

Editor's Notes for *Mirabilia Testimonia Tua (Salmo Primero de Nona)*

This piece is from a handwritten journal containing four orchestrated choral works and several short choral motets attributed to Hilarión Eslava. Nowhere in the scanned image file received from the Biblioteca Nacional de España could I find any indication of Eslava's name, nor any other name whatsoever, other than the letters "HE" written on the first page of a setting of the "*Magnificat*" (CPE-569) included therein. According to BNE, the journal was purchased from Miguel Blázquez of Madrid in February 2011. Based on the handwriting, notation style, and quality of music in general, it certainly could be Eslava's. The composition is not mentioned in any of the prior (though rather limited) listings of Eslava's compositions assembled by Spanish musicologist and Eslava biographer José López Calo and his predecessors.

None of the pieces in the journal were ever formally published, and several pieces, including this one, were fraught with errors and inconsistencies, with minimal guidance in terms of dynamics and tempo. This piece was especially challenging to transcribe, and was likely never performed except possibly under the direction of Eslava himself. Nonetheless, it tackles the exceptionally challenging and lengthy Psalm 119 (Psalm 118 in the Vulgate Bible) with an elegant charm that is quite delightful and deserves to be heard.

The "*Nona*" is a prayer of the Catholic Divine Office in the liturgy of the canonical hours. This office owes its name to the ninth canonical hour of the day. It is usually sung or recited at approximately 3:00 p.m. — the moment when Christ's death on the cross is commemorated. In the Roman rite, it is made up of a hymn, three psalms (or psalms fragments), a short reading, a verse, and a prayer.

Presumably, this piece was intended for the first Psalm reading. It concludes with the *Gloria Patri*. The source materials included a conductor's score with 2 flutes, 2 Horns in G, 2 violins, bass part (for which I am using strings in my transcription, but could presumably be played by a bass brass instrument as well), and SATB voices; a separate organ *obbligato* part that was not always consistent the conductor's score, and an organ/keyboard reduction (also inconsistent). There was a separate "*Antifona*" (short hymn) entitled "*Videntibus illis*" appended to both the organ *obbligato* part and keyboard reduction, which I have chosen to include as part of a set of short choral motets (contained in the same journal) in a separate transcription (CPE-412/1-12).

As mentioned, both the organ *obbligato* and the keyboard reduction were separately added following the rest of the score. This separation contributed to many of the inconsistencies I had to resolve in the transcription process, so the following points should be kept in mind for performance purposes:

1. The number of measures varied between the main score, organ *obbligato*, and keyboard reduction. I had to add a couple of measures to the orchestral score and fill in some sizable gaps in the keyboard parts in order to reconcile all parts.

2. Solo parts are not actually indicated within the SATB parts, but both the separate organ *obbligato* and keyboard reduction did provide some indication of sections where Eslava intended solos or duets. Therefore, this transcription has been edited to reflect those clues.
3. Dynamic, tempo, and articulation markings, when provided at all, were often illegible, contradictory, and/or inconsistent. Due to its lengthy duration (nearly 17 minutes in my transcription), I was concerned that the music could become rather tedious without provision of such dynamic details, and so I added many based on my own musical judgment. I did the best I could to capture Eslava's likely intent, but anybody performing this piece should exercise discretion in following the dynamics provided and rely on musical instinct.
4. The bass section (in the conductor's score) was sporadically provided with figured bass notations. These were often barely legible, and frequently inconsistent with the figured bass provided in the organ *obbligato* section (which had a much fuller set of notations). Furthermore, there seemed to be inaccuracies in both parts. I decided to remove figured bass notations from the bass part, as I do not believe they are commonly utilized in modern string music, and of course a bass brass instrument could not play them at all. I provided a simple rendering of the figured bass in the organ *obbligato* (shown with small notes), and adjusted it in places to match the harmonies in the other parts.
5. As mentioned, the perhaps concluding "*Antifona*" section only appeared in the *obbligato* and keyboard reduction. The lyrics only appeared in the keyboard reduction, without any corresponding SATB parts to indicate possible harmonies. The SATB parts I provided (as part of a separate transcription – see CPE-412/1-12) were therefore what I surmised might have been intended based on the keyboard reduction itself.

Psalm 118:129-144 (Vulgate)	Psalm 119 English Translation: 129-144 (NRSVUE)
129 Mirabilia testimonia tua: ideo scrutata est ea anima mea.	129 Your decrees are wonderful; therefore my soul keeps them.
130 Declaratio sermonum tuorum illuminat, et intellectum dat parvulis.	130 The unfolding of your words gives light; it imparts understanding to the simple.
131 Os meum aperui, et attraxi spiritum: quia mandata tua desiderabam.	131 With open mouth I pant, because I long for your commandments.
132 Aspice in me, et miserere mei, secundum iudicium diligentium nomen tuum.	132 Turn to me and be gracious to me, as is your custom toward those who love your name.
133 Gressus meos dirige secundum eloquium tuum, et non dominetur mei omnis iniustitia.	133 Keep my steps steady according to your promise, and never let iniquity have dominion over me.
134 Redime me a calumniis hominum ut custodiam mandata tua.	134 Redeem me from human oppression, that I may keep your precepts.
135 Faciem tuam illumina super servum tuum, et doce me justificationes tuas.	135 Make your face shine upon your servant, and teach me your statutes.

136 Exitus aquarum deduxerunt oculi mei, quia non custodierunt legem tuam.	136 My eyes shed streams of tears because your law is not kept.
137 [Sade.] Justus es, Domine, et rectum iudicium tuum.	137 You are righteous, O Lord, and your judgments are right.
138 Mandasti iustitiam testimonia tua, et veritatem tuam nimis.	138 You have appointed your decrees in righteousness and in all faithfulness.
139 Tabescere me fecit zelus meus, quia oblitus sunt verba tua inimici mei.	139 My zeal consumes me because my foes forget your words.
140 Ignitum eloquium tuum vehementer, et servus tuus dilexit illud.	140 Your promise is well tried, and your servant loves it.
141 Adolescentulus sum ego et contemptus; justificationes tuas non sum oblitus.	141 I am small and despised, yet I do not forget your precepts.
142 Iustitia tua, iustitia in æternum, et lex tua veritas.	142 Your righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and your law is the truth.
143 Tribulatio et angustia invenerunt me; mandata tua meditatio mea est.	143 Trouble and anguish have come upon me, but your commandments are my delight.
144 Æquitas testimonia tua in æternum: intellectum da mihi, et vivam.	144 Your decrees are righteous forever; give me understanding that I may live.