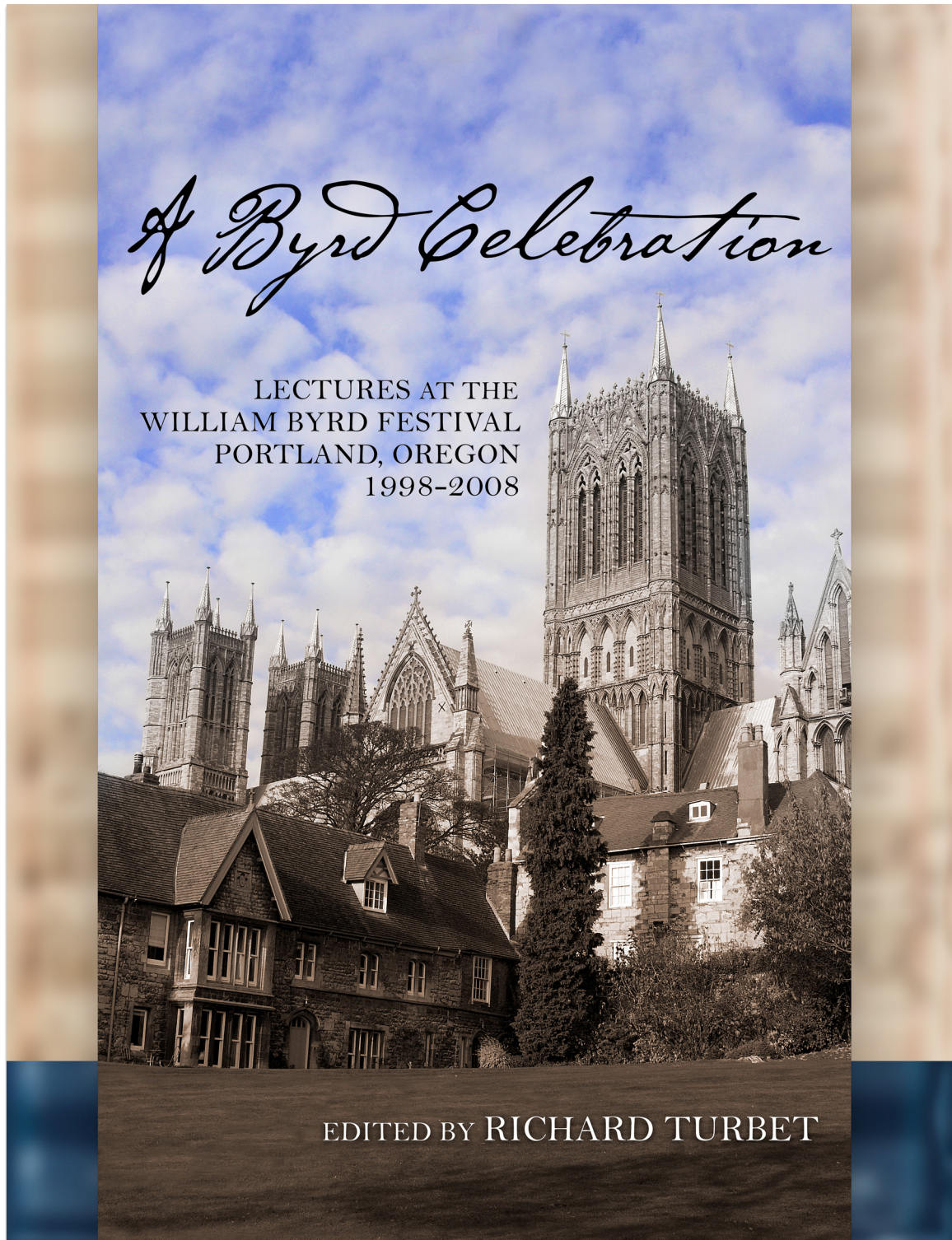


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A Byrd Celebration

LECTURES AT THE
WILLIAM BYRD FESTIVAL
PORTLAND, OREGON
1998-2008

EDITED BY RICHARD TURBET

A Byrd Celebration



William Byrd 1540-1625

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Cover picture is of the Lincoln Cathedral, England, where William Byrd was the choirmaster and organist for nine years, 1563–1572.

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PREFACE



Byrd Celebration celebrates the first ten years of the Portland William Byrd Festival.

Founded in 1998 by Dean Applegate, director of *Cantores in Ecclesia*, this festival brings together for a fortnight each summer a team of internationally renowned performers and scholars, drawn from the United States and Great Britain. In addition to concerts devoted to Byrd's sacred and secular vocal music, there are customarily two or three lectures, an organ recital, and four or more services during which the Masses for Three, Four, and Five voices—as well as the evening canticles from the Great Service—are sung liturgically.

Byrd's own situation—a staunchly Catholic composer in the Chapel Royal during the reigns of Queen Elizabeth and King James—is aptly reflected in the singing of texts in Latin and in English for both the Catholic and the Anglican rites. Aptly too, all those involved with the festival are—or have been—church musicians active in one or other of these religious traditions.

This publication includes a selection of the lectures delivered to date. The list of contributors includes the world's foremost Byrd scholars: Joseph Kerman, Philip Brett, William Mahrt, Kerry McCarthy, David Trendell, Richard Turbet.

The book also includes a catalogue of all the music so far performed at the festival, whether by soloists—such as the distinguished mezzo-soprano, Clare Wilkinson, and the keyboard virtuoso, Mark Williams—or by *Cantores in Ecclesia*. Based in Portland, formerly as the resident choir of St. Patrick's Church, this highly accomplished group concentrates on performing liturgically music by Renaissance composers at a time when this rich heritage is in danger of being lost by the Catholic Church. The choir has under its wing a children's *schola* devoted to chanting throughout the year the mass propers in plainsong. These young musicians also enhance the Masses at each Byrd Festival, singing this challenging repertoire with confidence and sensitivity.

The impressive achievements of *Cantores in Ecclesia* are due to a quiet, unassuming local church musician: Dean Applegate, organist of Holy Rosary, Portland. A graduate of Colgate-Rochester Divinity School and of Oxford University, he is not only an outstanding choral director but a leading authority on Gregorian chant. With the founding of *Cantores*, he created the cornerstone on which the Byrd Festival itself was to be founded, an initiative warmly encouraged by enthusiasts of Renaissance music both in the States and further afield. He has been ably assisted, musically and administratively, by his son, Blake. Dean Applegate's vision and dedication have seen the venture flourish beyond all expectations.

As the conductor invited to direct the choir every year, I feel not only a sense of privilege and delight but also a sense of awe and humility. Byrd is a composer of such immense stature. The more

one gets to know his music—be it motet, consort song or keyboard fantasia—the more one is astounded by his versatility and imagination, his sheer technical skill, his ability to color, project, move.

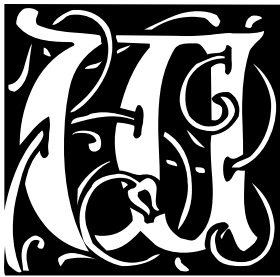
I look forward to future festivals with enthusiasm: many wonderful riches lie in store.

Richard Marlow
Trinity College
Cambridge

Biography

WILLIAM BYRD: A BRIEF BIOGRAPHY

Kerry McCarthy
Notes for the Program



William Byrd (1540–1623) was the most famous and best-loved of early English composers. His entire life was marked by contradictions; as a true Renaissance man, he did not fit easily into other people's categories. He was renowned for his light-hearted madrigals and dances, but he also published a vast, rather archaic cycle of Latin music for all the major feasts of the church calendar. He lived well into the seventeenth century without writing songs in the new Baroque fashion, but his keyboard works marked the beginning of the Baroque organ and harpsichord style. Although he was a celebrated Anglican court composer for much of his life, he spent his last years composing for the Roman liturgy, and died in relative obscurity. In the anti-Catholic frenzy following the 1605 Gunpowder Plot, some of his music was banned in England under penalty of imprisonment; some of it has been sung in English cathedrals, more or less without interruption, for the past four centuries.

Like most promising young musicians in Renaissance Europe, Byrd began his career at an early age. A recently discovered legal document shows that he was born in 1540, not in 1542/43 as previous biographers had thought. He almost certainly sang in the Chapel Royal during Mary Tudor's reign (1553–1558), "bred up to music under Thomas Tallis." This places him in the best choir in England during his impressionable teenage years, alongside the finest musicians of his day, who were brought in from all over the British Isles, from the Netherlands, even from Spain. "Bloody Mary" spent her brief reign overreacting to the excesses of Protestant austerity under her predecessor Edward VI. One of the more pleasant aspects of this was her taste for elaborate Latin church music. Byrd seems to have thrived on the exuberant, creative atmosphere: one manuscript from Queen Mary's chapel includes a musical setting of a long psalm for Vespers, with eight verses each by two well-known court composers, and four verses by the young Byrd. They must have recognized his talent and invited him to work with them as an equal.

He was eighteen years old when Mary died and the staunchly Protestant Queen Elizabeth succeeded her. The sudden change may well have driven him away from court. He

shows up again in his mid-twenties as organist and choirmaster of Lincoln Cathedral, where the clergy apparently had to reprimand him for playing at excessive length during services. After being named a Gentleman of the Chapel Royal in 1572, a well-paying job with considerable privileges attached to it, he moved back to London. He worked there as a singer, composer, and organist for more than two decades. Just after his appointment, he and Tallis obtained a joint printing license from Queen Elizabeth. He published three collections of Latin motets or *Cantiones Sacrae*, one (in 1575) with the collaboration of his teacher and two (in 1589 and 1591) by himself after the older man had died. Alongside these, he brought out two substantial anthologies of music in English, *Psalmes, Sonets and Songs* in 1588 and *Songs of Sundrie Natures* in 1589. He also wrote a large amount of Anglican church music for the Chapel Royal, including such masterpieces as the ten-voice Great Service and well-known anthems such as *Sing Joyfully*. In 1593 he moved with his family to the small village of Stondon Massey in Essex, and spent the remaining thirty years of his life there, devoting himself more and more to music for the Roman liturgy. He published his three famous settings of the Mass Ordinary between 1592 and 1595, and followed them in 1605 and 1607 with his two books of *Gradualia*, an elaborate year-long musical cycle. He died on July 4, 1623, and is buried in an unmarked grave in the Stondon churchyard.

Every stage of Byrd's musical career was affected by the political and religious controversies of his day. When a law was passed in 1534 establishing Henry VIII as "the only Supreme Head in earth of the Church of England," liturgy and church music took on new importance. In such volatile times, the outward practices of worship were often the only touchstone for inward loyalty—and in the new English church, disloyalty to the established religion was also disloyalty to the state. This point was not lost on the obsessively political Tudor regime. *Lex orandi, lex credendi*—how people worship reflects, even determines, what they believe—was a theological commonplace of the era, and public prayer was, as it had been for centuries in pre-Reformation England, inextricably linked with music-making. One of the first steps taken by the Reformers was the revision of all books of worship and the establishment of a new, simplified musical style. By the time Byrd joined the Chapel Royal in the 1570s, the rules had relaxed somewhat, and he could produce elaborate works for what was still the best-funded and most famous choir in the country. Even as he won fame for his Anglican music, though, he was writing bitter Latin motets, many of them publicly printed in his books of *Cantiones*, about the plight of the English Catholic community. At some point, he tired of compromise and left the court, keeping his position at the chapel *in absentia*. He never returned to live in London. He continued to write secular songs, madrigals, and keyboard pieces until the end of his life, but his later church music, composed during the years in Essex, is exclusively Latin.

The three masses and the two books of *Gradualia*, published over fifteen years, were Byrd's major contribution to the Roman rite. This music is quite unlike his earlier *Cantiones sacrae*. It is resilient enough to be sung by a cast of dozens in a vast Gothic cathedral, but it was written for the intimate, even secretive atmosphere of domestic worship, to be performed for a small group of skilled amateurs (which included women, according to contemporary accounts) and heard by a relatively small congregation. Although such worship could be dangerous—even a capital offense in some cases—Byrd went further than merely providing music. There are many records of his participation in illegal services. A Jesuit missionary describes a country house in Berkshire in 1586:

The gentleman was also a skilled musician, and had an organ and other musical instruments and choristers, male and female, members of his household. During these days it was just as if we were celebrating an uninterrupted Octave of some great feast. Mr. Byrd, the very famous English musician and organist, was among the company.

In view of such events, it is astonishing that he was allowed to live as a free man, much less keep his office in the Chapel Royal and the benefices associated with it. Shortly after the Gunpowder Plot was uncovered in November 1605, an unfortunate traveller was arrested in a London pub in possession of “certain papistical books written by William Byrd, and dedicated to Lord Henry Howard, earl of Northampton”—an unmistakable reference to the first set of *Gradualia*. The man was thrown into Newgate, one of the most notorious prisons in England. Byrd and his family suffered no such treatment, but court records show him involved in endless lawsuits, mostly over his right to own property, and paying heavy fines. The reputation he had built as a young man in London must have helped him through his later years.

Artists often claimed a sort of vocational immunity to the controversies of their age—John Taverner, implicated in the radical Oxford Protestant movement of the late 1520s, escaped a heresy trial with the plea that he was “but a musician”—but the simple act of creating religious art put them in the center of the fray. Byrd was talented and fortunate enough to continue his work, and to gain the esteem of nearly all his contemporaries. Henry Peacham reflected the public opinion when he wrote, just a few months before the composer’s death, in his *Compleat Gentleman*:

For motets and music of piety and devotion, as well for the honour of our nation as the merit of the man, I prefer above all our Phoenix, Master William Byrd.

“BLAME NOT THE PRINTER”: WILLIAM BYRD’S PUBLISHING DRIVE, 1588–1591

Philip Brett
1 September 2001



As a musician, Byrd was both a product and a shaping force of the Elizabethan age. His contemporaries regarded him as the country’s leading composer even after his influence had waned. At his death in 1623, the administrative record of the Chapel Royal, in which he had held a post since 1572, named him “a Father of Musick.” Another admirer echoed the sentiment by calling him “Brittanicae Musicae parens.” He had indeed in a sense fathered Elizabethan music culture, his way paved and assisted by his teacher Thomas Tallis, perhaps, but in some important respects an achievement all his own. Joseph Kerman has illuminated his general position in the period by saying “he belonged to the generation of Sidney, Hooker and Nicholas Hilliard, not that of Shakespeare, Dowland and Bacon. He was as impervious to late Elizabethan elegance, Euphuistic or Italianate, as he was to the subsequent Jacobean ‘disenchantment’.”¹ To my mind an equally important Elizabethan literary figure with whom Byrd can be compared is the poet Edmund Spenser (1554–99).

Both Spenser and Byrd played important roles in building and enhancing the culture of the Elizabethan court, the one with elaborately devised poems and romances that created an almost Arthurian atmosphere in this Tudor setting, the other with settings of her courtier’s verses, anthems, and services for the Anglican church of which she was head, music for the queen’s own instrument, the virginals, and “Latin songs” in effect praising the monarch to whom they were dedicated. Both consequently received significant royal favors in addition to the court-appointed jobs they landed in their twenties. Byrd got a music-printing monopoly granted to him and his aging teacher in 1575, Spenser a royal pension of fifty pounds a year in 1591. Both

¹Joseph Kerman, “William Byrd,” *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan, 2001), 4: 722.

needed these favors because, although the Byrds claimed to be gentlemen, and may have been a step or two of the social ladder above Spenser, who went to Merchant Taylors School as a “poor scholar,” both Edmund and William were determined seekers of the Elizabethan path of upward mobility. There was also an artistic bond, or at least a connection that may be more obvious today than it was at the time. We are accustomed to think of the artistic culture of past ages as contrasted to that of our own because of its immediacy and contemporaneous quality: but both Byrd and Spenser clearly had a historical sense, and were involved to one degree or another with the work of their predecessors. We should not think of that historical sense as equivalent to present-day canonic or intentional concerns, of course. Yet Byrd’s pointed reference, at the opening of the Sanctus of his first mass, the one for four voices, to the same place in a mass by John Taverner, the leading composer of King Henry VIII’s reign, is surely a symbol replete with significance; and Spenser’s archaisms were actually a matter of complaint from his contemporaries and immediate successors.

At a certain point, comparisons break down, as they should. Based on the many surviving sources, it appears that Byrd never set Spenser’s verse: they were not at all in collaboration. Recent researches have shown that Byrd was born earlier than we thought, in 1540 rather than 1543, and that makes him a good twelve years older than the poet.

Spenser was a Cambridge man who gravitated to the Protestant circle around the Earl of Leicester; Byrd never got a degree, remained a Roman Catholic all his life, and looked for protection to powerful Catholic nobles like the Earl of Worcester. The musician outlived his time, dying at the age of eighty-three with little besides the terse comment in the *Cheque Book of the Chapel Royal* to mark the fact. Spenser died before the Elizabethan age had outrun its course: his burial at Westminster Abbey was attended by a public display of grief, and in the title of his posthumous collected works, published in 1611, he was entitled “England’s Arch-Poet,” a prototype for poets laureate to come. Byrd’s stubborn recusancy (that is, his refusal to attend services in the established church) makes the composer an interesting case of the insider who is in one respect on the outs with authority: his relation to the established order must always be clouded with mystery on account of what seem increasingly subversive—if not treasonable—involvements with the Jesuit priests who invaded England. In any case, admiration for his queen was not his major project: he could never have been the recipient of a remark like Karl Marx’s unobtrusive reference to Spenser as “Elizabeth’s arsekissing poet”!²

Louis A. Montrose has recently challenged the modern tendency to see Spenser as “an unequivocal celebrant of Elizabethan political and social orthodoxies.” In an eloquent manner he argues “against an understanding of Spenser’s relationship to royal authority as either wholly assenting or wholly oppositional, and in support of one that allows for the multiplicity, discontinuity, and inconsistency of Spenserian attitudes toward the monarch, the courtly establishment, and the state without assuming that he was either merely hypocritical or merely muddled.”³ The quotation is one that might guide our footsteps in approaching William Byrd also, for neither Edmund Fellowes’s view of him as a pillar of the Anglican Church who had a slightly

²See Louis A. Montrose, “Spenser’s Domestic Domain: Poetry, Property, and the Early Modern Subject,” in *Subject and Object in Renaissance Culture*, ed. Margareta de Grazia, Maureen Quilligan, and Peter Stallybrass (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 83–130, especially p.121 and fn. 55.

³See Montrose, pp. 121, 122.

embarrassing “association” with the Catholics, nor the whole appropriation of him as an enemy of the state by eager latter-day Catholics, will quite do.

However considerable the temptation to plunge straight into the debate on Byrd’s political and social status, I wish to defer consideration of such larger matters for the moment in order to consider a material aspect of Spenser’s life and career to which Montrose draws attention, and which also bears thinking about in relation to Byrd. He writes: “We may understand Spenser’s own publication process, unfolded over the last two decades of the sixteenth century, to have been as calculated as [Ben] Jonson’s in its appropriation of the resources of the printed book to shape a distinctive and culturally authoritative authorial persona.”⁴ Contrasting Spenser with courtier-soldier-scholars like Sidney and Raleigh, Montrose demonstrates the need of the socially subordinate Spenser “to construct and to sustain an authorial persona in a corpus of generically varied printed poetry books.”⁵

Constructing and sustaining an authorial persona is a very different thing in music than in poetry. Byrd could not project himself as a Colin Clout, nor adopt any other direct autobiographical persona. But there are other ways of asserting authority, and Byrd was the first English musician to realize the power of print as a decisive factor in doing so. The nature of English history virtually guarantees that no such categorical statement will survive unmodified: the eccentric and marginal Thomas Whythorne published a single-authored set of songs in 1571, well before Byrd started on his infinitely more ambitious program. With grant of the monopoly of printed part-music and music-paper in 1575 to Byrd and Tallis, however, a new era dawned. Byrd, who must have been the driving force behind the enterprise, saw that nothing less would do than a prestigious initial publication dedicated to the Queen—partly in gratitude, partly with a view to establishing himself, his aged teacher, and English music on a new footing, as the highly patriotic prefatory matter makes clear. The language of highest status, Latin, was necessary for such a venture, and music of the highest order to match it, displaying plenty of what Byrd would later reveal as his chief artistic criteria, “depth and skill.” Hence both composers contributed elaborate canons, as well as other ambitious pieces revealing their mastery of various polyphonic idioms. But a problem arose because much of Tallis’s contribution, especially, had been written for the Roman Catholic office observed in Henry VIII’s and Mary I’s reigns; so the book was, perhaps on that account, coyly entitled “Songs which are called sacred on account of their texts.” A numerical conceit rounded out the symbolic nature of the publication: seventeen numbers by each composer reflected the seventeenth year of Elizabeth’s reign and suggest that the work was presented to her as dedicatee on Accession Day, the seventeenth of November.

Much has been made of the commercial failure of the 1575 *Cantiones*, and the monopolist’s subsequent petition for more support from the queen in 1577. Yet these “Latin songs,” several of them later metamorphosed into English anthems, together with a sizeable repertory that Byrd wrote specifically for the Anglican service, helped to establish the composer’s preeminence in his own time, and to preserve his memory for succeeding generations of English musicians.

⁴Montrose, p. 83.

⁵Montrose, p. 84.

It is through this publication that the continental imitative style finally became naturalized and established in England.

The printer of the partbooks was a Huguenot named Thomas Vautrollier, chosen presumably because of the elegant music type and continental format in which he had printed a set of Lassus chansons in 1570. Excessive correction during and after the press run, a habit Byrd never lost, suggests one reason why there was no immediate attempt to recoup the situation over the 1575 *Cantiones*. Tallis himself may have barred further attempts at trying to reach a market. But Tallis died in 1585, and Vautrollier in 1587. Shortly after, Byrd struck a more lasting relation with another printer, Thomas East, who took over Vautrollier's music types. With this partnership, English music printing moved from sporadic activity to sustained effort. Although its early years included two gestures toward the current vogue for the Italian madrigal, Byrd made sure that it served his own purposes amply. Between 1588 and 1591, around the end of his forties, he published four major collections as well as some incidental items. He also contributed to both madrigal collections, as if to lay claim to them too.

In order to avoid another commercial failure, this new publishing venture began very differently from the earlier one. The first publication, Byrd's *Psalms, Songs and Sonnets* (1588), reflects another side of Elizabethan culture as well as its composer. First of all it presented psalms in metrical translations, such as Elizabethans of all persuasions liked to sing for devotional purposes. The second part of the collection incorporated songs of which many are settings of verses by leading courtiers of the time—no harm would be done by Byrd's showing his credentials, though aristocratic privilege meant that the names of the poets had to remain anonymous. A further section contained "songs of sadness and piety" with sententious verses in the regular iambic meter of the midcentury—the sort of poems reprinted over and over again in popular anthologies like *The Paradise of Dainty Devices*. A final section contained two elegies for the universally admired courtier-soldier-poet Sir Philip Sidney, who had died in 1586: the poem of one of them, it turns out (from a slightly different version preserved in a manuscript collection), was written by Sidney's friend, Sir Edward Dyer; the other poem is an experiment in metrical verse of the kind in which Sidney was interested. Byrd tried to match the quantitative meter in his music as he had in yet another song of the collection.

Almost as important as the contents is the introductory matter. There is not merely an elegant dedication to a leading courtier, Sir Christopher Hatton, but an authorial statement about the value of singing. These "Reasons briefly set down by the author to persuade every one to learn to sing" look a bit quaint to a modern reader, but they are instructive because they remind us of the need at the time to defend musical activity of a learned kind—not because of modern anti-elitism, but because of Puritan zeal on the one hand, and lack of musical education on the other. As important as the nature of the contents is the composer's approach to its often too, too solid verse. The Italian madrigal style just then infiltrating English music was to be reflected in East's second music publication of the same year, a set of translated madrigals entitled *Musica Transalpina*. Byrd's songs were originally conceived as solo songs with instrumental accompaniment in the manner inherited from his predecessors and enhanced by the serious application of contrapuntal skill rather than any change in aesthetic of the kind the madrigal would have entailed. The only sign that Byrd recognized the difference was in his adapting all his instrumental parts so that they could be sung to the words, not a difficult task in view of the vocally grateful nature of his instrumental lines. He even employed this indigenous musical style for the one Italian poem he included in his songbook, a stanza from

Ariosto: it was included incongruously among the translated madrigals of *Musica Transalpina*, an indication that as monopolist Byrd took a managerial interest.

The aim of Byrd’s musical settings was not to mirror the images or syntax of the poetry, but literally to express its form. Like a medieval musician he works with the individual lines of verse, often providing matching cadences to mirror their rhymes. His settings are syllabic and strophic; they do not aim to connect specific verbal images and musical figures, but rather to make a positive link between musical and poetic shape. If they are expressive of anything, it is the form of the poems they set. The connection with medieval insular culture is even more specific, because one of the most well-known songs in the collection, the famous “Lullaby,” is to all intents and purposes a medieval carol, replete with a refrain to each of its stanzas and an intervening burden. The aesthetic behind these songs derives from ideas which Aquinas had articulated. The luster with which Byrd’s settings adorn their serious verse enables the ear to accept the good things that may then more easily enter the mind—or to make the lover’s rhetoric more acceptable to his adored object. It is a feature of music that in our day has been used more by capitalism than by religion or moral philosophy; but its efficacy has never been in doubt, and Byrd was never more supreme as an artist than in this impersonalized but important role.

[Example 1: *What Pleasure Have Great Princes*, stanza 1; see page 23]

Unlike the *Cantiones* of 1575, *Psalmes, Sonets & Songs* was an immediate success. We know this for two reasons. One is that East printed two further editions of the partbooks, both dated 1588. In the review of the 1588 editions now proceeding as part of the work of *The Byrd Edition*, we are asking whether these were in fact two full editions—East may have had to make up an incomplete set of sheets with one of them. In the impoverished musical climate of mid-Elizabethan England, however, even two editions in one year was something of a miracle, and a testament to the sure business sense that this new combination of monopolist and printer brought to the enterprise. The other fact is that Byrd was able to publish a second book of songs in the following year, referring in his dedication to the public’s “good acceptance of my former endeours.” *Songs of Sundrie Natures* (1589) is by no means as unified and well-articulated a collection as its predecessor, but it lets us see into Byrd’s workshop, for he must have ransacked his drawers to find sufficient material for such a large collection. Another group of psalms in an unknown verse translation heads the list, which presents a slightly more heterogeneous set of love songs, sententious verses, anthems—and even this time several carols or carol-like songs presented in their original format as instrumentally accompanied songs with interspersed choruses. The collection concludes with one of Byrd’s most celebrated creations, the verse anthem “Christ Rising,” originally conceived for Morning Prayer on Easter Day in the Anglican Church. This collection also ran into a second edition, not immediately, but about five or six years later.

There are two further publications of Byrd’s secular music during this period that indicate the contradictory and varied nature of his musical persona. One is a celebratory song in two sections entitled “A gratification unto Master John Case, for his treatise lately made in Praise of Musick.” A setting of a poem by the learned Thomas Watson, it pays tribute the ideas of the Oxford Don who had endeavored to argue for the importance of music in history and present culture. It was published in 1589. A year later, Byrd made an appearance in another madrigal collection, this time one by Thomas Watson, who announced that the madrigals he was

publishing were “englished, not to the sense of the original dittie, but after the affection of the Noate.” In a thoroughly contemporary fashion, Watson had simply set words to music, rather than music to words. And he included two settings by Byrd of a poem of his in praise of Queen Elizabeth. These were the first madrigals by an English composer ever to be printed. They are the exception that proves the rule in Byrd’s case. Whether he was simply proving that he could write a madrigal along with the best of the Italian masters, or asserting that the praise of the monarch in the context of pastoral-like Maying ceremonies justified the use of so light a style we cannot know. The conclusion to be drawn, however, is that with such skill and affect at his command as to imitate the madrigalian manner to perfection, his choice of the indigenous style for his own songs cannot have been simply owing to the lack of knowledge of what many scholars have implied is a superior style and ethos. I have argued strongly that his was in some ways the more literary solution, but it certainly was stubborn, and, as we would say nowadays, retro.

His dedicatory letter to the 1588 collection had indicated that Byrd was preparing “some other things of more depth and skill to follow.” Jeremy Smith, whose discoveries about East’s printing practices and his relation to Byrd have immeasurably helped my endeavors, points out the similarity of the phrase “depth and skill” to the terms in which Morley describes the motet in his 1597 treatise. He argues reasonably that this must refer to the collection of *Cantiones Sacrae* published in 1589, not to the *Songs of Sundry Natures* of the same year. This collection of what we would now call motets—the expression was not used in England until Morley introduced it in his 1597 treatise—also pointed forward to further publication: it was boldly labeled “Liber Primus,” and was fortunately followed by a Liber Secundus as early as 1591.

These two books could rightly have been considered by Byrd to be the peak of his achievement and quite likely to be the end of his composing career. If the main characteristic of Byrd’s songbooks is an expressive ethos based aesthetically on medieval ideas and musically on the work of his English predecessors, the 1589 and 1591 *Cantiones* reflect a different strategy altogether. This is not to say that there are no connections to earlier styles or forms. Byrd even included a chant cantus firmus piece, *Afflicti pro peccatis*, in the second book as a signal of the “skill” he so earnestly claimed. A distant nod is made to the old votive antiphon in the multi-section *Infelix ego* of the 1591 collection, and also in *Cunctis diebus* as its opening section for reduced voices indicates. But the main foundation of the style of these motets, which must mostly represent the work of the years between 1575 and 1591, is the sophisticated continental imitative style that Byrd had learned a great deal about as a result of his contact with Alfonso Ferrabosco, one of Elizabeth’s several foreign musicians.

[Example 2: *Exurge Domine*; see page 27]

This style can be relieved and varied by passages in chordal style, or in that kind of ruffled homophony in which Byrd excelled; it can also have trios or other passages in reduced voices in different and sometimes contrasting registers. A favorite technique, revealed by Joseph Kerman’s careful analysis, is that of creating a small “cell,” usually of several voices, that can be reiterated in various registers and then used for developing a longer contrapuntal argument.⁶

The musical aim of all this technique, however, is not simply to display “skill,” though that is certainly one principle aim. No one who has heard a good performance of Tallis’s masterly

⁶Joseph Kerman, *The Masses and Motets of William Byrd* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), pp. 88f. and passim.

Lamentations or some of his later motets such as *In ieiunio et fletu* can fail to realize that he must have been deeply affected by the possibility of ordering technique in the service of new kind of expression. Of course, Byrd had by now gone beyond Tallis’s technical resources, rooted as these were in an earlier generation of English music as well as a perusal of the work of early sixteenth-century composers such as Gombert. The anger and intensity that Tallis builds up as he matches Jeremiah’s threnody for the fallen Jerusalem and the wonderful call for its return to the Lord might well have been unforgettable to Byrd.

[Example 3: *Lamentations II*; see page 36]

The most obvious interpretation of these words, “All her portals lie in ruins, and her priests cry in sorrow. Her virgins are defiled, and she is crushed with bitterness,” set to music of this powerful kind is that it results from the anger of one who sees his religion forsaken, a musical jeremiad for the contemporary situation in England. The initial disillusion for Roman Catholics like Tallis and Byrd was the Pope’s excommunication of Elizabeth I in 1570, the Ridolfi plot the following year, and the resulting pressure on Catholics. All this destroyed the illusion of an uneasy truce that the cautious queen might have sustained with Rome, and it forced Christians in England to take sides.

The situation became more tense as the priests began to arrive from the English College abroad in what became the largely Jesuit-inspired mission to re-convert England. Parliament accordingly passed more and more repressive and punitive laws to counter the threat they posed. Early in the 1580s came the execution of the Jesuit Edmund Campion. A Catholic poem that circulated after this startling event met with stern censorship from the administration—its publisher had his ears cut off. Byrd included a setting of the first stanza, beginning “Why Do I Use My Paper, Ink, and Pen” in his 1588 songbook, together with two innocuous verses. No one who knew the poem could miss the reference.

[Example 4: *Why Do I Use My Paper, Ink, and Pen*; see page 51]

This daring act causes a kind of hiatus in the normally “cool” song form. For a moment here, and subsequently elsewhere, Byrd achieves almost declamatory rhetoric of a kind that becomes more usual in the seventeenth century, what the music history books call “baroque.” In the 1589 and 1591 *Cantiones*, however, passion spills out all over in the music that actively shapes an interpretation of the words. Just listen, for instance, to the declamatory passage with which Byrd begins the motet *Haec dicit Dominus*, another text from Jeremiah that in the context of the contents of the two books as a whole can be—almost demands to be—interpreted as a lament for the Catholic martyrs, as Byrd would have thought of them.

[Example 5: *Haec dicit Dominus: Vox in excelsis audita est*; see page 53]

Like this text, most of those which we take to refer to the contemporary situation are biblical. But so many of them have to do with the captivities of the Jews in Babylon or Egypt, with the Second Coming, or with dispossession or martyrdom that it was not difficult for Joseph Kerman, following arguments already made by H. B. Collins and others, to propose successfully that they addressed the plight of English Catholics in general, and those who favored the Jesuits in particular.⁷

⁷Kerman, *The Masses and Motets*, pp. 40–54; also *ibid.*, “The Elizabethan Motet: A Study of Texts for Music,” *Studies in the Renaissance*, 9 (1962), pp. 273–308.

Recently, Craig Monson has confirmed these intimations by showing how frequently the same biblical images and texts turn up in the vast amount of Roman Catholic propaganda circulating in England during the period (225 items, some of them large volumes, appeared between the execution of Campion in 1581 and the death of another celebrated priest, Henry Garnet, head of the English Jesuits, in 1606). Monson has also shown how apparently neutral texts, available for exegesis by Protestants and Catholics alike, could acquire special significance for Catholics through having been used on notable occasions. Psalm 50, *Miserere mei, Deus*, is a case in point. John Paine and John Nelson recited it on the scaffold, as did other victims, such as Robert Southwell.

Even the joyful and extrovert setting of *Haec dies quam fecit Dominus* that concludes the 1591 book may have reflected a similar use of this text to salute their doom by several stout-hearted Jesuits.

To all these texts, Byrd brings an energy, poignancy, and commitment different in degree rather than kind from the style of his songs. The “voice heard on high” in *Haec dicit Dominus* is brought excessively low as the word “lamentationis,” the property of that voice, is pictorially and effectively adumbrated in another, more somber, key. Examples could be multiplied, such as the justly admired *Vigilate*, in which we hear the cock’s crow and feel ourselves drifting into careless slumber along with the disciples only to be woken by the urgent cry “vigilate!” which Byrd introduced as a refrain, several more times than a literal reading of St. Mark’s Gospel in the Vulgate would have allowed or suggested.

There seems to be little doubt about the cultural, political, and purely human reasons for this development in Byrd’s work, stemming as it undoubtedly does from the status of Roman Catholics within a Protestant state, even one so equivocal as Elizabethan England. The scenes of Jesuit priests being hung, drawn, and quartered—that is, eviscerated and butchered—their heads placed on poles above the city gates as a warning, and their burned body parts displayed elsewhere must have acted powerfully upon the imaginations of an entire generation. Such scenes adorned the English College in Rome as a constant reminder, and books printed for the Roman faithful also emphasized them. Monson even goes so far as to claim that Byrd’s work in his Latin songs is part of a Jesuit propaganda effort “to foster an English Catholic identity and ideology grounded on consensus.”⁸

The work of uncovering this persecution story and revealing Byrd’s music as a kind of counter discourse has largely been done, and done powerfully and well. It is perhaps time to move on to consider other issues that might move us closer to a more complex understanding of Byrd’s position and its ramifications. The publications of the 1588–1591 period as a group—like Spenser’s poetry publications spanning a rather wider period—do indeed create a “distinctive and culturally authoritative authorial persona” to borrow Louis Montrose’s words again. Here is the consummate courtly composer, writing songs of every conceivable kind, from the sprightly *Though Amaryllis Dance in Green*, to the lyrical and heart-warming setting of Sidney’s *O Dear Life*. Byrd is involved in every national event—a song celebrating the great victory over the Spanish Armada in 1588 was not published but presumably known at court—and he was

⁸Craig Monson, “Byrd, the Catholics, and the Motet: The Hearing Reopened,” in *Hearing the Motet: Essays on the Motet of the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, ed. Dolores Pesce (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp. 348–74.

right on the mark politically and socially with his commemorations of Sidney the great Protestant hero. Byrd’s reputation for skill as well as, in Peacham’s words, for gravity and piety, were greatly enhanced by the publication of his Latin songs, which only a few would see as subversive, and all would acknowledge as representing European high art—the highest language set forth in the most complicated polyphony. It is arguable that no English composer ever again was able to rise to such a challenge on such a scale.

Yet in a sense this carefully constructed portrait of authority is undermined by the very expressiveness that for later generations gives it such power. The beauty of Byrd’s English music shows that there was no need for him to develop a sense of interiority. He could and possibly should have stayed within the carefully chosen world of the indigenous lyricist, adventuring into continental imitative polyphony only to create beautiful structures like the early works of Lassus.

Interiority, a sense of inwardness: it comes into Tudor and Stuart culture through a variety of means. One is the growing awareness of the body and its humors according to the theories of Galenic medicine. Another is religious meditation, and it is here that we meet Byrd’s dilemma. I am proposing that the strength of his reaction to the persecution of his fellow Roman Catholics, and his identification with the Jesuit cause, drew him into modes of composition and expression that undermine his classical poise just as they make him intriguing for us today. It might be better to contemplate for a moment how dislocating all this must have been for a composer attracted on the one hand to the general, not particular, expressive values of medieval culture and on the other to strophic forms and abstract patterns (Byrd was equally an instrumental composer for all his protestations about the superiority of the voice). Looked at in this way, it is possible to assert that the crisis years, from the time his wife Julian and their servant John Reason were first cited for recusancy in 1577 until Byrd made the decision around 1593 to retire to the Essex countryside, produced a very different composer from the one he set out to be.

At Stondon Massey, close enough to the Petre establishment at Ingatestone, Byrd began a very different project, that of adorning the Roman Tridentine liturgy with art that was clearly meant to attain liturgical decorum as well as to promote the cause of the Jesuits and their Catholic Reformation. As I argue in the several prefaces to my edition of *Gradualia*, decorum was largely kept while more subtle ways were found to inject political messages into the printed volumes, through such means as musical nuance or arrangement of contents.⁹ I spend some effort trying to contend with the theory that Joseph Kerman derived from the Catholic historian John Bossy that *Gradualia* and the Masses represent a Augustinian retreat into some sort of acceptance and acquiescence. But I would like to suggest that Byrd turned away from the continental expressive “motet,” though he imbued it with as much intensity as any of his peers, because it failed to satisfy some of his inbred aesthetic impulses and concerns. It had served as a catalyst, perhaps even in a cathartic manner, enabling him to process and produce his feelings in sometimes dramatic ways. But just as the keyboard pavan-galliard pair flowered because of their strophic limitations, and his grounds and other variations could build to expressive heights

⁹Reprinted in Philip Brett, *William Byrd and His Contemporaries: Essays and a Monograph*, ed. Joseph Kerman and Davitt Moroney (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), pp. 142, 143, 161.

because of the constraints of the repetitive underpinnings, so in his vocal music Byrd also needed some real constraint in order to reach an even deeper level. The liturgy put him back into such a confining framework. Within the tension between form and content, a different sense of interiority could burgeon, the slightly repressed intensity that makes motets like *Justorum animae* and *Optimam partem elegit* even more powerful than *Vigilate* or *Haec dicit Dominus*.

Whatever view we take of the interesting inconsistencies in Byrd's output, there can be no doubt of the integrity with which he met the various challenges he faced. Had he not adopted the English song style and made it work through imbuing it with stronger contrapuntal values, we would have no way of assessing the appearance and effect of the Italian madrigal style in England and its results. If he had not allowed his reaction to his situation as a Roman Catholic to infect his music at such a deep level, we should presumably have had either more Renaissance polyphony of the slightly bland kind that assumes God is in his heaven and all is more or less right with the world, or a late refashioning of older English polyphonic values that would have been magnificent but similarly detached—there are hints of this in the earlier Latin music. Finally, if he had not embarked on his retirement project to cultivate a musical flower garden (as he calls it in his dedication to Sir John Petre) both to adorn the liturgy and to provide for those moments of collective devotion that Roman Catholics cherished in the frequent absence of a priest, we would have little sense of the nature of worship in those clandestine circumstances. In each of these cases, even in Byrd's failure to contain his work within the decorum he surely sought, he invites us to witness the strength of his feelings, never hiding behind any of the generalized formulas of his time. It is for this reason, of course, that his music is still so very much alive in our own troubled times.

Example 1

What pleasure have great princes

Psalmes, sonets, & songs, 1588, no.19

William Byrd

The first singing part

Superius (Alto)

Medius (Alto)

Contratenor (Tenor)

Tenor (Baritone)

Bassus (Bass)

1. What plea - sure have great prin - ces, have great prin -
 2. Their deal - ings plain and right - ful, plain and right -
 5. O hap - py who thus liv - eth, who thus liv -

1. What plea - sure have great prin - ces, have great
 2. Their deal - ings plain and right - ful, plain and
 5. O hap - py who thus liv - eth, who thus

1. What plea - sure have great
 2. Their deal - ings plain and
 5. O hap - py who thus

A. 1. What plea - sure have great prin - ces more
 2. Their deal - ings plain and right - ful, are
 5. O hap - py who thus liv - eth, not

A. 1. What plea - sure have great prin - ces, what plea - sure have great prin - ces more dain - ty
 2. Their deal - ings plain and right - ful, their deal - ings plain and right - ful, are void of
 5. O hap - py who thus liv - eth, O hap - py who thus liv - eth, not car - ing

T. - ces, what plea - sure have great prin - ces, great prin - ces, more dain - ty to ___
 - ful, their deal - ings plain and right - ful, and right - ful, are void of all ___
 - eth, O hap - py who thus liv - eth, thus liv - eth, not car - ing much ___

Bar. prin - ces, what plea - sure have great prin - ces more dain - ty
 right - ful, their deal - ings plain and right - ful, are void of
 liv - eth, O hap - py who thus liv - eth, not car - ing

B. prin - ces, more dain - ty to their choice, what plea - sure have great prin - ces, more dain - ty to their
 right - ful, are void of all de - ceit, their deal - ings plain and right - ful, are void of all de -
 liv - eth, not car - ing much for gold, O hap - py who thus liv - eth, not car - ing much for

A.  dain - ty to their_ choice, than
void of all de - ceit, they
car - ing much for_ gold, with

A.  to their choice, than herd - men wild, who care - less in qui - et life re - joice,_
all de - ceit, they nev - er know how spite - ful it is to kneel and wait,_
much for gold, with cloth - ing which suf - fic - eth to keep him from the cold,_

T.  _ their_ choice, to their choice, than herd - men wild, who care - less,
_ de - ceit, all de - ceit, they nev - er know how spite - ful,
_ for_ gold, much for gold, with cloth - ing which_ suf -

Bar.  to their_ choice, to their choice, than
all de - ceit, all de - ceit, they
much for_ gold, much for gold, with

B.  choice, to their choice, more dain - ty to their_ choice, than herd - men wild, who care - less in
- ceit, all de - ceit, are void of all de - ceit, they nev - er know how spite - ful it
gold, much for gold, not car - ing much for_ gold, with cloth - ing which suf - fic - eth to

A.  10 herd - men wild, who care - less in qui - et life_ re - joice,
nev - er know how spite - ful it is to kneel_ and_ wait
cloth - ing which suf - fic - eth to keep him from_ the_ cold:

A.  _ re - joice, in qui - et life re - joice, in qui - et life re - joice, and
_ and wait, it is to kneel and wait, it is to kneel and wait on
_ the cold, to keep him from the cold, to keep him from the cold: Though

T.  care - less in qui - et life re - joice, re - joice, and
spite - ful it is to kneel and wait, and_ wait on
- fic - eth to keep him from the cold, the_ cold: Though

Bar.  herd - men wild, who care - less in qui - et life_ re - joice, and_
nev - er know how spite - ful it is to kneel_ and wait on_
cloth - ing which suf - fic - eth to keep him from_ the_ cold: Though_

B.  qui - et life re - joice, in qui - et life, in qui - et life re - joice, and
is to kneel and wait, it is to kneel, it is to kneel and wait on
keep him from the cold, to keep him from, to keep him from the cold: Though

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A.  and for - tune's fate not fear - ing,
on fa - vour - ite pre - sump - tuous,
Though poor and plain his di - et,

A.  for - tune's_ fate___ not_ fear - ing,
fa - vour - ite___ pre - sump - tuous,
poor and plain his di - et, not fear - ing, sing
his di - et, yet

T.  for - tune's fate not fear - ing, and for - tune's fate not fear - ing, sing sweet in
fa - vour - ite pre - sump - tuous, on fa - vour - ite pre - sump - tuous, whose pride is
poor and plain his di - et, though poor and plain his di - et, yet mer - ry

Bar.  ___ for - tune's fate not fear - ing, not fear - ing, sing
___ fa - vour - ite pre - sump - tuous, pre - sump - tuous, whose
___ poor and plain his di - et, his di - et, yet

B.  for - tune's fate not fear - ing, and for - tune's fate not fear - ing, sing
fa - vour - ite pre - sump - tuous, on fa - vour - ite pre - sump - tuous, whose
poor and plain his di - et, though poor and plain his di - et, yet

A.  1. 2.
sing sweet in sum - mer morn - ing. morn - ing.
whose pride is vain and sump - tuous, sump - tuous.
yet mer - ry 'tis and qui - et. qui - et.

