ABENDGEBET

for six unaccompanied voices (A.A.T.T.Bar.B.)

JACOB BERANEK

PROGRAM NOTE

While setting the text to this *Abendgebet* ("evening prayer") by German theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906–1945), I realized that these words were not only a prayer for evening time, but also the prayer of one in the evening of his earthly life. Bonhoeffer, who had been imprisoned for plotting the assassination of Adolf Hitler, wrote this prayer in jail, only months before his execution. Therefore, I wanted to conclude my setting of the prayer in a manner that represented Bonhoeffer's own perspective on death and life. It occurred to me that a powerful yet peaceful "Amen" was necessary to complete this image, and the idea struck me one day to set the "Amen" to the tune of the Lutheran chorale *Ein' feste Burg ist unser Gott* ("A Mighty Fortress Is Our God"). For me, this allusion would perfectly represent Bonhoeffer's hope amidst death and strength amidst evil. It was not until later that day that I happened to learn the circumstances preceding Bonhoeffer's death: the day before his execution, Bonhoeffer conducted his final Sunday service inside the Flossenbürg concentration camp. As the Gestapo entered to escort him to his "trial," Bonhoeffer concluded the service by leading the congregation in one last hymn: *Ein' feste Burg ist unser Gott.*

PERFORMANCE NOTE

With artistic trust in performers and in respect of their musicality, I have chosen not to over-mark the score with nuanced tempo modifications. Instead, metronomic ranges are provided to represent the span of possible tempos within a given section. In other words, this piece should not be performed maintaining only one steady tempo per section, even if that section has only one "tempo marking." Rather, performers are free to let a number of tempos arise naturally, beyond what is *literally* denoted in the score, but what is hopefully expressively inherent in the music. It is my belief that performers' artistry is too often restricted by an over-notated, controlling score, and it is my fervent wish to release them from this perceived bondage and encourage a collaborative joy in the making of my music.

—Jacob Beranek

This composition is also available in an arrangement for SATB choir by the composer.

TEXT (with composer's translation)

Herr, mein Gott, ich danke dir, daß du diesen Tag zu Ende gebracht hast; ich danke dir, daß du Leib und Seele zur Ruhe kommen läßt. Deine Hand war über mir und hat mich behütet und bewahrt.	Lord, my God, I thank you that you have brought this day to a close; I thank you that you have allowed my body and soul to come to rest. Your hand was over me and has protected and preserved me.
Vergib allen Kleinglauben und alles Unrecht dieses Tages und hilf, daß ich allen vergebe, die mir Unrecht getan haben.	Forgive all the lack of faith and all the injustice of this day, and help me to forgive all who have done injustice towards me.
Laß mich in Frieden unter deinem Schutz schlafen und bewahre mich vor den Anfechtungen der Finsternis.	Allow me in peace to sleep beneath your protection, and defend me from the spiritual crises of darkness.
Ich befehle dir die Meinen, ich befehle dir dieses Haus, ich befehle dir meinen Leib und meine Seele. Gott, dein heiliger Name sei gelobt.	I commend to you all that is mine, I commend to you this house, I commend to you my body and my soul. God, your holy name be praised.

