

EDITOR'S NOTES FOR *TWELVE SACRED CHORAL MOTETS*

This collection of gorgeous choral settings of various scriptures used in Roman Catholic liturgy is part of my laborious transcription of one of Hilarión Eslava's manuscript journals of unpublished choral works, an endeavor that took several months of concentrated effort. I originally transcribed these as a set of eleven motets in 2020, but now with several years more experience with Eslava's works, I have revisited these and made significant revisions.

The source is a handwritten journal containing four orchestrated choral works in addition to (actually) 12 short choral motets. Although 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 among them. According to BNE, the journal was purchased from a 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. Although there were no dates written in the journal, I suspect from the style of these and the other works therein that they would have likely been composed early in Eslava's career, perhaps while he was Master of the Chapel of the Cathedral of Sevilla, in 1832-1844.

To the best of my knowledge, none of the works in this particular journal were ever formally published, and they all seem to lack composer's instructions that would have been necessary to create the intended performance. Therefore, I can only conclude that these motets were likely never performed except under the direction of Eslava himself, who would have provided such instruction personally. Because of the paucity of instructions, I have made quite a few assumptions in the transcription process, which anybody performing this piece should bear in mind. These include:

1. There were no tempo indications at all. I therefore chose tempos I preferred that are of course reflected in the mp3 audio file and during playback on MuseScore, but left such notations invisible in the score, leaving the conductor free to direct the tempo as the spirit moves them.
2. Several of these motets included figured bass organ accompaniment. The small notes I have shown where this was the case do not appear in the original score; rather they are my simple interpretation of the figured bass markings, which I added as a guide, and to verify whether I was reading the notations correctly (they were often illegible and/or erroneous).
3. There were only a few dynamic notations in the entire piece, which I have shown. I did not try to provide any additional dynamic instruction – this is totally up to the conductor. That said, I invisibly applied dynamic instructions throughout each motet to reflect my own performance preferences.
4. I found that the pages in the source were out of order. Because of legibility and other issues, I found the correct pagination a bit challenging to reconstruct, but I think I succeeded in the end. It helped that the lyrics were typically Bible verses, which once deciphered made it possible to link the shuffled pages together.
5. In "*Et Vitam*" (#2), the note values shown in the handwritten source material often did not accurately correspond to the 3:2 time signature. I had to make a few changes for transcription purposes, which may or may not reflect the composer's intent. I therefore suggest this particular piece should be performed rather freely in terms of actual note durations, at the discretion of the conductor.

6. *“Hic Est Filius Meus”* (#8) was written very ambiguously, using old-fashioned choral C-clefs (STAB) with initially placed indications like [sic] *“4ª baja Si”*, *“Por 4ª baja”*, *“4ª baja mi”* and *“Esta, se ejecuta como está”* over its three manuscript pages, instructing the performers to transpose some of the lines to lower fourths and leaving others as written. Certainly, transcribing the lines as written (without the indicated adjustments) produced totally incongruent results. Following the handwritten indications (literally applying them) helped, but that still left numerous inconsistencies. In the end, I chose to approach the problem iteratively, taking sections of each part based on the original pagination, adjusting each section up or down (usually by a fourth or so) until some sort of harmony was achieved between all parts, occasionally revising a few accidentals. I believe that I was ultimately able to accurately reflect the composer’s intent, but I would still encourage the conductor to consult the source material if there are any questions or concerns.
7. *“Videntibus Illis”* (#12) was actually located separately from the other motets in the journal, seemingly appended to a larger choral work entitled *“Mirabilia Testimonia Tua (Salmo Primero de Nona)”* (CPE-619). It was entitled *“Antifona (Videntibus illis)”* and appeared with both the organ *obligato* and keyboard reduction parts but was not included with the main score. From a liturgical perspective, it does not make sense to perform the choral work and the antiphon together, because the scriptural basis of the large choral work is traditionally used for a service commemorating the death of Jesus on the Cross, and the antiphon is derived from a scripture describing Christ’s ascension into heaven 40 days later. Therefore, I chose to transfer the Antiphon to this set of motets, thus creating a set of 12 motets instead of the former 11.

The lyrics only appeared in the keyboard reduction, without any corresponding SATB parts to indicate possible harmonies. The SATB parts I provide here were therefore what I surmised might have been intended based on the keyboard reduction itself.

8. I slightly reordered the twelve pieces from the sequence in which they were written in the journal to better correspond to the liturgical calendar.

These motets are to be performed *a cappella* or with a simple organ accompaniment, as indicated. I have provided piano reductions mainly for rehearsal purposes, but of course this could be used as accompaniment if so desired. Note also that the piano reduction for #12 *“Videntibus Illis”* is as provided by the composer, and perhaps should be used as accompaniment (see note 7 above).

The following table provides lyrics, English translation, source text, and liturgical occasion.

NO.	LATIN LYRICS	ENGLISH TRANSLATION	OCCASION	TEXT SOURCE
1	Et incarnatus est de Spiritu Sancto ex Maria Virgine: et homo factus est.	And was conceived by the Holy Spirit, of the Virgin Mary, and was made man.	General	Credo
2	Et vitam venturi sæculi	And the life of the world to come	General	Credo
3	Erunt signa in sole et luna et stellis et in terris pressura gentium præ confusione sonitus maris et fluctuum	There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars, and on the earth distress among nations confused by the roaring of the sea and the waves.	First Sunday of Advent	Luke 21:25
4	Adjuva nos , Deus salutaris noster, et propter gloriam nominis tui, Domine, libera nos: et propitius esto peccatis nostris, propter nomen tuum.	Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of thy name: and deliver us, and purge away our sins, for thy name's sake.	Ash Wednesday	Psalm 78:9 (Vulgate); Psalm 79:9 NRSV
5	Inter vestibulum et altare plorabunt sacerdotes, ministri Domini, et dicent: Parce, Domine, parce populo tuo	Between the vestibule and the altar let the priests, the ministers of the Lord, weep. Let them say, "Spare your people, O Lord."	Ash Wednesday	Joel 2:17
6	Ductus est Jesus in desertum a Spiritu, ut tentaretur a diabolo	Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.	1 st Sunday of Lent	Matthew 4:1
7	Cum audisset Joannes in vinculis opera Christi, mittens duos de discipulis suis ait illi: Tu es qui venturus es, an alium expectamus?	When John (the Baptist), who was in prison, heard about the deeds of the Messiah, he sent his disciples to ask him, "Are you the one who is to come, or should we expect someone else?"	2 nd Sunday of Lent	Matthew 11:2-3
8	Hic est Filius meus dilectus, in quo mihi bene complacui; ipsum audite	This is my beloved son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him.	2 nd Sunday of Lent	Matthew 17:5
9	Erat Jesus ejiciens daemonium, et illud erat mutum.	Jesus was driving out a demon, which was mute.	3 rd Sunday of Lent	Luke 11:14
10	Dicebat Jesus turbis Judaeorum et principibus sacerdotum quis ex vobis arguet me de peccato	Jesus said to the crowd of Jews and the chief priests: Can any of you prove me guilty of sin?	Passion Sunday (5 th Sunday of Lent)	John 8:46
11	Scriptum est enim: percutiam pastorem et dispergentur oves gregis	For it is written: "I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered."	Palm Sunday	Matthew 26:31
12	Videntibus illis, elevatus est	Before their very eyes, he was lifted up	Ascension Day (40 th day of Easter)	Acts 1:9