

Media vita

Edited by Jason Smart

John Sheppard (d.1558)

1 from the higher stalls *All on the beginner's side of the choir (side A)*

Me - di - a vi - ta___ Nunc di - mit - tis ser - vum tu - um, Do - mi - ne: se - cun - dum ver - bum

All on the opposite side of the choir (side B) ,

tu - um in___ pa - ce. ___ Qui - a - vi - de - runt o - cu - li me - i: sa - lu - ta - re ___

Side A ,

tu - um. ___ Quod pa - ra - sti: an - te - fa - ci - em o - mni - um po - pu - lo - rum. ___

Side B ,

Lu - men ad re - ve - la - ti - o - nem gen - ti - um: et glo - ri - am ple - bis tu - ae ___ I - sra - el. ___

Side A ,

Glo - ri - a Pa - tri et Fi - li - o: et Spi - ri - tu - i ___ San - cto. ___

Side B ,

Si - cut e - rat in prin - ci - pi - o et nunc et sem - per: et in sae - cu - la sae - cu - lo - rum. ___ A - men. ___

Treble		
Mean		
Countertenor 1		
Countertenor 2		
Tenor	[Missing]	
Bass		

Me -

11

su - - - - - mus: quem quae - ri -
mor - - - - - te su - mus: quem quae - ri - mus
quem quae - ri - mus ad - ju - to - - - - -
- mus: quem quae - ri - mus
- ri - mus ad - - - - -
quem quae - ri - mus

14

- mus ad - ju - to - - - - - rem
ad - ju - to - - - - - rem ni - si te, Do - mi -
- - - - - rem ni - si te, Do - mi - - - - -
ad - ju - to - - - - - rem
- ju - - - - - to - - - - - rem
ad - ju - to - - - - - rem ni - si te, Do - mi -

29

- ste i - ra - sce - ris.

- ra - sce - ris, ju - ste i - ra - sce - ris.

ju - - - - - ste i - -

ju - ste i - ra - sce - ris.

32

- stris ju - ste i - ra - sce - ris.

- stris ju - ste i - ra - sce - ris.

- ra - - - - - sce - - - - -

41

Musical score for measures 41-43. The score consists of six staves. The top four staves are in treble clef, and the bottom two are in bass clef. The key signature has two sharps (F# and C#). The lyrics are: De - - - - -

B

44

Musical score for measures 44-46, marked with a 'B' section. The score consists of six staves. The top four staves are in treble clef, and the bottom two are in bass clef. The key signature has two sharps (F# and C#). The lyrics are: us, san - - - - -
us, san - - - - -
us, san - - - - -
us, san - - - - -
us, san - - - - - cte
us, san - - - - -

47

Musical score for measures 47-49. The score is written for a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The vocal line consists of five staves, with lyrics 'cte For' appearing below the first four staves. The piano accompaniment consists of two staves. The first staff of the piano part has an '8' below it, indicating an octave. The lyrics are: 'cte For', 'cte For', 'cte For', 'cte For', and 'cte For'.

50

Musical score for measures 50-52. The score is written for a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The vocal line consists of five staves, with lyrics 'For' appearing below the first staff. The piano accompaniment consists of two staves. The first staff of the piano part has an '8' below it, indicating an octave. The lyrics are: 'For', 'For', and 'For'.

C

53

- - - - - tis, san - - - - -
 - - - - - tis, san - - - - -
 - - - - - tis, san - - - - -
 - - - - - tis, san - - - - -
 - - - - - tis, san - - - - - ctetis, san - - - - -

56

- - - - - cte et mis - se - ri - cors Sal - va - - - - -
 - - - - - cte et mis - se - ri - cors Sal - va - - - - -
 - - - - - cte et mis - se - ri - cors Sal - va - - - - -
 - - - - - cte et mis - se - ri - cors Sal - va - - - - -

65

ne tra - das

- ti ne tra - das

- ma - rae mor - - - - ti ne

- - - - - ti ne

68

- - ti ne tra - das

tra - das

[nos, ne tra - das]

tra - - - - - das

tra - das

END

71

Musical score for measures 71-73. The score consists of six staves. The top two staves are vocal lines with lyrics "nos." below them. The middle two staves are piano accompaniment. The bottom two staves are bass lines with lyrics "nos." below them. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 8/8. The music concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots.

