Catalog No. 8476

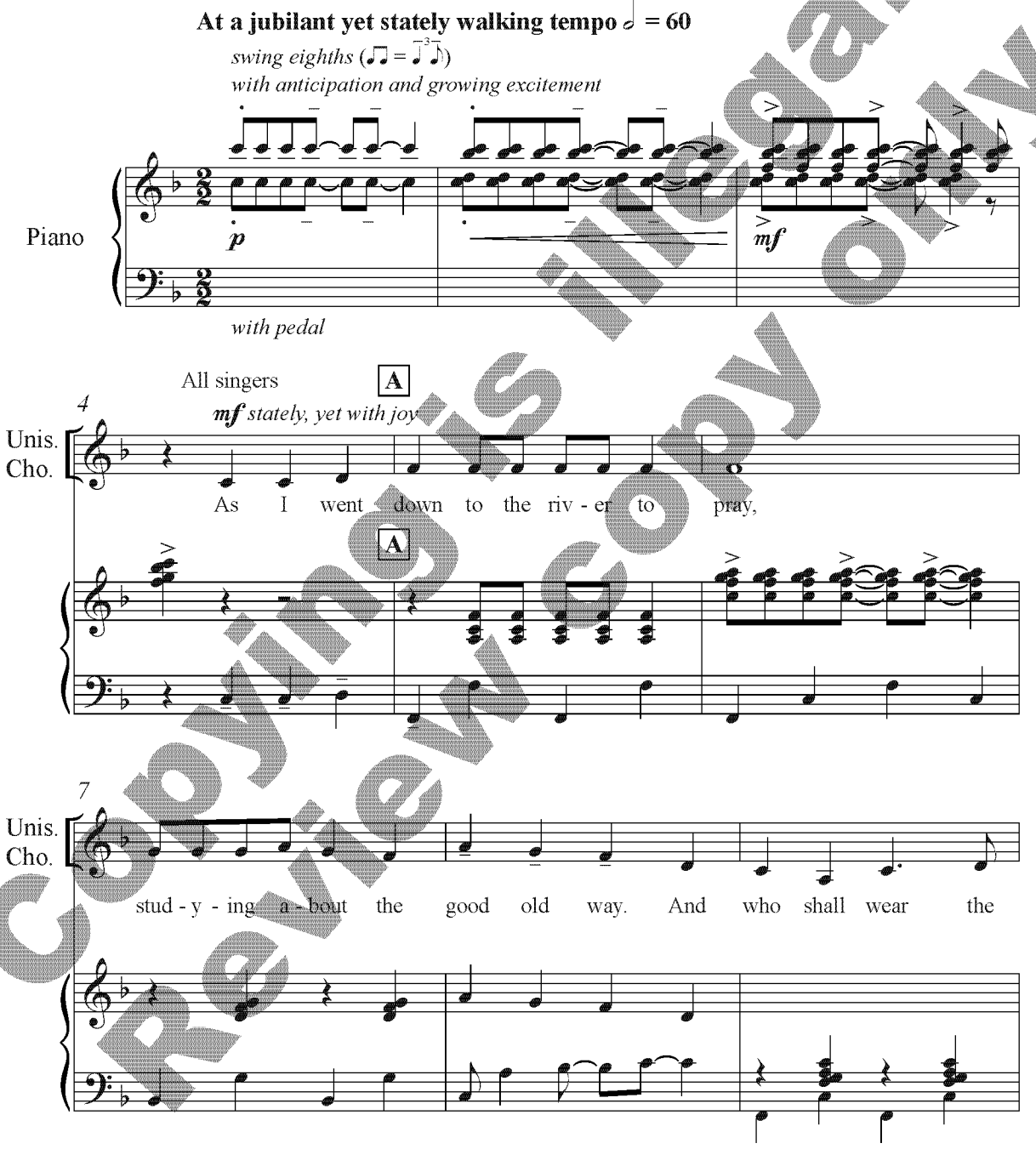
*Commissioned by the Warwick Valley Chorale (Warwick, NY) in celebration of their 75th season: 1940-2015; Stanley Curtis, Director*

# Down to the River to Pray

## *A Song of Celebration for SATB Chorus and Piano, or Brass Quintet and Percussion*

Traditional American Gospel Song
G. Walker, alt.

