Avner Finberg

Songs of a Wayfarar In America

for voice and piano

A Langston Hughs Song Cycle

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One-Way Ticket

I pick up my life
And take it with me
And I put it down in
Chicago, Detroit,
Buffalo, Scranton,
Any place that is
North and East—
And not Dixie.

I pick up my life
And take it on the train
To Los Angeles, Bakersfield,
Seattle, Oakland, Salt Lake,
Any place that is
North and West—
And not South.

I am fed up
With Jim Crow laws,
People who are cruel
And afraid,
Who lynch and run,
Who are scared of me
And me of them.

I pick up my life
And take it away
On a one-way ticket—
Gone up North,
Gone out West,
Gone!

Harlem [1]

Here on the edge of hell
Stands Harlem—
Remembering the old lies,
The old kicks in the back,
The old "Be patient"
They told us before.

Sure, we remember.
Now when the man at the corner store
Says sugar's gone up another two cents,
And bread one,
And there's a new tax on cigarettes—
We remember the job we never had,
Never could get,
And can't have now
Because we're colored.

So we stand here
On the edge of hell
In Harlem
And look out on the world
And wonder
What we're gonna do
In the face of what
We remember.

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Drums

I dream of the drums
And remember
Nights without stars in Africa.

Remember, remember, remember!

I dream of the drums
And remember
Slave ships, billowing sails,
The Western Ocean,
And the landing at Jamestown.

Remember, remember, remember!

I dream of drums
And recall, like a picture,
Congo Square in New Orleans—
Sunday—the slaves' one day of
"Freedom"—
The juba-dance in Congo Square.

I dream of the drums
And hear again
Jelly Roll's piano,
Buddy Bolden's trumpet,
Kid Ory's banjo,
They join the drums…
And I remember.

Jazz!

I dream of the drums
And remember.

Africa!
The ships!
New shore
And drums!

Remember!
I remember!
Remember!

Me and My Song

Black
As the gentle night
Black
As the kind and quiet night
Black
As the deep productive earth
Body
Out of Africa
Strong and black
As iron
First smelted in
Africa
Song
Out of Africa
Deep and mellow song
Rich
As the black earth
Strong
As black iron
Kind
As the black night
My song
From the dark lips
Of Africa
Deep
As the rich earth
Beautiful
As the black night
Strong
As the first iron
Black
Out of Africa
Me and my
Song

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Consider Me

Consider me,
A colored boy,
Once sixteen,
Once five, once three,
Once nobody,
Now me.
Before me
Papa, mama,
Grandpa, grandma,
So on back
To original
Pa.

(A capital letter there,
He
Being Mystery.)

Consider me,
Colored boy,
Downtown at eight,
Sometimes working late,
Overtime pay
To sport away,
Or save,
Or give my Sugar
For the things
She needs.

My Sugar,
Consider her
Who works, too—
Has to.
One don't make enough
For all the stuff
It takes to live.
Forgive me
What I lack,
Black,
Caught in a crack
That splits the world in two
From China
By way of Arkansas
To Lenox Avenue.
Consider me,
On Friday the eagle flies.
Saturday laughter, a bar, a bed.
Sunday prayers syncopate glory.
Monday comes,
To work at eight,
Late.
Maybe.

Consider me,
Descended also
From the
Mystery.

Island [1]

Wave of sorrow,
Do not drown me now:

I see the island
Still ahead somehow.

I see the island
And its sands are fair:

Wave of sorrow,
Take me there.

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Songs of a Wayfarar in America
A Langston Hughes Song Cycle

