

SAVONAROLA

A Grand Opera

IN A PROLOGUE & THREE ACTS

WRITTEN BY

Gilbert À Beckett

MUSIC COMPOSED BY

Charles Villiers Stanford

VOCAL SCORE

COVER IMAGE

"Vanity" by Frank Cadogan Cowper, 1907



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The "renaissance" in English music is generally agreed to have started in the late Victorian period, beginning roughly in 1880. Public demand for major works in support of the annual choral festivals held throughout England at that time was considerable which led to the creation of many large scale works for orchestra with soloists and chorus.

Although a number of those works were engraved, printed and are regularly performed today, performance scores for a considerable number of compositions, both large-scale and more intimate works, are not available. These works were either never engraved or were engraved and printed but are no longer available in the publishers' catalogues. While the existence of these works is documented in biographies of the composers, the ability to study and, most importantly, to perform these compositions is not possible.

Changes in the International copyright laws, coupled with changing musical tastes, played a pivotal role in creating this void. As a result, music publishers lost the ability to generate revenue from the sale/rental of such music. In 1964, holograph and copyist scores from both Novello and from publishers it represented were offered to the British Library and the Royal College of Music Library (see The RCM Novello Library – The Musical Times, Feb. 1983 by Jeremy Dibble).

These autograph full score manuscripts along with copies of engraved vocal scores, widely available through various online library sources, are now the only resources available for studying and performing these works.

The English Heritage Music Series has been created to ensure that these compositions are preserved, are accessible for scholarly research and, most importantly, are available for performance by future generations. Its mission is to:

- Source non-engraved/out-of-print English composer compositions that are in the U.S. public domain
- Preserve these compositions through the preparation of performance scores using notation software
- Provide open Internet access to the scores to facilitate study, performance and sharing of performance material (program notes, audio, reviews, etc.)

In preparing the English Heritage Music Series editions, every effort has been made to adhere strictly to the notation contained in the manuscripts. Because of the passage of time and its effect on the condition of the manuscript, the absence of clear information often times by the composer in notating divided instruments, and with emendations in the composer and other hands resulting from use of the manuscript in performance, there were numerous circumstances which required interpretation and decisions for notes, accidentals, dynamics, articulations and tempi. Should questions arise in the use of these editions, the composers' autograph manuscripts and the Novello vocal scores should be consulted for clarification.

Matthew W. Mehaffey

Editor

Professor of Music University of Minnesota - School of Music Minneapolis, Minnesota USA

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MR. STANFORD'S "SAVONAROLA"

by J.A. Fuller-Maitland

The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular, Vol. 25, No. 495 (May 1, 1884), pp. 270-272

The question of how best to turn history to account on the operatic stage is one that has vexed the souls of many a librettist and composer before now, and it does not seem probable that any ultimate solution will easily be arrived at. If on the one hand, historical accuracy be strictly adhere to, and nothing allowed into the text but what is established by the most unimpeachable documentary evidence, the result is apt to be terribly dull and ineffective, for the lives even of the greatest men do not obligingly arrange themselves into a convenient number of acts for stage purposes. On the other hand, if the facts of history be modified to suit the exigencies of the drama, the public and the critics will often complain that their firmest historical convictions have been grossly outraged, and will therefore have nothing to say to the production. Some composers, as for instance Wagner in "Rienzi," and Berlioz in "Benvenuto Cellini," have eluded the difficulty by screening themselves behind an historical novel, in which the modifications necessary for effect have been already successfully made.

In Mr. Stanford's new opera the librettist, Mr. Gilbert-à-Beckett, has had recourse to no such subterfuge as this, but has faced the difficulty for himself, and solved it in the best possible way, by surrounding the central figure with characters of his own invention, one of which at least is developed from a hint in Villari's life of the great Dominican.

PROLOGUE

Clarice, the daughter of a rich merchant of Ferrara, is beloved by Savonarola, a young student; she has been betrothed, against her will, to a Florentine nobleman named Rucello. She has appointed a last meeting with her lover on the evening of her betrothal, and at the opening of the **Prologue** he waits outside the gate of her house. He knows that his love is returned, but not that Clarice has been affianced to another. She comes, but only to bid him farewell. They are interrupted by Rucello, who taunts Savonarola with his lowly origin, and roughly orders Clarice to return to the house. Savonarola denounces him, and they are about to fight when a company of Dominican monks cross the stage singing as they go. The combatants put up their swords, and after the procession has passed, Clarice is drawn within the gates, but not before she has sworn to Savonarola that she will never marry Rucello. The student, left alone outside the gates, struggles once more against his fate, and tries to force an entrance, but as he does so the distant chant of the Dominicans breaks upon his ear, and he determines to join them and embrace a religious life.

ACT I

So far the Prologue, after which twenty-three years are supposed to elapse. In the meantime, *Clarice* has been married to a certain *Strozzi*, and has died leaving a daughter, closely resembling herself, names *Francesca*. Of this daughter *Rucello*, has obtained guardianship, for *Strozzi* is also dead. She has been brought up in Florence, learning from her guardian to hate the very name of *Savonarola*, who by this time has, by his unbounded influence and stength of character, risen to a position of supremacy in the city. *Rucell* is at the head of a set of partisans of the Medici, who desire to overthrow the power of the priest and to bring in their own princes as rulers.

At the beginning of Act I, they meet opposite *Rucello's* house in the Piazza della Signoria, he having promised to produce an emissary who shall be instrumental in delivering up Florence to the *Medici*. The messenger is *Francesca*, who now enters and declares her hatred of *Savonarola*, and her longing to see Florence delivered from his sway. While waiting for her message, she is met by *Sebastiano*, a member of the secular order of the Piagnoni, founded by *Savonarola*; he loves her, but in vain, for her heart is given to the ause wherein lies, as she has been taught, the only hope for Florence. He tries to dissuade her from her error, and to show her the treachery which it involves; but she is not to be turned from her purpose. When she is gone, the ceremmony of the "Burning of Vanities," so graphically described in (George Eliot's) "Romola," takes place, the Piagnoni boys collecting from the rich Florentines jewels and other spoils "for the holy fire." The partisans of the *Medici* deride the donors, and a tumult arises, which is immediately quelled at the appearance of *Savonarola*, the people falling at his feet as he advances, clad in the white robe and black hood of the order, and bearing in his hand a skull. Peace is restored, but is soon broken again by the discovery of *Francesca's* treachery. She is brought in, and confesses with pride that she is of the Medicean faction. *Savonarola* orders her to prison, but *Rucello* steps in and tells him whose daughter she is, showing him a miniature of *Clarice*. *Savonarola* wavers, and orders her to be freed. Upon this *Rucello* reviles him to the crowd, calling him:

One who sells
The honour of the state to feed and fan
The puling passion of a love-sick boy.

Savonarola regains his self-possession, and gives *Rucello* the lie, by confirming his first order of condemnation, and as *Francesca* is led off, the curtain falls.

ACT II

Act II passes in the monastery of San Marco. The Medicean faction has gained strength, and is engangering the ecclesiastical power in the city. The monks are praying to their founder, St. Dominic, for aid. *Sebastiano* and the chiefs of the Piagnoni come to dfend the convent, and all go into the chapel, except *Sebastiano*, who stands as sentinel outside. To his surprise, *Francesca* demands admission. She has been set free by *Rucello*, and in her imprisonment her feelings towards *Savonarola* have completely changes, and she is now come to warn him and his monks of the approach of the *Medici*. Shortly afterwards they come and sack the convent, defeating its defenders and killing *Sebastiano*. *Savonarola* is imprisioned.

ACT III

The third act is occupied with the final scenes of (*Savonarola's*) life. In the prison *Francesca* comes to crave his forgiveness. He blesses her, and as he does so the memory of years gone by returns, and in *Clarice's* child his old sorrow is expiated. The guards enter to take him to execution, and curtains close in the scene while a funeral march is played. The second scene is in the Piazza, where *Rucello* is exulting in the accomplishment of his revenge. As *Savonarola* comes, followed by the crowd who kneel for his blessing, *Rucello* confronts him in triumph, and scoffs at him. He remains perfectly calms, but *Francesca* and the crowd pour curses upon *Rucello's* head. The procession moves on, leaving *Francesca* alone on the stage, watching the preparations for the execution. AS the ruddy glow of the distant fire lights up the stage, she utters strains of rapturous exaltation as though seeing an angelic vision, and at last sinks lifelss to the ground.

The music inspired by this fine libretto is in all respects worthy of it. It is throughout lofty in emotion, conceived on the highest lines, intellectually as well as musically, and admirably sustained in every portion. It is not too much to say that in breadth of conception and richness of imagination, as well as in intrinsic musical beauty, it far excels all Mr. Stanford's former works. His method of operatic treatment is as original as the music itself. He uses "leading motives" freely, but by no means too lavishly. Some of the recurring phrases savour rather of musical allusion than of the "Leitmotiv" proper Thus the orchestral opening of the Prologue is used again almost note for note to introduce Acts II. And III., Which treat, like the Prologue, of *Savonarola*'s sufferings. A phrase of great breadth and beauty which first occurs in G major as an accompaniment to the expression of the young student's hopes of victory in love, is used again in a slightly modified form where supremacy of his influence is to be expressed, and again when he is taken prisoner, exulting in view of the martyr's triumphant death. The other musical motives may be left to explain themselves. The use of the Dominican Chant, the melody of which is taken from a collection of church music dating from about 1300, is very fine indeed, representing as it does the religious element in the drama. Of set pieces there are few or none in the opera, but nothing is farther from the composer's style than the "endless recitative" affected by some young musicians in fancied imitation of Wagner. Though there are no separable numbers, unless we count the prayer of the Dominicans and the funeral march as such, yet the music is divided into movements which are scarcely less clear in form than those of a sonata.

Among the most beautiful and striking portions of the score we may mention the duet and final tenor solo in the Prologue, *Francesca*'s song and the scene of the Burning of Vanities in Act I., The Dominican Hymn and the duet between *Francesca* and *Sebastiano* in Act II., and in Act III. The duet in prison, the funeral march and final soprano solo, in which the music first heard at the close of the Prologue recurs with the best possible effect, and by which the whole work is brought to a solemn and most affecting conclusion.

CHARACTERS

Prologue

THE PROLOGUE TAKES PLACE IN FERRARA - A.D. 1475

Clarice

Pupil of Savonarola *Soprano*

Savonarola

A student *Tenor*

Giovanni di Rucello

A Florentine noble *Baritone*

Opera

THE OPERA TAKES PLACE IN FLORENCE - A.D. 1498

Francesca

Daughter of Clarice Soprano

Savonarola

Prior of San Marco Tenor

Sebastiano Maraffi

An adherent of the Piagnoni Tenor

Giovanni di Rucello

Member of the Party of the Medici Baritone

Fra Filippo

A Dominican Monk Bass

Nardi and Bandini

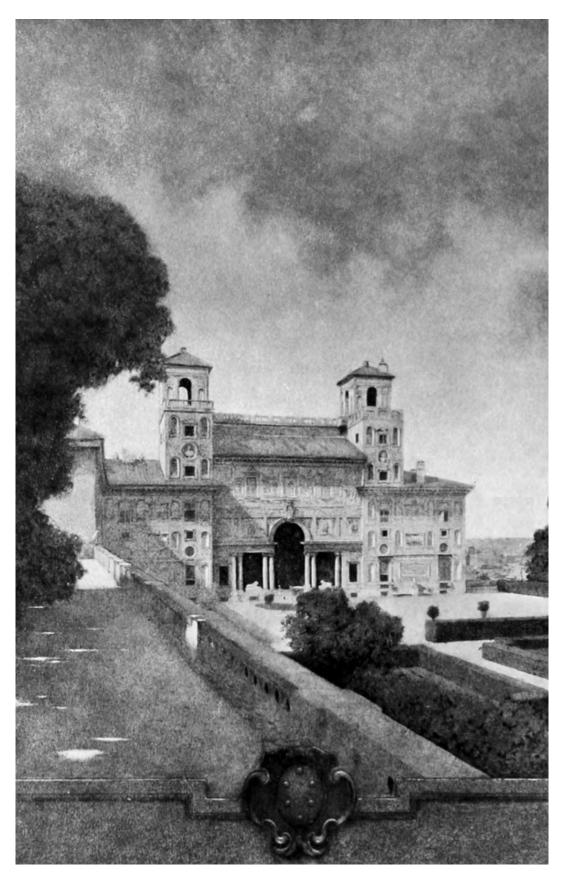
Two Spies Baritone/Bass

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PREMIERE PERFORMANCES

April 18, 1884 Stadt-Theatre, Hamburg Josef Sucher conductor July 9, 1884 Covent Garden, London Hans Richter, conductor



VILLA MEDICI Maxfield Parrish 1904

PROLOGUE

Gilbert À Beckett

Charles Villiers Stanford

PThe scene represents the exterior of the garden and grounds attached to the palace of a rich merchant of the city of Ferrara, towards the middle of the fifteenth century.