Gwyneth Walker




Note setting and format by Gwyneth Walker Music Productions

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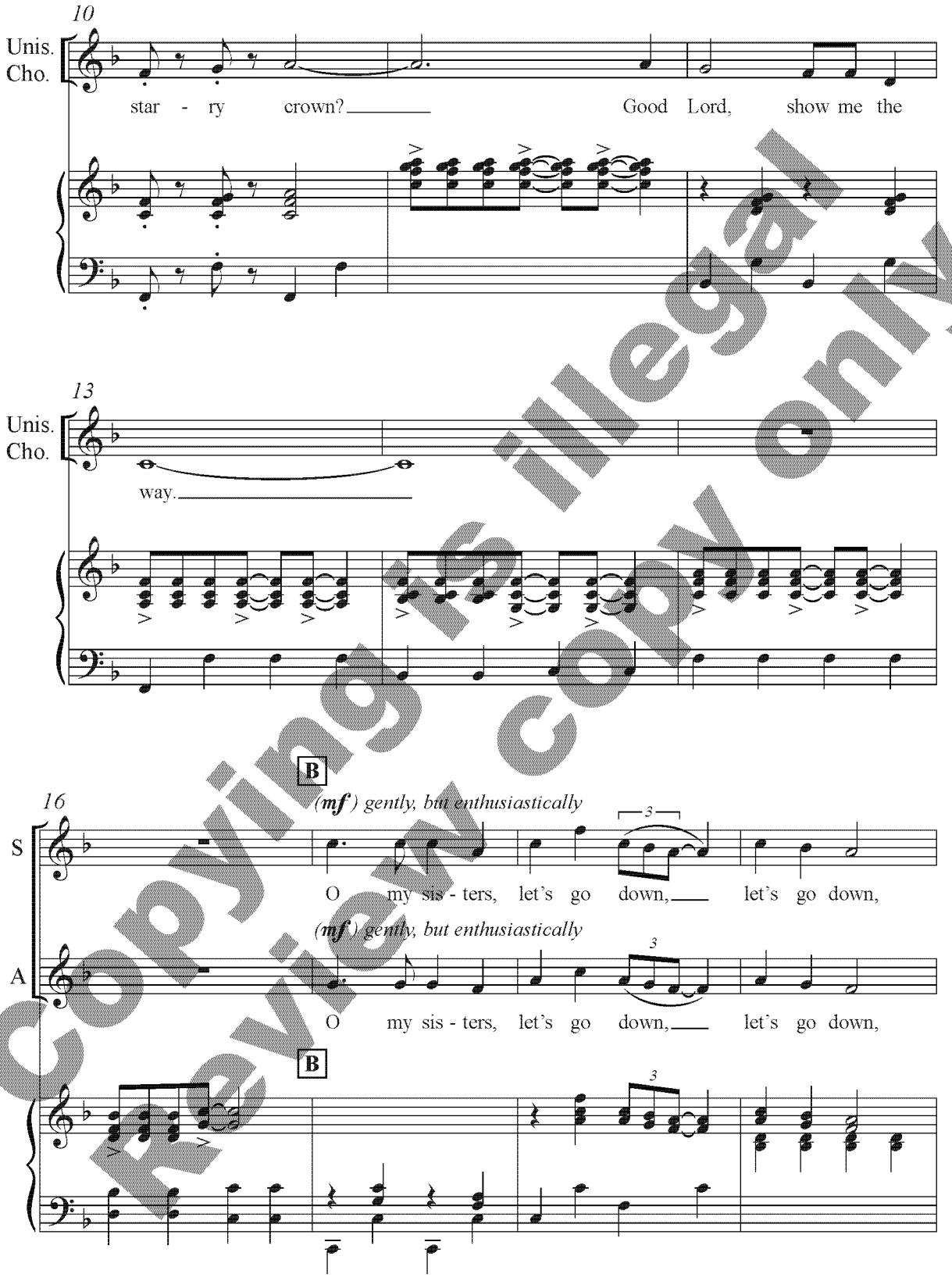


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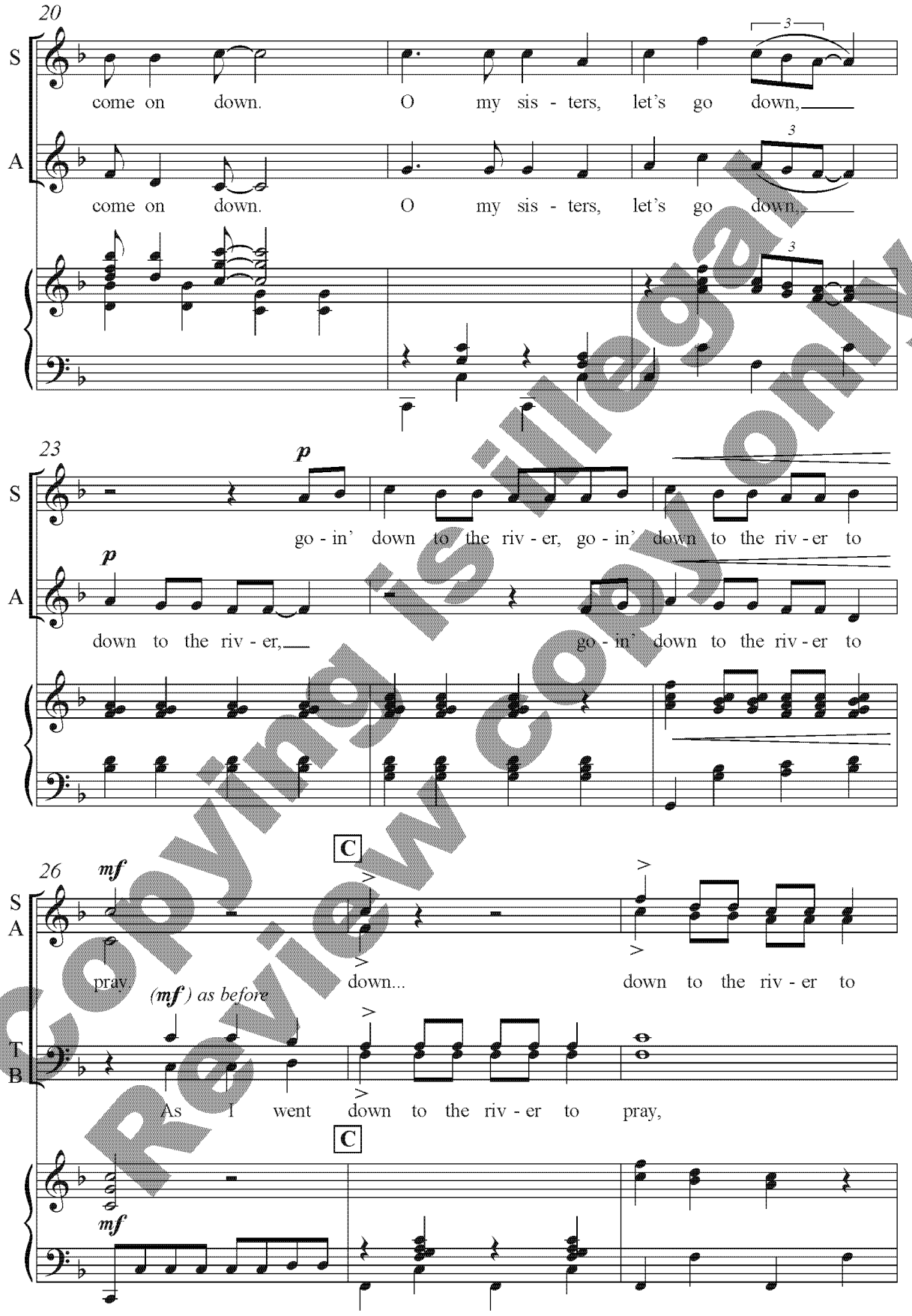


