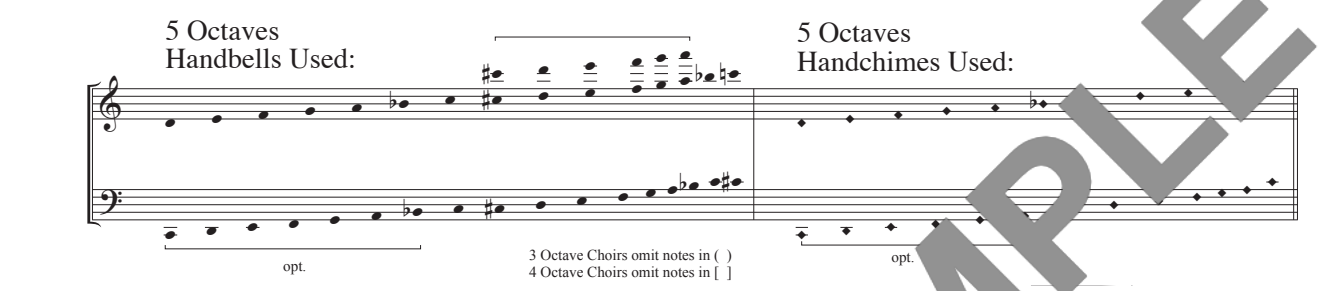
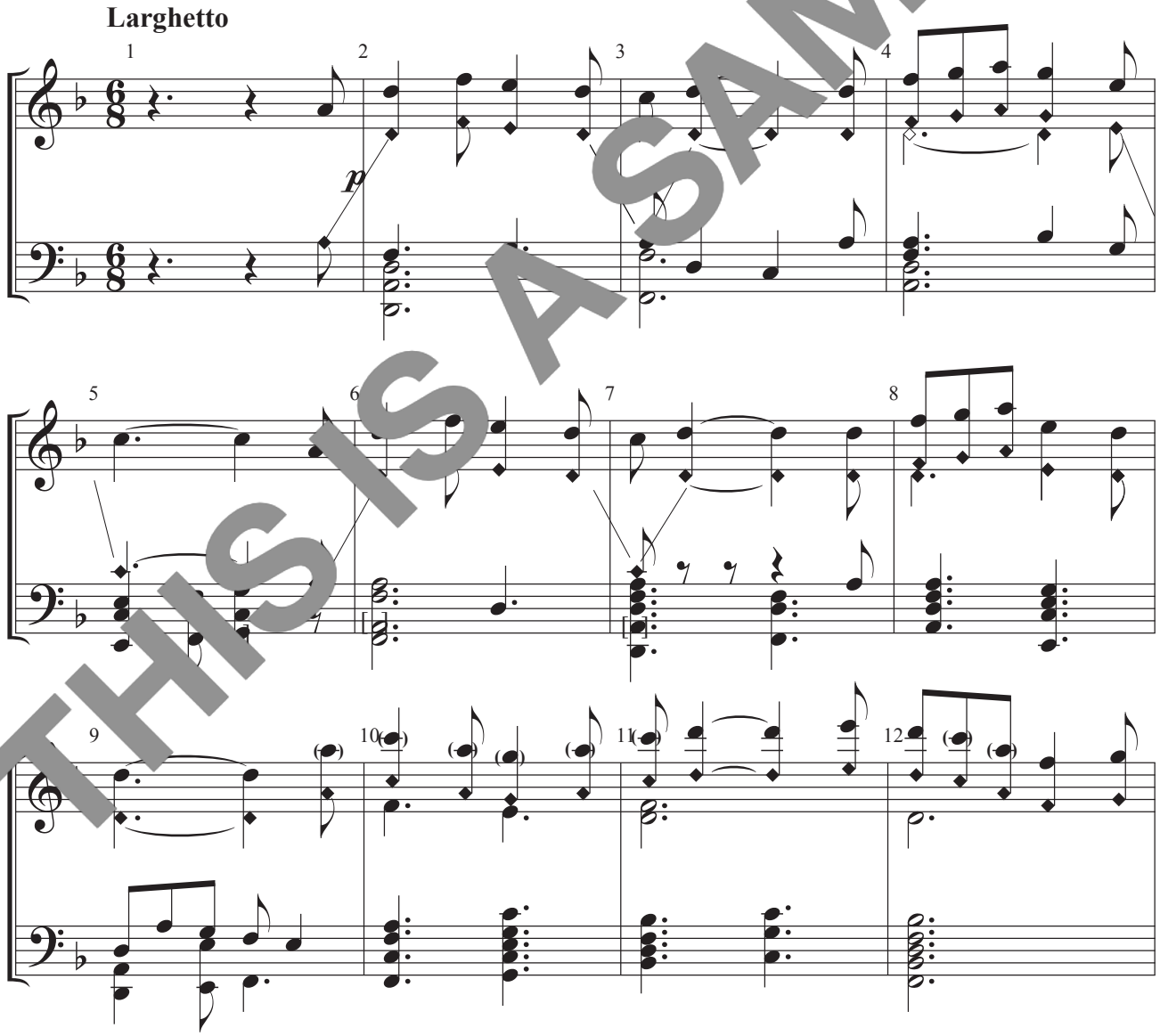
That Night in Bethlehem

