Nativitas

Poems by David Broadbridge
& organ music by Philip Moore

A sequence for Advent & Christmas
in poetry and organ music

Nativitas

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& organ music by Philip Moore

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Preface

This publication presents the universal message of the birth of Jesus in a new guise, offering a richly imaginative resource of poems and organ music.

Fresh, varied and accessible in their interpretation, the poems by David Broadbridge and the music of Philip Moore sound a new note in their variety. Together, they provide a unique commentary on the mystery and joy of the Christmas story.

Nativitas comprises a sequence of nine poems, exploring seasonal themes and using a variety of forms, such as villanelle, ballad, and free verse. Each reading of poetry is enhanced by organ music, reflecting the mood and imagery of the words.

Author's notes about the poems

The events leading up to Christmas and the story of Christmas itself are very well-known. They have been celebrated in music, art and literature over many centuries, indeed millennia. Presenting a new sequence of poems on this theme requires a degree of humility, not least because so much is so familiar.

How to make this new? I have tried to make the poems windows through which to see the mystery and joy of Christmas. I also wanted to keep the language as simple and direct as possible - a message as transcendental as this needs no complications of meaning or difficulty of understanding.

Composer's notes about the music

In writing these reflections on David Broadbridge's inspired words, I was struck, once again, how much the Nativity is the story of journeys. The journey of the three kings is the most obvious one. But there is also the journey of the shepherds, the journey made by Mary and Joseph, and the journey of a child opening an Advent Calendar. The journey of childbirth, from conception to birth, is perhaps the most extraordinary of all. There is, too, our own journey through life, which for many has a spiritual element, whatever our beliefs may be.

I have tried to reflect the journeys illustrated in the poems. Some of the musical gestures are obvious, such as the falling phrases in *Adam's Fall*. In *Advent Calendar*, I have tried to illustrate a child's impatience. The ground bass in *I Hear a Baby's Cry* suggests preparation for travel. And the fugue in *The Ballad of Mary and Joseph* is a musical illustration of progress from darkness and isolation to one of final fulfilment. *Simeon with the Christ Child* is perhaps the end of the first part of Christ's life on earth. Basing the musical ideas on Stanford's immortal setting in G of the *Nunc dimittis* seemed an appropriate way to anchor the listener into something familiar.

Musically, all of the movements, apart from the last, are based on ideas in the first movement. Each movement starts on a note a semitone higher than the previous one.

Registration marks are only suggestions and the player should feel free to interpret these according to the organ being used. The swell pedal should be used freely where appropriate – the indications of crescendo and diminuendo are only guidelines. Tempo rubato can be used, if the player thinks it appropriate to do so, but must be felt in his or her bones and not simply applied automatically. Metronome marks should be adhered to as strictly as possible, while yet making allowances for the acoustical properties of the building in which *Nativitas* is being offered.

Musical settings by other composers

Four of the poems by David Broadbridge have been set to music as follows:

Adam's Fall
Music by Richard Elfyn Jones, a carol for SATB (with divisions)

Faith in Waiting
Music by Richard Elfyn Jones, a carol for SATB (with divisions)

Kings and Shepherds (I)
Music by Christopher Gower, a carol for unison voices (SATB or upper voices only) and organ or piano, words from the poem, *O Magnum Mysterium*

Kings and Shepherds (II)
Music by Christopher Gower, a carol for SATB and oboe, words from the poem, *O Magnum Mysterium*

The Ballad of Mary
Music by Christopher Gower, a carol for SATB and organ or piano

Adam's Fall was first performed by the Choir of King's College, Cambridge, directed by Sir Stephen Cleobury, on Christmas Eve 2017. This carol was subsequently recorded by the Choir and featured on a recording, which was made in 2018 to celebrate 100 years of Nine Lessons and Carols.

O Magnum Mysterium is a shorter version of the poem of that title and was originally published in *Something in Writing*, by Oversteps Books. It was first performed by the Choir of Canterbury Cathedral and the Amici choir in December 2017 under the title *Kings and Shepherds*.

The Ballad of Mary was first peformed by the Canterbury Amici choir in December 2019.

Nativitas

Prelude, page 19

The Search

Though I had searched so hard all night to find it,
Of the Nativity I could find no earthly trace,
And did not know how much that I would mind it.

Should I have made my quest more open-minded,
And not abandoned hope with such bad grace,
Since I had searched so hard all night to find it?

The shepherds, too, by travelling light, defined it
By the angels' shining brightness in their face,
Though they had searched so hard all night to find it.

The wise men, with their wisdom shelved, aligned it
With a star which led them to a stable place.
They did not know how much that they would mind it.

All night I longed to be a child, love-blinded
At the sight, the door ajar, my mouth agape,
Like one who did not think that he would find it.

I should have thought instead what lay behind it:
That seeking is the way to saving grace,
Though I had searched so hard all night to find it,
And had not known how much that I would mind it.

Musical Reflection 1, page 21

Advent Calendar

As a child, my first lesson in patience
was the Advent Calendar. Even though

I knew what I was waiting for, I longed
to open every window all at once.

But day after day, the scenes made
no sense. Anticipation gave way to doubt.

The early windows opened onto
stacks of boxes tied with bows,

a robin on a snow-flossed branch,
a stage coach on a country road.

One window framed a reindeer
with a red-rouged nose.

But as I counted down the days,
I saw some angels standing by,

a shepherd with a new-born lamb,
a Wise Man with a gift of gold.

And when at last the final morning came,
I saw the Christmas story as of old.

My calendared days opened on
a star, a manger, and the child foretold.

