DELIVER US 6

Music: Mac Manus

FOR OTHER EYES 7

Words: Mac Manus/Cassidy/M.P. Thomas - Music: Mac Manus

SWINE 12

Words: Mac Manus/Cassidy - Music: Mac Manus

EXPERT RITES 20

Words & Music: Mac Manus

DEAD LETTER 24

Music: Cassidy

I ALMOST HAD A WEAKNESS 26

Words: Mac Manus - Music: M. Thomas/Mac Manus

WHY? 42

Words: Belton/Mac Manus - Music: Mac Manus

WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE? 44

Words: Mac Manus/M.P. Thomas - Music: M. Thomas

TAKING MY LIFE IN YOUR HANDS 53

Words: Mac Manus/J. Thomas/M.P. Thomas/Cassidy - Music: J. Thomas/MacManus

THIS OFFER IS UNREPEATABLE 59

Words: Mac Manus/Cassidy - Music: Brodsky Quartet/Mac Manus

DEAR SWEET FILTHY WORLD 71

Words: Mac Manus/Belton/M.P. Thomas - Music: Mac Manus

THE LETTER HOME 77

Words: Mac Manus/Cassidy - Music: Belton/Mac Manus

JACKSONS, MONK AND ROWE 83

Words: M. Thomas/J. Thomas/Mac Manus - Music: M. Thomas

THIS SAD BURLESQUE 90

Words: Mac Manus - Music: Cassidy

ROMEO'S SEANCE 95

Words: M.P. Thomas/Mac Manus - Music: M. Thomas/Mac Manus

I THOUGHT I'D WRITE TO JULIET 104

Words & Music: Mac Manus

LAST POST 114

Music: M. Thomas

THE FIRST TO LEAVE 116

Words & Music: Mac Manus

DAMNATION'S CELLAR 124

Words & Music: Mac Manus

THE BIRDS WILL STILL BE SINGING 135

Words & Music: Mac Manus

The Juliet Letters

So there was this professor in Verona who answered letters addressed to Juliet . . .

Well, if that sounds like the start of a tall story I suppose it is. My wife, Cait, pointed out the tiny newspaper item about a Veronese academic who had taken on the task of replying to letters addressed to "Juliet Capulet." This apparently continued for a number of years, until some gentlemen of the press exposed this secret correspondence. Quite how he came by these letters in the first place remains unclear. We can only make a guess as to their content. After all, these people were writing to an imaginary woman, and a dead imaginary woman at that. Perhaps they were simply scholarly enquiries, or letters of sympathy from others disappointed in love, or even a plea from somebody forced into an unhappy arranged marriage. Whatever was contained in these letters and their replies, the idea of this correspondence provided our initial inspiration.

I first saw the Brodsky Quartet play at the Queen Elizabeth Hall, London, in 1989. They were giving a series of concerts in which they were to perform all of the string quartets composed by Dimitri Shostakovich. Having arrived in town in time to attend the concert in which they played Quartets Nos. 7, 8 and 9, we returned on two subsequent evenings to hear them complete the cycle. I recall running out of a B.B.C. television studio where I had anxiously completed a programme presenting the album Spike in order to get to the last concert on time. Such was the impact of these performances. Not only did I come away with a clearer impression of the music, but also a strong sense of the love and dedication with which the Quartet played it. Over the next two years we went to see the Brodskys play some wonderful music: Haydn, Schubert, Beethoven and Bartok. Little did I suspect, but members of the Quartet had been to my London concerts during the same period. Somehow the connection was made we exchanged letters and recordings, and finally arranged to meet after their next London appearance. It was after that lunchtime concert in November 1991 that we began our collaboration.

At first we just talked and talked and . . . talked. This led to several informal musical sessions. We looked at the characteristics of the music that we loved and admired. The Quartet played pieces, I played songs, sometimes we listened to records. Naturally, some of the music introduced was unfamiliar, but this only added to the number of possibilities. Soon our own ideas began to emerge.

We wanted to explore the under-used combination of voice and string quartet, but were anxious to avoid that junkyard named "Cross-Over.n This is no more my stab at "classical music" than it is the Brodsky Quartet's first rock and roll album. It does, however, employ the music which we believe touches whichever part of the being that you care to mention. It also conforms to, and occasionally upsets, the structures found in our respective disciplines and indisciplinel

With The Juliet Letters as our title, we thought of the many types of character that the letter form would allow us. Somewhere there is a list of letters which we considered. Love letter, begging letter, chain letter, suicide note, etc. In order to make the work more personal we decided that each of us would contribute to the text, not forgetting the words written by Michael Thomas's wife, Marina. As the lyricist in the house, I could also act as a kind of editor. From these early drafts came a curious advantage. Of course, each of us had different approaches to the common subject, and through some unconscious poetry, and in the absence of much of the crafty language of the songwriter, we were able to assemble strong and varied texts. It seems that only poets and politicians write letters with a view to them being printed in collected form. In my experience the language of most letters swings wildly from the lyrical to the banal and from the courteous to the confessional, sometimes inside the same paragraph. I hope we've caught something of this in the words of The Juliet Letters.

The process of composition and arrangement was varied and is mysterious to contemplate. Some pieces arrived with both words and music complete. Bridges were then built between smaller related items, while at least one song and a crucial passage of music was effectively composed "spontaneously." While the job of compiling and creating the "draft arrangements" was shared among the members of the quartet, the process of arranging was often one of trial and error involving all five of us. This has continued throughout the rehearsals, the first two performances and even during this recording. Having previously been unable to read or write down music, my own recent studies have allowed me to progress, since January 1992, from picking out my ideas at the piano (using what is known in certain circles as "the crab method"), through piano scores to full proposed four-part arrangements. I have to give credit to the Quartet for their perseverance in deciphering some of my early intentions from the most wayward of playing. As I have found with other collaborations, the music that you most confidently attribute to one party invariably turns out to be the work of the person you least suspect.

The Juliet Letters begins with a short composition entitled "Deliver Us." It simply serves to open the story, for although the following letters are not intended to create a dialogue, you may choose to draw your own conclusions from some of the resulting juxtapositions.

One of the conventions which we have taken from classical song, or for that matter folk-song, is the acceptance of a man singing a woman's story. In "For Other Eyes" a woman confesses her jealous suspicions and fears.

The "letter" in "Swine" takes a more unusual form, being a piece of deranged, political graffiti carved on a wooden door.

For the next song, "Expert Rites," I have taken the liberty of imagining a reply made by a character similar to the Veronese professor who unwittingly provided our title. If he should ever hear this piece I hope he will not be offended by our presumption—in this version of the mystery the author of the letter is a compassionate and romantic soul. "Expert Rites" leads without pause into Paul Cassidy's "Dead Letter," which darkens the already melancholy mood into one of sadness and loss.

After a short introduction of my invention comes Michael Thomas's first song, "I Almost Had A Weakness," to which I added the tango passages. It is an eccentric aunt's curt reply to a begging letter.

The text of "Why?" was derived from Ian Belton's version of a child's note. I added the final repeated lines and the music.

Without dragging the listener through the mechanics of our working method, it should be stated that in naming the "main composer" we hope to indicate who was responsible for the initial music and defining structure of the collaborative pieces. Even if others have amended the melodic line or added further musical content, when such a credit is stated it is because we still regard it as "their" song. In the case of "Who Do You Think You Are?" this credit very much belongs to Michael Thomas. The song begins with a young man sitting down in a seaside cafe to write a postcard in which he details all his estranged lover's faults. The truth of the situation is gradually revealed.

In performance, "Taking My Life In Your Hands" concludes the first half of the sequence. The music was developed from a piece first outlined by Jacqueline Thomas. The letter portrays an obsessive and deluded person, writing letters never sent, expecting impossible replies.

The second part of The Juliet Letters opens with a rather extreme form of junk mail: "This Offer Is Unrepeatable."

The text of "Dear Sweet Filthy World" is a suicide note that turns from blase and bored with life to desperate, and is finally lost in a dream.
"The Letter Home" employs contrasting musical sections, predominantly from Ian Belton (I contributed the music for only the "Why must I apologise" section), as the story dissolves from the formal courtesies, through nostalgia and into bitterness.

"Jacksons, Monk and Rowe" is the name of a firm of solicitors which reoccurs as a motif among images of both childhood and adult disillusionment. The authorship of the two verses is divided between brother and sister, Michael and Jacqueline, while the music is Michael's.

The music of "This Sad Burlesque" is mostly the work of Paul Cassidy, although between us Michael and I proposed the related material in the bridge section. The events described in the letter should be familiar to those who lived in England in the spring of 1992.

The next letter is spelt out by a moving glass. "Romeo's Seance" tells of a strange young man's struggle to contact his ghostly lover. He even claims that she composed this song. In fact, the music is by Michael Thomas, although I think I should admit responsibility for the rather daft tune which Jacky plays during the central "flying furniture" section. In concert performance, Michael, Ian and Paul all play standing up, with Jacqueline seated on a small platform. This not only allows us to maintain eye contact, but also to change the grouping of the Quartet in order to heighten the focus on certain unconventional instrumental balances. Without the visual aspect we decided to minimise these changes of configuration in the studio. However, as Michael and Jacky create most of the rhythmic and percussive interest in "Romeo's Seance," Michael took up his "concert position" between the voice and cello. Do not, as they say, adjust your set.

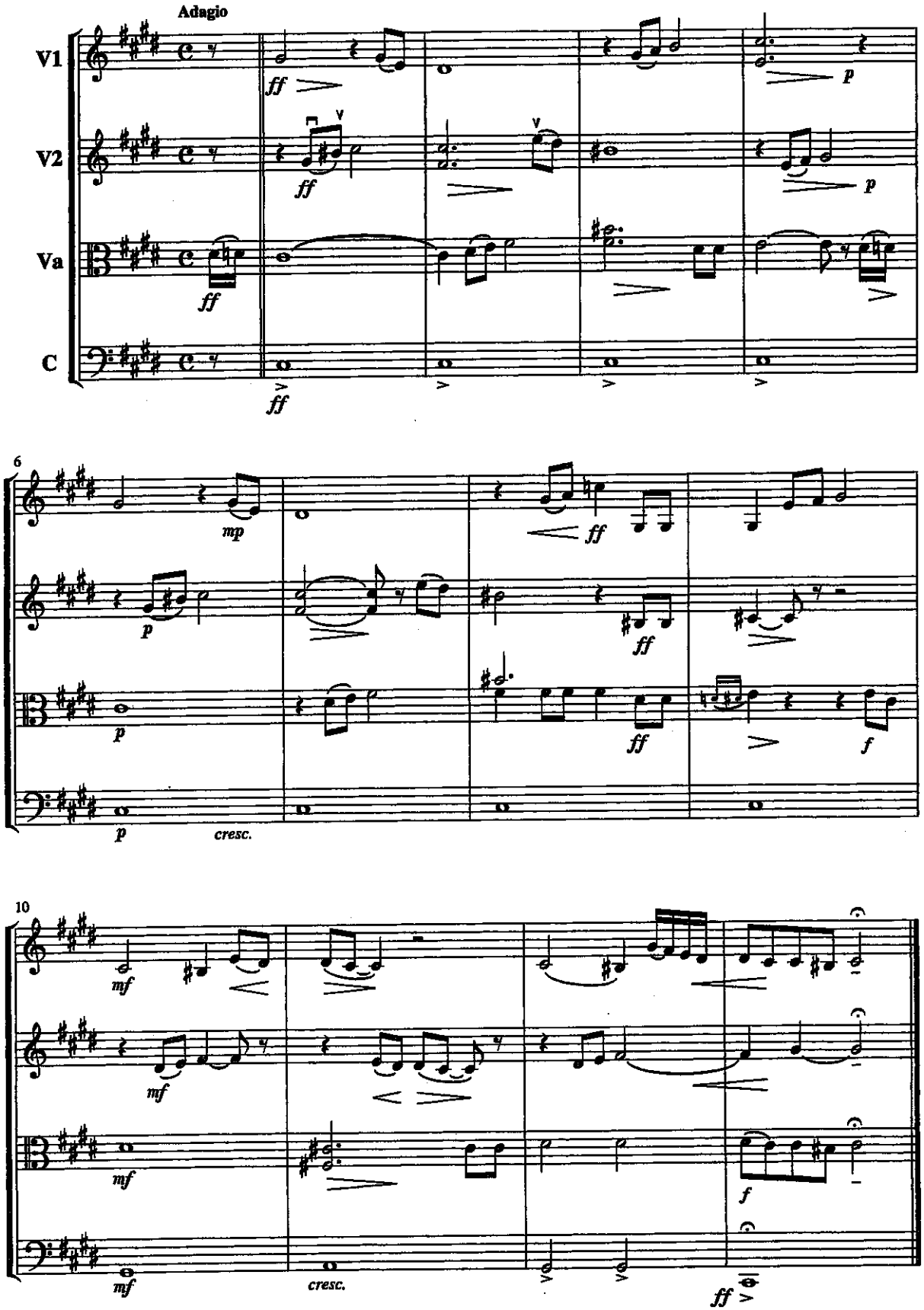
In "I Thought I'd Write To Juliet" a cynical writer quotes the contents of a letter that he has received. This "soldier's letter" is closely related to one sent to me during the build-up to the Gulf War tragedy. I would not like to comment further, except to say that it is not included as a simplistic political gesture, either "For" or "against" anything, but rather to illustrate the predicament of the two characters in being forced to reconsider their assumed positions. From the concluding mayhem a single note emerges leading into Michael Thomas's "Last Post." Despite its title this piece does not have any military significance. It seems to me to have a clear sense of peace, though not without strong feeling. It also serves as a preface to the trio of songs at the conclusion of the sequence as it runs without a break into "The First To Leave." In this song, a man who believes in the afterlife leaves a letter for his atheist lover, which, we must assume, she is reading after his demise. "Damnation's Cellar" gives a glimpse of a fantastic kind of immortality. The final letter is also delivered from a place beyond death, although the intention is not at all morbid. So it is a song of condolence and renewal, "The Birds Will Still Be Singing," which brings The Juliet Letters to, what I believe is, a hopeful conclusion.

The Juliet Letters was performed for the first time in public at The Amadeus Centre, London, on 1st, July 1992, and again at The Great Hall, Dartington, on 13th, August 1992. This recording was made and balanced at Church Studios, Crouch Hill, North London, between 14th, September and 1st, October 1992. It was recorded, as we say in the popular music parlance, "live in the studio."

Here follows a brief technical note. Our "Tonmeister" Kevin Killen, who engineered and balanced the disc, assures us that there was no equalisation of the signal coming from the studio. There are no overdubbed or additional parts. In order to preserve the clarity of the Quartet's tone, the vocals were recorded simultaneously, but behind isolation screens. Therefore, the only artificial reverberation that you hear is that added to the voice in order to match the natural reverberation of Studio B. Although this was a multi-track recording, employing a combination of close, distant and wide microphone positions, the very minimum of adjustments were made to the internal balance of the Quartet in order to preserve the integrity of the performances. The decision to make an analog recording was an aesthetic one, founded on my firm conviction that for everything that digital recording gains in noise reduction and supposed clarity, there are unacceptable losses of warmth and depth. For the same reasons, the record was mixed to half-inch analog tape. All other applicable methods of noise reduction were employed. We trust that the results justify these decisions.

Elvis Costello
October 21, 1992

Deliver Us



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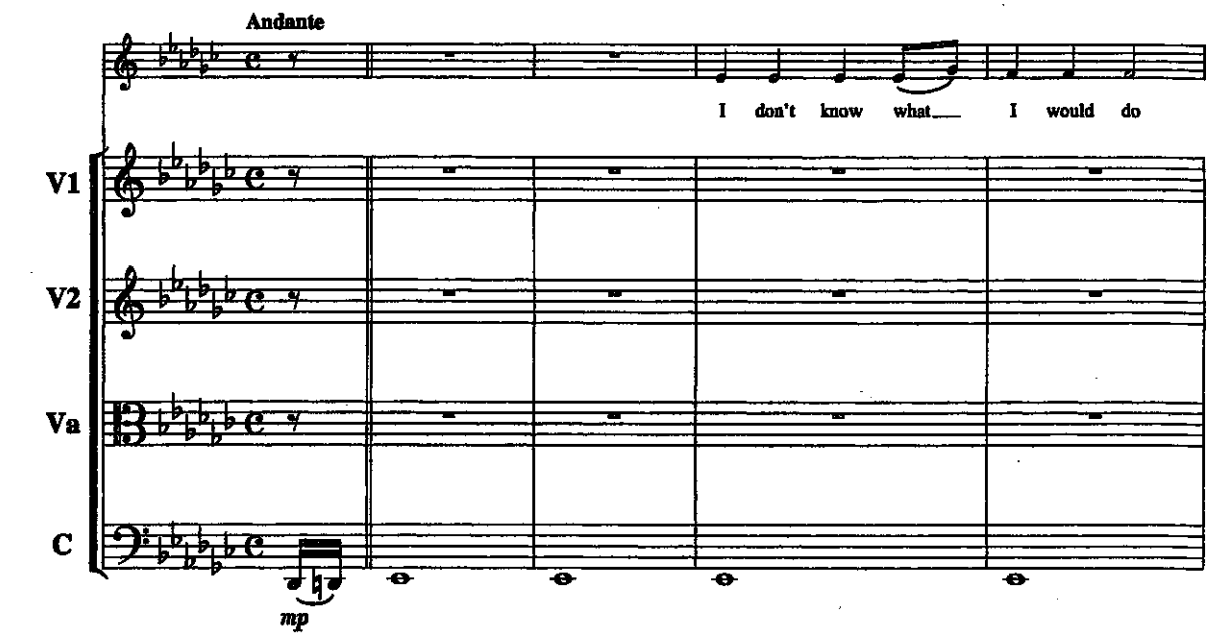

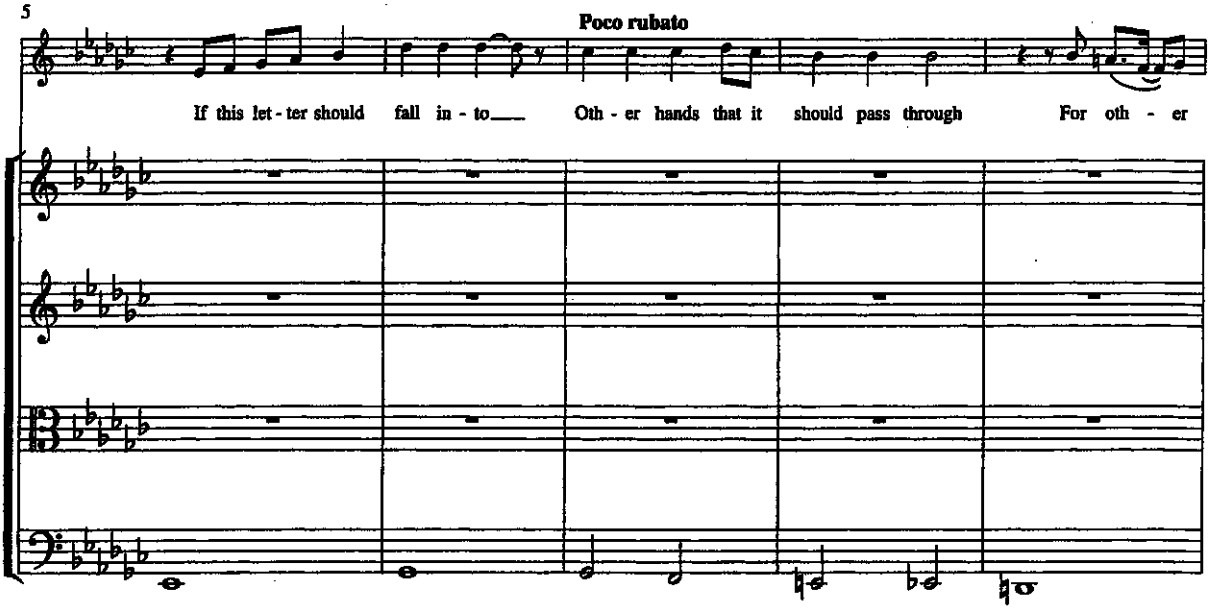

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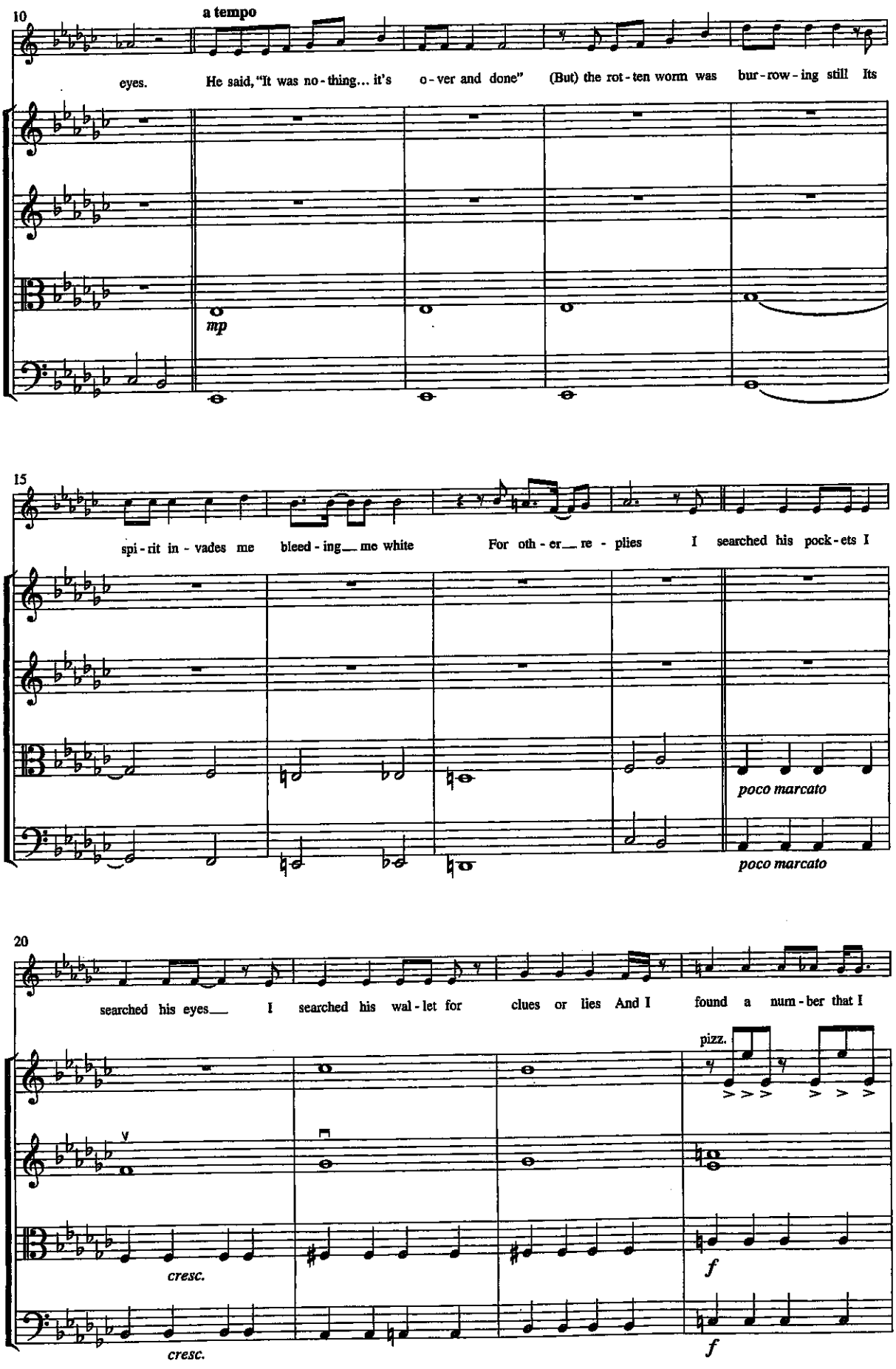
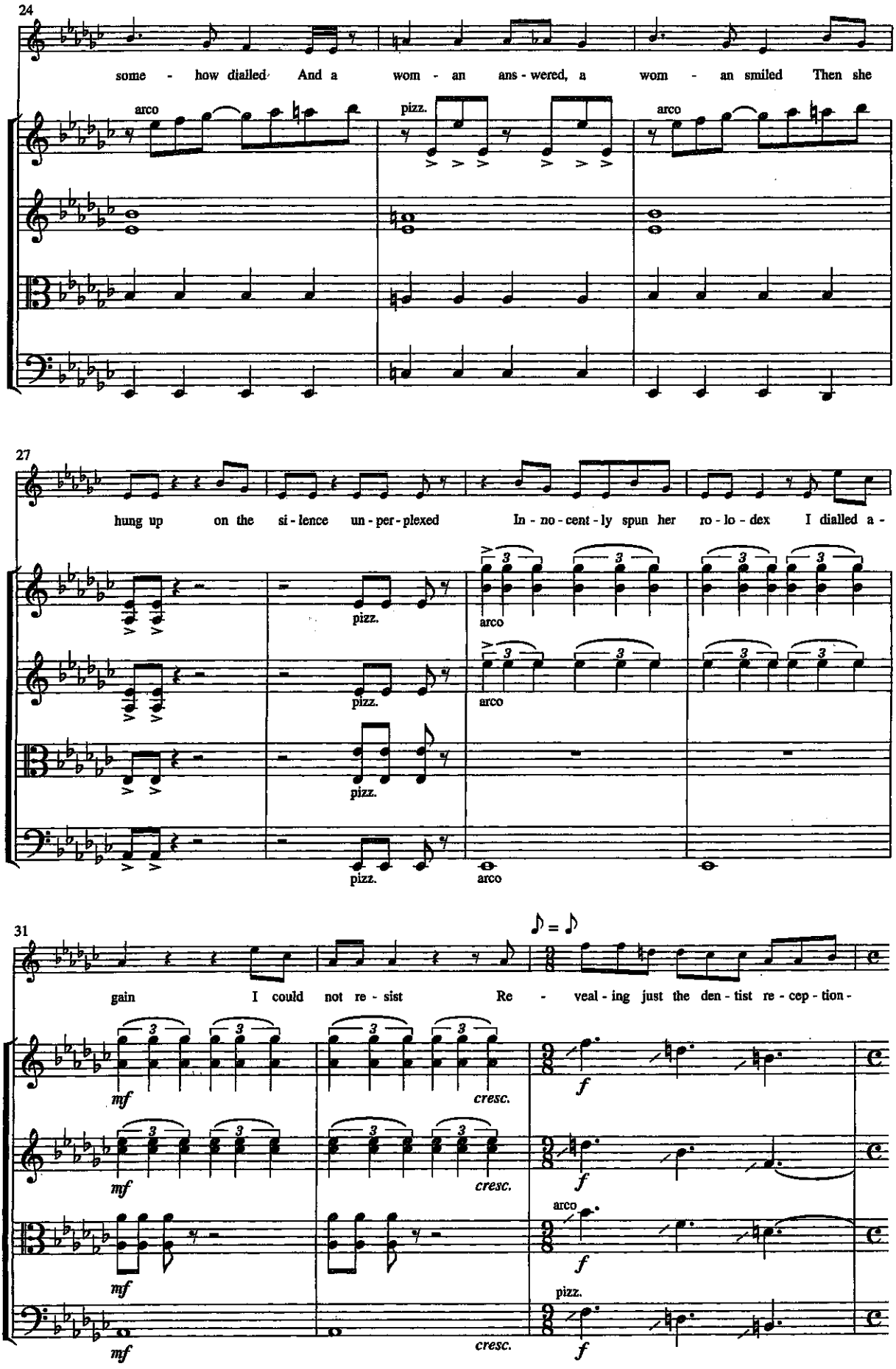
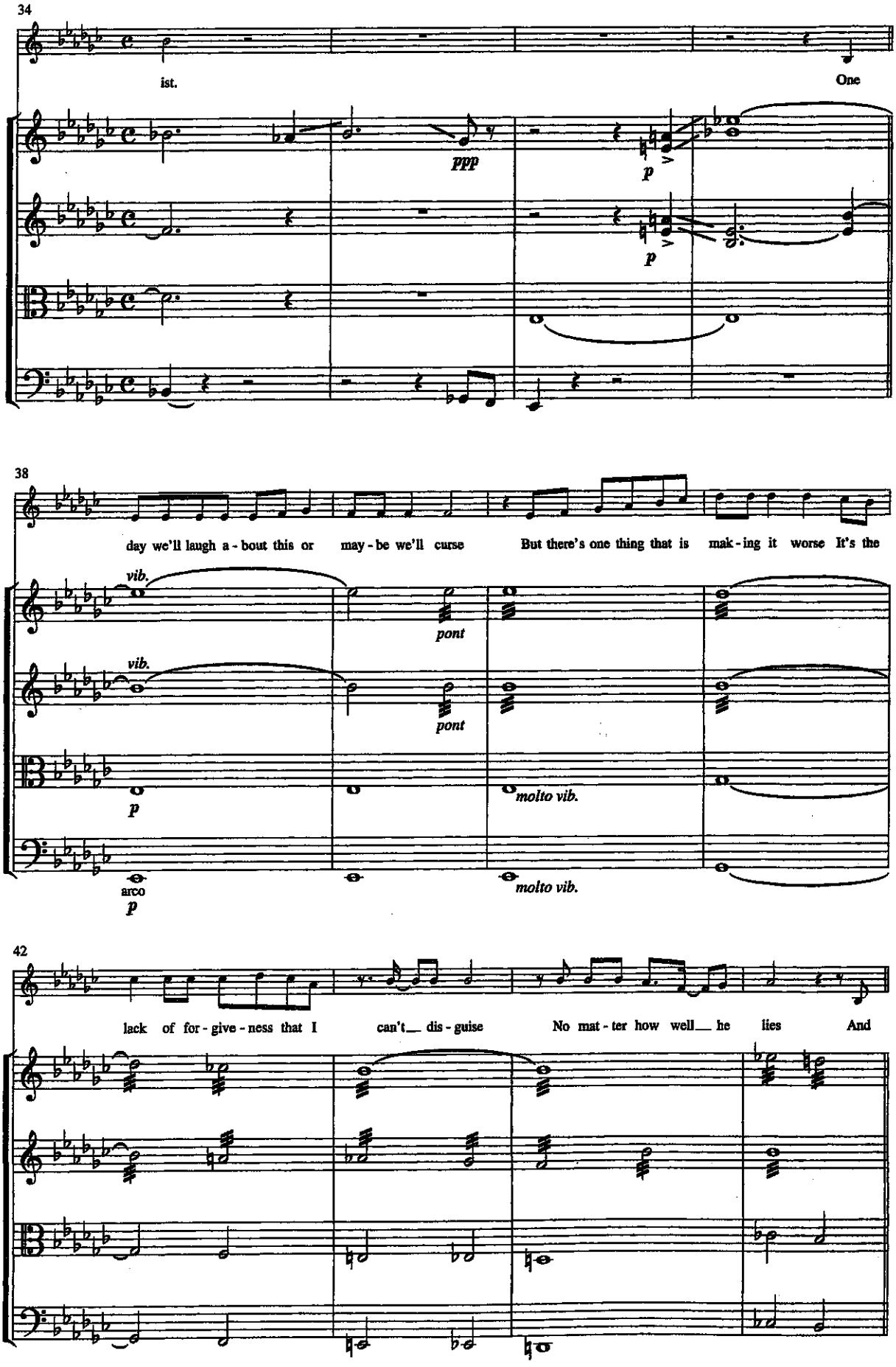
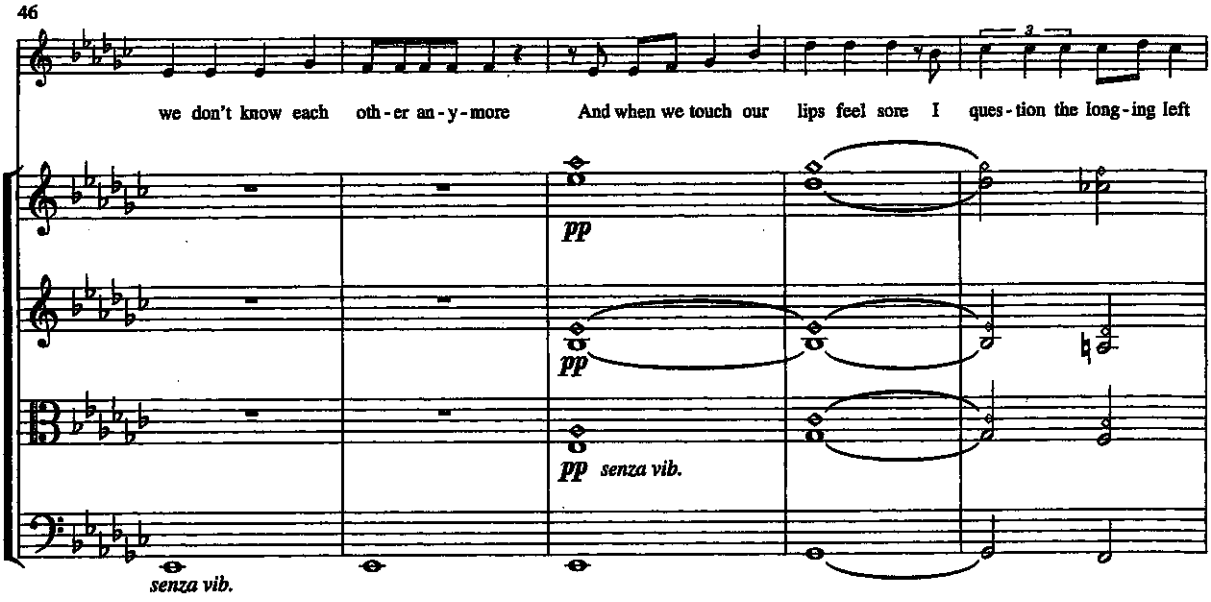
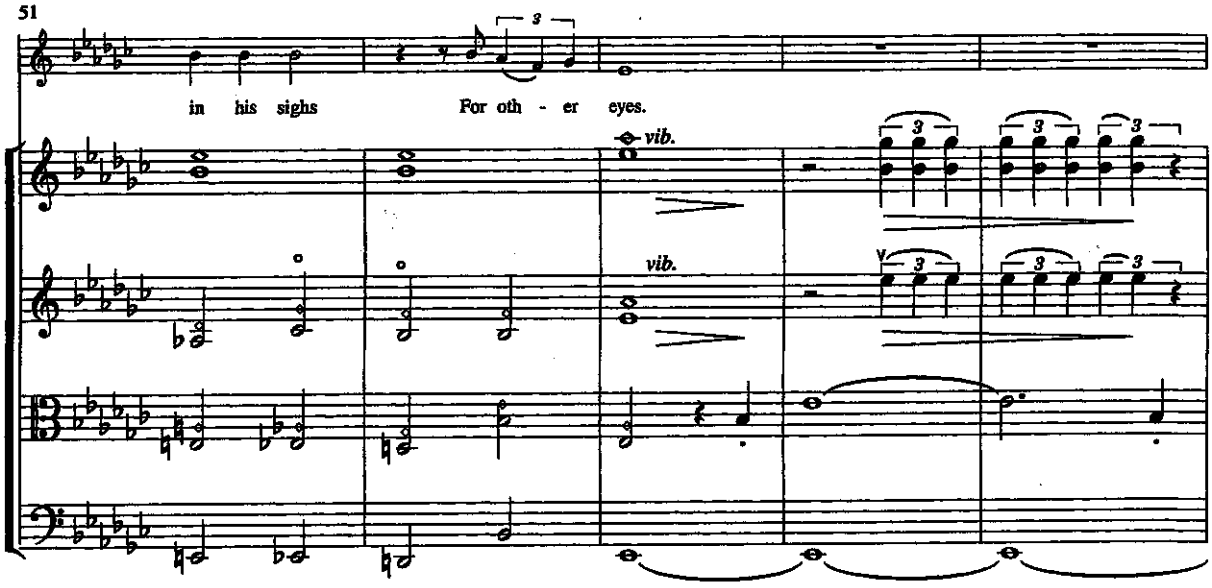
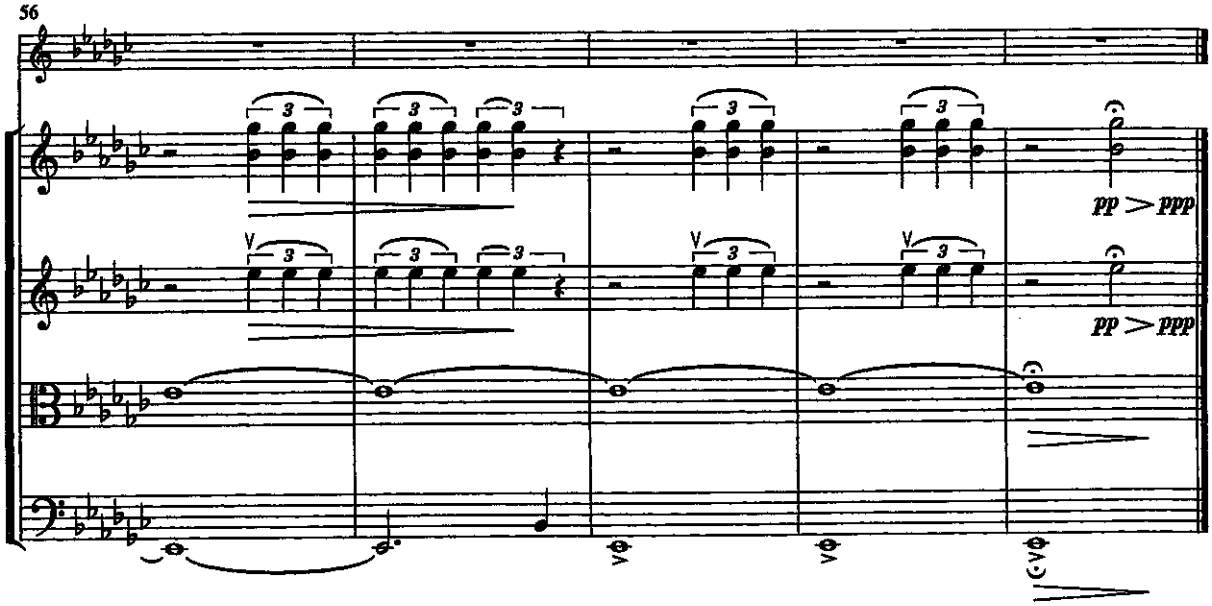

10
a tempo
eyes. He said, "It was no - thing... it's o - ver and done" (But) the rot - ten worm was bur - row - ing still! Its
mp
15
spi - rit in - vades me bleed - ing me white For oth - er re - plies I searched his pock - ets I
poco marcato
poco marcato
20
searched his eyes I searched his wal - let for clues or lies And I found a num - ber that I
pizz.
cresc.
cresc.
f
f


24
some - how dialled And a wom - an ans - wered, a wom - an smiled Then she
arco
pizz.
arco
27
hung up on the si - lence un - per - plexed In - no - cent - ly spun her ro - lo - dex I dialled a -
pizz.
arco
31
♪ = ♪
gain I could not re - sist Re - veal - ing just the den - tist re - cep - tion -
mf
cresc.
f
arco
pizz.

