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| Score ID: | 37509 | Shelf mark: | <D> |
| Composer: | Anthony Gilbert | | |
| Work: | Handles to the Invisible | | |
| Year of composition: | 2003 | Duration: | |

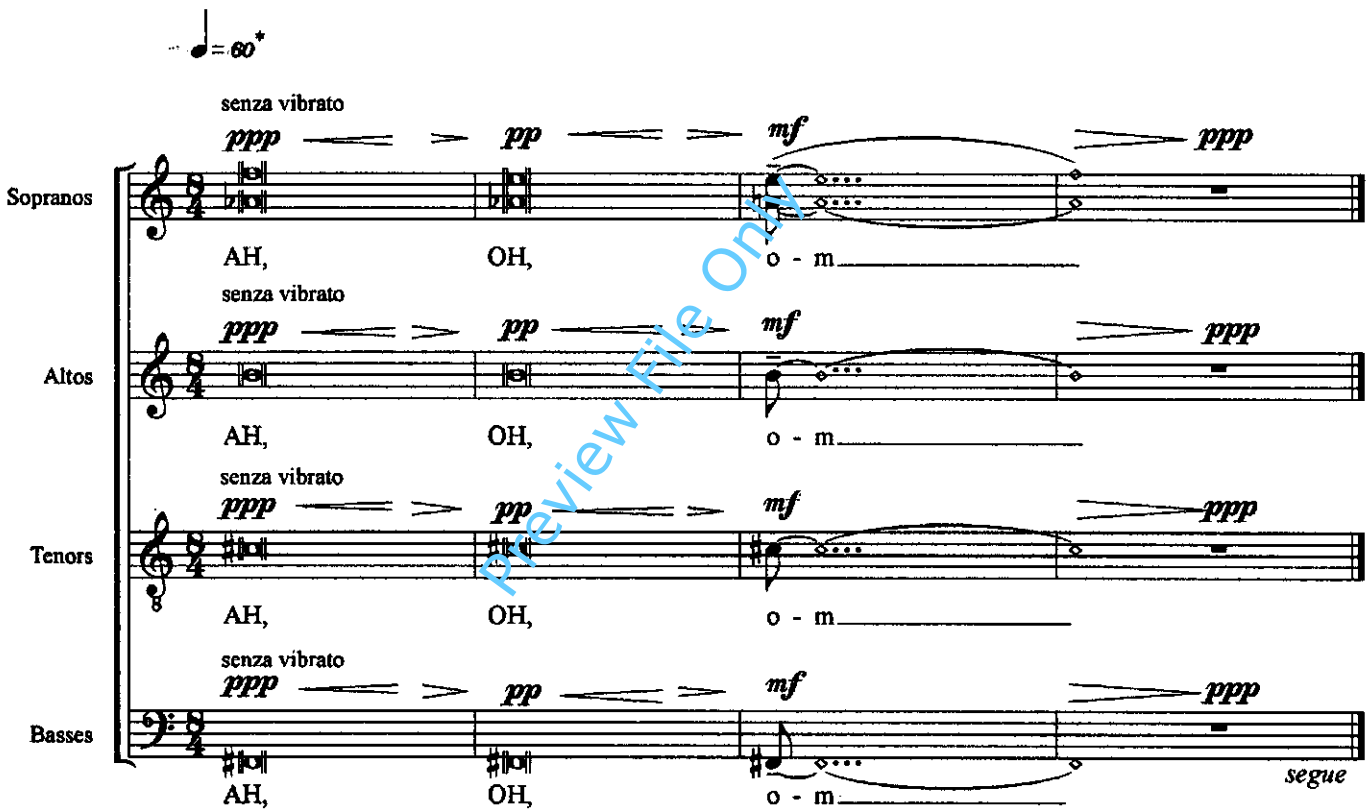
*to Sir Michael Tippett at ninety, in gratitude*

# Handles to the Invisible

Sarah Day

Anthony Gilbert,
1995, rev. 2003

## Spell 1

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* The tempi of the *Spells* should always be as marked; the other marked tempi are approximate and can be slower.

Commissioned by the Tippett Choir with funds generously provided by the Holst Foundation
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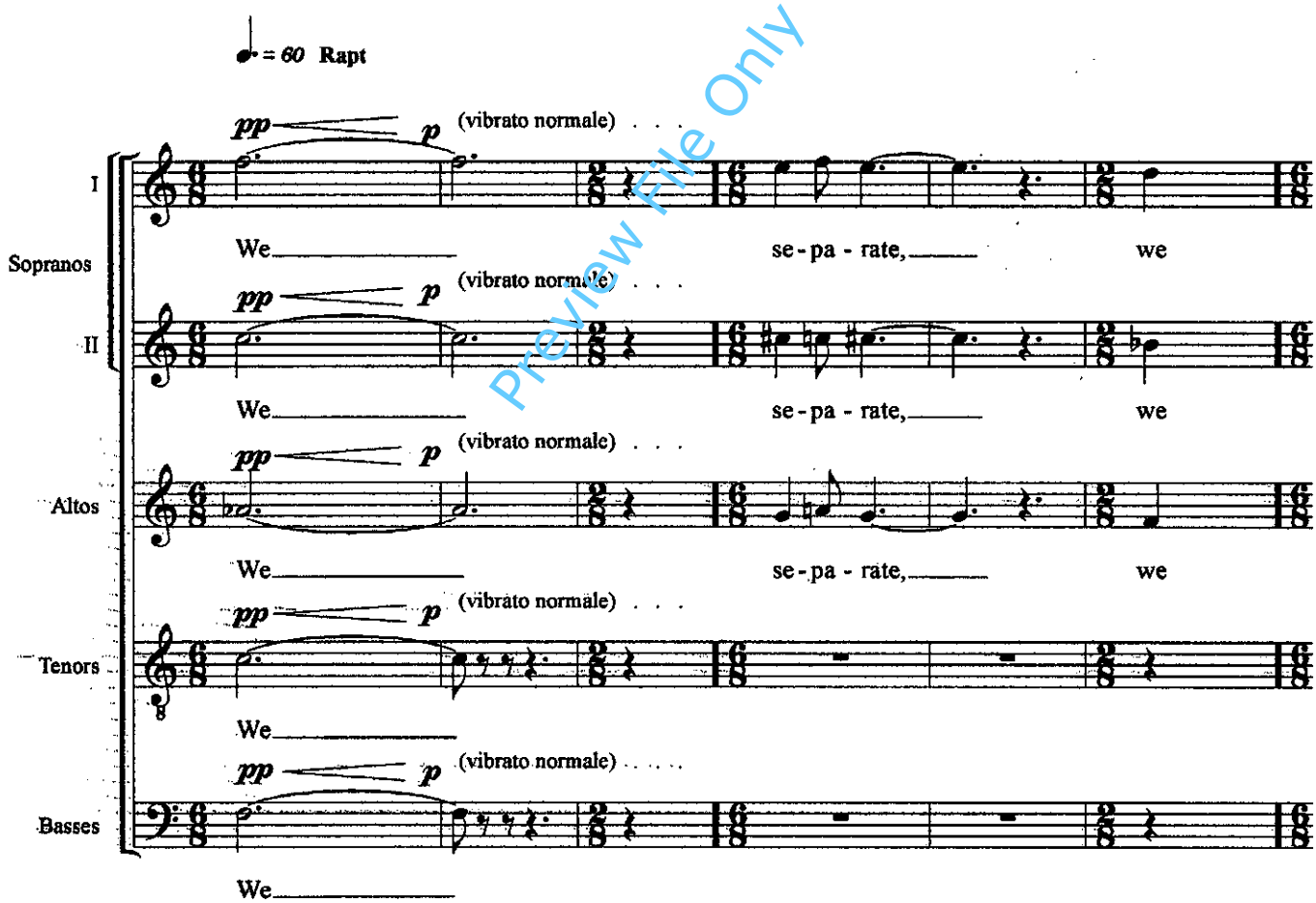
# 1. Reading the Beach

We separate like sea birds
on independent courses,

possessed, obsessed with detail.
At the end of the day

the map of our tracks is a skein
on the sand. We cover the same ground

and come away from different places
recalling them in myths of arbour, palace, horse's head.

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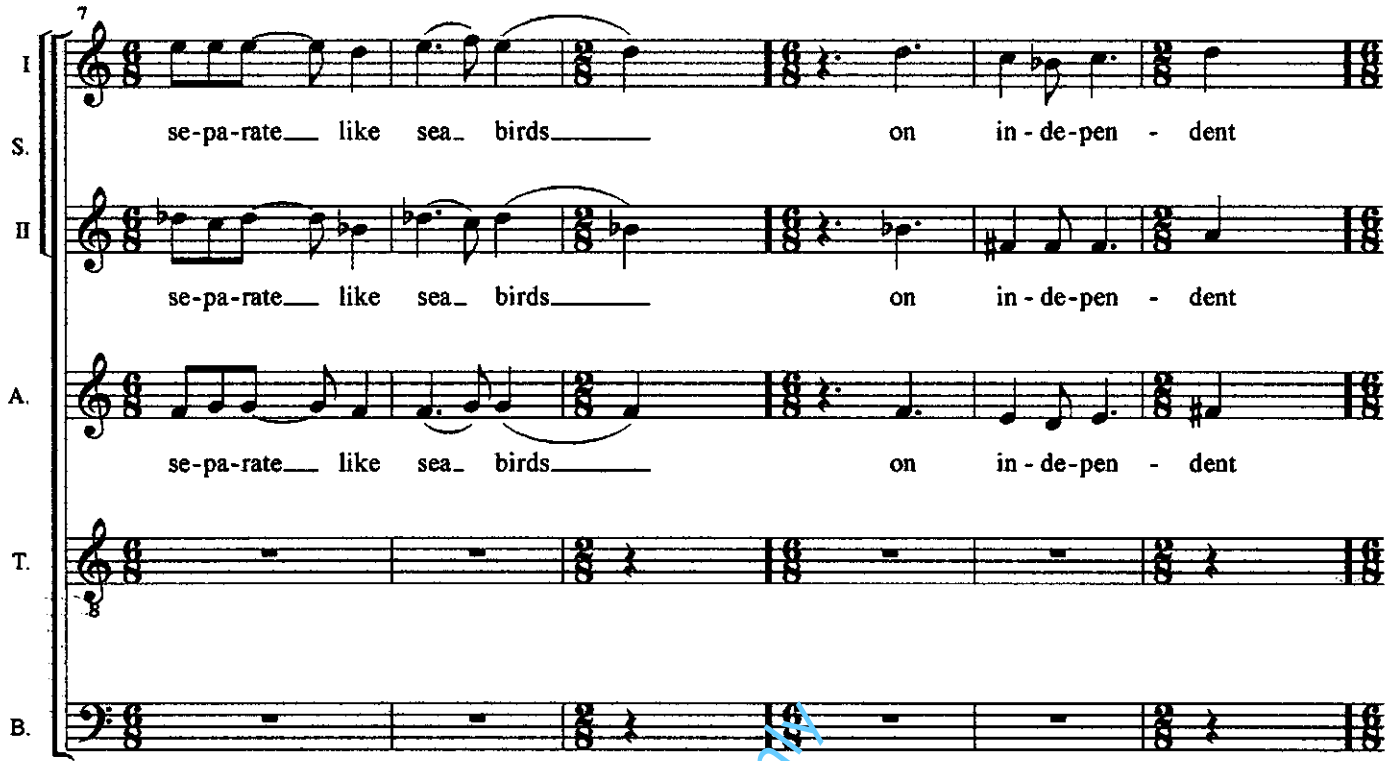


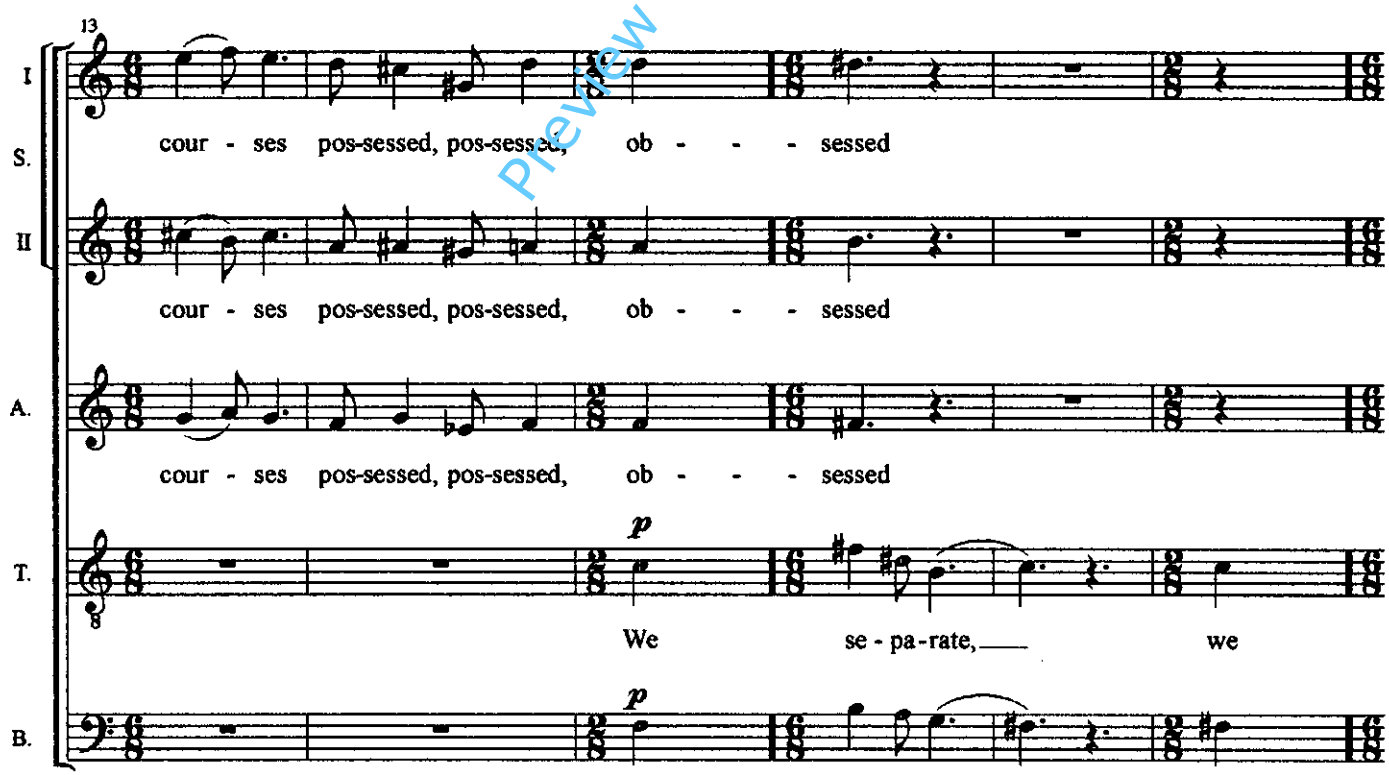


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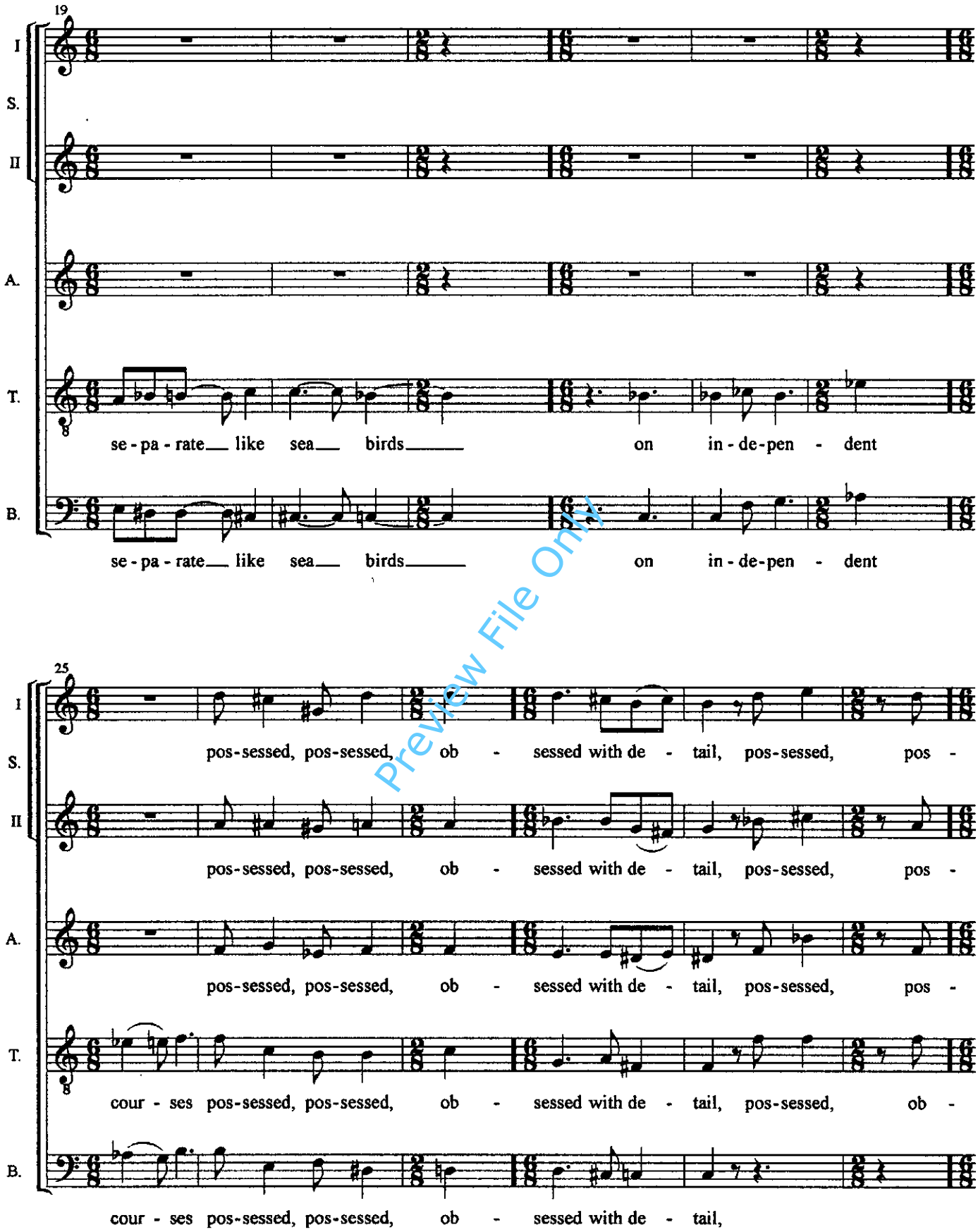


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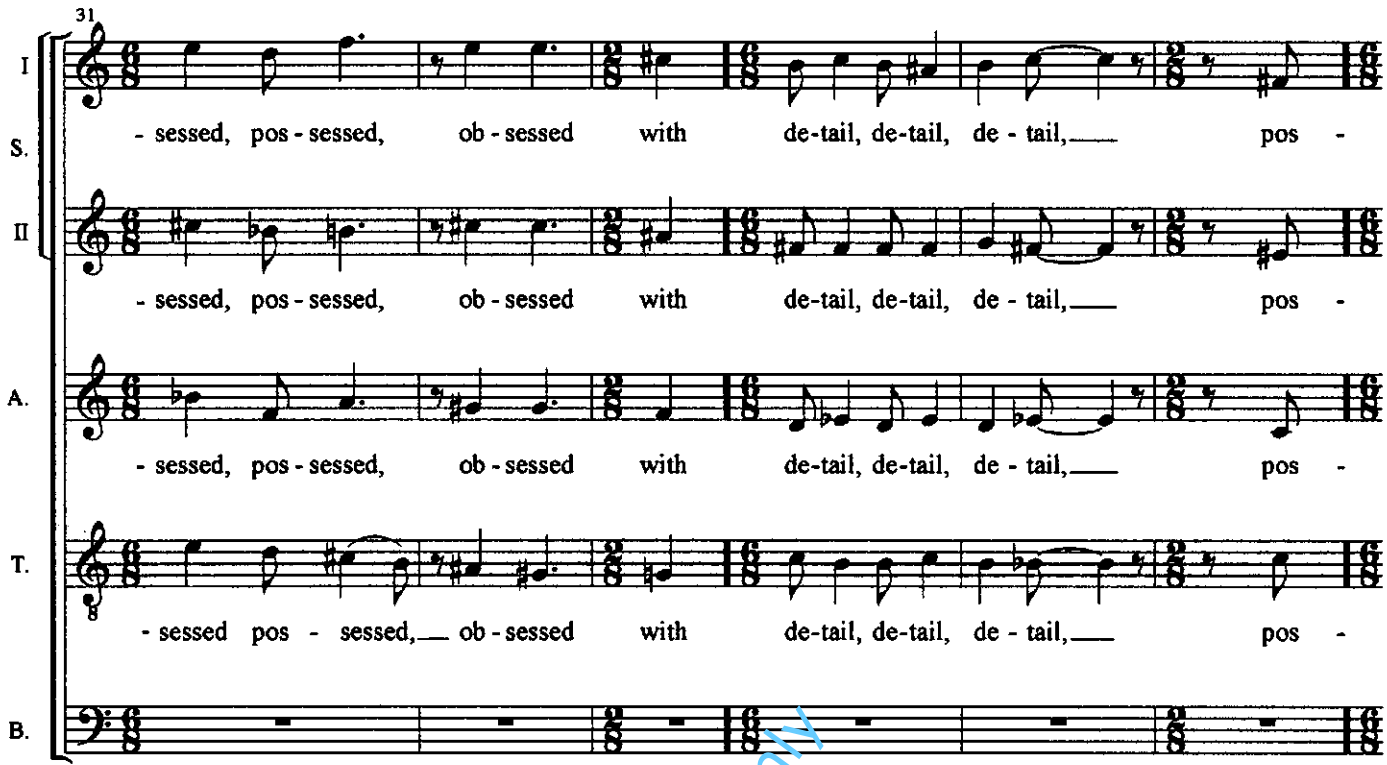


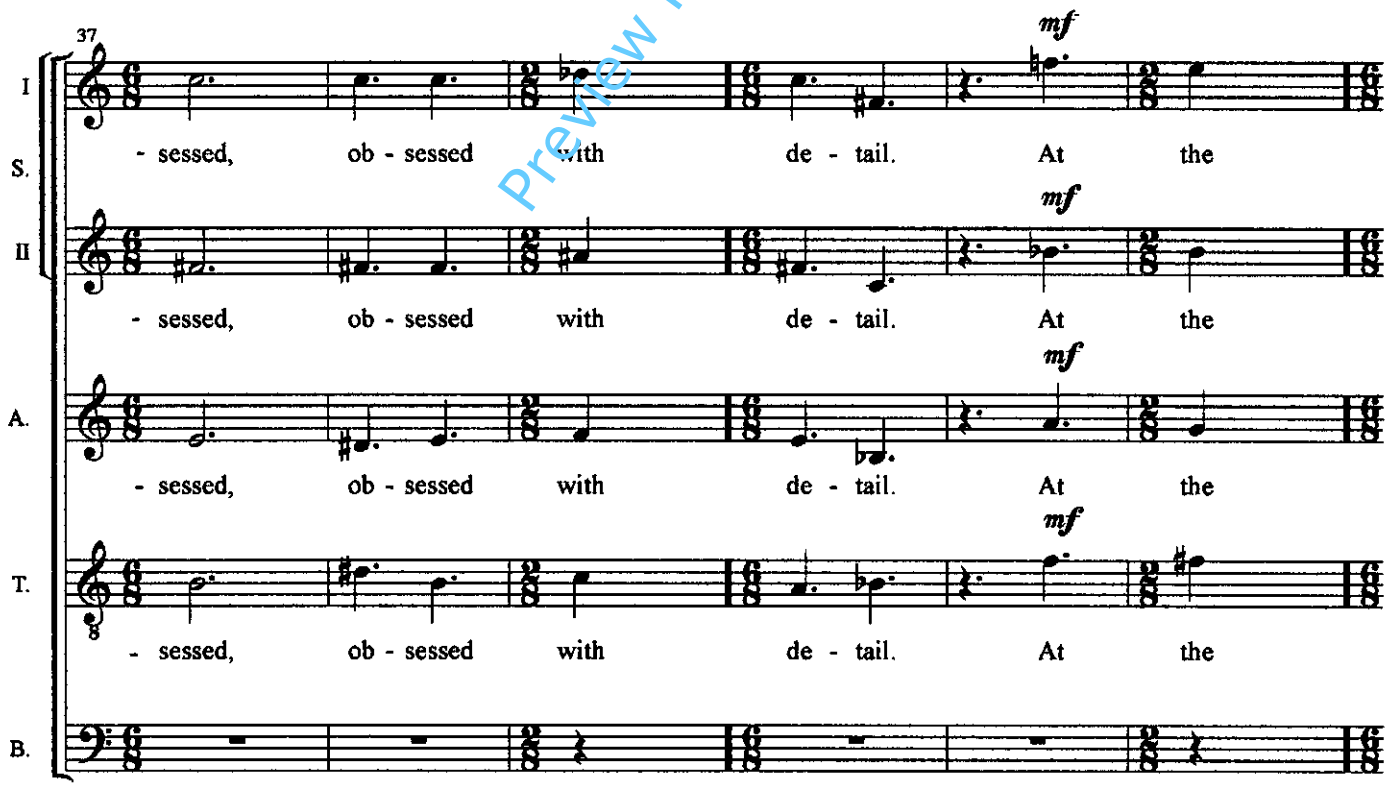


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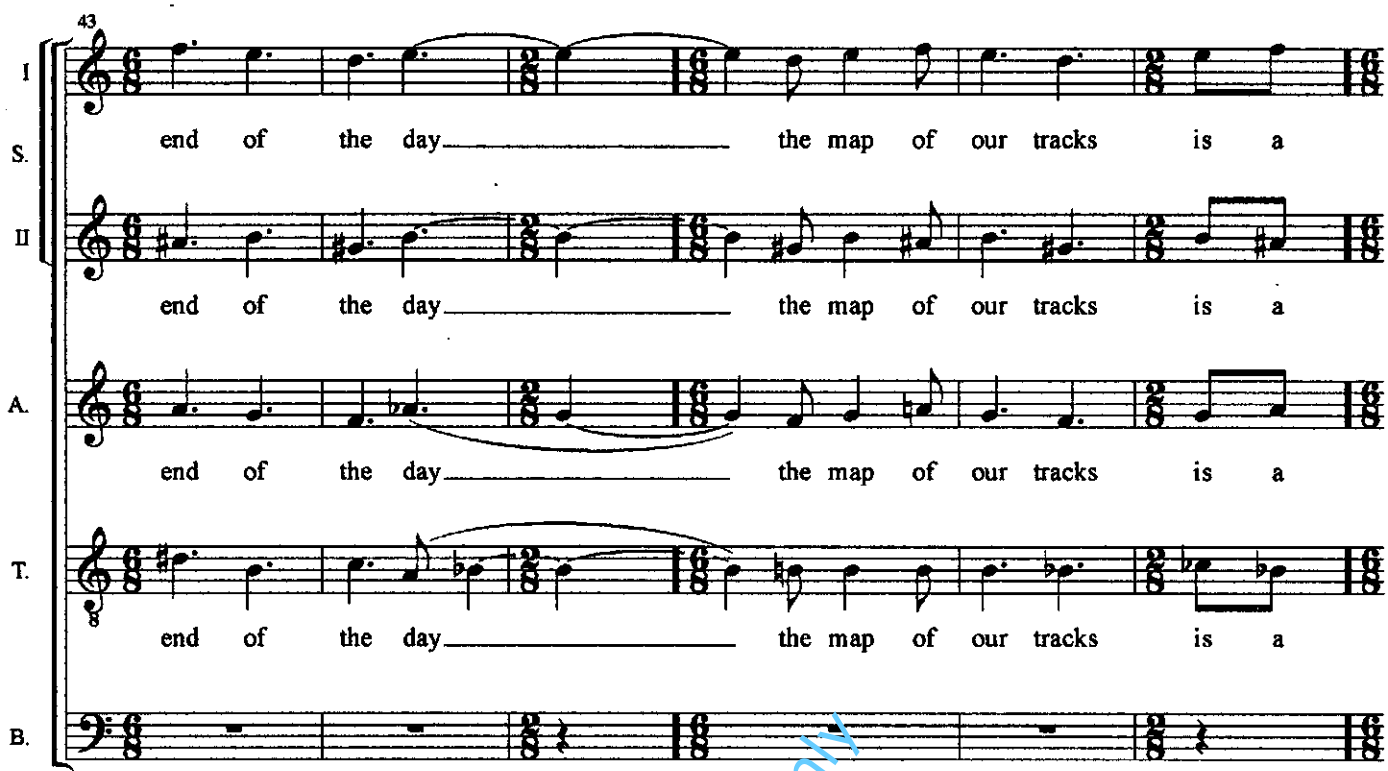