A.  sweet in sum - mer, sing sweet in sum - mer morn - ing. And morn - ing.
pride is vain, whose pride is vain and sump - tuous. On sump - tuous.
mer - ry 'tis, yet mer - ry 'tis and qui - et. Though qui - et.

T.  sum - mer morn - ing, in sum - mer morn - ing. And morn - ing.
vain and sump - tuous, is vain and sump - tuous. On sump - tuous.
'tis and qui - et, it is and qui - et. Though qui - et.

Bar.  sweet in sum - mer, sing sweet in sum - mer morn - ing. And morn - ing.
pride is vain, whose pride is vain and sump - tuous. On sump - tuous.
mer - ry 'tis, yet mer - ry 'tis and qui - et. Though qui - et.

B.  sweet, sing sweet in sum mer morn - ing, sum - mer morn - ing. And morn - ing.
pride, whose pride is vain and sump - tuous, vain and sump - tuous. On sump - tuous.
mer - ry, mer - ry 'tis and qui - et, and qui - et. Though qui - et.

What pleasure have great princes
More dainty to their choice,
Than herdmen wild who careless
In quiet life rejoice,
And fortune's fate not fearing,
Sing sweet in summer morning?

Their dealings plain and rightful
Are void of all deceit:
They never know how spiteful
It is to kneel and wait
On favourite presumptuous,
Whose pride is vain and sumptuous.

All day their flocks each tendeth:
At night they take their rest
More quiet than who sendeth
His ship into the East,
Where gold and pearl are plenty,
But getting very dainty.

For Lawyers and their pleading
They esteem it not a straw,
They think that honest meaning
Is of itself a law:
Where conscience judgeth plainly
They spend no money vainly.

O happy who thus liveth,
Not caring much for gold,
With clothing which sufficeth
To keep him from the cold:
Though poor and plain his diet,
Yet merry it is and quiet.

The underlay of verses 2 and 5 is editorial, the first stanza alone being printed with the music in the original publication.

Example 2

EXSURGE DOMINE
Cantiones sacrae II, 1591, no.19

William Byrd

Psalm 43: 23-24

Soprano
Ex - sur - ge, ex - sur - ge, qua - re ob -

Alto
Ex - sur - ge,

Tenor
Ex - sur - ge, ex - sur - ge,

Tenor/Baritone
Ex -

S.
- dor - mis, Do - mi - ne, ob - dor - mis, Do - mi -

A.
qua - re ob - dor - mis, Do - mi - ne, qua - re ob - dor - mis,

T.
Do - mi - ne, qua - re ob - dor - mis, Do - mi -

T/Bar.
- sur - ge, ex - sur - ge, ex - sur - ge,

B.
Ex - sur - ge, ex - sur -

10
S.
- ne, qua - re ob - dor - mis, qua - re ob -

A.
Do - mi - ne, qua - re ob - dor - mis,

T.
- ne, qua - re ob - dor - mis, Do - mi -

T/Bar.
ex - sur - ge, qua - re ob - dor -

B.
- ge, qua - re ob - dor - mis, qua -

S. - dor - mis, Do - - - - - mi - ne? Ex -

A. qua - re ob - dor - mis, Do - - - - - mi - ne? Ex - sur -

T. - ne, qua - re ob - dor - mis, Do - - - - - mi - ne? Ex - sur -

T/Bar. - mis, Do - - - - - mi - ne, Do - - - - - mi - ne? Ex - sur -

B. - re ob - dor - mis, Do - - - - - ne?

S. - sur - ge, ex - sur - ge, ex - sur - ge, et

A. - ge, ex - sur - - - - ge,

T. - ge, ex - sur - - - - ge, ex - sur - ge,

T/Bar. - ge, ex - sur - ge, Do - mi-ne, ex - sur -

B. ex - sur - ge, ex - sur - ge, ex - sur - ge,

S. ne re - pel - las me in fi - - - - - nem,

A. et ne re - pel - las me in fi - - - - - nem, in fi -

T. et ne re - pel - las me in fi - - - - - nem,

T/Bar. - ge et ne re -

B. et ne re -

S. et ne re - pel - las me in fi - nem,

A. - nem, et ne re - pel - las me in fi -

T. in fi - nem, et ne re -

T/Bar. - pel - las me in fi - nem, et ne re - pel - las me in

B. - pel - las me in fi - - nem,

30

S. et ne re - pel - las me, et ne re - pel - las me in

A. - nem, et ne re - pel - las me in

T. - pel - las me in fi - - - - -

T/Bar. fi - - - - - nem,

B. et ne re - pel - las me in fi -

S. fi - nem, et ne re - pel - las me in fi - -

A. fi - nem, in fi - nem, et ne re - pel - las me

T. - nem, et ne re - pel - las me in fi - nem,

T/Bar. et ne re - pel - las me, et ne re - pel - las

B. - nem, et ne re - pel - las me in

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40

S. - - - - - nem. Qua - re fa - ci-em tu-

A. - in - fi - - - - - nem. Qua - re

T. in fi - - - - - nem. Qua - re fa - ci-

T/Bar. me in fi - - - - - nem.

B. fi - - - - - nem.

S. - am a - ver - - - - - tis?

A. fa - ci-em tu - am a - ver - - - - - tis, a -

T. - em tu - am a - ver - - - - - tis,

T/Bar. Qua - re fa -

B. Qua -

S. - ver - - - - - tis?

A. qua - re fa - ci-em tu - am a - ver - - - - -

T. - ci-em tu - am a - ver - - - - - tis, a - ver - - - - -

B. - re fa - ci-em tu - - - - - am a - ver - - - - -

50

S. Ob - li - vi - sce-ris in - o - pi-ae no - - - strae,

A. Ob - li - vi - sce-ris in - o - pi-ae no - - -

T. - tis, a - ver - tis, a - ver - tis? Ob -

T/Bar. - tis? Ob - li - vi - sce-ris in - o - pi-ae no -

B. - tis, a - ver - tis? Ob - li - vi - sce-ris

S. ob - li - vi - sce-ris in - o - pi-ae no - - - strae,

A. - - - - strae, ob - li - vi - sce-ris

T. -li - vi - sce-ris in - o - pi-ae no - strae, in - o - pi-

T/Bar. - strae, ob - li - vi - sce-ris in - o - pi-ae no -

B. in - o - pi-ae no - - - - strae, ob -

60

S. ob - li - vi - sce-ris in - o - pi-ae no -

A. in - o - pi-ae no - - - strae, in - o - pi-ae no -

T. - ae no - - - - strae, in - o - pi-

T/Bar. - - - strae, ob - li - vi - sce-ris in - o -

B. - li - vi - sce-ris in - o - pi-ae no - - - strae, in -

S. - - - strae et tri - bu - la - ti - o - nis no -

A. - - - strae et

T. - ae no - strae et tri - bu - la - ti - o - nis no - strae,

T/Bar. - pi - ae no - strae et tri - bu - la - ti - o - nis

B. - o - pi - ae no - strae, in - o - pi - ae no -

S. - strae, et tri - bu -

A. tri - bu - la - ti - o - nis no - strae, et tri - bu - la - ti - o - nis no -

T. et tri - bu - la - ti - o - nis no - - strae, et

T/Bar. no - strae, et tri - bu - la - ti - o - nis,

B. - - - strae

70

S. - la - ti - o - nis no - - - - - strae,

A. - - - - - strae, et tri - bu -

T. tri - bu - la - ti - o - nis no - strae, tri - bu - la - ti - o - nis

T/Bar. no - - - strae, et tri - bu - la - ti - o - nis

B. et tri - bu - la - ti - o - nis no -

S. et tri - bu - la - ti - o - nis no - - - -

A. - la - ti - o - nis no - - - - strae, et tri - bu -

T. no - strae, _____ et tri - bu - la - ti - o - nis no -

T/Bar. no - strae, et tri - bu - la - ti - o - nis no - strae, et

B. - strae, _____ et tri - bu - la - ti - o - nis

S. - strae, et tri - bu - la - ti - o - nis no - strae, 80

A. - la - ti - o - nis _____ no - - - - strae, _____ et

T. - - - - strae, et tri - bu - la - ti - o -

T/Bar. tri - bu - la - ti - o - nis no - - - - strae, et tri - bu - la - ti - o -

B. no - - - - - strae, et tri - bu -

S. et tri - bu - la - ti - o - nis no - - - -

A. tri - bu - la - ti - o - nis, et tri - bu - la - ti - o - nis

T. - nis, et tri - bu - la - ti - o - nis no -

T/Bar. - nis no - - - - - strae, et tri - bu - la - ti -

B. - la - ti - o - nis, et tri - bu - la - ti - o - nis no -

"Blame Not the Printer": William Byrd's Publishing Drive, 1588–1591 — 39

Musical score for Soprano (S.), Alto (A.), Tenor (T.), and Bass (B.) parts. The score is in G minor (three flats) and 8/8 time. A box containing the number "100" is positioned above the Soprano staff. The lyrics are as follows:

S. - ne, ex - sur - ge, Do - mi - ne, ex -
A. - mi - ne, ex - sur - ge, Do - mi - ne,
T. - ne, ex - sur - ge, Do - mi - ne, Do - mi - ne, ex -
T/Bar. Do - mi - ne, ex - sur - ge, Do - mi - ne, ex - sur - ge,
B. - ne, ex - sur - ge, Do - mi - ne, ex - sur - ge,

Musical score for Soprano (S.), Alto (A.), Tenor (T.), and Bass (B.) parts. The score is in G minor (three flats) and 8/8 time. The lyrics are as follows:

S. - sur - ge, Do - mi - ne, Do - mi - ne.
A. ex - sur - ge, Do - mi - ne.
T. - sur - ge, ex - sur - ge, Do - mi - ne, Do - mi - ne.
T/Bar. Do - mi - ne, ex - sur - ge, Do - mi - ne.
B. Do - mi - ne, Do - mi - ne.

Arise, why sleepest thou, O Lord? arise, and cast me not off to the end.
Why turnest thou thy face away? and forgettest our want and our trouble?

Example 3

LAMENTATIONS II

Thomas Tallis

Musical score for Lamentations II, Example 3, showing vocal parts for Superius, Discantus, Contratenor, Tenor, and Bassus. The lyrics are: De La-men-ta-ti-o - ne Ie-re-mi - ae pro-phe - tae, pro-phe - De La-men-ta - ti - o - ne Ie-re - mi - ae pro-phe De La-men-ta - ti-

Continuation of the musical score for Lamentations II, Example 3, showing vocal parts for Superius, Discantus, Contratenor, Tenor, and Bassus. The lyrics are: De la - men- De la - men - ta - ti - o - ne Ie - re - mi - ae tae, Ie - re - mi - ae pro - phe - tae, - tae, Ie - re - mi - ae pro - phe - De la - men- De la - men - ta - ti - o - ne Ie - re - mi - ae tae, Ie - re - mi - ae pro - phe -

6

ta - ti - o - ne le - re - mi - ae pro - phe - tae, pro - phe -

pro - phe - tae, le - re - mi - ae pro - phe -

8

de La - men - ta - ti - o - ne le - re - mi - ae pro - phe

tae, le - re - mi - ae pro - phe - tae, De La - men - ta - ti -

8

tae

De la - men - ta - ti -

tae, pro - phe - tae,

tae, pro - phe - tae, le - re - mi -

- o - ne le - re - mi - ae pro - phe - tae, le - re - mi -

De La - men - ta - ti - o - ne le - re - mi - ae pro - phe

10

De La - men - ta - ti - o - ne le - re - mi - ae pro - phe

- o - ne le - re - mi - ae pro - phe - tae, pro - phe - tae

De la - men - ta - ti - o - ne le - re - mi - ae pro - phe - tae:

ae pro - phe - tae, pro - phe - tae

ae pro - phe - tae, pro - phe - tae,

- tae, pro - phe - tae, pro - phe - tae,

13

GI - MEL. - - - - - GI-

GI - MEL. GI - MEL.

GI - MEL. GI

16

- MEL. - - - - - GI - MEL. GI-

GI - MEL. GI - MEL. GI - MEL.

GI - MEL. GI - MEL. GI - MEL. GI

MEL. GI - MEL. GI

GI - MEL. GI - MEL. GI

19

- - - - - MEL. Mi-gra - vit lu - da prop-ter af-flic-ti-

GI - MEL. Mi-gra - vit lu - da prop - ter af-flic-ti-

MEL. Mi-gra - vit lu - da prop - ter af-flic-ti-

MEL. MEL.

MEL.

23

- o - nem ac mul - ti - tu - di - nem ser - vi - tu - tis, ac

- o - nem ac mul - ti - tu - di - nem ser - vi - tu - tis, ac

- o - nem ac mul - ti - tu - di - nem ser - vi - tu -

8 Mi - gra - vit lu - da prop - ter af - flic - ti - o - nem ac

26

mul - ti - tu - di - nem ser - vi - tu - tis, ac mul - ti - tu - di - nem ser - vi - tu -

mul - ti - tu - di - nem ser - vi - tu - tis,

8 tis, ser - vi - tu - tis, ac mul - ti - tu - di - nem ser - vi - tu

mul - ti - tu - di - nem ser - vi - tu - tis, ac mul - ti - tu - di - nem ser - vi - tu -

lu - da prop - ter af - flic - ti - o - nem ac mul - ti - tu - di - nem ser - vi - tu -

30

- tis, ha - bi - ta - vit in - ter gen - tes, ha - bi -

ha - bi - ta - vit in - ter gen - tes, in - ter gen - tes ha - bi -

8 - tis, ha - bi - ta - vit in - ter gen - tes, in - ter gen - tes ha -

- tis, ser - vi - tu - tis, ha - bi - ta - vit in - ter gen - tes,

- tis, ha - bi - ta - vit in - ter gen -

34

ta-vit in-ter gen - tes, nec in - ve - nit re - qui - em,

ta - vit in-ter gen - tes, nec in-ve - nit re - qui - em,

8 bi - ta - vit in - ter gen - tes, nec in-ve-

in - ter gen - tes nec in - ve - nit re - qui

38 - tes, nec in - ve - nit re - qui - em, nec in - ve - nit

nec in - ve - nit re - qui - em, nec in - ve -

nec in - ve - nit re - qui - em, nec in - ve - nit

8 nit re - qui - em, nec in - ve - nit re - qui

- em, nec in - ve - nit re - qui - em,

41 re - qui - em, nec in - ve - nit re - qui - em,

- nit re - qui - em, nec in - ve - nit re - qui - em. DA - LETH,

nec in - ve - nit re - qui - em. DA - LETH,

8 - em, nec in - ve - nit re - qui - em. DA - LETH, DA

re - qui - em. DA

nec in - ve - nit re - qui - em. DA

45

DA - LETH, DA - LETH: Om - nes
 DA - LETH, DA - LETH: Om - nes per -
 - LETH, DA - LETH, DA - LETH:
 - LETH, DA - LETH, DA - LETH:
 - LETH, DA - LETH, DA - LETH:

49

per-se-cu-to - res e - ius ap-pre-hen-de - runt e - am in-ter an - gus - ti - as. Om -
 - se - cu - to - res e - ius ap - pre - hen - de - runt e - am in - ter an - gu - sti - as.
 Om -

53

- nes per-se - cu-to - res e - ius ap - pre - hen - de - runt
 Om - nes per - se - cu - to - res e - ius ap - pre - hen - de - runt
 - nes per-se - cu-to - res e - ius ap - pre - hen - de - runt
 Om - nes per - se - cu - to - res e - ius ap - pre - hen - de - runt
 Om - nes per - se - cu - to - res e - ius ap - pre - hen - de - runt

56

e - am in - ter an - gus - ti - as, in - ter an - gus - ti - as, in - ter an - gu - sti - as, in - ter an - gu - sti - as, an - gu - sti - as, an - am in - ter an - gu - sti - as, an - gu - sti - as, in - ter e - am in - ter an - gu - sti - as, in - ter an - gu - sti - as, an -

59

- gus - ti - as: as, an - gu - sti - as: an - gu - sti - as: lu - gent e - o quod non sint qui ve - ni - ant ad an - gu - sti - as: lu - gent e - o quod non sint qui ve - ni - ant ad so -

62

- gu - sti - as: lu - gent e - o quod non sint qui ve - ni - ant ad so - lem - ni - ta - lu - gent e - o quod non sint qui ve - ni - ant ad so - lem - ni - so - lem - ni - ta - tem, ad so - lem - ni - ta - lem - ni - ta - tem, lu - gent e - o quod non sint qui ve - ni - ant ad so - lem - ni - ta - lem - ni - ta - tem,

65

tem ad so - lem - ni - ta - tem, so - lem - ni - ta - tem,

ta - tem, ad so - lem - ni - ta

tem, ad so - lem - ni - ta -

tem, ad so - lem - ni - ta -

ad so - lem - ni - ta - tem,

67

ad so - lem - ni - ta - tem. Om - nes por-tae ei - us de-

- tem. Om - nes por-tae e - ius de-

tem, so - lem - ni - ta - tem. Om - nes por-tae e - ius de - struc-

- tem, so - lem - ni - ta - tem. Om - nes por-tae e - ius de - struc

ad so - lem - ni - ta - tem. Om - nes por - tae e -

70

- struc - tae sa - cer - do - tes ei - us ge - men - tes vir-

- struc - tae, sa - cer - do - tes e - ius ge - men - tes,

- tae, sa - cer - do - tes e - ius ge - men - tes, vir - gi - nes ei - us squa - li

- tae, sa - cer - do - tes e - ius ge - men - tes, vir -

- ius de - struc - tae, sa - cer - do - tes e - ius ge - men - tes,

73

gi-nes ei - us squa - li - dae et ip - sa op - pres - sa a - ma - ri - tu - di -
 vir - gi - nes ei - us squa - li - dae et ip - sa op - pres - sa a - ma - ri - tu -
 dae et ip - sa op - pres - sa, op - pres - sa a - ma - ri -
 gi - nes ei - us squa - li - dae, et ip - sa op - pres - sa a - ma - ri -

76

ne, a - ma - ri - tu - di - ne, a - ma - ri - tu - di - ne.
 di - ne, a - ma - ri - tu - di - ne, a - ma - ri - tu - di - ne.
 tu - di - ne, a - ma - ri - tu - di - ne, a - ma - ri - tu - di - ne, a - ma - ri - tu - di - ne.
 tu - di - ne, a - ma - ri - tu - di - ne, a - ma - ri - tu - di - ne.

80

ma - ri - tu - di - ne, a - ma - ri - tu - di - ne, a - ma - ri - tu - di - ne.
 HETH. HETH. HETH.
 HETH.
 HETH. HETH.
 HETH. HETH. HETH.
 HETH. HETH.

82

Fa-cti sunt hos-tes e - ius in ca-pi-te in-

86

Fa - cti sunt hos - tes ei - us in ca - pi-
 Fa - cti sunt hos - tes
 Fa - cti sunt hos - tes
 e - ius in ca - pi - te in - i - mi -
 - i - mi - ci il - li - us, il - li - us lo - cu-ple-ta-ti sunt,

89

- ius in ca - pi-te in - i - mi - ci il - li - us, lo - cu - ple-ta - ti
 - te in - i - mi - ci il - li - us lo - cu-ple-ta-ti sunt lo - cu-ple-ta - ti sunt
 ei - us in ca - pi - te in - i - mi - ci il - li - us lo - cu - ple-ta-ti sunt:
 ci il - li - us lo - cu-ple-ta-ti sunt: qui - a
 lo - cu - ple - ta - ti sunt lo - cu - ple-ta-
 sunt, lo - cu-ple-ta - ti sunt, lo - cu-ple-ta - ti sunt: qui - a

92

qui - a Do - mi - nus lo - cu - tus est su - per e - am
 qui - a Do - mi - nus lo - cu - tus est su - per e - am prop - ter
 Do - mi - nus lo - cu - tus est su - per e - am prop - ter mul - ti - tu - di -
 - ti sunt: qui - a Do - mi - nus lo - cu - tus

95

Do - mi - nus lo - cu - tus est su - per e - am prop - ter mul - ti - tu - di -
 prop - ter mul - ti - tu - di - nem, qui - a Do - mi - nus lo - cu - tus
 mul - ti - tu - di - nem, qui - a Do - mi - nus lo - cu - tus est su - per e - am
 - nem, in - i - qui - ta - tum e - ius, qui - a Do - mi - nus lo - cu - tus est su -
 est su - per e - am prop - ter mul - ti - tu - di - nem, in - i - qui - ta - tum e - ius, qui - a

99

- nem, in - i - qui - ta - tum e - ius, qui - a Do - mi - nus lo - cu - tus est su - per e - am
 est su - per e - am prop - ter mul - ti - tu - di - nem i - ni - qui - ta - tum e
 prop - ter mul - ti - tu - di - nem i - ni - qui - ta - tum e - ius i - ni - qui - ta - tum e
 - per e - am prop - ter mul - ti - tu - di - nem i - ni - qui - ta - tum
 Do - mi - nus lo - cu - tus est su - per e - am prop - ter mul - ti - tu - di - nem i - ni - qui -

prop - ter mul - ti - tu - di - nem i - ni - qui - ta - tum e - ius,

121

ad Do-mi-num De - um tu - um, con - ver - te-re ad Do-mi-
 um, ad Do-mi-num De - um tu - um, con - ver - te-re ad Do-
 - um tu - um, ad Do - mi - num De - um tu - um, con - ver - te - re ad
 um, ad Do-mi-num De - um tu - um, con - ver - te-re ad
 - um tu - um, ad Do - mi - num De - um tu - um, con -

124

- num De - um tu - um, con -
 - num De - um tu - um,
 - mi-num De - um tu - um, tu - um,
 Do - mi - num De - um tu - um, tu - um,
 Do - mi - num De - um tu - um
 - ver - te-re ad Do - mi - num De - um tu - um.

128

con - ver - te - re ad Do - mi - num De - um tu -
 con - ver - te - re ad Do - mi - num De - um tu -
 con - ver - te - re ad Do - mi - num De - um tu
 con - ver - te - re ad Do - mi - num De - um tu
 con - ver - te - re ad Do - mi - num De - um tu

130

The image shows a musical score for five staves, spanning measures 130 and 131. The score is in a key signature of three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat) and a common time signature. The notation includes various note values, rests, and slurs. The lyrics 'um.' are placed below the staves in measures 130 and 131. A circled fermata is present at the end of measure 131 on each staff. A small number '8' is located below the third staff in measure 130.

um.

um.

um.

um.

um.

um.

um.

um.

Example 4

Why do I use?

William Byrd (c.1540-1623)

Superius [Soprano]

Medius [Alto]
The first singing part

Contratenor [Alto]

Tenor [Tenor]

Bassus [Bass]

Why do I use my pa - per ink and pen, my pa - per ink

Why do I use my pa - per ink and pen, my pa -

Why do I use my pa - per

Why do I use my pa - per ink and pen, and

Why do I use, why do I use my pa - per ink and

and pen, and pen, why do I use my pa - per ink and

per ink and pen, why do I use my pa - per ink and

pen, and call my wits to coun - sel what to

pen, and call my wits to coun - sel what to

pen, and call my wits to coun-sel what to say? Such

pen, and call my wits to coun - sel what to say?

pen, and call my wits to coun - sel what to

say? Such me - mo-ries were made for mor-tal men, were made for
 say? Such me - mo-ries were made for mor - tal men,
 me - mo - ries, such me-mo - ries, such me - mo-ries were made for mor - tal
 Such me - mo-ries, such me-mo - ries were made for mor - tal men,
 say, what to say? Such me - mo - ries, were made for mor - tal men, were

20
 mor - tal men, I speak of Saints, whose names can - not de -
 I speak of Saints, whose names can - - - not de -
 men, for mor - tal men, I speak of Saints, whose names can - not de - cay, whose
 for mor - tal men, I speak of Saints whose names can - not de -
 made for mor - tal men, I speak of Saints whose names can - not de -

-cay, an An - gel's trump, an An - gel's trump, an An - gel's trump,
 -cay, an An - gel's trump, an An - gel's trump,
 names can-not de - cay, an An - gel's trump, were fit - ter
 -cay, an An - gel's trump, an An - gel's trump, an An - gel's trump, were
 -cay, an An - gel's trump, an An - gel's trump,

30



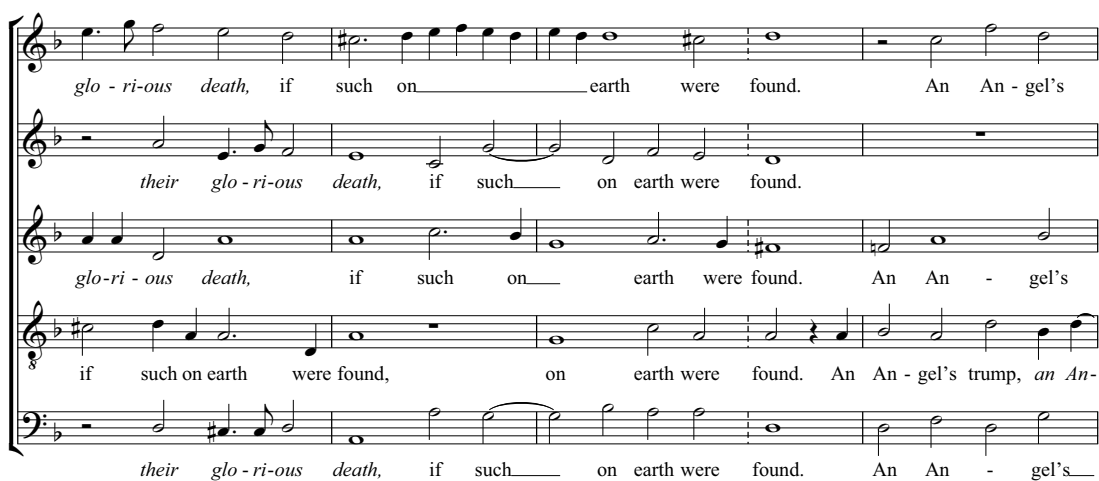
were_ fit - ter for to sound, their glo - ri - ous death, *their*

were_ fit - ter for to sound, their glo - ri - ous death,

for to__ sound, to sound, their glo - ri - ous death, *their glo - ri - ous death, their*

fit - ter for to sound, to__ sound, their glo - ri - ous death, *their glo - ri - ous death,*

were_ fit - ter for to sound, their glo - ri - ous death,



glo - ri - ous death, if such on__ earth were found. An An - gel's

their glo - ri - ous death, if such__ on earth were found.

glo - ri - ous death, if such on__ earth were found. An An - gel's

if such on earth were found, on earth were found. An An - gel's trump, *an An-*

their glo - ri - ous death, if such__ on earth were found. An An - gel's__



trump, *an An - gel's trump, an An - gel's trump, were_ fit - ter*

An An - gel's trump, *an An - gel's trump, were_ fit - ter*

trump, *an An - gel's trump, were fit - ter__ for to__ sound,*

- gel's__ trump, *an An - gel's trump, an An - gel's trump were_ fit - ter for to*

trump, *an An - gel's__ trump were_ fit -*

40

for to sound, their glo-ri-ous death, their glo-ri-ous death if
 for to sound their glo-ri-ous death, their glo-ri-ous
 to sound, their glo-ri-ous death, their glo-ri-ous death, their glo-ri-ous death
 sound, to sound, their glo-ri-ous death, their glo-ri-ous death if such on earth were
 -ter for to sound, their glo-ri-ous death, their glo-ri-ous
 such on earth were found, if such on earth were found.
 death, if such on earth were found, if such on earth were found.
 if such on earth were found, if such on earth were found.
 found, if such on earth were found, if such on earth were found.
 death, if such on earth were found, if such on earth were found.

1. Why doe I use my paper inck and pen,
 and cal my wits to counsel what to say,
 such memories were made for mortal men,
 I speak of Saints, whose names cannot decay,
 an Angels trump, were fitter for to sound,
 their glorious death, if such on earth were found.
2. That store of such were once on earth pursu'd,
 the histories of auncient times record,
 whose constancie great tyrants rage subdu'd,
 through patient death professing Christ their lord
 as his Apostles perfect witness beare,
 with many more that blessed Martirs were.
3. Whose patience rare & most couragious minde,
 with fame renom'd perpetuall shall endure,
 by whose examples wee may rightly finde,
 of holy lyfe and death a patterne pure:
 that wee therefore their vertues may embrace,
 pray wee to Christ to guide us with his grace.

Editorial notes

Source: William Byrd, *Psalmes, Sonets, & songs of sadnes and pietie* (London, 1588), no.33.

Text: Traditionally attributed to St. Henry Walpole (1558-95). Byrd's first stanza appears in *A true reporte of the death & martyrdome of M. Campion, Iesuite and priest, & M. Sherwin, & M. Bryan priestes, at Tiborne the first of December 1581*, a poem of thirty stanzas, but not including the second and third printed below Byrd's setting.

Part of my complete edition of the published vocal works of William Byrd made available through the Choral Public Domain Library (<http://www.cpd.org>). For general editorial notes, please visit my user page at <http://www.cpd.org/wiki/index.php/User:DaveF>. All scores are made freely available according to the CPDL Licence for downloading, printing, performing and recording. No further conditions are or can be attached, although it's always good to hear of any performances. Please do not, without consulting me, make copies of my scores available through other websites – there's no need, first of all, as CPDL is always here, and secondly by doing so you put these editions beyond my control and so will miss out on any updates and revisions.

Example 5

Haec dicit Dominus
Cantiones sacrae II, 1591, no.13

Jeremiah 31: 15-17

William Byrd

Superius (Alto)
Medius (Tenor)
Contratenor (Tenor)
Tenor (Bass)
Bassus (Bass)

Haec di - cit Do - mi - nus, haec
Haec di - cit Do - mi - nus, haec
Haec di - cit Do - mi - nus, haec
Haec di - cit Do - mi - nus, haec
Haec di - cit Do - mi - nus, haec

A.
T.
T.
B.
B.

di - cit Do - mi - nus: Vox
di - cit Do - mi - nus: Vox in ex - cel - sis, ex - cel -
di - cit Do - mi - nus: Vox in ex - cel - sis, ex - cel -
di - cit Do - mi - nus: Vox in ex - cel - sis,
di - cit Do - mi - nus: Vox in ex - cel - sis, ex - cel -

A.
T.
T.
B.
B.

in ex - cel - sis au - di - ta est
- sis au - di - ta est
- sis, vox in ex - cel - sis au - di - ta est, au - di - ta est
vox in ex - cel - sis au - di - ta est, au - di - ta est
- sis, vox in ex - cel - sis au - di - ta est

20

A. la - men - ta - ti - o - nis, la - men -

T. la - men - ta - ti - o - nis, la - men - ta - ti - o - nis, la -

T. la - men - ta - ti - o - nis, la - men - ta - ti - o -

B. la - men - ta - ti - o - nis, la - men - ta - ti - o - nis, la - men -

B. la - men - ta - ti - o - nis, la - men -

A. - ta - ti - o - nis, lu - ctus et fle - tus,

T. - men - ta - ti - o - nis, lu - ctus et fle - tus, Ra - chaell

T. - - - nis, lu - ctus et fle - tus, Ra - chaell plo - ran -

B. - ta - ti - o - nis, lu - ctus et fle - tus,

B. - ta - ti - o - nis, lu - ctus et fle - tus, Ra -

30

A. Ra - chaell plo - ran - tis fi - li - os su - - -

T. plo - ran - tis fi - li - os su - os, fi - li - os su -

T. - tis fi - li - os su - os, fi - li - os su - - -

B. Ra - chaell plo - ran - tis fi - li - os su - - -

B. - chaell plo - ran - tis fi - li - os su - os,

"Blame Not the Printer": William Byrd's Publishing Drive, 1588–1591 — 61

A. - os, et no - len - tis

T. - os, et no - len - tis

T. - os, et no - len - tis con - so - la - ri,

B. - os, et no - len - tis con - so - la - ri su -

B. et no - len - tis con - so - la - ri su - per e - os,

40

A. con - so - la - ri su - per e - os, su - per e -

T. con-so-la - ri, et no - len - tis con - so - la - ri su - per

T. et no - len - tis con - so - la - ri su - per e -

B. - per e - os, et no - len - tis con - so - la -

B. et no - len - tis con - so - la - ri

A. - os, qui - a non

T. e - os, qui - a non

T. - os, su - per e - os, qui - a non sunt,

B. - ri su - per e - os, qui - a non sunt, qui - a

B. su - per e - os, qui - a non

50

A.
 sunt, qui - a non sunt.

T.
 sunt, qui - a non sunt.

T.
 qui - a non sunt, qui - a non sunt.

B.
 non sunt, qui - a non sunt.

B.
 sunt, qui - a non sunt.

Secunda pars

A.
 Haec di - cit Do - mi - nus:

T.
 Haec di - cit Do - mi - nus, Do - mi - nus:

T.
 Haec di - cit

B.
 Haec di - cit Do - mi - nus, haec di - cit Do -

B.
 Haec di - cit

60

A.
 Qui - e - scat vox tu - a

T.
 Qui - e - scat vox tu -

T.
 Do - mi - nus, Do - mi - nus: Qui - e - scat vox tu -

B.
 - mi - nus: Qui - e - scat vox tu -

B.
 Do - mi - nus: Qui - e - scat vox tu -

70

A. a plo - ra - - - tu, et o - cu-li tu -

T. - a a plo - ra - tu, a plo - ra - tu, et o - cu-li tu -

T. - a a plo - ra - tu, a plo - ra - - - tu,

B. - a a plo - ra - tu, a plo - ra - tu, a plo -

B. - a a plo - ra - tu, a plo - ra - tu, et o - cu -

A. - - i a la - cri - mis,

T. - i, et o - cu-li tu - i a la - - cri -

T. et o - cu-li tu - i, et o - cu-li tu - i a

B. - ra - tu, et o - cu-li tu - - - i a

B. - li tu - i a la - cri - mis, a

80

A. a la - cri - mis, qui - a

T. - mis, a la - cri - mis, qui - a est mer -

T. la - cri - mis, a la - cri - mis, qui - a est mer - ces, qui -

B. a la - cri - mis, a la - cri - mis, qui - a est mer - ces

B. la - cri - mis, a la - cri - mis, qui - a est mer - ces, qui -

A. — est mer - ces o - pe-ri tu - o, a - it Do -

T. - ces o - pe-ri tu - o, a - it

T. - a est mer - ces o - pe-ri tu - o, a - it Do -

B. o - pe-ri tu - o, o - pe-ri tu - o, a -

B. - a est mer - ces, qui - a est mer - ces o - pe-ri tu - o, a -

A. - mi - nus: et est spes in no - vis -

T. Do - mi - nus: et est spes in no - vis -

T. - mi - nus: et est spes

B. - it Do - mi - nus: et est spes, et est spes in no - vis -

B. - it Do - mi - nus: et est spes

90

A. - si-mis tu - - is, in

T. - si-mis tu - - is,

T. in no - vis - si-mis tu - -

B. - si-mis tu - - is, in no - vis - si-mis tu - -

B. in no - vis - si-mis tu - -

"Blame Not the Printer": William Byrd's Publishing Drive, 1588–1591 — 65

100

A. no - vis - si - mis tu - is,

T. in no - vis - si - mis tu - is, et re - ver -

T. - is, in no - vis - si - mis tu - is, et

B. - is, in no - vis - si - mis tu - is,

B. - is, in no - vis - si - mis tu - is,

A. et re - ver - ten - tur fi - li - i, fi - li - i

T. - ten - tur fi - li - i, et re - ver - ten - tur fi -

T. re - ver - ten - tur fi - li - i, et re - ver - ten - tur fi - li - i

B. et re - ver - ten - tur fi - li - i, et re - ver - ten - tur, et re - ver - ten - tur

B. et re - ver - ten - tur fi - li - i ad

A. ad ter - mi - nos su - os, ad

T. - li - i ad ter - mi - nos su - os,

T. ad ter - mi - nos su -

B. fi - li - i ad ter - mi - nos su -

B. ter - mi - nos su - os, su -

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A. ter - mi-nos su - os, ad ter - mi-nos su -

T. ad ter - mi-nos su - os,

T. - os, ad ter - mi-nos su -

B. - os, ad ter - mi-nos su -

B. - os, ad ter - mi-nos su - os, ad

A. - os, ad ter - mi-nos su - os.

T. ad ter - mi-nos su - os.

T. - os, ad ter - mi-nos su - os.

B. - os, ad ter - mi-nos su - os, ad ter - mi-nos su - os.

B. ter - mi-nos su - os, ad ter - mi-nos su - os.

Thus saith the Lord: A voice was heard on high of lamentation, of mourning, and weeping, of Rachel weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted for them, because they are not.
 Thus saith the Lord: Let thy voice cease from weeping, and thy eyes tears: for there is a reward for thy work: and there is hope for thy last end, and the children shall return to their own borders.

BYRD AND FRIENDS

Kerry McCarthy
26 August 2006



We have more than one first-hand report from Byrd that he did his composing at night. Even in our post-Romantic age, we still tend to think of writing great music as a solitary activity: the composer in a dimly lit room, struggling with the big questions of art and life and death. In this year's program, I've quoted Byrd's famous line about his own experience of musical inspiration: when he ponders over "divine things" and thinks seriously about the words he wants to set, the musical ideas appear to him—he literally says they "come running." This fits well with the image of the composer as an isolated genius waiting for the muse to descend. What I want to do today is offer a slightly different view of his life and his work. He may have composed in the middle of the night, but his music, especially the music we're singing at this year's festival, was anything but a solitary pursuit. To get from a flash of musical inspiration to an actual sung Mass took all sorts of collaboration: from patrons and supporters, from publishers and scribes, from musicians, and from the clergy. The last of these was not a trivial matter in England at the time, where the Mass was illegal and Catholic priests were forced into hiding. This music could only be distributed in the first place through a large network of friendship and patronage. It also called for a group of reasonably skilled performers if Byrd was going to hear it anywhere outside his own head. That may sound obvious, but it's not true for all English Renaissance music. Think of the lutenist John Dowland, a younger contemporary of Byrd's who was famous for his deliciously gloomy lute songs. If he wanted to hear one of his own songs, he sat down and played it. If he wanted to impress the French or the Italians or the King of Denmark, he put his lute in its case, got on a boat, and played his music for them. The moment you start writing polyphonic music, music for a group of singers, you're no longer a completely free agent: you are, at least in theory, creating communities of musicians.

In some cases, it's obvious who these communities were. Palestrina, for example, was writing his music for the hand-picked choir of the Sistine Chapel, and he was publishing it in large quantities for the public market. If you were running a church choir in sixteenth-century Italy, and you wanted the latest thing in tune with the latest church reforms, you went to the local bookshop and picked up some copies of Palestrina. Publishers like Gardano were making a fortune from this; it was the sixteenth-century version of the Oregon Catholic Press. Byrd's case was more complex. He was writing music for rituals that were officially forbidden: if you put out posters in England four hundred years ago advertising a Pontifical High Mass of the

Tridentine Rite, you would soon find heavily armed men doing rather nasty things to you and your family. Given this tense situation, some people bought copies of Byrd's Catholic music because they liked the music, then used it in ways that had little to do with his original grand scheme. Other people involved with the production of the music simply disagreed with Byrd on some matters of religion but supported his project anyway. As I mentioned in my talk last year, the music in Byrd's *Gradualia* is closely tied to the calendar and to various ritual structures. This music was also tied to a social context, to specific communities and specific people. Today I'd like to introduce you to some of those people.

First of all, Byrd's patrons. When Renaissance composers wanted to publish a volume of music, they chose a patron, someone of higher social and financial standing, who would support the book, and whose name would appear on the title page as a sort of endorsement—sometimes in larger print than the composer's own name. The composer was also expected to write a letter of dedication to the patron, generally praising him or her in extravagant terms. (Tallis and Byrd's 1575 dedication to Queen Elizabeth is a classic example of this.) The dedication would then be published along with the music. Almost all the first-person testimony we have from Byrd as a composer comes from these open letters he wrote to his various patrons. When he wrote about his career, about his musical life, about how he saw the world, it was in these letters. The line saying “the music comes to me when I think seriously about the words”—that comes from one of those letters. It can be tempting just to treat Byrd's patrons as brand names put on the books, and his dedication letters as excuses for him to say interesting things about his own work. It is worth asking: who were these people? How did their own lives relate to the music Byrd was offering them?

To take one example: the patron of the first book of *Gradualia*, the music in this year's concert. This was a man named Henry Howard, the earl of Northampton and one of the more colorful figures in English Renaissance public life. He was born in 1540, probably the same year as Byrd. Like Byrd, he was a very intelligent and artistic person who found himself caught between a number of competing loyalties. By 1605, when Byrd presented him with the book, both of them were well into middle age and had finally found a niche for themselves, a more or less stable way of life. You can read all about Byrd's biography in the program. Henry Howard's biography is even more interesting. His family history is worth going into a bit: it explains some things about his temperament and his beliefs.

Howard's grandfather was an important member of King Henry VIII's cabinet, and helped the king get rid of his first two wives, which would come back to haunt the whole family later. His father was also named Henry, and he's the person you'll get if you do a google search for Henry Howard. He was one of the most important poets of the English Renaissance, the one who brought a number of Italian forms into English literature, and at least the indirect reason why Shakespeare was writing sonnets and blank verse and all the rest: in fact he invented English blank verse. One of his cousins was Catherine Howard, who became the fifth wife of Henry VIII. That marriage predictably went sour, and the king had her head cut off. He did the same to Henry Howard's father, the poet, for being on the wrong side of the matter. He almost did the same to his grandfather, but the king died the night before he was supposed to give the order for execution. Young Henry Howard was barely six years old at the time, and he was forcibly taken away from his mother, to be raised by more politically suitable guardians. His childhood tutor was John Foxe, the author of *Foxe's Book of Martyrs*, a particularly gory illustrated volume of stories about what was done to Protestants by unsympathetic regimes. In the

1550s, when England temporarily became Catholic again, he was sent to the household of the bishop of Lincoln. He was there from age 13 to age 18, soaking in an atmosphere of intellectual sophistication and quite uncompromising Catholicism. Meanwhile Byrd was in London, singing complicated music in Latin and learning to be a professional musician. When Queen Elizabeth came into power in 1558, England became Protestant once again. By the time they were out of their teenage years, both Byrd and Howard had been sat down three different times and told that everything they'd ever been taught about religion and culture was wrong: imagine growing up through the 1960s, three times over.

Byrd was appointed organist at Lincoln Cathedral in his early twenties, just after Howard left. He was given a hard time by the rather puritanical cathedral authorities, who at one point told him to stop playing elaborate organ pieces and to do nothing but give the pitch for the singers. Howard went to Cambridge and eventually became a lecturer in rhetoric there. He also started to write books. One of his first books was a treatise on passive civil disobedience—which was a major issue given the number of people, probably including Howard himself at the time, who simply refused to go to services run by the state church. His brother got actively involved in politics and came up with a slightly delusional plan to get married to Mary, Queen of Scots and make England Catholic again. I hardly need to tell you what happened to him. We still have the letter he wrote to his family the night before he was beheaded: what he had to say was “stay out of politics.”

