# Introduction

Born in Lubbock, Texas, in 1934, Gerre Hancock remained a proud Texan even as his career took him northwards. A graduate of the University of Texas and Union Theological Seminary in New York, he also studied at the Sorbonne; he took organ lessons with E. William Doty, Robert Baker, Jean Langlais, and Marie-Claire Alain, and studied composition and improvisation with Nadia Boulanger and M. Searle Wright. Early in his career he was Assistant Organist at St Bartholomew's Church, New York, and then Organist and Choirmaster at Christ Church (now Cathedral) in Cincinnati, Ohio, where he also served on the Artist Faculty of the College-Conservatory of Music at the University of Cincinnati; he also taught at the Juilliard School and Yale University. For thirty-three years, from 1971 to 2004, he was Organist and Master of Choristers at St Thomas Church, Fifth Avenue, New York, after which he and his wife, Judith Hancock, returned to Texas to teach the organ and sacred music at the University of Texas.

A superb recitalist, Gerre Hancock was considered the leading American organ improviser of his time and performed at numerous events worldwide, as well as achieving widespread acclaim with the choir of St Thomas. His improvisational and compositional style displayed a strong French influence while remaining grounded in a distinctively American musical vocabulary.

I first encountered Gerre Hancock's service-playing during the summer of 1970 at Christ Church in Cincinnati, and it opened my teenage ears to what service-playing could truly be. That same summer Gerre made his first commercial recording of improvisations, on the large 1957 Holtkamp organ which was then in Christ Church. Clarity, inventiveness, and variety of texture make these concise pieces models of hymn-based improvisation. After hearing them for the first time in many years, Judith Hancock remarked on their youthful freshness. Gerre's death in 2012 prompted me to finally transcribe a few of these gems, and I am delighted at their inclusion as a 'bonus feature' in this volume, which brings much of Gerre's published organ music back into print under one cover. I recorded the *Three Cincinnati Improvisations* on the superb Murray Harris organ at St James Episcopal Church in Los Angeles (Gothic G-49330-31, double CD).

In 2013 I had the privilege of recording all of Gerre Hancock's published organ works on the organs (chancel and gallery) that he played for so many years at St Thomas (Raven OAR-951, double CD). In the words of Judith Hancock, 'Years from now, when the organ heard on this recording is no longer at St Thomas, this CD will assist our memory of the uniquely thrilling and beautiful sounds of that instrument—sounds that were so closely associated with Gerre's own playing and composing.'

I hope you will find the music in this book both practical and educational in providing a window into the unique musical style of its composer. Gerre Hancock will be remembered by all who knew him as friend, mentor, inspiration, and ultimate cheerleader for church musicians across America and around the world.

TODD WILSON
Trinity Cathedral, Cleveland, Ohio
September 2021

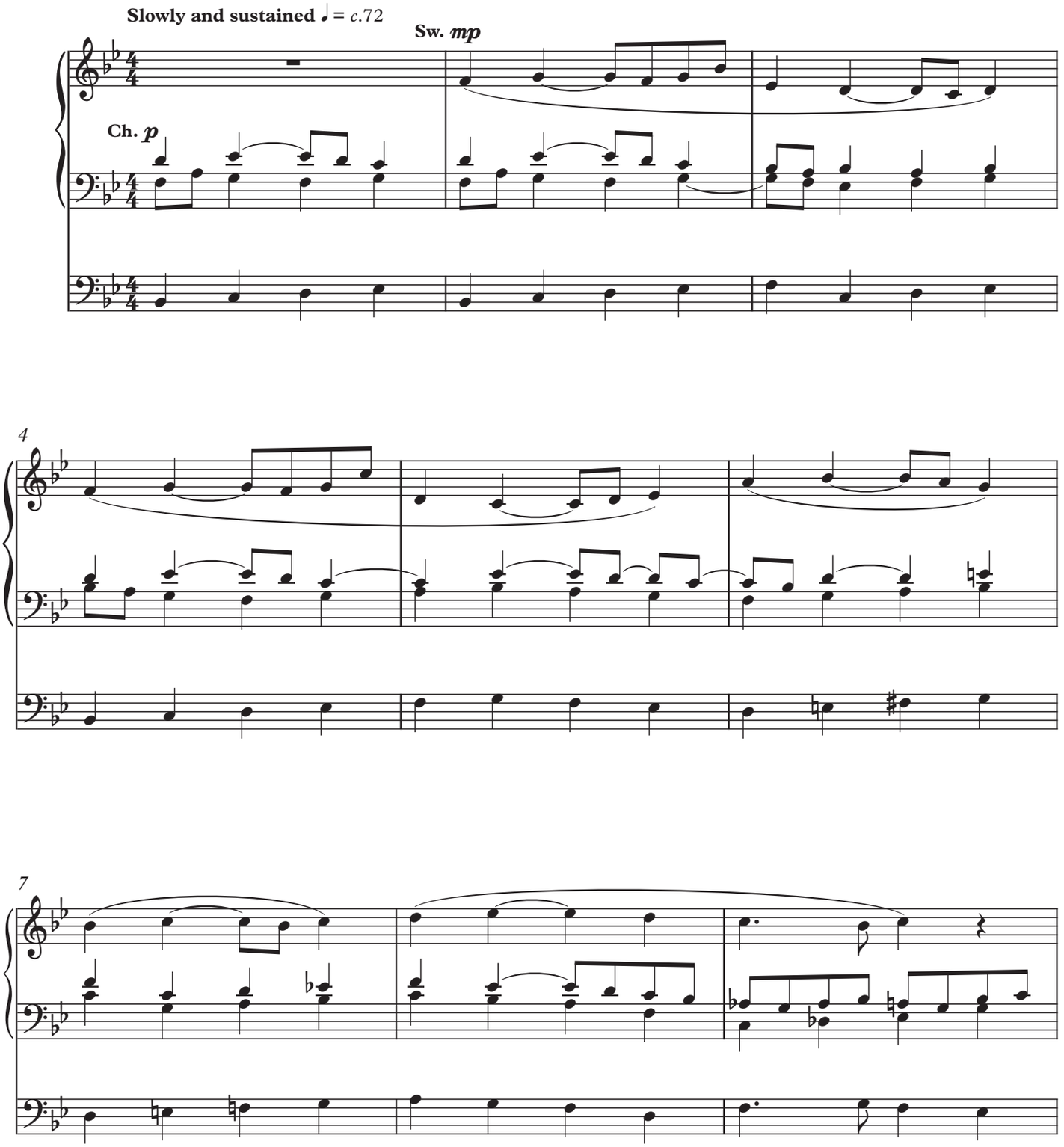
*for Judy*

# Air

## A Prelude for Organ

GERRE HANCOCK

**Sw.: Solo 8'**
**Gt.: Foundations 8', 4'**
**Ch.: Flutes 8', 4'**
**Ped.: Soft 16', 8', Ch. to Ped.**




© Oxford University Press Inc. 2000. Assigned to Oxford University Press 2010
© Oxford University Press 2022. Photocopying this copyright material is ILLEGAL.

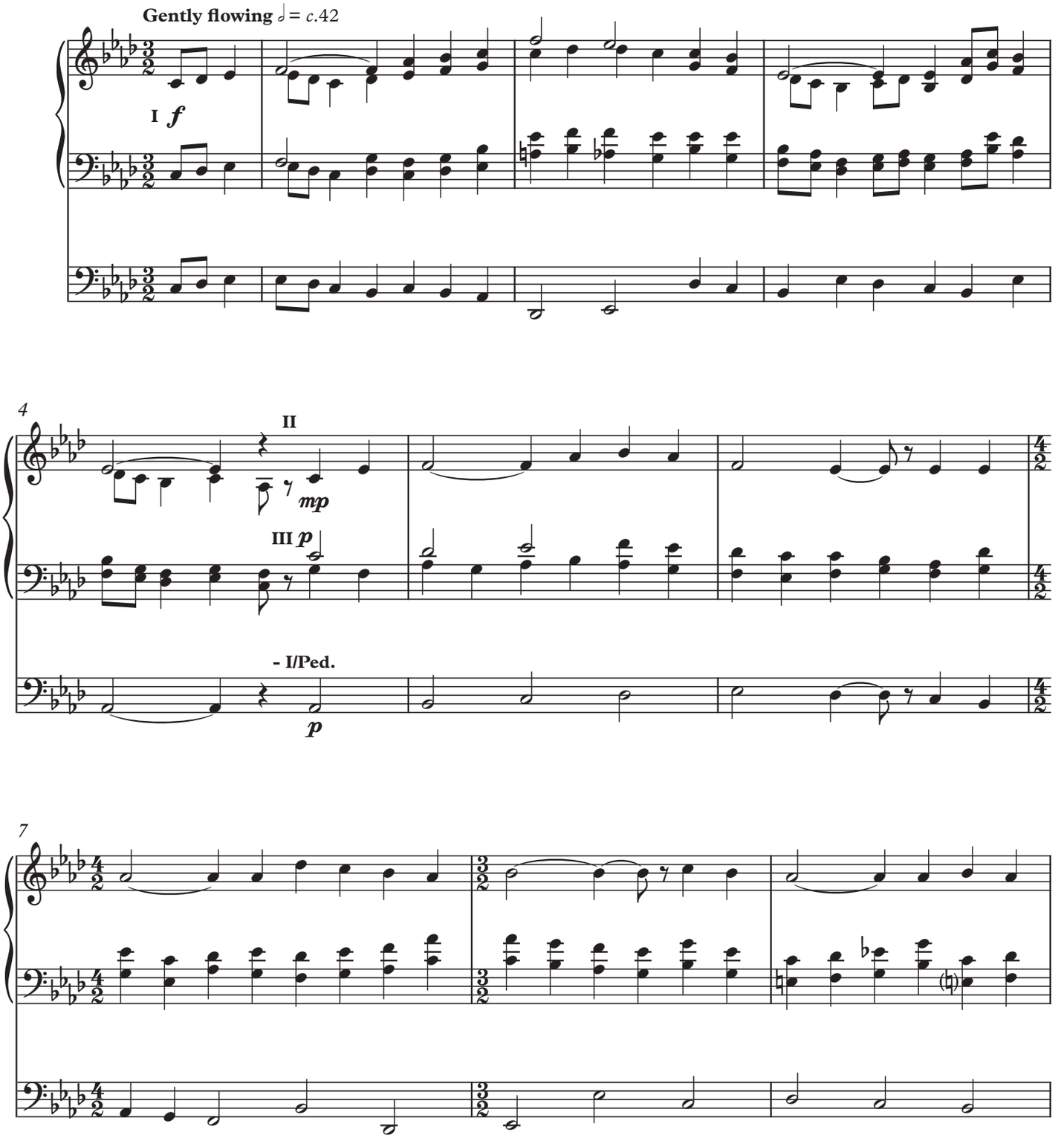
*Dedicated to Jane and Ben Baldus*
*on the occasion of their twenty-fourth wedding anniversary*