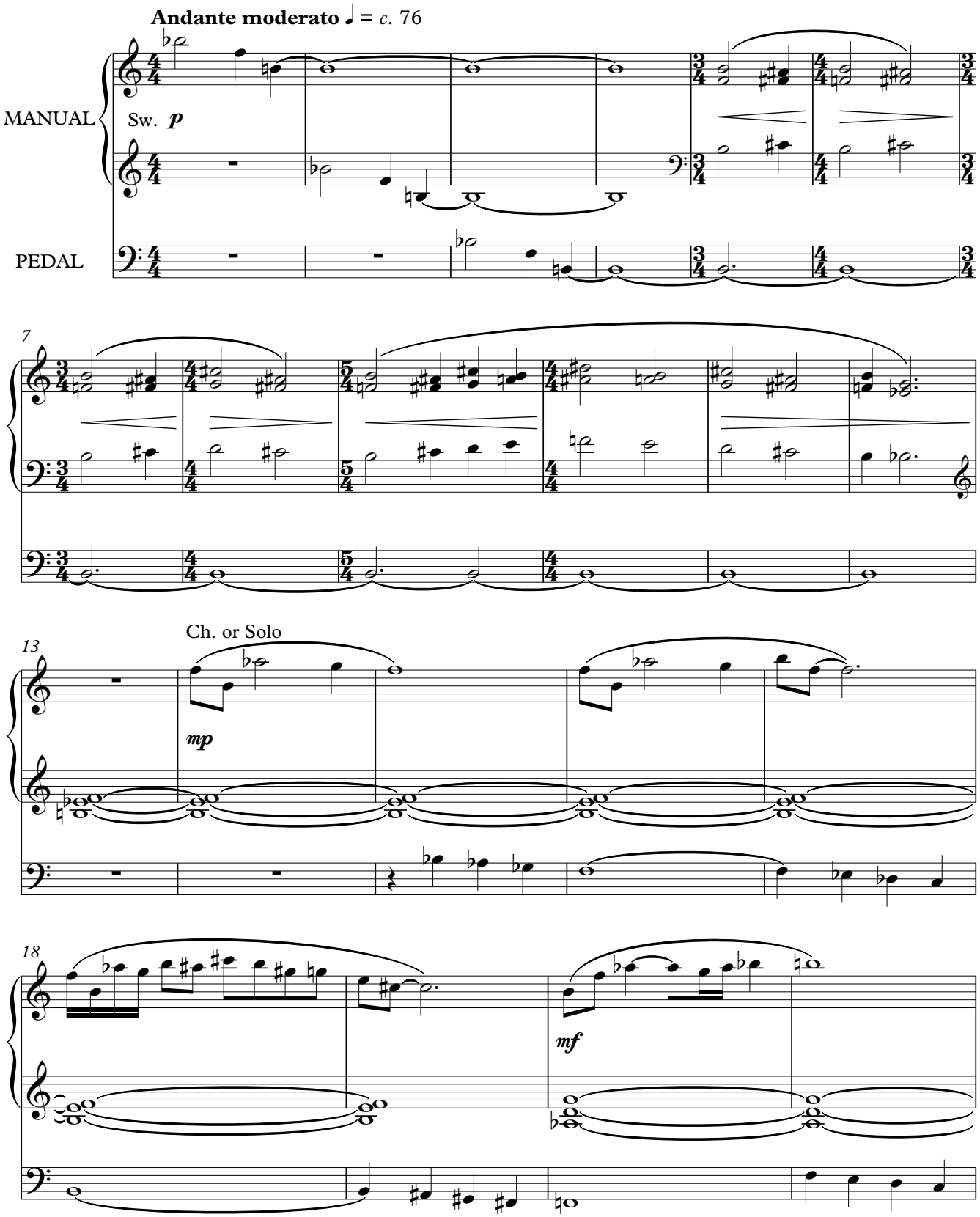
Musical Reflection 2, page 23

Nativitas

Sw. 8'
Gt. 8', 4', Sw. to Gt.
Ch. or Solo soft Reed or Flute 8'
Ped. 16', 8', Sw. to Ped.

PHILIP MOORE (b. 1943)

