

Nunc dimittis

Edited by Jason Smart

Christopher Tye (c.1505–1572/3)

Mean

Countertenor

Tenor

Bass

Lord, let thy ser - vant now

Lord, let thy ser - vant now de -

Detailed description: This block contains the first system of the musical score. It features four vocal parts: Mean, Countertenor, Tenor, and Bass. Each part has a prelude in C major, 4/4 time, consisting of a single half note. The main text begins with the Countertenor and Tenor parts. The Countertenor part starts with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (Bb), with lyrics 'Lord, let thy ser - vant now'. The Tenor part starts with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (Bb), with lyrics 'Lord, let thy ser - vant now de -'. The Bass part has a bass clef and a key signature of one flat (Bb). The Mean part has a bass clef and a key signature of one flat (Bb). The time signature is 4/4.

4

Lord, let thy ser - vant

de - part in

- part in

Lord, let thy ser - vant now de - part in

Detailed description: This block contains the second system of the musical score, starting at measure 4. It features four vocal parts. The lyrics are: 'Lord, let thy ser - vant' (Tenor), 'de - part in' (Countertenor), '- part in' (Tenor), and 'Lord, let thy ser - vant now de - part in' (Bass). The music continues with various note values and rests.

8

now de - part in peace

peace ac -

peace, in peace ac - cord

peace ac -

Detailed description: This block contains the third system of the musical score, starting at measure 8. It features four vocal parts. The lyrics are: 'now de - part in peace' (Tenor), 'peace ac -' (Countertenor), 'peace, in peace ac - cord' (Tenor), and 'peace ac -' (Bass). The music continues with various note values and rests.

12

ac - cord - ing to thy pro - mise.

- cord - ing to thy pro - mise, to thy pro - mise.

- ing to thy pro - mise, to thy pro - mise.

- cord - ing to thy pro - mise, to thy pro - mise. For mine

16

For mine

For mine eyes have seen the sa - vi - our

eyes have seen the sa - vi - our sent

20

For mine eyes have seen the sa - vi - our sent from

eyes have seen the sa - vi - our sent from

sent from

from

24

thee. Whom —

thee. Whom thou

thee. Whom thou hast pre - par - ed be - fore —

thee. Whom thou hast pre - par -

28

— thou hast pre - par - ed be - fore the face —

hast pre - par - ed be - fore the — face of thy —

— the face of thy — peo - - - ple,

- ed be - fore the face, be - fore the face of thy —

32

of thy peo - ple. A light to light -

— peo - ple. A light to light -

of thy peo - ple. A light to light -

— peo - ple. A light to light -

36

- en the gen - tiles, to be the glo - - ry of

- en the gen - tiles, to be the glo - ry of

- en the gen - tiles, to be the glo - ry of thy

- en the gen - tiles, to be the glo - - ry of

40

thy peo - ple of Is - ra - - - el.

thy peo - - - ple of Is - ra - - - el.

peo - ple of Is - ra - - - - - el.

thy peo - ple of Is - ra - - - - - el.

44

Glo - ry to the

Glo - ry to the Fa - ther, and

Glo - ry to the Fa - ther, and

Glo - ry to the Fa - - - ther, and to the

48

Fa - ther, and to the Son, and to the
to the Son, and to the Ho - ly
to the Son, and to the Ho - ly Ghost, the
Son, and to the Son, and to the Ho - ly

52

Ho - - - ly Ghost.
Ghost. As it was in the be - gin -
Ho - - - ly Ghost. As it was in the be -
Ghost. As it

56

As it was in the be - gin - ning, and is
- ning, and is now, and e - ver shall
- gin - - - ning, and is now, and e - ver shall
was in the be - gin - - - - - ning, and is now, and

60

now, and e - ver shall be, world with - out end, world
 with - out be, world with - out
 be, world with - out
 e - ver shall be, world with - out end, world with - out

64

with - out end. Al - way so be it,
 with - out end. Al - way so be it,
 with - out end. Al - way so be it,
 with - out end. Al - way so be it,

69

so be it.
 so be it.
 [so be it.]
 so be it.

Text

The Nunc dimittis, originally the canticle at Compline, became the second canticle at Evening Prayer in the Book of Common Prayer, 1549. Tye's text predates 1549. It has not been identified, but has similarities with a version in a Sarum primer printed by John Gough in 1536. Tye's setting, which has no accompanying Magnificat, may have been composed for the English form of Compline sung in the Chapel Royal on 11 April 1547, or for one of the vernacular services that began to be celebrated in some London churches the following year.

