

## Editor's Notes for *Misa a Ocho (1832)*

Roman Catholic Masses are very structured, with certain required litanies and responses that may be sung. Many composers have set these liturgical elements to music, including Hilarión Eslava, who wrote many different "*Misas*" (Masses) during his life. Each of Eslava's Masses is quite unique musically, and spectacular in its own way. As of February 29, 2024, I have already transcribed twelve of Eslava's *Misas*, which can be readily found on the [hilarioneslava.org](http://hilarioneslava.org) website as well as under my profile on MuseScore.

This *Misa*, written early in Eslava's career at about age 24 (one of his first work products as the Master of the Chapel at the Cathedral of Sevilla), stands out in many ways. Even though it lacks a musical *Credo*, at nearly 39 minutes it is still much longer than all other *Misas* I have encountered to date (these have typically varied from 12 to 26 minutes), leading me to transcribe it in two parts. Each of its eight movements is intricately orchestrated and conveys a wide range of moods, ranging from triumph to tenderness, from energetic excitement to subdued reflection, from plaintive to playful.

This work opens with a dramatic *Kyrie*, which transforms into an elaborate eight-part fugue midway through. The *Gloria* liturgy has been divided into five separate movements - *Gloria*, *Laudamus*, *Qui Tollis*, *Quoniam*, and *Cum Sancto Spiritu* - each dramatically different from a musical perspective. *Quoniam* includes a beautiful tenor solo and obbligato violin part. The remaining *Sanctus* and *Agnus Dei* movements are equally stunning.

The digital scan of the source manuscript was procured from the archives of the Cathedral of Sevilla via the Institución Colombina and consisted of handwritten conductor's score as well as a full set of instrumental *particellas*. There were many inconsistencies between the *particellas* and the main score, to the point where I often struggled regarding which version to use. In general, for major inconsistencies I would go by the main score, as usually the version therein sounded more correct musically, and was written in the composer's own hand and arguably more reflective of his intent. The more significant complications in transcription were as follows:

1. One particularly confusing element was the difference between the 1<sup>st</sup> Violin and Violin Obbligato parts. The conductor's score only indicates one movement as utilizing a Violin Obbligato part (*Quoniam*), but the Violin Obbligato part had music for each movement. In some movements, it basically matched the 1<sup>st</sup> Violin except in a couple of measures. In other movements, it appeared to alternate between matching the 1<sup>st</sup> Violin and Flute Parts. I ultimately concluded that the obbligato section was written to keep the solo violinist busy the entire performance, basically reinforcing either the 1<sup>st</sup> violin or the Flute in all movements but the *Quoniam*. For purposes of my transcription, if a regular Violin and Obbligato only differed in a couple of measures, I showed the Obbligato as a separate voice in one of the Violin parts. I retained the Obbligato movement when there was a significant degree of interchange between reinforcing the Flute and Violin parts, as was the case in the *Gloria*.
2. The conductor's score did not include a trombone or contrabassoon part, but there were *particellas* included for both of these instruments. The parts were essentially identical and for much of the time simply reinforced forte bass sections. I concluded that these instruments were likely used if/when available, but are probably not essential.
3. There were sparse as well as conflicting dynamic and articulation instructions between the *particella* set and the full score, and also between individual parts. The vocal parts were especially lacking in dynamic instruction, so in a few cases I did add suggested dynamics that do not appear in the source. I did my best to discern Eslava's true intent, but it would be wise to consult the original version if in doubt.

This *Missa* incorporates four different Mass liturgical elements, which are described below. These would have been used in the following order in conjunction with the Mass:

1. **Kyrie:** The first part of Mass involves a “Penitential Rite” or “Confession”. This is followed by the *Kyrie*, which expresses guilt and shame for such sins. The lyrics, taken from the ancient Greek are simple, and translate as:

<i>Kyrie eléison, Christe eléison</i>	Lord, have mercy, Christ, have mercy
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2. **Gloria:** This is a sung exhortation expressing adoration of God, followed by a prayer to the Holy Trinity. In this work, Eslava has divided the *Gloria* into five separate movements, each quite distinct in musical character. The traditional Latin lyrics are written and translated below:

<i>Gloria in excelsis Deo (not included in the score)</i>	Glory to God in the highest <i>(not included in the score)</i>
<b>First Movement:</b> <i>Et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis.</i>	<b>First Movement:</b> And on earth peace to people of good will.
<b>Second Movement:</b> <i>Laudamus te, benedicimus te, adoramus te, glorificamus te. Gratias agimus tibi propter magnam gloriam tuam, Domine Deus, Rex caelestis, Deus Pater omnipotens. Domine Fili unigenite, Iesu Christe, Domine Deus, Agnus Dei, Filius Patris.</i>	<b>Second Movement:</b> We praise You, we bless You, we adore You, we glorify You. We give You thanks for your great glory, Lord God, heavenly King, God almighty Father. Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son, Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father.
<b>Third Movement:</b> <i>Qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis; qui tollis peccata mundi, suscipe deprecationem nostram. Qui sedes ad dexteram Patris, miserere nobis.</i>	<b>Third Movement:</b> You take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us; You take away the sins of the world, receive our prayer; You are seated at the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us.
<b>Fourth Movement:</b> <i>Quoniam tu solus Sanctus, tu solus Dominus, tu solus Altissimus, Iesu Christe.</i>	<b>Fourth Movement:</b> For You alone are the Holy One, You alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ.
<b>Fifth Movement:</b> <i>Cum Sancto Spiritu: in gloria Dei Patris. Amen.</i>	<b>Fifth Movement:</b> With the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

3. **Sanctus:** The *Sanctus* (“Holy”) is typically sung prior to the priest consecrating the Communion elements. The lyrics and translation are:

<i>Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus Dominus Deus Sabaoth. Pleni sunt caeli et terra gloria tua. Hosanna in excelsis.</i>	Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts. Heaven and earth are full of Your glory. Hosanna in the highest.
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4. **Agnus Dei:** Finally, the *Agnus Dei* (“Lamb of God”) asks for mercy and peace and is sung prior to the congregants receiving Communion. Lyrics and translation follow:

<p><i>Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis.</i></p> <p><i>Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis.</i></p> <p><i>Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, dona nobis pacem.</i></p>	<p>Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us.</p> <p>Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us.</p> <p>Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, grant us peace.</p>
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