Lux Caelestis

I. Yehi-or
II. At toi Atrem
III. Pabhassara Sutta
IV. Gayatri Mantra
V. Lux aeterna

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Timothy Kramer

2011

Lux Caelestis

PROGRAM NOTES

In 2004 I composed my ***Lux aeterna*** for Scott Macpherson and the Trinity University choir. After hearing a recording of the piece from a performance in the Cologne Cathedral, I started to think about making a larger cycle that would address the subject of light from different religious perspectives all sung in original languages. ***Lux Caelestis*** (Celestial Light) is the final result of that process. In looking for texts I considered many sources, including texts from the Islamic faith to Native American religious practices to texts from Newton about the essence of light. In some cases, I could not find the right poetry. In other cases, out of respect, I could not set the text. (While it is possible to recite the Quran, it is objectionable to some Muslims to set and sing verses from the Quran.) I considered a very beautiful poem from the great Sufi poet, Rumi, but it was only available in an English translation by Coleman Barks and not available in a transliteration in the original Persian. It nevertheless, it captured the overriding philosophy of this cycle. An excerpt of the poem reads as follows:

> All religions, all this singing
> One Song.
> The differences are just
> Illusion and vanity.
>
> The Sun's light looks
> A little different on this wall than
> It does on that wall,
> And a lot different on this other one,
> But it's still one light

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I finally decided that for an unaccompanied work, five movements would be a good limit. I had found texts from Judaism, Buddhism, Hinduism, and Christianity, but needed another. The poet Robert Pinksy suggested to me that I look for Zoroastrian texts on the idea of fire. This rounded out the cycle perfectly.

The cycle begins with the creation of light (Genesis) and the words “Yehi-or” - let there be light. The piece opens with a solo similar to Jewish cantillation and the choir enters on the creation of light. The next piece comes from the Zoroastrian scriptures and is sung in Avestan, the only place where this language is still used. These excerpts are some of the oldest texts in the cycle (about 3800 years old) and some are hymns attributed to Zoroaster himself. They speak of Asha (divine Right) and fire as the manifestation of the light of God. Perhaps the first type of monotheistic religion, Zoroastrianism influenced the Abrahamic faiths and there are many traits that we see in other faith traditions (e.g., lighting a candle before a service). The work sets different words for fire (Atrem, Atarsh, Athro) and uses the metrical lines of the hymns in rhythmic strophes. The third text comes from Theravada Buddhism and the Pali canon. Here it is the mind that is luminous, not defiled by incoming thoughts. In this piece I played with the sound of the syllables as much as the words themselves. A pentatonic tune in a different

key is then juxtaposed against the opening pitch collection, finally breaking through into a bright ending. The fourth text is a widely known and loved Sanskrit mantra from the Hindu tradition, the ***Gayatri Mantra***. Translations vary widely, but guidance from divine light is a prominent theme. I used drones for the sacred syllable of "Om" and I wanted to make sure that the rhythm closely followed the traditional way this mantra is sung. Repeated three times, this is the longest piece in the cycle. The last work is the ***Lux aeterna***, only slightly altered from the 2004 version. Here light is an eternal concept of love, peace, and rest. All of the works in the cycle have material drawn from this last piece, with "light-motives" that reflect different aspects of light, the eternal, God, and fire throughout the cycle.

This work was supported, in part, by a grant from the Artist Foundation of San Antonio.

PROGRAM LISTING

Lux Caelestis

I. Yehi-or
II. At toi Atrem
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TEXTS and TRANSLATIONS

Yehi-or
(Genesis 1: vs. 1-5)

Bereshit bara Elohim et hashamayim ve'et ha'arets. Veha'arets haytah tohu vavohu vechoshech al-peney tehom veruach Elohim merachefet al-peney hamayim.

Vayomer Elohim yehi-or vayehi-or.

Vayar Elohim et-ha'or ki-tov vayavdel Elohim beyn ha'or uveyn hachoshech.

Vayikra Elohim la-or yom velachoshech kara laylah vayehi-erev vayehi-voker yom echad.

Let There be Light

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.

And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness.

And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day.

At toi Atrem
(Yasna 34-4, 43-4, and Haptan Yasht 36:3)

At toi Ātrem Ahurā aojonghvantem ashā usemahi

Ātarsh voi Mazdāo Ahurahyā ahi, Mainyeush voi ahyā spenishto ahi

Thwahyā garemā āthro ashā-aojangho, hyat moi Vangheush haze jimat Manangho

Of Thy Fire

O Ahura Mazda we ardently desire Thy mighty Fire, through Asha.

O Fire you are the symbol of Ahura Mazda, you are the symbol of the beneficent mind.

And Thou shall come to me through the heat (splendor) of Thy Fire, possessing the strength of righteousness and good mind.

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Pabhassara Sutta
Sutta pitaka, anguttara nikaya, bk. 1(1.5.9 -1.5.10)

Pabhassaramidaṃ bhikkhave cittaṃ, tañca kho āgantukehi upakkilesehi upakkiliṭṭhanti.

Pabhassaramidaṃ bhikkhave cittaṃ, tañca kho āgantukehi upakkilesehi vippamuttanti.

Luminous Discourse

Luminous, monks, is the mind. And it is defiled by incoming defilements.

Luminous, monks, is the mind. And it is freed from incoming defilements.

Gayatri Mantra
Rig Veda 3.62.10
(preceded by the *mahāvyāhṛti*)

Aum
bhūr bhuvaḥ svaḥ

tat savitur vareṇyaṃ
bhargo devasya dhīmahi
dhiyo yo naḥ pracodayāt

Hymn Prayer (to Savitur)
(Goddess Gayatri)

O thou existence Absolute, Creator of the three dimensions

We contemplate upon thy divine light.
May He stimulate our intellect and bestow upon us true knowledge

Lux aeterna
(from the *Mass for the Dead*)

Lux aeterna luceat eis, Domine,
cum sanctis tuis in aeternam,
quia pius es.
Requiem aeternam, dona eis, Domine,
et lux perpetua luceat eis

Light Eternal

Let light eternal shine upon them, O Lord,
with thy saints forever,
for Thou art merciful.
Rest eternal grant them, O Lord,
and let perpetual light shine upon them.

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Yehi - or

Mvt. I from *Lux Caelestis*

Timothy Kramer

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Genesis 1: vs. 1-5

Bereshit bara Elohim et hashamayim ve'et ha'arets.

Veha'arets hayetah tohu vavohu vechoshech al-peney tehom
veruach Elohim merachefet al-peney hamayim.

Vayomer Elohim yehi-or vayehi-or.

Vayar Elohim et-ha'or ki-tov vayavdel Elohim beyn ha'or uveyn hachoshech.

Vayikra Elohim la-or yom velachoshech kara laylah vayehi-erev vayehi-voker yom echad.

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep.
And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

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And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.

And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness.

And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night.
And the evening and the morning were the first day.

Performance Notes:

1. The bass E at the opening should start before the piece, probably during the conductor's bow.

2. The opening soloist may take liberty (within reason) with the rhythm.

3. The "r" in m. 23 is flipped as normal.

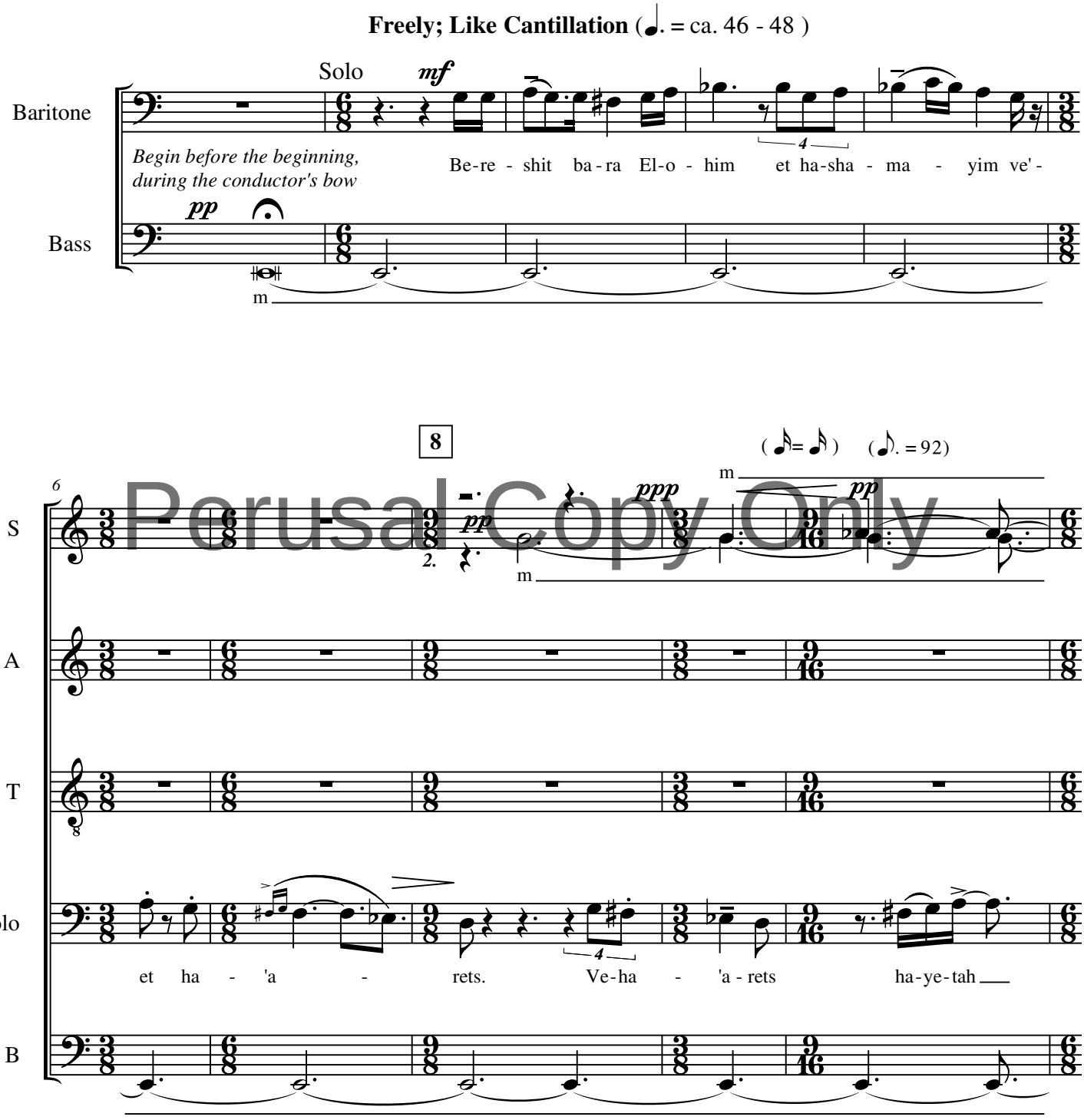
4. The "r" during harmonic singing (m. 25 - 27) should be more of a retroflex "r". See notes on score.

Yehi-or

for Scott MacPherson and the San Antonio Chamber Choir

Genesis 1: 1-5

Timothy Kramer



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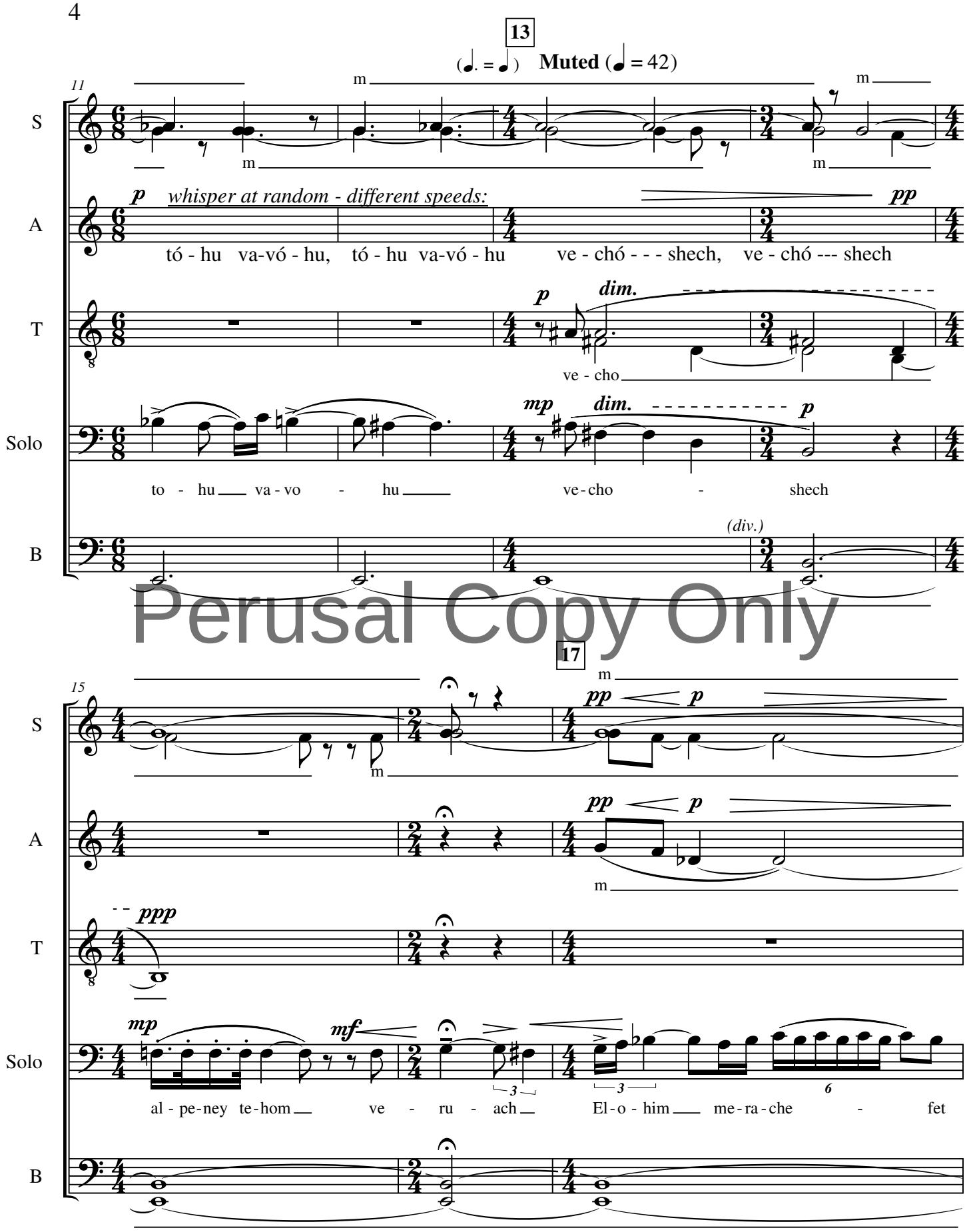

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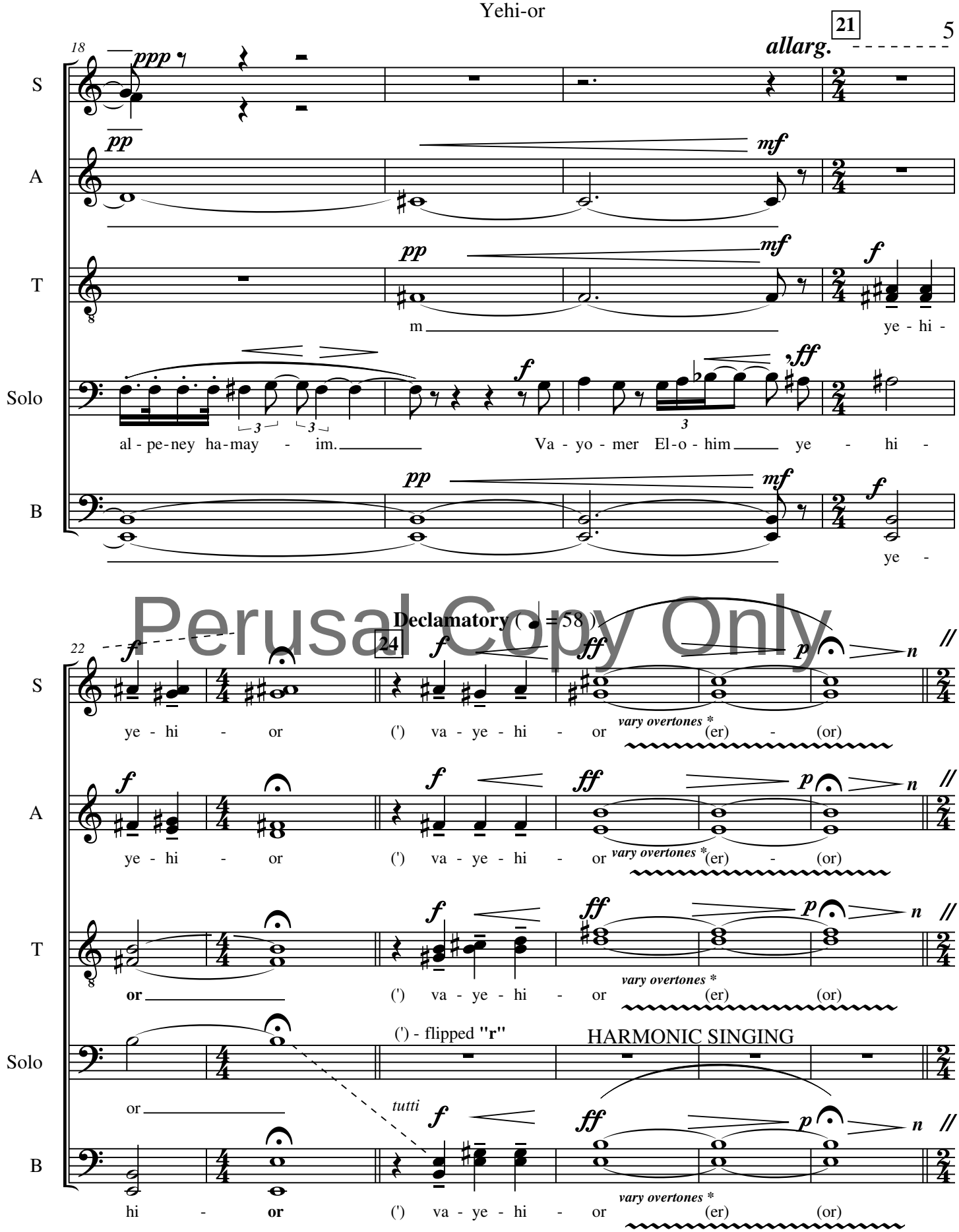

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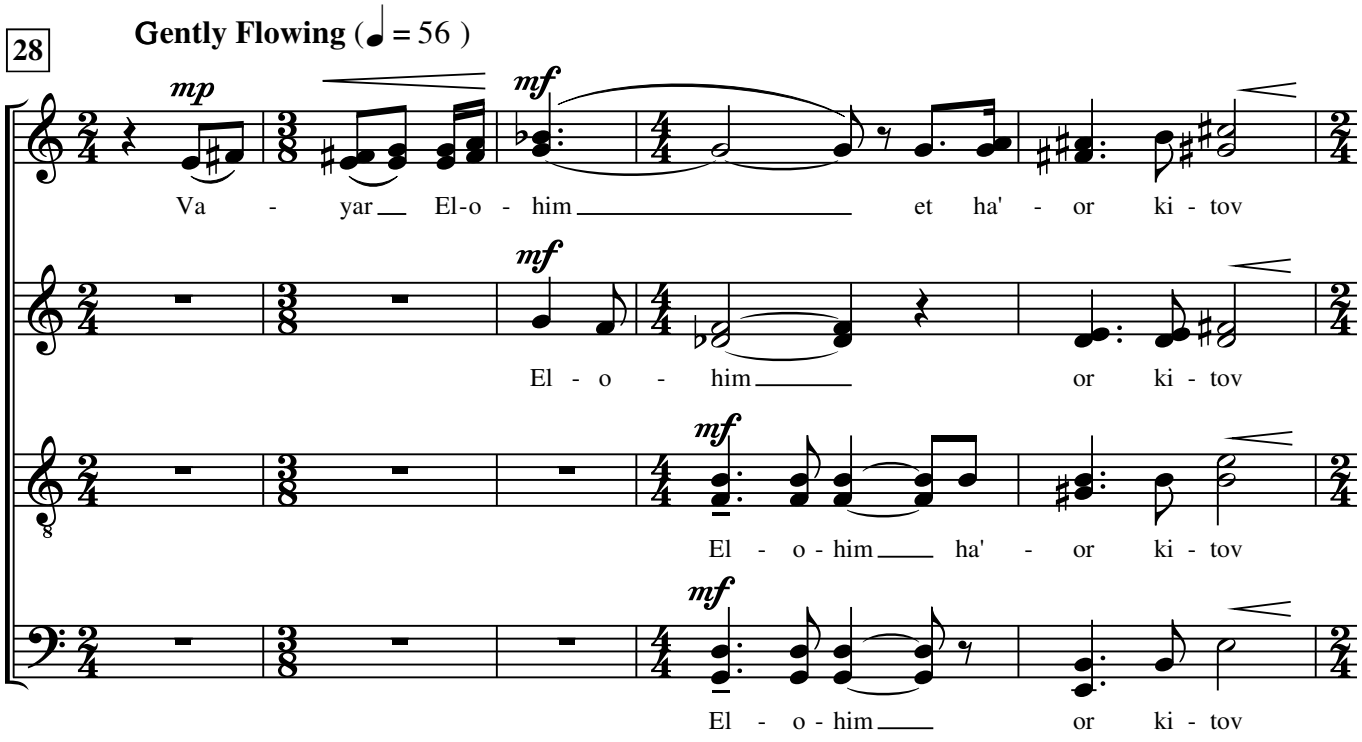
* Vary overtones at random. Slowly moving the tongue to make a severe "r" or "er" sound (retroflex r) should yield the strongest overtones. (It may sound very nasal.) Curl the lips to adjust and change the higher frequencies. The effect may be weaker in the higher parts.



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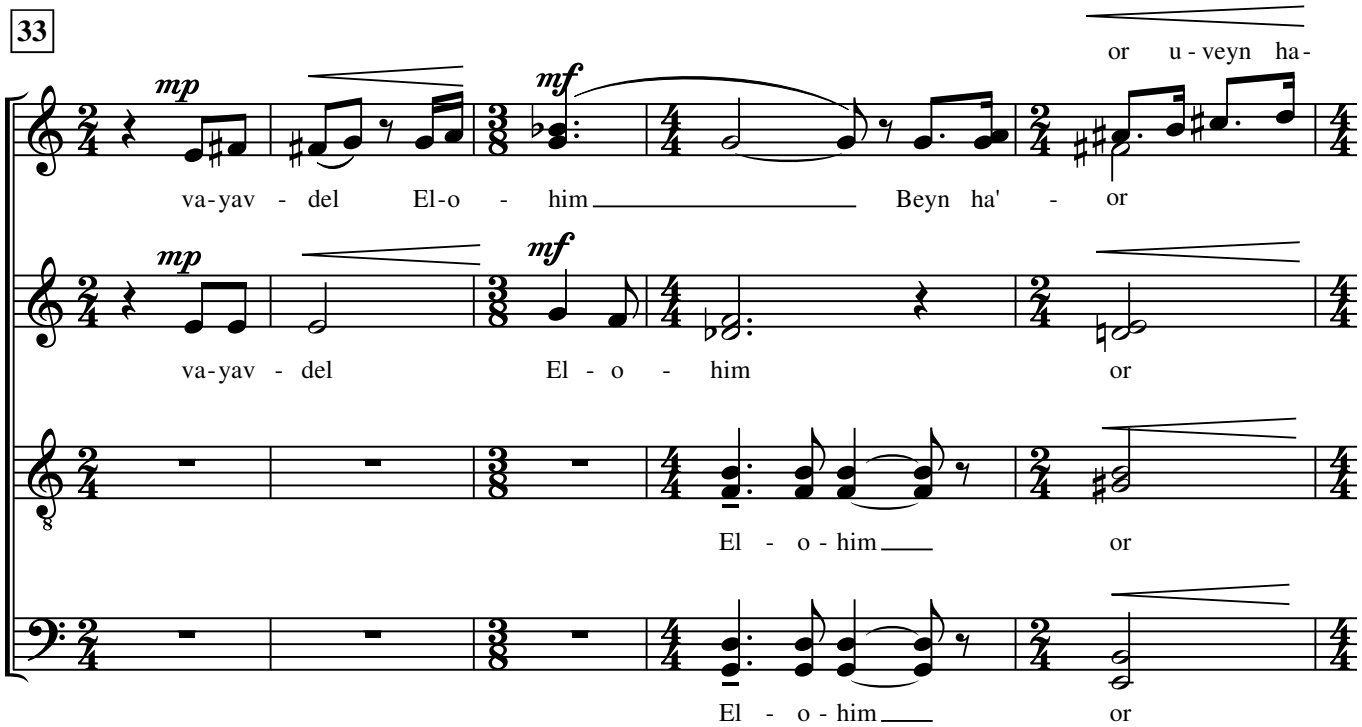

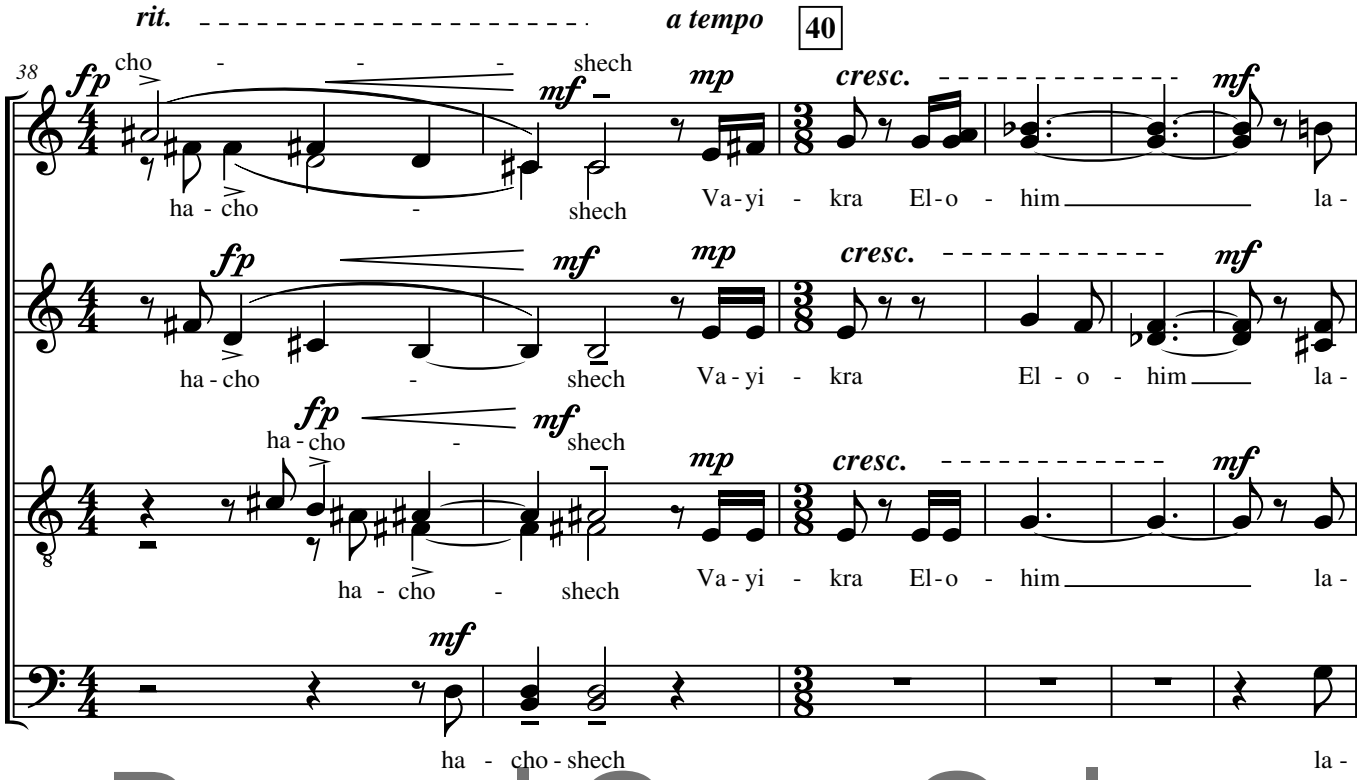

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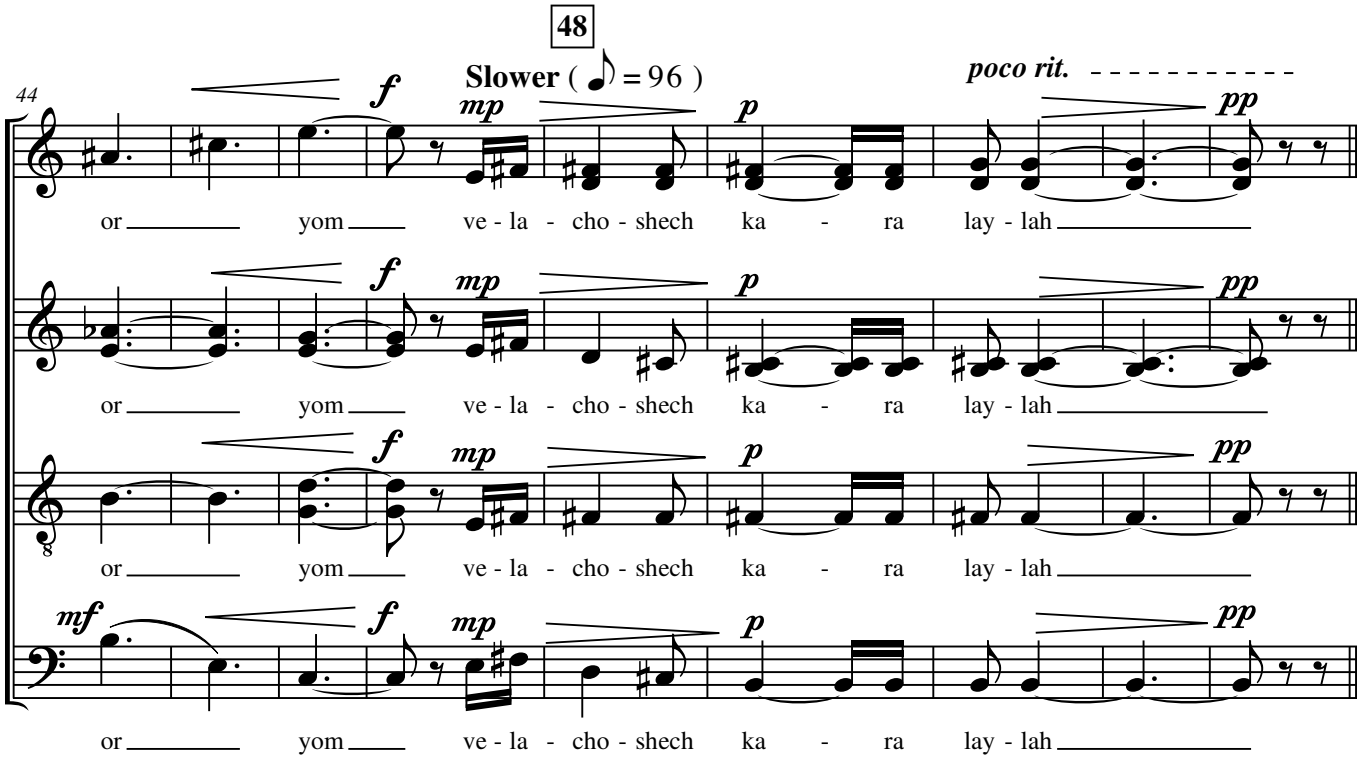

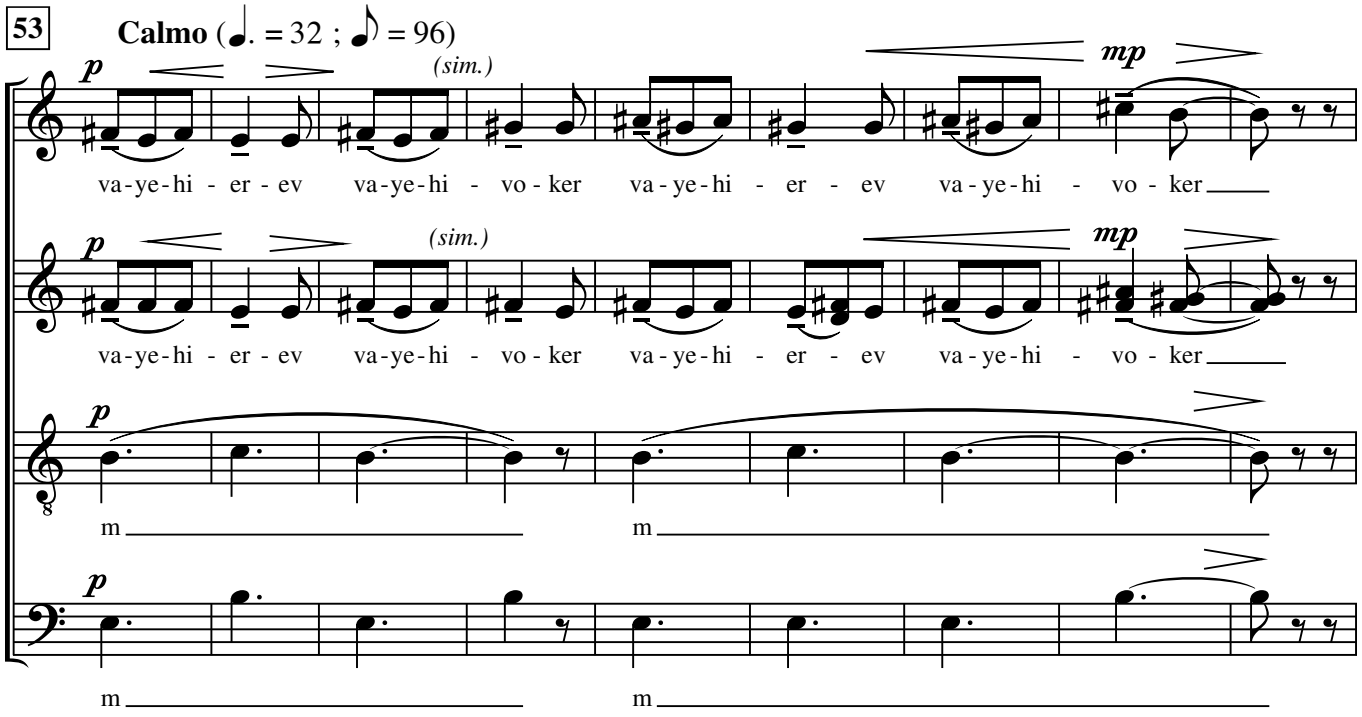

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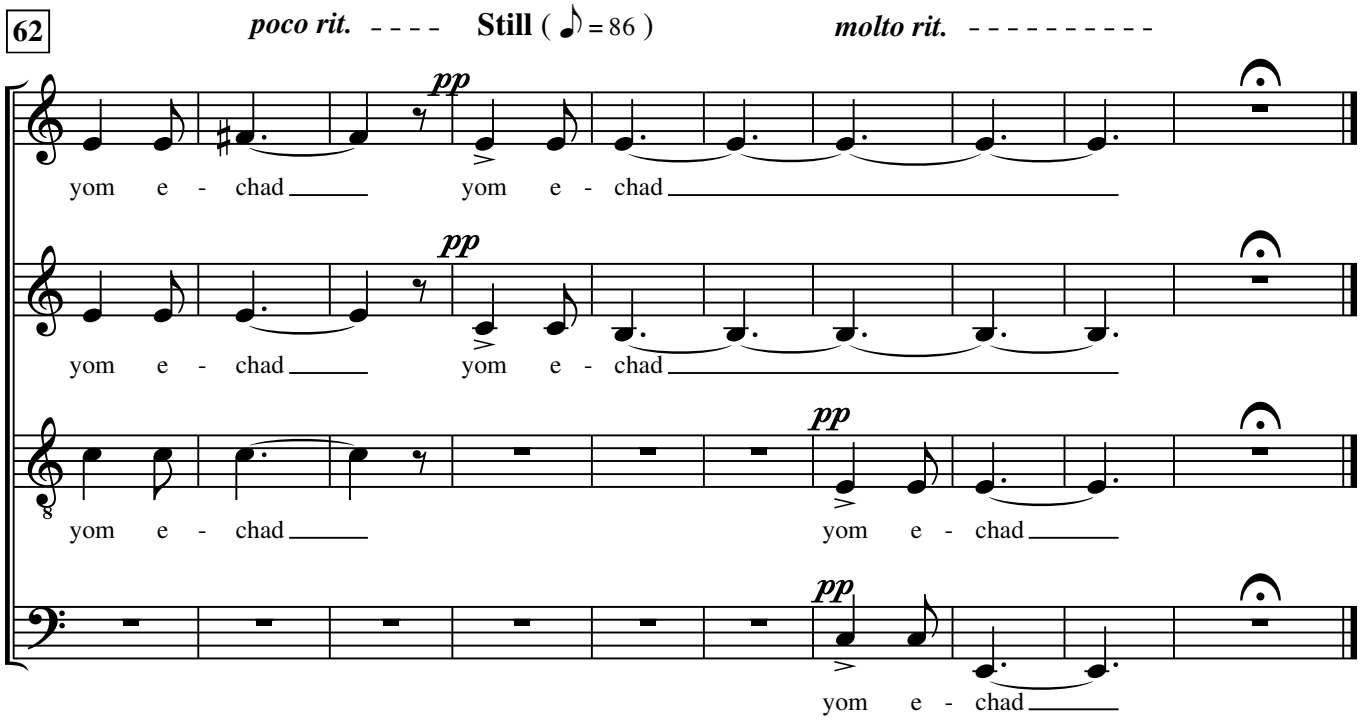

At toi Atrem

Mvt. II from *Lux Caelestis*

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PERFORMANCE NOTES and TEXTS:

Excerpts from Zoroastrian Scriptures (Avesta):

Yasna 34-4:

At toi Ātrem Ahurā aojonghvantem ashā usemahi

O Ahura Mazda we ardently desire Thy mighty Fire, through Asha.

