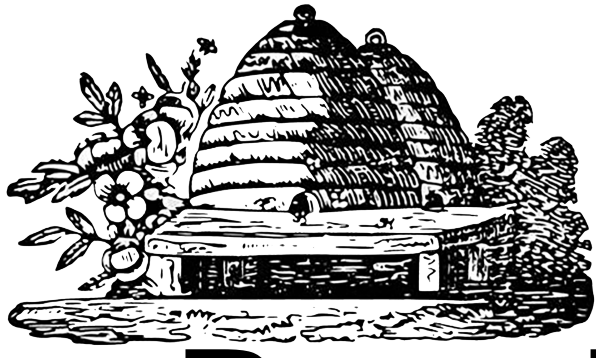
THE BUSY BEE, Raybon
SBMP 1796

SA or TB
piano



The Busy Bee

words by
Isaac Watts

music by
C. Leonard Raybon

Santa Barbara Music Publishing, Inc.

sbmp.com

About the composer

C. Leonard Raybon [b. 1970] is Associate Professor of Music and Director of Choirs at Tulane University. He is also the founder of Sacred Nine Project (sacrednine.com), where he engages with music, texts, and events from an earlier America to help shape a future one. For example, Raybon curated and composed a concert for UNC Chapel Hill, called *Sacred Nine Project: The Mending Sampler*, a kind of companion to John Wood Sweet's book, *The Sewing Girl's Tale*, about Lanah Sawyer, the first woman in the United States to sue for sexual assault (1793). He also created concert for The American Civil War Museum in Richmond, VA, about the infamous Libby Prison. In November 2023, Raybon's article, "Oh Don't You Want to Go," about the issue of whites singing African American Spirituals, was published in *Journal of Singing*. Raybon also hosts Sacred Nine Project Podcast.

About the poet

Isaac Watts was a prolific British poet and writer, best known for hymns like "Joy to the World" and "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross." He also wrote moral poetry, like *Divine Songs Attempted in Easy Language for the Use of Children* (1715), also called *Divine and Moral Songs*, widely circulated in England as well as the United States from its genesis throughout the entire 19th century. Since no child in England or America could have escaped *Divine and Moral Songs* at home or at school, Raybon originally set this poem for *Sacred Nine Project: The Mending Sampler,* to muse about the education of the survivor, Lanah Sawyer, mentioned above. "Against Idleness and Mischief" is one of the lighter texts in the volume, though it clearly points to a shame-based, "Idle hands are the Devil's workshop" mentality. This piece can serve as a playful way to begin a conversation about the kinds of Puritanical strongholds that were established early in our country that can still be observed. Incidentally, the year of this publication marks Watts' 350th birth year.

The Busy Bee

(original title: "Against Idleness and Mischief")
Isaac Watts (1674-1748)
From *Divine Songs Attempted in Easy Language for the Use of Children* (1715)

How doth the little busy Bee
Improve each shining Hour,
And gather Honey all the day
From every opening Flow'r!

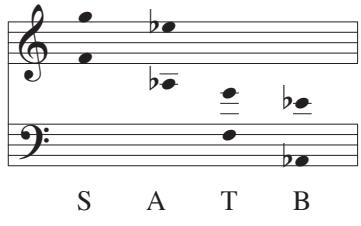
How skillfully she builds her Cell!
How neat she spreads the Wax!
And labours hard to store it well
With the sweet Food she makes.

In Works of Labour or of Skill
I would be busy too:
For Satan finds some Mischief still
For idle Hands to do.

In Books, or Work, or healthful Play
Let my first Years be past,
That I may give for every Day
Some good Account at last.

