

Editor's Notes for *Dies Iræ arreglado a fabordón*

"*Dies iræ*" (in Latin, "the Day of Wrath") is a liturgical sequence dating to the 13th century or possibly earlier. Its verses describe the Last Judgment, the trumpet summoning souls before the throne of a mighty and unyielding God. In the Roman Catholic tradition, this sequence used to be part of the ritual *Mass of the Dead*. In its Gregorian plainsong or plainchant ("*canto llano*" in Spanish) rendition, the well-known opening of the *Dies Iræ* has been widely quoted in modern symphonic works by composers such as Hector Berlioz in his *Symphonie Fantastique* and Sergei Rachmaninoff in his *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini*, among many others.

Despite the image (quite unjustified, by the way) of Hilarión Eslava as an unoriginal, Italianized Romantic-era composer, he was actually very well versed in the plainchant and polyphonic traditions of the late Renaissance and the early Baroque Spanish sacred music traditions and wrote much music (little of it known until recently) where all of these styles come beautifully together, as this piece shows. This particular work reached us in the form of a manuscript copy from the Biblioteca Nacional de España, possibly *not* in Eslava's hand, with a date on its cover of 29 March 1863, when Hilarión was a well-established Master of the Royal Chapel in Madrid. We do know, from other sources, that a version (perhaps a revision) of this piece was premiered in April 1870 at a special event held in memory of the writer Miguel de Cervantes (1547-1616) at the Iglesia de las Trinitarias in Madrid, where the writer was buried.

This *Dies Iræ* alternates solo/unison plainchant verses with no explicit scoring and the simple indication "*canto llano*" with fully scored four-part choral verses "*a fabordón*", or *fauxbourdon* (loosely in French, "false bass") or, more accurately, *falsobordone*, a four-part (SATB) harmonization of Gregorian melody following certain prescribed canons originally established the late 15th century. The *canto llano* verses would have been well known and therefore Eslava did not consider it necessary to write them out. To facilitate its performance, in this transcription of this *Dies Iræ* I have included the *canto llano* verses in full in modern (pentagram) notation practice, drawn from the *Liber Usualis* of 1961, published by the Abbey of Solesmes in France. The note values for the plainchant are approximate, and may be varied somewhat at the discretion of the singer or conductor. The *fabordón* parts are entirely Eslava's original work.

Latin original	Approximate English translation
Dies iræ, dies illa, Solvat sæclum in favilla: Teste David cum Sibylla.	Day of wrath and doom impending! David's word with Sibyl's blending, Heaven and earth in ashes ending!
Quantus tremor est futurus, Quando Iudex est venturus, Cuncta stricte discussurus!	Oh, what fear man's bosom rendeth, When from heaven the Judge descendeth, On whose sentence all dependeth.
Tuba, mirum spargens sonum Per sepulchra regionum, Coget omnes ante thronum.	Wondrous sound the trumpet flingeth; Through earth's sepulchres it ringeth; All before the throne it bringeth.
Mors stupebit, et natura,	Death is struck, and nature quaking,

<p>Cum resurget creatura, Iudicanti responsura.</p> <p>Liber scriptus proferetur, In quo totum continetur, Unde mundus iudicetur.</p> <p>Iudex ergo cum sedebit, Quidquid latet, apparebit: Nil inultum remanebit.</p> <p>Quid sum miser tunc dicturus? Quem patronum rogaturus, Cum vix iustus sit securus?</p> <p>Rex tremendæ maiestatis, Qui salvandos salvas gratis, Salva me, fons pietatis.</p> <p>Recordare, Iesu pie, Quod sum causa tuæ viæ: Ne me perdas illa die.</p> <p>Quærens me, sedisti lassus: Redemisti Crucem passus: Tantus labor non sit cassus.</p> <p>Iuste Iudex ultionis, Donum fac remissionis Ante diem rationis.</p> <p>Ingemisco, tamquam reus: Culpa rubet vultus meus: Supplici parce, Deus.</p> <p>Qui Mariam absolvisti, Et latronem exaudisti, Mihi quoque spem dedisti.</p> <p>Preces meæ non sunt dignæ: Sed tu bonus fac benigne, Ne perenni cremer igne.</p> <p>Inter oves locum præsta, Et ab hædis me sequestra, Statuens in parte dextra.</p> <p>Confutatis maledictis, Flammis acribus addictis, Voca me cum benedictis.</p> <p>Oro supplex et acclinis, Cor contritum quasi cinis: Gere curam mei finis.</p>	<p>All creation is awaking, To its Judge an answer making.</p> <p>Lo, the book, exactly worded, Wherein all hath been recorded, Thence shall judgement be awarded.</p> <p>When the Judge his seat attaineth, And each hidden deed arraigneth, Nothing unavenged remaineth.</p> <p>What shall I, frail man, be pleading? Who for me be interceding, When the just are mercy needing?</p> <p>King of Majesty tremendous, Who dost free salvation send us, Fount of pity, then befriend us!</p> <p>Think, kind Jesu! — my salvation Caused Thy wondrous Incarnation; Leave me not to reprobation.</p> <p>Faint and weary, Thou hast sought me, On the Cross of suffering bought me. Shall such grace be vainly brought me?</p> <p>Righteous Judge, for sin's pollution Grant Thy gift of absolution, Ere the day of retribution.</p> <p>Guilty, now I pour my moaning, All my shame with anguish owning; Spare, O God, Thy suppliant groaning!</p> <p>Through the sinful woman shriven, Through the dying thief forgiven, Thou to me a hope hast given.</p> <p>Worthless are my prayers and sighing, Yet, good Lord, in grace complying, Rescue me from fires undying.</p> <p>With Thy sheep a place provide me, From the goats afar divide me, To Thy right hand do Thou guide me.</p> <p>When the wicked are confounded, Doomed to flames of woe unbounded, Call me with Thy saints surrounded.</p> <p>Low I kneel, with heart's submission, See, like ashes, my contrition, Help me in my last condition.</p>
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Lacrimosa dies illa, Qua resurget ex favilla Iudicandus homo reus: Huic ergo parce, Deus: Pie Iesu Domine, Dona eis requiem. Amen.	Ah! that day of tears and mourning, From the dust of earth returning Man for judgement must prepare him, Spare, O God, in mercy spare him. Lord, all-pitying, Jesus blest, Grant them Thine eternal rest. Amen.
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