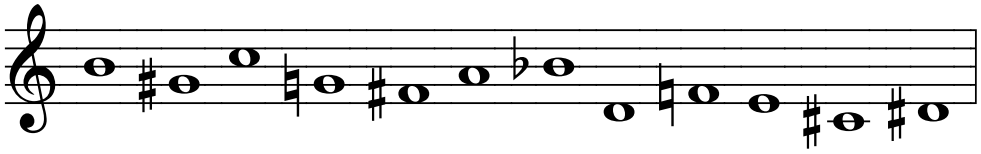


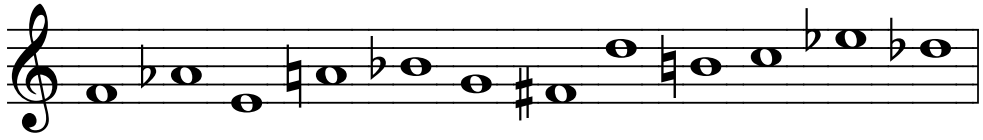
O magnum mysterium

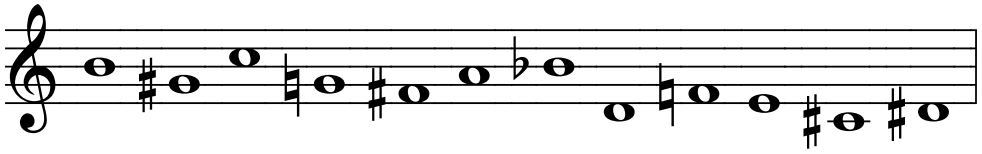
á 12

by

Charles H. Giffen

for
SSAT - SATB - ATBB
a cappella
voices





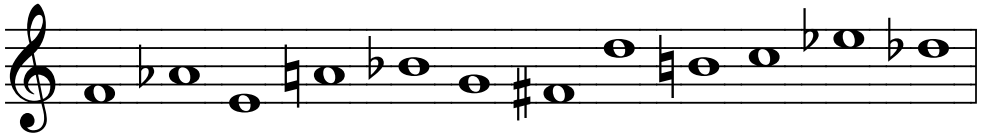
Notes on the composition

In this work, I have tried to capture the awe and reflect an aura of the calm, deep-night mystery of the Incarnation of Jesus in Bethlehem, where stable animals witnessed, with Mary and Joseph, a cosmic event that changed the course of history for ever - occurring in that "fulness of time, fixed by the unsearchable counsel of God, when the Son of God took upon him the nature of man, that he might reconcile it to its Maker."

The music includes mainly twelve tone thematic but also whole tone harmonic material, which lend a sense of mystery and reverence as the music unfolds. The given markings for tempo are approximate and may be adjusted to suit the performance acoustics. The three 4-part groups may be separated by some distance if there is adequate space in the performance venue.

The text is the full responsory to the fourth lesson at Matins of Christmas Day and hence includes the short *Ave Maria, gratia plena: Dominus tecum* that is often omitted in musical settings.

O magnum mysterium *et admirabile sacramentum,* *ut animalia viderent Dominum natum* *jacentem in præsepio!*	O great mystery and wonderful sacrament, that animals should see the new-born Lord lying in a manger!
O beata Virgo, cujus viscera *meruerunt portare Dominum Christum.*	O blessed is the Virgin, whose womb was worthy to bear Christ the Lord.
Ave Maria, gratia plena: *Dominus tecum.*	Hail Mary, full of grace: the Lord is with you.
O beata Virgo, cujus viscera *meruerunt portare Dominum Christum.*	Blessed is the Virgin whose womb was worthy to bear Christ the Lord.
Alleluia!	Alleluia!



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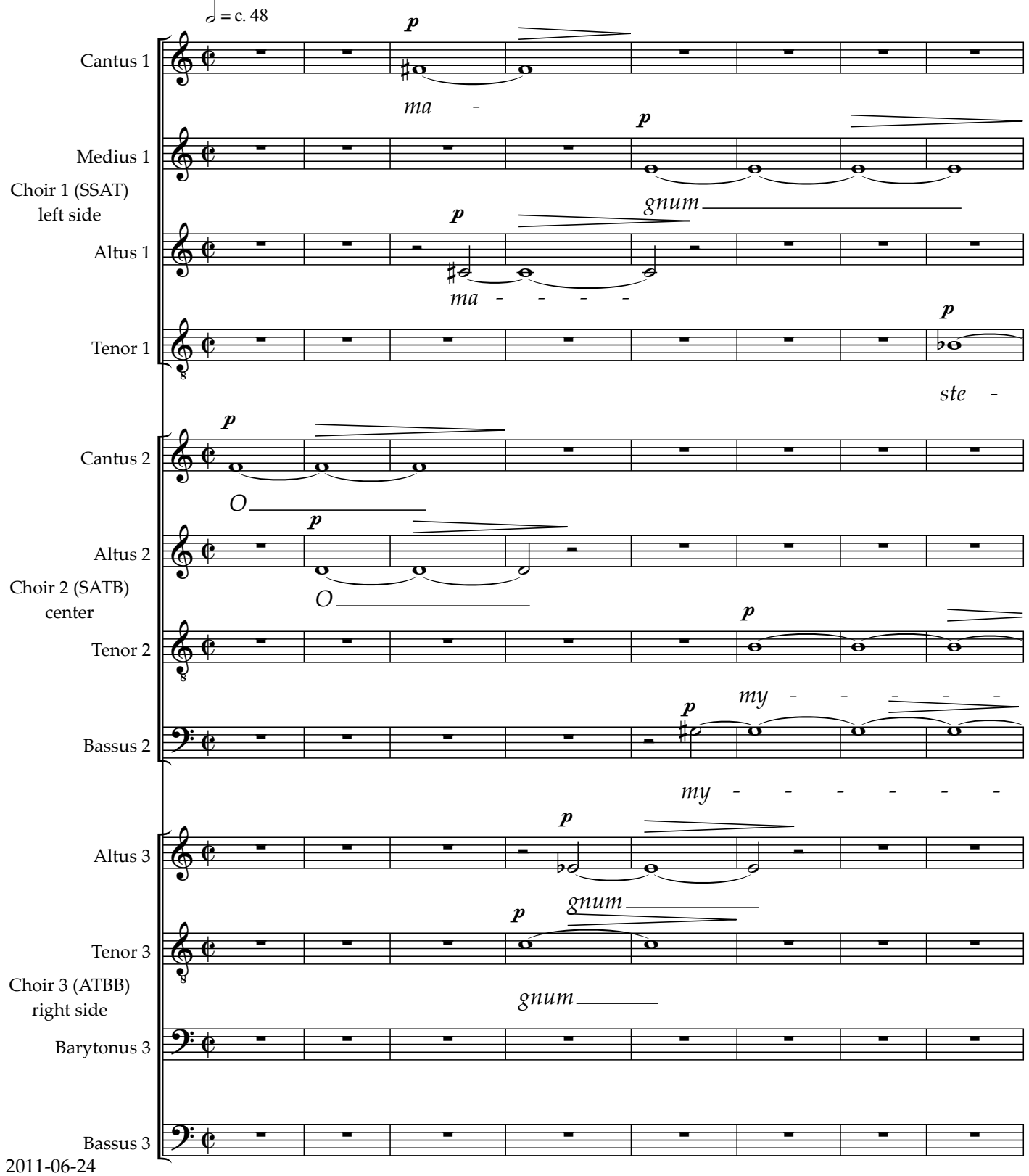
O magnum mysterium

SSAT - SATB - ATBB

Fourth responsory for
Matins of Christmas Day

Charles H. Giffen (b. 1940)