# A Meditation on 'Draw Us in the Spirit's Tether'

Based on a melody by Harold W. Friedell

GERRE HANCOCK

**I: Foundations 8', 4', III/I**
**II: Solo 8'**
**III: Foundations 8'**
**Ped.: Foundations 16', 8', III/Ped., I/Ped.**



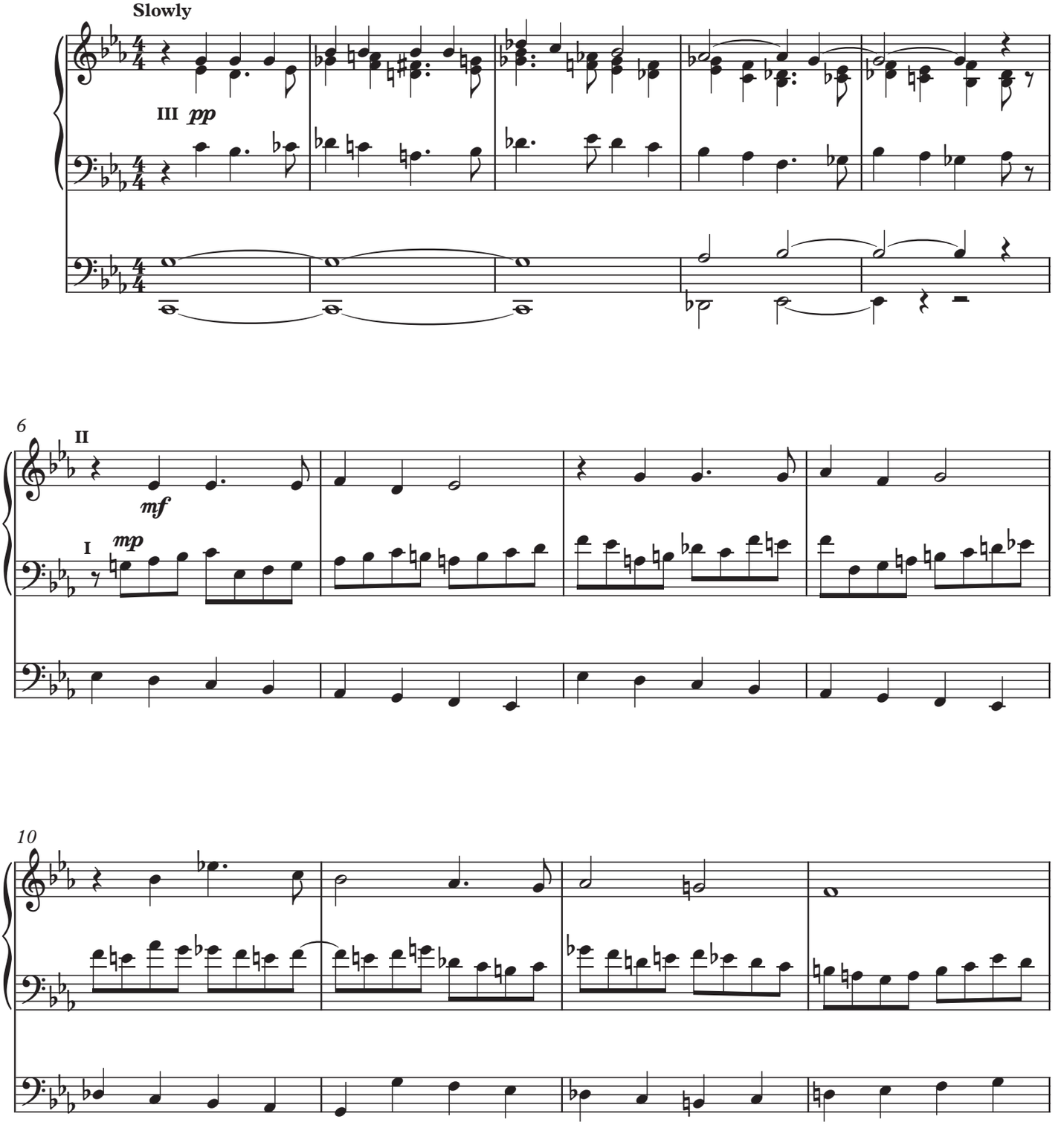

© Oxford University Press Inc. 1998. Assigned to Oxford University Press 2010
© Oxford University Press 2022. Photocopying this copyright material is ILLEGAL.

*for The Rev. Robert Scoggin*
*and the Fellowship of United Methodist Musicians*

# A Paraphrase of 'St Elizabeth'

GERRE HANCOCK

**I: Solo Flute or Flutes**
**II: Solo Stop**
**III: Soft Foundation 8' (Celestes)**
**Ped.: Soft 16', 8'**



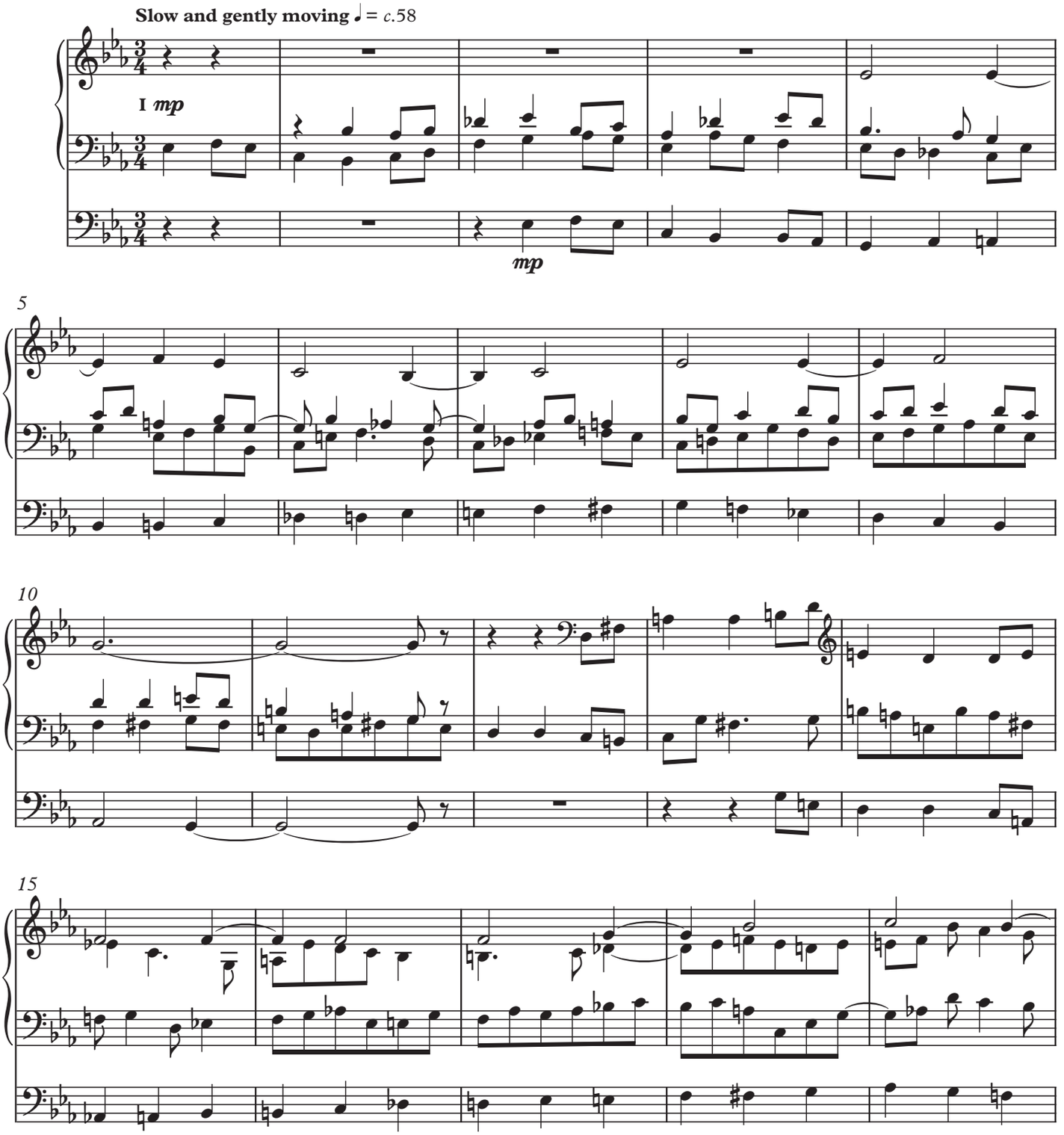

© Oxford University Press Inc. 1975. Assigned to Oxford University Press 2010
© Oxford University Press 2022. Photocopying this copyright material is ILLEGAL.

