

## Editor's Notes for *Misa en Re Mayor*

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](http://hilarioneslava.org) website as well as under my profile on MuseScore.

This source manuscript for this undated *Misa* was procured from the archives of the Cathedral of Sevilla via the Institución Colombina and consisted of only the two soprano parts and a part for a *bajón* (a dulcian, a direct ancestor of the modern bassoon, used primarily to reinforce a bass vocal part and/or forte bass instrumental passages). Given the sparsity of accompaniment, I suspect it is a fragment from a larger orchestration that may have included additional vocal parts as well. I have not yet encountered an alternative version of this particular Mass, so it is difficult and perhaps pointless to postulate too much on the matter.

Given the relative simplicity of the two soprano parts, and the fact that the source manuscript is from Sevilla, it is entirely possible that Eslava wrote this for performance by the *Seises*, a small group of boys that were recruited and trained for singing and liturgical dances at the Cathedral of Sevilla. One of Eslava’s responsibilities in his position as Master of the Chapel in Sevilla was to direct and compose music for the *Seises*, a task which he greatly enjoyed.

In order to make this piece more usable from a modern performance perspective, I have created a new (optional) accompaniment by combining the parts into a keyboard reduction that can be played on any keyboard instrument (I use a harpsichord in the synthesized rendition). Even though it may be lacking in its original complexity (assuming this piece was once fully orchestrated), this composition still becomes a beautiful, charming performance piece perfect for a children’s or women’s choir, with its individual movements sung on their own or with the Mass played in its entirety depending on the occasion.

This *Misa* 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:

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| <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. The traditional Latin lyrics are written and translated below:

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| <i>Gloria in excelsis Deo (not included in the score)</i>   | Glory to God in the highest <i>(not included in the score)</i>  |
| <i>Et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis. Laudamus te, benedicimus te, adoramus te, glorificamus te.</i> | And on earth peace to people of good will.<br>We praise You, we bless You,<br>we adore You, we glorify You. |
| <i>Gratias agimus tibi propter magnam gloriam tuam.</i>   | We give You thanks for your great glory.  |
| <i>Domine Deus, Rex caelestis, Deus Pater omnipotens.</i>   | Lord God, heavenly King,<br>God almighty Father.  |

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| <p><i>Domine Fili unigenite, Iesu Christe,<br/>Domine Deus, Agnus Dei, Filius Patris.<br/>Qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis;<br/>qui tollis peccata mundi, suscipe deprecationem<br/>nostram.<br/>Qui sedes ad dexteram Patris, miserere nobis.<br/>Quoniam tu solus Sanctus, tu solus Dominus, tu<br/>solus Altissimus, Iesu Christe.<br/>Cum Sancto Spiritu: in gloria Dei Patris.<br/>Amen.</i></p> | <p>Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,<br/>Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father.<br/>You take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us;<br/>You take away the sins of the world, receive our prayer;<br/>You are seated at the right hand of the Father, have<br/>mercy on us.<br/>For You alone are the Holy One, You alone are the Lord,<br/>you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ.<br/>With the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father.<br/>Amen.</p> |
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3. **Sanctus:** The *Sanctus* (“Holy”) is typically sung prior to the priest consecrating the Communion elements. The lyrics and translation are:

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| <p><i>Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus<br/>Dominus Deus Sabaoth.<br/>Pleni sunt caeli et terra gloria tua.<br/>Hosanna in excelsis.</i></p> | <p>Holy, Holy, Holy<br/>Lord God of hosts.<br/>Heaven and earth are full of Your glory.<br/>Hosanna in the highest.</p> |
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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:

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