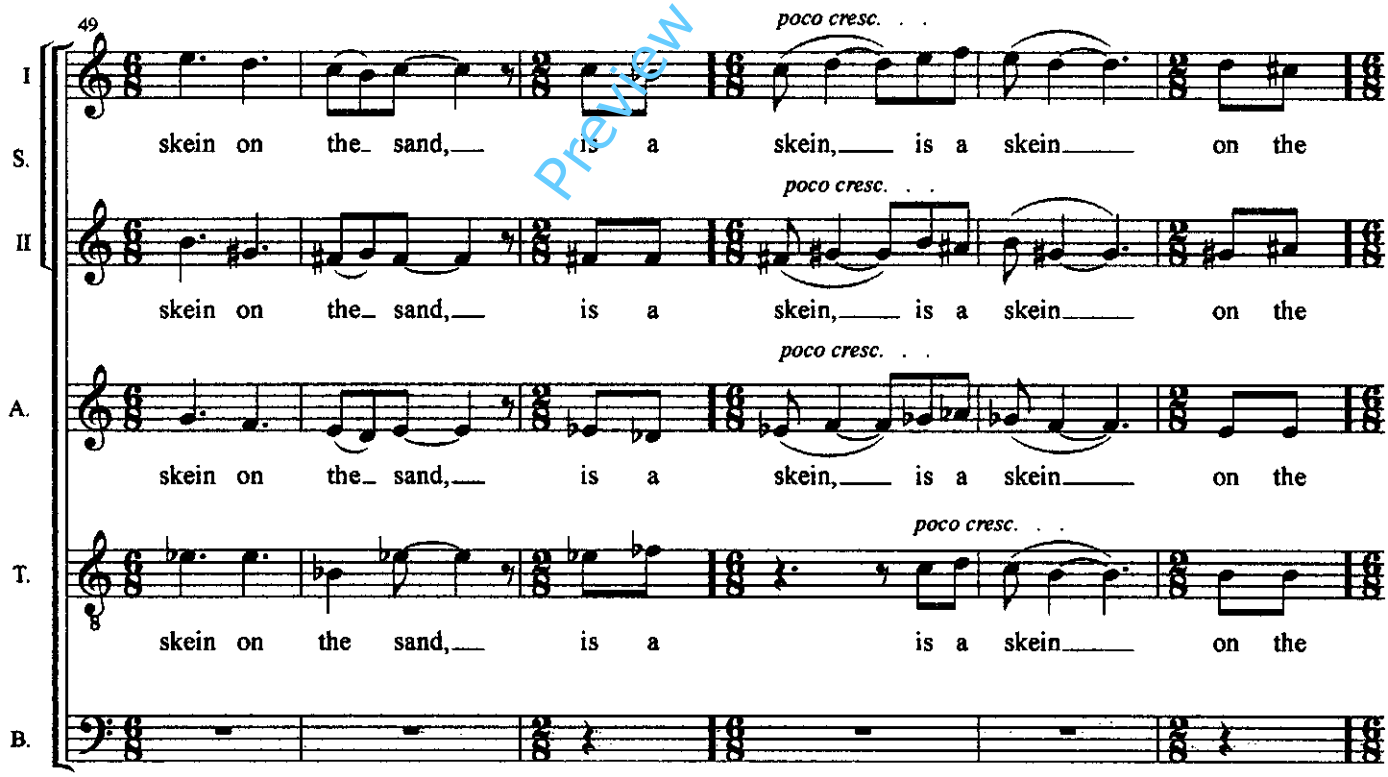


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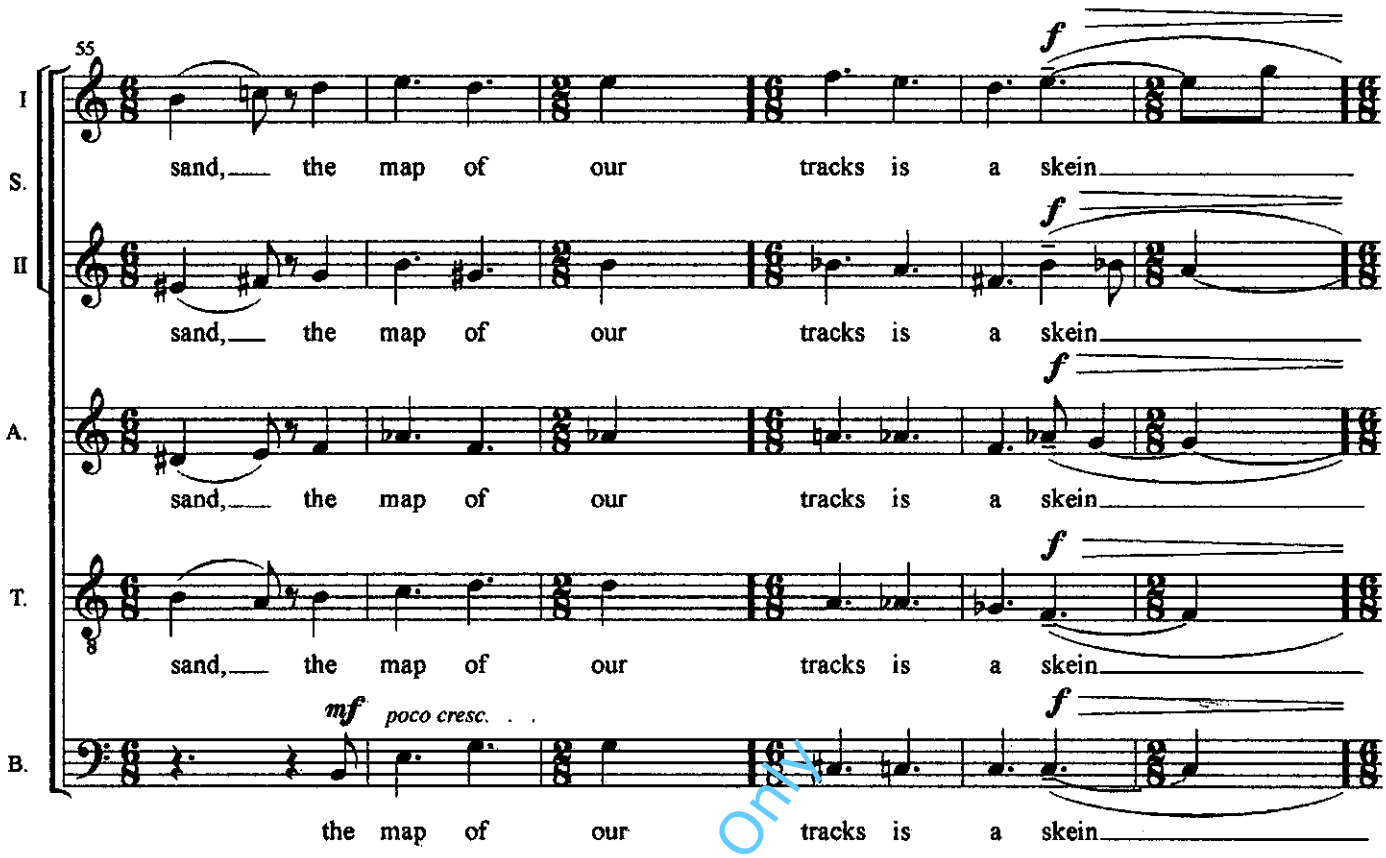


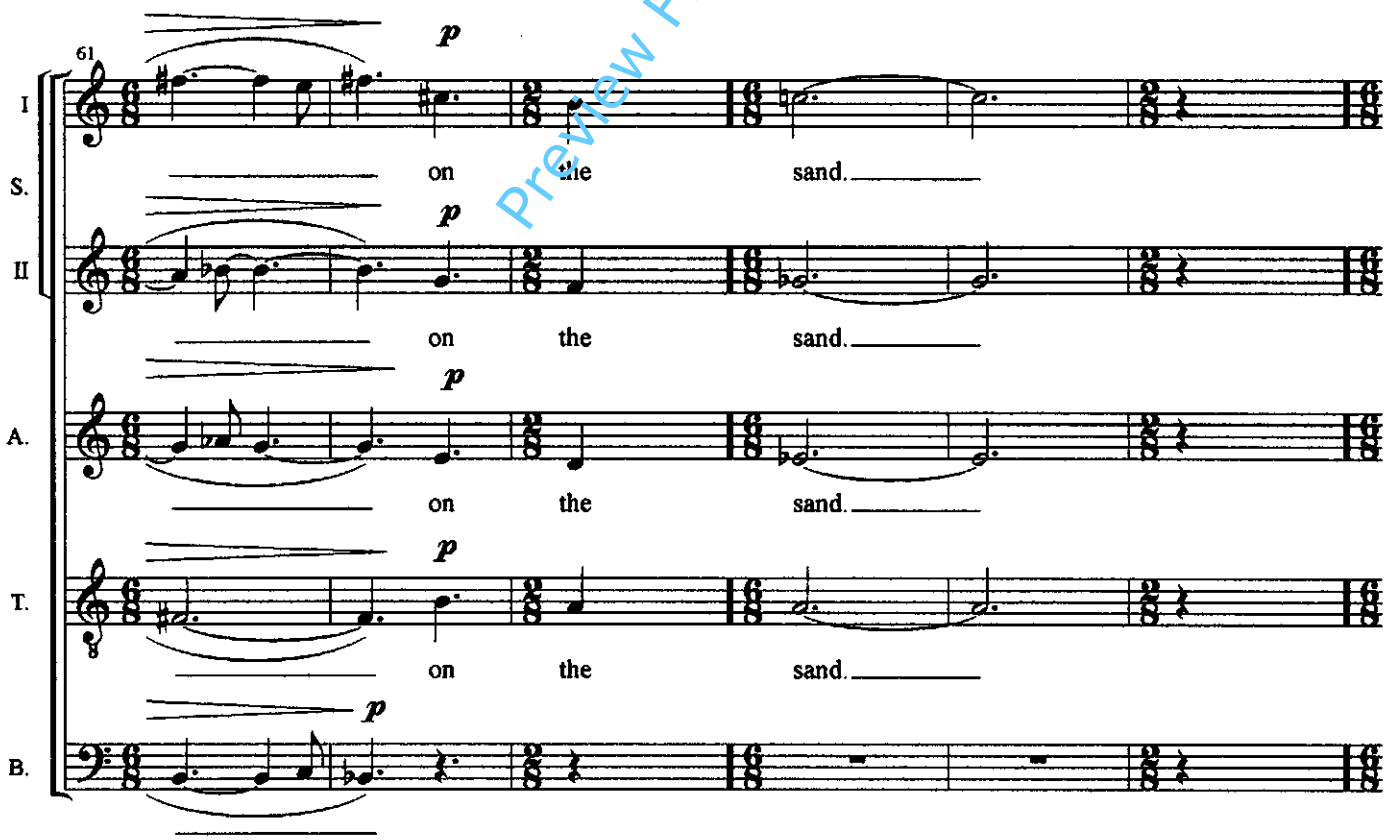


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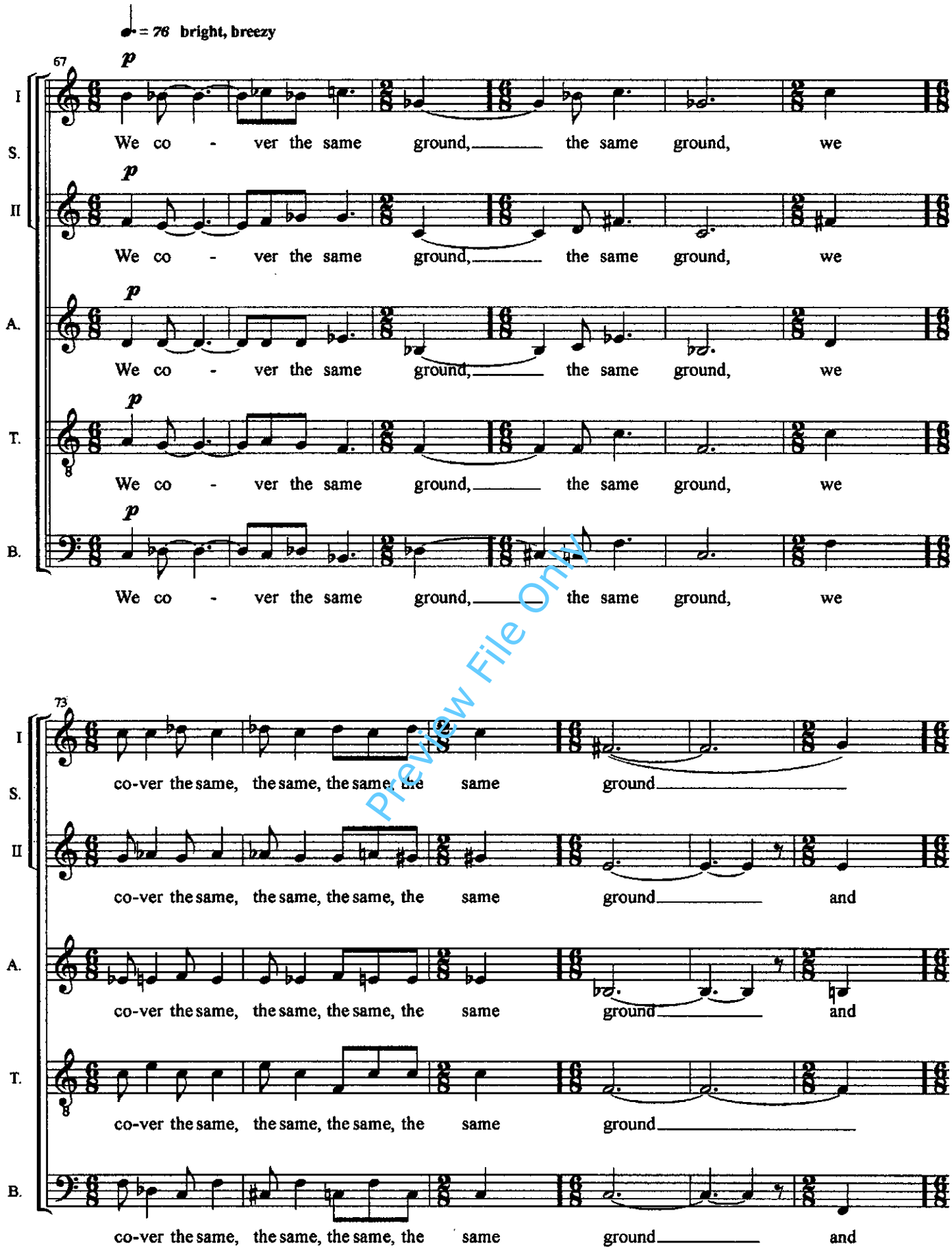


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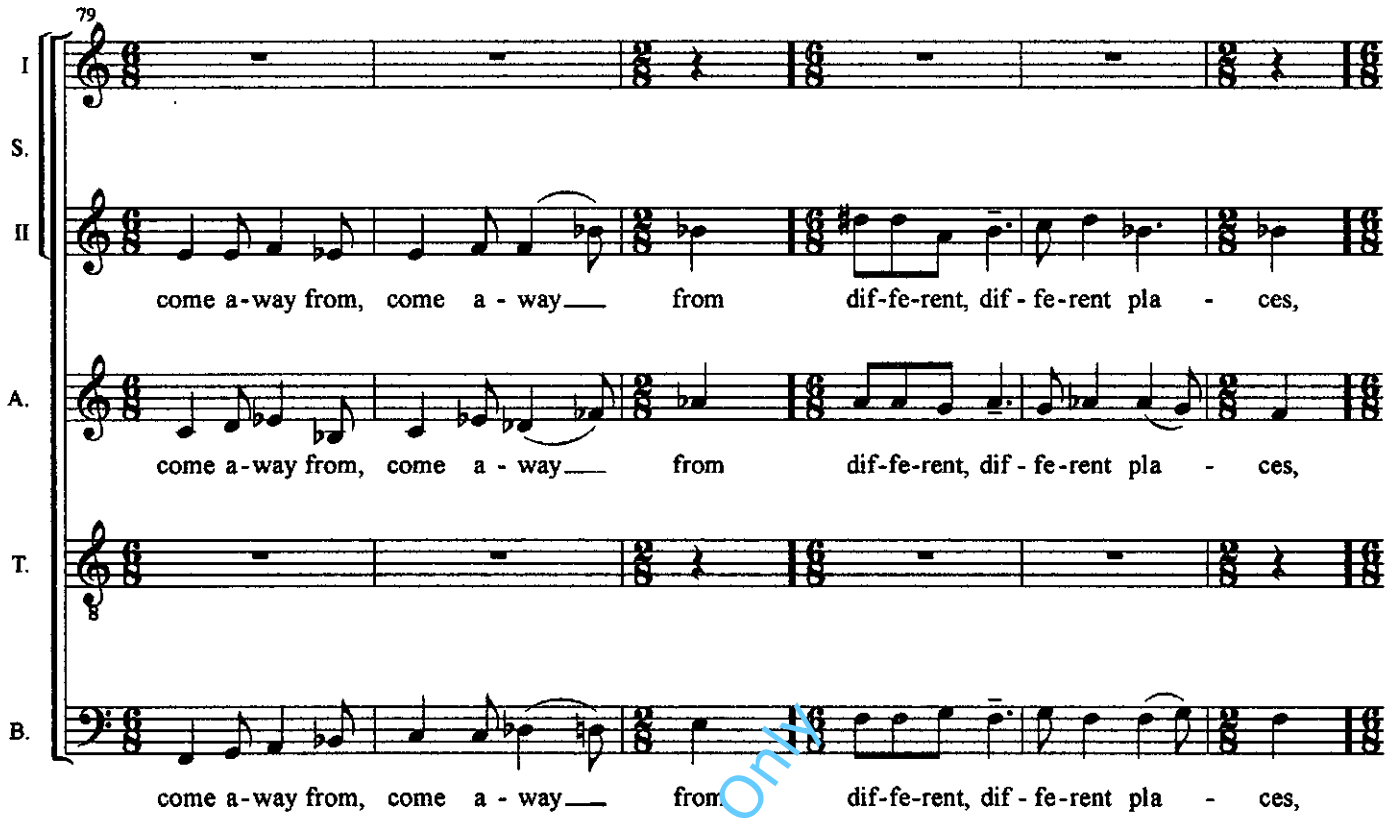


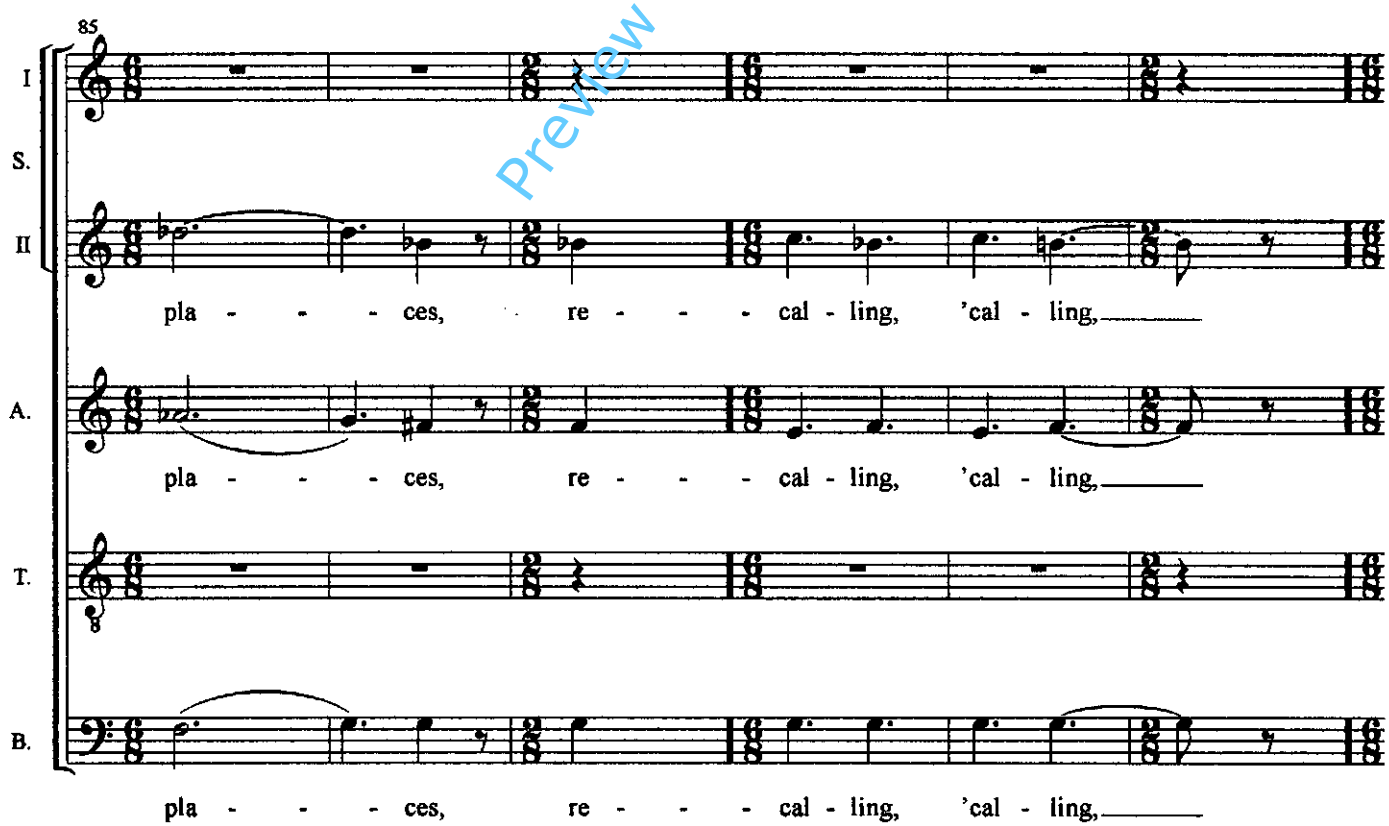


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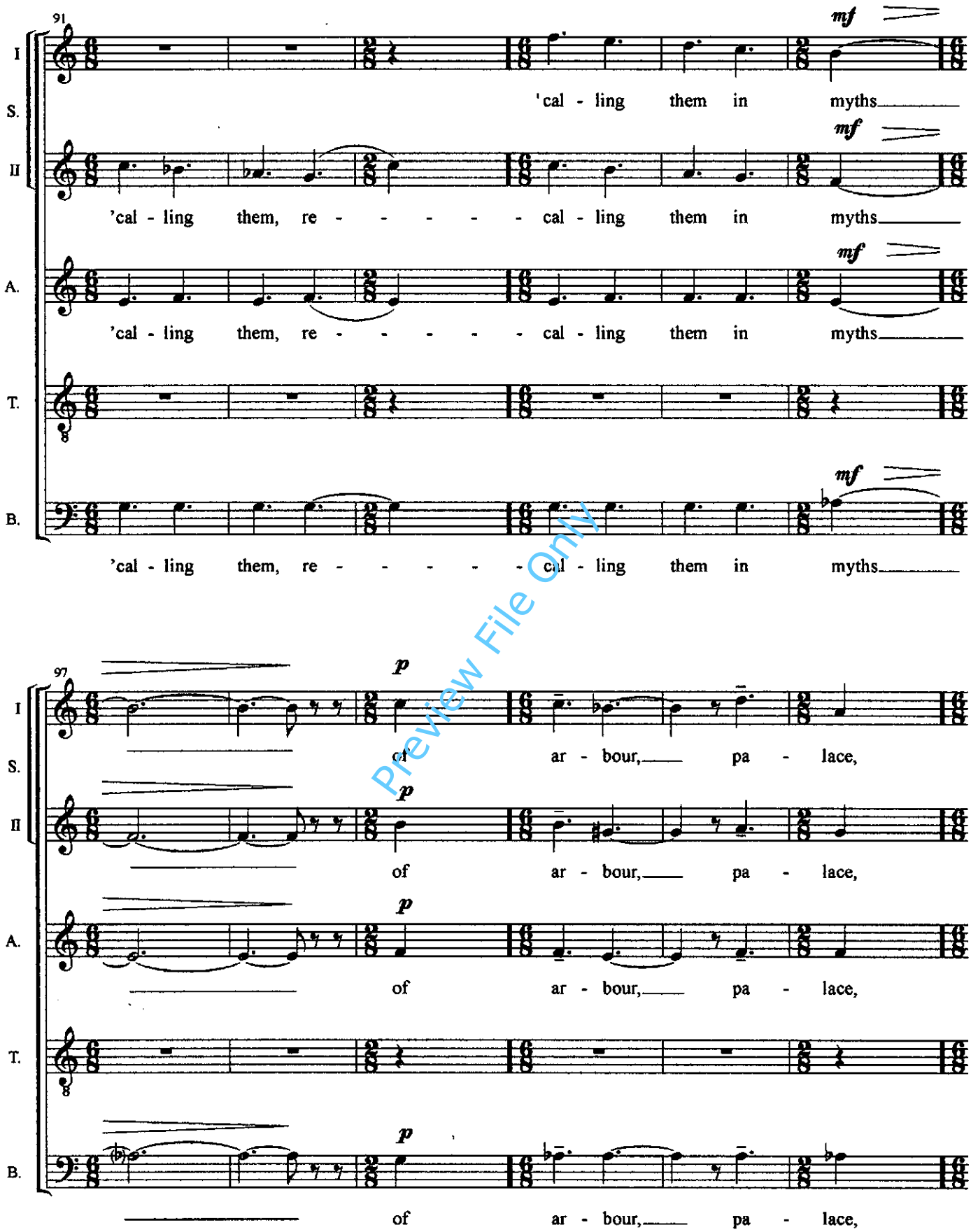


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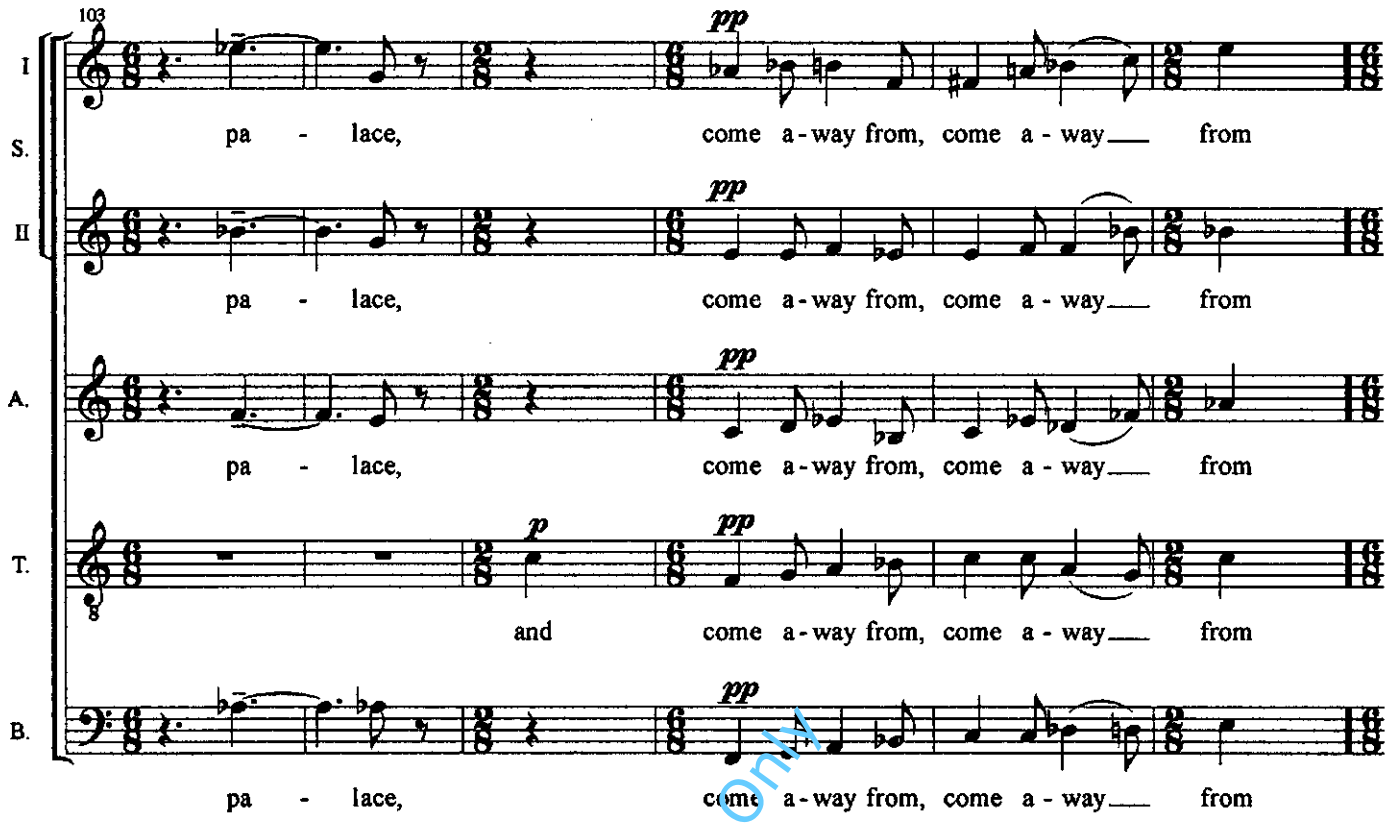


