CREATIVE SERVICE PLAYING

AN INTRODUCTION TO IMPROVISATION

by

Preston Rockholt, Mus. D., F.A.G.O.

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INTRODUCTION

1. This workbook is designed for those who already have a solid foundation in harmony.

2. The assignments should be worked out under the guidance of a competent teacher; otherwise, the student may perpetuate his errors.

3. Exercises are mostly for three and four voices, since the basic techniques acquired can be applied to one, two, or five or more voices.

4. Organ registration is indicated only where pitch level or color is especially pertinent to the nature of the assignment.

5. It is important to work out the transpositions where they are assigned, rather than to defer them, so that the student will be ready to use the techniques gained in the advanced assignments. The ability to transpose, particularly in contrapuntal forms, is as important in improvisation as the ability to read notes.

6. It is suggested that the student work out the assigned modulations in two ways: (1.) by providing the barest harmonic skeleton possible, and (2.) by providing an artistic bridge based on melodic, harmonic, or rhythmic motives from either (or both) hymn(s).

7. In all assignments, proceed as slowly at first as is necessary to play correctly. However, bring each exercise

up to a performing tempo before moving to the next.

8. It will be very helpful to the student to study the hymntune treatments in the works of such masters as Scheidt, Bach, and Brahms, but especially in the twentieth century works of Hugo Distler, Leo Sowerby, Flor Peeters, Ernst Pepping, Helmut Walcha, and others, whose contemporary styles can spark the student's imagination as well as instruct him in melodic, harmonic, contrapuntal, and structural or formal techniques.

9. It is hoped that a part of the usefulness of the workbook will result from what is largely omitted: the theories of harmony, counterpoint, form, organ registration, fingering and pedalling. The student using this workbook must be working already in these other disciplines.

10. After having worked successfully through this introductory text, the student is advised to continue in the improvisation textbooks by Marcel Dupre, or the equivalent, in order that he may develop further his improvisational skills.

P. R.
June 24, 1968
Washington Cathedral
Washington, D. C.

PART I

EXERCISES IN VOICE LEADING AND TRANSPOSITION

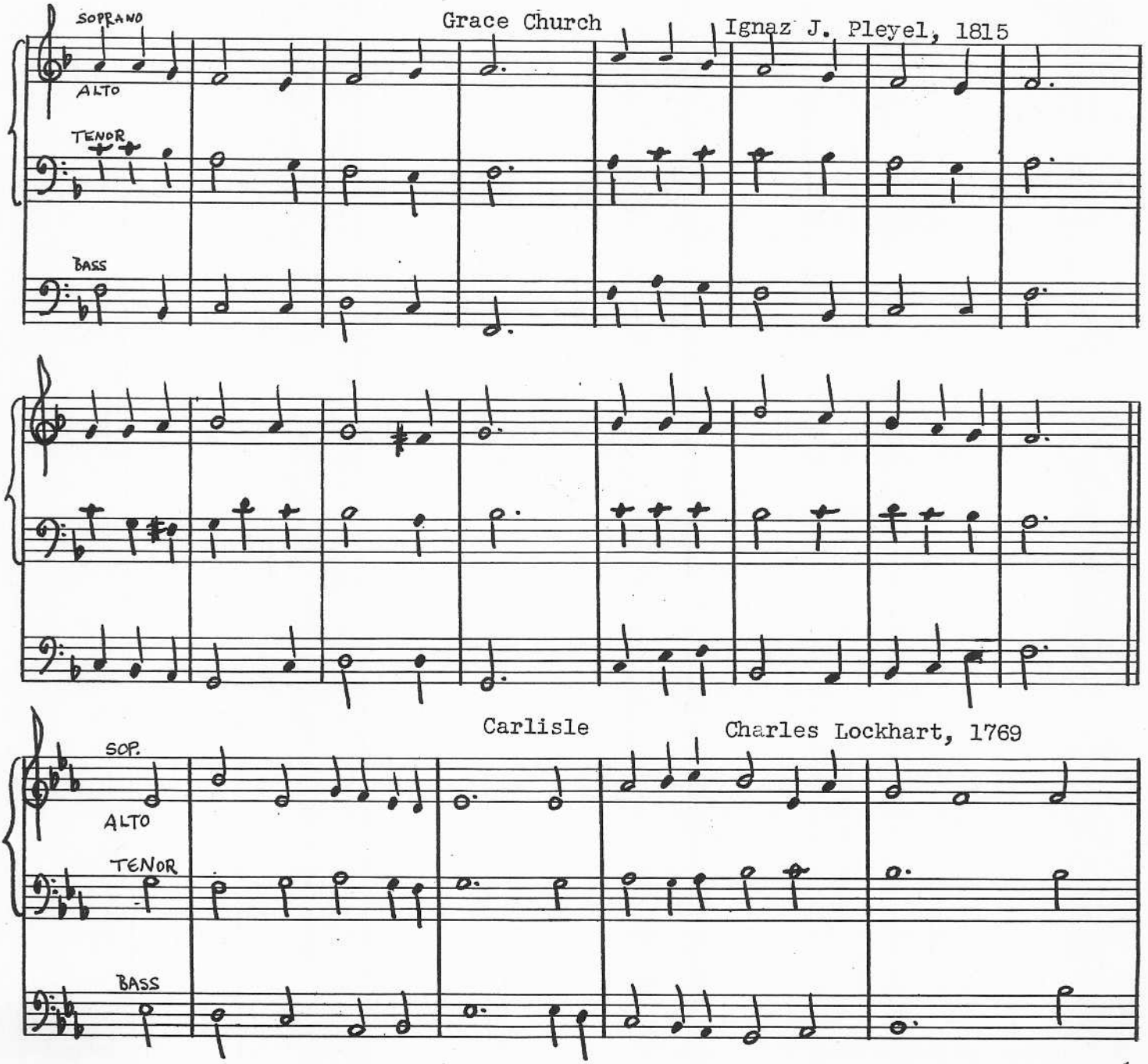
HYMNTUNE WITH RIGHT HAND

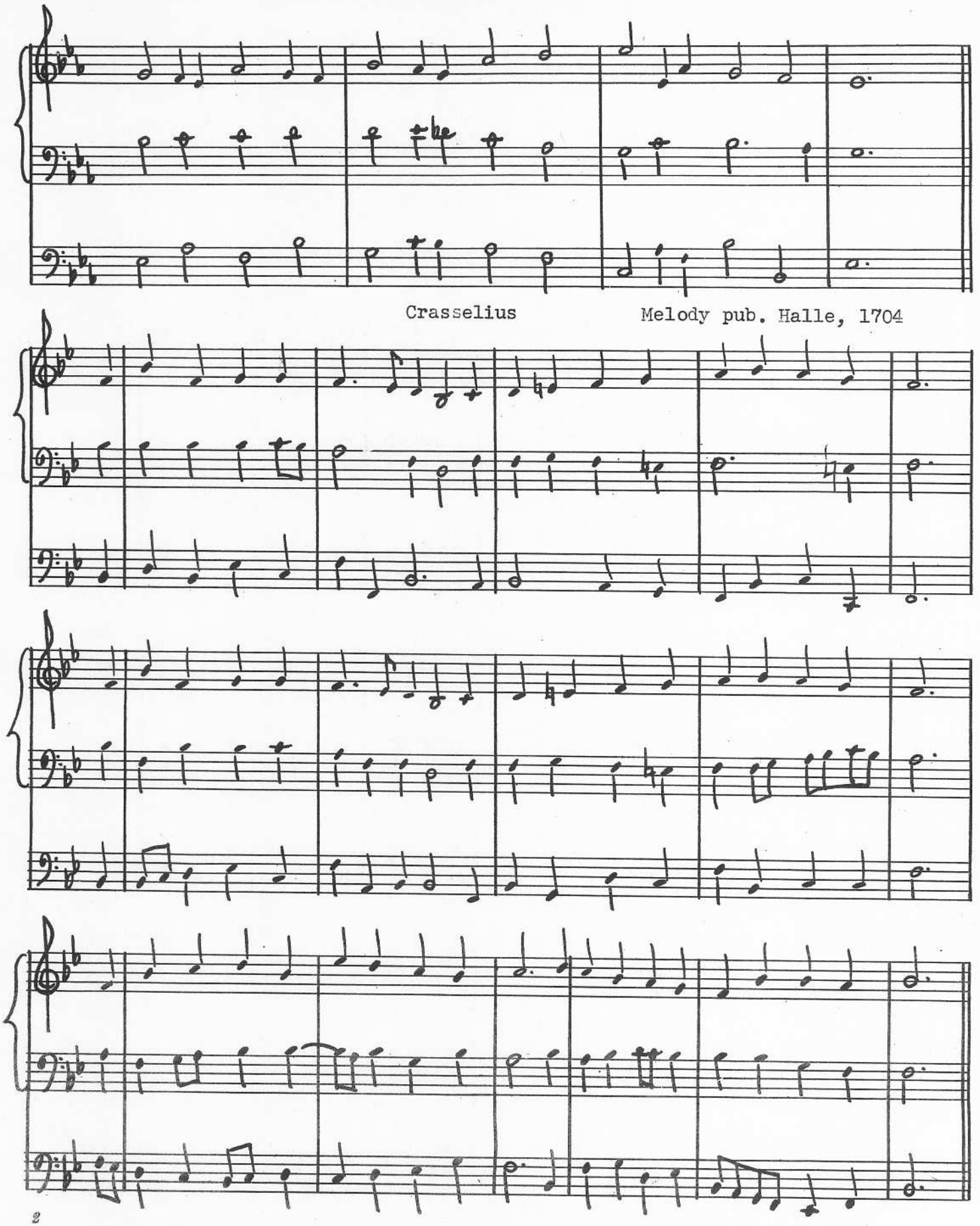
Assignment #1:

1. In the hymntunes given below, play the bass in the pedal, the tenor with left hand, the soprano and an improvised alto with the right hand.

2. Transpose the hymntune "Stuttgart", as harmonized in any standard hymnal, up and down one whole step.

3. Modulate from "Stuttgart" to any other hymntune.



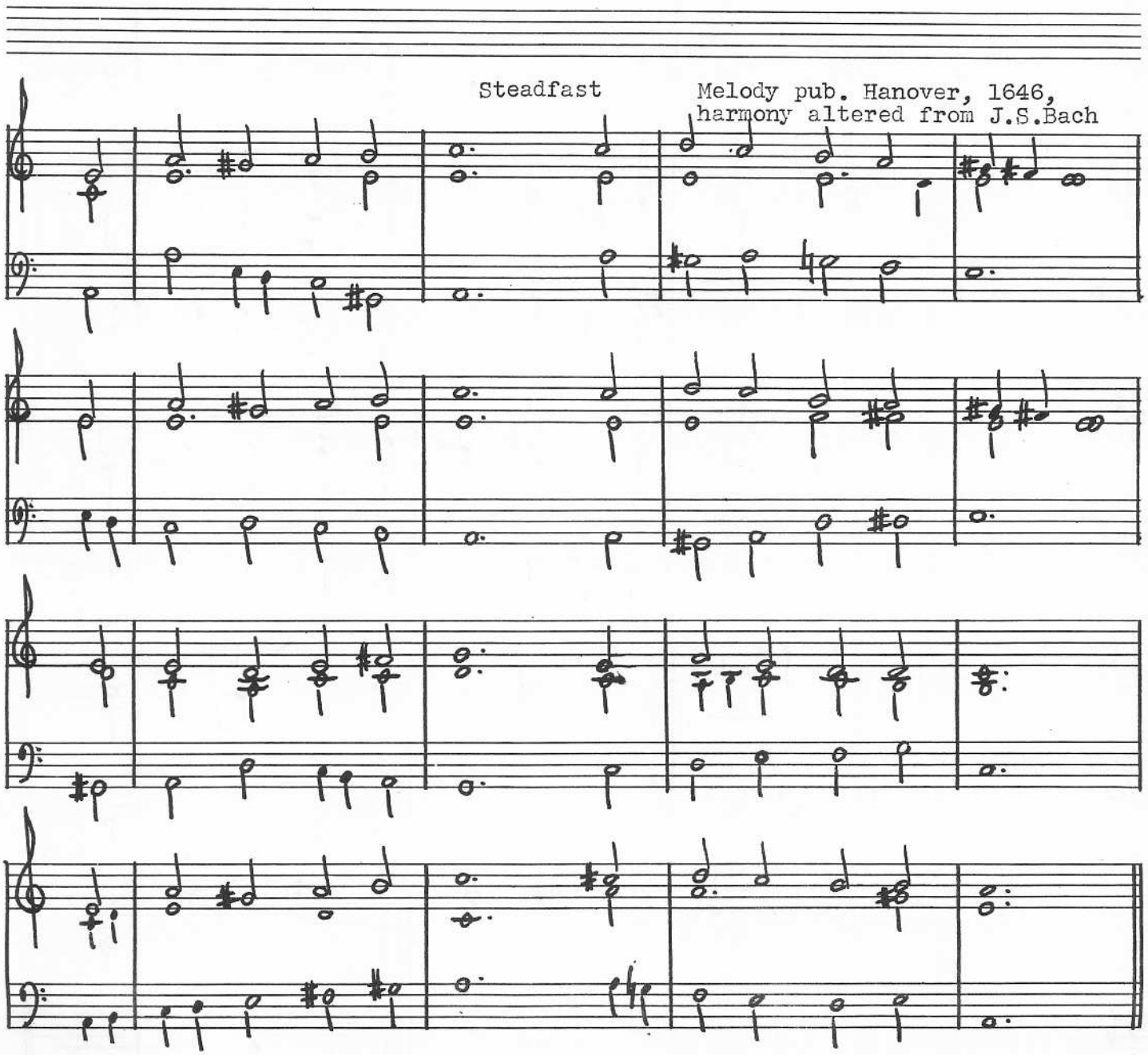

Crasselius
Melody pub. Halle, 1704

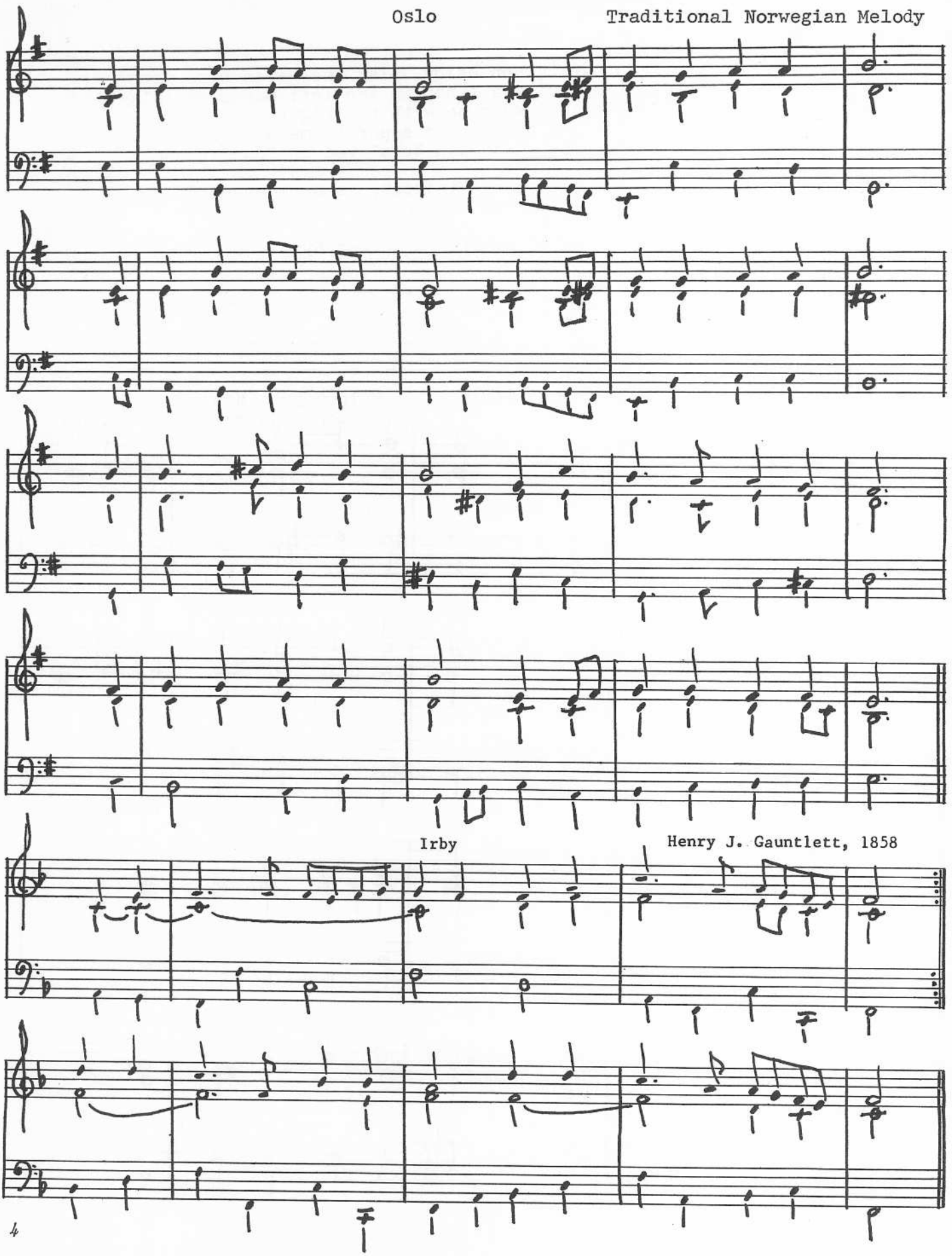
Assignment #2:

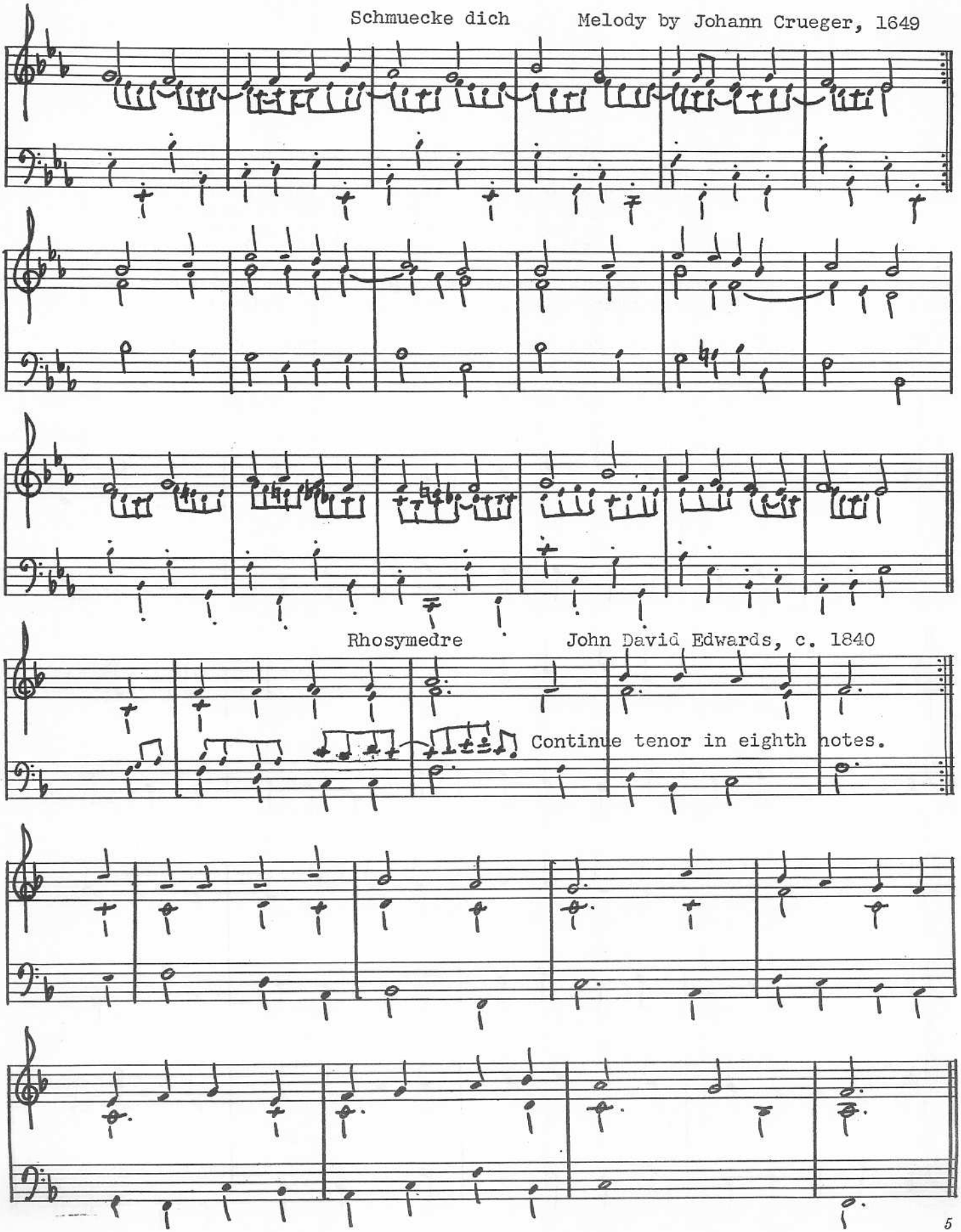
1. In the hymntunes given below, play the given bass with the pedal, improvise a tenor in the left hand, and play the given alto and soprano with the right hand. Draw a solo stop for the tenor on a separate manual from the right hand parts, which can be played on foundations.

2. Transpose the hymntune "Windsor", as harmonized in any standard hymnal, up and down one whole step.

3. Modulate from "Windsor" to any other hymntune.




Oslo
Traditional Norwegian Melody
Irby
Henry J. Gauntlett, 1858

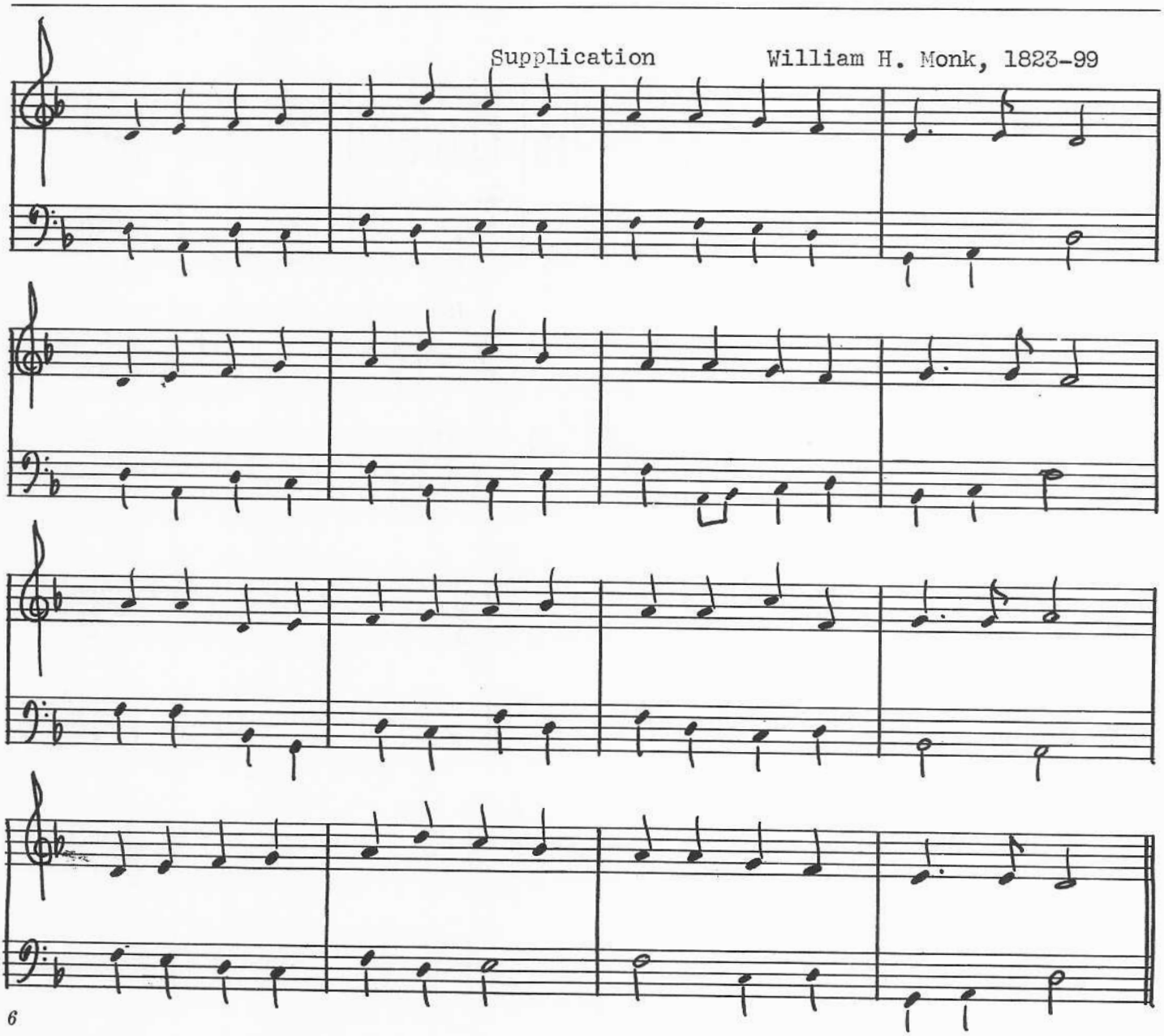

Schmuecke dich
Melody by Johann Crueger, 1649
Rhosymedre
John David Edwards, c. 1840
Continue tenor in eighth notes.

