Ode to Hope

for SATB chorus

Music by Melissa Dunphy
Text by Sophocles, translated by Philip Barnes

2024

7.5 min

Commissioned for the Saint Louis Chamber Chorus (Philip Barnes, artistic director)
by William Larson in gratitude for this organization's commitment to choral excellence

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Blessed are they who live long, far from evils,
Their homes stand free from the shaking of a god.
Yet when his ills fall upon a house without number,
Then does the tide wash over scions of age upon age.
As when the sea surges and throws up the sand
From the deep to the crests of the waves,
Battered and buffeted by harsh winds from the North,
Then the sea beats on every shore
And roars and moans its unending groan.

O Zeus, how might we mortal men
Pervert and curb your power,
Which neither sleep nor tireless months
Can weary hour by hour? [...]
The law you give is absolute
For those who live below, [...]
That no-one lives a boundless life
Not knowing a calamity.

The Labdakids of old have suffered woes of death,
Woes falling on their homes in every age;
Generations come and go but don't redeem the next,
And now I witness how a god is rushing its demise.
No atonement or reprieve are destined for this house.
Redemption's lights have shone their last upon the royal line
Of Oedipus, [...]
For even now the gods below uproot it, and they tell
A tale of madness mired in blood, through dusty sacrifice.

Hope, it ranges and deranges
Every man in search of gain,
Yet often uses and abuses
The frail in truth and brain.
You veil our sight as we step
Into singeing fires of lust.
We reckon little all those seers
Who told us once and ever more,
How choices bad yet good appear
Whene'er we set our wits aside,
Not knowing a calamity.

From *Antigone*, Stasimon 2

Cover image: Antigone and Ismene with their father Oedipus. Engraving for E. Schröter by Martin Lämmel after a bas-relief by German sculptor A. Küpper, published 1879.

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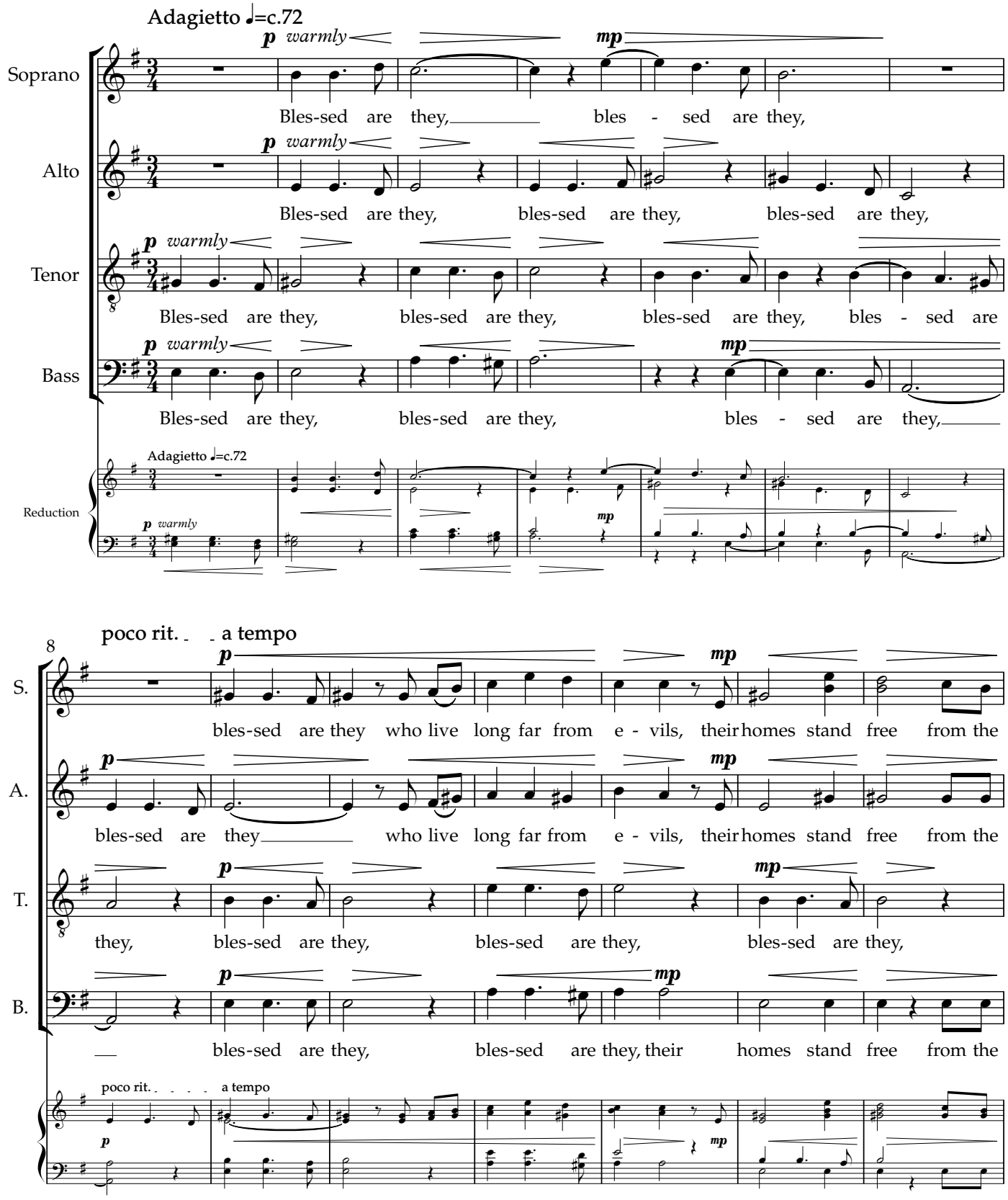

