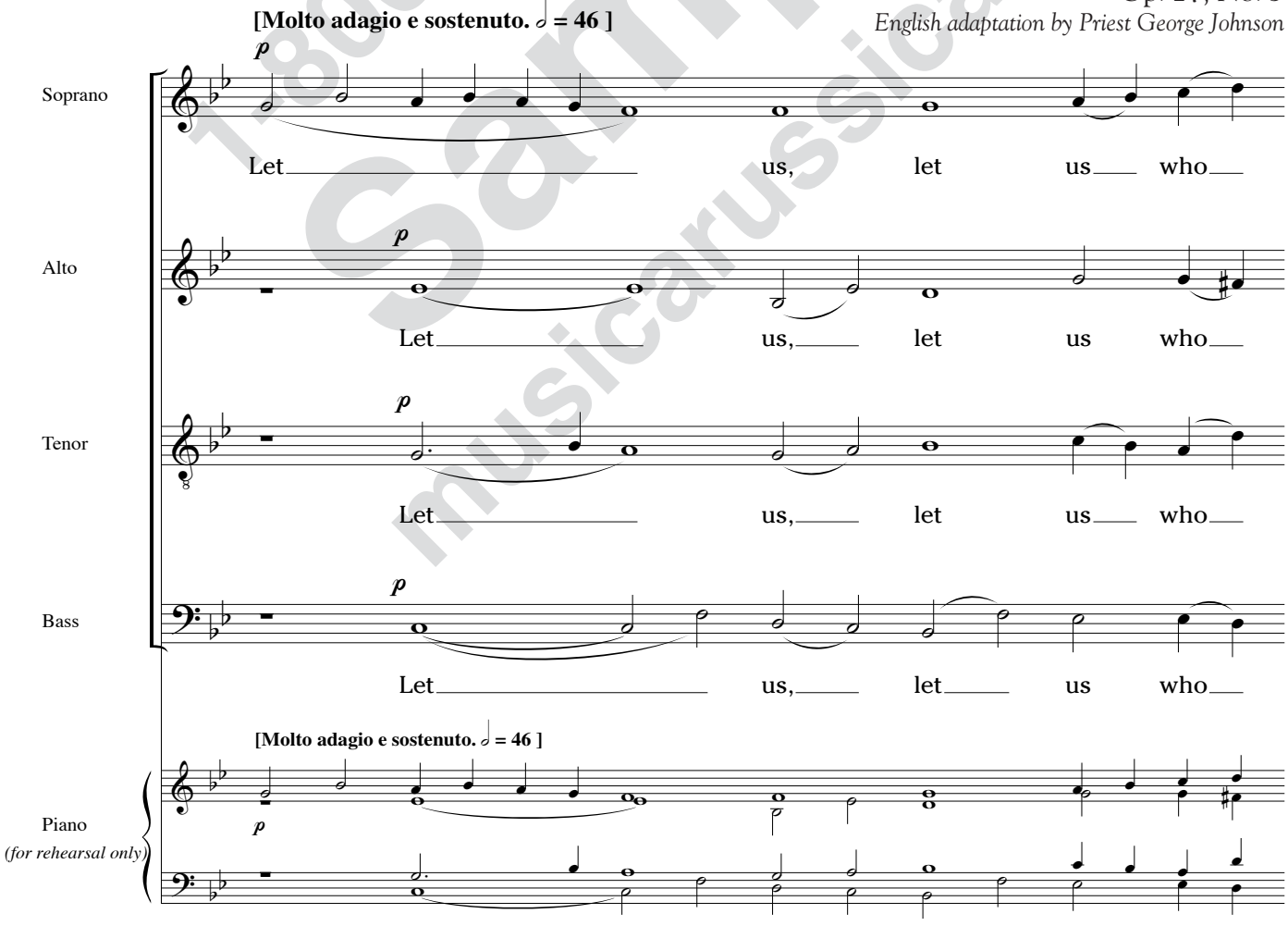
Cherubic Hymn
(Sofroniev Hermitage Melody)

CHESNOKOV, Pavel Grigor'yevich (b. 12 [24] October, 1877, near Voskresensk, Moscow region; d. 14 March, 1944, Moscow)—graduated from Moscow Synodal School of Church Singing in 1895; 1895–99, studied composition with Sergei Taneyev; graduated from Moscow Conservatory in 1917 in conducting and composition (student of Mikhail Ippolitov-Ivanov). From 1895, taught church singing (chant) at the Moscow Synodal School; served as precentor in several Moscow churches and taught choral music at various schools. From 1920 to 1944 was professor of choral music at the Moscow Conservatory and conductor of several state choirs in Moscow.

Chesnokov is the most prolific composer associated with the Moscow Synodal School: his compositional output includes over 500 choral works, over 400 of which are sacred. His major opera include three complete settings of the Divine Liturgy, two complete settings of the All-Night Vigil, two settings of the Memorial Service, and a setting of the Liturgy of Presanctified Gifts. In addition, he composed numerous settings of individual hymns taken from the ordinary of the Liturgy and Vigil, from feast-day propers, and paraliturgical concertos. His choral writing is characterized by a variety of textures, from austere unisons to sumptuous eight-voice polyphony, and colorful harmony, which he often "spices" with chromaticism. Approximately one-third of his sacred works are chant-based, while the rest are free compositions.

Among the commonly used chant settings of the Cherubic Hymn found in the Russian Orthodox repertoire, few possess the other-worldliness and mystical exaltation of the Sofroniev Hermitage Melody. Once sung in unison or in improvised harmony, this melody has captured the imagination of several composers, among them Alexander Kastalsky and Johann von Gardner. The present English adaptation of Chesnokov's arrangement is based upon the Russian first edition. All the performance markings are the composer's; editorial markings are enclosed in brackets.

