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THE SERVICES OF JOHN BLOW

Some aspects of late 17th-century

English liturgical music

by Watkins Shaw

John Blow (1649-1708) cultivated the composition of service music more than any of the composers with whom he was chiefly associated. In a short life, his gifted fellow-chorister Pelham Humfrey (1647-1674) wrote a single Morning, Communion, and Evening Service; but in view of his proclivities one cannot suppose that if he had lived longer he would have been attracted to this type of work. William Turner (1651-1740), who joined Humfrey and Blow in their curious adolescent 'Club' Anthem, wrote two, a Morning, Communion, and Evening Service in A, and a Morning and Evening Service in E minor, but neither achieved much currency even in his own day. Michael Wise (c1648-87) contributed a Morning, Communion, and Evening Service in D minor, Communion Services in E minor and F minor, and an Evening Service in E flat. Blow's famous pupil, Henry Purcell, apart from the much slighter and (as I judge) earlier Evening Service in G minor, no doubt considered his duty well fulfilled by his Complete Service in B flat — that is if we set aside the orchestral setting of *Te Deum* and *Jubilate* composed, as we shall see, for an exceptional purpose.

The list below indicates the scope of Blow's relatively extended *oeuvre* in this form. His Service in A and the greater part of the services in G and in E minor became such a staple in the repertory that in 1760-73, virtually a century after their composition, Boyce included them in his celebrated published anthology, providing both the common-time and the triple-time G major settings of the Responses to the Commandments and the Creed. This was not so much evidence of Boyce's personal choice (though he must have approved) as of his view of what customers would most likely want. Thus, of the ten composers of services in his anthology, nine contributed one each while Blow contributed three. To us, with the benefit of a higher vantage point, this may seem a distortion of the field. Nevertheless, that was how it was seen after the middle of the 18th century. A hundred years later still these works of Blow had been displaced — by new works, not revivals of pre-Civil War exemplars.

It was left to Sir Sydney Nicholson and Dr Heathcote Statham in 1922 and 1926 respectively to revive the evening canticles of the Services in F major and D minor, works which belonged to quite a different group from those given by Boyce and which had apparently been almost completely forgotten since Blow's death.

Before discussing them from a musical point of view one may note that Blow's settings illustrate certain liturgical trends of his time. The Prayer Book of Edward VI (1549) had prescribed Benedicite for Lenten use in place of Te Deum, while all Prayer Books from 1552 treated the two as general alternatives to each other. Nevertheless there is no musical setting of Benedicite by a pre-Civil War composer. After the Restoration of 1660 it evidently came into a certain limited use, and there are settings by Aldrich, Blow, Child, Purcell, and Tucker. Child's career began before the Civil War, but the conclusion must be that he wrote this in later life. The Prayer Books of 1552 and later provided Psalms 100, 98, and 67 as alternatives respectively to Benedictus Dominus, Magnificat, and Nunc Dimittis; but these, too, were not in favour for musical settings until after 1660, when Jubilate overtook Benedictus in use, and Psalms 98 and 67 were not infrequently set, as illustrated in Blow's output. As to the Communion Service, though Tallis had furnished a model by setting the Responses to the Commandments, the Creed, Sanctus, and Gloria in excelsis, it did not become an established practice to use the choir in more than the ante-Communion Service. But after the Restoration we find settings of Sanctus and Gloria in excelsis by Aldrich, Child, and Humfrey besides two by Blow. It is significant that this music survives only in manuscripts which have a definite Chapel Royal connection (except that, not unexpectedly, two scores of Aldrich's setting are in the library of Christ Church, Oxford). For example, surviving copies of the alto and tenor parts of Blow's Service in G used at Westminster Abbey in his lifetime do not contain those movements. It therefore appears that in these settings we have evidence of a distinctively Chapel Royal use in the reign of Charles II.

