Hymn to St. Cecilia

Opus 27 for S.S.A.T.B
Extract (Part 1, " Tranquillo e commodo ")

Words by W. H. Auden

Benjamin Britten
1913 - 1976

in a garden shady this holy lady
With rev'rent cadence and subtle psalm,
Like a black swan as death came on
Poured forth her song in perfect calm:
And by ocean's margin this innocent virgin
Construced an organ to enlarge her prayer,
And notes tremendous from her great engine
Thunder'd out on the Roman air.

Blonde Aphrodite rose up excited,
Moved to delight by the melody,
White as an orchid she rode quite naked;
In an oyster shell on top of the sea;
At sounds so entrancing the angels dancing
Came out of their trance into time again,
And around the wicked in Hell' abysses
The huge flame flicker'd and eas'd their pain,

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Blessed Cecilia, appear in visions
To all musicians, appear and inspire:
Translated Daughter, come down and startle
Composing mortals with immortal fire.

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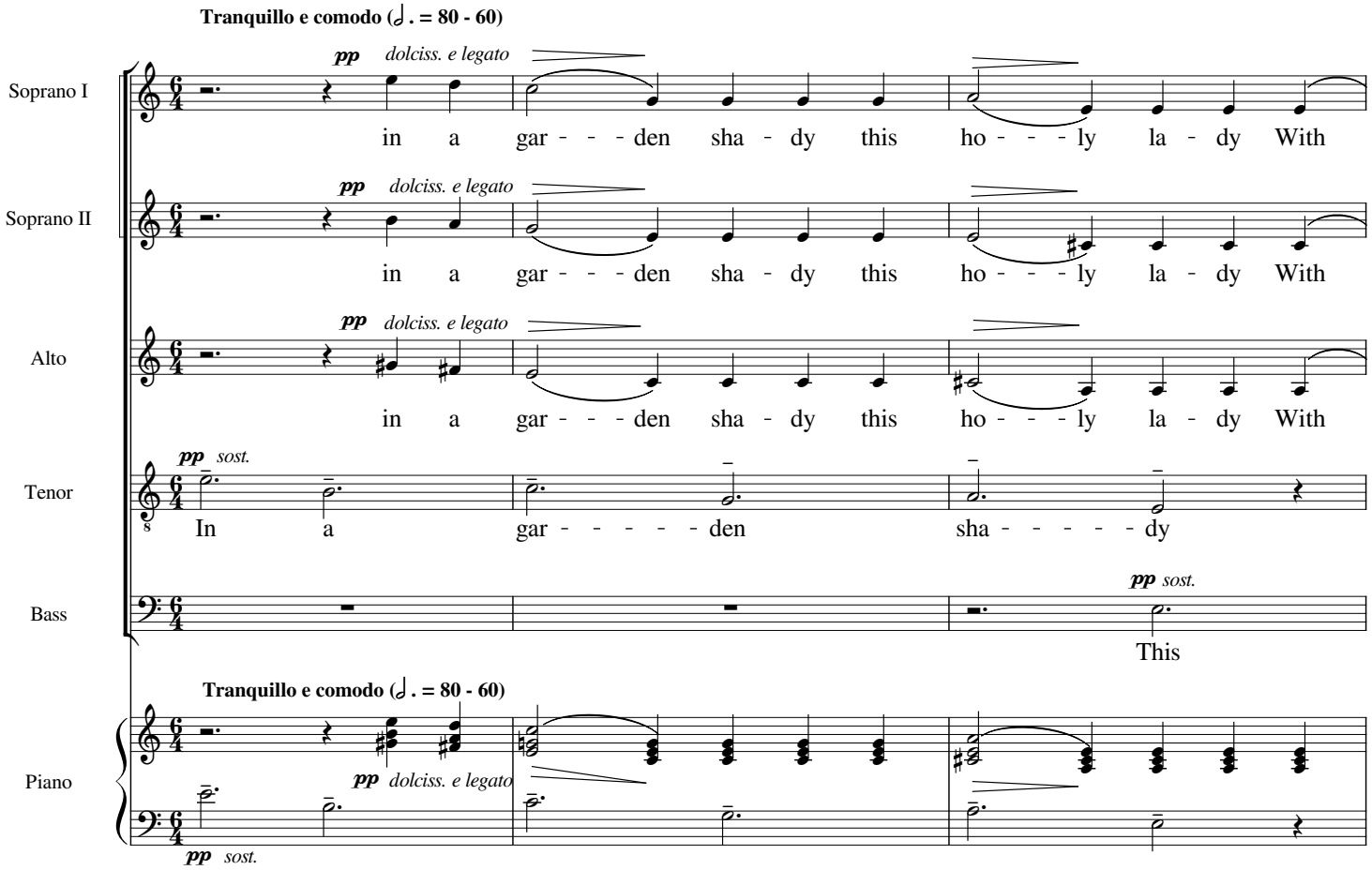

