

Editor's Notes for *Stabat Mater* (abreviado)

The *Stabat Mater* is a 13th-century Christian hymn to the Virgin Mary, which describes her suffering during the crucifixion of her son Jesus Christ. It has been variously attributed to the Franciscan friar Jacopone da Todi (ca. 1228-1306) and to Pope Innocentius III (ca. 1160-1216), among others. The title comes from its incipit, *Stabat mater dolorosa*, which means *The grieving mother stood weeping*. The hymn is often sung at the liturgy on the memorial of Our Lady of Sorrows, which in the Roman Catholic liturgical calendar falls in mid-September, and on other occasions around Holy Week honoring Christ's Passion and Mary's grief upon her Son's death.

The *Stabat Mater* has been set to music by many Western composers. There is in fact a helpful website devoted to the *Stabat Mater*, where one can find a fairly thorough listing of the many composers who have tackled this hymn (including 19 from Spain alone!), though surprisingly, the website does not mention Eslava. The website also includes translations in many languages; see <https://stabatmater.info/stabat-mater-translations-and-languages/>.

This dramatic setting by Eslava uses six of the twenty stanzas of the hymn, with its original Latin text. The source document is a fully orchestrated publication (labeled "Obra 135") by Bonifacio Eslava (nephew of Hilarión Eslava) identifying the composer as "Maestro Director de la Real Capilla y profesor de Composición del Conservatorio", indicating the piece was likely published after 1860, at a time when Gioachino Rossini's *Stabat Mater* was all the rage in Spain. The source score came to us courtesy of the Biblioteca Musical Victor Espinós, part of the Bibliotecas de Madrid (Madrid public library network).

I have previously transcribed another version of this piece that came to us in manuscript form from the musical archives of the Real Colegio Seminario de Corpus Christi in Valencia, Spain (see <https://musescore.com/user/29381772/scores/6867770>). That source only included the choral parts, violoncello, contrabass, and organ. I found that curious at the time, and suspected there were missing parts, but it sounded well even in that limited form. Comparing that source against this latest one, I found that the keyboard reduction in the published version was identical to the organ part in the manuscript, as were the bass strings and choral parts.

We know that other settings of this work were written by Eslava, including a then-acclaimed *O quam tristis et afflicta* (the third verse of the *Stabat Mater*) scored for soprano solo with an English horn obbligato (1864), which we have not yet been able to locate.

Finally, as a small nod to my beloved Spain, I have taken the liberty of adding in a set of alternative Spanish lyrics by the Spanish *Siglo de Oro* poet and playwright Félix Lope de Vega Carpio (1562-1635), from his *Soliloquios amorosos de un alma a Dios* (1626). I hope that my Spanish readers will forgive me for my audacity but will at least agree that Lope de Vega's beautiful poetic translation of the *Stabat Mater* makes a fitting match to Eslava's moving musical rendition.

LANGUAGE TRANSLATIONS OF THE LATIN TEXT (Verses in Eslava's setting only)

Original Latin	English Literal Translation	Poetic Spanish Translation by Lope de Vega
Stabat mater dolorosa juxta Crucem lacrimosa, dum pendebat Filius.	The grieving Mother stood weeping beside the cross where her Son was hanging.	La Madre piadosa estaba junto a la cruz y lloraba mientras el Hijo pendía.
Cuius animam gementem, contristatam et dolentem pertransivit gladius.	Her soul, sighing, anguished and grieving, was pierced by a sword.	Cuya alma, triste y llorosa, traspasada y dolorosa, fiero cuchillo tenía.
Pro peccatis suae gentis vidit Jesum in tormentis, et flagellis subditum.	For the sins of his people she saw Jesus in torment and subjected to the scourge.	Por los pecados del mundo, vio a Jesús en tan profundo tormento la dulce Madre.
Vidit suum dulcem Natum moriendo desolatum, dum emisit spiritum.	She saw her sweet offspring, dying forsaken, while He gave up His spirit.	Vio morir al Hijo amado, que rindió desamparado el espíritu a su Padre.
Eja, Mater, fons amoris me sentire vim doloris fac, ut tecum lugeam.	O Mother, fountain of love, make me feel the power of sorrow, that I may grieve with you.	¡Oh dulce fuente de amor!, hazme sentir tu dolor para que llore contigo.
Fac, ut ardeat cor meum in amando Christum Deum ut sibi compláceam.	Grant that my heart may burn in the love of Christ my Lord, that I may greatly please Him.	Y que, por mi Cristo amado, mi corazón abrasado más viva en él que conmigo.
Amen.	Amen.	Amén.