

Christe qui lux es et dies

Edited by Jason Smart

William Byrd (1539/40–1623)

Treble

Mean

Countertenor

Tenor

Bass

Pre - ca - mur, — san - cte Do - mi - ne, De - fen - de nos in hac no - cte;

Pre - ca - mur, — san - cte Do - mi - ne, De - fen - de nos in hac no - cte;

Pre - ca - mur, — san - cte Do - mi - ne, De - fen - de nos in hac no - cte;

Pre - ca - mur, — san - cte Do - mi - ne, De - fen - de nos in hac no - cte;

Pre - ca - mur, — san - cte Do - mi - ne, De - fen - de nos in hac no - cte;

Pre - ca - mur, — san - cte Do - mi - ne, De - fen - de nos in hac no - cte;

Detailed description: This block contains the first system of a five-part vocal setting. It features five staves: Treble (soprano), Mean (alto), Countertenor, Tenor, and Bass. Each staff begins with a clef and a common time signature. The lyrics are: 'Pre - ca - mur, — san - cte Do - mi - ne, De - fen - de nos in hac no - cte;'. The music consists of two measures per voice part, with a repeat sign at the end of the second measure.

3

Sit no - bis in te re - qui - es, Qui - e - tam — no - ctem tri - bu - e.

Sit no - bis in te re - qui - es, Qui - e - tam — no - ctem tri - bu - e.

Sit no - bis in te re - qui - es, Qui - e - tam — no - ctem tri - bu - e.

Sit no - bis in te re - qui - es, Qui - e - tam — no - ctem tri - bu - e.

Sit no - bis in te re - qui - es, Qui - e - tam — no - ctem tri - bu - e.

Sit no - bis in te re - qui - es, Qui - e - tam — no - ctem tri - bu - e.

Detailed description: This block contains the second system of the vocal setting, starting with a measure rest '3'. It features five staves for the vocal parts. The lyrics are: 'Sit no - bis in te re - qui - es, Qui - e - tam — no - ctem tri - bu - e.'. The music consists of two measures per voice part, with a repeat sign at the end of the second measure.

5

Ne gra - vis so - mnus ir - ru - at, Nec ho - stis nos sur - ri - pi - at,
 Ne gra - vis so - mnus ir - ru - at, Nec ho - stis nos sur - ri - pi - at,
 Ne gra - vis so - mnus ir - ru - at, Nec ho - stis nos sur - ri - pi - at,
 Ne gra - vis so - mnus ir - ru - at, Nec ho - stis nos sur - ri - pi - at,
 Ne gra - vis so - mnus ir - ru - at, Nec ho - stis nos sur - ri - pi - at,

7

Nec ca - ro il - li con - sen - ti - ens Nos ti - bi re - os sta - tu - at.
 Nec ca - ro il - li con - sen - ti - ens Nos ti - bi re - os sta - tu - at.
 Nec ca - ro il - li con - sen - ti - ens Nos ti - bi re - os sta - tu - at.
 Nec ca - ro il - li con - sen - ti - ens Nos ti - bi re - os sta - tu - at.
 Nec ca - ro il - li con - sen - ti - ens Nos ti - bi re - os sta - tu - at.

9

O - cu - li so - mnum ca - pi - ant, Cor ad te sem - per vi - gi - let;
 O - cu - li so - mnum ca - pi - ant, Cor ad te sem - per vi - gi - let;
 O - cu - li so - mnum ca - pi - ant, Cor ad te sem - per vi - gi - let;
 O - cu - li so - mnum ca - pi - ant, Cor ad te sem - per vi - gi - let;
 O - cu - li so - mnum ca - pi - ant, Cor ad te sem - per vi - gi - let;

11

Dex - te - ra tu - a pro - te - gat Fa - mu - los qui te di - li - gunt.

Dex - te - ra tu - a pro - te - gat Fa - mu - los qui te di - li - gunt.

Dex - te - ra tu - a pro - te - gat Fa - mu - los qui te di - li - gunt.

Dex - te - ra tu - a pro - te - gat Fa - mu - los qui te di - li - gunt.

Dex - te - ra tu - a pro - te - gat Fa - mu - los qui te di - li - gunt.

13

De - fen - sor no - ster, a - spi - ce, In - si - di - an - tes re - pri - me;

De - fen - sor no - ster, a - spi - ce, In - si - di - an - tes re - pri - me;

De - fen - sor no - ster, a - spi - ce, In - si - di - an - tes re - pri - me;

De - fen - sor no - ster, a - spi - ce, In - si - di - an - tes re - pri - me;

De - fen - sor no - ster, a - spi - ce, In - si - di - an - tes re - pri - me;

15

Gu - ber - na tu - os fa - mu - los, Quos san - gui - ne mer - ca - tus es.

Gu - ber - na tu - os fa - mu - los, Quos san - gui - ne mer - ca - tus es.

Gu - ber - na tu - os fa - mu - los, Quos san - gui - ne mer - ca - tus es.

