JOAN SZYMKO

Nothing But Mud

a setting of
"The Church, Zillebeki, October 1918"
by
WILLIAM ORPEN
for SSAATTBB *a cappella* CHORUS

Commissioned by
New Dublin Voices, Bernie Sherlock, Conductor

William Orpen

Major Sir William Newenham Montague Orpen, (b. 27 November 1878 – d. 29 September 1931) was born at Stillorgan, County Dublin. During the First World War, he was the most prolific of the official war artists on the Western Front. He produced drawings and paintings of ordinary soldiers, the dead, and German prisoners of war, as well as portraits of generals and politicians. He donated 138 of his works to the British government and they are now held or displayed in the Imperial War Museum, London. Orpen portrayed the awful conditions that men experienced at 'The Front', in his poem *The Church, Zillebeke, October 1918.* The mud landscape that became synonymous with the Battle of Passchendaele was unimaginable to the ordinary civilian back home and Orpen's poem attempts to describe it. —from royal-irish.com (©The Royal Irish)

The Church, Zillebeke, October 1918
Mud
Everywhere –
Nothing but mud.
The very air seems thick with it,
The few tufts of grass are all smeared with it –
Mud!
The Church a heap of it;
One look, and weep for it.
That's what they've made of it –
Mud!
Slimy and wet,
Churned and upset;
Here Bones that once mattered
With crosses lie scattered,
Broken and battered,
Covered in mud,
Here, where the Church's bell
Tolled when our heroes fell
In that mad start of hell –
Mud!
That's all that's left of it – mud!

Joan Szymko (b.1957)

Joan Szymko's choral music is regularly performed at regional, national and international choral festivals, competitions and conferences. Utilizing a familiar music vocabulary, she creates works that are nonetheless fresh and engaging; compelling and inspiring, her text selections are as notable as her music. Szymko is widely recognized as a foremost American composer of exceptional repertoire for women's choir. The American Choral Director's Association recognized Szymko's lasting impact on the choral arts in America by selecting her as the recipient of the prestigious Raymond W. Brock Memorial Commission in 2010.

Joan Szymko lives and works in the beautiful Pacific Northwest. As resident composer she enjoyed a fruitful collaboration with Portland based Do Jump! Movement Theater, (1995-2012) creating vocal underscoring for major touring productions. A dynamic conductor, she has directed a variety of church and community choruses, served on the choral music faculty of Portland State University (2013-15) and has led Aurora Chorus as Artistic Director since 1993. As a visiting artist, Szymko workshops her compositions with choirs in a variety of educational and festival settings across the country and abroad. For more info, see www.joanszymko.com

Commissioned by New Dublin Voices, Bernie Sherlock, Conductor

Nothing But Mud

William Orpen (1878-1931)
"The Church, Zillebeki, October 1918"

