Troy D. Robertson

The Beatitudes

The Beatitudes, by Troy D. Robertson, an alumnus of the group, was commissioned by the Festival Singers of Florida in honor of Dr. Kevin Fenton, founder and artistic director, on the occasion of the choir's tenth anniversary. Dr. Fenton's passion for excellence in the choral arts is legendary. It is from his vision, his energy, his enthusiasm, and passion for his craft that the Festival Singers of Florida came into existence. The impact of his vision, that by simply singing together we can bring peace throughout the world, is ever-expanding. He is an inspiration to anyone privileged to know him and he is truly a voice for peace.

Ron Hatley
Board of Directors Liaison
Festival Singers of Florida

A note from the composer:

The Beatitudes are among the best known verses of the Bible. When I first considered the text as a possible subject for this piece I was at a loss as to what my approach might be. As I read the verses again and again, however, I thought about how these words must have sounded to the first ears on which they fell. I thought about my friend Kevin Fenton and Festival Singers of Florida, and I began to see a possibility.

* * *

The opening "crow" of the piano, quiet and in the distance, is meant to set us in the proper frame of mind. That is to say, we already know the whole story, how it ends, and we know it from several sources. We are not the heroes of the story. Given that, the Beatitudes, far from a list of comforting assurances, are an indictment and an admonition:

The lowly and weak will have their share of heaven. The rest of us have our warning - woe to us!

After the opening crow the piano paints a backdrop of idyll (either "the mount" or "the plain," depending on the Gospel). Into the midst of this peaceful repose the singers offer strange ideas: "Rich are the poor... fortunate are you who hunger... blessed are you who weep..." These odd words of comfort change to words of conviction: "Woe to you who are rich... you who are full... you who laugh now..."

In the final moments of the piece Jesus (despairingly?) asks, 2,000 years hence, "Why do you call me Lord and yet do not the things I say?" In the coda that follows, the choir meditates on the more difficult, and therefore the most radical, of these sayings.

My hope is that this piece will challenge singers (and perhaps the audience) to hear these familiar words with new ears, to hear them as the strange and radical ideas they are.

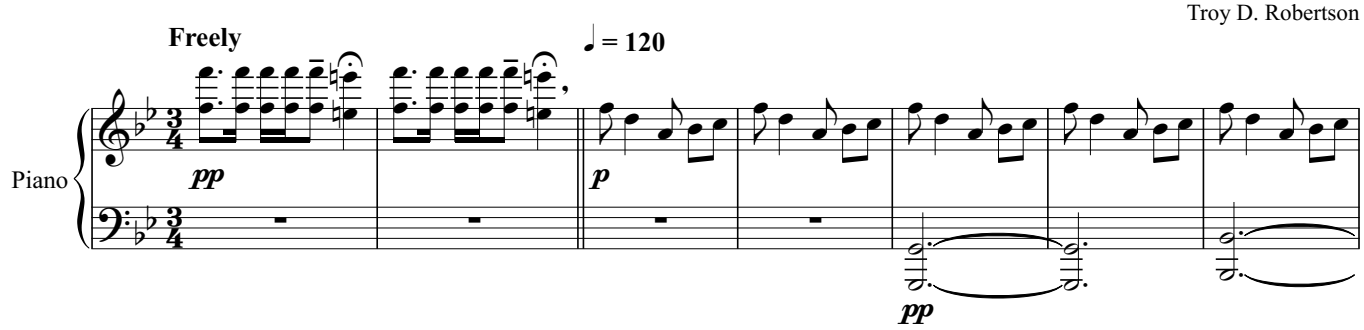
Troy D. Robertson

The Beatitudes

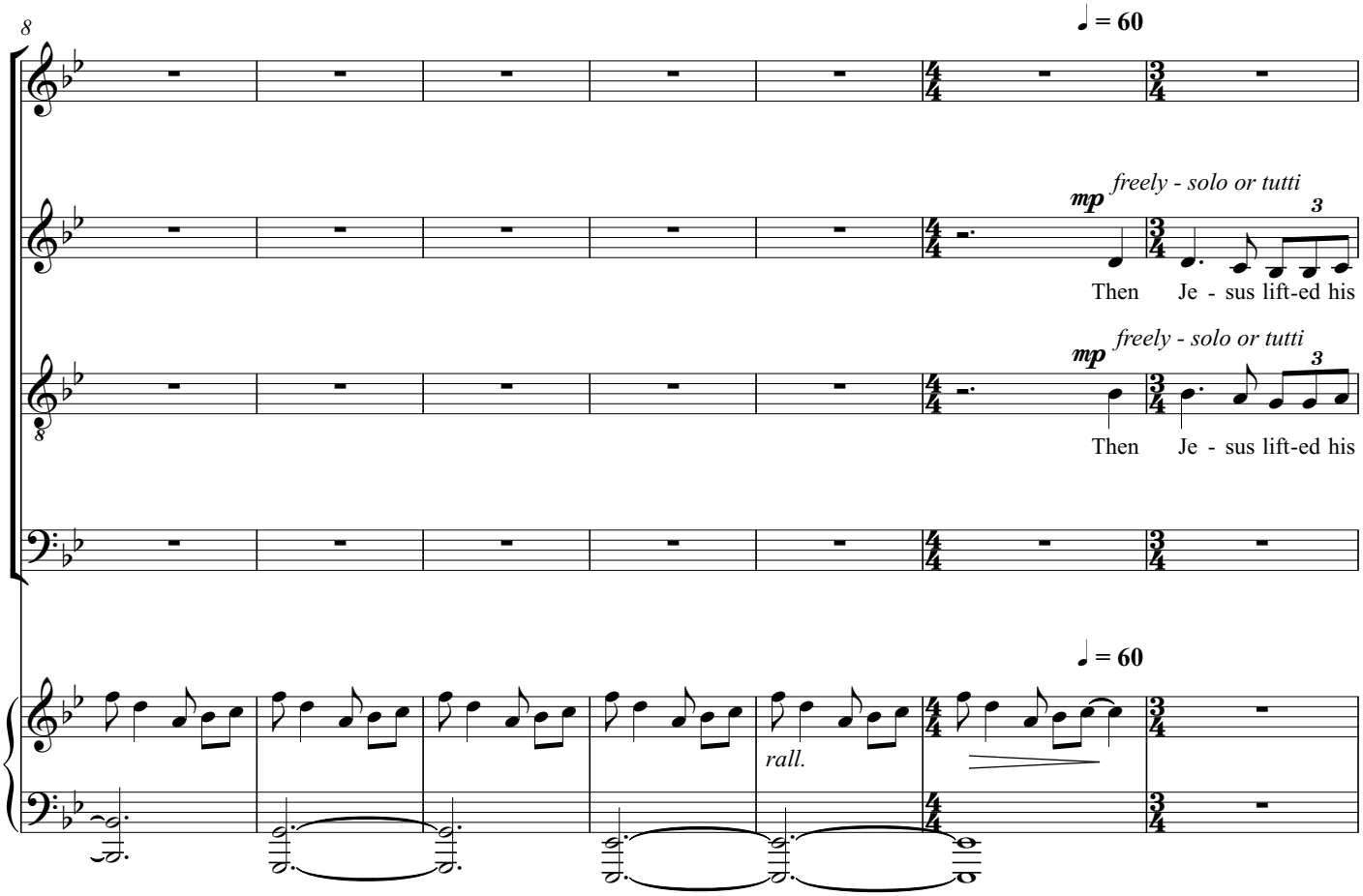
Written for Festival Singers of Florida and their conductor,
Kevin Fenton, in honor of 10 years of music and friendship

The words of Jesus from the Gospels of
Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John

Troy D. Robertson



"...this very night, before the rooster crows twice, you will deny three times that you even know me."



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brilliant, rich sound, expressive

15

mp *tutti*

Rich are you who are poor, for yours is the King-dom of God.

mp *tutti*

eyes on his dis-ci- ples and said: Rich are you who are poor, for yours is the King-dom of God.

mp *tutti*

eyes on his dis-ci- ples and said: Rich are you who are poor, for yours is the King-dom of God.

mp *tutti*

Rich are you who are poor, for yours is the King-dom of God.

