Twenty-Five Free Hymn Harmonizations for Organ

Set 1

by Derek Remeš

Twenty-Five Free Hymn Harmonizations for Organ, Set 1

These free hymn harmonizations are intended to provide variety during the church service with the ultimate goal of encouraging congregational singing. They are the result of years of writing free harmonizations each Sunday for my own use as an organist. Most are meant for the last verse of the hymn, but some may also be appropriate as introductions, particularly if the congregation is already familiar with the tune. Some might even be used as codas or interludes, even when not indicated as such. As John Ferguson once said to me, "Not every hymn should be an 'event.'" I believe he was right. One free harmonization per Sunday is usually enough. Always use the text of the hymn as a starting point for deciding whether to use a free harmonization at all.

Some tunes in this set include optional introductions, modulating interludes or other variations. Interludes, modulating or not, are important for giving untrained singers a chance to rest, particularly on longer hymns. Interludes also provide the opportunity to contemplate the meaning of the text.

No dynamics or registration indications have been given, except the occasional hairpin to indicate use of the swell box, if available (*St. Columba* is an exception, however). The variety of organs in use today makes it difficult to give meaningful registrations for all situations. If notated on two staves, the lowest line should always be played with the pedal. The default touch should be strict legato in all parts.

Although the usual texture is four part chorale-style, a fuller texture can be achieved by filling in more gaps in the chords, regardless of parallels. At times, I have written in this texture where I felt it would sound better (particularly at the end of the hymn to create a crescendo), but you should feel free to use this technique even where it is not indicated. It is important to remember than since the congregation will be singing unison on the last verse, rather than in four part chorale-style, the organ accompaniment does not always have to adhere to the rules of part writing which would otherwise forbid parallels. The pedal line might also be played in octaves at times, if you desire a fuller bass line and can manage to play legato.

No tempo indications have been given. One should always sing the hymn to find a suitable tempo, keeping in mind that the right tempo may vary depending on the traditions of a particular congregation and the acoustics of the room. After choosing your tempo, stick to it rigidly, only stretching slightly for breaths at the ends of phrases. At these places, my personal preference is to break the manuals while keeping the pedal legato. For very dry acoustics, one might only break the soprano line, or for very wet acoustics, break all voices.

Though all these arrangements are originally intended for the organ, some may be suitable for the piano if an organ is not available. If played on the piano, one should double the bass line in octaves, omitting the tenor voice if it cannot be played by the right hand. Lastly, be sure to check for melodic variations from the hymn tunes in your particular hymnal to be sure the versions are exactly the same, transposing if need be.

I sincerely hope you enjoy playing these free hymn harmonizations and find them of use in your own work as organists.

Derek Remeš
derekremes.com

March, 2013
Eastman School of Music
Rochester, NY

Twenty-Five Free Hymn Harmonizations for Organ, Set 1

Azmon

Caithness

Christe Sanctorum

Deus Tuorum Militum

Earth and All Stars

Foundation

Italian Hymn

Kings of Orient

Melita

Nun Danket

Old 113th

Ratisbon

St. Agnes

St. Anne

St. Columba

Slane

Song 46

Southwell

Tallis Canon (*The Eighth Tune*)

Tidings

Wachet Auf

Walton

Wareham

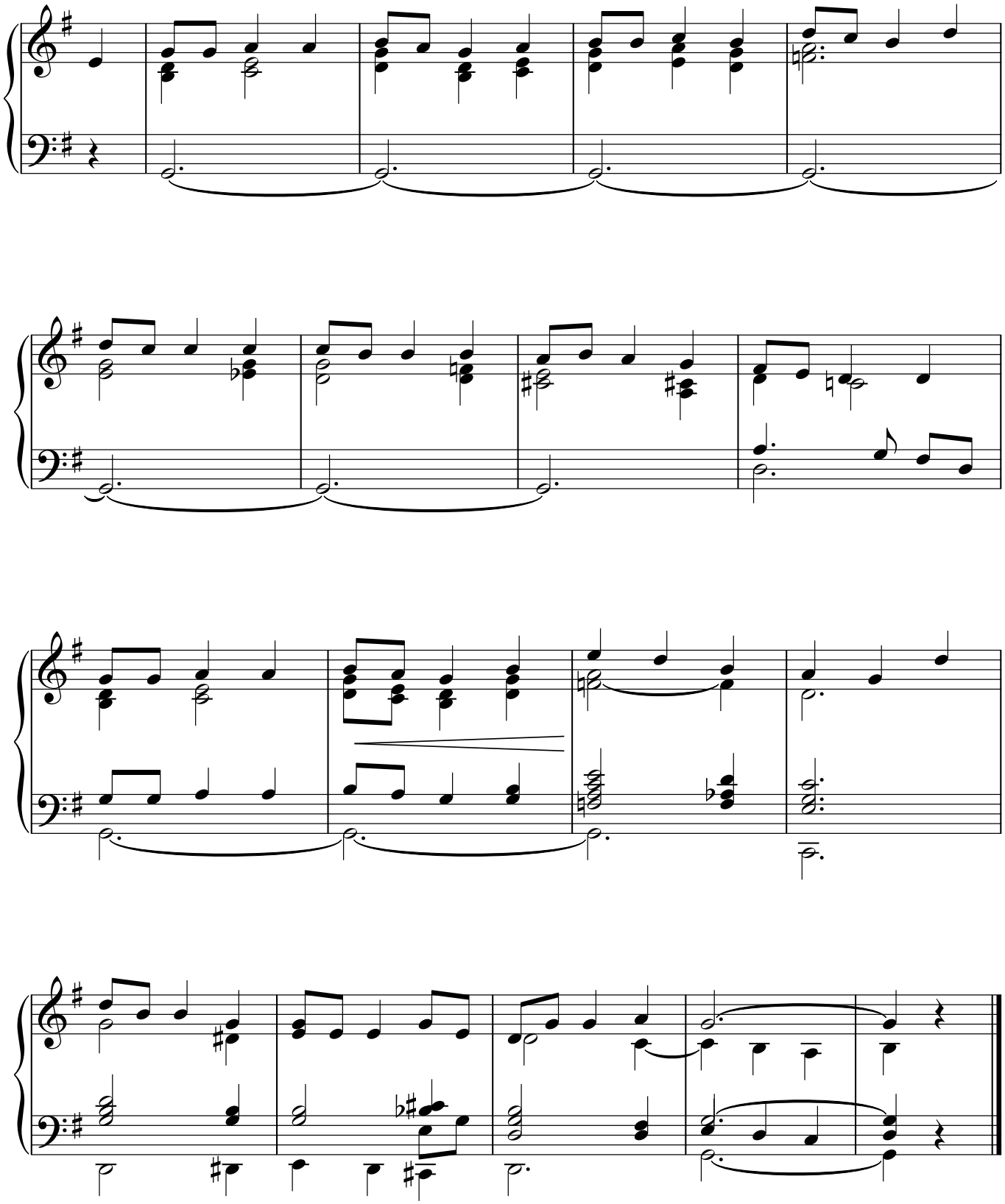
When the Saints Go Marching In

Winchester New

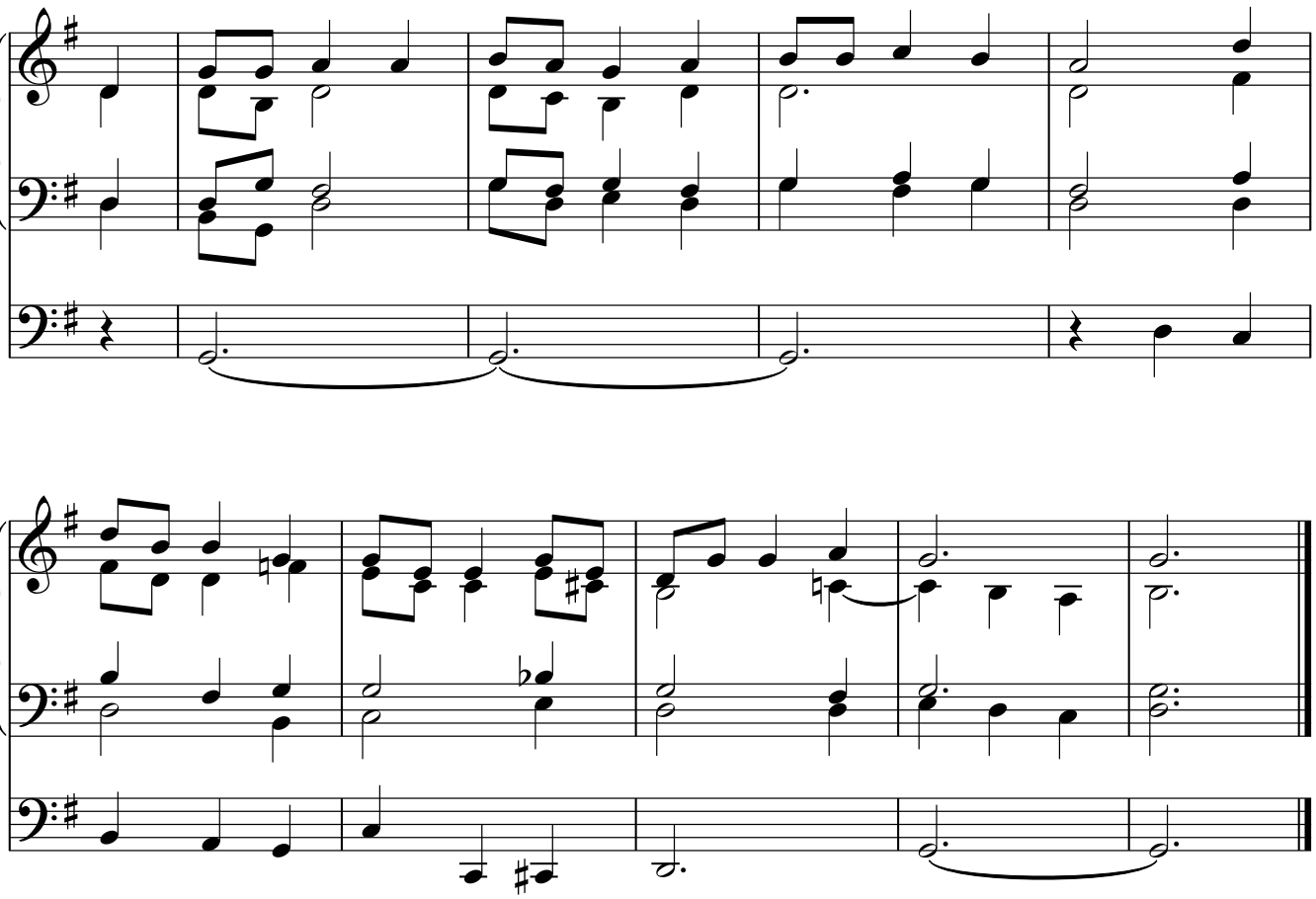
Azmon

Carl G. Gläser, 1784-1829
Arr. Derek Remeš

Introduction:



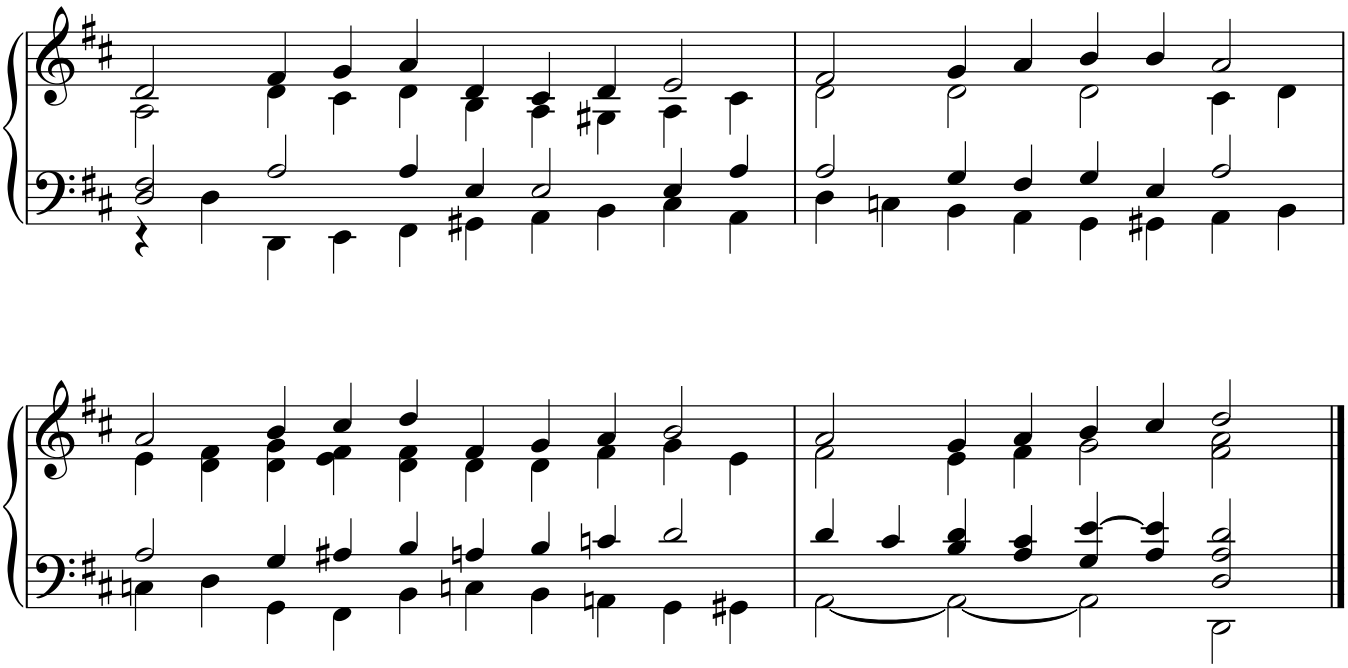
Setting for last verse:



Caithness

The Psalmes of David in Prose and Meeter, 1635
Arr. Derek Remeš

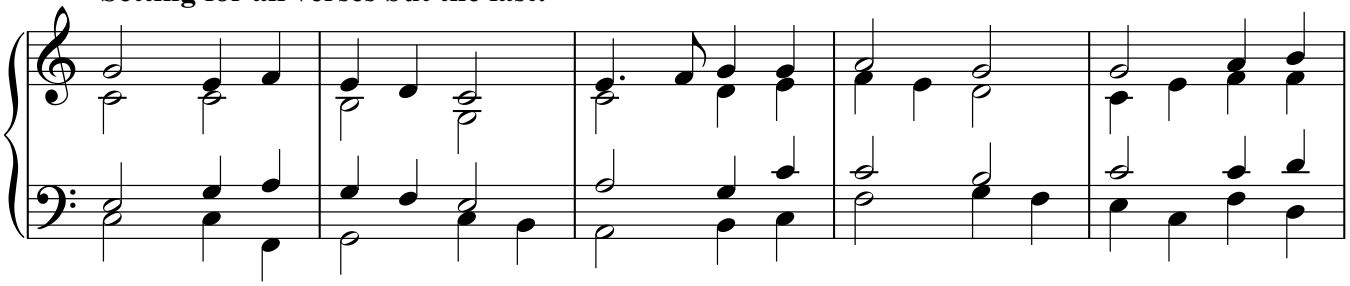
Setting for last verse:

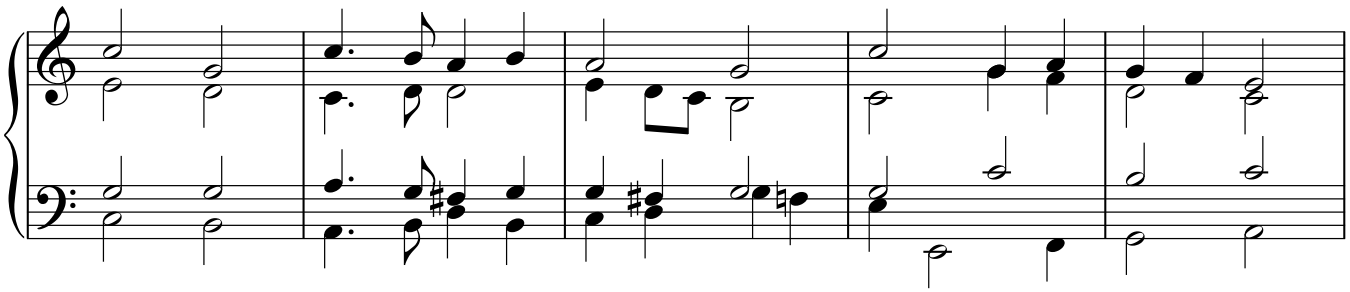


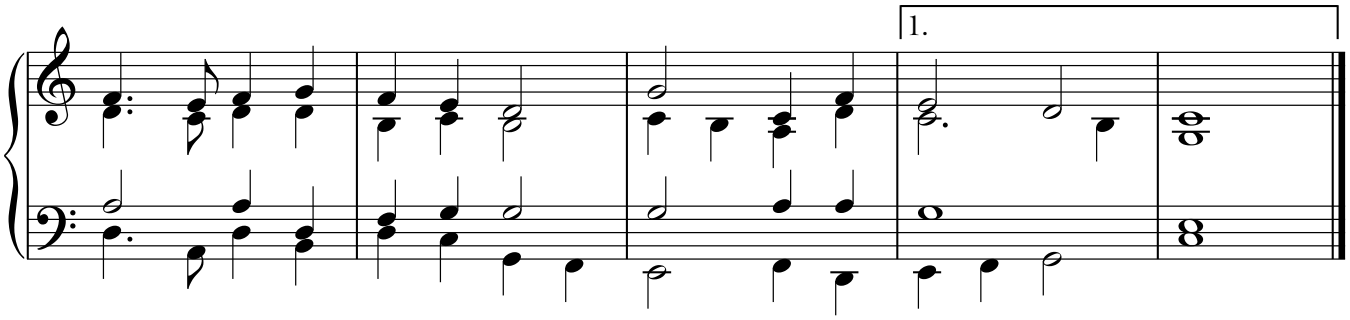
Christe Sanctorum

Paris Antiphoner, 1681
Arr. Derek Remeš

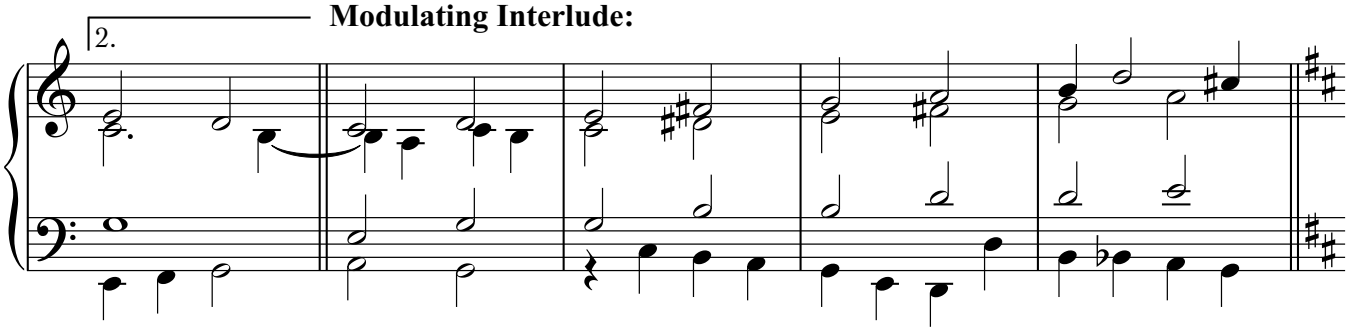
Setting for all verses but the last:

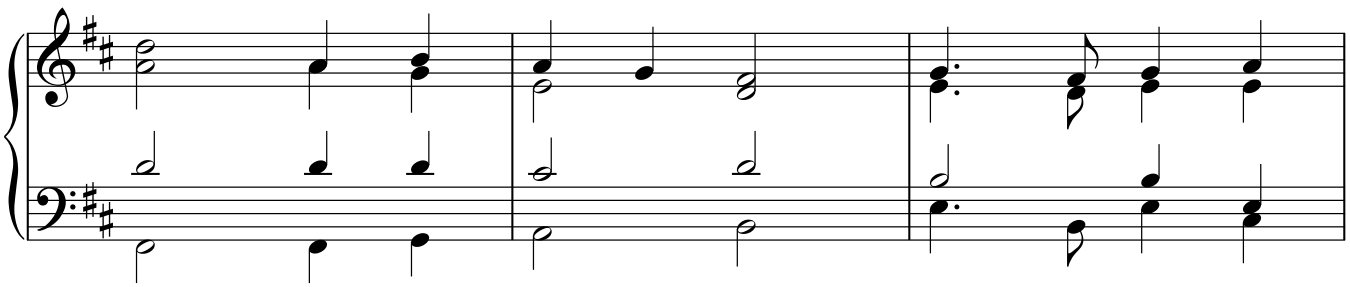


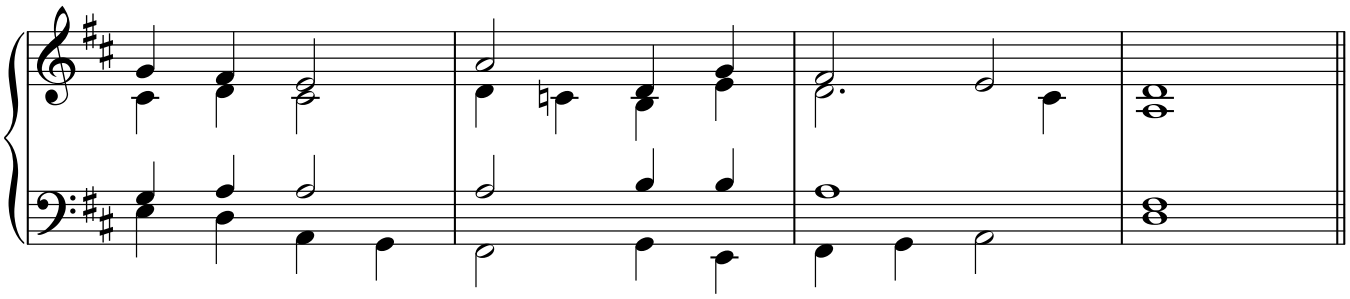




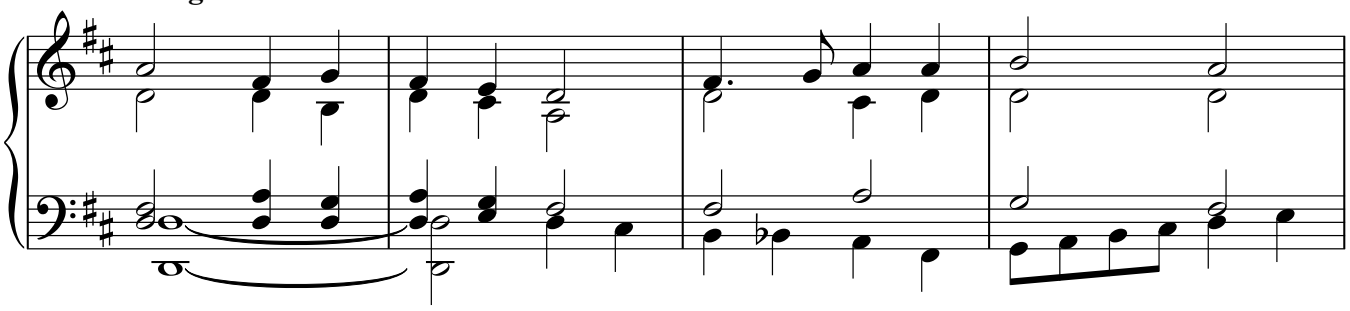
Modulating Interlude:

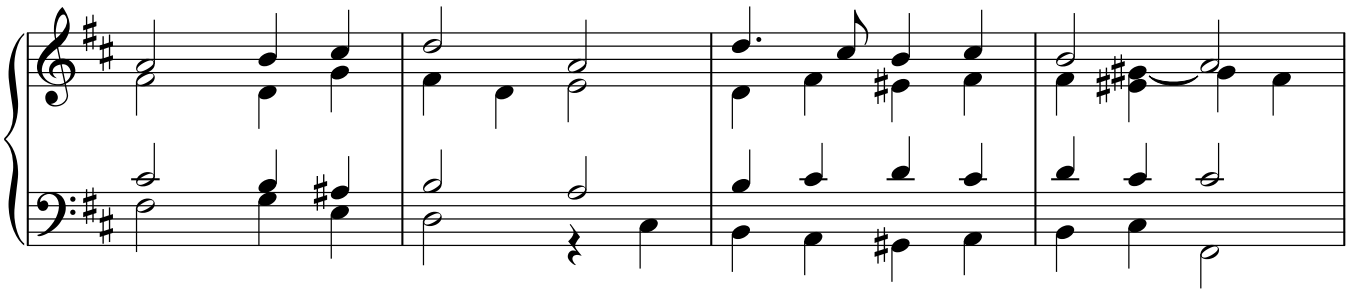


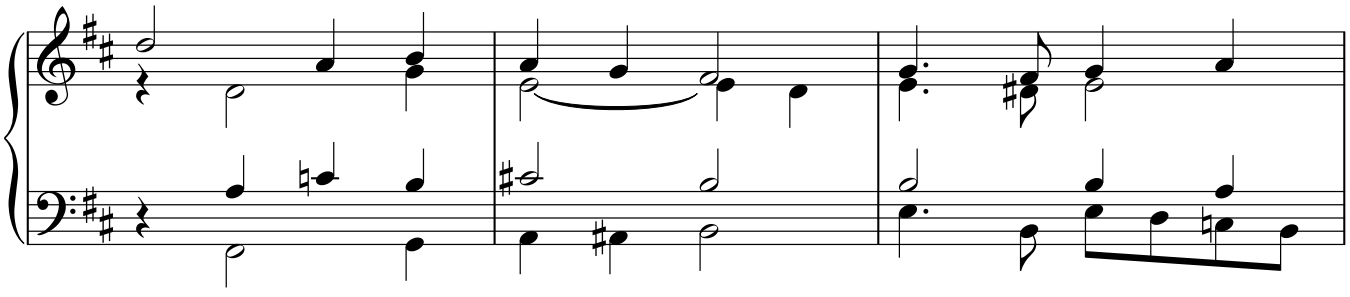


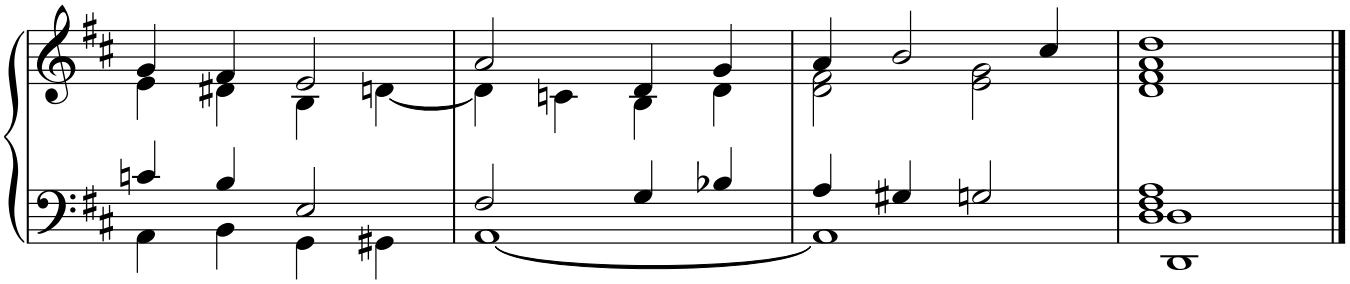


Setting for last verse:





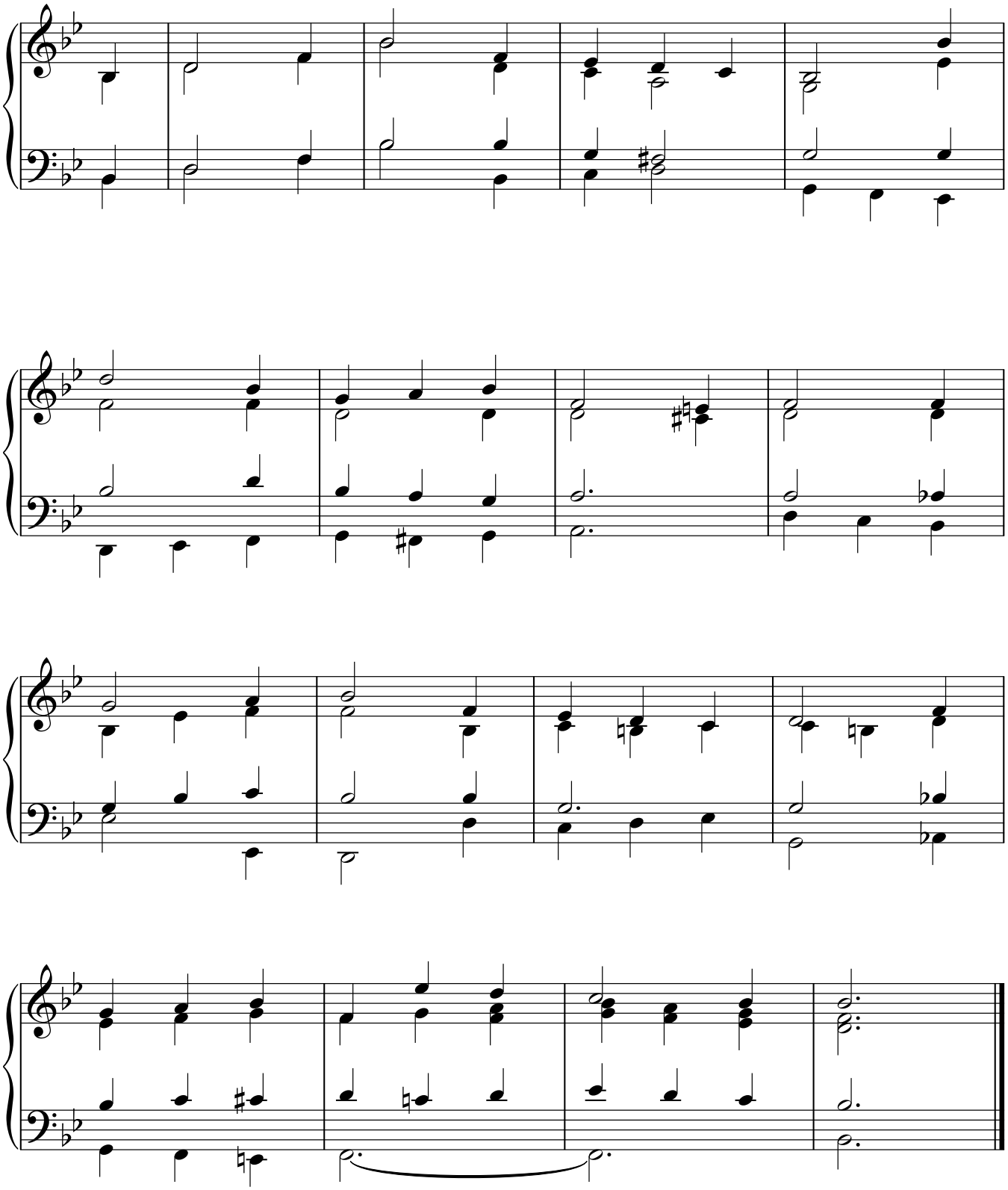




Deus Tuorum Militum

Grenoble Antiphoner, 1753
Arr. Derek Remeš

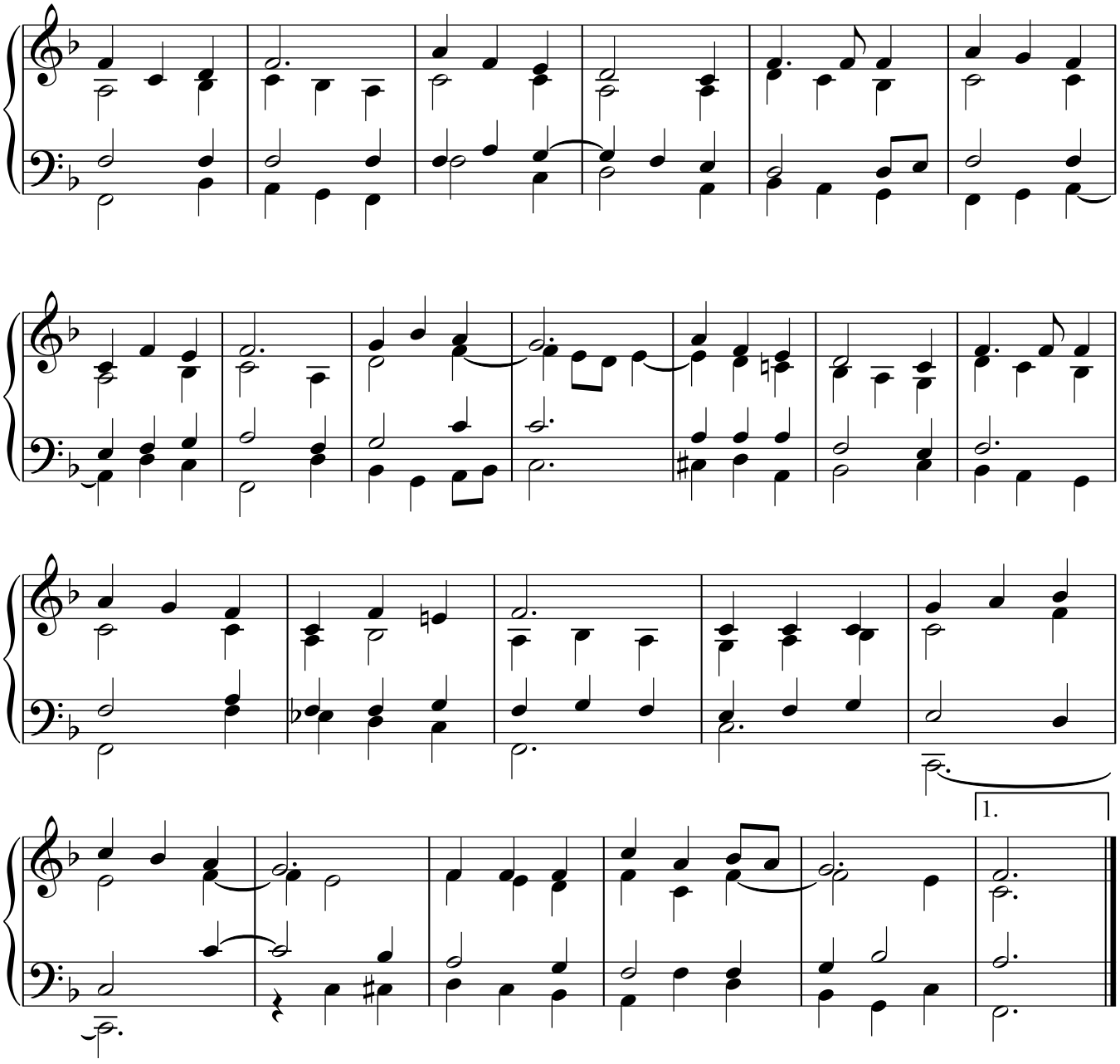
Setting for last verse:



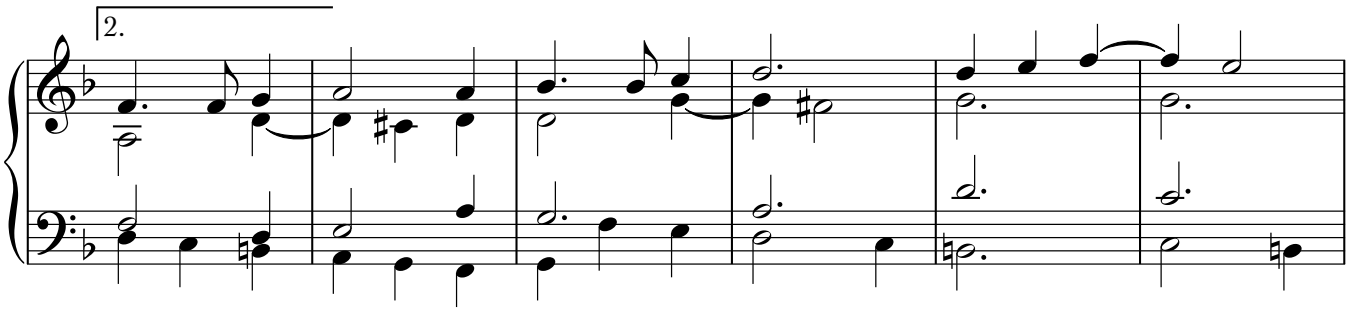
Earth and All Stars

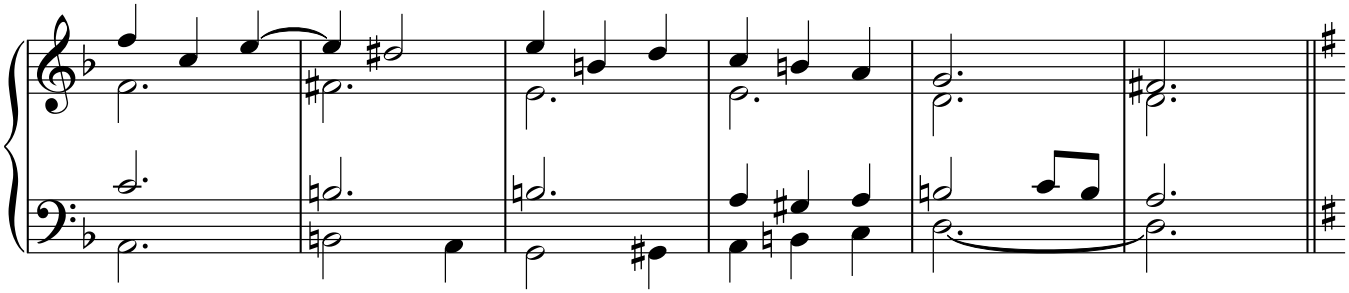
David N. Johnson, 1922-1987
Arr. Derek Remeš

