Michael Kaulkin

Tumbalalayka

for SATB chorus a cappella

c. 2’

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Michael Kaulkin

TUMBALALAYKA

for SATB chorus a cappella

Tumbalalayka is one of the most performed and beloved Yiddish folksongs. It is, quite simply, a riddle:

Shteyt a bokher. Shteyt un trakht. *Trakht un trakht a gantse nakht.* *Vemen zu nemen un nit farshemen.*	A young lad stands there thinking all night long: Whom shall I choose, without causing her shame?
Tumbalalayka, shpil balalayka *Tumbalalayka, freylekh zol zayn*	Tumbalalayka, play the balalayka. Tumbalalayka, be joyful.
Meydl, meydl, 'khvil bay dir freygn, *Vos ken vaksn, vaksn on regn?* *Vos ken brennen, un nit oyfhern?* *Vos ken benken, veynen on trern?*	Young girl, I've got a question: What can grow without rain? What can burn forever? What can weep without tears?
Narisher bokher, vos darfstu freygn? *Shteynen ken vaksn, vaksn on regn!* *Libe ken brenen, un nit oyfhern,* *A harts ken benken, veynen on trern!*	Silly lad! What are these questions? Stones can grow without rain! Love can burn forever! The heart can weep without tears!

This choral setting employs the use of instrument-like sounds imitating the strumming of the *balalayka*, a Russian folk instrument similar to a guitar, and contrasts the upbeat "*Tumbalalayka*" refrain with dark harmonic colors and occasional smooth polyphonic textures.



Michael Kaulkin (b. 1967) is active in the San Francisco Bay Area as a teacher and as a composer of works for chorus, orchestra, film and the musical stage. His music has been described as "*exceptionally beautiful on many counts.*" He is a graduate of the San Francisco Conservatory having previously studied at the Franz Liszt Academy of Music in Budapest, Hungary.

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Please send details about your performance of this piece! michael.kaulkin@gmail.com

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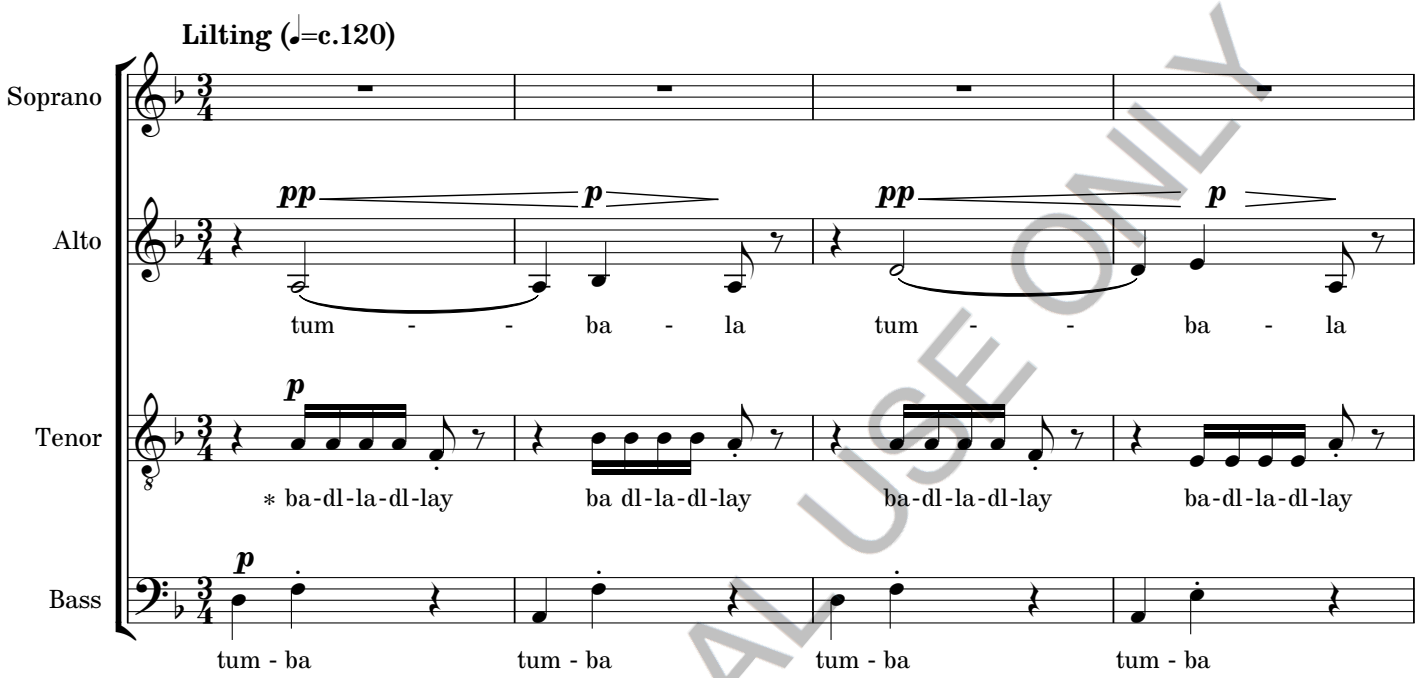
Tumbalalayka

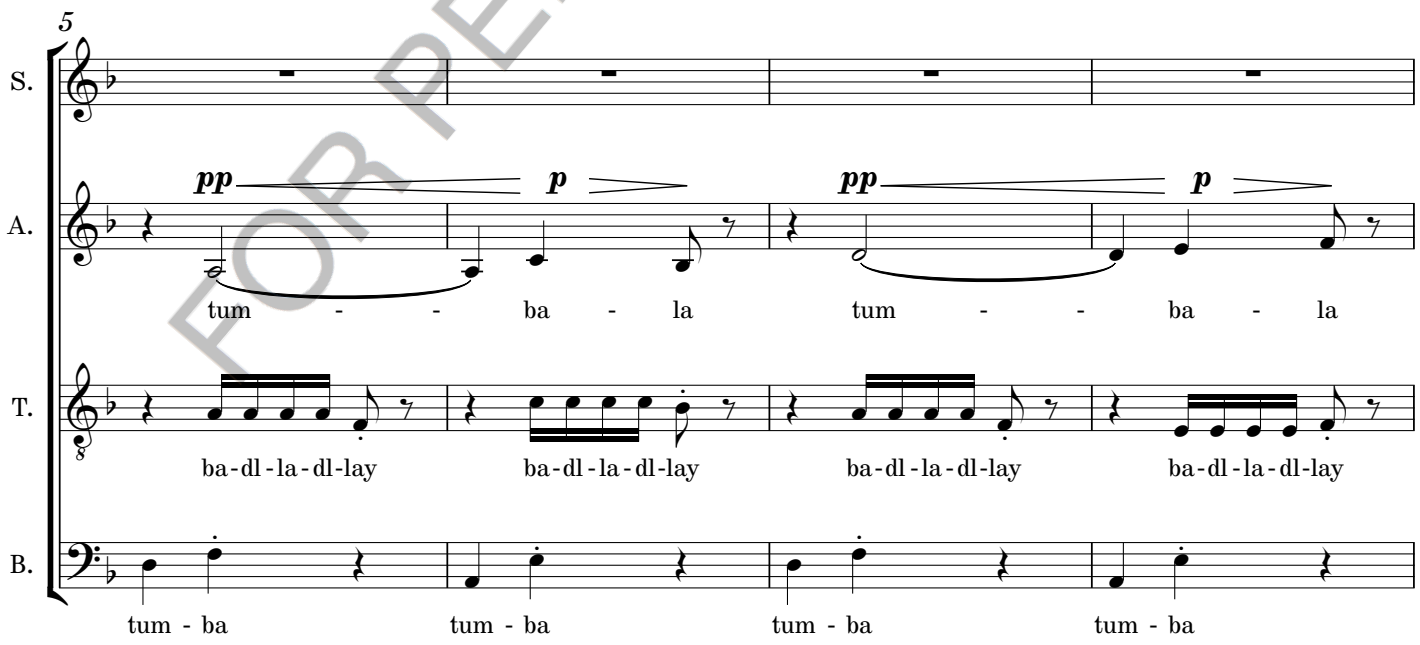
for mixed chorus *a cappella*

Traditional Yiddish Folksong

Michael Kaulkin



∗ - "*badladlay*" is an attempt to imitate the strumming of the balalayka, a Russian folk instrument similar to a guitar. The "lay" syllable should sound like the word "lie".