A lofty wall pierced in the centre with a double wrought-iron gate divides the foreground from the ornamental shrubbery beyond. To the right, rising above the wall, is discerned a portion of the mansion itself, with casements brilliantly illuminated as for a fête. The moon at its fullest and brightest hangs in the tranquil heavens above. The dark foliage of the poplar and cypress forms a frame-work to the picture of which the striking feature is the contrast between the fairy-like beauty of the moonlit grounds within, and the gloom of the deserted road that bounds them.

As the curtain rises, the strains of the following distant chrous break the silence.

Scene 1



Prologue - Scene 1



Prologue - Scene 1













Prologue - Scene 1



Prologue - Scene 1



Prologue - Scene 1



Prologue - Scene 1



Prologue - Scene 1



Prologue - Scene 1



Prologue - Scene 1

















Prologue - Scene 2



Prologue - Scene 2



Prologue - Scene 2



Prologue - Scene 2



Prologue - Scene 2



Prologue - Scene 2



Prologue - Scene 2



Prologue - Scene 2



Prologue - Scene 2



Prologue - Scene 2



Prologue - Scene 2

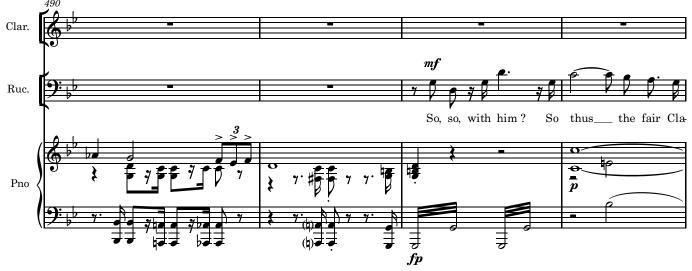


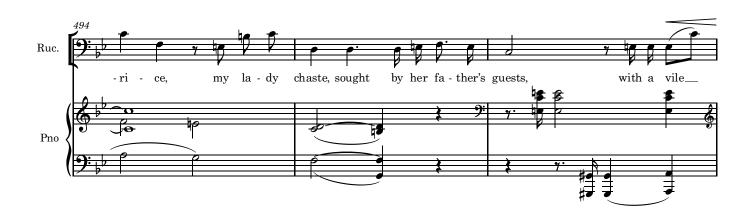
Prologue - Scene 2

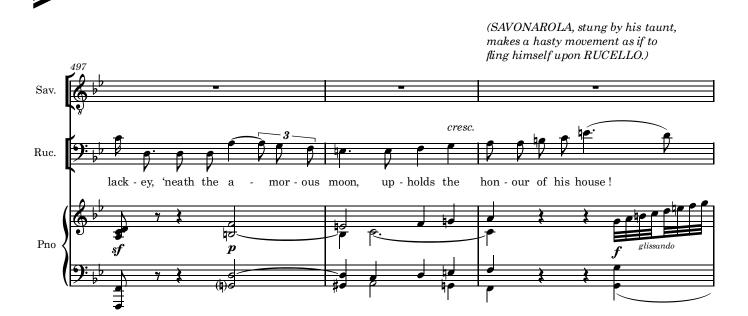


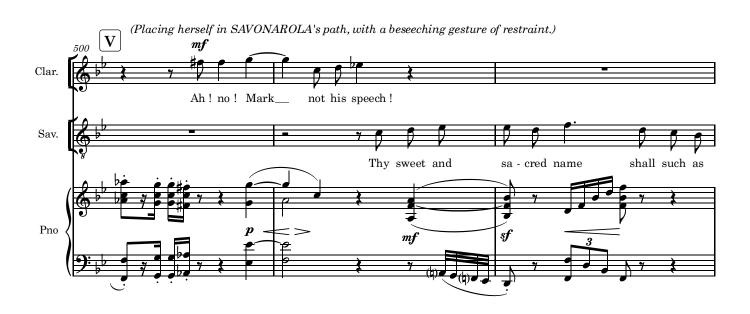


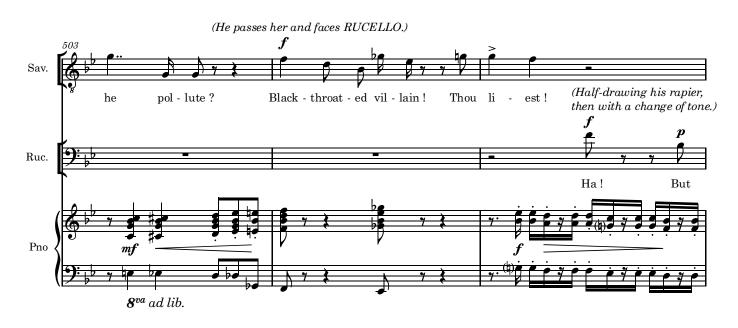
(At the moment he plants a kiss upon her forehead, RUCELLO appears suddenly on the threshold of the iron gates. On perceiving SAVONAROLA and CLARICE, he halts as one who has found the object of his search. They turn at his step, and on recognizing him, fall back a pace or two.)



