

Editor's Notes for *Letanía a 4 Voces (en Re Menor, Segovia version, CPE-556)*

The Litany, or Litany of Loreto, is used to honor Mary, the Mother of God, invoking various titles for her, reminding us of the role she plays in the Christian (especially Roman Catholic) faith. Most likely the Litany originated in or around Paris between the years 1150 and 1200. It gets its name from the Italian shrine (Loreto) where it was adopted in 1558. Pope Sixtus V approved its use in public worship in 1587. The Litany is used especially during May services, the month traditionally dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary. It is also used at Benediction, and some congregations use it in the Divine Office. The Litany is approved for public use and carries a partial indulgence.

The Litany incorporates praises addressed to Mary found extensively in the writings of the early Church Fathers of the first six centuries. Over time, a number of titles for our Lady were removed or added to the Litany. Originally, the Litany had fifteen additional titles, such as Our Lady of Humility, Mother of Mercy, Temple of the Spirit, Gate of Redemption, and Queen of Disciples. Recent history has seen the addition of five titles. The titles of the Litany which refer to the Mother of the Church, Immaculate Conception, the Assumption, the Rosary and Mary as the Queen of Peace are of relatively recent origin, and are not found in Hilarión Eslava's renditions of the prayer, the majority of which were likely composed around the mid-1800's, or earlier. The Litany concludes with the *Agnus Dei* prayer.

We believe that Eslava may have written as many as eight different settings for the Litany of Loreto, and I have transcribed many of these; see <https://musescore.com/user/29381772/sets/12714418> and/or <https://hilarioneslava.org/music/>

This Litany setting is delightfully lyrical, with a decidedly Spanish flavor to it. Digital images of the source manuscript were provided to us courtesy of the Cathedral of Segovia, Spain. We are especially indebted to Fr. José Antonio García Ramírez and to Mr. Bonifacio Bartolomé, at the Cathedral Archive, and to the Cathedral Chapter for their generosity and labor.

Upon initial examination, the piece seemed very similar to a version I have previously transcribed compiled from two different sources, which may be found as CPE-558 on the hilarioneslava.org website, or <https://musescore.com/user/29381772/scores/6728087>. However, though obviously similar, this version was worthy of a separate transcription for several reasons, including:

- The manuscript consisted of a set of *particellas*, many of which, judging by their calligraphy, appear to have been written by Eslava's hand. The fact that the title "*Letanía de Eslava*" appears on all the *particellas* would furthermore indicate this is probably an early work by Hilarión Eslava when he was still spelling his surname in its Basque form, using the letter "b" in the last syllable. Our experience tells us that it is improbable that anyone else adapting an original by Eslava years later would utilize this spelling. Therefore, we believe this work to be likely his, with a high degree of certainty.
- This Litany is written in the key of D-minor, whereas other versions I have come across are in the key of F-minor. Also, there are four singing voices (SSTB), as opposed to the SSB, TTB, or STB three-voice settings we have previously encountered.
- It is fully orchestrated, and quite beautifully so.

Some observations about this specific transcription:

1. The instrumental *particellas* did include *piano* and *forte* indications as I have shown in my transcription, although not always completely or consistently. In my transcription, I have reconciled the discrepancies. That said, the singing parts did not contain much in the way of dynamics. I have added a few indications where I thought helpful. But for the most part I believe Eslava intended a fairly constant *mezzo forte* to *forte* level on the vocals. Where the instrumentals are *piano*, there is usually only one vocal part performing, so it would be appropriate to have the vocals louder at such points.
2. It was not clear whether the organ part was intended to be played *obligato* or was provided as an orchestral reduction. I felt it added some needed depth to the accompaniment, so left it audible in my synthesized rendering. It is also substantial enough to use as a reduction in the absence of other instruments, and would sound amazing on the piano as well.
3. The euphonium ("*bombardino*") part was missing four measures. I added a few notes based on what I was seeing in the similar ophicleide part. These are shown in red font.

LATIN LYRICS	ENGLISH TRANSLATION
Kyrie, eleison Christe, eleison. Christe, audi nos. Christe, exaudi nos. Pater de caelis, Deus, miserere nobis. Fili, Redemptor mundi, Deus, miserere nobis.	Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy. Christ, hear us. Christ, graciously hear us. God the Father of heaven, have mercy on us. God the Son, Redeemer of the world, have mercy on us.
Spiritus Sancte Deus, miserere nobis. Sancta Trinitas, unus Deus, miserere nobis.	God the Holy Spirit, have mercy on us. Holy Trinity, one God, have mercy on us.
Sancta Maria, ora pro nobis. (<i>repeats after each of the following phrases</i>) Sancta Dei Genetrix, Sancta Virgo virginum, Mater Christi, Mater Divinæ gratiæ, Mater purissima, Mater castissima, Mater inviolata, Mater intemerata, Mater immaculata, Mater amabilis, Mater admirabilis, Mater Creatoris, Mater Salvatoris, Virgo prudentissima, Virgo veneranda, Virgo prædicanda,	Holy Mary, pray for us. (<i>repeats after each of the following phrases</i>) Holy Mother of God, Holy Virgin of virgins, Mother of Christ, Mother of divine grace, Mother most pure, Mother most chaste, Mother inviolate, Mother undefiled, Mother most amiable, Mother most lovable, Mother most admirable, Mother of our Creator, Mother of our Savior, Virgin most prudent, Virgin most venerable, Virgin most renowned,

<p> Virgo potens, Virgo clemens, Virgo fidelis, Speculum iustitiæ, Sedes sapientiæ, Causa nostræ laetitiae, Vas spirituale, Vas honorabile, Vas insigne devotionis, Rosa mystica, Turris Davidica, Turris eburnea, Domus aurea, Foederis arca, Ianua cæli, Stella matutina, Salus infirmorum, Refugium peccatorum, Consolatrix afflictorum, Auxilium Christianorum, Regina Angelorum, Regina Patriarcharum, Regina Prophetarum, Regina Apostolorum, Regina Martyrum, Regina Confessorum, Regina Virginum, Regina Sanctorum omnium, Regina sine labe concepta, Agnus Dei qui tollis peccata mundi, Parce nobis, Domine Agnus Dei qui tollis peccata mundi, Exaudi nos, Domine Agnus Dei qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis </p>	<p> Virgin most powerful, Virgin most merciful, Virgin most faithful, Mirror of justice, Seat of wisdom, Cause of our joy, Spiritual vessel, Vessel of honor, Singular vessel of devotion, Mystical rose, Tower of David, Tower of ivory, House of gold, Ark of the covenant, Gate of heaven, Morning star, Health of the sick, Refuge of sinners, Comforter of the afflicted, Help of Christians, Queen of Angels, Queen of Patriarchs, Queen of Prophets, Queen of Apostles, Queen of Martyrs, Queen of Confessors, Queen of Virgins, Queen of all Saints, Queen conceived without sin, Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world, spare us, O Lord. Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world, graciously hear us, O Lord. Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world, have mercy on us. </p>
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