Gu - ber - na tu - os fa - mu - los, Quos san - gui - ne mer - ca - tus es.

Gu - ber - na tu - os fa - mu - los, Quos san - gui - ne mer - ca - tus es.

17

Me - men - to no - stri, Do - mi - ne, In gra - vi i - sto cor - po - re;

Me - men - to no - stri, Do - mi - ne, In gra - vi i - sto cor - po - re;

Me - men - to no - stri, Do - mi - ne, In gra - vi i - sto cor - po - re;

Me - men - to no - stri, Do - mi - ne, In gra - vi i - sto cor - po - re;

Me - men - to no - stri, Do - mi - ne, In gra - vi i - sto cor - po - re;

Me - men - to no - stri, Do - mi - ne, In gra - vi i - sto cor - po - re;

19

Qui es de - fen - sor a - ni - mae, A - de - sto no - bis, Do - mi - ne.

Qui es de - fen - sor a - ni - mae, A - de - sto no - bis, Do - mi - ne.

Qui es de - fen - sor a - ni - mae, A - de - sto no - bis, Do - mi - ne.

Qui es de - fen - sor a - ni - mae, A - de - sto no - bis, Do - mi - ne.

Qui es de - fen - sor a - ni - mae, A - de - sto no - bis, Do - mi - ne.

Qui es de - fen - sor a - ni - mae, A - de - sto no - bis, Do - mi - ne.

21

A - - - men.

A - - - men.

A - - - men.

A - - - men.

A - - - men.

A - - - men.

Translation

We beseech you, holy Lord, to defend us this night; may our rest be in you; grant us a peaceful night.

Let not unwholesome dreams seize us, nor the enemy snatch us away, nor the flesh, yielding to him, make us guilty in thy sight.

While our eyes sleep, may our hearts always stay watchful to you; may your hand protect your loving servants.

O our defender, look upon us, restrain those who plot against us; guide your servants whom you have redeemed with your blood.

Be mindful of us, O Lord, burdened with a body; you who are the defender of the soul, be present with us, O Lord.

The Music

Byrd's text is verses 2–6 of the hymn *Christe qui lux es et dies*. Verses 1 and 7 do not appear in the source. It has become customary to supply these two verses in plainsong, but it is unlikely that this was Byrd's intention. His setting was not intended for liturgical use, but for secular recreation or devotion. Even if domestic singers had had a plainsong hymnal to hand there would have been little reason for them to trouble to use it. Also, to end a plainsong doxology with a polyphonic Amen would have been without precedent in the English hymn repertory, as well as arguably incongruous. Byrd began with verse 2 because, traditionally, liturgical hymn settings had set only the even numbered verses. In this verse the plainsong melody is placed in the Bass part. In each of the subsequent verses it rises one voice until it reaches the Treble. It was this decision that dictated the setting's five-verse structure.

Editorial Conventions

The nomenclature of the voice-parts follows the Tudor convention.

The original clef, mensuration symbol and first note of each part are shown on the prefatory staves.

Ligatures are denoted by the sign $\overline{\quad}$.

Spelling of the text has been modernised.

Source

Oxford, Christ Church, Mus. 984–8 (the 'Dow Partbooks', 1581–88).

984	(Tr)	no.45	index heading:	W. Birde
			at end:	W. B.
985	(M)	no.45	at end:	Bird
986	(Ct)	no.45	at end:	W. Bird
			below final staff:	Vide cantionem tertiam
987	(T)	no.45	at end:	M ^r . W ^m Byrde.
988	(B)	no.45	at end:	M ^r . W ^m Birde.

The Latin comment at the end of the Ct—'See the third song'—refers the reader to item no.3 in the partbooks, a similarly homophonic setting of the same hymn by Robert White.

Notes on the Readings of the Source

The sources uses black 'strene' notation throughout, the elegant hand of the scribe, Robert Dow, giving the semibreves of the edition the appearance of black breves. Dow does not distinguish the final notes of verses, either by form or by the use of fermatas, and he ends each verse with the same single 'barline' through the staff that he ends every line of text in the hymn (the double bars in the edition are editorial). Thus the work has the appearance of a continuous succession of twenty-one similar phrases. It is conceivable that performance replicated this continuous presentation, although singers who, like Dow, understood Latin would presumably have phrased the music according to the sense of the words.

It is just possible that, in bar 16, the placing of the ligature and the syllable *-gui-* in the Tenor is a scribal alteration that was not applied consistently to the other voices. Elsewhere in the source Dow did make occasional alterations to the pieces that he copied in order to improve the word accentuation.

In the Amen the final syllable in the Treble is placed below the C#. The reading of the source has been accepted since this corresponds to the placing of the syllable in some plainsong manuscripts. Nevertheless, this syllable may have been intended for the final note, its position in the manuscript being dictated by the attribution 'WB' that immediately follows it against the ruled right-hand margin.

In the Tenor the first A in the Amen lacks a dot.