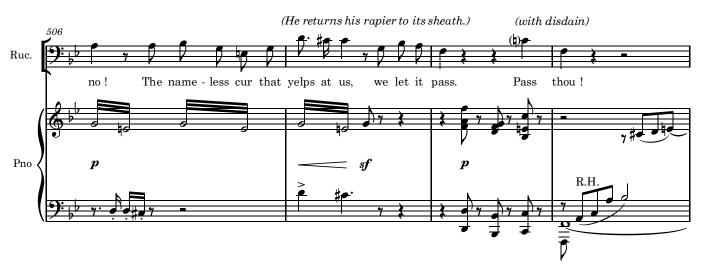




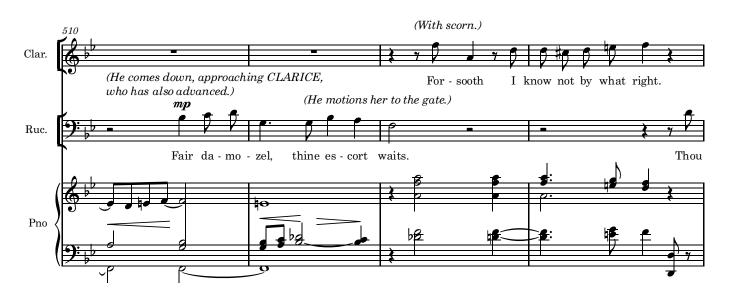


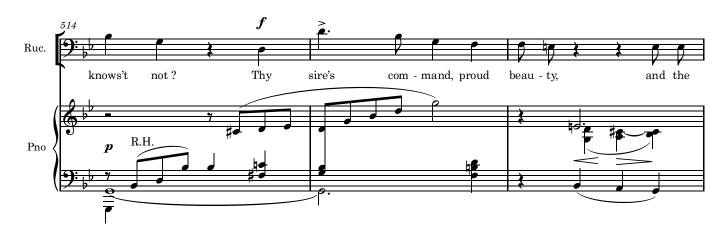








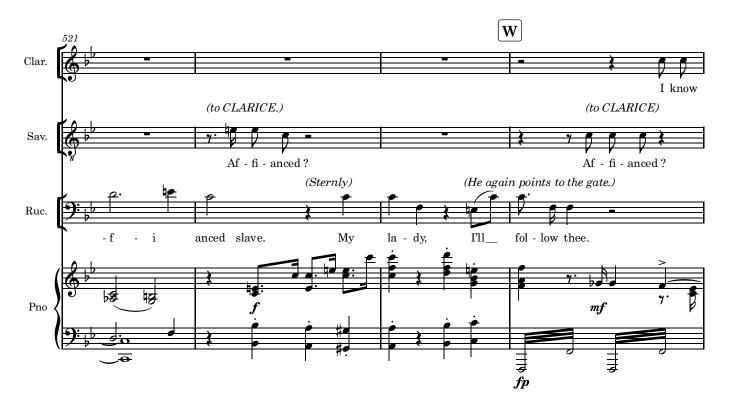


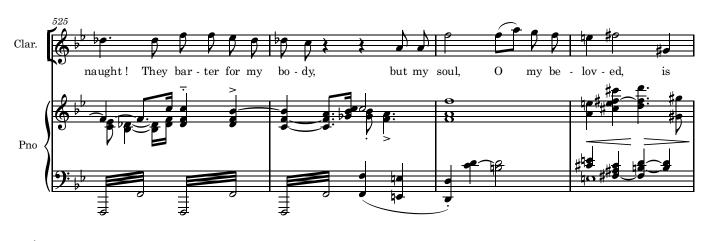




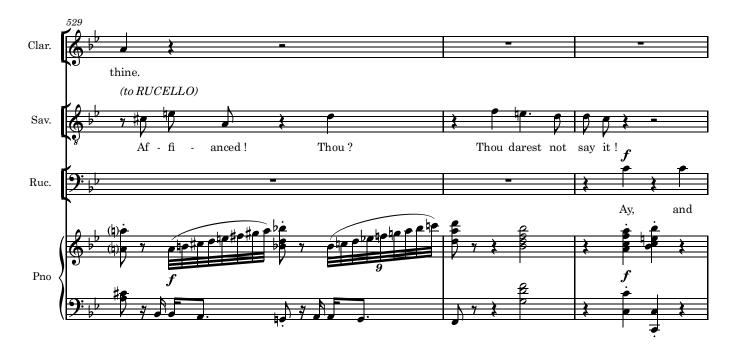




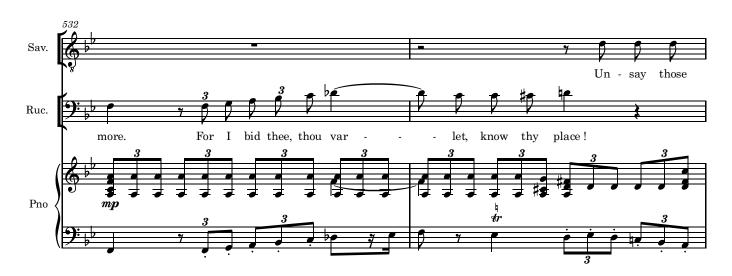














Prologue - Scene 3



Prologue - Scene 3

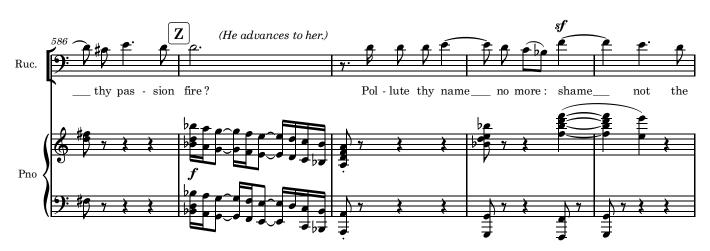


Prologue - Scene 3

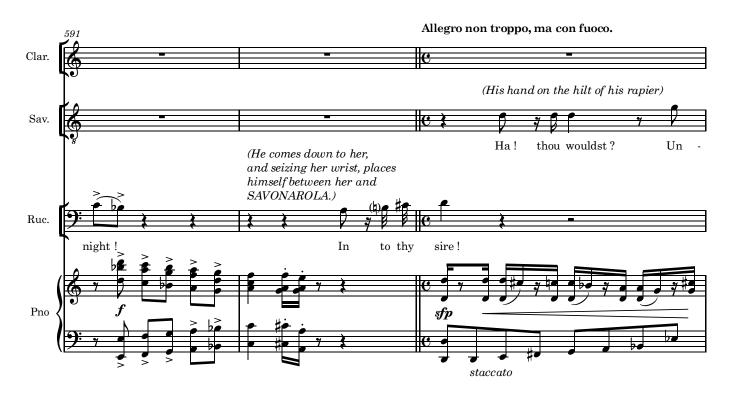










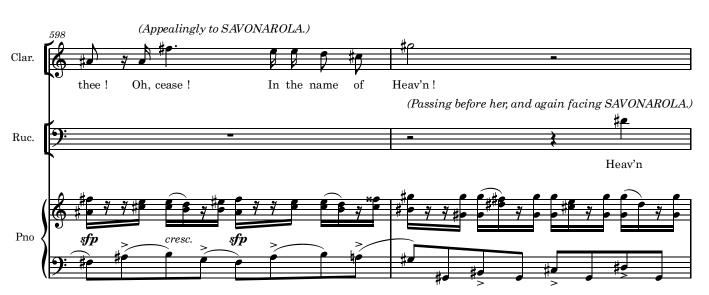


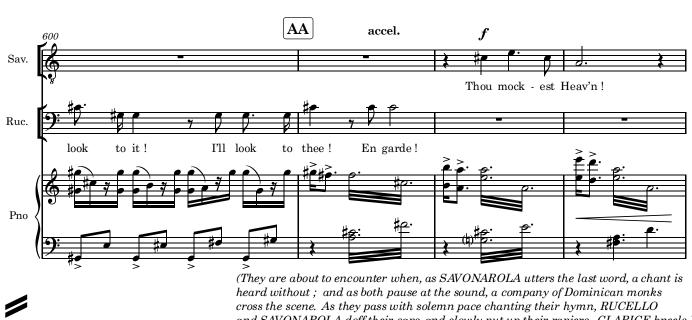
















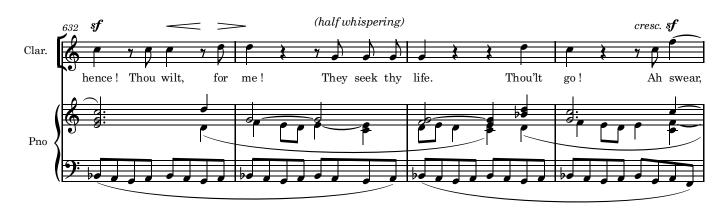
Prologue - Scene 3











Prologue - Scene 3

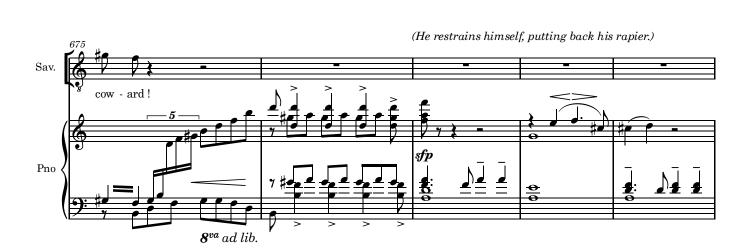


Prologue - Scene 3









Prologue - Scene 4



Prologue - Scene 4



Prologue - Scene 4



Prologue - Scene 4



Prologue - Scene 4



Prologue - Scene 4



Prologue - Scene 4

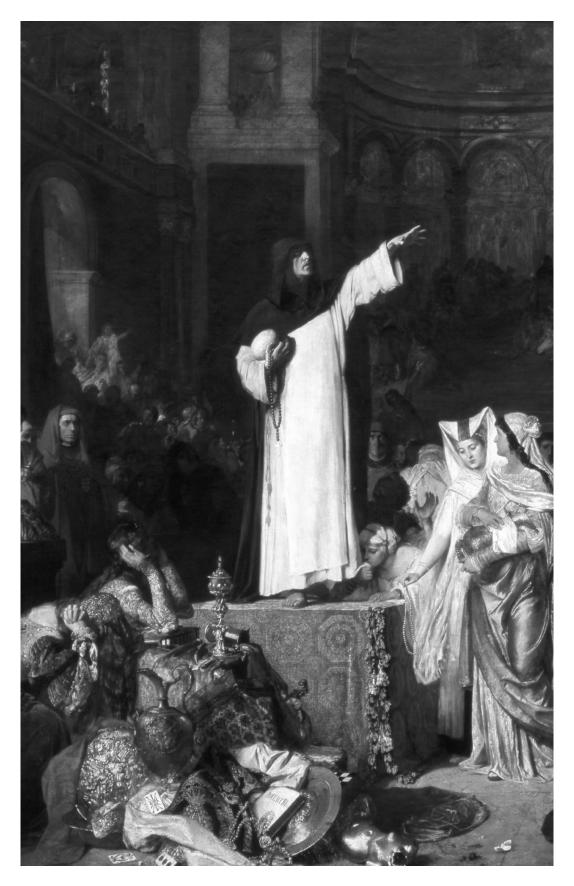


Prologue - Scene 4



Prologue - Scene 4





SAVONAROLA PREACHING AGAINST PRODIGALITY Ludwig von Langenmantel 1879

OVERTURE



Overture







Overture





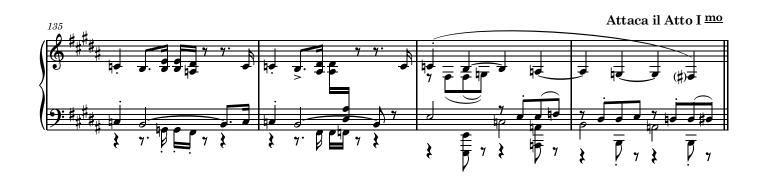
Overture











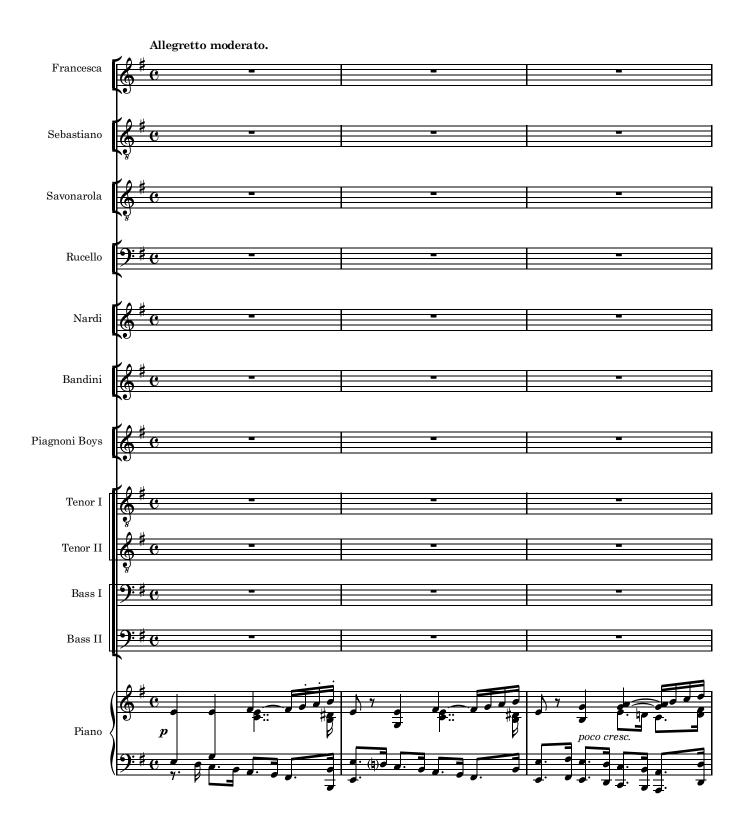


PIAZZA DELLA SIGNORIA Bernardo Bellotto 1740

ACT I

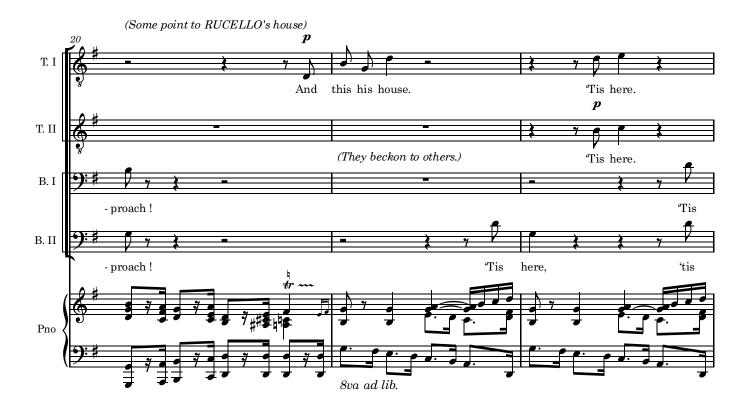
Scene 1

The scene represents the Piazza della Signoria in the city of Florence as it appeared A.D. 1498. To the left of the picture in the foreground the entrance to a noble mansion. The day is only just beginning to break as the curtain rises. The stage is deserted. Gradually entering at first in twos or threes, and subsequently in larger roups, the leaders of the Medici assemble in the vacinity of the mansion to the left of the scene.