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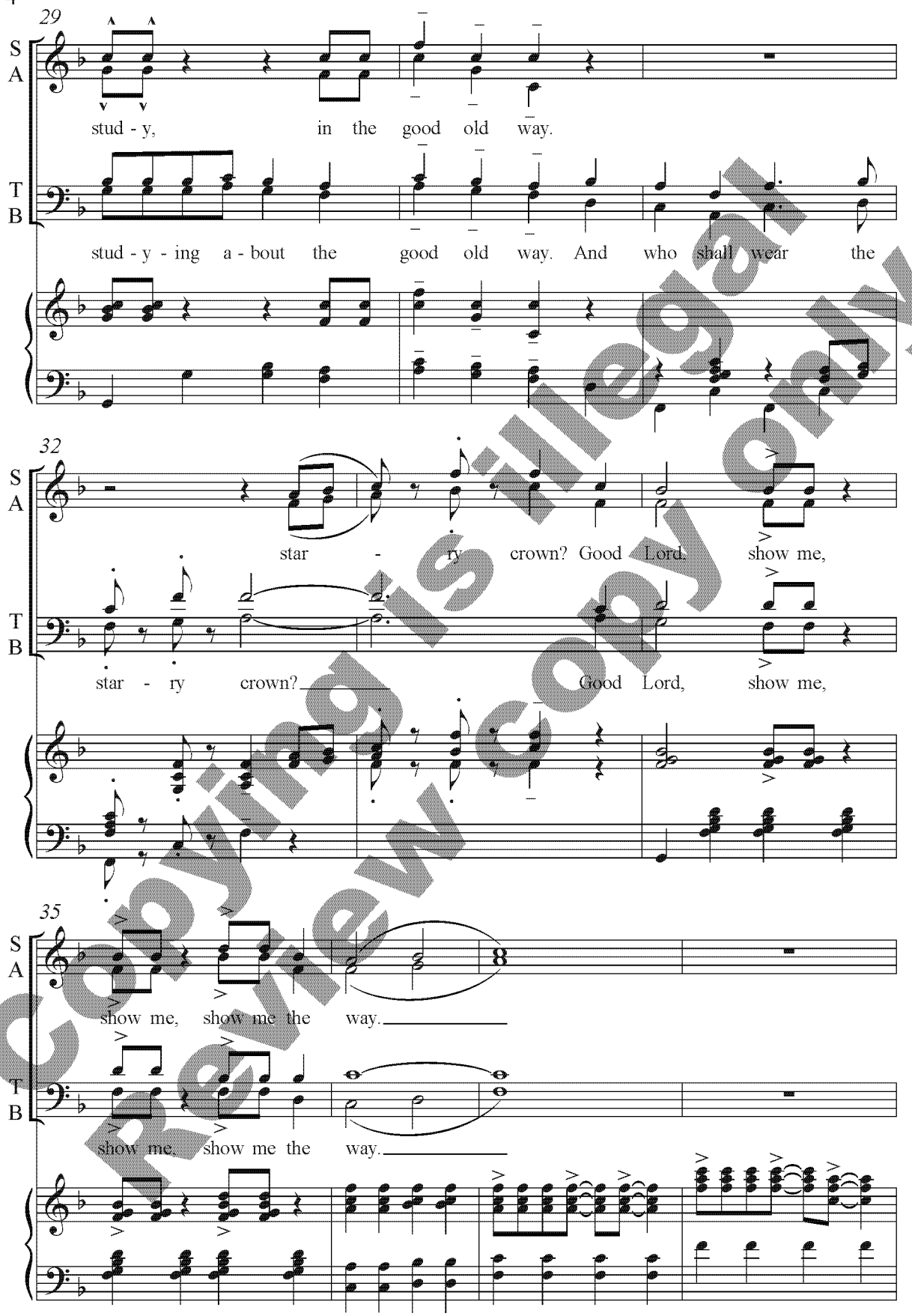


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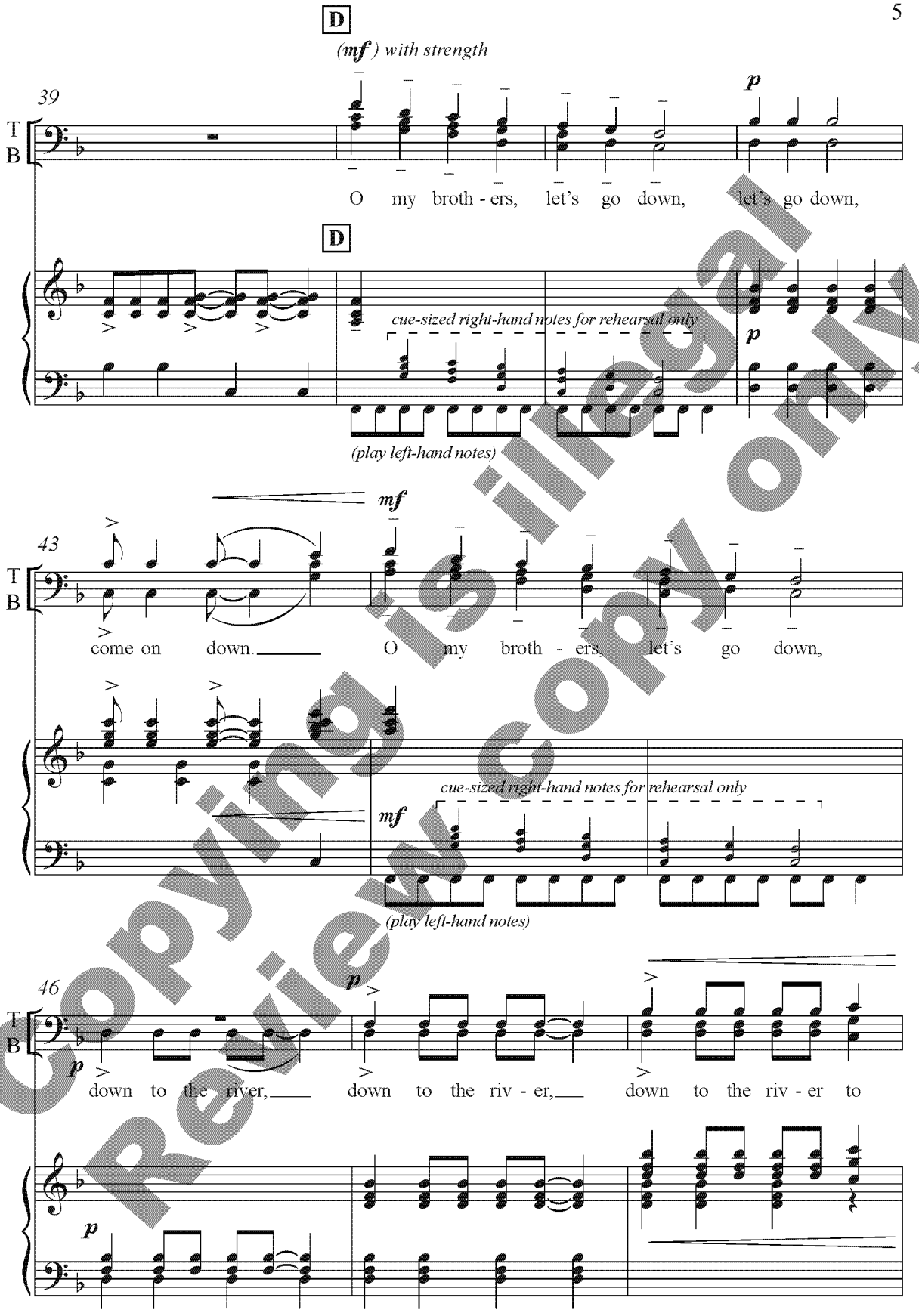


