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Five Liturgical Inventions

for Solo Organ

by

Victor Togni

50th Anniversary Commemorative Edition

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Victor Togni

(1935 - 1965)

Victor Togni was born on the Ides of March in Tanganyika (East Africa, now Tanzania) of Swiss parents. His musical studies began at the Abbey of Einsiedeln in Switzerland and continued at the Santa Cecilia Conservatory in Rome, the Ecole Normale de musique and the National Conservatory in Paris, the Royal College of Music in London, England and the Geneva Conservatory. His teachers included Fernando Germani, Olivier Messiaen, Marcel Dupre, Rolande Falcinelli, Jean Langlais and Jean Jacques Grunenwald.

During his short life Victor received several scholarship prizes for organ and improvisation from the association of Swiss musicians, a full scholarship from the Geneva Conservatory of Music and a government grant.

After completing the two year Master-class Course in Organ and Improvisation at the Geneva Conservatory in a single year (Class de Virtuosité, Grunenwald), he was awarded the First Prize for Virtuosity in organ performance and improvisation, the First Prize of the Rochette improvisation competition, and the Otto Barblan organ prize.

On June 26, 1964, Victor won first prize (with a unanimous decision) in Improvisation at the Convention of the American Guild of Organists, held in Philadelphia, where 2,000 organists gathered from the United States, Canada and Mexico. Maurice Durufle, the renowned French organist, composer and improviser was on the panel of judges. It was the first time that an improvisation competition of this kind was sponsored in America. The first prize was donated by the Casavant organ building firm of St. Hyacinthe, Quebec.

Victor Togni's reputation as a performer and improviser gained international recognition through his many recitals and broadcasts in cities of Europe, Africa, England, the United States and Canada, where he was a frequent recitalist in musical centres and for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. Victor was also the conductor of the National Youth Orchestra in Switzerland. In 1958, at age 23, he was a featured recitalist at the National Convention of the RCCO in Ottawa.

In 1963 Victor and Don Aldo Lanini, the parish priest in Magadino, Switzerland, along with Carlo Florindo Semini of Swiss Radio Lugano, organized an International Organ Festival. In July of that same year he had the honour to perform in the company of two of his teachers, Marcel Dupre and Fernando Germani at the first international organ festival of Magadino, Switzerland. He was scheduled to return in 1966 to open the festival. The ***Five Liturgical Inventions*** will be performed in July, 2015 at the 52nd edition of this festival.

In Europe Victor was organist of Rome's St. Gregory's Basilica and of the Lugano Cathedral. He was organist of the Calvin United Church in Pembroke, First Baptist Church in Ottawa and St. Columkille's Roman Catholic Cathedral in Pembroke, Ontario. In 1960 he was appointed organist at St. Basil's church of St. Michael's College, Toronto, and professor of organ and improvisation at St. Michael's Cathedral Choir School. In 1963, he was appointed organist of Toronto's St. Michael's Cathedral a position he held until his death. Victor gave several inaugural organ recitals. Among them were St. Mary's Cathedral in Calgary, Alberta, St. Mark's in Sudbury, Ontario and the Cathedral of St. Paul, Minnesota.

On March 29, 1965, Victor was on his way to Montreal to record a recital for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation when the car in which he was riding with his producer was struck near Gananoque, Ontario and both he and his producer were killed.

Victor was not only an organist, composer, conductor, improviser and harpsichordist but also a linguist, being fluent in six languages. He had a passion for jazz and would often play, or listen, the night away and in a public venue, and if asked, would be happy to oblige with a tune or two or three...,

What always touches me again and again as I read through all the papers and letters was the tremendous love and respect people had for him as a person, which only served to enhance his music. Victor had a great sense of humour and was always ready with a joke or anecdote.

The musical world suffered a great loss with his passing and still today he is remembered with great respect and love. It was a privilege to have known and loved him and shared a life with him however brief and I am so thankful that he passed my way and did not pass me by.

A quote from *The Pembroke Observer*, Pembroke, Ontario, May 15, 1958:

"This recital was truly inspiring; in fact long before it was over, I had given up taking the details of his playing apart and was permitting myself the luxury of simple and confident enjoyment - the response that great music, well performed, is after all, fundamentally supposed to induce."

Victor and I were married in 1958 and our son Peter-Anthony is well-known in Canada and abroad as a composer, musician, improviser and former broadcaster.

- Margaret Togni Fox (October, 2009 - updated May, 2015)

Program Notes and Reminiscences of Victor Togni and *Five Liturgical Inventions* for this special 50th Anniversary Commemoration

Five Litugical Inventions - Victor Togni (1935 - 1965)

Jesu Dulcis - Verbum Supernum
Ave Maria
Adoro te Devote
Laudate Dominum
Alleluia

2015 marks the 50th anniversary of Victor Togni's death. This memorial edition of the Five Liturgical Inventions *based on chants highlights the importance of these miniatures in the body of Canadian Organ Music. I was introduced to these works as an Organ Scholar at the Cathedral Church of the Redeemer in Calgary, Canada, and they have been a part of my musical and liturgical life ever since; they were recorded in 2006 on my debut recording, Without Boundaries (Raven CD OAR-890). I play them often in concerts and people are always quite curious about them. I am honoured to have been associated with Victor Togni through his music and equally honoured to have been asked to write a few words about these wonderful miniatures.*

The invention as a musical form has been in use since the 16th century, and the best-known examples are the Two- and Three-part Inventions of Johann Sebastian Bach. Victor Togni's Inventions based on chant melodies are simply and beautifully set to be within the reach of most church organists.

In the opening setting of Jesu Dulcis-Verbum Supernum, the chants are demonstrated canonically between the right hand and pedal parts, accompanied by a chordal texture. A distinct portion of each chant melody is used and interpolated. This invention can be used throughout the liturgical year as either a prelude or postlude, varying the registration according to the placement in the service.

In Ave Maria, the melody is presented in small sections, offering the organist an opportunity to explore a variety of colours. With imaginative use, this invention can be played throughout the liturgical year.