Meanwhile Henry Howard was turning out scholarly treatises, working more or less as a pen for hire. If anyone wanted a clever and literate defense of their position, he would write one. He wrote about everything from coats of arms to astrology to Puritanism. He was also a serious amateur musician: at one point he was looking for a teacher to help improve his lute playing, and he liked to put little musical jokes and puns into his letters. He clearly had higher ambitions than being a clever but obscure Cambridge academic, so, starting in his forties, he gradually began to work his way up into the ranks of the royal court. He soon discovered that he was very good at flattery and ingratiating himself with people in power—his taste for attractive young men didn't hurt him there either. He started to collect all sorts of distinctions. One way the English government handed out favors was to grant monopolies in some particular trade. We already know about this from Tallis and Byrd, who were given a monopoly on printed music by Queen Elizabeth. The rules were simple: no music (or even blank music paper) could be printed in England or imported into England unless it was under the auspices of those two composers, and they got a cut from the profits. This was a simple way to regulate the economy, and it happened with almost everything produced in England. I was curious whether Byrd's friends and associates held any other monopolies of this sort. It turns out the patron of Byrd's 1589 *Cantiones*, that exceptionally dark collection of Latin motets, had the monopoly on gunpowder—which may have raised some eyebrows. Henry Howard had the monopoly on starch. That sounds silly until you think about the clothes that people were wearing at the time, and the three-foot-wide starched ruffs they put around their necks. Most of Elizabethan high society was held together with farinaceous substances. There was so much starch being made in England that it actually became a point of serious controversy: the peasants were starving while the upper and middle classes were processing all the wheat flour to keep their fancy starched collars in place. Meanwhile Howard benefited from the whole business, just as Byrd did from music printing and Edward Somerset from gunpowder. Those three products—sheet music, gunpowder, and starch—somehow sum up a lot of English Renaissance society.

Bit by bit, Henry Howard fought his way up from relative obscurity into a quite important position at court. He even managed to negotiate an increase in salary for the singers of the Chapel Royal, which made him a popular figure among musicians. Through all this, he was always ambiguous about religion. He wrote a letter to Queen Elizabeth swearing that he had stopped going to Catholic Masses and associating with priests, and he wrote books defending Anglicanism, but he was never really comfortable with the established church. At one point he was visiting the queen in her private bedroom while she was sick (which is remarkable in itself), but when her chaplain came in and started to pray out loud, he literally ran out of the room in a panic, unwilling to take part in Protestant worship of any kind. Byrd picked him when he dedicated his first book of undeniably Catholic music. (The first undeniably Catholic music was actually the three masses, but those were published under the table, with no dedications and no title pages.) He got in trouble for being seen at Catholic services, but he was put on the royal commission to hunt down Jesuit sympathizers and get them out of England—which he did with grim efficiency, making some exceptions for his friends.

Meanwhile, what was going on in his own mind? We are lucky that he left such a substantial paper trail: not just academic books and letters, but a series of private notebooks and elaborate religious manuscripts. We've all seen pictures of so-called books of hours from the Middle Ages. These were prayer books, sometimes decorated with colorful illuminations, made for a person to read and ponder over in private. They had prayers to be said at various times of the day, the so-called Divine Office. Henry Howard made a whole series of prayer books of much the same kind. Some of them are still in draft form, in an almost illegible scrawl on huge sheets of paper. Some others are beautiful bound manuscripts in his neatest handwriting. He even illuminated one of the books in color. Here's a page from that book, one of the chapter headings. The illumination is of the burning bush from the Old Testament, which looks more like an exploding oak tree in this case. This photograph is about twice the original size, and, unfortunately, the orange and red and gold is a bit washed out from the original. There is only one catch with these books: the contents have almost nothing to do with the official Catholic liturgy, as the old books of hours did, and even less to do with the official Anglican office. Howard was writing these prayers himself, mostly in Latin, or in many cases cobbling them together from the scriptures and other sources. He wouldn't go to Protestant services, and he couldn't go to Catholic services, so he created his own prayer books and used them instead. It was a carefully ordered universe, just like the elaborate layout of Byrd's *Gradualia*, but it was a private and eccentric one, for an individual person to use rather than a community. (He did occasionally send one of these books to a friend as a sort of missionary effort, but there is no record of how they reacted.) Here we have a very different solution to the religious problems of Elizabethan England: roll your own liturgy.

It's always worth comparing private manuscripts of this sort with the books Byrd was publishing. Our festival a couple of years ago featured music from the 1591 book of *Cantiones*. That was the last book of assorted motets Byrd wrote before he started working on more orderly collections of liturgical music. Probably the most memorable thing in the book is the motet *Infelix ego*—the singers will certainly remember it. This is an extraordinary fifteen-minute piece based on a long prayer by the Italian Renaissance fire-and-brimstone preacher Savonarola. As it turns out, the patron of the 1591 *Cantiones*, John Lumley, had copied out exactly the same prayer near the beginning of his own devotional notebook. It's a wonderful little manuscript, barely the size of a deck of cards. Here's a facsimile in actual size. Again,

unlike a collection of polyphonic music, it's clearly a source made to be used by only one reader, to be carried around on one's person. Lumley's library catalog, which he had compiled for himself, describes it as a "very small book of prayers" and says he "made it for his own use." *Infelix ego* wasn't just a poem Byrd saw and liked and decided to set to music: it was quite literally close to his patron's heart, and the motet may have been his patron's idea. It is surprising how many people were willing to sponsor Byrd's music at a time when it was politically suspect. Without their help, our Byrd festival certainly couldn't have gone on for a decade with new music every year.

So you want to put on a Mass with high-quality singing: now that the music is published and available in print, the next ingredient in this recipe is a priest. In fact the one absolutely necessary thing is a priest. This is still true four hundred years later. All the music can be in place, but if the clergy can't or won't cooperate, nothing happens. This was the main limiting factor on the number of actual Masses in England. Despite some romantic ideas of Elizabethan Catholic life that developed during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, there wasn't a clandestine service going on every day in every basement. Having a priest around was a special occasion. The tiny handful of descriptions we have of Byrd actually making music at Mass—these tend to be in the short period between when one of his Jesuit associates makes it to England and when he's discovered and thrown into prison. There were a few old priests from earlier in the sixteenth century who had simply refused to go along with the new changes, but they were already dying out by the time Byrd began his career. There was no realistic way to educate new Catholic clergy under the kind of surveillance going on in England. Sending Italians or Bavarians or anyone else to help out would be suicidal unless they could speak perfect accent-free English and copy all the cultural mannerisms well enough to pass as something other than a foreign cleric. The only solution was to train English Catholics in Europe at special seminaries and then smuggle them back home.

The atmosphere at these so-called English colleges was interesting because of the prospects for the future: almost one in three Catholic priests in Elizabethan England were killed in the line of duty. Most of the people who were killed were young and recently ordained. Knowing that was a big part of every student's life. Close your eyes for a moment and imagine yourself back in the dining hall at your own college. Think of the noises, the smells, the friends you're sitting with. Now imagine all the walls are decorated with lurid paintings of recent alumni being tortured and executed in various unpleasant ways. That's how they decorated the dining hall of the English college in Rome, and it about sums up the culture at these places. Part of the training was to send the students on long pilgrimages in winter, on foot, without any money or any connections. This was not just a religious exercise: it was a way to get them used to walking long distances in bad weather, scrounging their food, sleeping rough, and dealing with suspicious locals—all of which were likely to happen once they got back to England. The overall effect of the whole place was somewhere between an extremely fervent seminary class and the SAS or the Navy Seals. All of this created a kind of hothouse atmosphere, though we do catch glimpses of them as normal young people. Some surviving manuscripts from the English College in Rome have little plays with music, put on by the students during their recreation period. The rule was that everything had to be in Latin, even recreation, so they were taking English madrigals and putting them into Latin: they even did a version of Morley's madrigal "Now is the Month of Maying," which is still the favorite of amateur madrigal groups. It's actually quite touching, seeing these eighteen- or nineteen-year-old kids trying to have something

like a normal college life before they went back to England and found their names on the Wanted List. The last verse of that madrigal has had the “dainty nymphs” and the “barley break” discreetly edited out; what they sang instead was “Let’s dance now; our youth is coming to an end.”

One of William Byrd’s sons entered an English seminary and left after two years. We don’t know why: it may have been bad behavior, academic incompetence, or a simple lack of interest. One of the people to make his way successfully through the system was a Jesuit priest named Henry Garnet, who became a friend and associate of Byrd. I mentioned him briefly in my talk last year; his story is an interesting one. We have a trustworthy report that he was the most talented musician in his whole school as a teenager. By the time he arrived in Italy, he was also very good at science, and would probably have gone into that if he hadn’t decided for the priesthood: his astronomy tutor at the Jesuit College in Rome was a brilliant scientist, one who went on to try reassuring the Pope that Galileo was in fact right. Garnet finished his education in 1586, was ordained a priest, and managed to get back into England in disguise. He spent almost two decades working underground there. He ministered to families and to people in prison; he made music with Byrd when he got the chance; and he generally did a great deal of good. He was actively interested in keeping up the old calendar of Catholic holidays, and he may well have been one of Byrd’s inspirations as he started writing the *Gradualia*. All of that changed abruptly in 1605 when he became mixed up with the Gunpowder Plot. I mentioned the Gunpowder Plot last year. This was a conspiracy by a group of hotheaded young Catholic extremists, led by a man named Guy Fawkes, to blow up the English Parliament during its opening session. That was the one moment in the year when the royal family, the various branches of the government, and the high-ranking clergy were all assembled in one place. If the conspirators had succeeded, they might or might not have made England a Catholic country again, but they would certainly have started it out with a clean slate. The plot was of course foiled at the very last minute. (Earlier this month, my first day in Portland, I looked over at a newspaper stand and saw a huge headline saying PLOT FOILED. Interesting to see that become everyday speech again as we enter the twenty-first century.)

At this point, Henry Garnet was stuck in a difficult place. He’d had nothing to do with the actual conspiracy—in fact the Jesuits were not allowed to use any kind of violence or even condone it. However, it came out that he had heard about it months in advance, and not told the authorities. This is the story: someone had asked to talk with him earlier that year, and he came to find the poor fellow in a completely agitated state. He said he had something to confess. He could barely sit still, much less kneel down in the usual way, so Garnet said the two of them should go for a walk, and consider everything said as being under the seal of confession. So they went for a walk, and this man told him there was a conspiracy to blow the whole English government to bits, he had become involved in it, and now he was terrified and afraid he might be doing something wrong. Of course Garnet told him yes, in fact, he *was* doing something wrong, but that was all he could do. Then, as now, anything that a person tells a priest in confession has to remain totally confidential, even if it has political or criminal implications. The priest can’t report it to the authorities: if he does, the evidence is inadmissible and the priest is permanently relieved of his job. We still see stories in the news about microphones in jail cells, and the argument is still going on. Henry Garnet did everything he could—he even wrote a series of more and more frantic letters to the pope, asking him to issue some sort of decree forbidding political violence in England—but he felt he simply couldn’t turn this man

in for something he'd said in confession. People have praised him since then as an advocate of privacy and individual conscience, though of course the debate has two sides. Try a little thought-experiment: some terrified person tells a well-respected religious leader in America that there's a plan to fly planes into the World Trade Center, but he doesn't report it directly to anyone because he can't or won't betray something said in confidence as a matter of spiritual counseling. Six months later, boom.—Quite a few innocent people did suffer a lot as a result of the Gunpowder Plot, even though the match was never lit in the end. We are fortunate that Byrd himself wasn't directly involved with any of this, although it happened halfway through the publication of the *Gradualia*, and he had some trouble getting the second half into print because of it.

Once the notorious Guy Fawkes was out of the way, Henry Garnet was the most wanted man in England. He knew they were coming for him, and they finally cornered him in a private house out in the country, where they found him hidden in a specially built secret room after almost a week of searching. We still have the letter he smuggled out from prison a few days later, describing what had happened. He got the letter out by asking for an orange, writing in orange juice, letting it dry, and disguising it as an innocuous piece of paper, which reveals its message when you heat it over a low flame. (I've tried this myself. Watered-down orange juice on unbleached paper makes perfect invisible ink.) He tells the whole story with his usual frankness: he says he could have stayed comfortably in the secret room for months if the owners of the house hadn't been using it for junk storage and if they'd bothered to put in a toilet. Once he was out, the head of local law enforcement, which was not much more than a vigilante mob in this case, felt guilty about what he'd put this poor man through for a week. He took him to his own house and gave him a lavish dinner to help him get his strength back. Garnet spends a whole page of the letter describing, in detail, all the various fine wines that were served that night.

He must have known what was coming next. He was given a quick trial and found guilty of high treason. Between the verdict and the sentencing, he had to sit through a very long and eloquent final speech by the prosecution, comparing him to all the great villains and conspirators of world history. Later that year, the speech was published in book form. It actually became a minor classic of anti-Catholic literature. King James had it translated into all the major European languages and sent it around as an example of good English criminal justice. The king also rewarded its author with various honors and business deals, including a huge castle in Dover and a monopoly on the production of starch. The speaker's name, of course, was Henry Howard, and he was the patron of the first book of Byrd's *Gradualia*, which had been published barely a year earlier.

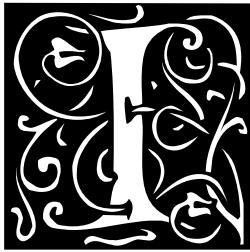
Henry Garnet was sentenced to death by hanging, drawing, and quartering. If you came to hear us sing the three-part mass last Sunday morning, you heard a little song from the first book of *Gradualia*: it was Byrd's setting of *Adoramus te Christe*. That was the exact prayer Garnet said at the very end of his life, after he'd climbed up the ladder and had the rope put around his neck. No one knows whether Henry Howard was there at the execution, or what he made of it if he was. He went on to become a wealthy, successful public servant and a close friend of King James: some less sympathetic people gave him the nickname of "His Majesty's earwig." When he was well into his seventies, he developed what seems to have been cancer in one of his legs, and trying to operate on it only made things worse. We still have some of his original letters from these late years. In the very last one, his handwriting has gone shaky, and he says "my leg

hurts so much, I simply can't think any more." When he knew he was dying, he managed to contact the Spanish embassy to England. They arranged for him to meet with a Catholic priest in London—actually the Spanish ambassador's own private chaplain, who was exempt from the ban on priests that he had helped enforce. He made his confession and sorted out his allegiances one last time. He died without any heirs, and his beautiful Latin prayer books ended up in the British Library. If you go to London now, you can still ask for them at the manuscripts desk, put them in a little foam cradle, flip through the pages, and wonder what on earth he was thinking.

If I send you home today more confused than before about religious practice and religious loyalties in Renaissance England, that will be a good thing. Despite what you may have read in CD booklets or heard at school, it was far from a black-and-white situation. Byrd himself lived and worked right at the intersection of these various loyalties—which of course makes it more interesting to speak at a Byrd festival than at a Palestrina festival. I like to think he would be pleased to see us here four centuries later, singing his music, both English and Latin, and pondering over all these things.

WILLIAM BYRD, CATHOLIC AND CAREERIST

Joseph Kerman
20 August 2005



will speak today about the secular career of William Byrd, and how it entwined with his religion.

I'll begin not at the beginning of Byrd's career, but at the end of it, with a beautiful song he wrote and published in his last songbook, the *Psalms, Songs, and Sonnets* of 1611. The composer was seventy-one years old, and the language he uses is the frigid language of finance and accounting:

Retire my soul, consider thine estate—he means both the state of his soul, and what he will leave when he dies, his estate—

Retire my soul, consider thine estate
And justly sum thy lavish sins' account:
Time's dear expense, and costly pleasures rate,
How follies grow, how vanities amount:
Write all these down in pale Death's reckoning tables,
Thy days will seem but dreams, thy hopes but fables.

“Reckoning tables” are ledgers. In a less somber mood, Byrd could have looked back with satisfaction on the career which he had forged for himself—self-fashioned, as Stephen Greenblatt would say. It had been a brilliant career. He was recognized as England's greatest musician, and on occasion praised extravagantly as such. He had acquired a good deal of land and money. He had acquired a coat of arms. Was this mere worldly self-aggrandizement, which he needed to regret, and repent? Vanities, sins, follies, fables?

Byrd, as is well-known, was a self-proclaimed Roman Catholic in Protestant England, part of a substantial minority under substantial oppression. Byrd not only worked out a way to observe his faith in peace, he also found ways to support that faith tangibly. He wrote protest music on behalf of his embattled co-religionists, and he composed music for their undercover Masses. Not just composed—he also got this illegal music published and circulated around the

country. And the theme of my lecture is simple: it was only the position that Byrd had achieved through his career ambition—his relentless ambition, I might say—that allowed him to contribute so much to the Catholic cause.

I will go on to outline that career, and its involvement with Byrd's Catholicism.

1540: BIRTH

Now let's go all the way back to the beginning and start at the birth of William Byrd—which is the first of several dates I'll give you to remember (1540, not 1543, which used to be the date given). Byrd was born in London, and nothing much is known about his family. The most interesting thing is that they hailed from the town of Ingatestone in the west of Essex, very close to where Byrd himself would retire when he was about fifty.

Byrd's father may have been a member of the Fletchers Company in London: Fletchers were originally makers of arrows, but they did various other things at this time. A solid citizen, he started off his sons as choirboys, one way to get them a good education and future. Two older brothers are listed as choirboys at St. Paul's Cathedral, and while documentation is lacking for young William, he must have had his musical training at court. For we know he was the prize pupil of Thomas Tallis, then the leading figure in the Chapel Royal. He remained very close to Tallis till his death, both personally and professionally.

Also, there's an unusual, indeed so far as I know, unique musical document from Byrd's teen-age years: a motet written jointly by him and two other, mature Chapel Royal composers, William Mundy and John Sheppard. This is during Queen Mary's reign, and the piece is a liturgical item for Easter services in the Catholic rite. What this piece shows is not only that Byrd stemmed from the Chapel Royal but that he was a teen-age prodigy, like Monteverdi, Mozart, Arriaga, Mendelssohn, and Prokofiev. And not only that, he was someone who was already impressing important people, dealing with persons of power. This is characteristic and crucial for his whole career.

Next there's a gap. We hear nothing about our prodigy before he's appointed organist and choirmaster at Lincoln Cathedral in 1563, at the age of 23. This was a big job for which he gets a very good contract, no doubt through the good offices of Tallis—of course it was an Anglican job; Byrd the Catholic seems never to have had any scruples about writing for the Anglican Church. Over the next ten years he starts a family, tends to quarrel with the diocese authorities, and writes some impressive music, vocal and instrumental, which starts turning up in contemporary manuscripts (such as they are). After ten years Byrd answered the call back to the Chapel Royal in London. "Gentleman of the Chapel Royal" was the most prestigious and remunerative position in English music, really the only such that existed. Byrd's career was on the march.

1575: THE TALLIS-BYRD *CANTIONES SACRAE*

Besides putting him at the nerve center of English music, the Chapel Royal provided Byrd with rich perks, as we see only three years later, in 1575, the second of the three dates I'm asking you to focus on. Byrd was born in 1540, in the reign of Henry VIII; in 1575, aged 35, he publishes a book of Latin motets and dedicates it to Queen Elizabeth, this in collaboration with

his teacher Tallis. This book, called *Cantiones sacrae* (sacred songs), contains extraordinary music, yet it's even more extraordinary as a gesture. In the preface to the book the composers thank the queen for granting them a monopoly over music printing. This monopoly was to be a major factor in Byrd's fame and his influence, as well as his finances.

But that's only one thing. The book is much more than a lavish thank-you note. It's a powerful political statement in which, I am sure, the composers were sponsored by more powerful figures at Queen Elizabeth's court. For the Byrd-Tallis motet-book of 1575 is a nationalist proclamation. It announces its intent to show the world that England, the England of Queen Elizabeth, has composers comparable to the best in the world (some of whom are named—Lassus, Gombert, Clemens, Ferrabosco). All this is laid out in a Latin preface by a noted humanist and educator, Thomas Mulcaster, who had close ties to the court, and in another preface by an actual courtier, named Ferdinando Richardson. I've also detected the hand of another courtier back of it all, a Groom of the Privy Chamber named Alfonso Ferrabosco. Alfonso was an émigré Italian composer who was a close friend of Byrd's. Musicologists have traced many composers from whose works Byrd borrowed, from none so extensively as Alfonso.

The *Cantiones sacrae* was a great career move for Byrd and Tallis, then, and they subsequently received further gifts from the queen. But Byrd the Careerist took a strange turn shortly after 1575. This is the time when we need to turn our attention to Byrd the Catholic.

Byrd the Catholic . . . Henry VIII broke with Rome yet kept England Catholic. Byrd was a choirboy when Henry died and Protestantism was established—transforming church services and church music along with everything else. Byrd was still a choirboy when Queen Mary effected her bloody return to the old faith, and with it the Catholic liturgy—this was when young Byrd wrote that motet for Easter services jointly with Chapel Royal composers. Church music was traditionally Catholic music, of course, and so all church musicians of Byrd's generation were Catholics. After Queen Elizabeth came to throne in 1558, most musicians converted to the Church of England and wrote music for its new Anglican services, music that was sadly reduced in quantity and quality from what was wanted and heard and composed a few years before.

Yet a number of other musicians of distinction retained the old religion as best they could under difficult conditions at home, like Byrd, or emigrated to Catholic Europe. Not many, like Byrd, actually became activists working for the re-establishment of Catholicism as England's religion. They ran the severe risk of treason, torture, and execution. But this was Byrd's path. In this he joined English Catholics who had gone abroad to join the Society of Jesus in Rome, and then returned to proselytize and face execution. If I emphasize here how his career kept Byrd relatively free from risk, I don't mean to imply that he was anything but a sincere—indeed a passionate—Catholic. Of course he was. But it was only by establishing so solid a position for himself in the England of Queen Elizabeth that he was able to do so much for the Catholic cause.

What do we actually know of Byrd's Catholic sympathies or connections? Plenty, but nothing until shortly before 1575, the date of the big publication, when some remarkable personal letters show him giving music lessons to two young Catholic noblemen. One later fled the country as a traitor, but the other—and how significant this is!—became the earl of Worcester and one of Elizabeth's most trusted servants. She famously called him “a stiff Papist but a good subject.”

Worcester remained a powerful patron of Byrd to the end of his life, even more powerful and potent than we know, I would guess. We do know that he provided Byrd with a room in his London mansion for when the composer came to town, after he had retired to his farm in Essex.

And shortly after 1575, clear signs emerge of Byrd's recusancy. A recusant was someone who refused to attend Church of England services and was punished for it. His wife is fined for recusancy at their home outside London (Byrd himself seems to have had some sort of exemption from the Chapel Royal position). A few years later his home was searched: he was suspected of harboring Jesuit priests and laundering money for them—one of his choirboy brothers was now a moneylender. Byrd attends a Jesuit retreat for priests who had been smuggled into the country—and I don't think he was there simply to do the music at their undercover services, I think he was there also because he'd been involved with the smuggling operation. A servant who had been with Byrd since his Lincoln days was caught with an incriminating letter and died in prison.

Yet Byrd had powerful friends, as I've already indicated—including the queen herself, as we've already seen. Elizabeth was a devoted musician, as you probably know. She was always praised for her playing on the virginals, and the best keyboard music around for her to play was by the star of her Chapel Royal, William Byrd—the best by far, as she must have known as well as we musicologists do, five hundred years later.

Well: this is speculation, but it is a fact that Elizabeth granted Byrd some sort of liability from prosecution for recusancy. And Byrd kept his nose clean, just about, and what's more Byrd had paid his dues, and he continued to do so. Though he evidently tacked too close to the wind in connection with the Throckmorton Plot against Elizabeth in 1583, by the time the Spanish Armada was blown away in 1588, when the queen wrote an anthem of thanks she chose Byrd to set it set to music. In these same years, we think, Byrd also produced the greatest piece of music ever written for the Anglican Rite, doubtless for Queen Elizabeth's Chapel Royal—the Great Service, for a double five-part choir.¹

Byrd was living a double life. And not a few other Elizabethans were walking the same sort of tightrope. And some, like Byrd, were courting trouble by exposing their feelings in books and poems. Byrd found a way of doing this in music.

He did it in music with texts, of course, perhaps cautiously Latin texts lamenting the oppression of his fellow recusants, crying out against it, praying for deliverance from it, even evoking specific occasions and specific atrocities. The words were typically Biblical and therefore blameless yet readily understood as metaphors, as has been true over the centuries. "When Israel was in Egypt's land, let my people go": Byrd didn't set that particular text, but that's exactly the sort of text he did set. Here's a translation from his motet *Domine tu iurasti*:

O Lord, you swore to our forefathers that you would give their posterity lands rich and flowing with milk and honey. Now O Lord, be mindful of your promise . . . and deliver us from the hand of Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and from the servitude of Egypt.

You've got everything here but "Go down, Moses."

¹Subsequent research suggests that it was composed during the following decade: see below, "Byrd's Great Service." [Ed.]

To take another one example from Byrd's music of these years—a double example, actually, but only two out of many—go to the martyrdom of the Jesuit Father Edmund Campion and two companions in 1581. This was a vicious anti-Catholic move that shocked England and the whole of Europe. Byrd set to music a famous English poem lamenting the event, *Why Do I Use My Paper, Ink and Pen?*—a poem which cost its printer his ears, but which Byrd circulated and later even published. (Of course he didn't print the openly seditious stanzas, but anybody in his right mind would immediately supply them when singing or even seeing the piece). He also wrote a Latin motet setting Psalm 78, about the destruction of Jerusalem and martyrs' bodies left to the beasts of the earth and the birds of the air, a chilling reference to the body parts of the Jesuits that were nailed to the gates at Tyburn. Included in the psalm settings are the last words that Campion spoke from the scaffold . . . the first of several such "gallows texts" that Byrd immortalized in music. Bear this in mind. Byrd later composed a gallows motet for Father Henry Garnet, the Principal of the Jesuit Order who was executed in the wake of the Gunpowder Plot in 1605.

1590: COMING RETIREMENT

Here's the last of the three special dates: 1540, 1575, and now 1590. Actually I have to say this is an ideal date, standing in for a period from 1578–1592. The Campion motet I have just mentioned, and the Campion song, and many other motets and madrigals were collected in manuscripts from the decade of the 1580s that amount to extensive anthologies of Byrd's music.

Four such manuscripts surface during this period of his life. These manuscripts tell us that Byrd had now become England's premier musician. At the end of the 1580s the composer is fifty years old, and looking to retirement. Four years is not too many for careful retirement planning.

But first, in the years around 1590—to be precise, from 1588 to 1591—came an extraordinary effort in publishing and self-promotion, one that marked a climax in Byrd's career (though there still was much more to come). I need to talk about this publication effort in some detail.

And I also need to go back to that earlier publication of 1575, the Byrd-Tallis *Cantiones sacrae*. This was a landmark not only for the composers but for music publication: prior to 1575 music printing in England hardly existed. A remarkable fact, since on the continent music printing had become a big business after around 1500. I don't want to go into the qualifications here, yet before 1575 next to no elite music like masses or motets or madrigals or part-songs had been published in England. Jeremy Smith has suggested that the printing monopoly that Queen Elizabeth gave to Byrd and Tallis may have been a deliberate effort to create an industry. If so, it didn't work, at least not at first. The *Cantiones sacrae* sold hardly any copies and the monopolists didn't risk a second book for ten years and more.

By that time two people were no longer on the scene: Thomas Tallis, the joint grantee of the printing monopoly, had died (Byrd wrote a moving musical elegy to him, *Ye Sacred Muses*), and also the printer of the *Cantiones*, a man called Vautrollier. Byrd saw that now was the time for a new start. It was an optimistic time, after the defeat of the Spanish Armada. He could now pocket the full proceeds of the monopoly. And whatever business arrangements he may

have had with the old printer were now void. He made new arrangements with a printer named Thomas East, a man who was both highly competent and sympathetic to Byrd's ideas.

Byrd's own music came out as a small flood: two English songbooks, and two further books of Latin motets—plus a smaller item weighing in on a hot current debate that mattered a lot to Byrd. Was music sensual and evil, as the Puritans were always claiming, and deeply suspect, as a prominent ornament of Catholic worship? Just the reverse, Richard Mulcaster had said in the preface to the 1575 motet book. Now another learned author, one John Case, said the same in a book called *Apologia musices*: and Byrd wrote a madrigal praising the man and issued it as a broadside. East also published music by associates of Byrd under his monopoly, among them two anthologies of Italian madrigals translated into English. Both include madrigals by Byrd himself, prominently advertised on their title pages. This was a monopolist who wanted everyone to know who was in charge.

Now: the two new motet books by Byrd were certainly understood at the time as discrete, covert Catholic items, though of course the Latin texts were not egregiously Catholic or the composer and the printer would have been arrested. They were dedicated to Catholic patrons.

But the songbooks and the madrigal books had nothing to do with Catholicism, and were dedicated to establishment figures—who of course were Protestants. The books were secular, commercial, timed to the market, courtly, and even Protestant in inclination. Let me enlarge.

Secular: many of the songs are moralistic and pious, it's true, yet there are also love songs, madrigals, and one positively prurient number, if you read between the lines, as Elizabethans were wont to do.

Commercial: we have good evidence the books sold very well. Unlike the 1575 motet-book.

Timely: again, we also have evidence that madrigal singing was just then becoming popular in England—and it was Byrd who provided this practice with the decisive push it needed. He himself wrote and published the first English madrigal, dedicated—significantly, once again!—to Queen Elizabeth. He was soon licensing publications of English madrigals by his student Thomas Morley, and many others were to come: Thomas Weelkes, John Wilbye, John Ward, *The Triumphs of Oriana*, and so on and so on.

Indeed, the most important of Byrd's own publications of the 1590s period cashed in on the growing rage for madrigals at that time. This was the much-republished *Psalms, Sonnets, and Songs of Sadness and Piety*. After a preface which is itself a defiant little *Apologia musices*—a list of eight “Reasons to persuade everyone to learn to sing”—the book presents songs written for one voice with instrumental accompaniment—consort songs—arranged for a choir, with words in all the parts. In other words, they were specially arranged to be sung like madrigals. Musicologists today want to distinguish between consort songs and madrigals, Byrd wanted to blur the distinction. He wasn't writing for the academy, he was writing for the market.

Another thing Byrd cashed in on was the death of Sir Philip Sidney, mourned over a period of years as the country's great Protestant champion and martyr. The songbook includes two memorial songs for Sidney:

Come to me grief forever . . .
 Sidney, O Sidney is dead.
 He whom the court adorned,
 He whom the country courtesied,
 He who made happy his friends,
 He that did good to all men.
 Sidney, the hope of land strange,
 Sidney, the flower of England,
 Sidney, the spirit heroic,
 Sidney, O Sidney is dead.

The book also includes songs set to Sidney poems that had not yet been printed, and other evidence that Byrd's song repertory was rooted in the court of Queen Elizabeth. Even the ten psalms which stand solemnly at the head of the *Psalms, Sonnets, and Songs of Sadness and Piety* have a Protestant flavor—for while everyone liked psalms, Catholics and Protestants alike, it was Protestants who printed them in profusion and used them in Anglican services. When Byrd came to write a specifically Catholic publication, years later, the *Gradualia*, it was not psalms he began with, but anthems to the Blessed Virgin Mary. Sidney is most famous for his *Astrophel and Stella* and the *Arcadia* and *The Defense of Poetry*, but Sidney also made translations of the psalms. So did Stella, Penelope Rich.

And then the songbook includes *Why Do I Use My Paper Ink and Pen*, which everyone knew was a banned poem bewailing the fate of Campion and his companions. A future Jesuit writes: "One of the sonnets on the martyrdom of Father Edmund Campion was set to music by the best composer of England, which I have often seen and heard." Byrd kicked off his second songbook, in 1589, with more psalms. And his second motet-book, in 1591, contains another unregenerate reference to Campion, the setting of the sanguinary Psalm 78, *Deus venerunt gentes*: also a well known piece, it seems, a piece remembered for a long time, remembered by Tomkins in the 1600s, one of John Milsom's astonishing discoveries.

So in these publications we have the explicit conjunction of the courtly and the Catholic. One could say that the courtly is a stalking-horse for the Catholic, but I think there's real ambivalence at work here. This man also wrote the Great Service and the anthem by Queen Elizabeth.

To sum up: with this spate of publication in the four-year period around 1590 Byrd does several things. With the passing of Thomas Tallis, he establishes himself unmistakably as number one in English music. He more or less proclaims that he is writing for Protestants and also that he is writing for Catholics. He jump-starts a small industry, music printing. He launches a musical genre, the English madrigal. He finally gets a financial return on the monopoly he had shared with Tallis.

Byrd retires—in a way: he retires from court and from his public career. But as a Catholic composer he does not retire. All he does is redirect his formidable energies. He gives up public laments for martyred Jesuits, entreaties on behalf of Egyptian slaves, and the like. Instead he writes music to adorn private, clandestine services, such as those that he attended under the protection of his main patrons, the Petre family, at Ingatestone in Essex—for it is near there that he bought his retirement home. First he writes music for the Ordinary of the Mass, then for the Proper of the Mass for the whole series of feasts throughout the year.

This was music designed to last—not just for Ingatestone but for other estates around the country where undercover services were held. So Byrd published it; this is Catholic activism of another kind. He published his three masses one at a time in small books, more like pamphlets, without title-pages saying where they were printed and who the printer was, though the name “Byrd” is coolly written above the music. I think these small editions could have been set up in type, a small batch of copies run off, and the type struck in just a few days.

When Byrd and Tallis received the monopoly for music printing, in 1575, it was for a term of twenty-one years, up till 1596. By that time Byrd has left London, yet he has also managed to get his masses published. I don’t understand how a clandestine publication profits from a monopoly, but there has to be an angle somehow. It all makes one think of long-range retirement planning by our Catholic careerist.

The second part of Byrd’s retirement project was *Gradualia*: the comprehensive aggregation of liturgical elements for Catholic services that was so numerous it required two published volumes. And the one thing I’ll say about *Gradualia* is this, and it’s what I’ve been saying all along: Byrd could have written all this music and sung it at the Petres’s undercover services at Ingatestone Hall, but he could not have broadcast it without powerful protection. Byrd got some kind of official clearance for the publication from an Anglican bishop, no less, and we’ve recently learned from Jeremy Smith something about the logistics of getting the music into the hands of those who needed it. The Jesuits were directly involved, and the music was picked up directly at the printer’s shop—Thomas East, who had been publishing for Byrd since the 1590s and before.

Gradualia is Byrd’s magnum opus. His career was surely thought to be at a close. He was in his mid 60s, and had been away from London some many years. His music was considered classic, certainly, but it was way out of style by now. Yet he keeps publishing: a whole new songbook with thirty-two pieces in it, in 1611, and contributions to anthologies, vocal and (at last) instrumental: *Tears or Lamentations of a Sorrowful Soul* and *Parthenia*.

The new songbook, the *Psalms, Songs, and Sonnets: Some Solemn, Others Joyful*, is fully secular and without any Catholic leanings (unless you count the fact that some of the texts are drawn from the Douai Bible). It is a retrospective collection; Byrd reprints a madrigal he had published twenty years earlier, in 1590—a madrigal in praise of Queen Elizabeth, a posthumous tribute to her patronage and, perhaps, to England’s Golden Age under her rule. It’s a miscellaneous collection, with something in it for everybody—songs, madrigals, a parody madrigal, psalms once again, anthems, little moralistic epigrams, and even a great fantasia for viols, a piece that’s about as old as the madrigal for Elizabeth. Byrd sets poems dating all the way back to the 1550s and he sets later poems which I feel—I fancy, it would be better to say — had a personal reference for the old man:

Retire my soul, consider thine estate
And justly sum thy lavish sins’ account. . .
Write all these down in pale Death’s reckoning tables . . .

I wonder if Byrd was feeling pangs of guilt about all the money and land he had acquired over his long, illustrious, and unremittingly litigious career. There’s another regretful poem with financial imagery in the songbook:

How vain the toils that mortal men do take
To hoard up gold, that time doth turn to dross . . .
— forgetting that what Christ taught us was
in heaven (my italic!) to hoard our treasure,
Where true increase doth grow beyond all measure.

True increase means interest; Byrd's brother John who was once a choirboy was now a moneylender. But as I've also mentioned before, it was only the position Byrd had forged for himself that made it possible for him to register his public or semi-public protests on behalf of the Catholic recusant community and then music for practical use in their services and for spiritual solace. I don't think there was much to regret. This last songbook, of course, returns us to Byrd the Careerist, not Byrd the Catholic. The career was in no need of refurbishing—yet Byrd, like some other great composers who lived into their seventies, wanted people to know and to hear and to admire. Like Monteverdi and Verdi, Schoenberg and Stravinsky, like Milton Babbitt and Elliott Carter. I love the Preface that he writes for "All True Lovers of Music":

Only this I desire: that you will be as careful to hear [my songs] well express'd, as I have been both in the composing and the correcting of them. Otherwise the best song that ever was made will seem harsh and unpleasant. . . . Besides, a song that is well and artificially made cannot be well perceived nor understood at the first hearing, but the oftener you shall hear it, the better cause of liking you will discover.

Byrd's last injunction to us, then, is not about things spiritual, let alone things Catholic. It's about performing music and listening to it. Schoenberg couldn't have said it better.

Masses

THE MASSES OF WILLIAM BYRD

William Peter Mahrt
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The Ordinary of the Mass was a principal genre in the Renaissance, and most Renaissance composers gave it considerable attention. The masses of William Byrd are among the most distinguished of the genre. The first polyphonic mass I ever sang was William Byrd's Mass for Five Voices. The first polyphonic mass I ever sang with the St. Ann Choir—which I now direct—was Byrd's Mass for Three Voices. This choir has sung the Mass for Four Voices at least twice a year for the last thirty-five years and the others occasionally. Having sung the Four-Voice Mass most frequently, I have always been surprised when singing one of the others to notice the close resemblances; I have often thought, "Why, this is the same mass with different notes." While this may be a slight exaggeration, it points to the unique position of the masses among Byrd's works in striking contrast with the works of the other prominent Renaissance composers. While Palestrina wrote over a hundred, Lasso nearly eighty, Victoria nearly twenty, and Josquin at least fifteen, Byrd wrote only three: simply one for each number of voices, three, four, and five. Why? Why not the amazing variety of the continental composers? What difference does it make? What sense does the difference make?

The Renaissance Mass Ordinary is a paradoxical genre; it is comprised of diverse texts bound by a single musical style. This was not the case in the Middle Ages. At that time, each piece of the ordinary was a separate liturgical genre: litanies—Kyrie and Agnus Dei; hymns—Gloria and Sanctus; and profession of belief—Credo. And each of these genres had its own musical style. These movements, whose texts remained constant from service to service, were most likely to have been set to polyphonic music for practical reasons: the settings could be used on any day in contrast with the Propers of the Mass, which could be sung on only one or at most a few days of the year. Yet, there was little integration among the parts of the ordinary when they were set to polyphonic music. Even the mass of Guillaume de Machaut was probably compiled from separately existing movements; some of its movements were based upon chant melodies and some were not, and those that were used different chants for each movement.

In the Renaissance, in contrast, there was a sense of artistic integration among those movements distinguished by polyphonic setting. The five movements of the ordinary were now composed as the pillars of the whole service, integrating and ordering the entire liturgy. They were

in a consistent style from movement to movement, despite the diversity of their texts. Being all by a single composer, their consistent style created a kind of rondo-like musical structure in alternation with the other elements of the service, which were mostly chants in diverse styles and modes, written at varying times over the whole history. Since these mass compositions were numerous—Palestrina alone wrote 103—and were all on the same set of texts, there had to be a principle of differentiation. To imagine the difficulty for a composer setting about to write his hundredth mass upon the same texts, yet composing something original that had not been done in any of the previous settings, is to realize the necessity of a principle of differentiation between such numerous masses. How could each of these masses have a unique style and expression? The principle of differentiation was the use of borrowed material: each mass was based upon musical material—chants or polyphonic pieces, sacred or secular—that had its source outside the mass itself, ensuring that the mass based upon it sounded fundamentally different from others based upon other borrowed materials.

There were striking differences in this use of borrowed materials between the fifteenth and the sixteenth centuries, what they borrowed and why they borrowed it. These differences relate to a difference between the aesthetics of the two centuries, a difference of the attitude to affect, or the emotion expressed by the music. For composers of the fifteenth century—such as Du Fay, Ockeghem, and Josquin Des Prez—the musical work is a microcosm of all of creation. The affect of the music is essentially that of wonder, upon the perception of universal order. Universal order is, in the medieval tradition, hierarchical; the parts of the music are ordered by the tenor voice having priority: the borrowed material was the melody carried by the tenor as an authoritative source. The focus of this aesthetic is upon an objective order, and the resulting affect might be called a universal one.

For composers of the sixteenth century on the continent, there was a remarkable shift in music, which is the result of humanism: the more human aspects of the sacred are now represented by focusing upon the quality of the affective response rather than upon the nature of the mystery which elicited it. This can be seen in the dominant school of spirituality of the period, such as in the *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius of Loyola—the self-conscious cultivation of a religious affect, albeit as a response to objective aspects of faith. The result of the cultivation of affectiveness of music is that texts are chosen which are capable of expressing intense affections. In the sacred (though not liturgical) realm, these included laments of Old-Testament fathers upon the death of their sons. There may not have been any explicit theology behind the choice of these texts; rather I suppose that the rationale of their being set to music was not primarily theological, but artistic, i.e., expressive: they were the means of expressing intense emotion. Secular music of the same period, likewise, found in the subject of human love, particularly disappointed or frustrated love, the occasion for the most beautiful and intense expression. These intense emotions found a secondary point of expression in setting the mass; the parody mass essentially borrowed the music of a piece with another text, whose expression it was; there was always the possibility that in the mass text was reflected, sometimes indirectly, by the music of the model. This was essentially a manneristic aesthetic, and is represented by the preponderance of the masses of Palestrina, Victoria, and Lasso, the most prominent mass composers of Byrd's era.

Byrd had been the heir of such an affective tradition. He had appropriated the mode of lamentation in many of the works of the three volumes of *Cantiones sacrae* in extended, expansive, and effective expression. But here, the purpose was not the same: the cultivation of intense

affects served at one and the same time an aesthetic purpose and as well as an expression of the lamentable situation of Catholics in England, even in particular relation to sacred music. It is thought that many of these cantiones were written for those who remembered the splendid location of excellent polyphony in the traditional Latin liturgy, cultivated as late as the final years of the reign of Mary; now they were reduced to singing elegant works of vocal chamber music set to sacred texts, but at the same time lamenting the loss of the proper location of such polyphony.

But something happened when Byrd wrote masses. These were now for liturgical celebration. Some think the Mass for Four Voices was performed by 1586; in any case it was published in 1592–93. In 1593, after decades of being a member of the Chapel Royal, he moved to Stondon Massey, where the masses would have been sung liturgically for the community of Catholics. The Mass for Three Voices was published in 1593–94 and that for Five in 1594–95.¹ Thus Byrd's masses occupy a unique historical position. Palestrina, Lasso, and Victoria composed for major institutional patrons, in the context of the self-conscious cultivation of artistry and of splendor, in each case accompanied by considerable piety as well. Still, the name of the game was variety, a kind of dazzling splendor of a different mass for every special occasion. I do not mean to suggest that a Renaissance ruler, such as the Duke of Bavaria, Lasso's longtime patron, comes in for any blame—to support the talents of one of the world's greatest artists, employed for making divine worship beautiful, is one of the best things he can have spent his money for. How does this compare with how our present-day governments spend our money? I contend, remarkably well. To give the liturgy the optimum human splendor was to approach the divine through the chain of being—i.e., the highest artistic form, the mass, brought the worshipper closer to the highest artist, the Creator.

Byrd had known such a context in the Chapel Royal, but the context of his masses was entirely different, more intimate and more focused. For the small community of Catholics in Elizabethan England, the Mass was a matter of their identity. They were celebrating the Mass authorized by the Council of Trent—not the old Sarum Rite—as recusants, Catholics who made great sacrifices to remain so. Their principal purpose was to celebrate this Mass, always the same in its essentials, in contrast with continental courts and cathedrals, where the essence of the thing was secure and taken for granted. Thus Byrd's masses stand quite apart from the continental tradition in several ways. First, he is writing the first Mass Ordinary in England in thirty years. Second, while he looked to his English predecessors, John Taverner in particular, but also Thomas Tallis and John Sheppard, he did not base his masses upon any systematically used borrowed material. In this he must have been conscious of a subordinate English tradition, the plain-style masses of Taverner, Tye, Sheppard, and Tallis, which cultivate a more direct and simple expression of the text than the festal masses of these composers, as do Byrd's masses. Finally, Byrd sets the entire Mass text; English composers rarely set the Kyrie, and their settings of the Credo omitted a substantial part of the text. This is clearly a reorientation to Tridentine usages on Byrd's part and a certain departure from English traditions.

But the most important difference lies in the composer's relation to the text. Byrd famously spoke of his relation to the texts of sacred music:

¹Joseph Kerman, *The Masses and Motets of William Byrd* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), pp. 188–89.

