

# O sing unto the Lord

Edited and completed by Jason Smart

John Sheppard (d.1558)

Treble

Mean

Countertenor 1

Countertenor 2

Tenor

Bass

Organ  
(for  
comparison  
only)

Musical score for the first system of 'O sing unto the Lord'. It features six staves: Treble, Mean, Countertenor 1, Countertenor 2, Tenor, and Bass. The organ part is shown in a separate system below. The lyrics are: O sing unto the Lord.

5

Musical score for the second system of 'O sing unto the Lord'. It features six staves: Treble, Mean, Countertenor 1, Countertenor 2, Tenor, and Bass. The organ part is shown in a separate system below. The lyrics are: un - to the Lord a new song: let Lord, un - to the Lord a new song: let the con - gre - ga - ti - on of a new song, a new song: let the con - gre - ga - ti -

10

— the con - gre - ga - ti - on of saints praise — him.  
 saints praise — him, praise — him.  
 — on of saints praise him, praise him, praise him, let —  
 let —  
 let —  
 Base

14

— the con - gre - ga - ti - on of saints praise him.  
 — the con - gre - ga - ti - on of saints praise — him.  
 — the con - gre - ga - ti - on of saints praise — him.  
 — the con - gre - ga - ti - on of saints praise him.

19

Let Is - ra - el re - joice in him that made him:

Let Is - ra - el re - joice in him that made

Let Is - ra - el re - joice in him that made him, let

Let

Let

Let

Counter  
Medio Chori

23

and let the

him: and let the

Is - ra - el re - joice in him that made him: and let the

Is - ra - el re - joice in him that made him: and let the

Is - ra - el re - joice in him that made him: and let the

Is - ra - el re - joice in him that made him: and let the

Counter  
Medio Chori



38

For the Lord hath plea - sure in his

For the Lord hath plea - sure in his\_

un - to him with tab - ret and harp.

- to\_ him with tab - ret and harp. For the\_ Lord hath plea - sure in his

un - to him with tab - ret and harp.

un - to him with tab - ret and harp.

43

peo - ple: and help -

peo - ple: and help -

For\_ the Lord hath plea - sure in\_ his peo - ple: and help -

peo - ple, for\_ the Lord hath plea - sure in his peo - ple: and help -

For\_ the Lord hath plea - sure in his peo - ple: and help -

For\_ the Lord hath plea - sure in his peo - ple: and help -

For\_ the Lord hath plea - sure in his peo - ple: and help -

48

- eth the meek heart-ed. Let the saints be joy - ful with to -  
 - eth the meek heart-ed. Let the saints be joy - ful with glo -  
 - eth the meek heart-ed. Let the saints be joy - ful with glo - - -  
 - eth the meek heart-ed. Let the saints be joy - ful with glo -  
 - eth the meek heart-ed. Let the saints be joy - ful with glo - - -  
 - eth the meek heart-ed. Let the saints be joy - ful with glo -

53

- ry: let them re - jice in their  
 - - ry: let them re - jice in their  
 - ry: let them re - jice in their beds, let them re - jice in their  
 - ry: let them re - jice in their beds, let them re - jice in their  
 - ry: let them re - jice in their beds, let them re - jice in their  
 - ry: let them re - jice in their beds, let them re - jice in their

58

beds. Let the prais - es of God be in their\_ mouth:

beds. Let the prais - es of God be in their\_ mouth: and\_

beds. Let the prais - es of God be in their\_ mouth: and a two

beds.

beds.

beds.

62

and\_ a two edg - ed sword in their hands;

\_ a two edg - ed sword\_ in\_ their\_ hands;

edg - ed sword in\_ their hands, in their\_ hands; To be a - ven -

Base  
to be avenged

67

- ged on the\_ hea - then: and to re - buke the

- ged on the hea - then: and to re - buke the\_

- ged on the hea - then: and to re - buke, and to re - buke the

- ged on the hea - then: and to re - buke the\_

71

To bind\_ their kings in chains: and their no - bles

To bind\_ their kings in chains: and their

peo - ple;

peo - ple; To bind\_ their kings in chains: and their no - bles with links\_

peo - ple;

peo - ple;

76

with links of i - ron.

no - bles with links of i - ron.

That they may be a - ven - ged of

of i - ron. That they may be a - ven - ged of

That they may be a - ven - ged of

That they may be a - ven - ged of

The piano accompaniment consists of two staves, with the right hand playing a melody of eighth and quarter notes, and the left hand providing a harmonic accompaniment with chords and single notes.

81

them, as it is writ - ten: Such ho - nour have all

them as it is writ - ten: Such ho - nour have all his

them, as it is writ - - - ten: Such ho - nour have all

them, as it is writ - ten: Such ho - nour have all his

The piano accompaniment continues with a similar texture to the previous page, supporting the vocal lines with a steady harmonic accompaniment.



