

***Fantasia Brillante*, by José Pinilla, based on a theme by Eslava**

As we continue our research on Hilarión Eslava, we have found remnants or adaptations of his compositions preserved by people who actually knew him. Such is the case for this elaborate *Fantasia*, which requires the formidable skills of a virtuoso pianist to play properly. The melodies are drawn from at least three fragments found in Eslava's second opera, *La Tregua di Ptolemaide* (a.k.a. *Las Treguas de Tolemaida*). Compare this to the piano/voice arrangements of:

- “Sull' april d'una vita” <https://musescore.com/user/29381772/scores/5961633>
- “Più misera chi vide mai” beginning at Measure 67, <https://musescore.com/user/29381772/scores/8525636>
- “Sorga l'alba” beginning at Measure 56 <https://musescore.com/user/29381772/scores/8493635>

Best known for his work as an educator, José Pinilla y Pascual (Autol, La Rioja, Spain, 1837 - Madrid, 1902) was also an accomplished pianist and composer. He received his musical education at the Royal Conservatory in Madrid, where he studied harmony and composition under Hilarión Eslava and received piano and composition awards. Pinilla was appointed professor of solfège at the Conservatory in 1863, and in 1865 founded a correspondence school of counterpoint, fugue, composition, and instrumentation. His *Teoría completa del solfeo*, an innovative method of solfège built on, and complementing the earlier work by Eslava, was widely published and was still in use at the Conservatory and around Spain well into the 20th century. Among his two dozen compositions are three piano pieces written in honor and based on the three operas of his *maestro* and friend Hilarión Eslava:

- 1) This present work,
- 2) *La velada de San Juan en Sevilla; Capricho característico andaluz, sobre un coro de la ópera “Don Pedro el Cruel”* (see <https://musescore.com/user/29381772/scores/5862099>), and
- 3) *Nocturno sobre una Romanza de la ópera Il Solitario* (see <https://musescore.com/user/29381772/scores/18017284>)

We purchased the source score from an antique music dealer in Spain. It would have been printed ca. 1860 at the shop of Eslava's nephew, Bonifacio Eslava, in Madrid.

Sources (in Spanish): Biographical entries on José Pinilla at the Real Conservatorio de Historia, at <http://dbe.rah.es/biografias/67570/jose-pinilla-y-pascual>, and Biblioteca Virtual de La Rioja, at http://bibliotecavirtual.larioja.org/bvrioja/es/consulta_aut/registro.cmd?id=3320. For digital samples of his works, see Biblioteca Nacional de España, at <http://datos.bne.es/persona/XX1531191.html>.