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A Prayer in Distress

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A PRAYER IN DISTRESS

based on Psalm 6

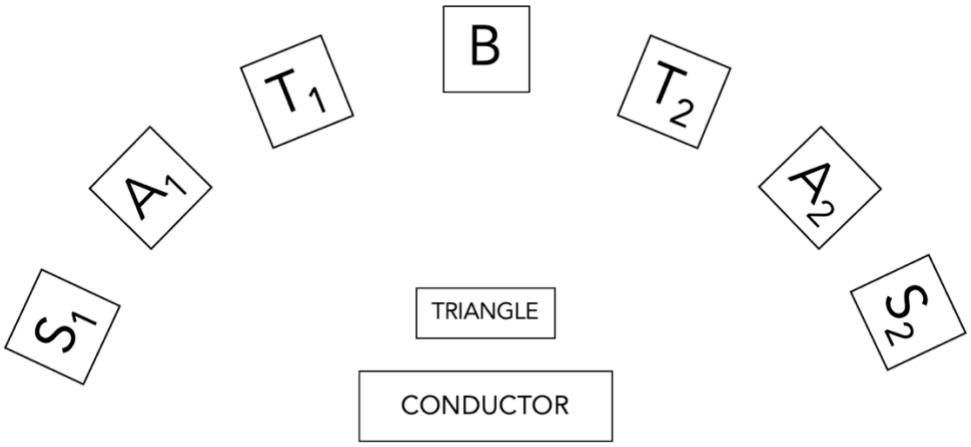
About

Psalm 6 is one of seven Penitential Psalms, written to express the sorrow of being a sinner. “For there is no one in death, that is mindful of thee: and who shall confess to thee in hell? I have laboured in my groanings, every night I will wash my bed: I will water my couch with my tears.” These lines struck a chord in me, in a retreat where I reflected deeply on the sins that I had committed.

For me, this Psalm had accentuated the regret and desolation I felt when I refused to accept the trials that were placed before me. Back in 2018, as a rather secular member of the society, I blamed God for tribulations and my life was overcast with anger. I refused to listen to the Word of God and never thought of it as a sin. It was only when my life was transformed by unfathomable miracles that I started to repent and seek forgiveness. The music of *A Prayer in Distress* seeks to bring out these struggles and emotions.

The piece also endeavours to explore tonality in three different aspects, namely: Modal Music, Diatonic Music and Octatonic Music. Although these aspects are starkly different, the harmonies formed by altering combinations of notes (or lake thereof) to create different harmonic effects is something that had greatly interest me in the last two years.

Suggested Performance Layout



Notes to Performers

I. The word ‘prayer’ should be sung as a Diphthong

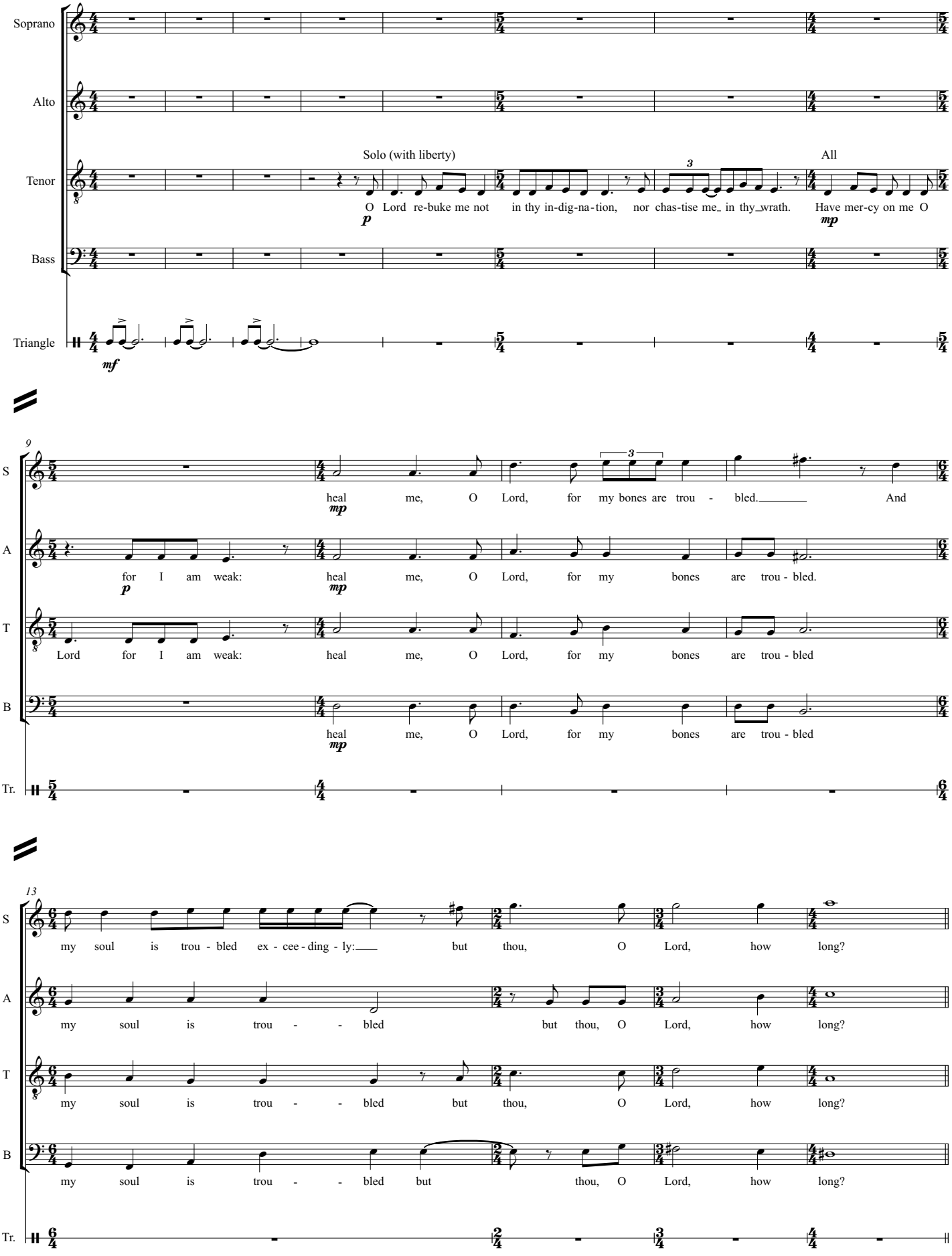
II. Words in boxes to be shout or spoken (depending on instructions) can be done at any time, repeatedly, within the instructed duration, unless otherwise instructed.