One-Way Ticket

Poems by Langston Hughs
Music by Avner Finberg

Lento ♩ = 60

p

I pick up my life and take it with me and I put it down

p

5

and I put it down in Chi

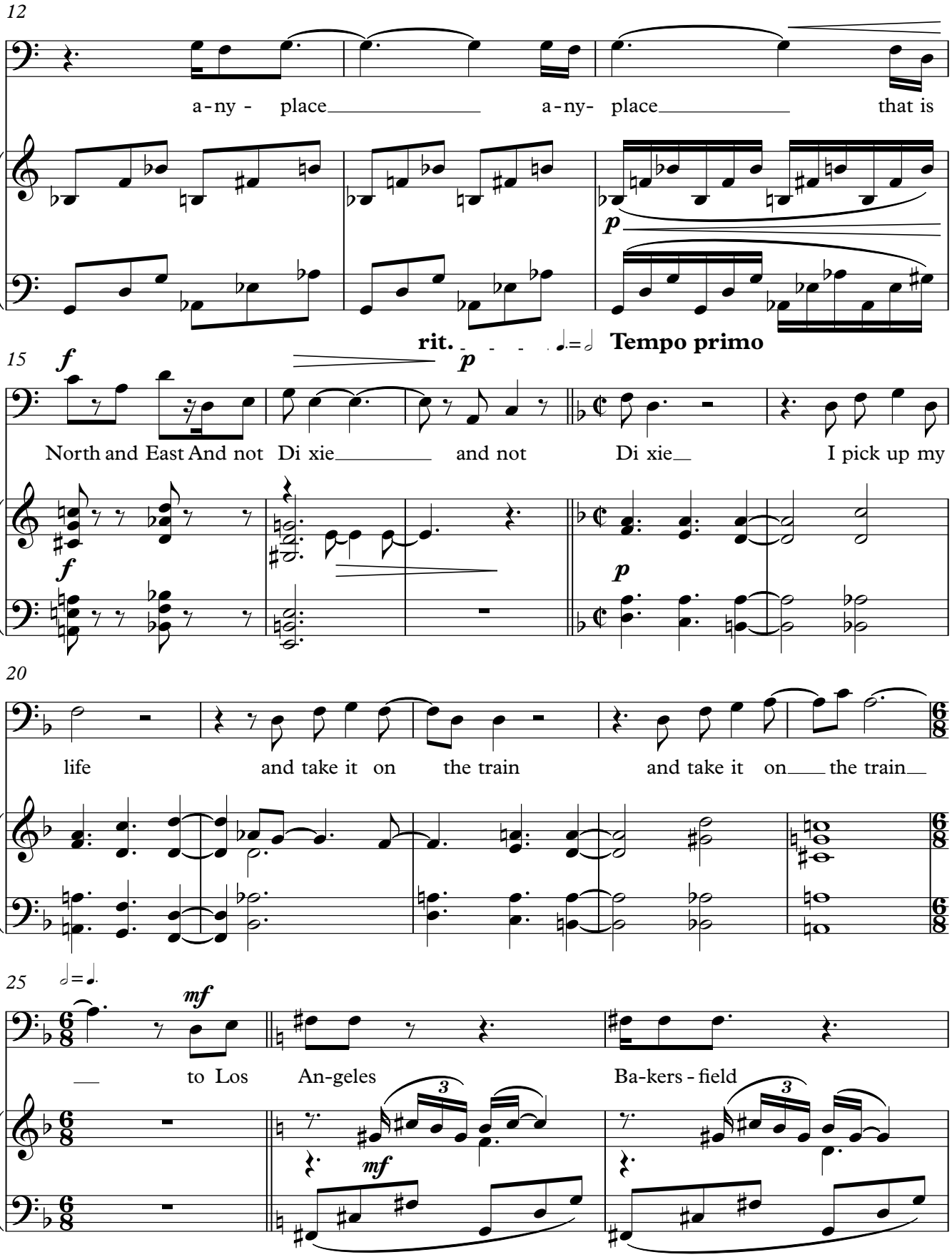
mf

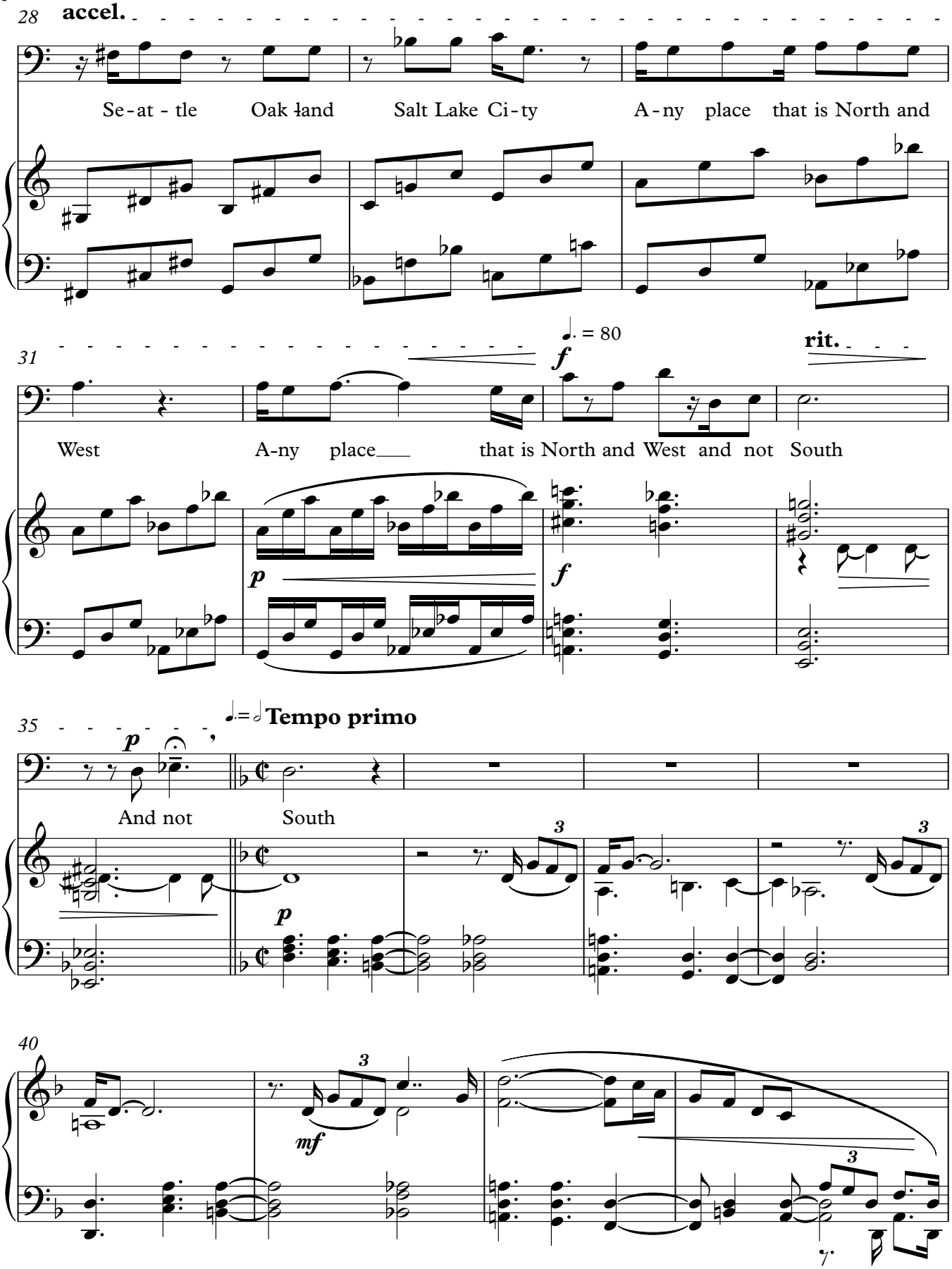
9 ♩=♩.

ca - go Det - roit Buf-fa-lo Scran-ton

3 3

mf


12
a - ny - place a - ny - place that is
p
rit.
Tempo primo
15
f
North and East And not Di xie and not Di xie I pick up my
f
p
20
life and take it on the train and take it on the train
25
mf
to Los An-geles Ba-kers - field
3
3
mf


28
accel.
Se-at-tle Oak land Salt Lake Ci-ty A-ny place that is North and
31
♩. = 80
f
rit.
West A-ny place that is North and West and not South
p
f
35
p
Tempo primo
And not South
p
3
40
mf
3

