

O crux splendidior

Transcribed and edited by Bert Schreuder

Original clefs: C1, C3, C3, C4, C4, F4.

Further notes at the end of the pdf.

Nicolas Gombert (1495-1560)

$\text{♩} = 45$

Cantus
O crux, spen-di - di - or, (splen-di -

Altus
O crux, splen - di - di - or, (splen - di -

Quinta

Tenor

Sexta
O crux, splen-di - di -

Bassus

Detailed description: This system contains the first five staves of the musical score. The Cantus part begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one flat (B-flat), and a common time signature. The tempo is marked as quarter note = 45. The lyrics are 'O crux, spen-di - di - or, (splen-di -'. The Altus part uses a soprano clef (C3) and has lyrics 'O crux, splen - di - di - or, (splen - di -'. The Quinta, Tenor, and Bassus parts are currently silent, indicated by horizontal lines with bar lines.

6

Cant
di - or) cun-ctis as -

A
- di - or) cun-ctis as - - -

5
O crux, splen - di - di - or

T

6
or cun - ctis as - -

B
O crux, splen -

Detailed description: This system contains the next five staves. The Cantus part continues with lyrics 'di - or) cun-ctis as -'. The Alto part has lyrics '- di - or) cun-ctis as - - -'. The Quintus part has lyrics 'O crux, splen - di - di - or'. The Tenor part is silent. The Sextus part has lyrics 'or cun - ctis as - -'. The Bassus part has lyrics 'O crux, splen -'. The system number '6' is written above the first staff.

10

Cant

tris, (as - - -

A

tris, mun-

5

cun-ctis as - - - tris mun - do

T

O crux, splen - di - di - or

6

(tris, cun-ctis as - tris)

B

di - di - or cun-ctis as - - -

14

Cant

tris,) mun - do ce - le - bris,

A

- do ce - le - bris, (ce - le - bris,) ce - le -

5

ce - le - bris mun-

T

cun - tis as - - - tris,

6

mun - do ce - le -

B

tris, mun - do ce - le - bris, (ce -

18

Cant
mun - do ce - le - - - - - bris, (mun -

A
bris, mun - do ce -

5
- do ce - le - - - - - bris, mun -

T
mun - do ce - le - bris, (mun - do ce -

6
- - - - - bris mun - do

B
le - bris.)

22

Cant
do ce - le - - - - - bris,)

A
le - bris, ho - mi - ni - bus mul - tum a -

5
- do ce - le - - (bris, ce - le - - - - - bris,)

T
- - - - - le - bris,) ho - mi - ni - bus

6
ce - le - bris, ho - mi - ni bus mul - tum a - ma -

B
mun - do ce - le - - - - - bris,

26

Cant

ho-mi - ni - bus mul -

A

8

- ma - bi - lis, a - ma - bi -

5

8

ho - mi - ni - bus mul - tum a -

T

8

mul - tum a - ma - bi - lis,

6

8

- bi - lis, a - ma - bi - lis,

B

ho - mi - ni - bus mul - tum, ho - mi - ni - bus mul -

30

Cant

tum, ho-mi-ni - bus mul - tum a - ma-bi-lis, san - cti -

A

8

lis, san - cti-or u-ni -

5

8

- ma - (bi-lis, a - ma - bi - lis,) san -

T

8

san - cti - or u-ni - ver - sis,

6

8

san - cti - or u-ni-ver - sis, (u-ni - ver - sis,)

B

tum a - ma - bi - lis, san - cti - or u-ni -

35

Cant
 or u - ni - ver - sis, san - cti - or u - ni - ver -
 A
 ver - sis, (u - ni - ver - sis,) san - cti - or u - ni -
 5
 - cti - or u - ni - ver - sis, (u - ni - ver - sis,) u - ni - ver - sis,
 T
 san - cti - or u - ni - ver - sis, u -
 6
 san - cti - or u - ni - ver - sis, (u -
 B
 ver - sis, u - ni - ver - sis, u - ni - ver - sis,