"Don Oíche Úd i mBeithil" (trad. Irish title)

Traditional Irish
arr. David Burrows





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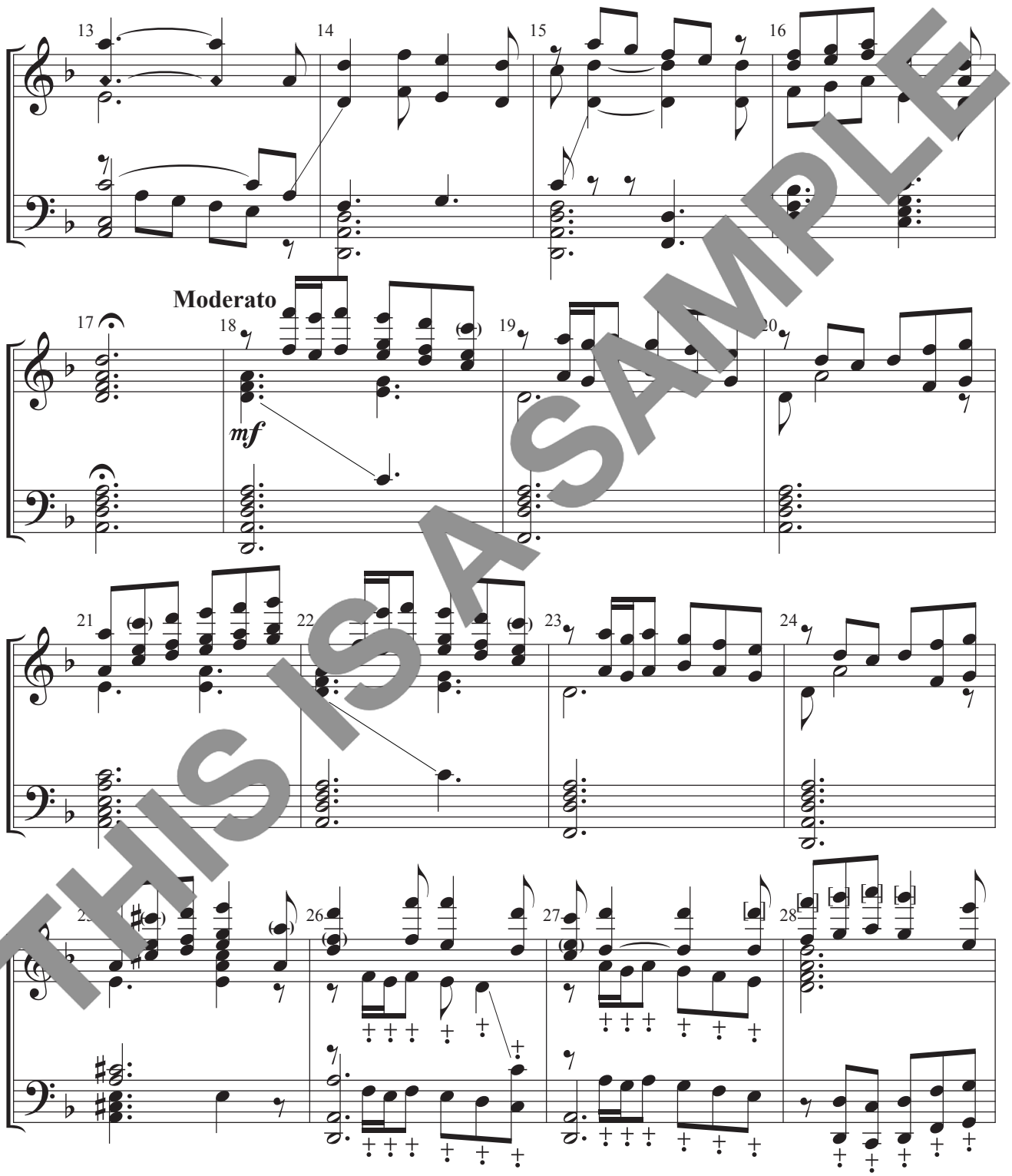

