# THE GREAT SILENCE

SAMUEL BORDOLI

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An anthem to commemorate former choristers killed in the First World War

Version for Upper Voices + Organ

# The Great Silence

An anthem to commemorate former choristers killed in the First World War
commissioned by General the Lord Dannatt GCB, CBE, MC, DL

Patrons:
General the Lord Dannatt
The Rt. Hon. The Lord Mayor Alderman Dr Andrew Parmley MusM Hon, FGS
The Venerable (Air Vice Marshal) Jonathan Chaffey QHC, RAF

The composer extends his warmest thanks to the Patrons of The Great Silence and to those listed here for their inspiration, suggestions and help:-

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The Reverend Canon Paul Wright
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The composer extends his warmest thanks for their generous support to the:-
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# Composer's Note

Bewilderment and grief swept over the nation in the years immediately following the end of the First World War as it attempted to come to terms with the scale of what had happened. The conflict had torn apart the fabric of society and the task of rebuilding fell upon the shoulders of those whose loved ones would not return. The idea of a two minutes commemorative pause was established by King George V in 1919 on Armistice Day; this first great silence was observed across the whole land. The process of regeneration and remembrance had begun in the spirit of optimism that this had been the 'war to end all wars'.

Silence in music is a powerful metaphor. After the sound stops, all that remains is an echo. This anthem has been composed to commemorate choristers who fell during the First World War. The text, 'Song and Pain', was written by Ivor Gurney, a chorister at Gloucester Cathedral from 1900 – 1906. He conceived it during the Battle of the Somme in 1916 at Crucifix Corner whilst serving with The Gloucestershire Regiment. The spirit of the words reflects the mood at the end of the war; it captures the idea of resurrection, that from the ashes, the soldier poet will endure his pain and enter the House of Joy.

After an introduction played by the organist, the work moves between two thematic sections, both of which return throughout. The first, a verse for unaccompanied choir in D minor, sets captures the sense of sadness and loss. The second, a chorus in D major, is optimistic and bright. The three melody notes in the main theme (C#, D and A) also unify the harmonic structure of the work, which is based on these three keys. At this point, churches have the opportunity to have the names of their fallen choristers sung as a roll call, each name dropping away until there is silence. An ecstatic build-up provides a climax to the work, where each voice enters in layers, before the music comes to a peaceful end.

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It is rare, if not unprecedented, for a musical work to be composed specifically to commemorate choristers who have lost their lives in war. Their echo and the regenerative spirit of *The Great Silence* bring a legacy into the lives of former and serving choristers of today. The anthem is also suitable for general commemorative use, with or without a sung list of names.

The Great Silence project is proud to be supporting and raising funds for the Royal College of Organists and Friends of Cathedral Music. Donations have also been made to London Music Masters.

www.thegreatsilence.co.uk

*Commissioned by General the Lord Dannatt GCB, CBE, MC, DL*
*and dedicated by the composer to the memory of choristers who lost their lives in the First World War*

*Patrons: General the Lord Dannatt, Lord Mayor Alderman Dr Andrew Parmley,*
*The Venerable (Air Vice Marshal) Jonathan Chaffey QCH, RAF*

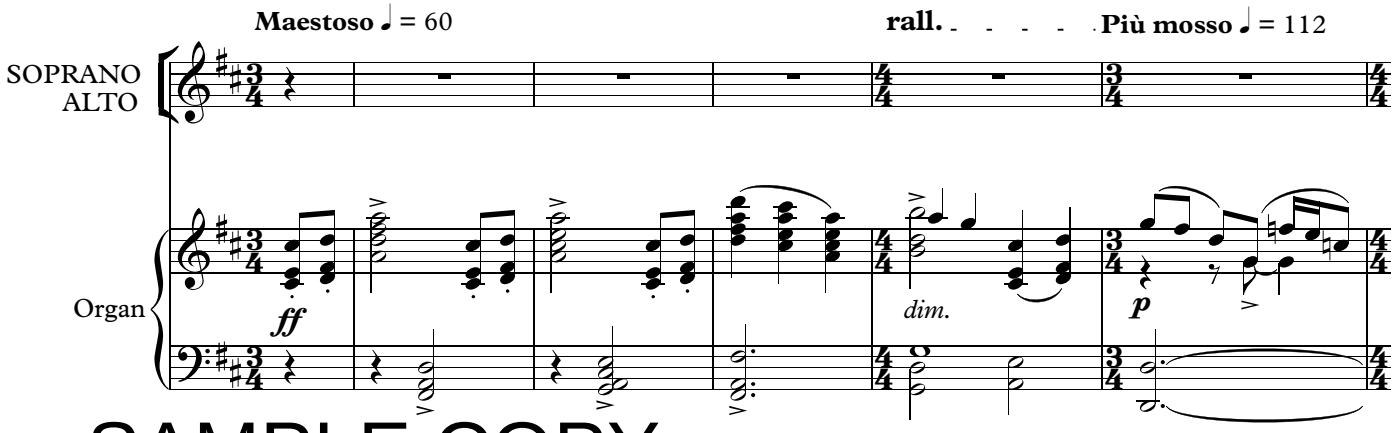
*Premiered by The Children and Gentlemen of Her Majesty's Chapel Royal, St James's Palace, The Choir of St George's Chapel, Windsor Castle,*
*The Choir of Her Majesty's Chapel Royal, Hampton Court Palace and The Choir of The Queen's Chapel of the Savoy on 26th September 2016*
*in a concert celebrating The Queen's 90th Birthday in St George's Chapel, Windsor Castle, part of Windsor Festival.*

