SINGING SONS

Nurturing Boys' Voices from Six to Sixteen

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Who Will Buy sung by Kennan LeJeune, age 8

Notes and resources at www.mrlj.com

Goals

- To inspire boys to sing for a lifetime.
- To help boys feel comfortable singing.
- To honor boys singing where they “ring”.

Agenda

- Stages of the male changing voice.
- How these stages influence repertoire choice
- 35+ audio samples of repertoire for each stage.

Vocal Metamorphosis

- Voice change can begin early (9) or late (14+).
- One part may not fit one voice.
- Stages of change can last days or months.

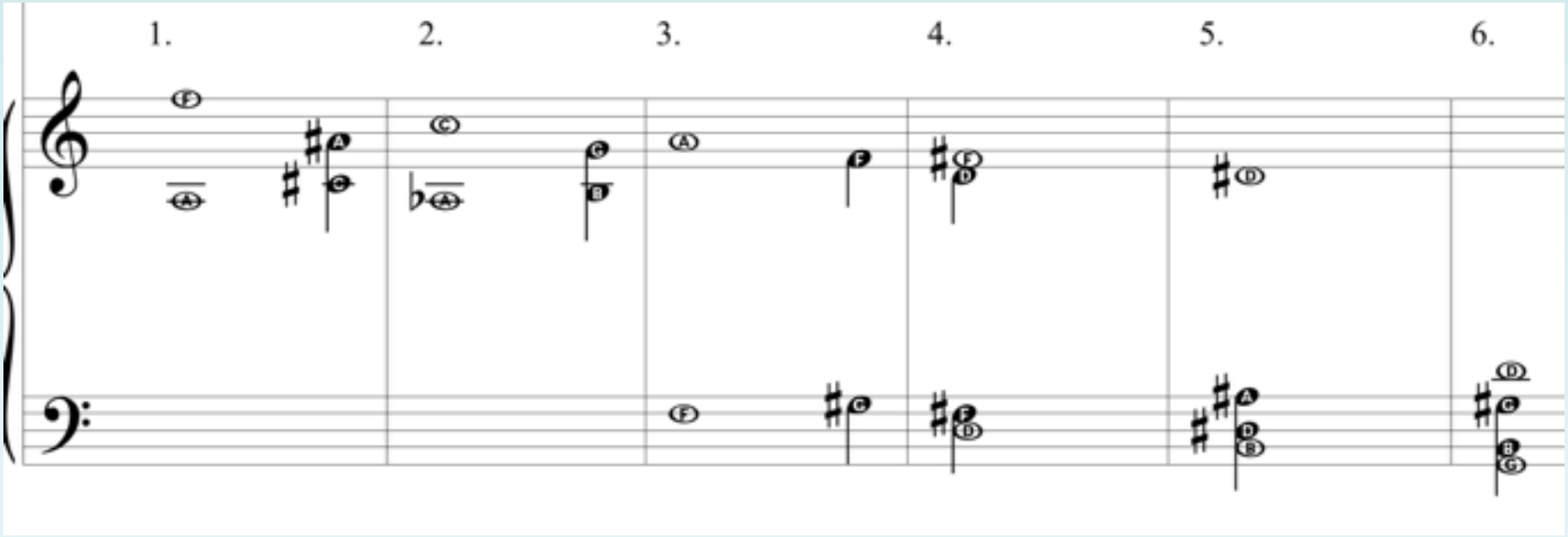
Field Recording 1

- Male in Grade 6, 7, 8,
- About 18 months between recordings.
- Sang in school and honor choirs.
- Sings “Red River Valley”

Field Recording 2

- Studied voice from early age.
- Warm-up and Brother John: Gr. 6
- Kodaly: Isten Kovacsa-Gr. 7
- Rachmaninoff, ‘Vocalise-Gr. 8
- Handel: Si tra i ceppi-Gr. 12

Common Range of Male Voice Change (Cooksey)



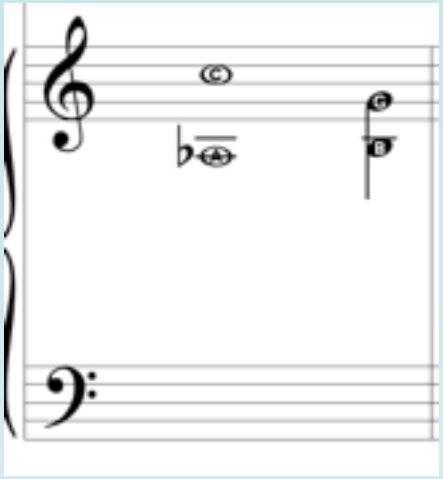
Practical Application

- 1. Male Treble Voice (not included today)
- 2. Early Stage Changing Male Voice
- 3. Middle Stage Changing Male Voice
- 4. Later Stage Changing Male Voice
- 5. Emerging Adolescent Male Voice
- 6. Mature Adolescent Male Voice

2. Early Changing Male Voice

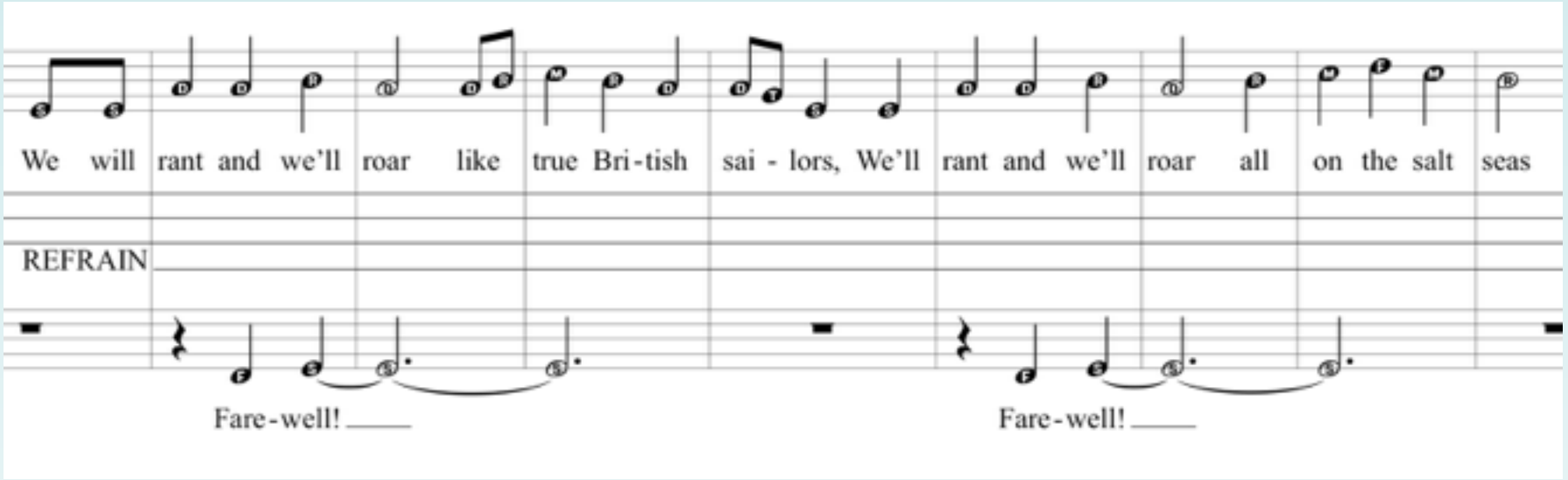
- Appears age 10-12, some in HS
- Light quality, more breathy above C5.
- Best range Ab3-C5, tessitura B3-G4.
- Less flexibility, especially in upper range.

2. Early Stage Changing Male Voice Repertoire Considerations

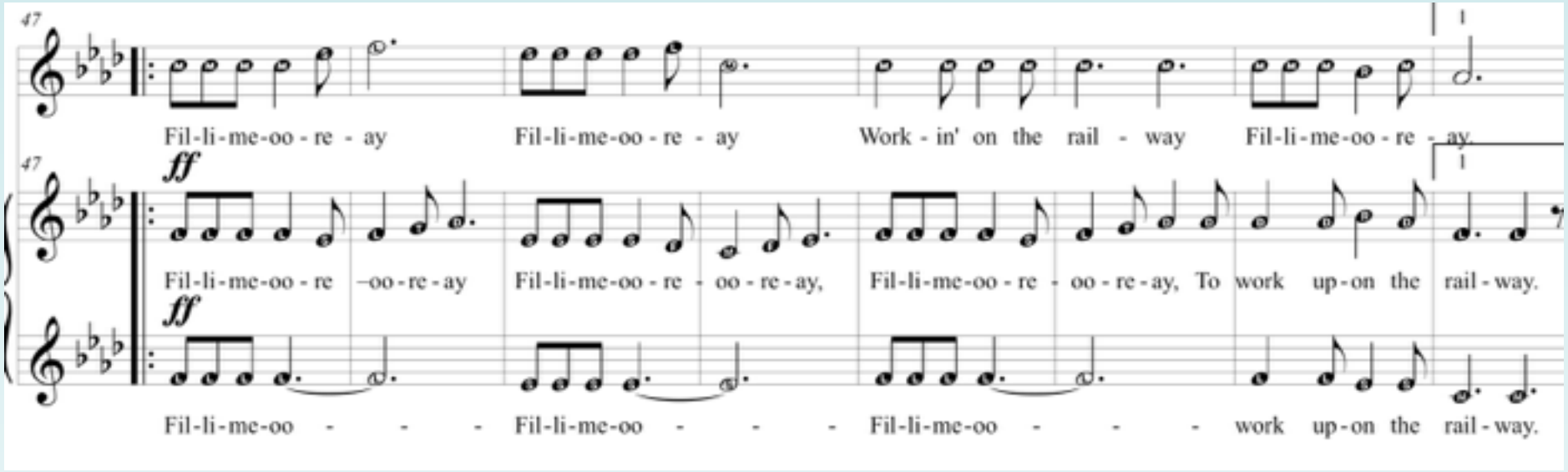


- Choose music with some parts below C5.
- Music with narrow 5-7 note range or with simple or repetitive lower harmonies.
- Feature lower part singing the melody or doubling upper part melody.