Pavel Chesnokov
Op. 27, No. 5
English adaptation by Priest George Johnson



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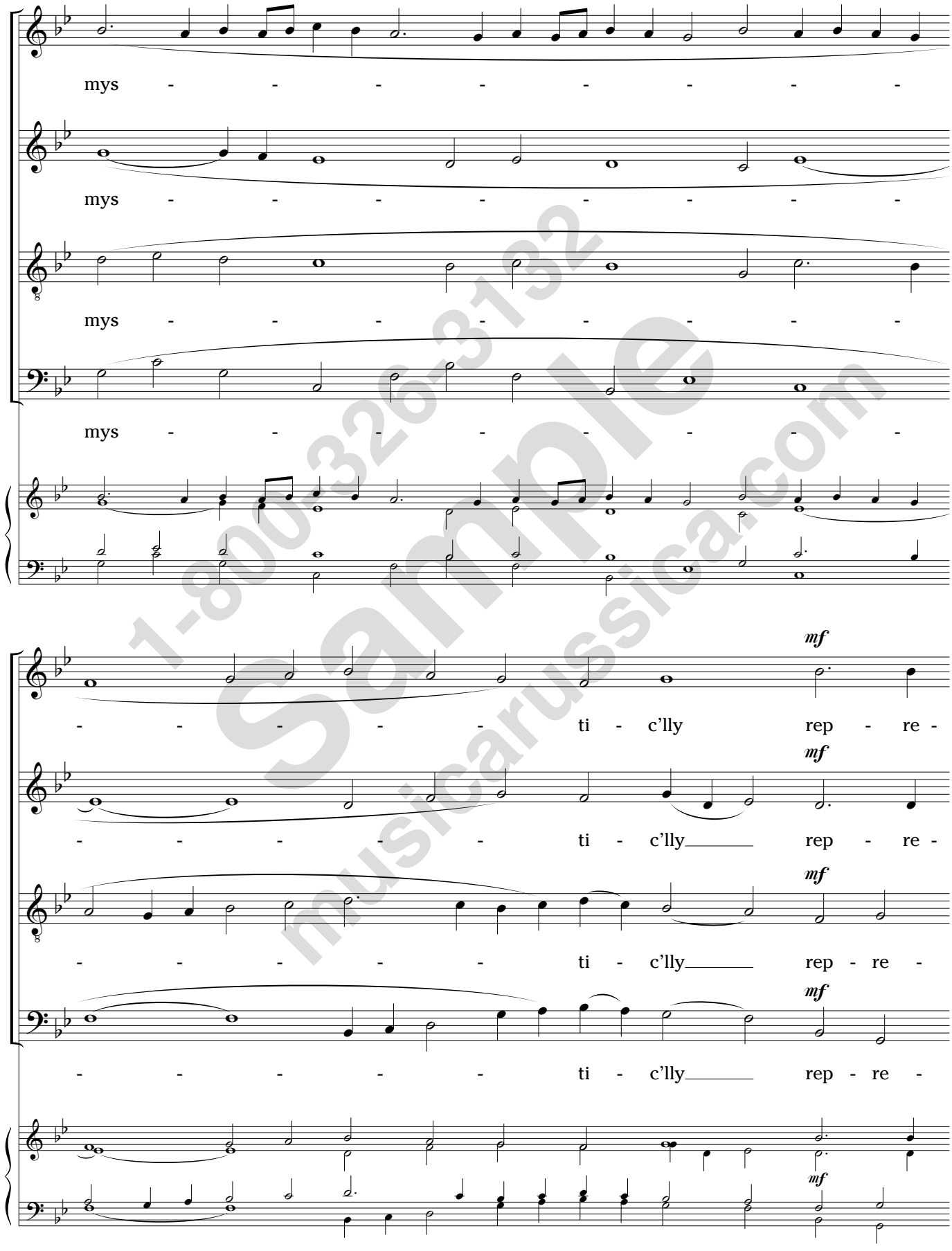

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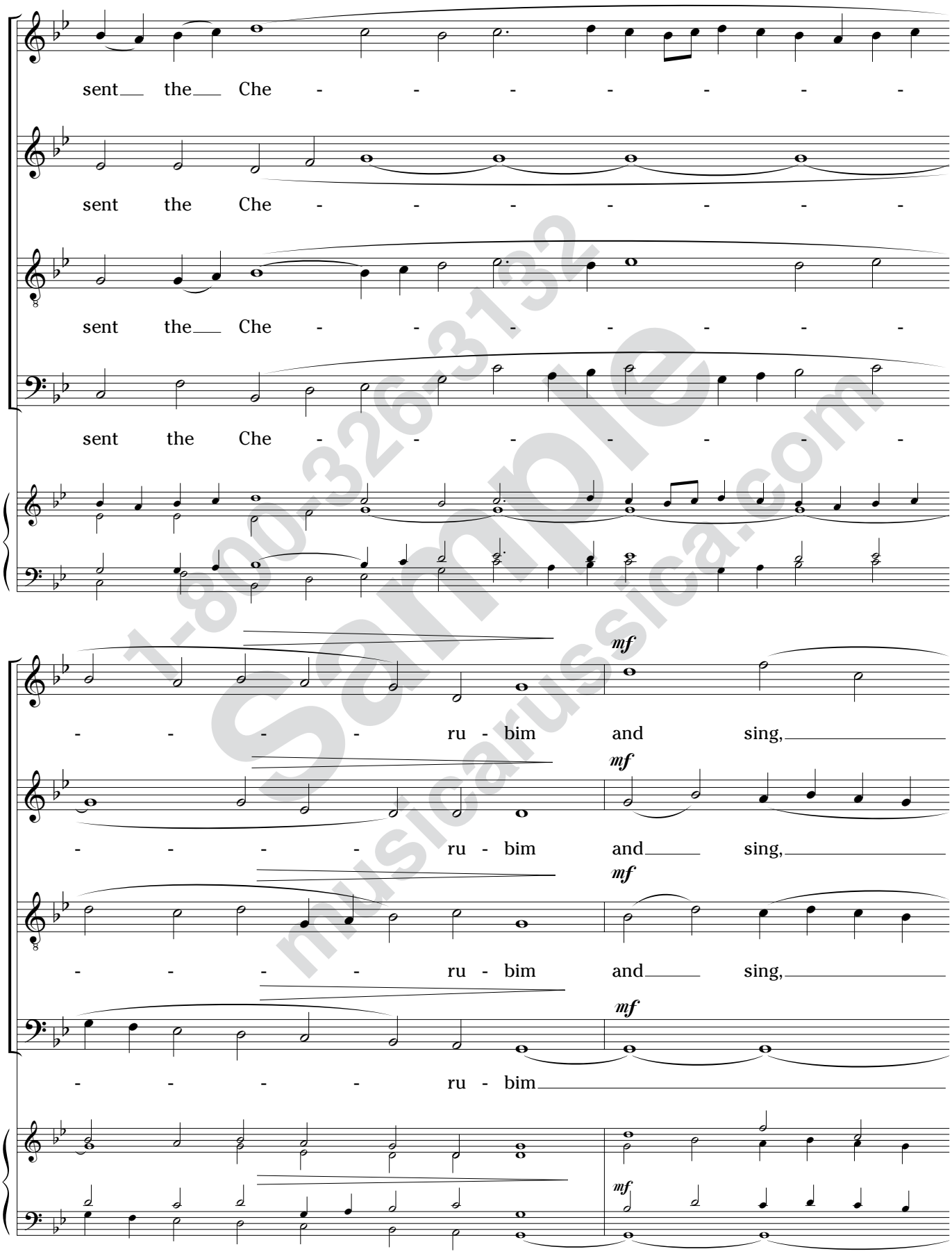

