Rorate Caeli

Michael Joncas

Preview

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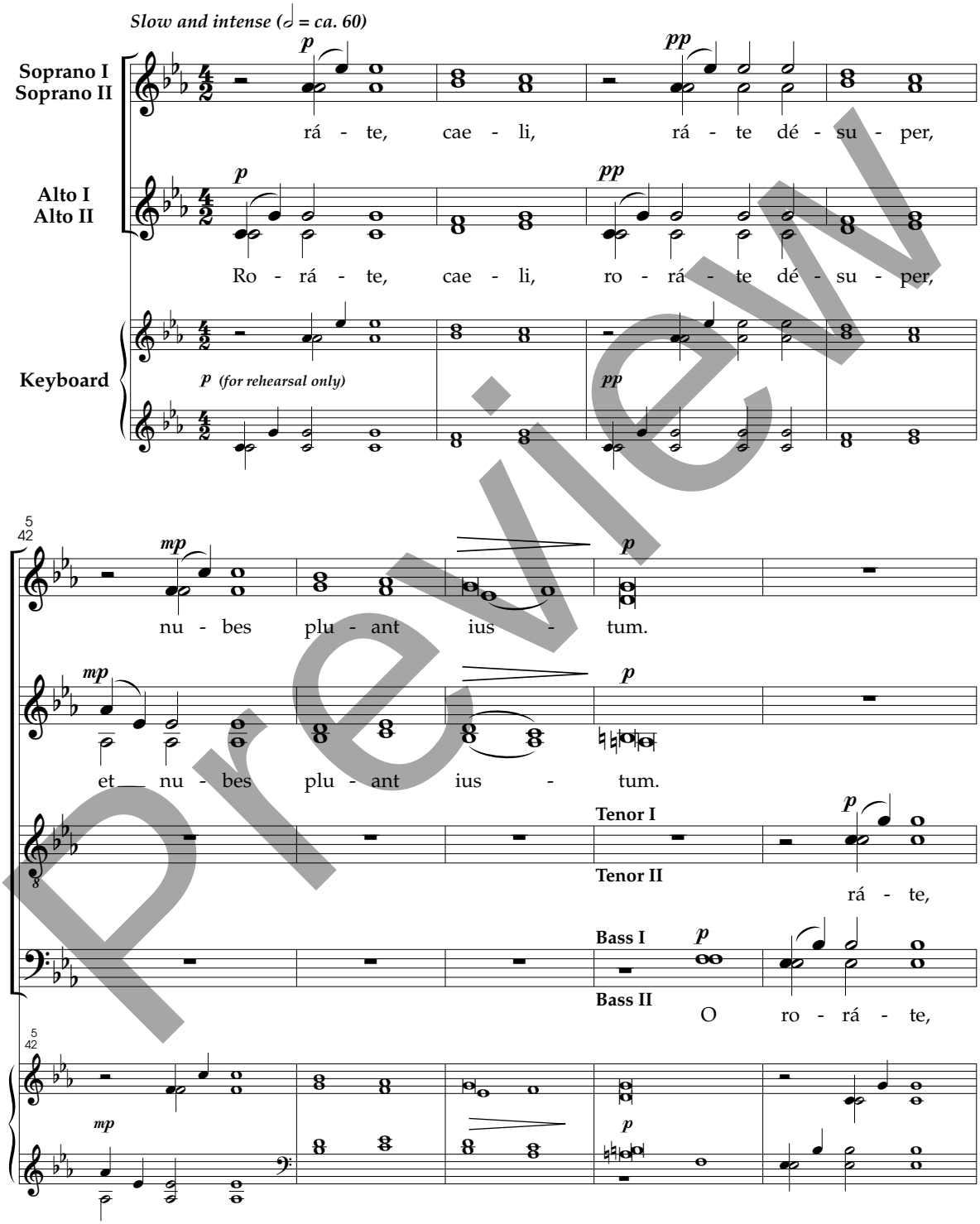
Edition #4627

for the Liturgical Choir of the University of St. Thomas, St. Paul, MN
(Rob Strusinski, founder and director) on its 30th anniversary of existence (2007)