# THE GREAT SILENCE

*VERSION FOR UPPER VOICES*

'*Song and Pain*'
Ivor Gurney

SAMUEL BORDOLI

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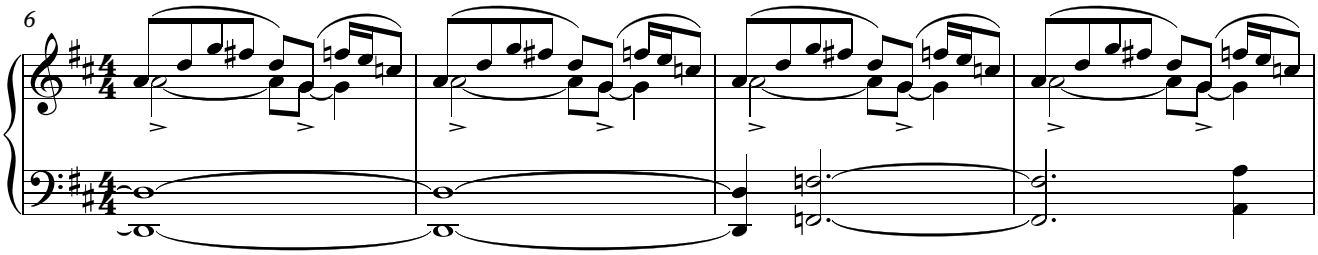