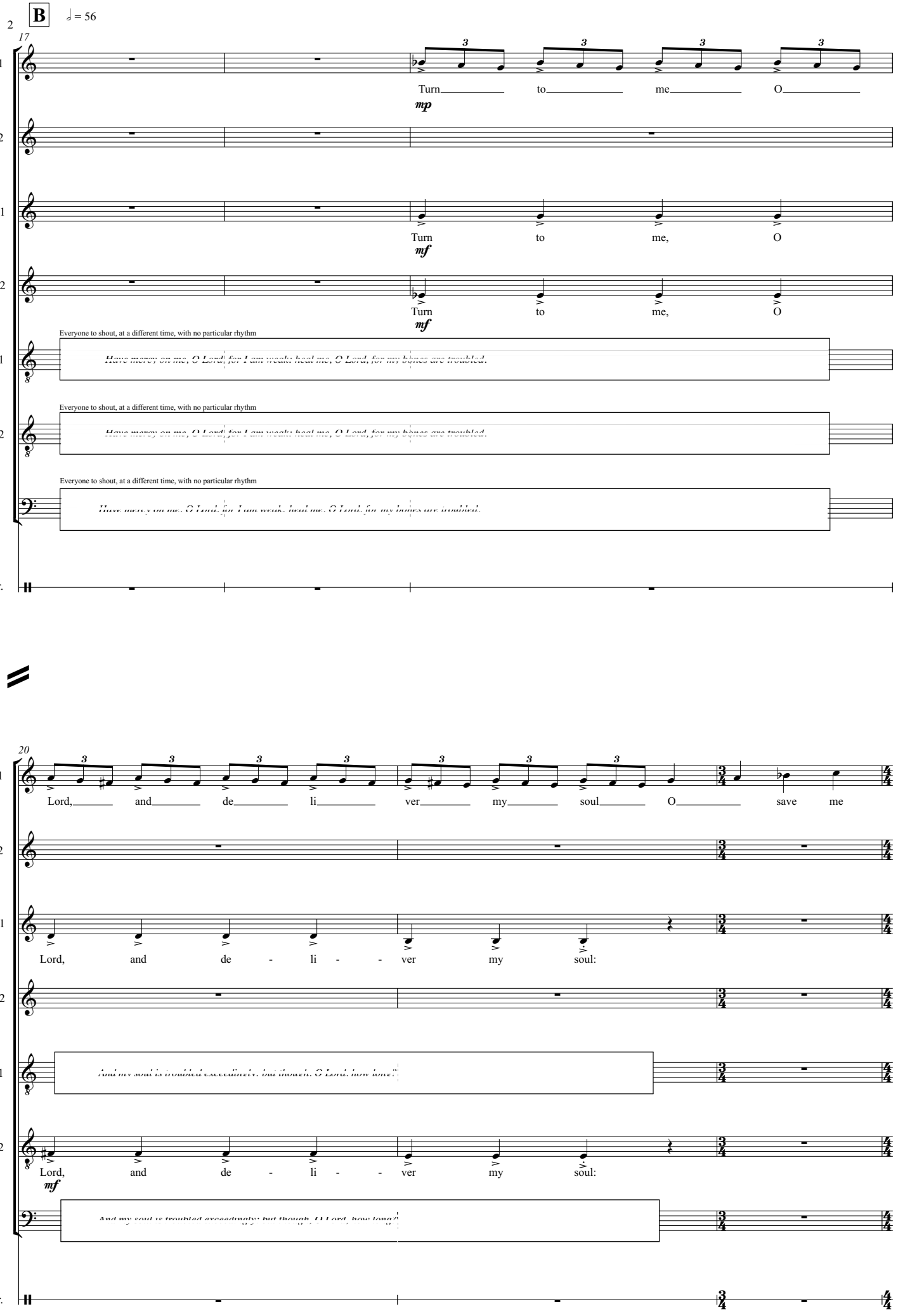
A Prayer in Distress

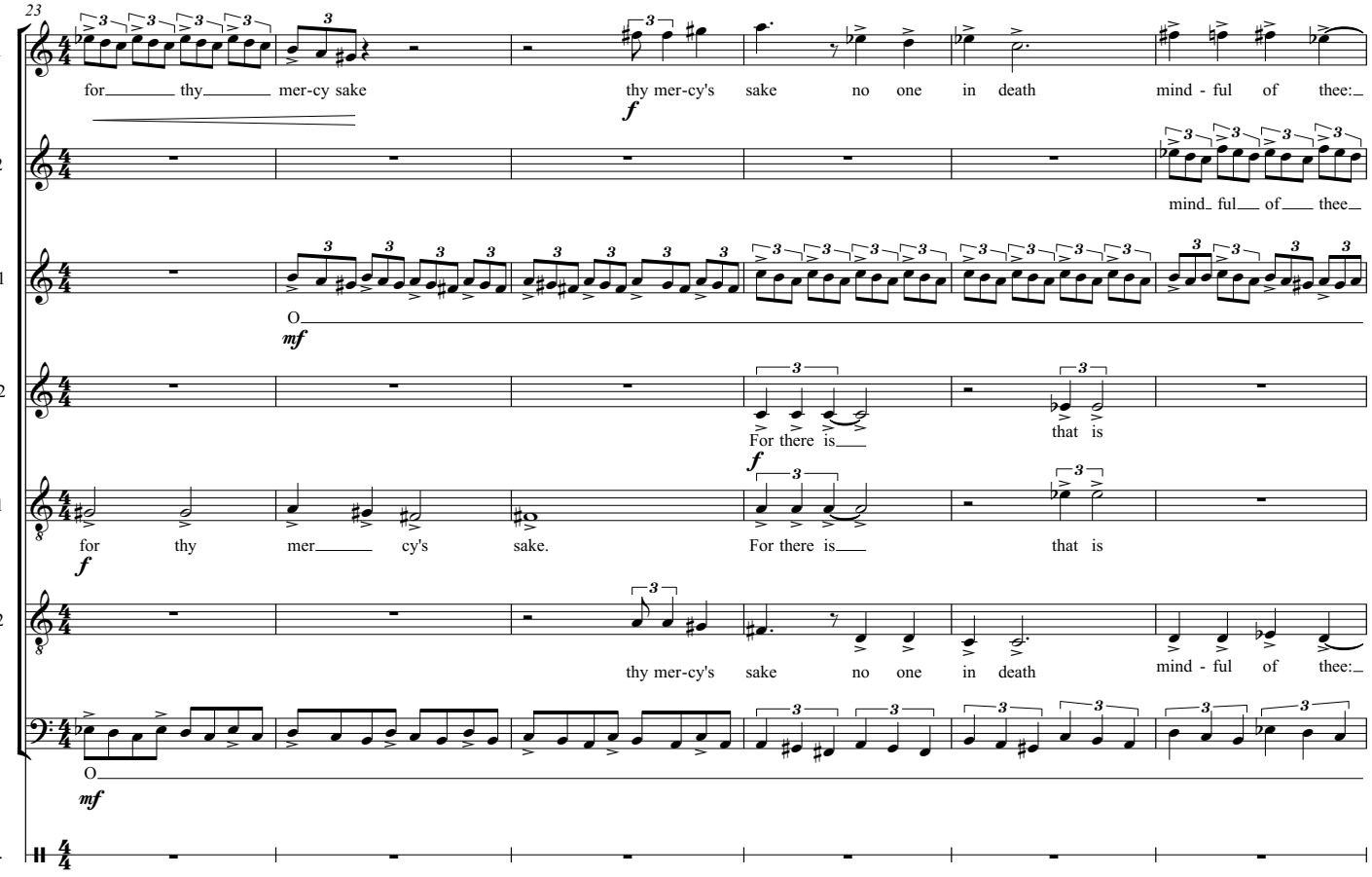
based on Psalm 6

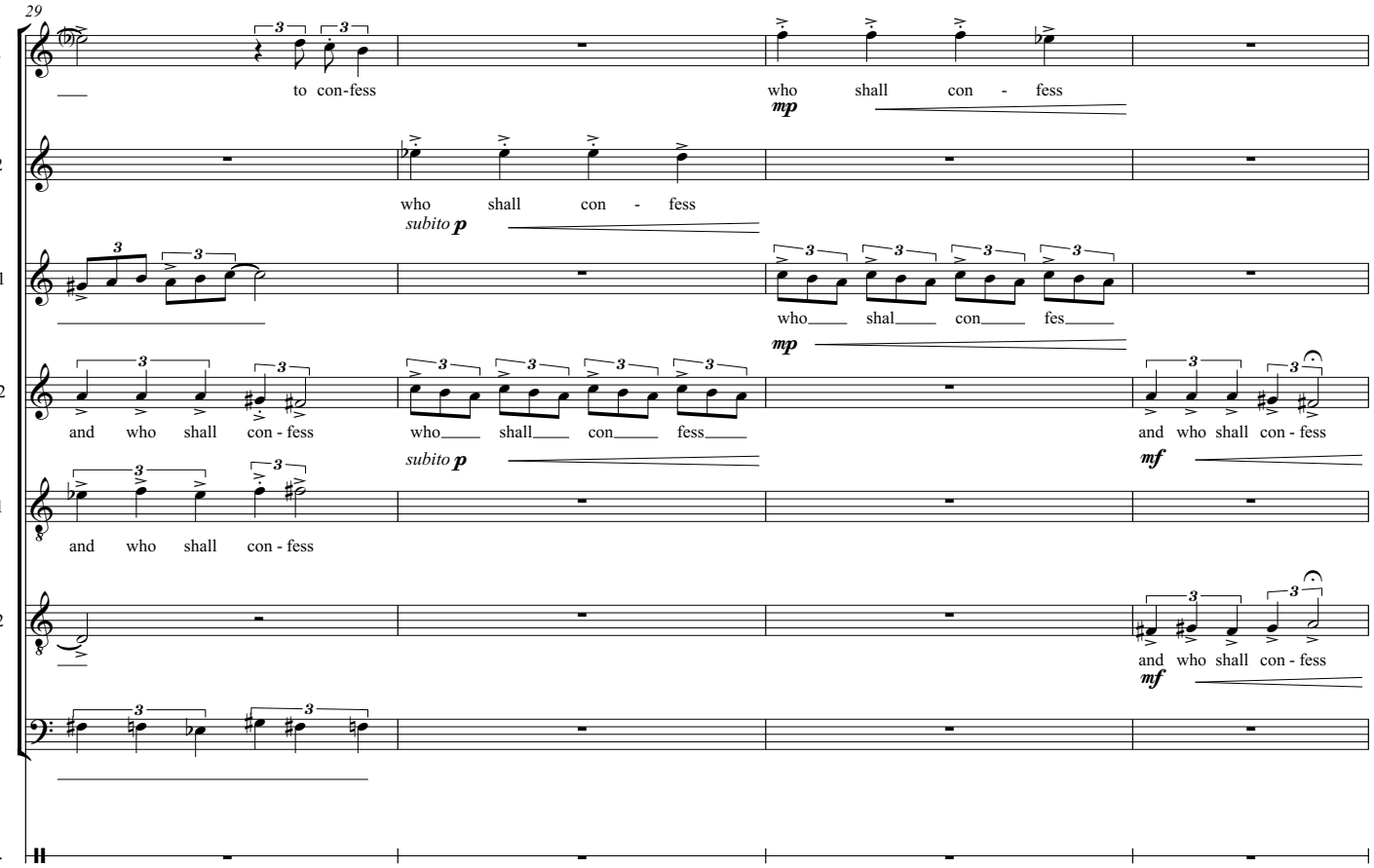
A ♩ = 48

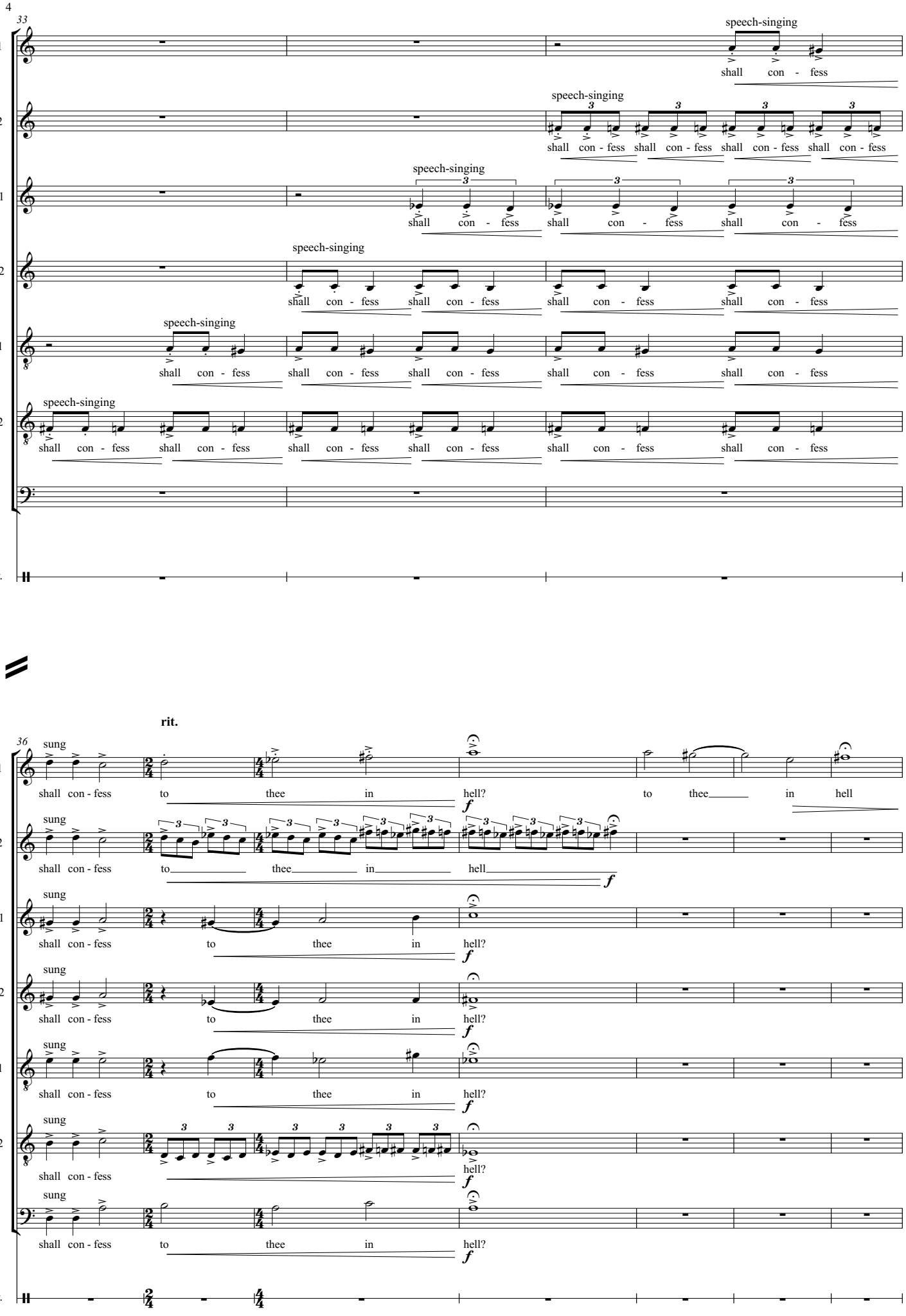
NG, Weihan




2
B
♩ = 56
17
S1
Turn to me O
mp
S2
A1
Turn to me, O
mf
A2
Turn to me, O
mf
Everyone to shout, at a different time, with no particular rhythm
T1
Have mercy on me, O Lord, for I am weak: heal me, O Lord, for my bones are troubled.
Everyone to shout, at a different time, with no particular rhythm
T2
Have mercy on me, O Lord, for I am weak: heal me, O Lord, for my bones are troubled.
Everyone to shout, at a different time, with no particular rhythm
B
Have mercy on me, O Lord, for I am weak: heal me, O Lord, for my bones are troubled.
Tr.
20
S1
Lord, and de li ver my soul O save me
S2
A1
Lord, and de - li - - ver my soul:
A2
T1
And my soul is troubled exceedingly: but though, O Lord, how long?
T2
Lord, and de - li - - ver my soul:
mf
B
And my soul is troubled exceedingly: but though, O Lord, how long?
Tr.


