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# A SERVICE FOR TODAY

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Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of
Requirements for Master of Sacred Music Degree

Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion
School of Sacred Music
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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

Most significant Jewish liturgical music of the past century, unfortunately, does not find its way into contemporary Reform worship very often. There is wonderful, moving liturgical music written by composers such as Milhaud, Piket, Fromm and Helfman; however, most of these works have become museum pieces relegated to concert performance, rather than active parts of Reform worship. Many congregants and clergy find this "high" music to be alienating and dry. Rather than actively involve the congregation, this music can distance the congregation and serve as an obstacle to a meaningful prayer experience. Conversely, as clergy and congregants strive to build a communal prayer experience and increase the role of congregational singing in contemporary Reform practice, much of the music actively used today lacks a true connection to the text and therefore also lacks substance and inspiration. As a composer and a future cantor with a strong commitment to both our established liturgy and to a substantive prayer experience, I strive to compose music and present a service that will fill the void left by the two musical styles described above. Inspired by what I see as a need for liturgical music that might maintain a deep-seated connection to the text and yet also promote an active praying community, I have composed several liturgical elements of a Shabbat evening service of music that would involve congregants both as listeners

and singers: I hope that my music will involve the congregation completely as a community of worshippers.

Despite an attachment to music as a pure art form and a great appreciation for many kinds of musical expression, I am also keenly aware of the liturgical function of music in today's Reform synagogue. Therefore, I have composed a service that I would describe as multi-functional. My main goal in writing this service is that it might truly serve the purpose described above. When I initially considered writing a musical composition for my Senior Project, I wondered, "Should I write a service, or an oratorio? Do I want my piece performed only in the concert hall, or should it be an active part of worship in the Synagogue?" I decided that I did not want to write a "classical" service, which would not meet the needs of a contemporary congregation. To compose a service completely in a pop/folk style that might have a better chance of regular usage in a Reform setting might be too much of a compromise of my own artistic and liturgical ideals. The Jewish music that I find most moving and affective is rarely used in contemporary Reform worship. It has already proven itself either too complex to appeal to many congregants, or too difficult to produce, due to greater rehearsal demands or the need for higher quality musicians, both of which are often in short supply. I did not want to write something more meaningful to me that will be summarily ignored as soon as it is composed. I found the option of writing a concert piece or oratorio similarly unappealing for the same reason. This quandary led me to the idea of a multi-functional service.

It is my belief that limiting the musical setting of a text, liturgical or otherwise, to a style that is easily sung by a congregation can limit the expressiveness of the music (and therefore the text as well). However, my goal in no sense is to alienate the

congregation. I realize that a complete musical service will not often have the opportunity for use in the synagogue, yet I believe that individual sections of my service may be appropriate and moving in a variety of contemporary worship settings, and many pieces are at least partially if not entirely singable by the congregation. In their simplest forms, for congregational use, many of the movements are performable by Cantor, unison choir/congregation and keyboard. However, in its complete form, my service takes advantage of additional instrumentation, cello, violin and a professional choir; it would make an effective concert piece. Much of the liturgical text will be set in such a way that it would appeal to congregants' desire to listen *and* sing. As a significant part of the composition process, I have researched and analyzed Benjamin Britten's *War Requiem*, and Ernest Bloch's *Sacred Service.* While both of these major works are clearly meant for the concert hall, I find many of these composers' conceptions of liturgy and how best to convey they text particularly appealing. Britten's combination of liturgy and non-liturgical text in particular has influenced and guided my own ideas of how best to present and use liturgy in a liturgical setting. In the *War Requiem,* Britten combines poetry by Wilfred Owen with the traditional elements of a Catholic Requiem Mass. His goal is not explicitly liturgical. Rather, he uses liturgy in combination with moving poetry to create extra-liturgical meaning, that of a powerful anti-war statement. Conversely, I have added non-liturgical texts to the traditional liturgical elements in order to heighten the meaning of the liturgy itself.

The Shabbat evening liturgy that I have set is as follows:

- *Y'did Nefesh*
- *L'cha Dodi*
- *Bar'chu*
- *Mi Chamocha*

- *V'shamru*
- *Eloheinu... R'tseih*
- *Oseh Shalom/Yihyu L'Ratson*
- *V'ne'emar/Bayom hahu*

Interspersed amongst these liturgical sections I have set three additional texts. Sometimes the additional text comprises a separate piece between liturgical pieces, and sometimes the text is inserted into a liturgical setting. I have chosen not to set some central elements of the service, such as *Sh'ma, V'ahavta, Aleinu,* etc. as these sections are traditionally sung using the Sulzer/chant settings. For practical purposes, I have composed my music recognizing that traditional settings, chant, *nusach*, and readings will also be intertwined amongst my settings in order to produce a complete service. The extra-liturgical texts that I set come from a variety of sources in order to ensure that each text will be well suited to the themes present in the liturgy. Whereas Britten chose a single poet who, through his poems, expresses a primary theme, I have chosen different sources that will best serve unique themes found within the liturgy.

Besides the choice of the texts themselves, several practical elements also serve my goal of enhancing the meaning of the Liturgy. I have set all of the explicitly liturgical sections in Hebrew. I encourage the use Hebrew in Synagogue worship, but it is a simple fact that most American congregants do not understand Hebrew. Therefore, while much is gained by praying in the holy language in which the liturgy was written, a great deal of understanding of the literal content of the prayers is lacking. The texts that I add to the liturgy are set in English, even if they were not written originally in English. While I avoid the redundancy of setting mere translations of the liturgy, the extra-liturgical texts identify and express, in English, ideas inherent in the liturgy itself.

As the extra-liturgical texts often develop themes present in the liturgical texts, my musical settings of the added texts also expand on the musical themes I incorporate in the settings of the Hebrew liturgy. Generally, the liturgical sections are set for a combination of choir, congregation and cantor. To this end, I have utilized many musical elements which might be easily grasped by a congregation (e.g. regular meter, phrasing, harmonic progressions, etc.) I have studied the liturgical music of Janowski and Shur in particular as I find that these composers are particularly adept at writing serious, inventive, and expressive music that nevertheless appeals to and is accessible to modern congregations. In contrast, I have employed more overtly expressive musical means in setting the English, non-liturgical texts: free meter/rhythm, expanded melody and harmony and greater fidelity to the natural expression of the spoken text. In most congregational music, the text is often subordinate to the music. In the non-congregational portions of my service especially, I try to let the music serve the text entirely. Much of this text is set for solo cantor.

Just as Reform *minhag* embraces some elements of traditional Judaism as well as newer innovations and variations of Jewish practice and ritual, so I have utilized many different musical styles throughout the service. In particular, one will recognize elements of eastern European *chazzanut* and modes, *nusach*, biblical chant, *niggunim*, classical and twentieth century Reform repertoire, Israeli/Middle-Eastern elements, and contemporary jazz/pop styles. I have not incorporated all of the previously mentioned elements solely for the sake of diversity, but rather in recognition of the multitude of styles of music that are present in contemporary Reform worship. My goal is not to reinvent Reform

worship, but rather to reflect current Reform ideology and practice through innovative and affective music.

## CHAPTER 2

## THE ROLE OF MUSIC IN THE SYNAGOGUE

When considering what kind of liturgical music to write, or whether the Reform synagogue even needs new music at all, I first had to consider the roles of cantor and of music in the Reform synagogue. What is music's purpose in a contemporary, worship setting? Even more generally, I had to consider the role of the congregant in synagogue. What are we as Jews hoping to gain in attending services, and how can we achieve this through music? In his essay, "The Vocation of the Cantor," Abraham Joshua Heschel expounds at length on the role of music and chant in the synagogue, and on the overarching questions, "what is prayer?" and "how do we pray?" Heschel also addresses these larger questions in greater length in *Man's Quest for God*; in this chapter I will often refer to themes and ideas presented in both texts in an attempt to formulate my own conceptions of music, prayer and community in the synagogue .

Although I find Heschel's discussion of the issues above enlightening, one must bear in mind that "The Vocation of the Cantor" was published in 1966 and *Man's Quest for God* in 1954. While his assessment of the "current" situation in synagogue worship is no longer completely accurate, the issues he addresses are completely relevant today. Heschel is not happy with the situation in the modern synagogue. Statements such as the following are relatively frequent in his writings:

> Following a service, I overheard an elderly lady's comment to her friend, 'This was a charming service!' I felt like crying. Is this what prayer means to us? God is grave; He is never charming.1

> The tragedy of the synagogue is in the depersonalization of prayer. Hazzanuth has become a skill, a technical performance, an impersonal affair. As a result the sounds that come out of the hazzan evoke no participation. They enter the ears; they do not touch the hearts.2

> The siddur has become a foreign language which the soul does not know how to pronounce.3

Simply put, the synagogue lacks real spirituality. The cantor has it within his/her power to change this situation, given that music itself has the power to be the most spiritual of all media. And yet, the modern (i.e. 1966) cantor serves himself, not the congregation, and certainly not God. The Cantor *should* recognize the need of the congregation for a greater level of spirituality and act accordingly:

> To attain a degree of spiritual security one cannot rely upon one's own resources. One needs an atmosphere, where the concern for the spirit is shared by a community.... It is the task of the Cantor to create the liturgical community, to convert a plurality of praying individuals into a unity of worship.[4]

This is the Cantor's charge, to create a praying congregation. But the above implies that the average congregant is a praying individual. As we see in *Man's Quest For God,* Heschel does not really think this to be the case as he states explicitly, "We do not refuse to pray; we abstain from it."[5] I would take this one step further. Some, I venture, do

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[1] Abraham Joshua Heschel, *Insecurity Of Freedom: Essays On Human Existence* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1966), 243.

[2] Ibid., 244.

[3] Ibid., 249.

[4] Ibid., 243.

[5] Abraham Joshua Heschel, *Man's Quest For God* (Santa Fe, N. M.: Aurora Press, 1998) 4.

abstain from prayer. Some however yearn to pray. We long to feel connected to God, to add another layer of understanding to our lives. "We do not step out of the world when we pray; we merely see the world in a different setting."[6] Whatever the reason, many Jews, even those regularly in attendance at synagogue, do not pray.

So what do we need to pray? And how can music aid in creating a spiritual community of praying individuals? Of all of Heschel's definitions and requirements for prayer, this is perhaps the most straightforward:

> It takes two things to make prayer come to pass: a person and a word.... As long as person and word are apart, there is no praying.... The very essence of prayer is in a blending of the two.[7]

Person and word may be the only two obligatory elements of prayer, yet music can be the most effective of catalysts. Certainly a person talking does not necessarily equate to prayer. Even a person sitting in synagogue, reading aloud words of the *siddur,* does not necessarily equate to prayer. Only when the blending of person and word create a pure expression of the heart do we pray. This is where music comes in. Because of music's lack of literalness, it can be most effective in creating an expression of the heart. We can describe music as happy, sad, exhilarating, contemplative, melancholy or spiritual, yet what makes it so? Even amongst music theorists who can explain in the greatest detail the specific musical elements at play, they must at some point make a leap of faith or intuition as to how the elements create meaning in an individual or a community.

> It is not enough, therefore, to articulate a sound. Unless one understands that the word is stronger than the will; unless one knows how to approach a word with all the joy, the hope or the grief he owns, prayer will hardly come to pass. The words

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[6] Ibid., 7.

[7] Ibid., 24.

> must not fall off our lips like dead leaves in the autumn. They must rise like dead birds out of the heart into the vast expanse of eternity.[8]

Music has the ability to give life to the liturgy and create from it prayer.

So how then can the Cantor imbue the congregation with a music that will serve to enhance the spirituality of the synagogue experience? How does he/she help the congregation to pray? A Cantor must invite the congregation to participate on a spiritual level:

> In a sense, prayer begins where expression ends.... In no other act does man experience so often the disparity between the desire for expression and the means of expression as in prayer. The inadequacy of the means at our disposal appears so tangible, so tragic, that one feels it a grace to be able to give oneself up to music, to a tone, to a song, to a chant. The wave of a song carries the soul to heights which utterable meanings can never reach.[9]

Liturgical music must aspire to these heights. Both the music itself and the performance thereof must carry the expression that is otherwise unutterable by the congregation.

What kind of music should a Cantor bring to the synagogue that will best aid a congregation to pray? What defines cantorial music?

> Cantorial music is first of all music in the service of the liturgical word. Its core is *nussach*, and its integrity depends upon the cultivation of *nussach*.... To pray without *nussach* is to forfeit the active participation of the community. People may not be able to pray; they are all able to chant. And chant leads to prayer.[10]

*Nusach* serves the text. It enhances the text by imbuing it with a musical soul. In its simplest form, it alters the text but little, yet it distinguishes evening from morning, Shabbat from weekday, and festival from high holiday. At its best, it adds layers of deeper meaning creating a veritable *midrash*. It is this *midrash* which allows us to pray.

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[8] Ibid., 27.

[9] Ibid., 39.

[10] Heschel, *Insecurity Of Freedom*, 246-7.

We cannot hope to accept and be moved to meaningful prayer via a static understanding of a given piece of liturgy. Heschel explains, "What, as a rule, makes it possible for us to pray is our ability to affiliate our own minds with the pattern of fixed texts, to unlock our hearts to the words and to surrender to their meanings. They inspire our minds and awaken our hearts."[11] We must somehow make the liturgy personally meaningful to the individual and to the community.

While *nusach* still plays a role in the modern synagogue, it no longer serves its true function. We cannot merely attempt to return to a past where liturgy came alive and became prayer through the Cantor's leading the congregation in chant.

> In order for cantorial music to regain its dignity, it will not be enough to study the authentic pattern of our musical tradition. What is necessary is a *liturgical revival*.... The decline of *Hazzanut* will continue as long as we fail to realize that reverence and faith are as important as talent and technique, and that the music must not lose its relationship to the spirit of the words.[12]

So the Cantor must do more than relive the past. He/she must pray in the moment; the cantor's music must be a spontaneous reaction, a heartfelt prayer that both arises from the text and illuminates the text, if it is to lead the congregation to authentic prayer. "The essence (of prayer) is inherent in the act of prayer itself. It can be detected only inside the consciousness of man during the act of worship." [13] Music need not create the emotions or thoughts inherent in prayer, but if used effectively, it can bring out the essence of prayer during the very act of prayer. We can have the best intentions to pray

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[11] Heschel, *Man's Quest For God,* 32.

[12] Heschel, *Insecurity of Freedom*, 249.

[13] Heschel, *Man's Quest for God,* 14.

without ever having the aptitude to pray. Music can imbue our hearts at a moment's notice with the expressiveness of prayer.

> (In the Synagogue) We are exposed neither to sacred word alone nor to spiritual tunes alone. This, indeed, is the essence of our liturgy. It is a combination of word *and* music. Great as music is, it is neither the ultimate nor the supreme. The ultimate is God, and the medium in which His guidance has been conveyed to us is the *word*.[14]

Heschel clearly expresses disappointment in the cantorate of his time, as well as the overall spiritual identification that he witnessed. But beyond the failures of the "performance" of the cantor (and composer), he also faults the Jewish population at large. "We have developed the habit of praying by proxy. Many congregants seem to have adopted the principle of vicarious prayer. The rabbi or the cantor does the praying for the congregation."[15] The role of the cantor is not to pray as proxy for the congregation, but rather to lead the *congregation* itself in prayer.

Since the late 1960s, due largely to this primary failure on the parts of the cantorate and the Reform Jewish population at large, there has been a growing movement of liturgical music which has been coined "American *nusach*."[16] Responding to both the loss of traditional *nusach* as described above and the "impersonal" and "technical" qualities that may pervade solo cantorial music or "classical" Reform repertoire, American *nusach* is a largely participatory form of music that is based in American

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[14] Heschel, *Insecurity of Freedom*, 250.

[15] Heschel, *Man's Quest for God*, 50.

[16] Benjamin William Dreyfus, "Hear the Echo of Miriam's song: American Nusach in Concert," *Studies in Jewish Musical Traditions: Insights from the Harvard Collection of Judaica Sound Recordings*, Harvard Judaica Collection Student Research Papers, Vol. 7, ed.Kay Kaufman Shelemay, ed. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard College Library, 2001) 34.

popular music. This new synagogue music began in camp and youth groups, but as the pioneers of this music (e.g. Debbie Friedman, Jeff Klepper, Craig Taubman) and the young people that embraced it grew older, American *Nusach* entered the mainstream of American Jewish worship, particularly in the Reform movement.[17] Debbie Friedman describes this music and its purpose in the liner notes to her first album, *Sing Unto God*:

> *Sing unto God* is a new experience in worship that emphasizes through song the importance of community involvement in worship. This music carries a solid message in a simple, easily understood form. It enables those who are willing, to join together as a community in contemporary songs of prayer[18]

Clearly the emphasis here is on community. And this music has been quite successful in encouraging and inviting congregational participation in the service. However, this music and its function as "songs of prayer" can fall short. Virtuosic music that solely indulges the Cantor's ego adds no depth to the congregation's expression of prayer and even prevents the congregation from participating in active prayer. However, nor does congregational music that does not concern itself with the deep meaning of the text act in the service of prayer.

Whereas the synagogue of Heschel's time suffered from music and cantors that alienated the congregation, in today's Reform synagogue, I fear that the pendulum has swung too far to the other side. We mostly pray ourselves without the aid of a cantor (even if the cantor might be singing along with us). The American *nusach* that is often heard in American Reform synagogues does not necessarily lead to real prayer. It may lead to warm feelings, to a sense of belonging and community, but none of these on its

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[17] Ibid., p.33.

[18] Debbie Friedman, *In the Beginning,* (San Diego: Sounds Write Productions, 1994).

own is akin to prayer. Per Heschel's description of a true prayer experience, much of the music of the contemporary Reform synagogue may lead to a void of prayer. "Religious music is an attempt to convey that which is in our reach but beyond our grasp. The loss of that tension throws all cantorial music into the danger of becoming a distortion of the spirit."[19] We may have all of the elements of prayer, but we don't really pray. We feel as if we are praying, but in effect we are merely communally singing a simple tune that has no deep-seated connection to the text. "Assembled in the synagogue everything is there—the body, the benches, the books. But one thing is absent: soul."[20] "Prayer is joy and fear, trust and trembling together."[21] Children's camp tunes do not embody fear. They do not create trembling. If we limit our expression of prayer to a "simple, easily understood form" that children can appreciate, then we limit our understanding and experience of prayer to that of children as well. Certainly liturgical music should have qualities that make it accessible and meaningful for all to share, but it also ought to reflect the complex range of emotion and experience that mature adults can bring to prayer.

Despite the Jewish mandate for community prayer, "...prayer is primarily an event in the individual souls, an act of emanation, not only an act of participation. Even the worth of public worship depends upon the depth of private worship, of the private worship of those who worship together."[22] It is the cantor's job to aid in this connection.

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[19] Heschel, *Insecurity of Freedom,* 248.

[20] Heschel, *Man's Quest For God,* 52.

[21] Heschel, *Insecurity of Freedom,* 243.

[22] Heschel, *Man's Quest for God,* 46.

Music that all can "enjoy" as a community may well leave individuals without a sense of unique expression of the liturgy. Heschel worries himself that we are losing the true meaning of our liturgy:

> Our prayer book is going to remain obscure unless Jewish teachers will realize that one of their foremost tasks is to discover, to explain, and to interpret the words of the prayer book. What we need is *a sympathetic* prayer book exegesis.[23]
>
> I should like to conceive *hazzanuth* as the art of *siddur* exegesis, as the art of interpreting the words of the liturgy. Words die of routine. The Cantor's task is to bring them to life.[24]

This is what good synagogue music does! A cantor or a composer of Jewish liturgical music, (either may be described as a Jewish teacher), ought to discover, to explain, and to interpret the words of our liturgy through music. If this is done with a true sincerity and sense of awe, not to mention beauty of voice and technical skill, the congregation will follow.

> ...Prayer is a personal duty, and an intimate act which cannot be delegated to either the cantor or the whole community. ...We must make clear to every Jew that his duty is to pray rather than to be a part of an audience."[25]

This does not imply that a cantor should never sing while a congregant listens. Rather whether listening or singing, a congregant ought to be *experiencing*. We often hear talk of an active versus a passive congregant. These terms do not equate to singing versus listening. One can both sing and listen passively without an engagement of the heart just as one can listen and sing with equal passion and commitment. Through a musical prayer experience, I hope that we will be able to express our souls.

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[23] Ibid., 85.

[24] Heschel, *Insecurity of Freedom*, 251.

[25] Heschel, *Man's Quest for God*, 85.

## CHAPTER 3

## BENJAMIN BRITTEN'S *WAR REQUIEM*

According to *Wikipedia,* which has become the standard, internet reference source of our day, "*War Requiem*, Opus 66 is a non-liturgical requiem by Benjamin Britten..." [26] Robert Chase, in his comprehensive guide of *Requiem* music, similarly states, "Although this setting is not liturgical, it closely adheres to the words of the traditional canon."[27] These seemingly straightforward statements raise many questions about Britten's large-scale oratorio. What does it mean to write a non-liturgical *Requiem* whose primary text is the Latin liturgy of the Catholic *Missa pro defunctis*? What is a *Requiem*, if not liturgical? Is its message liturgical, even if its function is not? Is it simply a "performance" piece? What were Britten's primary inspirations and goals for this work? While the *War Requiem* clearly transcends the traditional *Requiem* in most every way (textually, musically and functionally), to deny the work's liturgical core is inaccurate. Perhaps a more suitable adjective than "non-liturgical" would be "extra-liturgical." An analysis of the texts that Britten employs, the compositional and orchestration techniques

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[26] "War Requiem." *Wikipedia*, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/War_Requiem (accessed January 5, 2007).

[27] Robert Chase, *Dies Irae: A Guide to Requiem Music.* (Lanham, Maryland: Scarecrow Press, 2003), 442.

used in setting these texts and the history surrounding the composition of the *War Requiem* give great insight into the complex nature and function of this masterwork.

Many of the historical details of the *War Requiem* specifically address Britten's themes of death and war, religion, rebirth and transfiguration, and peace and coexistence. While the piece was never intended for use in a liturgical funeral service, it was inspired by and dedicated to the memories of four friends of the composer's who died during World War II. It was also commissioned for and intended to be performed in a church, specifically, the consecration of the Cathedral of St. Michael at Coventry on May thirtieth, 1962. Coventry cathedral itself was almost completely destroyed during the war; a new modern structure had been erected while utilizing the ruins of the original cathedral. Britten's musicians utilized the modern space, performing as three different ensembles in different locations. His vocal soloists represented three major nations in the conflict of World War II: the German baritone, Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, the English tenor, Peter Pears, and the Russian soprano, Galina Vishnevskaya (Vishnevskaya had to cancel shortly before the premiere and was replaced by the Irish soprano, Heather Harper). For this unique occasion, Britten created a musical tribute that perfectly embodied the multi-faceted nature of the event.

While the Latin *Missa pro defunctis* comprises the primary text of the *War Requiem*, Britten carefully intersperses nine poems by the British World War I poet, Wilfred Owen, into the Latin Mass. The Oratorio is divided into six movements, corresponding to each of the major Mass texts: *Requiem Aeternam, Dies Irae, Offertorium, Sanctus, Agnus Dei* and *Libera Me.* Britten inserts one poem into each movement, except the expanded, dramatic *Dies Irae* (day or wrath), which contains four

Owen poems. This unique combination of texts explicates Britten's singular message of the War Requiem as an extroverted, public statement of his personal, pacifist beliefs. Based on Britten's firm pacifist ideology (he was a conscientious objector during World War II), Mervyn Cooke explains:

> It was logical... that Benjamin Britten should have chosen in 1960 to set nine of Owen's finest war poems in his *War* Requiem, juxtaposing them with the Latin Mass for the Dead to create a unique pacifist statement fully in keeping with the composer's lifelong hatred of the violence and destruction of warfare.[28]

Sometimes the Owen poetry expands on a theme presented in the Latin text, but more often the connection is ironic as the Owen poems specifically contradict or question the liturgical concept. This is literally the case in the first Owen poem, "Anthem for Doomed Youth," which follows the opening texts "*Requiem aeternam, dona eis Domine*..." (Rest eternal, grant them, Lord...) and "*Te decet hymnus, Deus in sion*...." (Hymns are due to thee, God in Zion...) The tenor then interrupts, asking the question:

> What passing-bells for these who die as cattle?
> Only the monstrous anger of the guns.
> Only the stuttering rifles' rapid rattle
> Can patter out their hasty orisons.
> No mockeries for them from prayers or bells,
> Nor any voice of mourning save the choirs,–
> The shrill, demented choirs of wailing shells;
> And bugles calling for them from sad shires.[29]

Not coincidentally, Britten punctuates the opening of *Requiem Aeternam* with chimes. The boys choir then makes the request for hymns and prayers. It seems clear that Owen's words question and mock these religious rites of "bells", "prayers" and "choirs". Those

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[28] Mervyn Cooke, *Britten: War Requiem* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 1.

[29] Benjamin Britten, *War Requiem Op. 66* (New York: Boosey and Hawkes, 1997), vii.

who die pointlessly in war, "like cattle," do not receive the honor of these rituals. Britten carefully crafted his libretto to relate the Owen texts to the liturgical texts; he made some edits and amendments to the Latin and often severely edited and reshaped the English poetry in order to strengthen the dramatic tension.

Throughout the *War Requiem*, this juxtaposition of texts informs almost every detail of the music. The score is set for enormous forces: mixed chorus, soprano, tenor and baritone soloists, boys choir, full symphony orchestra, chamber orchestra of twelve instruments and organ. The majority of the text is split methodically amongst three distinct ensembles: the tenor and baritone, accompanied by the chamber orchestra, sing the Owen poetry; the Chorus, Soprano and full orchestra realize the bulk of the traditional *Requiem* text; and the voices of the boys choir, accompanied by the organ, interject portions of the Latin text, adding another color and level of meaning. Peter Evans interprets the three vocal/instrumental groupings as representing three levels of understanding:

> ...the three spatially distinct ensembles move most often on quite separate planes, presenting the impassive calm of a liturgy that points beyond death (boys and organ), the mingled mourning, supplication and guilty apprehension of humanity in the mass (choir and main orchestra, sometimes sublimated, rather than personalized, by the soprano soloist) and the passionate outcry of the doomed victims of war (male soloists and chamber orchestra).[30]

Regardless of the musical language employed in setting the variety of texts, Britten succeeds in highlighting the juxtaposition of texts and their different points of view by using such disparate instrumental and vocal colors.

Of course, Britten does indeed employ contrasting musical styles appropriate for the distinct texts and the forces assigned to express them. In setting the Owen poems,

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[30] Peter Evans, *The Music of Benjamin Britten* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 451.

Britten uses an expressive, signature musical style that is in keeping with many of his large-scale compositions. He contrasts chromatic, challenging tonalities with more direct, diatonic elements and often presents complex rhythms and meters to best express the text. "It has often been noted that Britten reserves his characteristic instrumental ingenuity for the intimacy of the Owen settings...."[31] In fact, the 12-piece chamber orchestra that accompanies the tenor and baritone soloists in expressing Owen's words is identical to that used in Britten's operas, *Rape of Lucretia*, *Albert Herring* and *The Turn of the Screw*.

In the traditional Latin portions, Britten utilizes a musical language that is, for him, relatively simple and more conservative than much of his other work. Emphasizing the meaning that his music conveys, rather than the music itself, Britten explains, " I certainly can't imagine making my language more obscure on purpose. When I write for a 'wider' audience, I obviously don't want to write very subtle things, and the language is, as a result, simpler.[32] The music is not just "simpler," but it also contains familiar elements and alludes to other recognizable musics.

Britten's setting of the *Requiem* text particularly recalls earlier *Requiem* settings, especially that of Verdi, completed in 1873. Although Verdi's *Requiem* is more straightforward in its conception than Britten's (Verdi sets the traditional Latin text for Chorus, Orchestra and a quartet of vocal soloists), the two composers were similarly inspired. Like Britten, "Verdi approached the text through his theatrical mind and intended his *Requiem* to be offered only as a concert piece and not as an ecclesiastical

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[31] Cooke, p. 53.

[32] Paul Kildea, ed. *Britten on Music* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 244.

work."[33] Verdi also was inspired to compose a *Requiem* following the death of someone important to him, the well-known writer, Alessandro Manzoni. Both *Requiems* by Verdi and Britten maintained traditional inspiration, if not traditional liturgical function.

Not only was Britten *influenced* by Verdi's operatic *Requiem,* but he specifically alludes to Verdi's music in several instances. The two works share similar or identical musical elements in the following examples, among others:

- Setting of the opening "Requiem Aeternam" text in a simple, syllabic, chanted style;
- Short, separated syllables (rests within and between single words) and distinctive, syncopated bass drum strikes in the *Dies Irae*;
- Similar dotted rhythms throughout the "Rex Tremendae" section of *Dies Irae*;
- Identical key areas of G minor ("Dies Irae") and B flat minor, featuring an enharmonic E natural ("Lacrimosa") in the *Dies Irae*;
- A recapitulation of the opening "Dies Irae" text and music immediately before the "Lacrimosa," although the Mass does not repeat the text;
- Identical staccato, rhythmic settings of the phrase "Tremens factus sum ego" followed by a highly chromatic, legato line, sung by the soprano soloist in the *Libera Me*; and
- Unharmonized melodies sung in octaves by the choir and doubled by the orchestra in the *Agnus Dei.*[34]

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[33] William Dawson Hall, "The Requiem Mass: A Study of Performance Practices from the Baroque Era to the Present Day as Related to Four Requiem Settings by Gilles, Mozart, Verdi, and Britten" (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Southern California, January 1970), 89.

[34] Cooke, p. 53.

Many commentators have viewed the allusions to Verdi and the departure from Britten's typical musical language as flaws of the work. Michael Kennedy criticizes, "...there is a disparity in invention between the large-scale liturgical sections and the Owen settings. The resemblances... to Verdi's *Requiem* (and also, I think to Mahler's *Resurrection* Symphony) in the *Dies Irae* are disturbing, the orchestra writing much more obvious and conventional.[35] However, rather than dwell on the seeming incongruity of styles, this juxtaposition of musical languages between the Latin and Owen texts serves to heighten the expressiveness of the English words, while giving deeply-rooted meaning to the traditional Latin.

Britten does not allude solely to the music of Verdi in setting the Latin text. In the opening *Requiem Aeternam*, the previously mentioned chimes and choral chant are accompanied by slow, heavily dotted rhythms in the orchestra. Not only does this show "Britten's awareness of an introit's ancient processional function,"[36] but it is also clearly reminiscent of a Baroque French overture style. In the *Offertorium*, Britten employs multiple layers of musical allusion. The first and most prominent involves his setting of the text, "Quam olim Abrahae promisisti." Not only does Britten set this text as a fugue, but he incorporates traditional fugue techniques such as melodic inversion, rhythmic augmentation, etc. His primary subject for the fugue is also a reference, borrowed from his own work of 1952, *Canticle II: Abraham and Isaac*. The tenor and baritone duet which interrupts the *Offertorium*, Owen's "The Parable of the Old Man and the Young,"

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[35] Michael Kennedy, *Britten* (London, 1982; second edition, 1993).

[36] Anthony Milner, "The Choral Music," Christopher Palmer, ed. *The Britten Companion* (NewYork: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 344.

(an ironic retelling of the Binding of Isaac, in which Abraham rejects the Angel's intercession and completes the sacrifice of Isaac) offers additional opportunity for musical allusion. Representing the voice of the Angel, the two voices sing in organum-like parallel fourths. Britten uses additional organum techniques throughout the entire work. Other musical references include frequent use of plainchant, or plainchant-like singing, especially by the boys' choir, and a recurring theme of a chorale harmonization of plainchant, first heard in the "Kyrie," which concludes the first movement. Britten utilizes the same hymn-like material to close the second and final movements of the oratorio.

As evidenced by the recapitulation of the a cappella chorale introduced in the "Kyrie," *War Requiem* is not just a study in contrasts. Britten incorporates several musical themes that serve to unify the whole. The central "theme" is the simple interval of a tritone. The tritone occurs numerous times in every movement in a plethora of musical guises: melody, harmony, relationship of tonal centers, etc. Due to Britten's continuous usage of tritones throughout the entire work, it is difficult to assign it a particular meaning or association, however Peter Evans argues that one can still understand its occurence as representing a general notion of rest and peace. He states:

> (while) the frequent appearance of so primary an element should discourage us from attaching too limitedly programmatic or "dramatic" a significance to it, it is important to note that its frequent association with the concept of *requiem* ('rest', and presumably therefore 'peace') suggests that any peace which mankind may attain is likely to be uneasy and inconclusive.[37]

So prevalent is the tritone throughout this extensive work, that the consonance of the major triad and the dissonance of the tritone almost reverse roles. Ultimately the tritone

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[37] Evans, 451

fulfills its role as a place of rest, even if it is a very different concept of rest than we might imagine. And with the finally resolved major triads (the final chord of each of the three chorale sections), perhaps our preconceived notions of rest and peace are not what we thought them to be.

Clearly, the *War Requiem* is a masterfully conceived and executed piece of art. Britten manages to intertwine ancient, liturgical text with modern, political poetry in order to create a unified statement against the atrocities of war. In his musical realization of the words, he employs an almost infinite variety of elements to highlight both the paradoxes and thematic unities inherent in the diverse texts. Ultimately he combines all of these disparate elements to create a singular message of peace, and expresses it to his audience as clearly as he is able. "Some of my right-wing friends loathed it (War Requiem).... 'Though the music is superb, of course,' they'd say. But that's neither here nor there to me. The message is what counts."[38]

[38] Kildea, 249.

# CHAPTER 4

## ERNEST BLOCH'S *SACRED SERVICE*

Unlike Britten's *War Requiem,* Ernest Bloch's Sacred Service has decidedly liturgical roots. In 1929, he was commissioned by Cantor Reuben Rinder of Temple Emanuel Congregation of San Francisco to compose a service for the synagogue. The commission was supported by the Warburg family the Rosa and Jacob Stern Fund. They too were supporting the composition, by a great Jewish composer, of a Jewish service for the synagogue. And Bloch had every intention of delivering a liturgical service. Rather than being *inspired* by Jewish Liturgy, Bloch began the task of composing a setting for the specific Sabbath morning service from *The Union Prayer Book for Jewish Worship,* the Reform *siddur* of the day. As any good composer might do, Bloch immersed himself in the text of the Sabbath liturgy. Since Bloch had not studied Hebrew since his Bar Mitzvah as a boy, he began by learning Hebrew voraciously. He did not want to rely on translation of the Hebrew text, but rather he sought to understand the depth of meaning inherent in each word of the ancient text. In a letter describing his fervor for the task at hand, Bloch writes:

> I am still studying the Hebrew text.... I know its significance word by word.... But what is more important, I have now absorbed it to the point where it has become mine and as it were the very expression of my soul. It far surpasses a *Jewish Service* now. It has become a cosmic poem, a glorification of the laws of

> the Universe.... It has become the very text I was after since the age of ten.... I intend besides the service to write a great orchestral, choral work with it.[39]

Indeed, Bloch's composition became much more than a "Jewish service." Bloch's final text, mostly in Hebrew, differed markedly from the predominantly English *Union Prayer Book*, He did eventually compose his "great orchestral, choral work," but he never composed the original liturgical version for the synagogue. Ultimately, the *Sacred Service* became a large-scale oratorio, a concert piece, based on Sabbath morning liturgy.

Bloch did not change direction because his thoughts on the composition had changed. Rather, due to his immersion into Hebrew and Jewish liturgy, his attitudes toward Judaism and his concept of Jewish worship developed dramatically. Originally, he had envisioned responsorial prayers to be sung by congregation and cantor, but "his understanding of the synagogue service as a whole has changed considerably. He no longer views it as exclusively liturgical, but rather as a unified poem, a programme, or better yet a libretto, for a large-scale concert work.[40] Bloch had become so involved in the text and his interpretation of its message, that he focused solely on how to express his passionate convictions musically. He lost all sense of logistical or practical considerations in composing music for an active Reform worship service.

Bloch sets his service in five movements, much like a Jewish equivalent to the five-part Catholic Mass. Bloch specifies that each of the five movements should be performed without interruption, with only a short pause separating each movement.

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[39] Suzanne Bloch and Irene Heskes, *Ernest Bloch: Creative Spirit* (New York: Jewish Music Council of the National Jewish Welfare Board, 1976), 74.

[40] David M. Schiller. *Bloch, Schoenberg, and Bernstein: Assimilating Jewish Music* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 31.

While his five sections might be seen as a natural breakdown of the Jewish service into the traditional rubrics of the liturgy, Bloch's sections correspond with neither the traditional Jewish model, nor the slightly modified service of the *Union Prayerbook*. Rather, Bloch's divisions are made for musical and dramatic considerations.[41]

Bloch also makes many textual changes that do not correspond to the liturgy of the *Union Prayer Book*, but adhere to his personal understanding of the text. In addition to minor omissions or word changes, Bloch adds significant pieces of liturgy where they do not exist in the *Union Prayer Book*. For example, the first piece of liturgy in Bloch's service is "Mah Tovu," the traditional invocation for a service. However, this text was absent from The *Union Prayer Book* of Bloch's day.

In the last movement, which is the only section with settings of the English text of the *Union Prayer Book*, Bloch finally gives a role to the minister or Rabbi who ostensibly would be leading an actual Sabbath service (despite various instructions which call for a spoken style, Bloch sets these words using full musical notation). Yet beyond minor edits of the English, Bloch makes two additional major changes. First, Bloch omits the "Kaddish" and replaces it with a recapitulation of "Tzur Yisraeil." In the piano/vocal score the following note is added: "At the Temples, the MINISTER could start *here*, in Hebrew, the 'Kaddish' prayer—In such case CHORUS and CANTOR must sing all the following till the end of page 80, ***ppp***, as a *far distant lamentation* of *all mankind*—The Answer to this lamentation, —this cry for help,—is then the Adon Olom—".[42] While this note attempts to solve a practical issue if the piece were utilized in Synagogue,

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[41] Ibid., 36.

[42] Ernest Bloch, *Avodath Hakodesh* (New York: Broude Brothers Limited, 1962), 78.

clearly the consideration of reciting the "Kaddish" here is an afterthought rather than the primary focus of the music.

In the note above, Bloch alludes to the final major alteration of the text: the insertion of "Adon Olom." The *Union Prayer Book* Sabbath morning service concludes with "Ein Keloheinu," not "Adon Olom." However, for Bloch, Ein Keloheinu did not embody his universalist message. Again, his understanding of the "message" of the liturgy preempts any perceived requirement of using the liturgy which the prayer book proscribes. Schiller explains Bloch's use of "Tzur Yisroel" as a "cry of help" and "Adon Olom" as Bloch's "Answer":

> ...the Tzur Yisroel and Adon Olom settings that conclude the concert version of the *Sacred Service* are dialectically linked: the former is the question, the particular, and all that is culturally conditioned; the latter is the answer, the universal, the absolute. Paradoxically, the Kaddish, in its expression of messianic hope, would have anticipated the universalizing affirmation that Bloch wanted to make in the Adon Olom. ...Bloch needed a theme *resistant* to assimilation to serve as a foil to the Adon Olom, and the Tzur Yisroel melody fulfilled this requirement.[43]

Despite the reference, to the "concert version," above, no alternate version exists. Just as Bloch gave instructions on how one might insert the Kaddish in a service, he also instructs that in concert, the work may conclude with Adon Olam, whereas the score does include a closing benediction.[44] Although Bloch envisions his work as more than a "Jewish service," he clearly feels that it can serve a traditional liturgical function.

Bloch's cohesive, five-movement oratorio is unified by a single theme, or *cantus firmus*. Variations of this six-note pattern (G-A-C-B-A-G) proliferate throughout the entire work. Although the melody is not overtly "Jewish" in character, it does allow for

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[43] Schiller, 47.

[44] Schiller, 48.

application in a quasi-pastiche cantorial style. In much of the music set for cantor specifically, Bloch writes melodic lines which are reminiscent of traditional chant, while not specifically quoting it. Bloch's general musical invention based on his *cantus firmus*, however, must be described as symphonic in nature. His musical language throughout utilizes programmatic elements and musical features of western, Romantic music. Only in the "Tzur Yisroel" does Bloch utilize a traditional Jewish chant which Cantor Rinder had notated for him. It is ironic that this text, which Bloch sees as "the supplication of mankind, its cry towards God, for help, for an explanation of this sad world—the reason for our suffering,"[45] utilizes the only traditional Jewish melody in the service. It seems that while Bloch expands his message to apply to all of "mankind," he is careful to add that this universal message is inherent in Jewish prayer. He does not make the claim that his message is universal rather than Jewish, but that the Jewish message is itself universal.

Despite Bloch's ultimate aim and realization of expressing musically his universalist interpretation of Jewish liturgy, through pure, symphonic music, unlike many art music settings of Jewish liturgy, much of this work has remained successful and usable in a synagogue setting. While using the entire service would be unfeasible in a contemporary Reform synagogue, individual pieces can be and are extracted for practical, liturgical use. Perhaps the same universalist beliefs which led to his *not* writing straightforward music for the synagogue is what maintains the appeal of his music within a contemporary synagogue setting. In describing his own work, Bloch writes, "Though intensely Jewish in its roots, this message seems to me above all a gift of Israel to the

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[45] Schiller, 47.

whole of mankind. It symbolizes for me, far more than a 'Jewish Service,' but, in it's great simplicity and variety, it embodies a philosophy acceptable to all men."[46]

[46] Ernest Bloch, Sacred Service Program Notes of the Schola Cantorum of New York, April 11, 1934, 6.

# CHAPTER 5

## *A SERVICE FOR TODAY*: AN ANALYSIS

Considering the eclectic nature of today's Reform musical liturgy, I have composed my liturgical music with two contradictory aims. As Yehudi Wyner once described his *Friday Evening Service* of 1963, my service is essentially a "numbers" piece. Which is to say, I have composed ten self-contained liturgical settings, any of which may be used on its own amongst other composers' music, or with a combination of my music and others'. Unlike Bloch's *Sacred Service*, my service should not be performed without interruption. I have composed music with the intention that other musical and non-musical elements will be added to complete a practical and effective liturgical service. However, considering the variety of styles of music that one often hears during contemporary Reform worship, I have attempted to unify my work by using a consistent musical language and several recurring motives. The motives do not have programmatic content, but rather are purely musical elements which help to make a highly diverse musical experience more cohesive.

The first and most prevalent motive is a simple interval of a descending minor third. I use this interval most often within a harmonic setting representing the scale degrees of flat 7 and 5. This simple motive has a distinctive sound and also serves as a springboard for thematic variation. In several instances, I have filled in the missing scale

degree 6, and created a stepwise, descending pattern of three notes. Many pieces within the service utilize both variations of this descending motive.

The prevalence of the flat 7 in my chosen motive has allowed me to incorporate many common features of much "Jewish" music. The traditional eastern European modes of liturgical music all make frequent use of a flat 7; a distinctive feature of both eastern European *chazzanut* and Israeli folksong is the use of a modal flat 7-1 cadence, avoiding the leading tone of western, diatonic harmony. In particular, I often invert the two variations of the original descending motive described above to create two cadential figures. The first is a primarily melodic motive which inverts the original 7-5 melody to create an ascending motive: 5-7-1. I often utilize the second cadential figure harmonically, inverting the stepwise 7-6-5 and beginning on scale degree flat 6, to create a modal cadence: 6-7-1.

The inherent modal harmonization of this motivic material also leads to two additional common features of the music of my service: the use of parallel fourths and fifths, and the use of jazz and popular harmonies (e.g. seventh, ninth and sixth chords). While a flat 7-1 cadence need not always be harmonized using parallel triads, I believe that the parallelism is implied, and therefore should be embraced and not avoided as in traditional, tonal harmony. This frequent use of fourths and fifths often creates chords that are not based on a triad. While I do not avoid triads, I stack and fourths and fifths resluting in chords with the added pitches mentioned above. I rarely add "color" notes for purely ornamental character, but rather through the use of common tones and effective use of counterpoint and parallelism, complex harmonies emerge.

### *Y'did Nefesh*

I chose to set "Y'did Nefesh" as an opening song for a variety of reasons. First, I am drawn particularly to this *kabbalistic* text which embodies the joy and wonder of Shabbat worship. I also feel that this text, expressed by an individual rather than by the community, is an important way to begin. As each of us enters into the synagogue as Shabbat beckons, each needs to have the personal desire and intention to welcome Shabbat and the presence of God. Only then can we join together to pray as a community. Finally, I discovered a wonderful congregational melody in Idelsohn's *Thesaurus*, attributed to the Aleppo community in Syria[47] I wanted to incorporate at least one Sephardic melody into my service since most Sephardic musical traditions rely on congregational singing as opposed to the eastern European tradition of professional *chazzanut*.

Although the Syrian melody is not strictly tonal in a western sense, the melody does imply western tonality. In arranging this melody, I have used western tonalities, but I mix them with other techniques more appropriate to a non-western melody. Due to implications within the melody and to my own ideas about individual and community expressed above, I set the melody as a quasi-canon. We sing the piece together as a community, but individual voices are heard independently, in canonic variation. Although the melody seems to be in G major with an F sharp leading tone, I chose to avoid a full, 5-1 cadence. Due to the melody resolving on a B natural (scale degree 3), I employed a cadence of B minor to G major, 3-1. The cadential melody (m.11) of D-C-C-B might also be understood as a variation of the primary descending minor third motive

[47] Idelsohn A.Z., Thesaurus of Hebrew Oriental Melodies, vol IV (New York: Ktav Publishing House. 1973), 263.

of the entire service. The combination of these unique melodic and harmonic aspects of the cadential material led me to highlight these elements in the short introduction and coda. The piece on the whole is accessible and singable for a contemporary congregation, yet I did not restrict my setting to a traditional, western, diatonic harmonization.

### *L'cha Dodi*

My setting of "L'cha Dodi," the highlight of *Kabbalat Shabbat*, heightens the general feeling excitement and joy embodied by "Y'did Nefesh." The extended introduction (mm. 1-9) features an energetic ostinato in the piano, while two themes are introduced in the strings (5-1-3-2 and a descending 4-3-2-1). The descending theme eventually becomes the cue to begin singing, as it is harmonized with parallel fourths and contrary motion in the cello and the bass of the piano. The rhythmic treatment of this motive also sets up the unusual meter of the refrain, 7/4. The first theme (5-1-3-2) becomes the primary melody of the refrain.

As "L'cha Dodi" is a strophic poem, the setting alternates between the mostly 7/4 refrain in E major, and a lilting, 6/4 verse in B *Adonai Malach* mode (due to the flat 7, A natural). Since the new Reform *siddur*, *Mishkan T'filah* includes all of the verses of *L'cha Dodi*, I have not specified how many verses should be sung in this setting. The previous Reform *siddur, Gates of Prayer*, included only four verses of the poem. Some congregations may prefer to sing only some verses, while some may take advantage of the availability of the complete text. Regardless, I have specified that the final verse, "Bo'i v'shalom" should be sung differently. This verse moves to the parallel E *Adonai*

*Malach* mode, and the tempo and accompaniment reflect the reverential character of this final verse which literally welcomes the Shabbat Bride into our midst.

### *Teach Me, O God*

Following Chatzi Kaddish and aiding in the transition from *Kabbalat Shabbat* to the *Ma'ariv* service proper, I have inserted a solo setting of the Leah Goldberg Poem, "Lamdeini, Elohai" in English translation. The text, which attempts to relate the acts of blessing and prayer to our daily lives, with the understanding that this is difficult, and necessary, is as follows:

> Teach me, O God, a blessing, a prayer
> on the mystery of a withered leaf,
> on ripened fruit so fair,
> on the freedom to see, to sense,
> to breathe, to know, to hope, to despair.
>
> Teach my lips a blessing, a hymn of praise,
> as each morning and night
> you renew your days,
> lest my day be as the one before;
> lest routine set my ways.[48]

It is entirely appropriate that we would make this request before we proceed with the call to prayer of the "Bar'chu." Before we can honestly bless God and pray, we must know how. Also, just as "Y'did Nefesh" made an individual request, so this texts pleads, "Teach *me*." Assuming that the request has been fulfilled at least to some degree, we can continue with the communal "Bar'chu": "Let *us* bless God."

Since the original Hebrew of this poem and the wonderful translation by Pnina Peli both incorporate a regular meter and rhyme scheme, I decided to set the poem using

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[48] Elyse D. Frishman, ed. *Mishkan T'filah: A Reform Siddur*. (New York: Central Conference of American Rabbis, (Preview Edition) 2005), 145.

a metric tune. The melody incorporates the flat 7-5 motive and also moves from the predominant E major of *Kabbalat Shabbat* to a new key area of D minor (*Magein Avot* mode) for the beginning of *Ma'ariv*. The full compliment of congregation, choir and instruments of the previous pieces is here limited to a cantor and cello duet.

### *Bar'chu*

The "Bar'chu," an immediate segue from the previous piece, continues in D minor and replaces the cello with organ. The piece observes the traditional form of a call and response, with a cantor's repitition of the choral/congregational response. The cantor's call is marked by a simple one measure ostinato in the Organ accompaniment and a simple, angular vocal melody incorporating the 7-5 motive. At the response (m. 9), the accompaniment texture changes, adding more harmonic variety, and the congregation sings an arcing, stepwise melody, contrasting with the cantor's simpler statement. At the cantor's repitition, the ostnato returns and the cantor sings a variation of the original, angular melody. The short piece ends with a "l'olam va'ed" that is reminiscent of Shabbat evening *nusach*.

### *An Appendix to the vision of peace* and *Mi Chamocha*

The next two pieces are inexorably linked. The first is a solo cantorial setting of a Yehuda Amichai's poem, "An Appendix to the Vision of Peace,"[49] which is a comment on the verse from Isaiah II 2:4, "and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation; neither shall they learn war any more."

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[49] Yehuda Amichai. *Great Tranquility: Questions and Answers*. Translated by Glenda Abramson and Tudor Parfitt. (New York: Harper & Row, 1983), 28.

Don't stop after beating the swords
Into ploughshares, don't stop! Go on beating
And make musical instruments out of them.
Whoever wants to make war again
Will have to turn them into ploughshares first.

While *Mishkan T'filah* does not include the Isaiah II verse in the English reading prior to "Mi Chamocha," the sentiment is the same. "Mi Chamocha" is a song of redemption, from opression and violence. As the Israelites rejoiced in song after redemption from Egypt, our song of rejoicing ought to be accompanied by a call for an end to all violence and war. Only then will we know true redemption.

This second of three cantorial solos is really an art song setting of Amichai's expressive text. As opposed to the simplicity of "Teach me, O God," this setting takes advantage of the piano and strings. Several thematic elements are woven into the texture of this piece, written in A minor: the primary melodic material is a variation on the 5-7-1 melodic fragment; the instruments contrast the flowing, vocal melody with sharp variations of the original 7-5 motive; and the slow-moving harmonic rhythm played by sustained notes in the piano consists of parallel fifths outlining the 6-7-1 cadence. Unifying all of these elements, the right hand of the piano repeats a simple two-note ostinato throughout the entire song, representing the literal beating of metalsmithing repeated in the text. The ostinato begins playing the pitches A and B, shifts up to E and F, and eventually returns to A and B for the conclusion of the song. The simplicity of the ostinato acts as a pedal, creating dissonances and complex harmony above a relatively simple harmonic structure outlined by the open fifths of the bass.

The unceasing effort which the text calls for is represented in several ways in the song. First, the ostinato can be seen as representing the continuous beating of the

metalsmith's hammer. This hammering stops only briefly, when the text speaks of "musical instruments." Of course the "musical instruments" in this song make quintessentially Jewish music as the key briefly changes to A *ahavah rabbah* mode with the addition of a C sharp and B flat. However, the joy is short-lived as we are reminded harshly of war and the hammering returns, presumably to turn the instruments back into ploughshares.

However the promise of redemption is renewed as the "Mi Chamocha" begins. While "Appendix" is expressed through a slow moving and contemplative A minor, the joy of "Mi Chamocha" is expressed through a rhythmic E minor. The related keys enable a smooth transition form one piece to the next; the opening rhythmic chords of Mi Chamocha use the same combination of notes (E, G, A, B, and D) that conclude "Appendix," despite the different keys. The two pieces share much of the same motivic material as well, with the exception of the ostinato of "Appendix." Yet the treatment of these motives marks a stark contrast. Despite similar elements, "Mi Chamocha" is defined by rhythmic, quartal harmonies, a simpler, congregational melodic statement, and an ABA form which most settings of this text have utilized over the past 150 years. "Appendix" uses these musical elements to create an expressive rendering of the English text, while "Mi Chamocha" creates a congregational song of triumph.

### *V'shamru*

While "V'shamru" is a text that many congregants know well, I feel that its meaning is often lost amongst the myriad strophic settings that we sing regularly. "V'shamru" is a commandment to keep Shabbat, as a sign of the covenant between the Jewish people and God. While I wanted to write a "V'shamru" that a congregation could

sing, I did not want to diminish the impact of this text. That being said, my "V'shamru" contains several features worthy of mention. The basic melody, in D minor, is quite simple, evoking an Israeli folk song, complete with a flat 7 cadence. However, to mark the difference of Shabbat, the harmony shifts dramatically from a D minor triad to a D flat major triad at the text "et hashabbat," utilizing the common tone of F (m.13). The cello plays a counter melody which recalls the stepwise 7-6-5 motive (this motive serves as the brief introduction to the piece as well).

After the choir/congregation sings "Beini u'vein b'nei Yisrael ot hi l'olam," the setting changes. Over an underpinning of the same melodic material, the Cantor sings a recitative on a text adapted from Heschel's *The Sabbath*:

> Time is like a wasteland.
> It has grandeur but no beauty.
> Then we arrive at the seventh day,
> and Shabbat is endowed with a felicity which enraptures the soul.[50]

This text does not prevent the congregation from vocally participating in the "V'shamru" statement, but it helps to remind us what we are singing about. The seventh day is different; recognition of the restful joy of Shabbat is one way of marking that change. Only after this reminder does the congregation return to its melody to complete the Hebrew text. For typical Shabbat worship, the Heschel interlude can be omitted entirely, leaving a simpler setting of the traditional text.

### *Eloheinu... R'tseih*

So far in this service there has been a nice balance of congregational and cantorial singing (especially since in practice, additional congregational tunes would be added to

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[50] Heschel, Abraham Joshua. *The Sabbath: Its Meaning for Modern Man.* (New York: Farrar Straus and Young, 1951), 20.

help fill out the sung liturgy). However there has been none of the traditional eastern European chazzanut that for many years was the core of Ashkenazic liturgical music. In setting "Eloheinu... R'tseih,"[51] I chose to arrange a beautiful cantorial recitative written by Israel Alter. More than other composers of traditional chazzanut, I find Alter's writing to be relatively simple, and yet inventive and deeply expressive of the text. This recitative is no exception. In order that this music fit in with the rest of the service, the arrangement, for organ accompaniment, utilizes many of the thematic elements present throughout the work in a consistent musical language.

### *Oseh Shalom/Yih'yu L'ratzon*

Coming out of a silent meditation to conclude the *Amidah*, the piece begins appropriately with the organ quietly playing the unaccompanied 4 bar phrase on which this entire piece is based. The melody is unique, ubt derived from the 7-6-5 descending, stepwise theme. The soprano and alto then sing the "Oseh shalom" text to the same melody in parallel thirds, while the organ plays the fully harmonized version of the same theme. The harmony is a set of parallel seventh chords created by parallel open fifths in both hands of the organ (e.g. E-B, G-D, m.5). Next, the cantor sings an improvisatory-style *chazzanut* as a countermelody above the organ which continues the original ostinato/theme. The cantor sings the "Oseh Shalom" text without finishing "v'imru Amen." The choir then takes over and the music changes to a four part setting of the "Yih'yu L'ratzon" text. The melody is loosely based on the cantorial countermelody of the previous section, and the change of theme away from the simple ostinato allows for a

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[51] Alter, Israel, *The Sabbath Service: The Complete Musical Liturgy for the Hazzan.* (New York: Cantor's Assembly, 1971), 29.

more overtly expressive rendition of the text. After this section ends, the music returns to the original ostinato, to which the cantor and choir add "v'imru Amen" to end the piece. The final amen is sung on an E major triad, the only instance of a simple major triad in the entire setting.

The piece is here presented for cantor, four-part choir and organ, however it could be more easily performed with only cantor and keyboard. While I don't envision much congregational participation in this piece, the repetetive theme makes the piece quite accessible. Congregants could easily "hum along" with the main theme music after one or two hearings.

### *V'ne'emar/Bayom Hahu*

This short piece serves as an example of the combination of musical elements at play throughout this service. The piece begins with a simple F major tune which would create a smooth transition from the traditional Sulzer "Aleinu." Only the presence of a raised scale degree 4 (B natural) adds a more contemporary color. A descending phrase at "l'melech al kol ha'aretz" leads not to F major, but to the D minor of the beginning of *Ma'ariv*. The "Bayom hahu" text then recapitulates the melody of "Teach Me, O God" which preceded "Bar'chu." It then becomes apparent that the "vne'emar" melody which began this piece was actually a major variation of the D minor theme. Unifying these disparate elements, stepwise eighth notes in parallel thirds run throughout the organ and string parts. Additionally, from "Bayom" through the end of the piece, the organ harmonizes the melody with quartal harmonies and a slow moving, stepwise, descending bass line that travels from D to D one octave below.

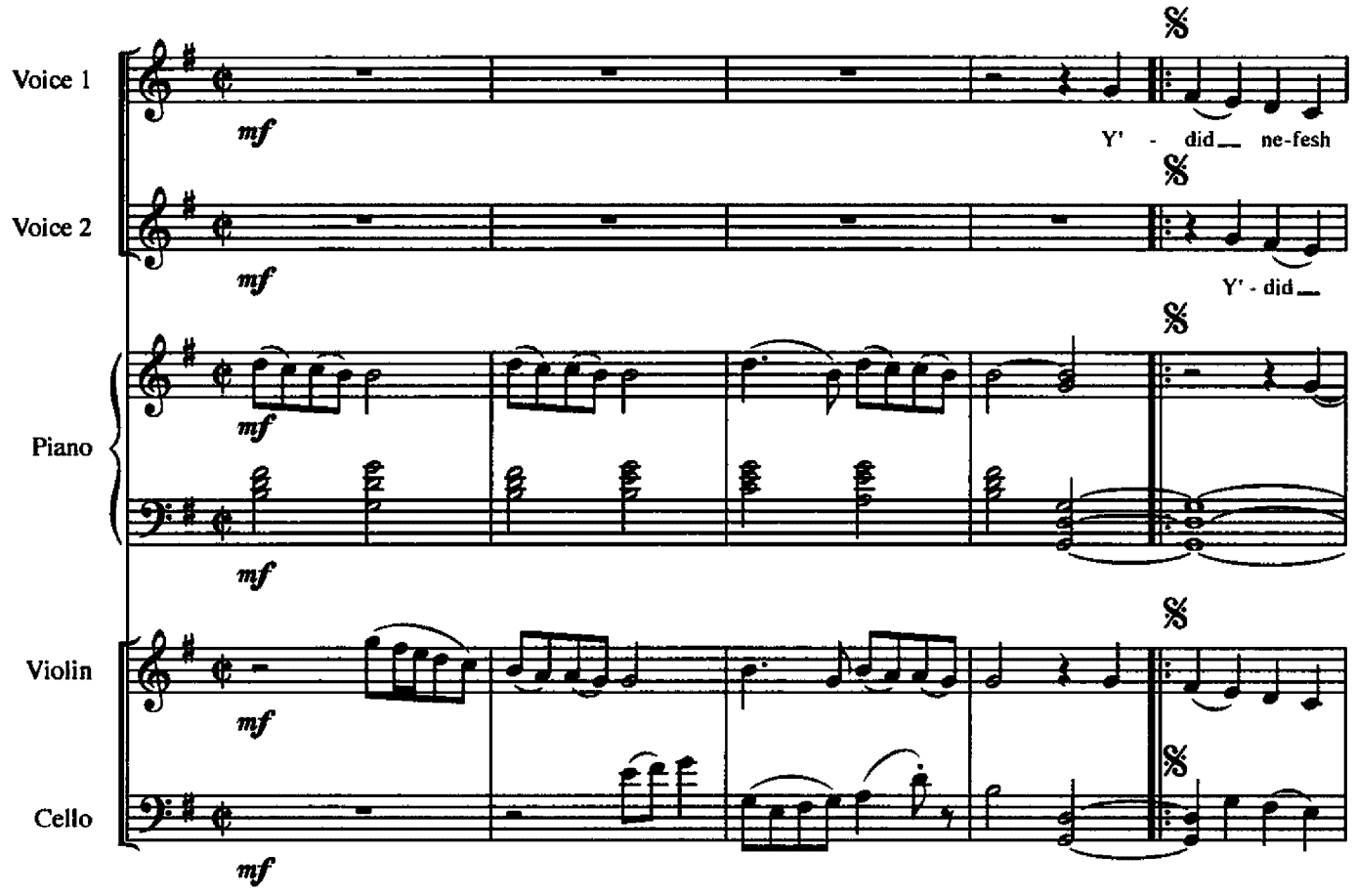
The brief ten measures of this piece manage to recall multiple themes and elements found within my music as well as those in traditional music that might be used along side my music. These ten measures encapsulate my goals of retaining the sacred elements of the variety of liturgical music that we have at our disposal: the depth of meaning found within Britten, the universal message and appeal of Bloch, the accessibility and sense of community of American *nusach*, and the sense of history and connection inherent in the traditional musics of the Jewish People.

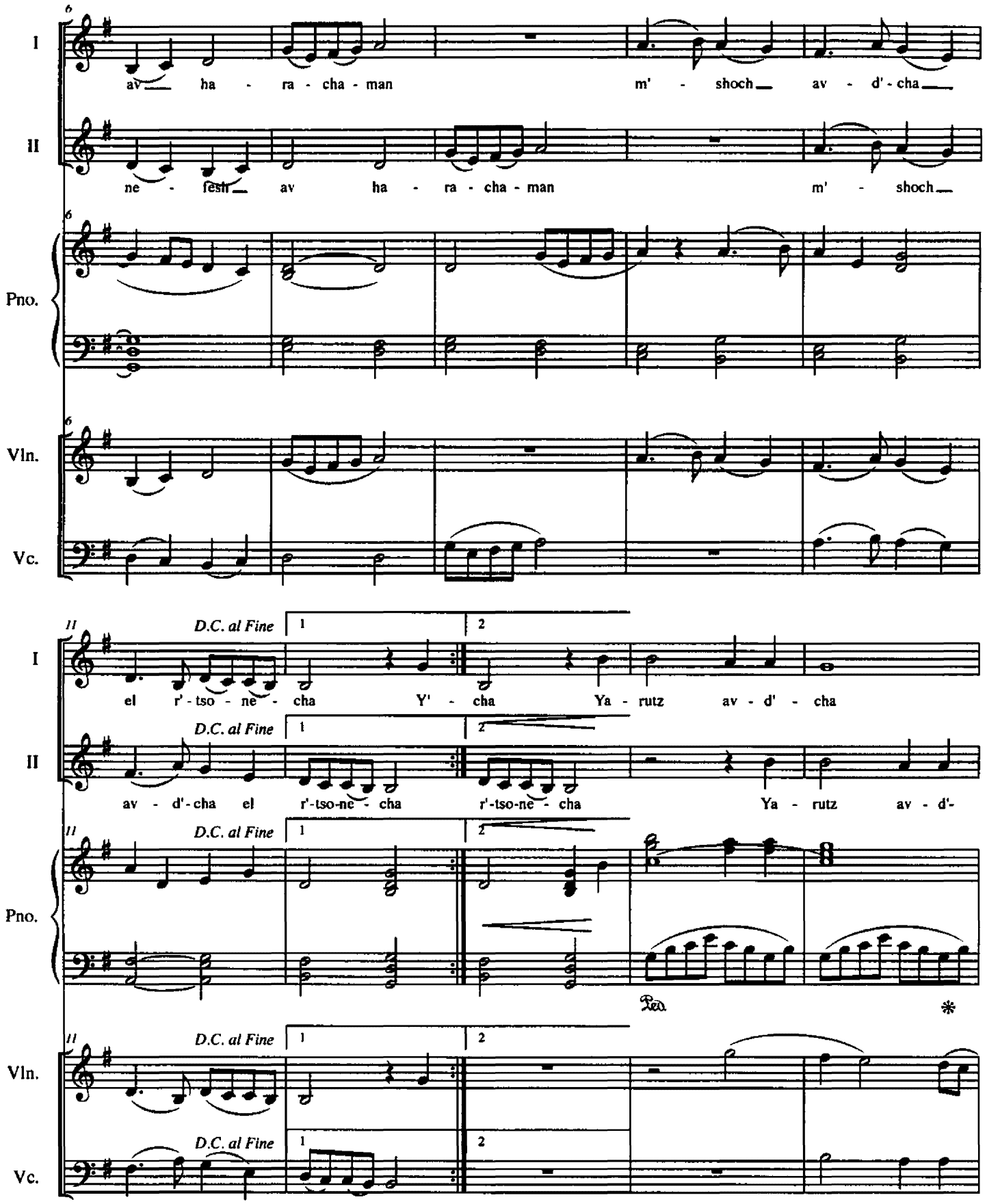
# CHAPTER 6

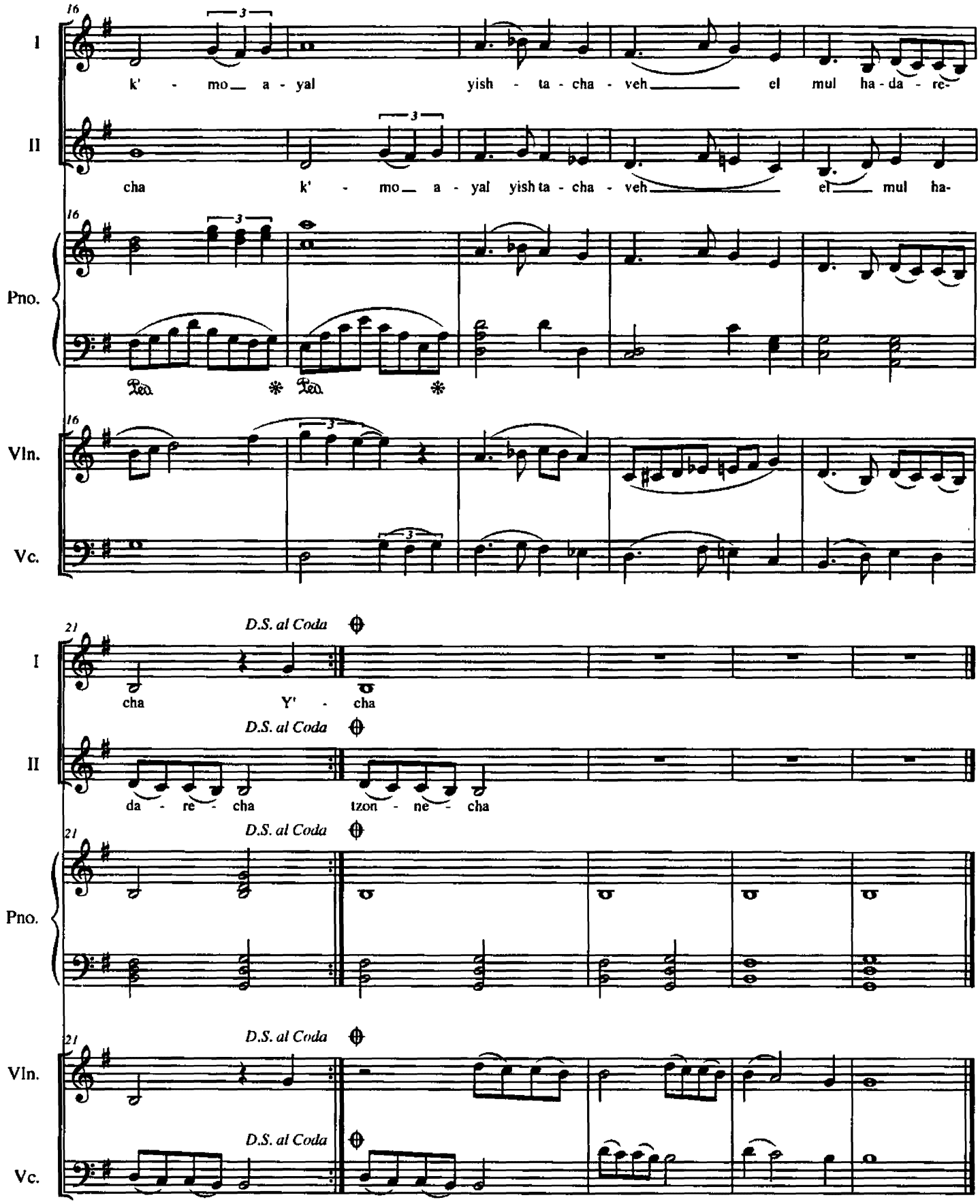
## *A SERVICE FOR TODAY*: THE MUSIC

# Y'did Nefesh

**Randall Schloss**

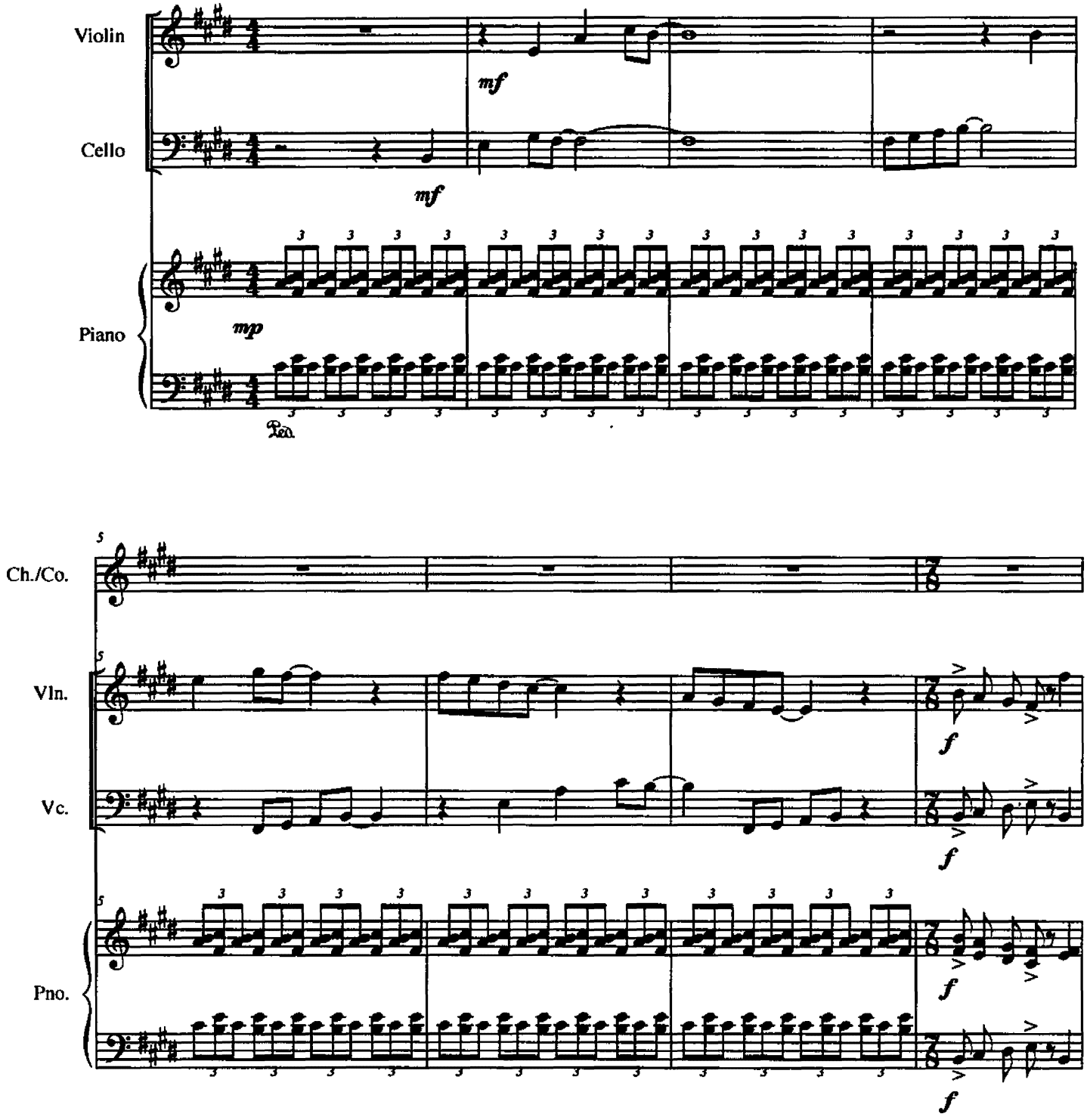


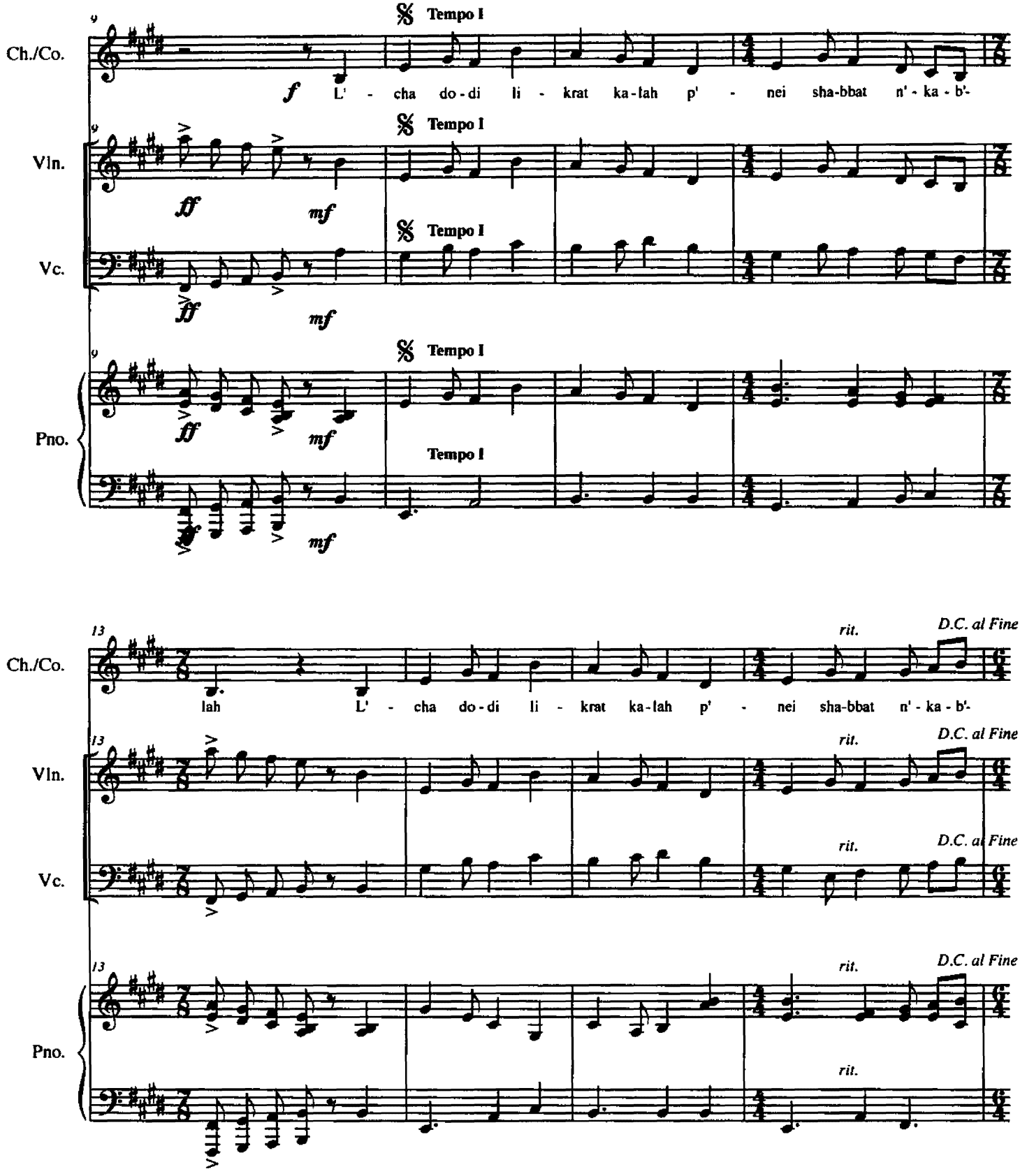

I
av ha - ra - cha - man m' - shoch av - d' - cha
II
ne - fesh av ha - ra - cha - man m' - shoch
Pno.
Vln.
Vc.
D.C. al Fine
1
2
el r' - tso - ne - cha Y' - cha Ya - rutz av - d' - cha
av - d' - cha el r' - tso - ne - cha r' - tso - ne - cha Ya - rutz av - d' -
Rea
*

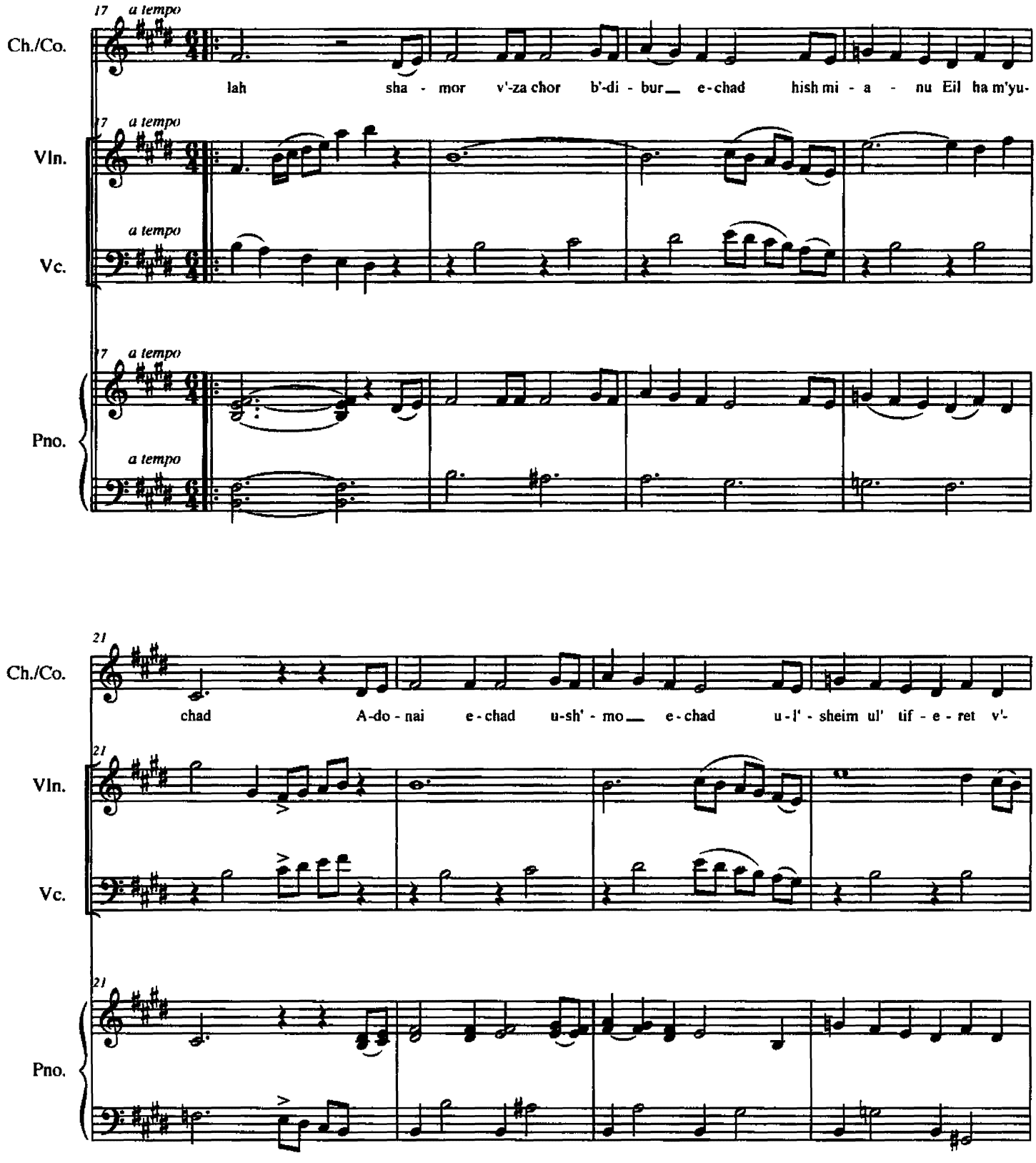

16
I
k' - mo_ a - yal yish - ta - cha - veh_____ el mul ha - da - re-
II
cha k' - mo_ a - yal yish ta - cha - veh_____ el_ mul ha-
Pno.
Ped. * Ped. *
Vln.
Vc.
21
D.S. al Coda
I
cha Y' - cha
II
da - re - cha tzon - ne - cha
Pno.
Vln.
Vc.

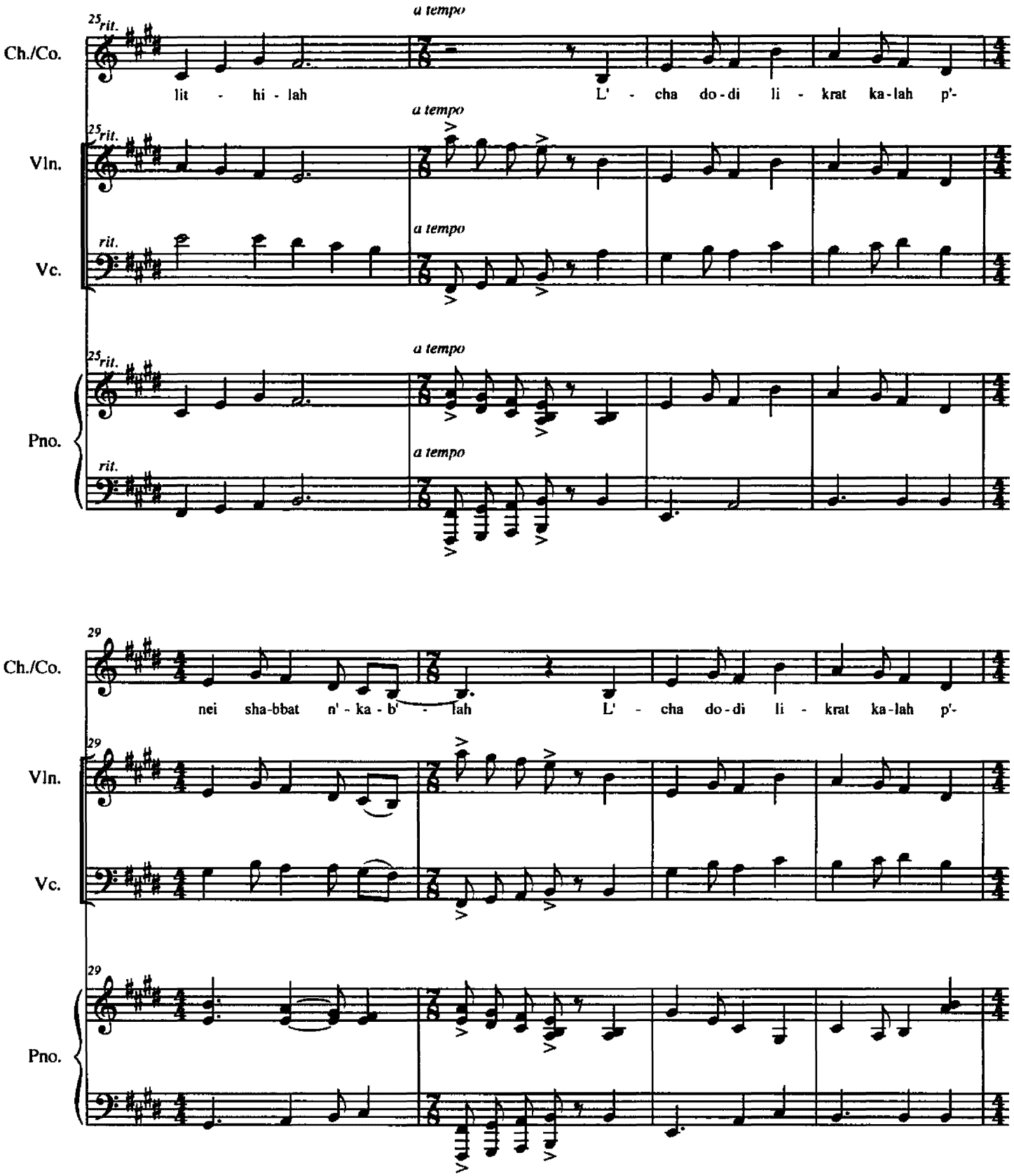
# L'cha Dodi

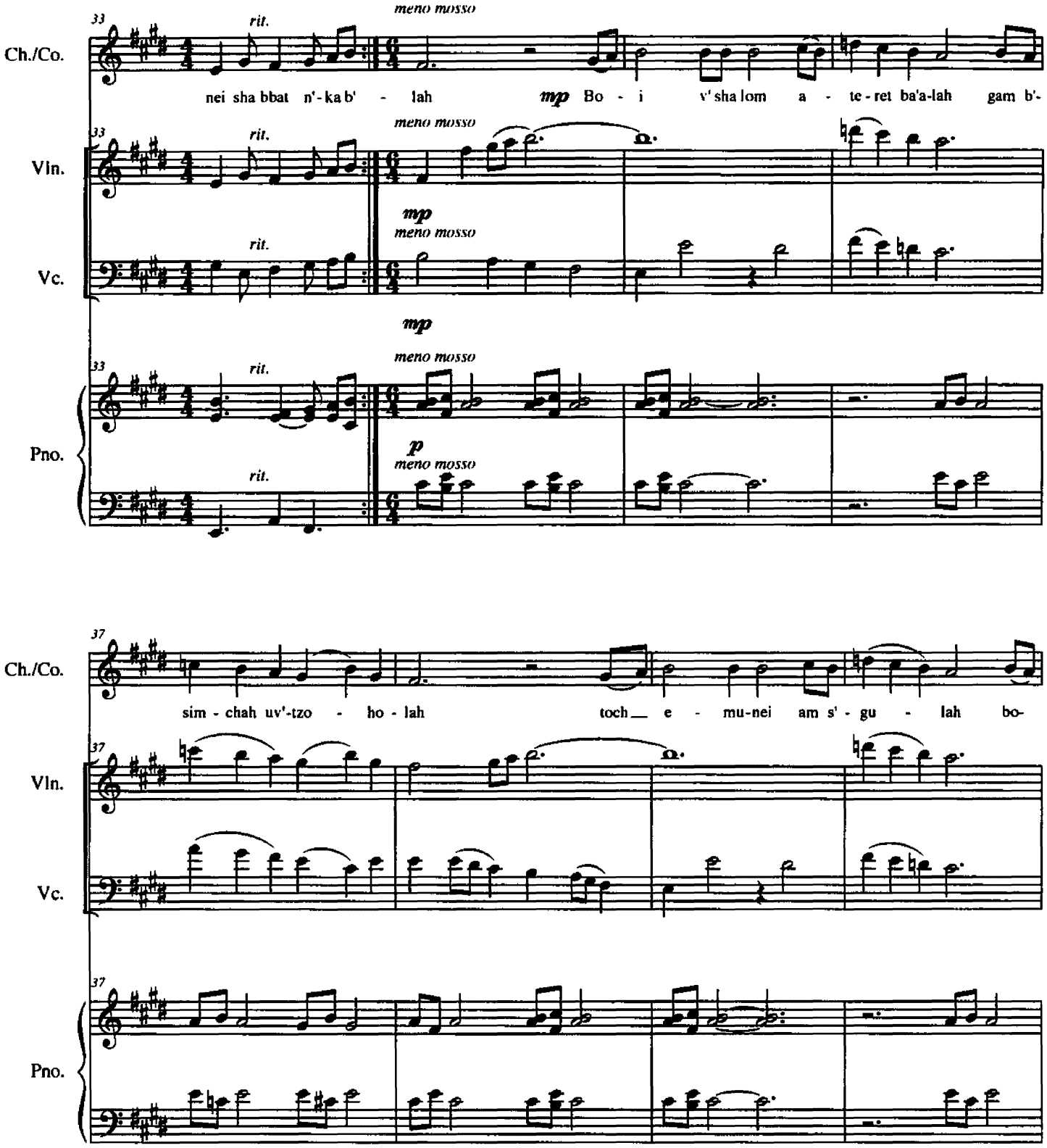
**Randall Schloss**

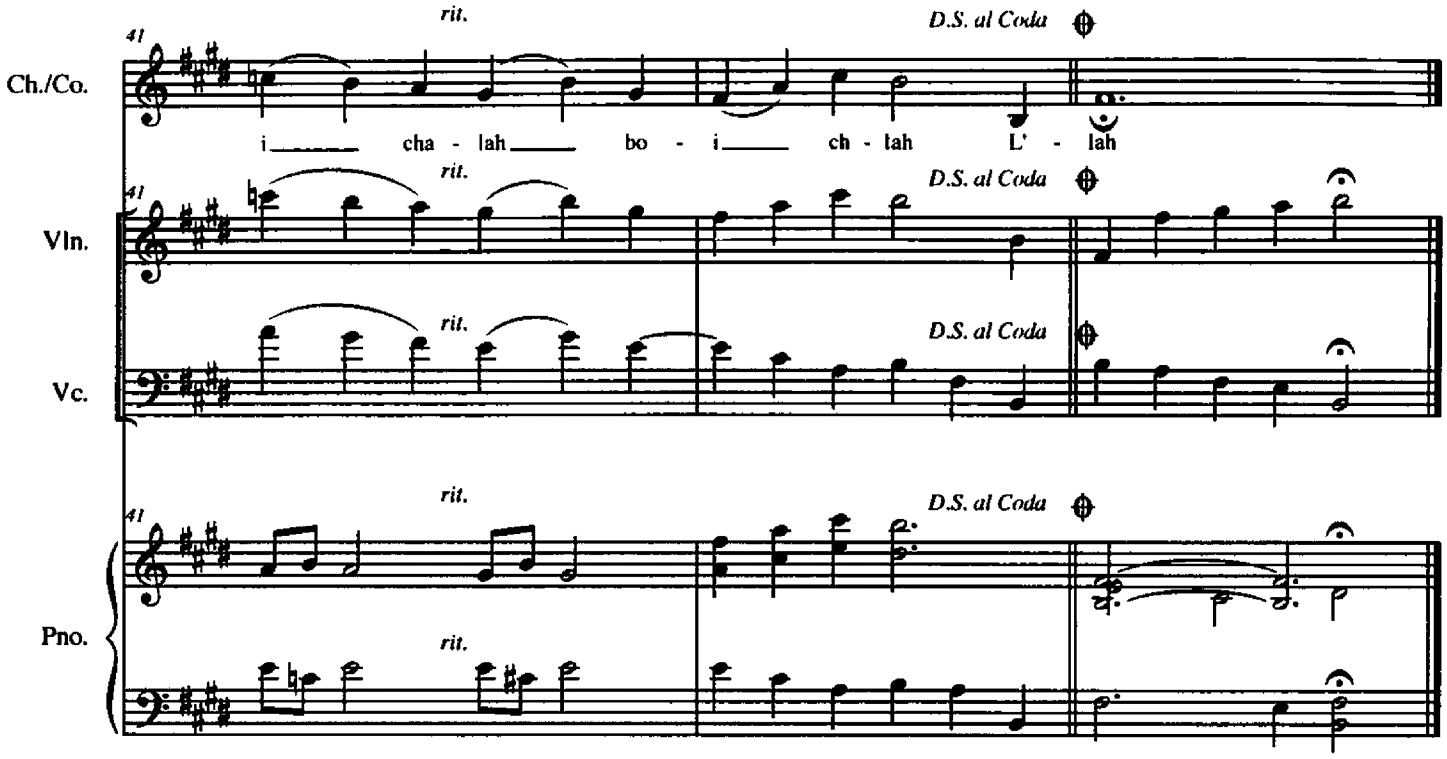



Ch./Co.
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.
Tempo I
f L' - cha do - di li - krat ka - lah p' - nei sha - bbat n' - ka - b'-
ff
mf
13
rit.
D.C. al Fine
lah L' - cha do - di li - krat ka - lah p' - nei sha - bbat n' - ka - b'-


17 a tempo
Ch./Co.
lah sha - mor v'-za chor b'-di - bur e-chad hish mi - a - nu Eil ha m'yu-
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.
21
chad A-do - nai e-chad u-sh' - mo e-chad u-l' - sheim ul' tif - e - ret v'-


Ch./Co.
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.
25
rit.
a tempo
lit - hi - lah
L' - cha do-di li - krat ka-lah p'-
29
nei sha-bbat n' - ka - b' - lah
L' - cha do-di li - krat ka-lah p'-

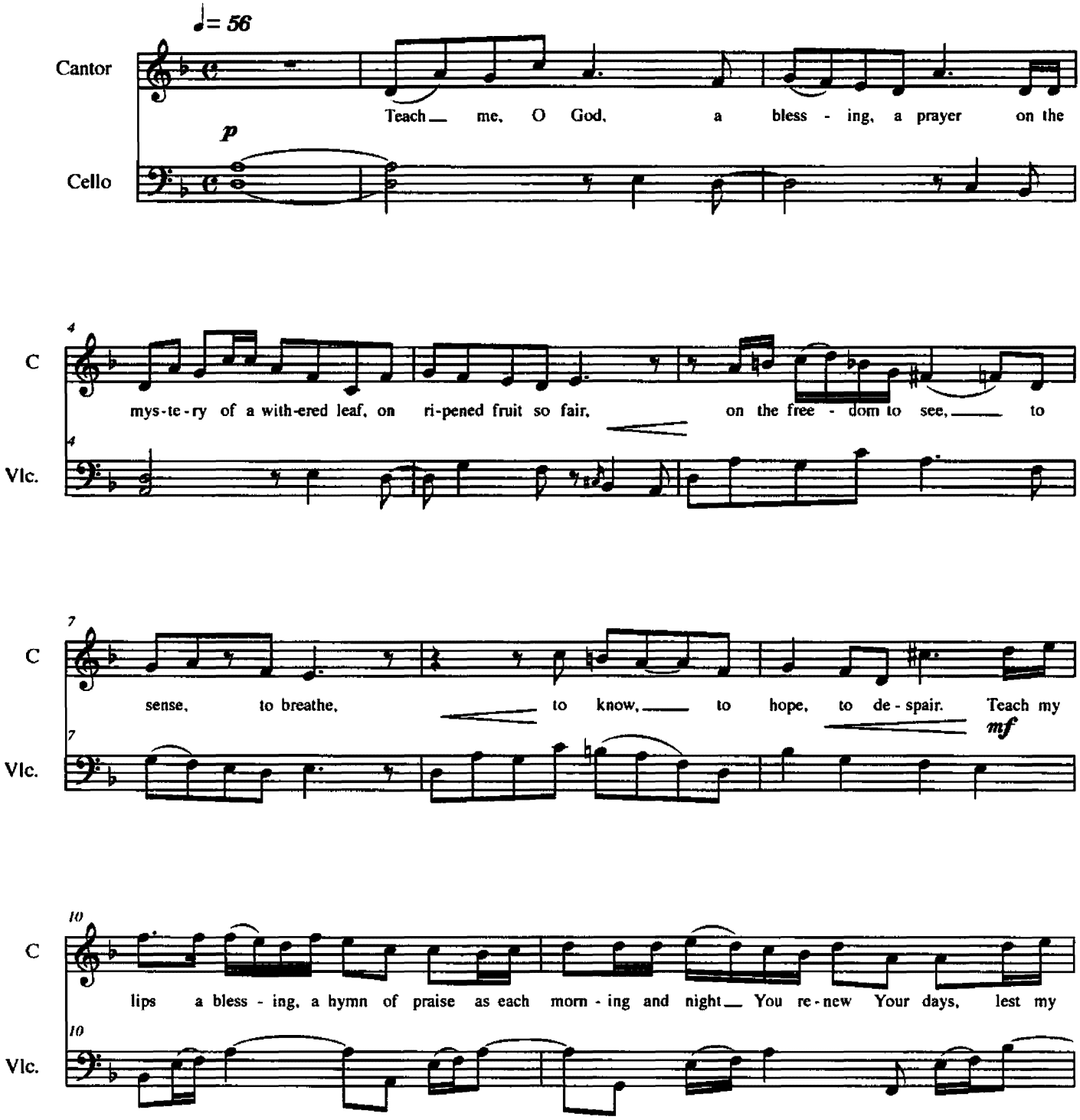

33
rit.
meno mosso
Ch./Co.
nei sha bbat n'-ka b' - lah
mp Bo - i v' sha lom a - te-ret ba'a-lah gam b'-
Vln.
Vc.
mp
Pno.
p
37
sim - chah uv'-tzo - ho - lah
toch e - mu-nei am s' - gu - lah bo-

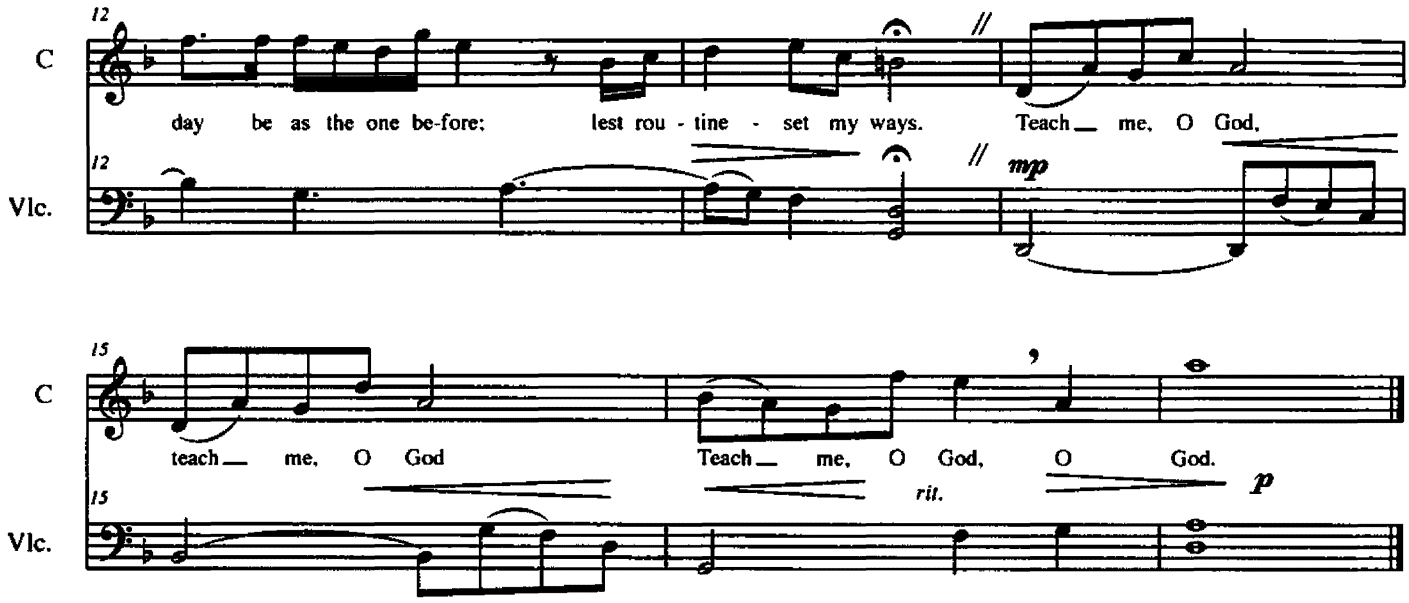

41
rit.
D.S. al Coda
Ch./Co.
i cha - lah bo - i ch - lah L' - lah
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.

Score

# Teach Me O God

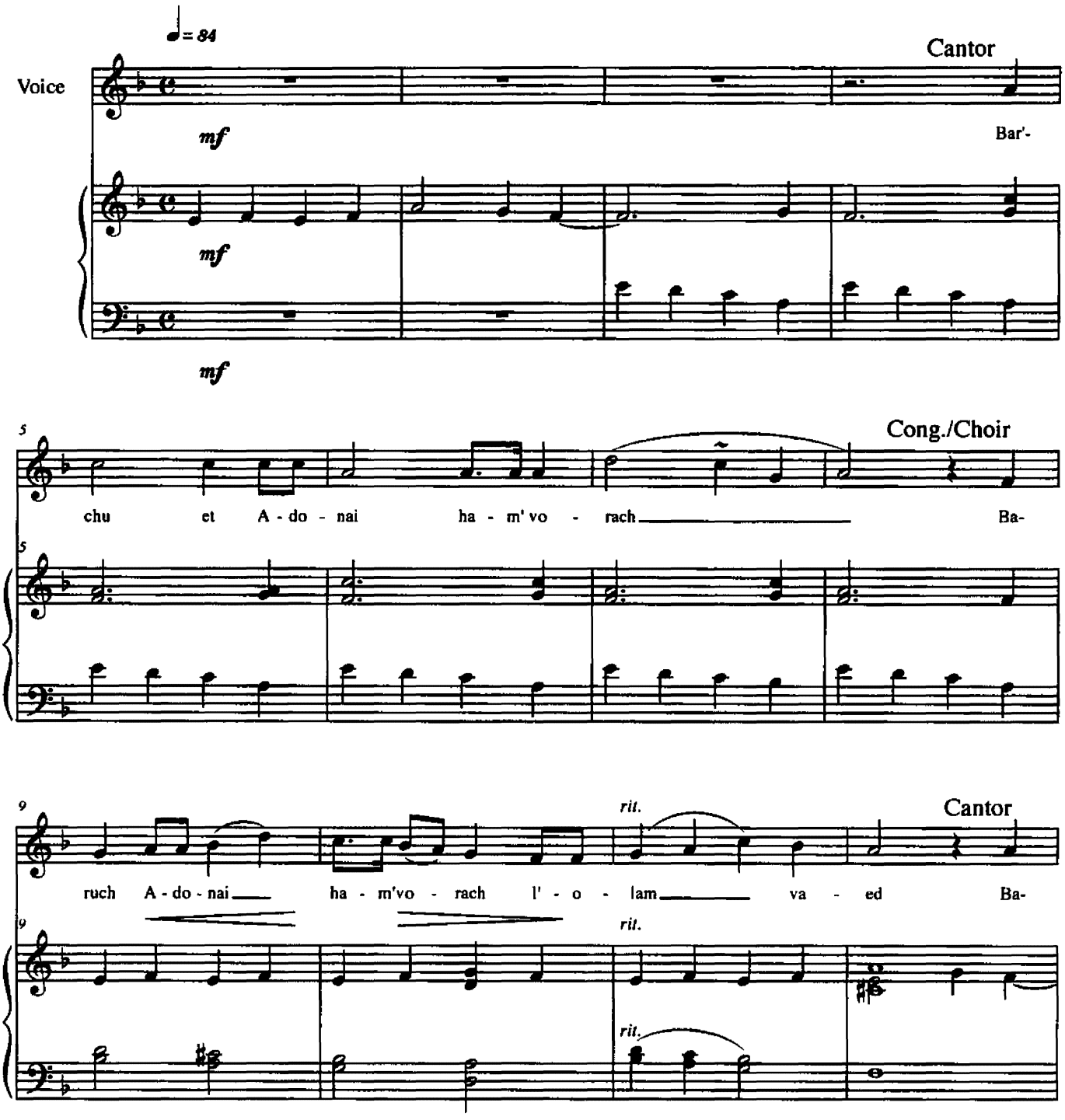
**Randall Schloss**

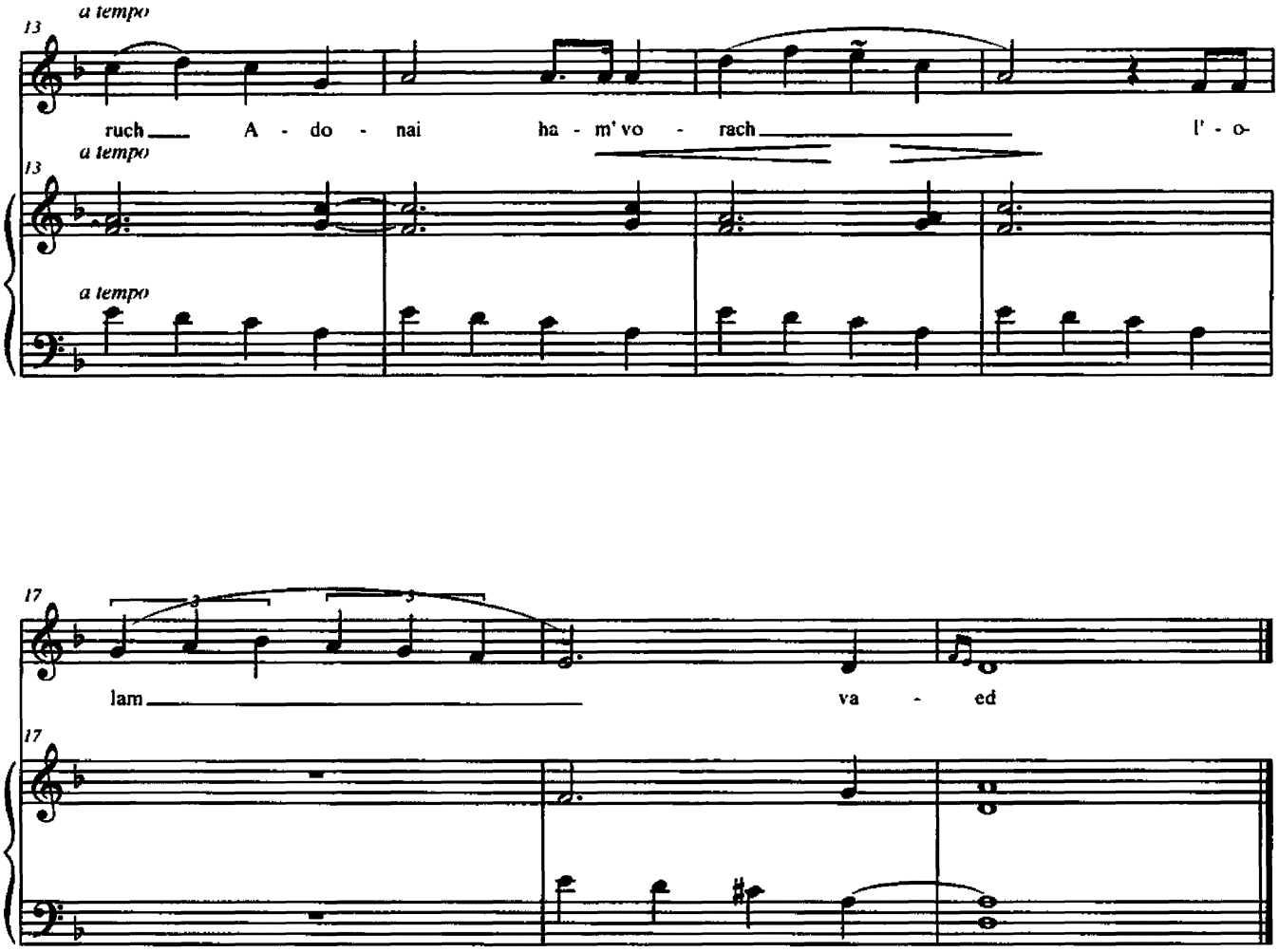



12
C
day be as the one be-fore; lest rou - tine - set my ways. Teach me, O God,
12
Vlc.
mp
15
C
teach me, O God Teach me, O God, O God.
rit.
p
15
Vlc.

# Bar'chu

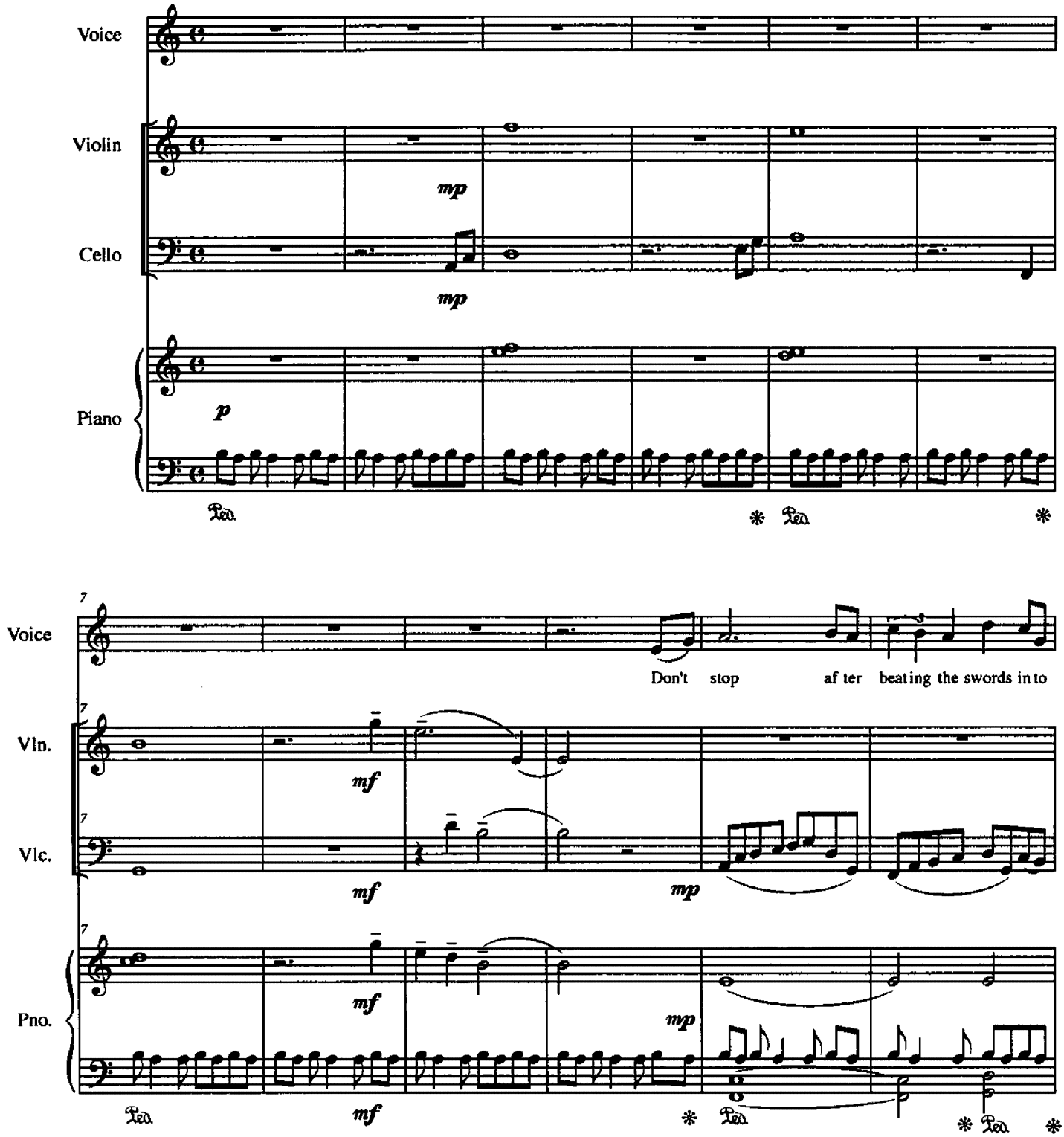
**Randall Schloss**

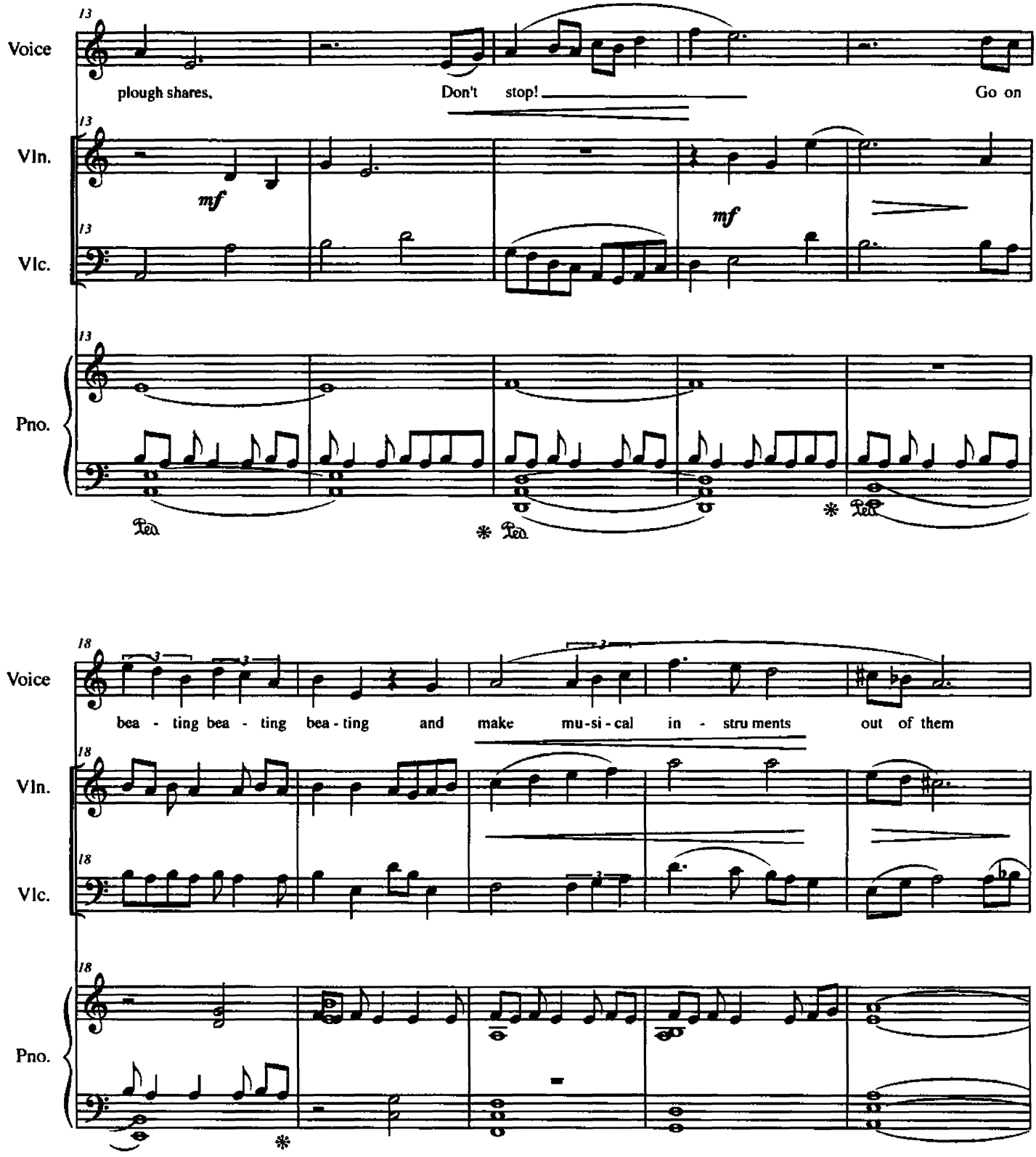


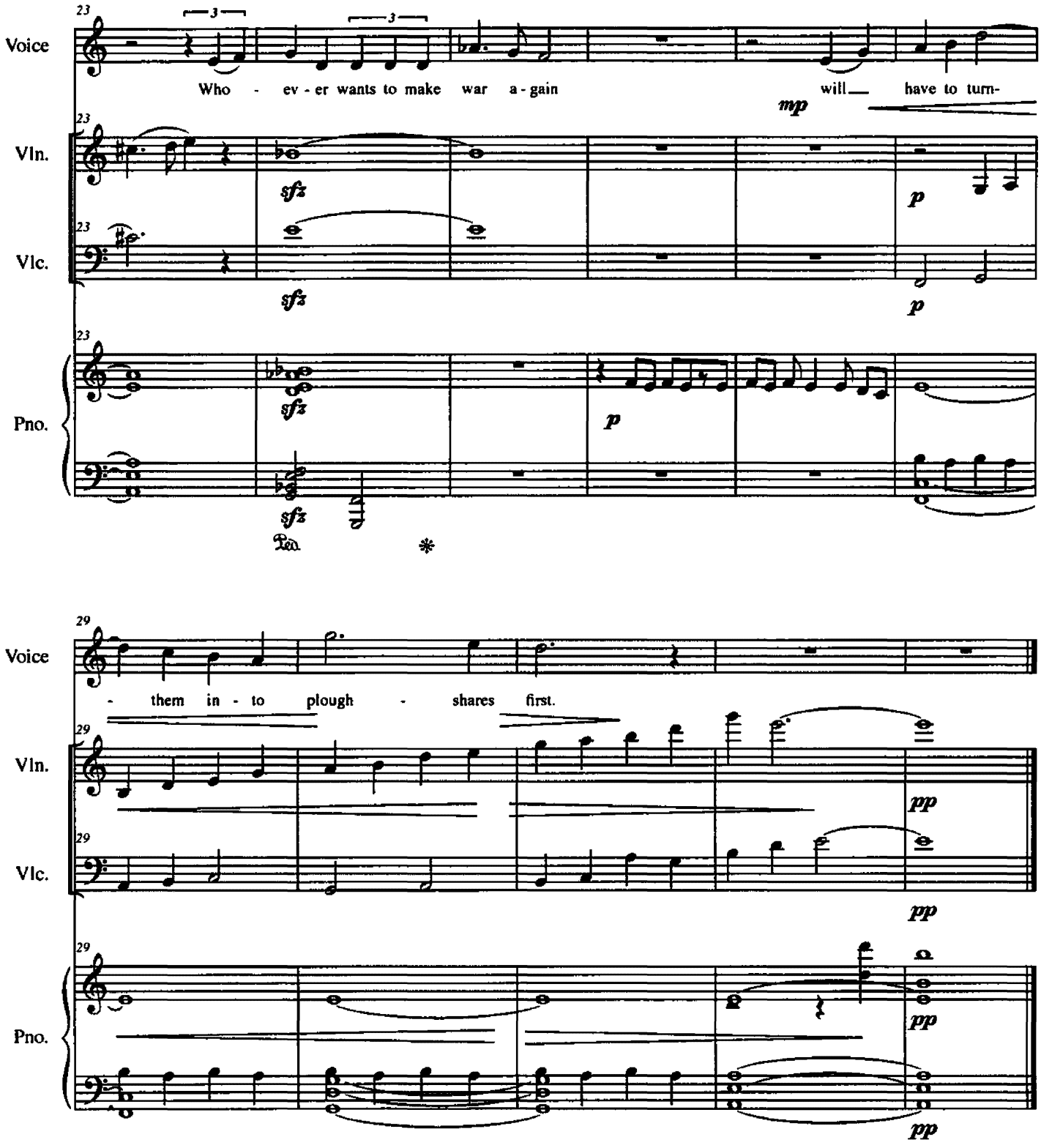

a tempo
13
ruch A - do - nai ha - m' vo - rach l' - o-
a tempo
13
a tempo
17
lam va - ed
17

# An Appendix to the Vision of Peace

**Randall Schloss**

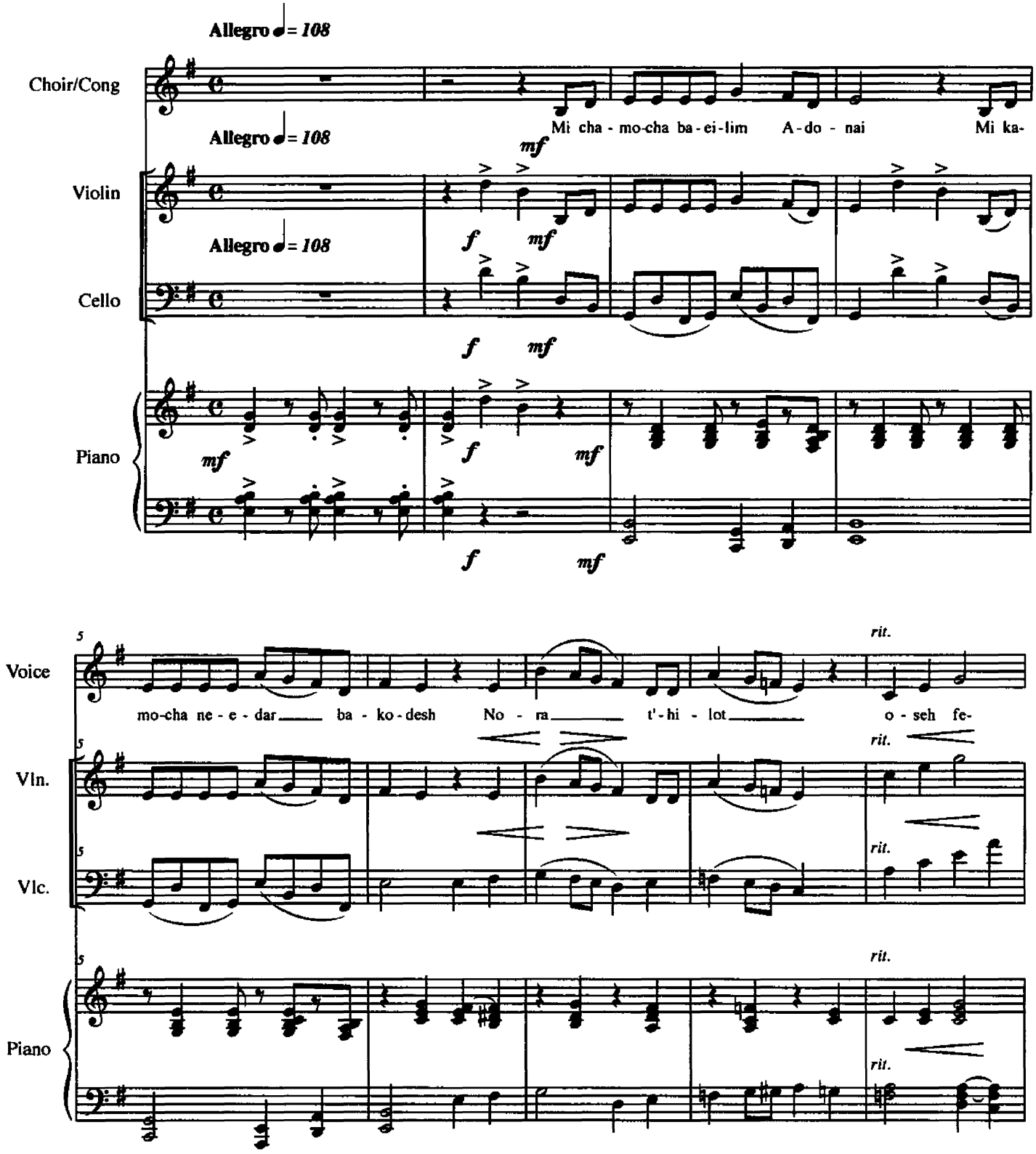


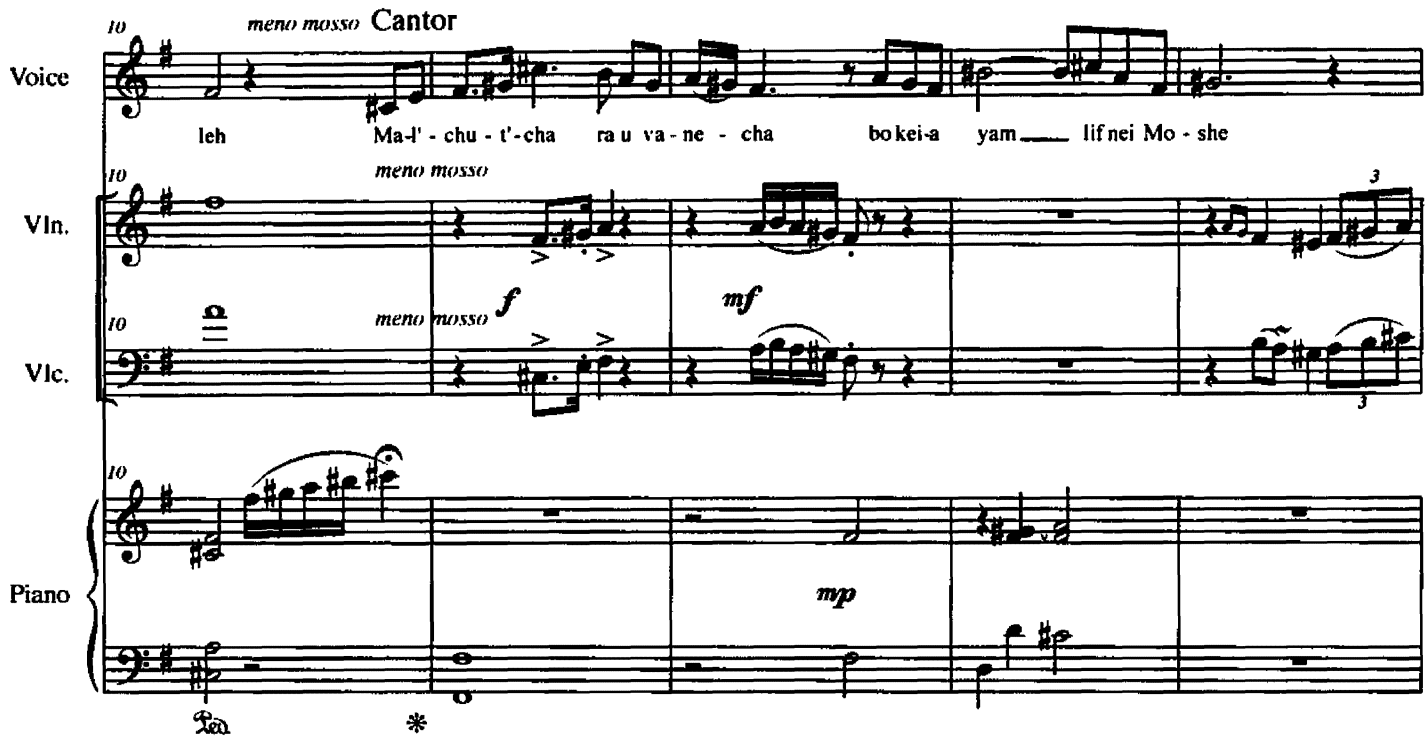

13
Voice
plough shares, Don't stop! Go on
13
Vln.
mf
mf
13
Vlc.
13
Pno.
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
18
Voice
bea - ting bea - ting bea - ting and make mu-si-cal in - stru ments out of them
18
Vln.
18
Vlc.
18
Pno.

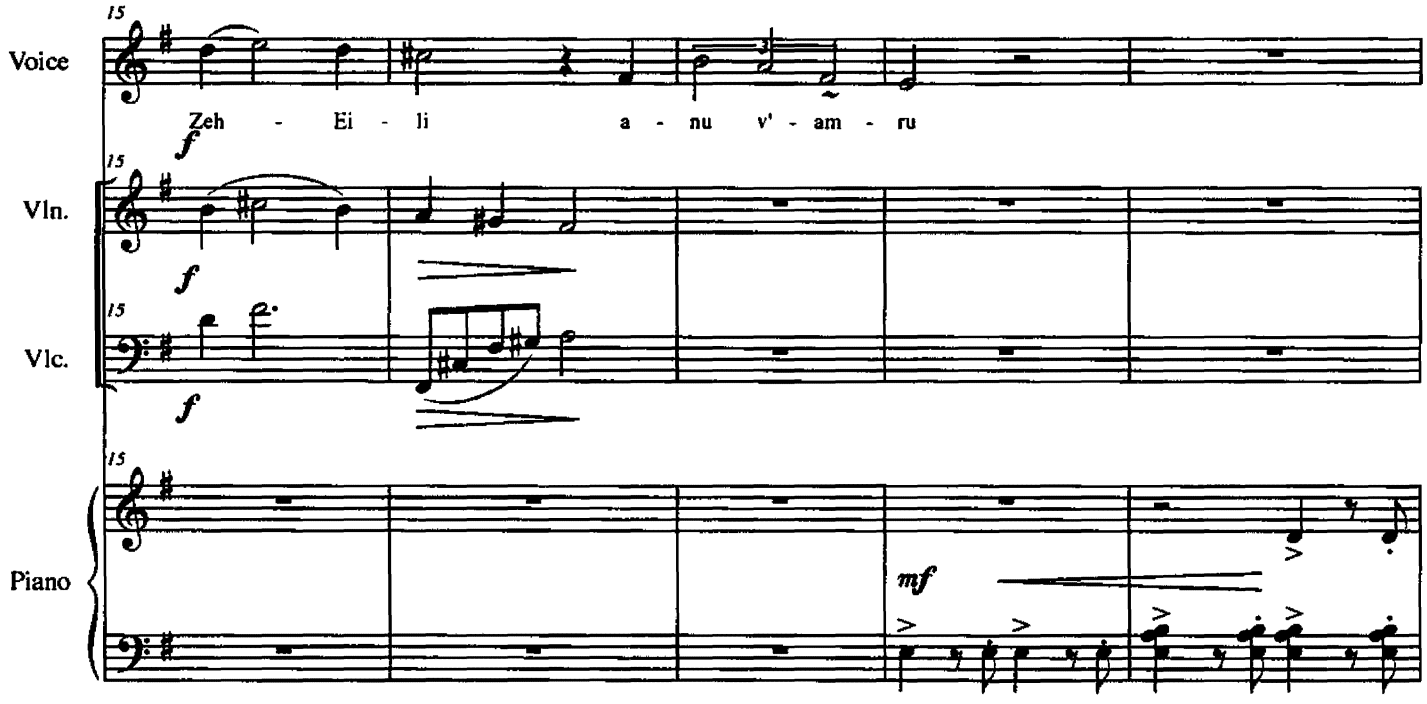

23
Voice
Who - ev - er wants to make war a - gain will have to turn-
mp
Vln.
sfz
p
Vlc.
sfz
p
Pno.
sfz
p
sfz
29
Voice
- them in - to plough - shares first.
Vln.
pp
Vlc.
pp
Pno.
pp
pp

# Mi Chamocha

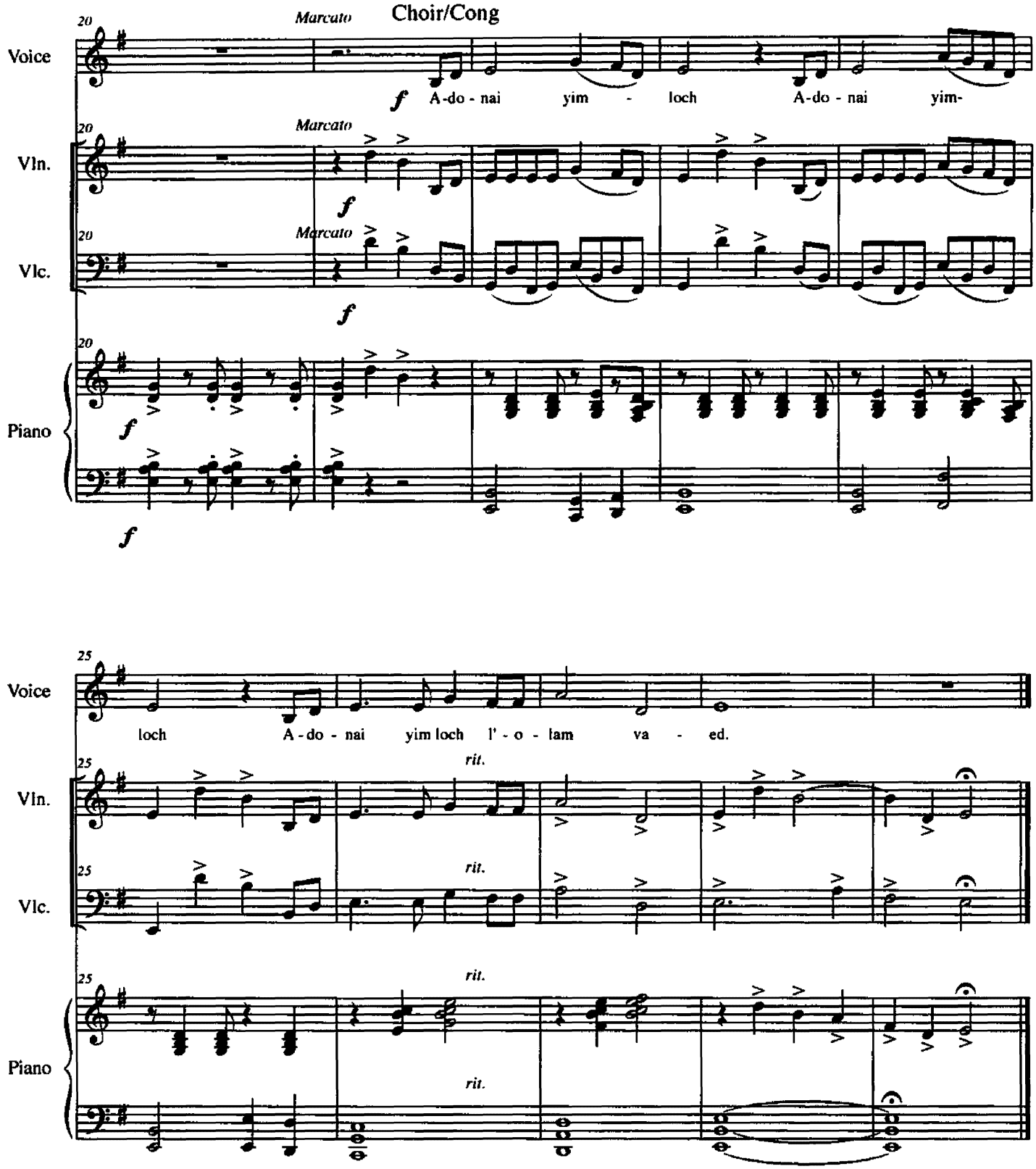
**Randall Schloss**




10
meno mosso Cantor
Voice
leh Ma-l' - chu - t'-cha ra u va - ne - cha bo kei-a yam lif nei Mo - she
Vln.
Vlc.
Piano
mf
mp

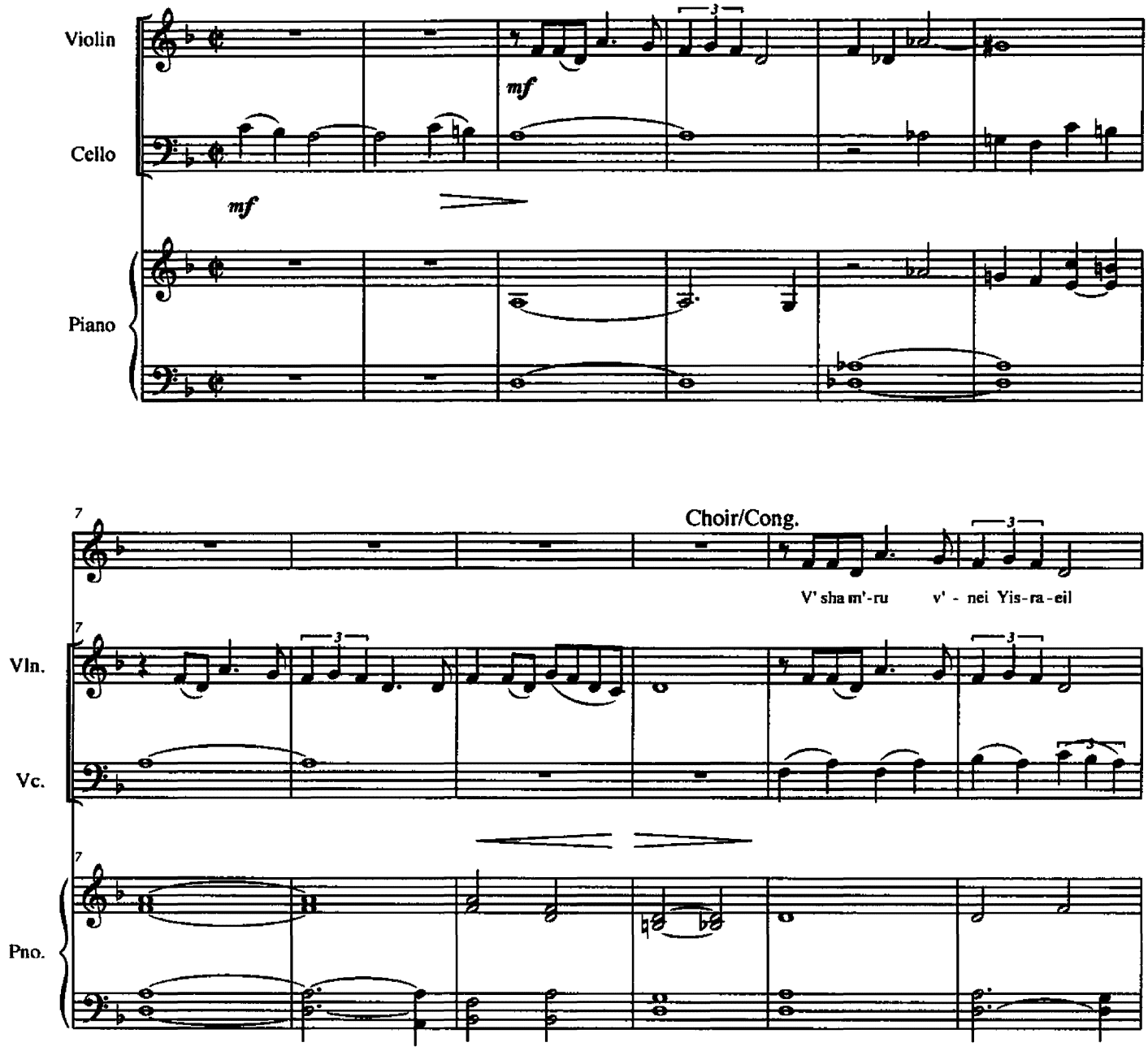

15
Voice
Zeh - Ei - li a - nu v' - am - ru
Vln.
Vlc.
Piano
f
mf

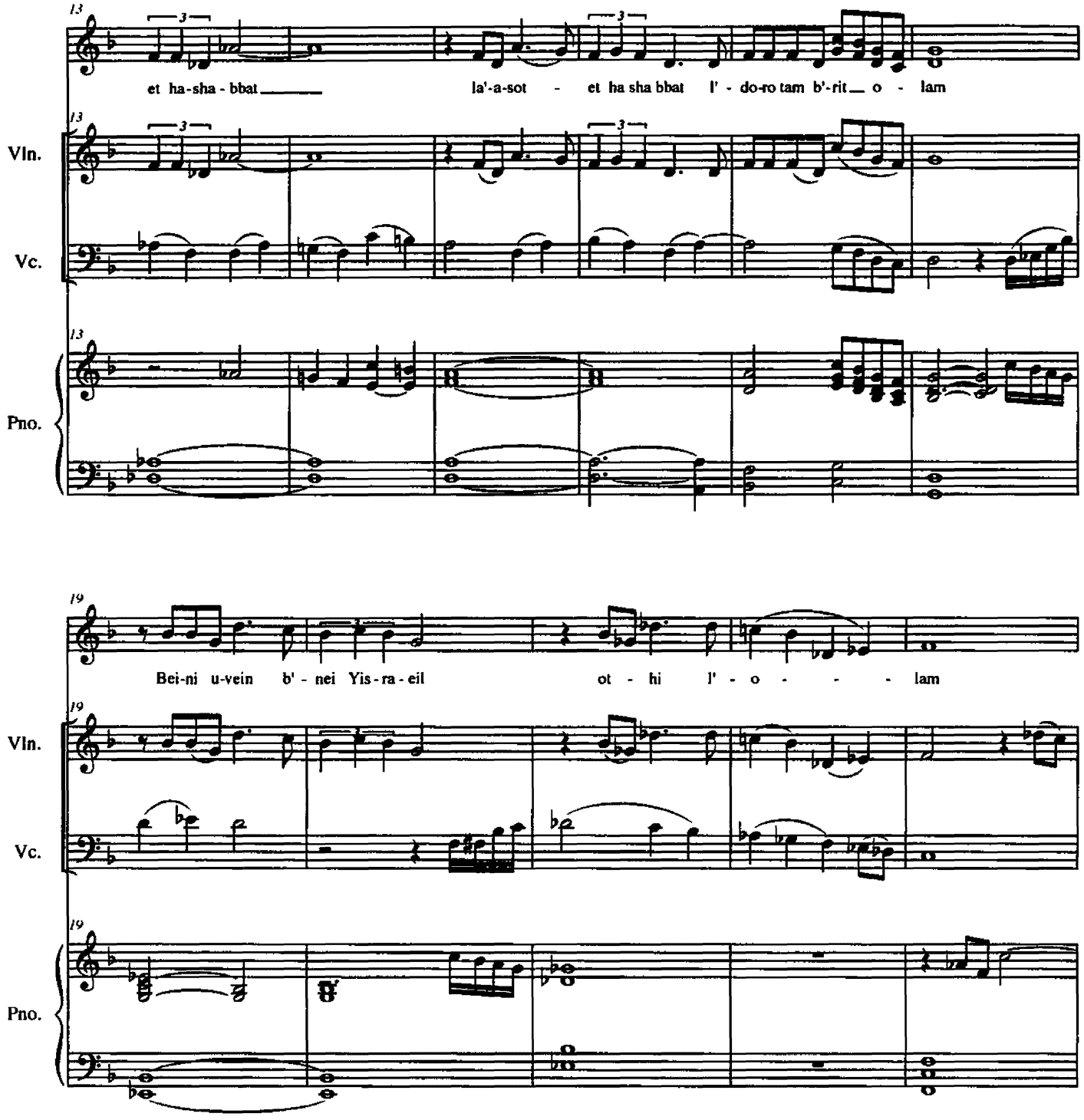
meno mosso

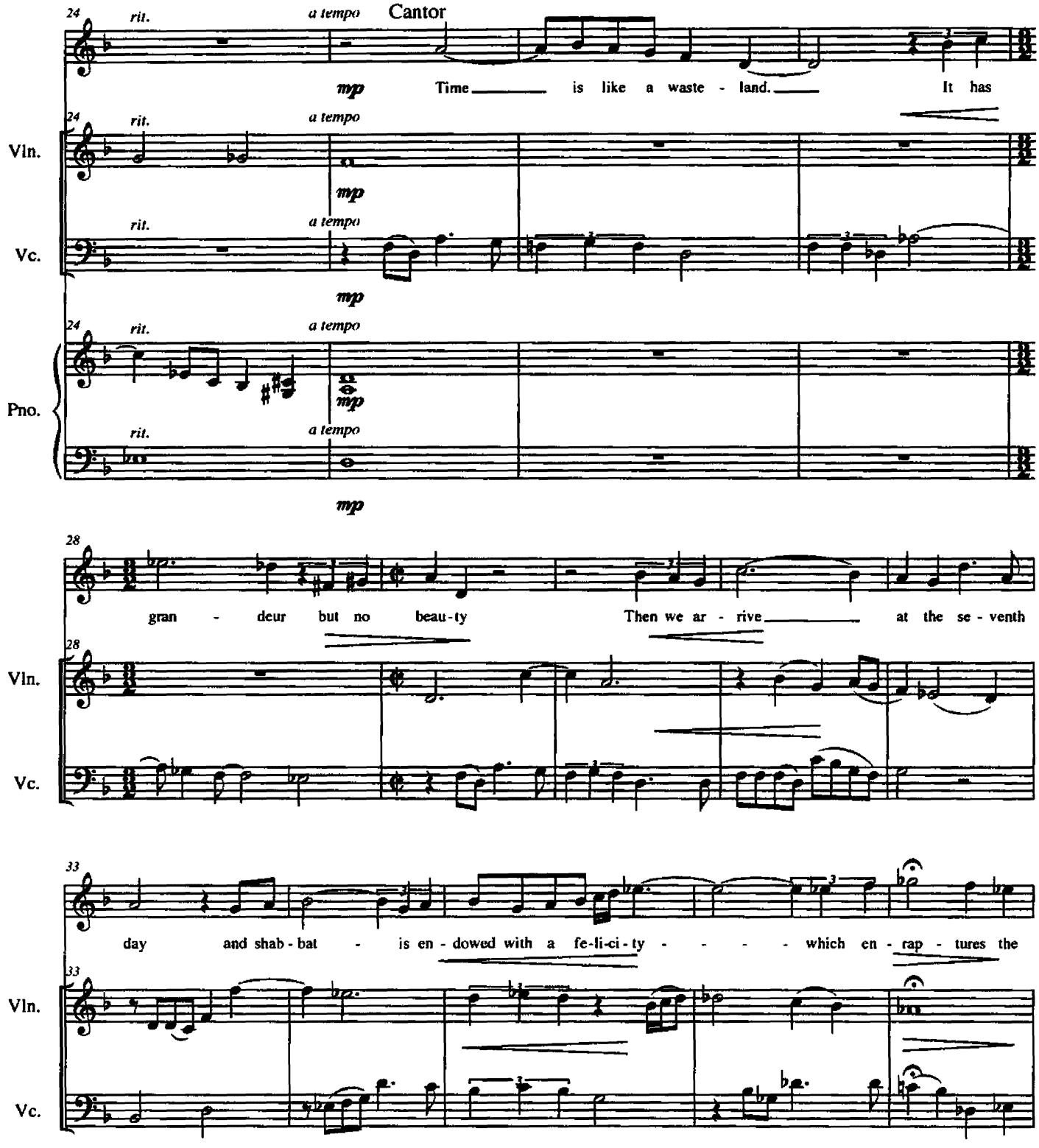

Choir/Cong
Voice
Vln.
Vlc.
Piano
20
25
Marcato
f
A-do - nai yim - loch A-do - nai yim-
loch A-do - nai yim loch l' - o - lam va - ed.
rit.

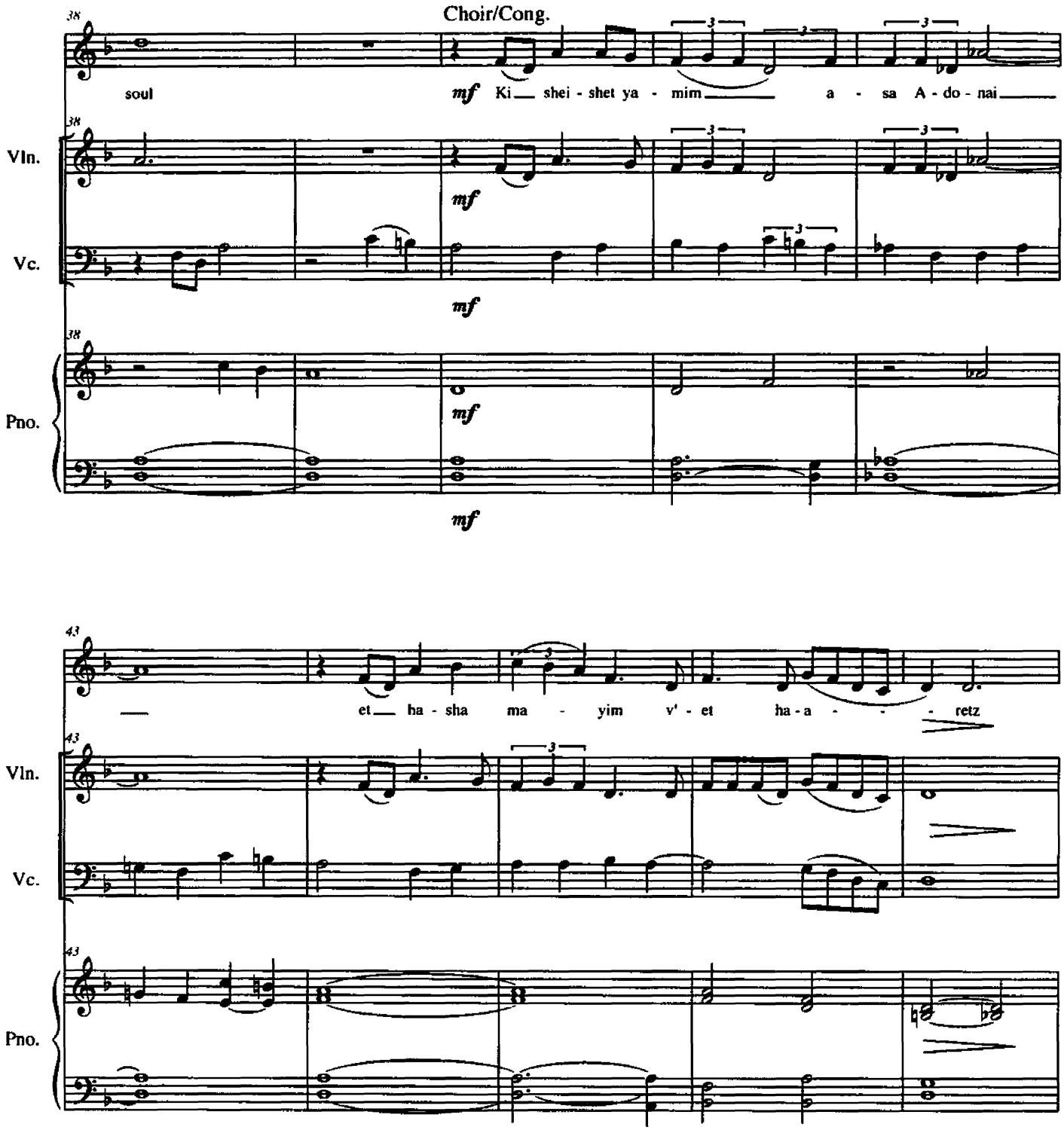
# V'shamru

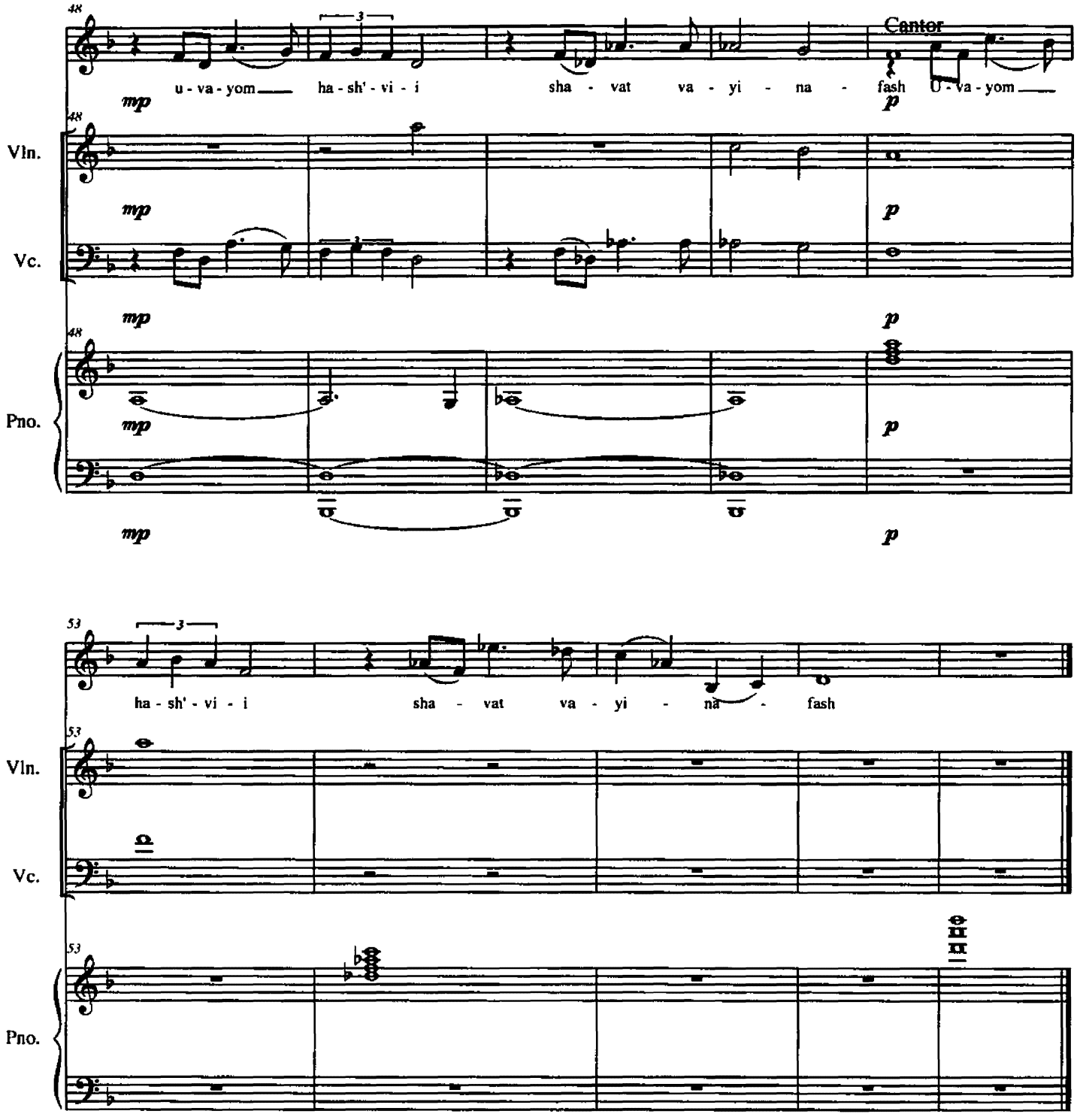
**Randall Schloss**




13
et ha-sha-bbat
la'-a-sot - et ha sha bbat l' - do-ro tam b'-rit o - lam
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.
19
Bei-ni u-vein b' - nei Yis-ra-eil
ot - hi l' - o - - - lam
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.

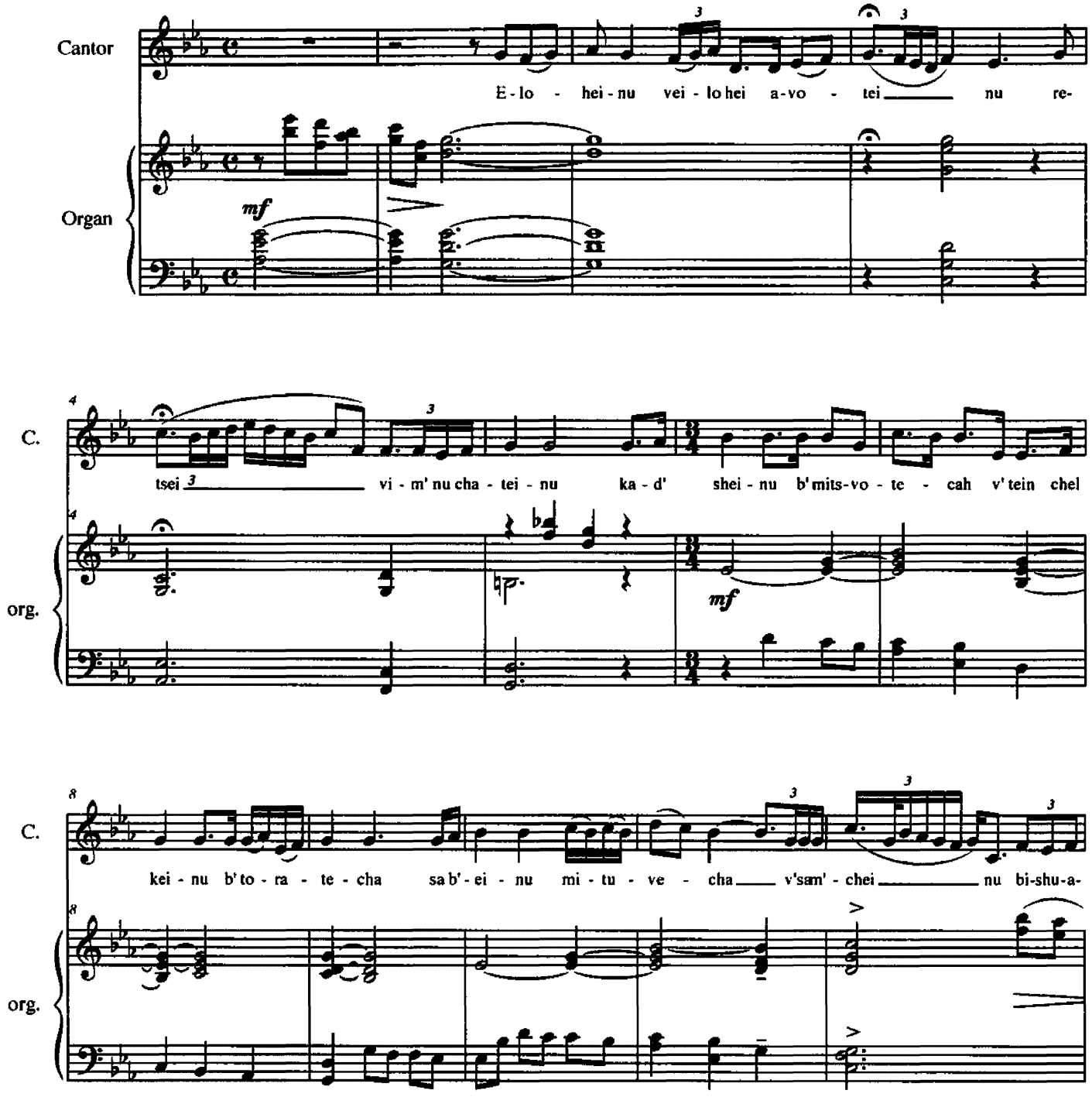

24
rit.
a tempo
Cantor
mp
Time is like a waste - land. It has
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.
28
gran - deur but no beau-ty Then we ar - rive at the se - venth
33
day and shab - bat - is en - dowed with a fe-li-ci-ty - - - - which en - rap - tures the

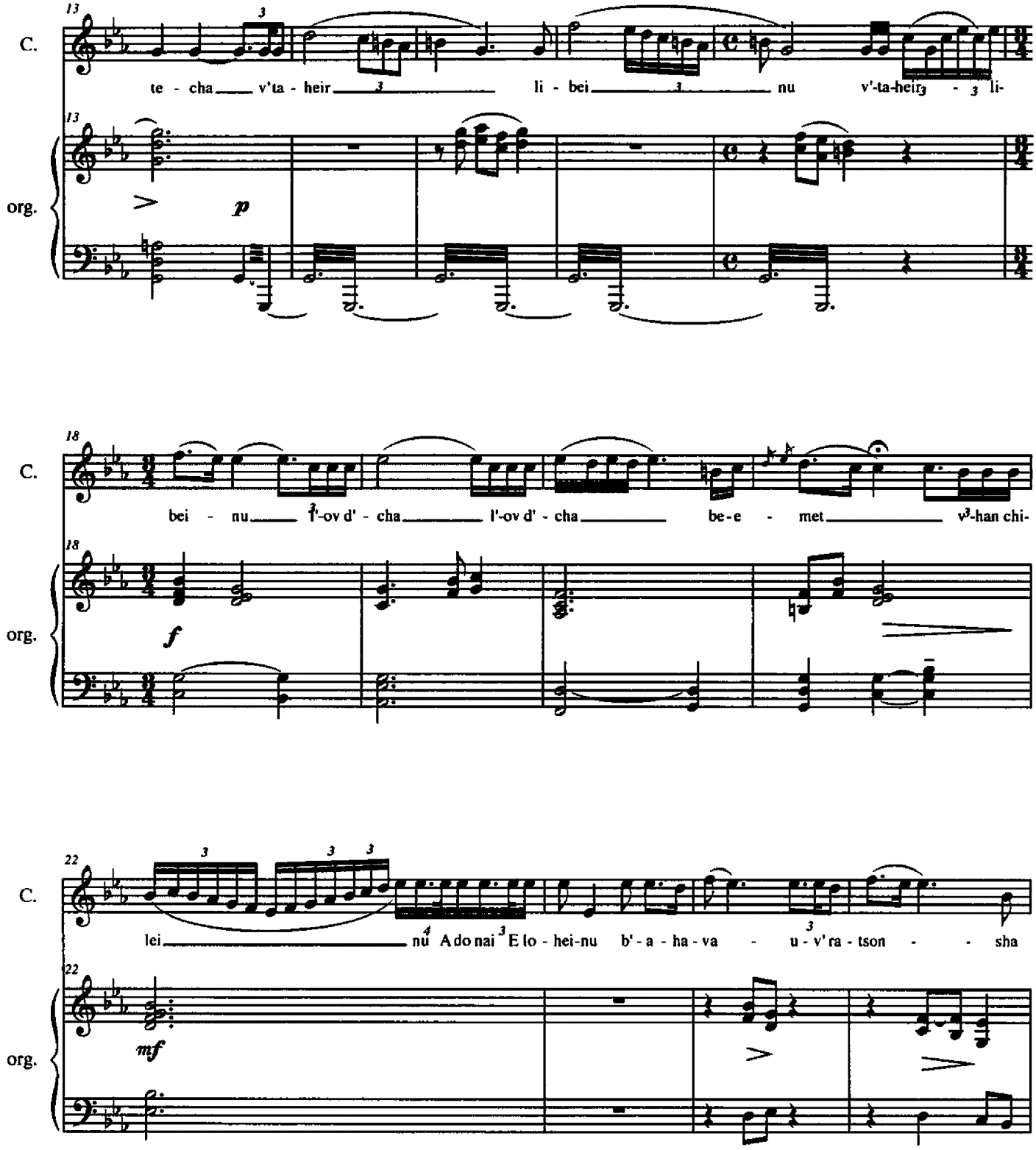

Choir/Cong.
soul
mf Ki shei - shet ya - mim a - sa A - do - nai
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.
et ha - sha ma - yim v' - et ha - a - retz

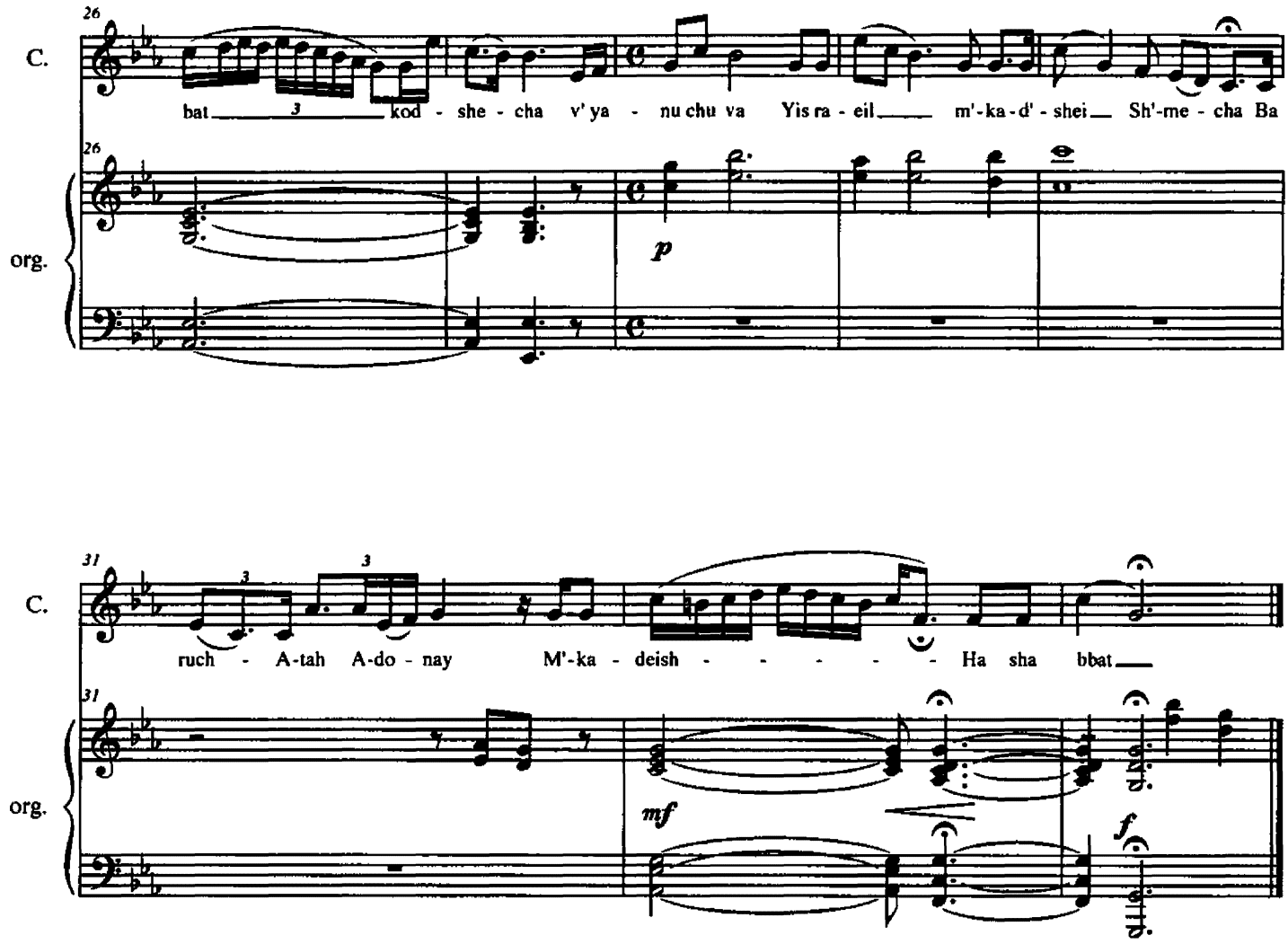

48
Cantor
u - va - yom ha - sh' - vi - i sha - vat va - yi - na - fash U - va - yom
mp
p
Vln.
Vc.
Pno.
53
ha - sh' - vi - i sha - vat va - yi - na - fash

# Eloheinu... R'tseih

**Alter/Schloss**

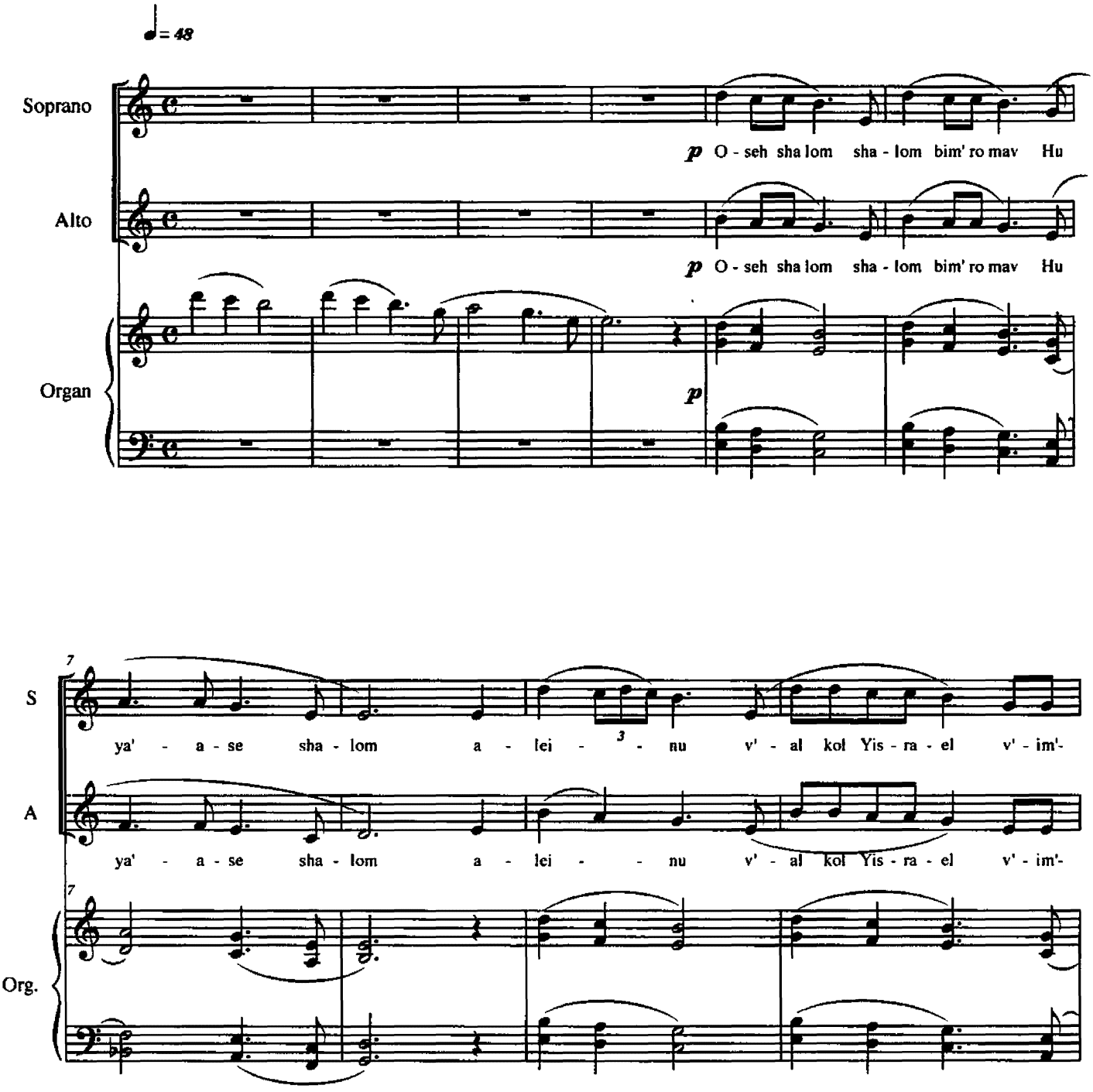


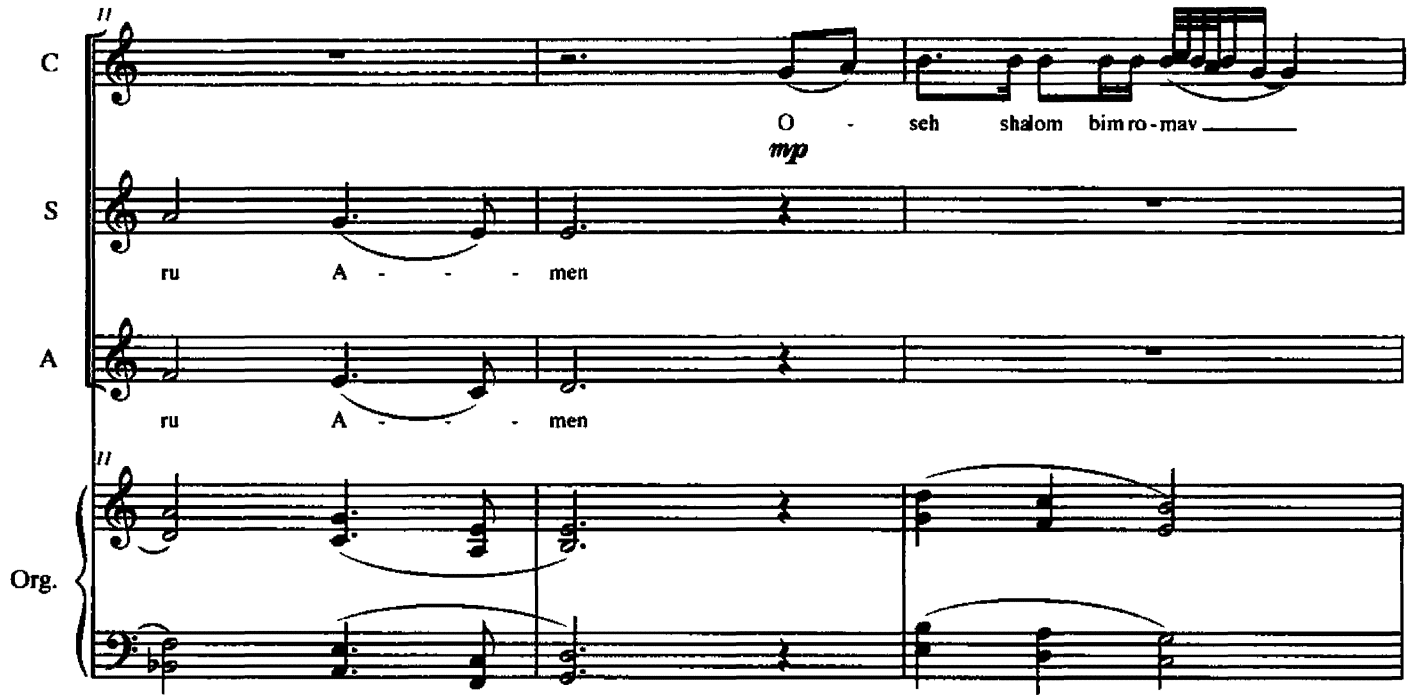

C.
org.
te - cha v'ta - heir li - bei nu v'-ta-hei - li-
p
bei - nu l'-ov d' - cha l'-ov d' - cha be-e - met v'-han chi-
f
lei nu Adonai Elo - hei-nu b' - a - ha - va - u - v'ra - tson - sha
mf

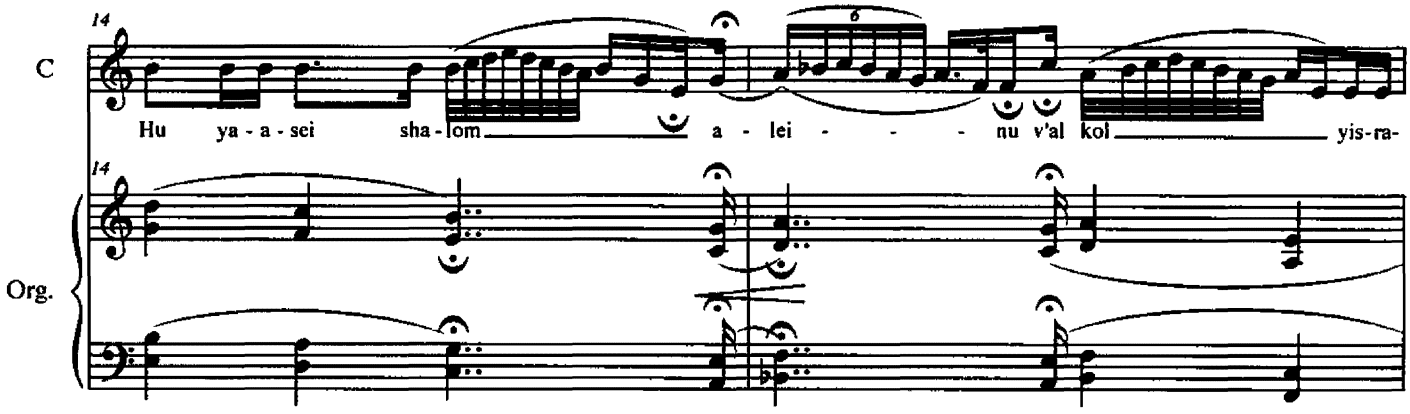

26
C.
bat 3 kod - she - cha v'ya - nu chu va Yis ra - eil m'-ka-d'-shei Sh'-me - cha Ba
26
org.
p
31
C.
3
3
ruch - A-tah A-do - nay M'-ka - deish - - - - - Ha sha bbat
31
org.
mf
f

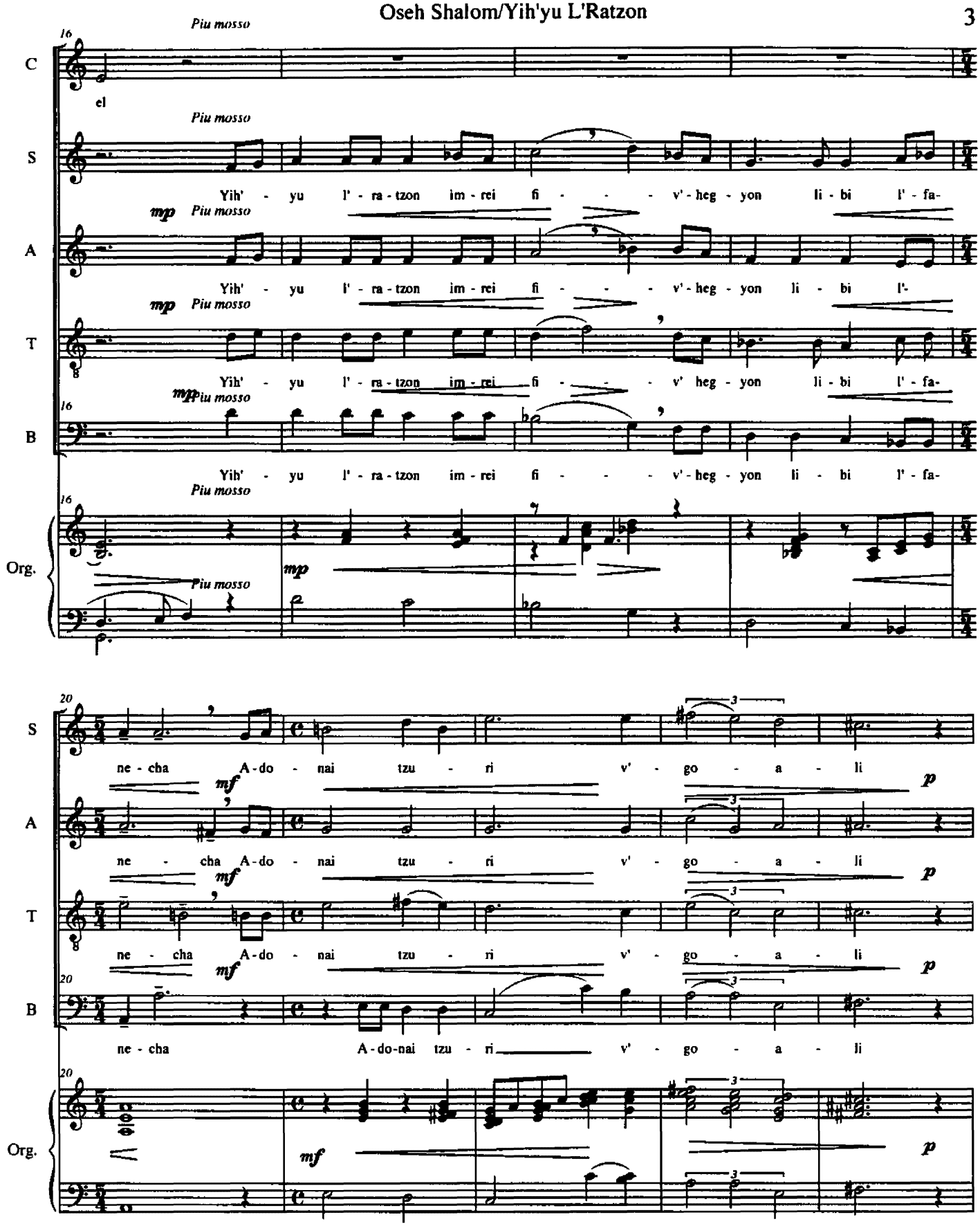
# Oseh Shalom/Yih'yu L'ratzon

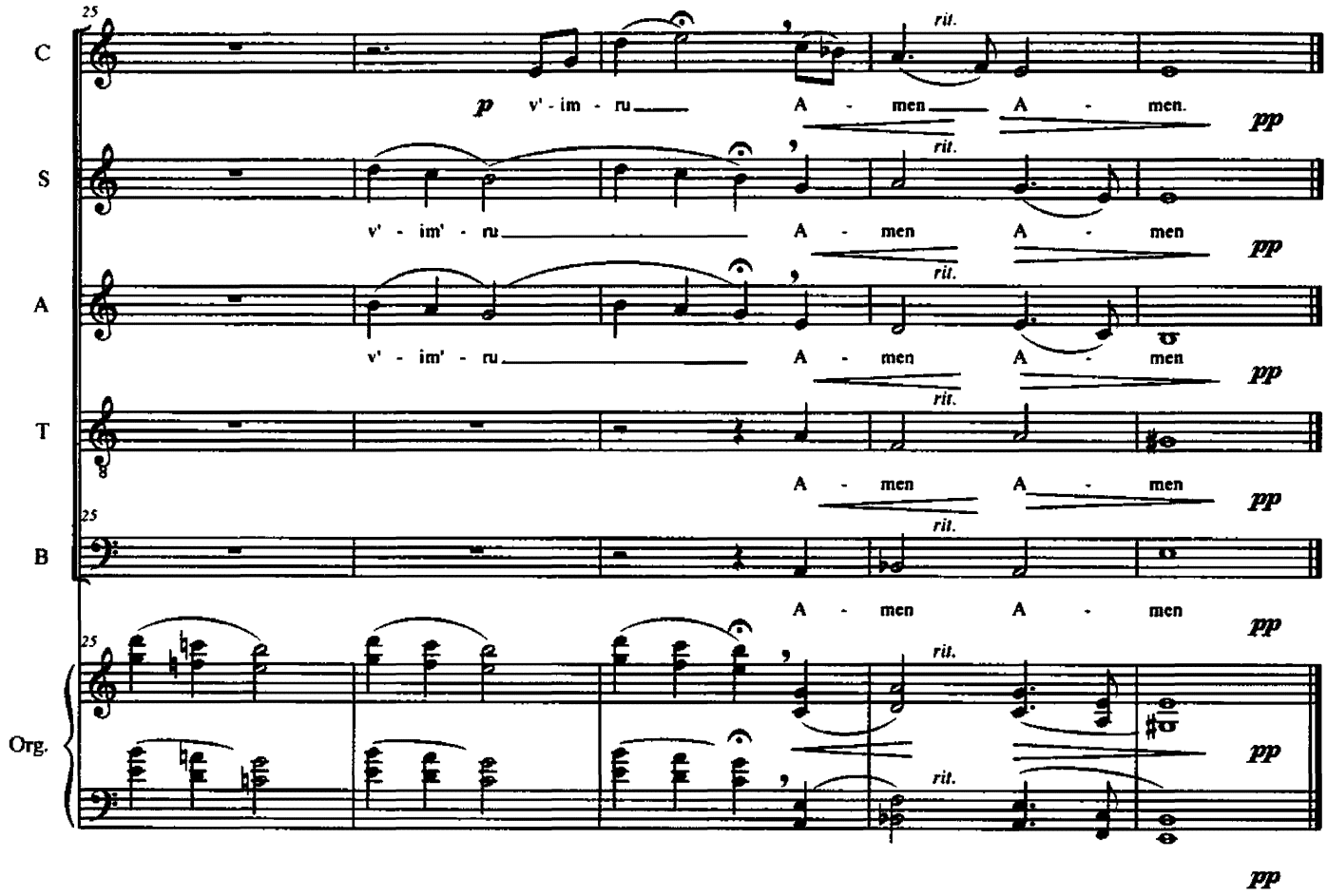
**Randall Schloss**




11
C
O - seh shalom bim ro - mav
mp
S
ru A - - - men
A
ru A - - - men
11
Org.

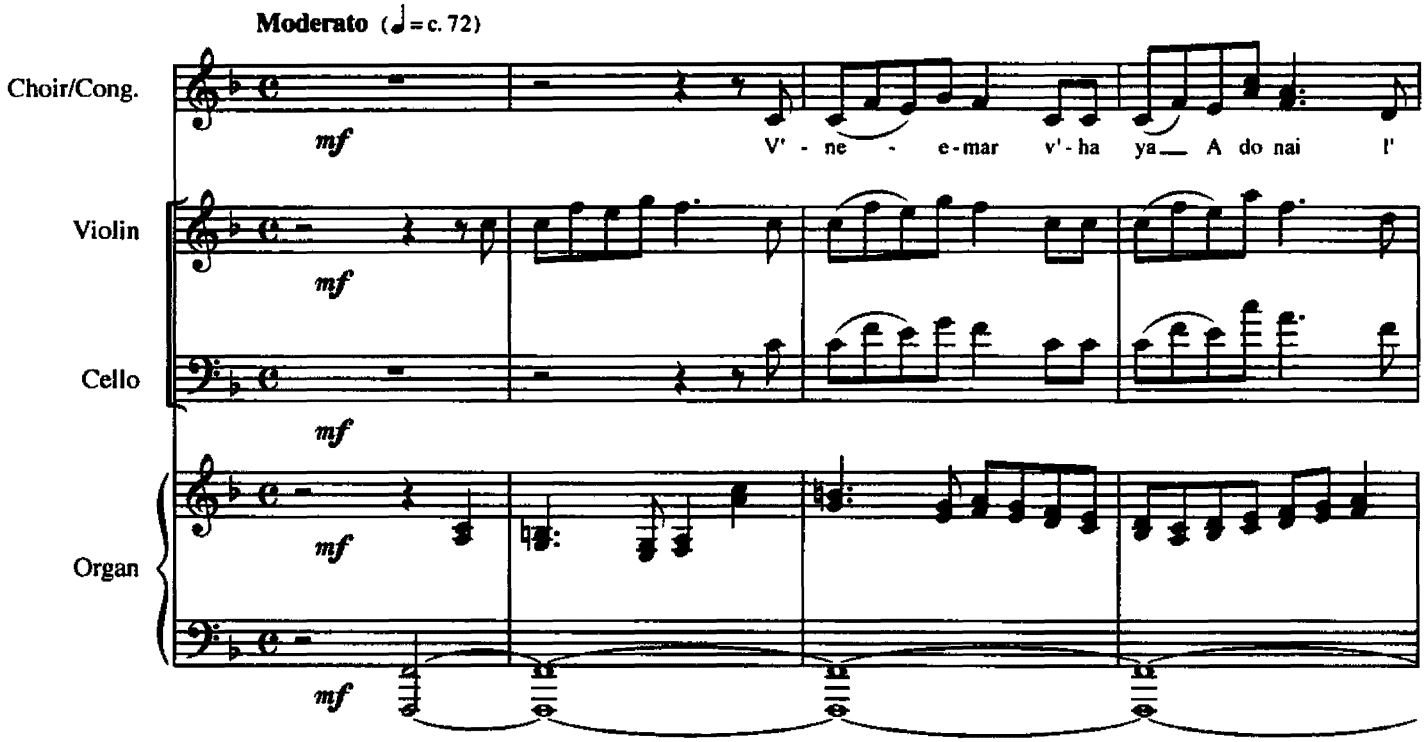

14
C
Hu ya - a - sei sha - lom a - lei - - - nu v'al kol yis-ra-
14
Org.

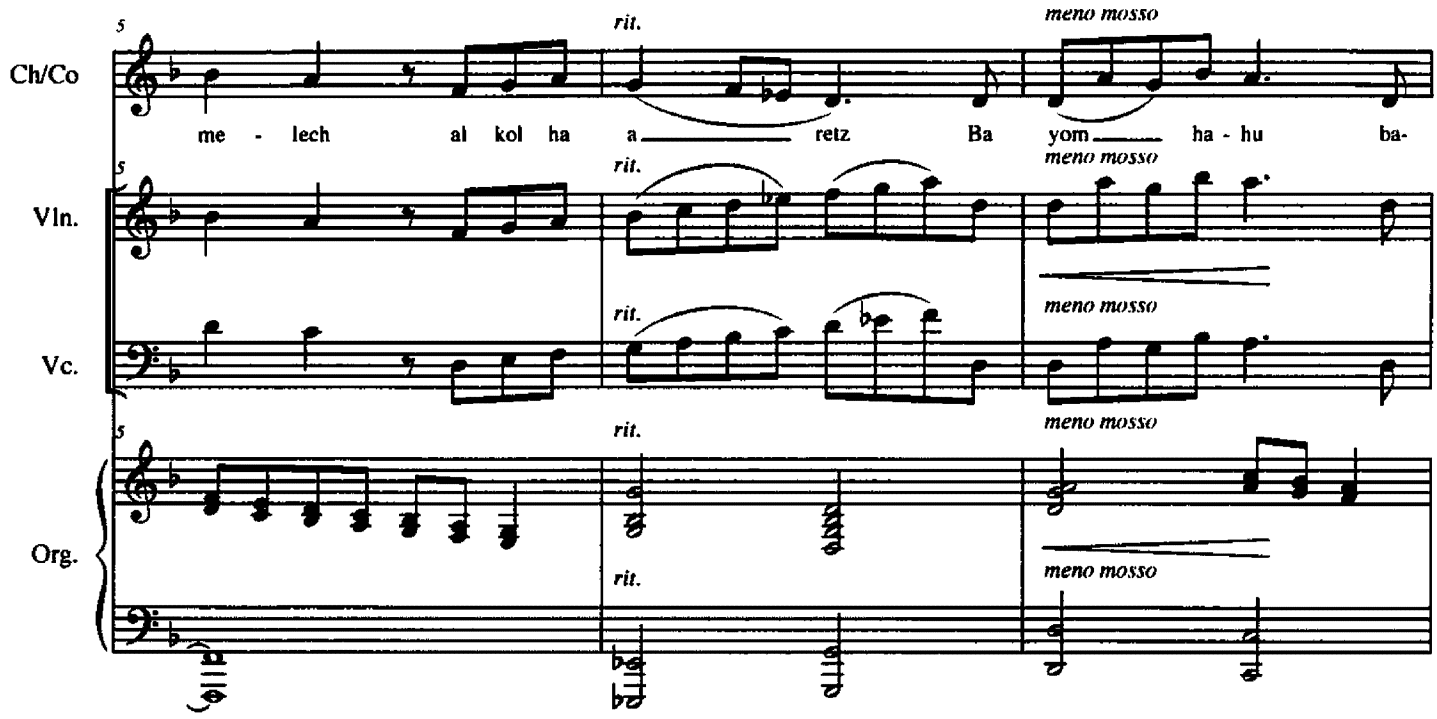

Piu mosso
C
el
S
Yih' - yu l' - ra - tzon im - rei fi - - - v' - heg - yon li - bi l' - fa-
mp Piu mosso
A
Yih' - yu l' - ra - tzon im - rei fi - - - v' - heg - yon li - bi l'-
mp Piu mosso
T
Yih' - yu l' - ra - tzon im - rei fi - - - v' heg - yon li - bi l' - fa-
mp Piu mosso
B
Yih' - yu l' - ra - tzon im - rei fi - - - v' - heg - yon li - bi l' - fa-
Piu mosso
Org.
mp
Piu mosso
20
S
ne - cha A - do - nai tzu - ri v' - go - a - li
mf
p
A
ne - cha A - do - nai tzu - ri v' - go - a - li
mf
p
T
ne - cha A - do - nai tzu - ri v' - go - a - li
mf
p
B
ne - cha A - do-nai tzu - ri v' - go - a - li
Org.
mf
p


25
C
p v' - im - ru A - men A - men. pp
rit.
S
v' - im' - ru A - men A - men pp
rit.
A
v' - im' - ru A - men A - men pp
rit.
T
A - men A - men pp
rit.
25
B
A - men A - men pp
rit.
25
Org.
rit.
rit.
pp
pp

# V'ne'emar/Bayom Hahu

**Randall Schloss**

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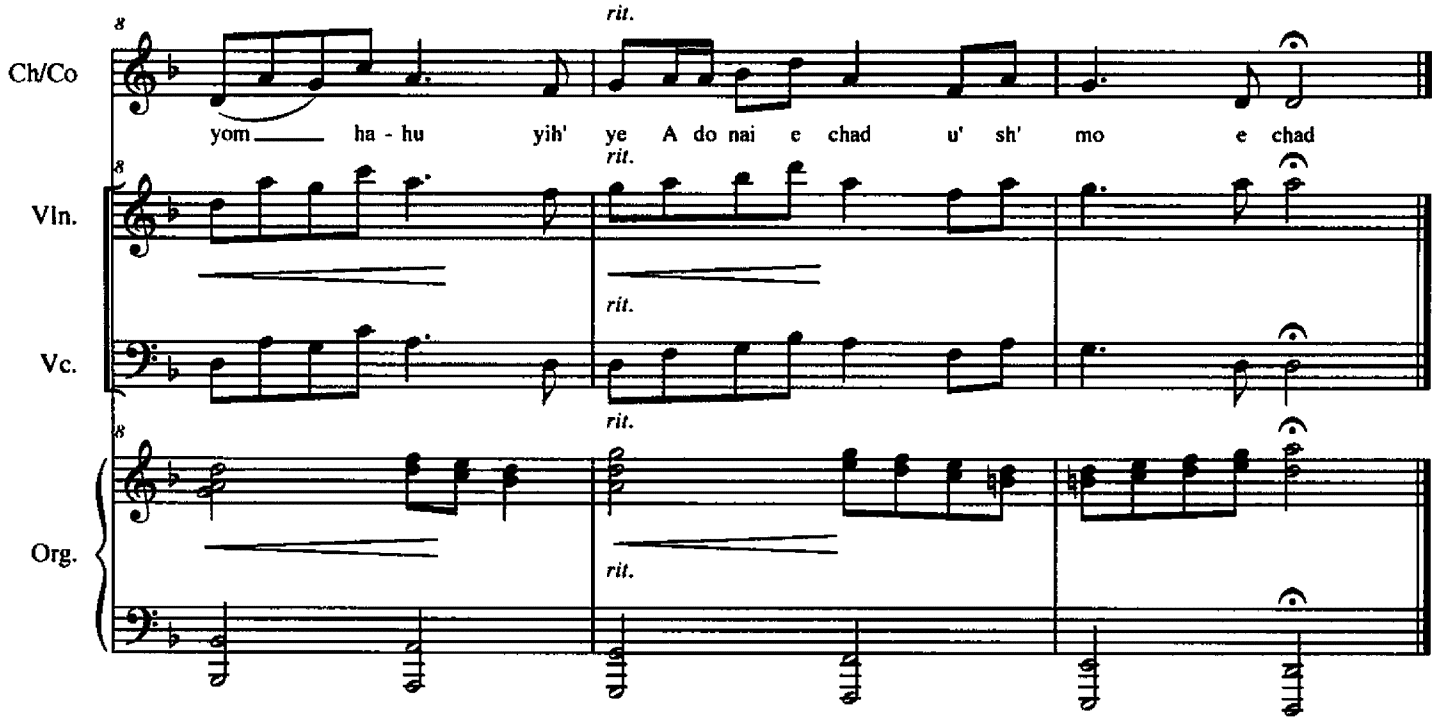
meno mosso
me - lech al kol ha a retz Ba yom ha - hu ba-


8
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yom ha - hu yih' ye A do nai e chad u' sh' mo e chad

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