Like all those of his contemporaries, Blow's services, with one exception presently to be discussed, employ the technique of the full anthem, that is to say without 'verses' for a single voice (though including ensembles of solo voices), and accompanied by the organ only, not on the basis of a true *basso continuo* but of a *basso seguente* duplicating the lowest prevailing voice part. At first thought it seems strange that a newer style of music combined with the resources and stimulus of the Chapel Royal under Charles II should not have produced a form of service music akin to the verse anthem with

strings, leading eventually to the emergence of liturgical settings after the manner of an anthem like Purcell's *O sing unto the Lord*. As it was, nothing in this direction was done, not even on the lines of a verse anthem with organ only, until Purcell produced his D major setting of Te Deum and Jubilate for soloists, chorus, strings, trumpets, and organ for a service in St Bride's, Fleet Street, on the morning of St Cecilia's Day. Blow's similar work in the same key followed in 1695 for a like occasion. But these were quite outside ordinary usage, even in the Chapel Royal, which in any event had given up the use of instruments other than the organ by that time.

The reason lies in the strength of a conservative view of the style and function of musical settings of the liturgy. If we put to one side Byrd's 'Great' Service (which stands alone, part of no group), the repertory of services as they had developed by the time the Prayer Book was abrogated by the Long Parliament in 1645 may broadly be classified as follows. First there was the pure 'short service' form as defined in the archetype by Tallis and adorned by Byrd, based on the principle of one note only to a syllable, no repetition of words, and all voices singing the same syllable at the same time as each other (in fact a form of chant), making a feature of passing alternate verses or clauses from one side of the choir to another. With some departures too slight to constitute a separate category this was maintained in later examples by Bevin, Richard Farrant, Morley, Stogers, Weelkes, and others. Next is a very substantial group in what, for want of a better term, may be called relaxed short service form. This permitted the use — but not pervasively — of short imitative and polyphonic passages with the limited word repetition involved and an equally limited application of two, three, or four notes to a syllable. There is a variable degree of relaxation in this group, but Gibbons's Service in F represents the classic balance. Lastly there was the verse service using solos or duets in diversification of passages for full choir. The solos and duets were accompanied by an obbligato part for organ which made a polyphonic texture with the voices. These solos and duets indulged a little in verbal repetition for the sake of musical design, but the nature of the texture itself ensured the clarity of words dear to reforming principles. In passages for full choir composers rarely departed from what was compatible with the 'relaxed' short service style, Tomkins perhaps pushing it to its limit as with his repetition of the words 'all generations' or 'and the rich he hath sent empty away' three, four, or five times in each voice in his Fifth Service. In all types, brevity of treatment of each clause was paramount.

When, following the Restoration of 1660, music from the historic repertory was gathered together for choir use, it is significant that no examples of the verse service were revived. Up to a point that may have been because of difficulty in recovery — for example, Weelkes's Service 'in medio chori' and Hooper's Evening Service for Verses, though in any event both of those must have been for some special occasion rather than general use. But there would have been no such difficulty about the verse services of Byrd and Gibbons, both easily accessible in Barnard's *First Book of Selected Church Musick*, copies of which survived the Commonwealth and Protectorate. Nor were any but the more straightforward of Tomkins's services brought back into use even though they were all published as part of his *Musica Deo sacra* in 1668. This exclusion must have been deliberate. Again, along with the stricter examples of the short service — Tallis, Byrd, Bevin — it was the more conservative of the 'relaxed' examples that found favour. And from Child, a composer who lived to bridge the break in church music, it was the more sober of his work that was continued in use. When Blow was a Chapel Royal chorister, and when as an adolescent he was taking his prentice steps as a composer, there was no lack of models from Elizabethan, Jacobean, and early Carolingian times. But they all conformed to this more conservative style and he was surrounded by the attitude to the liturgy which this choice reflected.

E. H. Fellowes (*English Cathedral Music*, 1941, p.119; 1969, pp. 116-17) suggested that this was attributable to a Puritan influence in the English church in the years after 1660. This may well be so. But as an aside it is worth noting that as late as 1860 and afterwards Sir Frederick Ouseley, himself no Puritan and possessed of an exceptional musical mind, deliberately preferred for actual liturgical use such sober things as the plain short services by Aldrich, Kempton, and Rogers, though he knew verse services by Gibbons and others. This shows how the view taken in the late 17th century made a long-lasting imprint on English church music.

