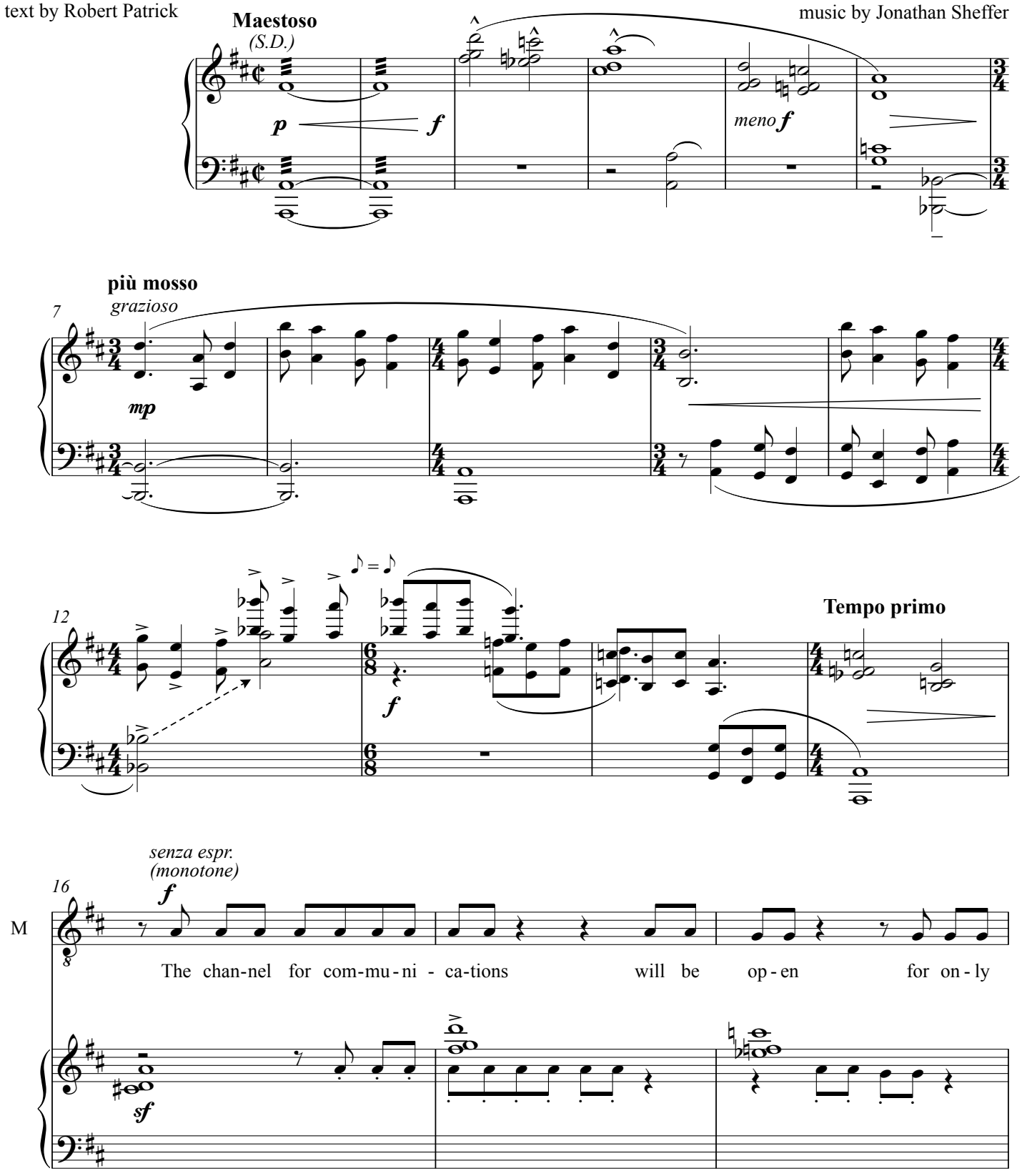
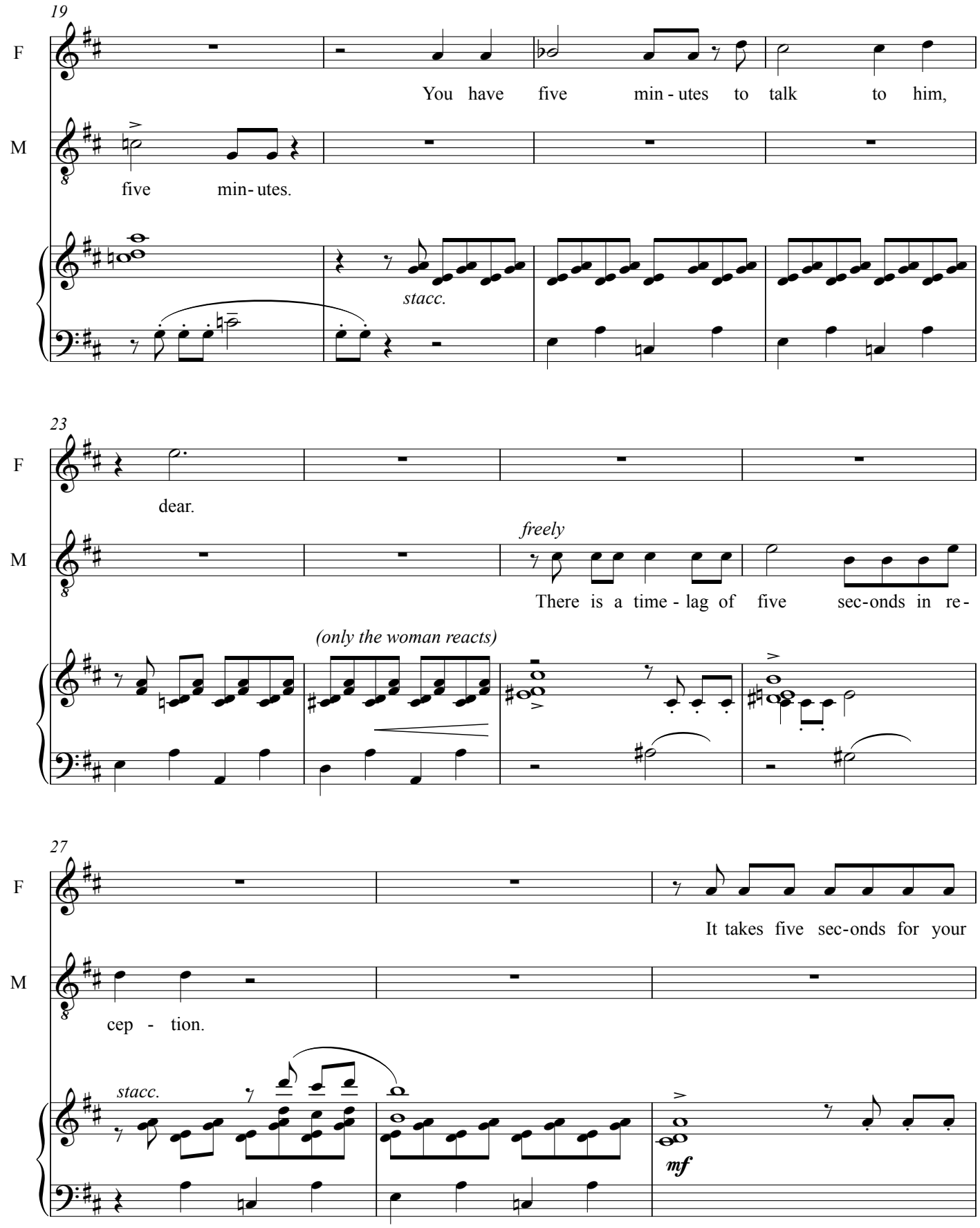
for Helen Harvey