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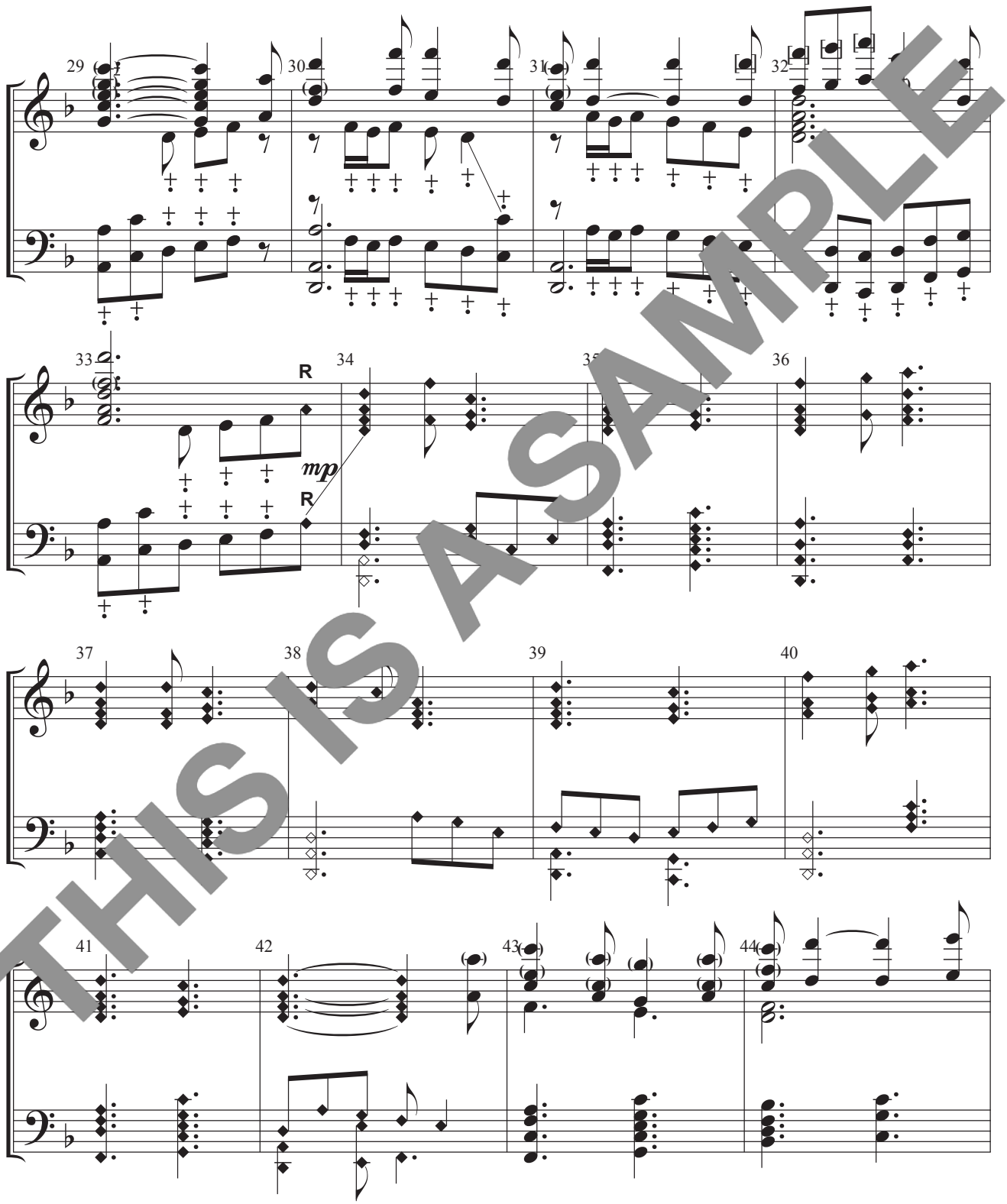

