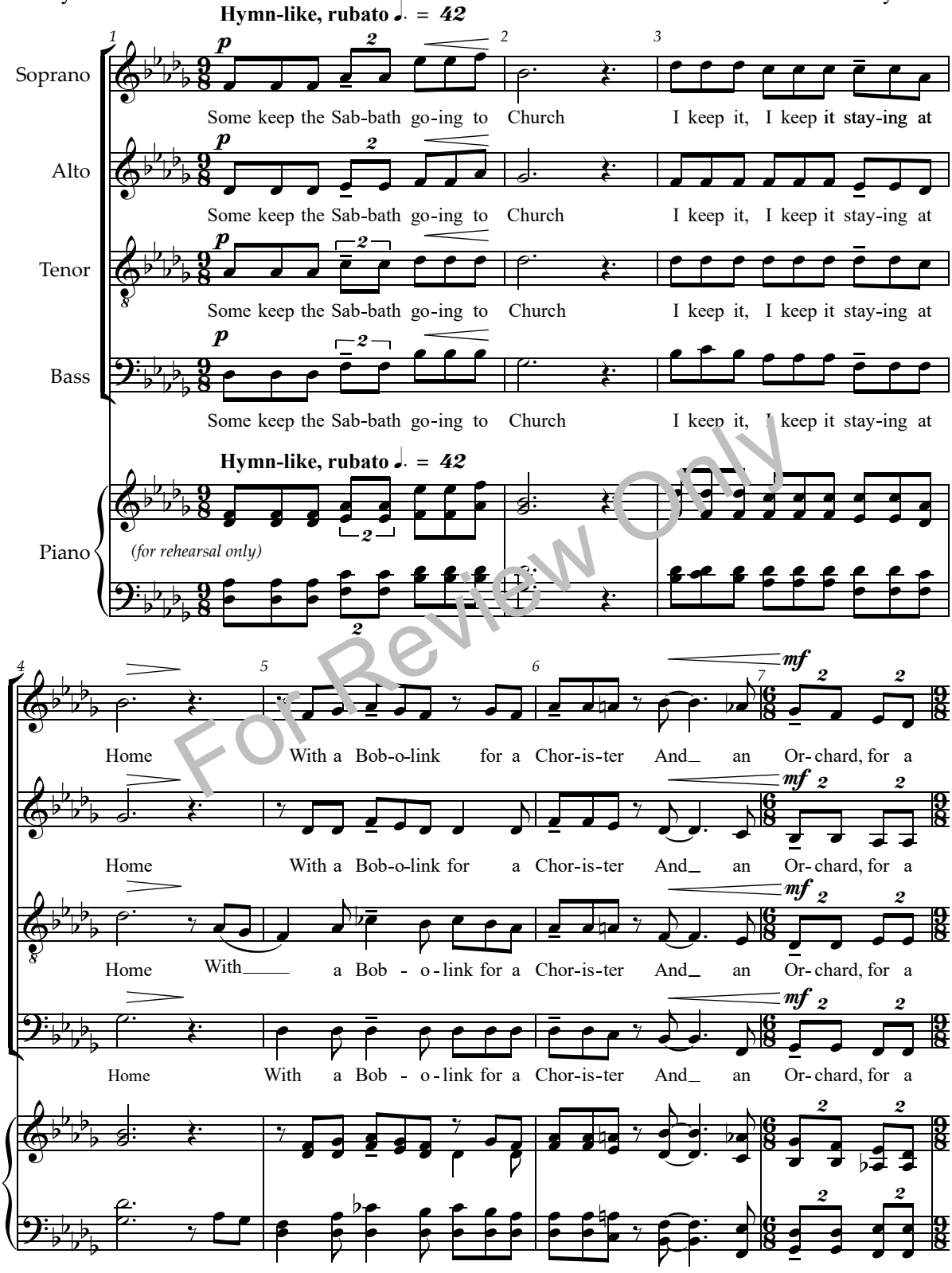
for Steve Durtschi

Some Keep the Sabbath

S.A.T.B., a cappella