Setting for all verses but the late:



Modulating interlude:





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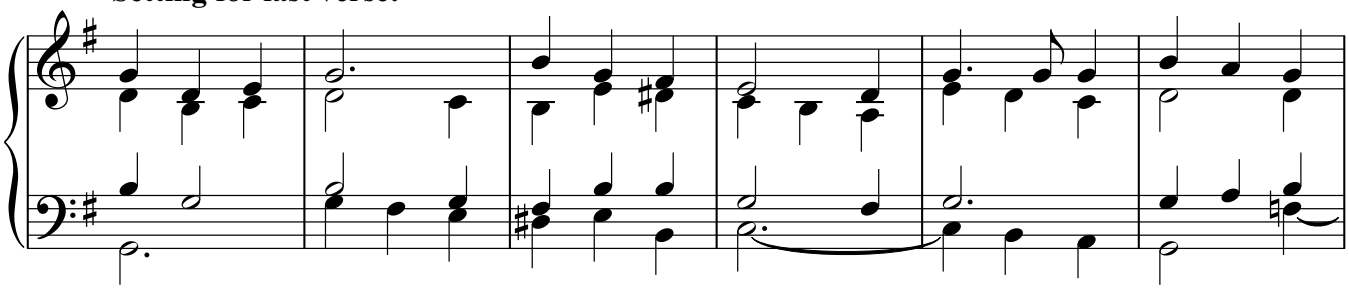
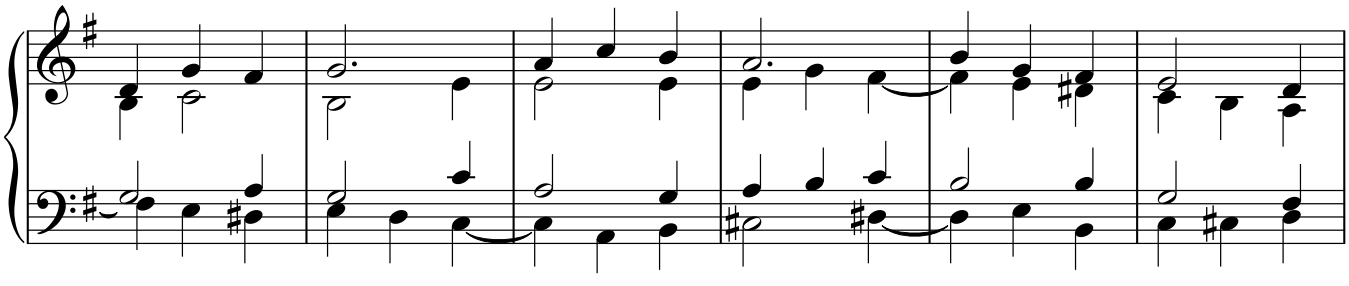
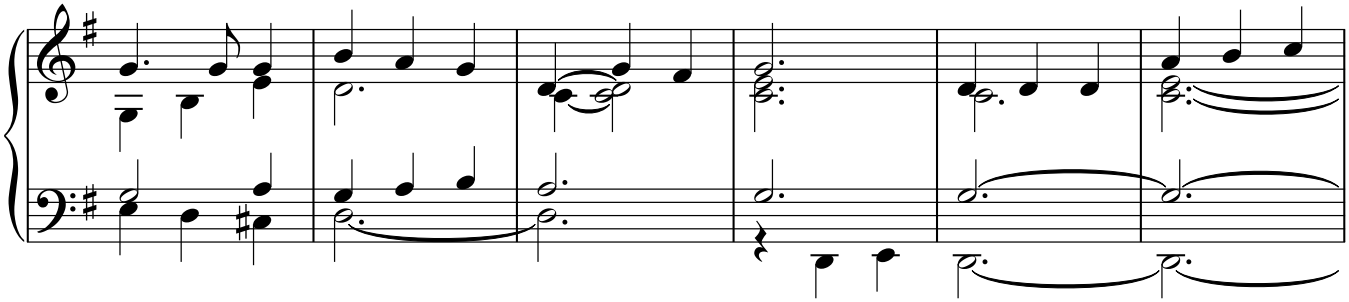
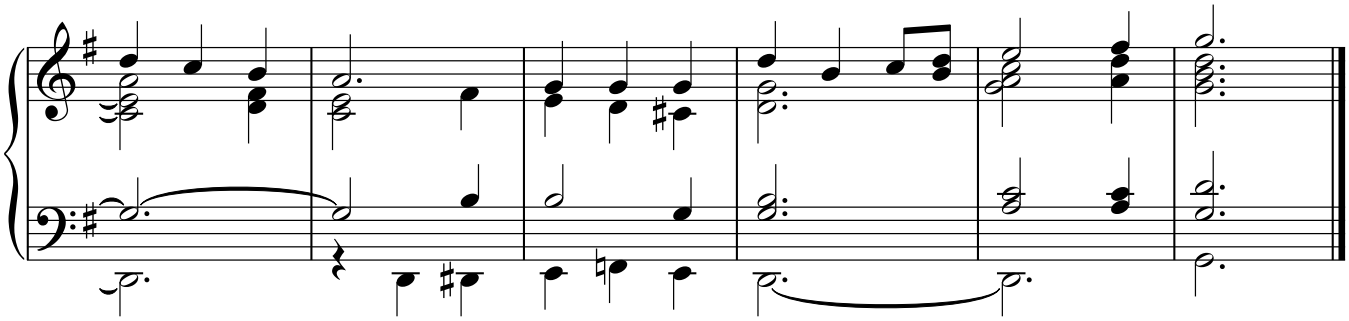




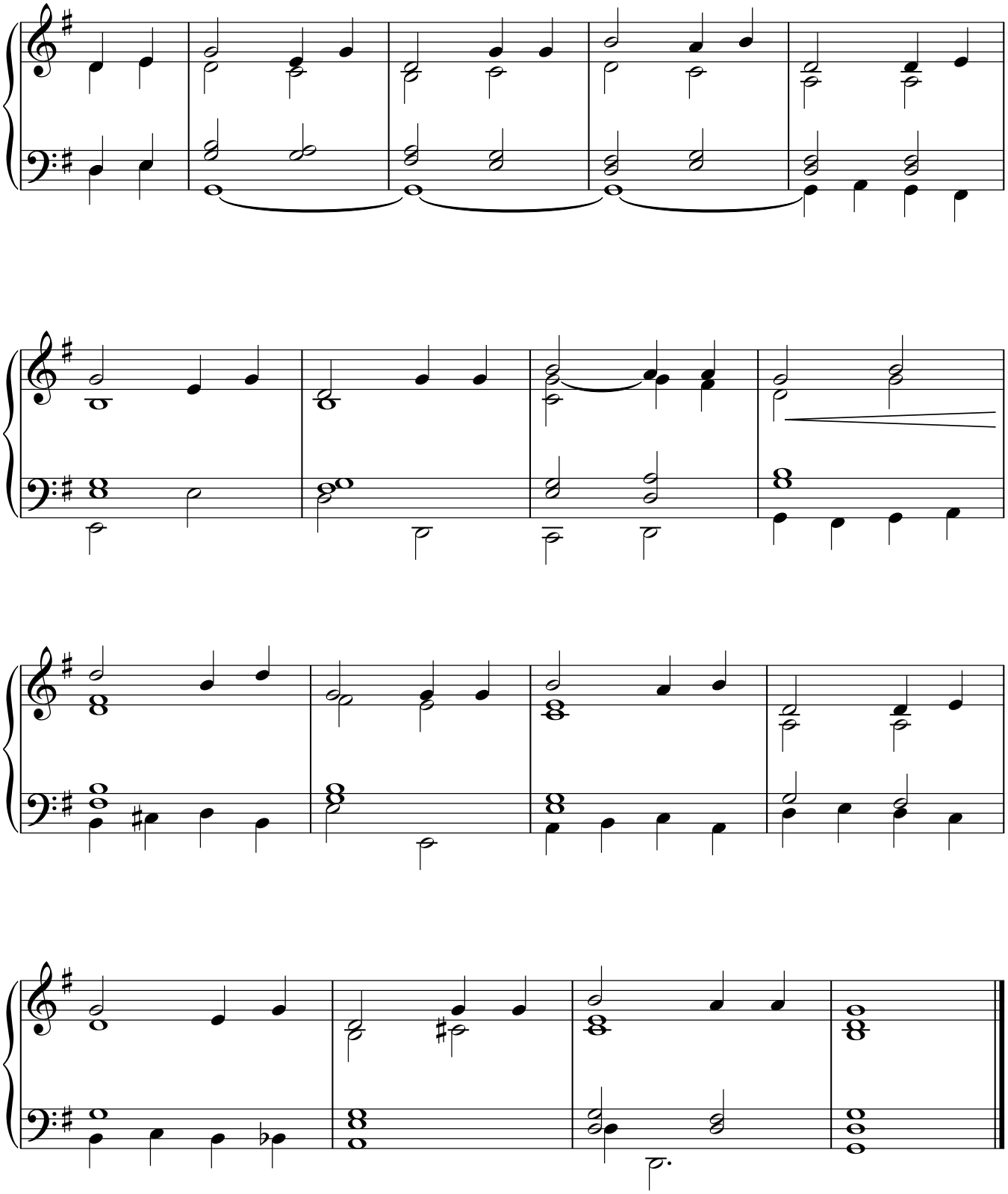




Foundation

The Sacred Harp, 1844
Arr. Derek Remeš

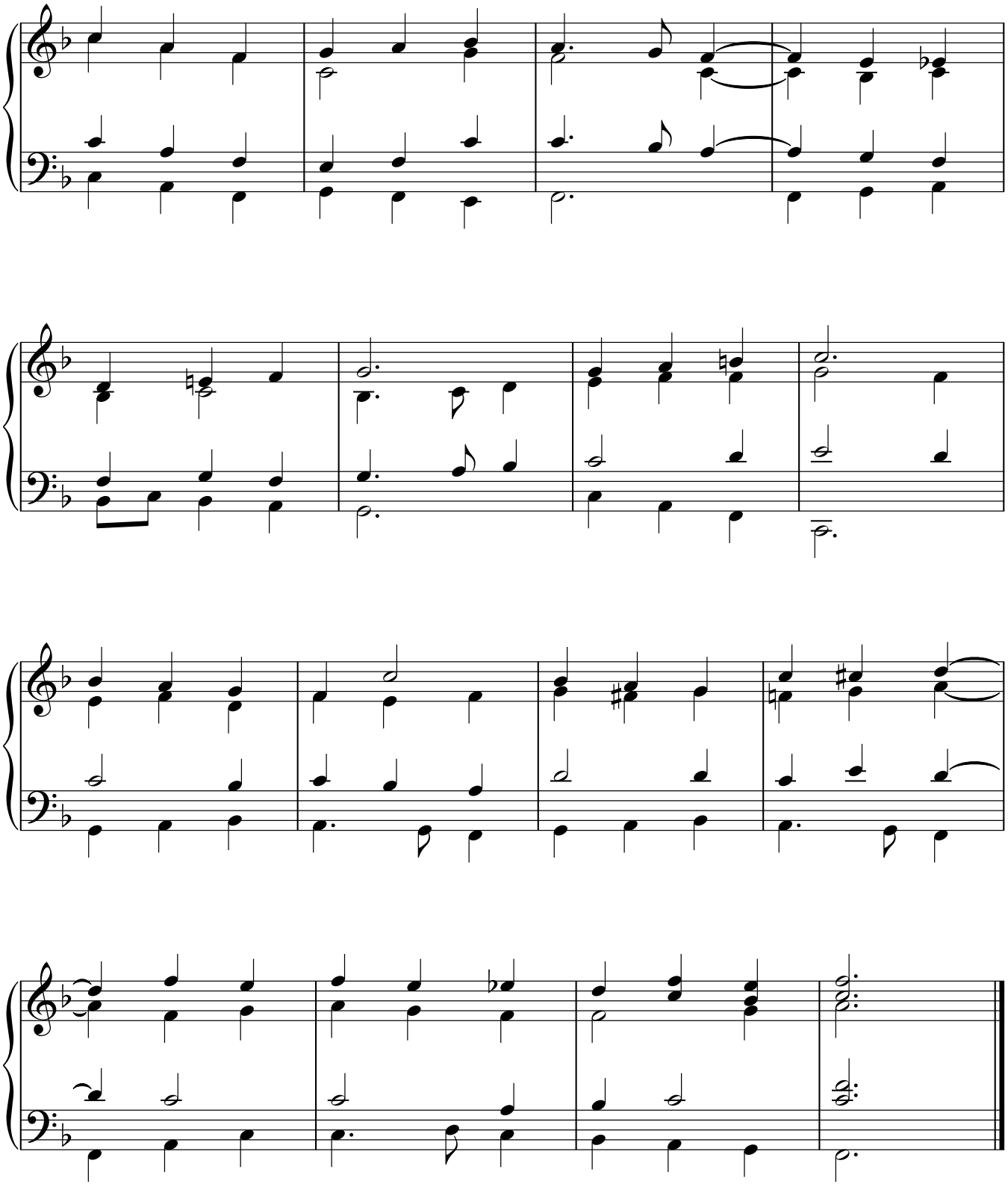
Setting for last verse:



Italian Hymn

Felice de Giardini, 1716-1796
Arr. Derek Remeš

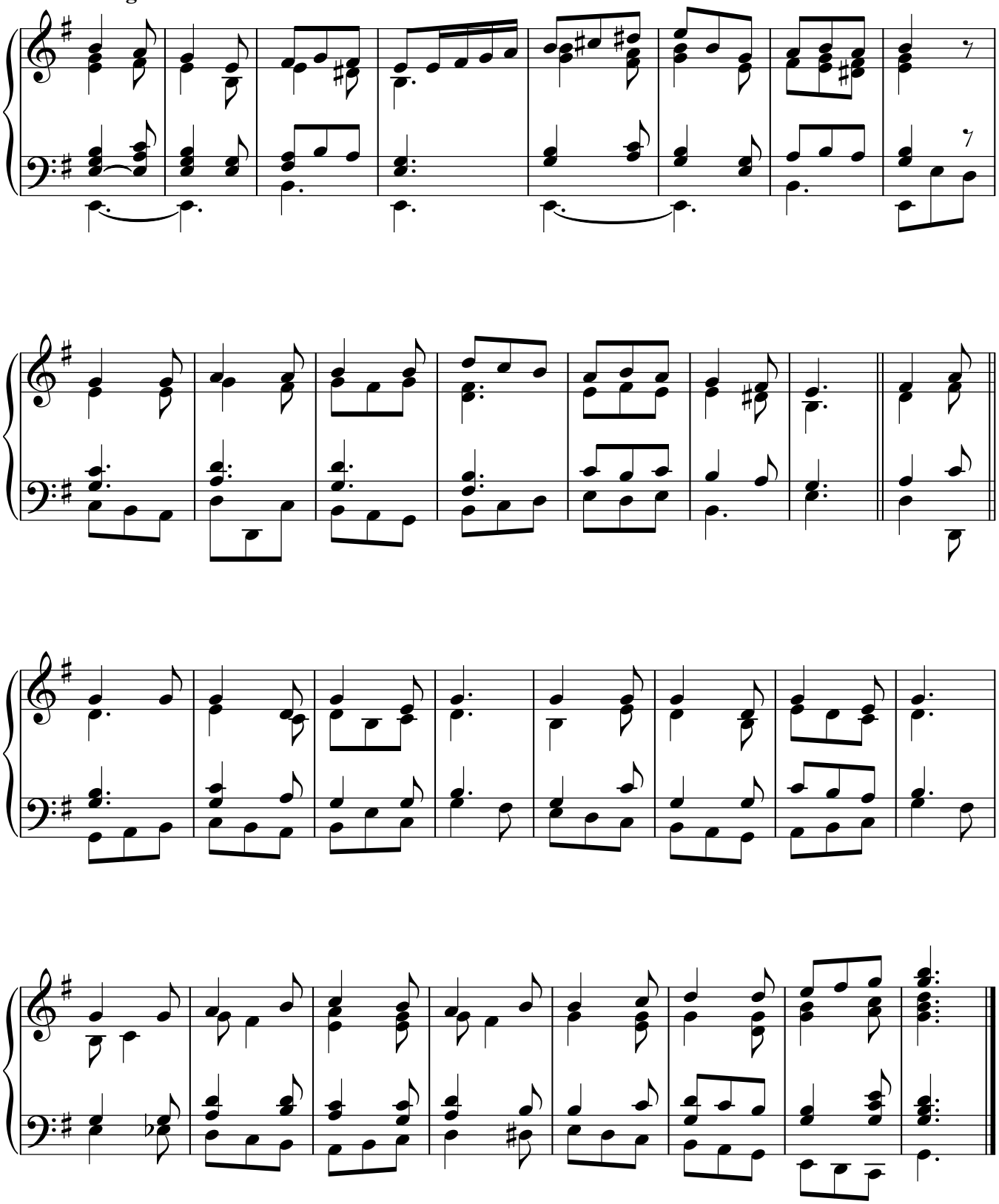
Setting for last verse (tune in the bass):