*to Robert Stevens Baker*

# Prelude on 'Slane'

GERRE HANCOCK

**I: Foundations 8', 4', III/I, II/I**
**II: Foundations 8', 4'**
**III: Foundations 8', 4'**
**Ped.: Foundations 16', 8', III/Ped., II/Ped.**




© Oxford University Press Inc. 1986. Assigned to Oxford University Press 2010
© Oxford University Press 2022. Photocopying this copyright material is ILLEGAL.

*Commissioned by St Paul's School, Brooklandville, Maryland, for the dedication of the Schoenstein Organ in St Paul's Chapel on 10 November 2002*

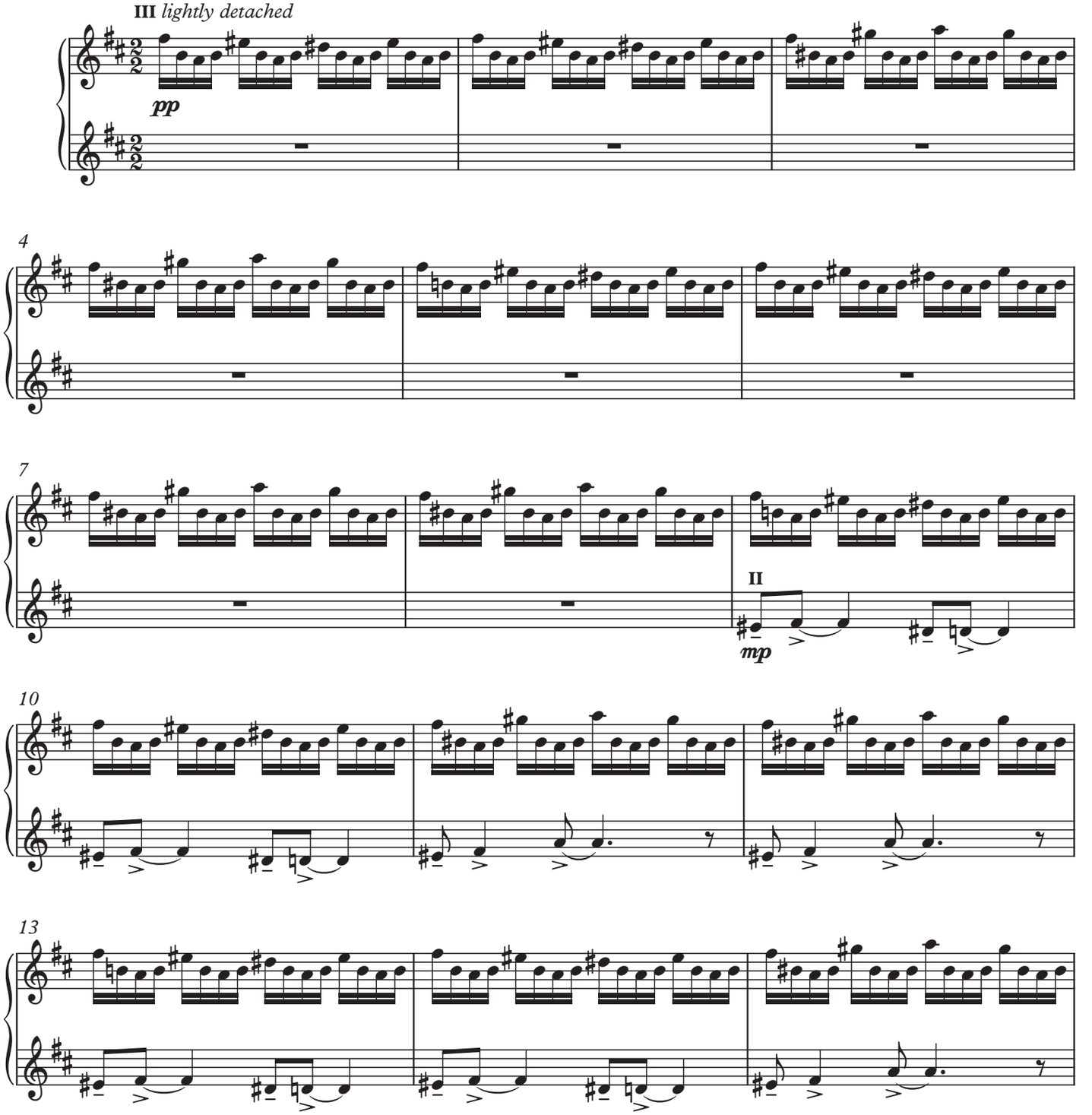
# Toccata

GERRE HANCOCK

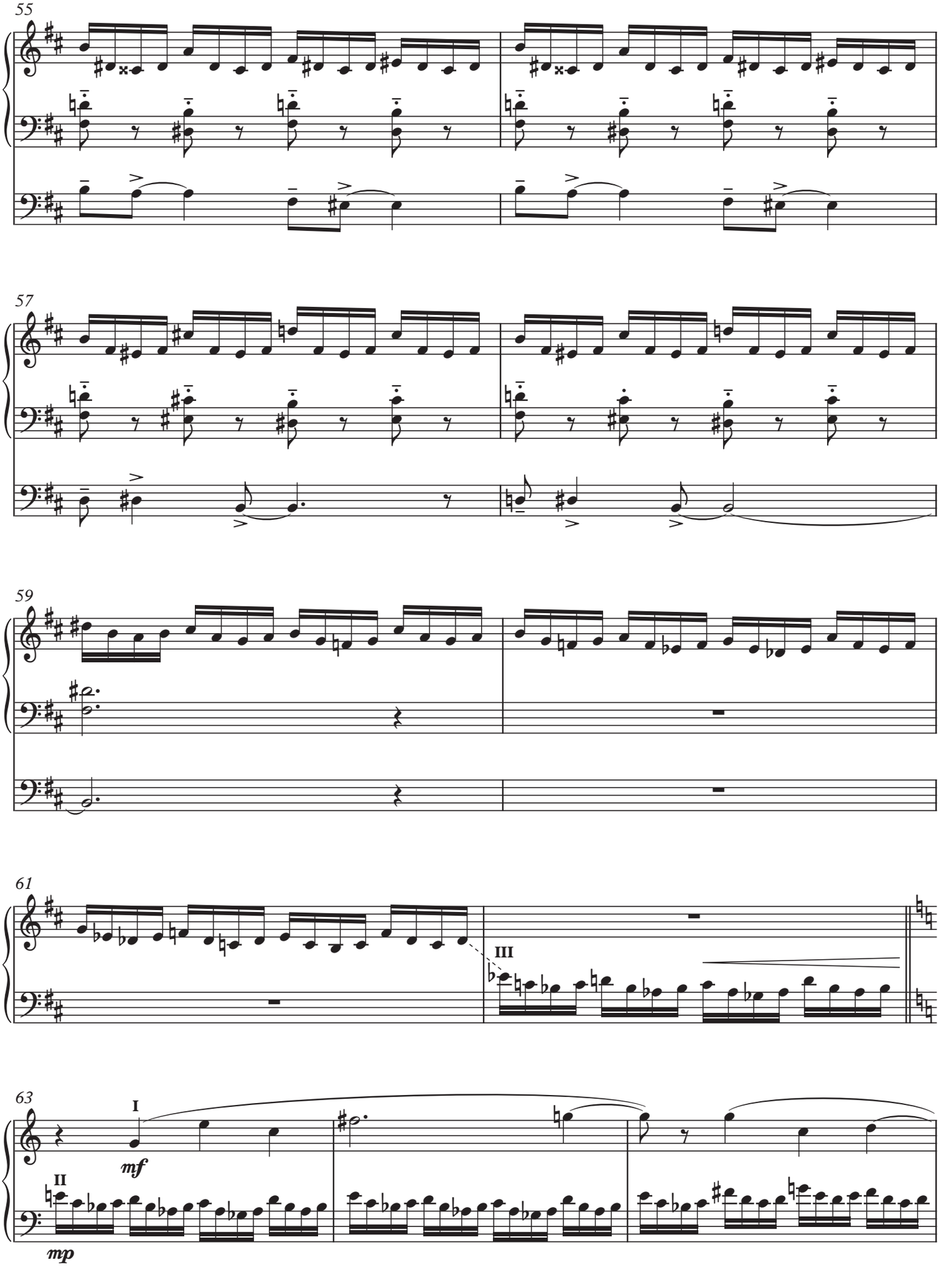
**I: Foundations 8', 4', III/I, II/I**
**II: Foundations 8', 4', III/II**
**III: Foundations 8', 4', Reeds 8'**
**Ped.: Foundations 16', 8', III/Ped., II/Ped.**

