PHARAOH'S QUEST FOR INTERPRETATION IN AN OPERATIC MUSICAL COMPOSITION

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1. Introduction

Pharaoh, the ruler of Egypt, has two troubling dreams that none of his wise men magicians can interpret. The dreams feature seven fat cows devoured by seven thin cows, and seven healthy ears of grain consumed by seven thin ears. Pharaoh is disturbed and seeks an interpreter. The chief cupbearer remembers Joseph, a Hebrew prisoner who had previously interpreted his dream (Gen. 40:1-23). Joseph is summoned, and he interprets Pharaoh's dreams, explaining that they foretell seven years of abundance followed by seven years of severe famine. The messages in this composition convene divine revelation and interpretation, God's sovereignty over nation and events, and preparation and wisdom for leadership.

Pre-compositional Consideration

Title: Pharaoh's quest for interpretation
Key: G major
Time signature: 4/4
Tempo: Andante, slowly, fast, lento
Length: 195 bars
Form: Through composed

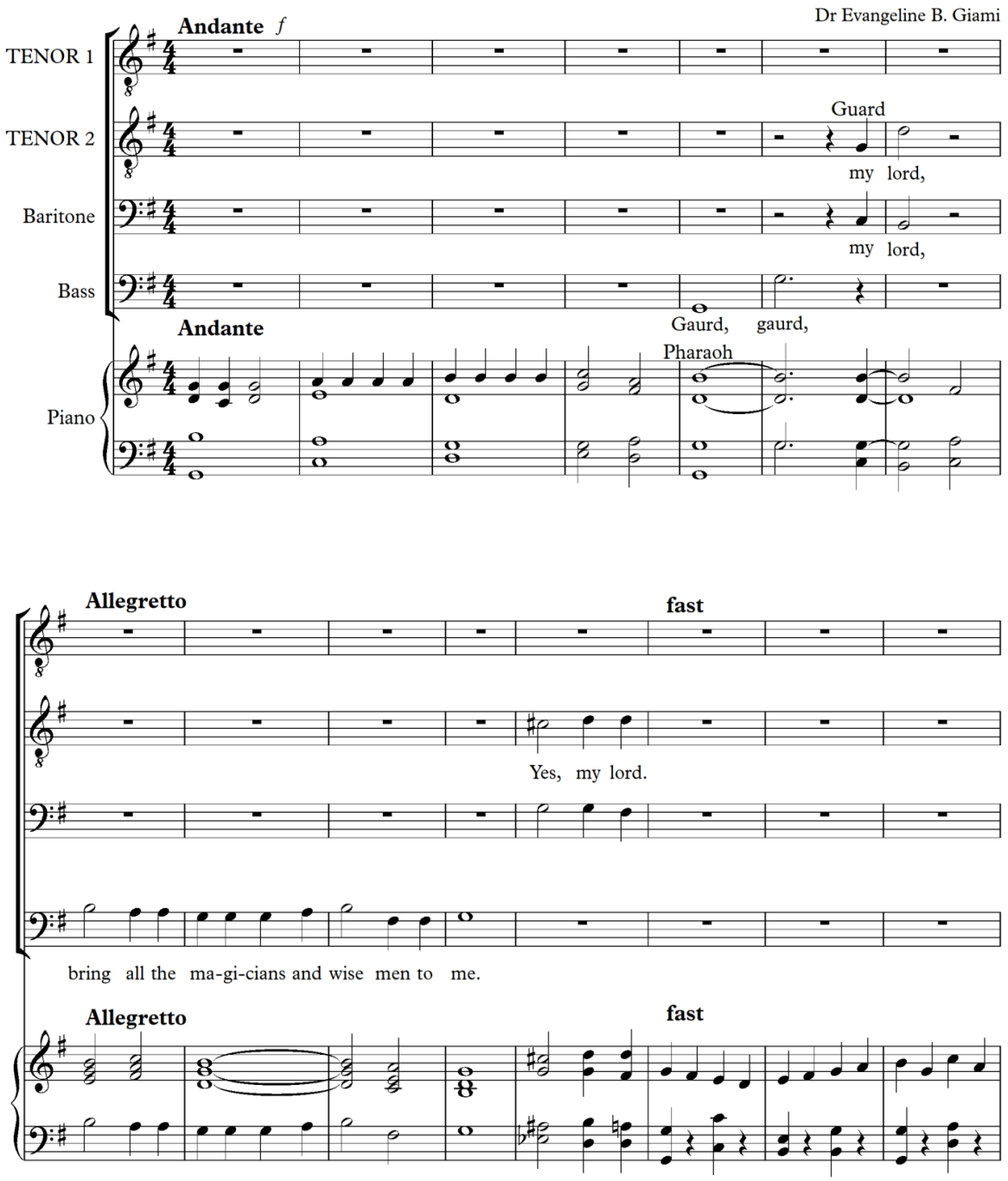
Sections	A	B	C	A Repeated	D
Bars	1-59	56-94	95-121	122-164	165-195
Modulation	D major	F major	C major	-	E minor
Cadence	Imperfect Authentic	Imperfect Authentic	Imperfect Authentic	Perfect Authentic	Perfect

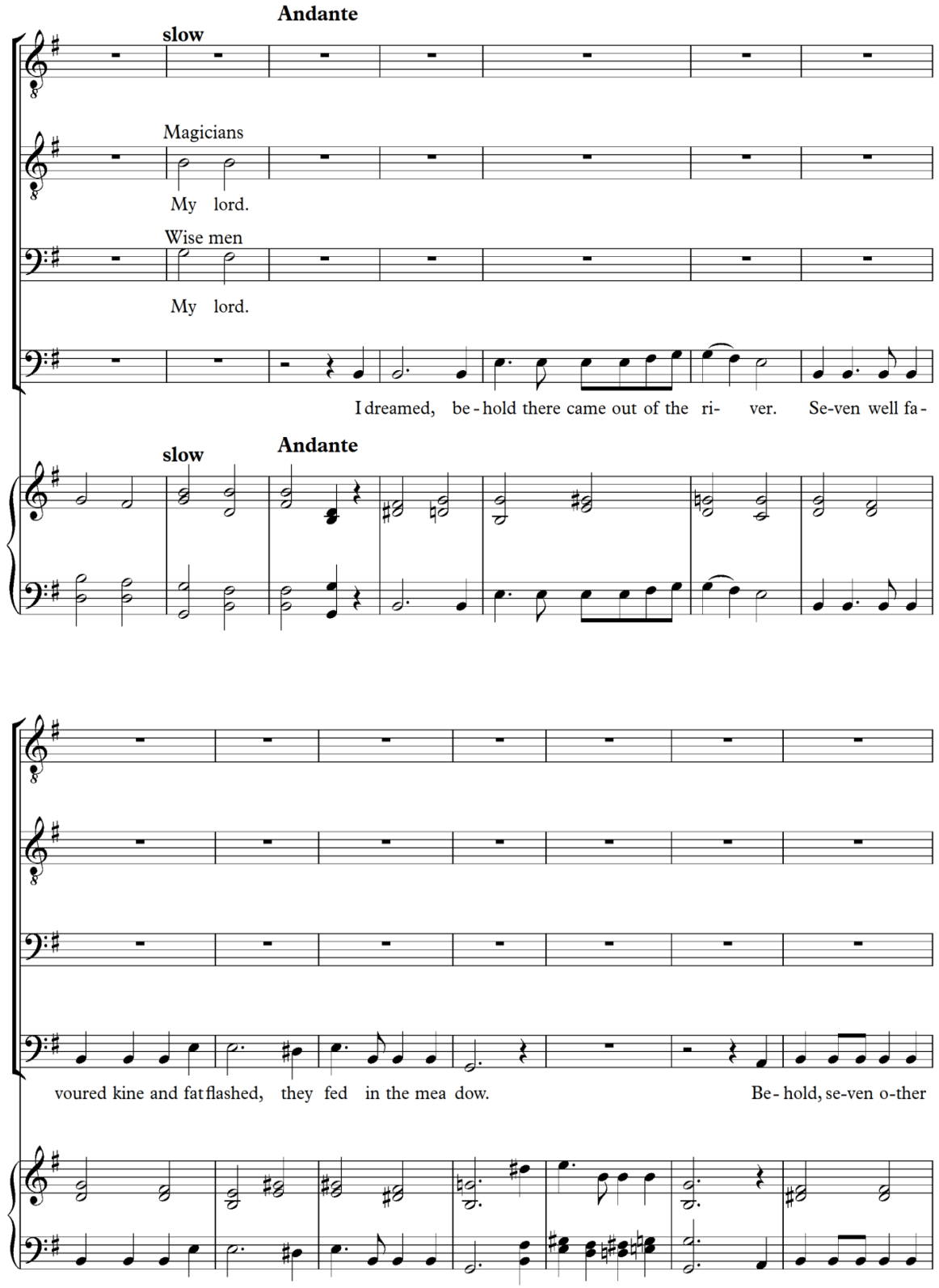
Texture: Monophonic/Homophonic
Media: Voice with piano accompaniment
Scale: Diatonic
Mood: Soberly
Dynamic: f
Language: English
Audience: Church and Concert hall
Genre: Opera
Cadence: Perfect cadence i – V - i
Performance Interpretation: For the optimal performance of this work, the following should be considered.
A good musical interpretation of the text.
A good breath control.
A good articulation of words.
A good costume

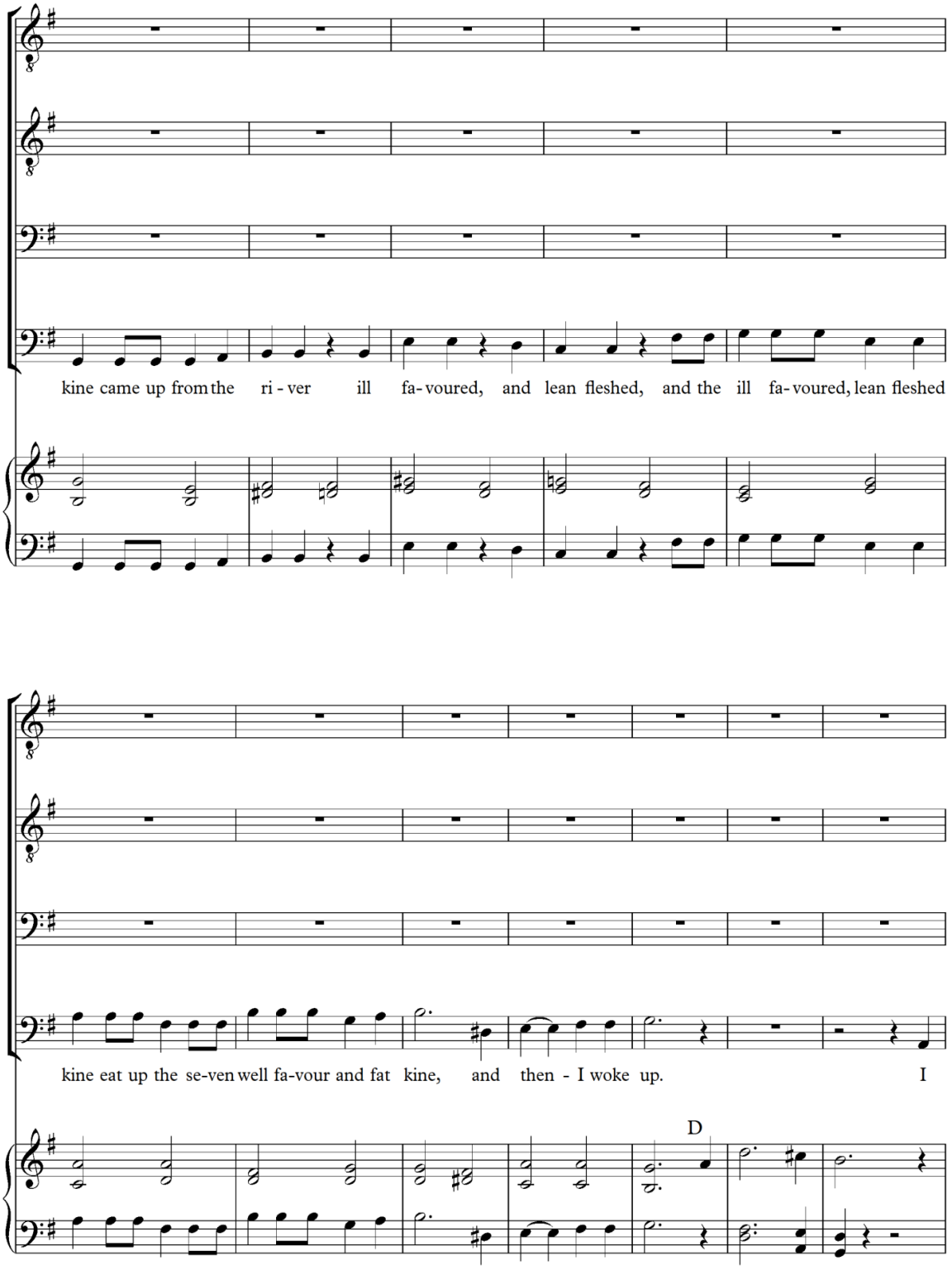
Modulation

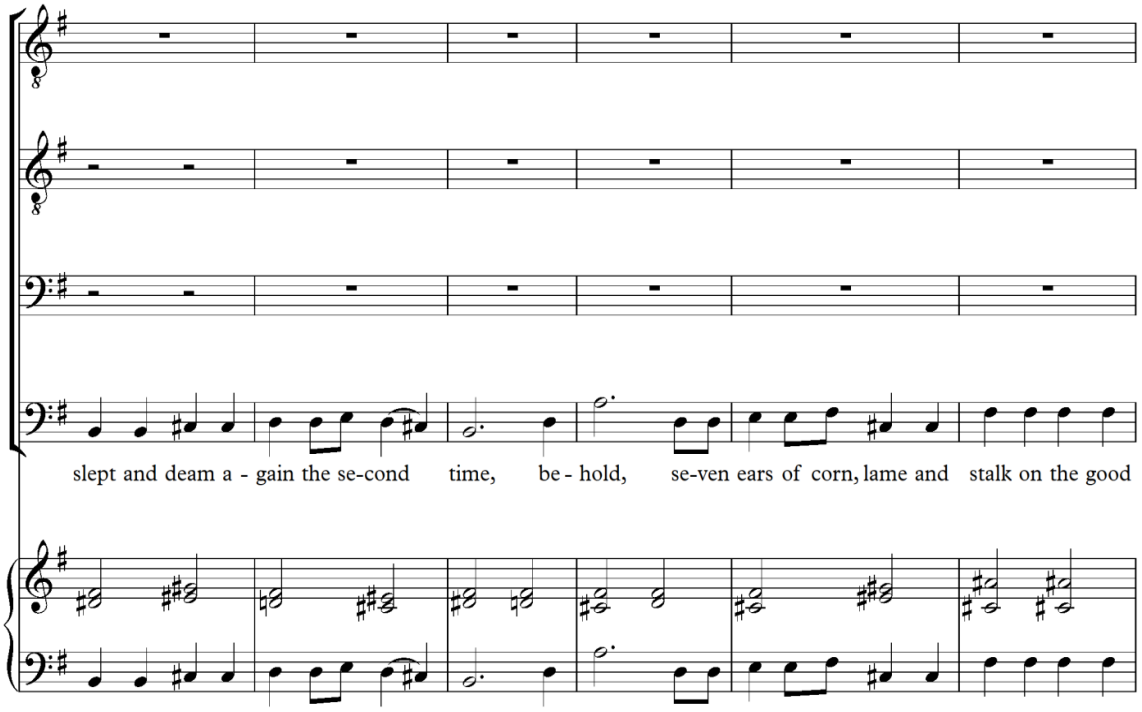
In this operatic work, the tone of speech changes and modulations are created to reflect these changes in sound. Benward and Saker in Giami (2025) discuss modulation as "a process that results in a shift of tonal center. The term applies to those occasions in music when one established tonal center gives way to another". (P. 315). Modulation refers to the process of moving from the home key of a musical composition to establish another key within the piece of music. In this piece, the modulation journey progresses through the keys of D major, F major, C major, and E minor.

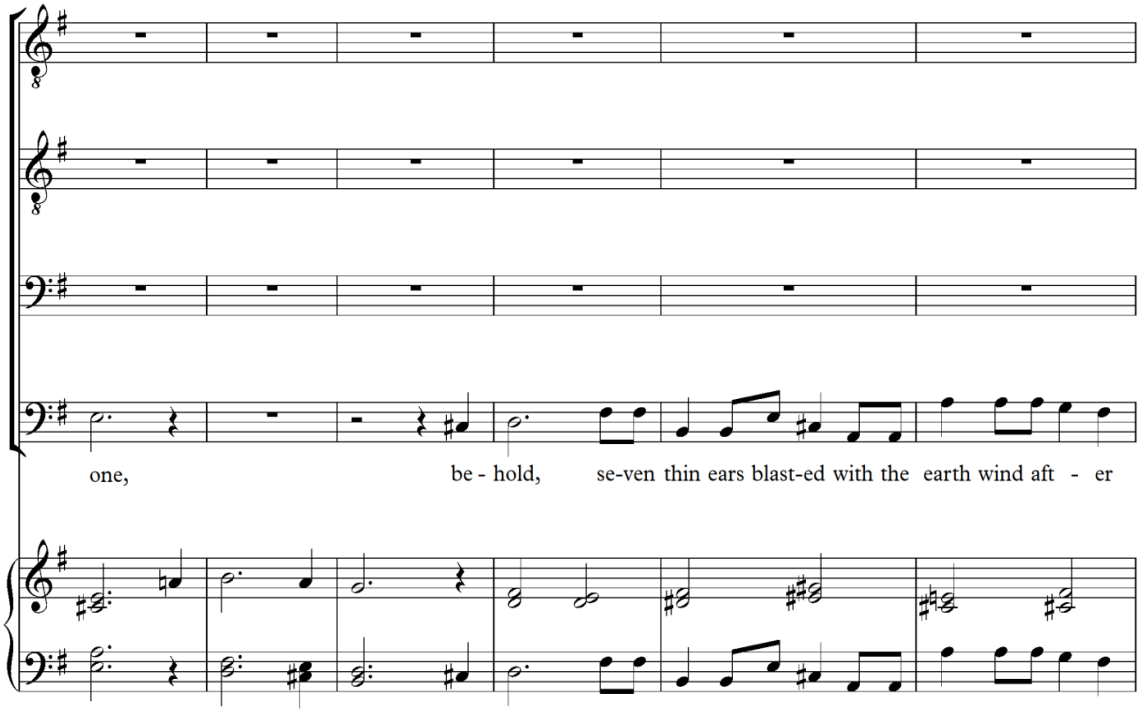
PHAROAH'S QUEST FOR INTERPRETATION

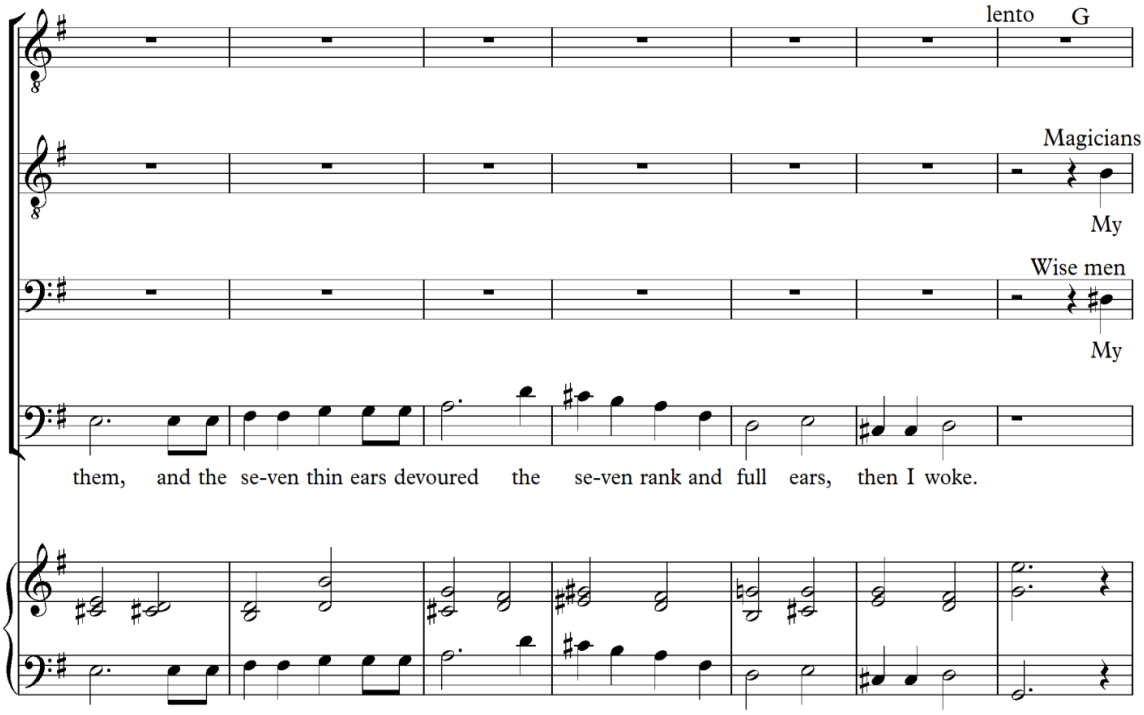


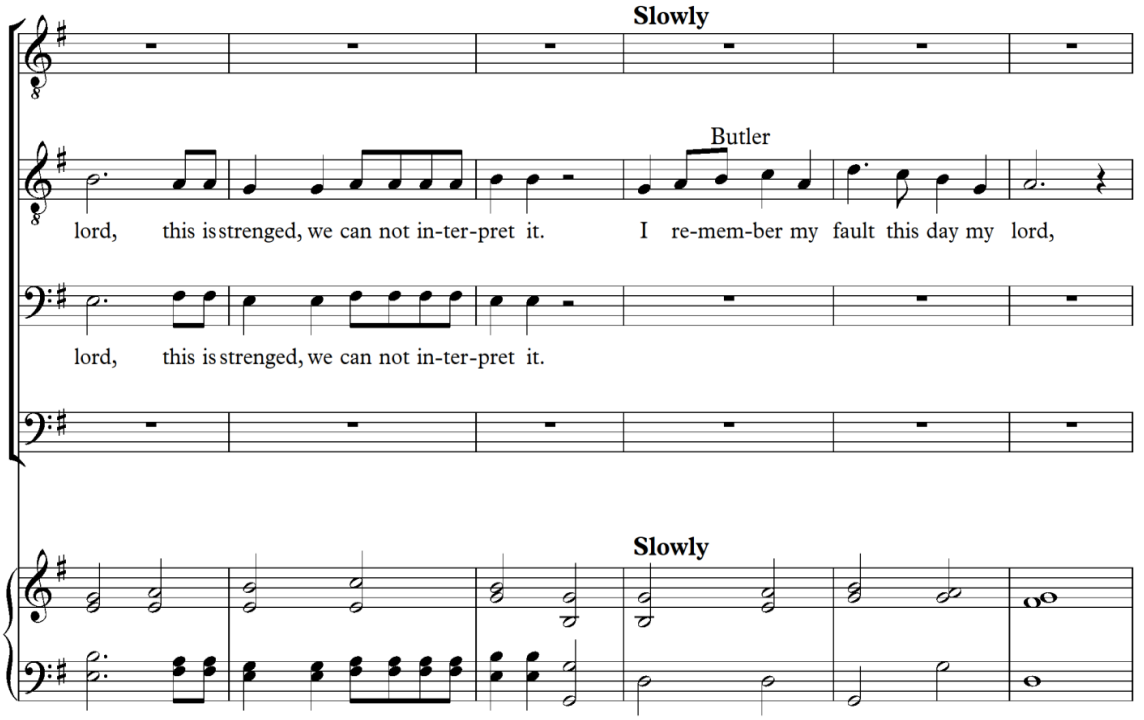

Andante
slow
Magicians
My lord.
Wise men
My lord.
I dreamed, be - hold there came out of the ri- ver. Se-ven well fa -
slow
Andante
voured kine and fat flashed, they fed in the mea dow. Be - hold, se-ven o-ther

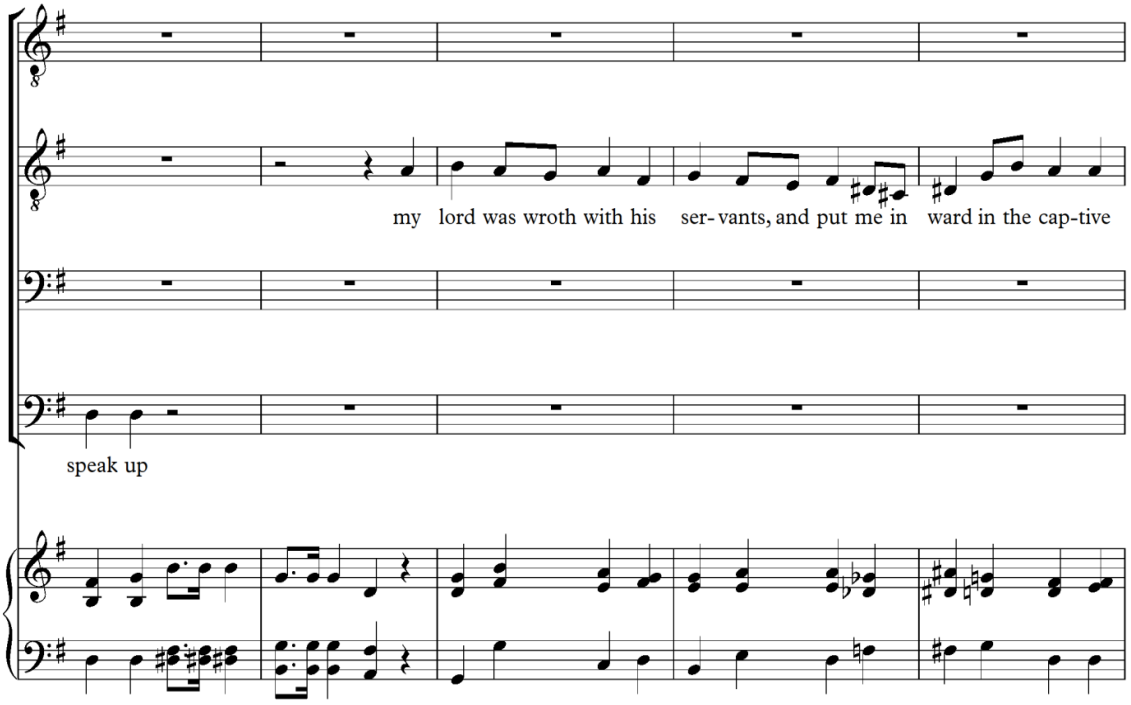

kine came up from the ri - ver ill fa- voured, and lean fleshed, and the ill fa- voured, lean fleshed
kine eat up the se-ven well fa-vour and fat kine, and then - I woke up. I
D

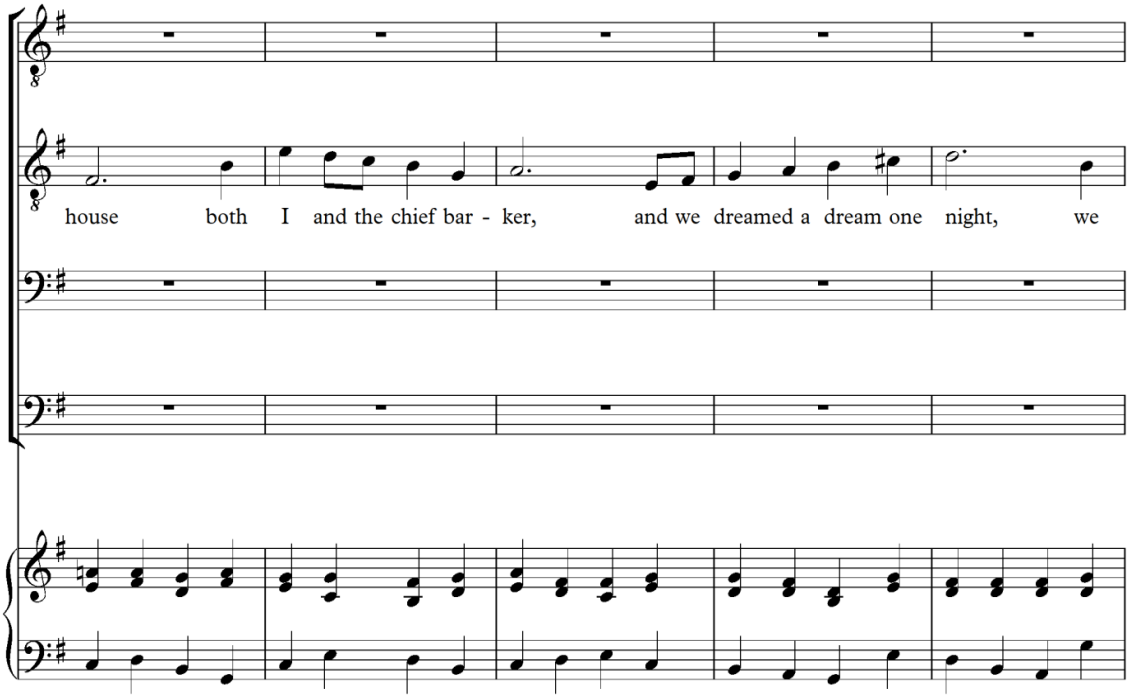

slept and deam a - gain the se-cond time, be - hold, se-ven ears of corn, lame and stalk on the good

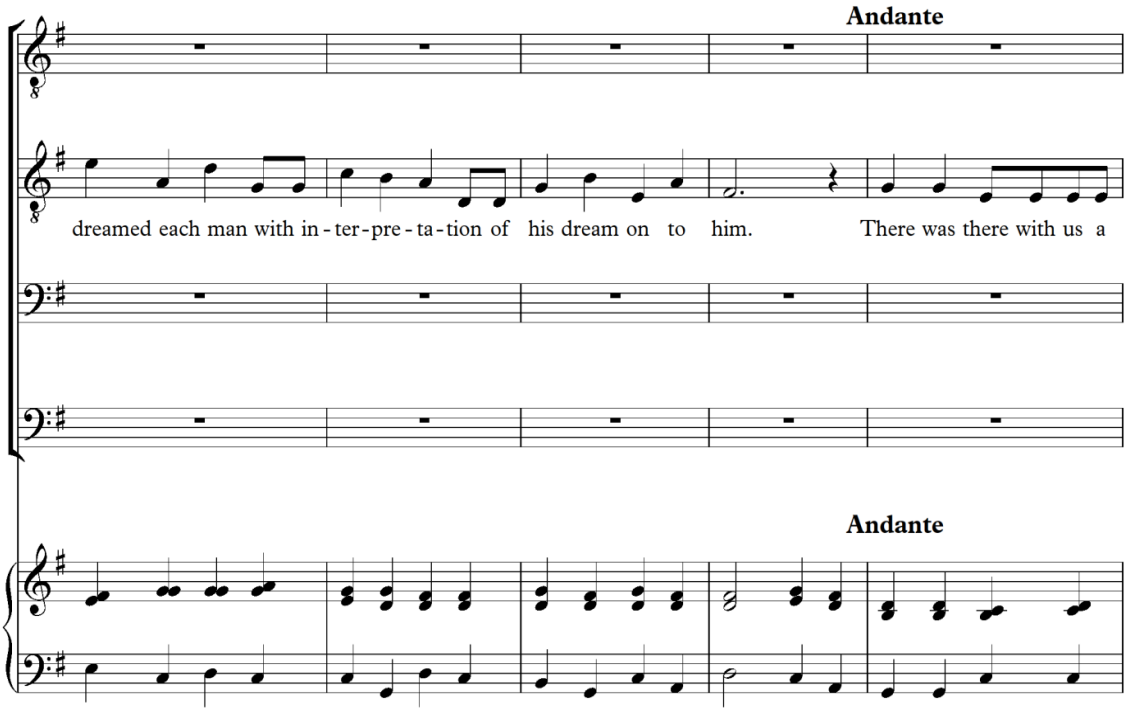

one, be - hold, se-ven thin ears blast-ed with the earth wind aft - er

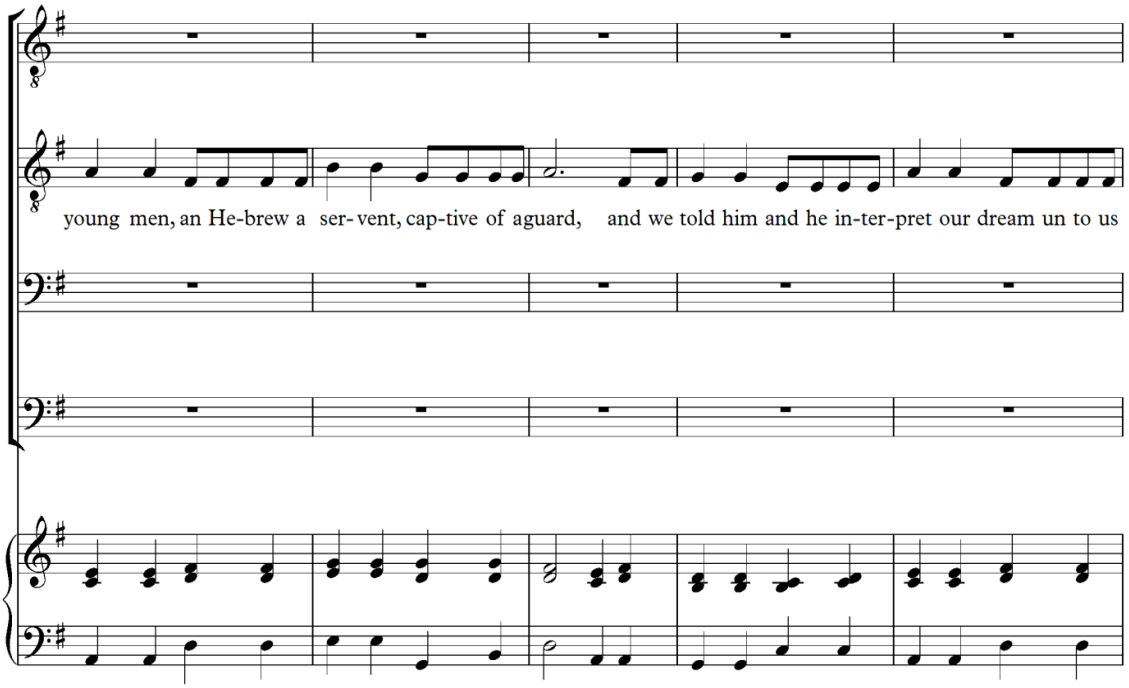

lento
G
Magicians
My
Wise men
My
them, and the se-ven thin ears devoured the se-ven rank and full ears, then I woke.

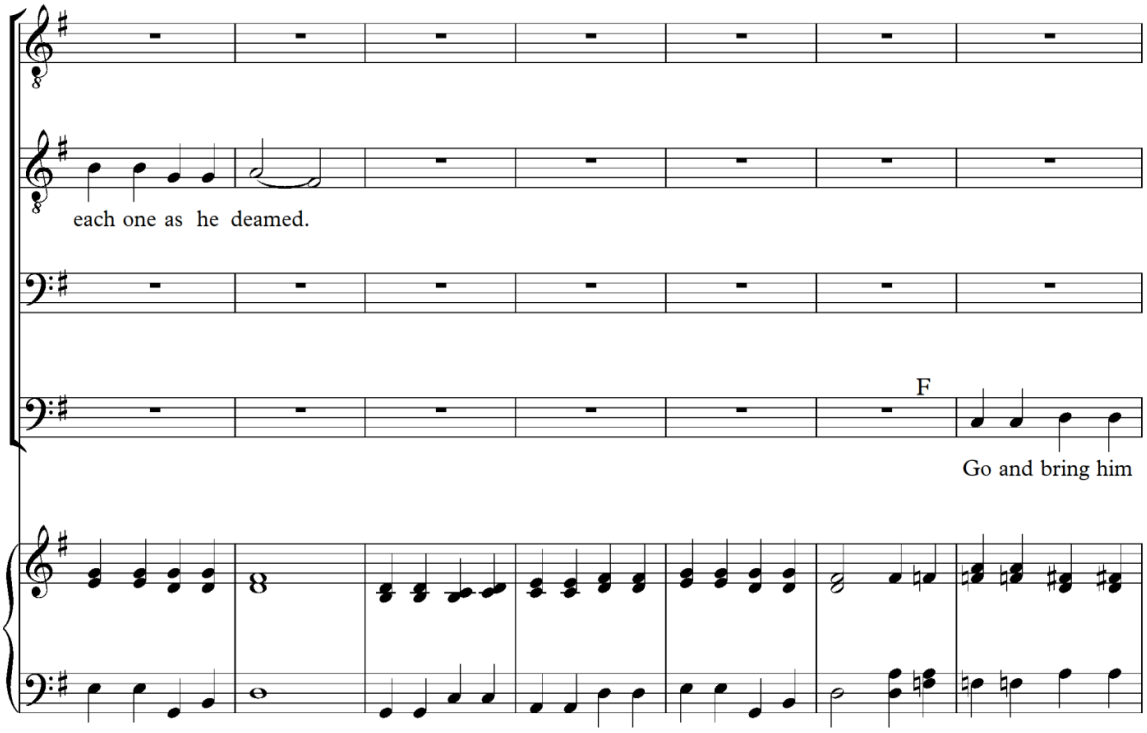

Slowly
Butler
lord, this is strenged, we can not in-ter-pret it. I re-mem-ber my fault this day my lord,
lord, this is strenged, we can not in-ter-pret it.
Slowly

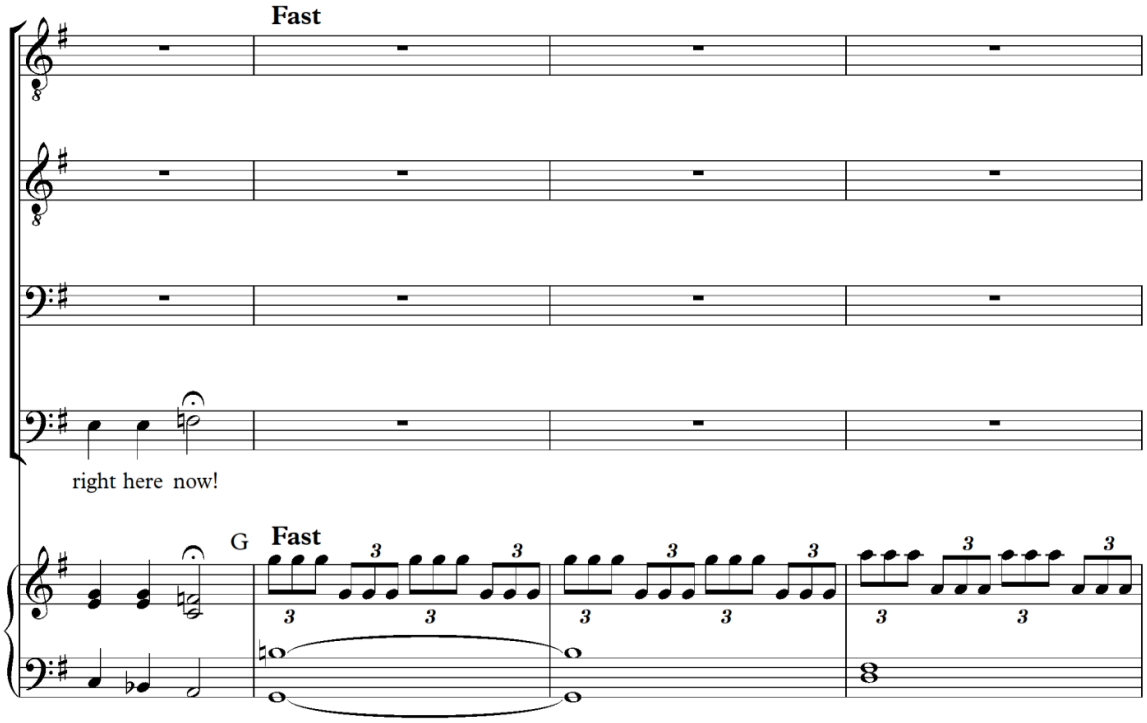

my lord was wroth with his ser- vants, and put me in ward in the cap-tive
speak up

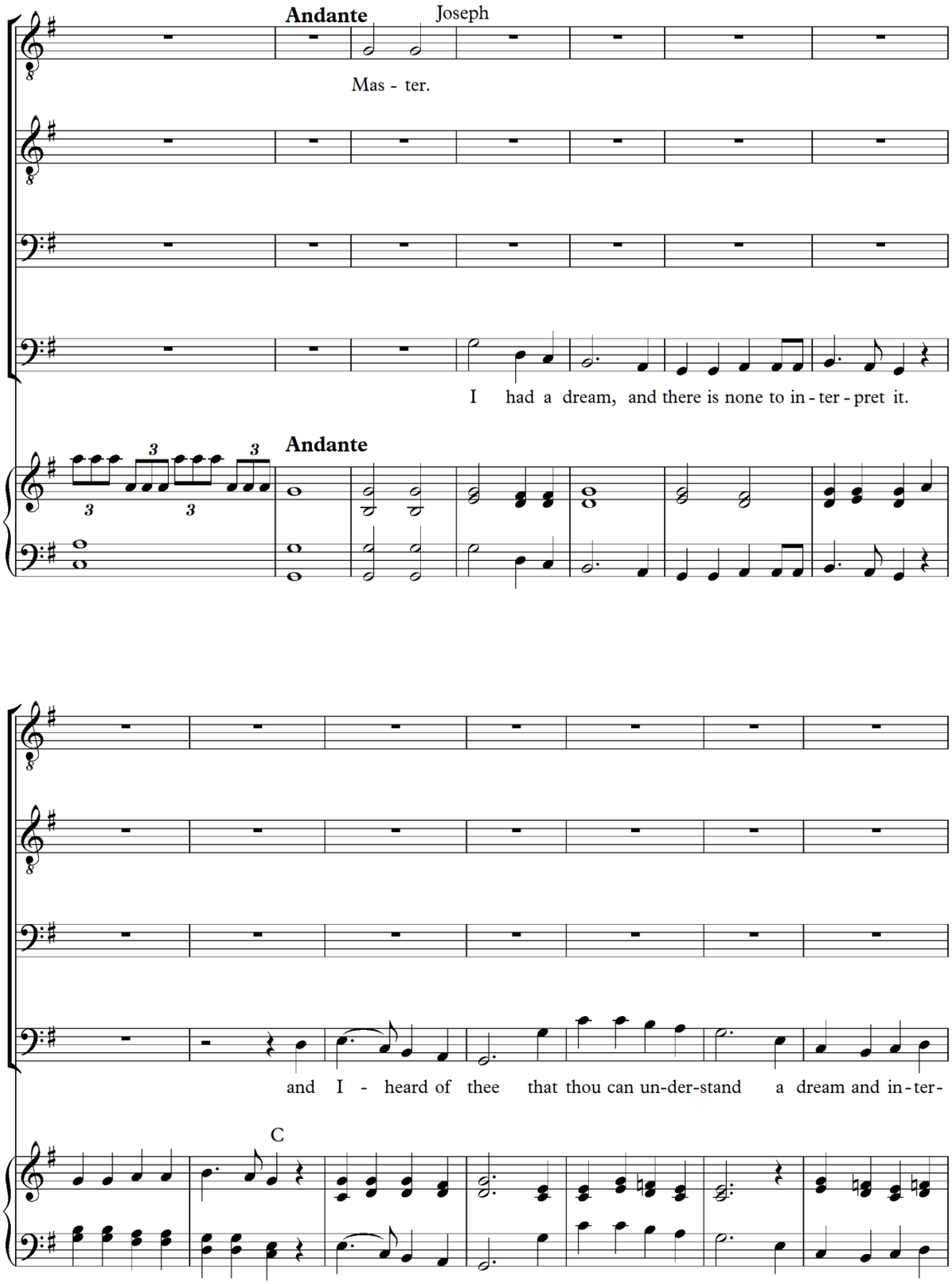

house both I and the chief bar - ker, and we dreamed a dream one night, we

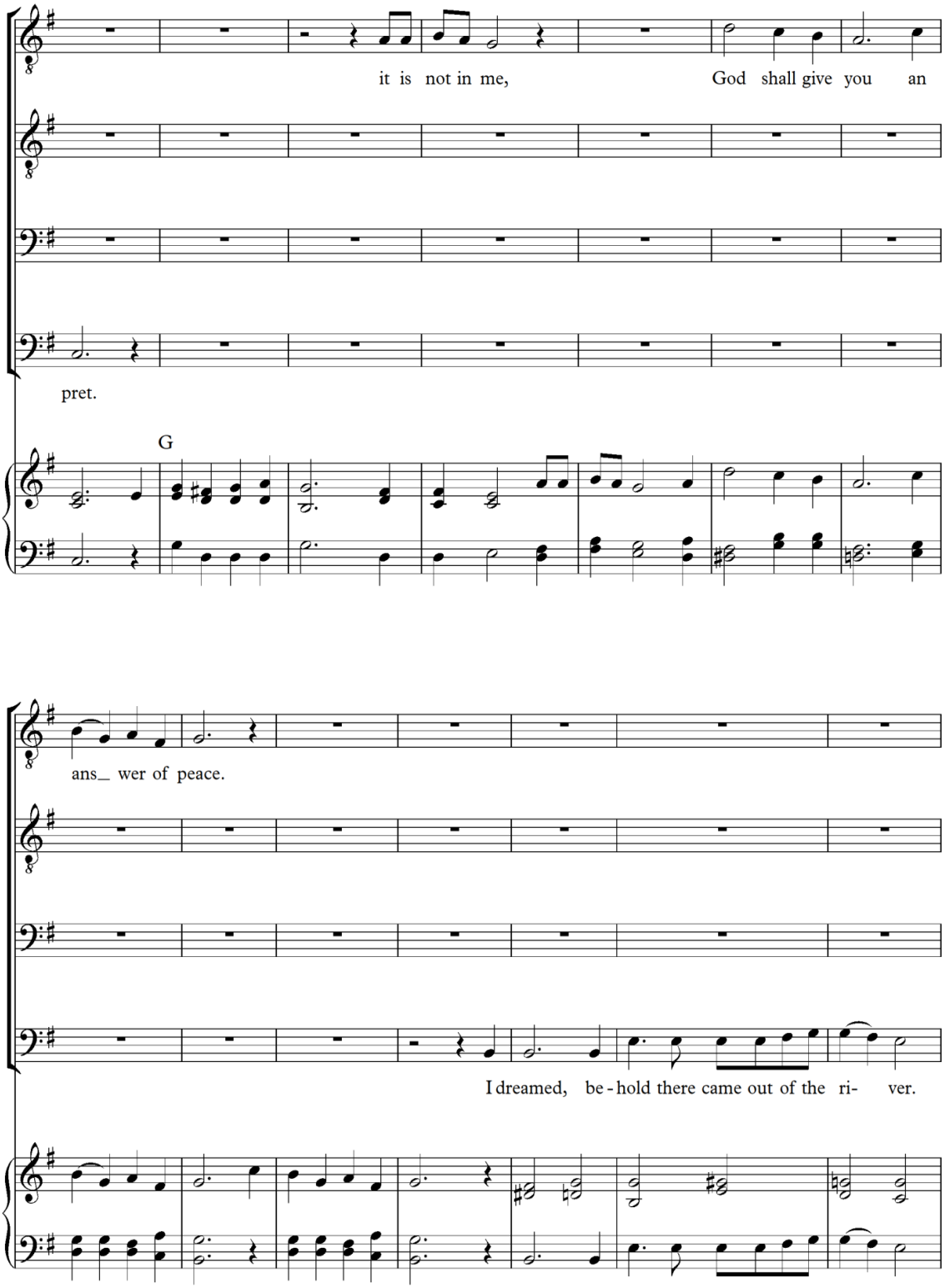

Andante
dreamed each man with in - ter - pre - ta - tion of his dream on to him. There was there with us a
Andante

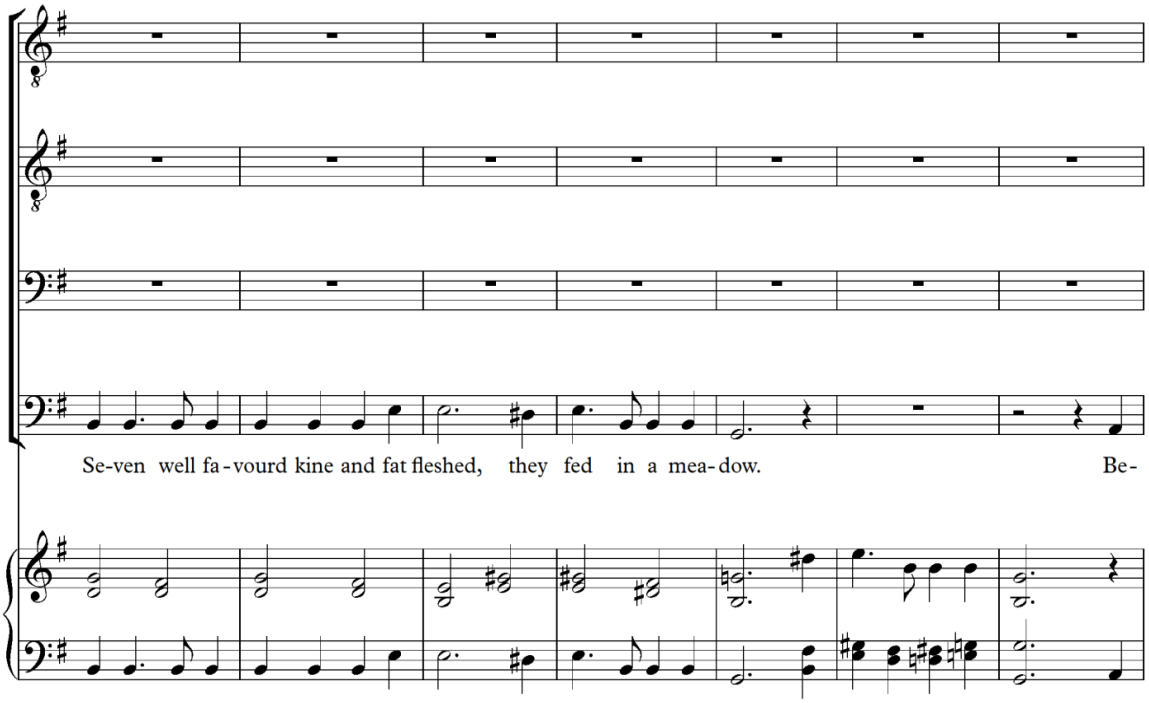

young men, an He-brew a ser- vent, cap-tive of aguard, and we told him and he in-ter-pret our dream un to us

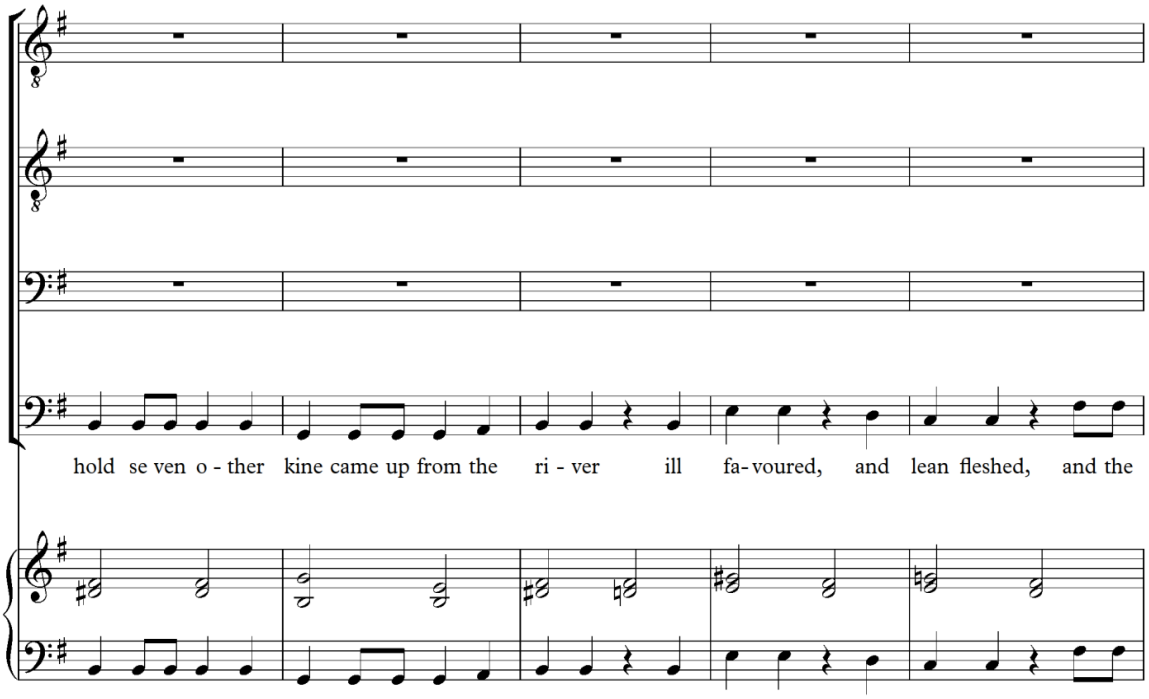

each one as he deamed.
F
Go and bring him

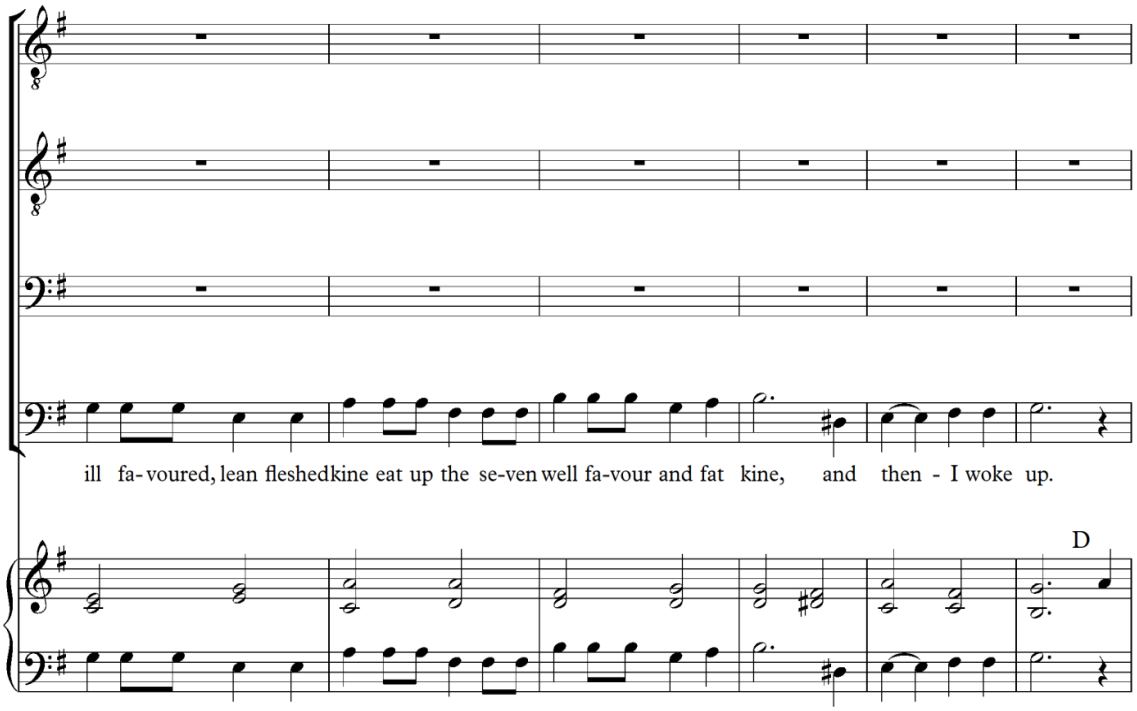

Fast
right here now!
G
Fast

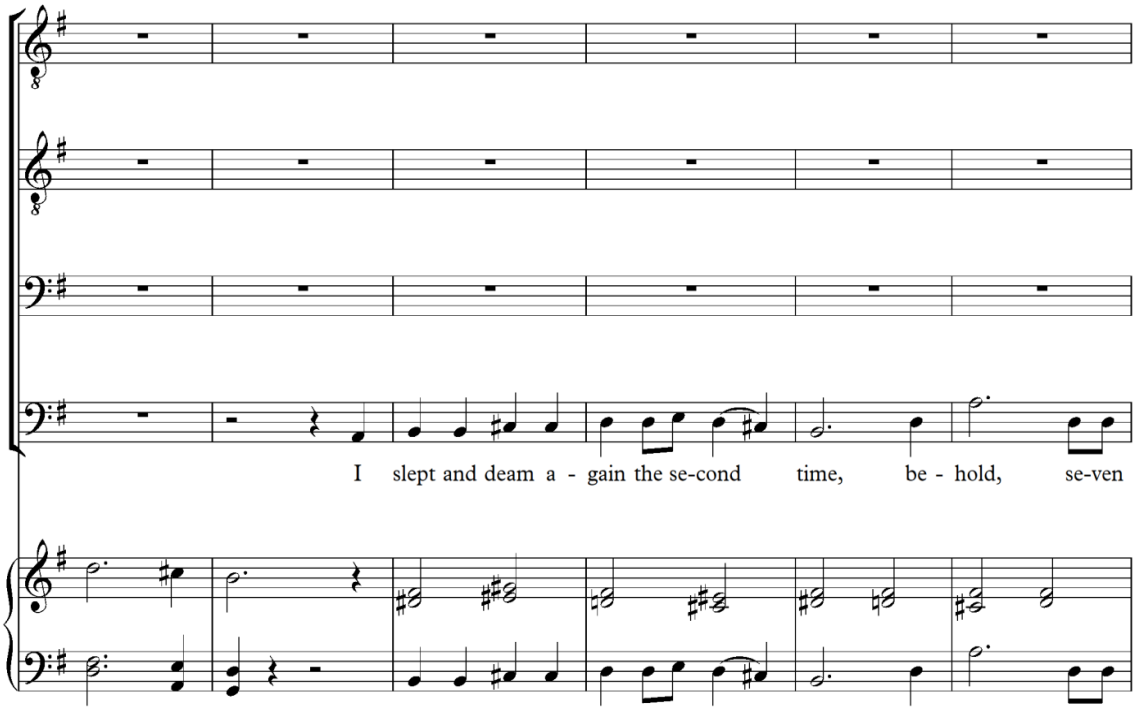

Andante
Joseph
Mas - ter.
I had a dream, and there is none to in - ter - pret it.
Andante
and I - heard of thee that thou can un-der-stand a dream and in - ter-
C

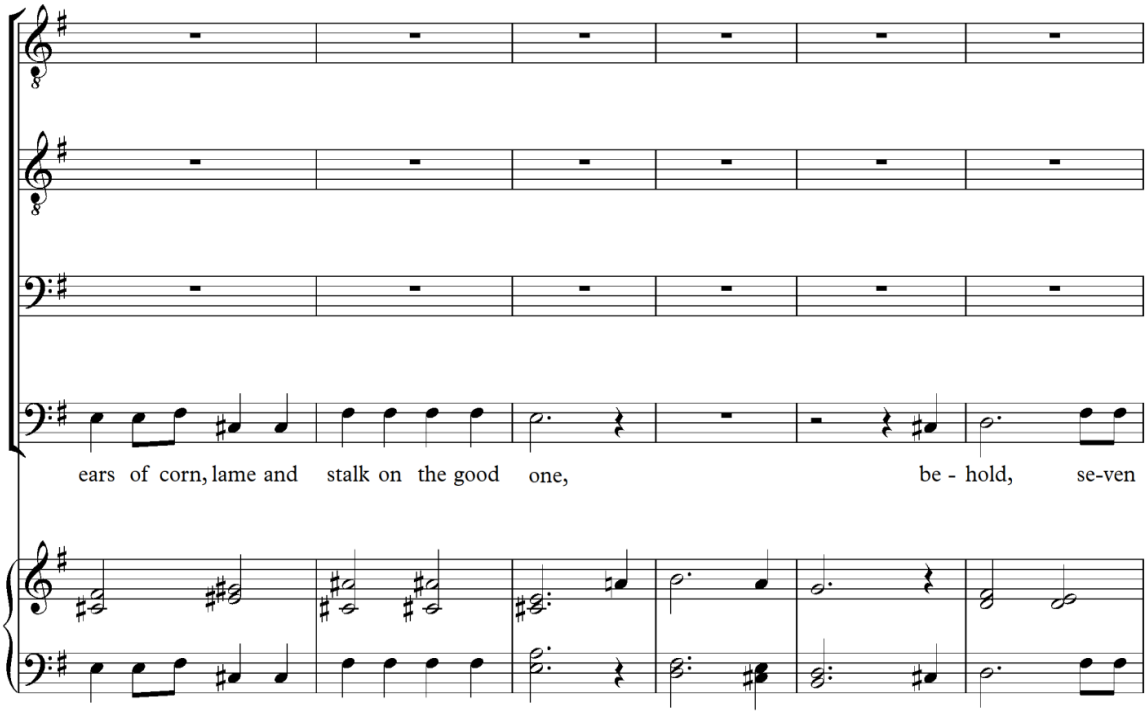

it is not in me, God shall give you an
pret.
G
ans_ wer of peace.
I dreamed, be - hold there came out of the ri- ver.

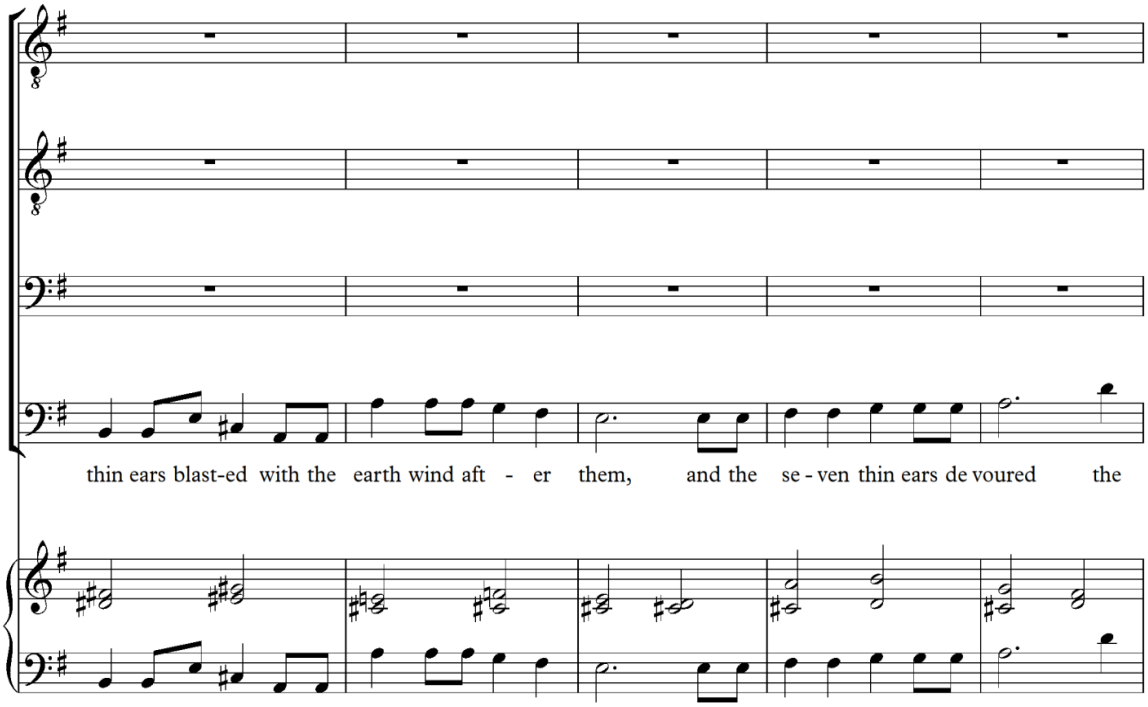

Se-ven well fa-vourd kine and fat fleshed, they fed in a mea-dow. Be-

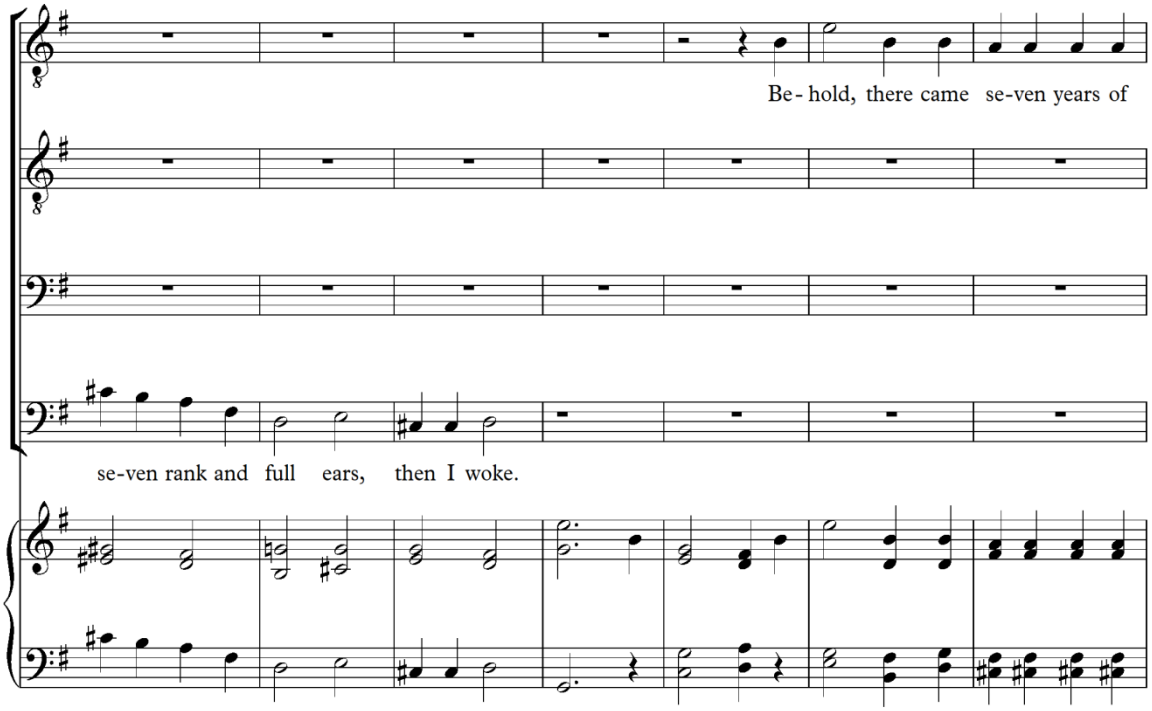

hold se ven o - ther kine came up from the ri - ver ill fa-voured, and lean fleshed, and the

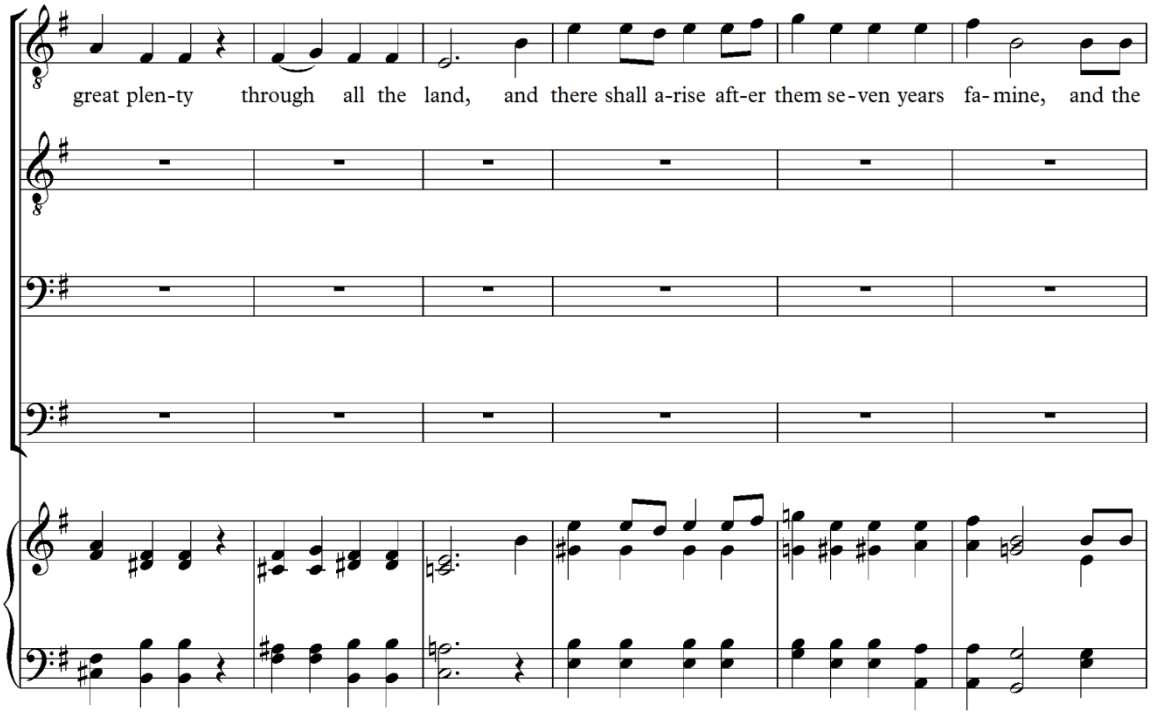

ill fa- voured, lean fleshedkine eat up the se-ven well fa-vour and fat kine, and then - I woke up.
D

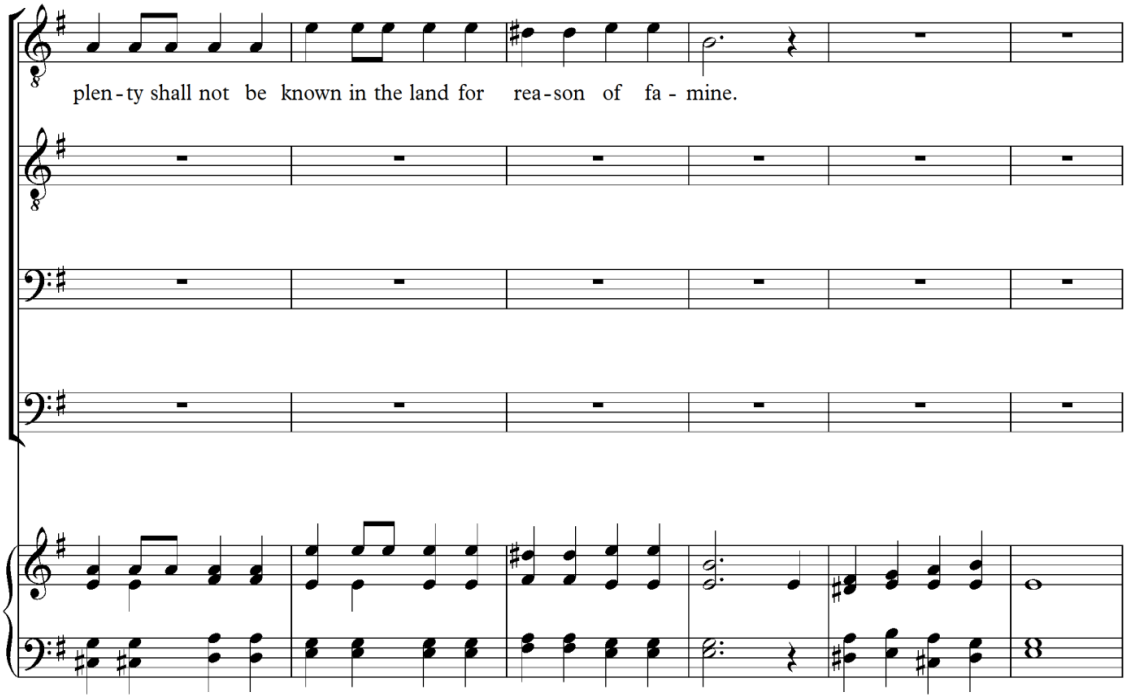

I slept and deam a - gain the se-cond time, be - hold, se-ven

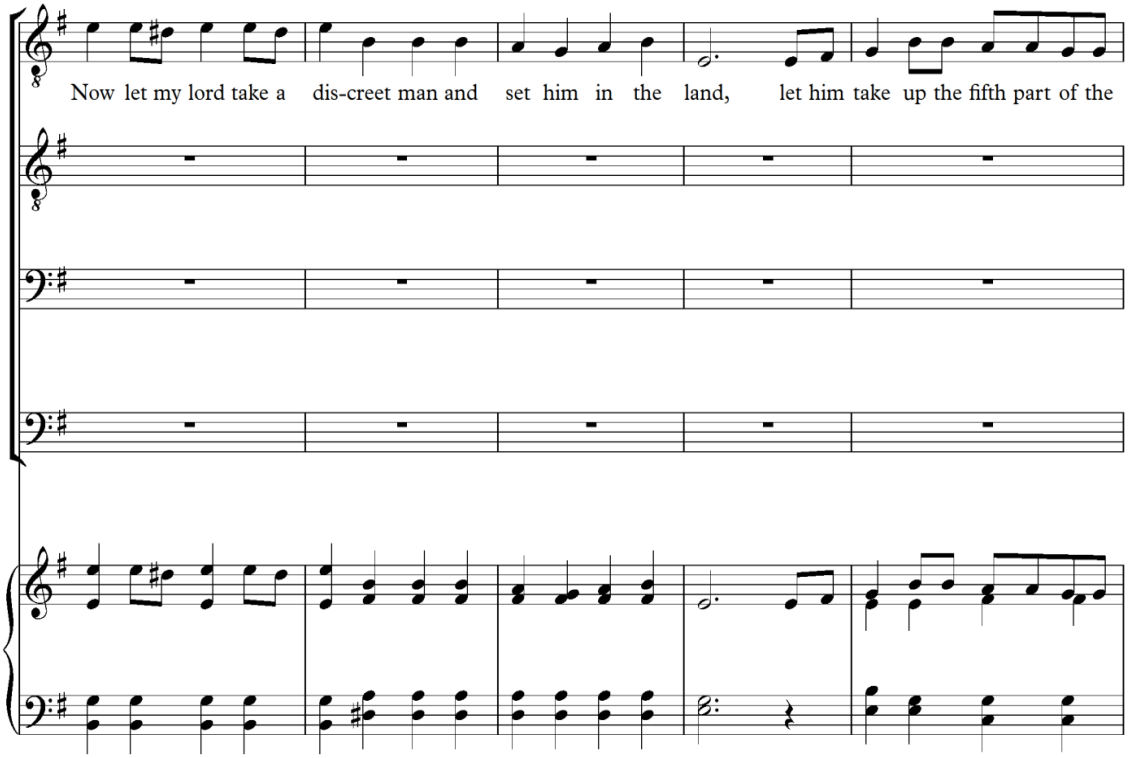

ears of corn, lame and stalk on the good one, be - hold, se-ven

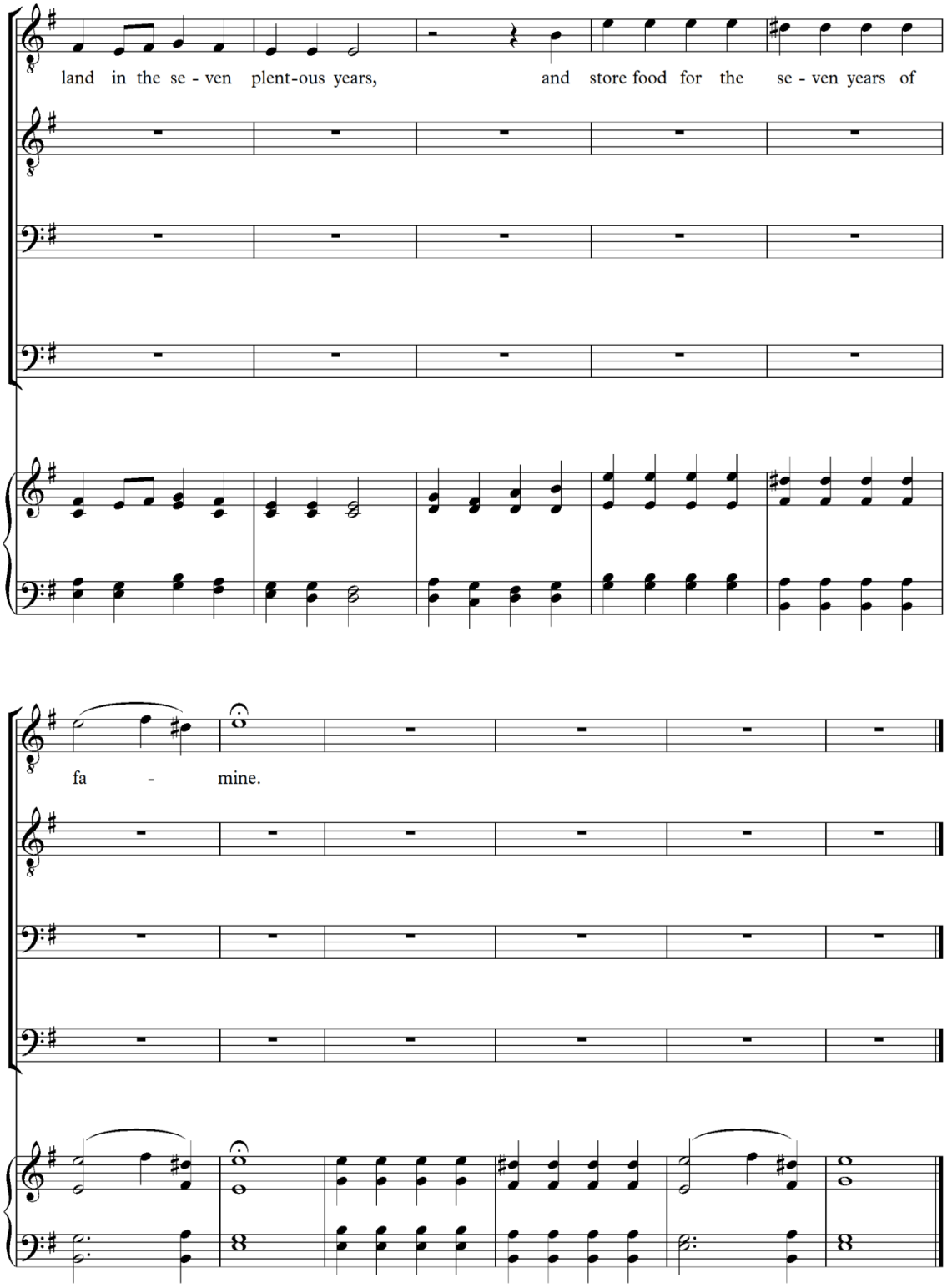

thin ears blast-ed with the earth wind aft - er them, and the se - ven thin ears de voured the


Be- hold, there came se-ven years of
se-ven rank and full ears, then I woke.


great plen-ty through all the land, and there shall a-rise aft-er them se-ven years fa-mine, and the


plen - ty shall not be known in the land for rea - son of fa - mine.


Now let my lord take a dis-creet man and set him in the land, let him take up the fifth part of the



References

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Benward, B & Saker, M. (2009). Music in theory and practice. McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc,

Cast

Pharaoh

Guards

Magicians

Wise men

Butler

Joseph