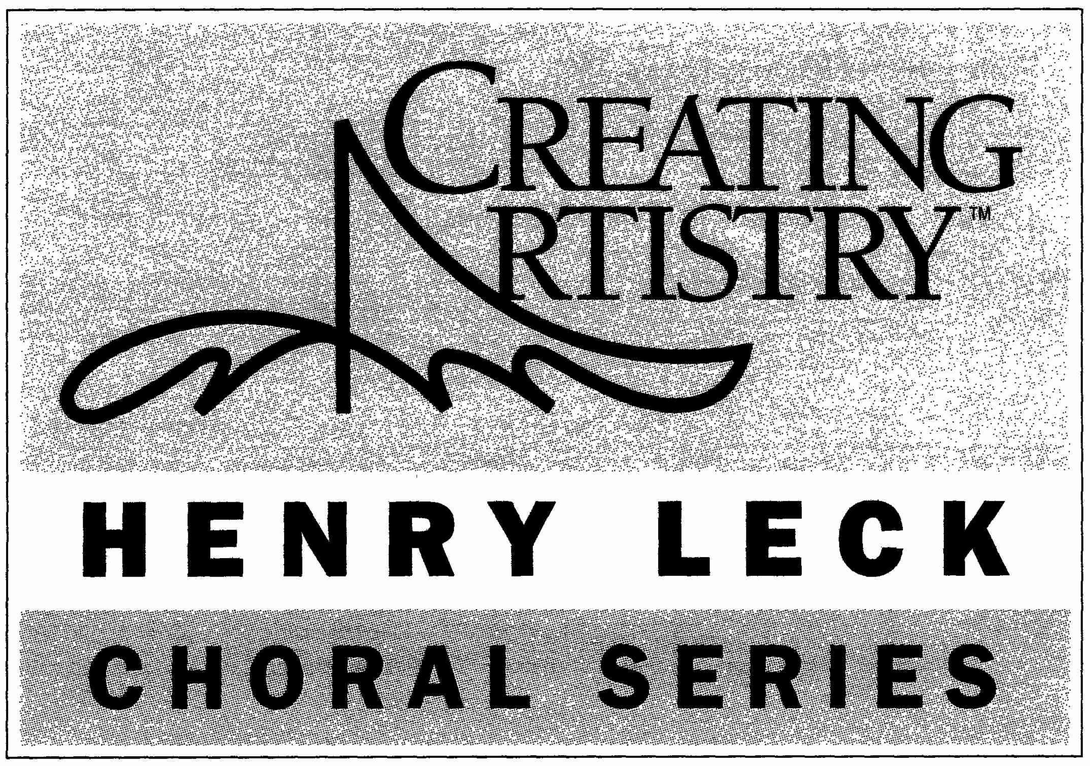
ghtest and B

American Folk Hymn

Arranged by

Ken Berg



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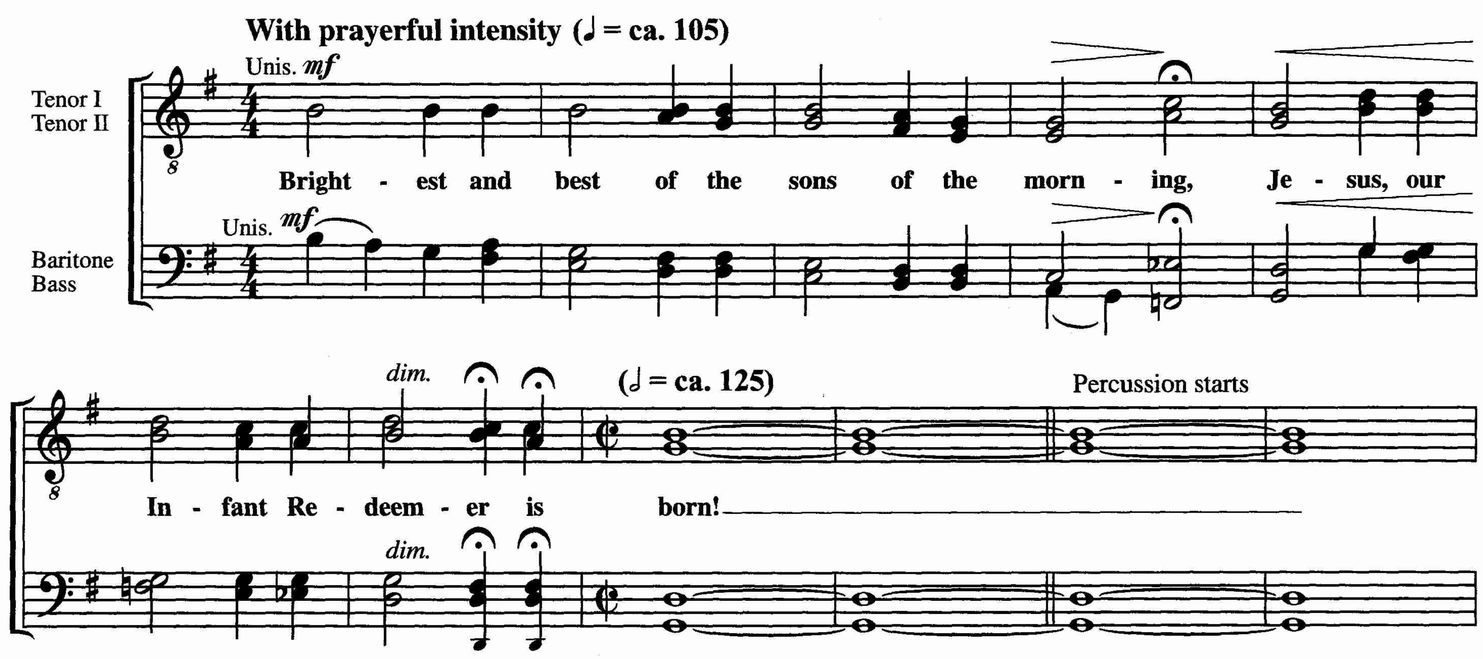
PERFORMANCE NOTES

"Brightest and Best" was written to show off a particularly good men's choir at John Carroll High School in Birmingham, Alabama. It was written in such a way that each of the four classes could learn those parts which suited them best. For example, the men of the Freshman Choir and sophomore Men's Choir sing most effectively in two parts, therefore they were responsible for all of the melody parts and the bass line, especially the "bell tones" in the verses. These occur in m. 37-52, m. 69-84, and m. 85-100 and should be sung with great attention to the *pianissimo* quality of the written accents.

The men of the Junior/Senior choir classes have a little more experience and a few more notes available to them, therefore they took on all four parts in the refrains and all the non-melodic parts in the verses, specifically the big three-part "He is born" chords and the "Gloria" descant in m. 71-84 and m. 85-100. This worked quite well, so that when we put it all together, every part was covered and everyone was comfortable with their parts. Furthermore, no one class had to bear the burden of learning the whole piece, although that certainly can be done. My teaching recommendation is to introduce the refrains first and show how they build from verse to verse. Then go back and introduce Verse 1, and show how each verse adds a little something to make the song grow.

The beginning chorale below is optional. (Directors who would prefer to leave this out should start at the percussion intro.) The chorale should be sung with great tenderness and serenity, but with a twinkle in the eye, because this part doesn't last very long and the singers know that something very exciting is getting ready to happen.



The subtle entrance of the percussion should signal a drastic shift in presentation, and the song simply grows from there. Even in the softer dynamics of the first verse, there should be great energy of text and expression. Be careful in each refrain to go immediately to the "n" on the word "sons." This is a great opportunity to teach the ringing quality of young men's voices. This song also provides a great opportunity to reinforce the concept that *soft does not mean slow*. The dynamic contrasts, especially the *subito piano* in m. 133-136, should really sparkle.