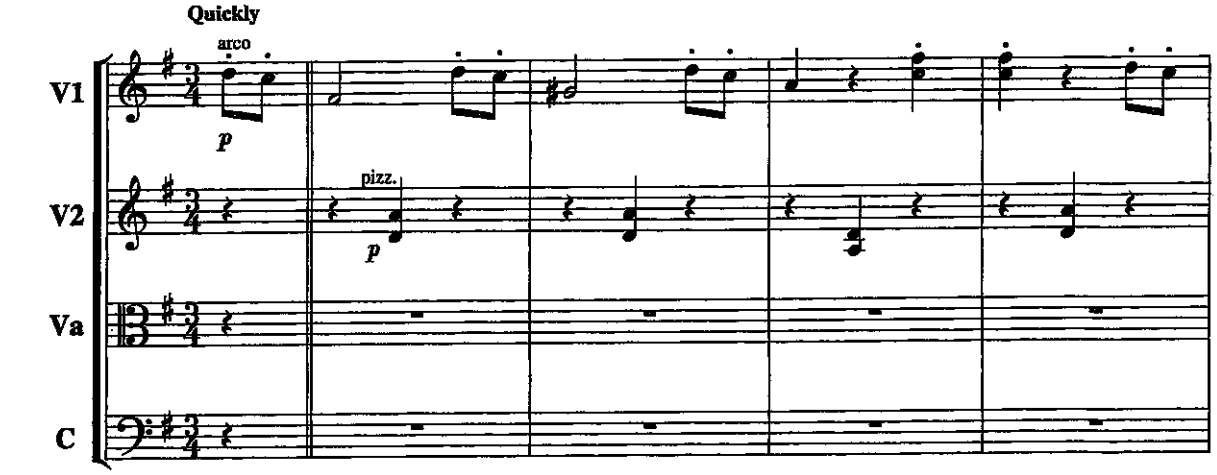

34
ist.
One
ppp
p
p
38
day we'll laugh a - bout this or may - be we'll curse But there's one thing that is mak - ing it worse It's the
vib.
pont
vib.
pont
p
molto vib.
arco
p
molto vib.
42
lack of for - give - ness that I can't dis - guise No mat - ter how well he lies And

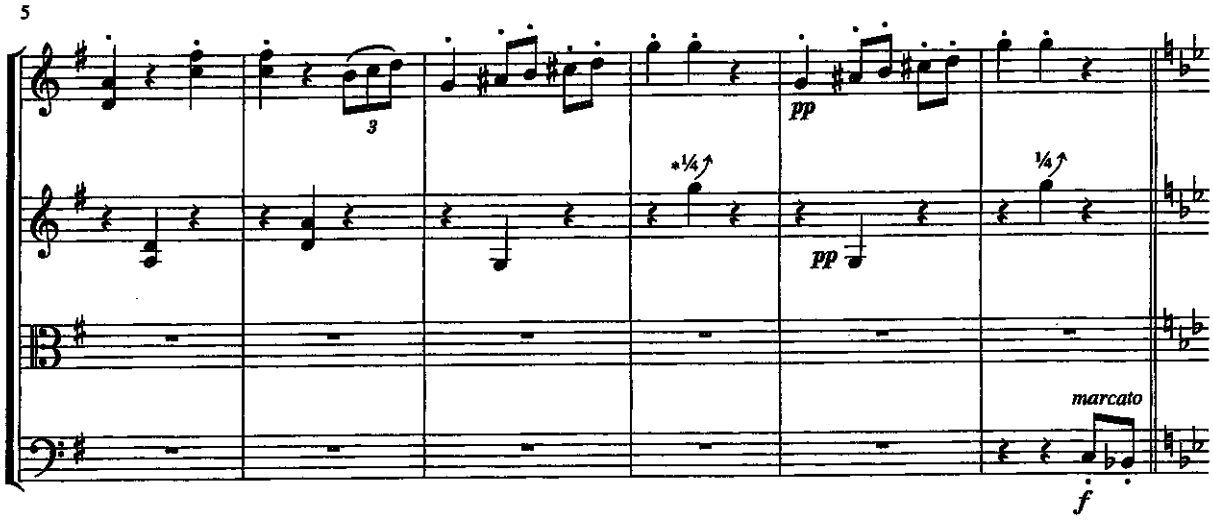

46
we don't know each oth - er an - y - more
And when we touch our lips feel sore I ques - tion the long - ing left
pp
pp
pp senza vib.
senza vib.

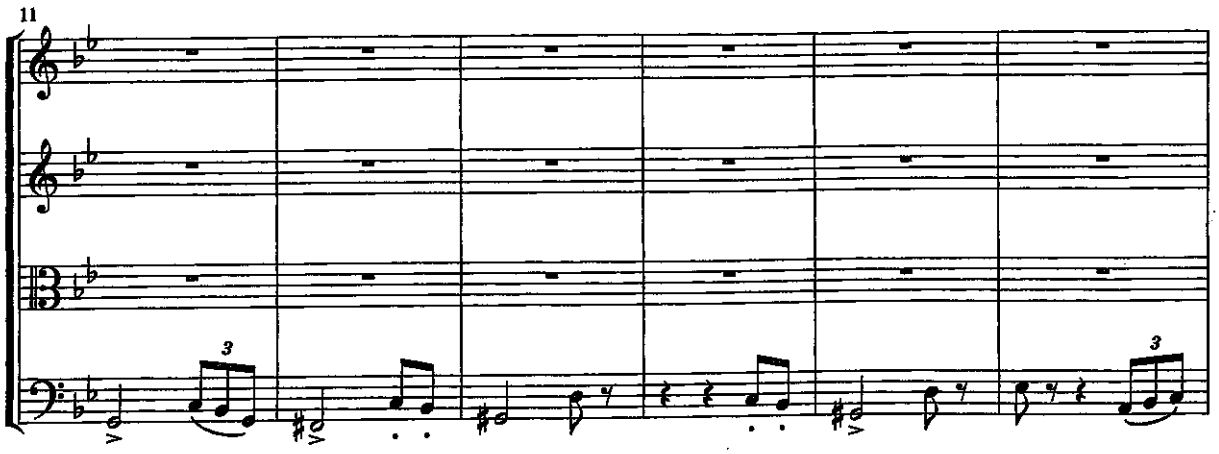

51
in his sighs
For oth - er eyes.
vib.
vib.


56
pp > ppp
pp > ppp

Swine







* Bend note from G up a quarter tone

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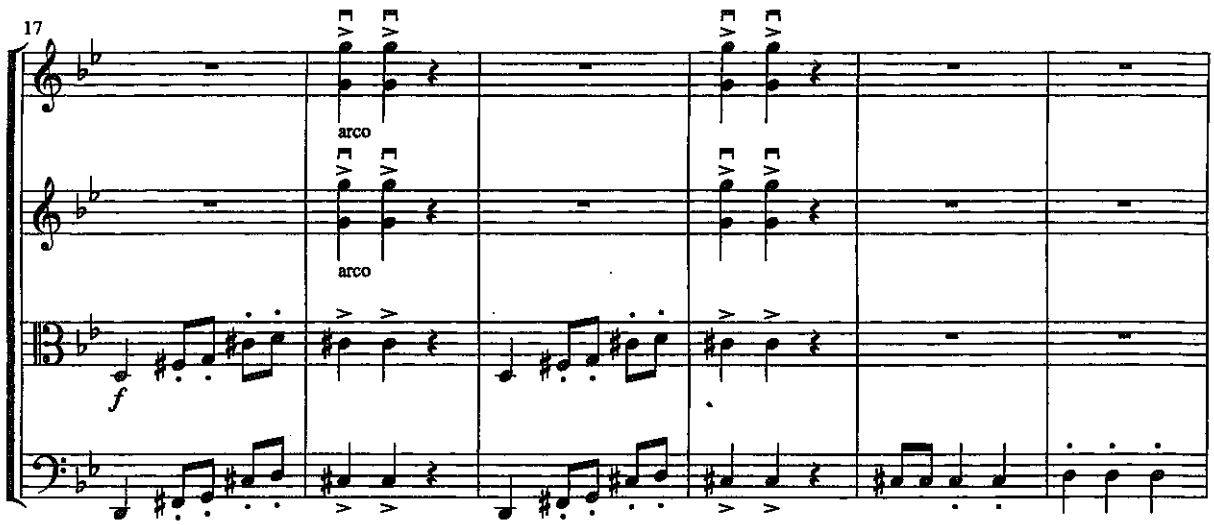
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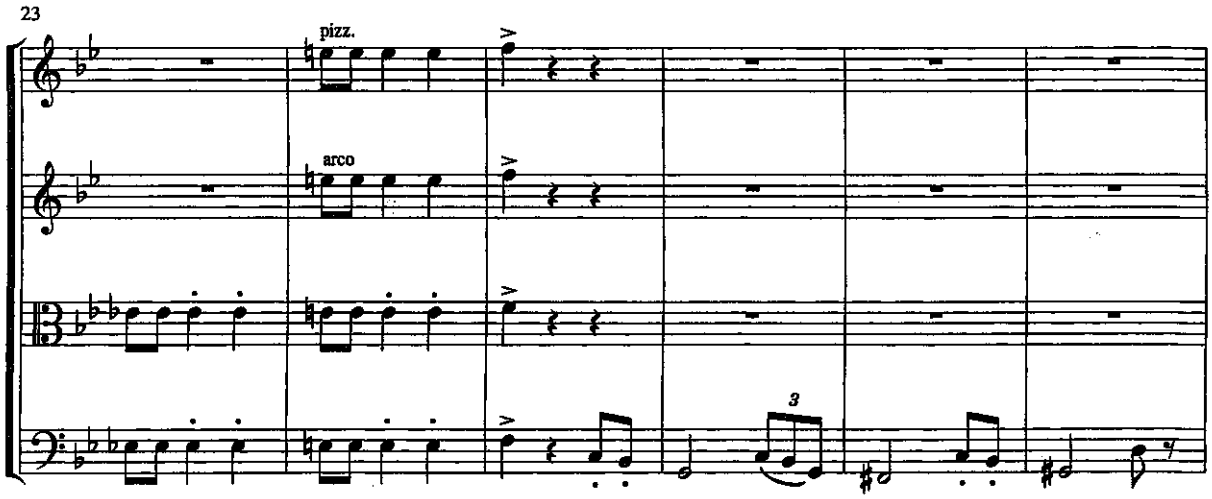
arco
arco
f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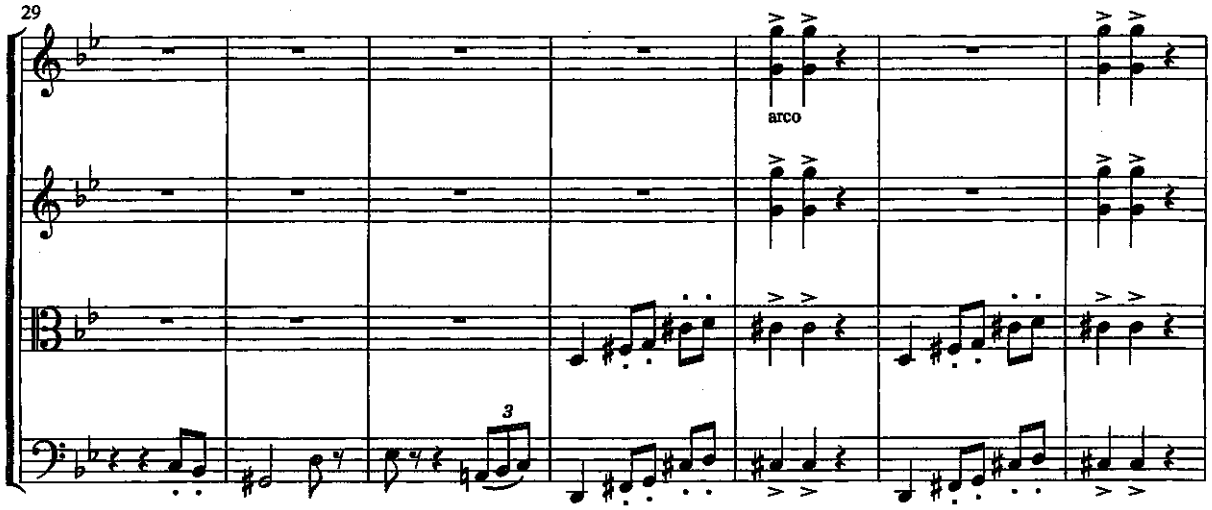
pizz.
arco
3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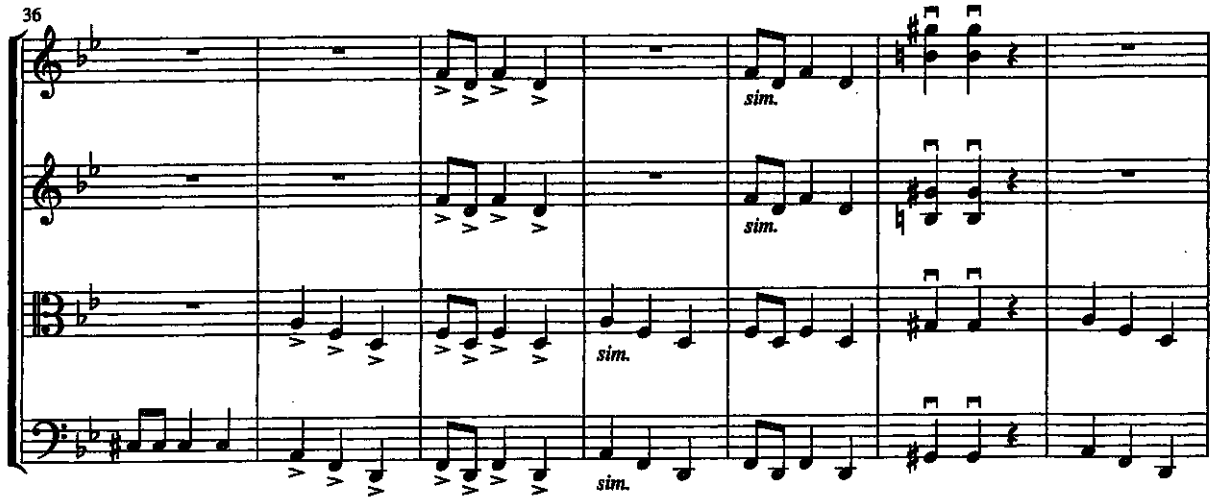
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sim.
sim.
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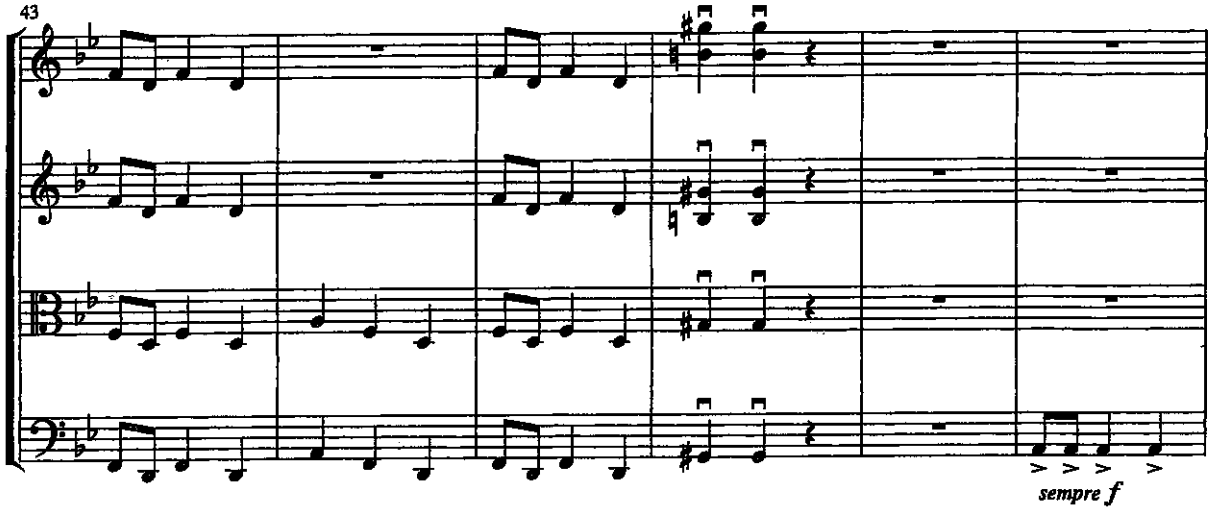
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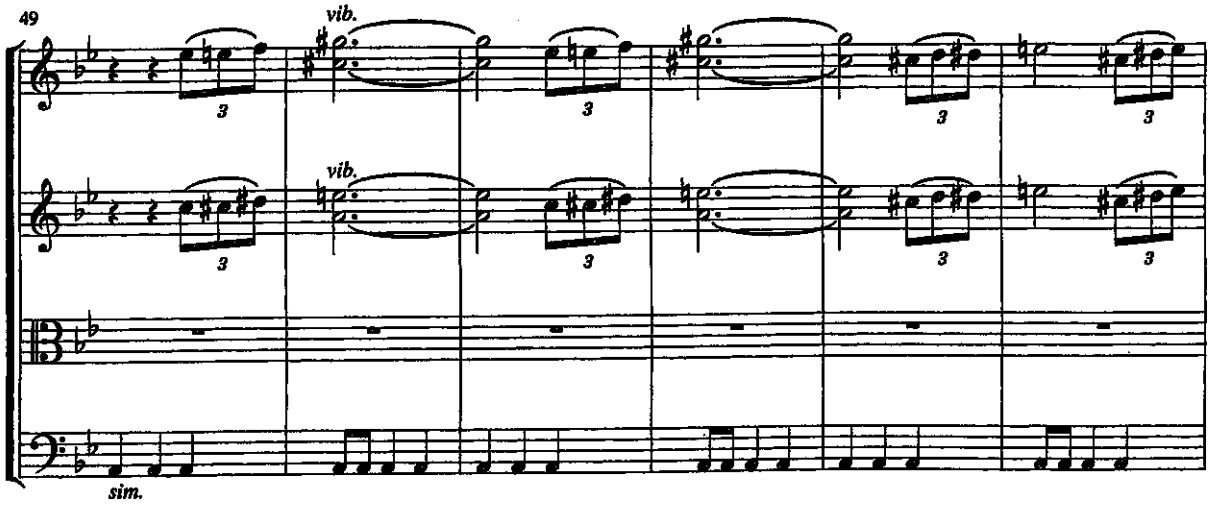
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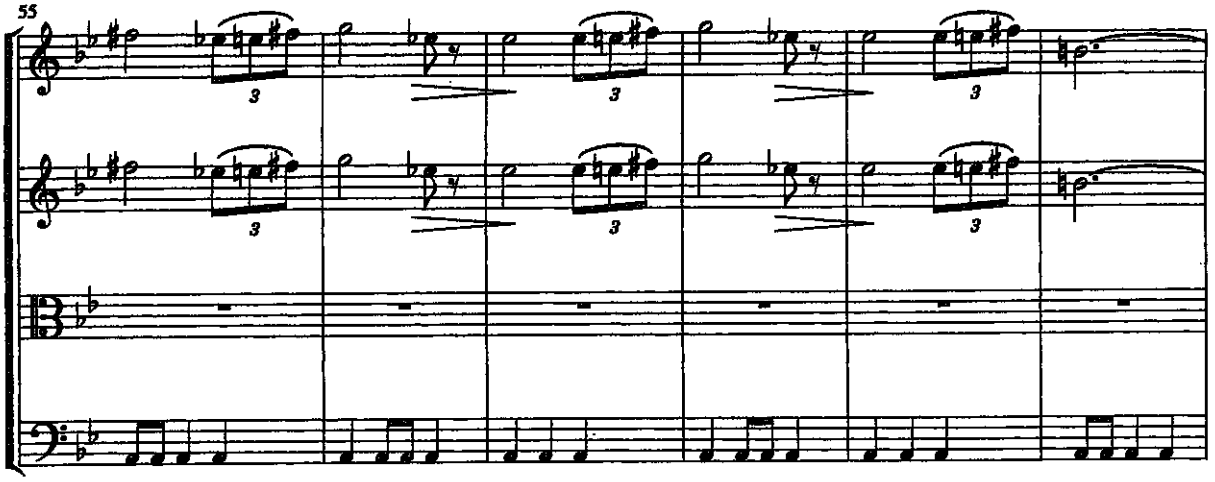
vib.
vib.
3
sim.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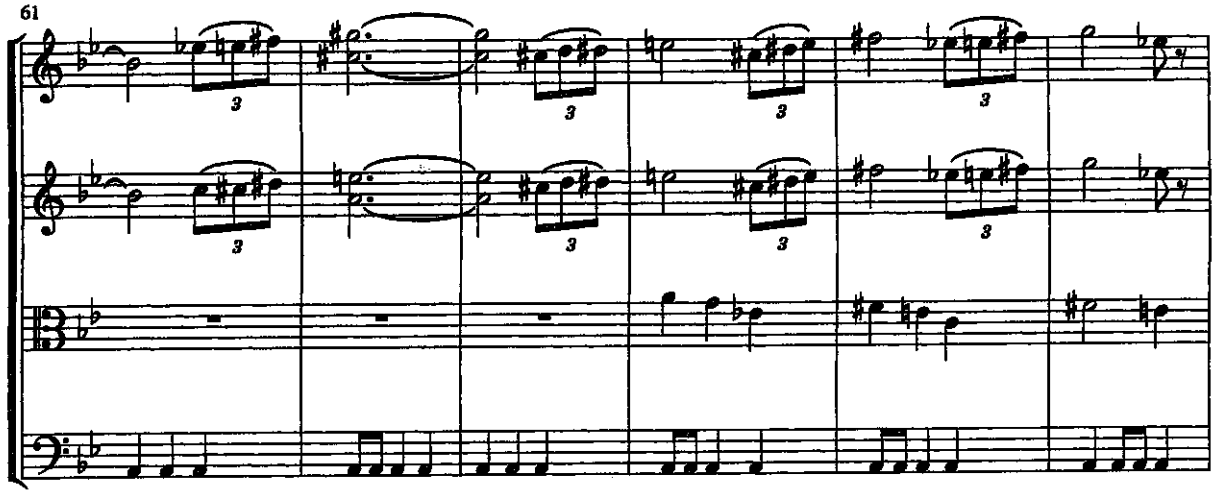
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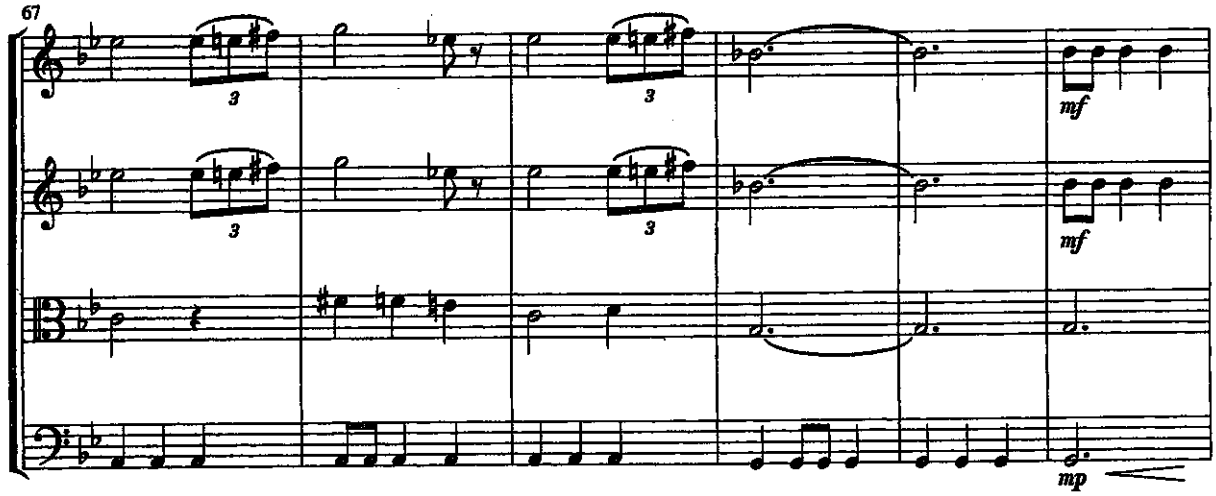
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3
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mf
mf
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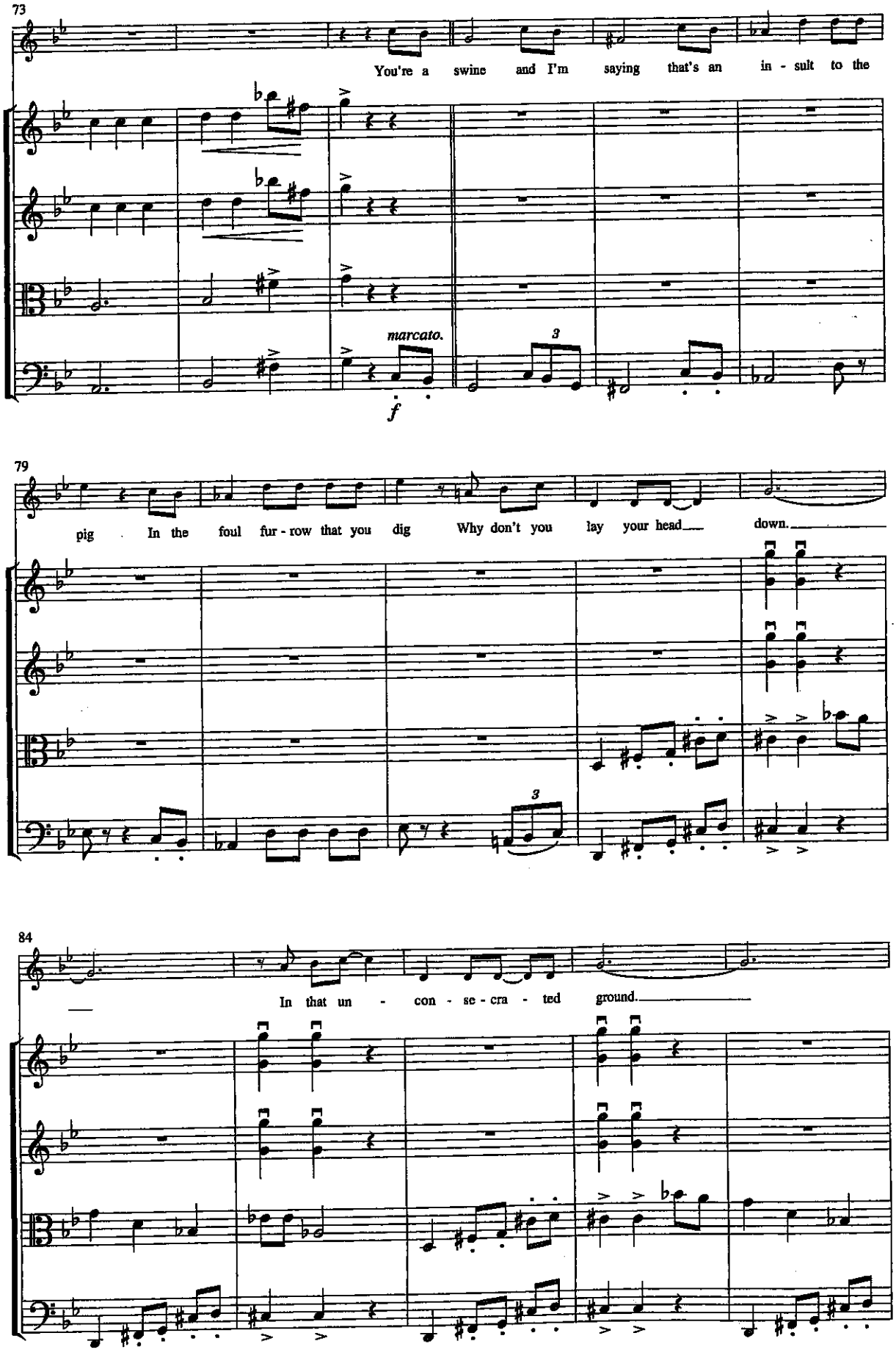
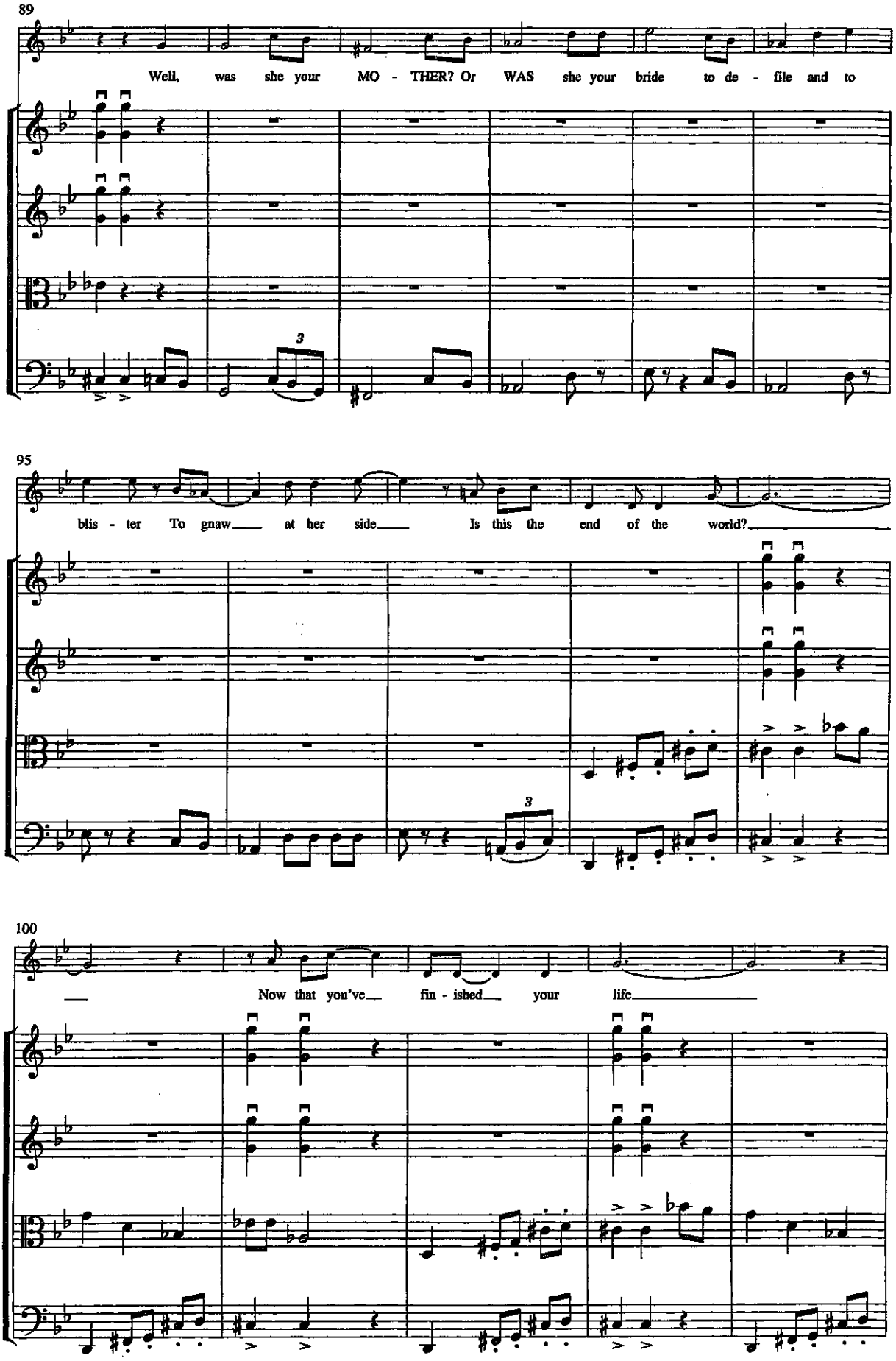
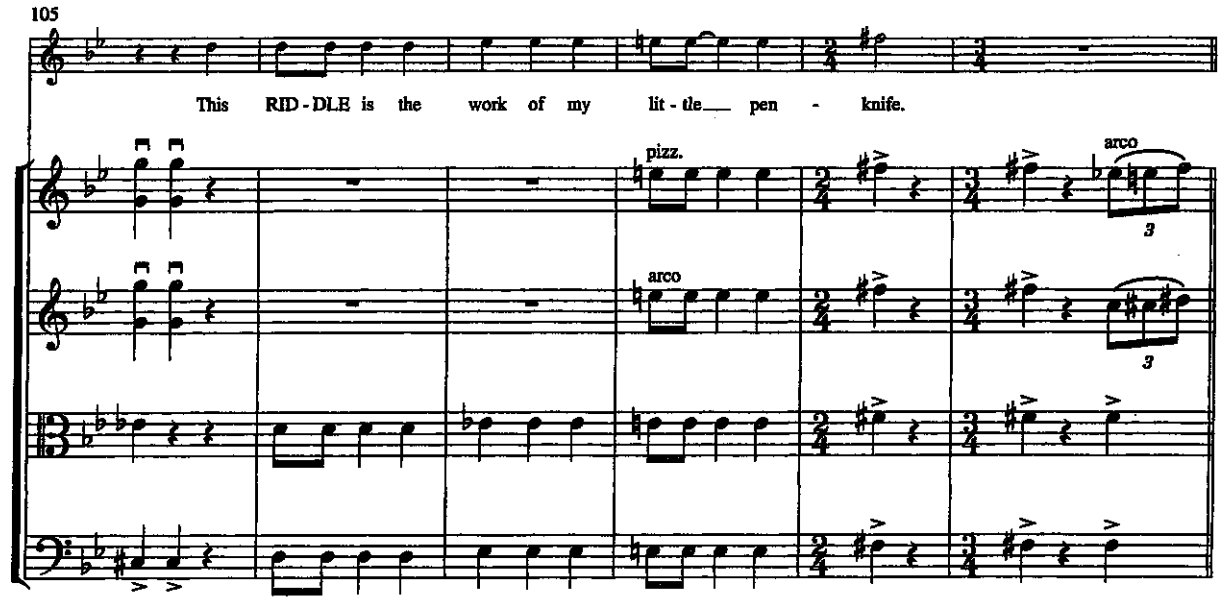

73
You're a swine and I'm saying that's an in - sult to the
marcato.
f
79
pig In the foul fur - row that you dig Why don't you lay your head down.
84
In that un - con - se - cra - ted ground.