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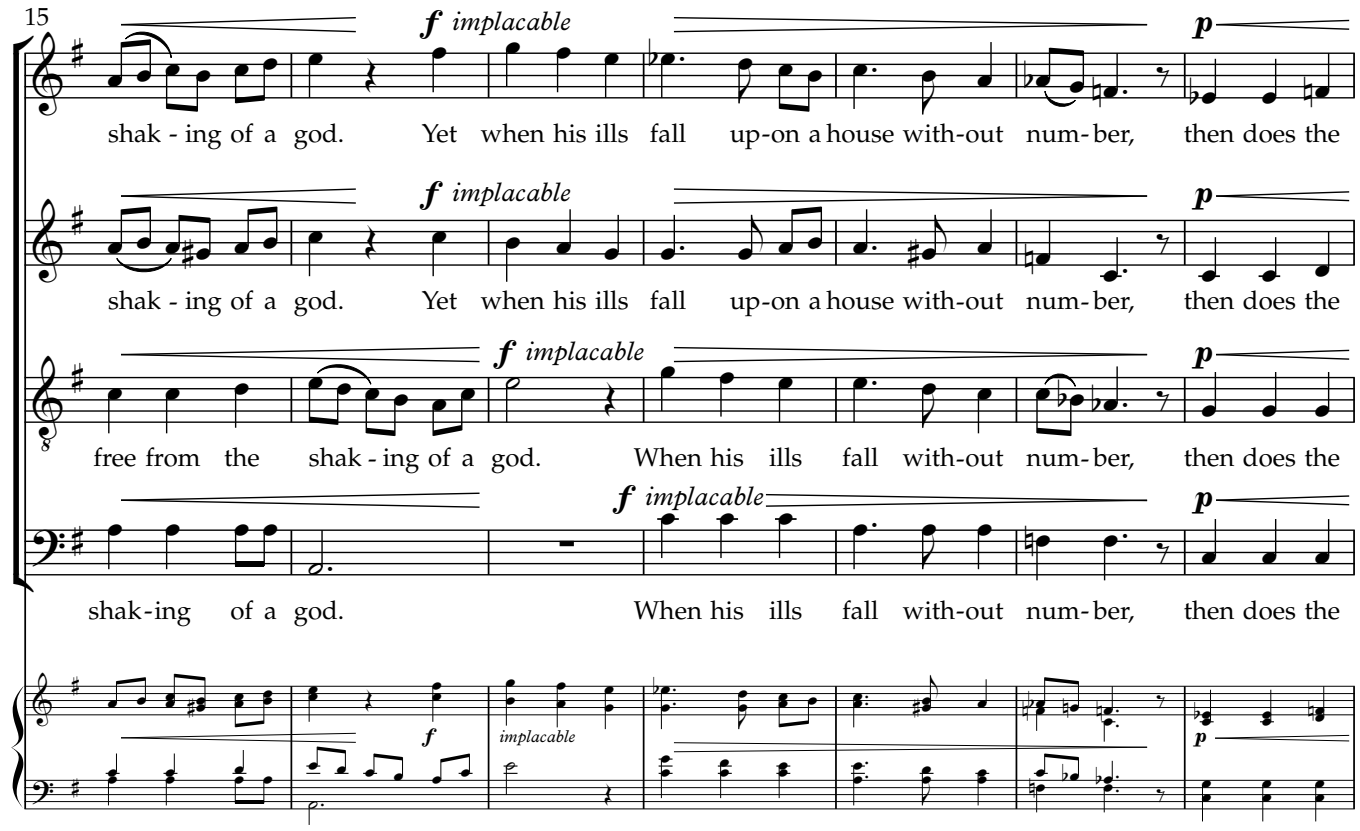
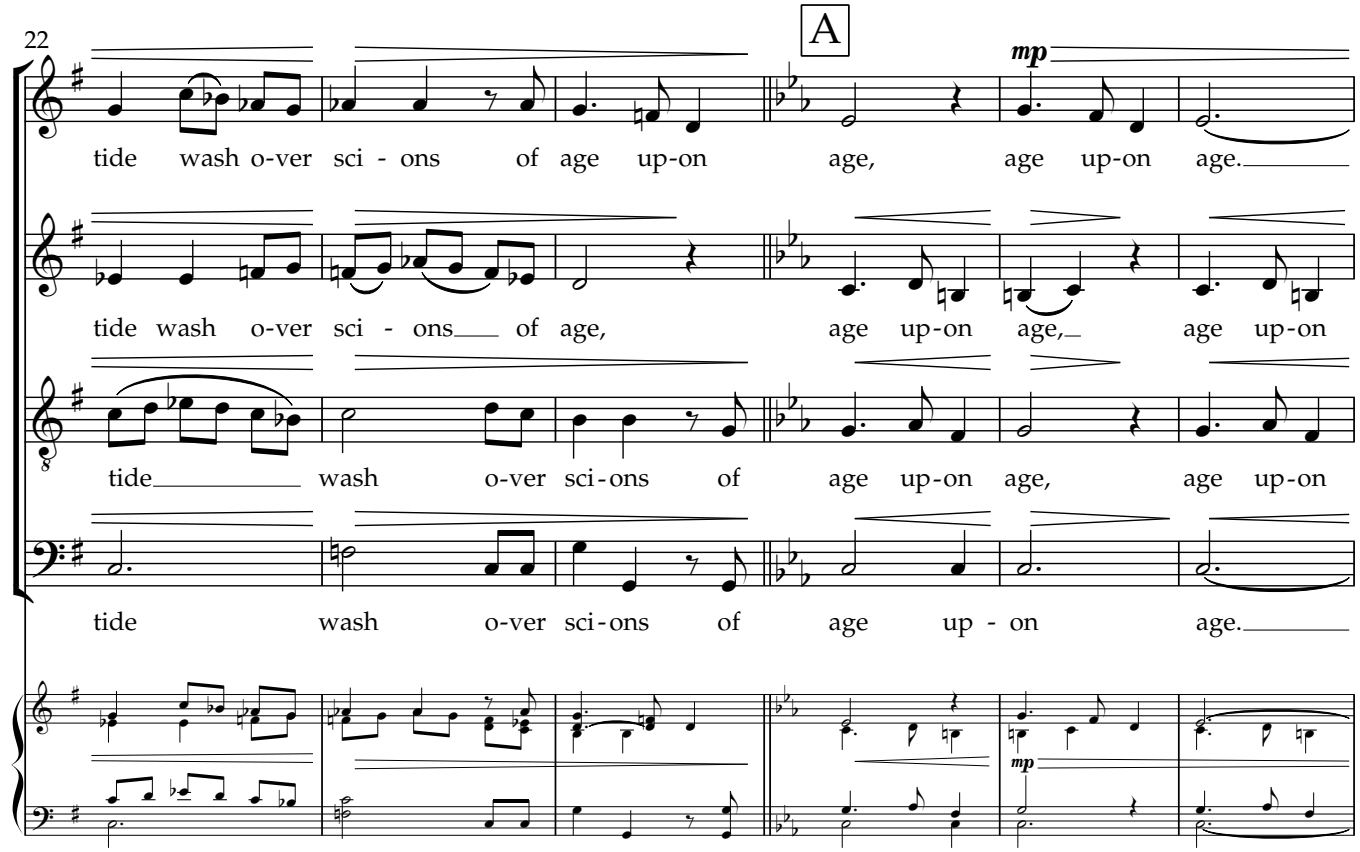
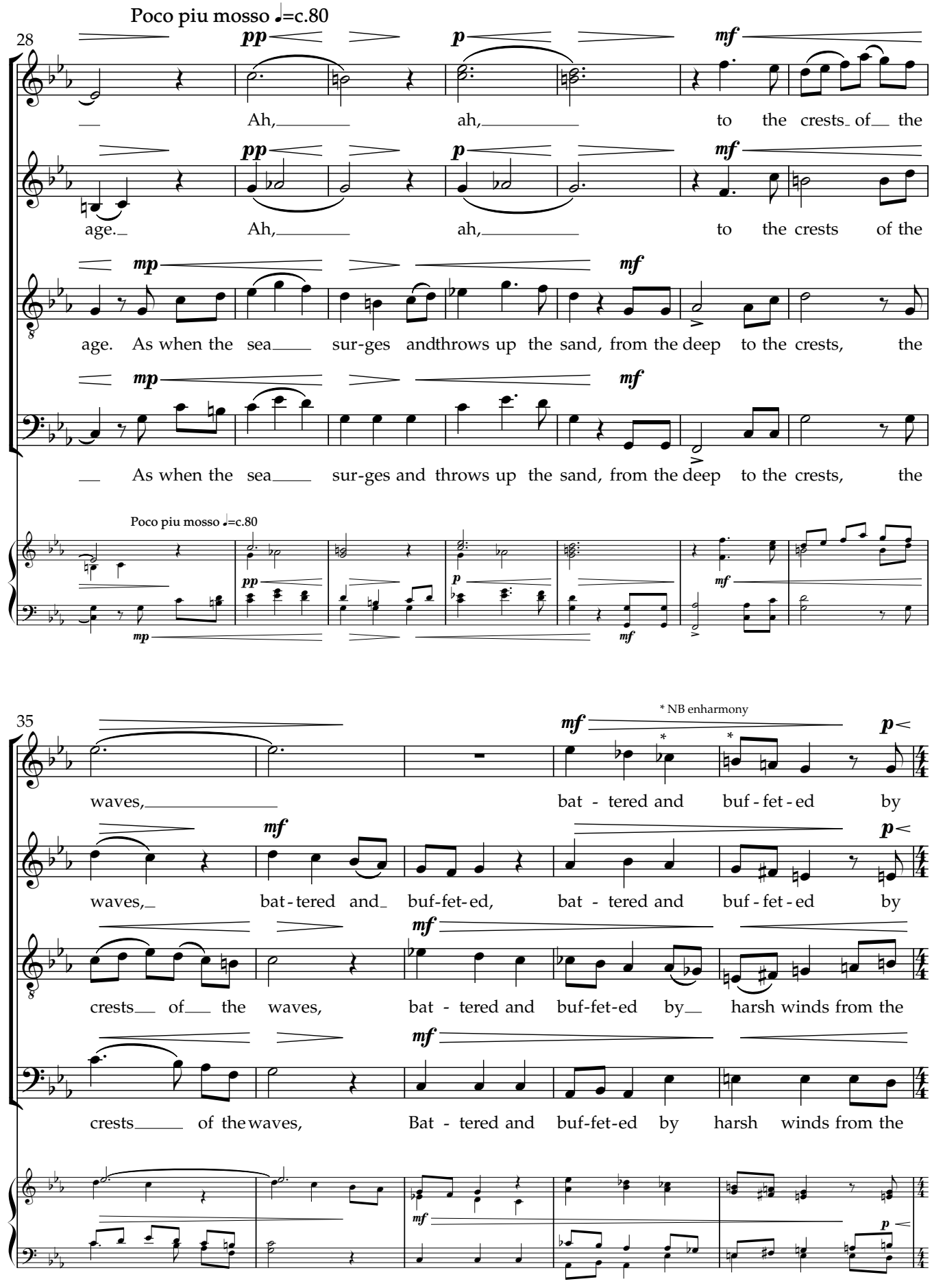
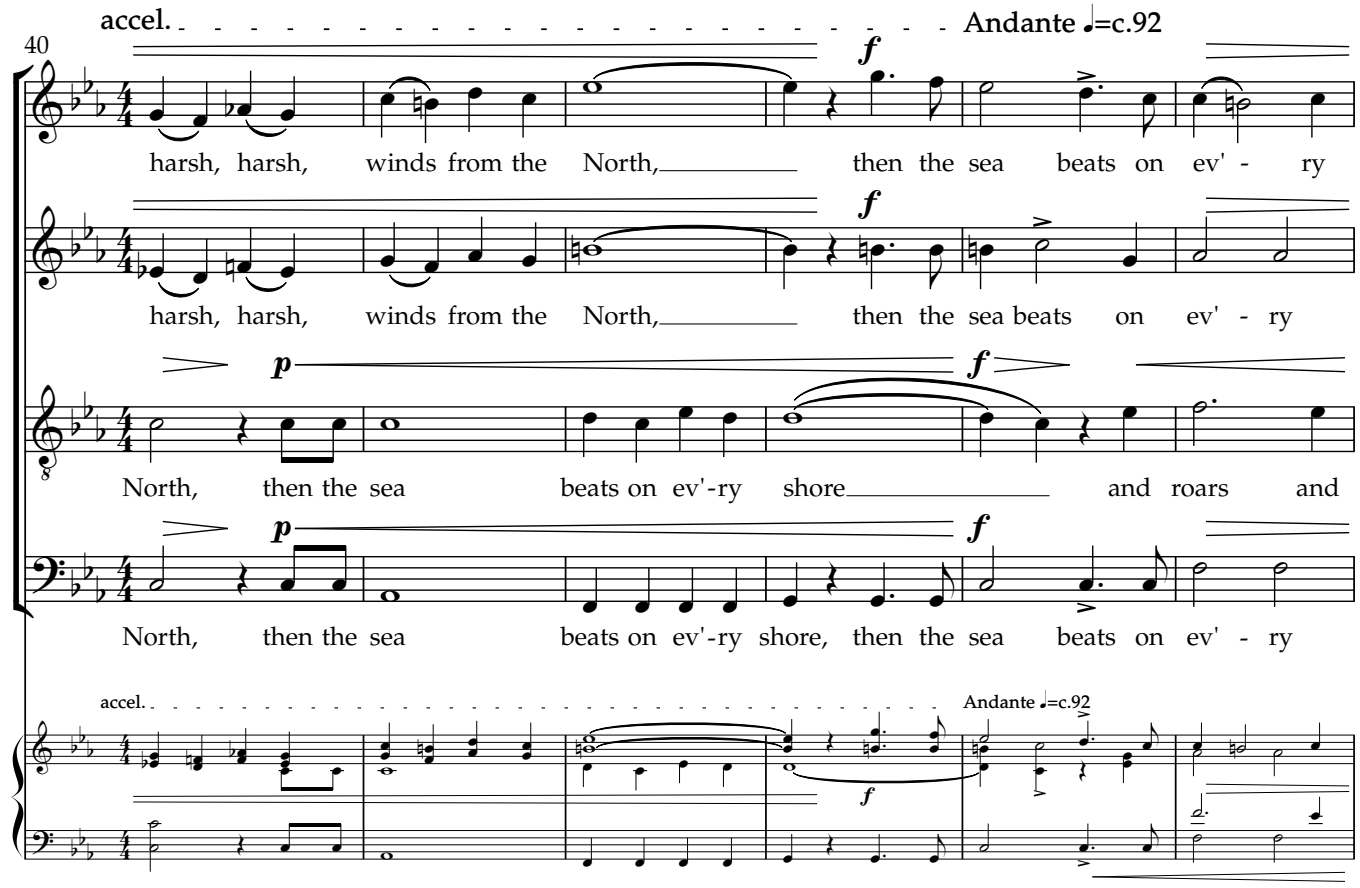
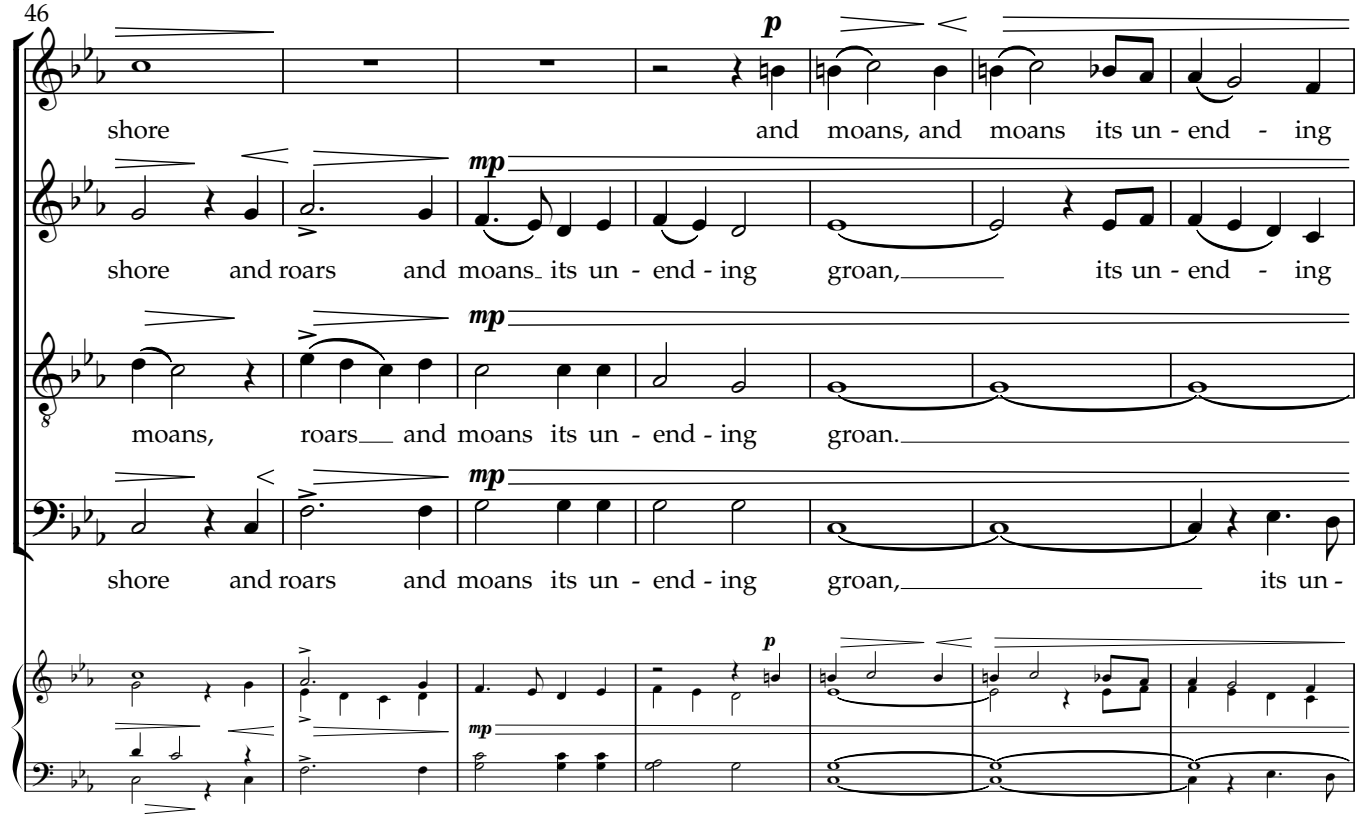
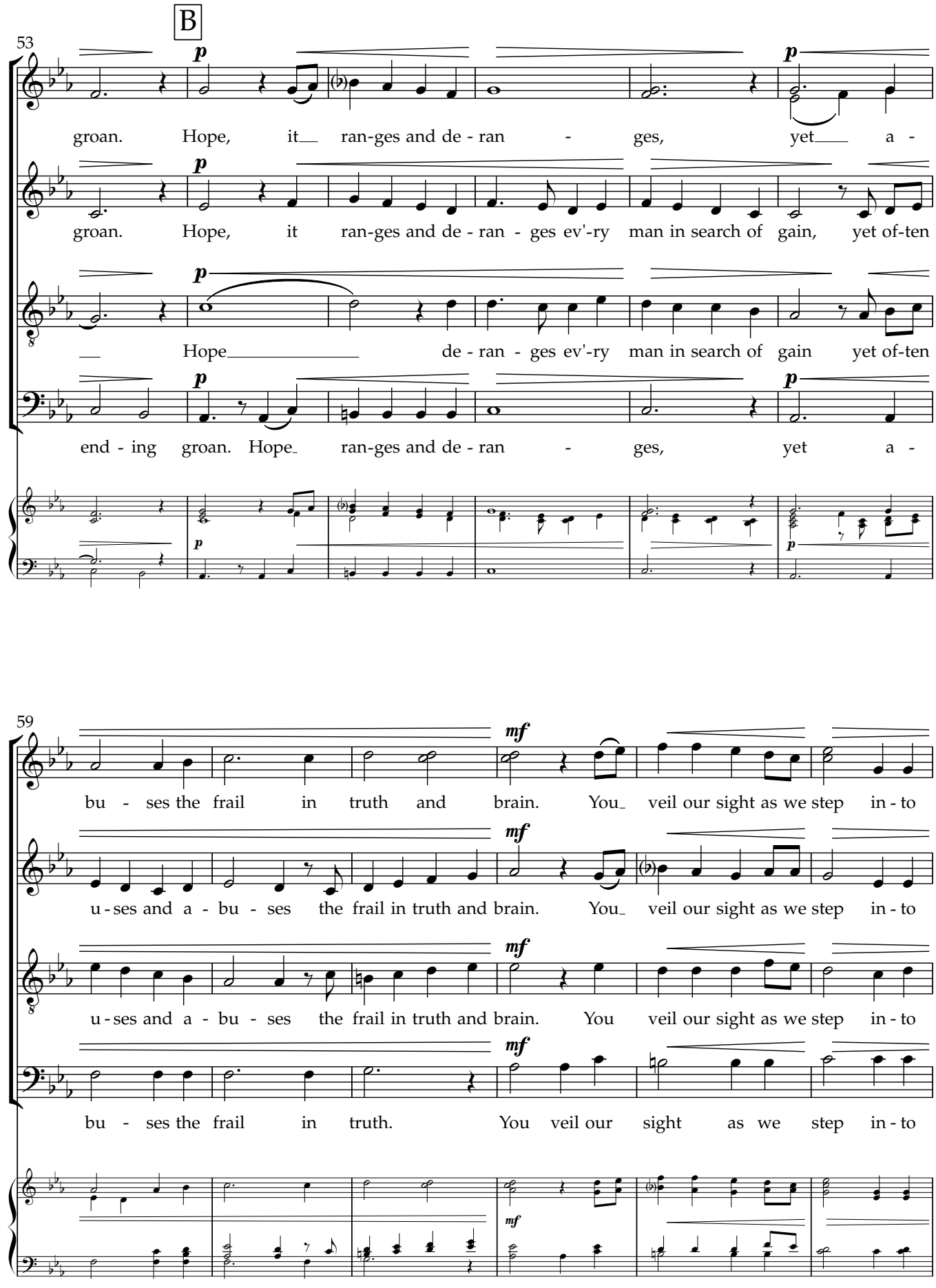