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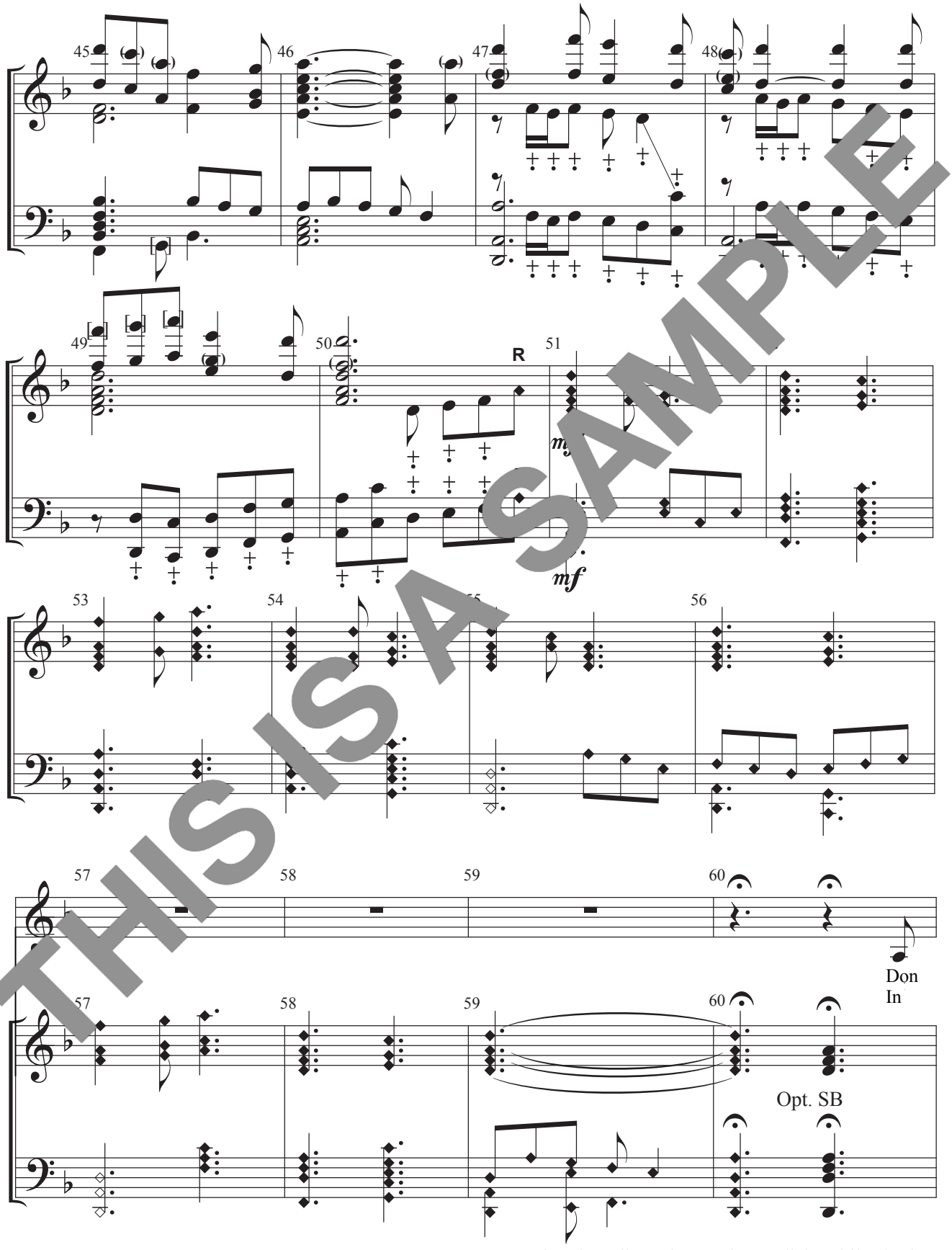