Maestoso ♩ = 50

44

f

I am fed up With Jim Crow laws, Peo-ple who are cruel And af -

47

raid Who lynch and run, Who are scared of me

mf

51

Tempo primo

p

rubato

And me of them I pick up my life and take it a-way

mp

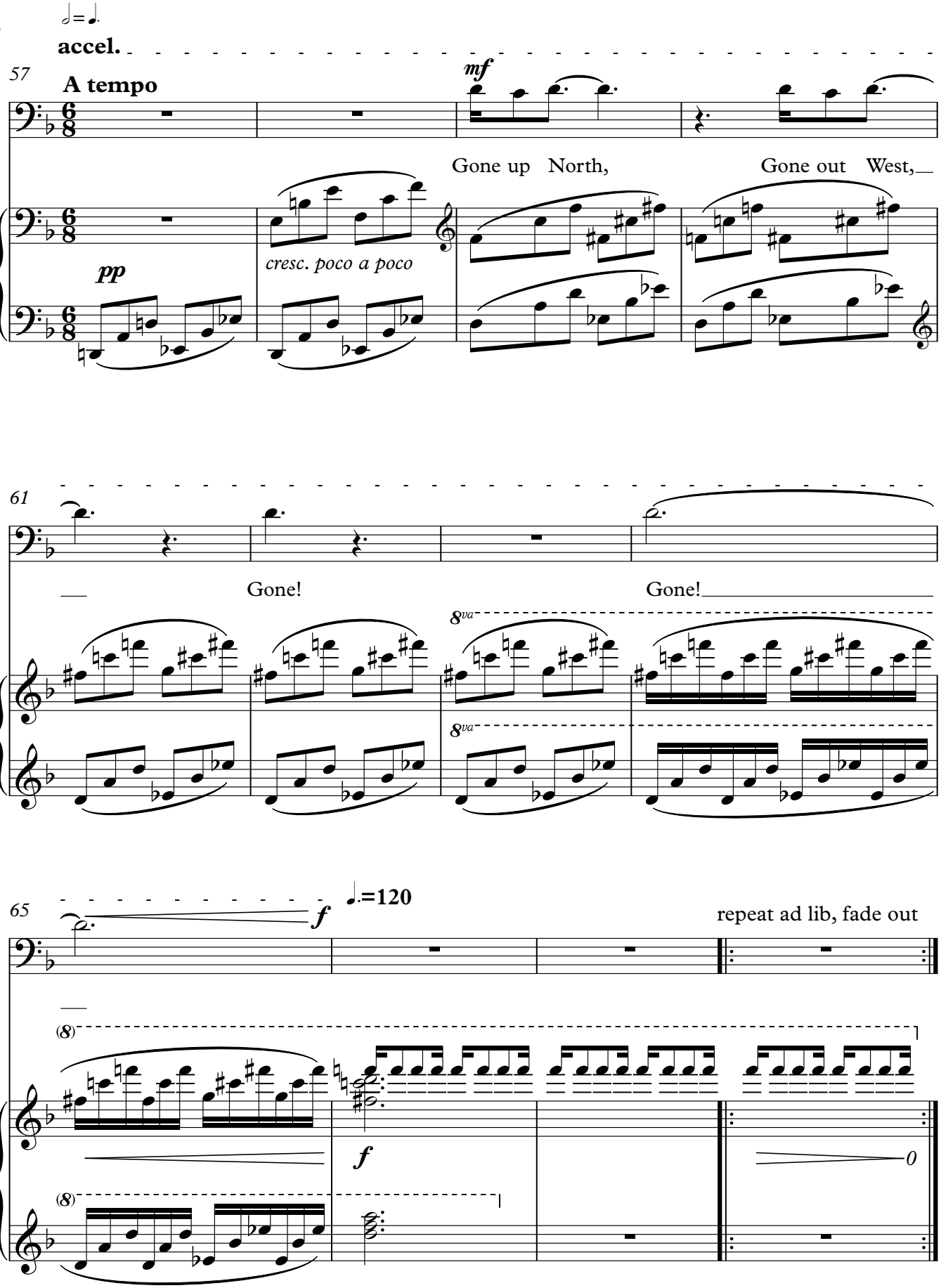
p

55

rit.