15
S.
A.
T.
B.
f implacable
p
shak - ing of a god. Yet when his ills fall up-on a house with-out num-ber, then does the
shak - ing of a god. Yet when his ills fall up-on a house with-out num-ber, then does the
free from the shak - ing of a god. When his ills fall with-out num-ber, then does the
shak-ing of a god. When his ills fall with-out num-ber, then does the
f
implacable
p

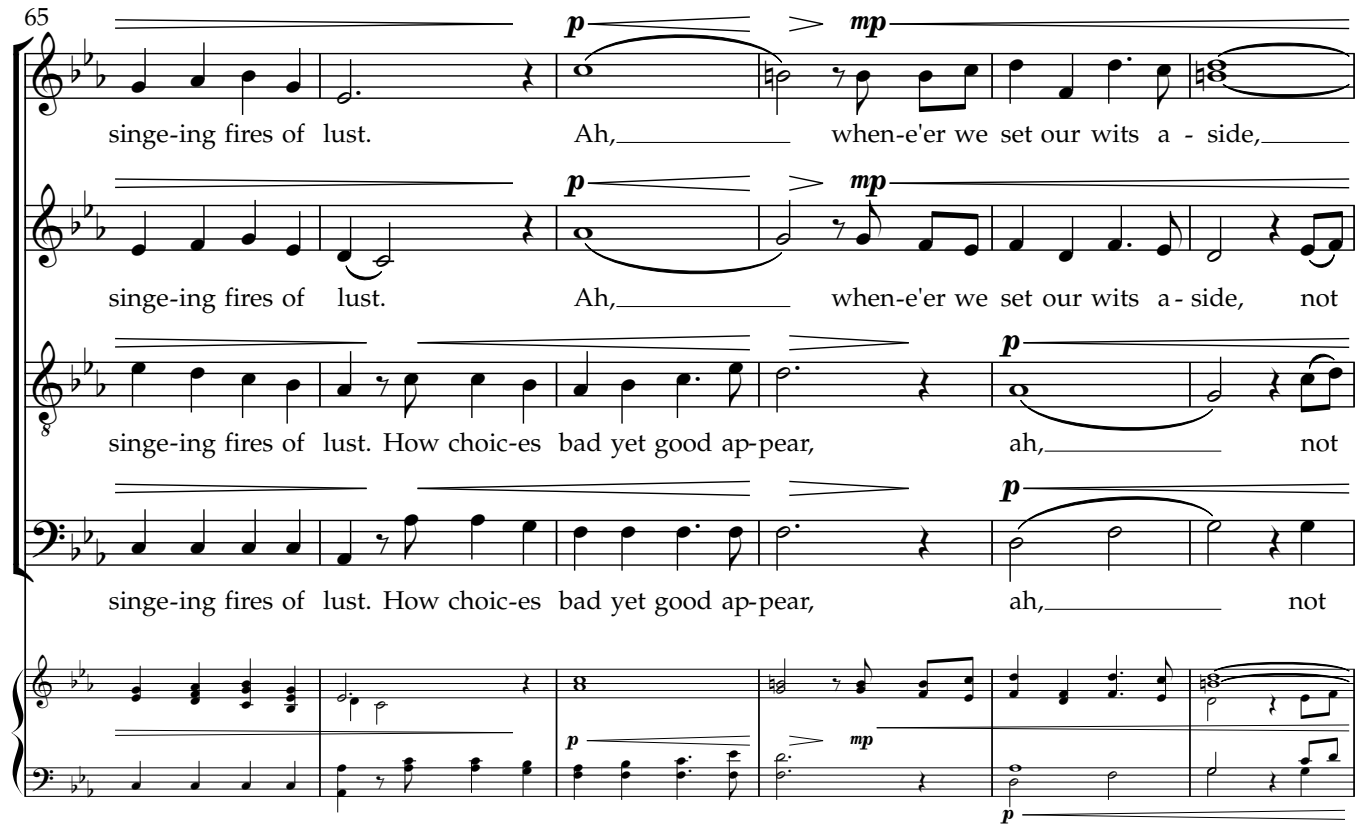

22
A
S.
A.
T.
B.
mp
tide wash o-ver sci - ons of age up-on age, age up-on age.
tide wash o-ver sci - ons of age, age up-on age, age up-on
tide wash o-ver sci-ons of age up-on age, age up-on
tide wash o-ver sci-ons of age up - on age.
mp