Prelude



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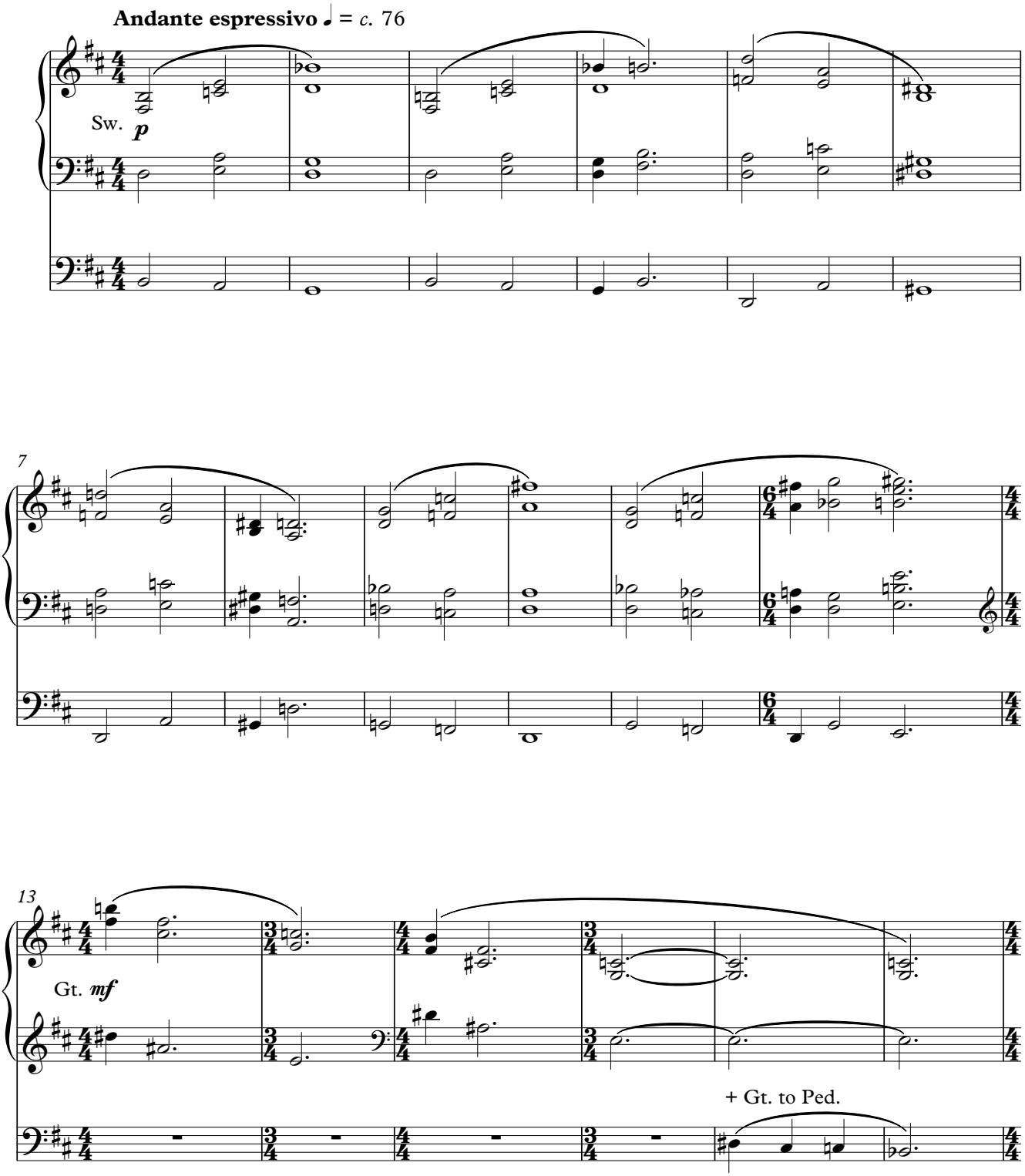
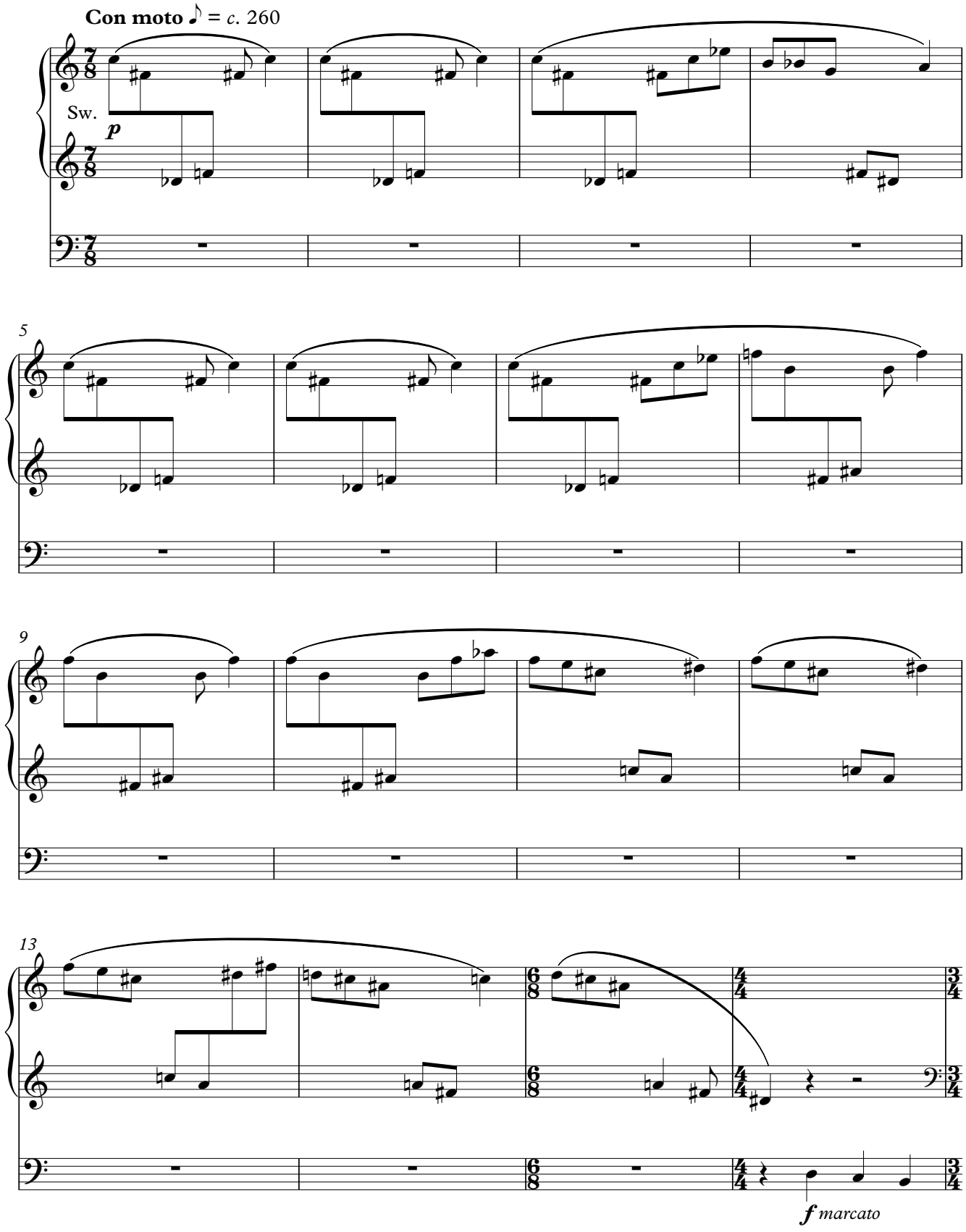
Reflection 1: The Search

Sw. 16', 8', 4'
Gt. Diapasons 8', 4', Sw. to Gt.
Ped. 16', 8', Sw. to Ped.



