Malcolm Hill

(1944 -)

Weep, O Graces

Text from Tasso

for Soprano and Chamber Organ (or 3 Viols)

mj331.1 composed 2013

www.malcolm-hill.co.uk

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Five Vocal Symphonies to fit between

Six Motets by Don Carlo Gesualdo

In a letter to Gesualdo of 10 December 1592 the poet Torquato Tasso (1544-95) wrote that he had sent over 40 texts for Gesualdo's sole use in madrigals, following the composer's specific requirements. Six days later he sent another five sonnets. Although they were great friends, Gesualdo set only a few of these texts. The friendship abruptly stopped when Tasso produced two poems which seemed to side with the murdered couple.

Malcolm Hill divided each of two Tasso sonnets *In Morte di due Nobilissimi Amanti* and *Sullo Stresso Argomento* in two, to give the freely-translated text for four vocal symphonies to be sung between the first five Gesualdo motets. While the motets should be performed unaccompanied, the vocal lines of the symphonies are accompanied by either chamber organ or three viols.

Gesualdo : *Deus refugium*

This motet is scored for SATTB, and although individual lines follow the rules, Gesualdo makes play with modulations at the word *pietatis*.

Deus refugium et virtus adesto piis Ecclesiae precibus auctor ipse pietatis et praesta ut quod fideliter petimus efficaciter consequamur.

O God, our refuge and strength, who art the author of mercy, hearken to the pious prayers of thy church, and grant that what we ask with faith, we may effectually obtain.

Solo vocal symphony : ***Weep, O Graces***

Weep, O Graces, and lament, O Loves, the harsh awards of death and the cruel rewards of the beautiful couple whom death takes from us so grudgingly, both the funeral spectacle and the ghostly horrors. Weep, O Nymphs, and cast flowers on this couple, their moist leaves painted with time-worn laments, and all of you who compete with each other in distilling the wreathed anguish and the odour of tears. Weep.

Gesualdo : *Reminiscere miserationum*
Duo vocal symphony : *Weep, Erato*

Gesualdo : *Ave, dulcissima Maria* [SATTB]
Solo vocal symphony : *O souls*

Gesualdo : *Gaudeamus omnes*
Solo vocal symphony : *Let whoever blames you*

Gesualdo : *Peccantem me*
Solo vocal symphony : *Nobles are exempt*

Gesualdo : *Ave sanctissima* [SSATTB]

Weep, O Graces

Between Gesualdo's *Deus Refugium* and *Reminiscere*
for Soprano and Chamber Organ (or 3 Viols)

Tasso

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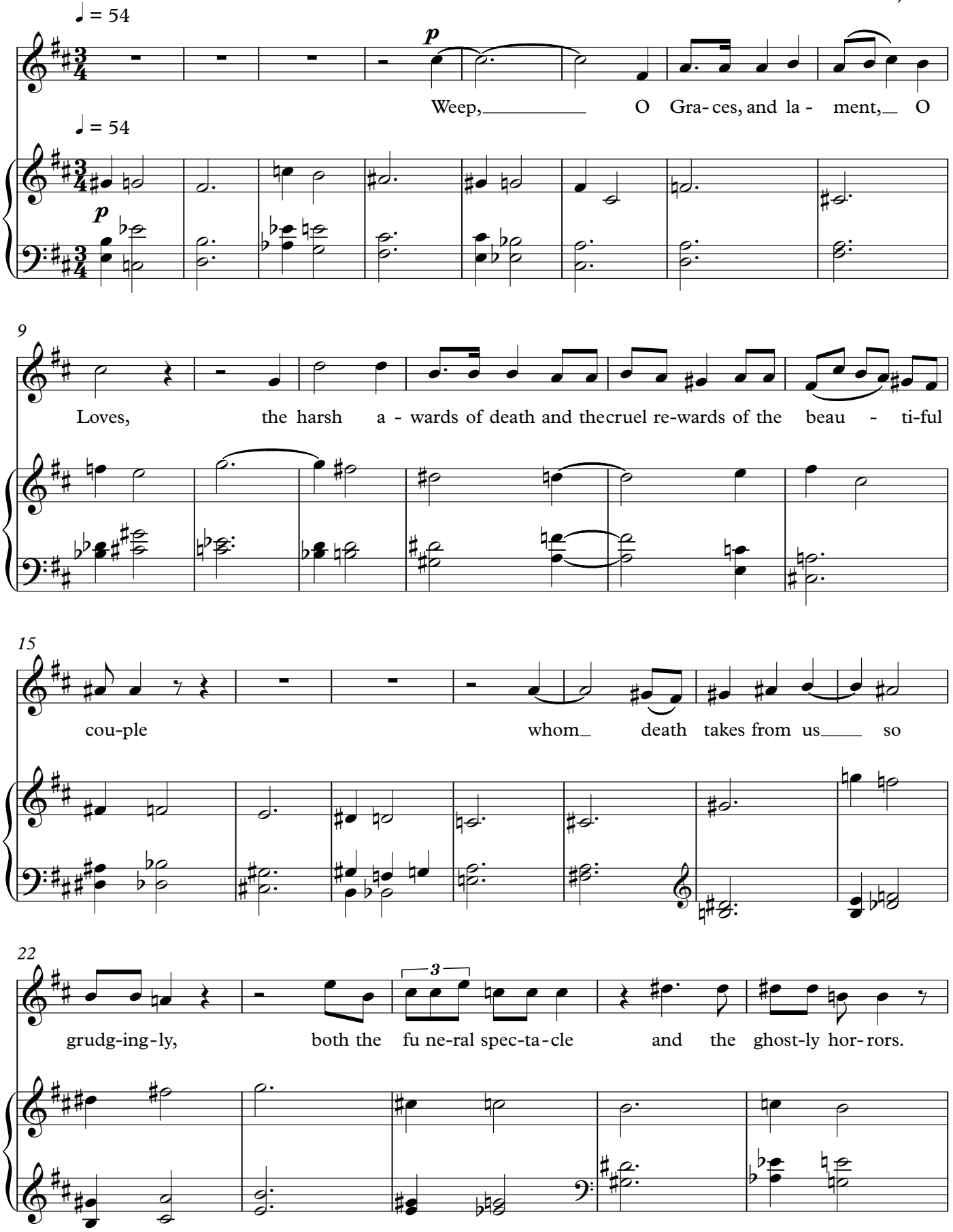
2013 mj331.1