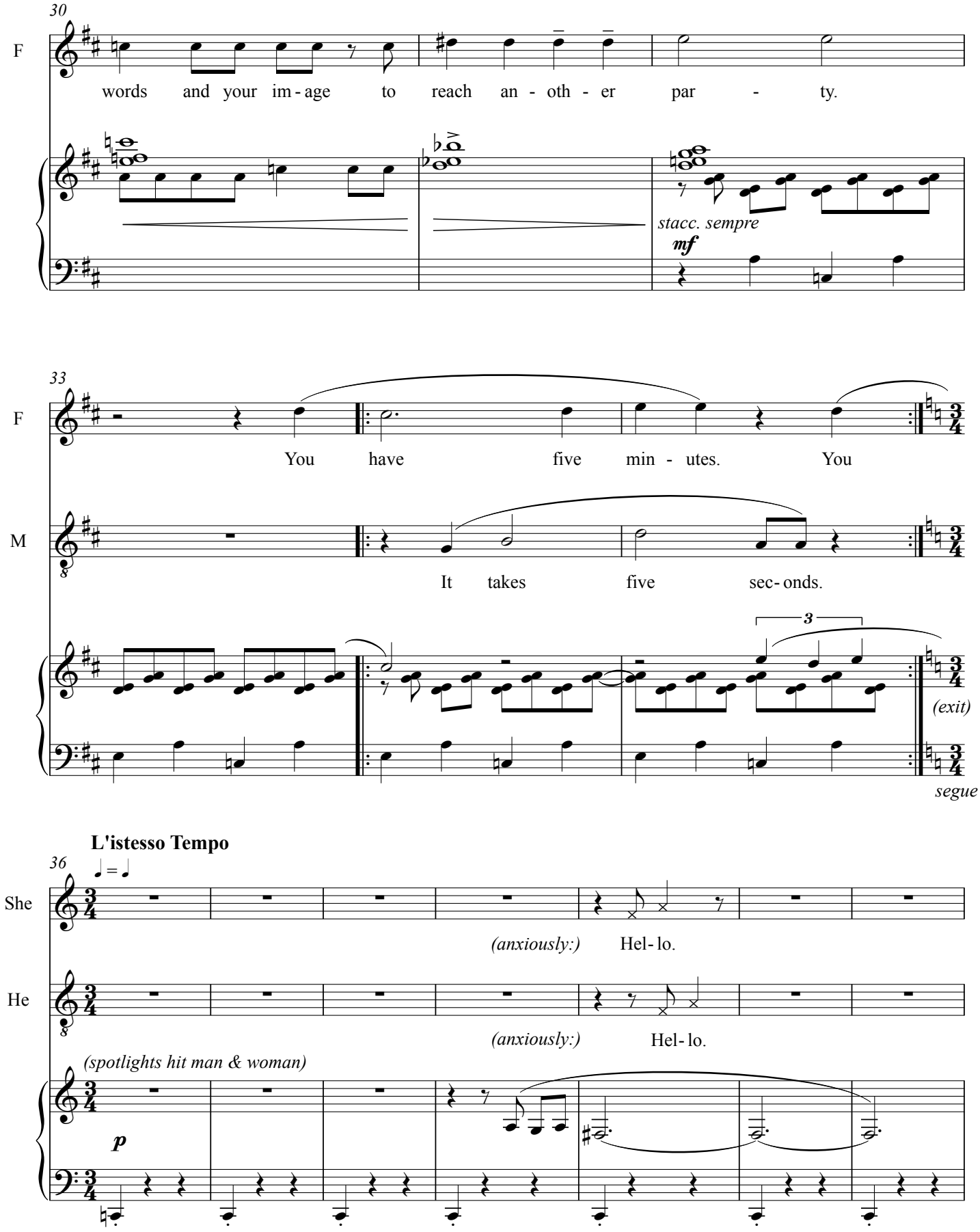
Camera Obscura

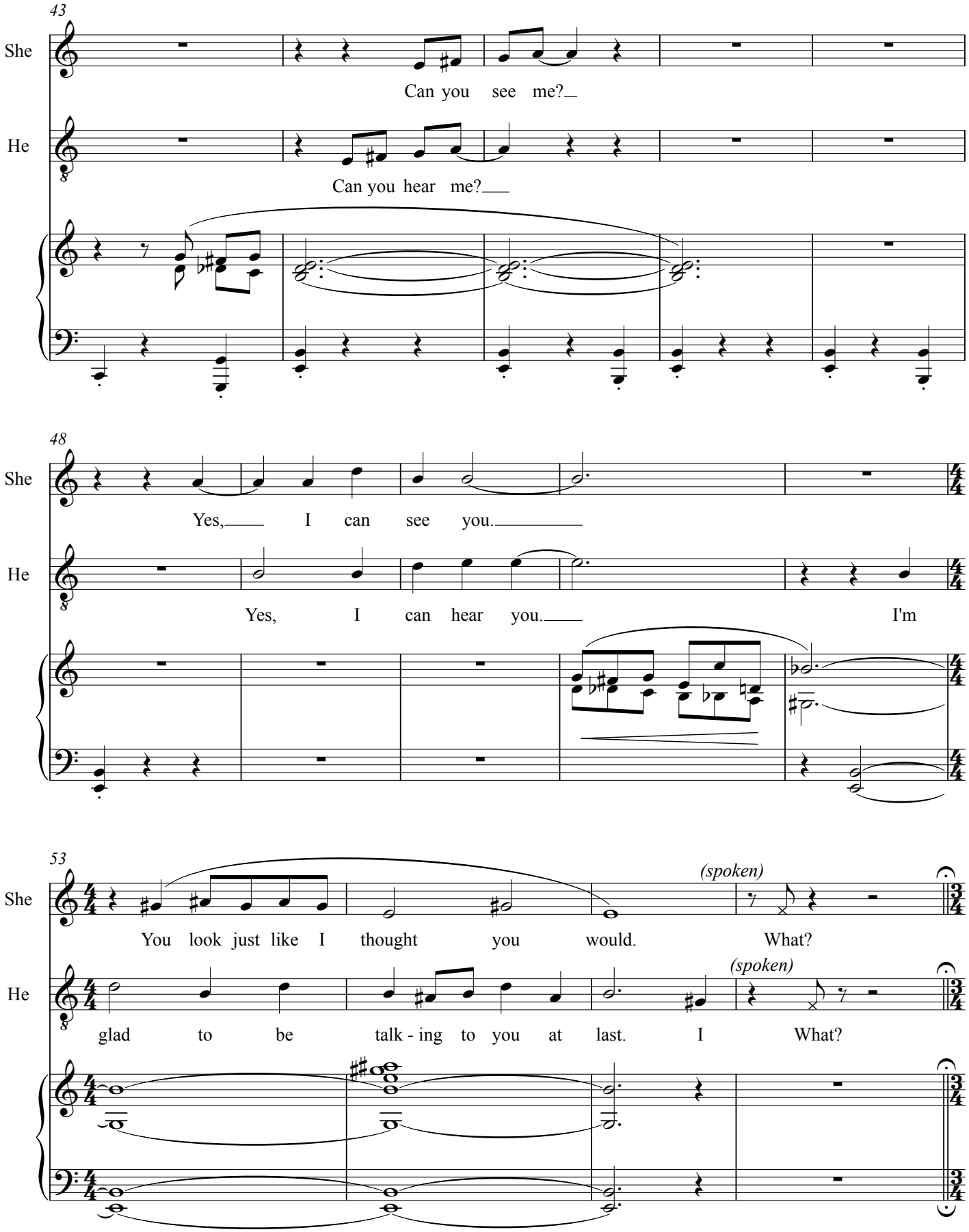
text by Robert Patrick

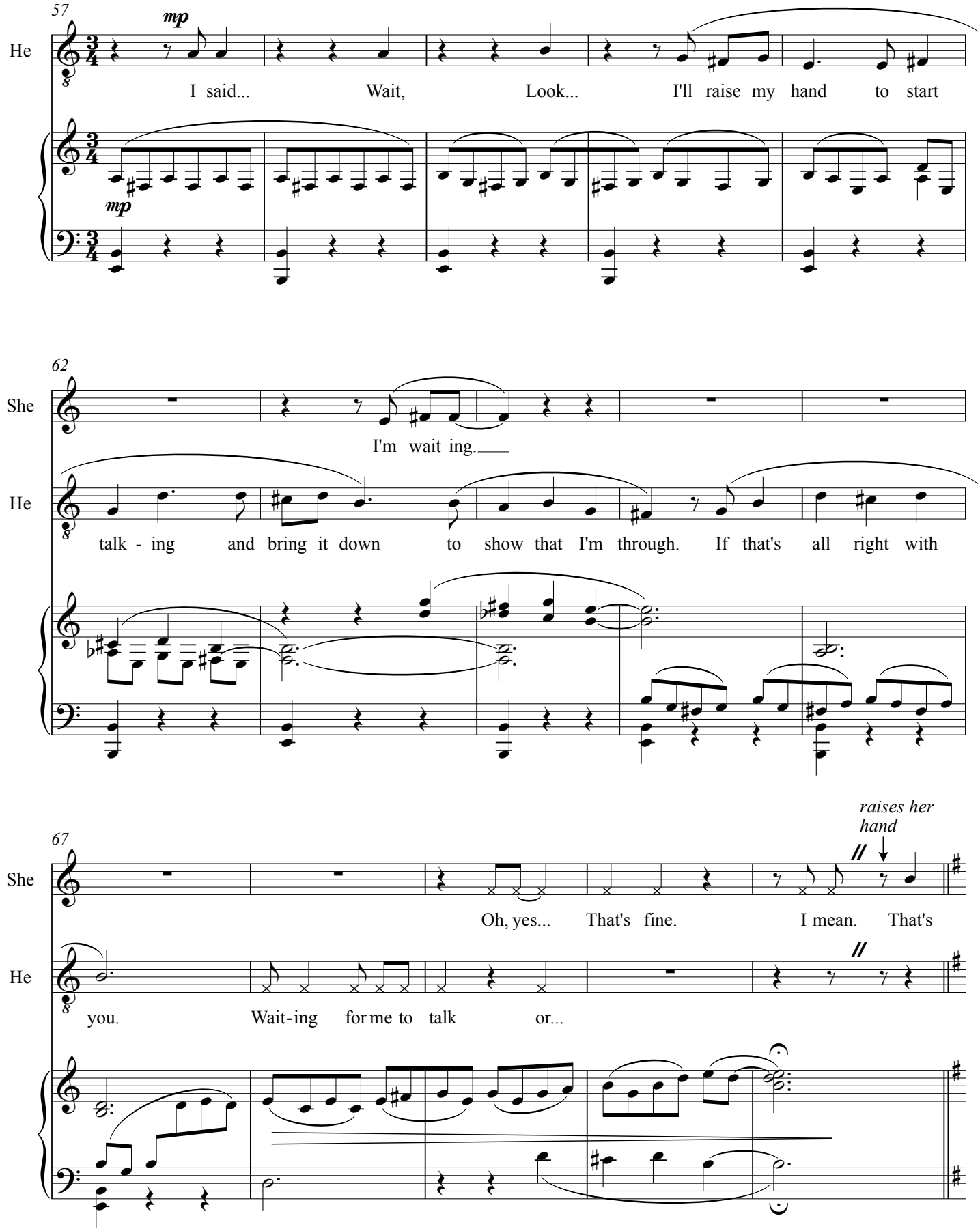
music by Jonathan Sheffer

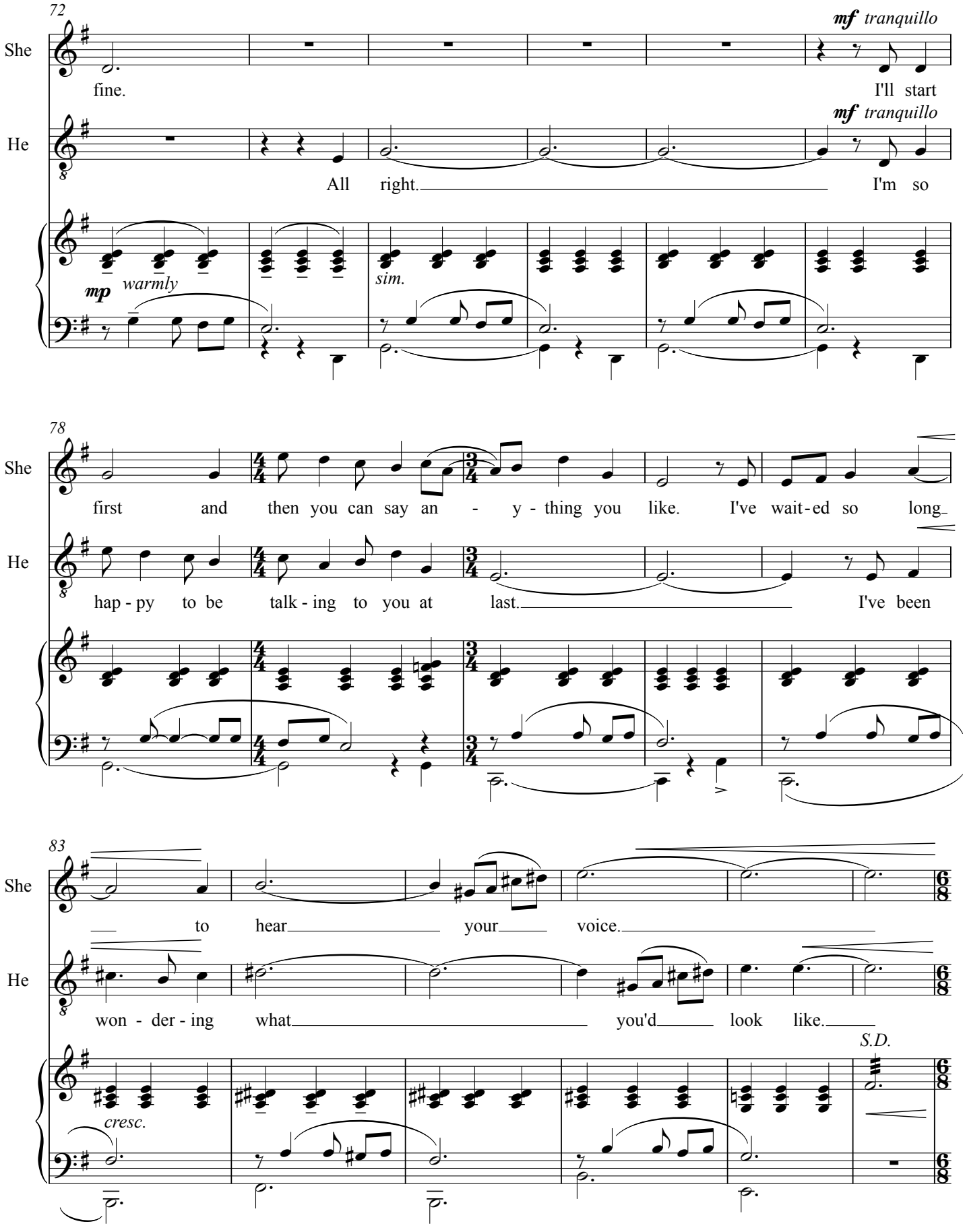


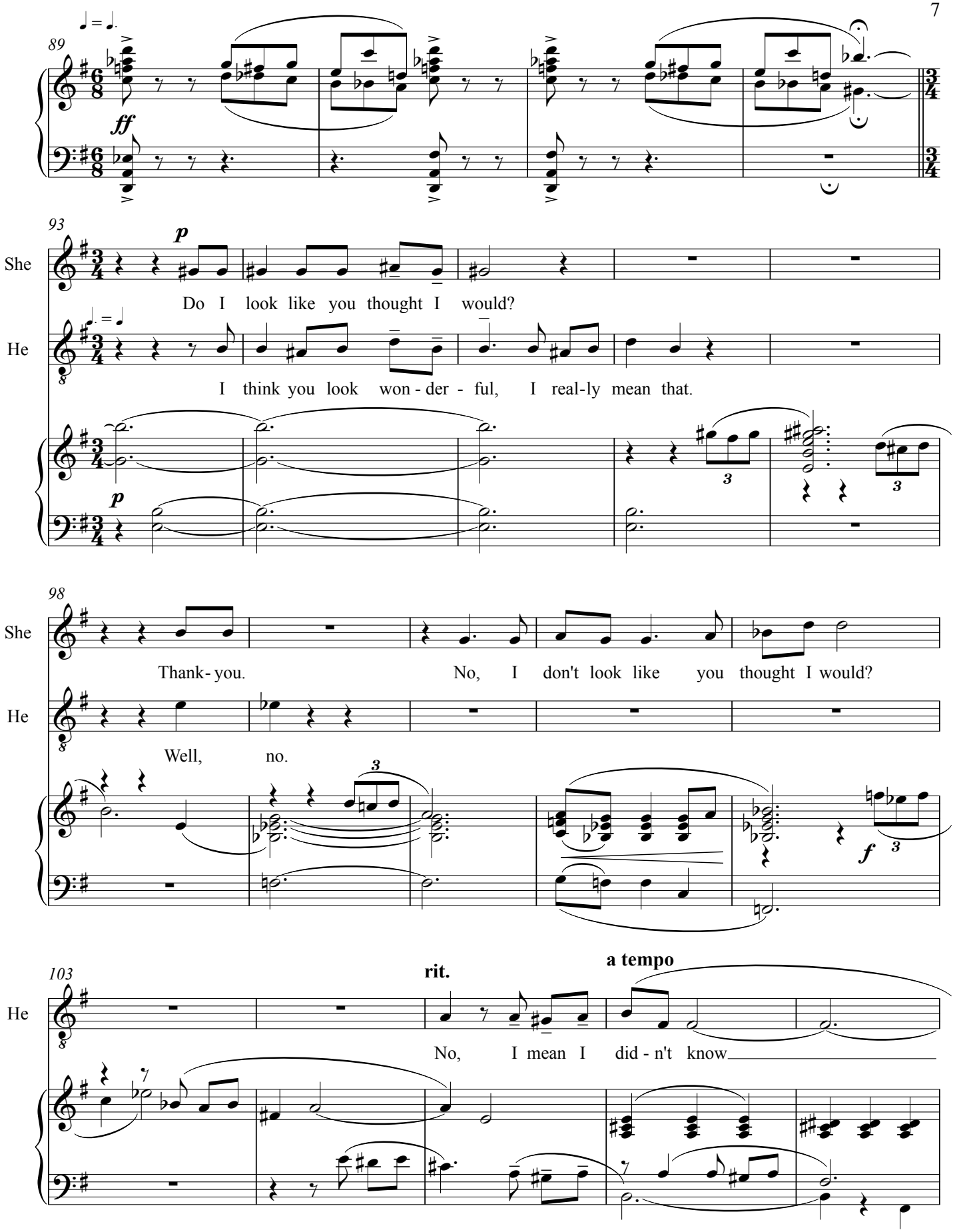

19
F
You have five min - utes to talk to him,
M
five min- utes.
stacc.
23
F
dear.
M
freely
There is a time - lag of five sec-onds in re-
(only the woman reacts)
27
F
It takes five sec-onds for your
M
cep - tion.
stacc.
mf

