M. E. Valverde

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A Green Voice

for SSAA chorus (div.) and piano

www.MariValverde.com

About the Poet

Recognized as Iowa's "farmer-poet and philosopher," award-winning author of over a dozen collections of poetry, James Hearst was born in 1900 and raised on a farm near Cedar Falls. Not two years after joining the army, he survived a diving accident with injuries that resulted in paralysis of the legs and lower body. With his family's support, he continued his education through the University of Iowa, worked as a livestock farmer, and wrote poetry from early adulthood through, subsequently, the Great Depression. In 1941, he began his 34-year term as professor of creative writing and English at the college that would eventually be known as University of Northern Iowa.

Inspired by his life and work on a farm, his writings provide an account of the reality of North American agriculture as a means by which to express a spirit of revolution. The James and Meryl Hearst Center for the Arts, formerly his late wife's and his home, stands as a living cultural contribution to the community of Cedar Falls.

Whatever cold tones
an empty sky echoes
after birds vanish
from meadow and tree,
and bright hues of color
fade as the flowers lie
buried in snow above
roots sealed in frost,
if the tunes grow faint
in the ear of your memory

and the country of your silence
seems windswept and bare,
give sun to this plant
that I bring you for Easter,
this small tree risen
with love from its earth,
and listen as soft leaves
unfold note by note,
it will add a green voice
to the time you need singing.

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Composer's Notes

In "A Green Voice," spring is reborn after a period of cold desolation; wishes for nourishing light are granted as blooming trees foretell their abundance; and a lost memory is recovered with sweet music. A wintry breeze, depicted in the piano's flourishes, brings in the choir, and they sing a song of hope and regeneration. From near silence, punctuated by the piano's dry chords, the singing builds voice by voice through a long crescendo till the shining sun is revealed in colorful harmony.

While predominantly sung in four parts, there are moments of divisi in the inner voices, which may be reassigned as necessary.

Composed in 2023, the original SATB version of "A Green Voice" was commissioned for the Metropolitan Chorale of Iowa's Cedar Valley, an ensemble comprising of amateur and professional singers of diverse ages and experiences, under the leadership of Dr. Amy Kotsonis, for their 69th season in loving memory of patron of the arts C. Hugh Petterson. The following year, the SSAA voicing of "A Green Voice" was commissioned by California Choral Directors Association for their 2025 All-State Soprano-Alto Honor Choir, conducted Dr. Kimberly Dunn Adams, and was premiered at the California Music Educators Association Convention (CASMEC) in Sacramento.

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dur. = ca. 3'30"

Commissioned for California Choral Directors Association 2025 SSAA Honor Choir,
Kimberly Dunn Adams, conductor

A Green Voice

for SSAA chorus (div.) and piano

James Hearst
1900-1983

Mari Esabel Valverde
b.1987

Cool and distant, poco andante ♩ = ca. 72

Piano

mp

molto rit.

A tempo

5

S

p *assuringly*

What-ev - er cold tones an emp - ty sky

A 1

* *p* *assuringly*

What-ev - er cold tones an emp - ty sky

A 2

* *p* *assuringly*

What-ev - er cold tones an emp - ty sky

Pno.

p

*From mm. 7-12 and from mm. 20-28, it is encouraged to split the three parts (SAA) evenly amongst the choir for balance. Alternatively, have second sopranos split evenly between the first soprano and first alto parts.

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9

S

ech-oes af - ter birds van-ish from mead - ow and tree,

A 1

ech-oes af - ter birds van-ish from mead - ow and tree,

A 2

ech-oes af - ter birds van-ish from mead - ow and tree,

Pno.

mp *p* *mp*

13

S 2

and bright hues of co - lor fade

A 1

as the flowers lie bur-ied in

Pno.

