

Editor's Notes for *Miserere a Cuatro* by Hilarión Eslava, CPE-431 (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 (specifically, the Paschal Triduum) 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)¹. The music generally takes about an hour to perform – longer if interspersed with readings (the exception to this duration in Eslava's repertoire being his *Miserere Breve* – literally "*Brief Miserere*" (CPE-411) – which takes around 10-15 minutes to perform and which I have previously transcribed).

The *Miserere a Cuatro* is one of two full-length unpublished, manuscript *Misereres* we have discovered at the Catedral Metropolitana de Santiago de Chile². For more about Eslava's *Misereres* in general, and how these particular versions came to be found so far from Spain, I will direct you to my editor's notes for *Miserere a Ocho* (CPE-430): <https://hilarioneslava.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/Editors-Notes-for-Chile-Miserere-a-Ocho-Parts-1-3.pdf> and <https://hilarioneslava.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Miserere-notes.pdf>. Turning specifically to this *Miserere*, one thing we can conclude is that it is distinct from its more famous counterparts in Sevilla and Baeza (CPE-125, 126, and 157) and all of their sub-variants. It turns out, moreover, based on a brief description that can be found in scholarly paper by the late Spanish musicologist, Fr. José López-Caló³, that this may be the same version as two near-identical settings Fr. López-Caló located in the archives of the cathedrals of Cádiz and Málaga. The first three movements (*Christus Factus Est*, *Miserere*, and *Amplius*) appear for the most part (though not entirely) to match the three *incipits* provided by López-Caló in his paper. Unfortunately, Fr. López-Caló's analysis –obviously just a preliminary study, does not provide sufficient information to take this analysis further at this time. However, one new finding as a result of our work is that we have been able to now conclusively establish that this *Miserere* was composed between 1847 (the year Eslava formally became Master of the Royal Chapel) and 1852 (when the *Miserere* was sent to Chile), whereas López-Caló, unaware of the existence of the Chilean *Misereres*, had hypothesized that this version – obviously a more mature work of Eslava than his Sevilla works, might have been written after 1860.

The work is so extensive that for its publication I have broken it up into three Parts of four movements each. Part 1 encompasses movements 1-4 of the *Miserere* – "*Christus Factus Est*", "*Miserere*", "*Amplius*", and "*Tibi*

¹ The antiphon *Christus Factus Est* in particular is not always included with the *Miserere* and has sometimes been composed and/or published as a standalone piece.

² My husband Antonio and I are deeply indebted to the Cabildo of the Catedral Metropolitana de Santiago de Chile and Dean Msgr. Héctor Gallardo, and to the Archivist, Carmen Pizarro and her team, for making it possible for us to access this invaluable musical repository. We are also grateful to Prof. Alejandro Vera of the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile for his assistance in locating these records.

³ López Caló, José, "*Los Misereres de Eslava*", *Temas de estética y arte*, No. XXVII, Real Academia de Santa Isabel de Hungría, Sevilla [2013], pp. 221-305. The Cádiz-Málaga *Misereres* are discussed in pp. 289-296.

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.

Title & Voicings	Latin Lyrics & English Translation
<p>1. <i>Christus Factus Est</i> (SATB) Performance time ~5:30</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>2. <i>Miserere</i> (SATB) Performance time ~3:30</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>3. <i>Amplius</i> (SATB with potential Tenor solo) Performance time ~5:00</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>4. <i>Tibi Soli</i> (SATB) Performance time ~3:00</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>5. <i>Ecce Enim</i> (SATB with potential Alto 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>6. <i>Auditui Meo</i> (SATB with potential Bass solo) Performance time ~5:30</p>	<p>Latin Lyrics: <i>Auditui meo dabis gaudium et laetitiam: et exsultabunt ossa humiliata.</i> English Translation: <i>Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones that you have crushed rejoice.</i></p>
<p>7. <i>Cor Mundum Crea</i> (SATB) Performance time ~4:00</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>8. <i>Redde Mihi</i> (SATB with potential Soprano solo) Performance time ~3:00</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>9. <i>Libera Me</i> (Alto/Tenor Duet) Performance time ~3:20</p>	<p>Latin Lyrics: <i>Libera me de sanguinibus, Deus, Deus salutis meae: et exsultabit 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>

Title & Voicings	Latin Lyrics & English Translation
10. Quoniam si Voluisses (SATB with Tenor/Bass Duet) Performance time ~7:00	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>
11. Benigne Fac (SATB) Performance time ~3:50	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>
12. Tunc Imponent (SATB) Performance time ~2:10	Latin Lyrics: <i>Tunc imponent super altare tuum vitulos.</i> English Translation: <i>Then shall they offer young bullocks upon Thine altar.</i>

As is typically the case with Eslava's manuscripts, there were a number of musical errors, inconsistent articulations, and often sparse dynamic indications, but not to an extraordinary degree. For playback purposes, I inserted many 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 identification of instruments and doubling of parts. For instance, Eslava only wrote out the trombone staff in the main score, while sometimes writing "con el trombón" in an otherwise empty bassoon staff. Upon reviewing the bassoon *particella*, I concluded that it basically doubles the trombone in all respects. Also, the trombone part was instead labeled as "figle/bucsen" in one movement. The *figle* is an ophicleide (which is sometimes replaced by the modern tuba) and a *bucsen* (buccin) is a precursor to the trombone, an instrument sometimes used in 19th century military bands, with a bell shaped like a serpent's head, complete with vibrating tongue. I suspect that Eslava felt any of these instruments would be suitable throughout the entire *Miserere*. Meanwhile, he only included a single line for the bass string instrument in the main score, sometimes labeling it as contrabass and other times violoncello/contrabass (when it was labeled at all). The corresponding *particella* indicated contrabass. Based on my experience with Eslava's orchestrations, I believe he preferred to have both instruments playing the same part throughout, and I have scored this transcription accordingly.

There was also considerable ambiguity as to whether certain vocal parts were intended for soloists. While Eslava did identify duets in a couple of movements, which would presumably be sung by two strong voices, there were definitely also opportunities for single soloists that were not indicated as such. Such solo opportunities are obvious in the score, and the choral conductor should decide based on their own judgment.

Regarding the tempos, traditionally, a full *Miserere* is supposed to take exactly one hour to perform. However, since there are no metronome indications, it is somewhat difficult to discern the correct tempo for any given movement. Several of the movements in this piece included a notation for their durations, but I was not sure that this number reflected Eslava's intent, and they often did not match the tempos that seemed suitable to my tastes. The table below compares the notations found in the manuscript to what I ended up with in my transcription.

Movement Title	Indicated Performance Time	Performance time of synthesized transcriptions by R. Rufin
1. Christus Factus Est	6:00	5:30
2. Miserere	6:00	3:30
3. Amplius	5:00	5:00
4. Tibi Soli	5:00	3:00
5. Ecce Enim	5:00	5:15
6. Auditui Meo	5:00	5:30
7. Cor Mundum	6:00	4:00
8. Redde Mihi	4:00	3:00
9. Libera Me	4:00	3:20
10. Quoniam	Not indicated	7:00
11. Benigne Fac	Not indicated	3:50
12. Tunc Imponent	Not indicated	2:10
Total Performance Time	~60 minutes	~51 minutes

Notes copyright © Rebecca and Antonio Rufin 2023. All rights reserved.