

Ne irascaris Domine

Isaiah 64:9–10
(Vulgate)

William Byrd (c. 1540–1623)
Edited by David Masao Zimmerman

Superius [Soprano]
Medius [Alto]
Contratenor [Tenor I]
Tenor [Tenor II]
Bassus [Bass]

for rehearsal only

Ne i - ra - sca - ris Do - mi -
Ne i - ra - sca - ris Do - mi - ne
Ne i - ra - sca - ris Do - mi - ne sa -

Detailed description: This block contains the first system of the musical score. It features five vocal staves (Superius, Medius, Contratenor, Tenor, Bassus) and a keyboard accompaniment staff. The vocal parts begin with the Latin text 'Ne irascaris Domine'. The Superius and Medius parts have rests. The Contratenor, Tenor, and Bassus parts have notes. The keyboard part provides harmonic support. A rehearsal mark is placed before the keyboard part.

5

Ne i - ra - sca - ris Do - mi -
Ne i - ra - sca - ris Do - mi - ne
ne sa - - - - - tis. Ne i - ra - sca - ris Do - mi - ne sa -
sa - - - - - tis,
- - - - - tis,

Detailed description: This block contains the second system of the musical score, starting at measure 5. It continues the vocal parts and keyboard accompaniment. The vocal parts have more text: 'Ne irascaris Domine' and 'ne sa - - - - - tis. Ne irascaris Domine sa -'. The keyboard part continues with the same accompaniment.

11

ne sa - - - - - tis. Ne i - ra - sca - ris Do - mi -
 sa - - - - - tis. Ne i - ra - sca - ris Do - mi -
 - - - - - tis. Ne i - ra - sca - ris Do - mi -
 Ne i - ra - sca - ris Do - mi -
 Ne i - ra - sca - ris Do - mi -

16

ne sa - - - - - tis, et ne ul - tra me - mi -
 ne sa - - - - - tis, et ne ul - tra me -
 ne sa - - - - - tis, et ne ul - tra me -
 ne sa - - - - - tis, et ne ul - tra me - mi -
 ne et ne ul - tra me - - -

21

ne - ris, in - i - qui - ta - tis no - strae,
 mi - ne - ris, in - i - qui - ta - tis no - strae,
 mi - ne - ris, in - i - qui - ta - tis
 ne - ris in - i - qui - ta - tis no - strae, in - i - qui -
 mi - ne - ris, in - i - qui - ta -

27

in - i - qui - ta - tis no - strae: Ec -
 in - i - qui - ta - tis no - strae:
 no - strae, in - i - qui - ta - tis no - strae:
 ta - tis no - strae, in - i - qui - ta - tis no - strae:
 - tis no - strae, in - i - qui - ta - tis no - strae:

33

ce, ec - ce, re - spi - ce,
 Ec - ce, ec - ce, re -
 Ec - ce, ec - ce, re - spi -
 Ec - ce, ec - ce, re - spi - ce, re -
 Ec - ce, ec - ce, re - spi - ce,
 Ec - ce, ec - ce, re - spi - ce,

39

Ec - ce, re - spi -
 spi - ce, ec - ce, re -
 ce, ec - ce, re - spi - ce,
 spi - ce, ec - ce re -
 re - spi - ce, ec - ce, re - spi -
 Ec - ce, re - spi - ce, ec - ce, re - spi -

65

nes_ nos, po - pu-lus tu - us om - nes_ nos, po - pu-lus
 tu - us om - nes nos, po - pu-lus tu - us om - nes nos,
 tu - us om - - - - nes nos, po - pu-lus
 us om - - - - nes nos, po - pu-lus tu - us om - nes
 po - pu-lus tu - us om - nes nos, po - pu -

70

tu - us om - - - nes nos, om - nes nos.
 po - pu-lus tu - us om - nes nos.
 tu - us, po - pu-lus tu - us om - - nes nos.
 nos, po - pu-lus tu - us om - - - nes nos.
 lus tu - us om - - - nes nos.

Secunda pars

75

Ci - vi - tas san - cti tu - - - - -

Ci - vi - tas san - cti tu - - - - - i, san - cti tu - - - - -

Ci - - - - -

Ci - - - vi - tas san - cti

Ci -

81

- - - - - i, Ci - vi - tas san - cti tu - - - - - i,

i, Ci - - - vi - tas san - cti tu - - - - - i,

- vi - tas san - cti tu - i, Ci - - - vi - tas san - cti tu -

tu - - - - - i, san - cti tu - i, Ci - vi - tas san - cti

Ci - vi - tas san - cti tu - i, Ci -

87

fa - cta est de - ser - ta, de - ser - - - ta,
 san - cti tu - - - i, fa - cta est de -
 - i, san - cti tu - i, fa - cta est de - ser - ta, fa -
 tu - - - i, fa - cta est de - ser - - - ta,
 - vi - tas san - cti tu - i,

93

de - ser - - - ta, fa -
 ser - - - ta, fa - cta est de - ser - ta, de - ser - - - ta,
 - cta est de - ser - ta, fa - cta est de -
 fa - cta est de - ser - ta, de - ser - - - ta,
 fa - cta est de - ser - ta, de -
 fa - cta est de - ser - ta, de -

99

- cta est de - ser - ta, fa - cta est de - ser - -
 fa - cta est de - ser - ta, fa - cta est de - ser - -
 ser - ta, fa - cta est de - ser - - ta, de - ser -
 de - ser - ta, fa - cta est de - ser - ta, de - ser - -
 ser - ta, fa - cta est de - ser - ta, de - ser - -