3 *non dim.*

p

mp

22

mp

For-tu-nate are you who hun - ger now, for you shall be full.

mp

For tu-nate are you who hun - ger now, for you shall be full.

mp

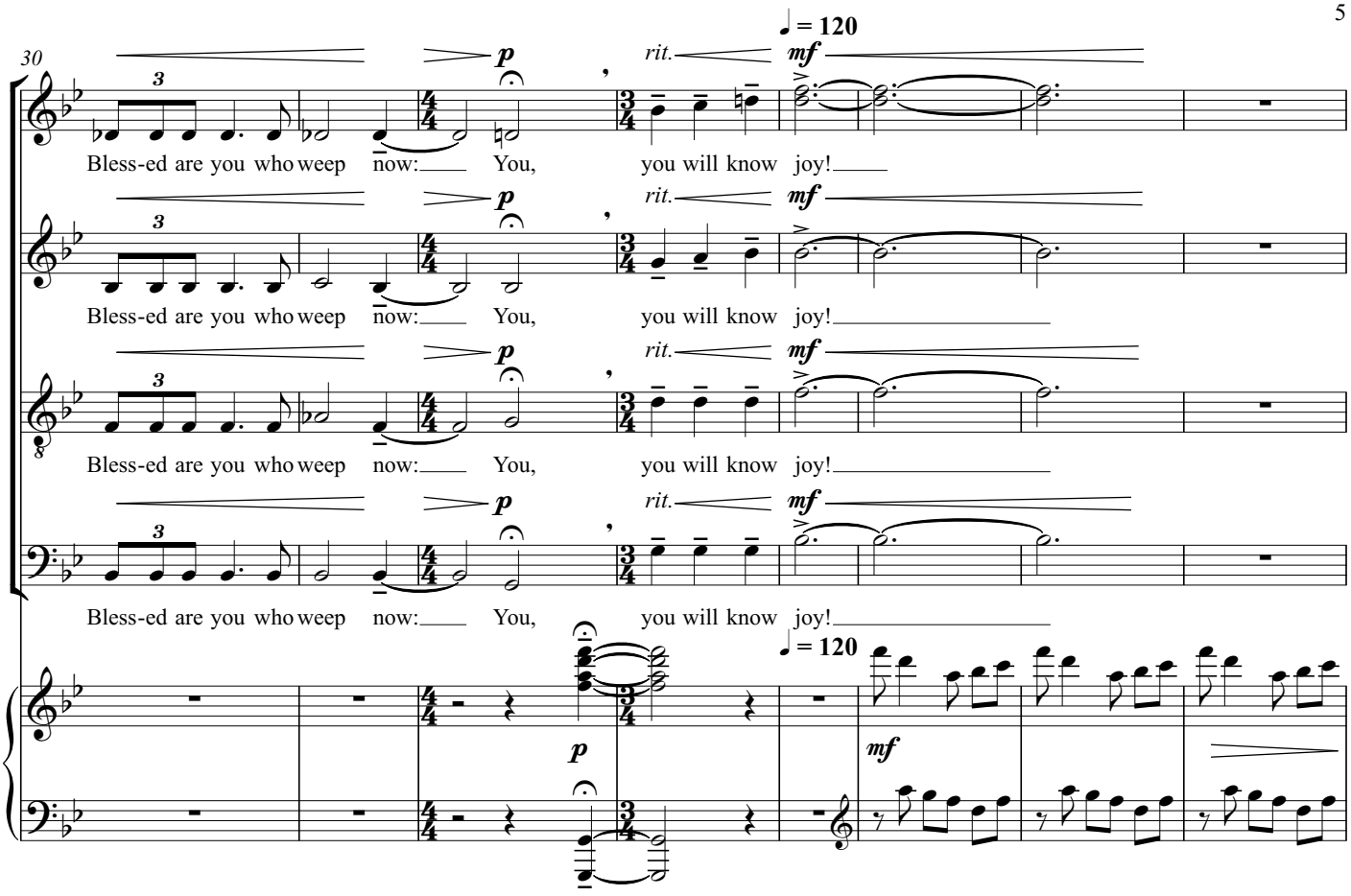
For-tu-nate are you who hun - ger now, for you shall be full.