40

Cant
 sis, san - cti - or u - ni - ver -
 A
 ver - sis, u - ni - ver - sis:
 5
 u - ni - ver - sis: quae so - la di - gna
 T
 ni - ver - sis, (u - ni - ver - sis:) quae so - la
 6
 ni - ver - sis:) quae so - la di - gna fu -
 B
 u - ni - ver - sis:

44

Cant

sis: quae so - la di - gna fu - - i -

A

8 quae so - la di - gna fu - i - sti

5

8 fu - i - - sti, quae so - la di - gna fu -

T

8 di - gna, quae so - la di - gna fu - i - sti,

6

8 i - sti, quae so - la di - gna fu -

B

8 quae so - la di - gna fu - i - sti, quae so - la di - gna fu -

49

Cant

sti por - ta - re sa - lu - tem mun - -

A

8 por - ta - re sa - lu - tem mun - (di,

5

8 i - - - sti por -

T

8 quae so - la di - gna fu - i - sti,

6

8 - i - sti por - ta -

B

8 i - sti, quae so - la di - gna fu - i - sti por - ta - re sa -

53

Cant

di, por - ta - re

A

mun - - - di,)

5

ta - re sa - lu - tem mun - di, por - ta - re sa -

T

por - ta - re sa - lu - tem mun - di, por -

6

re sa - lu - tem mun - - - di,

B

lu - tem mun - - - di,

57

Cant

sa - lu - tem mun - - - di, sa -

A

por - ta - re sa - lu - tem mun - - - (di,

5

lu - tem mun - - -

T

ta - re sa - lu - tem mun - di,

6

por - ta - re sa - lu - tem mun -

B

(por - ta - re) sa -

61

Cant

lu - tem mun - di.

A

mun - di,) sa-lu - tem mun - di.

5

- di, por - ta - re sa - lu - tem mun - di.

T

por - ta - re sa-lu - tem mun - di, sa - lu - tem mun -

6

di, (mun - di.)

B

lu-tem mun - - (di, mun - di.)

66

Cant

O crux glo - ri - o - sa, glo - ri -

A

O crux glo - ri - o - sa, o crux glo - ri -

5

di.