p

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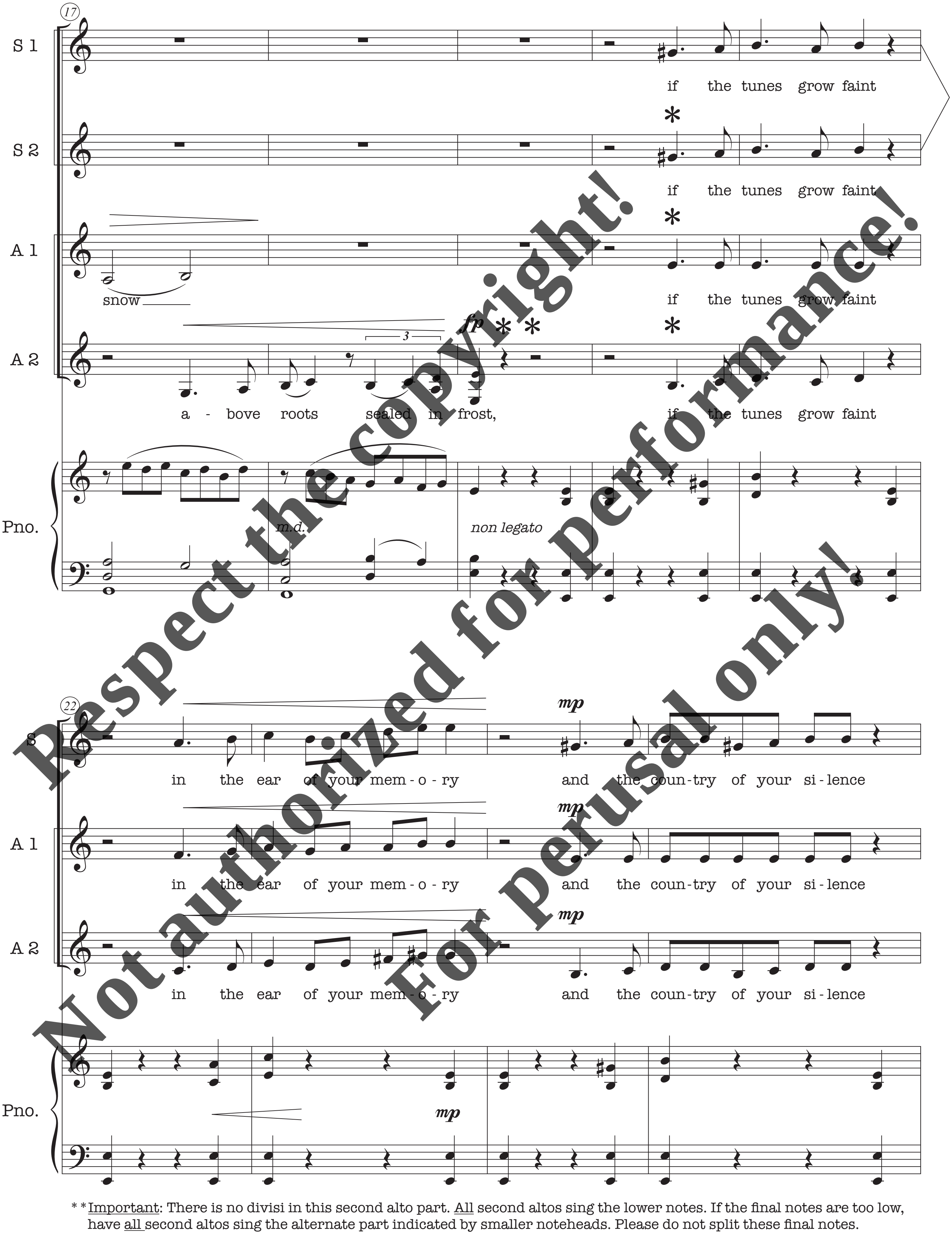

