

Learning Byzantine Chant Using Western Notation

Musicologists have demonstrated the originality and **high level of craft** that is embodied in the hundreds of medieval manuscripts that preserve the tradition of Byzantine chant. They have noted its sophisticated organization, **its perfect alliance with the texts of liturgical poetry** and it has been characterized as the musical embodiment of the *action* of the rite that it serves. It could, therefore, be forcefully argued that the real concern of those responsible for musical performance in the Orthodox Church today should be to draw upon the richness of the Church's centuries-old, accumulated practices and traditions in order to discover the cardinal contribution that this music has made to its liturgical life.

-- Dimitri Conomos

What is Byzantine chant and where did it come from?

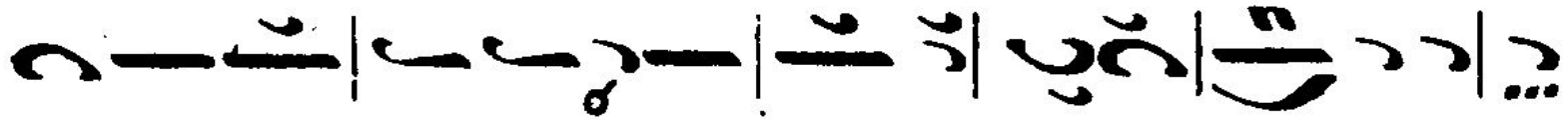
- Music in the synagogue.
- Ancient Greece and Syria.
- St. John of Damascus and the Octoechos.
- Formulas (Improvisation within rules).
- From rote to notation

A Little History of Church Music

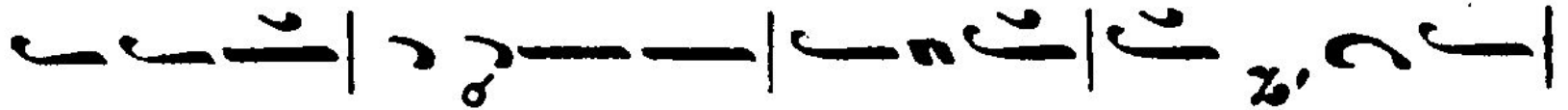
- Originally Congregations Sang
- Office of chanter (psalti) originated to sing hymns congregations didn't know. As hymnody increased, it became an ordained position.
- Choirs were organized to help psalti, they mostly held the ison.
- In 20th C. America, psaltis and choirs separated with choirs doing Sunday liturgy responses and hymns.

ΛΕΙΤΟΥΡΓΙΑ

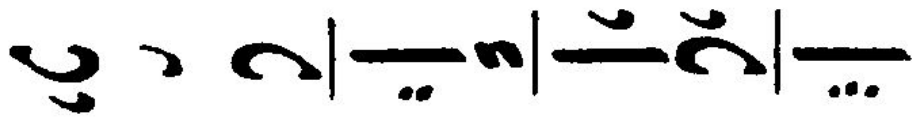
Ταῖς πρεσβείαις. ^Δ 




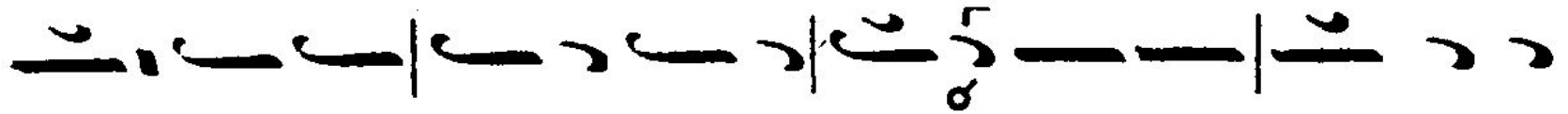
Ταῖς πρεσβείαις της Θεοτοκου Σωτηρ σωσον ημας (Δίς)



^Δ  Ταῖς πρεσβείαις της Θεοτοκου ου  Σωτηρ




σωσον ημααααας 



Σωσον ημας Υιε Θεου ο αναστας εκ νε



κρων ψαλλοντας Σοι αλληλουια (Τρίς) 

ⲁ ⲓ ⲛ ⲛ ⲛ ⲛ ⲛ ⲛ ⲛ ⲛ ⲛ ⲛ ⲛ ⲛ
ⲁ ⲓ ⲛ ⲛ ⲛ ⲛ ⲛ ⲛ ⲛ ⲛ ⲛ ⲛ ⲛ ⲛ ⲛ

Byzantine Musical Notation

- Long development over centuries.
- All hymns available are printed in this form of notation.
- Almost all in Greek.
- Takes time to learn. Few English textbooks.

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Using Western Musical Notation

- More accessible to American musicians. Saves learning time. Easier to sightread.
- Concerns
 - Lack of materials, esp. in English.
 - Versatility leads to errors and innovations in English translations.

Byzantine Rhythmic Styles

- Heirmological (Short)
 - usually one note per syllable
 - usually fast tempos
- Sticheraric (Long)
 - frequent use of two or more notes per syllable
 - more moderate and sometimes stately tempos
- Papadic (Melismatic and Ornate)
 - long melismas and ornamentations
 - slow tempos
 - designed to give time to the priest (papa)

Short Rhythmic Style

Allegro



f

A - men. The stone be - fore Your grave had been sealed by the Jews, Lord.

The musical notation is in 4/4 time, starting with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. It features a series of eighth and quarter notes with various rests and phrasing slurs. The lyrics are written below the notes.

Long Rhythmic Style

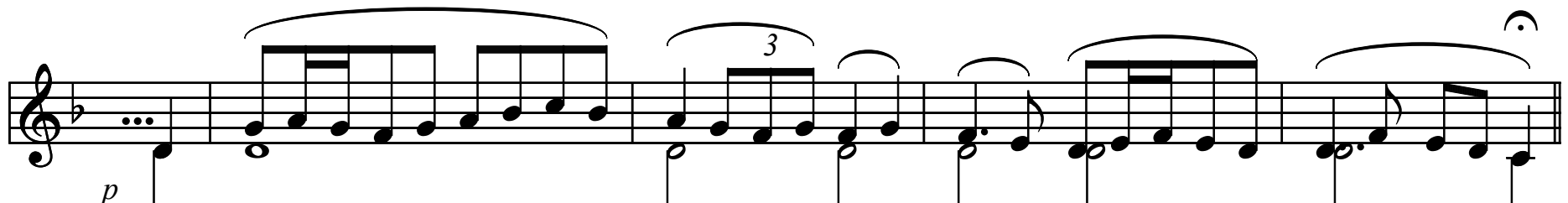
Moderato



Christ is ri - sen from the dead! By death He tram - pled down u -

The musical notation is in 4/4 time, starting with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. It features a series of eighth and quarter notes with various rests and phrasing slurs. The lyrics are written below the notes.