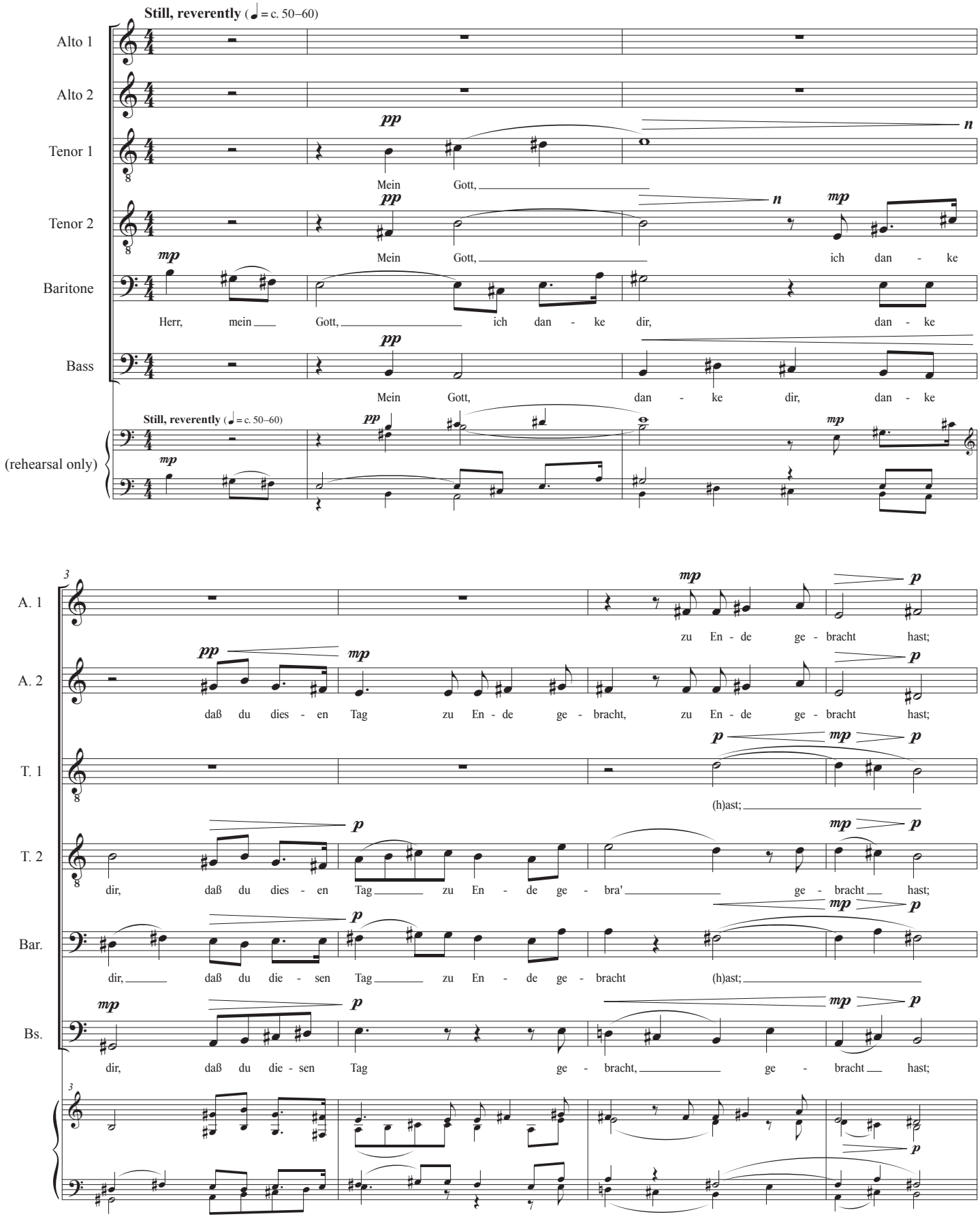
duration: c. 5' 00"

for the Gesualdo Six

ABENDGEBET

Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906–1945)

