Missa bicinia

Missa brevis for SB,
with optional AT,
and Organ.

Kyrie eleison (Greek)
Sanctus, Benedictus & Agnus Dei
(texts from The Book of Common Prayer)

by

David Cameron

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Kingston, Ontario

Missa bicinia

During the 1970's and early 1980's I directed several Evensongs, and also a number of choral concerts, in the warm acoustical setting of St. Paul's Anglican Church in downtown Kingston, Ontario. That historic stone building not only provided an excellent ambience for singers and instrumentalists; it was also—and remains—a charming and intimate venue for small to medium-sized audiences. Both the Pro Arte Singers and my choir from Chalmers United Church enjoyed singing in St. Paul's and were happy to return there repeatedly.

In the winter of 1981 the Rev. David Sinclair, Rector of St. Paul's, planned a series of Eucharists. He wanted to explore with his congregation some of the wide range of liturgical styles then current in the Anglican Communion. Despite my happy working situation at Chalmers, which eventually lasted forty-four years, and the excellent choir their support enabled me to direct, I needed now and then to affirm my own Anglican roots. So I offered to provide a choir for an Anglo-Catholic solemn Eucharist.

Since the project required that we stick plainly to Anglican liturgy, the great mass settings from the Renaissance were excluded: we needed Cranmer's English texts from *The Book of Common Prayer.* So I expected that we would sing a mass setting like Healey Willan's series of Missae Brevis.

Unfortunately the date selected was in March that year, and when I began detailed planning it emerged that a significant number of our singers would be away for the March break, just when we needed to rehearse for St. Paul's. So we needed a mass setting that would be moving and effective with only a few good singers, probably not enough for four voice parts.

It was against this background that I decided to write the *Missa bicinia* ("Mass for two voices", although in fact here and there it allows for, though it doesn't require, a third). What began as a challenge grew into serious involvement with the mystery that any thoughtful Christian must sense in the Eucharistic liturgy. After its first performance in March, 1981, it has been sung a number of times in various places, most notably for me at when Michael Capon conducted it for Fran's and my wedding in St. George's Cathedral, Kingston, in December 2012. At the suggestion of the late Shelagh Leach, one of the singers in the first performance, its Kyrie also inspired the beginning and conclusion of my cantata *The Gift of Light*. I am sure that Fr. Sinclair, to whom the mass is dedicated, will allow it to stand also as a memorial to Shelagh, a much-valued friend and colleague whom we miss.

The Prayer Book translation of the Ordinary is now unfashionable, but I hope that all the same *Missa bicinia* may sometimes serve good choirs working with temporarily limited resources.