"Brightest and Best" should be sung with reckless abandon; it should radiate great joy and deep feeling. Everyone – the percussionists, the singers and the audience – should get caught up in the spirit of the song and have a tap in their foot and a smile on their face when it's over!

Ken Berg

for the John Carroll Men's Choir

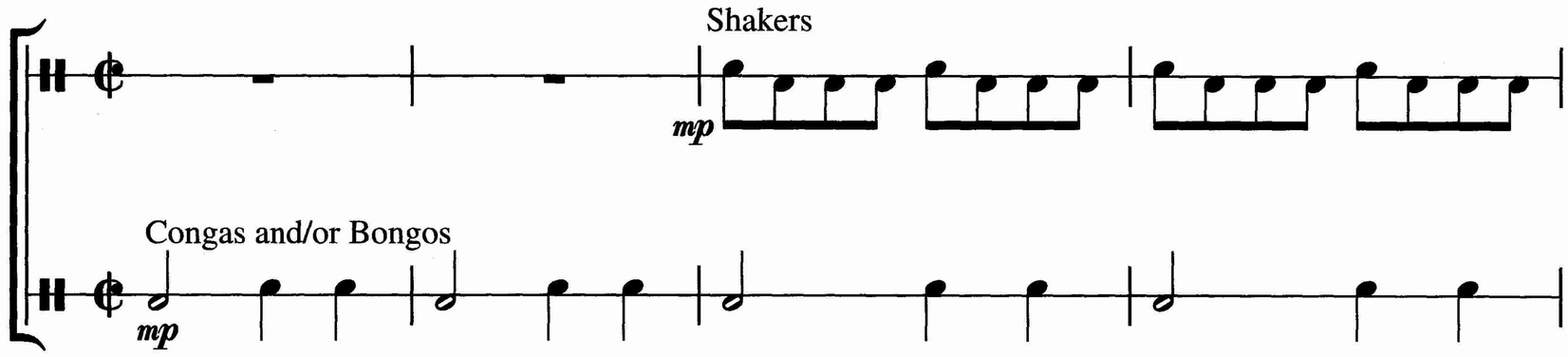
Brightest and Best

For TTBB and Optional Percussion

Performance Time: Approx. 2:45

American Folk Hymn
Arranged by KEN BERG

With an energetic, Gospel-Rock feel (𝅗𝅥 = ca. 125)



5 Percussion: *sim., ad lib. to m. 101*

Tenor I/II
Unis. *mp*

with quiet energy

Bright - est and best ___ of the sons ___ of the morn - ing,

Bar./Bass
Unis. *mp*

5

Dawn on our dark - ness and lend ___ us thine aid.