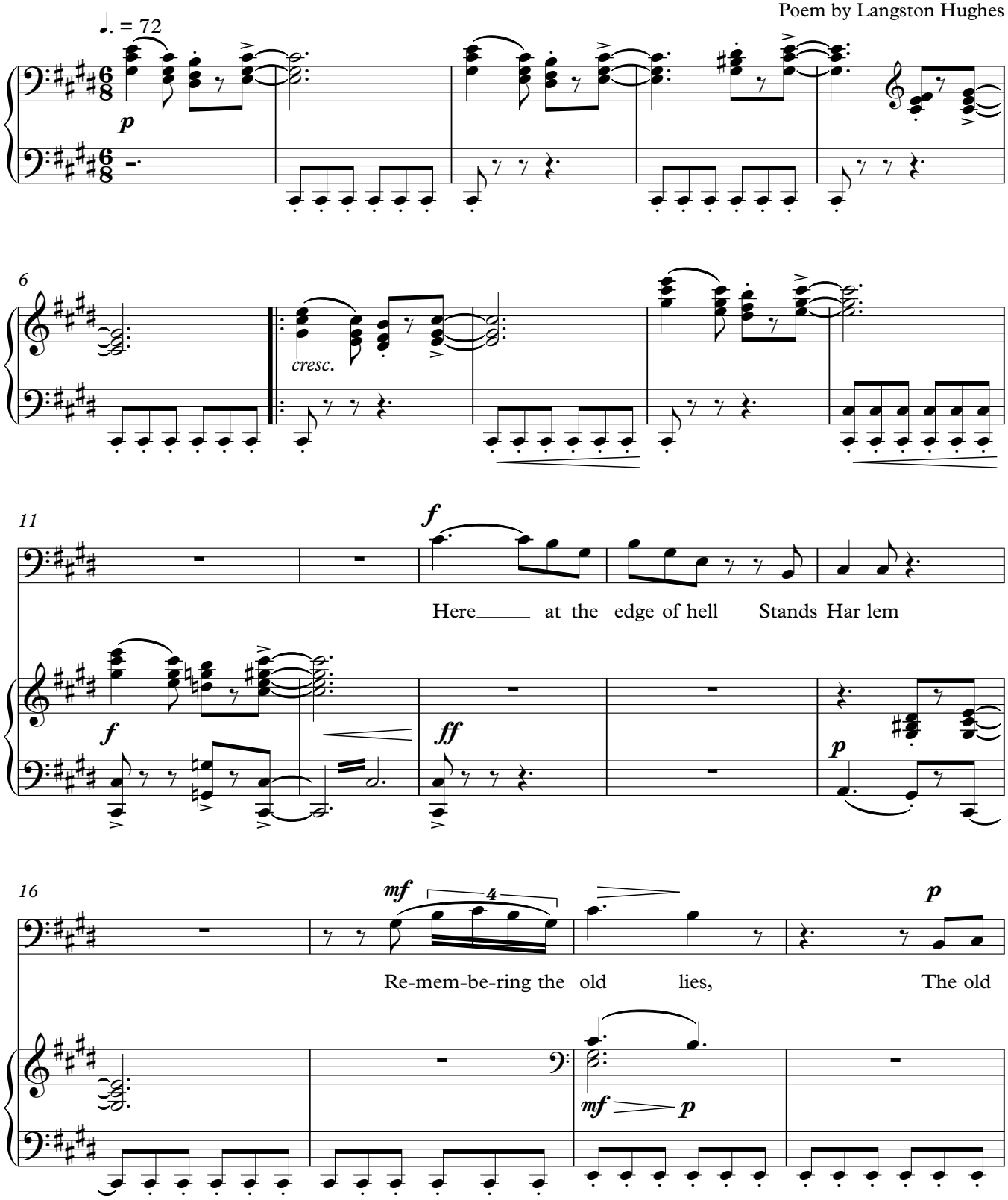
pp

on a one - way ti - cket on a one - way ti - cket


accel.
57
A tempo
mf
Gone up North,
Gone out West,
pp
cresc. poco a poco
61
Gone!
Gone!
8va
8va
65
f
♩.=120
repeat ad lib, fade out
(8)
f
0
(8)