Joan Szymko
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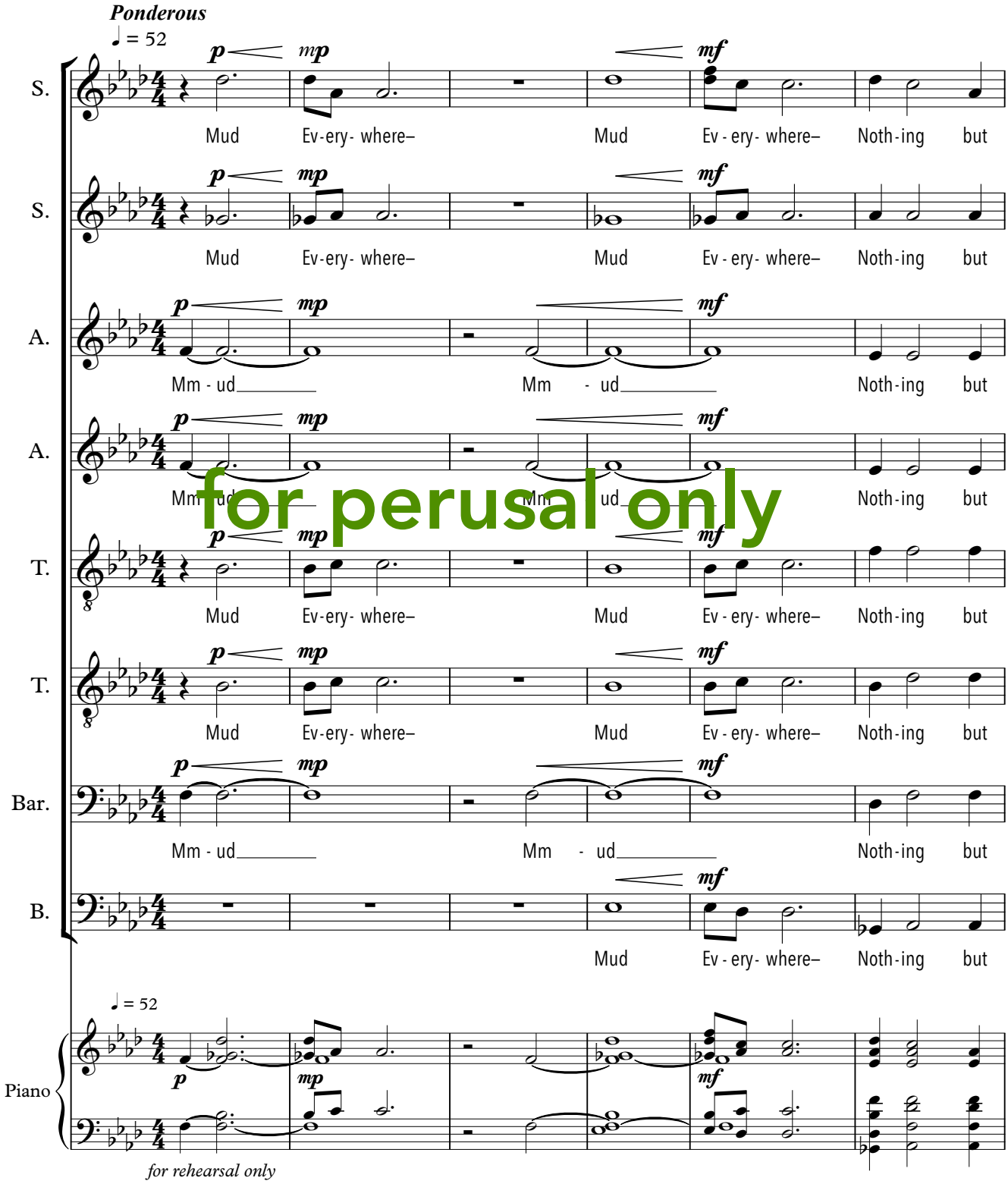