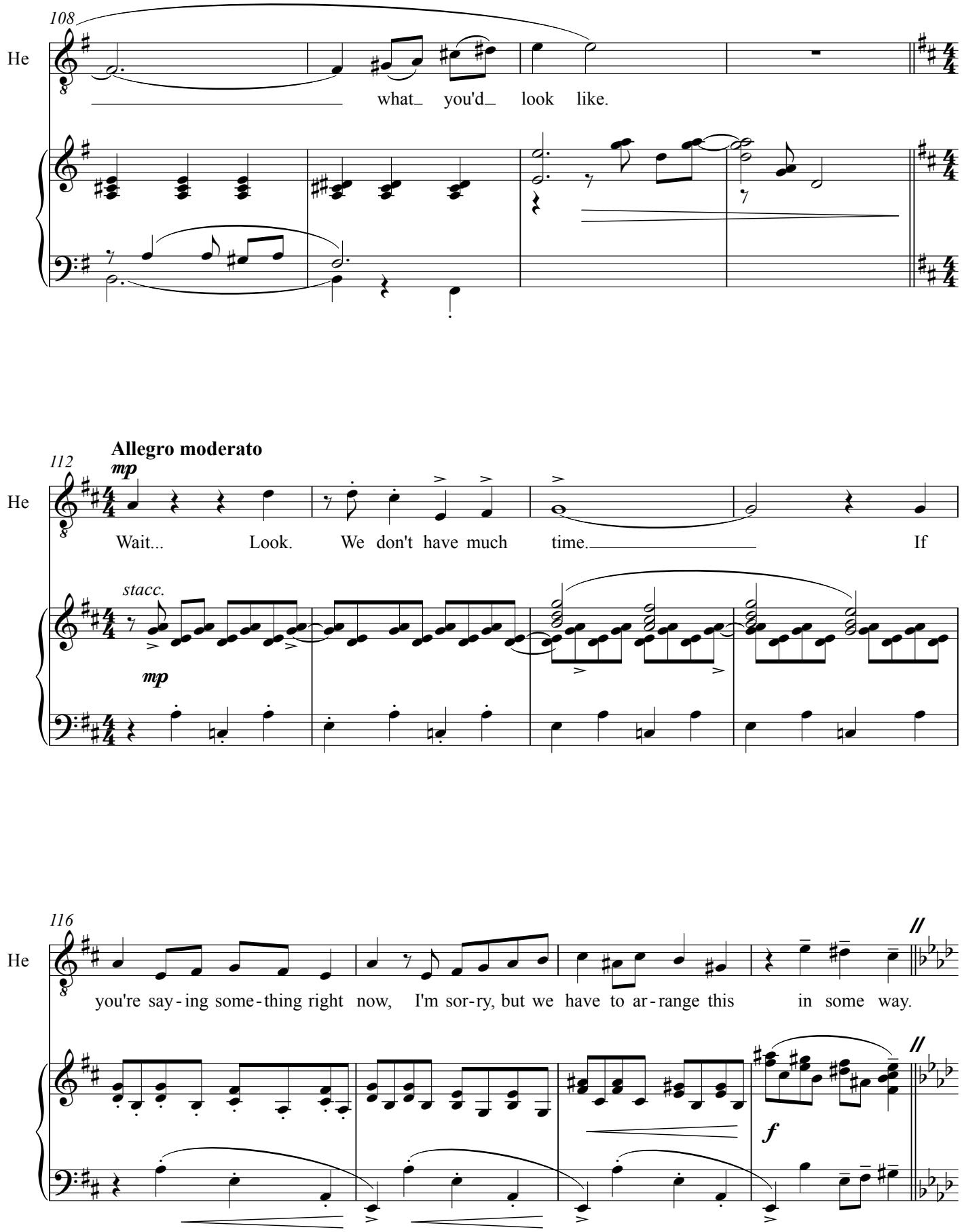

30
F
words and your im - age to reach an - oth - er par - ty.
stacc. sempre
mf
33
F
You have five min - utes. You
M
It takes five sec - onds.
3
(exit)
segue
L'istesso Tempo
36
She
(anxiously:) Hel - lo.
He
(anxiously:) Hel - lo.
(spotlights hit man & woman)
p

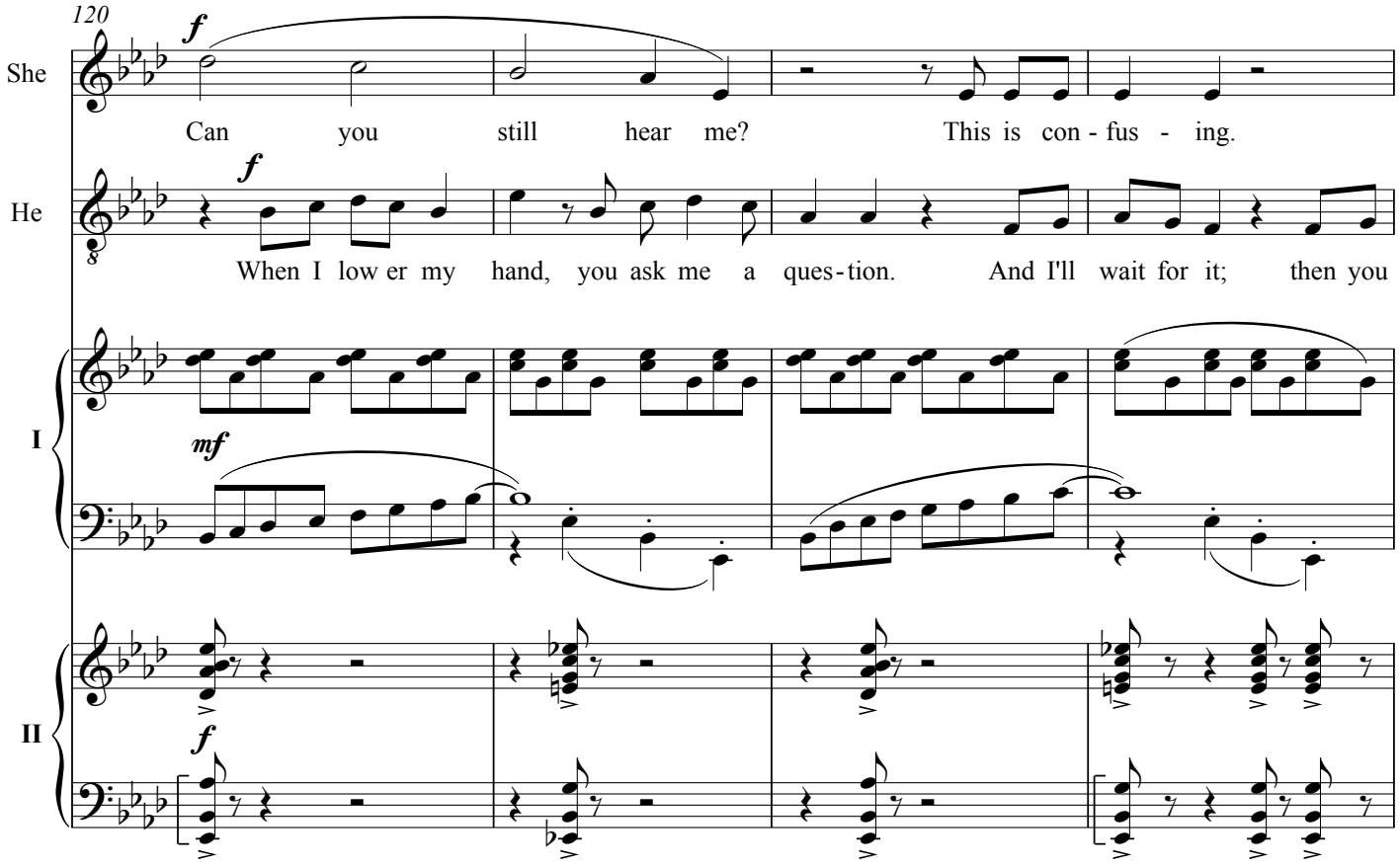

43
She
Can you see me?
He
Can you hear me?
48
She
Yes, I can see you.
He
Yes, I can hear you. I'm
53
She
You look just like I thought you would.
(spoken)
What?
He
glad to be talk - ing to you at last. I
(spoken)
What?

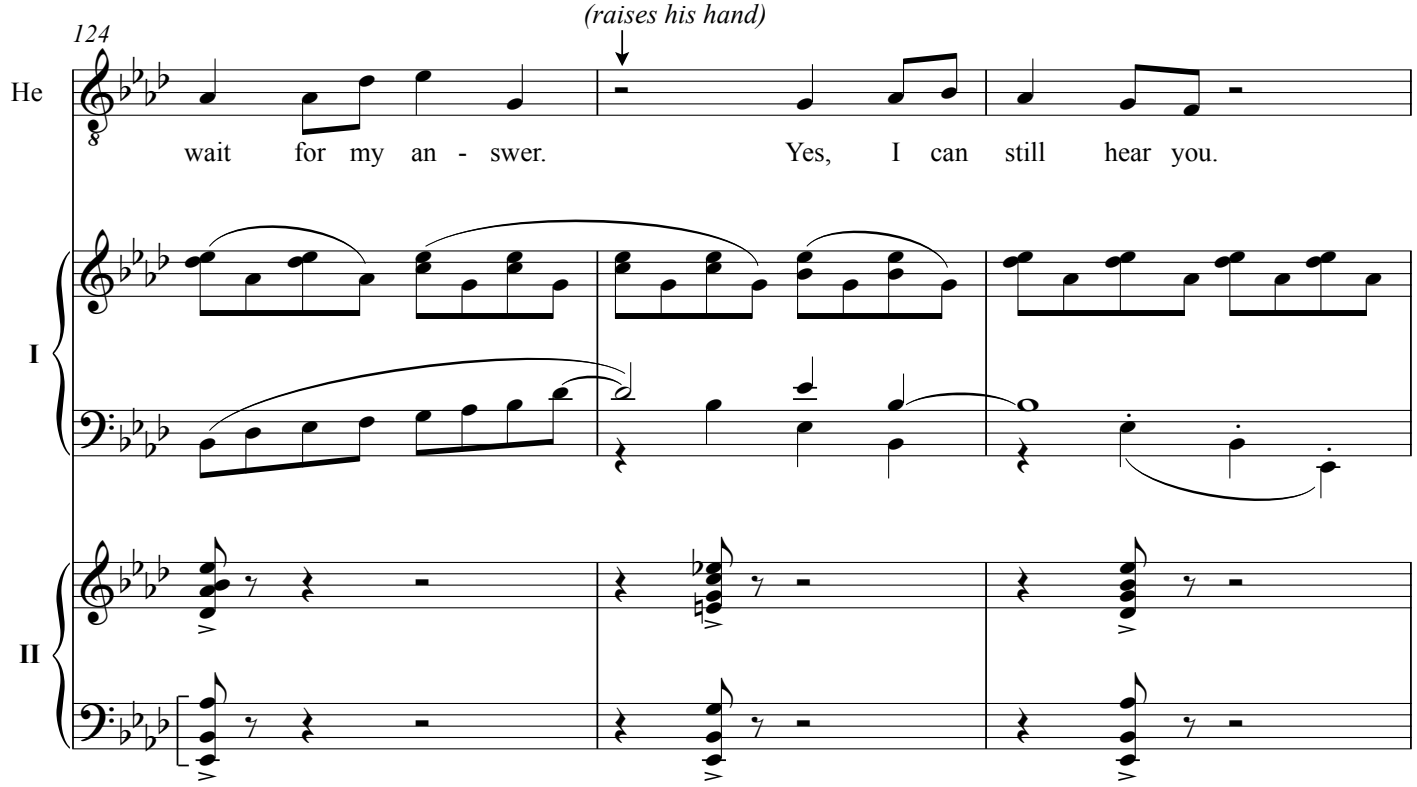

57
mp
He
I said... Wait, Look... I'll raise my hand to start
mp
62
She
I'm wait ing.
He
talk - ing and bring it down to show that I'm through. If that's all right with
67
raises her hand
She
Oh, yes... That's fine. I mean. That's
He
you. Wait-ing for me to talk or...