94

Ghost; As it was in the be - gin - ning, as it was in

Ghost; As it was in the be - gin - ning, as it was in the be -

Ghost; As it was in the be - gin - ning, as it was in the be - gin - ning,

Ghost; As it was in the be - gin - ning,

Ghost; As it was in the be - gin - ning, and is now, as it

Ghost; As it was in the be - gin - ning, as it was in the be -

99

the be - gin - ning, and is now, and ev -

- gin - ning, and is now, and ev - er shall be, and ev - er

and ev - er shall be,

and is now, and ev - er shall be

was in the be - gin - ning, and is now, and ev - er shall be world

- gin - ning, and is now, and ev - er shall be world with-out

103

- er shall be, and ev - er shall be world with - out end, with -  
 shall be, and ev - er shall be world with-out end.  
 and ev - er shall be, and ev - er shall  
 world with-out end, and ev - er shall be world with -  
 with - out end, and ev - er shall be world with - out  
 end, world with - out end, world

107

- out end. A - - - - - men.  
 A - - - - - men.  
 be world with - out end. A - - - - - men.  
 - out end. A - - - - - men.  
 end. A - - - - - men.  
 with - out end. A - - - - - men.

## Editorial Method

The nomenclature of the voice parts follows the Tudor convention.

For the extant voice and the organ part the original clefs, staff signature and first note are shown on the prefatory staves at the beginning of the piece. The other five voices have been constructed editorially using the organ part.

A transcription of the organ part from source **B** below is provided for comparative purposes only, preserving the layout, stem directions and text cues of the original. Where modern convention dictates, tied notes in this source have been tacitly transcribed as a single note of equivalent duration.

Editorial accidentals are placed above the notes concerned.

The sign  $\square$  denotes a ligature.

## Sources

**A** Oxford, Bodleian Library MS. Mus. Sch. e. 423 (c.1575–1586; Ct2 only).

(Ct2)	f.11	page header:	vj voc	Contratenor
		at beginning:	M <sup>r</sup> Tallis	
		at end:	M <sup>r</sup> Tallis	

**B** Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Tenbury 791 (the ‘Batten Organ Book’; c.1630; organ only).

(organ)	f.446 <sup>v</sup>	title:	Medio Chori	O singe unto y <sup>e</sup> Lord a new songe	Shephard
		header on f.447 <sup>v</sup> :	O sing unto y <sup>e</sup> Lord a new song: for Trebles:	Shephard	
		at end:	m <sup>r</sup> Shephard:		

A setting of *O sing unto the Lord* attributed to Sheppard in York Minster MS M 29 (S) p.4 is a different work, a setting of psalm 98.

## A Note on the Reconstruction

On stylistic grounds there can be little doubt that the attribution to Sheppard is correct.

Annotations in the sources tell us that this setting of psalm 149 is for six voices, is ‘for Trebles’ and utilises groups of voices ‘*in medio chori*’, a term that apparently refers to a texture featuring ensembles of a few voices (probably soloists) singing counterpoint that is self-sufficient without accompaniment. In Sheppard’s day six-part music for Trebles was most commonly scored for Tr M Ct Ct T B and there is no reason to suppose that this anthem was an exception. Only one vocal part survives, a Countertenor, but we also possess an organ part that supplies the Treble and Bass and occasionally some of the inner voices. This organ part was copied around eighty years after the anthem was composed and is unlikely to have been part of Sheppard’s conception. It is clear that the vocal texture consisted of short dialogues between a trio of high voices (Tr M Ct) and a quartet of low voices (Ct Ct T B), punctuated by passages for the full choir. Such high–low dialogues had previously been exploited by Taverner in his votive antiphons *Mater Christi sanctissima* and *O Christe Jesu pastor bone*, and Sheppard himself made use of the technique in his *Inclina Domine* I. For the high trios the organ part always gives the Treble and Countertenor parts and sometimes all three. Curiously (and unhelpfully), when the low-pitched quartet sings the organist’s right hand does not follow the customary practice of playing the highest sounding part, but slavishly follows the extant Second Countertenor, probably because the scribe saw no point in attempting to untangle two voices that would typically involve much interweaving and crossing. Fortunately it is evident that the upper and lower groups often answer each other with musically related phrases, so that, in the quartet sections, some of the First Countertenor can be recovered with reasonable confidence by imitating the Treble part an octave lower. Taking the organ part at face value, these correspondences imply that Sheppard wrote consecutive fifths in bar 84. The two sources also produce explicit consecutive octaves in bar 50. These consecutives are accepted in the edition. In the full sections the organ part mostly supplies only the Treble and Bass so it is here that the reconstruction of the Mean, First Countertenor and Tenor parts is at its most speculative.

## Notes on the Readings of the Sources

The organ part uses three clef combinations: G2 + C3 when the trio of upper voices is singing, C2 + C5 when the lower voices answer and G2 + C5 for the full sections. There are a couple of minor exceptions to this norm, but it has not been felt necessary to record the clef changes below.

The references below are listed by source and are at the pitch of the edition. Each reference is separated by an oblique stroke.

**A** 10 Ct2: B is corrected minim / 22 Ct2: semibreve rest omitted / 29 Ct2: ♯ for G / 38 Ct2: -to perhaps intended for G / 54 Ct2: ♯ for G / 71 Ct2: ♯ for first C / 75–76 Ct2: the two tied Ds are a minim only (i.e. dot of addition omitted) / 79 Ct2: F is corrected minim, ♯ for G / 96 Ct2: ♯ for first G / 105 Ct2: ♯ for G /

**B** 13 right hand: ♯ for second A / 27 left hand: rest omitted / 36 right hand: rest omitted / 58 right hand: no fermata for first B / 77 left hand: ♯ for both first and second G / 85 right hand: no fermata for second A / 88 left hand: rest omitted /