Act I - Scene 1









Act I - Scene 1



Act I - Scene 1



 $Act\ I - Scene\ 1$



Act I - Scene 1

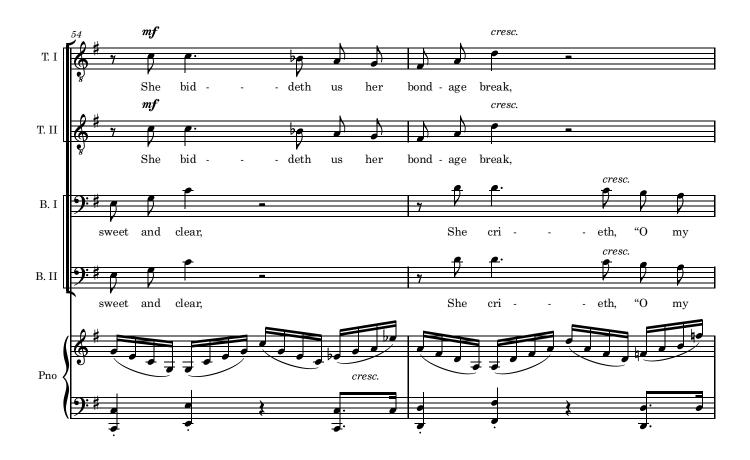


Act I - Scene 1





 $Act\ I - Scene\ 1$





Act I - Scene 1





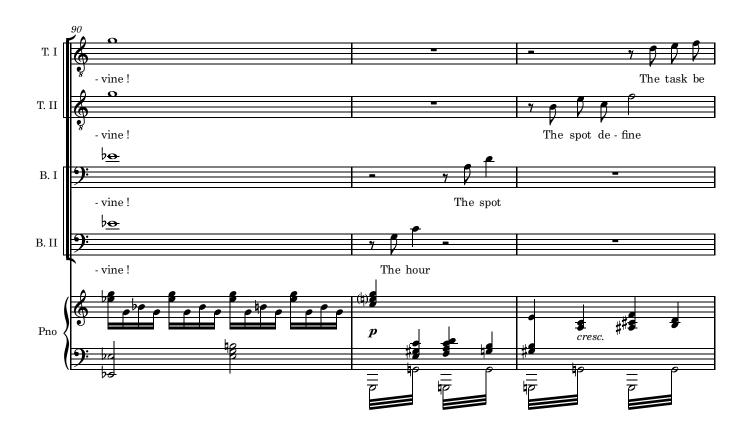
 $Act\ I - Scene\ 1$





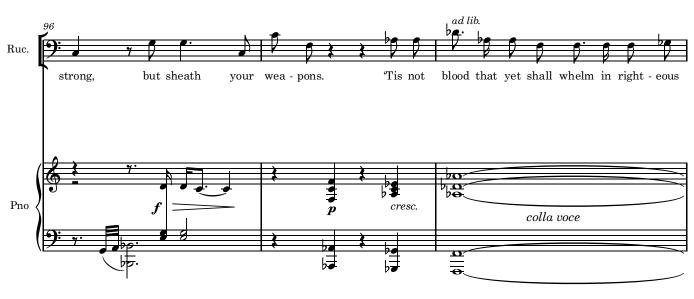


Act I - Scene 1

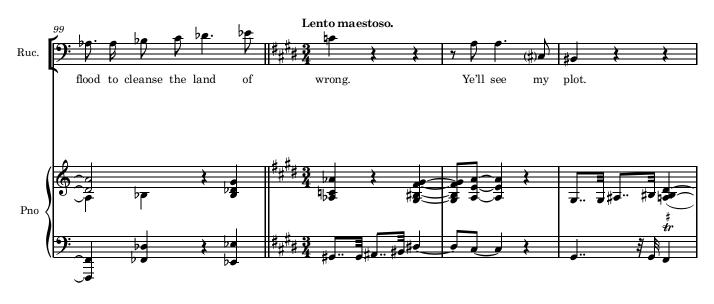














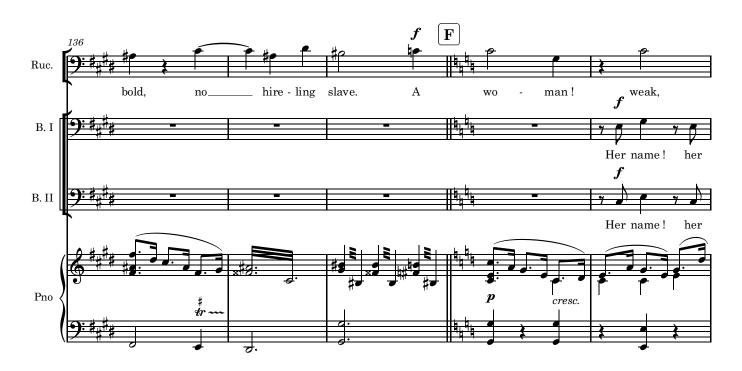


Act I - Scene 1





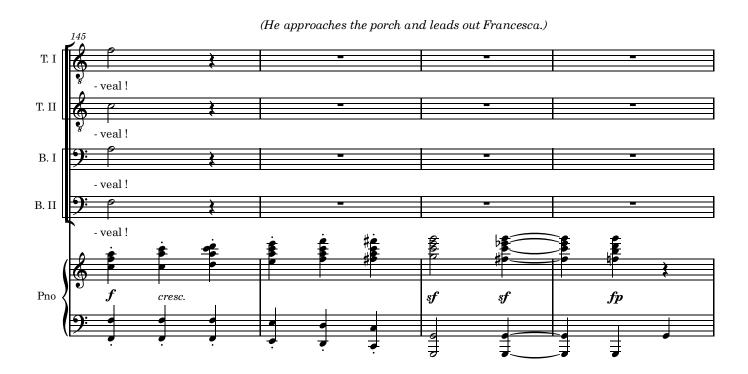
 $Act\ I - Scene\ 1$







Act I - Scene 1



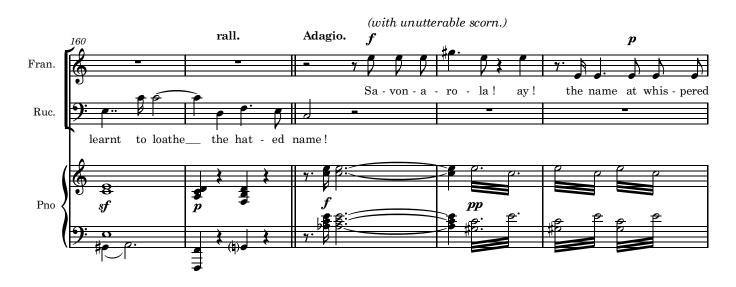




Act I - Scene 2



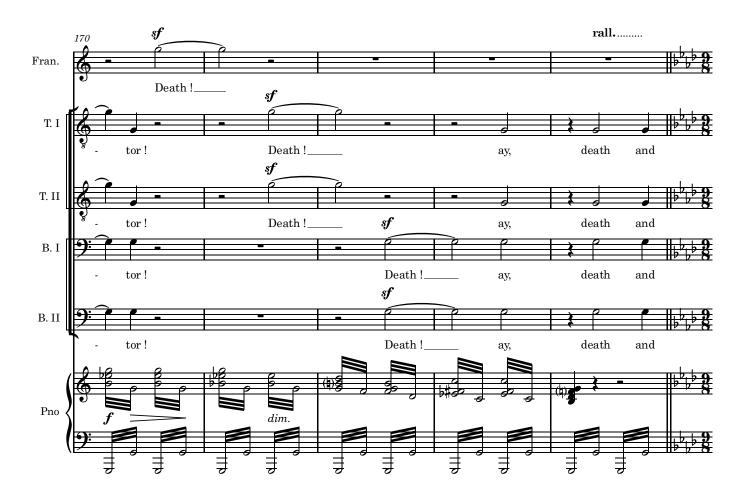
Act I - Scene 2



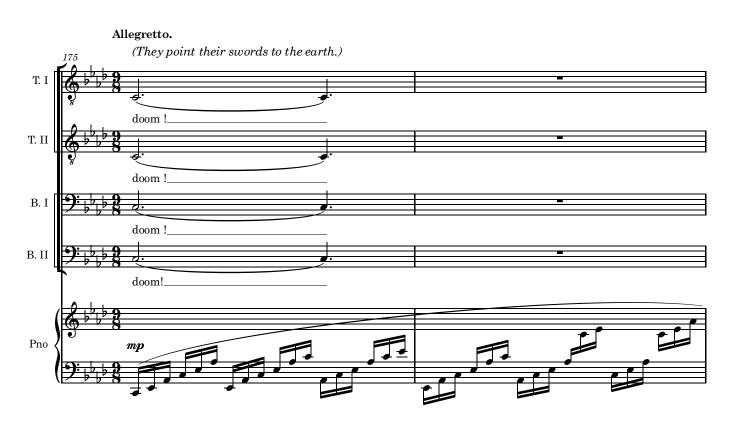




Act I - Scene 2





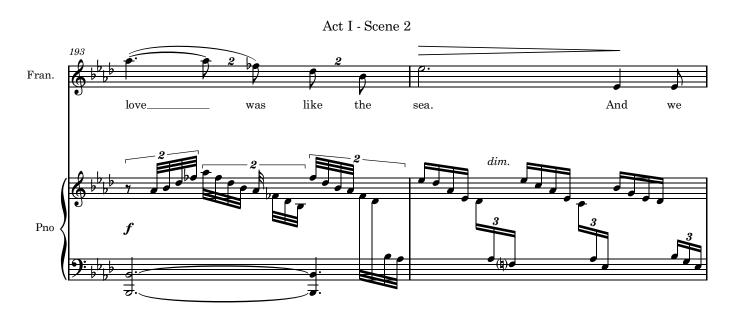


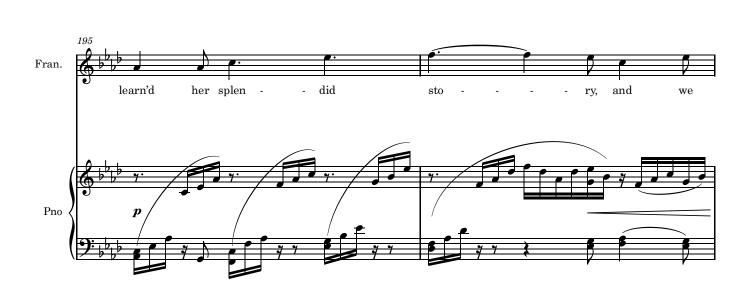
Act I - Scene 2

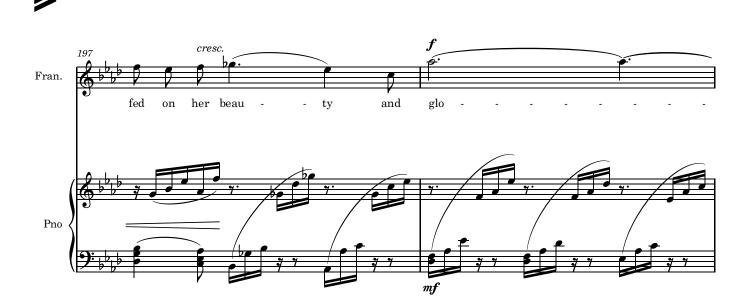


Act I - Scene 2















Act I - Scene 2



Act I - Scene 2

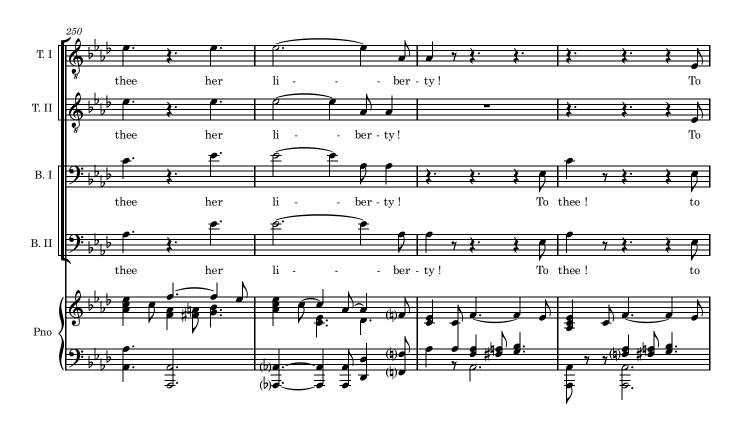




Act I - Scene 2







Act I - Scene 2

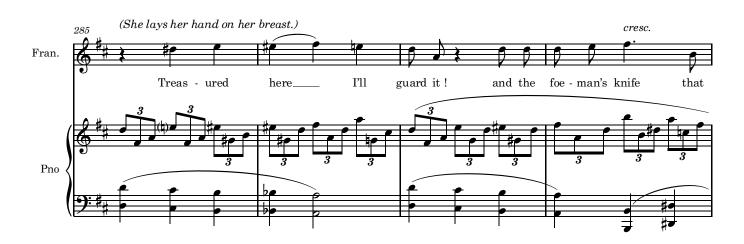




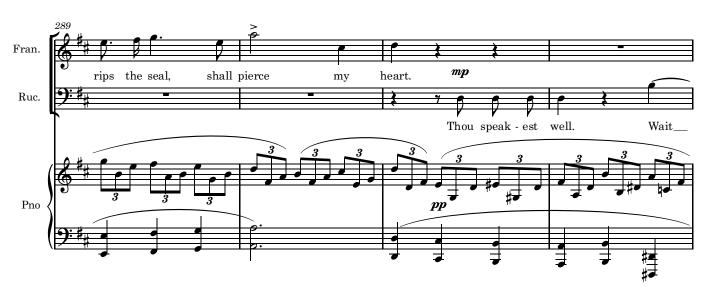
Act I - Scene 2



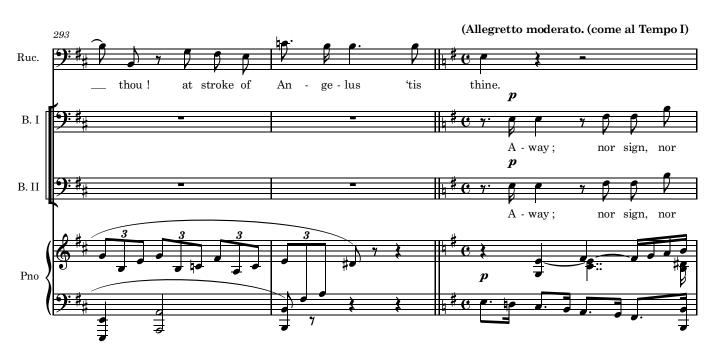
$Act\ I\ \hbox{-}\ Scene\ 2$











 $Act\ I - Scene\ 2$





Act I - Scene 3

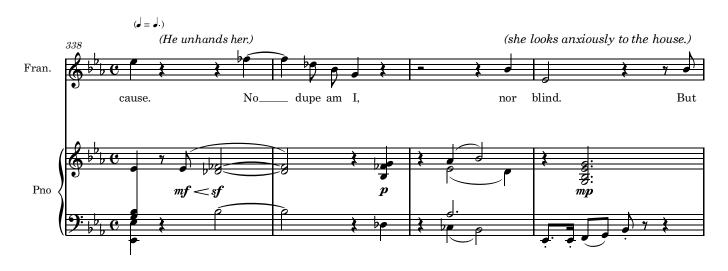
 $(FRANCESCA\ pauses\ for\ a\ moment\ on\ the\ now\ deserted\ scene,\ and\ is\ about\ to\ enter\ the\ porch,\ when\ SEBASTIANO\ hurriedly\ comes\ down\ and\ confronts\ her.)$