Haptan Yasht (Yasna 36:3):

Ātarsh voi Mazdāo Ahurahyā ahi, Mainyeush voi ahyā spenishto ahi

O Fire you are the symbol of Ahura Mazda, you are the symbol of the beneficent mind.

Yasna 43-4:

Thwahyā garemā āthro ashā-aojangho, hyat moi Vangheush haze jimat Manangho

And (Thou) shall come to me through the heat (splendor) of Thy Fire, possessing the strength of righteousness and good mind.

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Translations by Ervad Gustad Panthaki

Key Words (Translations by Christian Bartholomew, from I.J.S. Taraporewala)

At toi Ātrem = Of thy Fire

Ahura or Mazdāo Ahurahyā = Lord or Lord God

Aojonghvantem = mighty

Asha = concept of Right (Goodness)

Usemahi = we desire (or yearn)

Ātarsh = Fire

Garema = inspiration (splendour)

Āthro = Fire

Hyat moi = then to me

Haze = strength

Jimat =come

Vangheush Manangho or Vohu Mano = concept of Good Mind

Pronunciation Guide:

Transliteration of Avestan is similar to Sanskrit and Pali. All of them use symbols from IAST (International Alphabet of Sanskrit Transliteration) and most sounds can be represented with roman characters as follows:

a as in **a**cross (short)
Ā as in f**a**ther (long)
e as "a" in m**a**de, or sometimes like "e" as in bed.
i as in h**i**t, or **ee** in f**ee**t if at the end of a word (e.g., usemahi = ush-ma-h**ee**)
o as in m**o**re
u as in p**u**t
gh as in Ghana
g as in **g**irl
h as in hen
j as in **j**am
ng as in so**ng**
sh as in **sh**ave
th as in **th**ing
u**se** this syllable is u**sh.** The "s" is sometimes "sh"
v in front of **v**oi – **v**, as in **v**erse.
Very soft in front of ***Vangheush***, like w more than v. The same in **aojonghvantem**
m, **n, p, r, s, z, y** are all like English

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Diphthongs may be two distinct vowels elided:

Toi = toh-ee, as opposed to "toy."
a-o = as **ou** in **ou**t, but with more stress on each vowel.

Some Examples:

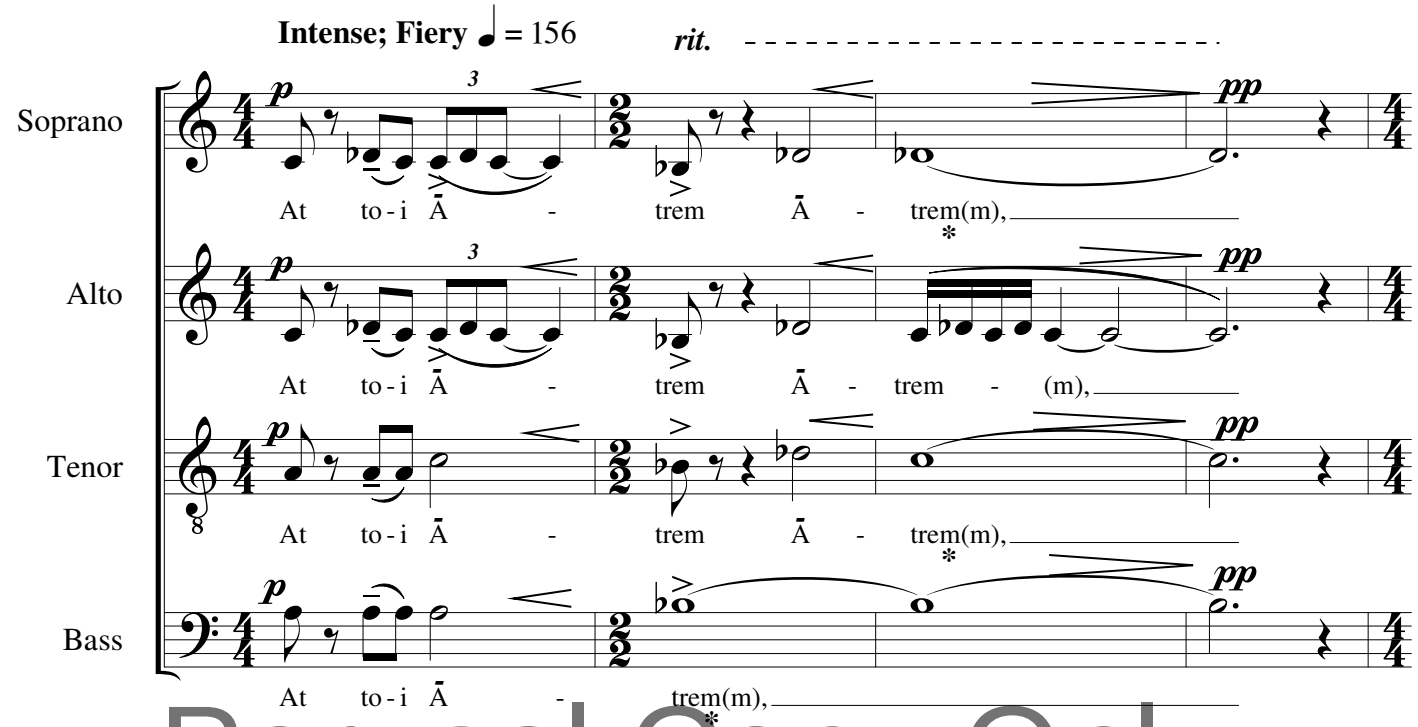
Aojonghvantem = a-o-jong-hwan-tem
Thwahyā = thwa-hwah
Toi Atrem = toh-ee Ah-trem
Mainyeush = Miñ-ya-oosh

At toi Atrem

for Scott MacPherson and the San Antonio Chamber Choir

Avesta:
Yasna 34:4, 43:4, and
Haptan Yasht (Yasna 36:3)

Timothy Kramer



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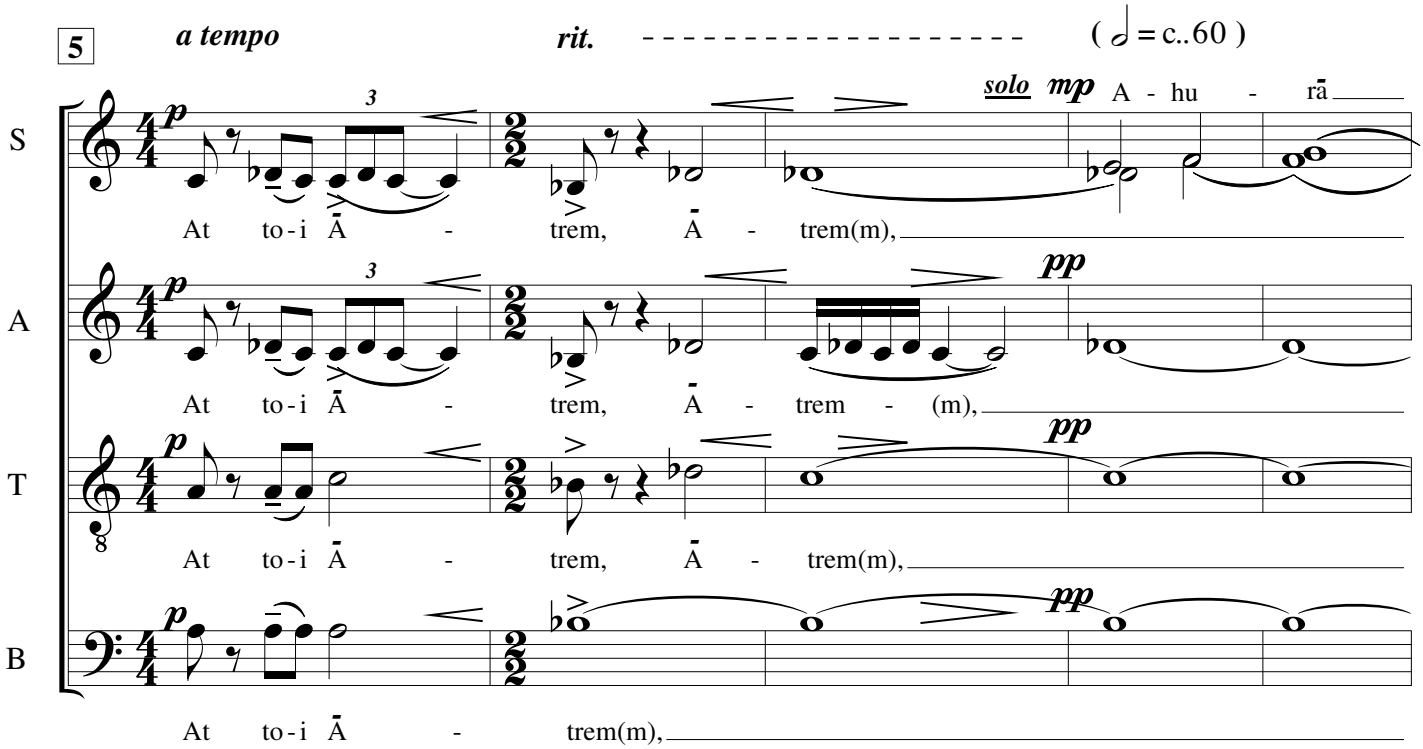

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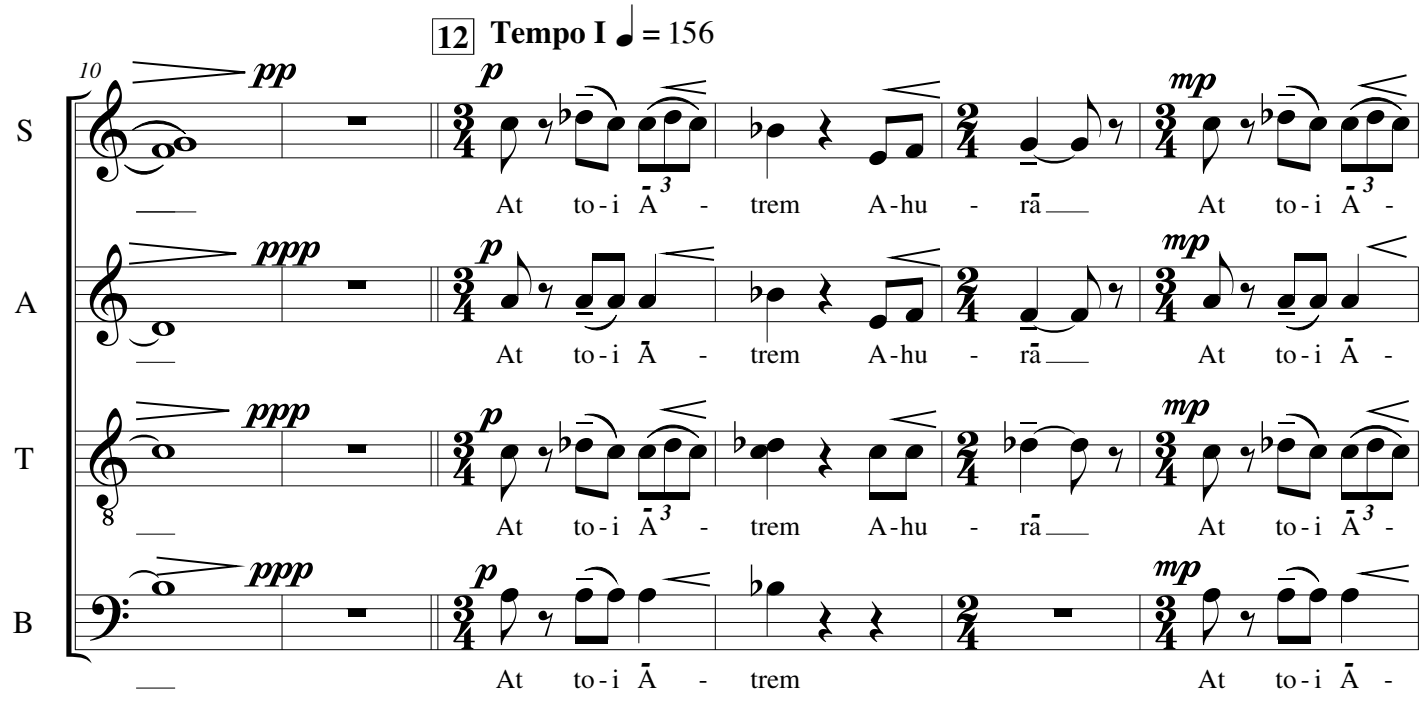

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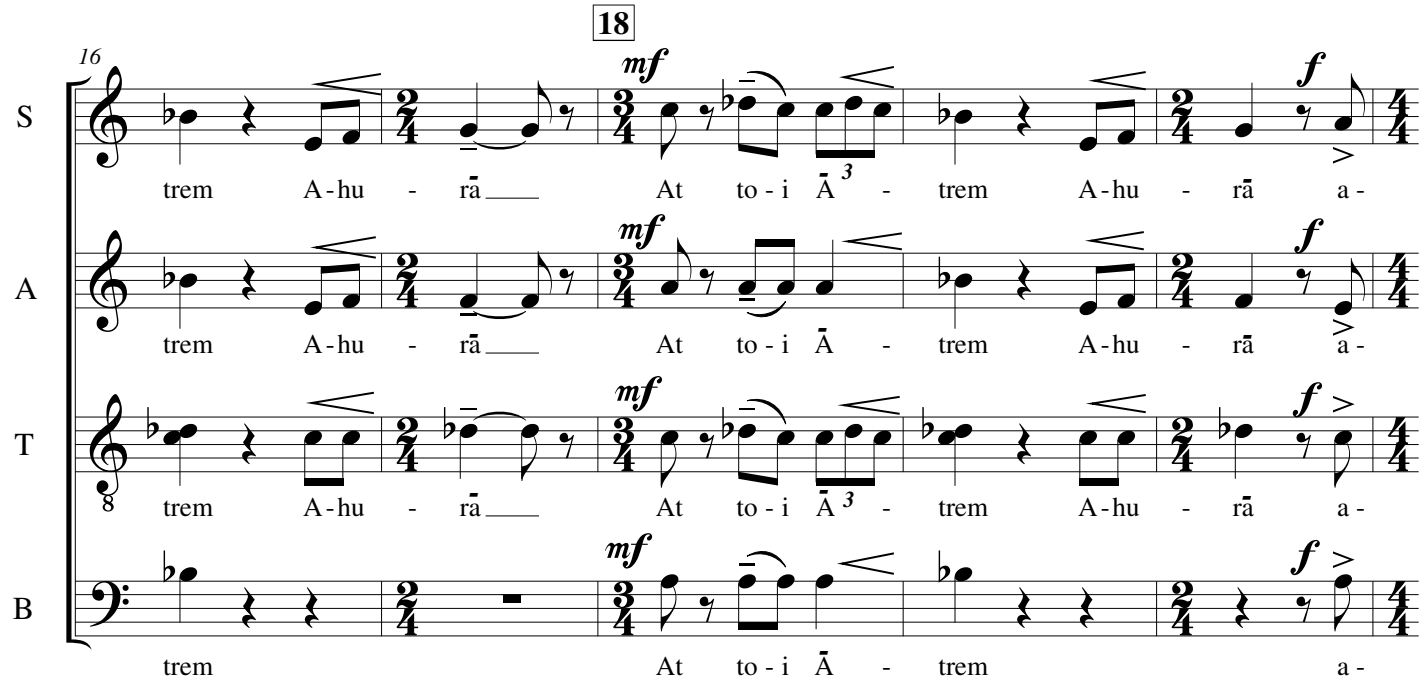

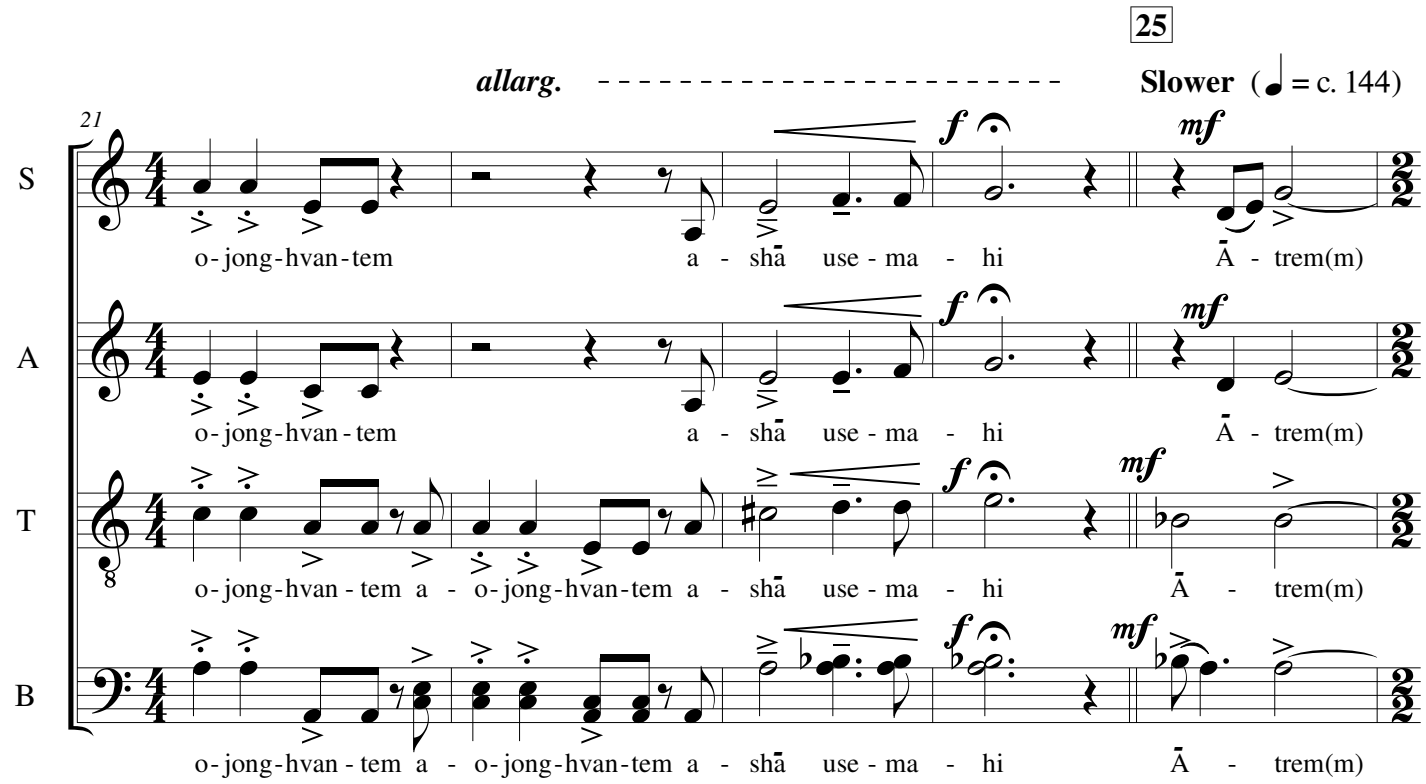

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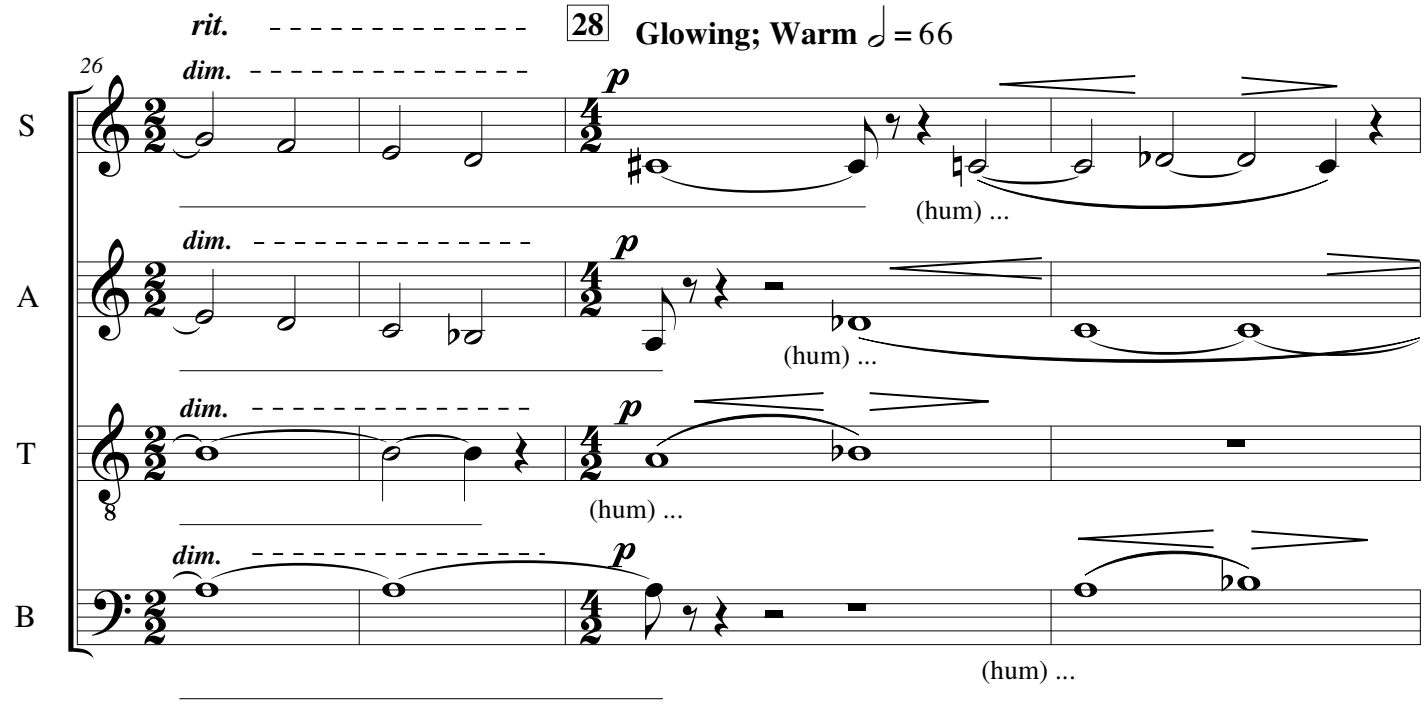

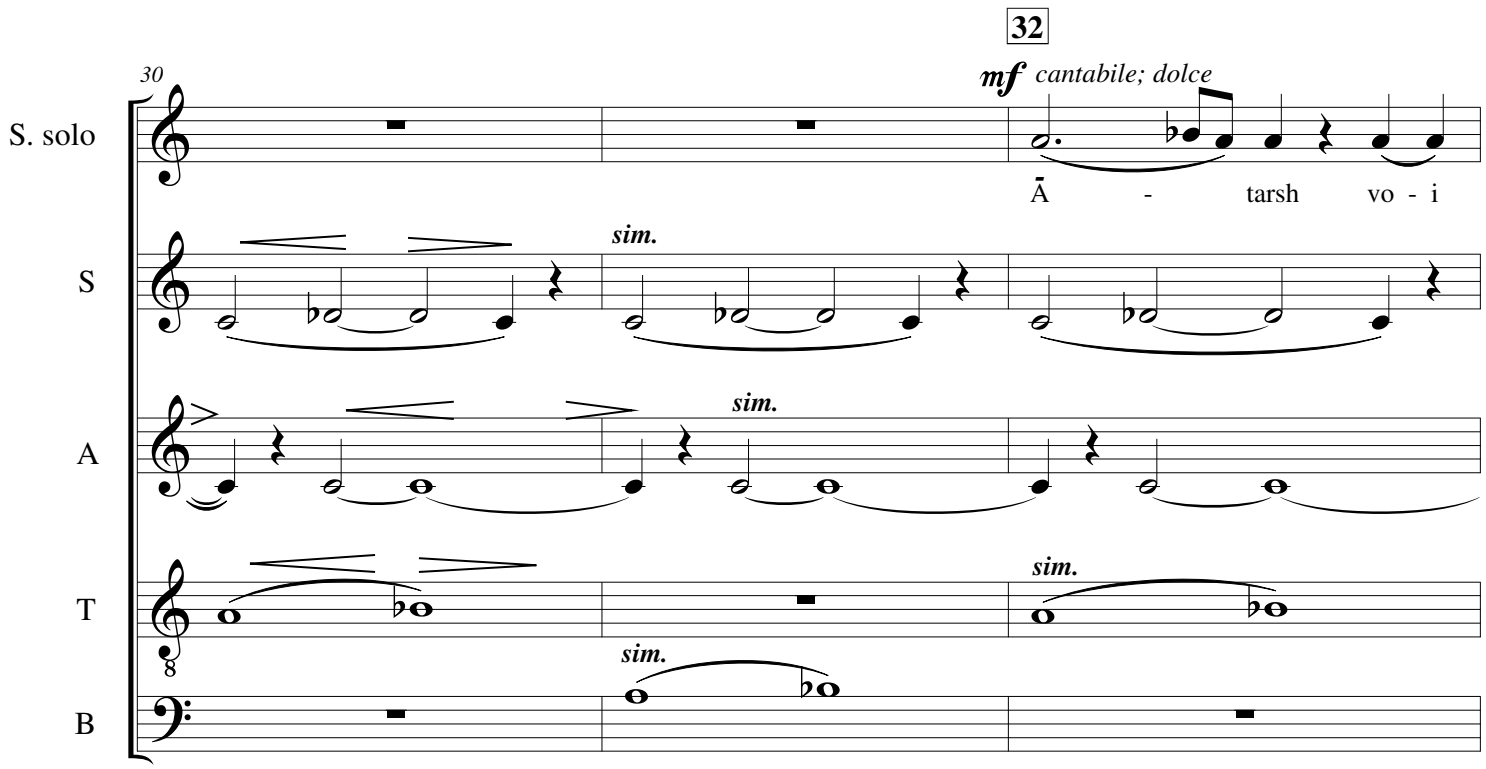

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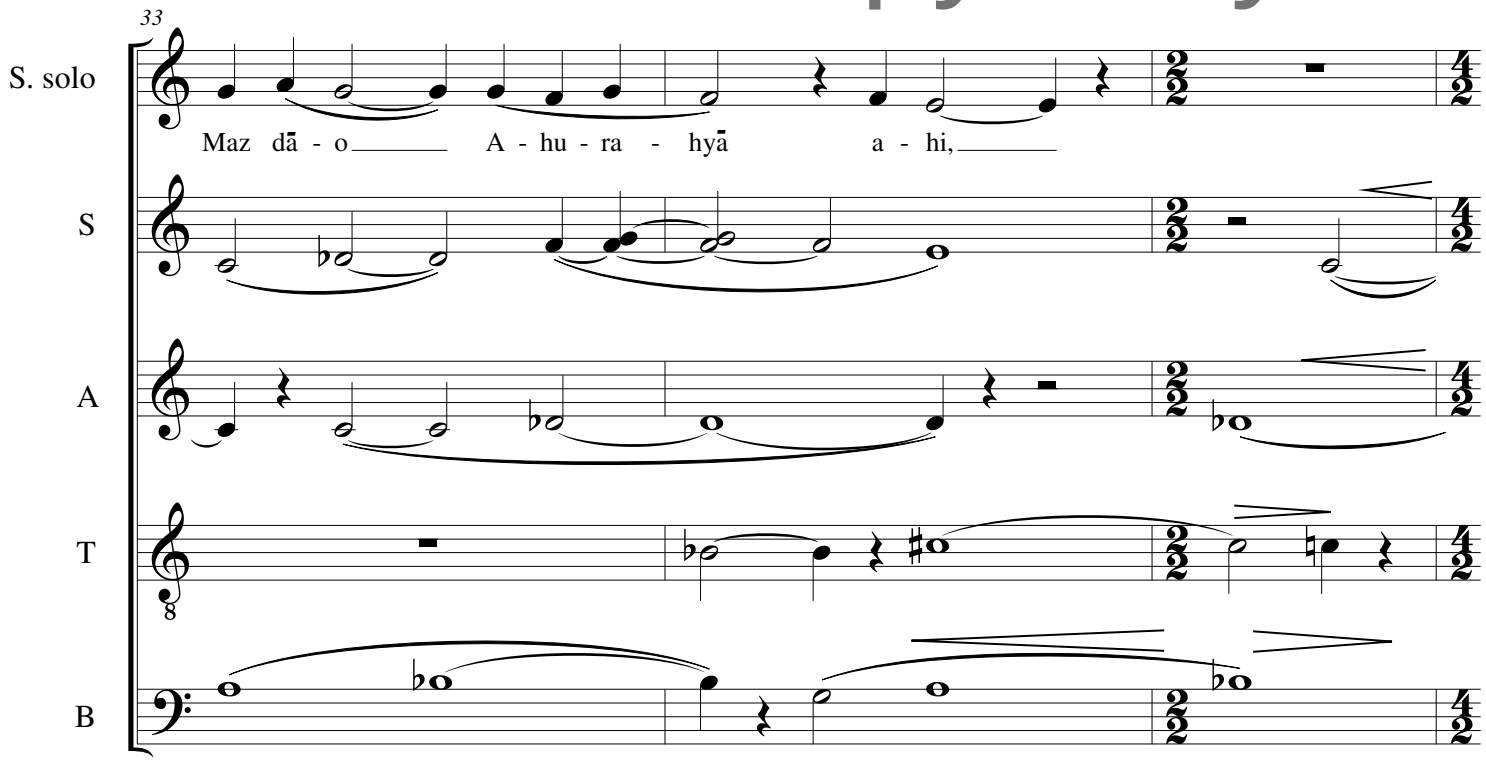

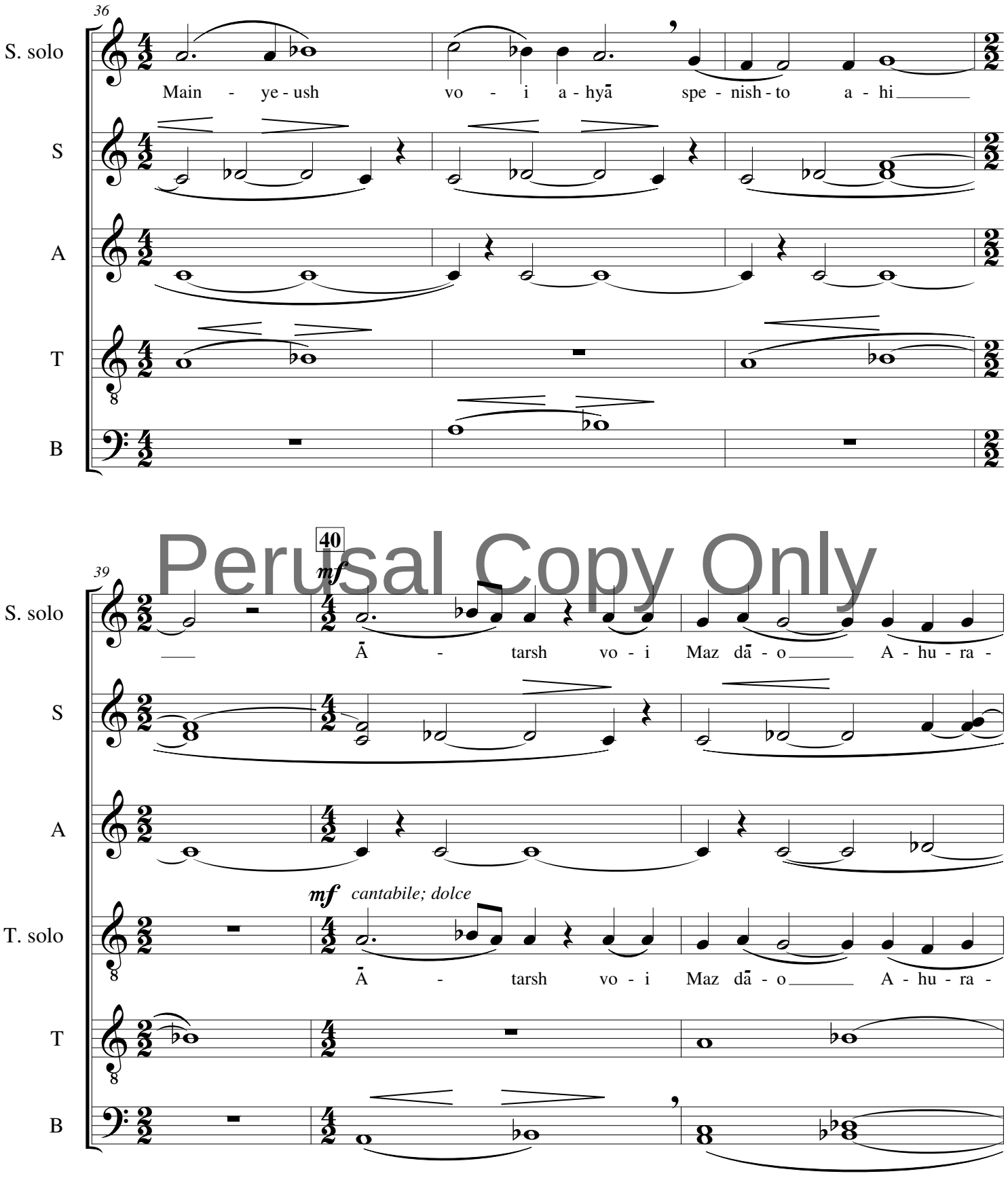

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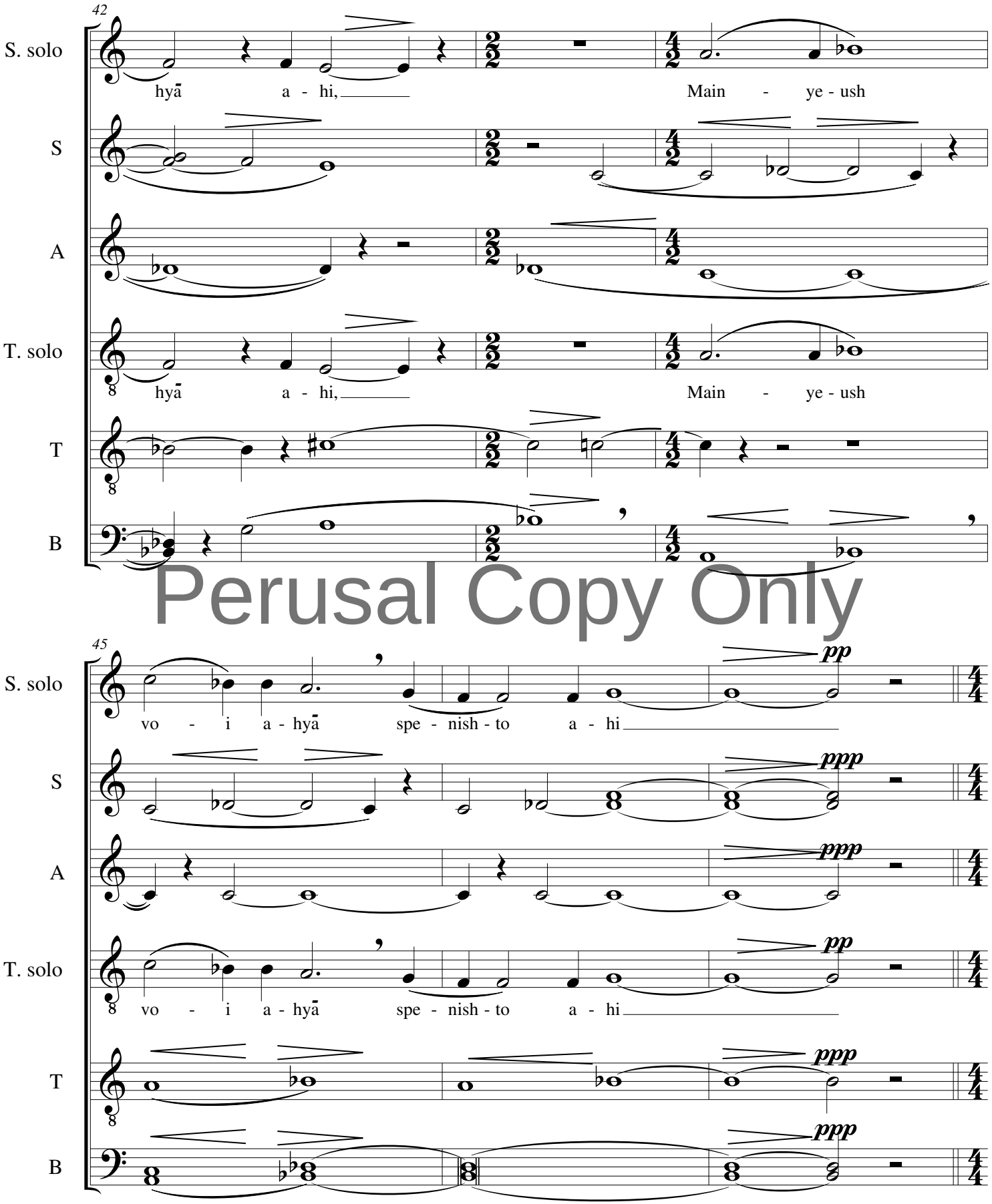