(from the 2nd edition, where all nouns were capitalized)

Ranges

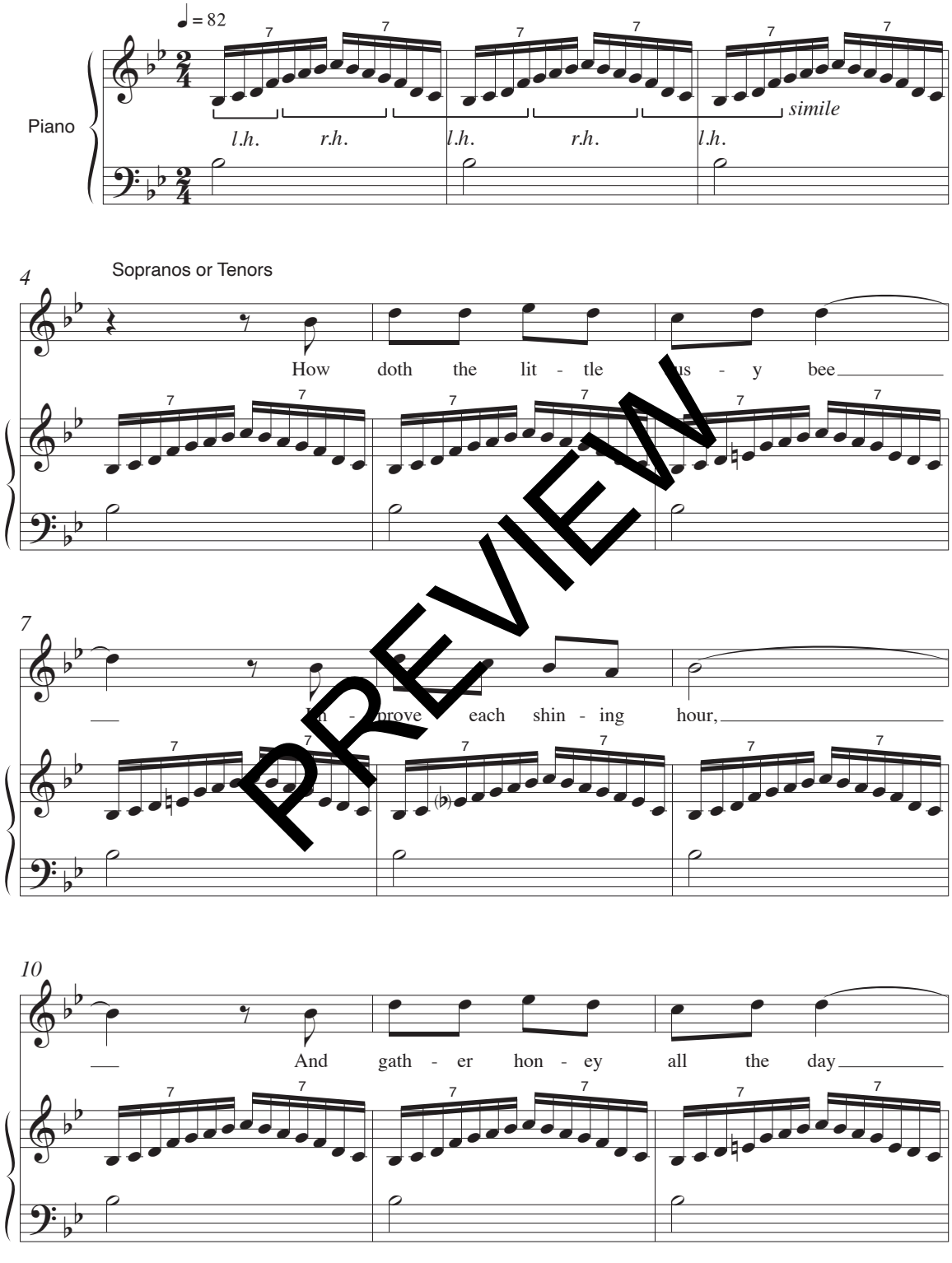


recording and rehearsal tracks available at sbmp.com

The Busy Bee

Isaac Watts