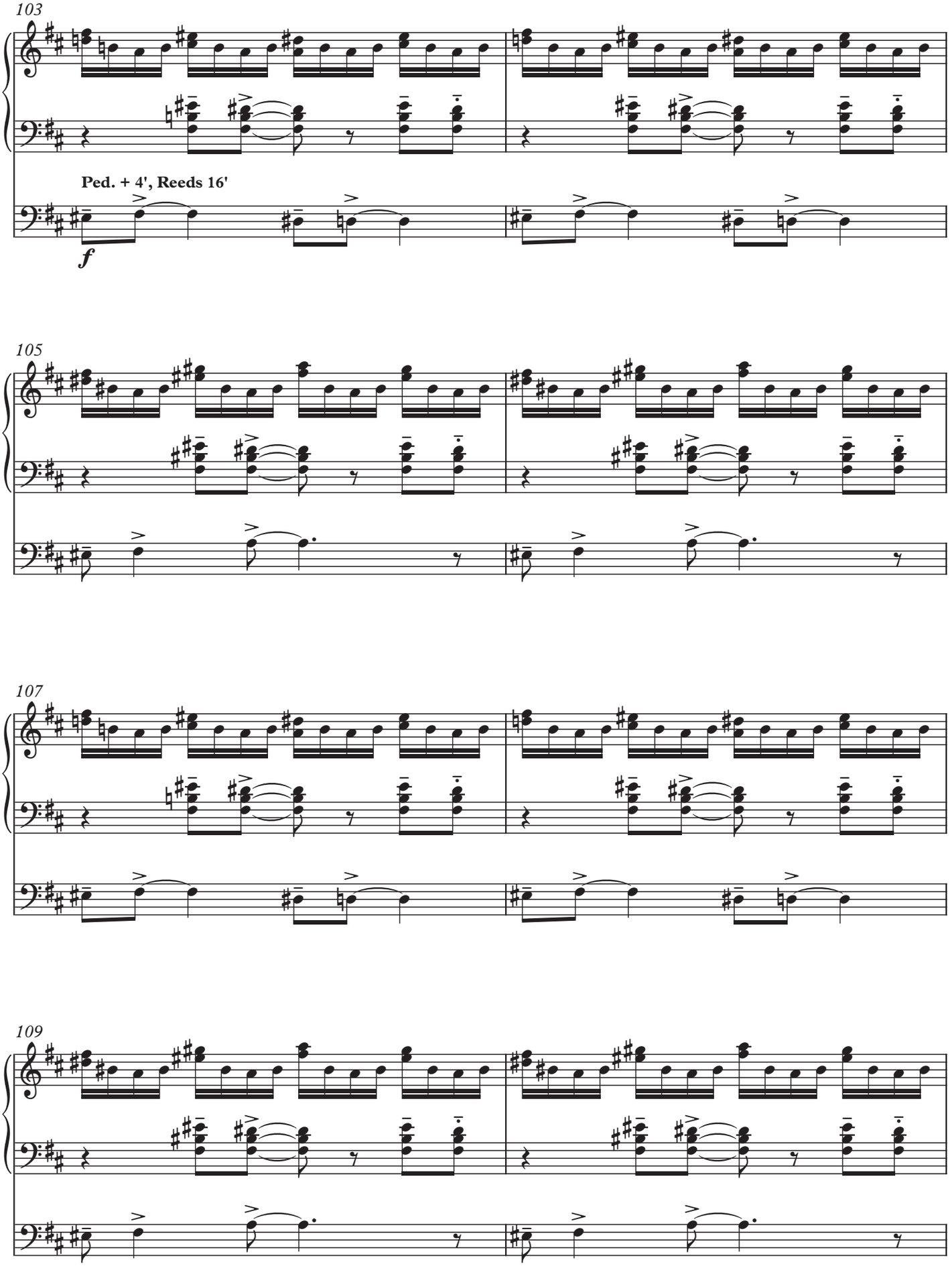
**Fast and energetic, but unhurried** ♩ = *c.*120

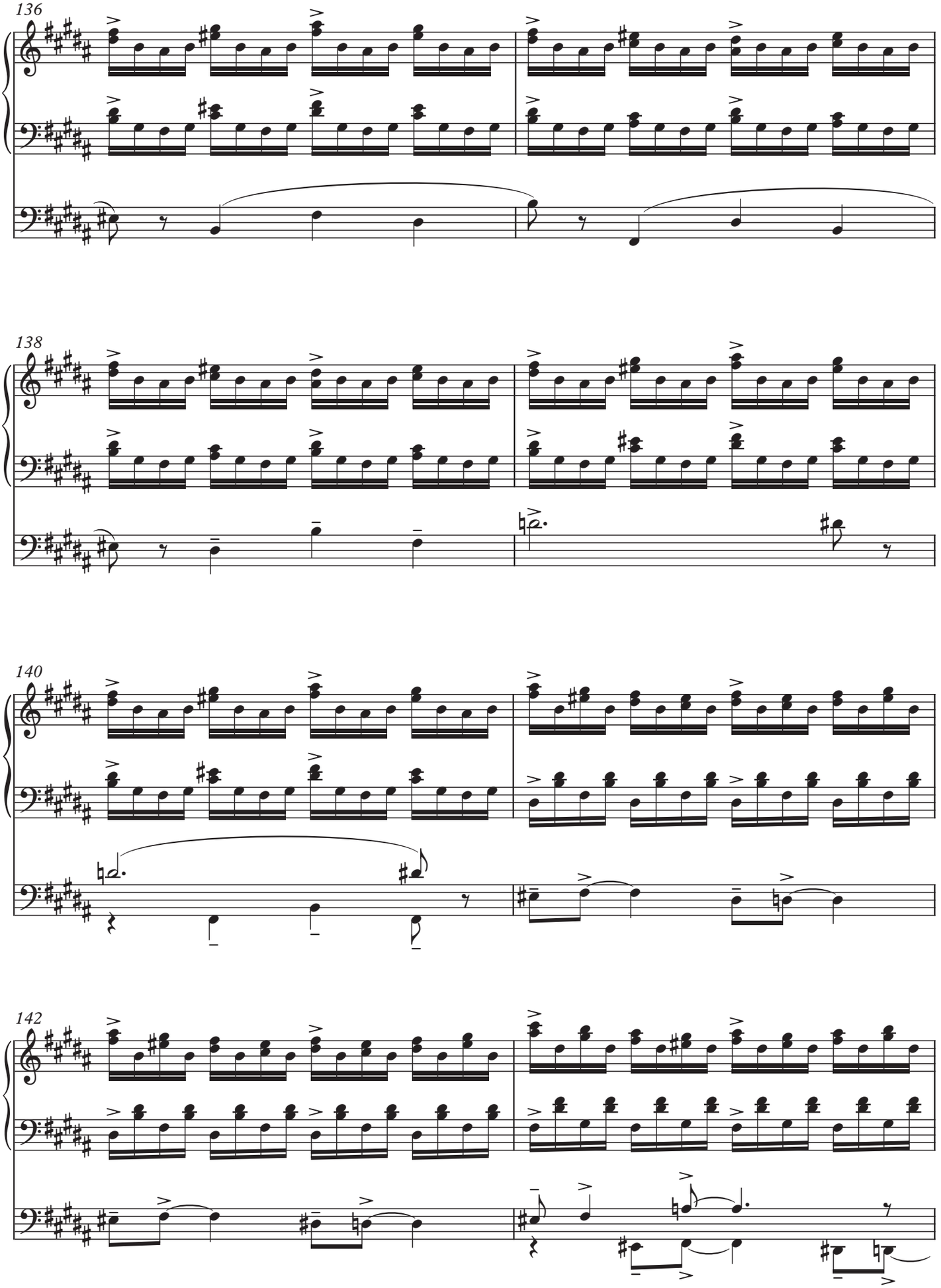
**III** *lightly detached*




© Oxford University Press Inc. 2003. Assigned to Oxford University Press 2010
© Oxford University Press 2022. Photocopying this copyright material is ILLEGAL.