Melismatic Rhythmic Style



p

Χρι - στόν ε - νε - δύ - σα - σθε.
Chri - ston e - ne - dhi - sa - sthe.

The musical notation is in 4/4 time, starting with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. It features a series of eighth and quarter notes with various rests and phrasing slurs, including a triplet. The lyrics are written below the notes.

Other Rhythmic Elements

- Meter follows accented syllables (frequent changes of meter)
- Dotted notes and triplets
- Ornamentation (trills, mordents, ripples, flutters, etc.)
- Accents

Scale Systems (Fixed-Note)

- Octave (Diapason)

ni-pa-vu-ga-di-ke-zo-ni

C D E F G A B C

do-re-mi-fa-so-la-ti-do

- Trichordal

do-re-mi-fa=do' -re' -mi' -fa' -etc.

- Tetrachordal

do-re-mi-fa-so=do' -re' -mi' -fa' -so' -etc.

Byzantine Scales

- Diatonic

F	G	A	B ^b	C	D	E	F
12	10	8	12	12	10	8	
Ga	Di	Ke	Zo	Ni	Pa	Vu	Ga'

- Enharmonic

F	G	A	B ^b	C	D	E	F
12	12	6	12	12	12	6	
Ga	Di	Ke	Zo	Ni	Pa	Vu	Ga'

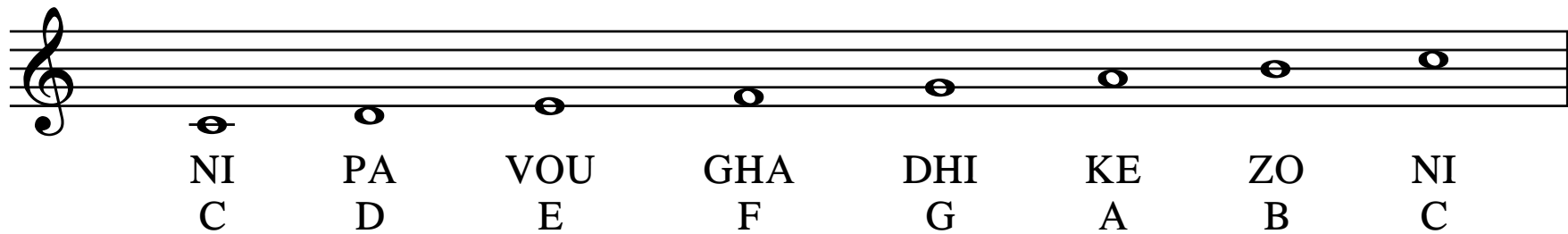
- Soft Chromatic

C	D ^b	E	F	G	A ^b	B	C
8	14	8	12	8	14	8	
Ni	Pa	Vu	Ga	Di	Ke	Zo	Ni'

- Hard Chromatic

D	E ^b	F [#]	G	A	B ^b	C [#]	D
6	20	4	12	6	20	4	
Pa	Vu	Ga	Di	Ke	Zo	Ni'	Pa'

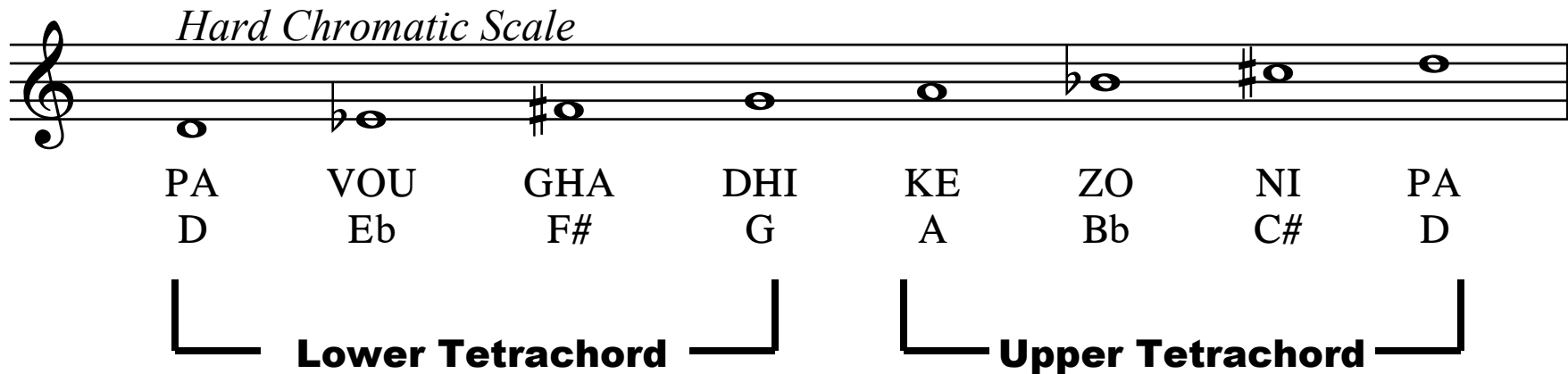
Diatonic, Enharmonic, and Soft Chromatic Scales



NI PA VOU GHA DHI KE ZO NI
C D E F G A B C

Hard Chromatic Scale

Hard Chromatic Scale



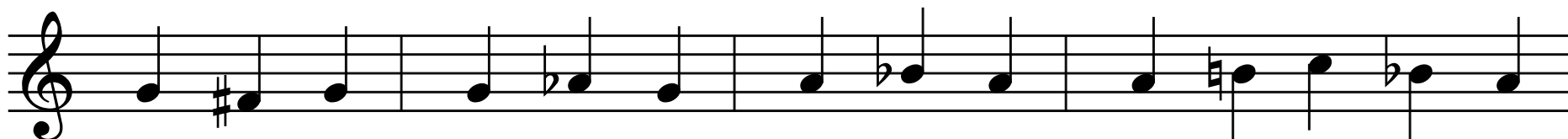
PA VOU GHA DHI KE ZO NI PA
D Eb F# G A Bb C# D