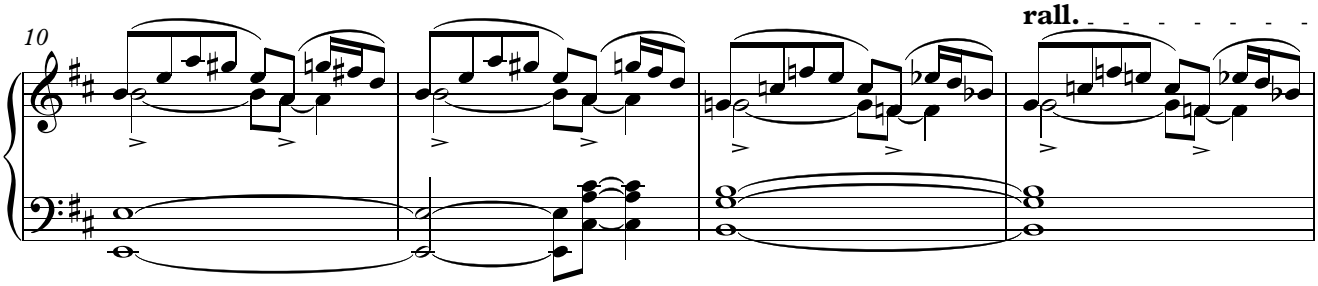


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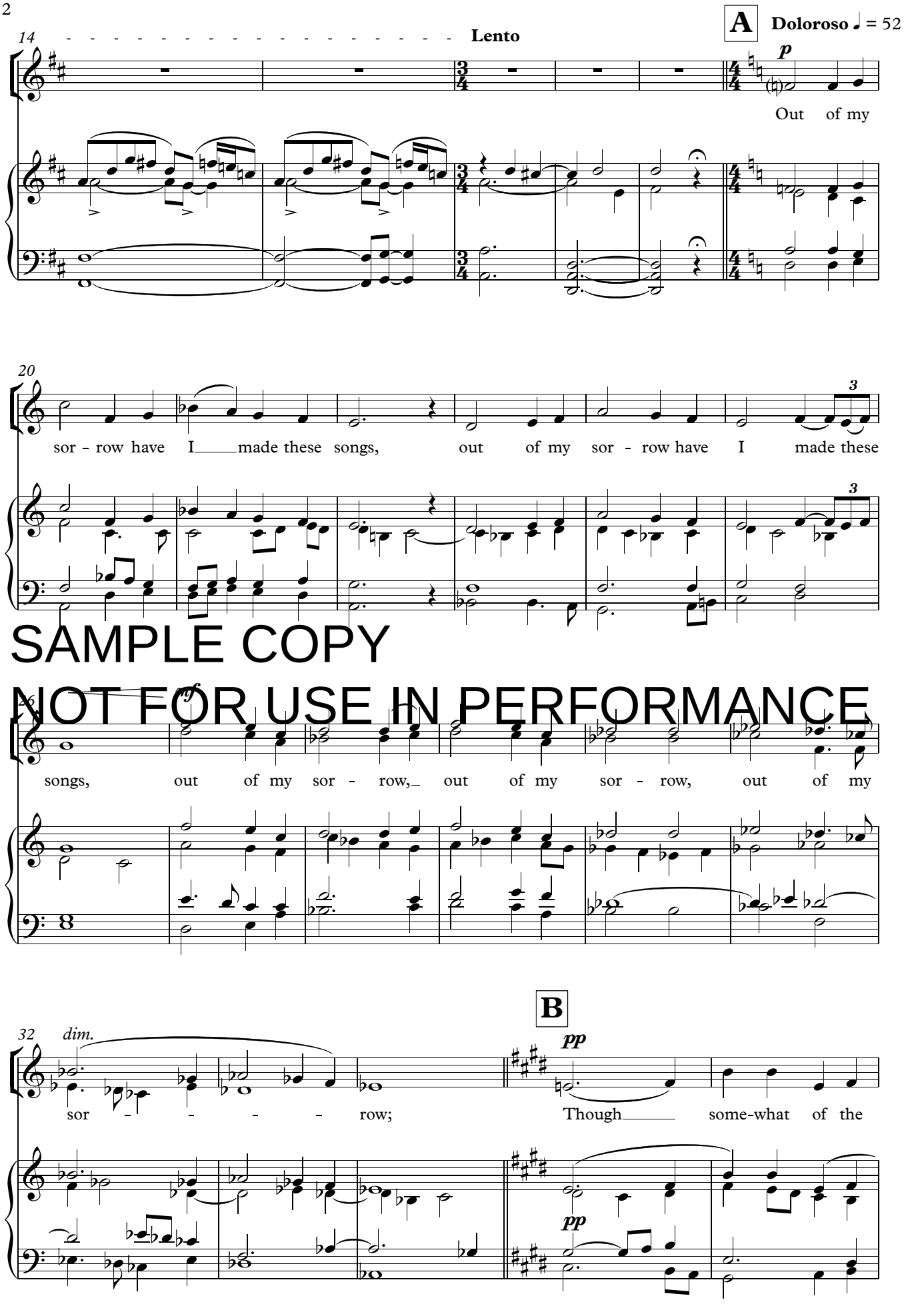


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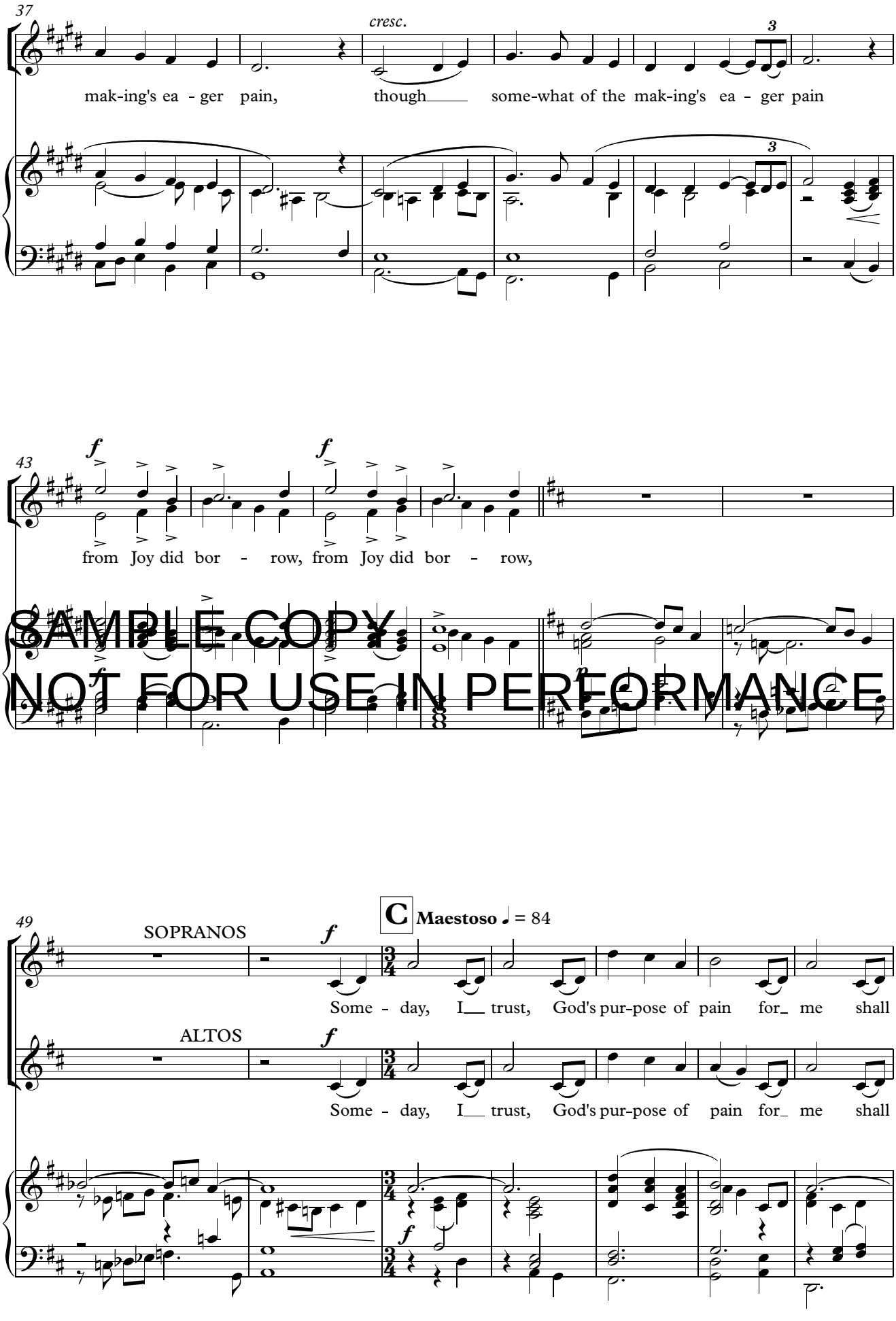