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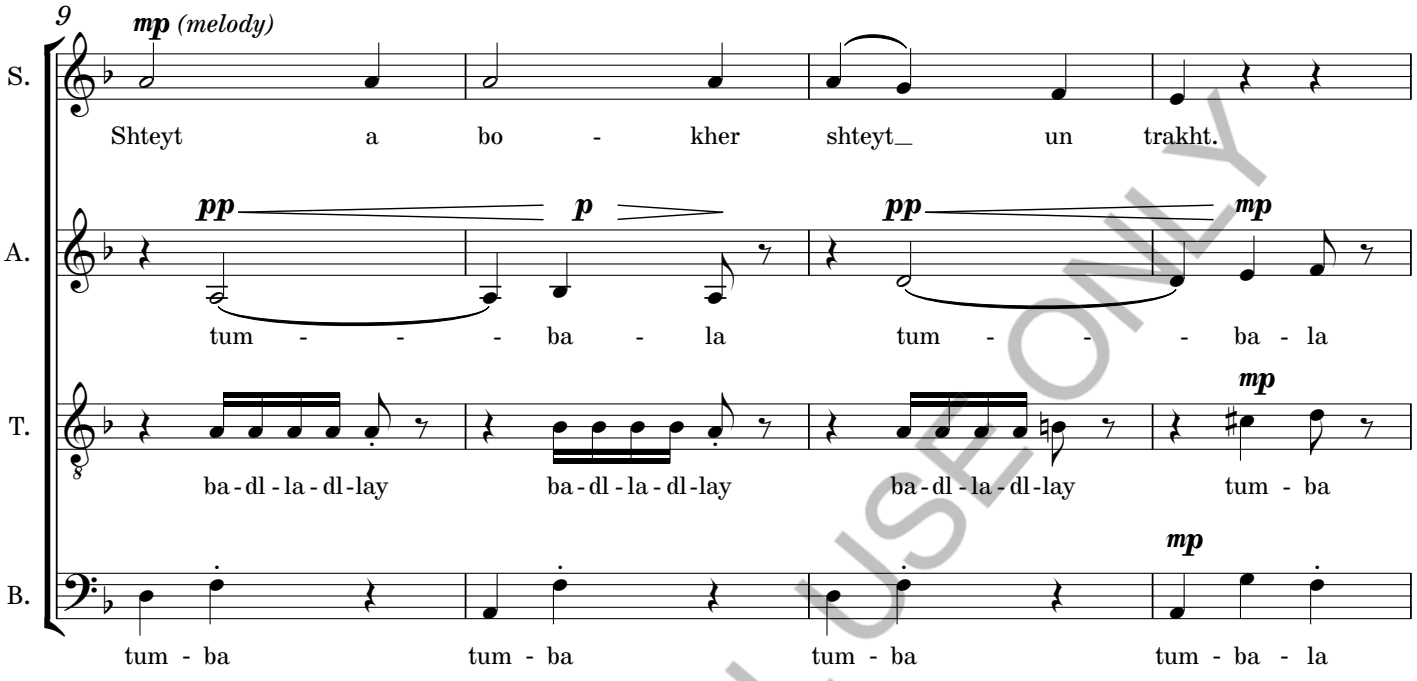

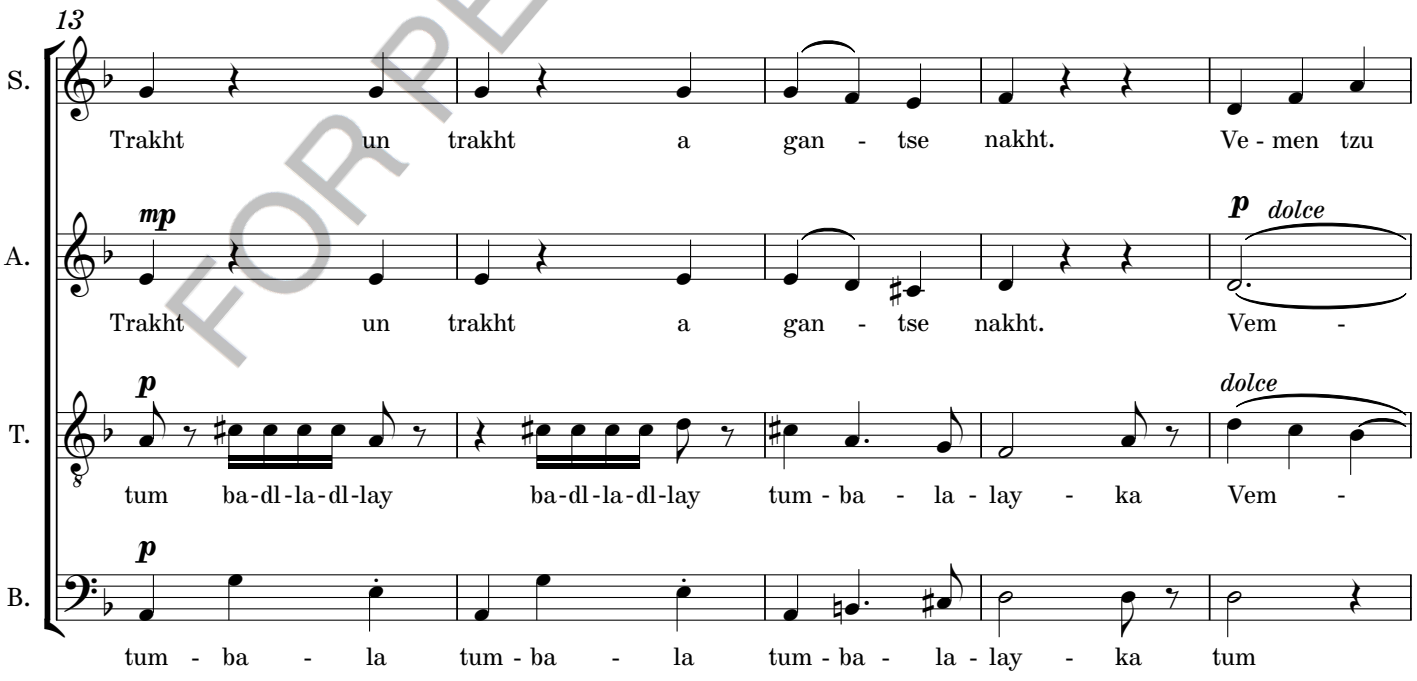

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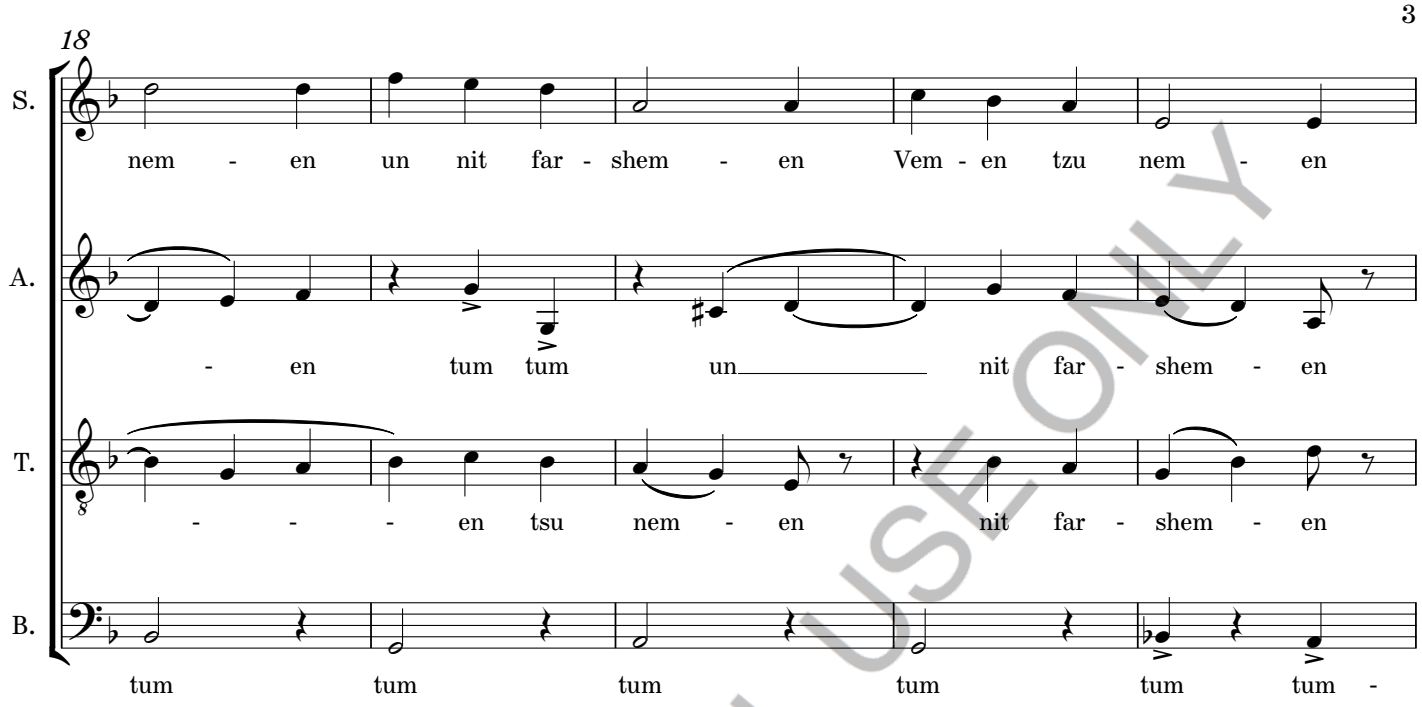