Adoro te Devote is one of the better known chants due to its close affiliation with Holy Week, in particular Maundy Thursday. Togni set the canon beautifully to allow the organist to explore as many different colours as possible to highlight the melody. This chant is commonly used during the Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament.

Laudate dominum, a chant of praise, is the most musically playful of all the inventions. This treatment of the chant melody explores the use of mutations and upperwork of the instrument.

Alleluia, the most technically challenging of these inventions, requires good keyboard technique throughout as well as, ideally, a fairly live room. Also desirable is an instrument capable of making a striking statement using its full complement of reeds. This piece makes for a wonderful conclusion to a celebratory liturgy.

Notes and thoughts by Dr. Maxine Thevenot, Organist, Composer, Founding and Artistic Director of Polyphony: Voices of New Mexico, and a faculty member at the University of New Mexico.

From Brian Rae, Organist at St. Michael's Cathedral, Toronto for 40 years.

I write this on the 50th anniversary of the passing of this genius.

I first met Victor when he came to Toronto. I was the assistant organist of St. Michael's Cathedral and a student of Victor's during his tenure as organist of the Cathedral. It was my privilege and pleasure to hear Victor play the various liturgies enhancing the worship experience with his artistic improvisations based on Gregorian Chant. Some of the best examples of his craft became known as the Five Liturgical Inventions. *I really felt the Inventions should be published for everyone to enjoy, and was delighted that this came about. Over the years I have played them frequently and they have been very well received by audiences. Naturally I have the Gregorian Chant sung preceding each Invention on which each "gem" is based..*

He was in the process of sketching out a method on improvisation when he was tragically taken from us just before Easter in 1965.

He was a Pedagogue--encouraging and being patient with me as a student as well as sharing his ideas on improvisation. He was a Mentor, in every sense of the definition--a learning and developing partnership between someone with vast experience and someone who wants to learn. He was a Friend--I have fond memories of the wonderful times on Heath street, and one in particular with Victor as host and chef extraordinaire. He lives on in our hearts and in these musical "gems'.

From Gordon Mansell M.Mus.Music Director, Organist, Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic Church - Toronto

Five Liturical Inventions

These very special short compositions were based on, or paraphrased if you will, on Gregorian themes. In performance, often each Invention would be preceded with a choir singing the appropriate chant. As it was Maestro Togni's skill to improvise on just about anything that came to mind, in any style, the Inventions themselves are improvisatory in style and I dare say, influenced by the harmonies of jazz. I first heard Victor perform in the early 1960's at St. Michael's Cathedral when I was perhaps six years of age. I was not yet a student of St. Michael's Choir School but very much aware of Cathedral music. I was shaken to the core with the sounds and the vibrations of the mighty Cathedral organ, and of course, the brilliance and creativity of the organist. I knew then that my future included the study of the organ and indeed, at the age of ten, I started my first lessons with Peter Daly at St. Michael's Choir School. Victor's untimely death served to motivate me and to solidify my desire to play the organ. I was determined to learn it well and was so happy when I became, as a student, one of the assistant organists at St. Michael's Cathedral. From these early influences, organ performance and church music became an integral part of my life.

Victor Togni has been very much a spiritual mentor to me with many coincidences interwoven throughout my career. He had been organist and music director at St. Basil's Catholic Church in Toronto. I too held this position and while there, I had the distinct honour to organize a memorial concert commemorating the fortieth anniversary of Victor's death. The date of that concert was May 27, 2005 and the church was filled with people who had known Victor and were touched by his personality and genius. William Wright, William O'Meara and yours truly, performed that concert and the senior choir of St. Michael's Choir School, directed by Brian Rae, sang the chants preceding my performance of the Liturgical Inventions. While I was more than a bit nervous on this occasion, I felt the Spirit and the admiration for this great man from everyone present. It was a spectacular concert and I am so happy to have produced it, performed in it and recorded it. Special and honoured guest Peter Togni then performed improvisation on the theme of "Victor". It was a magical night and I was certain that Victor was enjoying every moment. Today, as Music Director and Organist at Our Lady of Sorrows Church in Toronto, (another organ that was influenced by Victor Togni) I have similar experiences of his spirit moving within me and through my fingers with every improvisation I perform.

I am honoured to provide this reflection on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of Victor's death. In August 2015, while on a performance tour of Poland, particularly at Oliwa Cathedral, I will perform a concert of Bach and also introduce the Polish public to Victor Togni's Liturgical Inventions*. I will dedicate my concert at the Cathedral to the memory of Victor Togni. While his life was short, his influences have been long.*

Reflections from Victor Togni's son, Peter-Anthony Togni, Organist, Composer and Broadcaster