David Cameron

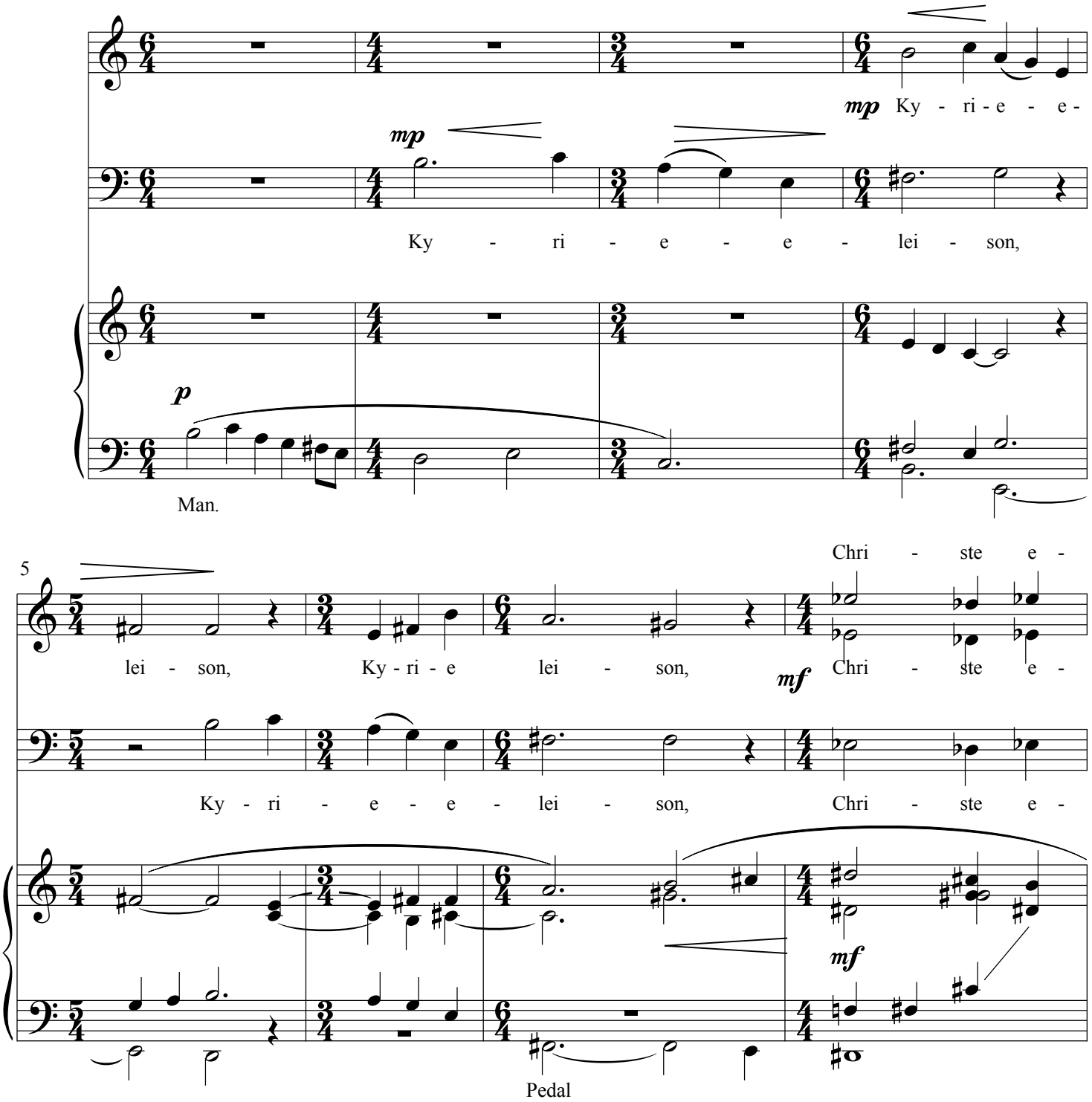
Kingston, 11 February 2015

Missa bicinia

for The Rev. David Sinclair

David Cameron

1. KYRIE ELEISON



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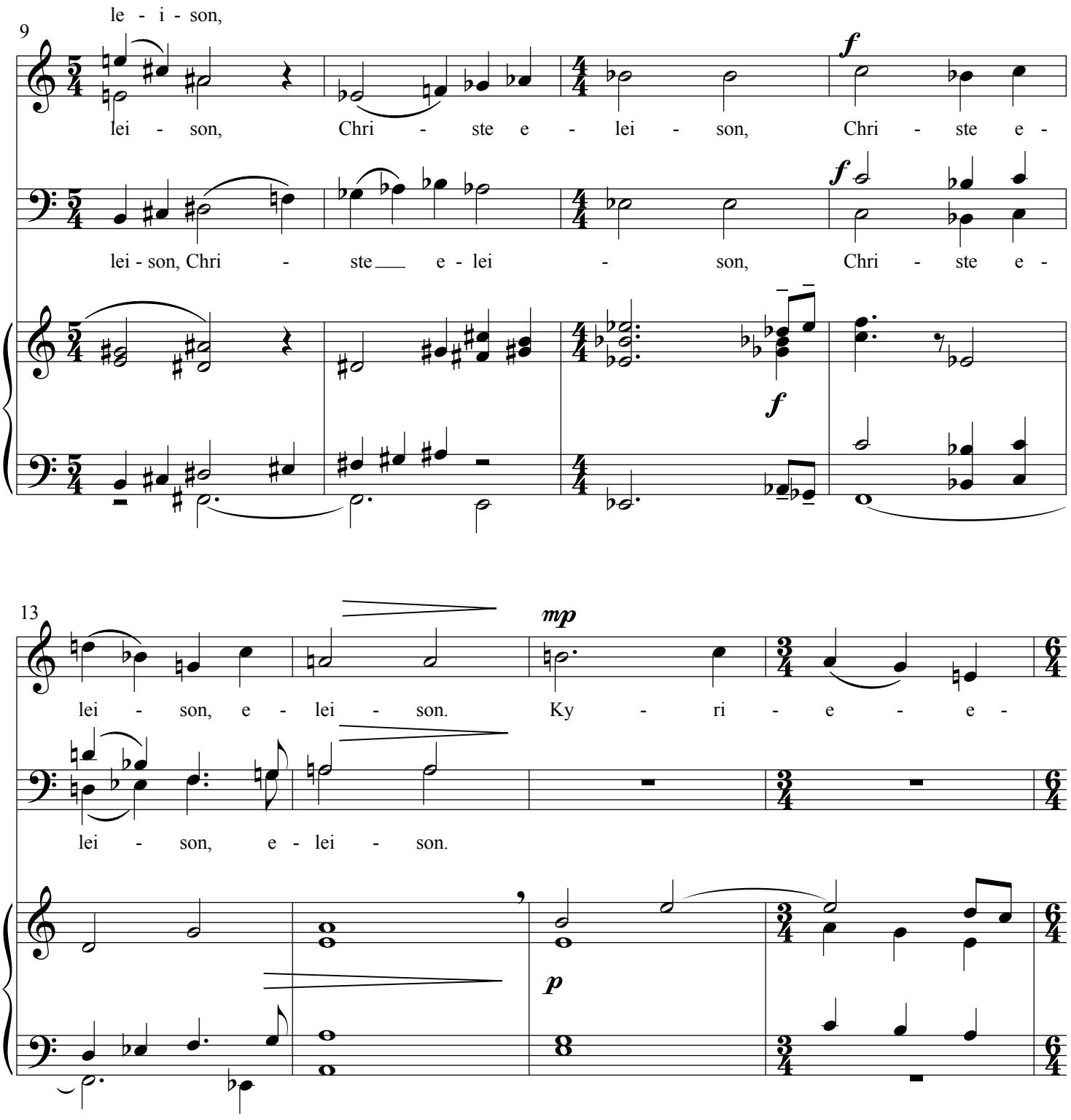