9

13

Star of the East, ___ the ho - ri - zon a - dorn - ing,

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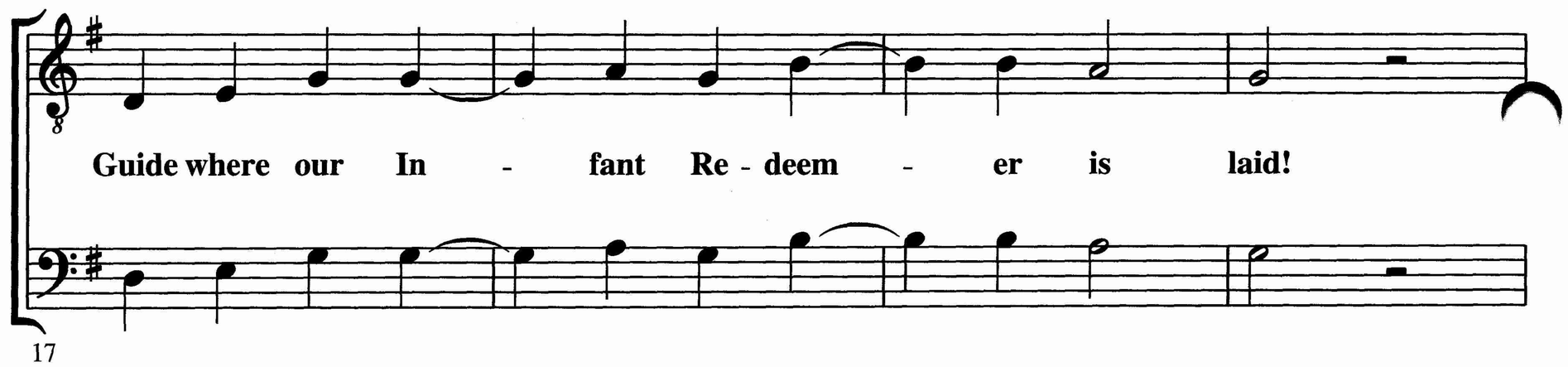
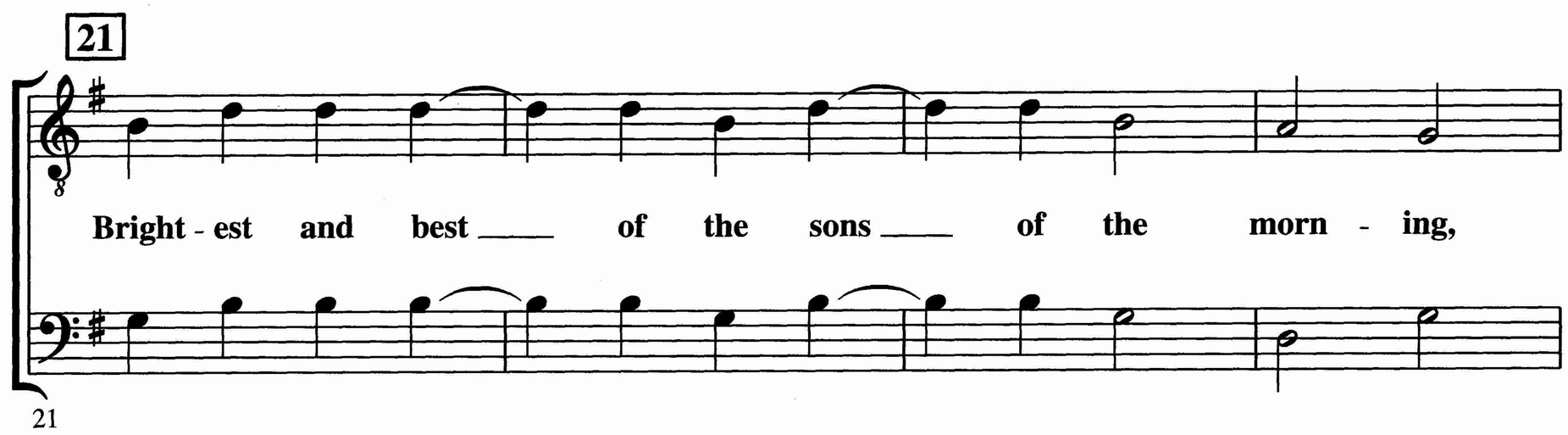
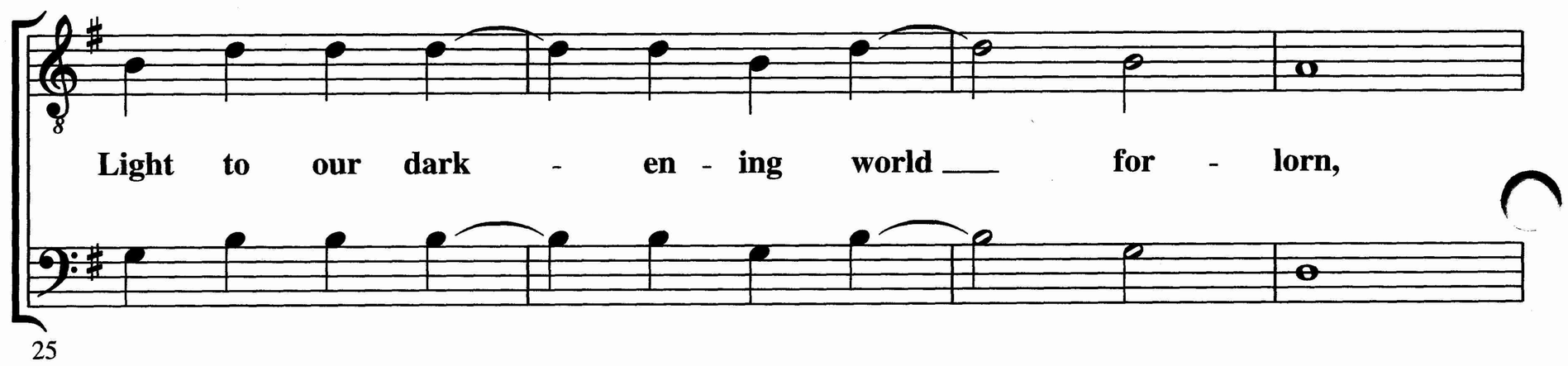
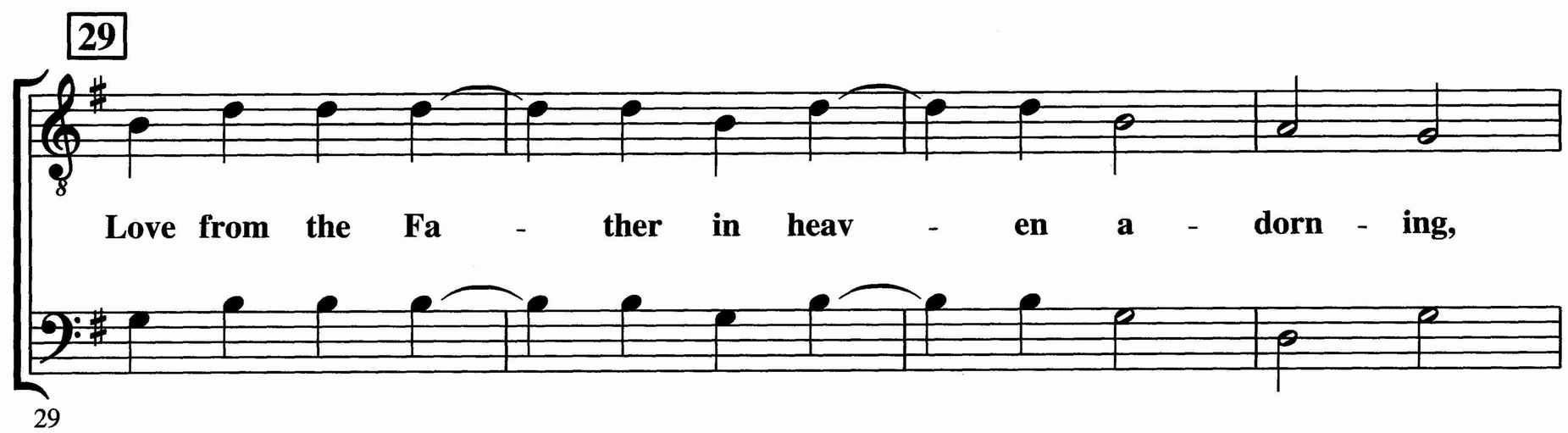
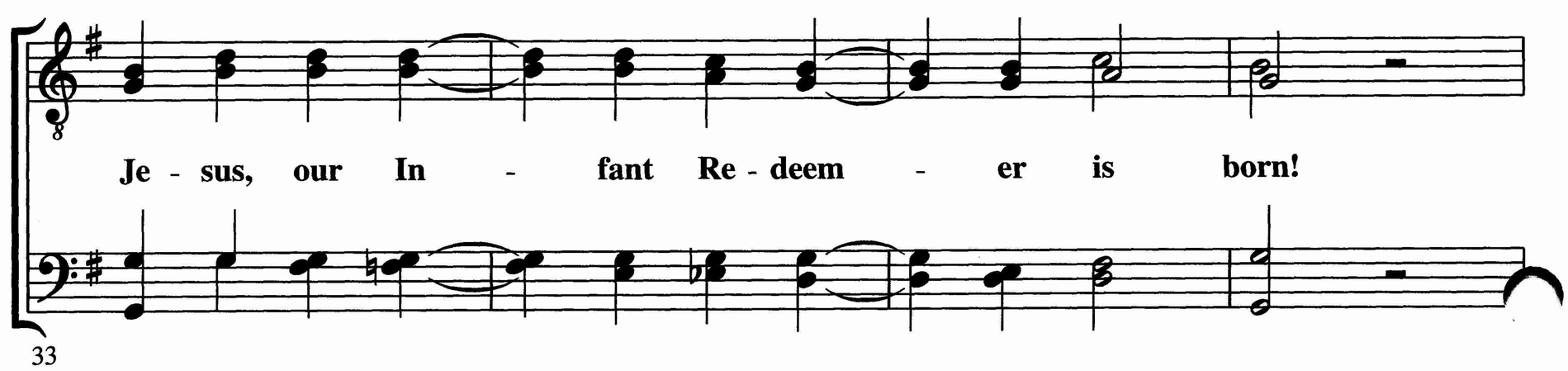
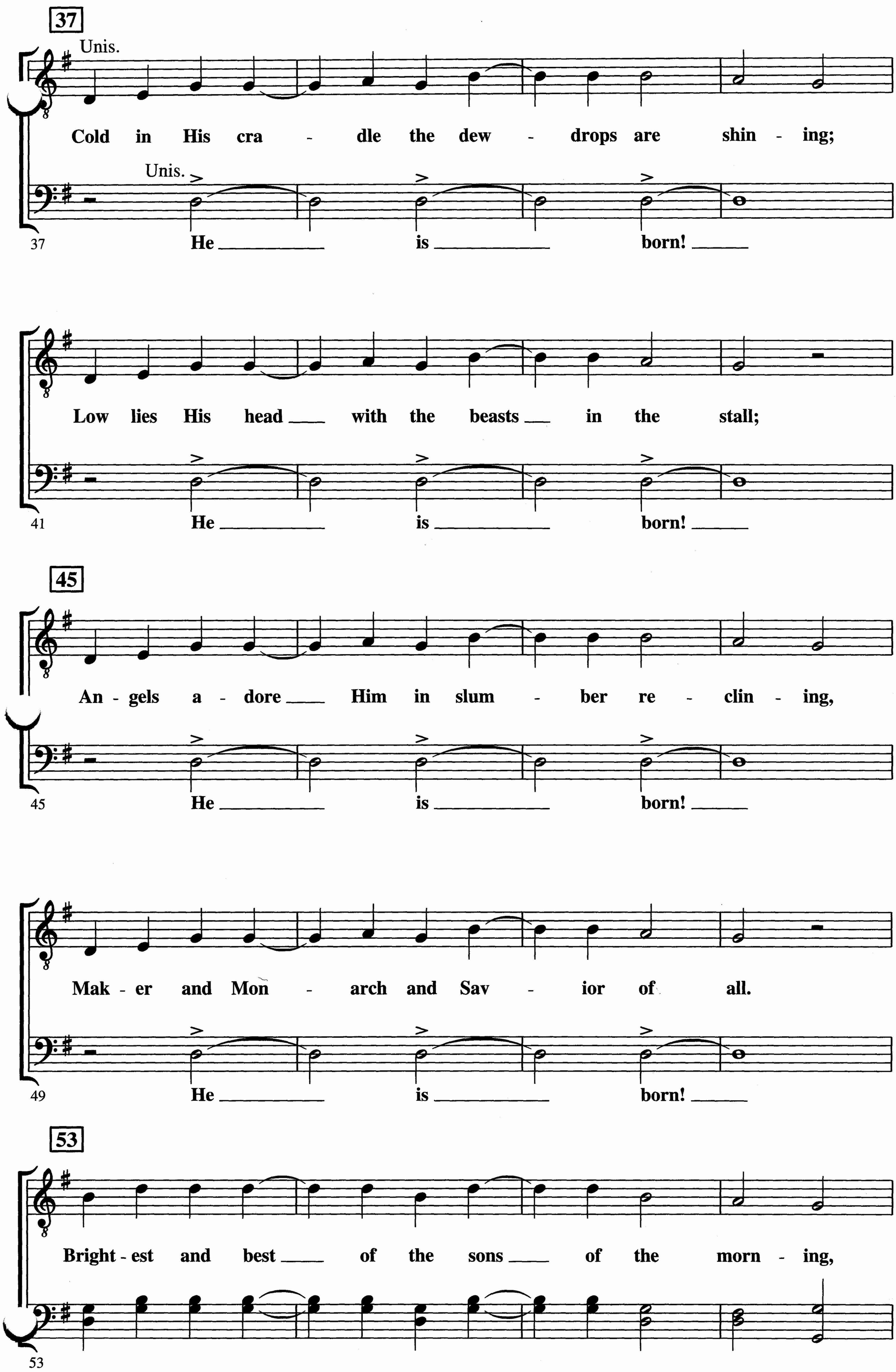

