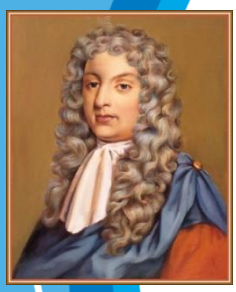
Byrd wrote many different kinds of music. This included sacred (religious) and secular (non-religious). He also wrote music for keyboard instruments, like the harpsichord, and for groups of instruments called consorts.

Musician of the Month

William Byrd

Use the QR code to listen to Ave verum corpus, one of Byrd's most famous pieces of music.

Making Connections ...



Use this QR code to listen to a song by Henry Purcell, one of Byrd's peers.

Even though he wrote religious music for the Church of England, he became a Roman Catholic in the 1570s. After that, he also wrote Catholic religious music.

William Byrd (born around 1540 – died 4 July 1623) was a famous English composer from the Renaissance period. Many people think he was one of the greatest composers of his time. He had a big impact on other composers in England and across Europe. He is often seen as one of England's most important early music composers.

Use the QR code to listen to Fantasia for harpsichord.

Use the QR code to listen to the Galliard in 6 parts.

Little is known of Byrd's early life except that he may have been born in Lincolnshire. A pupil and protégé of Thomas Tallis, Byrd was an accomplished organist and was appointed organist of Lincoln Cathedral in 1563. Nine years later he moved to London.