55
57
59
61
III
63
I
mf
II
mp


103
Ped. + 4', Reeds 16'
f
105
107
109


136
138
140
142

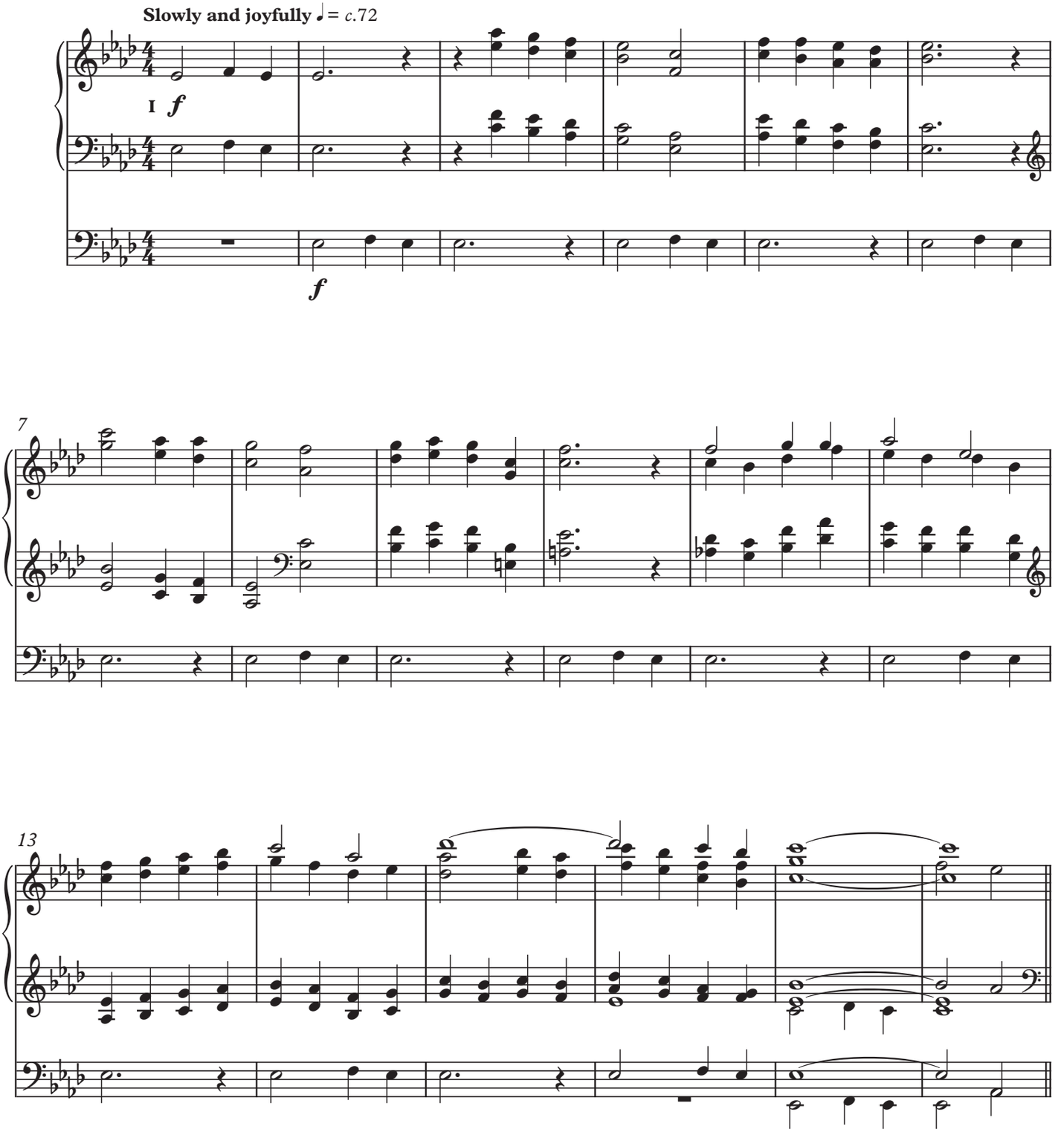
*in memoriam Lewis Bruun*

# Variations on 'Ora Labora'

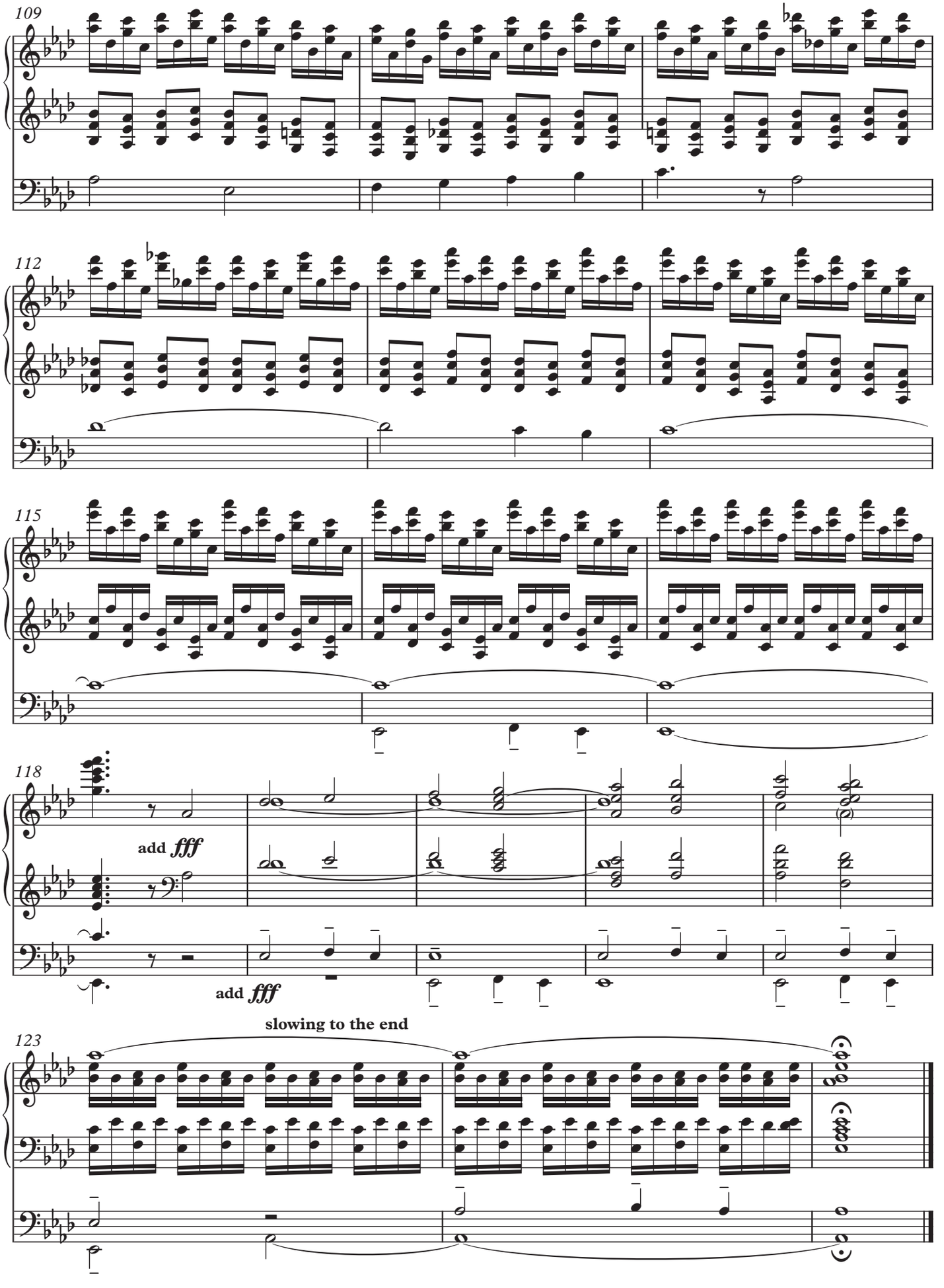
(Based on a hymn tune by T. Tertius Noble)

GERRE HANCOCK

**I: Foundations 16', 8', 4', III/I, II/I**
**II: Foundations 16', 8', 4', Reed 8'**
**III: Foundations 16', 8', 4', Reed 8'**
**Ped.: Foundations 32', 16', 8', 4', Reeds 16', 8', III/Ped., II/Ped.**




© Oxford University Press Inc. 2004. Assigned to Oxford University Press 2010
© Oxford University Press 2022. Photocopying this copyright material is ILLEGAL.