2011-06-24
2015-07-31
2019-01-13
2021-12-25

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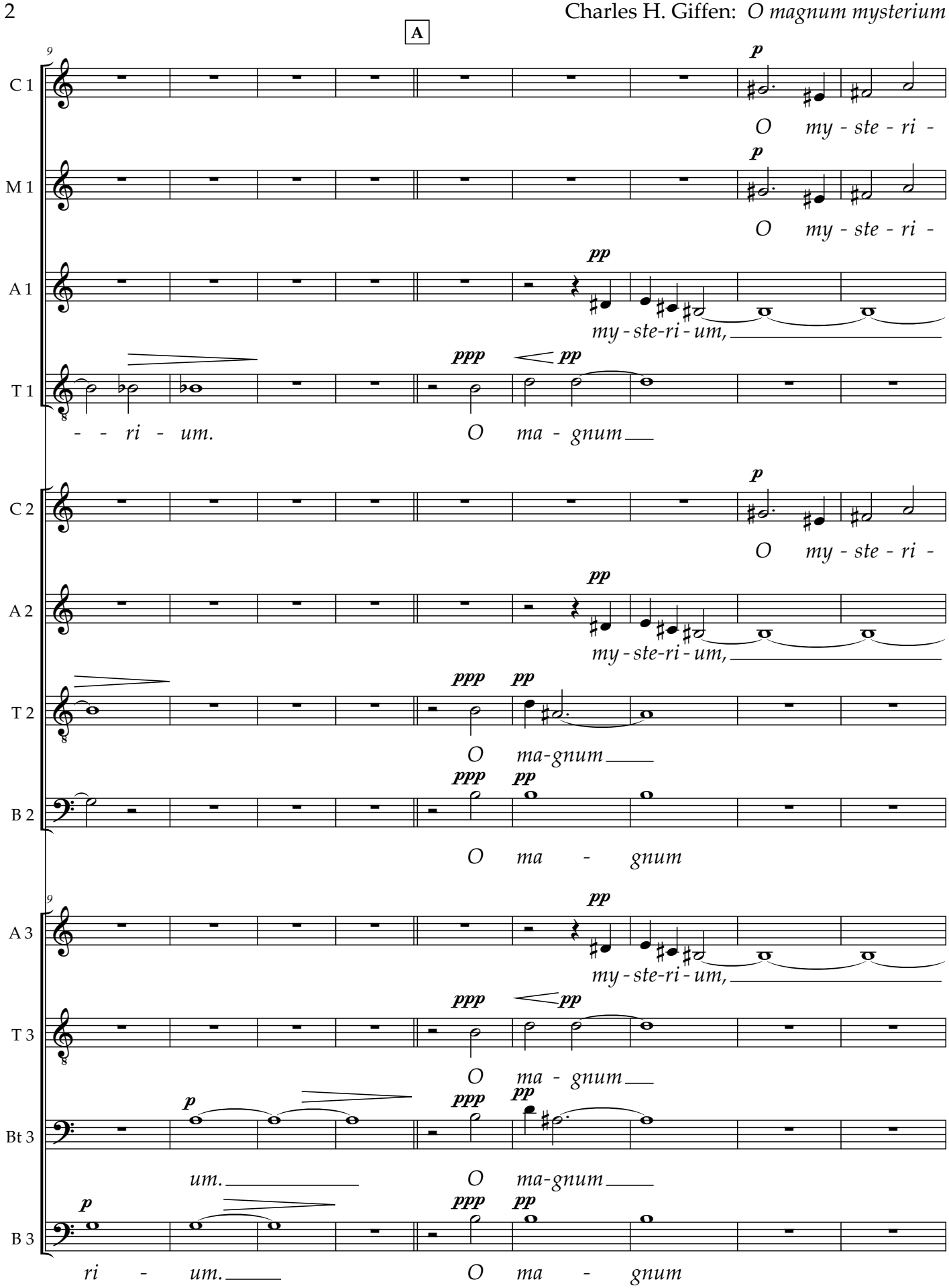
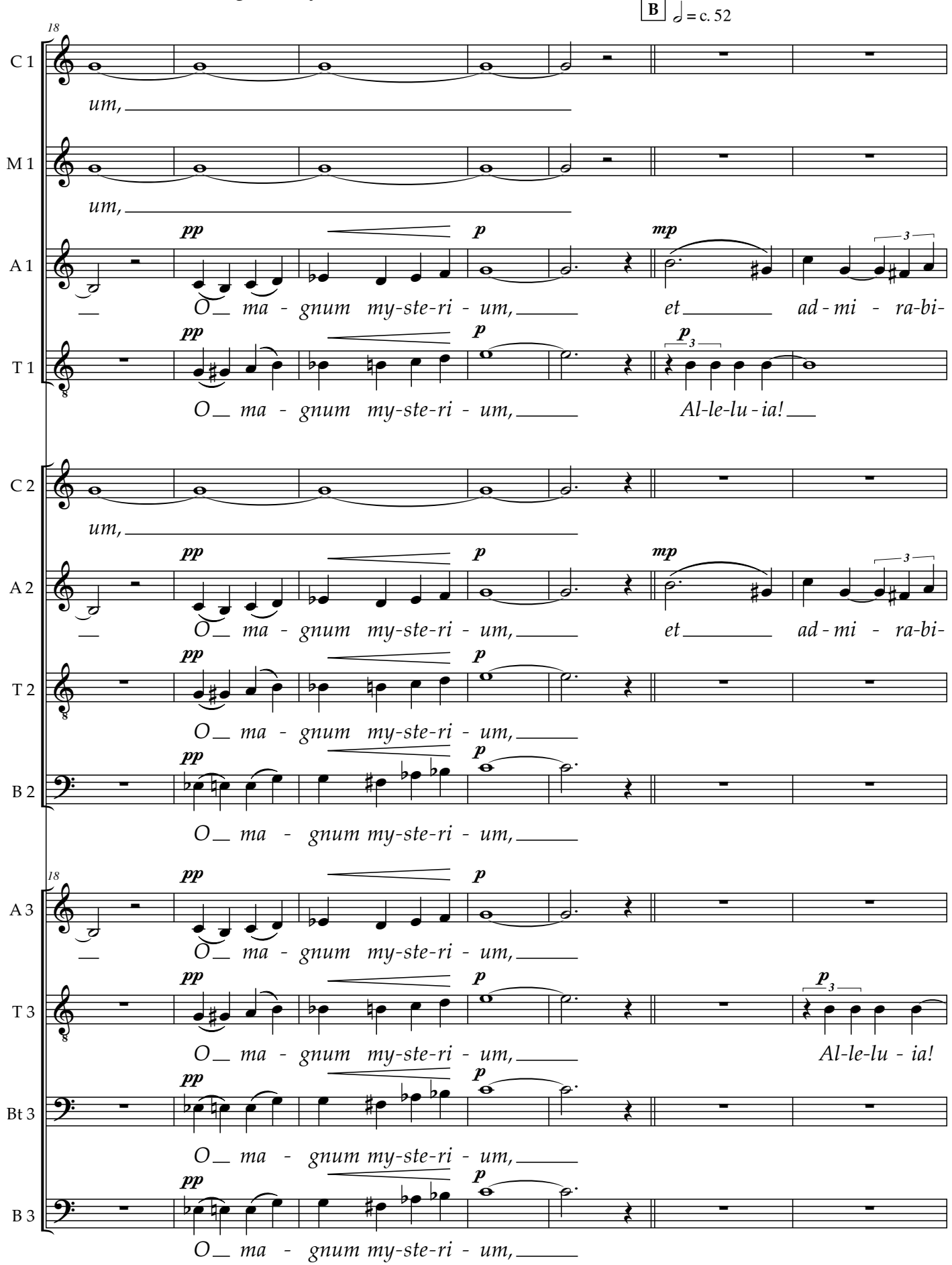