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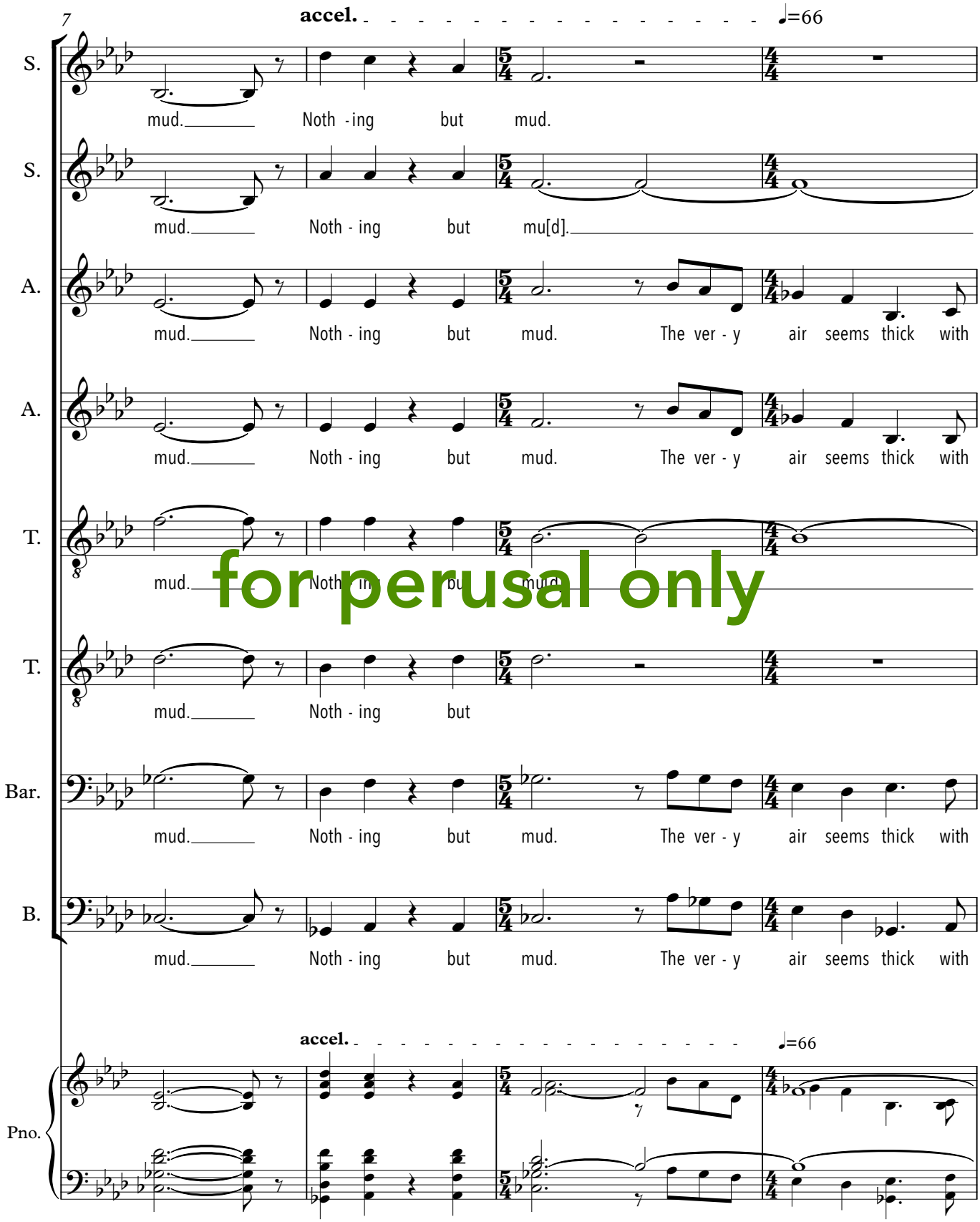

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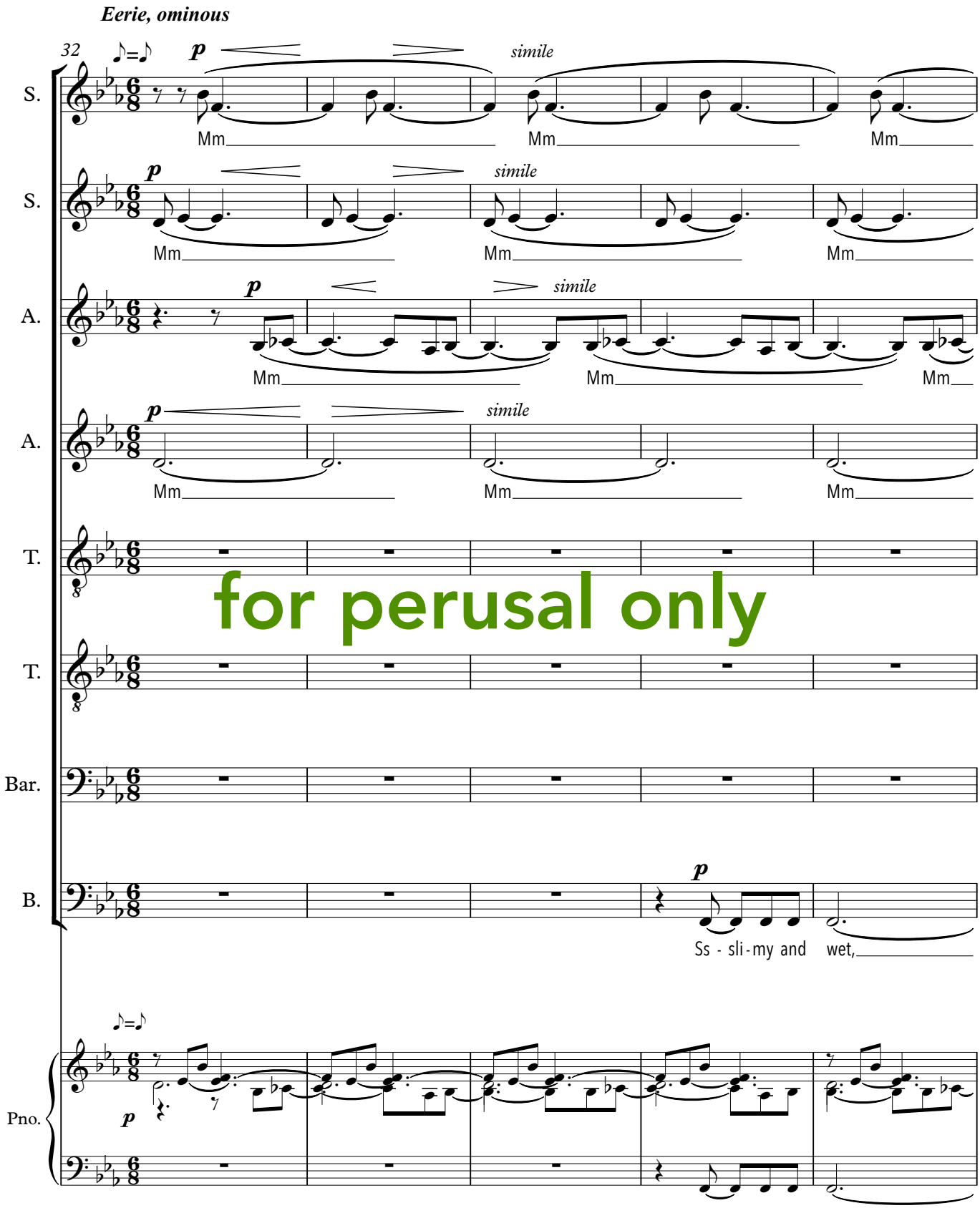

