

What is our Life?

This five-part madrigal is Orlando Gibbons's setting of Sir Walter Raleigh's sonnet of the same title, a sombre lament written whilst awaiting execution in the Tower of London.

Orlando Gibbons
(1583-1625)

The First Set of Madrigals
and Mottets, 1612, no. 14)
words: Sir Walter Raleigh

Musical score for the first system of the madrigal. It features five vocal parts: Cantus, Quintus, Altus, Tenor, and Bass. The music is in a 4/4 time signature with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The lyrics are: Cantus: What is our life, our life? a play of; Quintus: What is our life? a play of pas- si - on,; Altus: What; Tenor: What is our life?; Bass: (no lyrics shown).

Musical score for the second system of the madrigal. It features six vocal parts: Soprano (S), Alto 1 (A1), Alto 2 (A2), Tenor 1 (T1), Tenor 2 (T2), and Bass (B). The lyrics are: S: pas - si - on, what is our; A1: a play of pas- si-on, what is our life,; A2: is our life? a play of pas - si - on, of pas-si-on, what is; T1: is our life? a play of pas - si - on, of pas-si-on, what is; T2: a play of pas - si - on, a play of pas-si-on, what; B: What is our life? a play of pas - si -

2

9

S life, what is our life? our life? a play

A1 what is our life, what is our life?

A2 T1 our life? a play of pas - si - on.

T2 is our life? a play of pas - si - on, what

B on, what is our life, our life? a play of

13

S of pas- si - on. Our mirth the mu- sic of di- vi - si - on, of

A1 a play of pas- si - on. Our mirth the mu - sic

A2 T1 Our mirth the mu - sic, the mu - sic of

T2 is our life? a play of pas - si - on.

B pas- si - on. Our mirth the mu - sic of di- vi - si - on, of di- vi - si - on,

16

S di - vi - si - on.

A1 of di - vi - si - on, our - mirth the mu -

A2 T1 di - vi - si - on, our mirth the mu - sic of di - vi - si - on, our

T2 Our mirth the mu - sic of di - vi - si - on, our mirth the mu -

B our mirth the mu - sic of di - vi - si - on,

18

S Our mo - thers' wombs the tir - ing - hou -

A1 sic of di - vi - si - on.

A2 T1 mirth the mu - sic of di - vi - si - on. Our mo - thers'

T2 sic of di - vi - si - on. Our mo - thers'

B Our mo - thers' wombs the tir -

20

S ses be, Where

A1 Our mo - thers' wombs the tir - ing - hou - ses

A2 T1 wombs, our mo - thers' wombs the tir - ing, the tir - ing - hou - ses

T2 wombs, our mo - thers' wombs the tir - ing - hou - ses be,

B ing - hou - ses be,

22

S we are dressed for this short co - me - dy. Heaven the ju -

A1 be, Heaven the ju - di - cious

A2 T1 be, Where we are dressed, are dressed for this short co - me -

T2 Where we are dressed for this short co - me - dy, short

B Where we are dressed, are dressed for this short co - me -

4 25

S di - cious sharp spec - ta - tor is,

A1 sharp spec - ta - tor is, heaven the ju - di - cious sharp spe -

A2 T1 dy. Heaven the ju - di - cious sharp spe - cta - tor,

T2 co - me - dy. spe - cta - tor

B dy. Heaven the ju - di - cious sharp spe - cta - tor

28

S That sits and marks still who doth act a - miss,

A1 cta - tor is, That sits and marks still who doth act a - miss,

A2 T1 spe - cta - tor is, That sits and marks, that sits and marks still

T2 is, That sits and marks, that sits and marks still

B is, That sits and marks who doth a - miss,

30

S that sits and marks still who doth act a - miss. Our

A1 that sits and marks still who doth act a - miss, still who doth act a - miss.

A2 T1 who doth act a - miss, that sits and marks, marks still who doth act a - miss.

T2 who doth act a - miss, still who doth act a - miss, that sits and marks still who doth act a - miss.

B that sits and marks still who doth act a - miss. still who doth act a - miss.

33

S graves, our graves that hide us from the

A1 Our graves that hide us from the search - ing sun, that hide us

A2 T1 Our graves that hide us from the search - ing

T2 Our graves that hide us from the search - ing sun, from the search-ing

B Our graves that hide, that hide us from the search - ing

37

S search - ing sun Are like drawn cur - tains when

A1 from the search - ing sun Are like drawn cur - tains when the play

A2 T1 sun Are like drawn cur - tains

T2 sun, the search - ing sun Are like drawn cur - tains, drawn

B sun Are like drawn cur - tains when the

40

S the play is done,

A1 is done, are like drawn cur - tains when the

A2 T1 when the play is done, when the play is done, when

T2 cur - tains when the

B play is done, when the play is done.

6
43

S
when the play is done, the play is done,

A1
play is done,

A2
T1
the play is done, is done, are like drawn cur - tains

T2
play is done, the play is done, are like drawn cur - tains

B

46

S
are like drawn cur - tains when the play is done. Thus march we,

A1
are like drawn cur - tains when the play is done. Thus

A2
T1
when the play is done, the play is done. Thus march we, play - ing,

T2
when the play is done. Thus march we, play - ing,

B
Thus march we, play - ing, to our

49

S
play - ing, thus march we, play - ing,

A1
march we, play - ing, thus march we, play - ing, thus

A2
T1
thus march we, play - ing, thus march

T2
thus march we, play - ing, thus march we, play -

B
lat - est rest, thus march we, play - ing,

51

S
thus march we, play - ing, to our lat - est rest, thus

A1
march we, play - - ing to our lat - est rest, our lat - est

A2
T1
we, play - ing, thus march we, play-

T2
ing, thus march we, play - ing, to our lat - est rest, thus

B
to our lat - est rest, our lat - est rest,

53

S
march we, play - ing, thus march we, play - ing, to our lat-

A1
rest, thus march we, play-

A2
T1
ing, thus march we, play - ing, to our lat - est rest, thus march we,

T2
march we, play - ing to our lat - est rest, thus

B
thus march we play-

55

S
est rest, thus march we, play - ing, to our

A1
thus march we, play - ing, to our lat - - est

A2
T1
play - ing, to our lat - est rest, thus

T2
march we, play - ing, thus march we, play - ing,

B
ing, thus march we, play - ing, to our lat - est rest,

57

S lat - est rest, On - ly we die, we

A1 rest, On - ly we die in ear - - nest, that's

A2 T1 march we, play - ing, to our lat - est rest, On - ly we die in ear - nest,

T2 to our lat - est rest, On - ly we

B On - - - ly we

59

S die in ear - nest, that's no jest, we die in ear - nest, that's no jest.

A1 no jest, in ear - nest, that's no jest.

A2 T1 that's no jest, we die in ear - nest, that's no jest.

T2 die, we die in ear - nest, that's no jest.

B die in ear - nest, that's no jest, no jest.