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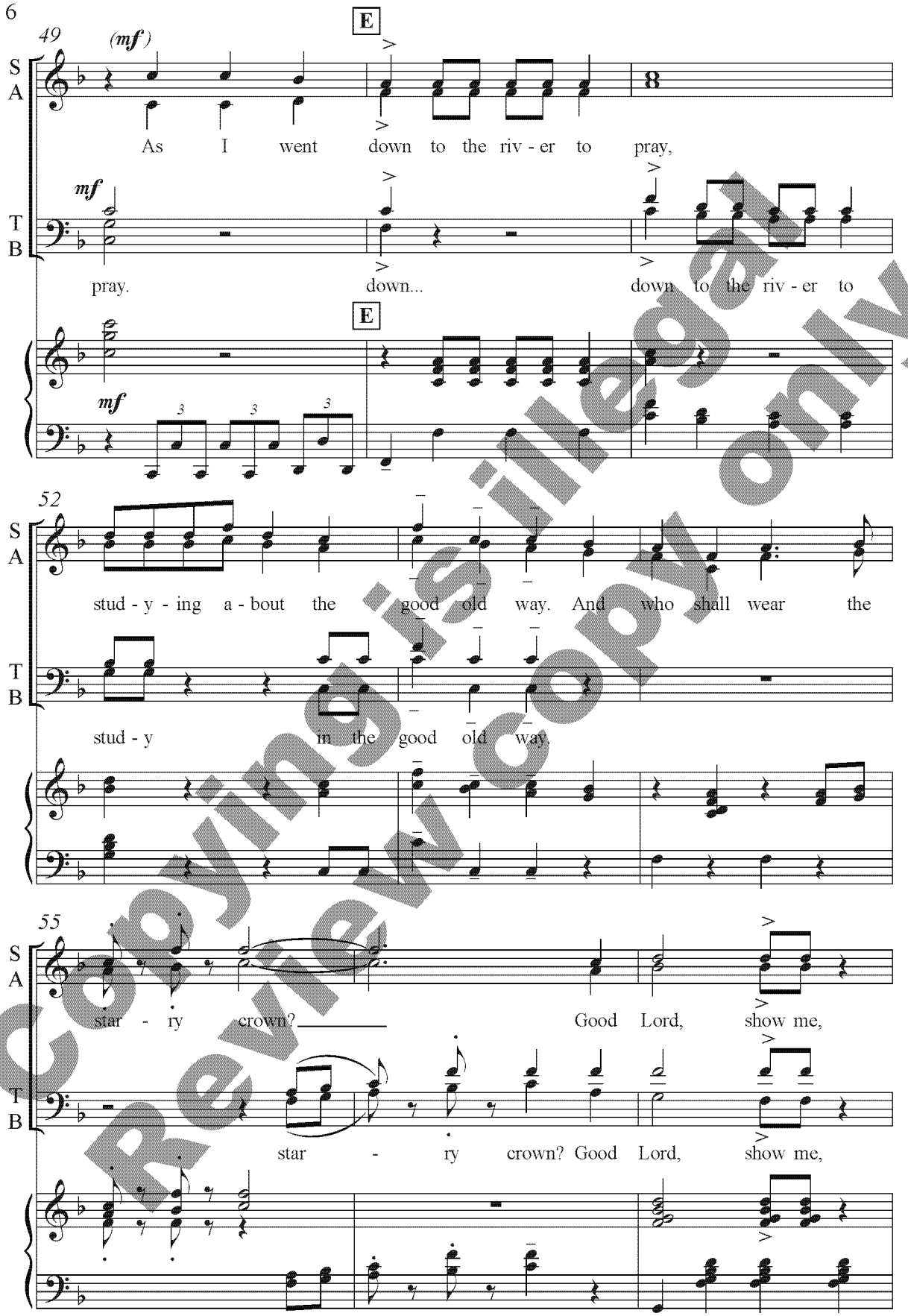