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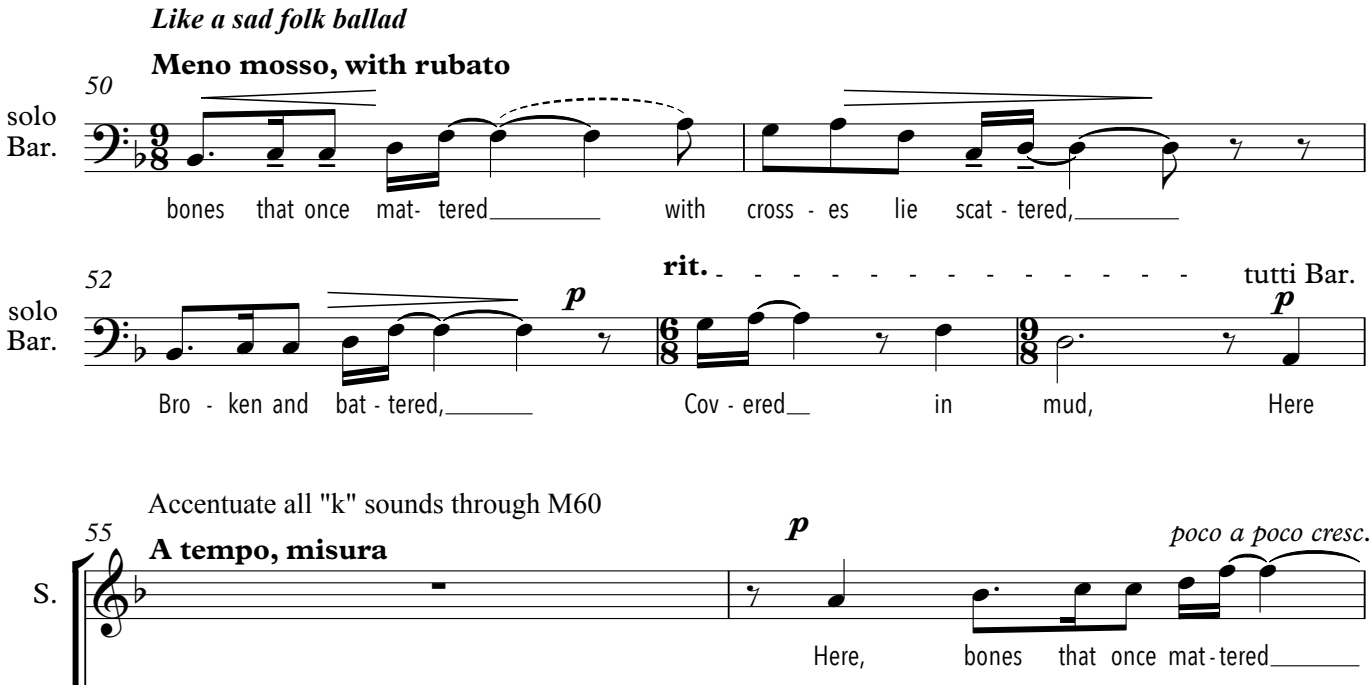