In these words, as I have learned by trial, there is such a concealed and hidden power that to one thinking upon things divine and diligently and earnestly pondering then, all the fittest numbers occur as if of themselves and freely offer themselves to the mind which is not indolent or inert.²

With his three masses, each for a different number of voices, he needed no further principle of differentiation; rather, I would suggest, each mass is the ideal setting of this text for this number of voices, in the manner which he describes. There is no systematic use of borrowed material; rather, each mass addresses its text in the most direct, succinct, and yet expressive way. These masses show clear evidence that Byrd was aware that they might be sung many times: their construction and expression is so tight and concentrated that they repay repeated performance. My experience in singing the *Gradualia* bears this out.³ The pieces of the *Gradualia*, mostly to be sung once a year, as beautiful as they are, do not have the intense concentration that the masses do: they can be sung once a year and retain great interest. The masses, however, can be sung quite a bit more frequently and sustain the repetition very well. The most extensive and intensive discussion of these works is in Joseph Kerman's *The Masses and Motets of William Byrd*.⁴ In what follows I will address a few specific points about the masses that relate to Byrd's treatment of the genre as a whole. The discussion may best be followed with access to score and recording.⁵

Byrd's focus upon the text can be seen in the manner in which the music represents the rhythm of the text. Especially in the movements with longer texts, the Gloria and Credo, much of the setting is syllabic—a single note per syllable: characteristically a phrase is set one note per syllable, with the accented syllables receiving the longer notes and higher pitches; the last accent of the phrase then receives a short melisma leading to a cadence. That Byrd focused upon the rhythm of the text may be illustrated by comparison of the rhythm of the beginning of his three settings of the Gloria [see example page]. My experience of “the same piece with different notes” is shown in how similar the rhythms for all three settings are.

The sensitivity to text is also seen in the rhetorical treatment of phrases. For example, in the Gloria of the Four-Voice Mass, beginning with “Laudamus te,” each of the four short acclamations is stated in a very brief duet, alternating low and high voices; at first it seems scarcely an adequate expression of these potentially expressive texts. However, upon the fourth acclamation, “Glorificamus te,” the rhetoric begins: the lower voices answer back the same text, and then, beginning with the highest voice, all enter in imitation leading to a strongly emphatic

²William Byrd, *Gradualia*, “Dedications and Foreword,” in Oliver Strunk, ed., *Source Readings in Music History*, revised edition, ed. Leo Treitler (New York: Norton, 1998), p. 378.

³Kerry McCarthy directed a cycle of the twelve major feasts provided by the *Gradualia* for celebrated Latin Masses on the proper days, one singer to a part, at St. Thomas Aquinas Church in Palo Alto, California, in the Jubilee Year 2000.

⁴Chapter 4, “The Mass,” in Kerman, *Masses and Motets*, pp. 188–215.

⁵Scores for the masses can be found in *The Byrd Edition*, Philip Brett, ed., Vol. 4, *The Masses* (London: Stainer & Bell, 1981); scores of all three masses are also available online at www.cpd.org. Many recordings are available; among them is: William Byrd, *The Three Masses*, Byrd edition, Vol. 5; The Cardinal's Musick, Andrew Carwood, director (London: ASV, 2000; CD GAU 206 ASV).

four-voice cadence. This cumulative ending pulls together the four acclamations in a splendid climax that gloriously emphasizes the culminating phrase, “We give thee glory.”

Another highly expressive rhetorical treatment of the text is at the beginning of the *Agnus Dei* of the Mass for Four Voices. This is a duet between soprano and alto in close imitation; such close imitation is essential to the rhetoric of the duet: after an initial somewhat conventional imitation (the head motive for the whole mass, identical with the first measures of the *Gloria*), the alto rises to a high note on “*qui tollis*,” after which the soprano imitates it a step higher and leads to the highest note so far in the passage; the alto begins “*miserere nobis*,” upon its lowest note, repeating the phrase twice, each time at a higher pitch, while the soprano imitates this at a higher pitch as well. This beautiful and highly rhetorical duet establishes a point of departure for the whole movement, which then has its greatest cumulation at its ending.

The basic language of the masses is imitation—each voice taking a subject in turn, but this technique is used in extraordinarily varied ways and often in very concentrated ways. An example is the *Kyrie* of the Four-Voice Mass:

It begins with a subject and a tonal answer—a fourth is answered by a fifth, the two comprising a complete octave, the theoretical range of the mode, or tone. The alto begins, answered by the soprano; the tenor then answers, but before the bass can enter the soprano states the tonal answer, a fifth lower than its original entrance; then the bass enters, giving the illusion of five voices in imitation, each entering at a measure’s distance. Once the bass has entered, though, the other voices being to enter at quicker successions, creating a *stretto* with fourteen entrances in the course of the whole ten-measure section. These entrances have all been on the tonally correct beginning notes, D and G.

The *Christe* introduces elements of considerable variety: the second voice enters after only a whole note, the third after a half, but the fourth after two wholes. This eccentric time interval is corroborated by eccentric pitches: D–G–D–G–G–C–E-flat–B-flat–B-flat–F–B-flat–F, but cadencing back to D.

The final *Kyrie* has a double subject, tenor and soprano beginning by each stating its own subject; there follows a separation of the two subjects, each being stated separately and on a variety of pitches, for a total of twenty-two entrances in the course of eighteen measures, a splendid proliferation of melody in counterpoint.

Byrd’s use of imitation is highly original and varied, sometimes even illusory. The *Agnus Dei* of the Four-Voice Mass shows a long-term use of illusion in imitation. It begins with the two upper voices in close imitation for the first complete sentence of the text. The second sentence is taken first by the two lower voices, also in close imitation, at the time-interval of only a half-note. But after three whole-notes’ duration, the soprano enters, causing the listener in surprise to re-evaluate the composer’s strategy: instead of a texture of paired duets—two high voices answered by two lower voices—there is now a texture of increasing voices—two voices answered by three voices. Then the outer voices answer the alto’s entrance with an imitation in parallel tenths that proceeds for four-and-a-half whole notes, long enough for the listener to assume that this will be the texture for this sentence; but, again, there is a surprise: the fourth

voice enters also in imitation, and this then leads to one of the most elegant suspensions, effectively depicting the peaceful state which the text prays for.

Each of the three masses has its own character and its own unique features, many of which are explored by Joseph Kerman. The basic differences derive from the difference in the number of voices, which was decisive for Byrd's decisions concerning texture. The texture of each mass optimizes the number of voices and what is possible with that number. Thus the Four-Voice Mass has as a principal texture paired duets: soprano and alto sing in close imitation, and this is followed by tenor and bass taking up the same material in their own duet. Four-voice imitation is prevalent, occasionally in juxtaposition with familiar style—simultaneous text in simultaneous rhythms, sometimes called homophony, as, for example, “*Gratias agimus tibi*,” following the imitative section on “*Glorificamus te*,” which then gradually breaks out into imitation on “*propter magnam gloriam tuam*.”

The mass for three voices is in what I would call a “risky” texture: three equal voices in full triadic sonority. In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, three-voice writing was the norm, but it was not in equal voices: soprano and tenor formed a self-sufficient, consonant, mainly conjunct counterpoint, while the contratenor supplied the third tone that usually completed the triad; the contratenor skipped around picking off the notes for the triad, not obliged to maintain a conjunct melodic style. In Byrd's three-part writing, however, all three voices have melodic coherence and proceed in full triads. Anyone who has studied harmony knows that four voices contain the means for good voice-leading, for doubling one of the notes of the triad allows some flexibility in how the voices move from chord to chord. In only three voices, there is no leeway, every note has to count, and every progression is naked and unprotected. In my opinion, of the masses, that for three voices represents the greatest compositional skill, since it works within such strict limitations. The inclusion of imitation poses further challenge, but the solution lies in the use of parallel tenths, usually between the outer voices. The harmonization of these by a third voice, then, makes possible smooth voice-leading and full triads. Anyone can do it. Hardly anyone can do it in a fashion that is interesting for more than a few phrases, not to mention for a whole mass, anyone, that is, except for Byrd.

The Five-Voice Mass has the greatest contrapuntal leeway, and being the last composed, benefited from the greatest experience in setting the text. Here reduced textures are more often in three voices, and the five-voice sections, in a couple of notable passages, are supremely forceful. Two of these passages are on “*Dominus Deus Sabaoth*” in the Sanctus and on the beginning of the third Agnus Dei. In both of these instances the full five-voice chordal texture is expressed very forcefully and constitutes a dramatic high point of the movement.

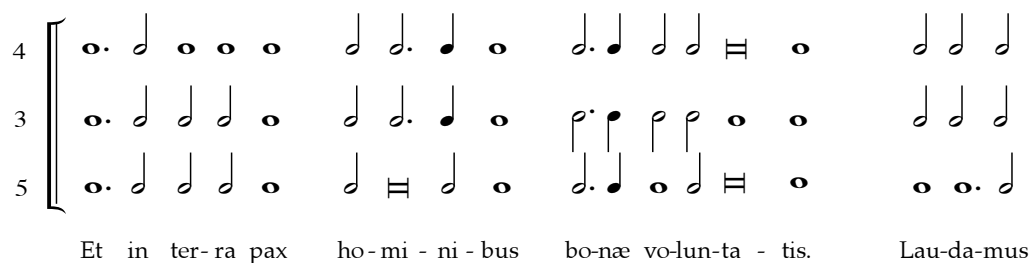
The overall shape of each mass also represents a sensitive approach to the texts. In the absence of the usual borrowed material to integrate the five movements, a traditional technique is still used—the head motive: the movements begin with the same melodic or contrapuntal figure, which serves to signify the integration of the movements. The Sanctus, however, stands outside this scheme, and this is part of its sensitive treatment. In a very important sense, the Sanctus is the centerpiece of the Mass liturgically. It is during the Sanctus and Benedictus that traditionally the Canon of the Mass is said silently and that the consecration of the Sacrament occurs, a most sacred and hieratic moment. The hieratic is best represented by something archaic, and this applies first of all to the text of the Sanctus itself. The text harks back to the Old Testament (Isaiah 6:3) and to the most hieratic phenomenon, the Seraphim before the face




of God crying out each to the other “Holy, Holy, Holy!” The Three- and Five-Voice Masses begin the Sanctus with a reference to a *cantus firmus* style—one voice holds long notes while the others embellish it. This derives from the fifteenth-century technique of setting the authoritative borrowed melody in the tenor in long notes, a *cantus firmus*. For Byrd it is only an allusion, but it is enough to recall the style of past generations, thus alluding to something ancient, and in turn evoking a hieratic effect. The Four-Voice Mass does a similar thing by imitating the Sanctus of John Taverner’s *Meane Mass*,⁶ by the 1590s a work from the distant past.

Byrd’s three masses are thus a unique phenomenon in the genre, being original and direct expressions of the Mass texts, eschewing the conventions of continental composers who differentiated one mass from another by borrowing musical material from outside the Mass. Rather they meet the practical need for a mass for three different voice dispositions, but they do so with the highest art and with the most loving attention to the text of the Mass itself, so much so that they remain perennial standards of the liturgical repertory.

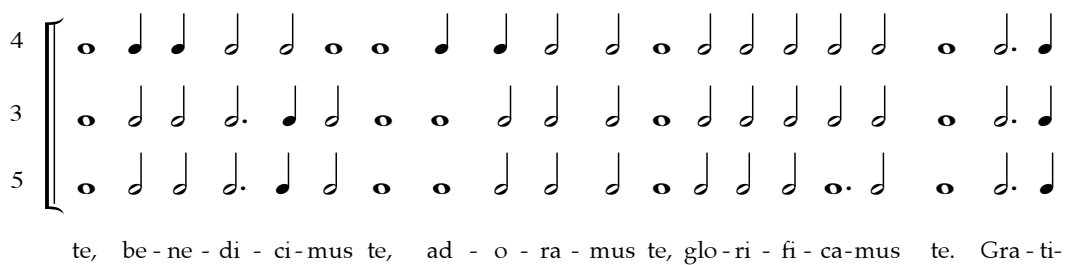
⁶See Philip Brett, “Homage to Taverner in Byrd’s Masses,” in *William Byrd and His Contemporaries: Essays and a Monograph*, ed. Joseph Kerman and Davitt Moroney (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), pp. 8–21)


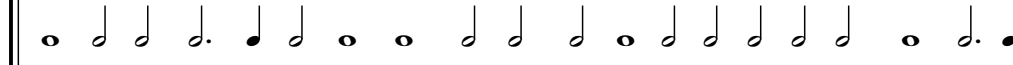

DELICAMATION OF THE GLORIA IN BYRD MASSES
FOR FOUR, THREE, AND FIVE VOICES



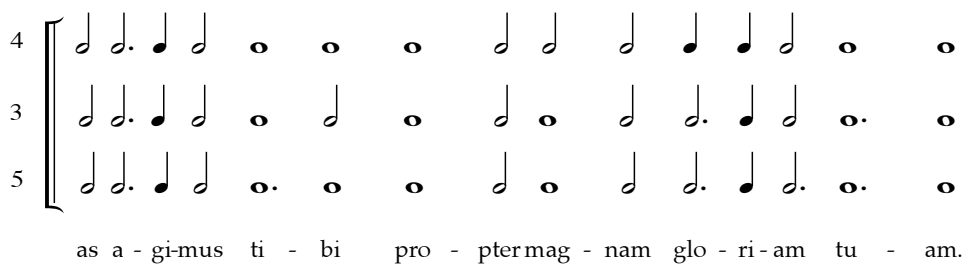
4   



Et in ter-ra pax ho-mi - ni - bus bo-næ vo-lun-ta - tis. Lau-da-mus



4   

te, be-ne - di - ci - mus te, ad - o - ra - mus te, glo-ri - fi - ca-mus te. Gra-ti-



4   

as a - gi-mus ti - bi pro - pter mag - nam glo - ri - am tu - am.

BYRD'S MASSES IN CONTEXT

David Trendell
19 August 2006



The year 1591 represents something of a point of demarcation in Byrd's life. The publication of the second book of his *Cantiones sacrae* in that year, together with the unpublished manuscript *My Lady Nevell's Booke*, brought to an end the anthologies of music he had written hitherto, which had started with the *Psalms, Sonets and Songs* in 1588. These had also included the *Cantiones sacrae* of 1589 and the *Songs of Sundrie Nature*. Byrd had complained that many of his motets had been circulating in imperfect or bowdlerised versions, and there is evidently the desire to print definitive versions in a type of summing-up of his work so far. Whether or not Byrd had planned his change of circumstances when he embarked on his spree of publications in the late 1580s, he nevertheless moved, probably in 1593, to Stondon Hall, a substantial property in Essex near to Ingatestone Hall, the seat of his patron Sir William Petre, dedicatee of the second book of *Gradualia*. What we really see here is a desire to move from the musical and political machinations of the metropolis, however much contact Byrd had had during the 1580s with country recusant squires, to a life living out the Catholic faith in a community of like-minded fellow practitioners, overseen by a politically astute and cautious patron. The change in circumstances has, in some ways, a parallel with Tomás Luis de Victoria, who in the mid 1580s had requested Philip II to allow him to return from Rome to live the quiet life of a priest in Spain. However, whilst Victoria's compositions are relatively infrequent after his return to Spain, Byrd embarked on a remarkable project in the 1590s—the provision of music for the celebration of the Roman liturgy in the form of three masses and the collection of propers for the major feasts of the liturgical year—the *Gradualia*. Byrd's focus had thus changed from the expression or depiction of the plight of the recusant community in the impassioned motets of 1589 and 1591 to a simple provision of music for the celebration of the Mass by that community. As he wrote in the dedication to Petre in the second volume, the pieces “mostly proceeded from your house” and, having been “plucked as it were from your gardens” are “most rightfully due to you as tithes.” In the same way, Byrd's musical priorities had changed from the opulent, complex, elaborate expression of the motets into a style that, as Bill Mahrt pointed out last week, was much more “economical”—a terser, more functional style that, by and large, avoided the great repetitions of text and emotional build-ups that thus accrued in those motets.

In this project it was the masses that were published first between ca. 1592–95. They were published separately, rather than as a group, starting with the Four-Part Mass and concluding with the Five-Part, but without title page, date—just the composer’s name. That there was this reticence is understandable. In fact, it is astounding to think that Byrd could publish these at all and get away with it. Recusancy laws, to which he and some of his family had fallen victim had been strengthened again in 1593, but in 1592 Byrd had been saved from the legal process, specifically on the orders of the queen, or at least somebody with her ear. It was perhaps this clemency that gave him the encouragement to publish the masses. Nevertheless, it was fairly brave. The beauty of the 1589 collection is that, whilst together the motets paint a vivid picture of the persecuted Catholic community, individually most are merely settings of biblical passages, unimpeachable therefore to Protestants in their theological rectitude. But what Byrd was doing by printing musical settings of the Roman Catholic Mass rite was openly rebellious—small wonder that they were published with minimum fuss.

So how do Byrd’s masses fit into the context of other contemporary settings? First of all, there is the numerical comparison; Byrd wrote only three settings of the mass compared to Palestrina’s 104, Victoria’s 20, and Lassus’s 60 odd. Given the political circumstances it is remarkable that he published any at all, and they were eventually designed to work in tandem with the propers of the *Gradualia*, the majority of whose pieces are scored for three, four, or five voices. In this context, one of functionality, no more than three were needed. Moreover, Byrd’s masses are freely composed, that is to say not based on a pre-existing work (although, as we shall see, there are allusions to one piece in the Four-Part Mass). The vast majority of continental masses fall into two types, parody and paraphrase. Paraphrase masses are based on a plainsong melody whilst parody masses are based on a pre-existing polyphonic piece. This could be a motet, a chanson, or a madrigal. The Council of Trent recognised the anomaly of a mass being based on a secular work, and indeed some were very secular indeed, and consequently discouraged it. That did not stop some composers, such as Lassus, carrying on as before. Only very few masses are freely composed, one example being Palestrina’s *Missa Papae Marcelli*. What Byrd does in the Four- and Five-Part Masses is to base the movements on a head motif, which in itself reflects the prevailing mood—here, perhaps unsurprisingly, one of melancholy.

[sing motifs: Five-Part, with its plaintive upper semitone, Four-Part Mass with its falling tail figure.]

But in some senses the comparison with contemporary settings from the continent is misleading, for there is little evidence that continental masses circulated in England in any great number, if they circulated at all. After all, this was one form of music that had no outlet for performance in England, and even to own a book of masses, as opposed to a book of Latin motets, might be thought seditious. It is notable that the most significant collection of continental sixteenth-century music prints, that of Byrd’s patron Lord Lumley at Nonsuch Palace, contains very few mass publications. In fact, the only ones we know certainly to have been there are some of the earliest music prints, those of Petrucci containing masses by Josquin, Pierre de la Rue, Antoine de Fevin, and Mouton, composers all working in the early years of the sixteenth century. It is possible that an item referred to as “Libri 5 missarum,” that no longer survives, could refer to the first five books of Palestrina’s masses (pure speculation), or perhaps to just his fifth book of masses published in 1590, in which case it is probably a little late to be of much use to Byrd. The bulk of the Nonsuch collection consisted of chansons,

madrigals, and motets, or collections of *Cantiones sacrae* published by Susato and Phalèse. These anthologies contained chansons and motets principally by Franco-Flemish composers of the post-Josquin generation, the best represented being Gombert, Manchicourt, and Clemens non Papa. (It is notable that these composers figure prominently in Morley's list of the great masters in his treatise *A Plaine and Easie Introduction to Musicke*.) The presence of Clemens is interesting, since it has long been obvious that Byrd found some of the texts for his *Cantiones* from settings by Clemens. In particular, it was in the latter's *cantiones sacrae* of 1546 that Byrd came across *Tristitia et anxietas* and it is evident too that Byrd was attracted here by some aspects—formal, melodic, and harmonic—of Clemens's setting. In Clemens's collections, Byrd also came across *Vide Domine afflictionem nostram*, a text that was to inspire one of his most potently political motets, as well as a setting of *Tribulationes civitatum* and *Tristitia obsedit me*, which included part of Savonarola's meditation on Psalm 50, *Infelix ego*. Since Byrd obviously knew and admired Clemens's work, it might prove instructive to listen to a movement from a mass by Clemens. This is the Agnus Dei from the *Missa Pastores quidnam vidistis*. This is scored for six voices—SSATBB and what we hear is an interweaving of all six polyphonic lines—continuous imitation, in other words. [Play Clemens]

If I now play the Agnus Dei from Byrd's Five-Part Mass, we hear something very different. First of all, rather than hearing a contrapuntal interweaving of all five voices, we hear definite sections for smaller combinations of voices. The first petition is scored for three voices, the second for four, and only at the third and final petition do we hear all five voices singing together. Moreover, Byrd sets the third petition homophonically, again contrasting with the continuous imitation of a continental setting. Homophony plays a particular role in Byrd's works. He reserves it for some of his most important doctrinal statements, such as *Ave verum corpus*, and also for some of the most anguished and politically charged moments of his motets. In an era whose style is predominantly that of imitative counterpoint, one's ear is naturally drawn to this rhetorical homophony, and Byrd uses it not just to get *our* attention, but also the attention of the Almighty. This is the case, for example, at the beginning of *Vide Domine*, where Byrd is beseeching the Almighty to sit up and behold the affliction of "his people." Similarly, in *Tribulationes civitatum*, which we heard last Sunday, homophony intrudes in the final section on the words "Aperi oculos tuos Domine" (Open your eyes, O Lord and behold our affliction). This is exactly the case in the final petition—by using homophony and by repeating the text "Agnus Dei" it is a desperate cry to the "Lamb of God" to have mercy on his people; in short, it is one of the angriest moments in all of Byrd's work, only offset by the serenity of the concluding "Dona nobis pacem." [Play Byrd]

The total dissimilarity in approach to setting the mass text is not just limited to the Agnus Dei. The way in which sixteenth-century continental composers ordered their works is remarkably uniform. The Gloria, for example is normally split into two halves with the break occurring before the text "Qui tollis peccata mundi." With all three of his masses, however, Byrd breaks a line earlier, the second section starting at "Domine Deus, Agnus Dei." Similarly, in the Credo Byrd observes different cut-off points between sections. What this shows is not Byrd being deliberately different from continental practice of mass settings, but really that he was almost certainly entirely ignorant of such practice. The Clemens example was chosen to show how radically different Byrd's setting was from that of a continental composer some of whose motets he certainly knew. But Clemens was of course of an earlier generation—he died in the mid 1550s. What of Byrd's contemporaries and how does his work differ from them? To answer

this I am going to play the Agnus Dei from Alonso Lobo's *Missa O Rex gloriae*, published in 1602, but quite possibly composed during the 1590s when Lobo was *mestre de capilla* at Toledo Cathedral. Byrd would not have known his work, but the reason for my choosing it is because it has a very similar opening point of imitation to the head motif of Byrd's Four-Part Mass [sing Byrd, Agnus Dei]. This point, which actually forms the opening motif of Palestrina's motet *O Rex gloriae*, on which Lobo's mass is based, consists of a falling fourth, then a rising minor third before downward stepwise movement. What makes the Lobo also interesting is that it contains quite a lot of dissonance, dissonance also being a main feature of Byrd's work. [Play Lobo]

Again Byrd's setting of the Agnus Dei in the Four-Part Mass is radically different, starting with just two voices for the first petition, three for the second before using all four voices for the final supplication. If the Five-Part Mass used one of the most important pieces of technical armoury in Byrd's political motets—his use of rhetorical homophony, the Four-Part Mass uses another, the repetition of a point of imitation over and over again at higher pitch levels avoiding points of repose and increasing dissonance. This is what happens in the famous “*dona nobis pacem*” point of imitation where the figure circles around with a suspension on just about every available beat. In fact, what is interesting in this movement is how the dissonant suspensions are packed into this last section, having been relatively absent from the earlier part of the movement. This compares with Lobo's setting, where the dissonant suspensions are more widely spaced throughout the movement. In fact, Byrd's Agnus has as many dissonant suspensions as you would find in a Palestrina setting, which are normally half as long again. And these suspensions in Byrd use the most dissonant intervals—the semitone and the major seventh. [Play Byrd]

Byrd's lack of knowledge of continental mass settings is one reason for his masses being so different, but there is another, more profound reason too. As we can see, he uses techniques that had been forged in creating the ideal expression for the political overtones of his 1589 and 1591 *Cantiones sacrae*. And there is that sense of extreme expression here, whether it be desperately seeking the Lord's attention in dramatic homophonic outbursts or a perpetual yearning for peace in the “*dona nobis pacem*.” That yearning for a peace which Byrd and his fellow Catholic practitioners simply did not possess would have been emphasised in the types of places where this mass would have been sung—small chapels in recusant households, perhaps sung outdoors, and so forth. The clandestine nature of such worship is a thousand miles away from the splendours of Toledo Cathedral, where the self-confidence of Philip II's Counter-Reformation is dramatically seen in the architecture, even in the paintings in the choir stalls depicting the Spanish conquest of the Moors. It is also a long way from Rome, where Palestrina's almost encyclopaedic approach to composition—composing music for all possible liturgical eventualities and for all feasts of the Christian year—saw him set on a pedestal as the “official” composer of the Roman Counter-Reformation. Small wonder Byrd's music is incomparable—so much more personal because born out of the plight of his friends and allies in the Catholic community.

If the music of such a passage as the “*dona nobis pacem*” was not just there as a description of the plight of the Catholics (their lack of a tangible peace) and, indeed as a consolation for it, there are other pointers in the masses which his co-religionists would have noticed. One of the most famous of these occurs in the Credo of the Four-Part Mass, where at the words “*Et unam sanctam Catholicam*,” Byrd repeats the word “*Catholicam*” confidently with all four voices singing the same rhythm. Richard Taruskin has pointed to the same passage in the Five-

Part Mass, where Byrd set the passage homophonically, repeating the words “et apostolicam ecclesiam,” emphasizing that this was a church in the apostolic tradition, created by God, not by a mere king. [Play this]

These three masses then are very different from the type of settings we see on the continent. It is highly unlikely, given how Byrd ordered the works, that he knew any continental masses, and, in any case, the ethos of Byrd's work, clandestine, born out of the desperation of the Catholic's plight, is worlds away from the self-confidence of the Catholicism of Spain or Italy. But to what extent are Byrd's masses part of an English tradition? Byrd's masses were the first examples of music written for the Latin Mass since Mary's reign, almost forty years distant and so we should not be surprised if they are very different from that earlier tradition. Moreover, those earlier masses would have been written when Catholicism was the “official” religion of the state, as we know a very different situation from the one in which Byrd found himself. By far the most prevalent type of polyphonic mass before the Reformation was the festal mass, so-called because written for a major feast day. These works by Fayrfax, Taverner, Sheppard, and Tallis were hugely ornate and long—Taverner's three large festal masses are at least forty minutes each. Scored for a large choir of five or six parts, they are richly melismatic, creating an aura of devotion that was matched by the architecture (and we must remember that there was still a lot of ecclesiastical building work being carried out in the early years of the sixteenth century); matched too by the sheer elaboration of the prevalent Sarum liturgy. This again was somewhat different from Byrd's situation, where celebrations would of necessity have been small scale, which accounts for the concise nature of the Kyries of at least the Three- and Five-Part Masses and the large amount of syllabic writing in the longer movements—the Gloria and Credo. One technique of pre-Reformation writing that Byrd refers back to is writing sections for a reduced number of voices. Most movements of pre-Reformation settings of the mass would start with a fairly lengthy section for a reduced number of voices, before a section for full choir. These sections for reduced voices would punctuate the entire movement, with each section ending with a passage for the full choir. As we have seen, both the Agnus Deis of the Four- and Five-Voice Masses start with the first two petitions being for a reduced number of parts. Byrd also conjures up this style of pre-Reformation writing in one of his longest works—*Infelix ego*. Similarly in some of his motets in the 1589 and 1591 collections that use texts from old Sarum Responds, Byrd conjures up the soundworld of pre-Reformation responds by the use of an equal-note *cantus firmus* and archaic melodic and harmonic figures. This use of pre-Reformation textures would surely have been recognised by at least some members of the congregations he was writing for.

Although the festal mass was the prevalent pre-Reformation form of mass, there are examples of some smaller scale masses and ones that use slightly different techniques, particularly by Taverner. It was Taverner who first based a mass on a secular melody, in this case the *Western Wynde Mass*; this type of mass composition had long been popular on the continent, witness the popularity of masses based on the L'homme armé melody. Taverner also used parody techniques, basing a mass on a preexistent polyphonic piece. We find this in the Mass *Mater Christi*, based on the votive antiphon of the same name, and the so-called *Small Devotion Mass*, actually based on an antiphon originally entitled *O Wilhelme pastor bonus*. These two masses would almost certainly have been composed whilst Taverner was *Informator Choristarum* (i.e., choir-master) at Cardinal's College, Oxford. It is often claimed that Taverner ceased composing when he left Oxford and when he became more involved in the propagation of Lutheran ideas

and the implementation of Henry VIII's reformation. However, one mass does appear to be slightly later and that is the *Meane Mass*, so-called because the top voice is the mean rather than the higher treble voice that was normally used in England. This is in many ways a strange piece, and very different from most of Taverner's music. This probably accounts for the fact that it is very rarely performed and has only once been recorded. It is highly sectional, the Gloria and Credo being split up into lots of different little sections. It also shows the influence of continental styles in its use of imitation. Imitation had been comparatively rare in England at this time, certainly as a principle that governed the entire composition. The *Meane Mass* is also a concise piece of work—largely syllabic in the Gloria and Credo, a little more melismatic in the other movements, but nowhere near as melismatic as his festal masses, where the melismas can literally go on for pages. This would all count for little were it not for the fact that Byrd alludes to the Sanctus of Taverner's mass in his own Four-Part Mass. This was first noticed by Philip Brett when he came to edit the three masses for the Byrd Edition. Since Byrd had based many of his 1575 motets on models by Ferrabosco, Brett wondered whether there were models too for the masses. As he described it in his article for the journal *Early Music*: "In the almost trance-like state in which I suspect similar discoveries are made, I took the copy of the Tudor Church Music edition of Taverner's masses off the shelf and began leafing through. The book fell open at part of the 'Meane' Mass, and the light dawned." As you can hear from this excerpt, Byrd starts his Sanctus with a figure rising through the interval of a perfect fifth. [Sing and play it] This is exactly the same figure that opens Taverner's Sanctus [Sing it], and the cadence that ends that ends the first phrase is almost identical to that which concludes Byrd's second phrase. [Sing Taverner] Brett pointed out other similarities between the Taverner and the Four-Part Mass. For example, the point starting the "Pleni sunt caeli" section is very similar, with Byrd just swapping the second and third notes around. [sing Byrd and then Taverner] In any case, it is perhaps not surprising that Byrd should seek out a model for his first setting of the mass, a form of which he seems to have known very few examples, be they English or continental. I have also noticed similarities between the Credo of Byrd's Five-Part Mass and Taverner's Credo. This occurs at the passage starting "Deum de Deo." In Byrd, as you can hear, the passage is antiphonal, setting off groups of voices against one another. It starts with two voices singing a descending line passing through a perfect fourth on the words "Deum de Deo" before that line being sung with a slightly varied dotted rhythm on the words "lumen de lumine." The next line "de Deo vero" has a melisma on the penultimate syllable before a homophonic passage at the words "Genitum non factum." [Play Byrd] The equivalent passage in the Taverner has a very similar motif—the descending fourth and very similar rhythms before a homophonic passage on the words "Genitum non factum." [Sing it]

Taverner's *Meane Mass* seems to be one of the very few clear antecedents for Byrd's masses—the only verifiable piece of musical context, although there is rather a delicious irony of a devoutly Catholic composer basing his masses on the writings of a man, who supposedly suppressed the monasteries of his native Boston and who, according to Fox, lamented the time he had spent composing "papish ditties." However, there is one other work that I would like to play before we leave the subject of the musical context of Byrd's masses, and that is the *Missa Tecum principium* by Robert Fayrfax. Fayrfax died in 1521, but he had been the outstanding composer of his generation, appearing at the head of the list of payments for Gentlemen of the Chapel Royal. Fayrfax seems to have had some connection with the Guild of the Name of Jesus, which was based at St. Paul's Cathedral and appears to have written music for this guild. Byrd

had connection with St. Paul's, both his brothers having been choristers there, though there is no positive proof that he himself had been a chorister. Nevertheless, it might have been through that connection that he could have come across the music of Fayrfax. Like a lot of this talk, this is highly conjectural, but there is something about the “dona nobis pacem” of Fayrfax's *Missa Tecum principium* that seems to presage the mood of that section from the Four-Part Mass. Fayrfax's “dona nobis pacem” starts serenely with slow-moving chords, but gradually a small figure emerges on the word “pacem” that gets imitated, sometimes in sequence, rather in the manner of what Byrd was doing later in the Four-Part Mass. [Sing the Fayrfax pacem motif] Moreover, the figure by leaping up a third creates unexpected dissonances. This is in an age when such dissonances were comparatively rare in England, certainly on this scale. But in an age where music was primarily a decoration of the liturgical celebration and an aid to devotion, there is something much more personal here. Perhaps one is reading too much into what is probably just an abstract musical figure, but it seems to me to be a yearning type of figure, certainly in the way that it is repeated over and over again in much the same manner that Byrd's figure yearned for that elusive peace in the Four-Part Mass. [Play Fayrfax]

To conclude, whatever the context or lack of it for Byrd's masses, there is no doubting their enduring popularity. If you picked up a copy of the *Daily Telegraph* any Saturday you would find a listing of the music to be sung in the churches of London and the cathedrals of the provinces, and on any given Saturday you can be assured that one of Byrd's masses will be sung by at least one such institution. Of course, quite whether Byrd would appreciate the irony of his works being sung by much larger forces than he intended in the context of the celebration of the Eucharist in the Reformed Church of England, a state religion that actively connived in the persecution of the original audience for these works, I am not so sure.

Cantiones

BYRD'S MUSICAL RECUSANCY

David Trendell
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William Byrd's 1589 *Cantiones sacrae* must rank as one of the most politically subversive musical publications of all time. For, behind the choice of texts lay hidden meanings that portrayed the plight of contemporary English Catholics. This second book of sacred songs is markedly different from those motets by Byrd in the joint publication of *Cantiones sacrae* with Tallis in 1575. If the former is notable for an exuberant display of technical brilliance, the latter goes further than perhaps any other of Byrd's publications in establishing his reputation for "gravity and pietie." What then had happened to effect, if not a change in direction (for even the 1575 collection has more than its fair share of sombre works), then a deepening of mood or character?

The 1580s saw an intensification of Catholic persecution in England. As a pragmatic ruler, and one who, according to contemporary witnesses, had high church sympathies, Elizabeth had had to maintain the support of the nobility, many of whom remained Catholic. However, the turning-point seems to have come when Jesuit priests, having trained abroad, such as Garnet and Southwell, were catapulted back into England to proselytise for the Faith. This was combined with the increasing threat from Catholic Spain, which culminated (or rather didn't) in the Armada of 1588; to be Catholic therefore became synonymous with being unpatriotic. Thus the 1580s saw a dramatic increase in the persecution of Catholics, beginning with the bloody execution of Edmund Campion in 1581, and the whole Catholic community was under threat. We can gauge this threat in the writings of the Jesuit missionaries, many of whose themes are echoed in the texts that Byrd chose for the motets in his 1589 collection. It is an astonishing fact that in this febrile atmosphere of mortal danger, something like two hundred Catholic pamphlets were published in the 1580s and 90s.

So what are the themes by which these pamphleteers chose to portray the plight of Catholics, and how are they related to the texts of Byrd's motets? First of all, it is worth pointing out that the majority of these sayings quote from the scriptures. Similarly Byrd's motet texts are largely scriptural, the beauty being that they could be seen to have validity merely as settings of the Word of God, as well as having perfectly obvious secondary meanings for their Catholic audience. Above all, the Catholics saw themselves as being like the Israelites, i.e., the chosen people; in some writings, people are praised for being a "true Israelite," i.e., a true Catholic.

This idea is reflected in several of the 1589 motets, perhaps most notably and comprehensively in *Memento, Domine*—“Be mindful, O Lord, of thy congregation, whom thou hast possessed from the beginning.” All other themes take their premise from this; thus, the destruction of Jerusalem becomes a metaphor for the destruction of the Catholic faith in England—the violence of the desecration of the Holy Places in Jerusalem echoing the destruction of rood screens, statues, and the other vivid realities of the Catholic faith in England. There are several references to the destruction of Jerusalem in the 1589 collection, most notably *Ne irascaris* and *Deus, venerunt gentes*, which describes the event in graphic and gruesome detail. *Deus, venerunt gentes* also ends with a phrase that is frequently found in recusant literature of the period: “We are become a disgrace in the eyes of our neighbours, an object of scorn and derision to those who are round about us.” The other common cry from the scaffold before the death of a Catholic martyr was the first verse of Psalm 50—“Miserere mei Deus” (Have mercy upon me, O God). Not only do we find a setting of just this verse as a complete motet in Byrd’s 1591 collection, but several motets in the 1589 collection conclude with this plea for mercy, notably *Tristitia et anxietas*. Another Israelite metaphor that is invoked is that of the Babylonian and Egyptian exiles; just as the Israelites had been exiled, now the Catholics find themselves in exile in their own country. Byrd had previously set part of Psalm 137 (By the waters of Babylon) famously in response to a setting by Philippe de Monte. But the exile work that appears in the 1589 collection is about the Egyptian captivity—*Domine, tu iurasti* (“deliver us from the hand of Pharaoh . . . and from the bondage under the Egyptians”).

However, the over-riding theme of recusant literature, and of Byrd’s 1589 collection, is that of Advent, the idea that God will come and save his people, the hope that there will be an end to persecution. In the 1589 *Cantiones* there are specifically Advent motets, such as *Laetentur caeli* and *Vigilate*, the latter memorably describing the need to keep alert in music of almost unsurpassed pictorialism and urgency. Then there are those pieces, such as *Vide, Domine* and *Domine, praestolamur*, that describe the plight of God’s people (i.e., the Catholic community) in the first part of the motet—“Behold, O God, our affliction”—and then start the second part with a plea for the Lord to “come and call back the exiles into thy city and have mercy upon thy sighing, weeping people.”

So close is Byrd’s choice of motet texts to recusant literature and utterances that even an apparently joyful work, such as the Eastertide motet *Haec Dies* from the 1591 collection, carried a political meaning; for the words “This is the day which the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it” were the exact words declaimed in court by Campion after his sentence had been pronounced. Thus we can see how closely Byrd was bound up with the recusant movement. Indeed we have many records of his participation in illegal services, and in July 1586 he was present at Hurleyford on the occasion of welcoming the Jesuit Superior Henry Garnet, who had managed to slip back into England.

But there is one other category of motets in the 1589 collection that is easy to overlook when one is finding parallels with themes used in recusant literature. And that is the number of personal motets, texts that portray the grief and utter misery of the individual. Indeed, this aspect is stressed right at the beginning of the publication with the motet *Defecit in dolore vita mea*, and three of the first four motets are personal supplications, before Byrd goes on later to describe the plight of the Catholic community. This is a very important point, because it shows Byrd not just portraying the plight of the community, but showing how he himself is affected

by it. Byrd and his wife had been regularly cited for recusancy from the early 1580s, and although he escaped severe prosecution, he was, in the words of David Mateer, who has written an article on the details of his legal problems, “unquestionably subject to a measure of governmental harassment.” Much is made of the fact that, in 1592, Byrd was saved from legal process by the intervention of the queen (or perhaps by appeal to a powerful patron with her ear), but this was three years after the publication of the 1589 collection (and many years after the composition of most of the motets), and there is every indication from a text such as that of *O Domine, adiuva me* that the knock on the door could occur at any moment: “O Lord, help me, and I shall be safe . . . Let not the wily foe snatch me away, but always find me watchful.”

If the choice of texts has a particular meaning for the Catholic community, is the same true of Byrd's music (or choice of musical style)? This question is a very broad one but can be understood in the following ways: does Byrd's music possess double meanings (or layers of meaning) in the way that the texts do, i.e., does Byrd's music contain encrypted messages that the Catholic community would understand? Secondly, in what ways was Byrd's compositional style affected by composing for an oppressed community, which of course included himself and his family? Central to this latter question is whether, and if so, how Byrd was able to forge a language that could express the extreme straits in which the Catholic community found itself as well as providing a sense of consolation for it, a language that had of necessity to be “particular”—to be unlike the prevailing musical language that his listeners would encounter.

The first part of this question is in many ways the easiest to answer. The most famous example occurs in the opening measures of *Ave verum corpus*; here, Byrd stresses the word “verum” (true) by means of a false relation between the top voice's F-sharp and the bass F-natural [Play this]. Philip Brett pointed out that the natural stress would be on the word “corpus,” but Byrd is emphasising the fact that this is the “*true* body of Christ,” reinforcing the doctrine of transubstantiation. Moreover, Byrd has deliberately composed against the poetic nature of the text by separating the words “Ave verum corpus” from the word “natum” that ends the first line of the strophe. These three words are further set apart from the rest of the motet, almost as if they are in inverted commas or act as a “headline,” or, more truthfully, as a fundamental statement of faith.

Ave verum corpus natum
de Maria virgine,
vere passum, immolatum
in cruce pro homine.

Thus we see a musical device used to convey an aspect of Byrd's deeply held Catholic beliefs, to which the very existence of the *Gradualia* is itself the most potent testament. There are many other examples, including famously the triumphant repetition of the word “catholicam” in the Credo of the Four-Part Mass. Sometimes the same words in different motets receive the same treatment, such as the word “desolata” in *Civitas sancti tui* and *Vide, Domine*. [Play]

Many features of Byrd's style seem deliberately to evoke pre-Reformation (and therefore specifically Roman Catholic) musical practices. A famous example occurs in *Infelix ego* from the 1591 collection, where Byrd evokes the style of the pre-Reformation votive antiphon by starting each section with reduced voices. Similar examples of pre-Reformation textures occur in the

masses, particularly in the *Agnus Dei* of the Four- and Five-Part Masses, which build up from two and three voices respectively in the first petition to the full complement in the final one. Moreover, Philip Brett noted that the Four-Part Mass appears to be modelled on the pre-Reformation *Meane Mass* of John Taverner.

If *Infelix ego* evokes the votive antiphon, then *Aspice Domine de sede* from the 1589 collection similarly evokes the world of the pre-Reformation responds of Tallis and Sheppard. Responds were sung after readings at the lengthier offices, Matins and Vespers, and were usually set polyphonically only on the major feast-days. They alternated plainsong and polyphony, and during the full sections the chant would be heard in equal longer notes in one of the voices, usually the tenor; we usually refer to this as an equal-note cantus firmus. In the hands of somebody like Sheppard, the respond is a vigorous type of composition, with pithy points of imitation replete with searing false relations, often resolving onto accented first-inversion chords.

[Play example of false relation, then play Sheppard]

Byrd's setting is obviously not liturgical, but, in all other respects *Aspice* is very similar to the pre-Reformation respond; he uses an equal-note cantus firmus and also the same type of false relations that we find in much Sheppard [play bar 19]. He also uses a similar punchy type of counterpoint, with short points of imitation entering in quick succession (listen to the point on the words "de sede"). Interestingly, Byrd had set several responds in the earlier 1575 *Cantiones*, but with one exception, they are through-composed as motets without an equal-note cantus firmus; even the exception, *Libera me*, bears none of the hallmarks of the pre-Reformation style. With *Aspice Domine*, and with the two responds found in the 1591 collection, it appears that Byrd is deliberately reverting to, or evoking, a pre-Reformation musical style specifically associated with a part of the Roman Catholic liturgy—the respond, and that this would have been easily recognisable to his audience.

[Play *Aspice*]

Turning to the second part of the question—how was Byrd able to forge a language that could express the dire situation of the Catholics in the midst of persecution as well as providing a source of consolation for that community, a language that had of necessity to be "particular"?