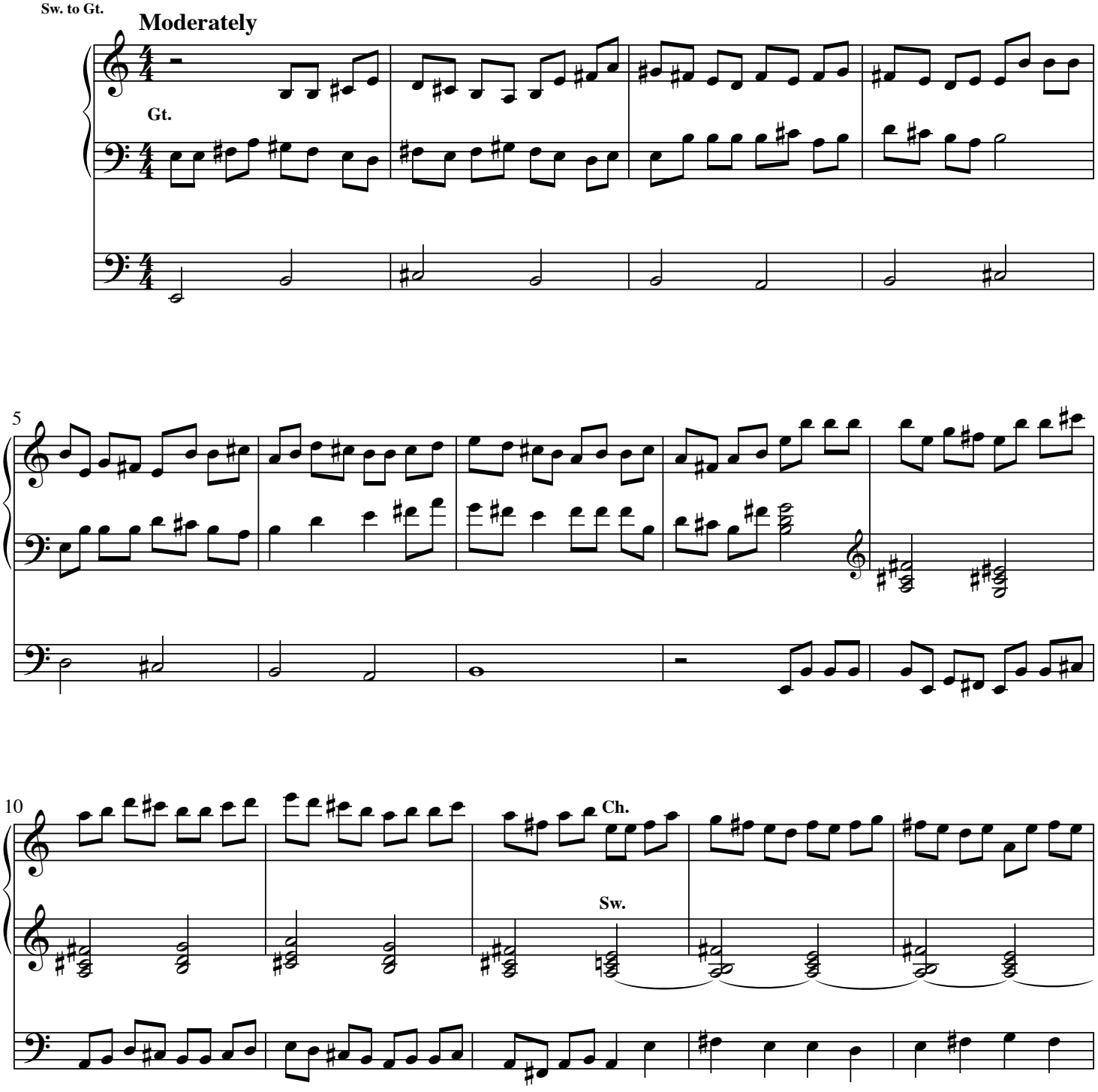
On March 29, 1965 the world lost a great artist and messenger of God and I lost my father, Victor Togni. I was only five years old at that time and to tell you the truth I don't remember very much about him, but the memories I have are very strong and very beautiful. I remember, how happy I was when he came home from a concert tour and the joy I would feel when he brought me a toy! I can remember making soup together. I remember a man who loved to laugh and who loved people, he would often bring home his students for supper and he loved to cook. However my strongest memories are listening to him play the organ, really one of the first musical sounds that I remember feeling. When we hear music it changes us, we are not the same as before, it's very physical. The magical sounds my father made at the organ are truly very much a part of my musical foundation. The incredible harmonies he used and developed in his improvisations influenced me greatly as a composer. My dad's Five liturgical Inventions *are a real window to who he was, not only as a musician, but as Christian who's greatest love was to play music to glorify God and to lead the congregation to prayer. He had a great love and understanding of the music of the Roman Catholic Church, in particular Gregorian Chant. Many of his brilliant improvisations were based on Gregorian melodies as are his* Five Liturgical Inventions*. They are a window into his soul. They show what kind of musician he was, that though he could improvise freely, he was always aware of the need for form and structure, a balance of control and freedom. In this case he chose the two part canonic form of the invention to base his freedom around. One can see his craft and his consistency, he studied with many of the great organ masters and had real respect for the lineage and the tradition while at the same time speaking in his own very personal and divine musical language.*

Five Liturgical Inventions for Organ

I - Jesu Dulcis -Verbum Supernum

Victor Togni

Sw: Foundations 8' 4'
Gt: Foundations 8' 4'
Ch: Solo 8'
Ped: 16' 8'
Gt. to Ped.
Sw. to Gt.



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15

Gt.

20

24

Slower

rit.