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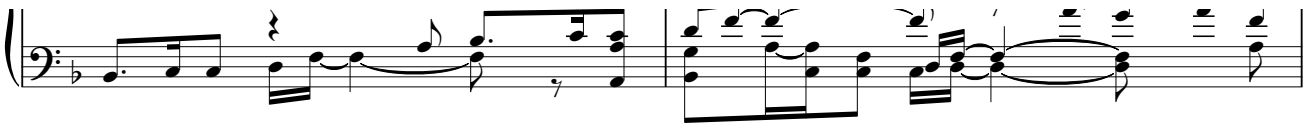

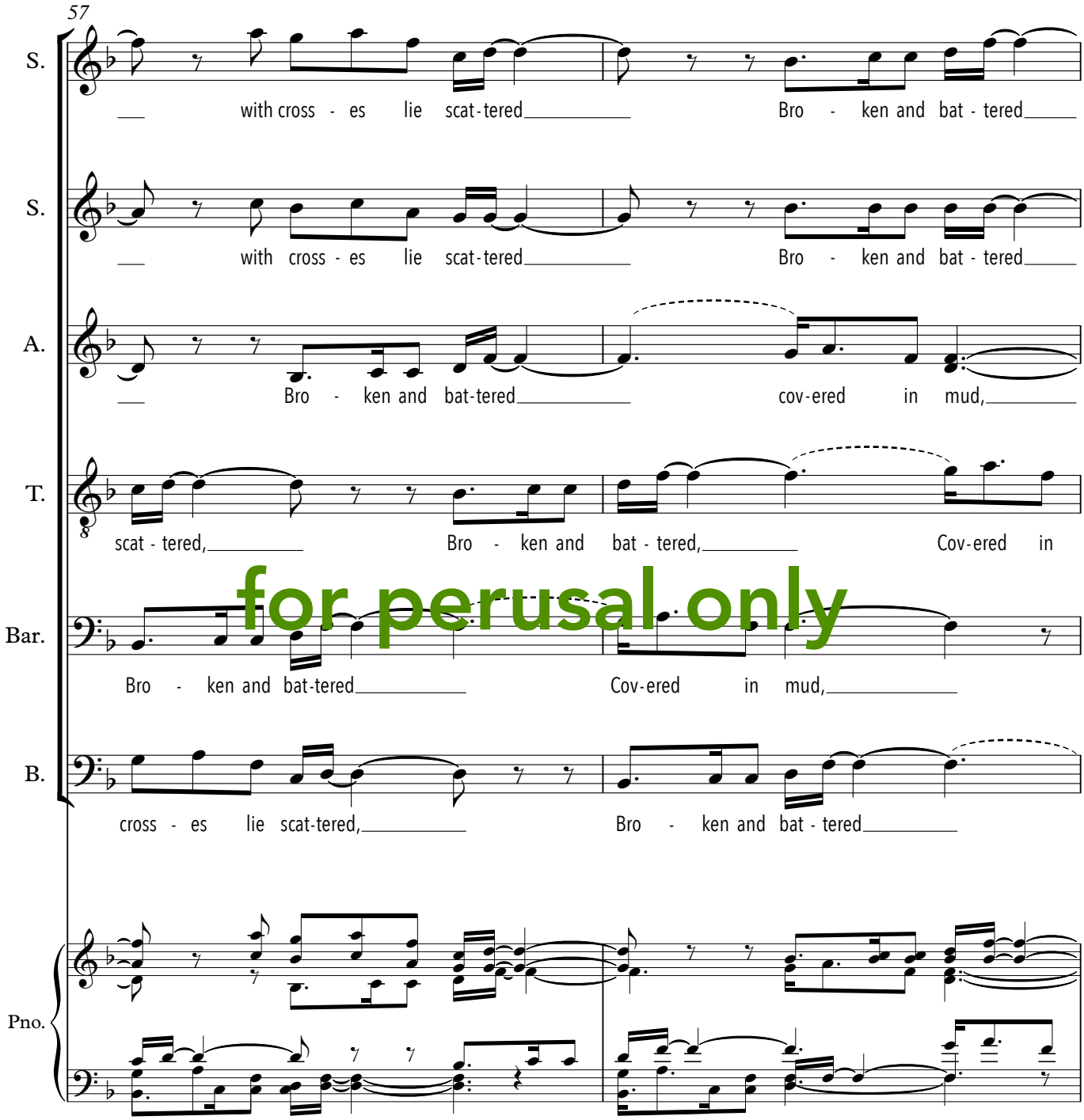