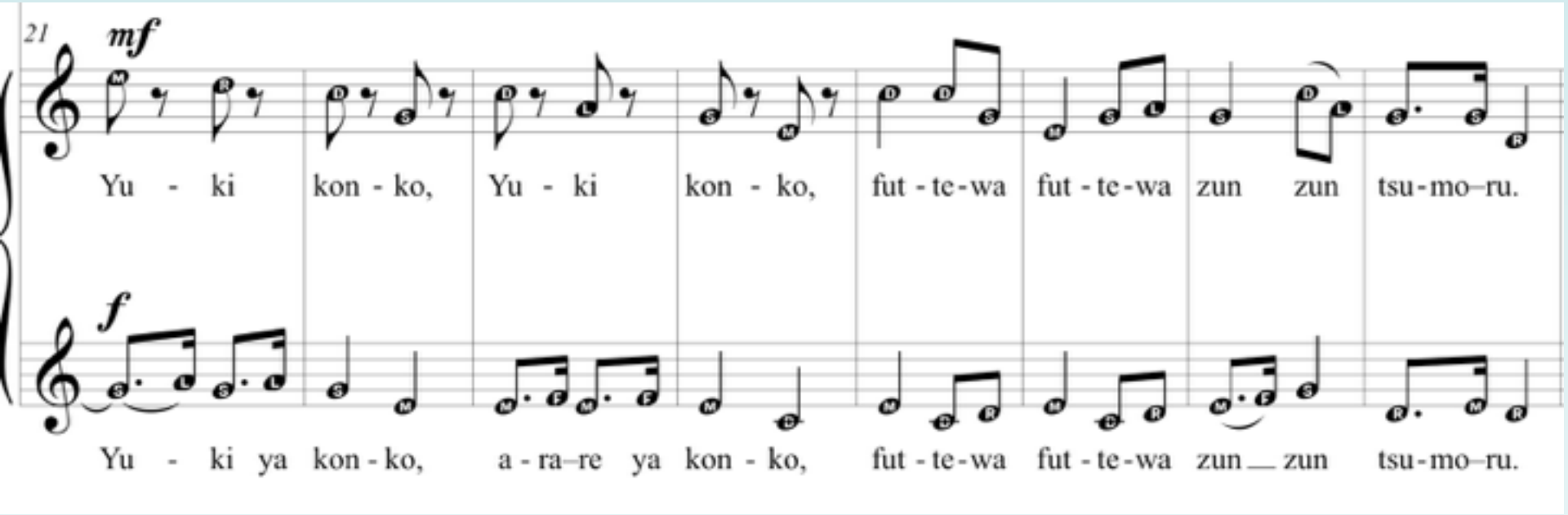
Spanish Ladies
Orff Schulwerk Vol. 5



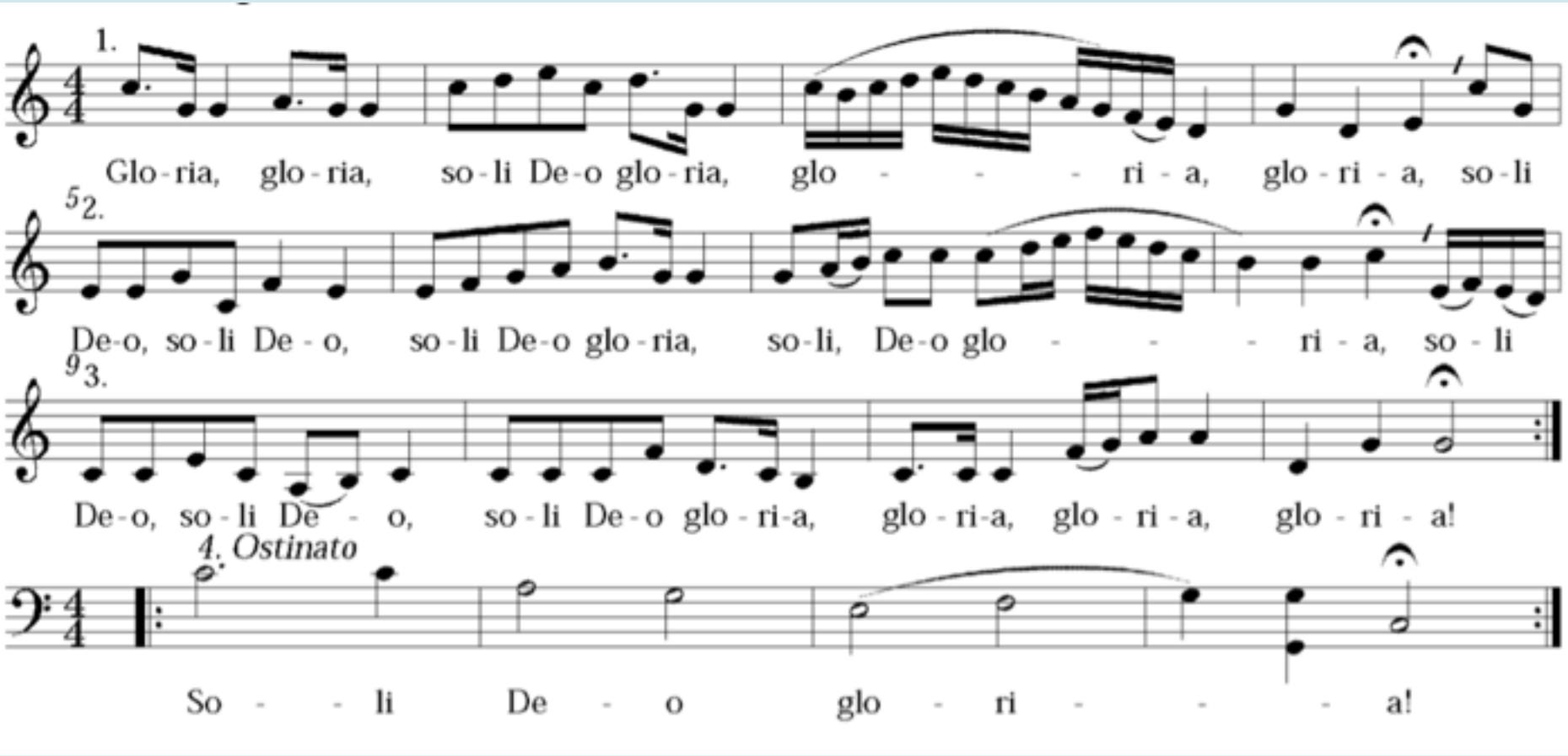
Pat Works on the Railway
Arr. Ruth Dwyer/M. Ellis



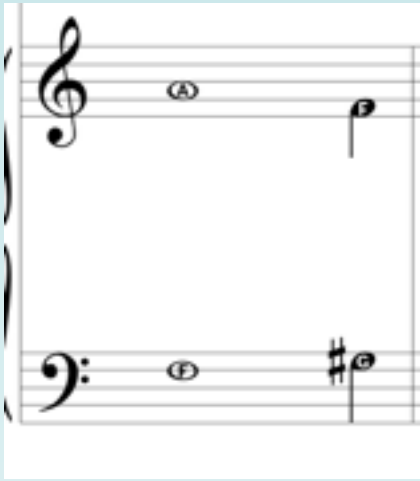
Fuyu No Uta
Arr. R. Stenson



Soli Deo Gloria
Paul Kickstat



3. Middle Stage Changing Male Voice

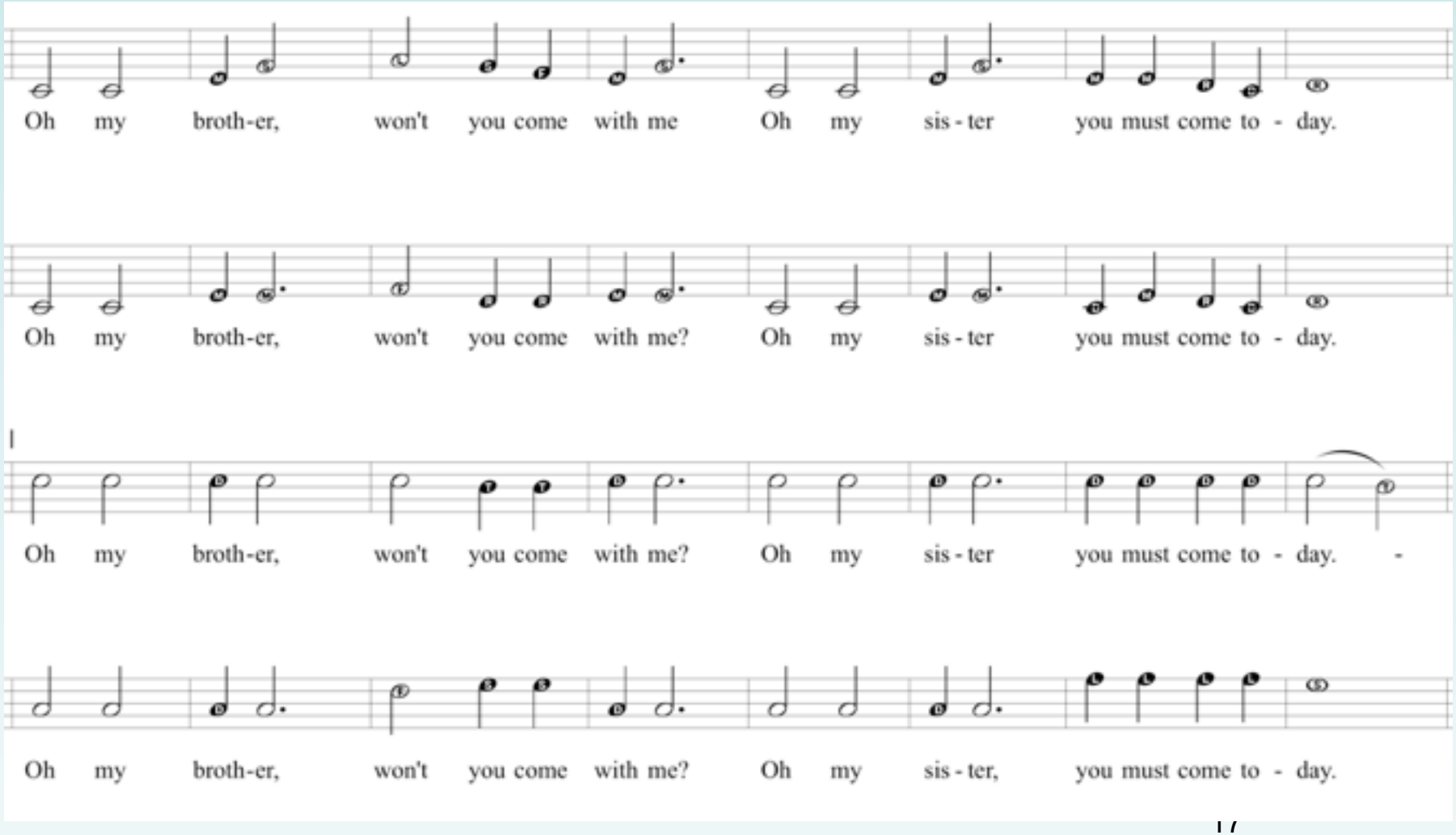


- Average age 13-14.
- Can have breathy/husky voice.
- Decreased projection, agility, pitch accuracy.
- Falsetto emerges usually above G4
- F3-A4 pitch range but G#3-F4 is realistic.