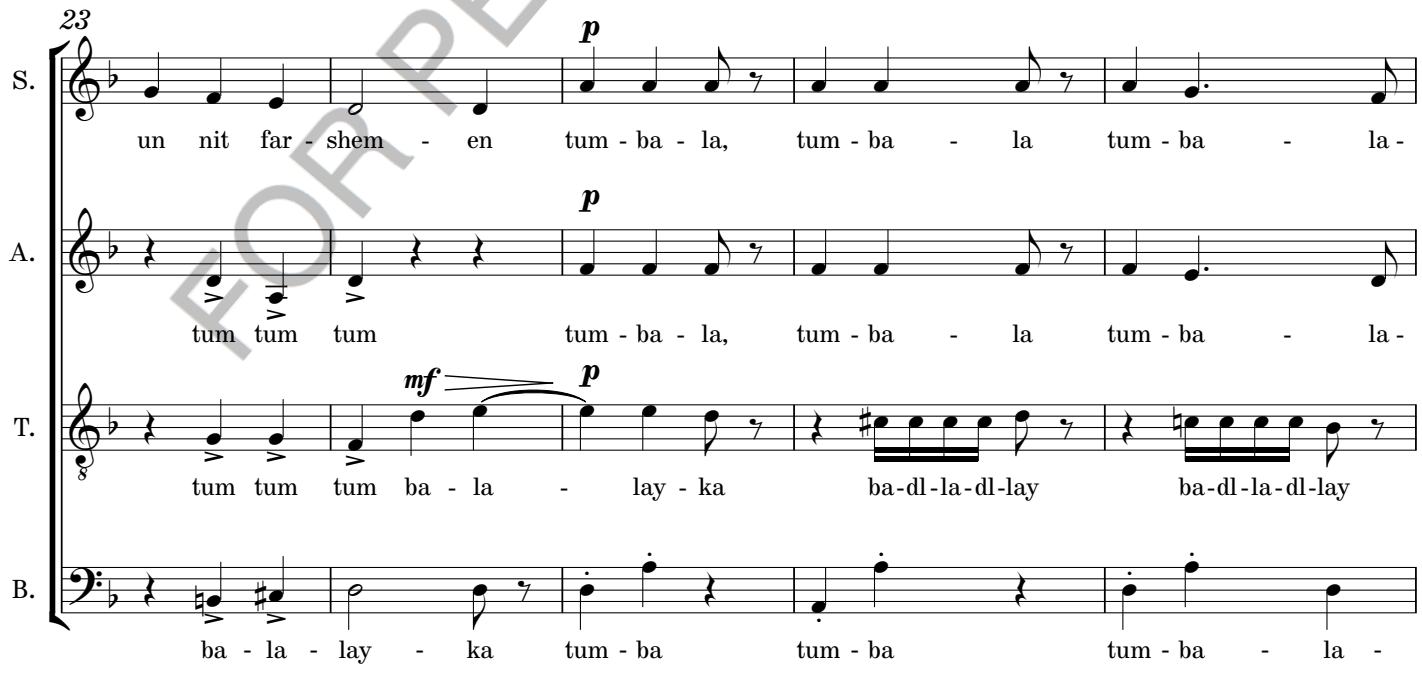

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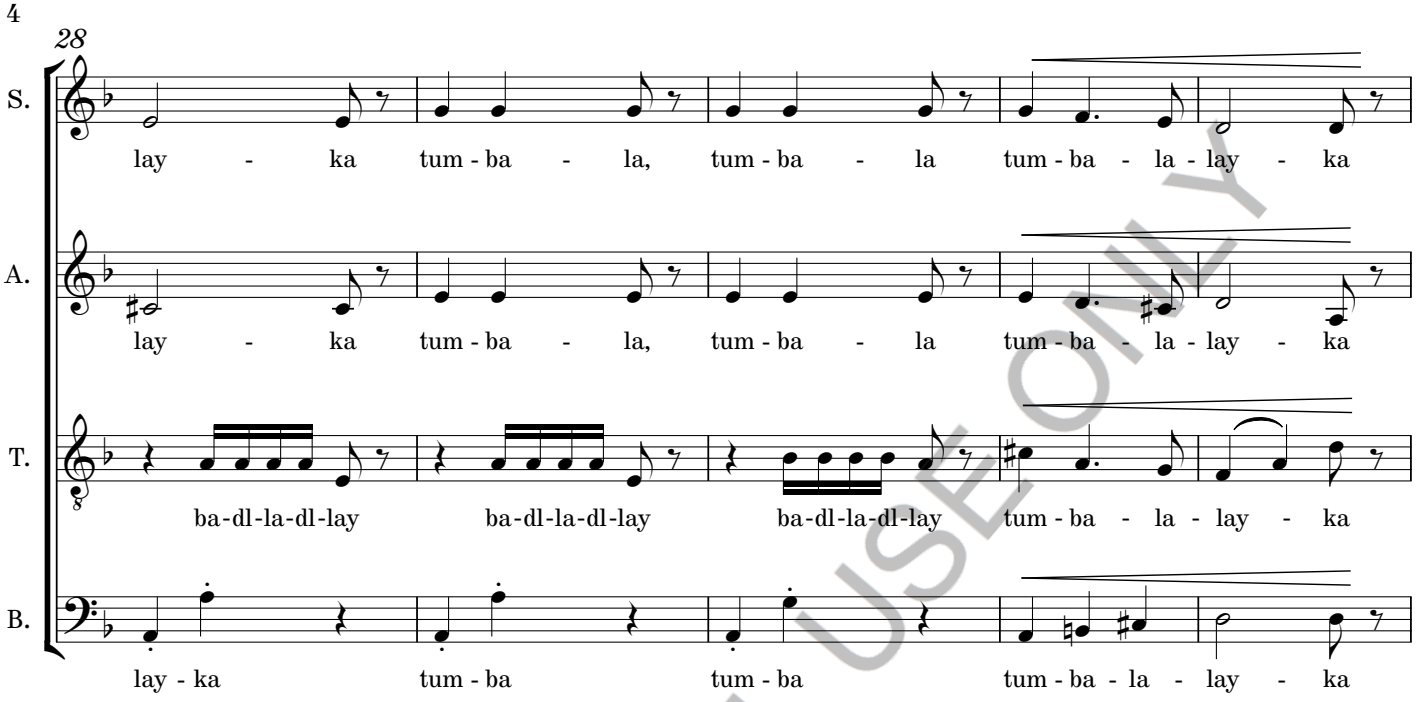