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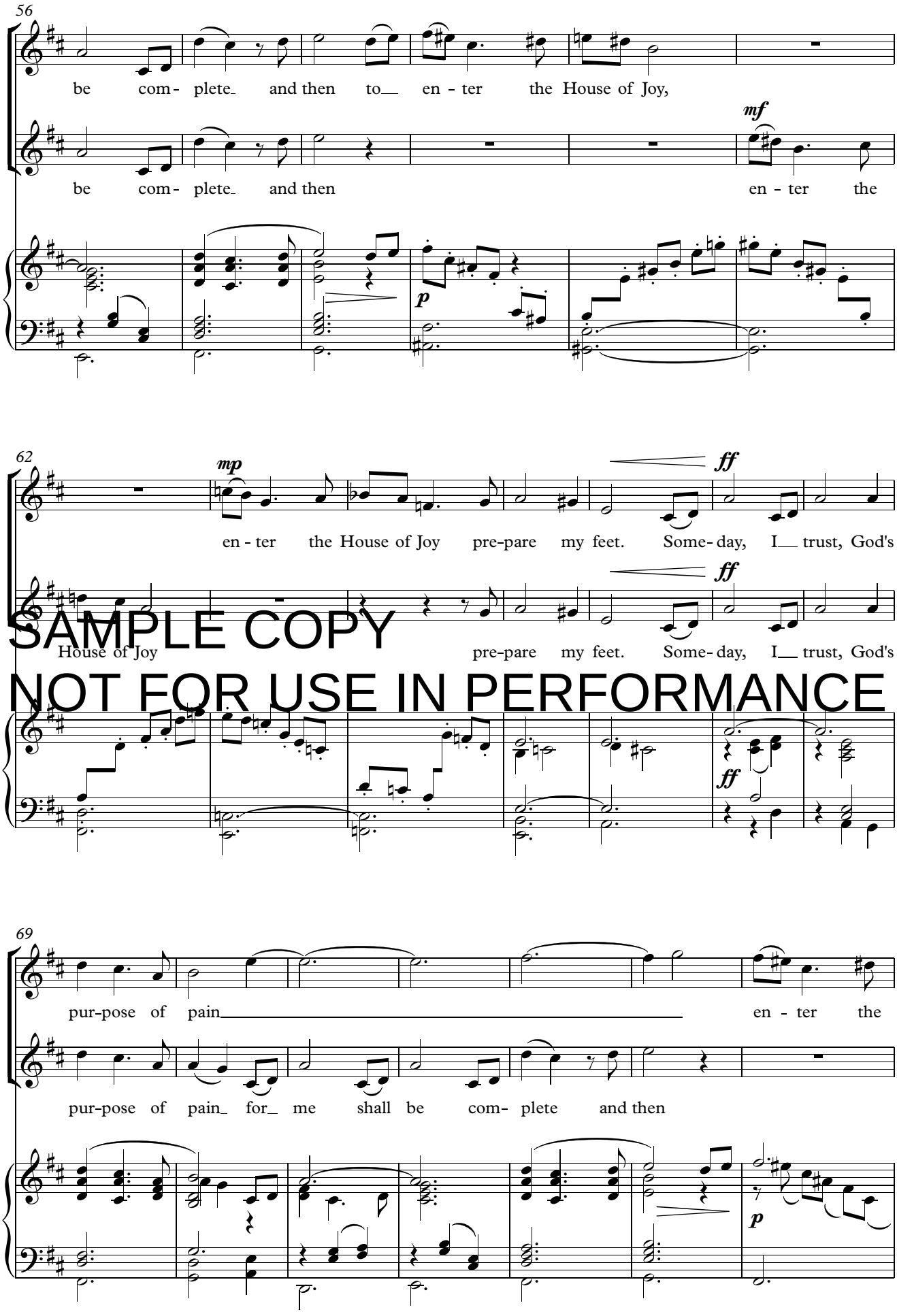