3. Middle-Changing Male Voice Repertoire

- Alto often too high, tenor too low.
- Seek F4-F5 parts that can be doubled 8va
- Seek SATB rather than SAB/3 pt mixed
- Avoid baritone notes below C3/D3.
- Avoid part writing with awkward leaps.
- Closed position harmonies are effective.

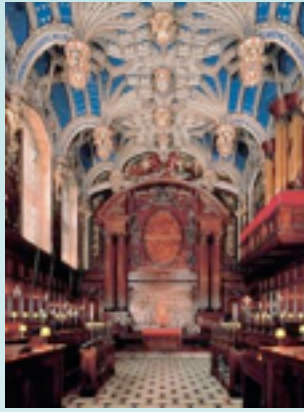
Bound for Jubilee (SATB)
Joyce Eilers



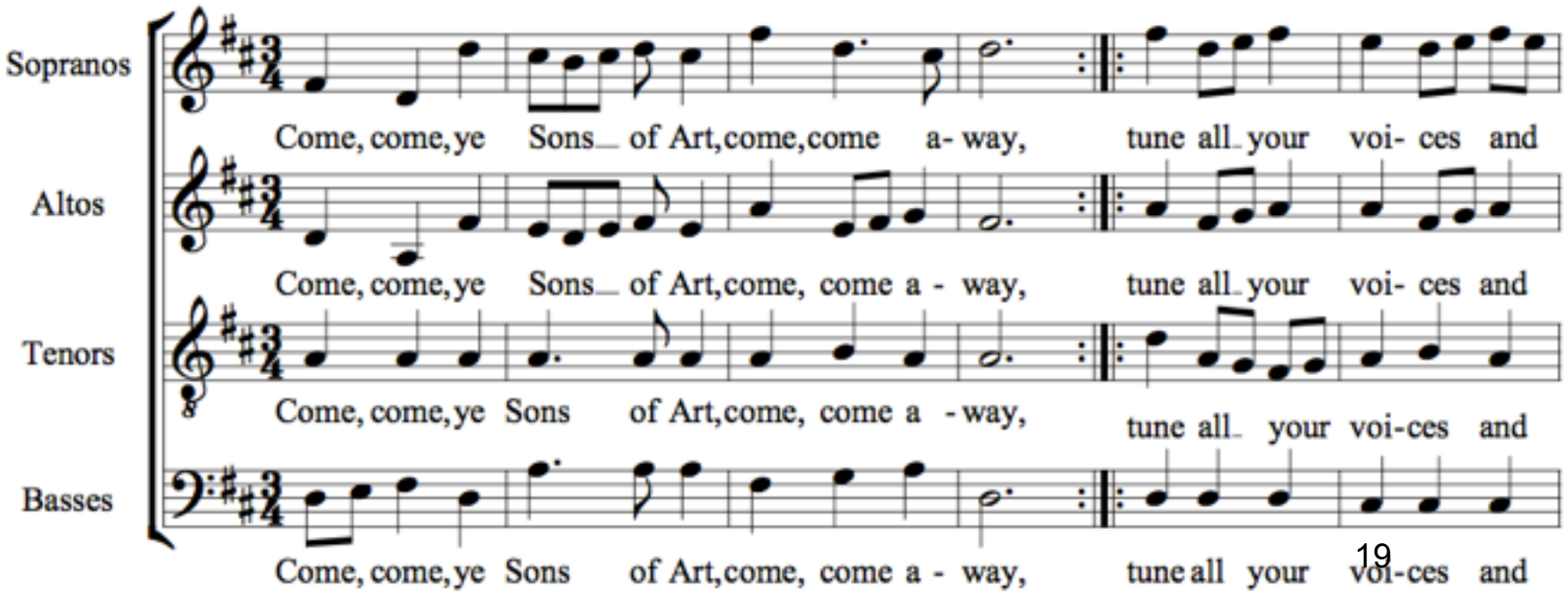
Amani
Jim Papoulis

- Treble voicing (SSA)
- Works for the changing voice since the harmony is a 6th below the melody.
- Parts can be doubled an octave lower, accommodating bass voices.
- Has energy and appeals to this changing voice stage while allowing treble voices to sing in a comfortable range.

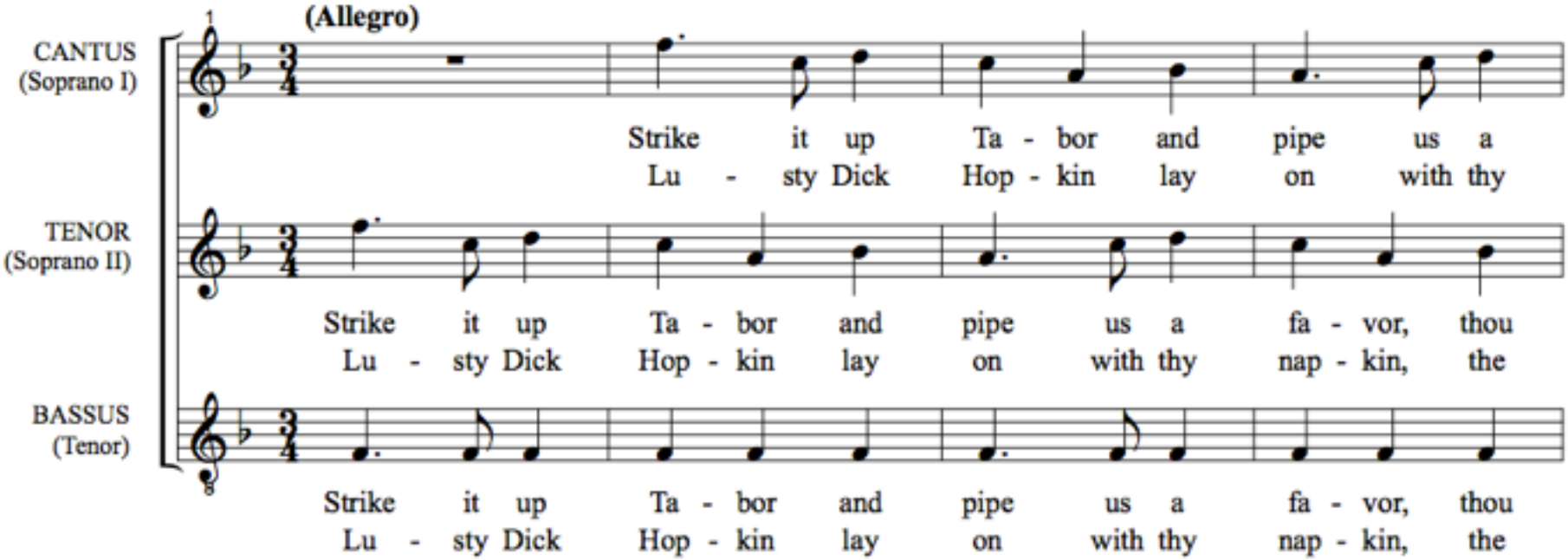
Come Ye Sons
Henry Purcell



Works as a solo, duet, or with SATB
Add strings or continuo alone for color.