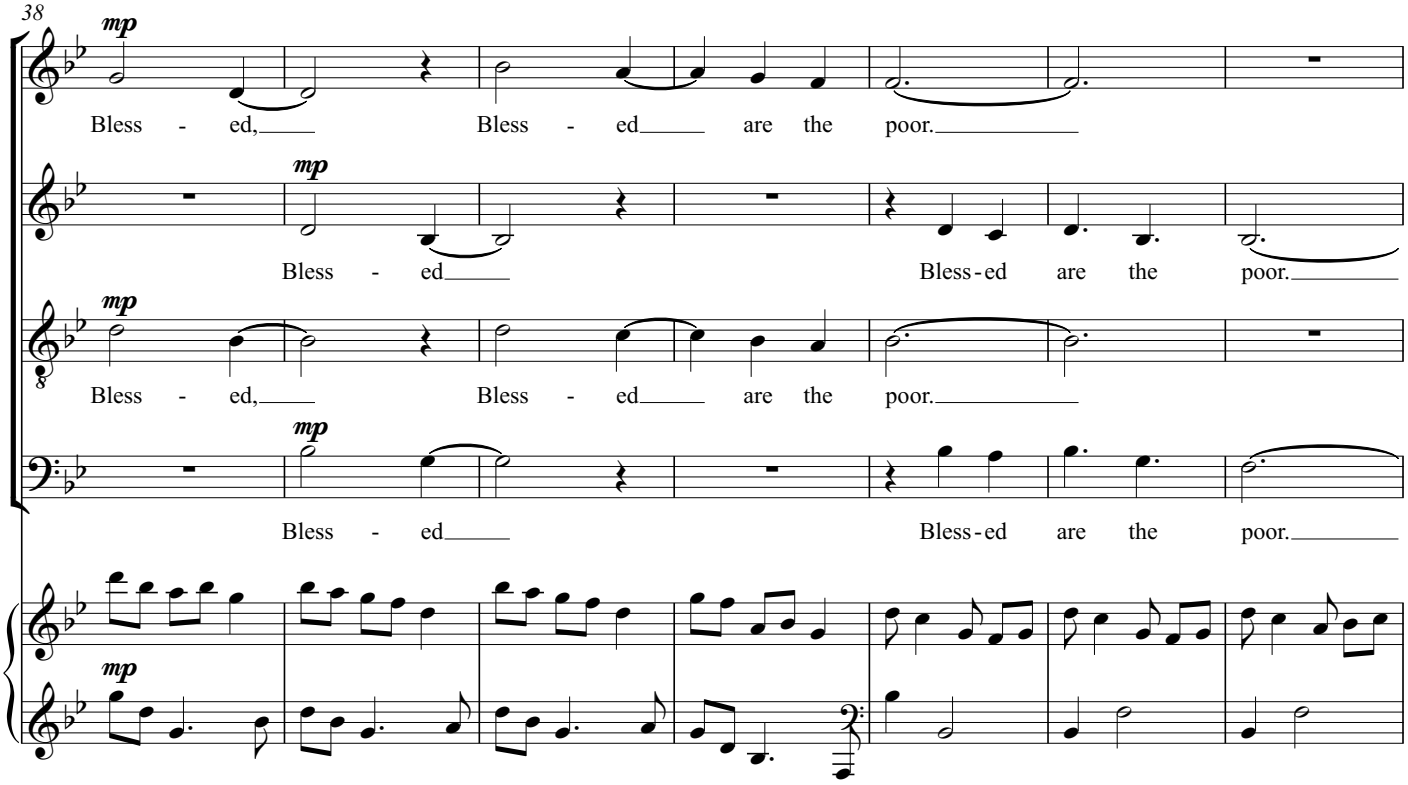
mp

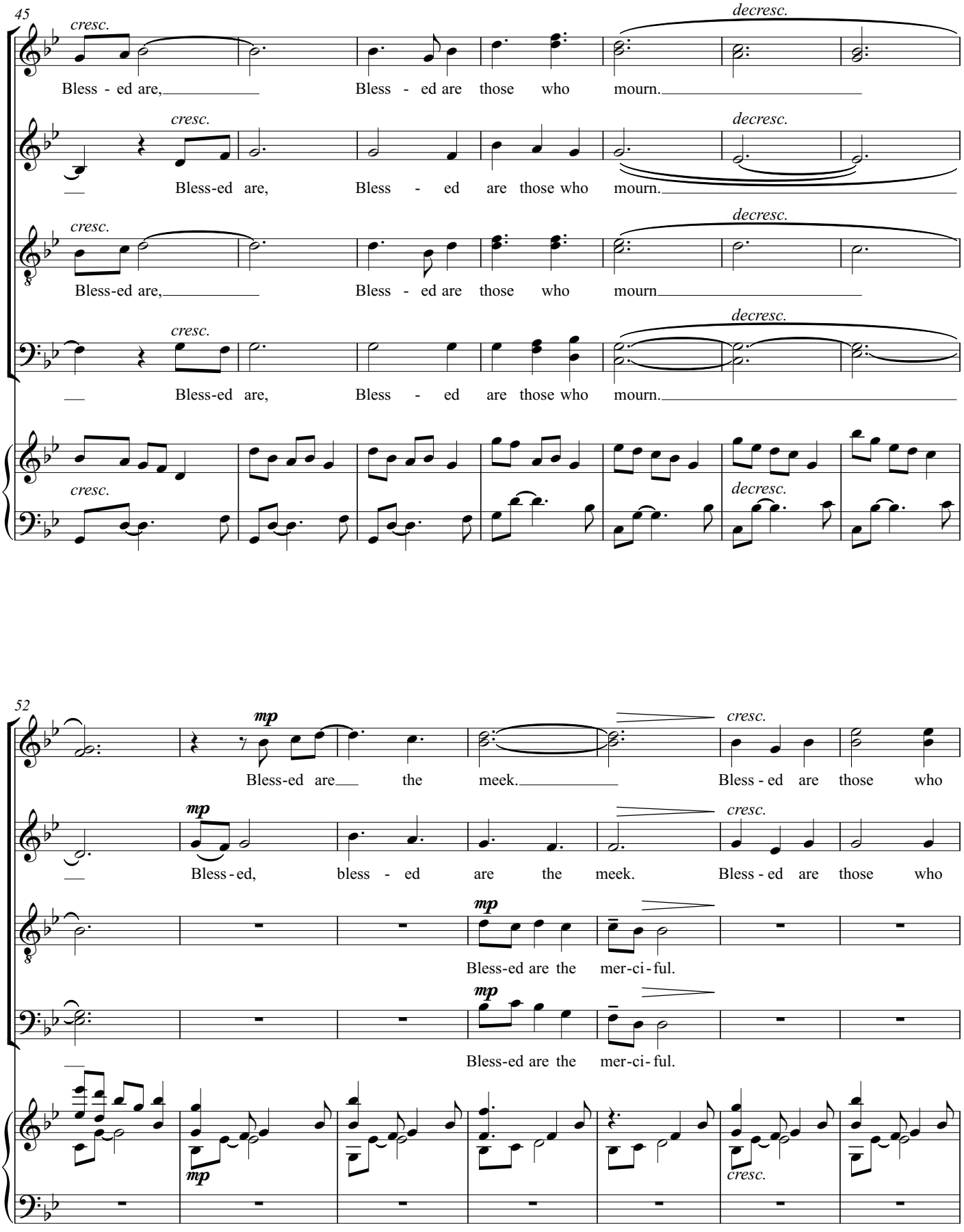
For-tu-nate are you who hun - ger now, for you shall be full.

