

Media vita

Edited by Jason Smart

John Sheppard (d.1558)

I 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 - di - a vi - ta___ A - men.

4

vi - - - - - ta in mor - te

Me - di - a vi - - - - - ta in mor - te su -

Me - di - a vi - - - - -

- - - - - ta in mor - te su - mus, in

in mor - te su - - - - -

- di - a vi - - - - - ta in

8

su - - - - - mus, in mor - te

- - - - - mus, in

- ta in mor - te su - - - - - mus:

mor - te su - - - - -

- - - - - mus: quem quae -

mor - te su - - - - - mus:

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 -

17

ni - si te, Do - mi - ne, _____

- - - - ne, ni - si te, Do - mi - ne, _____

- - - - - - - - ne, ni - si te, Do - mi - ne? _____

ni - si te, Do - mi - - - - - - - - - -

_____ ni - - - - - si _____

- - - - - - - - ne, ni - si te, Do - mi -

20

ni - si te, Do - mi - - - - - - - - - -

_____ [ni - si te, Do - mi -

_____ Qui pro pec - ca - tis

- ne, ni - si te, Do - mi - ne? _____

te, _____ Do - mi - - - - - - - - - -

- ne? _____ Qui pro pec - ca -

23

- ne, ni - si te, Do - mi - ne? Qui pro pec - ca - tis no - - - - - ne?]

no - stris, qui pro pec - ca - tis no - - - - -

Qui

- - - - - ne? - - - - - Qui pro pec -

- tis no - - - - -

26

- stris, qui pro pec - ca - tis no -

Qui pro pec - ca - tis, qui pro pec - ca - tis no - stris ju -

- - - - - stris, qui pro pec - ca - tis no - - - - -

pro pec - ca - tis no - - - - - stris - - - - - ju - ste i -

- ca - tis no - - - - - stris - - - - -

- - - - - stris

29

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

32

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

A

35

Musical score for measures 35-37. The score is written for six staves (three vocal parts and three piano accompaniment parts). The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. A vertical dashed line separates measure 35 from measure 36. The lyrics are: San - - - - - San - - - - - San - cte De - - - - - San - - - - - cte - - - - - ris. San - - - - - cte - - - - - San - - - - -

38

Musical score for measures 38-40. The score is written for six staves (three vocal parts and three piano accompaniment parts). The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The lyrics are: - - - - - cte De - - - - - - cte De - - - - - De - - - - - De - - - - - cte De - - - - -

41

De

B

44

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 six staves. The first four staves are in treble clef, and the last two are in bass clef. The key signature is one sharp (F#). The lyrics are: "cte For - - -".

50

Musical score for measures 50-52. The score is written for six staves. The first four staves are in treble clef, and the last two are in bass clef. The key signature is one sharp (F#). The lyrics are: "For - - -".

C

53

- - tis, san - - - - -
 - - tis, san - - - - -
 8 - - tis, san - - - - -
 8 - - tis, san - - - - -
 - - tis, san - - - - - cte _____
 - - tis, san - - - - -

56

- - - - -
 - - - - - cte et mi - se - ri-cors Sal - va -
 8 - - - - - cte et mi - se - ri - cors Sal - va - - -
 8 - - - - - cte _____
 - - - - - et _____
 - - cte et mi - se - ri-cors Sal - va - - - -

65

65

- - - - -

- - - - - ti ne

8 ne tra - das

- ti ne tra - das

- ma - rae mor - - - - ti ne

- - - - - ti ne

68

68

- - ti ne tra - das

- tra - das

8 [nos, ne tra - das]

- tra - - - - - das

tra - das

END

71

nos.

nos.

nos.

nos.

nos.

nos.

74

Ne pro - i - ci - as

Ne pro - i - ci - as

Ne pro - i - ci - as nos

77

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

8 — nos in tem - po-re se -

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

80

8 - - - - - tis cum de - fe - [ce] - rit, —

8 - ne - ctu - - - - - tis cum de - fe - ce -

- - - - - tis cum de - fe - ce - rit — vir -

83

83

cum de - fe - ce - rit _____ vir - tus no - - - -

- rit _____ vir - tus no - - - - -

- tus no - - - - -

86

- - - - - stra, ne de - re - lin - quas nos, Do - mi -

- - - - - stra ne de - re - lin - quas nos, [Do - mi - ne,] ne de - re -

- - - - - stra, ne de - re - lin - quas nos, Do - - - - -

89

ne. - lin - quas nos, Do - mi - ne. mi - ne.

REPEAT FROM **A** TO **B**

92

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

- [stras, ad pre-ces no] - - - - -
 no - - - - - stras, ad pre - ces no - - - - -
 - - - - - stras, ad pre-ces no - - - - -

104

- - - - - stras.
 - - - - - stras.
 - - - - - stras.

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

111

[illegible]

113

- dis, par - ce pec-ca - tis no - - - -
 - - - - -
 - dis, par - ce pec-ca - tis no - - - -
 cor - - - - -
 8
 8
 8
 Qui co - gno - - - -

115

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

This block contains the musical notation for measures 115 and 116. It features a vocal line with lyrics and a piano accompaniment. The key signature has two sharps (F# and C#). The piano part consists of two staves, each with an 8-measure rest. The vocal line includes lyrics: 'stris,' at the end of measure 115, and 'dis, par - ce pec - ca - tis no -' at the end of measure 116. The lyrics 'dis, par - ce pec - ca - tis no -' are also present at the beginning of measure 115. The lyrics 'scis oc - cul -' are at the beginning of measure 116.

