SATB

THE ROAD TO BETHLEHEM

A Journey to the Newborn King

LLOYD LARSON

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Music by Lloyd Larson
Narration by Kylee Larson
Orchestration by Ed Hogan

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Cover Design: Patti Jeffers

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Foreword

Bethlehem seemed an unlikely destination for the fulfillment of God's promise to send a Messiah. Bethlehem? Why would anyone – especially the Creator of the universe – choose that little remote village? Nothing good came from there! There was nothing distinctive or glamorous about this common town. But as Scripture records, the road to Bethlehem was the road that ultimately led to God!

Mary and Joseph took that road. The shepherds and the Magi did as well. And now we have been invited to take that journey; to experience in fresh and powerful ways the eternal hope that lies waiting for us in the form of a newborn Baby. The prophet Isaiah challenged those anticipating the promised arrival of Jesus that they should *…prepare the way for the Lord; make straight in the wilderness a highway for our God. (Isaiah 40:3)*

As you sing and play this music, be reminded that God can take a modest place like Bethlehem and turn it into an integral part of a glorious story. God can take common shepherds or devoted star-gazers and turn them into lead players in the greatest drama of human history. God can take you and me and transform our lives and eternal destiny; not because of a dusty road leading to a tiny village, but because of the newborn King born in a manger in that village at the end of the road.

So take the journey one more time. Embrace its message of joy and love. Experience once again the fulfillment of God's promise: *Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you: He is Christ the Lord. (Luke 2:11)*

—Lloyd Larson

Production Notes

The Road to Bethlehem is flexibly conceived for Advent and/or Christmas programming. Each individual anthem may be presented during the weeks leading up to Christmas, or the entire cantata may be performed as a whole in a single worship experience, depending on programming needs. Small and large choirs alike will find the choral writing appealing and versatile. Accompaniment options ranging from piano only to full orchestra with CD accompaniment or live instruments ensures maximum flexibility for your unique programming needs.

From the Publisher

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Due to the vast number of differences in computer system setups, we are unable to provide technical support for downloadable images/graphics by either phone or email.

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Contents

The Road to Bethlehem 4
Narration 1 15
A Highway for Our God 16
Narration 2 26
Come, Messiah! 27
Narration 3 34
Holy Child of Bethlehem 35
Narration 4 45
Shepherds in the Field 46
Narration 5 57
Shepherds' Cradle Song 58
Narration 6 67
The Journey 68
Narration 7 77
Christ Is Born in Bethlehem 78

Companion Products

65/2110L	SATB Score
65/2112L	SAB Score
65/2111L	SATB Score with Performance CD
99/4202L	Bulk Performance CDs (10-pack)
99/4199L	Stereo Accompaniment CD
99/4200L	Split-track Accompaniment CD
99/4201L	SA/TB Part-dominant Rehearsal CDs (reproducible)

Orchestration by Ed Hogan for Fl 1-2, Ob (Sop Sax, Cl), Cl 1-2, Bsn (Bs Cl), Hn 1-2 (Alto Sax, Cl), Tpt 1, Tpt 2-3 (Alto Sax), Tbn 1-2 (Bari T.C., Ten Sax), Tuba, Timp, Perc 1-2, Harp, Pno, Vln 1-2, Vla (Cl), Cello, Dbl Bass, Digital String Reduction

30/3813L	Full Score
e30/3813L	Full Score (Digital Download)
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30/3815L	CD with Printable Parts
30/3816L	Score and Parts plus CD with Printable Parts

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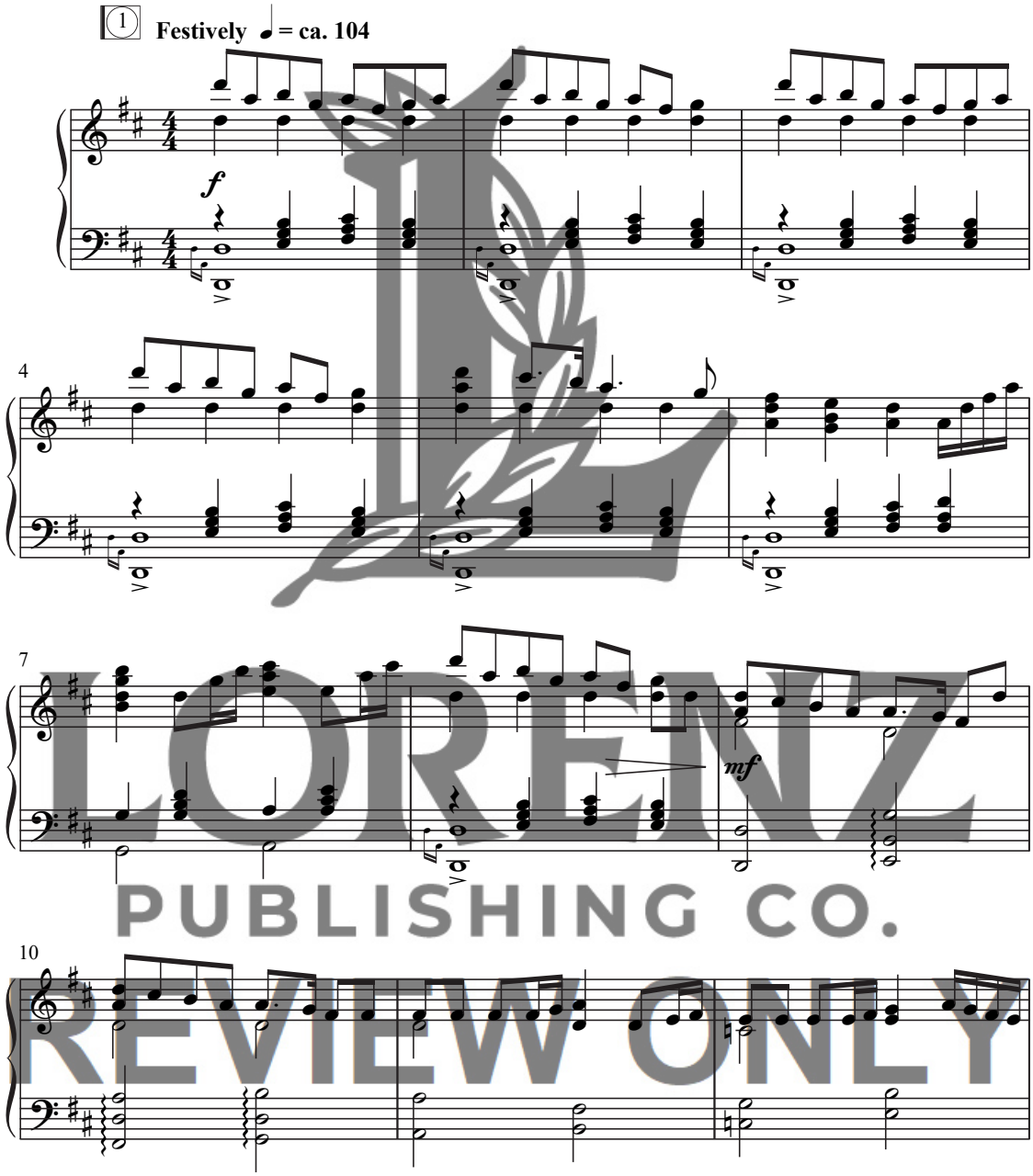
The Road to Bethlehem

Words by **Isaac Watts,**
Lloyd Larson, and
Traditional French Carol

Arranged with New Music
by **Lloyd Larson**
Incorporating **ANTIOCH** by G. F. Handel,
MENDELSSOHN by Felix Mendelssohn,
and **GLORIA,** Traditional French Melody



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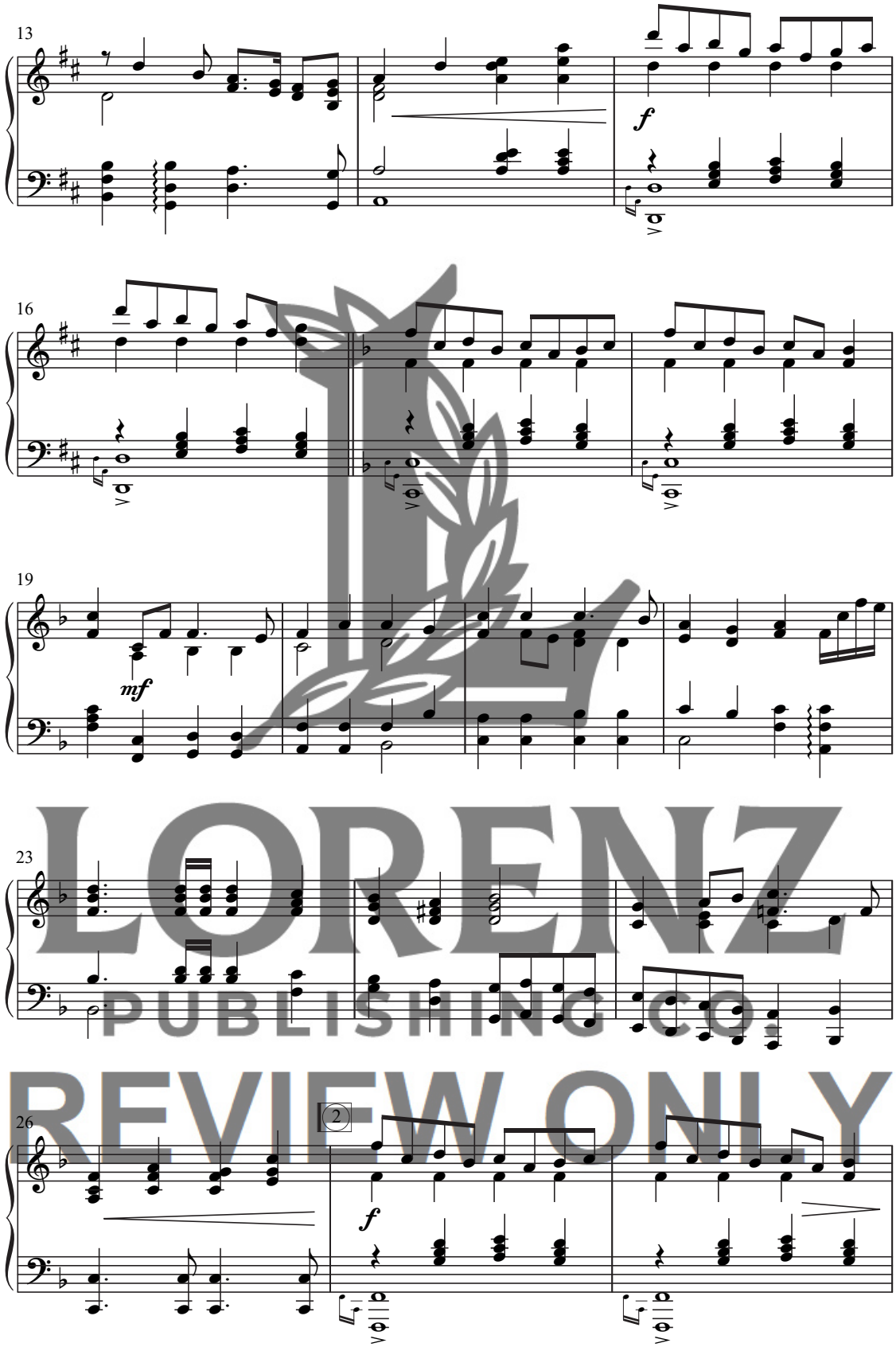

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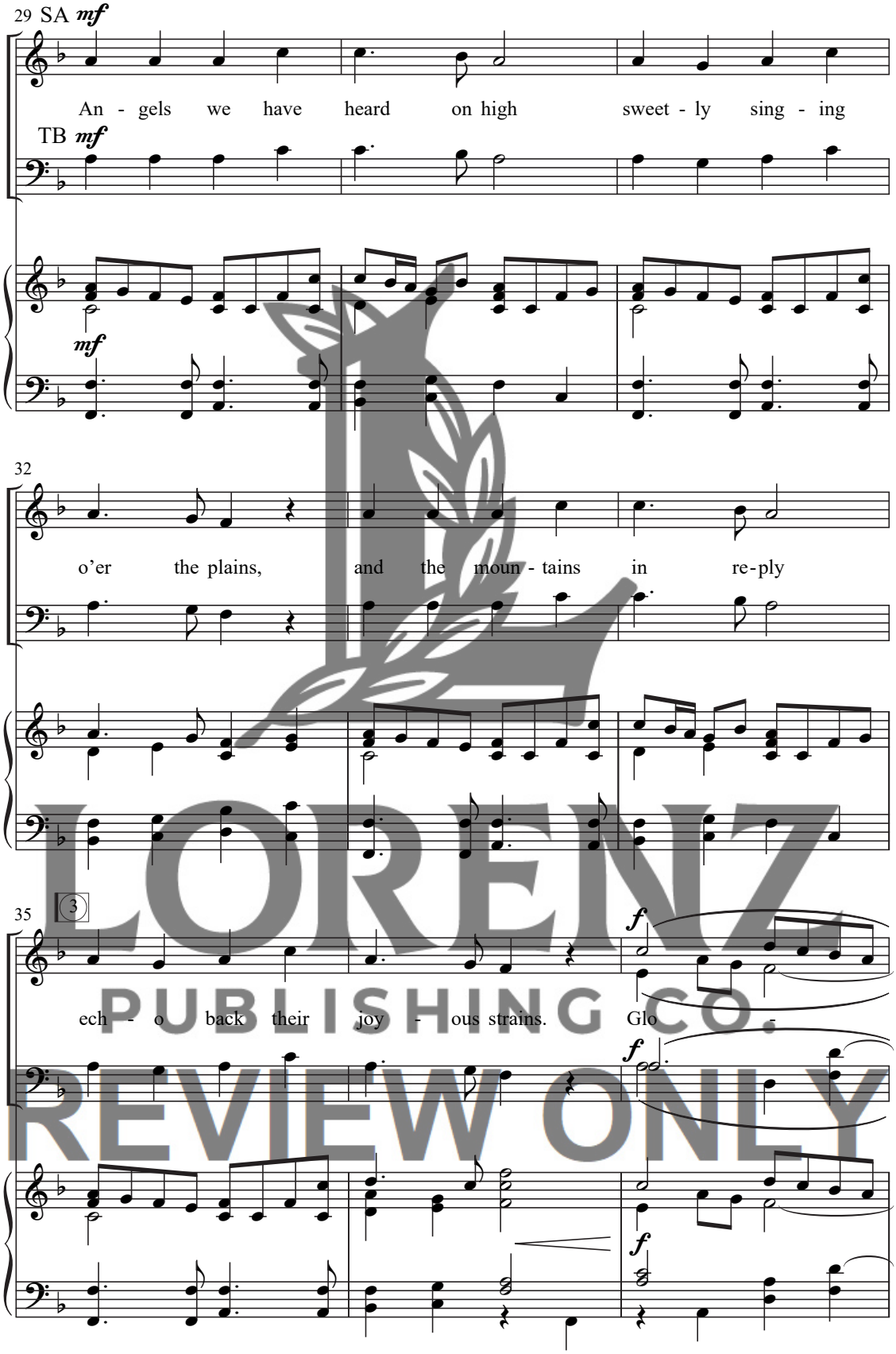

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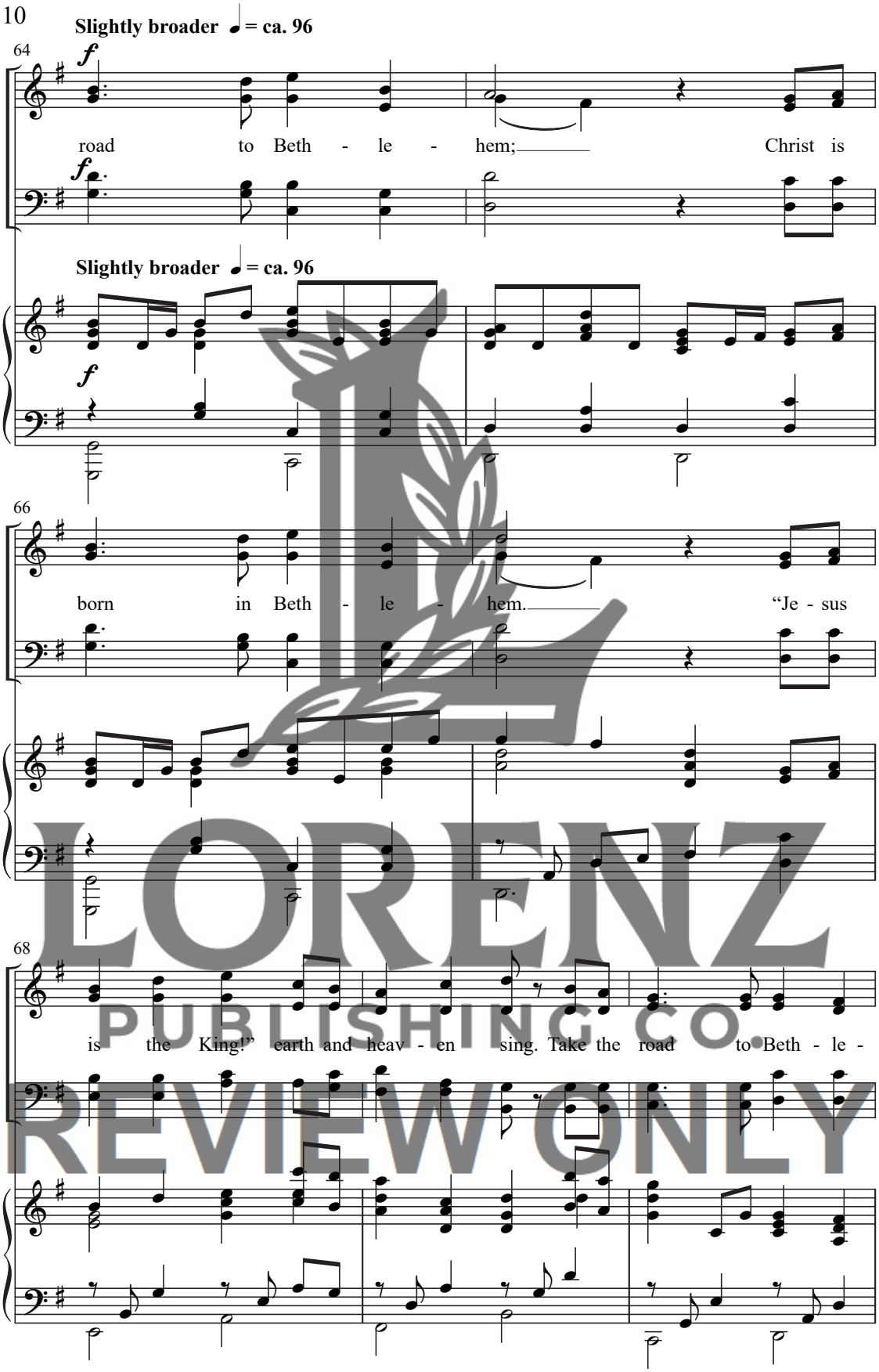

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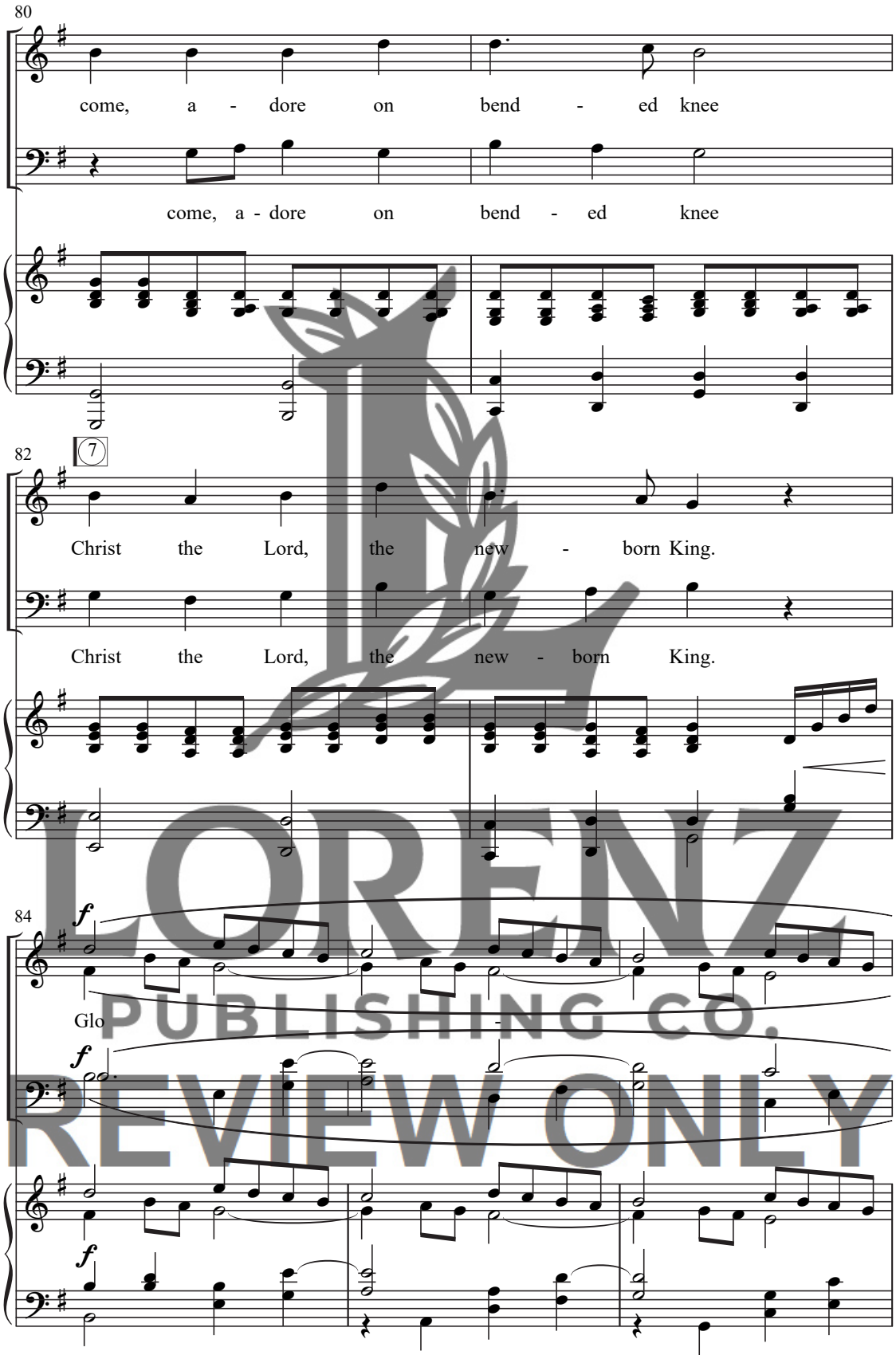

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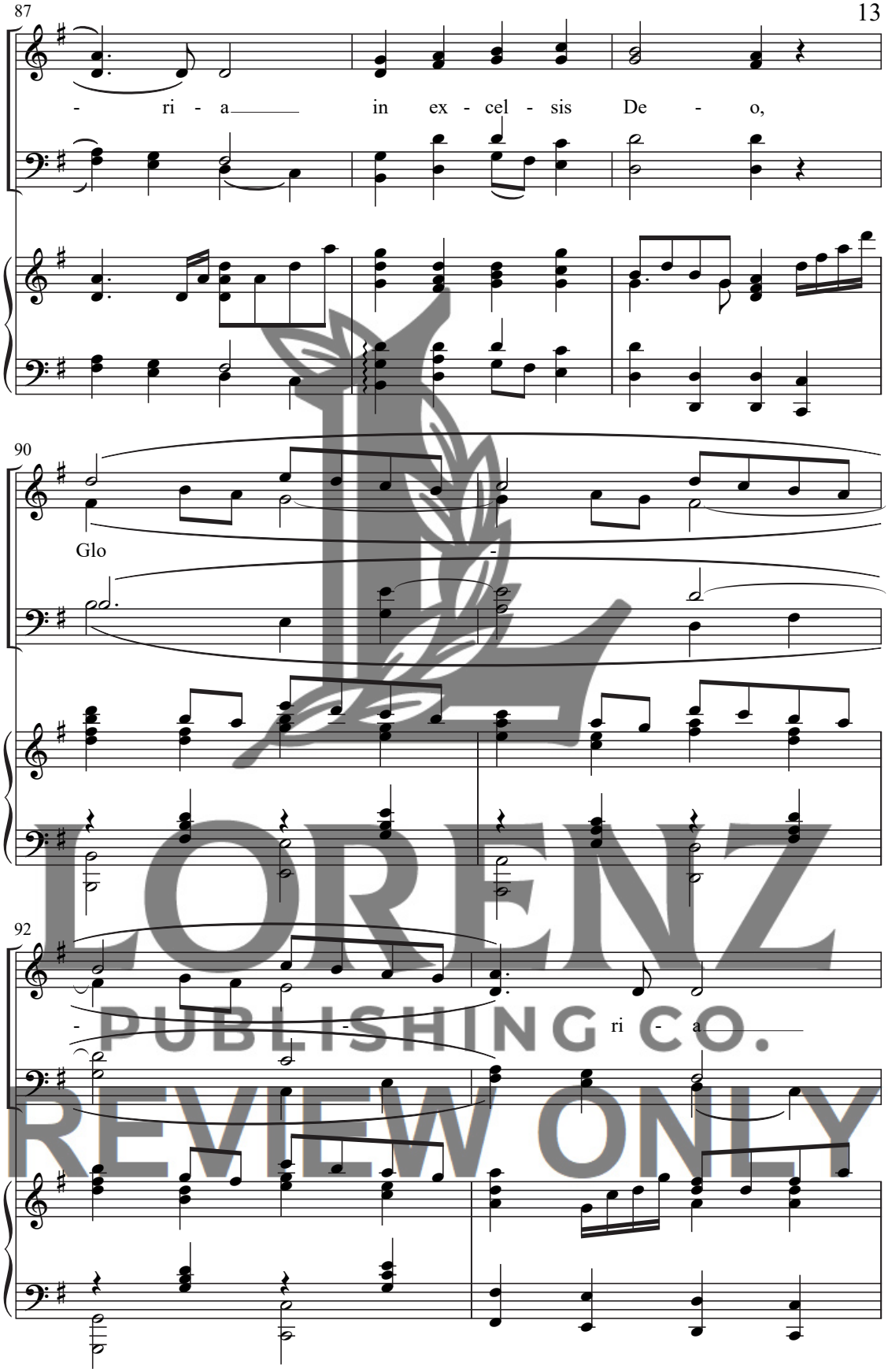

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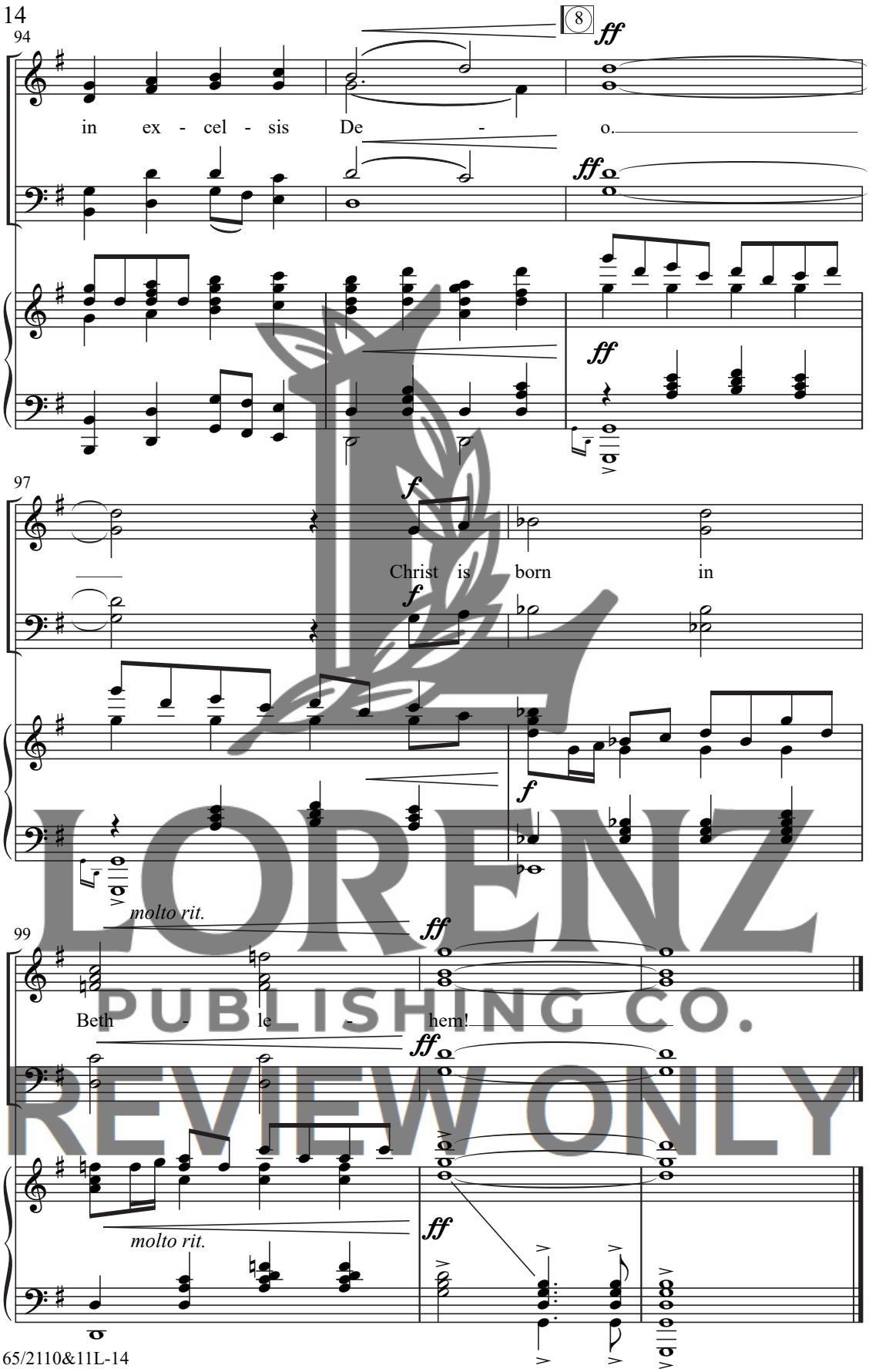

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Narration 1

Narrator 1: Sometimes the road we end up on is not the road we expected.

Narrator 2: Of all the places, in all the world, no one expected to be on the road to Bethlehem. Nothing good came from there. Why would anyone go?

Narrator 1: But many would. Something had changed. Something was calling them, drawing them, inviting them to it.

Narrator 2: Because suddenly, the road that led to Bethlehem, was the road that led to God. ***(music begins)***

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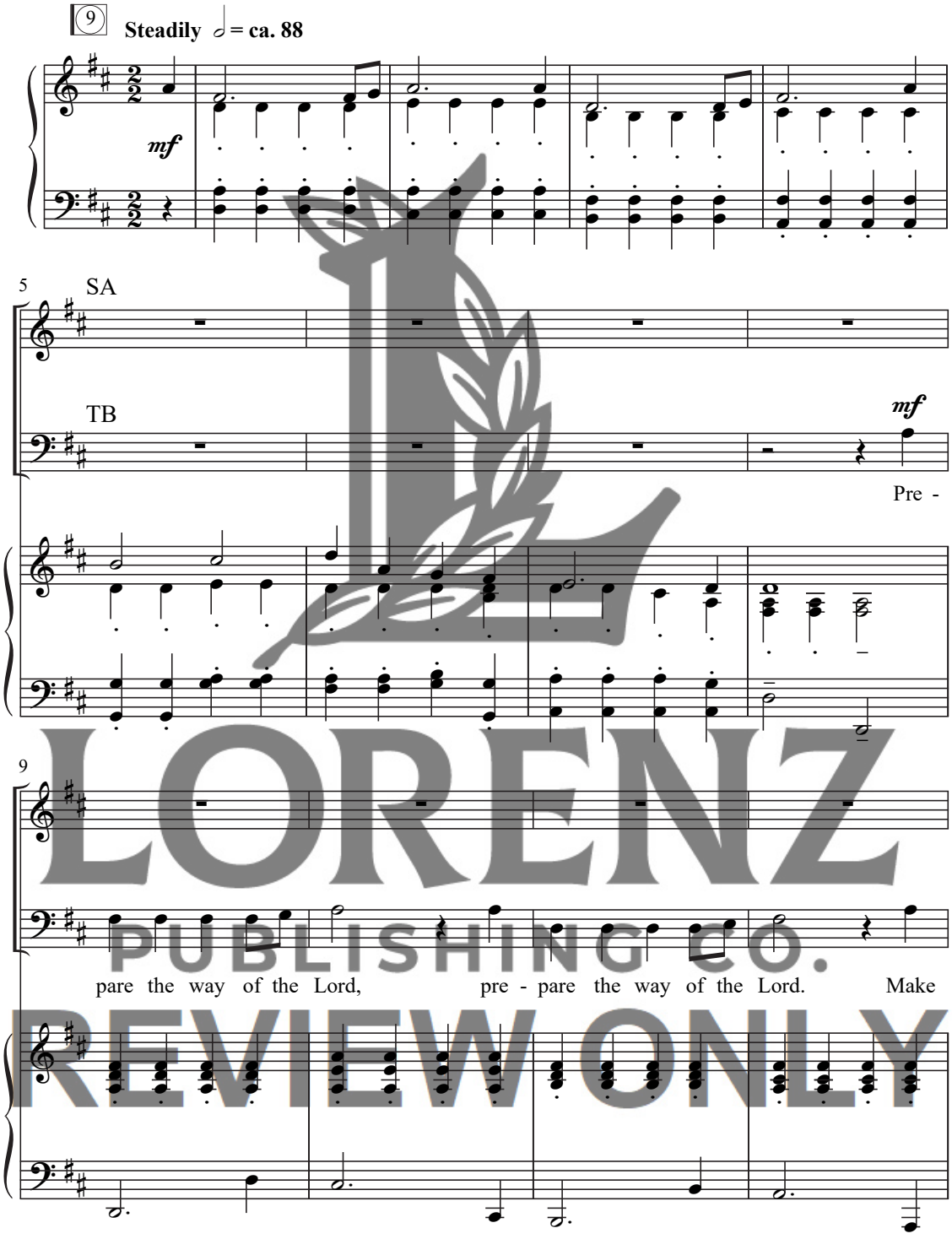
A Highway for Our God

Words by **Lloyd Larson**
Based on **Isaiah 40:3-5**

Music by
Lloyd Larson



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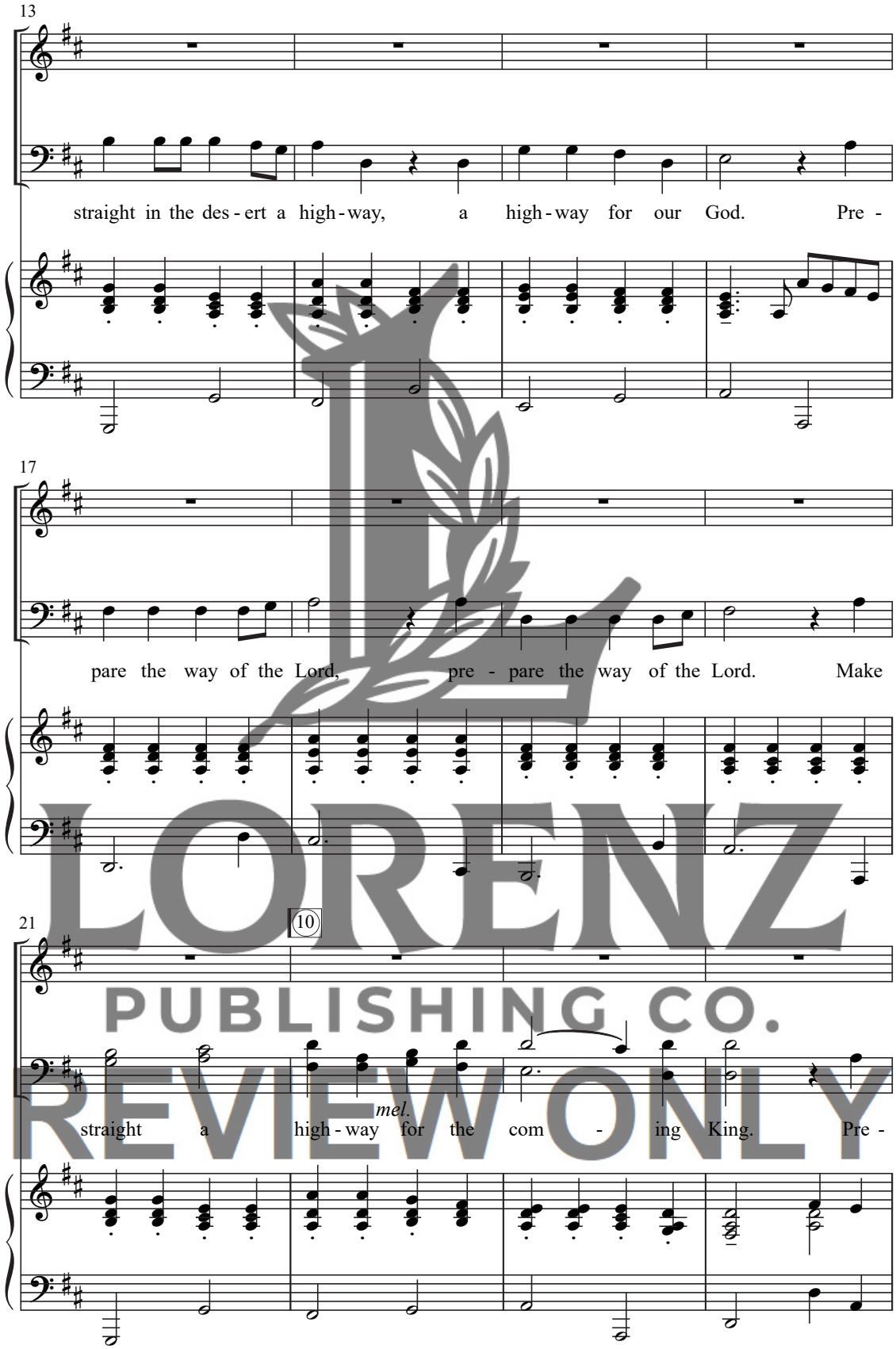

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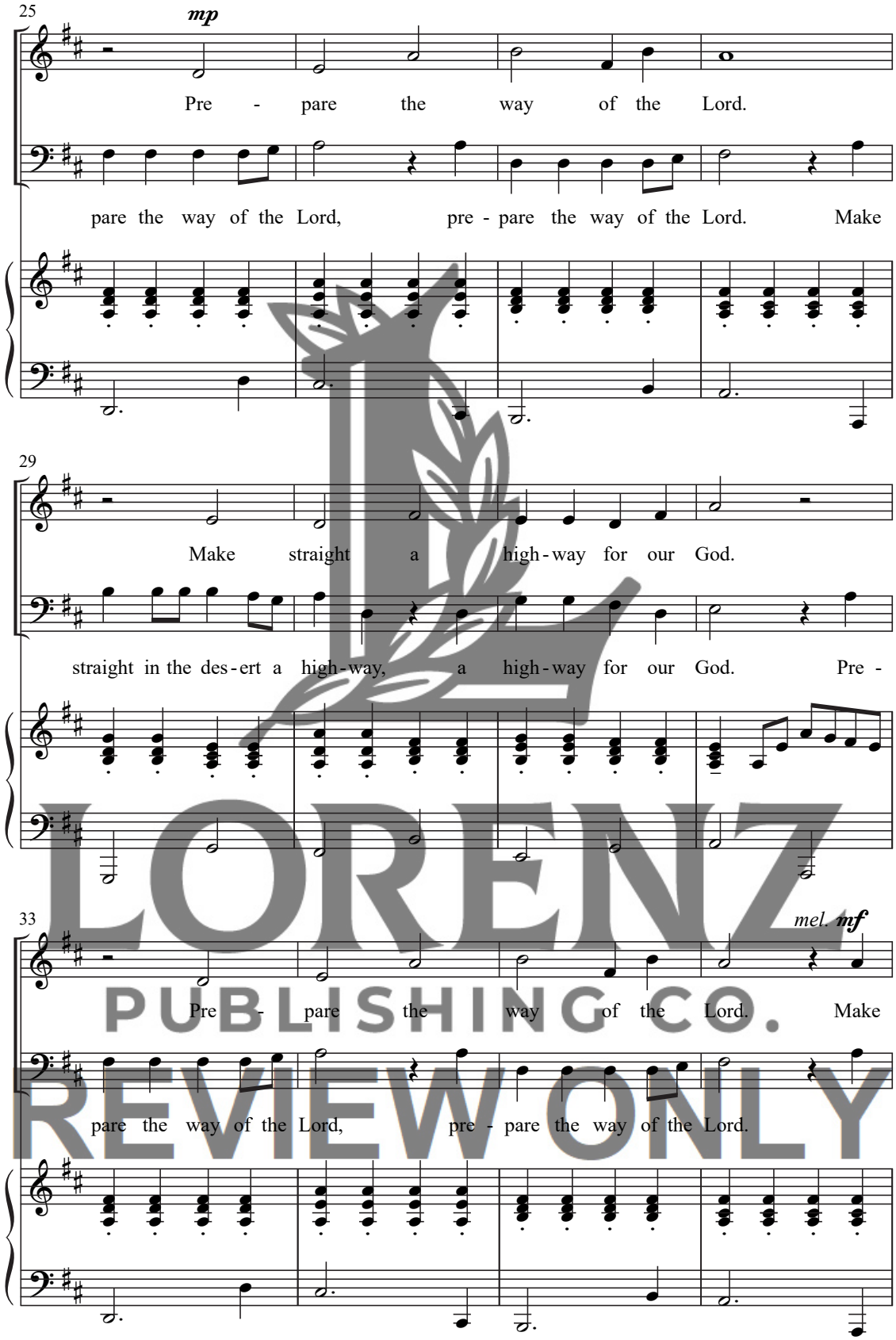

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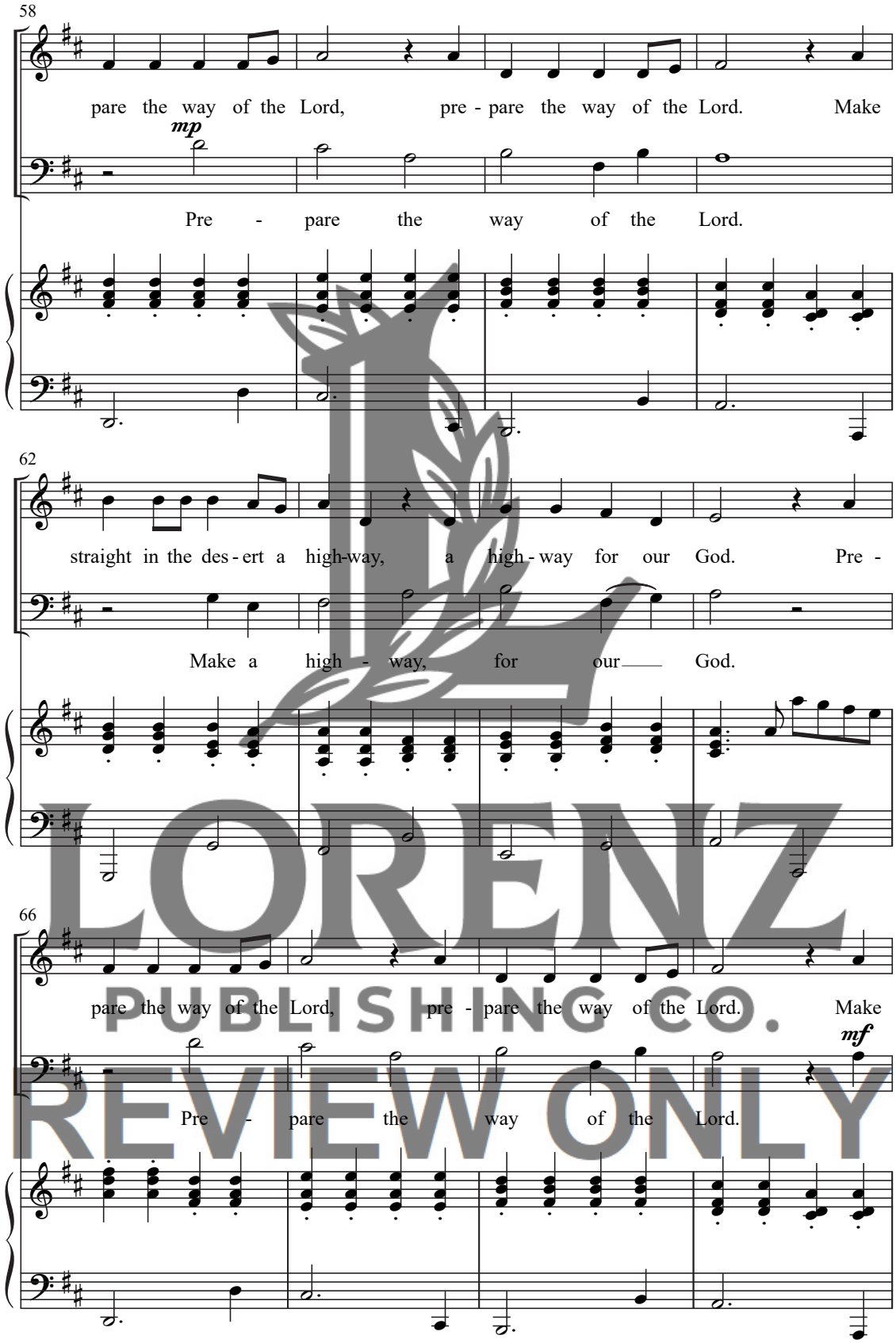

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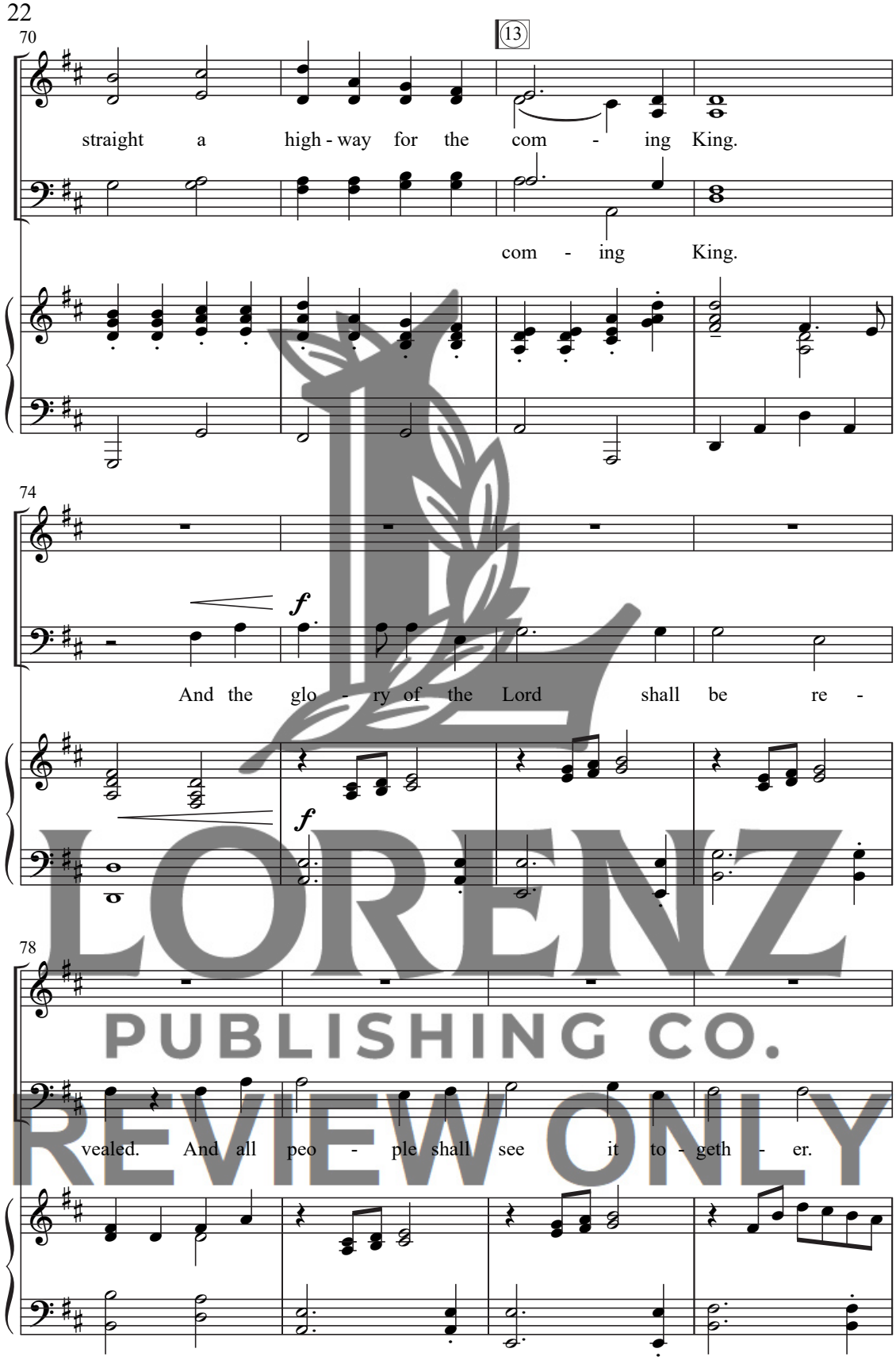

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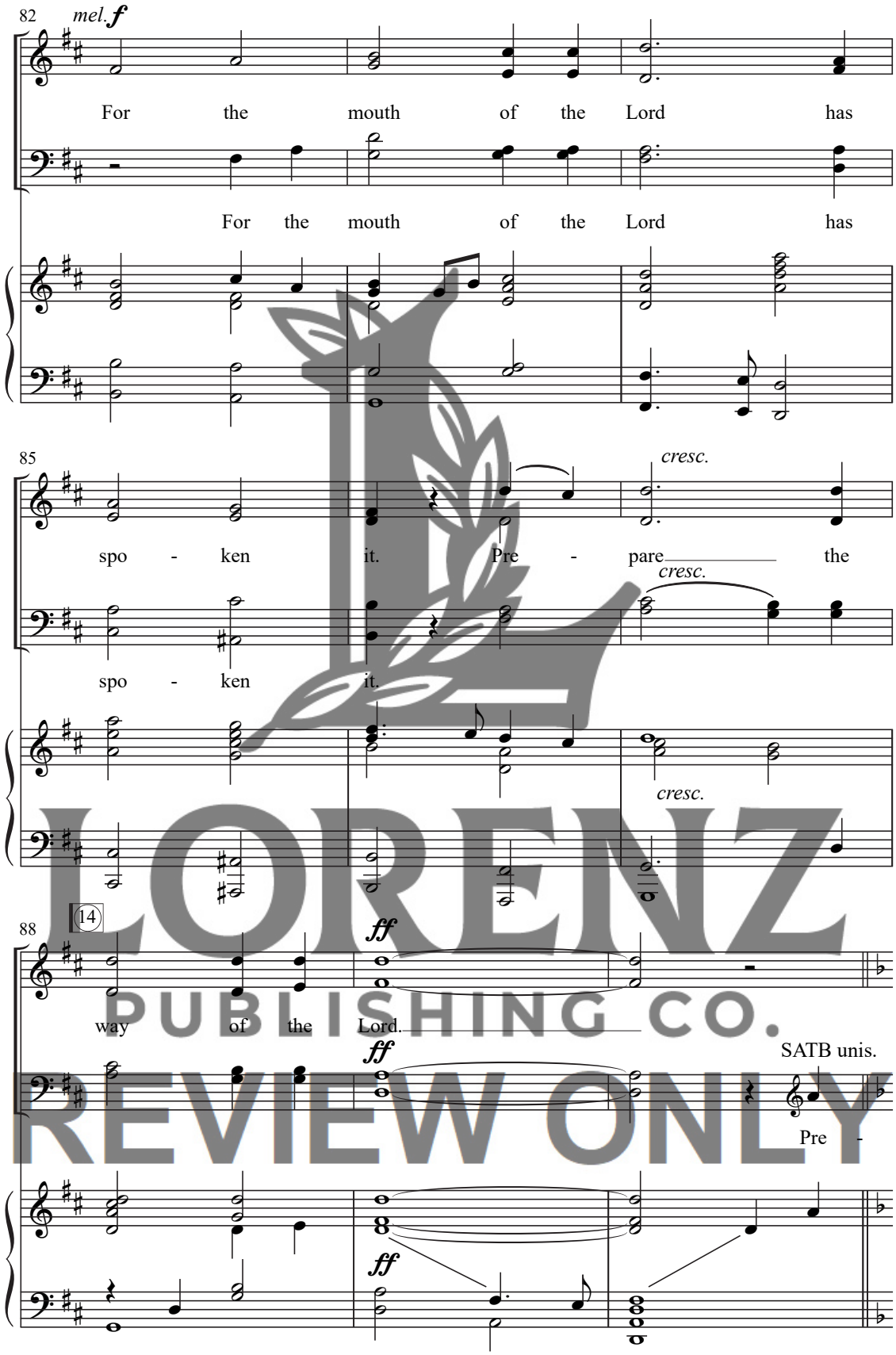

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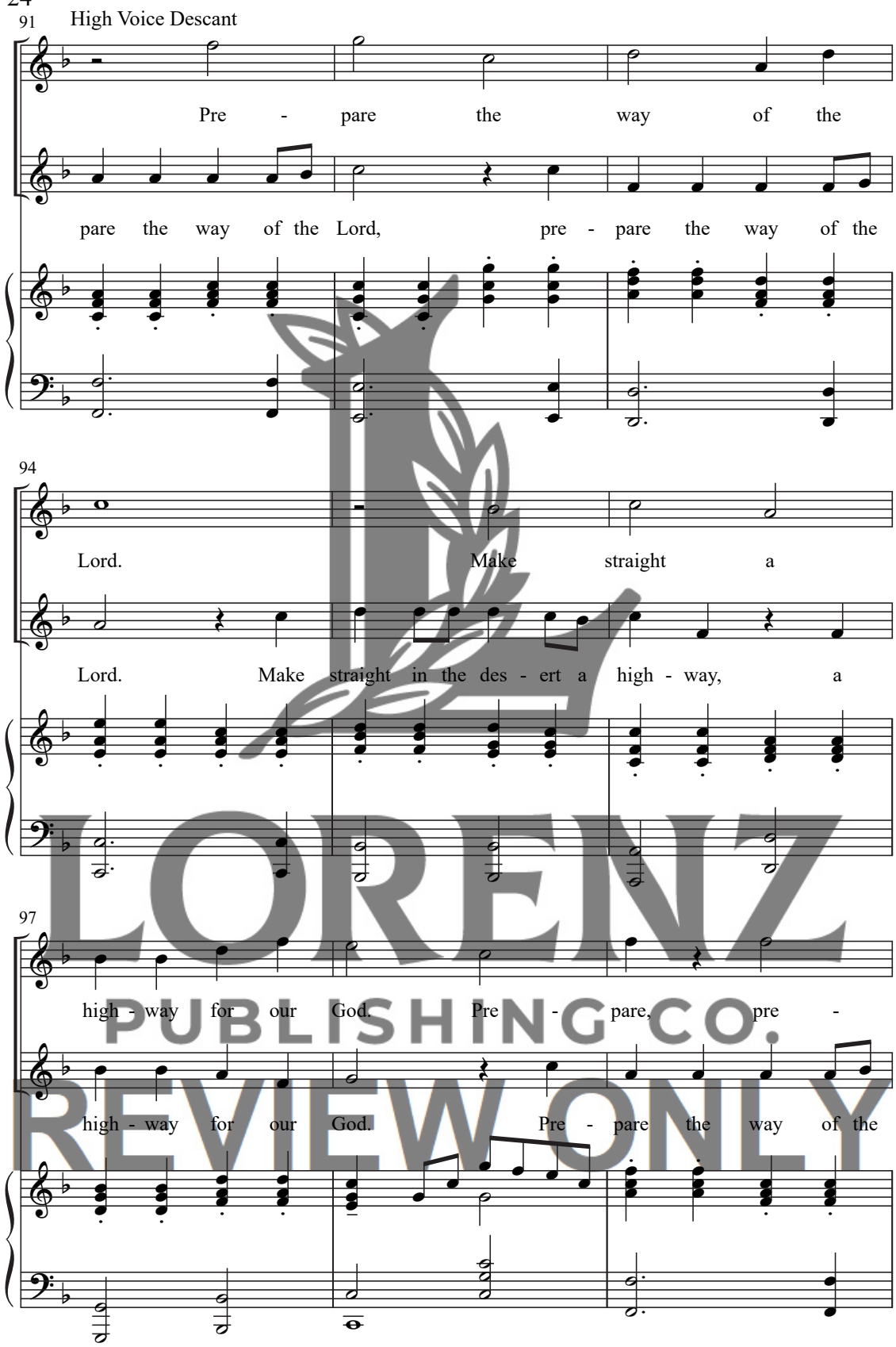

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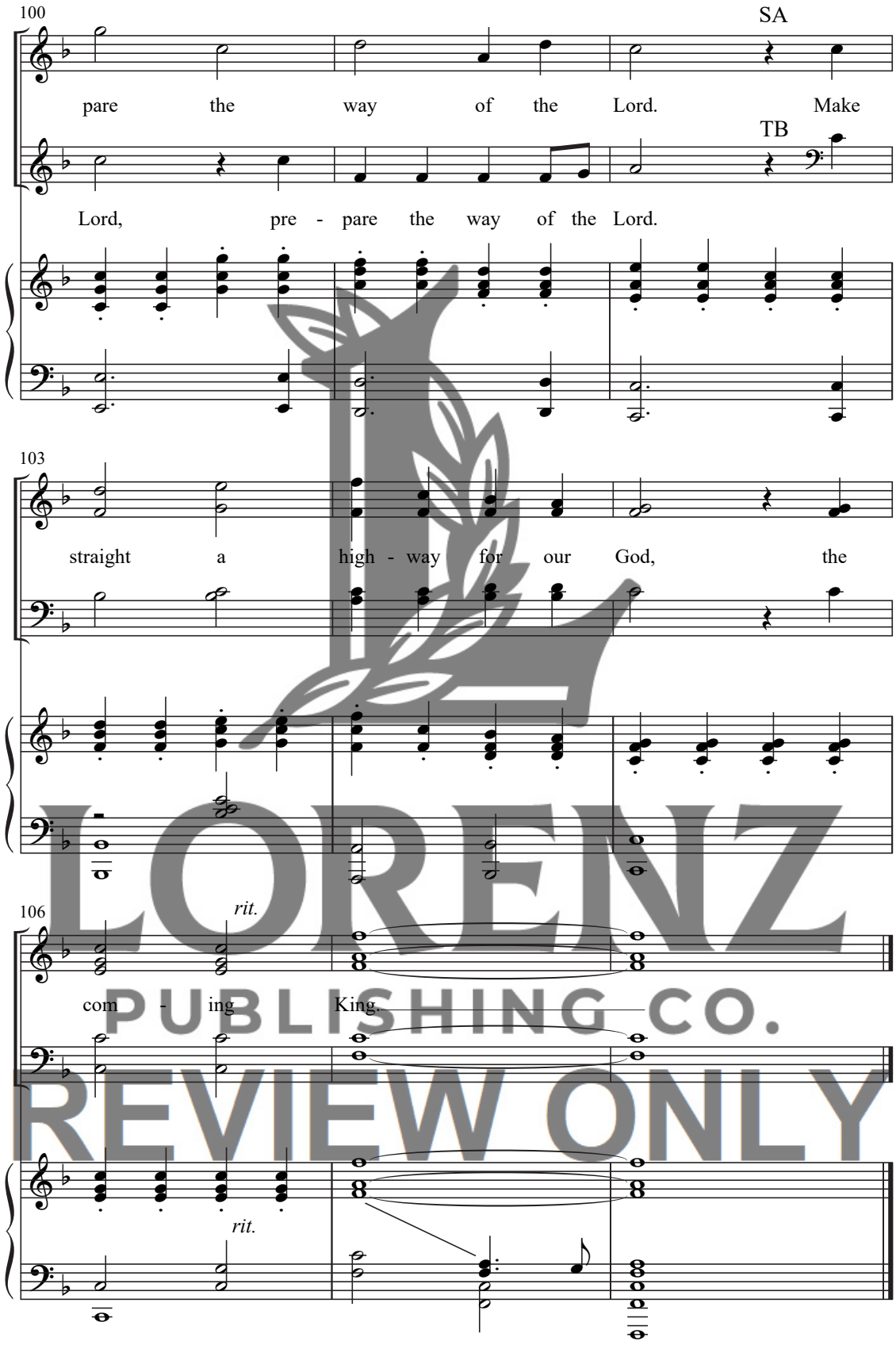

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Narration 2

Narrator 1: Why did they all come? Why travel all that way? Who, in the dark of the night or loneliness of grief, hasn't hoped for a Light that is lasting?

Narrator 2: Who, in moments of transcendent joy or fleeting beauty, hasn't longed for the Creator and Source of it?

Narrator 1: Who, when the world is so broken and unfair, hasn't desired a Judge who brings mercy and justice in balance?

Narrator 2: All. All hope, all long, all desire this Messiah. It was this hope that kept each one walking toward Him, all the way to Bethlehem. ***(music begins)***

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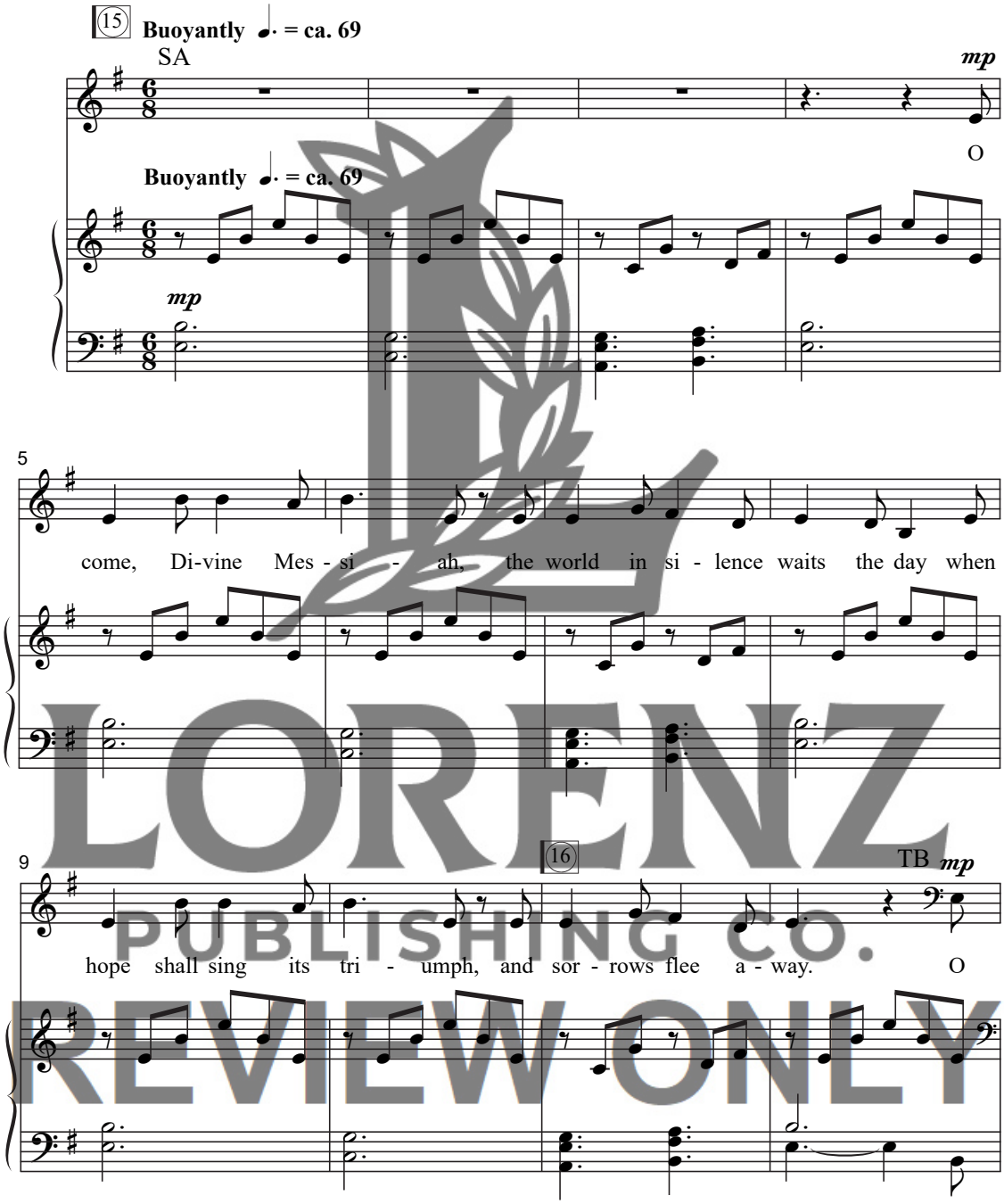
Come, Messiah!

Words by **Lloyd Larson** and
Abbe Simon-Joseph Pellegrin,
tr. by **S. Mary of St. Philip**, 1877

Music by
Lloyd Larson



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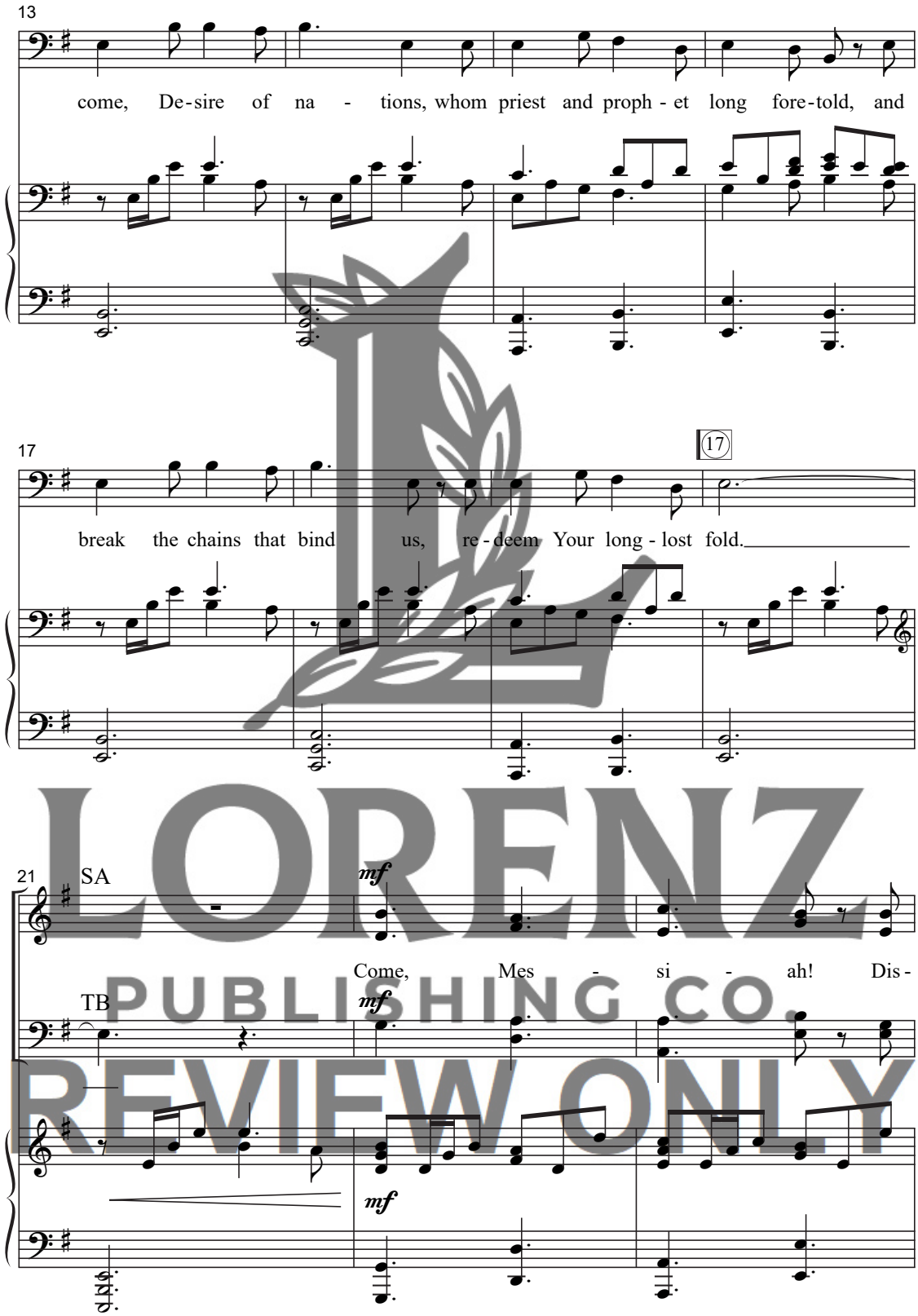

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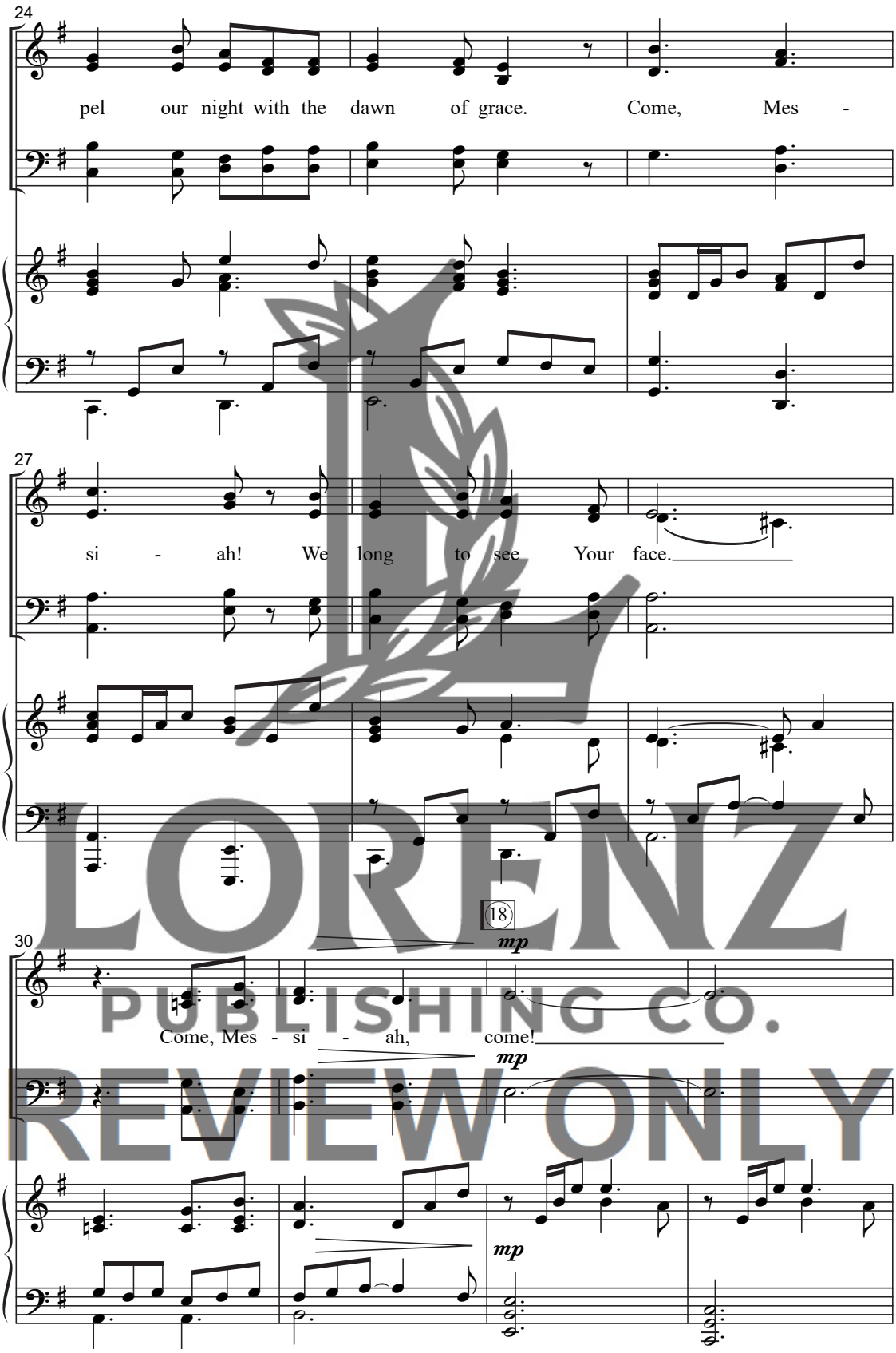

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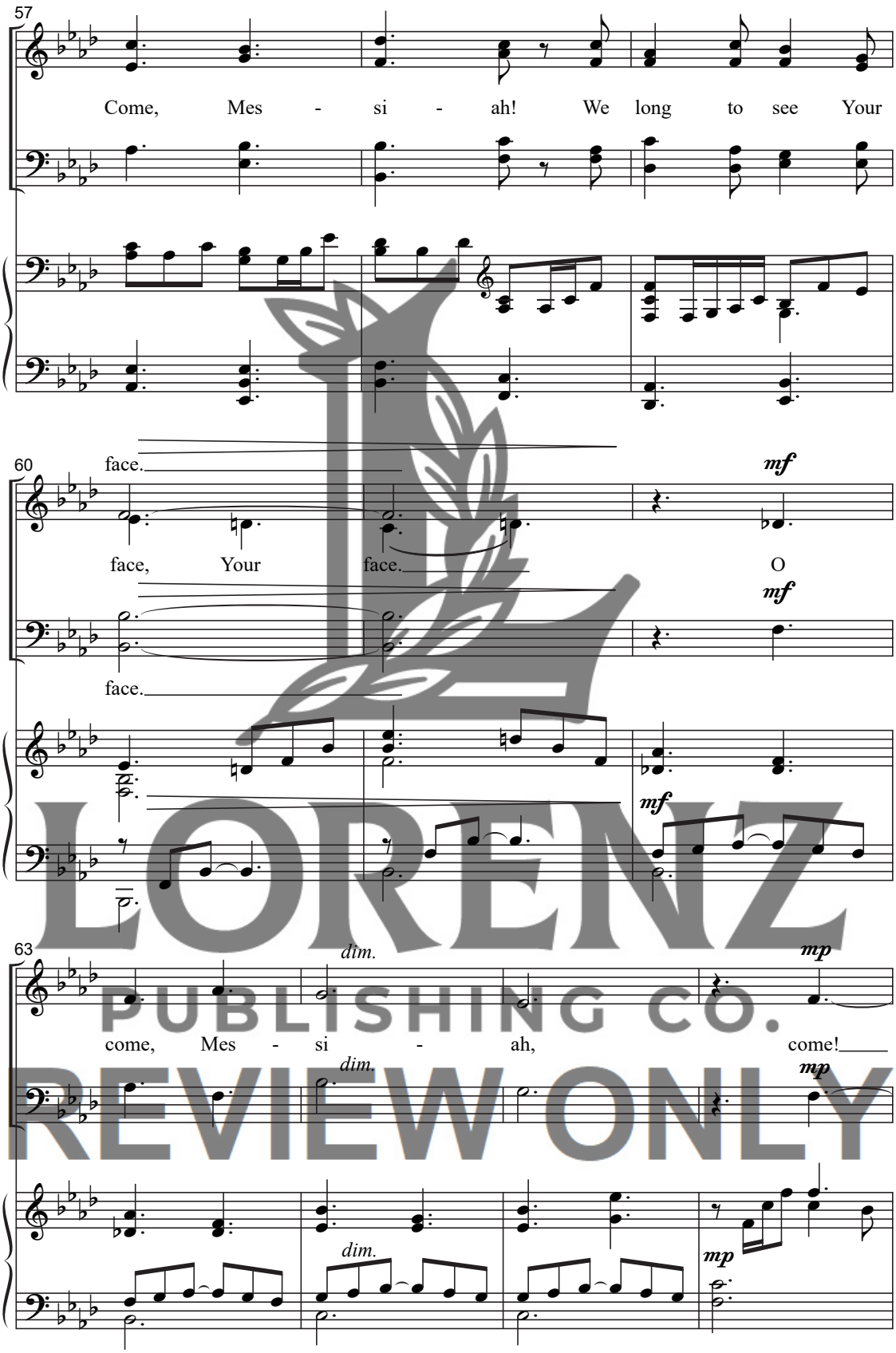

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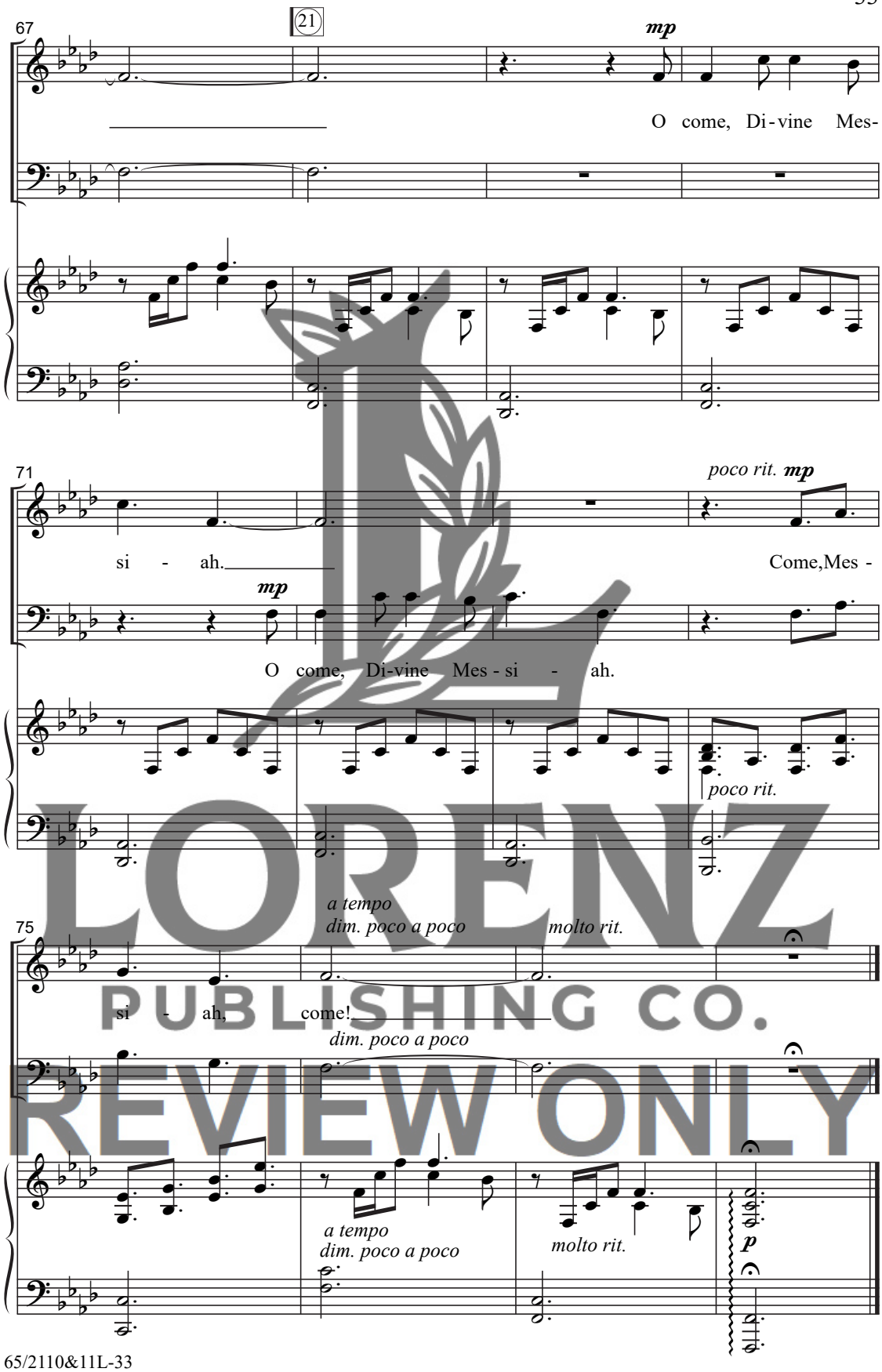

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Narration 3

Narrator 2: Mary and Joseph began on their road to Bethlehem quietly; with gentle angels, dreams, and songs. The vision was beautiful, but the road was long.

Narrator 1: How easy it would have been for God to deliver this small family on angel wings or clouds. And yet, here they were, on a dusty road, step after step, faithfully plodding.

Narrator 2: Perhaps, as she went, Mary sang the song she had composed for this Child: "God has lifted up the humble, He has filled the faithful with good things." Maybe she sang this even as the donkey carried her through the dust.

Narrator 1: Perhaps, as he went, Joseph listened to this song from his wife, and leaned just a bit closer to her, to the donkey, to the unborn Child. Maybe, he wondered at her words as his stomach rumbled. Could such hope be true? Be here? He set his heart on finding out when they reached Bethlehem. ***(music begins)***

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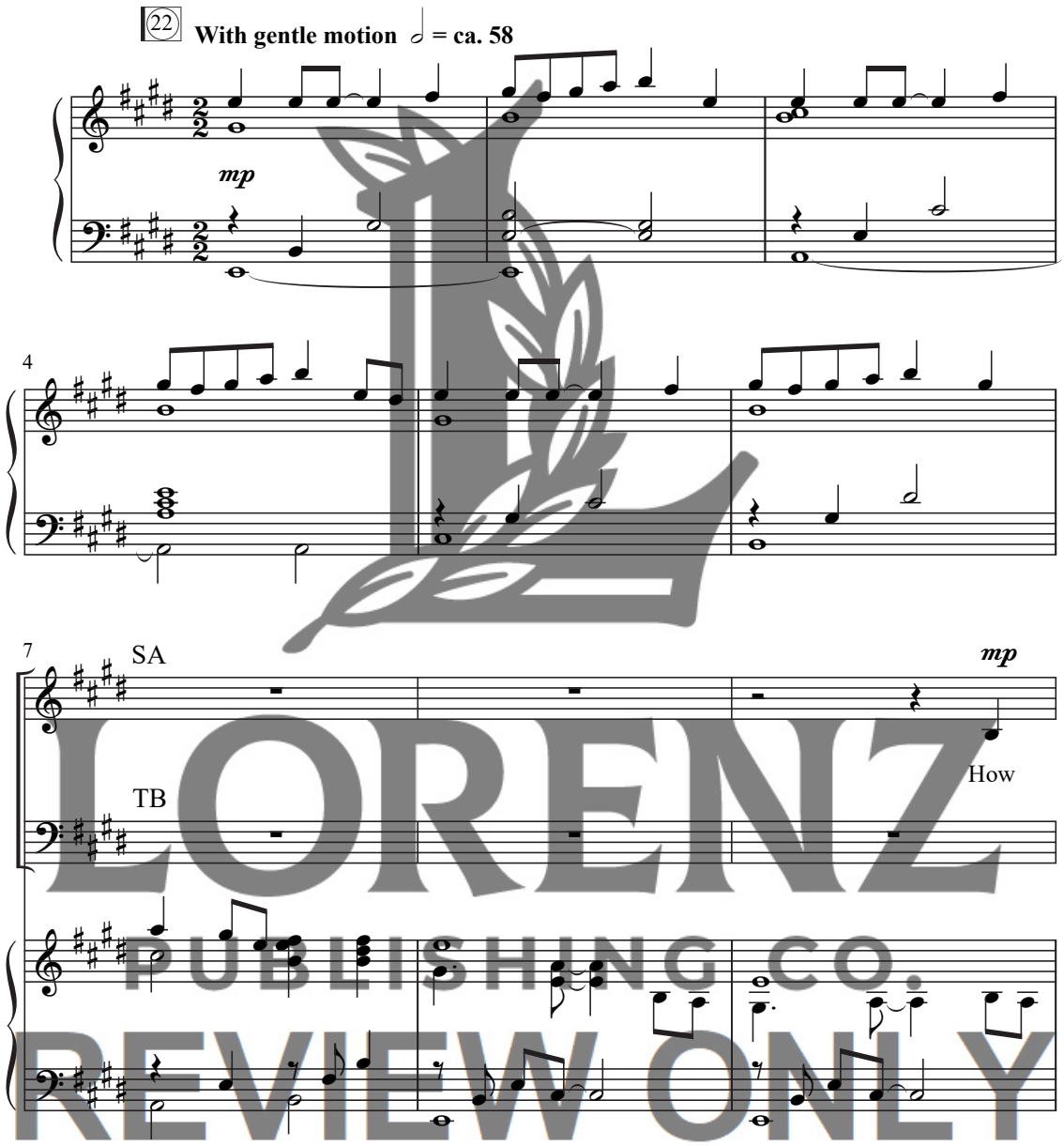
Holy Child of Bethlehem

Words by **Lloyd Larson**
and **Phillips Brooks**

Arranged with New Music
by **Lloyd Larson**
Tune: **FOREST GREEN,**
Traditional English Melody



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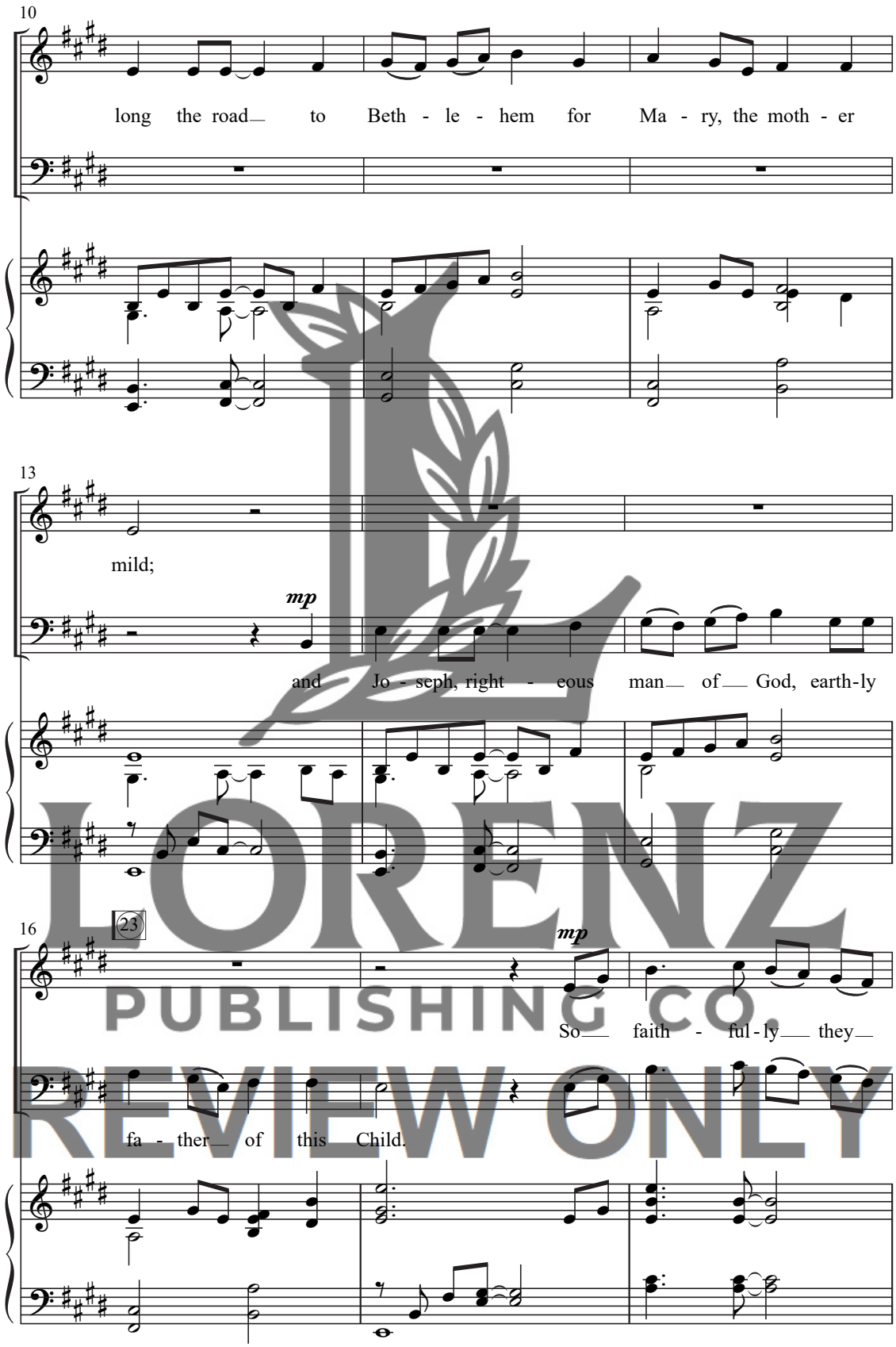

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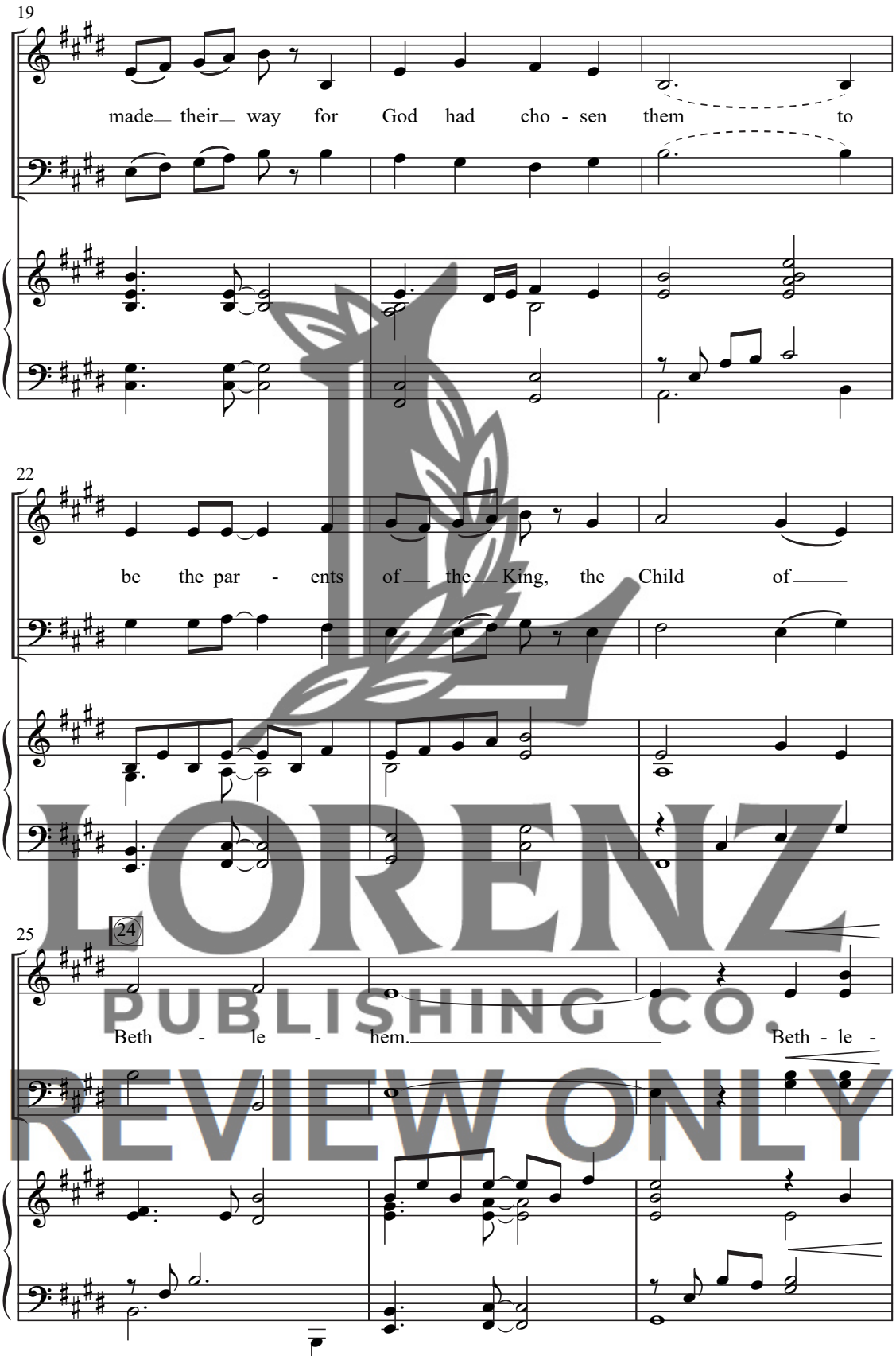

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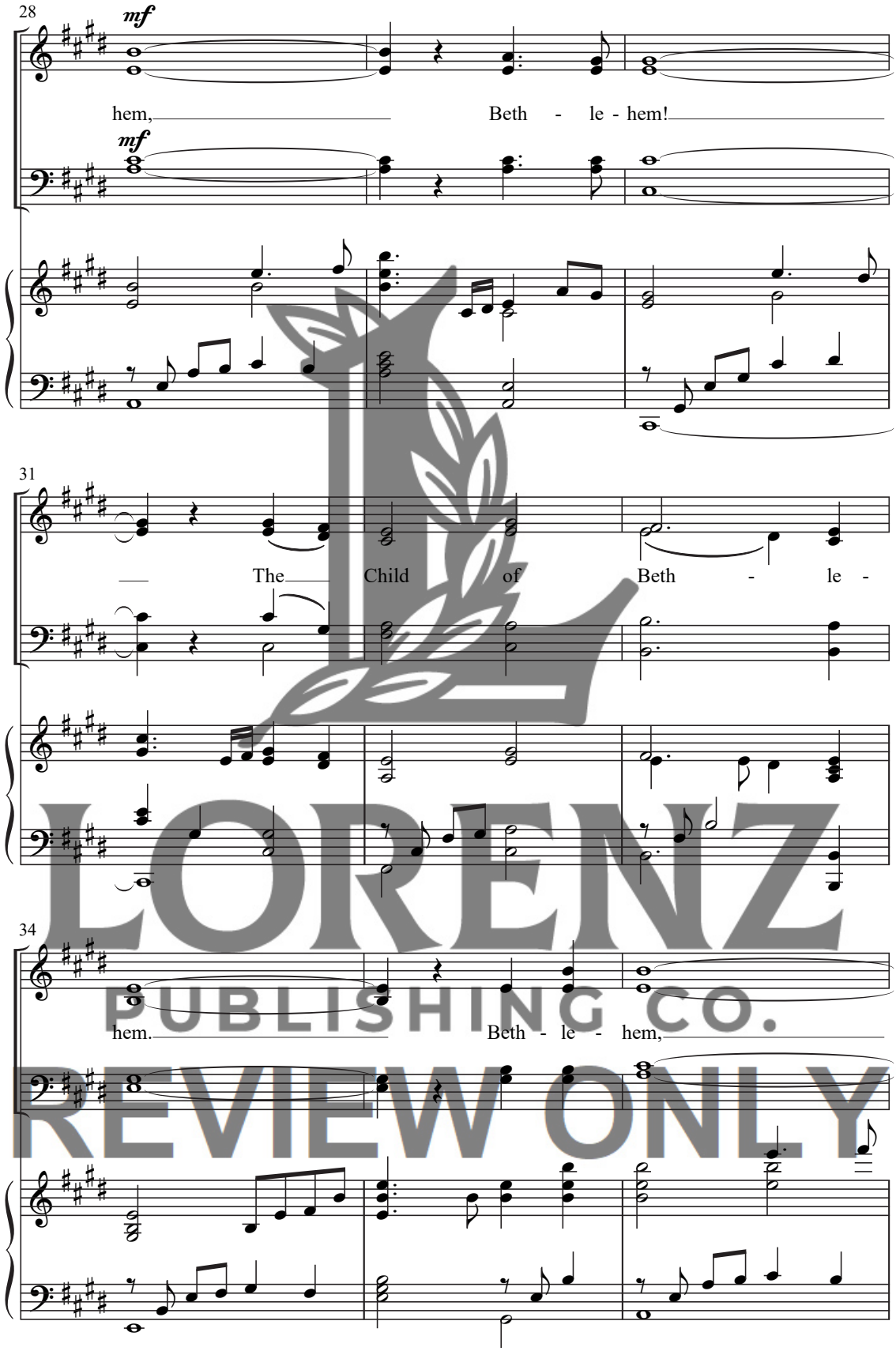

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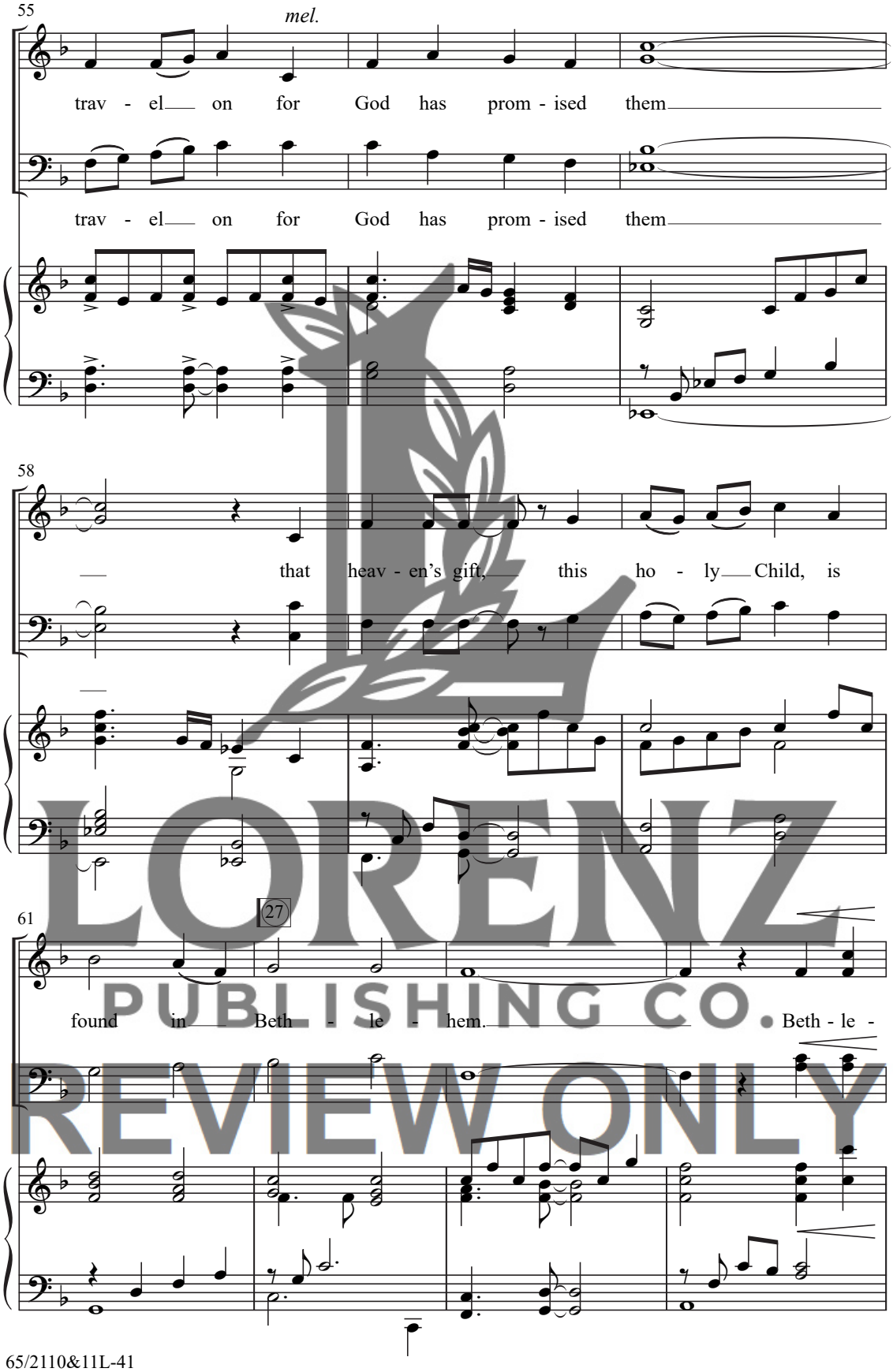

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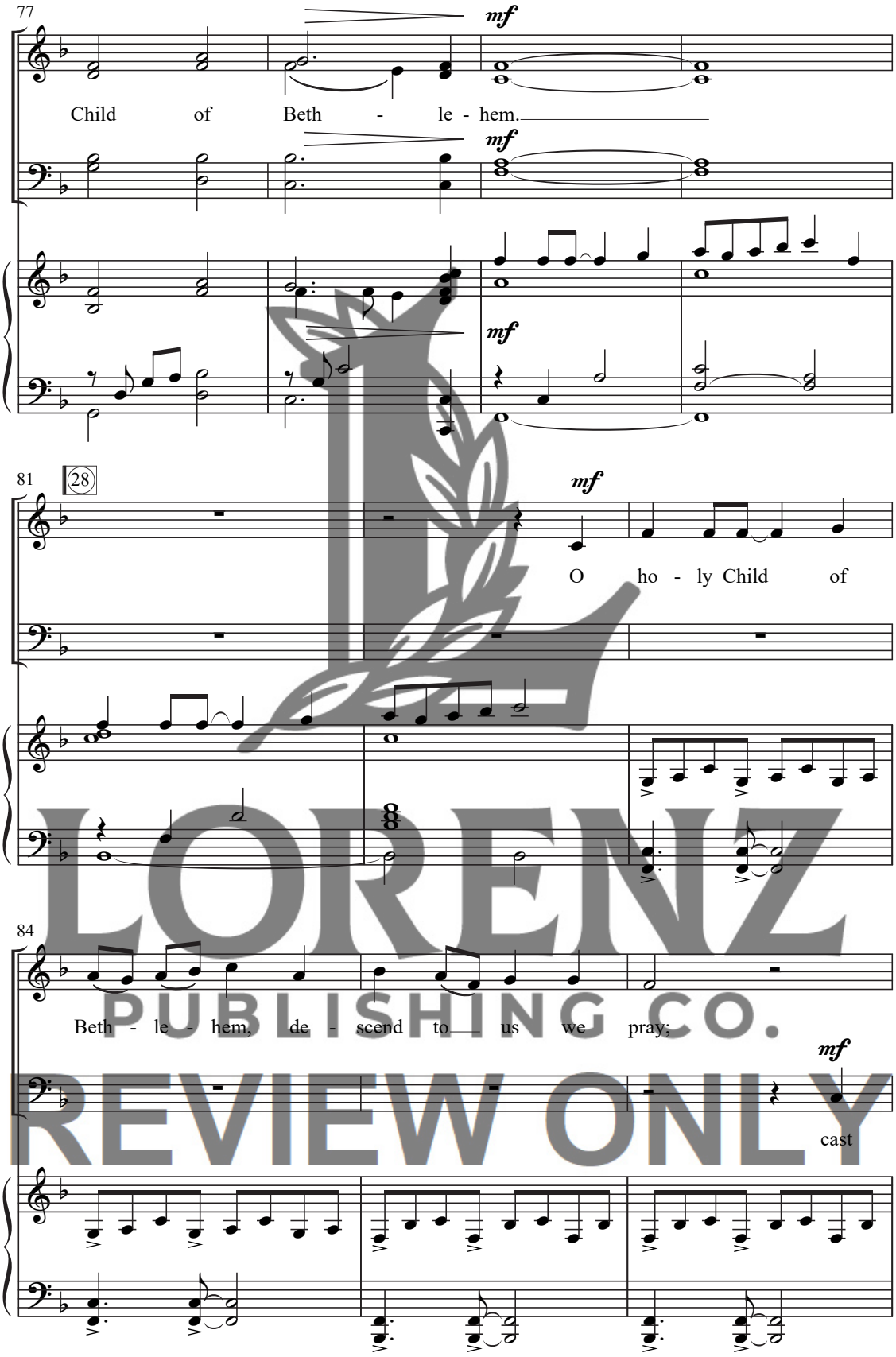

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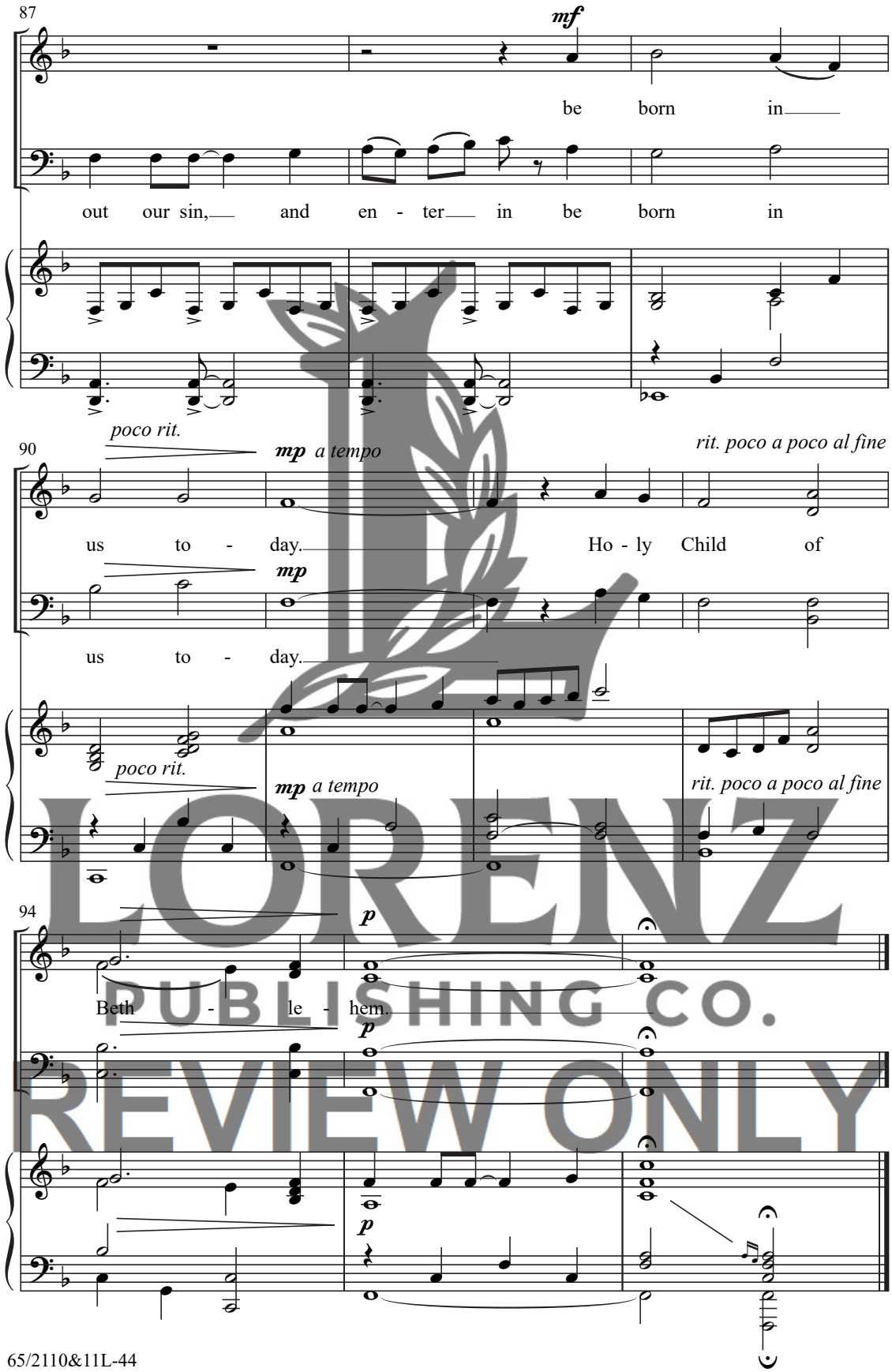

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Narration 4

Narrator 1: The Shepherds did not start on a road at all. They stood on sheep paths in the soft grass that night. They listened to the familiar, small sleeping noises of their flock. They gazed up with tired eyes at familiar stars. And then, suddenly, something new appeared in the sky. Then, they were wide awake!

Narrator 2: An angel. A promise: "Today, in Bethlehem, a Child has been born to you. He is the Messiah. The Lord." Angel choruses appeared, singing, "Glory!" And then, the sky was dark and familiar again. But nothing was the same.

Narrator 1: They gathered together to discuss what they had seen, but the discussion did not last long. If it were true God had come to them, what could they do now but go to Him? They left their sheep. They found the path. They started their walk to Bethlehem. ***(music begins)***

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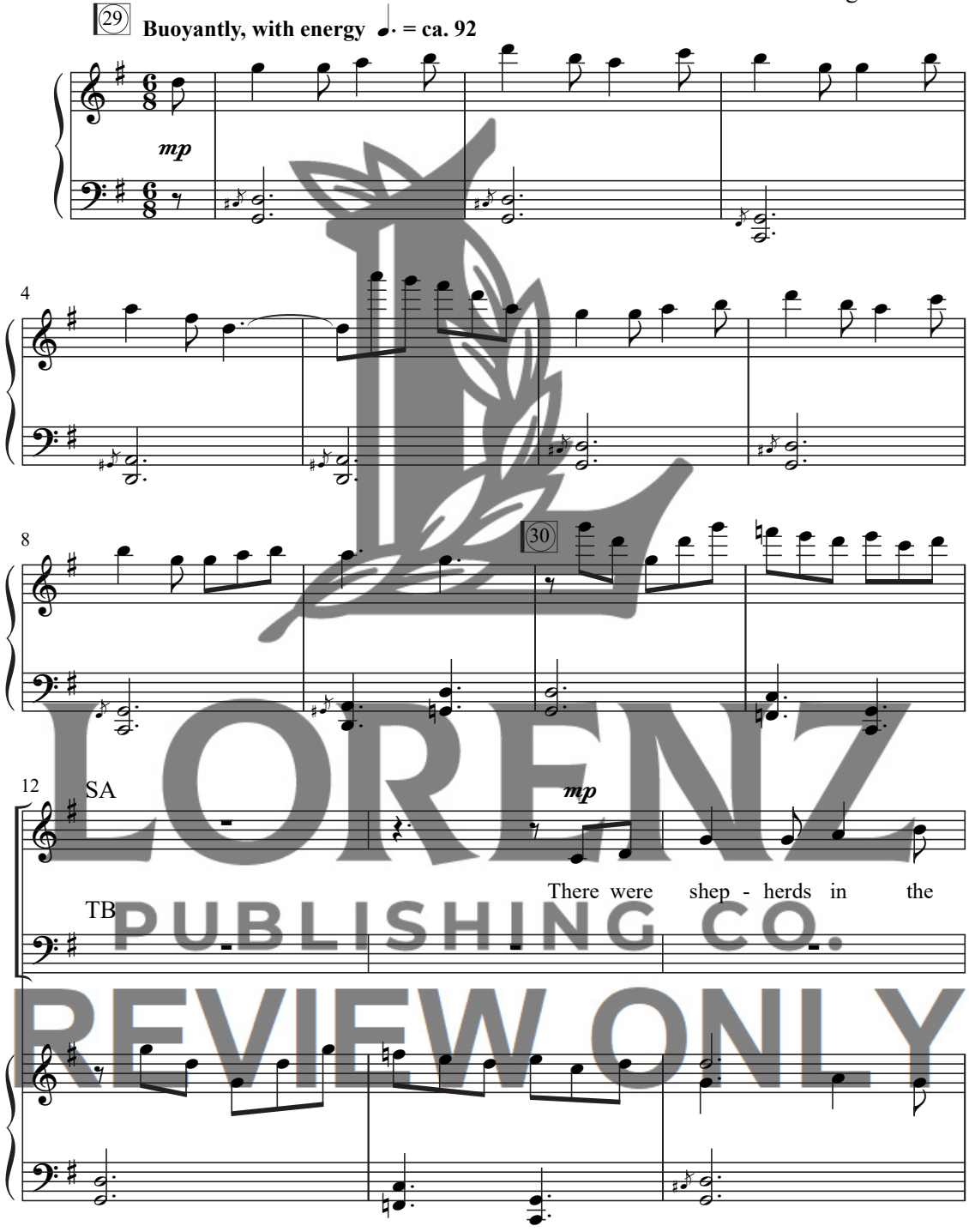
Shepherds in the Field

Words by **Lloyd Larson**
Based on **Luke 2:8-15** and
Traditional English Carol

Arranged by **Lloyd Larson**
Based upon **I SAW THREE SHIPS**
and **SUSSEX CAROL**,
Traditional English Carols



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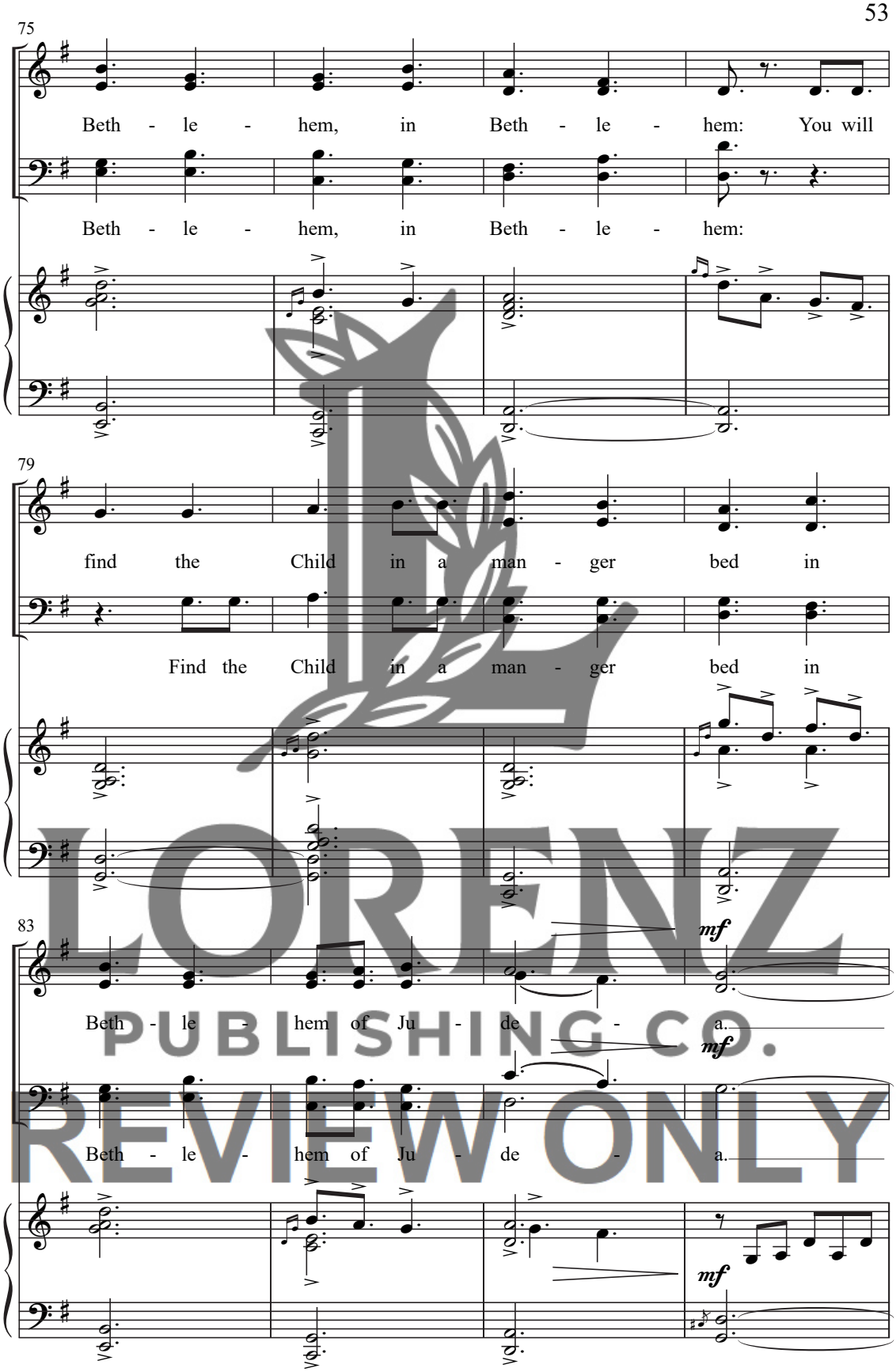

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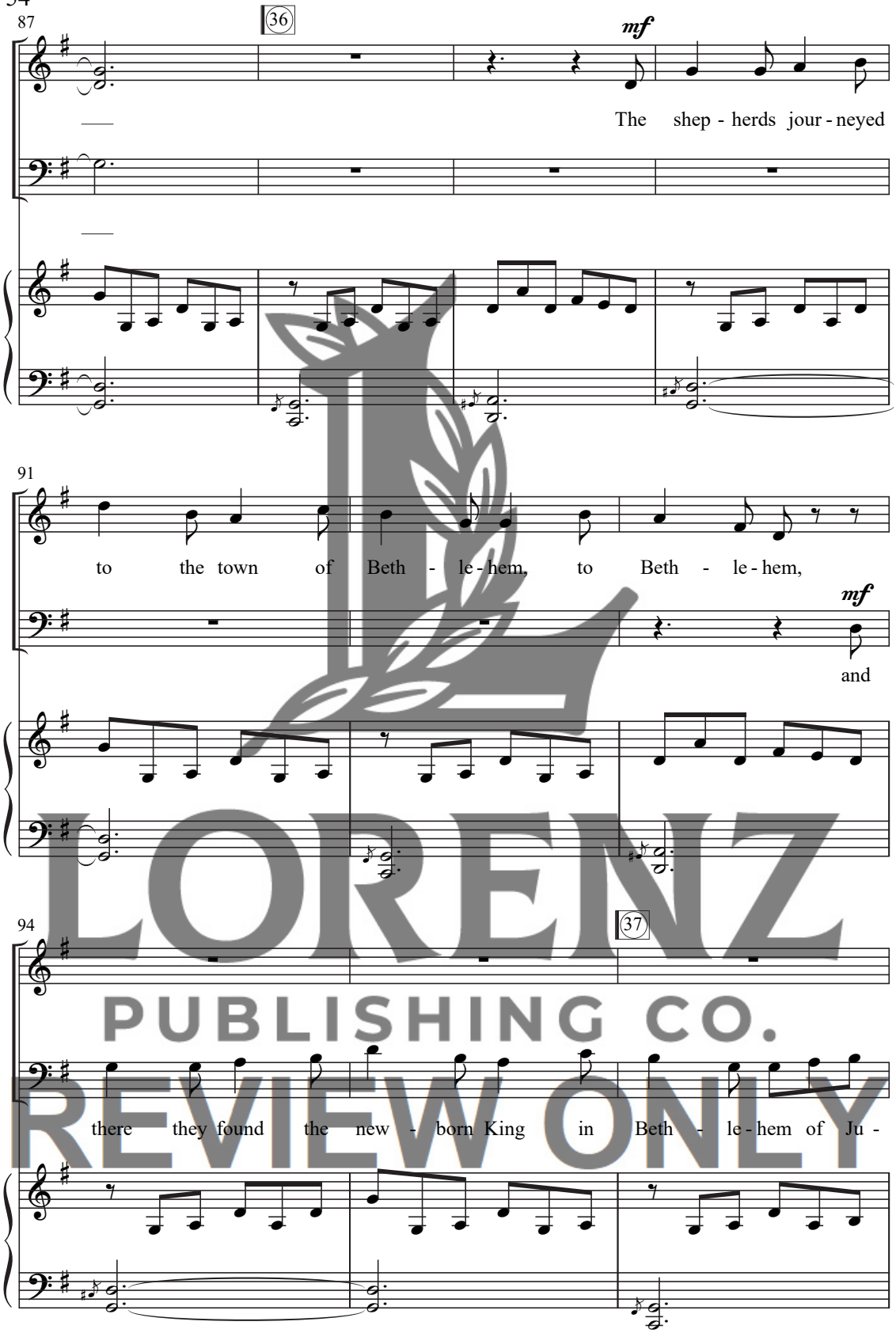

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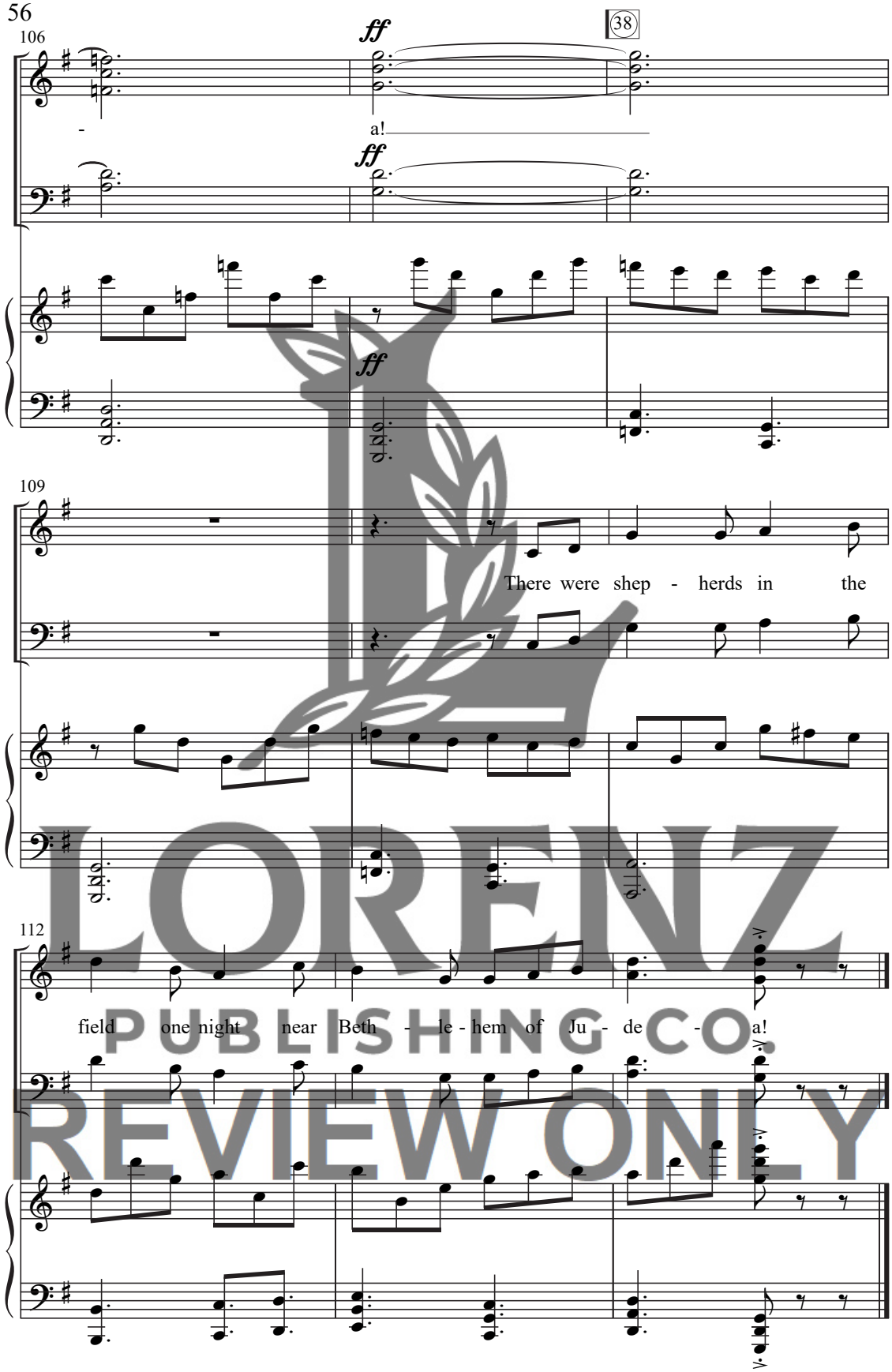

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Narration 5

Narrator 2: The best news the shepherds ever heard came in lights, proclamations, and songs from angels in the night sky. This is what started them down the road. But it was not just the journey that changed them; it was the Person at the end of it.

Narrator 1: As they walked toward this promised King, they may have discussed what it would take to get a chance to see Him. Would they be permitted? They knew they weren't a well-respected group. Would they be turned away?

Narrator 2: What a surprise, to find what they found: a scene they could easily enter and knew much about. There was no guard at the door; just a few sheep, which made them laugh. Oh, this is not a normal King. This is a King for us!

Narrator 1: In the quiet, in the stillness, there among the hay, they held and beheld Him: Jesus. This endless God made Himself small enough to hold. How could it be? And yet it was, here in Bethlehem. ***(music begins)***

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Shepherds' Cradle Song

Words by **C. D. Schubart, Lloyd Larson,** and Traditional English Carol

Arranged by **Lloyd Larson**
German Folk Song
Quoting **THE FIRST NOEL,** Traditional English Carol

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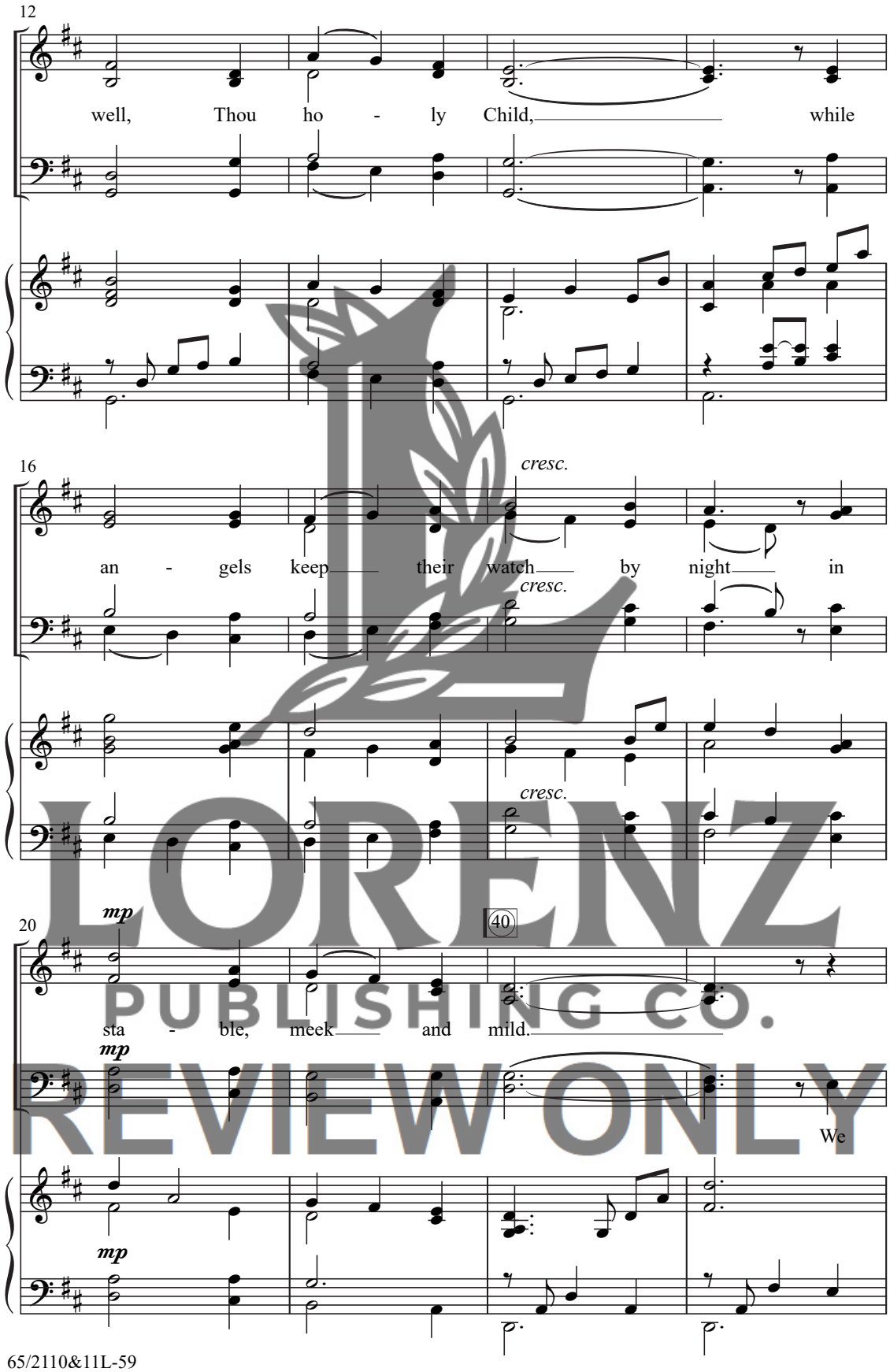

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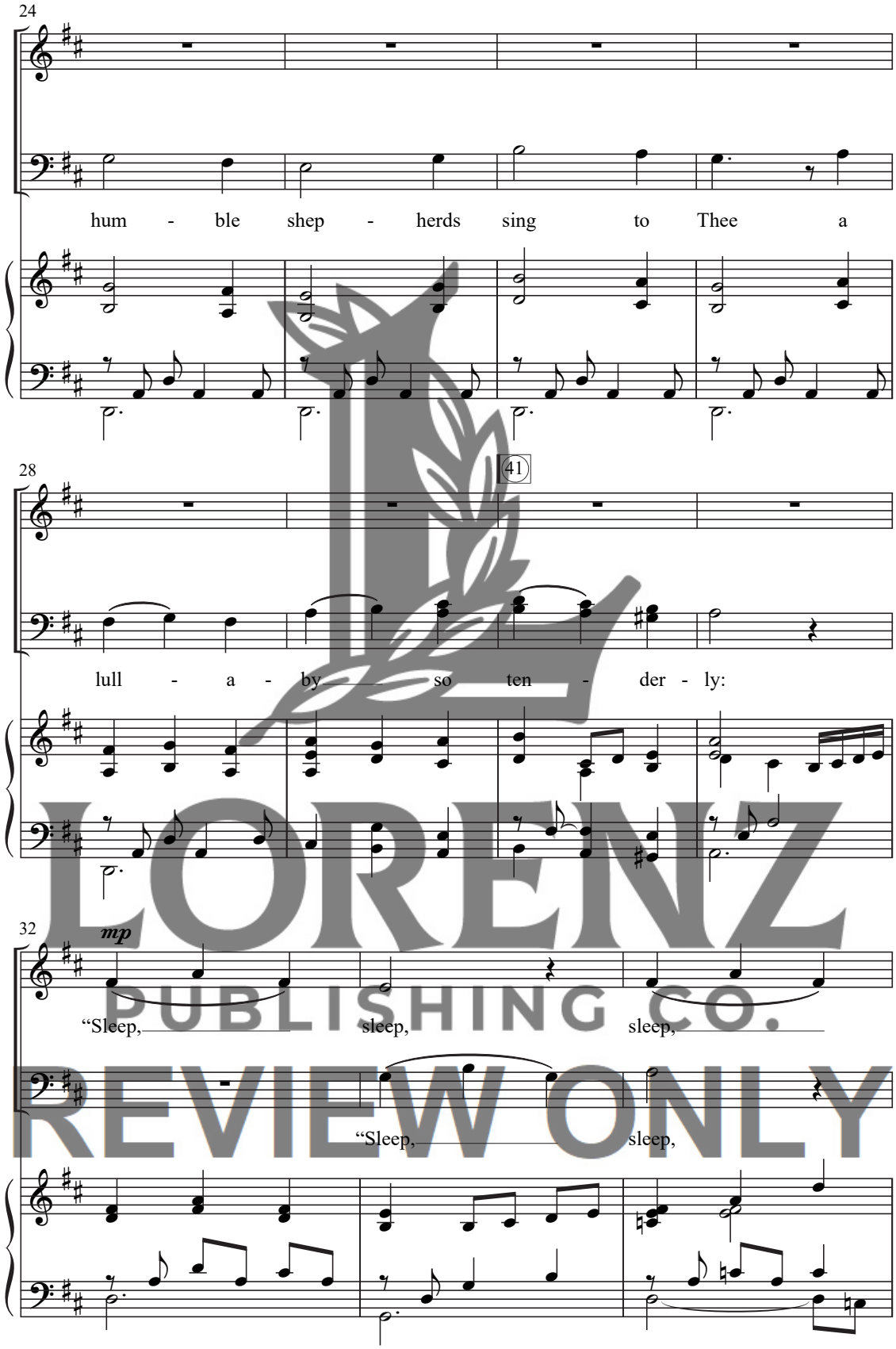

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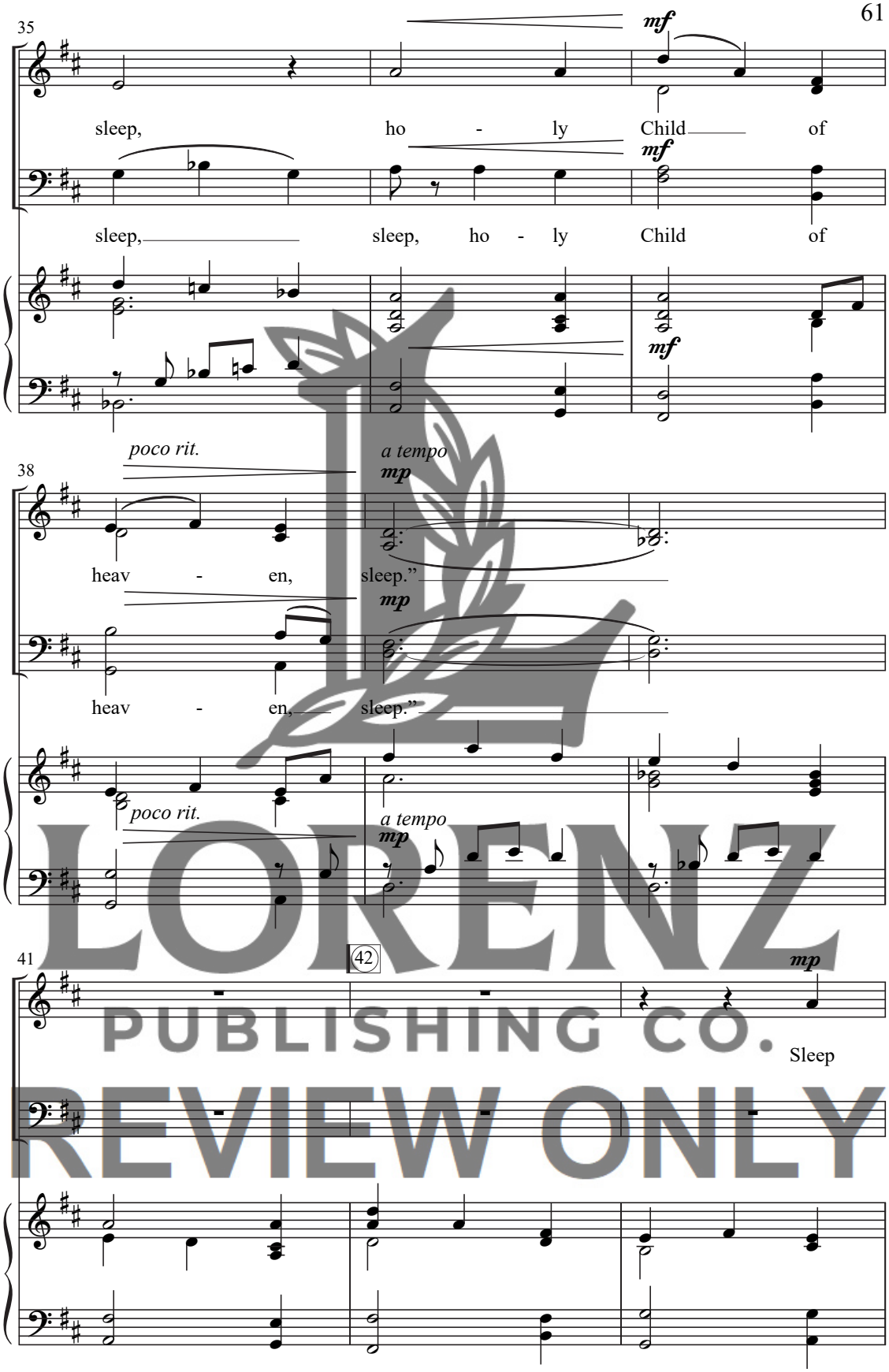

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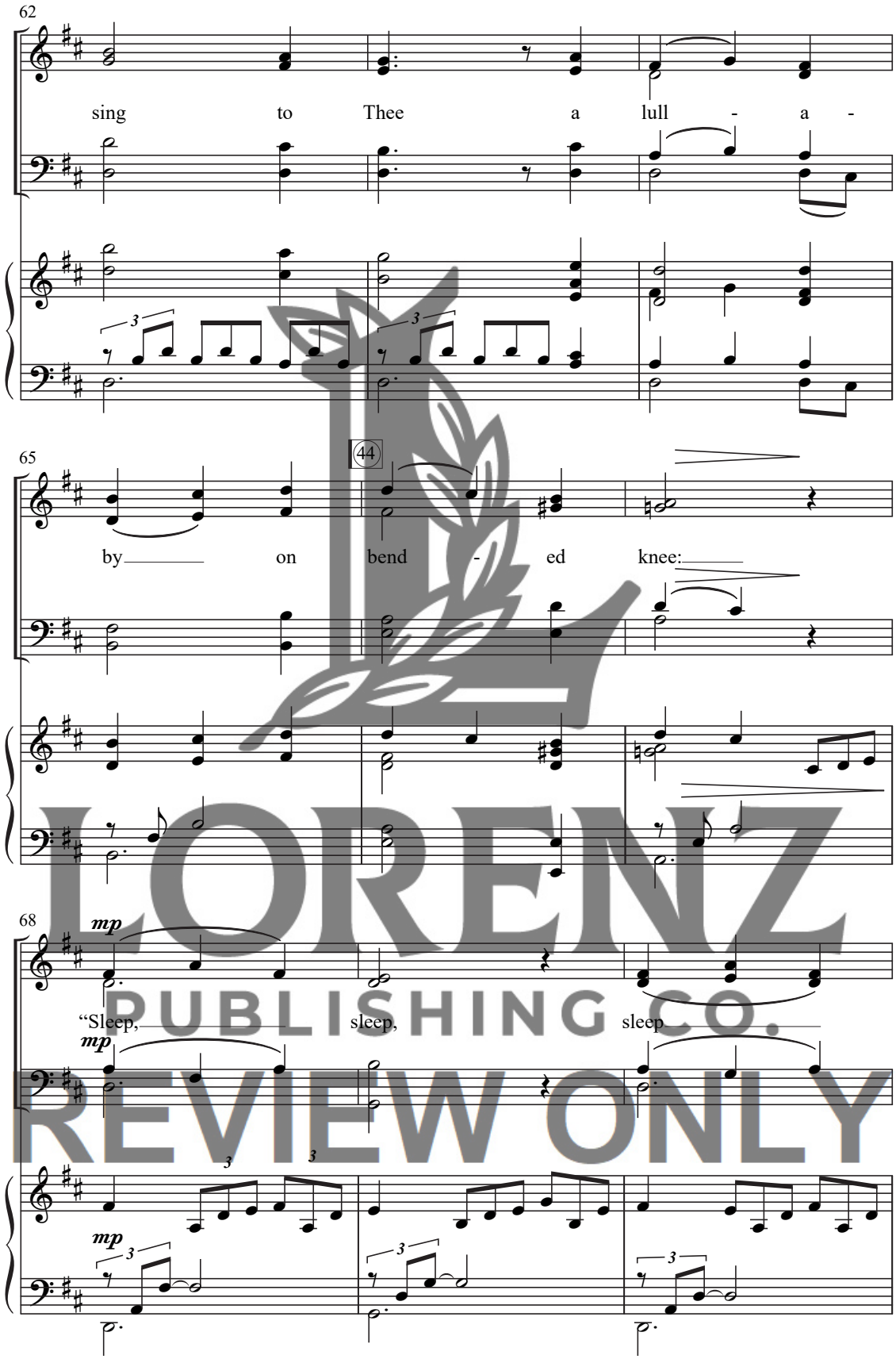

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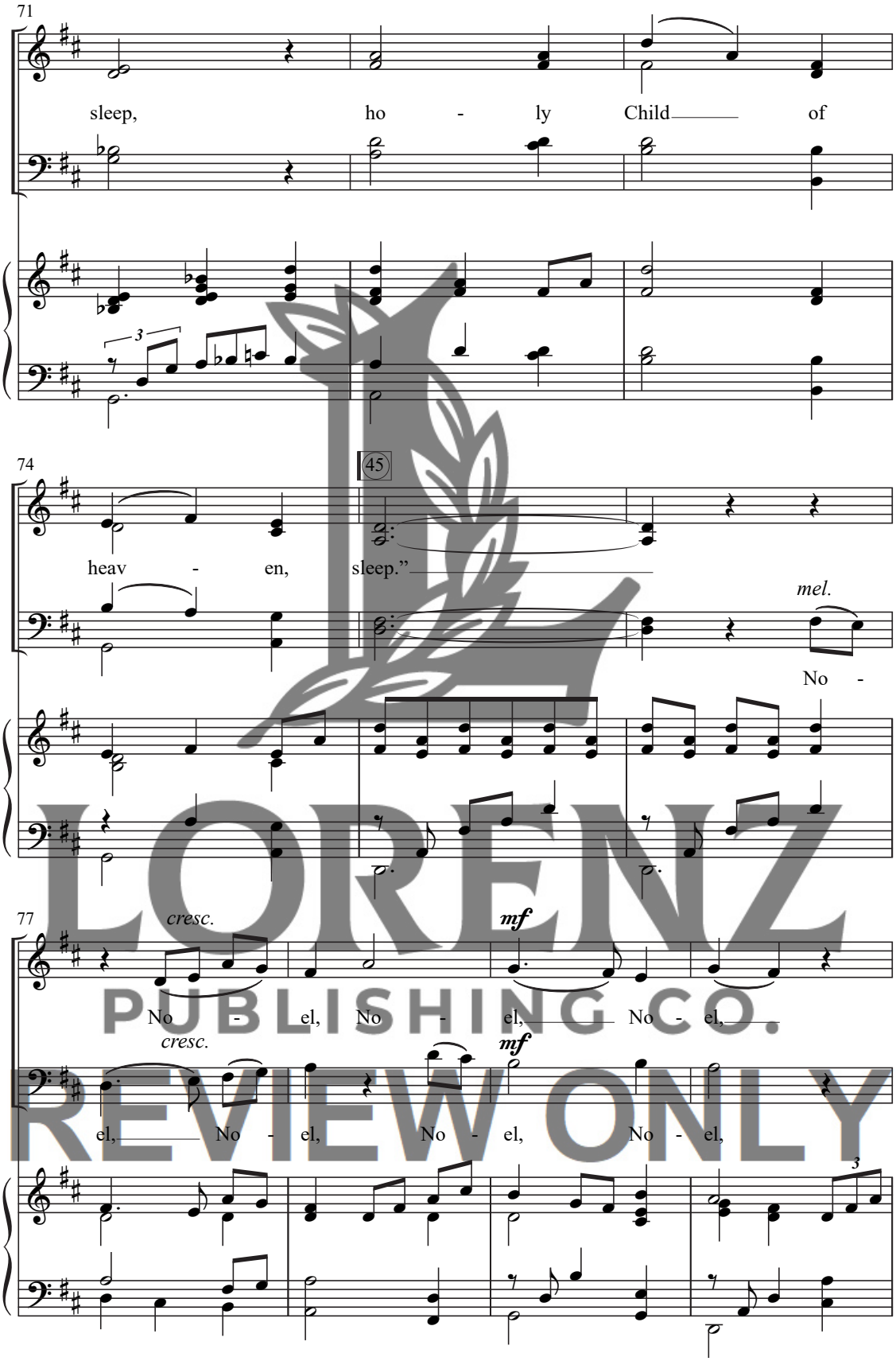

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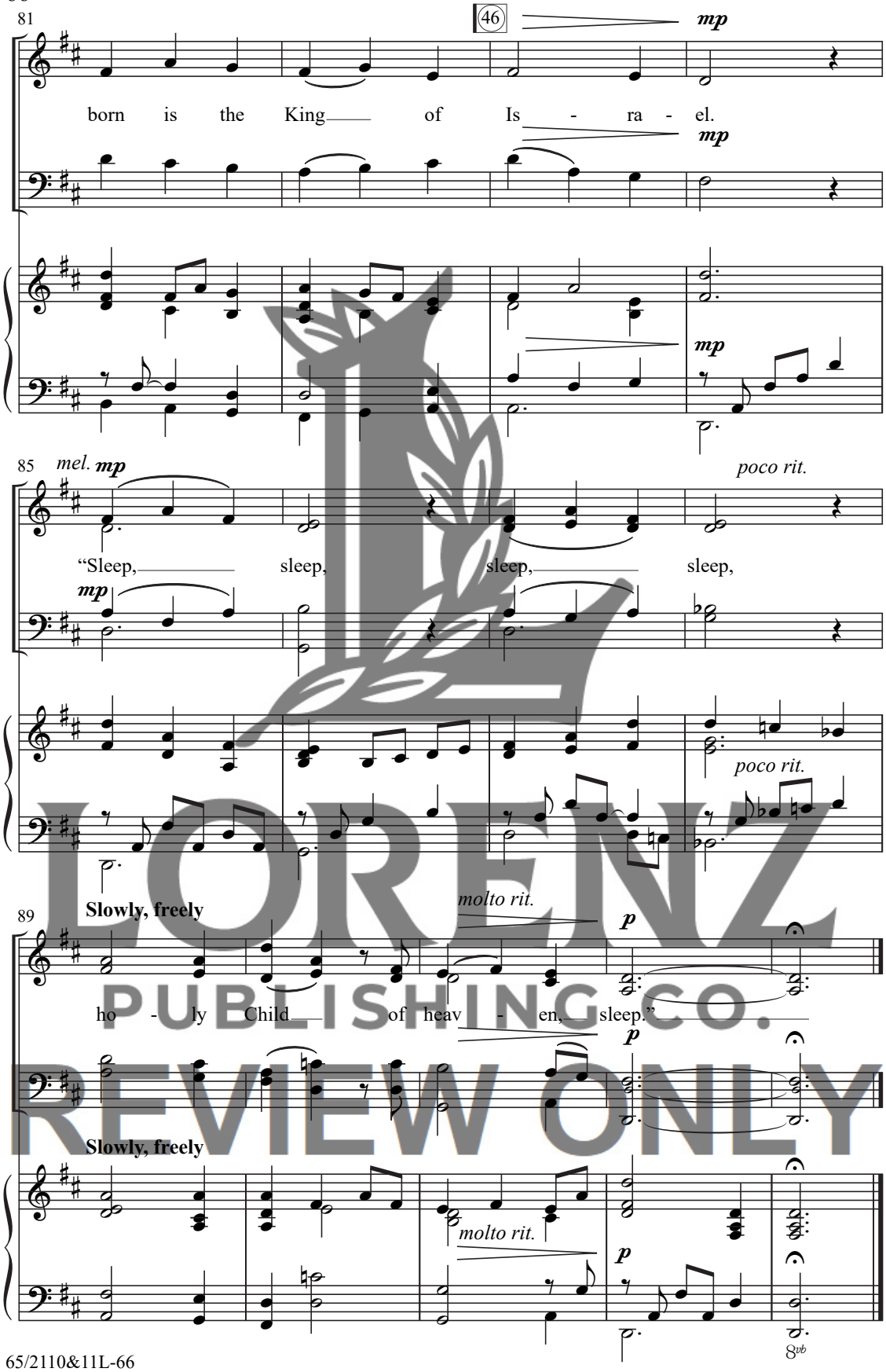

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Narration 6

Narrator 2: The Magi came later, with no sweet songs on their lips or promises to follow. King Herod sent them to find this promised Messiah. Herod said he wanted to worship Him. But even as he spoke, the Magi sensed the lie in his words.

Narrator 1: How could a person start on a road marked with suspicion, deception, and destruction, and end anywhere else? Herod set them on that dark path, but it was a star in the sky that lit their way.

Narrator 2: It was a star in the sky that replaced their suspicion with joy. It was a star in the sky that illuminated Jesus' small face; God's great love.

Narrator 1: They gave their gifts freely. They knelt at His small feet. They heard the voice of God in His small words. They felt the love of God in His small presence. Having seen and heard, they left Bethlehem. But Bethlehem never left their hearts. Every path leads to God when it is God you are following. ***(music begins)***

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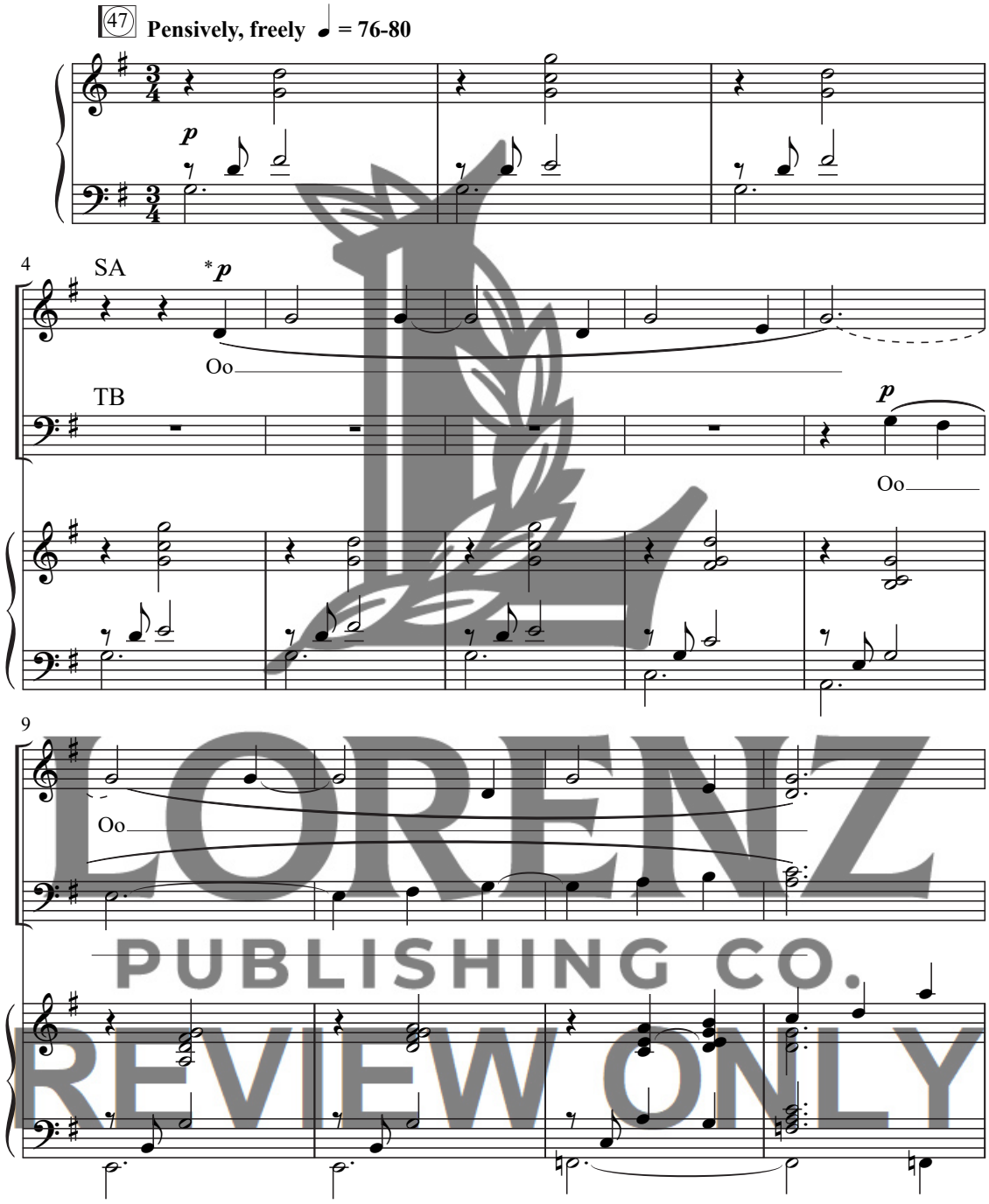
The Journey

Words by **Carol M. Hodge**
Based on **Matthew2:1-12**
and **II Corinthians 4:6**

Music by **Lloyd Larson**
Quoting **KINGS OF ORIENT**
by **John H. Hopkins**



*Stagger breathing as needed on "Oos" throughout.

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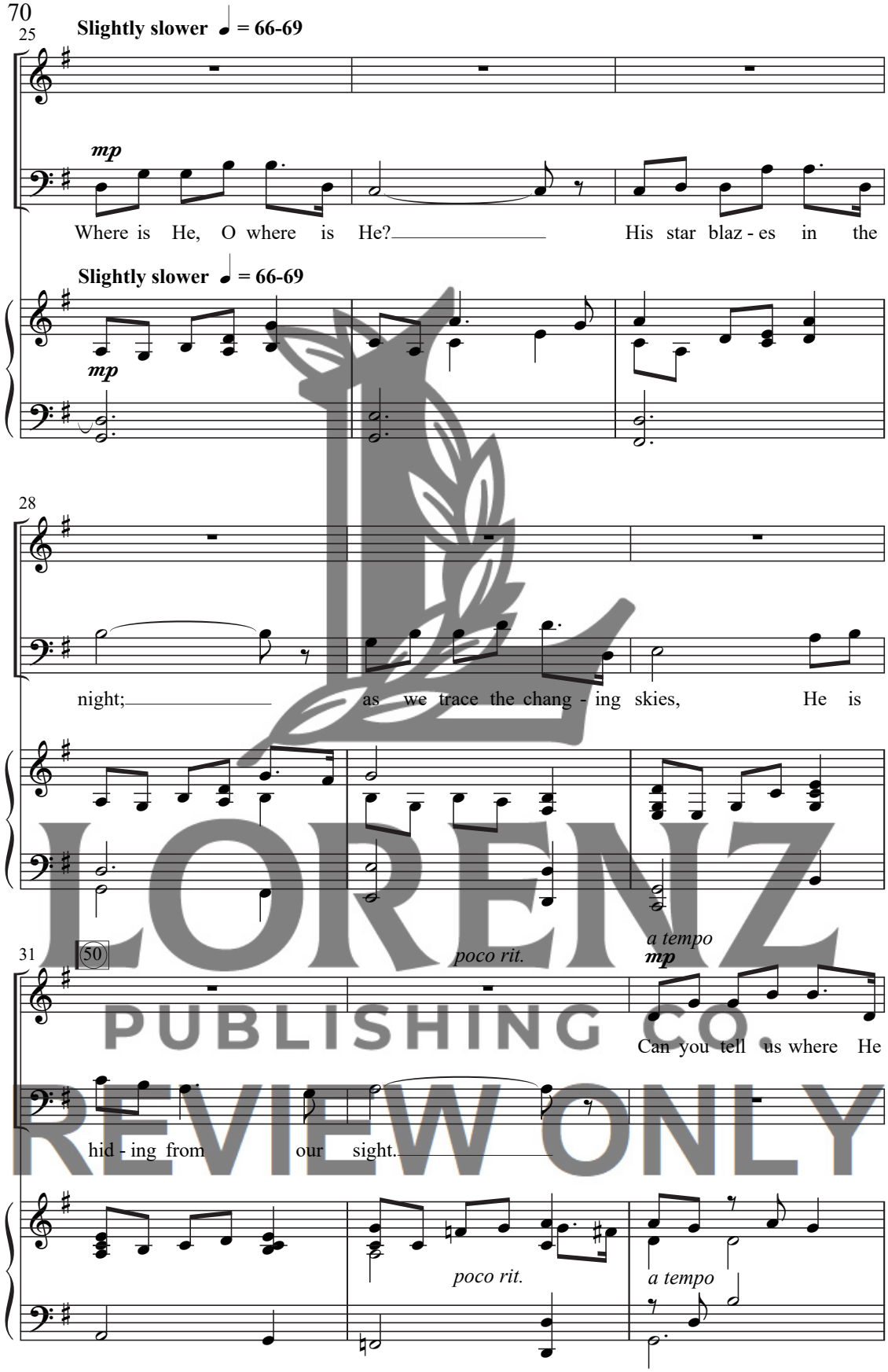

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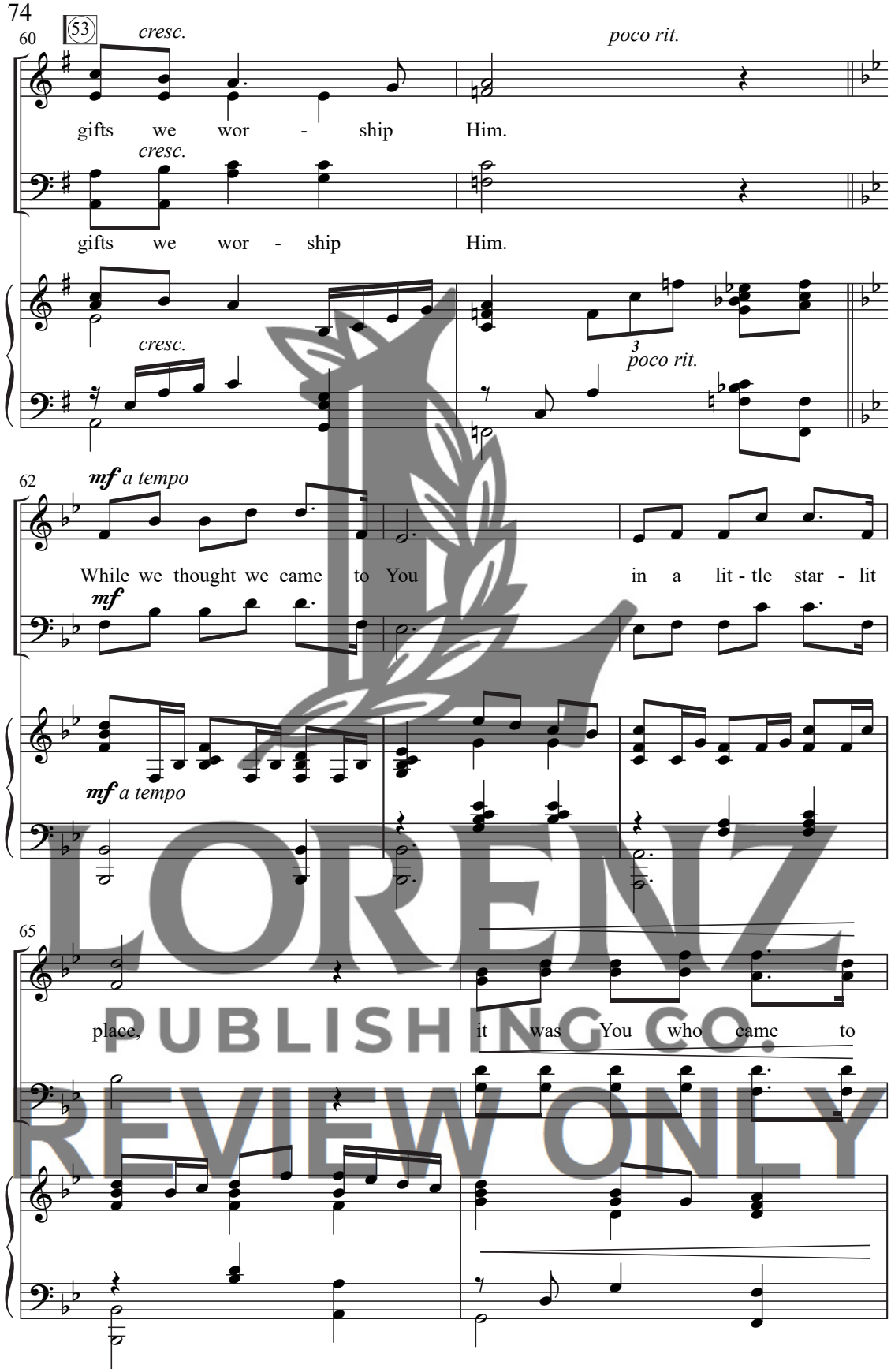

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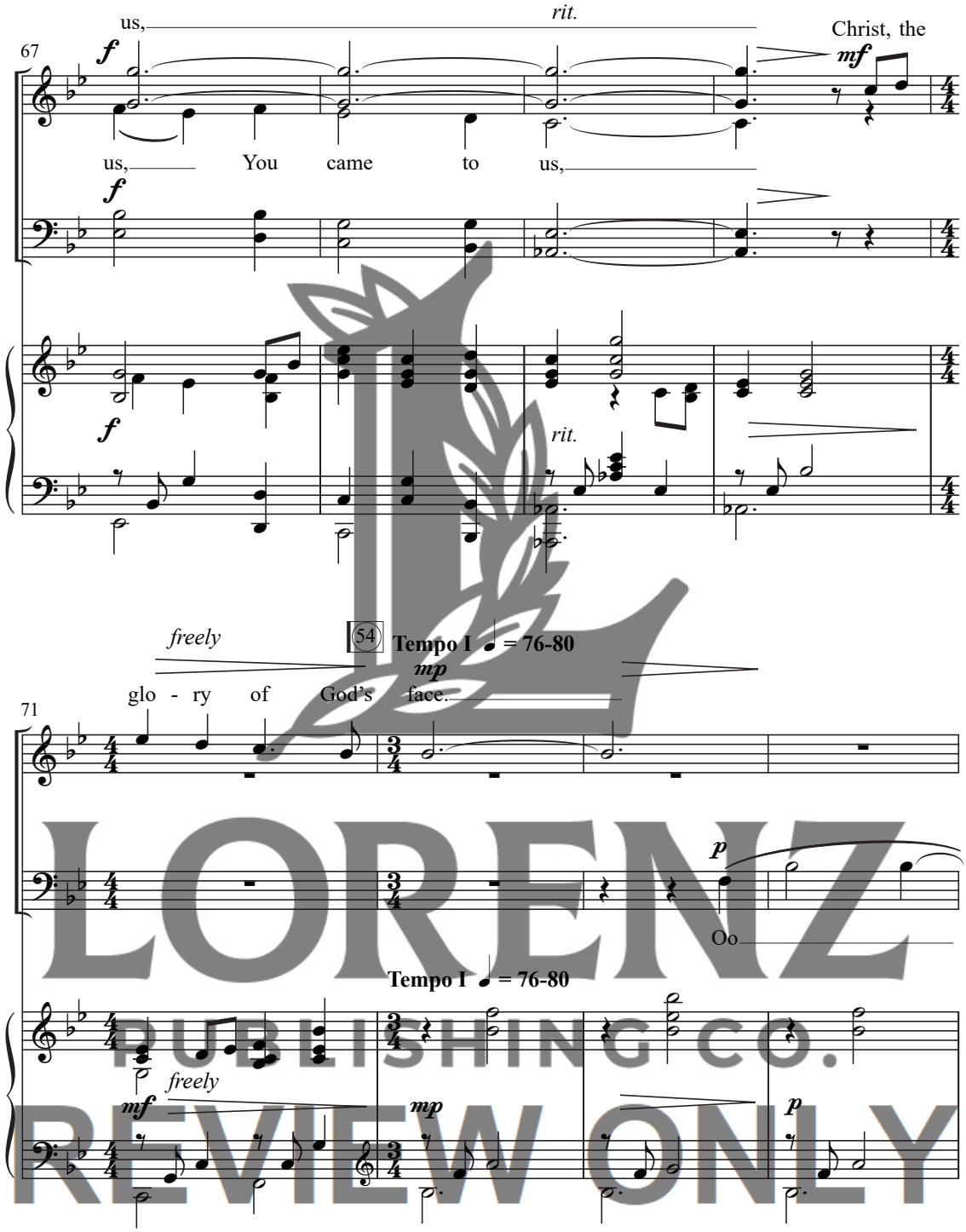

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Narration 7

Narrator 1: You might not know what road ***(music begins)*** you are on today, or you might not be sure where it leads.

Narrator 2: It could be you are on a road you did not choose, or at least, would not again.

Narrator 1: Nothing about where you are is an accident. You are here, today. And whether through words, songs, light or some quiet hope, Bethlehem calls to you.

Narrator 2: A Child has been born there: Jesus, Emmanuel.

Narrator 1: And even as you make your way to Him….

Narrator 2: …Jesus has come to you.

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Christ Is Born in Bethlehem

Words: Traditional French Carols
and **Lloyd Larson**

Arranged with New Music
by **Lloyd Larson**
Incorporating **STOWEY**, Traditional English Carol,
and **GLORIA**, Traditional French Melody

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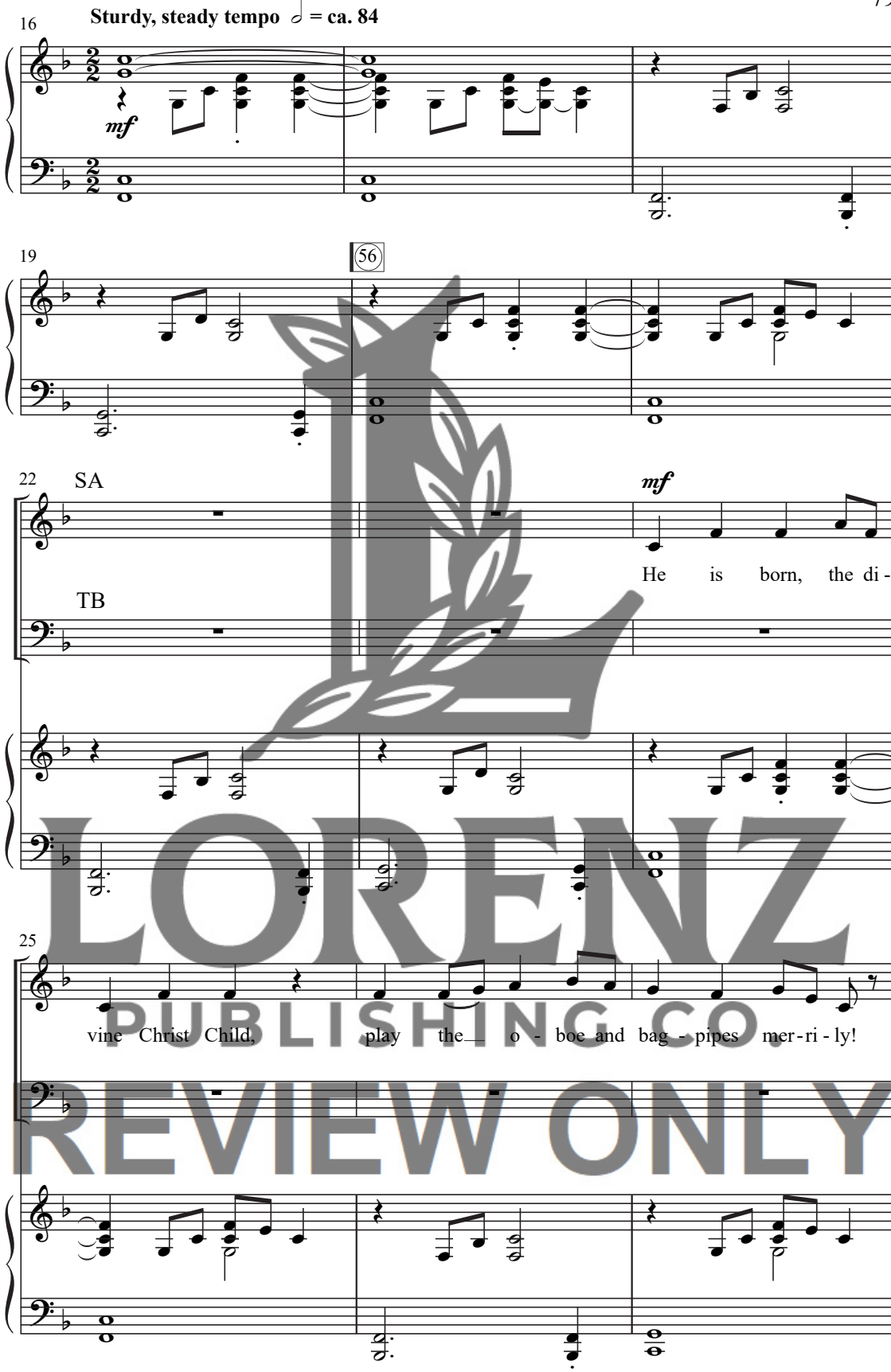

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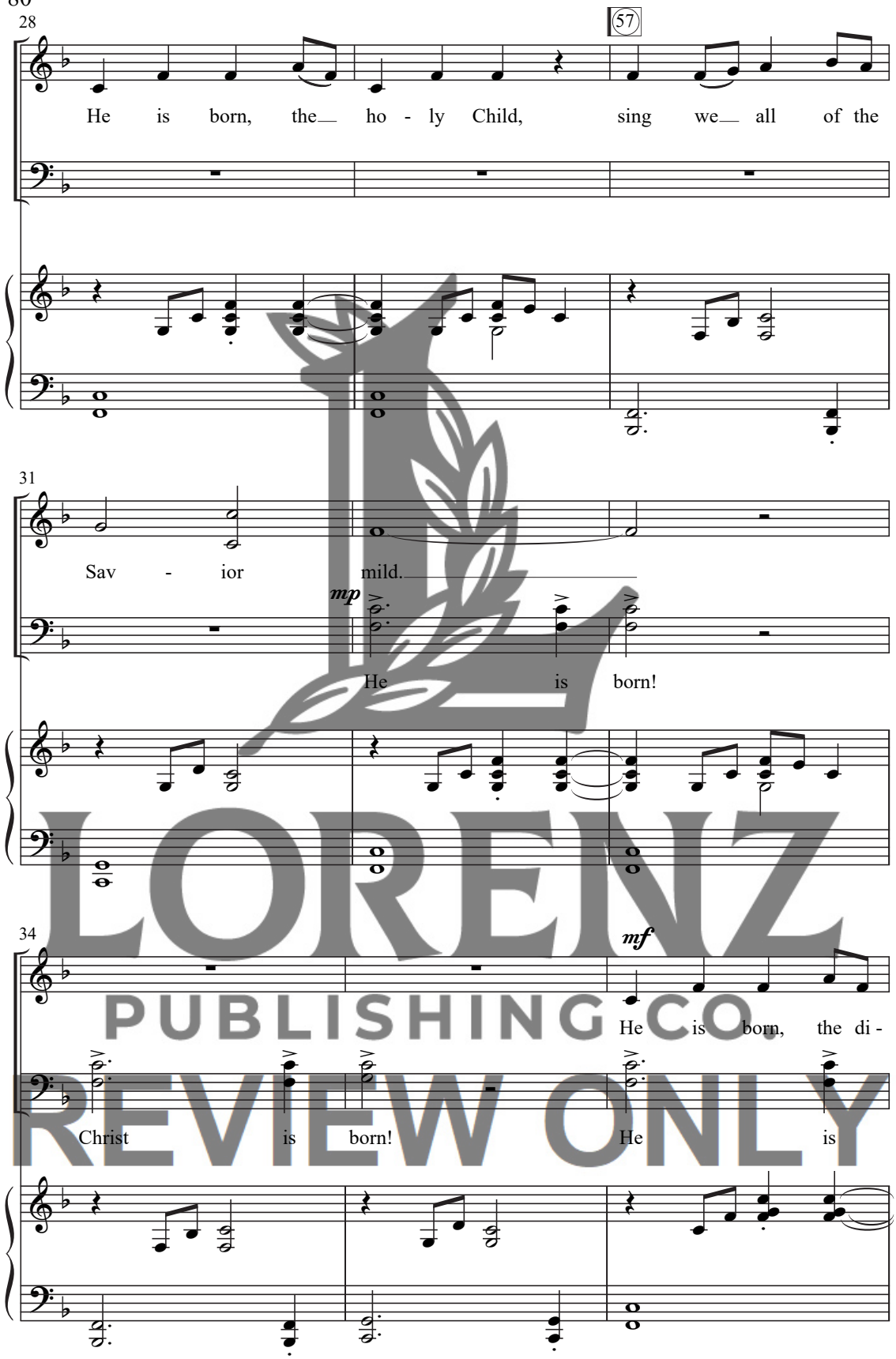

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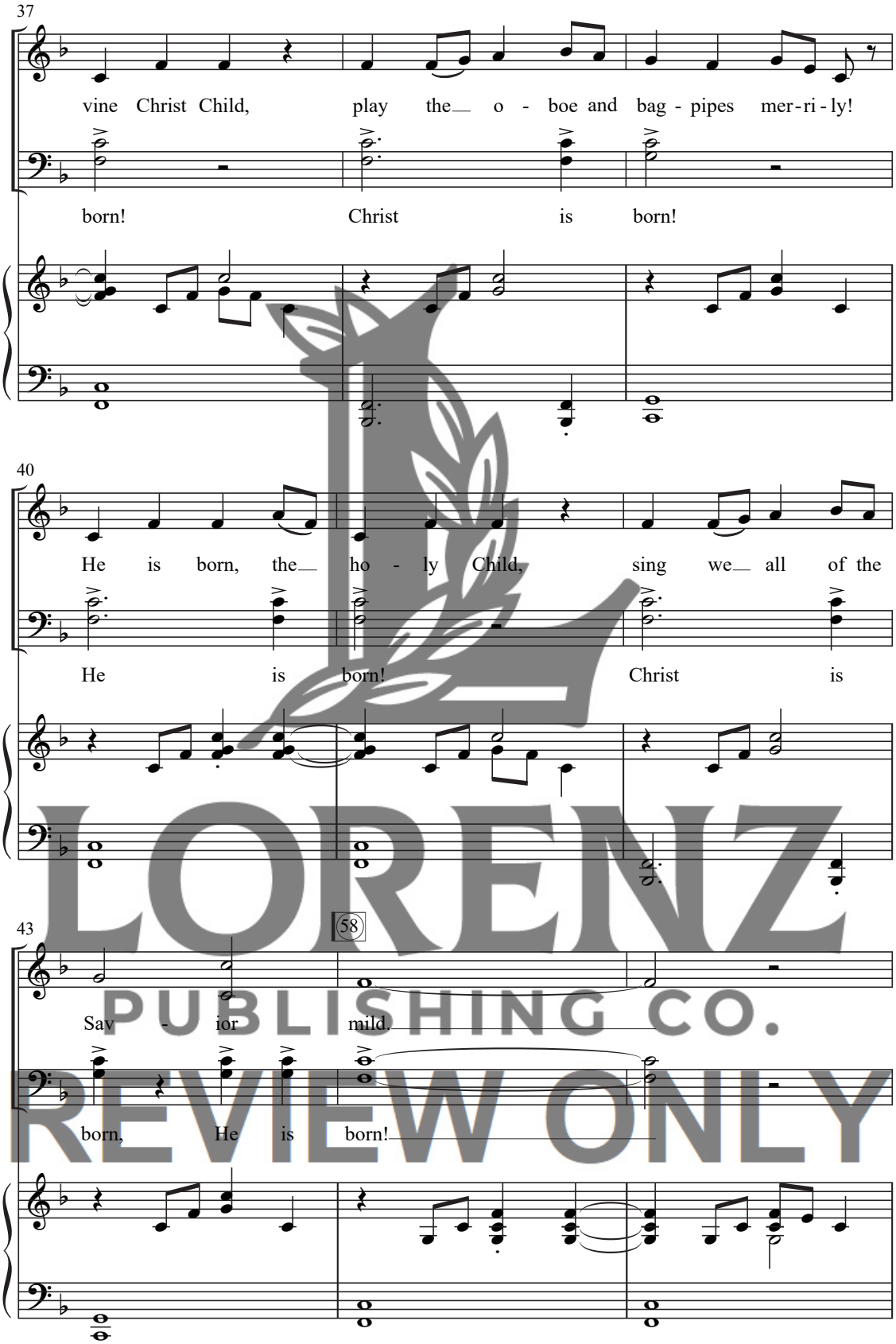

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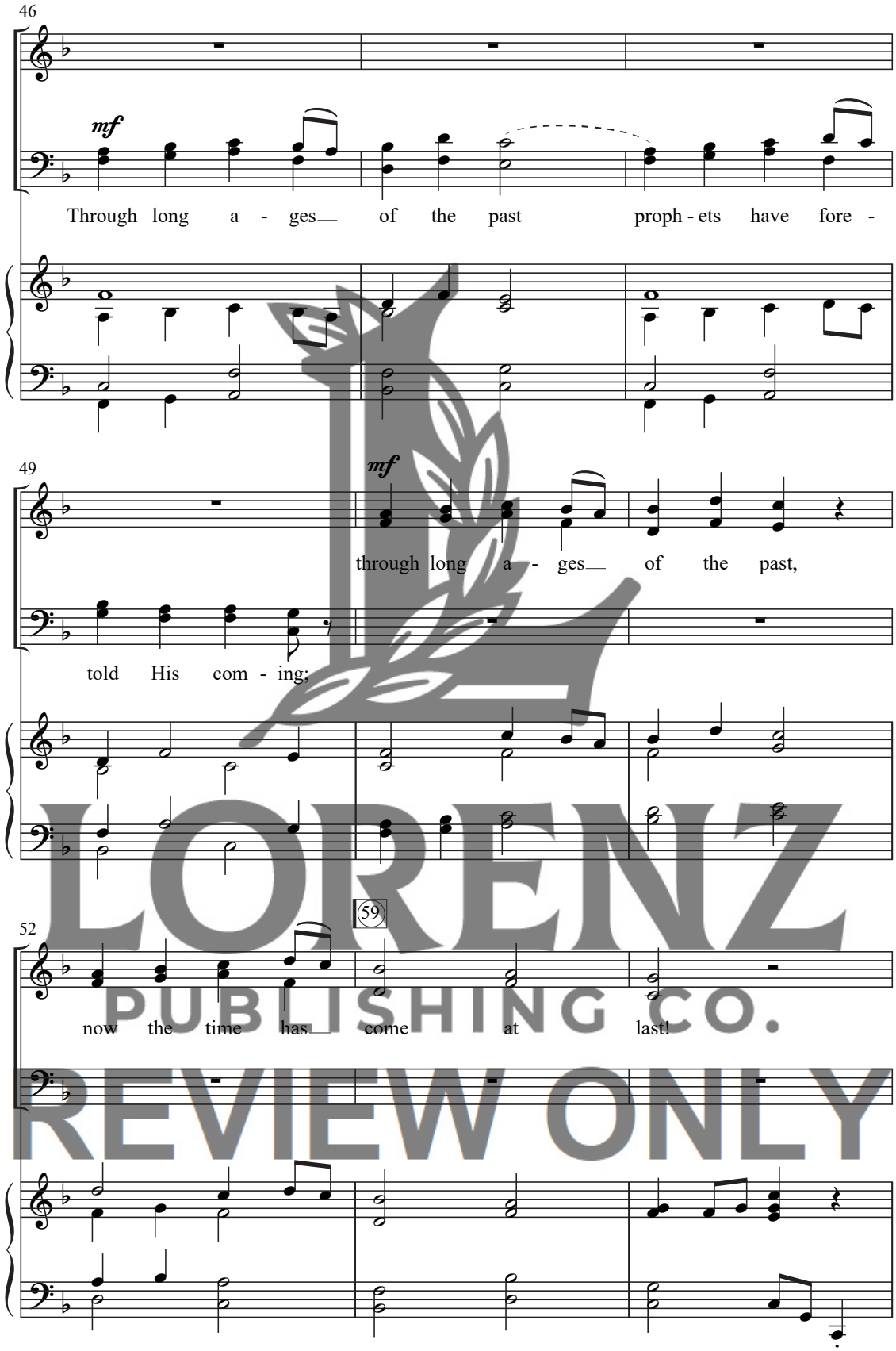

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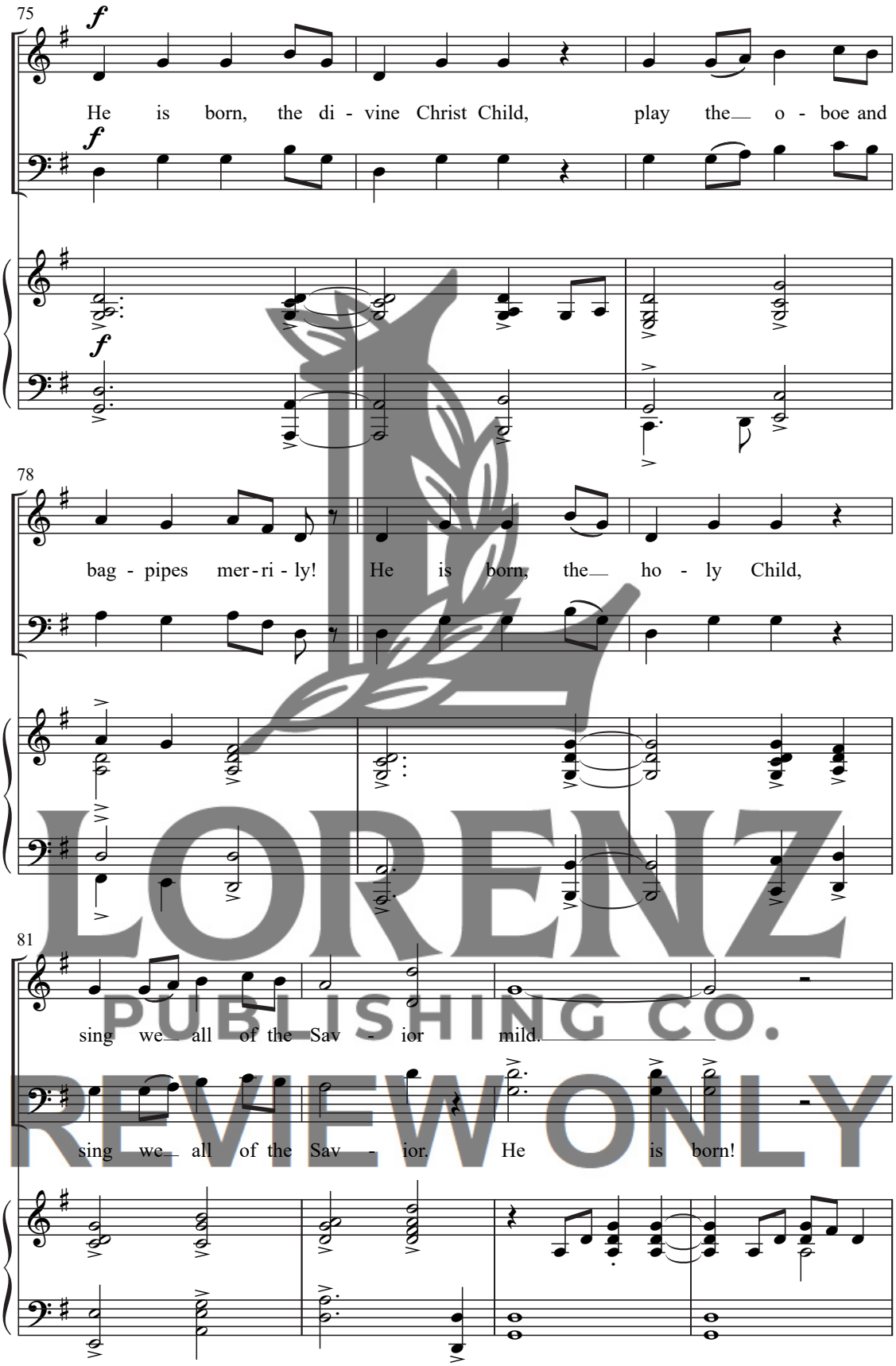

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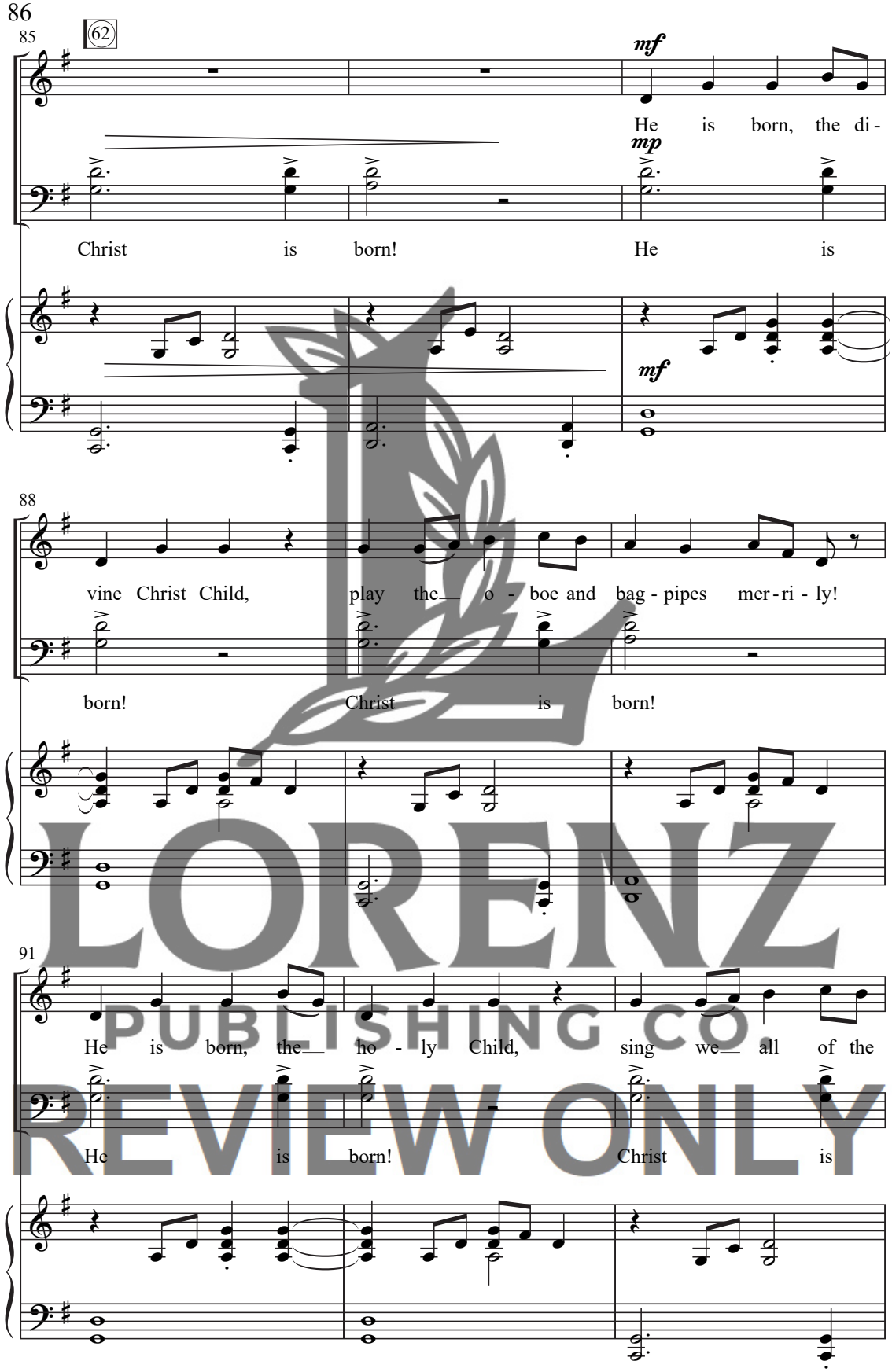

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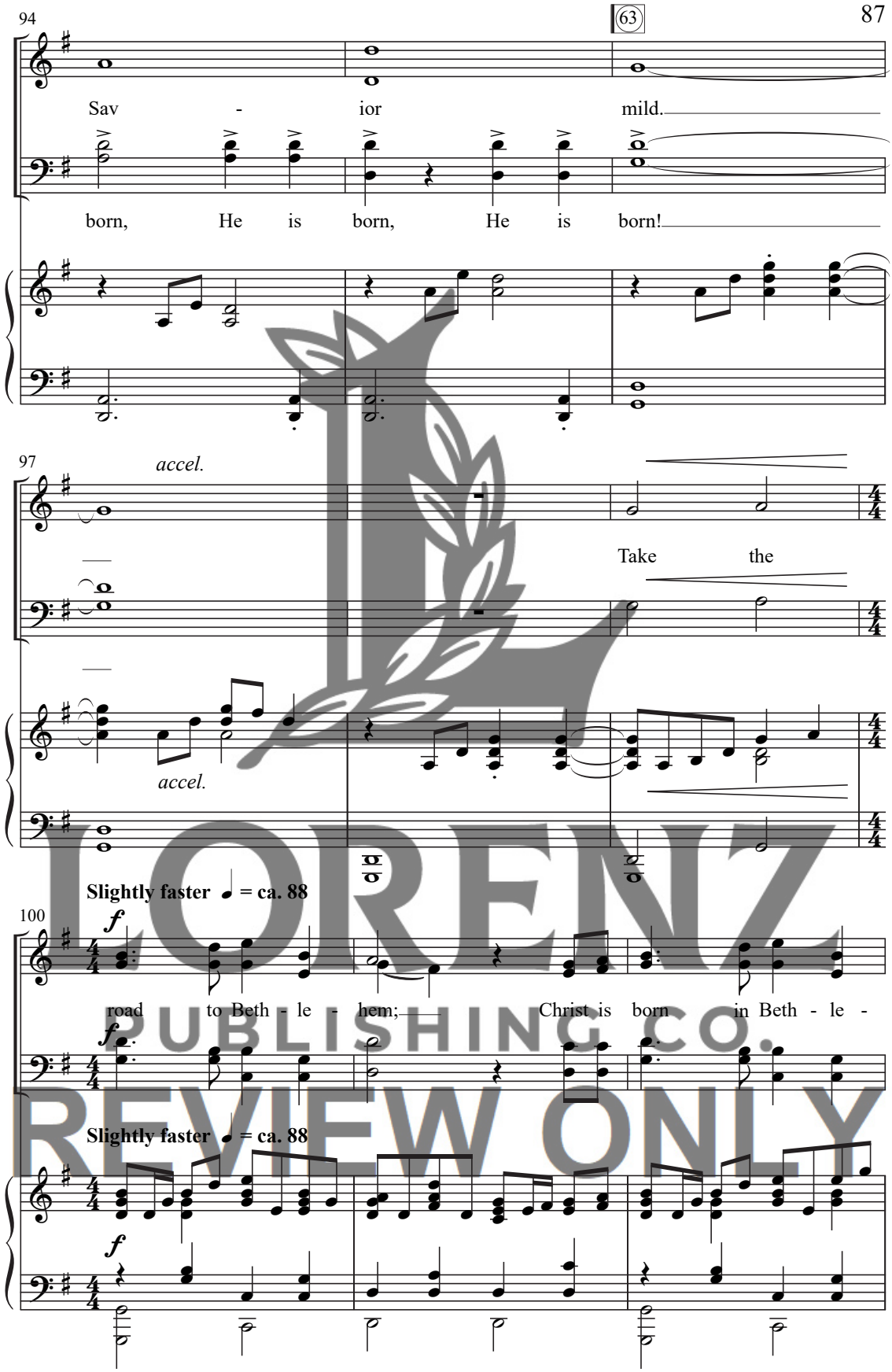

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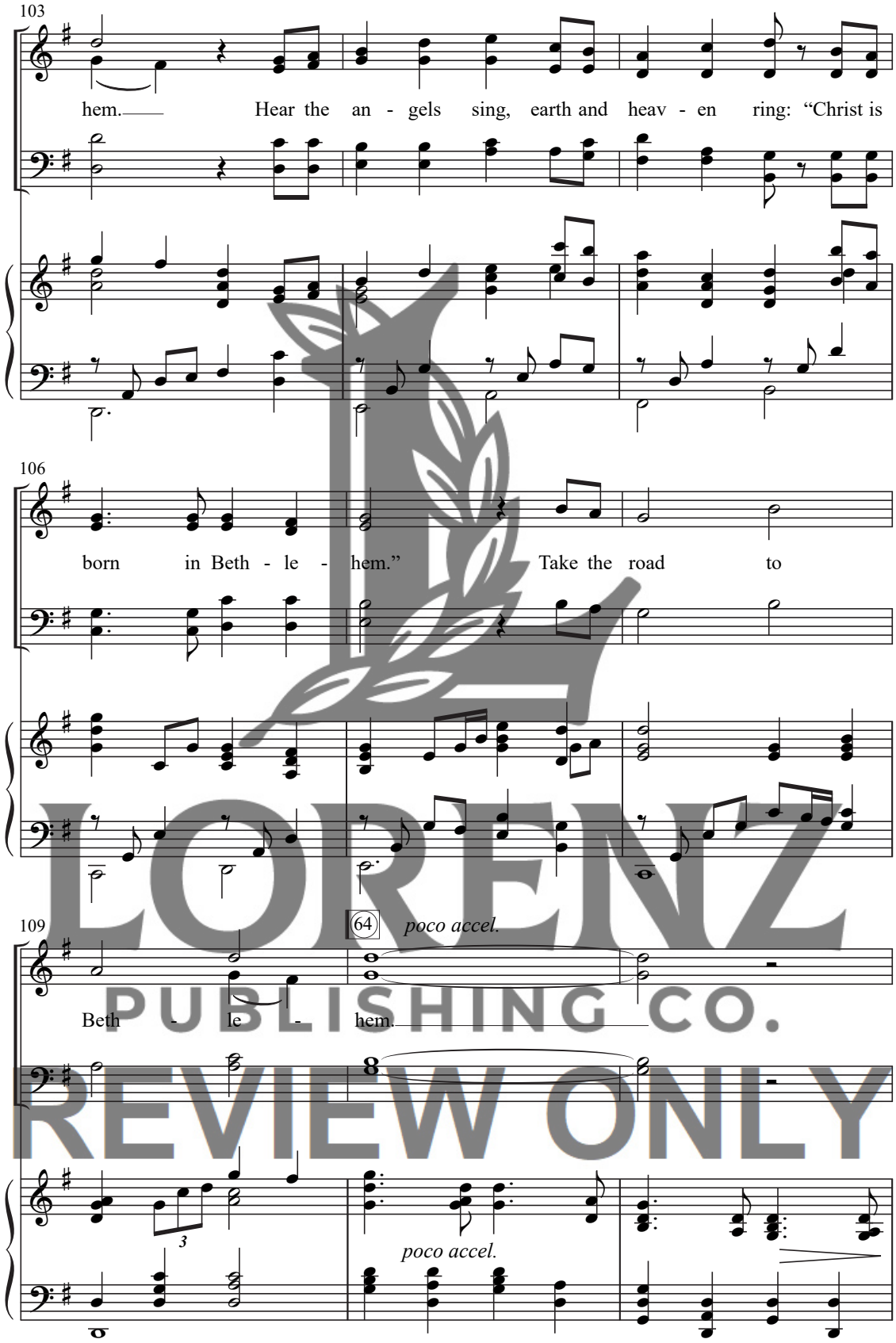

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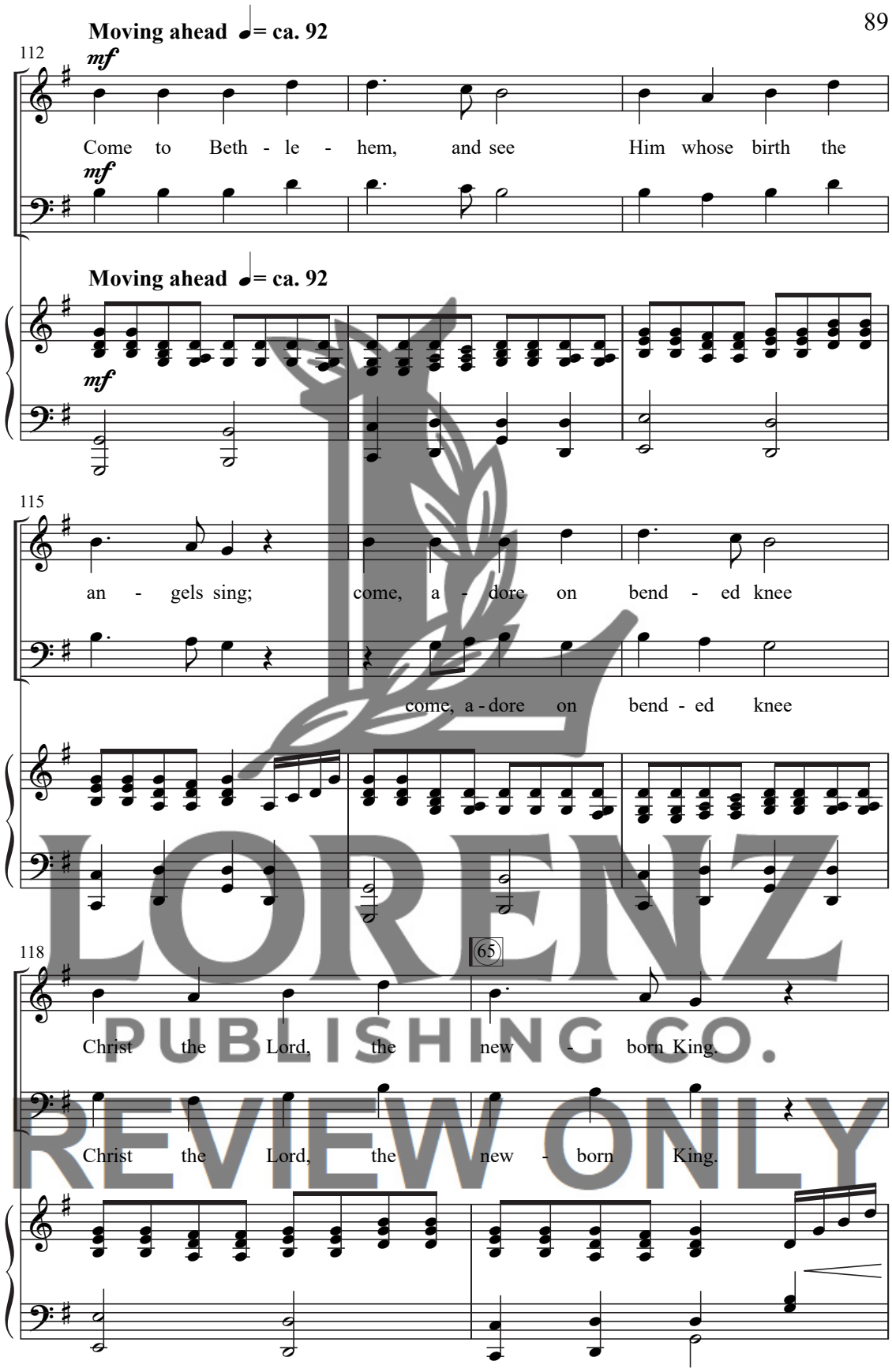

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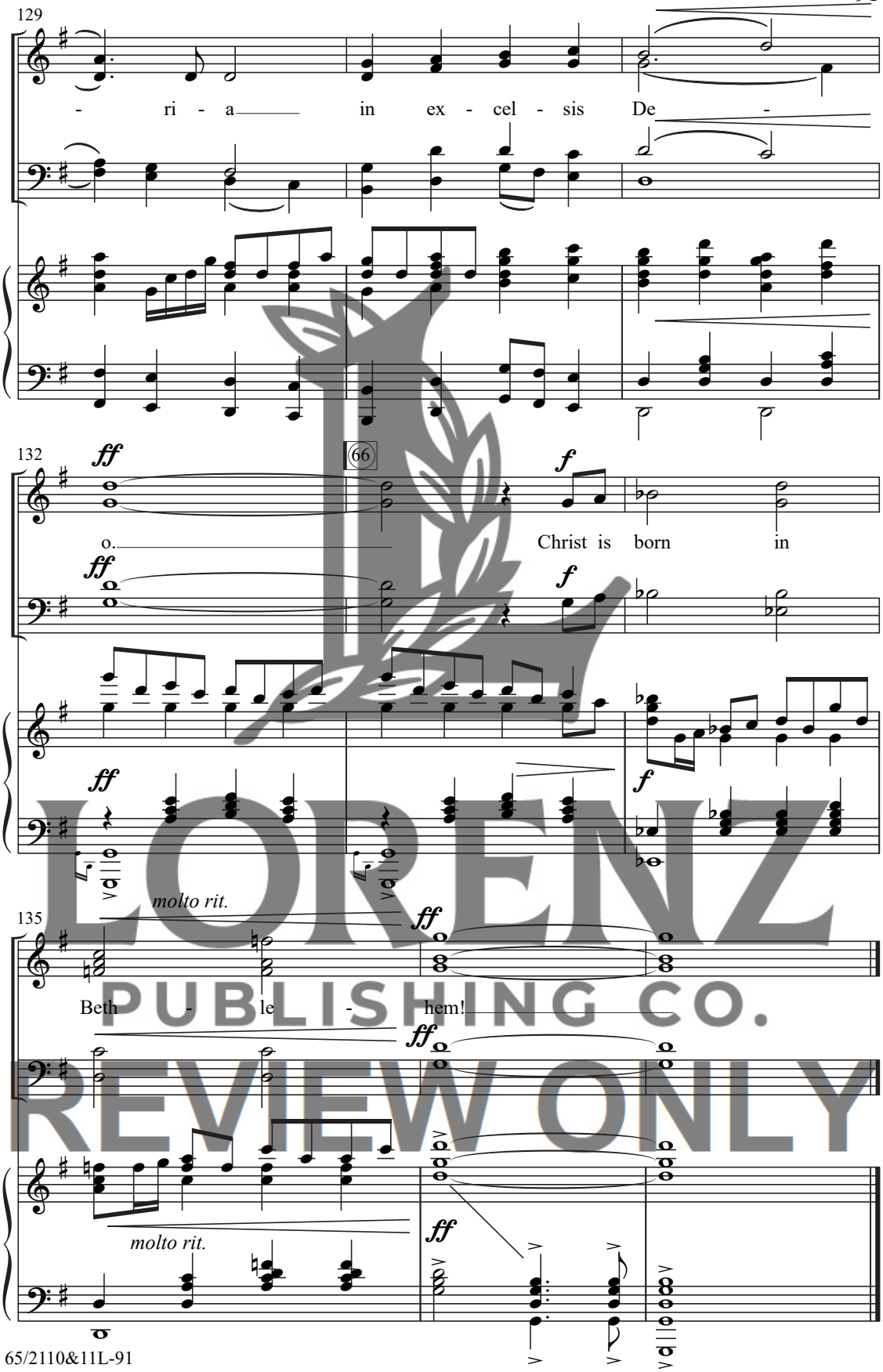

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