Lower Tetrachord **Upper Tetrachord**

Accidentals

1. Modal Modulations

2. Law of the Attraction of Tones

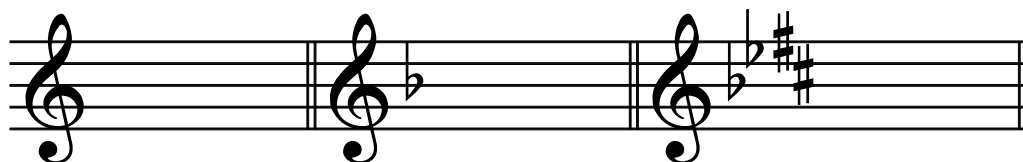


A musical staff in treble clef showing a sequence of notes: G, F#, G, G, Ab, G, A, Bb, A, A, B, C, Bb, A. The notes are grouped into four pairs: (G, F#), (G, Ab), (A, Bb), and (A, B). The final pair (A, B) is followed by a C and a Bb, and then an A. The notes are connected by stems and beams, indicating a melodic line.

G - F# - G G - Ab - G A - Bb - A A - B - C - Bb - A

3. Byzantine tokens for micro-tonal accidentals may be used.

Key Signatures



Three musical staves in treble clef, each showing a key signature. The first staff has no sharps or flats. The second staff has one flat (Bb). The third staff has one flat (Bb) and two sharps (F# and C#).

Expressive Markings

Western expressive marks may be used such as accents, trills, mordents, breath marks, fermatas, etc.

Unique Byzantine marks could be used as well.

The Eight Tones of Byzantine Chant

A Primer in Western Notation and
Including the Use of English Texts

Tones and Modes

- Greek word ἦχος (echos) literally means “tone.”
- A “mode” in music is defined by its scale and its keynotes.
- Each echos, or tone, contains several modes, depending on rhythmic style or tradition.

Names of the Tones

- | | |
|--------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Ἦχος Α. | 1. First Tone |
| 2. Ἦχος Β. | 2. Second Tone |
| 3. Ἦχος Γ. | 3. Third Tone |
| 4. Ἦχος Δ. | 4. Fourth Tone |
| 5. Ἦχος Πλάγιος Α. | 5. Plagal First Tone |
| 6. Ἦχος Πλάγιος Β. | 6. Plagal Second Tone |
| 7. Ἦχος Βαρῆς | 7. Grave Tone |
| 8. Ἦχος Πλάγιος Δ. | 8. Plagal Fourth Tone |

Identifying Characteristics of a Tone

- Its emotional qualities
- Common characteristics of the modes within the tone

Identifying Characteristics of a Mode

- Scale Used
- Rhythm Used
- Tonic (Ending) Note / Ison
- Dominant Notes
- Note of 1st Accented Syllable
- Melodic Formulas (Based on Syllabic Patterns)
- Melodic Cadences (Based on Syllabic Patterns)