from *Divine and Moral Songs for Children,* 1715

C. Leonard Raybon



PREVIEW

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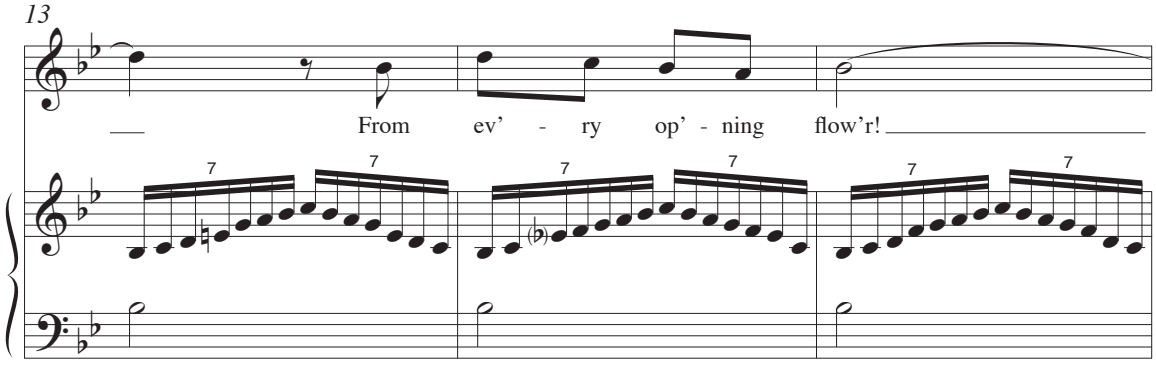
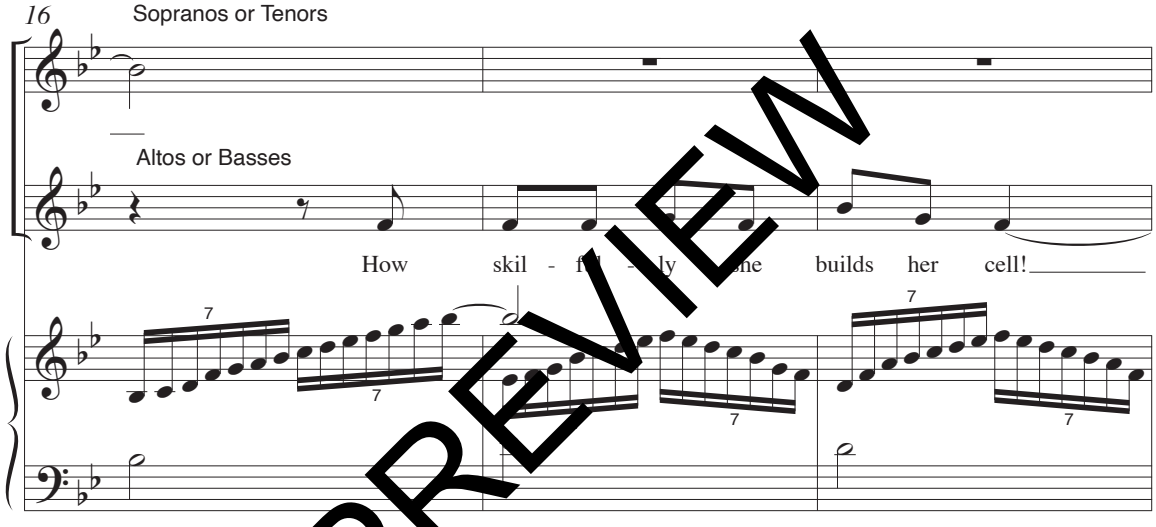