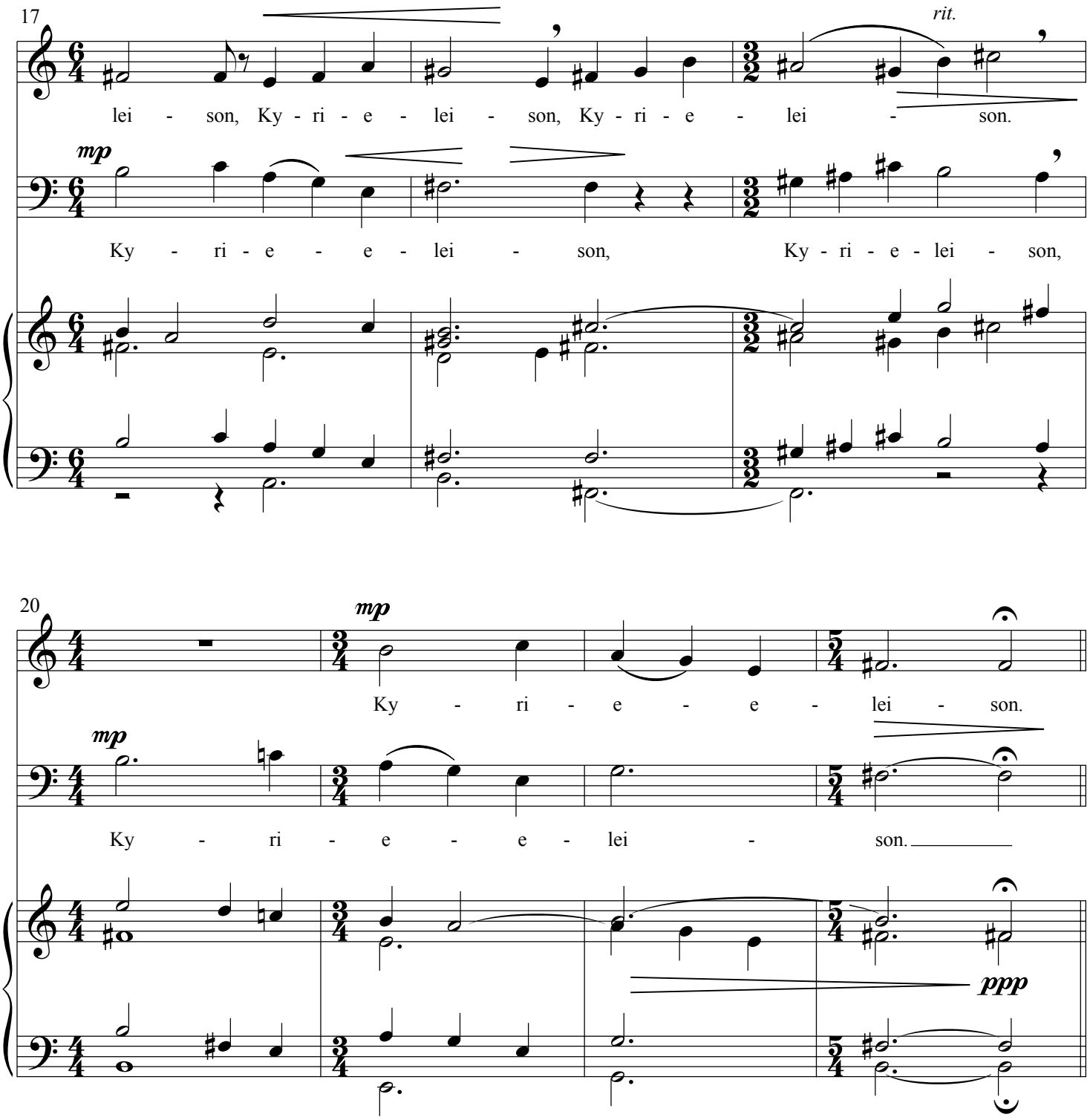

9
le - i - son,
lei - son, Chri - ste e - lei - son, Chri - ste e -
lei - son, Chri - ste e - lei - son, Chri - ste e -
f
f
f
13
mp
lei - son, e - lei - son. Ky - ri - e - e -
lei - son, e - lei - son.
p


