Magnificat

Edited by Jason Smart

Anon. (c.1503)

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Qui a resext humilitatem ancilae suae:
ecce enim ex hoc beatam me dicent omnes generatones.
Et misericordia eius a progenie in progenies: timentiibus eum.

Feicit potentiam in brachium in brachium.
Deposuit potentias de sede: et exaltavit humiles.
Suscepit Israel puerum suum:

recordatus misericordiae suae.
Gloria Patri et Filio: et Spiritu Sancto.
185

| 189 |

| 192 |
Nunc et sem-

Nunc et sem-

Et per:

In saecula

In [saecula] sae-

Et in saecula
Editorial Conventions

The nomenclature of the voice-parts follows the period practice of the time.

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

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

Redundant accidentals are retained in the score.

Ligatures are denoted by the sign ( ), coloration by the sign ( ).

Underlay between square brackets is entirely editorial.

Final notes before double bars have been standardised without comment.

The plainsong verses have been supplied editorially. The polyphony does not display any indisputable plainsong tone or faburden. (At this early date the latter would be the expected choice.) When tones or faburdens were incorporated in settings such as this their first and last notes always determined the chords on which the polyphonic verses began and ended. Chords at mid-verse pauses often conformed too, but by no means always and in the present setting these are so variable as to be of no help in determining the tone. The tonal structure of the verses suggests that the plainsong verses should be sung to tone 6, or to one of the endings in tone 1 or tone 7 that end on the same note as that on which the intonation begins. Tone 7 has been chosen for this edition.

Source


The source is a manuscript choirbook that most likely belonged to the Scottish Chapel Royal. It contains masses, Magnificats and votive antiphons, including all the known works of the Scottish composer Robert Carvor and the mass ‘L’homme armé’ by Guillaume Du Fay. These are the only composers named in the manuscript, but other sources have enabled the identification of works by Cornysh, Fayrfax, Lambe and Nesbet. These English works are thought to have arrived in Scotland in 1503 along with King Henry VII’s daughter, Margaret Tudor, who married James IV of Scotland in that year. Some of the anonymous works closely associated with them in the choirbook are also likely to be English, but the present work, the second of four anonymous Magnificats in the book, has voice ranges more typical of Scottish than of English church music of the sixteenth century.

Notes on the Readings of the Source

The source contains many uncorrected errors in the notation. The underlay also has errors. In bars 173–184 logic demands that both the Countertenor and Tenor should sing only the word Sicut, the Countertenor continuing with erat in principio when the Mean and Bass enter. However these latter words are underlaid too early in the Countertenor part. Similarly, in bars 192–200 the Tenor should clearly carry the same text as the Bass. Instead the scribe wrote the words just sung by the other three voices: in principio. He followed this with et nunc, but then corrected the second word to in. He also omitted est in the Countertenor at bar 49 and saecula at bars 201–202. In general, the words are not underlaid with any precision. At bar 161 the homophonic chords are obviously intended to carry the words et semini, but the text placing does not coincide with the notation. This seems true of the underlay elsewhere in the piece, the placing of many syllables being singularly unconvincing. The inescapable conclusion is that the precise matching of words to notes was left to the performers. Consequently the placing of the underlay in the edition is substantially editorial. On the whole it has been assumed that syllables generally appear somewhere near the notes to which they were sung, but there are exceptions. The main variants from the edition are noted below but many minor adjustments have not been not recorded. The underlay is best assessed by consulting the digital images of the source on www.diamm.ac.uk.

In the notes below each reference is separated by an oblique stroke. Within these references multiple readings are separated by a comma. The order within each entry is: (1) bar number(s); (2) voice(s); (3) reading of the source with subsequent bar numbers for extended readings in brackets. Voice names are abbreviated. Pitches are in capital letters, preceded by a number if necessary, e.g. 1G = first note G in the bar. Note values are abbreviated: cr = crotchet m = minim, q = quaver, sq = semiquaver.

Mensuration and Proportions Signs

65 all parts mensuration sign 4 at start of bar / 59–60 M1 M2 Ct proportion sign 3 before first colored note / 85–86 Ct B proportion sign 3 before first colored note / 141 all parts mensuration sign O at start of bar /
Accidental and Clefs
34 Ct ‡ for B / 37 Ct clef C2 before A, staff signature ‡s for upper & lower B / 39 M1 ‡ for F / 57 Ct clef C3 with staff signature ‡ for B before 1D / 82 Ct clef C2 with staff signature ‡s for upper and lower B before F / 141 Ct new line in source with staff signature ‡ for lower B only begins with C / 148 Ct new line in source with staff signature ‡s for upper and lower B begins with 3D /

Underlay

Pitches and Note Values
23 T rest omitted / 41 M2 qF is corrected qE / 69 M ligature mF mg for FE²G / 70 B G is F / 106 T1 ¹A is B / 136 B G is F / 153 Ct ²D omitted / 159 M G is F / 171 M sq sq are q q / 191 Ct A is B / 185 M ²C is corrected q / 190 B D is C / 192 M fermata for G / 203 Ct F is q / 204 T D is E / 212 M mF is cr /