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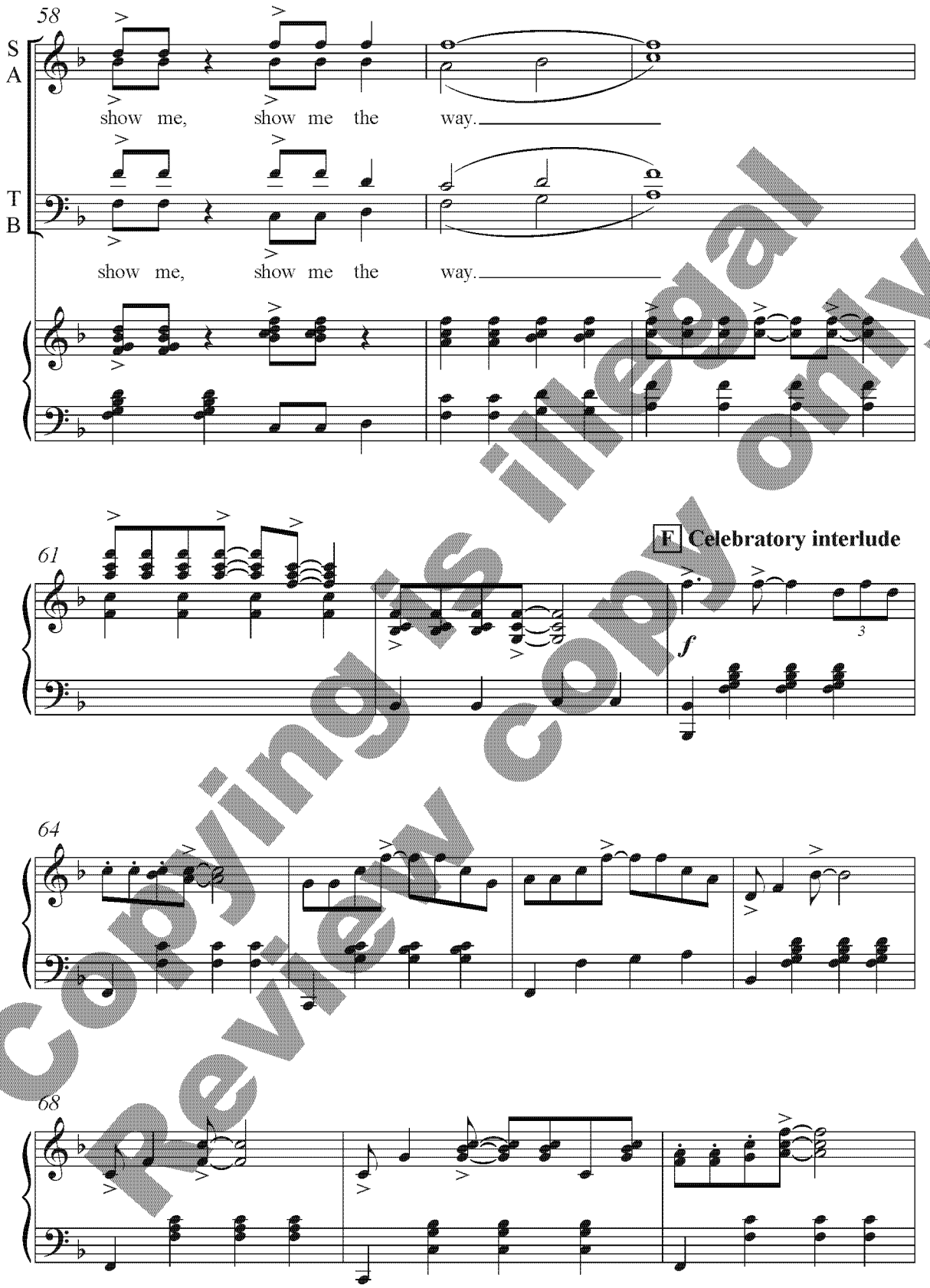


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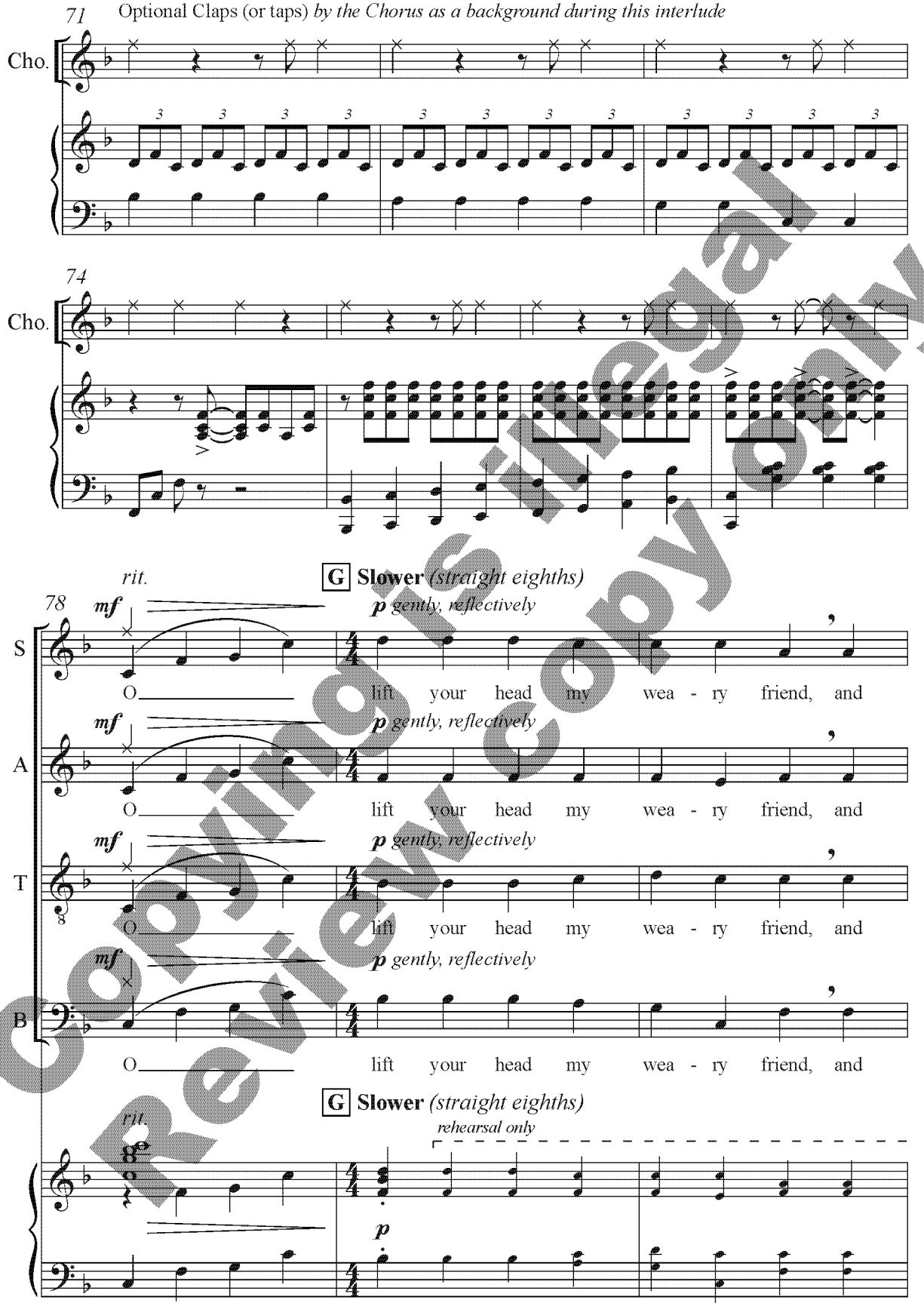