Be this matter as it may, the character of the service music written at this time declares sufficiently in itself how composers adopted a respectful attitude, resulting in a good deal of inhibition. Overmuch deference is paid, one feels, to the syllabic note-against-note principle, and the requirement not to develop any clause in a musical way. Thus too often texture is undistinguished, rhythmic patterns are inflexible, and an aggregation of short sections results in over-frequent perfect cadences. And under such conditions response to the verbal text can hardly be other than non-committal, as we notice at the

great metaphysical utterances in Te Deum and the Creed. Madrigal influence does however persist at words and phrases like 'put down', 'rose again', 'the round world', 'together', and so on. Both Blow and Purcell each furnish an amusing instance of 'eye music' (the appearance of the notation, not the sound, providing the illustration) by writing a chord whose every note requires a sharp at 'sharpness of death'.* Yet these are but cold matters.

Comparison with contemporary anthems shows how the adoption of such a style for services can only have been deliberate. That a cultivated man of taste like Aldrich, knowing something of Palestrina's music, should write a penny-plain thing like his Service in G is enough to show how this class of music was advisedly thought of. It cannot have been any lack of ability to respond emotionally which held back men capable of producing Humfrey's *Hymn to God the Father*, or Blow's *Salvator mundi*. We miss the intensity of Purcell's *Remember not, Lord, our offences*, or the joy of the singing of birds and the colour in the passage about the voice of the turtle in *My beloved spake*. With all its craftsmanship and several deft touches, one does not really warm to 'Purcell in B flat'. That both Blow and Purcell took occasion to introduce canons into their services (G major and B flat respectively) tells us, I think, that they saw such compositions in a somewhat statuesque light rather than as a field for lively imagination. And the clear distinction drawn between service and anthem is sharply revealed by a comparison of Humfrey's setting of Psalm 100 in his Service in E minor with his anthem to the same text, particularly its solo declamation. Any critique of the service music of this period must take these things into account, whatever other features might seem faulty.

Turning now specifically to Blow's music we can discern two main groups. The principal substance of the services in A major, E minor, and G major, all written within the term of a few years in the early 1670s, forms the first. It was immediately put into use in the Chapel Royal, of which Blow became a Gentleman and also Master of the Children in 1674. Instead of the traditional practice of allotting verses or half verses to each side of the choir in antiphony, these settings obtain relief from the full choir by 'verses' (i.e., ensembles, chiefly trios, of solo voices) frequently contrasting a high group (SSA) with a low one (ATB), and they also vary the metre by changing from the primary common-time measure to triple time. At this date, such a

*To explain this, it should be understood that at this period the present day sign for a natural had not come into use. To cancel a flat, a sharp was used. Hence, in his Service in B flat, when Purcell wrote the triad of E major, his notation was E sharp, G sharp, B sharp.

change implied also a change of tempo, one bar of triple time (say three minims) being equal to two minims of 4-2 time. These features are found also in Humfrey's Service in E minor and to some extent in the work of Child.

It would be kind to suppose that Blow's Service in E minor was quite early. To have chosen such a key for the praising and magnifying called for in Benedicite hardly seems apt. The fancy crosses one's mind that (allowing for duplication of Jubilate) Blow's initial purpose might have been to complete Humfrey's work in that key by setting the alternative canticles at Morning and Evening Prayer. The problems confronting anyone attempting to compose Benedicite in conformity with the stricter principles of short service style are only too evident, with monotony or restlessness as Scylla and Charybdis. At a somewhat later date Purcell brilliantly outflanks them in his Service in B flat by disposing his forces in terraces of strength and of colour: the full choir; antiphony between each side of the choir; verse trios for upper voices contrasted with lower voices. In these ways, as well as by taking advantage of the change from common time to triple time and by contrasting note-against-note sections with passages of more serious part-writing, his inventiveness finds relief from the straitjacket of the canticle itself. But Blow does not rise to the occasion. He merely plods along in restricted patterns of triple time, relieved only by the ambiguity between one bar of three semibreves and two bars of three minims each. There are too many stretches in homophonic style with frequent perfect cadences. It is not until the 12th verse that he provides any relief from triple time, to which he reverts for verses 18-20 and 25 to the end. There are some antiphonal high and low verse trios but the syllabic note-against-note treatment is maintained to the point of monotony, even in the Gloria where a bit of polyphony might have been looked for. Nor is the melodic or harmonic content other than commonplace.