First and foremost is Byrd's heavy use of dissonance, and the more extreme types of dissonance. If you compare Byrd to virtually all of his contemporaries, excluding some madrigalists, then his work has a much heavier use of dissonance. In our overfamiliarity with such works as the Four- and Five-Part Masses, it is easy to overlook the fact that there is a suspension at every available opportunity bar one in the "dona nobis" of the four-part, and that the five-part *Agnus Dei* has such intense dissonances that you simply cannot find them elsewhere [play]. Elsewhere, of the literally hundreds of examples from which one can choose, I just want to pinpoint one; namely, the extraordinary end of *Vide, Domine*, where there is a biting augmented fifth between the suspended B-flat and the F-sharp in the top voice [play]. I was going to describe this as unprecedented except that it is also occurs at the end of the consort song *Why Do I Use Paper, Ink and Pen*, which, in its original form, described the death of the Catholic martyr Campion in graphic detail. Moreover, whilst there is nothing unusual about suspensions over final chords, the note suspended is usually a fourth [play example] rather than a sixth. Except, that is, for pre-Reformation English composers, who often suspended the major sixth (this is an example from Taverner's *Mater Christi* [play]). Is Byrd here deliberately harking back to this usage, with

its recollection of the timelessness and sureness of early sixteenth-century Catholic faith, but somehow corrupting it to portray the grotesque plight of contemporary Catholicism?

A large number of motets in the 1589 *Cantiones sacrae* are based on a principal motif that includes what Joseph Kerman called “the expressive semitone step”; this rising semitone step is often the initial interval, such as in *Domine, tu iurasti* [sing] or occurs at the apex of the phrase. Indeed, so ubiquitous is this motif that it provides yet another unifying factor to the whole collection. Kerman also showed how Byrd was influenced in this respect by Alfonso Ferrabosco, an Italian composer who introduced many modern continental techniques of composition into England. Nevertheless, Byrd goes much further than Ferrabosco in his use of this device. I want now to look at one of my favourite works from the 1589 collection, since it perhaps has the most sophisticated compositional technique in this respect. In this work, virtually all the individual points of imitation derive from or are developments of the initial semitonal motif. Moreover, Byrd uses the semitonal figure to disrupt potential resolution and thus to create sustained tension.

The first part of *Tristitia* is unremittingly gloomy—“Sorrow and anxiety have taken hold of my innermost being. My heart is made sorrowful in grief, and mine eyes are darkened. Woe is me, for I have sinned.” The semitonal motif first occurs at the beginning, so that it is always associated with the word “Tristitia.” Byrd starts with a chordal opening, separated by rests, that we find elsewhere in the *Cantiones*, usually at the opening of motets of deep despair, such as *Vide Domine* and *Deus, venerunt gentes*. The effect is to draw our attention to the intensity of the emotion, and, in *Tristitia* it gives the opening an enclosed, interior, even claustrophobic atmosphere [play it]. Most of the main themes of the first part of the motet are related back to this initial semitone, especially the last one on the words “Vae mihi” (Woe is me). Here Byrd draws out the theme to almost double the length and so that the rising semitone falls on the accented syllable, “mihi,” rather than just being a decorative upper note [sing it]. Moreover, because the motif appears in all voices it causes a large number of interrupted cadences when it appears in the lowest voice. The preparation for the expected perfect cadences is quite long (four beats) so that they feel as if they are being prepared over a pedal point [play bars 88–89]; because the expected resolution is always avoided, Byrd is able to create an unbearably sustained tension in a section that lasts over thirty measures. There are other sources of disruption too, notably the avoidance of expected resolution onto tonic chords by the second part of the motif causing an accented first inversion chord, that most English of sonorities [play bars 91–94].

And yet, behind virtually all of Byrd's choices of texts lie the ideas of consolation, mercy, and redemption, and the second part of *Tristitia* emphasises these essential tenets of the Christian faith, particularly important to those close to despair under persecution. (“But thou, O Lord, who forsakest not those who hope in thee, comfort and help me for thy holy name's sake, and have mercy upon me.”) For Byrd, it is obvious that the most important matter was to offer such consolation, not as some *Deus ex machina*, but very much in the light of what had gone before. This is precisely what happens in *Tristitia*.

The first and most obvious manifestation of this occurs right at the start of the second part, where the semitonal figure (E–F) is expanded to a tone (E–F-sharp). This has two important consequences; firstly, while the first part of the motet had explored the flat side of A minor, the second part contains no flats and explores the sharp-key side of the tonic; secondly, the second part refers much more to major keys. Thus the *same* basic musical motif, which in the first part

had communicated the depths of despair, by transformation can suggest hope and consolation. Moreover, that same musical motif, by affecting the harmonic structure by creating a series of interrupted cadences, can produce a sustained febrile tension and lack of resolution that seems utterly appropriate to the depiction of a persecuted religious community. One more thing to be said about *Tristitia* is the sheer beauty of the final call for mercy, “et Miserere mei,” where Byrd combines elements of the two halves of the motet, bringing back the semitone at the apex of the phrase [sing it] together with a treatment of accented first inversion chords that is more typical of the second part. He even alludes back to a particular type of suspension heard right at the end of the first part [play this].

[Play *Tristitia*]

Much has been made of Ferrabosco’s influence on Byrd, and it is undoubtedly true that the two composers were very close. However, a more potent influence for many of the works in the 1589 collection seems to have come from the Flemish composer Clemens non Papa. Certainly Byrd discovered the text of *Tristitia* in Clemens’s collection of motets published in 1553 under the title *Cantiones ecclesiasticae* and that of *Vide, Domine* in an earlier publication. And almost certainly he would have stumbled across these motets in the library at Nonsuch Palace, assembled by his patrons Henry Fitzalan, twelfth earl of Arundel, and his son-in-law John, Lord Lumley. Like Byrd’s motet, Clemens’s starts with a pronounced semitonal motif and he also keeps the same structural divisions, such as before the words “Moestum factum est cor meum.” Byrd, of course, goes further in his expressive language than Clemens, but there is much here that must have given Byrd food for thought and a model to emulate. [Sing Clemens]

The creation of sustained tension seems to me to be at the heart of Byrd’s recusant musical style. We have already heard how he can do this by harmonic means, but there are other devices he uses as well. One of the pieces that have impressed me this week is *Tribulationes civitatum*, and I am particularly interested in the end of the second and third parts of the motets. The end of the second part, having described the plight of the people, cries out for the Lord to have mercy. Rather than the serene beauty of the plea for mercy at the end of *Tristitia*, Byrd adopts a much more obviously rhetorical approach; he uses a series of short phrases of block chords separated by rests, which we earlier identified as a means of grabbing attention. He repeats this four times, to convey the desperation, even anger of the situation [play this]. A similar device occurs in the third part of the motet at the words “aperi oculos tuos Domine” (open thine eyes, O Lord) before a final section where Byrd brings another device to maintaining and increasing tension into play, namely the way in which successive leads enter higher and higher. This occurs in so many of Byrd’s motets, such as *Tristitia*, but here it is in a remarkably clear and effective form. Like the final points of *Tristitia*, Byrd creates quite a long section, of almost thirty measures. At the beginning the pitch level remains constant round D-flat in the top voice (transposed edition). But when the bass climbs up to that note, the top voice immediately goes one higher to F and then the tenors to G-flat, then taken over by the sopranos before the tenors go one tone higher to an A-flat before subsiding into the final cadence [play].

After the political motets of the 1580s, Byrd was to turn to the encyclopaedic composition of propers for the Christian year—the *Gradualia*. Perhaps after his pardon from prosecution in 1592, he no longer felt personally threatened and was thus able embark on a project that fed more directly into the life of the church itself through the celebration of the Mass. Nevertheless, we know that the motets of the 1589 *Cantiones sacrae* were in wide circulation even before they

were published and it is easy to contemplate them being sung at small gatherings of fellow-minded Catholics, even possibly at events such as the reception of Garnet back into England mentioned earlier. In any case, it is Byrd's principal achievement not just to forge a musical style that was able to portray the plight of the Catholic community, but also one that was able to offer that community consolation and hope and also to express a type of beauty in their predicament. It is surely no coincidence that the collection ends with one of the few major key motets of unalloyed optimism—*Laetentur caeli*—that proclaims that the Lord “*will* come and *will* take pity on his afflicted people.”

WILLIAM BYRD'S ART OF MELODY

William Peter Mahrt

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elody, of all the aspects of music is difficult to talk about, even though it is the most apparent aspect of a piece of music—it is what we come away with humming, and it is generally what we recall first about a piece. Still, it is like St. Augustine's description of time: I know what it is until you ask me to define it. We recognize melodies, but we are sometimes hard put to say why they are effective. Thus, melody is not as well-studied as other aspects of music. A subject search of the library catalogue at Stanford yielded these results: about seven hundred fifty books under harmony, about three hundred under counterpoint, but only twenty or twenty-five under melody. Perhaps melody is in need of further study.

The two volumes of *Cantiones Sacrae* (1589, 1591) by William Byrd provide a fruitful basis for the study of one composer's melodic art, principally because these works show a striking polarity of affect—described in the period as “grave vs. merrie,” and because Byrd makes very effective setting of his texts. I have addressed the question of affect in the essay “Grave and Merrie, Major and Minor: Expressive Paradoxes in Byrd's *Cantiones Sacrae*, 1589,” showing that Byrd assimilated the lamenting affect of the Phrygian mode into the Aeolian, and considering certain anomalous relations of mode and affect: major-mode lamentations derive from the plainsong melody for the Lamentations of Jeremiah; the upbeat Phrygian relates to a particular Phrygian usage, such as the Phrygian Alleluia melodies in the Easter season.¹

Consider two contrasting melodies from Byrd's collections. In the first, *Deus venerunt gentes* [See Example 1], the opening segment of the melody sets the tone for this substantial and very grave work. It begins with several syllables reiterated on a single pitch before rising a half step with a minor third below it to express the accented syllables of the text, ending with a return to A via B-flat (mm. 1–5). It proceeds with more reiteration of the same pitch, and a rise of a minor third to the next important accent; the following accent bears a melisma rising

¹The Phrygian mode is that mode whose final is E, giving it a most pungent affect, particularly in its unique melodic cadence: the Phrygian cadence is a descent of a half step to the final, while the cadences of the other modes are a descent of a whole step.

Ex. 1: CS I:7. Deus venerunt gentes, medius, mm. 1–15

De - us De - us ve - nerunt gen - tes in he - re - di - ta - tem
tu - - - - - um pol - lu - erunt tem - plum san - ctum tu - um

another minor third, descending again to A through B-flat (mm. 6–11); the third segment shifts upward to D with a minor third above it, placing the important accent on the F, cadencing to D and then descending again to A through B-flat (mm. 11–15). Each segment carries some of the same elements: the minor third and the descent to a Phrygian cadence. Yet each one contains a substantial increase over the previous segment, contributing to a dynamic structure. Still, the range is limited, expressive of the lamenting character of the work. Likewise, the rather slow development of the whole subject indicates to the listener that it will be a work on a large scale.

The second melody, *Exsurge Domine* [Example 2], forms a striking contrast with the first. This melody begins with a skip upwards and after a brief turn, continues upwards in a quick scale; a repeat of the initial word sets its accent off by resolving it downwards by a half step (mm. 1–3). The question, “quare obdormis” (why are you sleeping?) is repeated, leading to “Domine,” which is emphasized by a leap of a sixth (mm. 4–9); the third statement of the question begins a descent of a whole octave, and then on “Domine” another scalewise ascent rises through the whole octave plus a half step (mm. 10–16).² The wide-ranging motion together with the quick reiteration of the question contributes to the ebullient sense of urgency that suffuses the piece.

Ex. 2: CS II:12. Exsurge Domine, superius, mm. 1–16

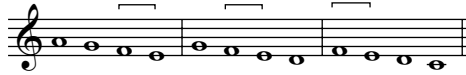
Ex-sur - ge, ex-sur-ge qua-re ob-dor-mis Do - mi - ne, ob-dor - mis Do-mi
ne, Qua - re ob-dormis, qua-re ob - dormis Do - - - - mi - ne?

The differences between narrow-ranging and wide-ranging, between stepwise and skipwise, and their affective connotations—often the contrast of “grave and merrie”—are characteristic for Byrd, but they can be further explored by outlining several ways in which he constructs melodies. Generally his melody has a characteristic beginning gesture, clearly articulated, and then that gesture is expanded or elaborated upon in the course of the setting of the first phrase. Likewise, most of his melodic gestures focus upon a half-step as an expressive element, either

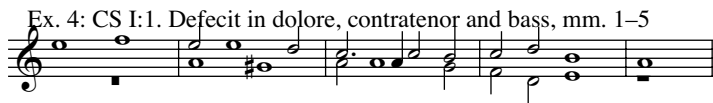
²It is interesting to note that this range is the perfect plagal ambitus defined by theorists, which includes the whole octave plus one note above it.

within the basic interval or added to it. Thus the distinction between the three species of tetrachord, differing by where the half step falls [see Example 3], is central to how Byrd forms his melodies, but the half step can also decorate an interval species as it did in *Exsurge*, and as is

Ex. 3: Three tetrachords with different positions of the half step



done in the contrapuntal beginning of *Defecit in dolore* Example 4. Here complementary entrances of the voices move to a half step in opposite directions. Or, a double half step can



shape a single melody [Example 5].

Ex. 5: CS I:8. Domine tu jurasti, tenor, mm. 1-5



Byrd's most stark beginning is that on a single pitch [Example 6]. Here are the words of the centurion in the gospel, "Lord I am not worthy that thou shouldst enter under my roof." The first word, "Domine," set to a single pitch, very slowly represents the rhythm of the word and by its single pitch the most discreet approach to the Lord (mm. 2-4). It is then repeated, rising briefly, adding an element of intensity, but immediately falling to a much lower pitch, a

Ex. 6: CS II:15. Domine, non sum dignus, superius, mm. 2-10



gesture of evident humility (mm. 5-7); what follows, "non sum dignus" (I am not worthy), reiterates the gesture, rising to the same note on the accented syllable and then descending through a scalewise passage to the same bottom note, now a much more elaborate gesture of humility (mm. 8-10). The simple rhythm of the word on a single pitch has been the basis of a progressive elaboration.

A similar stark melody serves a similar purpose in *Infelix ego* [Example 7]. Here, after eleven minutes of mainly contrapuntal buildup, commenting on Psalm 50, the text of the beginning of the psalm is quoted for the first time in repeated notes and familiar style,³ with only a half-step

³"Familiar style" is a texture in which all the voices sing the text simultaneously, as opposed to contrapuntal styles, in which each voice takes the text in turn; it is sometimes also called "chordal style."

Ex. 7: CS II:16. *Infelix ego, superius*, mm. 233–239

Mi - se - re - re me - i, mi - se - re - re - me - i De - us

inflection on the accent of the text: the passage is set off by a silence before and after it, and after repeating it intensely, it leads to the object of address, “Deus.” This setting a passage off in simultaneous text surrounded by rests was familiar to Renaissance composers, and they saved it for just the most poignant moments, naming it “noema.” The passage comes at the crux of the whole piece—the citation of the beginning of the text of the psalm upon which the piece has been the commentary. It is one of the most sophisticated rhetorical devices: to create a build-up to a climax and to provide as its culmination, not a great climactic peak but a point of utter simplicity. Of course, it is not simple at all; the psychological calculation to place it correctly and to gage its extent is masterly.

Another very discreet beginning melody type is a circling melody. In a separate setting of the beginning of Psalm 50, the text is given in familiar style, with the top voice singing this melody [Example 8]. The melody simply circles around the beginning pitch, accommodating the accent of the text.

Ex. 8: CS II:13. *Miserere mei Deus, superius*, mm. 1–5

Mi - se - re - re me - i De - - - - us

The very beginning of *Infelix ego* uses quite a different circling melody and to a different effect. This impressive twelve-minute work begins with the note upon which it will end, B-flat, circling around it in a four-note figure [Example 9]. But the circling actually outlines a G-minor

Ex. 9: CS II:16. *Infelix ego, superius*, mm. 3-6

In - fe - lix e - go

triad; this is followed by a descent downward, filling in nearly the whole octave from its top note and reinforcing the effect of the minor at the very beginning of this piece, which then ends in the major, thus setting a problematic modal context for the whole piece.

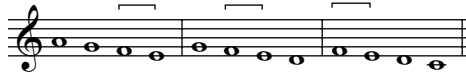
Yet another circling melody represents an idea in the text: On “Circumdederunt me” (the sorrows of death encompassed me about) [Example 10], the melody encircles its focal pitch, G, (mm. 5–7); the sorrows are then represented by a descent that begins with a half step above the beginning note of the melody (mm. 10–13).

Ex. 10: CS II:9. *Circumdederunt me, superius*, mm. 5–13

Cir - cum - de - de - - runt me do - lo - res mor - - - - tis

The next most discreet melodic beginning is a tetrachordal beginning, i.e., a beginning in which the range of the melody is limited to four notes. There are three possible species of tetrachord, depending upon where the half step is [see again, Example 3]. *Domine, salva nos* [Example 11] begins with a melody which descends by a third, leaps up for the plea, “salva,” and descends by a fourth, a Phrygian fourth, with the half step at the bottom. The first state-

Ex. 3: Three tetrachords with different positions of the half step



Ex. 11 CS II:20. *Domine salva nos, superius*, mm. 1–16



ment of the melody in the soprano skips down to its bottom note on “salva nos,” avoiding the half step (mm. 1–4), but the second statement includes the half step (mm. 7–10). This tetrachordal melody is then elaborated by changing the species of tetrachord and shifting the fourth upward (mm. 11–13), and then downward (mm. 14–16), thus gradually expanding its range to the whole octave.

In constructing melodic beginnings with tetrachords, Byrd very often makes pointed use of the half step. In *Tribulatio proxima est* [Example 12], the subject places a half step at both the

Ex. 12: CS II:5. *Tribulatio proxima est, superius*, mm. 3–6



tenor, mm. 1–4



top and bottom of the tetrachord. Byrd is quite unlike continental composers such as Palestrina, however, in treating melodies in imitation. When the voices take the melody in turn, Palestrina’s technique is to keep them quite consistent, and this is expressive of a certain kind of classicism rightly admired in Palestrina. But Byrd very often makes small variations in each entering voice, as here; while the top voice sings the fourth with the half step at both top and bottom (*superius*, mm. 3–6), the next voice down sings a straight fourth with the half step naturally occurring at the bottom, but adds a half step above the top note (*medius*, mm. 1–4). The next voice circles around the bottom note of the fourth, ultimately expanding its range to the whole octave (*tenor*, mm. 1–4).

Sometimes the Phrygian fourth is expanded to create what I call a Phrygian descent: a step-wise descent from the reciting note, C, to the final E, which then has the fourth as the concluding part of the descent. In *Domine exaudi* [Example 13], the basic fourth subject (mm. 9–11)

Ex. 13: CS II:6. *Domine exaudi orationem meam*, mm. 9–15

Do - mi-ne ex - au - di o-ra-ti - o-nem me - - - am

is extended to include this descent (mm. 12–15). This gives eloquent emphasis upon the object of the text, “orationem meam.”

Another way of emphasizing the half step in a fourth is to put it in a prominent position at the top of the fourth. *Apparebit in finem* [Example 14] uses such a half step to emphasize the accented syllable, “fi.”

Ex. 14: CS II:7. *Apparebit in finem, superius*, mm. 5–7

Ap - pa - re - bit in fi - nem

A very expressive tetrachordal melody is used in *Haec dicit Dominus* [Example 15], where the introductory sentence, “Thus saith the Lord,” is articulated with a fourth with a half step at

Ex. 15: CS II:10. *Haec dicit Dominus, superius*, mm. 1–13

Haec di - cit Do - - - mi - nus haec di - cit Do -
- - mi - nus vox in ex - cel - sis

the top descending to a half step at the bottom; the whole pattern is then expanded by touching on the half step below the beginning note and skipping up a third, setting the rest of the melody up a step, incorporating in the process four different half steps. These are two statements in familiar style and are obviously there for harmonic reasons, but they create a point of departure for what follows. Each of three successive statements begins on A; the second takes an ascending fourth with a half step at the top, a clear alteration of the tonality that has preceded. The third expands the range by rising the whole fourth above the A, also with a half step at the top. Thus the sequence has been a fourth rising to B-flat, then to C, then to D.

Whole triads are used for melodies, and are especially effective when they have a half step above them, as in *Levemus corda nostra* [Example 16]. The rising character of the text is well expressed by the upward leap of a fifth, eventually superseded by the rising half step on “corda” (hearts, mm. 1–3). This rising motion is expanded in the next phrases by adding to the rising triad plus half step a leap upward at “ad Dominum in caelos,” filling out the whole octave suitably expressing “heavens” by its highest note (mm. 20–23). Subsequently, the sopranos add yet

Ex. 16: CS II:10. Levemus corda
contratenor, mm. 1–3

Le - ve - mus cor - da cum ma-ni-bus ad Do-minum in cae - los

superius, mm. 20–23

cum ma-ni-bus ad Do-mi-num in cae - los in cae - - - - los

another half step to that high note for the highest note of the piece (mm. 32–37). Thus the height of heavens is the ultimate goal of the soprano part, even of the whole melody.

Rising fifths are also used with the additional feature that they carry swift scalewise motion upward to express some kind of upward ascent or general exaltation. *Haec dies*, the Easter text, expresses the exultation of the day through a triad elaborated by quick, stepwise motion [Example 17]. *Exsurge, Domine*, however, uses a similar figure, this time in a minor mode,

Ex. 17: CS II:21. Haec dies, superius, mm. 1–4

Haec di - - es, quam fe-cit Do-mi - nus

expressing a kind of urgency, to exhort the Lord to arise, an Advent theme expressed by ascending a whole octave [Example 18]. This urgency is expanded upon throughout the piece: on

Ex. 18: CS 12. Exsurge, superius, mm. 1–3

Ex - sur - - - ge, ex - sur - ge

“will you forget our poverty?” the same figure is stated on three successive pitches, insistently asking the Lord not to forget us [Example 19]. The piece is concluded by a recall of the first

Ex. 19: CS II:12. Exsurge, superius, mm. 49–62

Ob - li - vi - sceris ino - pi - ae no - - - - - strae ob - li - vi - sceris ino - pi - ae no -
- - - - - strae ob - li - vi - sce - ris in - o - pi - ae no - - - - - strae

exhortation, “exsurge” (arise). Now what was at first a fourth leap up is extracted from its original scalewise ascent and becomes a series of bald leaps [Example 20], first a sixth (mm. 86–88), and then an octave (mm. 87–90), and then, unbelievably, a ninth (m. 91–93), and then even another octave, a third higher (m. 92–5).

Ex. 20: CS II:12. Exsurge,
 medius, mm. 86–88 superius, mm. 87–90
 ex - sur - ge Do-mi - ne ex - sur - ge Do - mi - ne
 contratenor, mm. 91–93 tenor, mm. 92–95
 ex - sur-ge Do-mi-ne ex - sur-ge Do - mi-ne

A more gentle ascent greets the Blessed Virgin in *Salve Regina* [Example 21]. Here, the rising fifth touches upon the half step above more gently as an opening to this Marian greeting

Ex. 21: CS II:4. Salve Regina,
 medius, mm. 1–7
 Sal - - ve Re - gi - na ma-ter mi - se-ri-cor - - - di - ae
 tenor, mm. 15–18
 Sal - - - - - ve, sal - - - - - ve

(mm. 1–3); this ascent is complemented by a further fifth above it, filling out the whole range of an octave (mm. 4–7). The paragraph closes by repeating the greeting *Salve Regina*, but now the same figure is extended to a seventh and elaborated, so that its effectiveness is heightened upon repetition (mm. 15–18).

Byrd's treatment of text sometimes takes account of the grammatical mood of a phrase—its interrogative or imperative mood in contrast to the normal declarative mood. *Quis est homo* begins with a question [Example 22]: This rising figure followed by a rest represents the kind

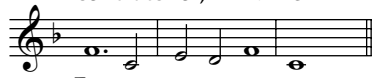
Ex. 22: CS II:2. Quis est homo, superius, mm. 1–2
 Quis est ho - - mo

of inflection we might give a question. Likewise, in *Exsurge, Domine* [Example 23], the half step gives a rising character suitable to a question; its reiteration throughout the texture also gives it a slightly nagging quality reminiscent of the questions of a child.

Ex. 23: CS II:12. Exsurge, superius, mm. 10–11
 Qua - re ob-dor-mis

The imperative mood may be the basis for the distinction in melodies in *Fac cum servo tuo* [Example 24]; its first melody is a little jagged, “Fac cum servo tuo,” (Deal with thy servant),

Ex. 24: CS II:3. Fac cum servo tuo,
contratenor, mm. 1–3



Fac cum ser-vo tu - o
superius, mm. 12–18



se - cun - dum mi - se - ri - cor - di - am tu - - - - am
superius, mm. 41–51



do - ce me do - ce me do - ce me do - ce me



ser - vus tu - us e - - - - go sum

superius, mm. 60–65

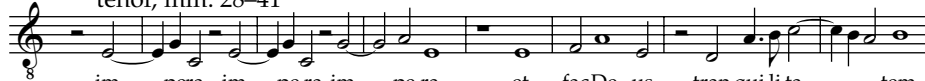


da mi - hi in - tel - lec - - - - tum in - tel - lec - tum

separating every accented syllable by a leap before or after to a higher pitch, emphasizing the accented syllables as is appropriate to the imperative mood (mm. 1–3). The following melody, on “secundum misericordiam tuam” (according to thy mercy), is, in contrast, entirely stepwise except for a leap to the first accented syllable (mm. 12–18). The next imperative in the same piece, “doce me,” (teach me), is on an isolated reiterated phrase, either all on the same pitch, or mainly with skips (mm. 41–51). There follows “servus tuus” (thy servant), again stepwise, and finally, another imperative, “da mihi intellectum” (give me understanding), in a phrase set off by dotted rhythms (mm. 60–65). The whole shape of the first part of this piece is thus articulated by the alternation of imperatives with non-imperative phrases in contrasting melodic styles.

Perhaps the most imperative spot in the whole collection is in *Domine, salva nos* [Example 25]: here the imperative is for an imperative: “impera et fac Deus tranquillitatem,” (command,

Ex. 25: CS II:20. Domine salva nos
tenor, mm. 28–41



im - pera im - pera im - pera et fac De - us tran - qui - li - ta - tem



et fac De - us tran - qui - li - ta - - - - tem et fac De - us

and create peace, O God!). The command to command is set to a repeated isolated word with an upward leap; “et fac Deus” is set to another upward leap, ultimately expanded to a sixth, comprising a whole octave (mm. 28–41), while the soprano makes an octave ascent on “et fac Deus” (mm. 40–41). The following series of imitations on “tranquillitatem” comes as a consoling contrast.

A larger-scale strategy for Byrd has to do with what I call a *conversio*. This is a rhetorical term which originally meant to run the changes through declensions or conjugations: e.g., “was . . . is now, and ever shall be,” three tenses of the verb to be. Theorists of mode speak of a conversion, in which interval species are converted from one to another: A–G–F–E; E–Fsharp–Gsharp–A. Such a *conversio* occurs in *Levamus corda nostra* [Example 26], where

Ex. 26: CS II:10. *Levamus corda*,
superius, mm. 67–71

Sed tu Do - mi - ne mi - se - re - re no - stri

medius, mm. 71–78

Sed tu Do - mi - ne mi - se - re - re no - - - - stri

“miserere” with a leap of a fifth plus a half step, a typical expression of pathos, is contrasted with “sed tu Domine,” with an ascent through a chromatically raised step. “Sed tu” is prepared by one version, G–E-flat–F–G and converted to G–E-natural–F-sharp–G. This passage clarifies Byrd’s meaning: in “but thou O Lord, have mercy,” “thou O Lord” is given a remarkably positive aspect by this major sounding interval, confirming that the prayer is asked in confidence rather than fear.

The sequence of melodies in the course of a piece often creates a sense of progression of affect. Such is the case in *Domine secundum multitudinem* [Example 27]. It begins with a

Ex. 27: CS I:15. *Domine secundum multitudinem*,
bassus, mm. 10–19

Do - mi - ne se - cun - dum mul - ti - tu - di - nem do - lo - rum, do -

superius, mm. 36–38 mm. 50–51

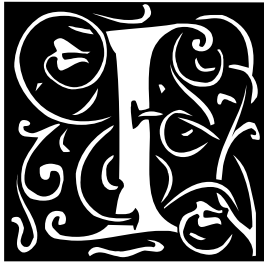
lo - rum me - o - - rum con - so - la - ti - o - nes tu - ae lae - ti - fi - ca - ve - runt

descending third, half step at the bottom (mm. 10–11); this is complemented by a rise to C, followed by the completion of a Phrygian descent (mm. 12–15). “Dolorum” is expressed by descending figures (mm. 16–18), but “consolationes” receives an impulse upward, expressing a more positive affect (mm. 36–38), and then “laetificantes” adds a new ascending half step to its quickening effect (mm. 50–51). Thus from the suggestion of lament at the beginning, a transformation takes place leading to a conclusion which is quite joyful.

I hope to have shown in Byrd’s melodies a characteristic procedure, beginning with a rather short initial melodic gesture, clearly articulated, which is then expanded and elaborated. This gesture epitomizes the affect of the text, but in the process of expansion is varied to convey a multitude of ways of differentiating the affect, and thus each work is different, though it expresses the basic affect of grave or merrie.

SAVONAROLA, BYRD, AND *INFELIX EGO*

David Trendell
21 August 2004



Infelix ego is undoubtedly one of the most remarkable of all Byrd's *Cantiones sacrae*. Comprising 268 measures, it is certainly one of his longest motets, and musically one of his most inventive and original, but behind it lies an extraordinary story. As we know, Byrd chose his texts with great care and a large number of motets in the 1489 and 1591 *Cantiones sacrae* portray the plight of the Catholic community in England with reference to, for example, the destruction of the Holy City of Jerusalem or the Babylonian and Egyptian exiles. *Infelix ego*, however, sets a meditation on Psalm 50 by the Florentine friar Girolamo Savonarola. This is indeed ironic, given Savonarola's disapproval of lavish music and his strong influence over Protestant reformers, particularly in England. Nevertheless, the writings of Savonarola proved a fertile source for composers during the sixteenth century, and this lecture will look at how Byrd's *Infelix ego* fits into this tradition (or rather doesn't) before showing how the text fired Byrd into composing one of his most dazzling successes. First, however, we need to look a bit at who was Savonarola, and why was he so influential after his death?

The height of Savonarola's power came during the 1490s in Florence. He had entered the Dominican order in 1472 and served in a number of towns in Italy, most notably Florence, where his preaching initially met with little success, and Bologna. However, in 1490 he was invited back to Florence by Lorenzo de' Medici and re-established himself at the convent of San Marco. In 1491 he delivered the Lenten sermons at the Duomo and the Florentine public were captivated by the power of his preaching and by his condemnation of corruption in the church and the decadence of the papal court at Rome. Savonarola's influence in Florence grew during the early 1490s, bolstered by his diplomacy during the crisis of 1494, when Charles VIII of France threatened to sack the city. The themes of his sermons remained similar, but there was an increasingly prophetic note to his preaching as well as a call for reform in the political, social, and religious spheres. He warned of incipient trouble for Italy, especially for corrupt Rome, and urged the Florentines to return to the simplicity of life of the early church. If they were to do this, then he prophesized that Florence would enjoy great wealth and power and would become the New Jerusalem. The ascetic tone of Savonarola's message was also applied to the nature of Florentine worship. He emphasized the importance of the inner life of prayer for the clergy and

condemned extravagant ceremonial. Polyphonic music (*canti figurati*) came in for special criticism because it distracted the listener; indeed it was positively lascivious, invented by the devil to destroy the possibility of mental prayer. Perhaps the most trenchant critique of music came in a sermon delivered in March 1496:

The Lord doesn't want elaborate music on feast-days; rather he says: "take away your beautiful *canti figurati*." These *signori* have chapels of singers who appear to be in a regular uproar, because there stands a singer with a big voice who appears to be a calf and the others cry out around him like dogs, and one can't make out a word they are saying. Give up these *canti figurati*, and sing the plain-chant ordained by the church. You wish to play organs too; you go to church to hear organs. God says: "I don't listen to your organs."

If music was lascivious, then the musicians themselves were decadent. In February 1496, Savonarola described the choir of the exiled Florentine ruler Piero de' Medici thus: "The tyrant sometimes maintains in his church, not for the honor of God but for his own pleasure, rascally singers who—their bellies filled with wine—come to sing the Mass to Christ, and then pays them with money from the commune."

Savonarola's preaching had the most pervasive effect on Florentine life. The choir at the Duomo, which had been one of the most famous in Italy, particularly after the arrival of Heinrich Isaac in the mid 1480s, was disbanded in 1493. Reforms of the Florentine constitution and the re-establishment of the republic, both of which he demanded from the pulpit were implemented along with social reforms, such as the prohibition of gambling. The effect of Savonarola's ascetic message was manifested in the annual carnivals. Previously these had been an orgy of excess in every single manner possible. The Florentine youths, the *fanciulli*, would build small huts and defend them against other gangs who tried to set them ablaze. But in the Savonarolan carnivals of 1496–8, these same *fanciulli* devoted themselves to doing good works and collecting for the poor and processing through the streets singing simple *laude*, just about the only music of which Savonarola approved. In 1497 the carnival culminated in a bonfire of the vanities; the *fanciulli* went around Florence collecting "lascivious pictures, vanities, such as women's hats, mirrors, wigs, dolls, sculptures, playing cards, dice boards, chess pieces, lutes, and other musical instruments" and burnt them on an enormous pyre.

Savonarola's reforms had proved divisive within Florence, events such as the bonfire of vanities setting the citizens against one another, even within individual families. Meanwhile, Savonarola's teaching had unsurprisingly attracted attention in Rome, and in 1497 he was excommunicated by Pope Alexander VI. In February 1598, Savonarola began preaching ever more provocative sermons, which resulted in the pope placing the whole city under interdict. The end came for Savonarola when a mob attacked his convent of San Marco. He surrendered, along with two other friars, and, after torture, signed a confession acknowledging the falseness of his prophecy. They were hung and burnt at the stake on May 23, 1498.

During his incarceration, Savonarola wrote two meditations on psalm texts, one on Psalm 30 entitled *Tristitia obsedit me*, which remained incomplete, and the other on Psalm 50 *Infelix ego*. These are extraordinary works by any standards. *Infelix ego* consists of a series of meditations on each of the nineteen verses of the psalm, interspersed with the refrain "Miserere mei Deus," the first verse of the psalm. The text starts with a depiction of the author in misery,

wretched, devoid of all help. It continues with a series of urgent questions—“Where shall I go? whither shall I fly?” since the author has offended heaven and earth. The questions end with “Shall I despair?” At this point the mood changes, since Savonarola stresses that God is merciful, saying that he will not be despised or rejected by him. When Savonarola encounters the Lord, he will “pour out words of sorrow,” saying, “Miserere mei Deus” (Have mercy upon me O God), the first verse of Psalm 50. A similar portrayal of misery followed by hope is evident in the incomplete meditation on Psalm 30.

Savonarola’s deathbed meditations became his best-known works, far more so than the tracts written during the rest of his life. Within two years of his death, they had appeared in fifteen Latin editions in Italy, including at Ferrara, Milan, and Venice as well as further afield in Antwerp and Germanic cities such as Augsburg. They continued to be popular all over Europe throughout the sixteenth century. What are the reasons for this? First of all, and not insignificantly, they are truly great pieces of literature. Secondly, Savonarola became a source of inspiration for the reformed churches as well as for other reformers within the Catholic church. The call to the citizens of Florence to return to the simple life of the early church with the outlawing of such pleasures as gambling, together with the bonfire of vanities, speak of an ascetic lifestyle, foreshadowing that prescribed by the Protestants, Calvin and Zwingli. Indeed, Savonarola’s strictures against elaborate forms of worship prefigure the extreme austerity of Genevan Protestantism, with their bare churches, whilst his tirades against the impure thoughts conjured up by music are positively Zwingli-esque. It is no surprise that Martin Luther published the two meditations in Wittenberg in 1523, for in certain of Savonarola’s writings he detected the notion of justification through faith alone, and the first published biography of Savonarola was written by a Lutheran theologian Cyriacus Spangenberg in 1558. Thirdly, in an age of considerable religious turbulence, Savonarola’s notoriously bloody death stood as an example of martyrdom, of a man remaining true to his faith until the last. Those who followed Savonarola down this particular path included Thomas Cranmer in England. Savonarola’s meditations proved extremely popular in England with twenty-one English-language editions of the meditation on Psalm 50 published between 1534 and 1578. The meditation usually appeared as an attachment to a primer, such as that published for William Marshall in 1534 and it is likely that their reception in Lutheran Germany paved the way for their widespread appearance in Protestant English circles. In 1553, during the Catholic restoration of Mary’s reign, Cranmer was tried for treason and in 1555 for heresy (the gap of two years was so that he could be burned alive, Parliament having suspended the practice in 1547). Cranmer famously altered his speech from one recanting his Protestant beliefs, which he had written out two days before his death, to one firmly proclaiming his Protestant beliefs, ending with the words: “And as for the Pope, I refuse him, as Christ’s enemy and Antichrist, with all his false doctrine.” This is the most widely-known part of the speech. However, interestingly, the speech started with a lengthy quotation from Savonarola’s meditation on Psalm 50—“I have offended against heaven and earth, more grievously than any tongue can express. Whither may I go, or whither should I flee for succour? Shall I despair? God forbid. O good God, thou art merciful,” and so on.

Savonarola’s popularity in England extended to musical settings of his meditation in English. The first of these was by William Hunnis, who incorporated lines for the meditation in a poetic version entitled “Alas wretched sinner that I am,” published in 1550. During Mary’s reign, Hunnis was confined to the Tower for plotting against her in 1556. Released by Elizabeth in 1558, he returned to the Psalm 50 meditation in a publication entitled *The poore*

Widowes Mite in 1583. Here he again incorporated lines from Savonarola in a piece called *Ab Helpless Wretch*. This text was further adapted by William Mundy in one of the earliest examples of a verse anthem, and much later by Thomas Ravenscroft.

Savonarola therefore proved an inspiration to the newly-reformed churches of Northern Europe—the reforming zeal of his mission in Florence; his attacks on extravagance within worship, including music; certain tenets of his faith; and the notoriety of his death all proved potent totems to reformers such as Luther and Cranmer. Yet Savonarola was not neglected in his native Italy, and it was here that the extraordinary lineage of polyphonic settings of *Infelix ego* started. In particular, Savonarola was revered in his native Ferrara. Duke Ercole I had maintained close correspondence with the friar in the 1490s asking for both spiritual and political guidance and even carrying out limited reforms in the spirit of Savonarola’s Florence. In 1498 he petitioned for Savonarola’s release and his death distressed the duke and the people of Ferrara. As the diarist Bernardino Zambotti wrote—“His horrifying and miserable death astonished all good Christians, and especially the Ferrarese and his Excellency our duke, whose letters written in his favor were not accepted by those most cruel Florentines.” In 1503, Ercole hired the foremost composer of the day, Josquin des Prez to be his *maestro di cappella*. Josquin only stayed in Ferrara for a year, but during that time he wrote one of his most famous works, *Miserere mei Deus*, a complete setting of Psalm 50. This motet bears striking resemblances to the structure of Savonarola’s meditation, for just as Savonarola places the refrain of the first verse “Miserere mei Deus” after each individual meditation, so Josquin repeats the same refrain, to the same music, after each verse of the psalm in the tenor voice. [Sing the refrain.] It was this musical figure, sometimes referred to as a *soggetto ostinato* (an ostinato musical motto, or subject) that was to prove so important to succeeding generations of composers. It was something of a happy coincidence that brought the work of Savonarola and Josquin together, and, indeed Josquin’s involvement probably did much to keep the friar’s legacy alive, at least in musical circles and in the rarefied strata of sixteenth-century society where such pieces were performed. For Josquin was by far the most important musician of his day, and his influence over succeeding generations, right up until the end of the sixteenth century was immense. His stature and influence was comparable, if you like, to that of Beethoven in the nineteenth century. Composers right up to Lassus and Palestrina wrote masses or magnificats based on motets by Josquin (so-called parodies) and anything with the name Josquin attached to it was seen as a mark of excellence. Whether it was by Josquin or not was debatable since, in the words of one commentator he appeared to write “more after this death than during his lifetime.”

It is perhaps no surprise that the first musical settings of Savonarola’s *Infelix ego* appeared in Ferrara, since the court there, having been firmly pro-Savonarola during his lifetime, remained a place tolerant of religious reform during the 1530s, providing a safe haven for Italian reformers as well as for French Calvinists. The spirit of Savonarola was kept alive by Duke Ercole II who commissioned a setting of *Infelix ego* from Adrian Willaert. Willaert maintained the Ferrarese linking of Josquin and Savonarola by using the same *soggetto ostinato* on the words “Miserere mei Deus” that Josquin had used in his motet. This *soggetto* occurs at regular intervals during the piece in the altus, the second part down. Willaert’s was the first of three settings written for Duke Ercole II’s court in Ferrara, the other two being by Cipriano de Rore and Nicola Vicentino. Like Willaert’s setting, they both use Josquin’s *soggetto ostinato*. I am going to play Willaert’s setting now to give you an idea of the Ferrarese approach to this text, so that you can compare it to Byrd’s radically different later version. Willaert’s setting is

an austere, sombre work, perhaps deliberately in keeping with Savonarola's ideas about the avoidance of complexity, above all in music. The text is set largely syllabically and harmonic progressions are limited in scope, indeed frankly repetitive. Similarly, the melodic lines feature repeated pitches so that melodic interest is subsumed into a projection of the text. Some might even call the piece slightly dull. [Play Willaert]

The Ferrara settings of Savonarola's meditation circulated fairly widely and it is no surprise that we come across settings by later sixteenth-century composers, in spite of the fact that Pope Paul IV prohibited Savonarola's works in the late 1550s. Perhaps the most famous continental setting is by Lassus, whose patron, Duke Albrecht V of Bavaria, maintained close links with the court of Ferrara, and who showed a particular interest in the music of Rore. Nevertheless, undoubtedly the finest setting of all is by William Byrd. But how did this staunchly Roman Catholic composer come to set *Infelix ego*, a text that had such strong affinities with reformists and Protestants, particularly, as we have seen in the case of Cranmer, in his own country?

The first thing to look at in this respect is how Byrd discovered the text. Byrd's patron Lord Lumley, to whom the 1591 collection of *Cantiones sacrae* was dedicated, maintained a magnificent library at Nonsuch Palace. A comparatively small section was devoted to music, but, importantly, it included a wide selection of continental prints. Lassus's setting of *Infelix ego*, published in 1568 in Nuremberg, was here, as was an edition of motets by Clemens non Papa, published by Susato in 1553. This latter is very important because it contains a number of motets on obscure texts which Byrd set and published in his 1589 *Cantiones sacrae*, including *Tristitia et anxietas* and *Vide Domine afflictionem nostram*. Moreover, there are striking thematic, structural, and harmonic similarities between the two composers' settings of *Tristitia*. One of the other motets in Clemens's volume is *Tristitia obsedit me*, which begins with part of Savonarola's meditation on Psalm 30 before going on to set a part of the Psalm 50 meditation, *Infelix ego*. Given Byrd's certain knowledge of this Clemens publication and the stylistic dissimilarity with Lassus's setting, I believe that Byrd first came across the text there, was intrigued, as he was by other texts in the volume, and explored further. Indeed, he would not have had very far to look, since Lumley's library contained four complete editions of Savonarola's text. Lumley himself had been implicated in Catholic plots against Elizabeth in the late 1560s and early 1570s and suffered imprisonment in the Tower during these years. His father-in-law had spent long periods under house arrest for his involvement in the plot to put Mary Queen of Scots on the throne, and Philip Howard, earl of Arundel from 1580, spent ten years of his life in the Tower for his Catholic activities. It is just possible, although perhaps a little far-fetched, that Byrd composed Savonarola's prison meditation with the incarceration of one of his patrons and his family in mind.

Regardless of the connections between Savonarola and Protestantism, the text of *Infelix ego* is very similar in mood and structure to other texts that Byrd favored. Many of Byrd's motets are in two parts, the first describing the desperate plight of the individual, such as *Tristitia*, or the community, such as *Vide Domine*. The second part by contrast offers hope and consolation from that situation and often ends with a plea for God's mercy, for example, *Tristitia* ending with the words "et miserere mei." This is precisely what occurs in the text of *Infelix ego*. The first half of Savonarola's meditation portrays the desperate plight of the individual, whilst from the question "Shall I despair?" onwards, there is hope, concluding with the plea to God's mercy. It is also true that Byrd was drawn throughout his career to texts that expressed the misery and

penitence of the individual, and *Infelix ego* is perhaps the supreme expression of that. Not for nothing was Byrd known for his “gravitie and piety.”

