

Editor's Notes for *Cuatro Misas*

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 this writing, I have already transcribed more than a dozen of Eslava’s *Misas*, which can be readily found on the hilarioneslava.org website as well as under my profile on MuseScore.

This set of four Masses was composed for the Cathedral of Sevilla probably early in Hilarion Eslava’s career as master of the Chapel, and were intended for daily use and on lesser holidays, when musical resources were more limited. They are formatted in a classic *alternatim* setting, with a leading instrument or voice (termed “cantor” in the score) followed by a unison chorus. The organ provides a figured base accompaniment throughout. The “*tono*” designations (*1º tono, 4º tono, 5º tono, and 6º tono*) refer to the eight tones used in plain chant and upon which each of these four *Misas* is built. Except as indicated below, the scores on which these transcriptions are based originated with the music archives of the Cathedral of Sevilla via the Institución Colombina.

Simple as this end product appears to be, it was no easy process assembling this in a manner that is accessible to modern performance (my goal here). I had to draw from several different and undated sources, written by a variety of copyists, often incomplete or with pages out of order. No single source was definitive, rather all versions had to be examined closely, using all versions to develop as complete a work as possible and reconciling differences between them. I chose also to flesh out full accompaniments based on the figured bass notations provided. This necessitated the use of considerable musical and editorial judgment on my part. Some of the challenges are described below.

I had previously encountered and transcribed two versions of the *Misa de 1º Tono*. The *Misa de Canto Mixto* (CPE-572) was transcribed from a publication by Bonifacio Eslava (the nephew of Hilarión Eslava). The two are essentially identical, except that the *Canto Mixto* version includes a “new” *Credo* section that is clearly patterned after the other movements, whereas the *1º Tono* version references use of the “*Credo Romano*” with one section thereof modified. The *Canto Mixto* Mass version also provided full accompaniment in lieu of figured bass, which I have copied over to this transcription. I also developed the accompaniment of the remaining three *Misas* after the pattern encountered in the *Canto Mixto* Mass, assuming this would be consistent with the composer’s preference for interpretation of the figured bass notation.

The other version of *Misa de 1º Tono* can be found in CPE-203 “*Misa de Primer Tono*”. Transcribed from a handwritten manuscript, this version provides an excellent example of how one could perform the *Misa* utilizing an instrument as cantor in lieu of a human. Such an approach could be applied to the other three *Misas* in this set.

To date, I have not encountered any of the other three *Misas* (*4º, 5º, or 6º tonos*) among any of my other transcription projects.

The digital scans of the source manuscripts consisted of two separate files (Institución Colombina signatures 104-1-1 and 32-1-5) containing various versions of these *Misas*, penned by at least four different hands at different times. The more significant complications in transcription were as follows:

1. **Credo:** For each of the four *Misas*, the source material indicates that the same "*Credo Romano*" be utilized, except substituting a portion of the confession (from "*Et incarnatus est*" to "*Et homo factus est*") with a different musical phrase written by Eslava. Apparently the "*Credo Romano*" used in Sevilla must have been a well-established (but poorly documented) local standard, probably one of many extant versions of the same sung Roman Creed. Unfortunately, while Eslava's music does provide a figured bass accompaniment for his "*Credo Romano*", it does not include the associated melody, and I was unable to find any documented musical setting of the *Credo Romano* that matches the accompaniment provided by Eslava. I had previously encountered similar instructions in CPE-203 "*Misa de Primer Tono*", and there utilized a traditional Roman *Credo* suggested by an expert in plain chant. However, that *Credo* version does not match the figured bass accompaniment provided here, so I am not including that in this transcription. I do provide the aforementioned musical phrase by Eslava, along with appropriate accompaniment, and I leave it up to the user if and how to incorporate this in performance.
2. **Benedictus:** In the Order of the Mass, the *Benedictus* would be traditionally sung as part of the *Sanctus* or a little later, immediately following the consecration. It could be chanted by the celebrant or by the cantor or choir. There were no "*Benedictus*" sections included in my prior transcriptions, nor does the *Benedictus* appear in the 104-1-1 folder source from Institución Colombina. However, in the 32-1-5 folder source, there were brief *Benedictus* sections for each of the four *Misas* that were jotted, out of proper sequence and using a different pen, after the *Agnus Dei* sections. Upon closer examination, it was clear that each of these afterthought sections were copying musical phrases from the corresponding *Sanctus* and/or *Agnus Dei* parts, substituting in the *Benedictus* text. The *Benedictus* for the *Misa de 5º Tono* was left incomplete, presumably because whoever started it was having trouble deciding which musical phrases to use. I postulate that these brief movements may have been the result of a special request. Given that they all utilize Eslava's music, I went ahead and incorporated them, replacing the incomplete *5º Tono* setting with one of my own devising using the same method but more appropriate musical phrases.
3. **Figured Bass:** Most of my sources only provided figured bass for accompaniment. This was challenging because the figured bass was written for some sort of non-C instrument which varied between *Misas*, and the key of the instrument was never mentioned. I had to figure out the key and transpose it for organ performance.
4. **Accompaniment:** Although some of the music provided in the 32-1-5 folder consisted of full-handed organ accompaniment, I found that the accompaniment provided often clashed with the singing voices, and I doubted that Eslava actually wrote such accompaniment. Therefore, I thought it would be convenient, even essential, to provide right-hand accompaniment based on the original figured bass notation. I already had this available for the *Misa de 1º Tono* (drawn from the CPE-572 *Canto Mixto*) and used the patterns therein to develop equivalent right-hand accompaniment for the remaining three Masses. In the transcriptions, I have shown all such additions in red font.