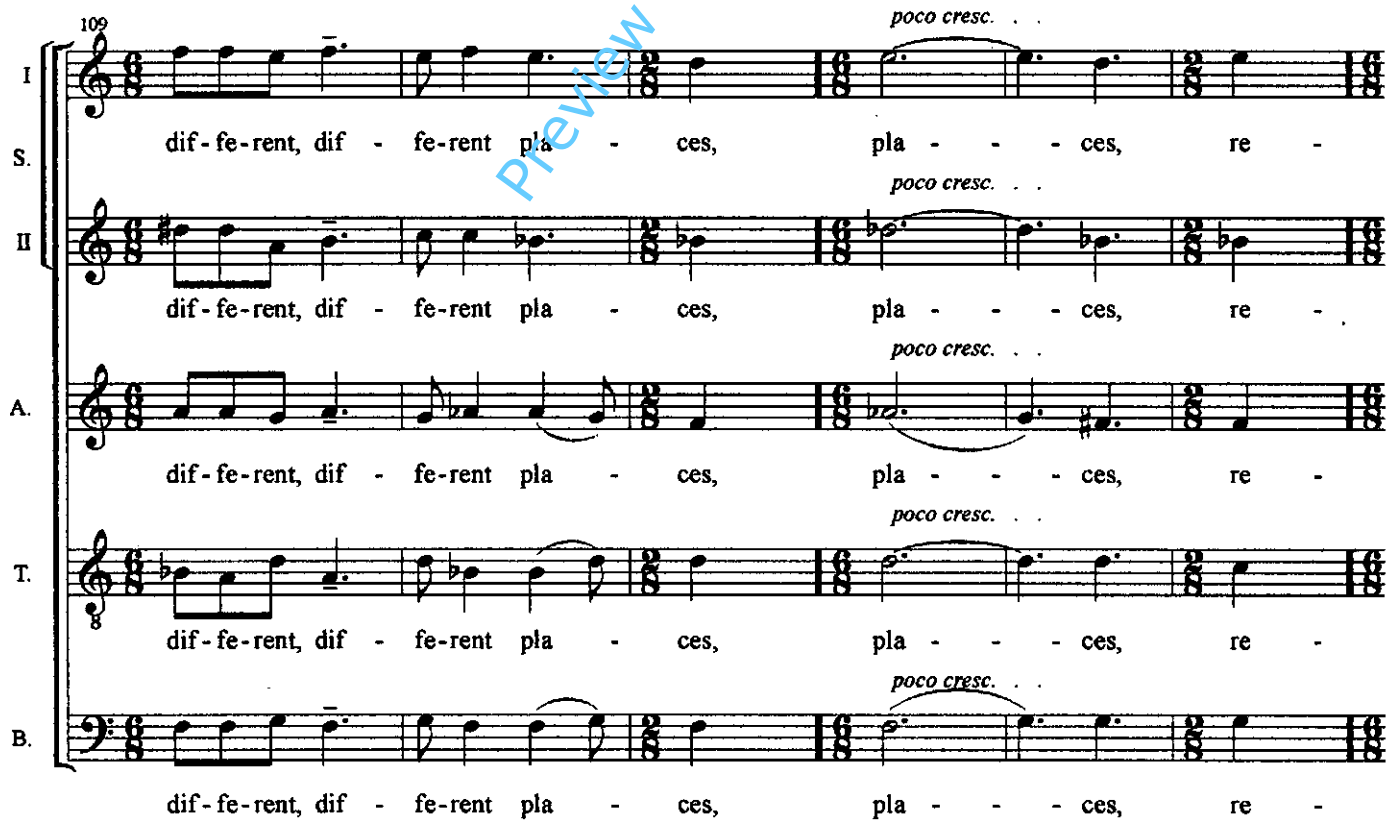


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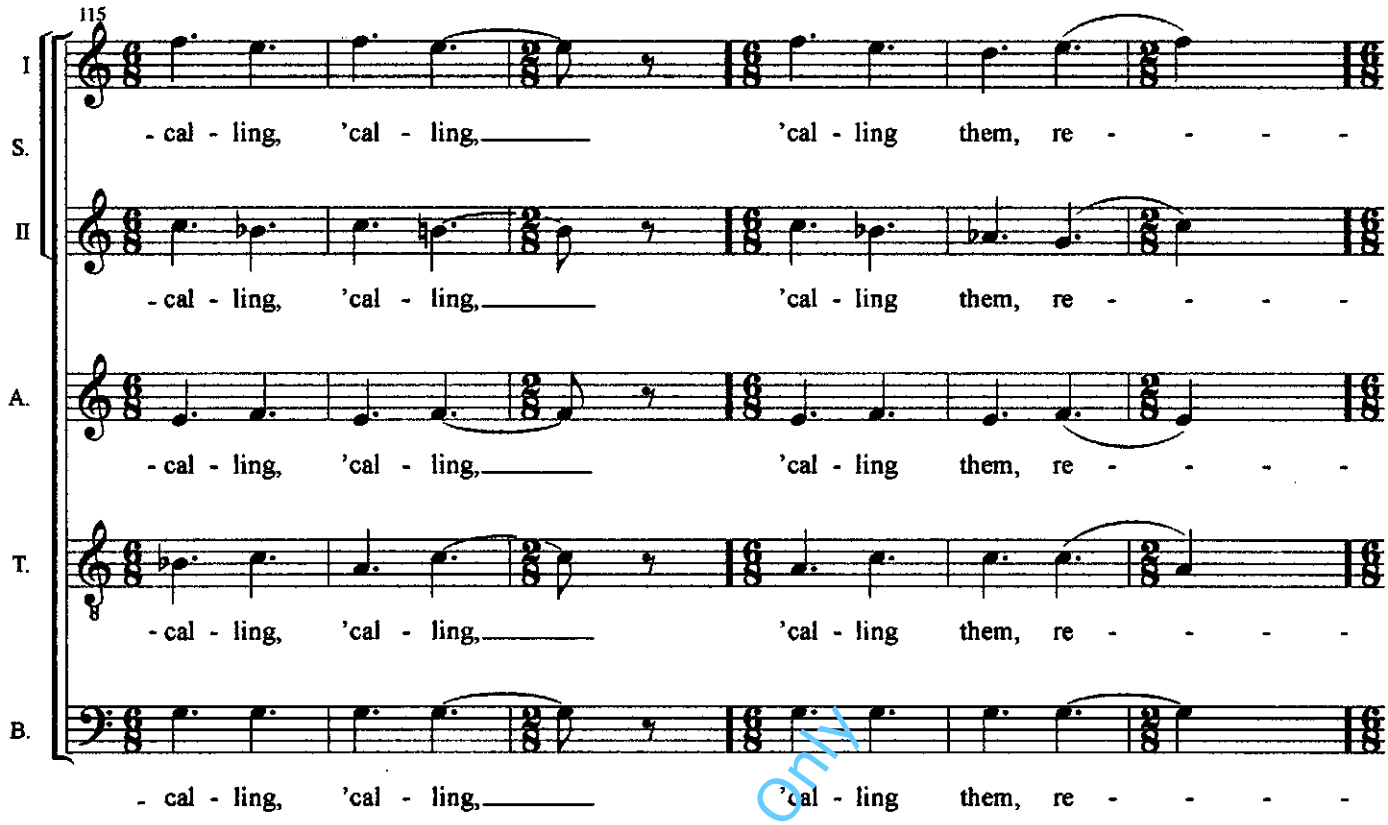


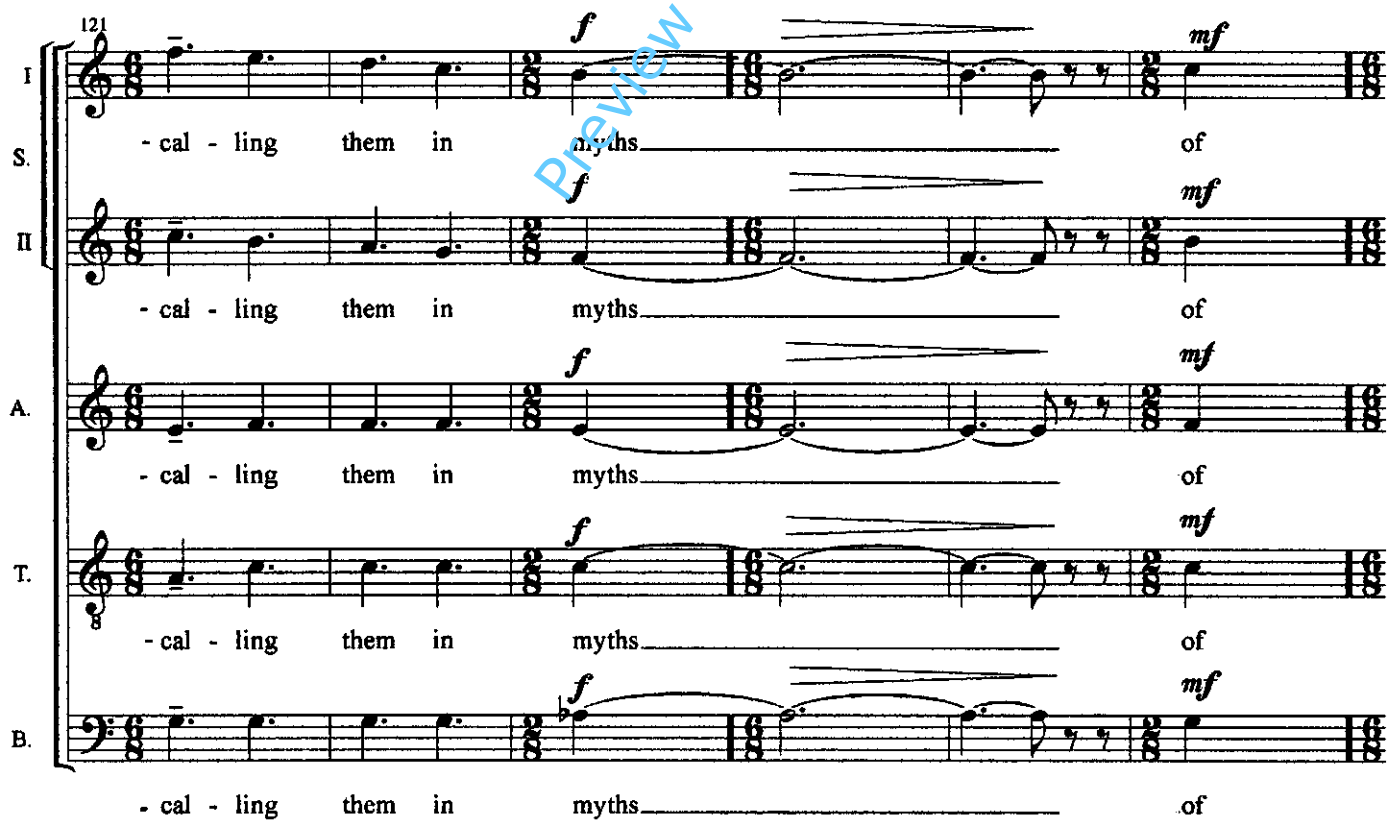


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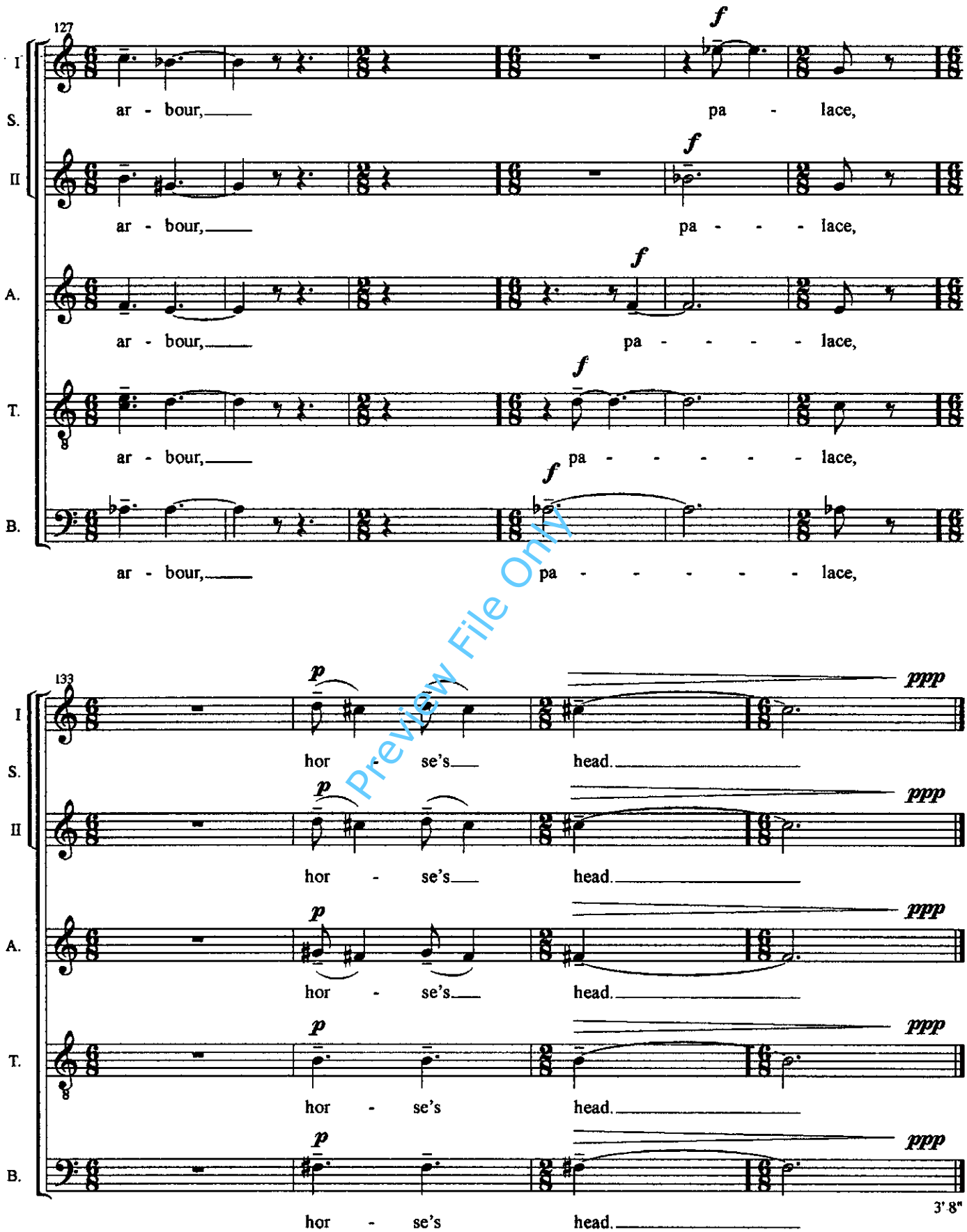


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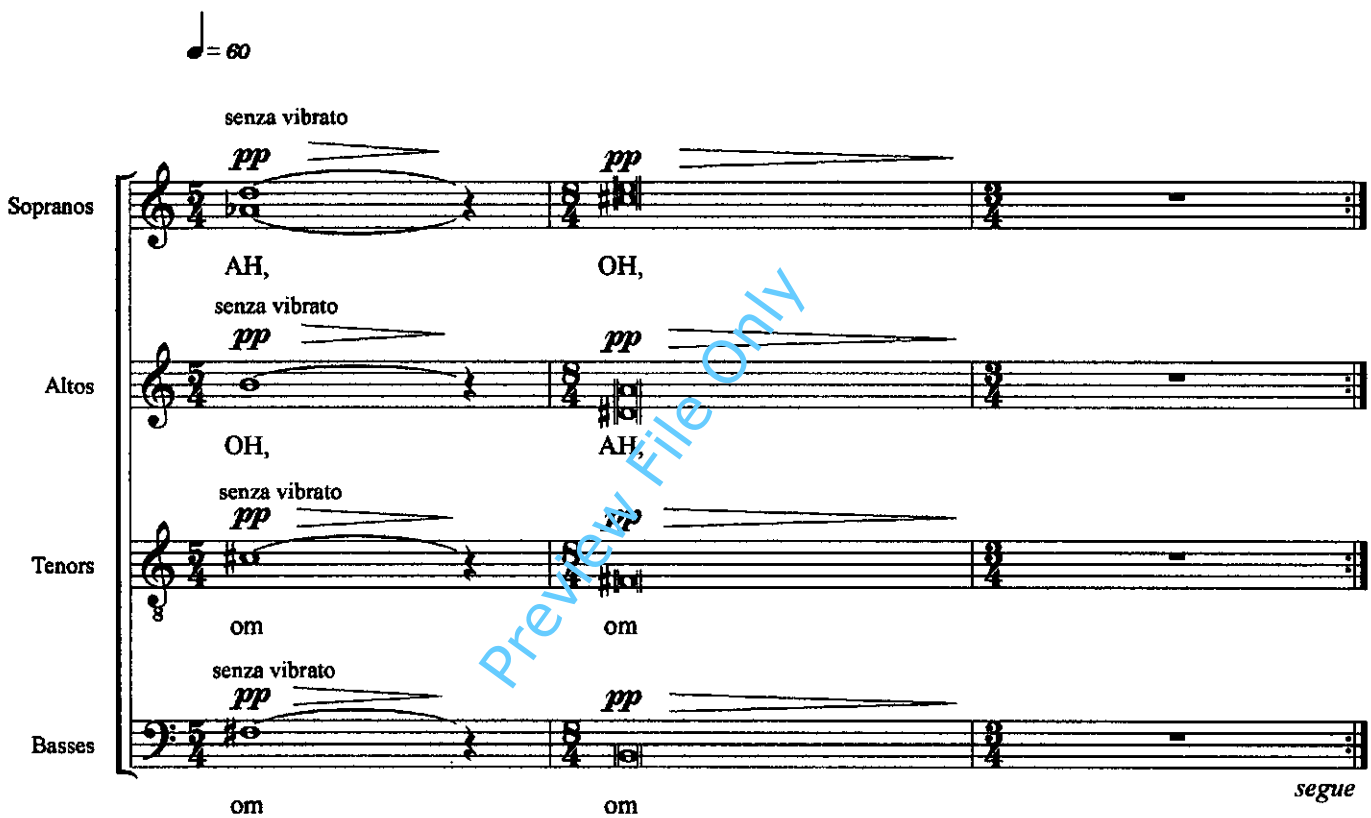


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# 2. Handles to the Invisible

This beach has so many stories to tell
beyond the narrative of crab claw and mussel shell,

time and tides that turn clear glass to ice blue and amethyst,
abrade the image, scatter parts until the whole is lost.

Everywhere there are handles to the invisible,
ornate illusions to the untold or half-told, impenetrable

sepia clues to unfinished landscapes. Exquisite borders clarify
the ill-defined.
Porcelain question marks conjure long drunk cups of tea.

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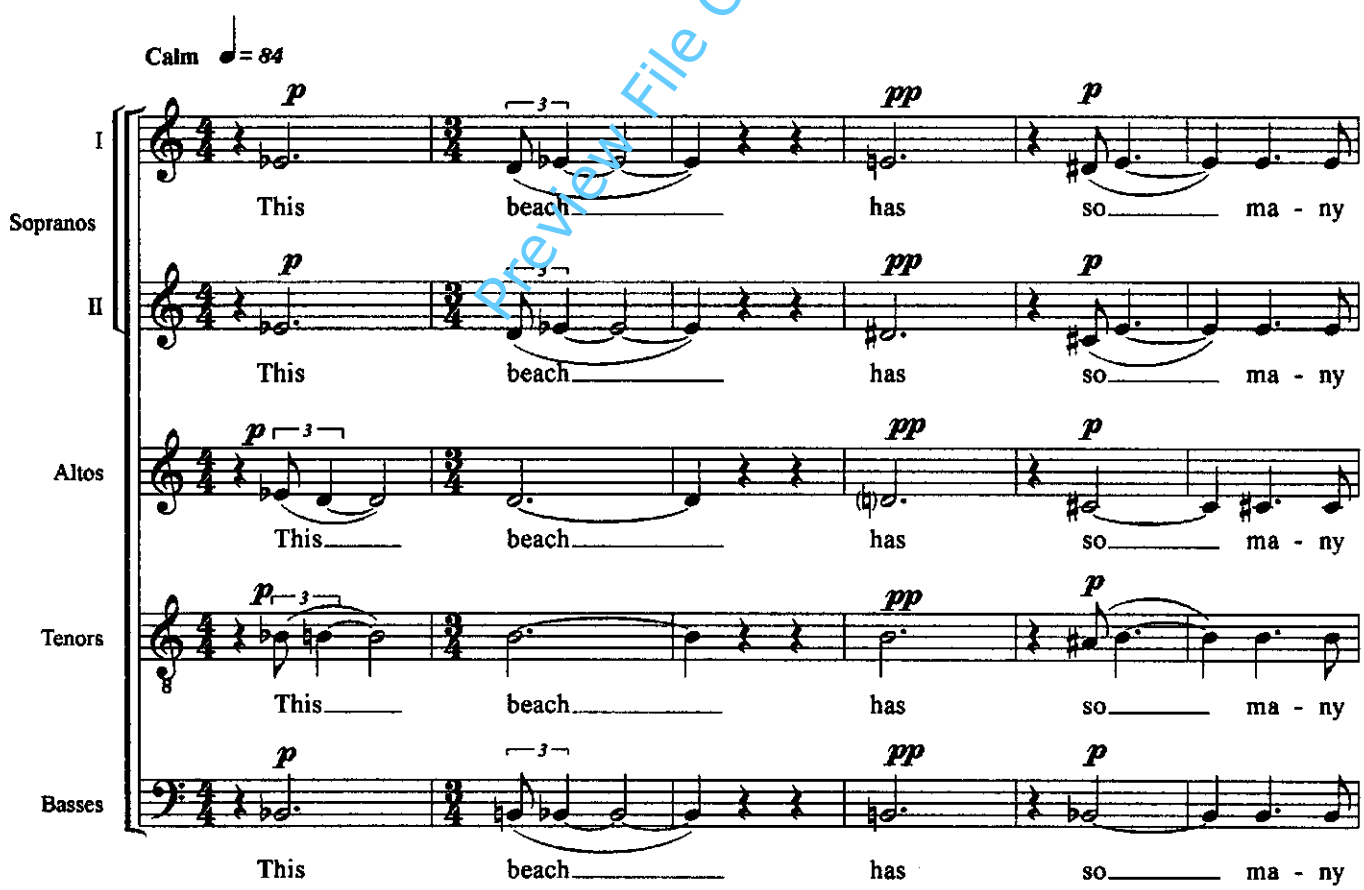

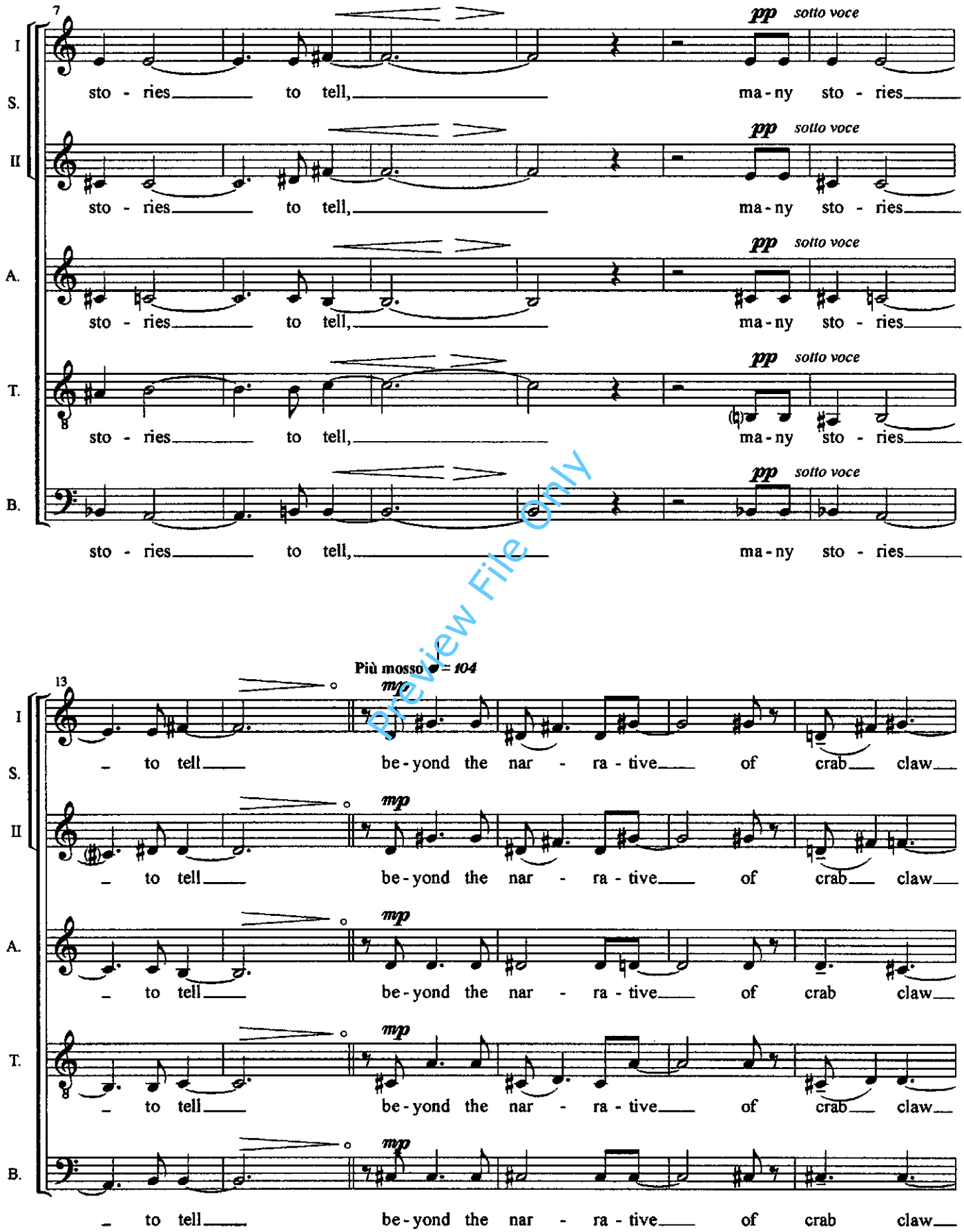


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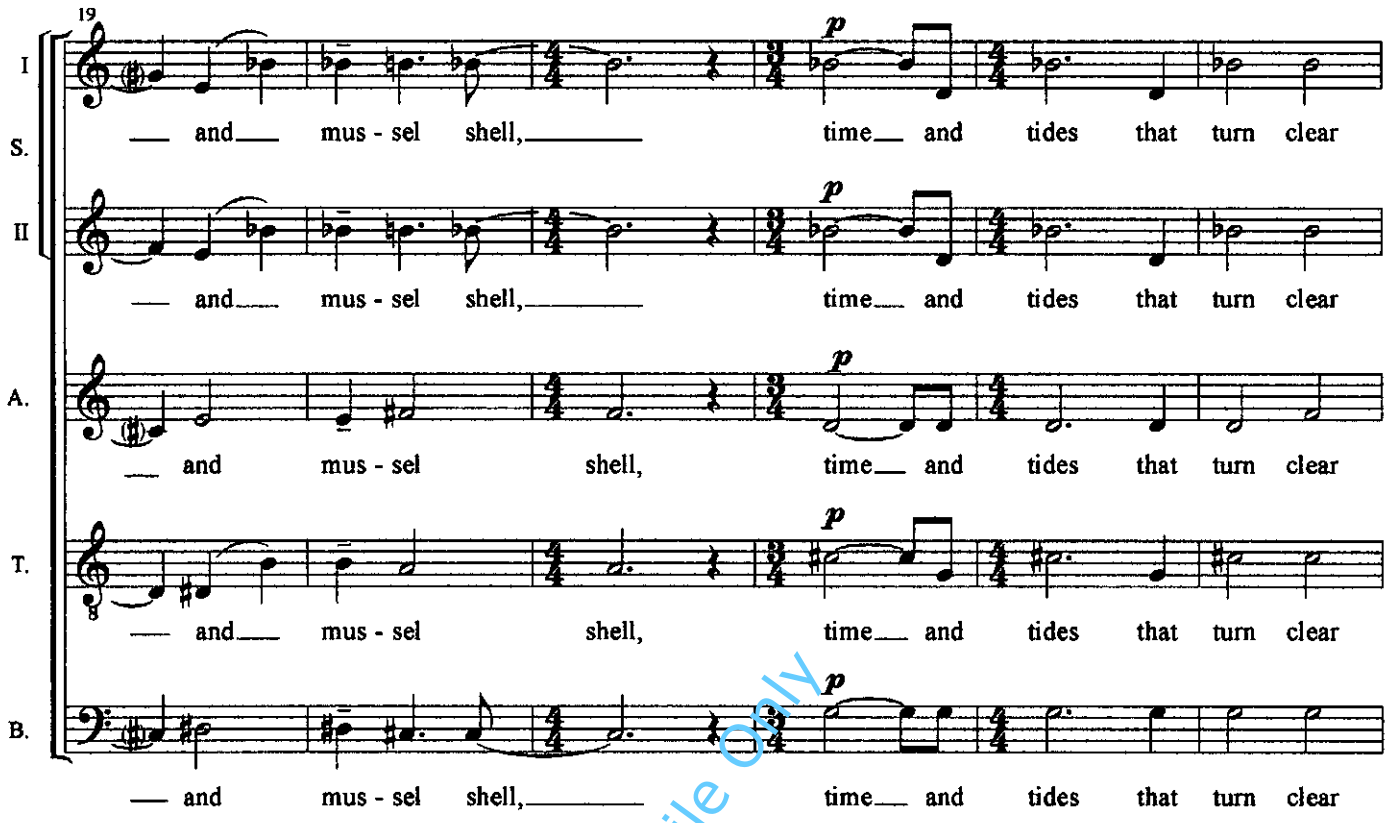