89
Well, was she your MO - THER? Or WAS she your bride to de - file and to
95
blis - ter To gnaw at her side Is this the end of the world?
100
Now that you've fin - ished your life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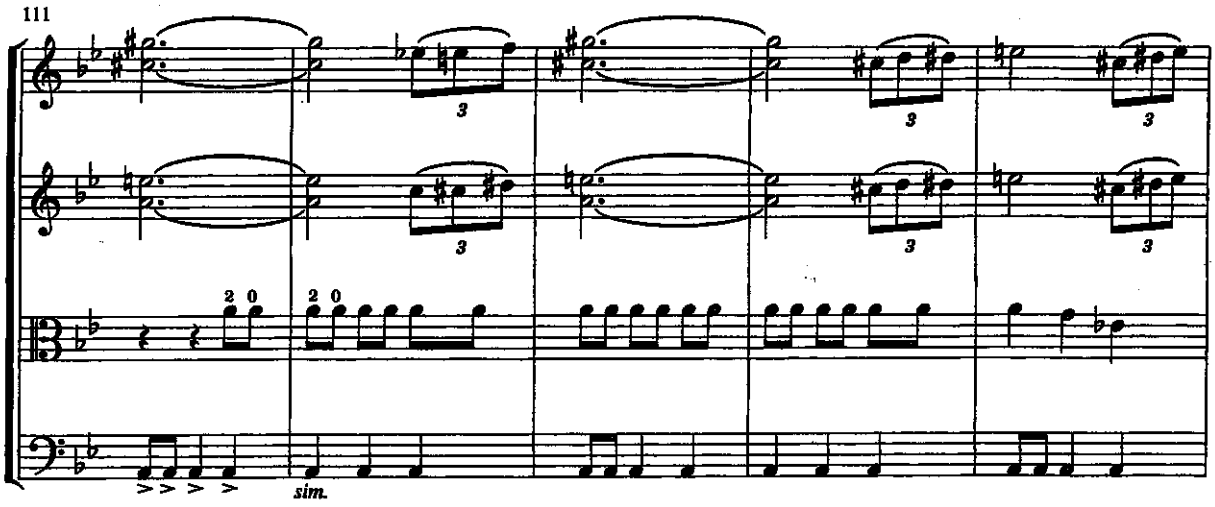
This RID - DLE is the work of my lit - tle pen - knife.
pizz.
arco
arco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2 0
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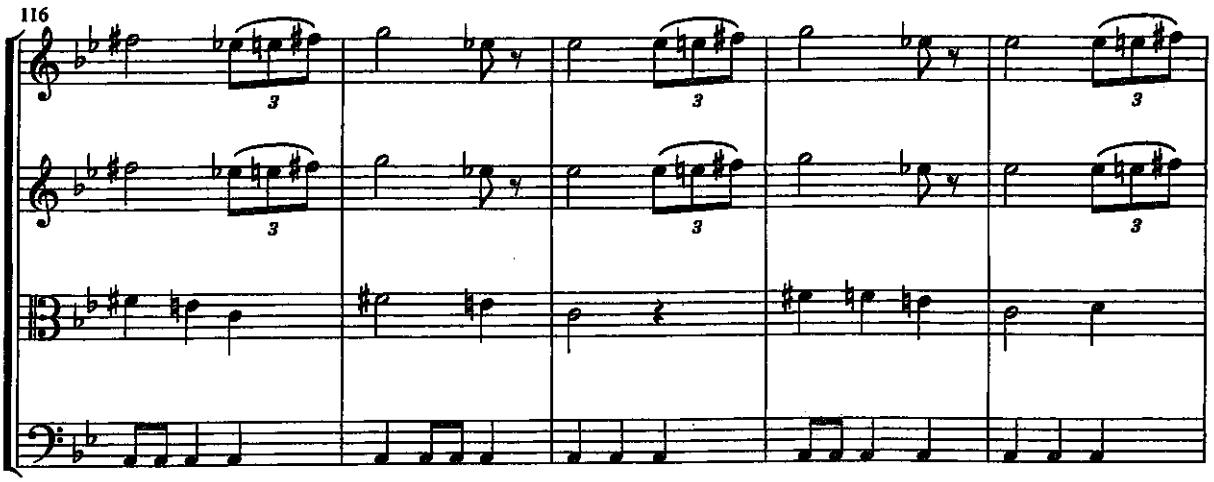
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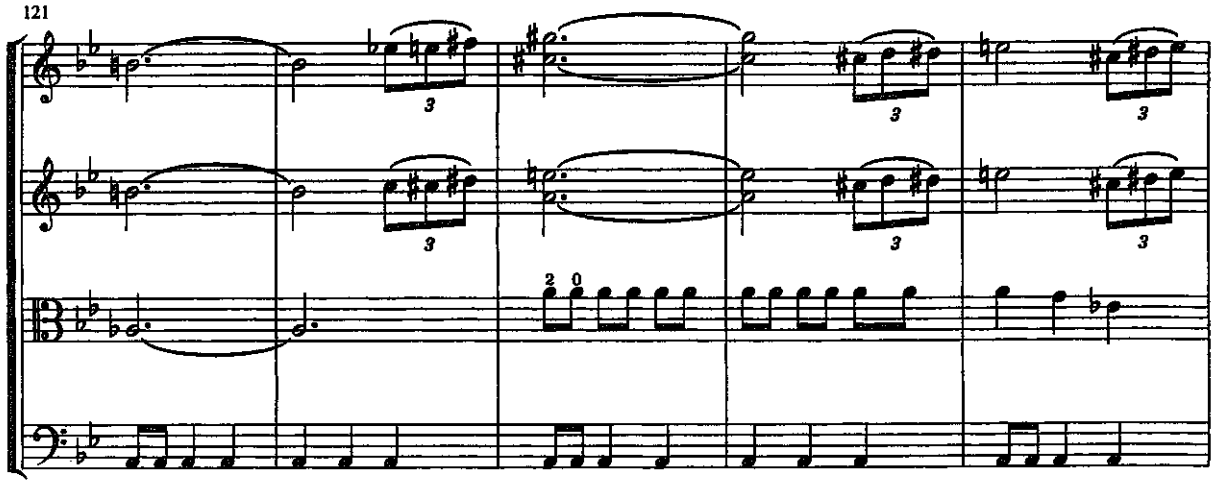
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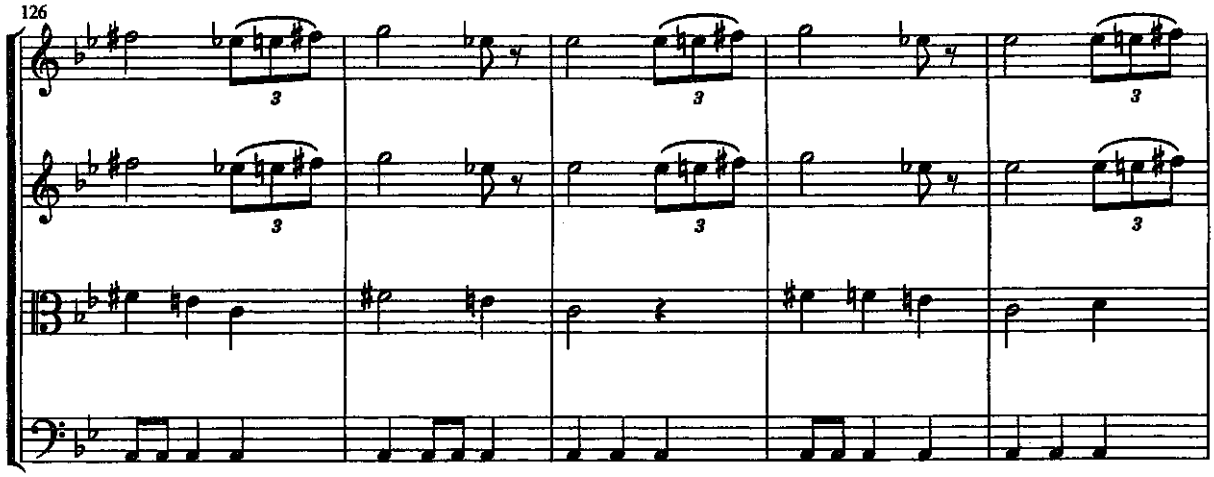
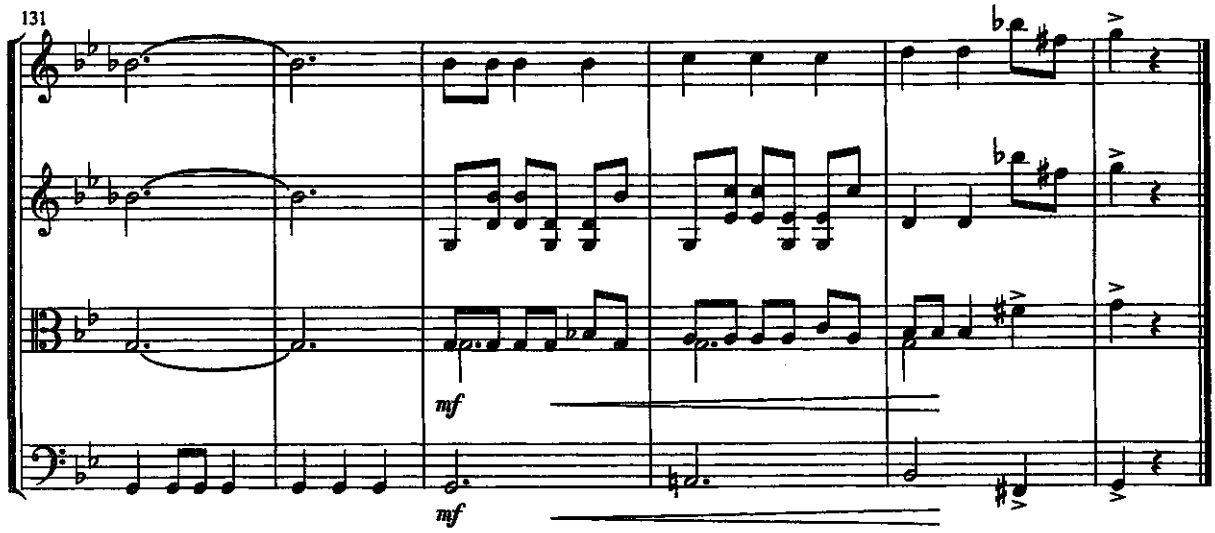
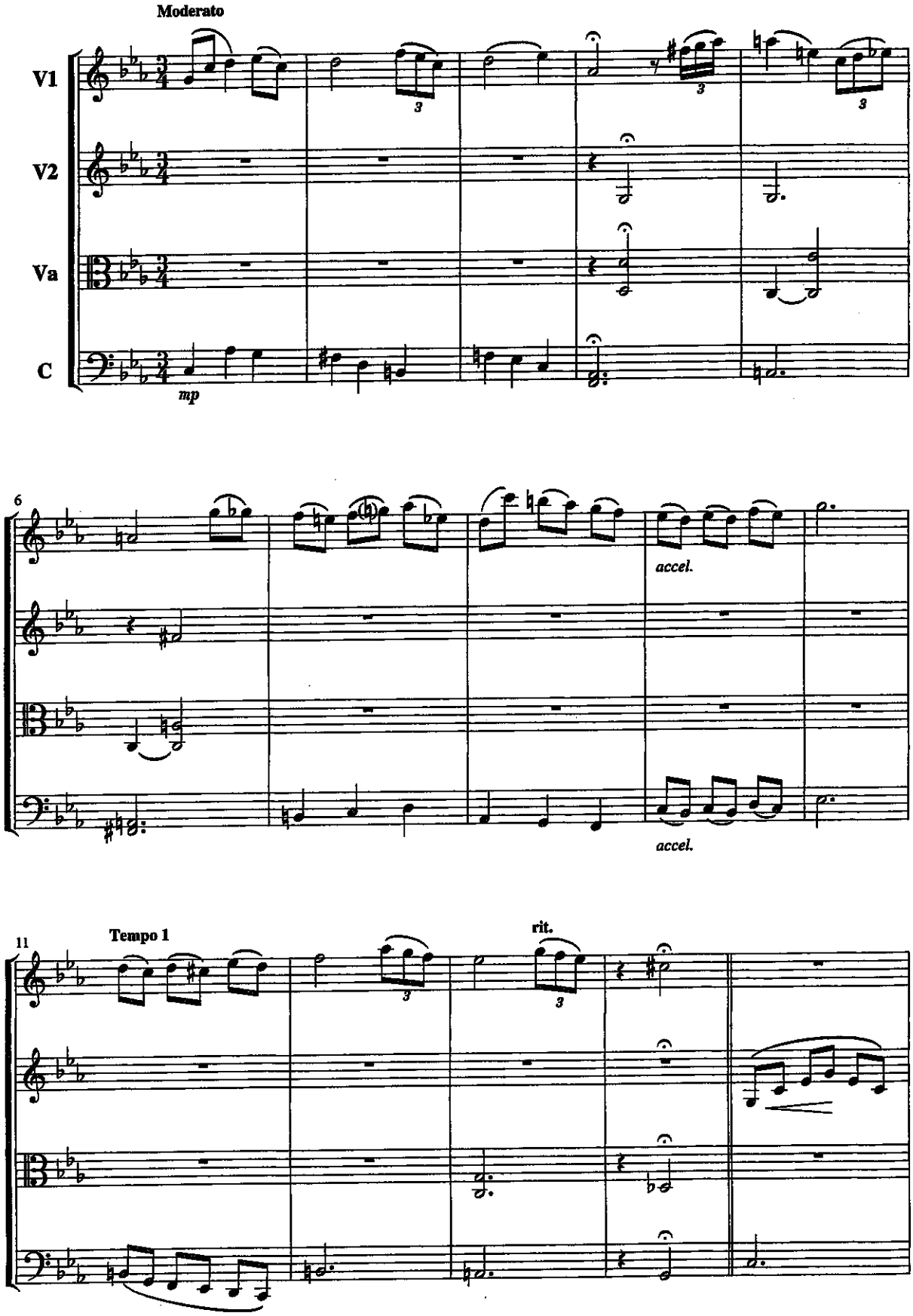

126
3
3
3
3
3
3


131
mf
mf

Expert Rites



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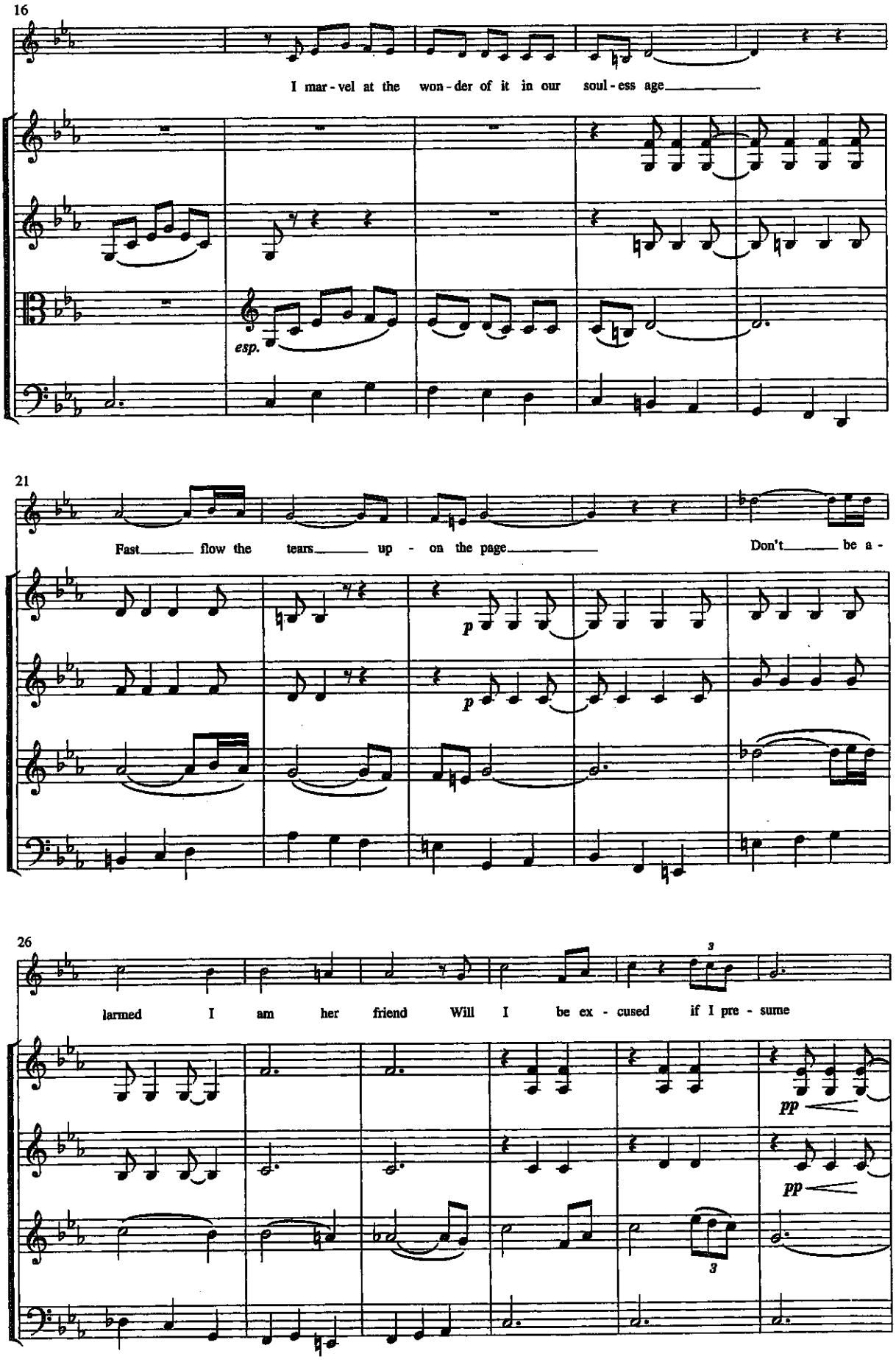
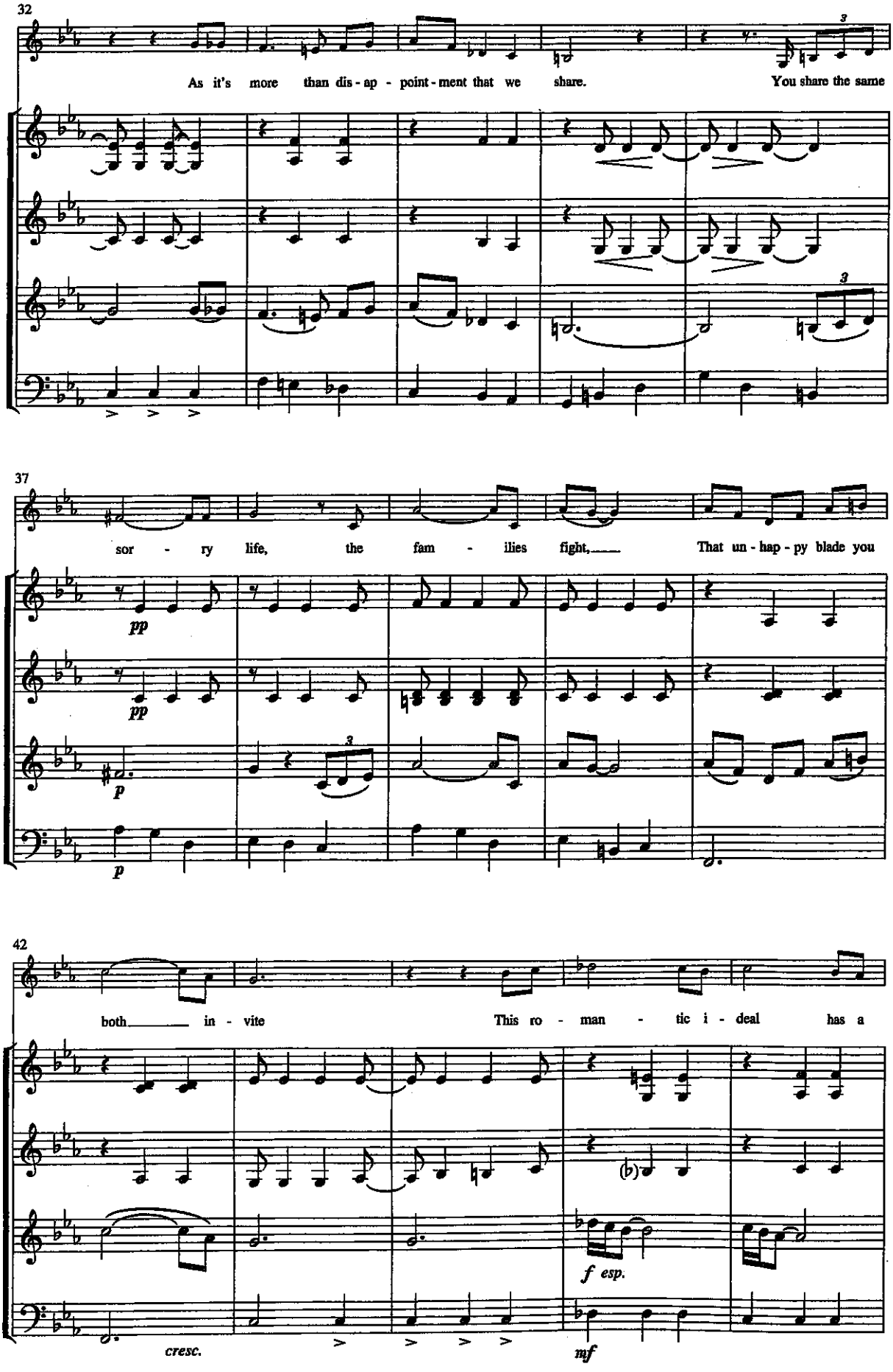
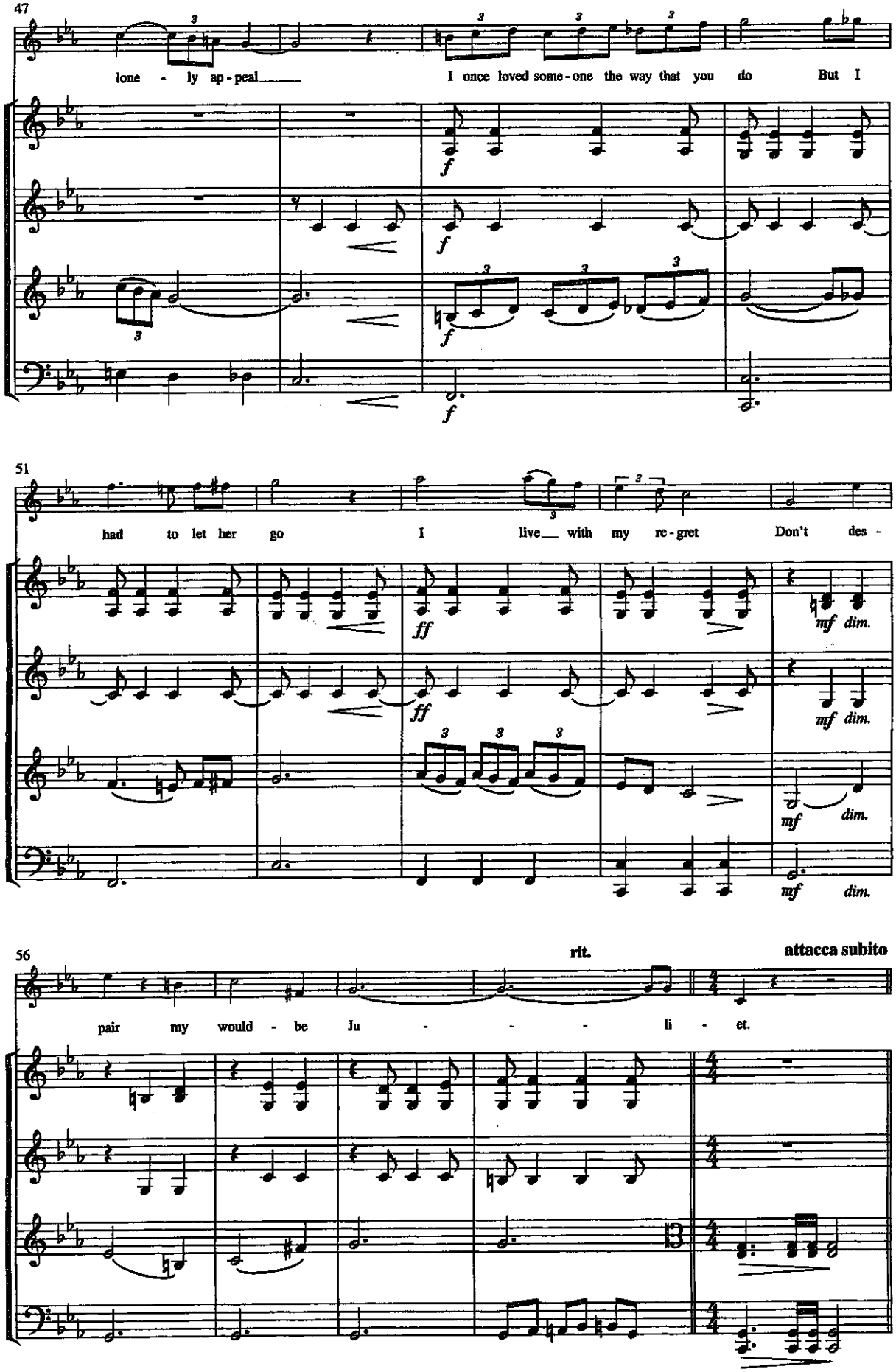
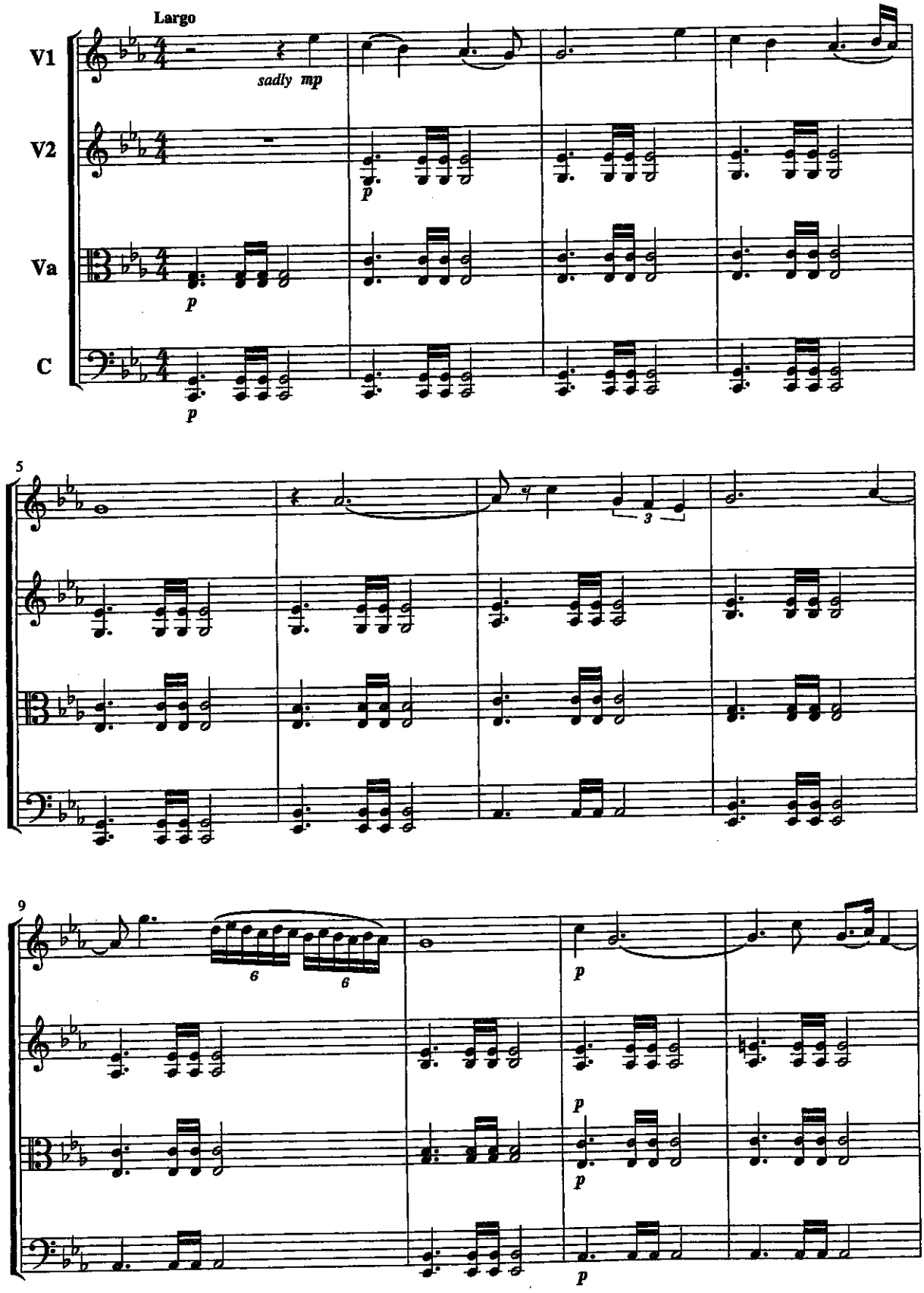

16
I mar - vel at the won - der of it in our soul - ess age
esp.
21
Fast flow the tears up - on the page
Don't be a -
p
p
26
larmed I am her friend Will I be ex - cused if I pre - sume
3
pp
pp
3


32
As it's more than dis - ap - point - ment that we share.
You share the same
37
sor - ry life, the fam - ilies fight,
That un - hap - py blade you
pp
pp
p
p
42
both in - vite
This ro - man - tic i - deal has a
f esp.
cresc.
mf


47
lone - ly ap - peal
I once loved some - one the way that you do But I
f
51
had to let her go I live with my re - gret Don't des -
ff
mf dim.
56
rit.
attacca subito
pair my would - be Ju - - - li - et.

Dead Letter



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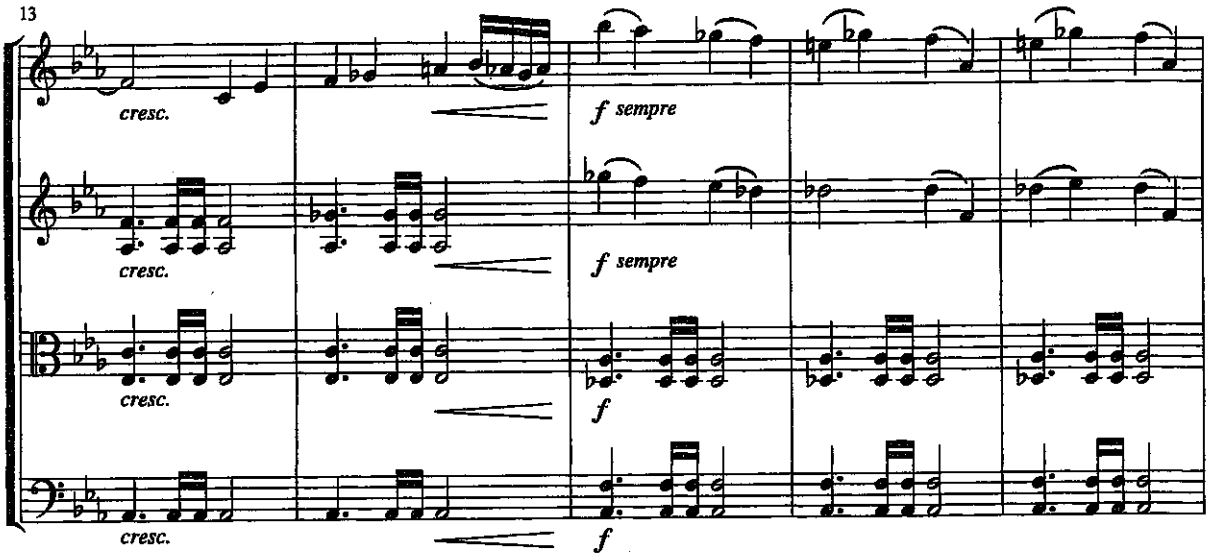
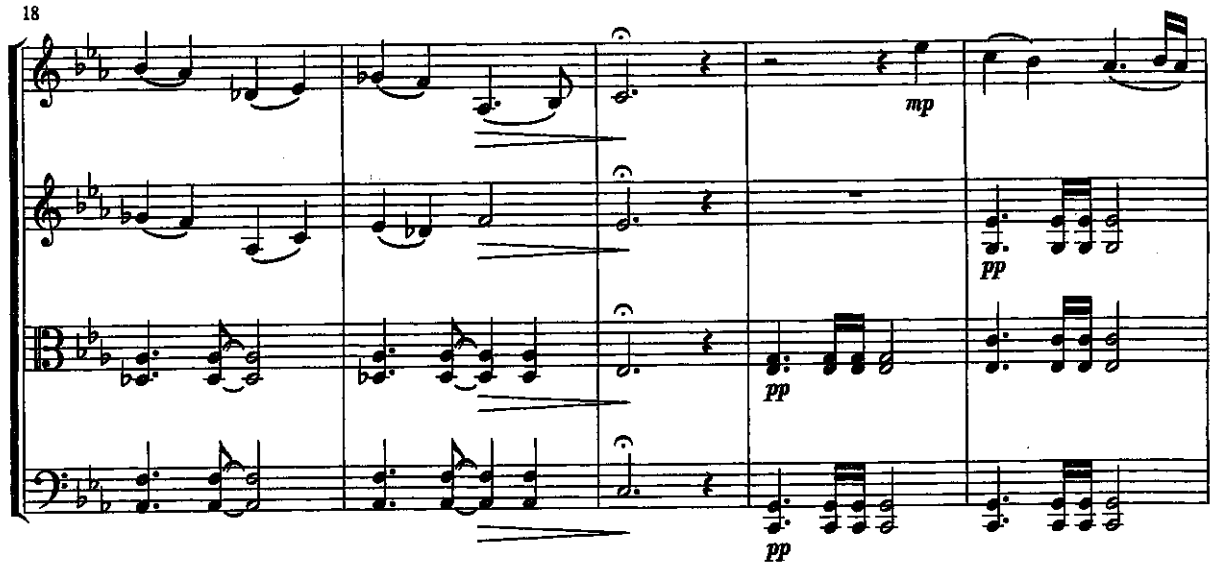
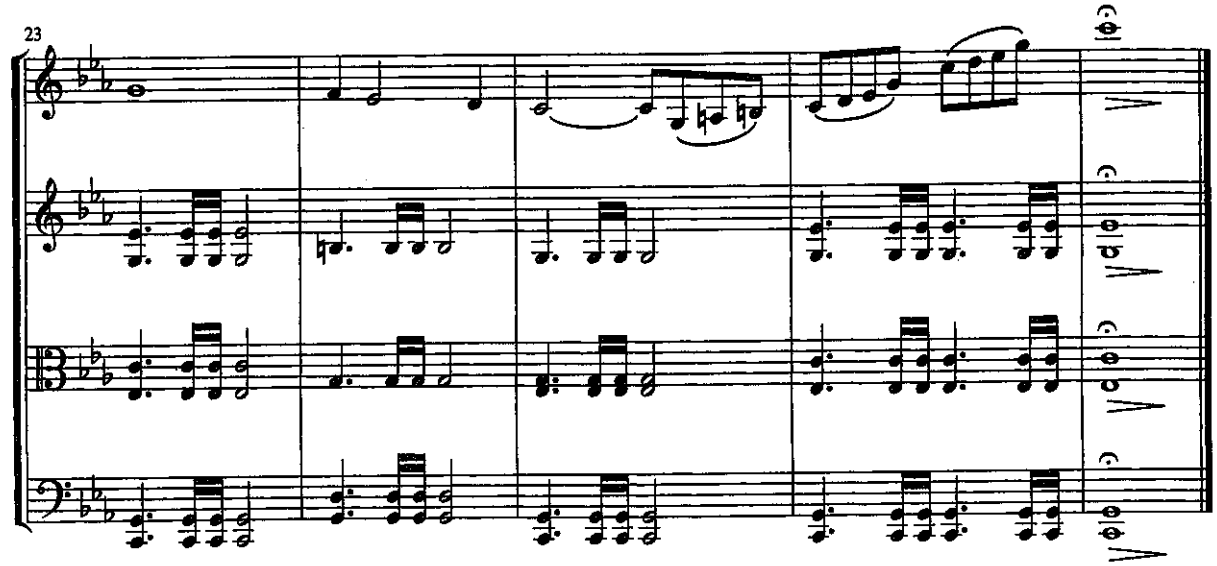
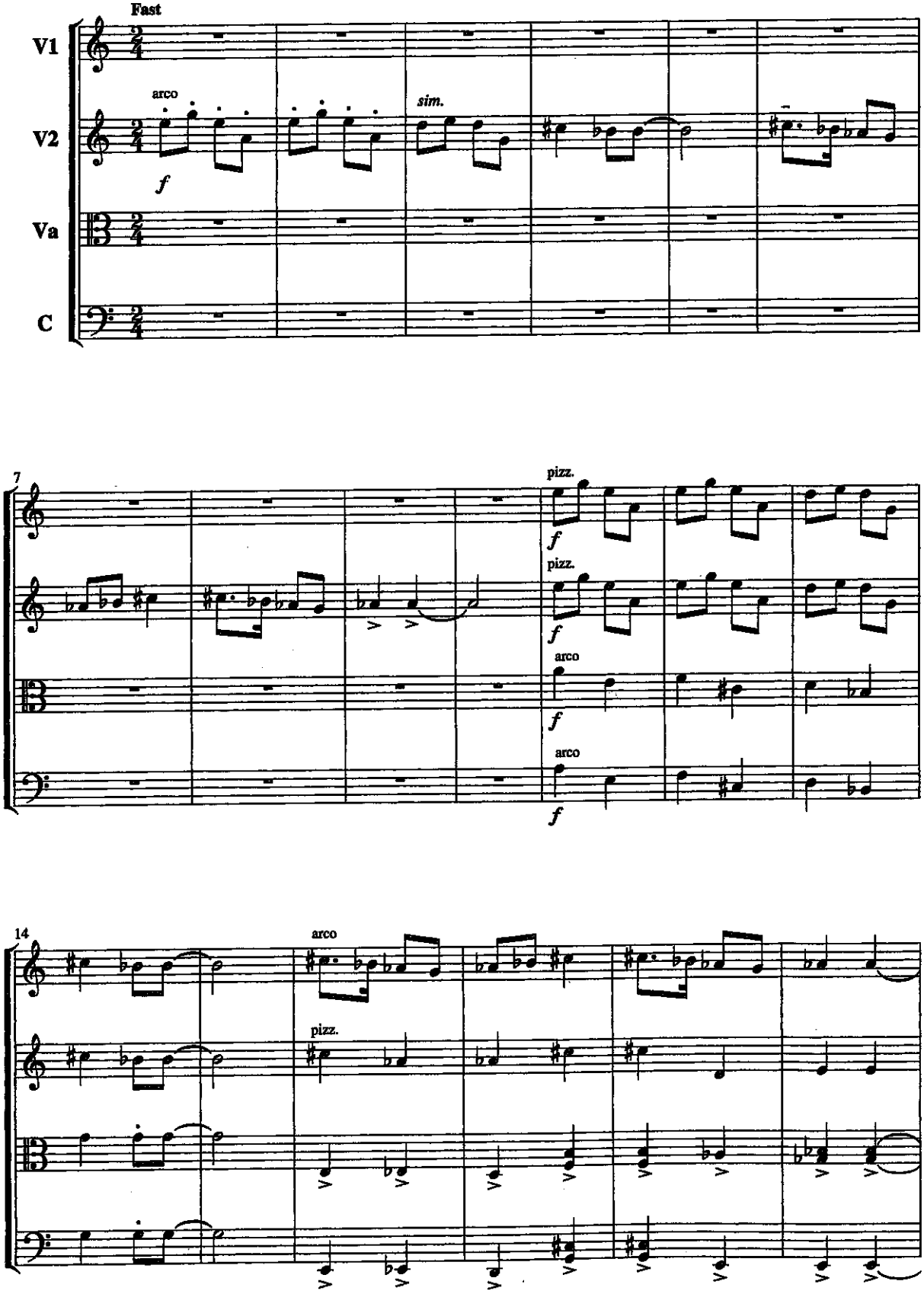