Guide where our In - fant Re - deem - er is laid!
17

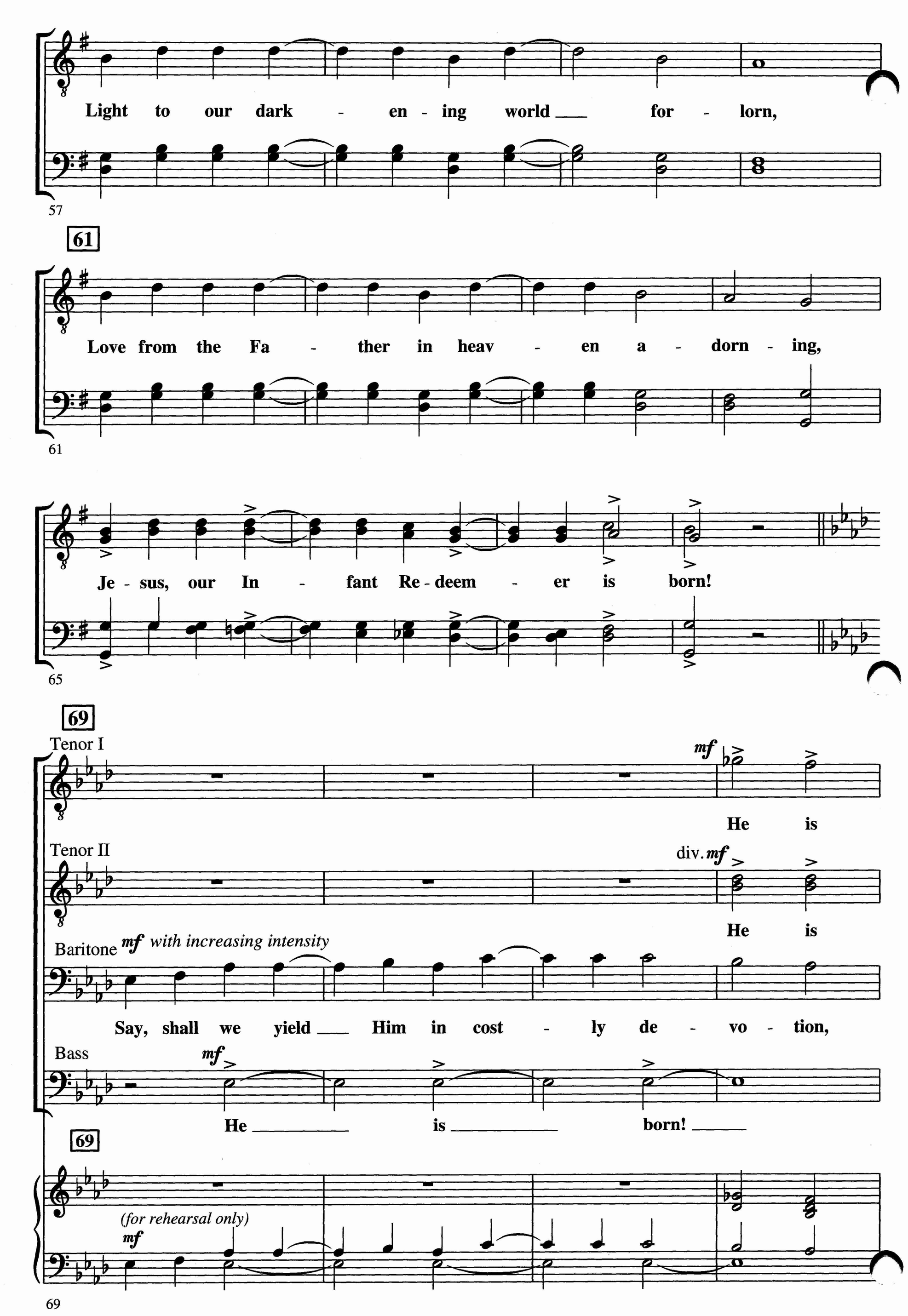

21
Bright - est and best ___ of the sons ___ of the morn - ing,
21


Light to our dark - en - ing world ___ for - lorn,
25


29
Love from the Fa - ther in heav - en a - dorn - ing,
29


Je - sus, our In - fant Re - deem - er is born!
33


37
Unis.
Cold in His cra - dle the dew - drops are shin - ing;
Unis.
He is born!
Low lies His head with the beasts in the stall;
He is born!
45
An - gels a - dore Him in slum - ber re - clin - ing,
He is born!
Mak - er and Mon - arch and Sav - ior of all.
He is born!
53
Bright - est and best of the sons of the morn - ing,


Light to our dark - en - ing world ___ for - lorn,
57
61
Love from the Fa - ther in heav - en a - dorn - ing,
61
Je - sus, our In - fant Re - deem - er is born!
65
69
Tenor I
mf
He is
Tenor II
div. mf
He is
Baritone
mf with increasing intensity
Say, shall we yield ___ Him in cost - ly de - vo - tion,
Bass
mf
He ___ is ___ born! ___
69
(for rehearsal only)
mf
69

born! He is

born! He is

O - dors of E - dom and of - f'rings di - vine,

He _____ is _____ born! _____

73

77

born! He is

born! He is

Gems from the moun - tain and pearls __ from the o - cean,

He _____ is _____ born! _____

77

77

born! He is

born! He is

Myrrh from the for - est and gold from the mine?

He is born! Oh,

81

Percussion: *cresc. poco a poco*

85

Opt. Solo or Small Group

Glo - ri - a!

born! He is

born! He is

Vain - ly we of - fer each am - ple o - bla - tion,

yes! He is born!

85

85

Glo - ri - a!

born! He is

born! He is

Vain - ly with gifts would His fa - vor se - cure,

Yes! He is born!