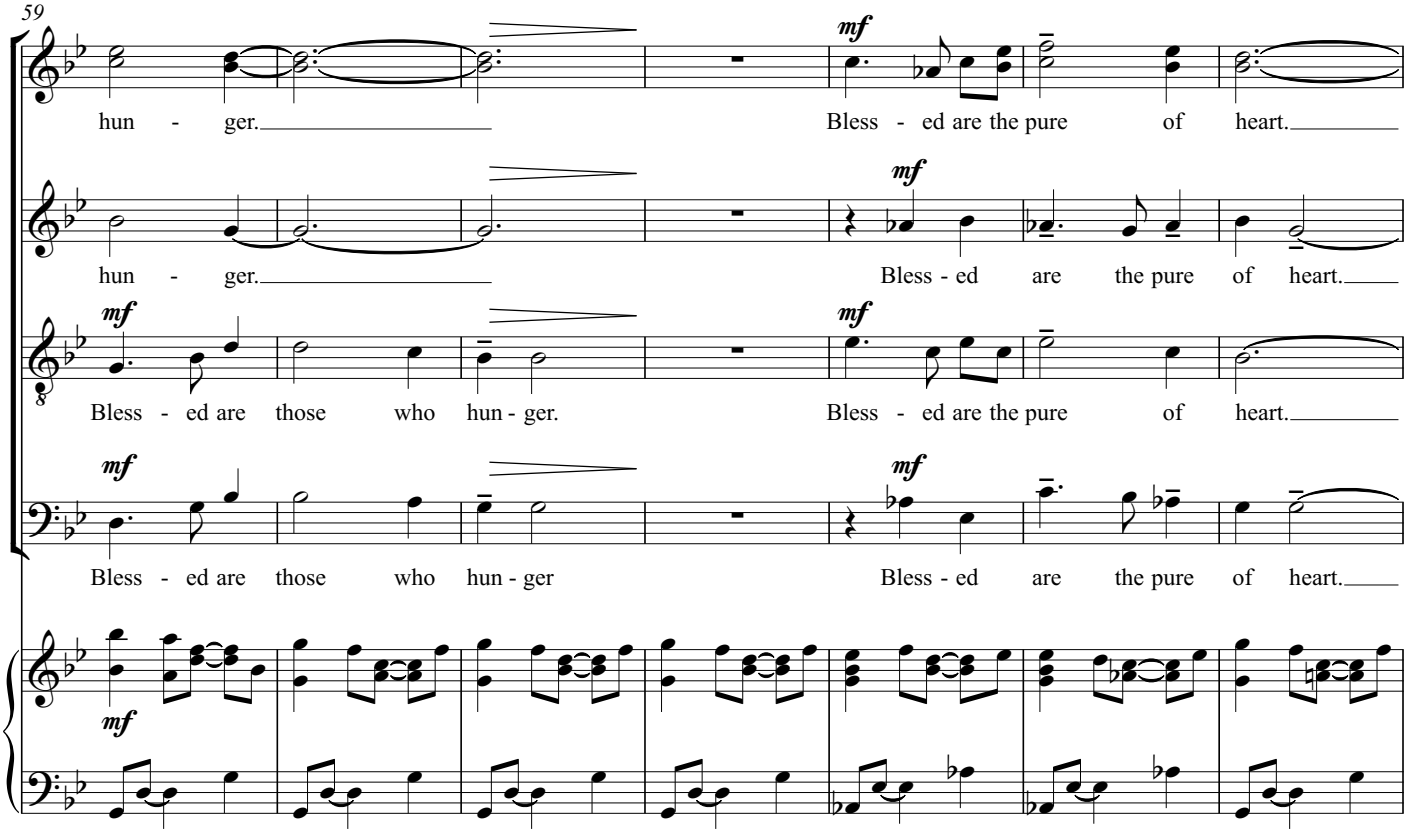
p

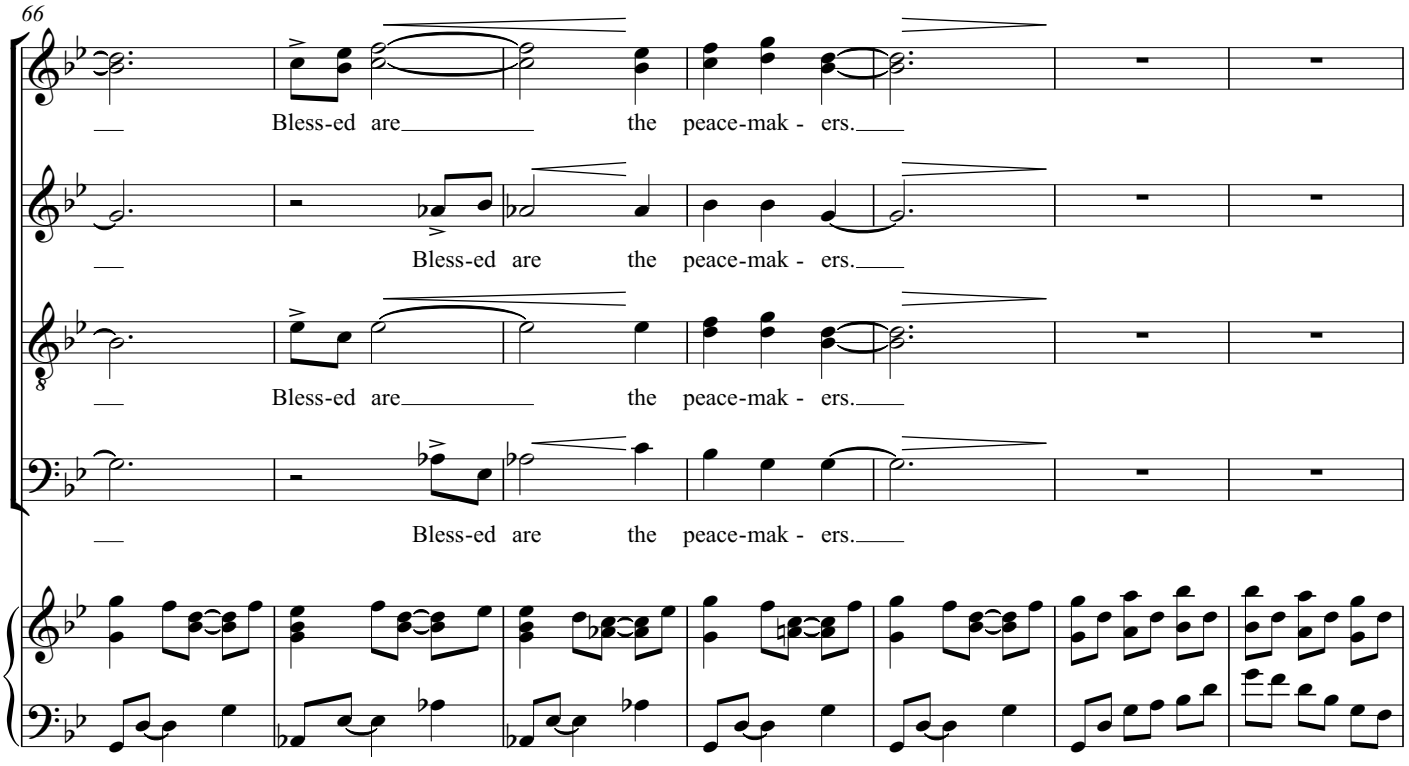
mp

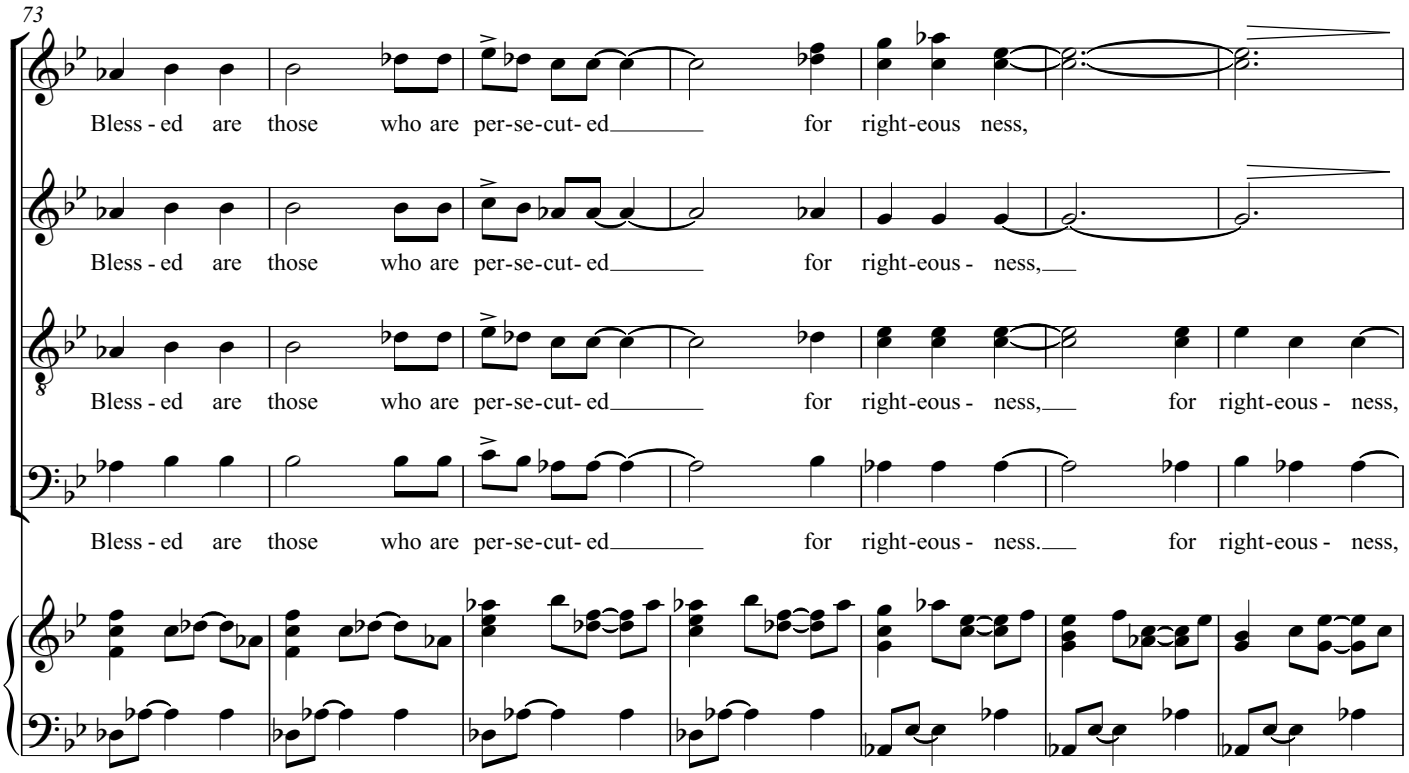

30
♩ = 120
rit.
mf
p
Bless-ed are you who weep now: You, you will know joy!
♩ = 120
mf
p