13
cresc.
f sempre
cresc.
f sempre
cresc.
f
cresc.
f


18
mp
pp
pp
pp


23

I Almost Had A Weakness



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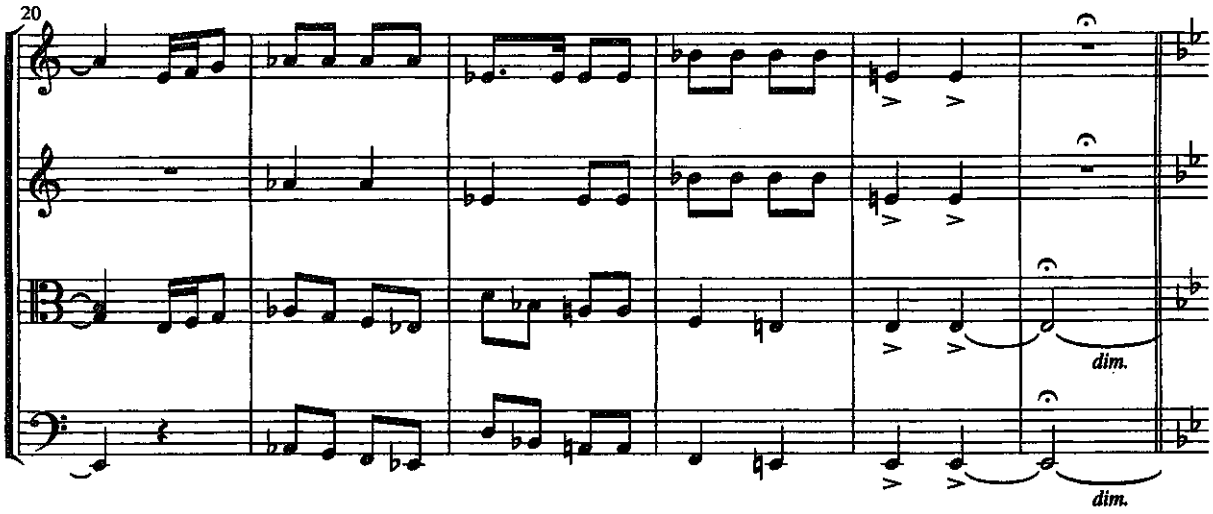
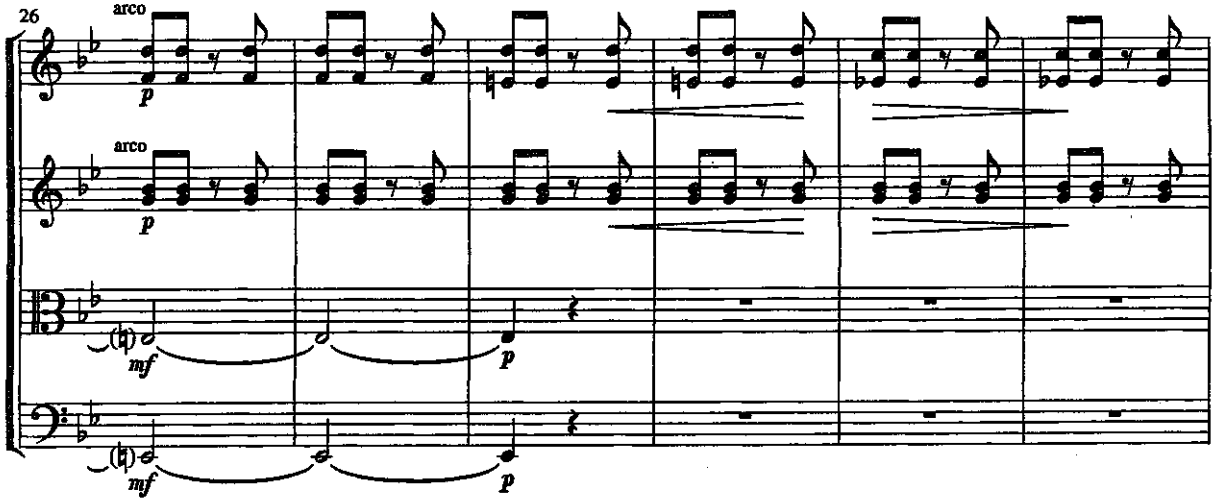
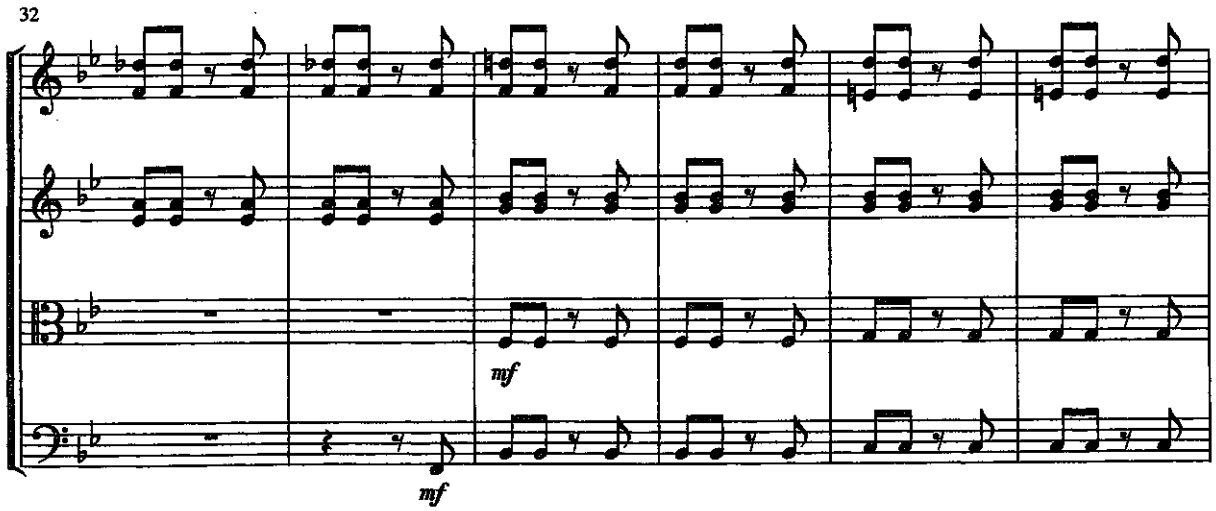
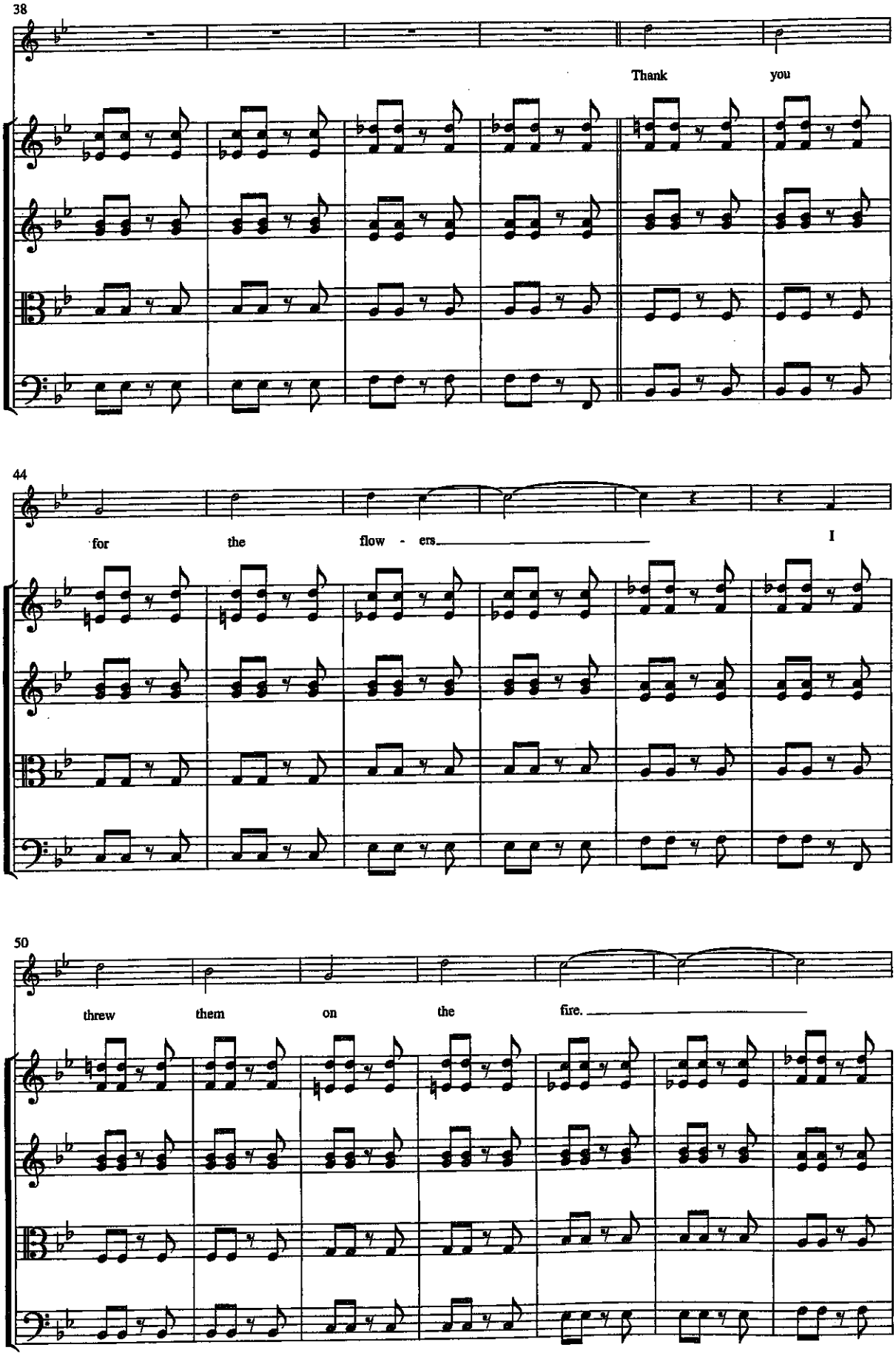
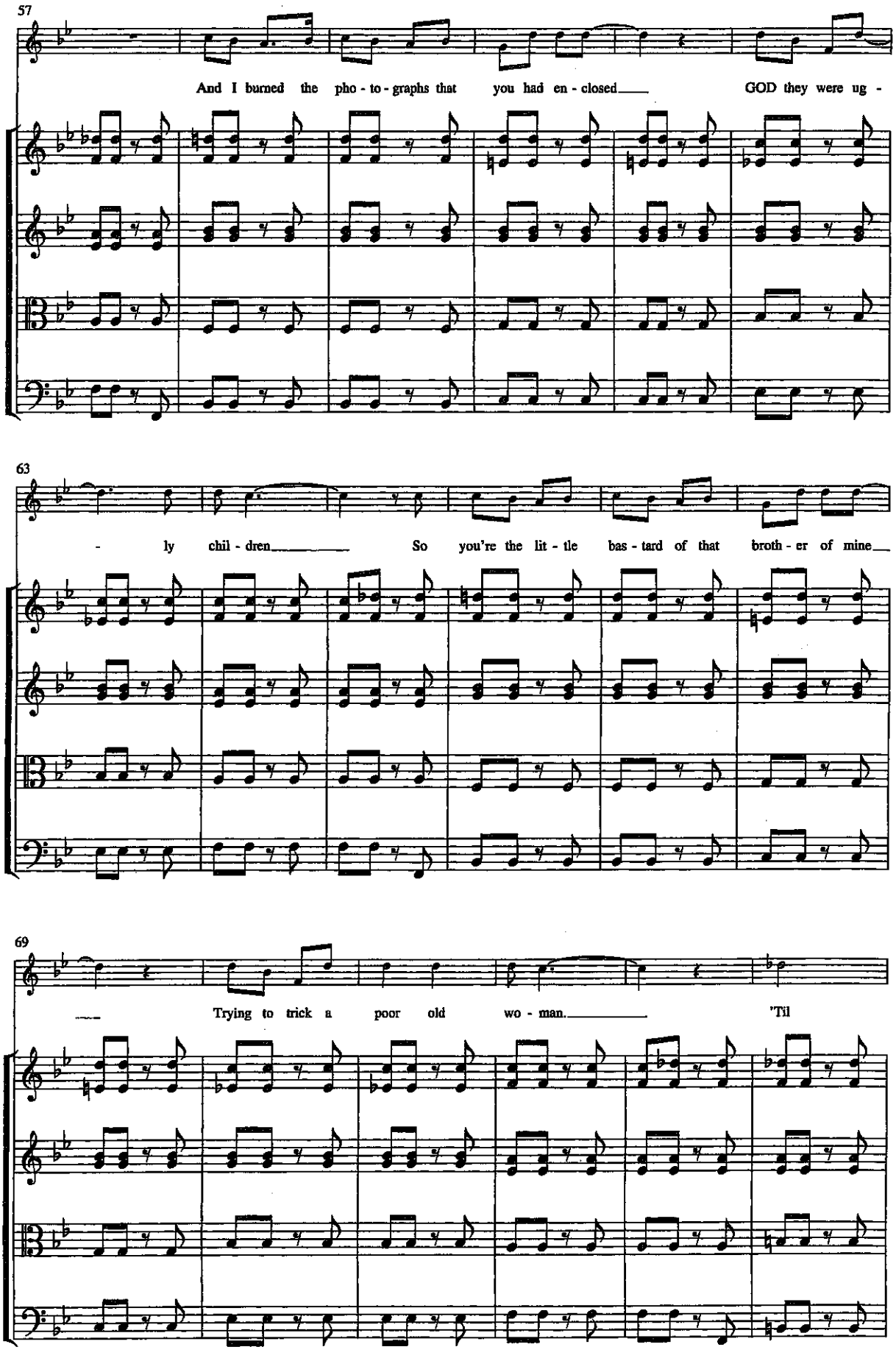
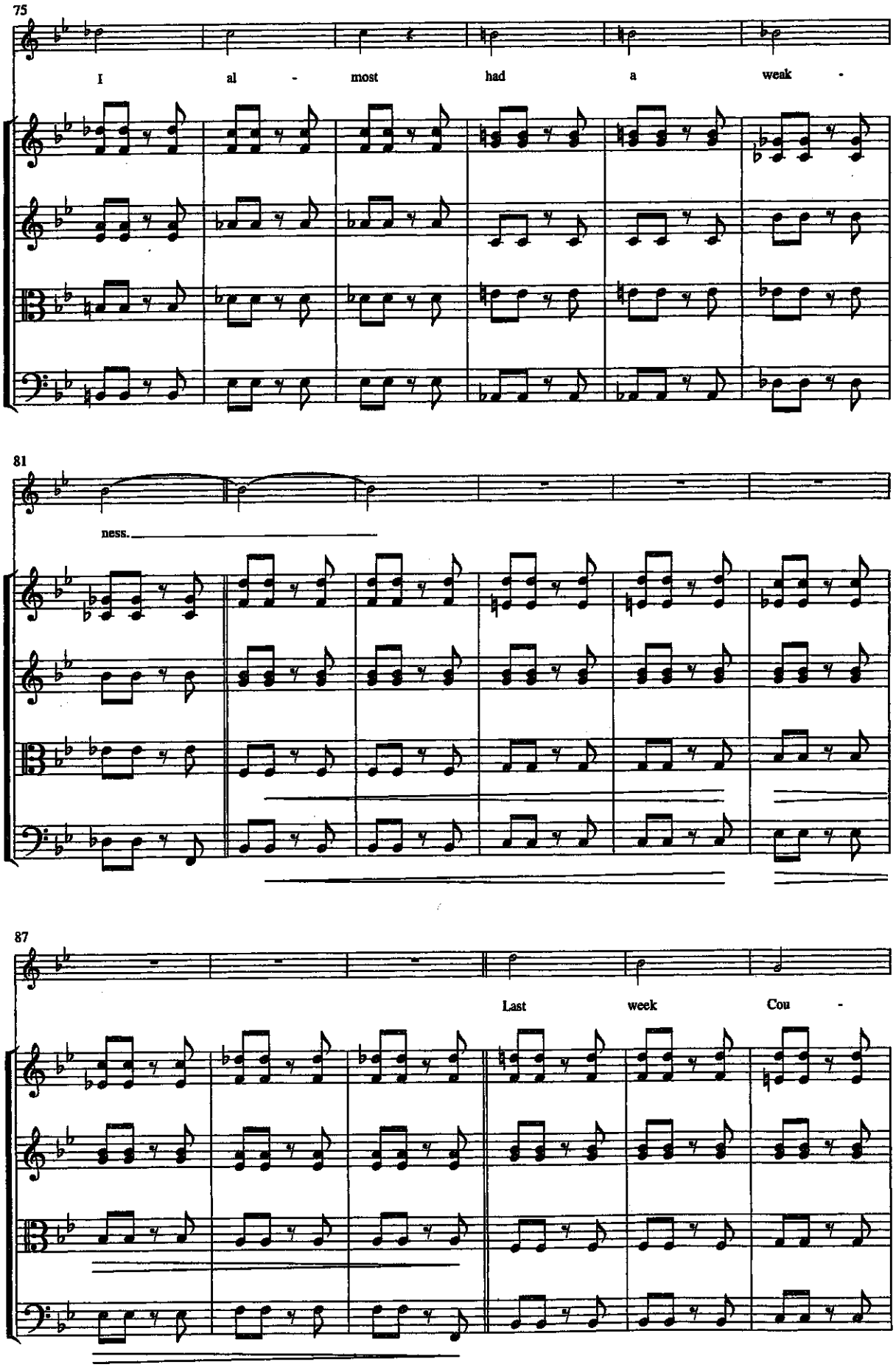

20
dim.
dim.

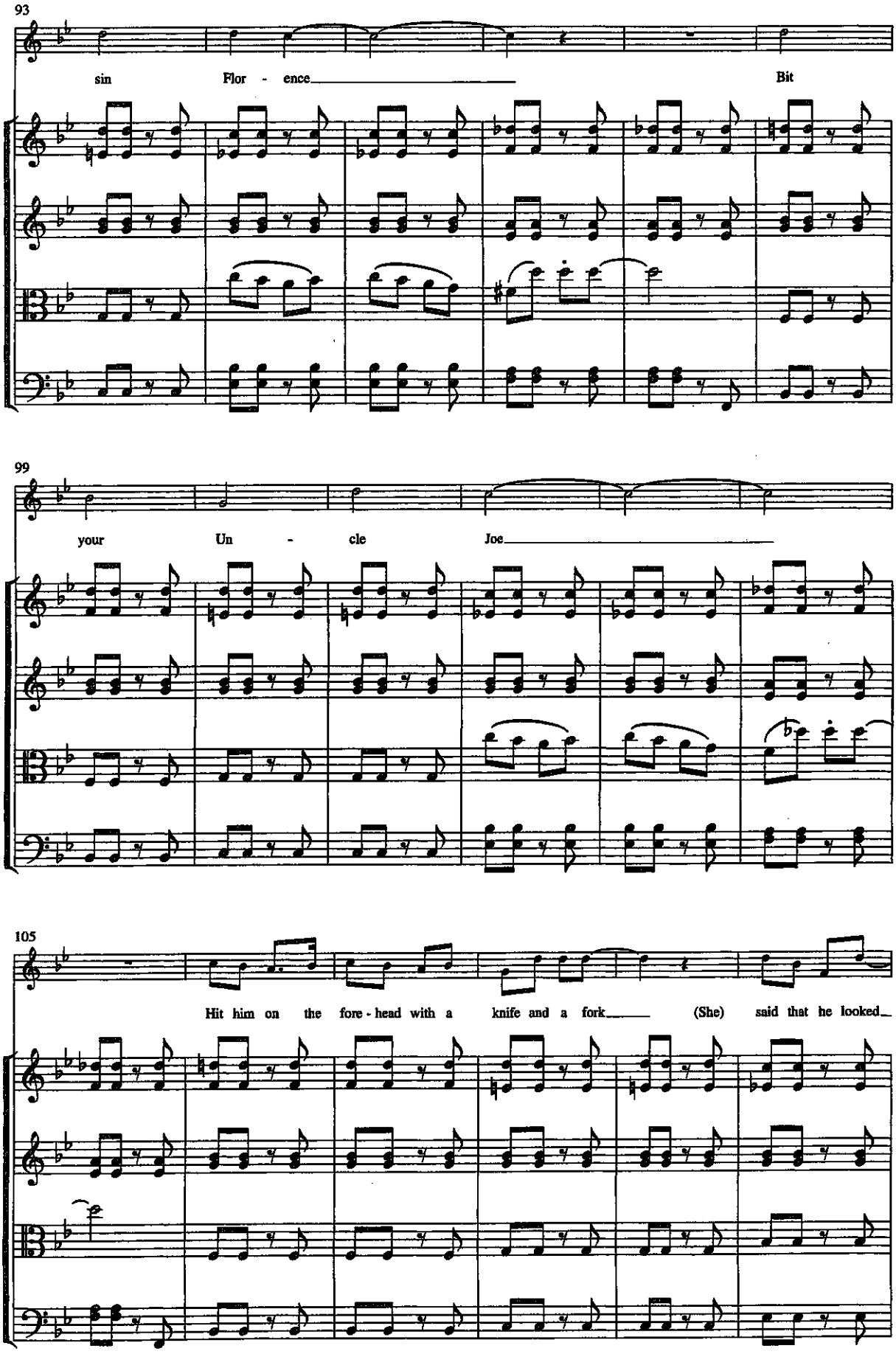

26
arco
p
arco
p
mf
p
mf
p

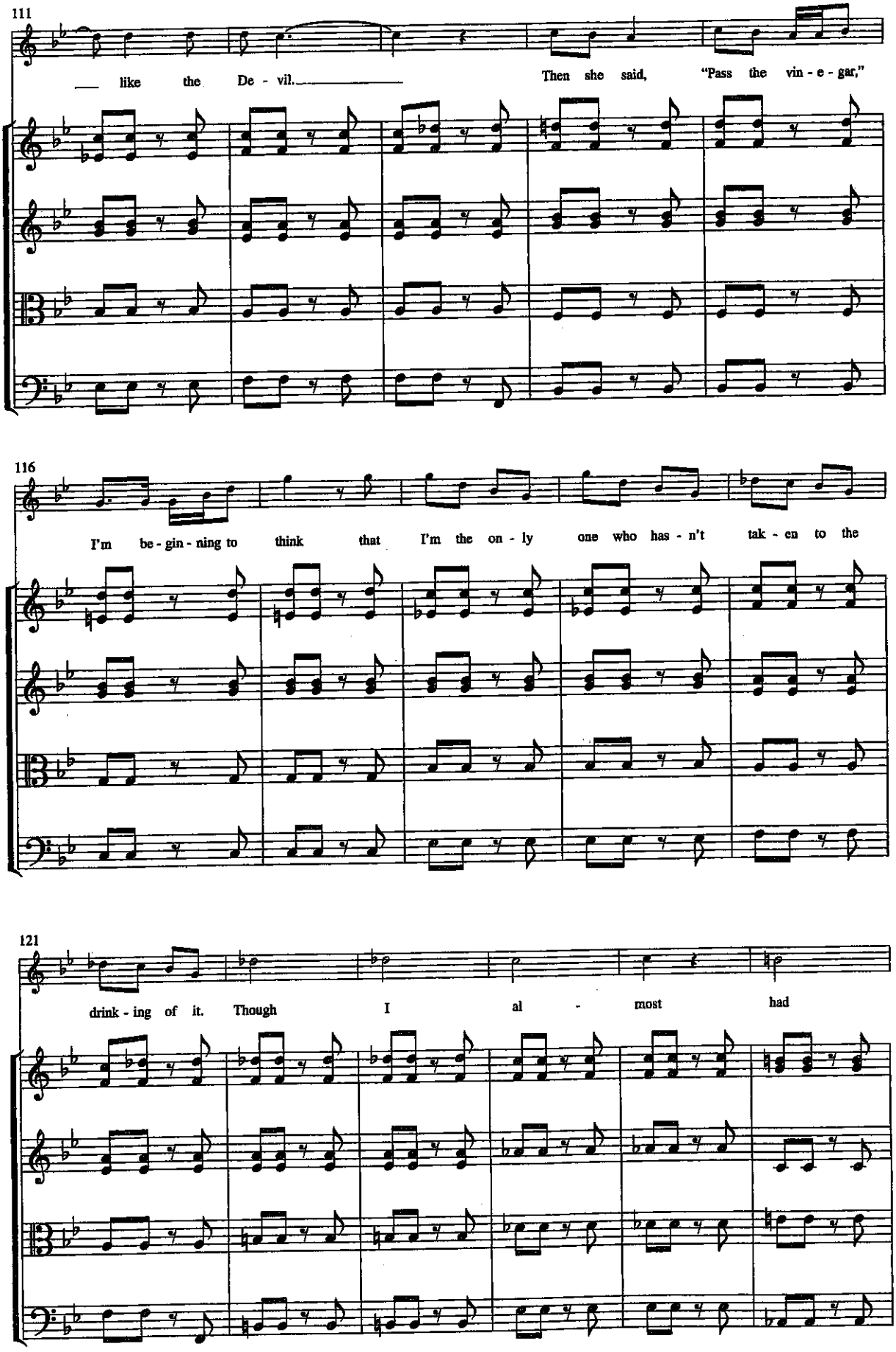

32
mf
mf

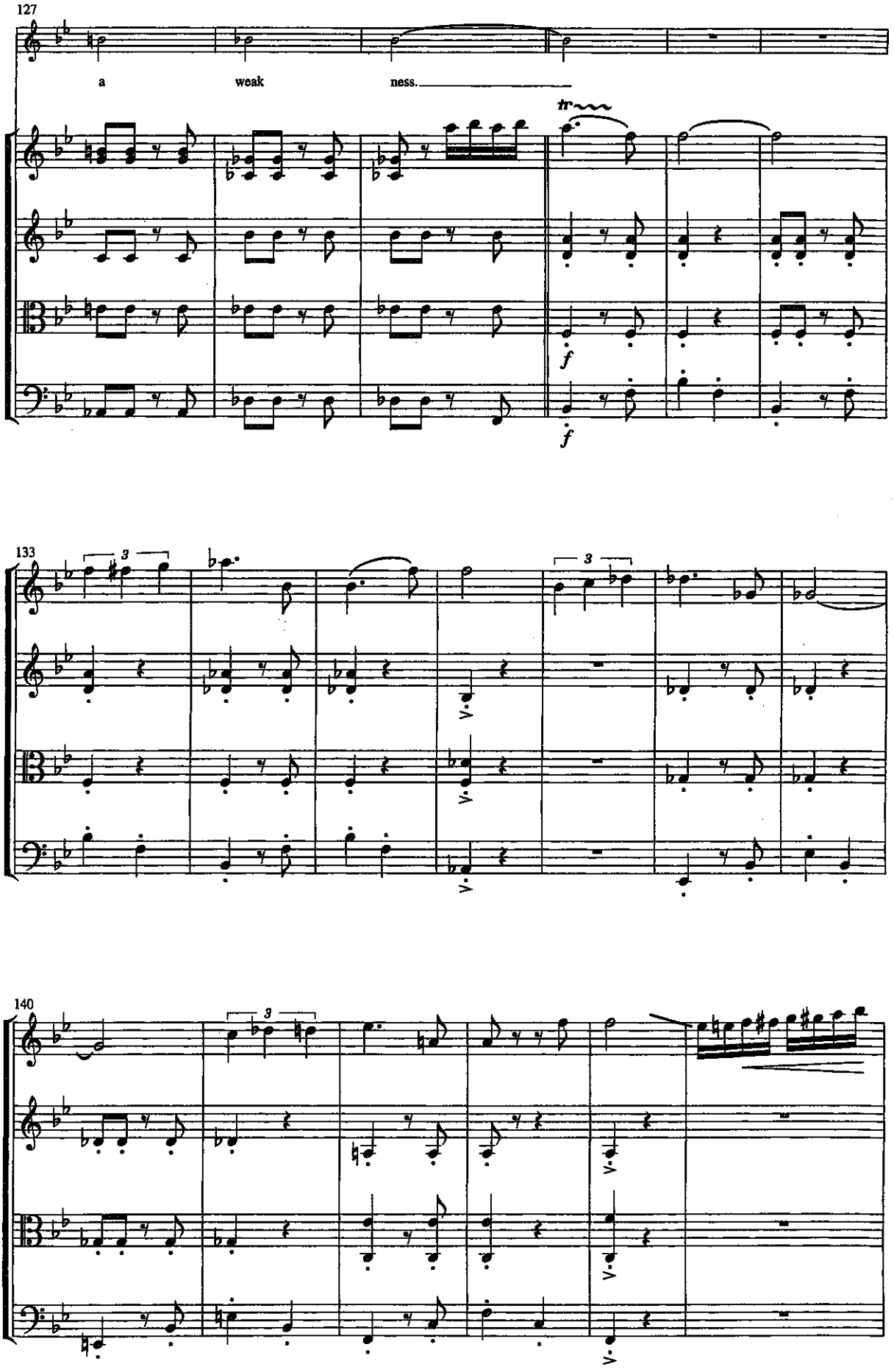

38
Thank you
44
for the flow - ers
I
50
threw them on the fire.

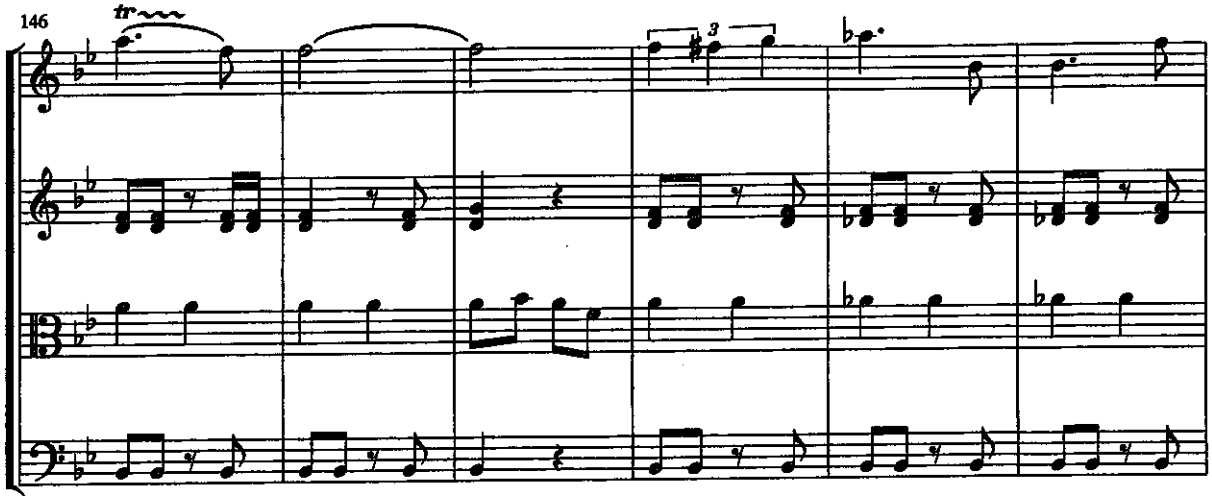

57
And I burned the pho - to - graphs that you had en - closed GOD they were ug -
63
- ly chil - dren So you're the lit - tle bas - tard of that broth - er of mine
69
Trying to trick a poor old wo - man. 'Til

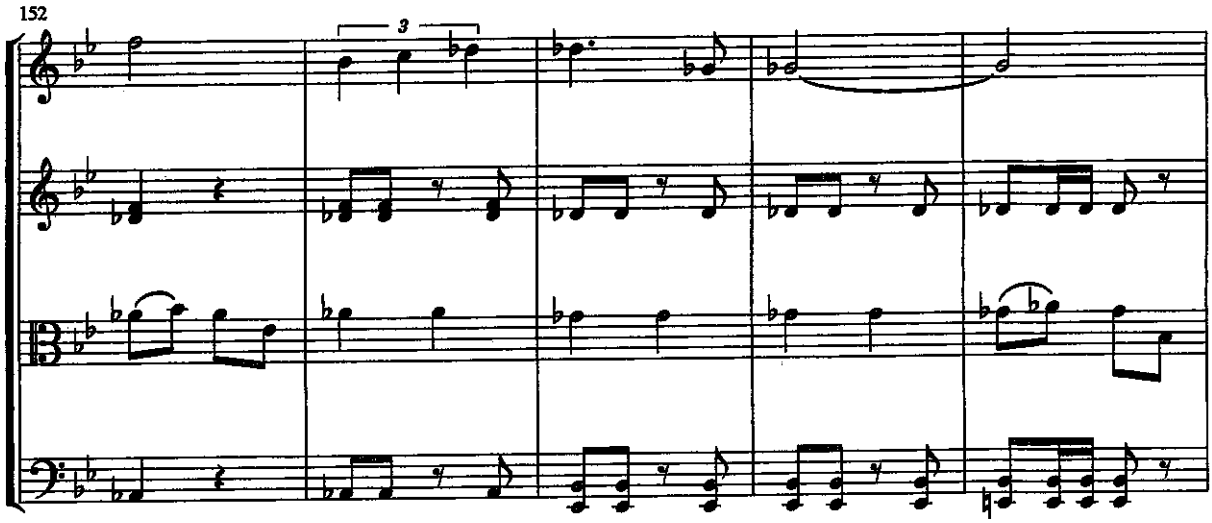

75
I al - most had a weak -
81
ness.
87
Last week Cou -

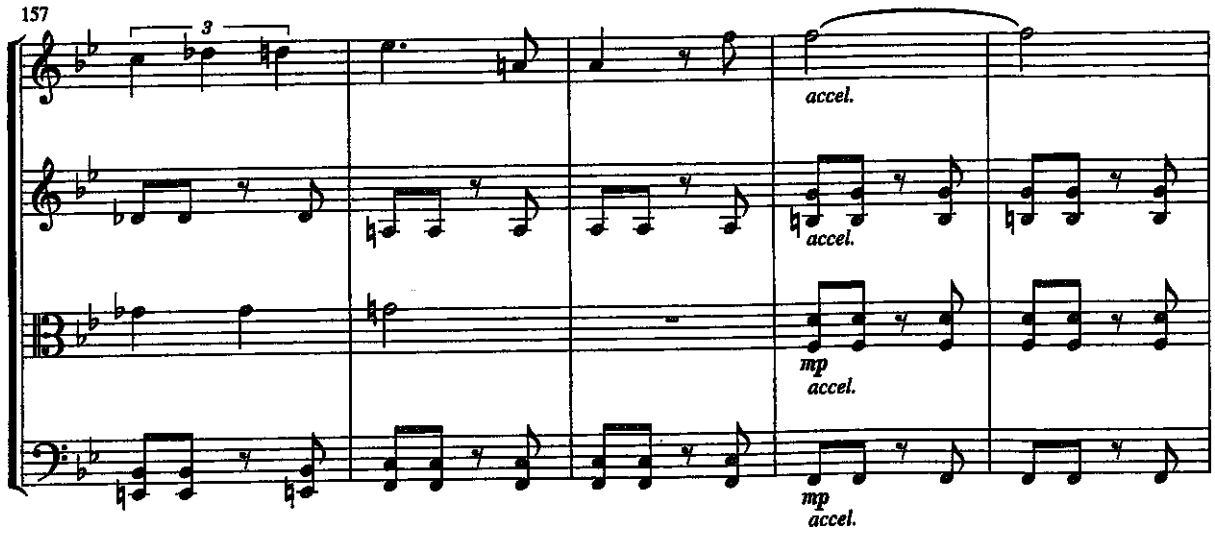

93
sin Flor - ence Bit
99
your Un - cle Joe
105
Hit him on the fore - head with a knife and a fork (She) said that he looked

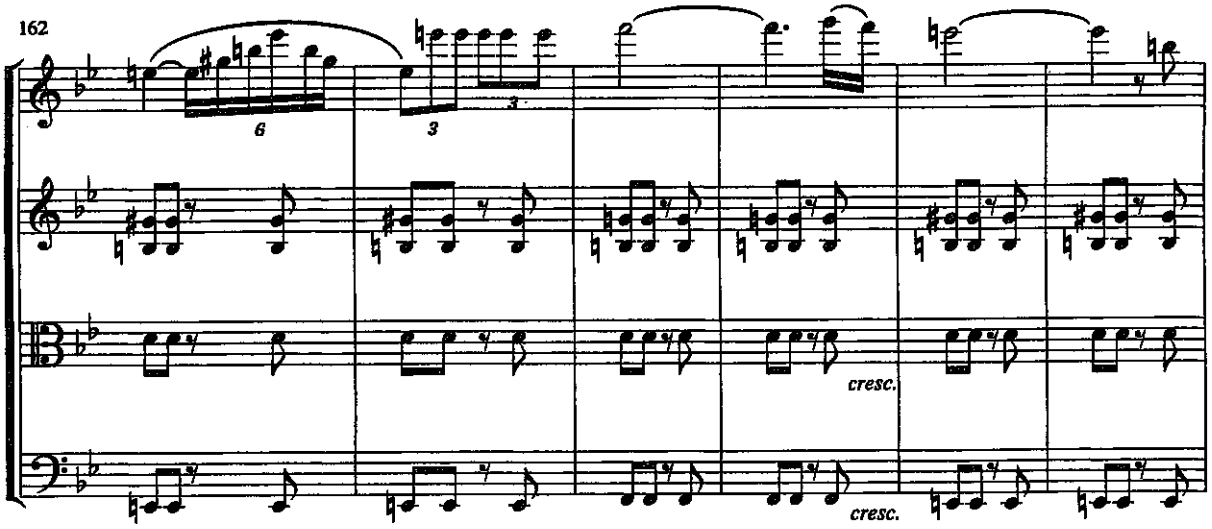

111
like the De - vil.
Then she said, "Pass the vin - e - gar,"
116
I'm be - gin - ning to think that I'm the on - ly one who has - n't tak - en to the
121
drink - ing of it. Though I al - most had