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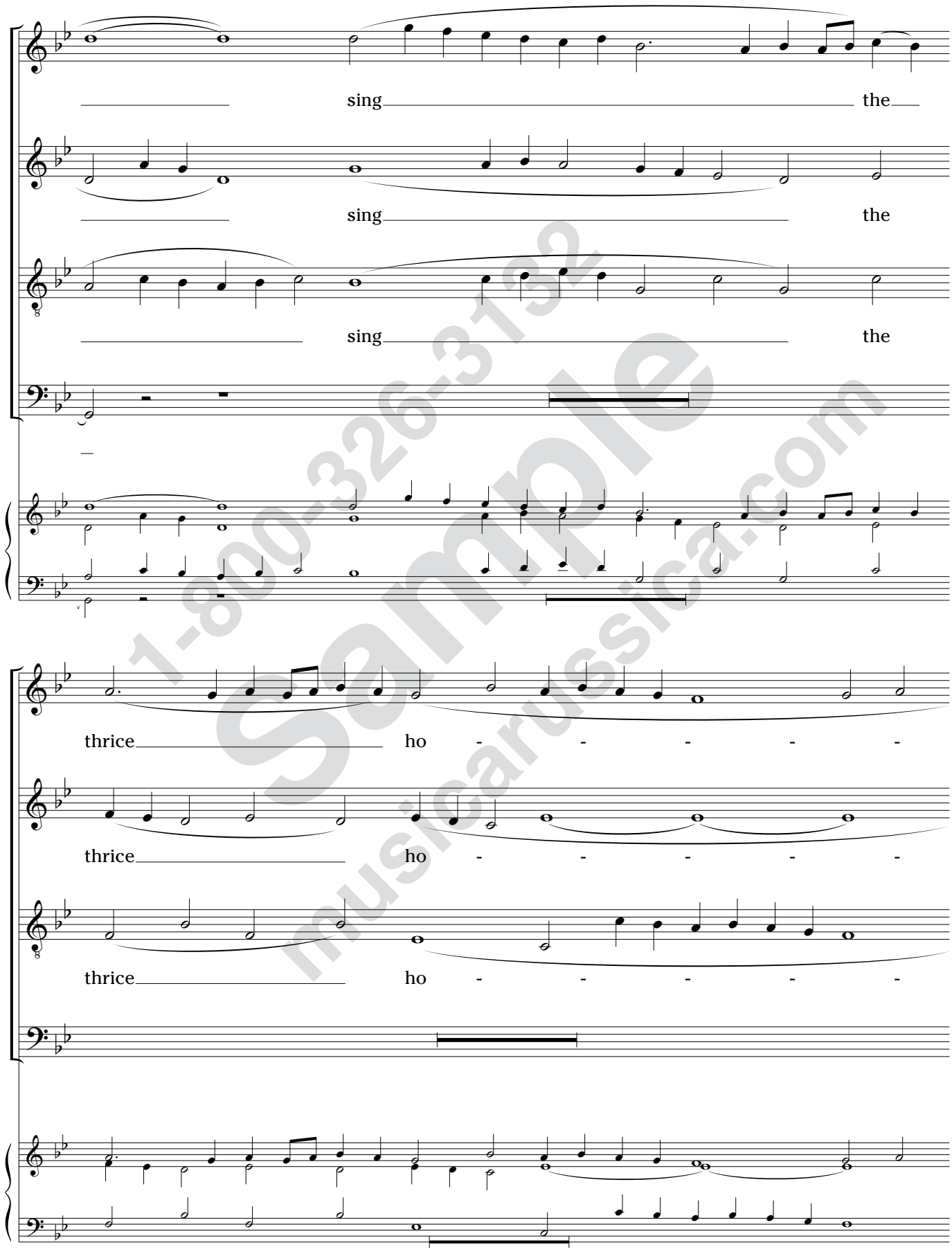

