

Editor's Notes for *Libera me, Domine*

Libera me, Domine ("Deliver me, Lord") is a Roman Catholic responsory sung in the Office of the Dead and at the absolution of the dead, a service of prayers for the deceased said beside the coffin immediately after the Requiem Mass and before burial. The text of *Libera me* asks God to have mercy upon the deceased person at the Last Judgment. Many composers have written settings for the text, including Giuseppe Verdi, Gabriel Fauré, Maurice Duruflé, and Igor Stravinsky, to name a few.

Hilarión Eslava's version (assigned at the time the numbering Op. 127; now CPE-360), probably a late work, is especially dramatic with its full orchestration, including timpani and two bass choral parts. An outstanding rendition of this work, along with the Requiem Mass by Eslava (though not from my transcriptions) was produced in 2017 and was recorded live by the Symphonic Choir of the Federación de Coros de Navarra / Nafarroako Abesbatzen Elkarte (FCNAE) led by José Antonio Huarte, with the Orquesta Sinfónica Goya of Zaragoza, Spain, Jesús Echeverría conducting. The soloists in that performance were María de los Llanos (soprano), Beatriz Gimeno (mezzo), Igor Peral (tenor), and Txema Lacunza, bass. The recording can be found online on YouTube, at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L3Nkt5xMXdY>. The score transcribed here has been synched to that performance, with much-appreciated permission from its authors. The original setting for my transcription was an early printed score, a copy of which was provided by Eresbil / Musikaren euskal artxiboa, the Basque Music Archive.

I first transcribed this piece in October 2019. The transcription was slightly revised in November 2022 to correct a few minor mistakes and for improved overall formatting.

Note that the powerful opening notes in unison by the orchestra are rhythmically, but not musically, identical to the opening bass choral parts in Measure 13 (which are sung a cappella). The sixteenth note drops to an E-natural in the orchestra, but remains on the F for the basses. The same holds true later in the piece at Measures 245 and 257. This is consistent with the source document, and I suspect it may be a printing error. However, if an error, it was repeated, so I chose to remain consistent with the source document in this regard. If I ever run across a manuscript of this piece, that will be something to check for.

LYRICS

Libera me, Domine, de morte æterna, in die illa tremenda
Quando cæli movendi sunt et terra
Dum veneris judicare sæculum per ignem.

Tremens factus sum ego, et timeo,
dum discussio venerit, atque ventura ira
Quando cæli movendi sunt et terra.

Dies illa, dies iræ, calamitatis et miseræ,
dies magna et amara valde
Dum veneris judicare sæculum per ignem.

Requiem æternam dona eis, Domine:
et lux perpetua luceat eis.

Kyrie eleison
Christe eleison.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Deliver me, O Lord, from death eternal on that fearful day,
When the heavens and the earth shall be moved,
When Thou shalt come to judge the world by fire.

I am made to tremble, and I fear,
till the judgment be upon us, and the coming wrath,
When the heavens and the earth shall be moved.

That day, day of wrath, calamity and misery,
day of great and exceeding bitterness,
When Thou shalt come to judge the world by fire.

Rest eternal grant unto them, O Lord:
and let light perpetual shine upon them.

Lord have mercy
Christ have mercy.