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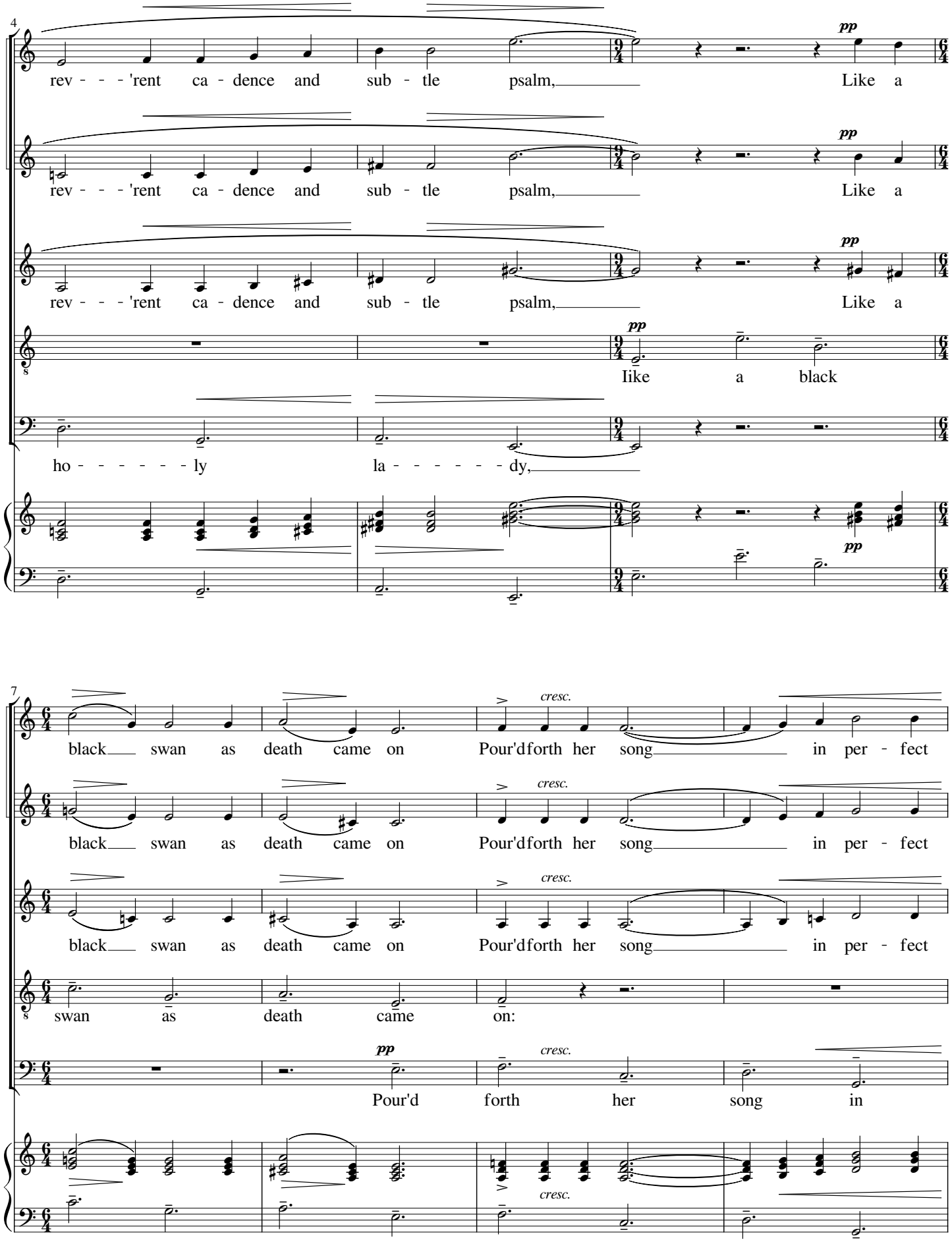
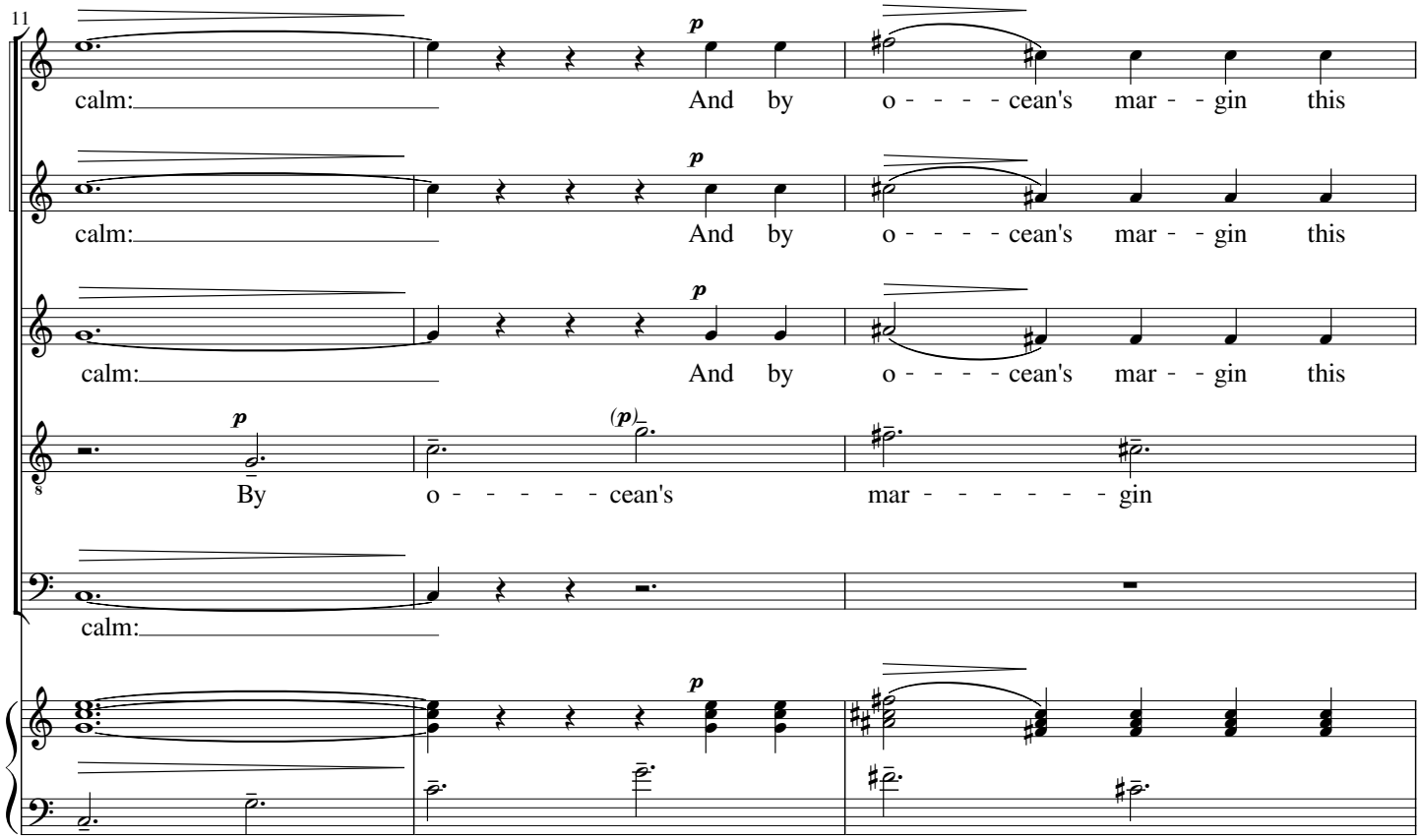
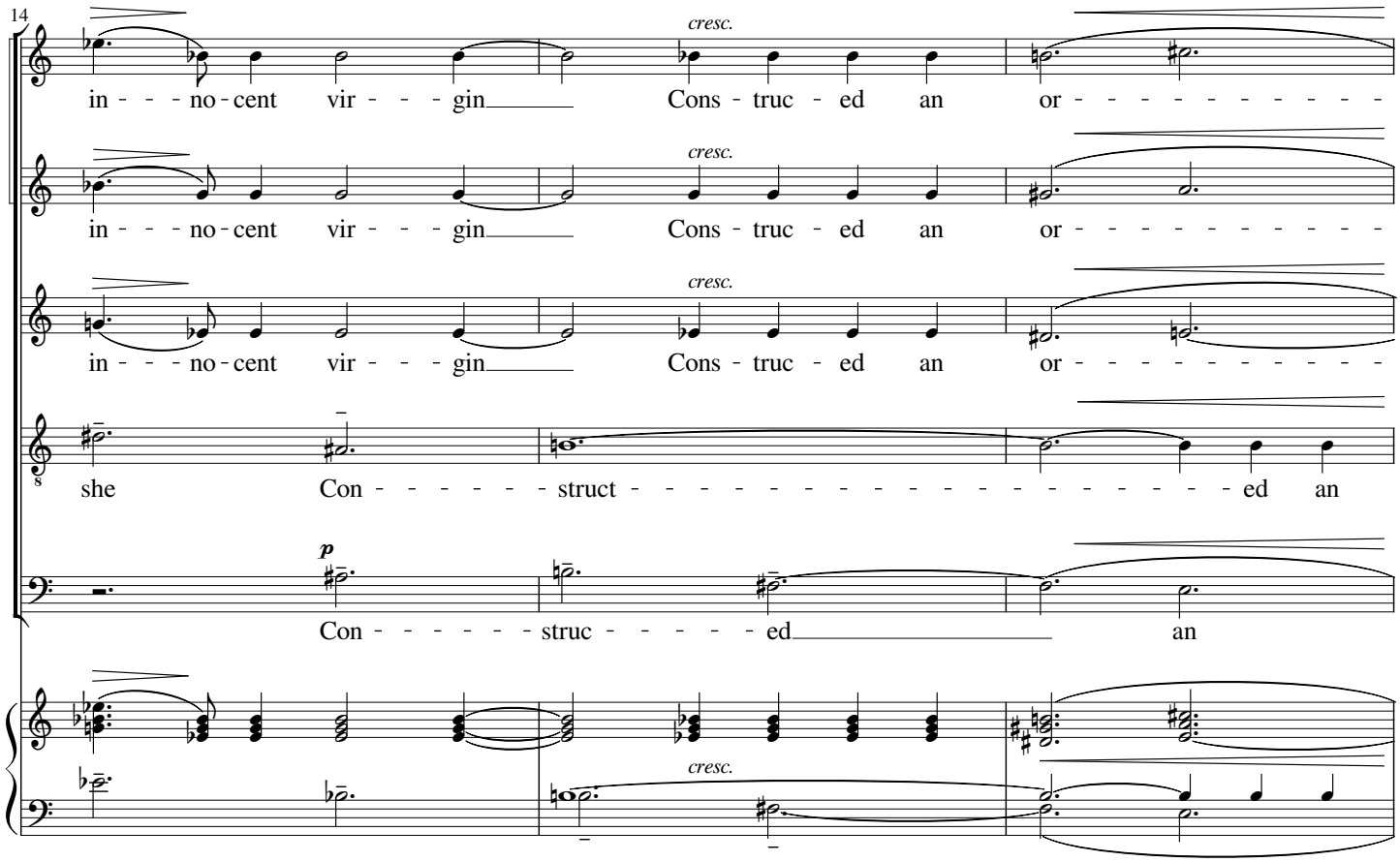