Almost immediately he added a Te Deum setting, making his work more frequently useful. Here, as in most movements in this group of works, he again seeks variety and relief by the methods outlined, as well as by very brief, stiffly unfolding imitative passages. Typical passages are illustrated in Example 1. The unfortunate result is restless, emphasising only too strongly the sectional construction. Jubilate is singularly uneventful. But somehow in the Evening canticles the composer's invention quickens, and for the first time in this service we strike any phrases which have some note of conviction. (Example 2) But settings of Psalms 98 and 67 in service form are of no practical value today.

The A major service, though no masterpiece and using the same methods, is a shade more dignified, while the choice of key provides more resonance. Blow tends to regard it as a sort of mixolydian aspect of D major, so that the keys of D and G are much in evidence and the apposition of G sharp and G natural makes an astringent feature. But an almost total absence of any striking turn of phrase emphasises the more the irritating effect of firm rhythmic and harmonic closes at each and every verse end, especially in Te Deum and the Creed. Jubilate is particularly hampered by the constraint of short service style. Perhaps if the composer's approach had been a little less serious and there had been rather more in the style of Example 3, the result might have been something, if not deep, at least graceful. What distinguishes the service is the way the composer seized the opportunity for rotund, resonant polyphony at the end of the Creed and, even better, of Deus Misereatur. (Example 4) Here the character is somewhat unexpected in an English composer of about 1674. Apparently it was some years later that he added a Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis in this key; but the text of these, in the form of an organ outline score only, is incomplete.

It would seem that it was to the Service in G that Blow devoted most thought. As we have seen, it includes alternative forms of the Communion Service, both with Sanctus and Gloria in excelsis. One of its features is that Te Deum, both settings of Sanctus and Gloria, Magnificat, and Nunc Dimittis all begin with virtually the same harmonic progression — an unconscious echo of the mediaeval practice of using a headpiece. It is here that Blow introduces those canons to which reference has been made. Two occur in Jubilate, the first for the first half of verse 3 (4-in-2; the pairs are ST and AB), the second for the Gloria (4-in-1). Two more respectively constitute the Gloria to Magnificat (3-in-1, SAT) and Nunc Dimittis (2-in-1, SA). That to the Gloria of Jubilate is found on the composer's memorial in the north choir aisle of Westminster Abbey, and was quoted approvingly by Purcell in the 12th edition of John Playford's *Introduction to the Skill of Musick* (1694) as being 'enough to recommend him [Blow] for one of the greatest masters in the world'. But canonic merits do not redeem this setting of Jubilate as a whole, nor is there much of quality or interest in Te Deum or the common-time setting of the Creed. Sanctus and Gloria in excelsis are unpretentiously dignified and suited to their brief function.

Here we turn aside for a momentary peep at the work of a Chapel Royal musician of the period. For purposes of accompanying at the organ it was the practice to use a short score on two staves providing a

skeleton of the music in the form of the prevailing highest and lowest parts together with one or two chords here and there more or less in full, a very sparse scattering of figures to the bass, a few notes to indicate an inner vocal entry after some rests, and verbal cues from time to time. More often than not organists constructed these for themselves, presumably because they needed some discretion, rather than leave the task to the copyists of the vocal parts. For this common-time setting by Blow of Sanctus and Gloria in excelsis there survives such an organ score in the hand of Henry Purcell, written either after he had become one of the Chapel organists, or (more probably, in view of the unformed state of the hand) at Blow's instance during that interim apprenticeship period when Purcell was his pupil.

The triple-time Communion Service is an oddity. Byrd's early example, delightfully entitled 'Master Bird's Three Minnoms', did not determine any convention, and it remained the regular thing that services should be governed overall, or at least primarily, by a common-time signature. In any event, Byrd was dealing only with Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis. As it is, the choice of metre in 'Dr Blow's Tripla Creed' seems inappropriate for the solemn Nicaean affirmation of faith. It is unrelieved by any temporary change to common time. An inelastic phrase structure and limited rhythmic patterns (dotted crotchet, quaver, crotchet; minim, crotchet; crotchet, minim; dotted quaver, semiquaver, crotchet, crotchet) make for irritation. The most that can be said is that there is a superficial air of bright cheerfulness about it all. Perchance it appealed to Charles II, as Pepys tells us he liked music with a straightforward rhythm.

