

Editor's Notes for "*Plegaria a la Divina Pastora*"

My source for this beautiful piece is an anonymous handwritten transcription of a score whose title translates to "Prayer to the Divine Shepherdess" for voice and piano, attributed to Hilarión Eslava and copied well after the composer's death. Judging by an annotation at the bottom of the score, the melody appears to have been copied in Sanlúcar de Barrameda (a town in the province of Cádiz and, as it turns out, the ancestral home of the Rufin family) in 1922, and the accompaniment has a similar postscript placing it in Melilla (a Spanish enclave located on the northwest coast of Africa, sharing a border with Morocco) in 1927. This composition is not mentioned in any of the past inventories of Eslava's works, which is not necessarily surprising, but may indicate that it may have never been performed outside of Eslava's lifetime.

The accompaniment was labeled as being for piano or organ; however, in my opinion it is unsuitable for organ performance, so my transcription indicates piano. The accompaniment pages were out of order and completely missing several measures – defects not obvious until one tries to combine the solo and accompaniment parts by either performance or transcription. I did my best to provide appropriate accompaniment for the missing measures, copying similar passages in some cases, and weaving similar musical patterns in with others. Such additions are shown in red font in my transcription. Hopefully it is not too far off from the composer's original intent, but that said, I suspect the original work may have been orchestrated, and this accompaniment was likely a keyboard reduction, probably not Eslava's.

The soprano solo had absolutely no dynamic indicators, and very few articulation signs. The accompaniment had an abundance of such notations, but often they did not make musical sense. Since Eslava was typically sparing in providing dynamic instructions, I suspect these indicators were added by the 1927 copyist, and considering the missing measures, there were likely errors in their placement. I have therefore included most of them, but often moved them around to make better musical sense. I also extended appropriately matching dynamics to the soprano part. Bottom line, anyone performing this piece should feel free to diverge from these instructions consistent with their own musical interpretation.

The lyrics in this piece contain beautiful imagery, appropriate for the Christmas/Advent season but general enough to be used for other religious or even secular occasions. The lyrics start with "*zagala*", which is an older word meaning "young maiden" or "shepherdess", and in this context is basically synonymous with "*pastora*".

SPANISH LYRICS	ENGLISH TRANSLATION
Zagala hermosa, pastora bella, Fulgida estrella, flor olorosa. Oye amorosa, tú mi querella Mi humilde huella, guía piadosa, Sé de mi vida, Madre querida, luz y consuelo. Rompa sus lazos, mi alma en tus brazos, y vuele al cielo.	Lovely shepherdess, beautiful shepherdess, Shining star, fragrant flower. Hear lovingly, my lament to you, To my humble footsteps, faithful guide, Be in my life, dear Mother, light and comfort. May my soul in your arms break its bonds, and fly to heaven.