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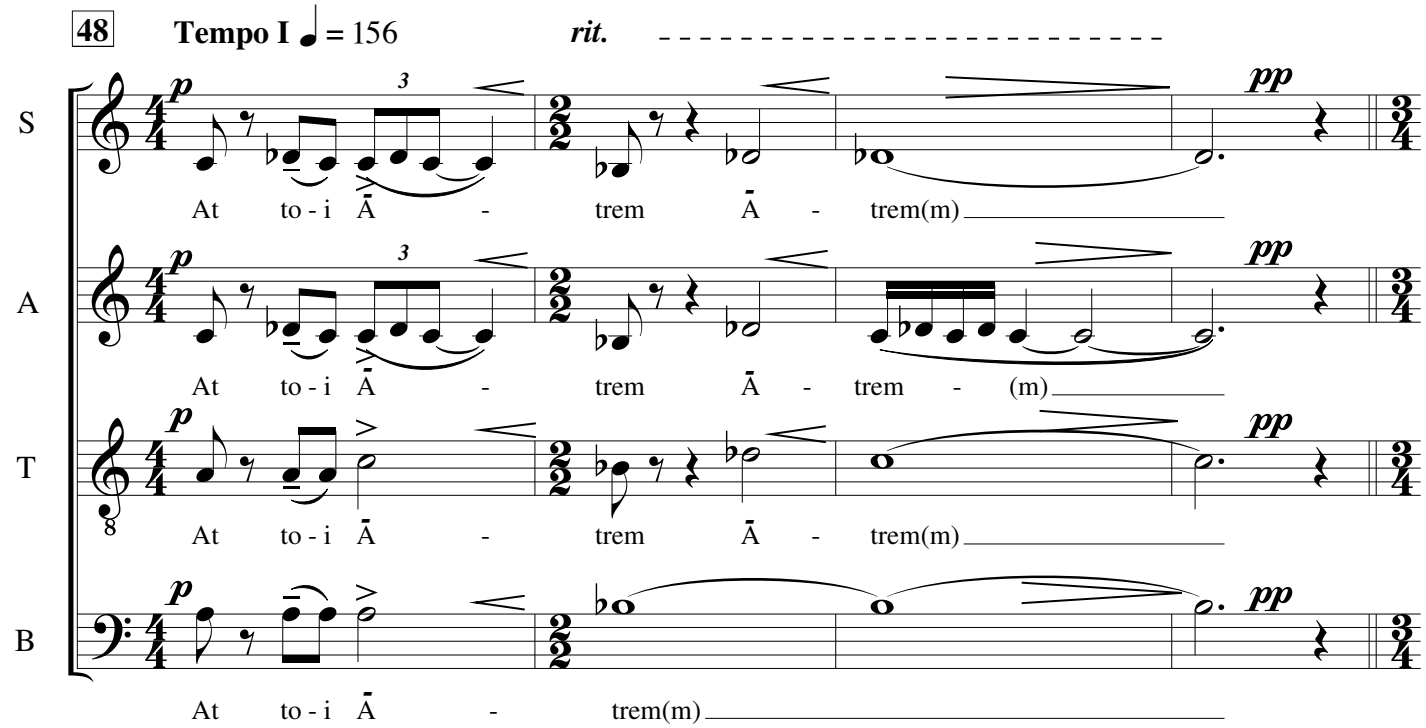

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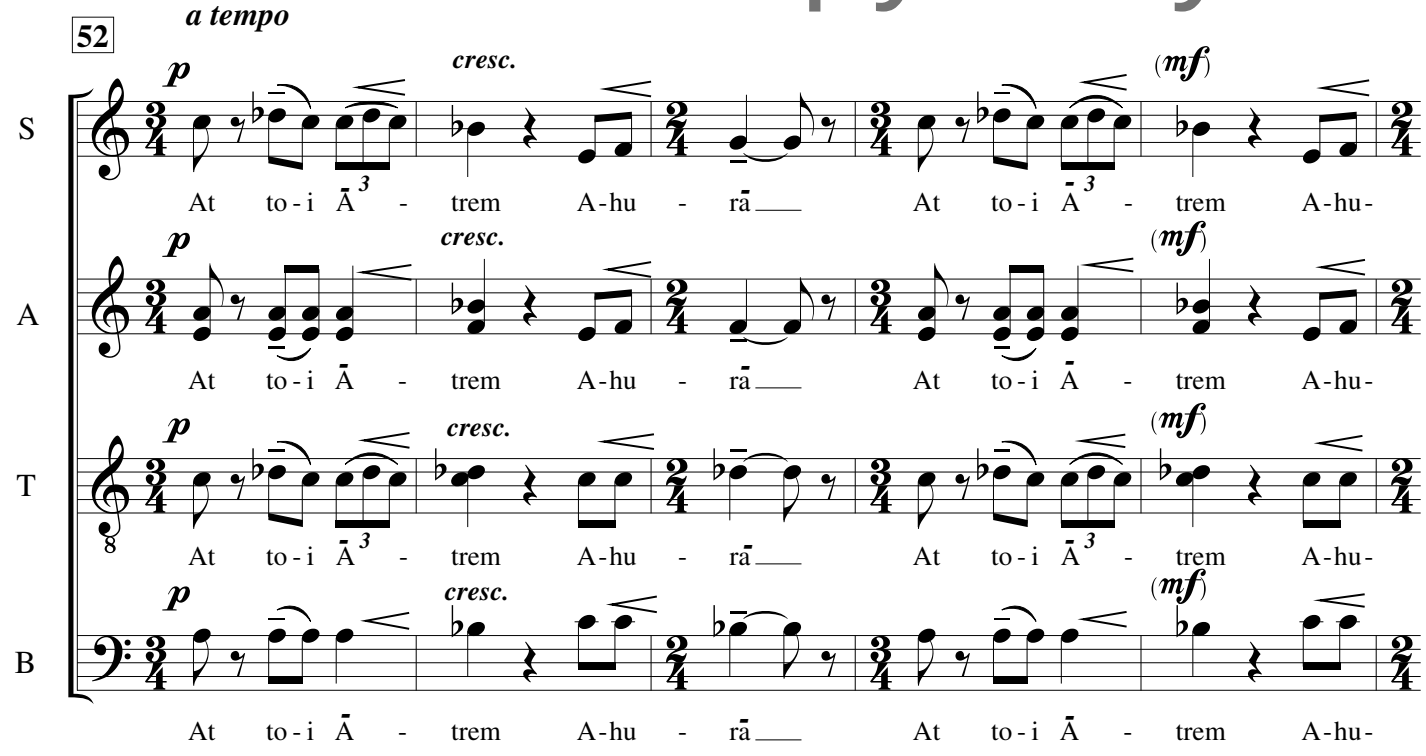

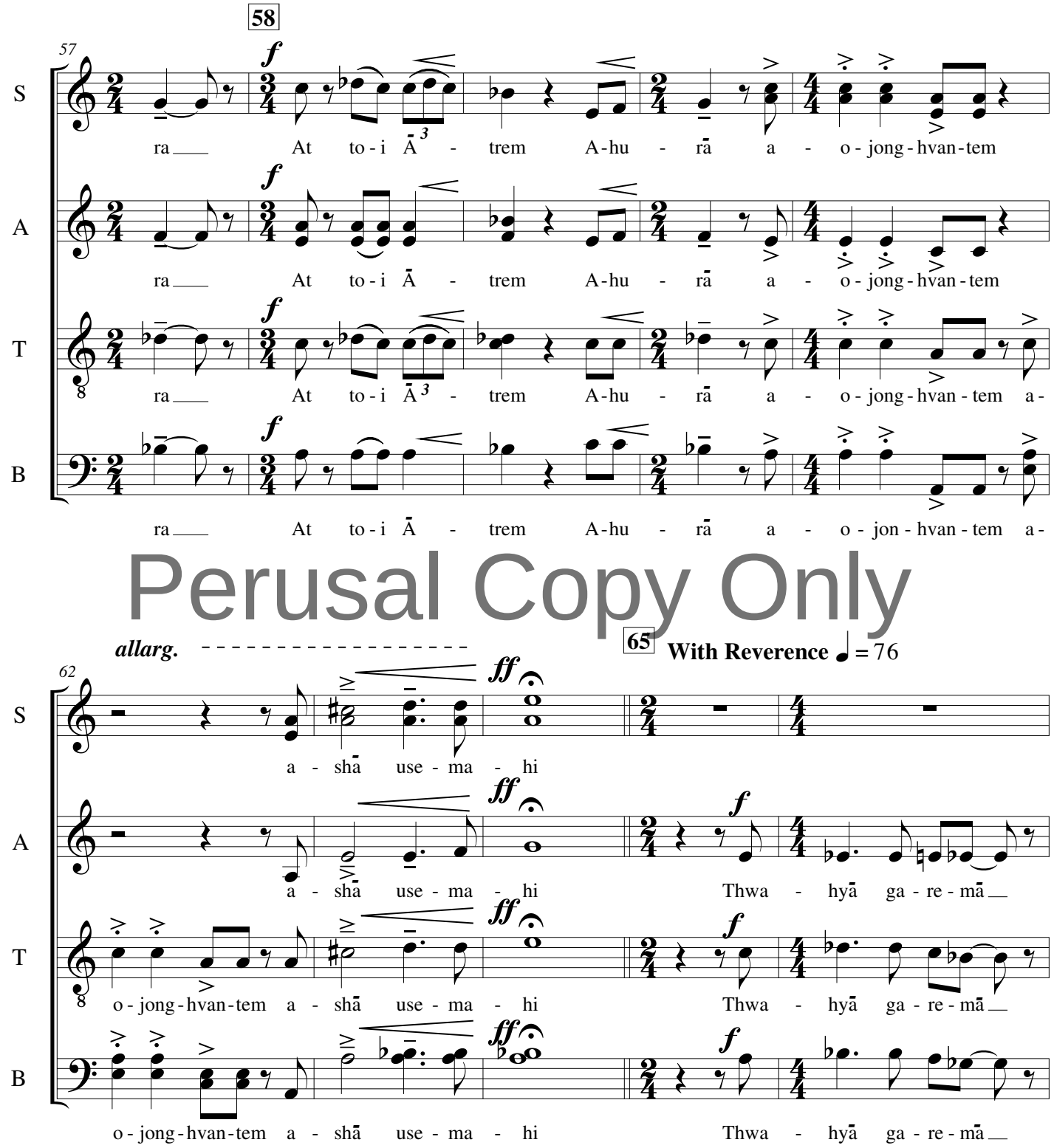

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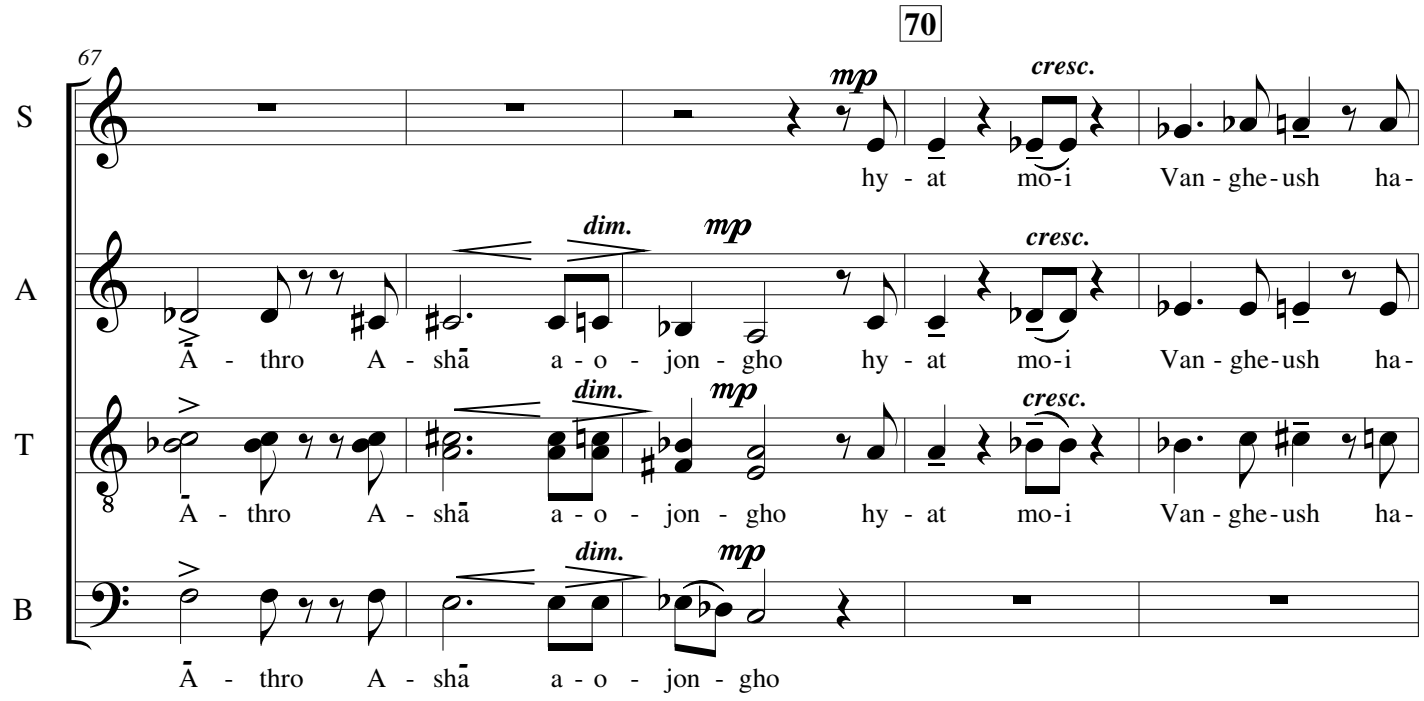

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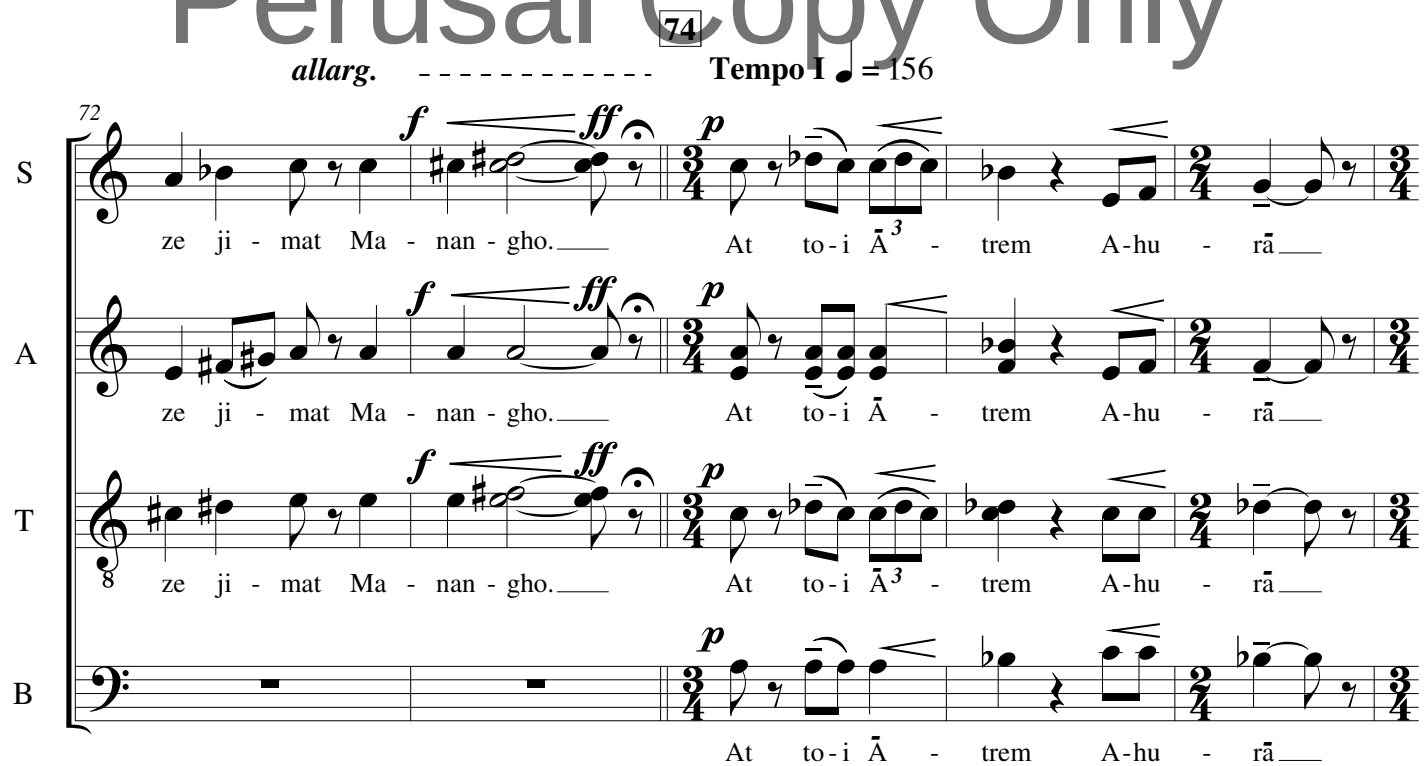

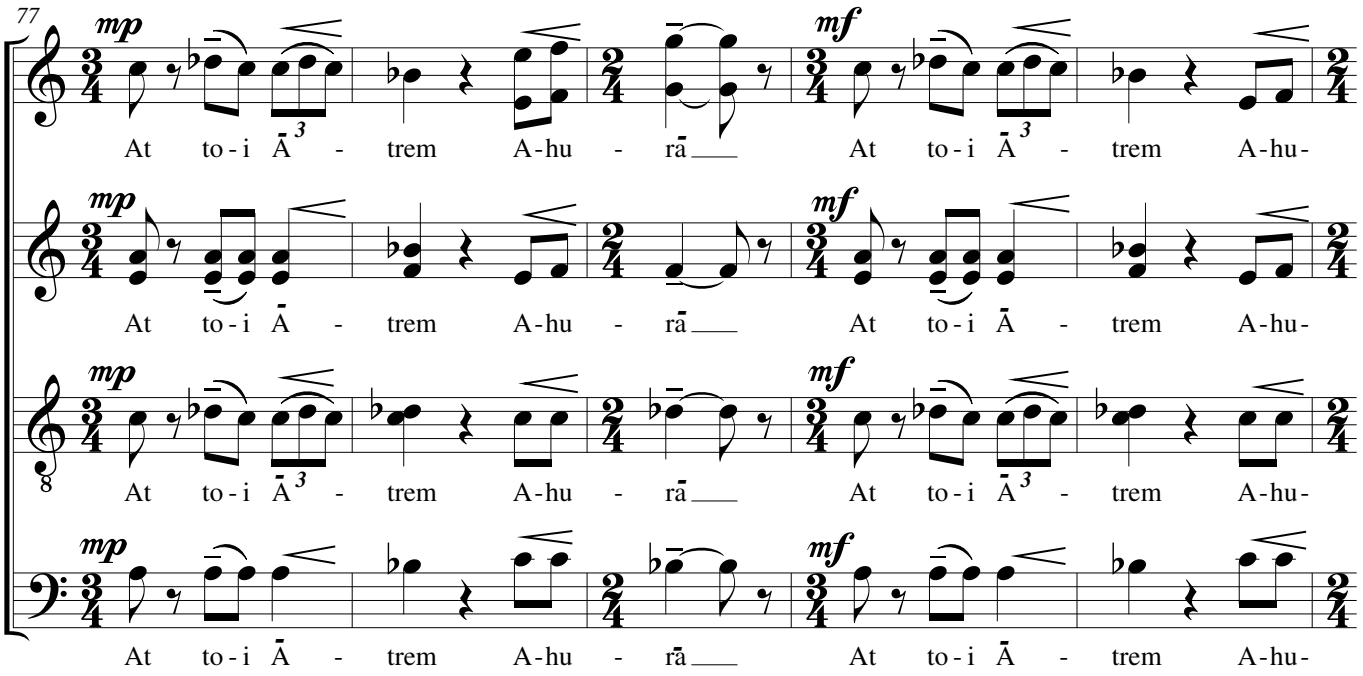

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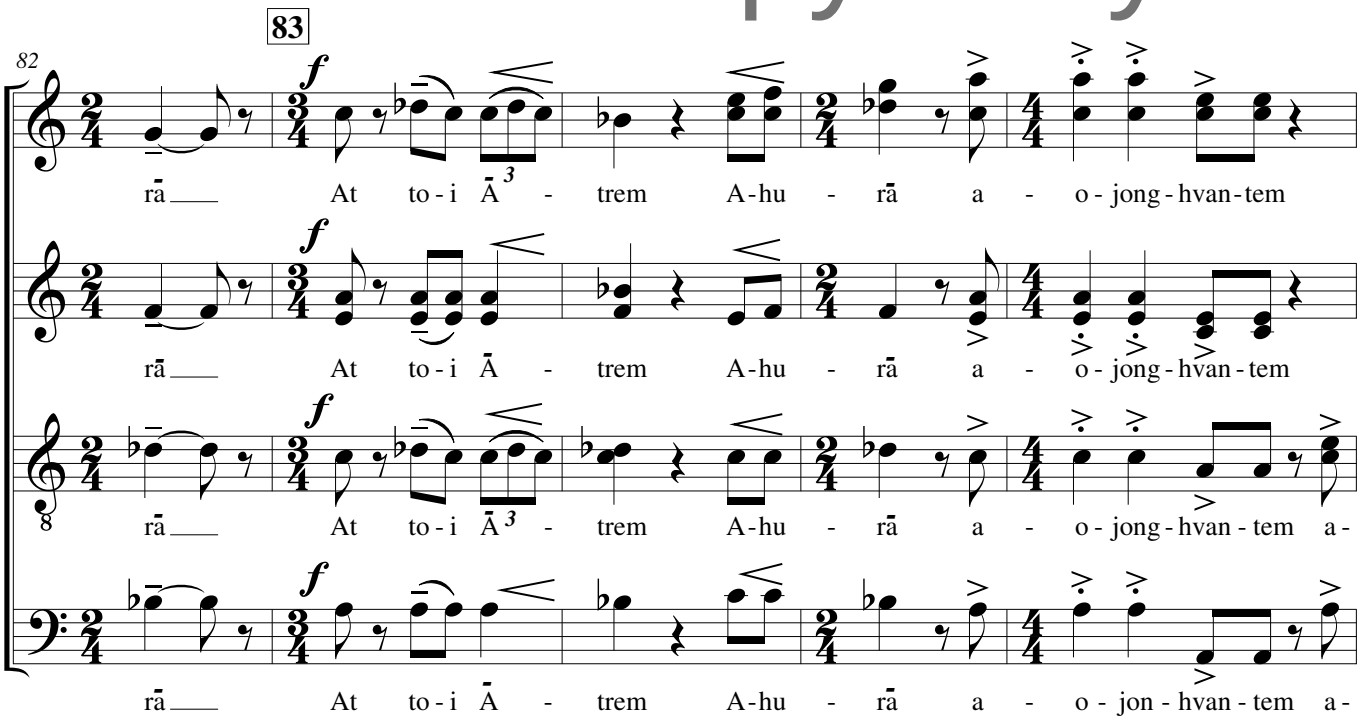

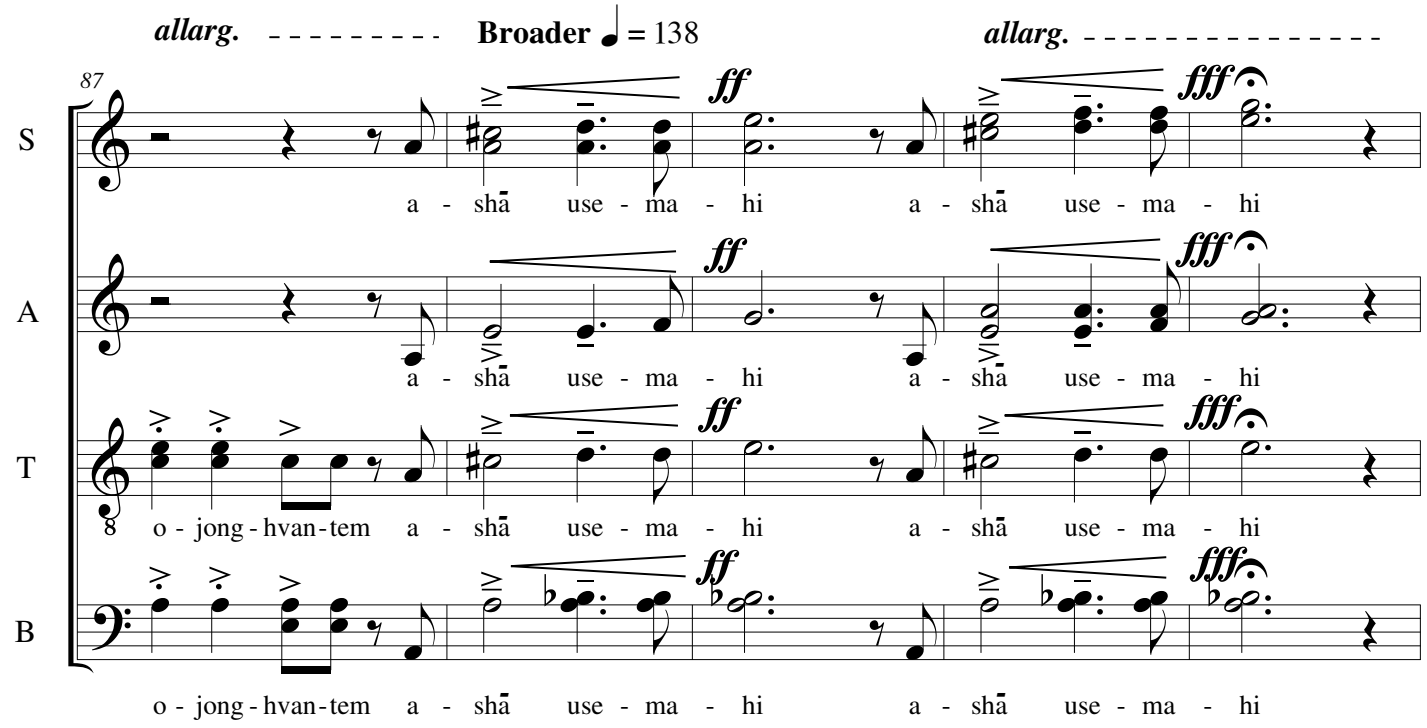

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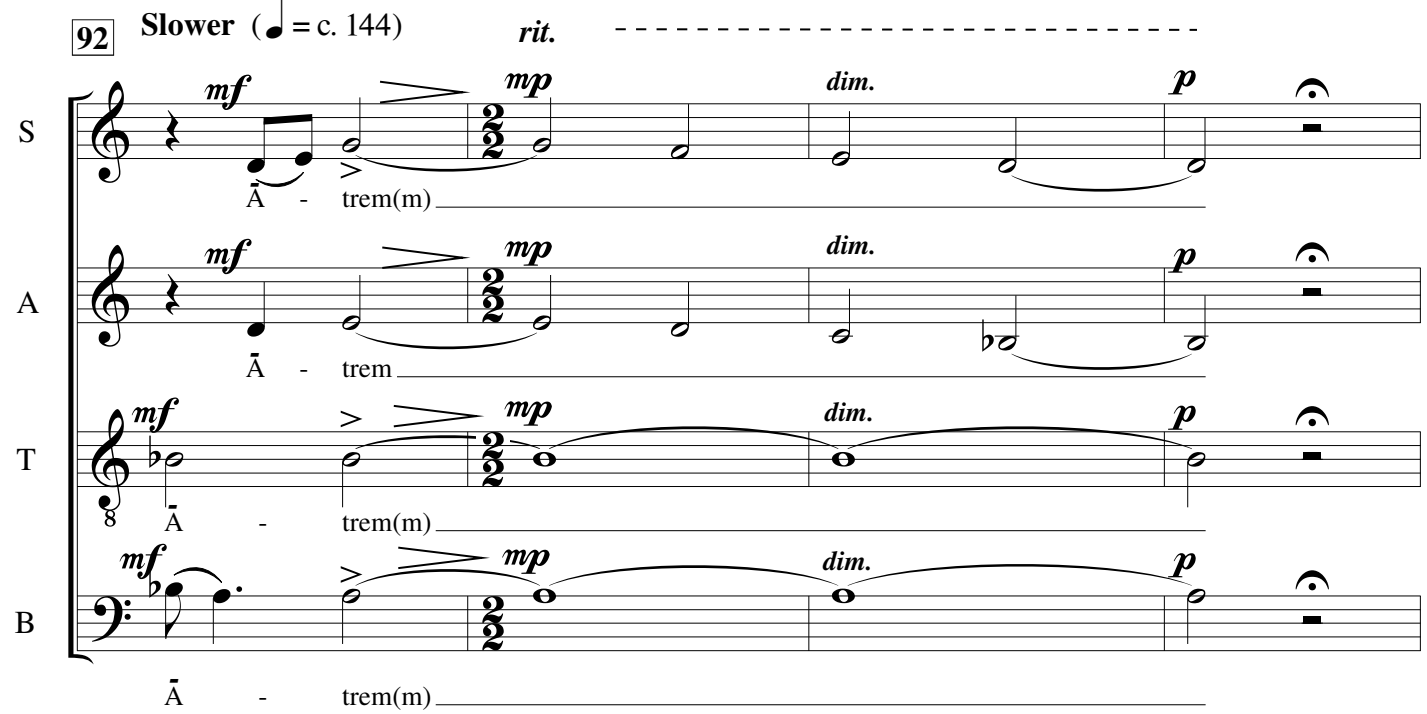

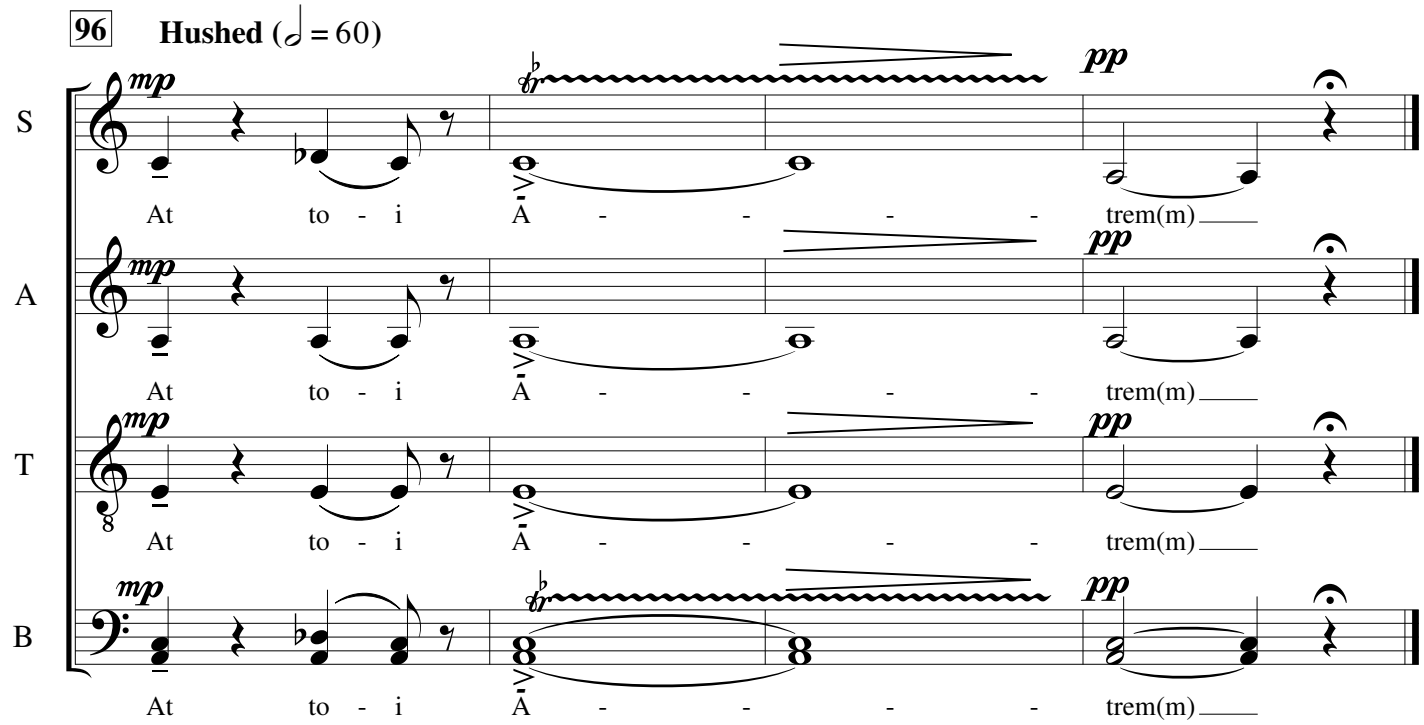

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Pabhassara Sutta

Mvt. III from *Lux Caelestis*

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PERFORMANCE NOTES and TEXT:

Pali Canon
Sutta pitaka, anguttara nikaya, Book 1, record 5532 (1.5.9 and 1.5.10)
Source: SLTP (Sri Lanka Tripitaka Project)

Pabhassaramidaṃ bhikkhave cittaṃ, tañca kho āgantukehi upakkilesehi upakkiliṭṭhanti.
Pabhassaramidaṃ bhikkhave cittaṃ, tañca kho āgantukehi upakkilesehi vippamuttanti.

Two Translations:

Bhikkhus, the mind is effulgent,* it is defiled by external defilements. *[radiant splendour, brilliance]
Bhikkhus, the mind is effulgent, when released from external defilement.

Luminous, monks, is the mind. And it is defiled by incoming defilements.
Luminous, monks, is the mind. And it is freed from incoming defilements.

Pronunciation Guide for Pali:

a as in **a**bout
ā long a as in f**a**ther
e long vowel ("ee") in open syllables (end of the word "bhikkhave")
short vowel (e as "a" in **a**te) in closed syllables (inside word "upakkilesehi")
i as in "ee" in feet at the end of a word
as in "i" in pin inside a word
o long vowel (oh) behind the word "kho"
u short as in p**u**t (inside word)
long as in r**u**le in open syllable (start of word "upakkilesehi)
bh b, with h behind sound (aspirated)
ph p, with h behind sound (aspirated)
kh k, with aspirated h
th t, with aspirated h
c "ch" as in church
ñ as in o**n**ion – IPA [ɲ]
r as in rat

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Other consonants **(t, p, l, k)** same as English.

Note on double consonants. Try to sing both consonants. (e.g. **tt** – as in ho**t t**omato). Some of these (e.g. - ss), should be elided for ease of singing. The conductor may make adjustments.