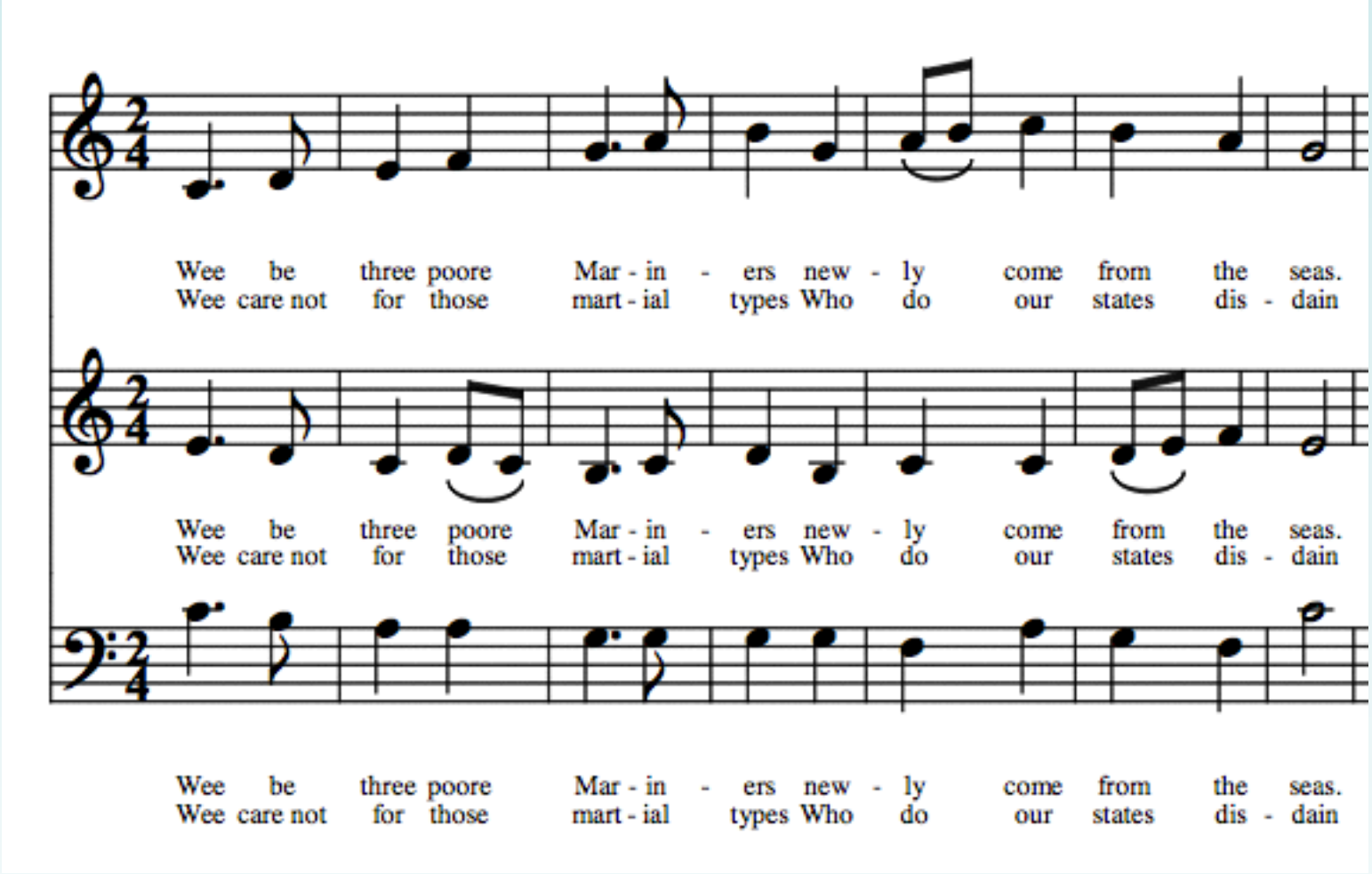


Strike it Up Tabor (SST)
Thomas Weelkes

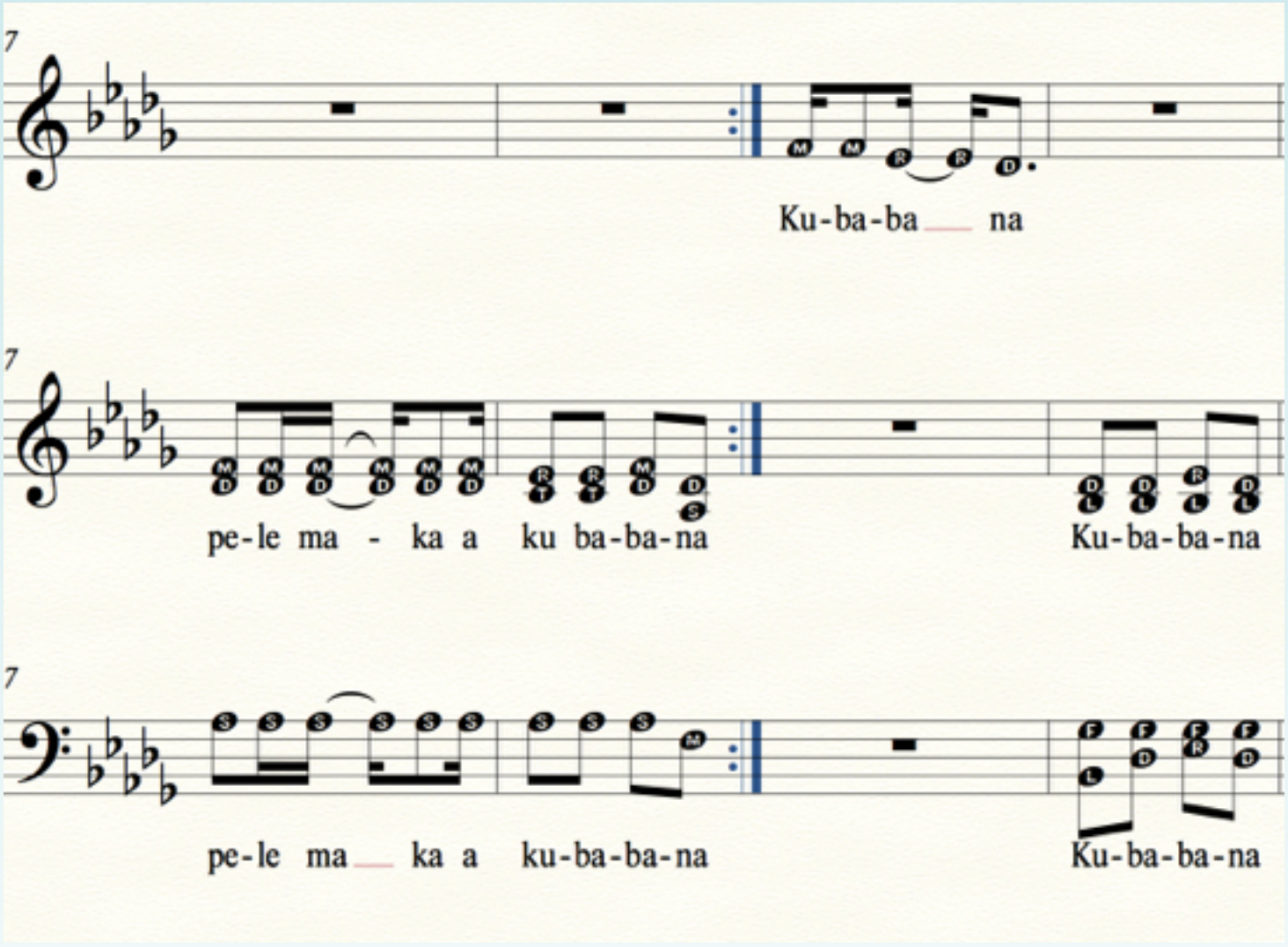


We Be Three Poor Mariners
Ravenscroft/ed. Harold Owen

- Example of a narrow range 3-part song.



Bonse Aba
Arr. Andrew Fischer



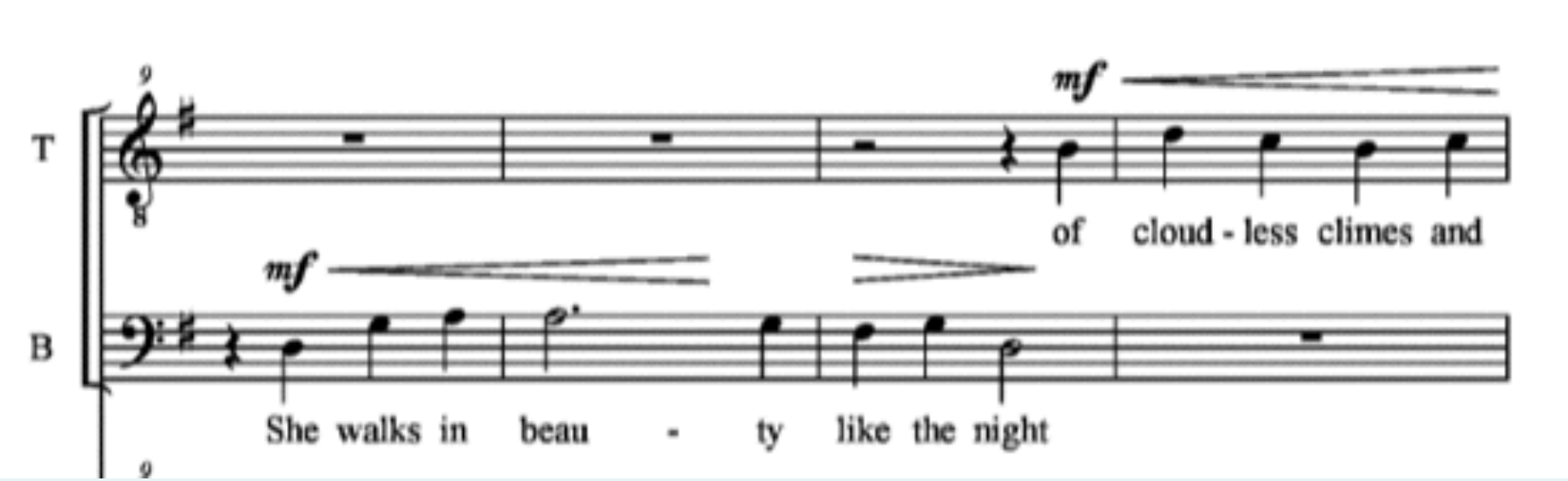
4. Later Stage Male Voice Change

- Most insecure time for a boy's voice
- Average 8th grade/late 7th age 13-14
- Unstable upper range, emerging baritone.
- Falsetto transition challenging for some.
- Pitch range D3-F#4, tessitura F#3-D4

4. Later Stage Male Voice Change Repertoire

- Moments of vocal rest within music is helpful.
- Develop falsetto downward.
- Music which alternates/shares/pairs SA/TB
- Avoid parts with many sustained pitches.
- Breath control issues require shorter phrases.