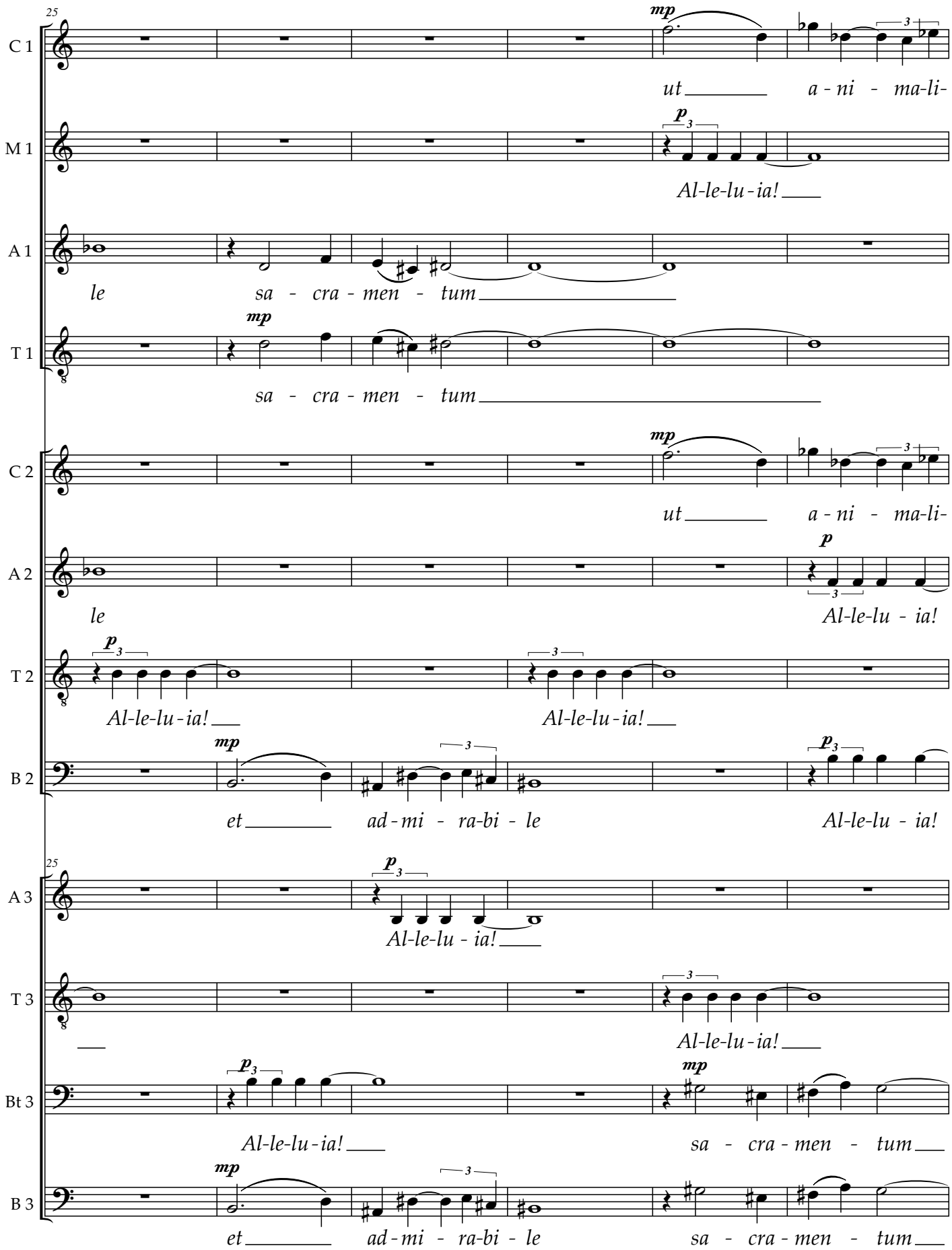
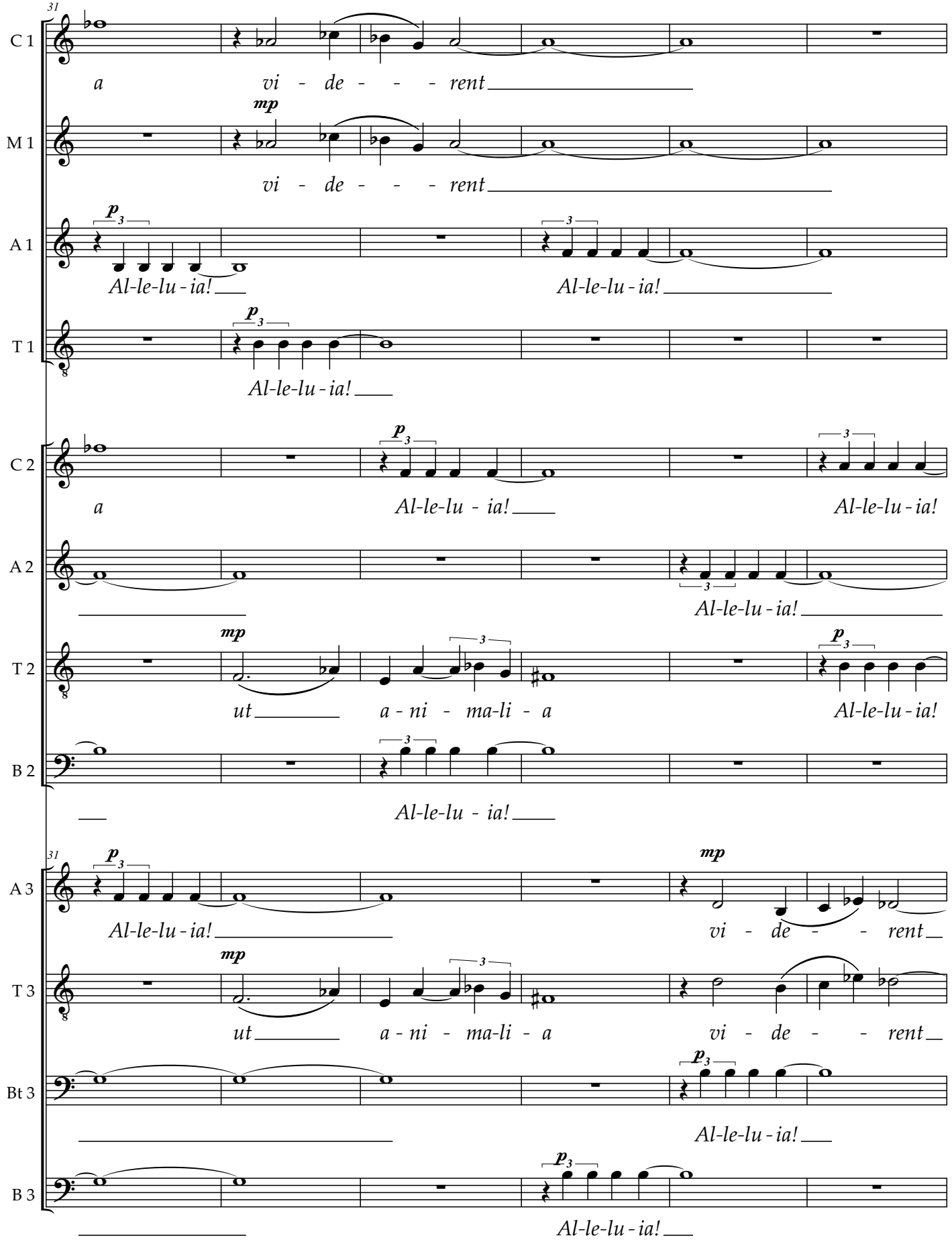
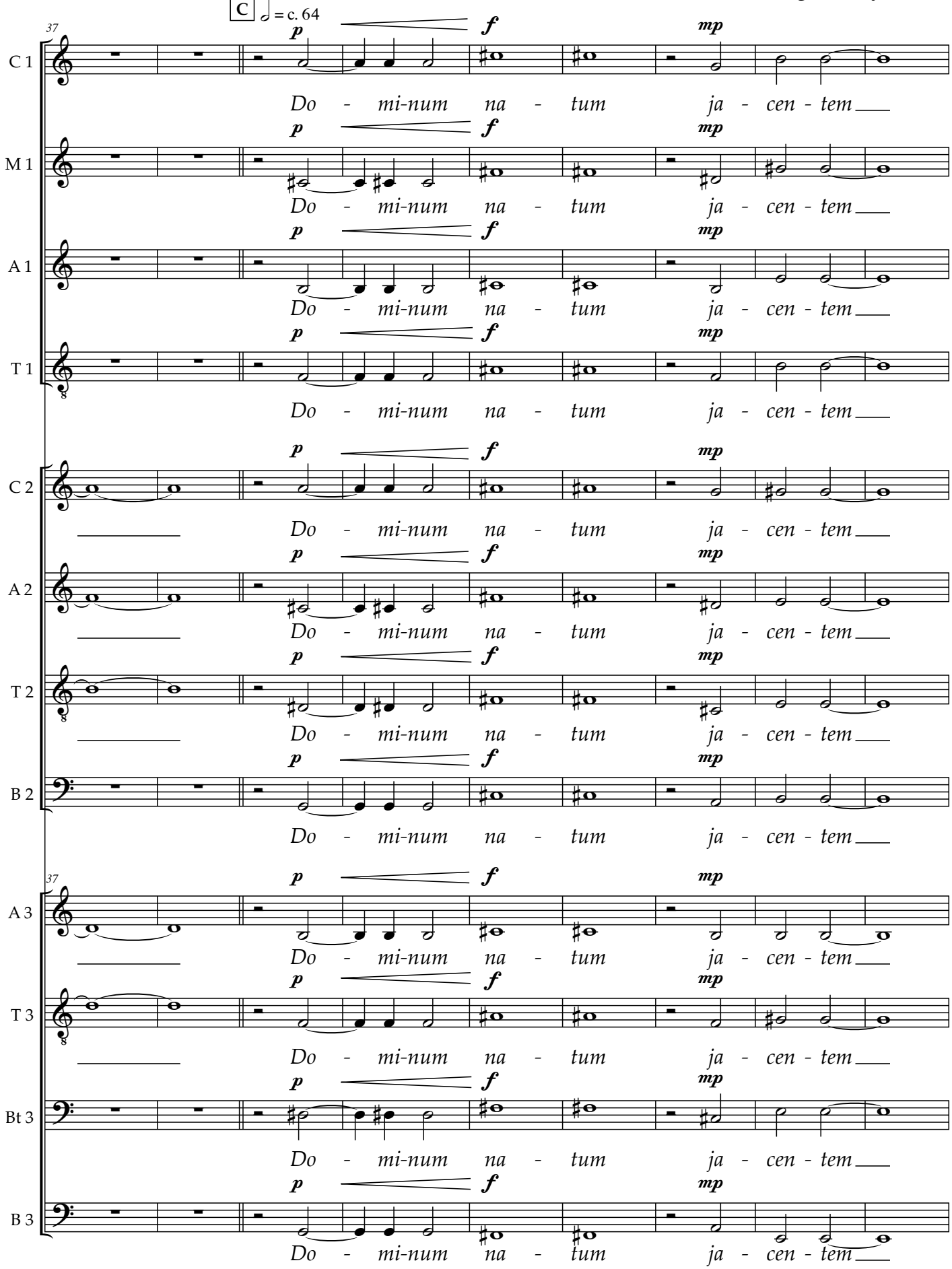
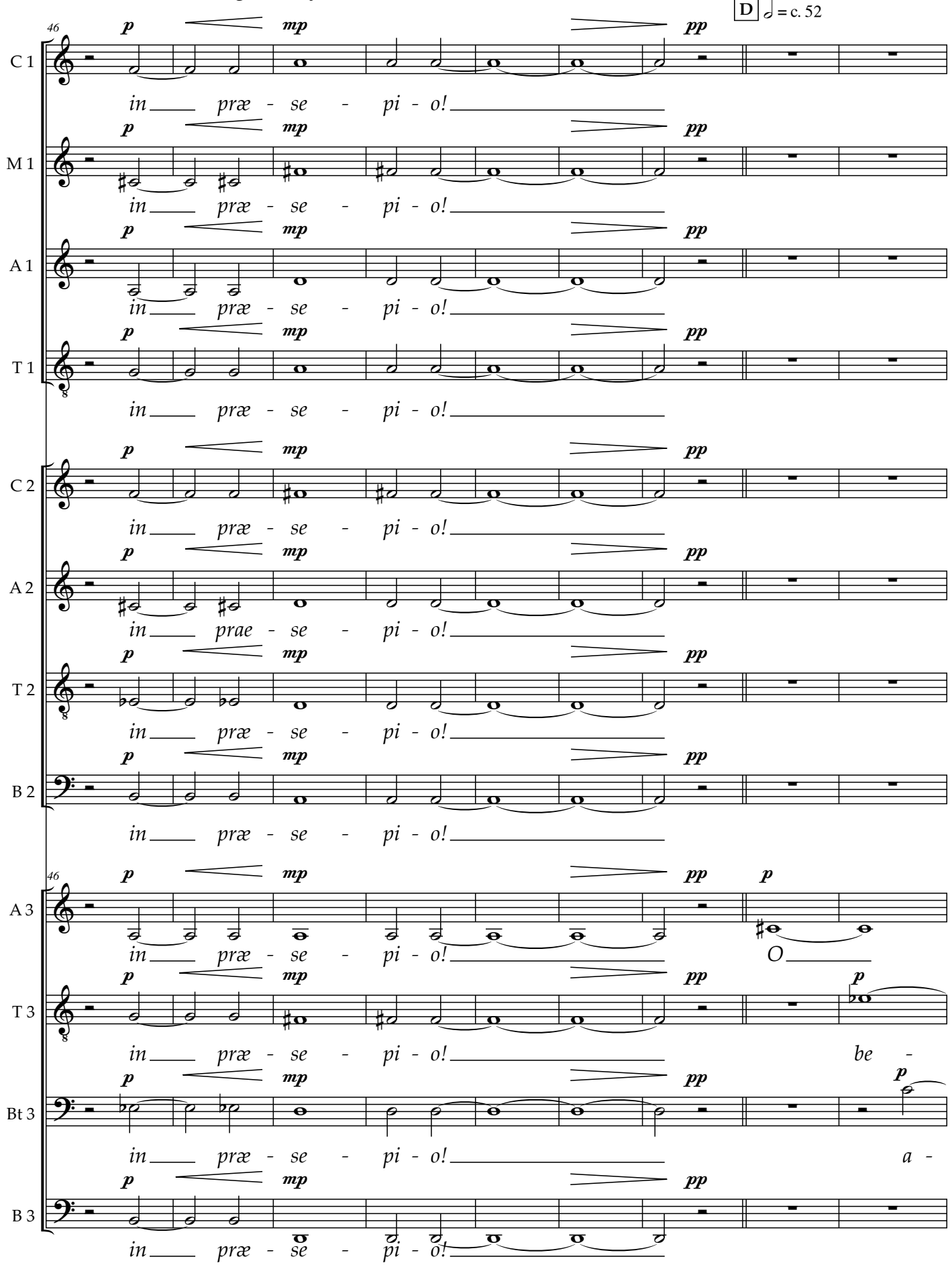