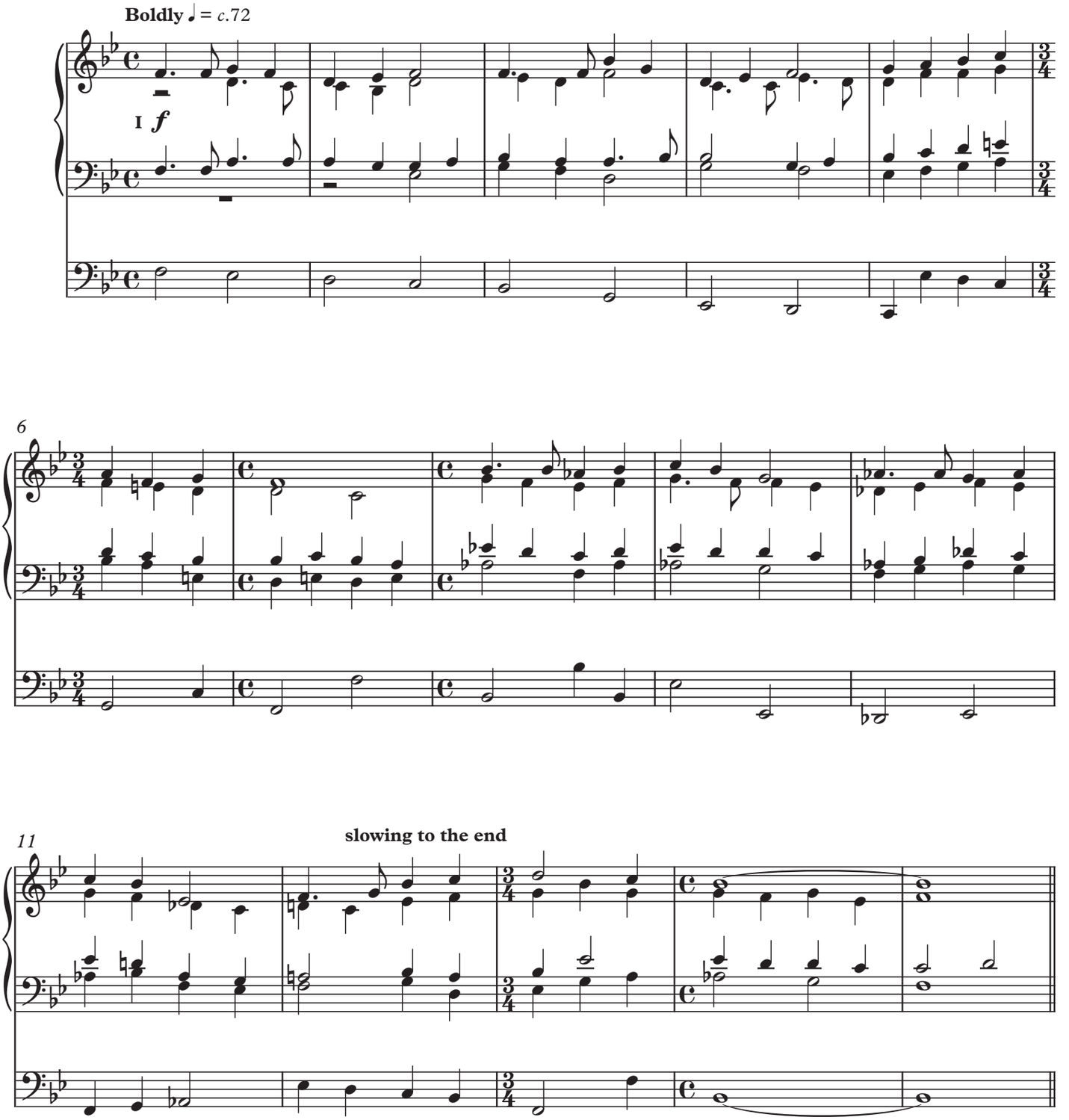

109
112
115
118
add fff
add fff
123
slowing to the end

*Commissioned by the Association of Anglican Musicians Conference*
*and dedicated to the AAM 2000 Palm Beach Conference*

# Variations on 'Palm Beach'

GERRE HANCOCK

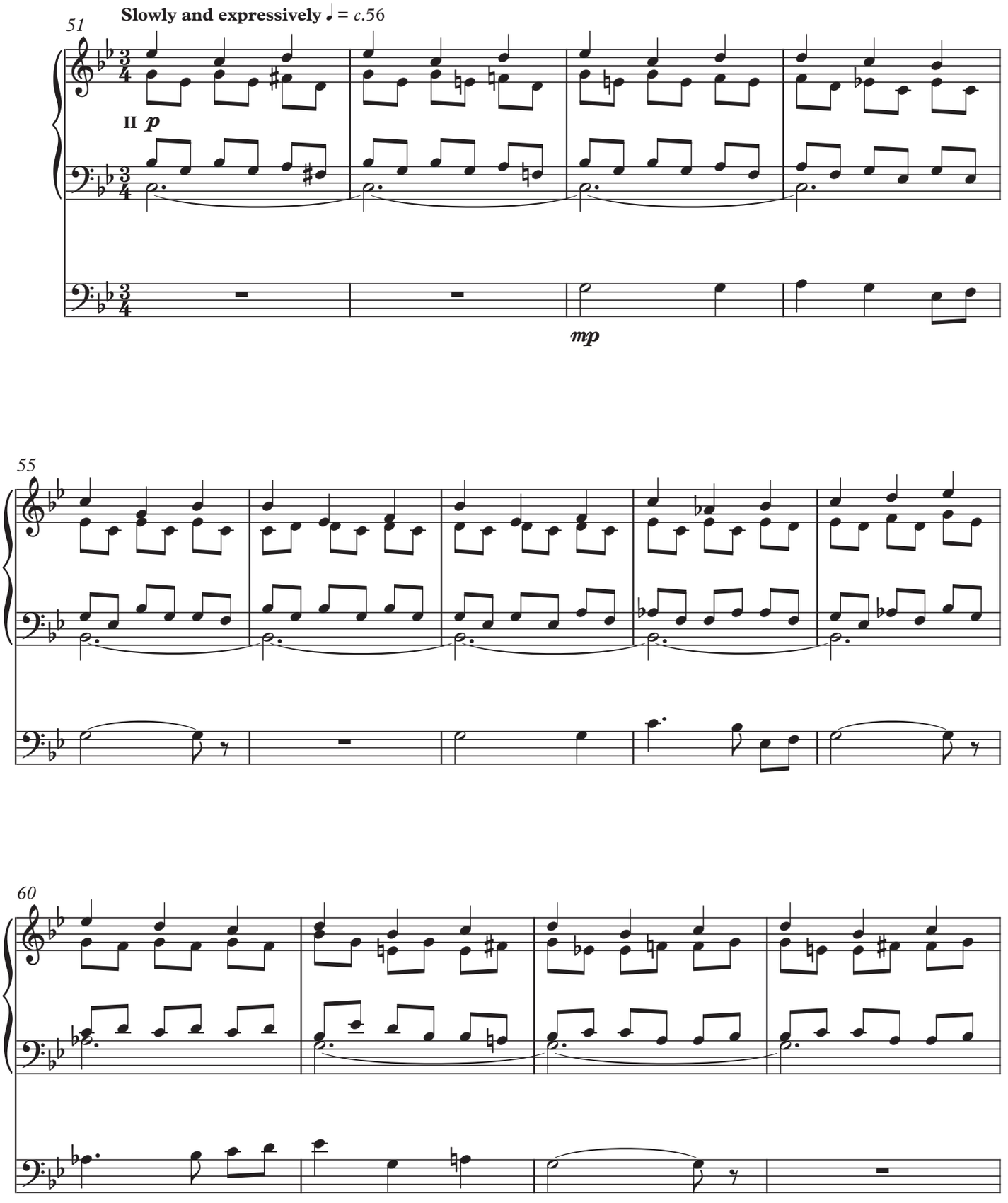
**I: Foundations 8', 4', III/I, II/I**
**II: Foundations 8', 4'**
**III: Foundations 16', 8', 4'**
**Ped.: Foundations 16', 8', III/Ped., II/Ped.**