She Walks in Beauty
Laura Farnell

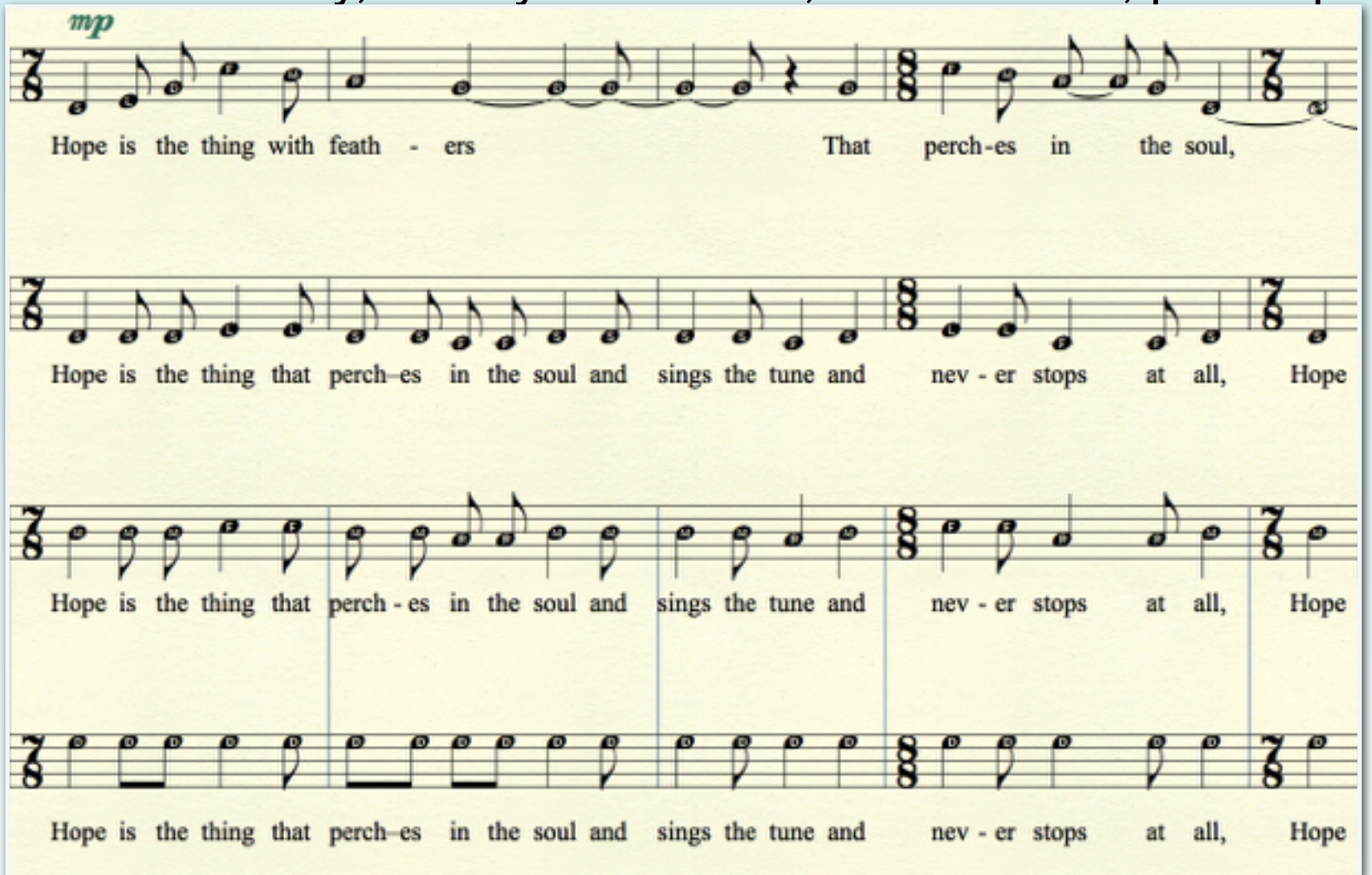


Old Joe Clark
Arr. M. Goetze

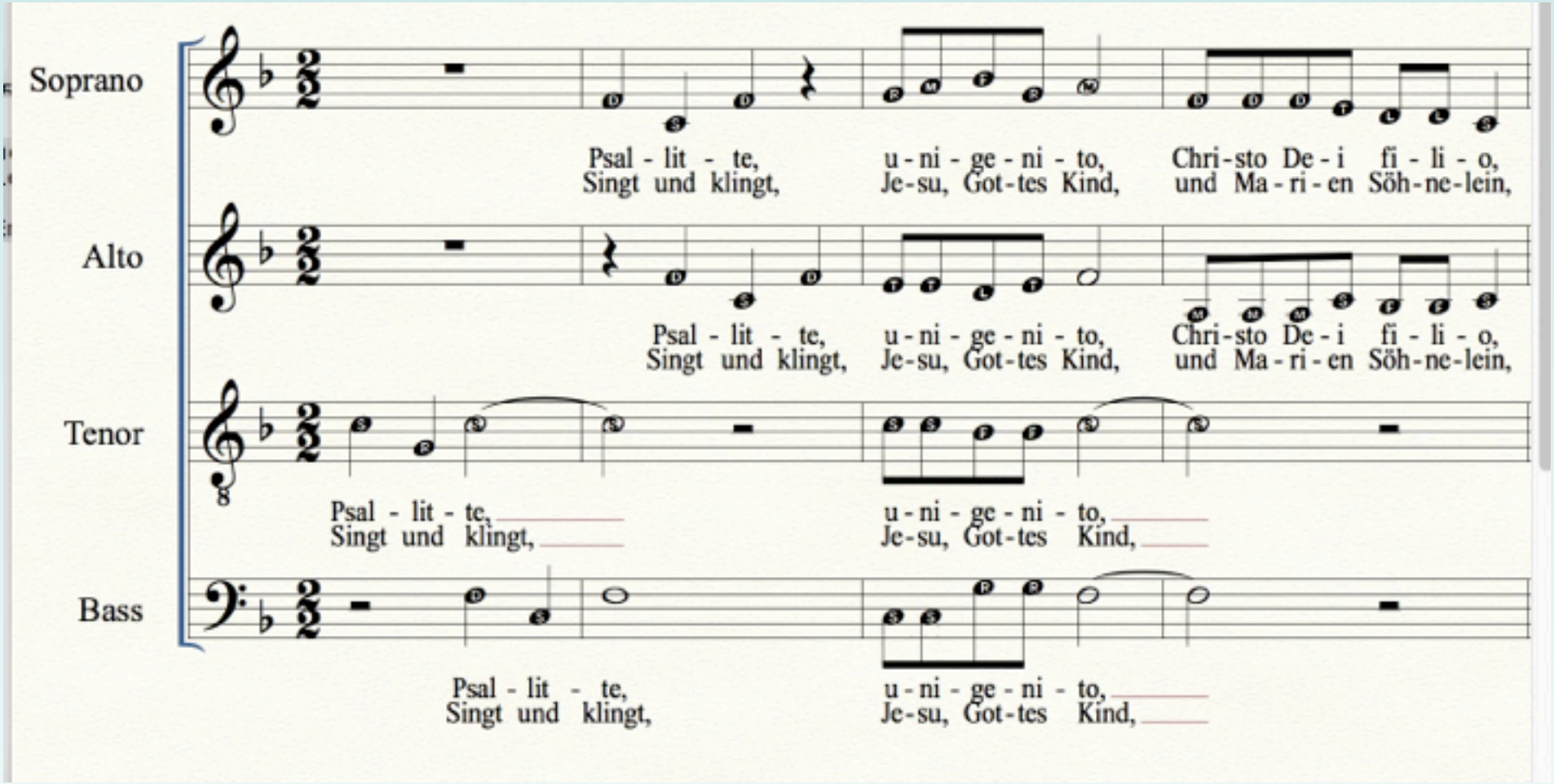
- SSA works great for changing boys voices!
- A cappella allows transposition to best key for your boys.

Hope is the Thing with Feathers
Kenney Potter

- Closed harmony, variety of textures, mixed meter, paired parts.