Editorial Conventions

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

The original clef, staff signature, mensuration symbol and first note of each part are shown on the prefatory staves.

Editorial accidentals are placed above the notes concerned and remain operative throughout the bar.

Ligatures are denoted by the sign $\overline{\quad}$.

Spelling of the text has been modernised.

Text repetition signs in the underlay have been expanded editorially in italics.

Sources

A Oxford, Bodleian Library MSS Mus Sch. e. 420–22 (the 'Wanley Partbooks', c.1548–50; lacking T).

420 (Ct) f.8^v [no attribution] at beginning: Nunc dymittis

421 (M) f.7^v [no attribution]

422 (B) f.8 [no attribution] at beginning: Nunc dimittis

B London, British Library, Add. MSS 30480–4 (the 'Hamond Partbooks', c.1570–90).

30480 (M) f.19^v at end: doctor Tye

30481 (Ct) f.21 at end: doctor Tye

30482 (T) f.18^v [no attribution]

30483 (B) f.21^v at end: doctor Tye

30484 ——— ———

Notes on the Readings of the Sources

A is the more reliable source and has been used as the copy text, although the Tenor part is necessarily from **B**. The score follows **A** in retaining the minims with fermatas at bars 14 and 33; **B** gives breves for these final chords. **B** makes no attempt to specify the underlay precisely, resulting in a high degree of ambiguity wherever there are more notes than syllables. **A** is less ambiguous, but still far from clear. These ambiguities have been resolved editorially and generally without comment, only the more significant instances being recorded below.

In the notes below, 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 commas and readings in different voices by semicolons. The order within each entry is: 1) bar number; 2) voice; 3) reading of the source. For extended references subsequent bar numbers are in brackets. Pitches are in capital letters, preceded by a number where necessary, e.g. ¹E = first note E in the bar. Note values are abbreviated in italics, e.g. *dot-sb* = dotted semibreve.

Accidentals

A 32 Ct # for A (not ♯ for B) /

B 31 M no # / 32 Ct no ♯ / 33 M ♯ for ¹E / 57 M no # /

Underlay

A 16 B *thy* for *the* / 20 Ct *thy* for *the* / 31 Ct *the* for *thy* / 40 M *the* for *thy* / 47 Ct *Son* below A / 59 B *as* for *and* / 62 Ct *be* omitted /

B This source omits all ligatures.

2 T *let* entered above erased *now* / 6 T *peace* below A (not in 9) / 6–7 Ct *peace* below CDCD (presumably intended for C in 8), (8) *in* below G / 7 B F is G / 9 M alignment of *in* ambiguous / 16 B *thy* for *the* / 17 T *my* for *mine* / 20 B *from* below G / 23 M *saver* for *saviour* / 25–27 M Ct B (but not T) *Which* for *Whom* / 31 B *all thy* below GD / 32 Ct syllables of *people* well separated, *peo-* possibly intended for D / 36–37 Ct *-ten the gen-* all one note earlier, (37) ¹C²C are one semibreve C with underlay *-tiles* / 46 Ct C is *crC crC, be to the* below DCC / 48 B no underlay repeat sign (*and to the Son* spread below BFEDFCDC in 47–49) / 58 B *-ning and* below GD, (59) *sbC* for ¹C²C, *is* below *sbC* / 58–60 Ct *shalbe* (sic) undivided below FEDC (no further underlay in 60–62) / 59 T *shalbe* (sic) undivided below CA (no *be* in 61) / 69–72 M Ct B *Amen* for *so be it* (A- on first note of 69, *-men* on last note of part); T *Amen* undivided below CCFG, *Amen* undivided below AGFEDF / 72 M *mC* omitted; B ²F omitted /

Other Readings

A 51 Ct FED are *m cr cr* (cf. **B**) /

B 1 all parts no mensuration symbol / 14 all parts last note is a *b* with fermata / 19 T ¹A is *dot-sb*, (20) ²G²G omitted / 33 all parts second note of bar is *b* with fermata / 51 Ct FED are *m cr cr* (cf. **A**), (52) *mE* is *sbE* / 57 M F is corrected *m* / 61 T *dot-sbD* for *sbD m-rest* / 67–68 M all parts *sb sb* for *be it* /