17
rit.
lei - son, Ky - ri - e - lei - son, Ky - ri - e - lei - son.
mp
Ky - ri - e - e - lei - son,
Ky - ri - e - lei - son,
20
mp
Ky - ri - e - e - lei - son.
mp
Ky - ri - e - e - lei - son.
ppp

2. SANCTUS & BENEDICTUS

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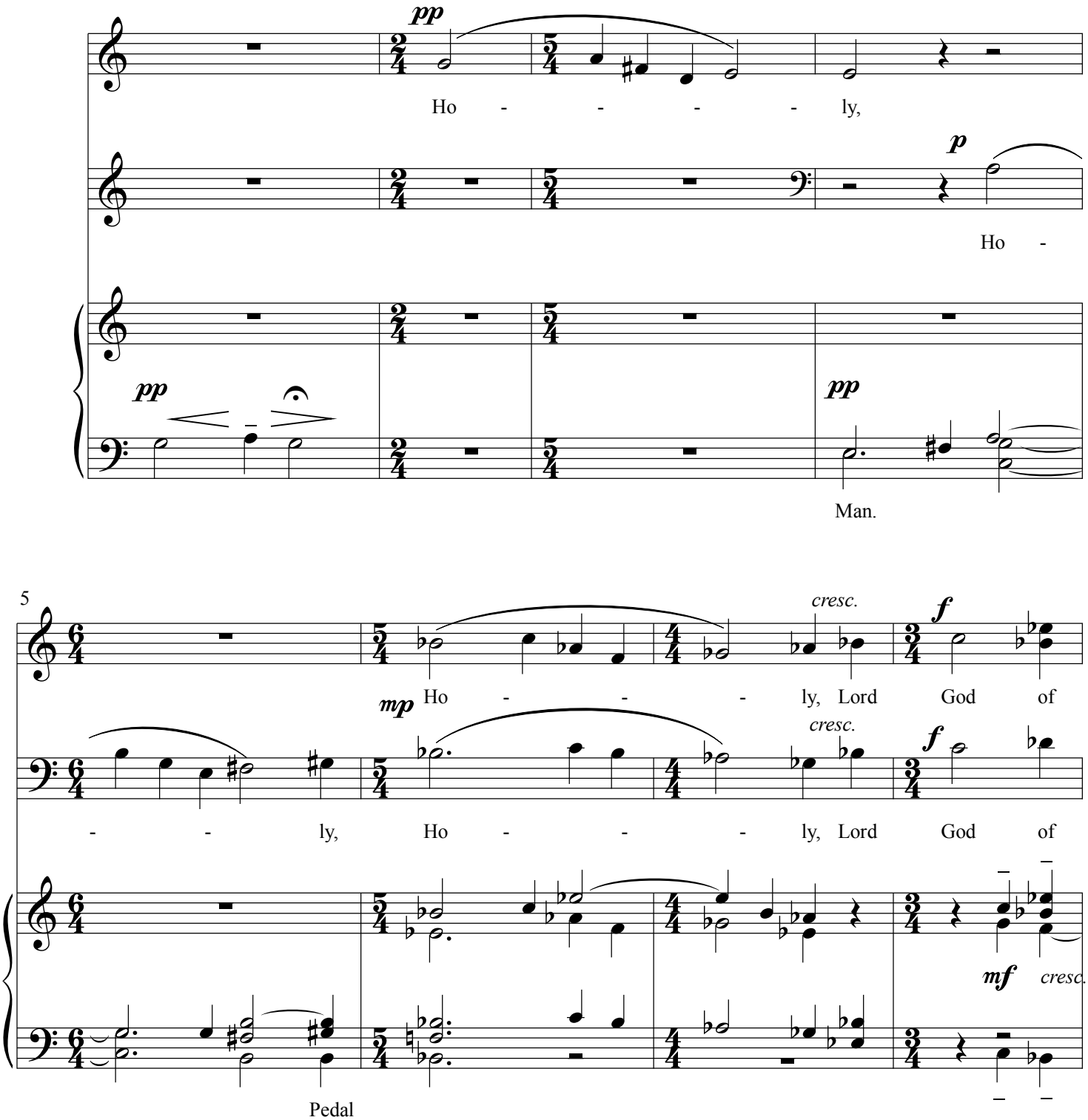