A
C 1
M 1
A 1
T 1
C 2
A 2
T 2
B 2
A 3
T 3
Bt 3
B 3
p
pp
ppp
O my - ste - ri -
my - ste-ri - um,
- - ri - um.
O ma - gnum
O ma-gnum
O ma - gnum
um.
ri - um.

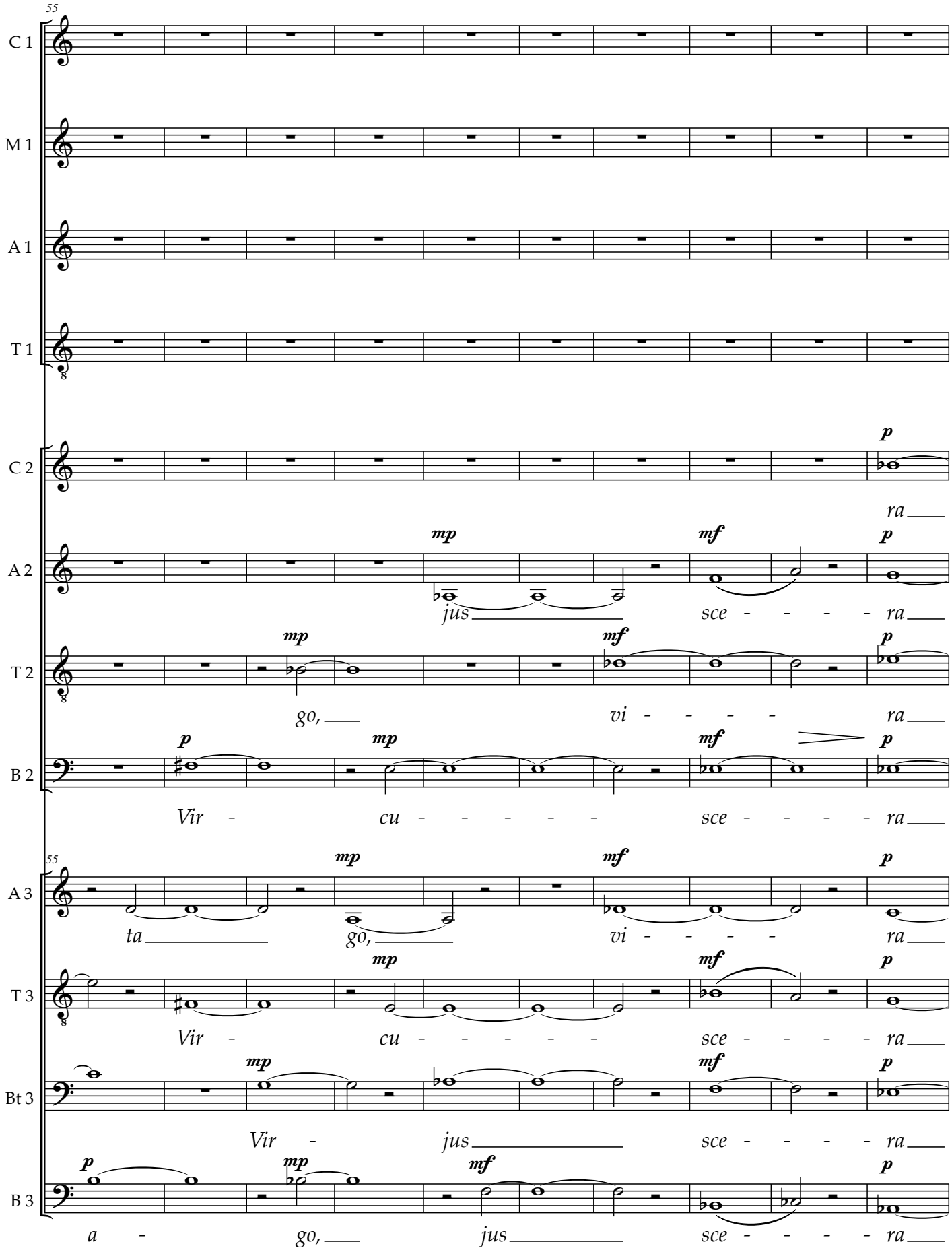

B
♩ = c. 52
18
C 1
M 1
A 1
T 1
C 2
A 2
T 2
B 2
A 3
T 3
Bt 3
B 3
um,
pp
p
mp
O ma - gnum my-ste-ri - um,
et ad - mi - ra-bi-
Al-le-lu - ia!

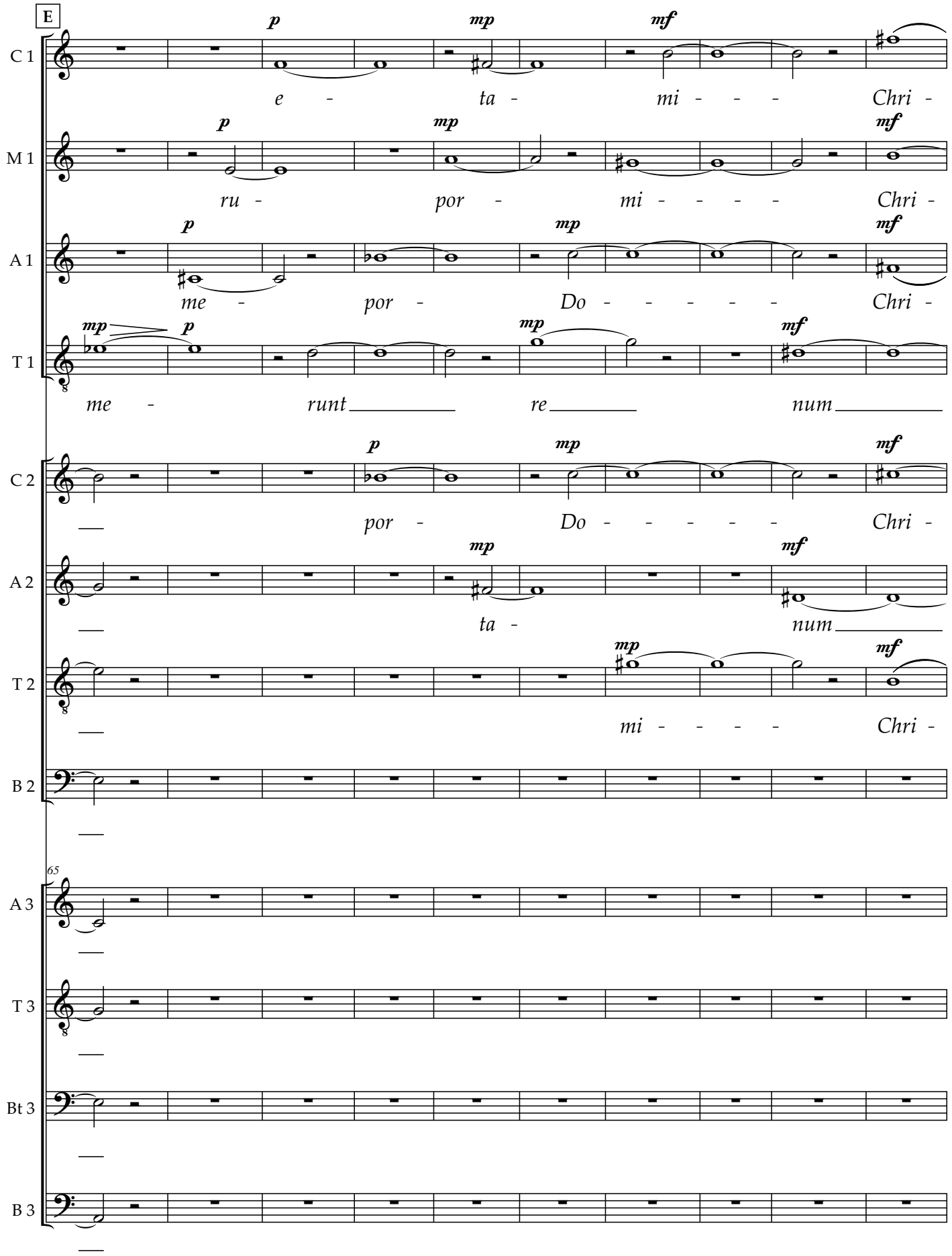

25
C 1
ut a - ni - ma-li-
M 1
Al-le-lu-ia!
A 1
le sa - cra - men - tum
T 1
sa - cra - men - tum
C 2
ut a - ni - ma-li-
A 2
le Al-le-lu - ia!
T 2
Al-le-lu-ia! Al-le-lu-ia!
B 2
et ad-mi - ra-bi - le Al-le-lu - ia!
25
A 3
Al-le-lu - ia!
T 3
Al-le-lu-ia!
Bt 3
Al-le-lu-ia! sa - cra - men - tum
B 3
et ad-mi - ra-bi - le sa - cra - men - tum