Partial

Complete

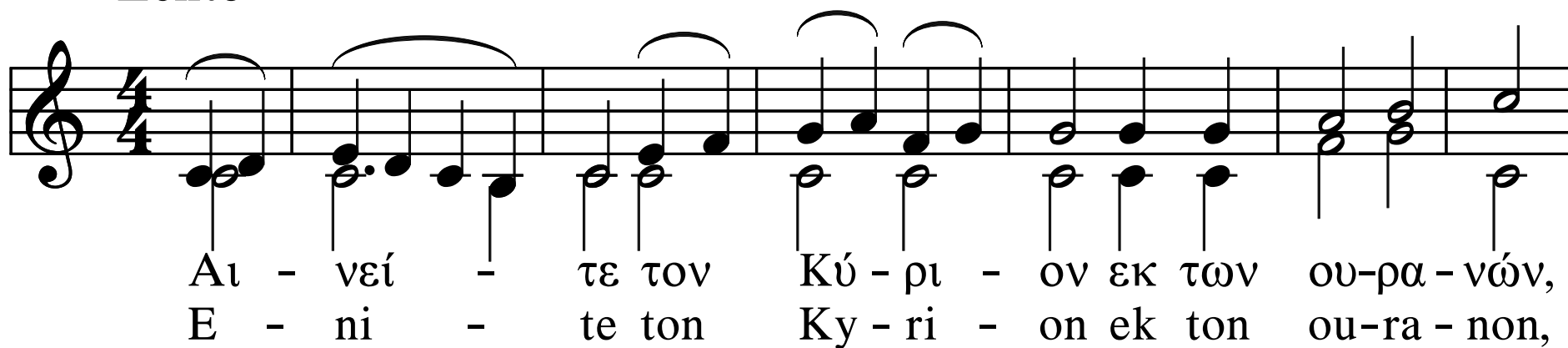
Final

Emphatic

Chanting Style

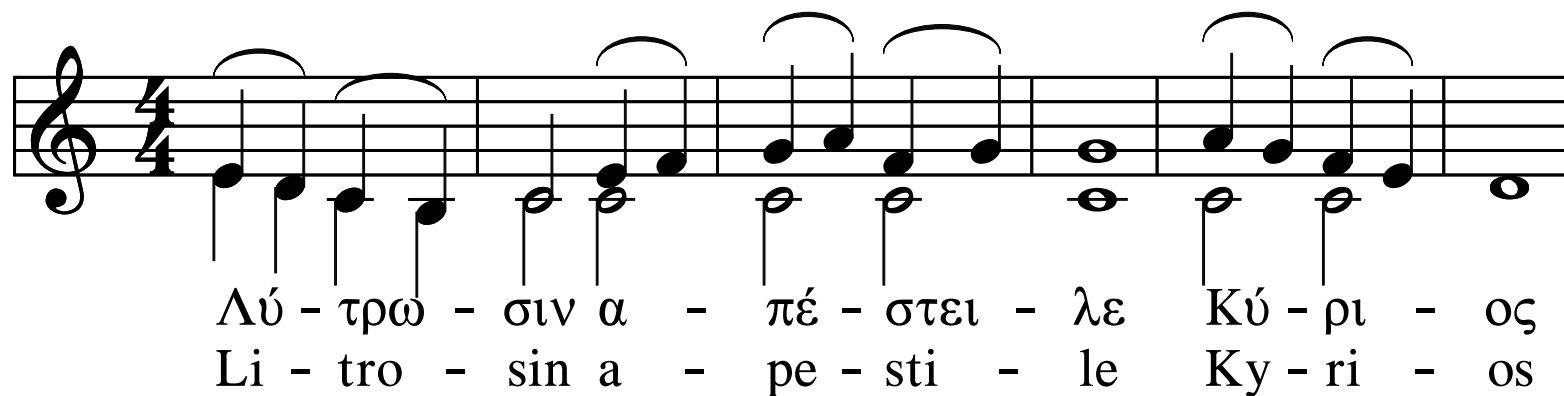
Example of Melodic Formula

Lento



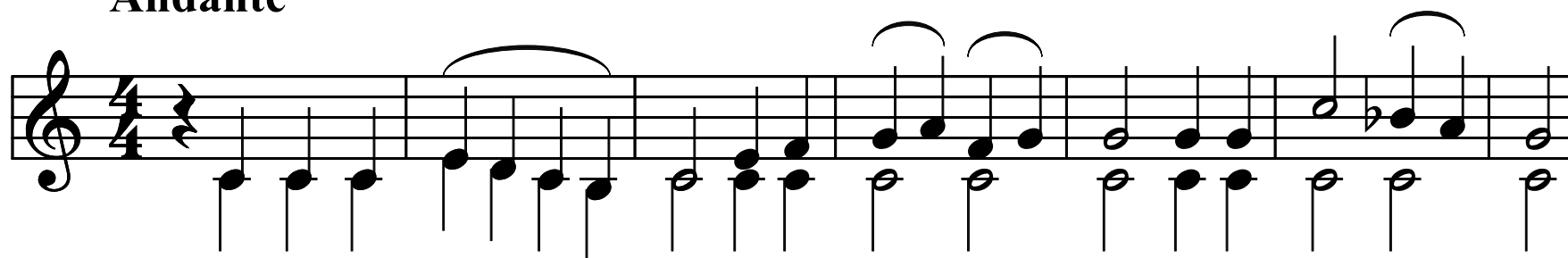
Αι - νεί - τε τον Κύ - ρι - ον εκ των ου - ρα - νών,
E - ni - te ton Ky - ri - on ek ton ou - ra - non,

Lento



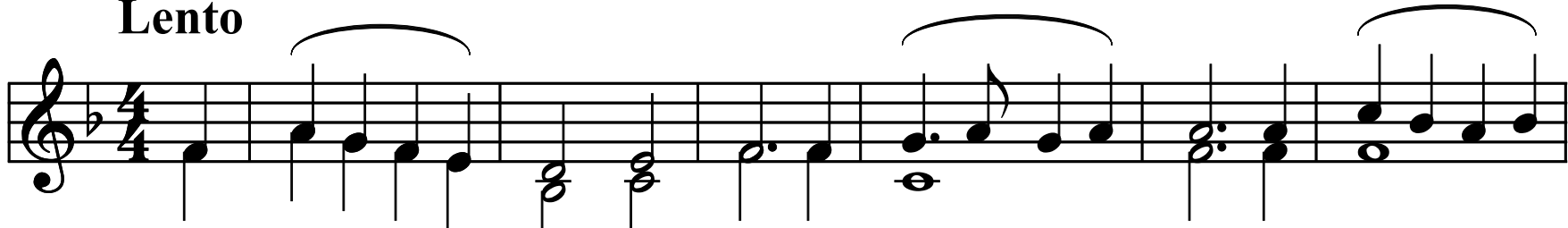
Λύ - τρω - σιν α - πέ - στει - λε Κύ - ρι - ος
Li - tro - sin a - pe - sti - le Ky - ri - os

Andante

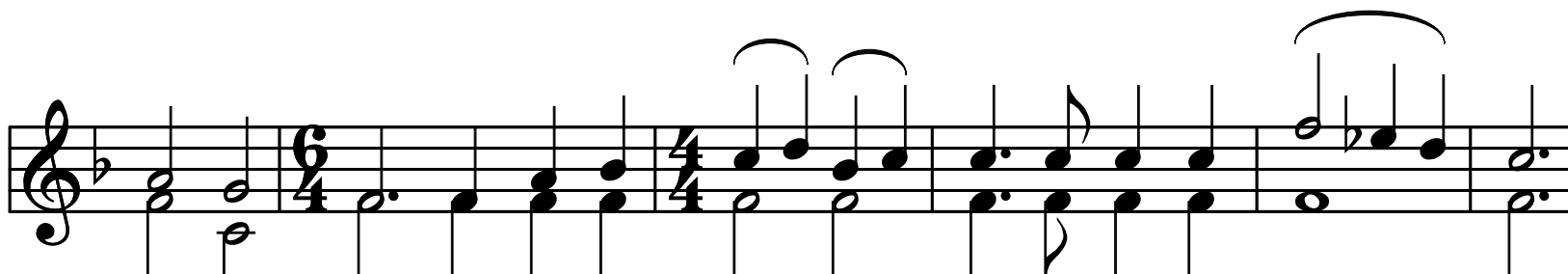


Ευ-λο-γη - μέ - νος ο ερ - χό - με - νος εν ο - νό - μα - τι
Ev-lo-yi - me - nos o er - ho - me - nos en o - no - ma - ti

Lento



Εις πά - σαν την γην ε - ξήλ - θεν ο φθόγ-
Is pa - san tin yin e - xil - then o fthon-



- γος αυ - τών, και εις τα πέ - ρα - τα της οι-κου - μέ - νης
- gos af - ton, ke is ta pe - ra - ta tis i - kou - me - nis

Incorrect

Correct

Musical notation in 4/4 time. The first staff, labeled 'Incorrect', shows a melodic line for 'Praise...' with a single slur over the entire phrase. The second staff, labeled 'Correct', shows a melodic line for 'Praise ye...' with a slur over 'Praise' and a separate slur over 'ye...'.