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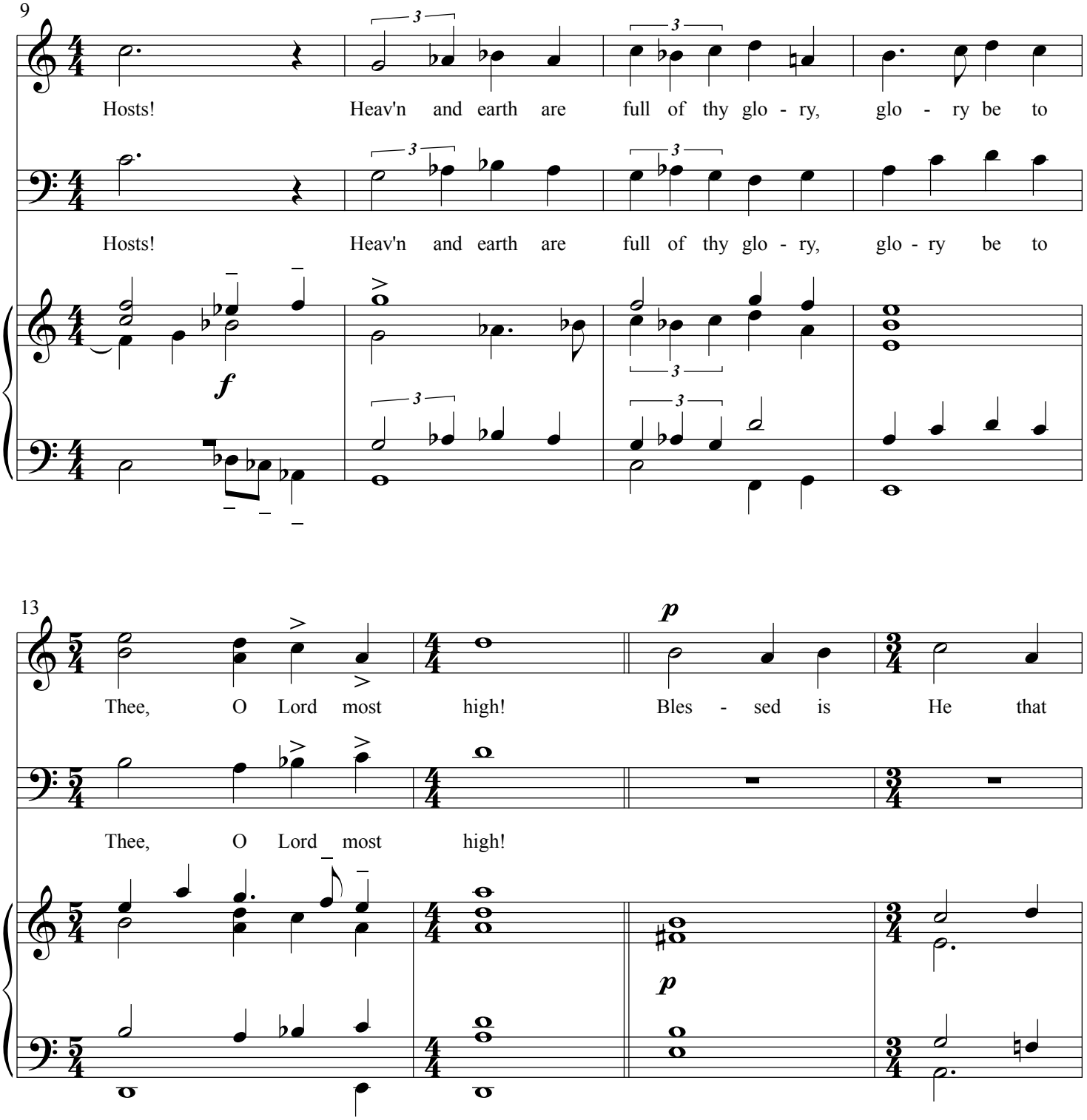
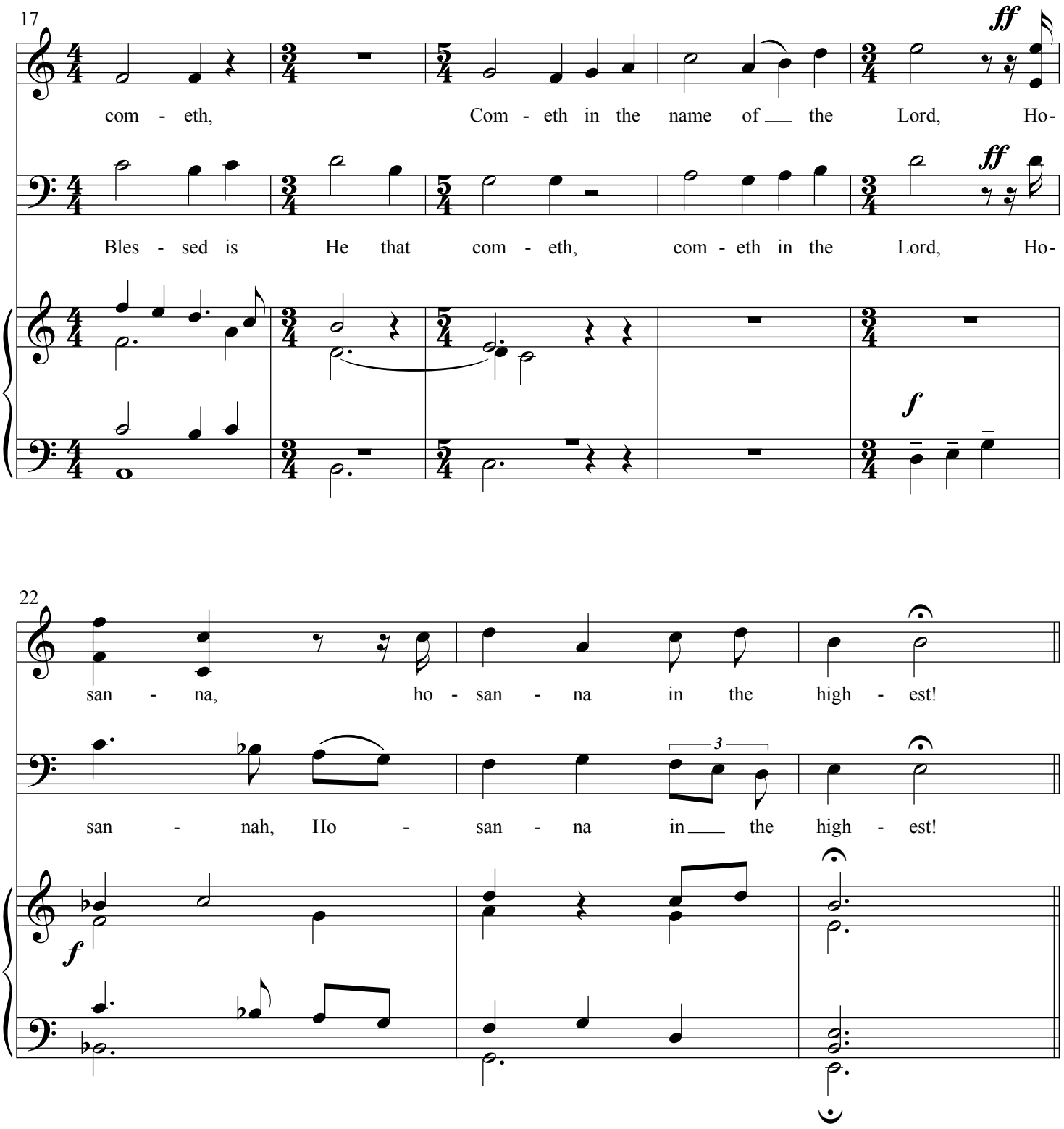

