

Editor's Notes for *Victimæ paschali laudes*

In this orchestral/choral work, Hilarión Eslava has taken a simple Gregorian chant written ca. 1048 and transformed it into showcase piece with a Spanish flair, contemporary for his time. This composition –an Easter sequence, would typically only be performed on Easter Sunday. A *sequence* is a hymn of joy that is sung or recited before the Gospel at Mass on certain feast days, in this case, Easter Sunday. The other sequences commonly used in the Roman Catholic church are *Veni Sancte Spiritus* (recited or sung at Pentecost), and *Lauda Sion Salvatorem* (on the Feast of Corpus Christi). Along with *Dies Iræ* (part of the Requiem Mass and thus usually not considered a sequence), they were all included in the Catholic *Missale Romanum* published in 1570 after the Council of Trent (1545-63). Hilarión Eslava set all three sequences to music.

The text for *Victimæ paschali laudes* is usually attributed to the 11th century cleric Wipo of Burgundy, chaplain to the German Emperor Conrad II. This sequence is still in liturgical use today and has been set to different musical arrangements by many Renaissance and Baroque composers.

If one examines closely the cover art on my transcription of this piece, which is the codex version of the original Gregorian chant, it is obvious that Eslava used the basic melody of the chant as the foundation for this piece, especially at the beginning. Eslava's seamless transformation to the decidedly Spanish rhythms and flourishes as the piece progresses is masterful and impressive.

An organ reduction (also suitable for piano) is provided if an orchestra is not available. The printed original used as a basis for this transcription bears the date of 1861 and lists Eslava as Master of the Royal Chapel and Professor of Composition at the Royal Conservatory of Madrid. This work was assigned an opus ("obra") number 132. The first page of this original from the Biblioteca Nacional de España contains the manuscript signature of Ramón Rufín y Valdés, my husband's great-grandfather.

LATIN LYRICS	ENGLISH TRANSLATION
Victimæ paschali laudes immolent Christiani. Agnus redemit oves: Christus innocens Patri reconciliavit peccatores.	May you praise the Paschal Victim, immolated for Christians. The Lamb redeemed the sheep: Christ, the innocent one, has reconciled sinners to the Father.
Mors et vita duello confluxere mirando: dux vitae mortuus, regnat vivus.	A wonderful duel to behold, as death and life struggle: The Prince of life dead, now reigns alive.
Dic nobis Maria, quid vidisti in via? Sepulcrum Christi viventis, et gloriam vidi resurgentis: Angelicos testes, sudarium, et vestes.	Tell us, Mary (Magdalen), what did you see in the way? I saw the sepulcher of the living Christ, and I saw the glory of the Resurrected one: The Angelic witnesses, the winding cloth, and His garments.

Surrexit Christus spes mea:
precedet vos in Galilea.
Scimus Christum surrexisse
a mortuis vere:
tu nobis, victor Rex,
miserere.
Alleluya.

The risen Christ is my hope:
He will go before His own into Galilee.
We know Christ to have risen
truly from the dead:
And Thou, victorious King,
have mercy on us.
Alleluia.