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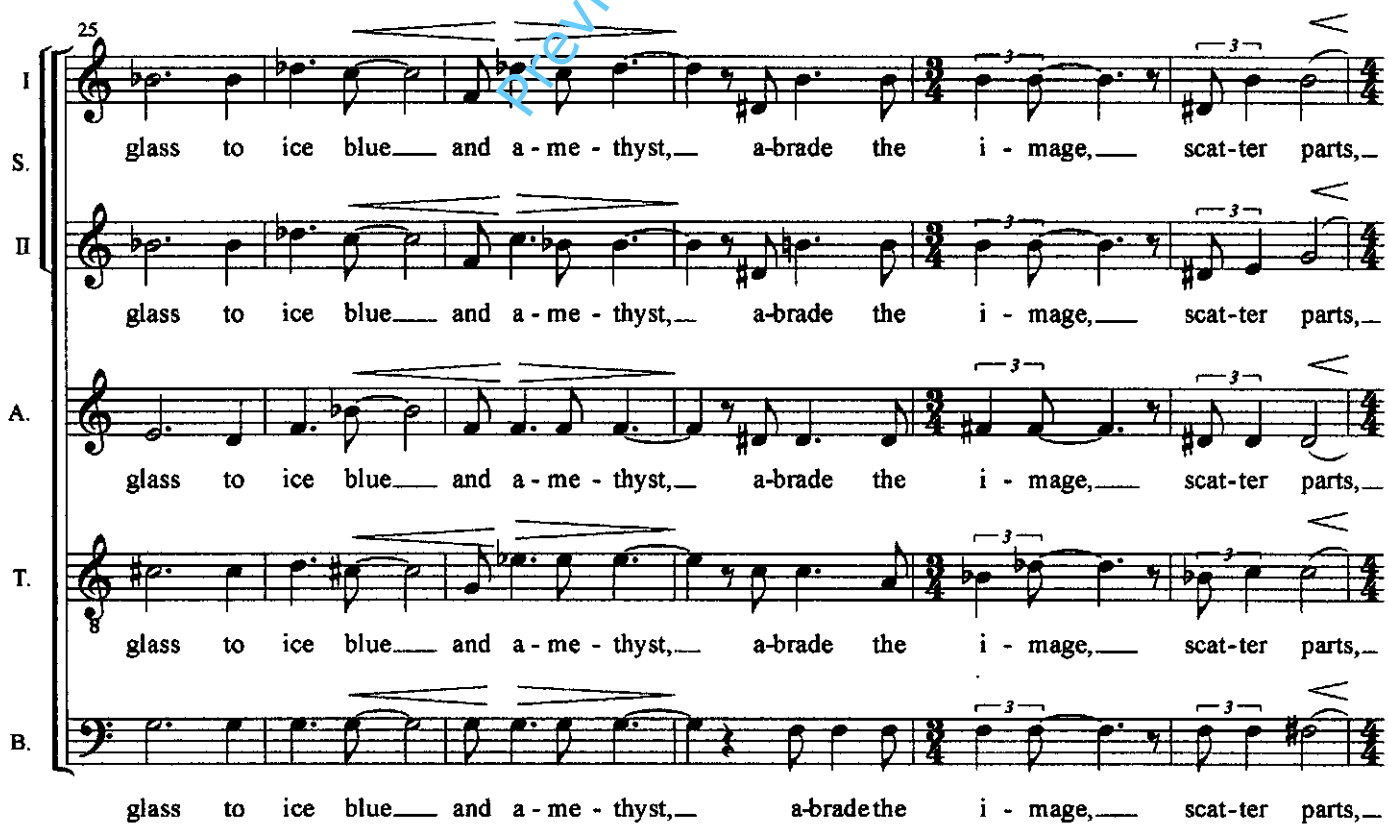

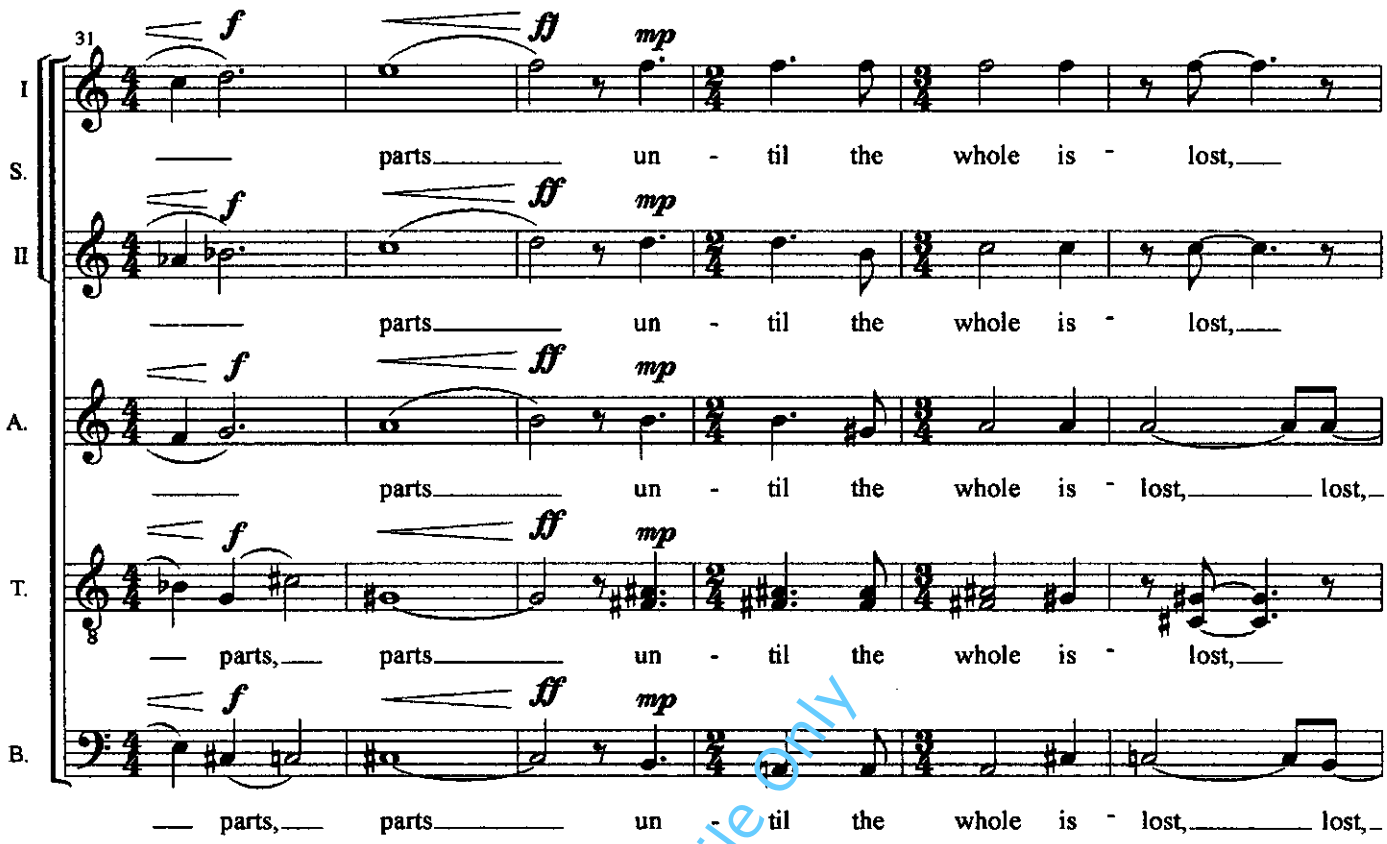


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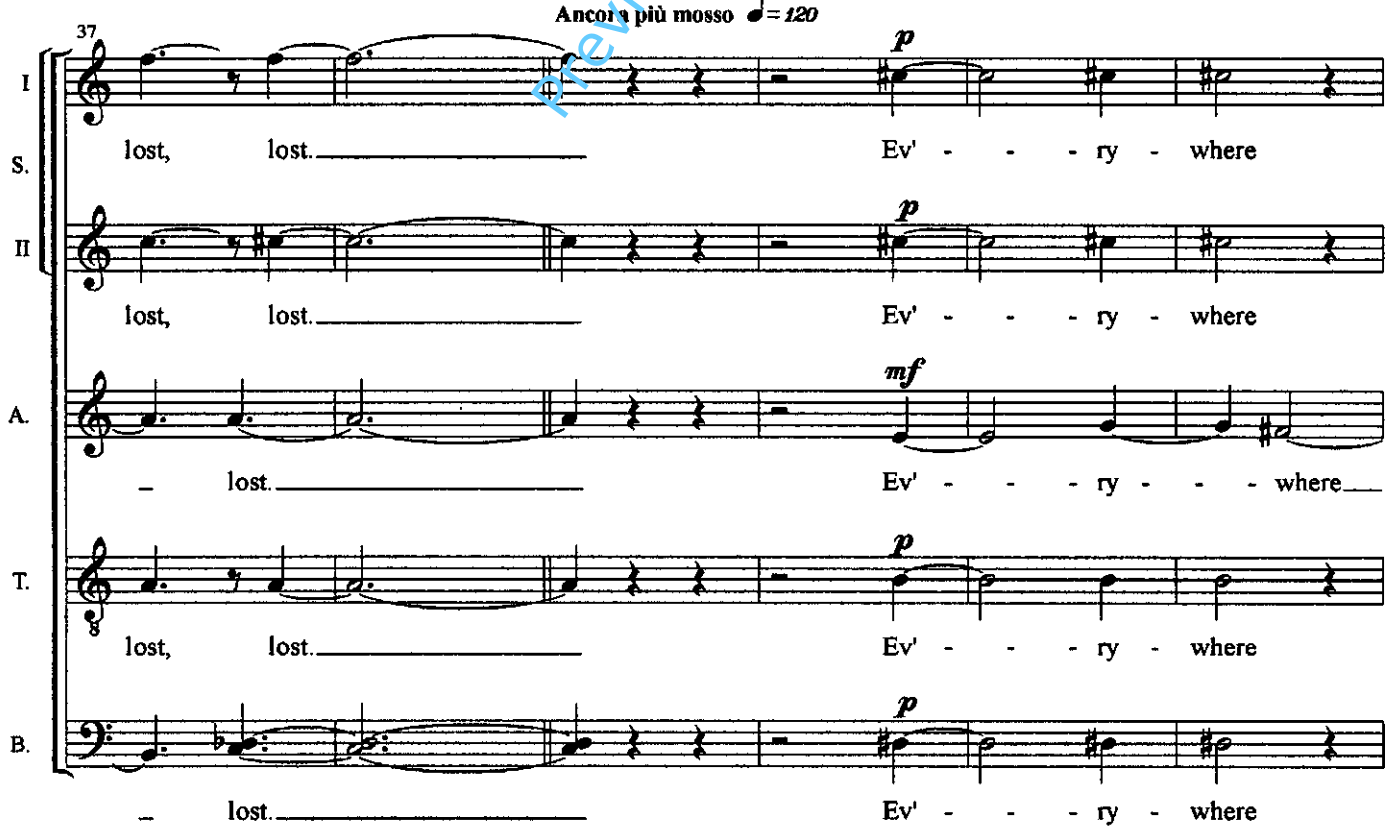

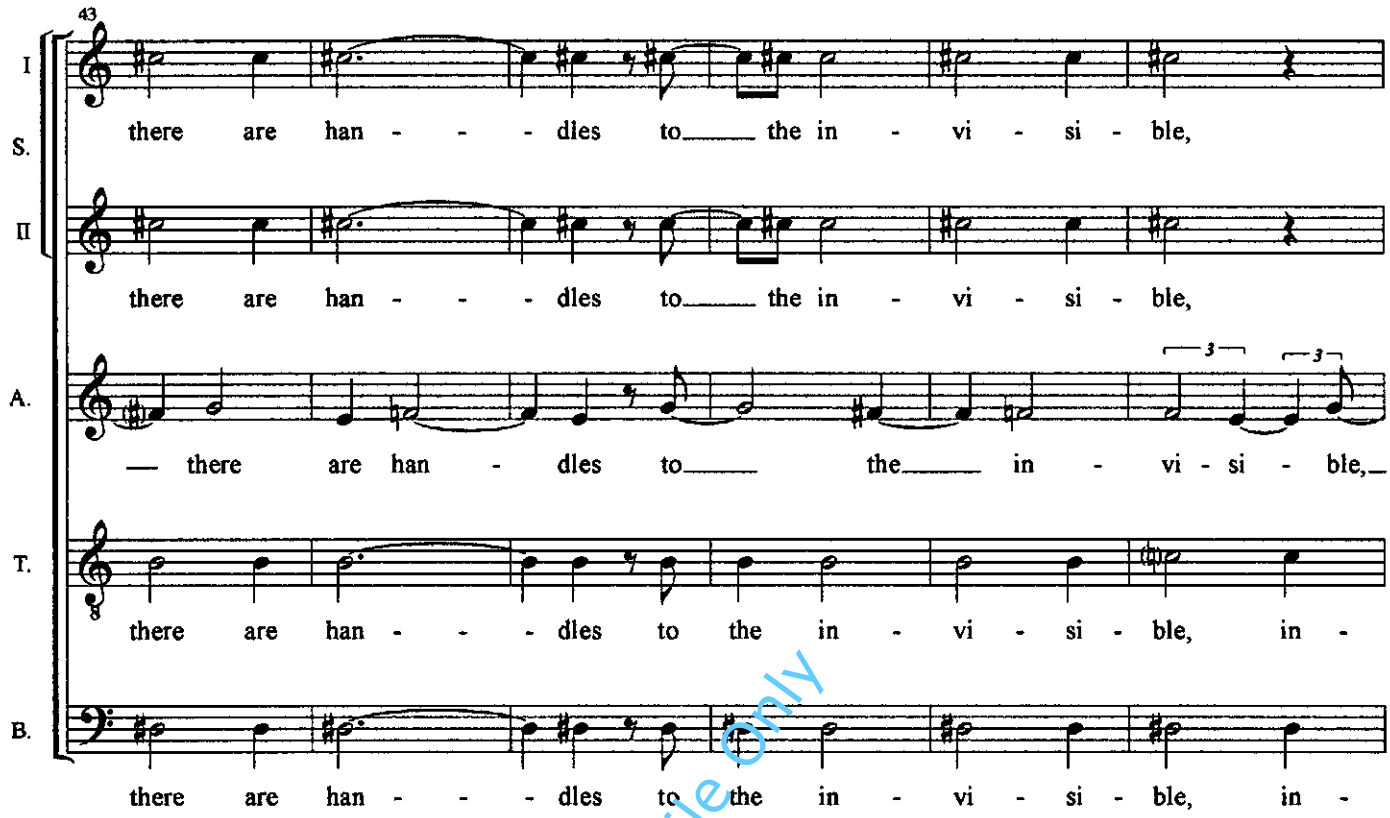


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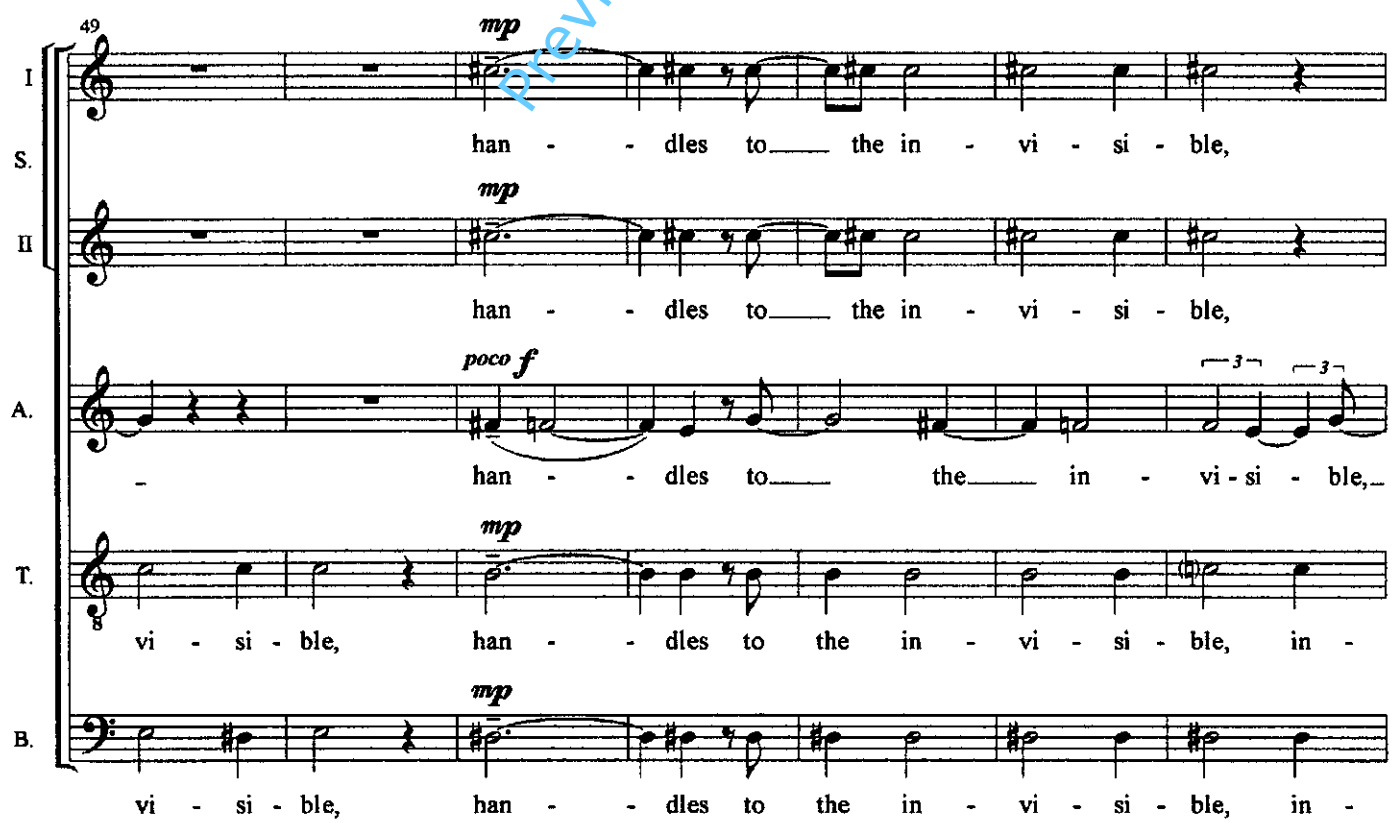

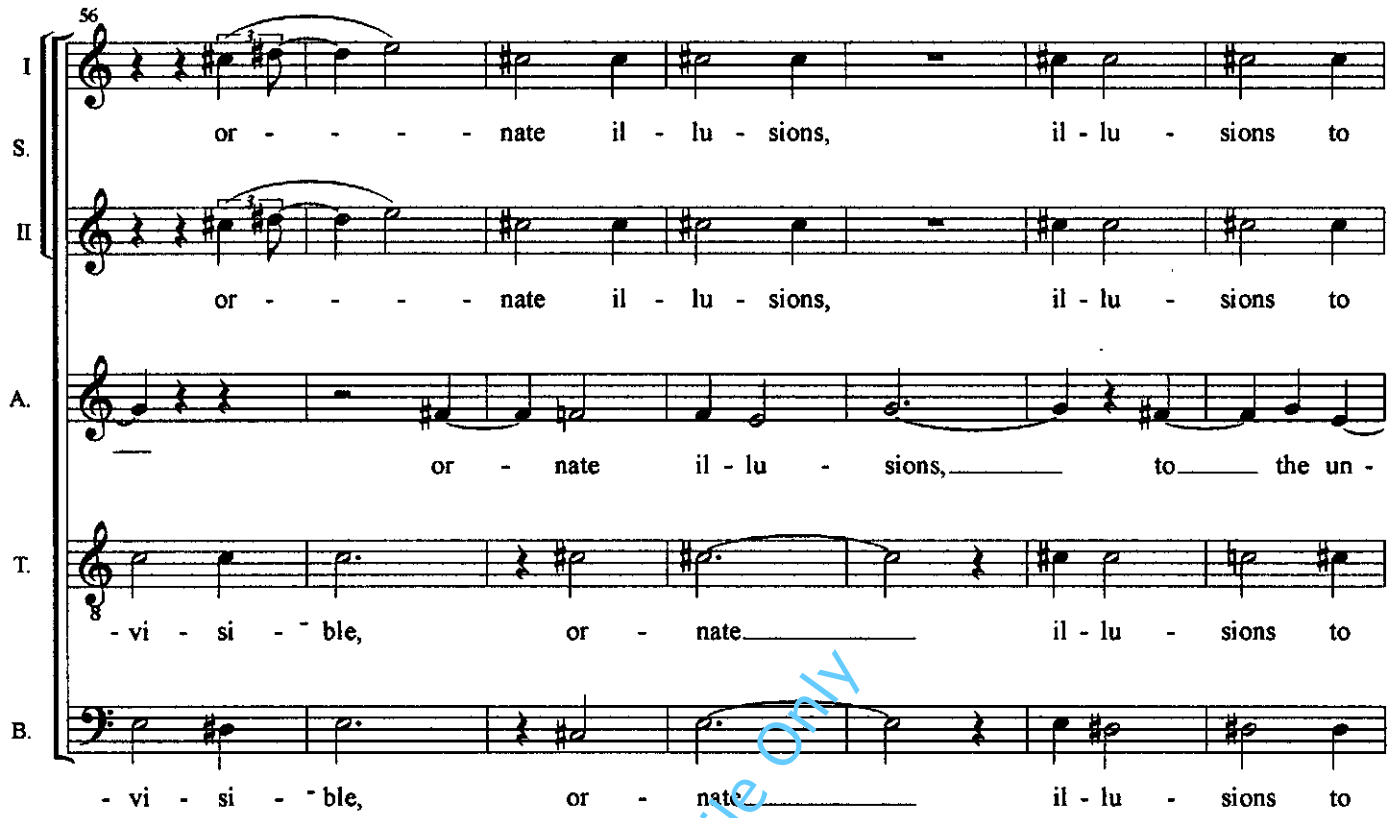


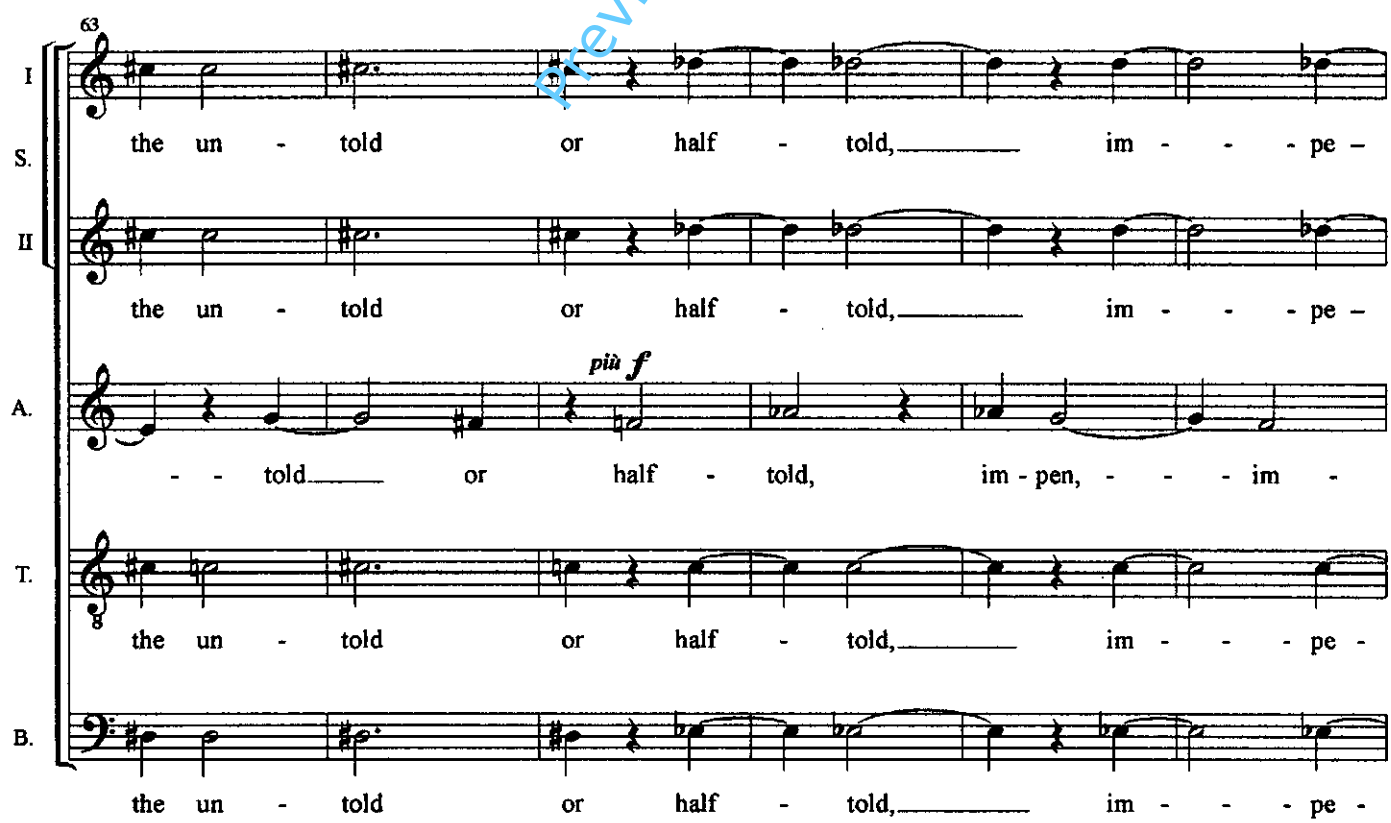


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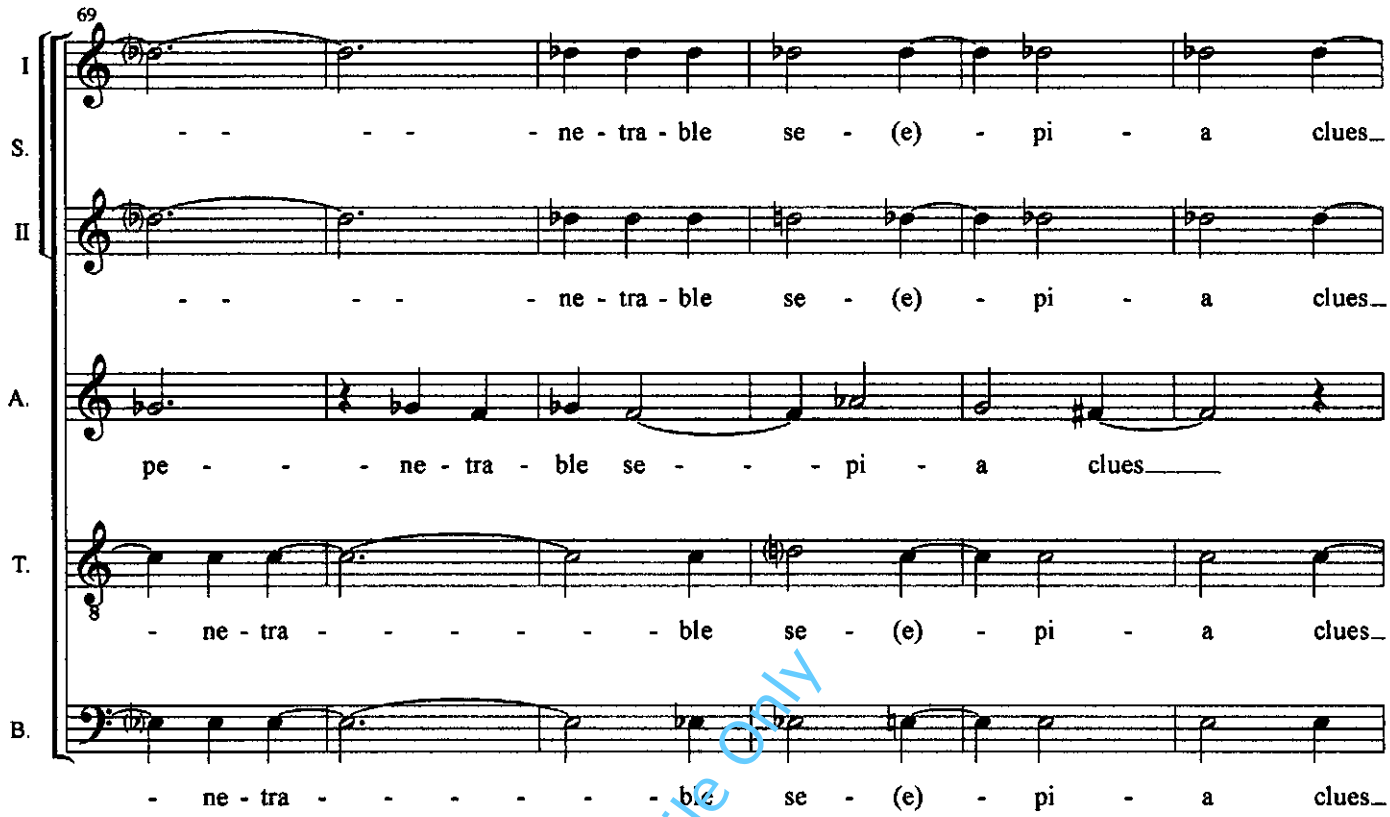