89

93

Glo - ri - a!

born! He is

born! He is

Rich - er by far is the heart's a - do - ra - tion,

Yes! He is born!

93

93

Glo - ri - a!

born! He's the

born! He's the

Dear - er to God are the pray'rs of the poor!

Yes! He is born!

97

101 Percussion: *tacet to m. 116*

f

Bright - est and best of the sons of the morn - ing,

f

Bright - est and best of the sons of the morn - ing,

f

Bright - est and best of the sons of the morn - ing,

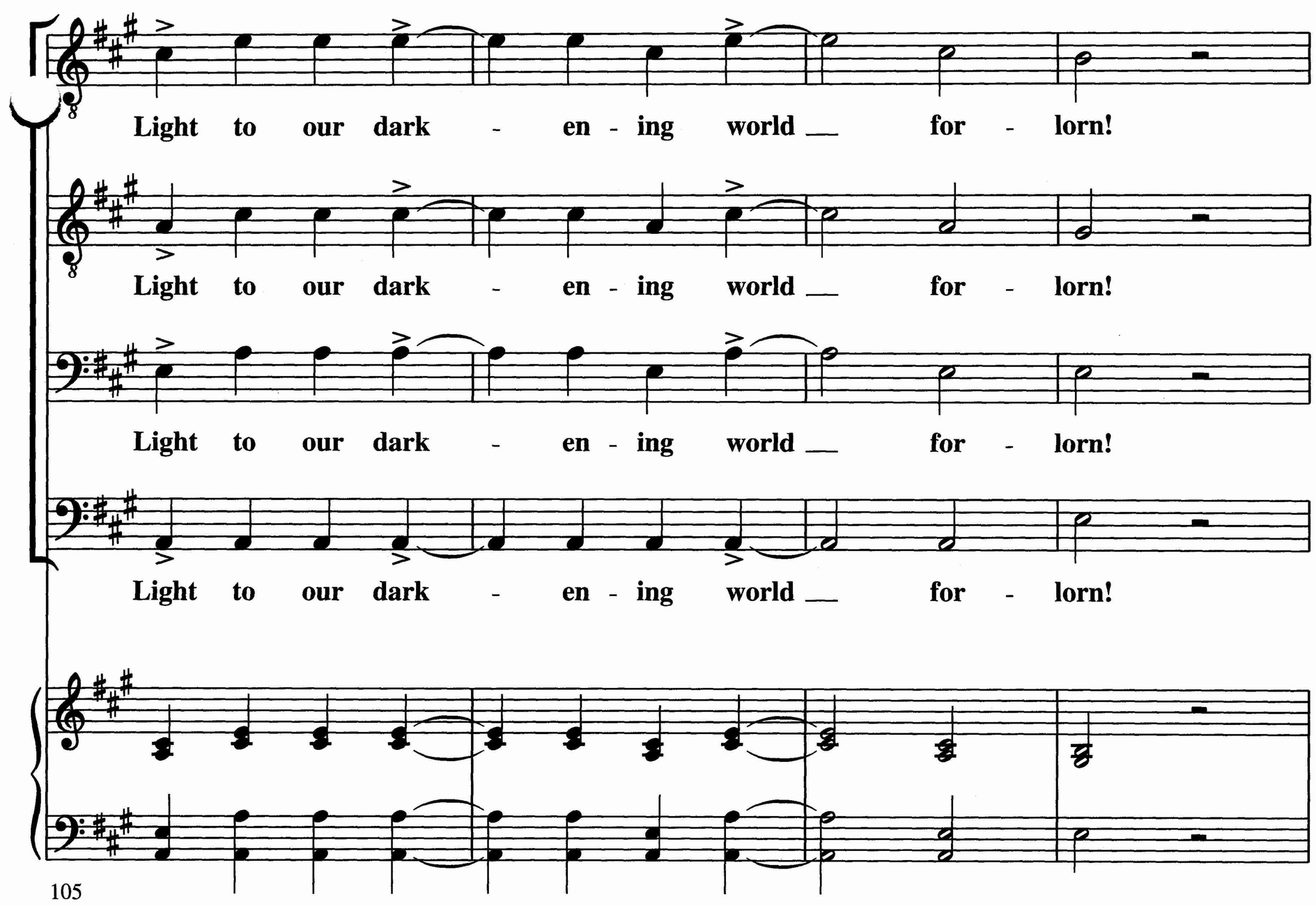
f

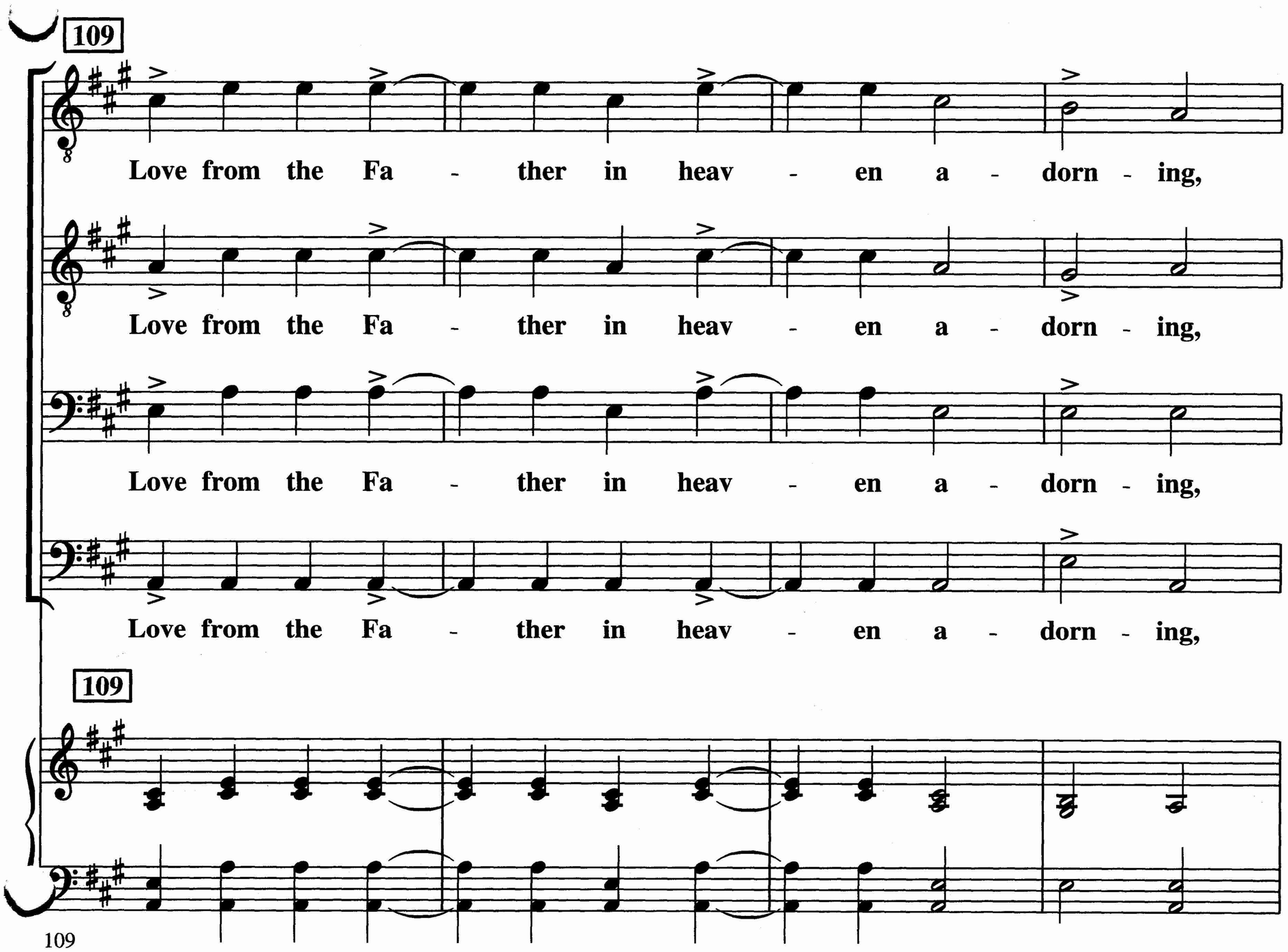
Bright - est and best of the sons of the morn - ing,