4
rev - - - 'rent ca - dence and sub - tle psalm, Like a
rev - - - 'rent ca - dence and sub - tle psalm, Like a
rev - - - 'rent ca - dence and sub - tle psalm, Like a
Iike a black
ho - - - - - - ly la - - - - - - dy,
pp
7
black swan as death came on Pour'd forth her song in per - fect
black swan as death came on Pour'd forth her song in per - fect
black swan as death came on Pour'd forth her song in per - fect
swan as death came on:
Pour'd forth her song in
cresc.


11
calm: And by o - - - - cean's mar - - gin this
calm: And by o - - - - cean's mar - - gin this
calm: And by o - - - - cean's mar - - gin this
By o - - - - - cean's mar - - - - - - gin
calm:


14
cresc.
in - - - no - cent vir - - - gin Cons - truc - ed an or - - - - - - - - - - -
cresc.
in - - - no - cent vir - - - gin Cons - truc - ed an or - - - - - - - - - - -
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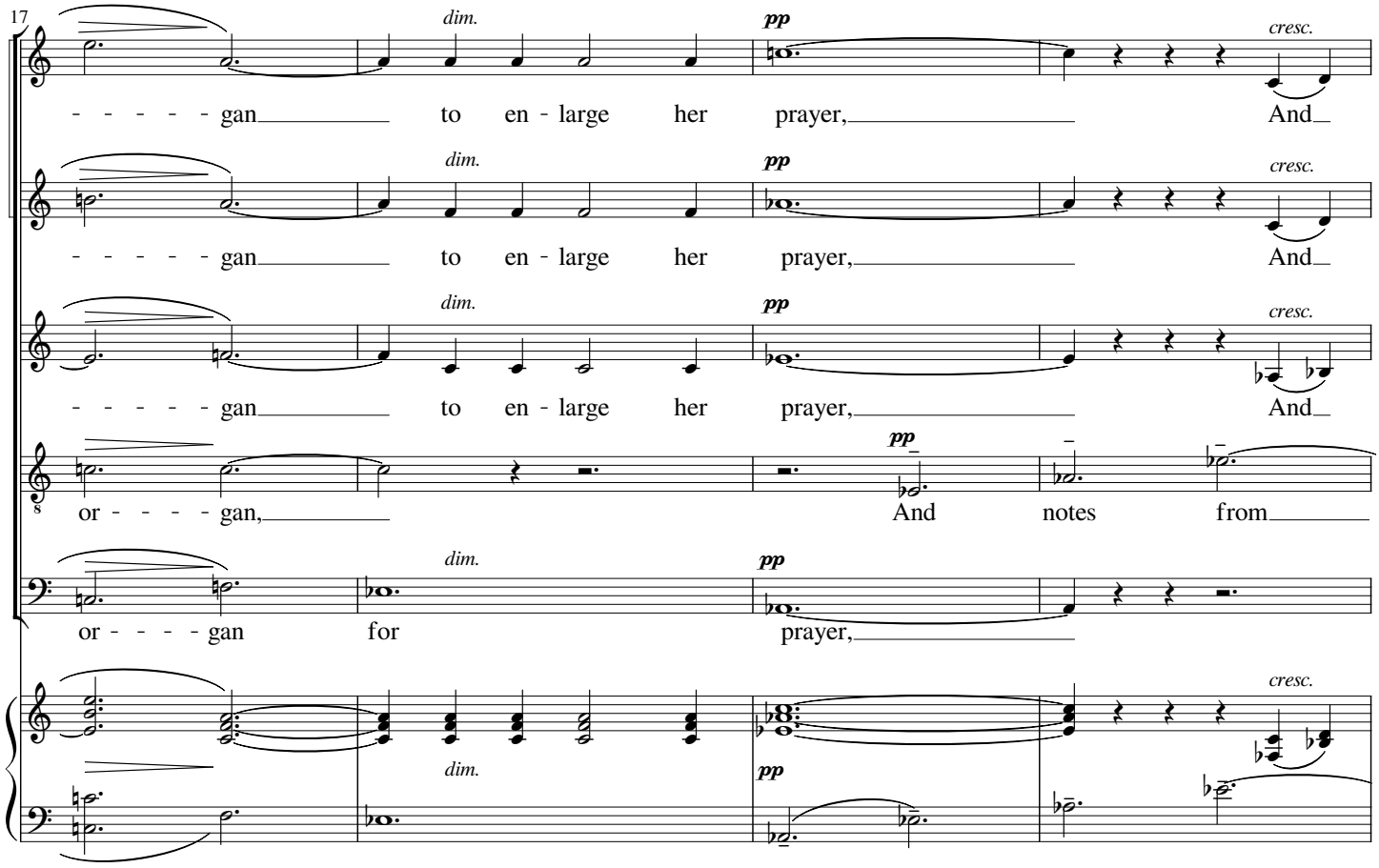
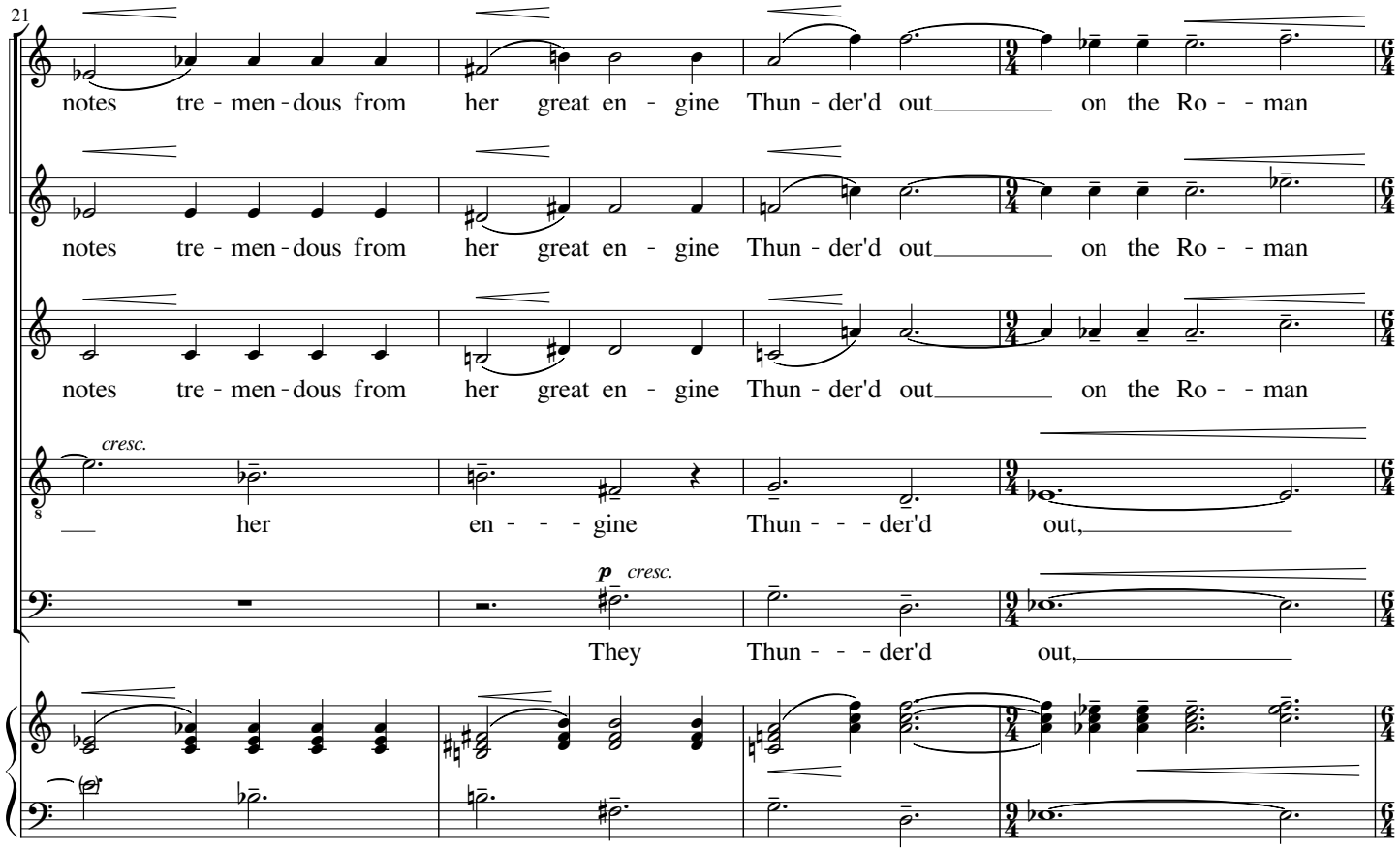
cresc.