Kings of Orient

John H. Hopkins, 1820-1891
Arr. Derek Remeš

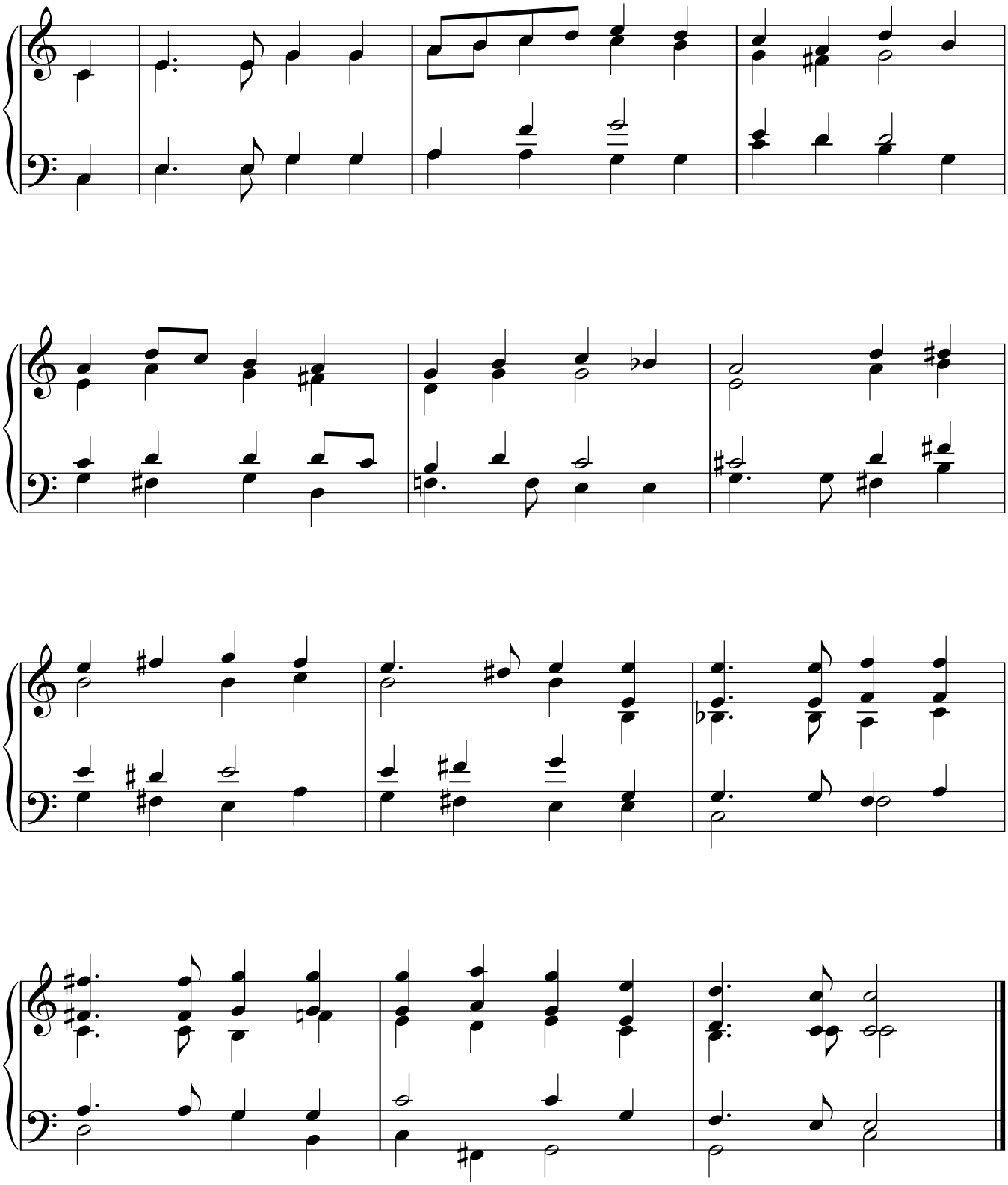
Setting for last verse:



Melita

John B. Dykes, 1823-1876
Arr. Derek Remeš

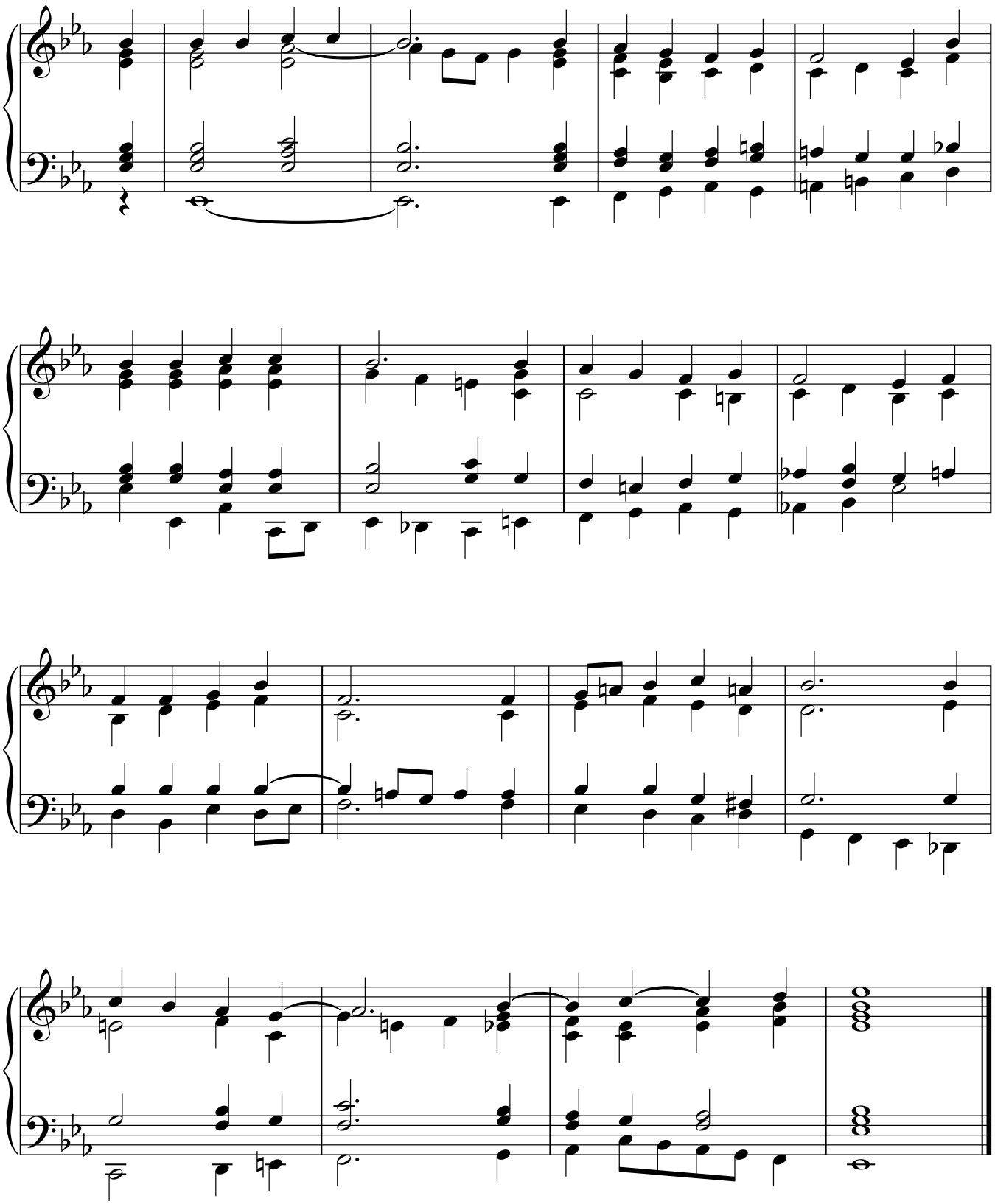
Setting for last verse (tune in the bass):



Nun Danket

Johann Crüger, 1598-1649
Arr. Derek Remeš

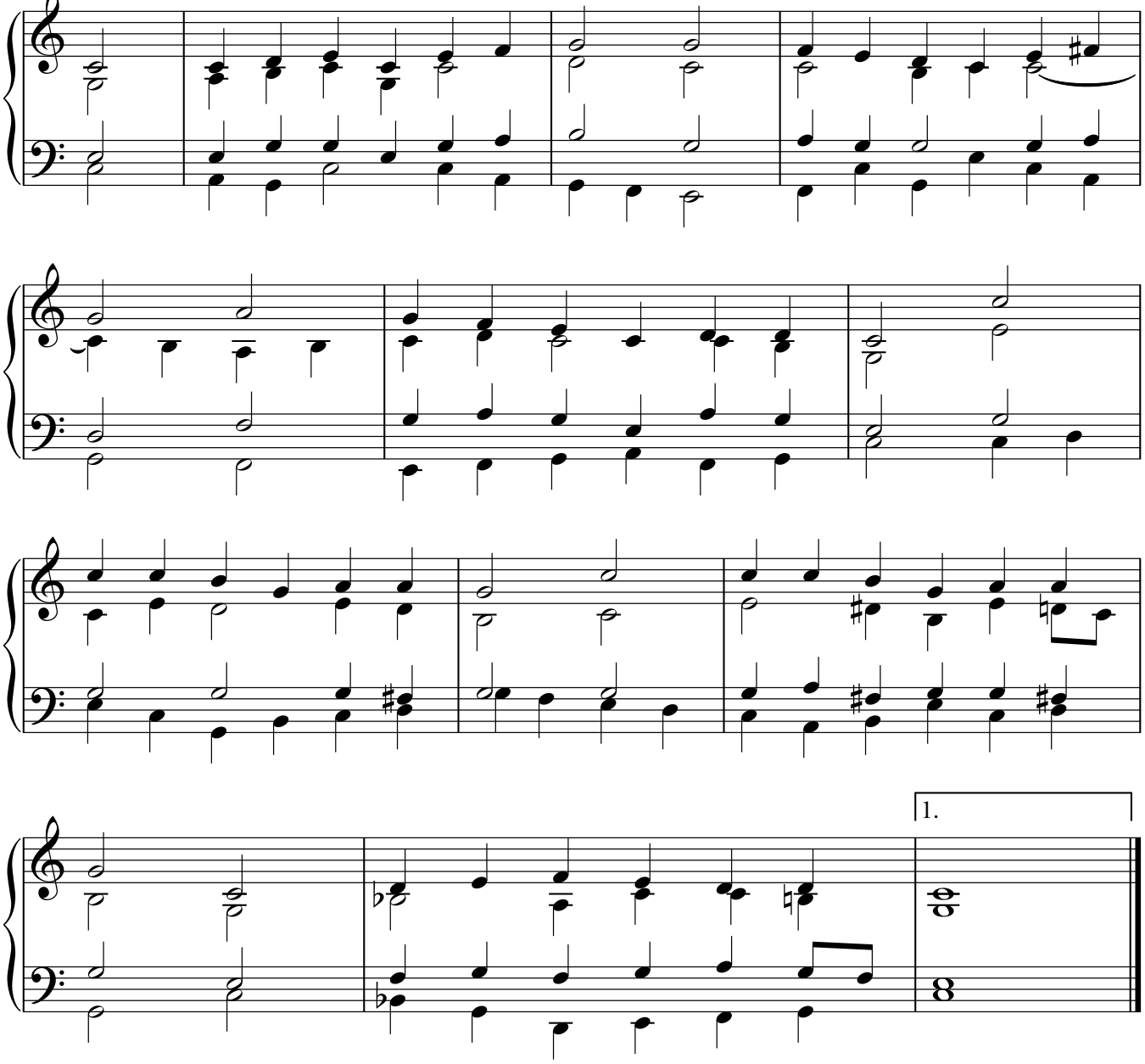
Setting for last verse:



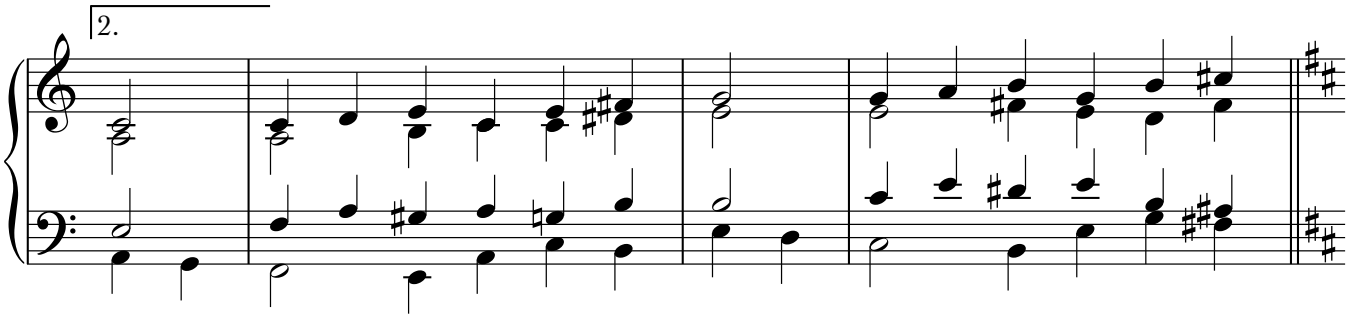
Old 113th

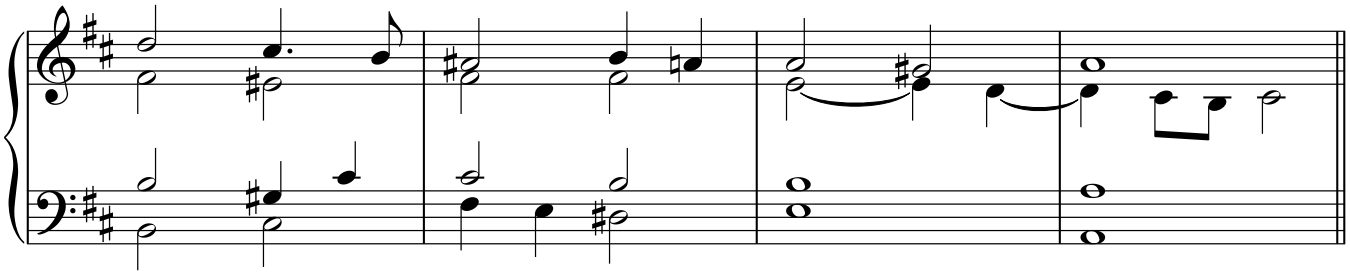
Strassburger Kirchenamt, 1525
Arr. Derek Remeš

Setting for all verses but the last:

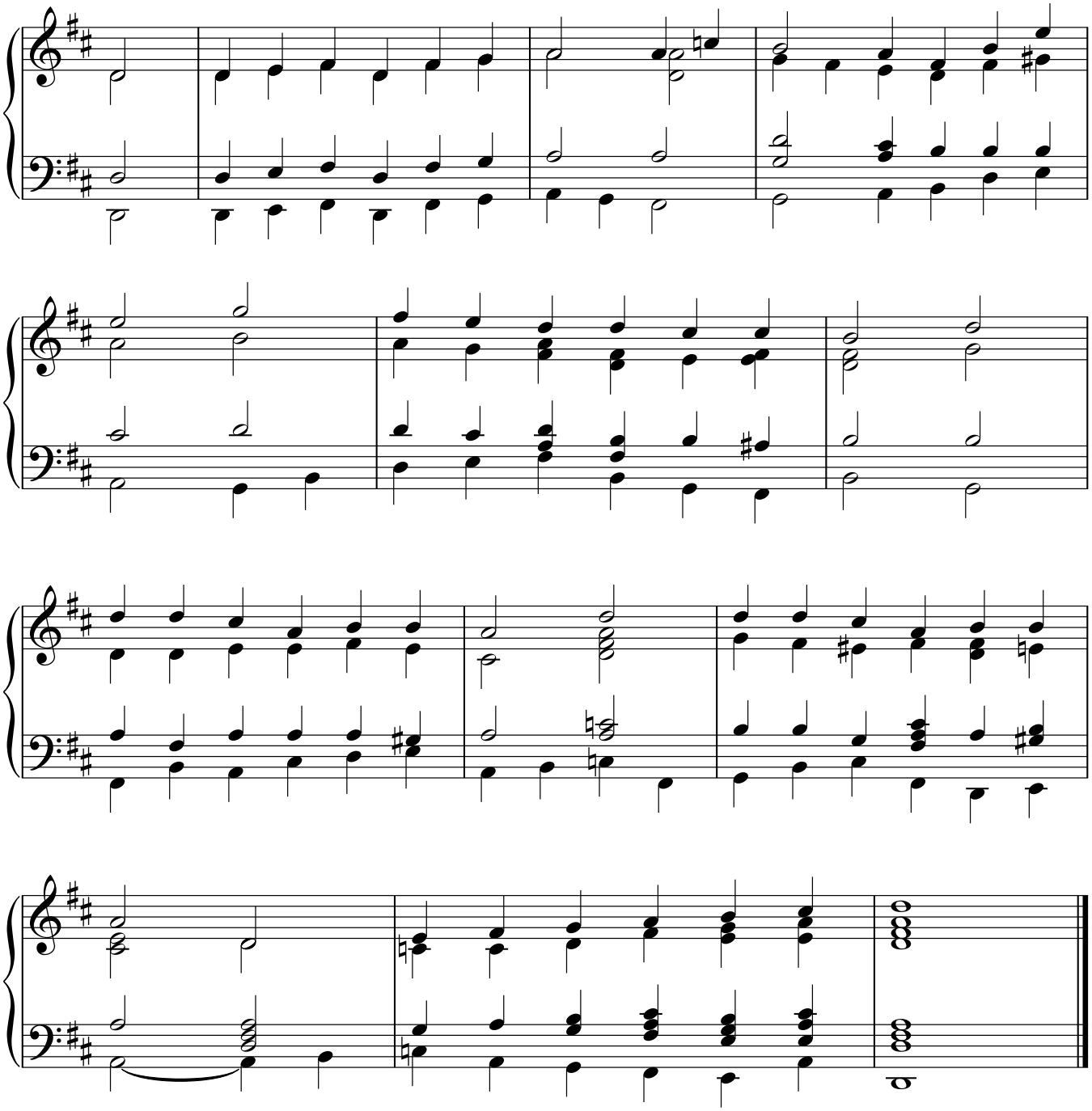


Modulating Interlude:





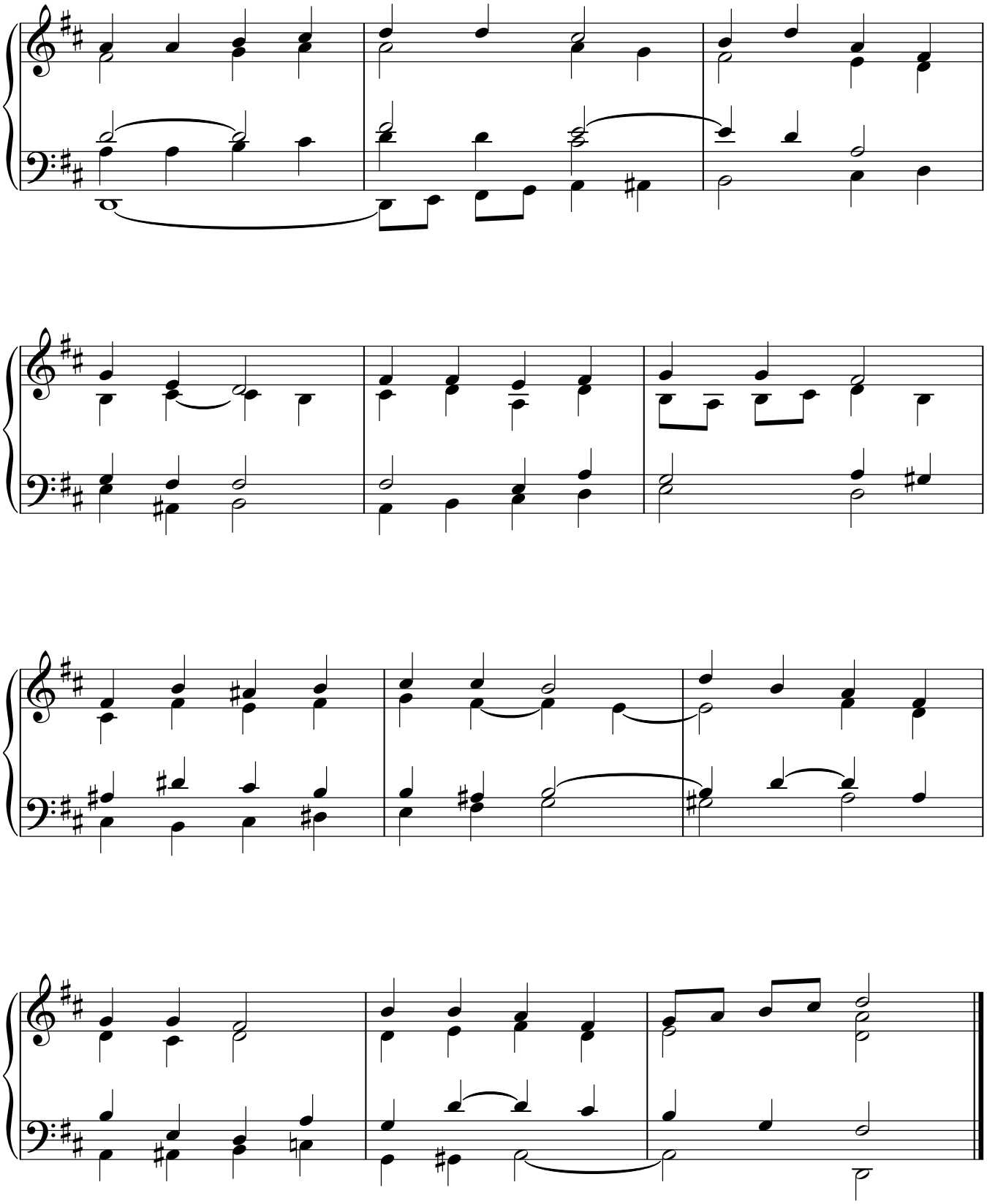
Setting for last verse:



Ratisbon

Gesystliche gesangk Buchleyn, 1542
Arr. Derek Remeš

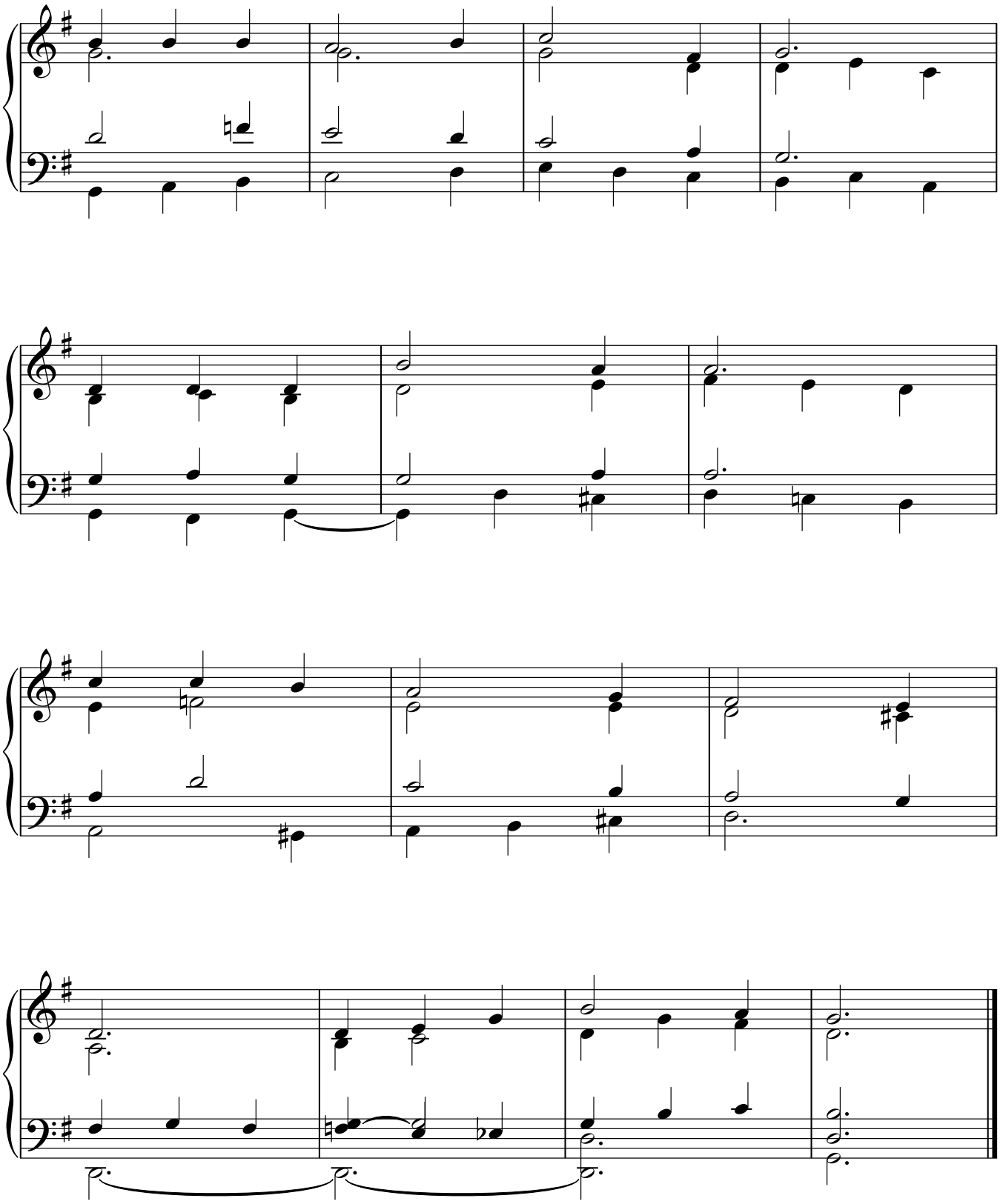
Setting for last verse:



St. Agnes

John Bacchus Dykes, 1823-1867
Arr. Derek Remeš

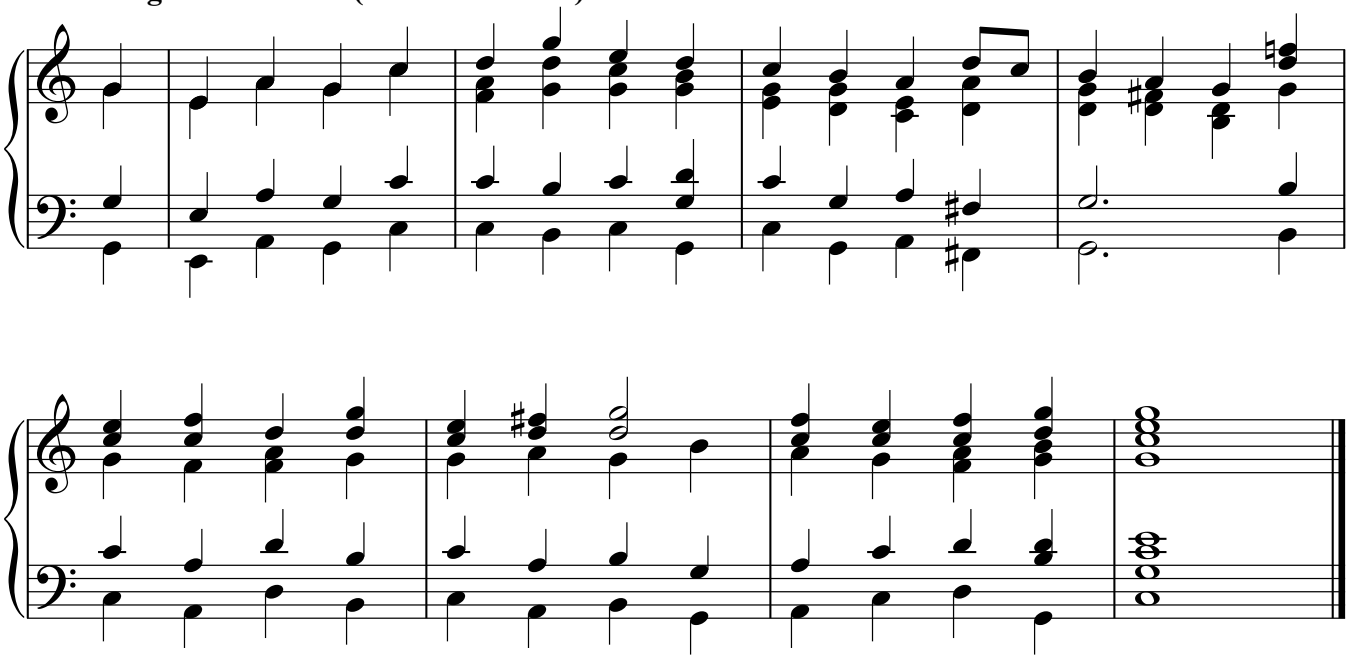
Setting for last verse:



St. Anne

att. William Croft, 1678-1727
Arr. Derek Remeš

Setting for last verse (tune in the bass):

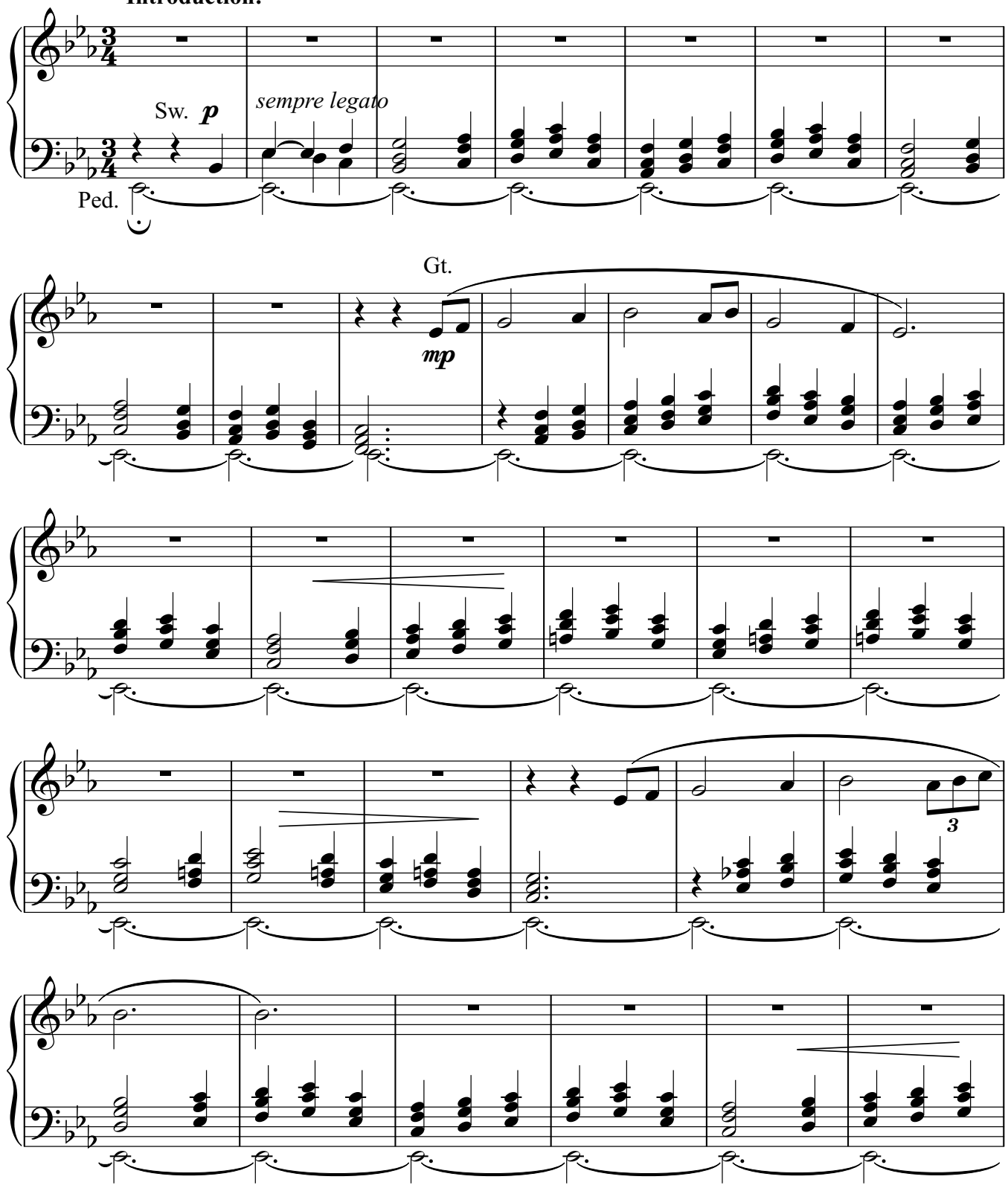


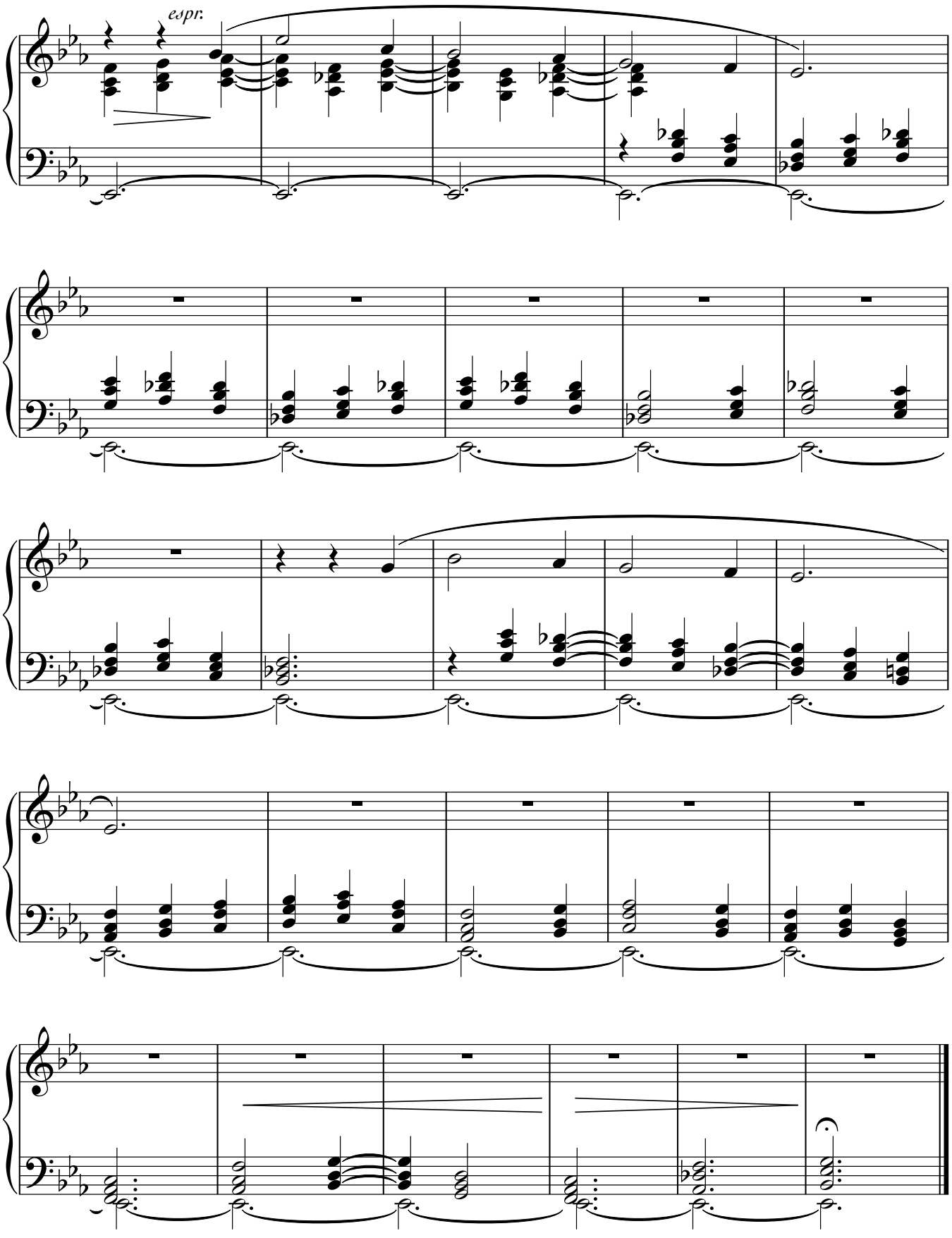
St. Columba

Great: 8' Open Flute, 8' Stopped Flute
Swell: String, Voix Celeste
Pedal: 16' Bourdon
Swell to Pedal