T

O crux glo - ri - o - - -

6

O crux glo - ri - o -

B

O

72

Cant
o - - - - - sa, o

A
o - sa, glo - ri - o - sa,

5
O crux glo - ri - o - sa, o crux glo - ri - o -

T
sa, o crux glo - ri - o - sa, o

6
sa, glo - ri - o - sa, o crux glo -

B
crux glo - ri - o - sa, o crux glo - ri -

76

Cant
crux a - do - ran - da, a - do - ran - da,

A
o crux a - do - ran - da, o li -

5
- sa, o crux a - do - ran - da,

T
crux a - do - ran - da, o crux a - do - ran -

6
ri - o - sa, o crux a - do - ran - da, o

B
o - sa, o crux

80

Cant

o li - gnum pre - ti - o - sum,

A

gnum pre - ti - o - sum,

5

o li - gnum pre - ti - o - -

T

- - - - da, o - li - gnum pre - ti -

6

li - gnum pre - ti - o - - -

B

a - do - ran - - da, o

83

Cant

o li - gnum pre - ti - o -

A

o li - gnum pre - ti - o - sum, o li - gnum pre - ti - o -

5

- - - - sum, o li -

T

- o - - sum, o li - gnum pre - ti - o -

6

- sum, o li - gnum pre - ti - o -

B

li - gnum pre - ti - o - sum, o li - gnum pre - ti - o -

87

Cant

sum et

A

sum et ad - mi-ra-bi - le si - gnum,

5

gnum pre - ti - o - sum et ad - mi -

T

sum et

6

sum et ad - mi-ra - bi - le si-gnum, et ad -

B

- sum et ad - mi - ra-bi - le si - gnum,

91

Cant

ad - mi-ra-bi - le si - gnum, et ad - mi-ra-bi -

A

et ad - mi-ra-bi - le si -

5

ra - bi - le - si - gnum,

T

ad - mi-ra-bi - le si - gnum,

6

- mi-ra - bi - le - si - gnum, et ad - mi -

B

et ad - mi - ra-bi - le,

95

Cant

le si - gnum, et ad - mi - ra - bi - le si -

A

- - - gnum,

5

et ad - mi - ra - bi - le si -

T

et ad - mi - ra - bi - le

6

ra - bi - le si - gnum, et ad - mi - ra - bi - le si -

B

et ad - mi - ra - bi - le si -

99

Cant

- gnum, per quod et di - a - bo - lus,

A

per quod et di - a - bo - lus, per quod et di -

5

- gnum, per quod et di - a - bo -

T

si - gnum, per quod et di - a - bo - lus,

6

gnum, per quod et di - a - bo - lus, per

B

- - - gnum, per quod

103

Cant

per quod et di - a - bo - lus, per

A

a - bo-lus, per quod et di - a - bo -

5

lus est vin - ctus, per quod et di -

T

per quod et di - a - bo-lus est vin -

6

quod et di - a - bo-lus est vin - ctus,

B

et di - a - bo - lus, per quod et di - a - bo-lus est

107

Cant

quod et di - a - bo-lus est vin - ctus,

A

lus est vin - ctus, et

5

a - bo-lus est vin - ctus, (vin - ctus,)

T

- ctus, et mun - dus Chri -

6

et mun - dus Chri - sti san - gui-ne re -

B

vin - ctus, et mun - dus Chri - sti san-gui -

111

Cant et mun - dus Chri-sti san gui-ne

A mun - dus Chri - sti san - gui - ne, et mun -

5 et mun-dus Chri - sti san -

T sti san - gui-ne, et mun - dus Chri-sti

6 dem - - ptus,

B ne re - dem - ptus,

115

Cant re - dem - - - -

A dus Chri-sti san - gui - ne,

5 - gui-ne, et mun - dus Chri-sti san - gui -

T san - gui-ne re - dem - ptus, et mun -

6 et mun - dus Chri-sti san - gui-ne

B et mun - dus Chri-sti,

119

Cant

ptus, san - gui - ne re - dem - ptus. #

A

8 et mun - dus Chri - sti (san - gui - ne, san - gui -

5

8 ne re - dem - ptus, san - gui -

T

8 dus Chri - sti san - gui - ne re - dem - ptus.

6

8 re - dem - ptus, et mun - dus Chri - sti b

B

et mun - dus Chri - sti san - gui -

123

Cant

ne re - dem - ptus, (re - dem - ptus.)

A

8 ne re - dem - ptus, re - dem - ptus. b

5

8 san - gui - ne, (san - gui - ne) re - dem - ptus. b

T

8 ne re - dem - ptus, re - dem - ptus. b

6

8 ne re - dem - ptus, re - dem - ptus. b

B

ne re - dem - ptus, re - dem - ptus. b

This composition by Gombert can be found in the following sources:

Motetti del frutto a sei voci (Venice, 1539)

<https://stimmbuecher.digitale-sammlungen.de/view?id=bsb00074348>

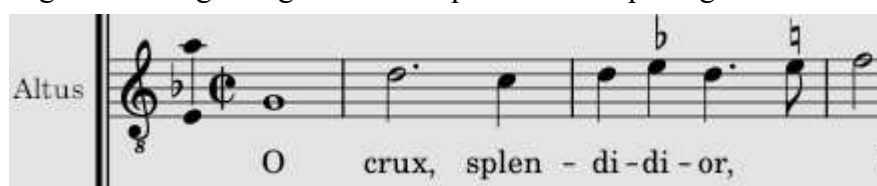
Quartus tomus evangeliorum (Nuremberg, 1555)

<https://dlib.si/details/URN:NBN:SI:DOC-3QHTBXSK>

The 1539 edition by Gardano was reprinted in 1549; I couldn't find an online facsimile of this edition.

