Te Deum

Edited by Jason Smart

Organ verses: John Blitheman (c.1525–1591) Choral verses: John Taverner (c.1495–1545)















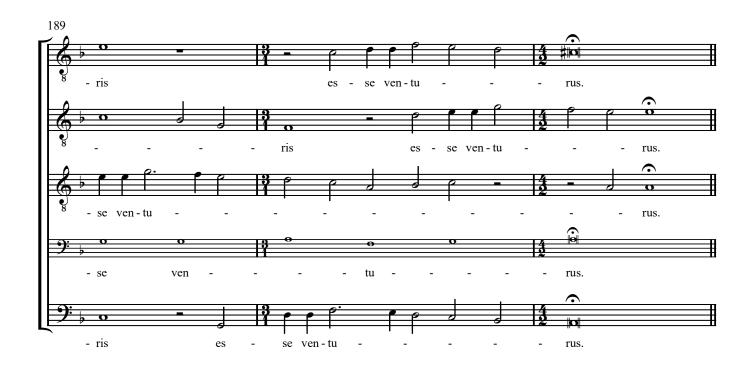






















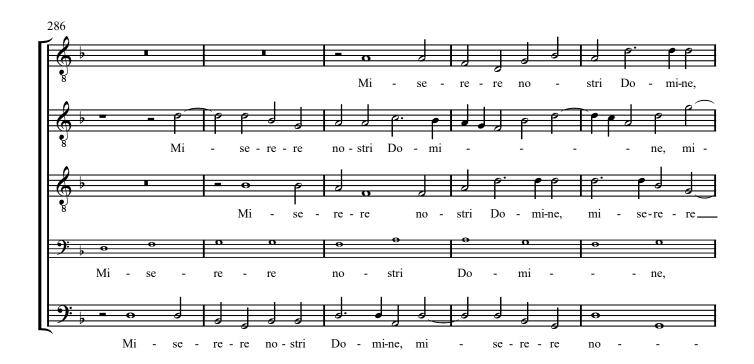


















Liturgical Function

In the pre-Reformation Use of Sarum, Te Deum was classed as a psalm rather than a hymn. It was sung at the end of Matins on Sundays and most feasts, but never during Advent and Lent. It was also sung at the coronation of monarchs and was regularly commanded to be sung on occasions of public rejoicing.

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 at the start of the piece. Subsequent changes of mensuration are shown above the staff.

Editorial accidentals are placed above or below the notes concerned.

Redundant accidentals are retained in the score if useful for clarification; otherwise they are relegated to the Notes on the Readings of the Sources below.

Ligatures are denoted by the sign

Underlay between square brackets is editorial.

Spelling of the text has been modernised.

The lost Tenor part in Taverner's setting has been supplied from the plainsong source cited below, except at bars 95–106 where it has been reconstructed editorially.¹

Dotted ties in the organ verses are editorial.

Sources

Choral polyphony: Oxford, Christ Church MSS 979-83 (c.1575–1581 with later additions).

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979
        (Tr)
                No.26
                          at end:
                                        mr: iohn: tavernar:
980
                No.26
                                        mr: john: tavernar:
        (M)
                          at end:
981
        (Ct)
                                        m<sup>r</sup>: iohn: tavernar: homo: memorabilis:
               No.26
                          at end:
982
983
        (B)
                No.26
                          in index:
                                        mr: tavernar:
                          at end:
                                        tavernar:
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Organ polyphony: London, British Library, Add. MS 30513, f.71^v.

f.71 v at beginning: Te deum at end: m^{r} blytheman

The opening intonation is taken from Antiphonarij ad usum Sarum volumen secundum vulgo pars Estivalis nuncupata (Paris: Wolfgang Hopyl for Franz Birckman, 1520), f.20^v of the psalter.

Notes on the Readings of the Sources

The pairing here of Taverner's Te Deum with Blitheman's is entirely editorial; we have no evidence that the two were ever so combined in the sixteenth century. The sources in which they survive are unrelated and neither contains clues about how the alternatim verses were performed. Nevertheless, it seems certain that Tudor alternatim settings combined choral and organ polyphony in the way presented here. Moreover, from 1556 a John Blitheman, possibly the composer, sang intermittently at Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford, where Taverner had been *informator choristarum* from 1526–30, so the pairing of the two settings during the reign of Mary Tudor is not completely unthinkable.

The unique source of Taverner's Te Deum was copied by an Elizabethan scribe who is known to have edited the underlay of the music he copied, particularly by introducing repeats of the text to break melismas. In doing so he was not overly concerned with correct word accentuation, so where a composer's own accentuation is sound, a badly accented text repeat is very likely to be the scribe's handiwork. In the present piece, Taverner's own accentuation is occasionally wayward, making scribal edits harder to pinpoint. For this edition a few such repeats have been suppressed and relegated to the notes below, but most have been allowed to stand.

The scribe made little attempt to align syllables precisely with specific notes, leaving this task to the singers. Significant ambiguities of underlay are noted below, but very many minor ones are resolved tacitly.

In the verse *Et laudamus* the omission of the words *in saeculum* after *nomen tuum* appears to be Taverner's—which is strange since they were apparently retained in the cantus firmus (at bars 125–126).

