O salutaris hostia (1st setting)
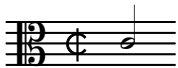
Edited by Jason Smart

William Byrd (1539/40–1623)
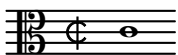
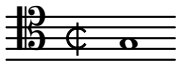Quae cae - li pan - dis ho - sti - um,
- sti - a Quae cae - li pan - dis ho - sti -
Quae cae - li pan - dis ho - sti - um,
- dis ho - sti - um, quae cae -
- a Quae cae - li pan - dis ho - sti -
pan - dis ho - sti - um, quae cae - li

Bel - la pre - munt ho - sti - li - a, ho - sti -
- um, Bel - la pre - munt ho - sti - li - a, ho - sti - li -
Bel - la pre - munt ho - sti - li - a, ho - sti - li -
- li pan - dis ho - sti - um, Bel - la pre - munt ho - sti - li -
- um, Bel - la pre - munt ho - sti - li -
pan - dis ho - sti - um, Bel - la pre - munt ho - sti - li -

19

- li - a,   bel - la pre - munt ho - sti -

- a, be - la pre - munt ho - sti -li - a, bel - la pre - munt

- a,   bel - la pre - munt ho - sti - li - a,

- [a, ho - sti - li] - - - - - a, bel - la pre -

- a,   ho - sti - li - - a,   be - la

- - a,   bel - la pre - munt ho - sti - li - a,

24

- li - a,   Da ro - bur, fer___ au - xi - li -

ho - sti - li - a, ho - sti - li - a,   Da ro - bur, fer___

Da ro - bur, fer___ au - xi - li - um,_____

- munt ho - sti - li - - a, Da ro - bur, fer au - xi - li - - um, au -

pre - munt ho - sti - li - a,   Da ro -

bel - la pre - munt ho - sti - li - a, bel - la pre - munt ho - sti - li - a, ho -

- um, da ro - bur, fer au - xi - li -

___ au - xi - li - um, *au-xi-li* - - - um, da ro - bur, fer___

da ro - bur, fer___ au - xi - li - um.

- xi - li - um, au - xi - li - - - - - -

- bur, fer au - xi - li - um,___ da ro -

- sti - li - a, Da ro - bur, fer au - xi - li - um, au - xi - li-um.___

- - um. A - - - - - - -

___ au - xi - li - um, au-xi - li - um. A - - - - - -

A - - - - - - - [men,

- um. A - - - - - - - - -

- bur, fer au - xi - li - um. A - - -

A - - - - - - [men, - - au - xi -

<div align="center">**Translation**</div>
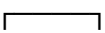
O saving victim who opens the gate of heaven, hostile wars oppress us: give strength, bring aid.

<div align="center">**Editorial Conventions**</div>

The nomenclature of the voice-parts follows the Tudor convention.
The original clef, staff signature, mensuration symbol and first note of each part are shown on the prefatory staves.
Editorial accidentals are placed above the notes concerned and remain operative throughout the bar.
Ligatures are denoted by the sign ⌐‾‾‾‾‾⌐ .
Spelling of the text has been modernised.
Text repetition signs in the underlay have been expanded editorially in italics.
Underlay between square brackets is entirely editorial.

<div align="center">**Sources**</div>

A Oxford, Christ Church, Mus. 979–83 (*c*.1575–1581 with later additions; lacking T).

979	(Ct1)	no.141	at end:	m^r: w: birde:·
980	(Ct2)	no.141	at end:	m^r: w: birde: orgamiste: [sic] of: the: quenes: maiesties: chappelle:·
981	(T1)	no.141	at end:	m^r: w: birde:·
982	(M)	no.141	at end:	m^r: w: birde:
983	(B)	no.141	index heading:	m^r: w: birde: 6: voc:
			at end:	m^r: w: birde:·

B London, British Library Add. MS 31390 (*c*.1578; all voices in table book format; textless).

f.17^v	above Ct1:	m^r byrd
	above Ct2:	m^r byrd

C MS in private possession of Mr David McGhie and Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Tenbury 389 (*c*.1575–*c*.1612; M and Ct1 only).

McGhie	(M)	p.153	at end:	m^r byrde. 6 p*arts*·
389	(Ct1)	p.163	at end:	m^r byrde·

<div align="center">**The Music**</div>

Byrd's 6-part setting of *O salutaris hostia* is a three part canon (between the Mean, Countertenor 2 and Tenor 2) accompanied by three free voices. He never included the piece in any of his publications and it is not hard to see why. Two authors have pinpointed the problem:

> *O salutaris hostia* must be about the most dissonant composition Byrd ever wrote. 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 (at pitch) with syncope suspensions. The piece has the air of an exercise that would scarcely survive actual performance.
> (Joseph Kerman, *The Masses and Motets of William Byrd* (London and Boston: Faber and Faber, 1981), p.120.)

> *O salutaris hostia* is a three-voice canon at various pitch levels, interwoven with three freely-composed parts, all undertaken with the breeziest possible attitude toward dissonance treatment. The result is layer upon layer of grating discord and tonal instability. It may well be the most appallingly dissonant piece of sacred music written in the sixteenth century.
> (Kerry McCarthy, *Byrd* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), p.19.)