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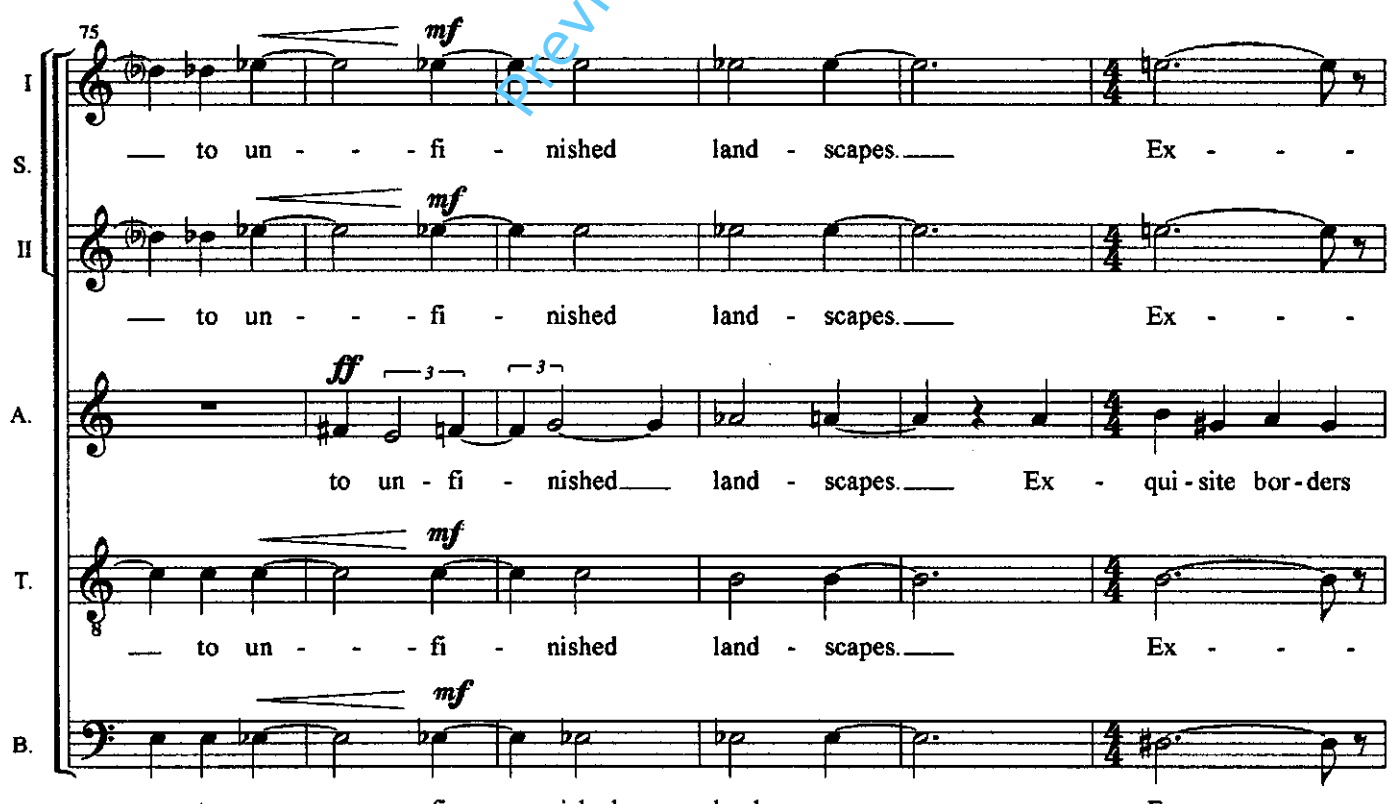

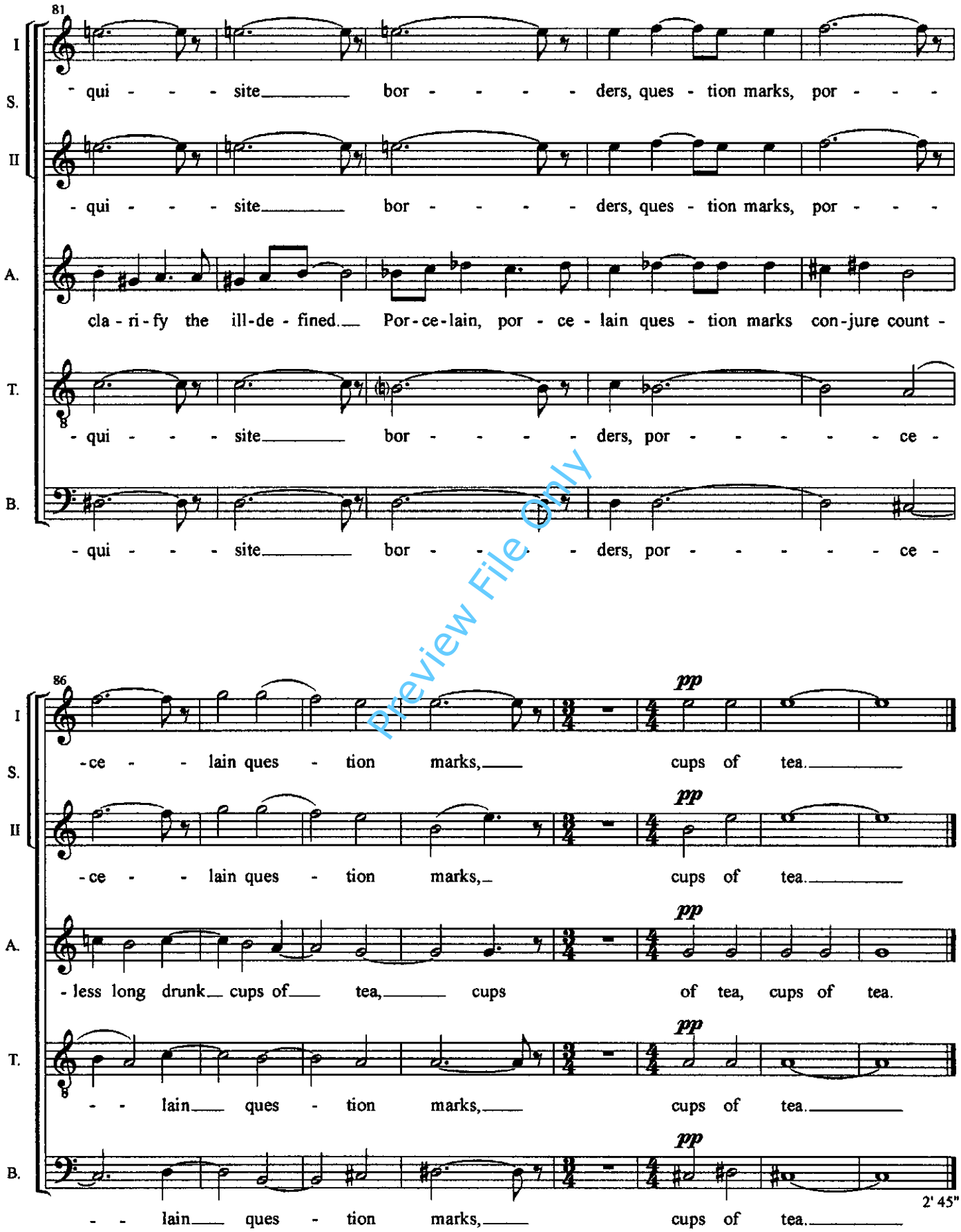


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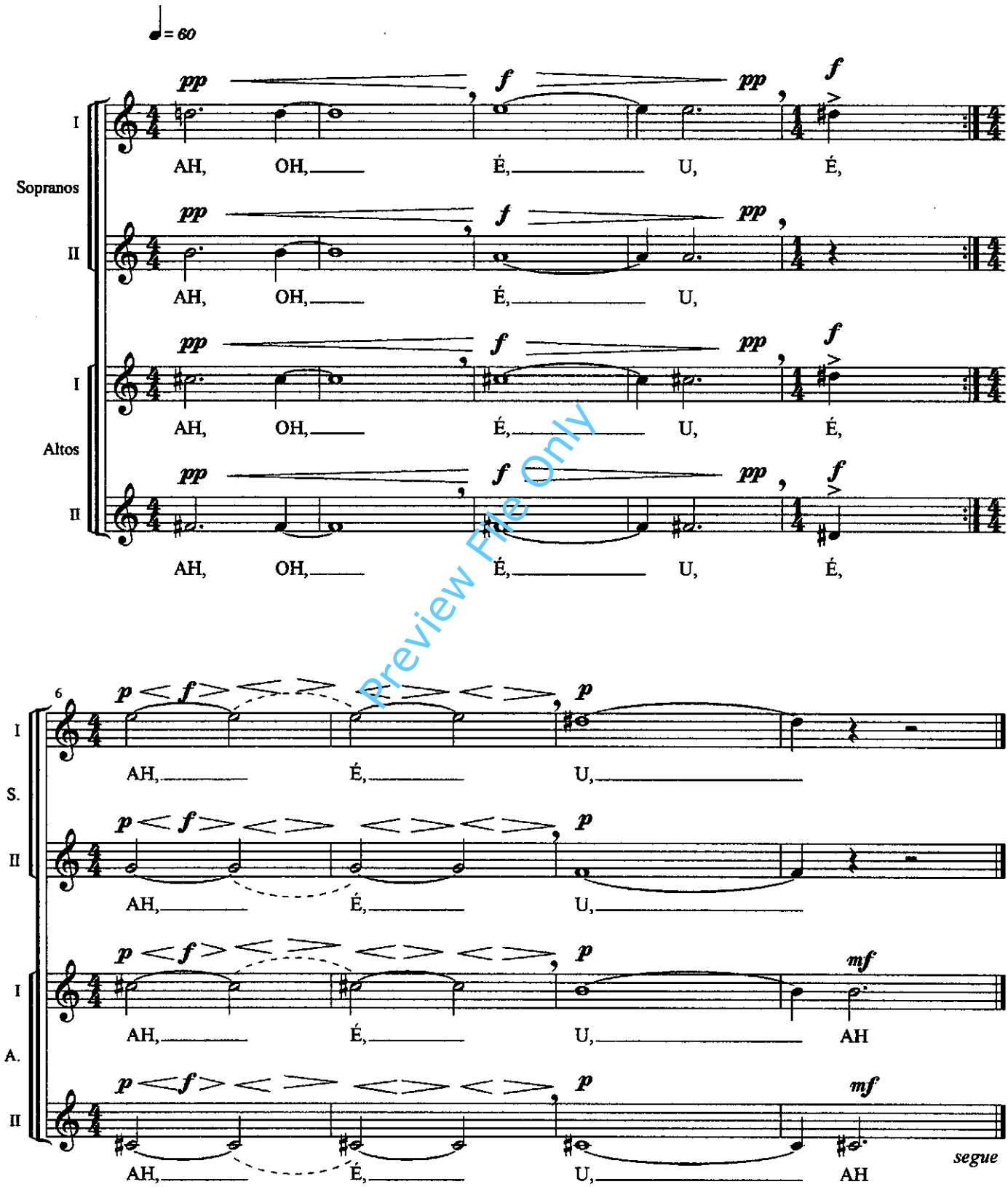


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# 3. Latent

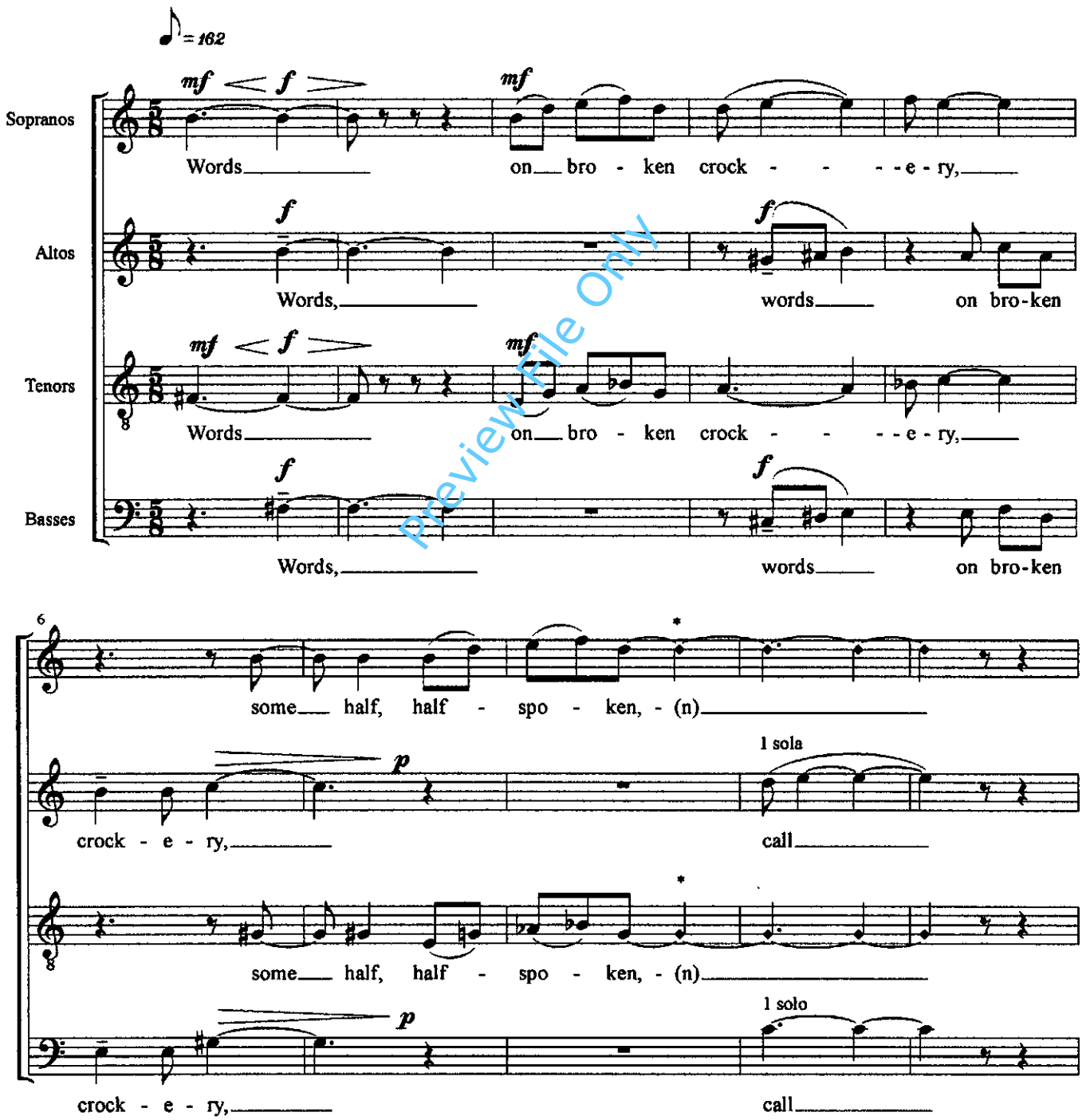
Words on broken crockery, some half-spoken,
Call up through shallow water from the sea bed:

*KIN THE Prophet defend PHYLLIS.*
This is the subtext, unsung, obscured

by sand, shell. Crabs skitter and lurch
sidelong in the undercurrent

between *HOBART, KEW* and *ngland.*
Laved, lapped by sea-lover along

the water-line, words spell
their unbreathed sighs - AH, OH, om.

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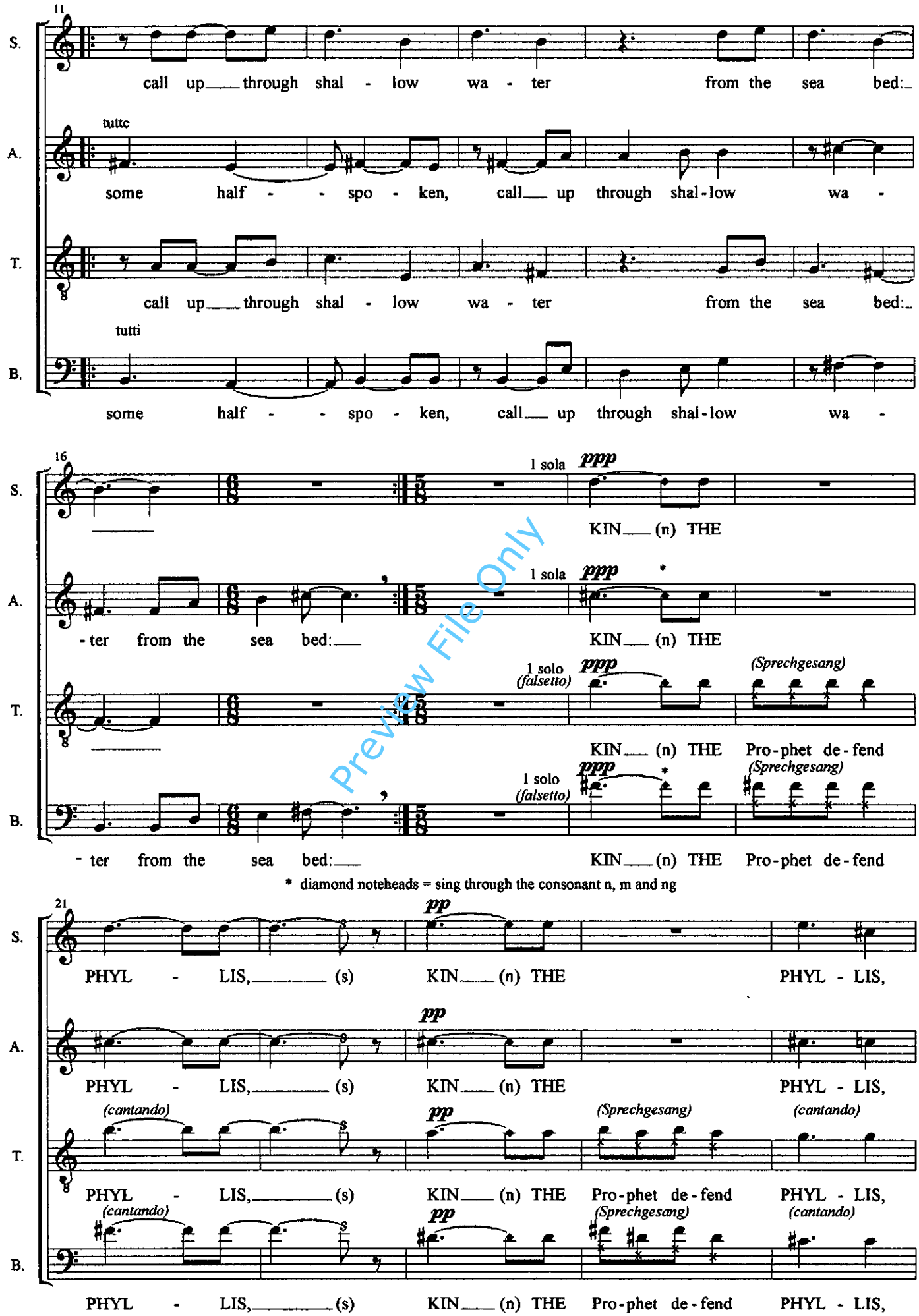
* diamond noteheads = sing through the consonant n, m and ng

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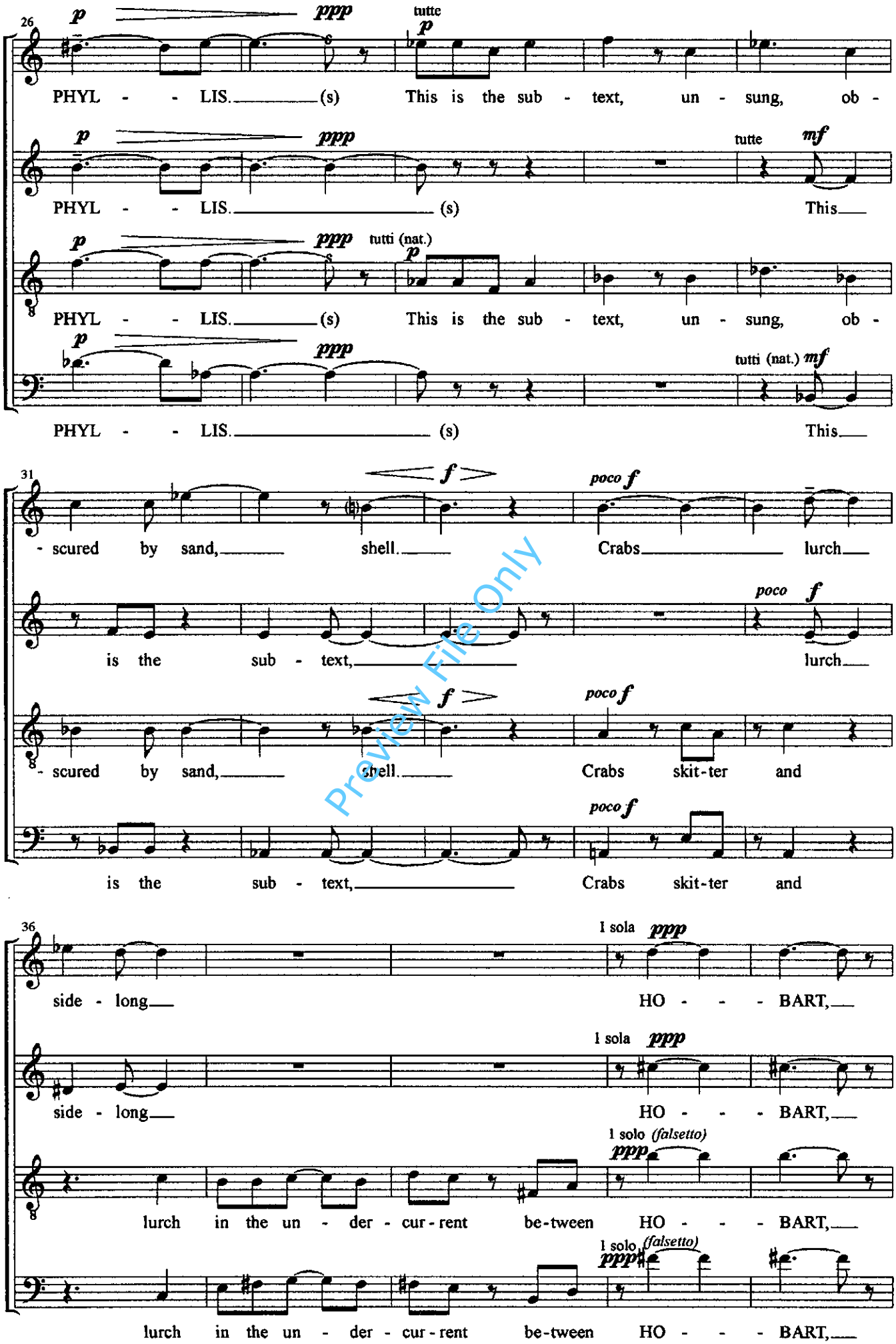


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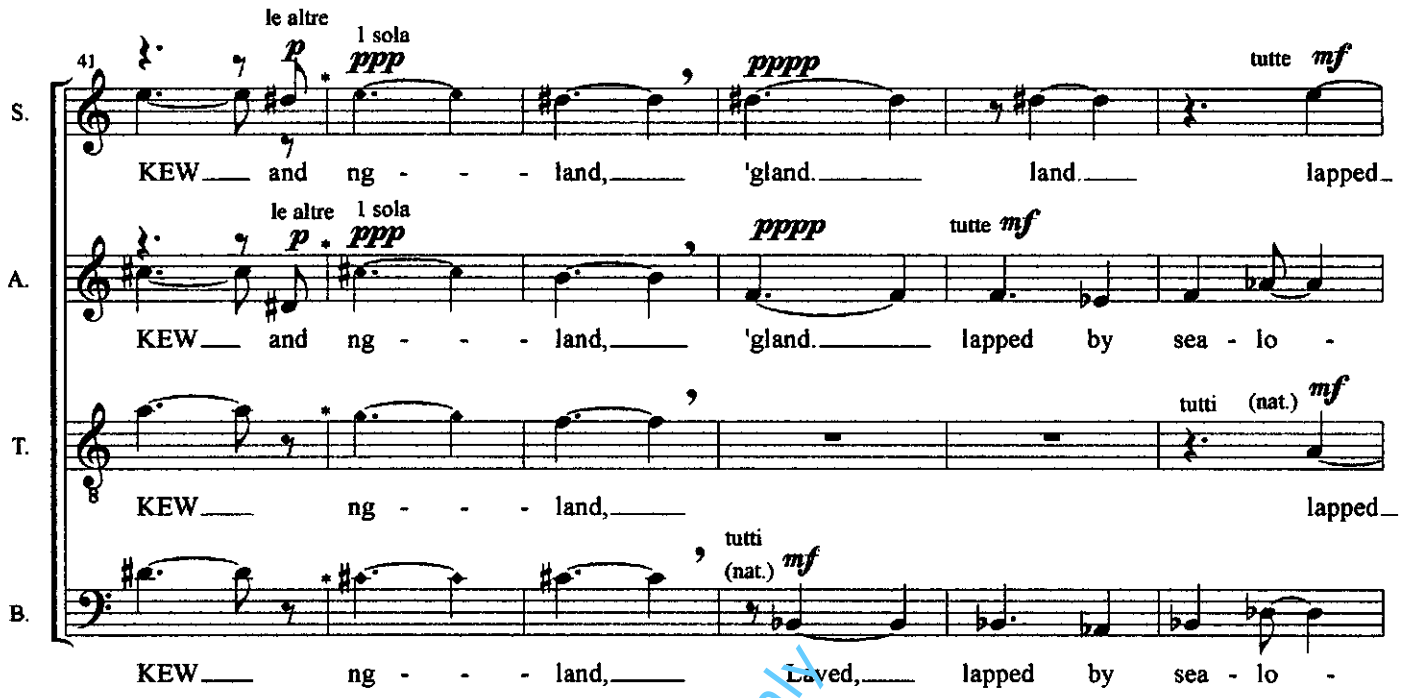


