

# Ne irascaris Domine

Isaiah 64:9–10  
(Vulgate)

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

Superius [Soprano] N E

Medius [Alto] N E

Contratenor [Tenor I] N E

Tenor [Tenor II] N E

Bassus [Bass] N E

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 -

The first system of the musical score for 'Ne irascaris Domine'. It features five vocal parts: Superius (Soprano), Medius (Alto), Contratenor (Tenor I), Tenor (Tenor II), and Bassus (Bass). Each part begins with a 'N' and an 'E' in a box, indicating the starting note and clef. The lyrics are: 'Ne i - ra - sca - ris Do - mi -', 'Ne i - ra - sca - ris Do - mi - ne', and 'Ne i - ra - sca - ris Do - mi - ne sa -'. Below the vocal parts is a grand staff for the keyboard accompaniment, with the instruction 'for rehearsal only' written above it.

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,

The second system of the musical score, starting at measure 5. It continues the vocal parts and keyboard accompaniment. The lyrics are: '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,', and '- - - - - tis,'.

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 -

The musical score for measures 11-15 consists of five vocal staves and a piano accompaniment. The key signature is one sharp (F#). The vocal parts are arranged in four voices (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and a fifth voice part. The lyrics are: "ne sa - - - - - tis, ne i - ra - sca - ris Do - mi -" repeated across the staves. The piano accompaniment features a steady bass line and a more active treble line with chords and melodic fragments.

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 - -

The musical score for measures 16-20 continues with the same five vocal staves and piano accompaniment. The lyrics are: "ne sa - - - - - tis, et ne ul - tra me - mi -" repeated across the staves. The piano accompaniment continues with a steady bass line and a more active treble line with chords and melodic fragments.

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.

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

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 -  
 ec - ce, re - spi -

44

ce, re - - - spi - ce, re - spi - ce, re - - - spi -  
- spi - ce, re - - - spi - ce, re - - - spi - ce,  
re - - - spi - ce, re - - - spi - ce, re - - spi -  
spi - ce, re - - - spi - ce, re - spi -  
ce, re - - - spi - ce, re - spi -

Detailed description: This block contains the musical score for measures 44 to 48. It consists of five vocal staves and a piano accompaniment. The key signature is one sharp (F#). The vocal parts are arranged in a SATB format. The lyrics are: "ce, re - - - spi - ce, re - spi - ce, re - - - spi - spi - ce, re - - - spi - ce, re - - spi - ce, re - spi - ce, re - - - spi - ce, re - spi - ce, re - - - spi - ce, re - spi -". The piano accompaniment provides harmonic support with chords and melodic lines.

49

ce, po - pu-lus tu - us o - - - mnes nos,  
po - pu-lus tu - - us o - - - mnes nos,  
ce, po - pu-lus  
ce, po - pu-lus tu - us o - - - mnes nos,  
ce, po - pu-lus

Detailed description: This block contains the musical score for measures 49 to 53. It consists of five vocal staves and a piano accompaniment. The key signature is one sharp (F#). The vocal parts are arranged in a SATB format. The lyrics are: "ce, po - pu-lus tu - us o - - - mnes nos, po - pu-lus tu - - us o - - - mnes nos, ce, po - pu-lus ce, po - pu-lus tu - us o - - - mnes nos, ce, po - pu-lus". The piano accompaniment provides harmonic support with chords and melodic lines.

musical score for measures 55-59. It features five vocal staves and a piano accompaniment. The vocal parts are arranged in a choir setting with Soprano (S), Alto (A), Tenor (T), and Bass (B) parts, plus a fifth staff for a Bass part. The lyrics are:   
S: po - pu-lus  
A: po - pu-lus tu - us o - mnes nos, po - pu-lus  
T: tu - us o - mnes nos, o - mnes nos,  
B: tu - us o - mnes nos,  
Piano accompaniment: tu - us o - mnes nos,  
The piano part includes a complex arpeggiated figure in the right hand.

musical score for measures 60-64. It features five vocal staves and a piano accompaniment. The vocal parts are arranged in a choir setting with Soprano (S), Alto (A), Tenor (T), and Bass (B) parts, plus a fifth staff for a Bass part. The lyrics are:   
S: tu - us po - pu-lus tu - us o -  
A: tu - us o - mnes nos, po - pu-lus  
T: po - pu-lus tu - us o - mnes nos, po - pu-lus  
B: - pu-lus tu - us o - mnes nos, po - pu-lus tu -  
Piano accompaniment: po - pu-lus tu - us o - mnes nos,  
The piano part continues with complex arpeggiated figures and chordal textures.