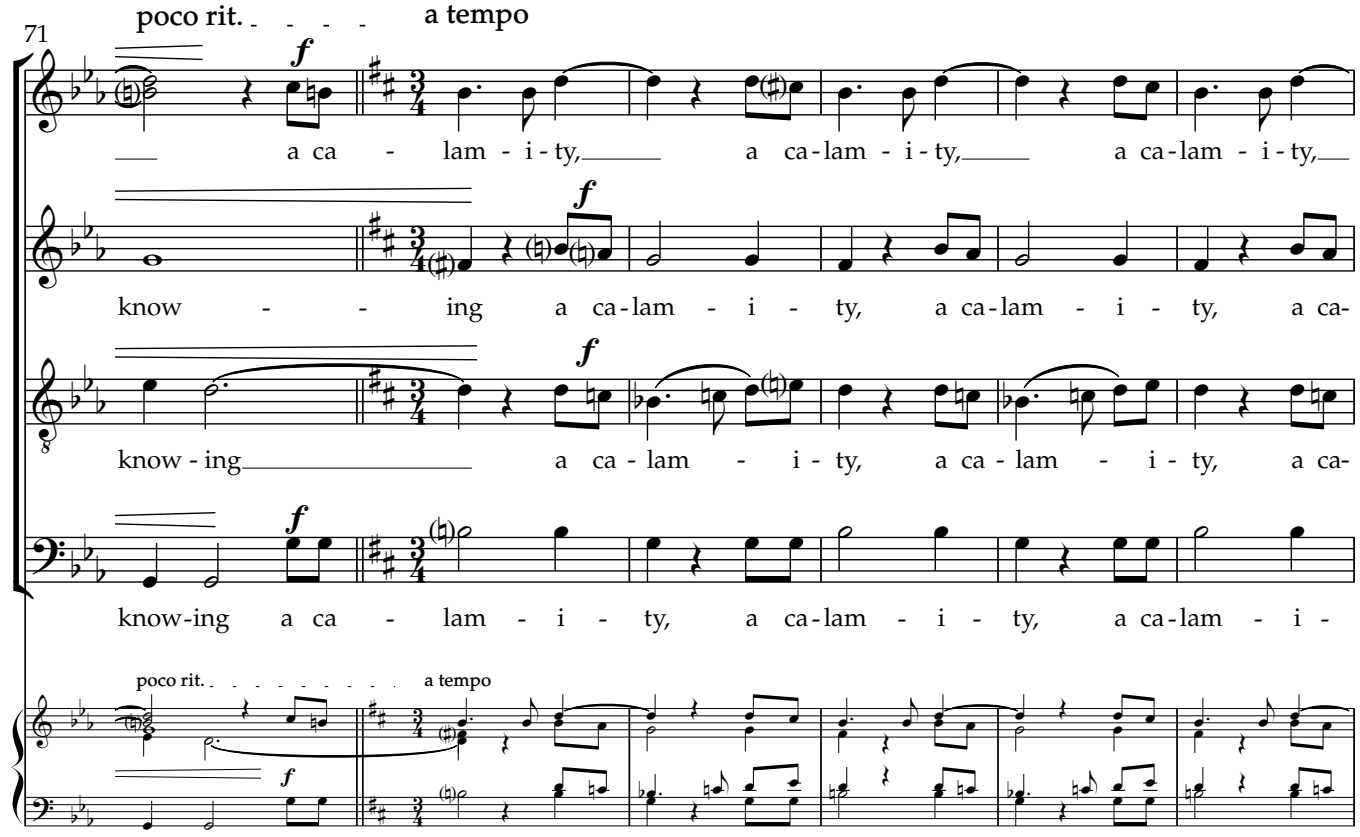

Poco piu mosso ♩=c.80
28
S.
A.
T.
B.
pp
p
mf
mp
Ah, ah, to the crests of the
age. Ah, ah, to the crests of the
age. As when the sea sur-ges andthrows up the sand, from the deep to the crests, the
As when the sea sur-ges and throws up the sand, from the deep to the crests, the
35
* NB enharmony
waves, bat - tered and buf - fet - ed by
waves, bat - tered and buf-fet-ed, bat - tered and buf - fet - ed by
crests of the waves, bat - tered and buf-fet-ed by harsh winds from the
crests of the waves, Bat - tered and buf-fet-ed by harsh winds from the

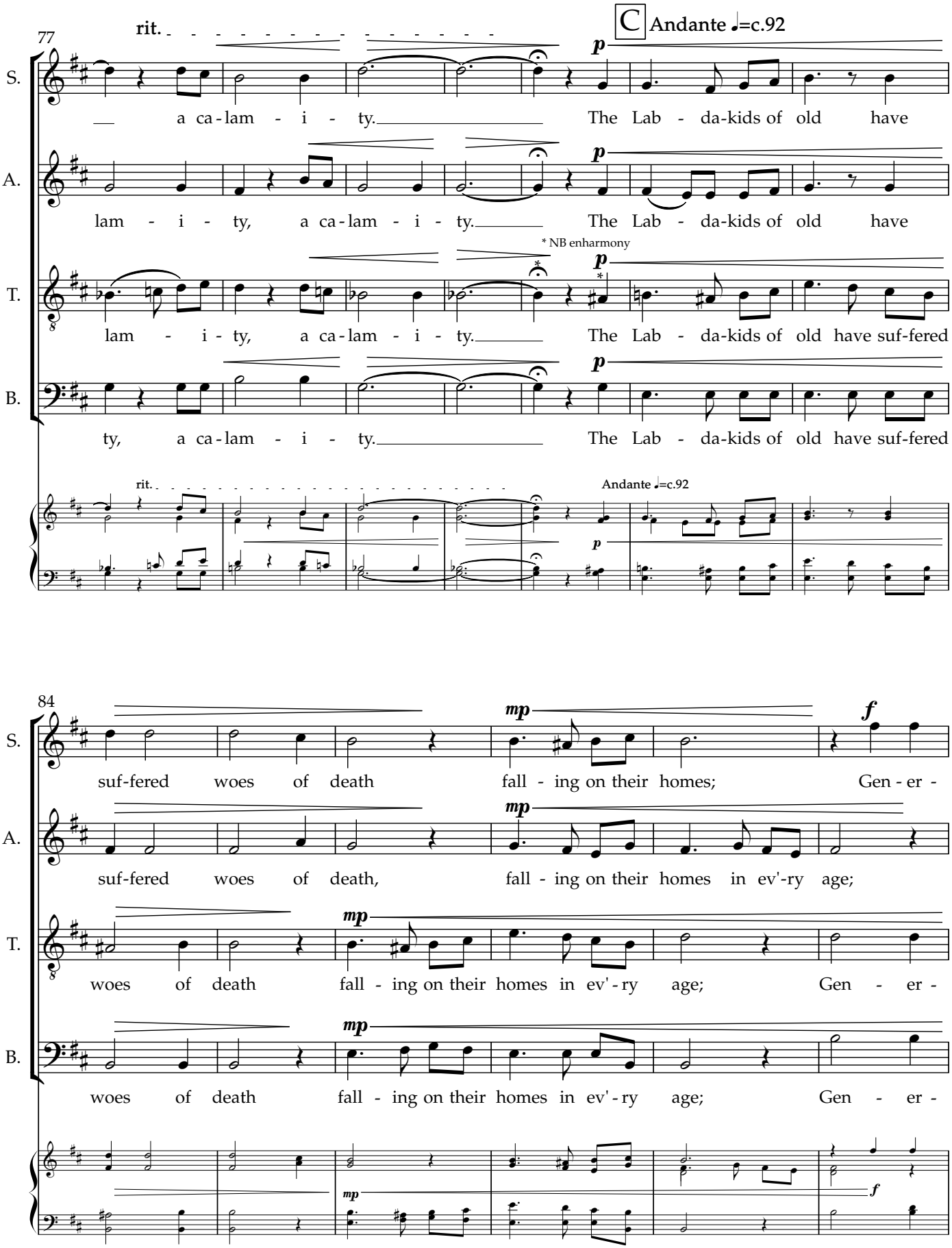

accel.
Andante ♩=c.92
40
S.
harsh, harsh, winds from the North, then the sea beats on ev' - ry
A.
harsh, harsh, winds from the North, then the sea beats on ev' - ry
T.
North, then the sea beats on ev'-ry shore and roars and
B.
North, then the sea beats on ev'-ry shore, then the sea beats on ev' - ry
accel.
Andante ♩=c.92

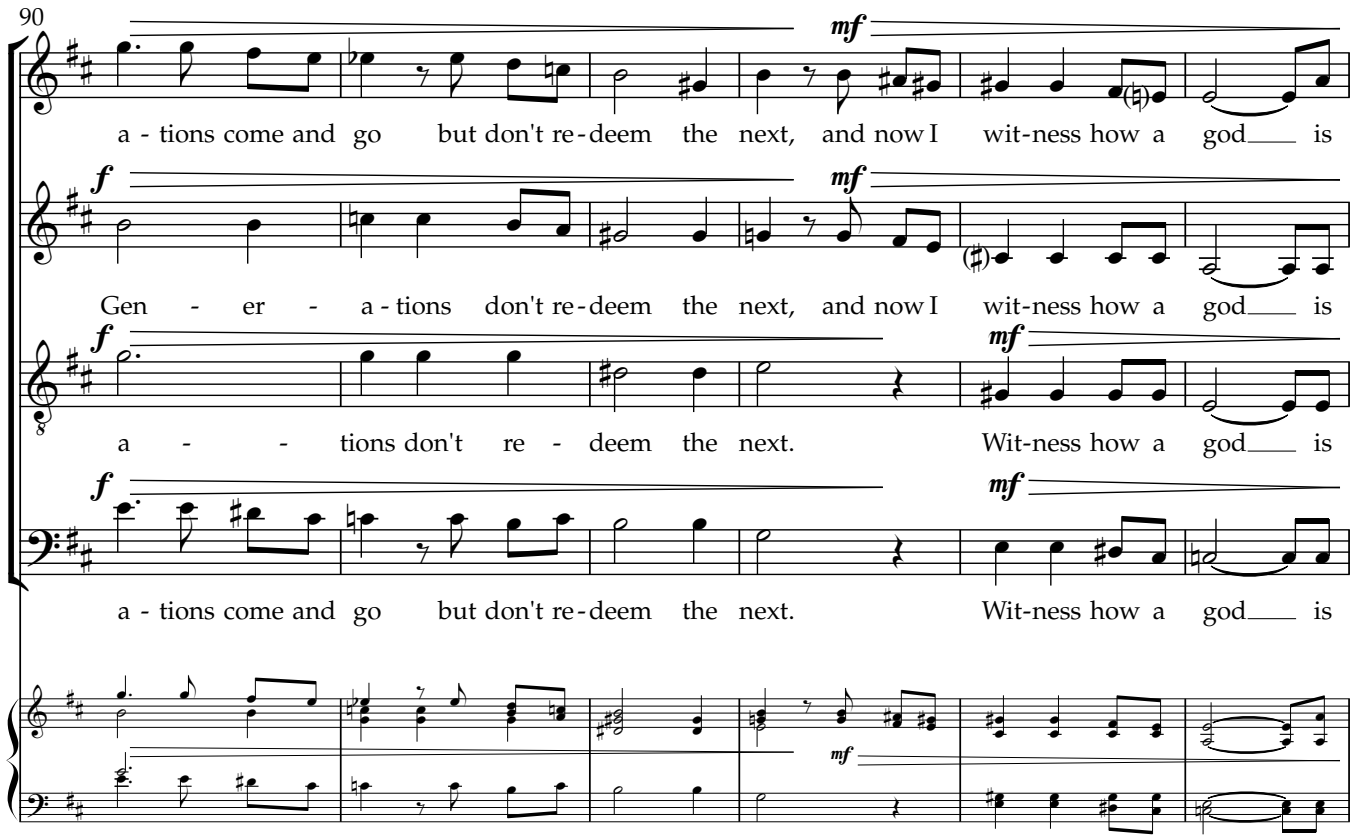

46
S.
shore and moans, and moans its un - end - ing
A.
shore and roars and moans its un - end - ing groan, its un - end - ing
T.
moans, roars and moans its un - end - ing groan.
B.
shore and roars and moans its un - end - ing groan, its un -