* diamond noteheads = sing through the consonant n, m and ng

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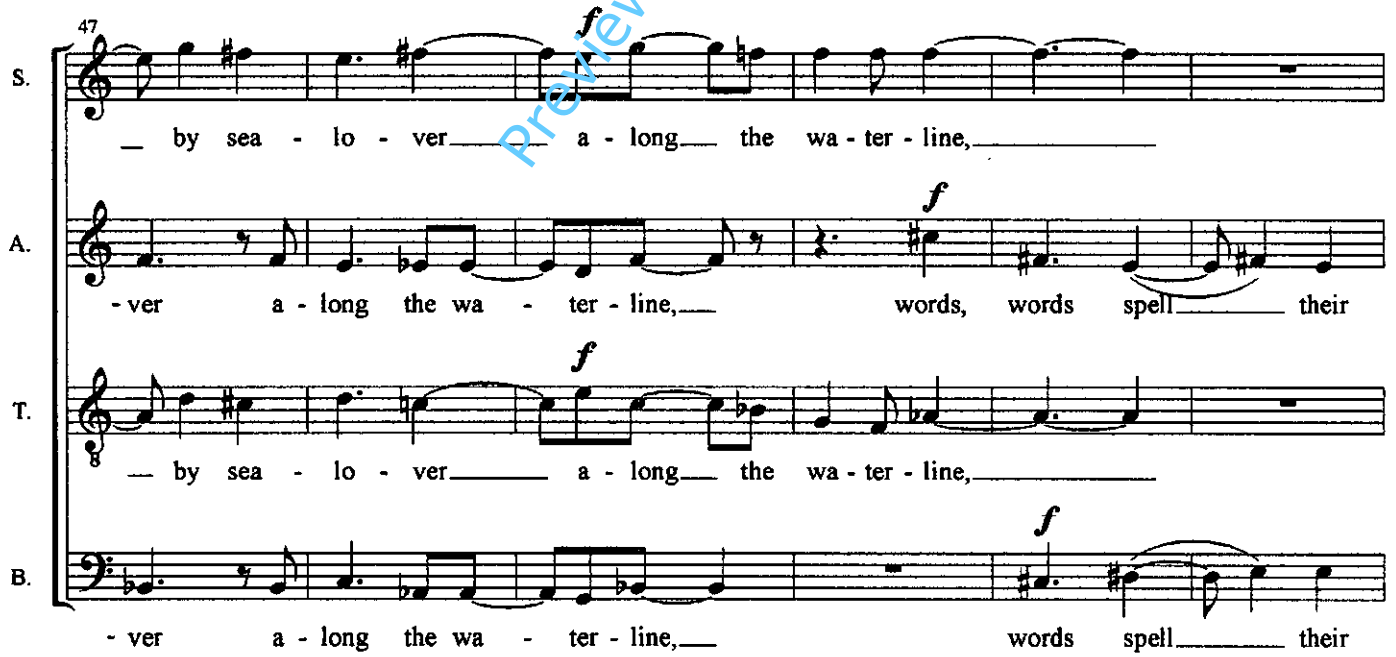

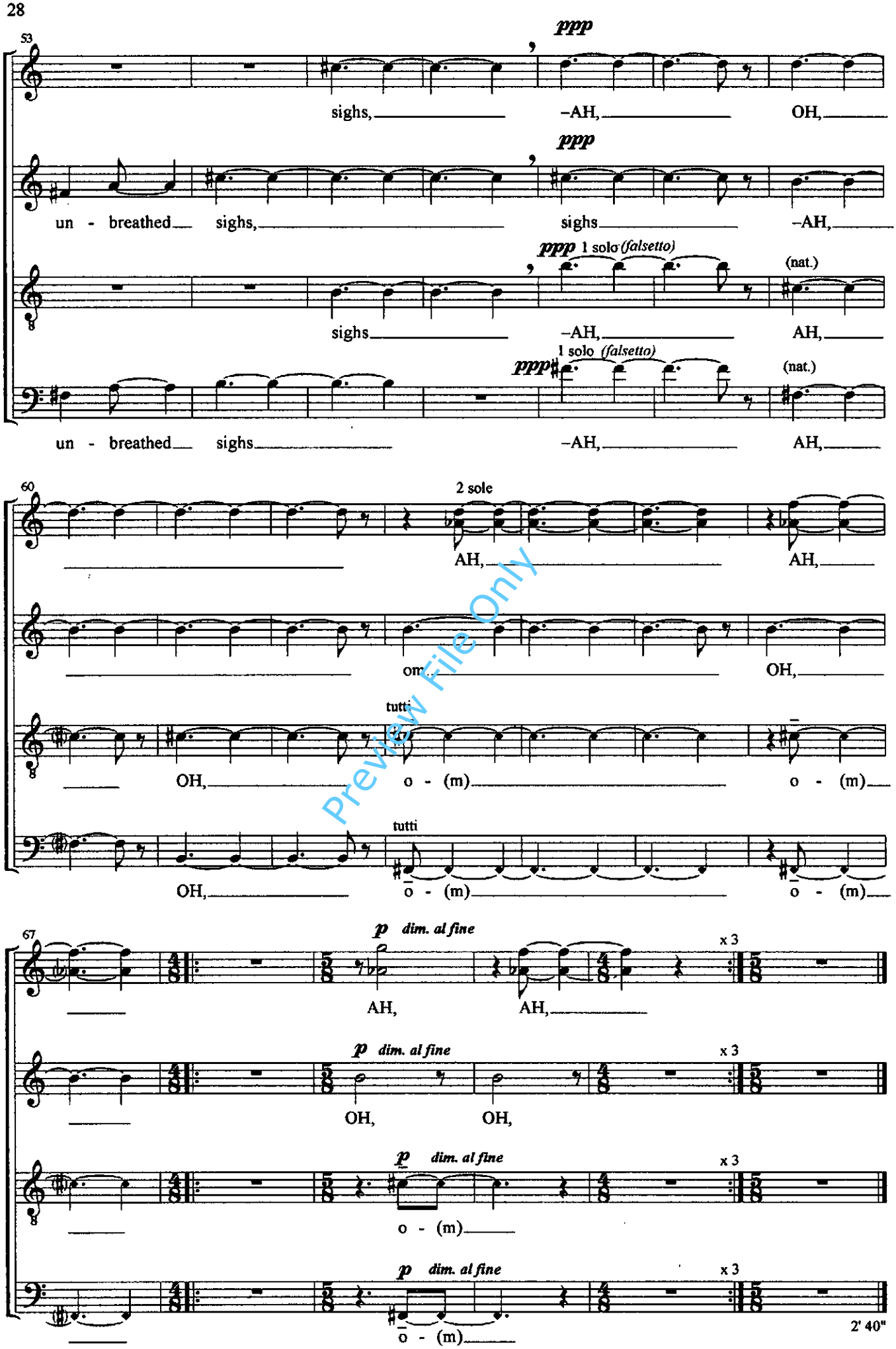


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# 4. Who Are You Phyllis?

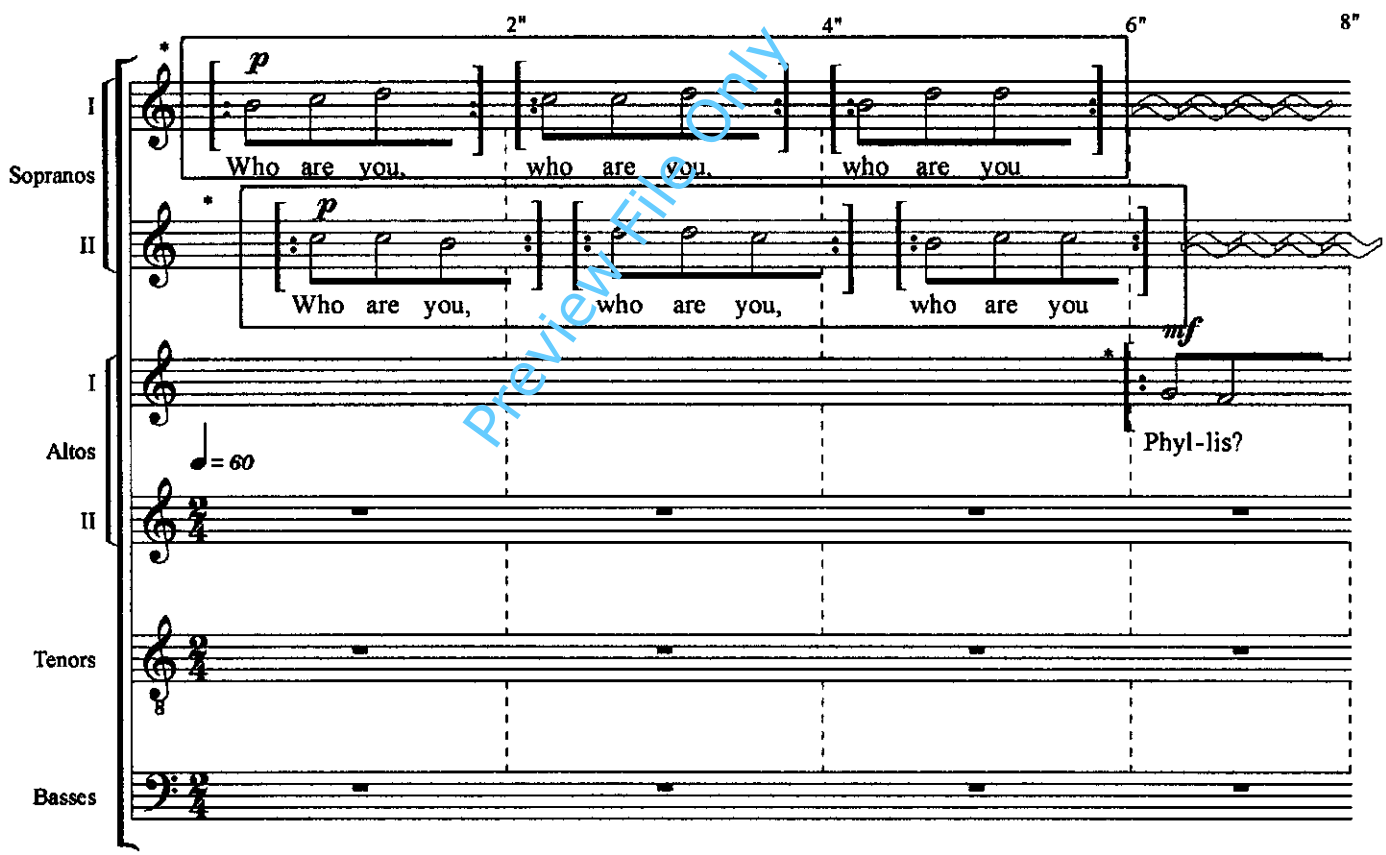
Who are you Phyllis? We know
you inhabit towers

that your bottle is rose and
amethyst and the fruit on your plates

more voluptuous than that between
your lips; the beer you drink is dandelion

or ginger, your china is English
your chamber pot handsome and sturdy.

You are no frail spectre, no captive
no dormant, drowned, dead, sad mermaid.

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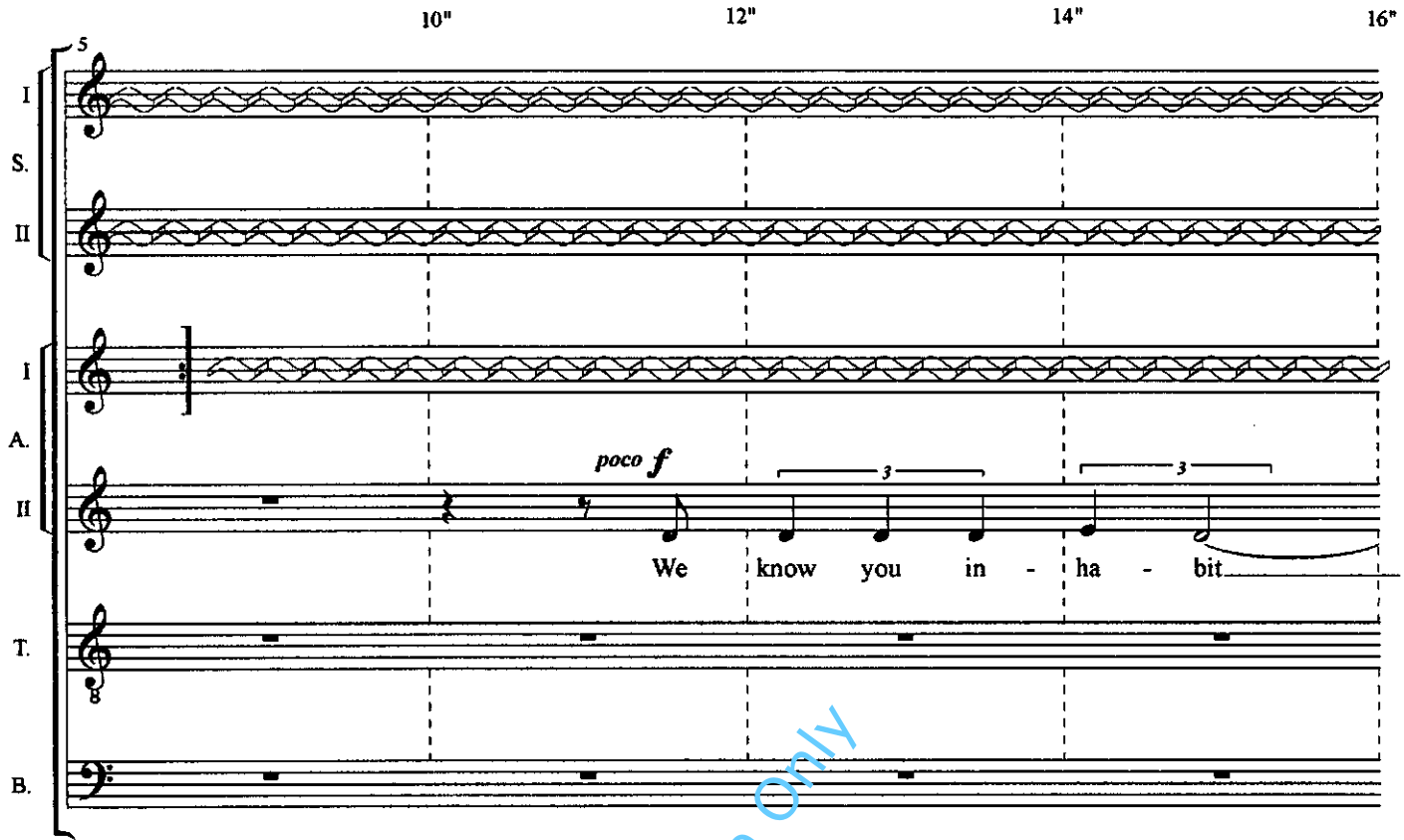
* Proportional notation. The passage of time is indicated above the systems, and the rhythms are approximate. Beamed 'minims' are legato notes sustained for the approximate length indicated. Repeat the phrases within the boxes in any order, each individual singer making her own choices. Continue for as long as the lines of ripples show, breathing at will. Make no attempt at synchronisation.

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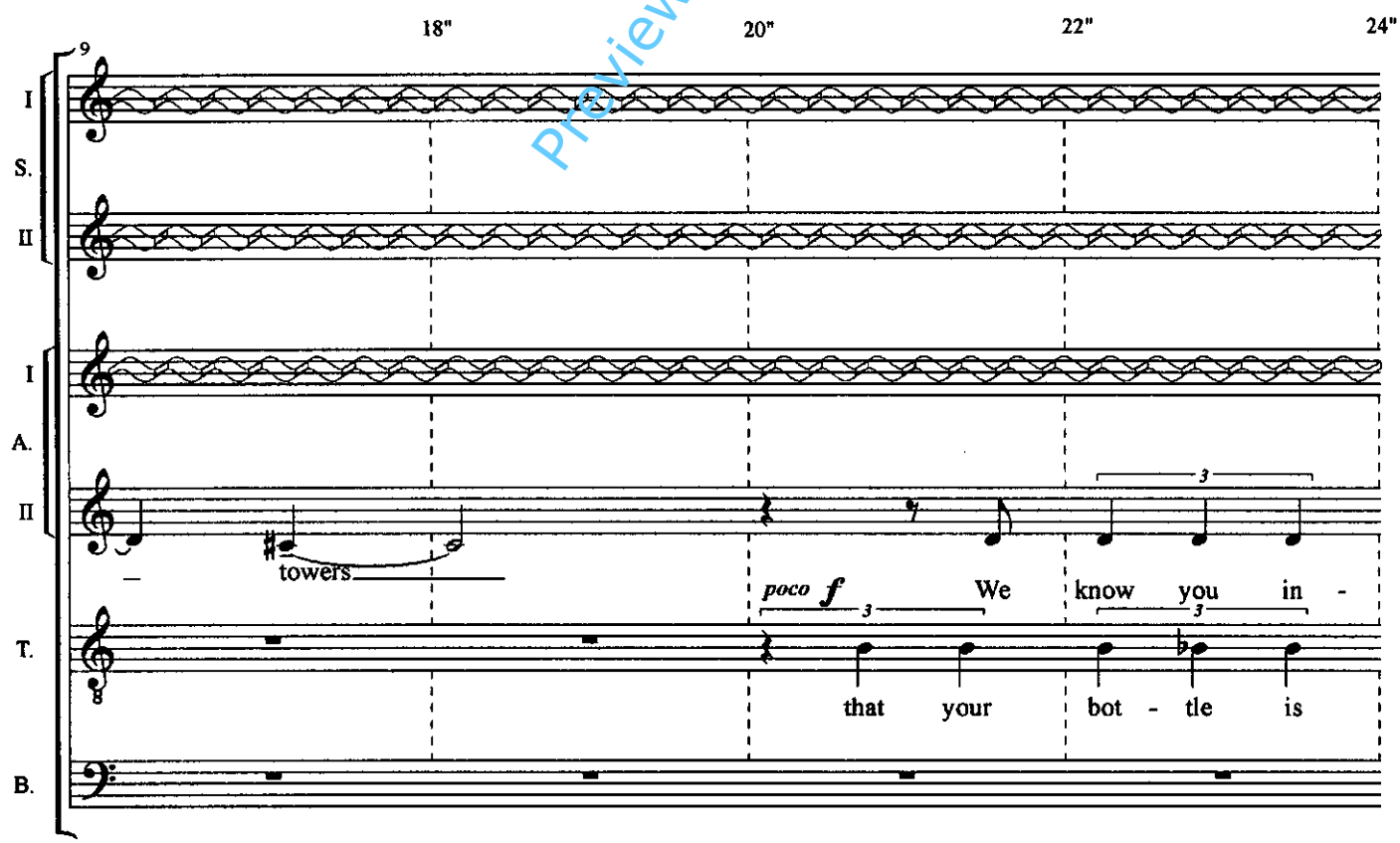

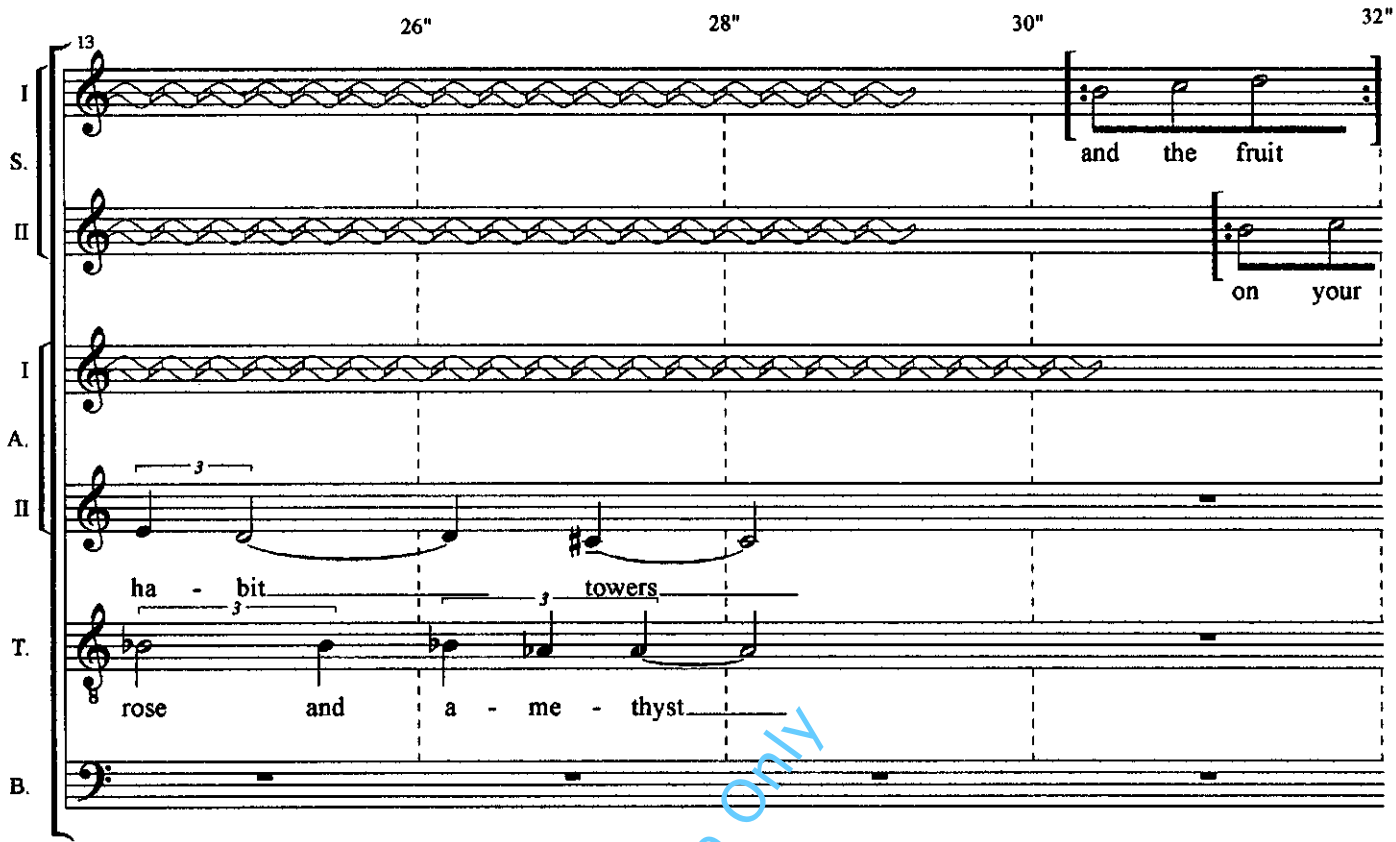


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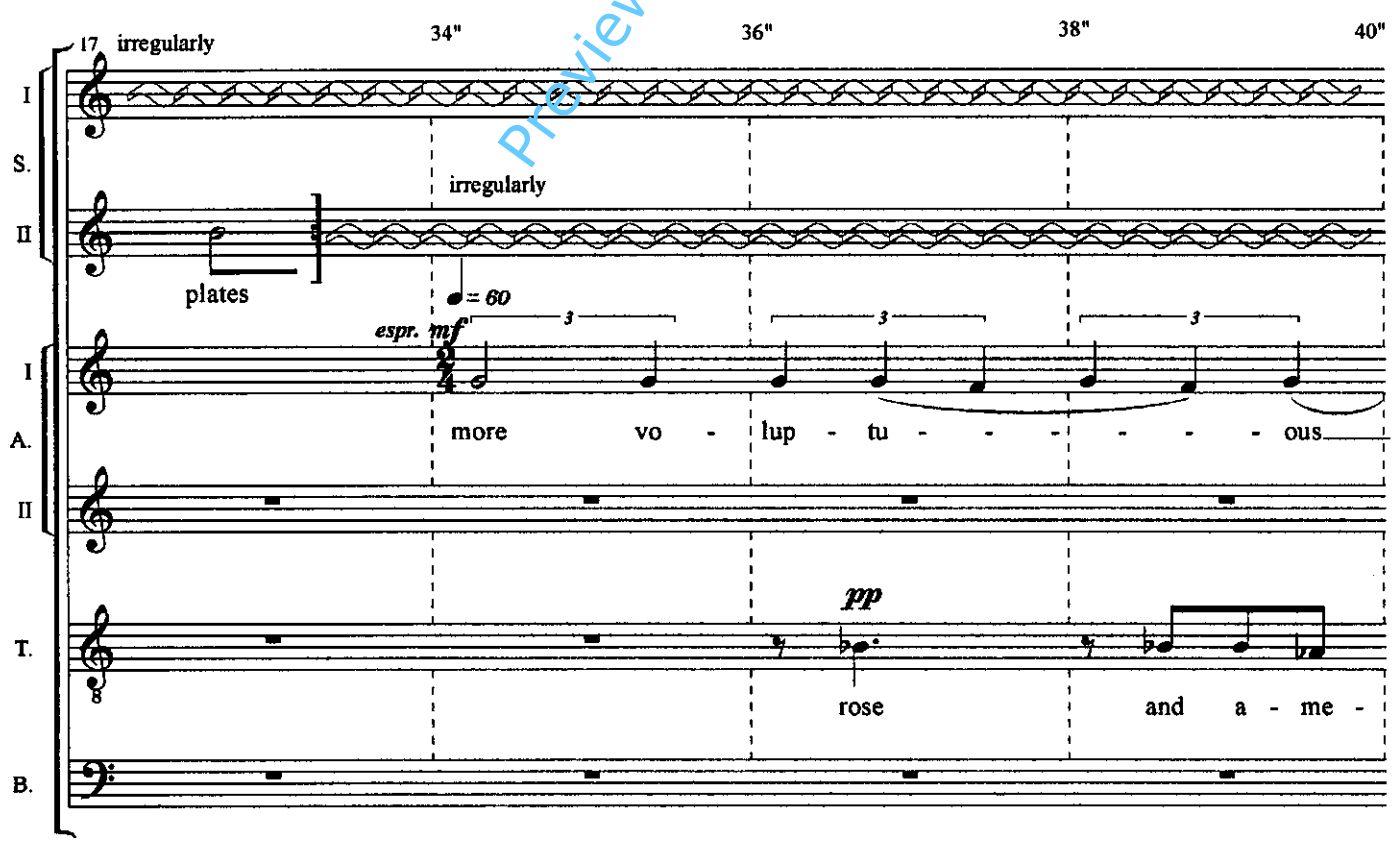