105

ta. Si - on de - ser - ta, de - ser - ta fa - cta est,
 ta. Si - on de - ser - ta, de - ser - ta fa - cta est,
 ta. Si - on de - ser - ta, de - ser - ta fa - cta est,
 ta, Si - on de - ser - ta, de - ser - ta fa - cta est,
 ta,

About this edition

This performing edition has been compiled from a digital reproduction of the Huntington Library’s copy of the original printed parts to Byrd’s *Cantiones sacrae I* (1589), available online via IMSLP.¹ Original note values have been retained, though a modern time signature and barlines have been added for the benefit of non-specialists. The notated pitch has been transposed up by one whole step to facilitate performance by a modern SATTB (or SATBarB) ensemble. This is, coincidentally, consistent with the evidence from period organs that pre-1642 traditional English “quire pitch” was roughly 1 to 2 half steps higher than the modern A440 standard.² However, as Byrd’s Latin motets were intended for *unaccompanied* performances by small groups of singers (likely one to a part) in a domestic rather than liturgical setting,³ the choice of performing pitch must have been fundamentally flexible. Cautionary accidentals (unambiguous in the source) are shown in parentheses, while editorial accidentals are placed above the staff. Horizontal brackets represent ligatures. In the superius part at m. 96, the controversial sharp affecting the first note is shown in square brackets; it is explicitly present in the source but creates a doubtful augmented sixth.⁴ Fermatas approximate the early modern custom of writing final notes as longs. A keyboard reduction has been supplied as a rehearsal aid; it has been notated for optimal playability and is not intended to be a faithful representation of the original voice-leading.

About the text

The text of this motet is from Isaiah 64:9–10 (Vulgate) and constitutes a prayer for mercy in anticipation of the coming restoration of Israel under the Messiah. This choice of text makes clear allegorical reference to England’s spiritual “desolation” in the aftermath of her separation from Rome (initiated by Henry VIII and confirmed under Elizabeth I). Byrd, famously, was a recusant Catholic but simultaneously an esteemed member of Elizabeth’s chapel royal—as well as one of her favorite composers.

Spelling and capitalization of the text have been modernized (e.g., using *j* and *v* to represent consonantal *i* and *u*), while retaining the original (occasionally inconsistent) punctuation, except for obvious errors. Text that expands a ditto sign (“ij”) in the source is italicized. The Latin text with Byrd’s original orthography is given below (top), alongside a phonetic transcription of a reconstructed⁵ period pronunciation (middle), and an English translation from the 1610 Douay–Rheims version⁶ of the Old Testament (bottom).

Ne Irafcaris domine fatis, et ne vltra memineris iniquitatis noſtre: Ecce, reſpice, populus tuus omnes nos.
Ciuitas fancti tui facta eſt deferta, Sion deferta facta eſt, Ierufalem defolata eſt.

[ne iras'kæris 'dømine 'sætis et ne 'ultræ me'mineris i'nikwi'tætis 'nøstre 'ekse 'reſpise 'pøpjulus 'tju.us 'ømnez nøs
'sivitas 'saŋtæi 'tju.ei 'faktæ est de'zertæ 'sei.øn de'zertæ 'faktæ est dʒe'ruzalem deʒo'lætæ est]

Be not angry, O Lord, enough, and remember no more our iniquity: Lo regard, all we are thy people.
The city of thy holy one is made desert, Zion is made desert, Jerusalem is become desolate.

1. Guilielmus [William] Byrd, *Liber primus sacrarum cantionum quinque vocum* (London: Thomas E[a]st, 1589), <https://imslp.org/wiki/Special:ReverseLookup/295857>.

2. Bruce Haynes, *A History of Performing Pitch: The Story of “A”* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow, 2002), 86–92.

3. Alan Brown, preface to *The Byrd Edition*, vol. 2, *Cantiones Sacrae I (1589)* (London: Stainer & Bell, 1988), viii.

4. For further discussion of this and several other similarly problematic accidentals, see Brown, *The Byrd Edition*, 2:ix; Watkins Shaw, “A Textual Problem in Byrd: A Purely Accidental Matter,” *The Musical Times* 102, no. 1418 (April 1961): 230–32.

5. Indications of vowel length are omitted, as they are moot in the context of explicitly notated rhythm. The precise vowel qualities that Byrd would have expected to hear can be debated. I have mainly followed Harold Copeman, “The Sound of English Latin to 1650,” chap. 9 in *Singing in Latin, or, Pronunciation Explor’d* (Oxford: self-pub., 1990). However, on the basis of more recent scholarship, I reconstruct ‘long’ *i* as [ei], ‘short’ *i* as [i], and ‘short’ *u* as [u]; see Roger Lass, “Phonology and Morphology,” in *The Cambridge History of the English Language*, ed. Richard M. Hogg, vol. 3, *1476–1776*, ed. Roger Lass (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 80–91. On the unreformed use of ‘long’ (i.e., tense) vowels in open final syllables, see E. J. Dobson, introduction to *The Phonetic Writings of Robert Robinson* (London: Oxford University Press, 1957), xix–xx.

6. Spelling and capitalization modernized; original from <https://n2t.net/ark:/13960/t2x350b23>. The Douay–Rheims translation of the Vulgate was prepared by exiled scholars (principally Fr. Gregory Martin) at the English College in Douai, France, for use by English Catholics living under the Protestant regime. Though the Old Testament was not published until 1609–10, it is thought to have been completed by 1582 (the year in which the New Testament volume was published) but not printed at that time for lack of funds. Byrd is known to have been familiar with the translation—including its copious, politically charged annotations—and likely had access to a pre-publication version. See Philip Brett, “Prefaces to *Gradualia*,” chap. 10 in *William Byrd and His Contemporaries*, ed. Joseph Kerman and Davitt Moroney (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 144n15.