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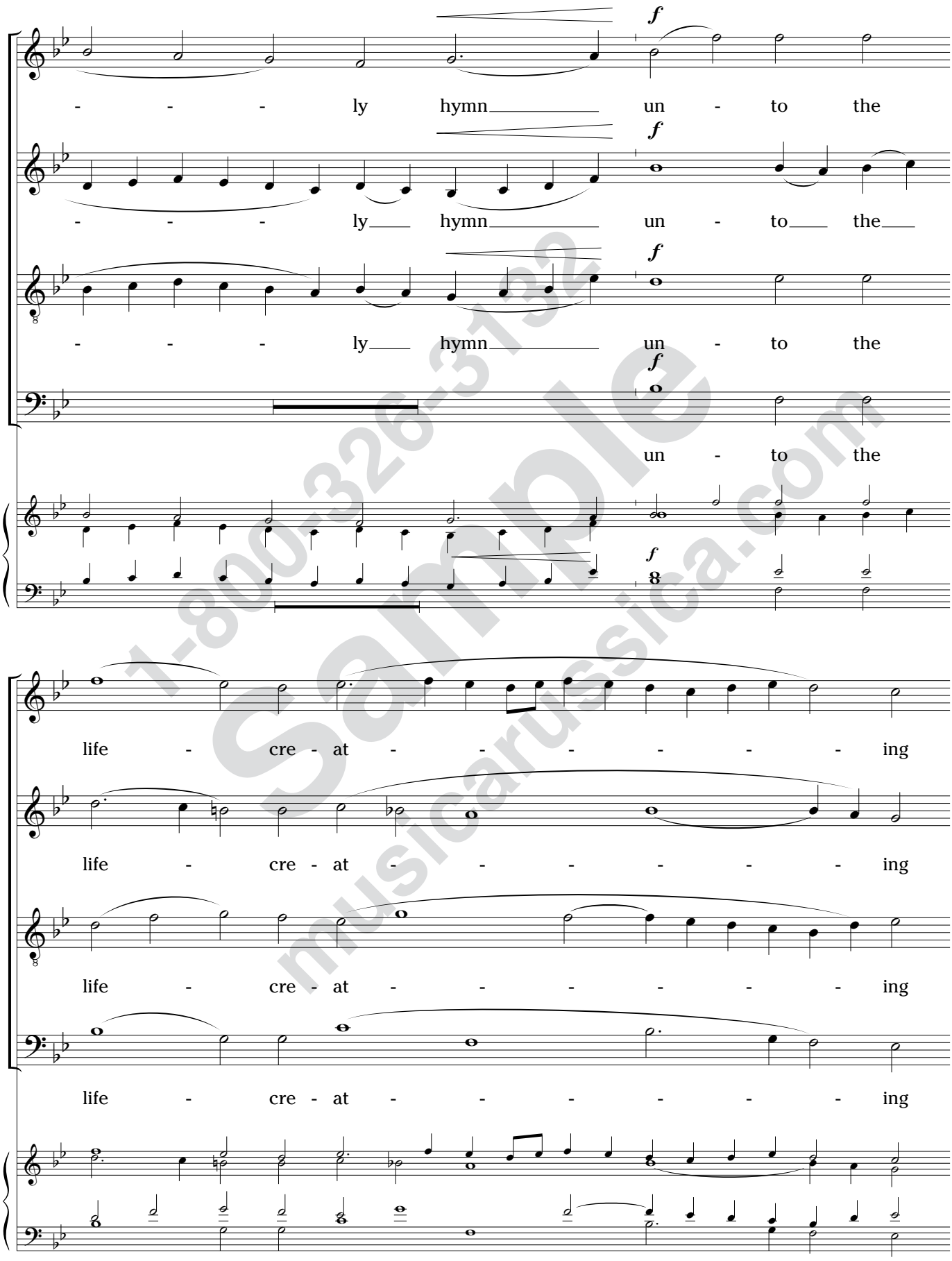

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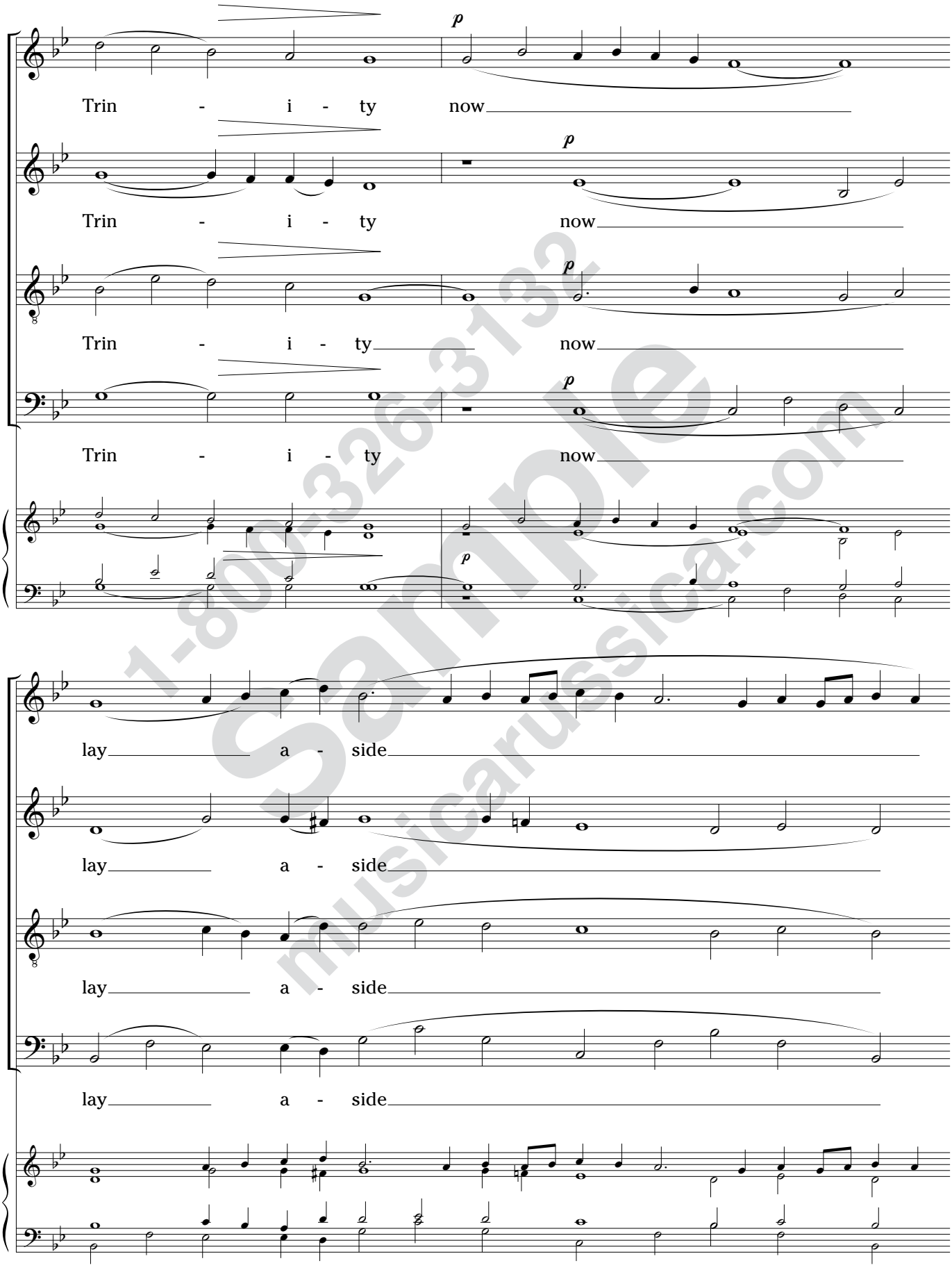