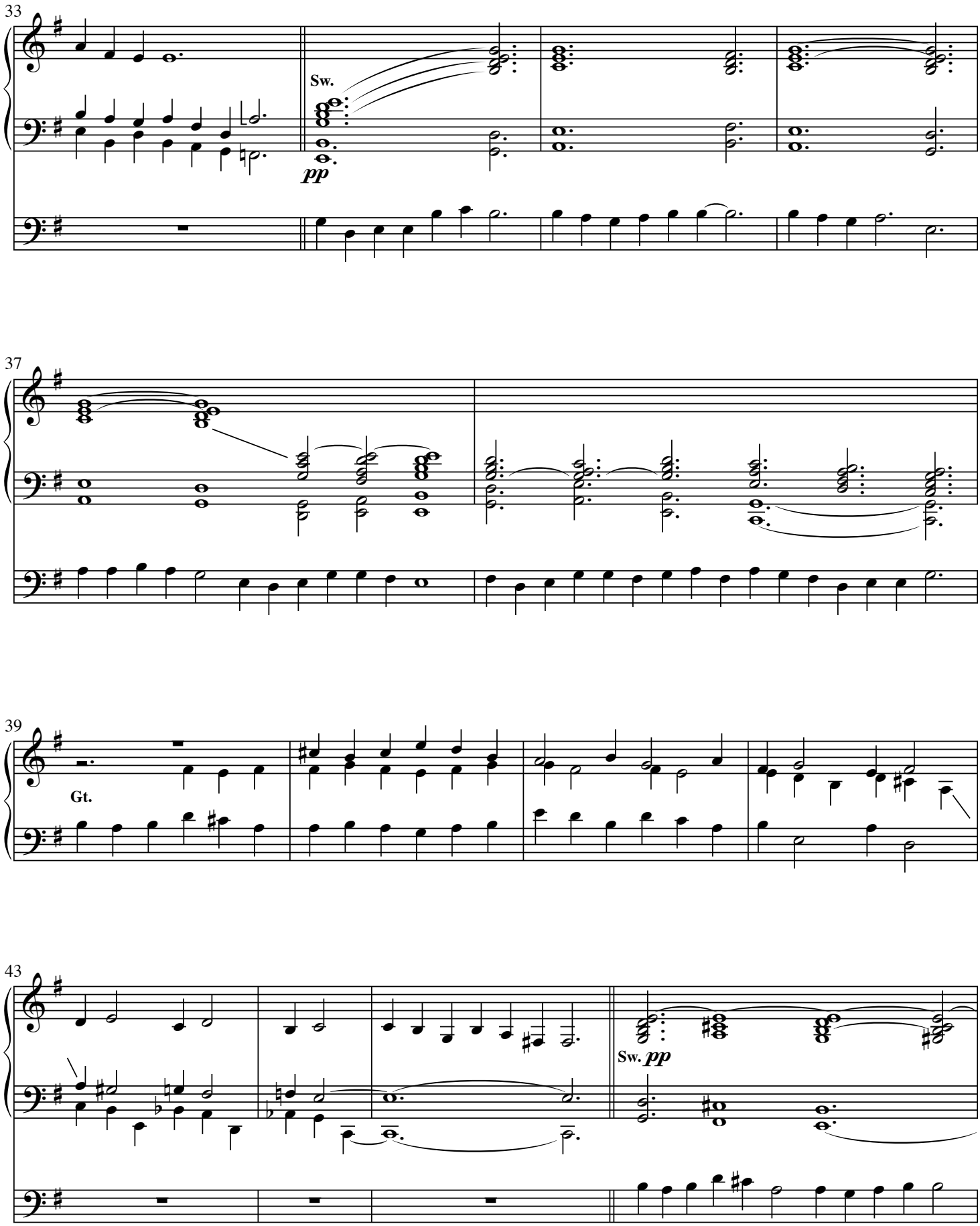
Sw. - 4'

II - Ave Maria

Sw: Salicional 8'
Unda Maris 8'
Gt: Flute 8'
Ped: Solo stop 4'

Slow

Gt.


33
Sw.
pp
37
39
Gt.
43
Sw. pp

47

49

Gt.

Slower

-Solo 4'
+Soft 16'

III - Adoro te Devote

Sw: Salicional 8'
Gt: Gedeckt 8'
Ch: Krummhorn 8'
Ped: Bourdon 16'

Moderato

Sw.

Gt.

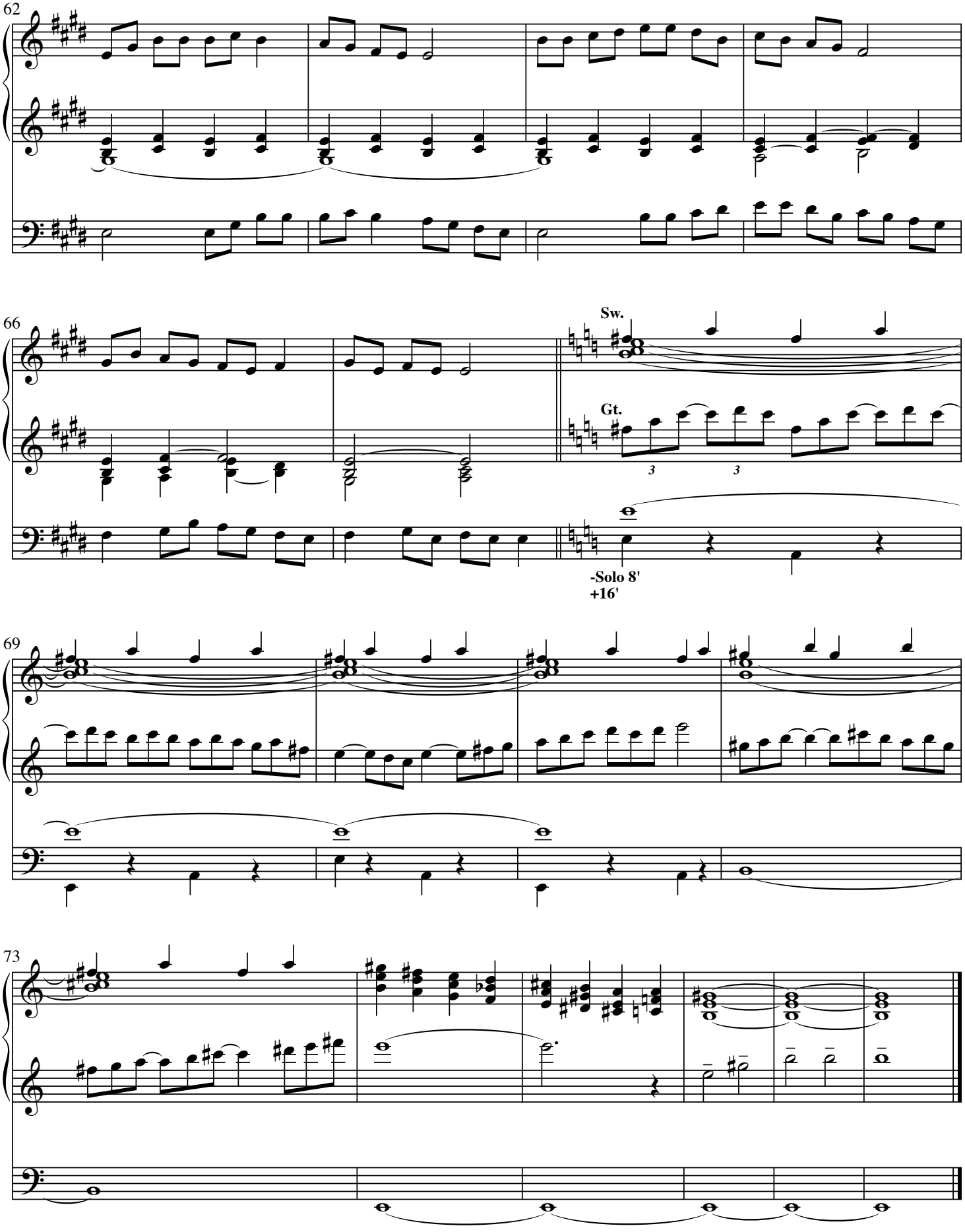
58

Ch.