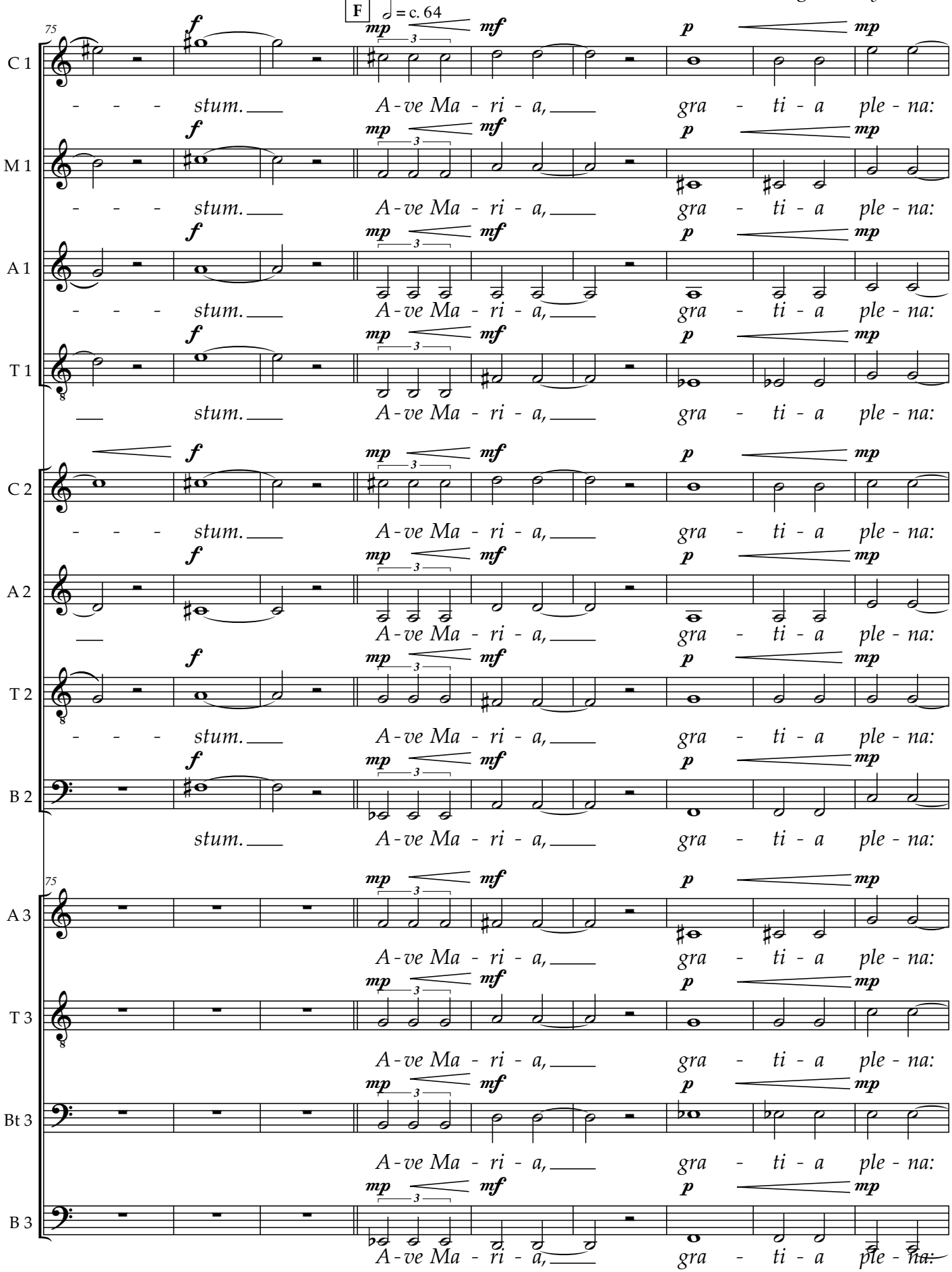

31
C 1
a vi - de - - - rent
M 1
mp
vi - de - - - rent
A 1
p 3
Al-le-lu - ia!
Al-le-lu - ia!
T 1
p 3
Al-le-lu - ia!
C 2
a
p 3
Al-le-lu - ia!
Al-le-lu - ia!
A 2
Al-le-lu - ia!
T 2
mp
ut a - ni - ma-li - a
p 3
Al-le-lu - ia!
B 2
Al-le-lu - ia!
31
A 3
p 3
Al-le-lu - ia!
mp
vi - de - - rent
T 3
mp
ut a - ni - ma-li - a
vi - de - - rent
Bt 3
p 3
Al-le-lu - ia!
B 3
p 3
Al-le-lu - ia!

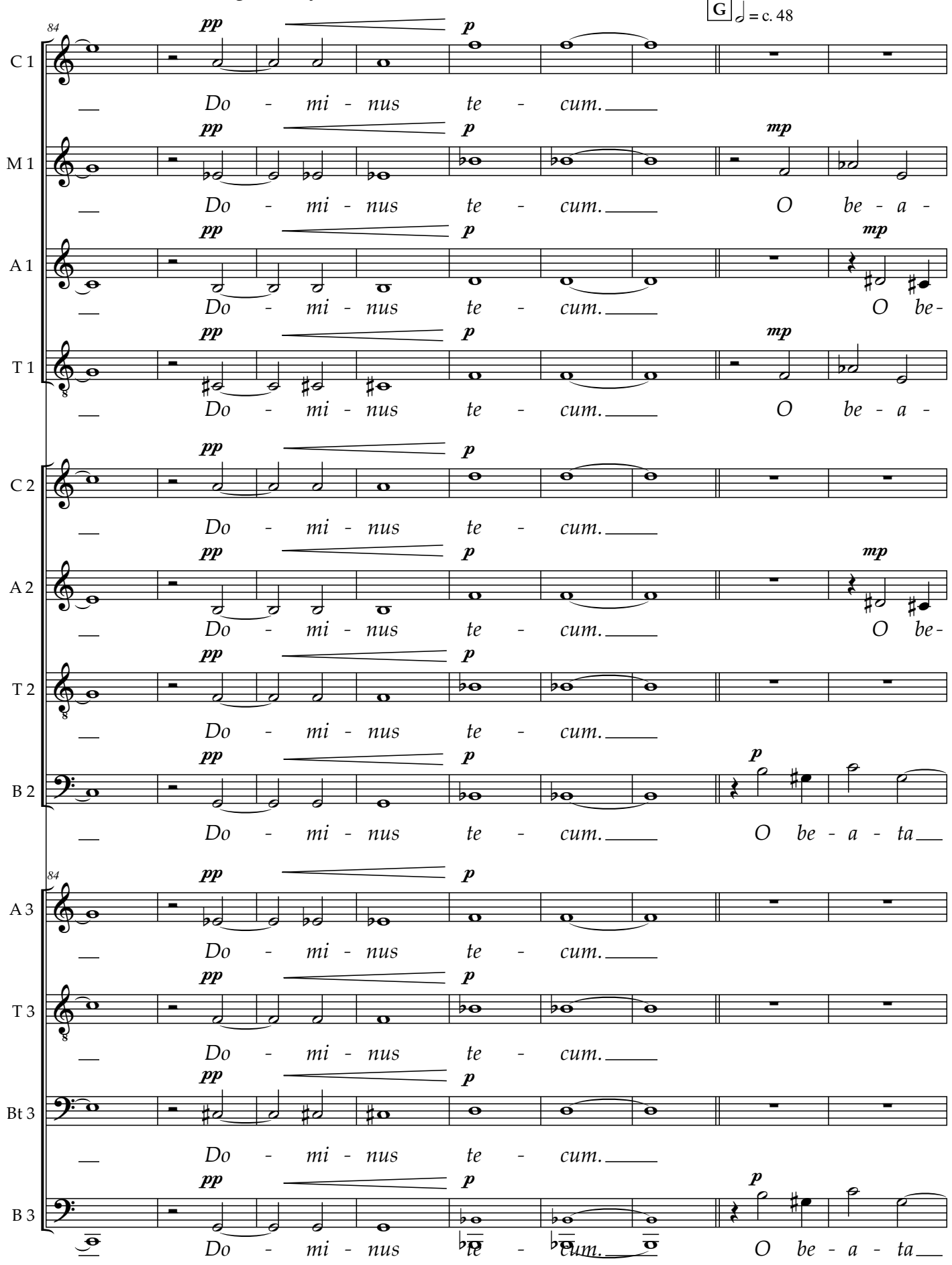

C
𝅗𝅥 = c. 64
37
C 1
M 1
A 1
T 1
C 2
A 2
T 2
B 2
A 3
T 3
Bt 3
B 3
p
f
mp
Do - mi-num na - tum ja - cen - tem