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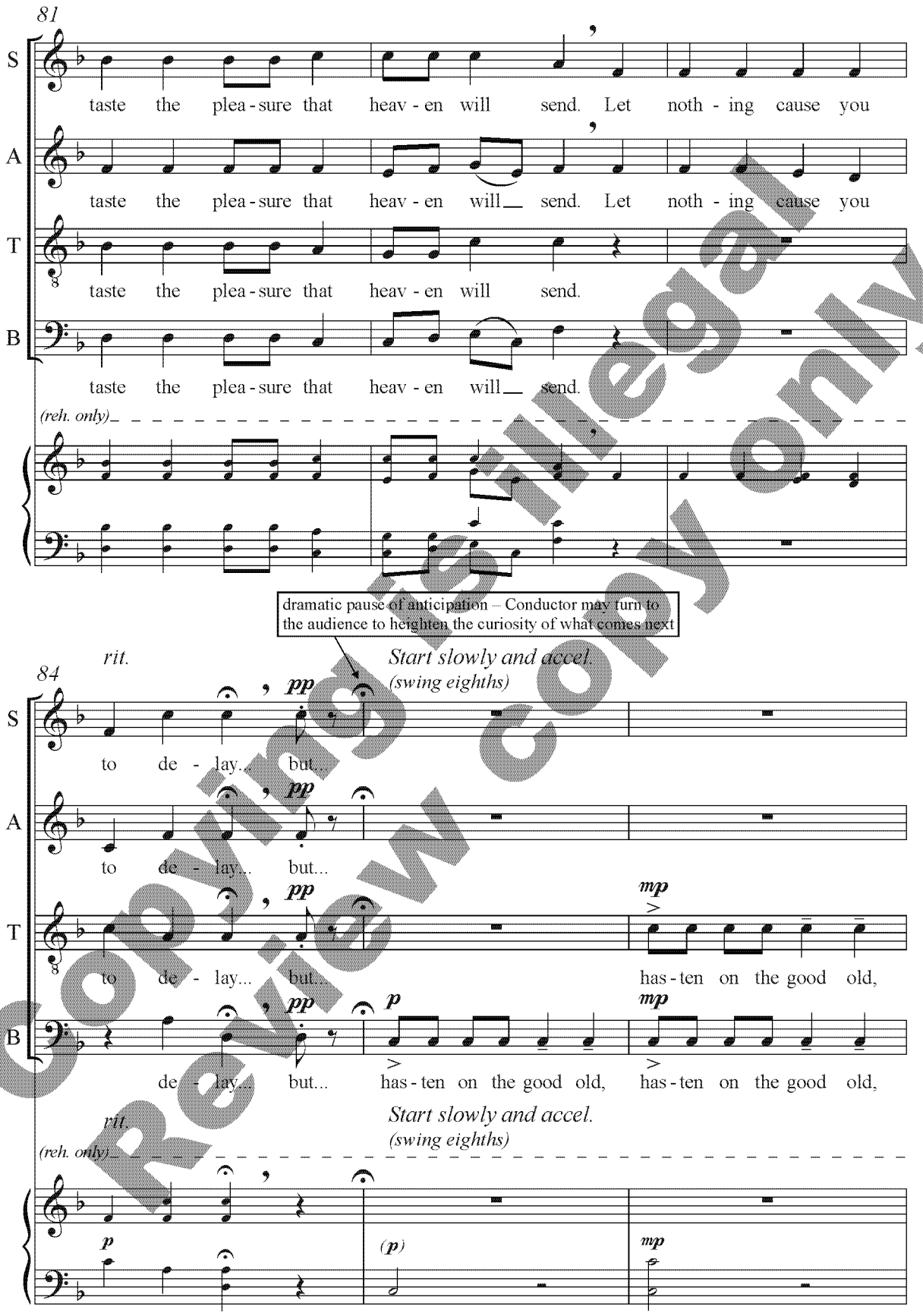