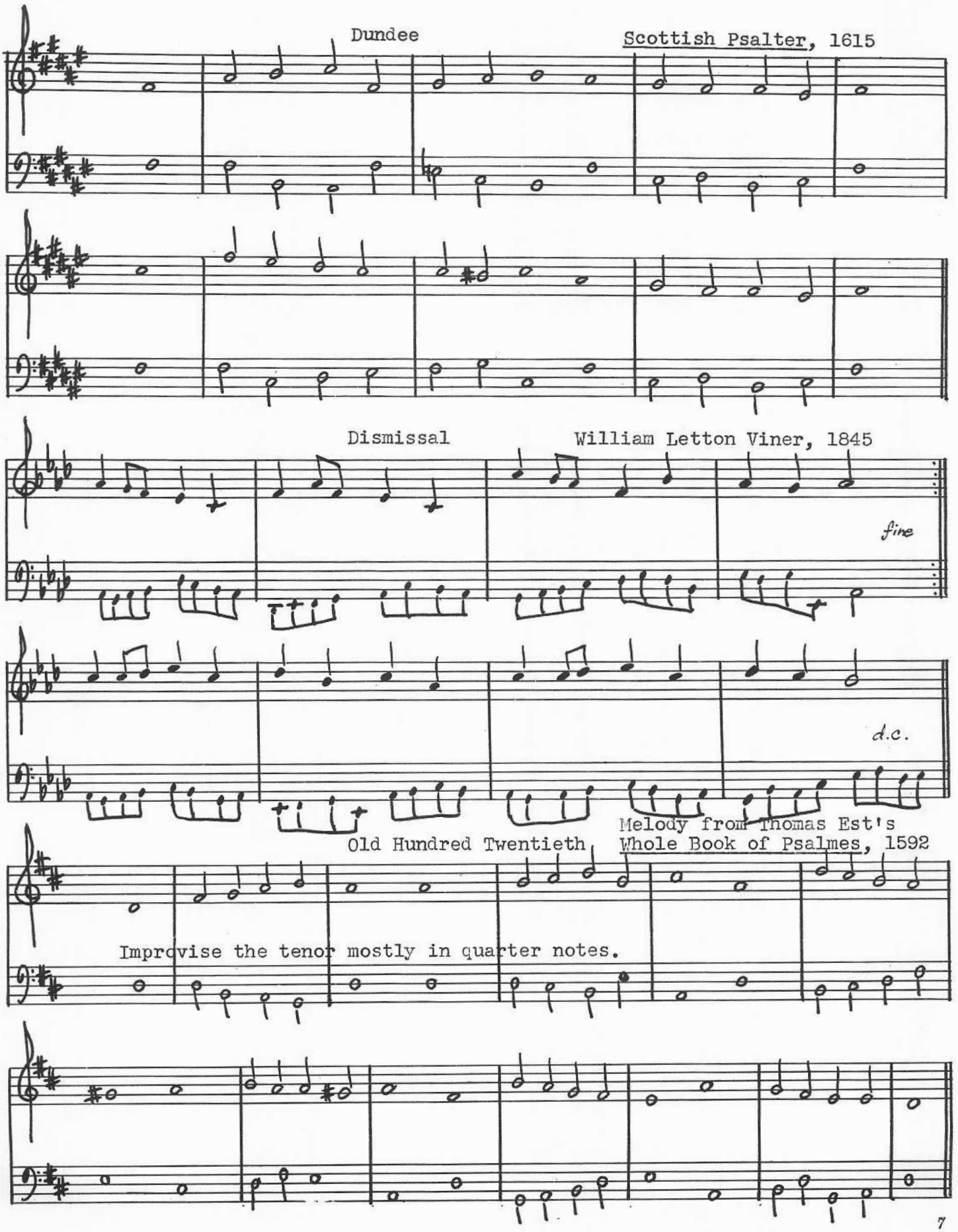
Assignment #3:

1. In the hymntunes below, play the given bass with the pedal and the given soprano with the right hand. Improvise an alto for the right hand (or the left when spacing of the voices requires it) and a tenor for the left hand. Play the three upper parts on one manual unless the alto remains consistently in the right hand.

2. Transpose the hymntune "Vox dilecti", as harmonized in any standard hymnal, up and down one whole step.

3. Modulate from "Vox dilecti" to any other hymntune.



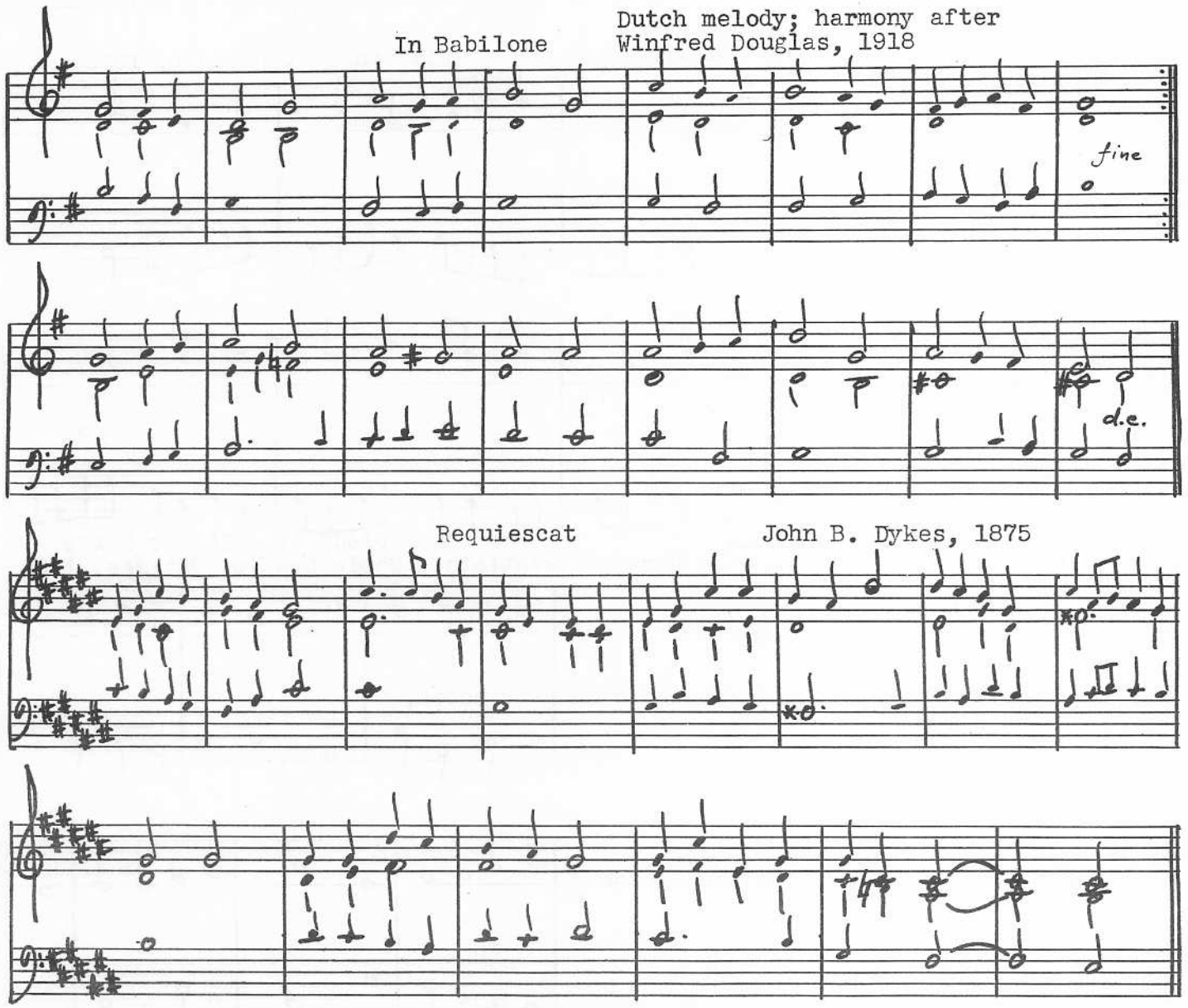

Dundee
Scottish Psalter, 1615
Dismissal
William Letton Viner, 1845
fine
d.c.
Old Hundred Twentieth
Melody from Thomas Est's
Whole Book of Psalmes, 1592
Improvise the tenor mostly in quarter notes.

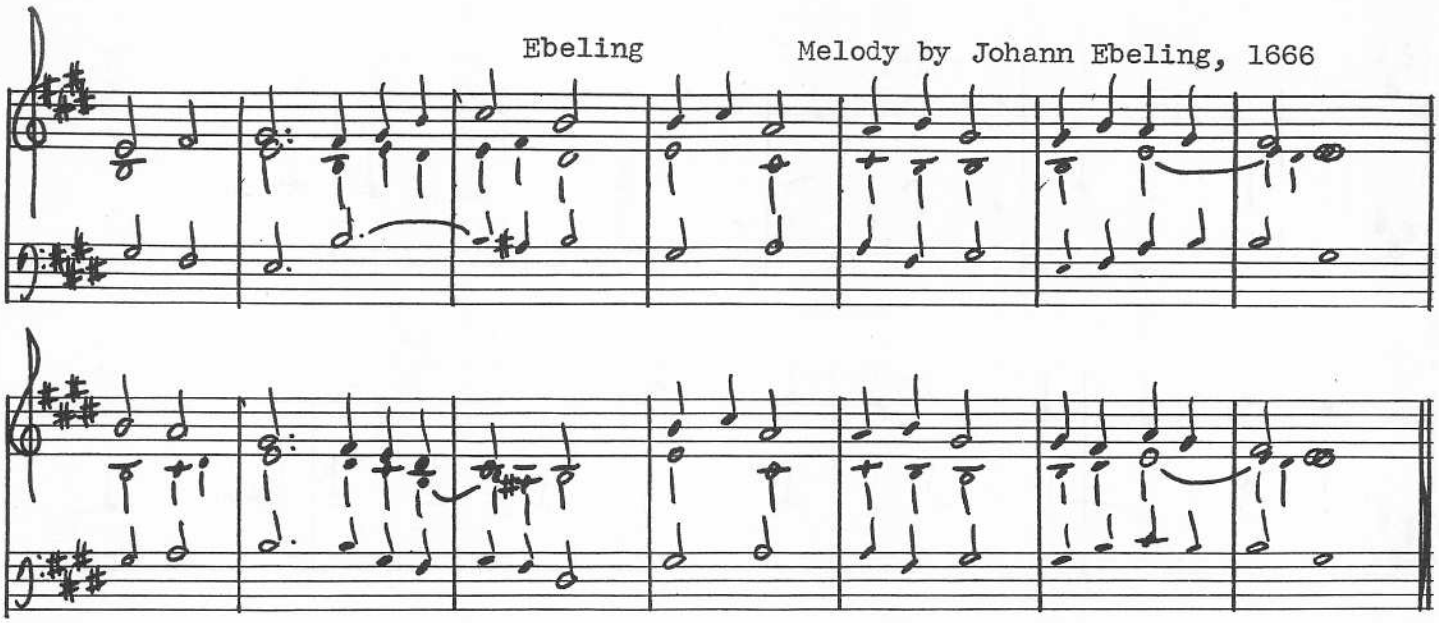
Assignment #4:

1. Improvise a bass for pedals in the hymntunes which follow and play the upper voices on one manual.

2. Transpose the hymntunes "Creation" and "Dominus regit me" up and down one whole step and one half step.

3. Modulate from these tunes to others.



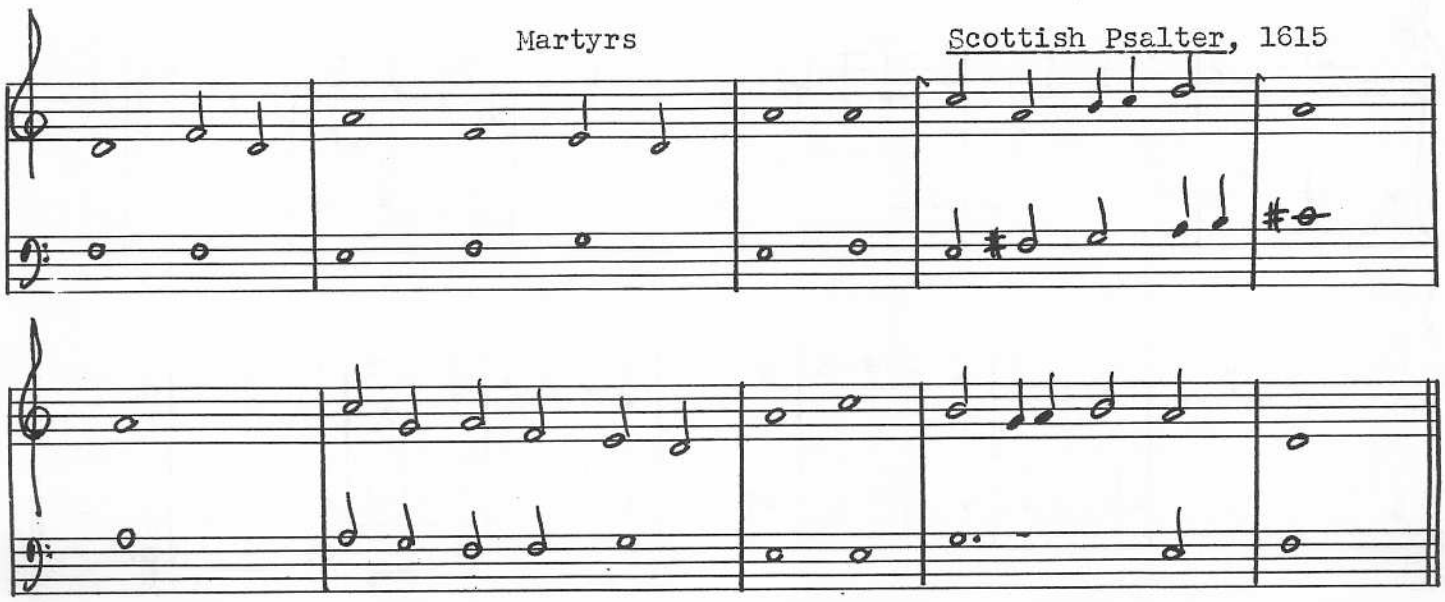


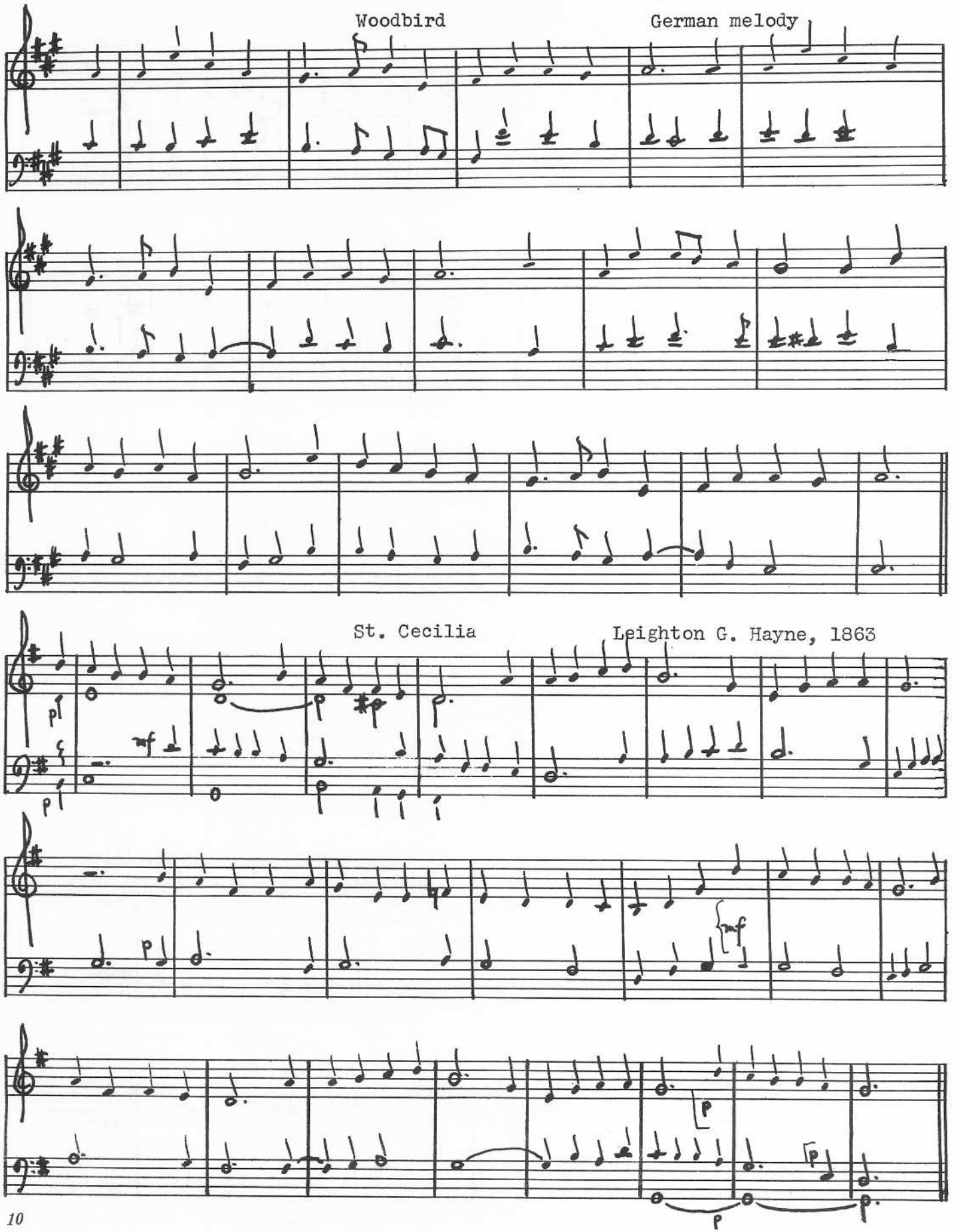
Assignment #5:

1. Improvise an alto and bass for the following tunes. In the first two examples play the three upper parts on one manual at first; then play the alto and tenor with the left hand on a second manual. Keep the bass in the pedal.

2. Transpose hymn nos. 1 through 5 in any standard hymnal up and down one whole step, one half step, and a minor third.

3. Modulate from each hymn to the next. If any two are in the same key or in a very nearly related key, make a brief reference in the modulation to some other key.



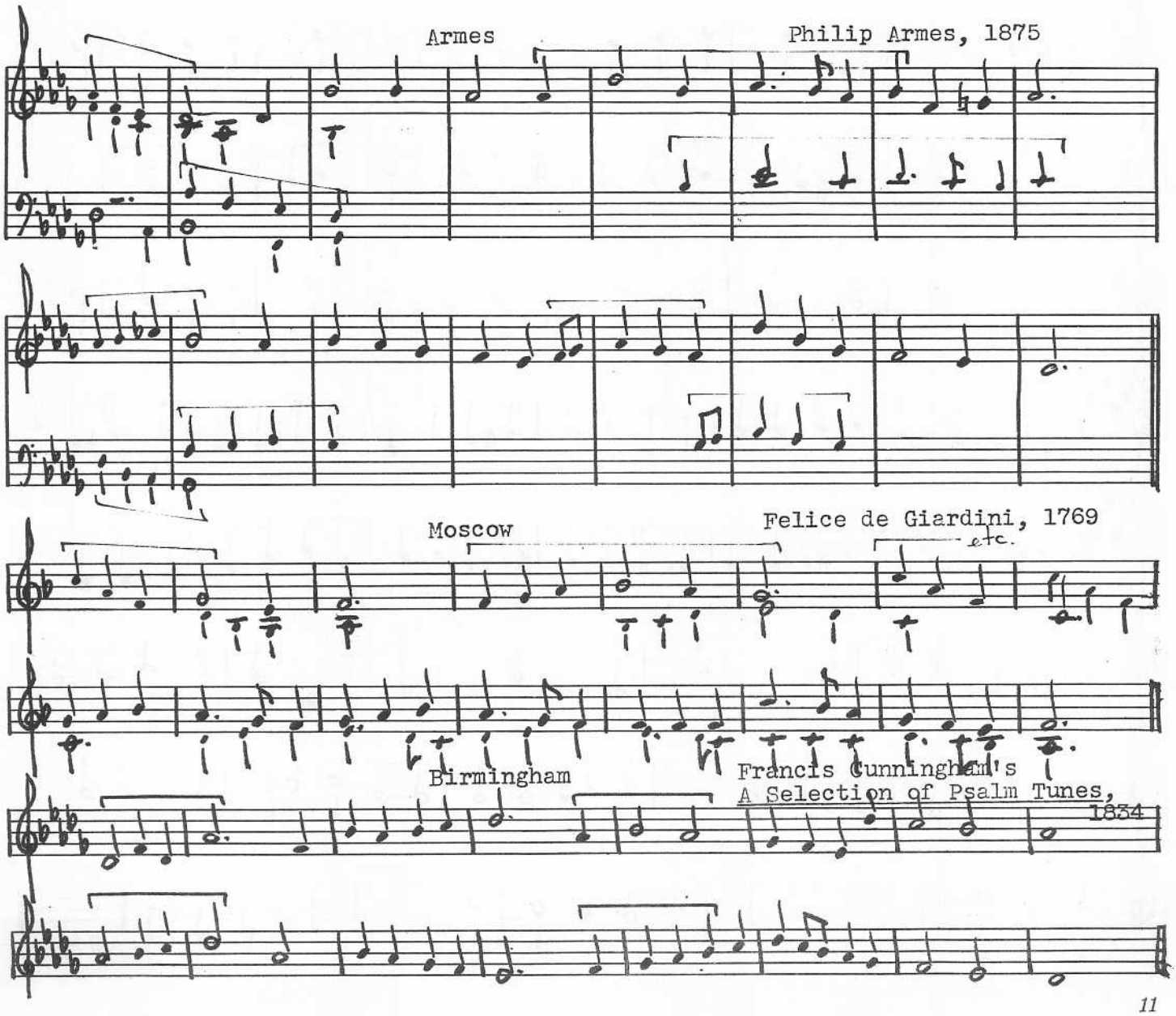

Woodbird
German melody
St. Cecilia
Leighton G. Hayne, 1863

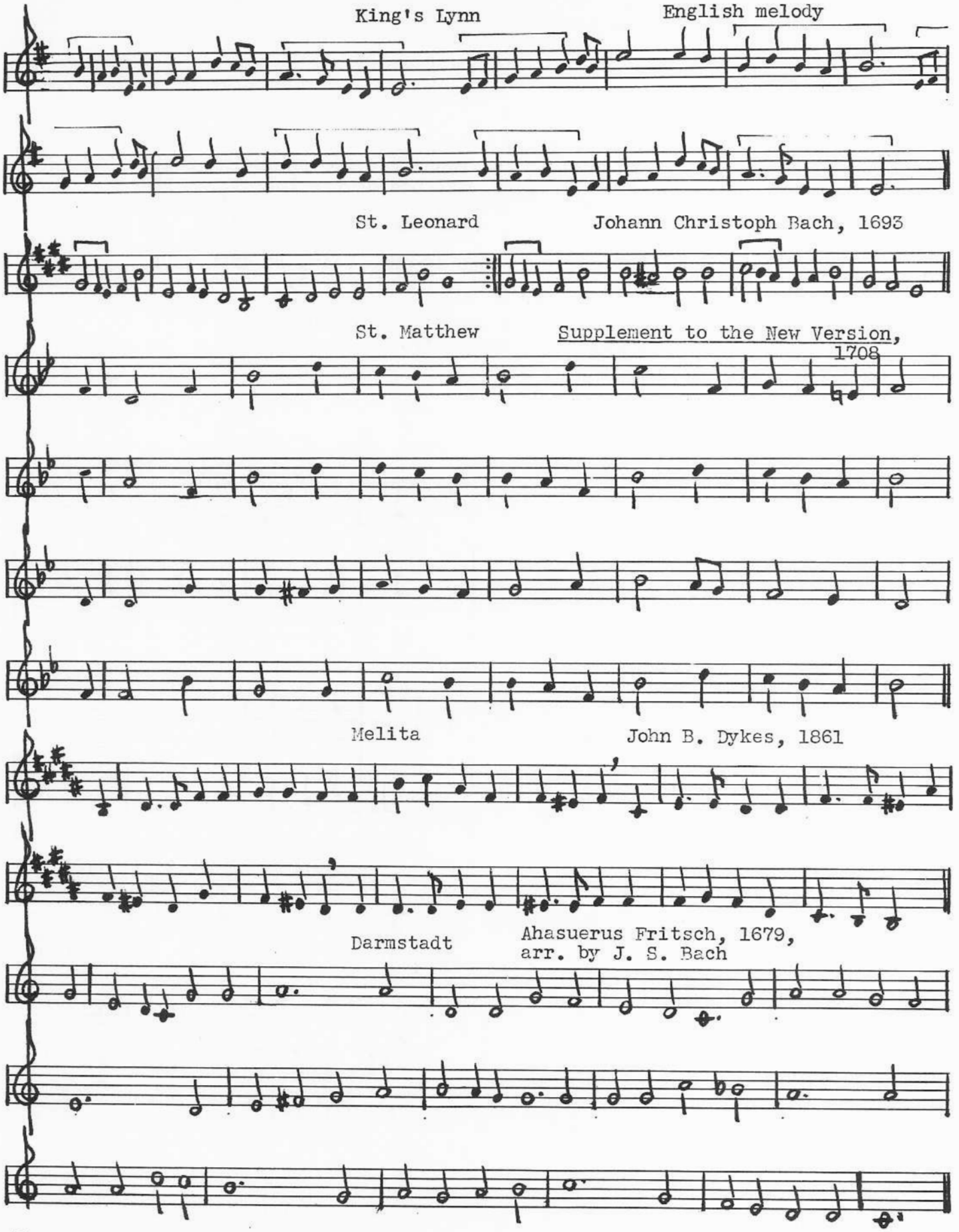
Assignment # 6:

1. Improvise a bass, alto, and tenor for the following tunes. In the first five examples make use of the imitations provided or suggested by brackets. In all examples look for (other) points of imitation, whether strict or free.