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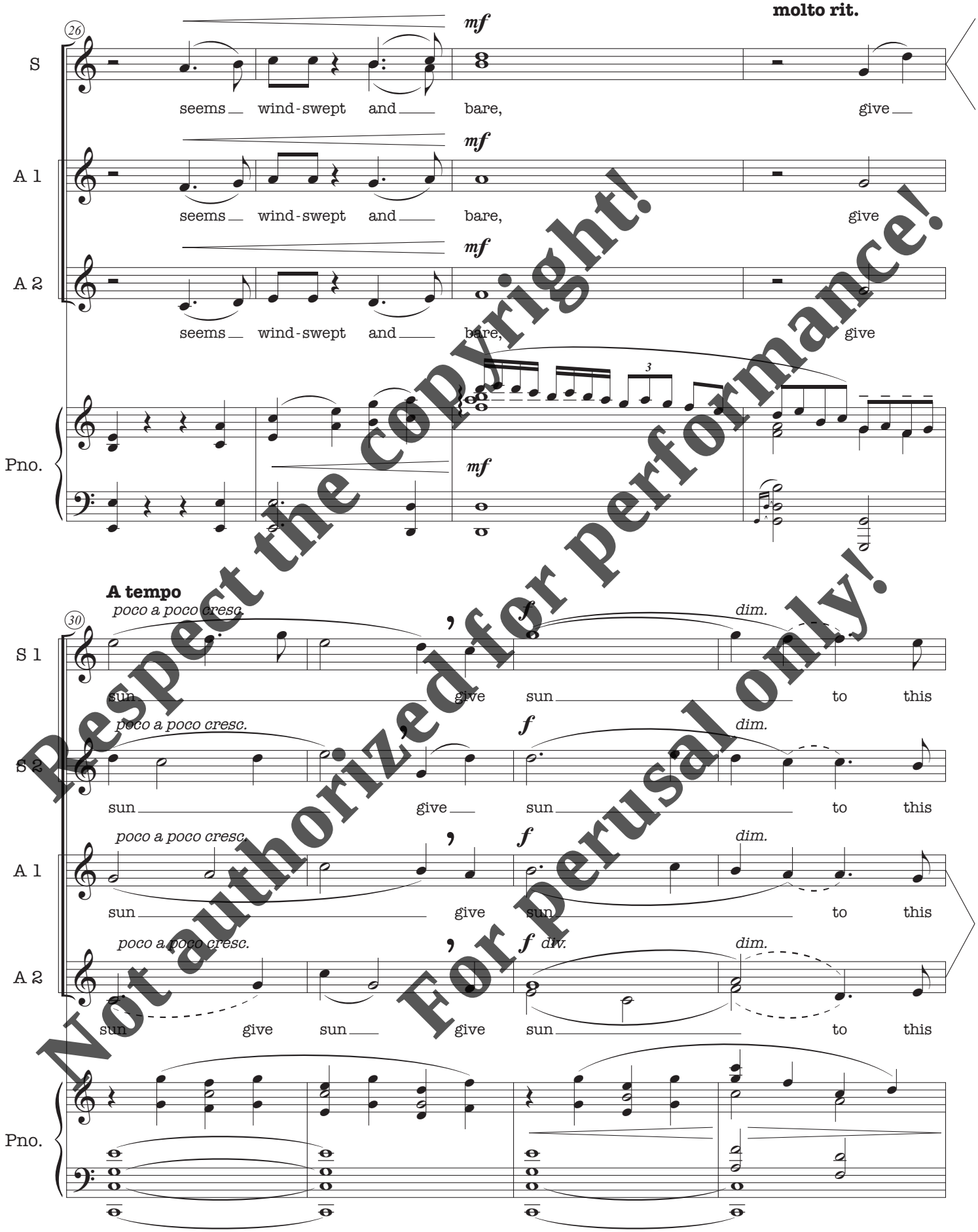
* * Important: There is no divisi in this second alto part. All second altos sing the lower notes. If the final notes are too low, have all second altos sing the alternate part indicated by smaller noteheads. Please do not split these final notes.