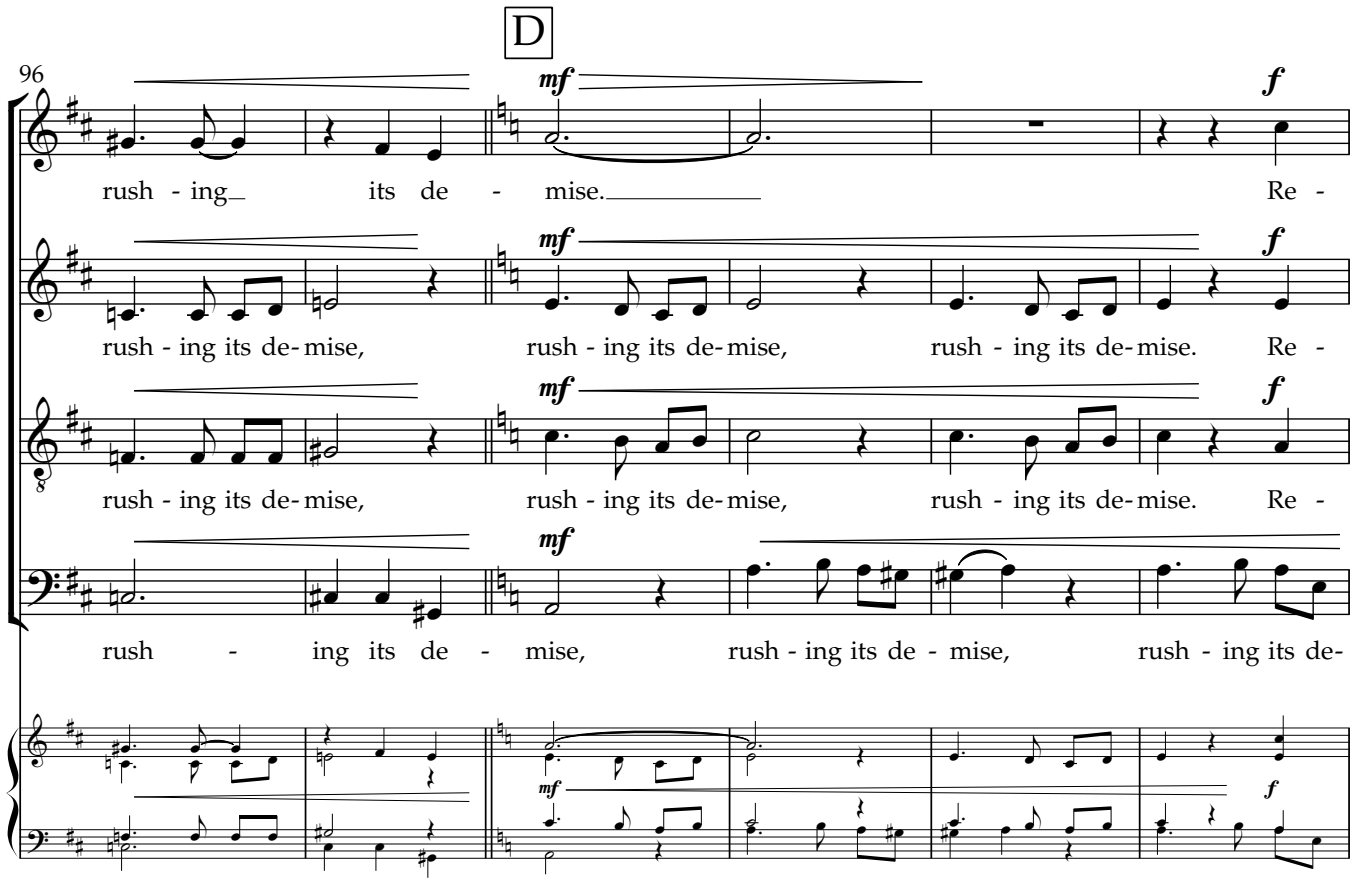

B
53
S.
groan. Hope, it ran-ges and de - ran - ges, yet a -
A.
groan. Hope, it ran-ges and de - ran - ges ev'-ry man in search of gain, yet of-ten
T.
Hope de - ran - ges ev'-ry man in search of gain yet of-ten
B.
end - ing groan. Hope ran-ges and de - ran - ges, yet a -
59
S.
bu - ses the frail in truth and brain. You veil our sight as we step in - to
A.
u - ses and a - bu - ses the frail in truth and brain. You veil our sight as we step in - to
T.
u - ses and a - bu - ses the frail in truth and brain. You veil our sight as we step in - to
B.
bu - ses the frail in truth. You veil our sight as we step in - to

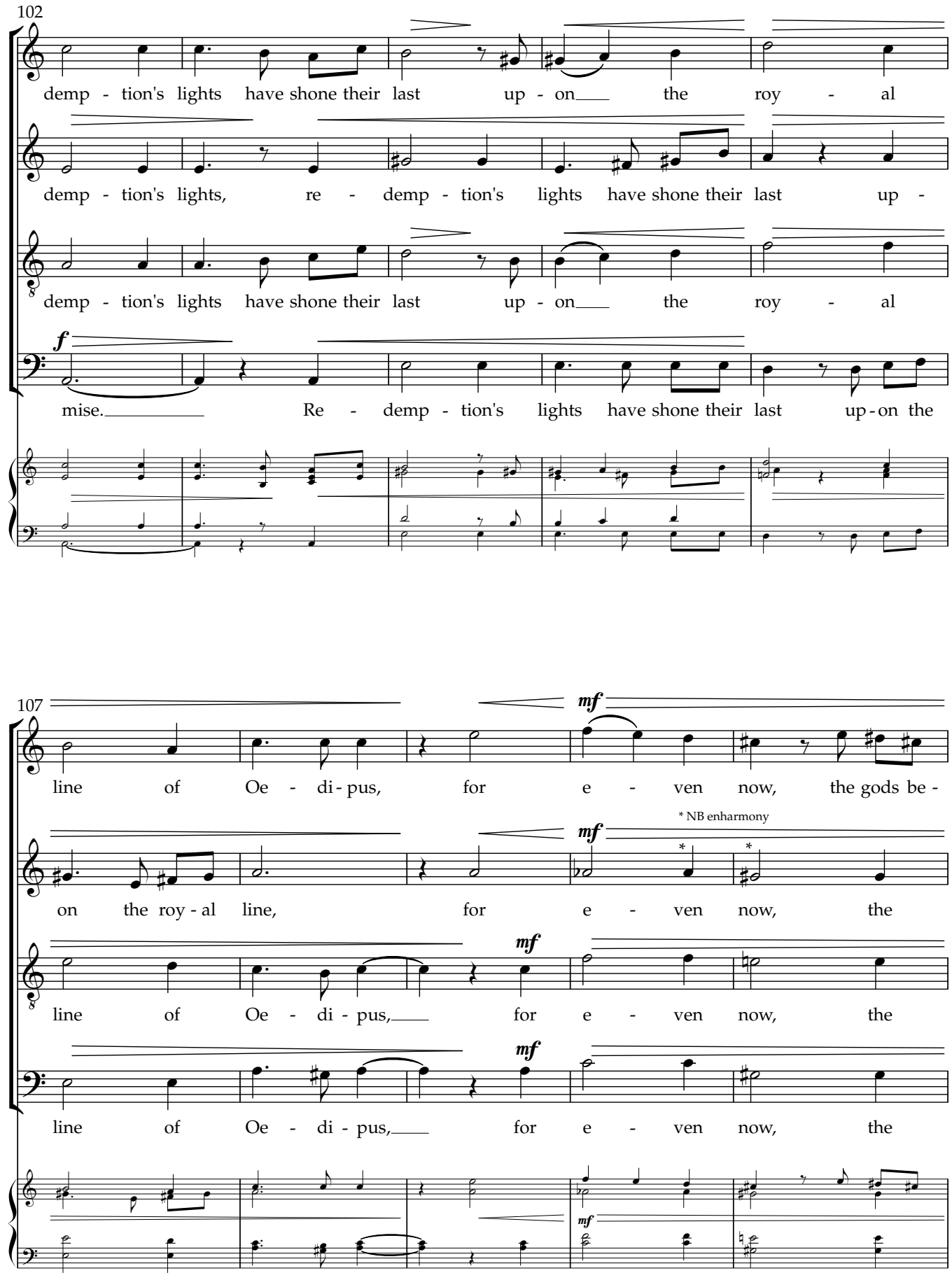

65
S.
singe-ing fires of lust. Ah, when-e'er we set our wits a - side,
A.
singe-ing fires of lust. Ah, when-e'er we set our wits a - side, not
T.
singe-ing fires of lust. How choic-es bad yet good ap-pear, ah, not
B.
singe-ing fires of lust. How choic-es bad yet good ap-pear, ah, not
p
mp

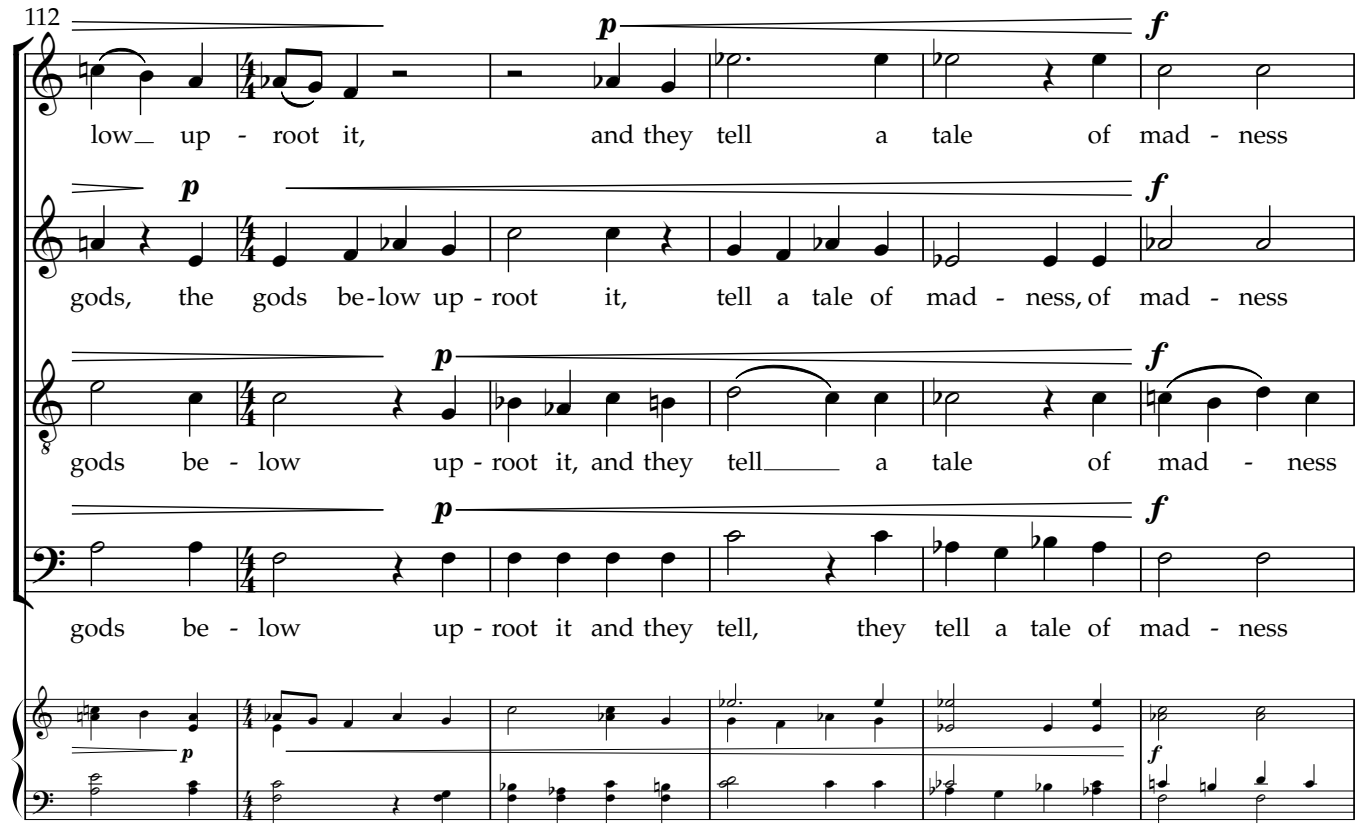

71
poco rit.
a tempo
S.
a ca - lam - i - ty, a ca-lam - i - ty, a ca-lam - i - ty,
A.
know - - ing a ca-lam - i - ty, a ca-lam - i - ty, a ca-
T.
know - ing a ca - lam - i - ty, a ca - lam - i - ty, a ca-
B.
know-ing a ca - lam - i - ty, a ca-lam - i - ty, a ca-lam - i -
f