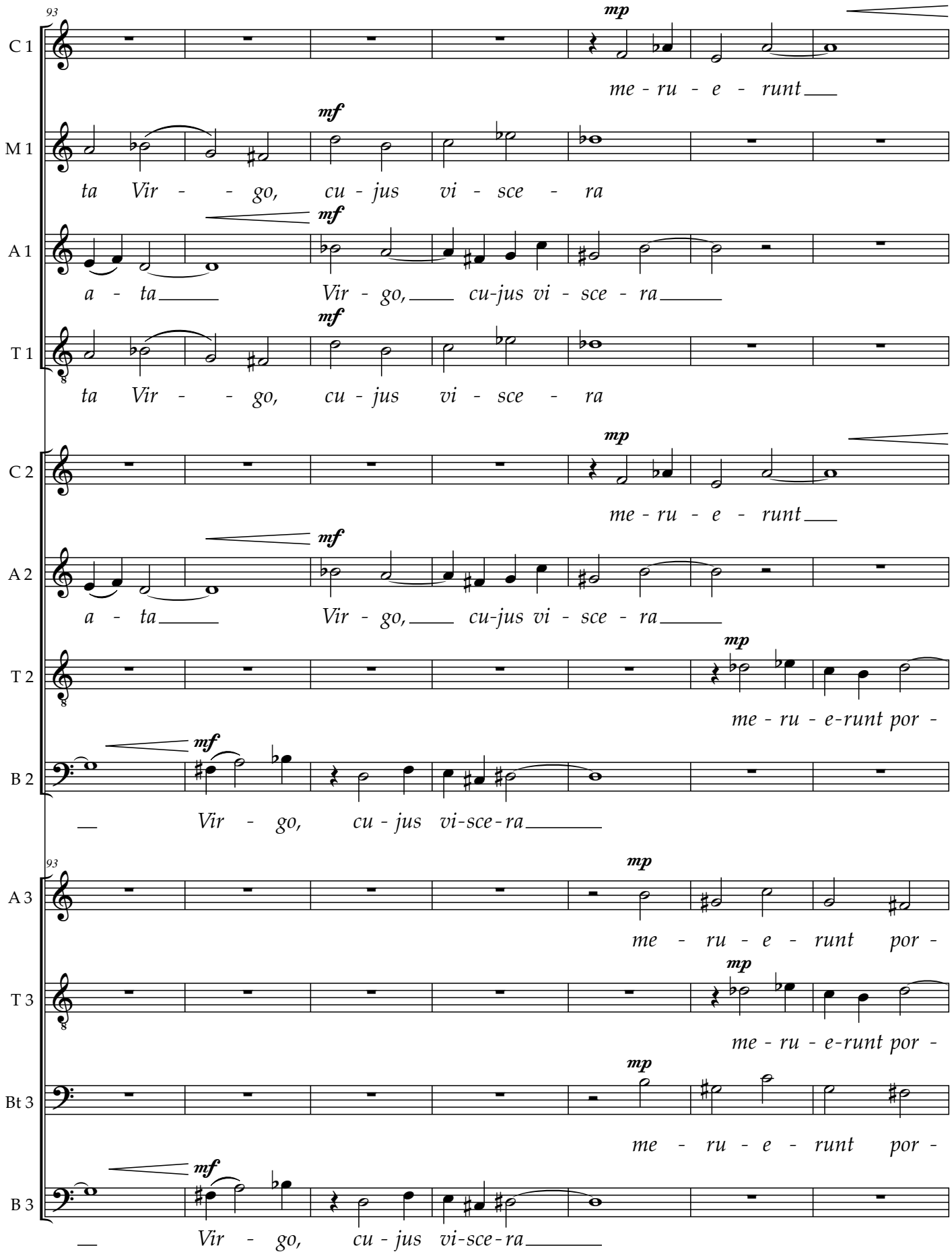

D ♩ = c. 52
46
C 1
M 1
A 1
T 1
C 2
A 2
T 2
B 2
A 3
T 3
Bt 3
B 3
p
mp
pp
in præ - se - pi - o!
in prae - se - pi - o!
O
be -
a -

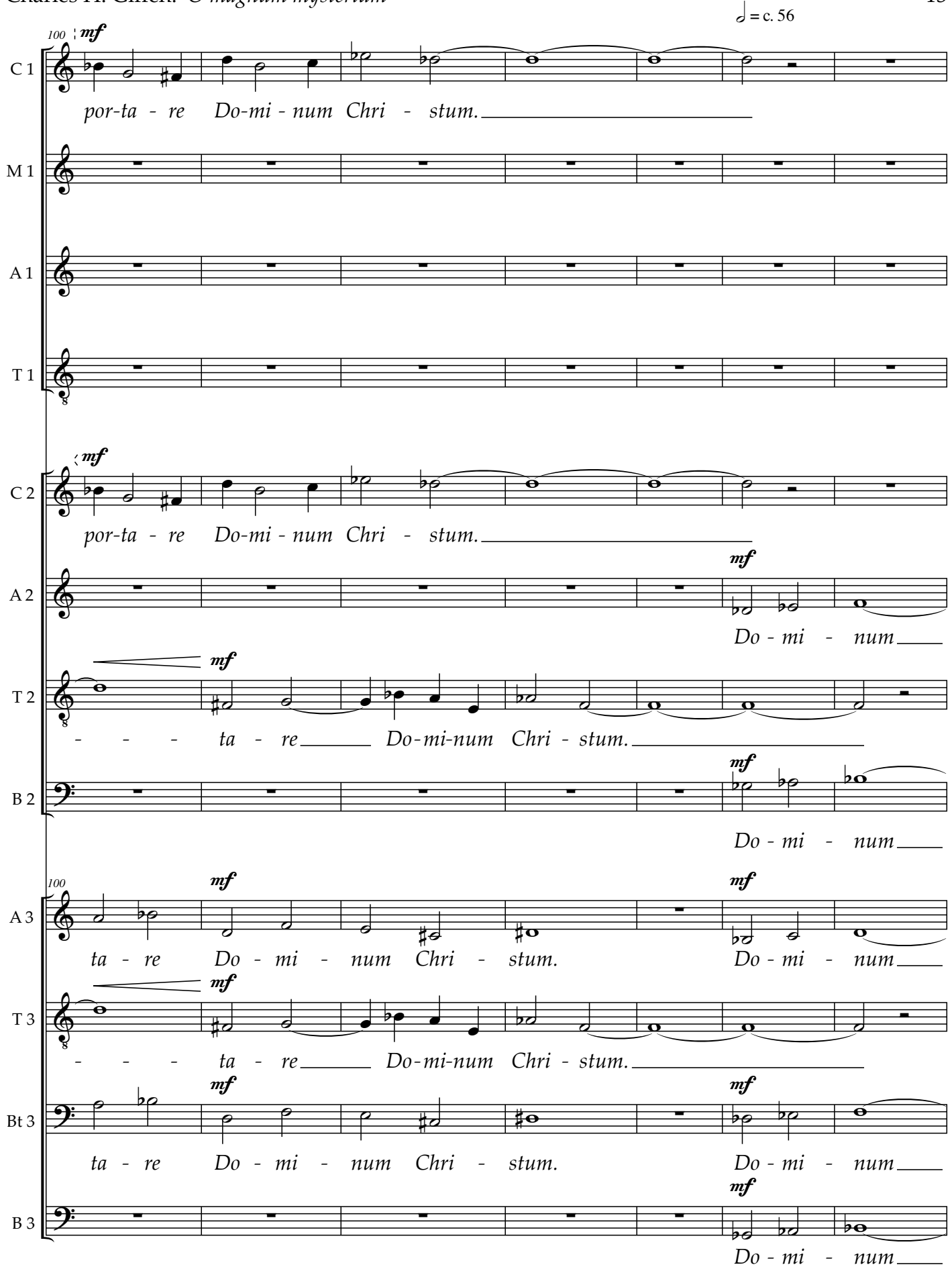

55
C 1
M 1
A 1
T 1
C 2
A 2
T 2
B 2
55
A 3
T 3
Bt 3
B 3
p
mp
mf
ra
jus
sce - - - - ra
go,
vi - - - - ra
Vir -
cu - - - - -
ta
a -

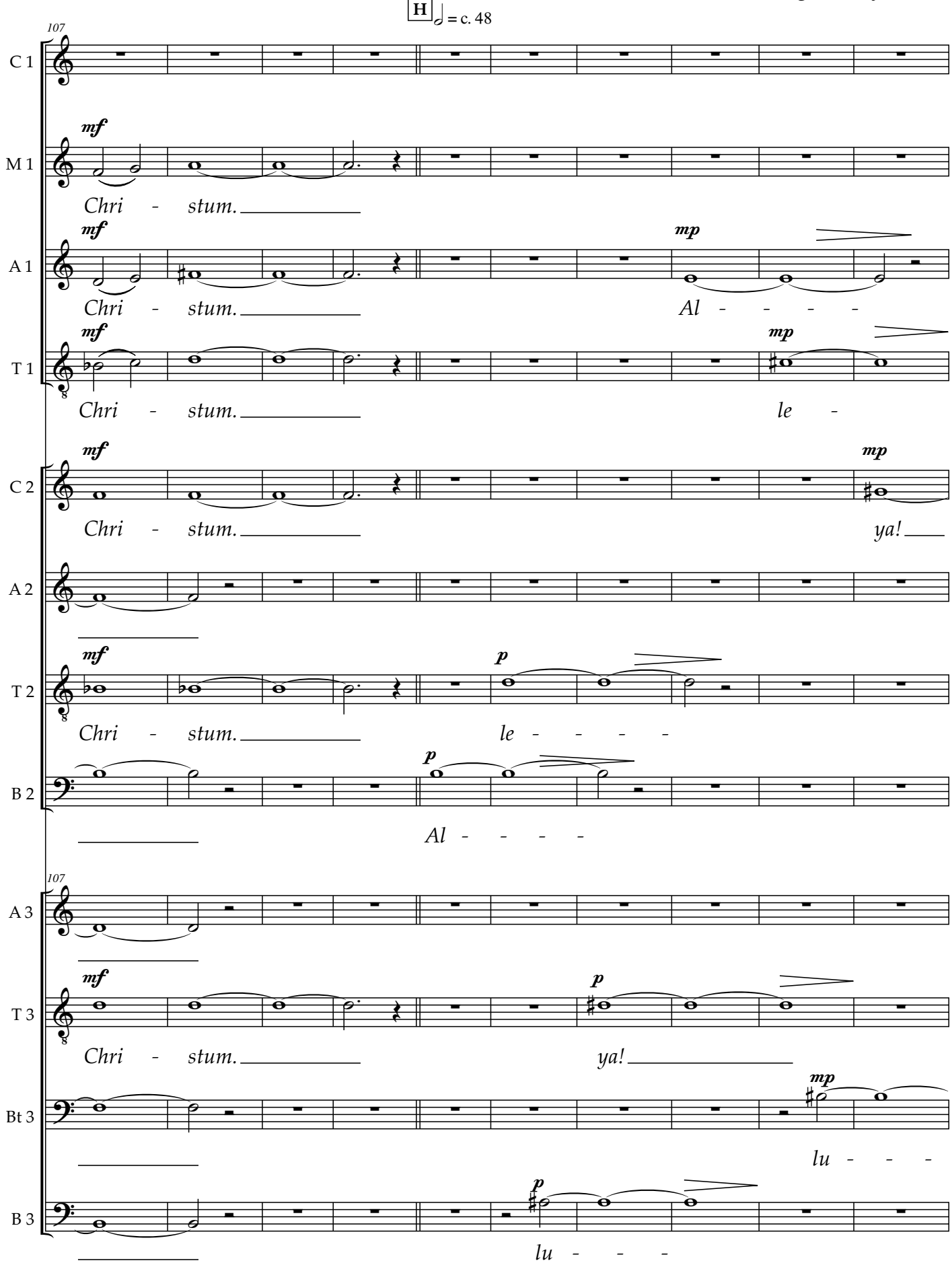

E
C 1
M 1
A 1
T 1
C 2
A 2
T 2
B 2
65
A 3
T 3
Bt 3
B 3
e - ta - mi - - - Chri -
ru - por - mi - - - - Chri -
me - por - Do - - - - - Chri -
me - runt re num
por - Do - - - - - Chri -
ta - num
mi - - - - Chri -