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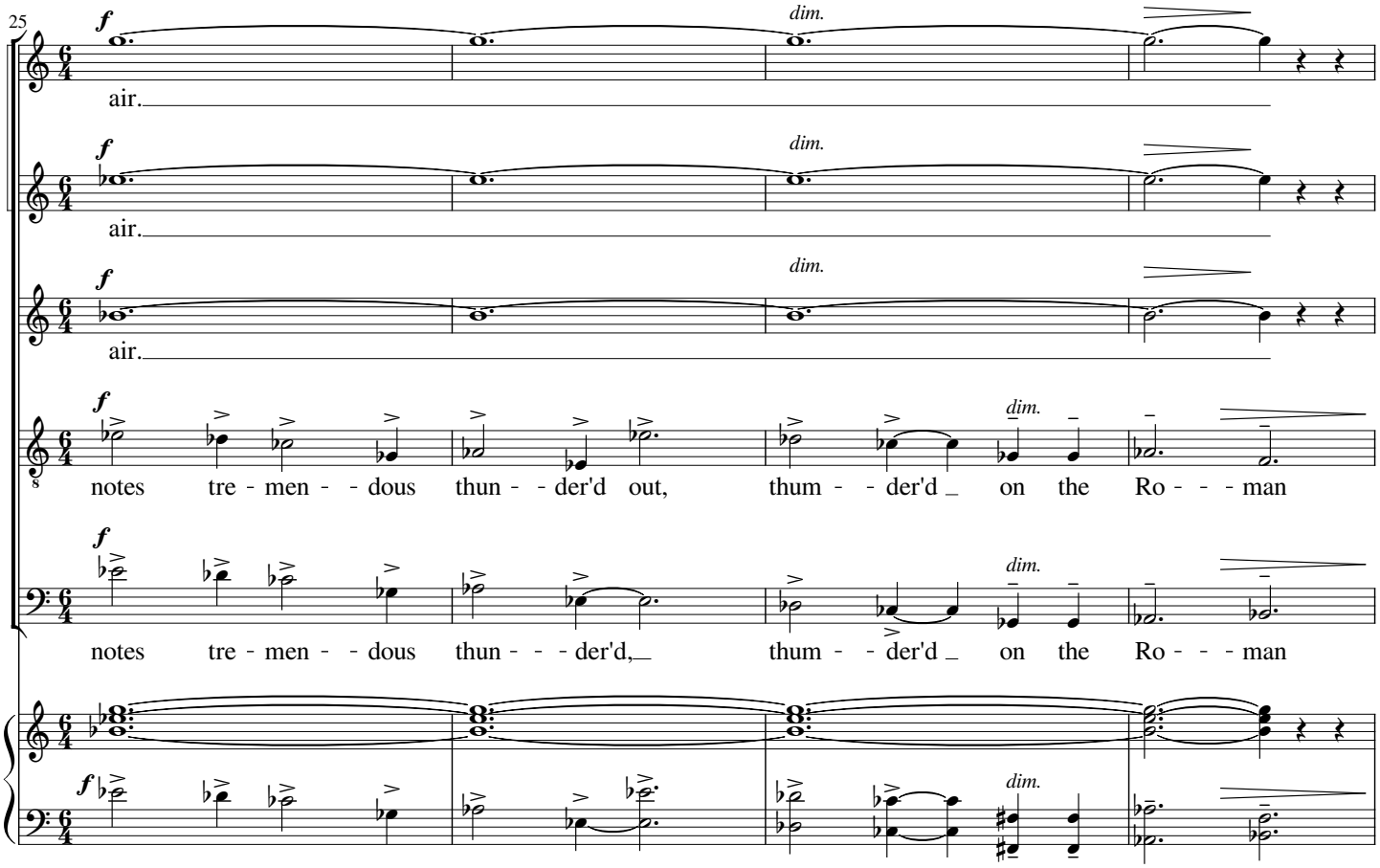