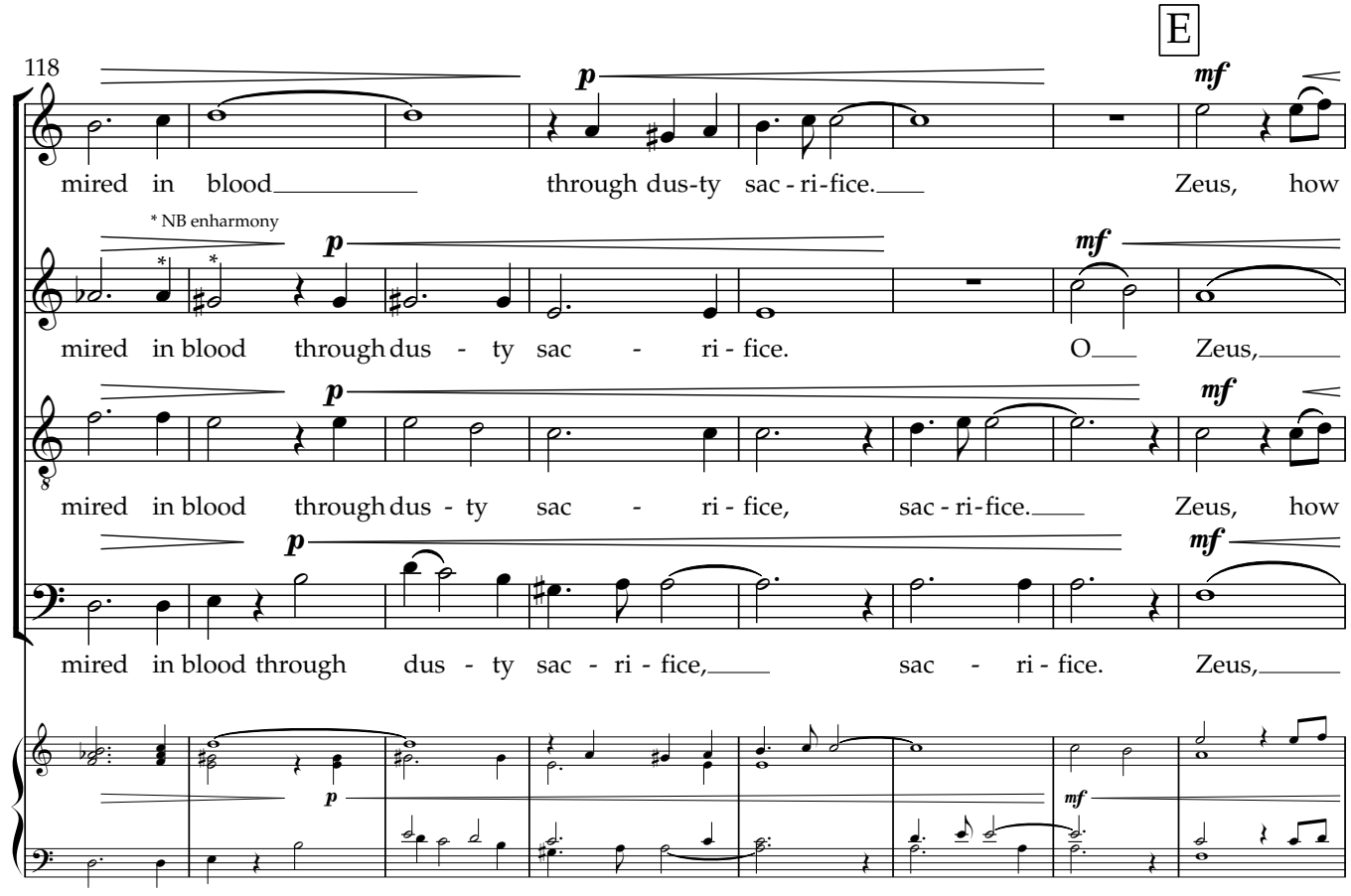

77
rit.
C Andante ♩=c.92
S.
a ca-lam - i - ty. The Lab - da-kids of old have
A.
lam - i - ty, a ca-lam - i - ty. The Lab - da-kids of old have
* NB enharmony
T.
lam - i - ty, a ca-lam - i - ty. The Lab - da-kids of old have suf-fered
B.
ty, a ca-lam - i - ty. The Lab - da-kids of old have suf-fered
rit.
Andante ♩=c.92
84
S.
suf-fered woes of death fall - ing on their homes; Gen - er -
A.
suf-fered woes of death, fall - ing on their homes in ev'-ry age;
T.
woes of death fall - ing on their homes in ev'-ry age; Gen - er -
B.
woes of death fall - ing on their homes in ev'-ry age; Gen - er -

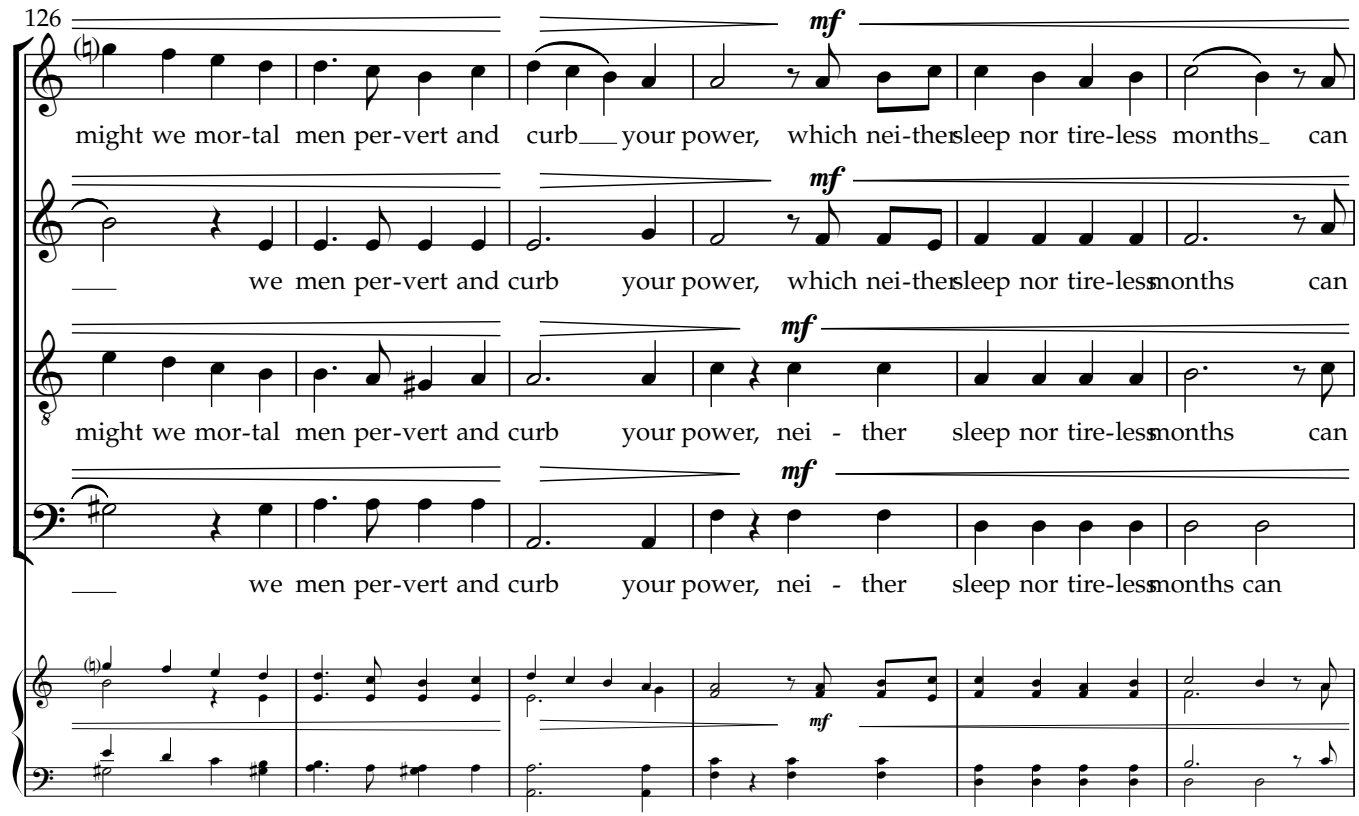

90
S.
A.
T.
B.
a - tions come and go but don't re - deem the next, and now I wit-ness how a god is
Gen - er - a - tions don't re - deem the next, and now I wit-ness how a god is
a - - tions don't re - deem the next. Wit-ness how a god is
a - tions come and go but don't re - deem the next. Wit-ness how a god is