Incorrect

Correct

Musical notation in 4/4 time. The first staff, labeled 'Incorrect', shows a melodic line for 'Bles-sed is he...' with a slur over the entire phrase. The second staff, labeled 'Correct', shows a melodic line for 'Bles - sed is he...' with slurs over 'Bles - sed', 'is', and 'he...'.


First Tone - Short Mode, Diatonic

Moderato



O Lord, save your peo - ple and bless your in-

Musical staff 1: Treble clef, key signature of one flat (Bb), 4/4 time signature. The melody consists of quarter notes: G4, A4, Bb4, C5, Bb4, A4, G4. The lyrics are: "O Lord, save your peo - ple and bless your in-".



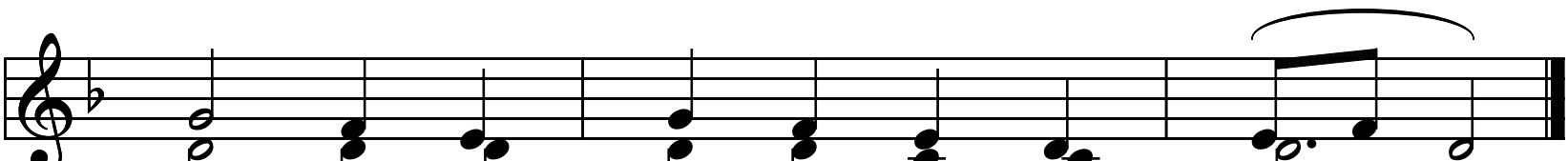
- he - ri - tance, grant vic - to - ry to your lea - ders

Musical staff 2: Treble clef, key signature of one flat (Bb), 4/4 time signature. The melody consists of quarter notes: G4, A4, Bb4, C5, Bb4, A4, G4. The lyrics are: "- he - ri - tance, grant vic - to - ry to your lea - ders".



o - ver the e - ne - my, and pro - tect your com - mon-

Musical staff 3: Treble clef, key signature of one flat (Bb), 4/4 time signature. The melody consists of quarter notes: G4, A4, Bb4, C5, Bb4, A4, G4. The lyrics are: "o - ver the e - ne - my, and pro - tect your com - mon-".



- wealth by the po - wer of your Cross.

Musical staff 4: Treble clef, key signature of one flat (Bb), 4/4 time signature. The melody consists of quarter notes: G4, A4, Bb4, C5, Bb4, A4, G4. The lyrics are: "- wealth by the po - wer of your Cross.".

First Tone - Long Mode, Diatonic



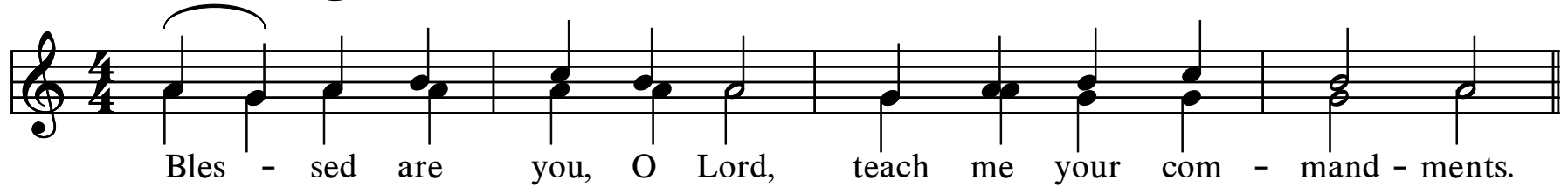
Andante

With hymns we praise thee, we bless thee,

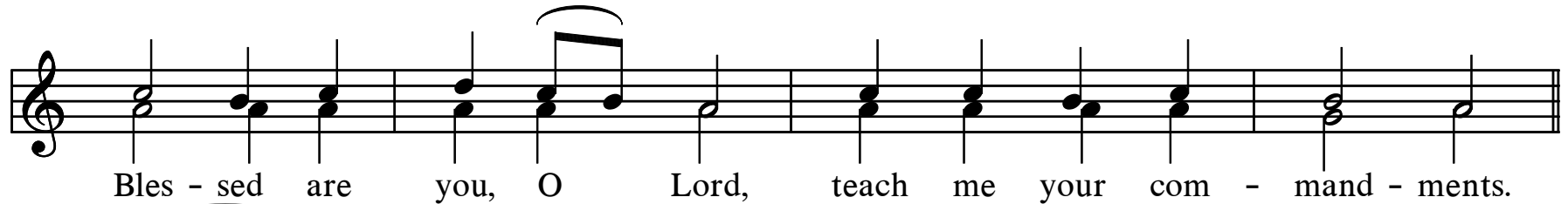
un-to thee we give our thanks, O Lord, and we

pray to thee, our God, to thee!

Plagal First Tone - Short Mode, Diatonic



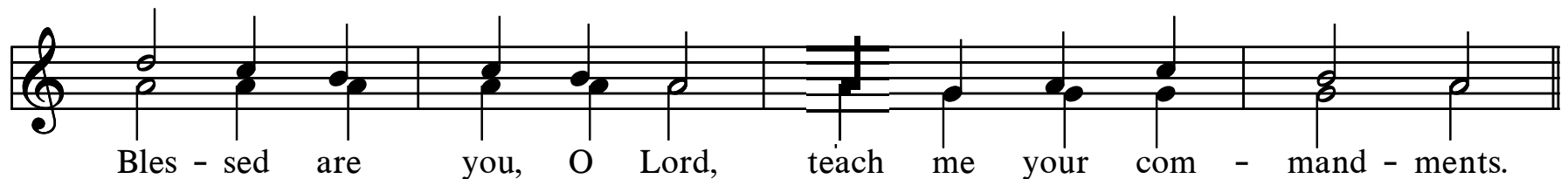
Bles - sed are you, O Lord, teach me your com - mand - ments.



Bles - sed are you, O Lord, teach me your com - mand - ments.



Bles - sed are you, O Lord, teach me your com - mand - ments.

