

Editor's Notes for *Magnificat a Ocho en Mi* (CPE-229)

The *Magnificat* is the Virgin Mary's hymn of praise to the Lord, often called the *Song* or *Canticle of Mary*. It is traditionally incorporated into the liturgical services of the Catholic Church (at vespers) and of the Eastern Orthodox churches (at the morning services), but the text and music are most often used during the Christmas/Advent season. It is one of the eight most ancient Christian hymns and perhaps the earliest Marian hymn. The text of the canticle is taken directly from the Gospel of Luke (1:46–55) where it is spoken by Mary upon the occasion of her visitation to her cousin Elizabeth. In the narrative, after Mary greets Elizabeth, who is pregnant with John the Baptist, the latter moves within Elizabeth's womb. Elizabeth praises Mary for her faith (using words partially reflected in the traditional Hail Mary prayer), and Mary responds with what is now known as the *Magnificat*. The title "*Magnificat*" comes from the incipit (first line) of its Latin lyrics ("*Magnificat anima mea Dominum*").

The *Magnificat* has had numerous musical settings from the likes of Palestrina, JS Bach and Mozart, and this is in fact just one of several versions by Hilarión Eslava I have transcribed to date. This particular *Magnificat* (which begins and ends in the key of E major) came from the music archives of the Cathedral of Sevilla via the Institución Colombina, in Sevilla, Spain. As I started working on this piece, I soon realized that it was a somewhat simplified variation of an elaborate *Magnificat* that I already transcribed, which is the concluding piece in the *Vísperas* set that we recovered from the Catedral Metropolitana de Santiago in Chile, probably dating to ca. 1851 (see <https://musescore.com/user/29381772/scores/10368916> beginning at pg 88).

The manuscript date (1832) places the composition of this work to the very year Eslava was appointed Master of the Chapel in Sevilla, setting his age at about 25. Given his youth, I believe this is Eslava's original version, which he then chose to revisit at a later date. The later version found in Chile is orchestrated much more elaborately, and there are significant differences that set this piece apart from the later one, rendering it worthy of its own transcription. Some of these differences include:

- An organ *obbligato* in lieu of the flutes and clarinets used in the later version (see note below);
- The early version is about 40 measures longer, mostly consisting of musical interludes, including a longer instrumental introduction and a concluding instrumental part as well.
- The melody and choral structure during the phrase "*Dominum; et exultavit spiritus meus in Deo salutari meo*" is substantially different. This holds true for "*ex hoc beatam me dicent omnes generationes*"
- An especially dramatic chord progression during the phrase "*et sanctum nomen ejus*" is eliminated from the later version.
- The "*dispersit superbos mente cordis sui*" phrase, while intricate for both versions, is handled quite differently in terms of the instrumentation.
- There are many differences in terms of voicings, articulations, ornaments and other such details throughout.

As is so often the case in these handwritten manuscripts, there was often conflicting or absent instructions in terms of dynamics, tempo, articulations, etc. There were also many musical errors in the score, mainly in the form of missing accidentals. I have done my best to locate and correct errors and add some consistency, while refraining to visibly add too much of my own musical interpretation.

With regard to the organ *obbligato* part, the *particella* contains the following handwritten indication:

“Lengüetería en los fuertes, y fasulet y Flauta trav^a (travesera) con el flautado de 13 del tercer teclado en los pianos”

(“Reeds in forte sections, and (*sic*) *fasulet* and concert flute with 8’ flutes on the third keyboard in the piano sections”)

We believe, based on its specifics, that this instruction pertains to the organ built for the Cathedral of Sevilla by Valentín Verdalonga between 1816 and 1831. This organ, situated on the Gospel side of the nave, was not functional when the Cathedral suffered a serious structural collapse in 1888 that completely destroyed the opposite, older organ by Jordi Bosch from 1779-1793, and irreparably damaged the Verdalonga organ, so it is hard to make a very firm determination about organ indications. The unusual term *fasulet* is probably a Spanish phonetic transliteration of *flageolet*, a flute stop. After consulting with Spanish organist and Eslava expert Javier Serrano Godoy, we concluded that in modern general organ registration practice, the instruction in question could be roughly extrapolated to:

“8’ Principal on the fortes, and 8’ Soft Flute (a little Tremulant) y and 4’ Soft on the pianos”

Lyrics and approximate translation:

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| Magnificat anima mea Dominum; Et exultavit spiritus meus in Deo salutari meo, Quia respexit humilitatem ancillæ suæ; ecce enim ex hoc beatam me dicent omnes generationes. Quia fecit mihi magna qui potens est, et sanctum nomen ejus, Et misericordia ejus a progenie in progenies timentibus eum. Fecit potentiam in brachio suo; Dispersit superbos mente cordis sui. Deposuit potentes de sede, et exaltavit humiles. Esurientes implevit bonis, et divites dimisit inanes. Suscepit Israel, puerum suum, recordatus misericordiæ suæ, Sicut locutus est ad patres nostros, Abraham et semini ejus in sæcula. Gloria Patri, et Filio, et Spiritui Sancto, sicut erat in principio, et nunc, et semper: et in sæcula sæculorum. Amen. | My soul magnifies the Lord; And my spirit rejoices in God my Savior; Because He has regarded the lowliness of His handmaid; For behold, henceforth all generations shall call me blessed; Because He who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is His name; And His mercy is from generation to generation on those who fear Him. He has shown might with His arm, He has scattered the proud in the conceit of their heart. He has put down the mighty from their thrones, and has exalted the lowly. He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich He has sent away empty. He has given help to Israel, his servant, mindful of His mercy Even as he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his posterity forever. Glory to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, As it was in the beginning, is now, and forever, world without end, Amen. |
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