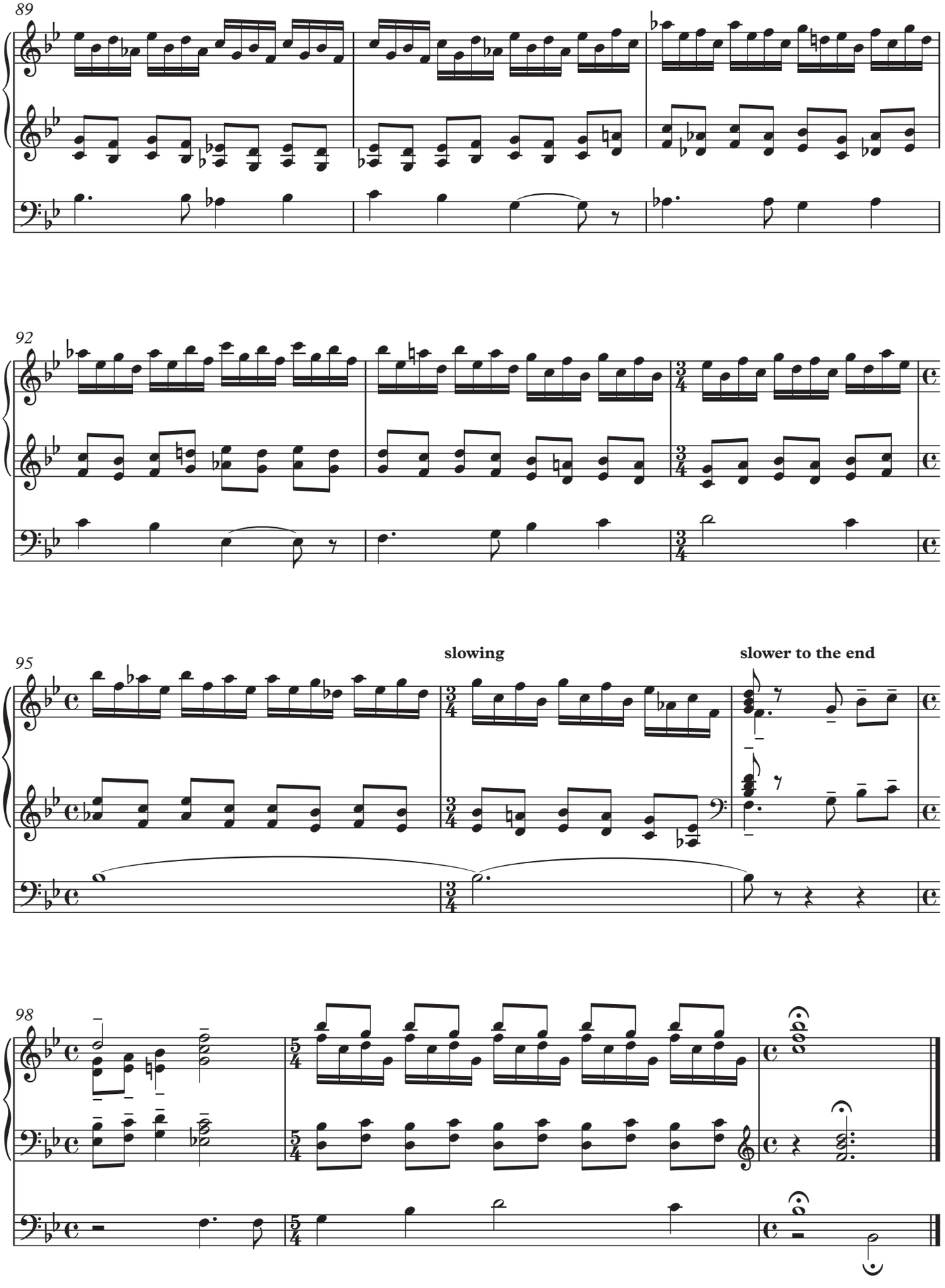



© Oxford University Press Inc. 2001. Assigned to Oxford University Press 2010
© Oxford University Press 2022. Photocopying this copyright material is ILLEGAL.

# III

**II: Strings & Celeste 8', III/II**
**III: Flute 16', Strings & Celeste 8'**
**Ped.: Solo 4'**



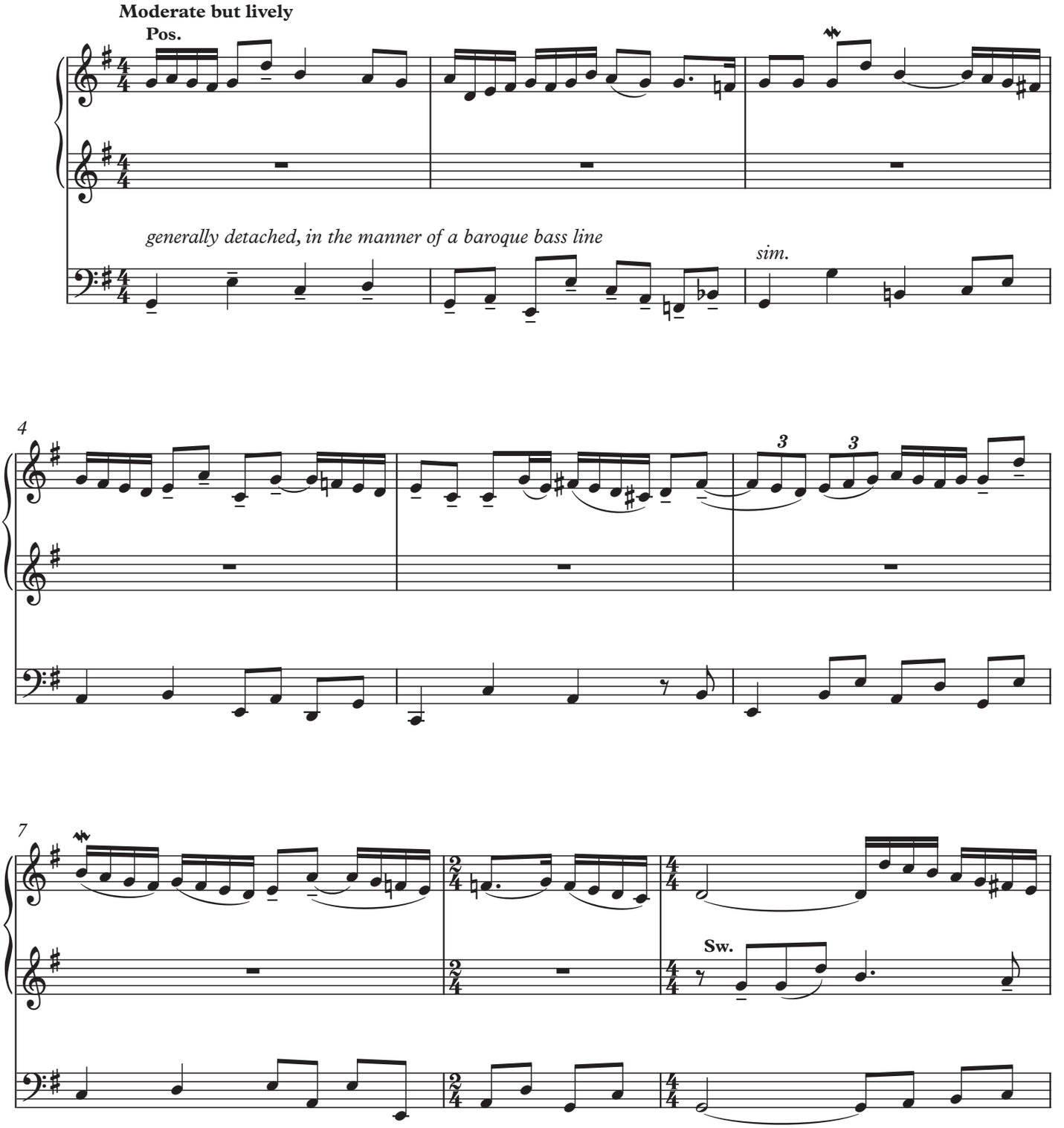

89
92
95
slowing
slower to the end
98

# Three Cincinnati Improvisations

GERRE HANCOCK
transcribed by Todd Wilson

## I. Improvisation on 'Lobe den Herren'

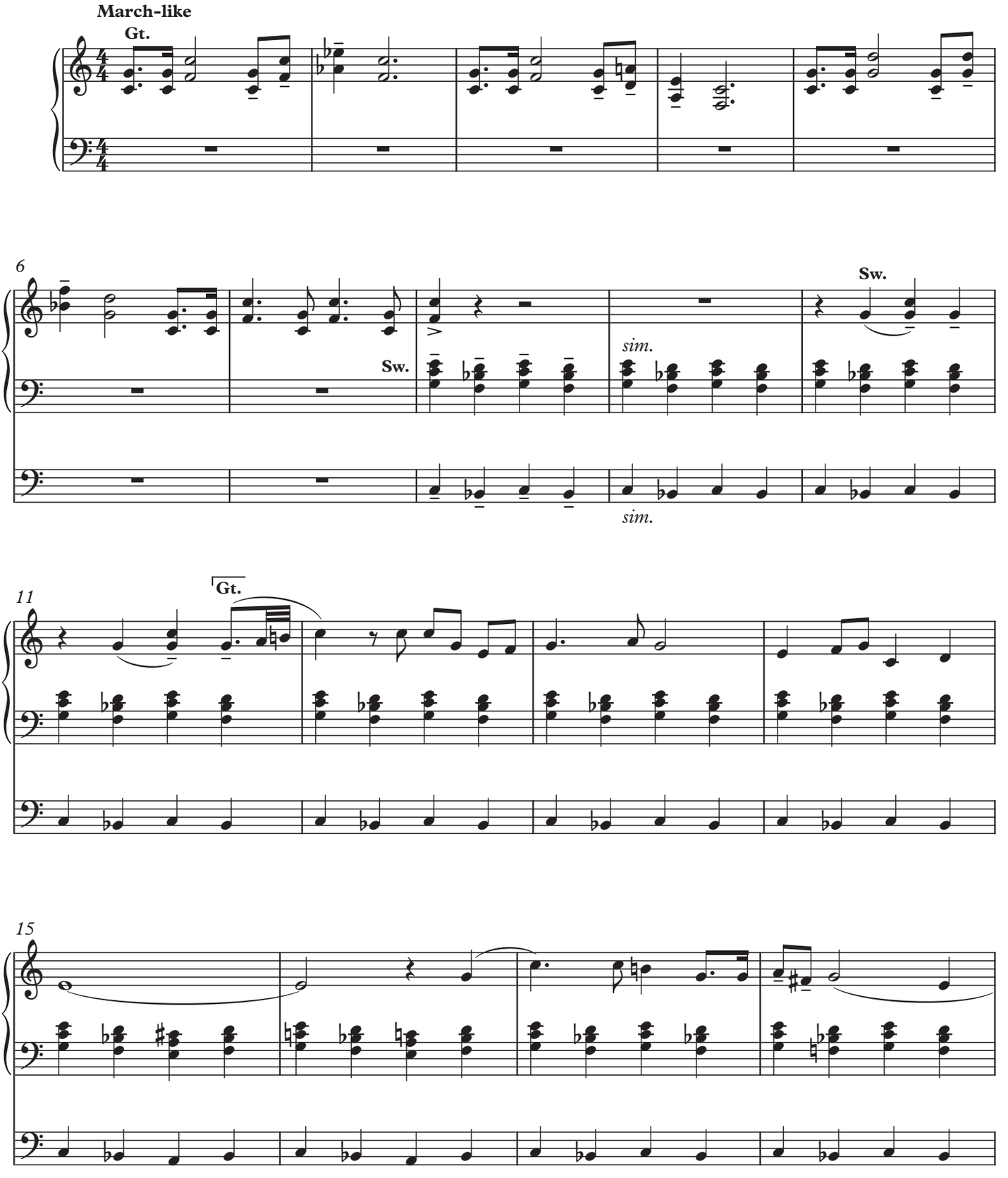
**Sw.: Oboe**
**Pos.: Flutes 8', 1', or other clear 'gap registration'**
**Ped.: Clear 16', 8'**