13
From ev' - ry op' - ning flow'r!


16
Sopranos or Tenors
Altos or Basses
How skil - f[illegible] ly [illegible]e builds her cell!

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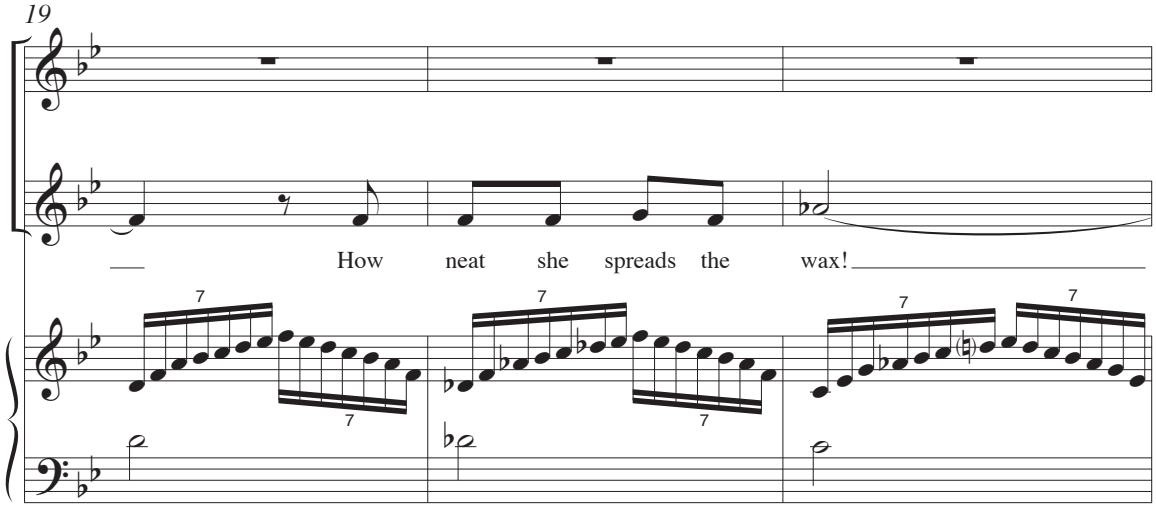
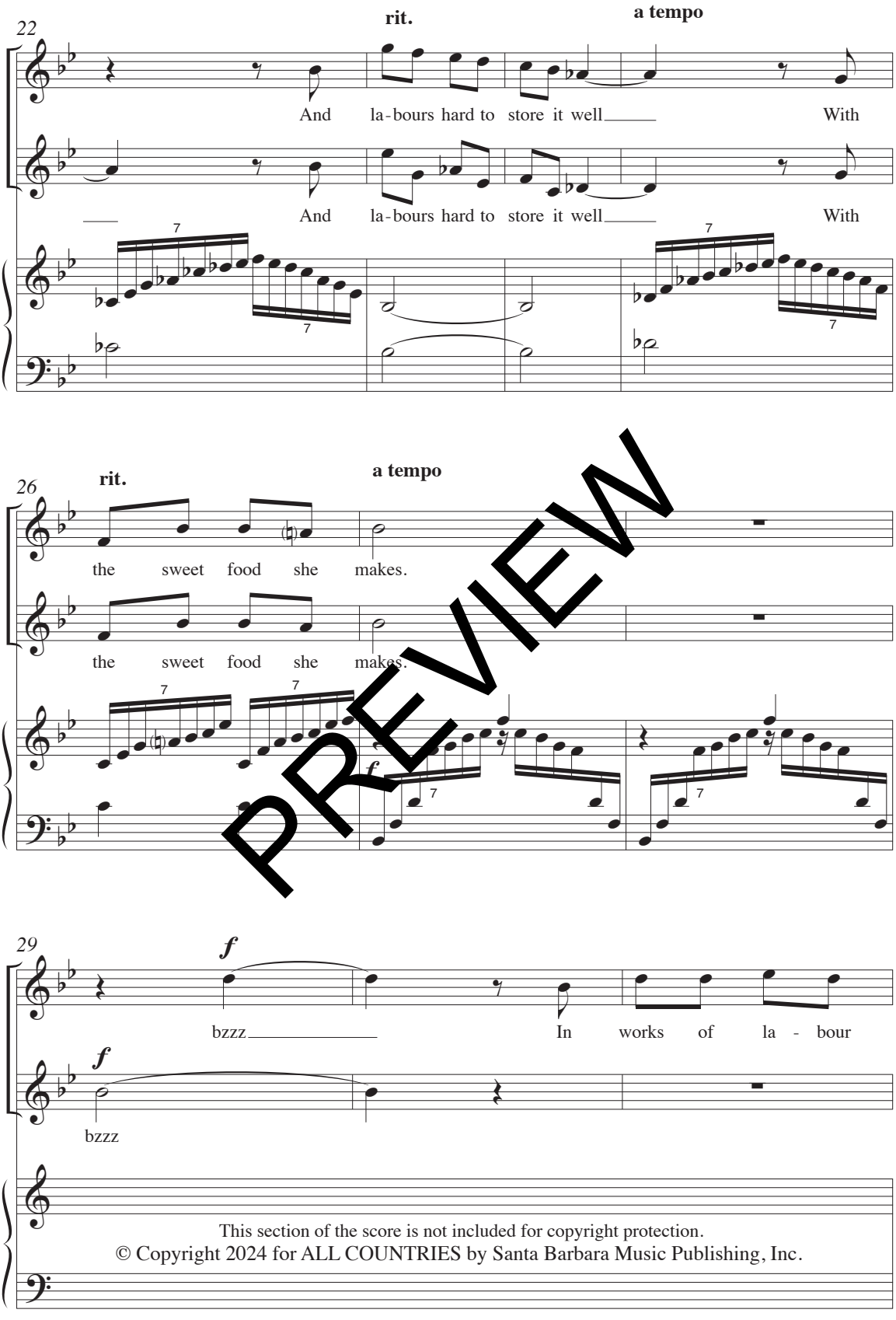