Sw.

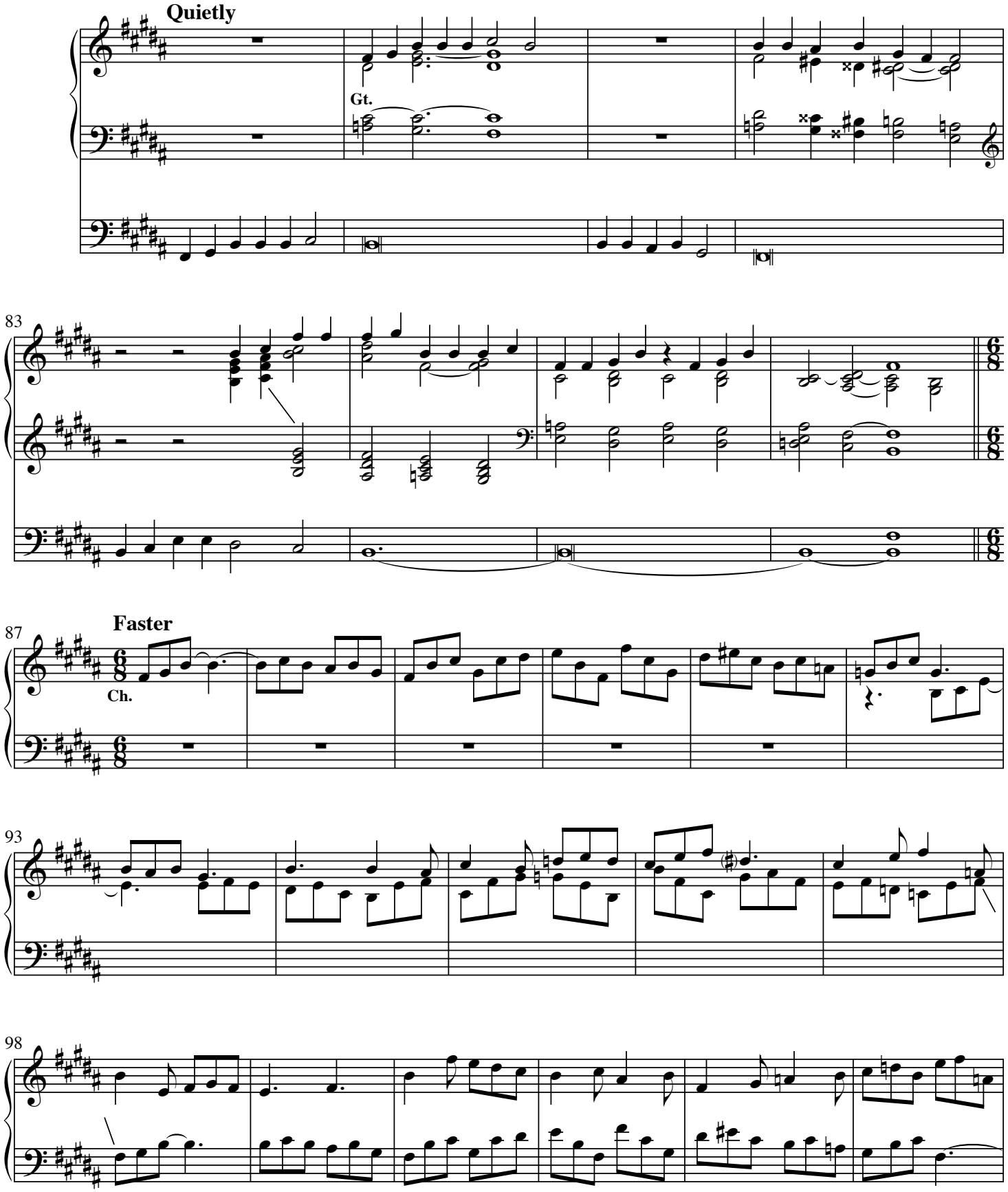
-16'