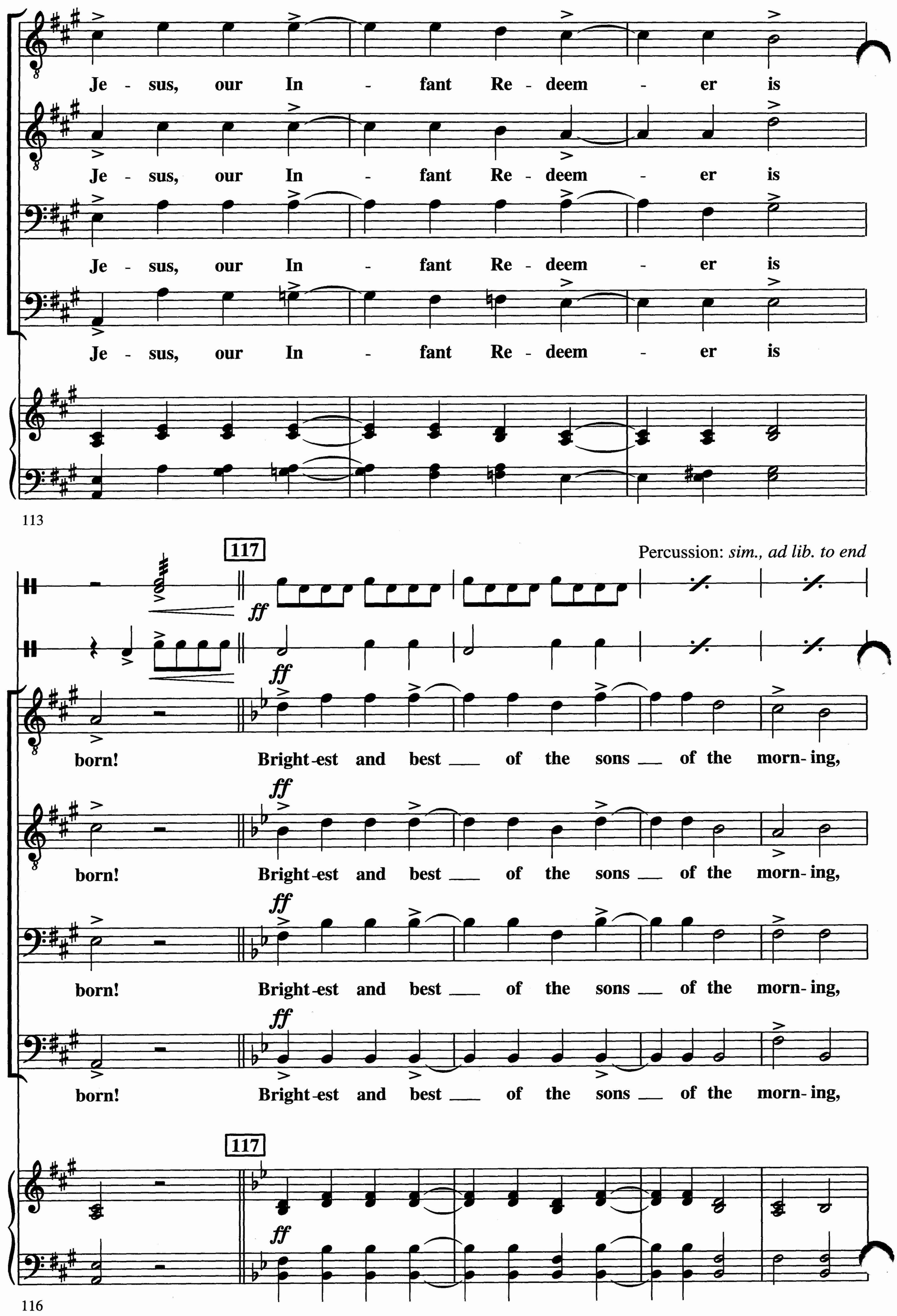
101

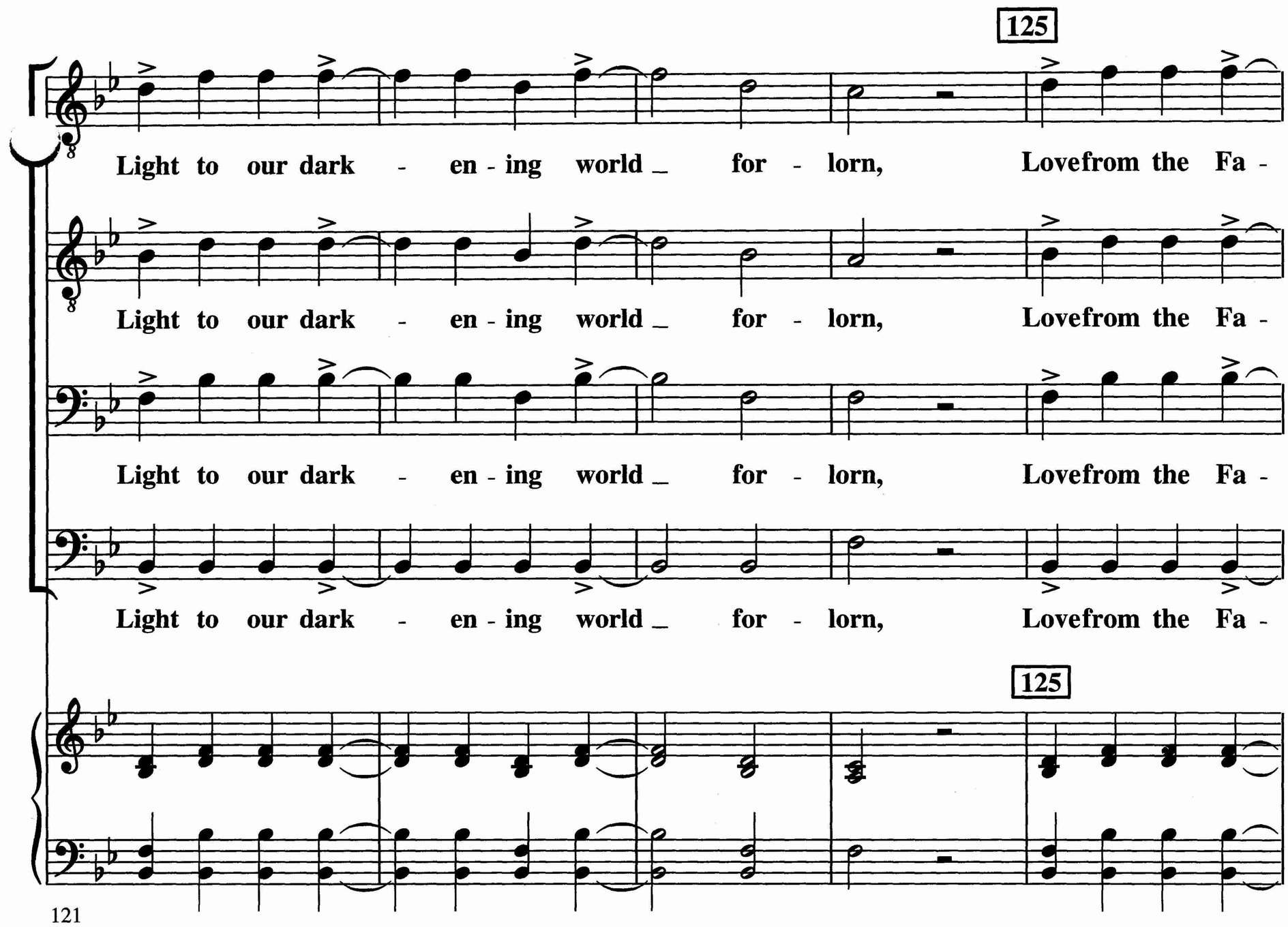
f

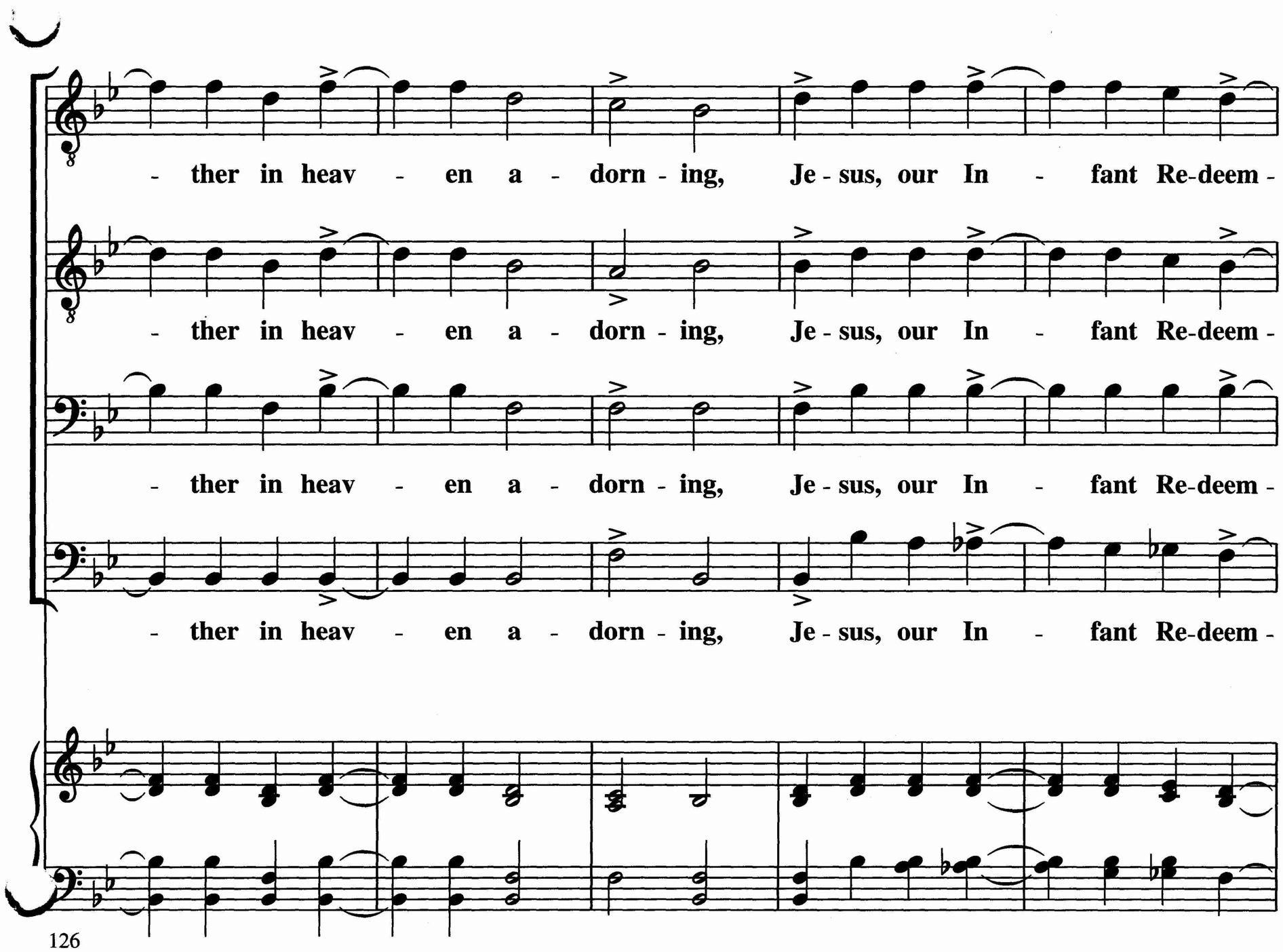
101

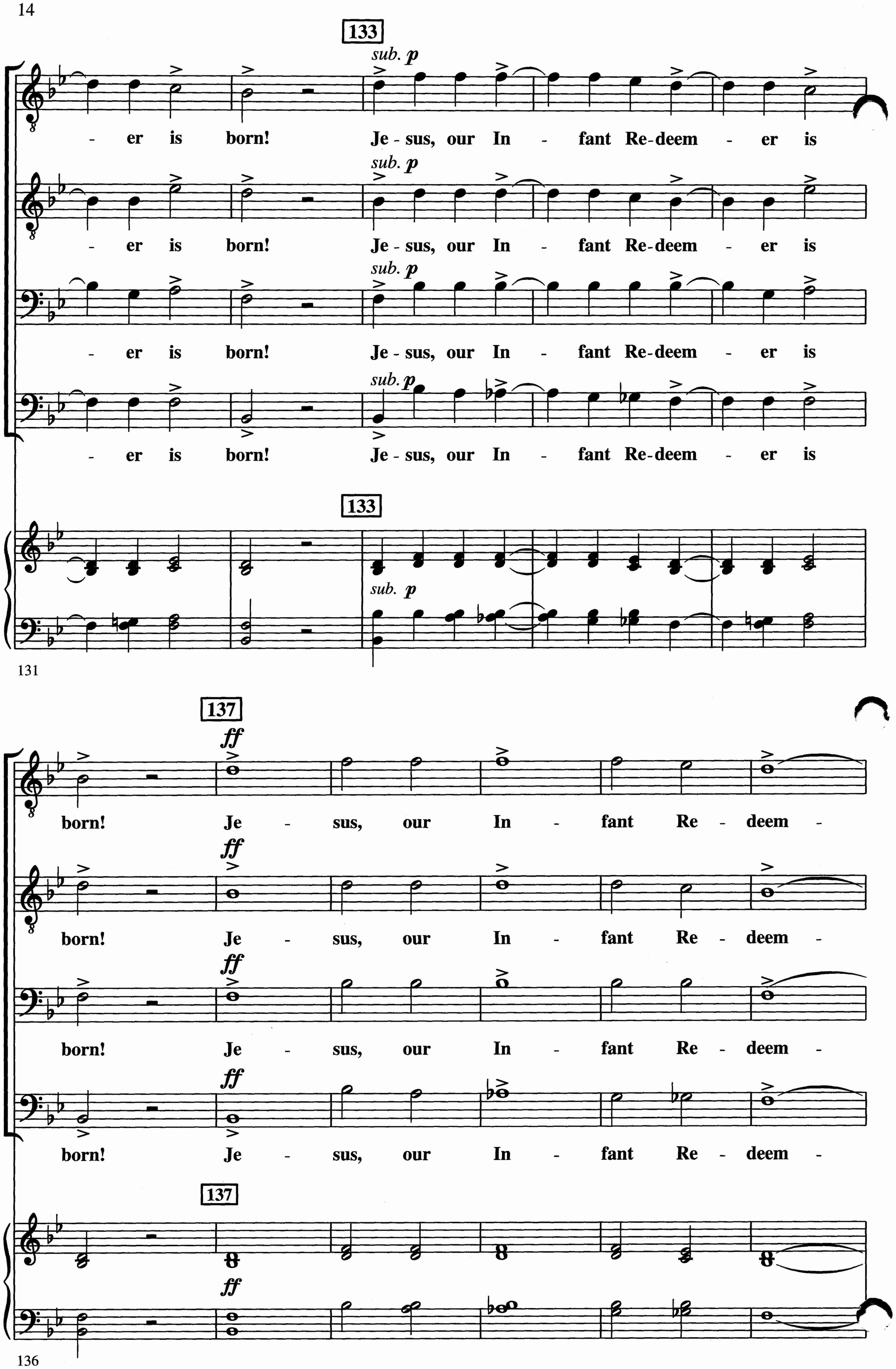

Light to our dark - en - ing world for - lorn!
Light to our dark - en - ing world for - lorn!
Light to our dark - en - ing world for - lorn!
Light to our dark - en - ing world for - lorn!
105

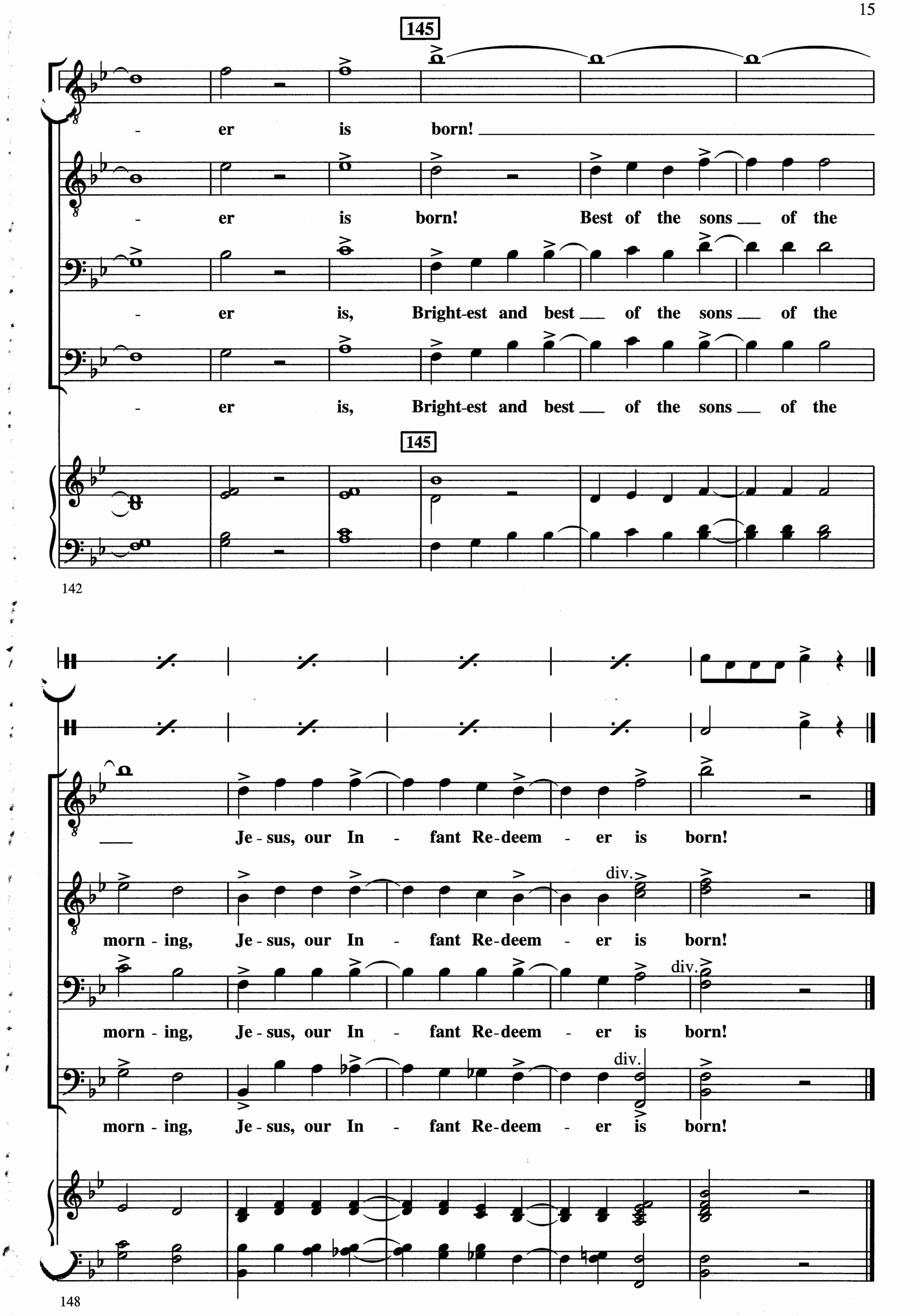

109
Love from the Fa - ther in heav - en a - dorn - ing,
Love from the Fa - ther in heav - en a - dorn - ing,
Love from the Fa - ther in heav - en a - dorn - ing,
Love from the Fa - ther in heav - en a - dorn - ing,
109
109


Je - sus, our In - fant Re - deem - er is
Je - sus, our In - fant Re - deem - er is
Je - sus, our In - fant Re - deem - er is
Je - sus, our In - fant Re - deem - er is
113
117
Percussion: sim., ad lib. to end