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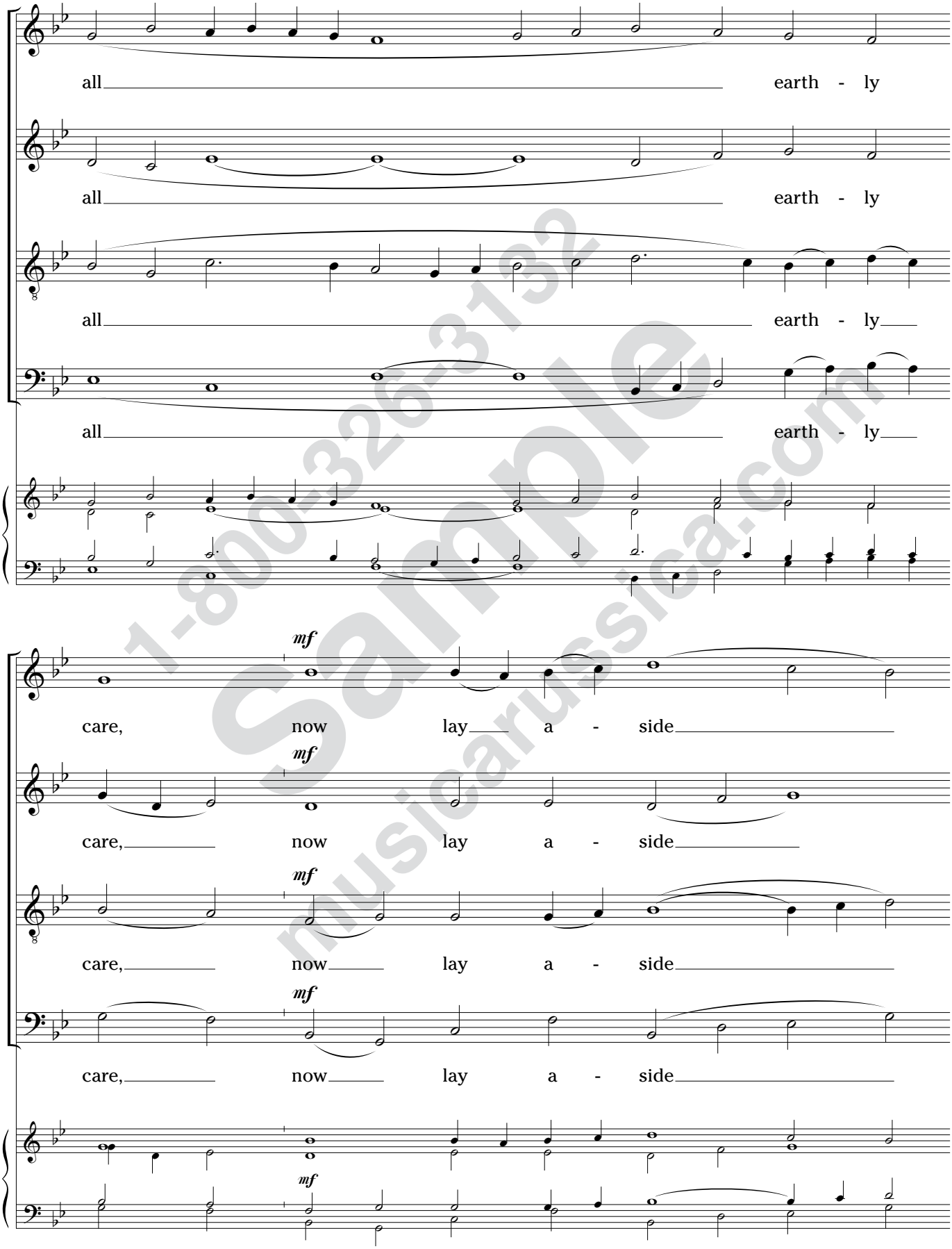