If this is a sorry story, it is with delighted astonishment that we reach the first G major setting of Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis, and find music requiring no apology or allowances. The composer has no need to seek superficial interest by such devices as alternation of common and triple time, or ringing the changes on variously constituted verse ensembles. With homophony at a minimum, yet keeping within the accepted conventions of relaxed short service style, there is abundance of invention, at times exuberant but not unduly so, and lively texture. Though necessarily sectional in construction, this aspect intrudes itself far less, and the fact that the verse sections (save in a short passage in Nunc Dimittis) are for SATB quartet and polyphonic in style helps reduce scrappiness. Though these evening canticles do not meet with favour among choirs today I have no hesitation in considering them to be the one really satisfying example of service music of the late 17th century with some

individuality. One feels the composer was seized by the urge to go forward with his conception, not lamely to construct clause by clause.

Settings of Benedictus, Cantate Domino, and Deus Misereatur were added to this service, obviously at a later date as the rhythmic patterns show. But they are unimportant and do not seem to have been incorporated into the Chapel Royal or Westminster Abbey repertory. Perhaps Blow wrote them simply to satisfy a private wish to compose a complete service. Benedictus has a slight suggestion of the headpiece and its Gloria is a canon 2-in-1.

More intriguing as to style is the second G major setting of Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis. It survives by the narrowest of margins in one transcript only, and if it was put to practical use no evidence of this has survived. In its solitary source it is associated with the triple-time Communion Service, and Magnificat begins with the same headpiece as the first setting. Otherwise it is quite different, and unusual for its time in containing passages for solo voices with organ continuo harmony, very much in the manner of the contemporary anthem. (Example 5) Is this a sign that Blow was seeking here to escape from some of the conventions surrounding the service? If so, he did not follow it up. Another feature of this setting is an eight-bar passage in six-part homophony for solo voices at the words 'and to be the glory of thy people Israel'.

Further signs that Blow may have been wanting to cast off some shackles are found in his Service in C, which belongs to neither of the two major groups. It is almost certainly much later than those already discussed. Unfortunately we have to rely for its complete text on a transcript made by a far from satisfactory scribe, Charles Badham, who became a minor canon of St Paul's Cathedral in 1698. But if he is reliable, we find here passages in which one voice has prominent movement against a plainer texture of harmony in the others, drawing near to a kind of solo with vocal accompaniment. In Example 6 the words in the lower voices are supplied conjecturally, Badham not having troubled to show them.

The second of our two main groups consists of the Morning and Evening Services in D minor, A minor, G minor, and F major. That in D minor, by the way, is written with an open key signature, so leading to its present day description as 'in the Dorian Mode'. Their date is not certainly known. To estimate it requires an intricate argument which is to some extent a circular one. Here it must suffice to say that I feel confident in assigning them c1700-1705. Certainly their quiet sobriety, like the group of 14 full anthems of which 'Be merciful unto me' is at present the best known and which also appear

to relate to those years, would accord with the temper of the Chapel Royal when the influence of Princess (later Queen) Anne rather than of Charles II was ascendant there. In March 1700 (New Style) Blow was appointed to a newly-instituted post of Composer to the Chapel Royal, and I fancy that these works are part of his response to that. One notices the regular choice of Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis rather than Psalms 98 and 67, and the use of Benedictus in two of them.

Blow wrote out skeleton organ parts of them at various points in an album of his own and other men's music which we know he compiled in the few years preceding 1707. This shows that they passed into practical use. The Decani alto part to all four survives among the papers of the Oxford Music School, suggesting that they may have been sung at one of its weekly meetings for music making. But for a complete score we have to rely on a beautiful neat copy made early in the 18th century by someone unknown who also made copies for himself of *Diocletian* and other music by Purcell (which latter are now Tenbury MS 1266, Bodleian Library).