Emily Dickinson — Jennifer Lucy Cook



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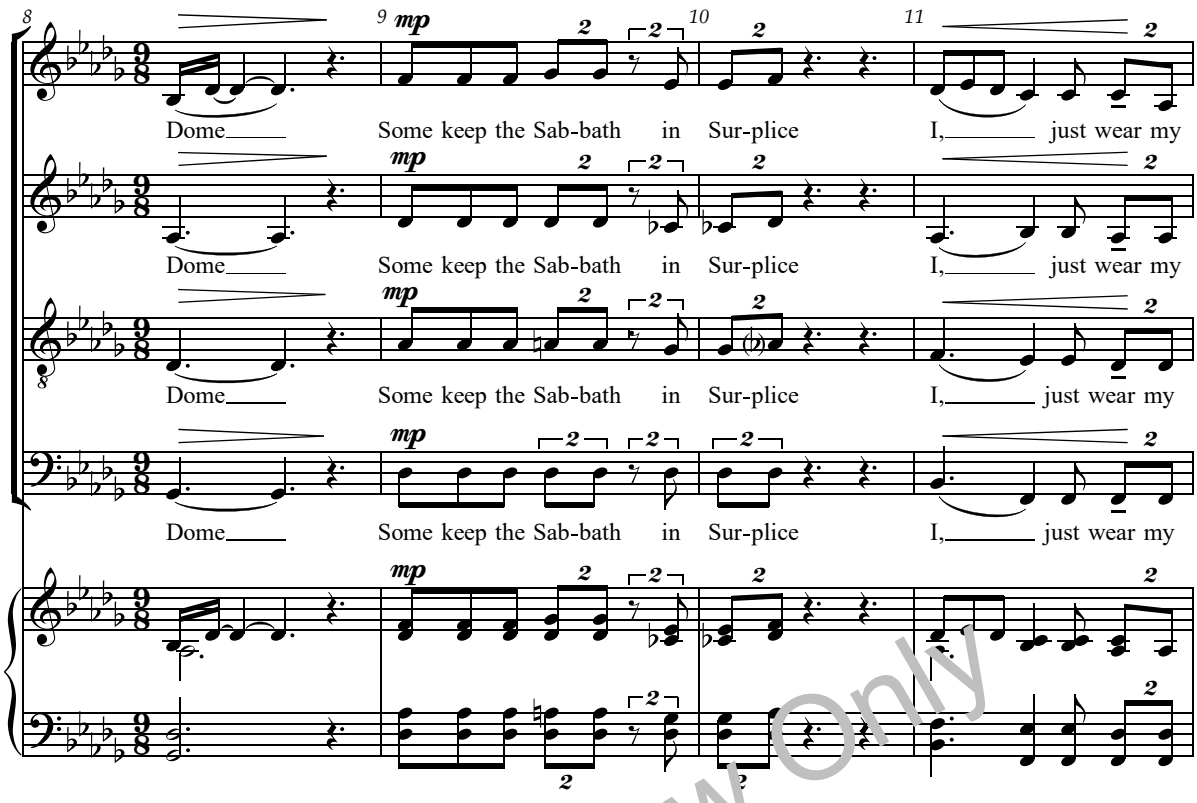

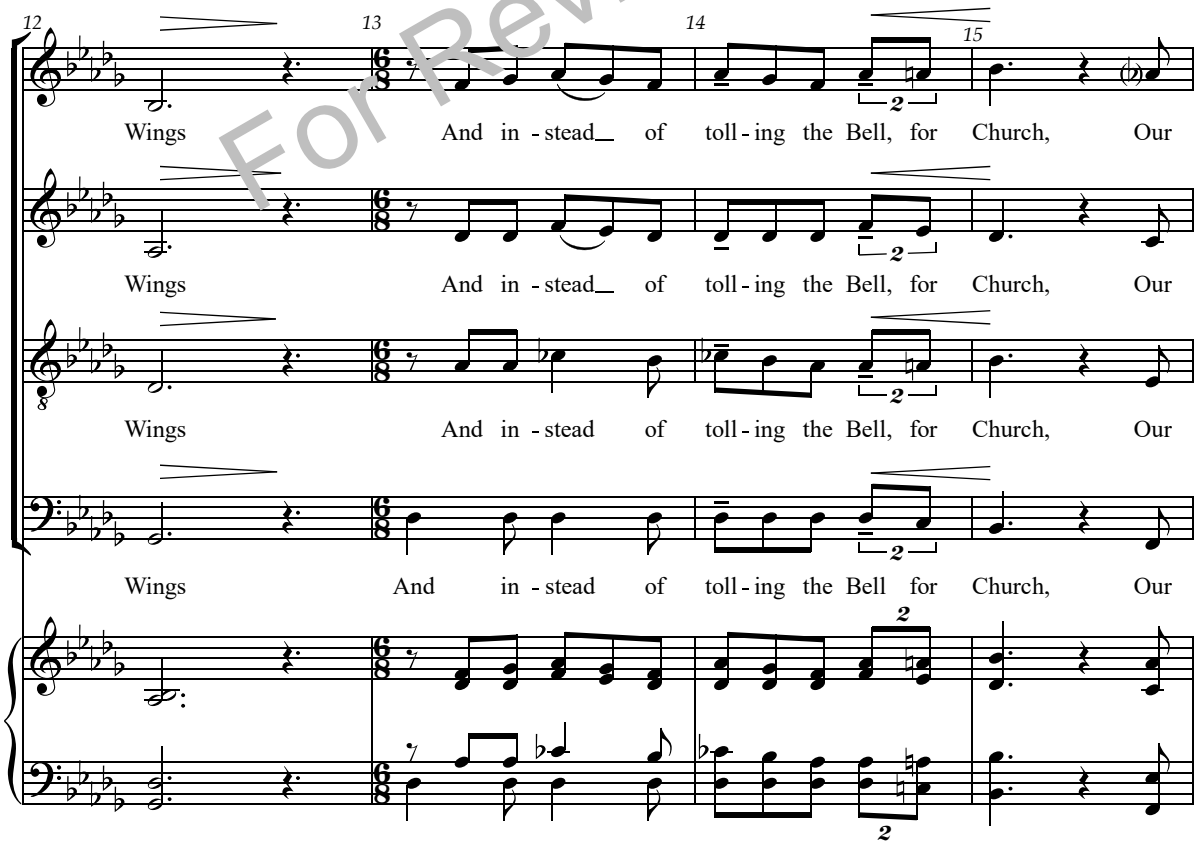

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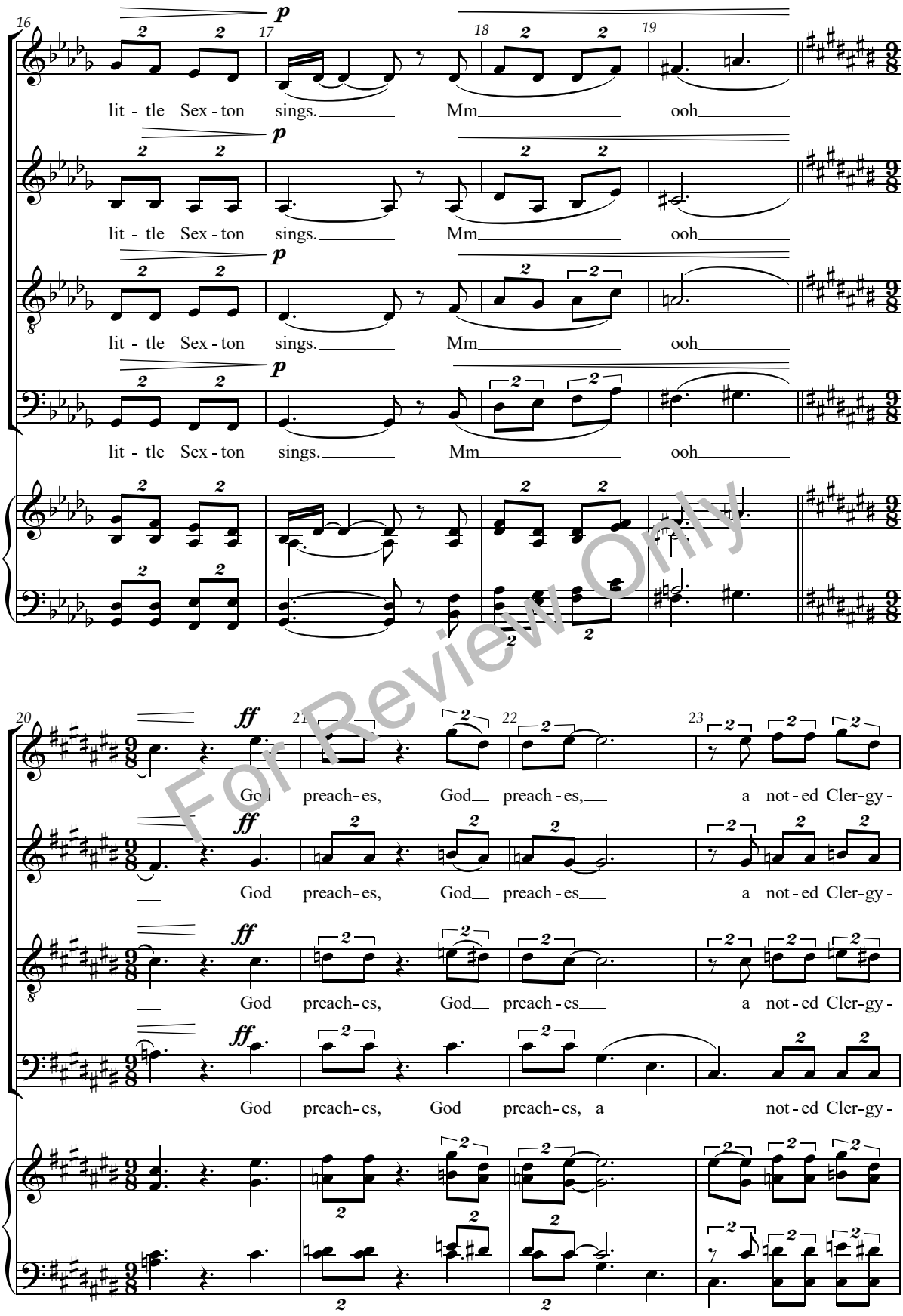

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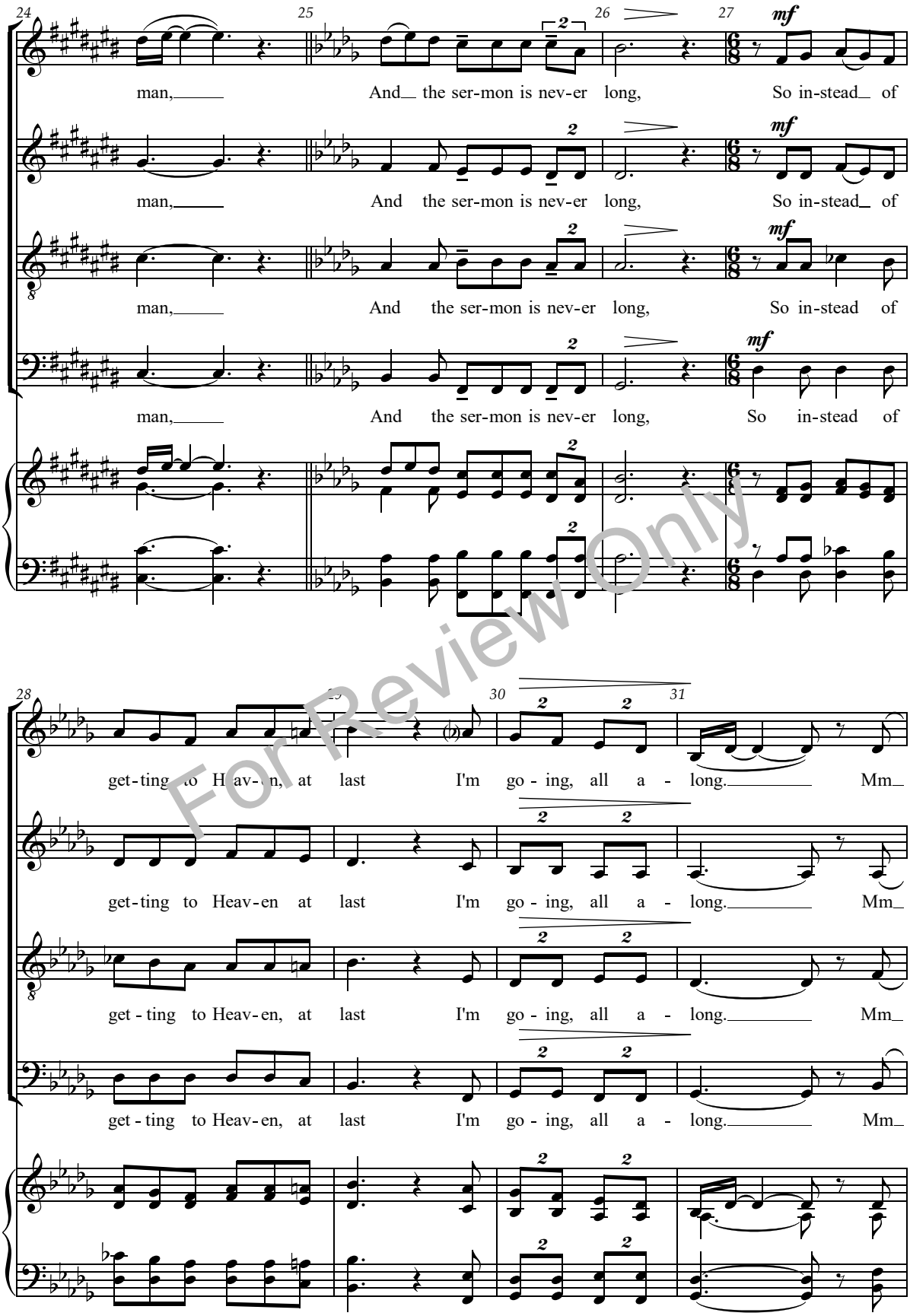

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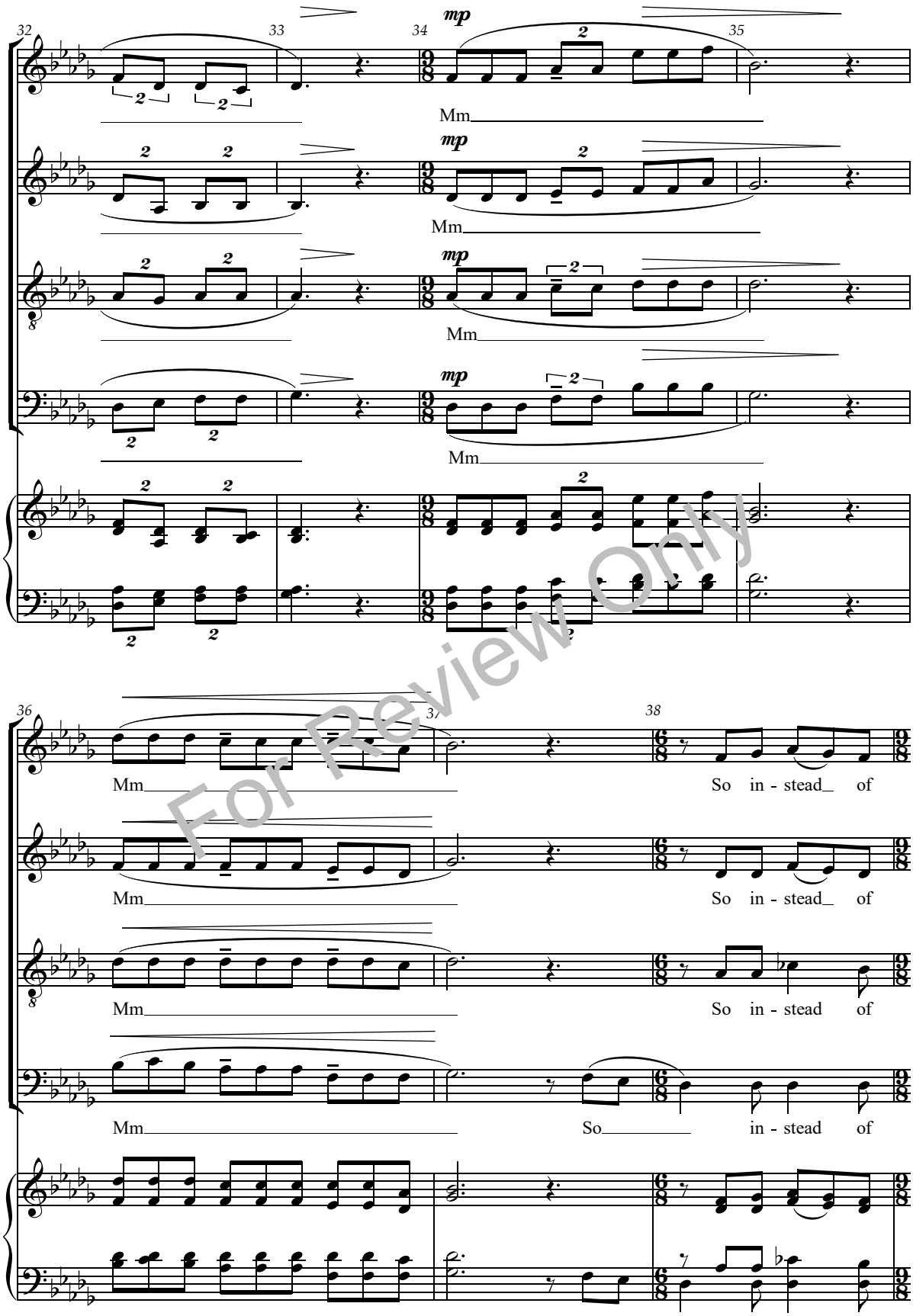

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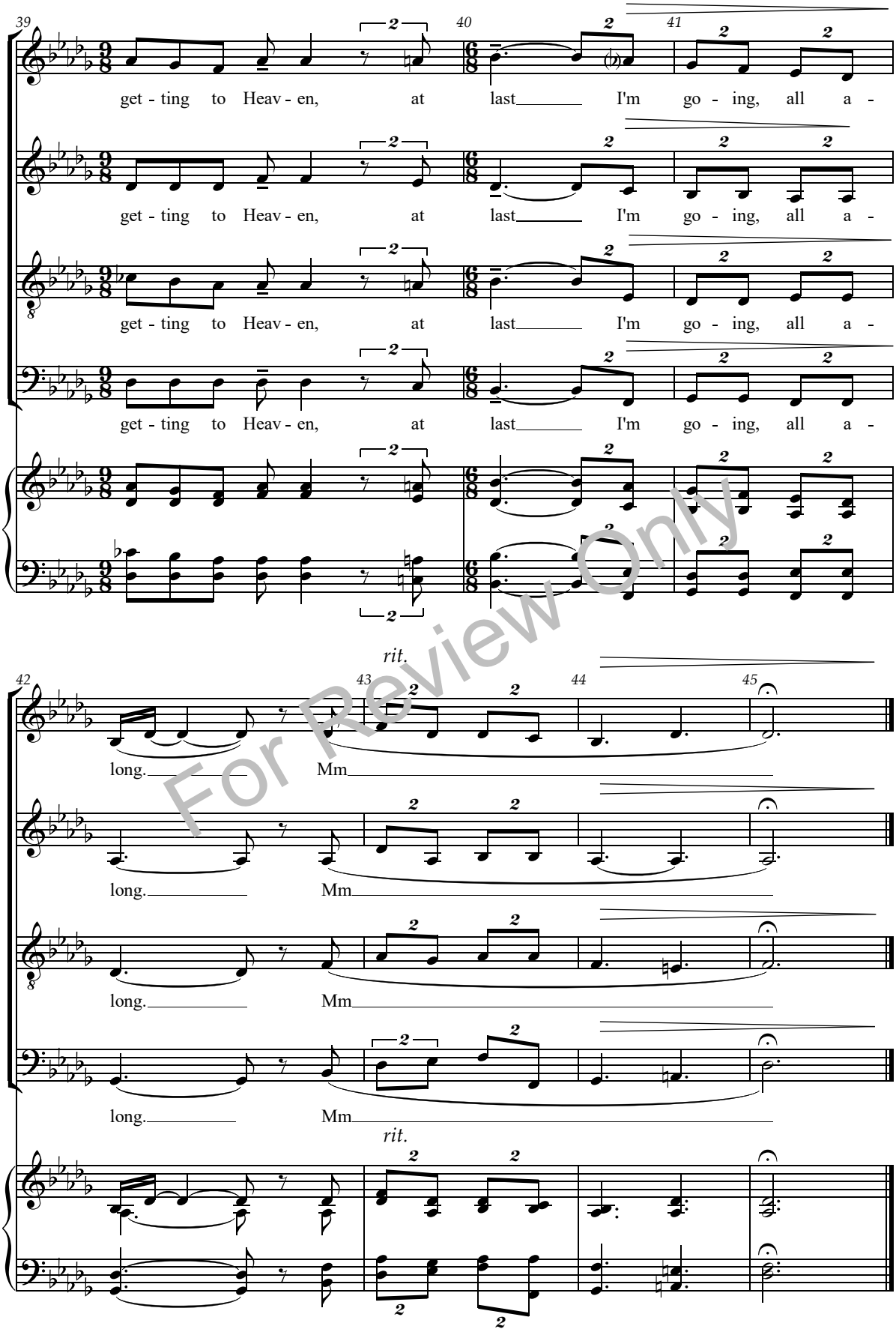

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PROGRAM NOTES

Hymn-singing is a beautiful expression of the vital connective tissue binding together a community, regardless of any religious context. So, I wanted to compose a sort of freeing hymn for everyone "wearing their wings" on a Sunday, as Emily Dickinson's perspicacious poem states. Moments of rest throughout the piece allow space to imagine the sound of songbirds and orchards, the sermon of the "noted Clergyman." And, the uncomplicated harmonic texture is reminiscent of traditional hymns, but punctuated by a little dissonant nod to the present during the connecting hummed sections. It's my way of reaching for the comfort and familiarity of old nostalgic traditions while keeping open eyes and a welcoming heart. May this be a musical reminder to us all that peace is ripe for enjoying now, because "instead of getting to Heaven at last, we're going all along."

Some keep the Sabbath going to Church –
I keep it, staying at Home –
With a Bobolink for a Chorister –
And an Orchard, for a Dome –
Some keep the Sabbath in Surplice –
I, just wear my Wings –
And instead of tolling the Bell, for Church,
Our little Sexton - sings.
God preaches, a noted Clergyman –
And the sermon is never long,
So instead of getting to Heaven at last –
I'm going, all along.

by Emily Dickinson

For Review Only

Jennifer Lucy Cook (she/her) is a composer and lyricist based in Los Angeles. Jen specializes in music for the stage and screen, choral music, and pop songwriting. Recent choral commissions include Cantorum Chamber Choir, Opus Voices, and the UVU Chamber Choir. She is the recipient of the Fissinger Composition Award, the Chorus Austin Composition Prize and the Cantus Emerging Composer Award. She is an alumni of the Johnny Mercer Foundation Writer's Grove at Goodspeed Musicals, and her theater commissions include Full House Theatre Co., British Youth Musical Theatre, and Shakespeare's Globe Theatre in London. Her musical recaps of the Bachelor recently went viral on TikTok. She earned a Master's degree in Musical Theater Writing from Goldsmiths University in London and a Bachelor's in Media Music from Brigham Young University.

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