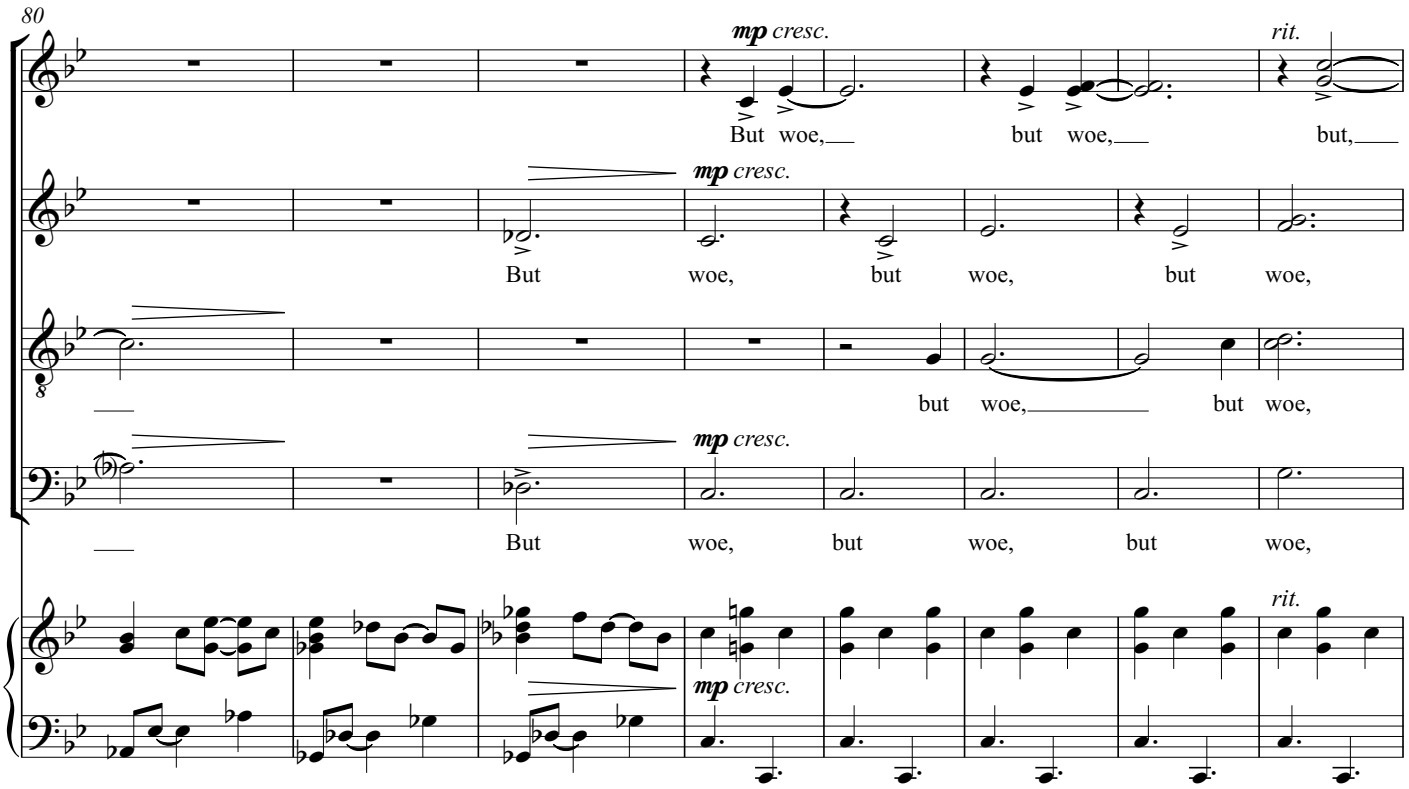

38
mp
Bless - ed, Bless - ed are the poor.
Bless - ed Bless-ed are the poor.

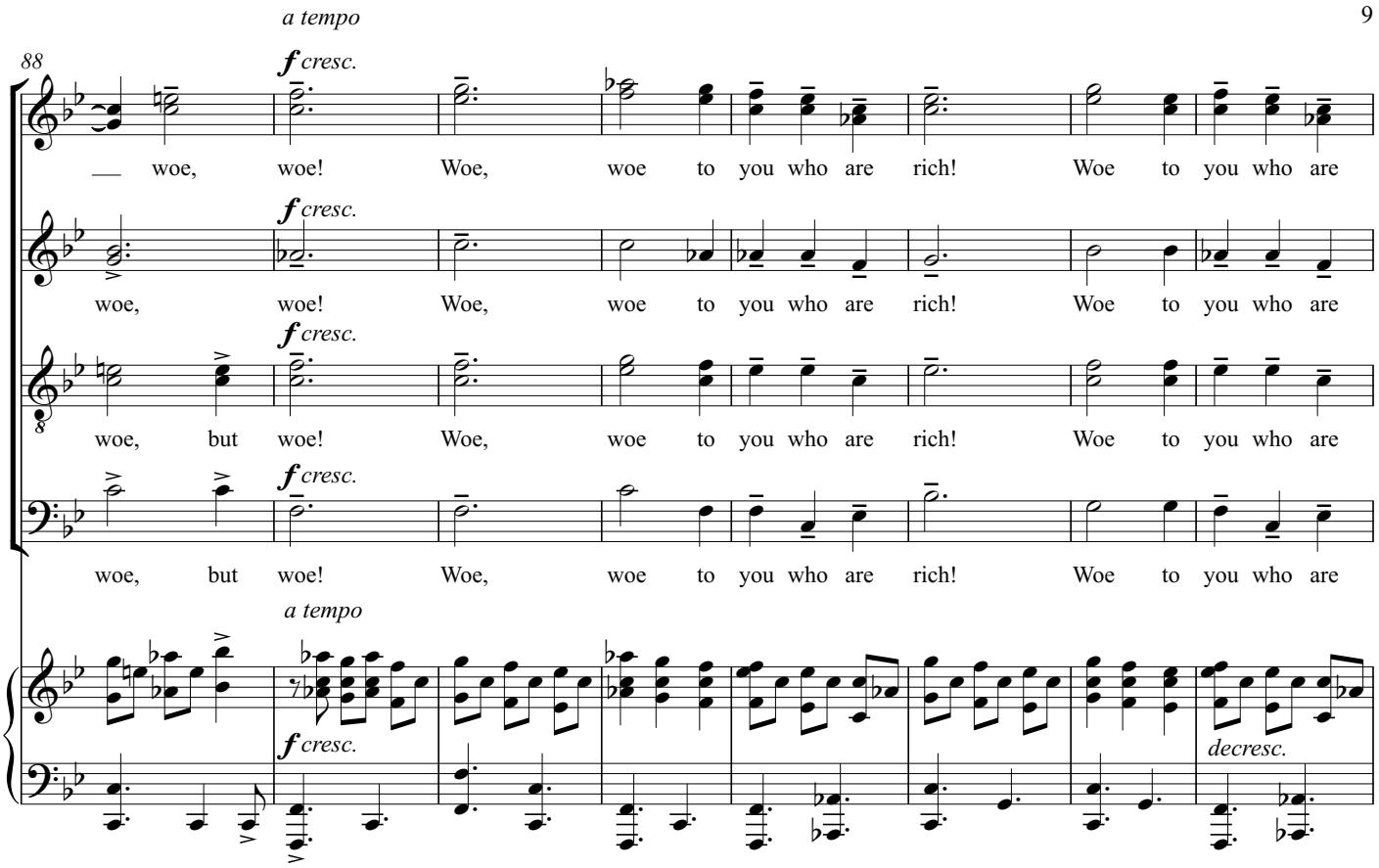

45
cresc.
decresc.
Bless - ed are, Bless - ed are those who mourn.
Bless-ed are, Bless - ed are those who mourn.
52
mp
Bless-ed are the meek. Bless - ed are those who
Bless - ed, bless - ed are the meek. Bless - ed are those who
Bless-ed are the mer-ci-ful.