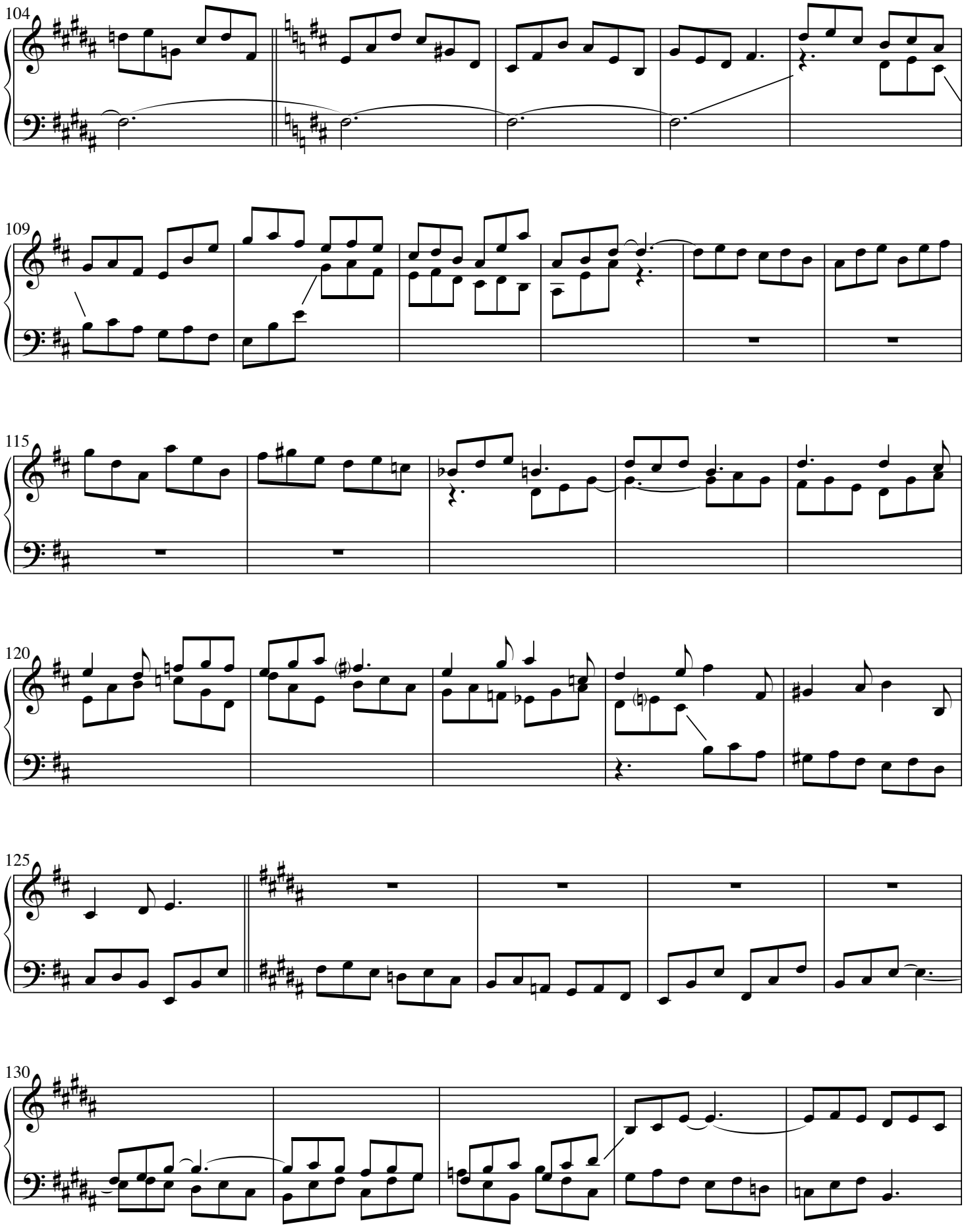
+Solo 8'

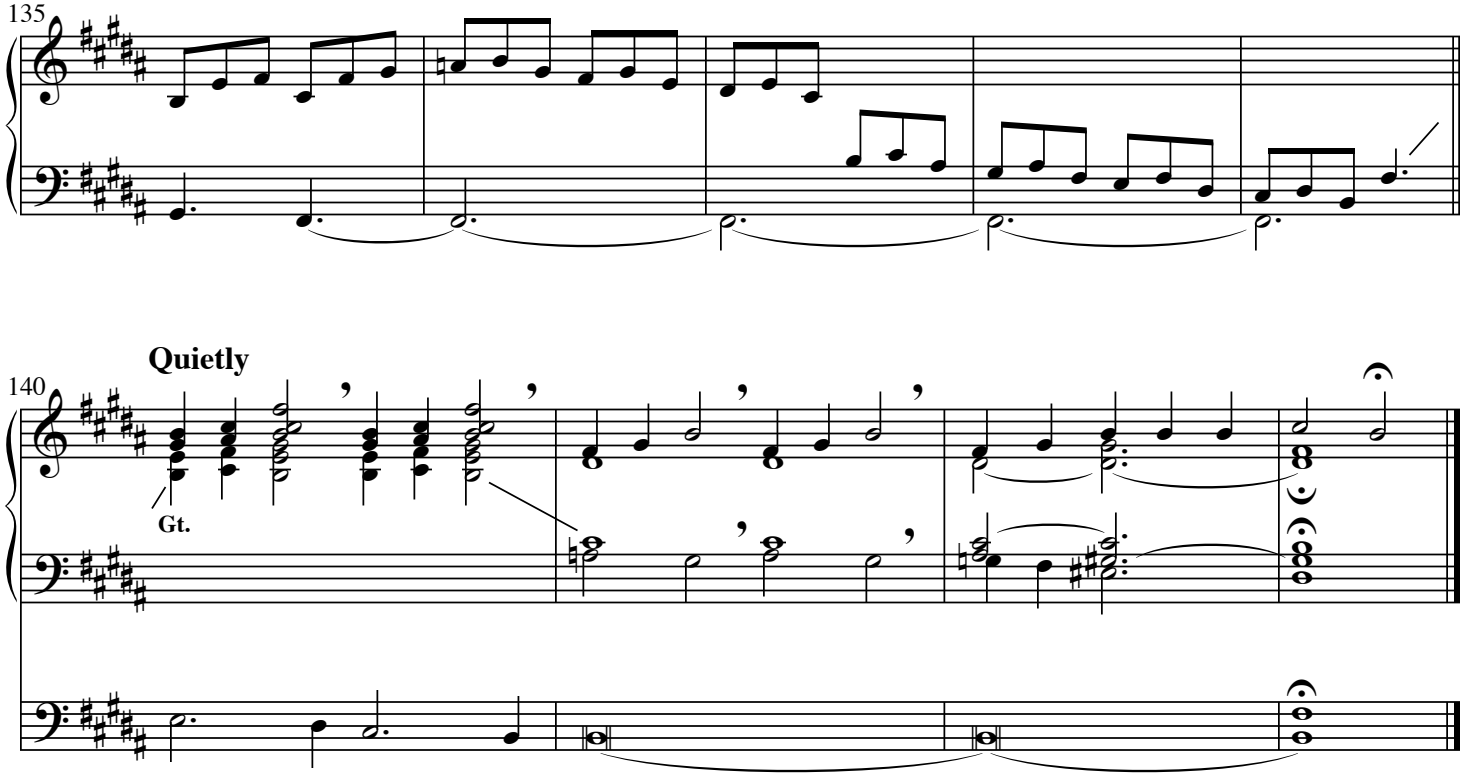

62
66
Sw.
Gt.
-Solo 8'
+16'
69
73

IV - Laudate Dominum

Gt: Foundations 8' 4'
Ch: 8', 4', 1 1/3'
Ped: 16' 8'

