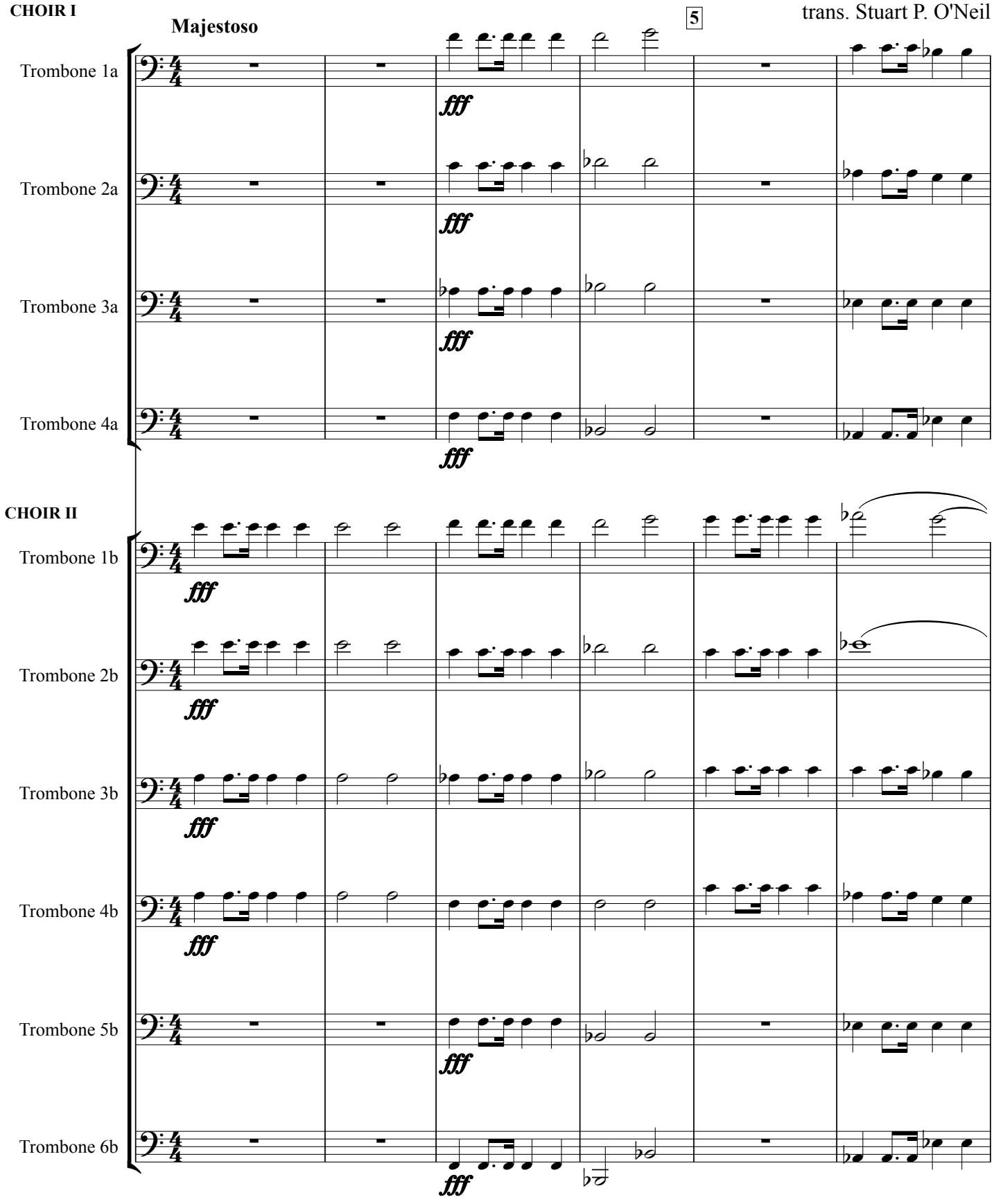
Ecce Sacerdos Magnus

Full Score

Motet for 10-part Trombone Choir

Anton Bruckner (1824-1896)