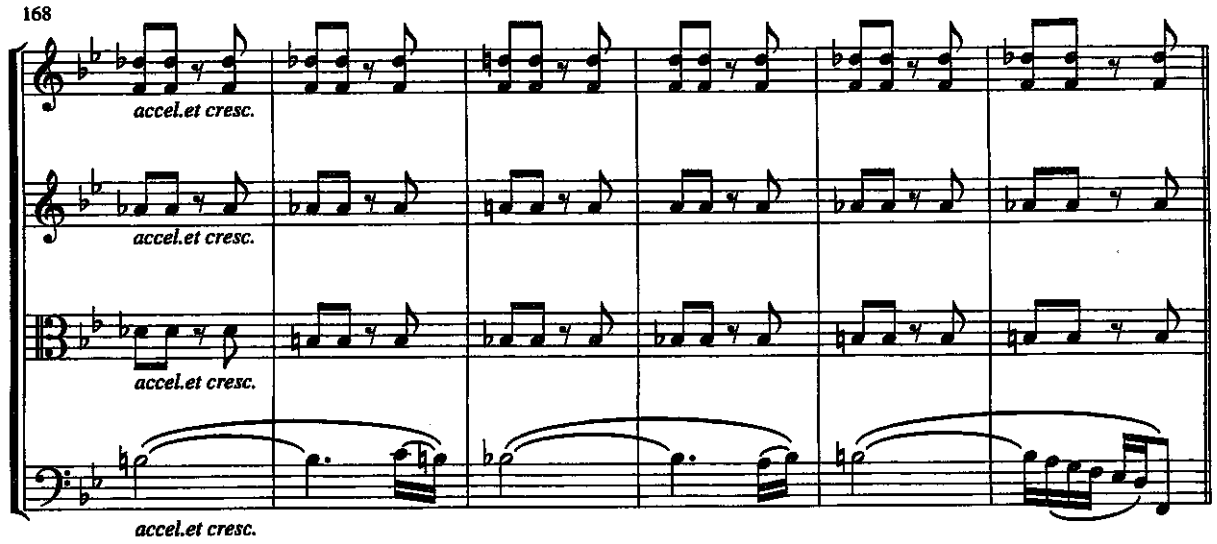

127
a
weak
ness.
tr
f
f
133
3
3
140
3

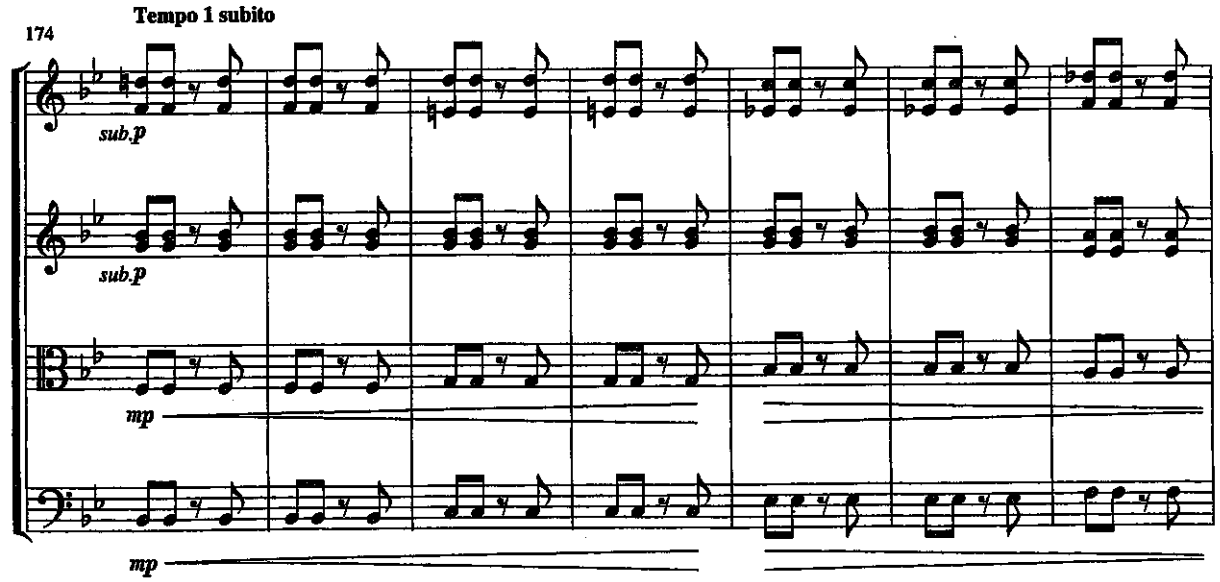

146
tr
3

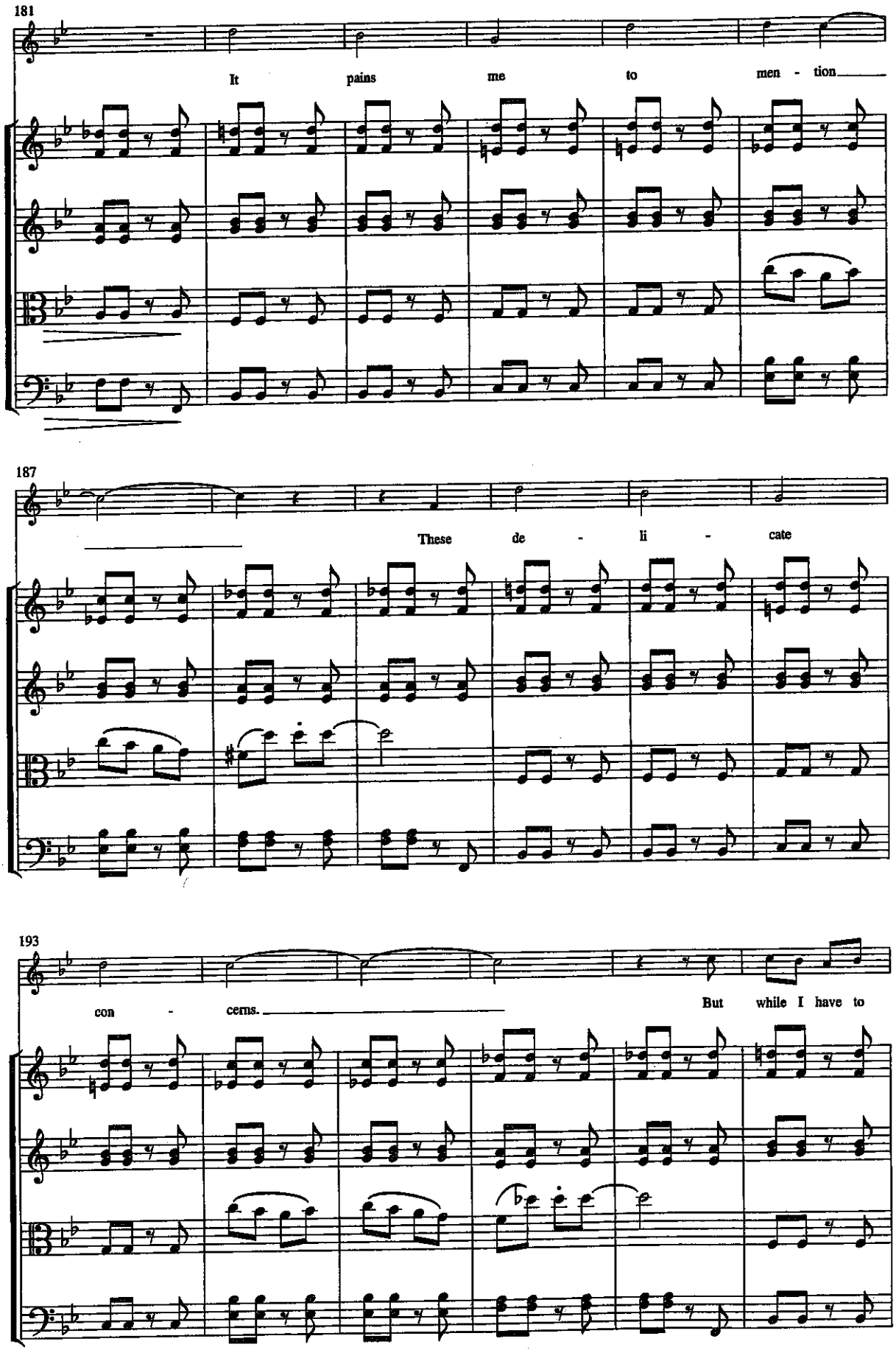

152
3

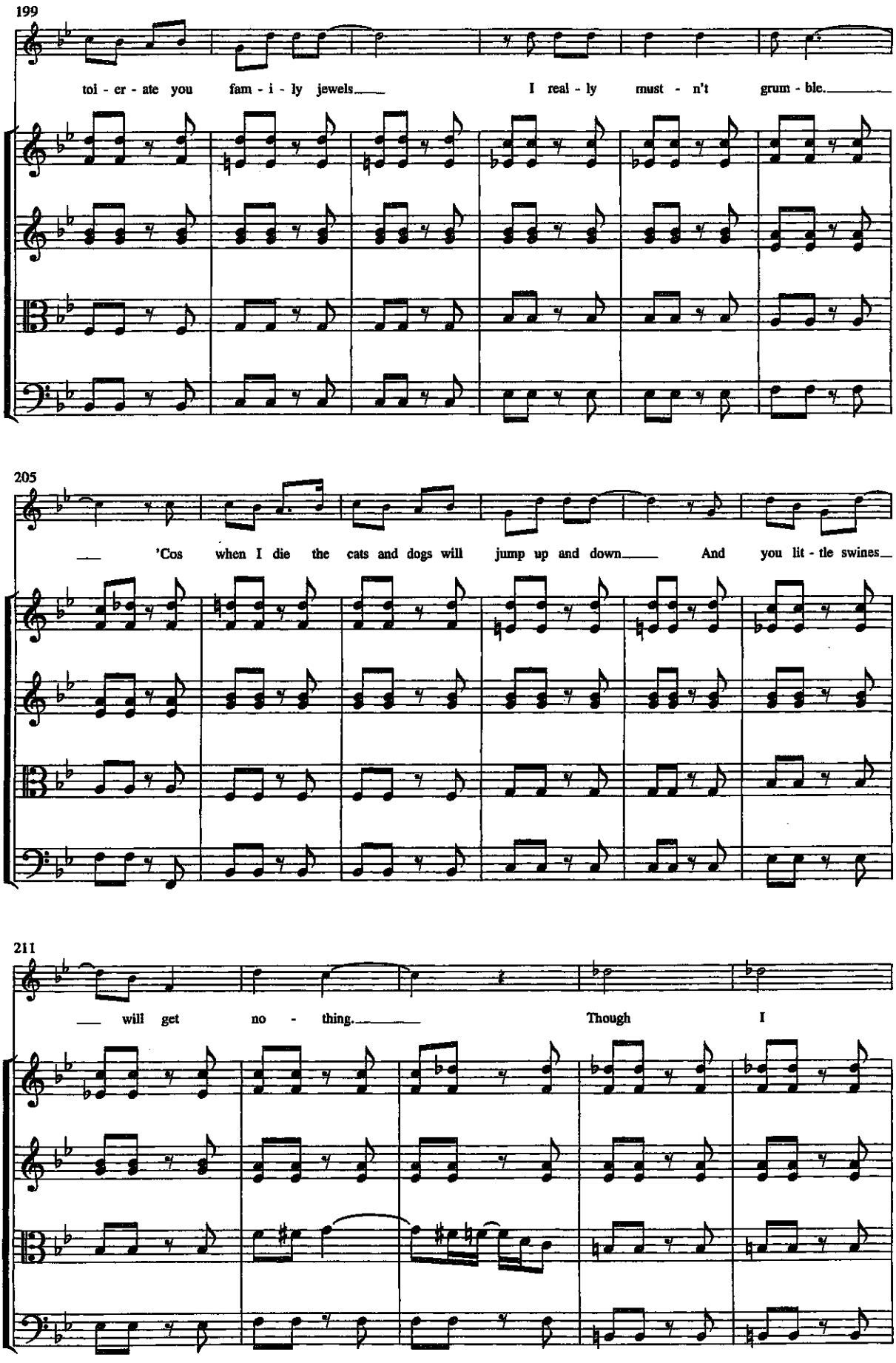

157
3
accel.
accel.
mp
accel.
mp
accel.

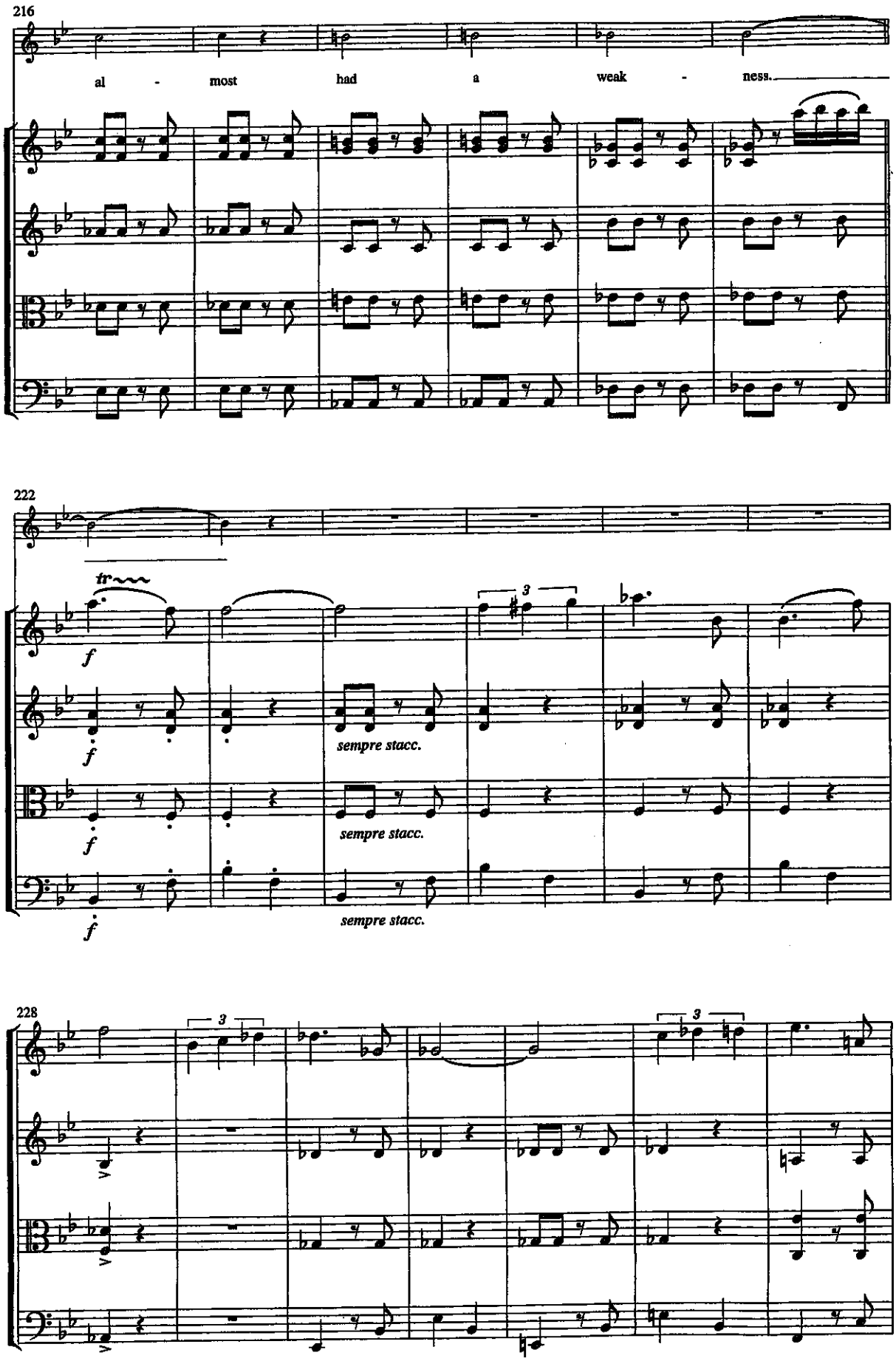

162
6
3
3
cresc.
cresc.

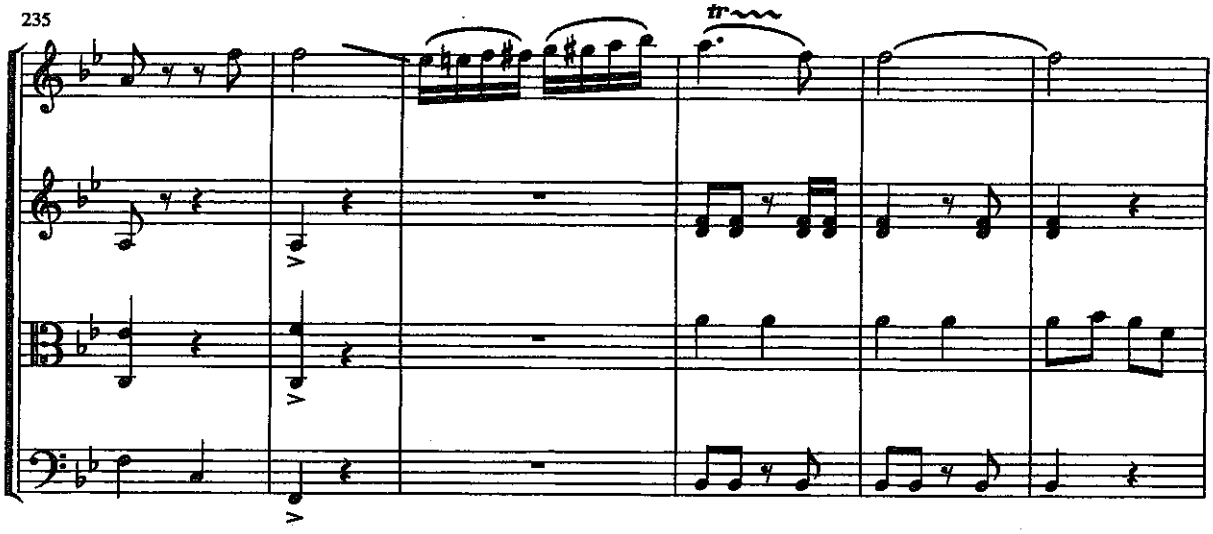

168
accel.et cresc.
accel.et cresc.
accel.et cresc.
accel.et cresc.

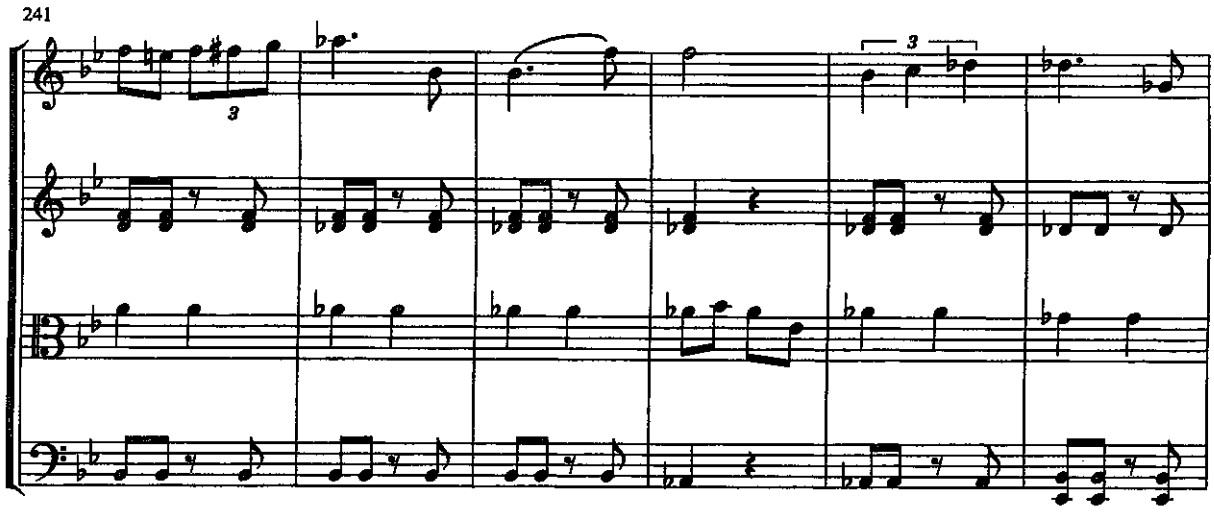

Tempo 1 subito
174
sub.p
sub.p
mp
mp

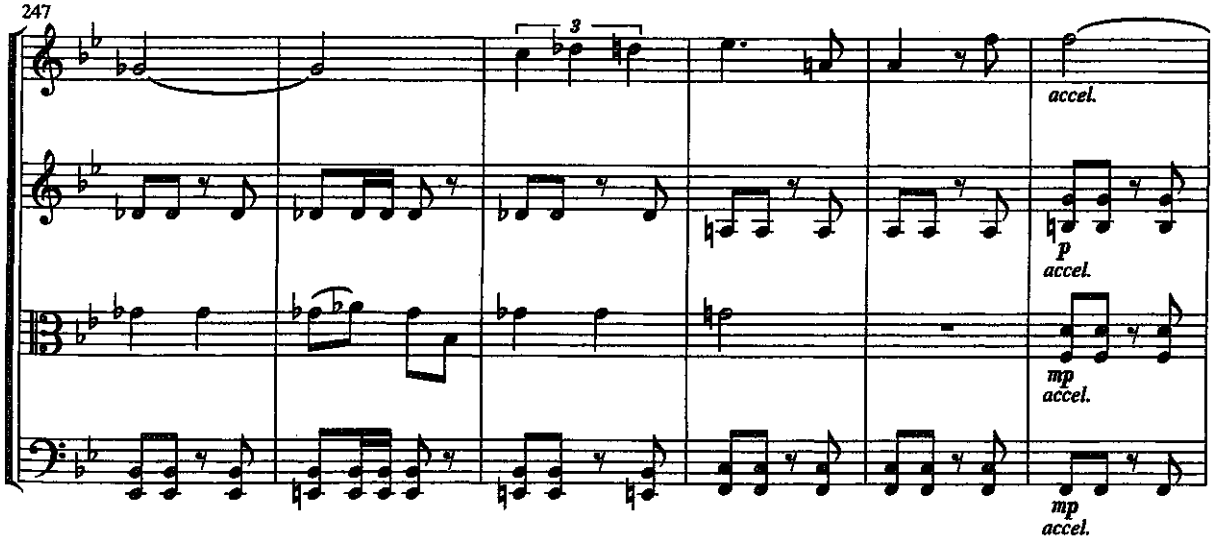

181
It pains me to men - tion
187
These de - li - cate
193
con - cems.
But while I have to

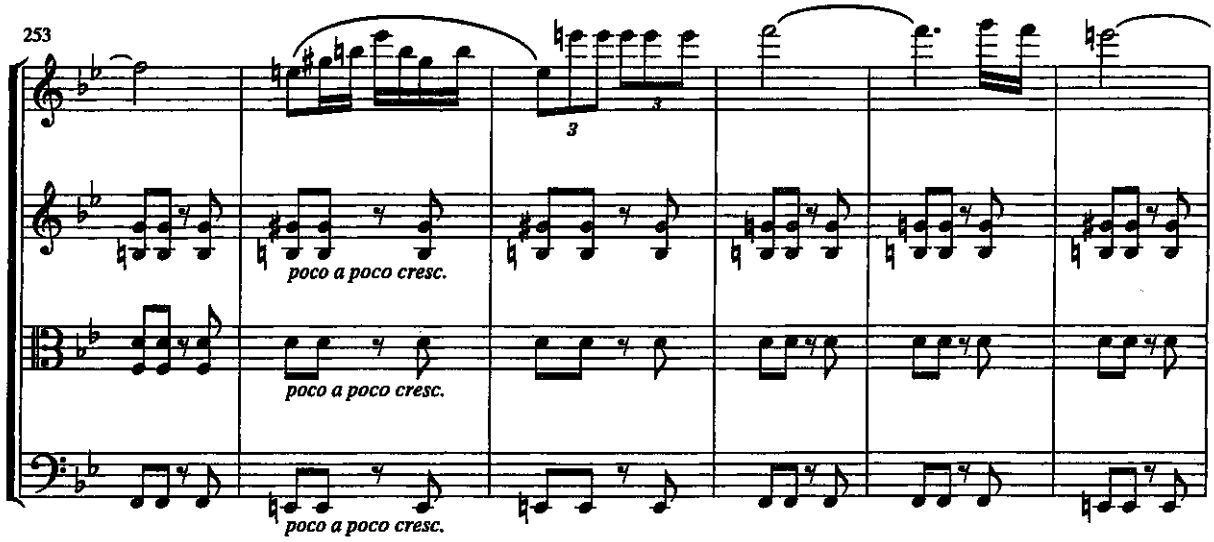

199
toi - er - ate you fam - i - ly jewels I real - ly must - n't grum - ble.
205
'Cos when I die the cats and dogs will jump up and down And you lit - tle swines
211
will get no - thing. Though I

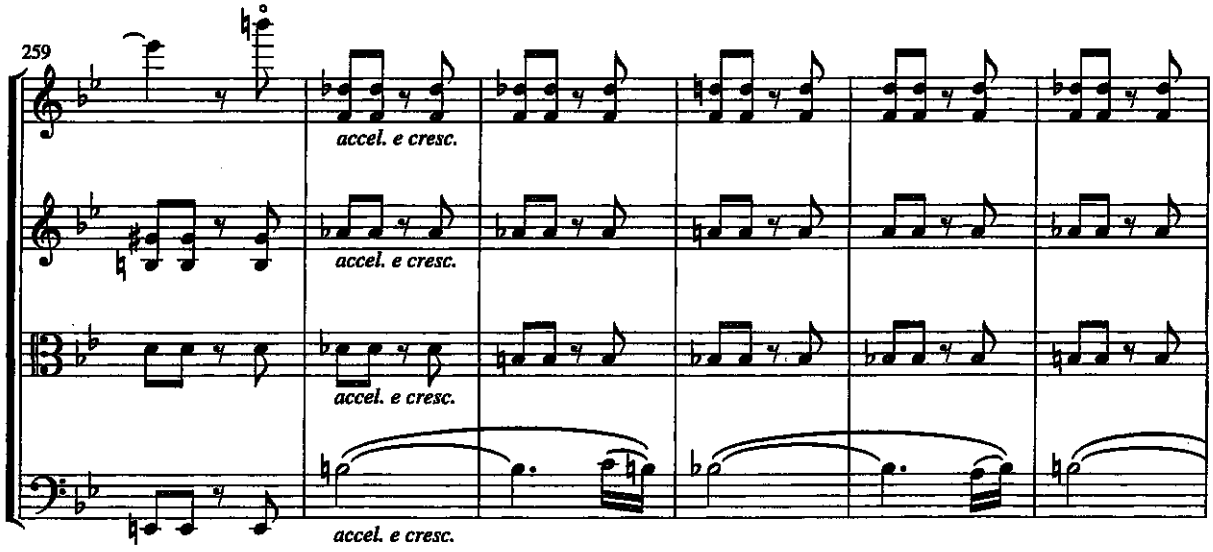

216
al - most had a weak - ness.
222
tr
f
sempre stacc.
sempre stacc.
sempre stacc.
228
3
3

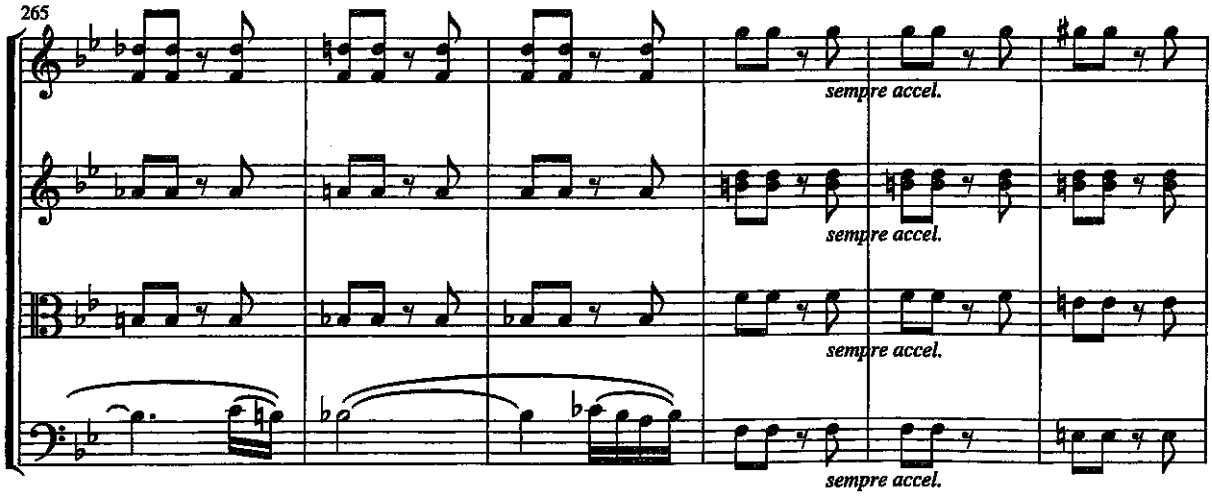

235
tr

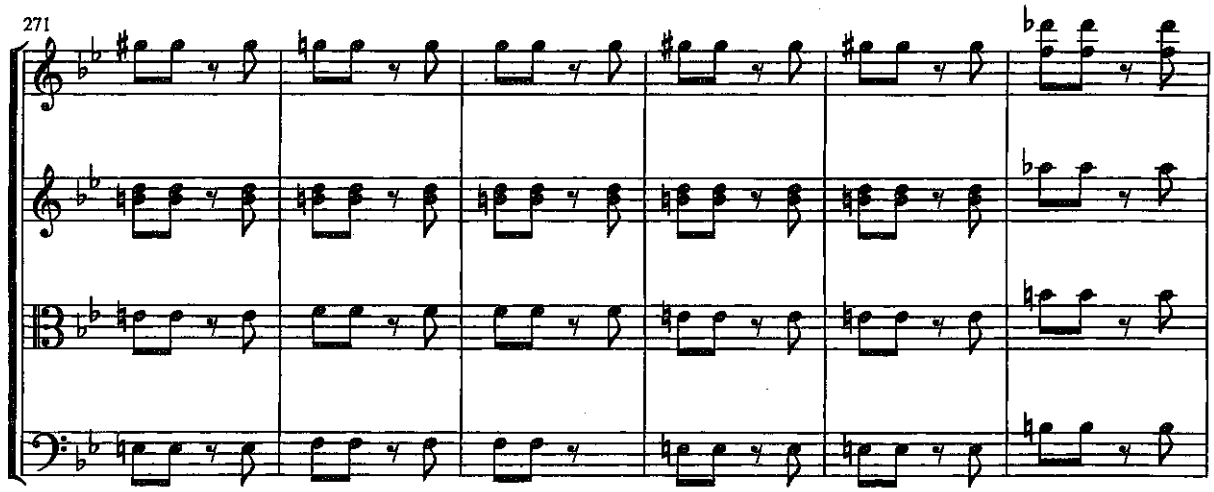

241
3
3

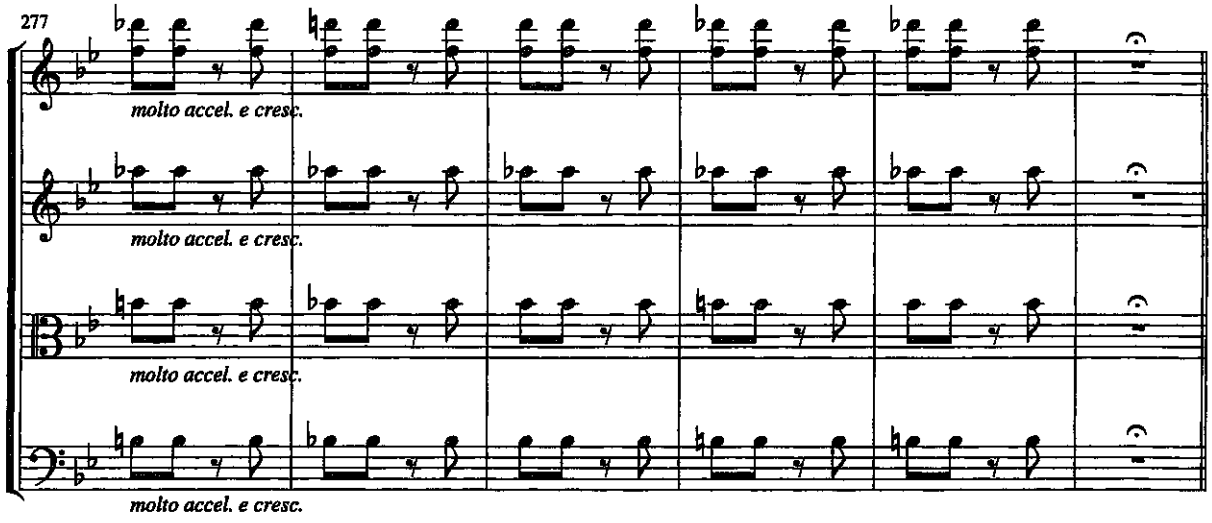

247
3
accel.
p
accel.
mp
accel.
mp
accel.

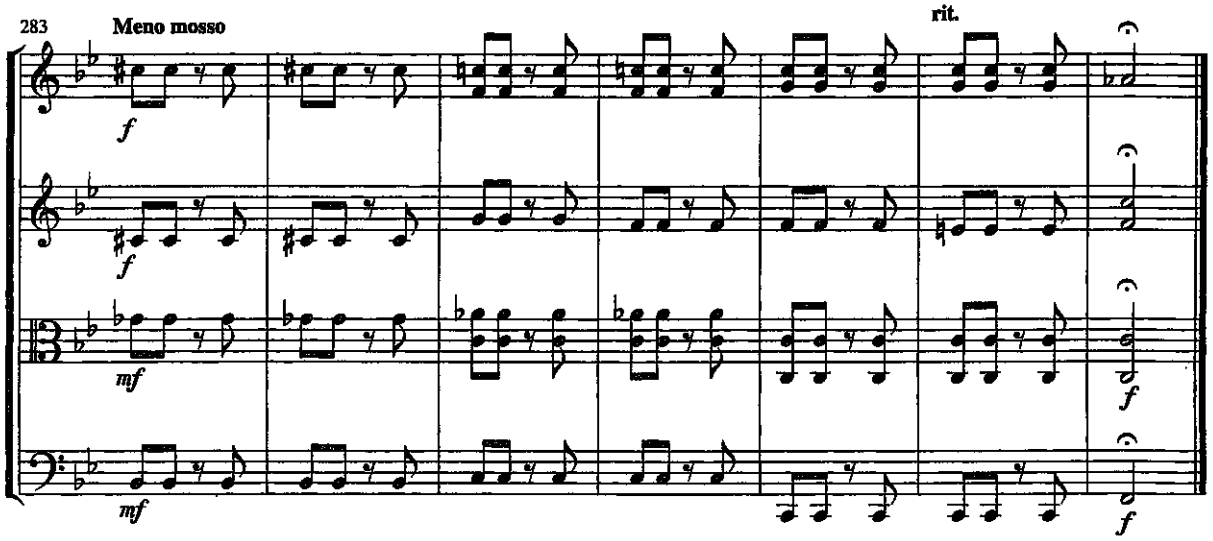

253
poco a poco cresc.
poco a poco cresc.
poco a poco cresc.


259
accel. e cresc.
accel. e cresc.
accel. e cresc.
accel. e cresc.

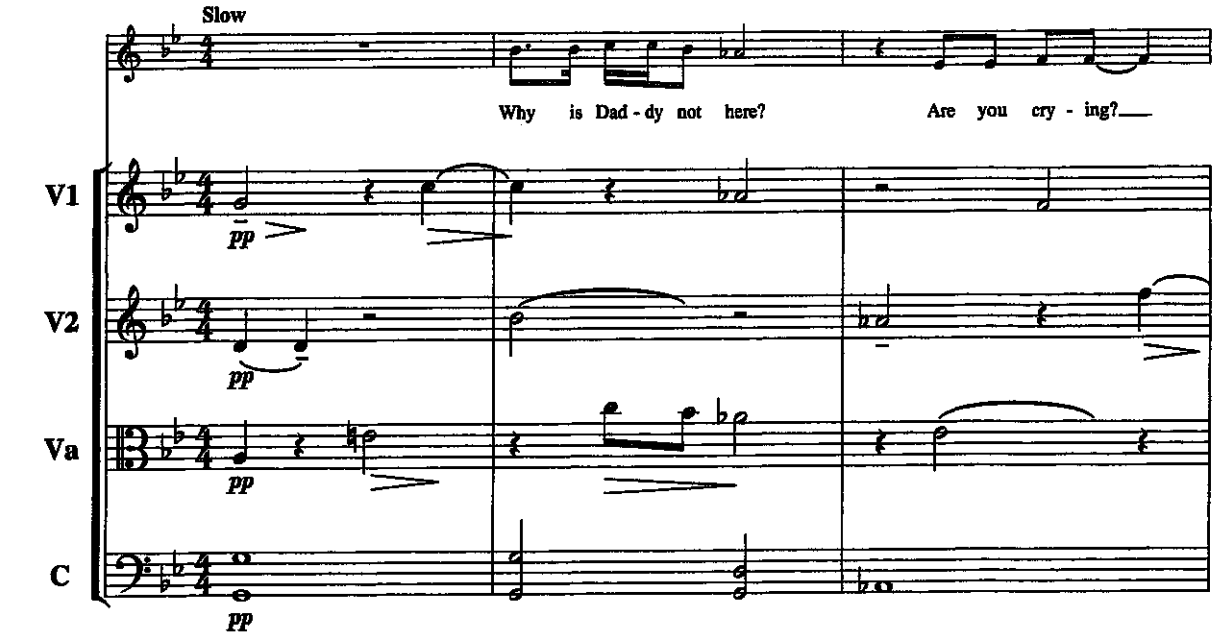

265
sempre accel.
sempre accel.
sempre accel.
sempre accel.

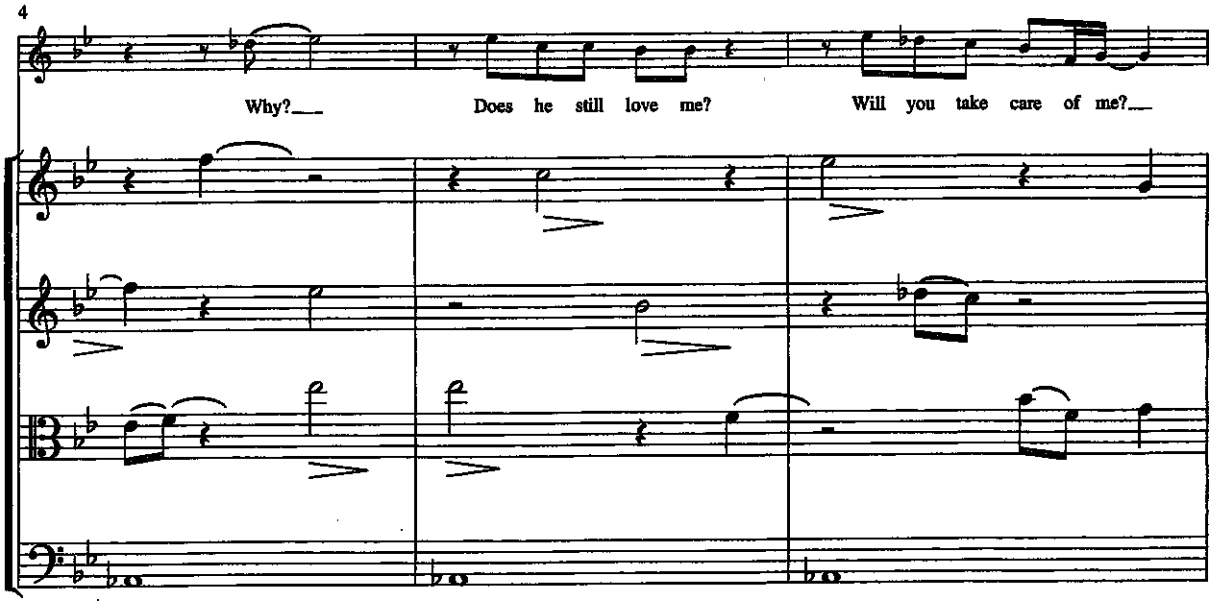

271


277
molto accel. e cresc.
molto accel. e cresc.
molto accel. e cresc.
molto accel. e cresc.


