

Editor's Notes for *Misa a Ocho (1832, with Órgano Obligado)*

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 March 21, 2024, I have already transcribed thirteen of Eslava's *Misas*, which can be readily found on the 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 and one of at least two Masses written that year), stands out in many ways. Even though it lacks a musical *Credo*, it still requires about 21 minutes to fully perform, comparable in temporal length to other of his *Misas* that do include the *Credo*.

Although the accompanying chamber orchestra is actually rather small compared to other works by Eslava, each of the *Misa's* eight movements is beautifully orchestrated with the instruments at hand, conveying a wide range of contrasting musical themes. Of particular interest is the *órgano obligado* (organ obbligato) part used throughout the piece, often weaving delicate counterpoint melodies with the violin and/or oboe sections.

This work opens with a dramatic *Kyrie*, which transforms into an elaborate eight-part fugue midway through. The *Gloria* has been divided into five separate movements - *Gloria*, *Domine Deus*, *Qui Tollis*, *Quoniam*, and *Cum Sancto Spiritu* - each quite 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 a few musical errors, as well as minor inconsistencies between the *particellas* and the main score, which I used my ear to reconcile as best I could. Other observations on the source manuscript include:

1. A "*bajones*" part was not included in the main score, but there was a *particella* written for it. As was customary in his time, Eslava would often specify *bajones* (*bajón* = Eng., dulcian, a woodwind precursor of the bassoon) to reinforce the bass vocal parts, especially in *forte* sections. Here, however, it is not clear whether Eslava originally intended the *bajones*, or whether they were added by a different conductor at some later date. I have utilized a contrabassoon in my transcription. However, Eslava often used instruments such as the trombone or ophicleide in a similar manner, likely dependent on what he had available for performance purposes, and these could be substituted if need be.
2. The manuscript for the conductor's score included a "*bajo*" (bass) section which was clearly intended for a stringed bass instrument, but was not otherwise described. The *particellas* provided for both violoncello and contrabass parts which were essentially identical to the "*bajo*" section. It was common for Eslava to utilize both instruments, playing the same part (acoustically an octave apart), so I have transcribed this score using both instruments.
3. Measure 15 of the 3rd movement (*Domine Deus*) consisted of the STB trio singing a cappella. While musically correct, it sounded a bit odd to my ears, as if Eslava had not completed his thought. Being a cappella, there were no instrumental parts to help me reconcile this concern. Therefore, I left the measure as written in the manuscript, but I also included an alternative rendering of the tenor part (non-sounding, in clearly marked small red font) that sounded better to my ears. I leave it to the discretion of the performer and conductor which version to use.

4. There were sparse as well as conflicting dynamic and articulation instructions between the *particella* set and the full score. 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>)
First Movement: <i>Et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis. Laudamus te, benedicimus te, adoramus te, glorificamus te. Gratias agimus tibi propter magnam gloriam tuam.</i>	First Movement: And on earth peace to people of good will. We praise You, we bless You, we adore You, we glorify You. We give You thanks for your great glory.
Second Movement: <i>Domine Deus, Rex caelestis, Deus Pater omnipotens. Domine Fili unigenite, Iesu Christe, Domine Deus, Agnus Dei, Filius Patris.</i>	Second Movement: Lord God, heavenly King, God almighty Father. Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son, Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father.
Third Movement: <i>Qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis; qui tollis peccata mundi, suscipe deprecationem nostram. Qui sedes ad dexteram Patris, miserere nobis.</i>	Third Movement: 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.
Fourth Movement: <i>Quoniam tu solus Sanctus, tu solus Dominus, tu solus Altissimus, Iesu Christe.</i>	Fourth Movement: For You alone are the Holy One, You alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ.
Fifth Movement: <i>Cum Sancto Spiritu: in gloria Dei Patris. Amen.</i>	Fifth Movement: 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</i> <i>Dominus Deus Sabaoth.</i> <i>Pleni sunt cæli et terra gloria tua.</i> <i>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:

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