trans. Stuart P. O'Neil



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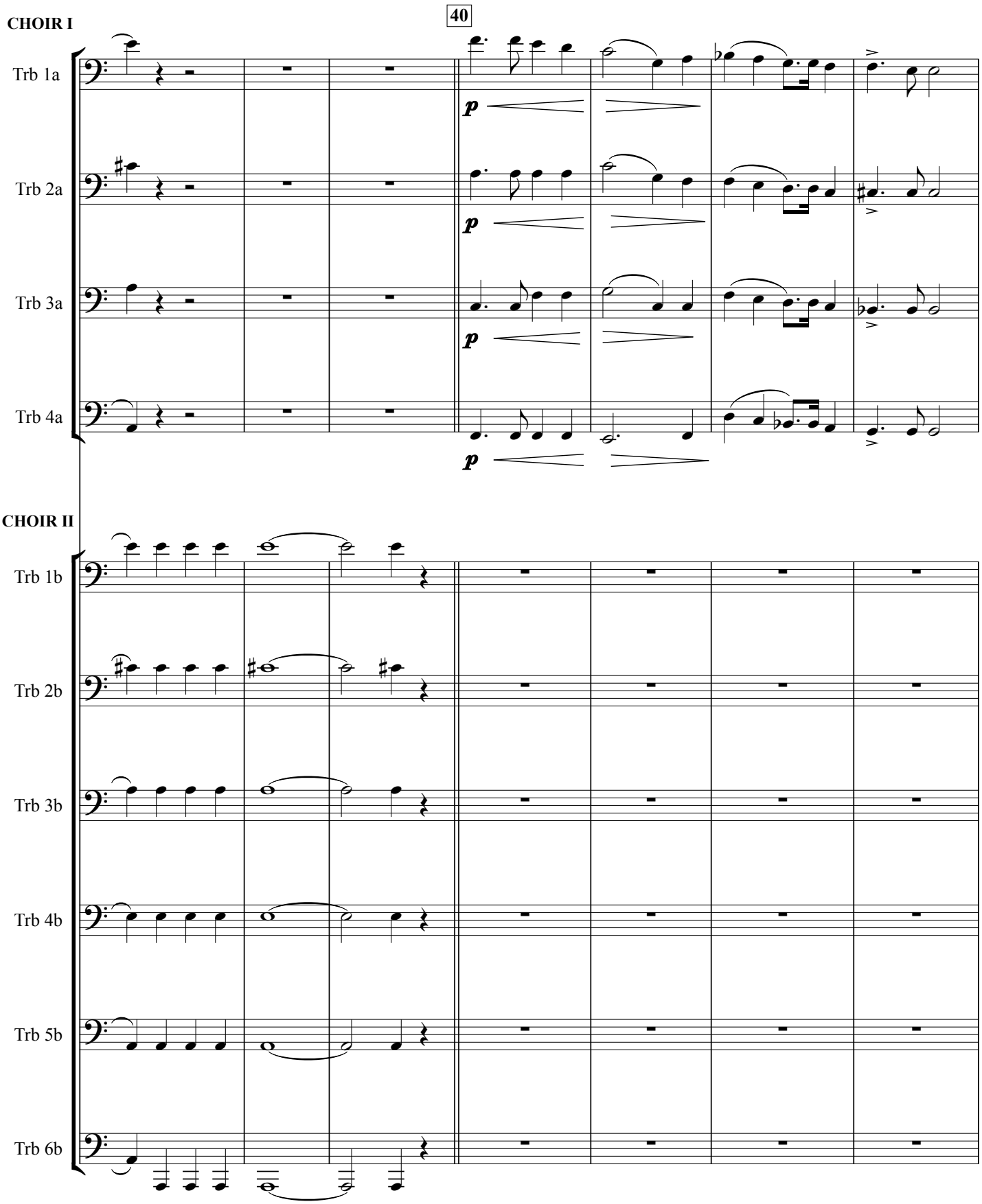
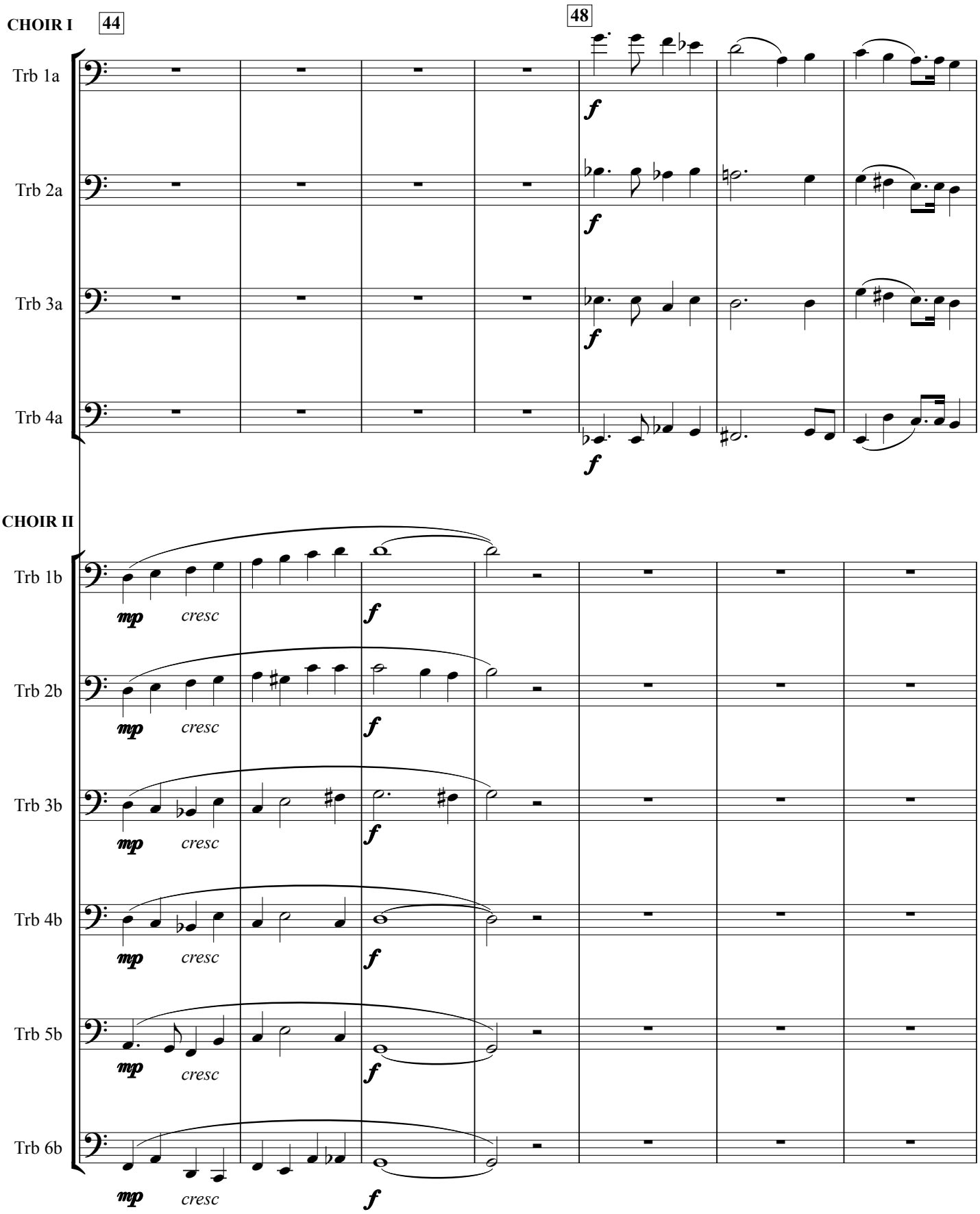