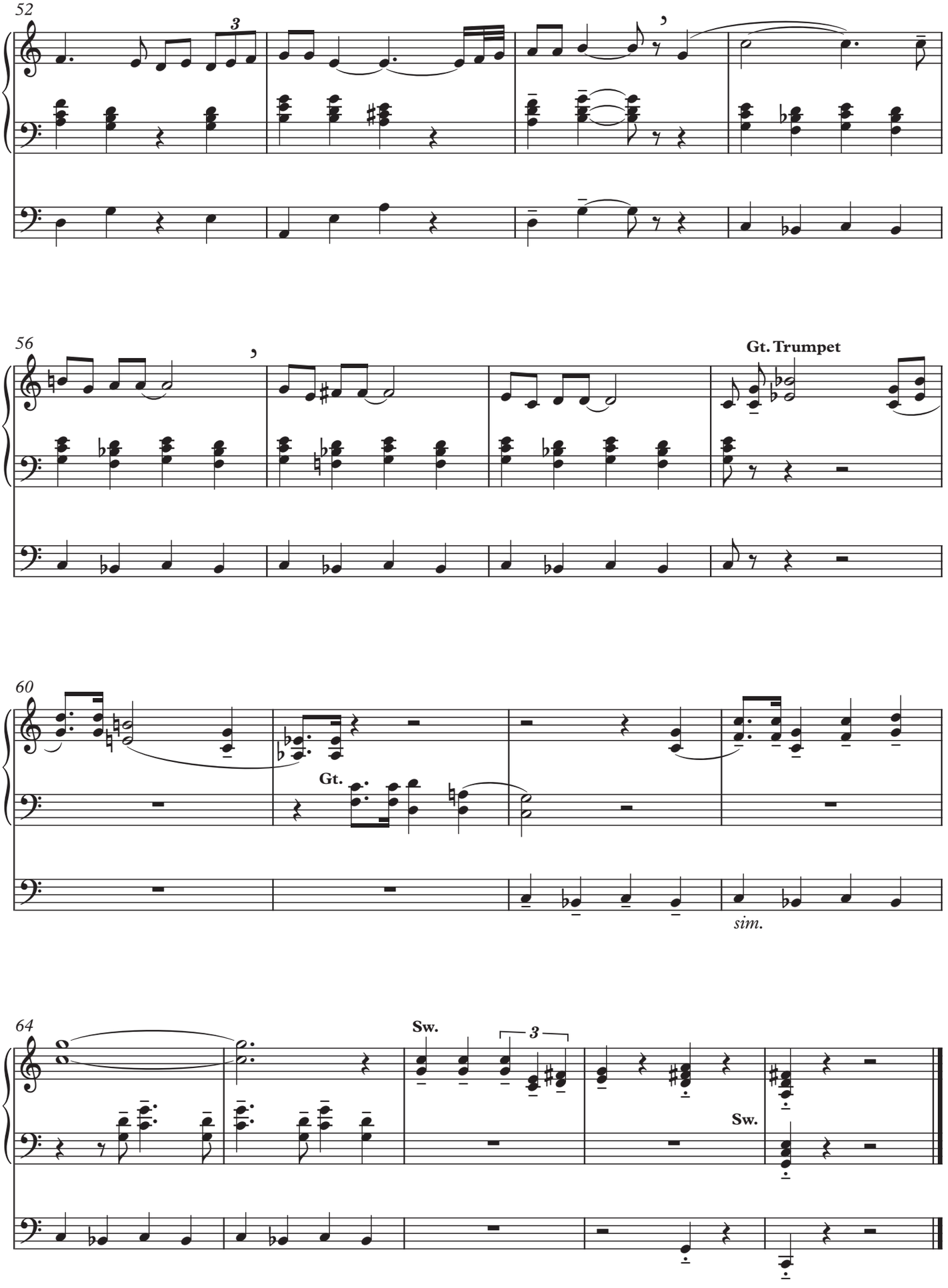


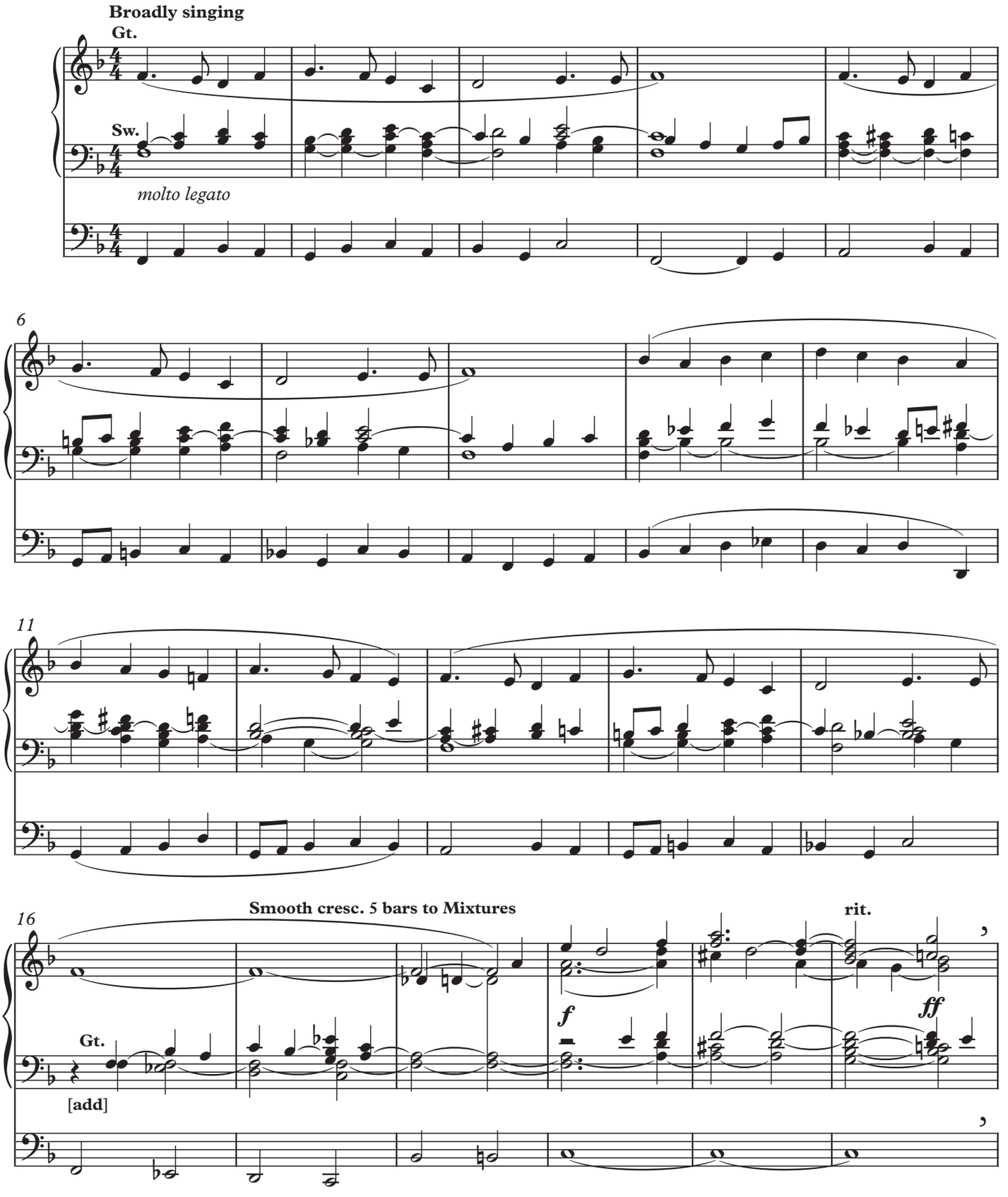

© Oxford University Press 2022. Photocopying this copyright material is ILLEGAL.

# II. Improvisation on ‘Grand Isle’

**Sw.: Flutes 8', 4'**
**Gt.: Trumpet 8'**
**Pos.: Cornet V**
**Ped.: Flutes 16', 8'**




52
3
56
Gt. Trumpet
60
Gt.
sim.
64
Sw.
3
Sw.

# III. Improvisation on ‘Ar hyd y nos’

**Sw.: Flute 8', Strings, Celeste**
**Gt.: Warm Foundations 8', Sw./Gt.**
**Ped.: 16', 8', Sw./Ped.**