74

Musical score for measures 74-76. The score consists of six staves. The top two staves are vocal lines with lyrics "Ne pro - i - ci - as" below them. The middle two staves are piano accompaniment. The bottom two staves are bass lines with lyrics "Ne pro - i - ci - as nos" below them. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 8/8. The music concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots.

77

— nos in tem - po-re se - ne - ctu - - - -
 nos in tem - po-re se -
 in tem - po-re se - ne - ctu - - - -

80

- - - - - tis cum de - fe - [ce] - rit, —
 - ne - ctu - - - - - tis cum de - fe - ce -
 - - - - - tis cum de - fe - ce - rit — vir -

89

Musical score for measures 89-91. It consists of six staves: two grand staves (treble and bass clef) and two vocal staves (soprano and alto clefs). The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The vocal lines contain the lyrics: "ne. - lin - quas nos, Do - mi - ne. mi - ne."

REPEAT
FROM

A TO **B**

92

Musical score for measures 92-94. It consists of six staves: two grand staves (treble and bass clef) and two vocal staves (soprano and alto clefs). The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The vocal lines contain the lyrics: "No - No - No -"

95

- li clau - de - re _____ au - res tu -
 - _____ li clau - de - re _____ au -
 - li clau - de - re _____

98

- - - as ad pre-ces no - - - -
 - res tu - - - - - as _____ ad pre - ces
 - au - res tu - - - - - as ad pre-ces no -

101

Musical score for measures 101-103. The score is in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It consists of six staves: two grand staves (treble and bass clef) and two vocal staves (soprano and alto clefs). The vocal parts have lyrics: [stras, ad pre-ces no] - - - - - no - - - - - stras, ad pre-ces no - - - - - stras, ad pre-ces no - - - - -

104

Musical score for measures 104-105. The score is in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It consists of six staves: two grand staves (treble and bass clef) and two vocal staves (soprano and alto clefs). The vocal parts have lyrics: - - - - - stras. - - - - - stras. - - - - - stras. The score includes repeat signs and arrows indicating a repeat from measure B to measure C.

REPEAT FROM **B** TO **C**

106

Qui co - gno - - - - -
Qui co - gno - - - - -
Qui co - gno - - - - -
Qui co -

109

- - - - - scis oc -
- gno - - - - -

111

- cul - ta cor - - - - - scis oc - cul - ta cor - - - - - scis oc - cul - ta cor - - - - - scis oc - cul - ta

113

- dis, par - ce pec-ca - tis no - - - - - dis, par - ce pec-ca - tis no - - - - - cor - - - - - Qui co - gno - - - - -

115

stris,
 dis, par - ce pec - ca - tis no -
 dis, par - ce pec - ca - tis no -
 scis oc - cul -

117

par - ce pec - ca - tis no -
 stris, par - ce pec - ca - tis no -
 ta cor - - - - - dis,

119

par - - - - - ce

121

stris.
stris.
stris.
stris.

— pec-ca - tis no - stris.

REPEAT
FROM **C** TO END

Translation

In the midst of life.

Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace according to thy word.
For mine eyes have seen thy salvation.
Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people.
To be a light to lighten the Gentiles and to be the glory of thy people Israel.
Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost:
As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

In the midst of life we are in death: of whom may we seek for succour, but of thee, O Lord, who for our sins art justly displeased? Yet, O Lord God most holy, O Lord most mighty, O holy and most merciful Saviour, deliver us not into the bitter pains of eternal death.

✠ Cast us not away in our old age when our strength faileth, neither forsake us, O Lord,¹
O God most holy.

✠ Shut not thy merciful ears to our prayer,
O Lord most mighty.

✠ Thou knowest, Lord, the secrets of our hearts; pardon our sins.
O holy and most merciful Saviour, deliver us not into the bitter pains of eternal death.
(All except verse 1 from the Book of Common Prayer)

Editorial Conventions

The nomenclature of the voice-parts follows the Tudor convention.

The prefatory staves at the start of the piece show the original clef, mensuration symbol and first note for each voice; the piece needed no staff signature.

Editorial accidentals are placed above the notes concerned.

Ligatures are denoted by the sign \lrcorner .

Repeat signs in the underlay have been expanded using italicised text.

Underlay between square brackets is entirely editorial.

The lost Tenor part has been restored editorially (see below) in small notation.