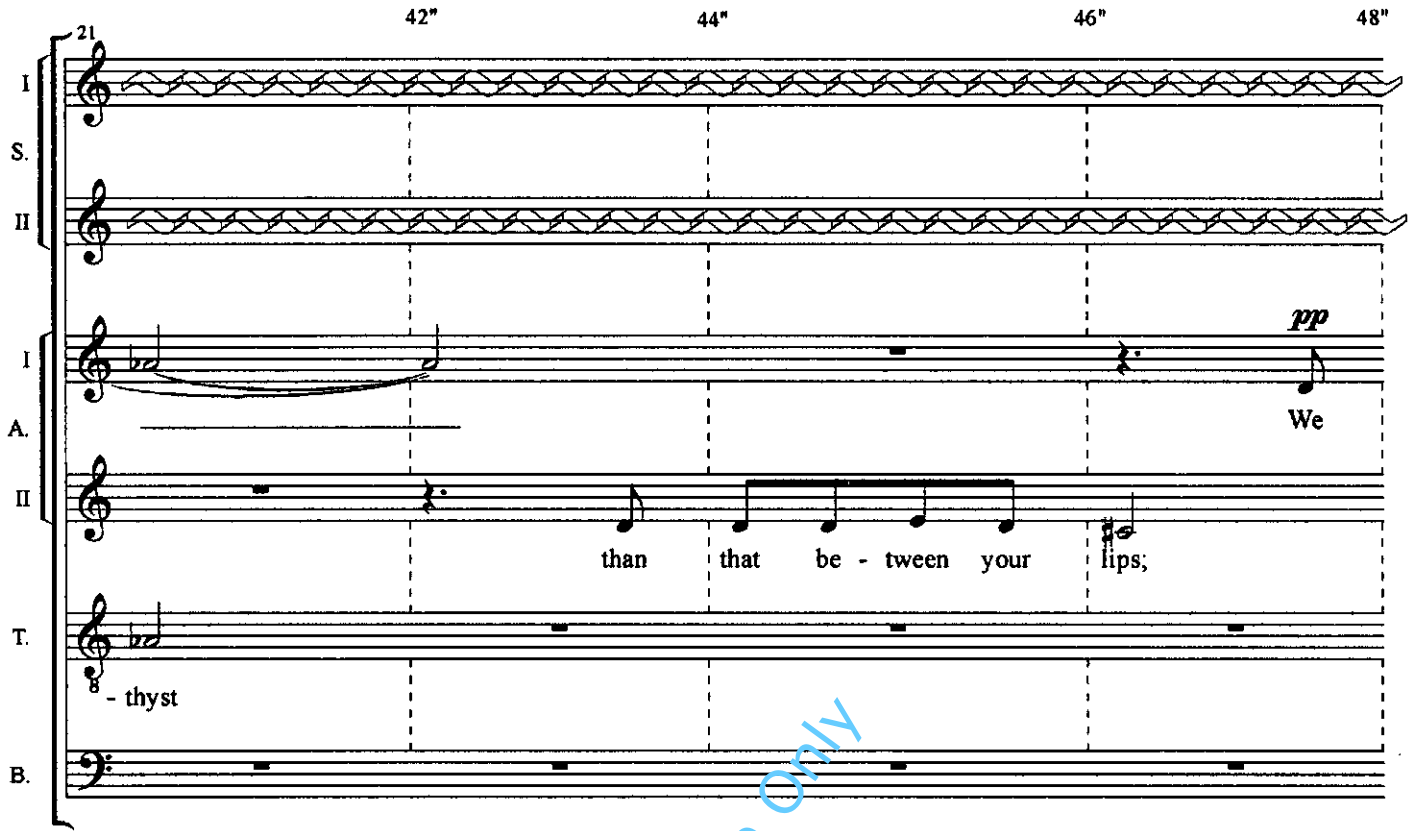


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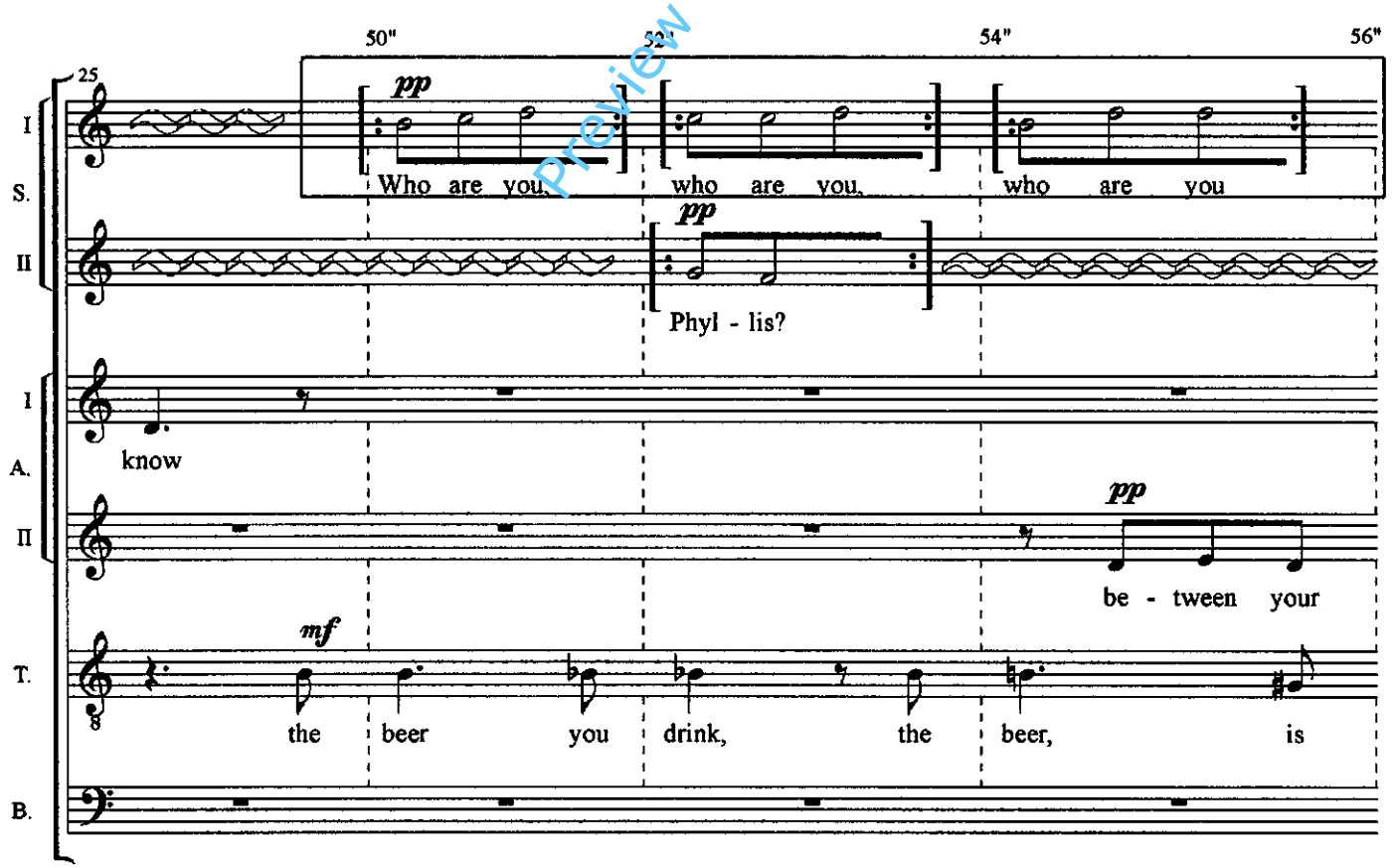

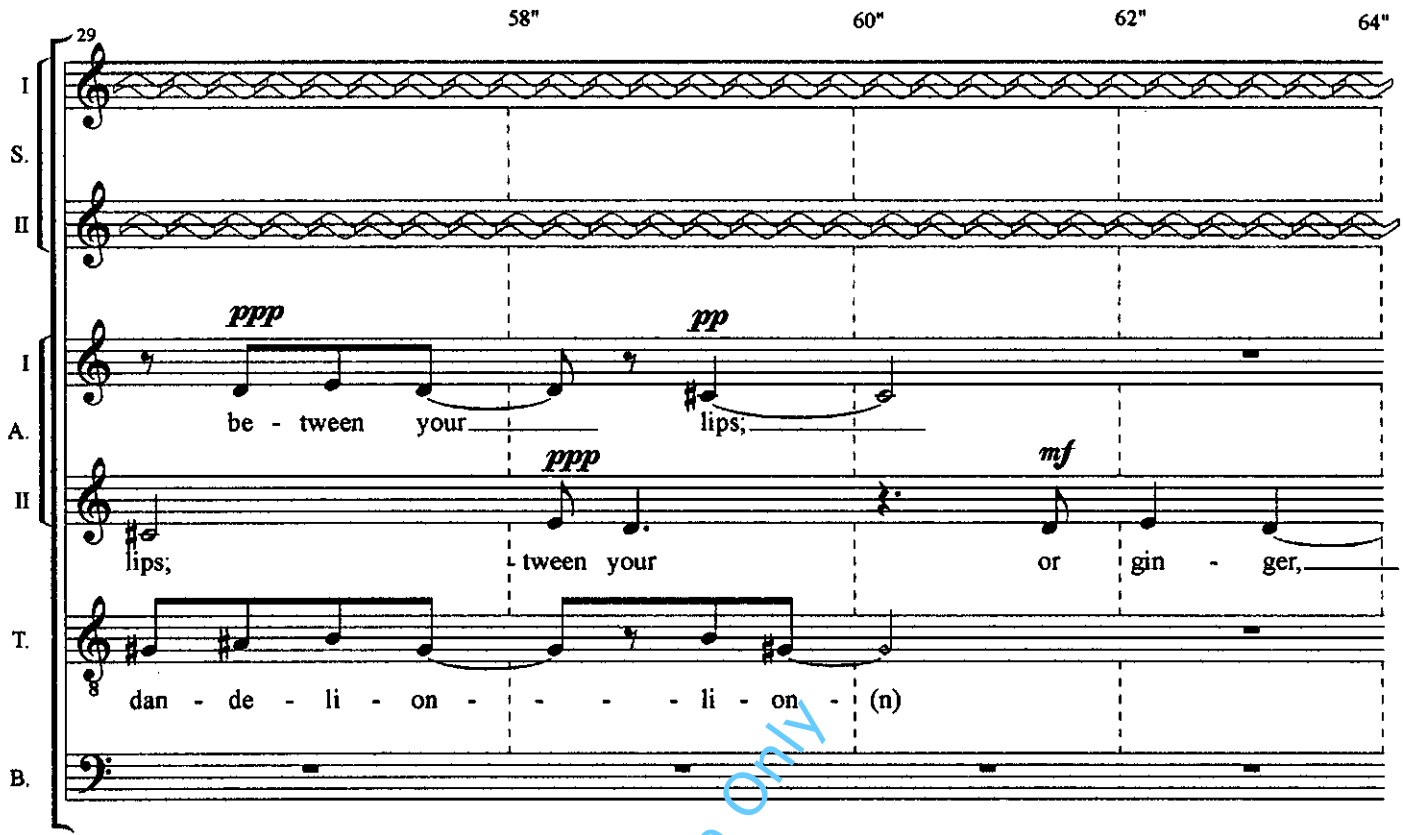


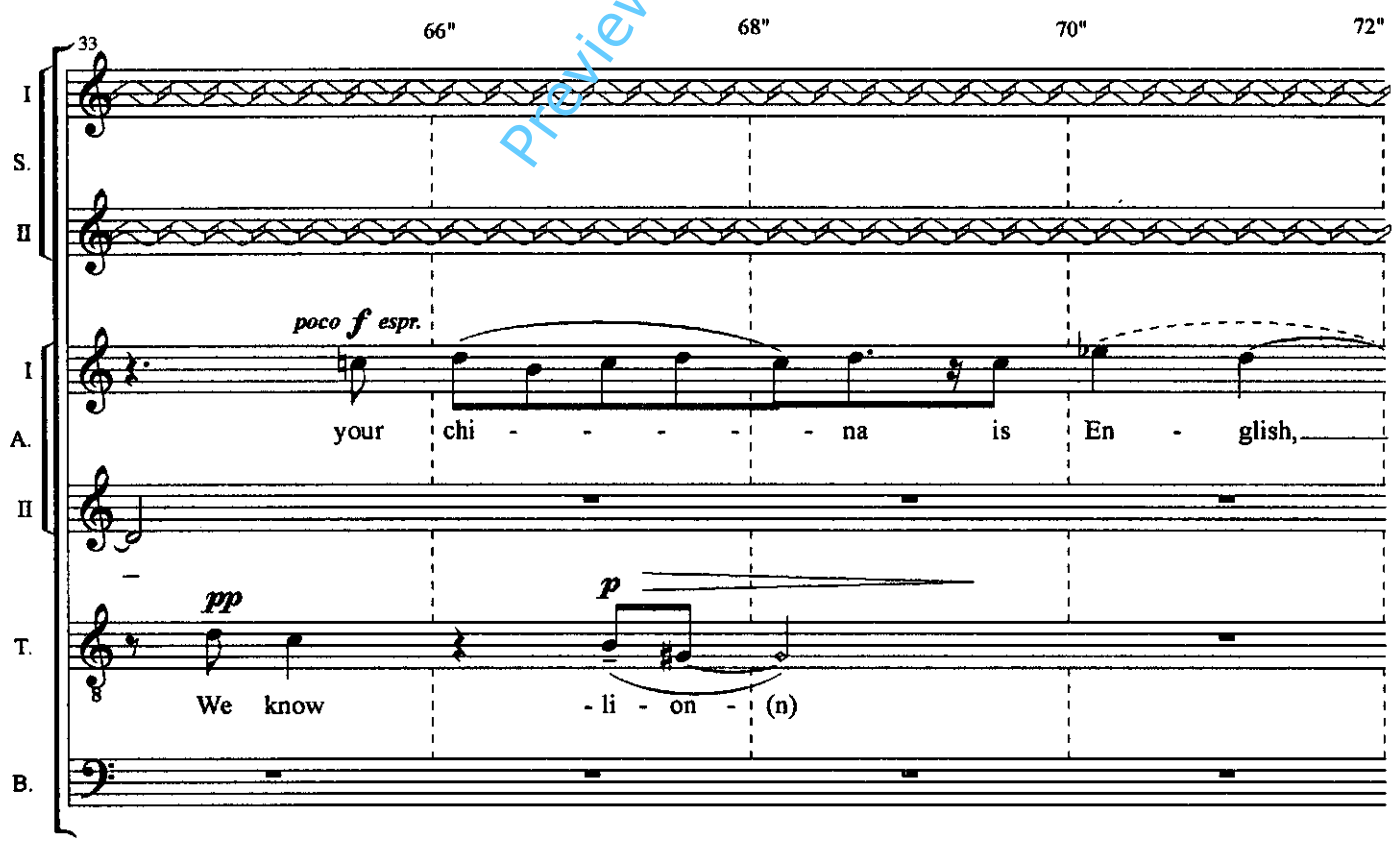


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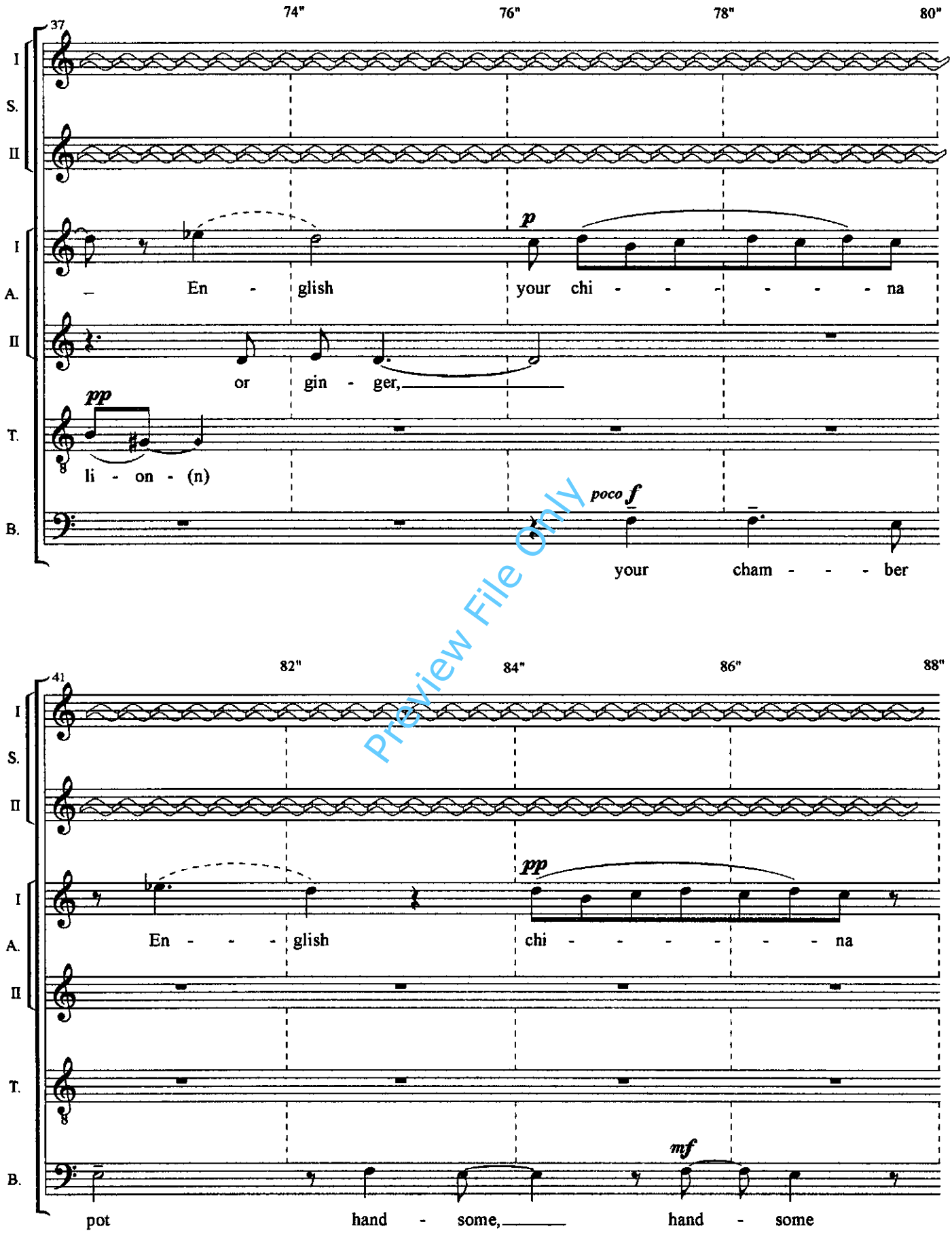





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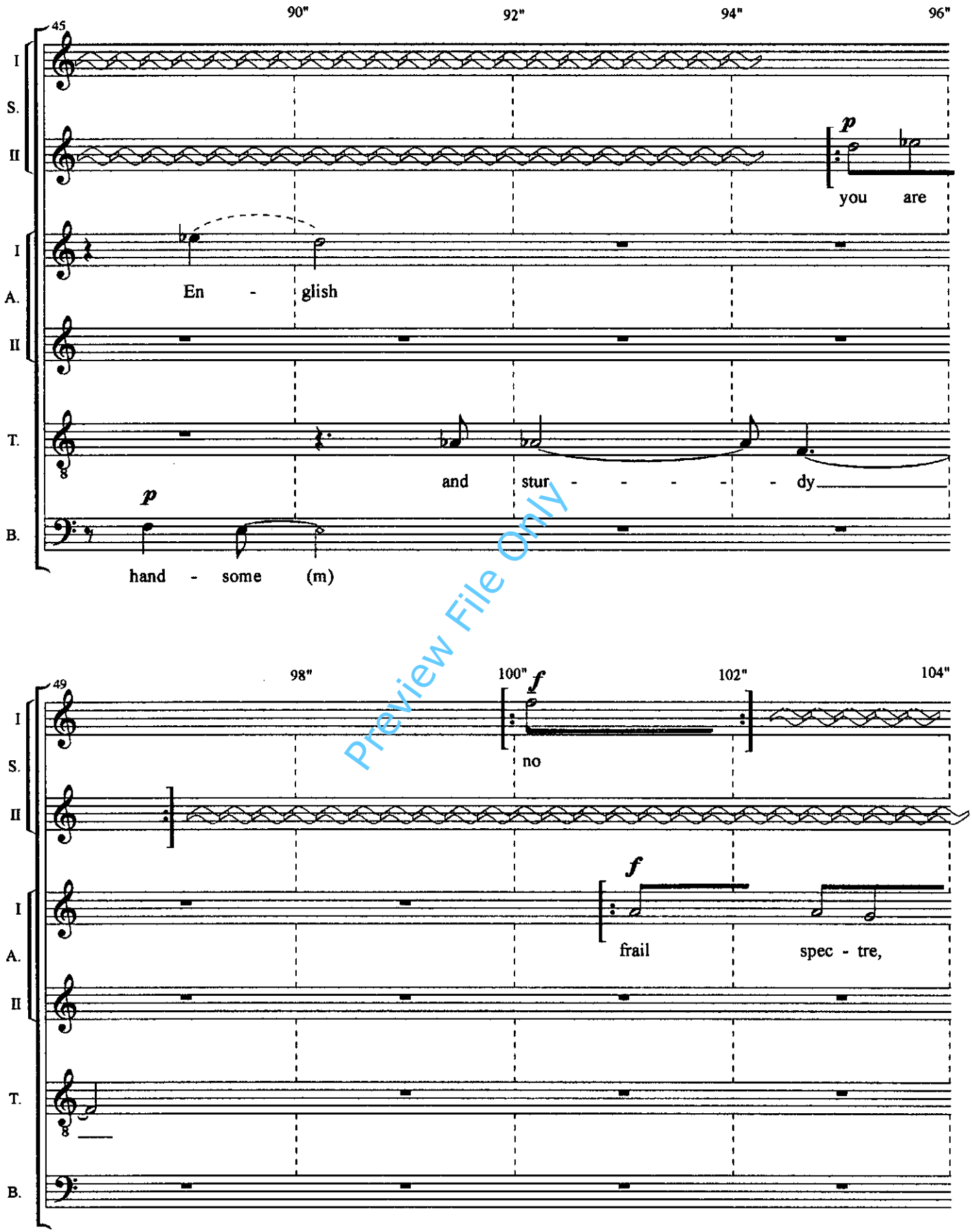


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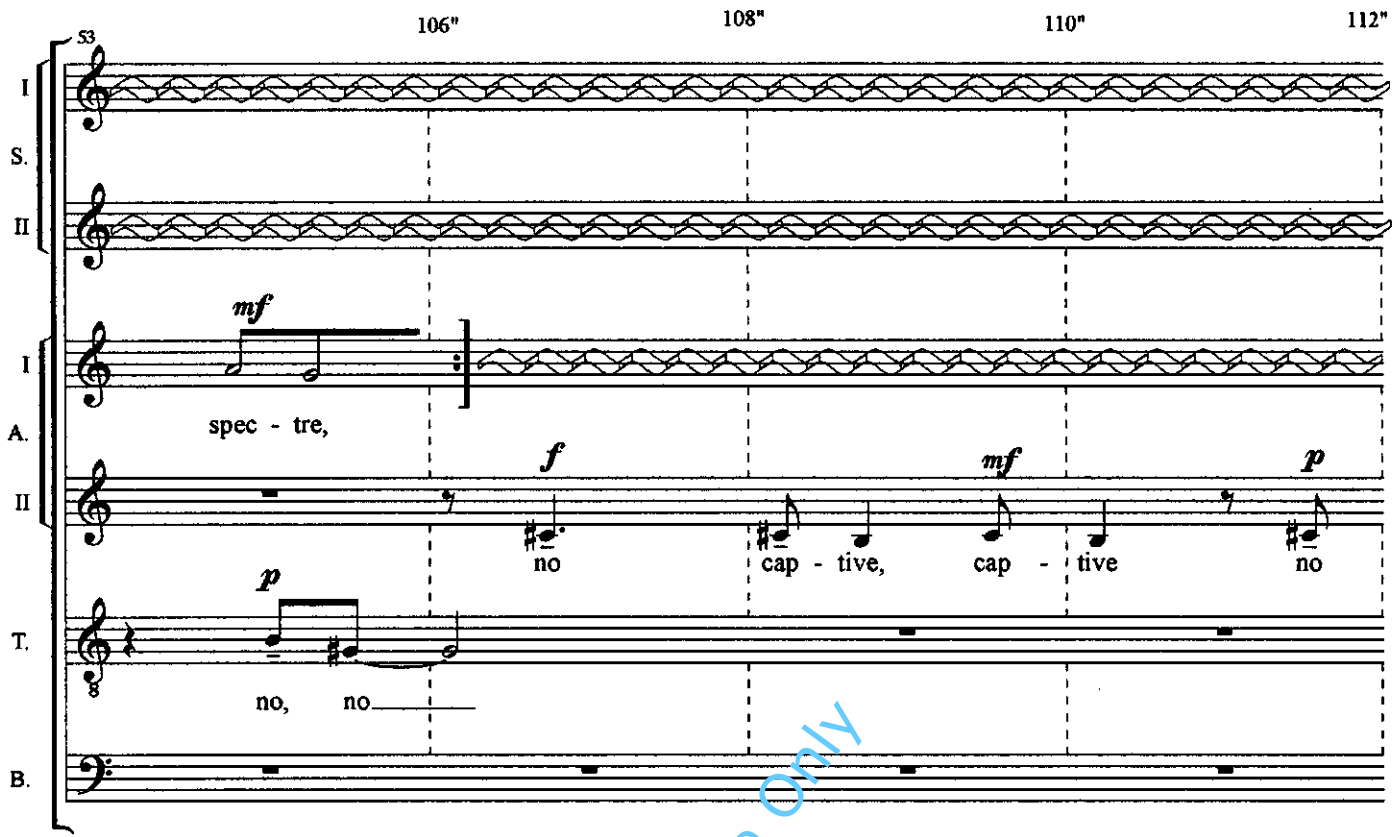


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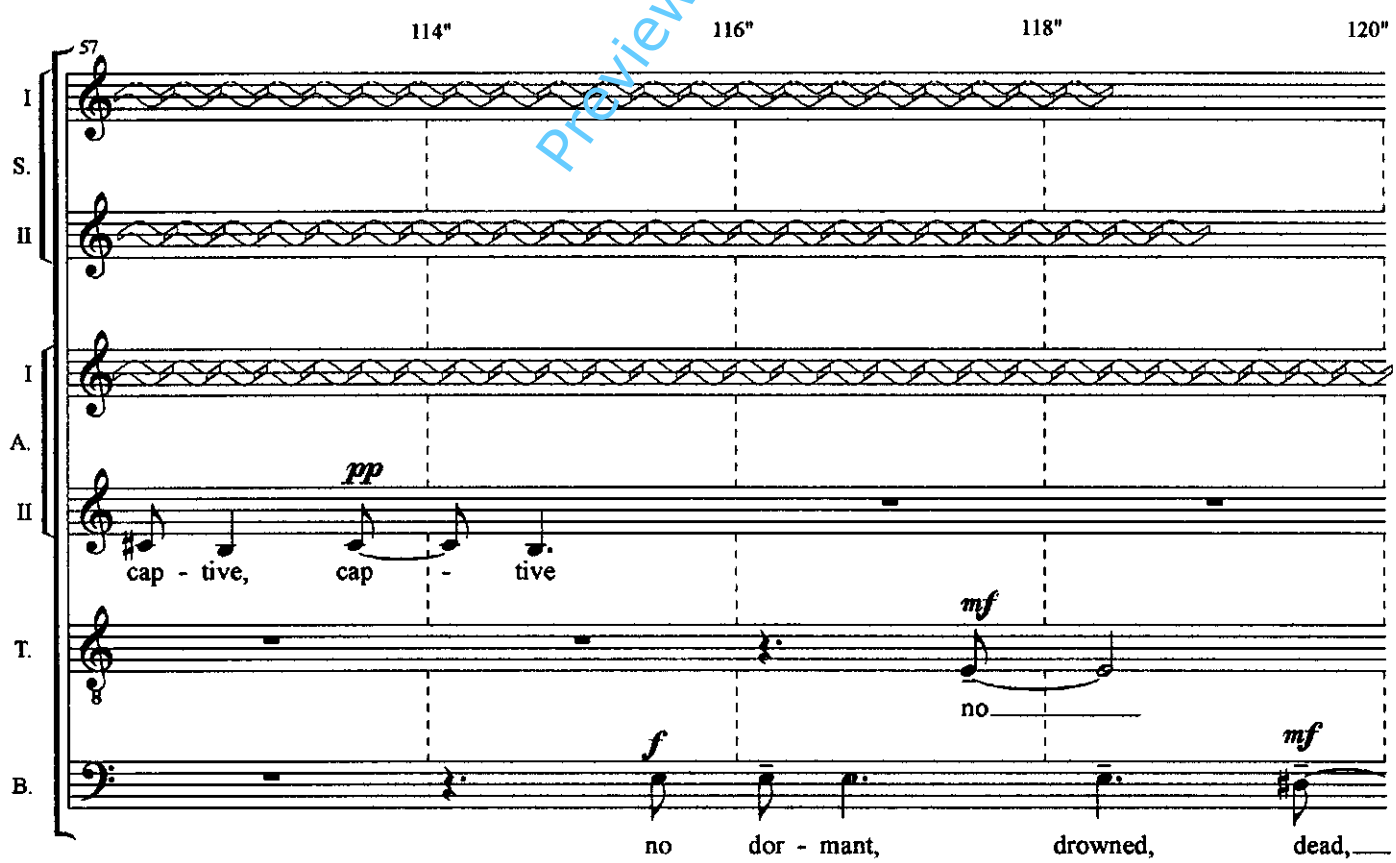

