

Bulls Goodnighte

Dr. John Bull, 1562–1628

Edited from a facsimile of the manuscript by David J. Perry

THE ONLY SOURCE for this attractive set of nine variations is a manuscript collection of virginal pieces made by Benjamin Cosyn, ca. 1620–1652; it is now in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris (F-Pn Rés 1185) and available [on IMSLP](#). *Bulls Goodnighte* is piece #22, pages 100–104 in the MS. It was published in *Musica Britannica* vol. XIX, #143, edited by Thurston Dart.

Stemming and beaming of notes in this edition reproduce what is in the manuscript, so things sometimes look different than what modern performers are used to seeing.

Fingering is from the original (17th century but not necessarily by Bull himself).

The *alla breve* time signature is original. However, performers should be aware that during the Renaissance this did not necessarily indicate a faster tempo than 4/4. (If the title refers to a lullaby — quite possible but not certain — then a too-fast tempo would not be appropriate.) At the beginning of variation 8, the notation ‘3 1’ indicates a shift to triple time, where three quarter notes are equivalent to one half note (see reproduction below). 6/4 is used to transcribe variations 8 and 9; dotted half notes are equivalent to simple half notes in the preceding variations.

For critical notes, including differences between this edition and *Musica Britannica*, see page 6.



Bulls Goodnighte

Dr. John Bull

Measures 1-5 of the piece. The music is in 2/4 time and features a key signature of one sharp (F#). The right hand plays a melody with eighth and sixteenth notes, while the left hand provides a bass line with dotted rhythms and rests. A fingering '5' is indicated above the final measure.

Measures 6-10. Measure 6 begins with a fingering '5'. Measure 7 contains a repeat sign. Measure 8 starts with a new time signature of 3/8. The right hand continues with a melodic line, and the left hand has a bass line with eighth notes and rests.

Measures 11-14. The right hand features a more active melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes. The left hand has a bass line with eighth notes and rests. A fingering '5' is shown above the final measure.

Measures 15-18. Measure 15 starts with a fingering '15'. Measure 16 contains a repeat sign. Measure 17 begins with a new time signature of 3/8 and a fingering '3'. The right hand has a melodic line with eighth notes, and the left hand has a bass line with eighth notes and rests.

Measures 19-22. The right hand plays a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes. The left hand has a bass line with eighth notes and rests.

23

4

26

29

32

1 2 5 2

35

1 1 5

38

41

6

44

3

47

7

50

1

53

56

31 $\frac{6}{4}$

8

31 $\frac{6}{4}$

Textual Notes

The table of contents in the MS identifies this piece as *D^r Bulles Goodnight*.

MB = *Musica Britannica*; r. h. = right hand, l. h. = left hand.

Dotted barlines and notes/accidentals in square brackets are editorial additions.

The MS uses a fingering system where the left hand is numbered 1–5 starting with the little finger. These digits have been changed to the usual modern system with 1 as the thumb.

MB changes the time signature to 4/4 (with an indication that C was the original).

M. 1: *MB* has a half note b in the l. h. instead of the quarter note in the MS.

M. 23: the double-stroke ornament is on g' in the MS but on d'' in *MB*.

M. 36: the MS is damaged in the l. h. Only the stem of the bass note is visible, and d seems the obvious choice; *MB* adds an f# between the d and the a.

M. 57: the sharp on f'' is clear in the MS, while there is no sharp on the f' in the tenor voice. (See the first measure of variation 8 in the cover page photo.) Some performers may prefer to play both notes as f# and so preserve the modal feel.¹

M. 65: *MB* omits the fingering '1' on the second a''.

M. 66: The first edition of *MB* printed f#/g'' as the last two notes in the r. h., while the MS clearly has f#e''. This was corrected in the 1970 edition.

Credits

Several members of The Jackrail discussion forum, devoted to early keyboard instruments (<https://jackrail.space>), were helpful in reading the original MS. Any errors are my responsibility.

The example on the first page is reproduced from the facsimile available at IMSLP.

Typeset in Adobe™ Caslon Pro using MuseScore 3.6 by David J. Perry.

¹ This piece is written in the Mixolydian mode (similar to G major but with no f# in the signature). Most of the Fs are sharped, but note f# in the descending scales in mm. 32, 66, 69 and 71.