

Editor's Notes for *Miserere a Ocho* by Hilarión Eslava, CPE-430 (from the Catedral Metropolitana de Santiago de Chile)

The *Miserere* is the name traditionally given to Psalm 51 (Psalm 50 in the Vulgate/Orthodox Bible), attributed to King David. In this Psalm, David expresses his deep remorse and repentance following the well-known episode described in the Bible's Books of Samuel and Kings concerning his loyal general (Uriah), sent to his death so David could take the man's wife (Bathsheba) as his own. In the Western Church tradition, the *Miserere* is associated with Lent and the sacrament or rite of Penitence.

The *Miserere* has been set to music by many composers dating back to the 16th century and probably earlier yet. Hilarión Eslava wrote many versions of it, each typically comprising 12 separate choral movements or pieces (each of which could be sung as a separate work entirely), concluded by the "*Allegro strepitoso*", an energetic instrumental finale. The music generally takes about an hour to perform – longer if interspersed with readings.

One of the biggest difficulties when discussing the various settings of the *Miserere* is that there are so many similar but different versions around. During Eslava's time, it was typically the duty of the Masters of the Chapel at many of Spain's principal cathedrals to produce a new *Miserere* every two years. The music was meant to be performed (often in near-total darkness) at the conclusion of the holy offices of the Paschal Triduum, the three days preceding the commemoration of Christ's resurrection at Easter. This was a monumental requirement in addition to the many other responsibilities of the position. And then there were also similar requests or commissions from neighboring cathedrals and lesser churches. Understandably, therefore, some of Eslava's "new" *Misereres* were modifications or updates of prior versions, with perhaps a new movement or two slipped in to replace older ones. The three *Misereres* Eslava wrote during his time in Sevilla during the 1830's, including his best-known *Gran Miserere* of 1835-37, have already been transcribed by others and are performed regularly there; such performances can be readily found on YouTube. For a scholarly discussion of Eslava's *Misereres*, I recommend the excellent monographs on the subject by the late Spanish musicologist, Fr. José López-Calo published by the Centro de Documentación Musical de Andalucía in Granada and by the Real Academia de Santa Isabel de Hungría, Sevilla.

Last year, in the course of our research on the maestro, we discovered, thanks to the work of Prof. Alejandro Vera at the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile, and by others, that there was a treasure trove of Eslava manuscripts extant in the main Cathedral of Santiago, Chile. The presence of these works in faraway Chile came about in 1851 as the Archbishop of Santiago at the time, monsignor Rafael Valdivieso (1804-1878), decided that the Cathedral, with its brand-new custom-made English organ, deserved a more up-to-date sacred music repertoire. To accomplish this, he commissioned the Chilean ambassadors in Paris and Madrid to acquire samples of the best music they could find. In Spain, the ambassador ultimately connected with Eslava, who was then serving as the Master of the Royal Chapel under Queen Isabel II. Eslava in due course assembled a sizable collection of what he felt were the best exponents of the music of his time, such as the works of composers Francisco Andreví and Mariano Rodríguez de Ledesma, as well as some of his own works, along with a few handwritten explanatory annotations. Eslava's compositions included three different *Misereres*, a Mass, and a number of other sacred works. Ironically, because of the technical complexity and cost of performing this music, very little of it was ultimately used in Santiago.

When we reached out to the Cathedral to inquire if we could obtain copies of their Eslava scores for study and transcription, we were told that they did not have the resources for copying the large volume of materials, but graciously granted us permission to visit the Cathedral in person and make copies for ourselves.

So we traveled to beautiful Chile in November-December 2022 and spent several days in the archives of Santiago’s Catedral Metropolitana. Though obviously limited in resources and space, the music archive was lovingly well-organized and Eslava’s music was found in immaculate condition, mostly in the form of bound volumes (for the general scores of Eslava’s major works) and complete instrumental and voice scores in loose sheet form, all manuscript and with few signs of use. For the digital copying process, we employed a portable, non-contact document scanner and a laptop computer (and a great deal of care) to create digital pdf images of 13 major works that we had not yet likely encountered from other sources. We are truly grateful for the courtesy, kindness, and generosity of the Cabildo-Catedral, the Dean, Fr. Héctor Gallardo, and especially Archivist Carmen Pizarro and her small crew of volunteer helpers.