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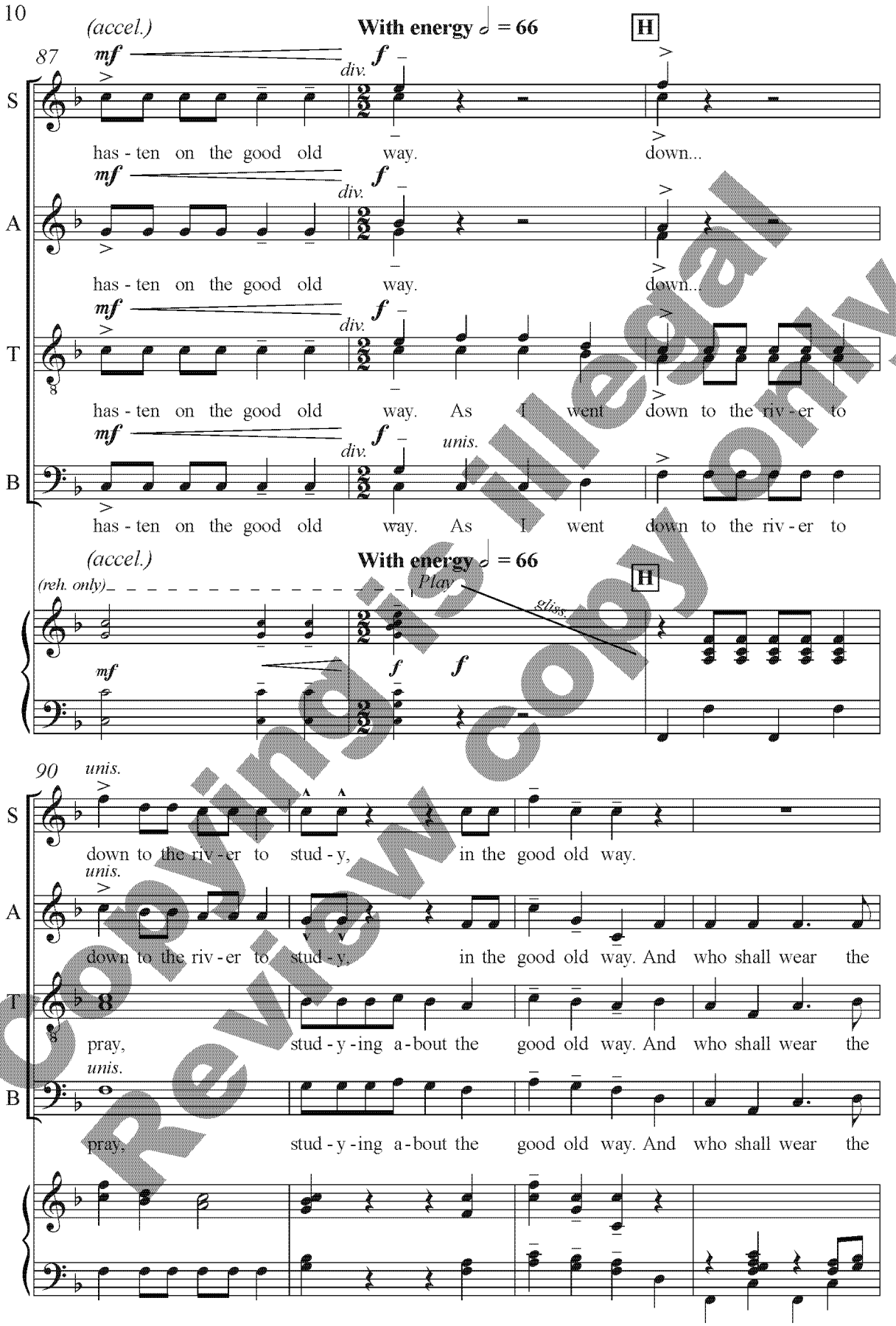


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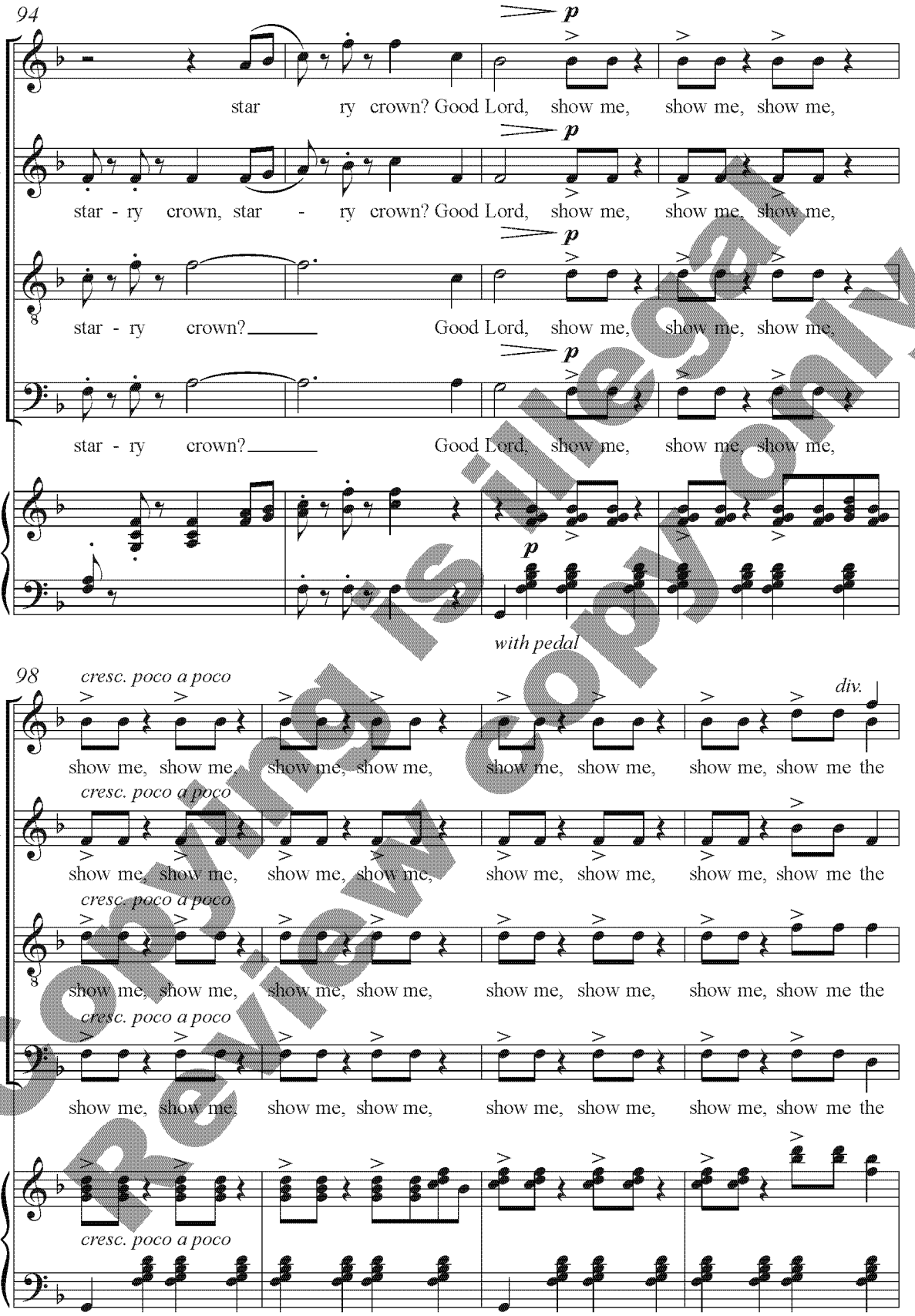