23
S1
for thy mer-cy sake
thy mer-cy's sake no one in death mind - ful of thee:
f
S2
mind- ful of thee
A1
O
mf
A2
For there is
that is
T1
for thy mer cy's sake.
For there is
that is
f
T2
thy mer-cy's sake no one in death
mind - ful of thee:
B
O
mf
Tr.


29
S1
to con-fess
who shall con - fess
mp
S2
who shall con - fess
subito p
A1
who shal con fes
mp
A2
and who shall con - fess
who shall con fess
and who shall con - fess
subito p
mf
T1
and who shall con - fess
T2
and who shall con - fess
mf
B
Tr.


33
S1
S2
A1
A2
T1
T2
B
Tr.
speech-singing
shall con - fess
36
rit.
sung
to thee in hell?
to thee in hell
f

C ♩= 48

43

S1 O pp

S2 O pp

A1 O pp

A2 O pp

T1 I have la-boured in my groa-nings, I will wa-ter my couch with my tears. mp

T2 e-very night I will wash my bed: my eyes is mp

B

Tr. mp

47

S1

S2 e - ne - mies mp

A1 I have grown old mp stagger breathing Oo

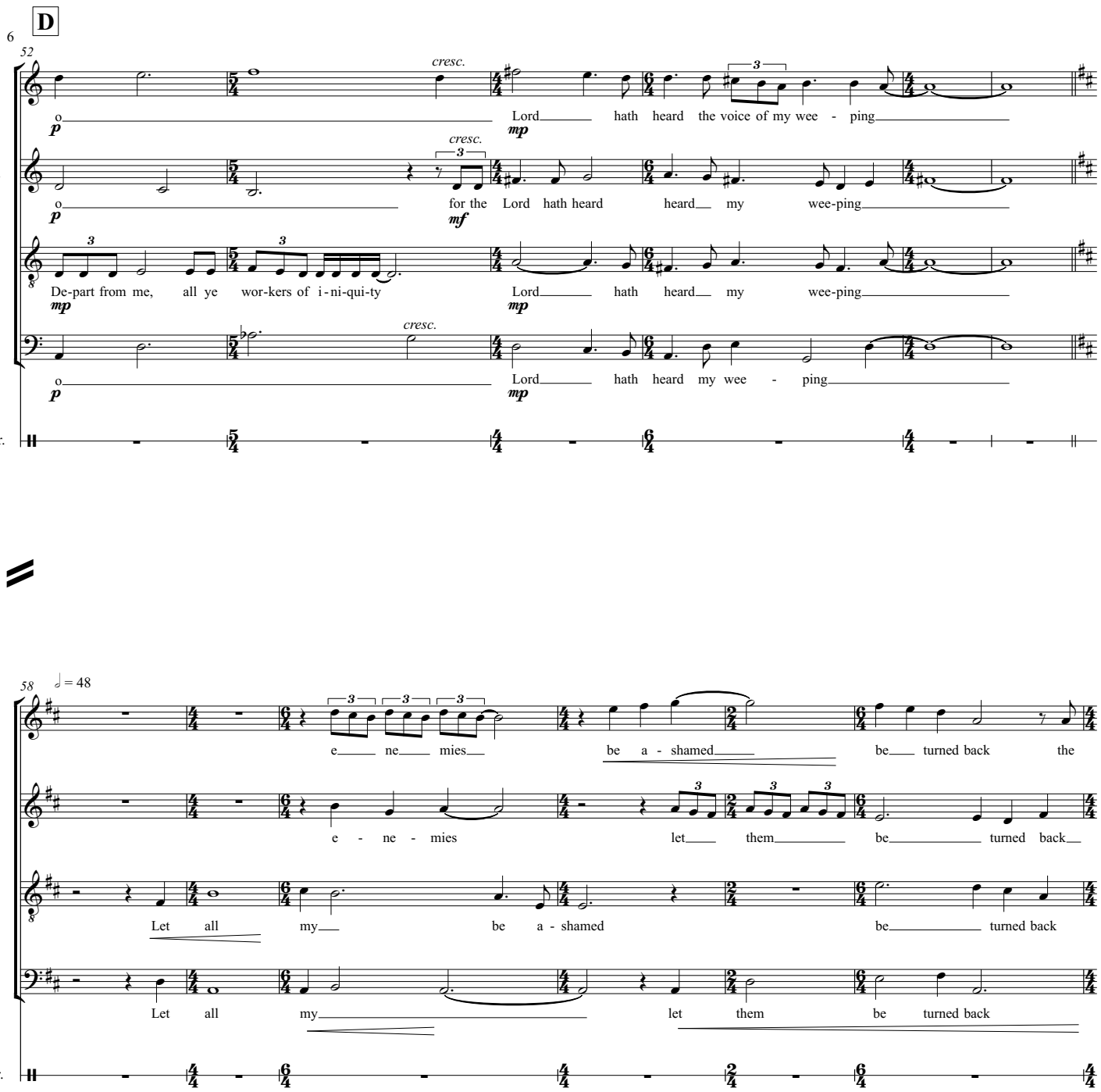
A2 a - mongst my mp Oo

T1

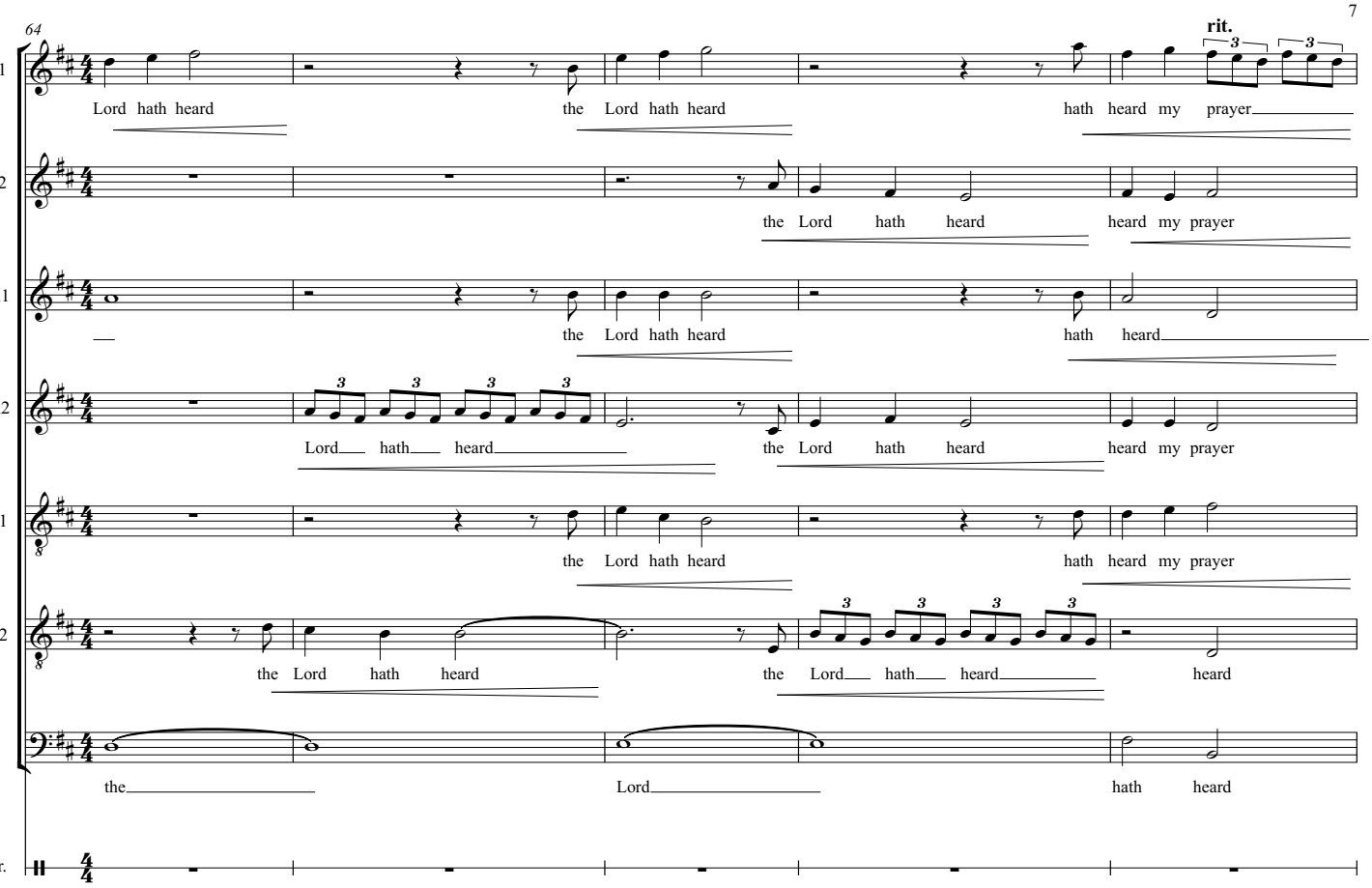
T2 trou-bled through in - dig - na - tion:

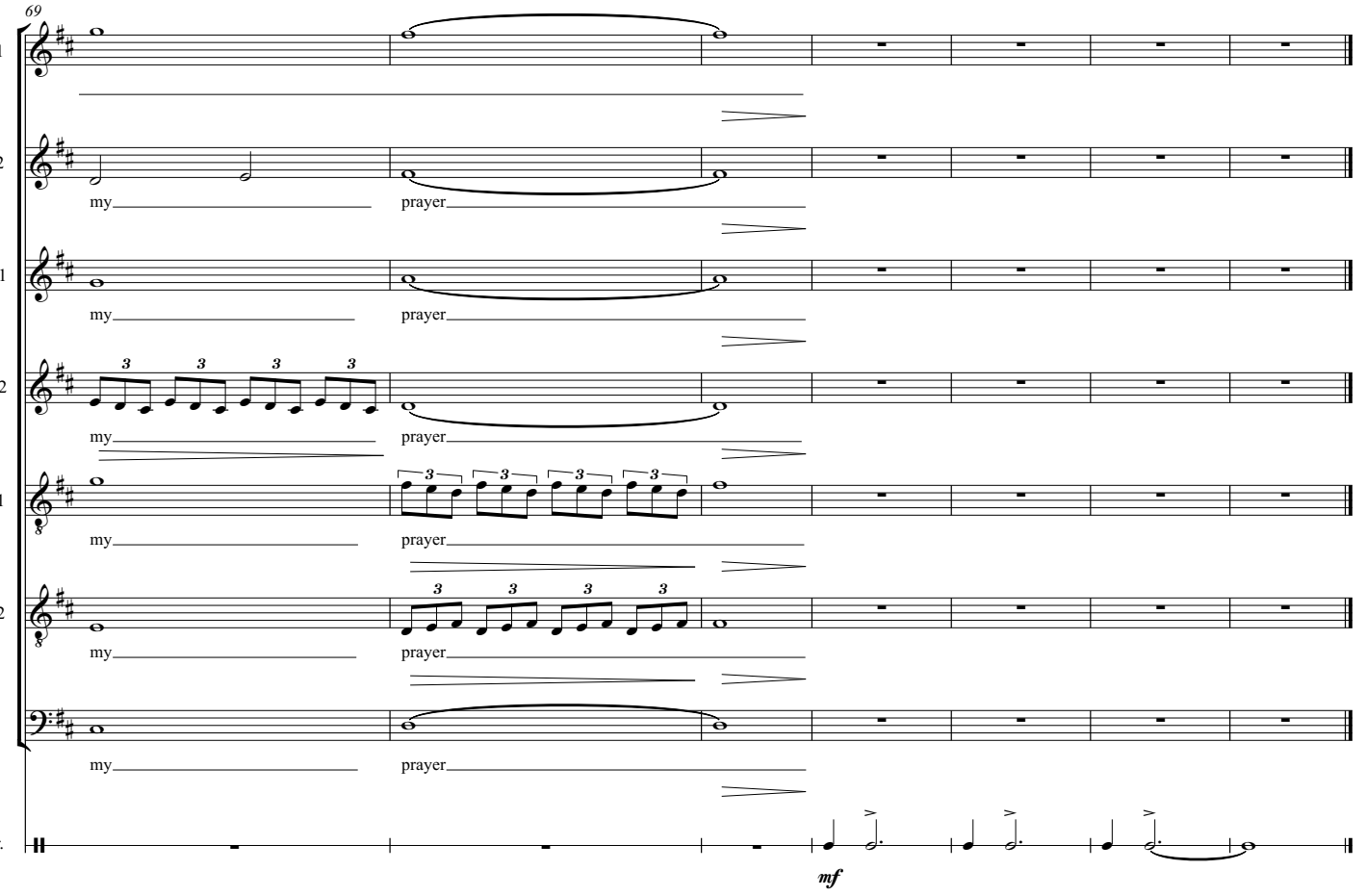
B

Tr.


D
6
52
S
A
T
B
Tr.
cresc.
p
mp
mf
o
Lord hath heard the voice of my wee - ping
for the Lord hath heard heard my wee-ping
De-part from me, all ye wor-kers of i-ni-qui-ty
Lord hath heard my wee-ping
Lord hath heard my wee - ping
3

58
♩ = 48
S
A
T
B
Tr.
e ne mies be a - shamed be turned back the
e - ne - mies let them be turned back
Let all my be a - shamed be turned back
Let all my let them be turned back
3


64
rit.
S1
Lord hath heard the Lord hath heard hath heard my prayer
S2
the Lord hath heard heard my prayer
A1
the Lord hath heard hath heard
A2
Lord hath heard the Lord hath heard heard my prayer
T1
the Lord hath heard hath heard my prayer
T2
the Lord hath heard the Lord hath heard heard
B
the Lord hath heard
Tr.


69
S1
S2
my prayer
A1
my prayer
A2
my prayer
T1
my prayer
T2
my prayer
B
my prayer
Tr.
mf