

## Editor's Notes for *Dixit Dominus* (1832)

"*Dixit Dominus*" ("The Lord said unto my Lord") is from Psalm 110 in the Old Testament (Psalm 109 in the Orthodox and Vulgate Bibles). It is considered both a royal psalm and a messianic psalm, and a cornerstone in Christian theology, cited as proof of the plurality of the Godhead and Jesus' supremacy as king, priest, and Messiah. For this reason, Psalm 110 is frequently quoted or referenced in the New Testament.

Psalm 110 is a regular part of Jewish, Catholic, and Protestant liturgies. Because this psalm is prominent in the Office of Vespers, its Latin text has particular significance in music, and there are settings of it composed by the likes of Mozart, Handel, and Vivaldi. Eslava composed several settings as well, four of which I have previously transcribed.

When I started working on this piece, I soon realized that the opening melody was nearly identical to another undated setting I originally transcribed in 2020 (see "*Dixit Dominus* for double choir with orchestra", CPE-663, at <https://musescore.com/user/29381772/scores/6415920>). That prior setting was one of the most difficult pieces I have transcribed to date, due to the poor quality of my source (faded to where the stave lines were indiscernible throughout the document), pages out of order, at least one page entirely missing, and no individual parts to cross-reference. So, at first, I thought I could use this piece from 1832 to find and correct errors and missing portions of my 2020 transcription. However, that was not to be the case.

This setting was written in 1832 when Eslava was around 25 and newly employed as Master of the Chapel of Music of the Cathedral of Sevilla. It is now evident that Eslava revisited this piece much later in his career, probably sometime during his lengthy tenure as master of the Royal Chapel in Madrid, between 1847 and 1868. Here we have a vivid example of how Eslava's compositional skills evolved and matured over time. One could write a thesis on the similarities and differences between these two settings, speculating on the roles played by elements such as the emergence of romantic music, development in musical instruments, accessibility to better musical financing and musicians, refinement of personal skills, etc. Both settings are exquisite in their own ways, similar but different. Some of the differences include:

- a. Duration: at the tempos that felt right to me, the 1832 setting (at 11 minutes) is over 4 minutes longer. The later setting cuts back significantly on many of the lengthier instrumental solos as well as vocal solos and duets present in the 1832 version. This is what leads to the significant reduction in duration.
- b. Instrumentation: The later version is richly orchestrated with flute, clarinets, trumpets, bassoons, violas, and ophicleide – all in addition to the oboes, horns, violins, cellos, and contrabasses included in the 1832 setting. The intricate organ obbligato part of the 1832 version has been reduced to a single, sustained bass note in the later version – you would not even need a trained organist to play it.
- c. The chord structures in the later version are more sophisticated. This is especially evident in the gorgeous chord progression found in Measure 43 of the later version, which can be compared to Measure 58 in the 1832 setting.
- d. In the later version, there was at least one page missing, and I added Measures 52-56 (marked in red font) to knit the piece together, transitioning from a soprano solo to 4-part choral in that

interval. The equivalent lyrics in the 1832 setting comprise Measures 75-83, consisting of a Soprano/Tenor duet with an entirely different melody. Therefore the 1832 setting gave me no clues as to what Eslava had in mind for his later setting at that point.

- e. In his early years, Eslava typically concluded his compositions with the standard loud instrumental “da-Dum, da-Dum”, as can be heard in the final two measures of the 1832 setting. However, in the later setting he ends with a quiet choral “Amen”, with pizzicato string accompaniment.

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 tried to reconcile by ear. Other observations on the source manuscript include:

1. The organ obligato part provided some specific instruction regarding the organ registration: “*Lengüeterías en los fuertes, y voz en 26 del tercer teclado en los pianos y dulces*”, loosely translated as “reeds in the *forte* sections, voice at 26 in the third keyboard for the *piano* and *dolce* sections”. “Voice at 26” is most likely a direct reference to a specific *vox humana* reed stop on one of the two organs at the Cathedral in Sevilla, probably the Gospel-side organ, which at the time had just been constructed by Valentín Verdalonga and is no longer in existence. I chose to use a flute in my rendering, but do not know if this is the best choice. There were also points in the score where “*Trompas reales*” (probably an 8-foot trumpet stop, common in Spanish organs) were indicated, and I have reflected that in my transcription, and added notes when I thought it likely that Eslava intended to revert back to the reed settings indicated in his general instructions.
2. There were sparse as well as conflicting dynamic and articulation instructions between the *particella* set and the full score. In general, I added or excluded articulations based on the pattern found for the majority of the instruments at a given measure. The vocal parts were also 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.

The text of the piece (Psalm 110 followed by the Gloria Patri) follows:

<p>1 Dixit Dominus Domino meo: Sede a dextris meis, donec ponam inimicos tuos scabellum pedum tuorum.</p>	<p>1 The LORD says to my lord, “Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool.”</p>
<p>2 Virgam virtutis tuæ emittet Dominus ex Sion: dominare in medio inimicorum tuorum.</p>	<p>2 The LORD sends out from Zion your mighty scepter. Rule in the midst of your foes.</p>
<p>3 Tecum principium in die virtutis tuæ in splendoribus sanctorum: ex utero, ante luciferum, genui te.</p>	<p>3 Your people will offer themselves willingly on the day you lead your forces on the holy mountains. From the womb of the morning, like dew, your youth will come to you.</p>

<p>4 Juravit Dominus, et non pœnitebit eum: Tu es sacerdos in æternum secundum ordinem Melchisedech.</p>	<p>4 The LORD has sworn and will not change his mind, "You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek."</p>
<p>5 Dominus a dextris tuis; confregit in die iræ suae reges.</p>	<p>5 The Lord is at your right hand; he will shatter kings on the day of his wrath.</p>
<p>6 Judicabit in nationibus, implebit ruinas; conquassabit capita in terra multorum.</p>	<p>6 He will execute judgment among the nations, filling them with corpses; he will shatter heads over the wide earth.</p>
<p>7 De torrente in via bibet; propterea exaltabit caput.</p>	<p>7 He will drink from the stream by the path; therefore he will lift up his head.</p>
<p>Gloria Patri, et Filio, et Spiritui Sancto, sicut erat in principio, et nunc, et semper, et in sæcula sæculorum. Amen.</p>	<p>Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, and now, and forever, and forever and ever. Amen.</p>