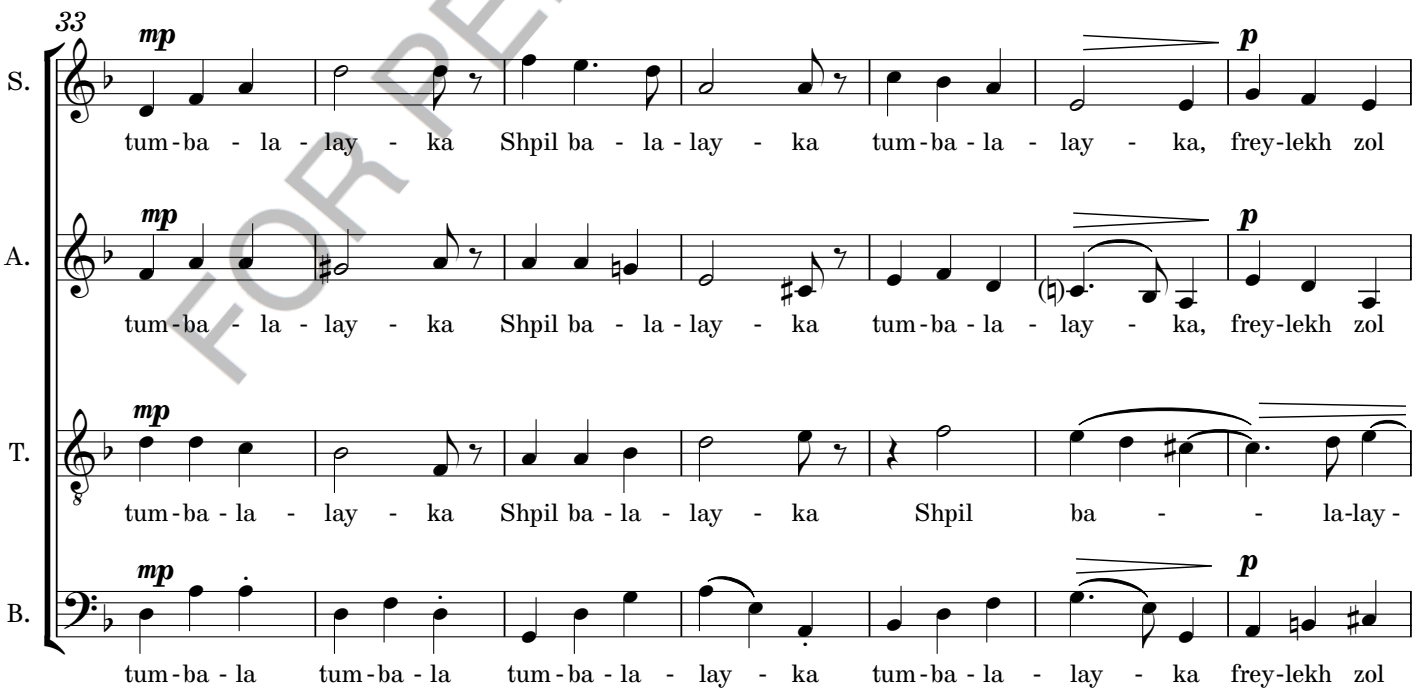

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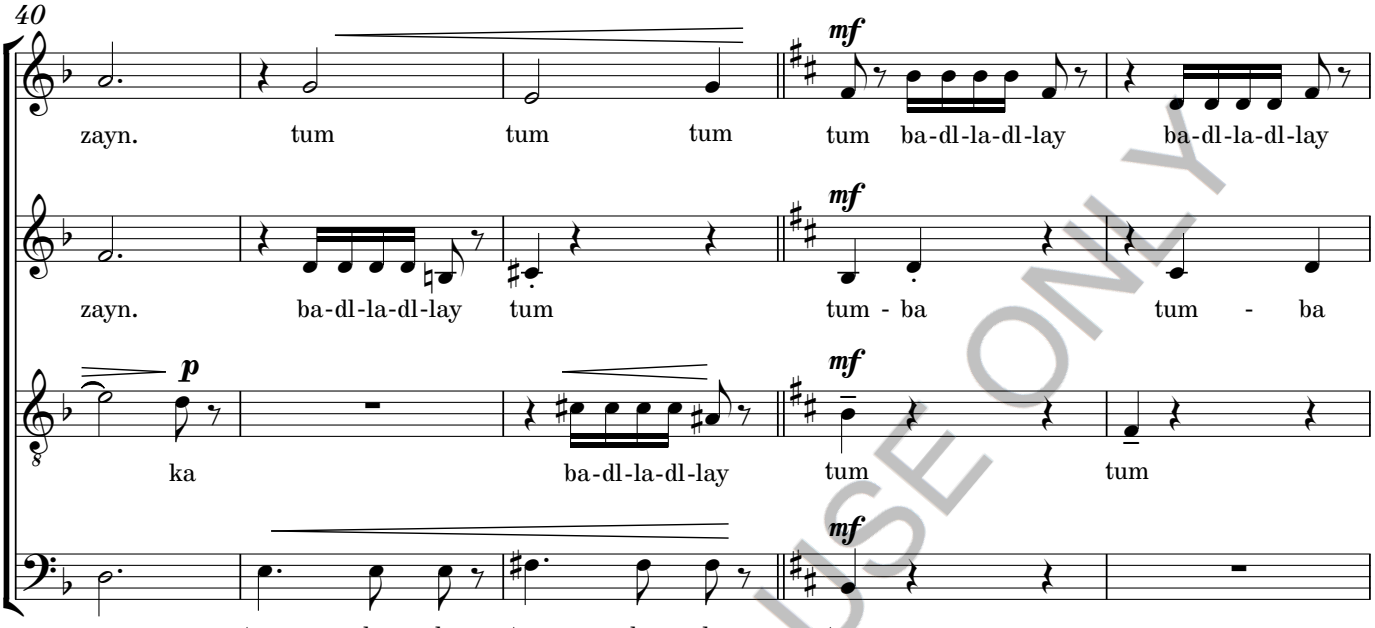

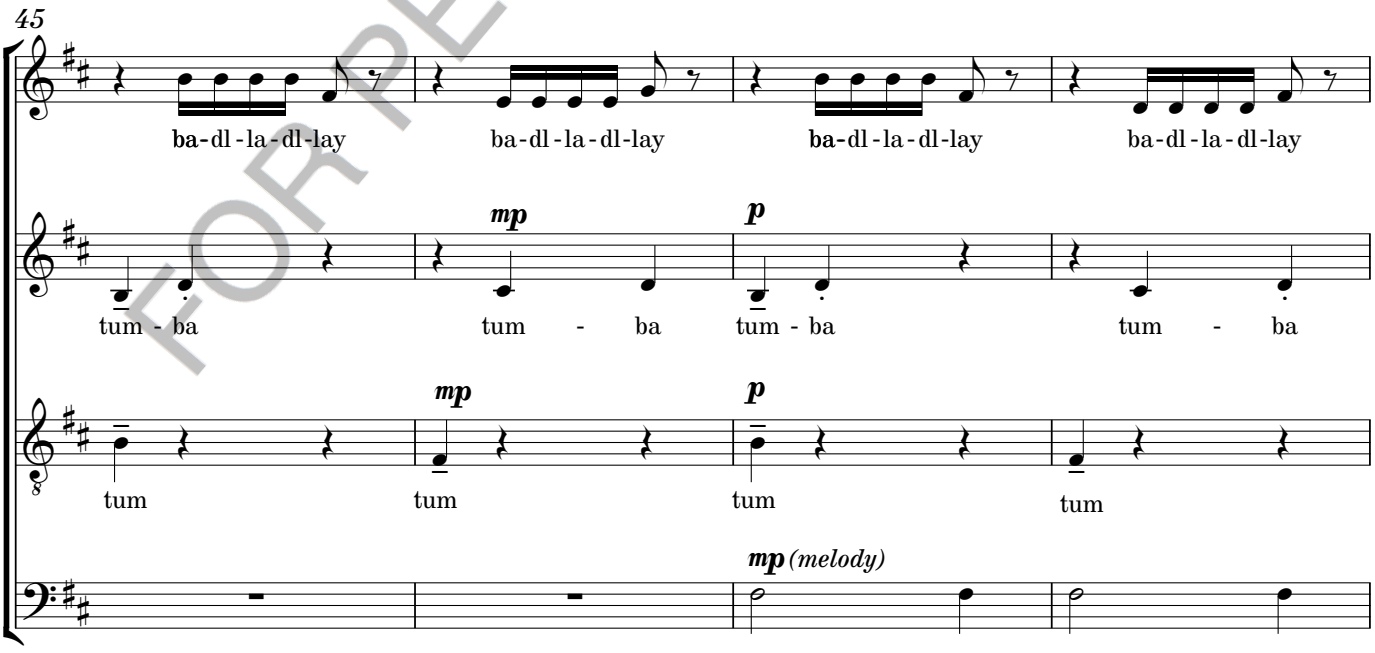

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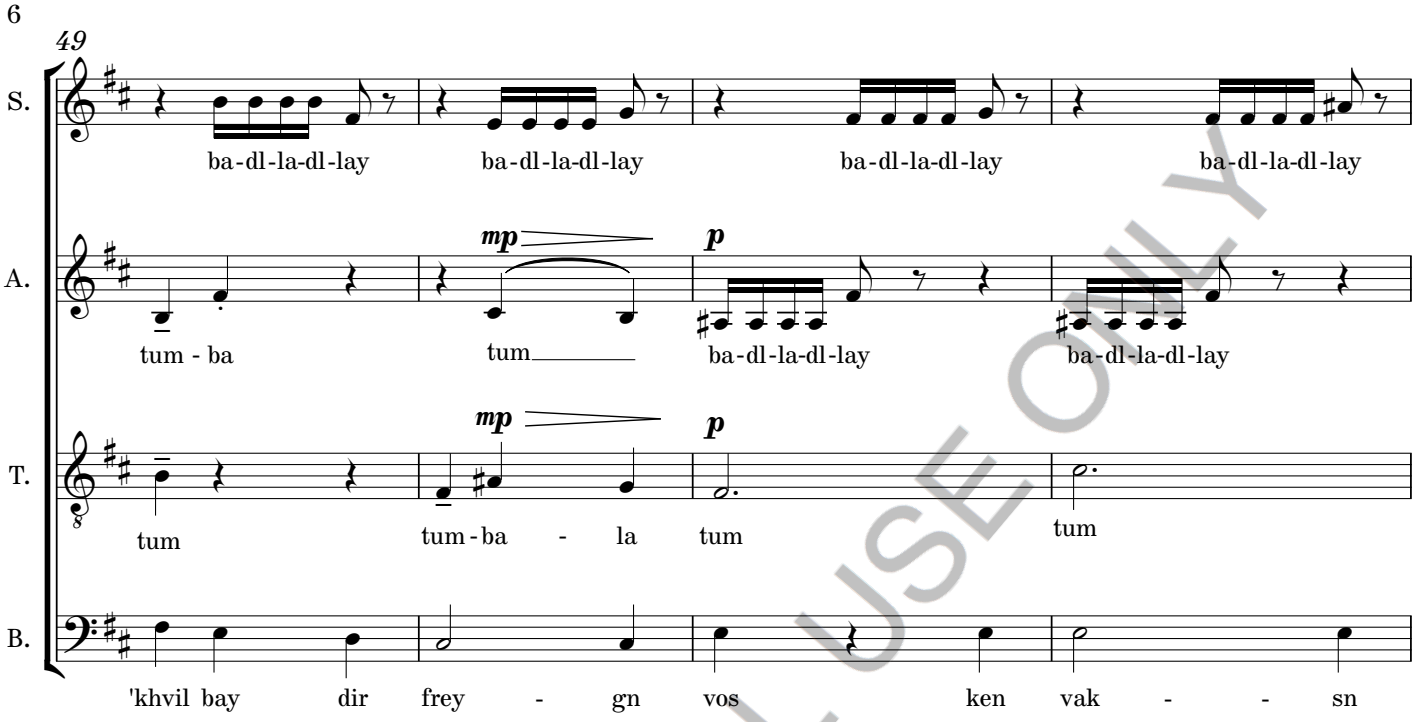