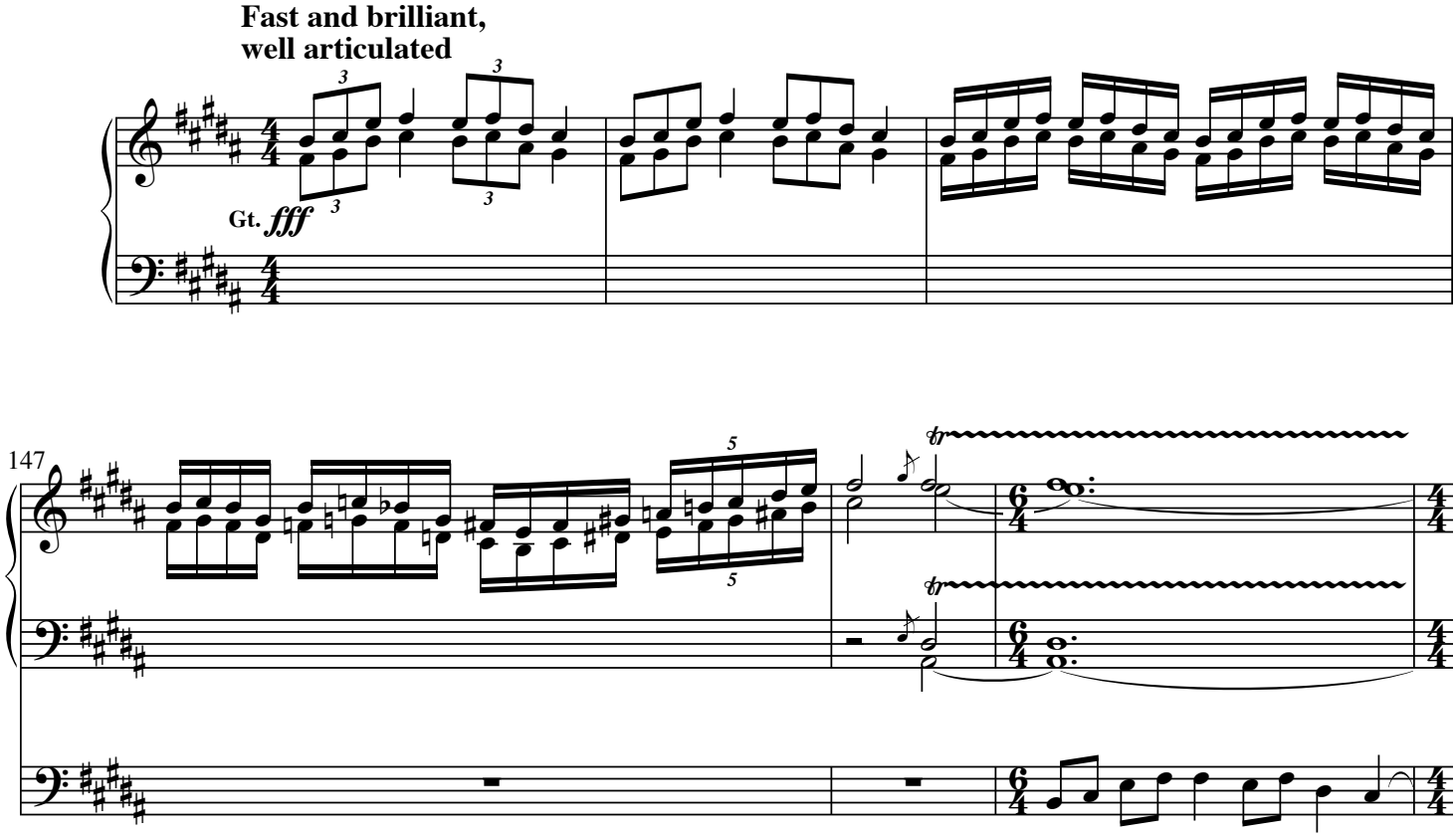


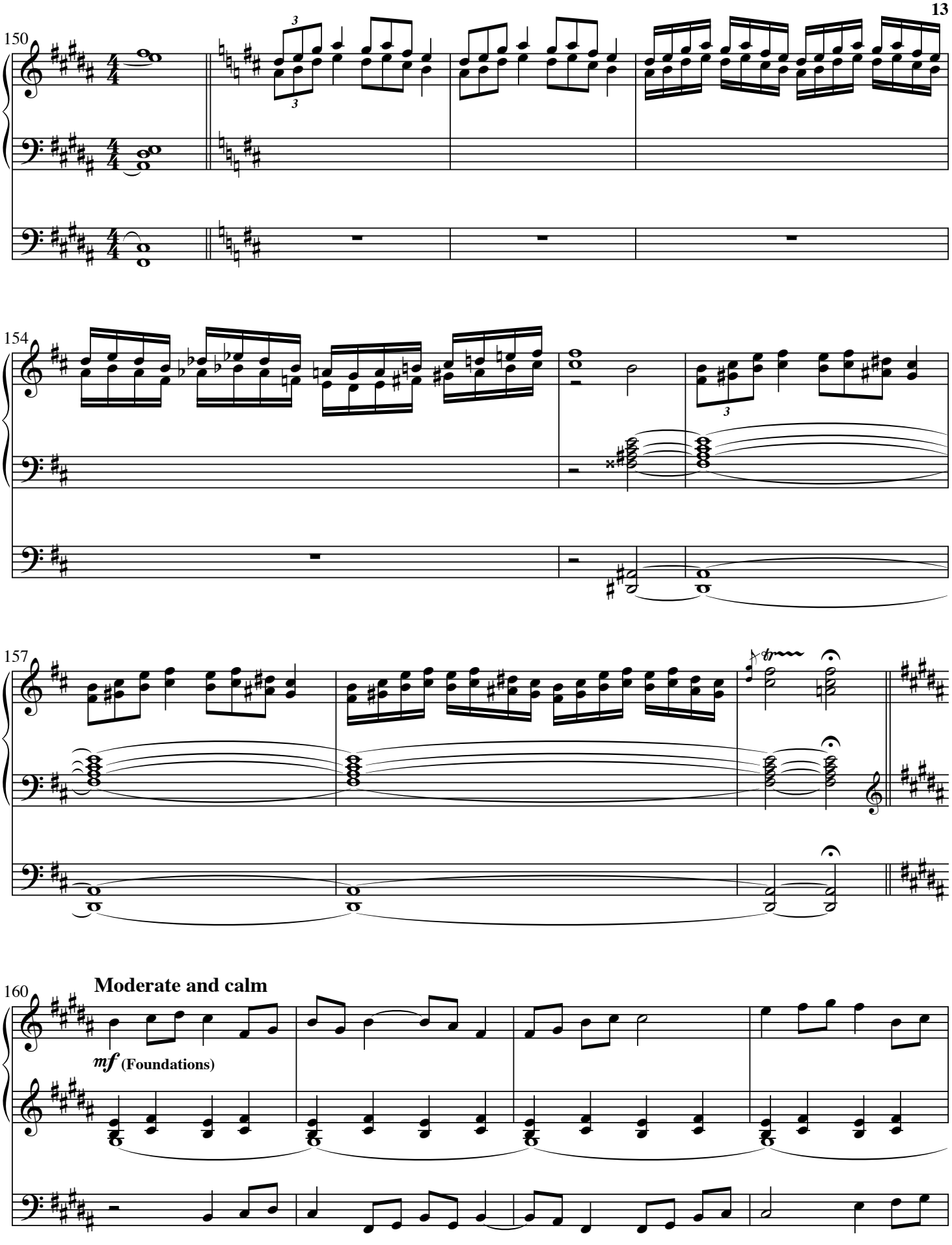

104
109
115
120
125
130

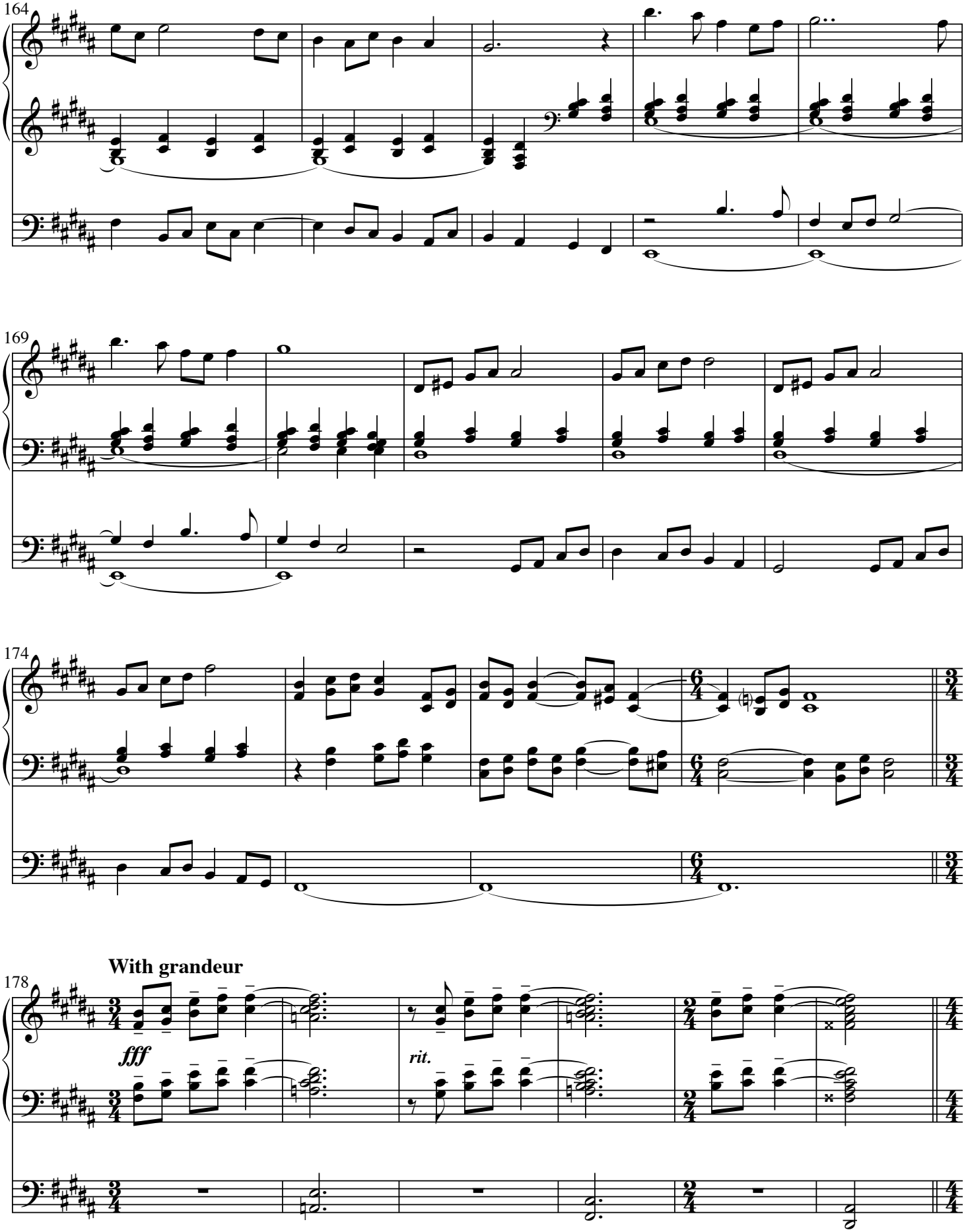


To Don Aldo Lanini of Magadino, Switzerland

V - Alleluia




150
154
157
160
Moderate and calm
mf (Foundations)


164
169
174
178
With grandeur
fff
rit.

Fast, recitative-like

184

Gt.

Sw.

187

Gt.

190

Sw.

192

Gt.

194

Sw.

Gt.