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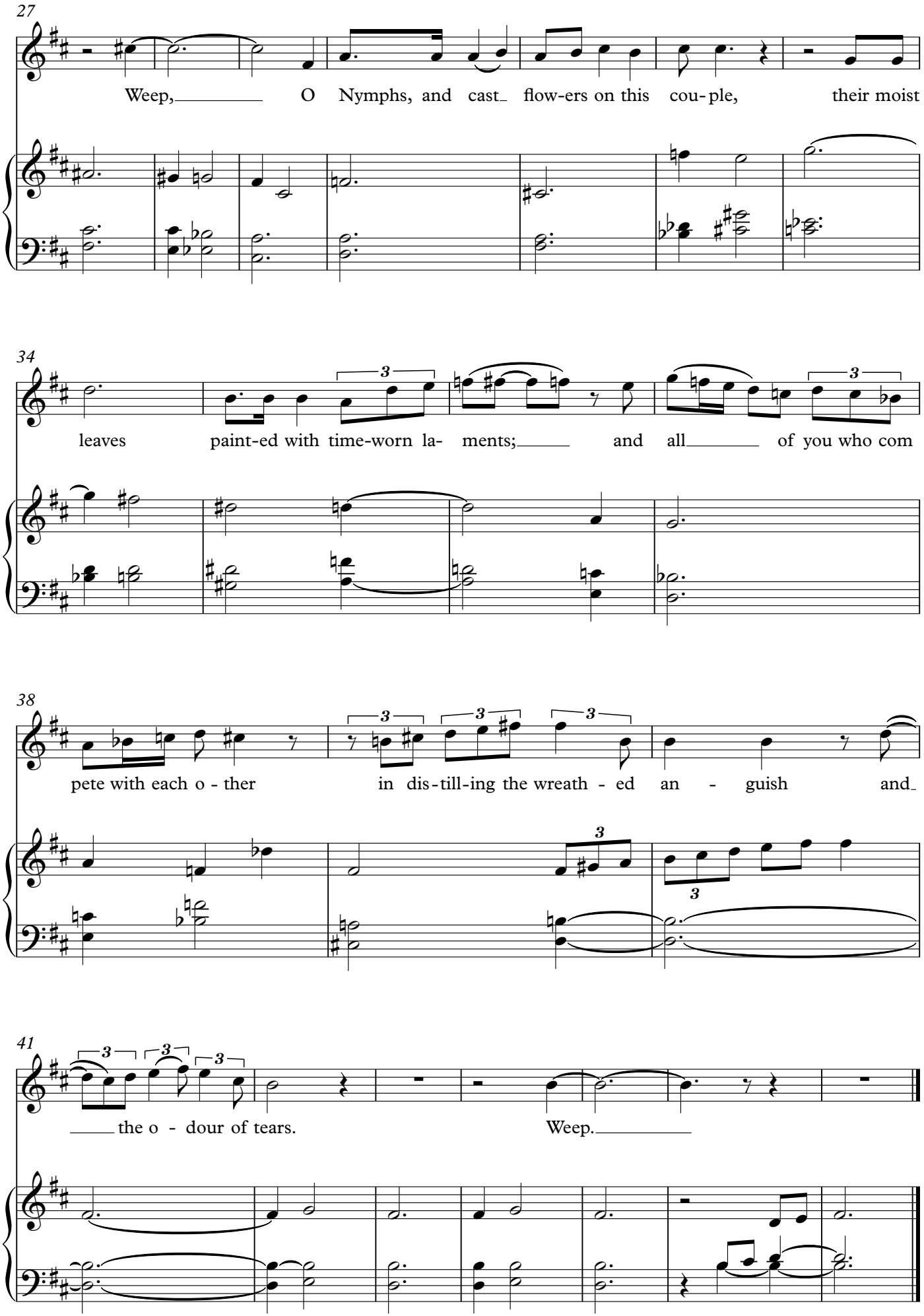
27
Weep, O Nymphs, and cast flow-ers on this cou-ple, their moist
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leaves paint-ed with time-worn la- ments; and all of you who com
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pete with each o - ther in dis-till-ing the wreath - ed an - guish and
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the o - dour of tears. Weep.