G-dorian: E^b or E natural?

Right at the beginning an E^b is required in the opening motif:



It isn't written in the sources, but it seems quite obvious that it should be sung as a fa-super-la. The cantus and the sexta vox sing the motif on D, their B^b is given at the clefs.

For the next point on "mundo celebris" again nothing is indicated, but this time there is no reason to flatten the E's. Occasionally an E will sound together with a B^b, but that is not uncommon in this style, so no E^b's.

The next signal to flatten E's comes in bar 43 in quinta vox and Altus:



Melodically the E^b is required in these parts; for coherence it makes sense to also flatten E's in other parts. Then, in bars 47-48 the sexta vox has to sing an E^b and E-natural in the same line:



It can only be avoided by having the tenor sing E-natural in bar 47 (which sounds awful), so that the sexta vox doesn't have to start on E^b. Obviously, I opted for E^b.

Next, at "portare salutem mundi", E^b is again melodically required. But then, in bar 58, something strange happens: flattening the E in the quinta vox sounds terrible, but it is reached by an upward leap from a B^b. I see no other option but to keep the augmented fourth. As this is very rare, I find it surprising that nothing is indicated.

Another surprise: in bar 92 we find the only written E^b in the entire piece, in the sexta vox, on the word "signum". Intended as a serious signal, or just a pun? Finally, in the last five bars, E^b's are again desired/required.

Dissonance treatment

The music is quite dense, as is often the case with Gombert. On average there is a dissonant on the beat approximately every two to four bars, not counting passing notes of course, as they aren't on the beat. However, at "per quod et diabolus" in bars 101-105 there is a dissonant on every beat.

Undoubtedly intentional, to make it sound more diabolical.

Leading-notes have been suggested at cadences, some of them causing clashes.

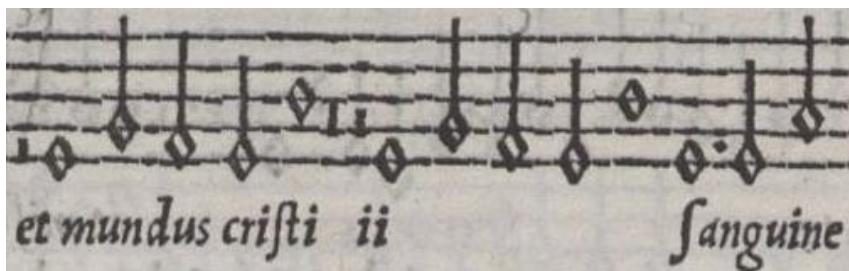
Text underlay

This always requires some speculation in music from this period. One decision I took from the start: the final syllable of a melodic line will generally be placed under the last note of that line. Most of the time, this is not the case in the sources: the final word is complete, followed by blank space with a lot of notes above it. Sometimes so many, that you look for an opportunity to repeat (part of) the text, even when there is no *ii*-repetition sign. In this edition a text-repeat without any indication in the source is in parenthesis. Text in italics means my underlay is different from that in the source.

And then there's the issue of accentuation: which syllable should be stressed. At the end of the piece there is the sentence "et mundus Christi sanguine redemptus.":



At first, the most logical underlay in all the parts seemed to be: "et mu-undus Chri...", with the "Chri-" on the top-note. However, the bass-part changed that view:



Inevitably, the "sti" comes on the top-note. In French pronunciation of Latin in this period this may have sounded natural. But Gardano was a Venetian publisher, so I wonder what Italian singers would have

made of this. For coherence I applied the same accentuation in the other parts.

Remarkable detail, unrelated to anything mentioned above: the repeated "universis" motif in sexta vox and bassus in bars 39-42 is the same as "ut moriar" from bars 45-50 of "Lugebat David Absalon", also by Gombert.

Bert Schreuder