283
Meno mosso
rit.
f
f
mf
mf
f
f

Why?





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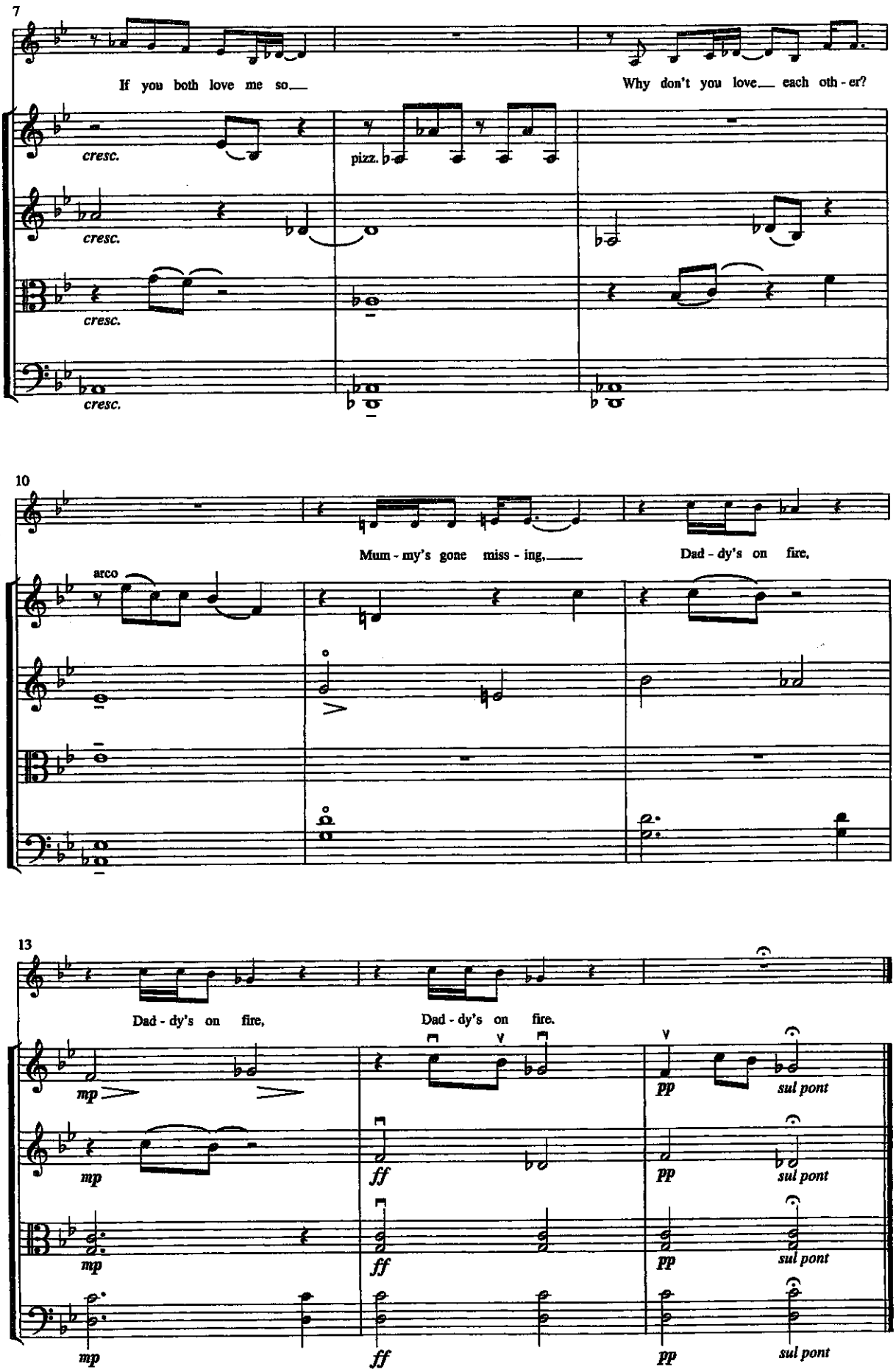
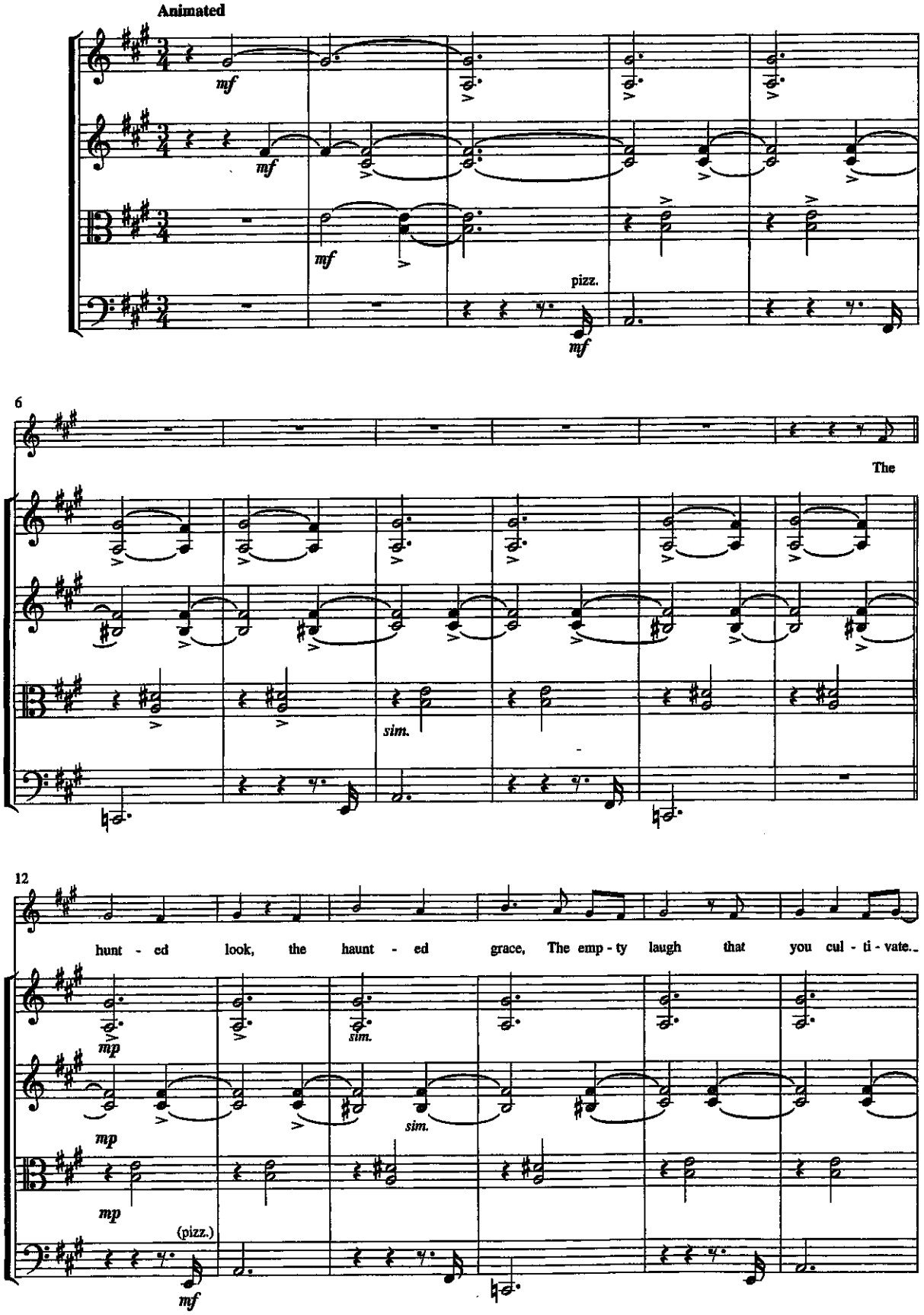

7
If you both love me so
Why don't you love each oth - er?
cresc.
pizz.
10
Mum - my's gone miss - ing,
Dad - dy's on fire,
arco
13
Dad - dy's on fire,
Dad - dy's on fire.
mp
ff
pp
sul pont

Who Do You Think You Are?



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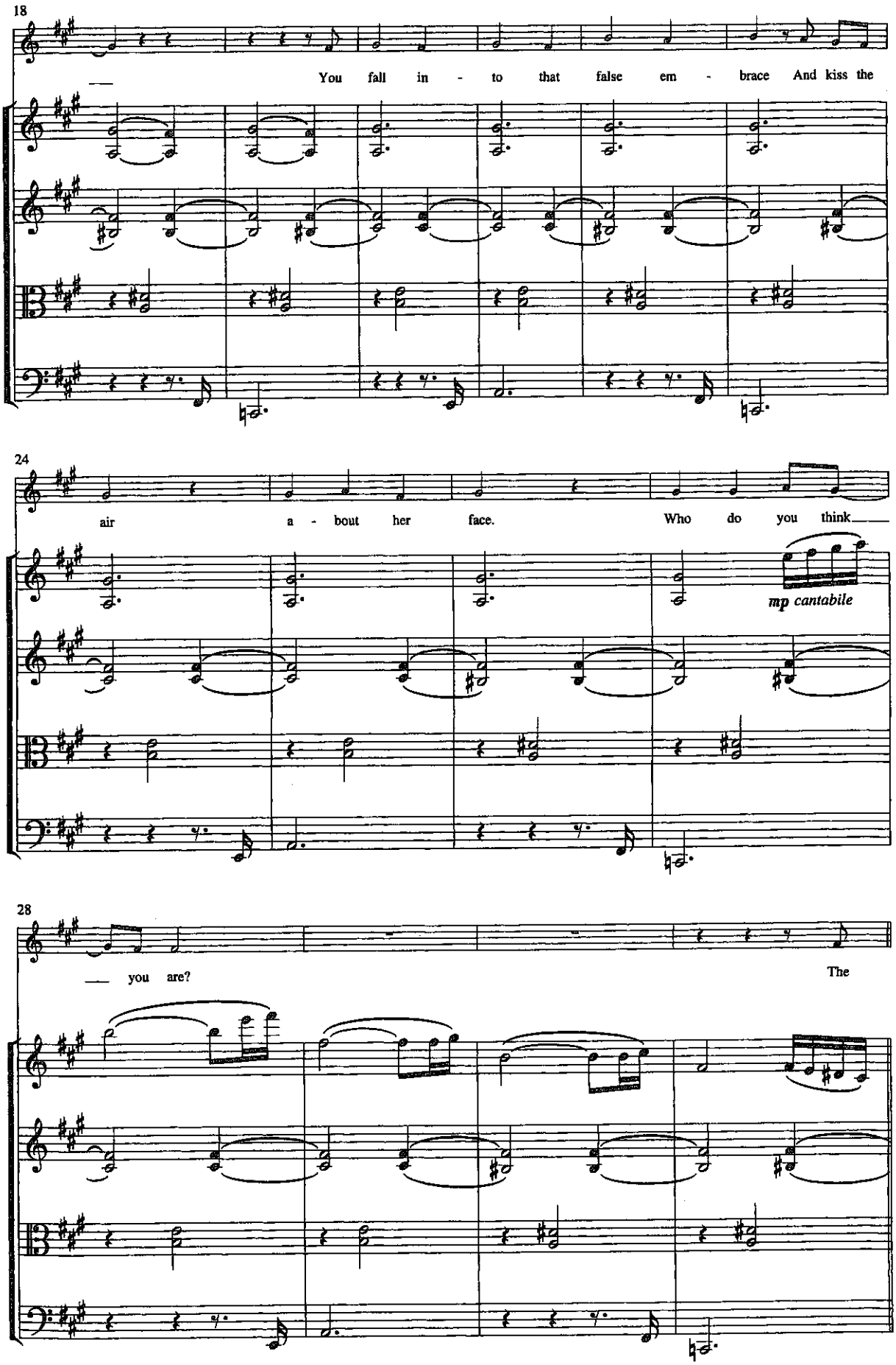
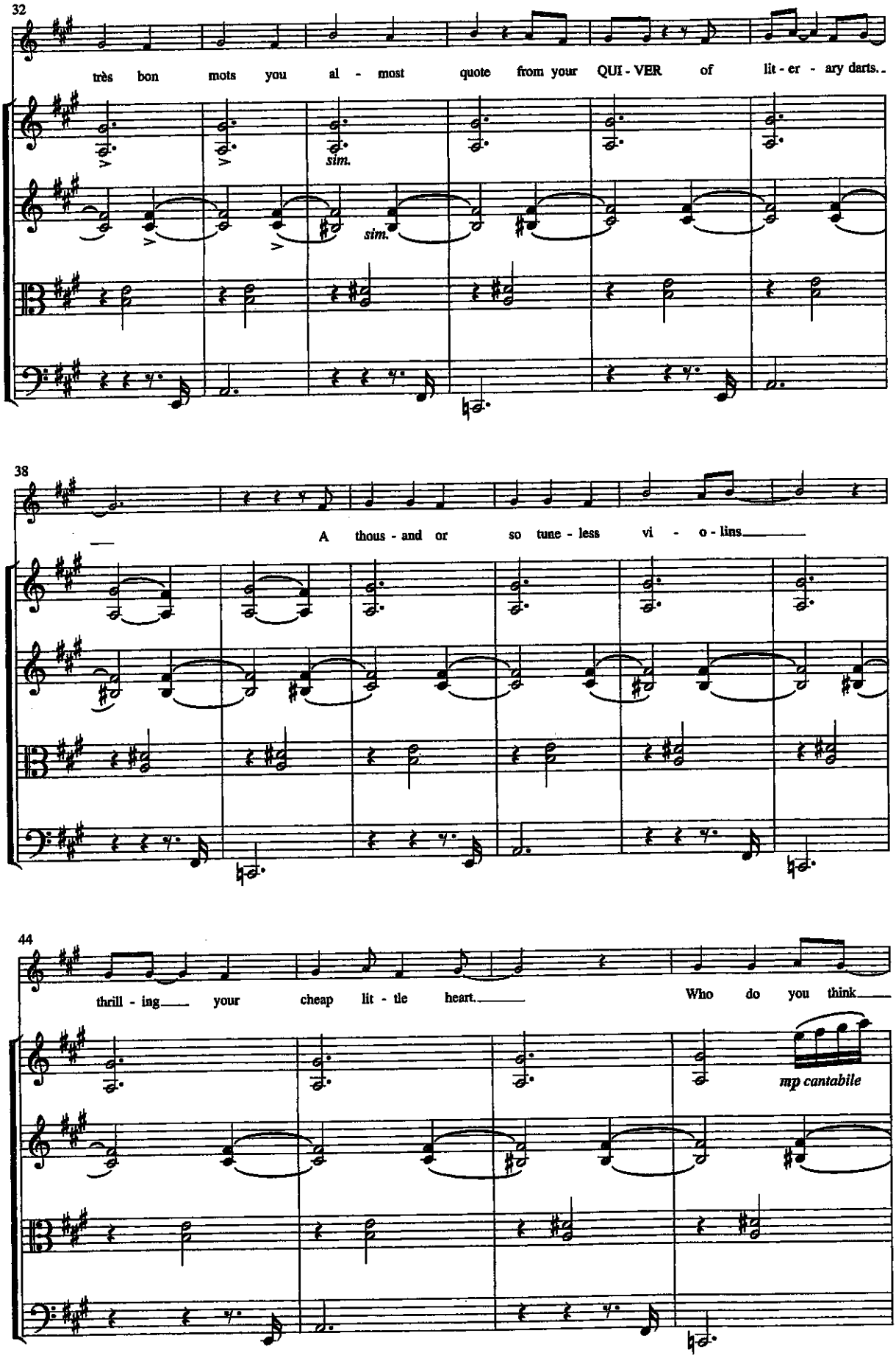
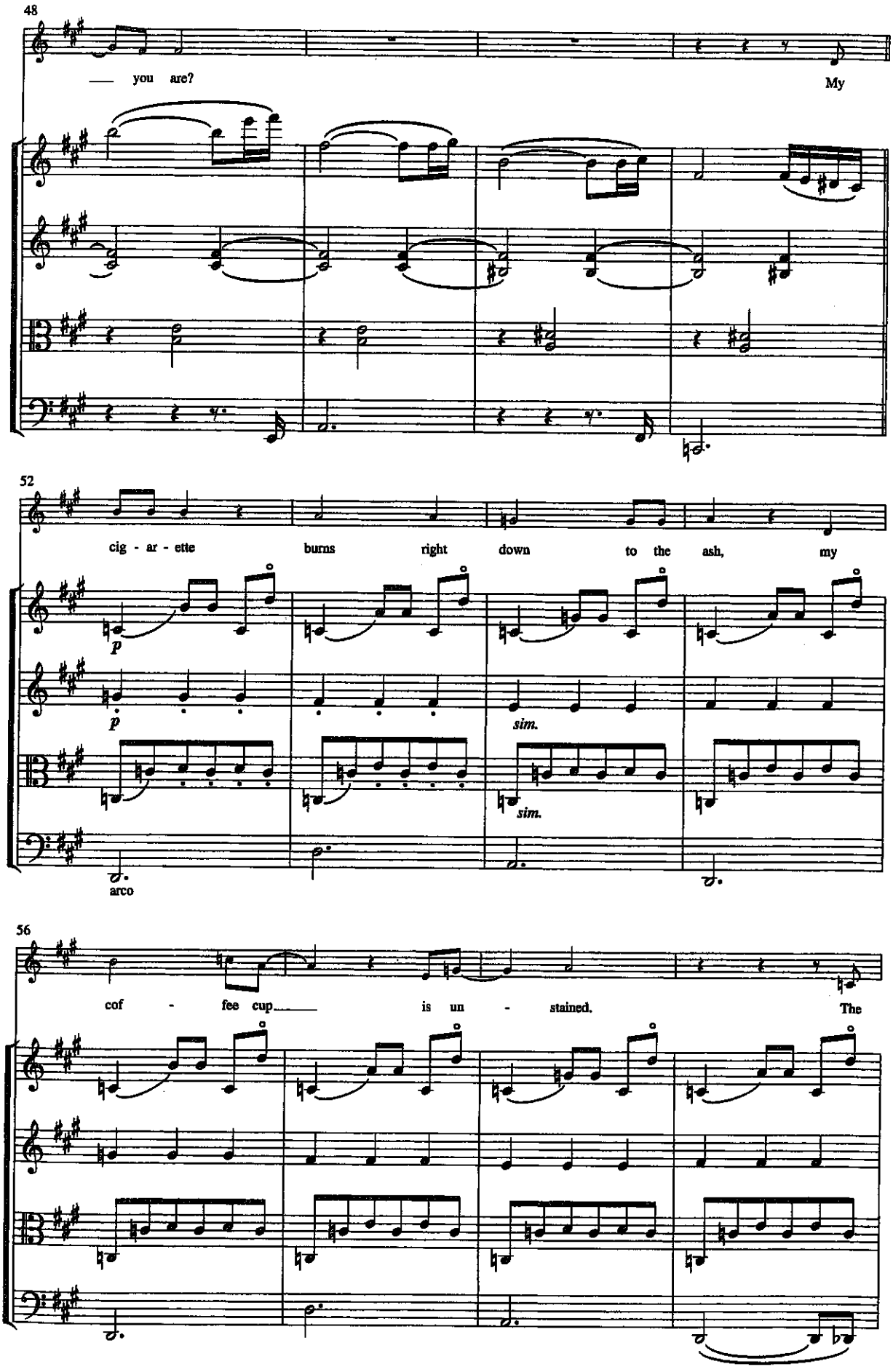
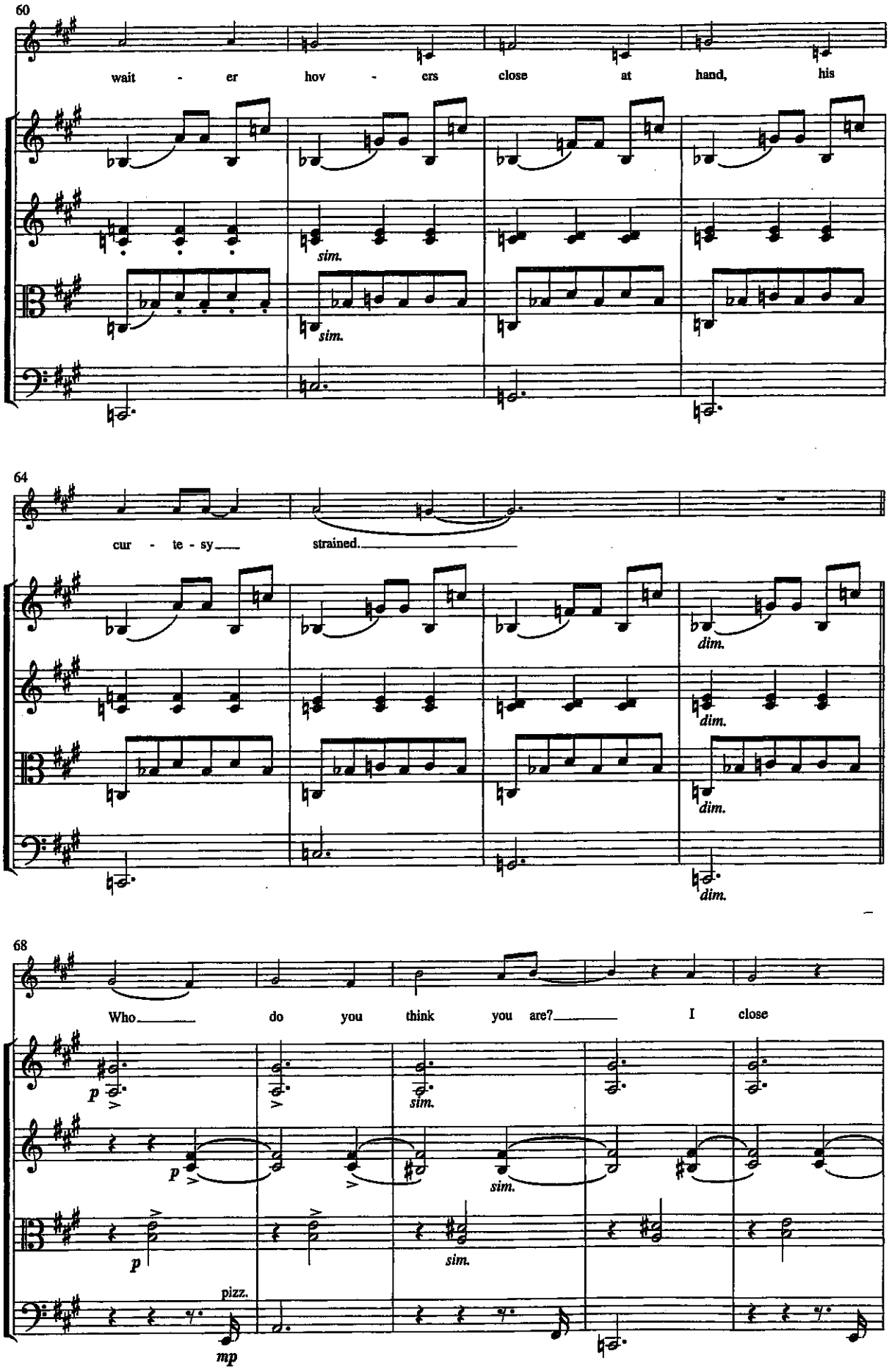
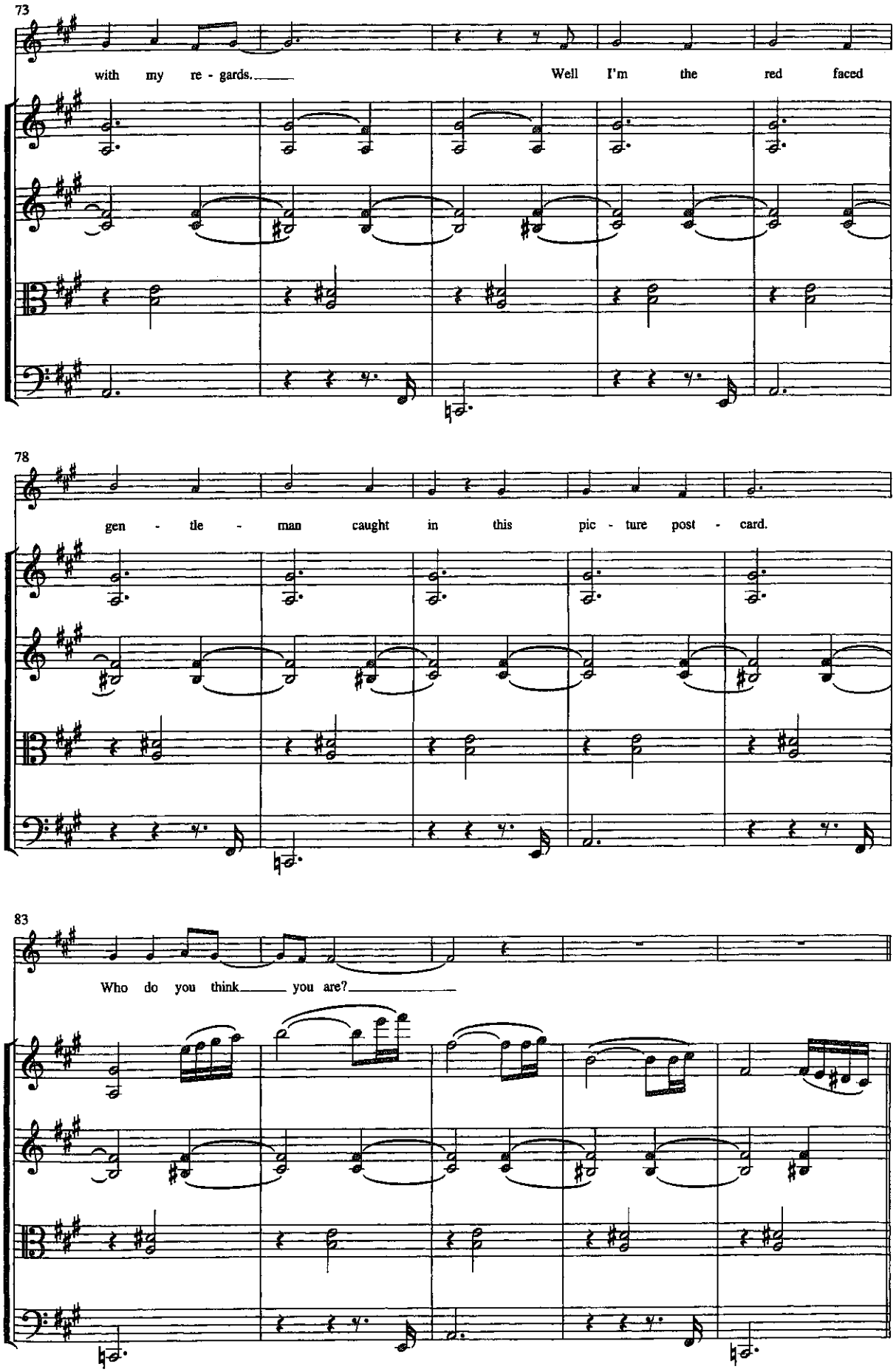
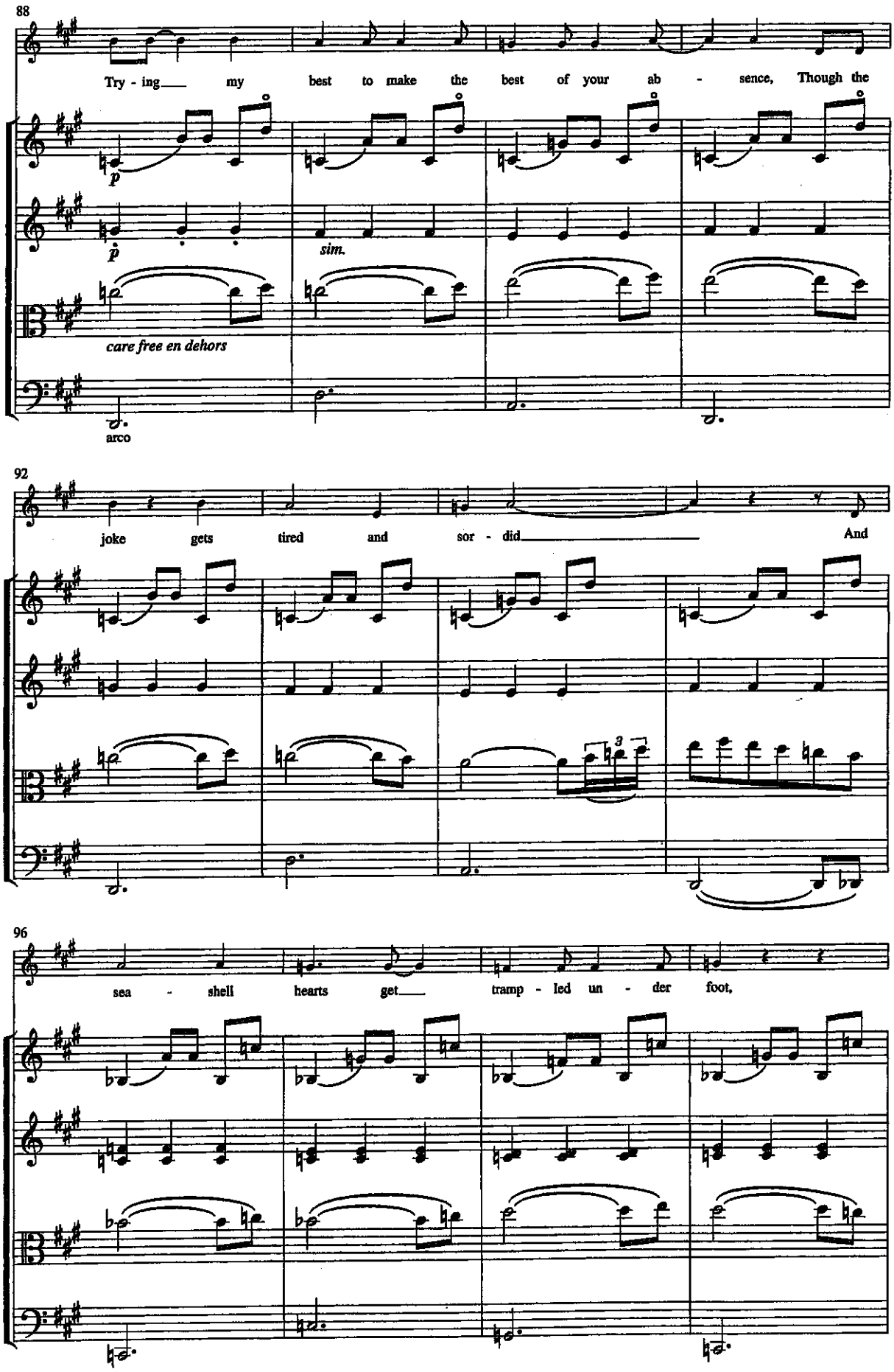

18
You fall in - to that false em - brace And kiss the
24
air a - bout her face. Who do you think
mp cantabile
28
you are? The

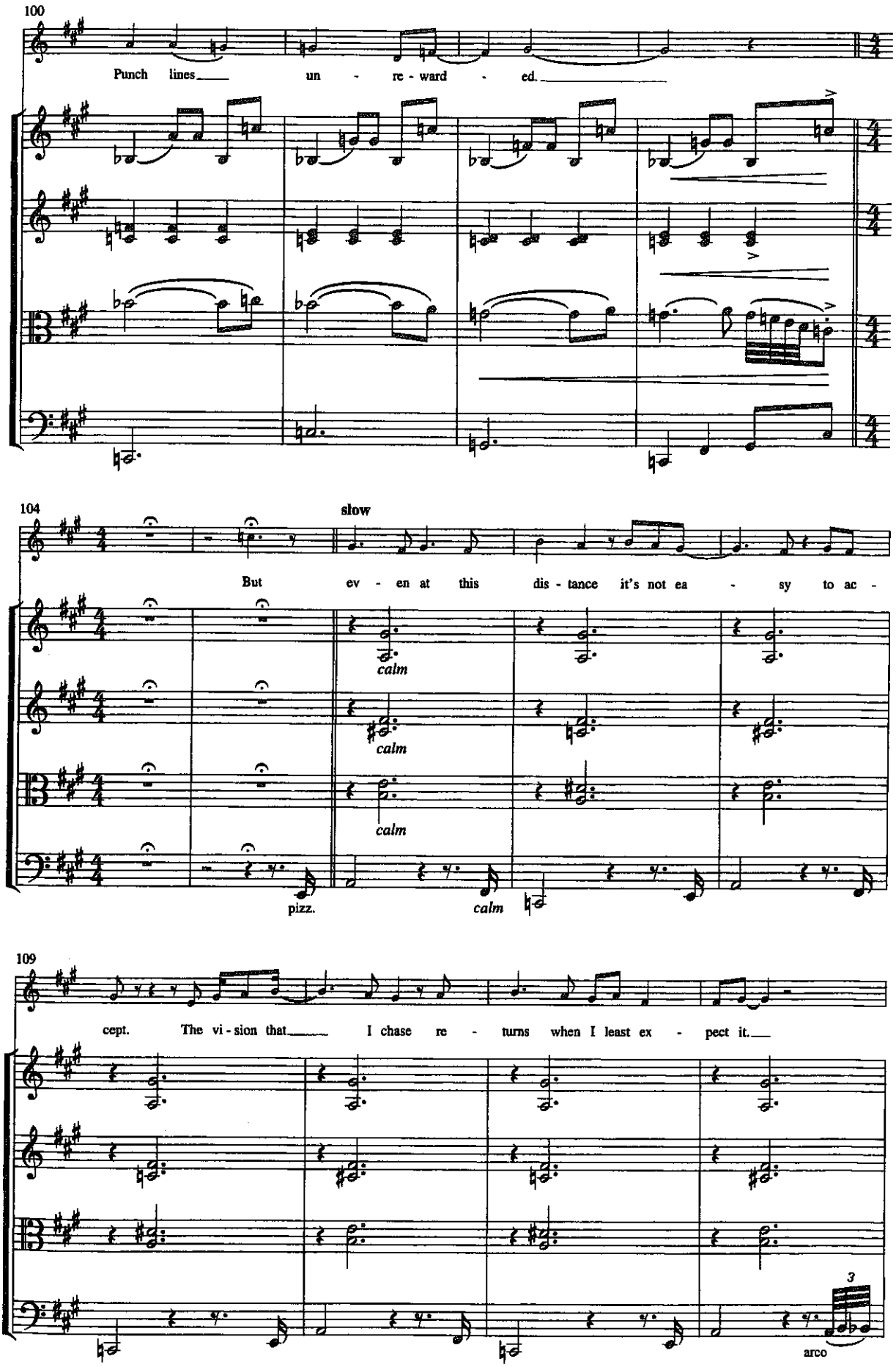

32
très bon mots you al - most quote from your QUI - VER of lit - er - ary darts.
sim.
sim.
38
A thous - and or so tune - less vi - o - lins
44
thrill - ing your cheap lit - tle heart. Who do you think
mp cantabile

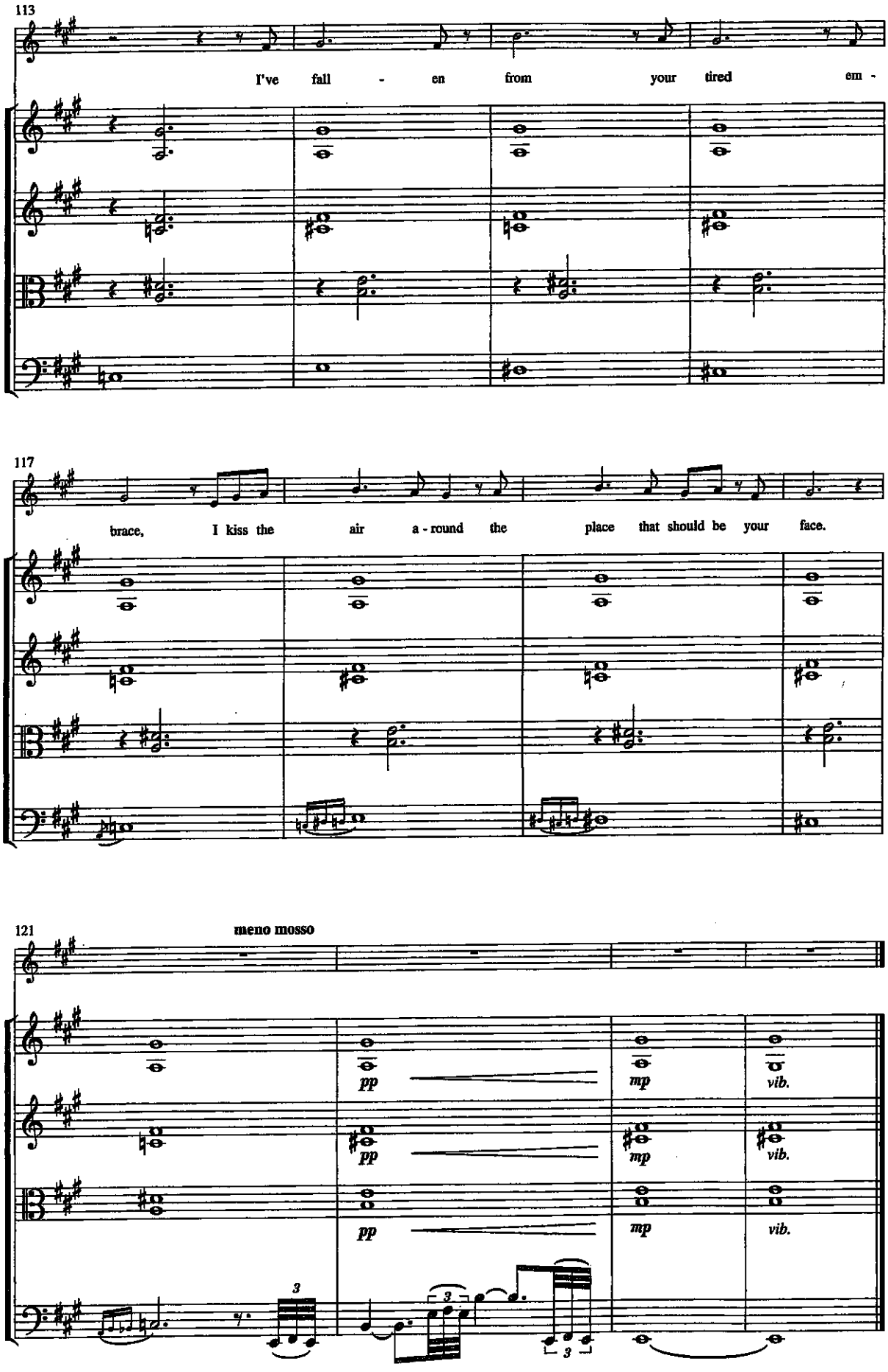

48
— you are?
My
52
cig - ar - ette
burns
right
down
to the
ash,
my
p
p
sim.
sim.
arco
56
cof - fee cup —
is un - stained.
The


60
wait - er hov - ers close at hand, his
sim.
sim.
64
cur - te - sy strained.
dim.
dim.
dim.
dim.
68
Who do you think you are? I close
p
sim.
p
sim.
p
sim.
pizz.
mp

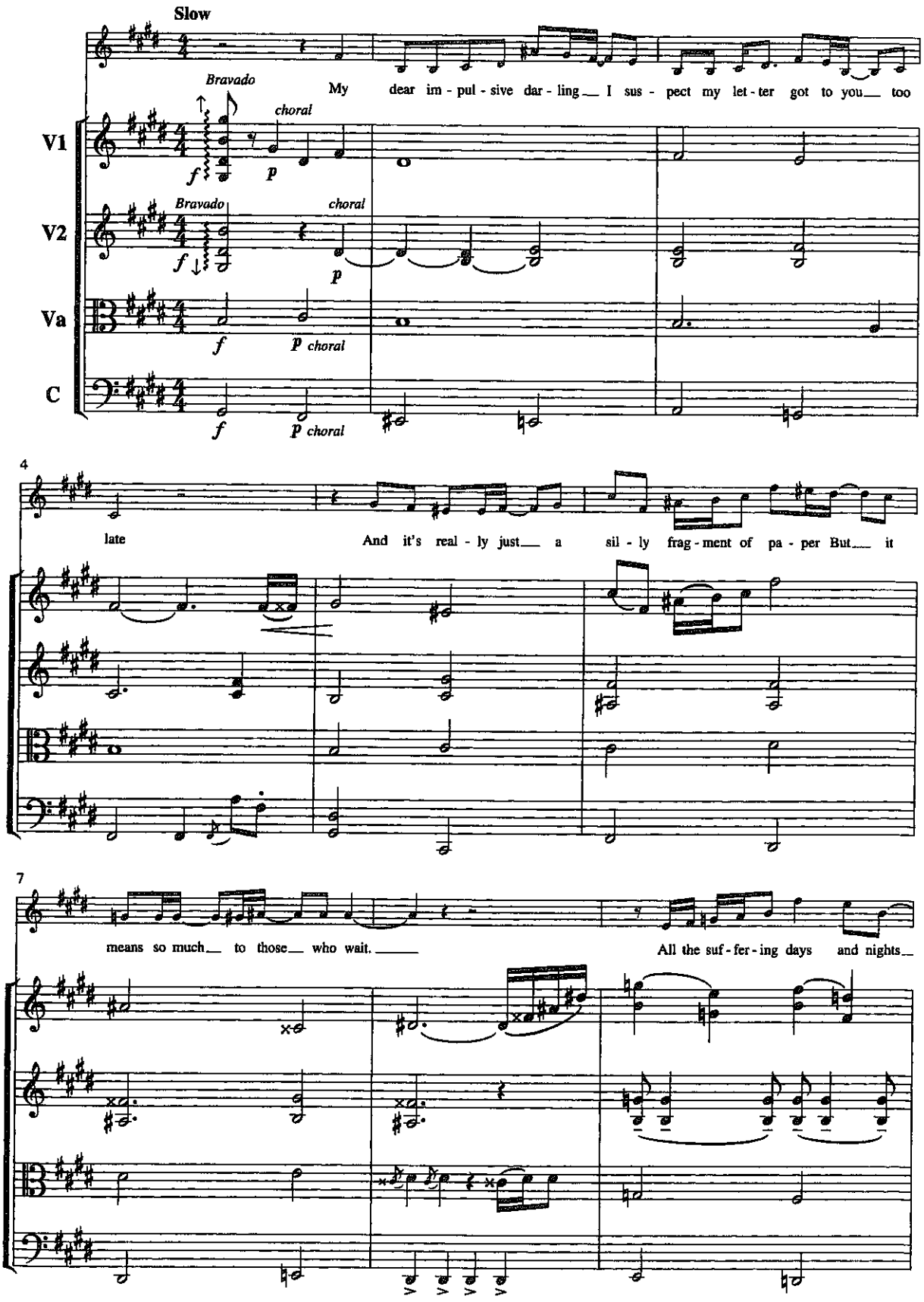

73
with my re - gards.
Well I'm the red faced
78
gen - tle - man caught in this pic - ture post - card.
83
Who do you think you are?