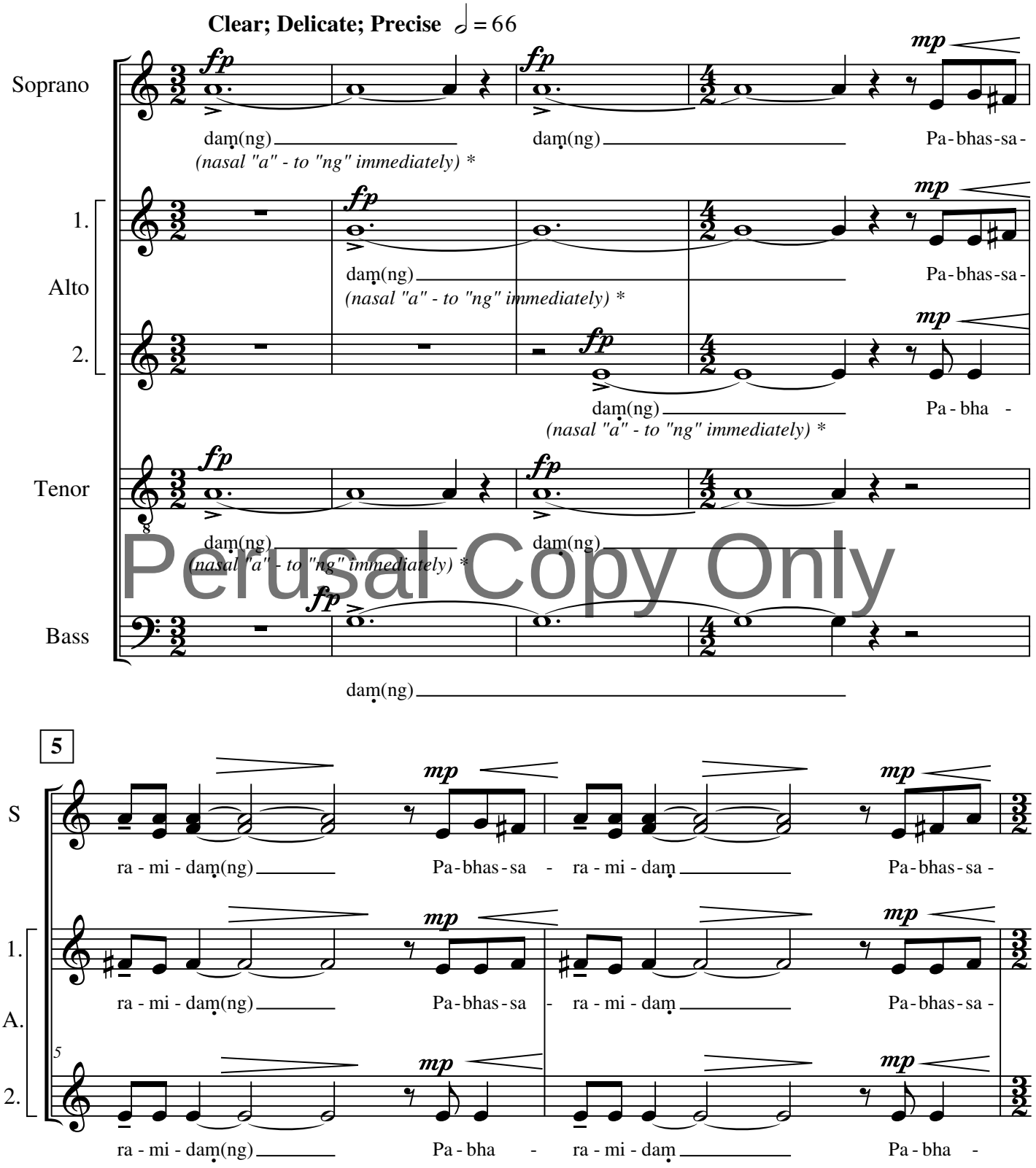
Note on the dot under a letter. This will nasalize the vowel in front of the letter. The letters **aṃ** will have more of a sound like "ng" in "sung" at the back of the word - IPA [ãŋ].

Pabhassara Sutta

for Scott MacPherson and the San Antonio Chamber Choir

Pali canon:
sutta pitaka, anguttara nikaya, bk. 1

Timothy Kramer



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** For the letter ṃ, always slightly close the mouth immediately and sing "ng" - as in sung. Do not sing an open "a." Some liberty may be taken at a louder dynamic.*

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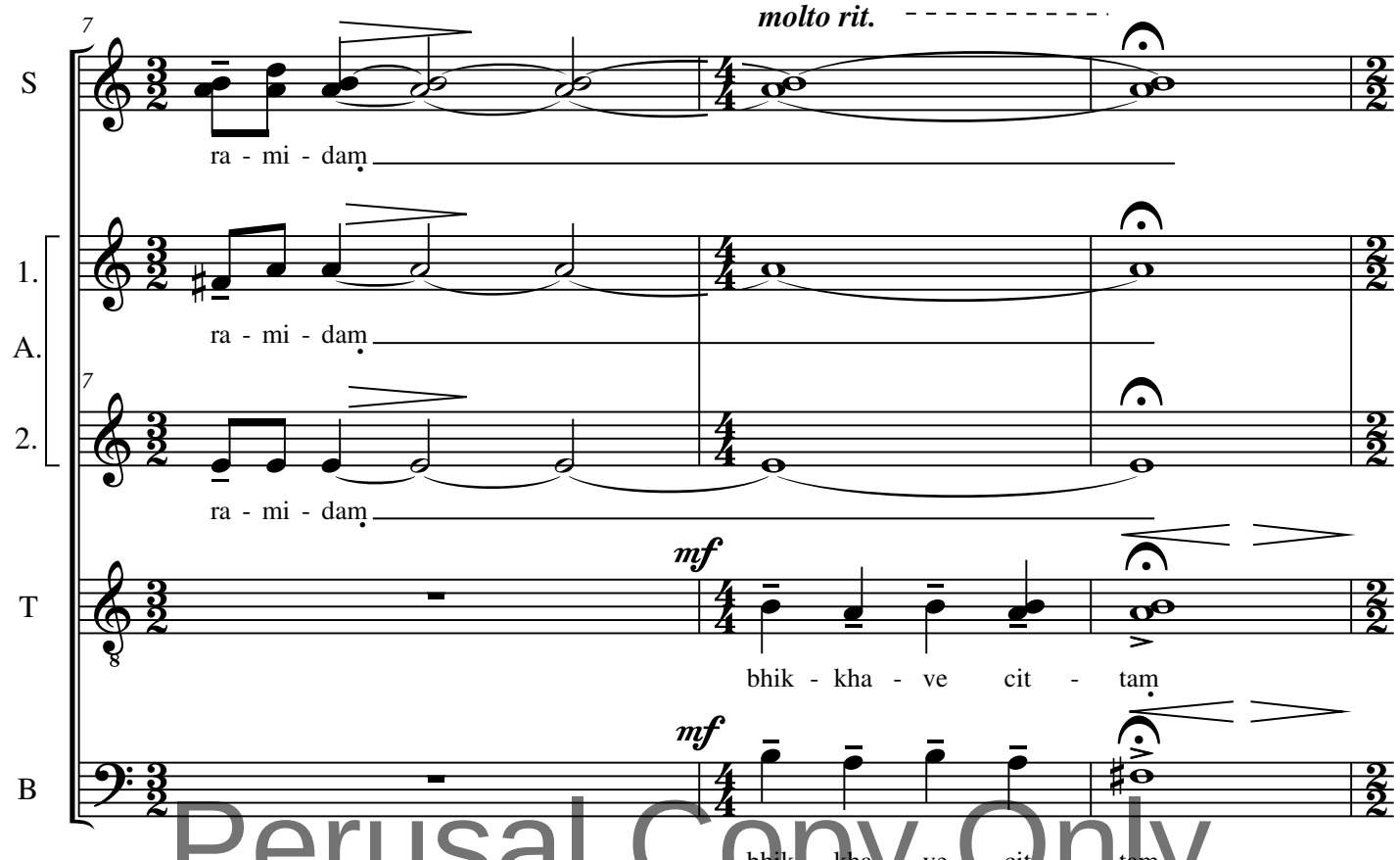

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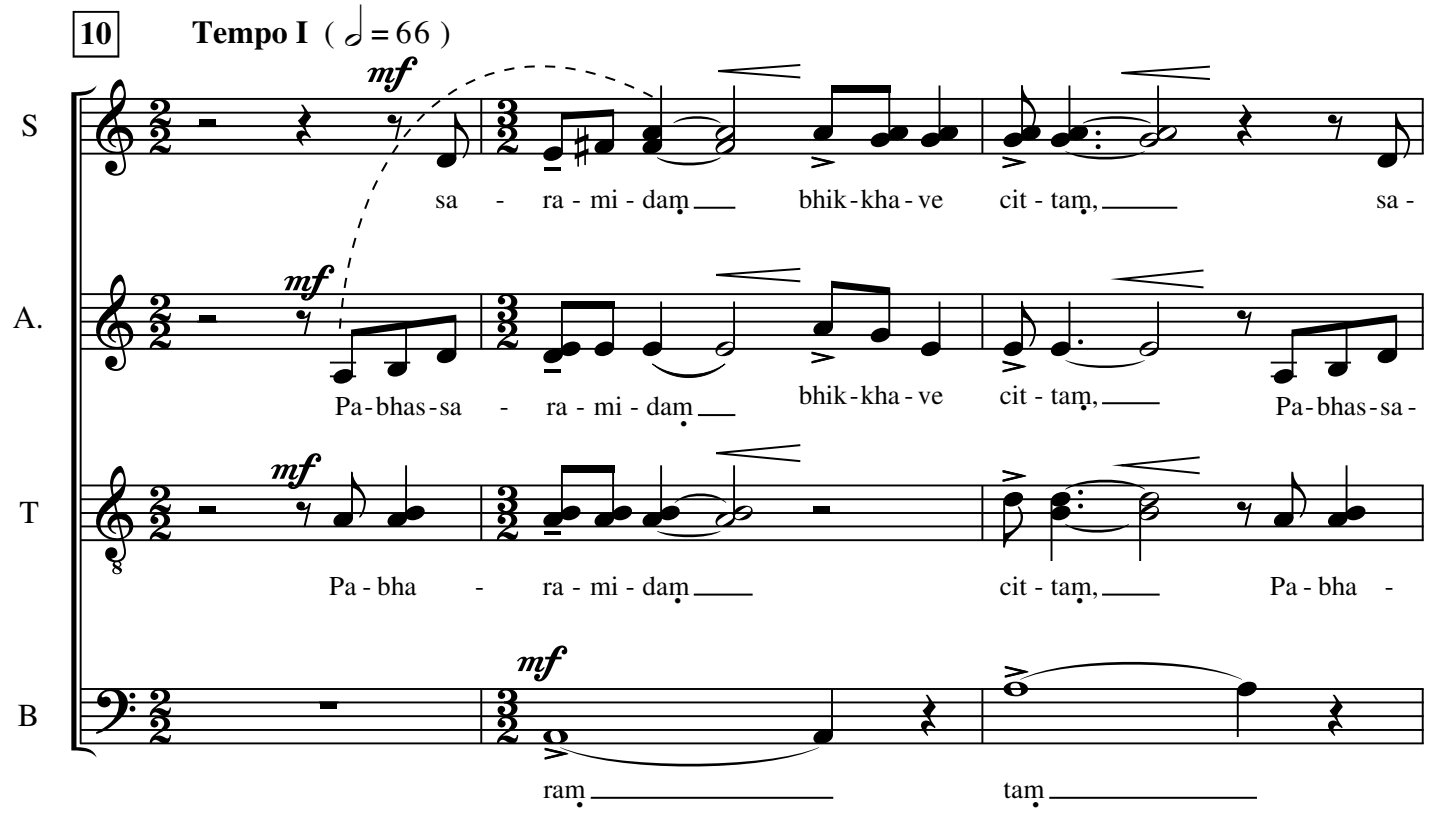

poco rit. - - - - - **Slightly Slower** ♩ = 126

13

S: ra - mi - daṃ bhik - kha - ve cit - taṃ a(ah)

A.: ra - mi - daṃ bhik - kha - ve cit - taṃ a(ah)

T: ra - mi - daṃ taṃ

B: raṃ tañ - ca kho

with intensity

mp

ā - gan - tu - ke - hi

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17

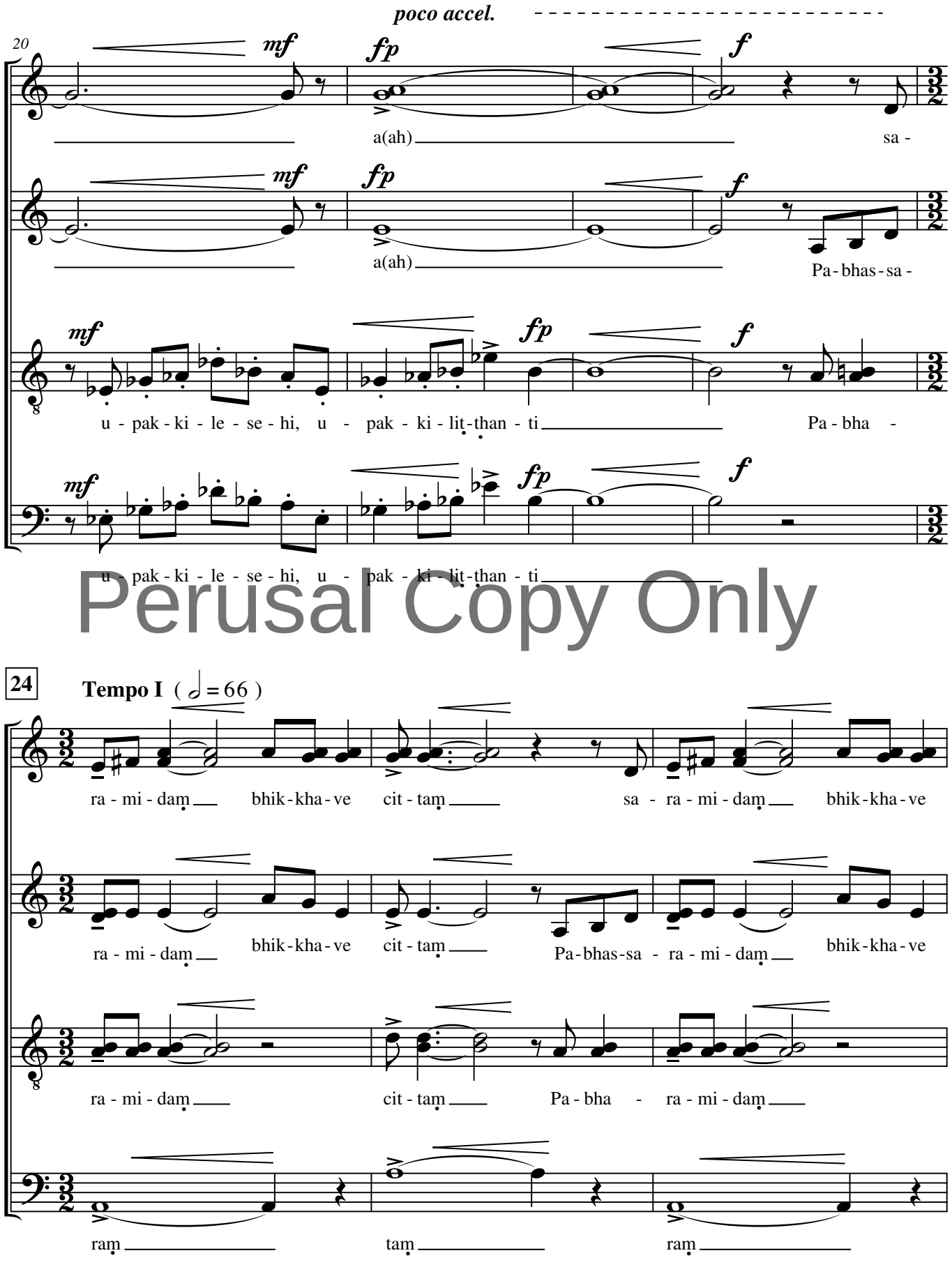
S: *mp* — *p* a(ah) — *mp*

A.: *mp* — *p* a(ah) — *mp*

with intensity

T: *mp* ā - gan - tu - ke - hi u - pak - ki - le - se - hi,

B: u - pak - ki - le - se - hi, ā - gan - tu - ke - hi u - pak - ki - le - se - hi,



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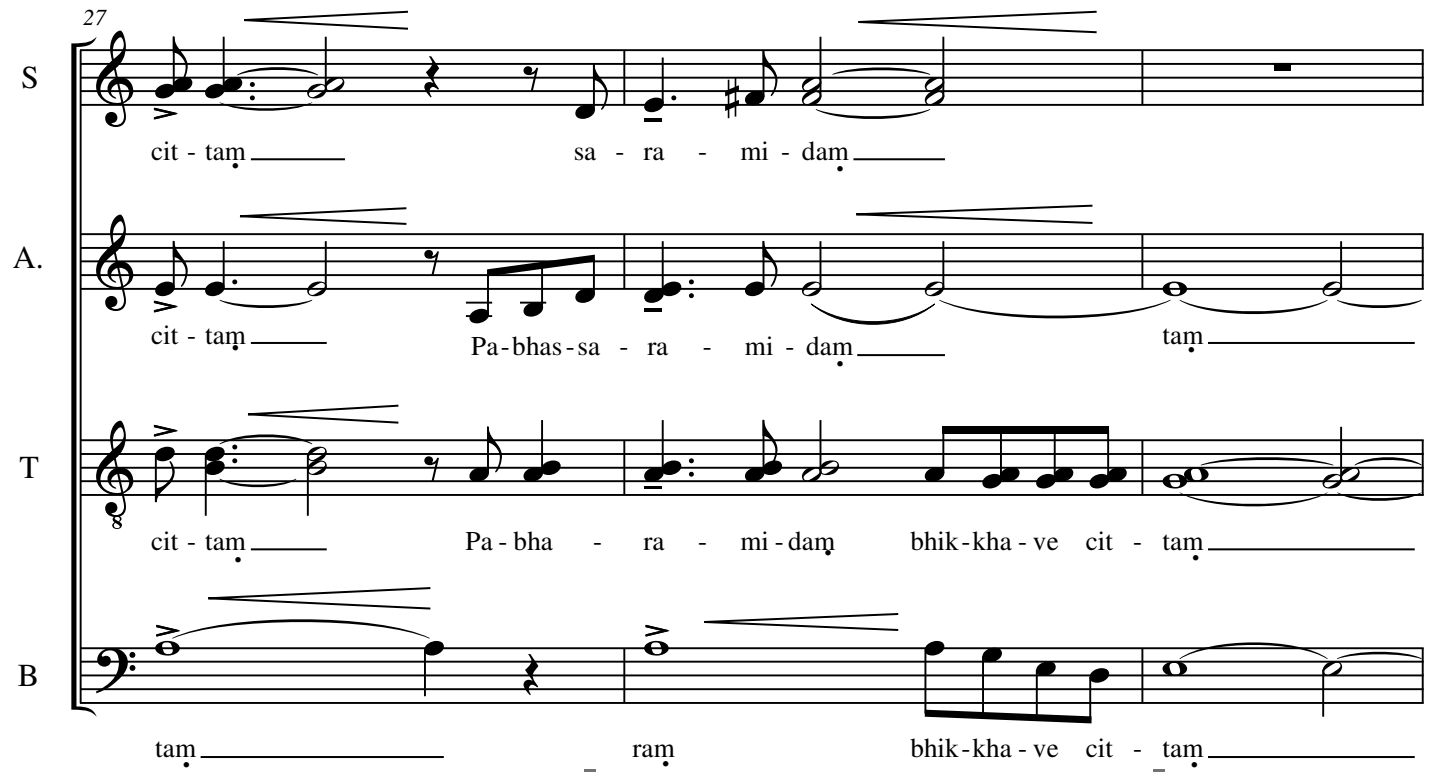

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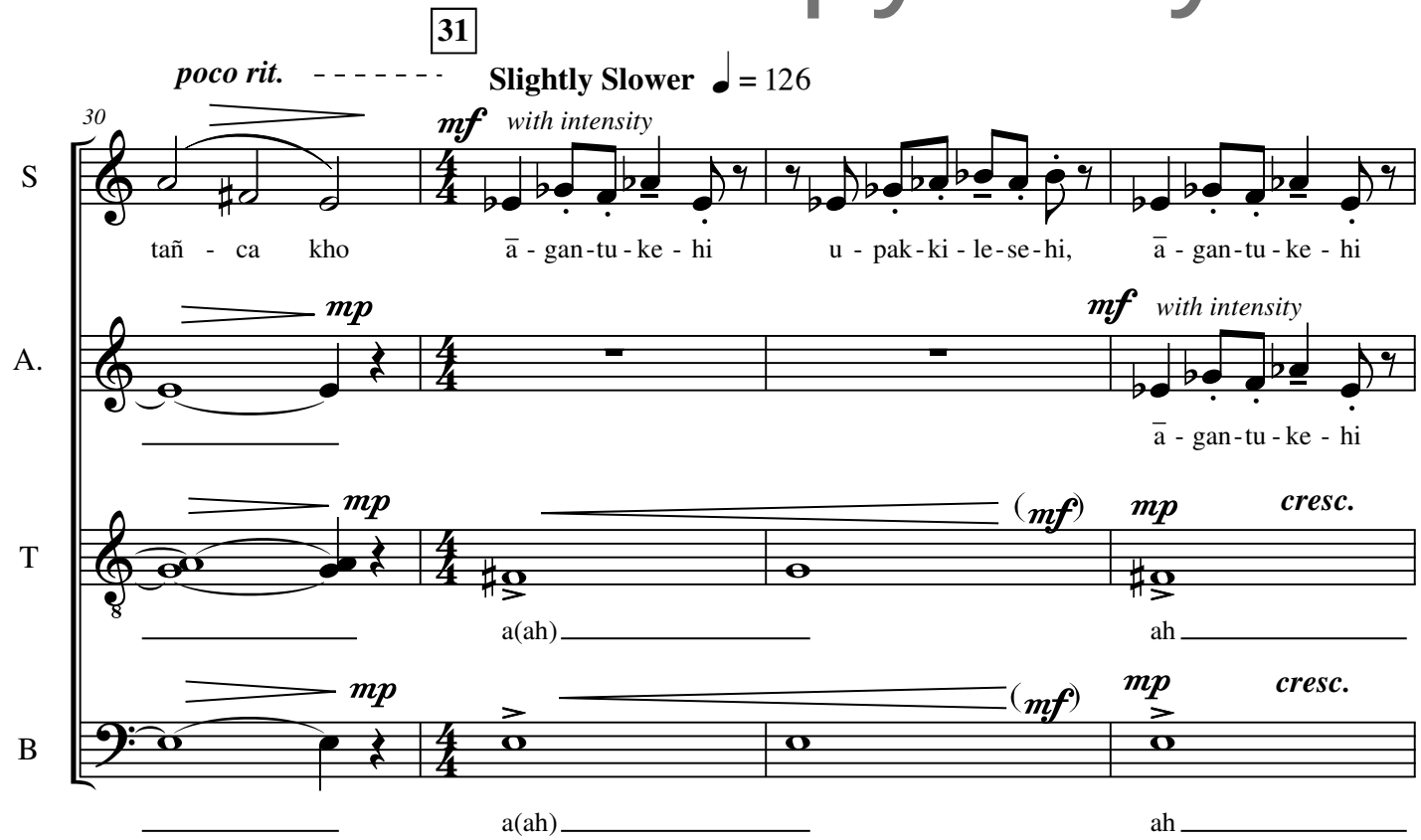

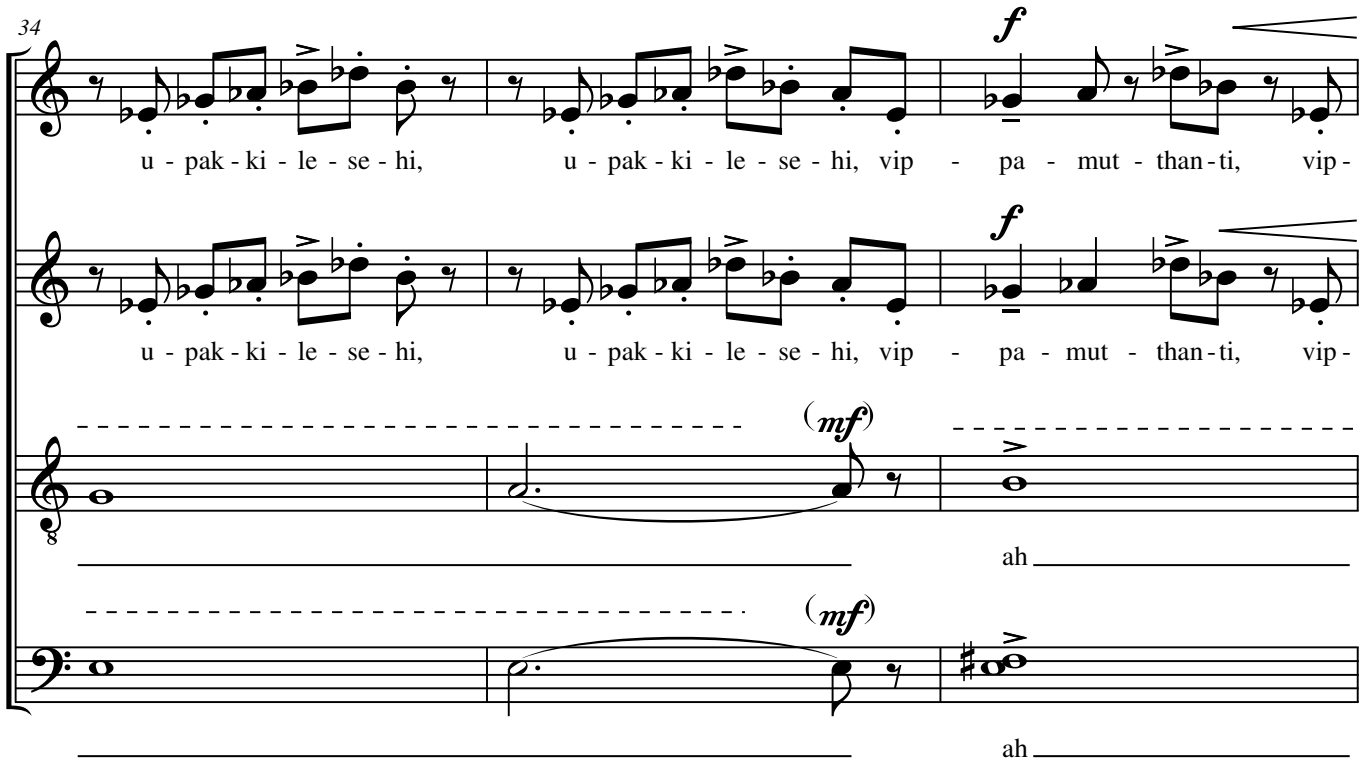

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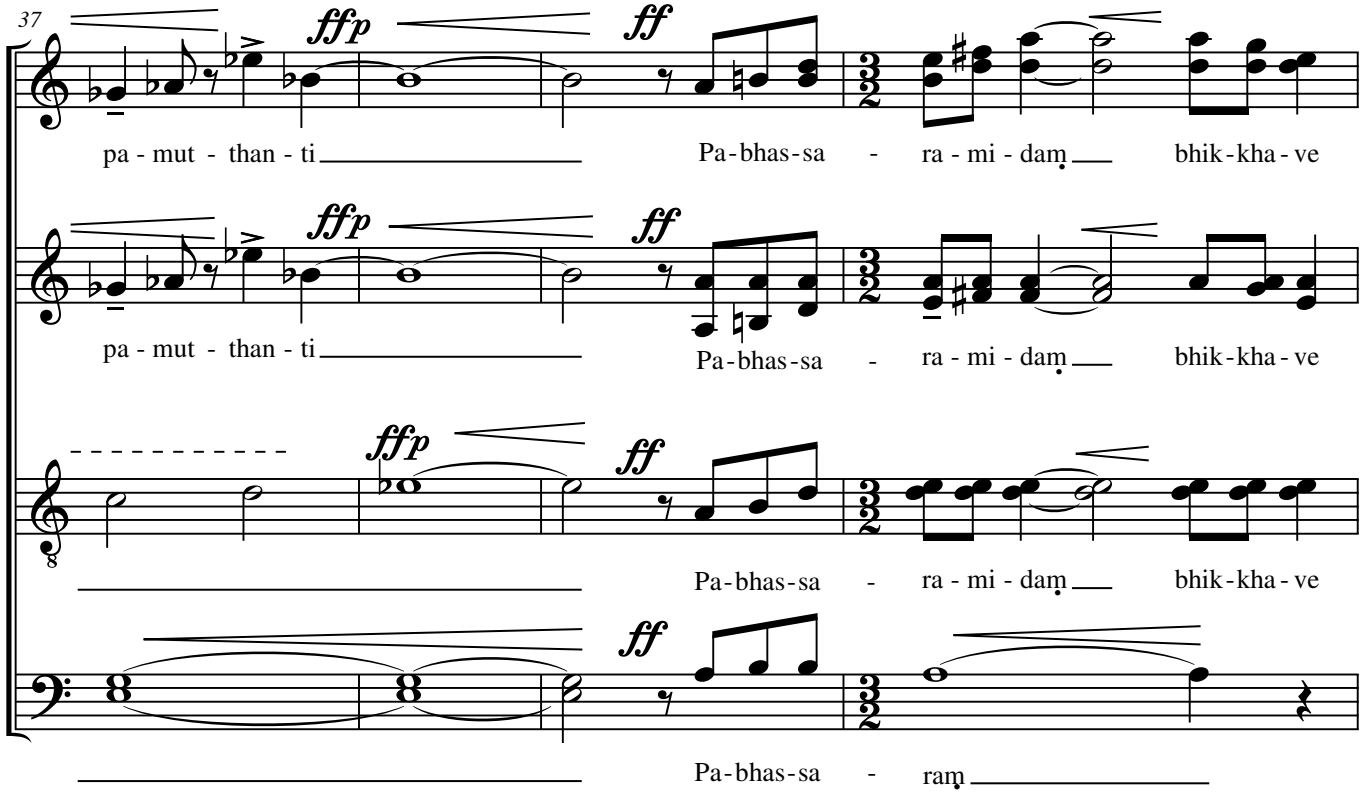

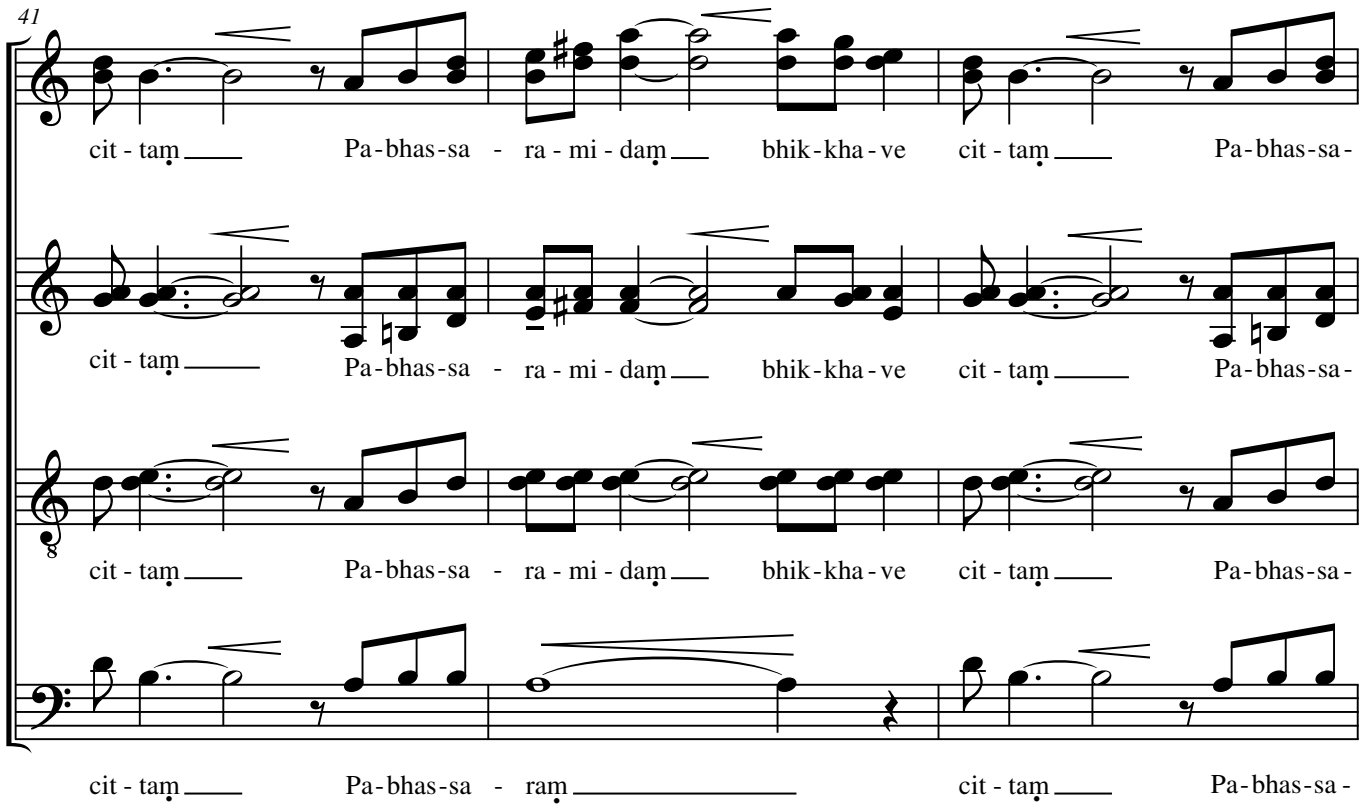

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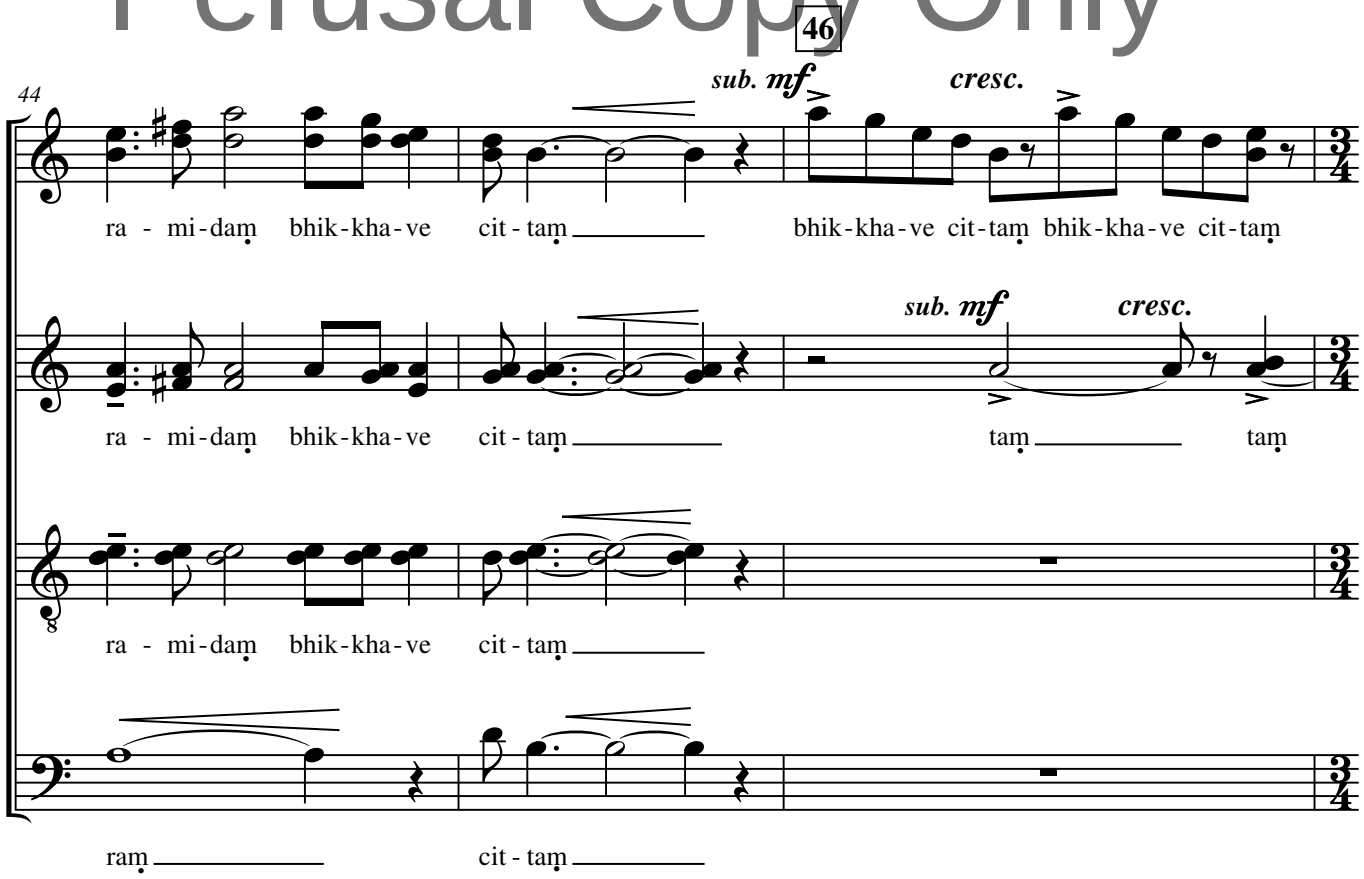