2. Transpose hymn nos. 6 through 10 in a standard hymnal up and down a major and minor second and third.

3. Modulate from each to the key of G major or A-flat major, which_ever is the more remote key.



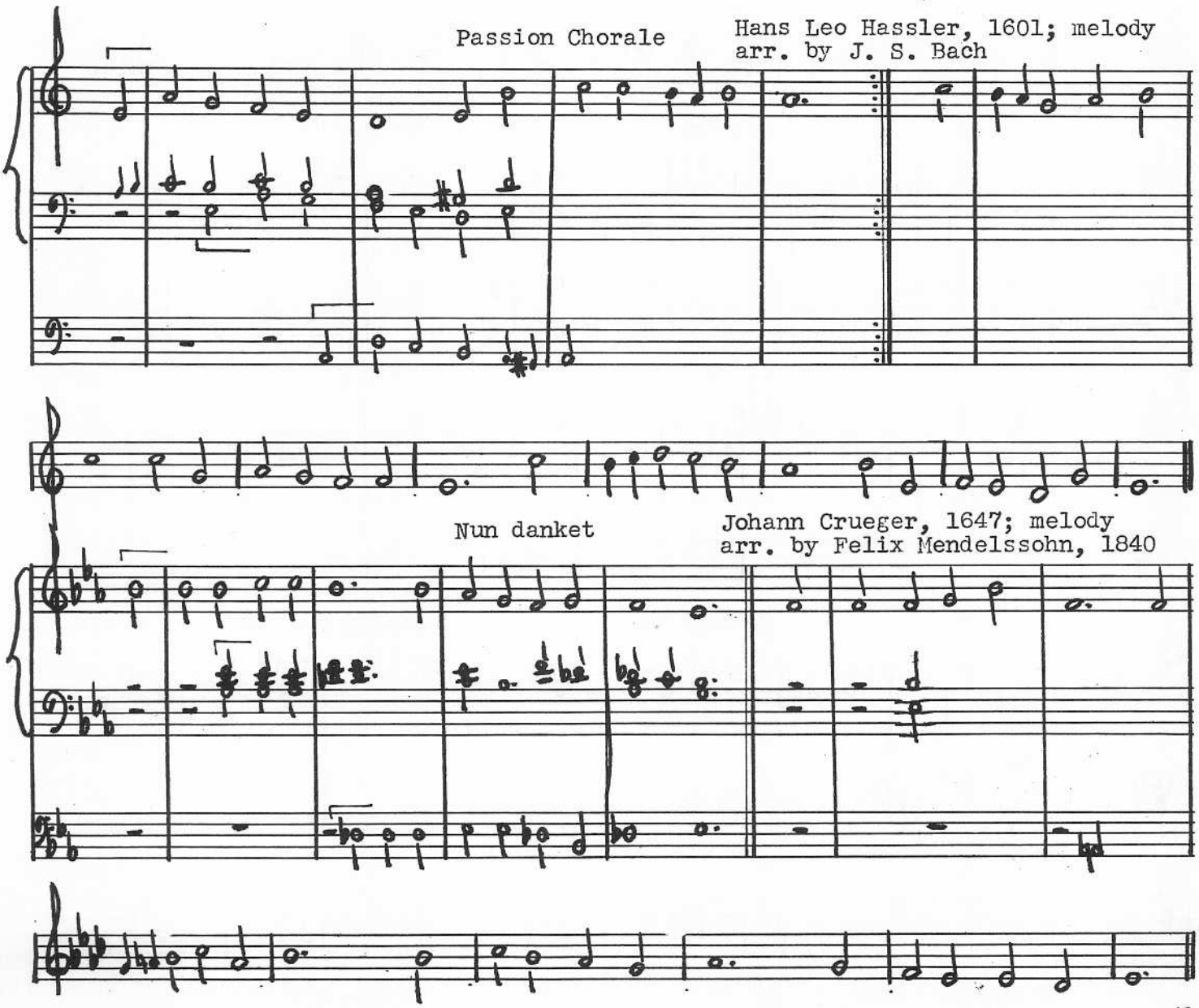

King's Lynn
English melody
St. Leonard
Johann Christoph Bach, 1693
St. Matthew
Supplement to the New Version, 1708
Melita
John B. Dykes, 1861
Darmstadt
Ahasuerus Fritsch, 1679, arr. by J. S. Bach

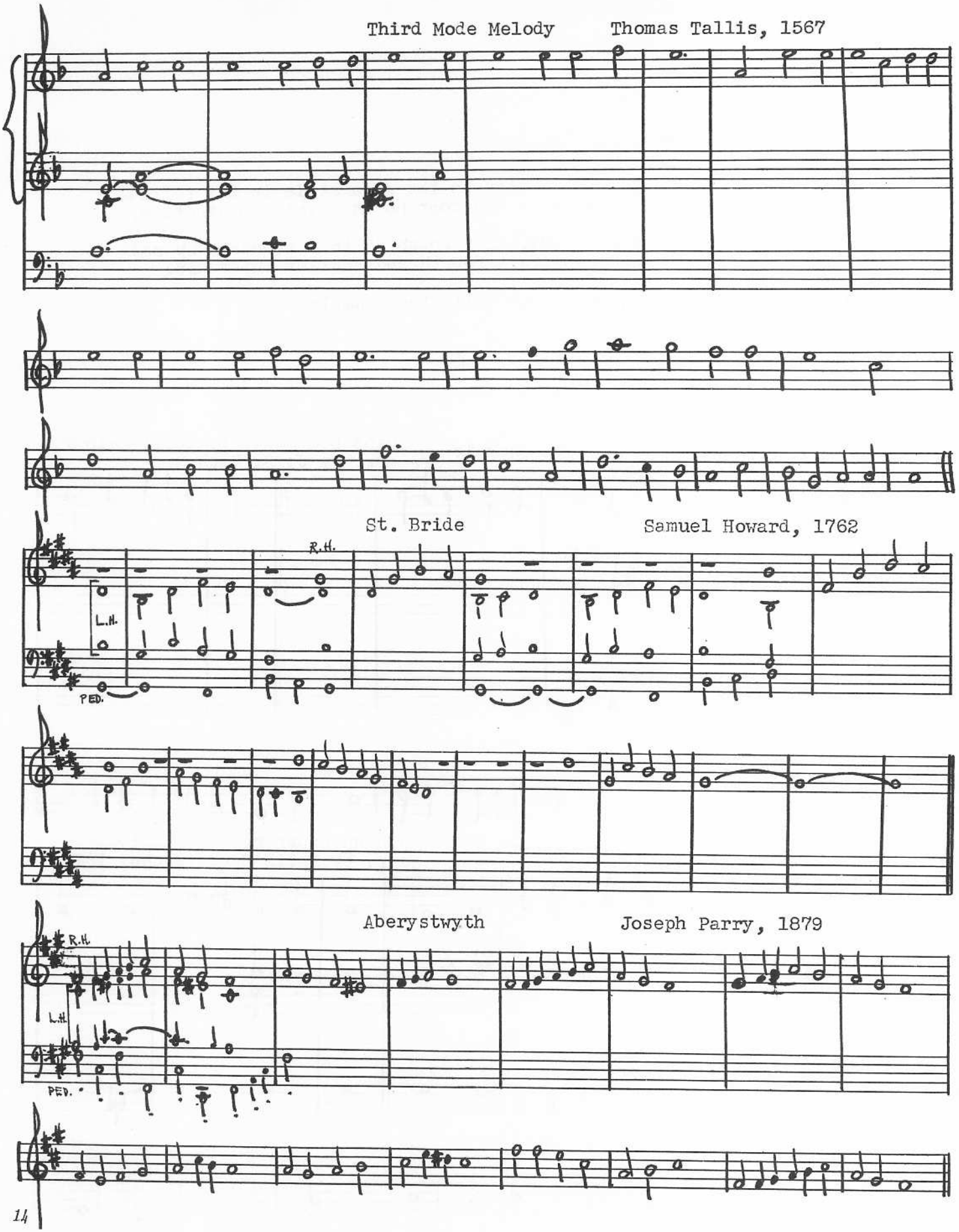
Assignment #7:

1. Improvise a completion in the same style in the following examples. Play the soprano on a solo combination.

2. Transpose hymn nos. 11 through 15 in a standard hymnal up and down a perfect fourth and smaller intervals.

3. Modulate between the following examples.



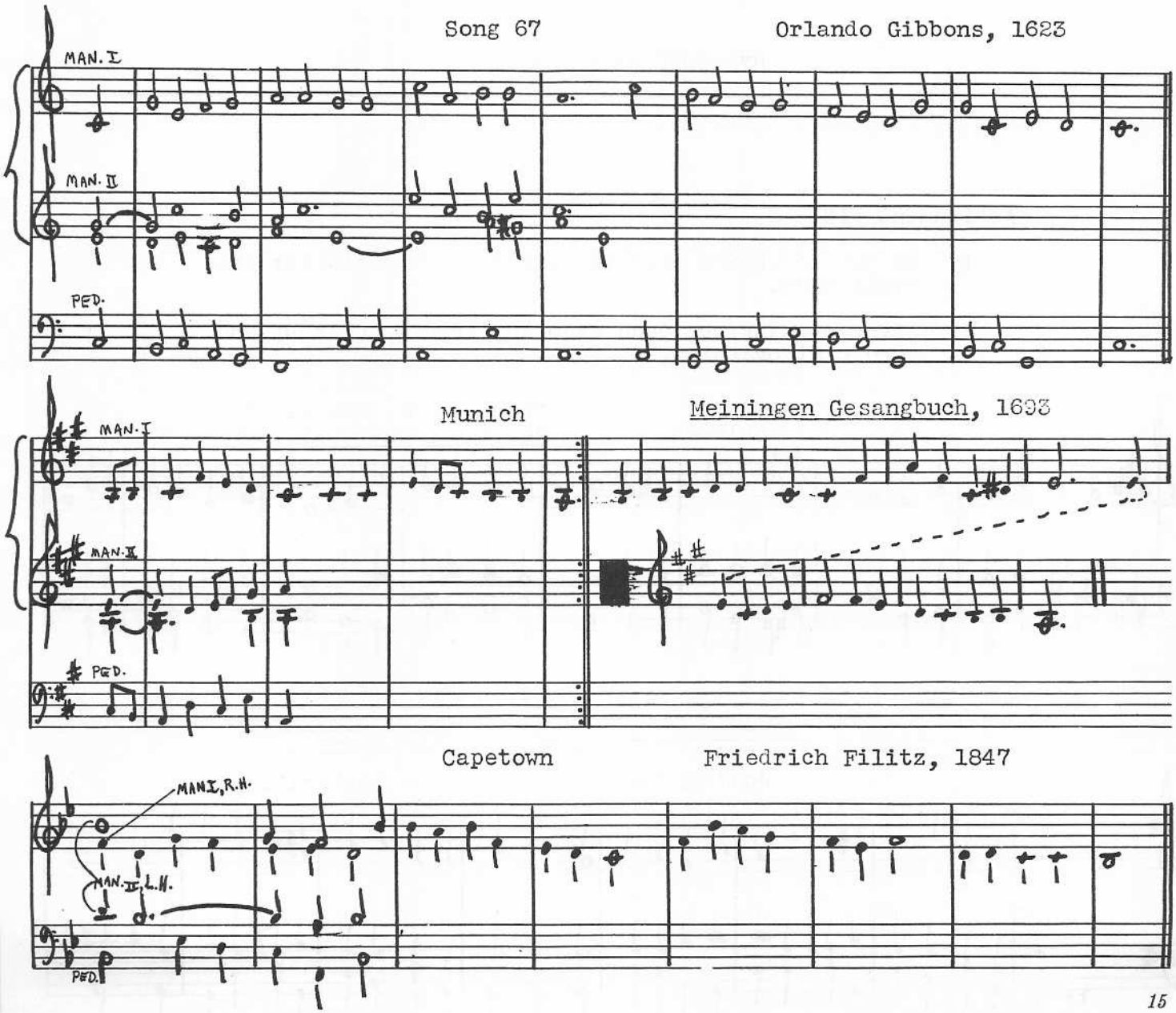

Third Mode Melody
Thomas Tallis, 1567
St. Bride
Samuel Howard, 1762
R.H.
L.H.
PED.
Aberystwyth
Joseph Parry, 1879
R.H.
L.H.
PED.

Assignment #8:

1. In the following examples treat the melody for the right hand as an alto and the left hand parts as a tenor and soprano; the voices may cross freely.

2. Transpose hymn nos. 16 through 25 in a standard hymnal up and down an augmented fourth or diminished fifth.

3. Modulate between the various transpositions.



Assignment #9:

1. Transpose other hymntunes to the alto register and play them on a reed stop or cornet combination with the right hand. Improvise two parts for the left hand, one of which will generally sound above the tune as a soprano, and the other of which will generally sound below the tune as a tenor. Provide a pedal bass.

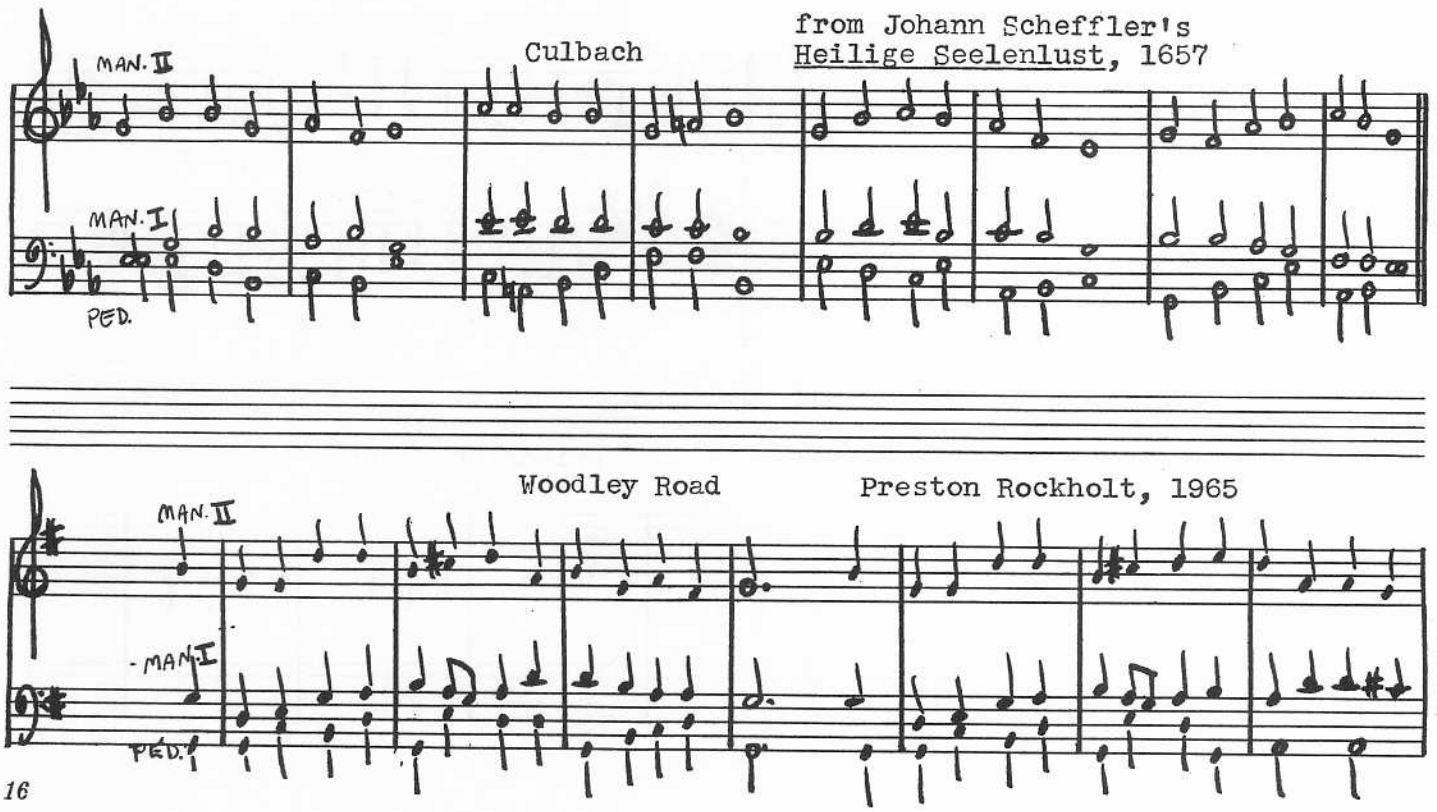
2. Go back over the first part of assignments 1 through 8 and transpose the examples given to be worked out up and down one whole step and one half step.

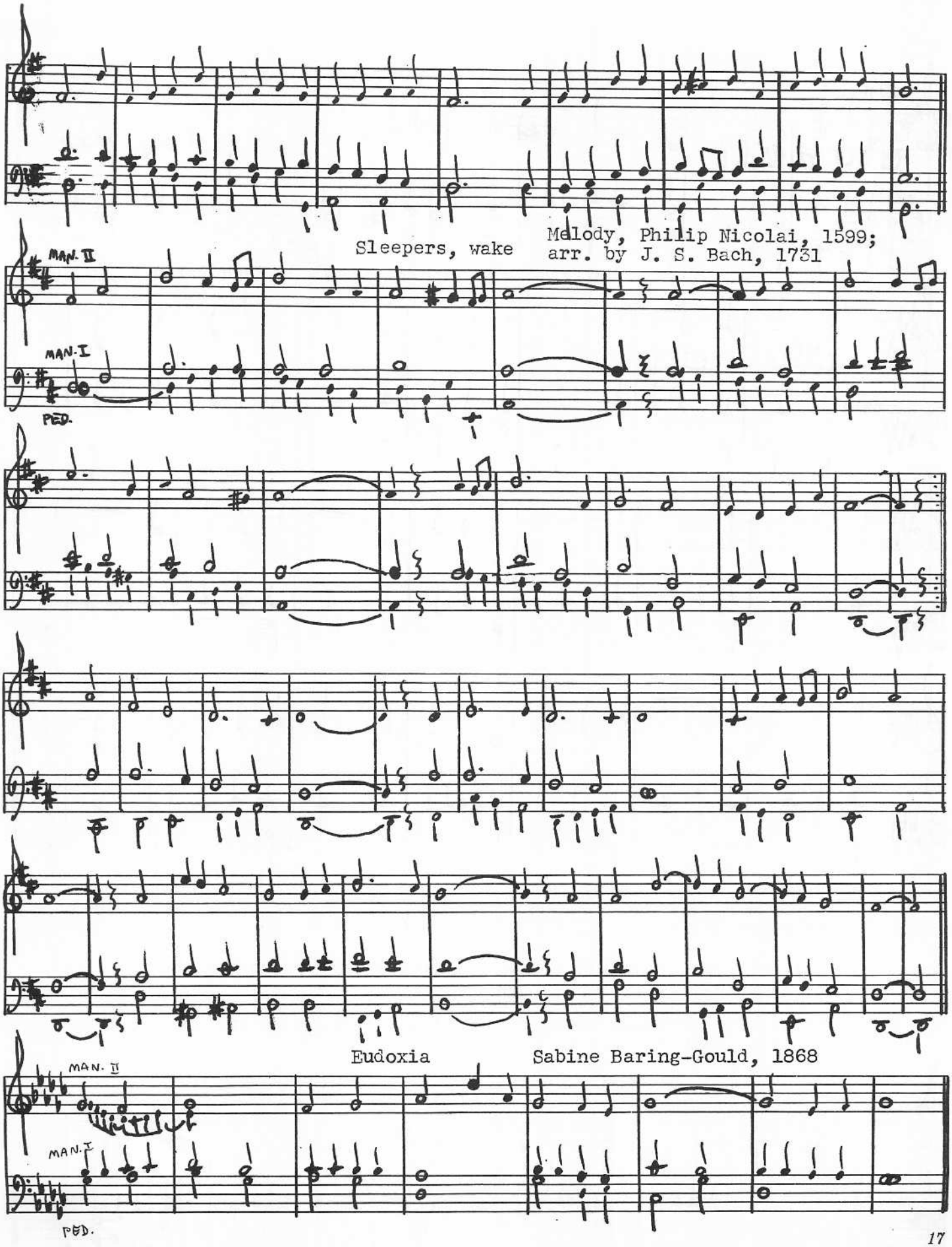
HYMNTUNE WITH LEFT HAND

Assignment #10:

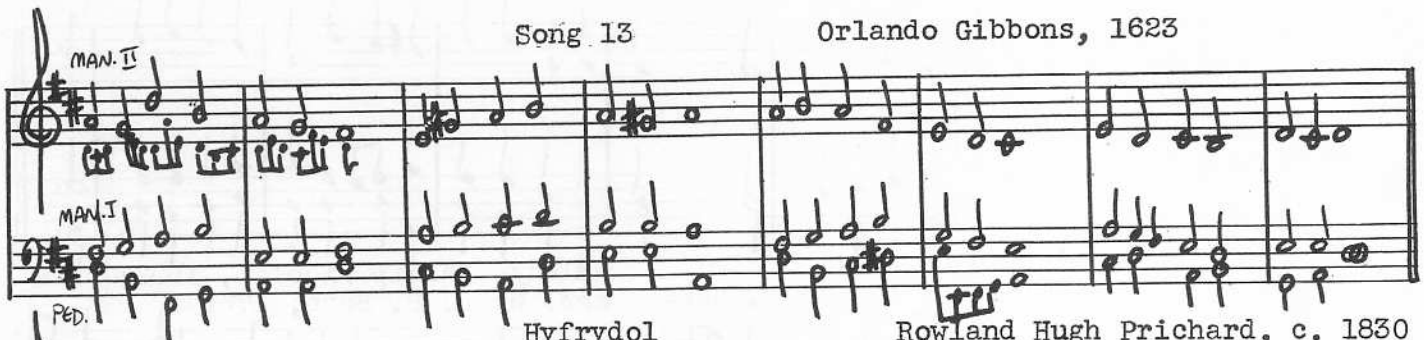
1. In the following examples improvise an alto for the right hand.

2. After working out each example, transpose it up and down a minor third.

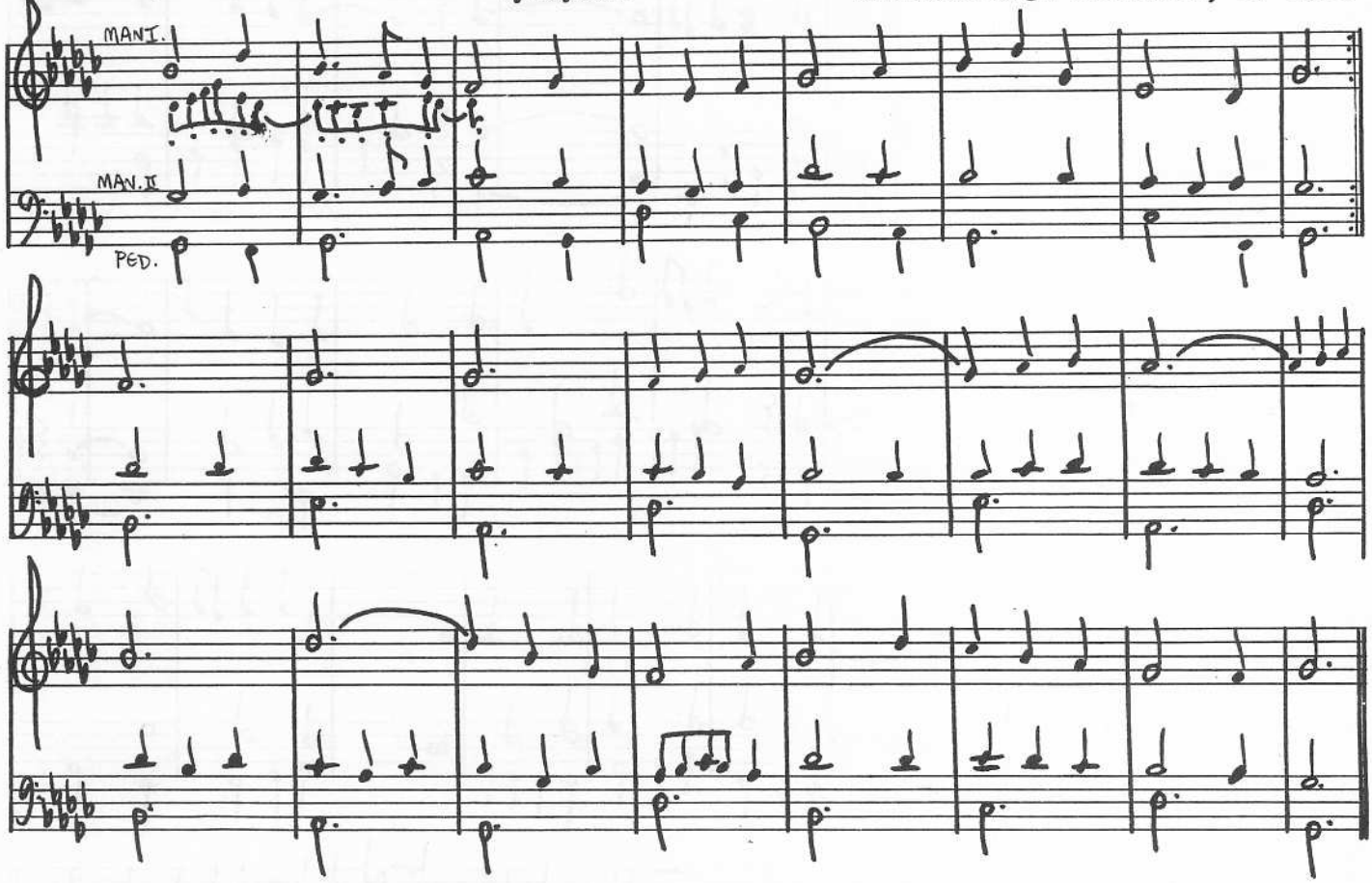



Sleepers, wake
Melody, Philip Nicolai, 1599;
arr. by J. S. Bach, 1731
MAN. II
MAN. I
PED.
Eudoxia
Sabine Baring-Gould, 1868
MAN. II
MAN. I
PED.

Song 13 Orlando Gibbons, 1623



Hyfrydol Rowland Hugh Prichard, c. 1830

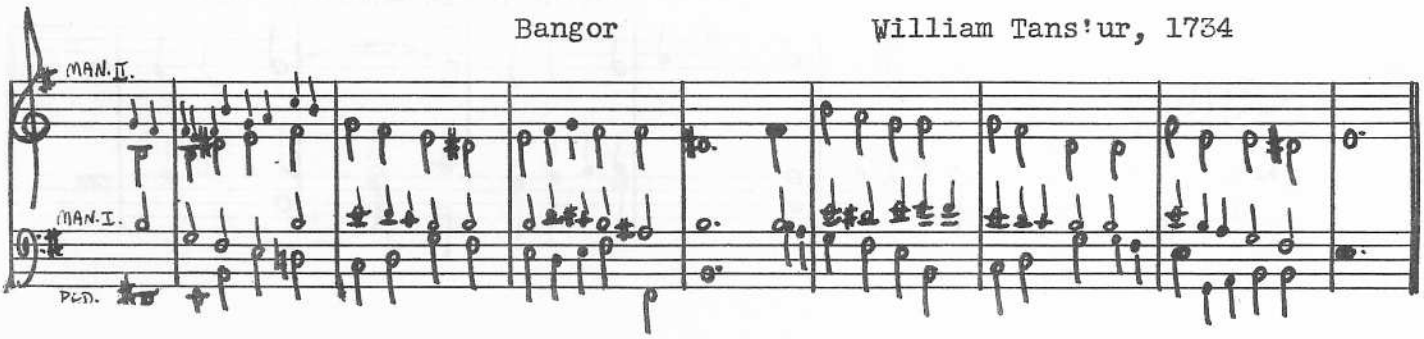


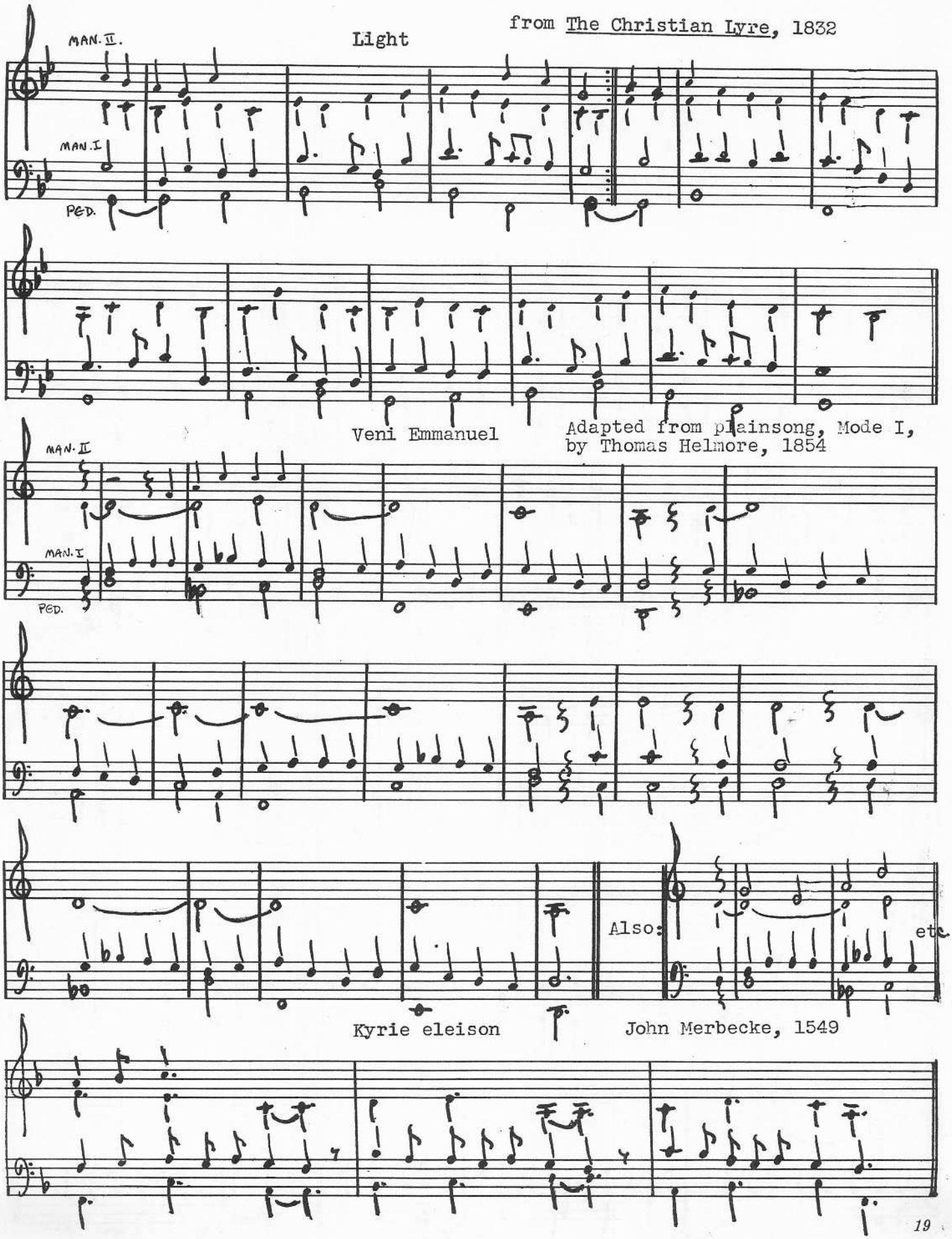
Assignment #11:

1. In the following examples improvise a soprano for the right hand.

2. After working out each example, transpose it up and down a major third.

Bangor William Tans'ur, 1734

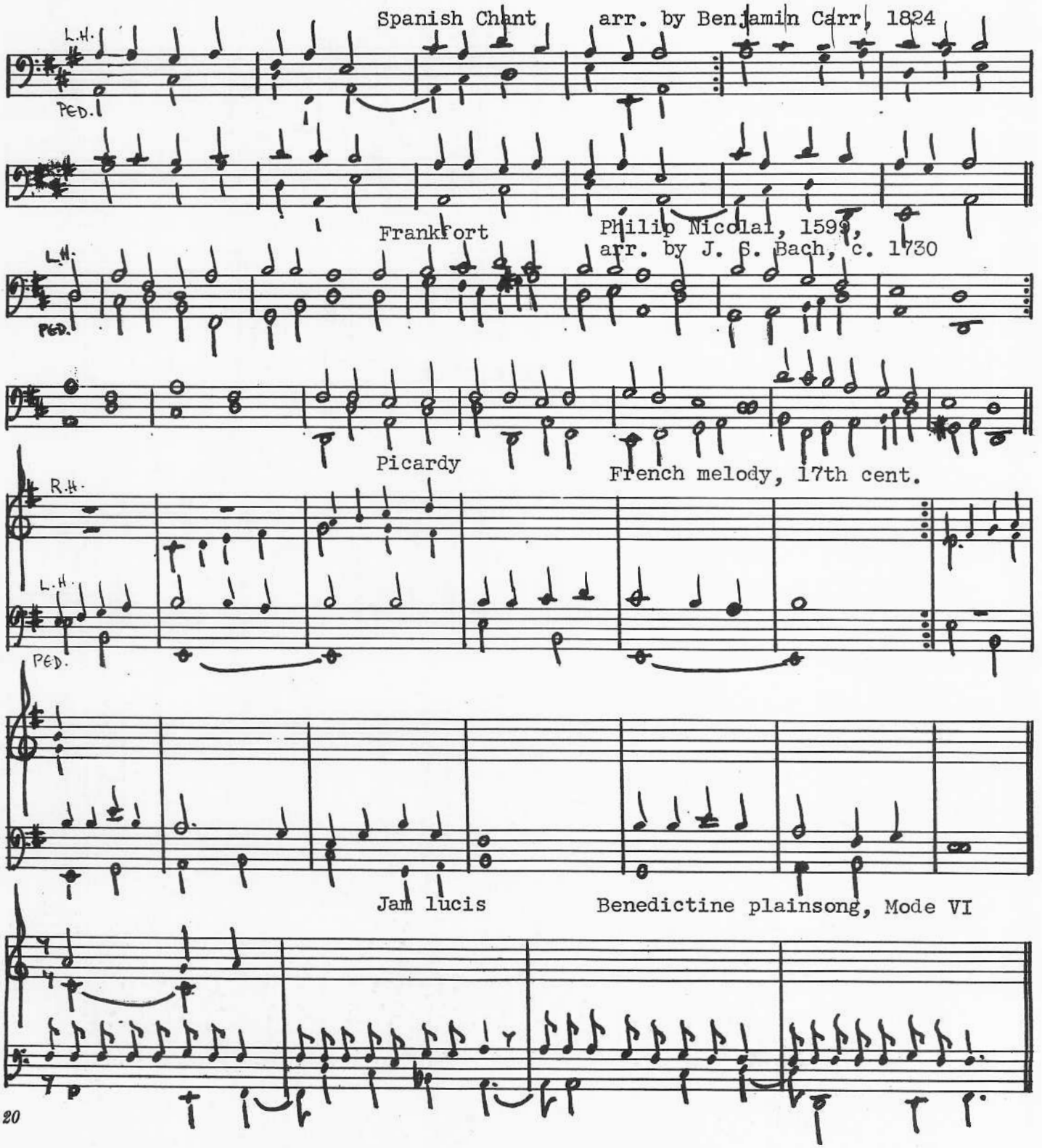



MAN. II.
Light
from The Christian Lyre, 1832
MAN. I
PED.
Veni Emmanuel
Adapted from plainsong, Mode I,
by Thomas Helmore, 1854
MAN. II
MAN. I
PED.
Also:
etc.
Kyrie eleison
John Merbecke, 1549

Assignment #12:

1. In the following examples improvise an alto and soprano for the right hand, played on a separate manual from the left.

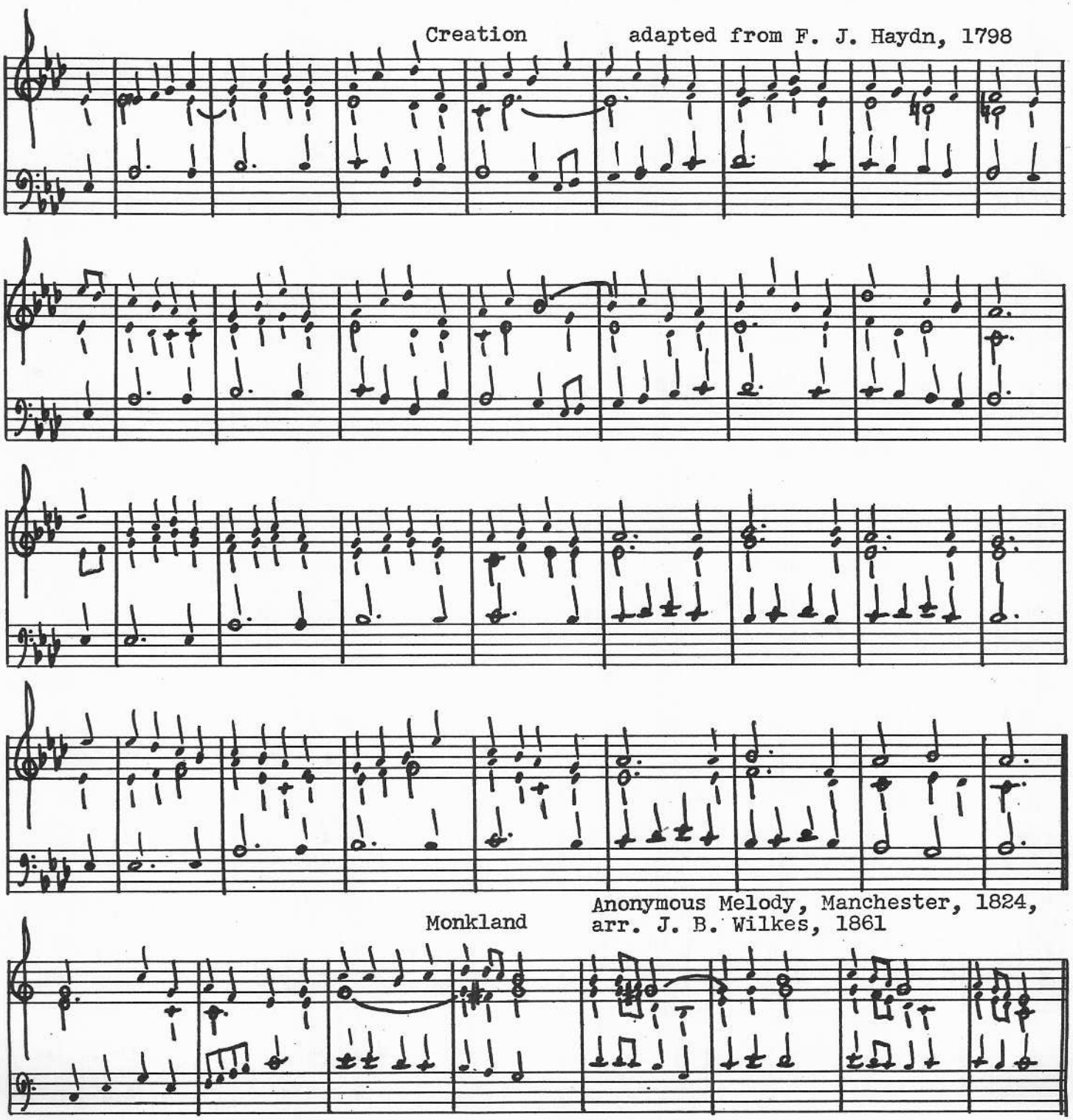
2. After working out each example, transpose it up and down a perfect fourth.



Assignment #13:

1. In the following examples improvise a pedal bass.

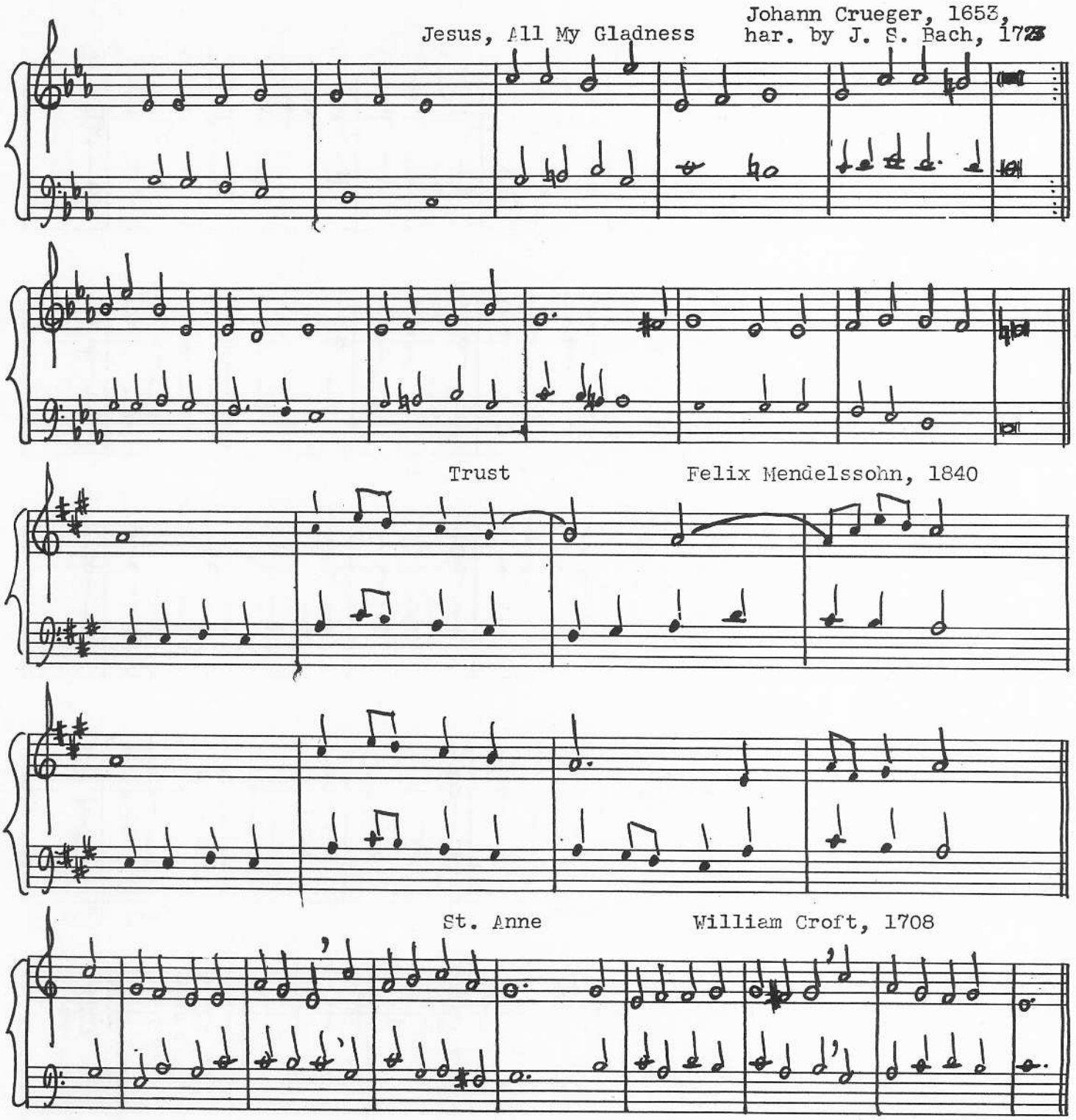
2. After working out each example, transpose it up and down at various intervals.



Assignment #14:

1. In the following examples improvise a pedal bass and an alto for the right hand.

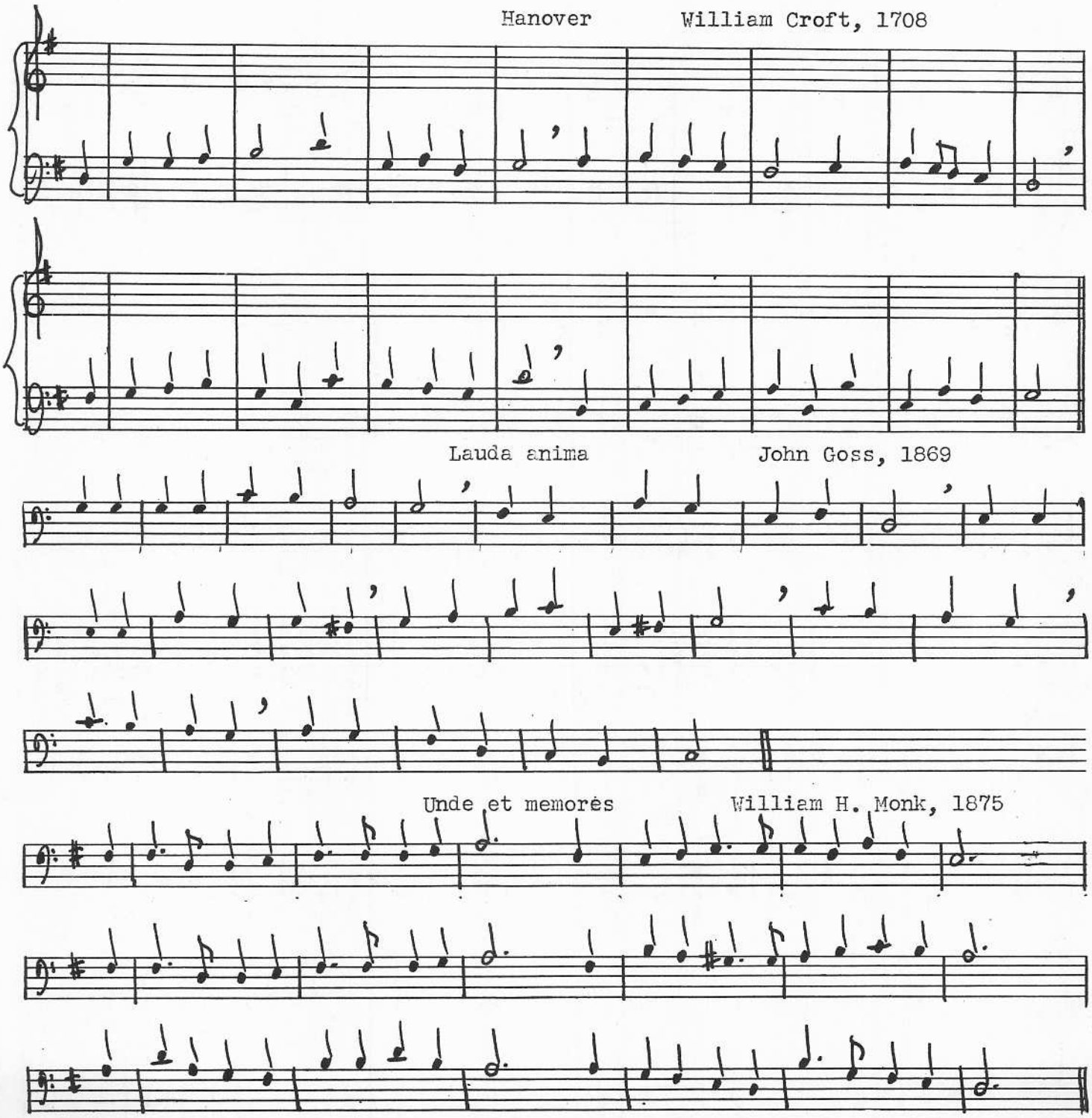
2. Transpose the realized examples up and down a whole step.



Assignment #15:

1. In the following examples improvise a soprano and alto for the right hand and a pedal bass.

2. Transpose the realized examples up and down a half step.

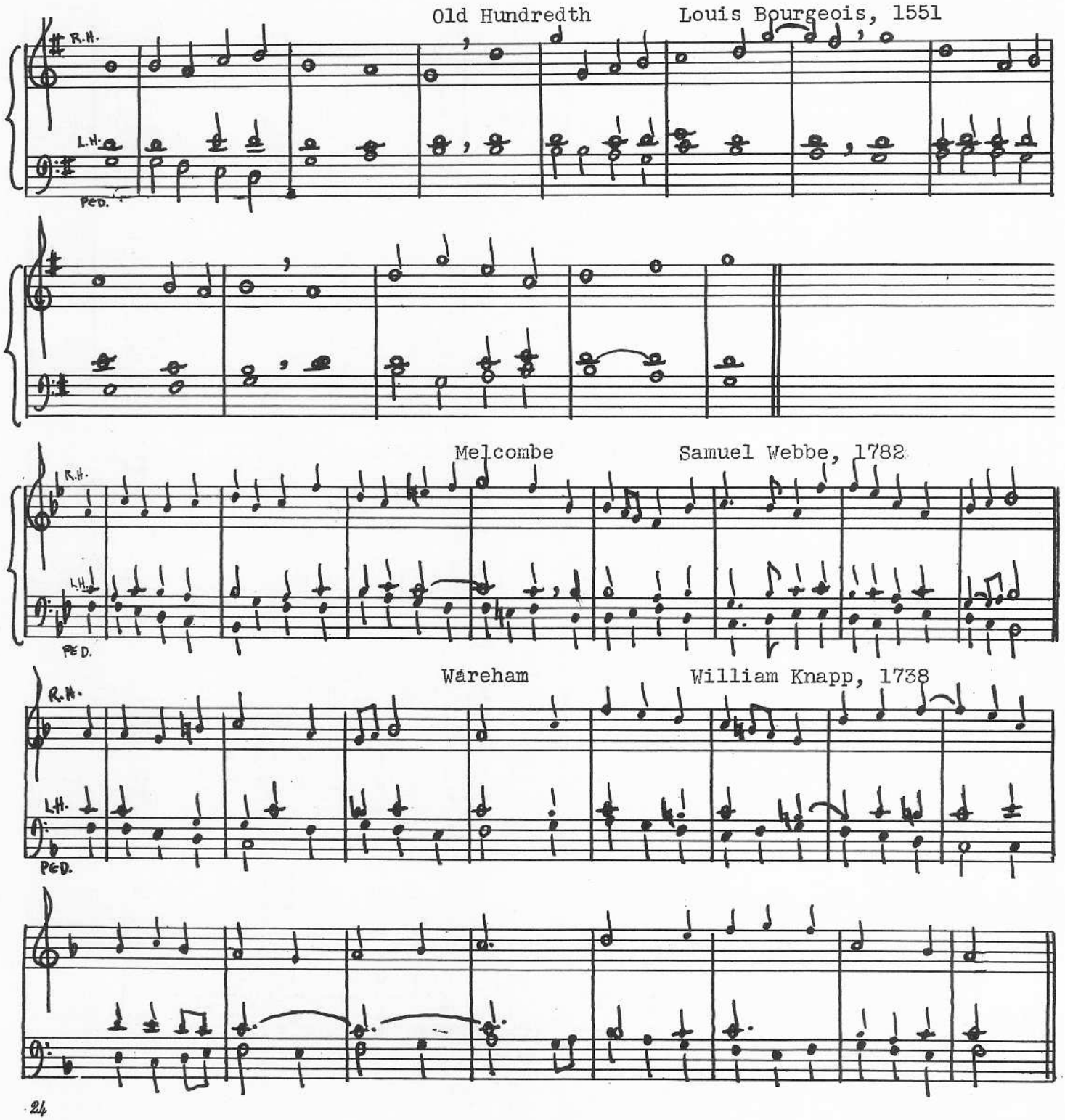


HYMNTUNE WITH PEDAL

Assignment #16:

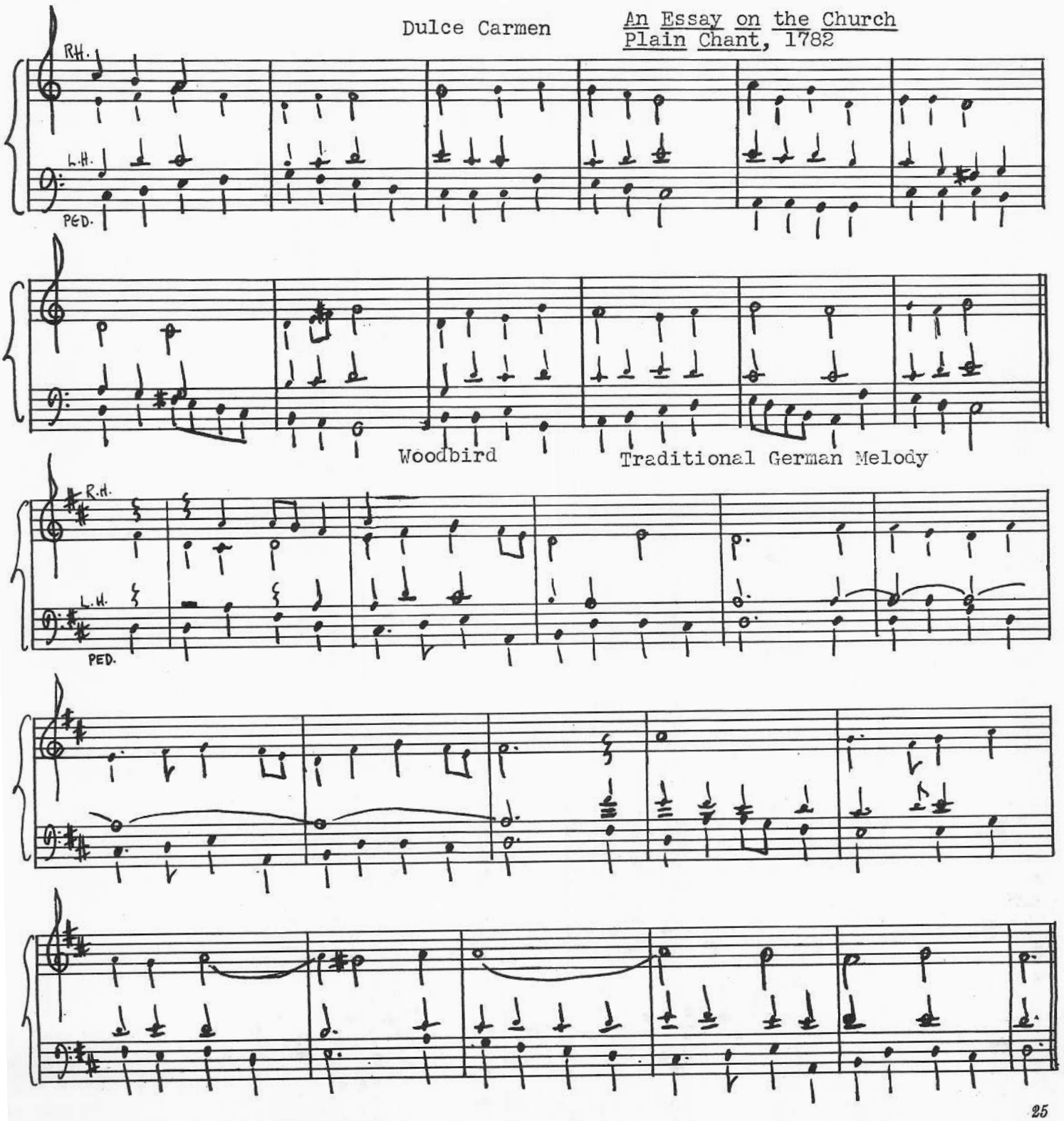
1. In the following examples improvise an alto for the right (or occasionally the left) hand.

2. Work out the same examples transposed up and down a minor third.



Assignment #17:

1. In the following improvise a soprano for the right hand.
2. Work out the following transposed up and down a major third.