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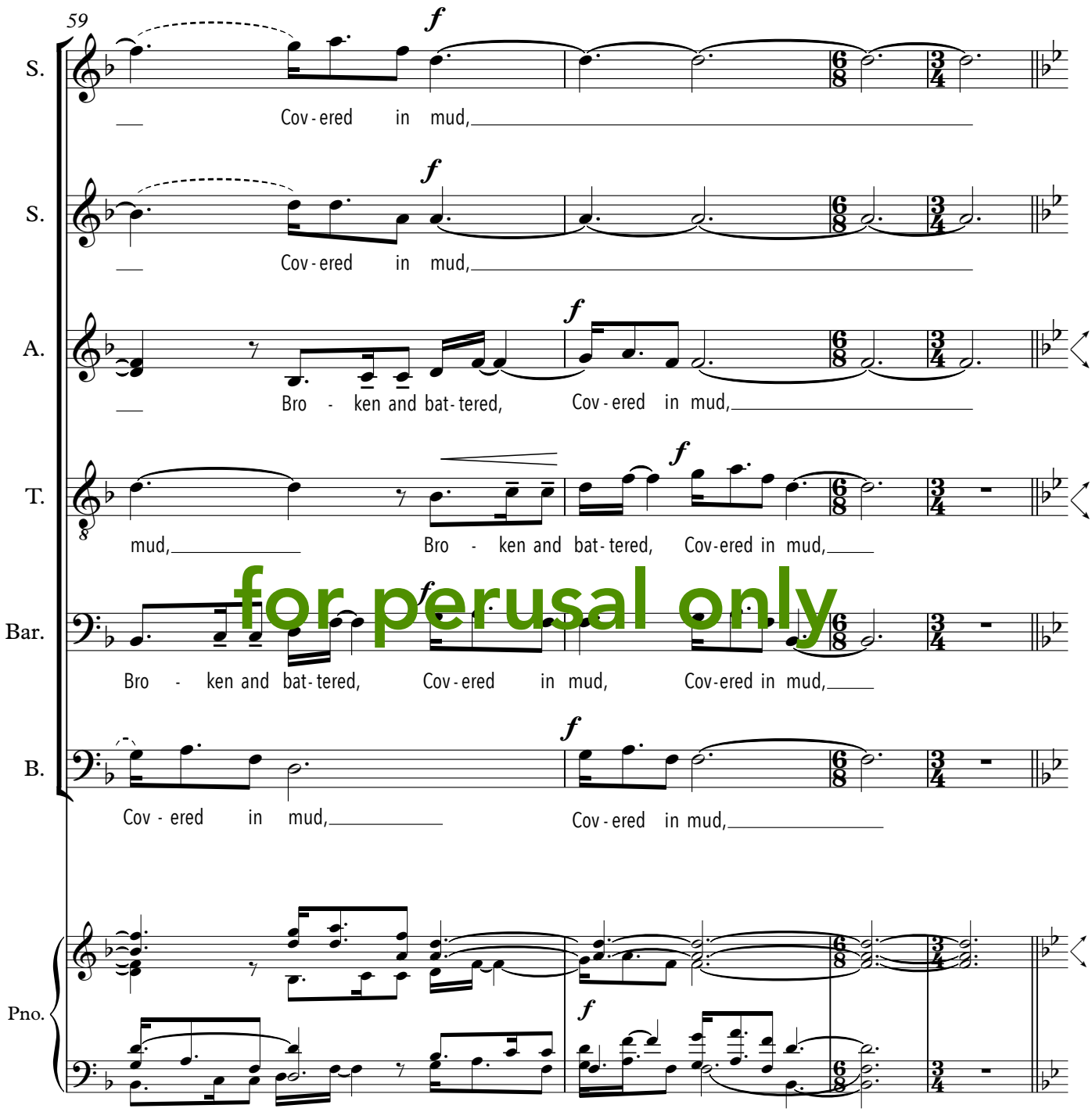