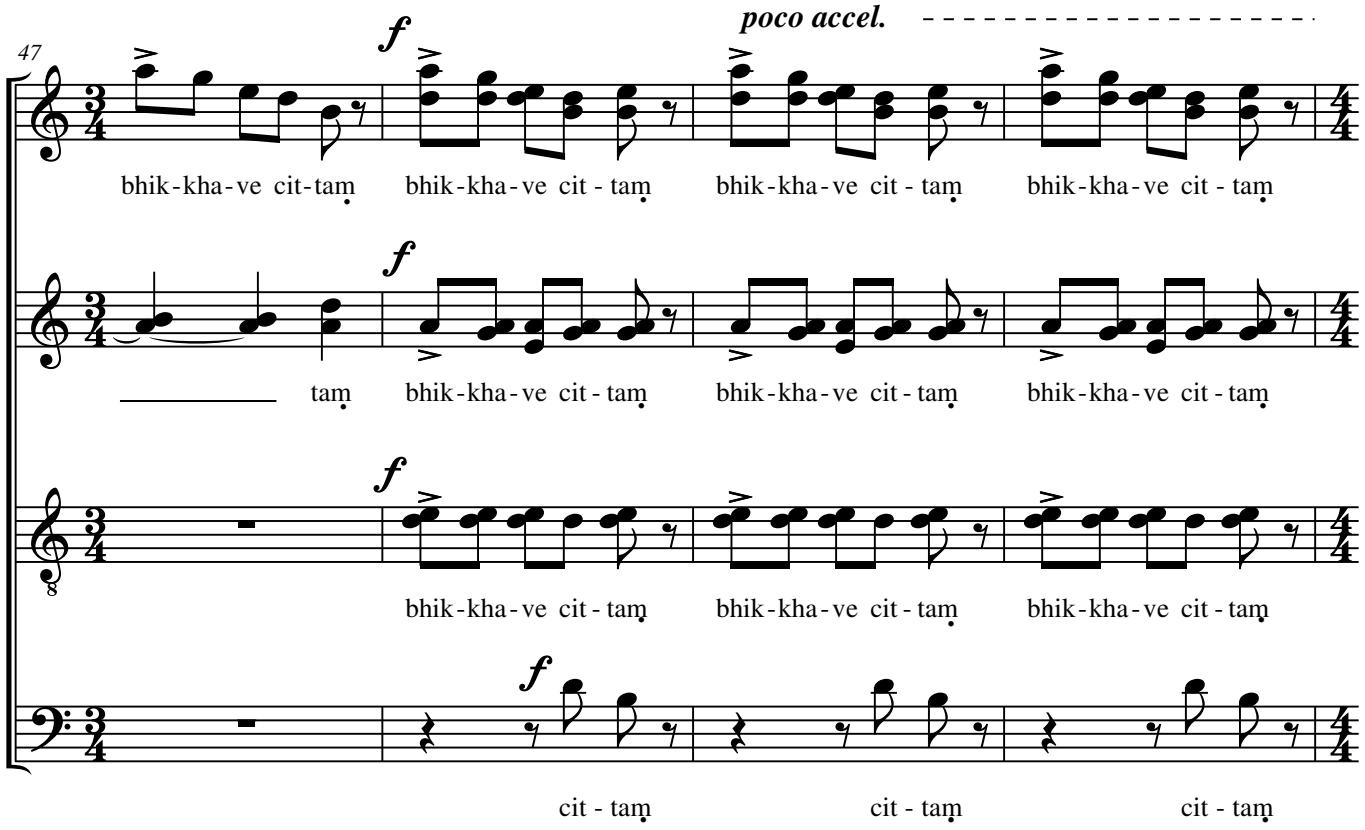

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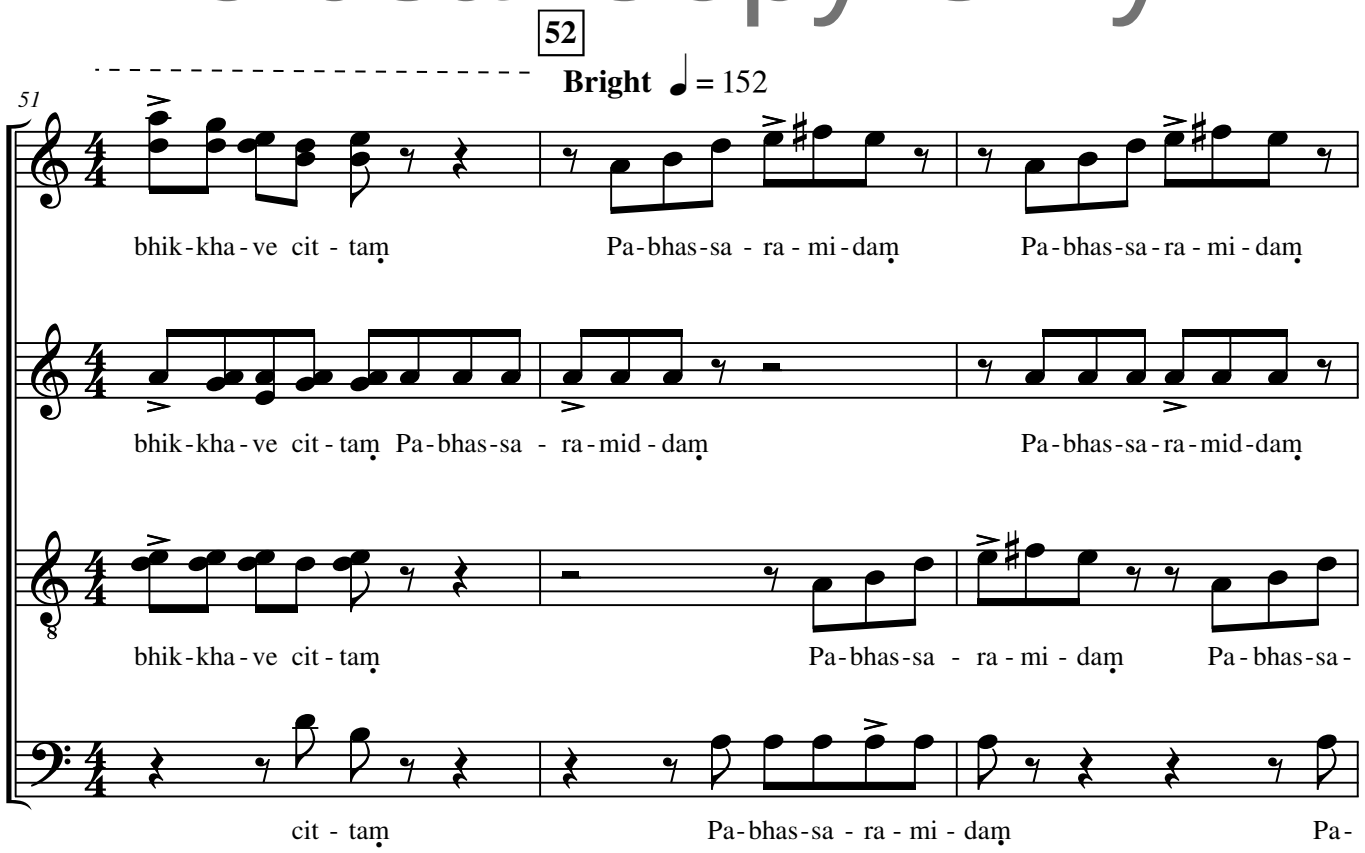

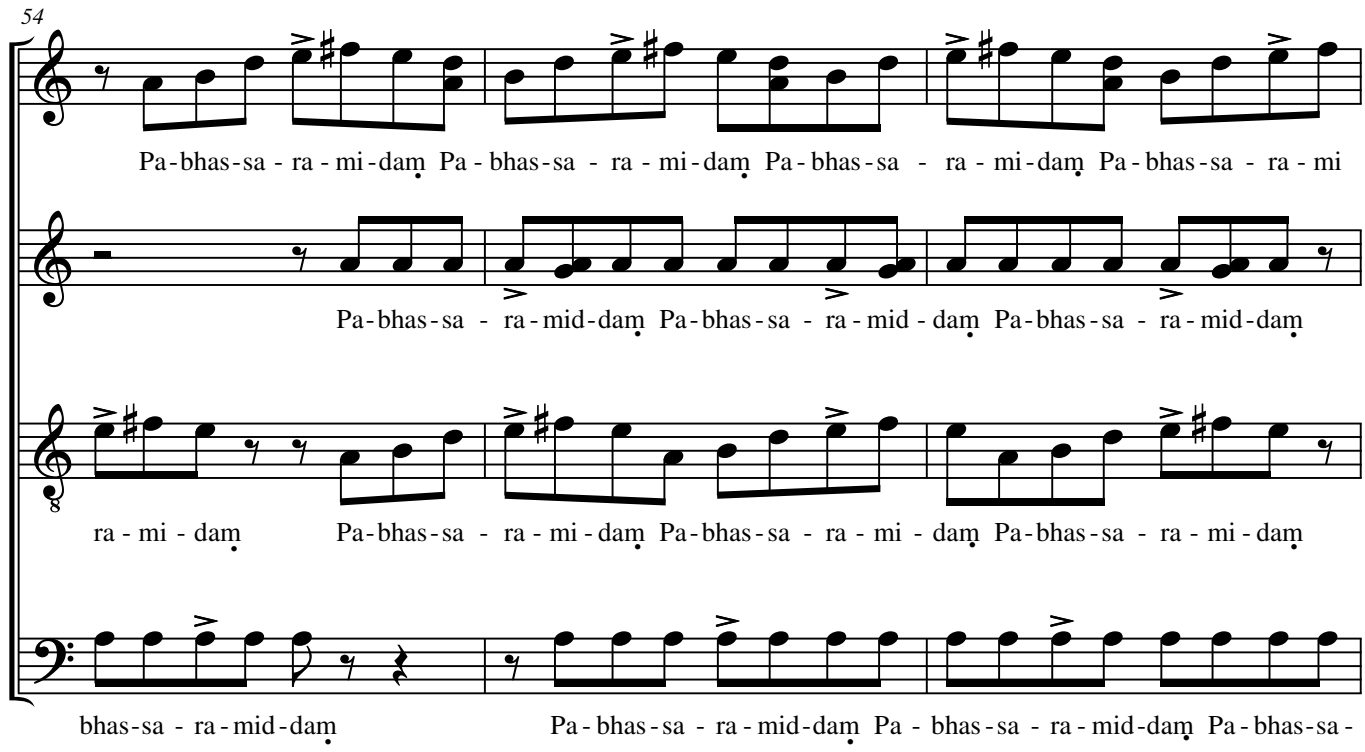

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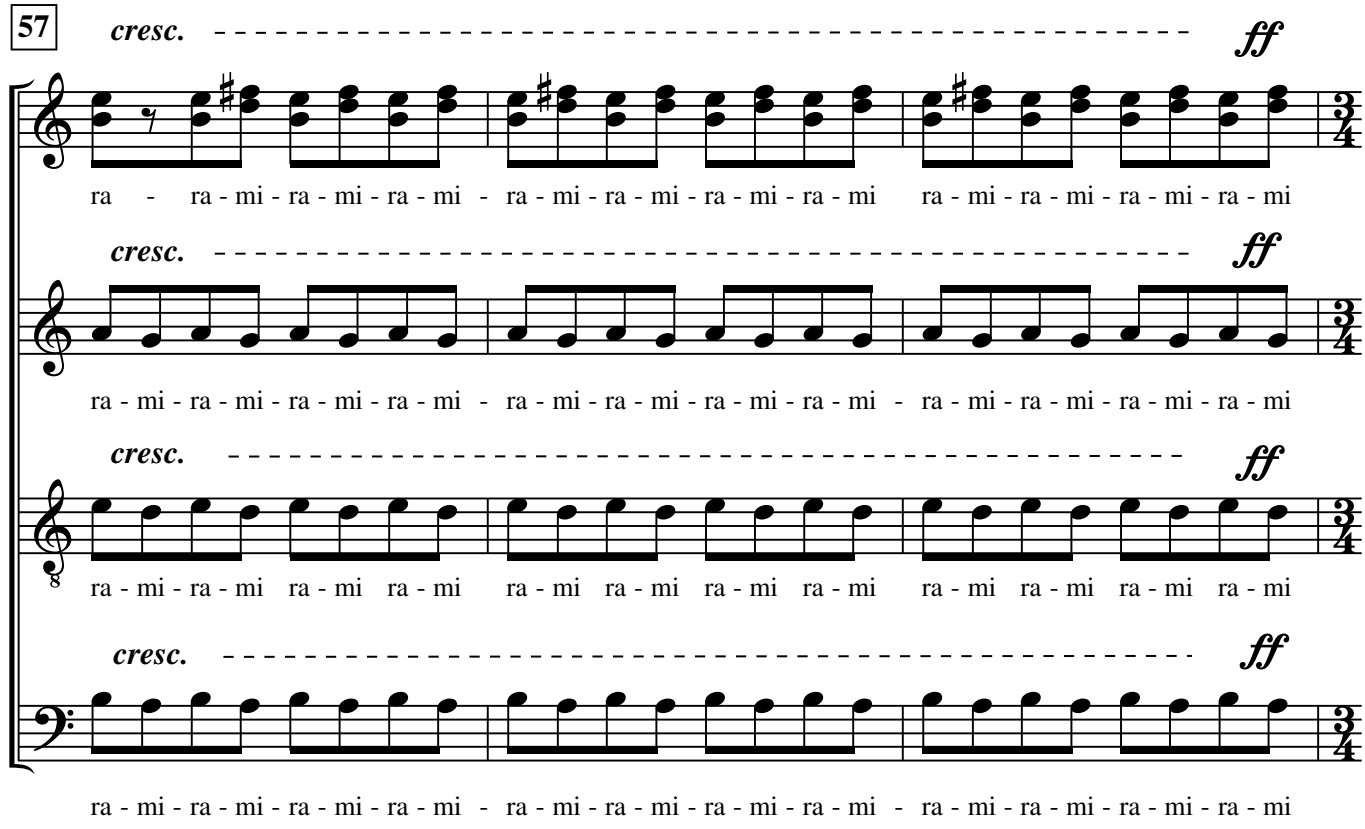

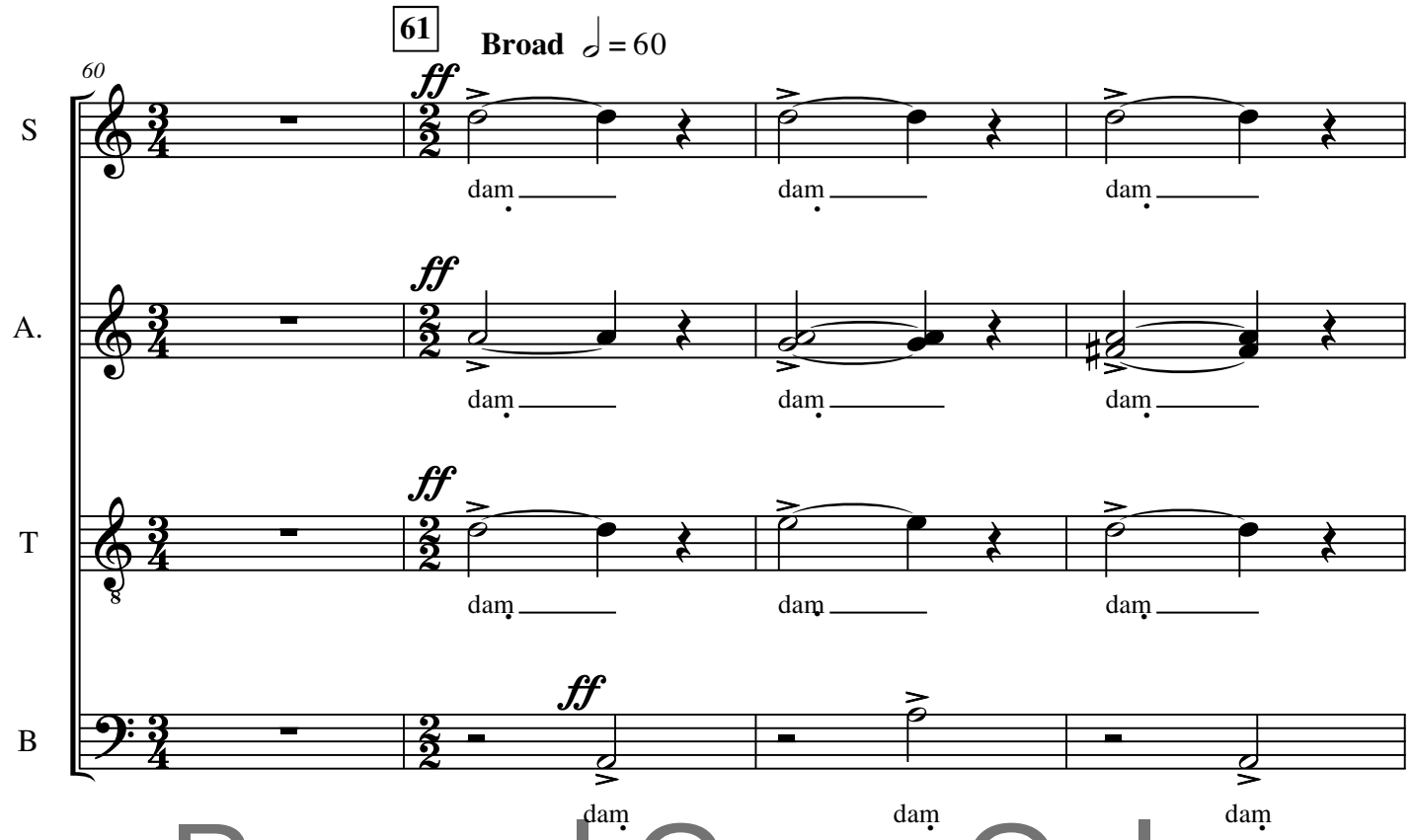

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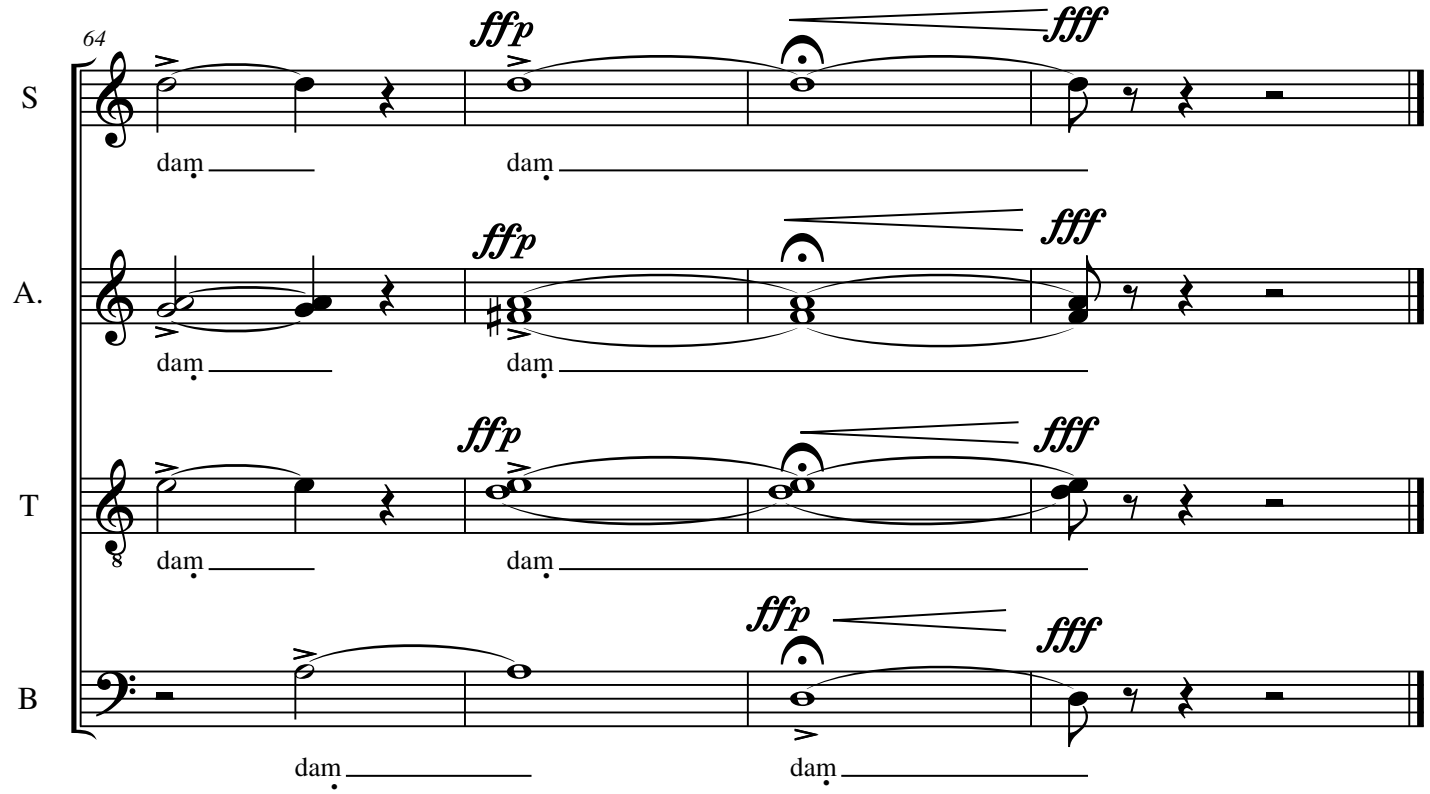

Gayatri Mantra

Mvt. IV from *Lux Caelestis*

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Timothy Kramer

2011

Performance Notes and Text

Rig Veda 3.62.10 (Third Mandala of the Rigveda) preceded by the *mahāvyāhṛti* ("great utterance")

Aum
bhūr bhuvaḥ svaḥ
tat savitur vareṇyaṃ
bhargo devasya dhīmahi
dhiyo yo naḥ pracodayāt

Translated in Several Ways:

O thou existence Absolute, Creator of the three dimensions,
We contemplate upon thy divine light.
May He stimulate our intellect and bestow upon us true knowledge. (Gayan Rajhans)

May we attain that excellent glory of Savitar* the God:
So he may stimulate our prayers. (Ralph T. H. Griffith)
*Savitar is also interpreted as "divine light or radiant sun" (S. Radhakrishan)

We meditate on the glory of sacred Light illuminating the three worlds
May that divine light inspire our thoughts (Tilak Pyle)

Pronunciation Guide for Sanskrit

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a	as a in **a**bout
ā	as a in f**a**ther
e	as a in b**a**ne
i	as e in **e**ngland
ī	as ee in f**ee**t
o	as in b**o**ne
u	as u in p**u**t
ū	as u in r**u**le
r	as in **r**un, can be flipped when singing (as in "bhargo")
au	long diphthong, as in h**ou**se
ḥ	aspirated (IPA: [h]), if followed in the score by **(a)**, sing "ah". If not, simply add air at end of word.
ṃ	vowel before this m is nasalized
ṇ	vowel before this n is nasalized
bh, dh	h behind the b or d, aspirated
c	ch as in **ch**urch (e.g. pra-**c**o-da-y**ā**t = prah-cho-dye-yaht)
m, d, s	as in English.
y	as in English. Some diphthongs may alter the sound.
v	may be soft in the word "svaḥ"

Note on the word **"svaḥ"** There are three sounds elided here, but one word. Think of this as su-va-ha. The **sv** is elided very quickly and the h is a aspirated, with "ah" often following.

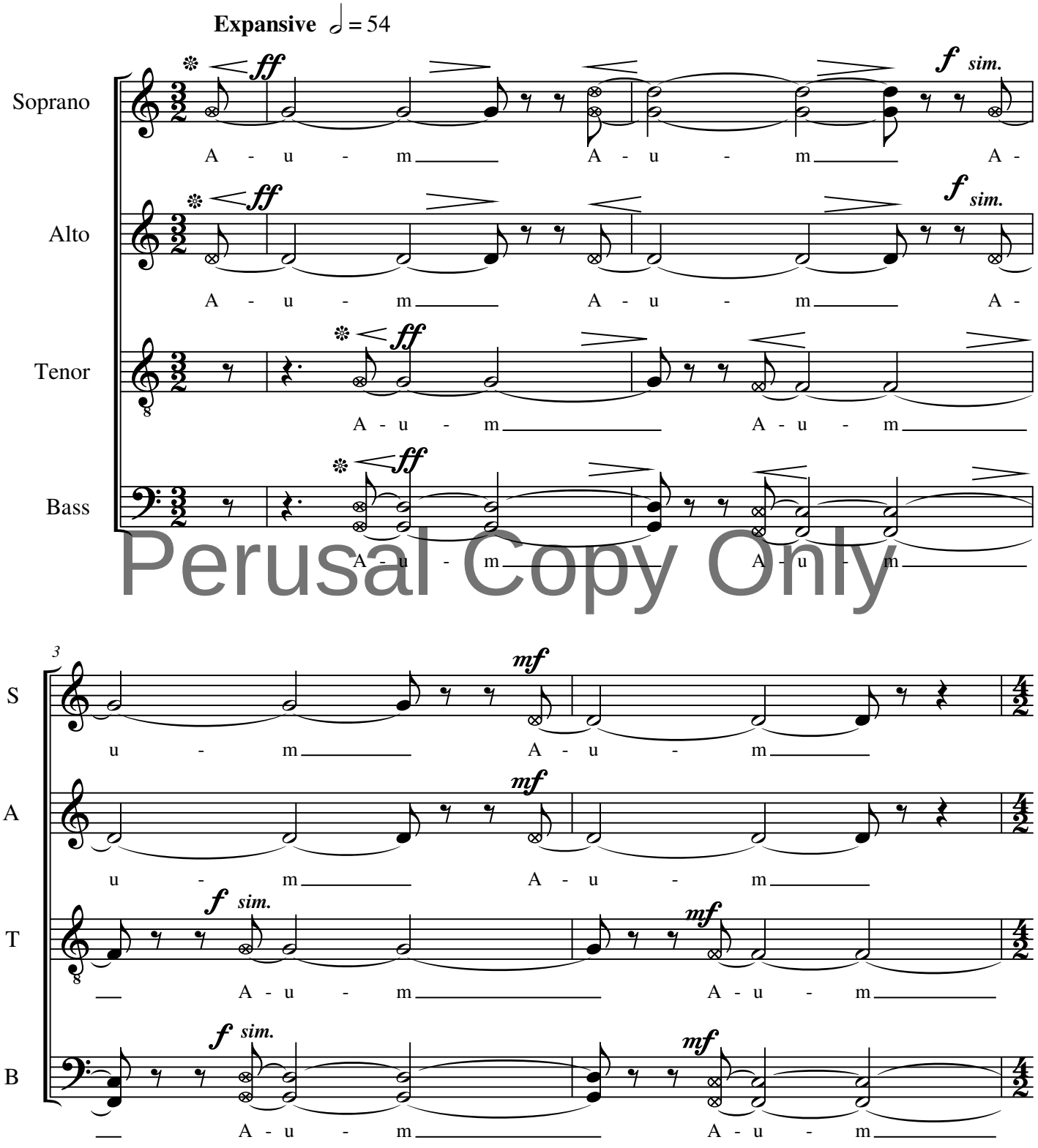
Note on the sound **Aum**. This is sometimes spelled as **Om**. The sound should always start deep in the abdomen and the diphthong should be very smooth (ah-oh-oom). The **m** should always end the sound and decay. This sound may be adjusted for volume.

Gayatri Mantra

for Scott MacPherson and the San Antonio Chamber Choir

Rig Veda 3.62.10

Timothy Kramer



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❊ Start sound with air stream and some breath. You may have a slight portamento (scoop) into the pitch. The tone may be less refined, but the aum (om) should be round. Slowly move into the sound of the m and decay.

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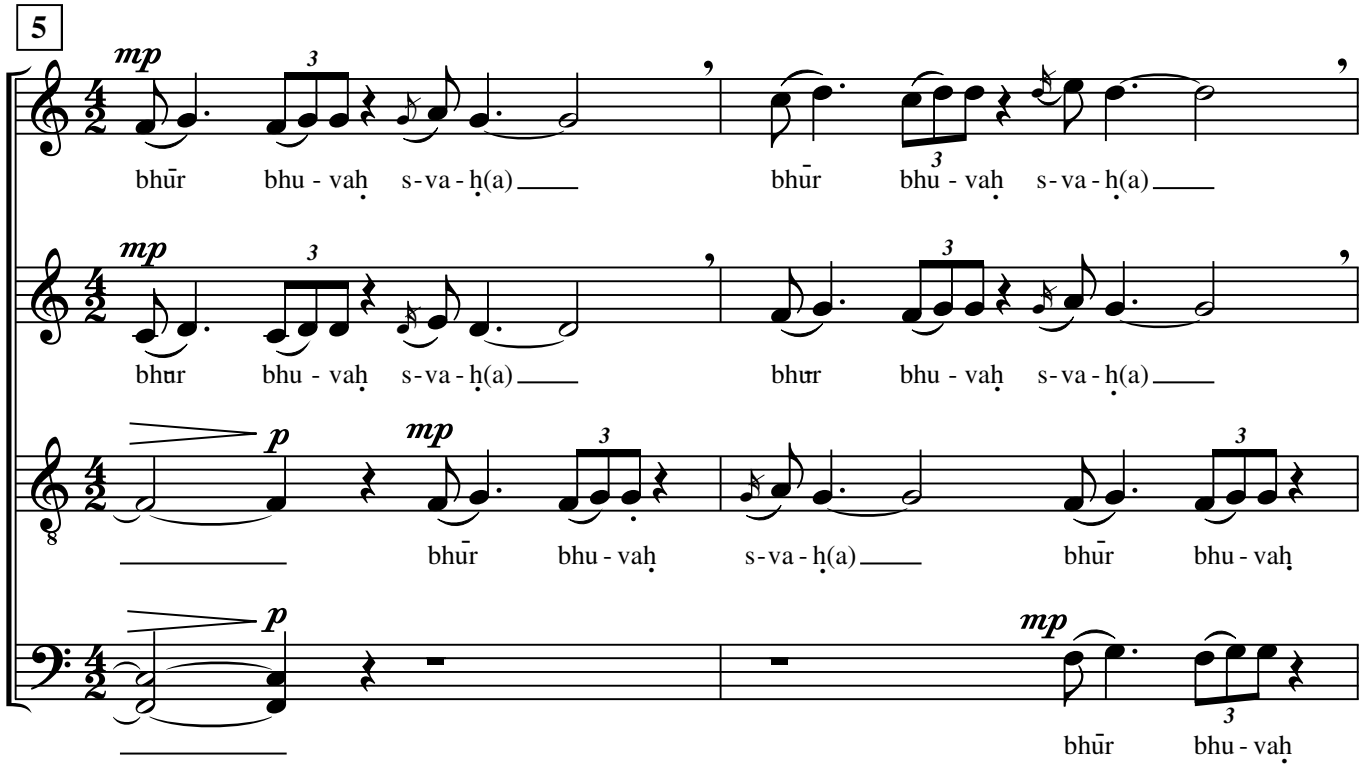

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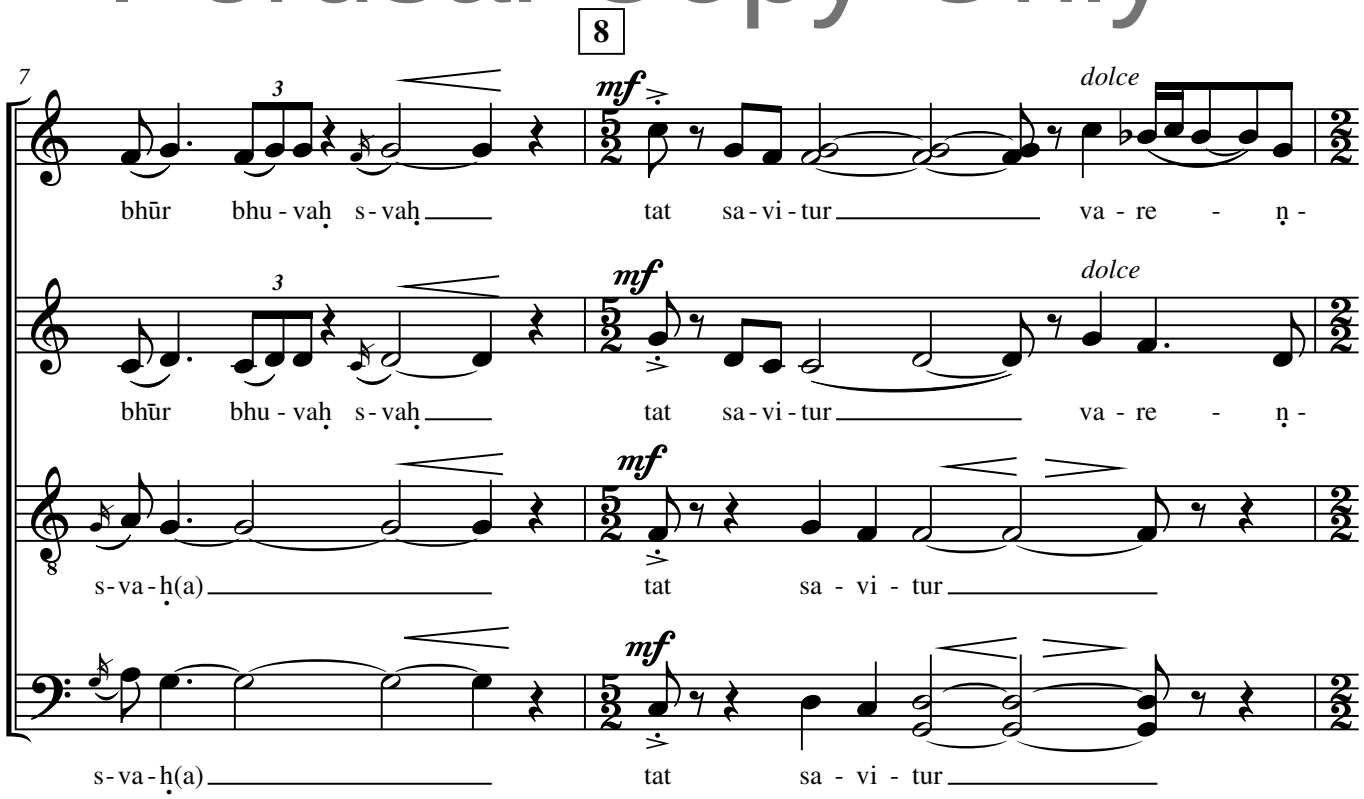