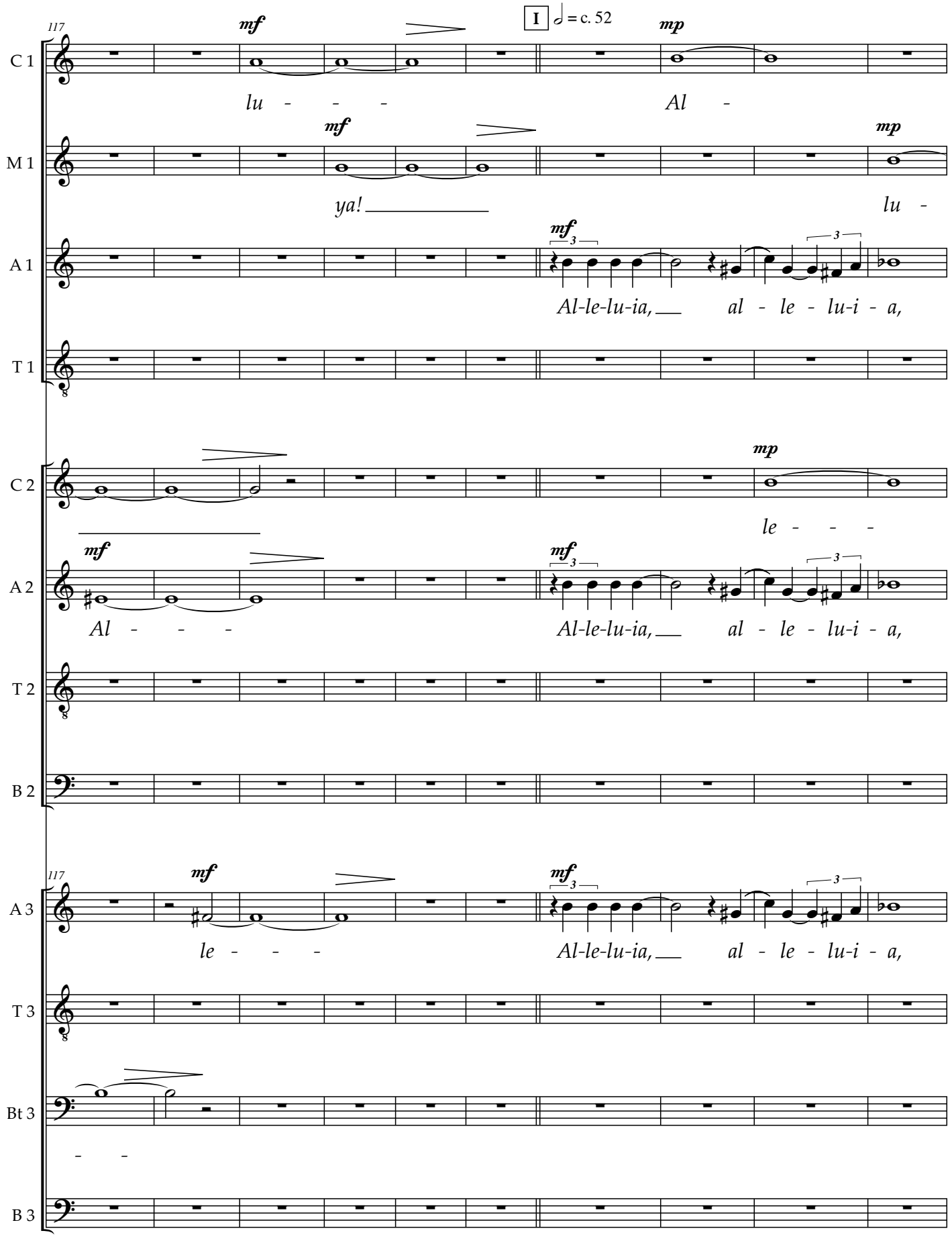

F
= c. 64
75
C 1
M 1
A 1
T 1
C 2
A 2
T 2
B 2
A 3
T 3
Bt 3
B 3
f
mp
mf
p
stum.
A-ve Ma-ri-a,
gra-ti-a ple-na:

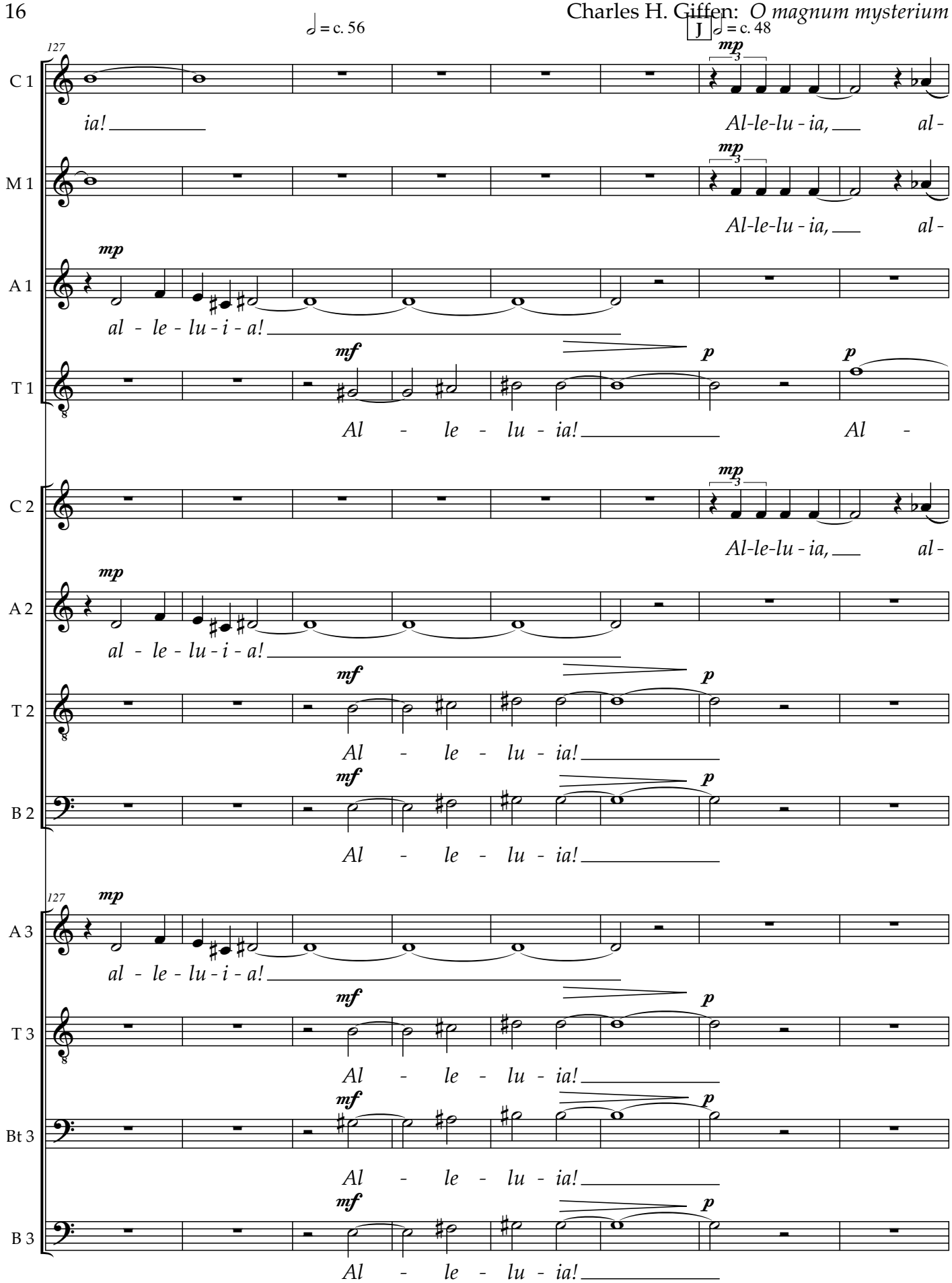

G ♩ = c. 48
84
C 1
M 1
A 1
T 1
C 2
A 2
T 2
B 2
A 3
T 3
Bt 3
B 3
pp
p
mp
Do - mi - nus te - cum.
O be - a -
O be -
O be - a - ta