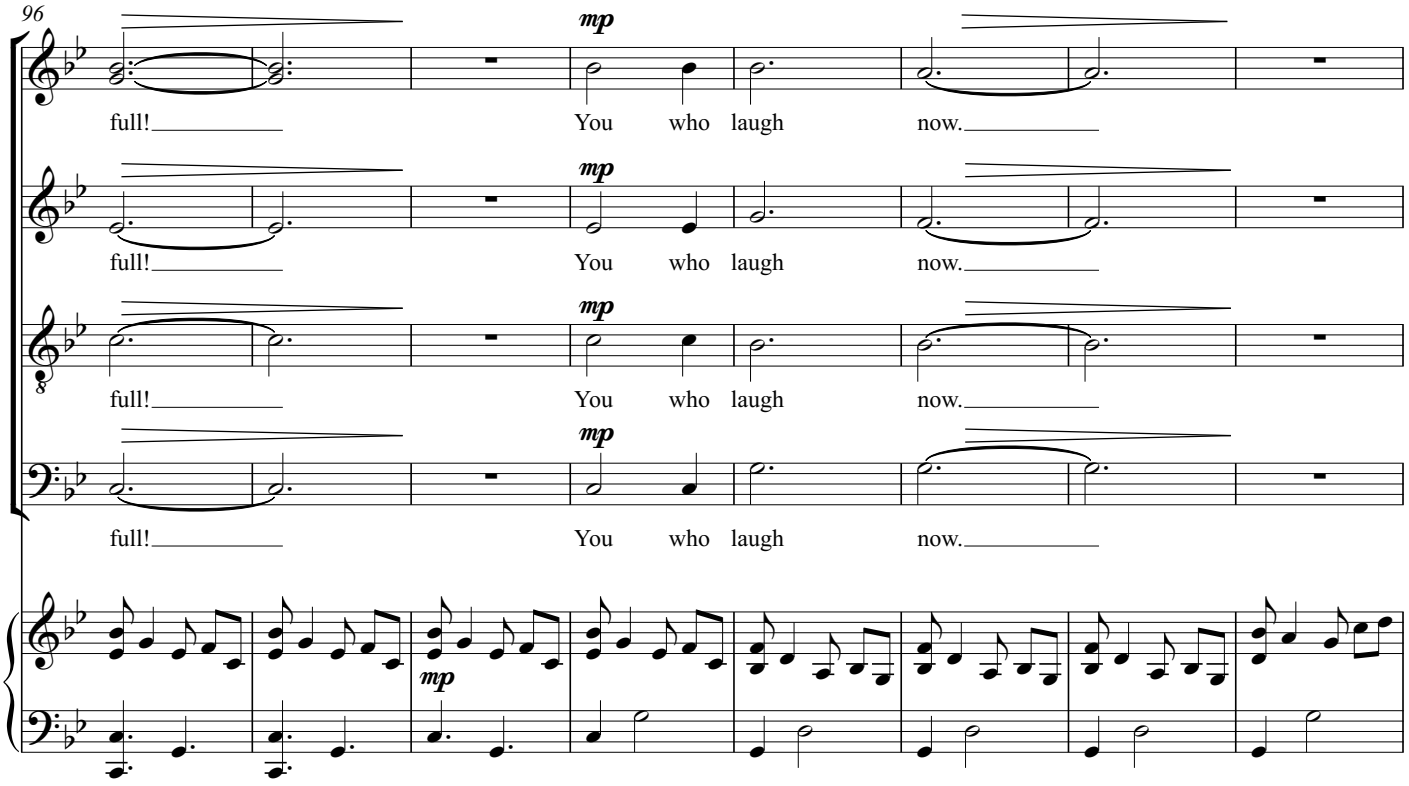

59
mf
hun - ger.
Bless - ed are the pure of heart.
mf
hun - ger.
Bless - ed are the pure of heart.
mf
Bless - ed are those who hun - ger.
mf
Bless - ed are the pure of heart.
mf
Bless - ed are those who hun - ger
mf
Bless - ed are the pure of heart.
mf

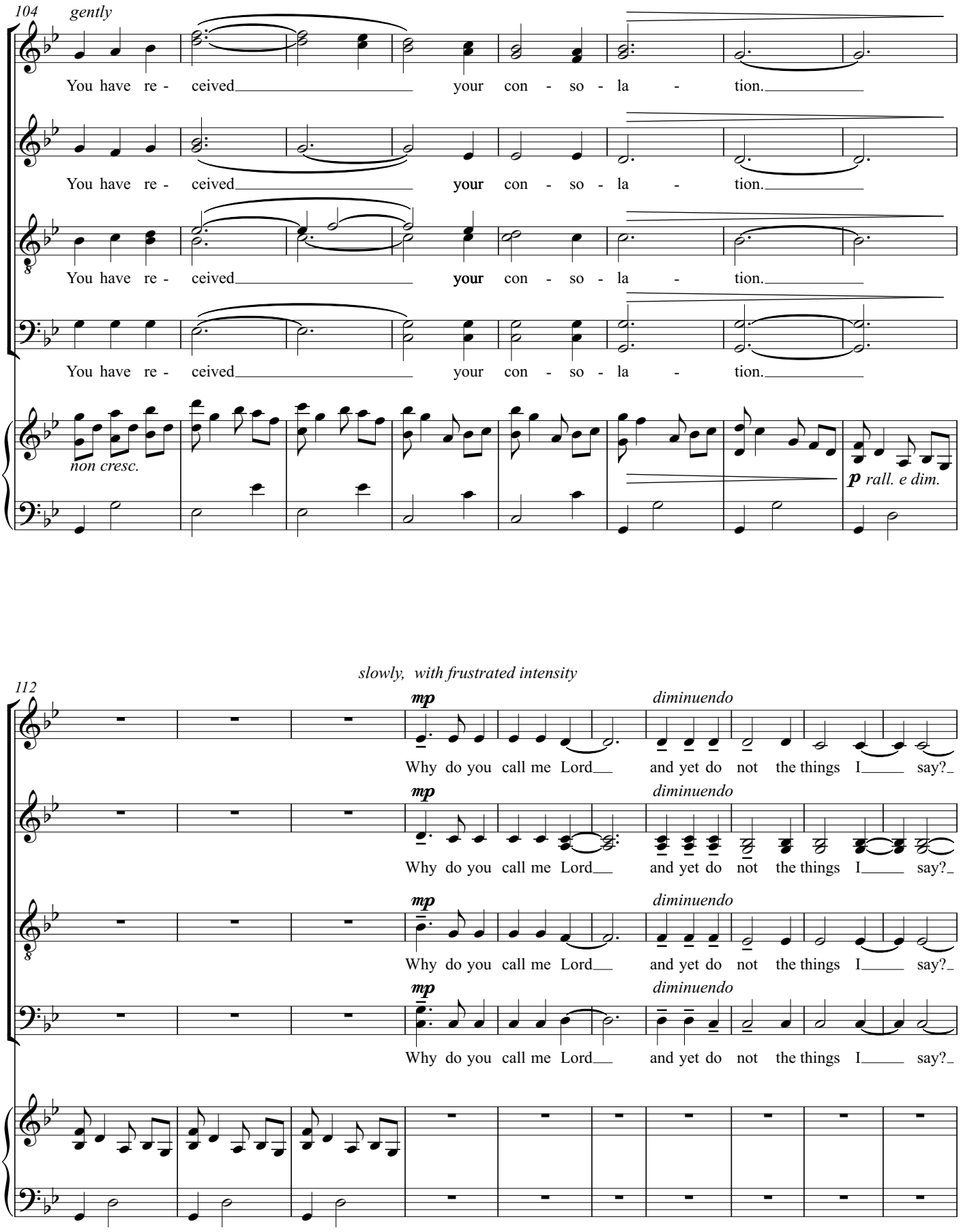

66
Bless-ed are the peace-mak - ers.
Bless-ed are the peace-mak - ers.
Bless-ed are the peace-mak - ers.
Bless-ed are the peace-mak - ers.