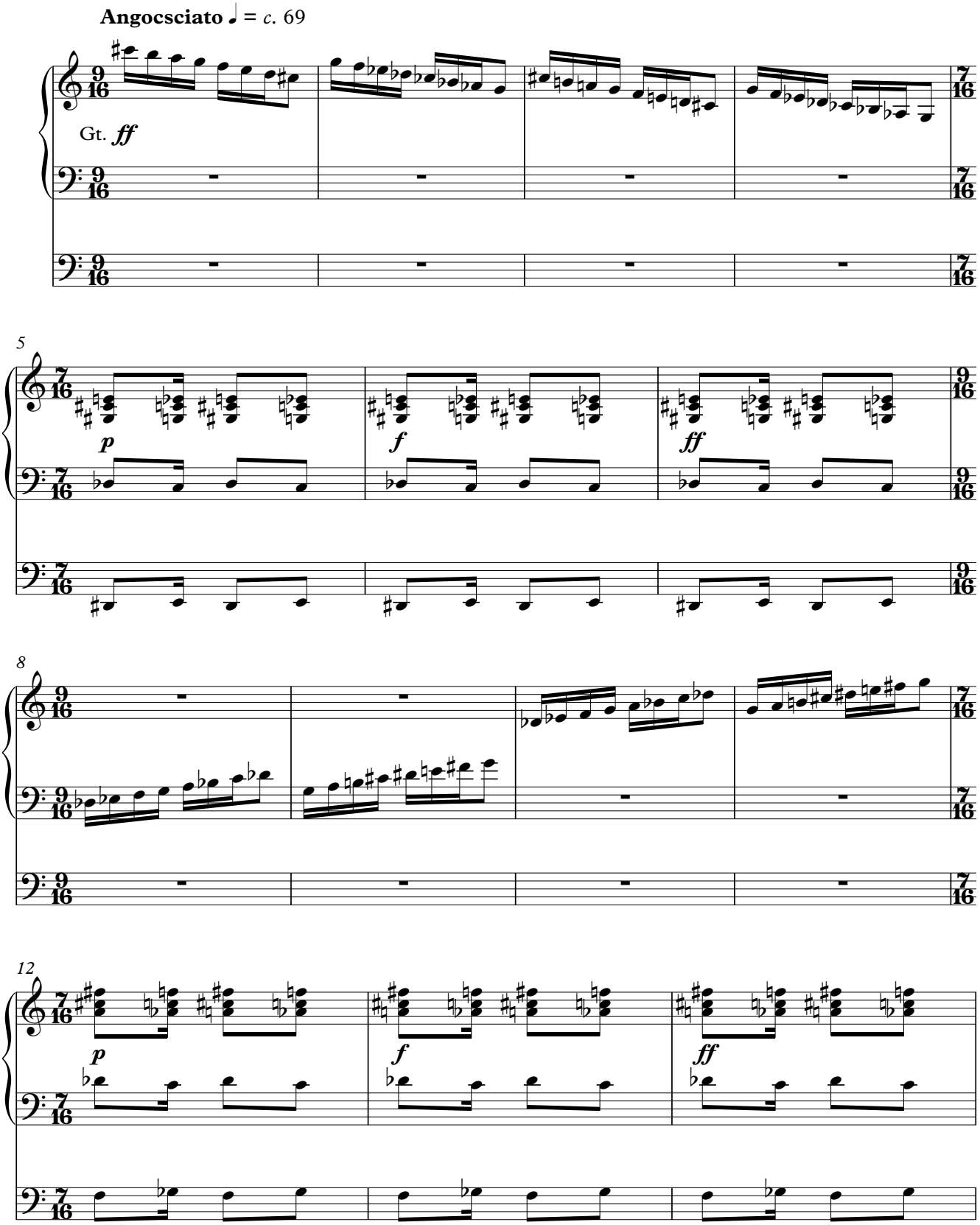
Reflection 2: Advent Calendar

Sw. 8', 2'
Gt. Diapasons 8', 4', 2', Sw to Gt.
Ch. or Solo soft Reed or Flute 8'
Ped. 16', 8', Gt. to Ped.