ff
born! Bright-est and best of the sons of the morn- ing,
born! Bright-est and best of the sons of the morn- ing,
born! Bright-est and best of the sons of the morn- ing,
born! Bright-est and best of the sons of the morn- ing,
117
116


125
Light to our dark - en - ing world _ for - lorn, Lovefrom the Fa -
Light to our dark - en - ing world _ for - lorn, Lovefrom the Fa -
Light to our dark - en - ing world _ for - lorn, Lovefrom the Fa -
Light to our dark - en - ing world _ for - lorn, Lovefrom the Fa -
125
121


- ther in heav - en a - dorn - ing, Je - sus, our In - fant Re-deem -
- ther in heav - en a - dorn - ing, Je - sus, our In - fant Re-deem -
- ther in heav - en a - dorn - ing, Je - sus, our In - fant Re-deem -
- ther in heav - en a - dorn - ing, Je - sus, our In - fant Re-deem -
126


133
sub. p
- er is born! Je - sus, our In - fant Re-deem - er is
sub. p
- er is born! Je - sus, our In - fant Re-deem - er is
sub. p
- er is born! Je - sus, our In - fant Re-deem - er is
sub. p
- er is born! Je - sus, our In - fant Re-deem - er is
133
sub. p
131
137
ff
born! Je - sus, our In - fant Re - deem -
ff
born! Je - sus, our In - fant Re - deem -
ff
born! Je - sus, our In - fant Re - deem -
ff
born! Je - sus, our In - fant Re - deem -
137
ff
136


145
- er is born!
- er is born! Best of the sons of the
- er is, Bright-est and best of the sons of the
- er is, Bright-est and best of the sons of the
145
142
Je - sus, our In - fant Re-deem - er is born!
div.
morn - ing, Je - sus, our In - fant Re-deem - er is born!
div.
morn - ing, Je - sus, our In - fant Re-deem - er is born!
div.
morn - ing, Je - sus, our In - fant Re-deem - er is born!
148