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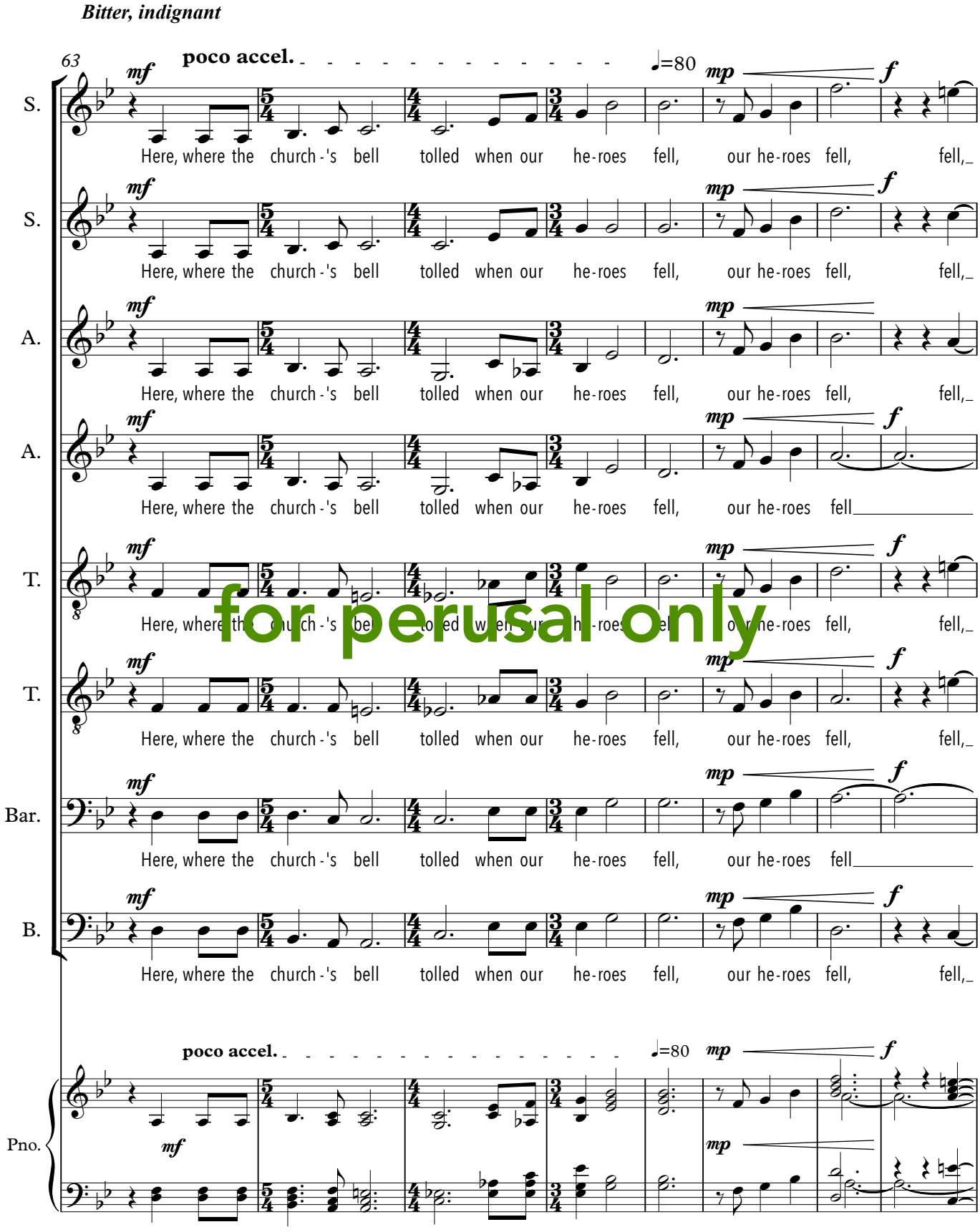
Bitter, indignant
63
poco accel.
♩=80
S.
A.
T.
Bar.
B.
Pno.
Here, where the church-'s bell tolled when our he-roes fell, our he-roes fell, fell,
Here, where the church-'s bell tolled when our he-roes fell, our he-roes fell
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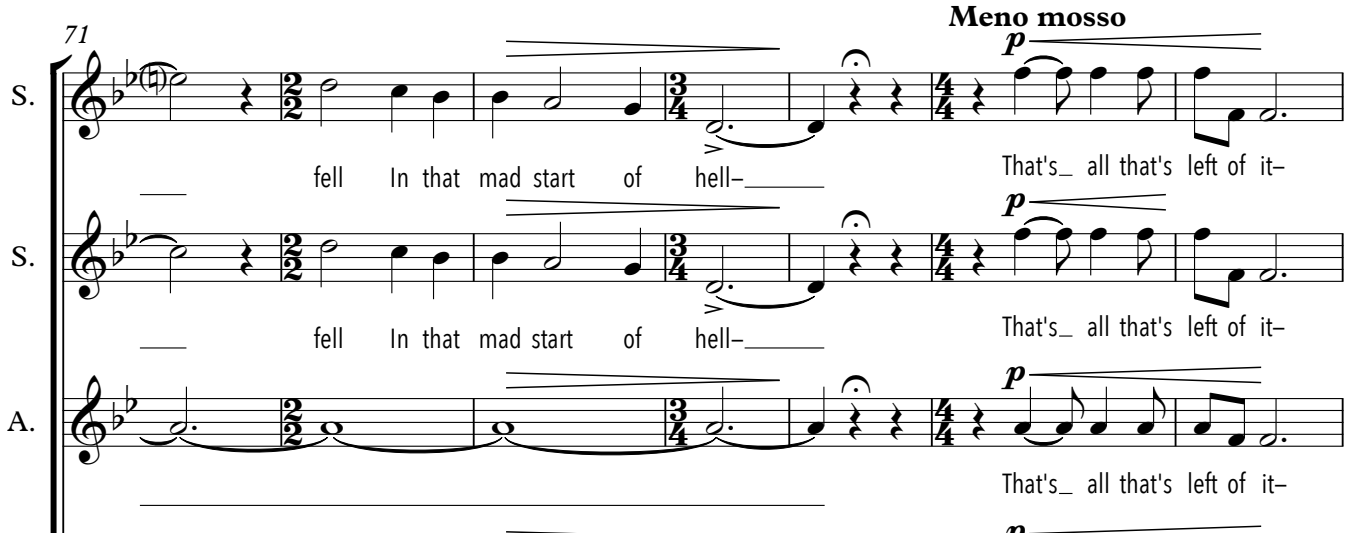