Byrd, I think, was also unconcerned with past connotations of texts, even if he was ever aware of them, although surely he must have been aware of the fate of Savonarola. It has strongly been argued that there is a reformist subtext to many of Clemens’s choices of texts, with *Vide Domine afflictionem nostram* a depiction of the savage persecution of reformers in Flanders in the mid-1540s, just as it became a depiction of the English recusant community of the 1580s in Byrd’s hands. Of paramount importance was the quality of the text, so that Byrd could discover what he called the “profound and hidden power” in the words as he set them to music.

That this was the case in *Infelix ego* is undeniable, for we are dealing here with one of Byrd’s supreme masterpieces. As with other works, most notably his settings of respond texts in the 1589 and 1591 collections, Byrd deliberately evokes a pre-Reformation musical style, that of the votive antiphon. Votive antiphons invariably started with a section for reduced voices, often in three parts, and each of the three sections of Byrd’s motet starts with such a grouping, far more extended than would normally be the case. There is in any case some sort of continuity with the votive antiphon. At the time of the Reformation, the function of the votive antiphon seems to have been superseded by the psalm motet, but the musical style of the votive antiphon, with its contrasting sections for full choir and reduced voices, was continued in many of the psalm motets of Robert White. The self-conscious stylistic “harking-back” of *Infelix ego* may reflect the fact that it too is based, however loosely, on a psalm.

Byrd’s *Infelix ego* is remarkable in many ways. Lasting some twelve minutes, it is probably Byrd’s longest motet. The problems he confronted were not just how to sustain such a long span, but, more importantly, how to achieve a sense of direction towards a defined climax. Byrd achieved this in a number of ways; firstly by moving progressively from major tonalities to minor; secondly by increasing the levels of pitch increasingly towards the end of each section; and thirdly by increasing the level of dissonances, unexpected twists and turns and melismas towards the end of each section.

The first section might appear to start rather nonchalantly—the text expressing the “unhappy sinner, bereft of all succour” set in a resolutely major tonality with a minor tinge only added at the words “Ad quem confugiam?” The passage at “Ad coelum levare oculos non audeo” (I do not dare lift my eyes to heaven) shows Byrd’s attention to text. The verb—“non audeo” (I do not dare)—comes at the end of the sentence, so Byrd creates a false sense of optimism with a rising figure for the first part of the phrase, before being dashed by an insistently repeated figure on “non audeo.” Throughout, Byrd dissipates tension at the ends of sections by changing to a lower texture building up to the end of the next point of imitation, the levels of pitch increasing until finally the top part reaches an F on the word “fui.”

[Play first section]

The second section again starts with just three voices asking the question “Shall I despair?” Byrd sets the phrase “Misericors” homophonically before a glorious ascent in the soprano line. Byrd interestingly precedes the phrase “Solus igitur Deus” (Only God is my refuge) with a rest, thus drawing attention to this fact. The passage on “ipse non despiciet” has a beautiful interior feel to it, starting in the lower voices and favoring minor tonalities before the music builds up in terms of pitch with each repetition of “imaginem suam,” the section closing with an extraor-

dinary cross relation between the top two voices in the penultimate measure.

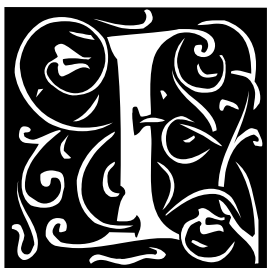
[Play second section]

The final section is the only one of the three to start in the minor and remains consistently in this territory until the phrase “cum oculos levare non audeo,” a sentence we had heard in the motet’s *prima pars*, where he inserts a note of optimism into the initial ascent before dashing such hopes on “non audeo.” The music returns to the minor for “verba doloris” (words of sadness) before leading to the imploration for God’s mercy. The final “miserere mei Deus” section is the climax of the work. It begins, like the motet *Miserere mei Deus* in the 1591 collection homophonically with a beautifully drawn out cadence. There are wonderfully unexpected modulations on the words “secundum magnam.” The tour-de-force, however, is on the word “misericordiam” where a chord as beautiful as it is unexpected occurs on the third beat. This is a moment of real catharsis—in an instant, the tension which Byrd has steadily built up throughout the piece is dissipated in a progression of dazzling originality. One hardly notices the rest of the piece, suffice it to say that Byrd creates a sinuous melisma in the top voice that rises to create two successive accented first-inversion chords, a sonority so redolent of pre-Reformation English music. In short, Byrd has yet again created a work that portrays the suffering of the individual whilst in that one chord on “misericordiam” offering consolation for that suffering.

[Play third section]

GRAVE AND MERRIE, MAJOR AND MINOR: EXPRESSIVE PARADOXES IN BYRD'S *CANTIONES SACRAE*, 1589

William Peter Mahrt
30 August 2003



In 1589, William Byrd began retrospective publication of his works with a collection of Latin sacred pieces, Book I of *cantiones Sacrae*. It had been fourteen years since he and Thomas Tallis had published their joint collection, also entitled *cantiones Sacrae*, in 1575. The character of the 1589 collection was somewhat different: as David Trendell has pointed out, the execution of Edmund Campion had taken place, and the Catholic community had acquired at once a sense of immanent danger and solidarity, expressed in the latter collection by texts which lament the state of the church, especially under the figure of the Holy City Jerusalem.

The 1575 collection had included seven lamentations upon the state of the soul due to personal sin, but only one which referred to the church collectively. In 1589, however, there were eight pieces of urgent collective imprecation, with only six referring to personal sin. There is in this collection, then, a heightened expression of the state of the community.

It is useful at this point to distinguish between *cantio sacra* and *motet*. “Motet” in the sixteenth century seems to have been used in England first by Thomas Morley in 1597, when he defined it as “a song made for the Church.” This was something of a dilemma for Byrd at the time, for, being a Catholic, there was no church in which to sing the song. Indeed, the title page of 1575, *Cantiones quae ab argumento sacrae vocantur* (songs which by their texts are sacred) may represent a certain downplaying of setting Latin sacred texts at all, but the issue is more fundamental than that. Kerry McCarthy has pointed up the distinction: these *cantiones sacrae* are based upon texts which are freely chosen for their expressive values rather than being suited to liturgical or occasional genres. Of the sixteen cantiones in the 1589 collection, fully twelve have lamenting or beseeching texts; only three have texts of praise; one is of warning. So, in striking contrast with Byrd’s later *Gradualia* of 1605 and 1607, whose texts were prescribed by the liturgy, the *cantiones Sacrae* have texts chosen out of intense personal and immediate concern—the affect of these texts and its expression in music is a principal *raison d’être*.

Indeed, the overwhelming impression of the 1589 collection is that of a dichotomy of affect, the contrast of “grave and merrie.” Byrd’s collection of secular songs the same year, which bore the explicit title, *Songs of Sundry Natures, Some of Gravity and Some of Mirth*, sets this dichotomy forth. Thomas Morley in the *Plaine and Easie Introduction to Practical Music* (1597) picks up upon this distinction in his disquisition upon fitting music to its text. He says that you must “dispose your music according to the nature of the words which you are therein to express, as whatsoever matter it be which you have in hand, such a kind of music must you frame to it: if a merrie subject you must also make your music merrie. For it will be a great absurditie to use a sad harmony to a merrie matter, or a merrie harmony to a sad, lamentable, or tragical dittie.”

He goes on to suggest other dichotomies, between sharp thirds and sixths and flat ones, between long and short notes, the use of suspensions, the use of diatonic notes or chromatic inflections, quickness or slowness of rhythmic motion, ascent or descent as visual depictions, and the careful representation of the proper lengths of the syllables. All of these elements enhance the gravity or mirth of pieces in Byrd’s collection.

Though Morley only hints at modal expression, Byrd’s collection shows a preponderance of minor-mode settings for grave texts and some major-mode settings for merrie texts [See Example 1]. Yet there are some problems: the glorious Jerusalem lament *Ne irascaris* is in the Ionian mode, while the exultant *In resurrectione tua* ends in the Phrygian. Moreover, given the number of lamenting texts, why are there so few instances of the Phrygian mode? While it is

Ex. 1: Mode and effect in *cantiones sacrae* 1589

#	Title	Sig.	Fin.	Mode	Affect
1.	Deficit in dolore	–	A	Aeolian	Lamentation with consolation
2.	Domine praestolamur	–	A	Aeolian	Lord’s coming against captivity, collective
3.	O Domine adjuva me	–	A	Aeolian	Personal imprecation with consolation
4.	Tristitia et anxietas	–	A	Aeolian	Personal lamentation with consolation
5.	Memento Domine	b	A	Phrygian	Collective imprecation
6.	Vide Domine	b	D	Aeolian	Collective imprecation with expectation of consolation, Jerusalem
7.	Deus venerunt gentes	b	D	Aeolian	Pure collective lamentation, Jerusalem
8.	Domine tu jurasti	–	A	Aeolian	Collective imprecation against captivity with expectation of consolation
9.	Vigilate	b	D	Aeolian	Warning, collective
10.	In resurrectione tua	b	A	Phrygian	Exultent Easter text
11.	Aspice Domine	b	D	Aeolian	Collective imprecation
12.	Ne irascaris	b	F	Ionian	Collective imprecation with lamentation, Jerusalem
13.	O quam gloriosum	b	F	Ionian	Exultent, All Saints
14.	Tribulationes	bb	G	Aeolian	Collective lamentation with imprecation
15.	Domine secundum	–	C	Ionian	Slight personal lamentation with consolation
16.	Laetentur caeli	b	F	Ionian	Rejoicing, consolation of afflicted people

true that Morley gives a summary account of Glarean's twelve-mode system later in his treatise, it must be remembered that Glarean himself, after having labored to demonstrate the expansion of the eight-mode system to twelve, admits that only three are in actual practical use, Ionian, Aeolian, and Phrygian, precisely the three Byrd uses. So the question I address here is what is the role of modality in the intense expression of affect we experience in the *Cantiones*? Traditional analysis has sought to classify a piece according to its principal mode, and this is possible for Byrd. But this principal mode is often only a backdrop for more varying and interesting usage. The beauty of the works most often consists in a free play of modal elements over and above the principal mode, and often designated in the period as *commixtio*, commixture of modes. And so I examine the pieces for the interplay of modes which constitutes an important expressive element of Byrd's musical vocabulary.

I am using the simple traditional modal system of the sixteenth century, since for the purpose of discussing modal affect, this suffices. I use Glarean's Greek mode names only as a matter of convenience, to avoid differing number systems. I take mode to be first of all a melodic matter, in which patterns of melody suggest a relation to a final and project an affect; the framework for this is the species of fifths and fourths, as sketched out in Example 2. But mode is also

Ex. 2: Interval species

Fifths 1. 2. 3. 4. Fourths 1. 2. 3.

Dorian 1. Phrygian 1. 2. Aeolian 1. 2. Aeolian transposed 1. 2.

contrapuntal, in which the beginning notes of imitations identify the principal notes of the modes and relate to cadences, especially formal ones, the *clausula vera*. It is finally, as well, harmonic. Since ten out of sixteen pieces fall into the Aeolian mode, I will begin there. For Byrd, it is important to recognize that the Aeolian mode is in some sense already a mixture: in the traditional eight-mode system, a mode on A was analyzed as Dorian transposed because of its first species of fifth, and because Dorian chant melodies easily admitted B-flat, the flat sixth degree. But as early as Gaforius, the A-mode was seen as a mixture: the first species of fifth with the second species of fourth (proper to the Phrygian mode). For Byrd, this is a crucial realization, since in particularly lamenting texts in the Aeolian mode, he features the half-step above the fifth, the expressive interval at the bottom of the fourth, so much so that I infer that the traditional affect of the Phrygian mode has been assimilated into the Aeolian mode, and exploited there by emphasizing that half step. The initial subjects of most of the Aeolian pieces feature this half step [see Example 3], sometimes complementing it with a descending half-step in a lower voice. At other times, a figure occurs which I call a Phrygian ascent or descent, relating by direct scalewise motion the C reciting note and the E final of the Phrygian mode [see Example 4].

Ex. 3: Subjects with "Phrygian" half step

#1
De - fe - cit in do - lo - re vi - ta me - a O Domi - ne ad - ju - va me

#3

#4
Tri - sti - ti - a, tri - sti - ti - a

#6
Vi - de Do - mi - ne, vi - de Do - mi - ne

#7
De - us, De - us ve - nerunt gen - tes

#8
Do - mi - ne tu ju - ra - sti pa - tri - bus no - stris

Ex. 4: Phrygian ascent, #2

Do - mi - ne prae - sto la - - - mur

Even within such a subject there can be a commixture. The subject of *Domine tu jurasti* [Example 3, #8] begins in the tenor on E rising the half-step immediately, suggesting a strong Phrygian inflection, but immediately it descends to D and outlines the main pitches of the D mode.

Sometimes, within the same vocal part, a striking change of species underlines a change of affective stance. In *Vide Domine* [see Example 5], a Phrygian descent to D is followed by an ascending fifth with a major third on the words “gaudium cordis nostri,” and then through a descending fifth with a minor third on “conversum est in luctum,” three different species of fifth in turn. This change in interval species was known specifically to continental theorists as

Ex. 5: Conversio, #6, mm. 30–42

Ci - vi - tas e - le - cta, gau - di - um cor - dis no -

stri con - ver - sum est in lu - ctum

Clearly this setting does the latter: Byrd's setting of "Be not angry, O Lord" conveys a confidence that the Lord will be not angry and thus provides consolation in the very act of expressing the lamentation. The tempo of the beginning and the balance and equanimity of the melody confirms that.

As a conclusion I would make two theoretical speculations. I concur with Jesse Ann Owens that Byrd is not a "theoretical" composer; he is responding to personally chosen texts in an intense way drawing from the musical vocabulary of tradition and his own milieu; his genius touches upon the fact that in doing so he yet made some remarkable constructions from a theoretical point of view

He followed an English penchant for imitations that comprise a chain of three fifths, such as D-A-E; this is closely related to his manner of introducing a pair of pitches, say, A-E, and then cadencing down one more, D. This is not a purely "tonal" practice, and yet is not entirely different either. It might be a modal antecedent of the role of secondary dominants in later tonal music.

A more interesting speculation concerns the identity of the Aeolian and Phrygian modes. This collection shows a wide variety of kinds of Aeolian mode, some more like a transposed Dorian, some highly intermixed with Phrygian elements. Likewise, the two Phrygian pieces approach the Aeolian in quite distinct ways. The interaction of these two modes suggests a state of flux between them, even that they are just one general category with all degrees of variation within them—the range of affects they set is shared between them, so that even when we may call an A mode with one flat Phrygian, we may also say that Byrd has gone beyond Glarean, and at least for this collection, there are two principal modal categories, Ionian on the one hand, and Aeolian with "Phrygian" on the other, just as there are two affects, grave and merrie.

Gradualia

ROSE GARLANDS AND GUNPOWDER: BYRD'S MUSICAL WORLD IN 1605

Kerry McCarthy
27 August 2005



As we go on with our festival, we're working our way through Byrd's life in a roughly chronological fashion. This year we've made it into the early seventeenth century, and we're beginning a new chapter. I want to start out today by asking: how is this concert different from all our past ones? What's so distinctive about the music that Byrd was writing later on in life? Of course the short answer (or the reasonably short answer) is in the program booklet. Almost all of this music is for specific events and rituals in the church calendar. We have a whole group of pieces on tomorrow's concert that are meant to be sung on February 2 each year—forty days after Christmas, when we commemorate the presentation of the infant Jesus in the Temple. Byrd wrote various things for the various parts of Mass and Vespers on that day. The same for a large number of other events in the calendar. As you can guess, we have to take some liberties with this schedule: otherwise the festival would be going on all year round. We'll just have to imagine the winter evening and the candlelight and the tapestries and the cold little basement room where you can see your breath when you sing. It's still a conceptual shift from the kind of music we've done in past years: there's not a heading at the top of *Laudibus in sanctis* that says "sing this immediately before communion on October 24."

Leaving aside the practical issues of scheduling, why does this even matter? The best way to explain the change in Byrd's musical career may be to drop the biographical details for a moment, about where he lived and how he published and who he was working for, and think instead in terms of the stories he was telling, or of the narratives he composed around. His music is full of stories. This is especially true for his Latin music, which we've sung so often at the festival. You can divide it up into some rough categories. First of all, there are the first-person-singular pieces. A classic example of this is *Tristitia*, which we sang a few years ago. Here you have a first-person voice, an individual speaker, generally someone who's suffering in some way and (usually) ends up finding consolation of some sort. Byrd tends to do this by a gradual transformation in the music, a process of letting the light in. He can start out with claustrophobic misery but finish with some level of hope. You can watch this happen so many times in his music, and both of the moods, the misery and the hope, are made more effective by the contrast. In some of the longer pieces, like *Infelix ego*, he takes the singers and the listeners on an

astonishing sort of interior journey that you might not expect to find so early on in music history.

Then there's the second kind of music, the kind in a collective and plural voice. Here Byrd is generally speaking on behalf of his Catholic community in England. We tend to call these the "political" motets. Joseph Kerman talked about them last week, and we've all heard the subject matter before. Jerusalem is destroyed; come and build it back up. We're suffering oppression; come and set us free. We're in desperate straits; stop lounging around in the heavenly realms, come down, and help us. David Trendell just played us a splendid example, where the singers are literally shouting "Wake up, wake up, open your eyes." There tends to be a slightly lower percentage of positive resolutions in these songs. Quite a few of them just go on for six or eight or ten minutes and end in a state of bitterness or exhaustion.

You get a sense in some of Byrd's Latin motets, especially in the longer and more mature ones, that he'd pushed these two ideas as far as they could go. (Looking back again to previous years of the festival, the most radical example of type one, the first-person, is probably *Infelix ego*; for type two, the collective and political, I'd have to say *Vide Domine afflictionem nostram*.) This is extremely beautiful and effective music, but it's also a dead end in some ways. Byrd had to tell these two stories again and again—almost like someone who'd suffered a trauma of some kind and had to work it out through obsessive retelling. He had a bit of the Ancient Mariner in him during those middle years of his life: "and till the ghastly tale is told, this heart within me burns. . . ." When he finally stopped turning out all the overtly emotional pieces, or at least when he slowed down on them, he started to write a different kind of music because he was telling a different kind of story. The main narrative in his two books of *Gradualia*, which is the collection of liturgical music we're singing from this year, is a cosmic narrative, not a personal one or a political one. The things he's writing about now are much bigger ones: the incarnation of Christ, the passion, the resurrection, the ascension into heaven, the descent of the Holy Spirit, the institution of the Eucharist, the life of the Virgin Mary, the saints and angels, and all kinds of quite overwhelming topics. Byrd latched his last big creative project onto something bigger, something that was outside himself and even outside his community. He also put himself in a much stricter framework. With a few exceptions, he didn't get to choose whatever words pushed his emotional buttons: he set to music whatever was prescribed by the liturgy for a given day. All the first-person singular, and even the first-person plural, fell far into the background. (And, by the way, I think that's one reason the good old *Ave verum corpus* is such a surprising piece: it starts out as a standard Eucharistic prayer, but at the very end, you have the unexpected direct plea for mercy: "have mercy on me," "miserere mei." This is one of the very few first-person singulars in the whole collection of 108 pieces. *Plorans plorabit*, on this year's program, is another first-person singular. You'll see tomorrow evening how he handled that one. All I'll say now is that he revisits the old types one and two, and does something astonishing with both of them.)

In the great majority of this later music, Byrd is doing something different. Instead of telling the story of an individual soul, or the story of an oppressed group, he's telling a universal story, something that gets reenacted year after year across all imaginable social boundaries. Listening to all these pieces, it's clear that he still felt a deep sense of wonder at the whole thing. He writes in his preface to the 1605 book—which is this year's music—about meditating on the sacred words and on the events behind them before he tries to compose. Even if he hadn't done us the favor of saying so in print, we'd still be able to tell from the end product. Just to

take one example: his music for Easter from the second volume of *Gradualia*, the 1607 book, which we'll be singing in a couple of years. This isn't about white lilies and pink bonnets and a sort of polite rejoicing. It's the slightly wild-eyed amazement of people who show up for a funeral, discover the body isn't there, and then get a tap on the shoulder from their recently deceased friend, who's just made them a nice breakfast and wonders if they'd like to sit down and eat. Just go back and read the end of the gospel of John. It's worth recalling the radical strangeness of what we do as church musicians: every year in the spring we kill God, we watch him come back to life, and then we go off to the beach to recuperate for a few days. When you really get into Byrd's Latin church music, that strangeness is never too far from the surface. The liturgical year, especially the Roman Catholic liturgical year, was something he could never take for granted, and this music, starting with the three masses and continuing with the *Gradualia*, was his unique response to it.

It also made him rethink the way he composed. He couldn't indulge in writing ten-minute motets any more, because everything had to fit into the pre-existing rituals. Given how dangerous it was to put on a Catholic Mass in seventeenth-century England, you didn't want to linger over any part of it for ten minutes. We have records of people having to stop in the middle of a Mass and pack everything up in a few seconds when they heard the knock at the door. For example: it's unlikely that English Catholics ever used any incense at the offertory, and they certainly didn't make elaborate processions around and around, waving an incense burner. Leaving behind that sort of smell could get people thrown in jail or even killed if anyone searched the building. It's no wonder some of Byrd's offertories are barely a minute long. You create a different sort of art when you're under duress: think of the difference between our imaginary basement chapel in England, with the tapestries and the flickering candles, and something like St. Peter's Basilica in Rome, which is an absolute orgy of Baroque triumphalism on the largest possible scale. Until you reflect more deeply on what they have in common, it's hard to believe you're even looking at the same religion.

And writing this sort of music wasn't just something new in Byrd's own life: it was something unusual in England at the time, and in all of Europe for that matter. As much as I'd like to make a plea for Byrd the Progressive, what he was doing in his liturgical music was in some ways entirely behind his times, or removed from his times. He never really did make it into the seventeenth century. I started out this year's program notes by mentioning the year 1607, when Byrd finished publishing this big collection of music. I brought up a few other cultural and historical things that also happened to occur that year. Those were the premiere of Monteverdi's opera *Orfeo*; the completion and publication of Shakespeare's play *King Lear*; and the founding of the British colony of Jamestown on the North American coast. It seems worth talking about these three things now in a bit more detail. They can give us some perspective on the context of Byrd's later life, on the various stories that were being told there, and on his own occasionally uncomfortable place in it. If I seem to be drifting away from the subject of music now and then, I hope you'll bear with me until we come back.

First of all, the Jamestown colony. This was the first permanent British colony in America—or the first one that lasted. It's at least the indirect reason we're sitting here now, on the far western edge of the world, talking about Byrd in the English language. The colony was named after King James, who was an avid supporter of the whole project. Their first ships landed in America in May 1607, a month after Byrd signed off on his last volume of *Gradualia* and sent

it to the printing press. What kind of society was being founded here? We tend to think of the early American colonists either as free-spirited religious nonconformists or as swashbuckling heroes of a more secular kind. We're often told in school, at least here in America, that many or even most of them left to get away from some sort of religious oppression. If you look at the original documents from Jamestown, though, they make the situation almost anywhere in Europe at the time seem lenient by comparison. For example: everyone was required to go to church services together, including Sunday evensong. If you missed church once, you lost that week's salary. For the second offense, you got a flogging. For the third offense, you got the death penalty. (The last of our three Byrd masses will be tonight, if anyone's interested.) Even that was relatively enlightened. You got the death penalty the first time you picked fruit, vegetables, or herbs from someone else's garden—which has a wonderful Augustinian bite to it. If you pretended to be sick to get out of work: death penalty for the first offense. This was the utopia of the English merchant and military classes at the turn of the seventeenth century. And we wonder why there's so much barely concealed anguish in Shakespeare's plays and Byrd's music! It's worth reflecting a bit on that sort of environment, a small group of people who were struggling so hard for physical survival *and* were under constant internal surveillance. Life in an isolated Catholic community back in England could be quite hard, but life in the colonies was even harder, and not just for material reasons.

Of course Byrd wasn't directly involved with any of this. The so-called Age of Discovery went on without him, and not just because he was getting older. At most, he heard some second-hand or third-hand reports through his courtly connections. Not only did he not go to America; he never made it across the English Channel, or even that far around Britain. He seemed to be immune to the travelling bug that affected so many artists in the Renaissance. The biographies of early composers can read like a sort of Grand Tour around Europe: one year here, three years there, six months here, and sometimes trying to collect multiple salaries at once—something which was frowned upon by the church and by the secular patronage system, but which happened anyway. Byrd lived into his eighties, but he only held two full-time jobs in his entire adult life. That was fairly unusual then, and it would still be unusual for a musician now. The world traveller in his family seems to have been one of his sons, who went to Spain and to Rome, enrolled himself at a Catholic college for English students, and was thrown out after a couple of years for unspecified bad behavior. If he inherited his father's tendency to get tangled up in grudges and lawsuits, this isn't too surprising. Whatever trouble Byrd managed to get into was generally within a few miles of home, whether it was arguments at Lincoln Cathedral about the excessive length and showiness of his organ preludes, or accusations of "seducing" his household help into Catholicism, or long-drawn-out lawsuits over estate boundaries and the right to cut firewood on his property. Almost all the music in his *Gradualia*, if we believe what he wrote in his preface, can be traced back to performances in one patron's house in rural Essex, and to the little room where he said he stayed up at night writing away. He called the music "my night labors, which I genuinely call night labors"—or, perhaps better translated, "I'm not just calling them that for effect." Incidentally, we get almost the same exact words from one of the few other Renaissance composers who wrote large unified cycles of mass propers. There's something about this kind of composition that demands hard, systematic work at a quiet time of the night: you can't just sit down at your desk and wait to be carried away by personal emotion or by political outrage. You have to engage yourself systematically with all kinds of very big topics, and come up with something original for

each one—which Byrd always managed to do, as we'll see over the next four or five years of the festival. By the time he got to these late works, his world was both much broader and much narrower. He seems to have gone out of the house more often to represent himself in the law courts than to do anything musical. It's no surprise he did his composing at night.

Our next artifact from 1607 is Monteverdi's opera *Orfeo*, which is a completely different sort of project. This is the first real opera that survives intact, and it's still performed four hundred years later. It's based on a classical myth, the myth of Orpheus, the great musician who tries to use his music to bring his beloved back from the underworld. It's not really a Christian story, or really even a religious story, although there's quite a bit of unsolicited moralizing along the way from the Greek-style chorus. It's set in a kind of pastoral wonderland. This is a place where nymphs and shepherds frolic under the trees, where gods mix with mortals, and where the dialogue is sung rather than spoken. This last point is no big deal to modern people who've been raised on musical theater or the operatic tradition, but it would have been very striking for Monteverdi's audiences in seventeenth-century Italy. This new genre of opera came straight out of the Renaissance fascination with ancient drama, and its musical style was designed to evoke ancient Greek theater, or at least the Renaissance idea of what ancient Greek theater sounded like. What you hear most often is a solo singer, accompanied by instruments, declaiming the text as if it were a heightened form of speech. This new solo style caused quite a sensation, and it wasn't long before it got taken over from opera into church music. In seventeenth-century Europe, the soloist began to take on a more and more important role in church. This created a certain contradiction in terms. Real liturgical music is a group activity by nature: it's done by a choir. Byrd's Catholic liturgical music was written for the musicians themselves as well as for whatever audience or congregation may have been present. This was genuine chamber music. Byrd never wrote any Catholic pieces in a solo style, with the single tantalizing exception of the little song *Adoramus te*, which we'll be hearing tomorrow night. Even that piece is far from the new Italian style of the early seventeenth century: it's an old-fashioned English consort song which happens to have a Catholic text. Monteverdi's *Orfeo* was at the other end of the spectrum. It was a secular work, and a real performance piece, put on by skilled soloists as an entertainment for a courtly audience. The audience was a carefully chosen group of perhaps two hundred connoisseurs in the duke's palace in Mantua. It wasn't until the second performance that ladies were even allowed to attend. (It's worth mentioning, just as a footnote, that from the evidence we have about Byrd's *Gradualia*, women singers were included from the beginning. Some of this was borrowed from the tradition of domestic secular singing—of course these weren't established church choirs with boy choristers—and some of it was plain old necessity, using whatever voices happened to be around. This seems to have been the first time in the history of the world that Catholic liturgical polyphony was sung by mixed groups of men and women. We take that for granted every time we go hear Cantores sing on a Saturday night, but it was something new in its time. The cardinals and legislators in Rome might not have approved, but, quite frankly, they were aware that underground Catholicism in England couldn't be practiced in full-dress Counter-Reformation style, and they turned a blind eye to any number of irregularities much bigger than letting girls and women sing at Mass.) In case you're wondering by now: Byrd never wrote any operas, or anything at all in the new Italian baroque song style. We can only wonder what it would sound like if he had. Your standard music-history timeline takes a sharp lurch into that sort of music right at the

turn of the seventeenth century, and more or less leaves everything else behind. This puts the older Byrd, past the age of about sixty, in the uncomfortable position of not really existing.

Shakespeare's play *King Lear* was another product of this same moment. We tend to think of Byrd and Shakespeare as being intellectual and cultural contemporaries, and they certainly shared any number of traits, not least an unshakeable craftsmanship and a talent for human characterization. *King Lear* is a story of an absolutely compelling human sort, and, frankly, of a godless and even nihilistic sort. There's no justice in the end and no transcendent meaning. You could consider it the first nihilistic play in a long line that runs through *Waiting for Godot*. Just to summarize the main plot very quickly: the elderly and not too emotionally stable King Lear decides to retire and pass his kingdom on to his three beloved daughters. His favorite daughter Cordelia, the youngest, is an unusually intelligent and honest girl, and she won't play along with the usual courtly flatteries, so he disinherits her on a whim. The other two daughters take over, and they gradually start mistreating and exploiting their poor old father, until he's reduced to staggering naked through the wilderness, ranting and raving. (The scene on the heath has one of the most astonishing stage directions in all of English drama: it simply says "Tears off his clothes." It took theater companies a few centuries before they were willing to take that one literally.) Eventually any number of minor characters are brutalized and killed, and Lear's two older daughters do each other in violently, but not before getting their sister Cordelia condemned to death. No one can rescue her in time, and in the final scene, Lear comes staggering in, holding Cordelia's dead body. Then he simply disintegrates on stage—all you can do is sit there and watch this old man's mind fall apart—and drops dead over her body. Then curtains. There's no moral, no redemption, not even a real explanation. This was so disturbing to seventeenth-century audiences that the ending got changed within barely fifty years to a happy and moralizing one, with far fewer corpses to carry off the stage. *King Lear* was done only in the so-called "improved" version until well into the nineteenth century, when directors started to risk the original again.

To return to Byrd again, this whole story is a far cry from the story of the elderly Simeon in his music for Candlemas. Simeon was a character Byrd seemed to identify with rather strongly. He's also an old man who's about to die, but he's seen his Savior and is ready to go in peace, accompanied by beautifully resolved and unusually radiant music. It's hard to believe that these two tales were being told in England at the same time. Anybody who wants to claim Shakespeare as an active religious apologist, whether Catholic or any other kind, has quite a task here. I'd say their first job, before they get on to coded messages about phoenixes and turtles and other birds, should be to explain away *King Lear*. There's certainly no redemption in that universe, except for some measure of human warmth, which is bought far too dearly in any case. The old king doesn't make any great speeches before he dies. At the very end, as he's collapsing for the last time, he makes a banal little request, asking someone to undo a button for him. These are the last coherent words he gets out: he says "Pray you undo this button. — Thank you, sir." This was probably the first time in his life that this spoiled, neurotic old tyrant has told anyone please and thank you: and it's safe to say he was being sincere. Of course it took a stage full of mutilated bodies to get to this one tiny moment of human openness. Byrd could write pages and pages of absolutely unforced gratitude: for example, just listen to the Latin *Nunc dimittis* on the concert tomorrow night. It's worth reflecting a bit on the sheer distance between these two worldviews: almost a yin and a yang of English Renaissance sensibility, although each one does contain a tiny speck of its opposite.

So—we've seen through all these examples that the older Byrd was very often an odd fit with his own culture and his own times. I would argue that we can't simply write that off to his being Catholic. As our two other speakers have told us, Byrd was not a typical English Catholic by any stretch of the imagination—not least because of his close ties to power and his unusually diverse career. Knowing what we know about his strong religious loyalties, it's easy to get fascinated with his Latin church music as a sort of closed system, and treat his Anglican music as an uncomfortable footnote to it. This would be missing an important fact about his life. We've heard this again and again over the last couple of weeks: he worked all sides. We should step back here and remember that there's hardly ever been a professional musician of any kind—and ivory-tower academics can forget about this sometimes—there are very few professional musicians who have the luxury of *not* working all sides, no matter what their private convictions might be about musical taste and musical style. Let's stop for a moment of reflection: how many of us in this room have ever appeared, in any form, on the payroll of the Oregon Catholic Press? Of course the issue in the sixteenth century was both of ideology and of artistic quality. Byrd was not an Anglican, but he wrote a lot of Anglican music. I think the logical next question should not be “what on earth was going on in his conscience?,” but “is the music any good?” It is: and in fact he's the single composer who did the most to make it that way. The fully developed English church style was something forged to a large extent by Byrd himself, who apparently saw no reason why this music shouldn't be as splendid as Latin church music could be, at least in some cases. Those of you who heard the Great Service at evensong last week will probably agree. This isn't pared-down utilitarian music by any stretch, and it certainly wasn't composed through clenched teeth. He was also still writing at least a bit of this music while he was writing the *Gradualia*: the famous anthem *Sing Joyfully* turns out most likely to be a commission for King James at the christening of his own child.

Byrd created a very intimate (and spacious) area in his own mind for Catholic liturgical music, but that seems never to have crowded out other things. It's easy to underestimate the sheer scope of his music. His complete works barely fit into twenty-two books. So far we've worked most of our way through five or six of them. They're in almost all imaginable genres of Renaissance music, which was unusual for his time. The Spanish composer Victoria was a brilliant musician and never wrote anything secular. As far as we can tell, he never even thought about writing anything secular. Orlando di Lasso was vastly prolific, but he seems to have been completely uninterested in writing instrumental music, which is of course our loss. Byrd, even when he was at his most sectarian, had a certain broad-mindedness and musical curiosity that makes him stand out among his contemporaries. Ironically enough, staying in England all his life may have added to this openness. He didn't emigrate to Europe and become a convent organist and a self-styled Catholic composer, writing nothing but Latin church music in some imitation of the Italian style of Gabrieli or Monteverdi. Quite a few English Catholics did this, people like Richard Dering and Peter Philips; these were very good second-rate composers, whom you may or may not have heard of. Byrd stayed in England, and he remained a passionately committed Catholic, and an active composer on any number of different levels. I think he managed to do this precisely because he learned to cultivate his Catholic faith as an interior discipline, rather than as a political cause. That's the exact transition we see during his middle-aged years, when he starts writing carefully ordered liturgical music instead of angry rants about the Babylonian captivity.

You've probably been wondering about the rose garlands and the gunpowder in my title. Those just refer to two more things I mentioned in the program notes, two things that were going on among English Catholics exactly four hundred years ago. One was the so-called Gunpowder Plot in the fall of 1605, which was a plan by a group of disgruntled Catholic extremists to sneak into parliament during the joint opening session in early November and set off enough gunpowder in the cellar to blow the king and all the branches of the English government to bits. The conspirators were caught at the last possible minute, after they'd already brought in the bombs. This may sound all too familiar four centuries later—and in fact it was more or less the birth of modern terrorism as we know it. In this case, no one was hurt, and the result was a huge national sigh of relief and an understandable wave of anti-Catholic sentiment. It was at this point that someone got thrown in jail in possession of a copy of Byrd's *Gradualia*, which was hot off the press. We're lucky Byrd had already published that music in November; he could hardly have managed it later.

The rose garlands refer to the celebration of Corpus Christi in the same year, the summer of 1605. We have an account of that particular day at an English Catholic house, with a big sung Mass, probably with Byrd's own music, and (astonishingly) a large outdoor procession. This was something done all over England before the Reformation, and, in some places, even afterwards. Large amounts of money were spent on floral displays and parades—you can still see this now in the Catholic areas of Europe. I suppose our secular equivalent here in Portland is the Rose Festival. It's generally in the early part of June, for obvious reasons, and I certainly ran into their parade more than once while coming home from the Corpus Christi service at St. Patrick's. Byrd himself uses the metaphor of a "garland" to describe his music in the 1605 book, which is apt on more than one level.

Very broadly speaking, these were the two ways of asserting Catholic identity in Renaissance England: by violent political action and by interior devotion. Some of the same people were involved in both these activities. For example: Byrd's friend Henry Garnet, who was an English Jesuit priest, a musician, and a cultivator of the liturgy. He met an extremely unpleasant end after he got tangled up in the Gunpowder Plot. (One of the conspirators had mentioned the plot to Fr. Garnet while he was hearing his confession a few months earlier, and Garnet had refused to turn him in, because he believed that everything said in the confessional ought to stay private and shouldn't be used in criminal prosecution. You can still find variations on this story in the newspapers four hundred years later.) Garnet got caught between private sacramental practice and violent political agitation, and he was hanged, drawn, and quartered for his trouble in a public square in London. Byrd went through both of these models in his music, and ended up, by the early seventeenth century, having settled on the devotional side—although he does show his teeth one last time in that marvelous piece *Plorans plorabit*.

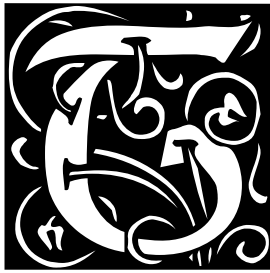
There's much more to say about both of these core ideas of English Catholicism, the rose garlands and the gunpowder—and they're both equally interesting paths to explore. Of course those are topics for another day. I want to finish today with some music you've already heard if you joined us for Mass back on the fifteenth. This is *Optimam partem*, the communion piece for the Assumption of Mary, which Byrd published four centuries ago this year. It's the last piece in the two-hundred-page jigsaw puzzle of Byrd's Marian music—and I'd say it's one of the most amazingly bittersweet compositions in all of Western church music. Let's think about the words a bit, as Byrd said he himself did. The story is taken from the Gospel of Luke. The

main characters are Mary of Bethany (not Mary, the mother of Jesus), her sister Martha, and Jesus himself, who's come to visit the two sisters for dinner. Mary is sitting at the feet of Jesus and listening to him talk, while Martha is busy in the kitchen, getting dinner ready. The whole exchange, as Luke writes it down, has a bit of an edge to it; it's not something that would have been made up for the purpose of edification. Martha gets exasperated with all the work she's doing on her own, and asks Jesus to tell Mary to get up and help her. (The implication being: "since she's obviously hanging on your every word, tell her to come in here and make herself useful.") Jesus answers Martha by telling her something surprising. He scolds her, more or less gently, for being worried about all these things, and then he says the words that Byrd sets to music here. He says: "Mary has chosen the best part for herself, which will not be taken away from her for all eternity." We can assume that Martha eventually went back to the kitchen, because they all had to eat at some point. All we're left with is this strange little statement: "Mary has chosen the best part for herself, which will not be taken away from her for all eternity."

It turns out that this exact passage was cited quite a bit among English Catholics during Byrd's lifetime—not as an opinion on doing kitchen work vs. paying attention to the guest of honor, but as a straightforward praise of the contemplative life over the active life. It's also important to know that the understanding of "contemplative life" in the seventeenth century was not what Byrd and his musicians were doing when they got together to sing polyphony at Mass. It meant going off to become a cleric or a monk or a nun, entering some kind of exclusive Catholic enclave, and giving up worldly concerns to devote oneself solely to prayer. This is the final irony of the whole story. "Choosing the best part for oneself" had meant something quite different for Byrd. He was a worldly person all along. He married early on, and had a large and not always well-behaved family. He owned property and spent a lot of time managing, or mismanaging, it. He never dropped his connections with the court or with the Establishment—and they seem to have taken him far. As, for example, when he got personal permission from the Anglican bishop of London to print the first book of *Gradualia*, the one with all the music about the Virgin Mary and the saints and the finer points of eucharistic doctrine. Just that one historical fact makes my head spin. Byrd's musical taste stayed eclectic until the very end: it was catholic with a small c. He wasn't a separatist, and, later on in life, he wasn't really a militant either. What precisely he *was*, he may well have taken to his grave, without leaving enough clues for twenty-first-century musicologists to pry it open again. It think it's not too far-fetched to say you can hear some of these huge contradictions and paradoxes played out even in a little piece such as *Optimam partem*, especially when you think about what the words mean, and what they meant at the time. Byrd had chosen something unique for himself. He wasn't seeking some kind of earthly paradise—whether by packing up and going west with the colonists, or by rejoining old Catholic Europe as a monk or a priest, or by suicide-bombing government buildings, or by any other popular method. Whatever utopia he did build for himself was in the little spaces between these musical notes. Our advantage, of course, is that we can still visit him there.

THE ECONOMY OF BYRD'S *GRADUALIA*

William Peter Mahrt
12 August 2006



he final concerts of the William Byrd Festival for the first seven years focused upon one of the three collections entitled *Cantiones sacrae* from the years 1575, 1589, and 1591. Then, beginning in 2005, the four-hundredth anniversary of the publication of the *Gradualia* was the occasion to begin a four-year series focusing upon that collection, the first two years on Book I (1605) and the next two upon Book II (1607). This series prompts a reflection on the nature of the Gradualia and the difference between this collection and the previous sets of *Cantiones*

sacrae.

Cantiones sacrae and *Gradualia* represent two strikingly different musical genres, and it is worth exploring these differences in order to understand the pieces better. Cantiones are songs, which, according to the title of Byrd and Tallis's publication of 1575—by the nature of their texts are called sacred—substantial works of sacred vocal chamber music without a designated place in the liturgy. Gradualia, on the other hand, are specifically liturgical pieces, mostly propers of the Mass, whose texts are assigned to specific days of the church year, and which generally fall into sets of pieces—introit, gradual, alleluia or tract, offertory, and communion for each specific day.

The genres thus differ by the purpose of their choice of text. Byrd seems to have chosen the texts of the cantiones specifically for their affective potential. Famously, the texts of the cantiones show a polarity of potential affect, expressed in Byrd's terms, between "grave" and "merry," the grave greatly outnumbering the merry. In the absence of a place for the singing of Latin sacred music, Byrd's works of the 1570s and 80s show a preponderance of pieces lamenting the state of the church or the state of the soul, and their texts suggest that many of them may have been composed for the consolation of recusant musicians in recreational singing. The gradualia, on the other hand, come from the time that Byrd once again had a liturgical occasion for the performance of his Latin compositions: in the 1590s he moved to Essex, where he was close to the aristocratic house of the Petres, who regularly had Masses celebrated in their household, often with some solemnity. Once the choice was made to compose Mass propers, however, there was little further choice of text—the liturgy specified what the texts were, and

that specification was for a wide variety of reasons, most of them not affective reasons. So the texts of the liturgy do not show the affective polarity of the cantiones, but rather a more consistent range of affects.

These differences result in very different approaches to the composition of the music. While the cantiones are discursive and project rather short texts in somewhat extended pieces, the gradualia are tight and economically-composed pieces, noted for their brevity and conciseness. An analogy could be drawn with J.S. Bach's fugues: the organ fugues are discursive; they are drawn-out and rhetorical, and hearing them involves taking part in a discussion, in which themes are developed in a full and extended way, and in which the duration of the piece provides adequate time to assimilate the discussion. The fugues of the *Well-Tempered Clavier*, in contrast, are succinct, logical, and right to the point. In fact, they are so concentrated that one does not relish hearing many of them in quick succession. Each brief prelude and fugue is best heard and then savored in reflection, with some time to absorb what has just been heard. I have heard a cycle of all forty-eight played in three concerts; by the end of each concert, I was resisting listening to the pieces, so much had the previous pieces of the concert demanded my attention beyond the duration of their playing. The concentration of the pieces of the *Gradualia* can function in a similar way in the liturgy. They would be interspersed among several other sung elements—prayers, lessons, and perhaps even chants of the ordinary. Their concentrated style would thus provide a complement to the other liturgical elements, giving them an increased and more complex musical resonance.