19
How neat she spreads the wax!



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32
or of skill
I would be bus - y
l.h.
35
too:
For Sa - tan finds some
38
mis - chief still
For i - dle hands to

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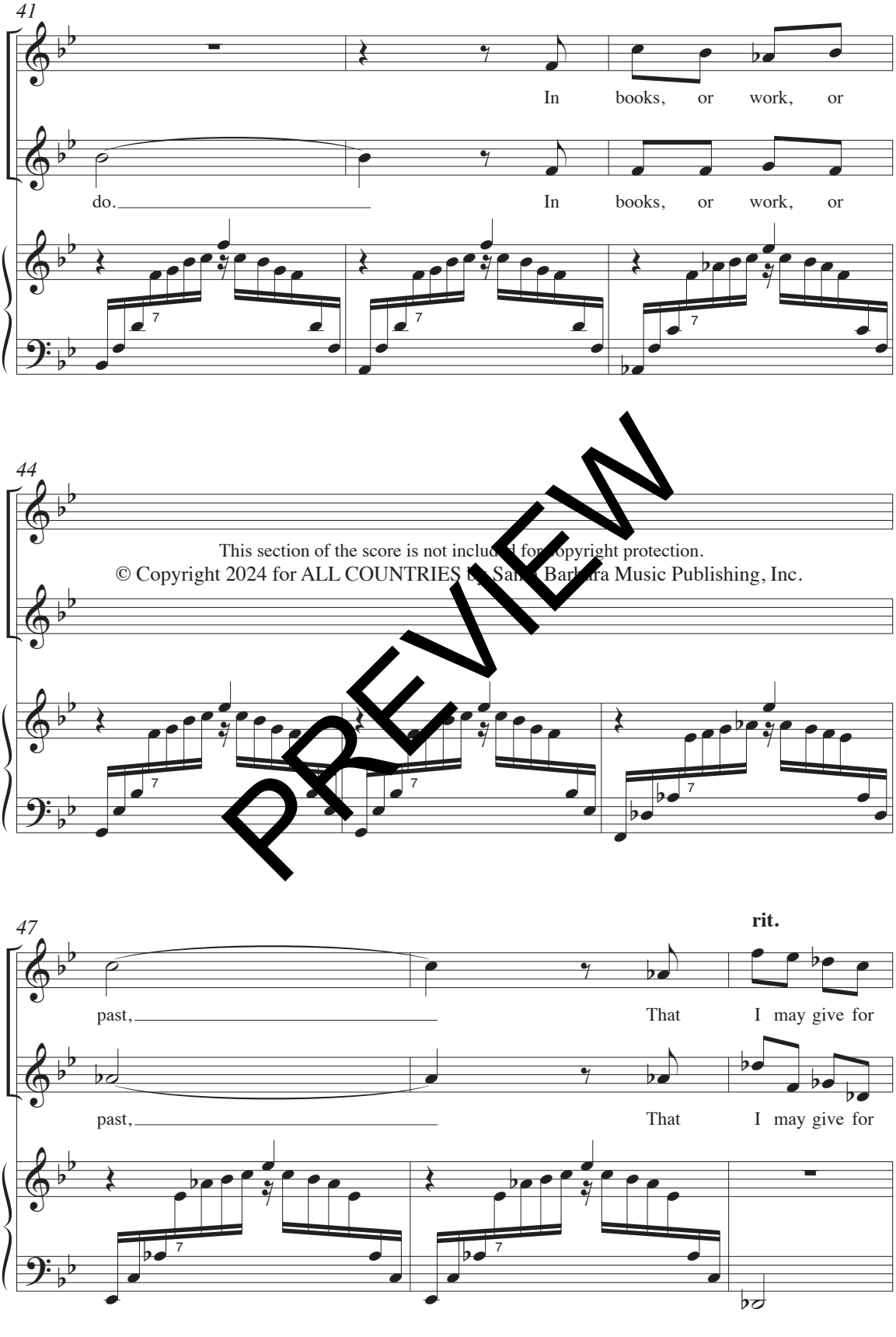