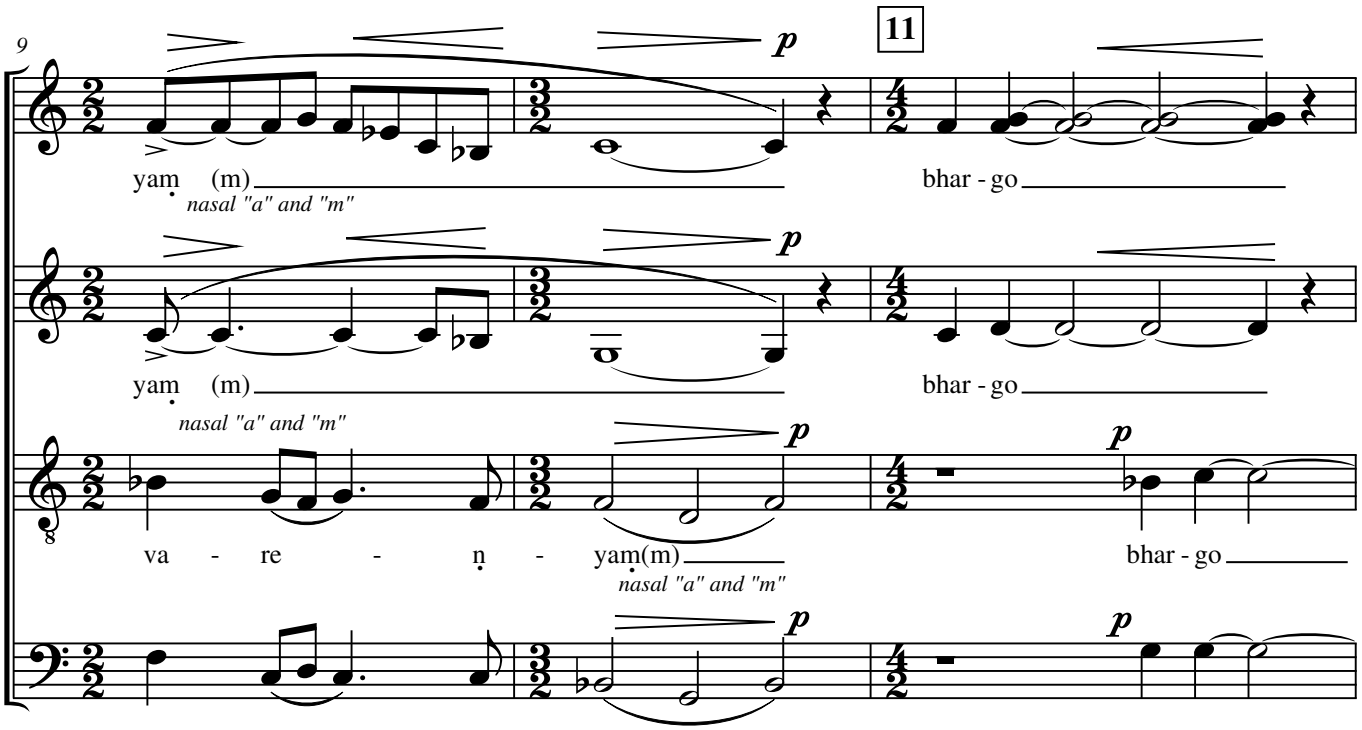

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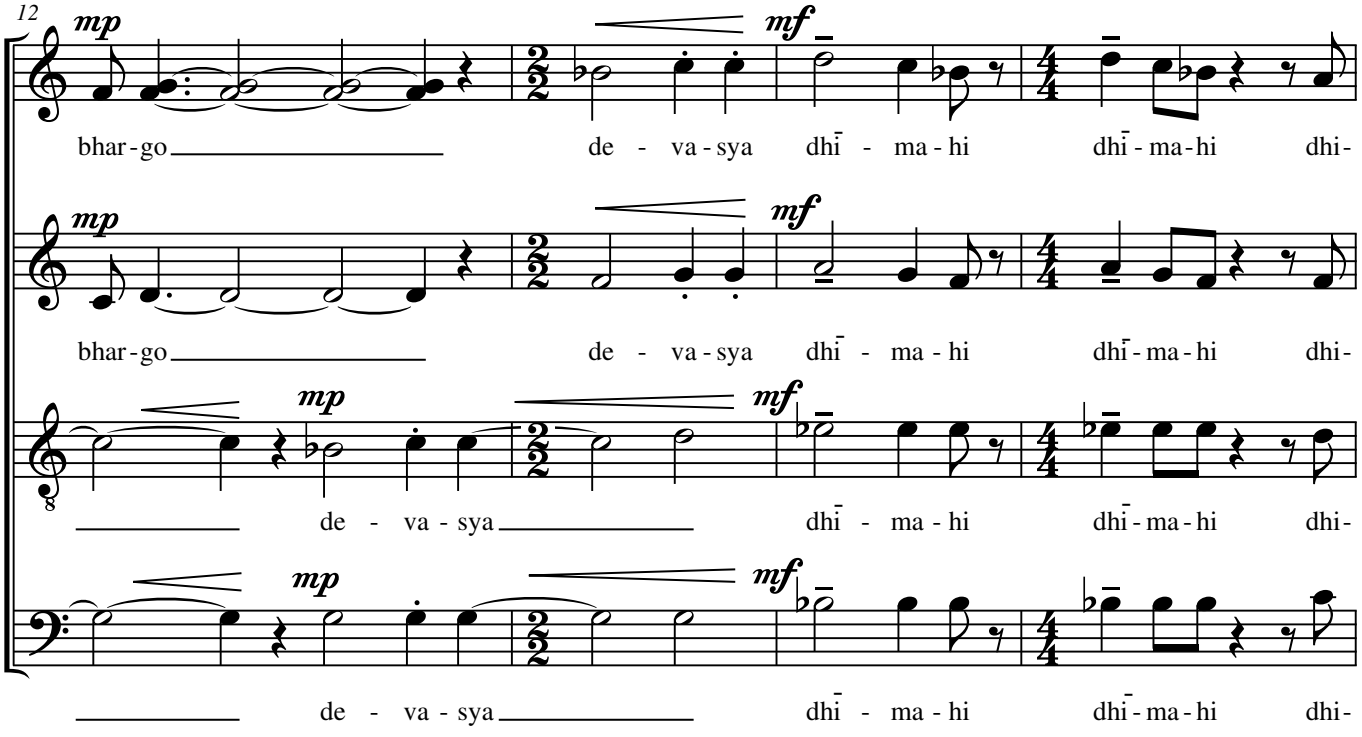

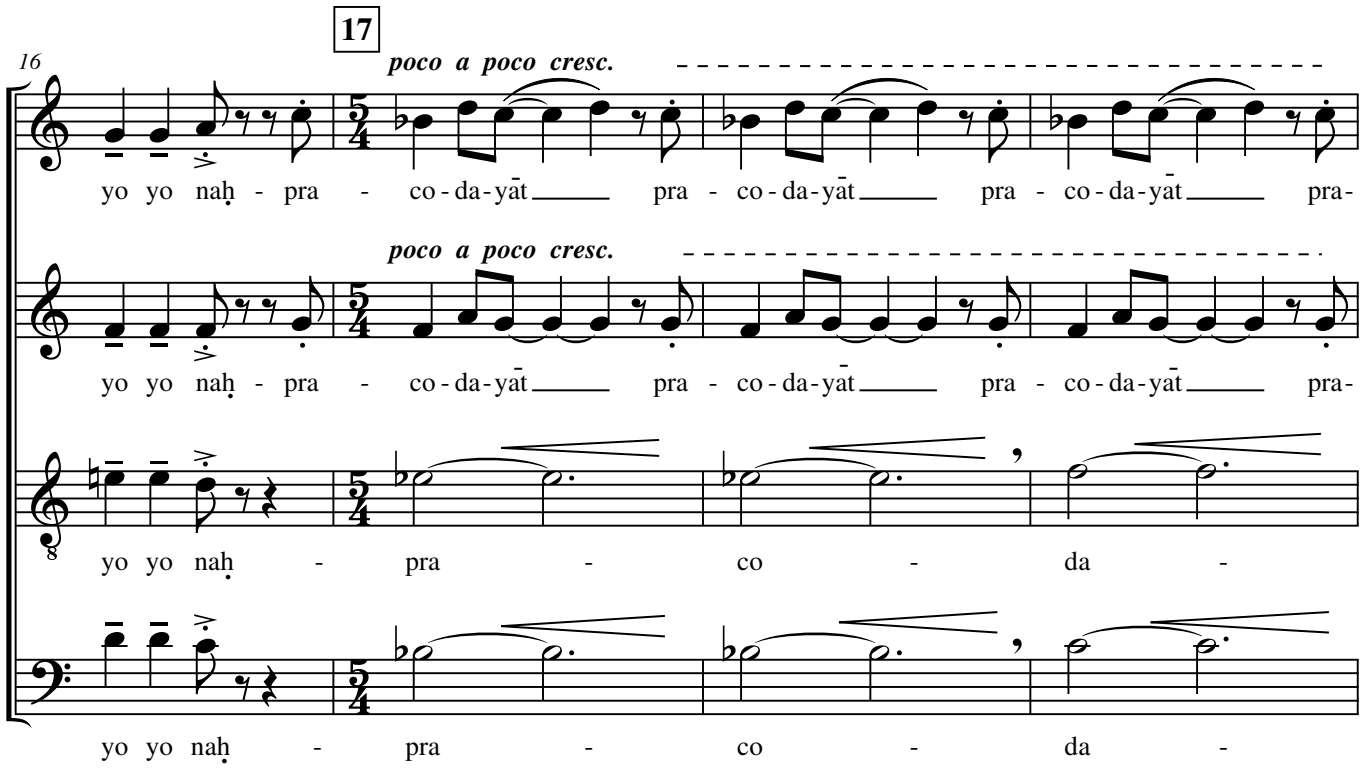

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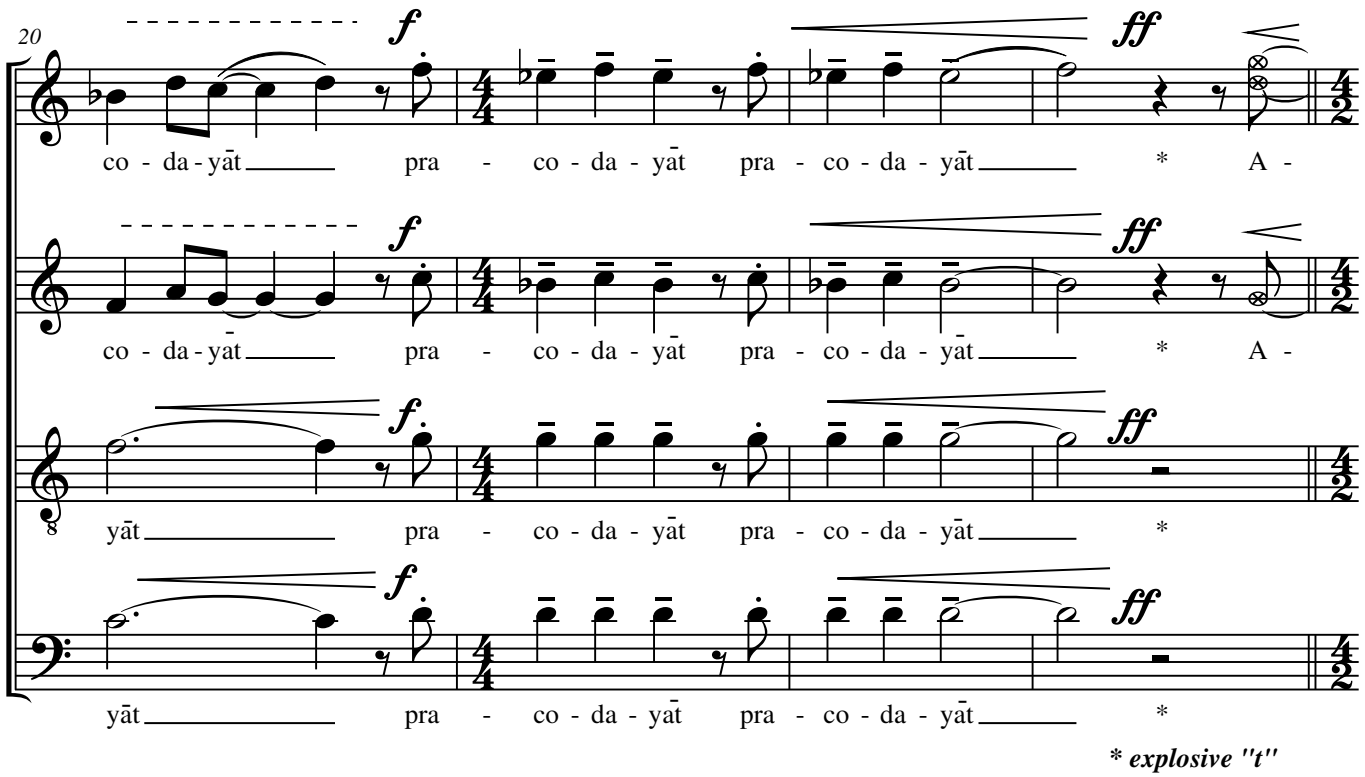
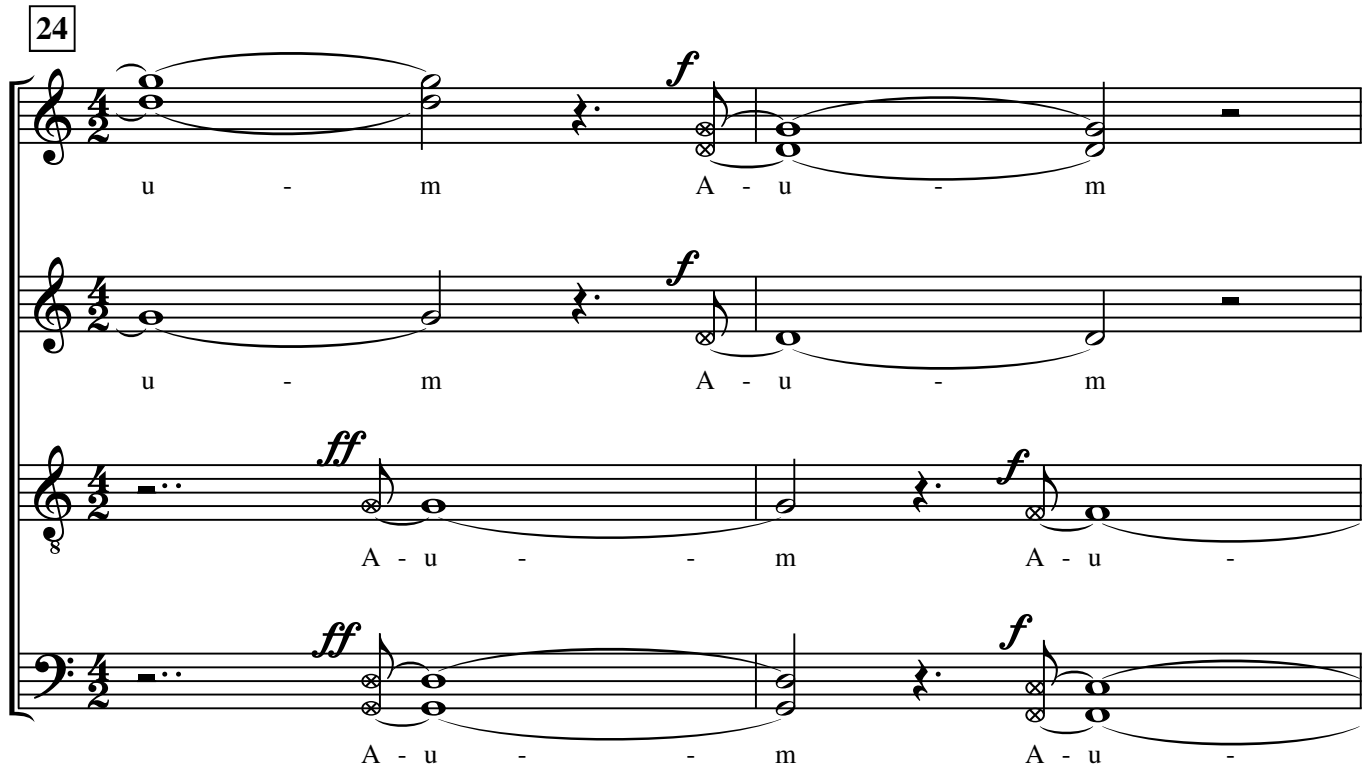


** explosive "t"*



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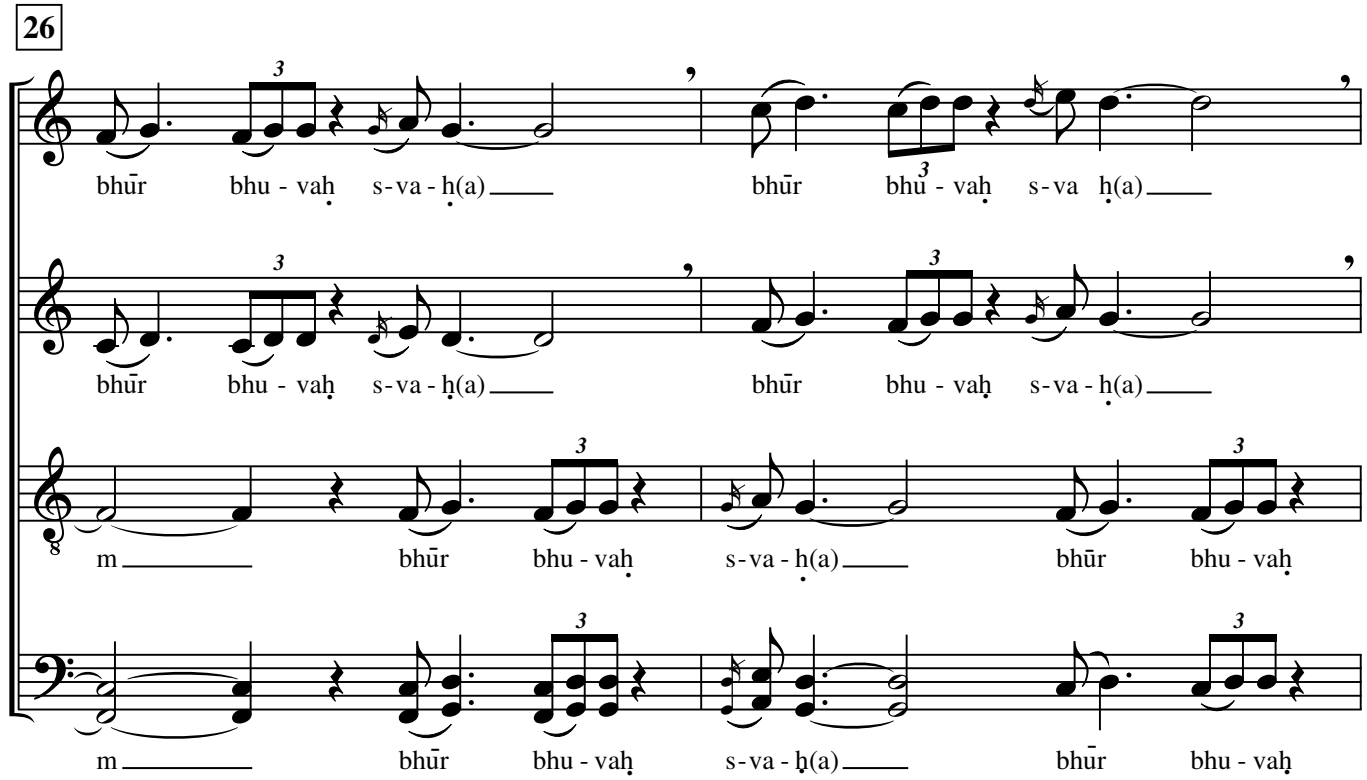

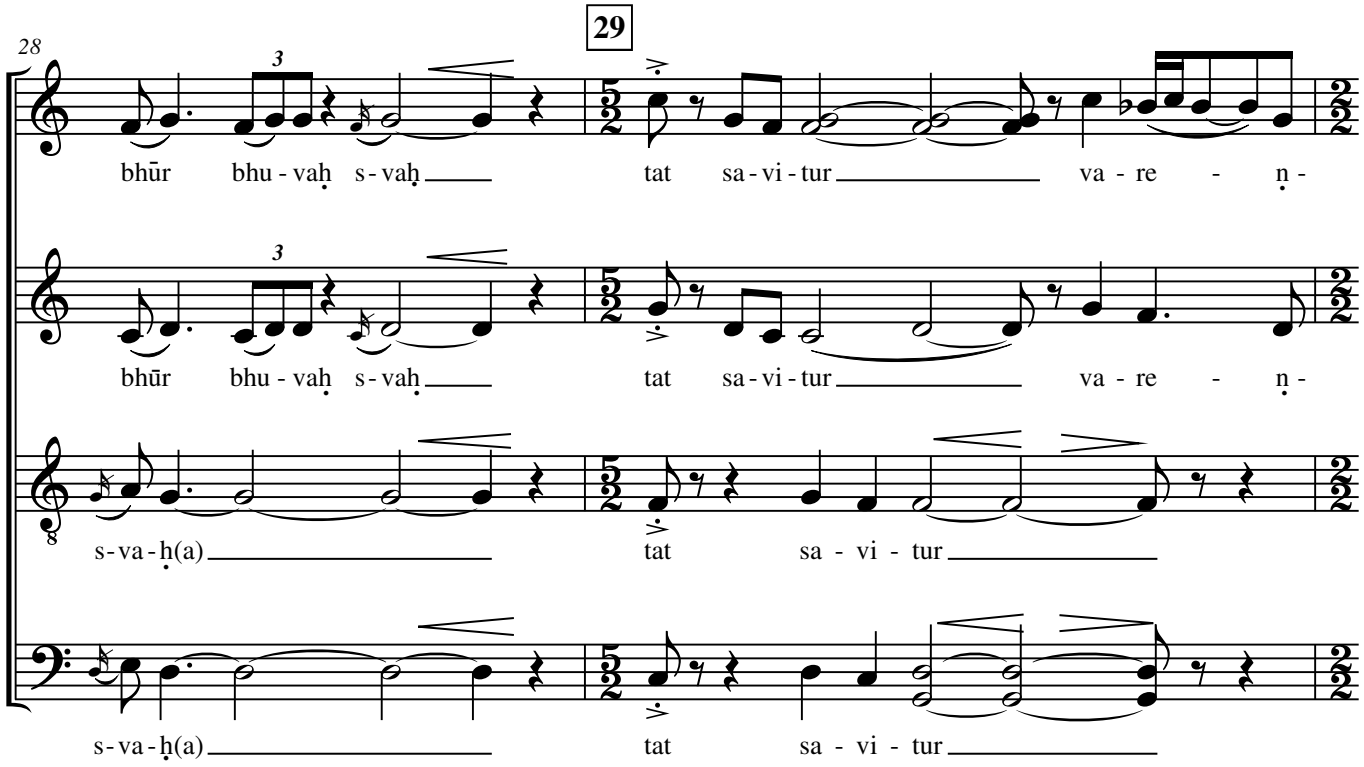

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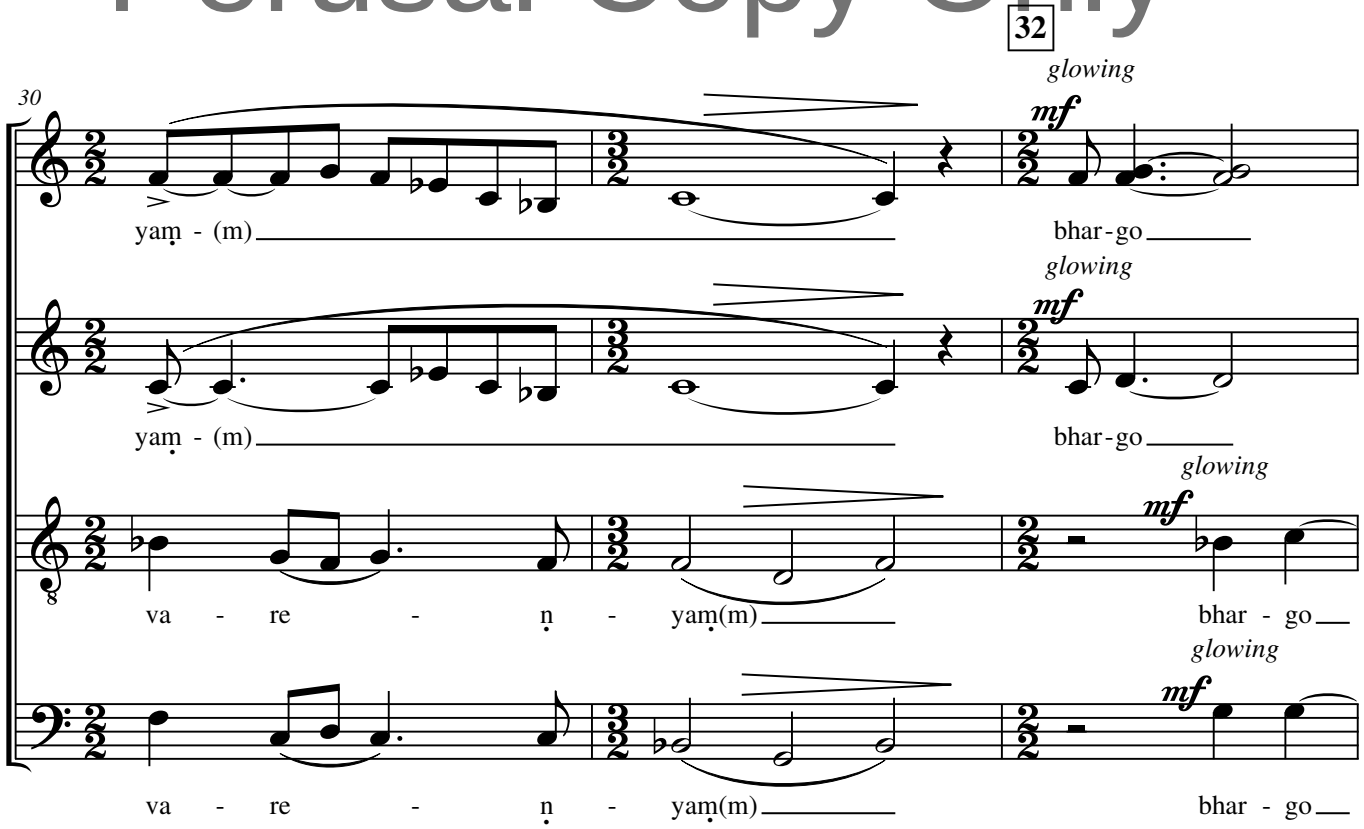

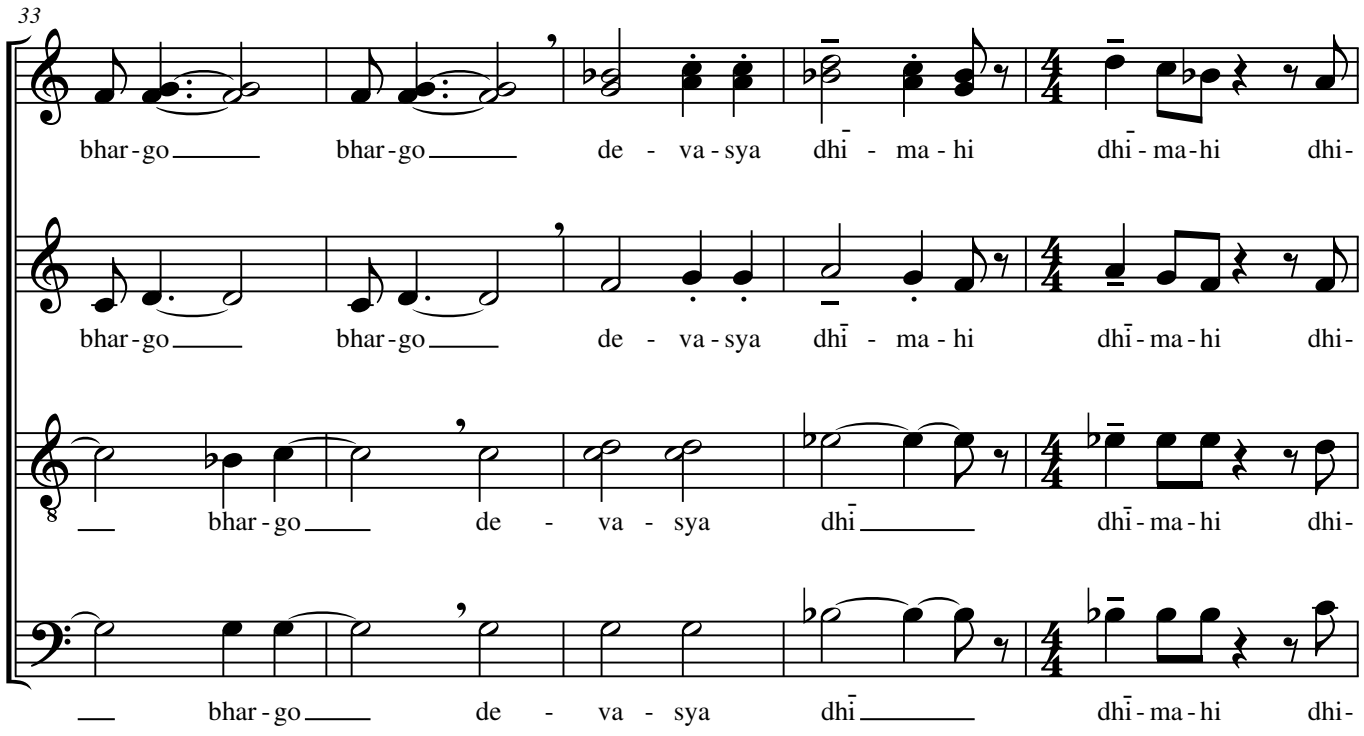

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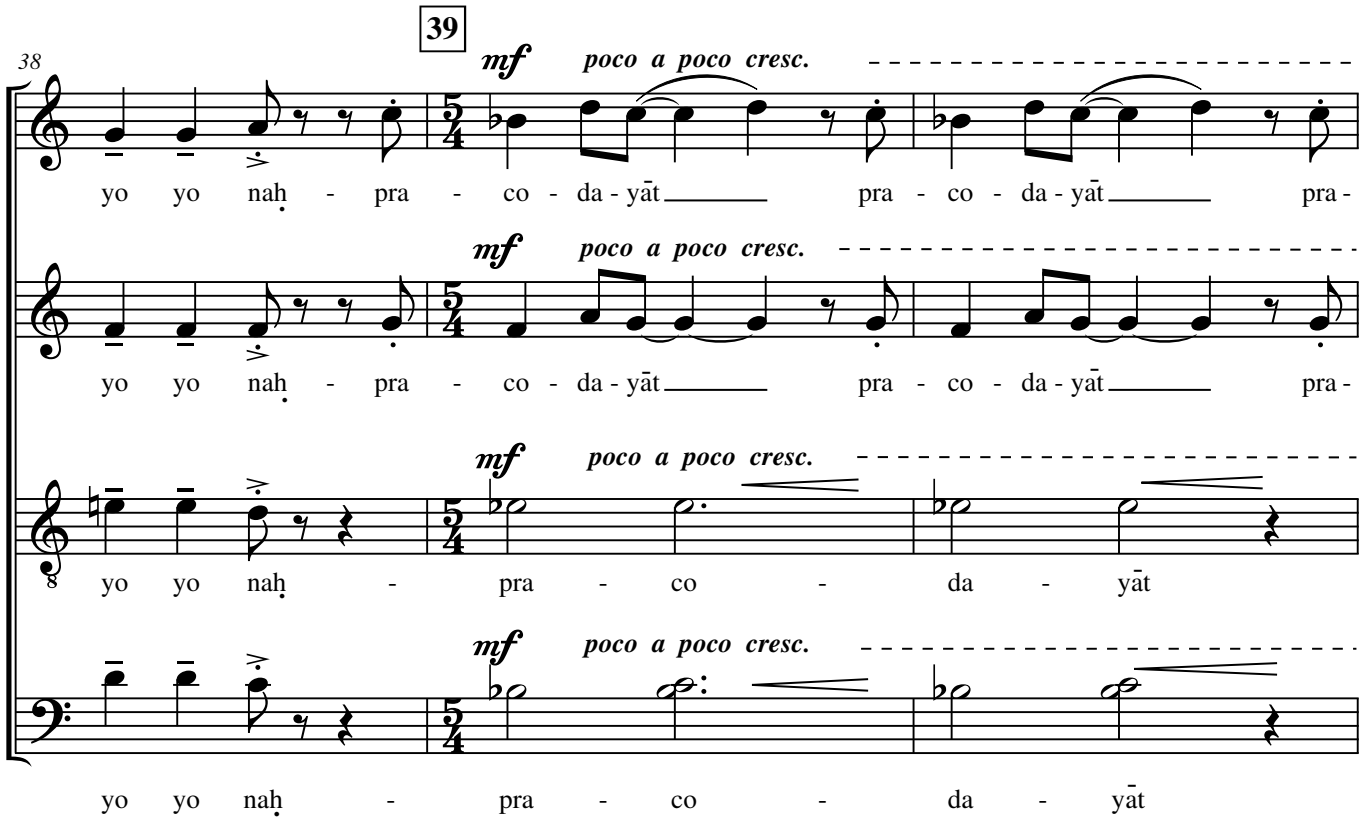

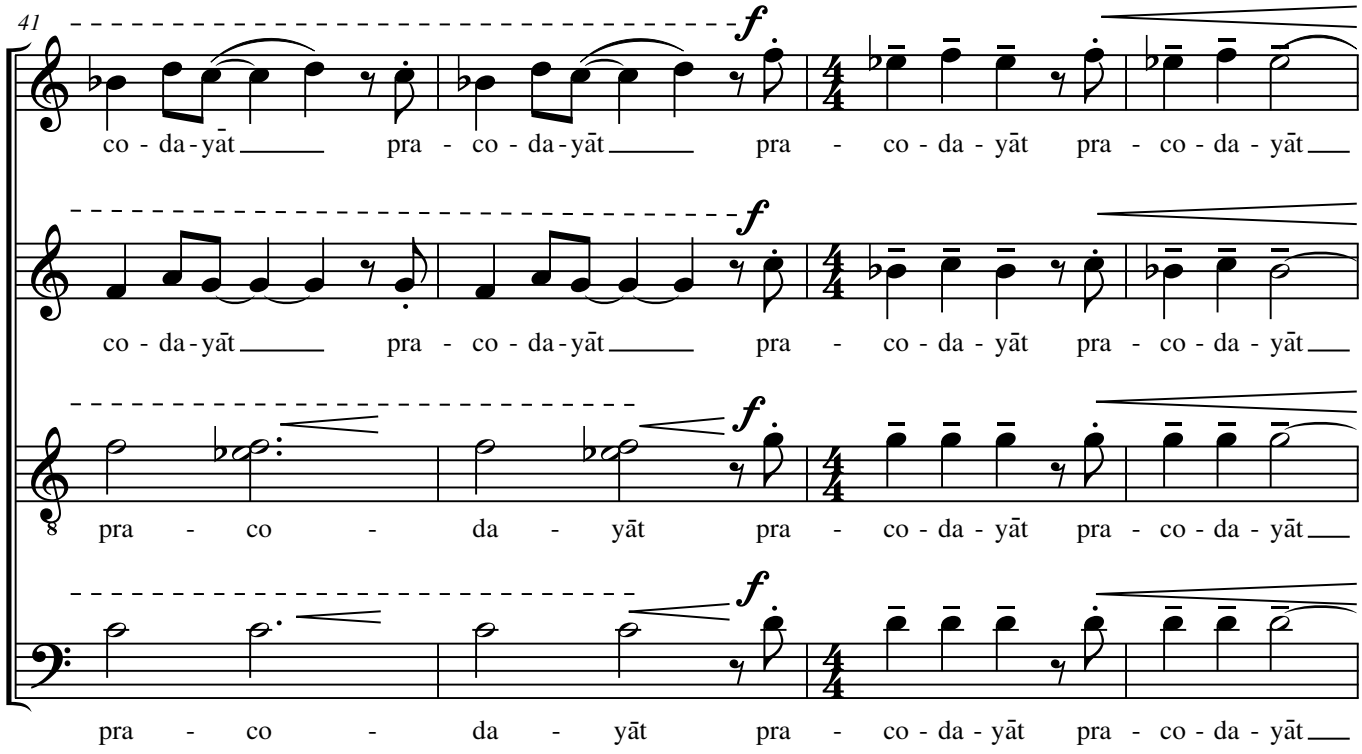

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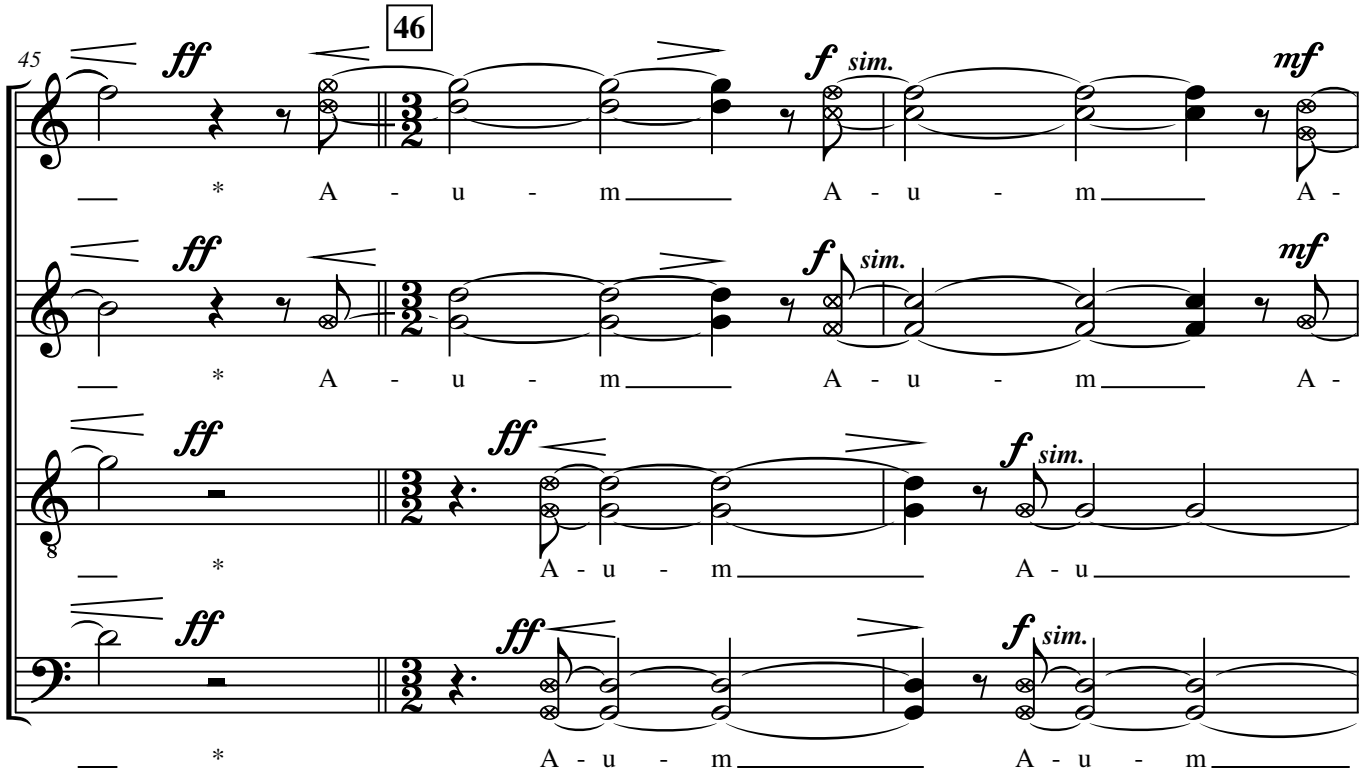