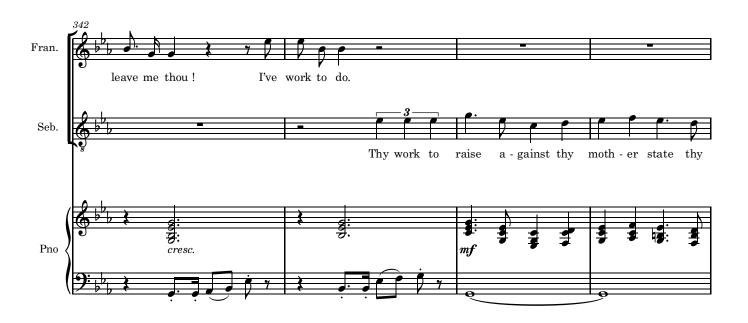
Act I - Scene 3



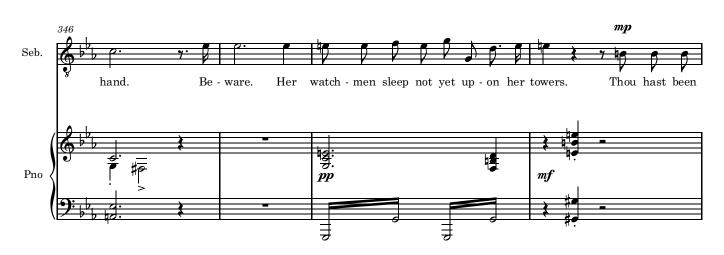
 $Act\ I\ \hbox{-}\ Scene\ 3$











 $Act\ I\ \hbox{-}\ Scene\ 3$



Act I - Scene 3



Act I - Scene 3



Act I - Scene 3



Act I - Scene 3

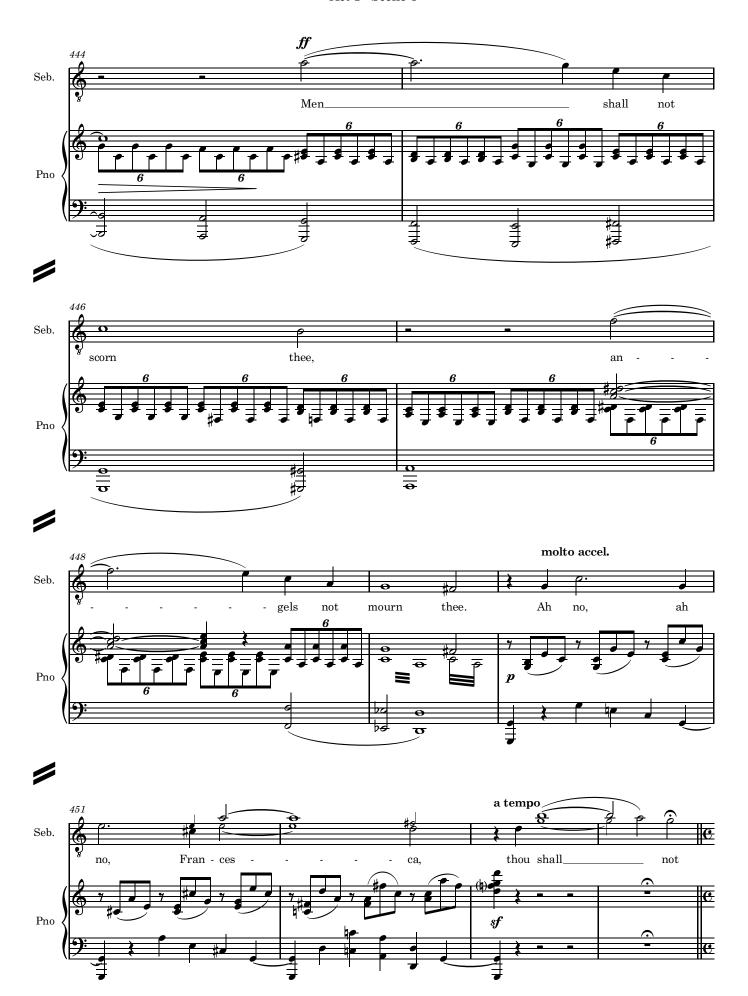




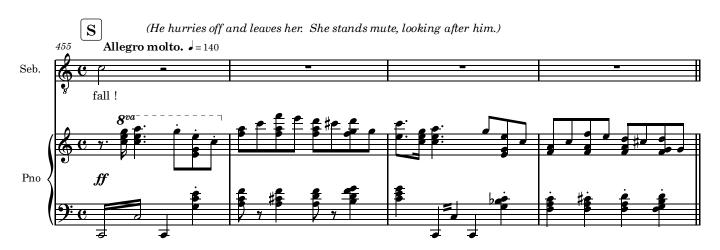
Act I - Scene 3



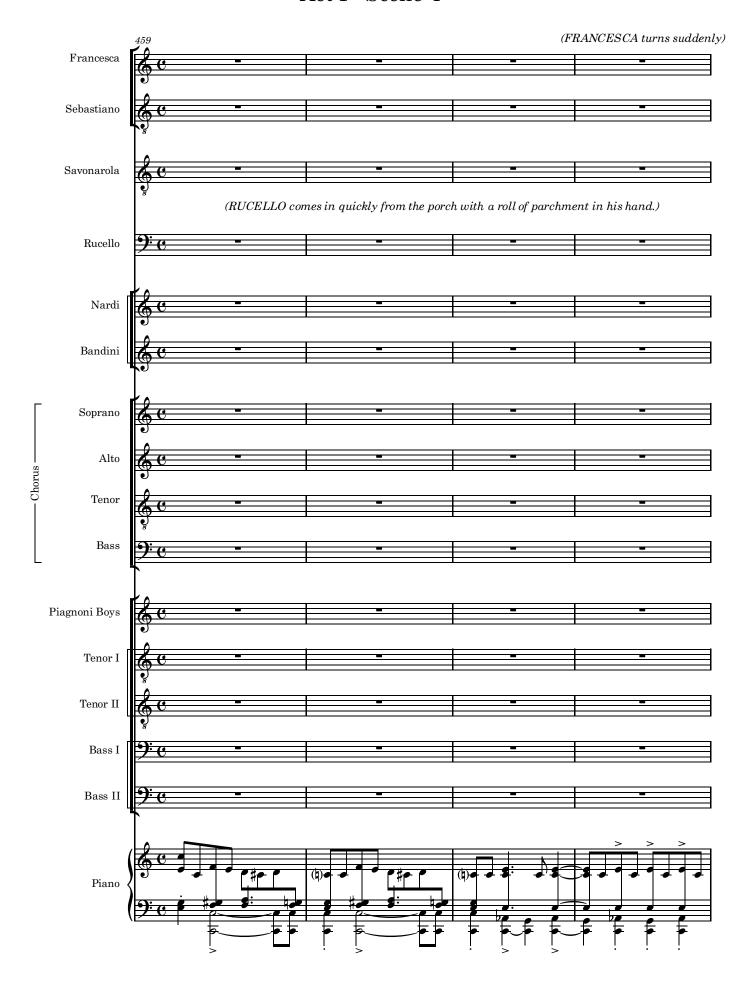
Act I - Scene 3



Act I - Scene 3



Act I - Scene 4



Act I - Scene 4



Act I - Scene 4



$Act\ I\ \hbox{-}\ Scene\ 4$



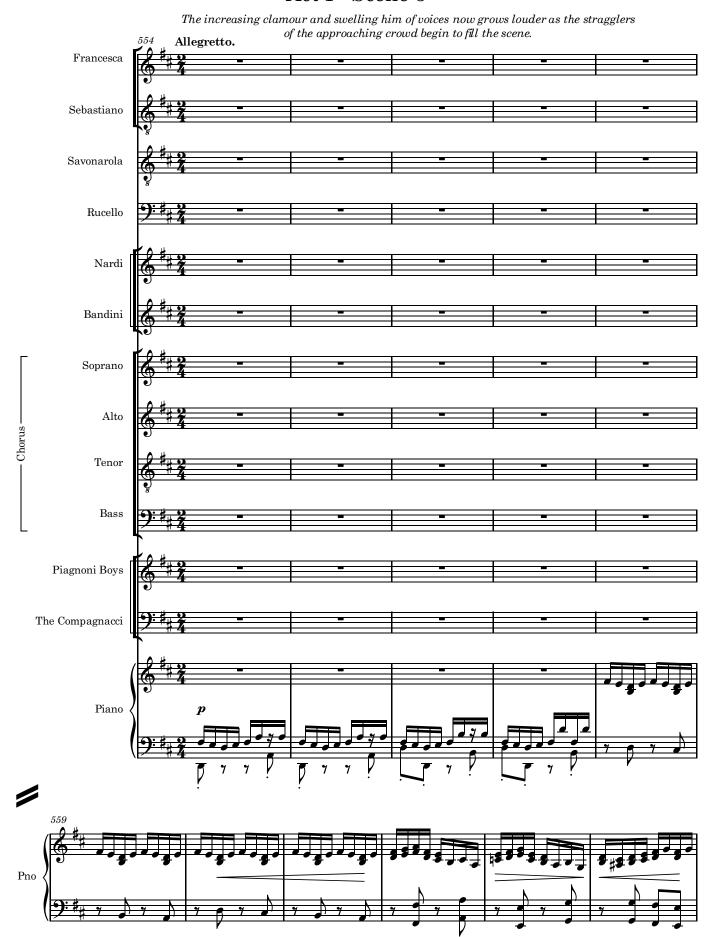
Act I - Scene 4



Act I - Scene 4



Act I - Scene 5







Act I - Scene 5





Act I - Scene 5





Act I - Scene 5





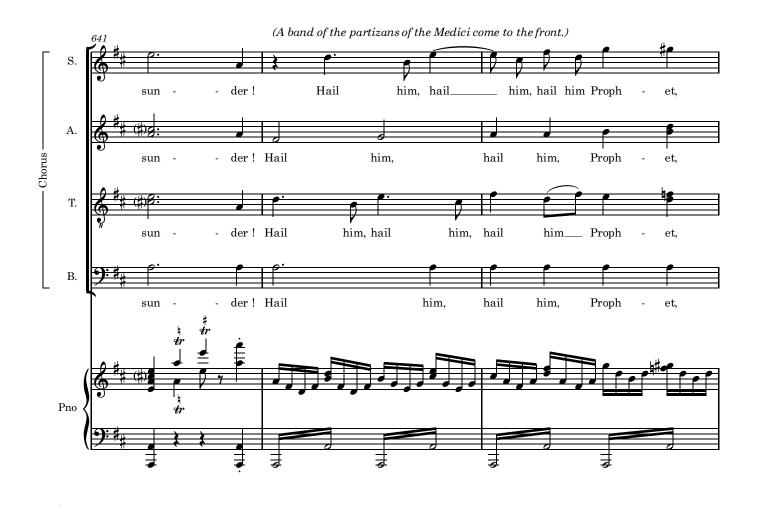
Act I - Scene 5





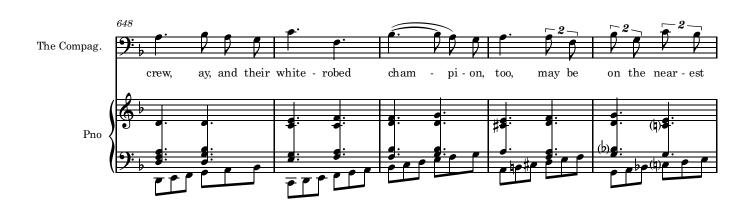


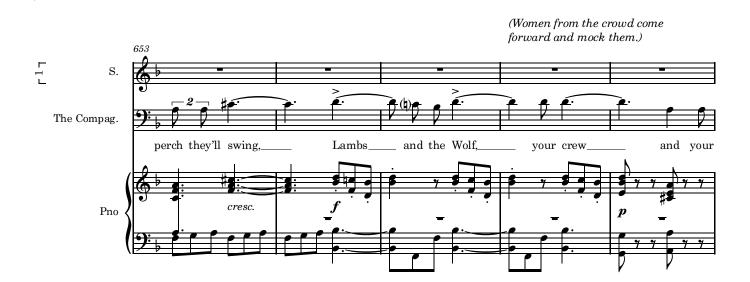
 $Act\ I - Scene\ 5$





Act I - Scene 5







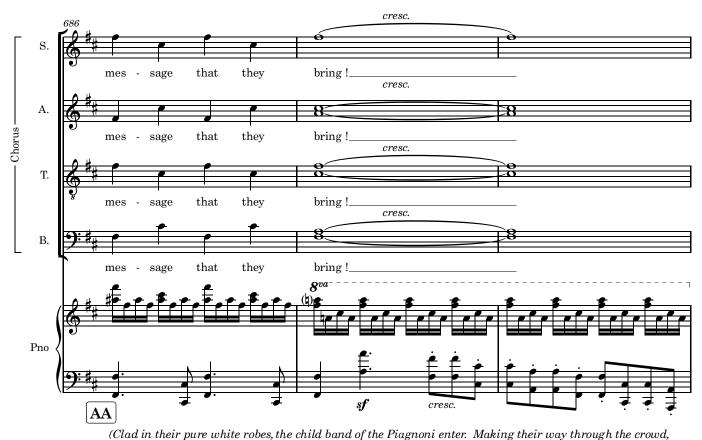
 $Act\ I - Scene\ 5$





Act I - Scene 5





they turn first to one and then to another as they sing their petitional hymn. Advancing some in a winsome, playful manner, they beg the gew-gaws from the richly-dressed townsfolk, now from the young, now from the old; the libertine, the beauty, the roué, the bedizened matron, all in turn being assailed for their adornments, while others carry baskets into which the spoils are flung.)