Jacob Beranek



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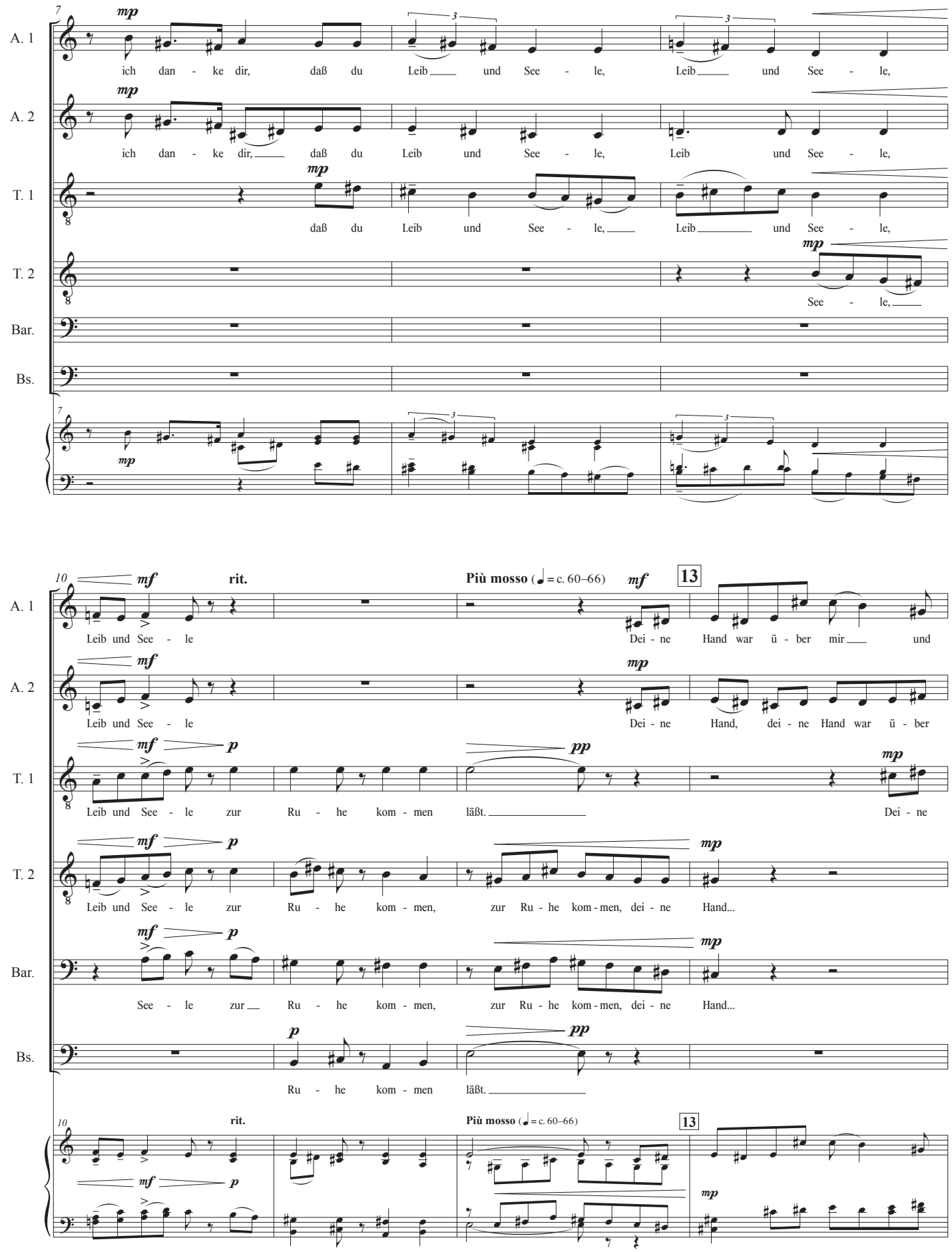
7
mp
A. 1
ich dan - ke dir, daß du Leib und See - le, Leib und See - le,
A. 2
ich dan - ke dir, daß du Leib und See - le, Leib und See - le,
T. 1
daß du Leib und See - le, Leib und See - le,
T. 2
See - le,
Bar.
Bs.
10
mf
rit.
Più mosso (♩ = c. 60–66)
13
Leib und See - le
Dei - ne Hand war ü - ber mir und
Dei - ne Hand, dei - ne Hand war ü - ber
p
pp
Leib und See - le zur Ru - he kom - men läßt.
Dei - ne
Leib und See - le zur Ru - he kom - men, zur Ru - he kom - men, dei - ne Hand...
See - le zur Ru - he kom - men, zur Ru - he kom - men, dei - ne Hand...
Ru - he kom - men läßt.