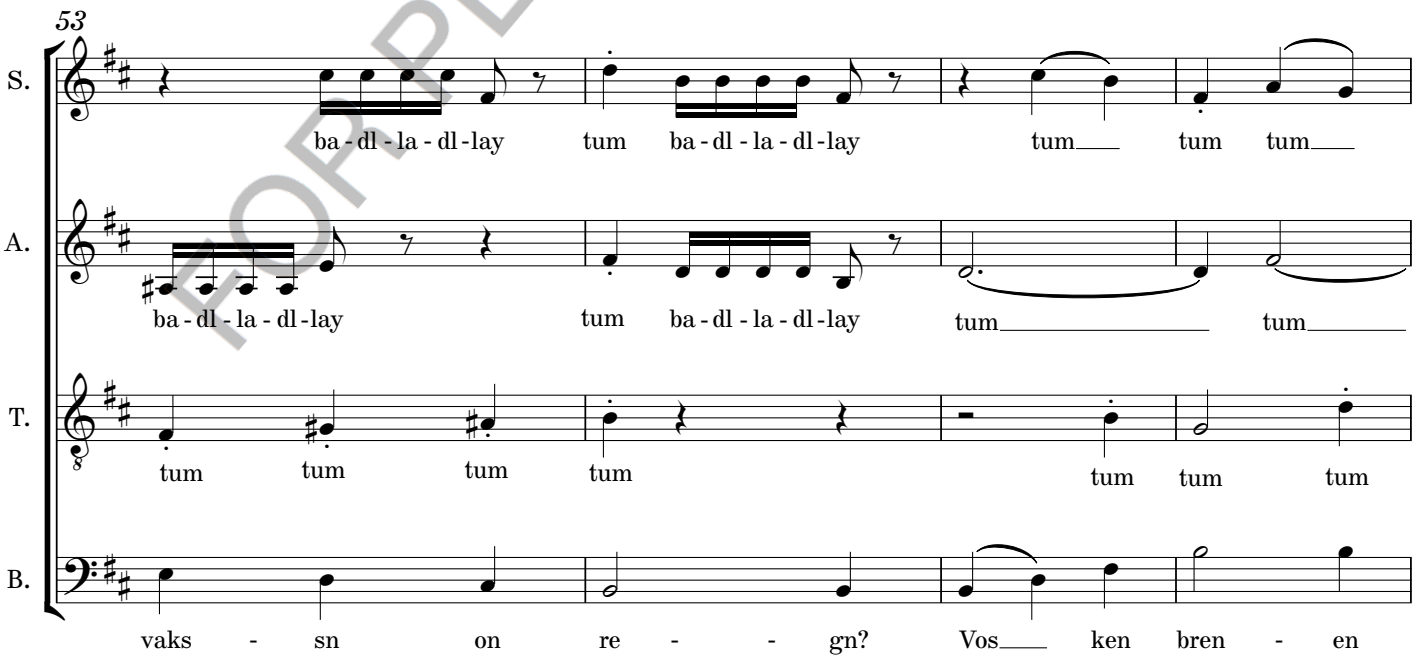

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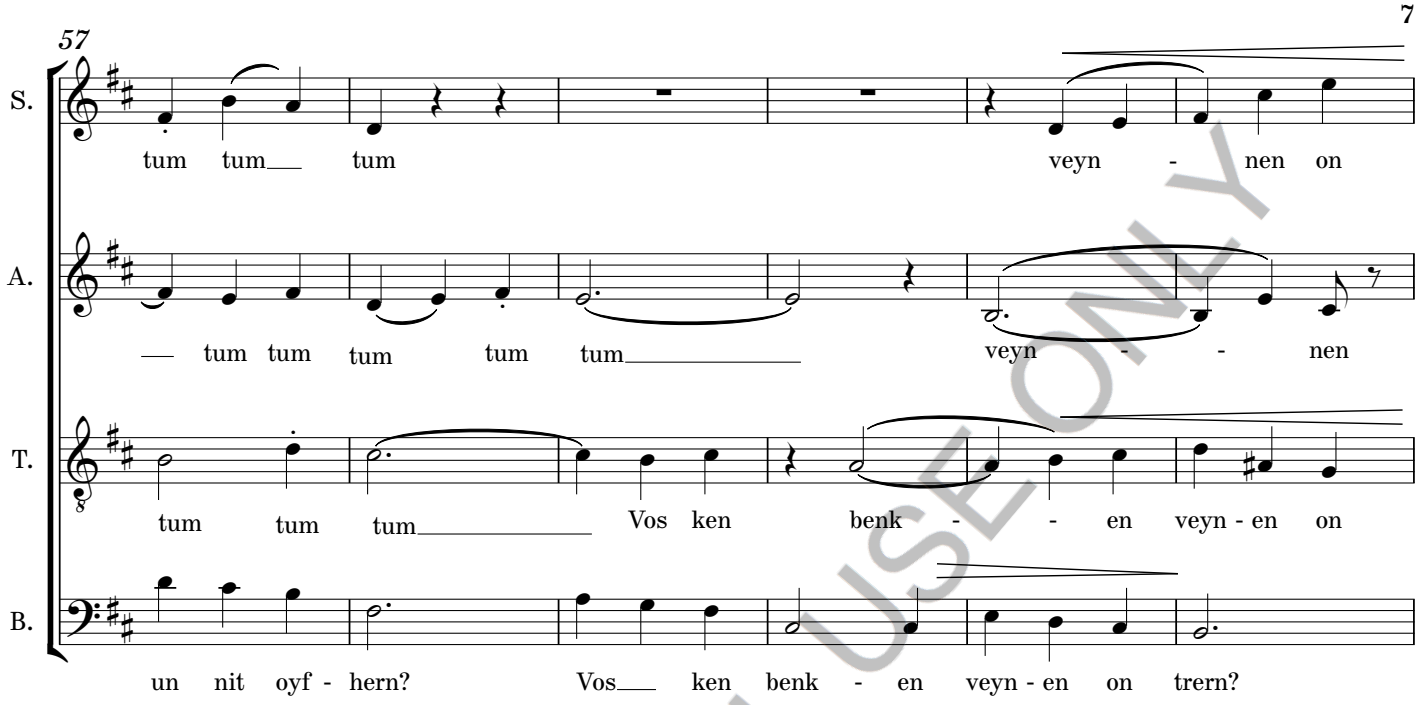