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Act I - Scene 5



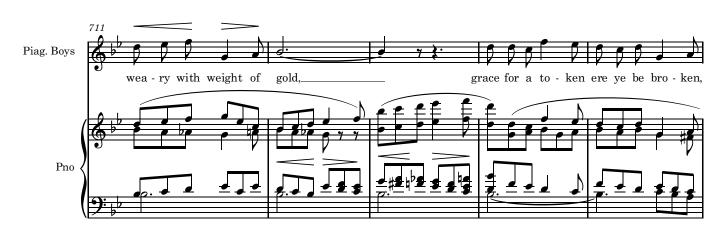
Act I - Scene 5











Act I - Scene 5



Act I - Scene 5









Act I - Scene 5

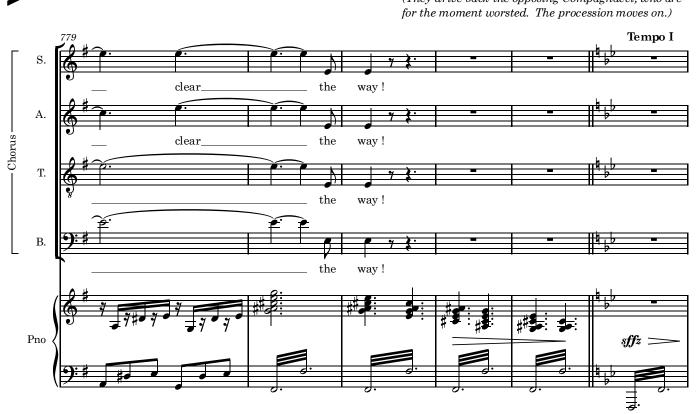


 $Act\ I - Scene\ 5$

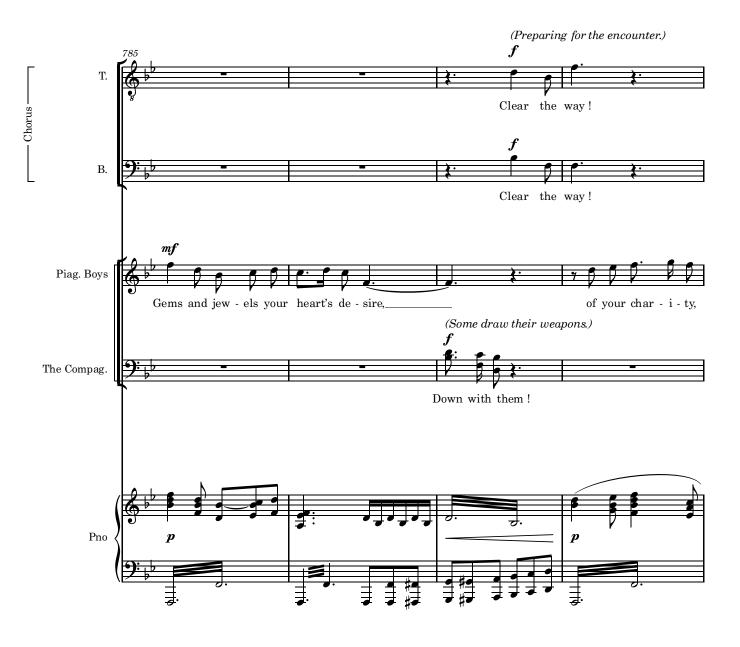


Act I - Scene 5

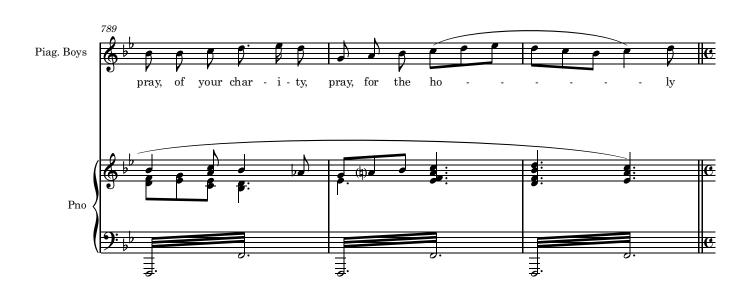




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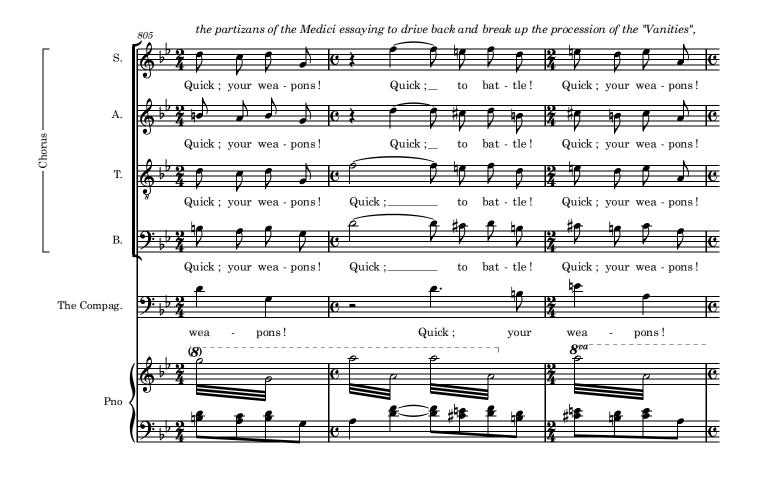


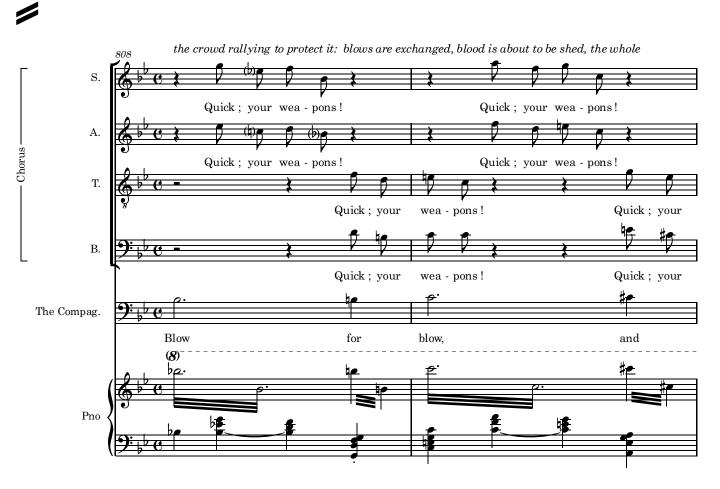






Act I - Scene 5

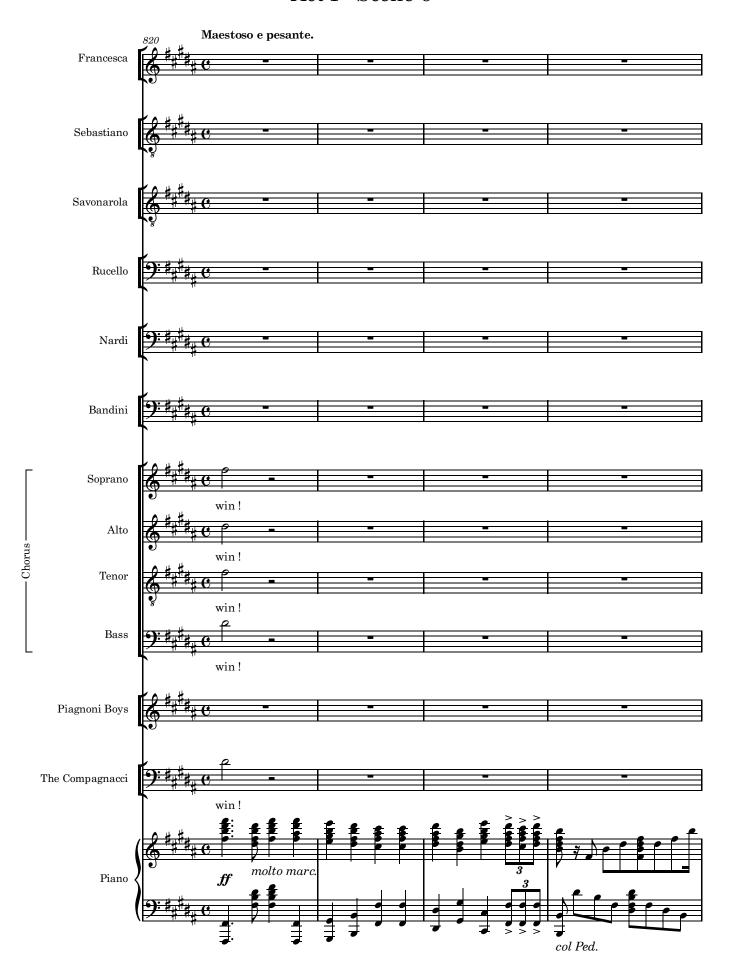






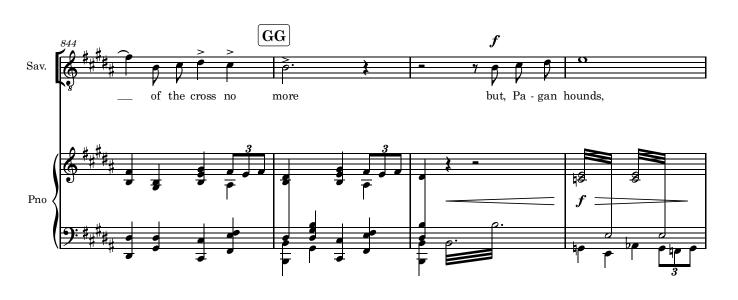


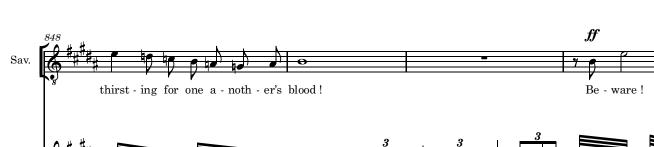
Act I - Scene 6





Act I - Scene 6

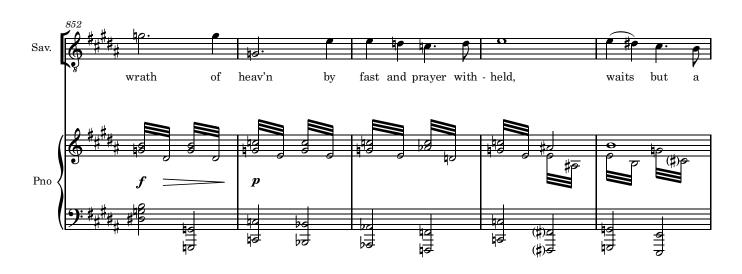






The





Act I - Scene 6



Act I - Scene 6



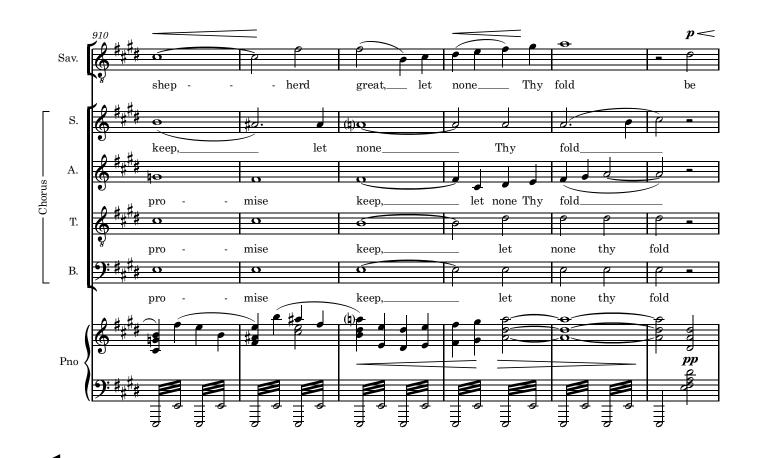
 $Act\ I\ \hbox{-}\ Scene\ 6$







Act I - Scene 6





Act I - Scene 6



Act I - Scene 6







Act I - Scene 6







Act I - Scene 6



Act I - Scene 6



Act I - Scene 6



Act I - Scene 6



Act I - Scene 6





 $Act\ I\ \hbox{-}\ Scene\ 6$





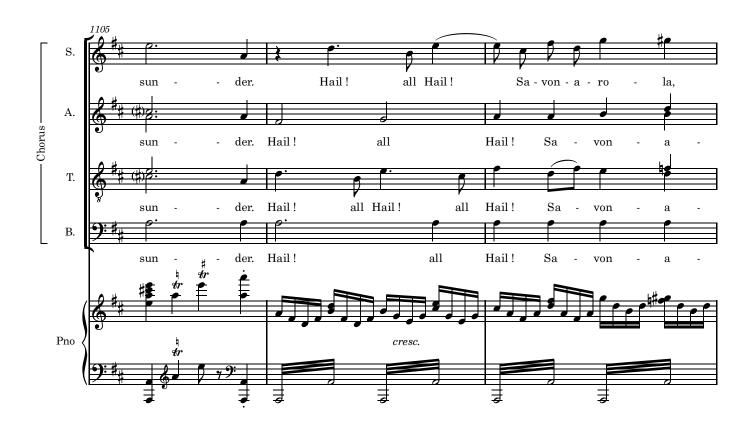
Act I - Scene 6



 $Act\ I - Scene\ 6$



Act I - Scene 6

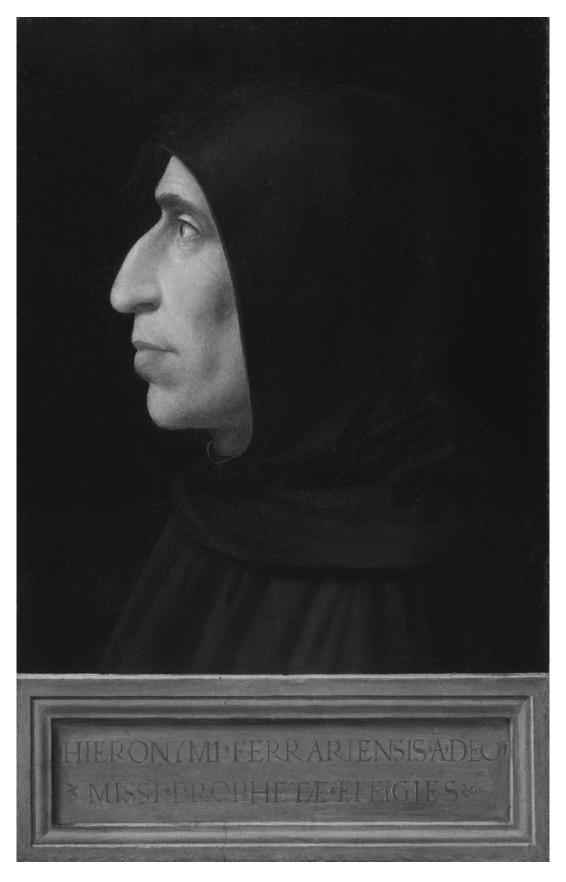




Act I - Scene 6







PORTRAIT OF GIROLAMO SAVONAROLA Fra Bartolomeo 1498



MONASTERY OF SAN MARCO Florence

ACT II

Scene 1

The interior of the Monastery of San Marco. The scene represents an angle of the cloisters. To the left, approached by a few steps, is the entrance to the chapel of the community. To the right, a large iron-bound double door, leading to another part of the building and communicating with the outer world, stands open. FRA FILIPPO and his brother monks are discovered in groups, looking towards this further court, and listening to the sounds of distant commotion without, as the Act drop rises.