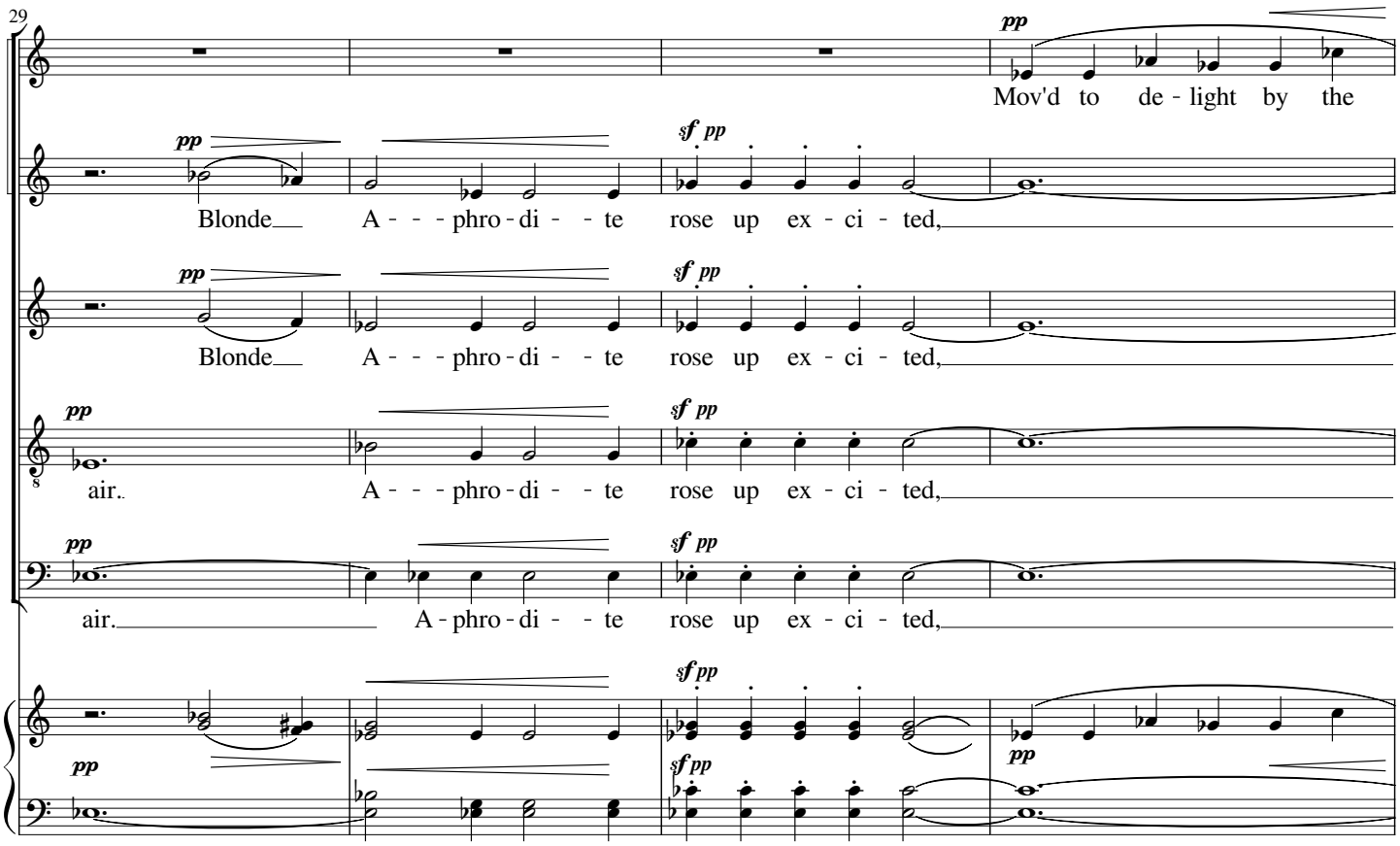
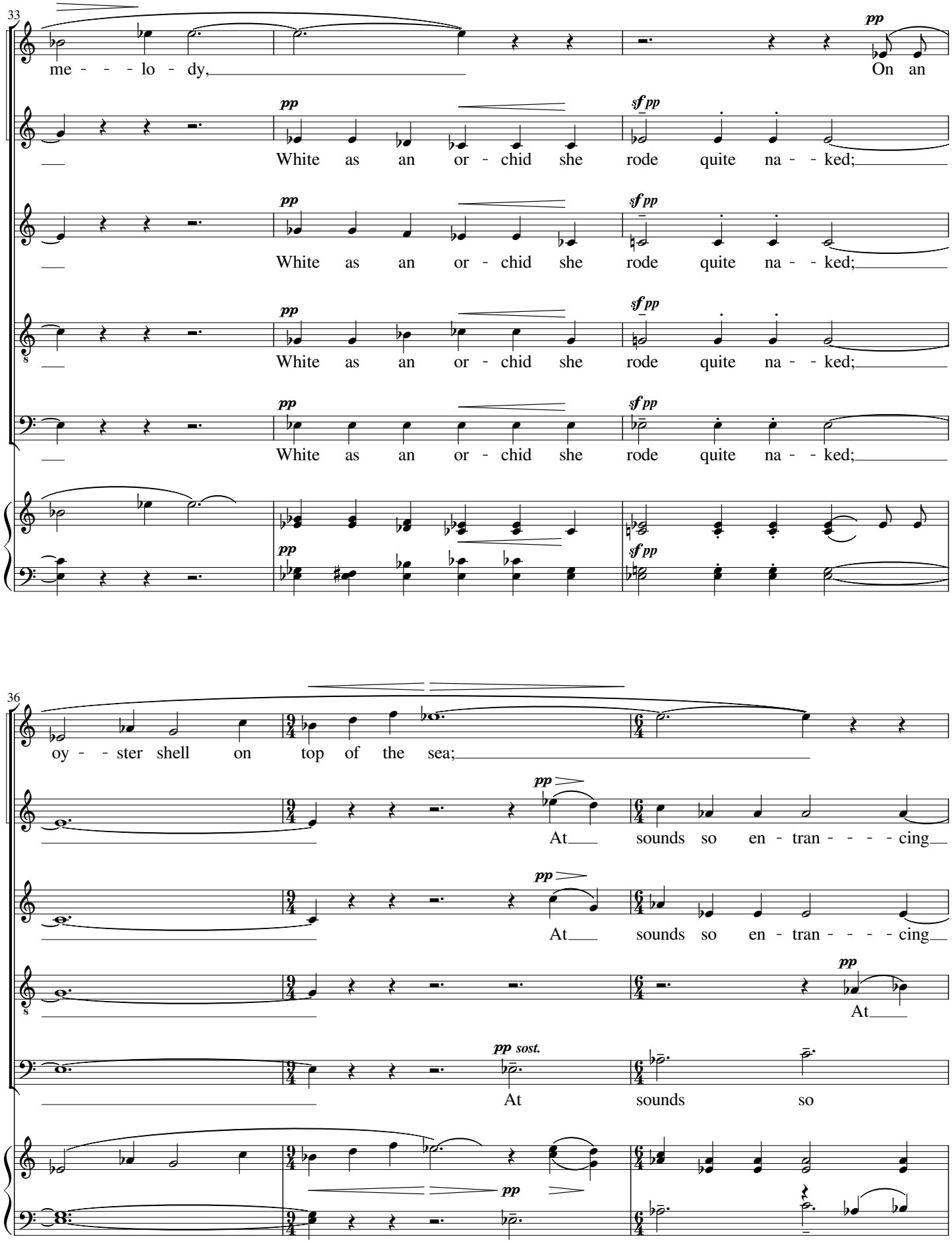
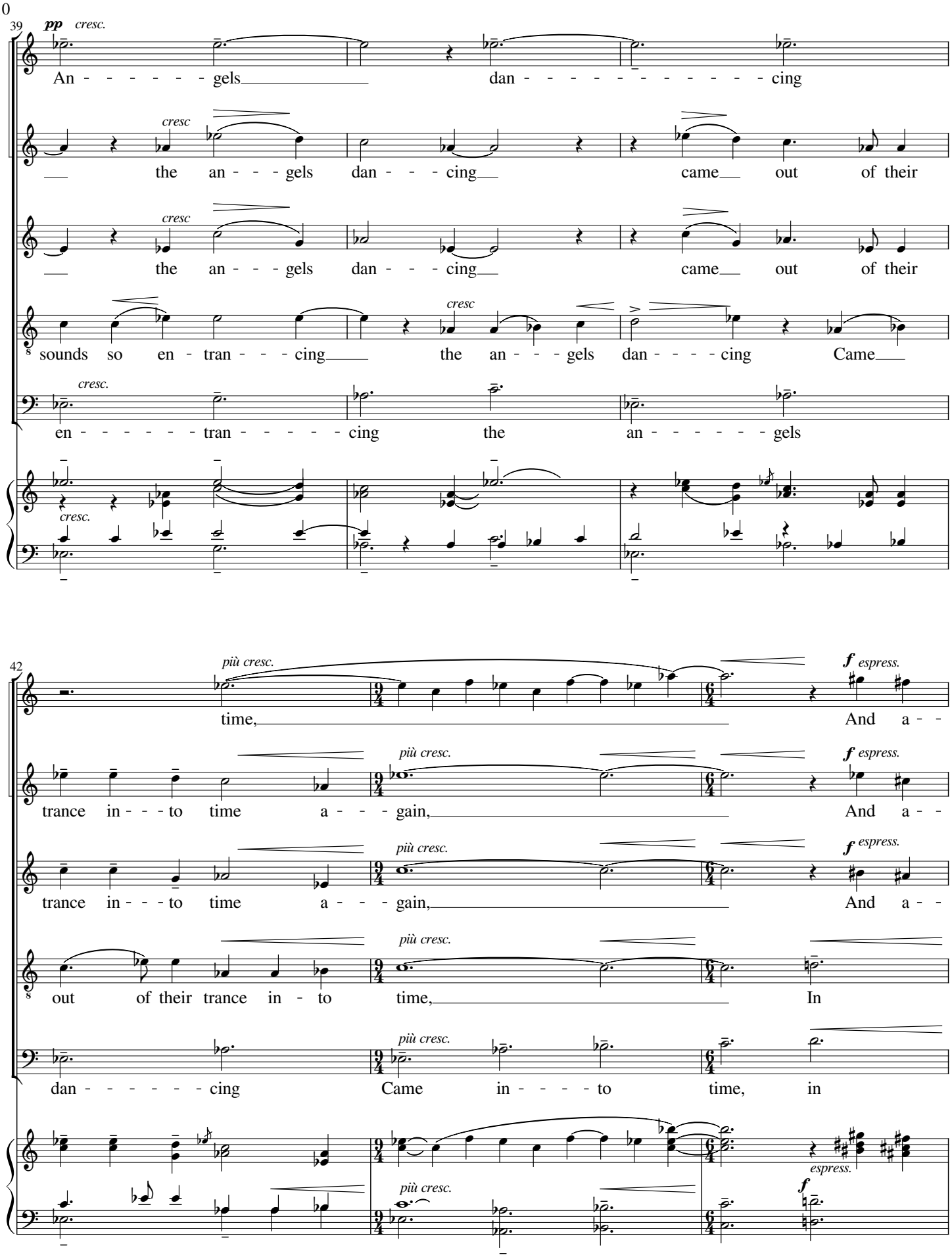