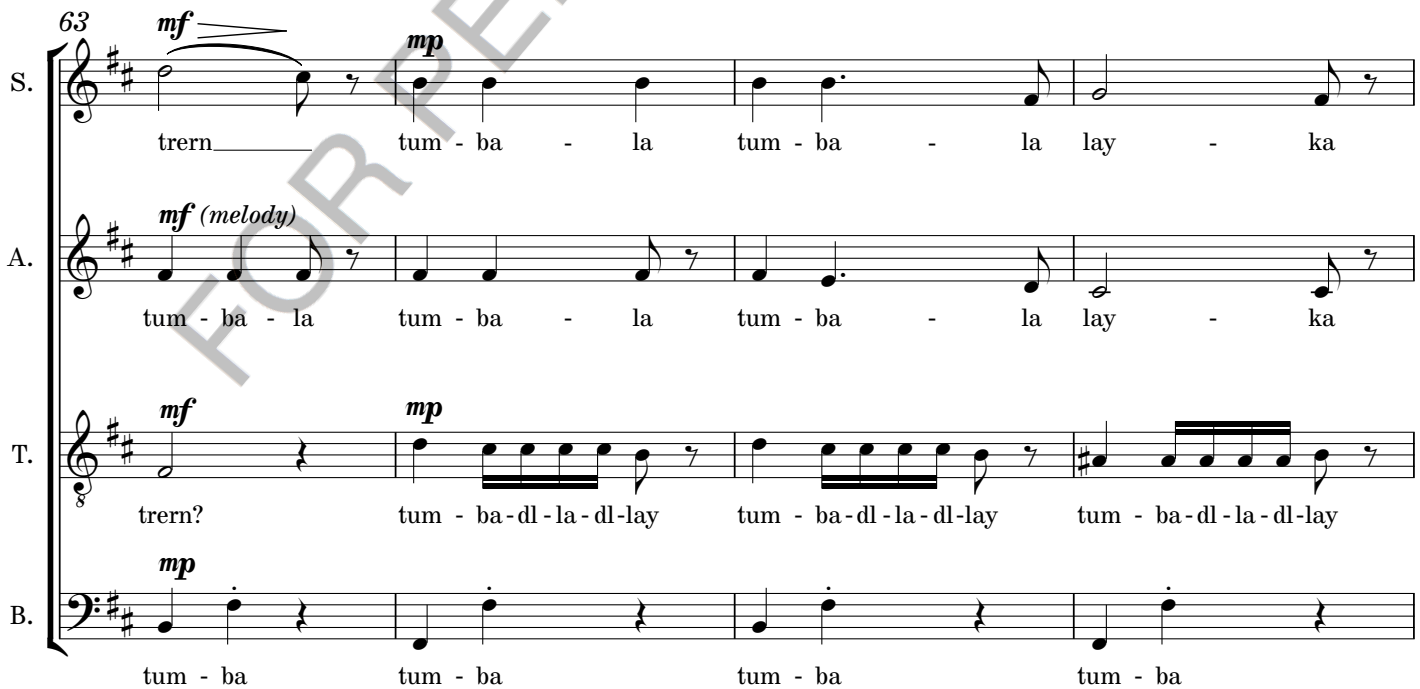

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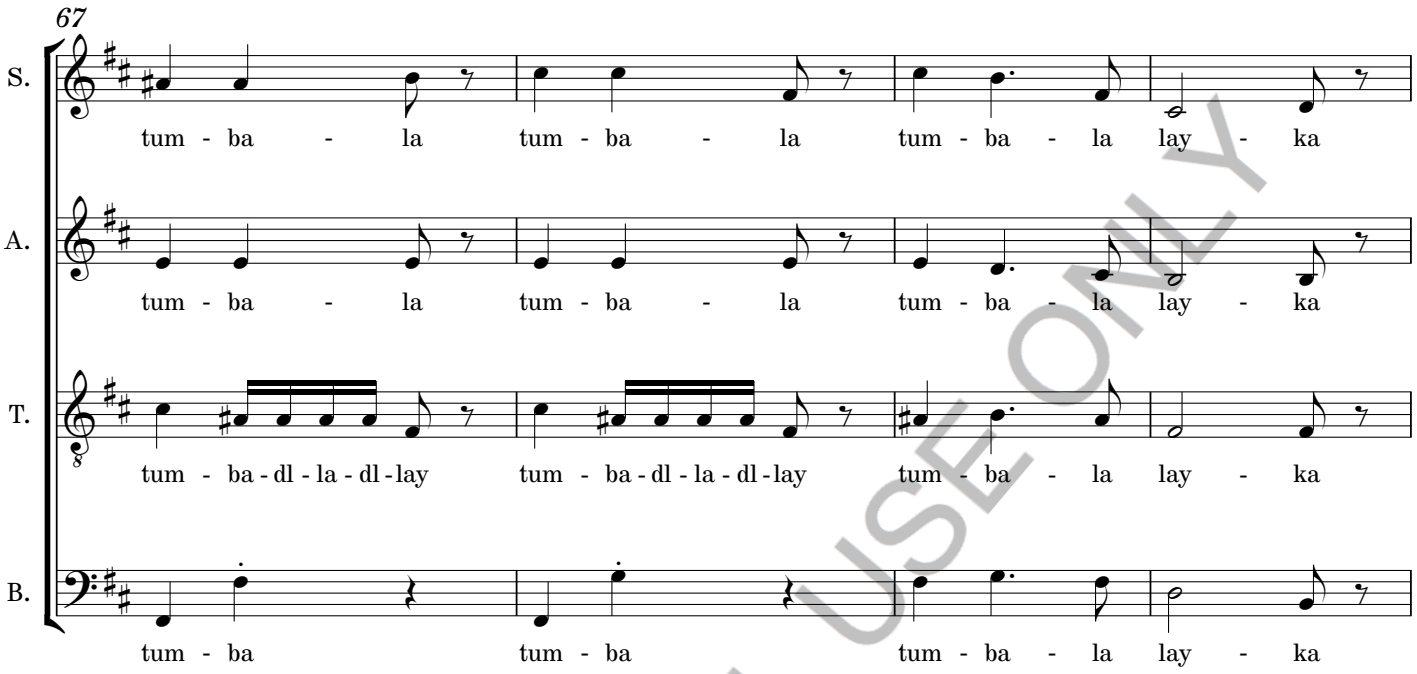

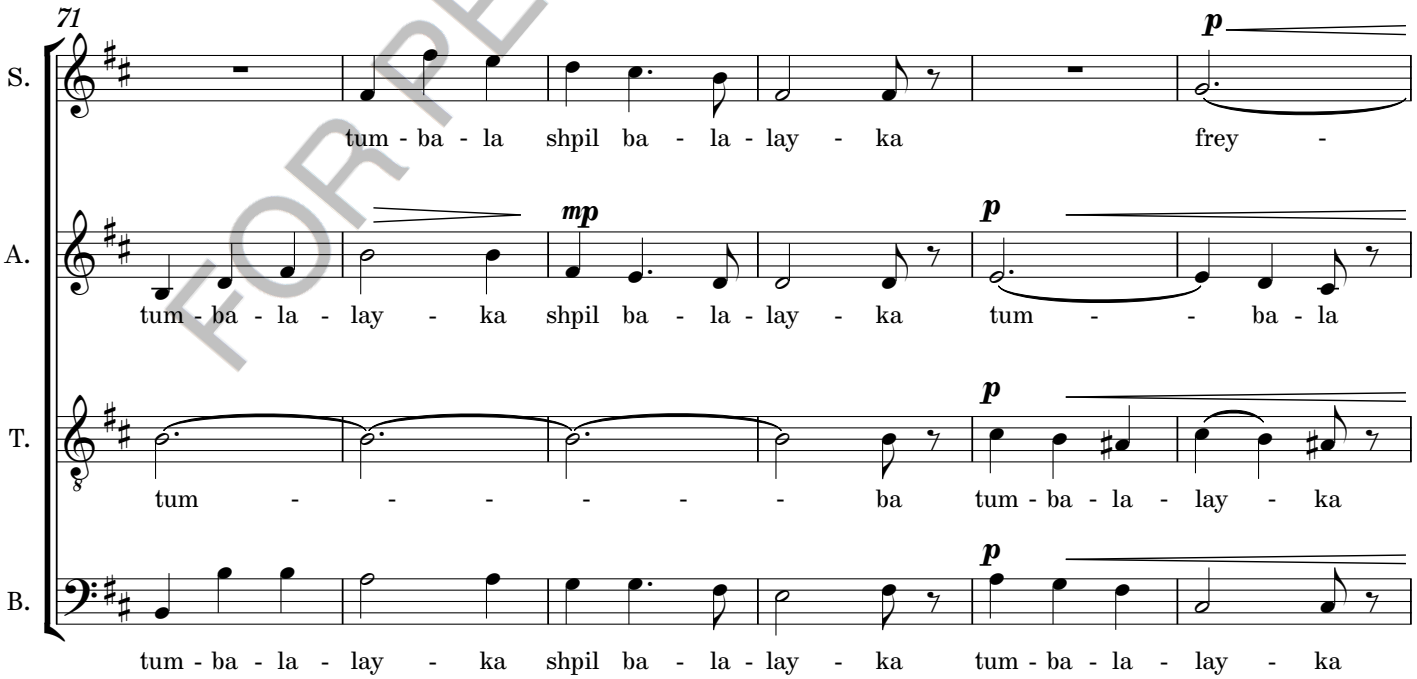

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poco rit. - - - - - - - - - Meno Mosso (♩=c.132)