Forming a singularly homogeneous group, they represent without doubt a deliberate attempt to go back to early models. There are no verse ensembles, and the classical antiphony of Decani and Cantoris is restored. All are governed by a common-time signature. Considerable stretches are in the stricter short service manner, even to the point, now and then, when Cantoris answering Decani uses the same musical material adapted as need be to other syllables. A fairly close study of later 16th- and early 17th-century settings clearly lies behind them. That is not to say Blow's work would in every respect satisfy a modern examiner seeking to test a candidate in the style of X or Y. But the general method and spirit is abundantly there, and one is constantly coming across little idioms like those in Example 7 taken from the G minor Benedictus. Blow grasped, too, that in this style common time was not intended to yield a regular once in four accent. From this point of view it is worth mentioning that he took the trouble, not professionally necessary, to write out for himself a score of the Service in G minor by Nathaniel Patrick (†1595) which is now in the library of Christ Church, Oxford (MS 761).

If, after the hints in the second setting of Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis in his Service in G and the general tendency of his music in the 1690s, shown in his Marriage Ode and orchestral Te Deum and Jubilate in D, it seems strange that at the latest stage in his composing career (assuming my dating is right) he should have assumed this style, then it must point both to some external influence and his

willing acceptance of it. For all the works are carefully crafted. Notwithstanding that, however, the plainness which they mostly evince militates against their practical revival as a group. Of this style the Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis 'in the Dorian Mode' is a sufficient and admirable example, with a judicious breaking into cross rhythm at 'for he that is mighty' and 'in the imagination of their hearts'. Nevertheless, no musician of character is likely to write as many as four services wholly under such restraint. Nor does Blow. In the Evening canticles in F major he creates a good deal more interest by the frequent and happy introduction of imitation; and the Gloria to Nunc Dimittis achieves a capital contrapuntal climax, knitting together the words 'world without end' and 'Amen', reminding us of the way he closed *Deus Misereatur* in A.

In connection with each of these four services Blow provided a single chant in the appropriate key for Venite. In Example 8 we give that in A minor in the form of today's convention, side by side with Blow's own way of presenting it in his outline organ score.

There is a puzzle connected with the performance of these pieces. All editors, including myself, have taken the view that in terms of present day pitch they are better transposed up a tone. The same view has been taken by the editors of services by Humfrey, Purcell, and Wise. But no one considers the anthems of these composers require such adjustment, and everyone seems content to sing Purcell's *Hear my prayer, O Lord* in C minor. Yet both classes of works were sung at one and the same occasion, not only in the Chapel Royal. I know of no explanation, and if anyone can solve the conundrum it would be helpful.

No such problem affects the Te Deum and Jubilate in D with orchestral accompaniment dated 1695. If to discuss this we appear to be retreating chronologically, that is because it seemed well first to complete our consideration of what Blow wrote strictly in his various capacities as a church musician. The origins of this setting are much different. From 1683 it had been the practice of a loosely organised 'Musical Society', consisting partly of professional musicians in royal employ and partly of gentlemen, to celebrate St Cecilia's Day (22 November) from time to time by means of a dinner and musical entertainment in the City of London. It was for these events that Purcell, Blow, and others wrote odes on St Cecilia's Day. In 1694 the scheme was enlarged to include a morning service at St Bride's Church, Fleet Street, for which Purcell composed his own D major Te Deum and Jubilate. This idea was maintained the following year when Blow was the composer. The practice of having such an

orchestral setting for ceremonial or festival observance of Morning Prayer was then adopted by the Festival of the Sons of the Clergy and later became the centre around which the Music Meetings of Gloucester, Hereford, and Worcester developed: But Purcell's essay was so successful that it hardly seems that Blow's ever had a second performance.

Given the same resources and the same texts, it is not surprising that the second work should be closely on the lines of the first. For what was a novel departure in English music both composers drew on their experience in writing odes for the Court and the Musical Society. It is those rather than earlier essays in what one may call pure service composition that lie behind these two compositions. What is significant to us here is that here alone, wholly outside the requirements of regular liturgical observance, and quite irrespective of whether orchestral instruments were used, did these composers feel able to express themselves, when setting these words, by employing an emotional, dramatic, colourful, and musically developed style, free from reserve.