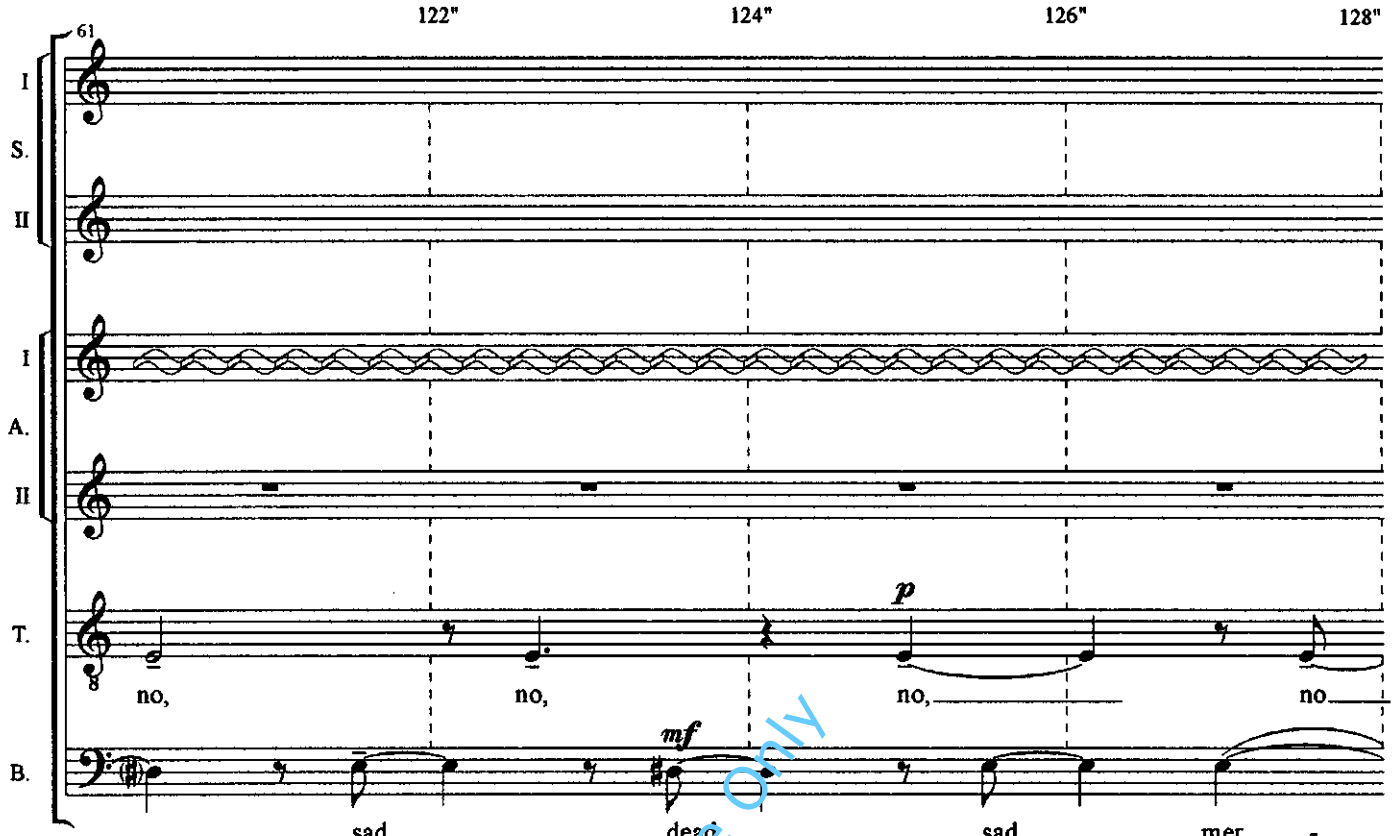


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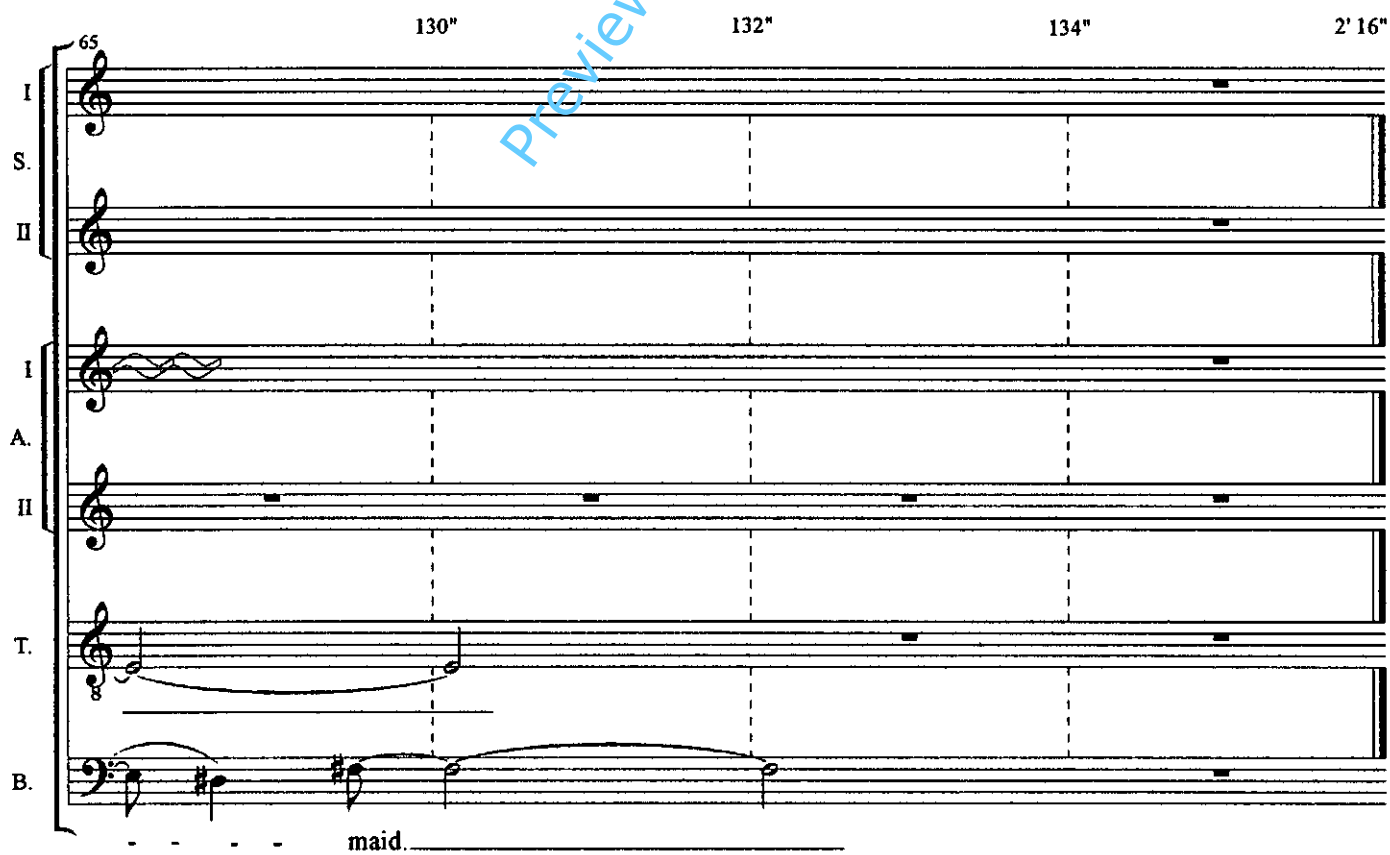
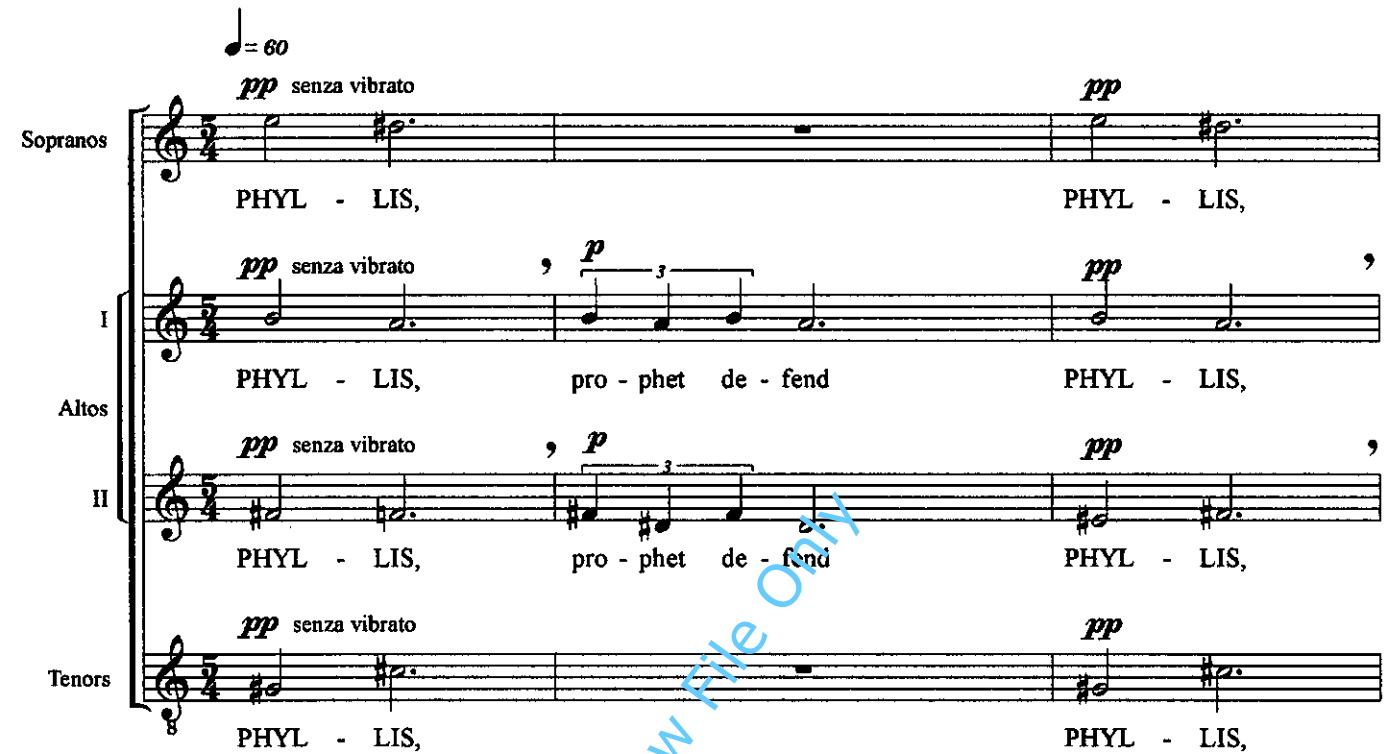


# Spell 4

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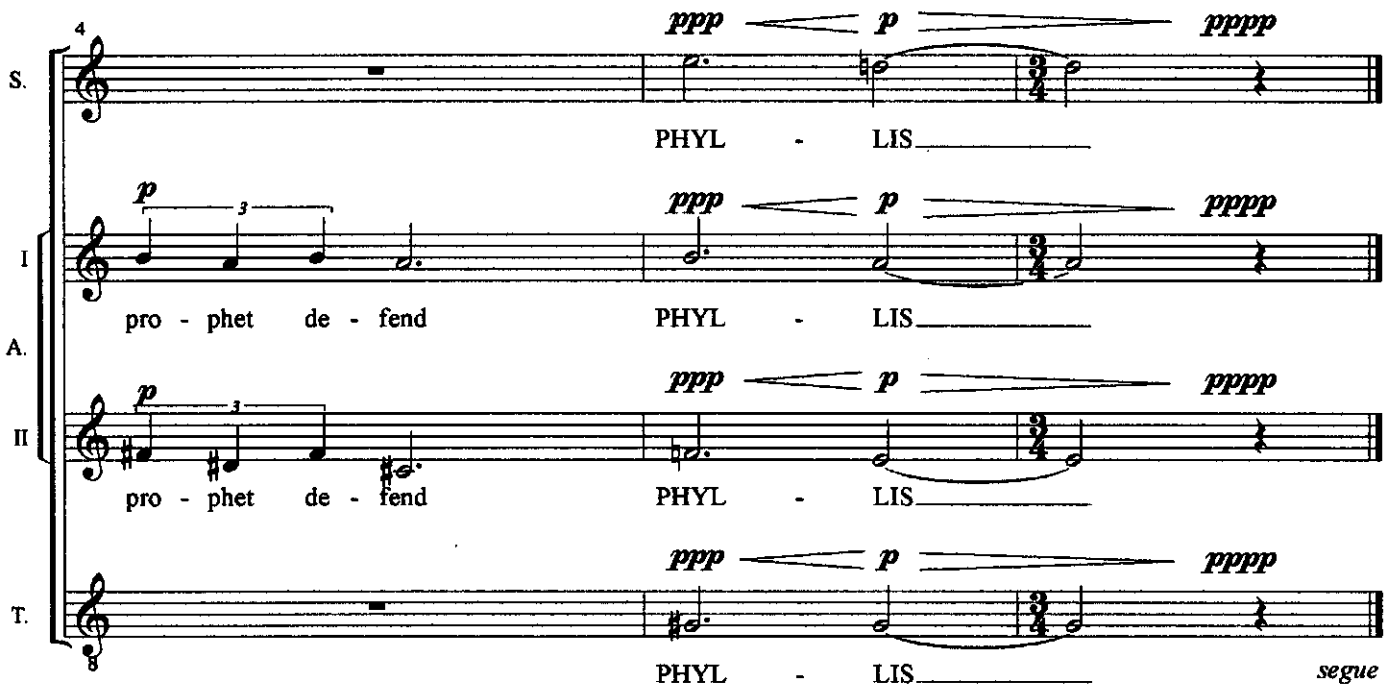


# 5. Sediment

Each segment of the beach mosaic
is a fragment of a separate story.

Time mixes and matches -
sea-level vision and kitchen wisdom;

mussel shell, willow plate fade the same washed blue.
From his boat, the pink standing man wonders

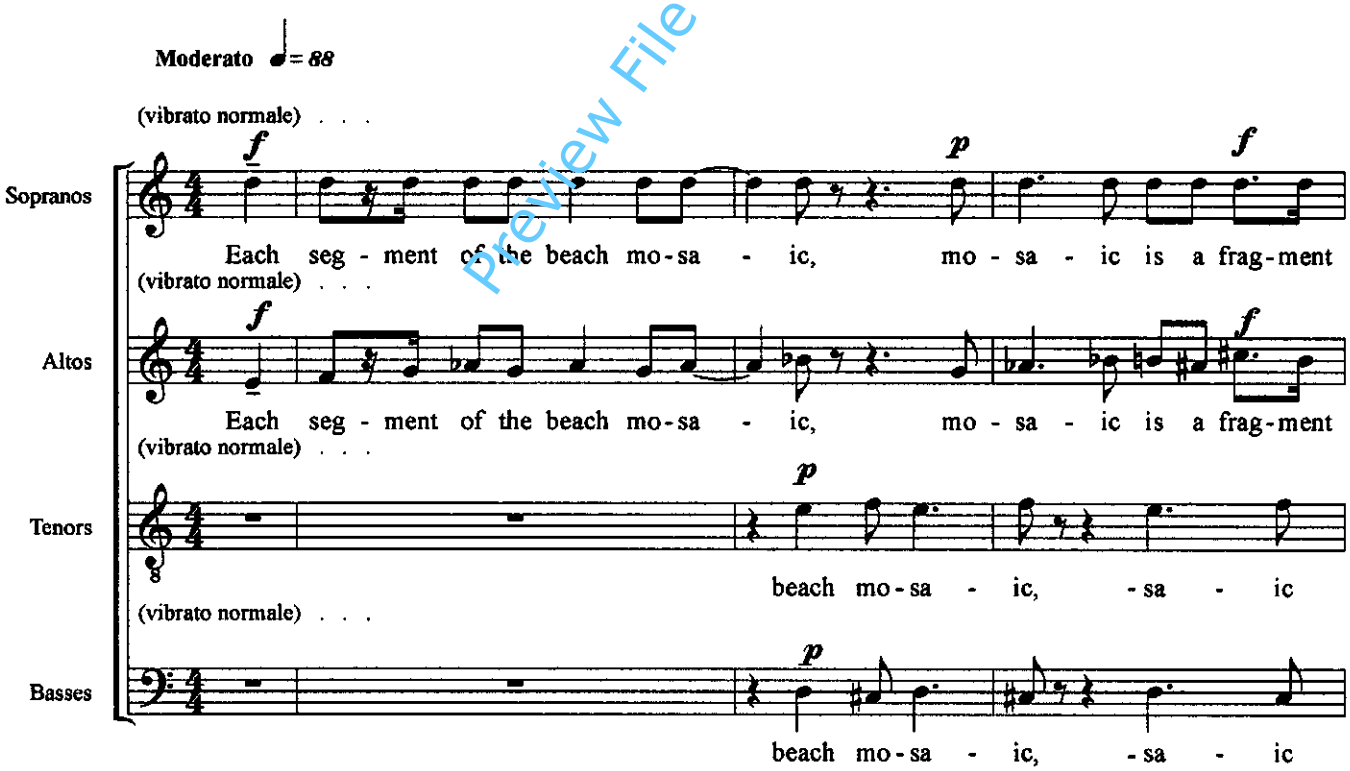
if it is to him the green woman
in the tower behind the trees gazes . . .

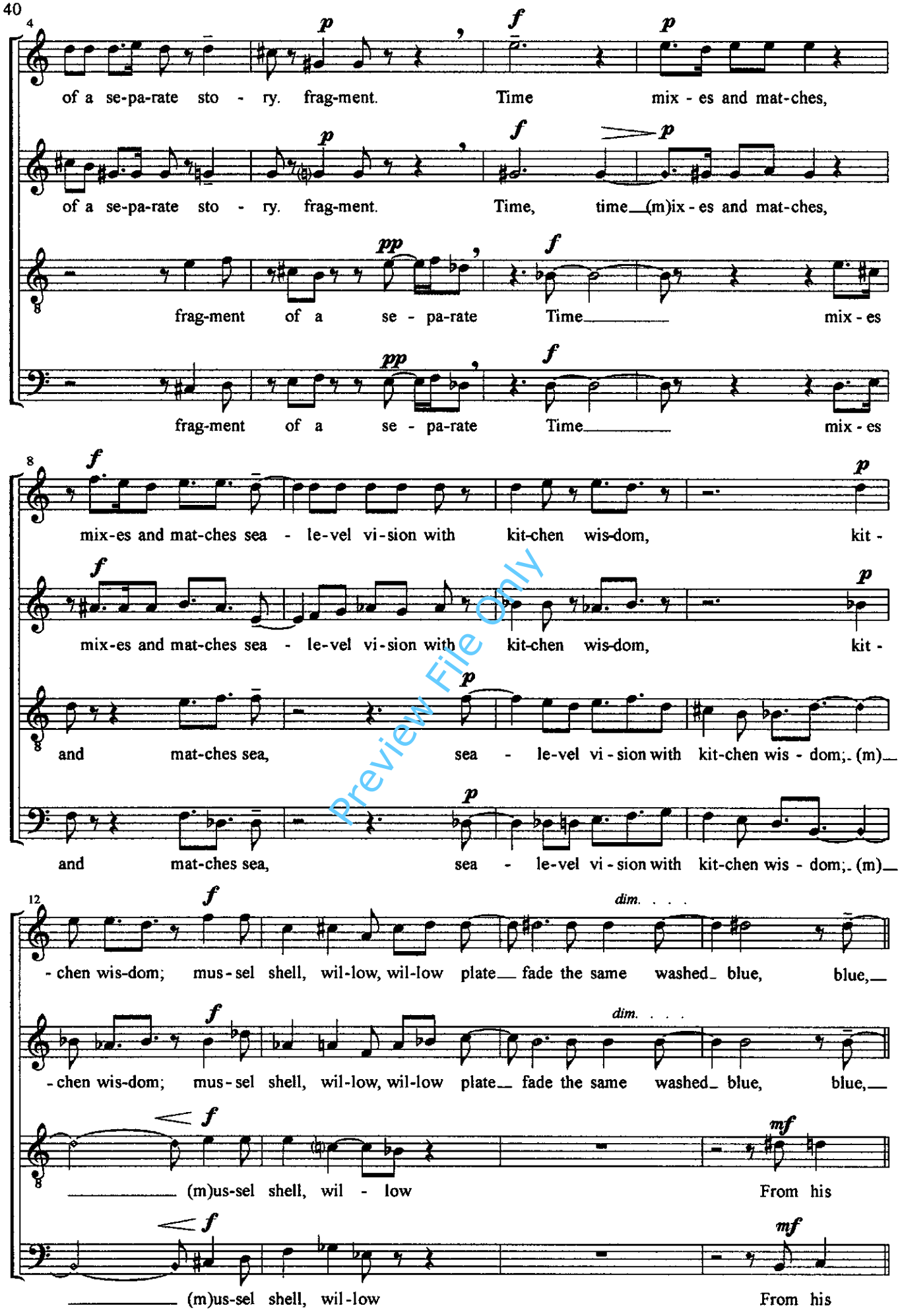
Unlikely, the skylines are wrong
and a fragment of border further along

the sand suggests that the forest is deeper
than he perceives from his shard. Blue gates, bridges,

thresholds to arcane landscapes,
into or out of which, the hindless white horse gallops.

Preview File Only



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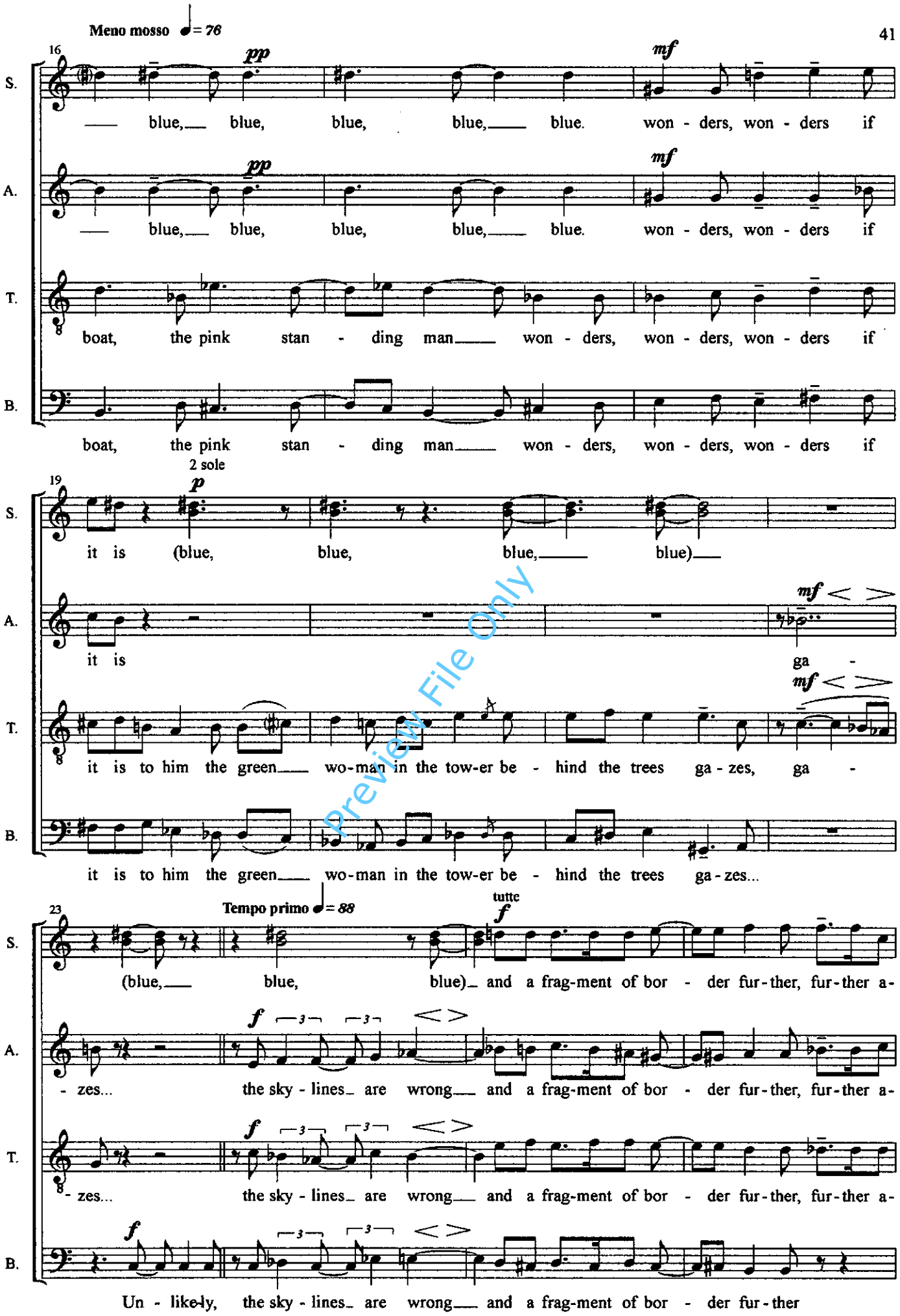

Meno mosso ♩= 76




blue, blue, blue, blue, blue. won - ders, won - ders if



blue, blue, blue, blue, blue. won - ders, won - ders if

boat, the pink stan - ding man won - ders, won - ders, won - ders if

boat, the pink stan - ding man won - ders, won - ders, won - ders if

2 sole


it is (blue, blue, blue, blue)


it is ga -


it is to him the green wo-man in the tow-er be - hind the trees ga - zes, ga -

it is to him the green wo-man in the tow-er be - hind the trees ga - zes...

Tempo primo ♩= 88



(blue, blue, blue) and a frag-ment of bor - der fur-ther, fur-ther a-


- zes... the sky - lines are wrong and a frag-ment of bor - der fur-ther, fur-ther a-


- zes... the sky - lines are wrong and a frag-ment of bor - der fur-ther, fur-ther a-


Un - like-ly, the sky - lines are wrong and a frag-ment of bor - der fur-ther

Preview File Only

27

S. - long the sand sug - gests that the fo-rest is dee-per than he per-ceives from his

A. - long the sand sug - gests that the fo - rest is dee-per, dee-per than he per-ceives from his

T. - long the sand sug-gests that the fo-rest is dee-per than he per-ceives from his

B. deep, dee-per

♩ = 60

Molto meno mosso

31

S. shard. Blue brid-ges, thresh-olds to ar-cane land-scapes, in - to or out of which,

A. shard. Blue, blue, blue, blue

T. shard. Blue gates, blue, blue, blue

B. Blue gates, brid-ges, ar-cane land-scapes, in - to or out of which,

35

S. the hind-less white horse gal-lops, gal-lops, gal-lops, gal-lops, gal-lops.

A. out of which, out of which, gal-lops, gal-lops, gal-lops, gal-lops, gal-lops.

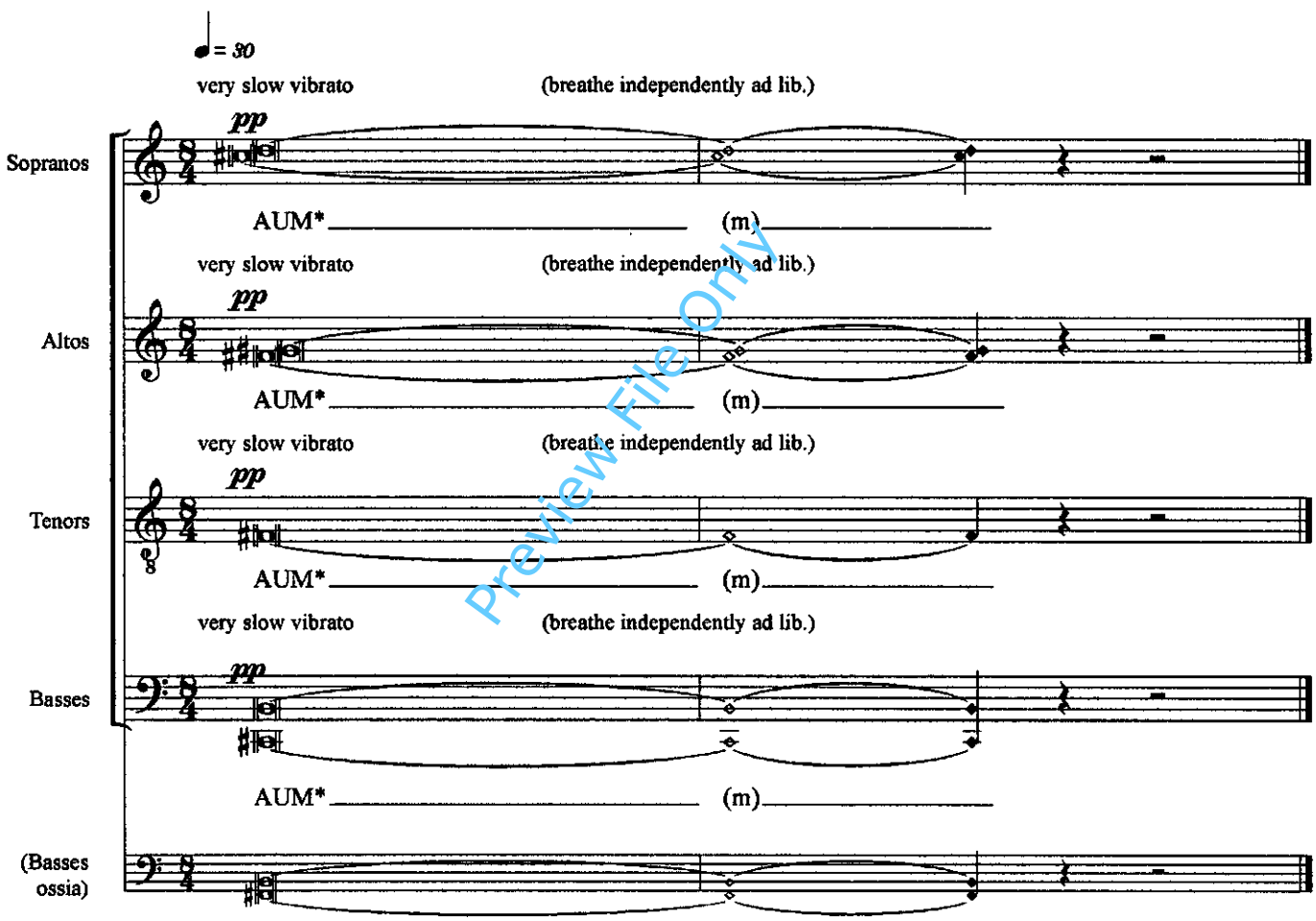
T. out of which, out of which, gal-lops, gal-lops, gal-lops, gal-lops, gal -

B. the hind-less white horse gal-lops, gal-lops, gal-lops, gal-lops, gal -

2' 0"

Preview File Only

# Spell 5




Preview File Only

* Slowly change vowel colour ad lib from A to U then *bocca chiusa.*

Total duration: 16 - 18'