This *Miserere a Ocho* is the first of the Santiago pieces I am transcribing. The work is so extensive that I have broken it up into three sections of four movements each. What I have discovered is that there are definite similarities between this *Miserere* and the earlier *Misereres* written during Eslava’s Sevilla (and possibly later) years, but there are also some major differences. Specifically, three of the 12 movements are completely different from other known versions, including the dramatic opening movement “*Christus factus est*”. The remaining nine movements have much in common with Sevilla’s 1835-37 *Gran Miserere*, but there are still differences to be found upon close examination. There is nonetheless plenty of room left for further study and a detailed expert musicological analysis of this work, which I am hoping my transcription will help inspire.

In my transcription, Part 1 encompasses movements 1-4 of the *Miserere* – “*Christus Factus Est*”, “*Miserere*”, “*Amplius*”, and “*Tibi Soli*”. Part 2 delivers movements 5-8 – “*Ecce Enim*”, “*Auditui Meo*”, “*Cor Mundum Crea*”, and “*Redde Mihi*”. Finally, Part 3 includes “*Libera Me*”, “*Quoniam*”, “*Benigne Fac*”, and “*Tunc Imponent*”.

The table below briefly describes each movement and compares it to its 1835-37 Sevilla counterpart.

Title & Voicings	Latin Lyrics & English Translation	Brief Comparison to Sevilla Counterpart
<p>1. <i>Christus Factus Est</i> (Double Choir with Soprano & Tenor solos) Performance time ~5:00</p>	<p>Latin Lyrics: <i>Christus factus est pro nobis obediens usque ad mortem, mortem autem crucis.</i> English Translation: <i>Christ became obedient for us unto death, even to the death, death on the cross.</i></p>	<p>This is a completely different musical setting.</p>
<p>2. <i>Miserere</i> (Double Choir with Soprano solo) Performance time ~4:45</p>	<p>Latin Lyrics: <i>Miserere mei, Deus, secundum magnam misericordiam tuam.</i> English Translation: <i>Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love.</i></p>	<p>Musically very similar, but this version calls for a soprano soloist (instead of a tenor).</p>
<p>3. <i>Amplius</i> (Double Choir with Alto solo) Performance time ~6:00</p>	<p>Latin Lyrics: <i>Amplius lava me ab iniquitate mea, et a peccato meo munda me.</i> English Translation: <i>Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.</i></p>	<p>Almost identical, except the solo part in this version is a little less intricate in a few places.</p>

Title & Voicings	Latin Lyrics & English Translation	Brief Comparison to Sevilla Counterpart
<p>4. <i>Tibi Soli</i> (First Choir with Tenor solo) Performance time ~4:15</p>	<p>Latin Lyrics: <i>Tibi soli peccavi, et malum coram te feci; ut justificeris in sermonibus tuis, et vincas cum judicaris.</i> English Translation: <i>Against you alone have I sinned, and done what is evil in your sight, so that you are justified in your sentence and blameless when you pass judgment.</i></p>	<p>Musically similar, especially at the beginning; however, this version is longer (73 measures vs. 57) and the choral parts are different once the tenor solo concludes.</p>
<p>5. <i>Ecce Enim</i> (Double Choir with Bass solo) Performance time ~5:15</p>	<p>Latin Lyrics: <i>Ecce enim veritatem dilexisti: incerta et occulta sapientiae tuae manifestasti mihi.</i> English Translation: <i>You desire truth in the inward being; therefore teach me wisdom in my secret heart.</i></p>	<p>Nearly identical to the Sevilla version.</p>
<p>6. <i>Auditui Meo</i> (Double Choir) Performance time ~7:30</p>	<p>Latin Lyrics: <i>Auditui meo dabis gaudium et laetitiam: et exultabunt ossa humiliata.</i> English Translation: <i>Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones that you have crushed rejoice.</i></p>	<p>Quite similar to the Sevilla version, but this version includes a full 55 measures of introduction before the altos come in, whereas the Sevilla version only includes 12.</p>
<p>7. <i>Cor Mundum Crea</i> (First Choir with woodwind & brass accompaniment) Performance time ~4:15</p>	<p>Latin Lyrics: <i>Cor mundum crea in me, Deus: et spiritum rectum innova in visceribus meis.</i> English Translation: <i>Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me.</i></p>	<p>This is a completely different musical setting.</p>
<p>8. <i>Redde Mihi</i> (Soprano voices) Performance time ~3:45</p>	<p>Latin Lyrics: <i>Redde mihi laetitiam salutaris tui: et spiritu principali confirma me.</i> English Translation: <i>Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and sustain in me a willing spirit.</i></p>	<p>Nearly identical to the Sevilla version.</p>
<p>9. <i>Libera Me</i> (TTBB/SATB Choir) Performance time ~5:00</p>	<p>Latin Lyrics: <i>Libera me de sanguinibus, Deus, Deus salutis meae: et exultabit lingua mea justitiam tuam.</i> English Translation: <i>Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation: and my tongue shall sing of Thy righteousness.</i></p>	<p>Musically similar, but substantially longer than the Sevilla version (101 measures vs. 72), including a passage for solo tenor voice (or first choir tenors).</p>
<p>10. <i>Quoniam</i> (Double Choir) Performance time ~5:30</p>	<p>Latin Lyrics: <i>Quoniam si voluisses sacrificium, dedissem utique: holocaustis non delectaberis.</i> English Translation: <i>For Thou desirest no sacrifice, else would I give it Thee: but Thou delightest not in burnt offerings.</i></p>	<p>This is a completely different musical setting.</p>