Rorate Caeli

Isaiah 45:8

Michael Joncas

Preview

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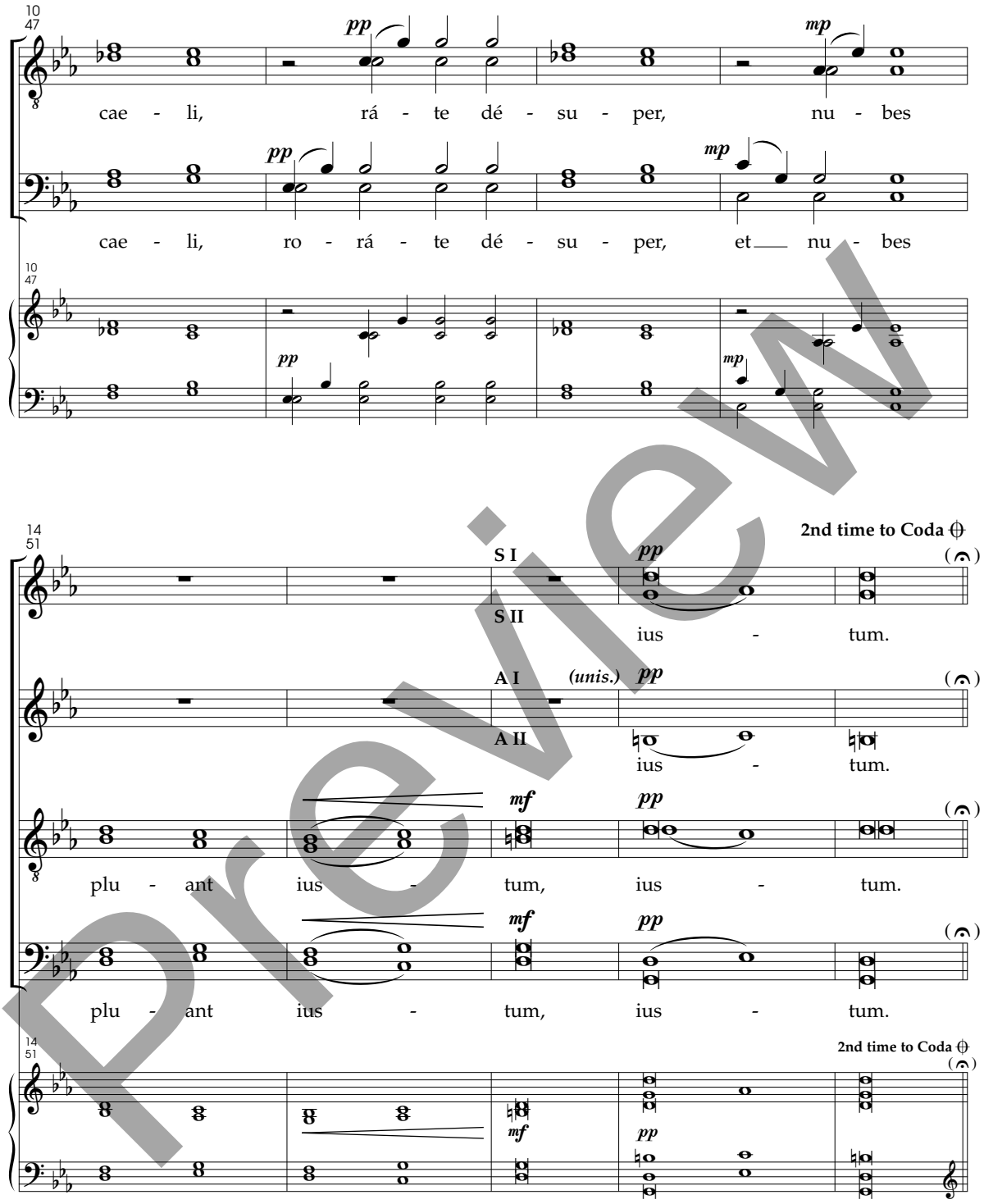
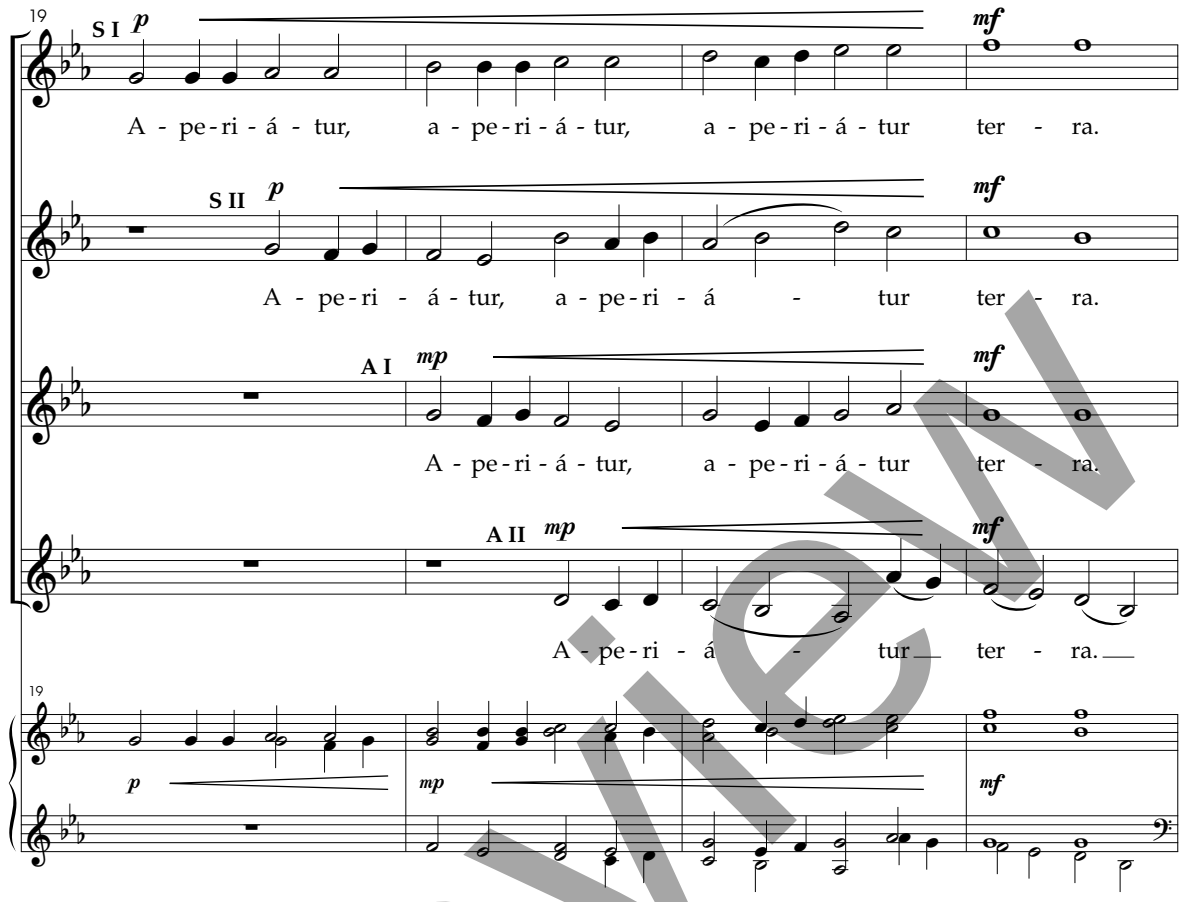

10
47
pp
mp
cae - li, rá - te dé - su - per, nu - bes
cae - li, ro - rá - te dé - su - per, et nu - bes
14
51
2nd time to Coda
S I
S II
A I
A II
(unis.)
mf
ius - tum.
plu - ant ius - tum, ius - tum.

Preview

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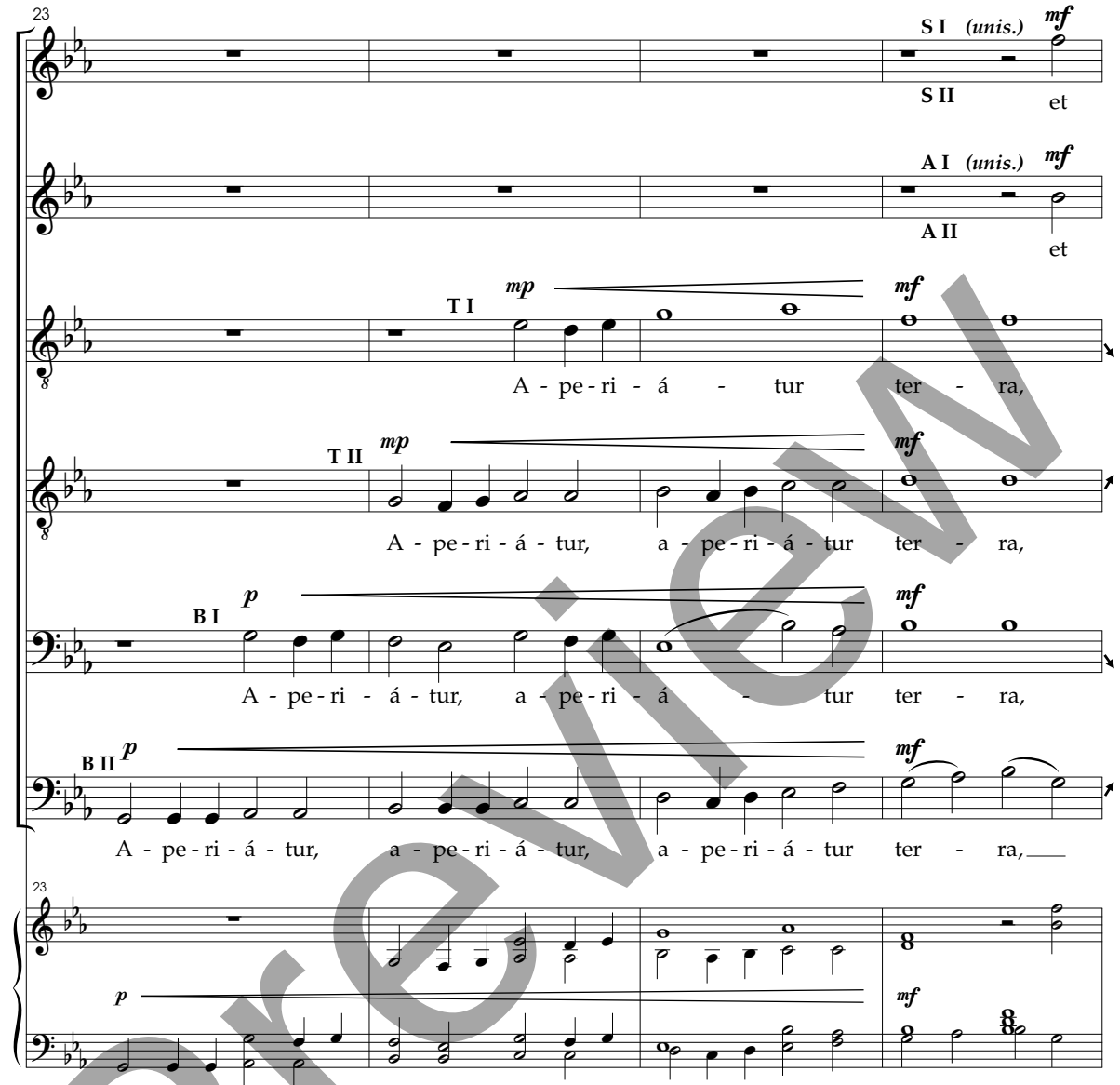
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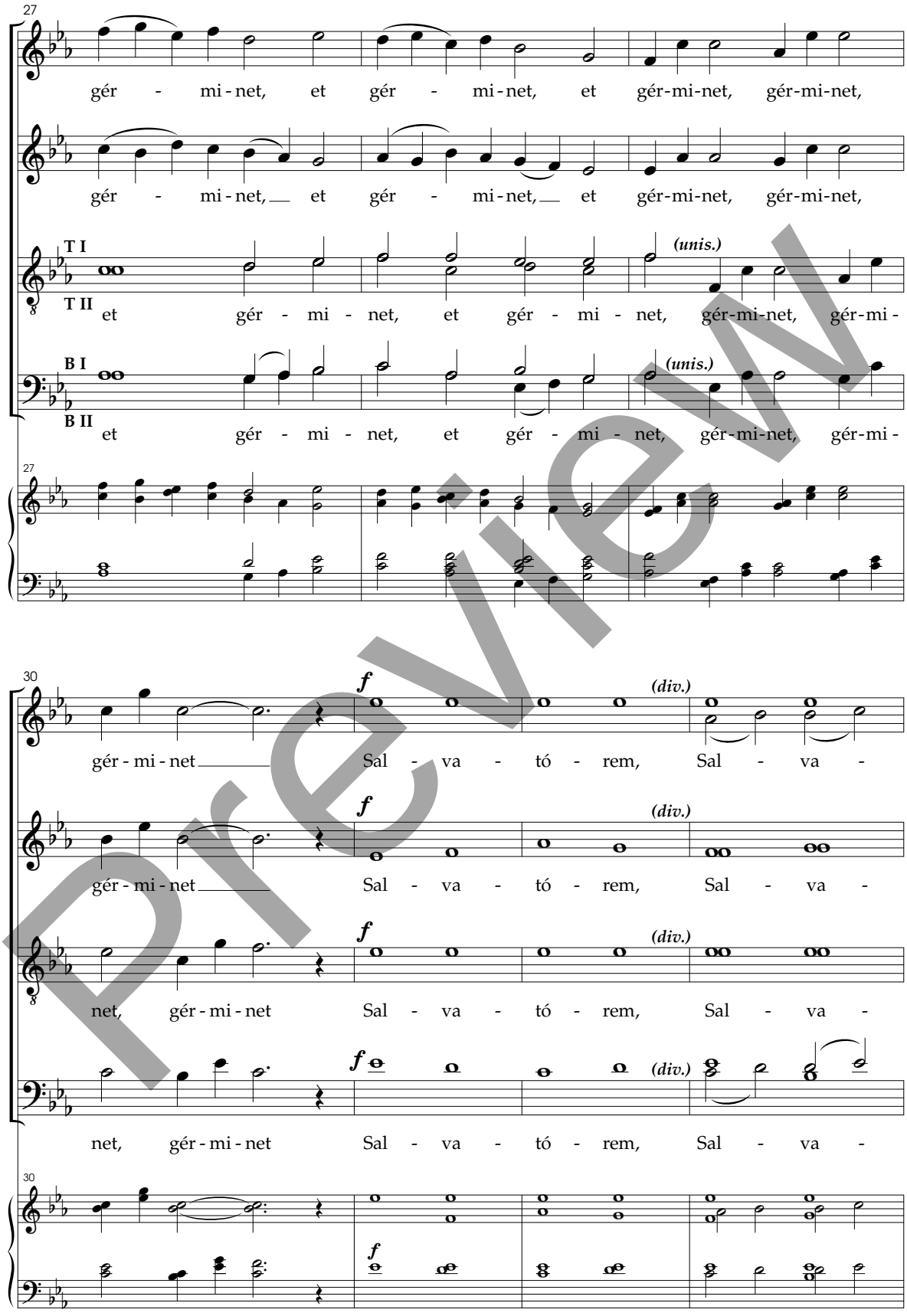
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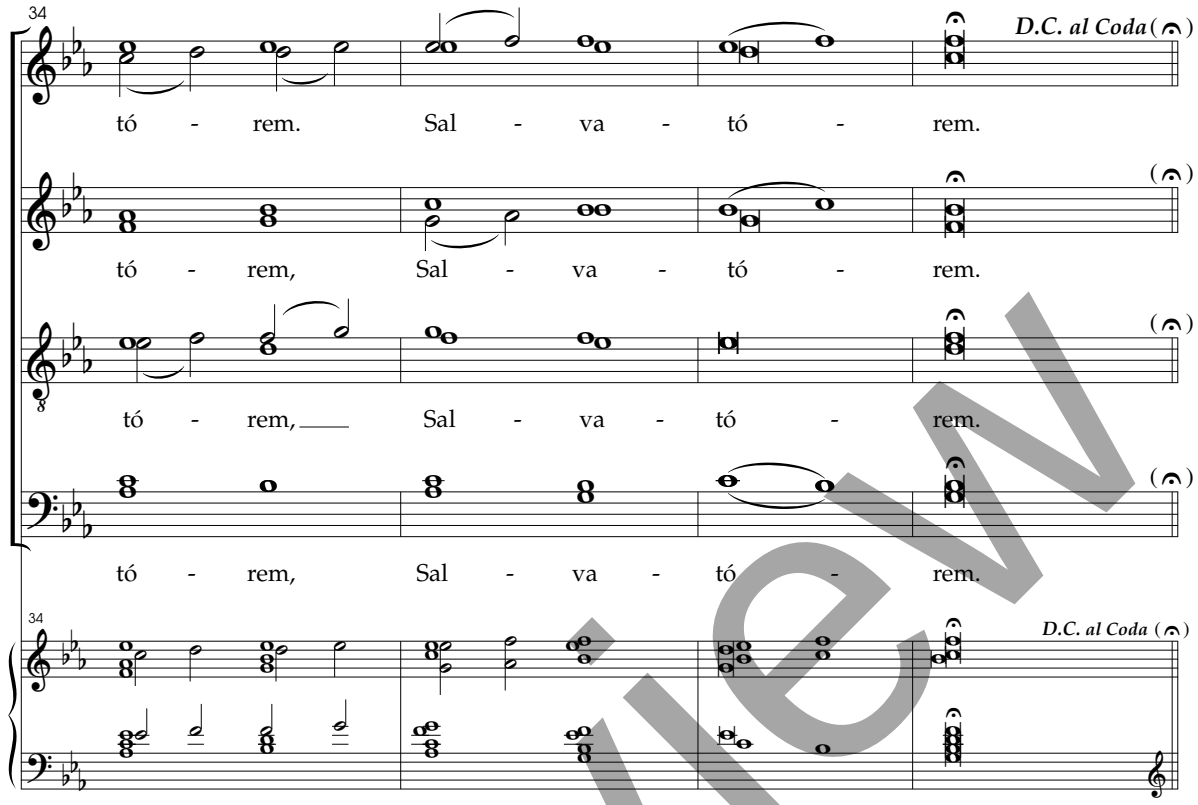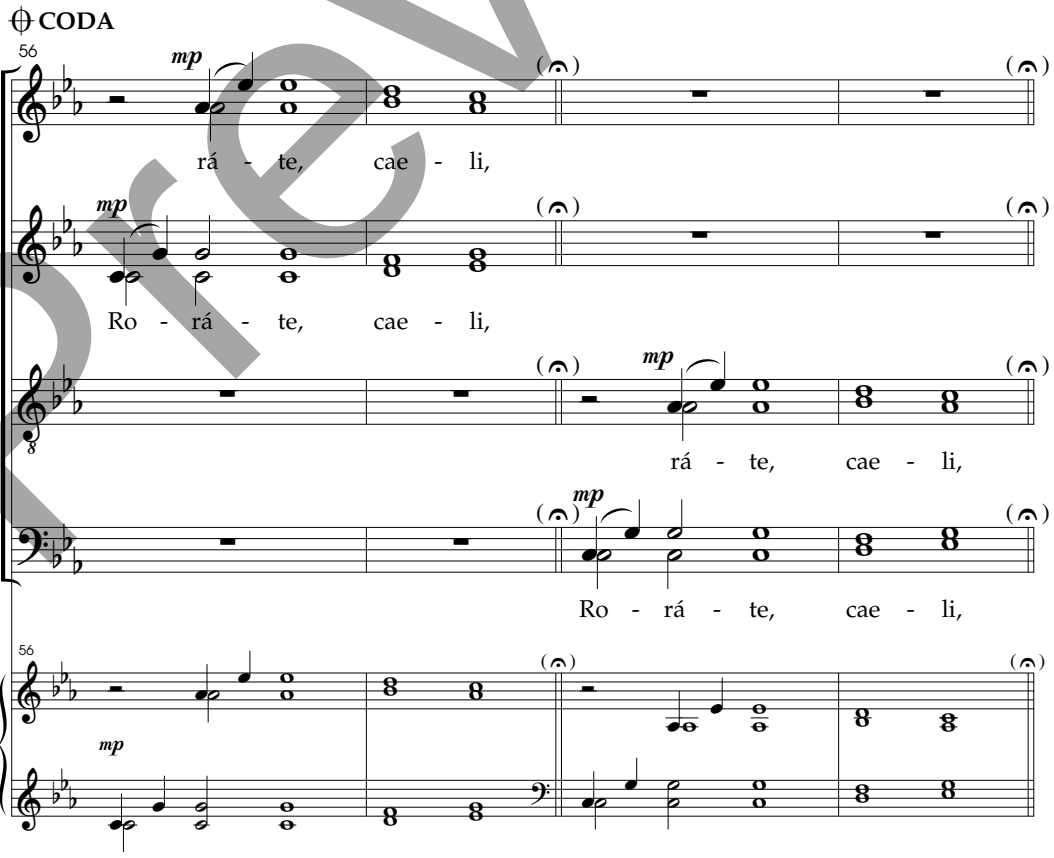

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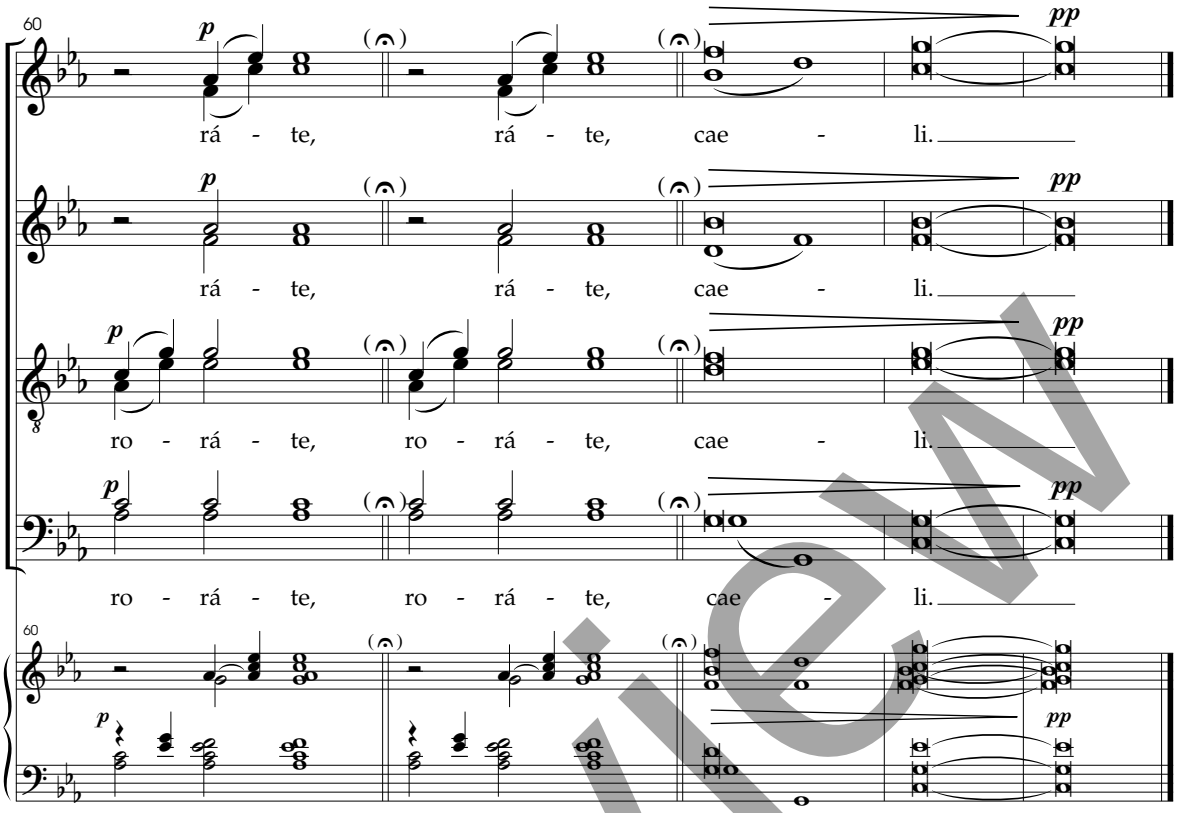
Roráte, caeli, désuper,
et nubes pluant iustum.
Aperiátur terra,
et gérminet Salvatórem.

Send forth dew, O heavens, from above,
and let the clouds rain down the Just One;
let the earth open
and let it bud forth a Savior.

Composer Notes

Inspired by the anthems of Morten Lauridsen and Kurt Nysted, I set the *antiphon ad introitum* assigned to the Fourth Sunday of Advent for Rob Strusinski and the Liturgical Choir at the University of St. Thomas, to be performed during the choir's 30th anniversary tour to Rome in December of 2007. Liturgically, "Rorate Caeli" is appropriate throughout the Advent Season (and on the last Sundays of Ordinary Time and the Solemnity of Christ the King that highlight eschatological themes). It could also be used in services highlighting prayer for justice and peace in the world.

The text is a Latin translation of Isaiah 45:8. The Hebrew original is a poetic cry of joy anticipating God's action. It evidences the antithetical parallelism and multiple forms of a root word characteristic of Hebrew poetry: "righteousness/justice" *(sedeq)* will drip down from the skies while the plowed earth will blossom with "salvation" *(yesha`)*. The Latin translation, reading the Hebrew text in the light of Christian revelation, transforms "justice" into the "Just One" and "salvation" into "a Savior".

As much as possible this piece should be sung *senza* vibrato. Careful attention to the dynamic markings is necessary for the composition to achieve maximum expressiveness.

—Michael Joncas

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