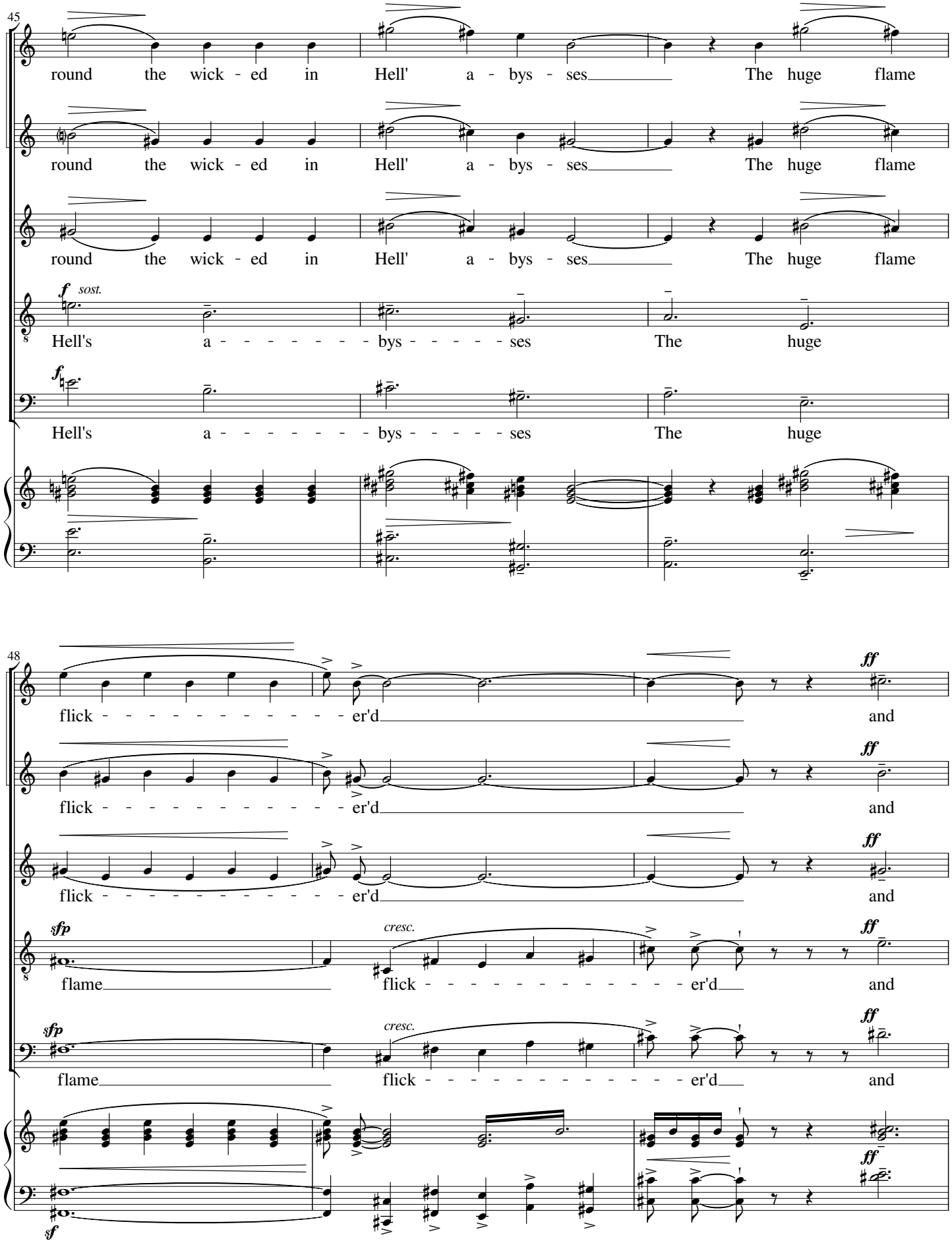
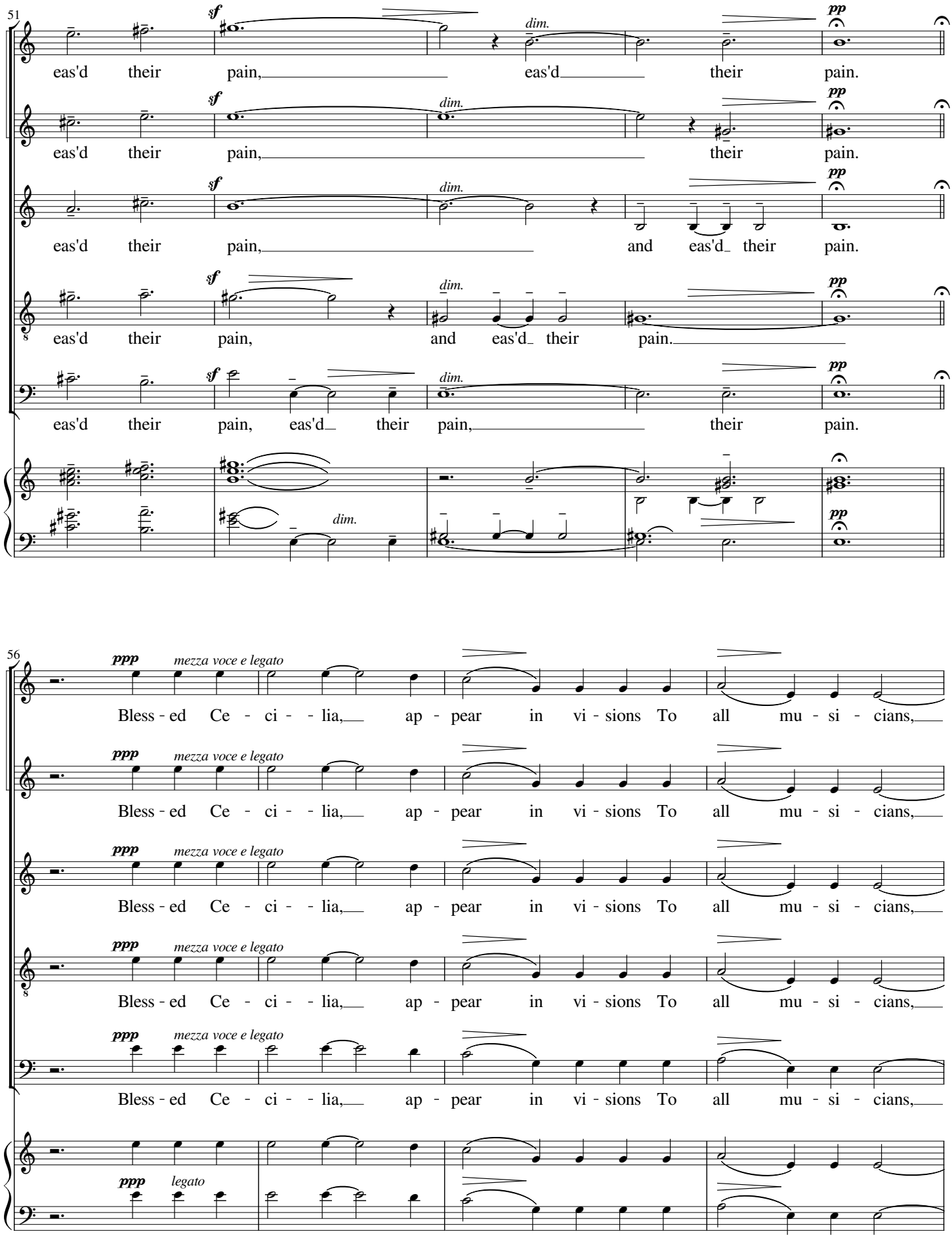