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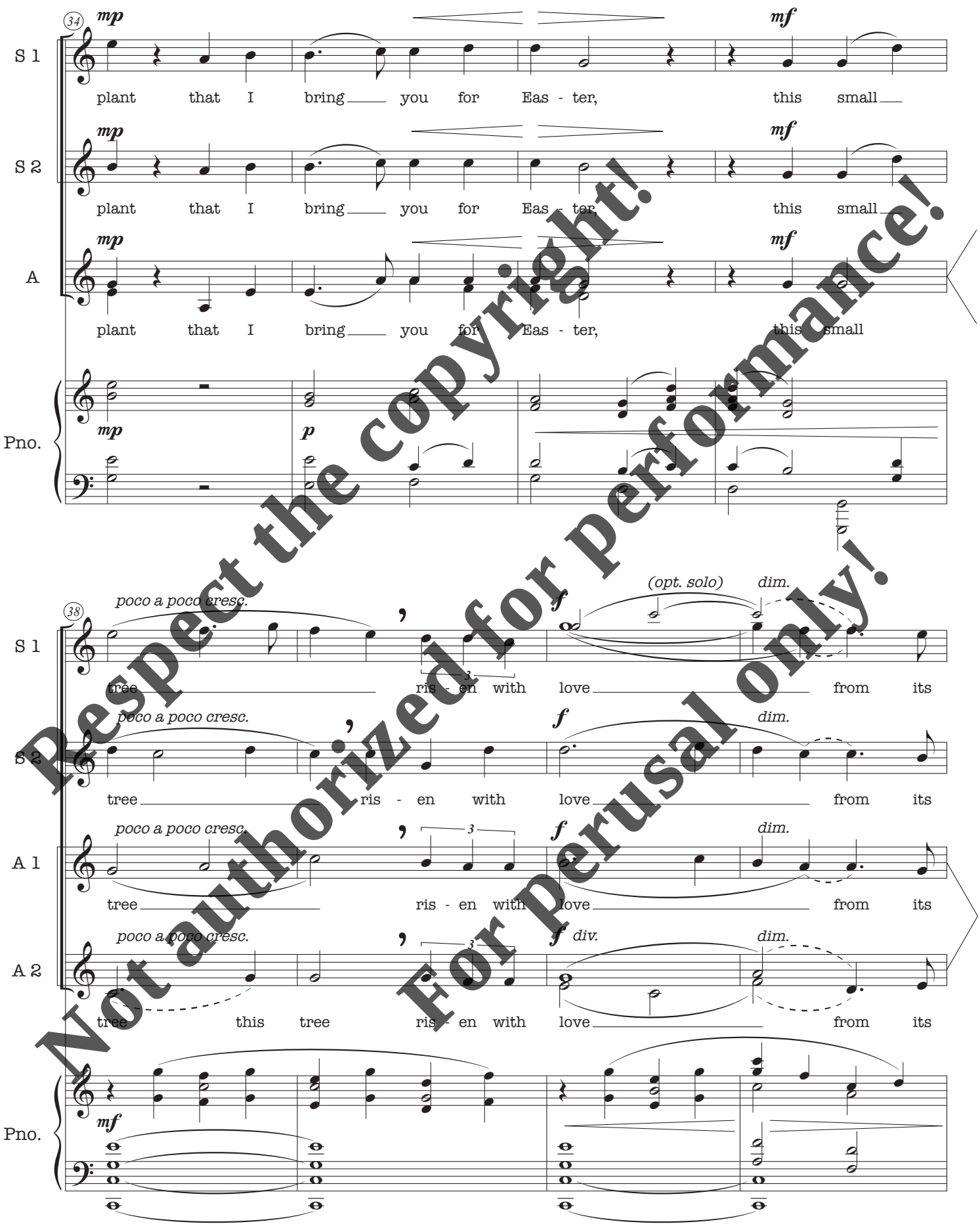

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42

S 1

mp

earth, and lis - ten...

S 2

mp

earth, and lis - ten...

A

mp

earth, and lis - ten...