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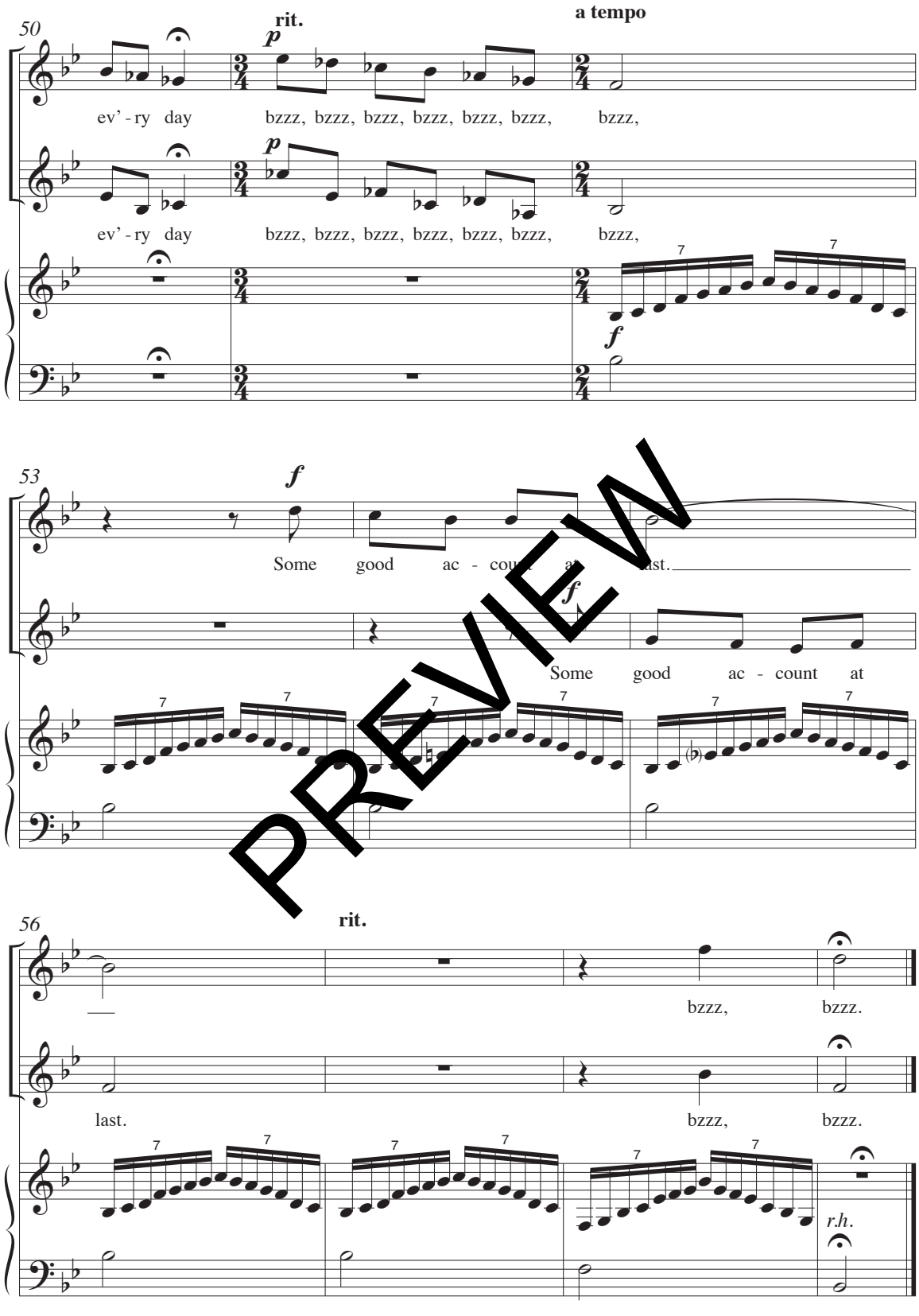

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SBMP 1796
Code: C8

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