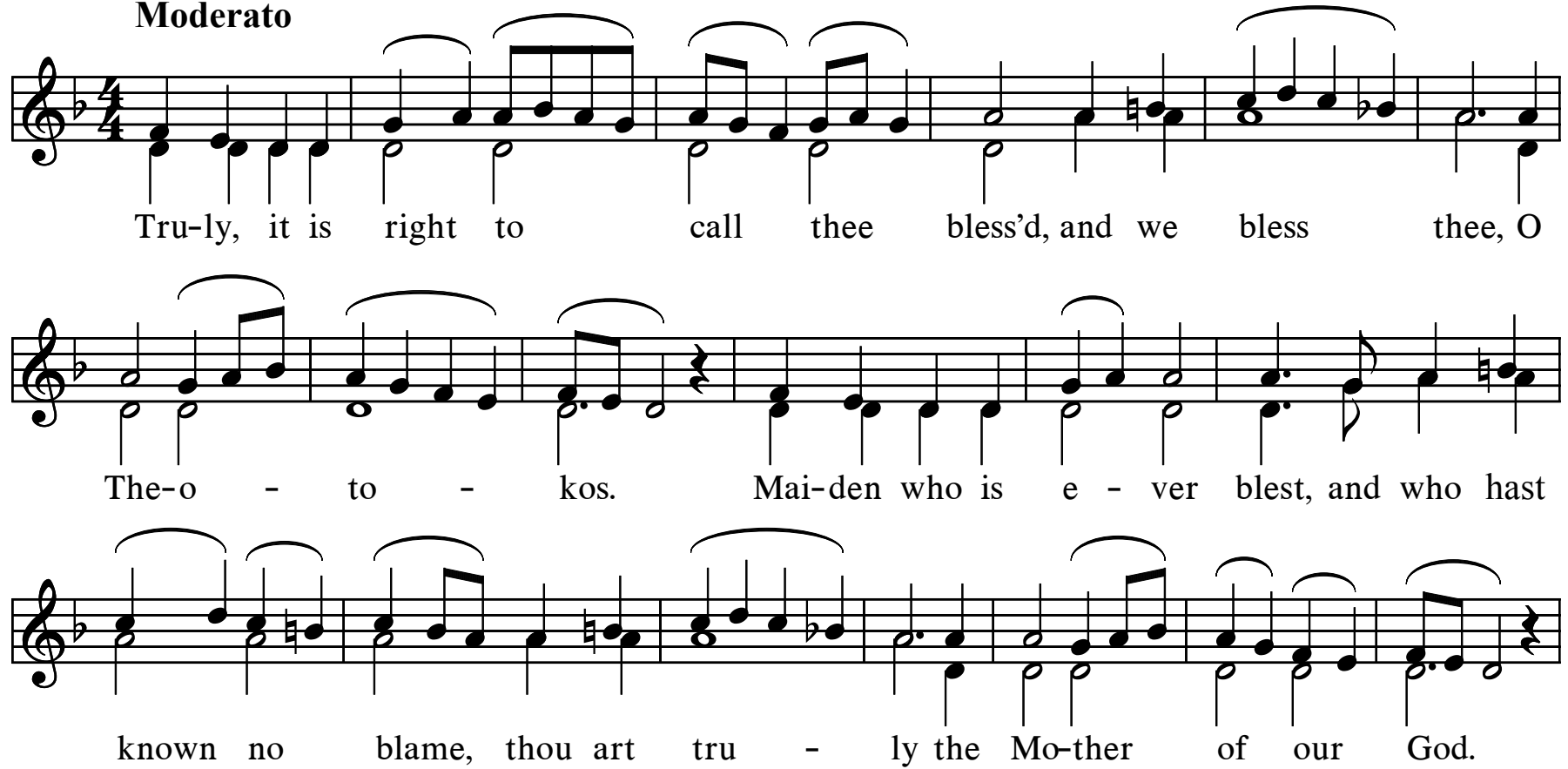


Bles - sed are you, O Lord, teach me your com - mand - ments.

The choir of the Saints has found the Fountain of Life and the Gate of Paradise; may I also find the way through repentance. I am the lost sheep; recall me, O Savior, and save me.

Plagal First Tone - Long Mode, Diatonic, Tetrachordal

Moderato



Tru-ly, it is right to call thee bless'd, and we bless thee, O
The-o - to - kos. Mai-den who is e - ver blest, and who hast
known no blame, thou art tru - ly the Mo-ther of our God.

The musical score is written in a single system on a treble clef staff with a 4/4 time signature and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The tempo is marked 'Moderato'. The melody is diatonic and tetrachordal, featuring a series of eighth and quarter notes with various phrasing slurs. The lyrics are printed below the notes, with hyphens indicating syllables that span across multiple notes.

Second Tone - Short Mode, Soft Chromatic

Through the in - ter - ces - sions of the The - o - to - kos,

Sa - vior, save us. Ταις πρεσ - βεί - αις της Θε - ο -
Tes pres - vi - es tis The - ο -

- τό - κου, Σώ - τερ, Σώ - σον η - μάς.
- to - κου, So - ter, So - son i - mas.

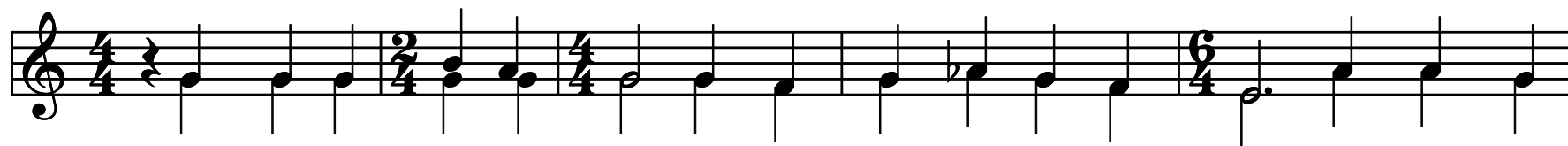
Second Tone - Long Mode, Soft Chromatic

Moderately

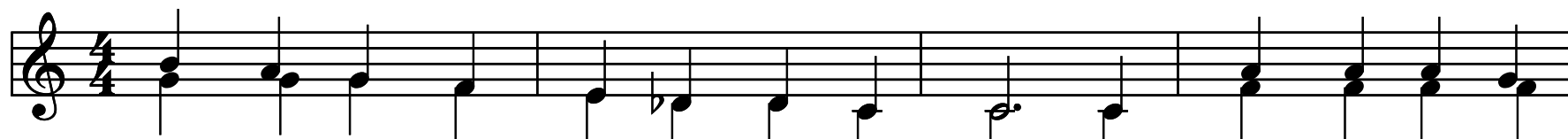
p
A - γι - ος ο Θε - ός, A - γι - ος Ισ - χυ - ρός, A - γι - ος A -
A - yi - os o The - os, A - yi - os Is - hi - ros, A - yi - os A -
- θά - να - τος ε - λέ - η - σον η - μάς. Ho - ly God, Ho - ly and
- tha - na - tos e - le - i - son i - mas.
Migh - ty, Ho - ly and Im - mor - tal One have mer - cy on us.