A

T

T

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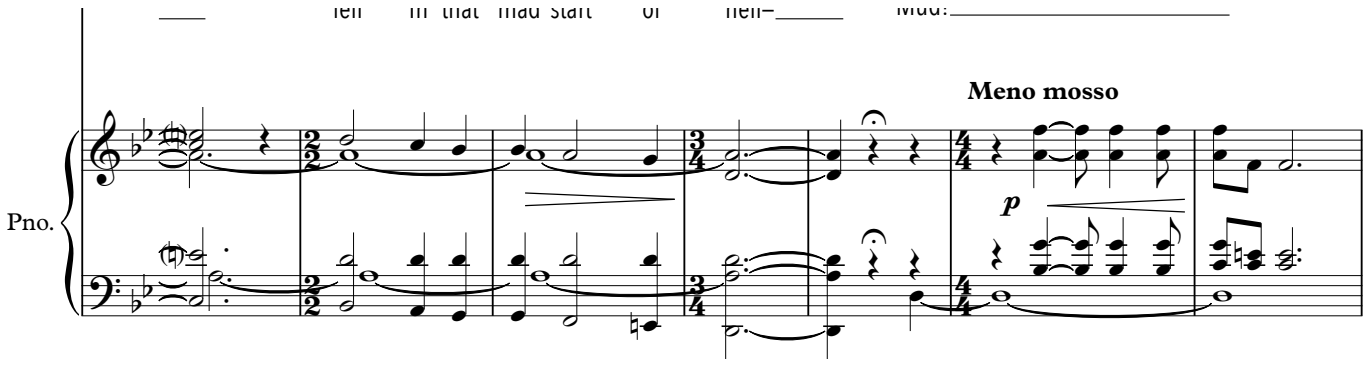
Bar

B



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