The basis of both genres is imitation: a subject is stated by each voice in succession, and that “point of imitation” is brought to a conclusion by a cadence. Much of the difference between the two genres consists of the ways in which imitation is handled. Compare the beginning of two pieces as examples: *Tristitia* from the *Cantiones*, 1589, and *Salve, sancta parens* from the *Gradualia*, 1605.¹ *Tristitia* [Brett, 2, 42–61; *Cardinal's* 7, Bd. 4] begins with a homophonic statement in the lower voices, answered by the higher voices; only gradually does complete imitation in all the voices emerge. The first brief line of text extends through several repetitions to a fairly long segment of the composition. *Salve, sancta parens* [Brett, 5, 40–49; *Marian*, Bd. 9],

¹The examples can be consulted in the following scores and recordings, as indicated in the text:

Scores:

Brett. William Byrd, *The Byrd Edition*, ed. Phillip Brett, Vol. 2: *Cantiones sacrae I* (1589), ed. Alan Brown (London: Stainer & Bell, 1988), Vol. 5: *Gradualia I* (1605), *The Marian Masses*, ed. Philip Brett (1989); Vol. 6a: *Gradualia I* (1605), *All Saints and Corpus Christi*, ed. Philip Brett (1991). There is also an earlier edition: William Byrd, *The Complete Vocal Works*, ed. Edmund H. Fellowes (London: Stainer & Bell, 1938), vols. 2, 4–7. All of these pieces can also be found online at Choral Public Domain Library (www.cpdl.org).

Recordings:

Cardinal's 7: William Byrd. *The Byrd Edition*, 7. *Cantiones sacrae 1589, Propers for Lady Mass from Christmas to the Purification*. The Cardinal's Musick, Andrew Carwood, director. Gaudeamus CD GAU 224; London: ASV Ltd., 2001.

Cardinal's 8: William Byrd. *The Byrd Edition*, 8. *Cantiones Sacrae 1589, Propers for the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary*. The Cardinal's Musick, Andrew Carwood, director. Gaudeamus CD GAU 309; London: ASV Ltd., 2002.

Marian: William Byrd. *Gradualia: The Marian Masses*. William Byrd Choir, Gavin Turner, Conductor. 515221T; London: Hyperion, 1990; reissue, Oakhurst, New Jersey: Musical Heritage Society, 1998.

Christ Church: William Byrd. *Mass for Five Voices and the Propers for All Saints' Day*. Christ Church Cathedral Choir, Stephen Darlington, director. NI 5237; Wyastone Leys, Monmouth: Nimbus Records, Ltd., 1990.

on the other hand, begins with an imitation in three voices, and after three measures has moved on to the next segment of text, and in two more measures, the next text. This is a characteristic construction for pieces of the *Gradualia*, in which rather short modules of the text receive short imitative points in quick succession. Byrd paces these modules quite purposefully, however, for subsequent ones take up more time, notably that on “in saecula saeculorum,” presumably to express the temporal aspect of this text (something he does elsewhere to represent eternity).

Another aspect of the economy of the *Gradualia* is in the ordering of the whole collection. The liturgy often calls for the use of the same text on more than one day; when this happens, Byrd most often does not recompose the text, but expects the performer to supply the musical setting of the text from the day for which it was composed. This results in a complicated system of interlocking pieces, especially in the pieces for the Marian feasts. In order for such exchanges to work well, the pieces have to be in the same mode; thus, all the pieces for Marian feasts are in the D-Aeolian mode. The result is that in general, the Mass propers for any one day are all in the same mode, and this is a major innovation in the history of the composition of Mass propers. The traditional proper chants were in various modes, without any evident coordination of mode for any day, and the tradition of composition of polyphonic propers included the original chants as *cantus prius factus*, such as those of Dufay and Isaac. The integration of a cycle of polyphonic propers by a single mode may have been suggested by the practicalities of economically setting the texts; the result was a remarkable innovation in the setting of the propers of the Mass.²

The most important aspect of the economy of the *Gradualia*, is the style of the music itself—tight, brief, and concise. There may be several reasons for this. First, Byrd is setting texts prescribed by the Council of Trent for the Roman liturgy, and not the texts of the ancient English Sarum rite. A characteristic feature of the Roman rite is its brevity and economy.³ Since Byrd's models were probably graduals published after the Council of Trent, it is possible that the economic spirit of that rite suggested a certain brevity. There is, of course, a more immediate motivation for composing rather brief settings of the liturgical texts when they are for performance at Masses celebrated in recusant households. Given the possibility of being discovered, the celebration of Mass needed to be brief. The brevity of the offertories is notable: the time it takes to say the offertory in the traditional rite is considerably extended if the customary incensation of the altar is used. But the use of incense must have been a luxury they dared not allow themselves, for if they were discovered, the accouterments of the Mass could be hidden quickly, but the fragrance of incense would persist as a sure give-away. A third possibility suggests itself for Byrd's concise style. John Harley, in his recent biography of Byrd, has pointed out that in the latter part of Byrd's life he was frequently involved in law courts defending his right to hold properties; it may well be that this repeated experience gave him much practice in

²These matters have been dealt with extensively by Phillip Brett, *William Byrd and His Contemporaries: Essays and a Monograph*, ed. Joseph Kerman and Davitt Moroney (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007). and Kerry McCarthy, *Liturgy and Contemplation in Byrd's Gradualia* (New York: Routledge, 2007).

³See Edmund Bishop, "The Genius of the Roman Rite," in *Liturgica Historica: Papers on the Liturgy and Religious Life of the Western Church* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1918; reprint, 1962), pp. 1–19.

making concise and to-the-point statements, a habit that could carry over into the composition of concise pieces of music.

The economy of style can be seen in several characteristics. First, there is a modular construction of melodies. Compare the melody of *Domine prestolamur* from the *Cantiones sacrae*, 1589 [Brett, 2, 15–31; *Cardinall's* 7, Bd. 2] with *Salve sancta parens* from the first book of the *Gradualia*. The opening melody of *Domine prestolamur* is a wide-ranging melody, which in imitation makes for an expansive opening. The opening of *Salve sancta parens*, on the other hand, consists of short, modular units; “Salve sancte parens” is presented in imitation in just three voices, after which “enixa puerpera Regem,” is imitated in five voices, without any repetition, and the for the next module the same.

A second way the economy of style is manifested is in the avoidance of counter-expositions. Frequently in the cantiones there is a manner of constructing imitation, in which after an “exposition”—the presentation of the subject in each of the voices in turn—the subject is presented again in all the voices. This “counter-exposition” contributes considerably to the breadth and scope of the expression of each line of text. Such complete counter-expositions are rare in the *Gradualia*; if there is any extension of the exposition of a point of imitation, it is more frequently incomplete, as in *Gaudeamus*, the introit for All Saints [Brett, 6a, 27–36; *Marian*, Bd. 39], where, after a complete point of imitation in all the voices, there is a brief restatement of “gaudeamus” in two voices simultaneously, followed by a quick succession of “in Domino” in three voices.

A third way the economy of style is manifested is in the quick succession of texts. The avoidance of extended repetition of imitations means that modules of the text can be presented rather quickly. Characteristically, if there is any repetition of imitations, it comes upon the last line of text, creating a more emphatic conclusion to the piece. Such is the case in *Benedicta et venerabilis es* [Brett, 5, 50–52; *Marian*, Bd. 12] from the set for the Nativity of Mary. Here each short line of text is treated in full imitation in five voices, with the beginning of the imitations based upon the next line overlapping it. The final line of text, “inventa es mater Salvatoris,” receives a counter-exposition in four of the five voices, but its purpose is clear: these imitations are at a higher pitch and thus create an effective culminating conclusion to the short piece.

While in general the text modules are presented in quick succession, Byrd sometimes makes purposeful permutation of such quick succession, extending the performance of one or another text module, particularly toward the end of the piece. This variation of the manner of presentation of text modules is one of the means Byrd uses to create an extraordinary variety within these short pieces. A good example is *Gaudeamus* for All Saints. The initial imitation begins in three voices, all at the unison, creating an ostinato effect that enhances the festive character of the beginning. Yet, each of the three unison statements rises to a higher peak on “Domino,” creating a climax on the third one, coinciding with the entrance of the first lower voice; another entrance, still lower completes the expansion of range. There follows, on “diem festum celebrantes,” a remarkable enhancement of the festive character of the piece. Here the speed of the text has been doubled: on “Gaudeamus,” the syllables of the text were set, about one to a half note, with important accented syllables on whole notes or dotted whole notes; now they are on the quarter note, with important syllables on the half or dotted half note. This quick homophonic statement is repeated twice, each at a different pitch level and with slightly greater breaking up of the homophonic texture. There follows another striking shift of text

tempo: on “sub honore Sanctorum omnium,” the syllables are set to half and whole notes, all the accented syllables set to longer notes, now in quick imitation. This shift to a slightly slower text tempo than even at the beginning of the piece creates a momentary allusion to a more solemn style, suitable to the idea of the text: honor. “De quorum solemnitate” shifts back to a quarter-note tempo and a richly various imitative texture, recalling in tempo “diem festum celebrantes,” but contrasting remarkably with it in texture. The next module, “gaudent Angeli” includes much repetition, as if to represent an incessant quality in the rejoicing of the Angels; moreover, the activity of the Angels is presented as the most various in the piece, including much syncopation and an occasional cross relation giving an affective touch to the mix. Then “collaudant,” while retaining the same quality of quick imitation, is more regular in imitation, now representing the Angels as doing something together. The object of their praise, “Filius Dei,” is then presented in a smoother, more continuous texture, with a longer scope of repetition, enhancing the name of the Son of God as the conclusion of the piece.

In certain pieces, the variety of treatment of the text modules shows a transformation of texture within the setting of the module, and also serves the purpose of representation of specific meanings of the text. The alleluia verse, *Venite ad me* [Brett, 6a, 42–47; *Christ Church*, Bd. 4, 2:07] from All Saints is a good example of this. It begins as a straight-forward antiphonal texture, two voices in note-against-note style are answered by three voices in the same style, after which four voices enter, but now two are offset by a half note from the other two, adding an element of complexity. The progressive addition of voices is completed when all five voices sing together on the word “omnes.” This begins as a block chord comprising the widest range of notes in the piece (from low B-flat to high F), and is a way of representing “all,” by including all of the voices and all of the notes. “Qui laboratis” is set in imitation to a subject which turns on itself in a labored fashion, and “et honorati estis” suddenly acquires a great number of short notes, giving the singers an extra burden, representing the text. Finally “et ego reficiam vos” is set to a dance-like pattern, whose lively and alluring rhythms amply compensate for the labor and burden of the previous passages.

The variety of texture and imitations in setting short modules of text does not, however, distract Byrd from constructing pieces which have strongly persuasive overall structures; two examples for All Saints are particularly interesting: the offertory *Iustorum animæ* and the communion *Beati mundo corde*. *Iustorum animæ* [Brett, 6a, 48–52; *Christ Church*, Bd. 6] is based upon a text which contrasts the apparent and the real state of the souls of the just:

<p><i>Iustorum animæ in manu Dei sunt, et non tanget illos, tormentum mortis: visi sunt oculis insipientium mori: illi autem sunt in pace.</i></p>	<p>The souls of the just are in the hand of God, and it will not touch them, the torment of death: they seem to the eyes of the unknowing to be dead: they are, however, in peace.</p>
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Byrd divides the text into the portions which state the fact and those which are contrary to fact: those which are the fact are set in a major mode (F Ionian), while those that are contrary to fact are in a minor mode (G Dorian). Within this framework, each text module receives a distinct texture. “*Iustorum animæ*” receives a nearly homophonic statement, emphasizing the text by setting the accented syllables to longer notes; “*in manu Dei sunt*” then begins to be more imitative, while “*et non tanget illos*” is set to voice exchange—upon repetition, the two sopranos

exchange parts and the bass takes what the tenor had just sung. This brief repeat of the text prepares for the change of mode on “tormentum mortis,” which is then emphasized by two harmonically varied repetitions, confirming the change of mode. “Visi sunt oculis” begins with a striking motive, descending and rising a fifth, leading to a kind of imbroglia on “insipientium mori.” Here the fifth-based motive, which ordinarily would be set to a consistent treatment of fifths, is now set in a confused way—the fifths both ascend and descend, and they fall on a variety of pitches, E-flat, B-flat, F, C, D, and A, leaving out G, which was the focal pitch of the passage. This confused state—not following the conventions of consistent use of species of fifths—is Byrd’s way of representing the unknowing, those who cannot get their fifths straight, as it were. The section cadences on C, leading to a return to F for the contrasting statement “illi autem sunt in pace.” This recalls the melody of “Justorum animæ” in the soprano and leads to a peroration which now uses the species of fifths consistently, all descending and mostly are on F or B-flat; what was disorderly and active on “insipientium” is now orderly and leading to repose on “in pace.” Moreover, the descent is emphasized by going a note below the fifth in several cases. This descent is further emphasized by the fact that all the voices at this point reach their lowest point: neither soprano part has touched the bottom note of its octave ambitus, F, until here upon the word “pace,” peace. The bass makes a particularly pointed descent beyond its low B-flat to a poignant A, the lowest note of the whole piece. In this, several kinds of descent conspire to create a tranquil conclusion that is the antithesis of the confusion in the imbroglia on “insipientium mori.”

The communion *Beati mundo corde* [Brett, 6a, 53–59; *Christ Church*, Bd. 8] has an evident climactic structure, moving from three to four to five voices, but this structure is also made more emphatic by having the five-voice section be longer and contain the most expressive music. The piece begins by representing the pure of heart by treble voices singing “pure” imitations. The section in four parts represents the peace-makers with stepwise descent on “pacifici,” recalling the descents of *Justorum animæ*. The five-part section represents those who suffer persecution for the sake of justice, and its importance is emphasized immediately by the sopranos’ “beati” which rise to F, the highest note in both parts, but also by the tenors who also rise to their high F. A point of poignancy is made on “propter justitiam” by striking simultaneous cross relations and other dissonances,⁴ and by the double repetition of that text. Joseph Kerman has written eloquently about the ways in which certain passages of sacred texts had very personal resonances for Byrd, and this is one of them. That resonance is underscored by the extended treatment of the part of this text which speaks of suffering persecution for the sake of justice, and by the employment of particular expressive devices there.

A final brief point about texture: while he does not use it often, Byrd occasionally used a cantus firmus texture—longer notes in one part, setting off a notable melody. The Introit *Salve sancta parens* begins with three voices in imitation, while the alto sings in longer notes the rising figure, A-F-E, setting off that figure and pointing to the fact that it recalls the outline of the Gregorian melody for this introit: A-C-D-E-D, D-D-C-D-E-F-D-D. This is not a quotation,

⁴On the fourth iteration of “propter justitiam” in the alto, the half-note A is dissonant with the B-flat in the tenor and then with the G in the second soprano.

but merely a reminiscence of the chant; nevertheless, it is the kind of reference that Byrd makes in several places in the *Gradualia*.

A very different cantus firmus usage can be seen in *Optimam partem* [*Brett*, 5, 170–174; *Marian*, Bd. 42], the communion for the Assumption of Mary. Here the top soprano begins the piece with reiterated notes followed by longer notes, accompanied by faster melodic motion in the lower parts. The soprano continues to sing at a relatively high pitch for the piece. Does this cantus-firmus-like treatment in the highest part of the piece represent the better part which the text says that Mary has chosen?

The economies of the *Gradualia* are several: first, there is the economy of organization—a somewhat elaborate system of using the same pieces over again, based in an economy of the liturgy itself. Second, there is an economy of materials—short melodic segments, discreet statements. But most important, third, there is an economy of style—the adoption of a concise manner of expression that does not focus upon the expression of the moment as often as in the *Cantiones sacrae*, but projects small pieces as parts of the larger whole—the whole liturgy for the day as well as for the whole year.

The economic style is, paradoxically, the point of departure for more elaborate expressions, even a foil for them, often linked to particular texts, whether representing eternity, the ecstatic activity of angels, the excitement of the word alleluia, or the pathos of suffering for the sake of justice. Likewise, it is the point of departure for a characteristic kind of development, which starts from the simple and discreet and moves quickly in stages to the rich and complex.

All of this is within the strict constraints of the liturgy. We are fortunate to hear two complete cycles of mass propers on the final concert, but also to hear one within the context of the liturgy, the Mass for the Assumption. There the introit *Gaudeamus*, in contrast with that for All Saints, projects, not so much external festivity, but an internal and more mystical joy suited to the Virgin's festivity; there, rising melodic lines vividly recall Mary's assumption into heaven; there Mary's having "chosen the better part," is depicted in an elegant cantus firmus style. In each of these cases, the whole is greater than the sum of the parts, because it adds up to a liturgical whole—which was Byrd's purpose.

English Music

BYRD THE ANGLICAN?

David Trendell
13 August 2005



Consider Byrd's setting of the text *O Lord, Make Thy Servant Elizabeth Our Queen*, a prayer for the well-being of Byrd's monarch, obviously heartfelt in its musical warmth, with luscious English cadences, other false relations and an opulent final "Amen," as well as for the sheer inventiveness of the writing, such as the glorious point of imitation on the words "And give her a long life." Yet Byrd was, as we all know, a staunch Roman Catholic in an age of great persecution. Many of his Latin *Cantiones sacrae* of 1589 and 1591 reflect themes that occur in Jesuit pamphlets during the 1580s—the destruction of the Holy City, the Babylonian exile and the Advent promise that the Lord will come and save his afflicted and persecuted people. Nevertheless, Byrd had composed a significant amount of music for the reformed Church of England, both during his time as organist of Lincoln Cathedral and then as a member of Her Majesty's Chapel Royal. Those of you who have heard me speak here before and know my interest in Byrd's creation of a specifically recusant style may be surprised that I am going to consider his Anglican music today. But another purpose of this lecture, besides showing how Byrd fits into and develops the various forms of Anglican music, is to examine the differences between his Anglican music and the music of the 1589 *Cantiones sacrae*, thus reinforcing the idea of a style that Byrd deliberately forged for these recusant and highly political motets, but also to see if there are any points of contact between the two styles. But first it is necessary to give some facts about Byrd's work for the Anglican Church.

It is now thought that Byrd was born in about 1540, a newly identified document dating from 1598 describing him as being about "58 yeares or ther abouts." He was one of seven children of Margery and Thomas Byrd, and, although there is no record of Byrd having done so, two of his elder brothers were choristers at St. Paul's Cathedral, London. Given this, he might well have been around St. Paul's at the time of the elaborate festivities to mark the marriage of Mary Tudor to Philip II of Spain in 1554. These culminated in a series of Masses held there and sung both by the choir of the Chapel Royal and that of Philip II's chapel. In any case, Byrd's formative years coincided with the richest outpouring of Sarum Rite polyphony—years that saw the musical apotheosis of the votive antiphon in such works as Tallis's *Gaude gloriosa* or Mundy's *Vox patris caelestis*, works of late summer ripeness. Elizabeth's succession to the throne in 1558 brought an end to the Catholic Sarum Rite with the Act of Uniformity of 1559,

together with the new Elizabethan Prayer Book reverting to the Protestantism of Edward VI's reign.

Byrd was appointed organist of Lincoln Cathedral on March 25, 1563. He was obviously held in high regard, since he was given a higher salary than hitherto. It is likely that Byrd wrote most of his liturgical music for the Anglican Church whilst in Lincoln. However, Byrd's time in Lincoln was not all plain sailing. A dispute in 1569 was serious enough to lead to the suspension of his salary after an increasingly puritanical chapter apparently felt that Byrd's organ playing was too long and popish. Byrd remained in Lincoln until the death of Robert Parsons, who drowned in the River Trent at Newark, thus freeing up a vacancy in the Chapel Royal. Byrd was sworn in as a member of the Chapel Royal in February 1572, although he only formally left Lincoln in December of that year. That matters seemed to have been resolved in Lincoln by the time of his departure is evident by the fact that the chapter there agreed to continue paying him a salary on condition of him sending them "church songs and services" from time to time. Payment of this salary continued until 1581. The choir at the Chapel Royal was certainly the finest and most prestigious in England and conditions of employment were commensurate with this, a member receiving thirty pounds (later forty pounds) each year, a figure some three times higher than other establishments. Moreover, Byrd was able to make important contacts with royalty and Catholic nobles, who not only acted as patrons and dedicatees of his printed output, but also protected him when he and his family fell foul of the recusancy laws. Byrd moved away from London in 1593 to Stondon Massey, near his Catholic patron Sir John Petre, and his name no longer appears in the Chapel Royal Cheque Book, only in two formal Registers of all the members.

The worship in Elizabeth's chapel seems to have been distinctly less puritan than during Edward VI's reign, and it is this that may have had an effect on the increasing opulence of Anglican music written during her reign (and thereafter) after the austerity of much Edwardine music. The Spanish Ambassador, Bishop Quadra, confidently expected another Catholic reformation, having attended a service in the Chapel Royal in 1559. As he wrote to the Bishop of Arras on October 9 that year:

The Queen ordered the marriage of one of her lady servants to take place in her own chapel and directed that a crucifix and candles be placed upon the altar, which caused so much noise among her chaplains and the Council, that the intention was abandoned for the time; but it was done at Vespers [i.e., Evensong] on Saturday, and on Sunday the clergy wore vestments as they do in our services, and so great was the crowd at the palace that disturbance was feared in the city. The fact is that the crucifixes and vestments that were burnt a month ago publicly are now set up in the royal chapel, as they soon will be all over the kingdom, unless, which God forbid, there is another change next week.

The conduct at the Chapel Royal apparently upset some Puritans, including Dean Nowell of St. Paul's Cathedral, and the Dean of Christ Church, Oxford—Thomas Sampson—lamented the "high" worship in the following manner:

What can I hope when three of our lately appointed bishops are to officiate at the table of the Lord, one as a priest, another as deacon, and a third as subdeacon, before the image of the crucifix . . . with candles, and habited in the golden

vestments of the papacy, and are thus to celebrate the Lord's Supper, without any sermon?

This description of high church practice also extended to the queen giving permission for Latin to be used in some educational collegiate establishments, such as Oxbridge colleges and at Eton and Winchester. This brings out the tantalising possibility that some of Tallis's and Byrd's works in the 1575 collection of *Cantiones sacrae* may have been performed within Anglican services. That, however, is extremely unlikely. First is the intriguing title that Tallis and Byrd gave the collection, which to quote in full goes as follows: "Cantiones, quae ab argumento sacrae vocantur," literally, "Songs, which by their subject matter are called sacred."

Thus Tallis and Byrd did not envisage a primarily liturgical use, it was simply that the subject matter was sacred. As John Milsom has shown, all the evidence for ownership of the part-books that make up this publication turns out to be private individuals, as it is for virtually all manuscript collections of Latin-texted music during Elizabeth's reign. As he writes: "There is no evidence to show that copies . . . were acquired for use by the choirs of England's cathedrals or churches. There is thus little likelihood of Byrd composing Latin motets for use in Anglican services, certainly not those of the 1589 and 1591 volumes, although there might be a slim case for some of the 1575 collection being composed for the Chapel Royal.

It is perhaps ironic that a modern-day English collegiate or cathedral choir might sing more Latin music by Byrd than that in the vernacular, this Latin music being specifically Catholic. Of the English music, most choirs probably sing the preces and responses, the evening canticles from the Short Service, the Second and Third Services and the Great Service in their repertoire, perhaps with a handful of anthems—*O Lord, Make Thy Servant Elizabeth Our Queen, Sing Joyfully, Prevent Us, O Lord*, and possibly a verse anthem, such as *Hear My Prayer, O Lord or Christ Rising Again*. On the other hand, such a choir would be likely to have a number of the *Cantiones sacrae* in their repertoire—*Emendemus, Laetentur caeli, Vigilate* and *Ne irascaris* from the 1589 collection as well as a number of items from the *Gradualia* and, of course, the three masses. There is something gloriously incongruous about hearing one of the masses, presumably designed, like the *Gradualia*, for a clandestine ceremony and almost certainly sung by small forces, if not one to a part, being sung by a full cathedral choir in the midst of a modern Anglican rite in the vernacular. Perhaps not one that Byrd would necessarily have approved of, but something which demonstrates the broadness of the Anglican church as well as a magpie-like tendency to appropriate music from wherever it likes, be it Orthodox chant, African national hymns, or Catholic liturgical polyphony.

Joseph Kerman has suggested that Byrd took a deliberately encyclopaedic approach to his composition for the Anglican church, composing music for the services of Matins and Evensong in a variety of styles, from the simple Short Service to the Verse Service and then the opulent Great Service, as well as composing festal psalms and a number of anthems, again in differing styles. It has also been suggested that Byrd wrote most of his music for the Anglican church whilst in Lincoln (except the Great Service), although possibly with an eye for its reception and use at the Chapel Royal. Whatever the case, it is important to see Byrd's Anglican music within the context of music written for the Edwardine Church and to see how he expands these forms.

The governing principle of music for the Reformed Church was neatly summed up by the Lincoln Injunctions of 1548, which called for a "plaine and distincte note for every syllable one." This austere and syllabic writing can be seen at its purest in a work such as Tallis's Short

Evening Service, often referred to as the Dorian mode. The style of writing can be best described in the following manner: short, homophonic, and syllabic phrases are sung antiphonally by the two sides of the choir, and are separated by rests; vocal ranges are limited and the harmony often reinforces a type of austerity—bare fifths, indeed the use of the Dorian sharpened sixth. Even in this work, however, Tallis permits himself some licence with occasional melismatic writing towards the end of a phrase in one or more parts (second phrase—“re-joiced”—inner parts). Byrd continues this style in his Short Service and also in his Shird Service, even if the melismas may be a little more expansive.

Another interesting feature of this functional music for the Anglican liturgy was the provision for festal psalms, presumably psalms to be sung on feast days, although there is considerable confusion as to which psalm should be sung on which feast day. In any case, the style of writing in most of them is akin to the short-service style, with its short syllabic phrases. However, there are two slightly more interesting settings, one of Psalm 54, *Save Me, O God for Thy Name's Sake*, which has much in common with the Great Service. Its scoring is comparable with two soprano parts, two altos (although four are indicated) two tenors and bass and, although the writing is still antiphonal, the antiphony is now between the upper voices and the lower ones, rather in the manner of the “He remembering his mercy” section of the Great Service Magnificat. Indeed, the psalm starts in the same manner of the Great Service Magnificat with the same combination of four upper voices and there is a greater opulence to the writing.

If Psalm 54 represents some advance on the normally austere writing for the reformed church, then another festal psalm, part of Psalm 119—*Teach Me, O Lord, the Way of Thy Statutes*, represents another formal innovation, the use of antiphony between soloist and choir, which is usually called the verse service or anthem. Indeed, this piece is often described in seventeenth-century manuscripts as an anthem. Compared to later examples it is fairly rudimentary; the solo or “verse” parts are given only to the top voice and they are concise in nature.¹ The last point could also be made about the Second Service evening canticles, except that here the verses are more varied, being scored successively for solo alto, tenor and treble. Nevertheless, the emergence of the verse service and anthem in Byrd's work undoubtedly unleashed the flood of imaginative settings by later composers, such as Morley, Weelkes and, in particular Gibbons, whose Second Service reaches unparalleled heights of invention in its dramatic use of duets. What might have provided the impetus here was the consort song, where Byrd was able to achieve clarity of text in a single voice against a contrapuntal backdrop, which was, of course, a *sine qua non* of his compositional aesthetic. But it might also be a continuation of the English obsession with variations of texture. This had been a defining feature of pre-Reformation music, where votive antiphons or mass movements alternated between quite lengthy sections for a reduced number of parts with sections for the full choir. In particular, votive antiphons and mass movements often, or even invariably, started with a section for a reduced texture, and it is notable that so do most verse services or anthems, including Byrd's Second Service. It is interesting to note, however, that the full sections of this setting very much conform to the type of writing seen in the short service style.

Recent research by Roger Bowers as yet unpublished suggests that this piece was composed as a verse anthem and was not intended by Byrd to be a festal psalm, only being pressed into service as such during the seventeenth century. [Ed.]

If clarity of text still lay behind Byrd's expansion of the service and anthem with the addition of solos (or verses), how can the same be said to be true of Byrd's finest creation for the reformed church, the Great Service? This service, which comprises the music for Matins as well as Evensong, was undoubtedly written for the Chapel Royal, who at the time must have been one of the few choirs large and skilled enough to perform it, although they were later emulated by York Durham in this endeavour, from where most of the surviving partbooks emanate. The sheer grandeur of the setting was undoubtedly appropriate only to the great solemnities, but it also probably reflects the splendour of worship at Elizabeth's Chapel Royal, as described by Bishop Quadra. However, despite its opulence, the Magnificat clocking in at just over 9 minutes, it is, at least to some extent, consistent with the principles of the Lincoln Injunctions of 1548. Perhaps it does not quite conform to the spirit of "a playne and distincte note," but it does conform to a remarkable degree to the plea for syllabic writing. By and large, each new verse starts after a rest with a homophonic exposition of the new portion of text—you can hear this, for example, at "For he hath regarded," "For behold from henceforth," and at "And his mercy." How Byrd achieves his divine length is by continual repetition of text, often set after the initial homophonic statement to contrapuntal points that develop in the manner to which we are accustomed in his Latin motets—a particularly good example from the early part of the Magnificat is at the words "all generations shall call me blessed," and the movement is crowned with a magnificent musical development of the point for the words "and ever shall be, world without end. Amen."

Another device, which is perhaps new to the type of music written for the English Church, but which I believe is vital to comprehension of text is word-painting. This is perhaps seen at its best in the central section of the Magnificat, where the proud are truly scattered with a falling arpeggio figure with then a tricky leap upwards, and the mighty are firmly put down before the humble are exalted with a rising phrase.

Another famous example of word-painting comes from an anthem that also probably dates from Byrd's time at the Chapel Royal, *Sing Joyfully*. Here, at the words "Blow the trumpet in the new moon," Byrd employs a suitably martial figure. This is the most obvious example, but the exuberance with which Byrd captures the initial mood of the anthem, with a rising interval onto the word "joyfully," and the cumulative build-up on the words "sing loud" go some way in explaining why this was Byrd's most popular piece in the century after his death.

But to return to my opening question, how different is Byrd's music for the Anglican Church compared to his recusant motets? One of the most obvious differences is that a larger number of his English pieces are in a major tonality, particularly when one takes into account those pieces that could be classed as anthems, but which occur in printed collections alongside secular music, such as *Praise Our Lord All Ye Gentiles* and *This Day Christ Was Born*. This may have something to do with the desire of a newly-established church to project, outwardly at least, its self-confidence, and self-confidence became an increasing feature of Elizabeth's England. But even in Byrd's more introspective and minor-mode English pieces, there are few of the musical devices that form the compositional backbone of the recusant motets—the motivic reliance on the plaintive upper semitone or the continual thwarting of repose by evading cadences.

However, one of the most notable features of Byrd's recusant motets is his use of homophonic writing. This is often employed for moments of direct supplication to the Lord to have mercy, and indeed is often used to set the first verse of Psalm 51—"Miserere mei Deus," both in the motet of that title from the 1591 collection and in the final section of *Infelix ego*. The

technique is also used to establish the mood of a penitential work, such as the glacial claustrophobia at the opening of that essay in personal anguish, *Tristitia et anxietas*. It is also found in places where important doctrinal points need to be expounded, such as at the opening of *Ave verum corpus*, where coupled to a crucial cross relation between the bass and soprano on the word “verum,” the defining tenet of transubstantiation is emphasised in a phrase that acts as a headline to the rest of the motet. Some of the most moving uses of homophony occur in *Tribulationes civitatum*, a motet about the destruction of the holy city and the plight of its people. Towards the end of the second part, Byrd states the line “Dominus miserere” (Lord have mercy) four times, the first three separated by rests before the last climaxes in one his most opulent cadences. In the third part, the people cry out to the Lord “Aperi oculos tuos, Domine, et vide afflictionem nostram” (Open thine eyes. O Lord, and behold our affliction), again repeated in an impassioned manner.

Although there are possibilities of foreign influence on Byrd in this use of homophony, the most notable being in Lassus (although this is limited to very few pieces), it is noticeable that the type of homophony used in Byrd’s recusant motets, i.e., phrases separated by rests or natural breaks and starting on an off-beat with a semibrevis, is rhythmically remarkably similar to that found in his English pieces, particularly the services (e.g., “For behold from henceforth” from the Great Service). It is possible that Byrd saw in the enforced simplicity of textual declamation in English music a possibility for rhetorical declamation of extreme straits, of pleas for mercy and for the expounding of crucial theological doctrines. Nevertheless, as we can hear from *Tribulationes*, with its impassioned repetitions and greater harmonic disruption, there is a gulf of difference in its use and meaning—the angst factor is substantially higher. But that does not necessarily mean that the seeds for this vital component of Byrd’s recusant style did not in some ways evolve from a specifically reformed Anglican tradition.

BYRD'S GREAT SERVICE: THE JEWEL IN THE CROWN OF ANGLICAN MUSIC

Richard Turbet
18 August 2007



efore I begin to talk about the Great Service I should like to take you back nearly a hundred years to rural England, and to the county of my birth, Essex. The annual William Byrd Festival here in Portland is the first festival to be dedicated to the composer, but it was nearly only the second. In 1914 plans were well advanced for a William Byrd Festival based in the town of Thaxted in the northwest of Essex, and in the tiny nearby village of Little Easton. Unfortunately it was scheduled for September 22–23, 1914, by which time the First World War had started and all such cultural events were cancelled. No published proposal or preview of the festival is known to exist. Nevertheless, it is through good fortune that evidence of this proposed event came to light. During the early 1990s, I was researching among the papers of the Carnegie Trust in Edinburgh for an article which turned out to be about the incendiary and hitherto unknown circumstances surrounding the dismissal in the early 1920s of Sir Richard Terry from the editorial board of the monumental *Tudor Church Music* series. I came across a single handwritten reference to the aborted festival, plus a printed but cancelled festival letterhead, upside down on the back of a sheet being used for a memorandum. The letterhead contained details of the festival, its dates and leading personnel. Unbelievably I then lost track of where in the massive Carnegie archive I had found this letterhead (which at one demented stage I recalled as a flier) and it took three more searches before the document—the sole surviving printed evidence—stared me in the face once more. Despite being a librarian, or perhaps because of it, I wanted to make a very loud noise in the Scottish Record Office, but I controlled my voice, if not my facial features. It may seem strange to take so much trouble over an event which never took place, but it is important that such an event was planned, just as it is important that this festival in Portland was planned and, blessedly, not only proceeded to take place in 1998 for the first time but is now celebrating its tenth anniversary.

A great achievement deserves great music, and in the context of the entire repertory of the Anglican and Episcopalian Church, there is no greater piece of music than William Byrd's Great Service. It is without question the Bach St. Matthew Passion, the Beethoven Ninth, the Mahler

Eighth of the Anglican repertory. So from where did Byrd's Great Service come? Although the Anglican Church was still only half a century old at the time of its composition, the Great Service has never been surpassed in magnitude nor in magnificence. It did not spring out of nowhere. Indeed, as we shall see shortly, it is in at least one way a thoroughly derivative work.

But first it is necessary to demolish a musicological fiction. There was never a genre of "great services." Contrary to what some writers still wrongly state, Byrd's Great Service was not one of a category that were each so titled, or which were referred to as such in their day. It is merely a title applied in some, but by no means all, sources to what was Byrd's largest work that was generically a service—the Anglican musical equivalent of a mass, consisting of settings of movements or canticles that go to make up the Ordinary of the day's services of Mattins, Communion and Evensong. In other contemporary manuscripts Byrd's Great Service is called his New or Long Service. Of those sources that supply a title—the work was never published during Byrd's lifetime—the majority call it "Great," and this is the title that has survived. But just as the term "short service" was used for routine compositions that followed the Cranmerian guidance towards one syllable per note, so "long service" was not infrequently used for more ambitious works, whether with verses for soloists or not. It was not until after the Restoration in England, 1660, that the term "short service" came to be viewed as a genre—in Elizabethan and Jacobean times there were just services, some of which happened to be short, some long. A composer did not sit down to compose a short service: he sat down to compose a service that was short. This is a significant semantic difference: there was in Tudor times no awareness of specific categories of services, and it was scribes who applied a descriptive tag or nickname to a particular work to help identify it for the putative performer. Many services survive with two and three different titles, signifying sequence in a composer's output, such as Second Service; resources required, such as for verses or full or in five parts; or magnitude, such as short or long or whole. If Byrd's service needs to be shoehorned into any category it would not be incorrect to call it a long service. Only two contemporary services were also called "Great" in their original sources: the Third Service of Byrd's formidably talented Welsh pupil Thomas Tomkins was in part a homage to his teacher's Great Service and in one source the scribe confused one section of Tomkins's service with a similar one of Byrd's nearby in the same manuscript and provided the wrong heading. Thomas's Third Service still gets mentioned, performed and recorded as his "Great Service." Peter Phillips of the Tallis Scholars confessed to me that he knew the title was a scribal error but nonetheless used it on their recording because it is more arresting! The other work in question is by the underrated but estimable Edmund Hooper. He composed five surviving services, and in one source his more usually titled Full Service is called "Great." This would seem simply to be a quantitative description rather than a qualitative one, to differentiate it from the other four, and this is indeed the case with Byrd's—there has been a shift in meaning from Tudor times, when great in such cases as this meant magnitudinous, to nowadays, when it usually means very good indeed—although some use of the older meaning still survives.

All that the three services by Byrd, Tomkins, and Hooper have in common is that they are full, in other words not containing solo verses. This is what may have misled E. H. Fellowes who rediscovered Byrd's Great Service early in the twentieth century and who invented this specious genre of Tudor great services of which he surmised Byrd's was one. He quite appropriately cast around for the source of Byrd's musical inspiration. Byrd himself composed the first known verse anthem, so before Byrd there could only be full services: those for full choir and

no solo verses. A very few “long” services survive intact or fragmentarily, by Tallis, Parsons, and Sheppard, and in time Fellowes re-branded these as “great” services to fit his theory of a pre-existing genre for which Byrd composed his service. Although some musicologists realised that Fellowes was misguided, it was not until relatively recently that the source of Byrd’s inspiration was uncovered. In his edition of the Great Service, Craig Monson mentioned in a footnote merely one passage of music from the Benedictus in which Byrd was indebted to the corresponding passage in the Second Service of John Sheppard. Then in 1992 the Choir of Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford brought out a disc of music by John Sheppard, including the evening canticles of his Second Service, which were the only part of the service which had been published, in 1971. The distinguished writer of the scholarly sleevenotes was Professor Roger Bray, and he listed seven pre-echoes of Byrd’s Great Service in the rhythms and the shapes of some imitative parts. A few years later the then Mr., subsequently Dr. Stefan Scot told me that he had prepared an edition of the rest of Sheppard’s Second Service for his Master’s thesis. He very kindly sent me copies of the settings for Mattins and Holy Communion so that I could peruse them for any further pre-echoes of Byrd’s Great Service. What I discovered was that Byrd used elements from Sheppard’s service extensively, much more so than Roger Bray surmised, and that, in the same way that Philip Brett imagined that Byrd had the *Meane Mass* by Taverner open before him as he composed his own masses, William might have had Sheppard’s service securely in his mind while composing the Great Service. It is not surprising that Byrd should have turned to Sheppard as a mentor, because one of the earliest surviving Latin compositions by Byrd, composed when the Roman Catholic Queen Mary was still on the English throne, was one third of a longer composition by him, William Mundy and, with the largest contribution, Sheppard.

But, and this is a very big, indeed great, but: for all that Byrd takes many cues from Sheppard’s Second Service, his own Great Service never even gives forth the slightest whisper of Sheppard’s own idiosyncratic style. The music is pure Byrd. Arguably the greatest passage in the entire work comes at the end of the Te Deum, “let me never be confounded.” It is not well known because Mattins is seldom sung liturgically, and being the longest movement of a demanding work, Byrd’s Te Deum is seldom scheduled; I know of only King’s College Cambridge Choir that has it in its liturgical repertory. This glorious passage is the epitome of why the Great Service is indeed, in modern parlance, great. It is the cumulation of all the music preceding it in this tumultuous and varied canticle. The treble line sounds at times almost like plainsong while inner and lower parts sing insistent rhythms, as do subsequently the trebles, to emphasize the urgency of this appeal to God—some might see it as the apology of a Roman Catholic composer writing music for an alien creed; others, simply as a genius at the top of his game—yet none of this outpouring of sublime and impassioned music bursts outside the decorum of Anglican Divine Worship. But interestingly, this passage has no equivalent in Sheppard’s setting. Also, many regard the Nunc dimittis, which we shall be hearing shortly during this festival, as the best single movement; and this has few vestiges of Sheppard, and none at all in the concluding Gloria regarded so highly by Fellowes and everyone else since. And most intriguingly Stephen Jones, conductor of the City of London Chamber Choir, brilliantly solved a long running musicological problem. It has always been suspected that Tomkins’s monumental keyboard piece titled *Offertorium* was based upon a pre-existing theme, but apart from some improbable attempts to wed it to various pieces of incompatible and unobliging plainsong, no solutions appeared, until Stephen noticed, when his choir was rehearsing for a performance of

Byrd's *Te Deum*, that Tomkins based his *Offertorium* on the passage "Let me never be confounded."

So, why is Byrd's Great Service so great? First, Byrd's tunes. I get tired of hearing folk parrot the likes of Lord Britten and Sir Michael Tippett about how wonderful Dowland and Purcell were at setting English words to music. No more wonderful than Byrd. I have already cited "Let me never be confounded," with its edge of desperation. At the other emotional extreme, listen to the opening of the Magnificat this afternoon for the unaffected humility of "My soul doth magnify the Lord"—magnifying him all the more with humble music of dance-like innocence yet subtly drawing attention to the magnificence of the Lord with an arresting modulation in mid phrase. Scoring. The work is in ten parts: two trebles, four contratenors, and two each of tenors and basses. Current research is of the opinion that the pitch of Elizabethan Anglican music was only fractionally higher than today's, and so should be performed at the written pitch. The male falsettist did not seem to participate in such choirs, so in modern terms the pitches correspond to a treble of mezzo-soprano range, a contratenor of modern tenor range, a tenor of modern baritone range, and a bass corresponding more to modern bass-baritone or proper bass rather than the modern baritone. Byrd rings the changes kaleidoscopically, never using all ten at once for emphasis. Although he uses five against five (*decani* versus *cantoris*) as in the Creed at "God of gods, Light of light" for full choir, and the *Te Deum* at "Day by day" which is a verse for an ensemble of soloists, the largest number of voices he uses contrapuntally is eight. This could either be because he considered this to be the maximum number for comprehensible counterpoint—he composed several works in six parts but only two for eight voices and a single motet for nine, all three pieces considered to be early works—or perhaps he deferred to what he felt was the restraint required within the Anglican liturgy. The barnstorming *Glorias* for the two evening canticles are both in only five parts yet because of Byrd's striding themes, their rhythmic agility, and his amazing instinct for when to hold back a particular part so that its re-entry into the counterpoint has all the more impact, it is easy to believe these *Glorias* are in more than the actual five parts. Some of his passages of inspired scoring which you will be able to hear on this afternoon at evensong include three contratenors, tenor, and bass as in the Magnificat at "As he promised," four higher voices at the beginning of the Magnificat (to characterize the Virgin Mary); and he continually rings the changes between passages for full choir and passages for the *decani* or *cantoris* halves, or verses for an ensemble of solo voices.

The Great Service is a continuous encyclopaedia of the finest scoring and wordsetting. This begins in the very first phrase. This monumental work begins its first movement, the *Venite*, with the most modest resources, a verse passage for the four highest voices, two trebles and two contratenors, reflecting human insignificance in the presence of the Lord: "O come let us sing unto the Lord: let us heartily rejoice in the strength of our salvation." Unerringly Byrd places a discreet but audible dissonance on the word "strength," reminding us that behind human kind's salvation for which we sing and rejoice, there was a Crucifixion. This is so typical of Byrd's method and of the profundity of his intellect and perception: it is not wordpainting—there is nothing inherently dissonant about strength in the way that there is about pain; rather, he is causing us to think at a deeper level, at what is beneath the surface, what has gone on before. It would be possible to go through the whole of his sacred output and identify many such moments. Byrd never wasted a single note or chord or phrase: every note gives meaning to the text which he sets. But his music is not a series of episodes or gestures. Whether it be a

short lullaby or a massive service, Byrd always has a grasp of the whole, and every part of one of his works is part of a continuous narrative. Nor is his music monotonous or monochromatic. He has a masterful grasp of contrast so that differences or variety within a text can be accommodated. Immediately the opening phrase of the Venite has come to an end, the chorus enters in five full parts, shortly to become all ten parts divided into cantoris and decani five parts a side answering one another antiphonally. None of this is forced. It grows organically from Byrd's response to the text in the form of the music to which he sets that text. The Gloria begins in five parts, breaks out into ten antiphonally at "and ever shall be," then reverts to five until the end.