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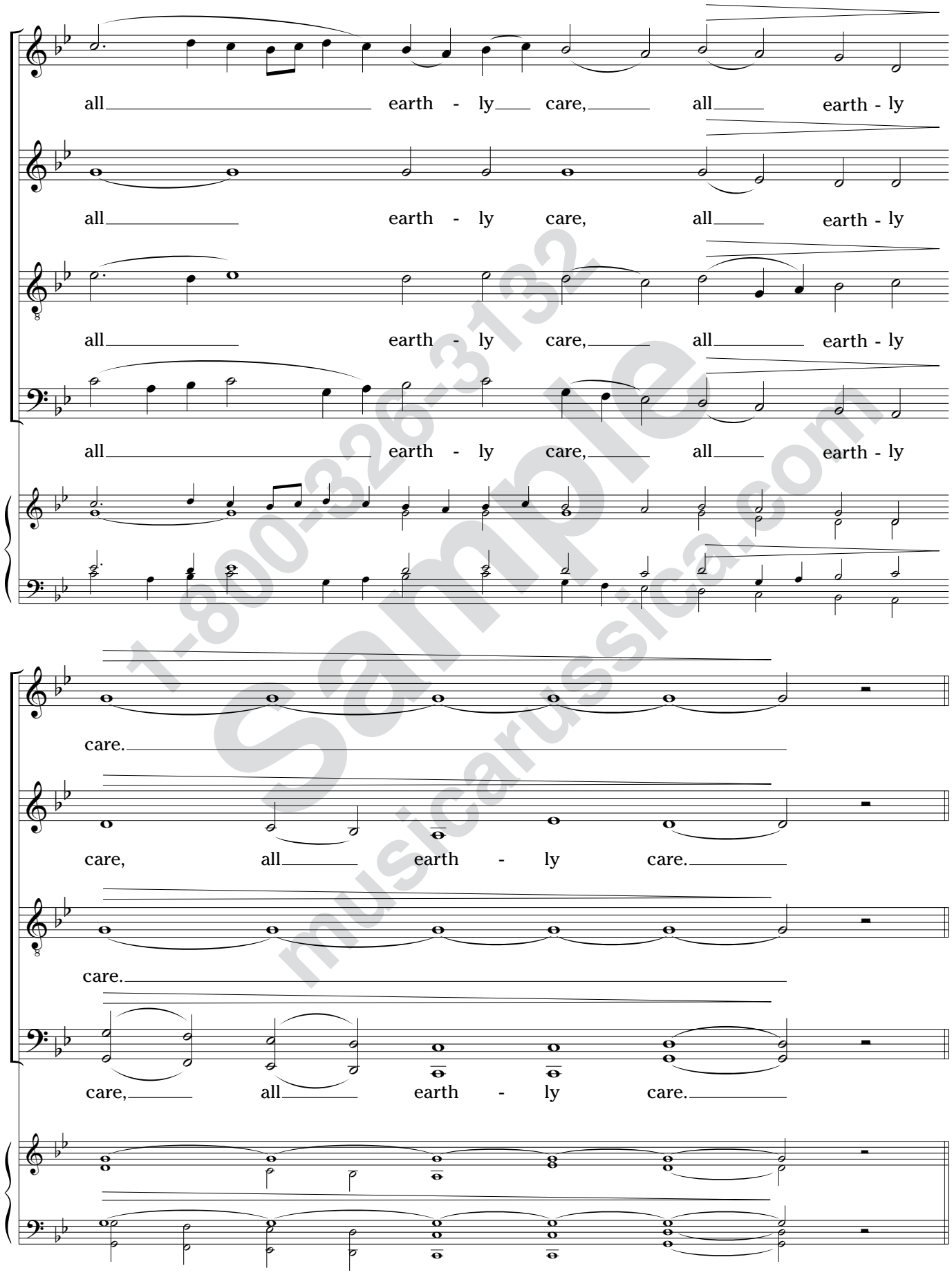

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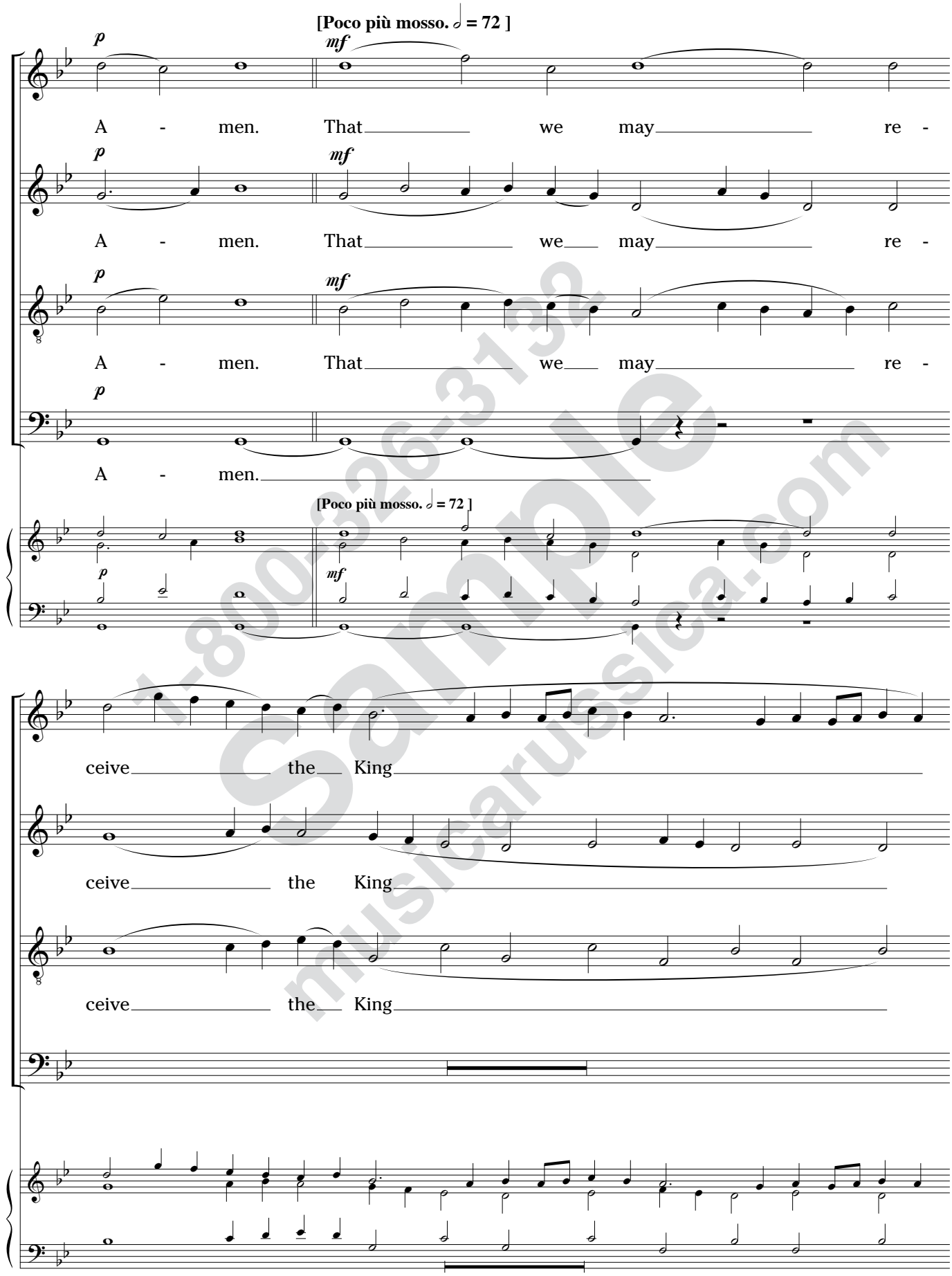