The choice of key was determined by suitability for the natural trumpet, skill on which had only been developed in England within the preceding four or five years under the leadership of Matthew Shore, the royal trumpeter. The time had not yet come when, in setting any clause or verse, a self-sustaining musical structure would be set up to form an independent movement. Instead, though ample repetition of words might be indulged in, this was not so much for the purpose of filling a musical design as to establish mood and emotion, and was not pursued beyond that point. (This was a matter misunderstood by Boyce when he came to edit Purcell's work and thought it necessary to expand various sections to make short movements as an 18th-century composer understood things.) Within such a conception, taking advantage of the recent resource and combining trumpets with strings, Blow writes choruses in rich sonority at the obvious points. Passages for solo voices, either singly or in ensemble, match the *affekt* of other parts of the text, varying through sweet duet style, rotund arioso with violin accompaniment for solo bass (the renowned Leveridge, composer of 'The roast beef of old England'), and rhetorical declamation (see Examples 9 and 10). In a bit of later baroque-style counterpoint (Example 11) it is a matter of opinion whether the clash of the fourth bar arises from design or lack of skill in the idiom; but certainly the passionate dissonance of Example 12 is intentional. At one point Blow takes a subtly independent view of his text. Conventional practice was to start a new

passage or movement at the beginning of a verse; but when he reaches 'Govern them . . . Day by day' he runs them effectively together by setting 'Govern them' as a bass roulade and introducing the chorus at 'and lift them up', going on continuously into 'Day by day . . .'

Though it would make an interesting revival in performance, this work is significant rather for what it tells us about the composer and his period than as an enrichment of the repertory. And the meagre harvest — three settings of Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis — otherwise disclosed in this survey is disappointing. To a limited extent that may be due to the inexperience of a young composer who was probably not surrounded in early life by much bracing criticism. Nevertheless, though a maddeningly unequal composer, Blow was capable of good work, and was constantly enterprising and responsive throughout his life to new and eclectic influence. In his earliest essays in service form we are however only too conscious of restraint upon him, whatever other shortcomings there may be. As to the later essays, how striking that the man who wrote the *Te Deum* and *Jubilate* for St Cecilia's Day should, a few years later (if I am right about the date), deliberately put the clock back and adopt a *stile antico* in the four short Morning and Evening Services. We can only conclude that the hand of ecclesiastical convention as it then obtained lay heavily on him.

NOTE. The consecutive 5ths at the end of bar 4 in Ex. 9 are thus in the source text.

LIST OF SERVICES AND SOURCES (Only the leading sources, closest to Blow and his work, are cited)

Numbering of movements: 1 – Te Deum, 2 – Benedicite, 3 – Benedictus, 4 – Jubilate;
5 – Responses to the Commandments, 6 – Creed, 7 – Sanctus, 8 – Gloria in excelsis;
9 – Magnificat, 10 – Cantate Domino, 11 – Nunc Dimittis, 12 – Deus Misereatur.

KEY TO SOURCES

- A London, British Library, Add.MS 31457.
- B London, British Library, Harl.MS 7338.
- C London, British Library, Harl.MS 7339.
- D London, British Library, Harl.MS 7340.
- E London, British Library, MS leaves in Printed Book K.9.b.9.
- F London, British Library, Add.MS 31559.
- G Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum. MS 116 (Blow's organ outline score).
- H Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum. MS 117.
- J Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum. MS 152 (Purcell's organ outline score).
- K Oxford, Bodleian Library. MS Mus.Sch.c.38.
- L Oxford, Bodleian Library. MS Mus.Sch.c.42 (Single contratenor part).
- M Oxford, Christ Church Library. MS 22 (hand of Edward Lowe).
- N Oxford, Christ Church Library. MS 554 (hand of Edward Lowe).
- O Oxford, Christ Church Library. MS 780.
- P York Minster Library. M.I.S. (the 'Bing-Gostling' Part-books).

The following, though providing only fragmentary text, require mention as survivors of the part-books in use in the Chapel Royal and at Westminster Abbey during Blow's lifetime:

- X London, British Library. RM 27.a.[olim 23.m.] 1-3, 5-8 (a set of Chapel Royal part-books, contents not uniform, no Medius part).
- Y London, British Library. Add.MS 50859 (a Chapel Royal Bass part-book).
- Z(1) London, Westminster Abbey. Alto Cantoris Book No. 1a, Tenor Cantoris Book No.4.
- Z(2) London, Westminster Abbey. Tenor Decani Book No.5.