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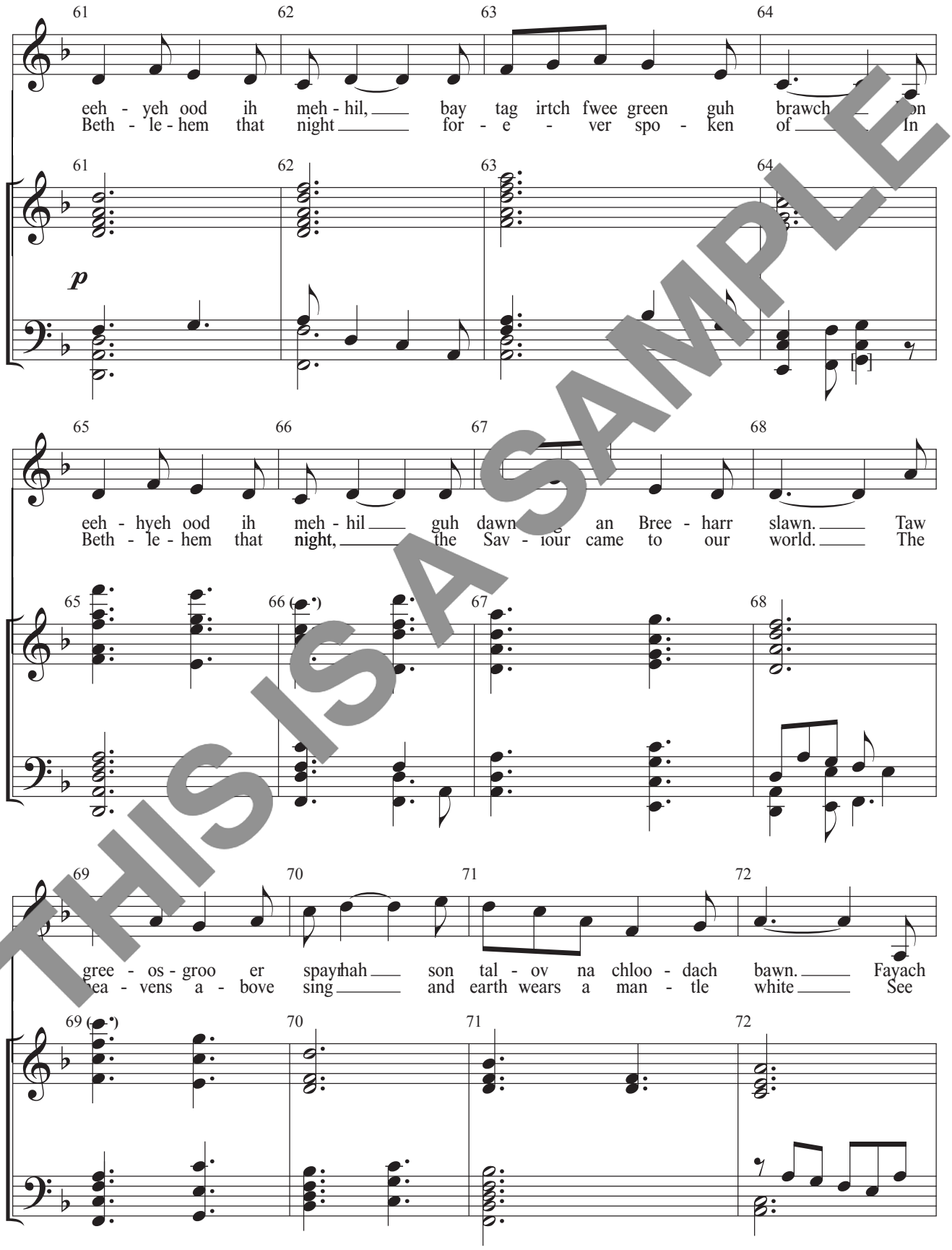
* Optional reading of poem in English while singing bells hold chord. Voice and bells then resume, singing in either English or Irish. A melody instrument may substitute for the voice.