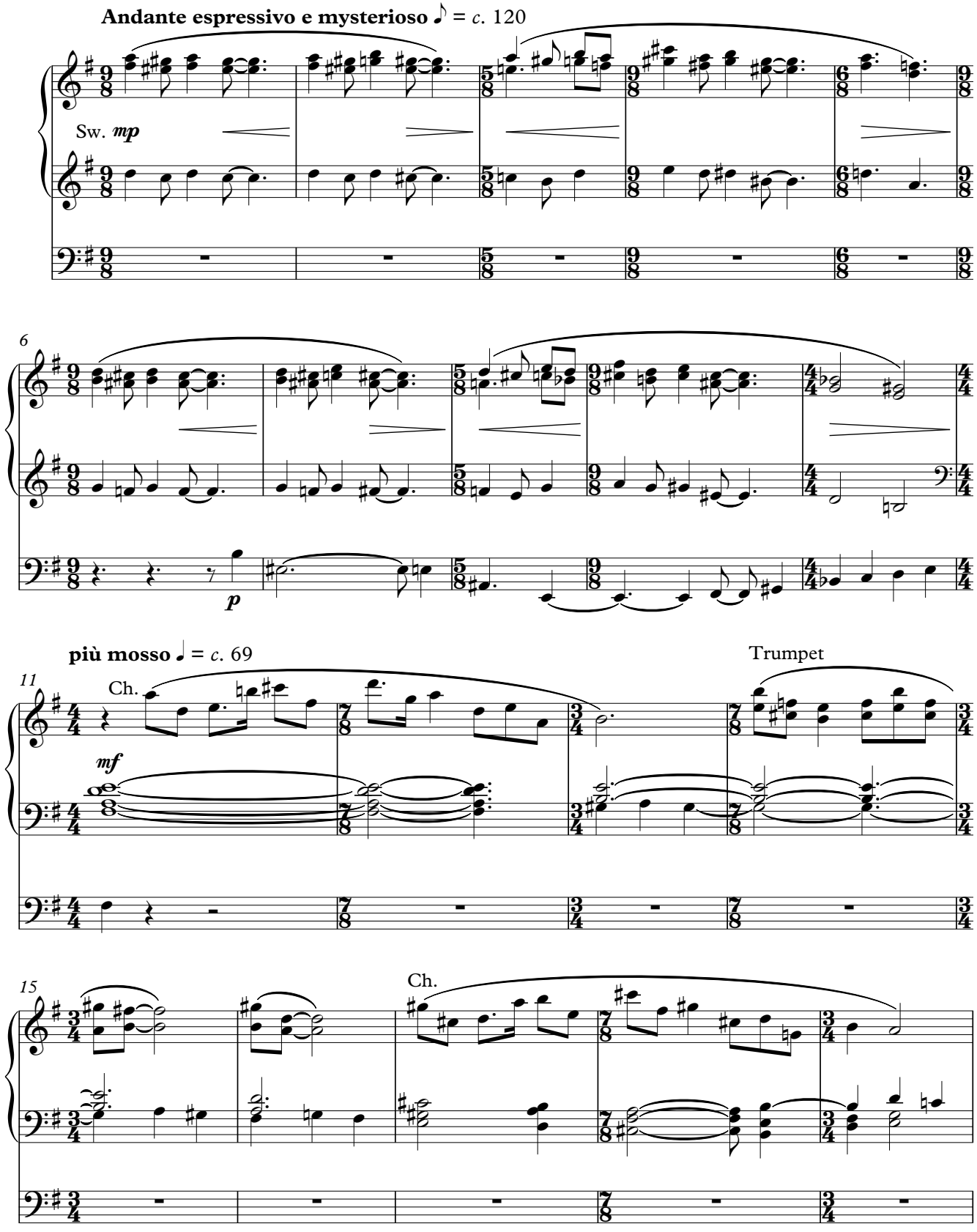
Reflection 3: Adam's Fall

Sw. Full
Gt. Diapasons 8', 4', 2', Mixt., Sw. to Gt.
Ped. 16', 8', Sw. to Ped., Gt. to Ped.



Reflection 4: The Annunciation

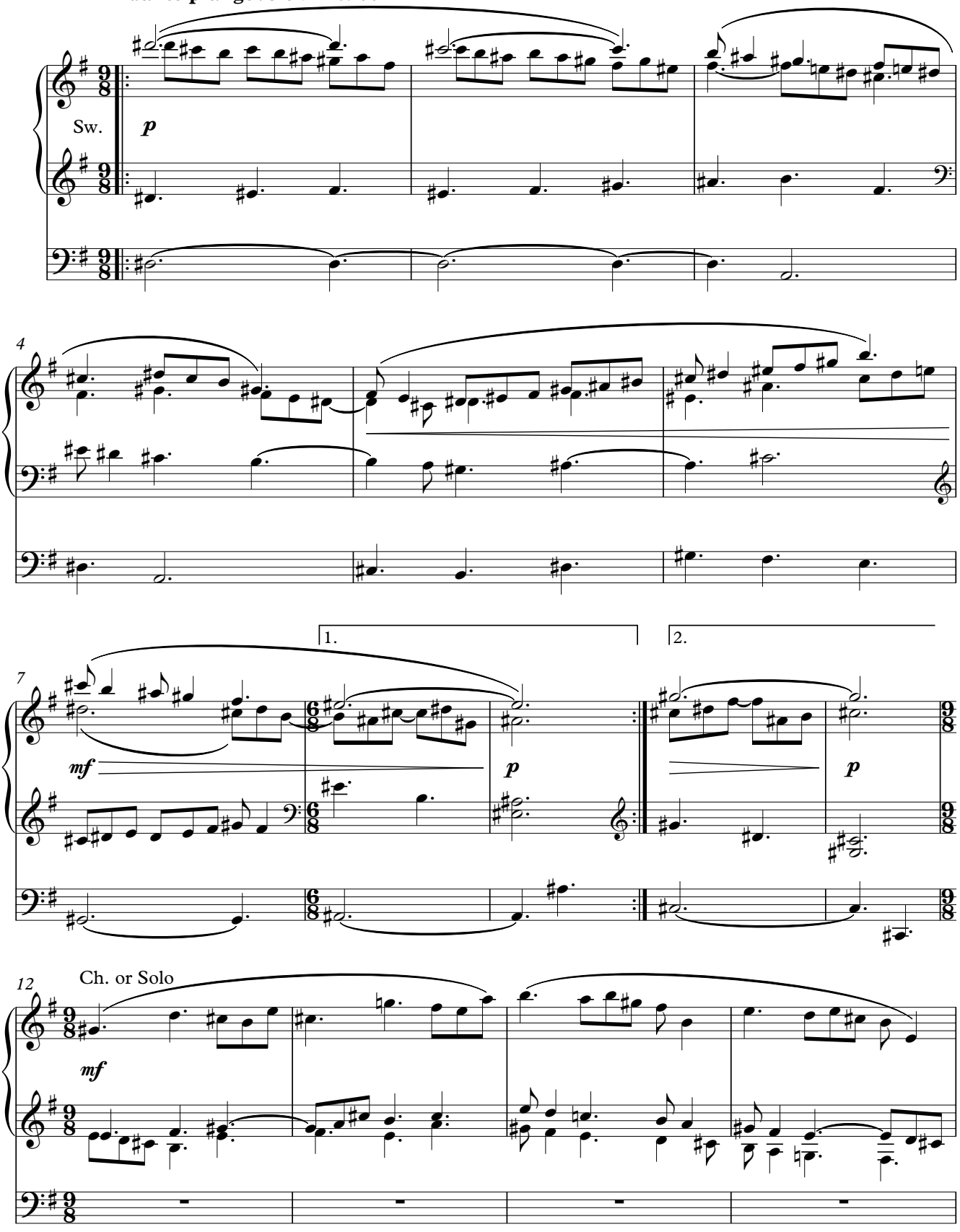
Solo Trumpet
Sw. Strings
Ch. 8', 4', 2' + mutations
Ped. 16', 8'