73
Bless - ed are those who are per-se-cut- ed for right-eous ness,
Bless - ed are those who are per-se-cut- ed for right-eous - ness,
Bless - ed are those who are per-se-cut- ed for right-eous - ness, for right-eous - ness,
Bless - ed are those who are per-se-cut- ed for right-eous - ness, for right-eous - ness,

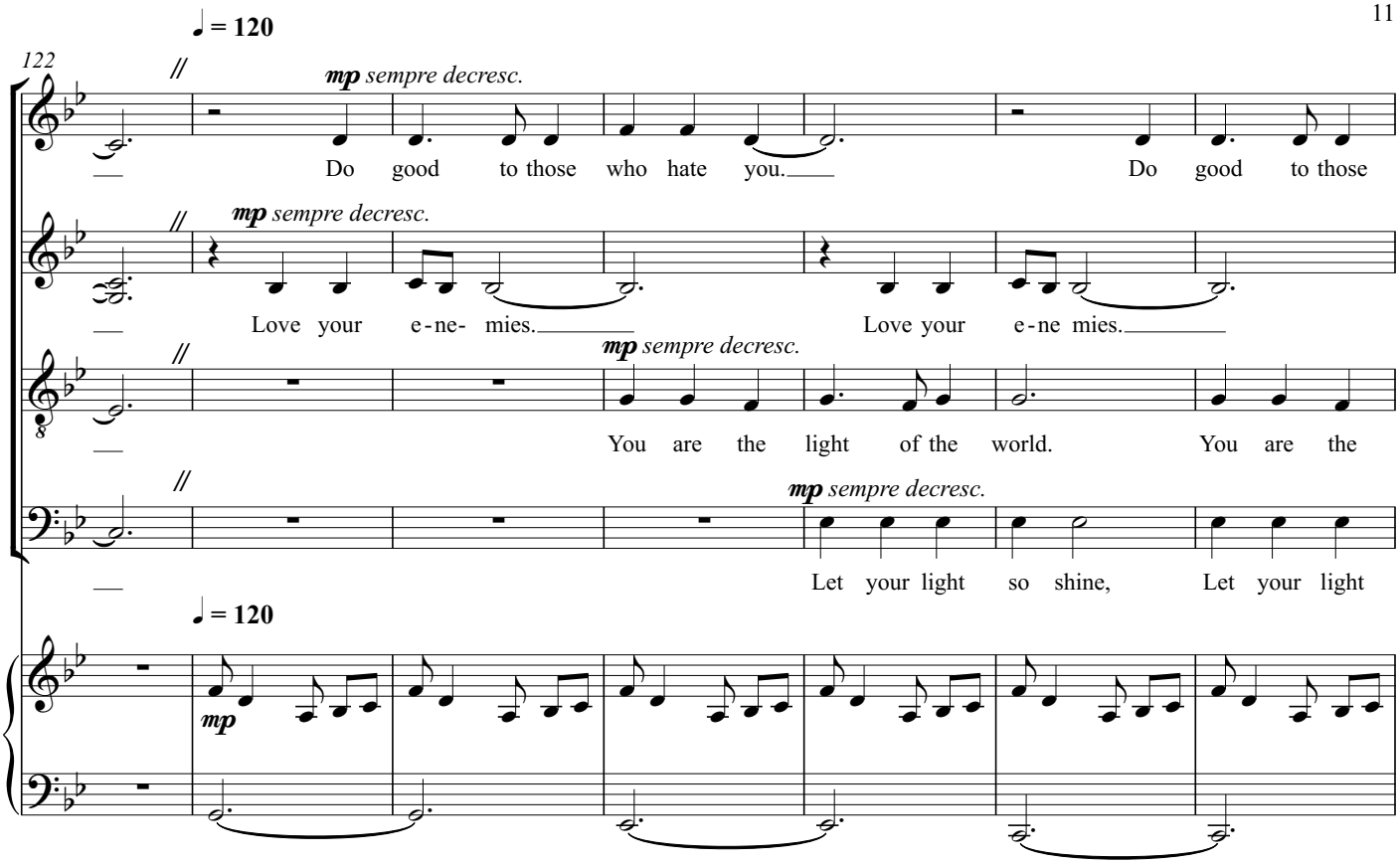

80
mp cresc.
But woe, but woe, but,
rit.
mp cresc.
But woe, but woe, but woe,
but woe, but woe,
mp cresc.
But woe, but woe, but woe,
rit.
mp cresc.

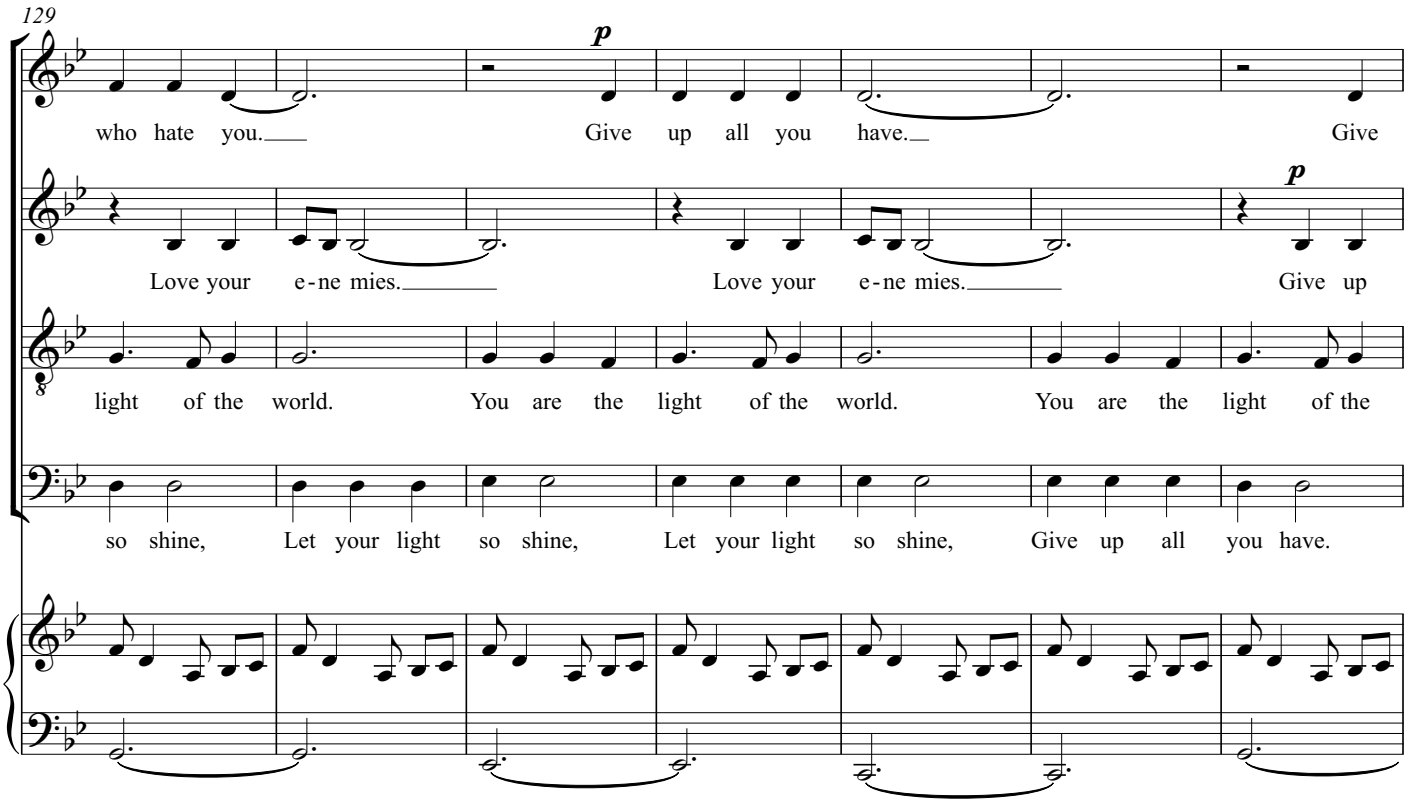

a tempo
88
f cresc.
woe, woe! Woe, woe to you who are rich! Woe to you who are
woe, but woe! Woe, woe to you who are rich! Woe to you who are
a tempo
decresc.