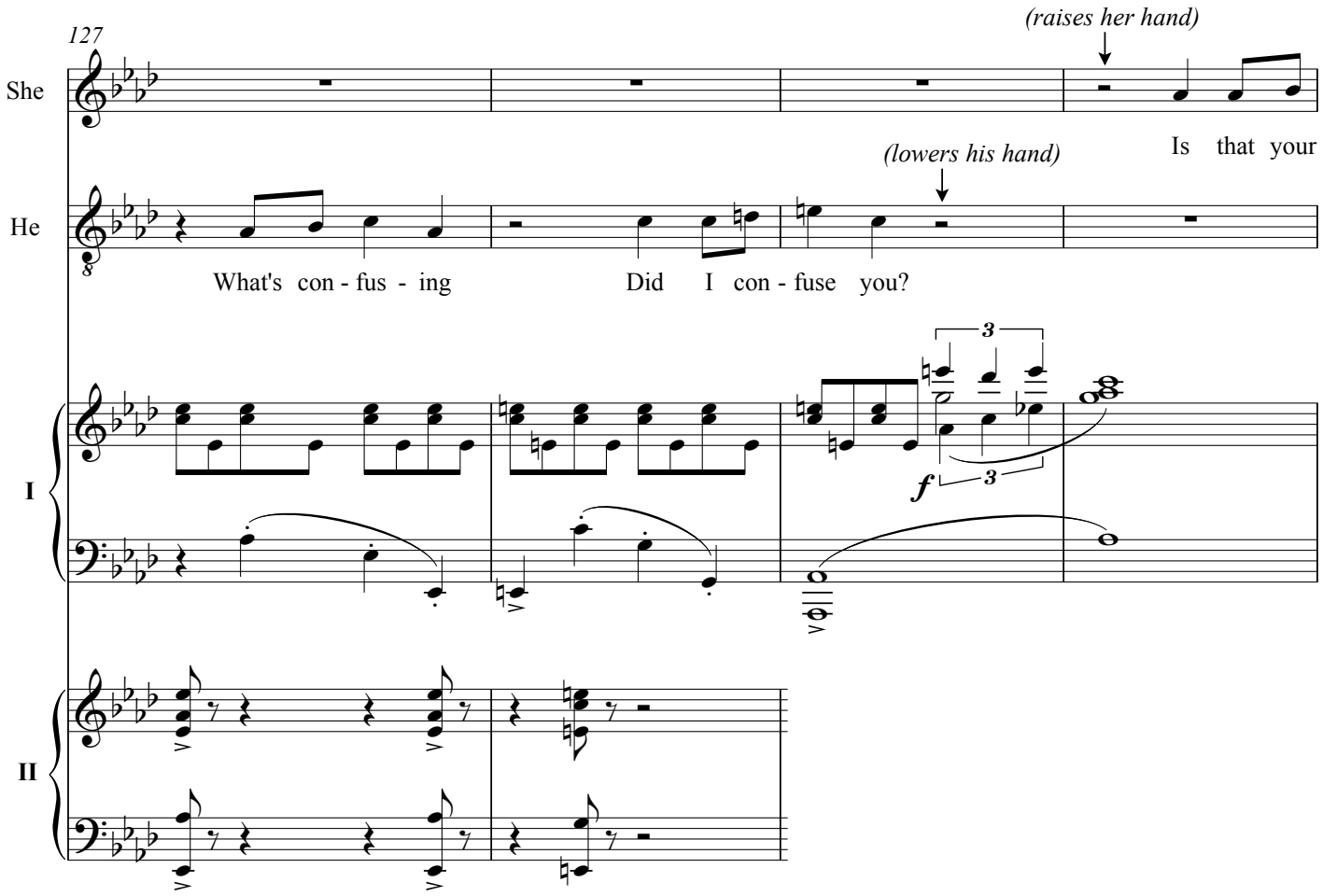

72
She
fine.
mf tranquillo
I'll start
He
All right.
mf tranquillo
I'm so
mp warmly
sim.
78
She
first and then you can say an - y - thing you like. I've wait-ed so long
He
hap - py to be talk - ing to you at last.
I've been
83
She
to hear your voice.
He
won - der - ing what you'd look like.
S.D.
cresc.

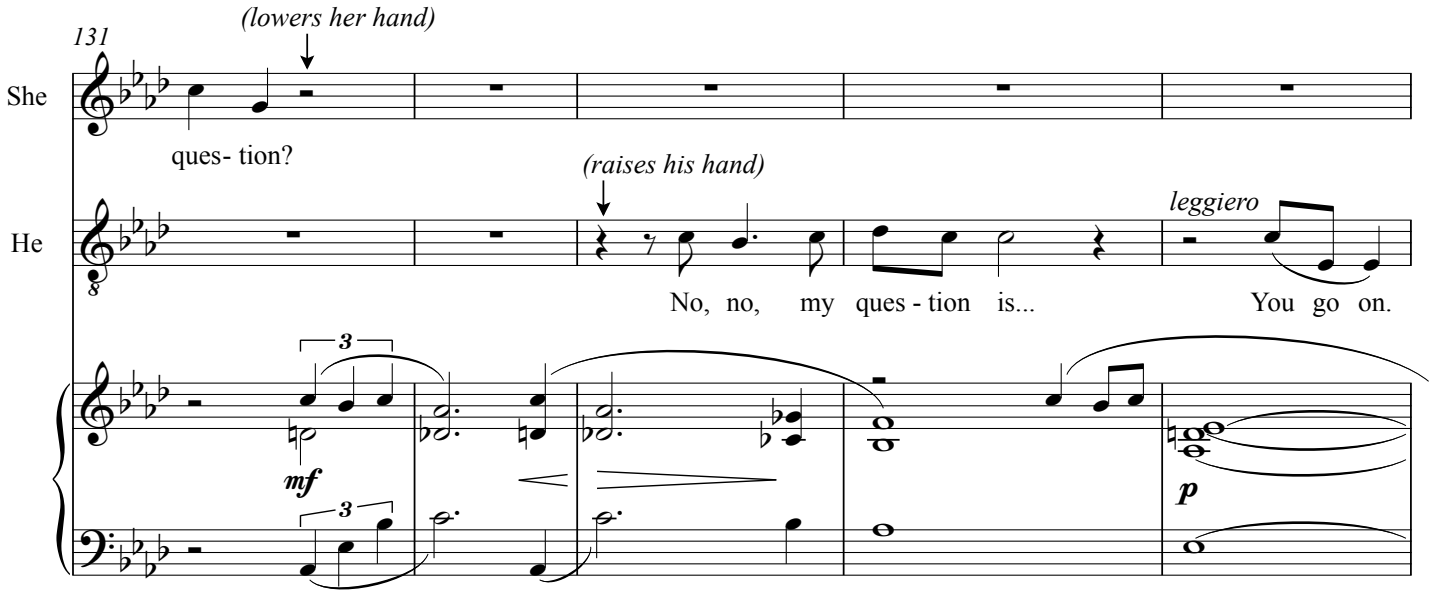

89
ff
93
She
p
Do I look like you thought I would?
He
I think you look won - der - ful, I real-ly mean that.
p
98
She
Thank- you.
No, I don't look like you thought I would?
He
Well, no.
f
103
He
rit.
a tempo
No, I mean I did - n't know

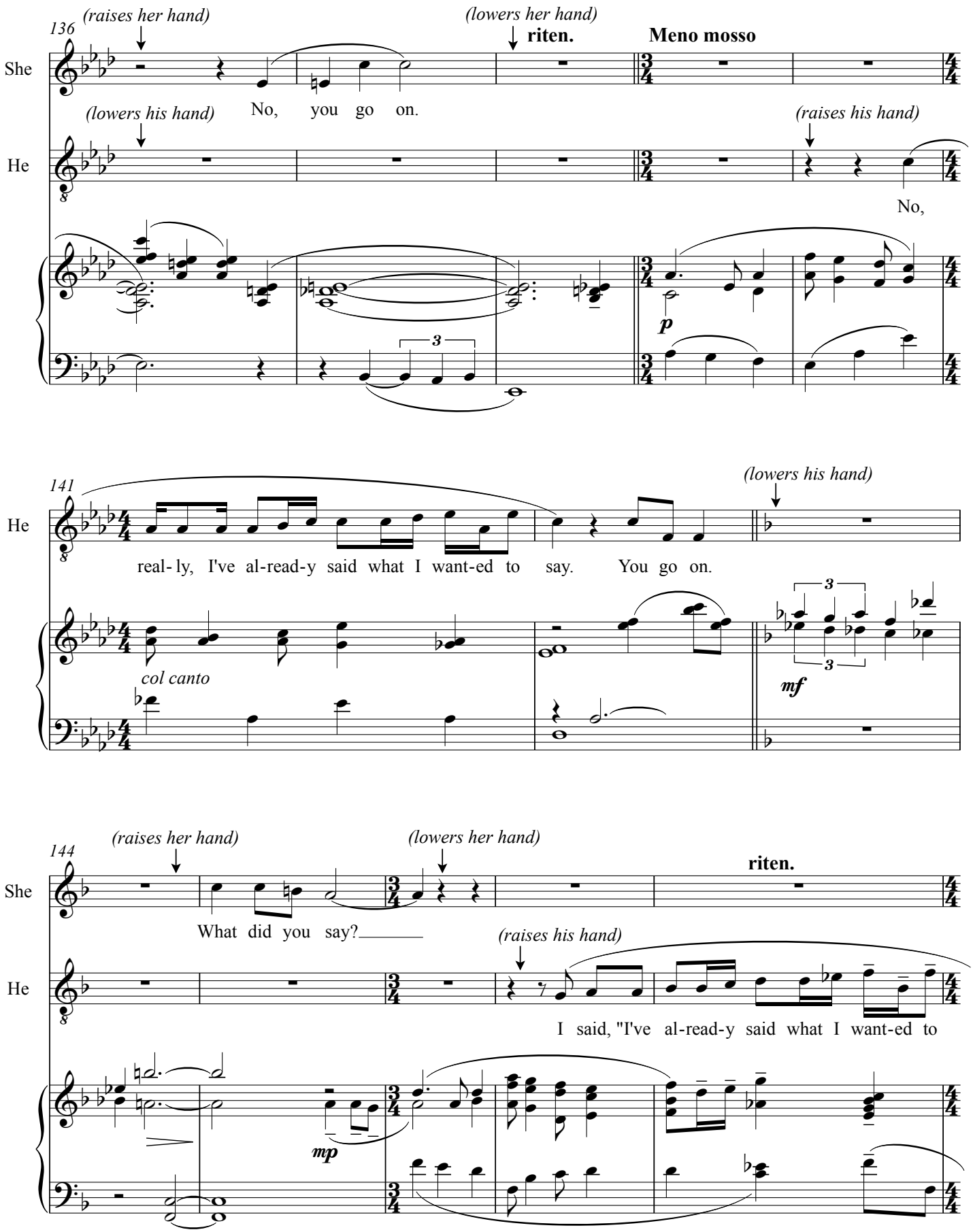

108
He
what_ you'd_ look like.
Allegro moderato
112
mp
He
Wait... Look. We don't have much time. If
stacc.
mp
116
He
you're say-ing some-thing right now, I'm sor-ry, but we have to ar-range this in some way.
f

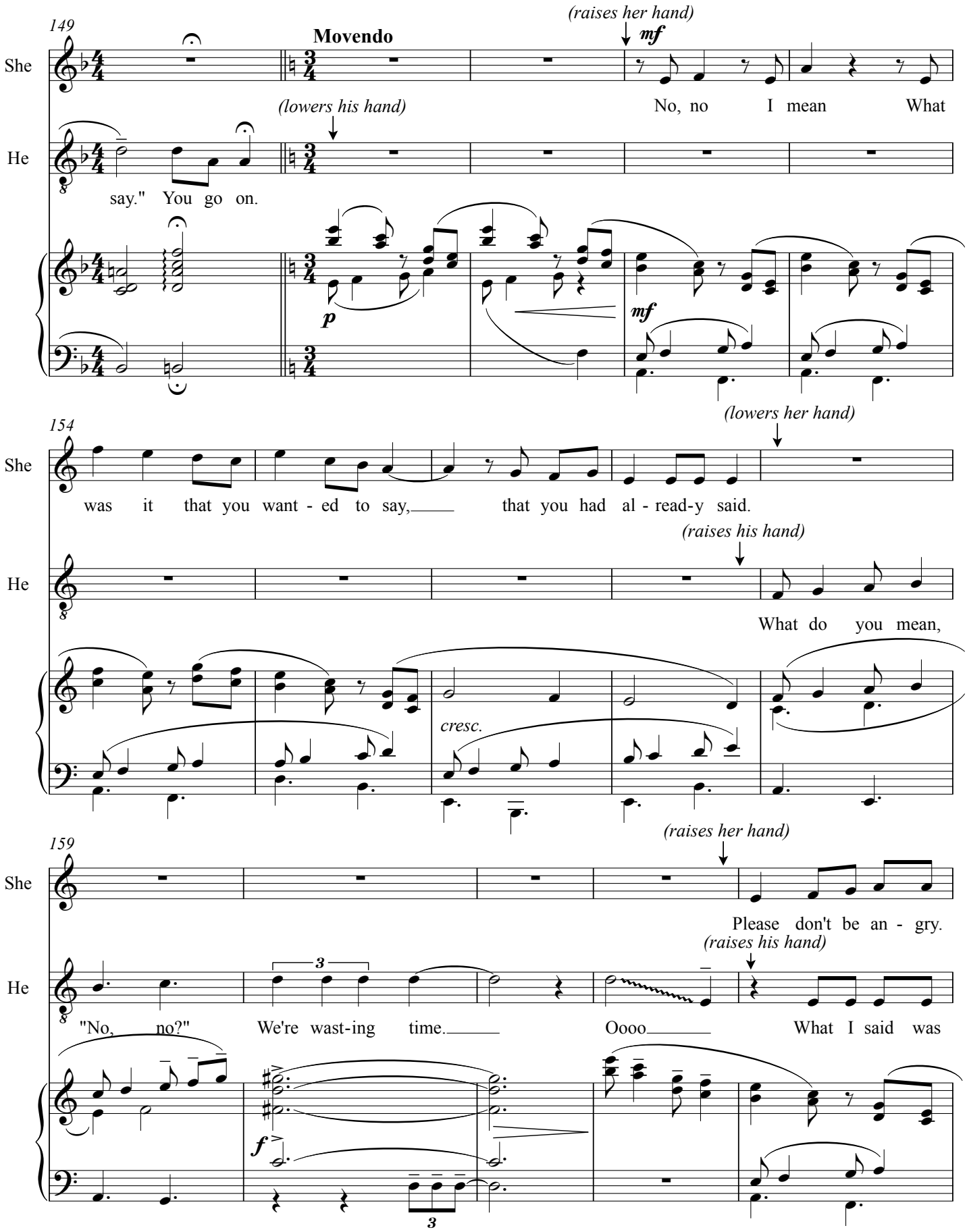

120
She
Can you still hear me? This is con - fus - ing.
He
When I low er my hand, you ask me a ques - tion. And I'll wait for it; then you
I
II