CHOIR I
40
Trb 1a
Trb 2a
Trb 3a
Trb 4a
p
CHOIR II
Trb 1b
Trb 2b
Trb 3b
Trb 4b
Trb 5b
Trb 6b


CHOIR I
44
48
Trb 1a
Trb 2a
Trb 3a
Trb 4a
f
CHOIR II
Trb 1b
Trb 2b
Trb 3b
Trb 4b
Trb 5b
Trb 6b
mp
cresc
f

about the composer…
Anton Bruckner was born in Ansfelden, Austria, in 1824. Raised in a Catholic family, Bruckner's father was also the local schoolmaster and directed his early education. Upon his confirmation in 1833, Bruckner attended school in Hörsching where he continued to develop his skills as an organist. When his father died in 1837, the thirteen-year-old Bruckner was sent to the Augustinian monastery in St. Florian where he studied choir, organ and violin.

As a young adult, Bruckner worked as a schoolteacher and an organist while continuing to develop his musical craft. In 1868, he began teaching music theory at the Vienna Conservatory and then accepted a position at the Vienna University in 1875 where he remained for the rest of his professional career. In 1886, Bruckner was awarded the Order of Franz Joseph. He died in Vienna in 1896 and is buried in the crypt of the monastery church in St. Florian.

about the music…
Bruckner is best known for his masses, motets, chamber pieces, and symphonies, which in particular contain a high degree of chromaticism and complex polyphonic textures; they are much longer than symphonies of the past. Initially criticized as radical, the music of Bruckner has come to exemplify late nineteenth-century Romanticism.

Ecce Sacerdos Magnus ("Behold the Great Priest") comes from the early European tradition of plainchant. Bruckner's setting of the responsory, originally scored for eight-part mixed choir, organ and three trombones, brings certain medieval qualities to an otherwise Romantic-era composition. This transcription for large trombone ensemble attempts to retain the majesty, power and beauty of the original piece; all of Bruckner's phrasing, dynamics, and accents have been retained.