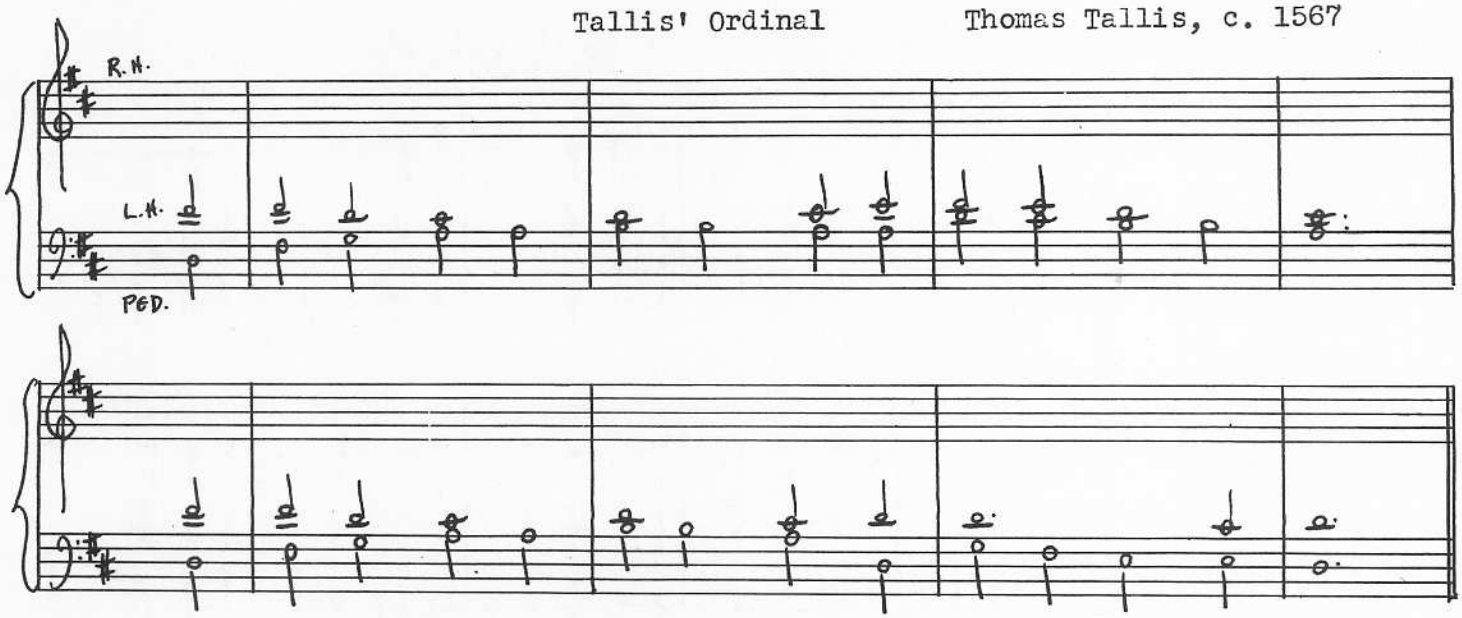


Assignment #18:

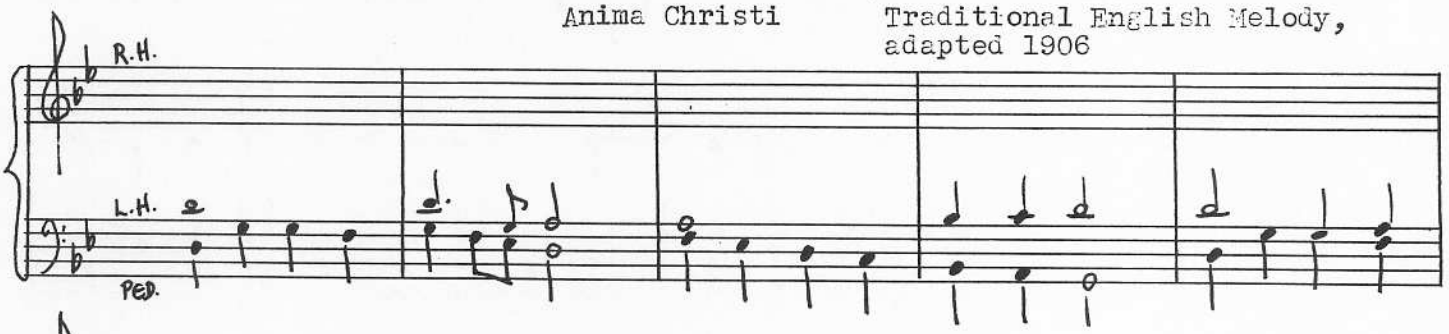
1. In the following improvise an alto and soprano with the right hand, assisted by the left when necessary.

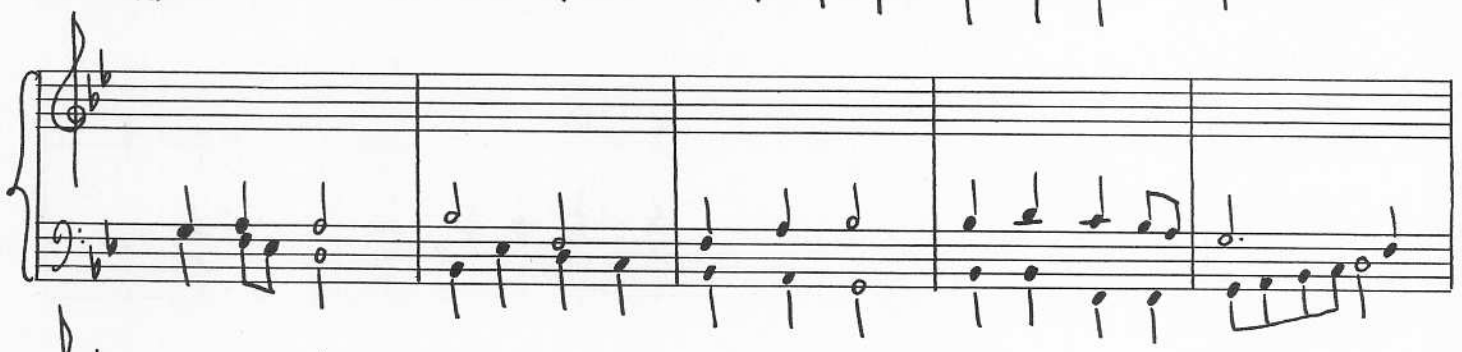
2. Work out the same examples transposed a perfect fourth up and down.

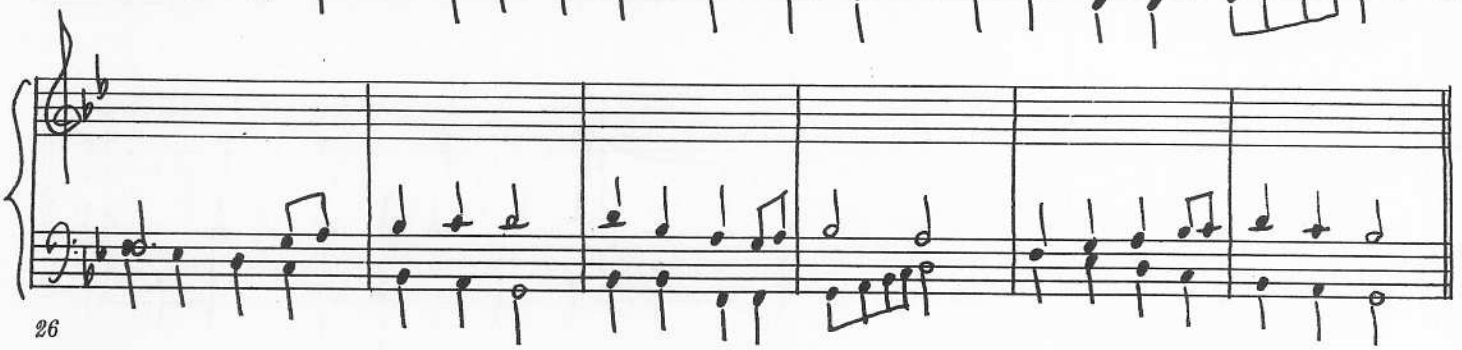
Tallis' Ordinal — Thomas Tallis, c. 1567



Anima Christi — Traditional English Melody, adapted 1906



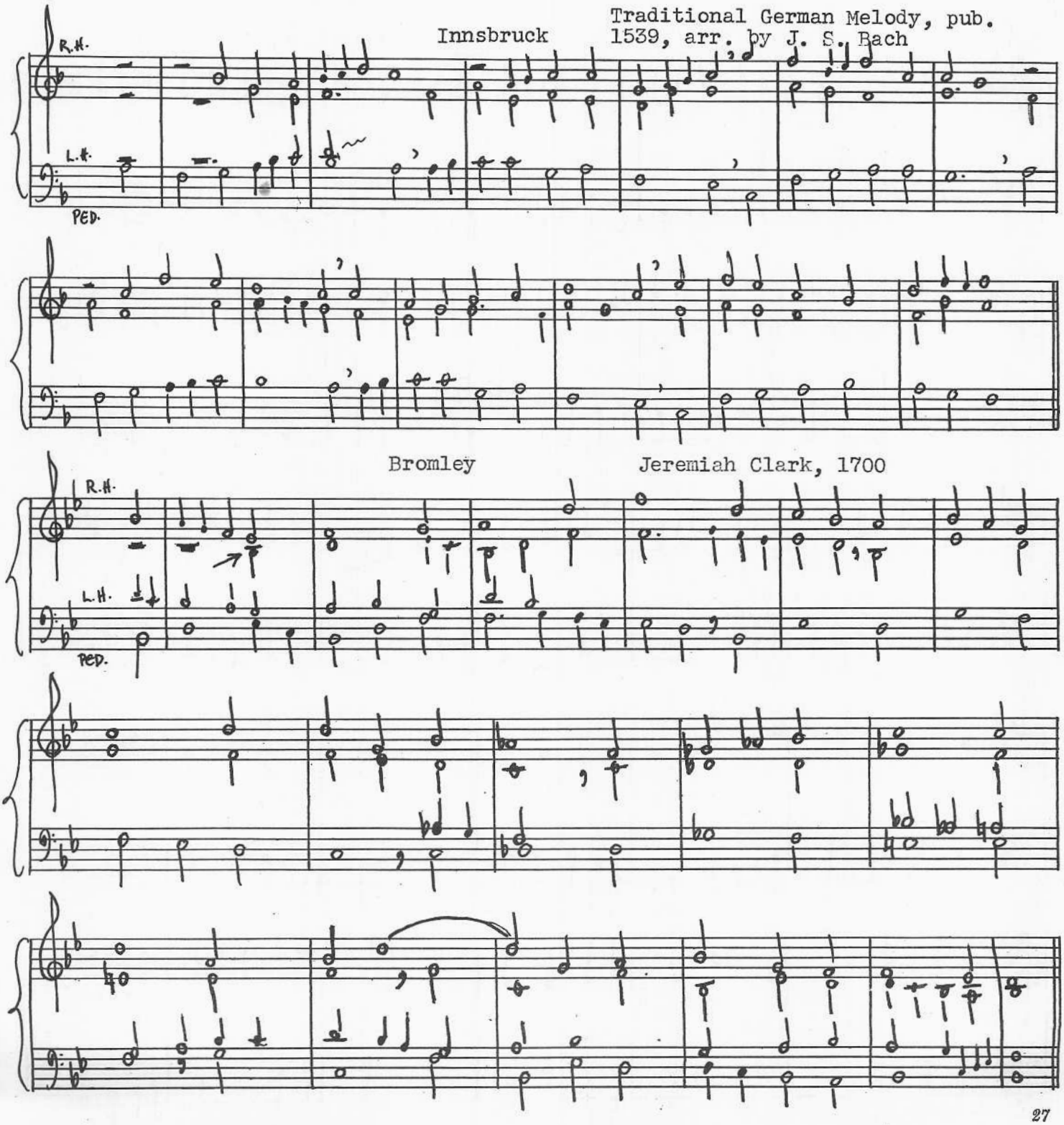




Assignment #19:

1. In the following improvise a completed tenor for the left hand; note the freer harmonic style in the second example which accomodates the canon throughout.

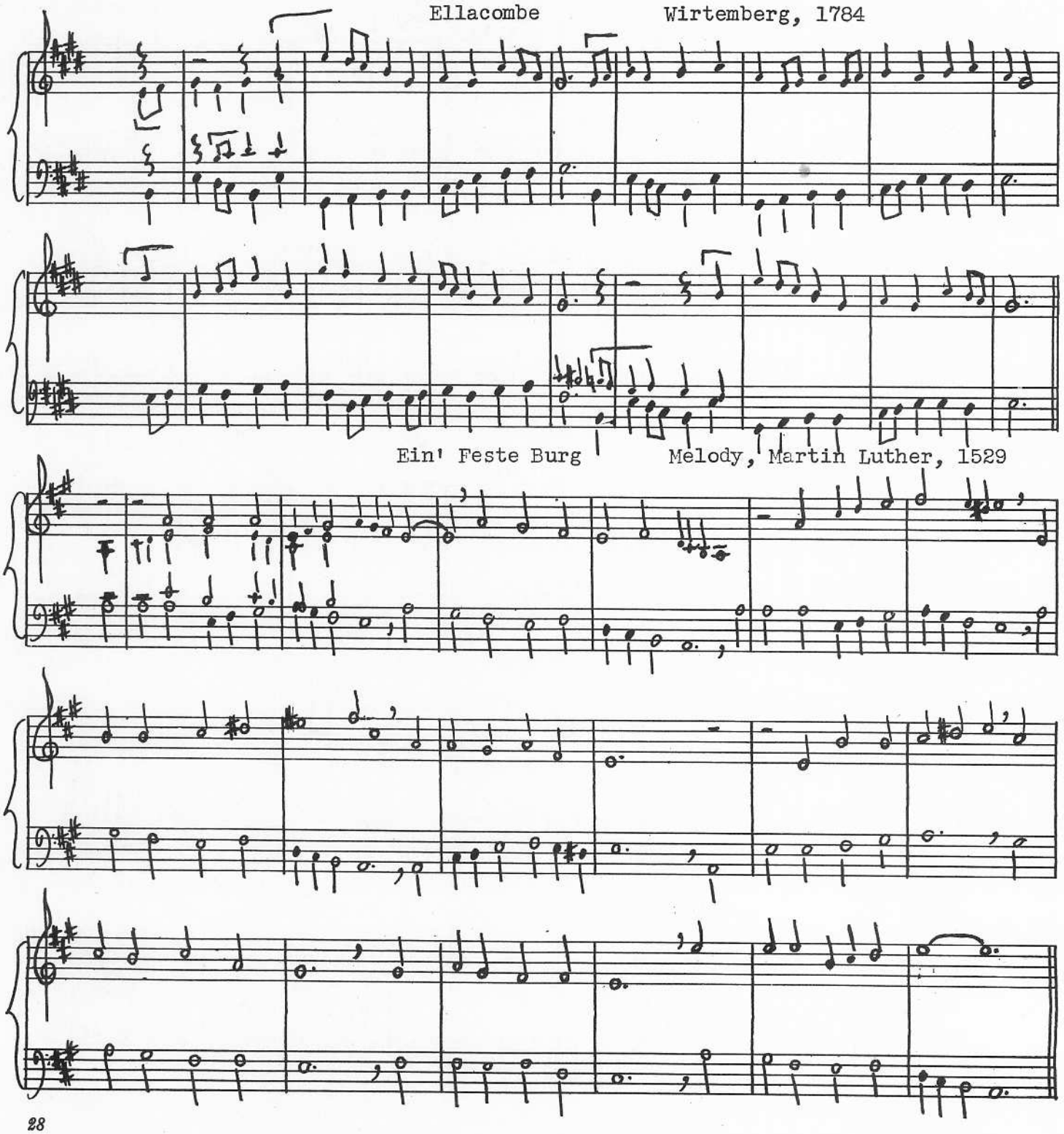
2. Work out the same examples transposed up and down.



Assignment #20:

1. Complete the following by improvising an alto and tenor in a free harmonic style.

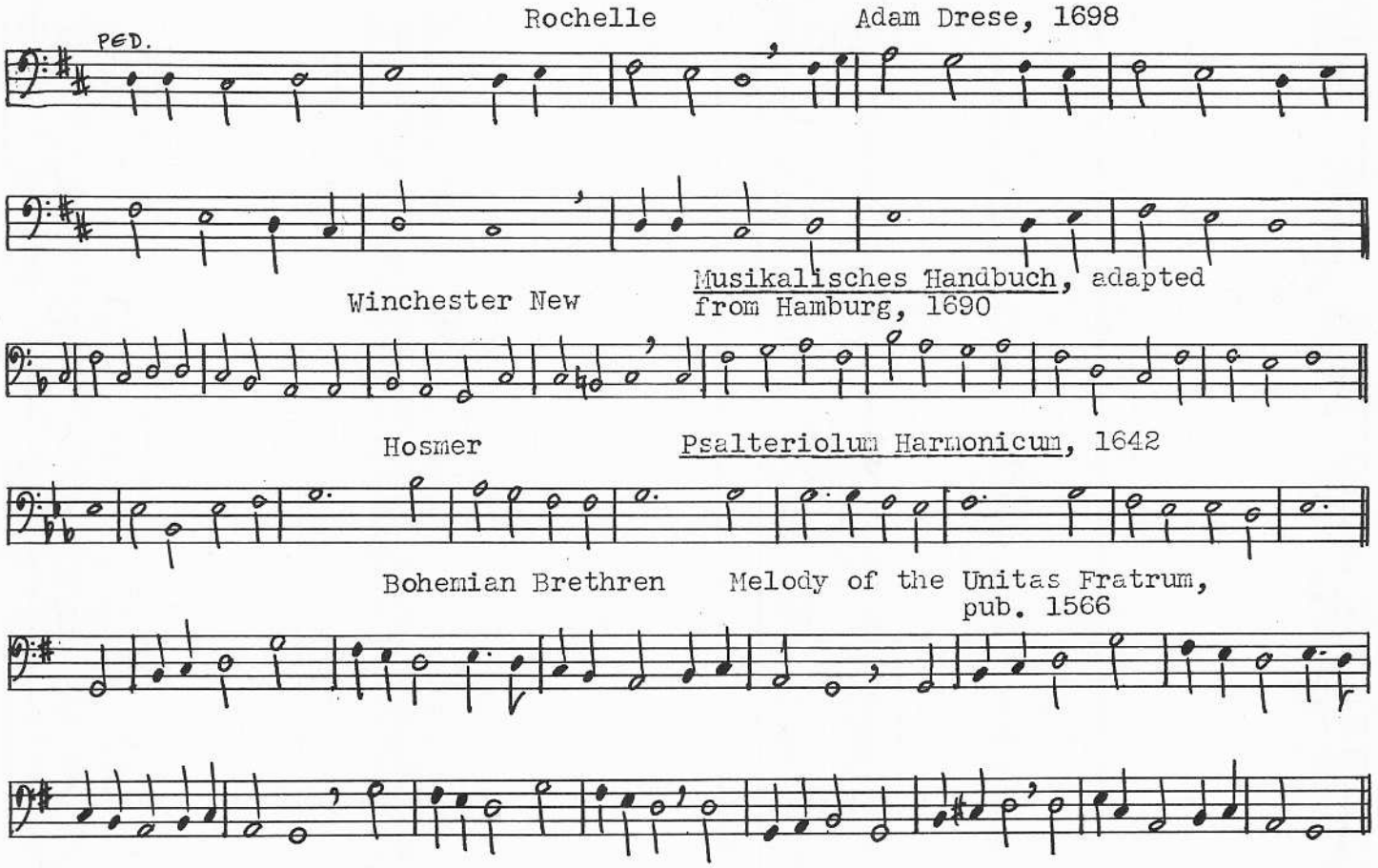
2. Transpose the completed example up one half step.



Assignment #21:

1. Improvise a soprano, alto and tenor over the following pedal melodies.

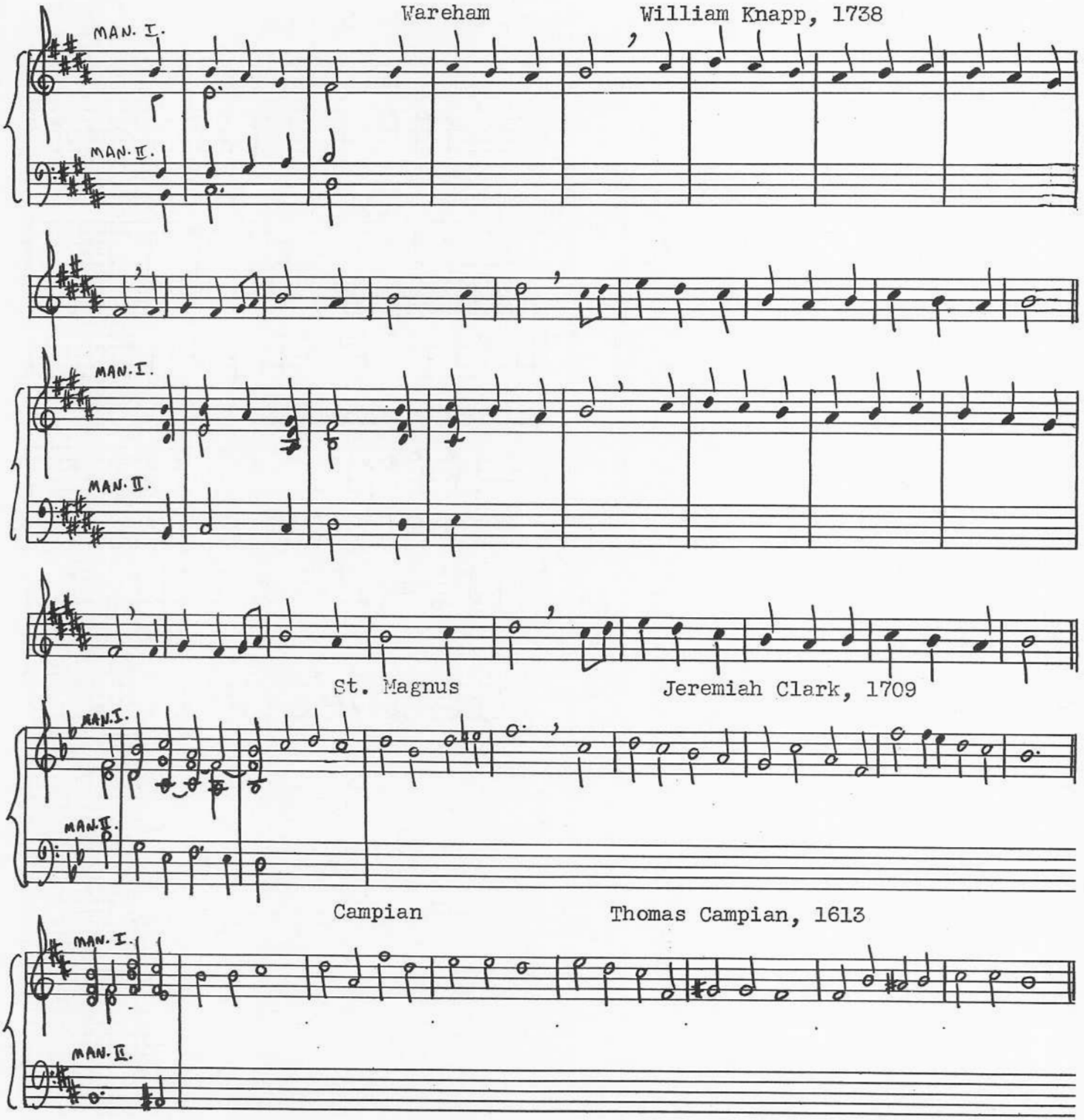
2. Transpose the examples up and down a whole step.



Assignment #22:

1. Improvise the completion of the following in the same styles.

2. Transpose the same examples down an augmented fourth.



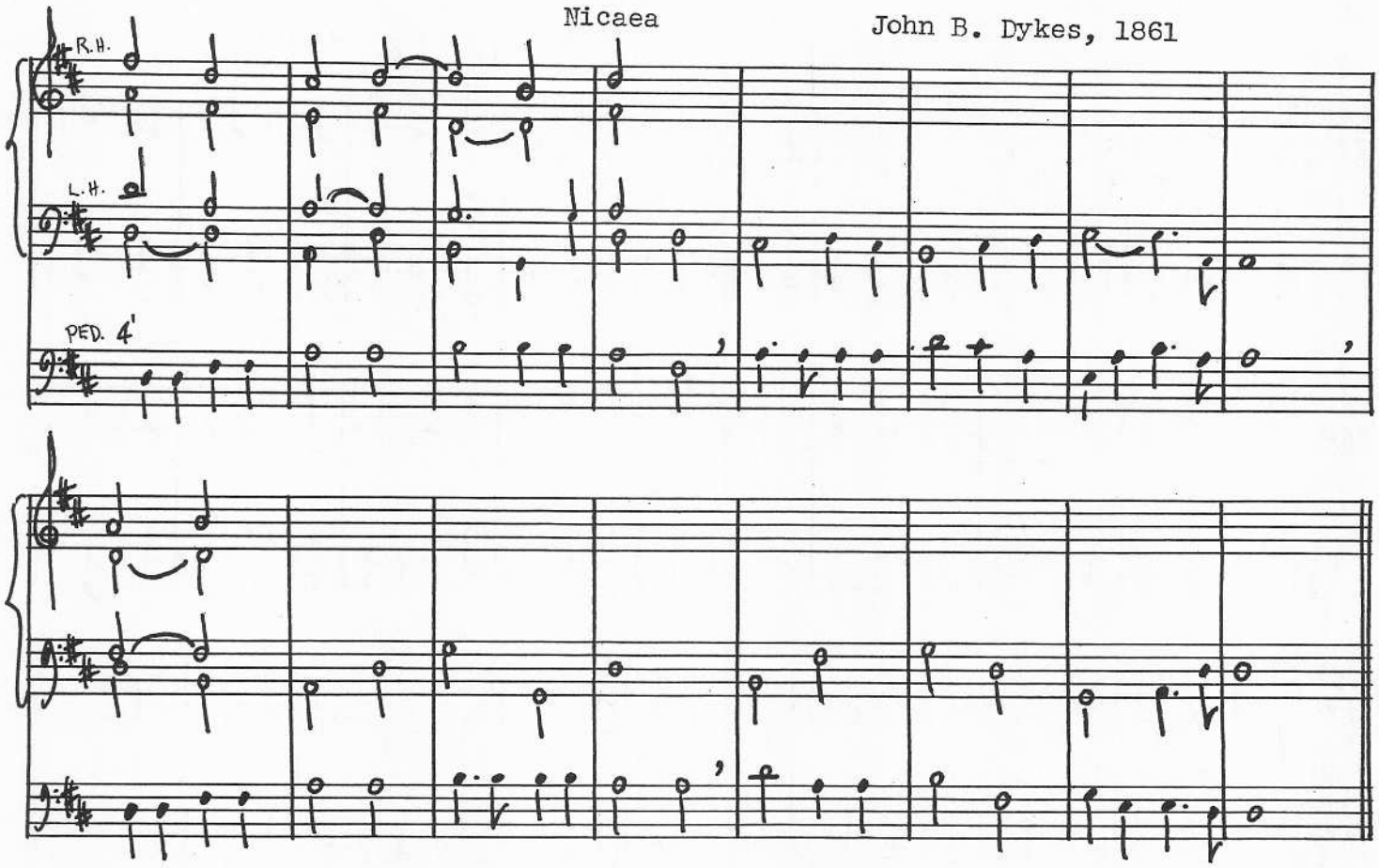
FOUR MANUAL VOICES WITH HYMNTUNE ON PEDAL 4' STOP

Assignment #23:

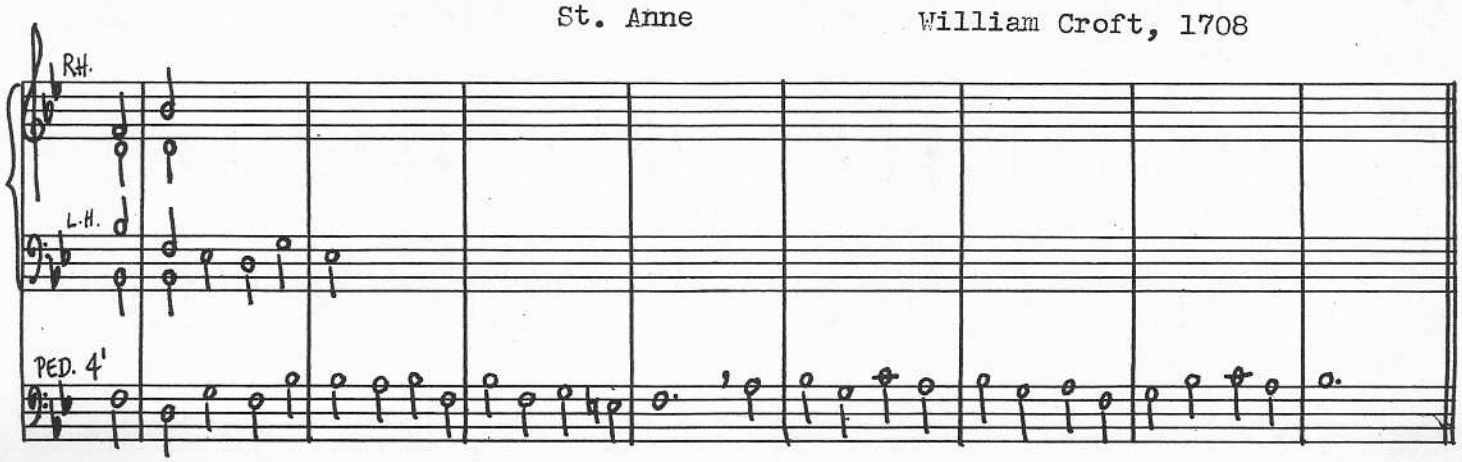
1. Improvise the completion of the following examples. Keep the pitch level of the pedal hymntune above that of the left hand bass.