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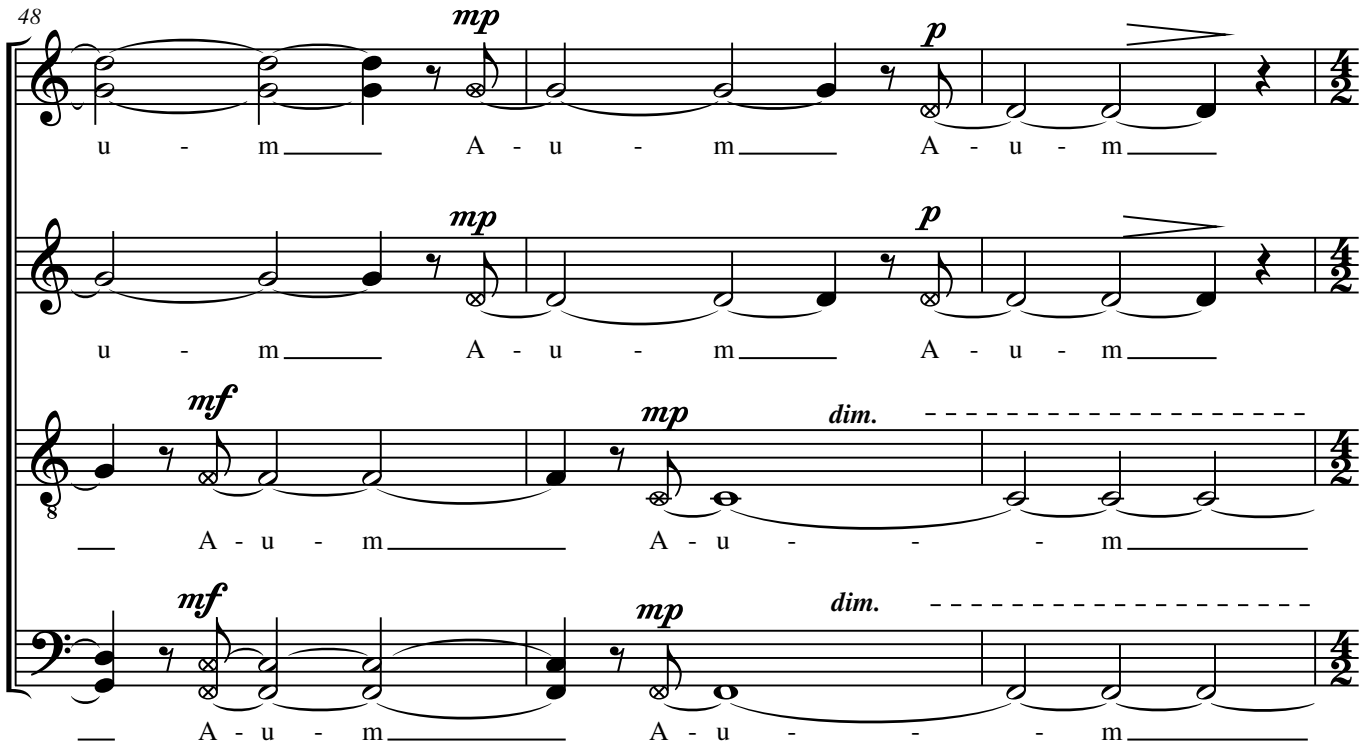

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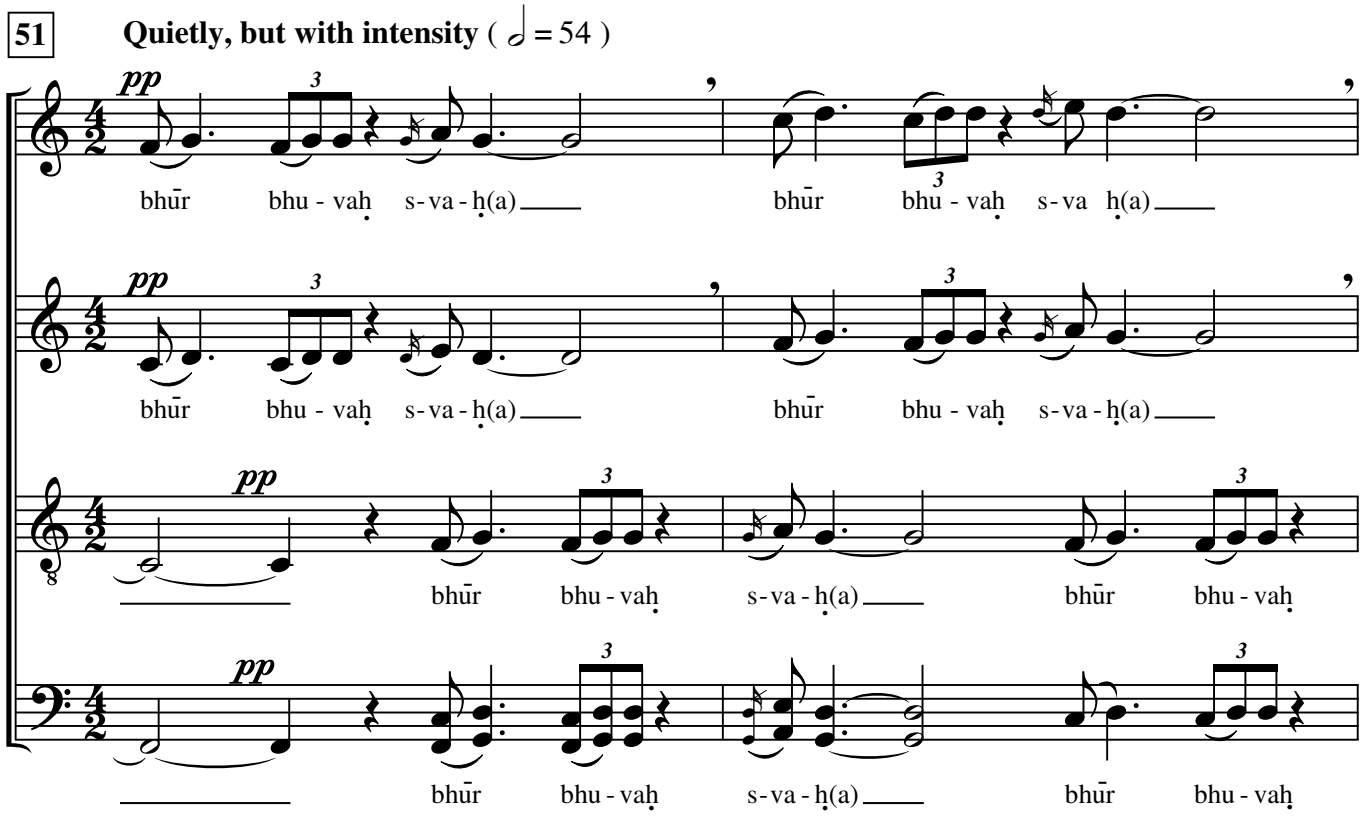

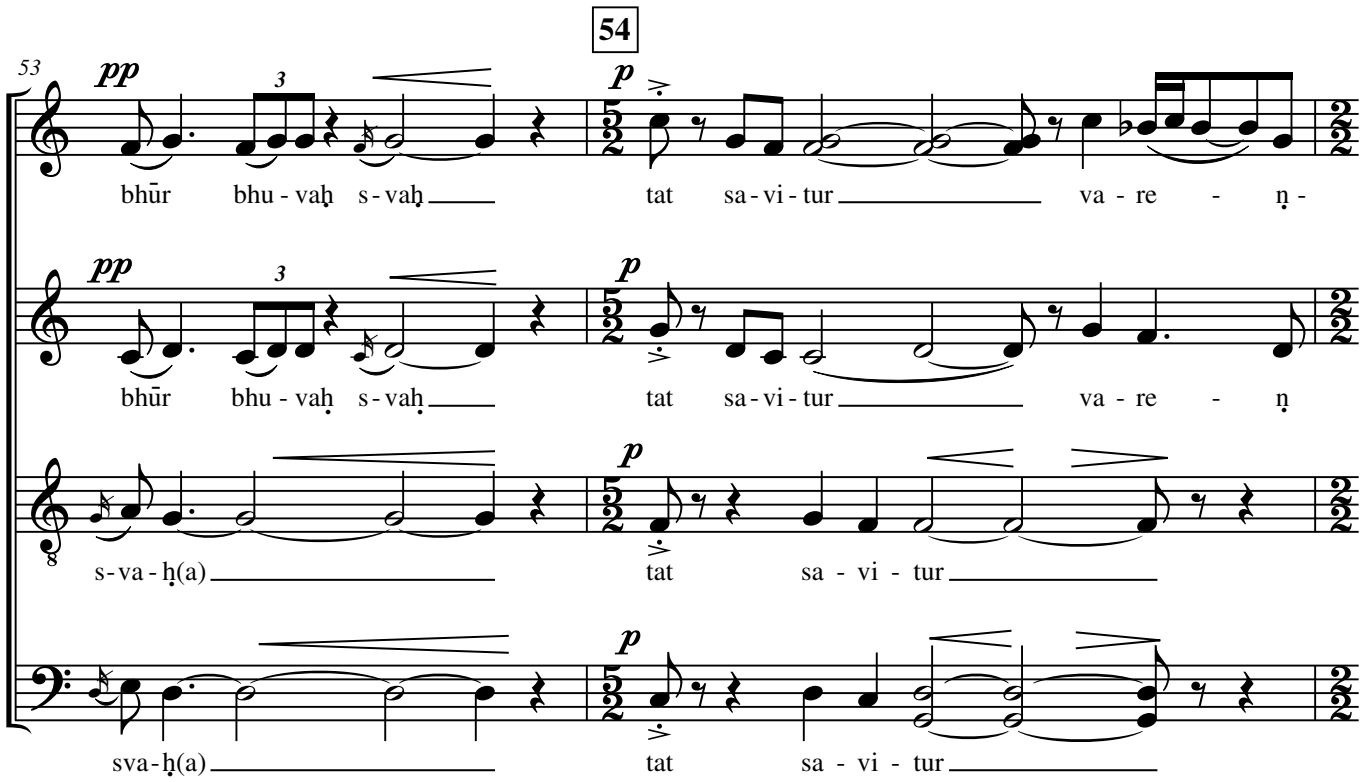

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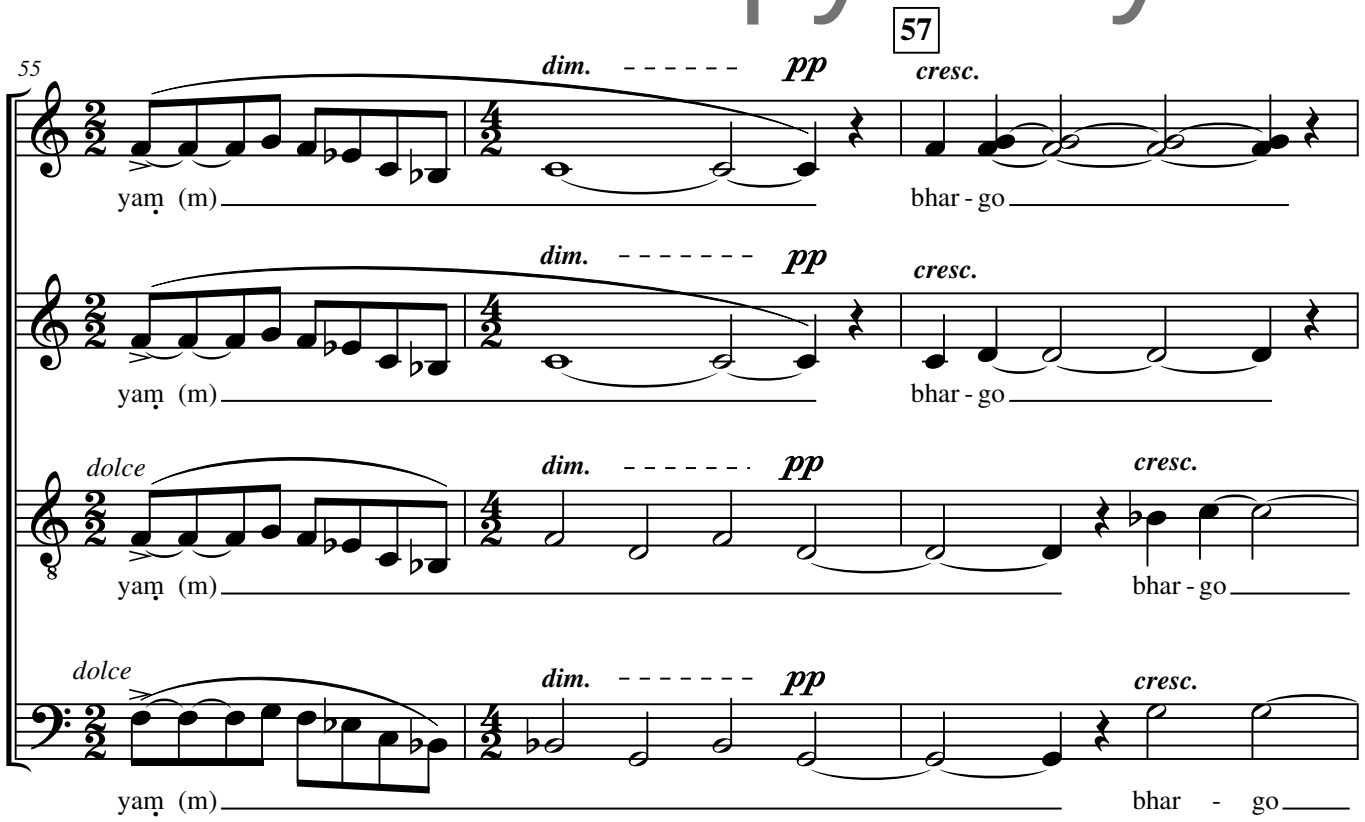

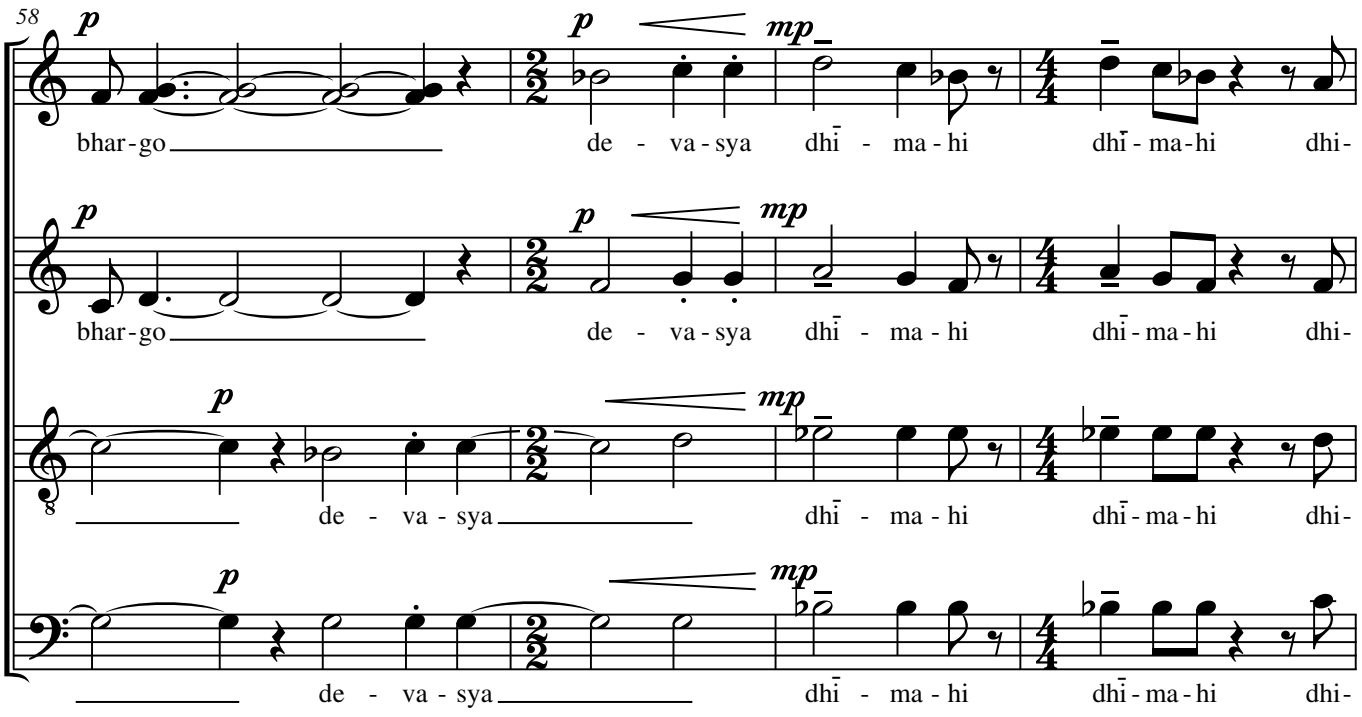

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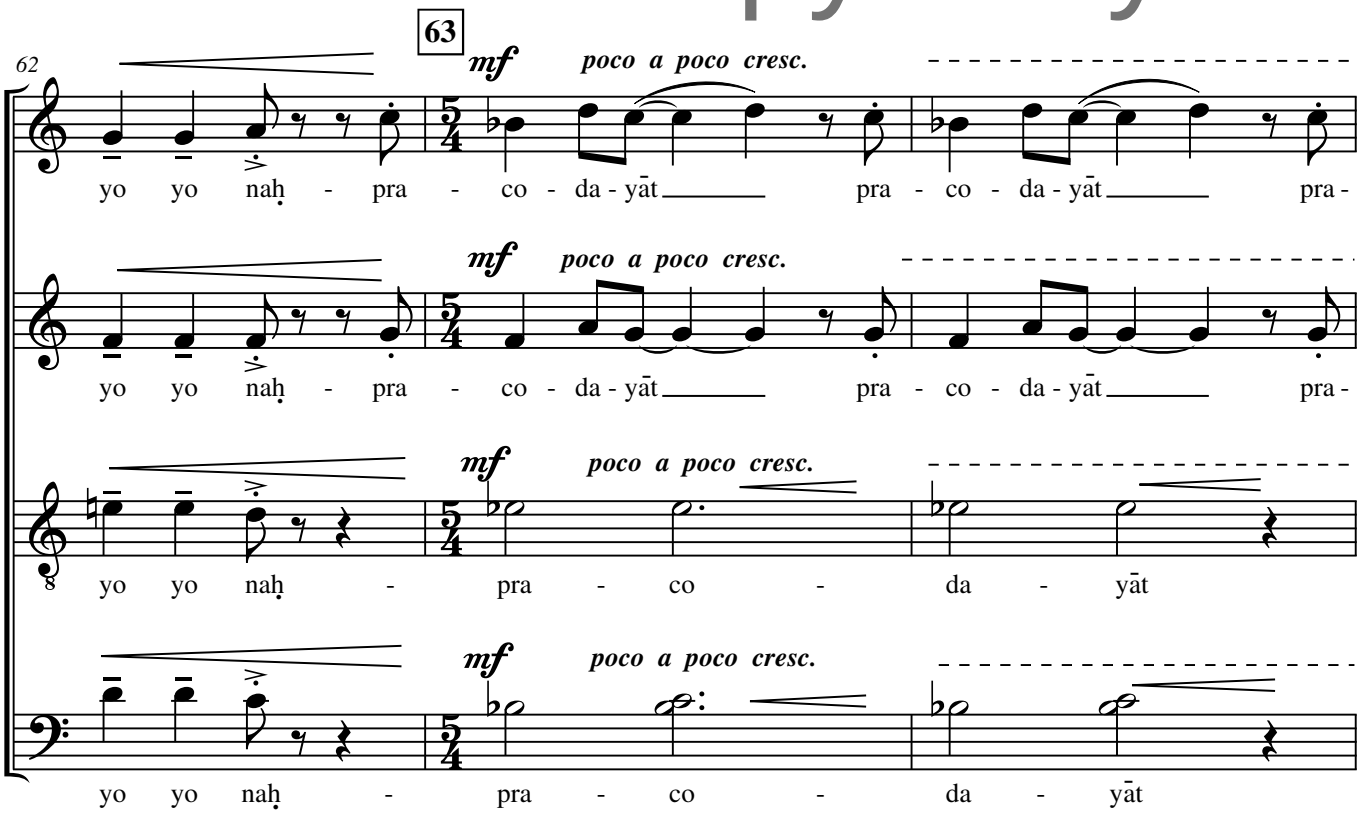

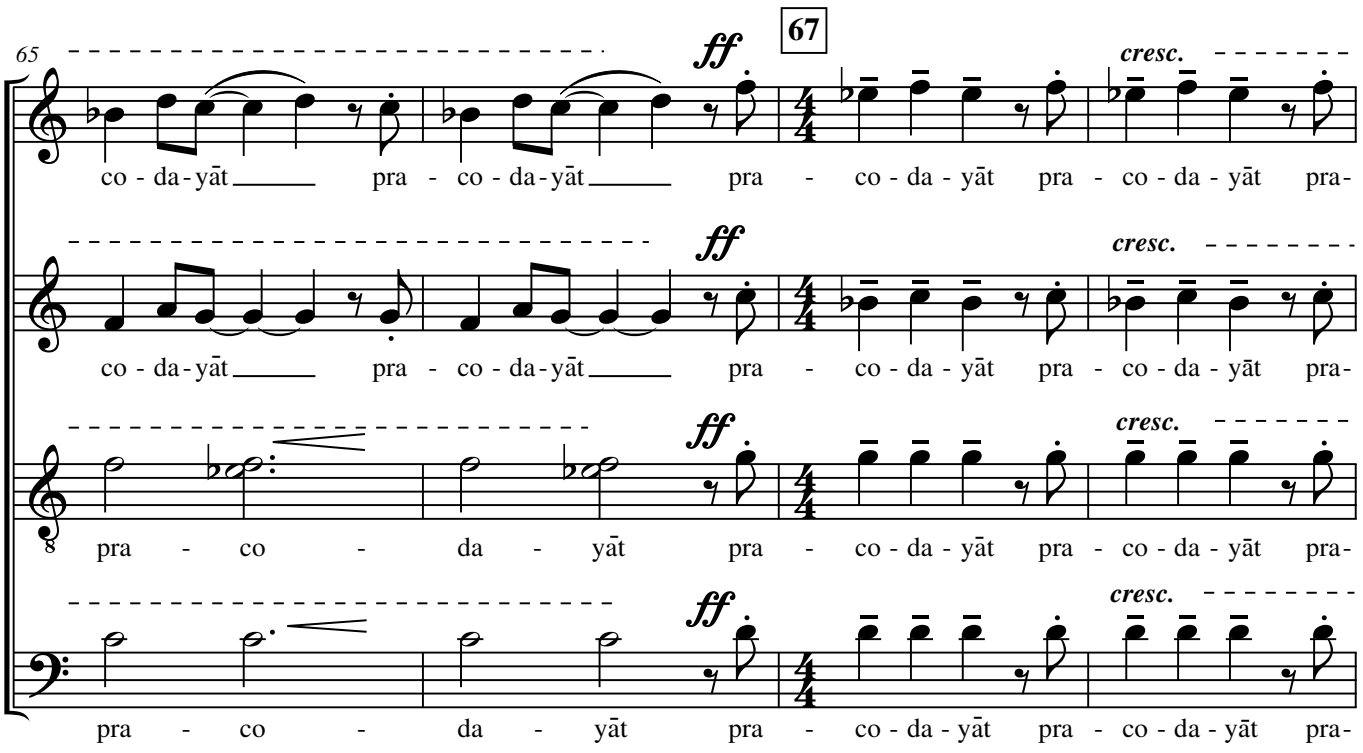

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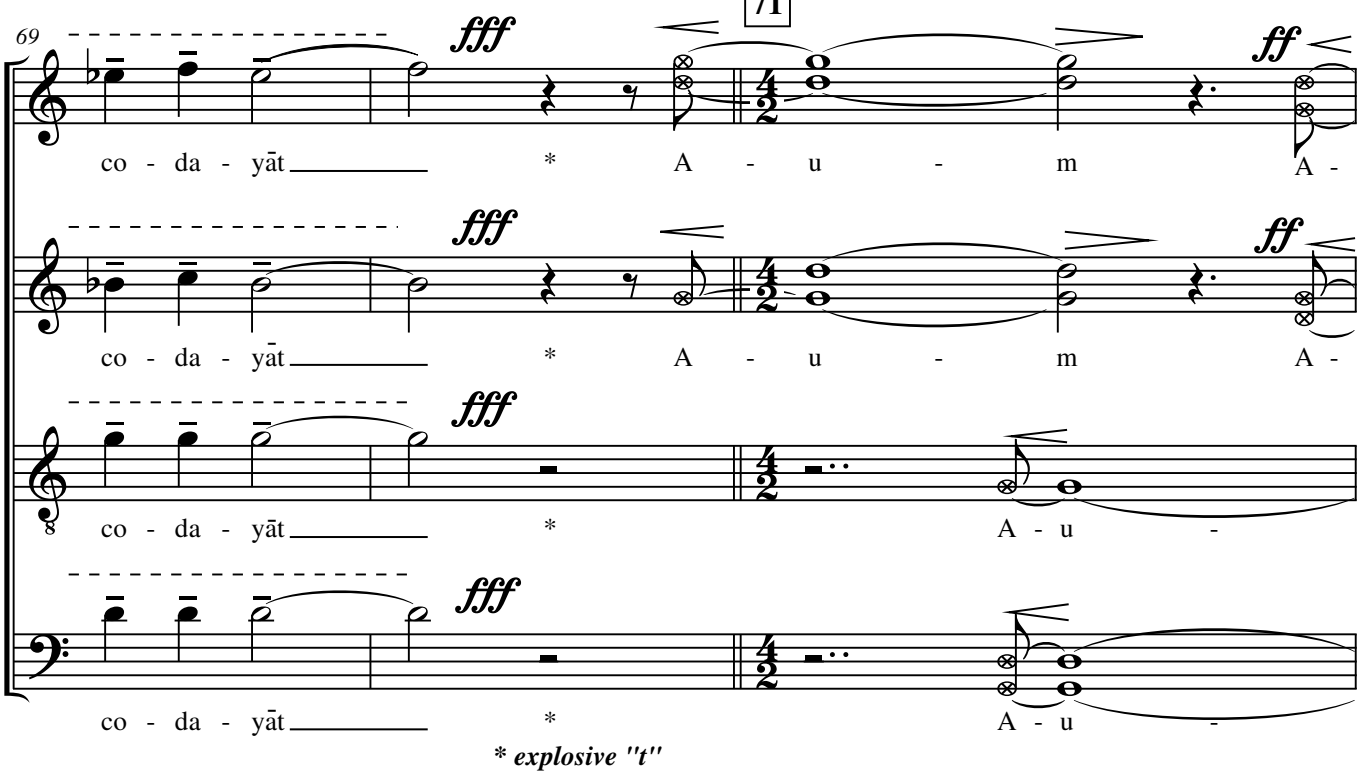

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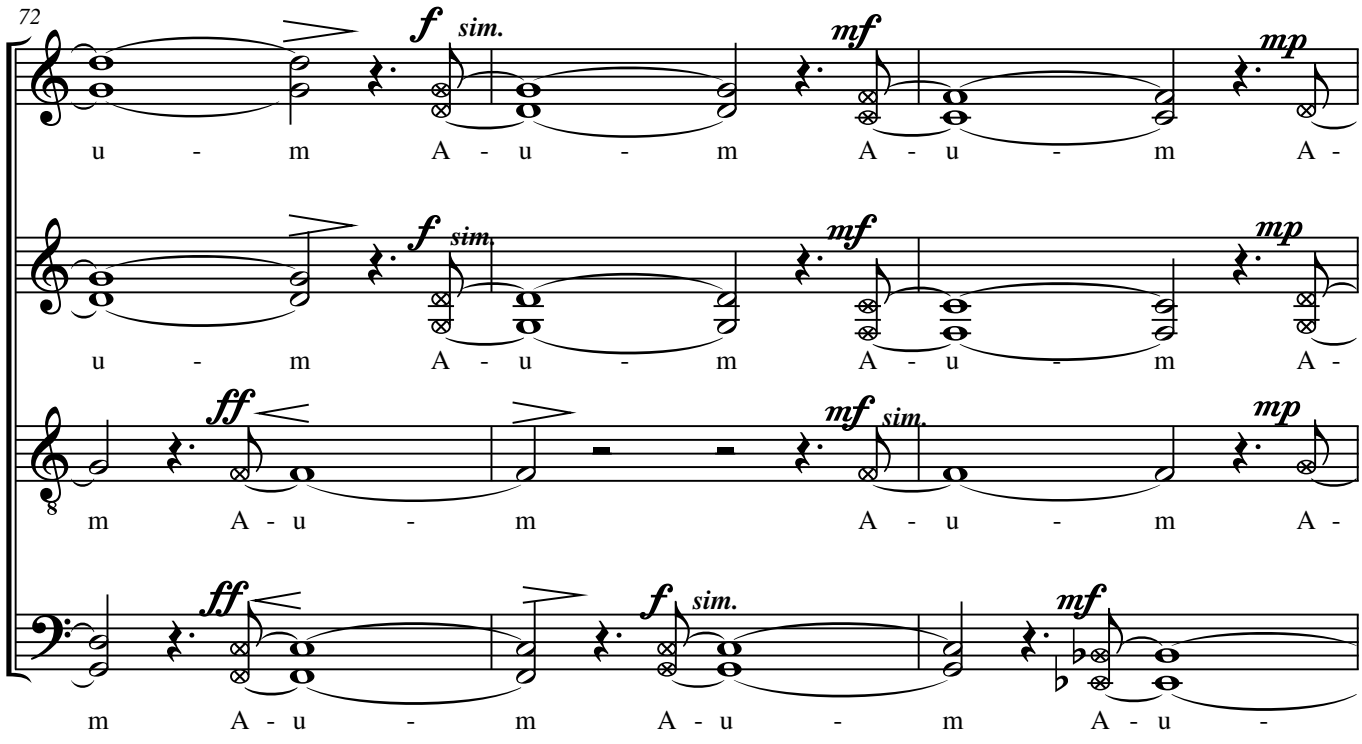

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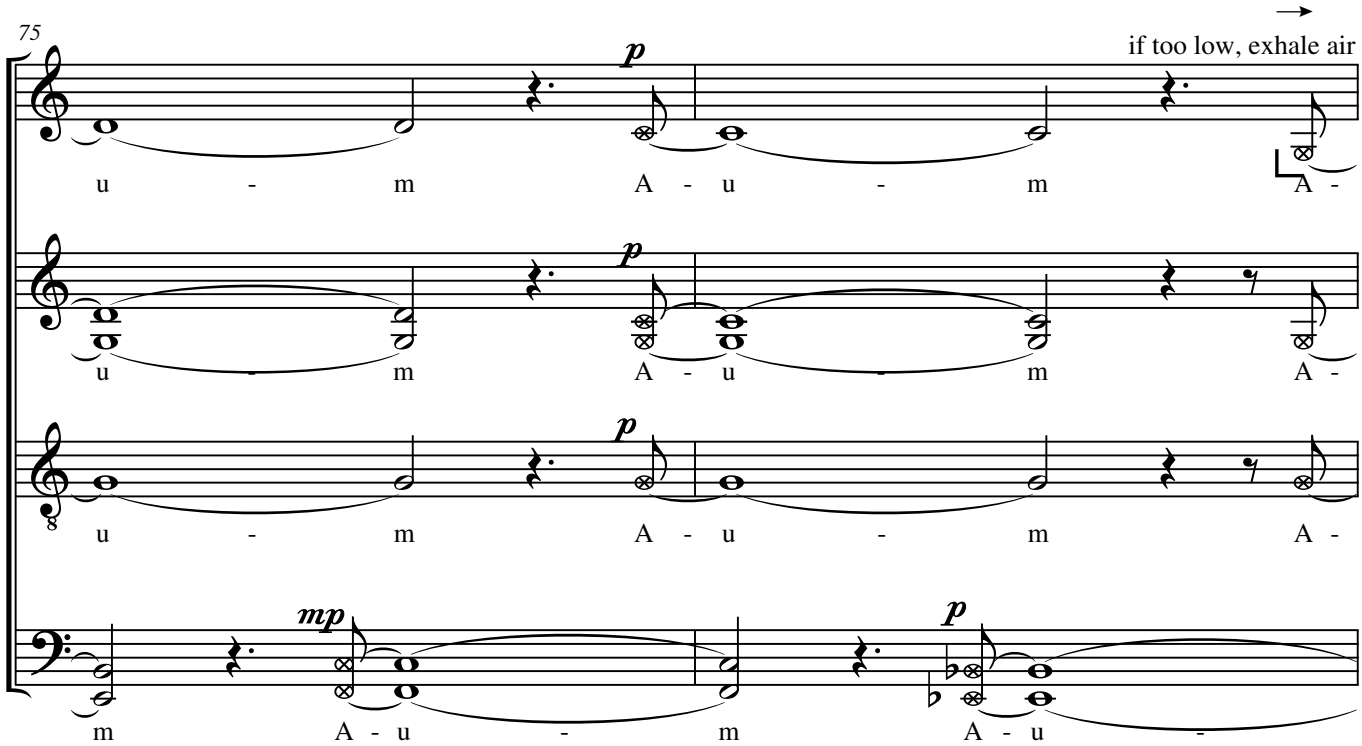