Source

Oxford, Christ Church, Mus. 979–83 (c.1575–1581 with later additions; lacking T).

979	(M)	no.118	at end:	m ^r iohn shepperde
980	(Ct1)	no.118	at end:	m ^r S
981	(Ct2)	no.118	at end:	m ^r shepperde
982	(Tr)	no.118	at end:	m ^r shepperde
983	(B)	no.118	index heading:	M ^r John Shepperde. [later hand]
			at head of first page:	6 parts
			at end:	S

A Note on the Music

In the pre-reformation Sarum Rite *Media vita* was the Nunc dimittis antiphon at Compline from the third Sunday in Lent to Passion Sunday. The three verses included in Sheppard's setting were sung only on the Saturdays, Sundays and feasts of nine lessons within this period.

Sheppard composed his setting around the proper plainsong which he placed in the Tenor. The Tenor partbook from the Christ Church manuscripts has long been lost and the chant is restored here from the printed Sarum antiphonal of 1519.² Sheppard's verses are free-composed, although verses 1 and 3 paraphrase the chant at the beginning. It is unlikely that a Tenor part needs to be reconstructed for any of the verses. Although a four-part ensemble of Ct Ct T B was a commonplace texture in Tudor music, it is unnecessary in the first two verses. It is impossible to construct a Tenor voice that treats the points of imitation persuasively, even allowing for Sheppard's typically flexible approach to imitation. Moreover, the spacing of the existing parts often appears to preclude a fourth voice and Sheppard's texture is complete in three parts.

The form of *Media vita* has been widely misunderstood, not least by the present editor.³ Three elements need reassessment: 1) the performance sequence; 2) the extent of the repeats after the verses; 3) the Nunc dimittis tone.

¹ Cf. *Book of Common Prayer*: 'Suffer us not, at our last hour, for any pains of death, to fall from thee.'

² *Antiphonarij ad usum Sarum volumen primum vulgo pars hyemalis nuncupata* (Paris, 1519), printed by Wolfgang Hopyl for Franz Birckman (Revised English Short Title Catalogue 15790), f.163 of the Temporale.

³ I am grateful to David Skinner for nudging me to look afresh at the form and to Magnus Williamson and, particularly, John Harper for providing primary source material and advice on its interpretation. For the solution presented here, however, I take full responsibility.

The Performance Sequence

Hitherto it has been generally assumed that the chant was performed in the order in which it is printed in the 1519 antiphonal: 1) antiphon (complete to *ne tradas nos*), 2) Nunc dimittis, 3) the three verses, each followed by a partial repeat of the antiphon. This was not the case. The written order is dictated by the format in which psalms and their antiphons are routinely presented in the Sarum antiphonal. The complete words of the psalms and canticles appear only in the psalter. The antiphons that appear with them there are set out in the way they were performed. Only the incipit of the antiphon was intoned before the psalm was sung; after the psalm the antiphon was begun a second time and sung through to the end. Elsewhere in the antiphonal the layout is different because the psalms and canticles occupy a subsidiary position to the antiphons and other chants. Only the title of the psalm or canticle is cued and these cues are placed at the end of each antiphon, under an abbreviated reminder of the psalm tone and ending to be sung. Nevertheless, the order of performance was the same as given in the psalter.⁴ The chant for *Media vita* follows this convention: the canticle is cued after the antiphon in the usual way. The verses are then placed after the canticle because they were occasional additions, sung only on certain days. The layout of *Media vita* can be compared with that of the antiphon *O Rex gloriose* which replaced *Media vita* from as the Nunc dimittis antiphon from Passion Sunday to the Wednesday in Holy Week. This also had three verses and its presentation is similar.⁵ As it happens, *O rex gloriose* was also sung, without its verses, on the Feast of the Name of Jesus and in this form it looks no different to any other antiphon.⁶ That *Media vita* was sung complete after the Nunc dimittis is stated specifically, although almost in passing, in the rubrics in the printed antiphonal and in the Sarum customary Oxford, Corpus Christi College MS 44. Both sources stipulate that it was when the antiphon was re-intoned after the Nunc dimittis that the rulers of the choir were to enquire of the precentor which clerks were to sing the verses. This confirms that, on days when the verses were sung, these verses did not immediately follow the Nunc dimittis, but were sung after the antiphon. The Great Breviary of 1531 prints the text of *Media vita* in the same order found in the antiphonals.⁷ In some more modest breviaries and portiforia, however, the antiphon and its verses are printed in tandem *after* the cue for the Nunc dimittis, reflecting more closely the actual order of performance.