The scribe appears to have provided fewer accidentals than was his norm, no doubt reflecting the state of his source. Our ears at least seem to demand many more flattened Es than he gives. The question of editorial subsemitones ('raised leading notes') is more thorny. To raise such notes in this piece at all systematically raises the

¹ On the alteration to the end of the verse *Tu Patris sempiternus* and similar subsequent verses, which derives from the practice of faburden, and on the transposition of the plainsong in the verses *Aeterna fac*, *Salvum fac*, *Et rege eos* and *In te*, *Domine*, see John Caldwell, 'The 'Te Deum' in late medieval England', *Early Music* vi/2 (April 1978), pp.188–194.

already dissonant counterpoint to a level of abrasiveness that would be unusual even in an Elizabethan composition, let alone one from, presumably, the second quarter of the sixteenth century. The notion that there was a convention of systematically raising the leading notes in earlier Tudor music is not as secure as often thought and it may be that composers did not expect consistency in this matter. No raised leading notes have been suggested in this edition, but a modest provision by performers would not be inappropriate.

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 a comma and readings in different voices by a semicolon. The order within each entry is: (1) bar number(s); (2) voice; (3) reading of the source (with any subsequent bar numbers in brackets). Pitches are in capital letters, preceded by a number where necessary, e.g. $^3D = \text{third}$ note D in the bar (or group of bars) under reference. The sign + denotes a tie.

Taverner's Choral Polyphony

Accidentals

38 B b for B / 89 B b for B / 139 Ct2 b for B / 144 Ct2 # for C / 242 B b for B / 266 B b for B / 317 B b for B / 327 B b for B / 328 Ct3 \$\mathbf{f}\$ for E / 335 Ct1 \$\mathbf{f}\$ for E /

Underlay

14–15 Ct1 -tur venera- below FC+CBG / 33–34 Ct2 seraphin undivided below ³DDBGD / 71 Ct1 -sus below A / 75 Ct3 -rus cho- below FC / 87–88 B Martyrum undivided below ED+DBC / 89 Ct1 slur for E¹D / 93–95 Ct2 exercitus undivided below EDBF+FD / 107–108 Ct1 immensae undivided below ²ED+DCAGF; Ct3 immensae undivided below GG+GFGD; B immensae undivided below BADGB / 112–113 B majestatis undivided below FCDBCA / 130 Ct3 -tum below C, (131) Spiritu (sic) undivided below ¹CADC / 142–143 Ct3 sempiternus undivided below DDFED / 162 Ct3 -cto below G (not in 163), underlay repetition sign below A; B mor- below ²G (not in 163) / 168–169 B credentibus undivided below BEEDG / 191 Ct2 -ris for -rus / 213–214 Ct1 fac cum sanctis all one note later, (214–215) tuis undivided below A+AGFE / 212–218 B cum sanctis tuis in gloria numera- all one note later / 214 Ct2 -is below ²A but intended position ambiguous / 242–243 Ct1 extolle undivided below ²GBAGF, il- below E, (245) —os usque below AFF, (246) in below A, aeter- undivided below GFED / 268–269 Ct2 saeculum undivided below D+DCB / 270–271 Ct1 saeculi undivided below FEDC (but underlay in Ct2 clear) / 288–289 Ct2 Domine undivided below CBAGF (no -ne in 290) / 290 B -stri below G, (291–295) miserere nostri, miserere nostri, one syllable per note / 318–320 Ct2 confundar undivided below ABGFGA, (321–322) non confundar below BCED / 328 Ct1 -num below G, (330) in aeter- below FGABC / 330 Ct2 -num below C, (331–332) in aeter- below FGB /

Other Readings

109–111 Ct1 DCBAB for BAGFG / 111 Ct2 minim rest is semibreve rest / 146 Ct3 A is F / 167 Ct3 G is A / 245 B $^1\mathrm{F}$ is G / 248 Ct1 C is minim / 291 B CB for BC / 324 Ct1 B is C / 336–338 Ct1 DFGAFA are FABCAC / 337 Ct2 D is C /

Blitheman's Organ Polyphony

RH = right-hand staff, LH = left-hand staff.

Staff Signatures and Accidentals

Other Readings

1 vertically in left-hand margin before staves



18 RH $\,^{\dagger}$ is letter f / 19 RH $\,^{\dagger}$ for B / 50 RH $\,^2$ F is G; LH D duplicated in RH / 115 RH minim E on same stem as C, but smaller (apparently a corrected error) / 133 RH proportion sign $\,^{\circ}$ above rest / 147 LH proportion sign $\,^{\circ}$ before rest / 206–207 RH F to end of 207 a third too high / 223 RH G omitted / 227 RH BG for GF; LF G is F / 233 RH $\,^{\circ}$ C omitted / 234 LH B omitted / 250 RH proportion sign $\,^{\circ}$ above rest / 257 LH proportion sign $\,^{\circ}$ 32. below F / 273 LH no proportion sign / 274 RH new line begins with $\,^{\circ}$ B, clef C3 / 283 new line begins at start of bar; RH clef C1 / 307 RH new line with clef C2 begins with $\,^{\circ}$ B

² Paul Doe, 'Another View of Musica Ficta in Tudor Music', *Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association* 98 (1971–2), pp.113–122.