Reflection 5: Faith in Waiting

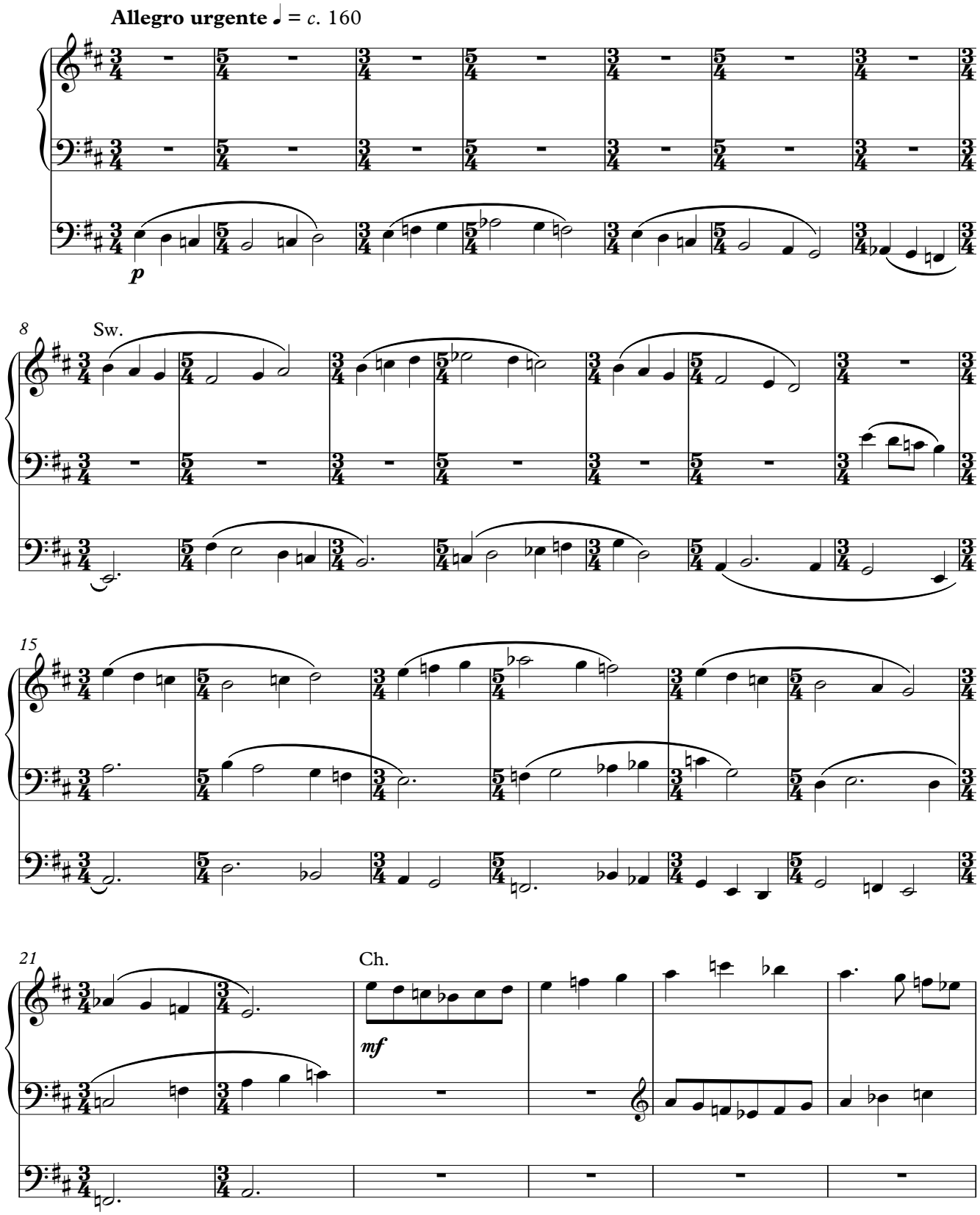
Sw. 8', (4')
Ch. or Solo soft Reed 8'
Ped. 16', 8'