This arrangement should be approached as a choral piece: connected and fluid. The harmonic language is essentially triadic; great care should be taken in the tuning of each chord throughout the piece. The director is also encouraged to experiment with space and texture in the preparation of this work. An antiphonal setting is most effective, perhaps with Choir I being comprised of four solo trombones placed offstage or even behind the audience, and Choir II being made up of the rest of the ensemble on the stage. This creates contrasts between the two choirs and within the ensemble. As with any antiphonal setting, the size and acoustic properties of the performance space are essential factors for consideration. The chant passage beginning in measure 81 is cued in all parts; it may be played as a solo or small group.

about the arranger...
Stuart P. O'Neil (b. 1969) has taught vocal and instrumental music for Kansas public schools since 1993. He received a bachelor of music education degree from the University of Nebraska and a master of music theory degree from the University of Kansas. His compositions for concert band, brass ensemble, choir, jazz band, orchestra, and various chamber ensembles have been performed by music ensembles throughout the Midwest and overseas. In addition to his work as a teacher and composer, Mr. O'Neil also serves as an arranger, accompanist, adjudicator, and conductor. He currently lives in Lawrence, Kansas, with his family.

Trombone 1a

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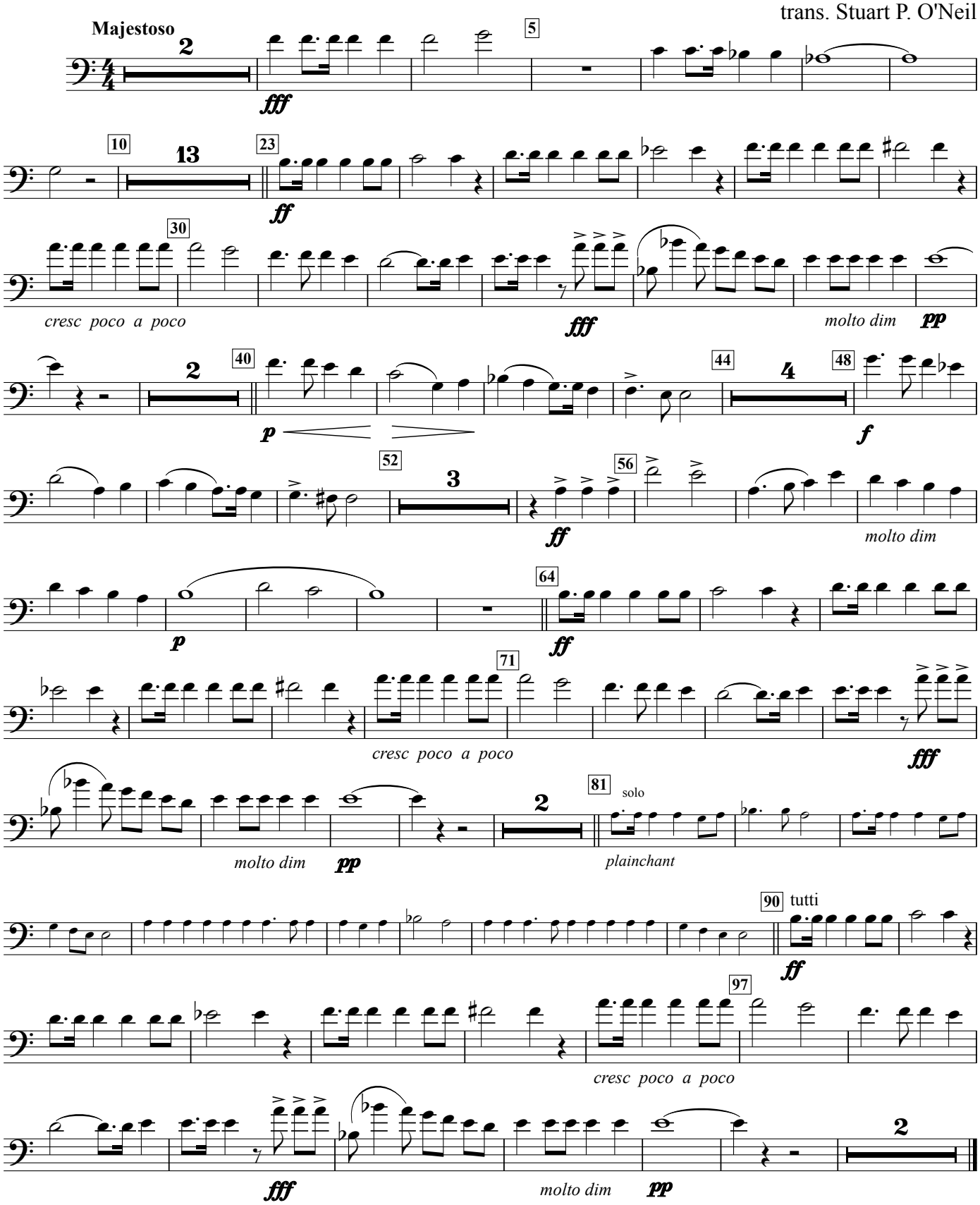