Larghetto



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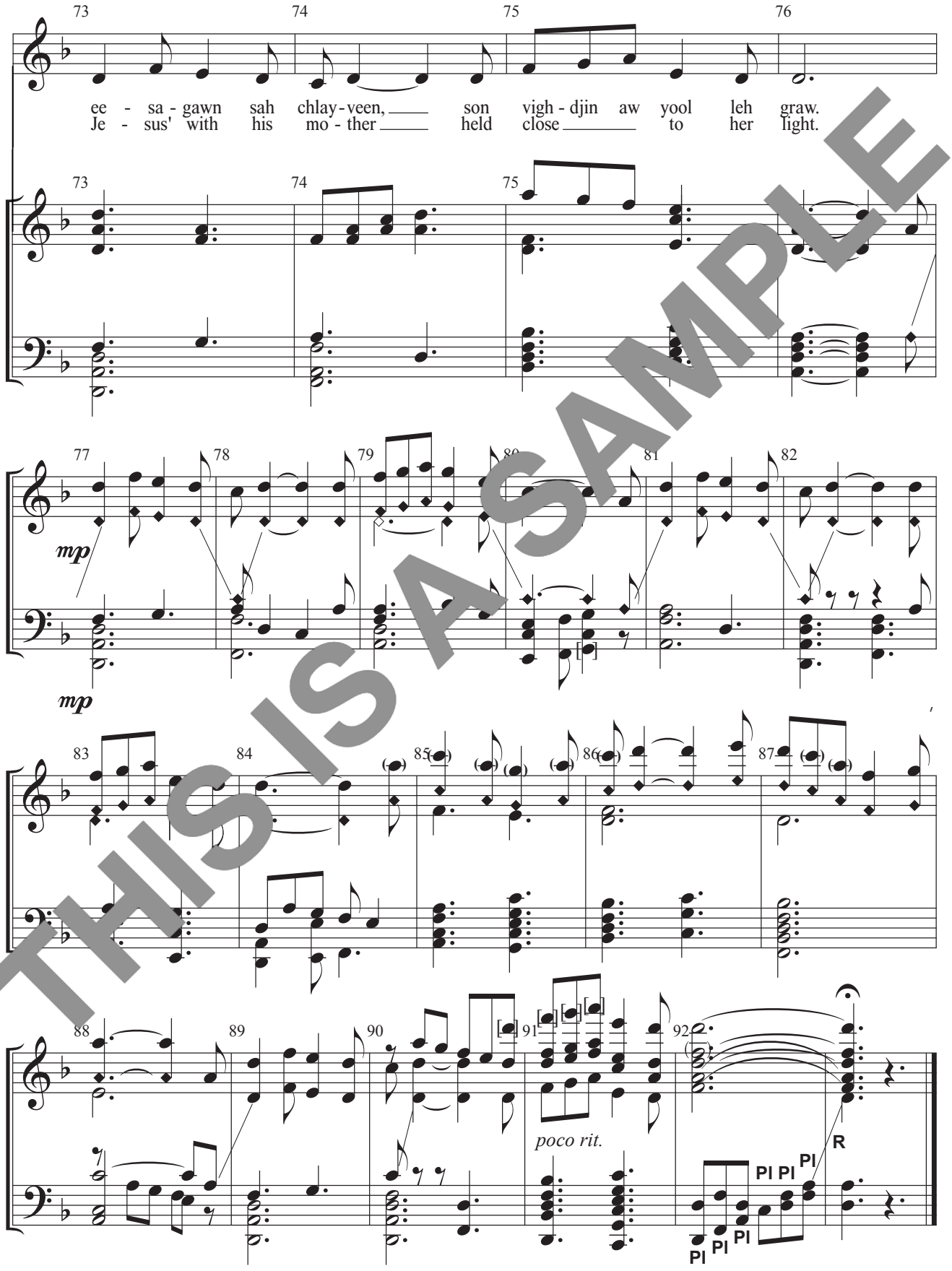

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Don Oíche Úd i mBeithil is a popular, traditional Irish Christmas Carol. The English text for the singer in the score is a poetic interpretation to fit the meter, by the arranger David Burrows, who first encountered the piece through his Celtic harp studies. The Irish phoenetic syllables in the score are compliments of David Monks and are used with permission. Monks' version of this piece is in the Choral Public Domain Libary (cpdl.org). This piece is usually set in 4/4 time and has been recorded by Irish bands, including The Chieftans and Celtic Woman.

Don oiche ud i mBeithil

Don oiche ud i mBeithil,
beidh tagairt ar ghrian go brach
Don oiche ud i mBeithil,
go dtainig an Briathar slan
Ta griosghrua ar speartha,
's an talamh 'na chludach ban
Feach iosagan sa chleibhin,
's an Mharighdean in aoibhneas gra

Ar leacain lom an tsleibhe,
go nglacann na haoiri scaa
Nuari in oscailt gheal na speire,
ta teachtaire Dhe sa lan

Cead glor anois don Athair,
i bhFlaith as thuas go hard
Is feasta fos ar talamh,
dhara, deam-mhein siochain

—Attributed to Aodh Mach Aingil
Mac Cathmbaoil (1571-1626),
poet and Theologian

Of that far off night in Bethlehem
There will be sunny mention forever
of that far off night in Bethlehem,
When the Word arrived safely;
there is a ruddy cheek skyward
and the ground is under a white blanket;
Look at little Jesus in the wicker basket
and the Virgin suckling Him with love.

On the bare sides of the mountain
where the shepherds take shelter
when in a bright opening of the sky
God’s messenger is to be found;

a hundred glories now to the Father,
in the high Heavens above!
and forever after on the earth
Peace to men of good will!

—Literal translation, by Gael Glas,
used with permission.

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