

Notes from the editor:

Born in the first decade of the sixteenth century, Thomas Tallis began his musical career as a member of Catholic music establishments, the first documentary evidence of his service dating from ca. 1530. Unfortunately for Tallis, the Anglican Reformation instituted by Henry VIII began to take hold in the mid-1530's leading to the dissolution of Catholic abbeys and monasteries throughout England. Henry's creation of the Church of England dates from this same period, culminating in the Acts of Succession (1534) and the gradual rise of Thomas Cranmer, appointed Archbishop of Canterbury in 1532. Cranmer's agenda included the establishment of a completely English service, with the Humanist notion that musical settings should be syllabic ("for ev'ry syllable, one note"). This political-religious revolution certainly affected Tallis' compositional output; he being one of the first English composers of note to produce a substantive body of English sacred music. The "Dorian Service", once thought to date from the reign of Henry's son, Edward VI (1547–1553), is now regarded as a likely product of the post-Catholic interregnum (1553–58). Tallis became a Gentleman of the Chapel Royal, a position he retained for the remainder of his life, as early as the end of Henry VIII's reign.

Tallis' musical setting of the *Magnificat* from the "Dorian Service" exemplified Cranmer's edict, setting the canticle's text with remarkable economy. As the name of the service implies, this canticle was composed in the Dorian mode (with a partial signature); its scoring for four voices in this mode necessitated an upward transposition in order to make it suitable for modern SATB choirs. This edition is in E Dorian, although raising it another half-step to F Dorian is certainly possible. The simple, declamatory style belies Tallis' considerable melodic and contrapuntal mastery. Though originally in *tactus alla breve* (2/2) throughout (without barlines), the combination of text stress and homophonic style led the editor to an unprecedented use of variable meter designed to mirror the text accent present in the majority of the voices. Accordingly, the content of successive measure changes and the "downbeat" generally retains that modern implication of accent. The value of the quarter note remains constant throughout. That is, meter change does not indicate any proportional relationship. By this means, the editor has sought to retain the larger shape and fluidity of Tallis' musical phrases.

There are a number of stylistic features that are unique to music of this time. Among the most obvious is the antique text. For those desirous of a more modern text, it has been accommodated with editorial modernizations in parentheses. It is the preference of the editor, however, that Tallis' original words and the sometimes awkward way in which they are set rhythmically be retained as an essential aspect of the historical style of the composition. Another idiosyncrasy is Tallis' use of successive cross relations such as those that occur in measures 14, 30 and 41. While not as striking as the simultaneous cross relationships found in Tallis' Latin church music, these are an essential aspect of his harmonic style and should be retained. Although the keyboard part is labeled *for rehearsal only*, numerous contemporary sources include an organ part that doubles the voices.

– Chester L. Alwes

Magnificat from the “Dorian Service”

SATB *a cappella*

Luke 1:46-55, alt.

Thomas Tallis (c.1505–1585)

edited by Chester L. Alwes

$\text{♩} = 76$
mf

My soul doth mag-ni - fy the Lord. And my spir - it hath re -
(has re -

mf

My soul doth mag-ni - fy the Lord. And my spir - it hath re -
(has re -

mf

My soul doth mag-ni - fy the Lord. And my spir - it hath re -
(has re -

mf

My soul doth mag-ni - fy the Lord. And— my spir - it hath re -
(has re -

$\text{♩} = 76$
mf
(for rehearsal only)

Duration: 2:30

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5

joice - ed in God my Sav - ior. For He hath re - (has)

joice - ed in God my Sav - ior. For He hath re - (has)

joice - ed in God my Sav - ior. For He hath re - (has)

joice - ed in God my Sav - ior. For He hath re - (has)

mp

mp

mp

mp

8

gard - ed the low - li-ness of His hand-maid - en: for be - hold, —

gard - ed the low - li-ness of His hand-maid - en: for be - hold, —

gard - ed the low - li-ness of His hand-maid - en: for be - hold, —

gard - ed the low - li-ness of His hand-maid - en: for be - hold, —

mp

3

3

3

3

12

from hence - forth all gen-er - a - tions shall call me

from hence - forth all gen-er - a - tions shall call me

from hence - forth all gen-er - a - tions shall call me

from hence - forth all gen-er - a - tions shall call me

15

bless - ed. For He that is might - y hath mag - ni-fied me; and

bless - ed. For He that is might - y hath mag - ni-fied me; and

bless - ed. For He that is might - y hath mag - ni-fied me; and

bless - ed. For He that is might - y hath mag - ni-fied me; and

19

ho - ly is His name. And His mer - cy is on them that (who)

ho - ly is His name. And His mer - cy is on them that (who)

ho - ly is His name. And His mer - cy is on them that (who)

ho - ly is His name. And His mer - cy is on them that (who)

mp

23

fear Him through-out all gen-er - a - tions. He hath show - ed (has shown)

fear Him through-out all gen-er - a - tions. He hath show - ed (has shown)

fear Him through-out all gen-er - a - tions. He hath show - ed (has shown)

fear Him through-out all gen-er - a - tions. He hath show - ed (has shown)

f

27

strength with His arm; He hath scat-tered the
(has scat-tered)

strength with His arm; He hath scat-tered the
(has scat-tered)

strength with His arm; He hath scat-tered the
(has scat-tered)

strength with His arm; He hath scat-tered the
(has scat-tered)

30

proud in the im-ag-i-na-tion of their hearts. He

proud in the im-ag-i-na-tion of their hearts. He

proud in the im-ag-i-na-tion of their hearts. He

proud in the im-ag-i-na-tion of their hearts. He