77

S. *mp* - lekh zol zayn. *mp (melody)* Na - rish - er bo - kher vos darfs - tu

A. *mp* tum - ba - la - lay - ka *pp* tum(mm) - *p* ba - la tum - ba - la

T. *mp* tum - ba - la - lay - ka tum tum *pp* tum(mm) - *p* ba - la tum - ba - la

B. frey - lekh zol zayn. *pp* tum(mm) - *p* ba - la tum

83

S. frey - gn? Shteyn-en ken vak - sn vak- sn on re - gn Li - be ken bren - en

A. *pp* tum(mm) *p* tum tum tum(mm) *pp* tum tum tum

T. *pp* tum(mm) *p* tum tum tum(mm) *pp* tum tum tum tum tum

B. *pp* tum(mm) *p* tum tum tum(mm) *pp* tum tum tum tum

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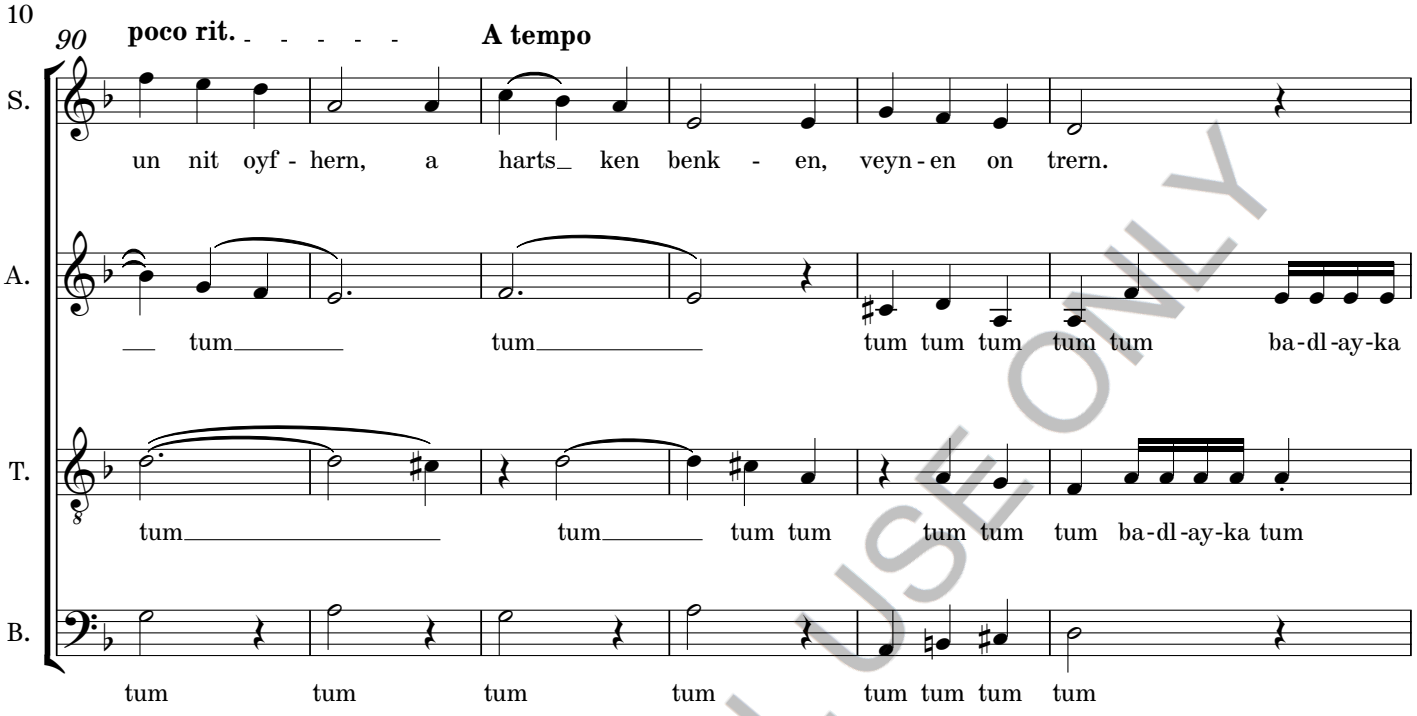

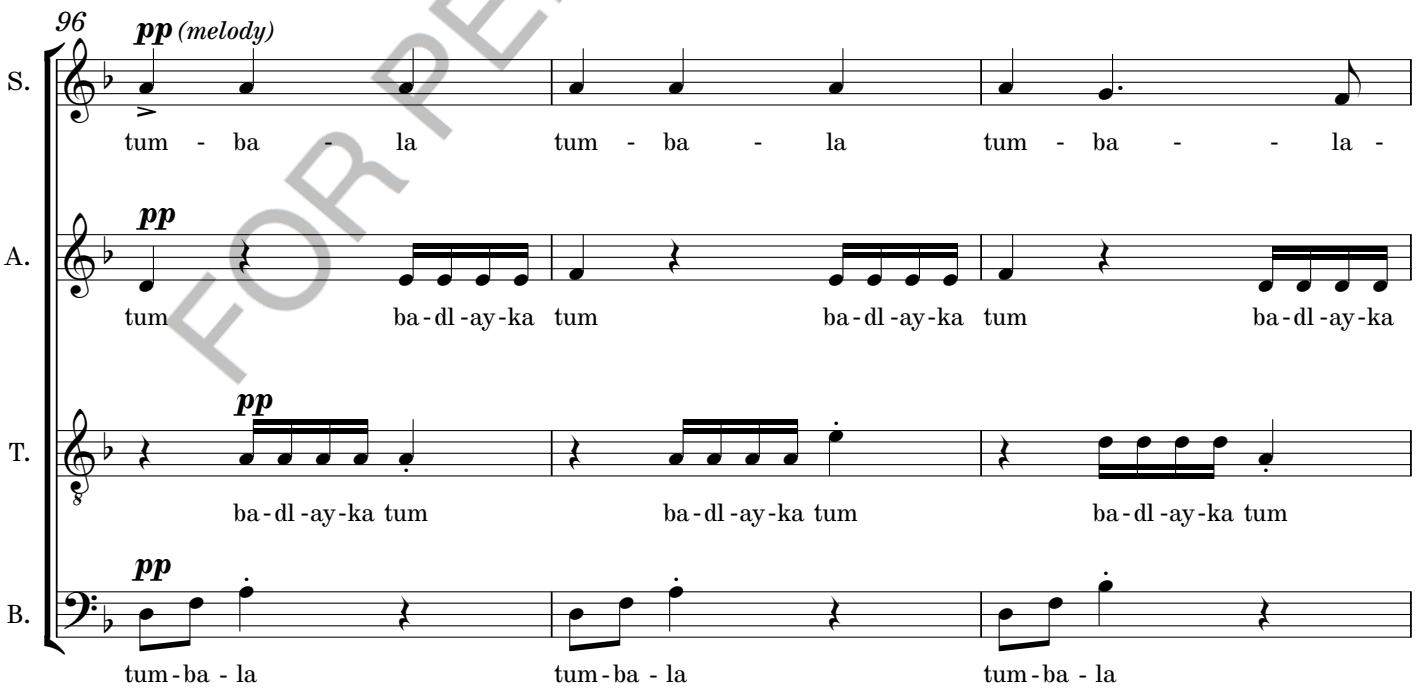

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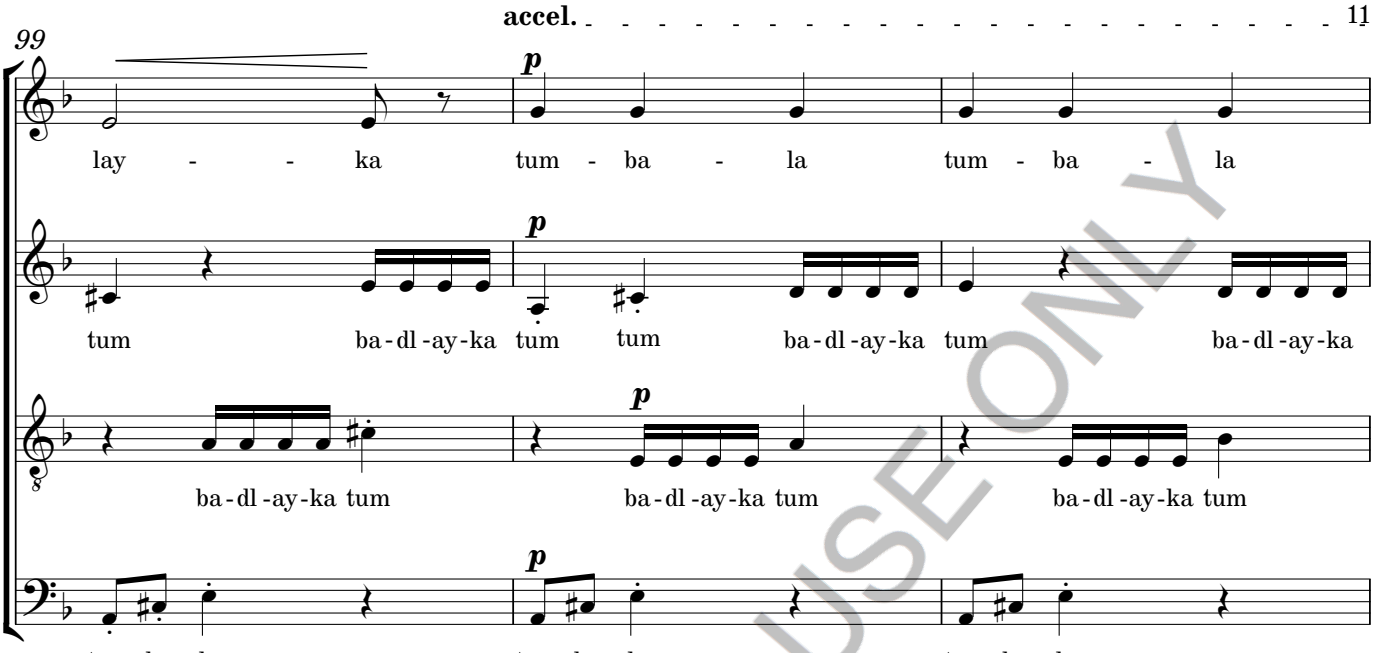