117

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

This block contains the musical notation for measures 117 and 118. It features a vocal line with lyrics and a piano accompaniment. The key signature has two sharps (F# and C#). The piano part consists of two staves, each with an 8-measure rest. The vocal line includes lyrics: 'par - ce pec - ca - tis no -' at the end of measure 117, and 'stris, par - ce pec - ca - tis no -' at the end of measure 118. The lyrics 'ta cor - dis,' are at the beginning of measure 118.

119

Musical score for measures 119-120. The score is written for a piano with eight staves. The key signature is one sharp (F#). The time signature is 3/4. The music features a complex texture with multiple voices. The lyrics "par" and "ce" are written below the staves.

par - - - - - ce

121

Musical score for measures 121-122. The score is written for a piano with eight staves. The key signature is one sharp (F#). The time signature is 3/4. The music features a complex texture with multiple voices. The lyrics "pec-ca - tis no - stris." are written below the staves.

— 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.

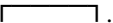
(All except verse 1 from the Book of Common Prayer)

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 .

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 words of the psalms and the 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 there 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* 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.⁷ 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.⁸ 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.⁹ 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’).¹⁰ 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.¹¹ 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

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 I am indebted to John Harper for drawing my attention to this.

⁸ *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.

⁹ *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.

¹⁰ Oxford, Corpus Christi College MS 44, f.44, col.2; London, British Library, Harley MS 2911, f.37, col.2.

¹¹ 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.

distinguish clearly between the simple and solemn forms. These confirm that the Nunc dimittis took the simple tone.

Fifteenth-century polyphonic settings of the Nunc dimittis composed for performance with the Purification antiphon *Lumen ad revelationem* suggest that the two sides of the choir alternated at every half verse. This antiphon was unusual, however, in that it was repeated after every verse of the cantic and it may have been this that prompted the half-verse antiphony. In ordinary psalmody the two sides of the choir alternated verse by verse and there is no reason to suppose that, at other times, the Nunc dimittis was any different.

Notes on the Readings of the Source

Each reference to a bar or group of bars is separated by an oblique stroke. Within these references multiple readings in the same voice are separated by a comma and readings in different voices by a semicolon. The order within each entry is: (1) bar number(s); (2) voice; (3) reading of the source (with any subsequent bar numbers in brackets). Pitches are in capital letters, preceded by a number where necessary, e.g. ¹A = first note A in the bar. Pitches quoted are those of the edition. The abbreviation ‘amb’ indicates underlay that is ambiguously positioned below the notes.

Staff signatures and accidentals


22 M # for D below G / 23 Ct2 # for A / 25 Ct1 # for ¹A / 28 M # for ¹G / 38 Tr # for ¹A / 42 Tr # for D; B new staff with # for C (= B at original pitch) begins with ²E / 49 Ct1 # for ¹D / 57 B new staff without signature begins with rest / 61 B # for ¹C / 68 B # for C / 103 Ct1 # for ¹A / 110 Tr2 # for A / 121 Tr2 # for A /

Ligatures and underlay

6–7 M -ta amb below ²A²F, *in morte su-* one note later / 10–11 B -mus quem quaerimus one note later / 12 Ct1 -juto-amb below ¹DC²B²D / 13–14 M quem quaerimus amb below ¹G¹B²BA²GFED / 14 Tr -mus below ²C / 15 M -rem amb below ²F²EDC / 21 Ct1 -ne below A (not in 19) / 27–28 Ct2 -stris juste one note earlier / 28 M -tis no- below EA, (29) -stris juste i- below AE¹G²G, (30) -rasce- below AG, -ris below ²D, (32) irasce- below D¹EF, (35) -ris below ²F / 33 Ct1 irasce- below ²E²DC, (35) -ris below A / 34 Tr -ris below ²B (not in 33), i- below ³B, (35) -rasce- below ¹CD, -ris below ²A; 34 Ct2 juste i- below ²A³D²B, (35) -rasce- below FE, -ris below C / 35 B -ris below F (not in 30) / 49 Ct1 -cte amb below ²E³D, for- below G / 64 Tr -ti mor- below CB / 67 M -te for -ti / 75 Ct1 Ct2 -ijas for -jicias / 78 B senectu- below ²DAC / 82 Ct1 -ris for -rit below ²A / 88 Ct2 nos below ²A / 97 Ct1 -re below ¹D (not in 95) / 98–99 B tu- amb below ²G¹FB³D / 111 Tr1 -ta amb below ¹D¹E, cor- below A; 111–112 M1 -ta cor-amb below D²E¹A / 112 Tr2 -ta amb below D¹E, cor- below A / 114 B -scis below C, (115) oc- below ²D, (116) -cul- below D, (118) -ta below A, (119) cordis parce below ¹BA²BC, (120) pec- below G, (121) -catis below ²GA /

Other readings

9 B ²B is a breve / 44 M ³F is a semibreve / 45 Ct1 two superfluous crotchet rests before B / 106 Tr1 ‘Gimell primis’; Tr2 ‘Gimell Secundus’; M1 M2 ‘Gimell’; Ct2 *qi cognos.* below staff; B ‘rest’ below staff /

114–115 Tr1  (perhaps the result of a momentary eye-skip to bar 118 followed by a clumsy amendment of the extra beats) /