I have already mentioned one passage in the Te Deum. This movement is a microcosm of the whole, as it is a varied text that requires a special talent to create a coherent setting. One of Byrd's passages of counterpoint in eight parts is the climactic "Thou art the King of Glory O Christ." Here, without tub-thumping, he creates emphasis by having entries on the beat and on the offbeat, so that the choir audibly sings both "*Thou* art the King of Glory" and "Thou *art* the King of Glory," together creating an awesome double assertiveness.

So when was this masterpiece composed? In 1967, Peter le Huray noted that the earliest sources dated from the early seventeenth century and that one, at York Minster which Peter dated as ca. 1618, describes it as a "new sute of service," suggesting "a comparatively late date." A more recent suggestion has been by Craig Monson in the introduction to his 1982 edition already mentioned. Given the evidence of surviving sources, including one which he dated as circa 1606, and given what he perceived to be Byrd's musical preoccupations at certain times in his composing career, Craig suggested the late 1580s. However, according to Andrew Johnstone, who is writing a book about Byrd's Anglican music, evidence from the fragmentary manuscript source in York Minster Library suggests that Byrd began composing it around 1597. My own research confirms that he had completed it by 1604, because he sets wording from the Elizabethan Prayer Book of 1559 which was changed in the Jacobean Prayer Book of 1604, a circumstance overlooked by all previous scholars.

Why did Byrd compose such a gigantic work? I have come to the conclusion that Byrd may have composed his Great Service for the fortieth anniversary of the queen's accession in 1598. Andrew Johnstone proposes that Byrd began composing it in 1597. The number forty already had musical resonances from Tallis's *Spem in alium* and not only would the piece celebrate Elizabeth's reign, but also it would be a magnificent illustration of Byrd's compositional capabilities and the Chapel Royal's ability to perform such a demanding work; Elizabeth's successor could not fail to be impressed! We have already seen that in his three masses Byrd invoked the music of Taverner. As we have already seen, Byrd, while still a teenager, had been brought in to collaborate with Sheppard (and Mundy) in the composition of a tripartite motet, and in his finest musical creation for the Anglican Church Byrd similarly invoked the music of Sheppard. So it may well be significant in this context that his old mentor died in the same year forty years previously during which Elizabeth came to the throne. Such human circumstances must be borne in mind beside more austere musicological or historical ones. Taken together, they provide compelling evidence for when and why Byrd composed what C. Grant Robertson called "the greatest achievement of the greatest of British musicians."

CONTEXT AND MEANING IN WILLIAM BYRD'S CONSORT SONGS

David Trendell
16 August 2002

BYRD'S *LULLABY*



That was a setting of one of Byrd's most famous consort songs, *Lullaby, My Sweet Little Baby*. But what do we mean by consort song? Although you will be hearing these accompanied by organ tonight, these were originally composed for voice accompanied by a consort of viols. However, before we are accused of being inauthentic, it must be pointed out that Byrd himself arranged these songs for different musical forces. Part of the reason was commercial, as we shall see, but Byrd also makes clear that he decided on publication because much of his music had been circulating widely in bowdlerized versions. Therefore, towards the end of the 1580s, he embarked on a plan to publish music he had written thus far (or, if not all, a substantial part of it) and the years 1588–1591 see the publication of no fewer than four collections of works, in addition to the famous manuscript of virginal music for Lady Nevell. Two of these collections were of music set to English words, the *Psalmes, Sonets, and Songs of Sadness and Pietie* of 1588 and the *Songs of Sundrie Natures* of 1589. The other two collections were of motets, the *Cantiones sacrae* of 1589 and 1591. The consort song you have just heard, the *Lullaby* like many others, appears also in the 1588 collection of *Psalmes, Sonets and Songs* but in a version for voices. As Byrd writes in the introduction to that volume, “diverse songs, which being originally for Instruments to express the harmony and one voice to pronounce the ditty, are now framed in all parts for voices to sing the same.” Byrd's great joint venture with Tallis, the 1575 *Cantiones . . . sacrae* had been a commercial flop. By transcribing these for voices, Byrd was trying to ensure that his pieces reached the widest possible market, a market that had recently acquired a strong taste for the madrigal, and thus for secular vocal music. These pieces were also transcribed for other instruments; the most common of these was the lute, but many of these works were also transcribed for the keyboard. *Lullaby* exists in all these different versions, firstly as a consort song with viols, then as an entirely vocal piece, whilst existing also in two arrangements for lute as well as arrangement for keyboard, made by no lesser figure than Thomas Weelkes.

The interesting thing is that Byrd did not publish these songs in their original versions for voice with a consort of viols. This seems to suggest that there was no mass market for such a publication, and this in turn suggests that this was elite art, music for the few: wealthy, highly cultivated members of the aristocracy who could afford not only to employ musicians but to engage the services of the most notable composer of the period, Byrd himself. The next piece Clare and Mark are going to perform very much backs this up. It is entitled *My Mistress Had a Little Dog* and is, it has been suggested, an allegory on the death of Robert Devereux, second earl of Essex. I will attempt an interpretation of the allegory in a moment or two, but you will see right away from the text that the song must be about more than just a murdered dog. What particularly gives the game away is the reference to a specific place—Appleton Hall—since this was the seat of Edward Paston, a patron of Byrd. An esoteric allegory of a contemporaneous political event, decipherable only to those “in the know” therefore supports the view that the consort song is a form for wealthy connoisseurs of music, an instance of what is often called *musica reservata*. And Paston fits this type very well; in fact, his love for music fostered these examples of domestic chamber music. It is notable too that this work was never published in any form and that it is only found in manuscripts that originated in Paston’s collection. In fact, a substantial number of Byrd’s consort songs are only found in manuscripts from Paston’s collection, with the assumption therefore that they were written for performance there.

Edward Paston was one of the foremost collectors of music of the period and himself a gifted amateur musician. He came from a wealthy Norfolk family. His father had been a gentleman of Henry VIII’s privy chamber and the inheritance was sufficient for Edward to embark upon significant building projects—Appleton Hall in North Norfolk was completed in 1596. In 1590 he remodelled the old family house of Thorpe Hall, close to Norwich, and in 1612 he built another large manor house further east at Town Barningham. Paston was an accomplished player of the lute (hence the substantial number of pieces in his manuscripts that are transcriptions for the lute) and would also have been able to call upon the services of musicians from nearby Norwich, at that point the second largest city in England; musicians such as Thomas Morley who penned the foremost treatise of the period *A Plaine and Easie Introduction to Music*. Apparently, according to a letter sent from Paston to the earl of Rutland, such musicians could expect advancement on Paston’s recommendation, but they must have respected him as a musician and performer in his own right.

This gives some idea of the cultural and social environment of the consort song, but there is one other very important factor to explore; namely, that Paston, like Byrd, was a Roman Catholic, because this gives the music an even greater air of exclusivity. Norfolk, like the rest of East Anglia, had been among the most profoundly Catholic regions of England before the Reformation. Significant church building and renovation (on a very lavish scale) had carried on right up until the Reformation, and the region contained a large number of aristocracy who remained Catholic throughout Elizabeth’s reign (Petres at Ingatestone in Essex—other patrons of Byrd). Byrd’s Latin motets in the 1589 and 1591 had significant double meanings for Byrd’s Catholic audiences, and so occasionally do the consort songs.

This brings us back to the allegory behind *My Mistress Had a Little Dog*. The earl of Essex had been a great favourite of Queen Elizabeth, hence the references to “my mistress” who had “not a hound so fair and white.” He had been a military daredevil and his capture of Cadiz in 1596 made him a national hero. However, in 1601 he was involved in a ludicrous and aborted *coup d’état* and was arrested. The music for the first three verses (only two are going to be sung)

matches the light-hearted, rather coy, mocking nature of the verse. But when we come to the fourth verse, the mood changes and becomes more serious; a change to minor tonalities and a departure from the tongue-in-cheek character of the first verses display Byrd's sympathy for Essex. Essex had been a promoter of his Roman Catholic friends at court, and his sister, Lady Penelope Rich, whose name is punned at the end of the second verse and was a friend and neighbor of Paston, had toyed with the idea of becoming a Catholic. There follows a mock trial by hounds and beagles at Appleton Hall (complete with hunting-horn-like fanfares), presumably symbolic of the sympathetic Catholic gentry of Paston's circle, who condemn the "lout" who had betrayed Essex (probably Essex's former protégé, Sir Francis Bacon) to death at Tyburn, the place where Catholic martyrs had been hanged. The Protestants thus get a taste of their own medicine.

[Perform *My Mistress Had a Little Dog*]

One of the Catholic martyrs who had been hung at Tyburn was the Jesuit Edmund Campion. He had been among the first of the Jesuit mission to attempt the reconversion of England in the late 1570s and it appears that Byrd had strong links with Jesuit missionaries. This overt proselytism caused a new approach from the Elizabethan regime. It appears that Catholicism had been to an extent tacitly tolerated; after all, the regime had needed the support of the conservative aristocracy, many of whom retained their Catholic faith. However, from the late 1570s the mood changes with this overt attempt to reconvert the country. The Jesuit missionaries were brutally suppressed and executed in a spectacularly gory manner; to be Catholic, particularly with the threat from Catholic Spain, came to be unpatriotic, and for the first time we see the rise of Protestantism equated with Englishness. Certainly, the rise of what is known as the "political" motet in Byrd's works dates from this time—there are very few examples in the 1575 collection, but the motets composed during the 1580s and collected into the 1589 and 1591 *Cantiones sacrae* (especially the 1589 collection) barely attempt to conceal their true meaning. This is because from the late 1570s onwards many of Byrd's motet texts chime in with the rhetoric of Jesuit pamphlets and public announcements. For example, the Catholics saw themselves as "Israelites," the chosen people, whom God would lead from captivity, hence the many themes of Advent. The state of Catholic England was frequently likened to the destruction of Jerusalem or the Babylonian or Egyptian captivity, hence the large number in the 1589 *Cantiones sacrae* on these themes. Another underlying thread of Jesuit rhetoric was that of martyrdom and Byrd's choice of motet texts reflects this, particularly the motet *Deus venerunt gentes* which contains the line from Psalm 78 "We are made a spectacle unto our neighbours" that Campion uttered from the scaffold before his death.

The final piece Clare and Mark are going to perform is a lament on the death of Campion called *Why Do I Use Paper, Ink and Pen?*

Unpublished Motets

BYRD'S UNPUBLISHED MOTETS

David Trendell
11 August 2007



As we all know, William Byrd's first published works were contained in the *Cantiones sacrae* of 1575, the joint venture with Tallis. In the context of Byrd's extraordinarily fecund compositional career, it is easy to forget the importance Byrd placed upon this his first publication. For the older Tallis it must have been something of a retrospective summation of a long compositional career, represented by the sheer variety of compositions he chose. These included not only works written in his most up-to-date and indeed pathbreaking style, such as the monumental seven-part *Suscipe quaeso Domine* and the harmonically daring penitential *In ieiunio et fletu*, but also works seemingly written for the old Sarum Rite, such as the respond *Dum transisset sabbatum* and the hymn *Tē lucis ante terminum*. For Byrd, the publication gave him the opportunity to show himself to be a thoroughly modern composer, one up-to-date and in tune with some of the most recent developments in continental music as well as proclaiming his originality and technical prowess. The preface to the 1575 collection not only pays lavish tribute to Queen Elizabeth I in a dedication of magnificently obsequious grandiloquence; but, by praising the two composers as paragons of English music, the publication was obviously designed to showcase English music on the continent. (In this respect it failed: the volume never made either composer any money, and it sold pitifully on mainland Europe.) Joseph Kerman has pointed out that a number of pieces by Byrd are consciously modelled on works by Alfonso Ferrabosco, the mysterious figure at court (later accused of spying), who, it is argued, introduced Byrd to many technical devices developed in continental music, most notably Lassus. Certainly Byrd's works in the 1575 *Cantiones sacrae* are more akin to the spirit of contemporary approaches to setting sacred Latin texts. In fact, the very term *Cantiones sacrae*, literally "sacred songs" was used by Clemens non Papa, or at least by his publisher, to describe a collection of what are often called motets. Byrd's and Tallis's *Cantiones*, certainly as published in this volume, were more likely to be performed in a domestic environment (perhaps purposely composed for that milieu) rather than in a liturgical setting.

It is easy to imagine Byrd being the driving force behind the publication and its purposeful statement to represent the best of English music to the continent. There is more than an element of Byrd showing off his prowess. The placing of *Emendemus in melius* as his first piece in the collection is proof of this. This is indeed one of Byrd's most powerful pieces. Kerman

argued that the type of homophony that Byrd used in this piece was modelled on Ferrabso's *Qui fundasti terram*. Certainly there are great similarities between the two, although it is difficult to tell which came first, and the type of homophony found in this piece is not characteristic of much continental music of the period, even that of Lassus. Kerman points out that Byrd goes well beyond Ferrabso in expressive scope by abandoning the homophony for a plaintive final contrapuntal section on the words "libera me." What is perhaps most important of all is the implied declaration by Byrd that he had discovered in this use of rhetorical homophony a style that seemed utterly appropriate to the expression of texts of deep penitence, and of personal and collective entreaties to the Lord. Time and time again he was to return to this style of rhetorical homophony when addressing the Lord in this manner—I am thinking of the beginning of *Vide Domine*, where the Lord is told to behold the affliction of his people, and the final section of *Tribulationes civitatum*, where the Lord is told to open his eyes and behold the tribulation of his people. This might be Byrd's most successful piece in the 1575 *Cantiones sacrae* but there are others that proclaim that Byrd is a force to be reckoned with. *Tribue Domine* shows a composer capable of sustaining large-scale forms, whilst a number of pieces have clever canons, although the one that is often proclaimed the most skilful—*Diliges Dominum*—is to me very dull.

In the late 1580s and 1590s, Byrd embarked on a spree of publications. These included not only the *Cantiones sacrae* of 1589 and 1591, but also the *Psalmes, Sonnets, and Songs* of 1588 and the *Songs of Sundrie Nature* in 1589. In addition to this, 1591 saw the compilation of much of his keyboard music into *My Lady Nevell's Book*. Much of the impetus must have come from a desire to draw together most of his works written up to that point, perhaps a desire to make some money before his life and compositional career turned direction. For in 1593 he moved to Stondon Massey in Essex and devoted much of the rest of his life there to the composition of works for the Roman Mass Ordinary and Proper. Undoubtedly, Byrd felt the need to present definitive versions of his works. Many of them had circulated widely during the 1580s, but as he noted, they were often in corrupt and imperfect copies, and this gave him the opportunity to present the correct text.

But if this gives an overview of some of the impulses behind Byrd's publications there is nevertheless a substantial corpus of sacred music that never appeared in print. So, what are these pieces like and why did Byrd never publish them? Part of the answer I have given already. Much of the impetus behind Byrd's choice of works to appear in the 1575 *Cantiones sacrae* seems to have been a desire to show off his technical prowess, whether in the sphere of canonic writing or in the ability to sustain large-scale forms; to show himself up-to-date with contemporary continental trends and styles, such as freedom in the choice of texts and more flexible imitative writing, as well as proclaiming his originality and expressive depth. It is inevitable that Byrd chose to ignore some of his earlier pieces that don't fit into the image he wanted to project, let alone those works that might tactfully be described as the sins of youth.

One such *crime de jeunesse* is undoubtedly the six-part setting of *O salutaris hostia*. Kerman wrote about this piece:

Even if we apply greater charity with the accidentals than did the scribes of any of its sources, it makes a ceaseless racket of false relations and resolutions sounding simultaneously. . . . The piece has the air of an exercise that would scarcely survive actual performance.

Kerman however praised the recording by The Cardinal's Musick in the performance that you are about to hear, writing that they take “this excruciatingly dissonant canon entirely seriously,” and continuing that “their deadpan and beautifully accurate rendition may make this a collector's item.”

[Play *O salutaris*]

When such a seeming aberration appears in the oeuvre of a “great” composer, it is customary for musicologists to call into question the attributions in the sources—“it must be the scribe's fault.” However, in this instance, the sources—there are three of them, more than for any other of Byrd's early sacred works and all dating from the period 1560–75—are generally very reliable, and there are precedents for such extreme and somewhat comic use of the false relation. One such is Tallis's second setting of *Salvator mundi*, which actually appears in the 1575 *Cantiones sacrae*. These pieces bring to mind Morley's later criticism of the use of false relations found in his didactic tome *A Plaine and Easie Introduction to Practicall Musicke*. He writes that “amongst many evils this is one of the worst,” going on to liken them to “a garment of a strange fashion which being new put on for a day or two will please because of the novelty, but being worn threadbare will grow in contempt.” The interesting word here is “strange” which in the 1590s meant primarily “alien—of or belonging to another country,” or “added or introduced from outside,” to quote the OED. Archbishop Parker, for example, instructed in 1572 that something “be sent out to the reader both English and strange.” Morley seems to be intimating that it was alien to the normal flow of English music, as if a gaudy, attractive, but essentially foreign practice had “seduced” English composers. Certainly this seems to be the case here. The English, once they had encountered false relations in the music of Gombert, Clemens, and their continental contemporaries, whose music was circulating in England in increasing amounts, took to the device like bees to honey. That Byrd later used the false relation more sparingly and more tellingly for expressive purposes—think of the beginning of *Ave verum corpus*—shouldn't blind us to the fact that in earlier life he may have revelled in a unbridled display of youthful and enthusiastic coarseness. In fact, set alongside some of Gombert's chansons, which were circulating in England more than his other works, it is, if not chaste, then somewhat less extreme than Kerman might suggest.

Other manuscript works may be more assured but doubtful on stylistic grounds. One such is the fascinating *Vide Domine quoniam tribulor*. This is an exercise in chromatic writing that seems to be without precedent in Byrd's work—witness the unexpected cadence at the end of the first phrase and the sudden chordal change between phrases at “subversum est” and “cor meum.” But yet, some of these seismic shifts are by thirds and are similar to those found between phrases in many of Byrd's homophonic writing, for example *Emendemus* and *Vide Domine afflictionem nostram*, which has another extreme modulation. It is possible that *Vide Domine quoniam tribulor* is an experiment in chromatic writing from which Byrd took only certain points and used them in his rhetorical homophonic style whilst discarding more extreme procedures. The later and better known *Vide Domine afflictionem nostram* from 1589 sets a text that Byrd probably found in a collection of motets by Clemens residing in the Nonsuch Library of Lord Lumley, and it is worthwhile pointing out that the text of this earlier *Vide Domine quoniam tribulor* was also set by Clemens. The coincidence of Byrd's settings of these texts found in Clemens cannot be ignored if we are playing the game of attribution.

[Play *Vide Domine quoniam tribulor*]

It is undoubtedly true that the majority of works surviving solely in manuscript sources are products of the composer's youth, and it is possible that many represent the composer learning certain styles and methods of composition. Whilst Byrd was growing up, these would have included the principal types of music written for the office—the respond and the hymn. The main exponents of both forms during the period of Queen Mary were Sheppard and Tallis—one thinks of such glorious works as the latter's respond *Videte miraculum*. Both types of composition, mainly festal in nature, were based on plainchant *cantus firmi*, usually held in one part in longer equal notes. The respond had a particular form whereby a plainsong verse was sung after the end of the initial polyphony before repeating the latter part of the polyphonic respond before a plainsong Gloria and the very final piece of the polyphony. Byrd's two manuscript settings are not liturgical, but the principal features—the plainsong *cantus firmus* sung in longer equal notes in one voice, together with a sectionalization of the polyphony determined by the ends of phrases in the chant—still pertain. The example I am going to play you is *Omni tempore benedic Deum*, where the plainsong is held in the upper voice. The result is definably different from some of the more celebrated festal responds and perhaps finds a composer using a pre-existing form to develop his compositional style.

[Play *Omni tempore*]

One slightly strange manuscript piece is a setting of the hymn *Christe qui lux es et dies*. This is preserved in the Dow partbooks and has many similarities with White's setting of the same hymn, most notably in its notation. Both pieces produce a note-against-note harmonisation of the plainsong melody in black breves. White's is liturgical, setting only the alternate verses to polyphony, but Byrd's isn't, each verse after the first being polyphonic. Byrd places the plainsong melody in different voices, rising from the bass through the five voices to the top part in verse six. The work contains some real surprises—unexpected, even wilful cadences, particularly in the first verse, and some ungainly melodic lines. Although possessed of an austere beauty, it does to me have the quality of an exercise about it. The abruptness of some of the progressions has an element of a desperate pupil trying to make something fit the melody, rather in the manner of Morley's hapless student in *A Plaine and Easie Introduction to Practall Musicke*. This is borne out by my experiences in trying to perform this piece—I well remember a particularly fractious rehearsal in New College where the sheer eccentricity of some of the vocal lines and harmonic writing bemused singers more used to the mellifluous contours of Renaissance polyphony.

[Play *Christe qui lux es et dies*]

If these pieces show Byrd developing his compositional talent by working through different forms of contemporary composition, others show the direct musical influence of Tallis. One such example is Byrd's *Lamentations*. Setting of texts from the Lamentations of Jeremiah were all the vogue in England at the time. Quite whether this was an early manifestation of composers using this depiction of the destruction of the Holy City of Jerusalem as a metaphor for the plight of the Catholic community in England in the manner of Byrd's later *Cantiones* is unsure. Although there might be compelling evidence that Tallis's setting was such, it is extremely unlikely that Osbert Parsley, Norwich Cathedral's longest-ever serving layclerk, was a co-religionist. Perhaps it was all down to compositional rivalry, seeing who could write the most affective setting of a bitterly penitential text. Tallis's second setting of the *Lamentations* starts with a lengthy setting of the words "De lamentatione Jeremiae prophetae" lasting twenty-eight

measures. One of the interesting devices that Tallis uses, as Bill Mahrt has pointed out, is stating the point of imitation at three pitches [sing this]. Normally a point was imitated at the fifth and octave, but here Tallis states the point on an initial pitch of G, imitating it at the fifth D, but then bringing in an entry of it on A, the supertonic. This procedure vastly expands the tonal and harmonic possibilities. Byrd emulates this with an even longer opening section—thirty-three measures—but also uses Tallis's three-pitch imitations. The initial point starts on an A, imitated in the bass at the fifth below on D. Further entries on D and A occur, but with the mixture of C-sharps and naturals creating piquant false cross relations, before the top voice enters with the point on E. Byrd's use of accidentals heightens the tonal ambiguities of this section in a manner akin to Tallis before ending on a chord suspending a B-flat in the tenor against the augmented sixth F-sharp in the top voice. Furthermore, the cadence right at the end of Byrd's setting is a total copy of the cadence at the end of the first set of Tallis's *Lamentations*.

[Play Byrd *Lamentations*]

The *Lamentations* are an early example of Byrd working on an extended canvas, even if the piece is divided up into smaller sections. However, there are two other notable examples of large-scale manuscript pieces that seem to have been written early in his career, perhaps in the 1560s. They are *Ad Dominum cum tribularer* and *Domine quis habitabit*. Both are examples of a psalm motet, a term that requires some explanation. The end of Henry VIII's reign saw the demise of the votive antiphon. One of the causes of this were the Ten Articles of 1536. In many ways, these reflected the orthodoxy of Catholic belief but with a slight nod in the direction of reforming opinion. The articles specifically approved the veneration of images of saints, but preachers were to ensure that the people were warned against idolatry—"it is very laudable to pray to saints in heaven . . . to be intercessors and to pray for us," but the people must not think that "any saint is more merciful . . . than Christ." Given that the vast majority of votive antiphons were addressed to Mary, this undoubtedly had an effect on this most opulent of musical forms. Jesus antiphons, such as Tallis's *Sancte Deus*, grew in number, but the votive antiphon was often replaced by a psalm. We see this too in personal devotional books of the period, where the normal lavish supplications to the Virgin were replaced by psalmody. Composers reflected this trend, and it is interesting to note that many early motets setting a complete psalm (or a portion), such as White's *Exaudiat cor meum*, use the same formal procedures and contrast in texture of a votive antiphon. Although the reign of Queen Mary had restored the votive antiphon, leading to a glorious Indian summer in the form of Mundy's *Vox patris* and Tallis's *Gaude gloriosa*, psalm motets continued to proliferate and Byrd's two settings seem redolent of many elements of the musical style of Mary's reign. This is particularly true of *Ad Dominum cum tribularer*. Here we find a liberal use of false relations, often resolving onto an accented first inversion chord that was so typical of music of the 1550s together a predilection for thick textures. Indeed the long point of imitation at the opening, rather than the terser, more flexible points we find in mature Byrd, is similar to the types of points we find in such works as the Benedictus from Tye's Mass *Euge bone*. The imitation is largely kept to the same pitches rather than rising successively to provide a climax at the end of each section in the manner of his later works. Instead the climaxes are provided by sheer weight of sonority. That is not to criticise the work—it is rather to point out the differences in style to that which Byrd evolved in his mature works. Indeed, like the *Lamentations*, there are several pointers to the way in which Byrd would develop his style, most notably in the proliferation of yearning suspensions at the beginning of the second part of the motet that sound far more modern than the types of dissonance found

in the 1550s. The sheer scale of these pieces is a vital stage on the way to such works as *Tribue Domine*, *Tristitia*, and *Infelix ego*.

[Play *Ad Dominum cum tribularer*]

It is tempting to look for deficiencies in Byrd's unpublished works to explain his rationale for not exposing them to a wider musical public. Certainly Kerman often finds significant faults in all of them. But there is no doubt that some are assured enough to have merited publication, two cases in point being these powerful psalm motets. Another interesting case is *Quomodo cantabimus*, which we sang last year. This might have been a special case given the circumstances of its composition. Just to recount, the Flemish composer, Philippe de Monte, who had visited England as part of Philip II's musical retinue in the 1550s, sent Byrd a setting of *Super flumina Babylonis* in 1583. Byrd responded by composing a setting of part of the same psalm, Psalm 136, *Quomodo cantabimus*, a pointed political metaphor of the Catholics in internal exile in England exclaiming "how could they sing the Lord's song in a strange land?" It could be argued that the political overtones of this piece might have prevented publication, but that didn't stop Byrd elsewhere. Perhaps the clue to its non-publication is that it is in eight parts. Byrd's publication of *Cantiones* never rise above six parts, apart from *Diliges Dominum*, which is a special case, where one choir of four voices is in canon with the other, thus not requiring extra part-books. The expense of providing extra partbooks for just these three pieces might have proved exorbitant and simply might not have been practical anyway.

There remains one piece in five voices whose failure to appear in print mystifies me and that is *Peccavi super numerum*, which we are singing this year, for it has a great deal in common with many of the pieces in the 1589 *Cantiones sacrae*. It is scored for five voices like the rest of the 1589 collection; the text is severely penitential portraying the plight of the penitent individual rather in the manner of *Tristitia*—"I have sinned above the number of the sands of the sea"—and like many pieces in that collection it starts with a motif based on the plaintive semitonal step [sing it]. It also has a sure sense of build-up to climaxes by raising the pitch of each successive entry of a point of imitation, which is a clear hallmark of Byrd's mature works—listen particularly to the point on "et multiplicati sunt"—as well as a contrast in texture and lightening of tension after such a climax. It has tonal contrast, switching to the major on the ascending figure for "videre altitudinem caeli," as well as thematic unity that is again the hallmark of Byrd's mature style. For example the point of imitation on the words "prae multitudine iniquitatis" starts with two descending fourths at the beginning of the point, the first of which is inverted for the subsequent phrase on the words "iniquitatis meae" [sing this]. In short, it seems to be a perfect candidate to have occupied a place in the 1589 collection.

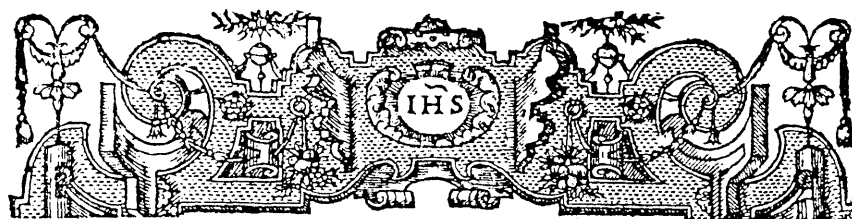
[Play *Peccavi*]

I can only think of one thing that *Peccavi* lacks, and that is the idea of consolation for the sinner's plight that is so important a part of even the most desperate of the 1589 works. Whatever the explanation, the existence of such works as *Peccavi*, the two psalm motets and *Quomodo cantabimus* shows that there is a treasure trove of great music to be explored in Byrd's unpublished works. Sure, many of the others are imperfect and works of juvenilia, but we should also bear in mind that Byrd never published much of his English sacred music, the *Great Service* and *Sing Joyfully* among them.

Appendices

RECORD OF CHORAL WORKS PERFORMED AT THE WILLIAM BYRD FESTIVAL
Prepared by Mark Williams

TITLE	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08
Masses											
Mass for 3 voices											
Mass for 4 voices											
Mass for 5 voices											
Cantiones Sacrae 1575											
Emendemus in melius á 5											
Libera me Domine et pone me á											
Peccantem me quotidie á 5											
Aspice Domine á 6											
Attollite portas á 6											
O lux beata Trinitas á 6											
Laudate pueri Dominum á 6											
Memento homo á 6											
Siderum rector á 5											
Da mihi auxilium á 6											
Domine secundum actum meum á 6											
Diliges Dominum á 8											
Miserere mihi Domine á 6											
Tribue Domine á 6											
Libera me Domine de morte á 5											
Cantiones Sacrae 1589 (all á 5)											
Defecit in dolore											
Domine praestolamur											
O Domine adjuva me											
Tristitia et anxietas - Sed tu Domine											
Memento Domine											
Vide Domine afflictionem											
Deus venerunt gentes											
Domine tu jurasti											
Vigilate											
In resurrectione tua											
Aspice Domine de sede											
Ne irascaris Domine											
O quam gloriosum est regnum											
Tribulationes civitatum											
Domine secundum multitudinem											
Laetentur coeli - Orietur in diebus											
Cantiones Sacrae 1591 (all á 5)											
Laudibus in sanctis											
Quis est homo - Diverte a malo											
Fac cum servo tuo											



GRAD VALIA,

SEV

CANTIONVM SA-

crarum : quarum aliæ ad quatuor, aliæ

verò ad quinque & sex voces editæ sunt.

LIB. SECVNDVS.

*Authore Gulielmo Byrde, Organista
Regio, Anglo.*

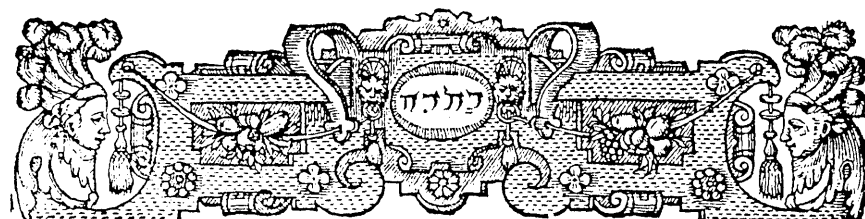
Ex Noua & accuratissima eiusdem Authoris
recognitione.

*Musica Diuinos profert modulamine Cantus :
Iubilum in Ore, fauum in Corde, & in Aure melos.*

SEXTVS.



Excudebat H. L. Impensis RICARDI REDMERY,
*ad Insigne Stelle aureæ in Diui Pauli
Cemeterio. 1610.*



GRAD VALIA,

SEV

CANTIONVM SA-

crarum: quarum aliæ ad Quatuor, aliæ

verò ad Quinque & Sex voces editæ sunt.

LIB. SECVNDVS.

*Authore Gulielmo Byrde, Organista
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Ex Noua & accuratissima eiusdem Authoris
recognitione.

*Musica Diuinos profert modulamine Cantus:
Iubilum in Ore, fauum in Corde, & in Aure melos.*

CANTVS Primus.



Excudebat H. L. Impensis RICARDI REDMERJ,
*ad Insigne Stelle aureæ in Diuis Paris
Cæmeterio. 1610.*

7. Voc II. CANTUS primus. 281.

V I de runt omnes fines ter ra, fi nes ter-
 ra, sa lu ta re De i no stri, ij.
 sa lu ta re De i no stri, iu bi la te, iu bi la te De o,
 Iu bi la te De o, iu bi la te iu bi la te De o omnis ter ra.

Versus.

N O tum fe cit Do minus, sa lu ta re fi-
 um, an te con spectum gen ti um re ue la uit iu sti ti am su am, iu-
 sti ti am su am. Al le lu ia, ij. ij.
 ij. Al le lu ia, Al le lu ia.

Chorus sequitur.
 B.ij.

6. Voc. In festo S. S. Petri & Pauli. XXXVIII. CANTVS primus.



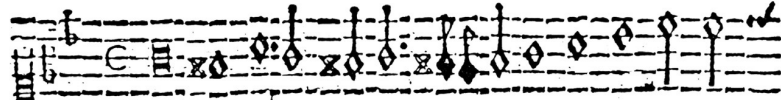
Vnc scio verè, ve re, Nunc scio
 ve- re, qui a misit Dominus
 Angelum su um, quia misit Dominus Angelum suum, et
 e ri puit me, de ma nu He ro- dis, de manu He-
 rodie, et de omni expecta ti o ne plebis Iudæo rum. Iu dæ o rum.
 plebis Iu dæ o rum, Iu dæ o rum. plebis Iu dæ o rum.

Versus. **D**omine probasti me: Glori a Patri et Fili o, et spi ri-
 tu i san cto, Sicut e rat in prin ci pi o, et nunc et sem per, et in sæcula
 sæculorum, Amen. sæculorum, A men. ij. sæculorum, A men.

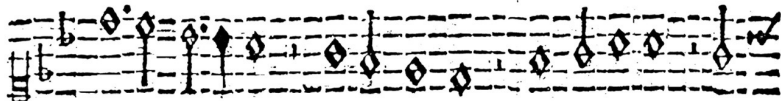
4. VOC.

V.

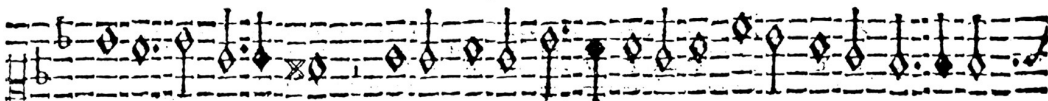
SVPERIVS.



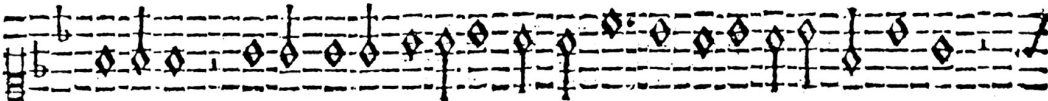
Ve verum cor- pus, natum de Ma-



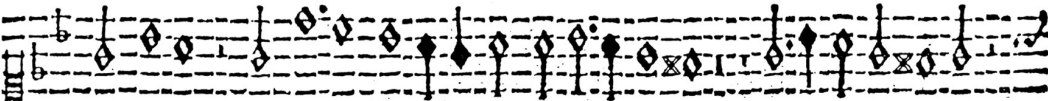
ri a Virgi ne, ye re passum, im mola tum in



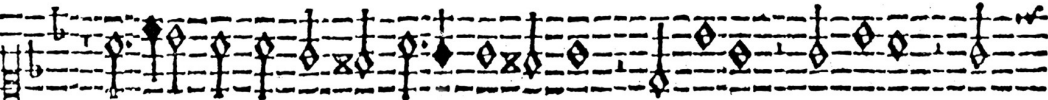
cruce pro ho mi ne: Cuius la tus per fo ra tum, yn da fluxit san guine.



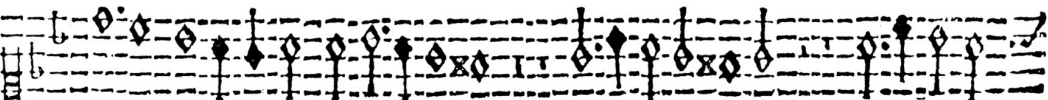
lan guine. E sto nobis pra gustatum in mor tis ex a mi ne: O Dulcis!



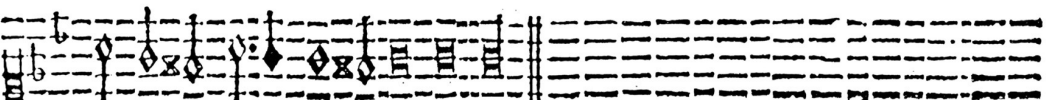
O pi e! O Ie su fi li Ma ri æ, mi se re re me i.



ij. me i. O Dulcis! O pi e! O



Ie su fi li Ma ri æ, mi se re re me i. ij.



me i. Amen.

Byrd

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CONTRIBUTORS

PHILIP BRETT (1937–2002) was born in the English Midlands, a choirboy at Southwell Cathedral and a choral scholar and Fellow at King’s College, Cambridge University (1963–66), Brett came under the spell of Thurston Dart, the most influential British musicologist of his generation. A stellar teacher and a supremely gifted musician, he played harpsichord and viols—and piano four-hands.

While a student, Brett tracked 50-odd scattered Elizabethan/Jacobean music manuscripts to a single documented scriptorium, and identified anonymous songs for voice and viols preserved in one MS. as late works of William Byrd. Thus his Cambridge doctoral dissertation disclosed an entirely unknown Spätstil repertory of a canonical composer. The genre itself was little known before he edited the whole corpus in *Musica Britannica* (1967); Byrd’s own songs he edited separately (1970). Among his many, often brilliant contributions to our knowledge of Byrd and other Tudor composers, one tour de force may be mentioned: his reconstitution of the six-part madrigal “Let Others Praise” from just three surviving broadside pages.

When Dart died, leaving the old Byrd edition in an incomplete and unsatisfactory state of revision, Brett took on the general editorship of a new *Gesamtausgabe*, notably refining principles of the scholarly editing of music in the 10 volumes he undertook. Brett moved as easily in liturgical studies as in philology and literary criticism, and the same musicality that warms his Schubert essay illumines his readings of Byrd’s motets. He was one of the finest English prose stylists among the musicologists of his time.

JOSEPH KERMAN studied with Oliver Strunk at Princeton and is emeritus professor of music at the University of California, Berkeley. He began writing music criticism for *The Hudson Review* in the 1950s, and is a longtime contributor to *The New York Review of Books* and many other journals. His books include *Opera as Drama* (1956; new and revised edition 1988), *The Beethoven Quartets* (1967), *The Masses and Motets of William Byrd* (1981), *Contemplating Music* (1986), *Concerto Conversations* (1999), and *The Art of Fugue* (2005). He was a founding editor of the journal *19th-Century Music*.

WILLIAM PETER MAHRT grew up in Washington state; after attending Gonzaga University and the University of Washington, he completed a doctorate at Stanford University in 1969. He taught at Case Western Reserve University and the Eastman School of Music, and then returned to Stanford in 1972, where he continues to teach early music. Since 1964 he has directed the choir of St. Ann’s Chapel in Palo Alto, which sings mass and vespers in Gregorian chant on all the Sundays of the year, with masses in the polyphonic music of Renaissance masters for the

holy days. He also directs the Stanford Early Music Singers; they have recently completed a cycle of masses of Josquin Des Pres as well as a series of concerts in the form of historical vespers services. Dr. Mahrt has published articles on the relation of music and liturgy, and music and poetry. He frequently leads workshops in the singing of Gregorian chant and the sacred music of the Renaissance. He is also the editor of *Sacred Music*, the oldest continuously published journal of music in North America and president of the Church Music Association of America.

RICHARD MARLOW was a choirboy at Southwark Cathedral. He became Organ Scholar and later Research Fellow of Selwyn College, Cambridge. A student of Thurston Dart, he wrote a doctoral dissertation on the 17th-century virginalist Giles Farnaby. After teaching at the University of Southampton, he returned to Cambridge in 1968 as Fellow, Organist and Director of Music at Trinity College and Lecturer in the University Music Faculty. He founded the College's mixed choir in 1982. In addition to playing the keyboard, conducting choirs, and teaching, Dr. Marlow has been active as an editor and has contributed articles and reviews to various scholarly journals and books, including *The New Grove*, its recent revision, and the *Dictionary of National Biography*. He has also conducted, lectured, and given harpsichord and organ recitals in many European countries as well as in Asia, Australasia, Africa, and North and South America. As organ soloist and choir director, he records frequently.

KERRY MCCARTHY, who has written the program notes for the William Byrd Festival since its inception, was born and raised in Portland, Oregon. She discovered the delights of early music while in high school and joined Cantores in Ecclesia in 1994. She received her B.A. from Reed College in 1997 and her Ph.D. from Stanford University in 2003. She is now Assistant Professor of Musicology at Duke University. Her book on Byrd's *Gradualia* was published by Routledge in 2007.

DAVID TRENDELL was born in 1964 and received his early musical education as a chorister at Norwich Cathedral. He was subsequently Organ Scholar at Exeter College, Oxford and then pursued research into the works of Alexander Zemlinsky. During this time, he was also Assistant Organist at Winchester College and then Organist of the University Church in Oxford and a lecturer at St. Hilda's, St. Hugh's and Oriel Colleges. He was Director of the Edington Festival (1987–91), where he also conducted the Nave Choir of Men and Boys until 2000, broadcasting each year for BBC Radio 3. Currently he is College Organist and Lecturer in the Music Department at King's College London, where he directs the chapel choir, with whom he has made several recordings, including Taverner's *Missa Corona Spinea* together with motets by Byrd, and music by Alonso Lobo for ASV. Active as a conductor, singer, writer, organist and record producer (for ensembles including The Clerkes's Group and the Maîtrise de Caen), he is also Director of Music at St. Bartholomew the Great in the City of London.

RICHARD TURBET hails from Ilford in the county of Essex, England. Since 1977 he has been a librarian at the University of Aberdeen, Scotland. He sang in choirs from 1963 until 1992, was a capable pianist in his younger years, and surely remains his old school's worst ever House

Organist. He was a layclerk in the choirs of Wakefield and Aberdeen Cathedrals, singing in the latter alongside his two sons. He has written or edited over a hundred books and articles about music librarianship, Tudor music and Byrd, and is a contributor to *Grove* and to the *Dictionary of National Biography*. *Tudor Music: a Research and Information Guide* won the C.B. Oldman Prize for 1994. Most recently, a second edition of *William Byrd: A Guide to Research* and a cumulative edition of all the *Annual Byrd Newsletters* were published during November 2005. Other music enthusiasms include Louis Couperin, E.J. Moeran, Steve Reich, Elmore James and Bob Dylan plus, as a founding member of the Carver Choir, Scotland's greatest composer, Robert Carver. At the time of writing, he is Special Collections Cataloguer and Music Librarian at the University of Aberdeen, and is Advisor to The Cardinal's Music Byrd Edition.

MARK WILLIAMS has been described as "the shooting star of the international organ scene" (*Berliner Zeitung*) and is increasingly in demand as one of the U.K.'s most exciting young musicians.

Appointed in the year 2000 as the youngest ever Assistant Sub-Organist of St. Paul's Cathedral in London and Director of Music at St. Paul's Cathedral School at the age of 21, he relinquished both posts in April of 2006 in order to pursue his rapidly growing freelance career.

Educated in Bolton, Lancashire, he sang as a boy at Manchester Cathedral before going on to spend a year as Organ Scholar of Truro Cathedral in Cornwall. In 1997 he took up the organ scholarship at Trinity College, Cambridge, where he was also later awarded an academic scholarship and where he worked regularly with the internationally-renowned choir under the direction of Dr. Richard Marlow. He has recorded works of Elgar, Mendelssohn, and Duruflé with the Choir of Trinity College Cambridge.

Mark has appeared as a soloist and accompanist throughout London and the U.K. and has appeared with a number of groups such as The Sixteen, The King's Consort, the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, the City of London Sinfonia and the Hanover Band as a continuo player. He has worked as opera répétiteur, harpsichordist and pianist, and has led masterclasses in choral training, singing and organ performance in the U.K., the U.S., and Africa. Appointed Principal Conductor of English Chamber Opera in 2007, his debut met with acclaim following performances of "Don Giovanni" in Ireland in early March. Mark has also appeared on film soundtracks, and has worked with pop, jazz and crossover musicians in rehearsal, concert and recording. Engagements in 2007 have included concerts in London, York, the Konzerthaus in Vienna, the Trefoldkighetskirken in Oslo, Lusaka Cathedral in Zambia, the Casa da Musica Oporto, and St. Thomas Fifth Avenue New York. Future plans for the year include concerts in Croatia, Germany, and Mexico.

He is a Fellow of the Royal College of Organists, a member of the Council of the Friends of Cathedral Music and has been playing at the William Byrd Festival in Portland, Oregon since the year 2000.