Even with all the accidentals removed the motet remains crude. It must surely be an early, student work. For the modern editor, the most perplexing problem is that, so far as the accidentals are concerned, the three surviving sources tell broadly the same tale, making it almost impossible to identify which are Byrd's and which, if any, the result of later, scribal interference (though the sharpened leading notes to cadential figures can confidently be laid at Byrd's door). The scribe of source **A**, John Baldwin, was an admirer of Byrd's music and was commissioned, apparently by Byrd himself, to copy a manuscript of Byrd's keyboard music. He may have acquired his copy of the motet from Byrd, but this is far from certain. Source **B** largely agrees with **A**, but the scribe has added many cautionary accidentals and a few inflections of his own. Source **C**, generally a rather unreliable source, also adds

several cautionary accidentals, but its pitch inflections are not radically different from the other two sources. Perhaps all the surviving copies of this motet are corrupt, but the evidence, taken at face value, suggests that Byrd was responsible for the majority the accidentals found in the sources. A curious feature is that the three free voices are reasonably blameless contrapuntally; it is the three canonic parts that create most of the problems.

For this edition accidentals appearing in more than one source have generally been accepted, but accidentals found only in a single source may be less authoritative and have often been rejected. The sharp to the semibreve on the word *da* in the M at bar 31 is common to all three sources, while those at the corresponding points in the two other canonic voices (Ct2, bar 30, T2 bar 33), are confirmed by the other sources so far as they survive. Nevertheless, a case could be made for omitting these three accidentals, none of which is essential contrapuntally.

<h3 style="text-align:center">Notes on the Readings of the Sources</h3>

In the notes below, each reference to a bar or group of bars is separated by an oblique stroke. Within these references multiple readings in the same voice are separated by commas and readings in different voices by semicolons. The order within each entry is: 1) bar number; 2) voice; 3) reading of the source. For extended references subsequent bar numbers are in brackets. Pitches are in capital letters, preceded by a number where necessary, e.g. ¹B = first note B in the bar. Note values are abbreviated in italics. The sign + denotes a tie and ⁊ an underlay repeat sign.

Staff Signatures and Accidentals

A 12 M ♯ for ¹G / 28 M ♮ for B / 29 Ct1 no ♯ for F / 30 Ct1 no ♮ for F / 35 T1 no ♯ for ¹F /

B 4 B ♮ for B / 5 B ♮ for ¹B / 11 Ct2 ♯s for ²C³C (and ¹C) / 13 T2 ♯ for G / 14 T1 ♮s for ¹F²F / 15 Ct2 ♭ for E / 16 M ♮ for B / 17 Ct1 ♮ for ¹F / 18 T2 ♮ for B / 19 M no ♯ for G / 26 Ct2 new line begins with D, ♭ for E before D, (27) ♮ for E / 27 M ♮ for ¹C (cancelling ♯ in 24) / 28 T2 ♮ for C (cancelling ♯ in 25) / 29 M ♯ for F / 31 T2 ♯ for F / 32 M ♮ for B / 36 M ♯ for G; Ct2 ♯ for F / 37 M ♮ for C; Ct1 ♯ for ¹C / 38 M no ♯ for G; Ct1 ♮ for F / 39 Ct1 no ♯ for C / 41 T1 ♮ for F; B no ♭ for B / 44 M ♯ for F / 45 M ♮ for B / 46 T2 ♯ for ¹F /

C 1 M staff signature ♮ for upper B / 9 Ct1 ♮s for ¹B³B / 14 Ct1 ♯ for C / 15 M no ♯ for C; Ct1 ♮ for B / 17 Ct1 ♮ for ¹F / 22 M ♮ for B / 28 M new line in source without staff signature begins with B / 35 Ct2 no ♯ for C / 36 Ct1 no ♯ for C / 37 Ct1 ♯ for ¹C, ♮ for B / 38 Ct1 ♮ for F / 39 Ct1 no ♯ for C / 40 M ♯ for C / 44 Ct1 ♮ for ¹B / 45 M ♯ for ²G / 48 Ct1 ♮s for ¹B²B /

Underlay and Ligatures

A 7 M -*a* below E / 13–14 T1 -*um quae caeli* one note earlier, (14) *pandis* undivided below AG¹FED, (14–15) *hostium* undivided below ²FECG / 19 M -*a* below A / 29 M ⁊ below D / 36 Ct1 -*um* below E / 39–44 M no underlay / 45 Ct1 -*men A-* omitted /

B 36 B ligature for AD / 39 B ligature for AD /

C 11–12 Ct1 *pandis* undivided below CBAGF / 14–15 Ct1 -*um hosti-* below ²DE³D / 18 M ⁊ (for *hostilia*) below A / 19–20 Ct1 *sb*E+*m*E for *m*E *m*E+*m*E, (20) *sb*C is *dot-m*C *cr*C, -*a bella* below ACC, (21) ⁊ for *premunt hostilia*) below ¹C, ²C is *cr*C *cr*C / 22 Ct1 ⁊ (for *bella premunt hostilia*) below ²G / 25 Ct1 ⁊ below B, *bella* inserted between ⁊ and staff / 30 Ct1 -*um* ⁊ omitted / 32 M ⁊ (for *robur fer auxilium*) below ¹D / 33 Ct1 ⁊ (for *robur fer auxilium, auxilium*) below ¹A /

Other Readings

A 39 M clef C2 before rest / 48 T1 fermata for G (and D) / 47–48 M *sb*G *sb*G+*sb*G *sb*G with fermata, no underlay /

B 24 T1 EE are *dot-m cr* / 30 T2 G is *dot-m*, ²A omitted /