Plagal Second Tone - Short Mode, Soft Chromatic

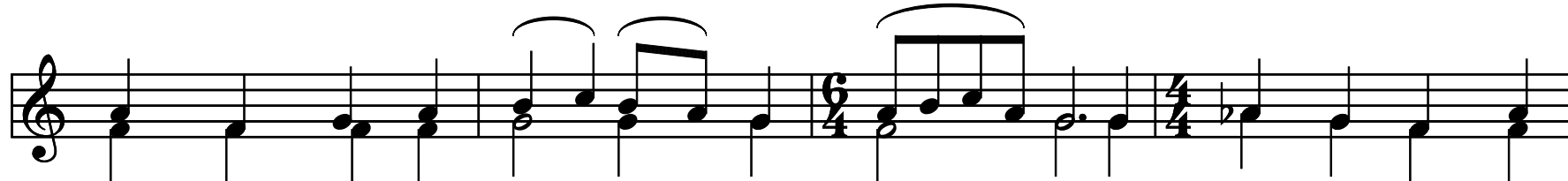
Allegro



When the an - gel-ic pow-ers were gath-ered at Your tomb, and those who



guard - ed You took on the look of death, and stand - ing at the



grave where they had laid You was Ma - ry in search of Your pure



Bo - dy. De - spoil - ing Ha - des' ar - mor, You were not

Plagal Second Tone - Melismatic Mode, Hard Chromatic, Trichordal

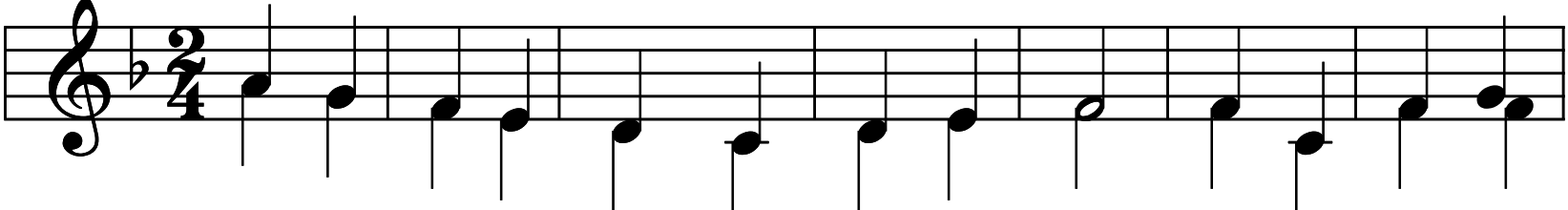
Lento A

A - men. We, who my - sti - c'ly re - pre - sent the
Cheru - bim, sing
the thrice ho - ly hymn, thrice ho -
ly, thrice ho - ly hymn,



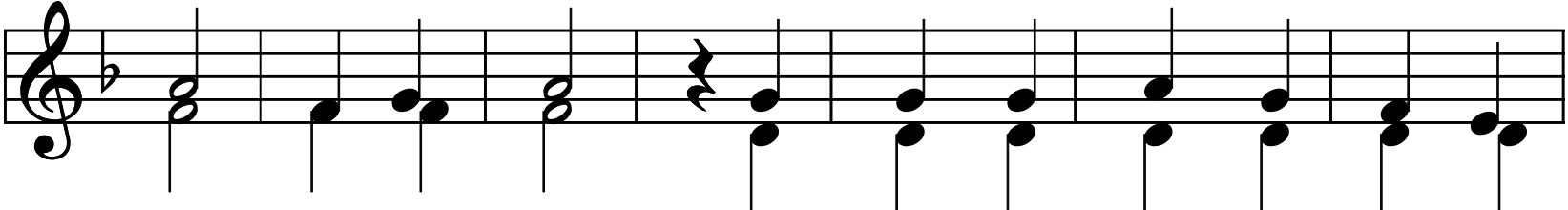
Third Tone - Short Mode, Enharmonic

Allegro



Glo-ry be to thee, who giv-eth light. Glo-ry in the

The first staff of music is in treble clef, 2/4 time, and B-flat major. It contains a single melodic line with the following notes: G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), Bb4 (quarter), C5 (quarter), Bb4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), F4 (quarter), E4 (half), D4 (quarter), C4 (quarter), Bb4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), F4 (quarter), E4 (quarter), D4 (quarter).



high - est to God. Let there be peace up - on the

The second staff of music continues the melody. It contains the following notes: G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), Bb4 (quarter), C5 (quarter), Bb4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), F4 (quarter), E4 (quarter), D4 (quarter), C4 (quarter), Bb4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), F4 (quarter), E4 (quarter), D4 (quarter).



Earth and good - will a - mong all peo - ple.

The third staff of music concludes the piece. It contains the following notes: G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), Bb4 (quarter), C5 (quarter), Bb4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), F4 (quarter), E4 (quarter), D4 (quarter), C4 (quarter), Bb4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), F4 (quarter), E4 (quarter), D4 (quarter).

Third Tone - Long Mode, Enharmonic

...Δι - ό οι φω - τισ - θέν - τες δι' αυ - τών δο-
...Dhi - o i fo - tis - then - des dhi af - ton do-

- ξά - ζο - μεν σου την εκ νε - κρών α-
- xa - zo - men sou tin ek ne - kron a-

- νά - στα - σιν, φι - λάν - θρω - πε
- na - sta - sin, fi - lan thro - pe

Κύ - ρι - ε.
Ky - ri - e.