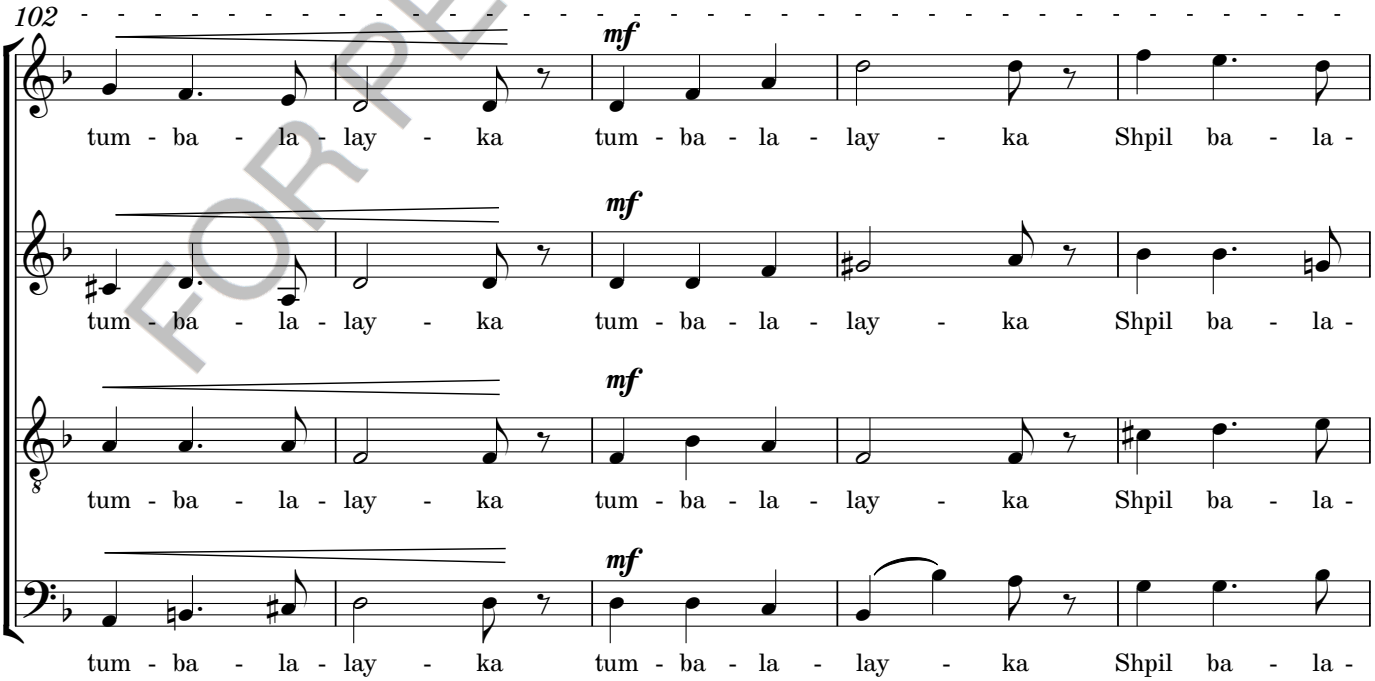

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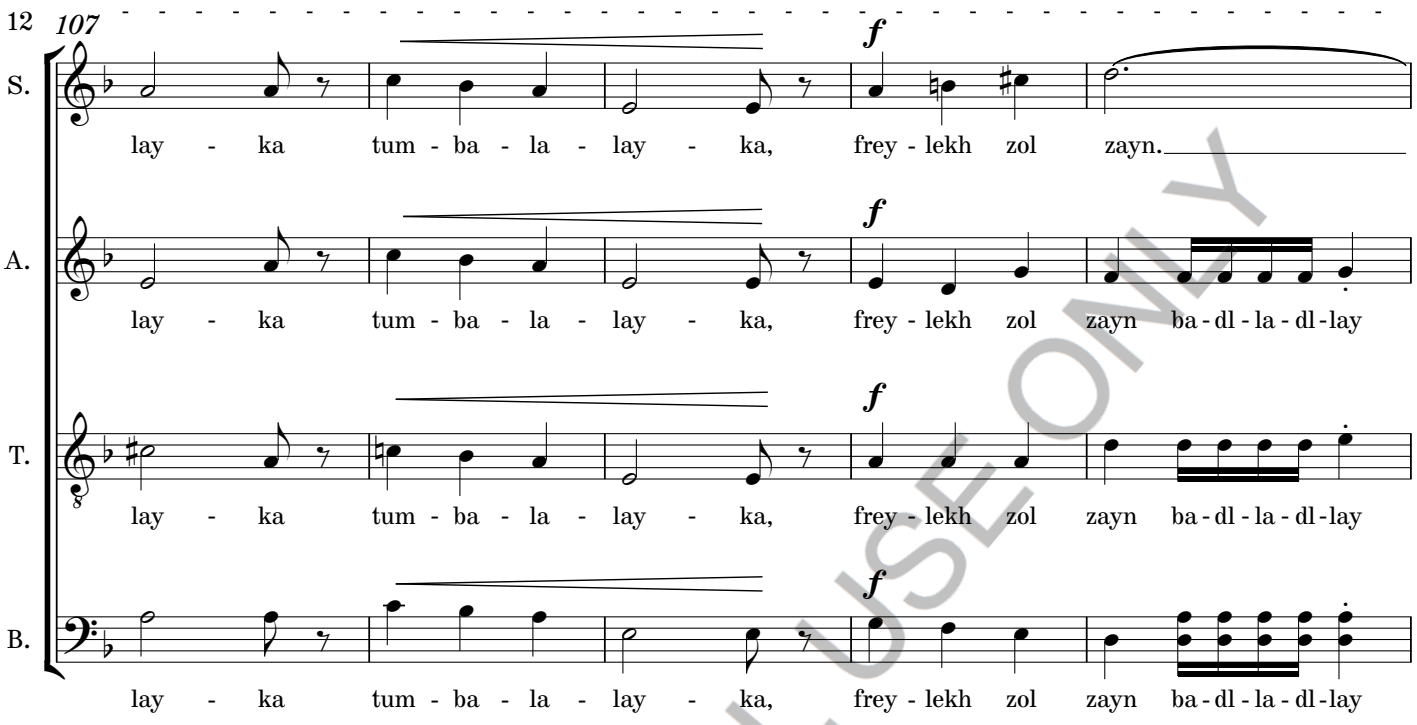

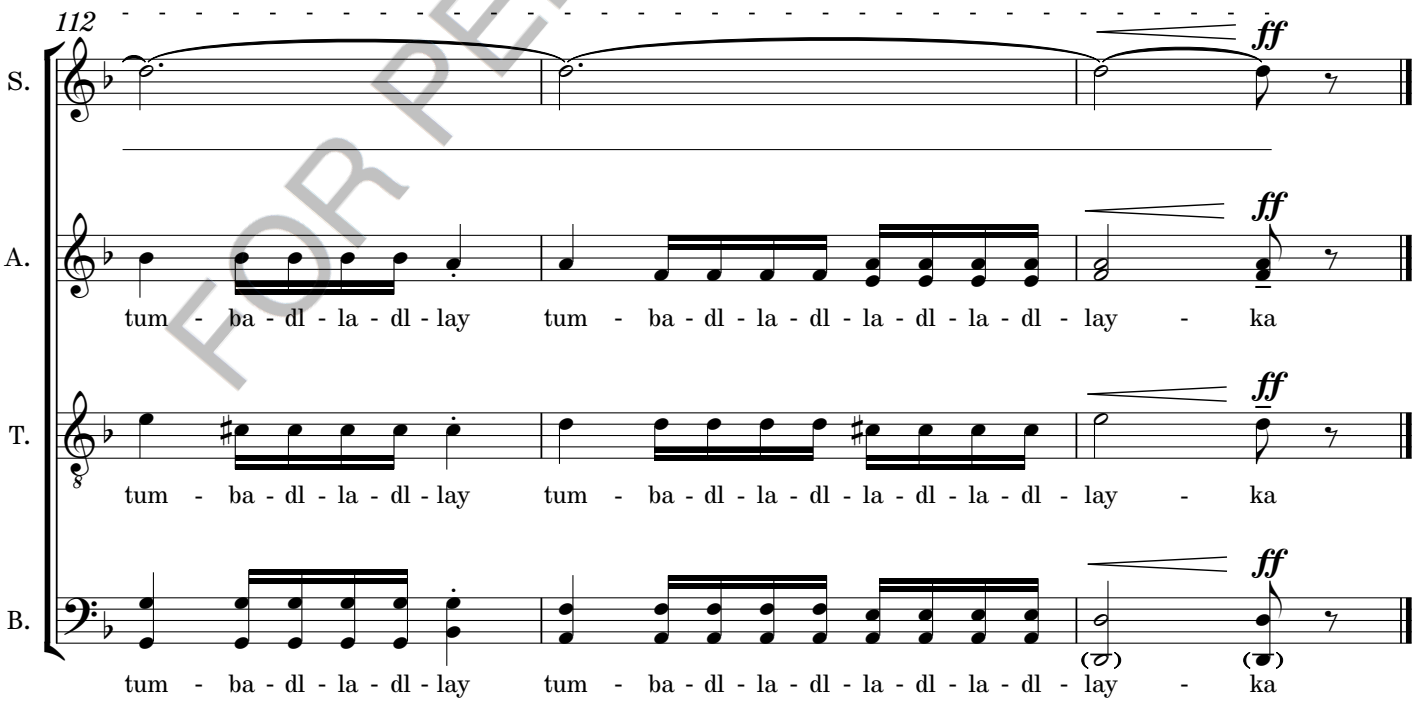

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