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Trombone 6b

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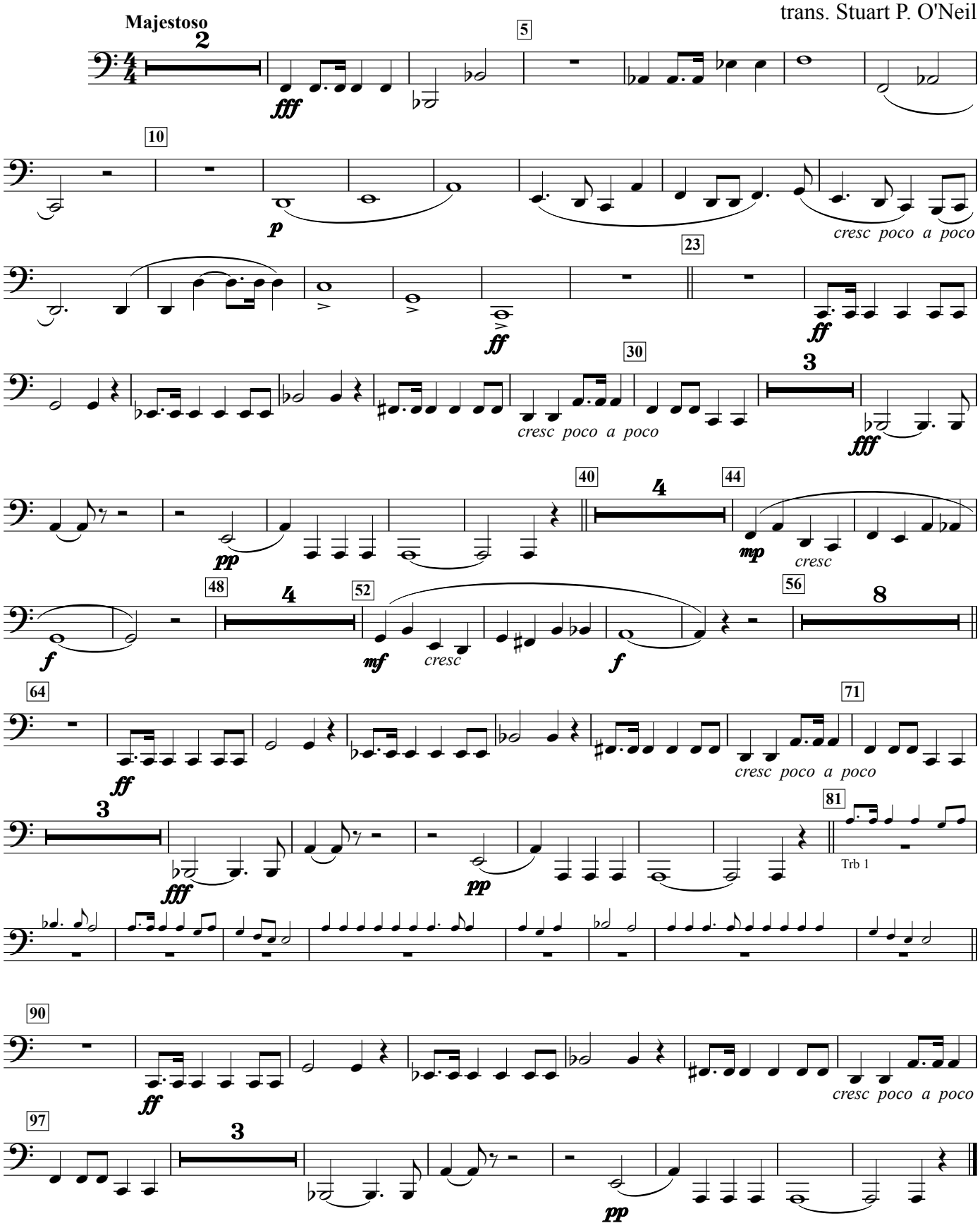

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