From all this we can conclude that the correct musical sequence is: 1) the incipit (only) of the antiphon; 2) Nunc dimittis; 3) the complete antiphon from the beginning to *Ne tradas nos*; 4) on Saturdays, Sundays and nine lessons feasts only, the three verses, each followed by a shortened repeat of the antiphon.

Repeat Scheme

In the Great Breviary of 1531 the first verse is followed by the words ‘*Sancte Deus*’, the second by ‘*Sancte fortis*’ and the third by the complete text from *Sancte et misericors Salvator* to the end of the antiphon. Visually these instructions resemble the cues found at the end of the large office responds. In their nineteenth-century edition, Procter and Wordsworth interpreted them in precisely that way, adding the missing text in brackets. Frank Harrison pointed out that this was indeed how the antiphon was performed in the Use of Hereford.⁸ The Use of Sarum, however, was different. The apparent cues in the Breviary are no such thing. They are to be interpreted literally. Conclusive proof of this is found in two Sarum Ordinals in which the first two cues, *Sancte Deus* and *Sancte fortis*, are each followed by the word *tantum* (‘only’), while the cue after the third verse, *Sancte et misericors*, is followed by the words *usque ad finem antiphonam* (‘to the end of the antiphon’).⁹ Similar instructions are found in the Clondalkin Breviary (where the first two repeats are notated in full), the Duke of Bedford’s Breviary and the Exeter Ordinal.¹⁰ These sources confirm the evidence of the Sarum ordinals: in the Use of Sarum the first two repeats consisted of the cued words alone and only the final repeat was carried through to the end of the antiphon.

The Nunc Dimittis Tone

This was sung to the simple psalm tone, not to the solemn form. The shorthand cues for the psalm tones in the Sarum antiphonals often give only the ending of the tone, but whenever they include the intonation as well they always distinguish clearly between the simple and solemn forms. These confirm that the Nunc dimittis took the simple tone.

⁴ Some scholars are of the view that on double feasts every antiphon was ‘doubled’, that is sung complete both before and after the psalm or canticle. The Sarum customary does not confirm this. In its older recension it provides merely a list of those double feasts (and it is by no means all of them) on which the Magnificat antiphon was sung in this way. The editor is not aware of any evidence that doubling was applied in the Sarum Use to antiphons other than those for the Magnificat.

⁵ *Antiphonarij ad usum Sarum* (1519), f.179^v of the temporale. *O rex gloriose* had a different scheme of repeats after the verses.

⁶ *Antiphonarij ad usum Sarum volumen secundum vulgo pars Estivalis nuncupata* (Paris, 1520), printed by Wolfgang Hopyl for Franz Birckman (Revised English Short Title Catalogue 15790a), f.75 of the sanctorale.

⁷ *Breviarium ad usum insignis ecclesiae Sarum*, ed. F. Procter and C. Wordsworth, 3 vols. (Cambridge, 1879–86), ii, col. 229. The summary cues in the Sarum ordinals Oxford, Corpus Christi College MS 44, f.44, col.2 and London, British Library, Harley MS 2911, f.37, col.2 are also in this order.

⁸ *Music in Medieval Britain*, 2nd edn. (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1963), p.60, fn.2; Walter Howard Frere and Langton E. G. Brown (eds), *The Hereford Breviary* (London: Henry Bradshaw Society, 1904), i, p.274.

⁹ Oxford, Corpus Christi College MS 44, f.44, col.2 London, British Library, Harley MS 2911, f.37, col.2.

¹⁰ Dublin, Trinity College MS 78, f.23^v; France, Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale MS Latin 17294, f.186; *Ordinale Exon*, ed. J. N. Dalton, 4 vols. (London: Henry Bradshaw Society, 1909–40), i, p.120. They also occur in an antiphonal of the Use of York: Arundel, Castle Archives, York Antiphonal, f.77. Caution is necessary when using books of Sarum Use from churches elsewhere since they may incorporate local, non-Sarum elements. For example, the use followed at Exeter Cathedral was nominally that of Sarum, but had liturgical variations peculiar to itself, but their agreement about *Media vita* is worth noting.