Title & Voicings	Latin Lyrics & English Translation	Brief Comparison to Sevilla Counterpart
11. Benigne Fac (Double Choir with Tenor Solo) Performance time ~2:45	Latin Lyrics: <i>Benigne fac, Domine, in bona voluntate tua Sion: ut ædificentur muri Jerusalem.</i> English Translation: <i>O be favourable and gracious unto Zion: build Thou the walls of Jerusalem.</i>	This version is written in 2:4 time, as opposed to common time in the Sevilla versions. Otherwise, it is nearly identical.
12. Tunc Imponent (Double Choir, followed by “Allegro Strepitoso” instrumental postlude) Performance time ~3:00	Latin Lyrics: <i>Tunc imponent super altare tuum vitulos.</i> English Translation: <i>Then shall they offer young bullocks upon Thine altar.</i>	Nearly identical; however, the “Allegro Strepitoso” section ends with the flute playing a high G note, as opposed to E-flat with the rest of the instruments. In my opinion this is more interesting.

As is typically the case with Eslava’s manuscripts, there were a number of musical errors and often sparse dynamic indications, but not to an extraordinary degree. For playback purposes, I inserted much more dynamic and tempo codings, but these are invisible in the printed score. In general, I do my best to discern Eslava’s preferences, but such fine points should ultimately be decided by the choral conductor. There are certainly clues in the accompaniment that provide some guidance to the conductor.

Another point of confusion was with regard to the oboes and clarinets. These instruments shared the same staves in the full score, and also the same *particella*. The score contains rather cryptic notes like “*oboeses o clarinetes*” (oboes or clarinets), but I was uncertain whether Eslava intended that only one of these options should be exercised in performance, or that, with both instruments playing (if available), the same *particella* could be simultaneously used. There was only one movement where it was clear that he only wanted a B-flat clarinet (“*Cor Mundum Crea*”, provided in Part 2), as there the *particella* is written for a B-flat instrument and specifically indicates the B-flat clarinet. All the other oboe/clarinet movements are notated for C instruments, which could make performance on a B-flat clarinet challenging. I have therefore included separate *particellas* for B-flat clarinet.

There was also considerable ambiguity as to whether certain vocal parts were intended for soloists or the first choir. Even when obviously a soloist, it was often unclear whether the soloist should continue singing along with the first choir when they came in (singing with their corresponding section), or whether the soloist would be meant to rest at that point. In such places I used my own judgment, but such decisions can and should be overruled by the choral conductor when appropriate.

Regarding the tempos, traditionally, Sevilla’s full *Misereres* were supposed to take exactly one hour to perform. Most recordings I have heard of the Sevilla versions exceed this by 10 to 15 minutes; I suspect that several passages have been performed more slowly than Eslava would have preferred. However, since there are no metronome indications, it is somewhat difficult to discern the correct tempo. That said, the 1835-37 Sevilla manuscripts included notations by the composer as to how long each movement should take. This version is of course different from that one, but the table below provides a performance time comparison of my tempo choices versus those specified by Eslava himself.

Movement Title	Eslava's Performance Time	Performance time of synthesized transcriptions by Rufin
1. Christus Factus Est	6:00	5:00
2. Miserere	5:30	4:45
3. Amplius	5:30	6:00
4. Tibi Soli	5:00	4:15
5. Ecce Enim	5:00	5:15
6. Auditui Meo	5:30	7:30
7. Cor Mundum	4:30	4:15
8. Redde Mihi	5:00	3:45
9. Libera Me	6:30	5:00
10. Quoniam	4:30	5:30
11. Benigne Fac	3:30	2:45
12. Tunc Imponent	3:00	3:00
Total Performance Time	59:30	57:00

Finally, for a broader discussion about Eslava's *Misereres*, see <https://hilarioneslava.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Miserere-notes.pdf>.

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