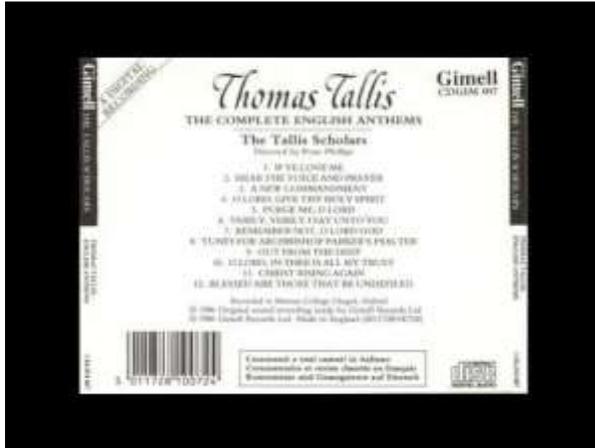


MUSICAL MUSING

During these trying times I, like many of you, turn to music for solace. I am particularly drawn to hymns and instrumental music. Many of our favorite hymns have been around for hundreds of years. This past week I have been listening to and playing a hymn tune by Thomas Tallis that was written over 459 years ago.



English composer Thomas Tallis (c.1505-1585) was organist and a Gentleman of the Chapel Royal. The Chapel Royal served the spiritual needs of the Monarch and traveled with them. The Gentleman were part of the choir along with boy choristers. Tallis served Henry VIII, Edward VI, Mary I and Elizabeth I during his long life. He is primarily remembered for his vast contribution to choral music during the Tudor period and his ability to write equally well for the Latin liturgy of Henry VIII and the new Anglican liturgy that followed.

In 1567, Tallis wrote nine Psalm chant tunes for Archbishop Parker's Psalter (a collection of metrical Psalms in English). The 3rd tune written by Tallis (known as *The Third Tune*) is a haunting melody in the phrygian mode and is found in *The Hymnal 1982*. The tune is first paired with a holy week text by Fred Pratt Green (Hymn #170 - *To mock your reign; O dearest Lord*):

1 To mock your reign, O dearest Lord,
they made a crown of thorns;
set you with taunts along that road
from which no one returns.
They did not know, as we do now,
that glorious is your crown;
that thorns would flower upon your brow,
your sorrows heal our own.

2 In mock acclaim, O gracious Lord,
they snatched a purple cloak,
your passion turned, for all they cared,
into a soldier's joke.
They did not know, as we do now,
that though we merit blame
you will your robe of mercy throw
around our naked shame.

3 A sceptered reed, O patient Lord,
they thrust into your hand,
and acted out their grim charade
to its appointed end.
They did not know, as we do now,
though empires rise and fall,
your Kingdom shall not cease to grow
till love embraces all.

Fred Pratt Green

The Third Tune is also paired with a text by Scottish hymn writer Horatius Bonar (1808-1889)
(Hymn #692 - *I heard the voice of Jesus say*)



- 1 I heard the voice of Jesus say,
 "Come unto Me, and rest;
Lay down, thou weary one, lay down
 Thy head upon My breast."
I came to Jesus as I was,
 Weary, and worn, and sad;
I found in Him a resting-place,
 And He has made me glad.
- 2 I heard the voice of Jesus say,
 "Behold, I freely give
The living water: thirsty one,
 Stoop down, and drink, and live."
I came to Jesus, and I drank
 Of that life-giving stream;
My thirst was quenched, my soul revived,
 And now I live in Him.
- 3 I heard the voice of Jesus say,
 "I am this dark world's Light;
Look unto Me, thy morn shall rise,
 And all thy day be bright."
I looked to Jesus, and I found
 In Him my Star, my Sun;
And in that Light of life I'll walk
 Till trav'ling days are done.

Horatius Bonar (1808-1889)

Our Sanctuary Choir was scheduled to sing a beautiful arrangement of The Third Tune to the text Thou wast O God, and Thou wast blest by John Mason (1645-1694). This text is a hymn of praise for creation. The video is below.



1 Thou wast, O God, and Thou wast blest
Before the world begun;
Of Thine Eternity possess
Before Time's glass did run.
Thou needest none Thy praise to sing,
As if Thy joy could fade:
Couldst Thou have needed anything,
Thou couldst have nothing made.

2 Great and good God, it pleaséd Thee
Thy Godhead to declare;
And what Thy goodness did decree,
Thy greatness did prepare:
Thou spak'st, and heaven and earth
appeared, And answered to Thy call;
As if their Maker's voice they heard,
Which is the creature's all.

3 To whom, Lord should I sing, but Thee,
The Maker of my tongue?
Lo! other lords would seize on me,
But I to Thee belong.
As waters haste unto their sea,
And earth unto its earth,
So let my soul return to Thee,
From whom it had its birth.

4 But ah! I'm fallen on the night,
And cannot come to Thee:
Yet speak the word, "Let there be Light!"
It shall enlighten me.
And let Thy Word, most mighty Lord,
Thy fallen creature raise;
O make me o'er again, and I
Shall sing my Maker's praise.

John Mason (1645-1694)

Which text speaks to you? Each one is incredibly profound. To me they all work beautifully with *The Third Tune* by Tallis.

Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958) became familiar with *The Third Tune* while he was editing the *English Hymnal* of 1906. He was so inspired by the tune that in 1910 he composed a large scale work for double string orchestra entitled *Fantasia on a Theme of Thomas Tallis*. The effects of the two orchestras and solo quartet is other-worldly and seems to transcend time and space.

Click this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qlhZbvlCjY0>



S:

I would encourage you to take the time to listen to this work. Turn off the TV, put away your phone, close your eyes and listen. Contemplate the divine. Let your worries and anxiety go. It's a cathartic experience. During this Pandemic let the gift of music, in addition to prayer and scripture, comfort and sustain you.

Yours in Christ,

Kyle Osborne

Director of Music