

# Miserere nostri

Edited by Jason Smart

Thomas Tallis (c.1505–1585)

Two parts in one. Canon in unison.

Mean 1  
Mi - se - re - - - re no -

Mean 2  
Canon in unison.  
Mi - se - re - - - re

Countertenor 1  
Four parts in one, canon in unison, augmenting twice, ascending and descending  
Mi - se - re - re no - stri, Do - mi - ne, mi - se -

Countertenor 2  
Canon in unison.  
Mi - - - - se - - -

Tenor  
Free part  
Mi - se - re - re no -

Bass 1  
Canon in unison.  
Mi - se - re - - - -

Bass 2  
Canon in unison.  
Mi - - - - se - re - - -

4

- stri, Do - - - - mi - ne,

no - stri, Do - - - - mi - ne,

- re - - - - re no - - - -

- re - - - - re no - - - -

- stri, mi - se - re - - - re no -

- re no - - - - stri,

- re no - - - -

7

mi - se - re - - - re no - - - stri,  
 mi - se - re - - - re no - stri,  
 - - - - - stri, mi - se - re - re no - stri, Do -  
 - stri, Do - - - - - mi -  
 - - - - - stri, Do - mi - - - - ne, mi - se - re -  
 Do - - - - - mi - ne, mi - se -  
 - stri, Do - - - - - mi -

11

mi - se - re - - - re no - - - stri,  
 mi - se - re - - - re no - - - stri,  
 - - - - - mi - - - - - ne, mi - se - re -  
 - ne, mi - - - - - se - - - - - re - - - - -  
 - re no - - - - - stri, mi - se - re - - - - - re -  
 - re - - - - - re - - - - - re no - - - - -  
 - ne, mi - se - re - - - - - re

15

mi - se - re - - - - re no - -

mi - se - - re - - - - re no -

8 - - re no - - - - stri, mi - se - re - - - - re

8 - - - - re no - - - - - - - -

no - - - - - - - - - - - - - - stri, mi -

- - - - - - - - - - - - - - stri, mi - se - re - re no -

no - - - - - - - - - - - - - -

19

- - - - - stri, no - - - - - stri.

- - - - - stri, no - - - - - stri.

no - - - - - stri.

- - - - - stri.

- se - re - re no - - - - - stri.

- - - - - stri.

- - - - - stri.

## Translation

Have mercy upon us, O Lord, have mercy upon us. (*Psalm 123, v.3*)

## Editorial Conventions

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. Text repetition signs in the underlay have been expanded editorially in italics.

## Sources

**A** Thomas Tallis and William Byrd, *Cantiones quae ab argumento sacrae vocantur* (London: Thomas Vautrollier, 1575). Copy used: London, Royal College of Music G28/1–6 (*olim* I.E.9).

|             |       |        |  |
|-------------|-------|--------|--|
| Superius    | (M1)  | No.34  | at top of page: VII. Voc. T. Tallis.<br>at beginning: Due partes in una, Canon in unisonus.                                      |
| Discantus   | (Ct1) | No.34  | at top of page: VII. Voc. W. Birdi.<br>at beginning: Quatuor partes in una, Canon in unisonus, Crescit in duplo, Arsim & Thesim. |
| Contratenor | (Ct2) | No.34  | at top of page: VII. Voc. T. Tallis.<br>at beginning: Canon in unisonus.   |
| Tenor       | (T)   | No.34  | at top of page: VII. Voc. T. Tallis.<br>at beginning: Voluntaria pars.   |
| Bassus      | (B2)  | No.34  | at top of page: VII. Voc. T. Tallis.<br>at beginning: Canon in unisonus.   |
| Sexta Pars  | (B1)  | No.15  | at top of page: VII. Voc. T. Tallis.<br>at beginning: Canon in unisonus.   |
|             | (M2)  | No.34* | at top of page: VII. Voc. T. Tallis.<br>at beginning: Canon in unisonus.   |

\* 15 is the correct number for this partbook.

The index at the back of each partbook singles out three compositions that contain canons. The present piece is described as follows: Miserere nostri, 6. partes in duabus, cum una parte ad placitum.

**B** Austria, Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, MS Mus. Hs. 17771 (1620s; wordless score), f.147<sup>v</sup>.

|   |  |
|---|--|
| At beginning, vertically in left-hand margin: | 6 partes in duo: Doctor Bull [7 v]oces |
| Below M1 at beginning:                        | Due partes in Una.                     |
| Below Ct1 at beginning:                       | 4: partes in Una.                      |
| At end:                                       | Johan Dottor Bull Canon                |

The Tenor (the free part) is the bottom voice of the score.

## Notes on the Readings of the Sources

Considering how closely Byrd and Tallis monitored the printing of their 1575 *Cantiones* and corrected errors during the printing, it is by no means certain that the attribution to Byrd in the Discantus partbooks is an error. John Milsom has noted that, since Ct1 is the *dux* of the 4-in-1 canon, it is conceivable that Byrd composed this part and presented it to Tallis, who resolved the canon, adding a second, 2-in-1 canon of his own (M1 and M2) and the *pars ad placitum*.

It is not clear whether **B** derives from **A** or is independent. The gap of perhaps 40 years between the two sources merely obfuscates the issue. As John Milsom has noted, the differences between the two are such that could have been committed while copying from the printed set. Of the four pages allocated to this piece all but the last are worn and contain some holes with the consequent impairment of legibility. The attribution to Bull is patently incorrect.

The notes below are listed by source. 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 a comma and readings in different voices by a semicolon. The order within each entry is: (1) bar number(s); (2) voice; (3) reading of the source. Pitches are in capital letters, preceded by a number if necessary: e.g. <sup>2</sup>F = second note F in the bar. Note values are abbreviated, e.g. *dot-sb* = dotted semibreve. The symbol + denotes a tie.

**A:** 1 M1 signum above C / 3 Ct1 signum above B / 6 Ct1 signum below E / 8 B1 *b* for B / 11 Ct1 signum above E / 20 B1 *b* for B / 20 B1 *-stri* below <sup>2</sup>F / 22 M1 signum above <sup>1</sup>G /

**B:** 1 M1 M2 T lower *b* omitted from staff signature; M1 M2 Ct1 mensuration symbol for these voices only; B1 *bF* for *dot-sbF mF* / 1–4 B2 *bF+bF bF+bF* for F+FFFF / 5 T *dot-mD* is *q*, <sup>3</sup>D is *m* (producing consecutive octaves with Ct1) / 9–10 B2 *bF+bF* for F+FF / 11–12 B2 *bB+bB* for BBB / 12 T *mB* for *cr cr* / 19–20 B2 no tie /