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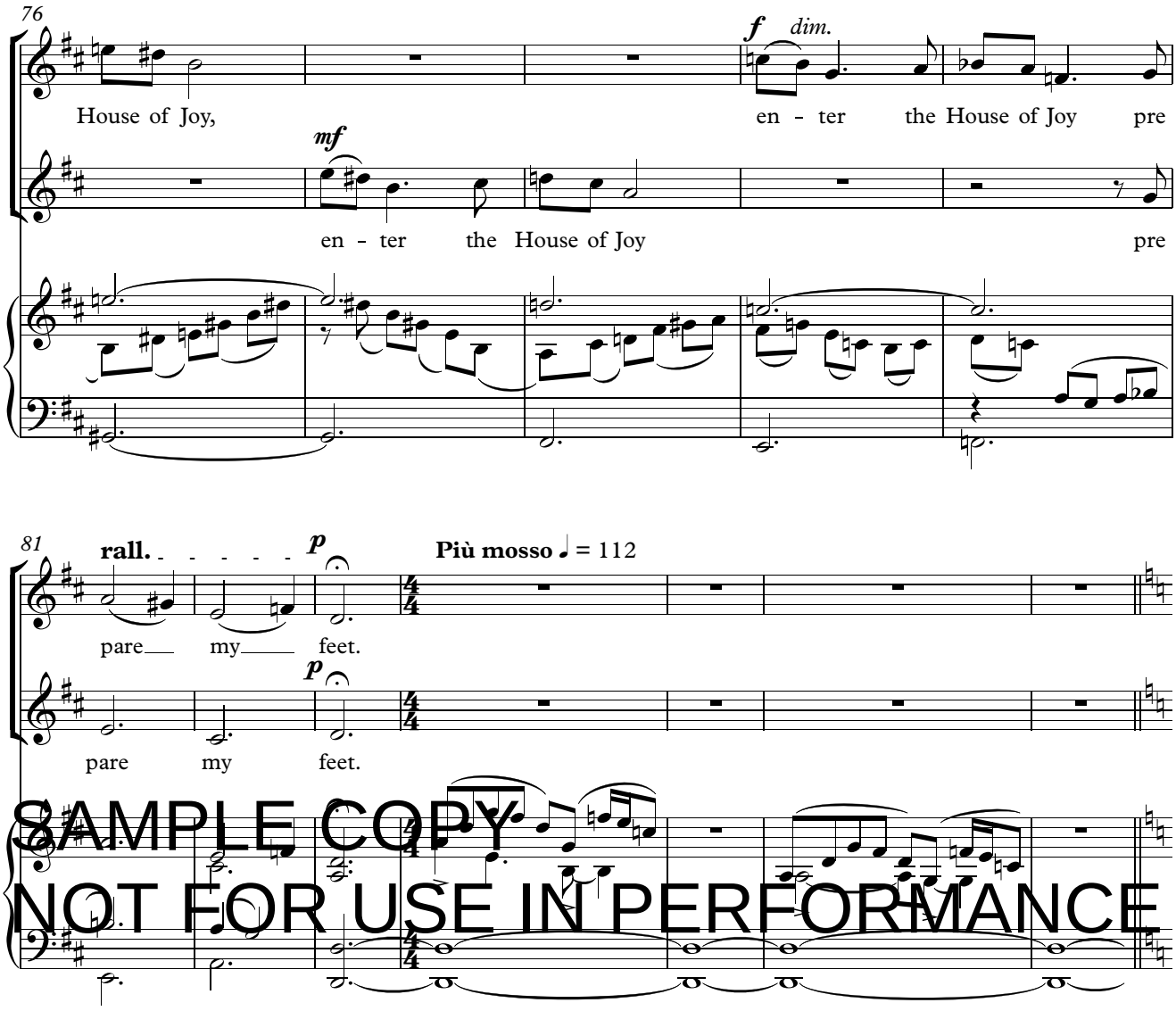