88
Try - ing my best to make the best of your ab - sence, Though the
p
p
sim.
care free en dehors
arco
92
joke gets tired and sor - did And
3
96
sea - shell hearts get tramp - led un - der foot,


100
Punch lines un - re - ward - ed.
104
slow
But ev - en at this dis - tance it's not ea - sy to ac -
calm
calm
calm
pizz.
calm
109
cept. The vi - sion that I chase re - turns when I least ex - pect it.
3
arco


113
I've fall - en from your tired em -
117
brace, I kiss the air a - round the place that should be your face.
121
meno mosso
pp
mp
vib.

Taking My Life In Your Hands



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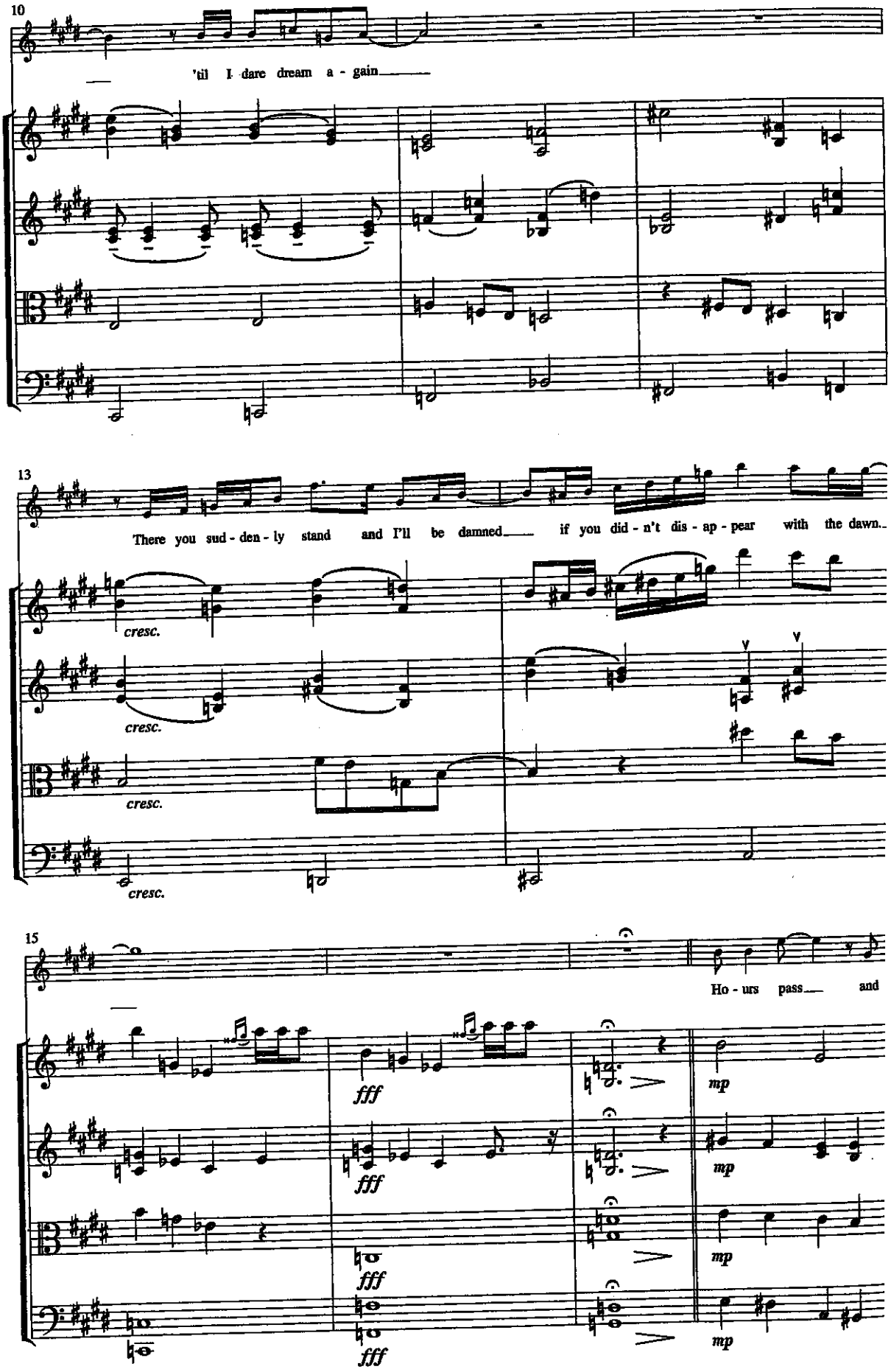
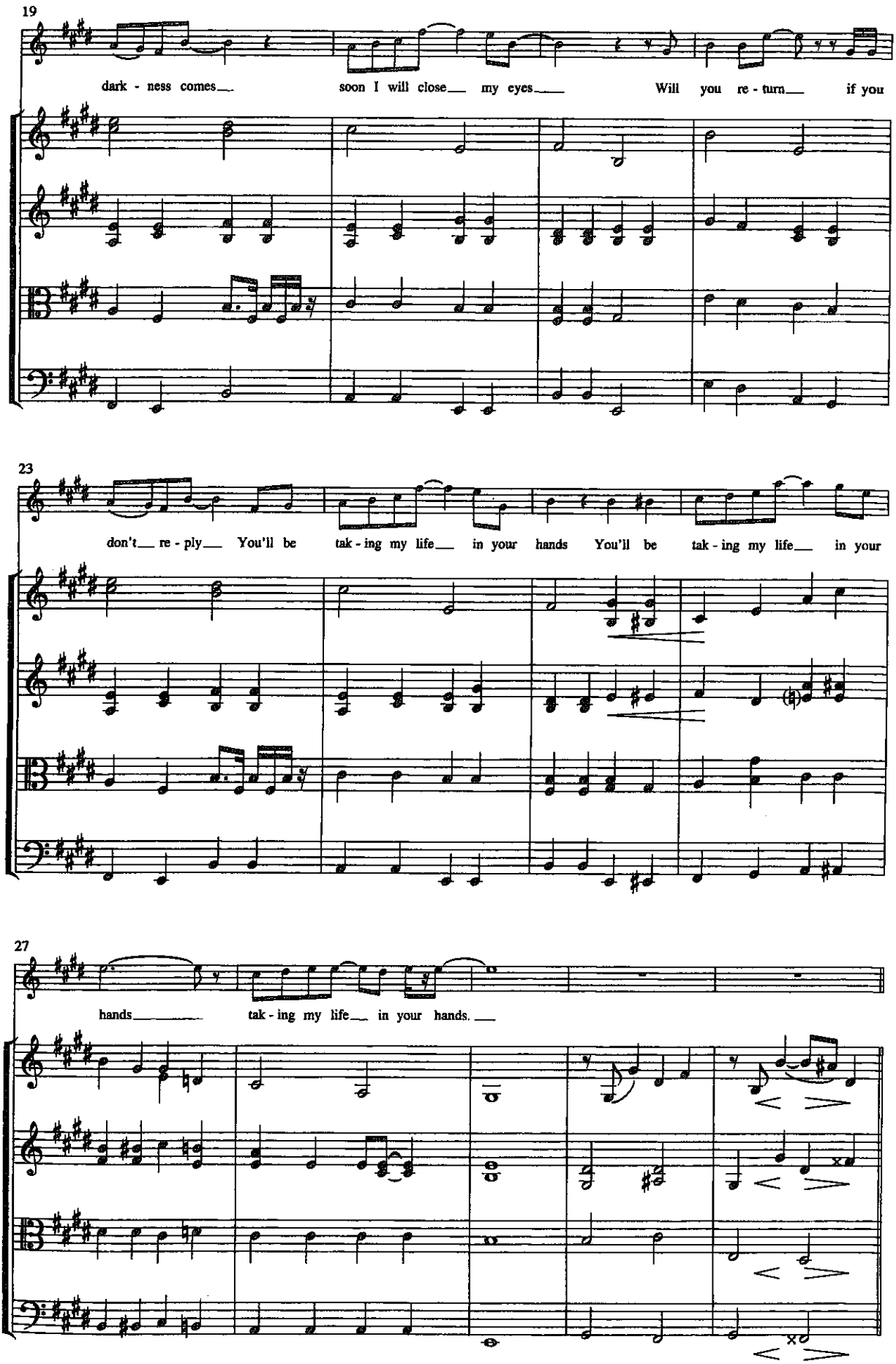
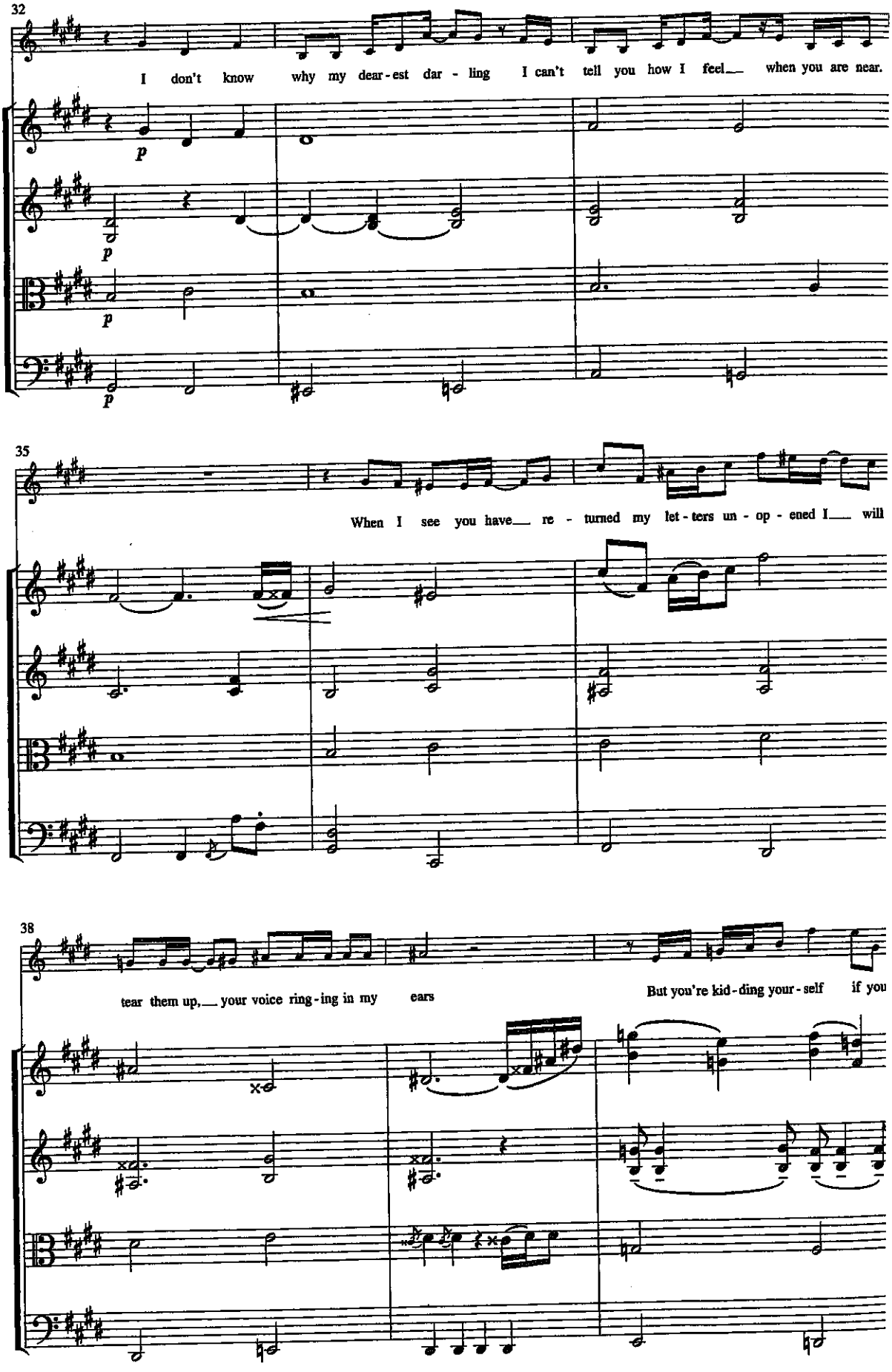
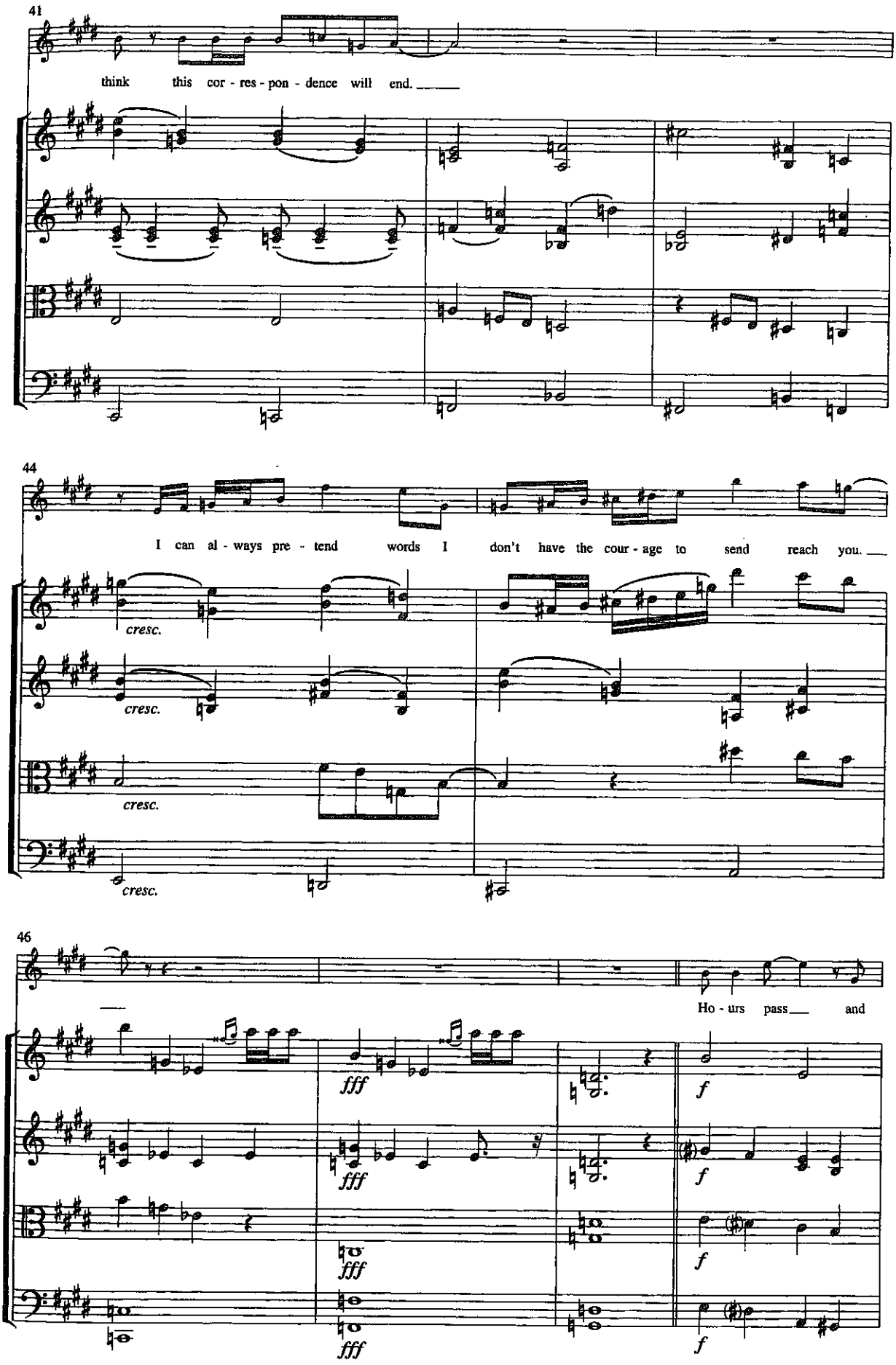
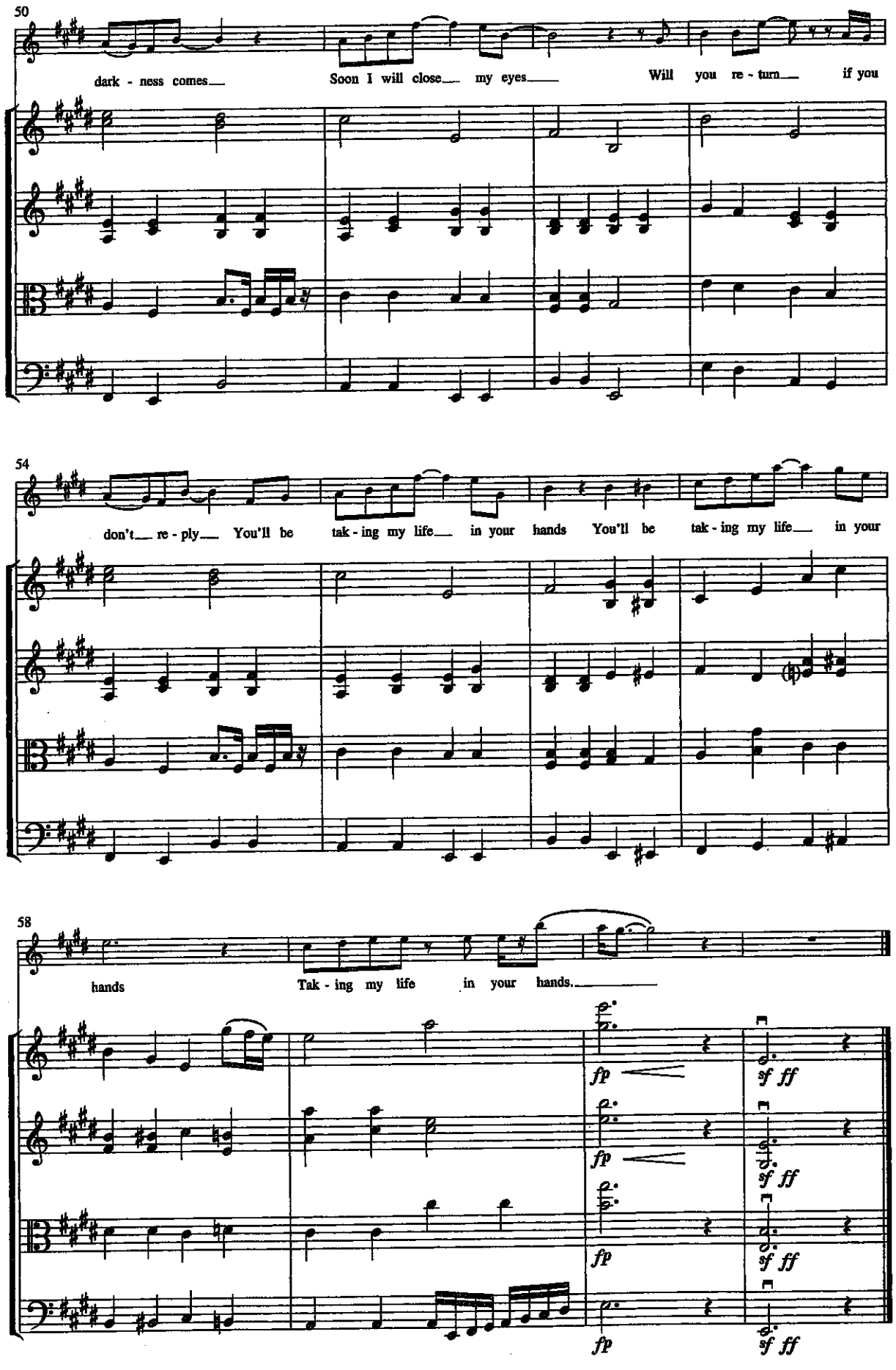

10
'til I dare dream a - gain
13
There you sud - den - ly stand and I'll be damned if you did - n't dis - ap - pear with the dawn.
cresc.
cresc.
cresc.
cresc.
15
Ho - urs pass and
fff
fff
fff
fff
mp
mp
mp
mp

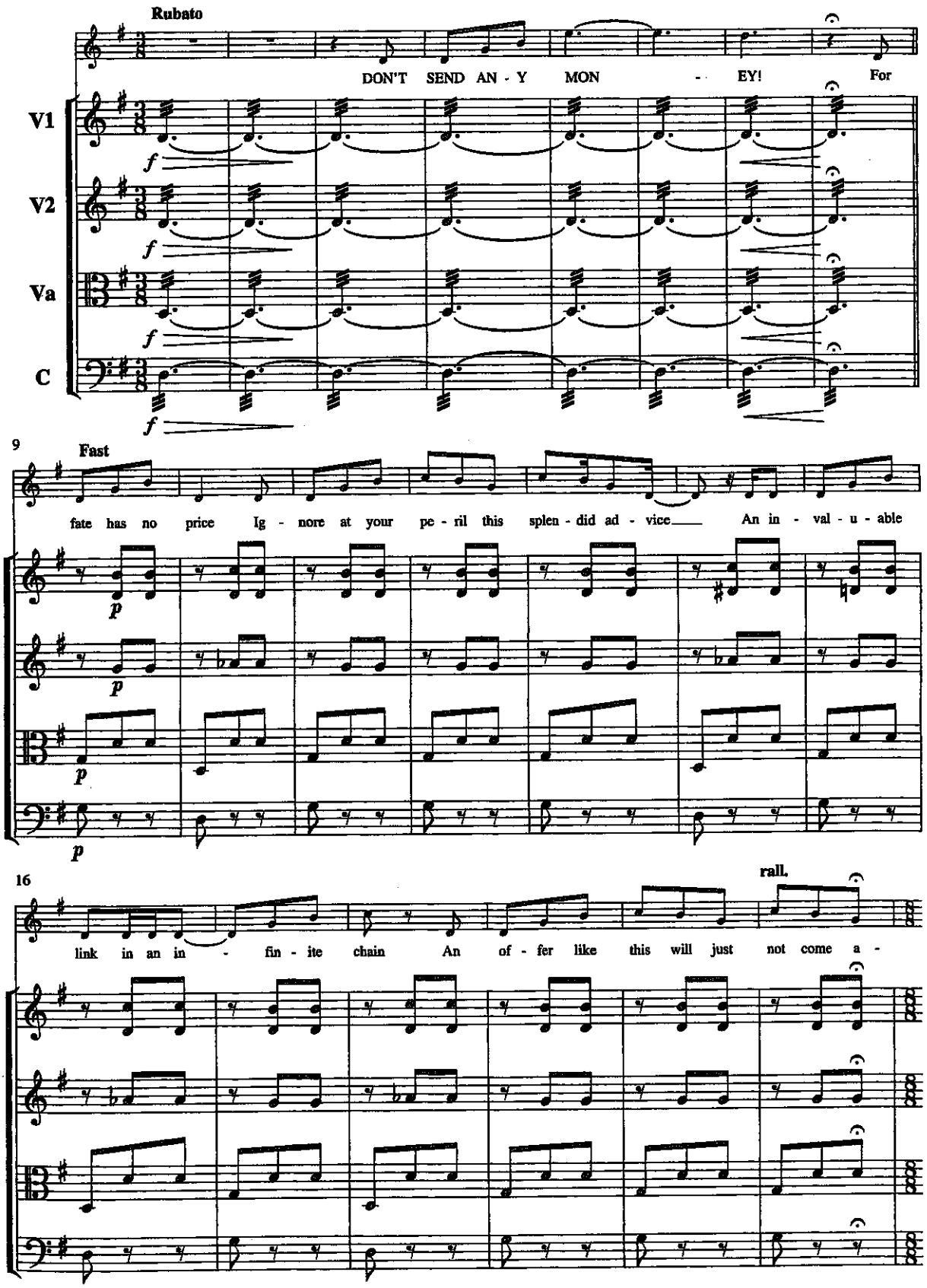

19
dark - ness comes soon I will close my eyes Will you re - turn if you
23
don't re - ply You'll be tak - ing my life in your hands You'll be tak - ing my life in your
27
hands tak - ing my life in your hands.


32
I don't know why my dear-est dar - ling I can't tell you how I feel when you are near.
p
35
When I see you have re - turned my let-ters un - op - ened I will
38
tear them up, your voice ring-ing in my ears
But you're kid-ding your-self if you


41
think this cor - res - pon - dence will end.
44
I can al - ways pre - tend words I don't have the cour - age to send reach you.
cresc.
cresc.
cresc.
cresc.
46
Ho - urs pass and
fff
fff
fff
fff
f
f
f
f


50
dark - ness comes
Soon I will close my eyes
Will you re - turn
if you
54
don't re - ply
You'll be tak - ing my life
in your hands
You'll be tak - ing my life
in your
58
hands
Tak - ing my life in your hands.
fp
sf ff