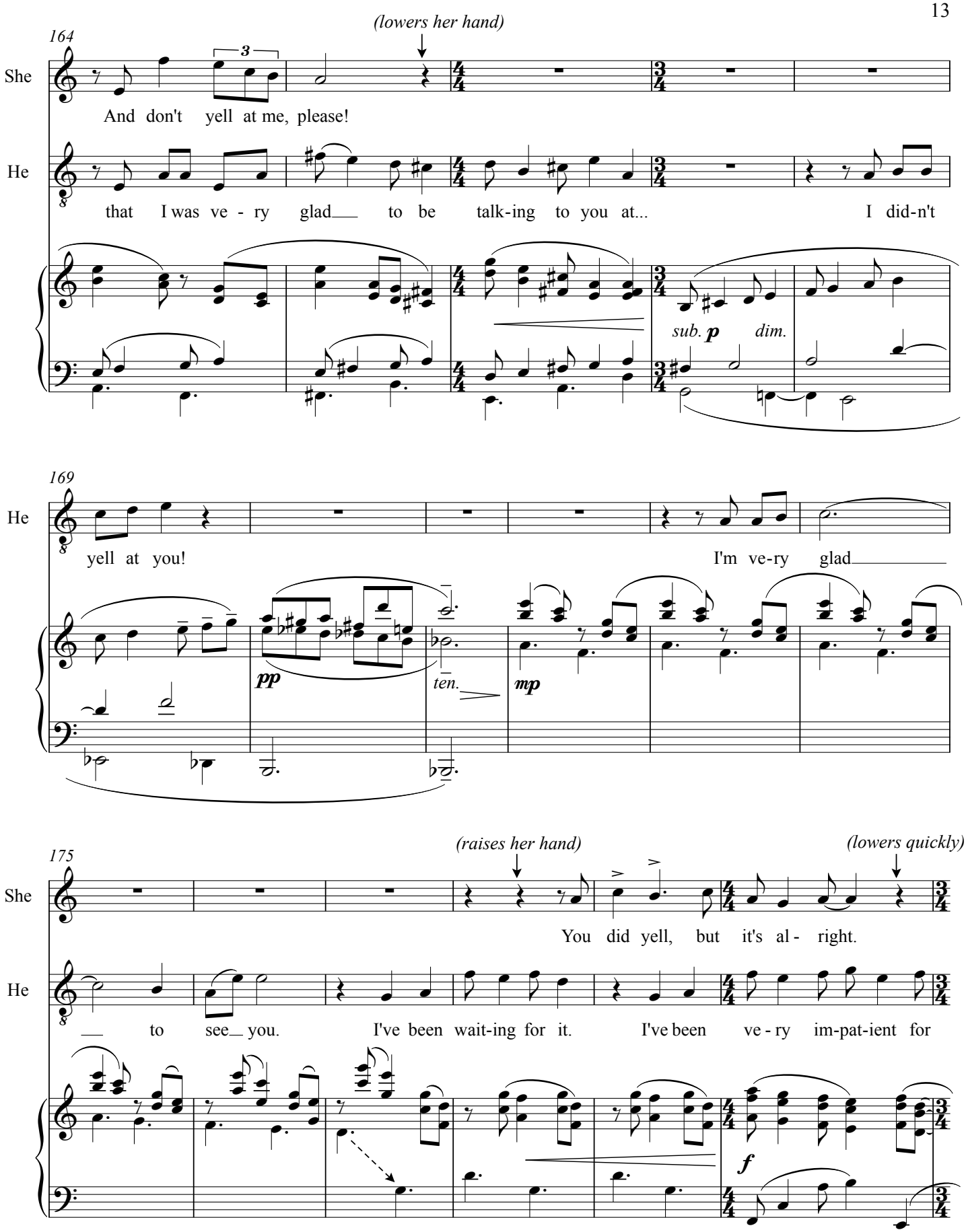

(raises his hand)
124
He
wait for my an - swer. Yes, I can still hear you.
I
II

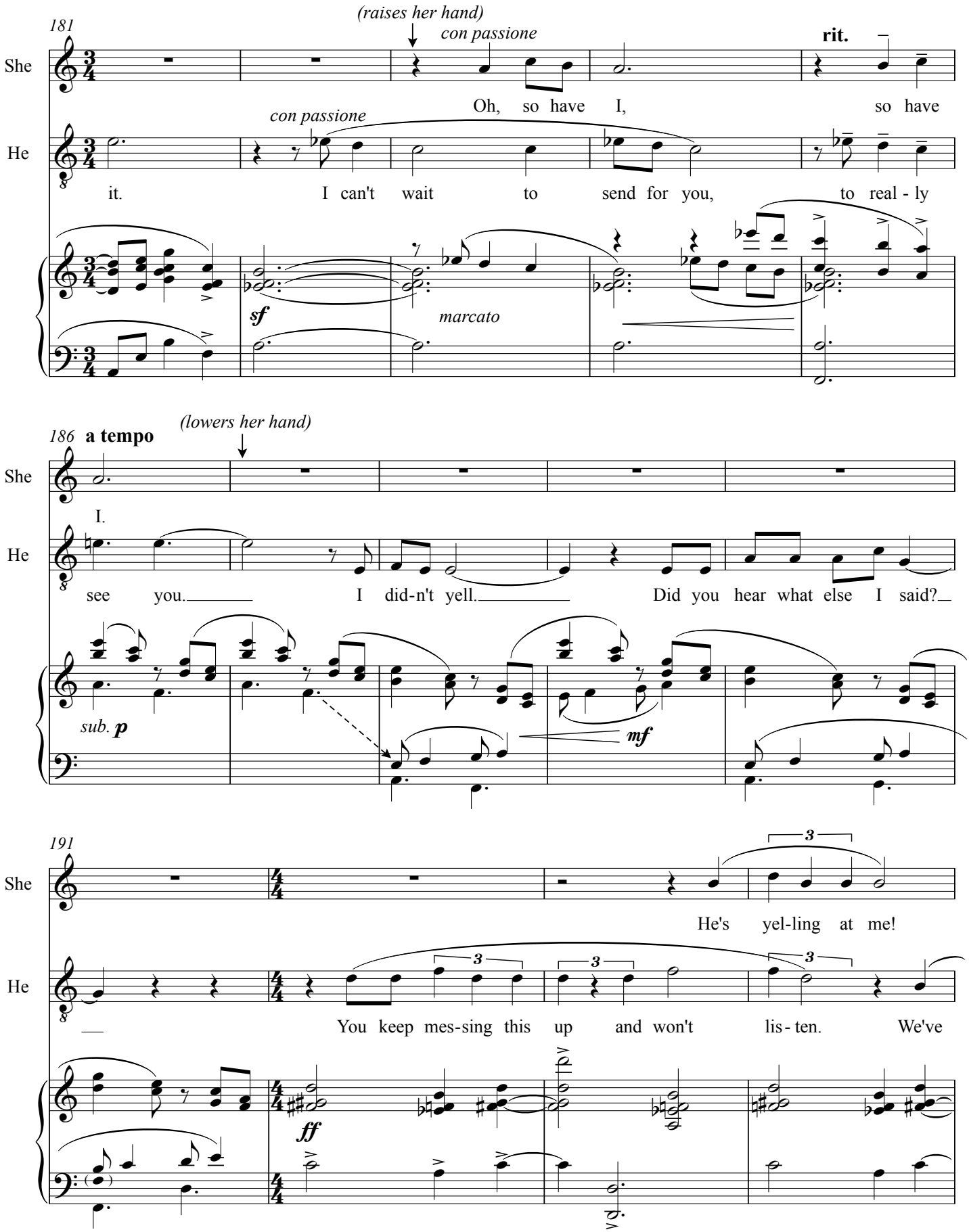

127
(raises her hand)
She
Is that your
(lowers his hand)
He
What's con - fus - ing
Did I con - fuse you?
I
f
II

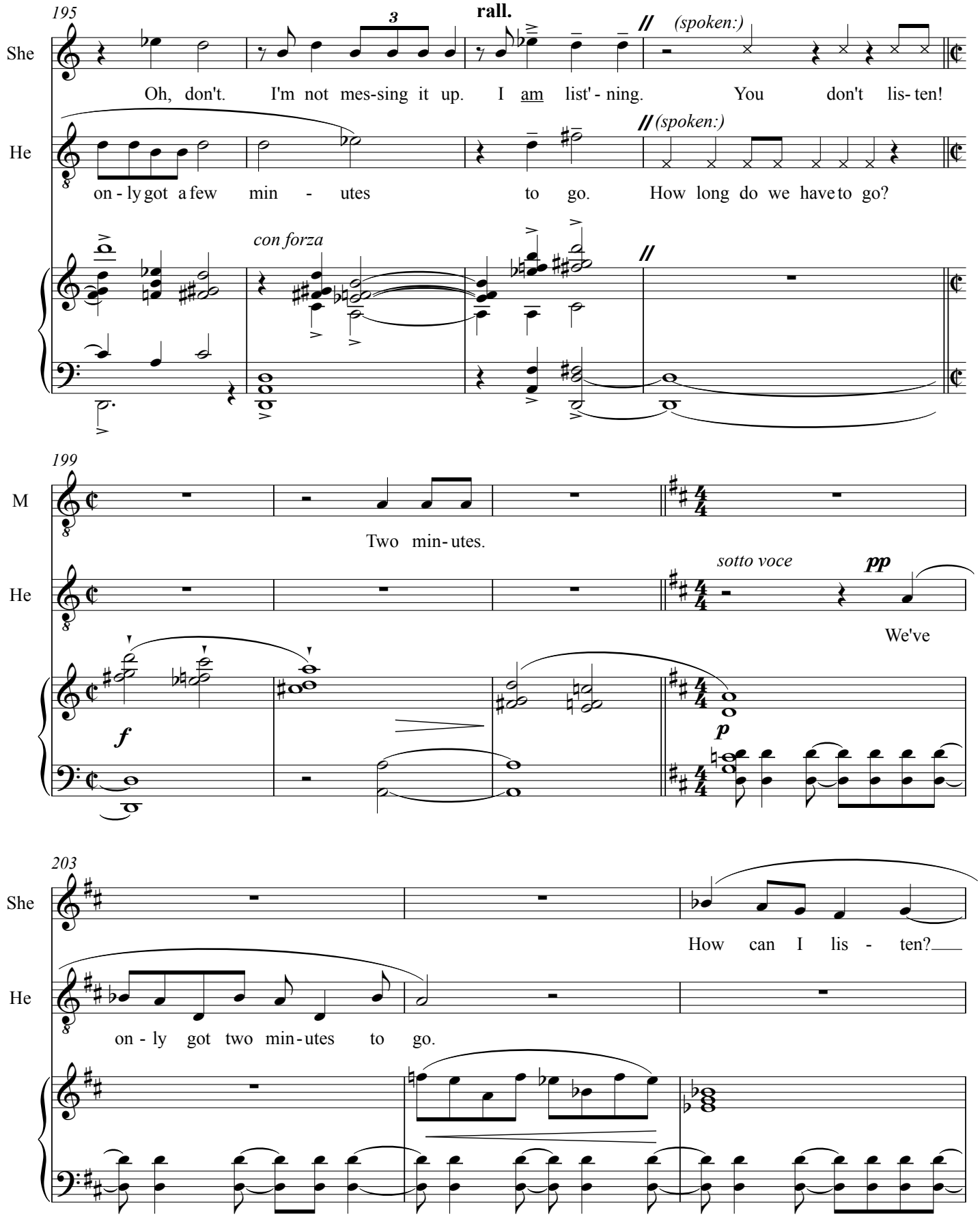

131
(lowers her hand)
She
ques- tion?
(raises his hand)
He
No, no, my ques - tion is...
leggiero
You go on.
mf
p