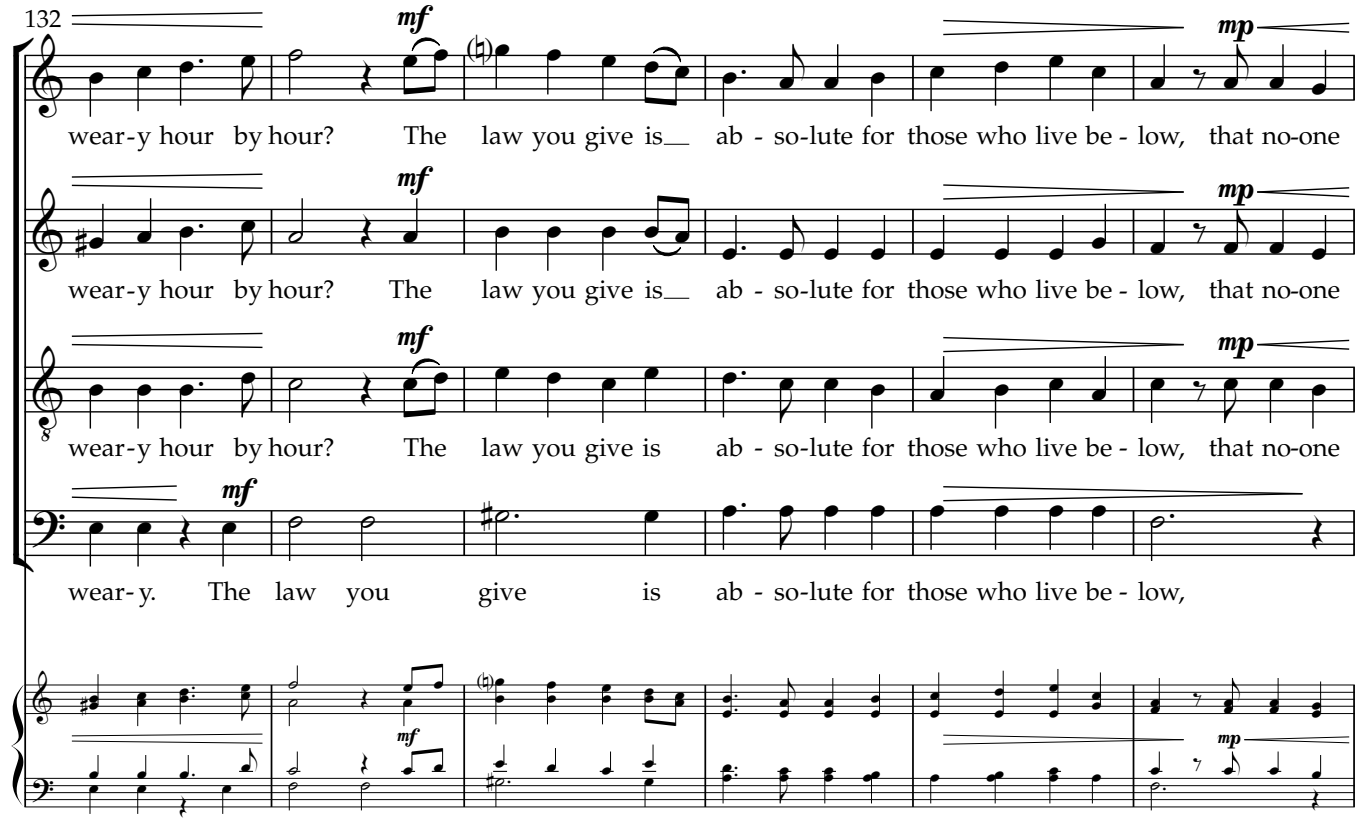

D
96
S.
A.
T.
B.
rush - ing its de - mise. Re -
rush - ing its de - mise, rush - ing its de - mise, rush - ing its de - mise. Re -
rush - ing its de - mise, rush - ing its de - mise, rush - ing its de - mise. Re -
rush - ing its de - mise, rush - ing its de - mise, rush - ing its de -


102
S.
demp - tion's lights have shone their last up - on the roy - al
A.
demp - tion's lights, re - demp - tion's lights have shone their last up -
T.
demp - tion's lights have shone their last up - on the roy - al
f
B.
mise. Re - demp - tion's lights have shone their last up-on the
107
mf
S.
line of Oe - di-pus, for e - ven now, the gods be -
* NB enharmony
mf
A.
on the roy-al line, for e - ven now, the
mf
T.
line of Oe - di - pus, for e - ven now, the
mf
B.
line of Oe - di - pus, for e - ven now, the
mf


112
S.
low_ up - root it, and they tell a tale of mad - ness
A.
gods, the gods be-low up - root it, tell a tale of mad - ness, of mad - ness
T.
gods be - low up - root it, and they tell_ a tale of mad - ness
B.
gods be - low up - root it and they tell, they tell a tale of mad - ness


E
118
S.
mired in blood through dus-ty sac - ri-fice. Zeus, how
* NB enharmony
A.
mired in blood through dus - ty sac - ri - fice. O_ Zeus,
T.
mired in blood through dus - ty sac - ri - fice, sac - ri-fice. Zeus, how
B.
mired in blood through dus - ty sac - ri - fice, sac - ri - fice. Zeus,


126
S.
might we mor-tal men per-vert and curb your power, which nei-ther sleep nor tire-less months can
A.
we men per-vert and curb your power, which nei-ther sleep nor tire-less months can
T.
might we mor-tal men per-vert and curb your power, nei - ther sleep nor tire-less months can
B.
we men per-vert and curb your power, nei - ther sleep nor tire-less months can
mf


132
S.
wear-y hour by hour? The law you give is ab - so-lute for those who live be - low, that no-one
A.
wear-y hour by hour? The law you give is ab - so-lute for those who live be - low, that no-one
T.
wear-y hour by hour? The law you give is ab - so-lute for those who live be - low, that no-one
B.
wear-y. The law you give is ab - so-lute for those who live be - low,
mf
mp

F

138

S. lives a bound-less life. Hope, it ran-ges and de - ran - ges ev'-ry

A. lives a bound-less life not know-ing a ca - lam - i - ty. Hope de - ran - ges ev'-ry

T. lives a bound-less life. Hope, it ran-ges and de - ran -

B. no - one lives not know-ing a ca - lam - i - ty. Hope de - ran -

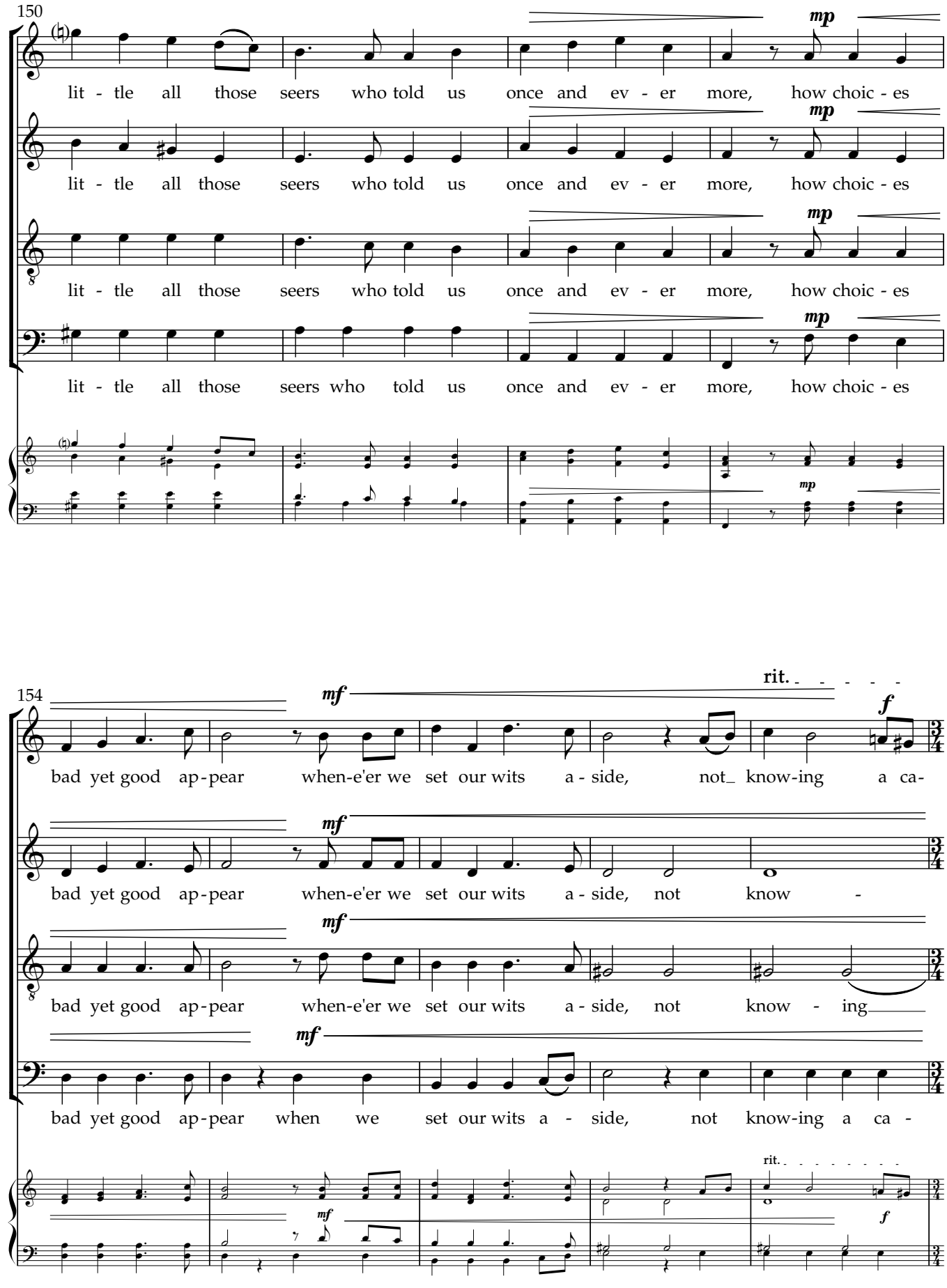
144

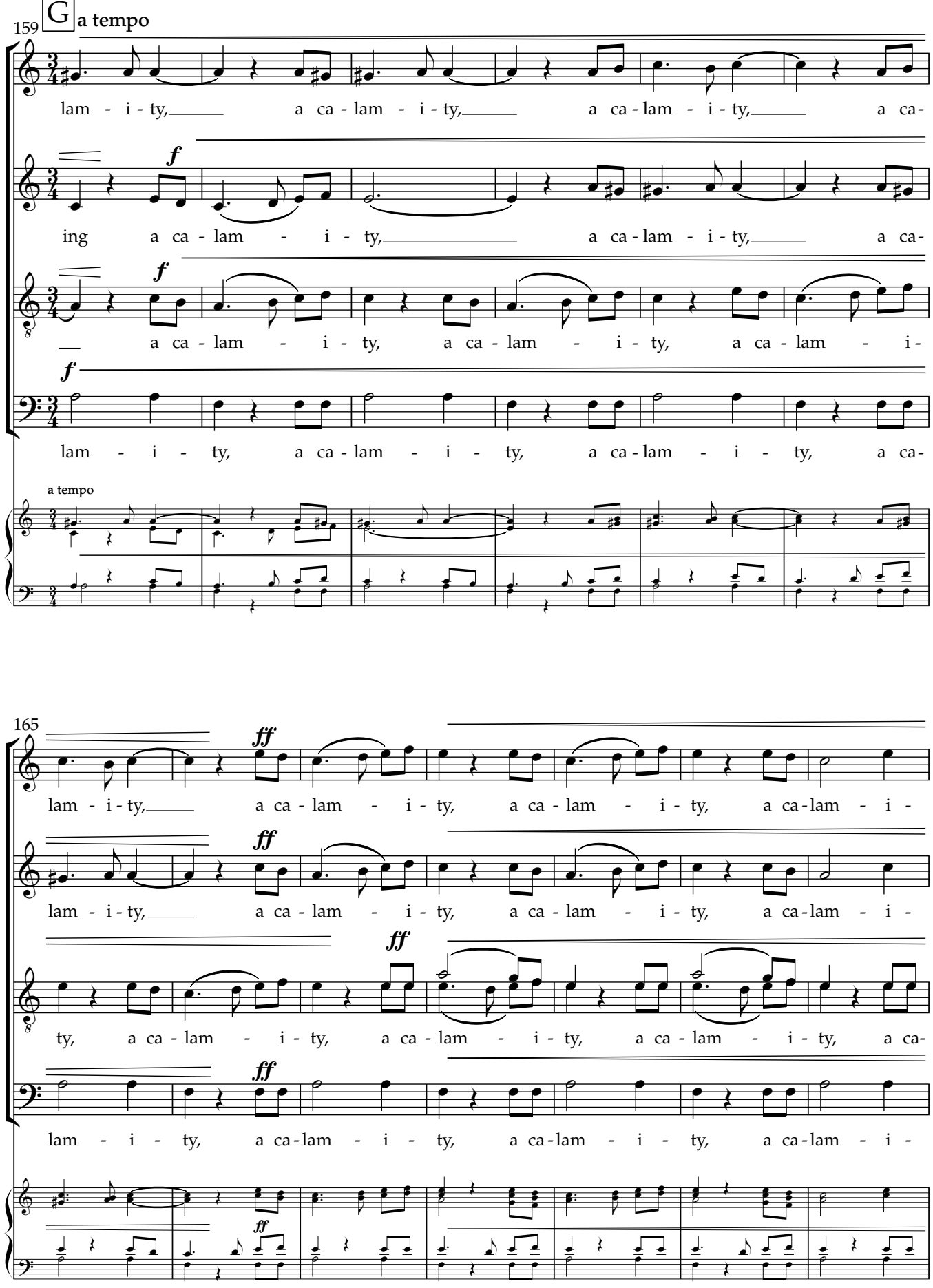
S. man in search of gain, yet of-ten u - ses and a - bu - ses the frail in truth and brain. We reck-on