Pno.

mp *p espress.*

46

S 1

lis - ten as soft leaves un - fold note by

S 2

lis - ten as soft leaves un - fold note by

A 1

lis - ten as soft leaves un - fold note by

A 2

lis - ten as soft leaves un - fold note by

Pno.

mp

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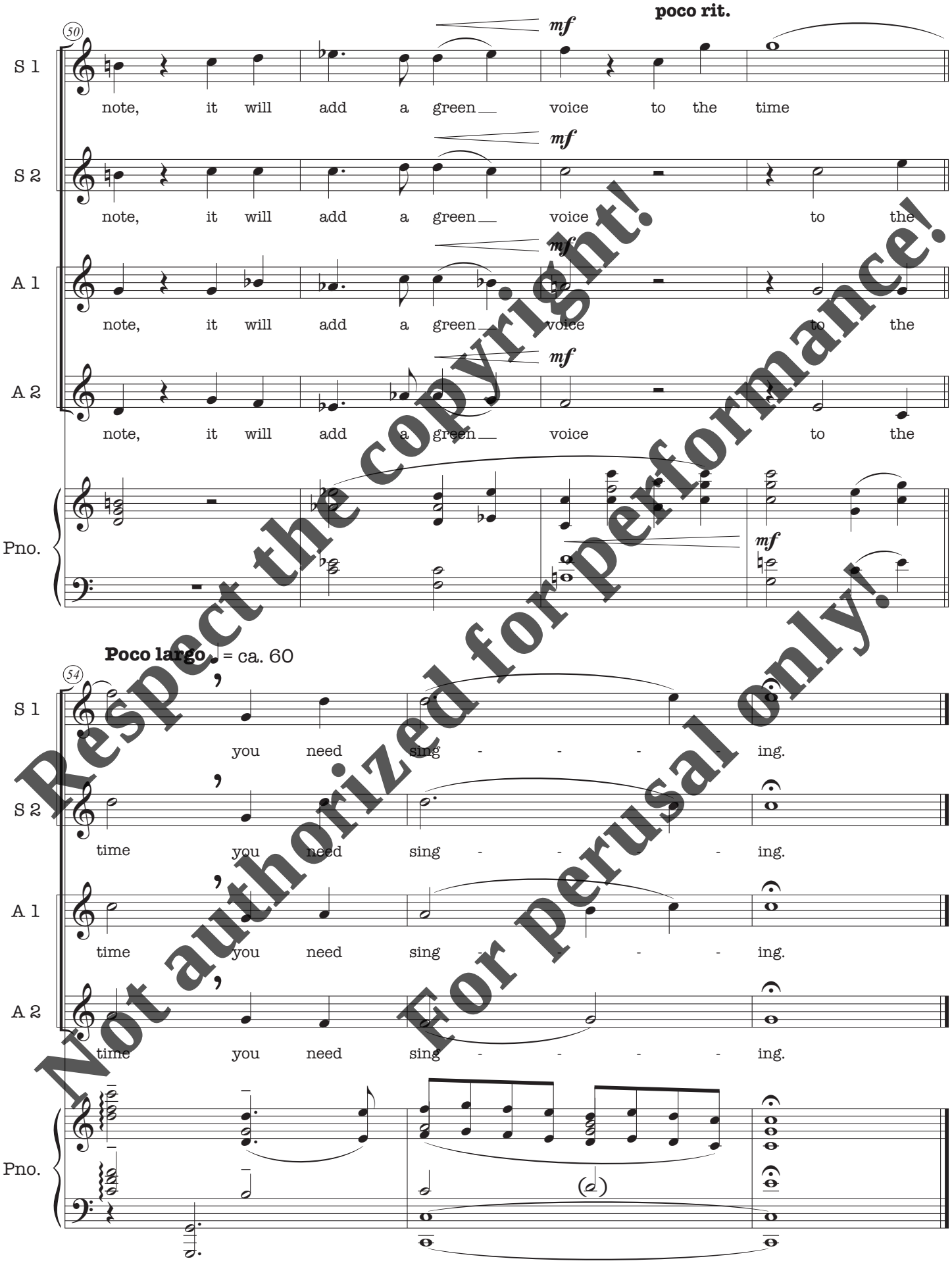

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