The musical score consists of four staves of music in a single system. Each staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The first staff contains the first line of lyrics, the second staff the second line, the third staff the third line, and the fourth staff the final line. The lyrics are written in Greek and English. The music features various note values, including quarter, eighth, and sixteenth notes, as well as rests. Phrasing slurs are used to group notes across measures. The final measure of the fourth staff ends with a double bar line.

Grave Tone - Short Mode, Enharmonic

Allegro

f

O Lord, You have by Your Cross put an end to death, and Pa-ra-dise

You have made o-pen to the thief. You have trans - formed the la-

- ments of the myrrh - bear - ers and sent forth Your a - pos - tles, com-

- mand - ing that they pro - claim that You have ri - sen from death,

Christ our God, be - stow - ing great mer - cy on all the u - ni - verse.

Grave Tone - Long Mode, Enharmonic

Kyrie Ekekraxa

Moderato

Lord, I have cried out to you, hear me, hear me, O

Lord, O Lord, I have cried out to you, hear me. Give

heed to the voice of my prayer, when I cry out to you,

hear me, O Lord. Let my prayer rise up as incense be-

Fourth Tone - Short Mode, Diatonic

Moderato

Your birth, O Christ, our God, ri-ses up - on the world and

makes the light of wis - dom to shine o - ver all the

earth. Those who bowed in a - do - ra - tion be - fore the stars

have by a star been led to wor - ship you.

Fourth Tone - Unique Melody, Soft Chromatic

Moderato

The musical score is written for a single voice part in treble clef. It consists of five staves of music. The tempo is marked 'Moderato'. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The time signature changes throughout the piece: 4/4, 5/4, 4/4, 6/4, 2/4, 4/4, 3/4, 6/4, 4/4, 5/4, and 4/4. The melody is characterized by soft chromaticism, with many half-step intervals. The lyrics are: 'The pur - est tem - ple of the Sa - vior, the most pre - cious bri - dal cham - ber and Vir - gin, the sa - cred trea - su - ry of the glo - ry of God on this day has en - tered the house of the Lord bring - ing with her the grace of the di - vine Spi - rit, whom the an - gels of God ce - le - brate in song, for she is the Ta - ber - na - cle of Hea - ven.'

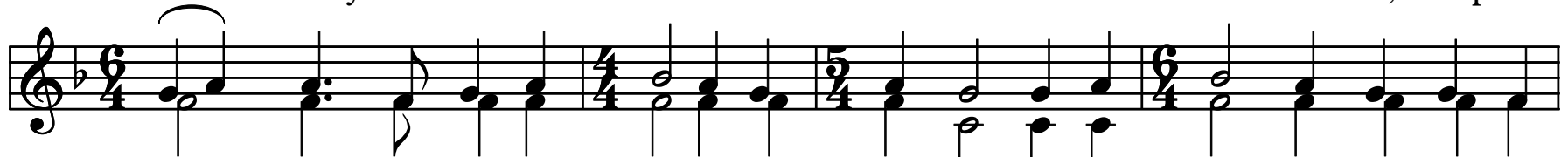
The pur - est tem - ple of the Sa - vior, the most pre - cious bri - dal
cham - ber and Vir - gin, the sa - cred trea - su - ry of the glo - ry of God
on this day has en - tered the house of the Lord bring - ing with
her the grace of the di - vine Spi - rit, whom the an - gels of
God ce - le - brate in song, for she is the Ta - ber - na - cle of Hea - ven.

Plagal Fourth Tone - Short Mode, Diatonic

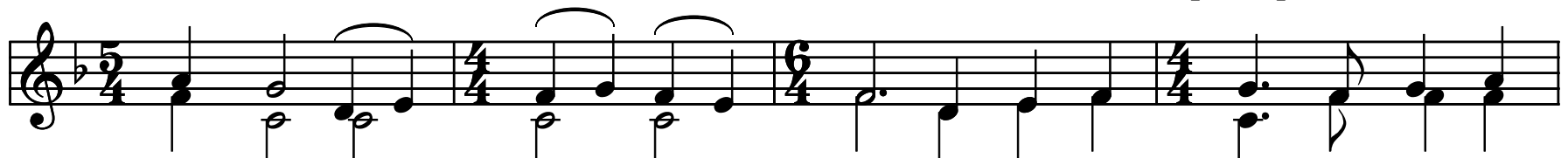
Allegro



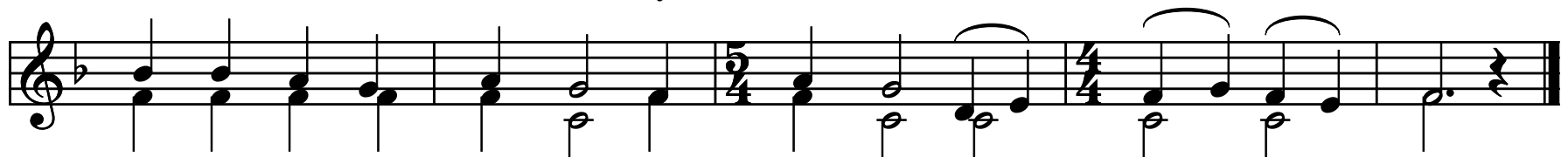
Ευ - λο - γη - τός εἰ, Χρι - στέ ο Θε - ός ἡ - μών, ο παν -
Ev - lo - yi - tos i Chri - ste o The - os i - mon, o pan -



- σό - φους τούς α - λιε - ίς α - να - δει - ξας, κα - τα - πέμ - ψας αυ - τοίς τό
- so - fous tous a - li - is a - na - dhi - xas, ka - ta pem - psas af - tis to



Πνεύ - μα τό ά - γι - ον, καί δι' αυ - τών τήν οι - κου -
Pnev - ma to a - yi - on, ke dhi af - ton tin i - kou -



- μέ - νην σα - γη - νεύ - σας, φι - λάν - θρω - πε, δό - ξα Σοι.
- me - nin sa - yi - nef - sas, phi - lan - thro - pe, dho - xa Si.

Plagal Fourth Tone - Long Mode, Diatonic



Moderato

O Lord, the wo - man who had fal - len in-to ma - ny sins per -
cei - ving your di - vi - ni - ty as - sumes the role of a myrrh - bear - er and la -
men - ting she brings the myrrh be - fore your bu - ri - al.