This Offer Is Unrepeatable



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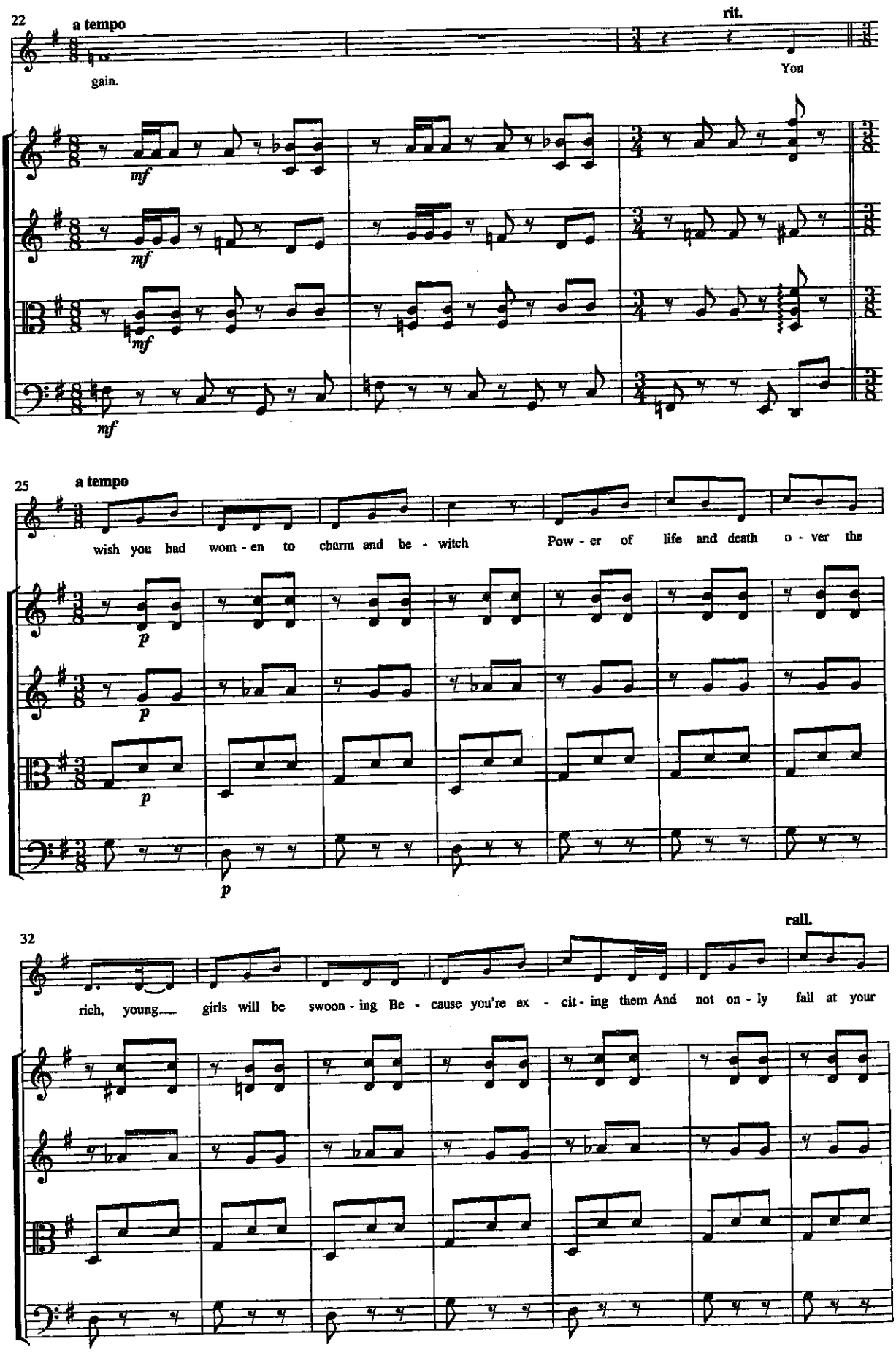
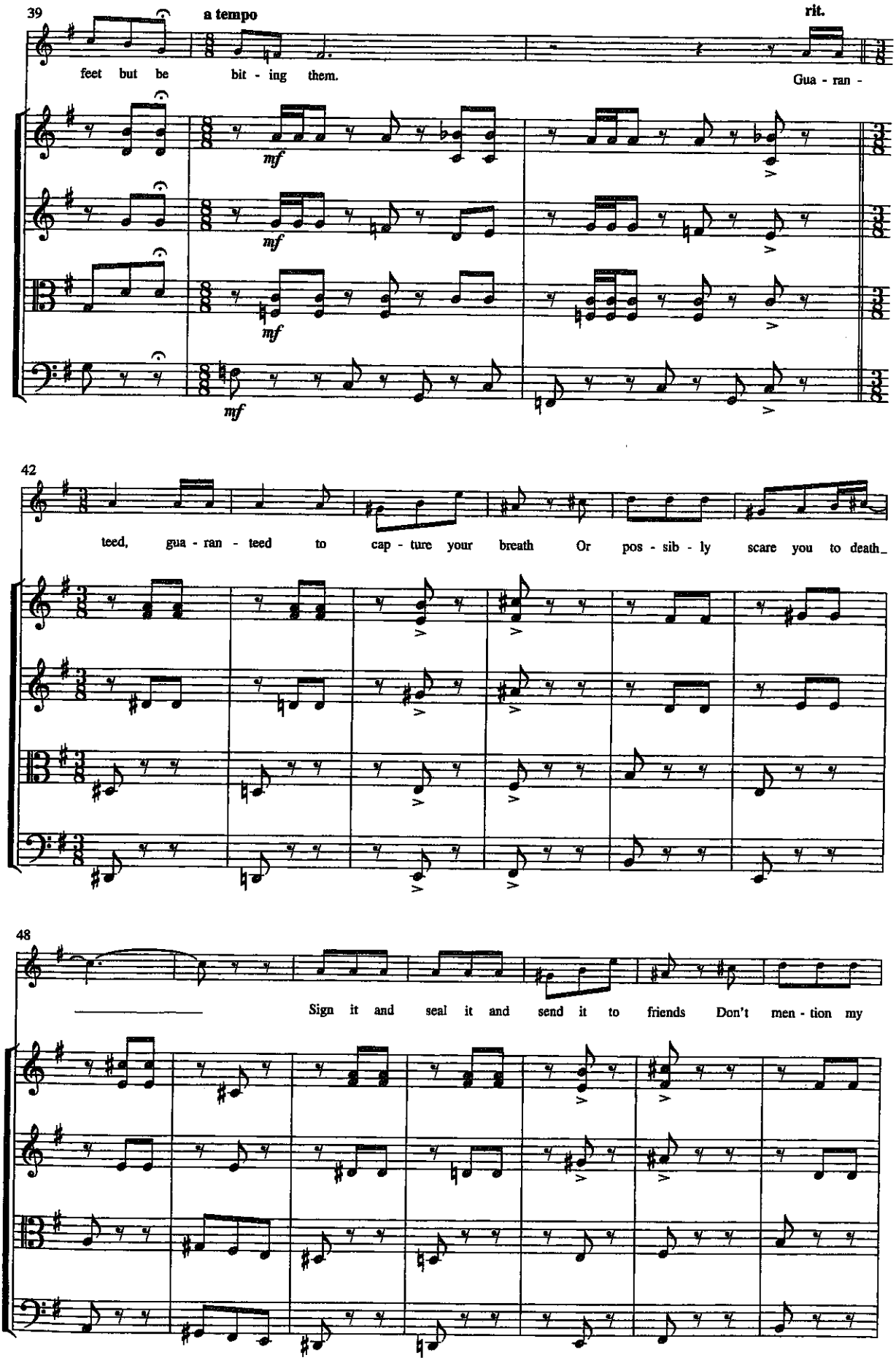
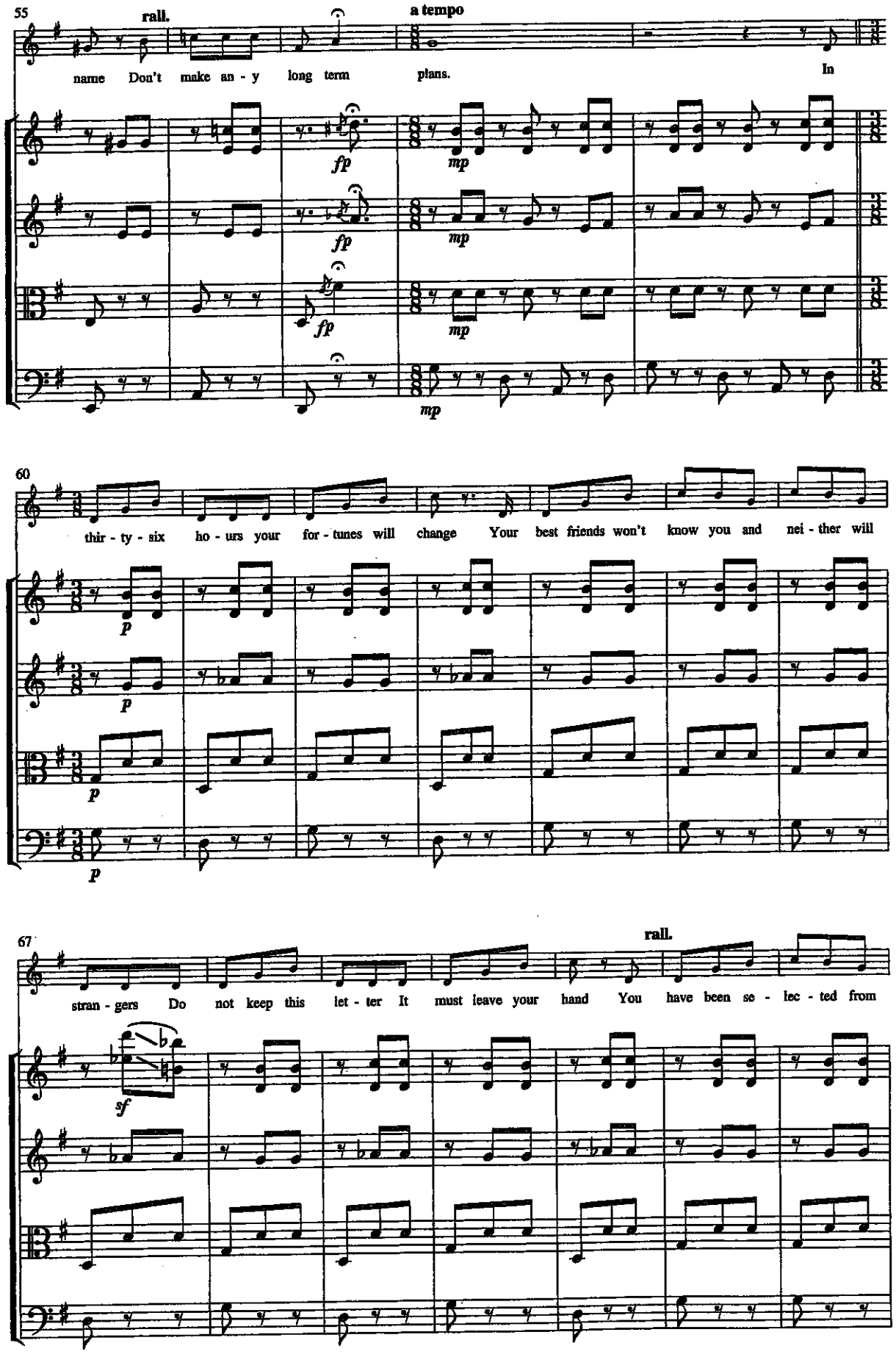
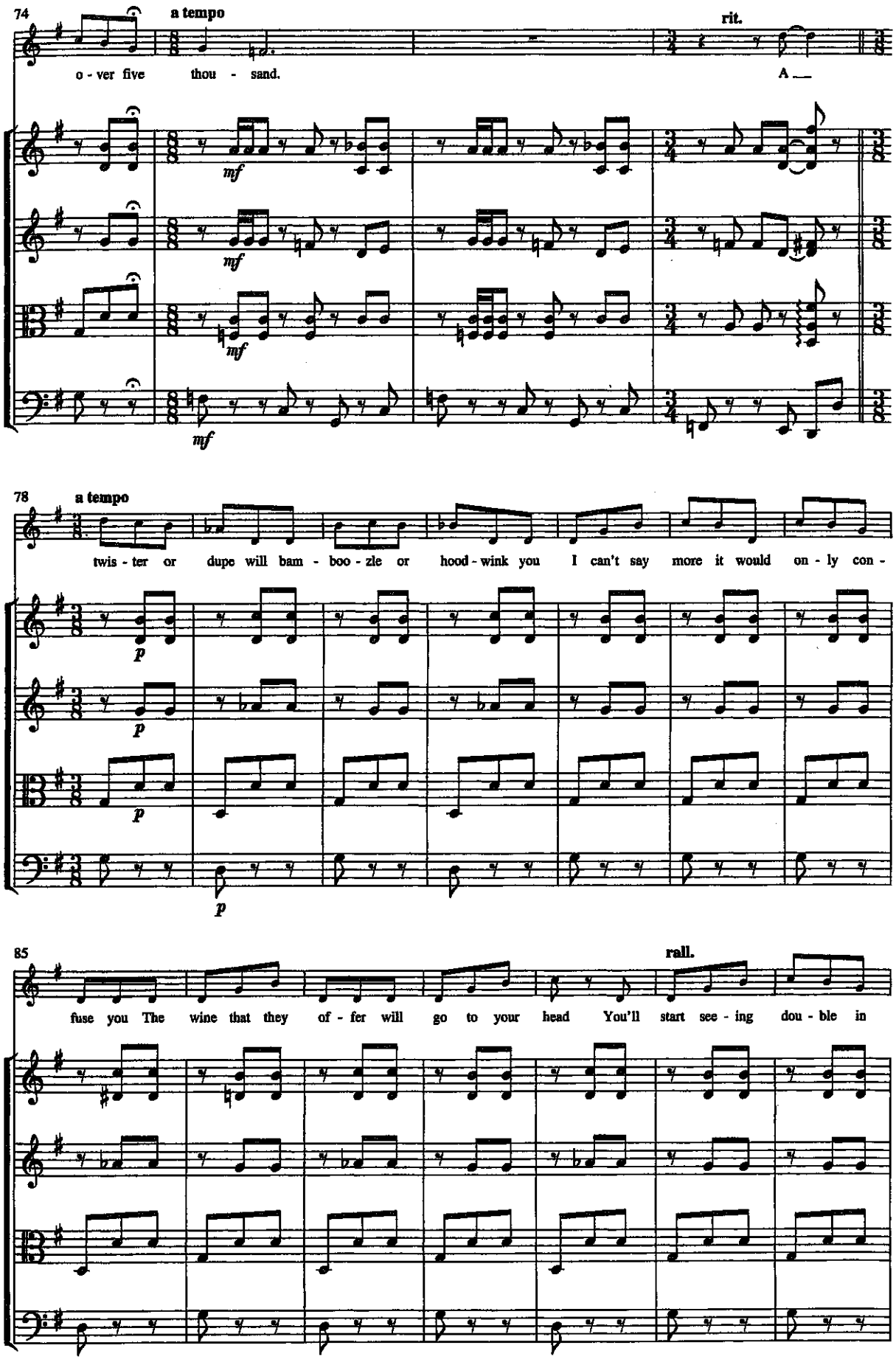
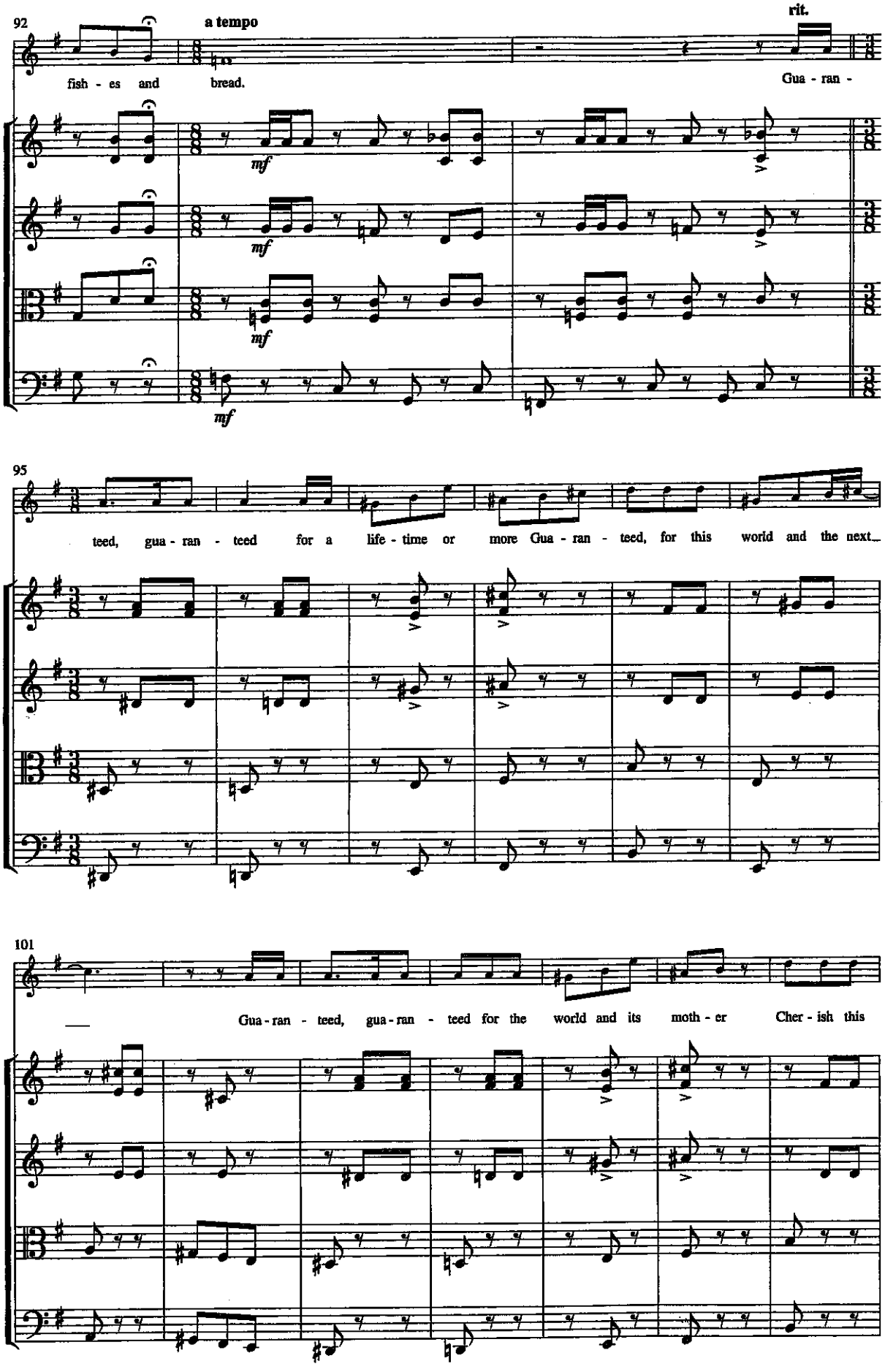
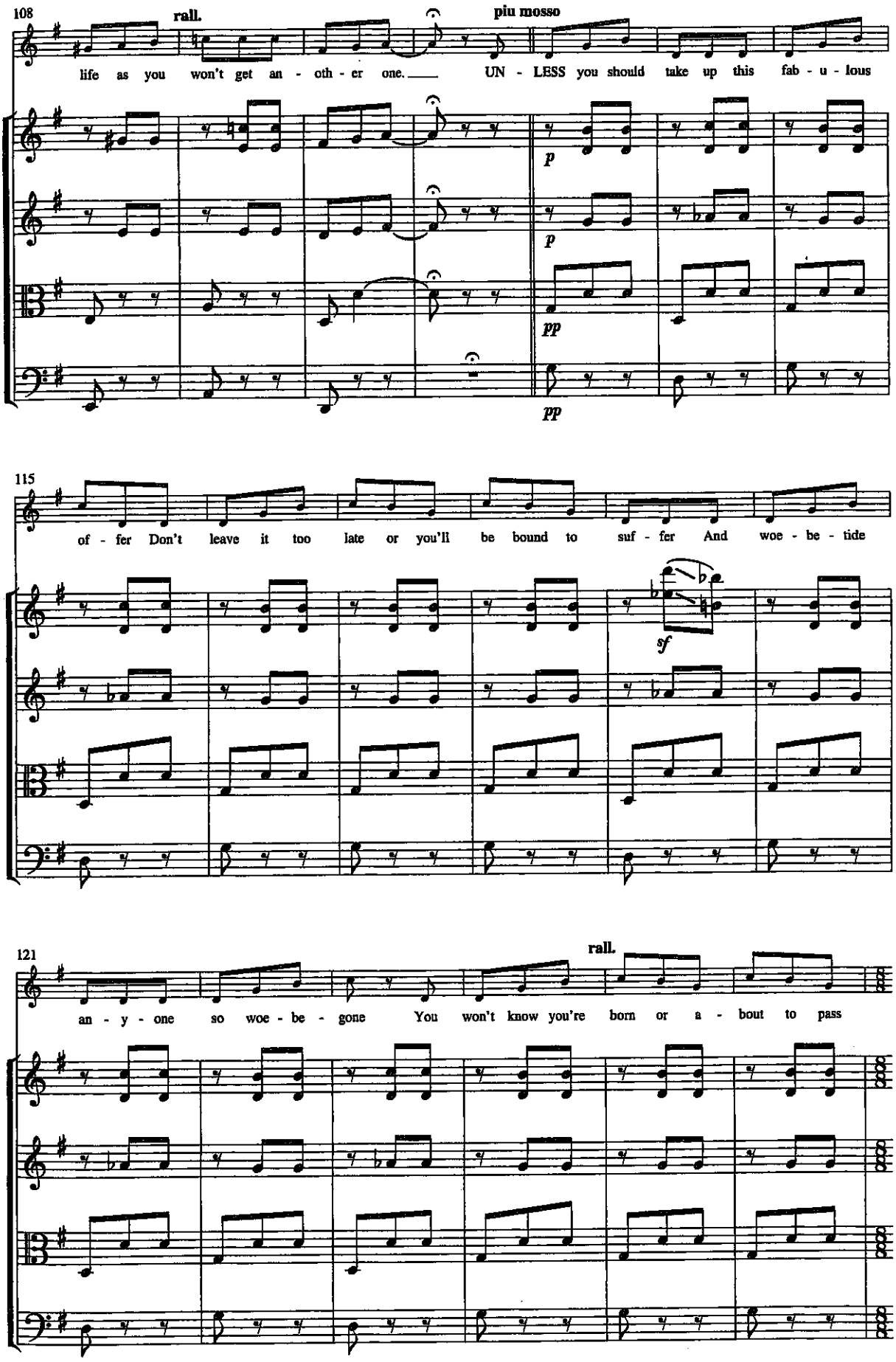

22
a tempo
rit.
gain.
You
mf
mf
mf
mf
25
a tempo
wish you had wom - en to charm and be - witch
Pow - er of life and death o - ver the
p
p
p
p
32
rall.
rich, young girls will be swoon - ing Be - cause you're ex - cit - ing them And not on - ly fall at your

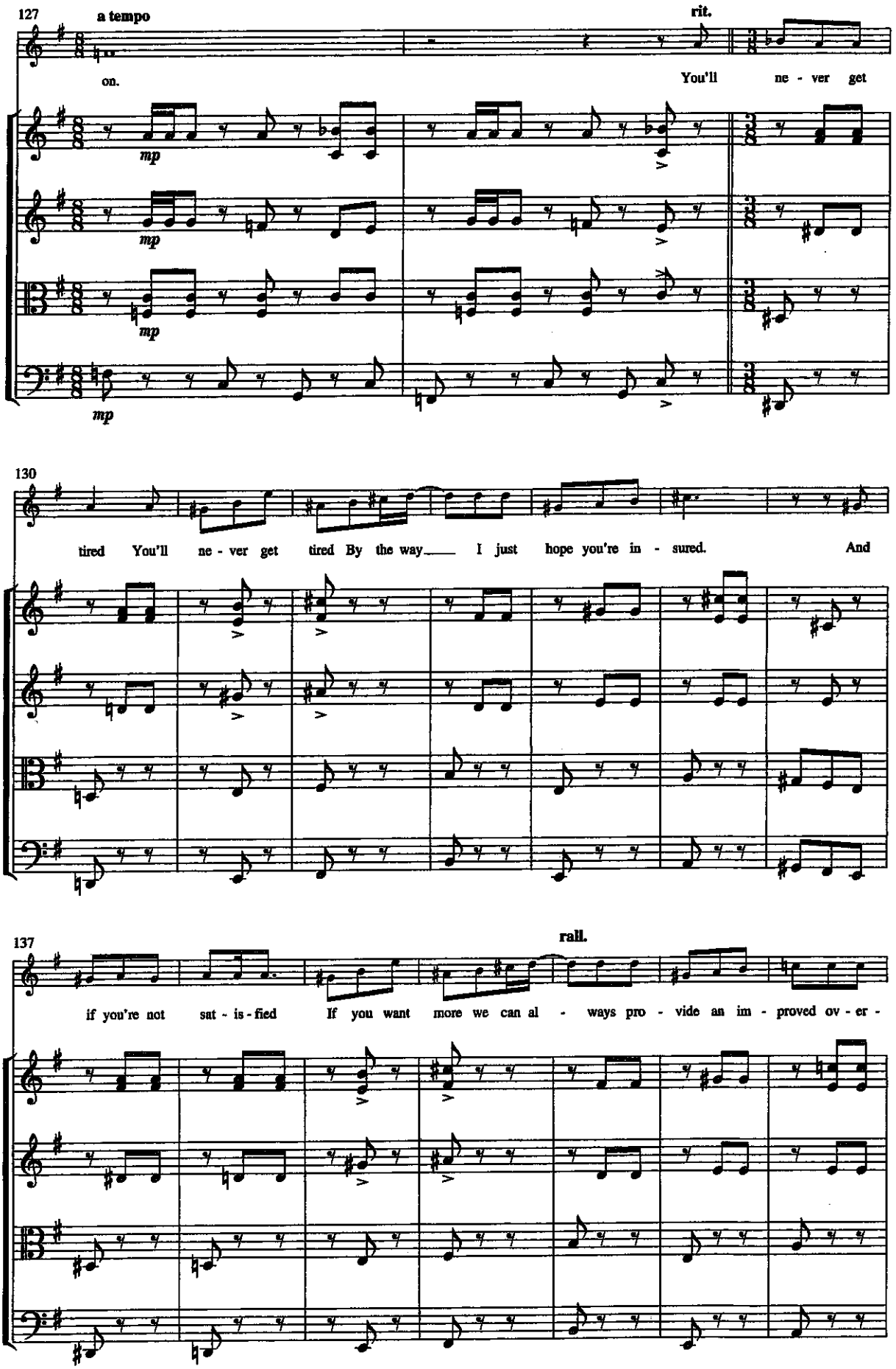

39
a tempo
rit.
feet but be bit - ing them.
Gua - ran -
mf
42
teed, gua - ran - teed to cap - ture your breath Or pos - sib - ly scare you to death_
48
Sign it and seal it and send it to friends Don't men - tion my

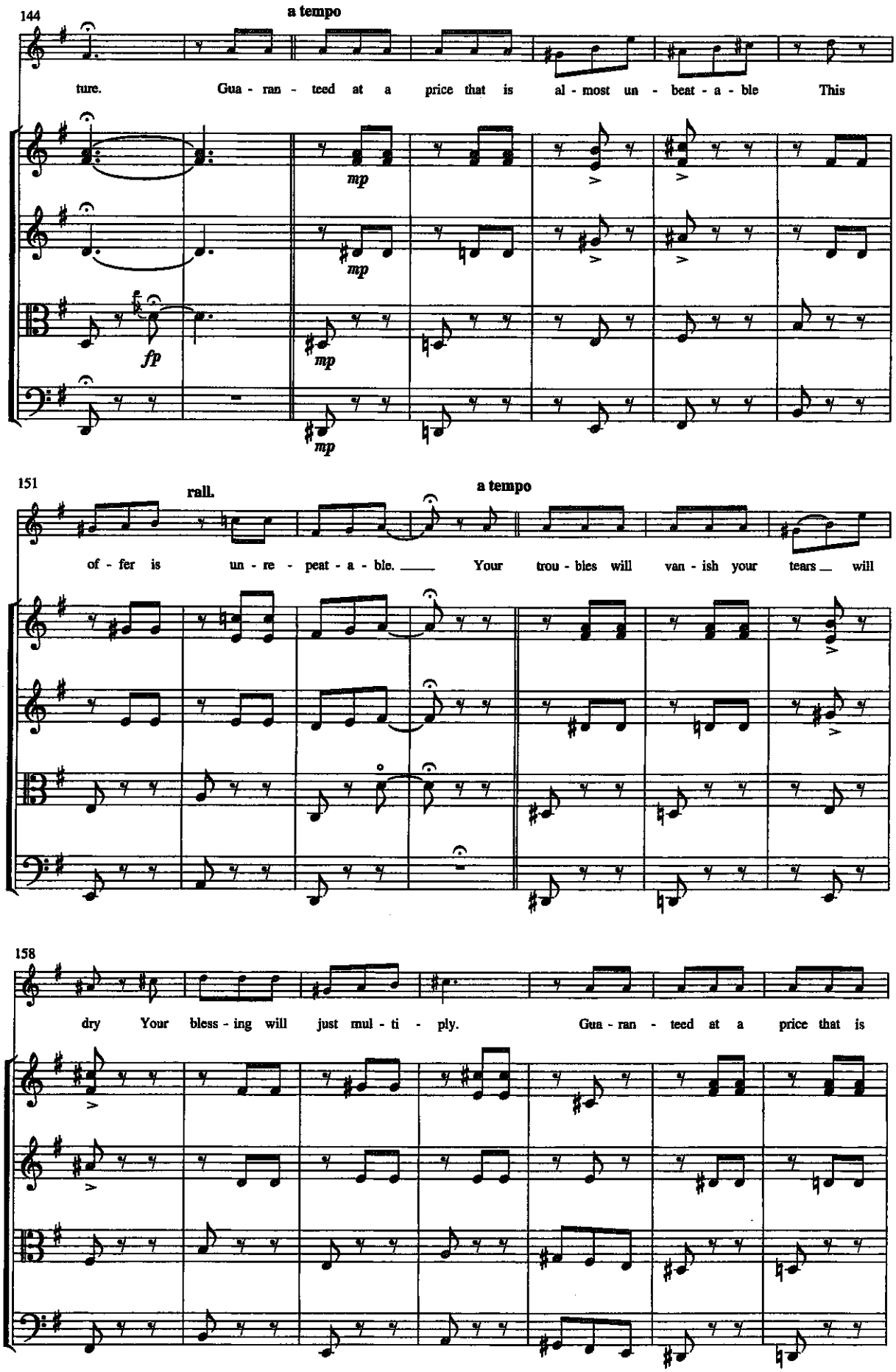

55
rall.
a tempo
name Don't make an - y long term plans. In
fp
mp
60
thir - ty - six ho - urs your for - tunes will change Your best friends won't know you and nei - ther will
p
67
rall.
stran - gers Do not keep this let - ter It must leave your hand You have been se - lec - ted from
sf

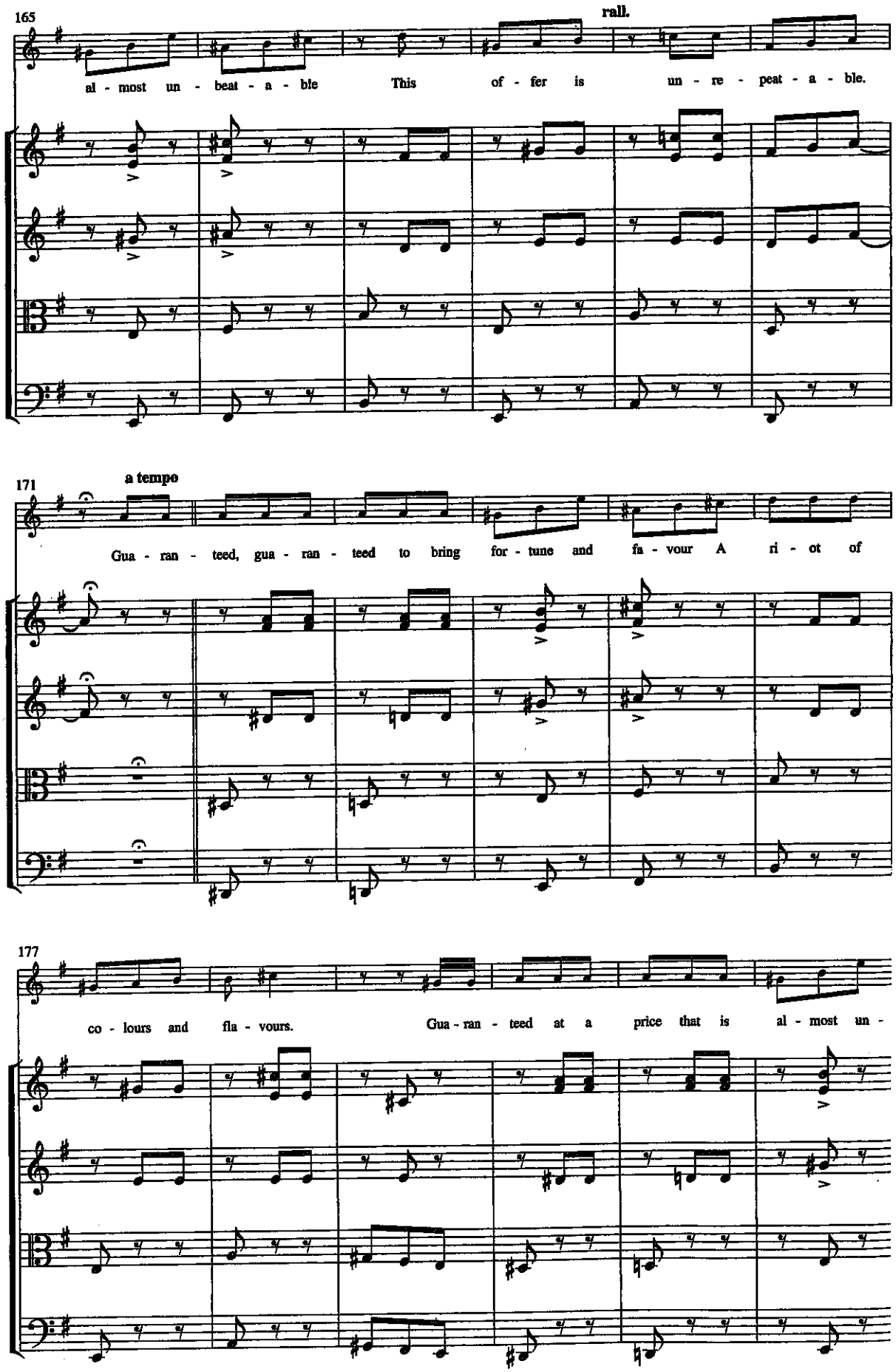

74
a tempo
rit.
o - ver five thou - sand.
A
mf
78
a tempo
twis - ter or dupe will bam - boo - zle or hood - wink you I can't say more it would on - ly con -
p
85
rall.
fuse you The wine that they of - fer will go to your head You'll start see - ing dou - ble in

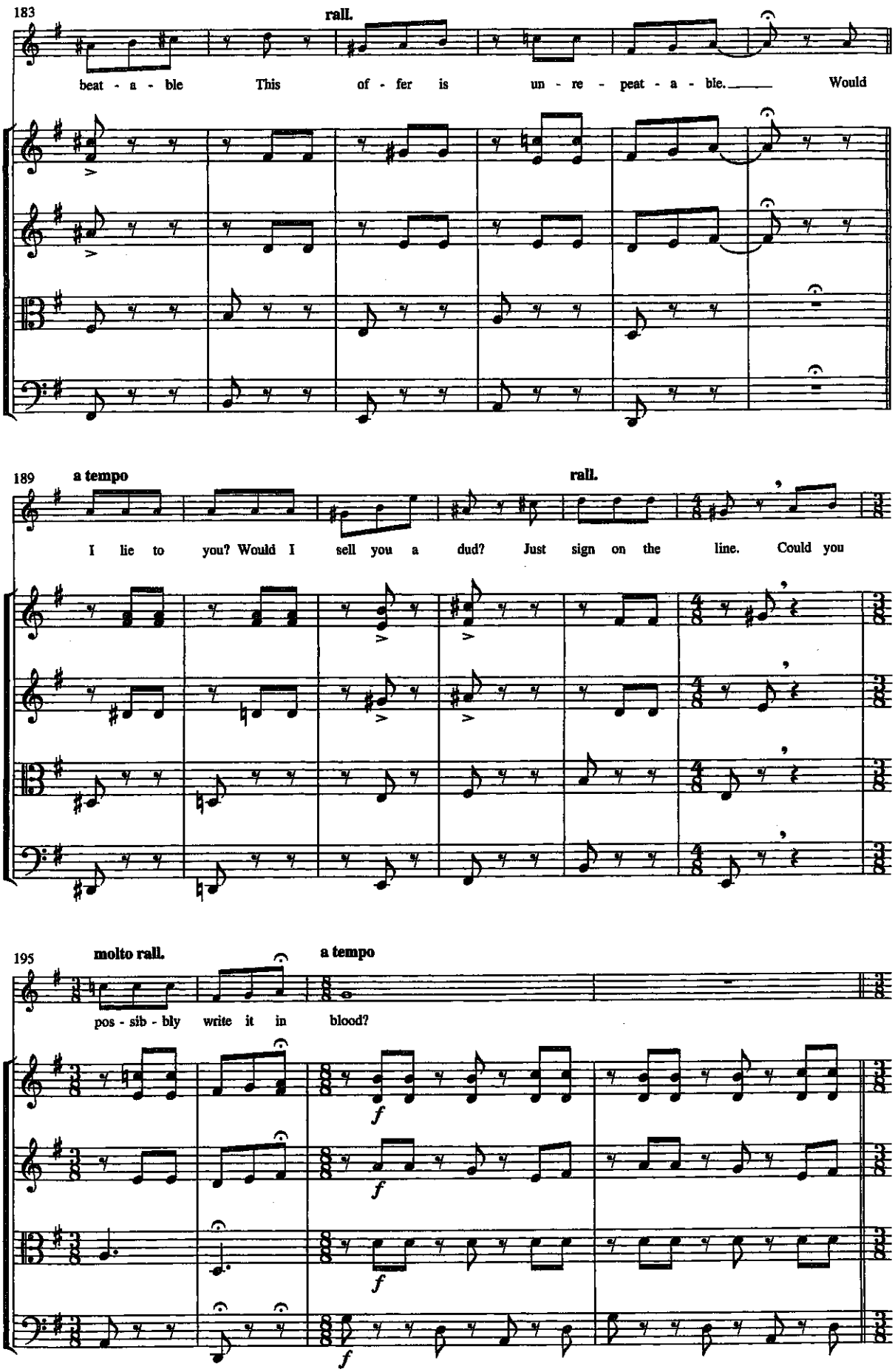

92
a tempo
rit.
fish - es and bread.
Gua - ran -
mf
95
teed, gua - ran - teed for a life - time or more Gua - ran - teed, for this world and the next...
101
Gua - ran - teed, gua - ran - teed for the world and its moth - er Cher - ish this

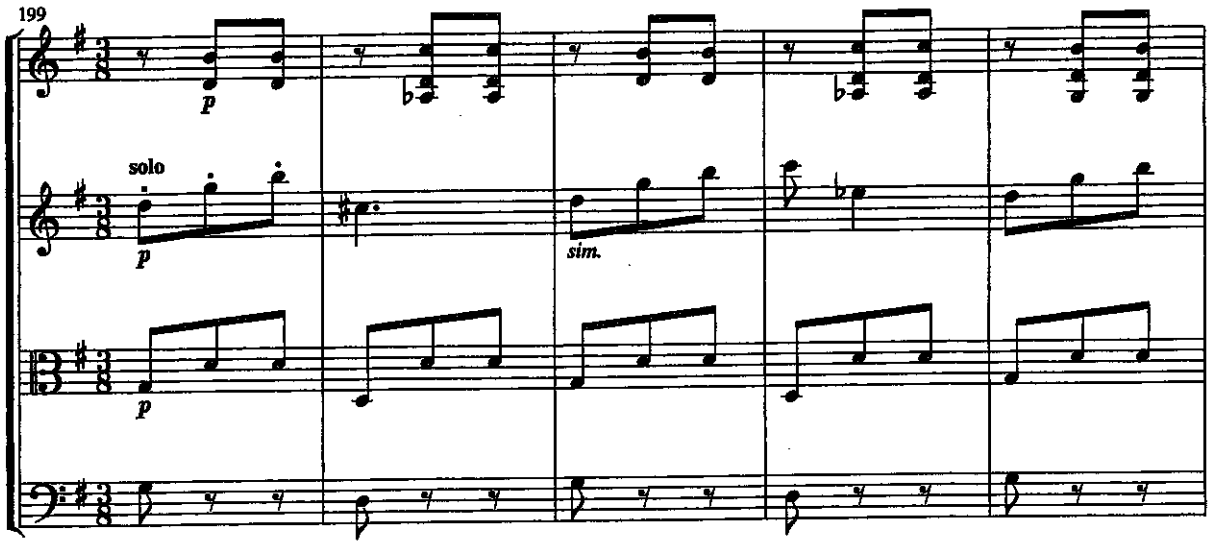

108
rall.
piu mosso
life as you won't get an - oth - er one. UN - LESS you should take up this fab - u - lous
p
p
pp
pp
115
of - fer Don't leave it too late or you'll be bound to suf - fer And woe - be - tide
sf
121
rall.
an - y - one so woe - be - gone You won't know you're born or a - bout to pass

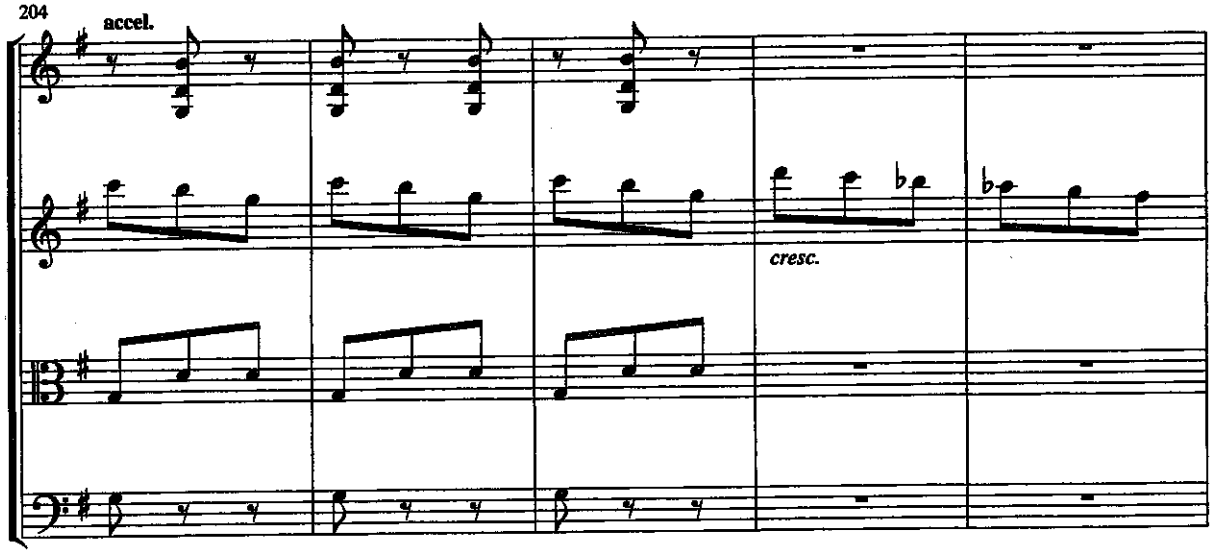

127
a tempo
rit.
on.
You'll ne - ver get
mp
130
tired You'll ne - ver get tired By the way I just hope you're in - sured. And
137
rall.
if you're not sat - is - fied If you want more we can al - ways pro - vide an im - proved ov - er -

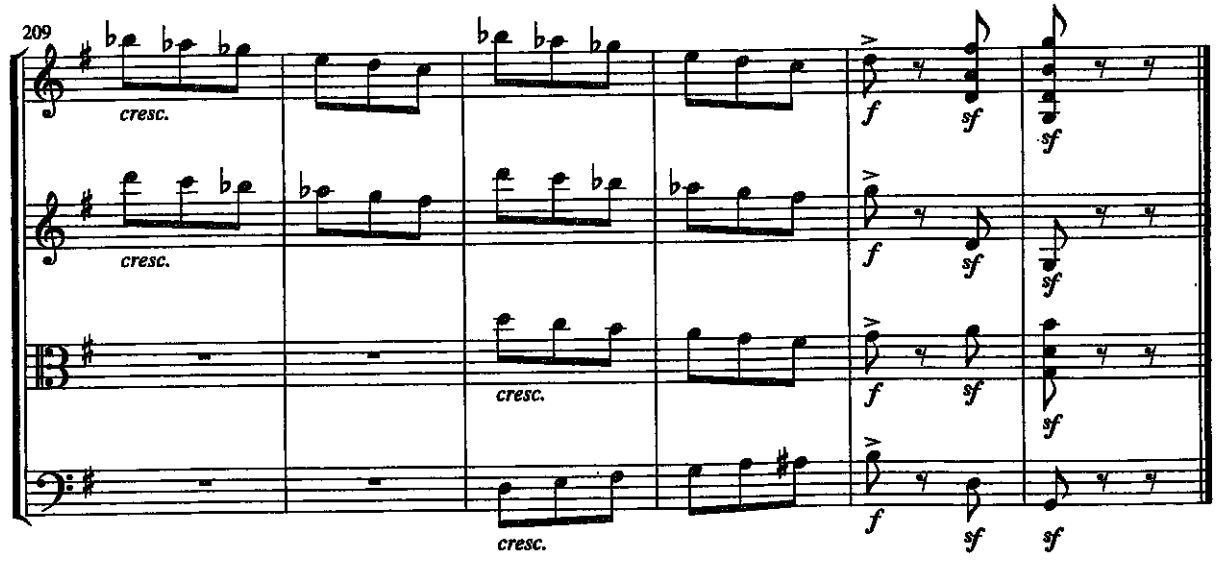

144
a tempo
ture. Gua - ran - teed at a price that is al - most un - beat - a - ble This
mp
mp
fp
mp
mp
151
rall.
a tempo
of - fer is un - re - peat - a - ble. Your trou - bles will van - ish your tears will
158
dry Your bless - ing will just mul - ti - ply. Gua - ran - teed at a price that is


165
rall.
al - most un - beat - a - ble This of - fer is un - re - peat - a - ble.
171
a tempo
Gua - ran - teed, gua - ran - teed to bring for - tune and fa - vour A ri - ot of
177
co - lours and fla - vours. Gua - ran - teed at a price that is al - most un -


183
rall.
beat - a - ble This of - fer is un - re - peat - a - ble. Would
189
a tempo
rall.
I lie to you? Would I sell you a dud? Just sign on the line. Could you
195
molto rall.
a tempo
pos - sib - bly write it in blood?
f
f
f
f


199
solo
p
p
sim.
p


204
accel.
cresc.


209
cresc.
cresc.
cresc.
cresc.
f
sf
sf
f
sf
sf
f
sf
sf
f
sf
sf