9
Hosts! Heav'n and earth are full of thy glo - ry, glo - ry be to
Hosts! Heav'n and earth are full of thy glo - ry, glo - ry be to
f
13
Thee, O Lord most high! Bles - sed is He that
Thee, O Lord most high!
p
p


17
ff
com - eth, Com - eth in the name of the Lord, Ho-
Bles - sed is He that com - eth, com - eth in the Lord, Ho-
f
22
san - na, ho - san - na in the high - est!
san - nah, Ho - san - na in the high - est!
3
f

3. AGNUS DEI

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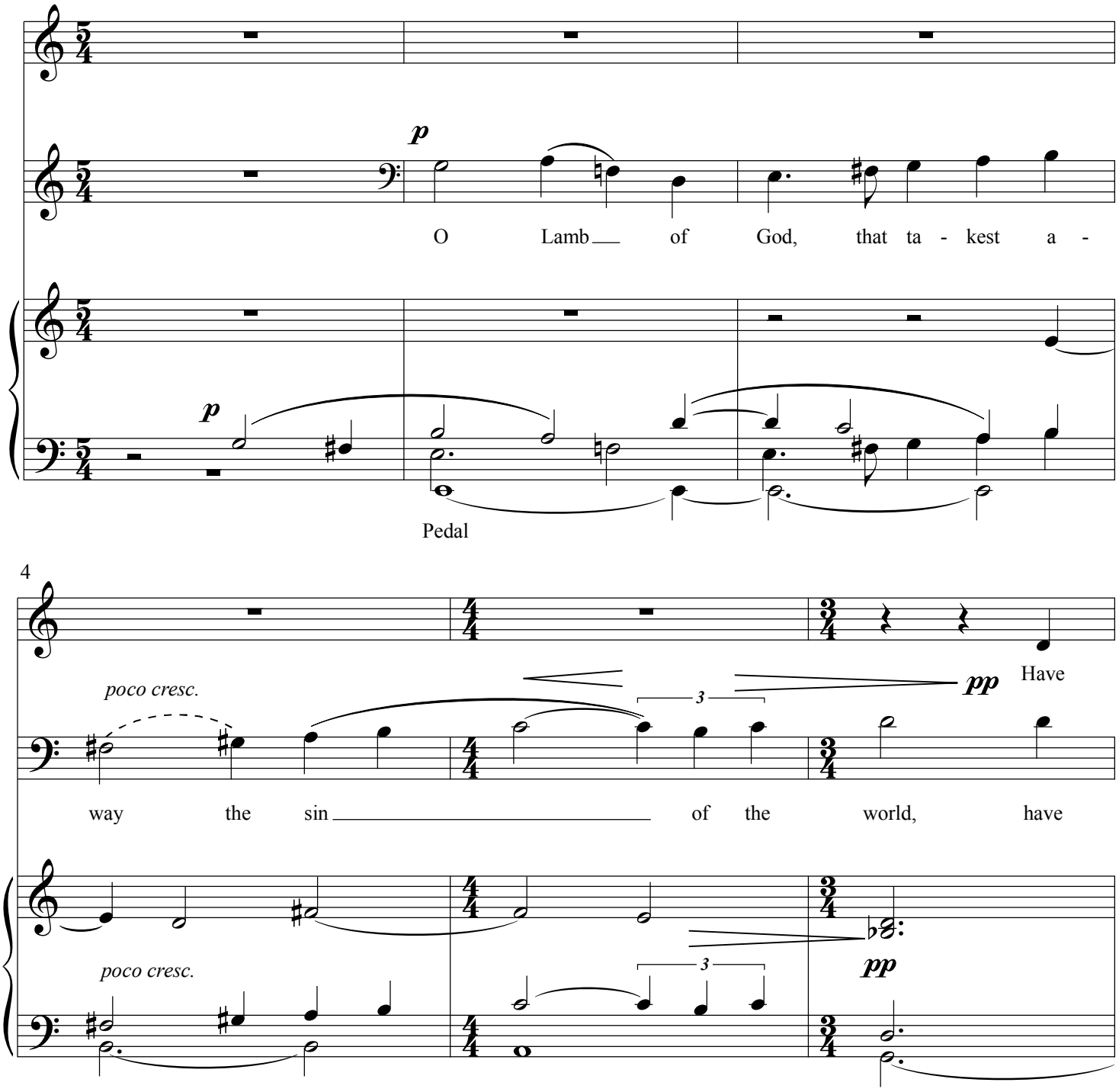