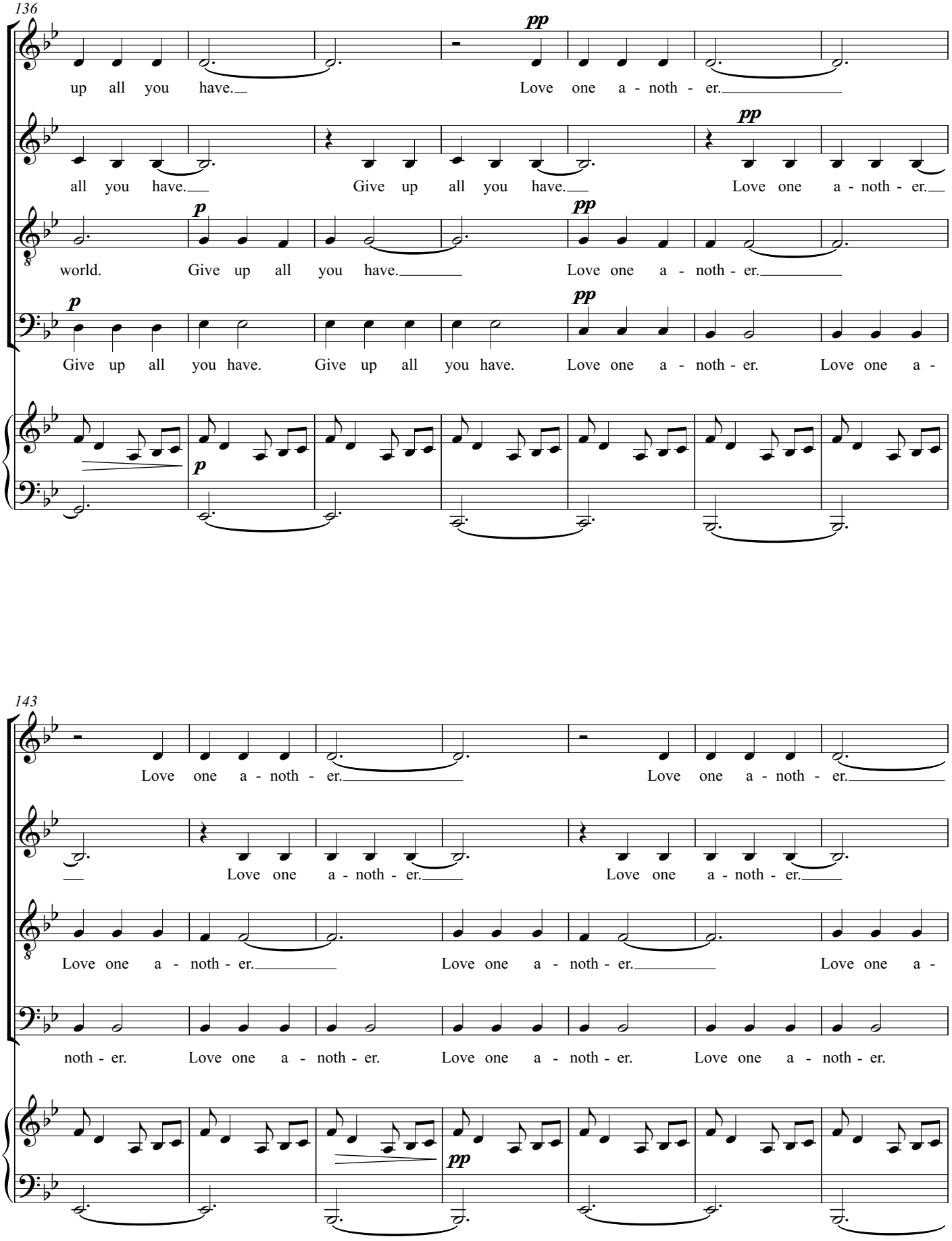

96
mp
full! You who laugh now.

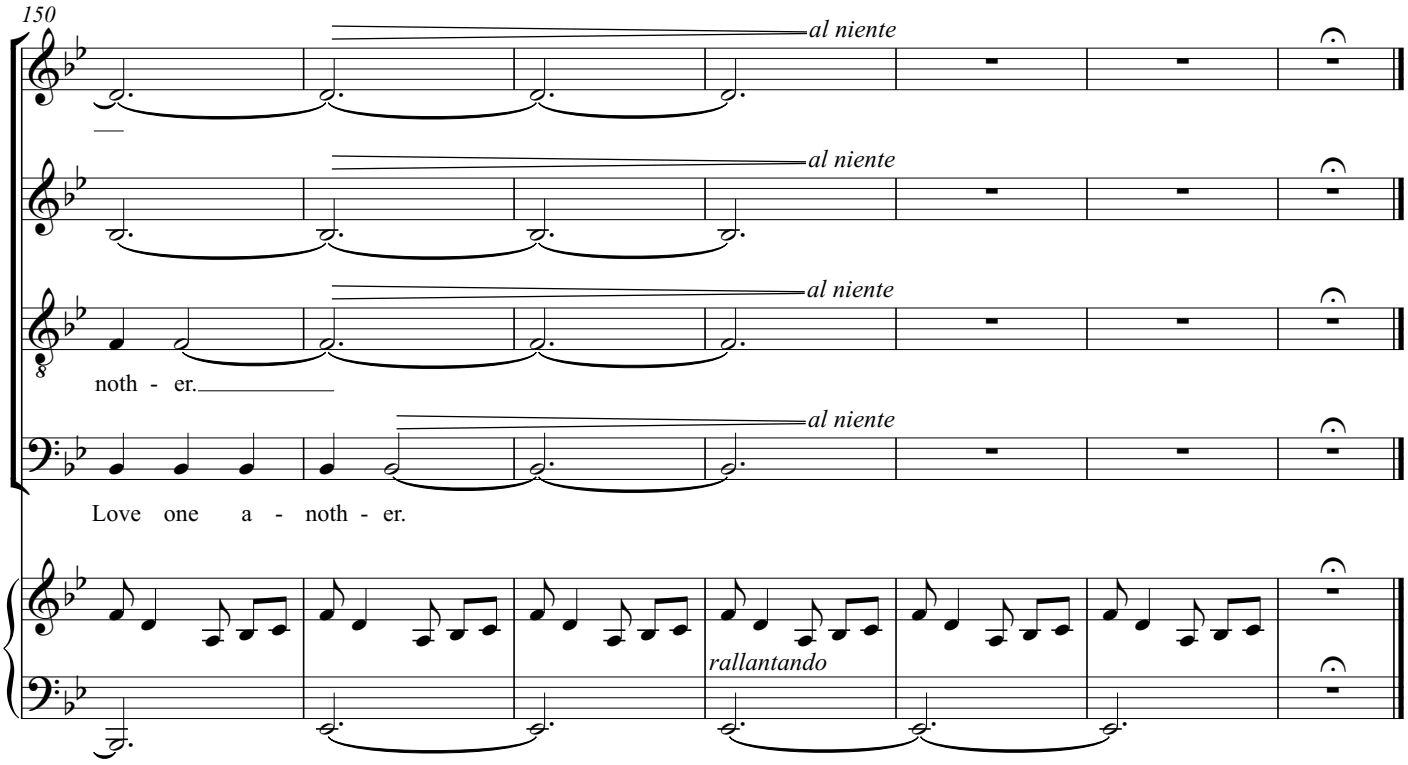

104
gently
You have re - ceived your con - so - la - tion.
You have re - ceived your con - so - la - tion.
You have re - ceived your con - so - la - tion.
You have re - ceived your con - so - la - tion.
non cresc.
p rall. e dim.

slowly, with frustrated intensity
112
mp
diminuendo
Why do you call me Lord and yet do not the things I say?
Why do you call me Lord and yet do not the things I say?
Why do you call me Lord and yet do not the things I say?
Why do you call me Lord and yet do not the things I say?


♩ = 120
122
mp sempre decresc.
Do good to those who hate you. Do good to those
Love your e-ne- mies. Love your e-ne mies.
You are the light of the world. You are the
Let your light so shine, Let your light
♩ = 120
mp


129
p
who hate you. Give up all you have. Give
Love your e-ne mies. Love your e-ne mies. Give up
light of the world. You are the light of the world. You are the light of the
so shine, Let your light so shine, Let your light so shine, Give up all you have.


136
pp
up all you have. Love one a - noth - er.
all you have. Give up all you have. Love one a - noth - er.
p
world. Give up all you have. Love one a - noth - er.
Give up all you have. Give up all you have. Love one a - noth - er. Love one a -
143
Love one a - noth - er. Love one a - noth - er.
Love one a - noth - er. Love one a - noth - er.
Love one a - noth - er. Love one a - noth - er. Love one a -
noth - er. Love one a - noth - er. Love one a - noth - er. Love one a - noth - er.


150
al niente
al niente
al niente
noth - er.
al niente
Love one a - noth - er.
rallantando