25
f
dim.
air.
notes tre - men - - dous thun - - der'd out, thum - - der'd _ on the Ro - - - man
notes tre - men - - dous thun - - - der'd, thum - - der'd _ on the Ro - - - man

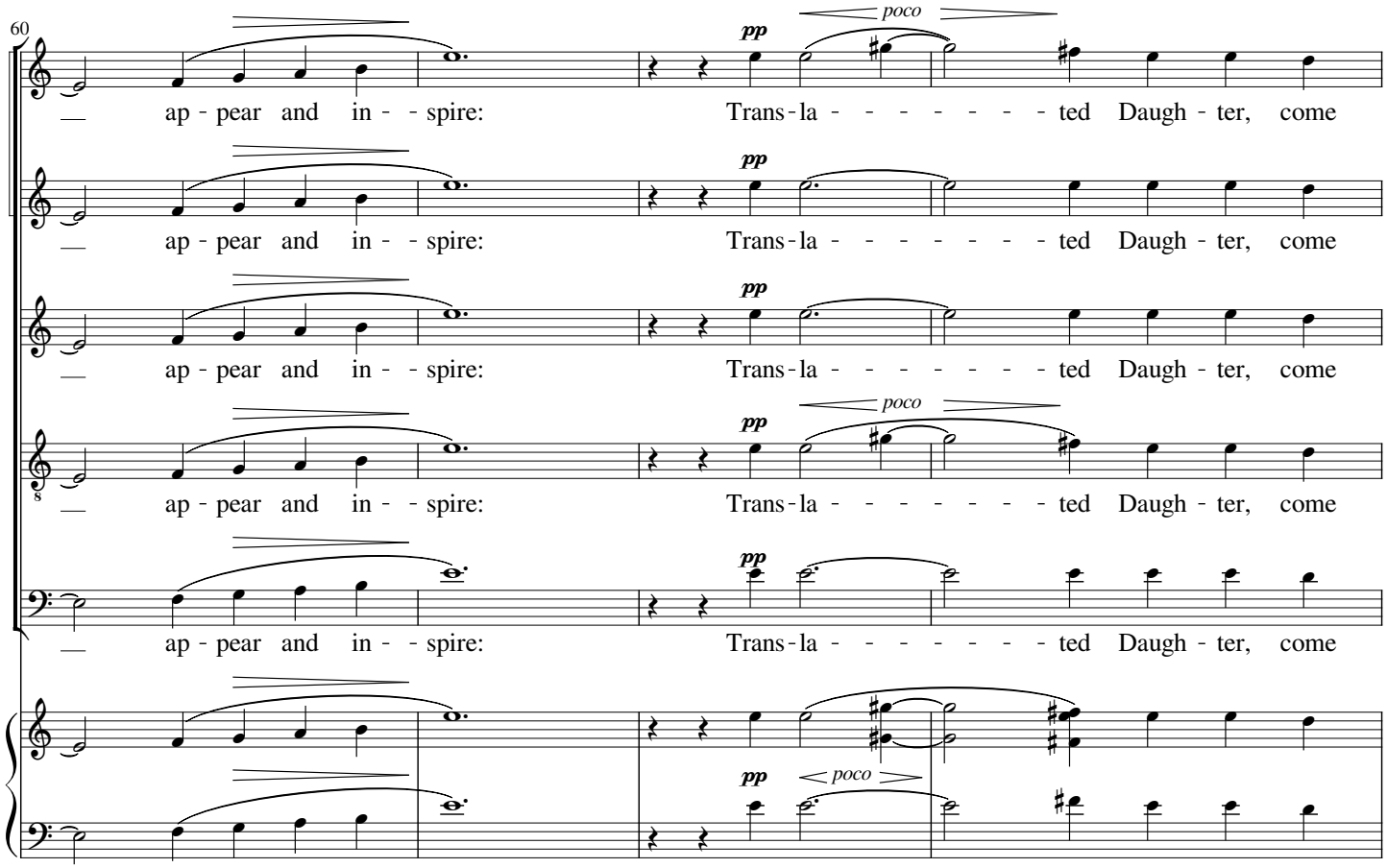

29
pp
Mov'd to de - light by the
sf pp
Blonde A - - - phro - di - - te rose up ex - ci - ted,
air. A - phro - di - - te rose up ex - ci - ted,