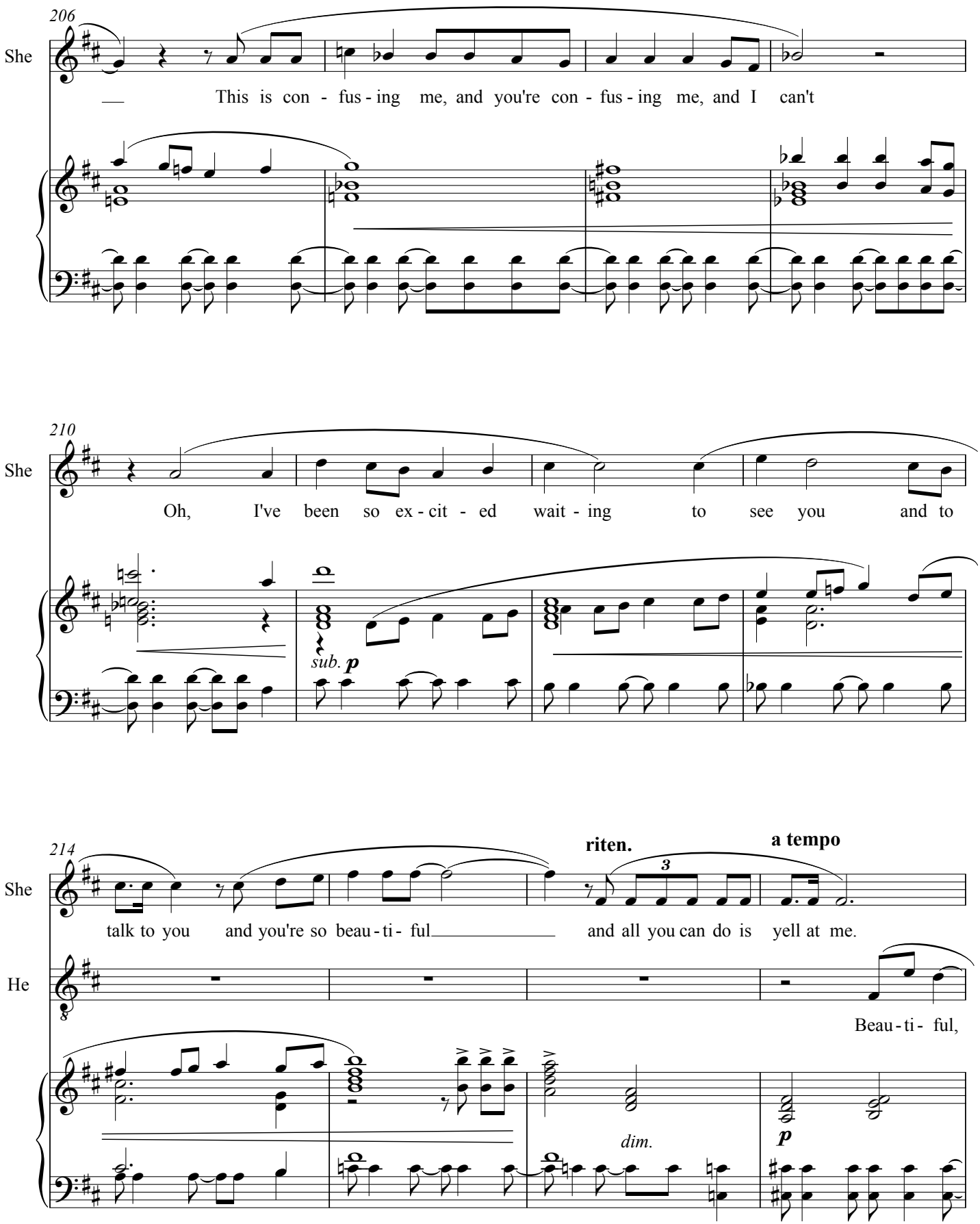

136
(raises her hand)
(lowers her hand)
riten.
Meno mosso
She
No, you go on.
(lowers his hand)
(raises his hand)
He
No,
p
3
141
(lowers his hand)
He
real- ly, I've al-read-y said what I want-ed to say. You go on.
col canto
3
3
mf
144
(raises her hand)
(lowers her hand)
riten.
She
What did you say?
(raises his hand)
He
I said, "I've al-read-y said what I want-ed to
mp

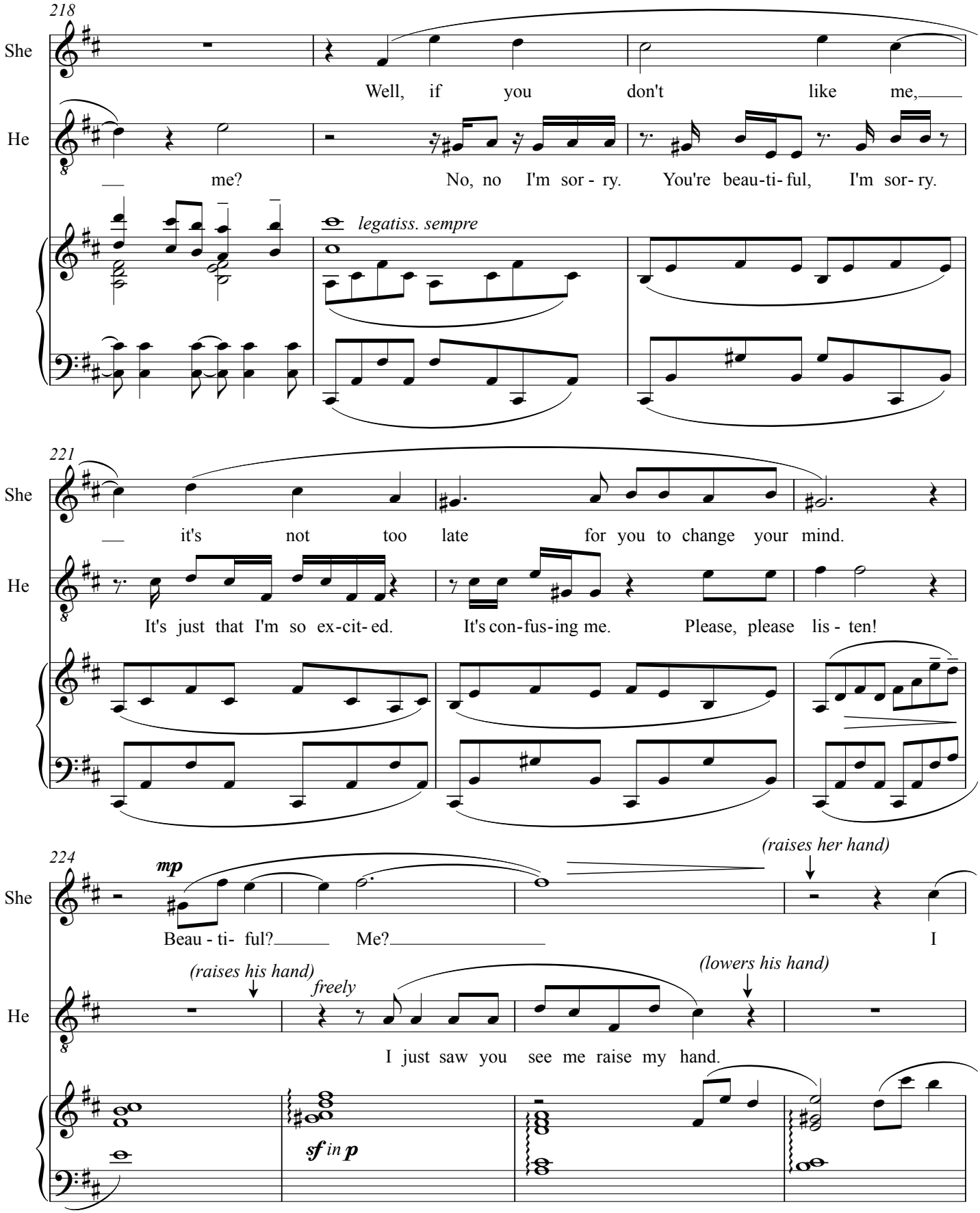

149
Movendo
(raises her hand)
mf
She
No, no I mean What
(lowers his hand)
He
say." You go on.
p
mf
154
(lowers her hand)
She
was it that you want - ed to say, that you had al - read-y said.
(raises his hand)
He
What do you mean,
cresc.
159
(raises her hand)
She
Please don't be an - gry.
(raises his hand)
He
"No, no?" We're wast-ing time. Oooo What I said was
3
f
3

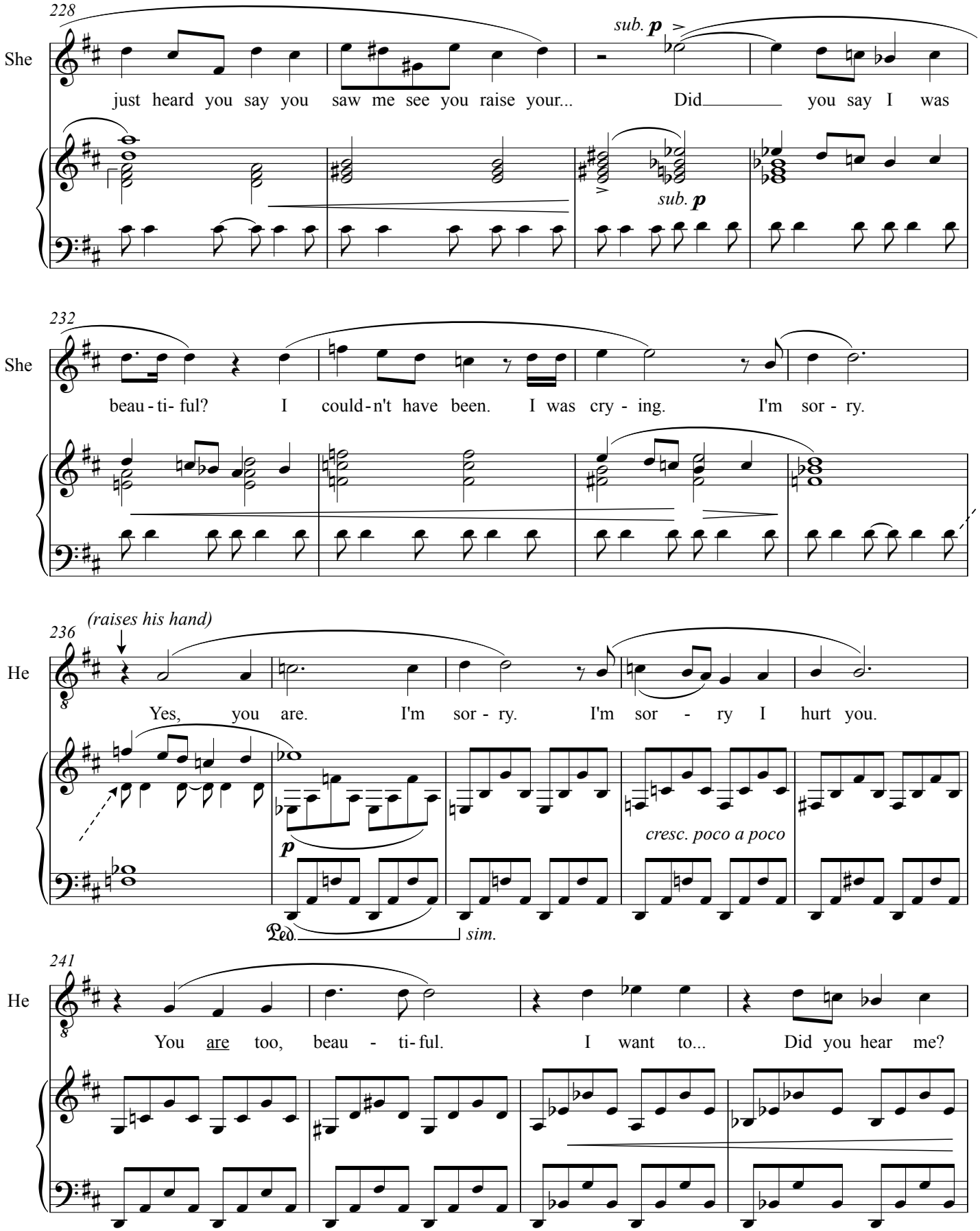

164
(lowers her hand)
She
And don't yell at me, please!
He
that I was ve - ry glad to be talk-ing to you at... I did-n't
sub. p dim.
169
He
yell at you! I'm ve-ry glad
pp
ten.
mp
175
(raises her hand)
(lowers quickly)
She
You did yell, but it's al - right.
He
to see you. I've been wait-ing for it. I've been ve - ry im-pat-ient for
f