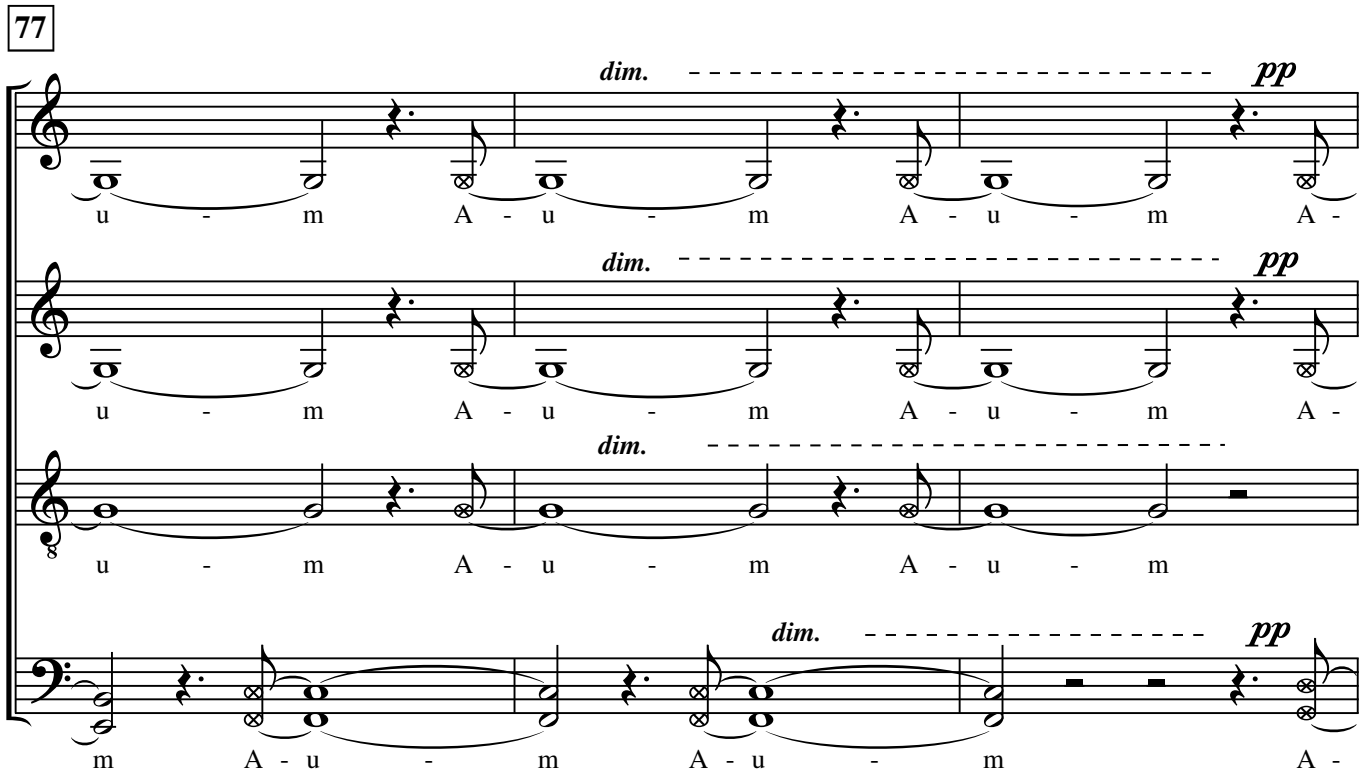

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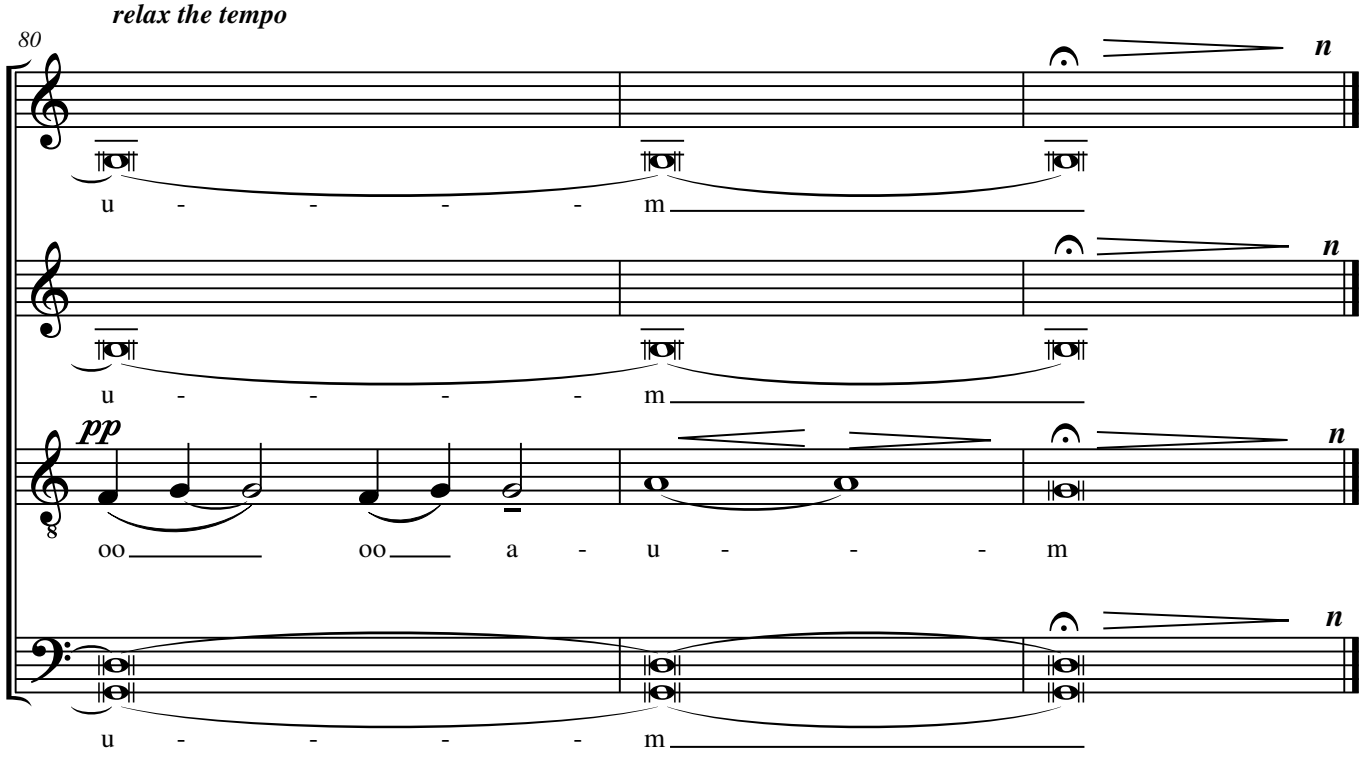

Lux aeterna

Mvt. V from *Lux Caelestis*

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Timothy Kramer

2004, 2011

PROGRAM NOTES:

This work was written for the Trinity University Choir and their director Scott MacPherson. In anticipation of the choir's tour to Germany in 2005, I was asked to write a piece that would be suitable for performance in the Cologne Cathedral. In thinking about that large reverberant space, the words of the *Lux aeterna* seemed most appealing to me. With that in mind, this piece uses soft, glowing textures, an attention to color, and long held tones to express the images of light, the eternal, and the perpetual. It was completed in 2004 while on sabbatical from Trinity University.

This may also serve as the last movement (Mvt. V) of *Lux Caelestis*, an entire cycle of works drawn from different religious traditions that deal with the subject of light.

Text:
Lux aeterna luceat eis, Domine,
cum sanctis tuis in aeternum,
quia pius es.
Requiem aeternam, dona eis, Domine,
et lux perpetua luceat eis.

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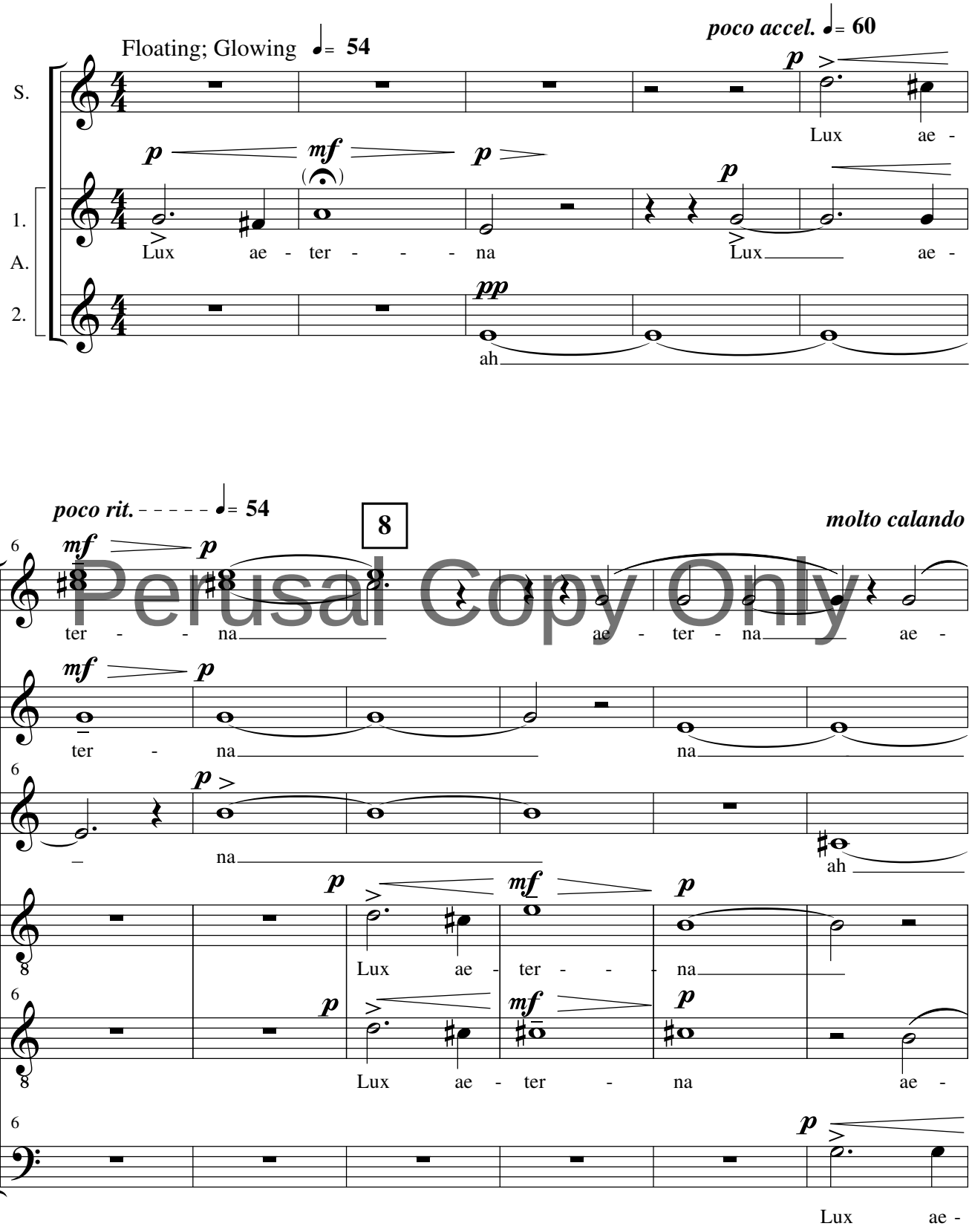
Translation:
Let light eternal shine upon them, O Lord,
with thy saints forever,
for Thou art merciful.
Rest eternal grant them, O Lord,
and let perpetual light shine upon them.

Lux aeterna

for Scott MacPherson and the Trinity University Choir

Timothy Kramer



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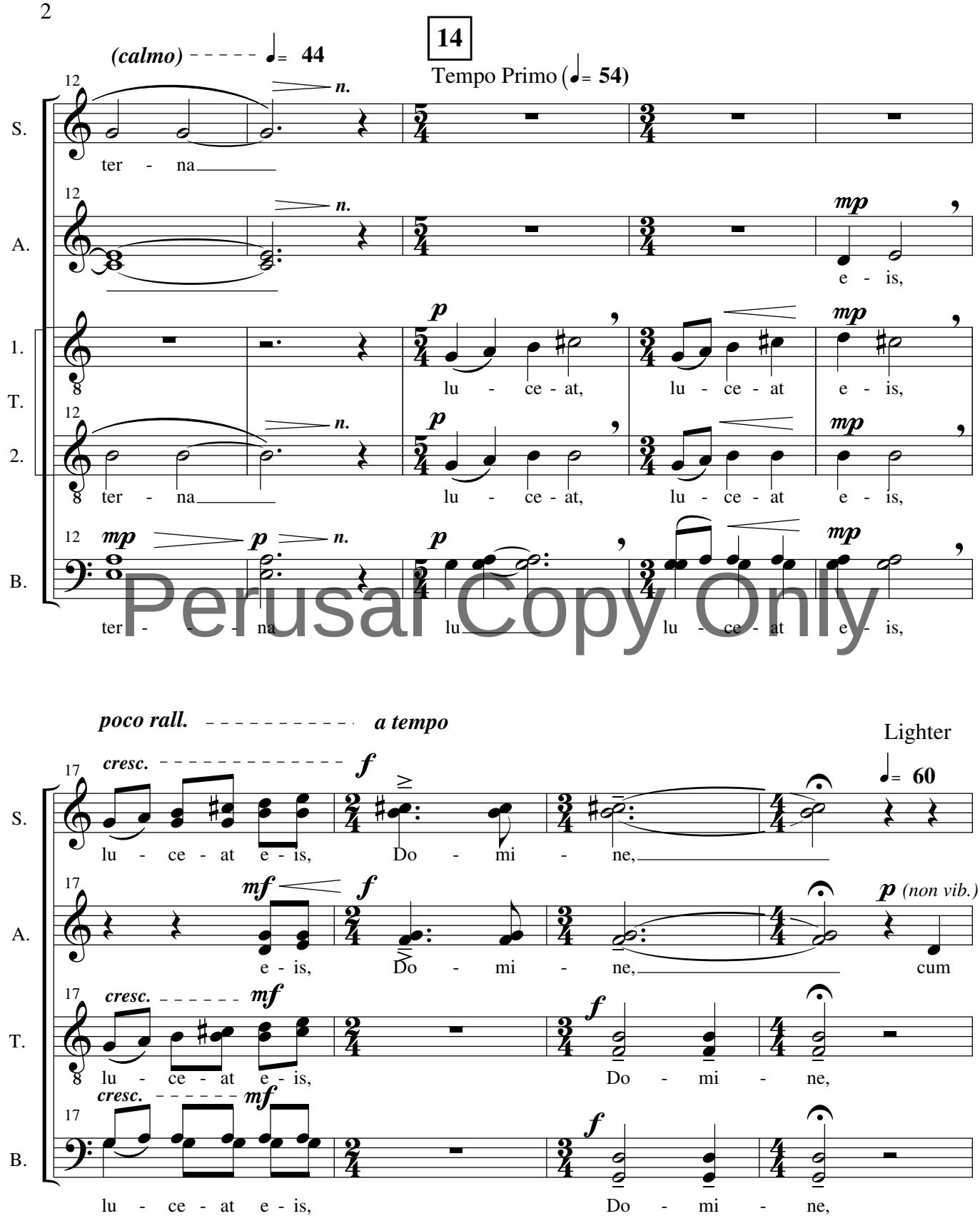

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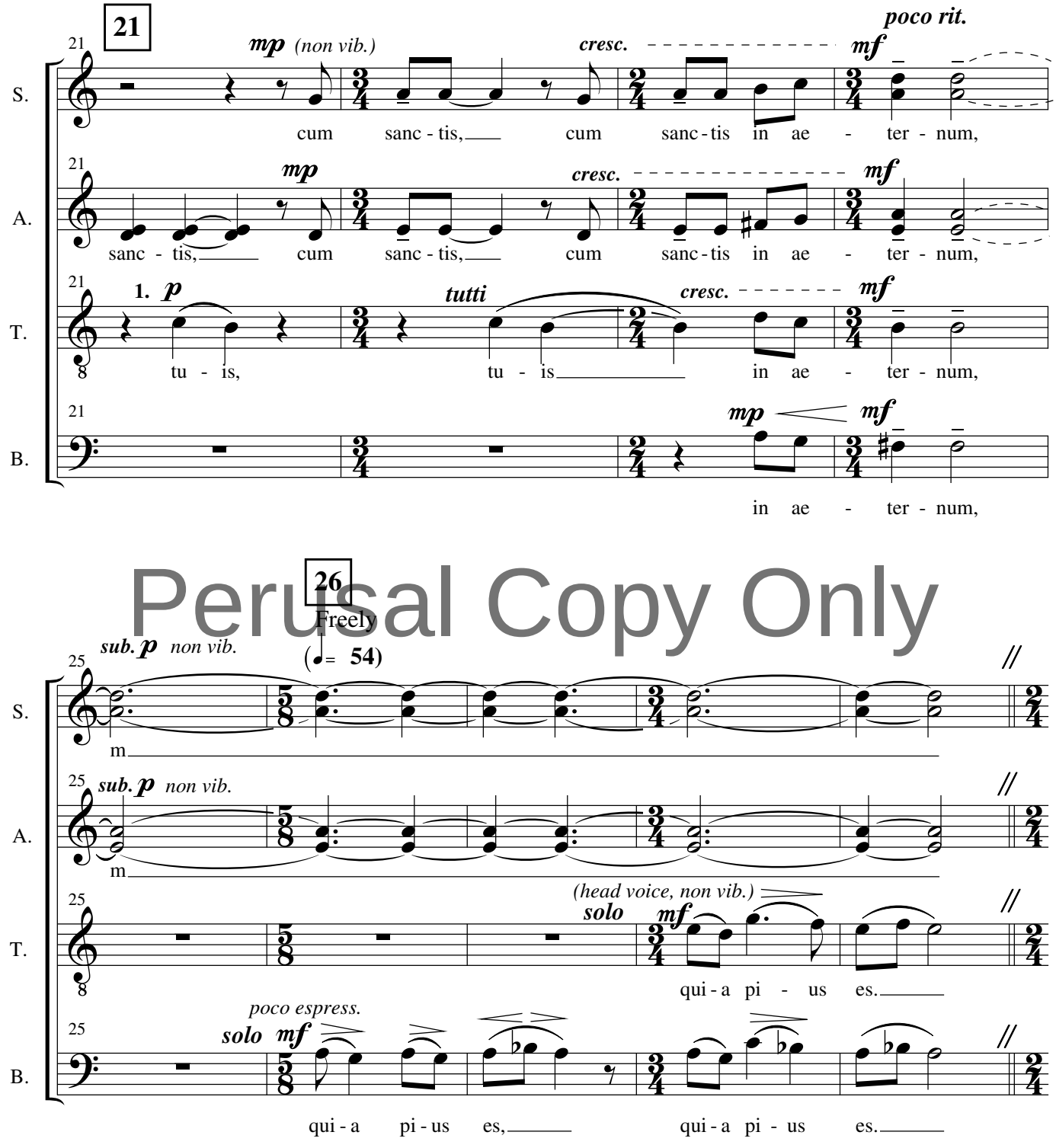

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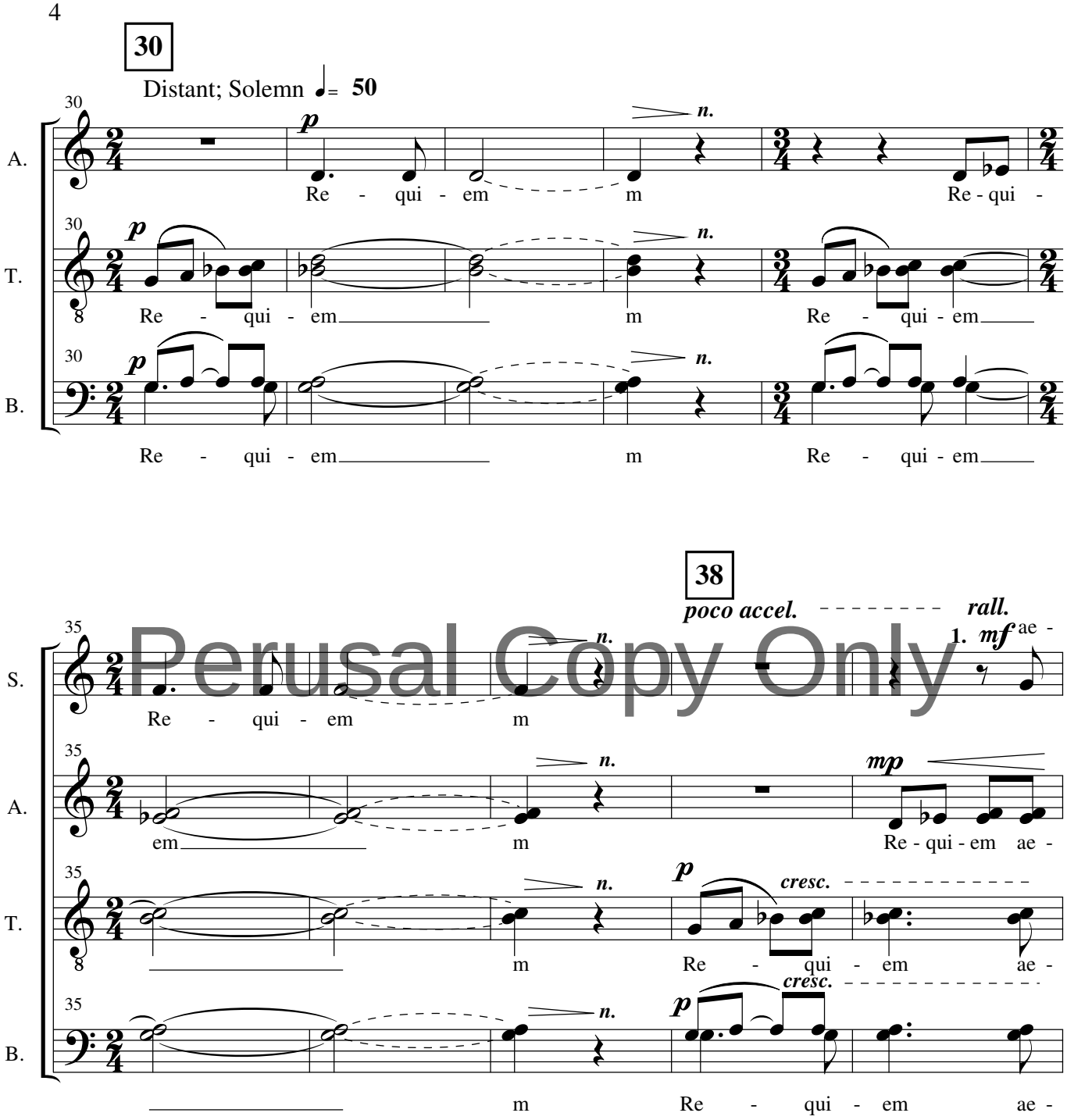

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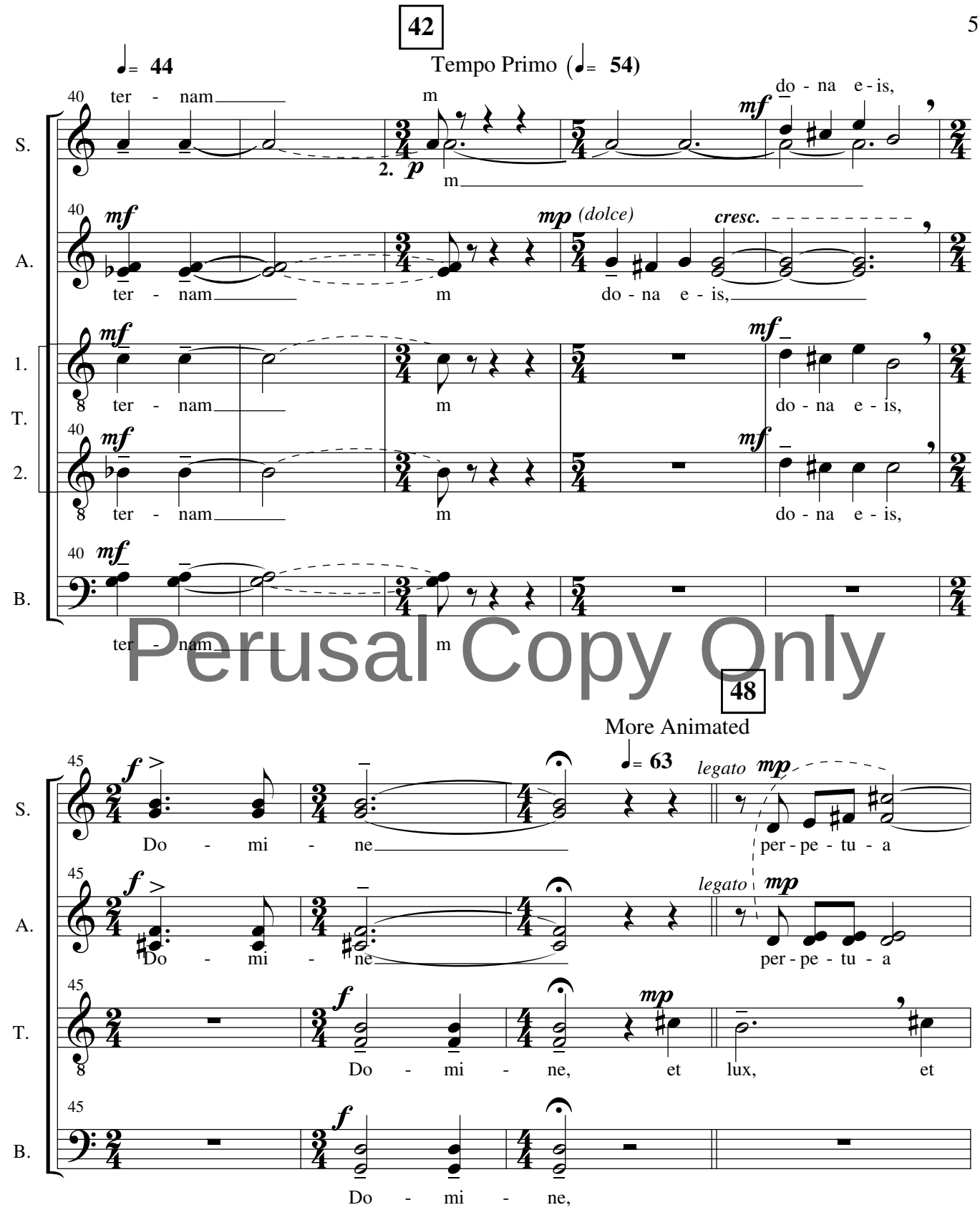

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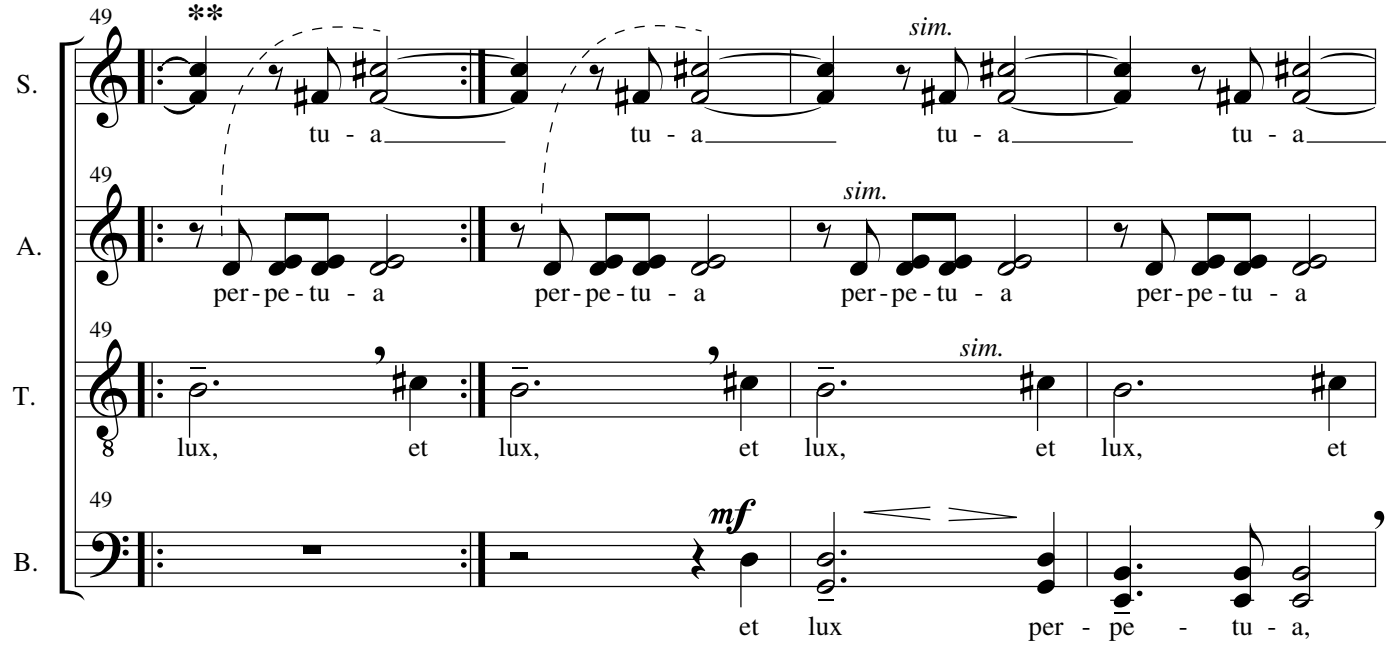

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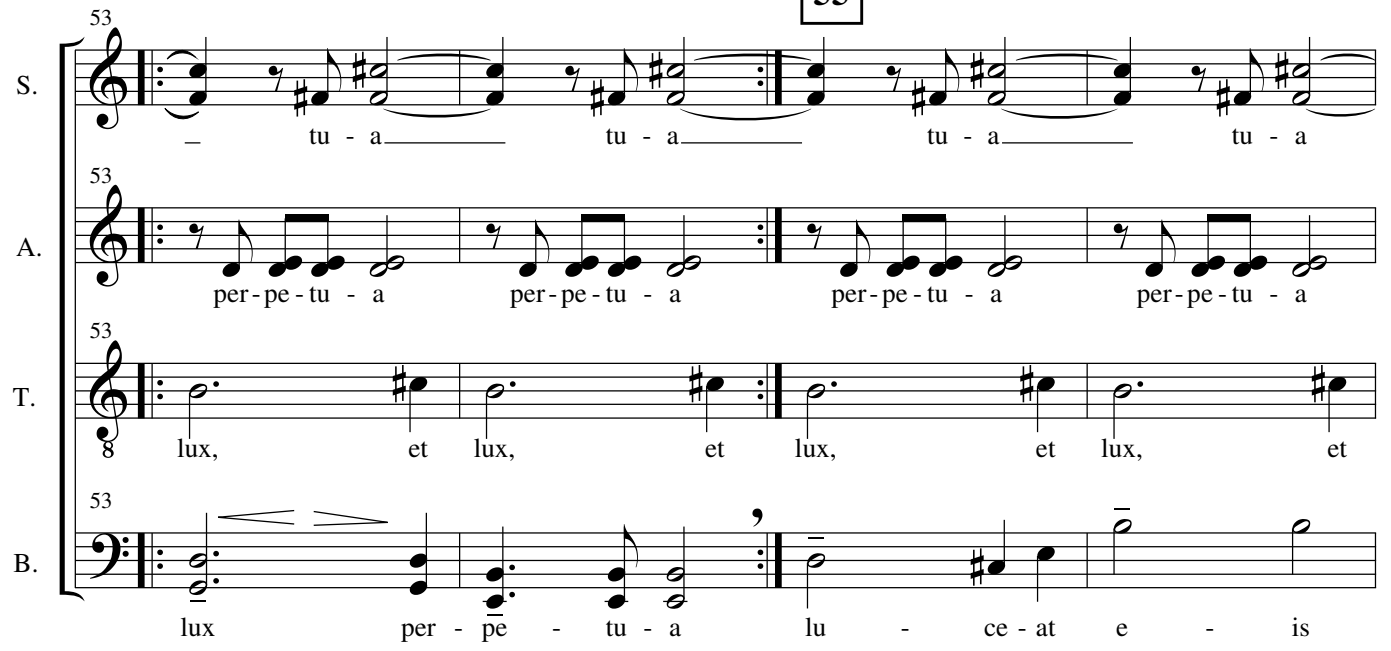
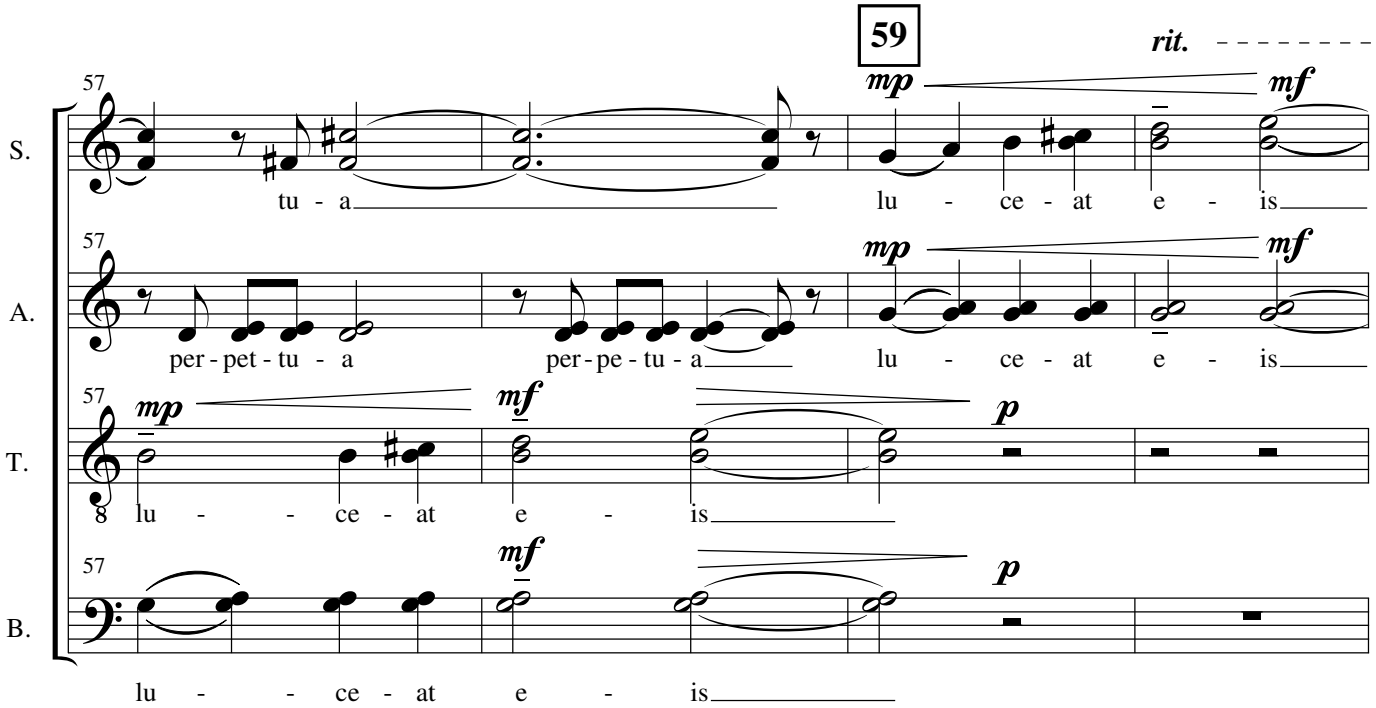


** *Repeats must be performed if the entire cycle is sung.*
Repeats are optional if the Lux aeterna is performed separately.



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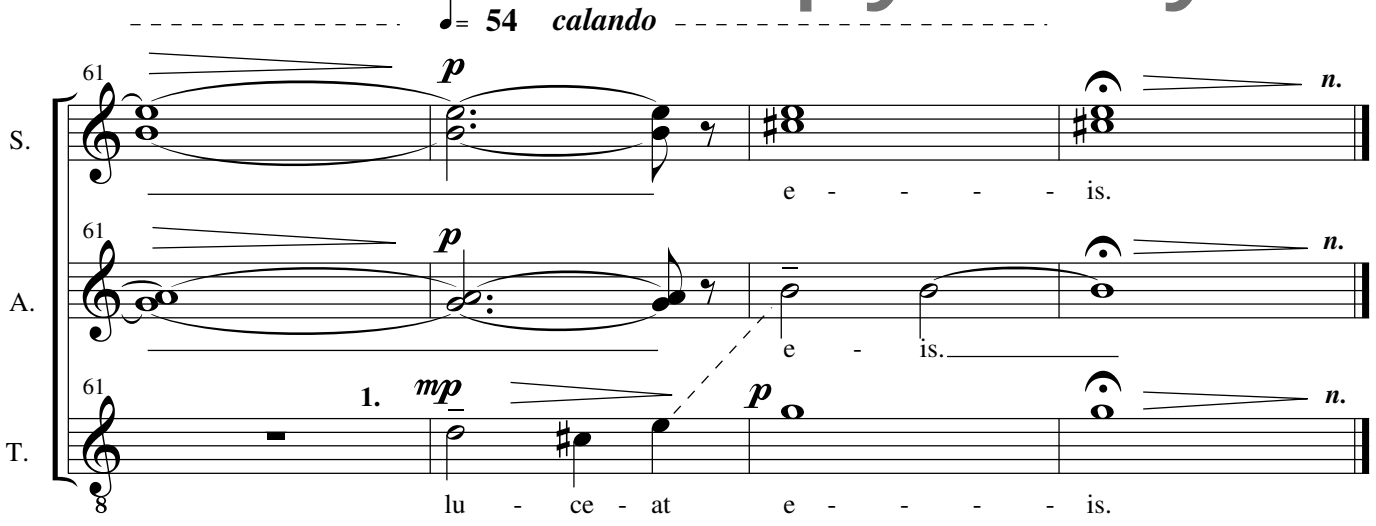

Jacksonville, Illinois
August, 2004