Andante piangevole ♩. = *c.* 60



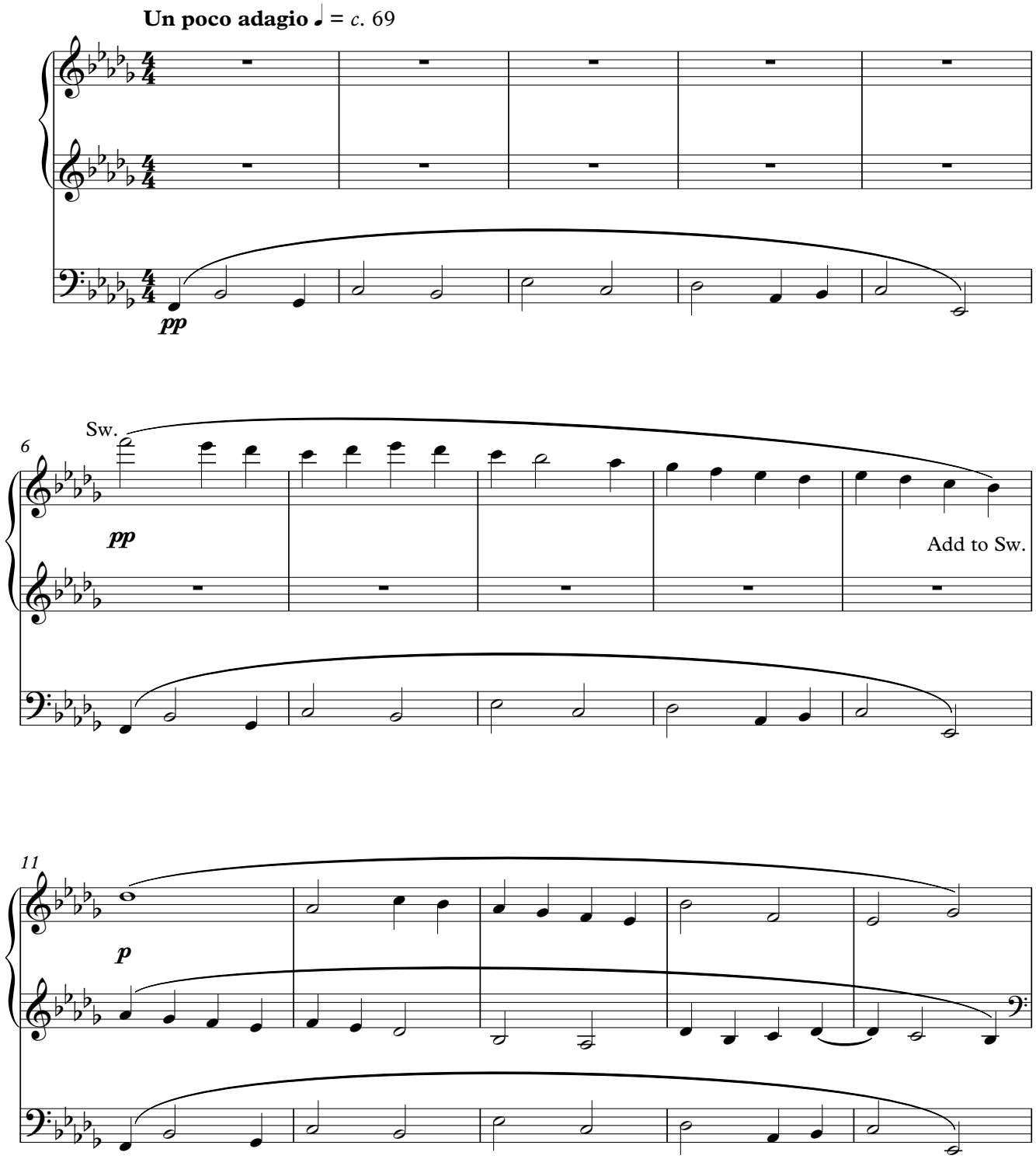
Reflection 6: The Ballad of Mary and Joseph

Sw. Full, box shut
Gt. Diapasons 16', 8', 4', Sw. to Gt.
Ch. 8', 4', 2'
Ped. 16', 8', (4'), Sw. to Ped.