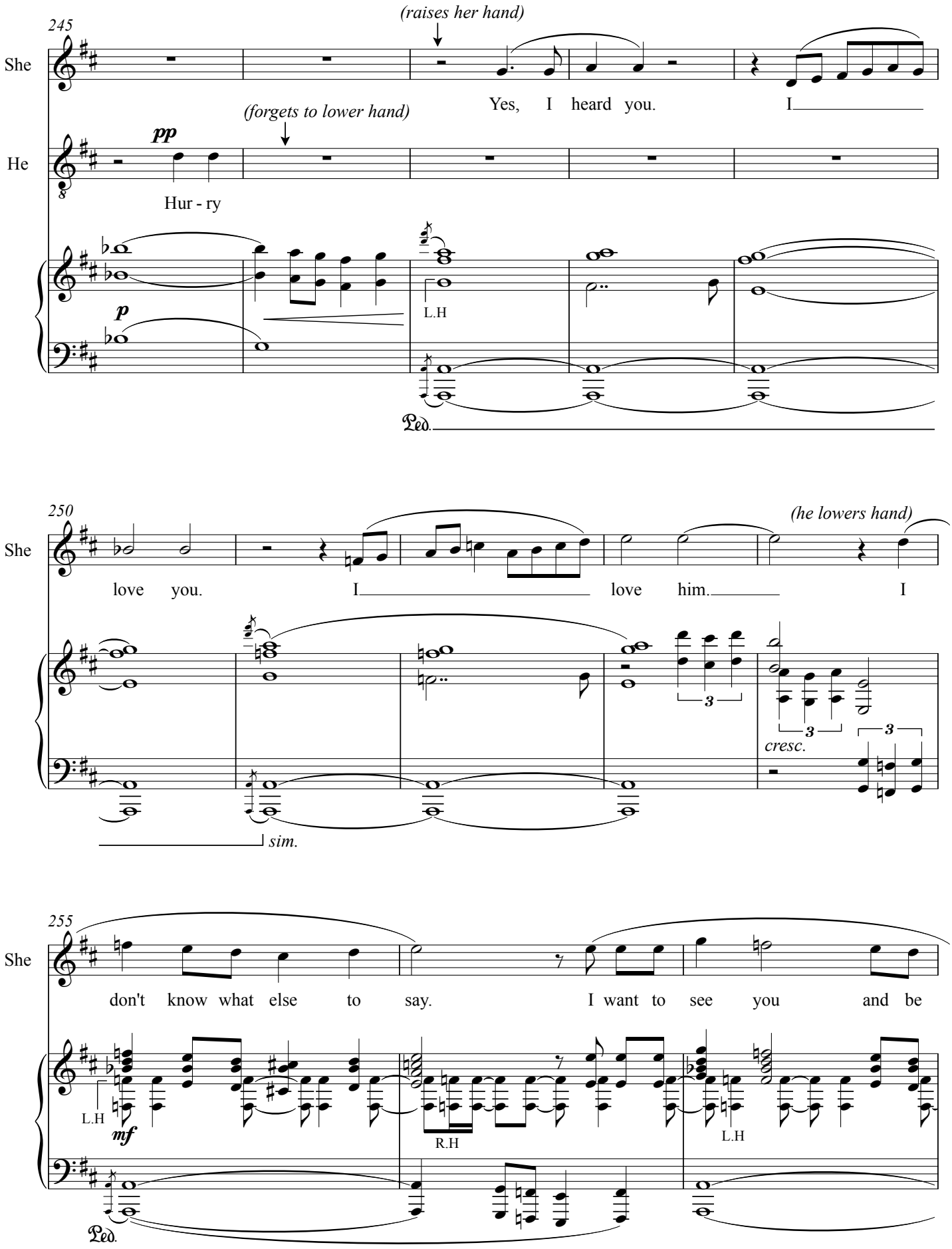

181
(raises her hand)
con passione
rit.
She
Oh, so have I, so have
He
con passione
it. I can't wait to send for you, to real - ly
sf
marcato
186 a tempo
(lowers her hand)
She
I.
He
see you. I did-n't yell. Did you hear what else I said?
sub. p
mf
191
She
He's yel-ling at me!
He
You keep mes-sing this up and won't lis - ten. We've
ff

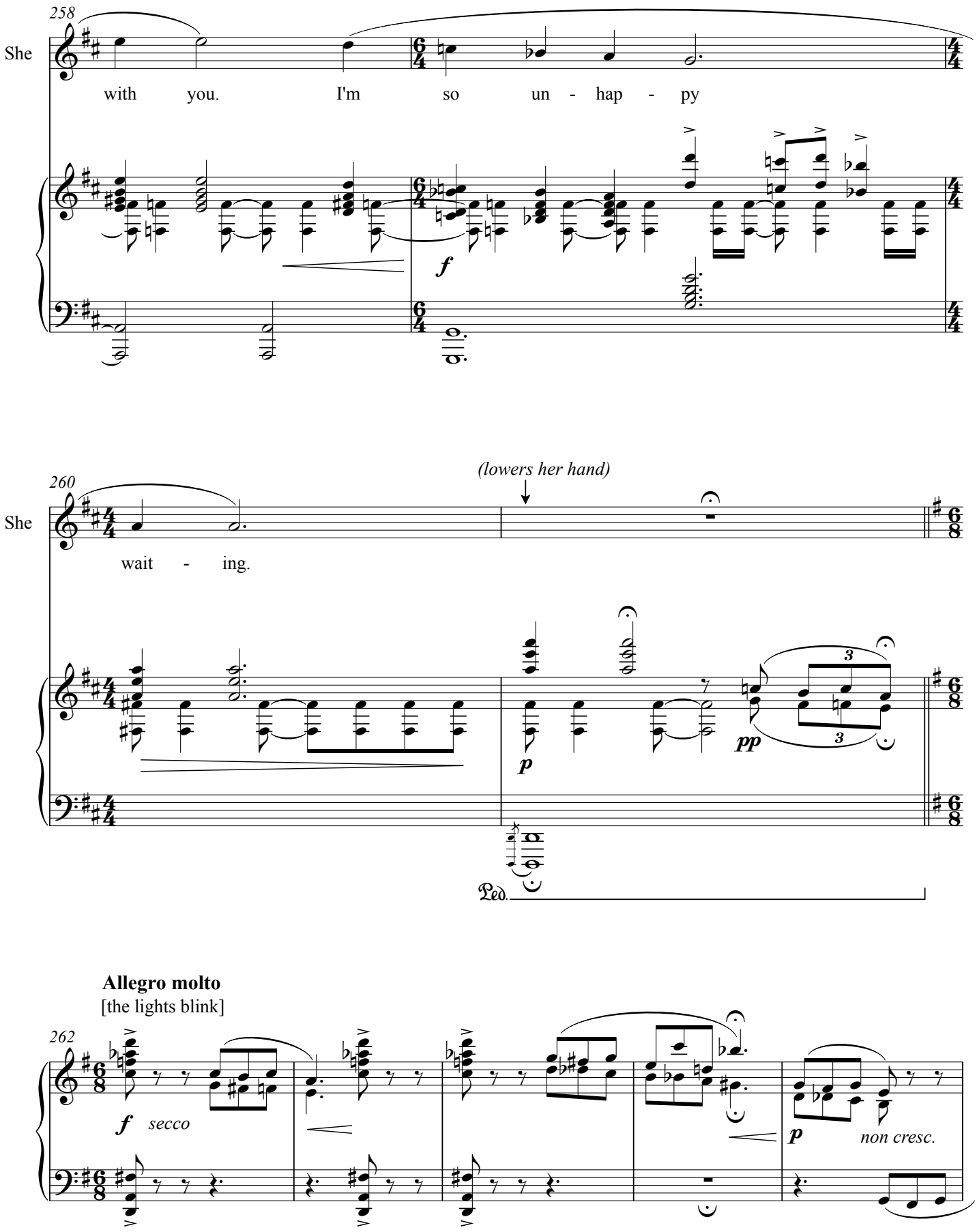

195
rall.
(spoken:)
She
Oh, don't. I'm not mes-sing it up. I am list' - ning. You don't lis- ten!
He
(spoken:)
on - ly got a few min - utes to go. How long do we have to go?
con forza
199
M
Two min- utes.
He
sotto voce
pp
We've
f
p
203
She
How can I lis - ten?
He
on - ly got two min- utes to go.

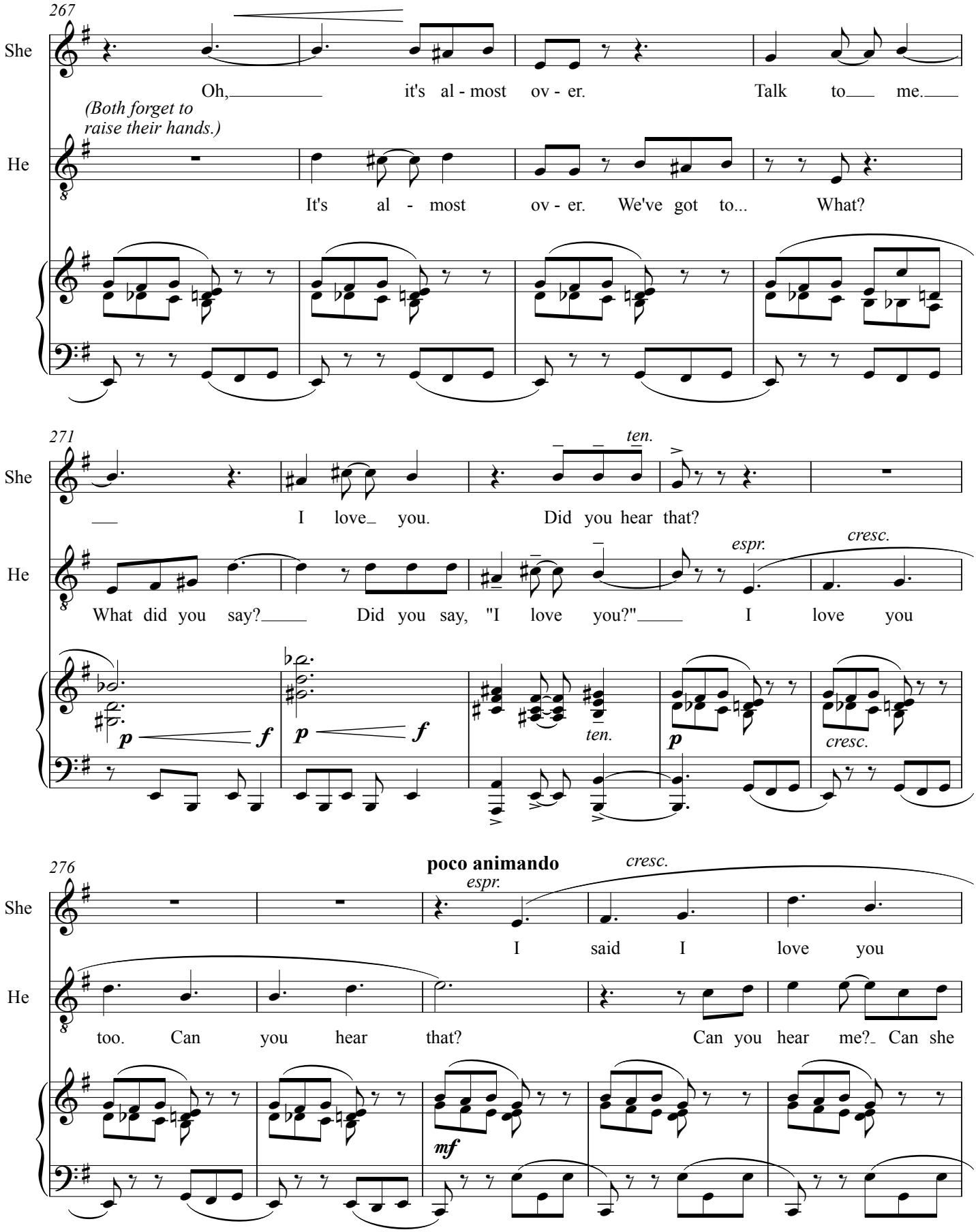

206
She
This is con - fus - ing me, and you're con - fus - ing me, and I can't
210
She
Oh, I've been so ex - cit - ed wait - ing to see you and to
sub. p
214
She
talk to you and you're so beau - ti - ful
riten.
a tempo
and all you can do is yell at me.
He
Beau - ti - ful,
dim.
p