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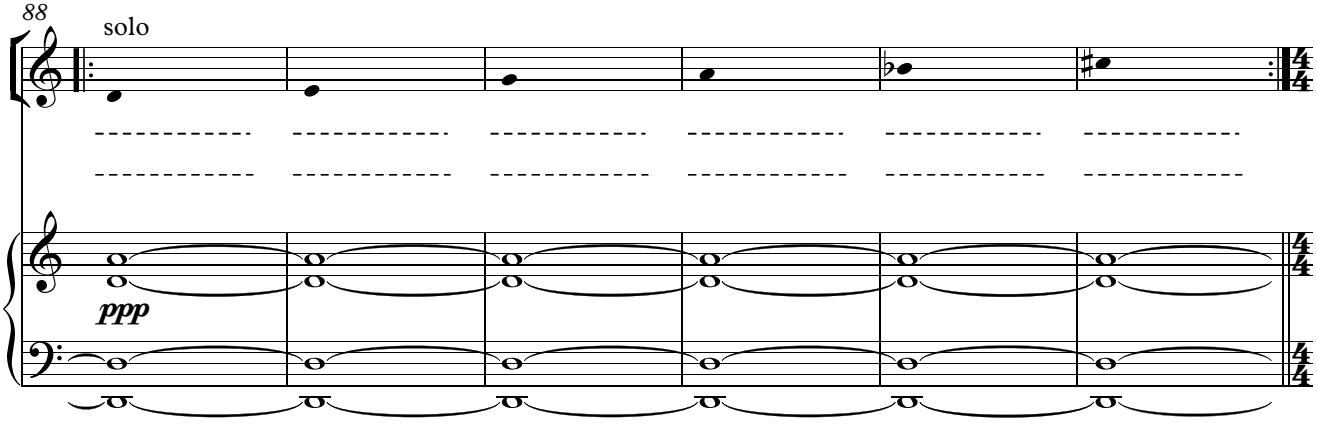
## OPTIONAL Roll of Honour to commemorate fallen choristers

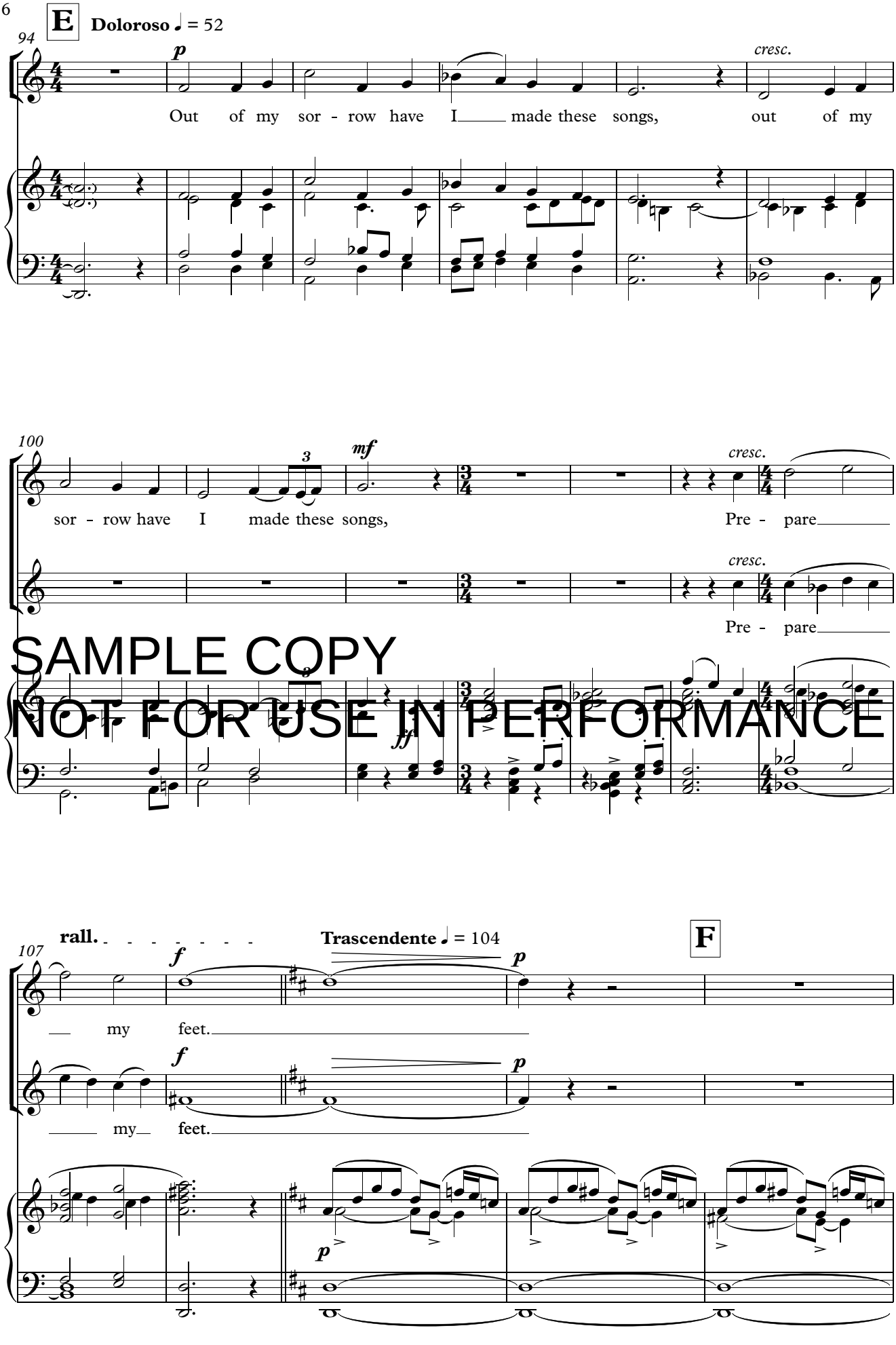
If this section is used, it should follow without a break. If it is not used, the choir should go directly to letter E.