Act II - Scene 1





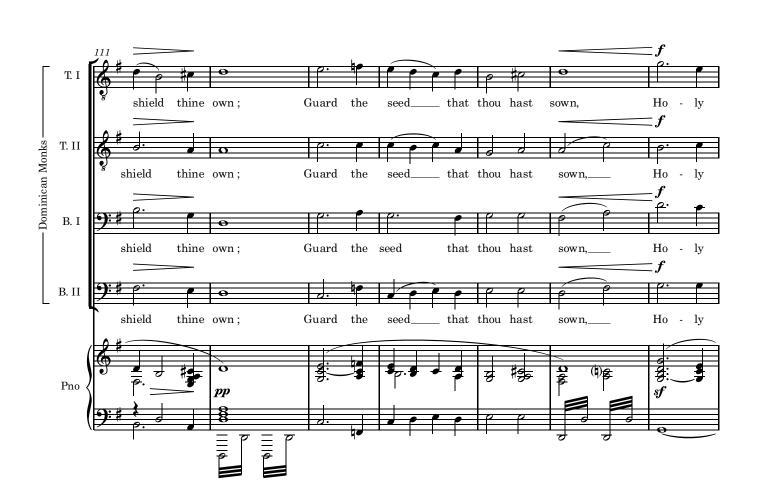
Act II - Scene 1



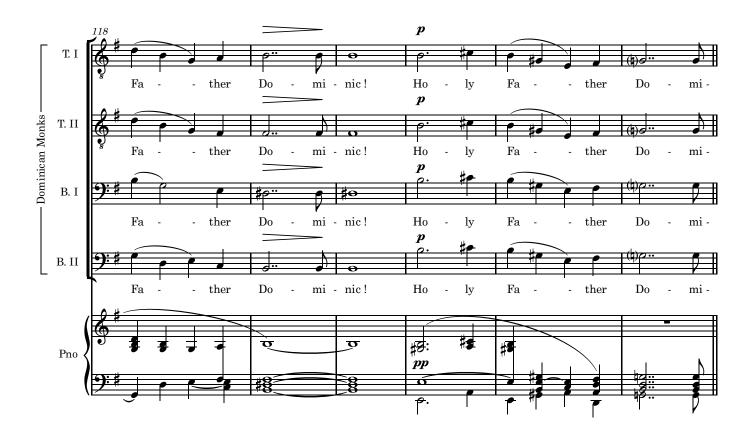


Act II - Scene 1





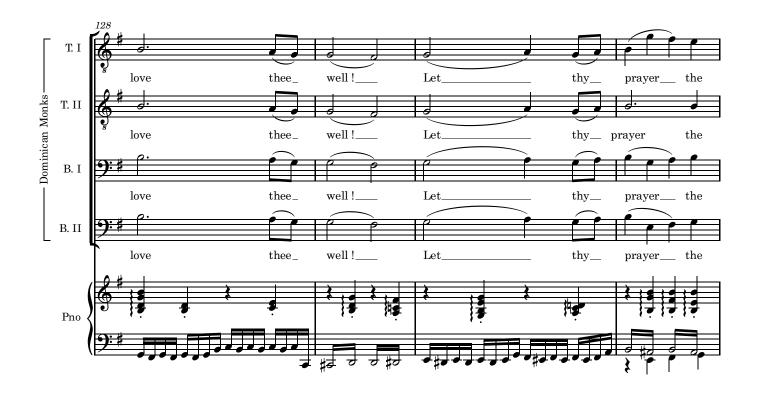
Act II - Scene 1







Act II - Scene 1





Act II - Scene 1





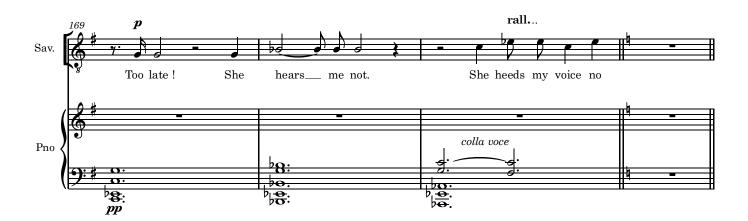


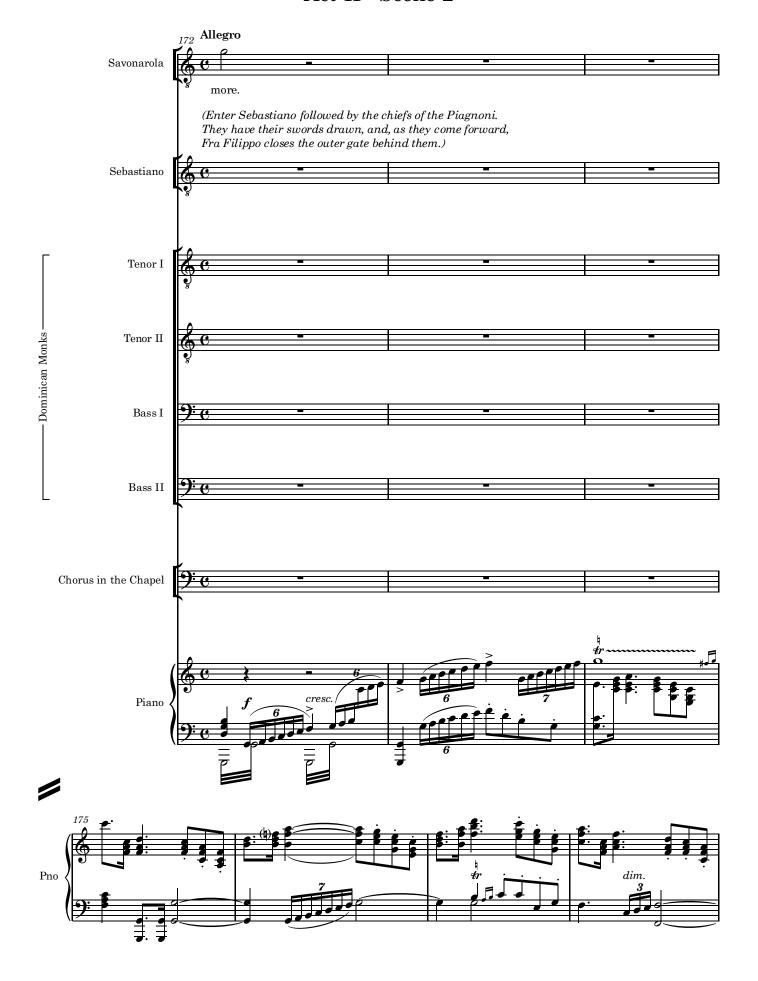
Act II - Scene 1



Act II - Scene 1







Act II - Scene 2



Act II - Scene 2



Act II - Scene 2



Act II - Scene 2



Act II - Scene 2









Act II - Scene 2





Act II - Scene 2

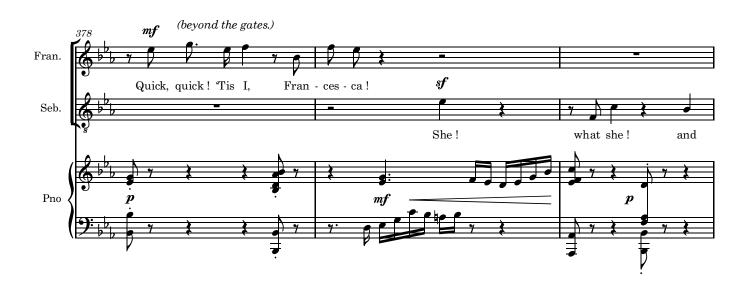


Act II - Scene 2



















Act II - Scene 3



Act II - Scene 3



Act II - Scene 3







Act II - Scene 3



Act II - Scene 3



Act II - Scene 3





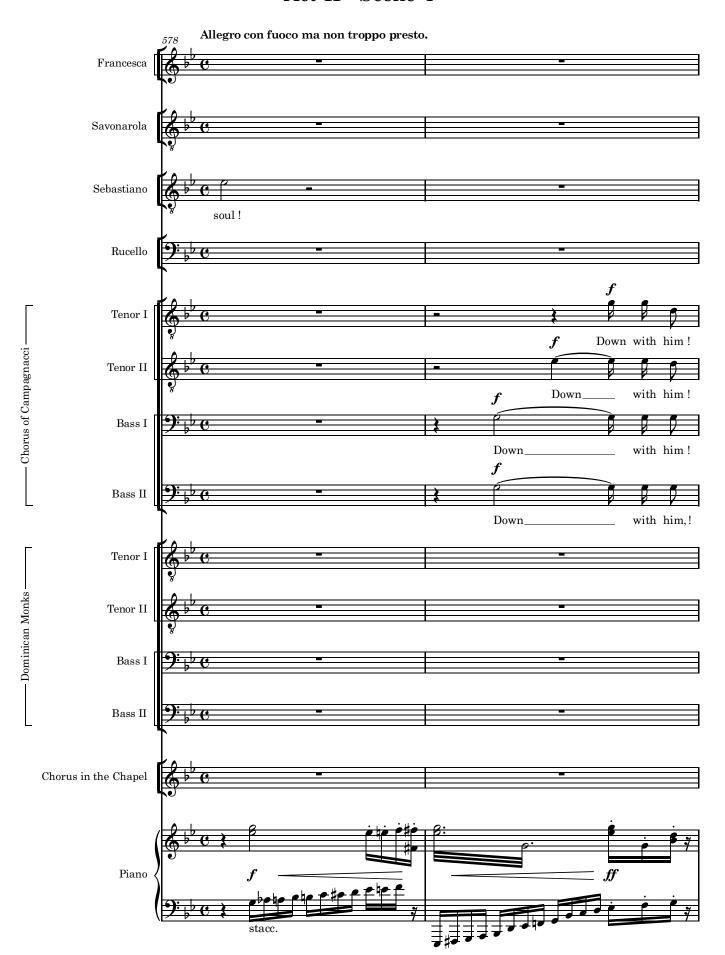
Act II - Scene 3

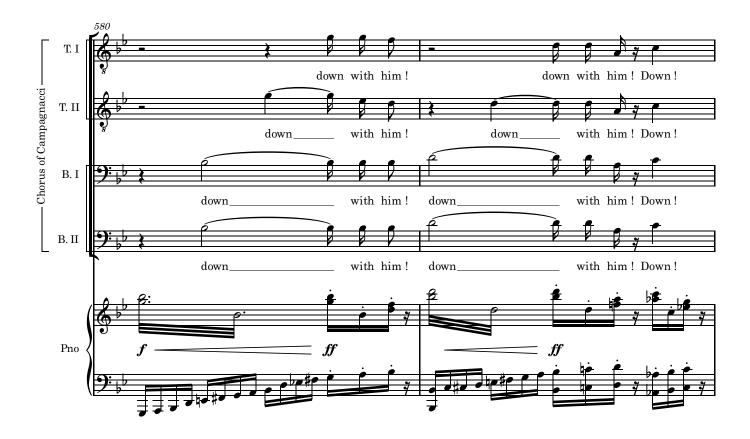


Act II - Scene 3



Act II - Scene 4





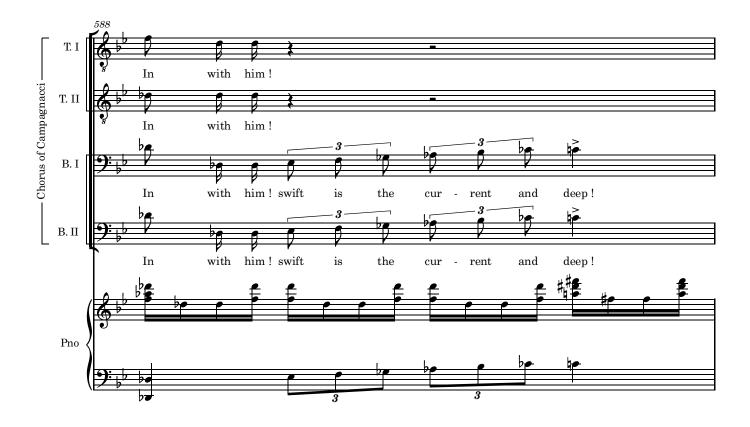




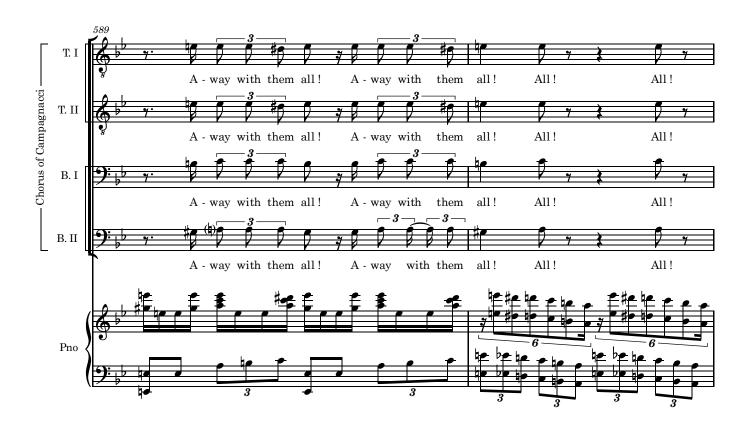
Act II - Scene 4











Act II - Scene 4









Act II - Scene 4



Act II - Scene 4



Act II - Scene 4



Act II - Scene 4



Act II - Scene 4





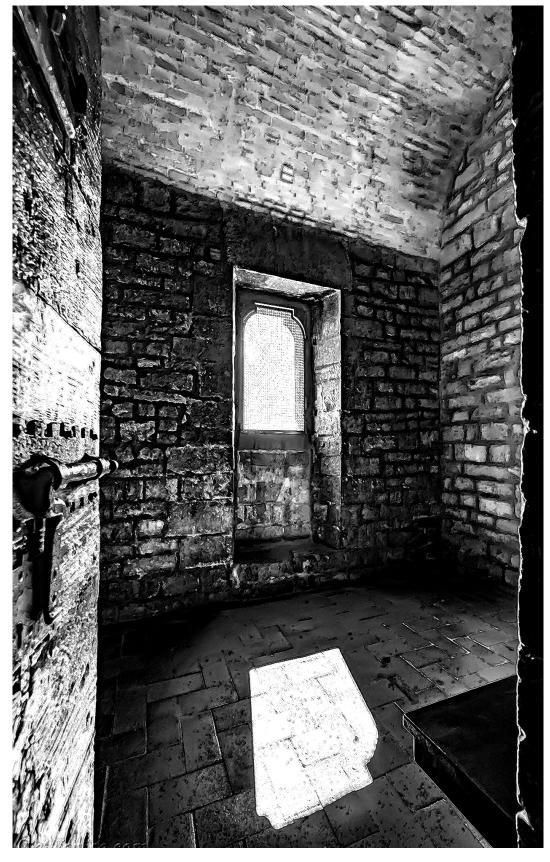
Act II - Scene 4











SAVONAROLA'S CELL IN PALAZZO VECCHIO Florence

ACT III

Scene 1