2. Transpose the completed examples up and down.

Nicaea — John B. Dykes, 1861



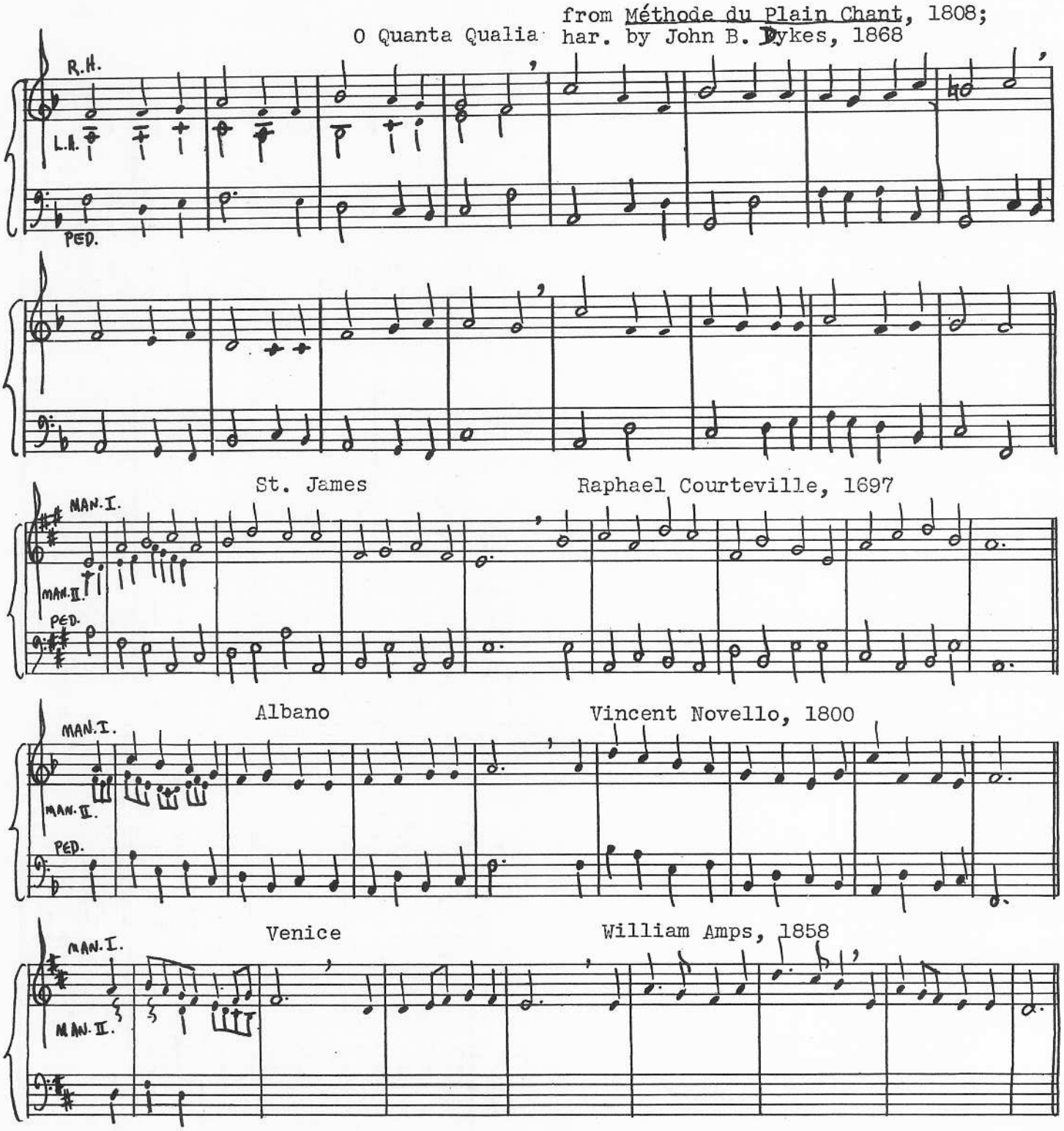
St. Anne — William Croft, 1708



HYMNTUNE IN TRIO

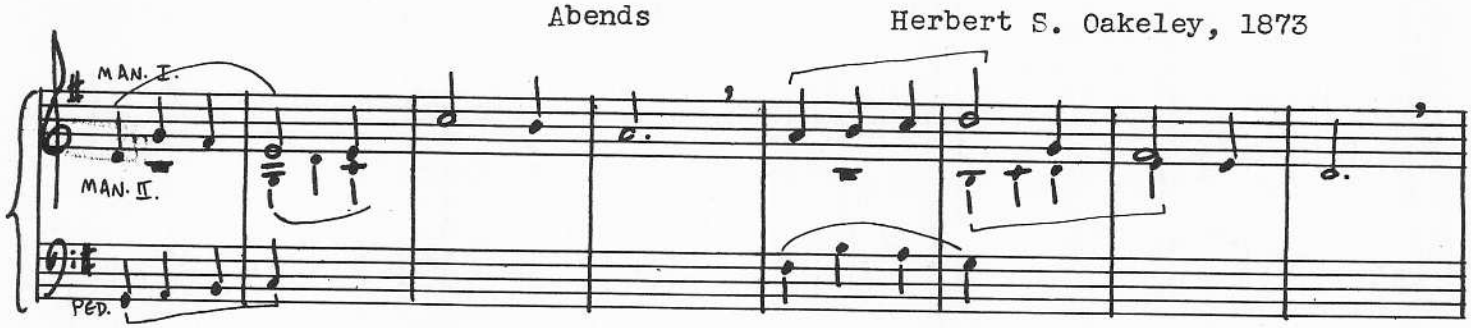
Assignment #24:

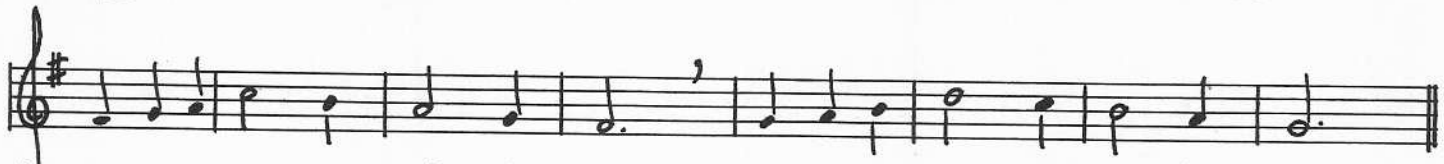
1. Improvise the completion of the following in the same style.
2. Transpose the same examples at various intervals.



Abends

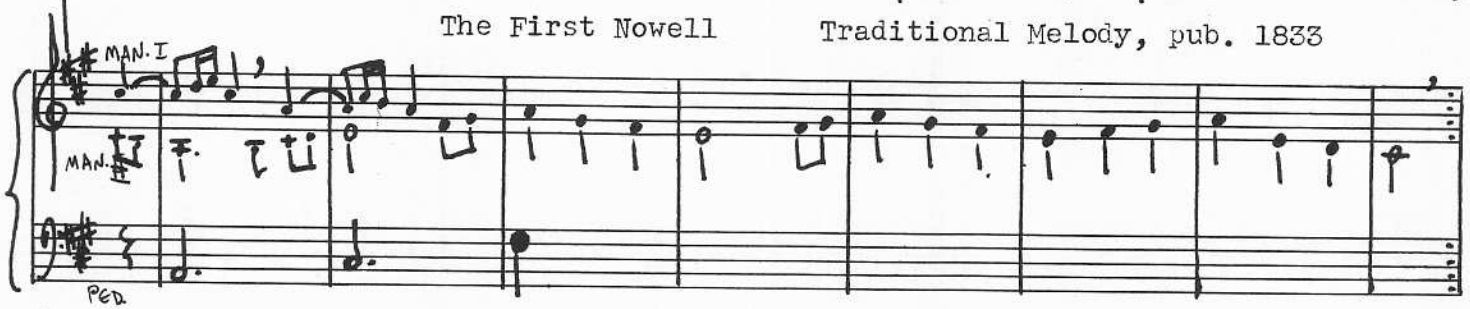
Herbert S. Oakeley, 1873

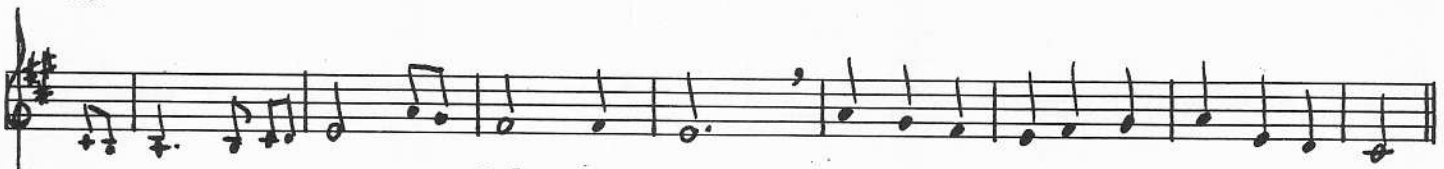




The First Nowell

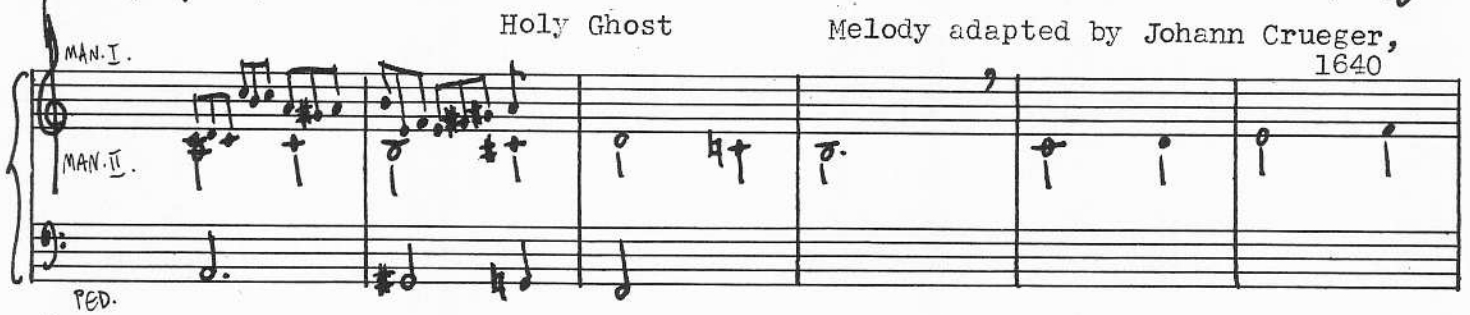
Traditional Melody, pub. 1833





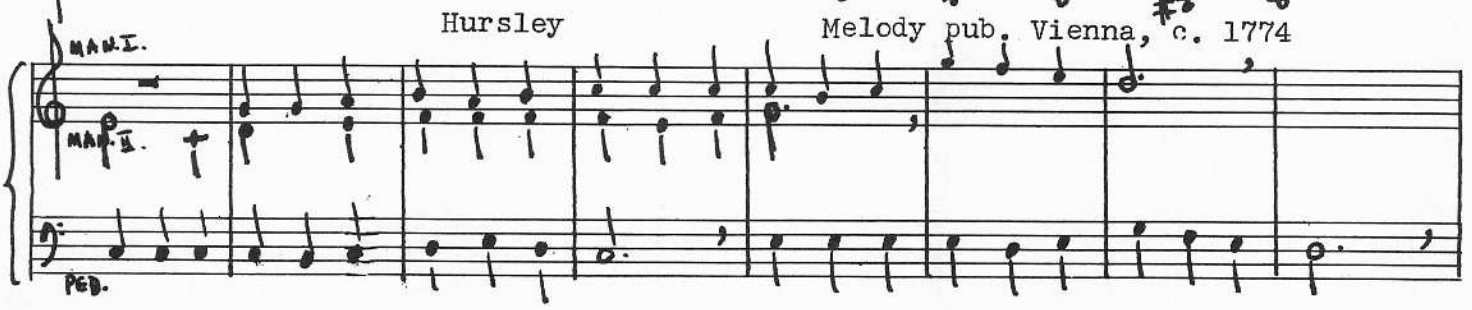
Holy Ghost

Melody adapted by Johann Crueger, 1640



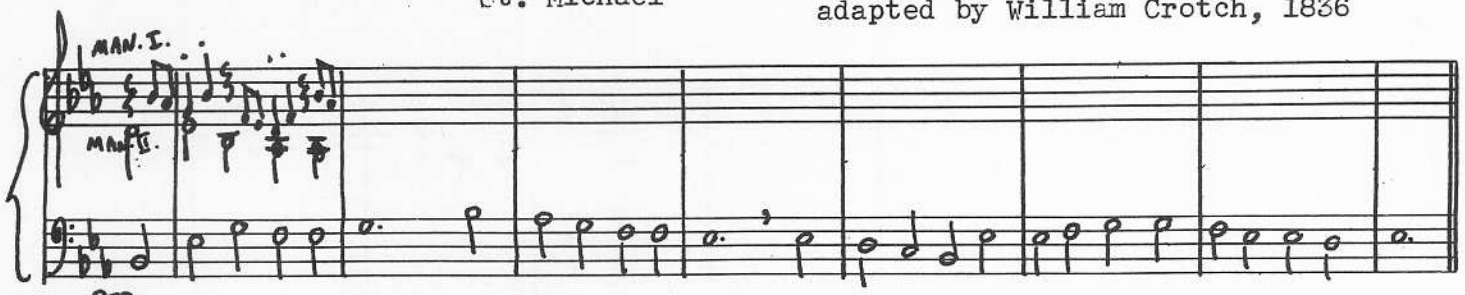
Hursley

Melody pub. Vienna, c. 1774



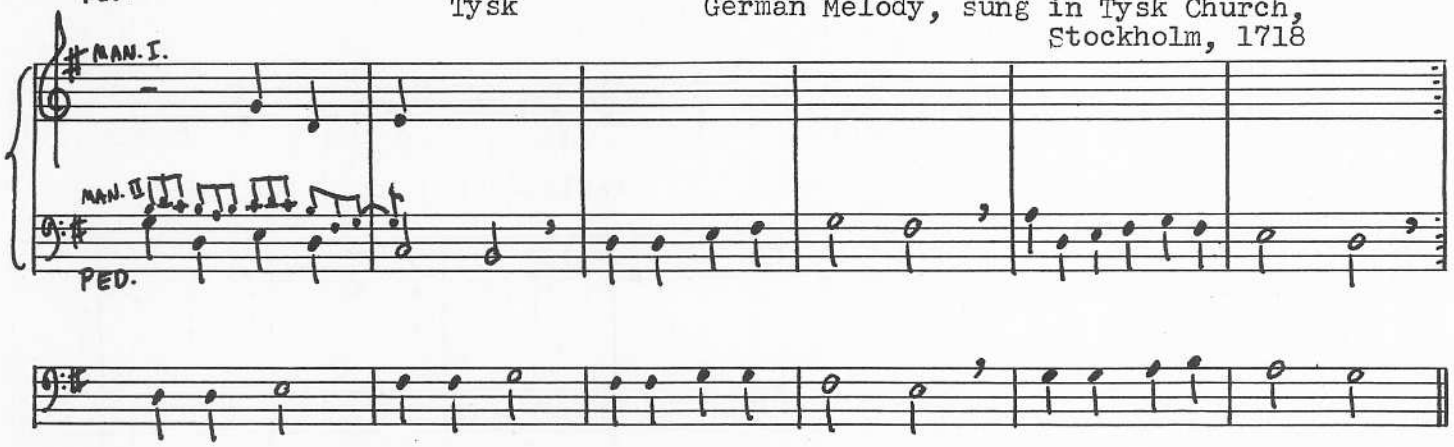
St. Michael

Melody by Louis Bourgeois, 1551,
adapted by William Crotch, 1836



Tysk

German Melody, sung in Tysk Church,
Stockholm, 1718



PART II

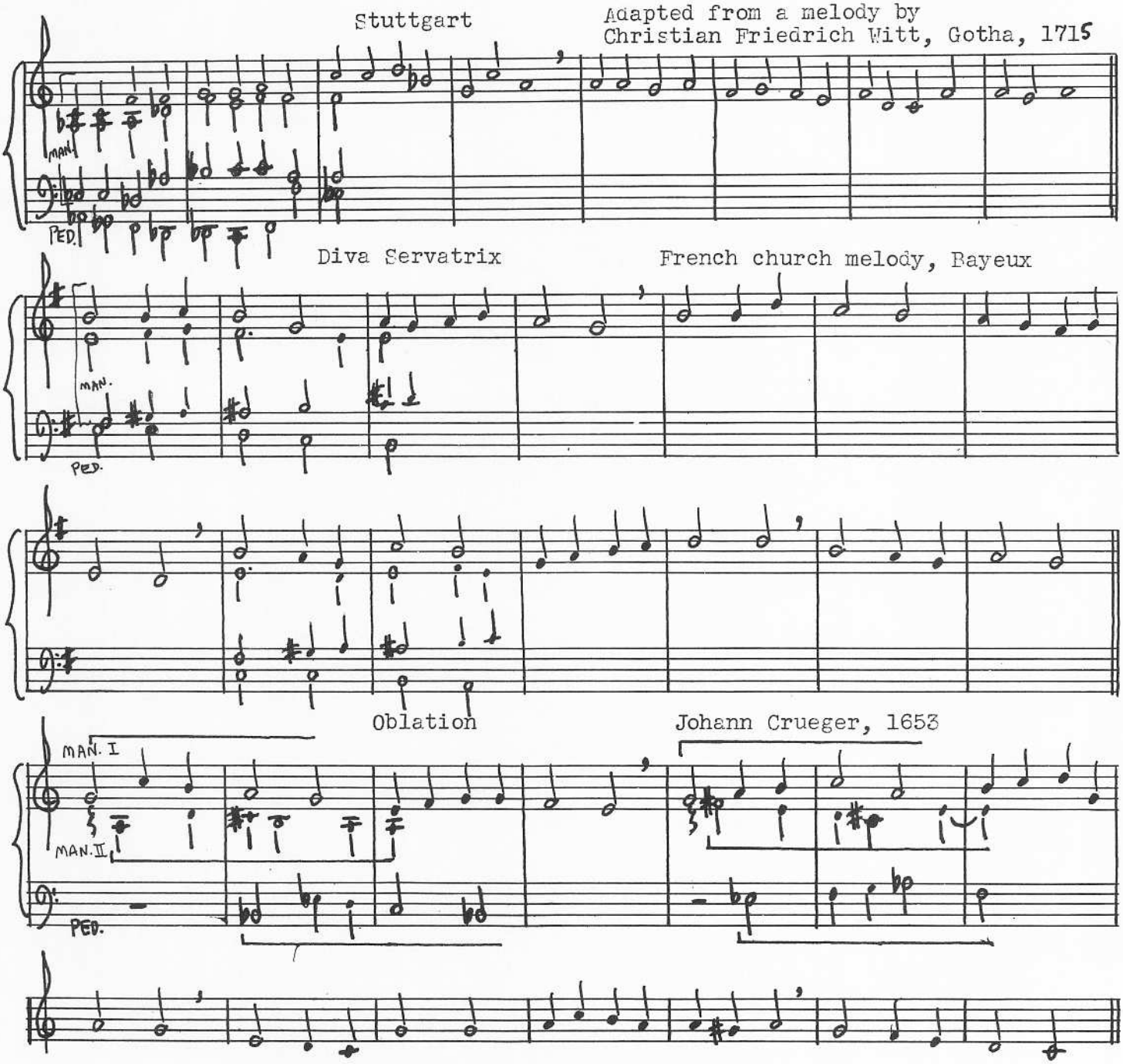
IMPROVISING IN SHORT ORGAN FORMS

VARIATIONS ON A HYMNTUNE

Assignment #25:

1. Complete the following examples of reharmonization in the same style.

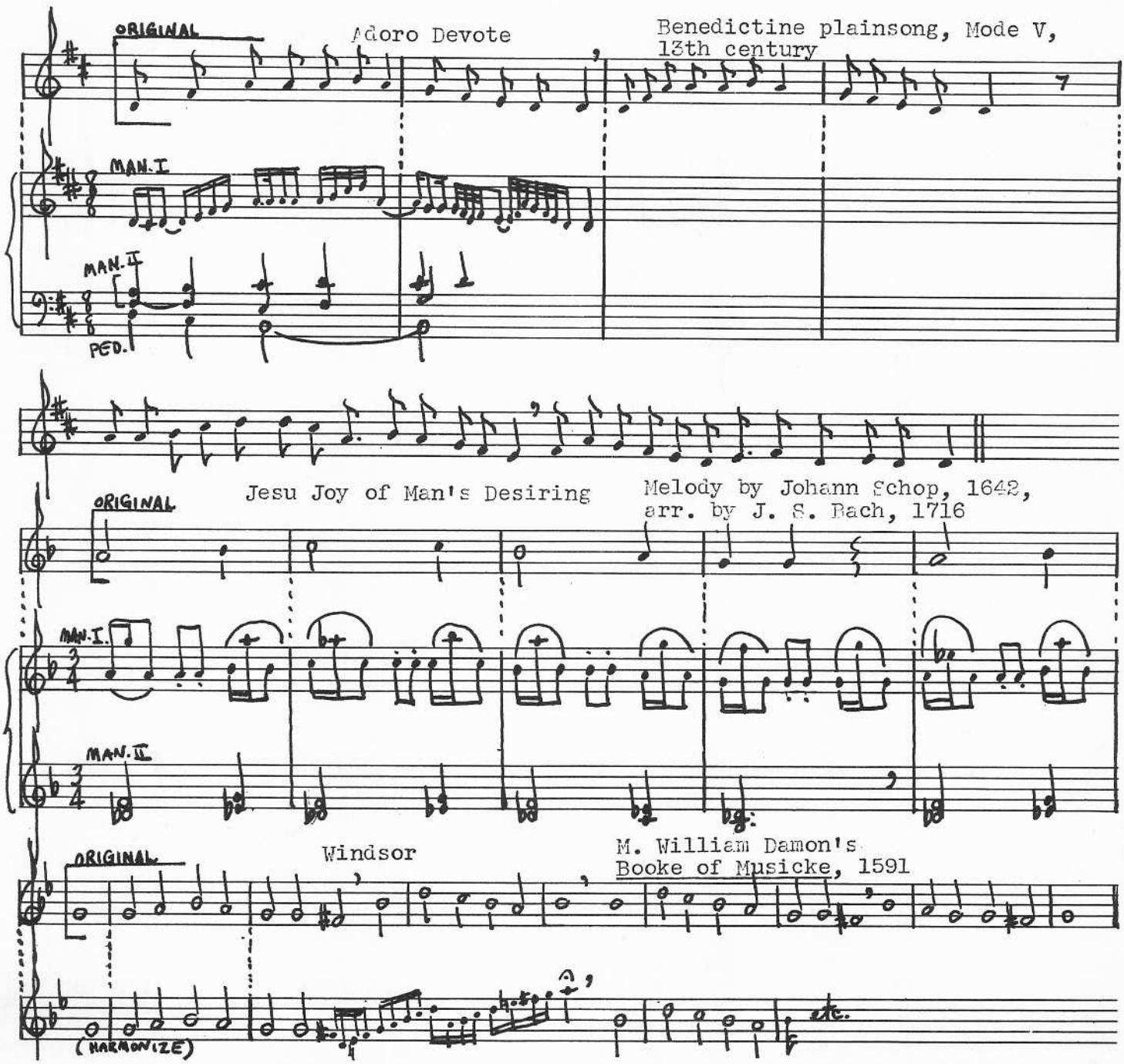
2. Reharmonize the same hymntunes placed in the tenor (left hand), bass (pedal), and alto (4' pedal stop).



Assignment #26:

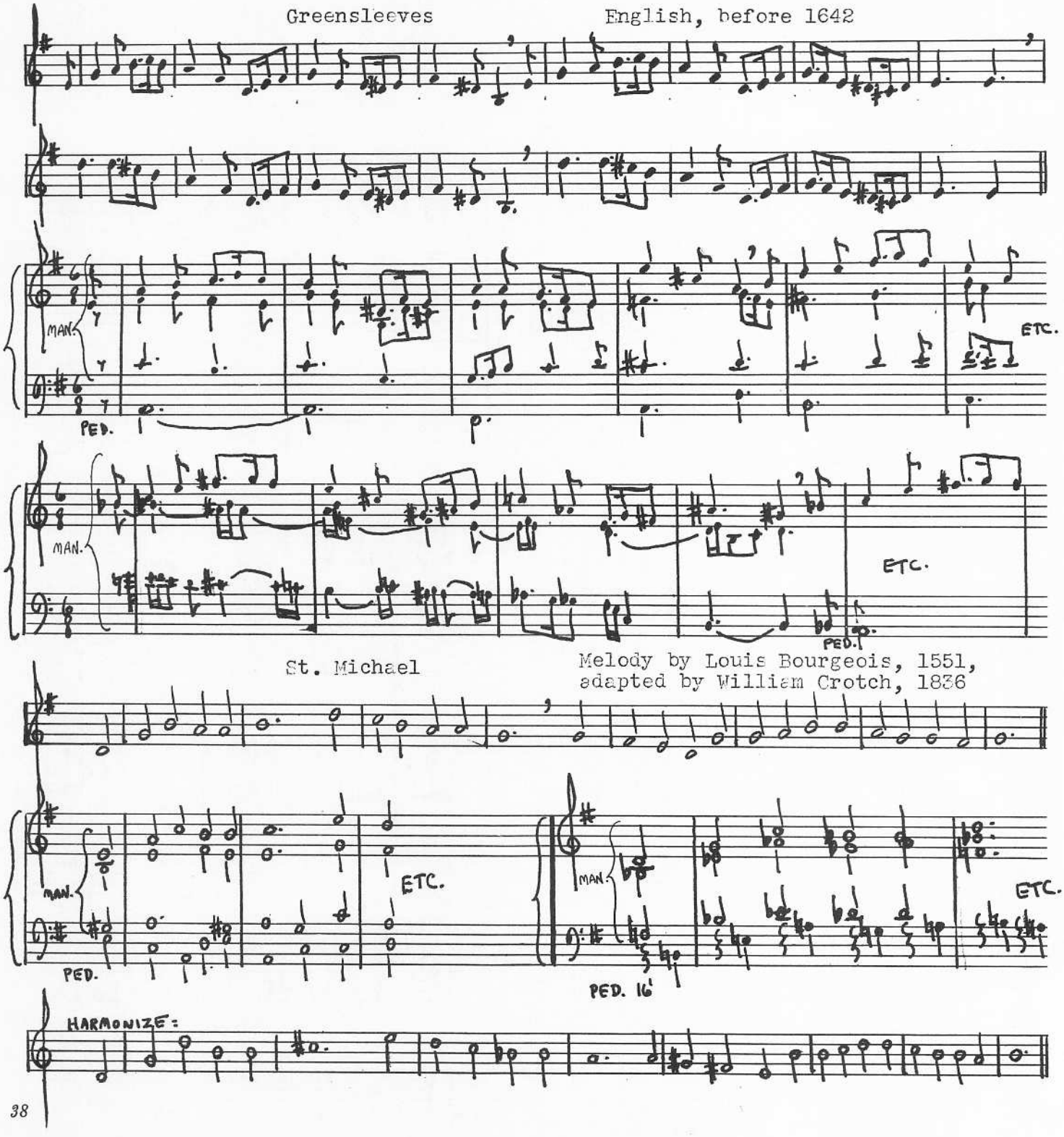
1. Complete the following examples of ornamented melody in the same style. Invent other styles of ornamentation for the same hymntunes after looking at examples of this technique by Bach, Brahms, Distler, and others.

