

**1687**

**A SONG FOR ST. CECILIA'S DAY**

**John Dryden**

**Dryden, John (1631-1700) - English poet and dramatist who was perhaps the greatest literary figure during the Restoration. Dryden is recognized in many respects as being the creator of both modern verse and modern prose. A Song For St. Cecilia's Day (1687) - One of Dryden's best-known lyrics. Opening lines:  
From Harmony, from heav'nly Harmony / This universal Frame began: ...**

## A SONG FOR ST. CECILIA'S DAY

From Harmony, from heav'nly Harmony  
 This universal Frame began:  
 When Nature underneath a heap  
 Of jarring Atomes lay,  
 And cou'd not heave her Head,  
 The tuneful Voice was heard from high:  
 Arise, ye more than dead.  
 Then cold and hot and moist and dry  
 In order to their Stations leap,

And MUSICK'S pow'r obey.  
 From Harmony, from heavenly Harmony  
 This universal Frame began:  
 From Harmony to Harmony  
 Through all the Compass of the Notes it ran,  
 The Diapason closing full in Man.  
 What passion cannot MUSICK raise and quell?  
 When Jubal struck the corded Shell,  
 His listening Brethren stood around,  
 And, wond'ring, on their Faces fell  
 To worship that Celestial Sound.  
 Less than a God they thought there could not dwell  
 Within the hollow of that Shell  
 That spoke so sweetly, and so well.  
 What passion cannot MUSICK raise and quell?

The TRUMPETS loud Clangor  
 Excites us to Arms  
 With shrill Notes of Anger  
 And mortal Alarms.  
 The double double double beat  
 Of the thund'ring DRUM Cryes, heark the Foes come;  
 Charge, Charge, 'tis too late to retreat.  
 The soft complaining FLUTE  
 In dying Notes discovers  
 The Woes of hopeless Lovers,  
 Whose Dirge is whispered by the warbling LUTE.  
 Sharp VIOLINS proclaim  
 Their jealous Pangs and Desperation,  
 Fury, frantick Indignation,

Depth of Pains and height of Passion,  
For the fair, disdainful Dame.

But O! what Art can teach  
What human Voice can reach  
The sacred ORGANS praise?  
Notes inspiring holy Love,  
Notes that wing their heav'nly  
Ways To mend the Choires above.

Orpheus cou'd lead the savage race,  
And Trees unrooted left their place,  
Sequacious of the Lyre;  
But bright CECILIA rais'd the wonder high'r:  
When to her Organ vocal Breath was given,  
An Angel heard, and straight appear'd,  
Mistaking Earth for Heav'n.

### **GRAND CHORUS**

As from the Pow'r of Sacred Lays  
The spheres began to move,  
And sung the great Creator's Praise  
To all the bless'd above;  
So, when the last and dreadful Hour  
This crumbling Pageant shall devour,  
The TRUMPET shall be heard on high,  
The dead shall live, the living die,  
And MUSICK shall untune the Sky.

**THE END**