65

mnes\_ nos, po - pu-lus tu - us o - mnes\_ nos, po - pu-lus  
 tu - us o - mnes nos, po - pu-lus tu - us o - mnes nos,  
 tu - us o - - - - mnes nos, po - pu-lus  
 us o - - - - mnes nos, po - pu-lus tu - us o - mnes  
 po - pu-lus tu - us o - mnes nos, po - pu -

70

tu - us o - - - mnes nos, o - mnes nos.  
 po - pu-lus tu - us o - mnes nos.  
 tu - us, po - pu-lus tu - us o - - - mnes nos.  
 nos, po - pu-lus tu - us o - - - - mnes nos.  
 lus tu - us o - - - - mnes 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.







142

de - so - la - ta est, de - so - la - ta est, de - so - la - ta  
 de - so - la - ta est, de - so - la - ta est, de - so - la - ta  
 de - so - la - ta est, de - so - la - ta est, de - so - la - ta  
 est, de - so - la - ta est, de - so - la - ta est,  
 la - ta est, de - so - la - ta est, de -

148

est, de - so - la - ta est, de - so - la - ta est.  
 est, de - so - la - ta est, de - so - la - ta est.  
 est, de - so - la - ta est, de - so - la - ta est.  
 de - so - la - ta est, de - so - la - ta est.  
 - so - la - ta est, de - so - la - ta est.

## 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.<sup>1</sup>

Original note values have been retained, though barlines and a modern time signature have been added for the benefit of non-specialists. The notated pitch has been transposed upward by one whole step to facilitate performance by a modern SATTB (or SATBarB) ensemble. Of note, this is consistent with the limited evidence from original instruments that pre-1642 traditional English “quire pitch” was between 1 and 2 half steps higher than the modern A440 standard.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, it should be kept in mind that Byrd's *Cantiones sacrae* were intended for unaccompanied performances by small groups of singers (likely one to a part) in a domestic rather than liturgical context,<sup>3</sup> so that the choice of performing pitch must have been rather more flexible in practice.

Cautionary accidentals (unambiguous in the source) are shown in round brackets, while editorial accidentals are placed above the staff. 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.<sup>4</sup> Fermatas approximate the early modern custom of writing final notes as longs.

The spelling and punctuation of the Latin text have been modernized (using, for instance, *j* and *v* to represent consonantal *i* and *u*, respectively) while respecting the original syllabification. Where the text underlay in the source is ambiguous due to crowding, I have followed Alan Brown's critical-urtext score in the Byrd Edition.<sup>5</sup> Text that expands a ditto sign (*ij*) in the source is italicized.

A keyboard reduction has been supplied as a rehearsal aid. It has been optimized for 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 imminent restoration of Israel under the Messiah. This choice of text makes clear allegorical reference to England's spiritual “desolation” in the aftermath of the separation from Rome (initiated by Henry VIII and confirmed under Elizabeth I). Byrd, famously, was a recusant Catholic as well as an esteemed member of Elizabeth's chapel royal.

The full text of the motet is reproduced below (left), alongside a phonetic transcription of a reconstructed<sup>6</sup> period pronunciation (center), and an English translation taken from the 1610 Douay-Rheims version<sup>7</sup> of the Old Testament (right).

|  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| Ne irascaris Domine satis,<br>et ne ultra memineris iniquitatis nostrae.<br>Ecce respice populus tuus omnes nos. | [ne iras'kærɪs 'dɔmɪne 'sætɪs<br>et ne 'ʊltrə me'mɪnɪrɪz ɪ'nɪkwɪ'tætɪs 'nɔstre<br>'ekse 'respɪse 'pɔpjʌlʊz 'tjy.ʊz 'ɔmnɪz nɔs | Be not angry, O Lord, enough,<br>and remember no more our iniquity.<br>Lo, regard, all we are thy people. |
| Civitas sancti tui facta est deserta.<br>Sion deserta facta est,<br>Jerusalem desolata est.                      | 'sɪvɪtəs 'sænʃtɪ 'tjy.ʌɪ 'faktə ɛst de'zɛrtə<br>'sɔɪ.ən de'zɛrtə 'faktə ɛst<br>dʒɛ'rɔzələm dezo'lætə est]                     | The city of thy holy one is made desert.<br>Zion is made desert,<br>Jerusalem is become desolate.         |

1. William Byrd, *Liber primus sacrarum cantionum quinque voces* (London: Thomas East, 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 *Cantiones Sacrae I (1589)*, The Byrd Edition, vol. 2 (London: Stainer & Bell, 1988), viii.

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

5. “Ne irascaris,” in *Cantiones Sacrae I*, 169–86.

6. See A. G. Rigg, “Anglo-Latin,” chap. 4 in *Singing Early Music*, ed. Timothy J. McGee (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996).

7. Spelling and punctuation have been modernized. The Douay-Rheims translation of the Latin Vulgate was prepared by exiled seminarians at the English College in Douai, France, for use by English Catholics living under the Protestant regime. Byrd was certainly familiar not only with the translation itself but also with its copious, politically charged commentaries on the text. See Philip Brett, “Prefaces to *Gradualia*,” in *William Byrd and His Contemporaries*, ed. Joseph Kerman and Davitt Moroney (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 142, 144n15.