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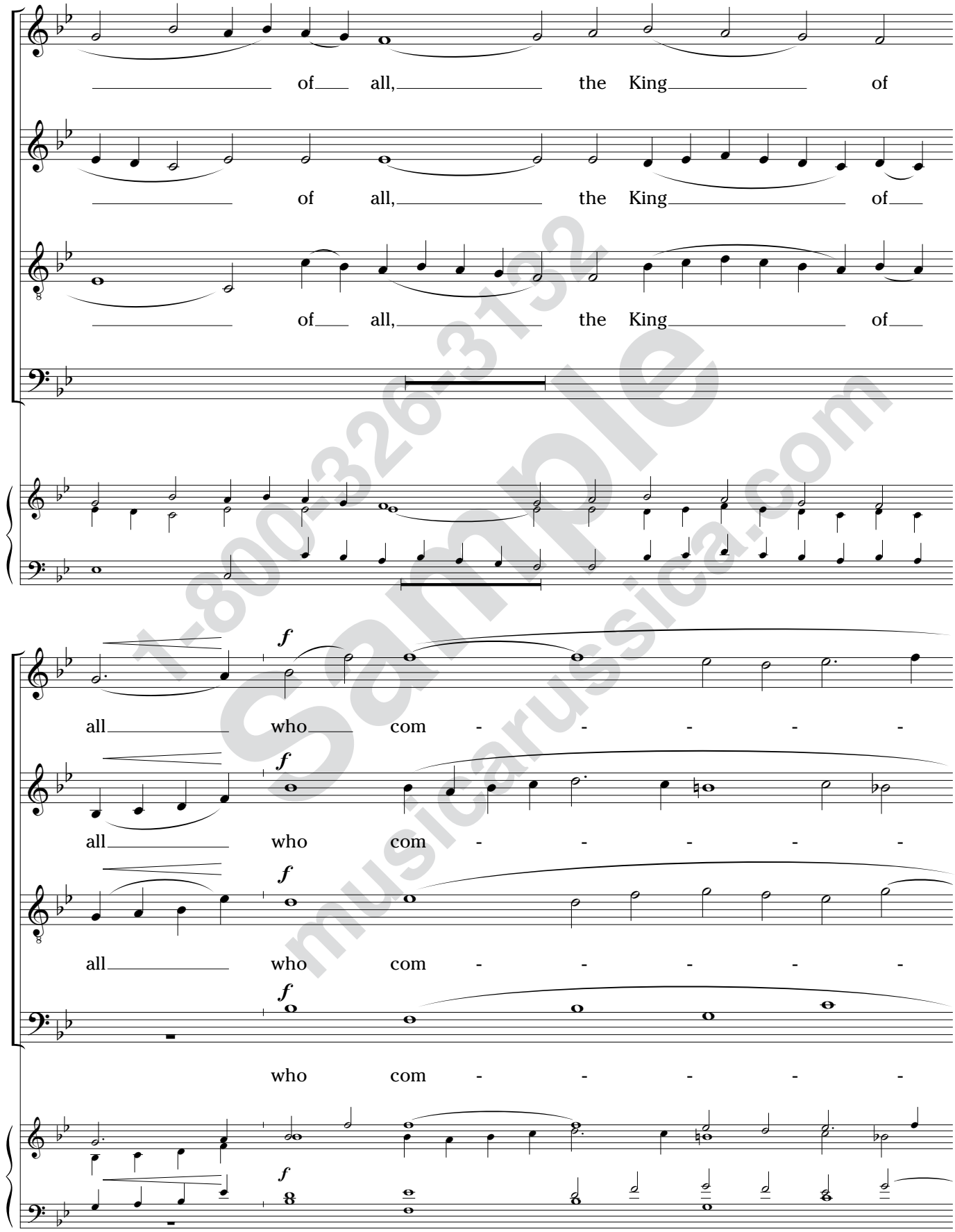