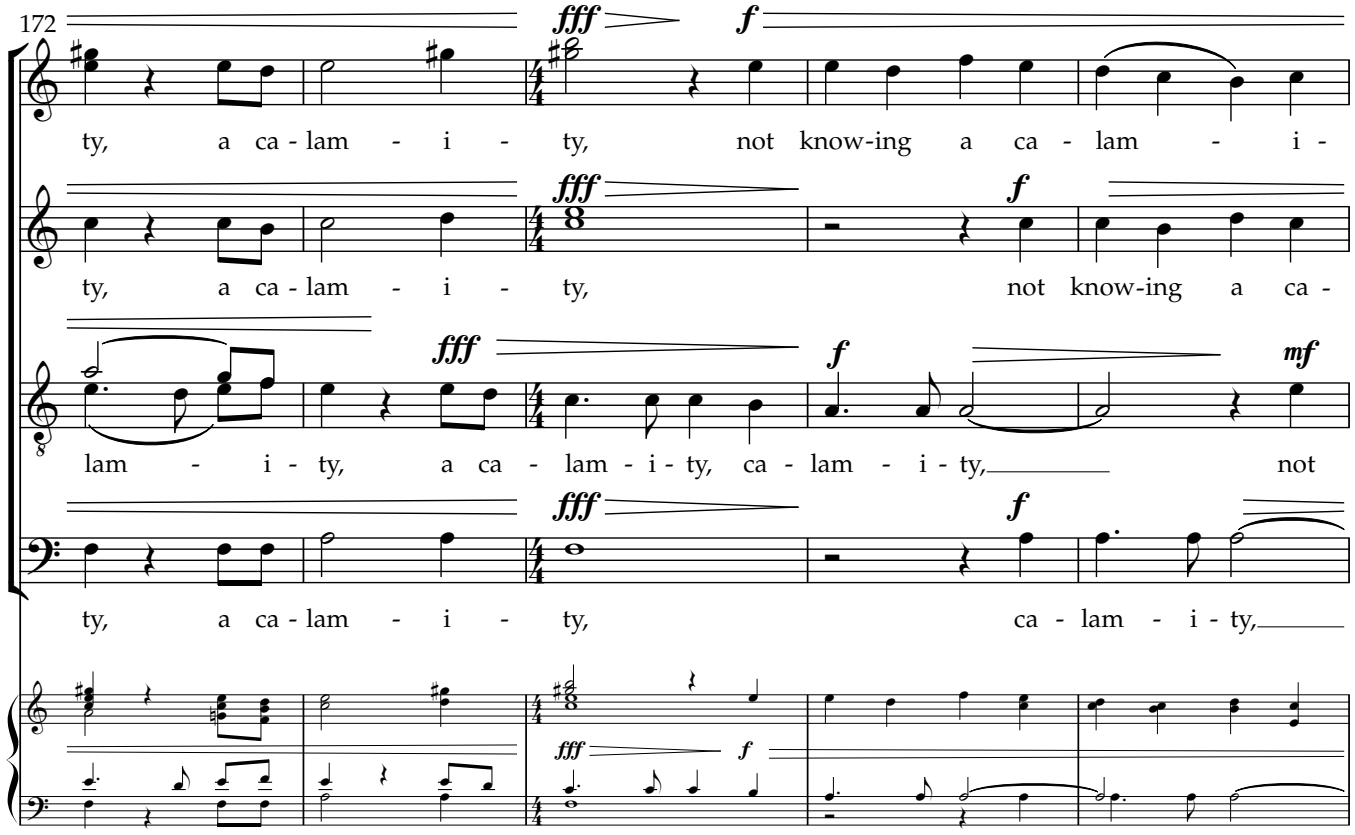
A. man in search of gain, yet of-ten u - ses and a - bu - ses the frail in truth and brain. We reck-on

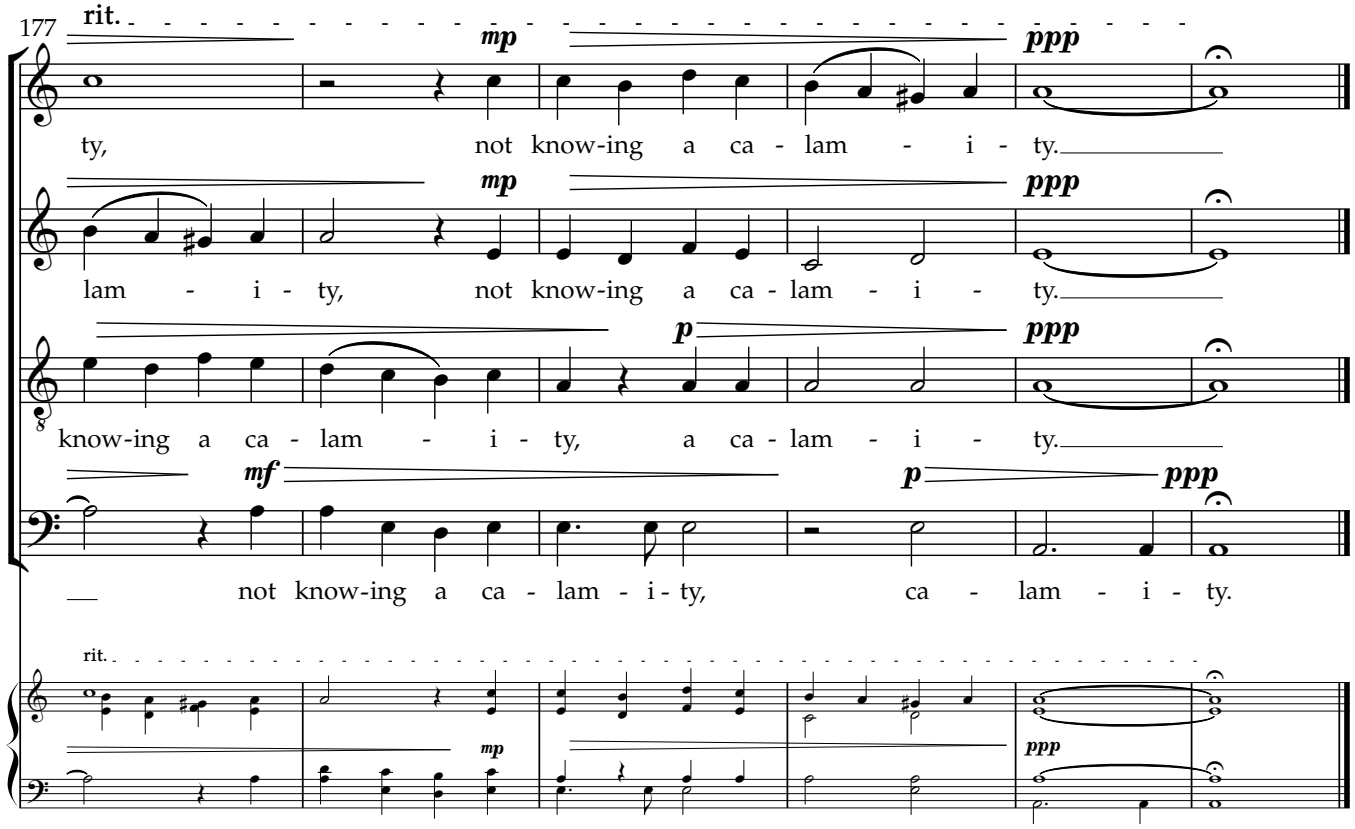
T. ges, yet a - bu - ses the frail in truth and brain. We reck-on

B. ges, yet a - bu - ses the frail in truth. We reck - on


150
S.
A.
T.
B.
mp
lit - tle all those seers who told us once and ev - er more, how choic - es
lit - tle all those seers who told us once and ev - er more, how choic - es
lit - tle all those seers who told us once and ev - er more, how choic - es
lit - tle all those seers who told us once and ev - er more, how choic - es
mp
154
mf
rit.
f
bad yet good ap-pear when-e'er we set our wits a - side, not_ know-ing a ca-
bad yet good ap-pear when-e'er we set our wits a - side, not know -
bad yet good ap-pear when-e'er we set our wits a - side, not know - ing
bad yet good ap-pear when we set our wits a - side, not know-ing a ca -


159
G
a tempo
S.
A.
T.
B.
lam - i - ty, a ca - lam - i - ty, a ca - lam - i - ty, a ca-
ing a ca - lam - i - ty, a ca - lam - i - ty, a ca-
a ca - lam - i - ty, a ca - lam - i - ty, a ca - lam - i-
lam - i - ty, a ca - lam - i - ty, a ca - lam - i - ty, a ca-
a tempo
165
lam - i - ty, a ca - lam - i - ty, a ca - lam - i - ty, a ca-lam - i -
lam - i - ty, a ca - lam - i - ty, a ca - lam - i - ty, a ca-lam - i -
ty, a ca - lam - i - ty, a ca - lam - i - ty, a ca - lam - i - ty, a ca-
lam - i - ty, a ca-lam - i - ty, a ca-lam - i - ty, a ca-lam - i -


172
S.
A.
T.
B.
fff
f
mf
ty, a ca - lam - i - ty, not know-ing a ca - lam - i -
ty, a ca - lam - i - ty, not know-ing a ca -
lam - i - ty, a ca - lam - i - ty, ca - lam - i - ty, not
ty, a ca - lam - i - ty, ca - lam - i - ty,


177
rit.
S.
A.
T.
B.
mp
p
mf
ppp
ty, not know-ing a ca - lam - i - ty.
lam - i - ty, not know-ing a ca - lam - i - ty.
know-ing a ca - lam - i - ty, a ca - lam - i - ty.
not know-ing a ca - lam - i - ty, ca - lam - i - ty.