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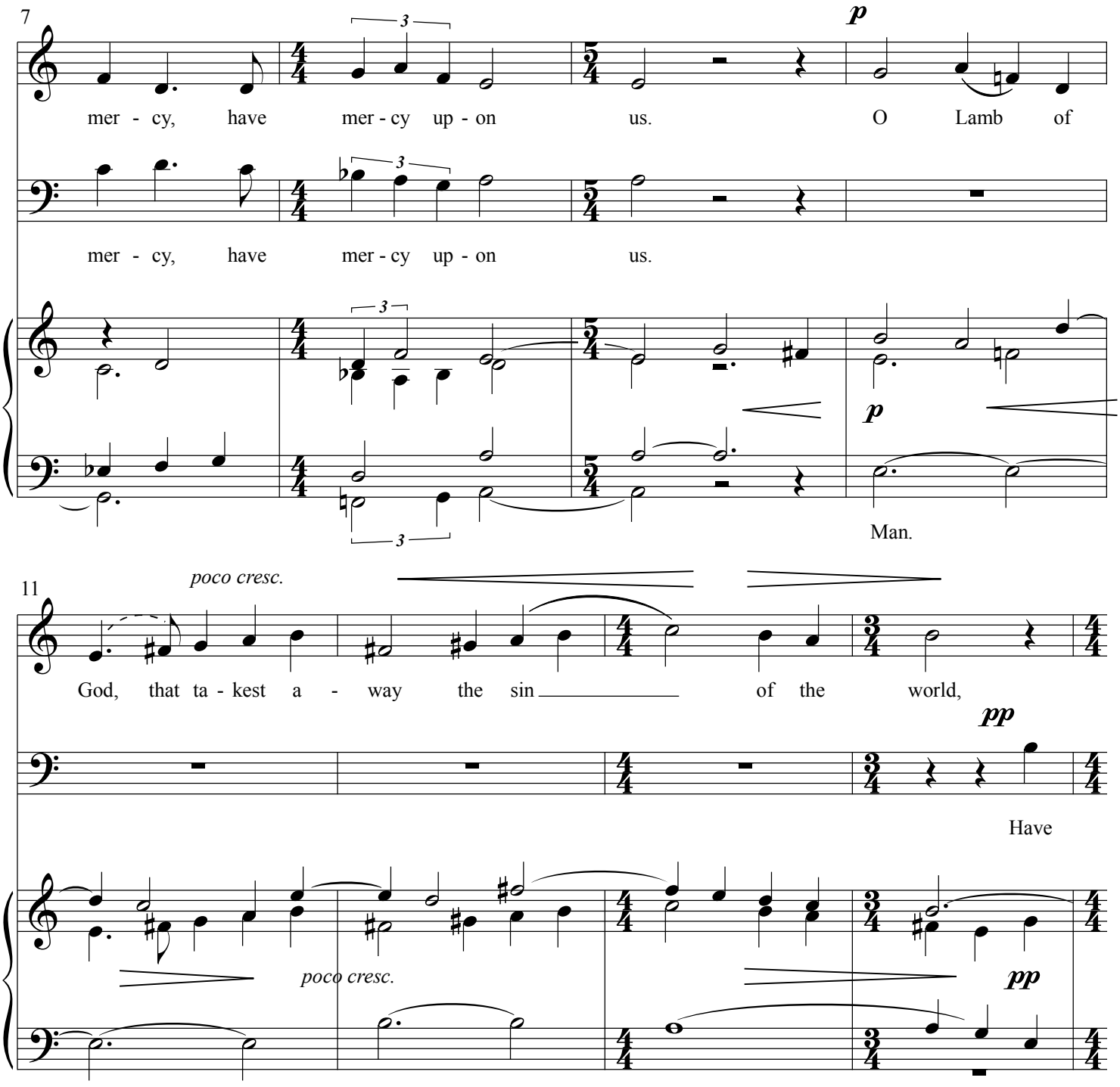
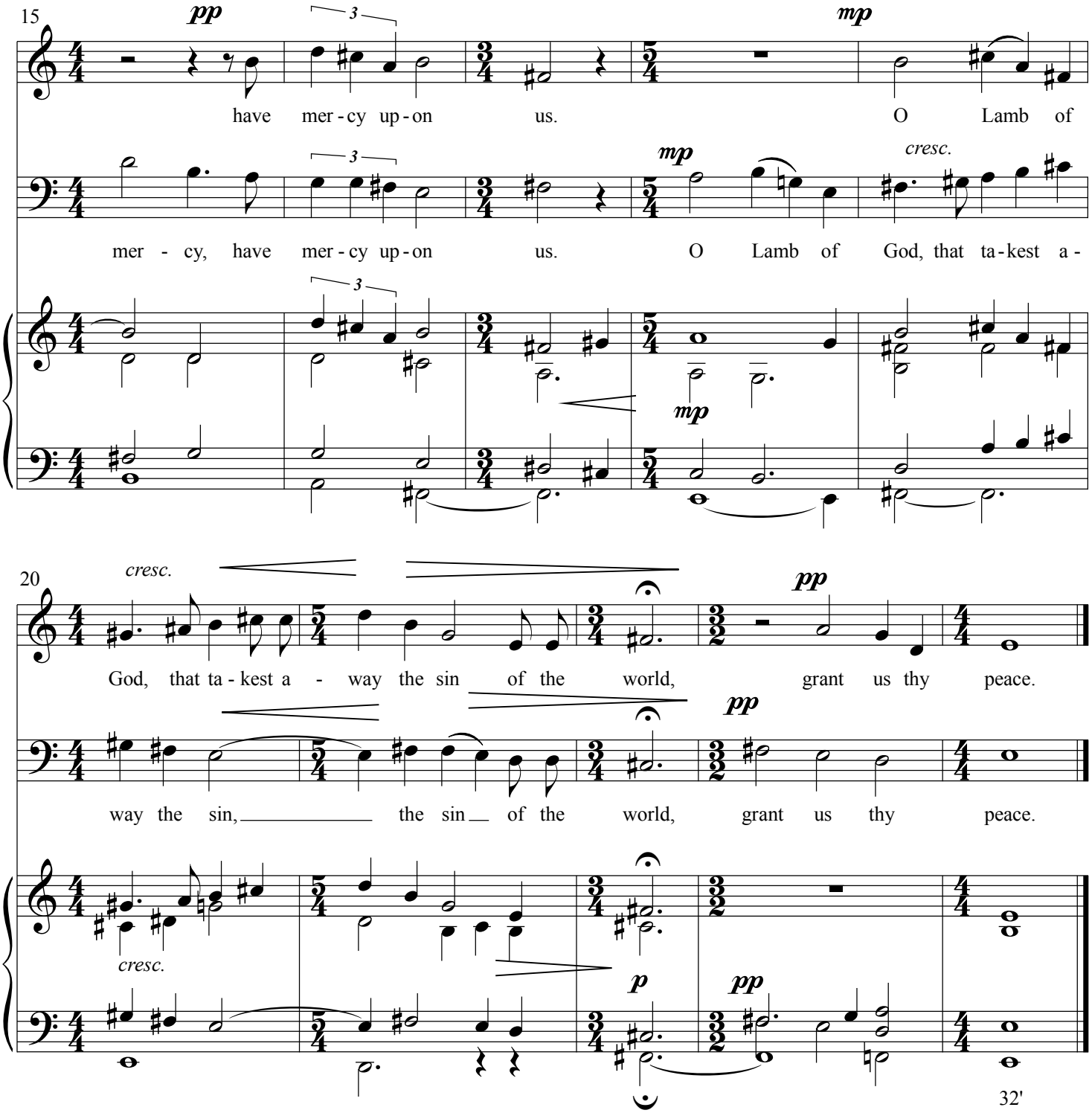

7
mer - cy, have mer - cy up - on us. O Lamb of
mer - cy, have mer - cy up - on us.
Man.
11
poco cresc.
God, that ta - kest a - way the sin of the world,
Have
poco cresc.



Kingston, Ontario, 12 March 1981