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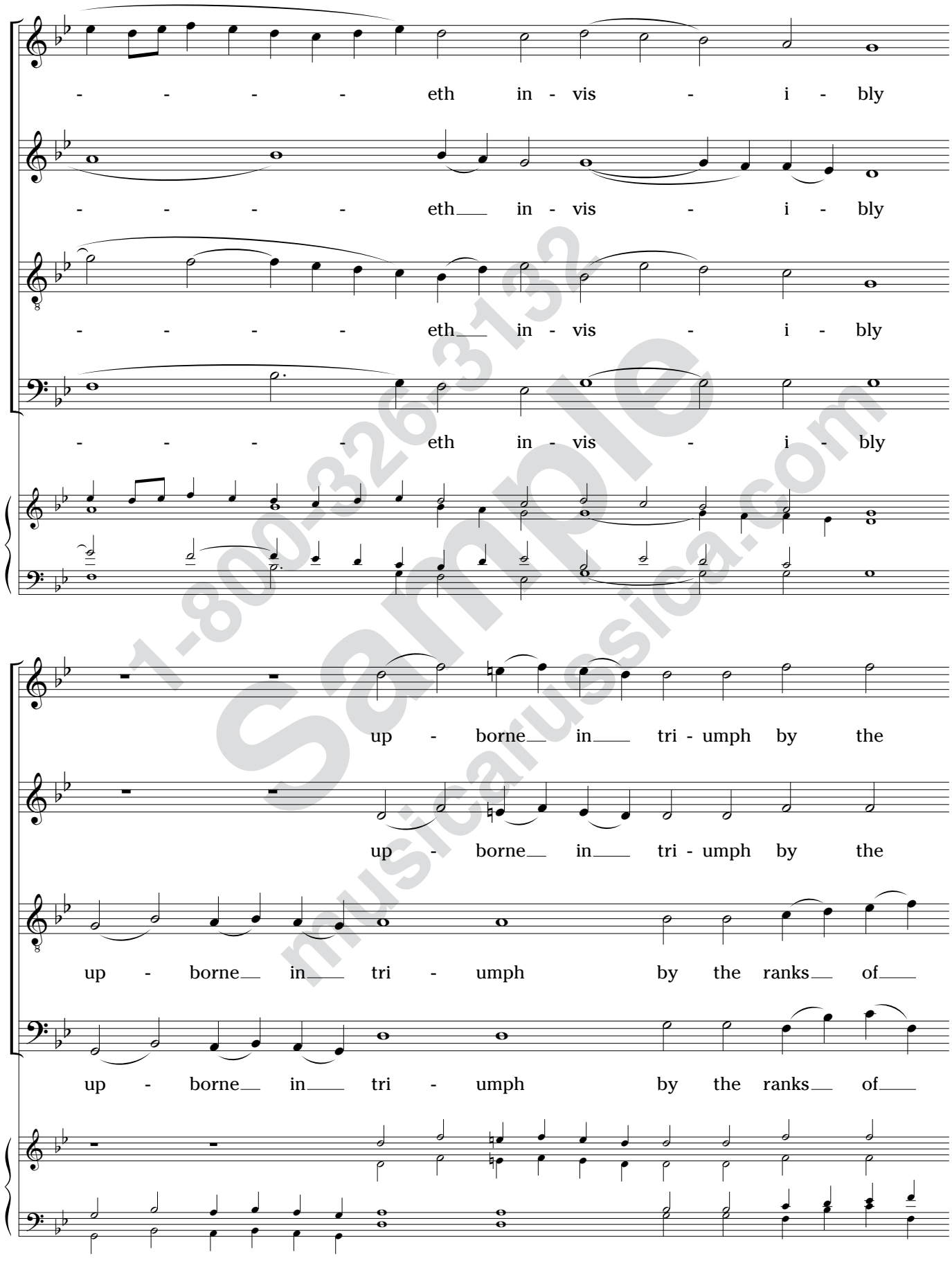

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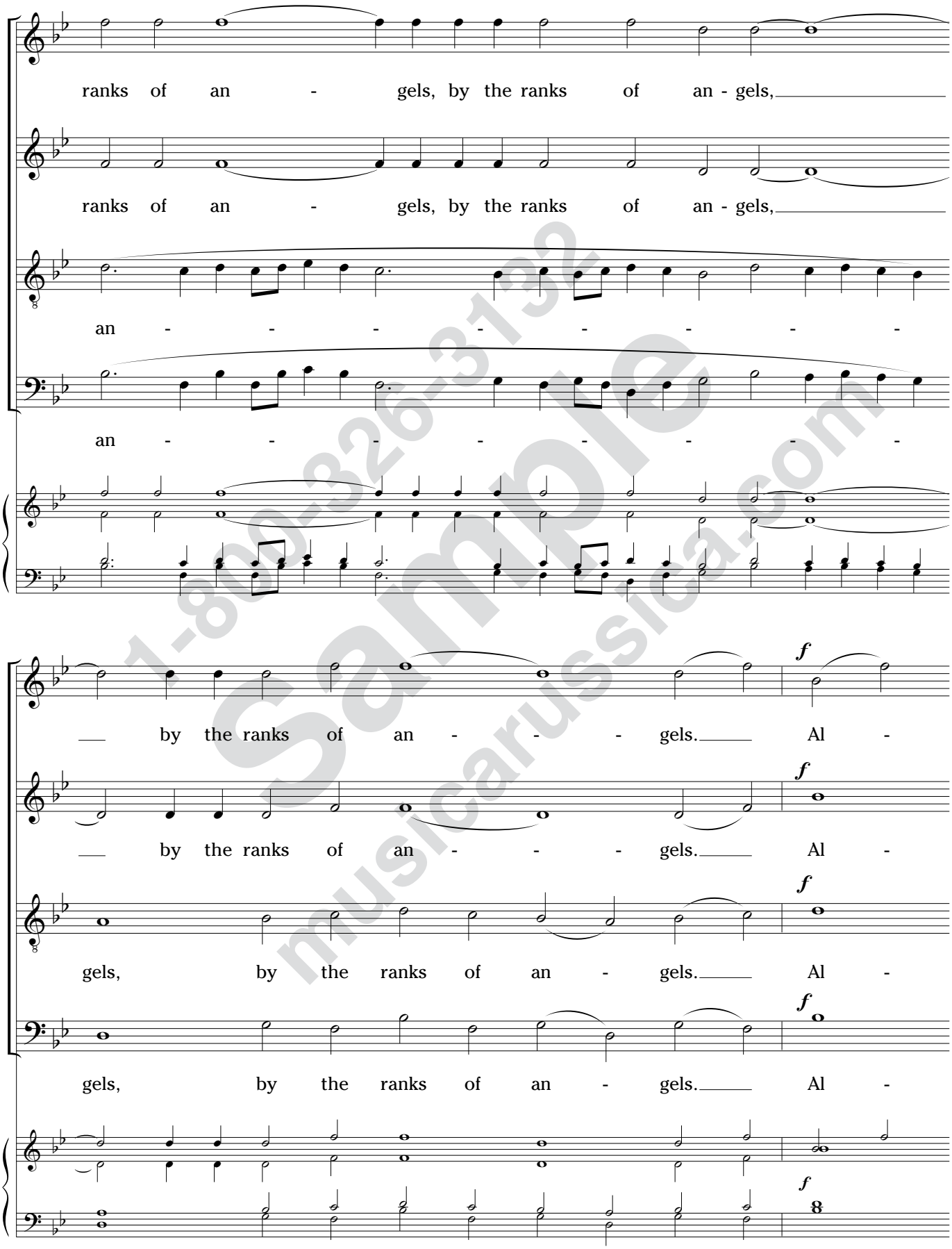

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