Sing the name of each fallen chorister on the given pitch in free rhythm. Names may be written on the dotten lines provided.

There are 6 pitches in total. If the number of names exceeds the number of pitches, the section may be repeated to incorporate all the names. If there are less than 6 names, notes may be omitted at the choir master's discretion.

**D** **Lento ad libitum**



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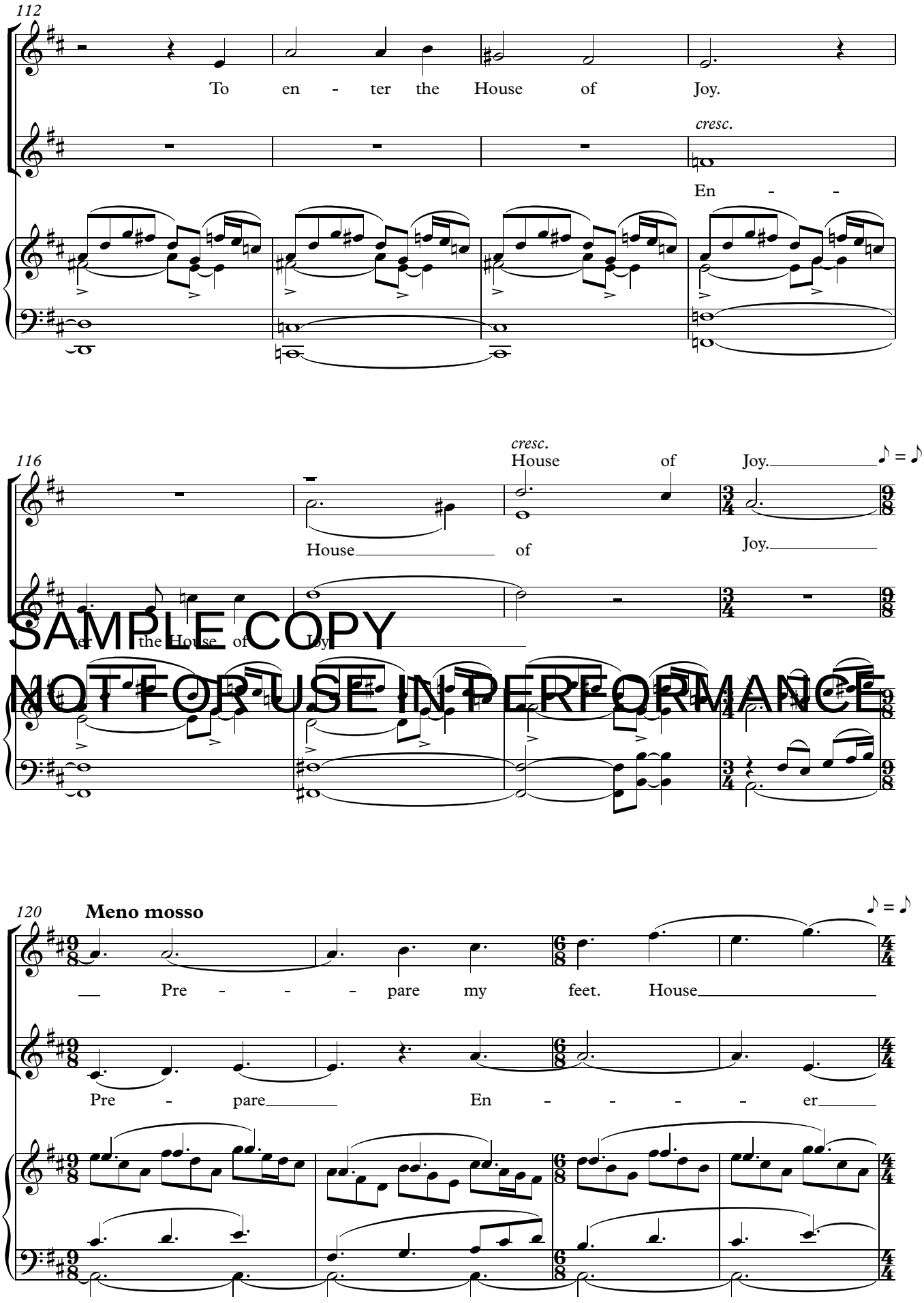