SERVICES

- C major** (*Incomplete text for Communion and Evening.*)
G: 1,4; 9,11. K: 1,4; 6.
- D major** [No.1] (*Incomplete text.*)
G: 1,4; 9,11.
- D major** [No. 2, orchestral setting]
A: 1,4.
- D minor**
F, G, L: 1,4; 9,11.
- E minor**
H, P, Z(1): 1,2,4; 5,6; 10,12. N: 2,4; 5,6; 10,12.
Y: 1,4; 5,6; 10,12. B: 10,12. M: 1.
- F major**
F, G, L: 1,3; 9,11.

- G major** (*=Triple time. †=Verse setting. *There is some instability in the versions of 7,8, likewise of 7*,8*.*)
O: 1,3,4; 5,5*,6,6*, 7,8; 9,10,11,12.
H: 1,4; 5,5*,6,6*,7,7*,8,8*; 9,11.
E: 5*, 6*, 7*, 8*; 9†, 11†/1,4; 5,6, 7,8; 9,11.
X: 1,4; 5,5*,6,6*,7,8; 9,11.
P, Y: 1,4; 5,5*,6,6*; 9,11.
Z(1): 1,4; 5,6; 9,11.
C: 1,4; 9,11.
J: 7,8.
- G minor**
F, G, L: 1,3; 9,11.
- A major** (*Incomplete text for 3,9,11.*)
G: 1,3,4; 9,10,11,12.
D, H, M, P, Y, Z(2): 1,4; 5,6; 10,12. E: 1,4; 10,12.
- A minor**
F, G, L: 1,4; 9,11.

DOUBTFUL OR SPURIOUS ATTRIBUTIONS

Responses to Commandments and Creed in G. British Library, Harl.MS 7339.
Sanctus and Gloria in excelsis in D. Numerous voice parts in Durham Cathedral. As there is no surviving setting of Responses to Commandments and Creed in this key by Blow this attribution seems questionable.

Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis in B flat. British Library, Add.MS 31457. Conjecturally attributed to Blow in British Library Catalogue but in fact by Thomas Tudway (compare Harl. MS 7341 and Add. MS 36268).

Canon from a Magnificat in D minor. British Library, Add.MS 30933 (William Flackton's Collection).

MODERN EDITIONS

- Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis in the Dorian Mode* (trans. to E minor). Church Music Society Reprints, 34.
- Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis in F* (trans. to G). Novello Early Church Music, 21.
- Evening Service in G* (trans. to A). Stainer & Bell Church Services, 302.

Ex. 1(a)

FULL (S.A.T.B.)

VERSE (S.S.B.)

Thou art the e-ver-last-ing Son of the Fa - ther. When thou tookst up -

on thee to de - li - ver man, thou didst not ab-hor the vir - gin's womb.

Ex. 1(b)

FULL

ibid.

blood. Make — them to be

blood. Make — them to be num-ber'd with thy saints in

blood. Make — them to be num-ber'd with — thy saints in glo-ry e-ver-

blood. Make — them to be num-ber'd with — thy saints in glo-

etc.

num-ber'd with — thy saints

etc.

glo - ry e-ver-last-ing.

etc.

last - ing.

etc.

- ry e-ver-last - ing.

Ex. 11 BLOW. Jubilate in D (edited from British Library Add. MS 31457)

FULL

from gen-er-a - - - - - tion

from gen-er - - - - -

- dur - eth

from gen-er - a - - -

- dur - eth

Organ

to gen-er-a - - - - - tion etc.

tion - - - to gen-er-a - - - - - tion, from gen-er- etc.

tion to gen-er-a - - - - - tion etc.

from gen-er-a - - - - - tion etc.

Ex. 12 BLOW. Te Deum in D (edited from *ibid.*)

VERSE

O Lord, have mer-cy,

O Lord, have

Organ

have mer-cy, have mer - cy up-on-us, have mer-cy,

mer-cy, have mer-cy, have mer-cy up-on-us, have

have mer-cy, have mer - cy up-on-us, etc.

mer-cy, have mer-cy, have mer-cy up-on-us, etc.