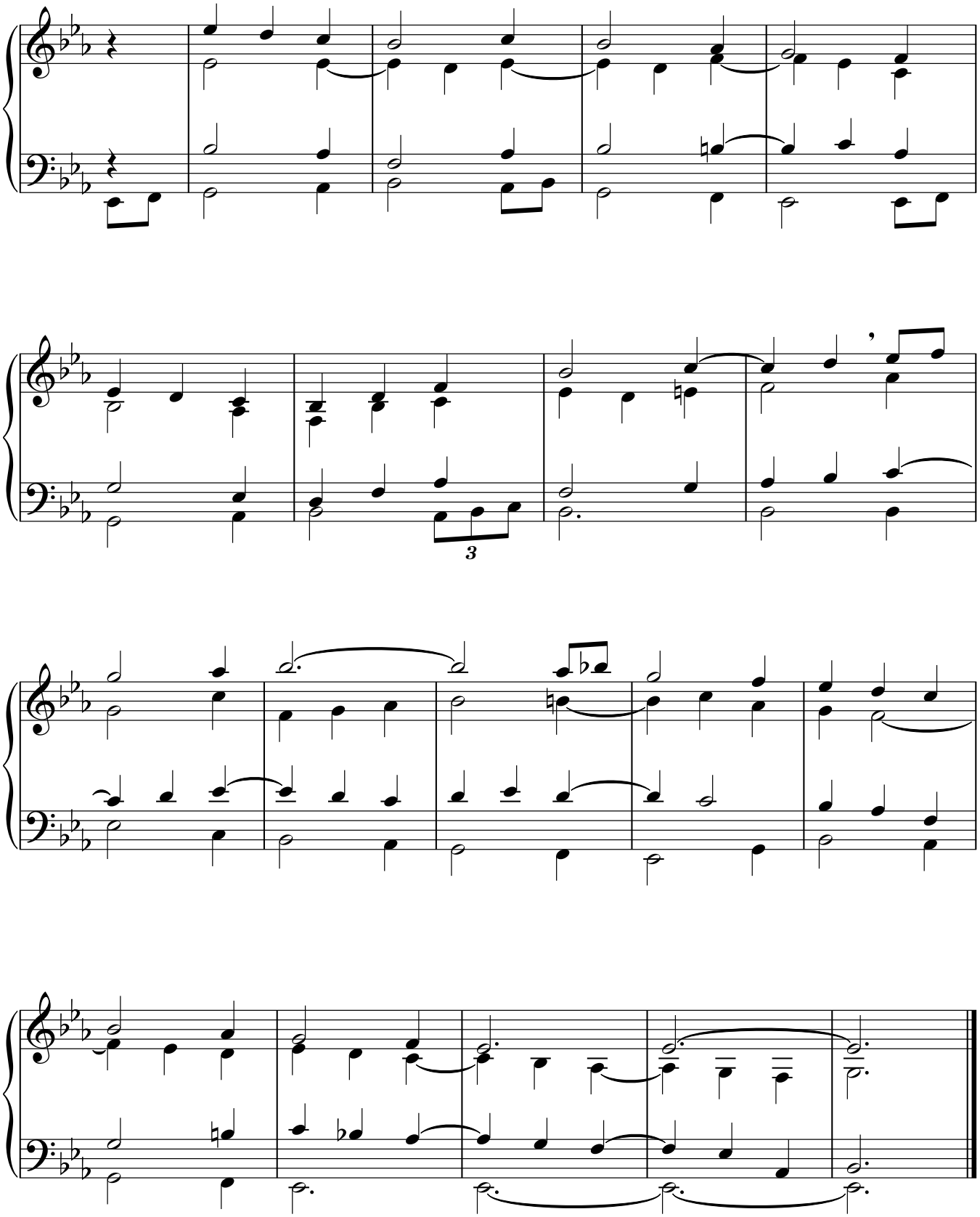
Irish Melody
Arr. Derek Remeš

Introduction:

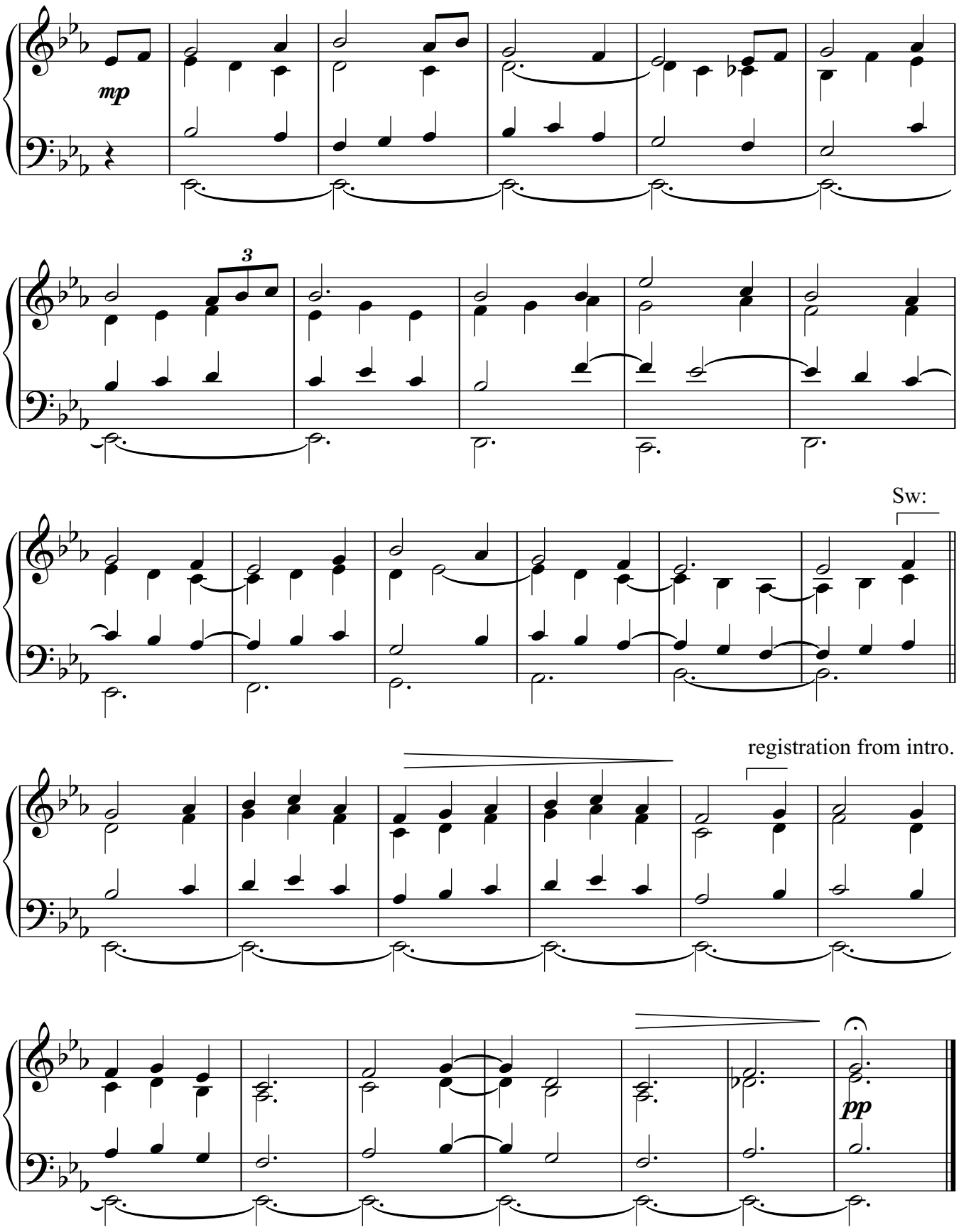



espr.

Setting (tune in the bass):



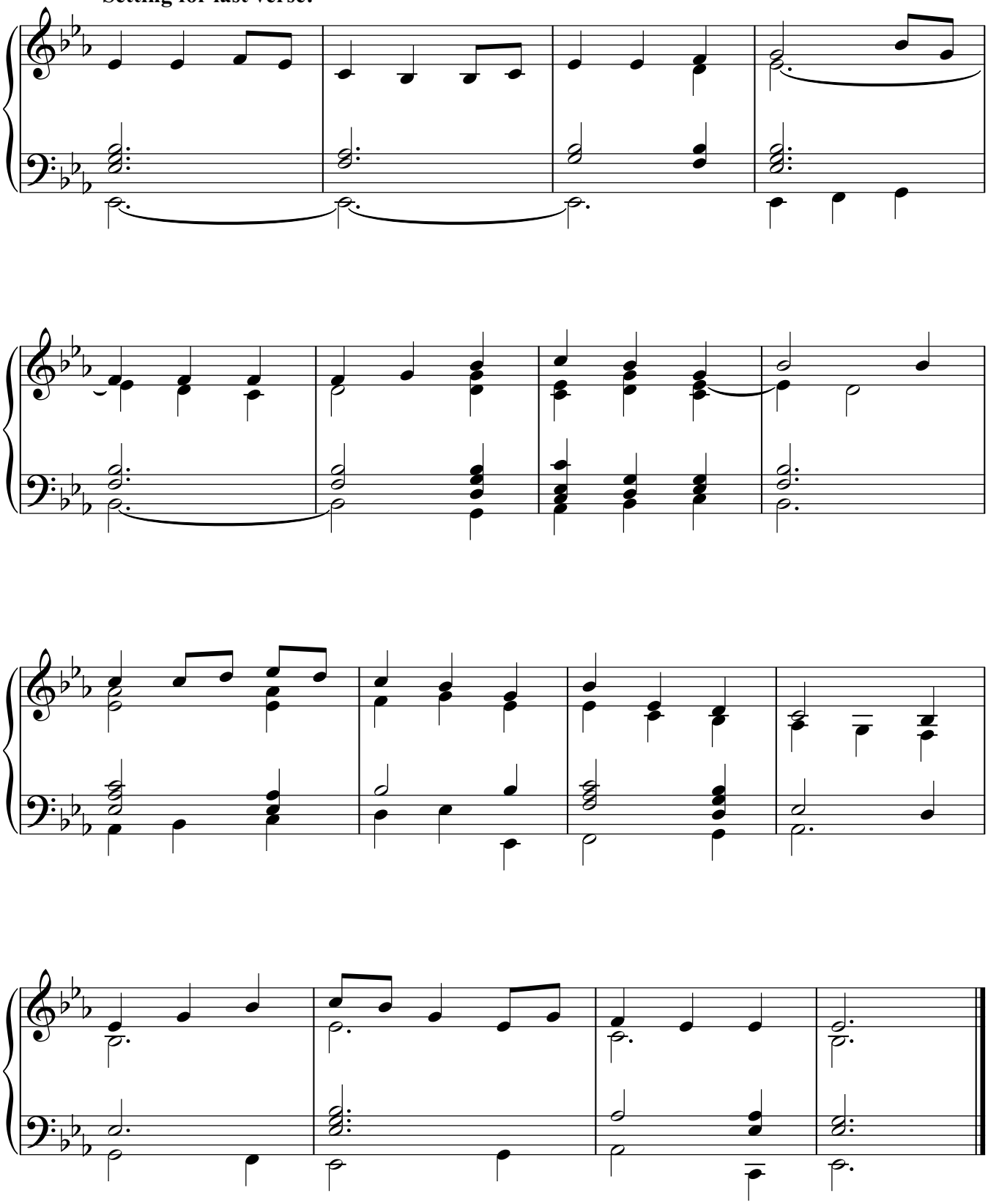
Setting for last verse (with coda):



Slane

Irish Ballad Melody
Arr. Derek Remeš

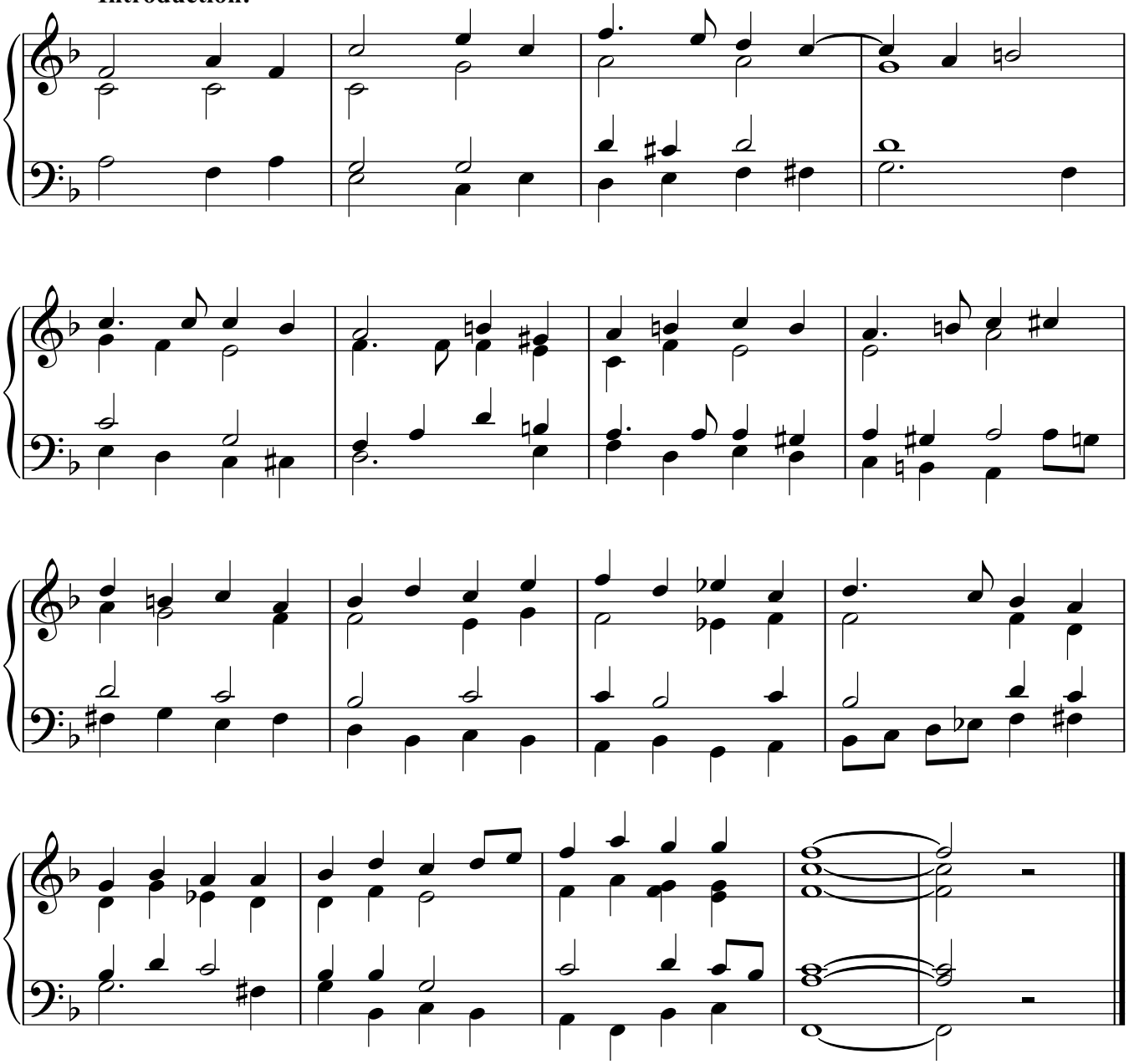
Setting for last verse:



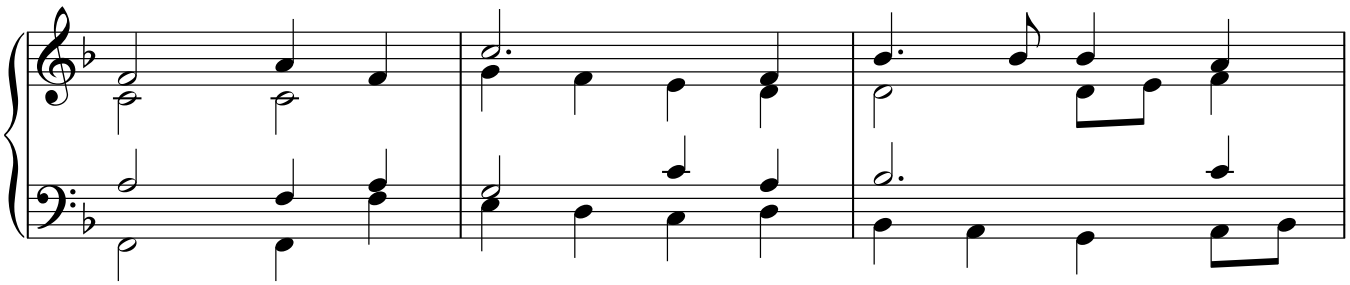
Song 46

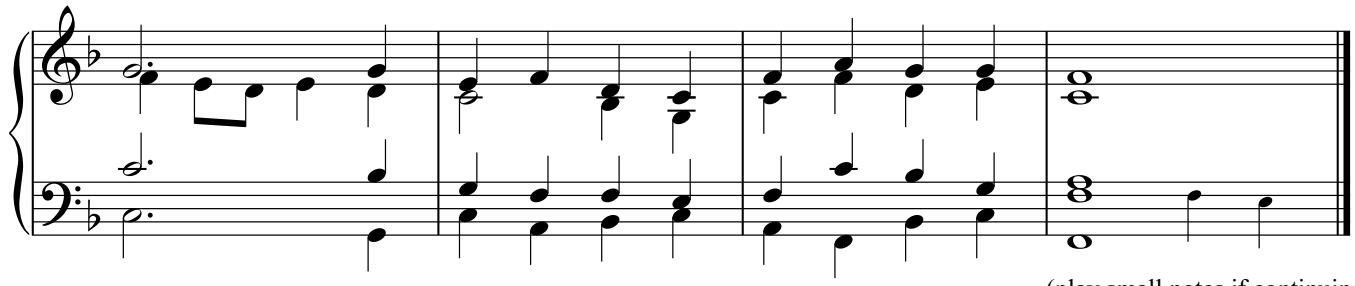
Orlando Gibbons, 1583-1625
Arr. Derek Remeš

Introduction:



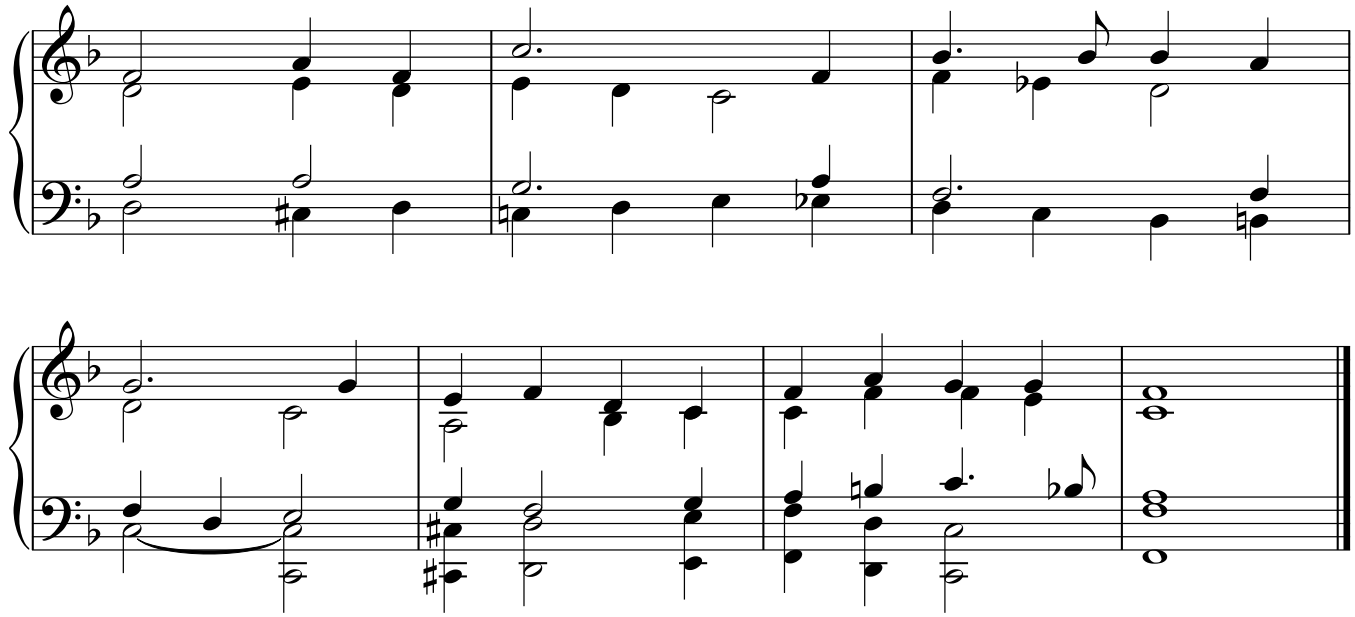
Standard Harmonization:



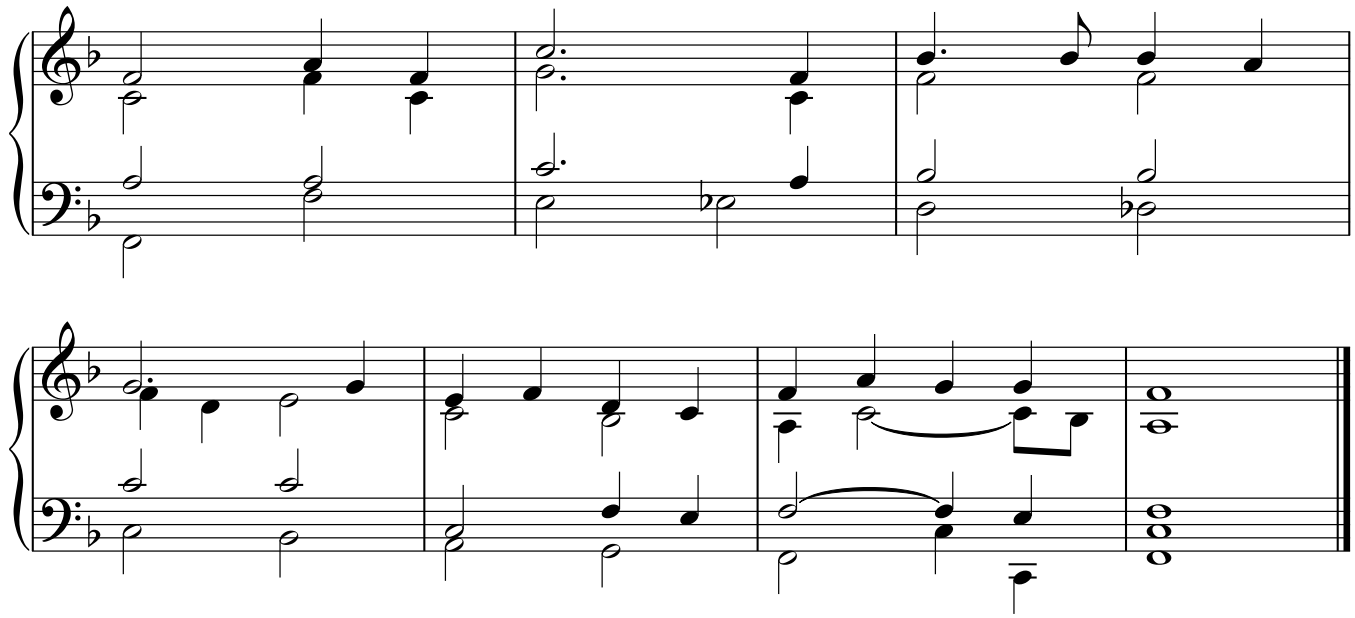


(play small notes if continuing
to alternate harmonization)

Alternate Harmonization:



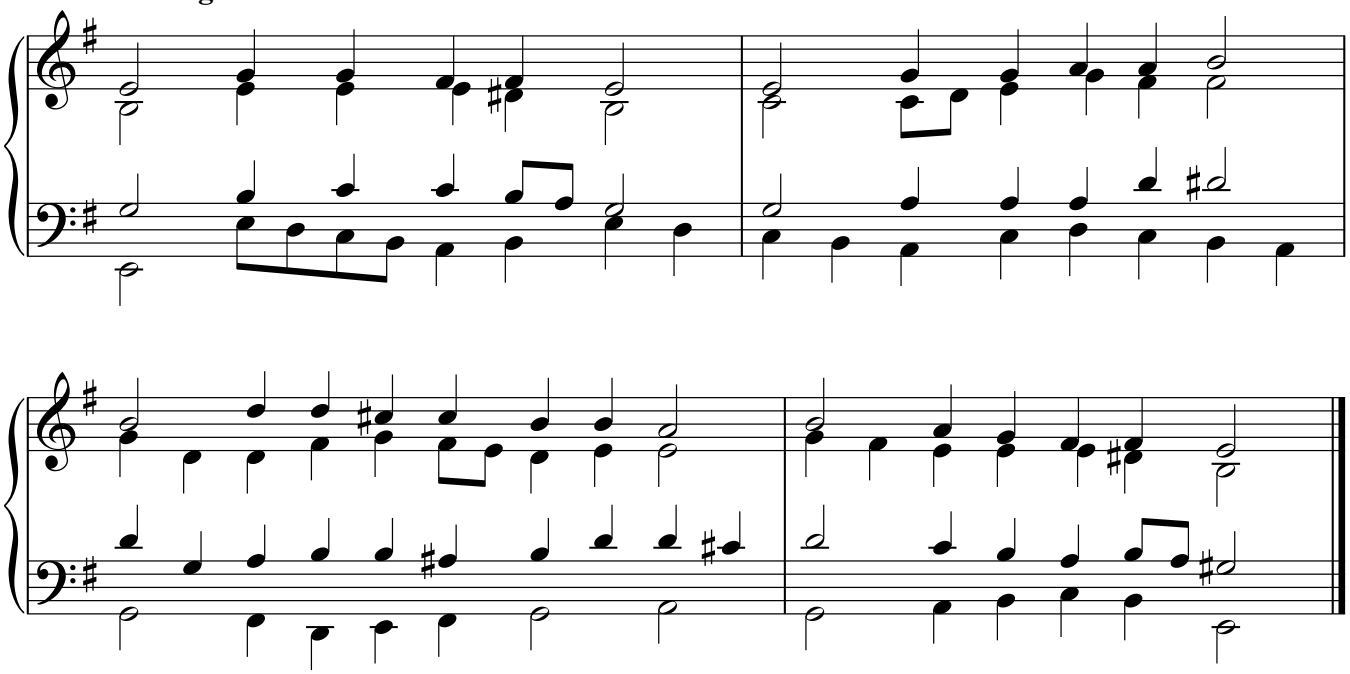
Setting for last verse (melody on solo trumpet):



Southwell

Daman's Psalter, 1579;
adapt. *Hymnal* 1982
Arr. Derek Remeš

Setting for last verse:

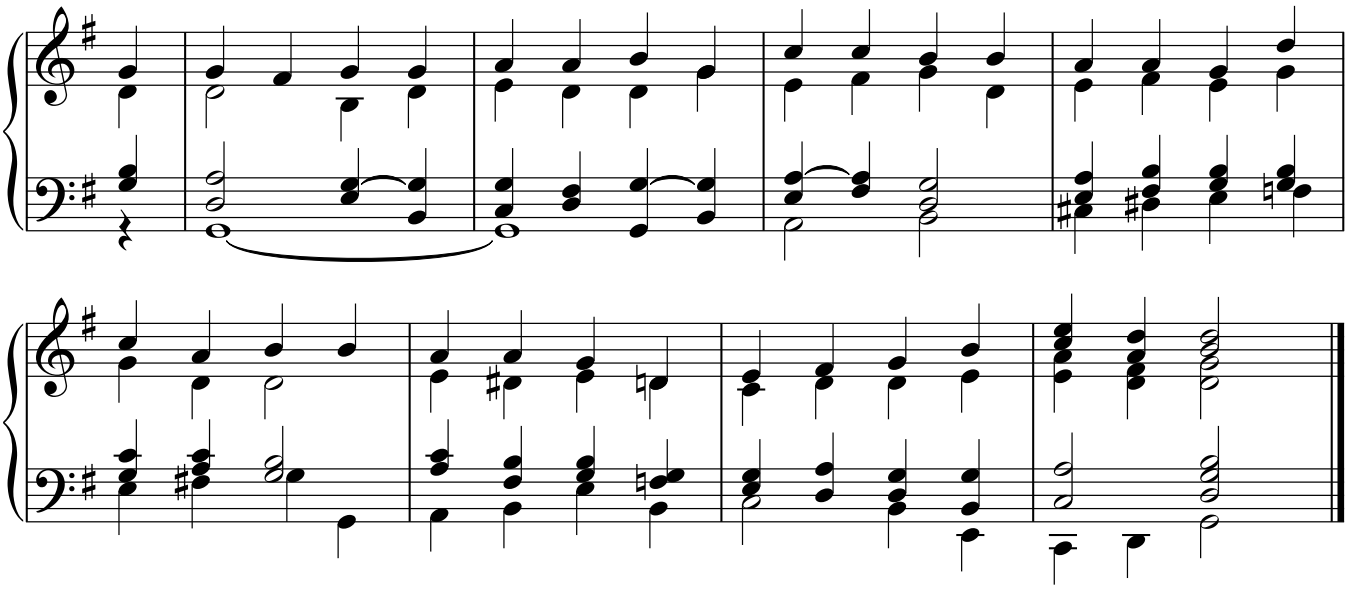


Tallis Canon

(*The Eighth Tune*)

Thomas Tallis, 1505?-1585
Arr. Derek Remeš

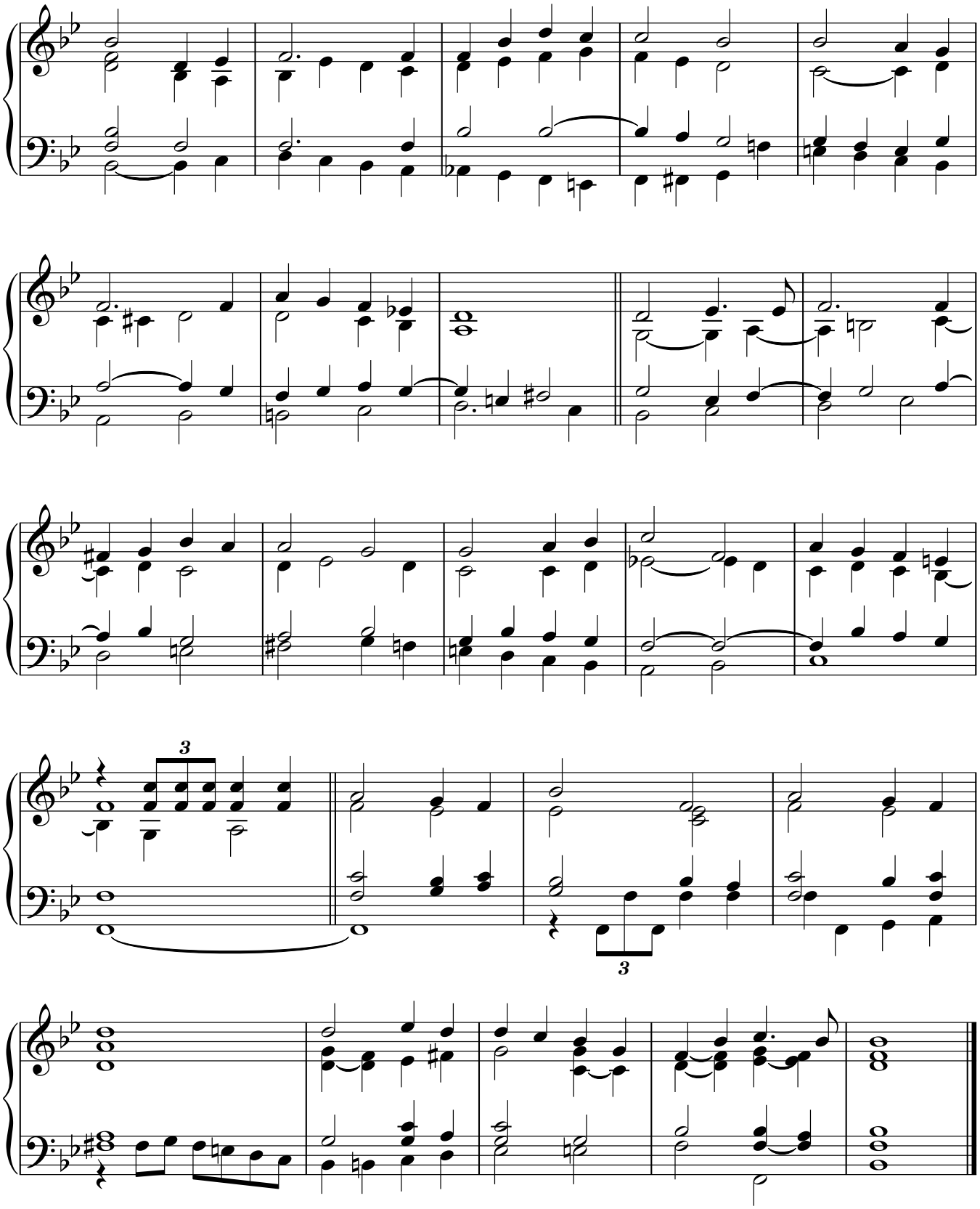
Setting for last verse:



Tidings

James Walch, 1837-1901
Arr. Derek Remeš.

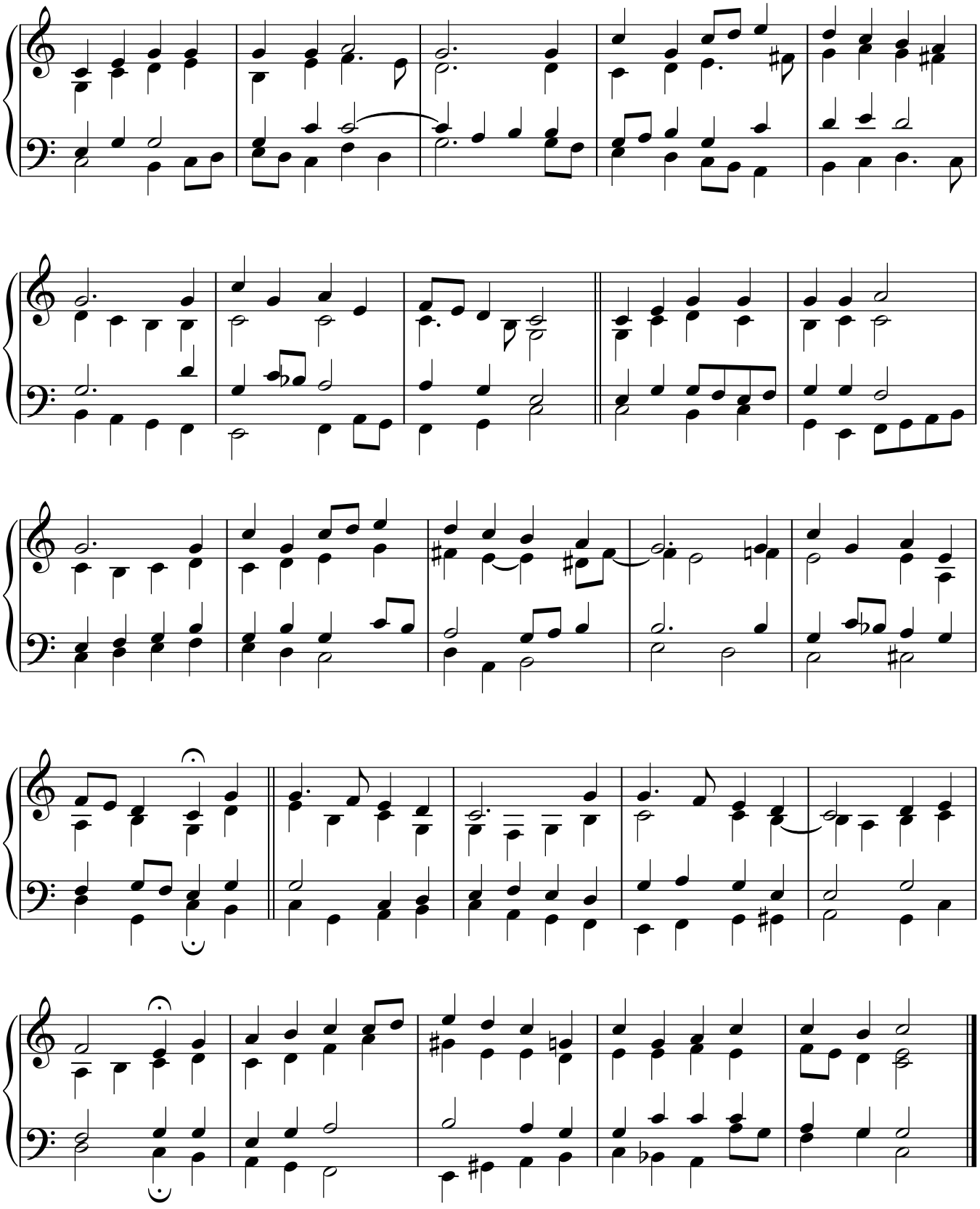
Setting for last verse:



Wachet auf

Hans Sachs, 1494-1576;
adapt. Philipp Nicolai, 1556-1608
Arr. Derek Remeš

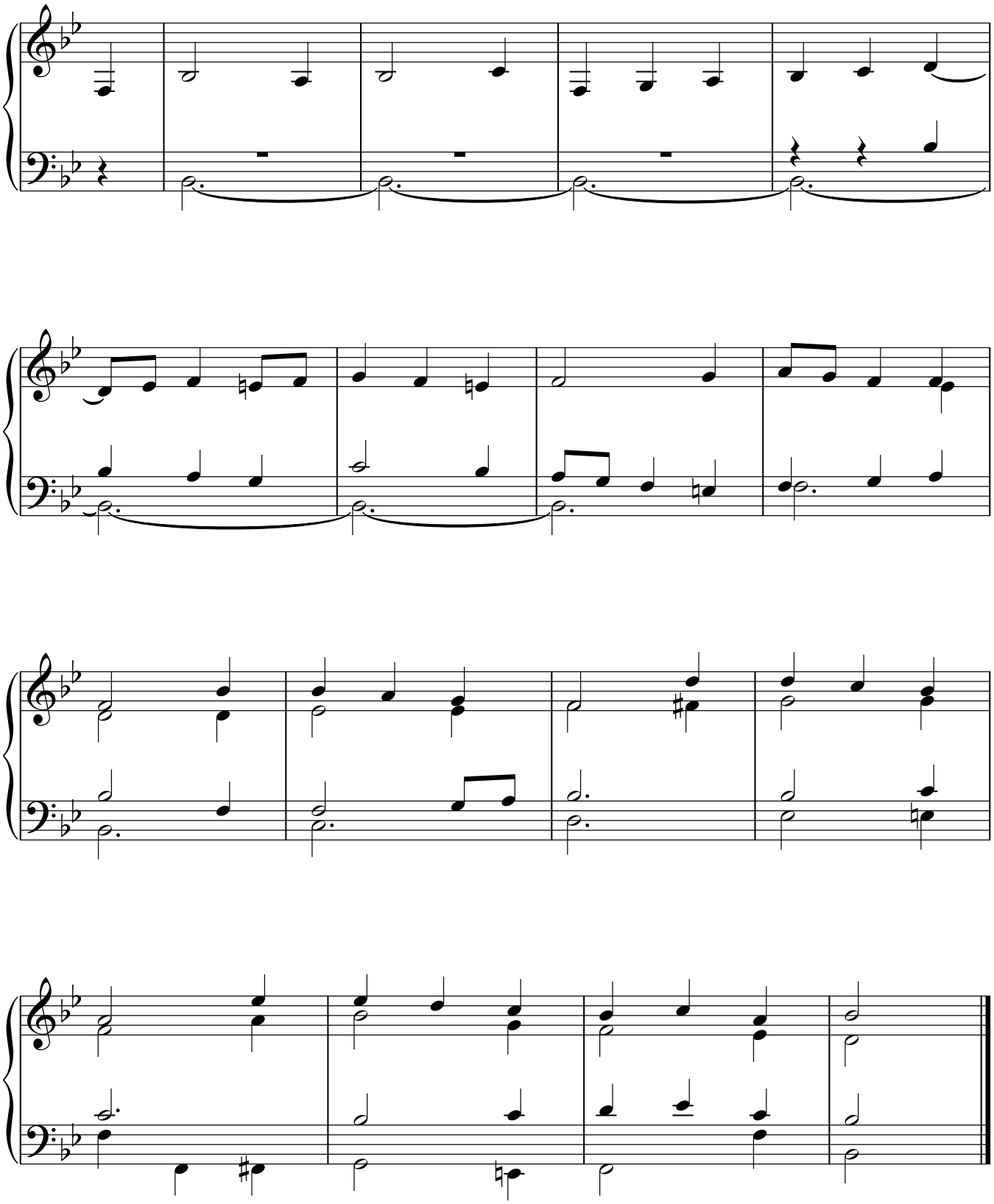
Setting for last verse:



Walton

Sacred Melodies, 1815
Arr. Derek Remeš

Introduction:



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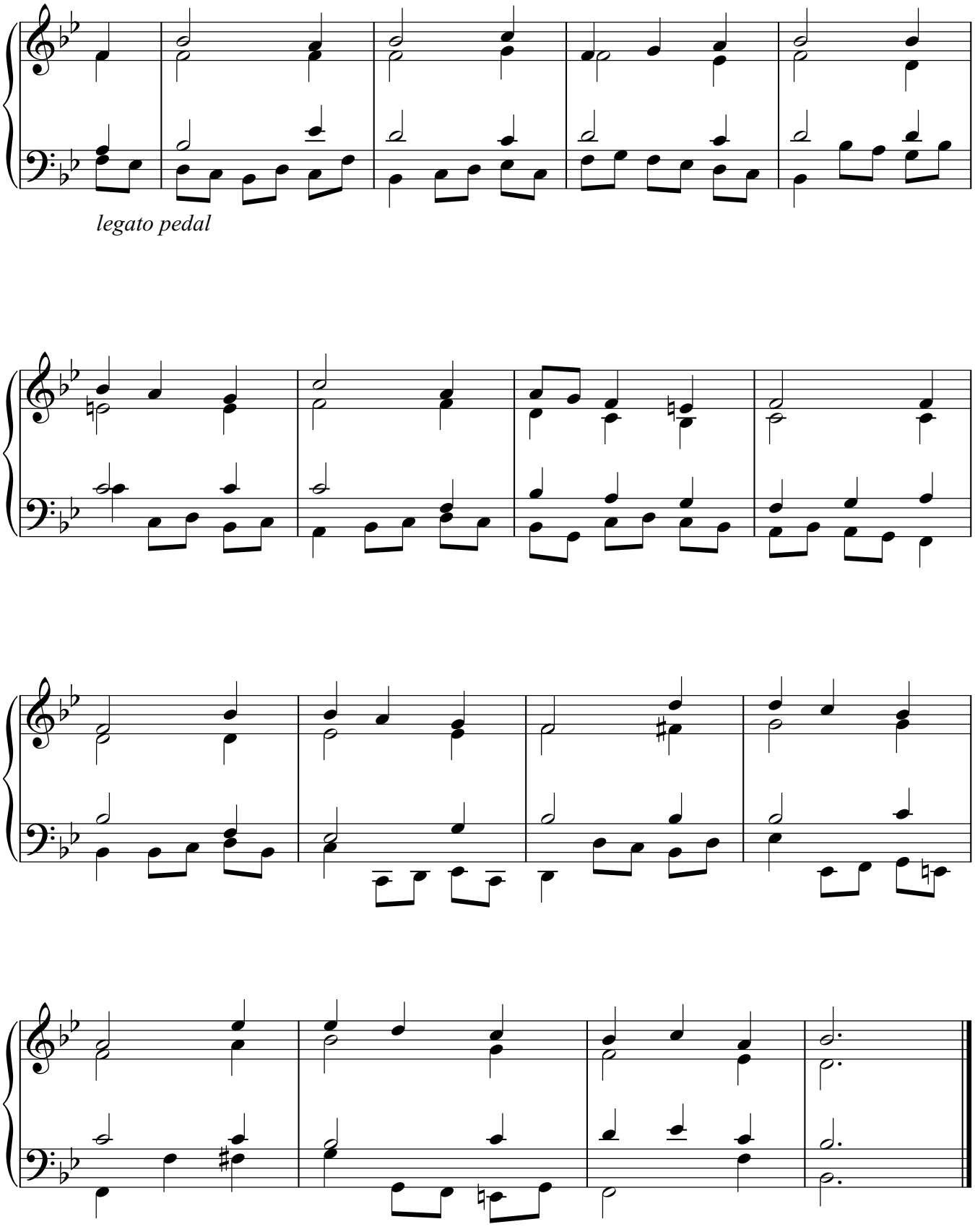
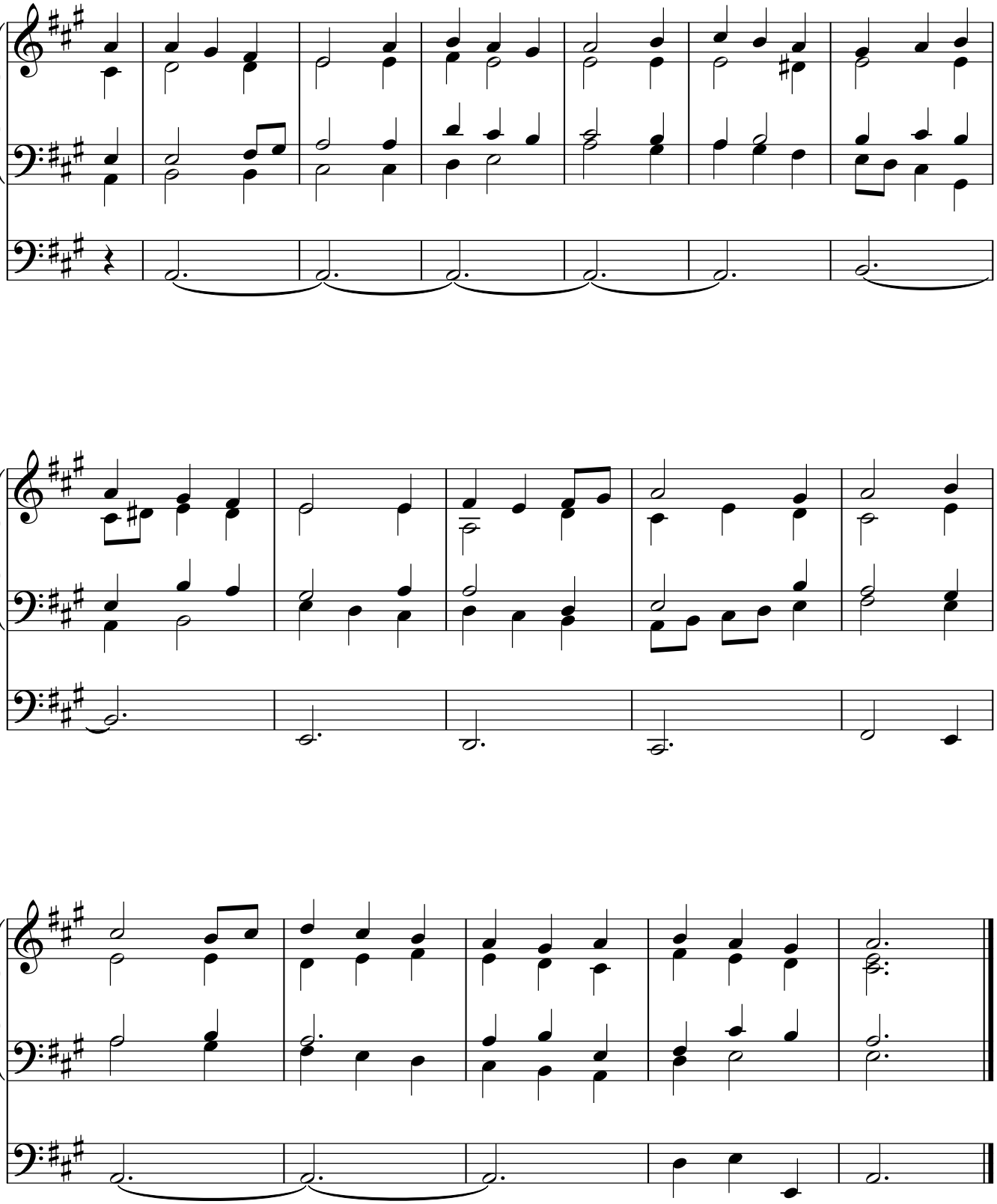


Wareham

William Knapp, 1698-1882
Arr. Derek Remeš

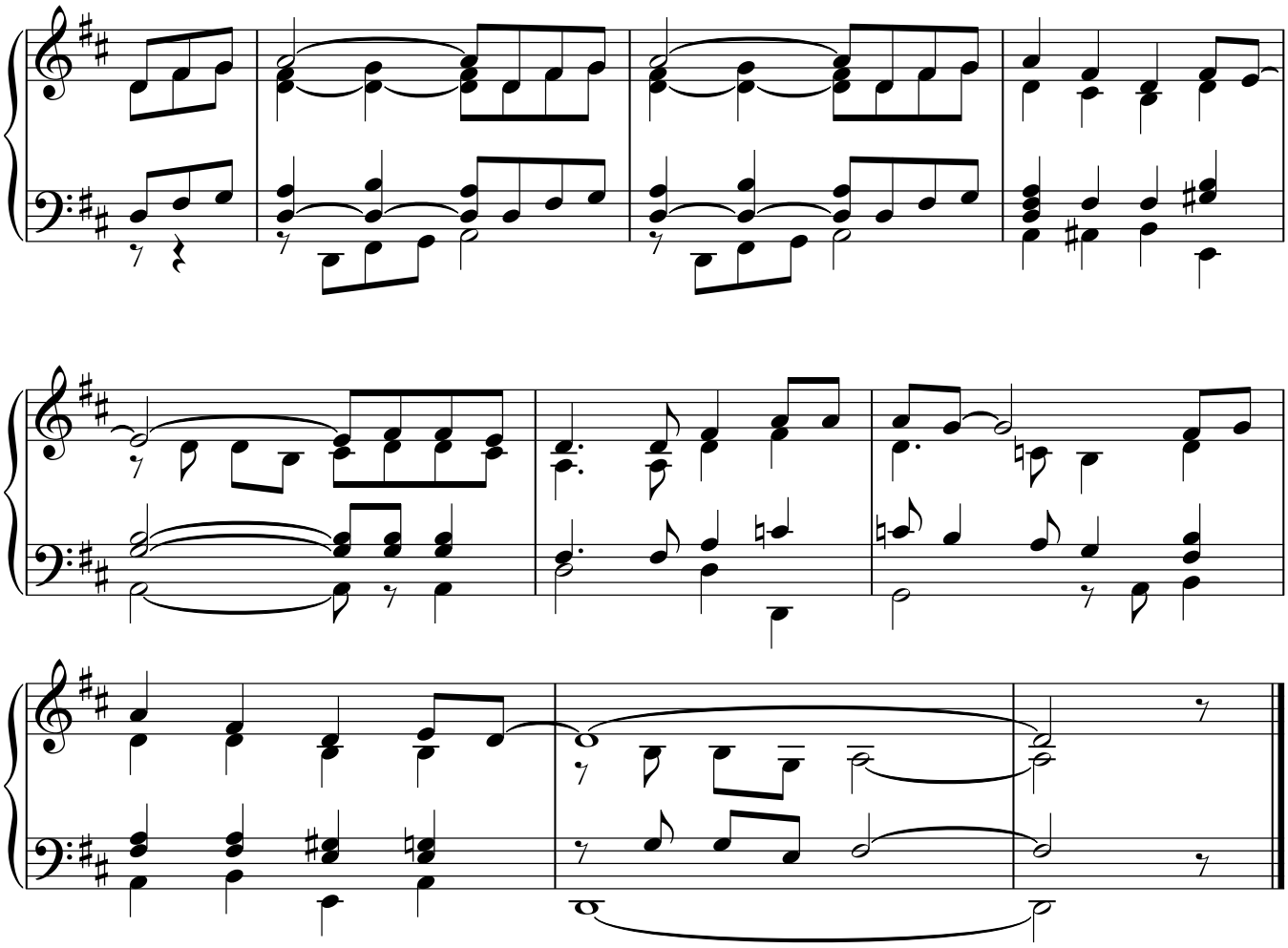
Setting for last verse:



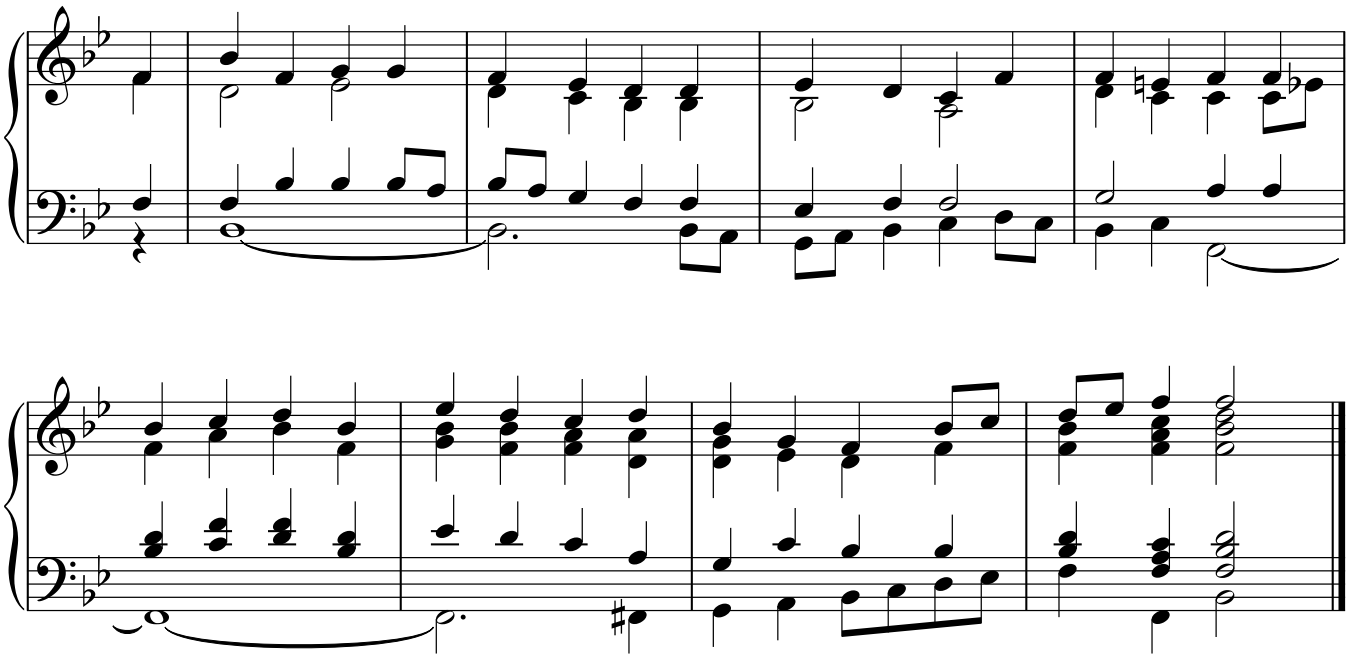
When the Saints Go Marching In

Traditional Gospel Hymn
Arr. Derek Remeš

Setting for regular verses:



Winchester New

Musicalisches Hand-Buch, 1690
Arr. Derek Remeš

Setting for last verse: