Besançon Carol

~ introduction, verses, and free harmonization for organ ~

Old French Carol
Arranged by Christopher J. Hoh

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This French melody, *Chantons bargiés, Noué, Noué*, found new life in the 20th Century thanks to Martin Shaw and the Oxford Book of Carols (No. 133). Published there in 1928 with Eleanor Farjeon's text, "People, Look East," it has become widely sung during Advent. It remains popular for Christmastide as well with the 17th Century text "Berger, secoue ton sommeil profond" and 19th Century translation "Shepherds, shake off your drowsy sleep."

This work provides five organ arrangements to accompany the tune at a lively tempo. The first is intended as an introduction. The rest are organ arrangements that suit congregational singing. The second verse is compatible with the Martin Shaw setting in the Oxford Book of Carols (albeit in the key of D). The third follows the harmonization by John L. Hooker in the American Episcopal supplement "Wonder, Love and Praise" (No. 724). The fourth is more straightforward, consistent with the version by Barry Rose in the hymnal "Evangelical Lutheran Worship." The last verse is for a final stanza, embellishing the harmony and rhythm. While the organist should feel free to mix and match verses corresponding to the specific performance situation, the five in sequence serve as complete composition.

Christopher J. Hoh
Arlington, Virginia — November 2014

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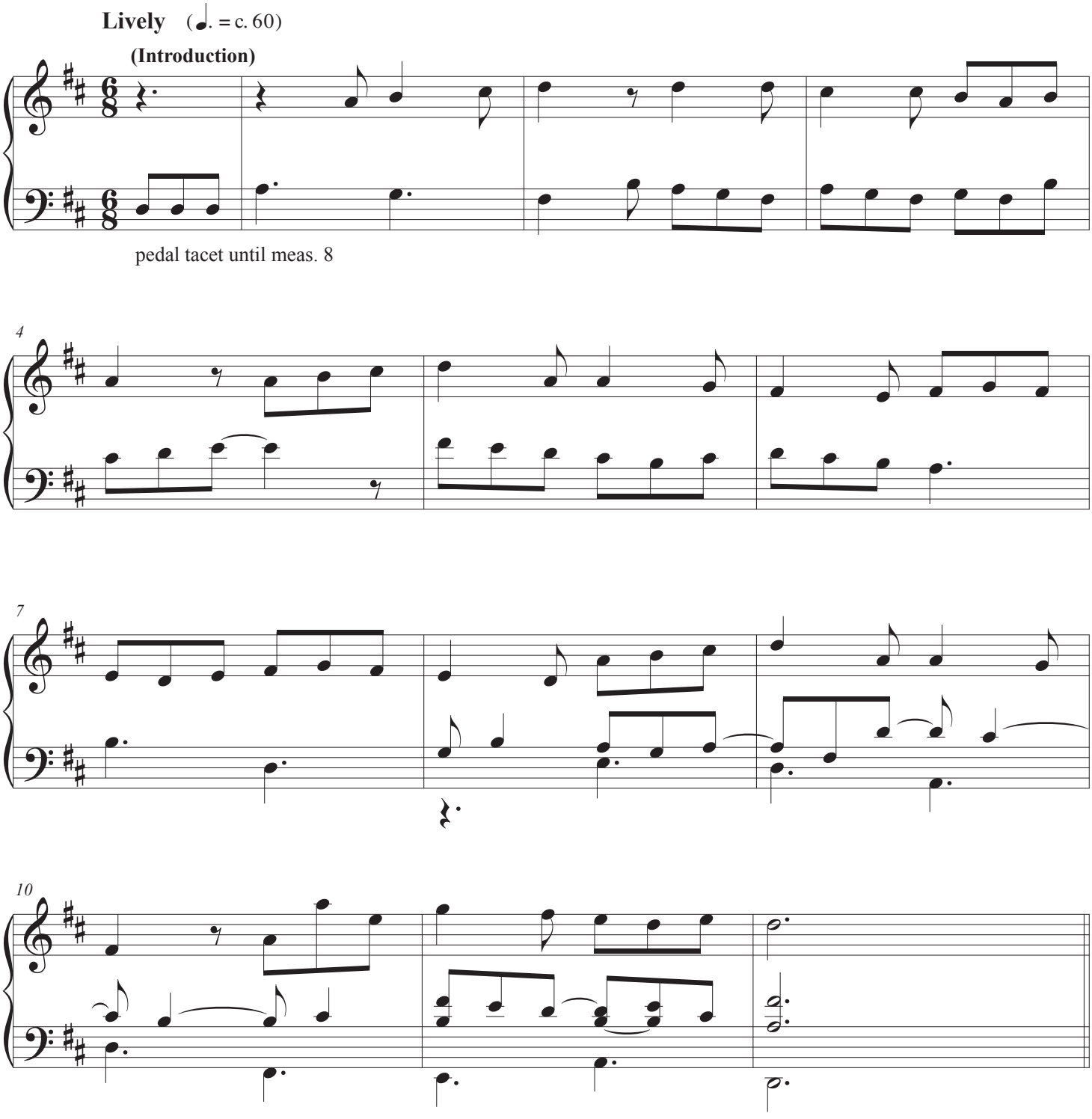

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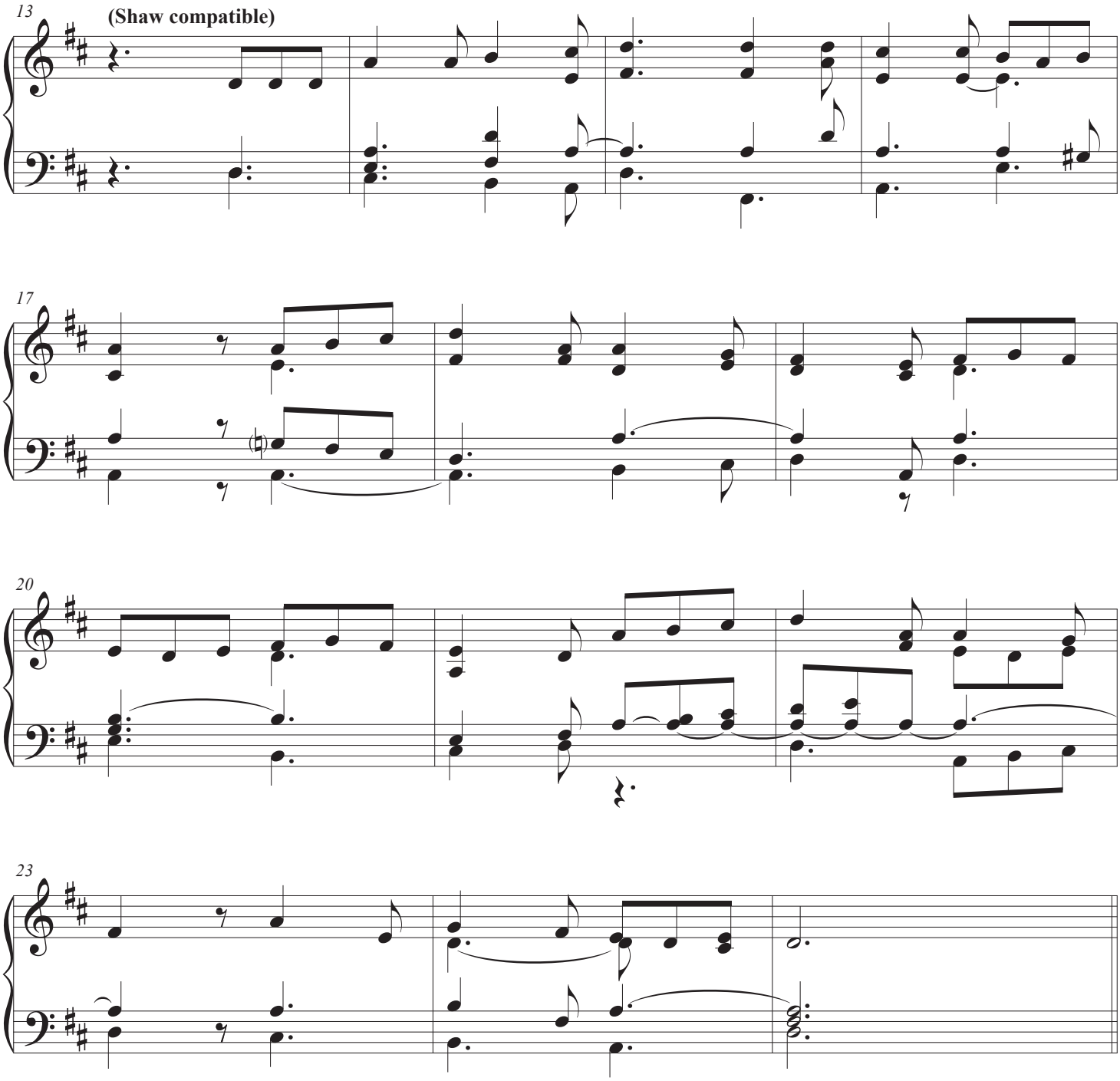
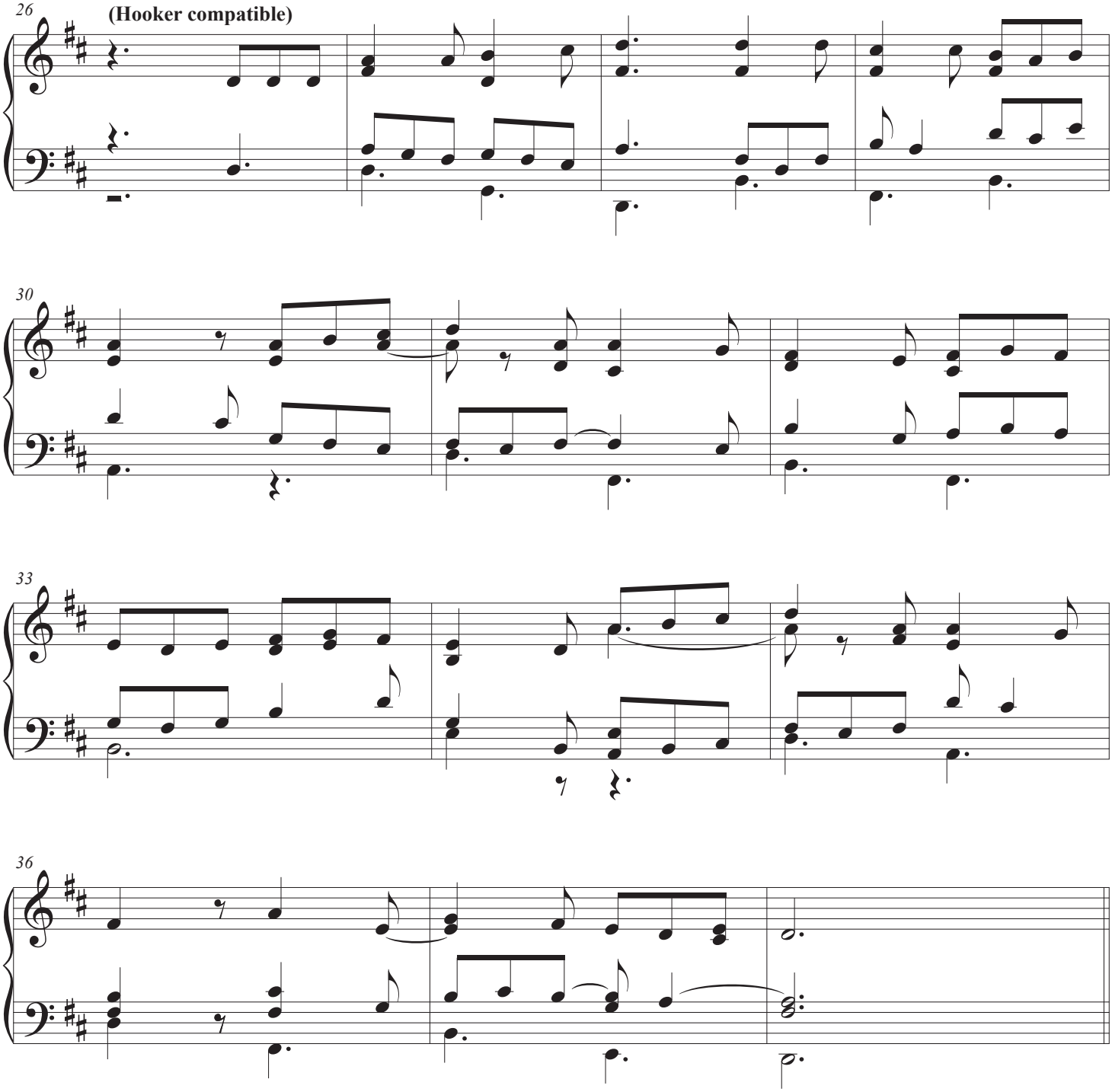
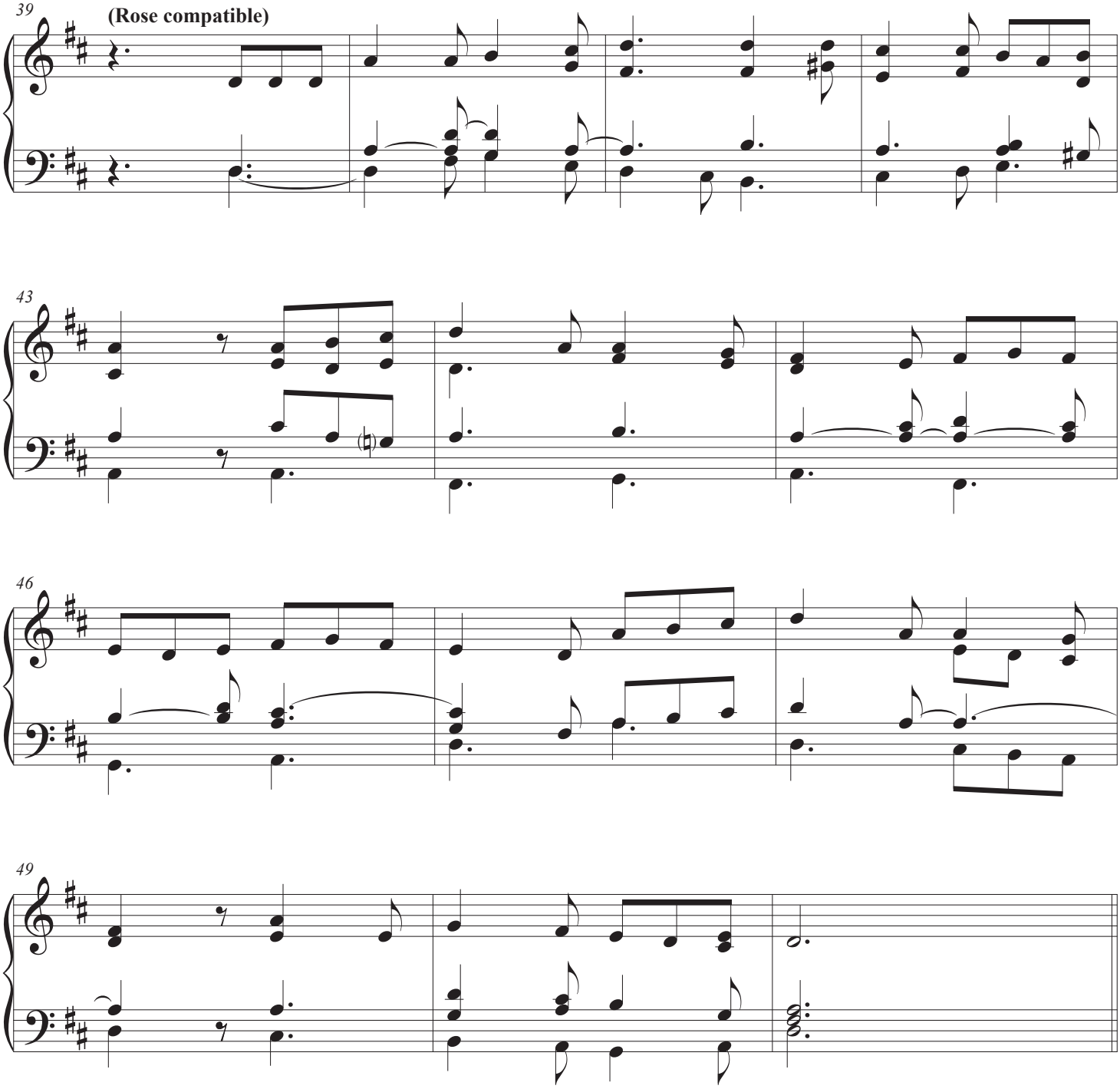
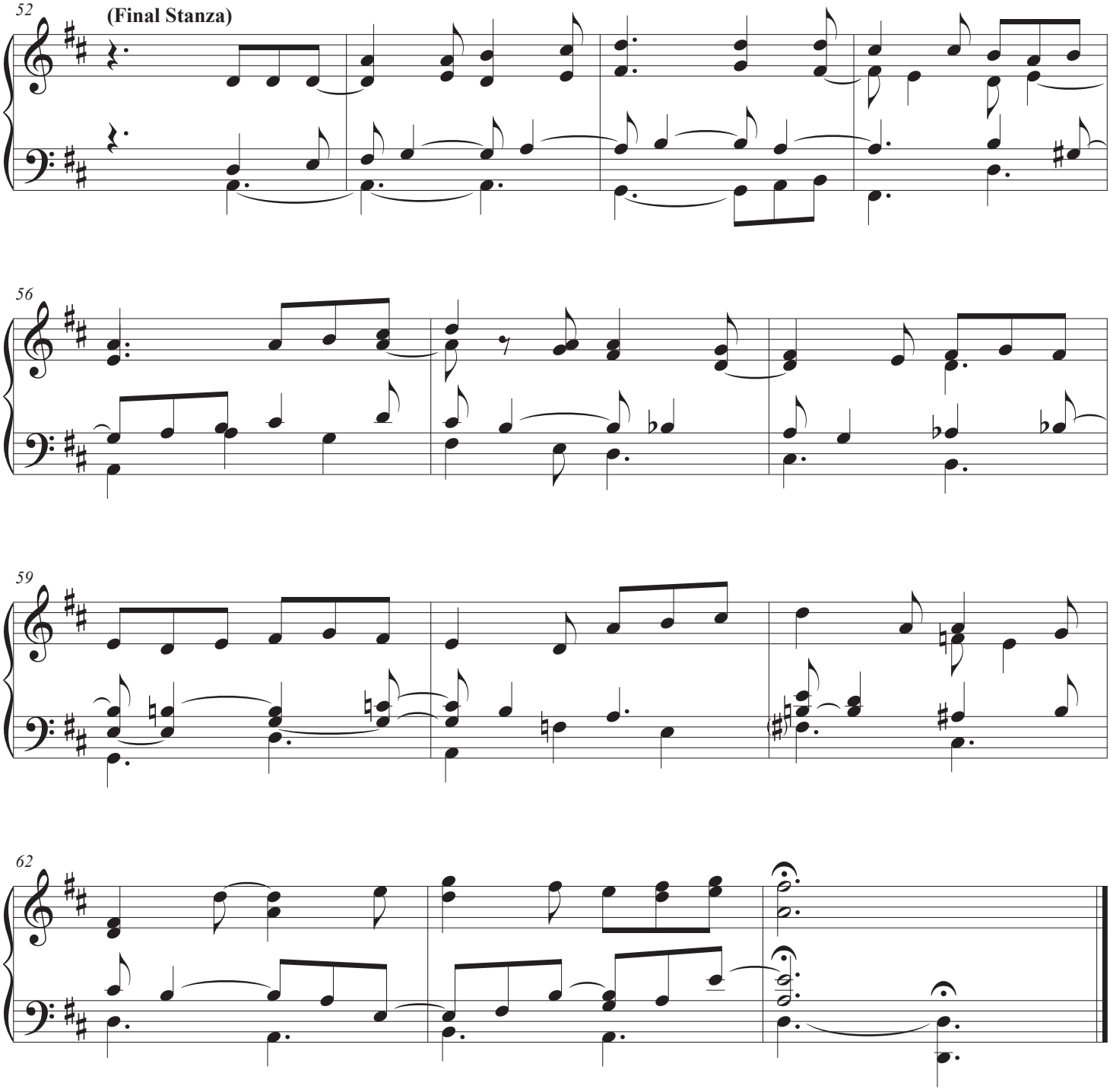

13
(Shaw compatible)
17
20
23


26
(Hooker compatible)
30
33
36


39
(Rose compatible)
43
46
49


52
(Final Stanza)
56
59
62