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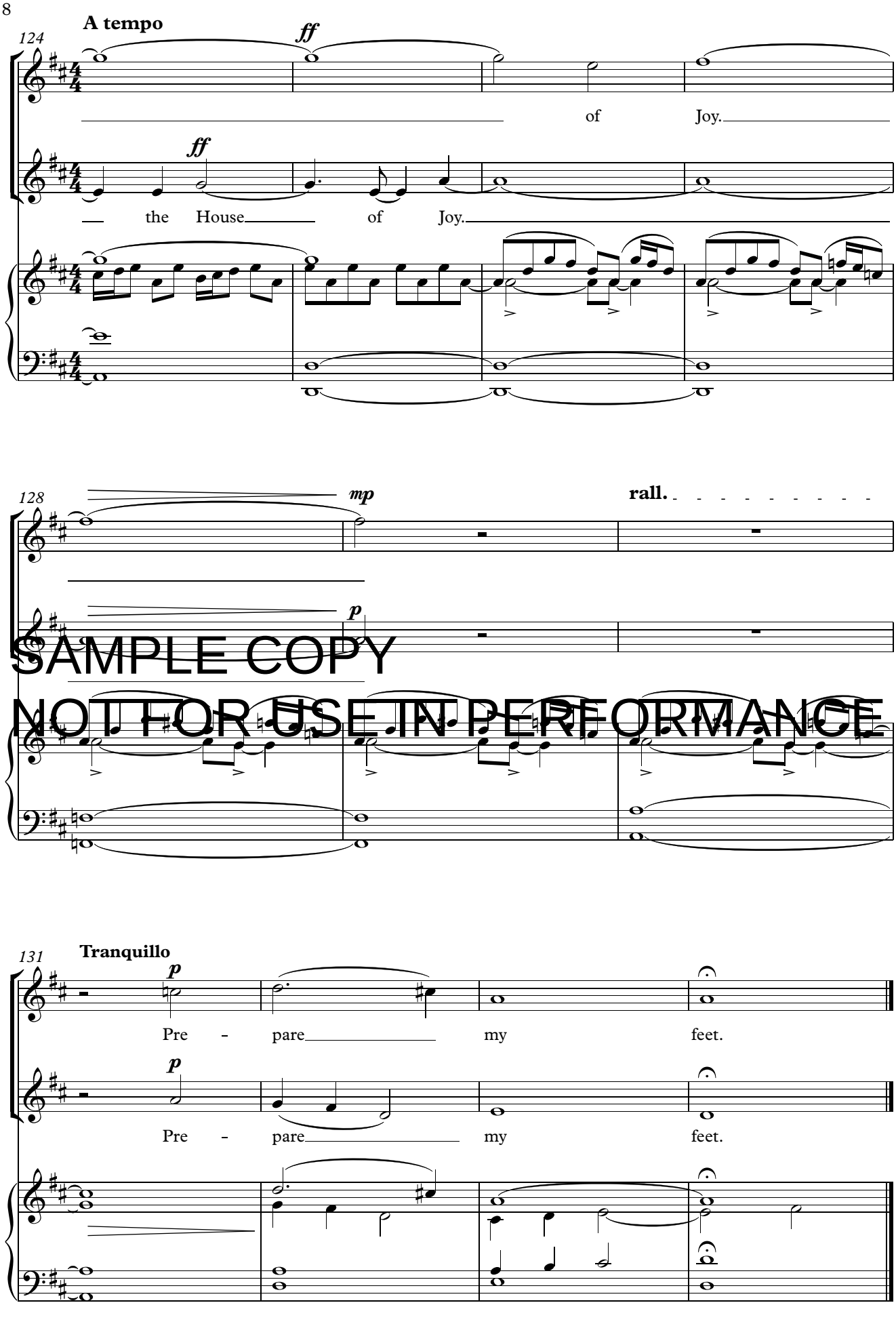


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