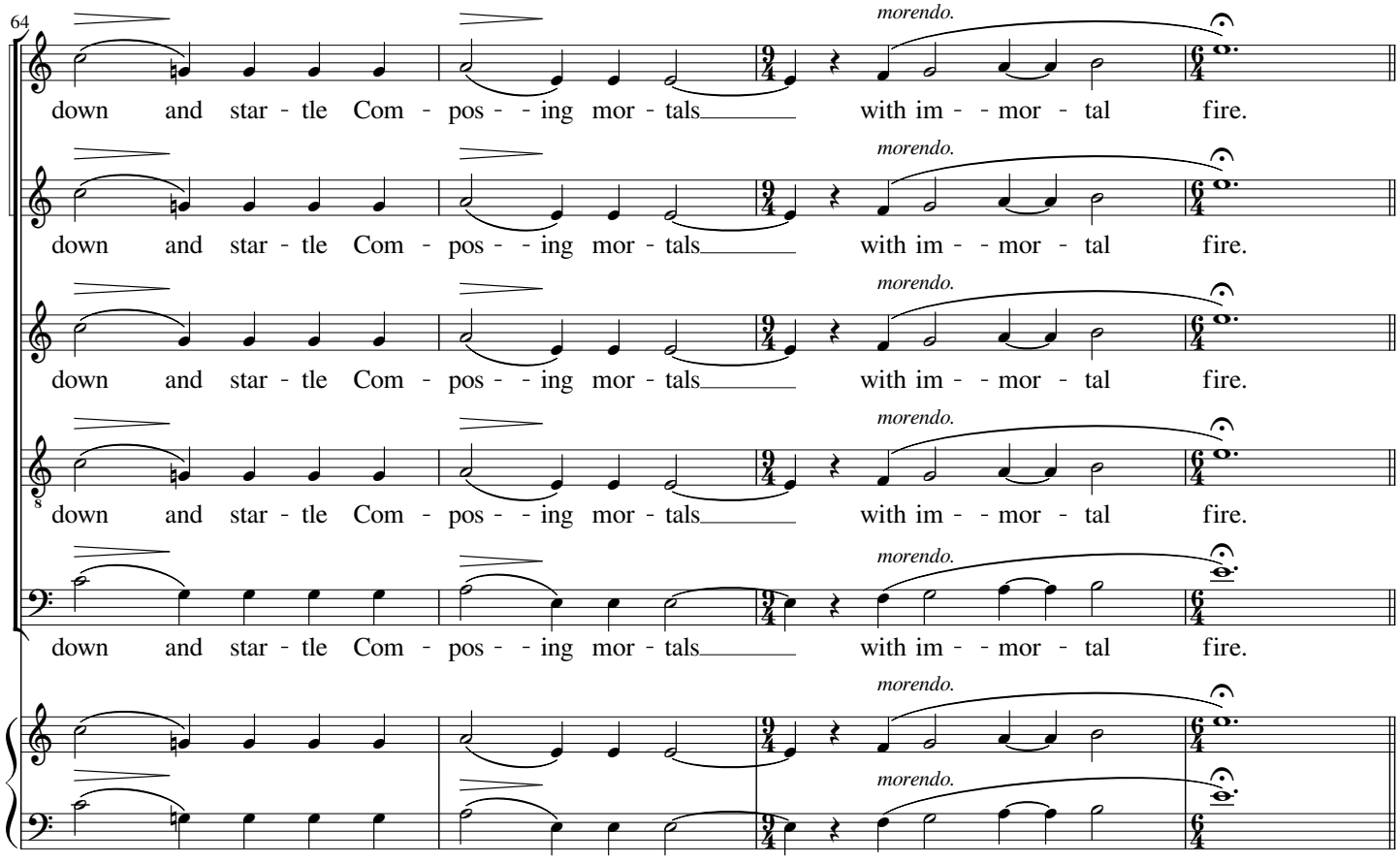

33
me - - - lo - dy,
On an
White as an or - chid she rode quite na - - ked;
White as an or - chid she rode quite na - - ked;
White as an or - chid she rode quite na - - ked;
White as an or - chid she rode quite na - - ked;
36
oy - - ster shell on top of the sea;
At sounds so en - tran - - - - cing
At sounds so en - tran - - - - cing
At
At sounds so


39
pp cresc.
An - - - - - - gels dan - - - - - - - - - - cing
cresc
the an - - - gels dan - - - cing came out of their
cresc
the an - - - gels dan - - - cing came out of their
cresc
sounds so en - tran - - - cing the an - - - gels dan - - - - cing Came
cresc.
en - - - - - - tran - - - - - cing the an - - - - - - gels
cresc.
42
più cresc.
f espress.
time, And a - -
più cresc.
f espress.
trance in - - - to time a - - - gain, And a - -
più cresc.
f espress.
trance in - - - to time a - - - gain, And a - -
più cresc.
out of their trance in - to time, In
più cresc.
dan - - - - - - cing Came in - - - - to time, in
più cresc.
espress.
f


45
round the wick - ed in Hell' a - bys - ses The huge flame
round the wick - ed in Hell' a - bys - ses The huge flame
round the wick - ed in Hell' a - bys - ses The huge flame
f sost.
Hell's a - - - - - - - - bys - - - - - ses The huge
f
Hell's a - - - - - - - - bys - - - - - ses The huge
48
flick - - - - - - - - - - - - - er'd and
flick - - - - - - - - - - - - - er'd and
flick - - - - - - - - - - - - - er'd and
sfp cresc. ff
flame flick - - - - - - - - - - - - - er'd and
sfp cresc. ff
flame flick - - - - - - - - - - - - - er'd and
ff
sf


51
sf
dim.
pp
eas'd their pain, eas'd their pain.
eas'd their pain, their pain.
eas'd their pain, and eas'd their pain.
eas'd their pain, and eas'd their pain.
eas'd their pain, eas'd their pain, their pain.
56
ppp
mezza voce e legato
Bless - ed Ce - ci - - lia, ap - pear in vi - sions To all mu - si - cians,
legato


60
poco
pp
ap - pear and in - - spire:
Trans - la - - - - - - - - ted Daugh - ter, come


64
morendo.
down and star - tle Com - pos - - ing mor - tals
with im - - mor - tal fire.