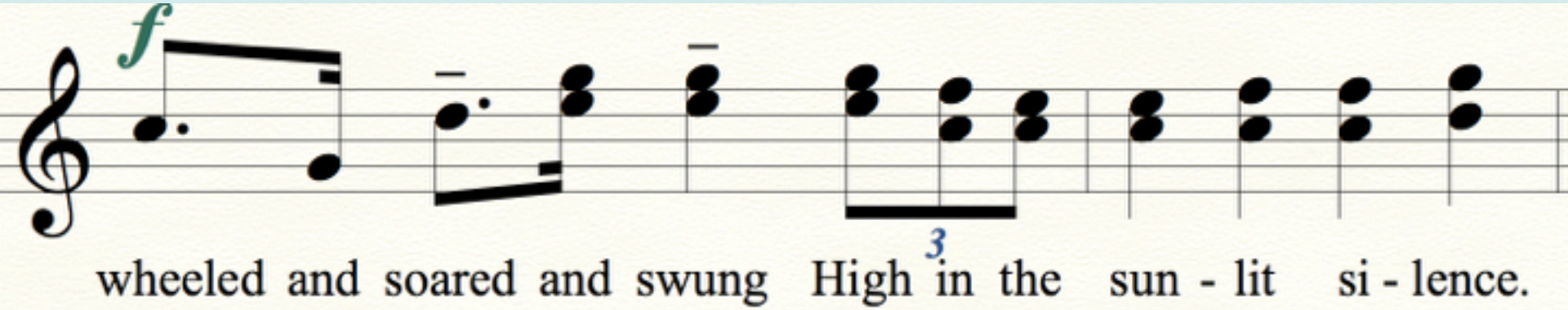


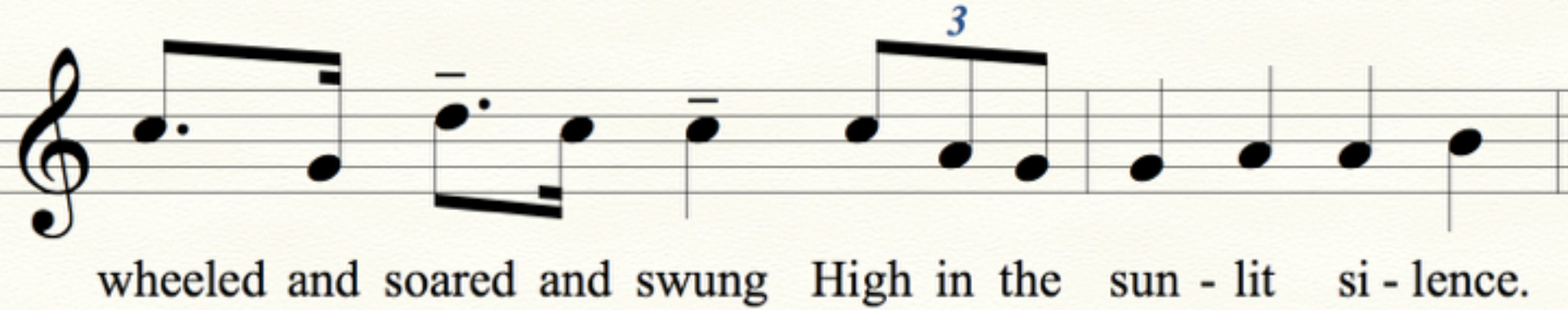
Psallite
Praetorius



Amavolovolo
Arr. deBeer

High Flight
Written for SSA or TTB
Karen Robinson





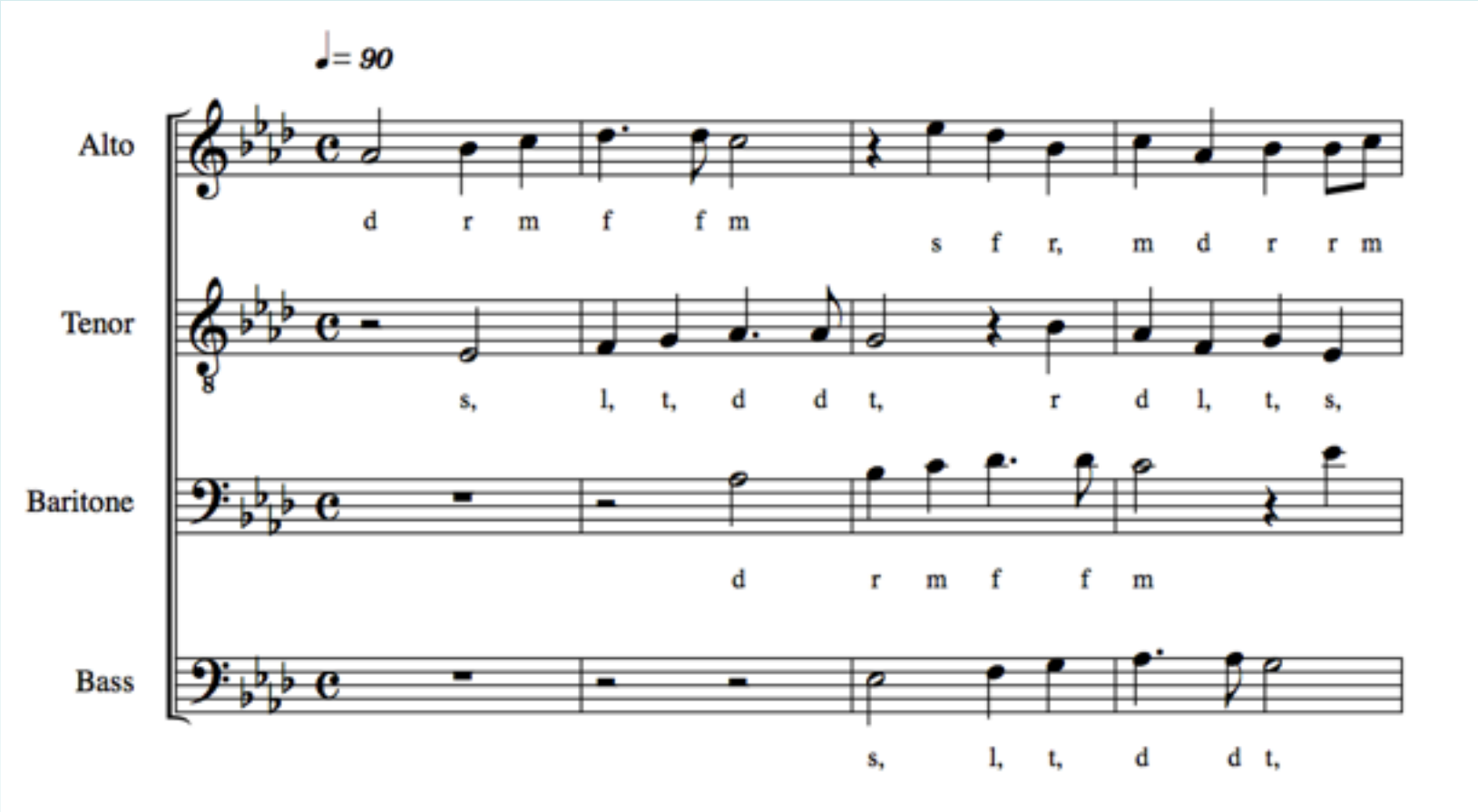
Oy es dia de placer
Arr. Jody Noblett

- Accommodates narrow range for tenors.
- Needs few baritones to sound good.
- Sustained open 5th is wonderful for tuning.

Da Pacem

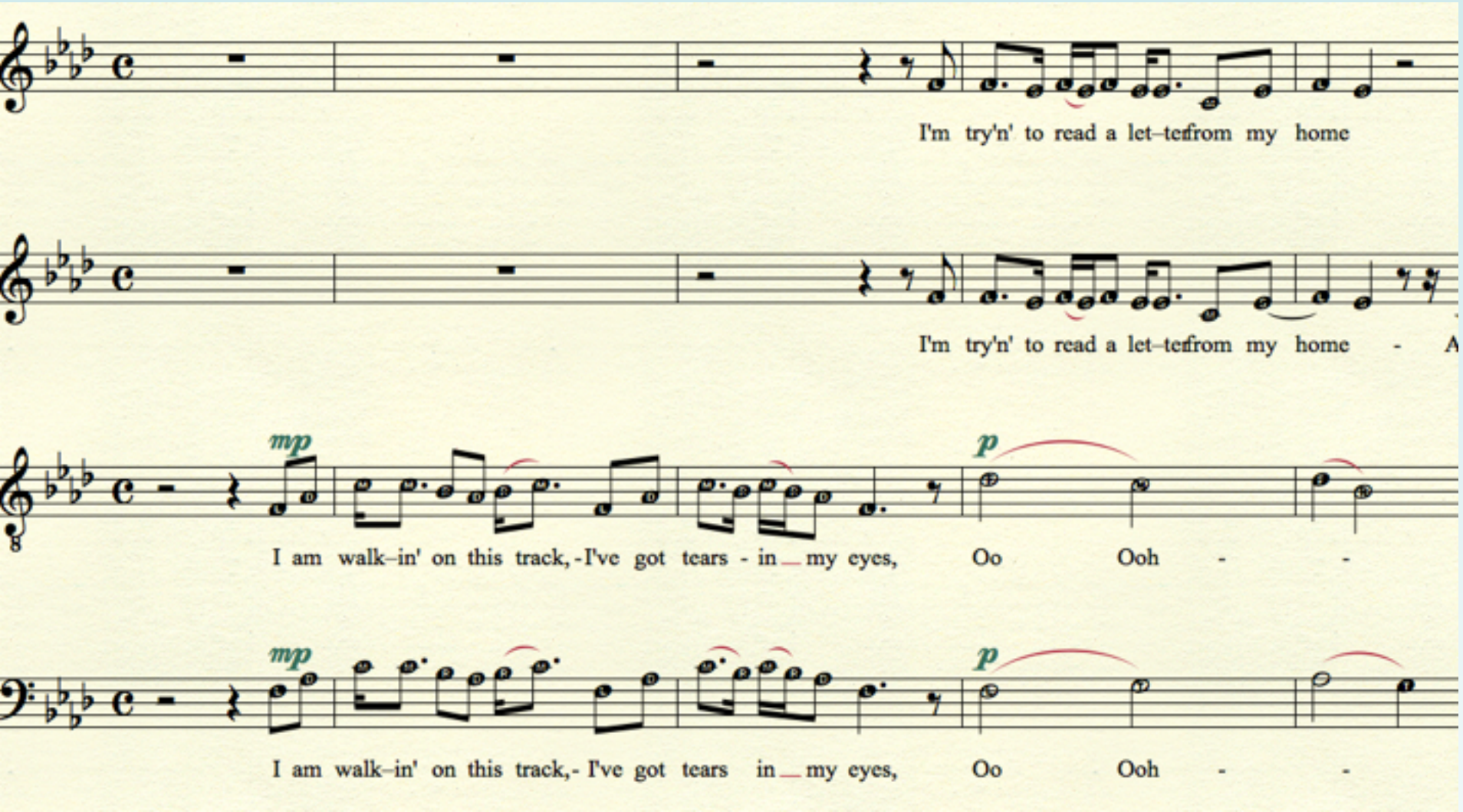
Melchior Franck/arr. Goetze

- Double canon-works for SSAA/TTBB
- Perfect piece to determine parts.



Nine Hundred Miles

Philip Silvey



Ukrainian River Song
Roman Yakub

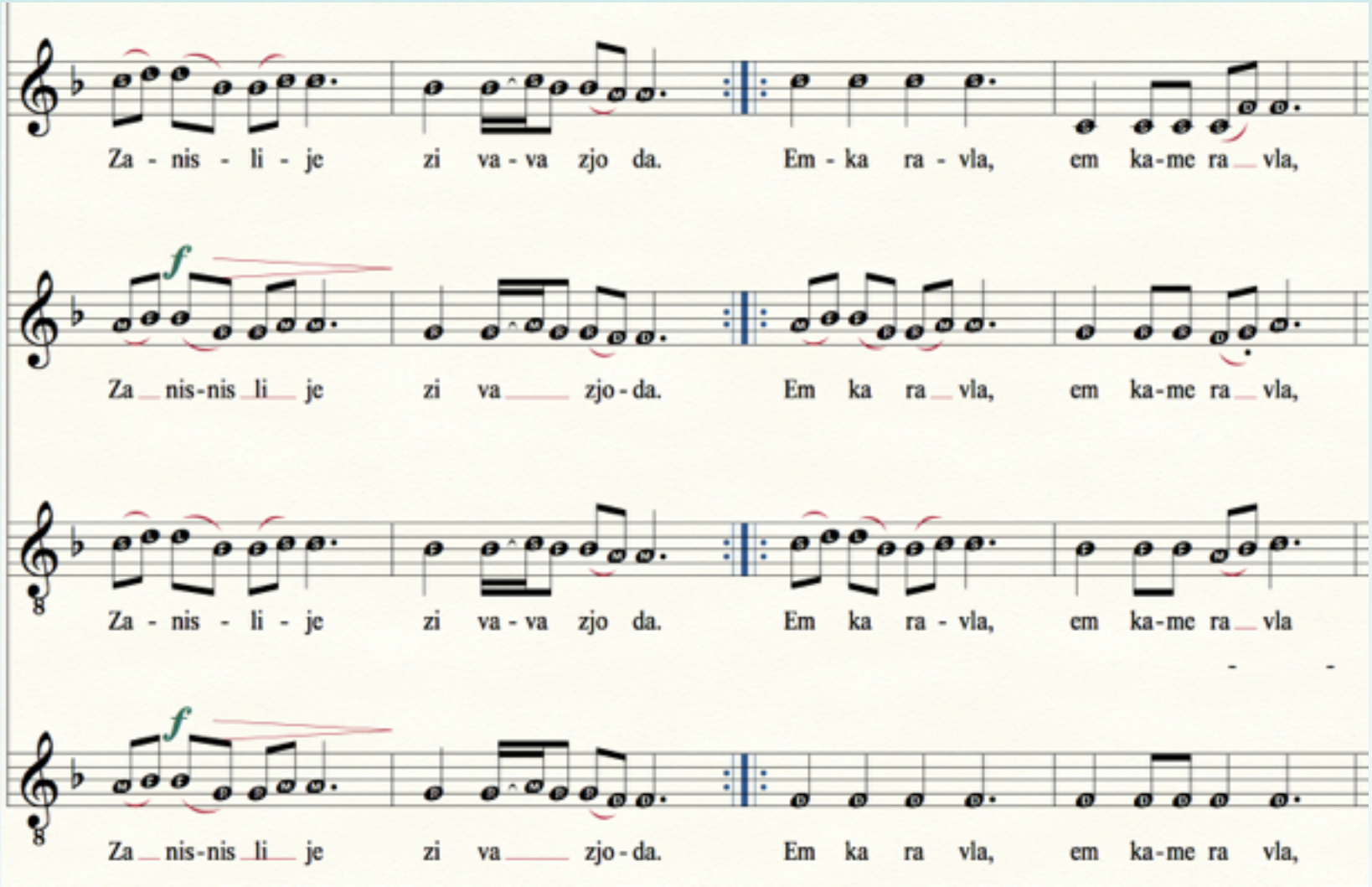
5. Emerging Adolescent Male Voice

- Often referred to as “new baritone” in 7th/8th grades, more in 8th/9th
- Sound gaining clarity but lacks fullness.
- Some gain stability in falsetto register.
- Pitch instability especially in upper range.
- Ideal range Bb2-C4 max.