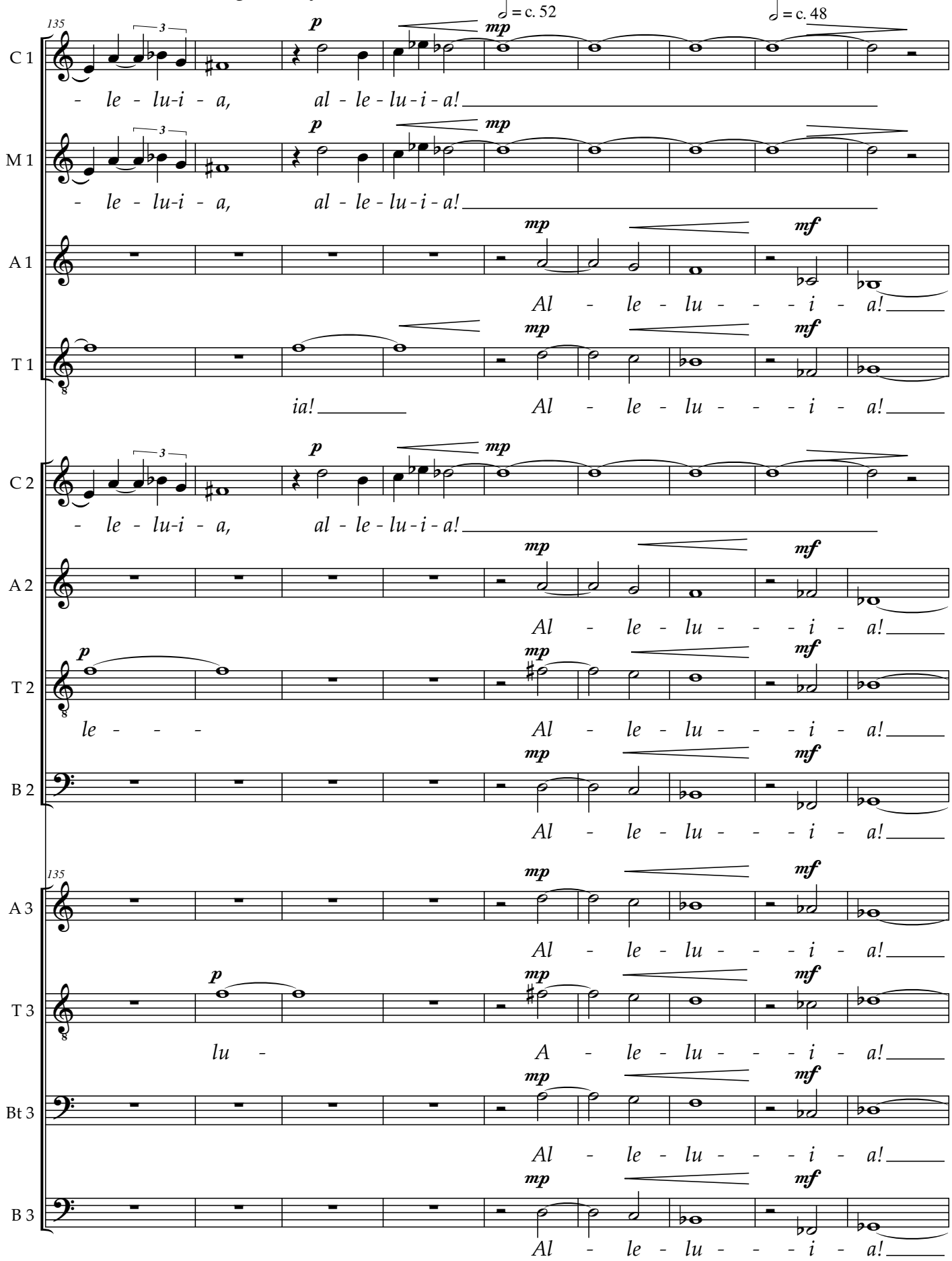

93
C 1
mp
me - ru - e - runt
M 1
mf
ta Vir - - go, cu - jus vi - sce - ra
A 1
mf
a - ta Vir - go, cu-jus vi - sce - ra
T 1
mf
ta Vir - - go, cu - jus vi - sce - ra
C 2
mp
me - ru - e - runt
A 2
mf
a - ta Vir - go, cu-jus vi - sce - ra
T 2
mp
me - ru - e-runt por -
B 2
mf
Vir - go, cu - jus vi-sce-ra
93
A 3
mp
me - ru - e - runt por -
T 3
mp
me - ru - e-runt por -
Bt 3
mp
me - ru - e - runt por -
B 3
mf
Vir - go, cu - jus vi-sce-ra

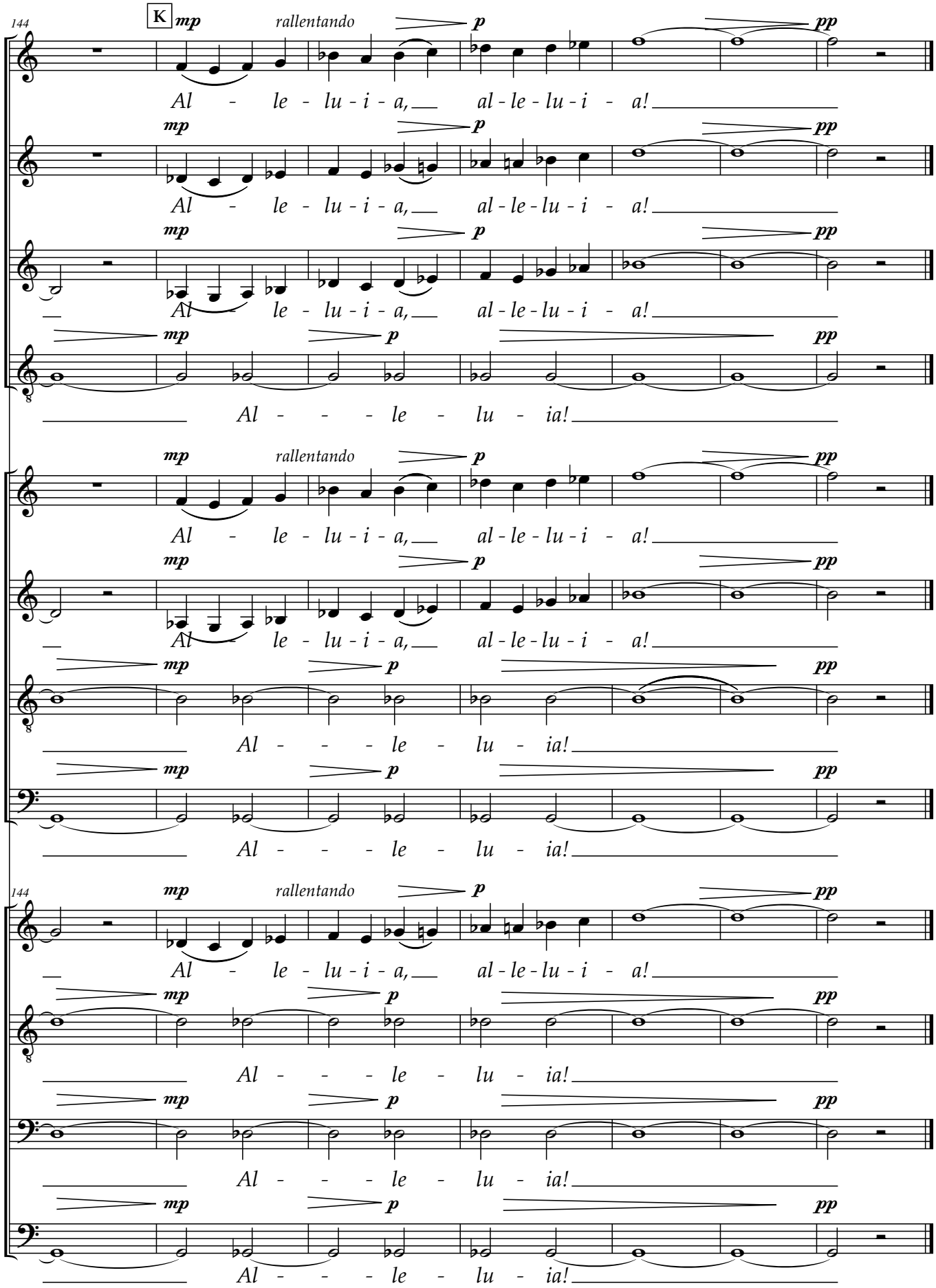

𝅗𝅥 = c. 56
100
mf
C 1
por-ta - re Do-mi - num Chri - stum.
M 1
A 1
T 1
C 2
por-ta - re Do-mi - num Chri - stum.
A 2
Do - mi - num
T 2
- - - ta - re Do-mi-num Chri - stum.
B 2
Do - mi - num
100
A 3
ta - re Do - mi - num Chri - stum. Do - mi - num
T 3
- - - ta - re Do-mi-num Chri - stum.
Bt 3
ta - re Do - mi - num Chri - stum. Do - mi - num
B 3
Do - mi - num


H
= c. 48
107
C 1
M 1
A 1
T 1
C 2
A 2
T 2
B 2
A 3
T 3
Bt 3
B 3
mf
mp
p
Chri - stum.
Al - - - -
le -
ya!
lu - - -


117
I
♩ = c. 52
C 1
M 1
A 1
T 1
C 2
A 2
T 2
B 2
A 3
T 3
Bt 3
B 3
mf
mp
lu - - -
Al -
ya!
lu -
Al-le-lu-ia, al - le - lu-i - a,
le - - -
Al - - -


♩ = c. 56
J ♩ = c. 48
127
C 1
M 1
A 1
T 1
C 2
A 2
T 2
B 2
A 3
T 3
Bt 3
B 3
mp
mf
p
ia!
Al-le-lu - ia, al -
al - le - lu - i - a!
Al - le - lu - ia!
Al -


135
C 1
M 1
A 1
T 1
C 2
A 2
T 2
B 2
135
A 3
T 3
Bt 3
B 3
= c. 52
= c. 48
p
mp
mf
- le - lu-i - a, al - le - lu - i - a!
Al - le - lu - - - i - a!
ia!
le - - -
lu -
A - le - lu - - - i - a!


144
K
C 1
M 1
A 1
T 1
C 2
A 2
T 2
B 2
A 3
T 3
Bt 3
B 3
mp
p
pp
rallentando
Al - le - lu - i - a, al - le - lu - i - a!
Al - - - le - lu - ia!