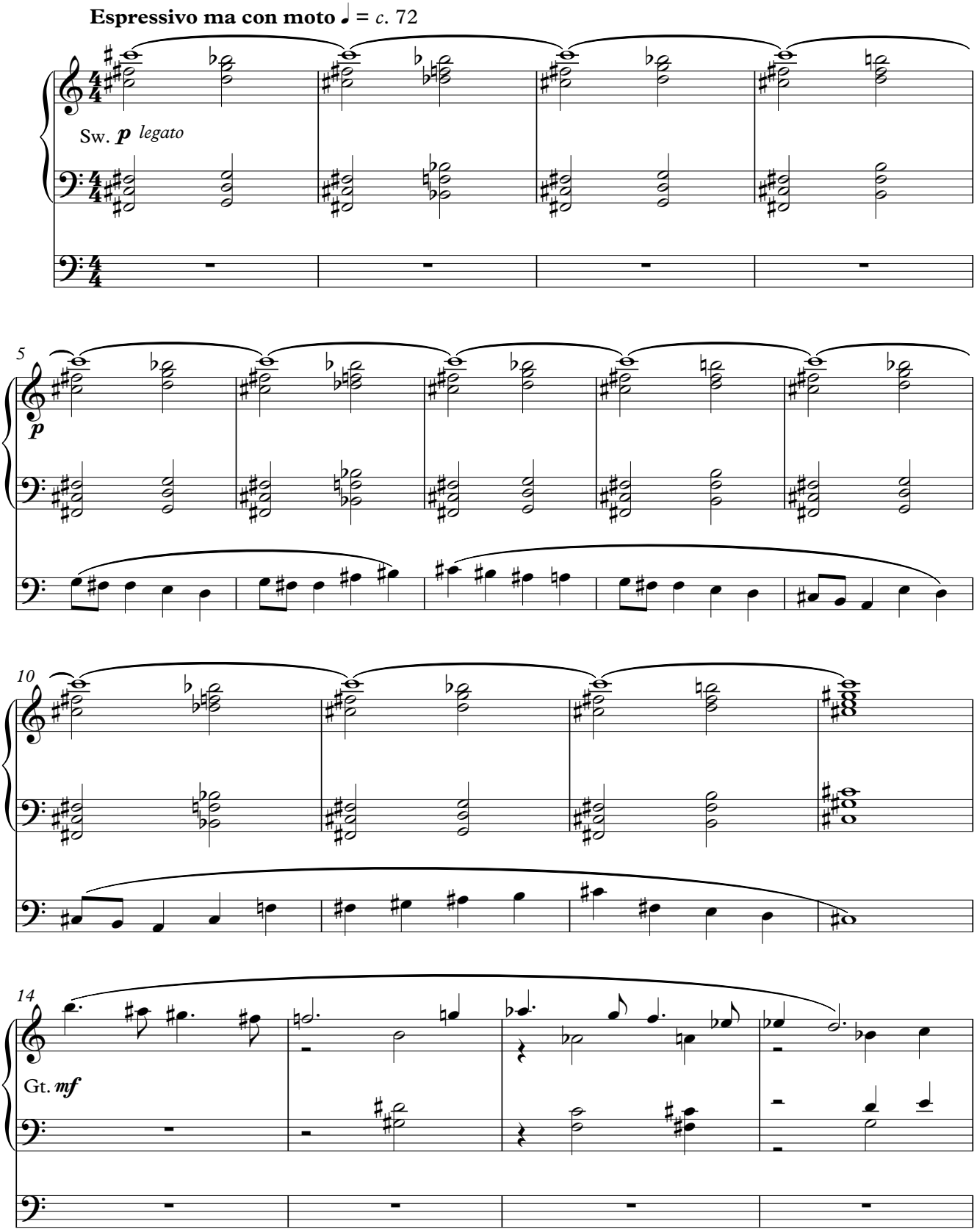
Reflection 7: I Hear a Baby's Cry

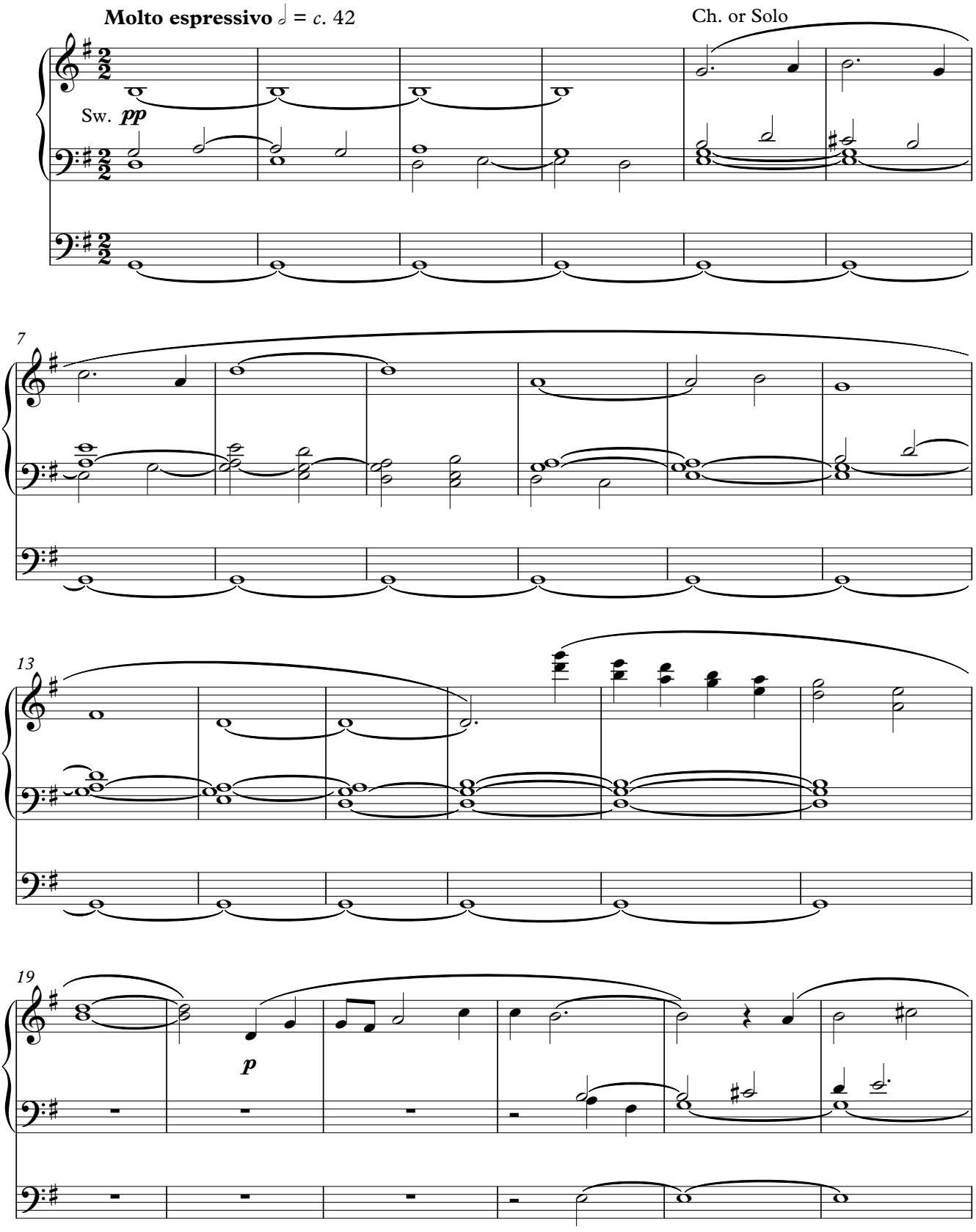
Sw. Flute 8'
Gt. Flute 8', Sw. to Gt.
Ped. 16', Sw. to Ped.



Reflection 8: O Magnum Mysterium

Sw. Strings 16', 8', 4'
Gt. Flutes 8', 4', uncoupled
Ped. 4' only, uncoupled



Reflection 9: Simeon with the Christ Child

Sw. Strings
Gt. Diapasons 8', 4', Sw to Gt.
Ch. or Solo soft Flute 8'
Ped. 16', 8', Sw. to Ped.