

## More About I HEARD THE VOICE OF JESUS

Thomas Tallis' **Third Mode Melody** is certainly one of the most beautifully haunting hymn tunes in the entire literature. I wrote this arrangement in 1994 for the 50th anniversary of Trinity United Methodist Church, in Albuquerque, NM, where I was choir director at the time.

Originally composed as an *a cappella* psalm and later used as the tune for many hymns, **Third Mode Melody** is probably best-known to the world-at-large from a great instrumental masterpiece: Ralph Vaughan Williams' 1910 **Fantasia on a Theme of Thomas Tallis**, for double string orchestra. That is how I first became acquainted with it.

Thomas Tallis (~1505 - 1585), court composer and organist under 4 mid-16th Century Tudor monarchs and known almost exclusively for his church music, wrote this, possibly his best-known composition, as one of 9 psalms he set for Archbishop of Canterbury Matthew Parker's Psalter in 1567.

The original text is an Old English versification of **Psalm 2** (*Why fumeth in sight*), but this deeply-felt tune has provided music for several other hymns over the centuries, including two prominent 20th century texts: **To Mock Your Reign, O Dearest Lord** (Fred Pratt Green 1972) and **My soul Finds Rest in God Alone** (David J. Diephouse, 1986). But the text most commonly sung to this melody is the 19th century one used in this arrangement.

Horatius Bonar (1808 - 1889) was a Scottish churchman and poet who wrote many hymns and books, of which **I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say** is one of his best-known. Having been set to several tunes besides the Tallis, it was probably originally written to the traditional English melody **Kingsford**, which is still the tune most commonly associated with it. It is also frequently heard to **Vox Dilecti** (John B. Dykes 1868), as well as several other more obscure hymn tunes. I even saw it set to the tune of **Drink to Me Only** in an old hymnal!