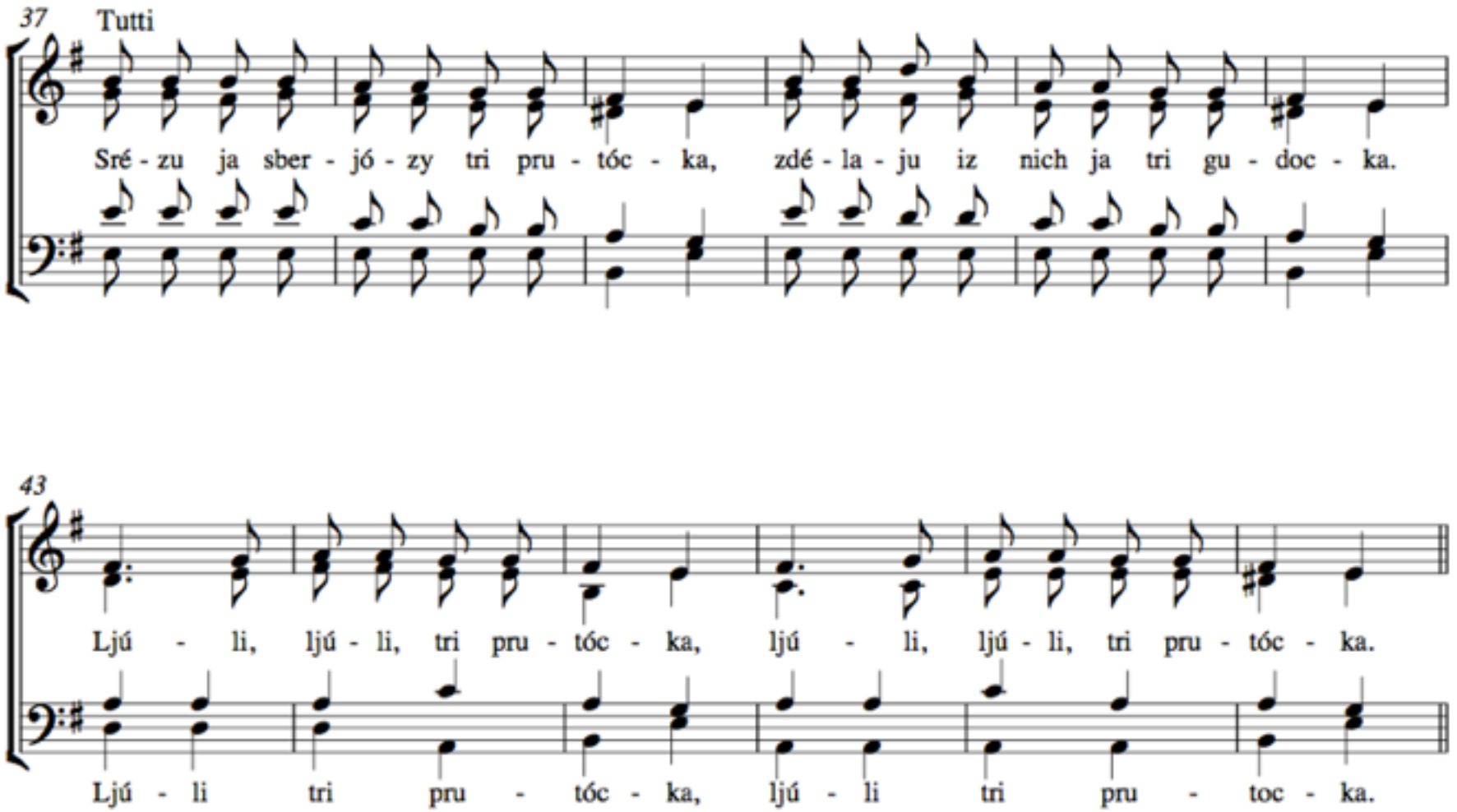
5. Emerging Adolescent Male Voice Repertoire

- Seek SATB or TTB music to fit various ranges.
- Voices gaining flexibility for more complexity.
- Improved balance with treble voices emerges.
- Avoid bass below A2 or tenor below F3.

Niska Banja
Arr. Nick Page



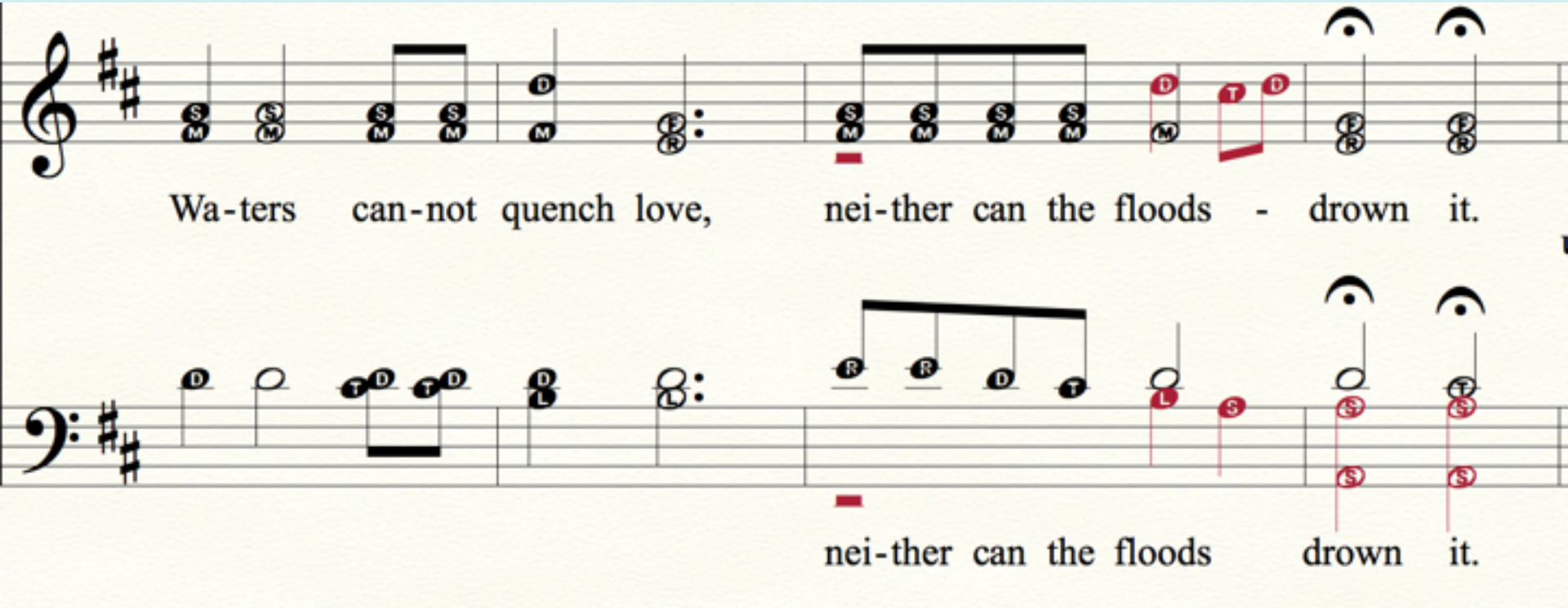
Vo pole berjozonjka stajala
(Birkenbäumchen)
Little Birch Tree/Arr. Jens Klimek



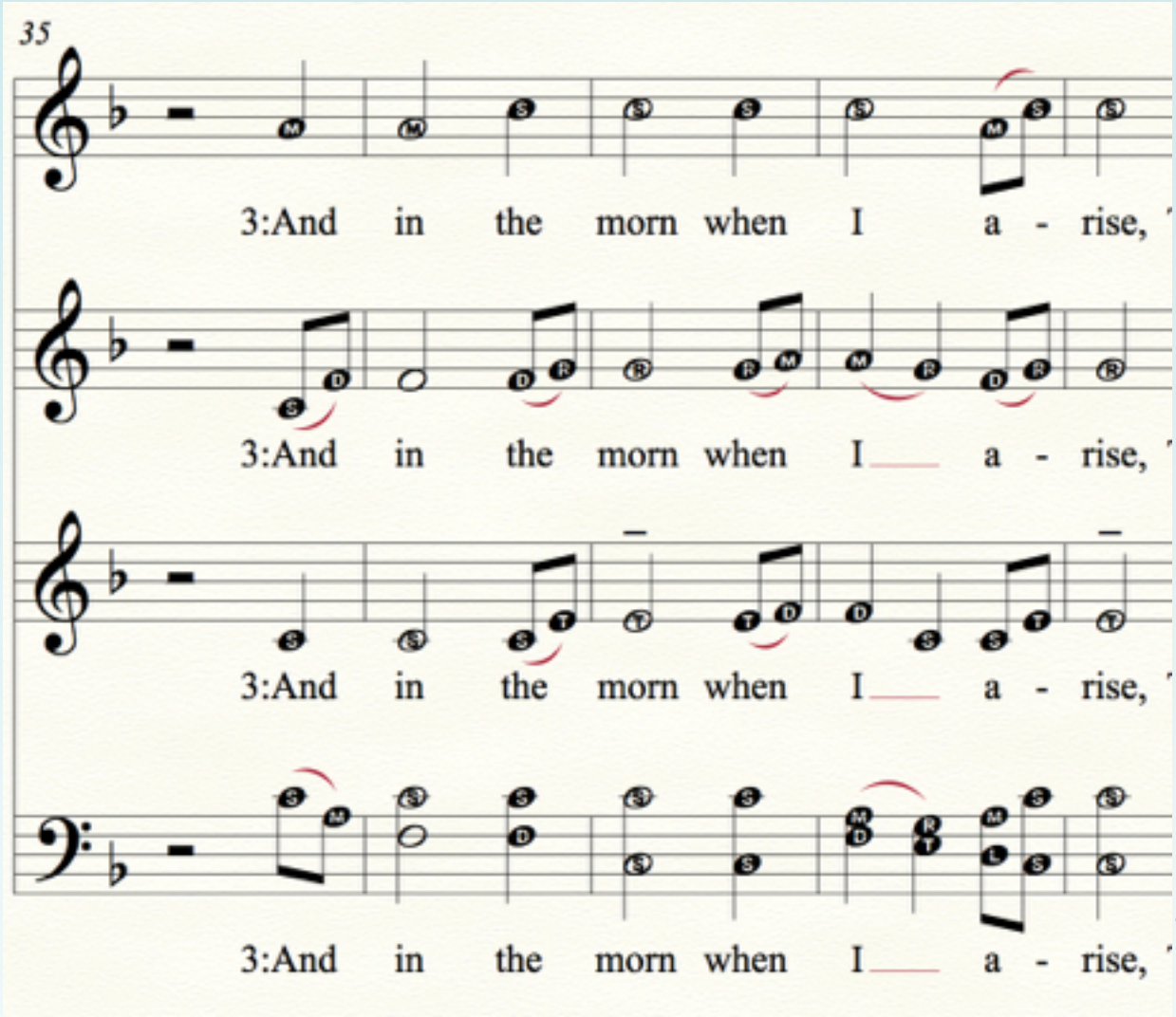
Old King Cole
Arranged Donald Moore

- Great example of an ideal SATB range.
- Alternates between SA and TB
- Imitation between parts facilitates learning.
- Effective way to teach 4 part chorale.