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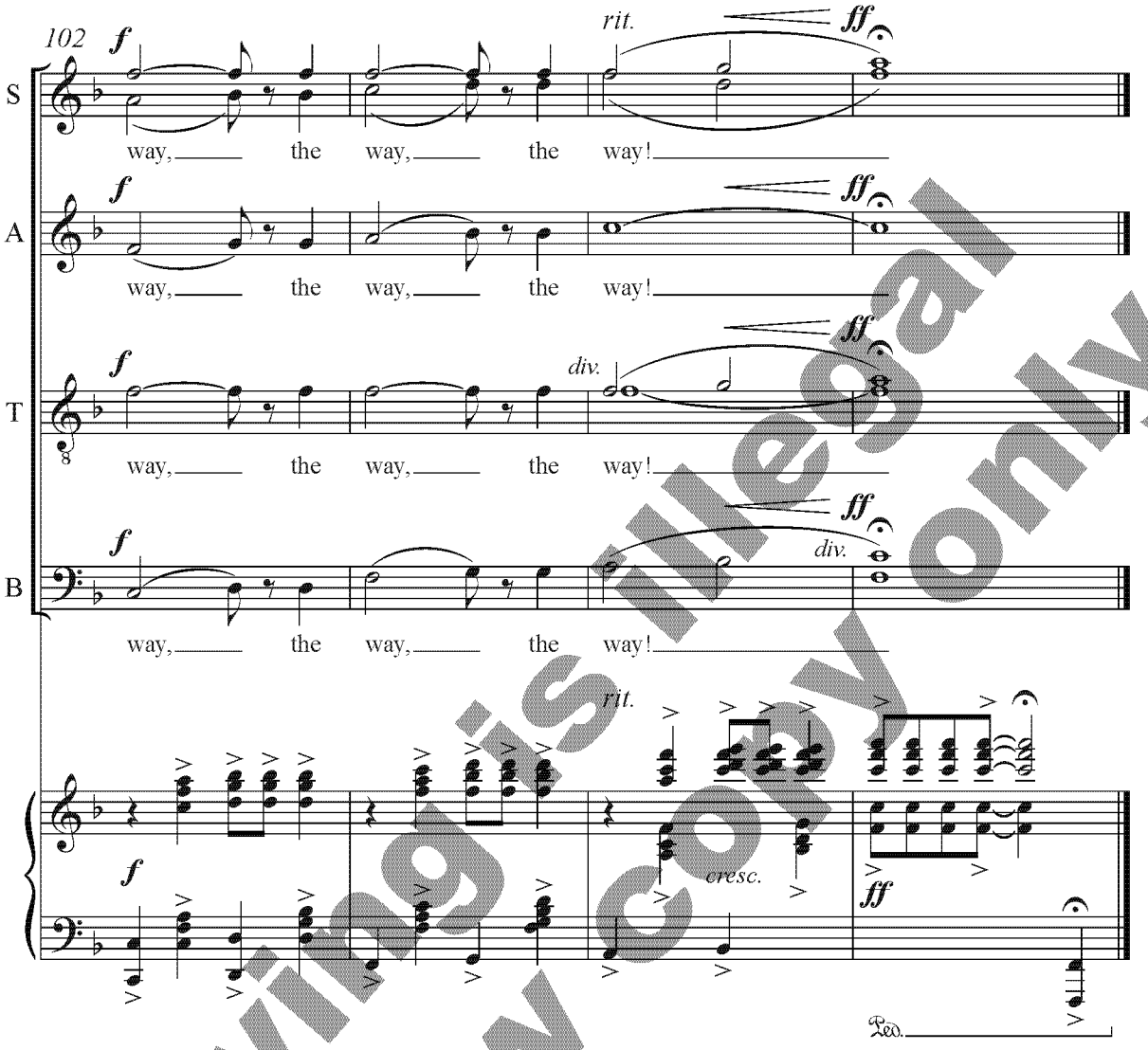


July 16, 2015
New Canaan, Connecticut
3:30

## Program Notes

***Down to the River to Pray*** originates as an American gospel song with a simple message of faith and baptism, going "down to the river." However, it is thought that the song was composed by a slave, with reference to the river and the "starry crown" (North Star) as a route and guide to freedom.

Usually the song is performed a cappella, and slowly, prayerfully. However, the walking aspect of the lyrics might suggest a different approach – one of swing rhythm in duple meter. Here the focus is on the journey, the joy of the pilgrimage, and the hope for freedom.

The accompaniment (either piano, or brass and percussion) plays a featured role, especially as rhythmic force. The song now becomes one of triumphant progression, hastening on the "good old way!"

**Available editions:**

Octavo: ECS Catalog No. 8476
Full Score: ECS Catalog No. 8476A
Parts: ECS Catalog No. 8476B

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$2.25
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