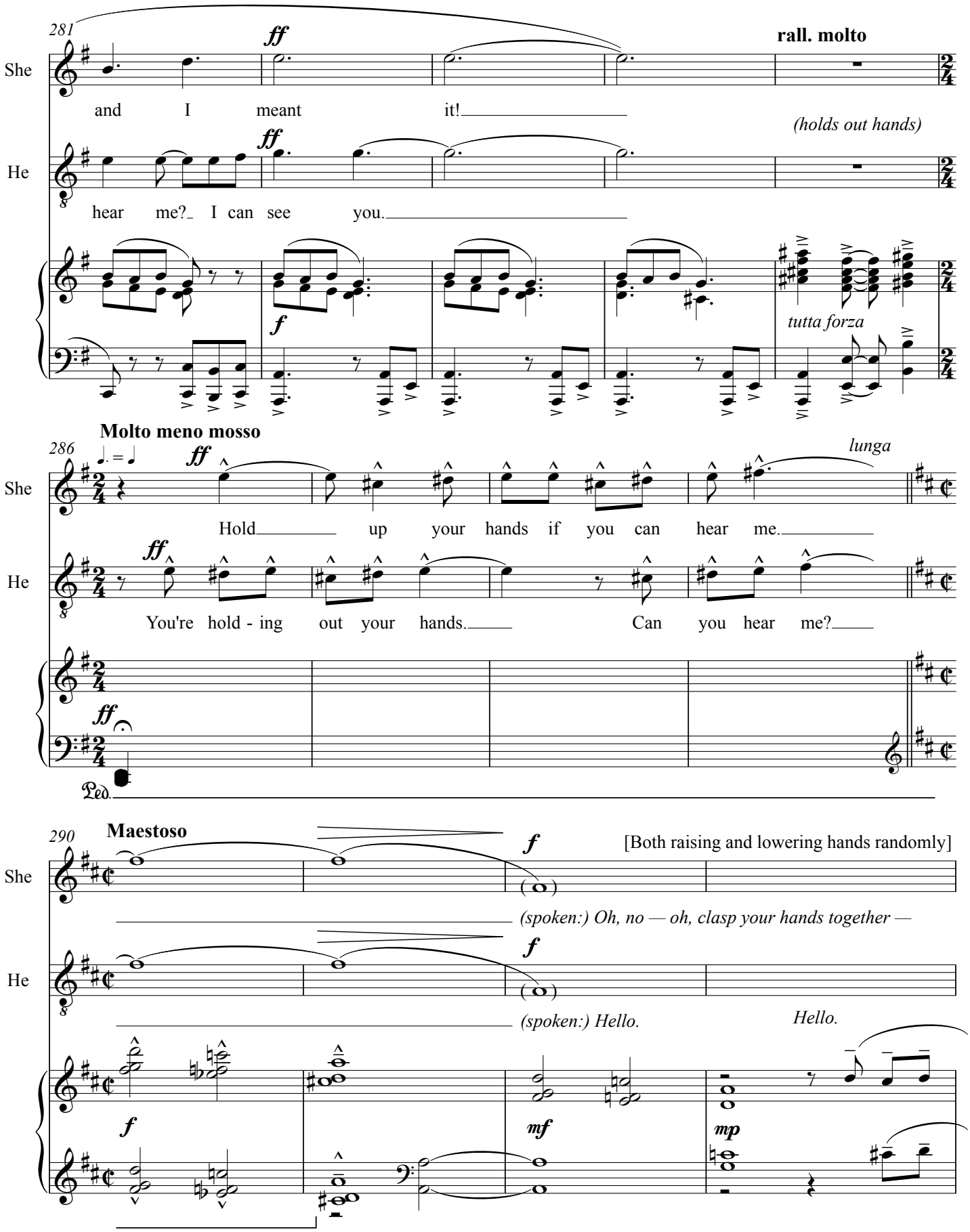

218
She
Well, if you don't like me,
He
me? No, no I'm sor - ry. You're beau-ti- ful, I'm sor- ry.
legatiss. sempre
221
She
it's not too late for you to change your mind.
He
It's just that I'm so ex-cit- ed. It's con-fus-ing me. Please, please lis - ten!
224
She
mp
(raises her hand)
Beau - ti- ful? Me? I
He
(raises his hand)
freely
(lowers his hand)
I just saw you see me raise my hand.
sf in p

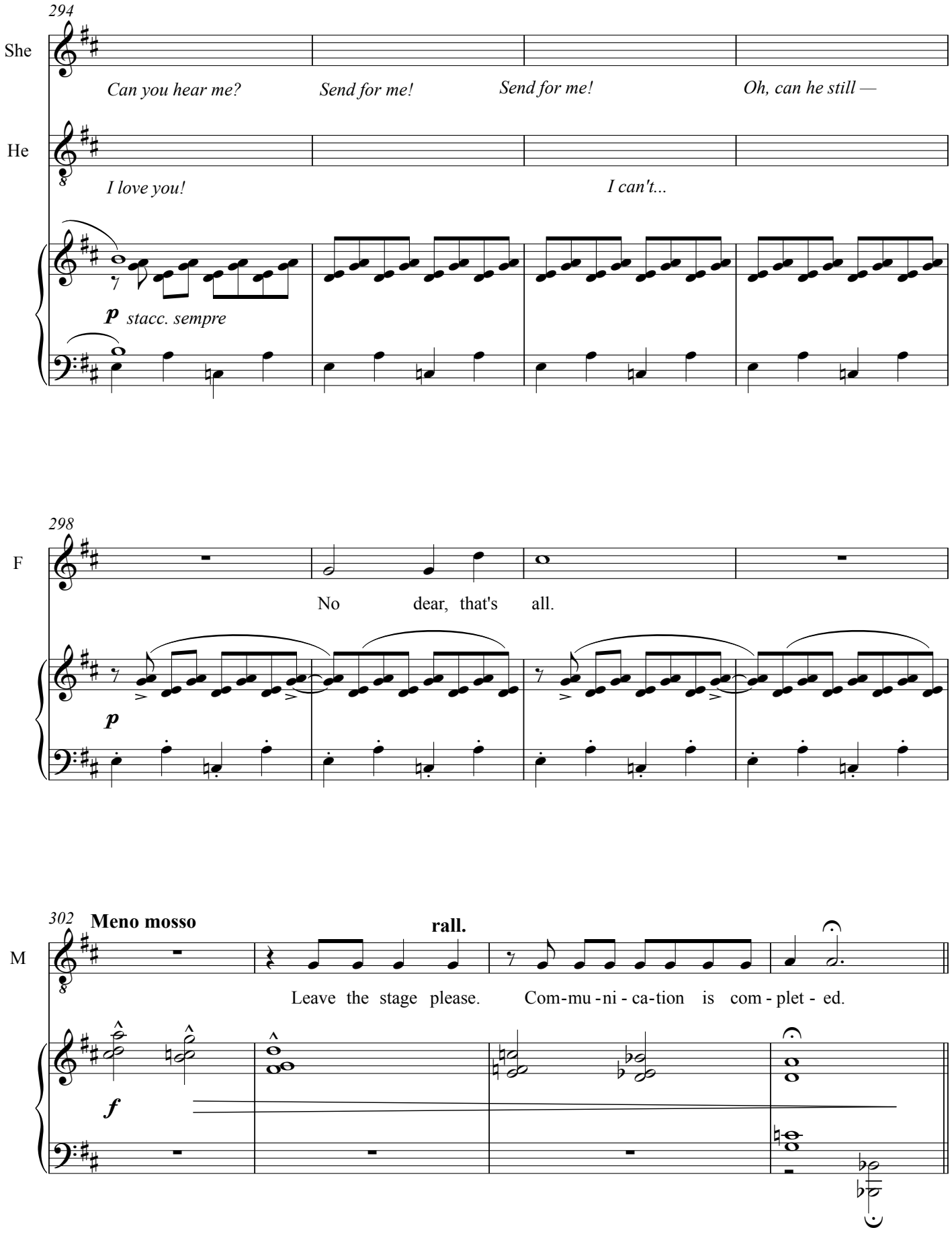

228
She
just heard you say you saw me see you raise your... Did you say I was
sub. p
sub. p
232
She
beau - ti- ful? I could-n't have been. I was cry - ing. I'm sor - ry.
(raises his hand)
236
He
Yes, you are. I'm sor - ry. I'm sor - ry I hurt you.
p
cresc. poco a poco
Ped.
sim.
241
He
You are too, beau - ti- ful. I want to... Did you hear me?

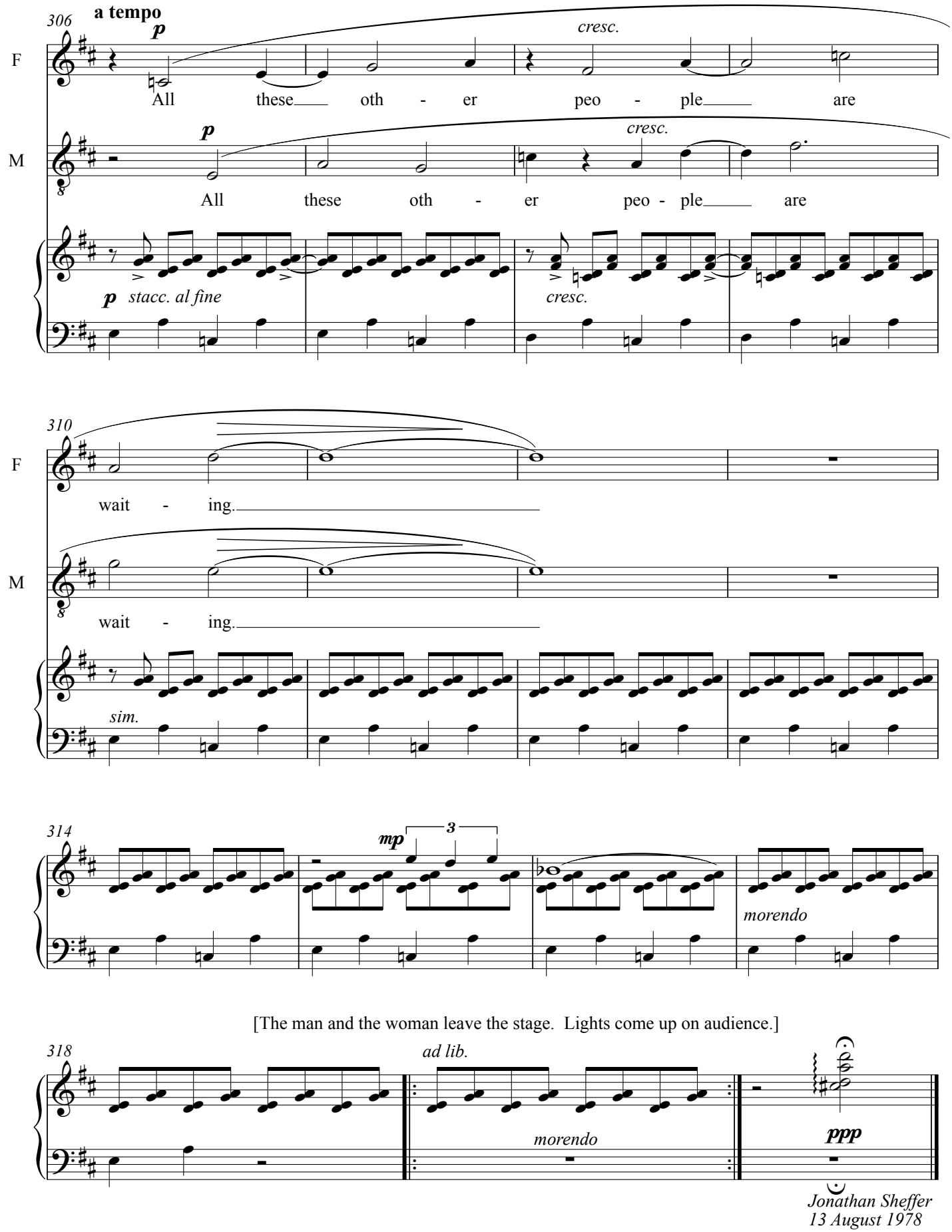

245
(raises her hand)
She
Yes, I heard you. I
(forgets to lower hand)
He
pp
Hur - ry
p
L.H
Ped.
250
(he lowers hand)
She
love you. I love him. I
3
3
3
cresc.
sim.
255
She
don't know what else to say. I want to see you and be
L.H
mf
R.H
L.H
Ped.


258
She
with you. I'm so un - hap - py
f
260
She
wait - ing.
(lowers her hand)
p
pp
Ped.
Allegro molto
[the lights blink]
262
f secco
p non cresc.


267
She
Oh, it's al - most ov - er. Talk to me.
(Both forget to raise their hands.)
He
It's al - most ov - er. We've got to... What?
271
She
I love you. Did you hear that?
ten.
He
What did you say? Did you say, "I love you?" I love you
espr.
cresc.
p f p f
ten.
p
cresc.
276
She
poco animando
espr.
cresc.
I said I love you
He
too. Can you hear that? Can you hear me? Can she
mf


281
She
He
ff
rall. molto
and I meant it!
hear me? I can see you.
(holds out hands)
f
tutta forza
Molto meno mosso
286
lunga
Hold up your hands if you can hear me.
You're hold - ing out your hands. Can you hear me?
Ped.
290
Maestoso
[Both raising and lowering hands randomly]
(spoken:) Oh, no — oh, clasp your hands together —
(spoken:) Hello.
Hello.
mf
mp


294
She
Can you hear me?
Send for me!
Send for me!
Oh, can he still —
He
I love you!
I can't...
p stacc. sempre
298
F
No dear, that's all.
p
302
Meno mosso
rall.
M
Leave the stage please.
Com-mu-ni-ca-tion is com-plet-ed.
f


306
a tempo
p
cresc.
F
All these oth - er peo - ple are
M
All these oth - er peo - ple are
p stacc. al fine
cresc.
310
wait - ing.
wait - ing.
sim.
314
mp
3
morendo
[The man and the woman leave the stage. Lights come up on audience.]
318
ad lib.
morendo
ppp
Jonathan Sheffer
13 August 1978