SATB with 7/8th Gr. Boys
Set Me As a Seal
David Childs



Daisies White
Traditional/Arr. N. Harmony

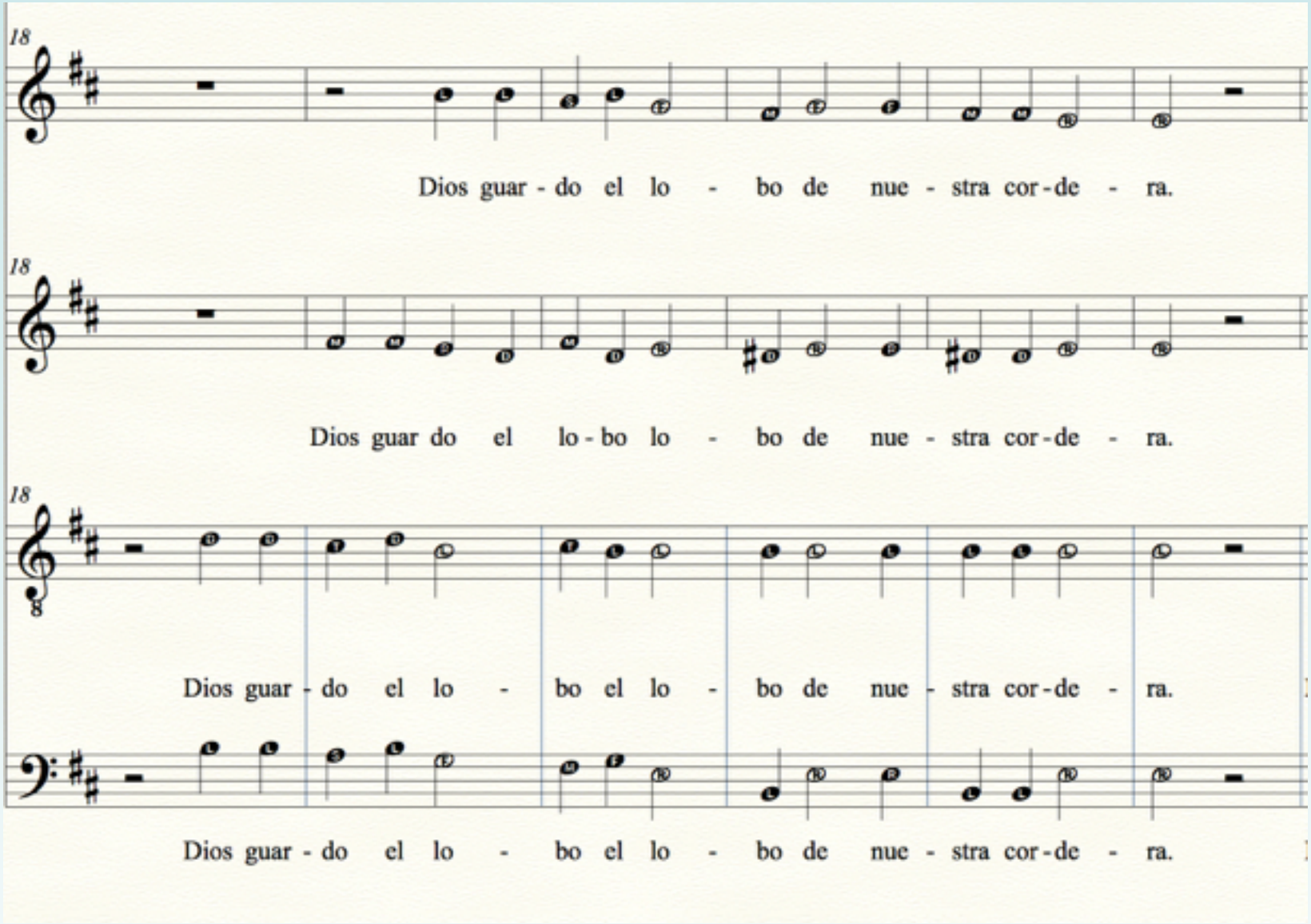


6. Mature Adolescent Male Voice

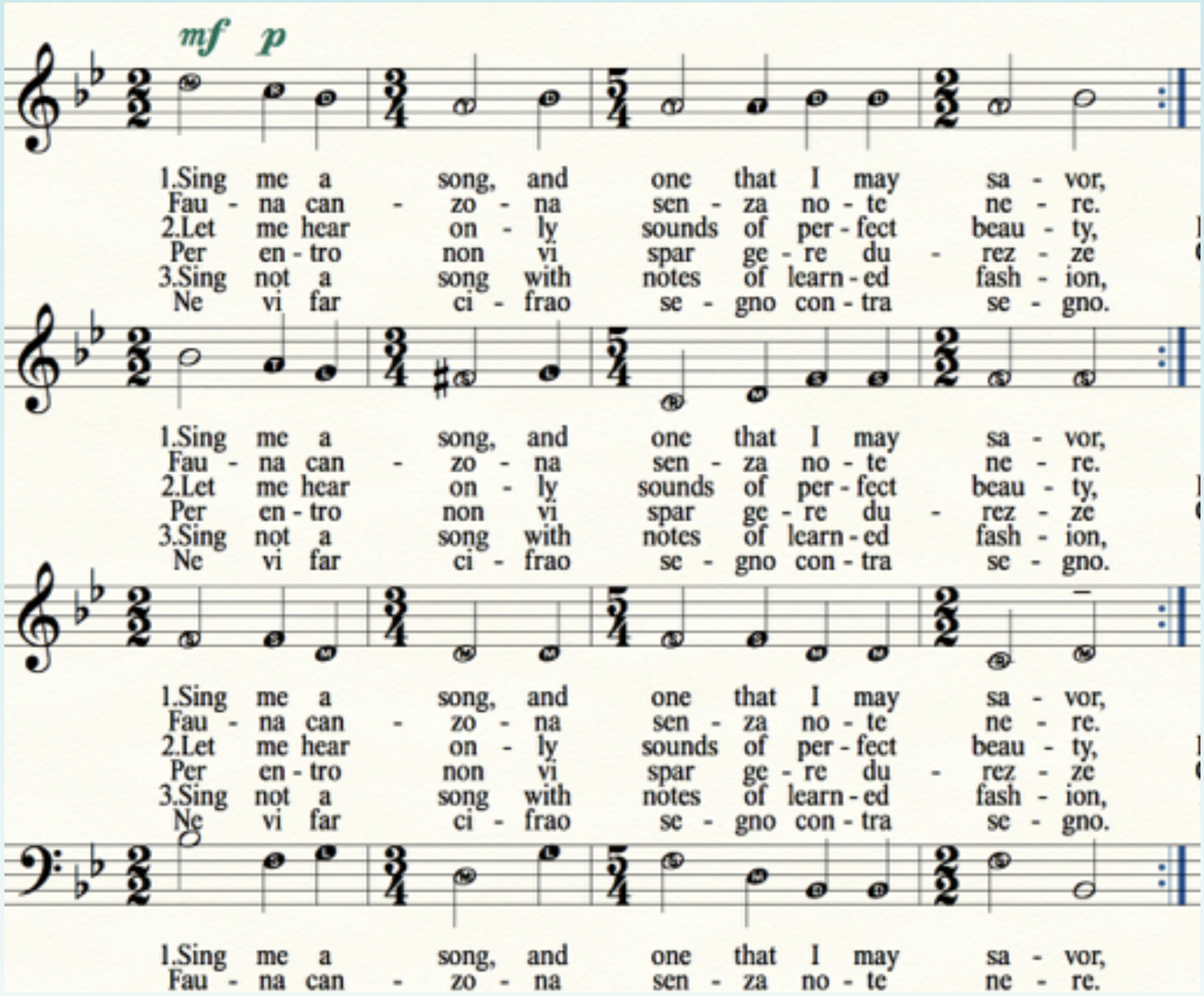
- Generally 9th gr. and age 14-15+
- Tone is more stable/consistent, larger range.
- Upper range/falsetto gain clarity, control.
- Best range Bb2-A3.
- Tendency to push above A3.

Riu, Riu, Chiu

16th century (ed. Greenberg)

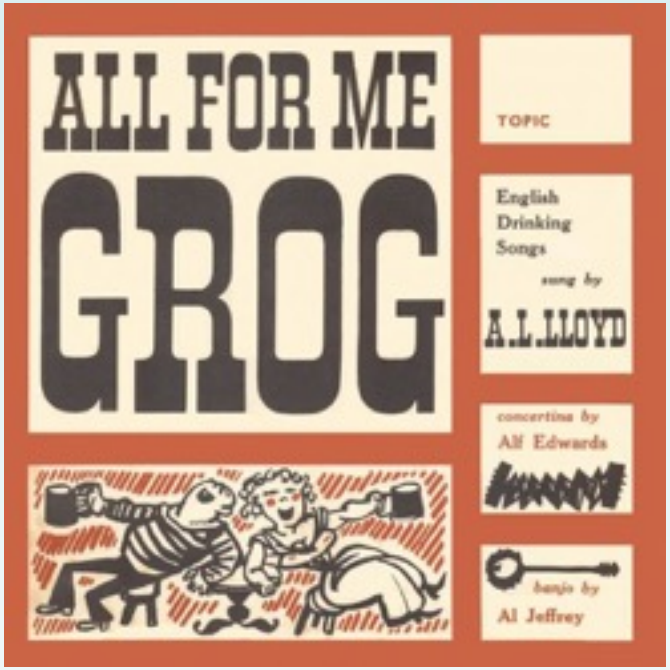


Fa Una Canzona
Vecchi



All for Me Grog
Stephen Hatfield

- Unusual maturity for 7/8th gr. boys.
- Atypical male sound-similar to 9/10th gr.



Example of Gr. 7-9 Sound

- Duond Akuru by Rollo Dilworth (SATB)
- Increased projection in the sound.
- 9th grade basses and tenors enrich the sound.

Example of Gr. 7-9 Sound

- Minstrel Boy, arr. Michael Mauldin
- Note the improved clarity of tone.
- Pitch is more stabile.

Thanks for attending today!

"However much we stumble, it is the teacher's burden always to hope, that with learning,

a boy's character might be changed,

and so, the destiny of a man."

From "The Emporer's Club"

Age 4

Age 15