2. Treat the same or other tunes in the tenor voice with the left hand.



Assignment #27:

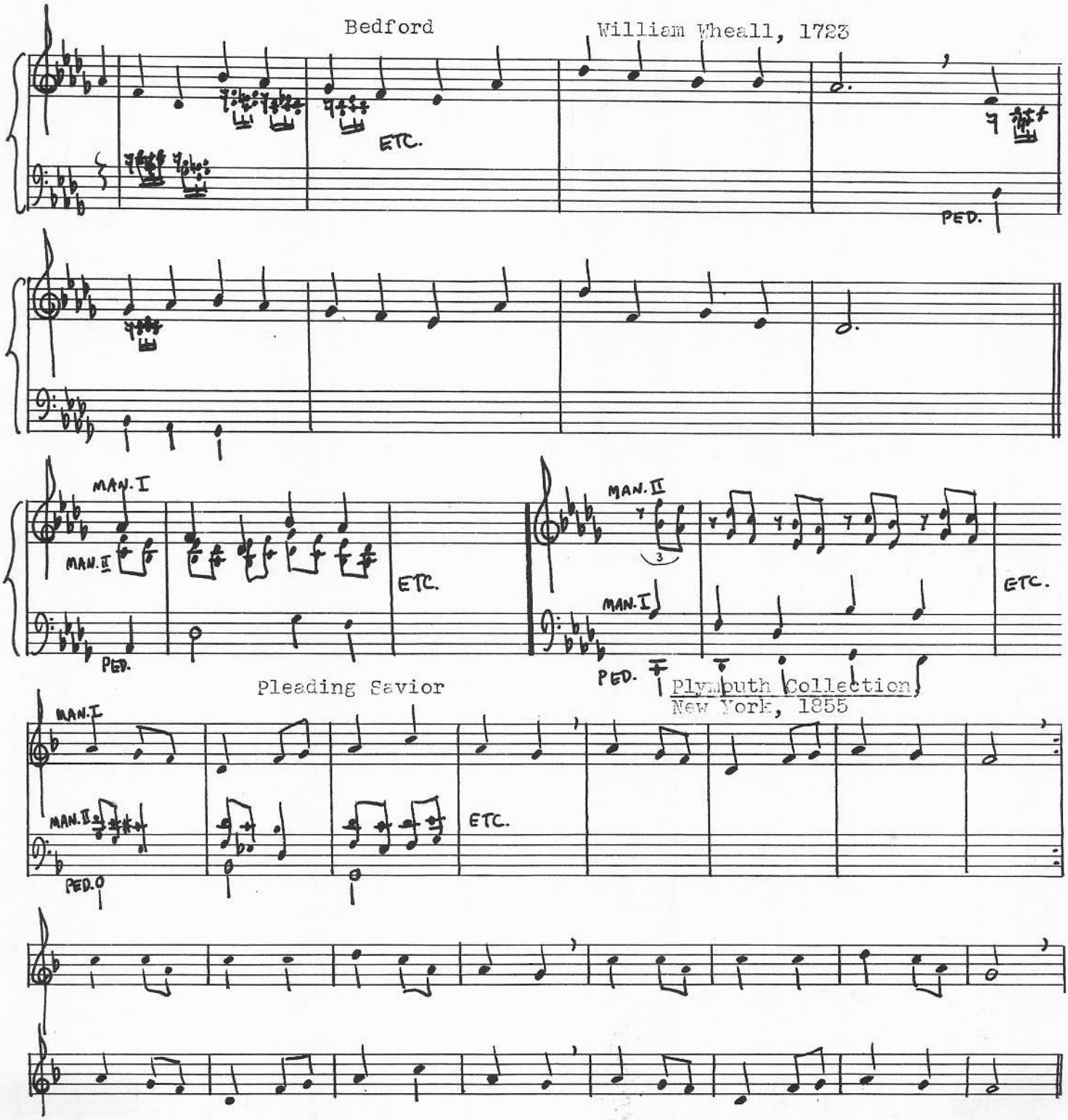
1. Complete the paraphrases begun on the hymntunes below.
2. Invent paraphrases for other hymntunes.



Assignment #28:

1. Complete the following examples in the same style.

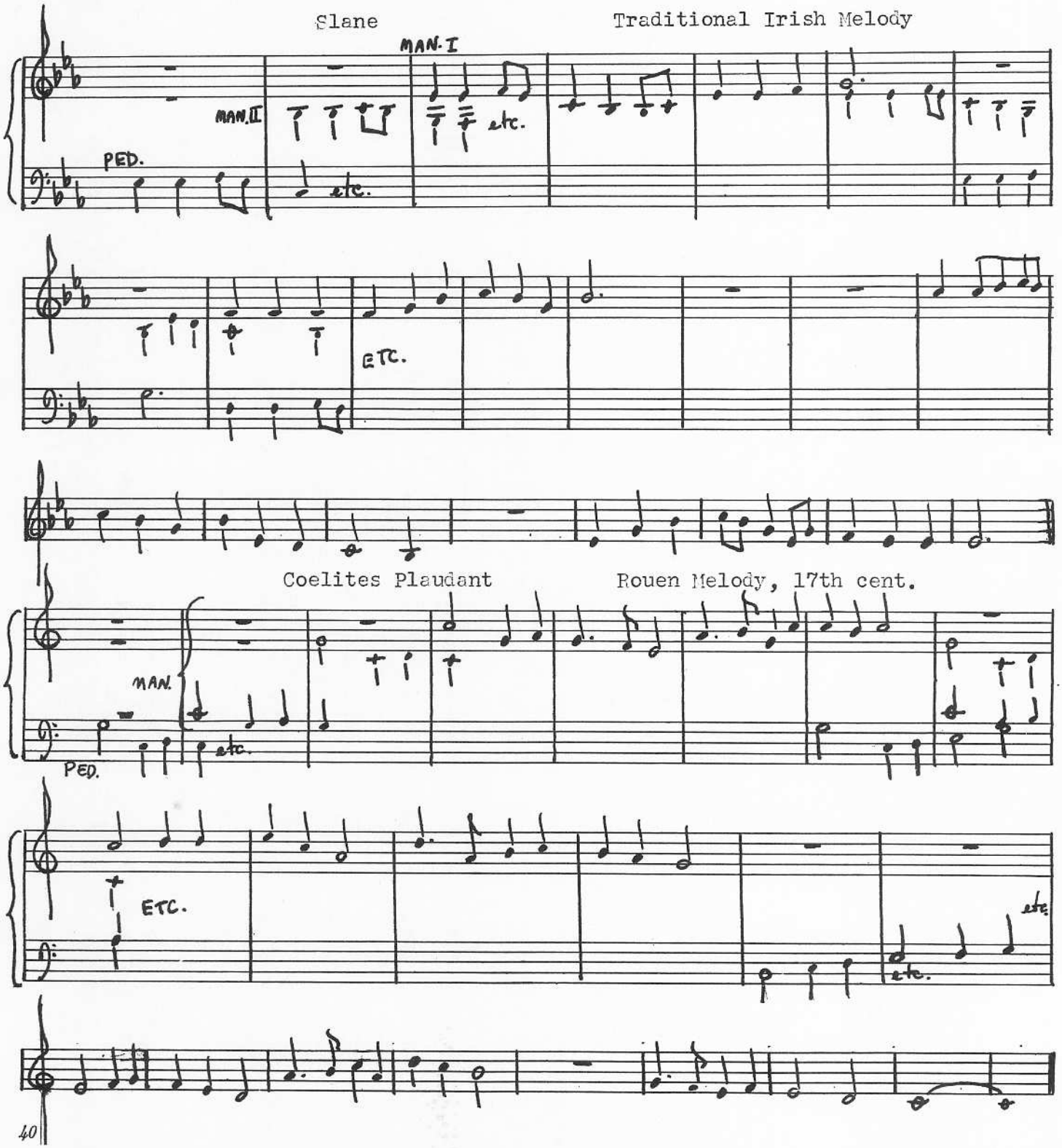
2. Using the same accompanying intervals, with or without pedal, improvise other settings of these or other hymn-tunes.

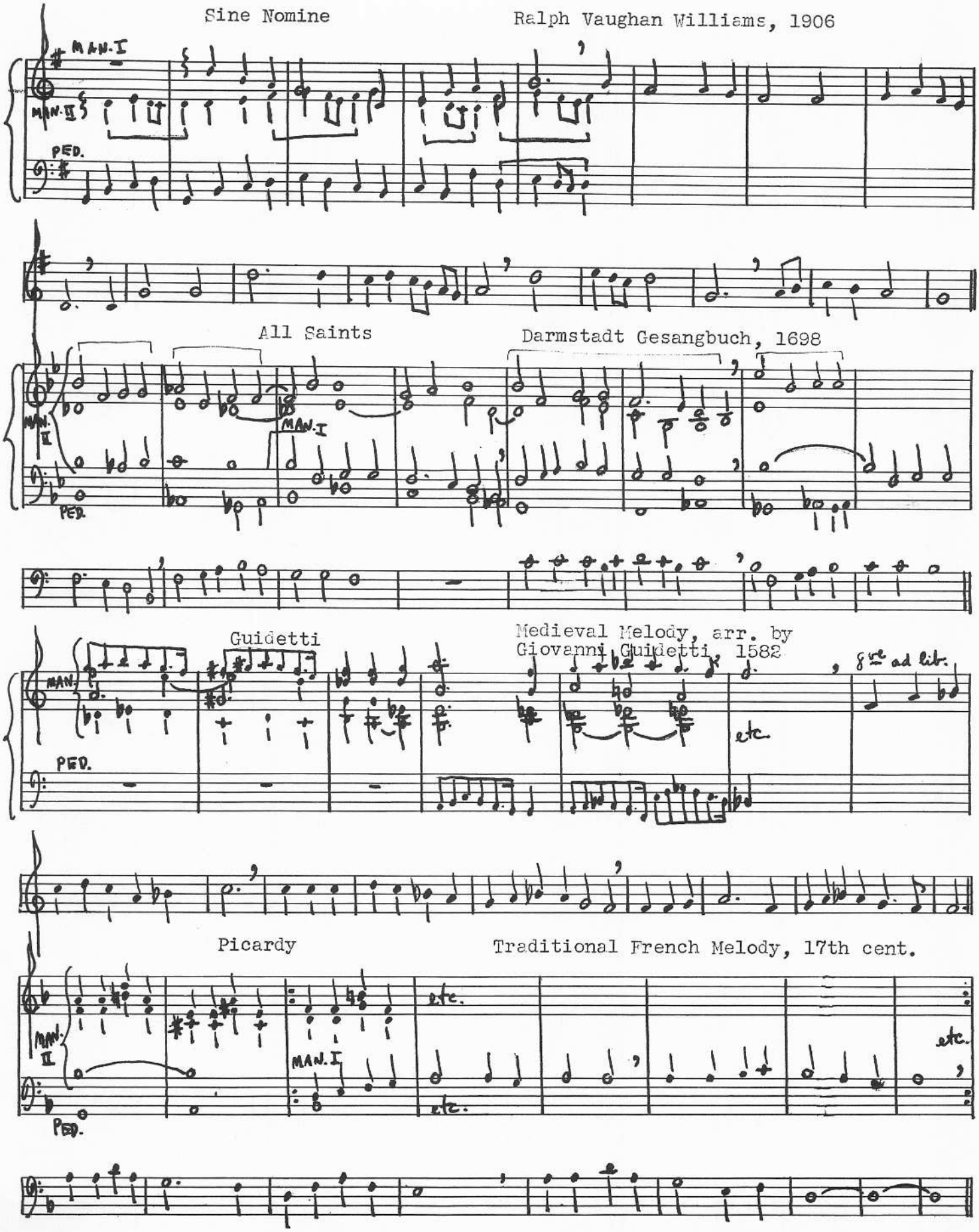


Assignment #29:

1. Complete the following examples of hymntune accompaniment based on figures derived from the melody.

2. Improvise accompaniments to other hymntunes by using the same musical device.

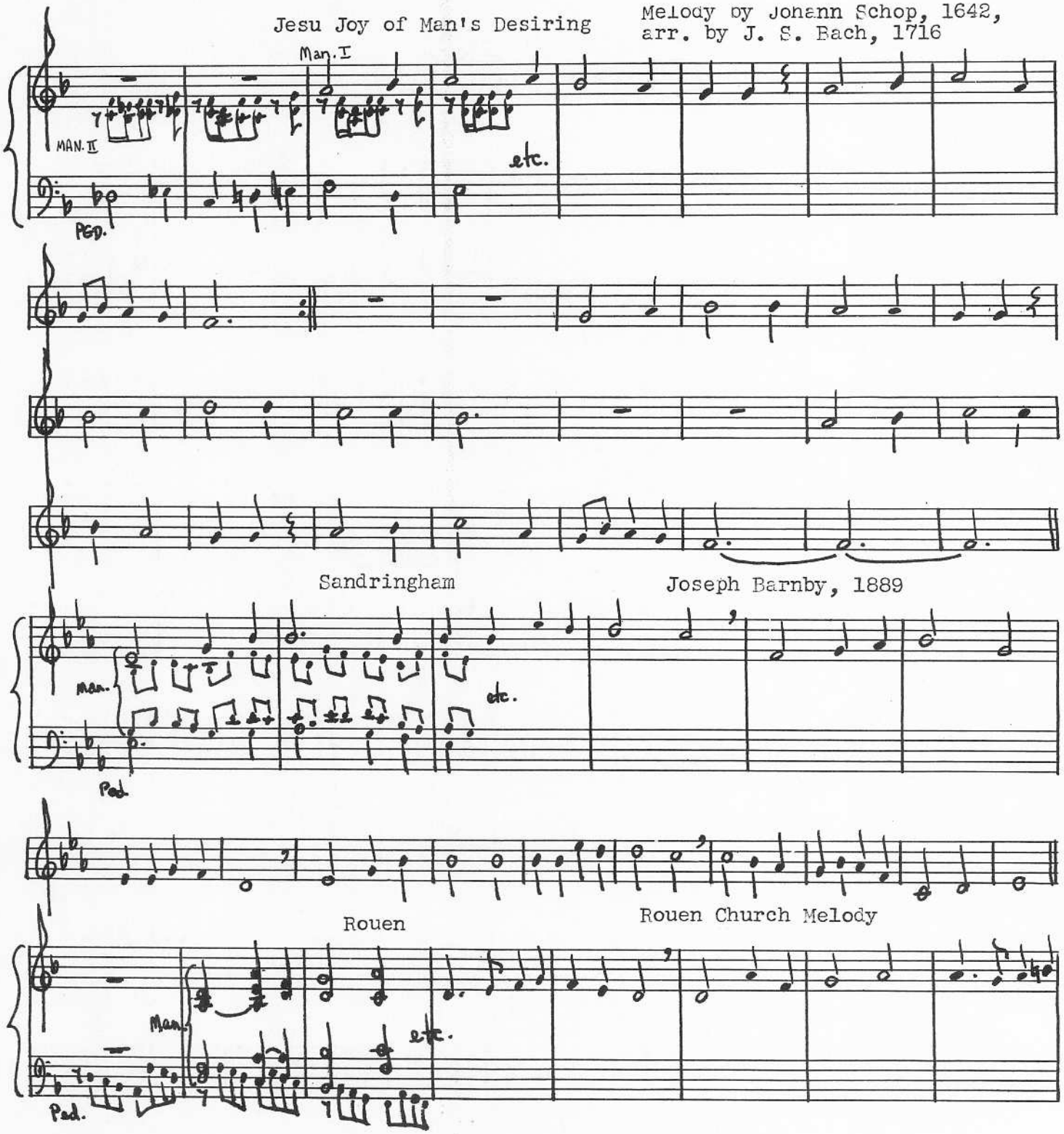


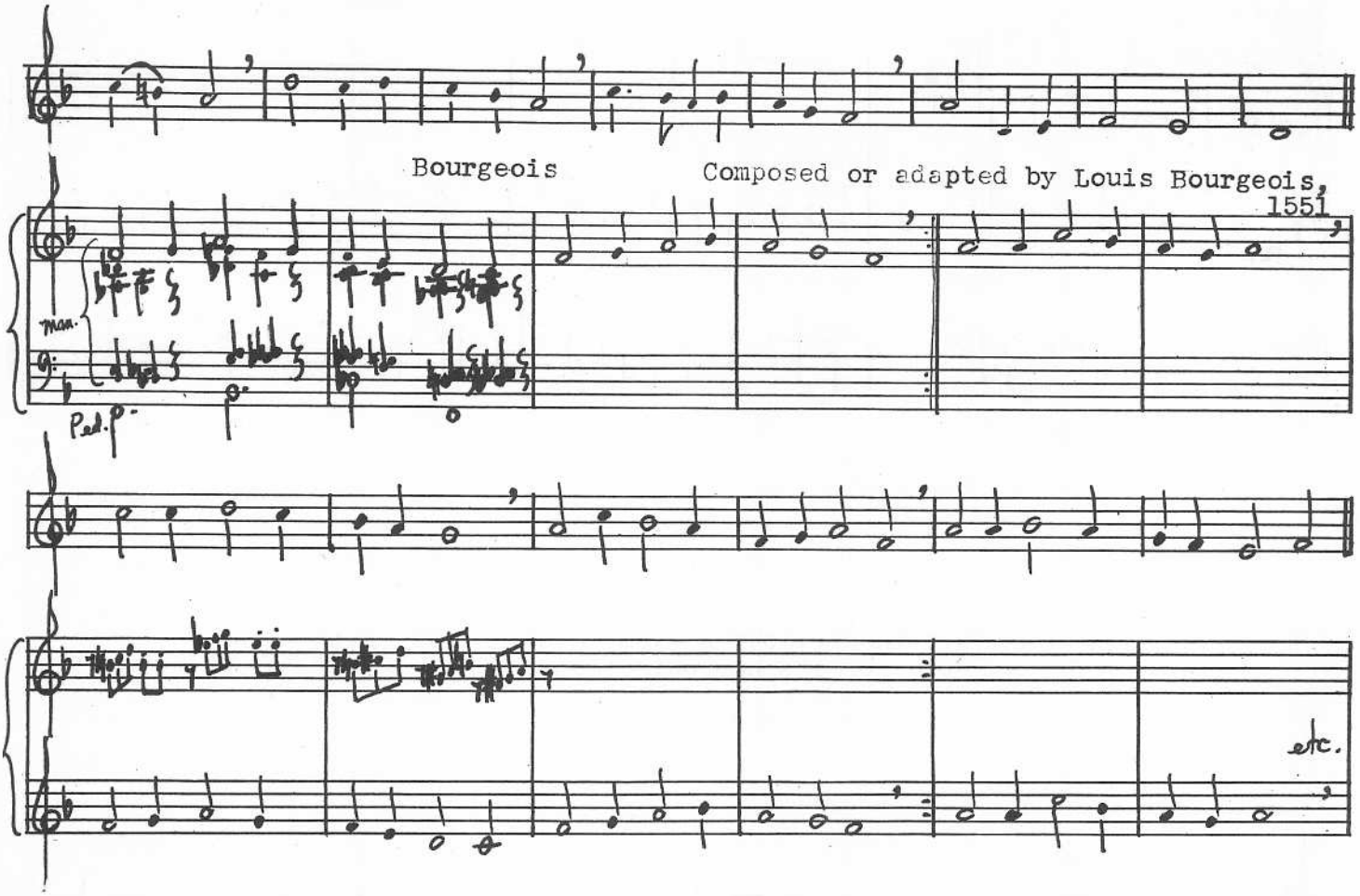

Sine Nomine
Ralph Vaughan Williams, 1906
MAN. I
MAN. II
PED.
All Saints
Darmstadt Gesangbuch, 1698
Guidetti
Medieval Melody, arr. by
Giovanni Guidetti, 1582
8va ad lib.
etc.
Picardy
Traditional French Melody, 17th cent.

Assignment #30:

1. Complete the following examples of hymntune accompaniment based on original figures.

2. Improvise accompaniments to other hymntunes with original accompanying figures.

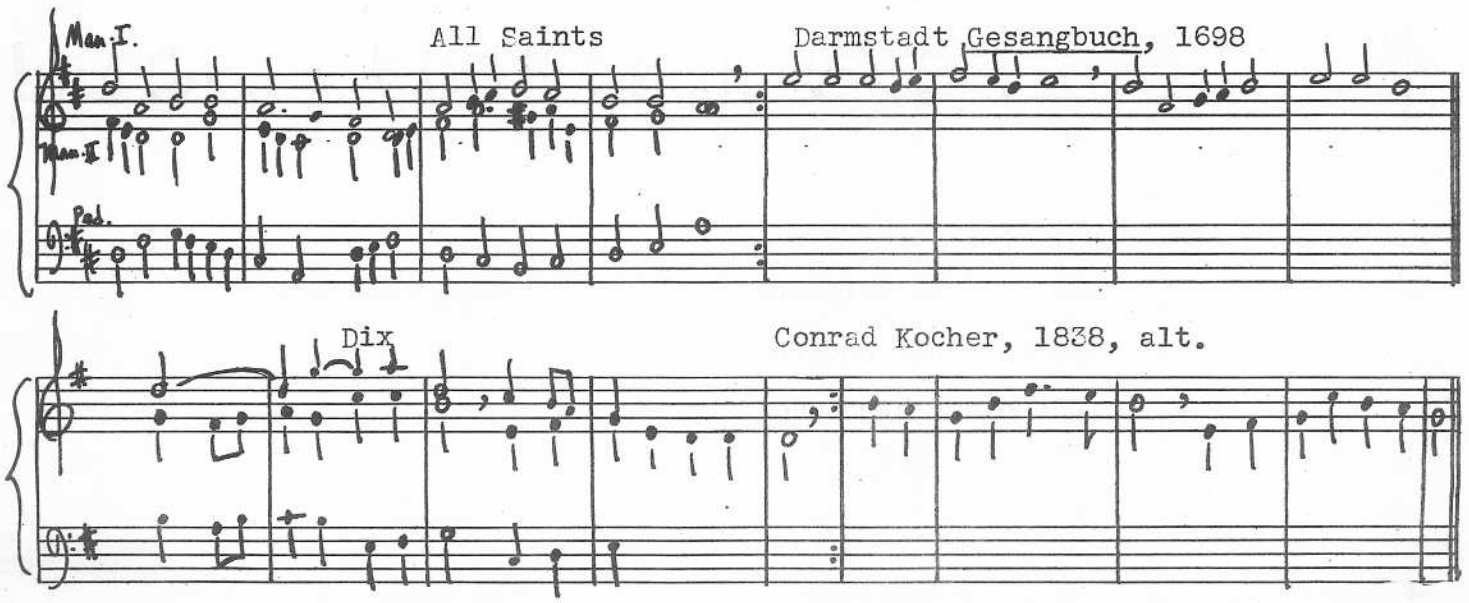


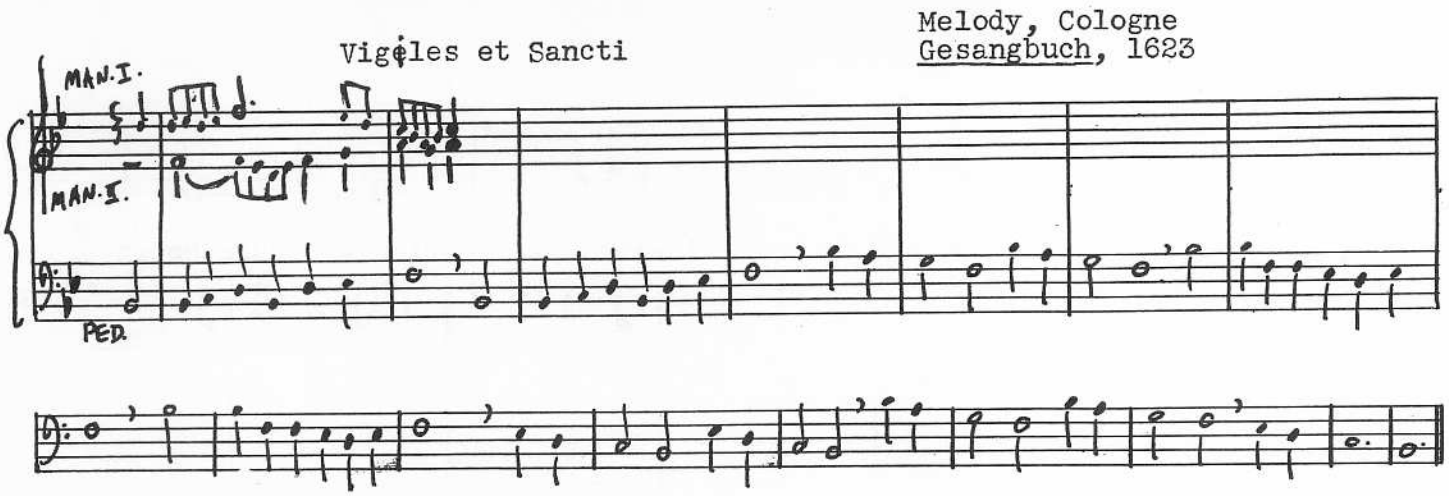


Assignment #31:

1. Complete the following examples of trio, hymntune in any voice.

2. Treat other hymntunes in trio.

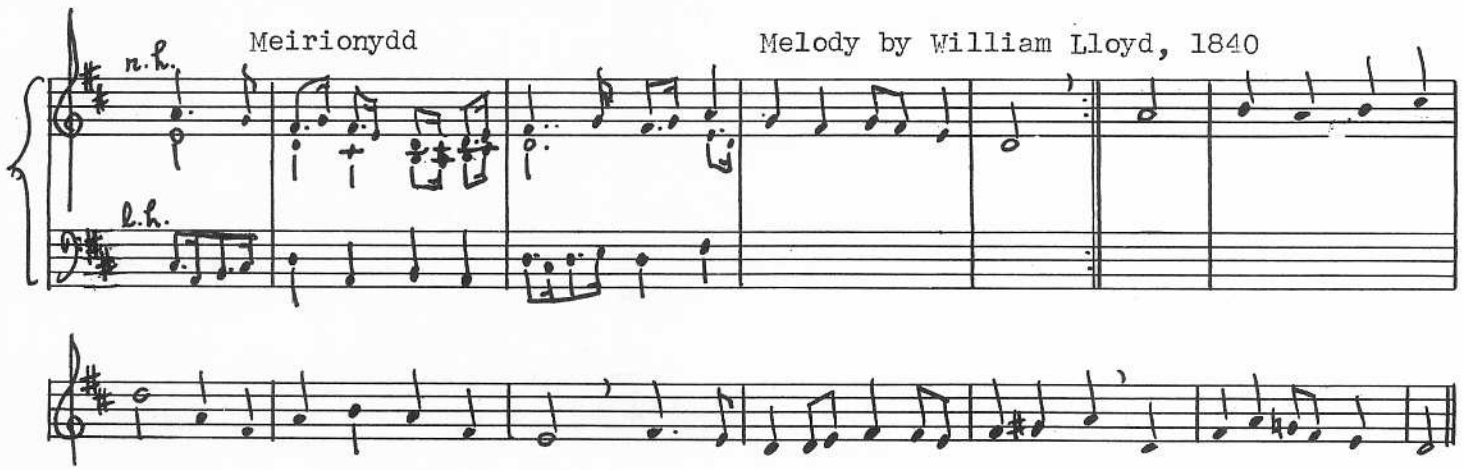




Assignment #32:

1. Complete the following example of dotted rhythms in a hymntune or its harmonization.

2. Treat other hymntunes similarly.



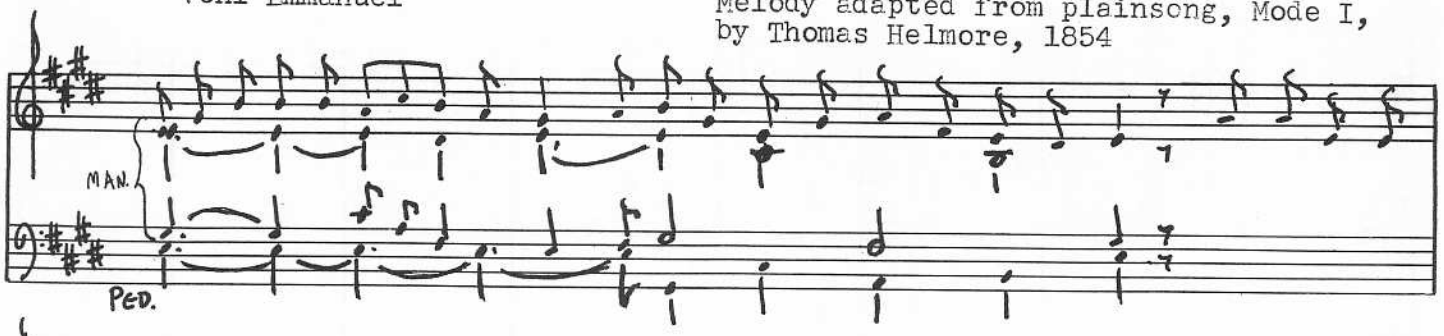
Assignment #33:

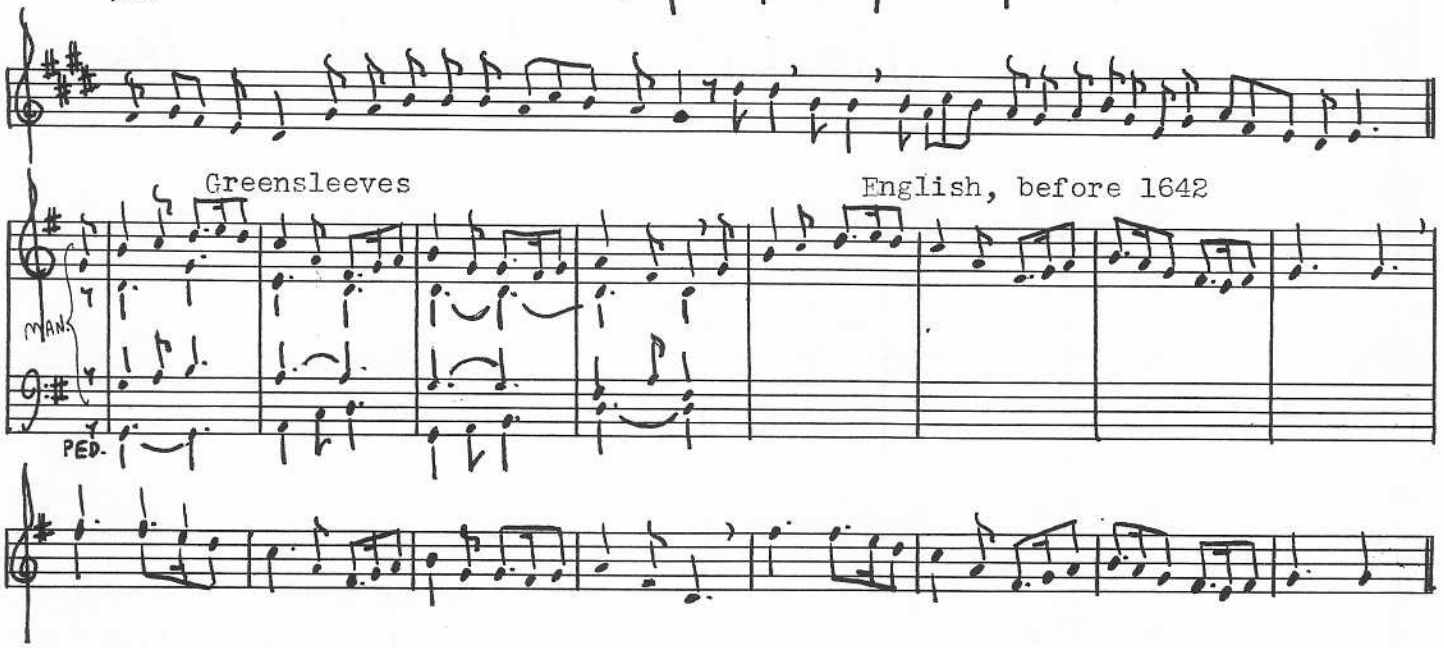
1. Complete the following examples of change of mode in hymntunes either by change of signature or by transposing them to other positions on the staff.

2. Treat other hymntunes similarly.

Veni Emmanuel

Melody adapted from plainsong, Mode I,
by Thomas Helmore, 1854





Greensleeves

English, before 1642

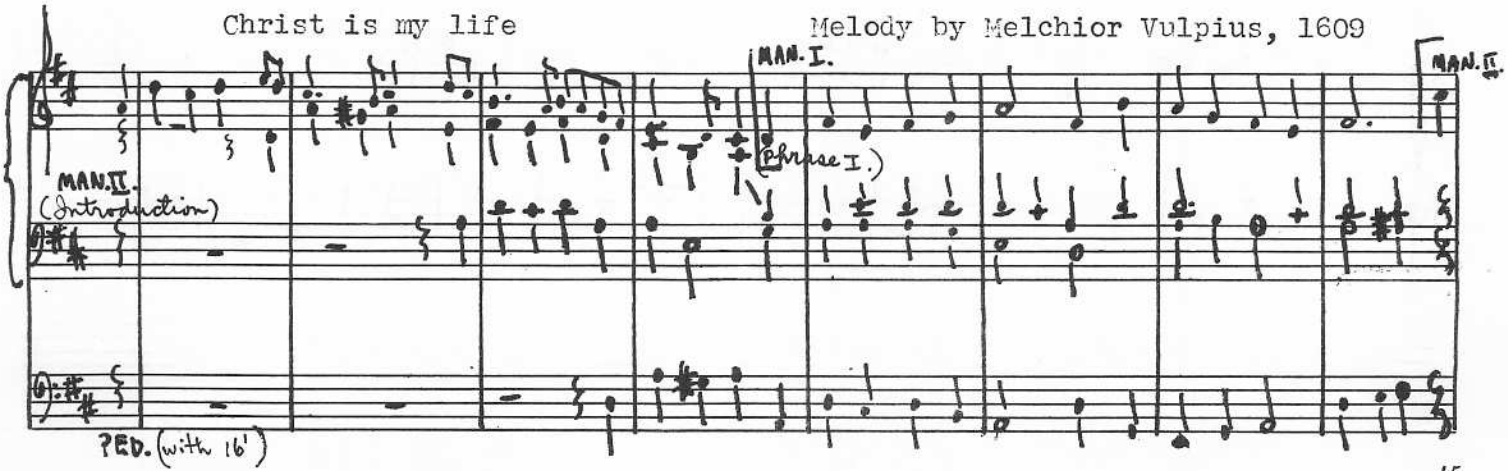
Assignment #34:

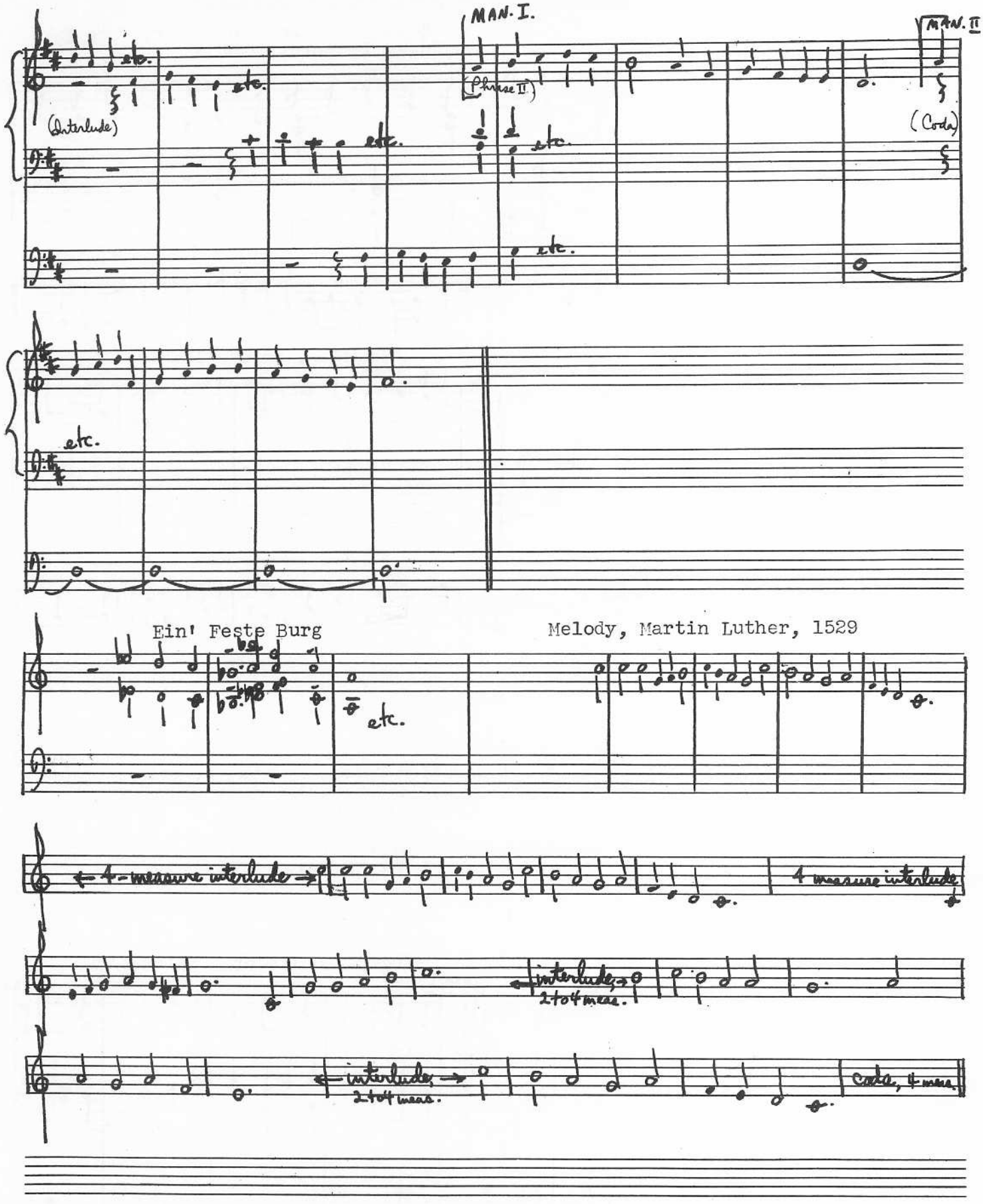
1. Improvise a brief introduction before hymntunes, brief interludes between phrases, and a brief coda to conclude, after first completing the following example.

2. Treat other hymntunes in the same form but with varying note values, accompanying figures, registration, and number of voices.

Christ is my life

Melody by Melchior Vulpius, 1609

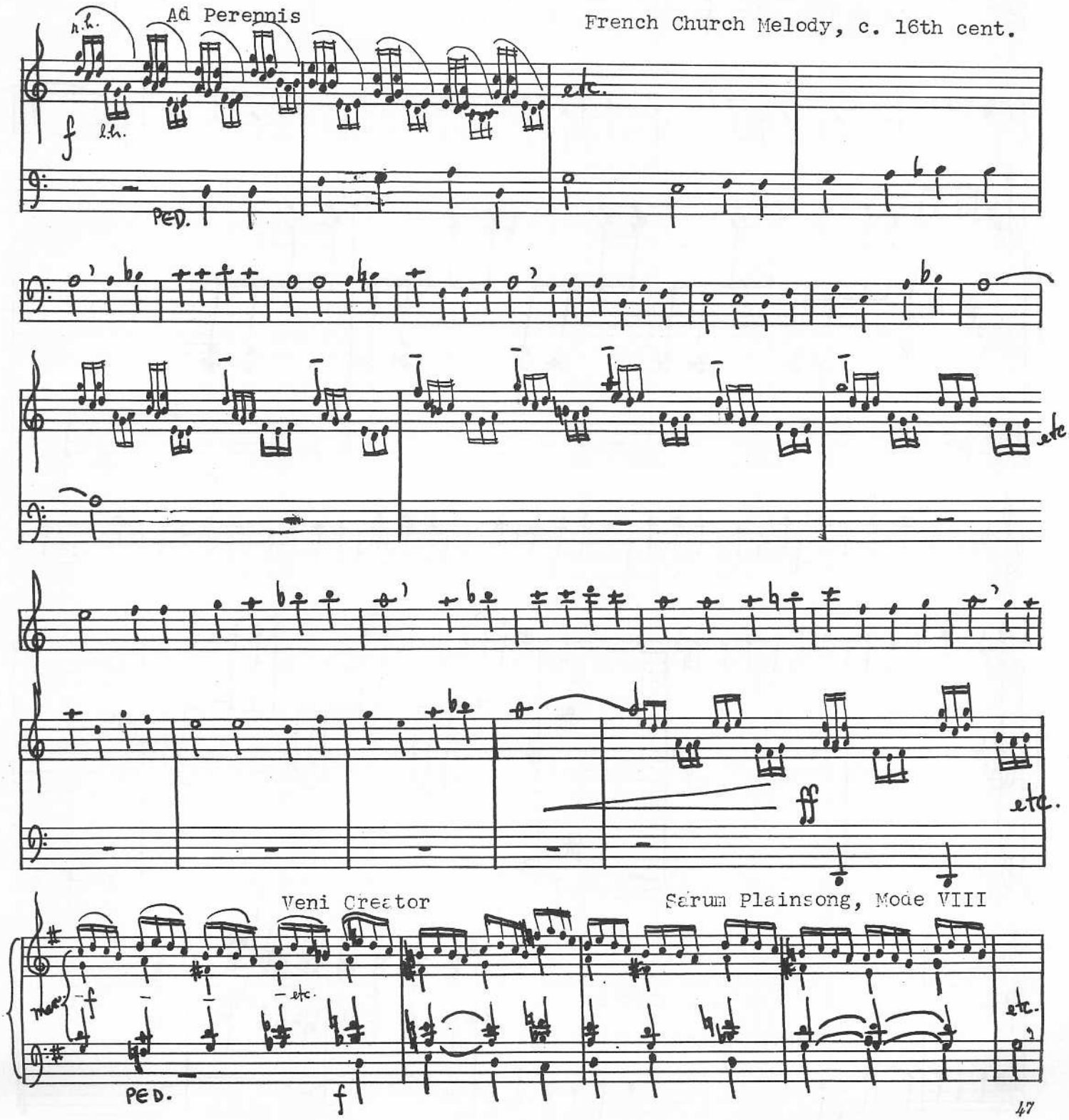


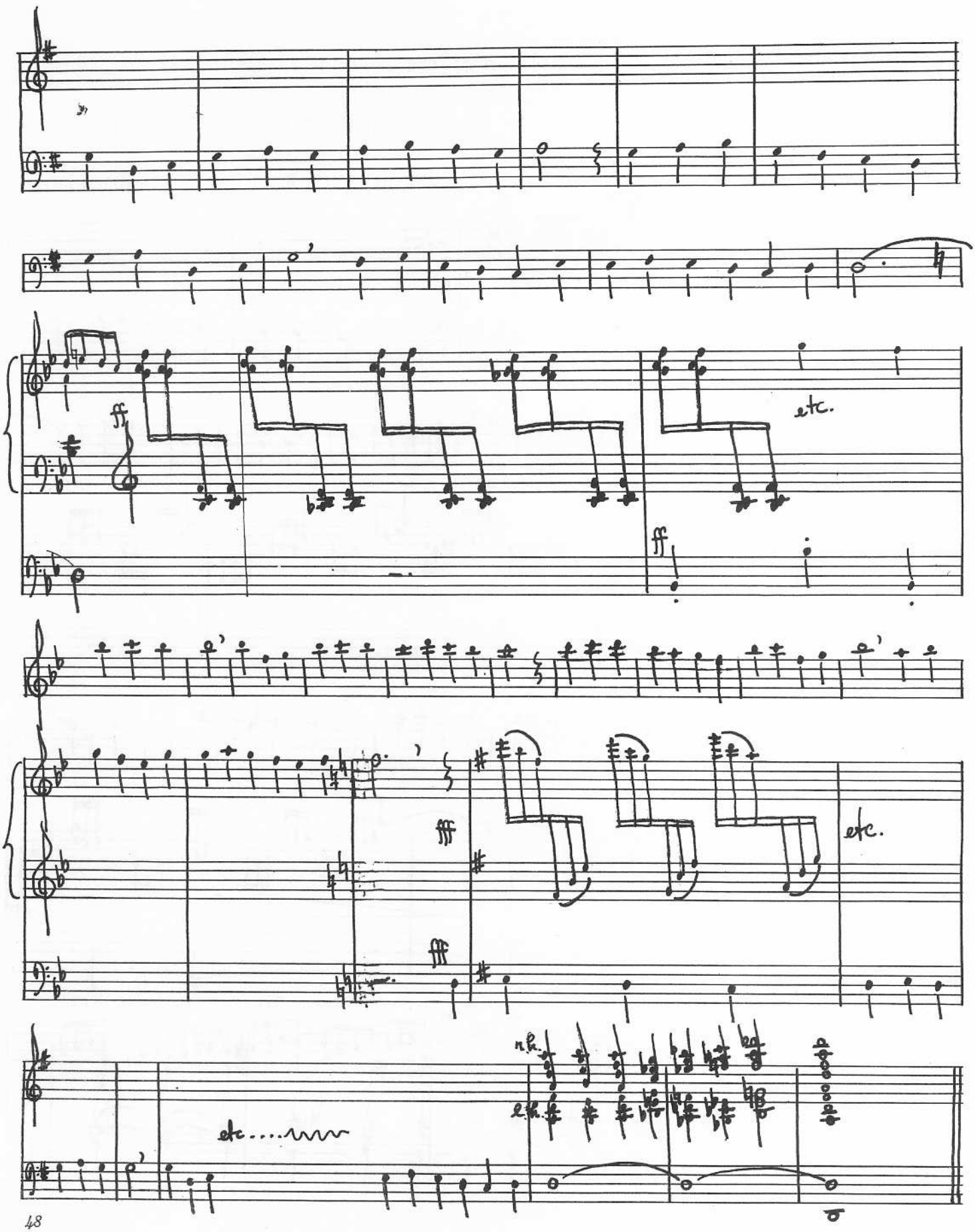

MAN. I.
MAN. II
(Interlude)
(Phrase II)
(Coda)
etc.
Ein' Feste Burg
Melody, Martin Luther, 1529
4-measure interlude
4 measure interlude
interlude
2 to 4 meas.
Coda, 4 meas.

Assignment #35:

1. Improvise the completion of the following examples in toccata style.

2. Invent other toccata figures and apply them to hymntunes.

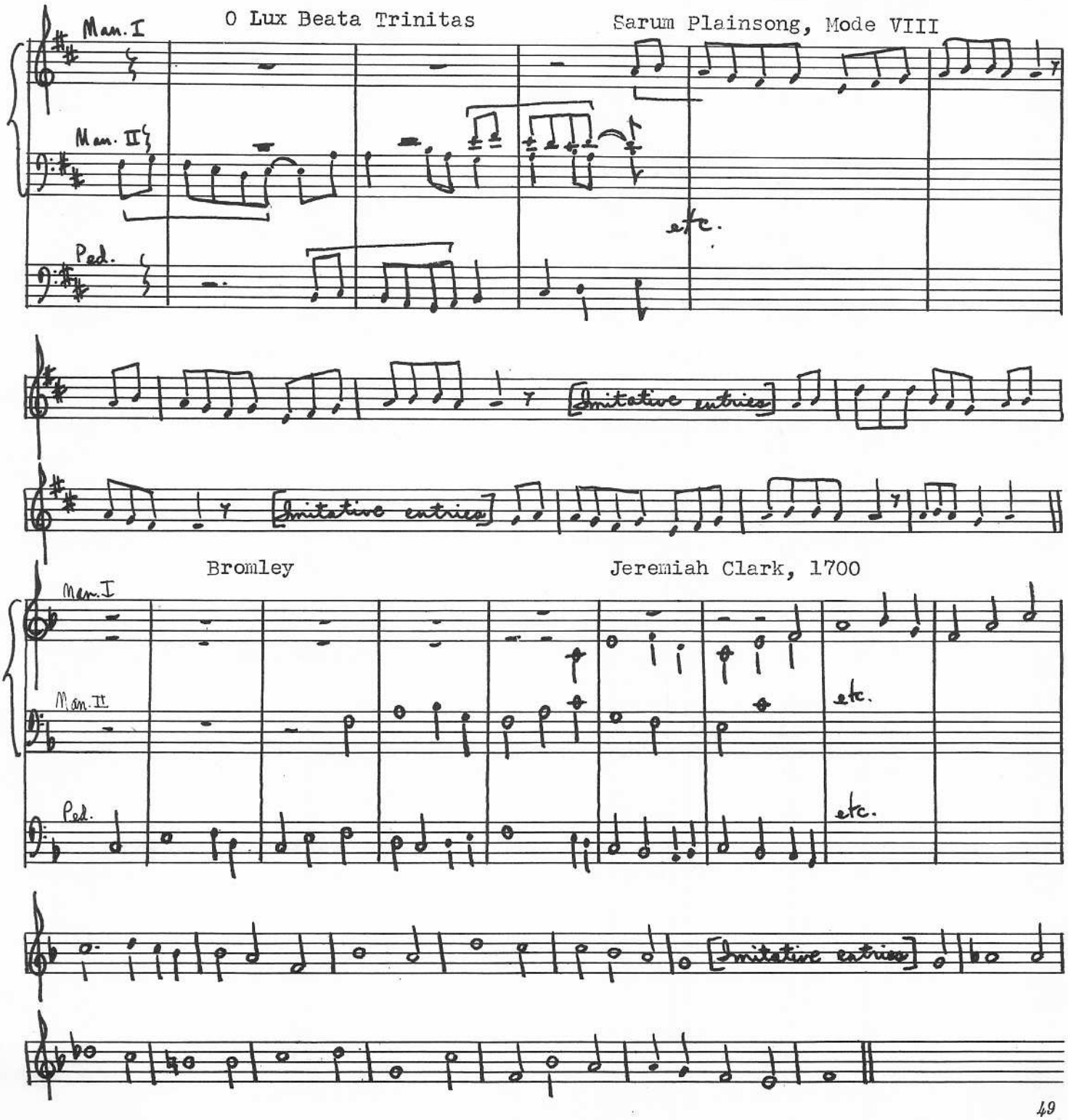



ff
etc.
ff
fff
etc.
fff
etc....
r.h.
l.h.

Assignment #36:

1. Continue the following examples, and treat each phrase with imitative entries of the voices.

2. Select other tunes and treat the voice entries with strict or free imitation.



Assignment #37:

1. Using various combinations of variation techniques described in Assignments #25 through 36, invent forms best suited to hymntunes or themes of your choice.

2. Invent other types of variations and improvise in them.

SHORT ABA FORMS

Improvise in the following short three-part forms on a hymntune or other theme.

Assignment #38:

Short introduction, making use of a melodic and/or rhythmic figure of two to five notes derived from the tune.

A. The tune, with other voices making some use of introductory figure.
Short bridge to a new key.

B. Paraphrase of tune in the new key.
Short bridge to original key.

A. The tune, possibly shortened.
Short coda, making use of the introductory figure.

Assignment #39:

Short introduction, making use of an original melodic and/or rhythmic figure of two to five notes.

A. The tune, accompanied by the introductory figure.
Short bridge to new key.

B. Paraphrase of the tune, making free use of bits and pieces of the theme and modulating through two or three keys to the original key, the last few measures with a dominant pedal point.

A. The tune as a pedal bass with a toccata figure or block harmonies in the manuals.
Short coda, over a tonic pedal, and making brief reference to the introductory figure.

Assignment #40:

A. Free imitative entry of voices, with the tenor entering last with the hymntune ornamented. Each phrase may be separated by a new series of imitative entries of the voices.

B. Voices, entering in free imitation, modulate to another key for interlude, not to exceed part A' in length, in which not all of the voices sound at the same time. Cadence in the dominant key.

A. Shortened free imitative entry of voices, with the hymntune again in the tenor.

Assignment #41:

Introduction, with a toccata figure in manuals, which may be interrupted by any free passage work in manuals and/or pedal.

A. Hymntune enters in pedal, each phrase being separated with the toccata figue continuing.
Short bridge of root-position chords modulating to another key.

B. Paraphrase of hymntune in soprano voice (right hand) with staccato chords in left hand and pedal.
Transition of passage work and bits of the toccata figure modulating to the original key.

A'. Hymntune enters in the pedal, uninterrupted, with the toccata figure adjusted to more and/or quicker notes.
Short coda of massive, root-position chords, ending over a tonic pedal.

Assignment #42:

A. Hymntune exactly as it appears in a standard hymnal.
Short bridge modulating to another key.

B. Free development of thematic material, which may be fairly lengthy when justified by artistic results.
Transition to original key.

A'. Hymntune, reharmonized, or presented in pedal.

Assignment #43:

Invent other formal designs which are basically ABA and improvise in them.

CONCLUSION

The student is reminded that this workbook has merely introduced him to the creative aspect of service playing. He should continue by working in larger forms, especially the great polyphonic forms suited to the organ.

Imagination and disciplined experience will open up countless ways to make use of improvisational techniques both in and out of formal structure. "Out of formal structure" refers to those many times when the service player must improvise an artistic bridge between service elements or must introduce or extend another musical work without upsetting proportion and balance. Sometimes he must improvise without knowing how long he must continue. Again, through experience, he will discover those forms which can most easily be expanded or shortened without disastrous results or without formless meandering.

There is no art without form.