

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 -

4

Lord, let thy ser - vant

de - part in

- part in

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

8

now de - part in peace

peace ac -

peace, in peace ac - cord

peace ac -

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
 _____ 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,
 _____ end. Al - way so be it,
 _____ end. Al - way so be it,
 _____ 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. ¹G = first note G in the bar. Note values are abbreviated in italics, e.g. *dot-sb* = dotted semibreve.

Accidentals

A 32 Ct # for C (not ♯ for D) /

B 31 M no ♯ / 32 Ct no ♯ / 33 M ♯ for ¹G / 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 C / 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 C (not in 9) / 6–7 Ct *peace* below E²F² (presumably intended for E in 8), (8) *in* below B / 7 B A is B / 9 M alignment of *in* ambiguous / 16 B *thy* for *the* / 17 T *my* for *mine* / 20 B *from* below B / 23 M *saver* for *saviour* / 25–27 M Ct B (but not T) *Which* for *Whom* / 31 B *all thy* below B²F / 32 Ct syllables of *people* well separated, *peo-* possibly intended for F / 36–37 Ct *-ten the gen-* all one note earlier, (37) ¹E²E are one semibreve E with underlay *-tiles* / 46 Ct E is *crE crE, be to the* below F²E² / 48 B no underlay repeat sign (*and to the Son* spread below DAGFAEFE in 47–49) / 58 B *-ning and* below B²F, (59) *sbE* for ¹E²E, *is* below *sbE* / 58–60 Ct *shalbe* (sic) undivided below AGFE (no further underlay in 60–62) / 59 T *shalbe* (sic) undivided below EC (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 EEAB, *Amen* undivided below CBAGFA / 72 M *mE* omitted; B ²A omitted /

Other Readings

A 51 Ct AGF 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 ¹C is *dot-sb*, (20) ²B²A omitted / 33 all parts second note of bar is *b* with fermata / 51 Ct AGF are *m cr cr* (cf. **A**), (52) *mG* is *sbG* / 57 M A is corrected *m* / 61 T *dot-sbF* for *sbF m-rest* / 67–68 M all parts *sb sb* for *be it* /