A dungeon. The rays of the newly risen sun are streaming through the iron-barred casement that give it light. As the act drop slowly ascends, and reveals the darkened stage, SAVONAROLA is discovered erect, facing the sunrise, the bright glory of which bathing his white-robed figure, causes it to stand out in a conspicuous relief from the surrounding gloom.







Act III - Scene 1



















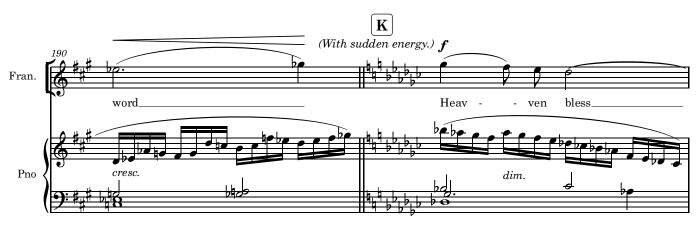




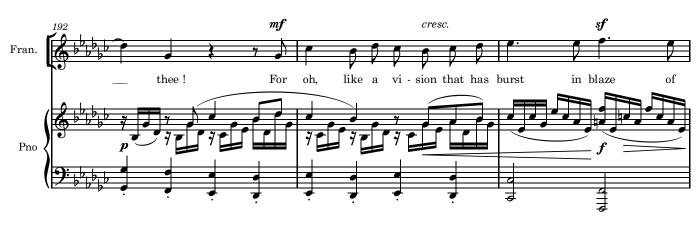




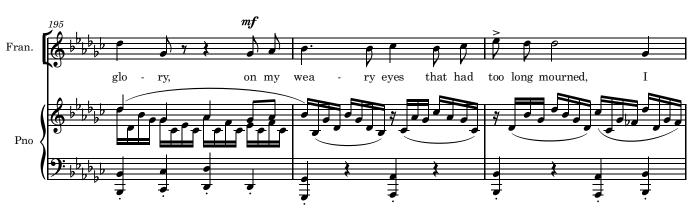
Act III - Scene 2



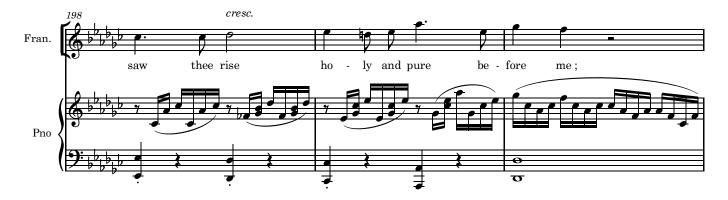












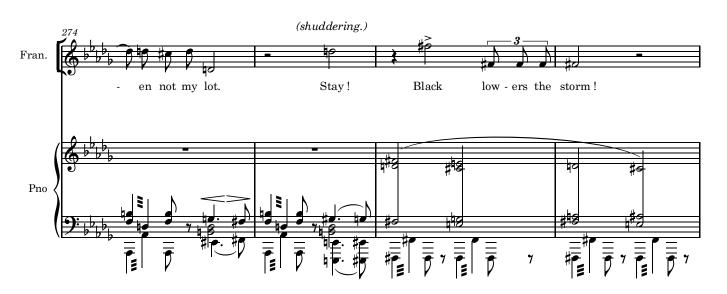




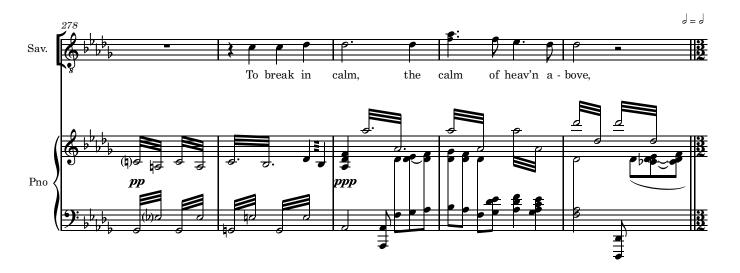




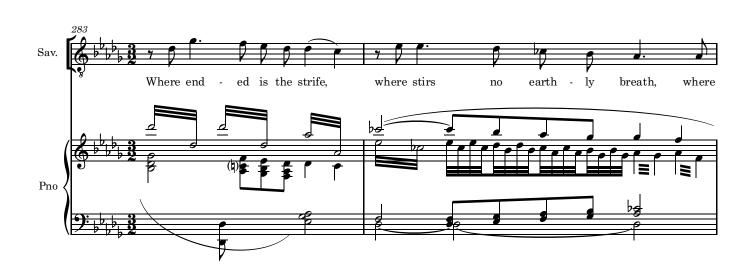


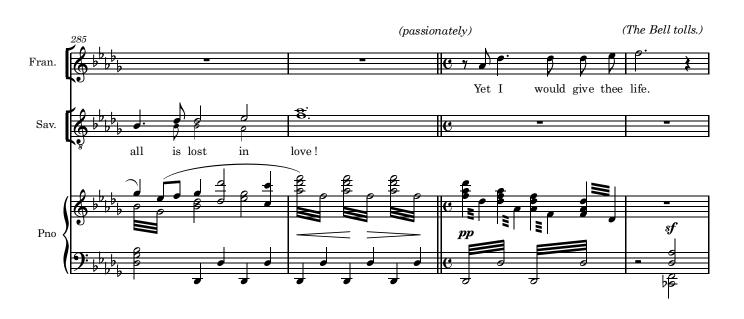




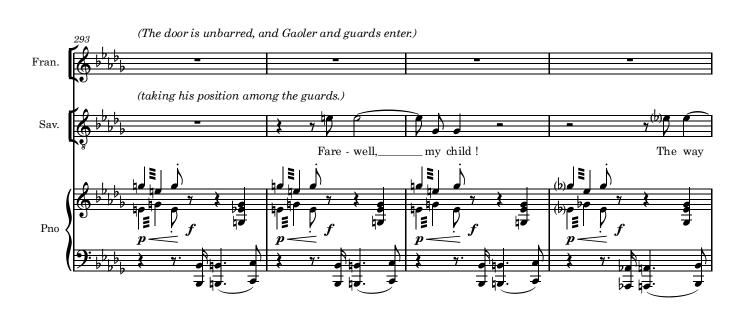


























A bye street leading to the Piazza, set diagonally, the open space of the great square being discernible in the distance. Rucello is discovered waiting the approach of the procession conducting savonarola to the stake.







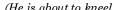




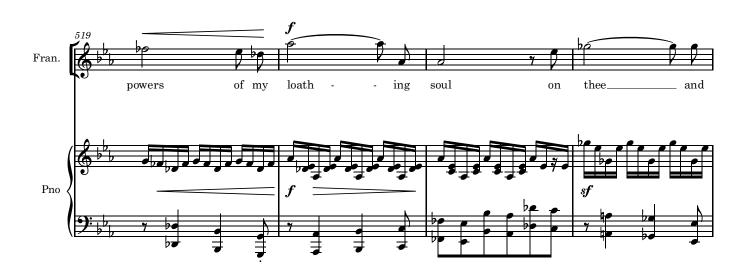




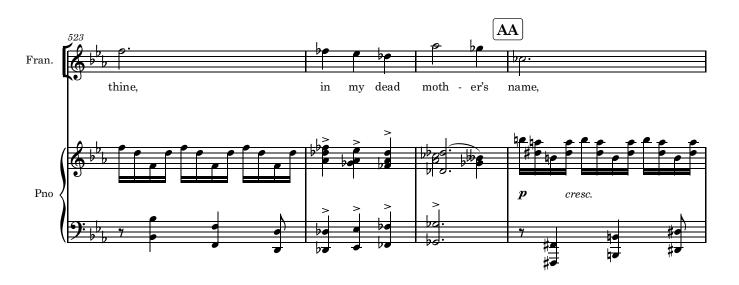




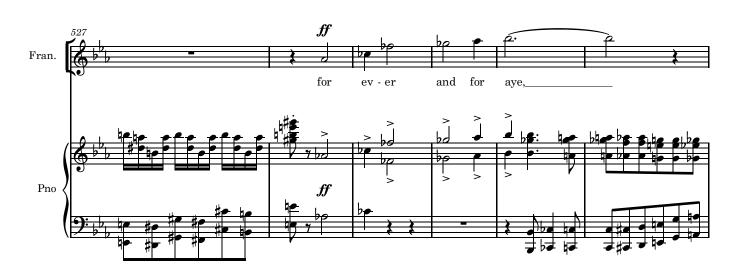






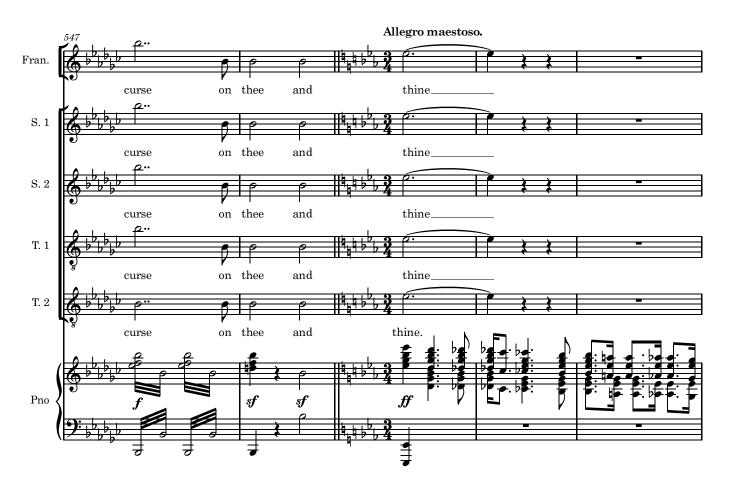


































Act III - Scene 3







END OF THE OPERA



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