Harlem

Music: Avner Finberg
Poem by Langston Hughes



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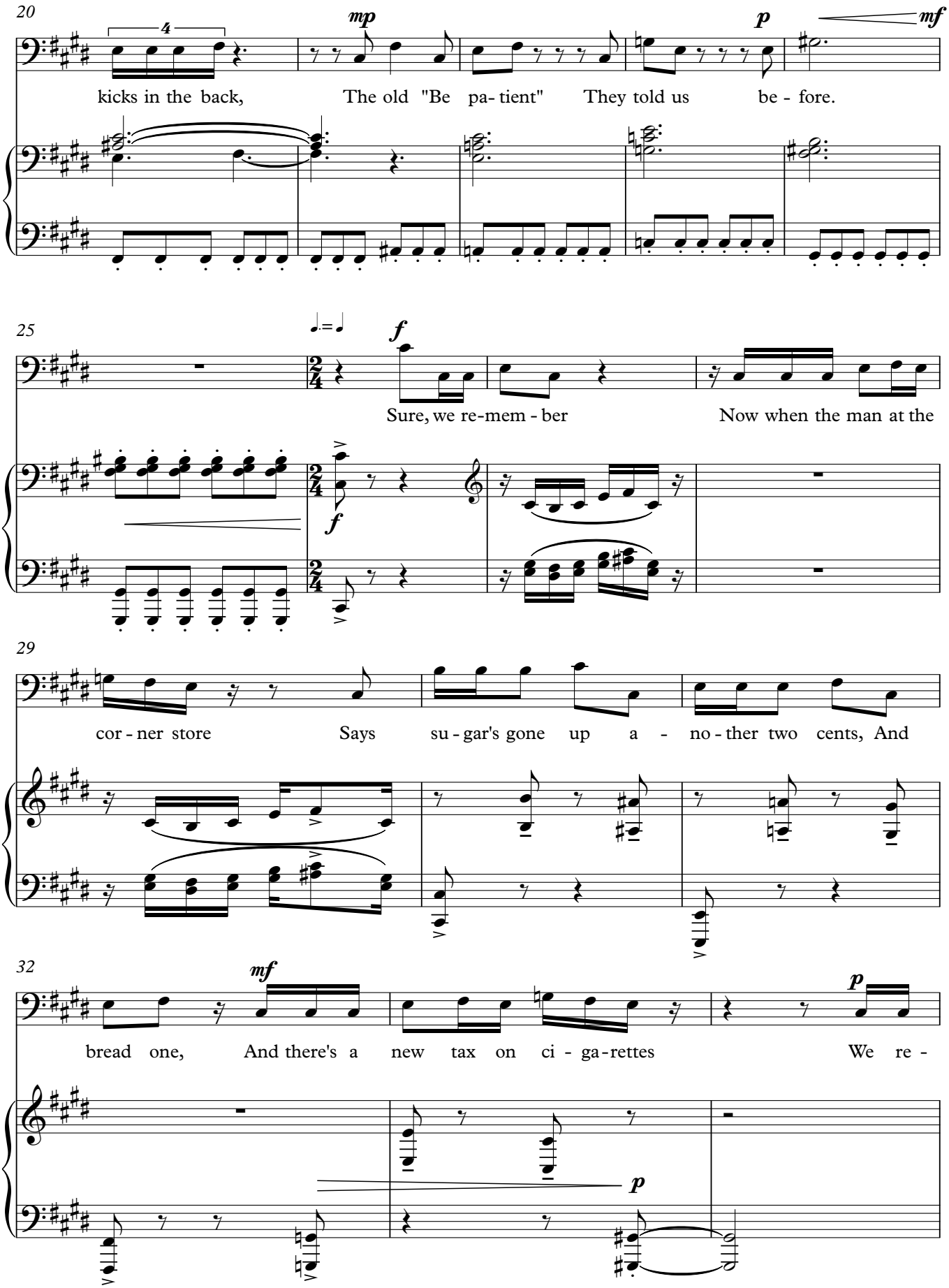
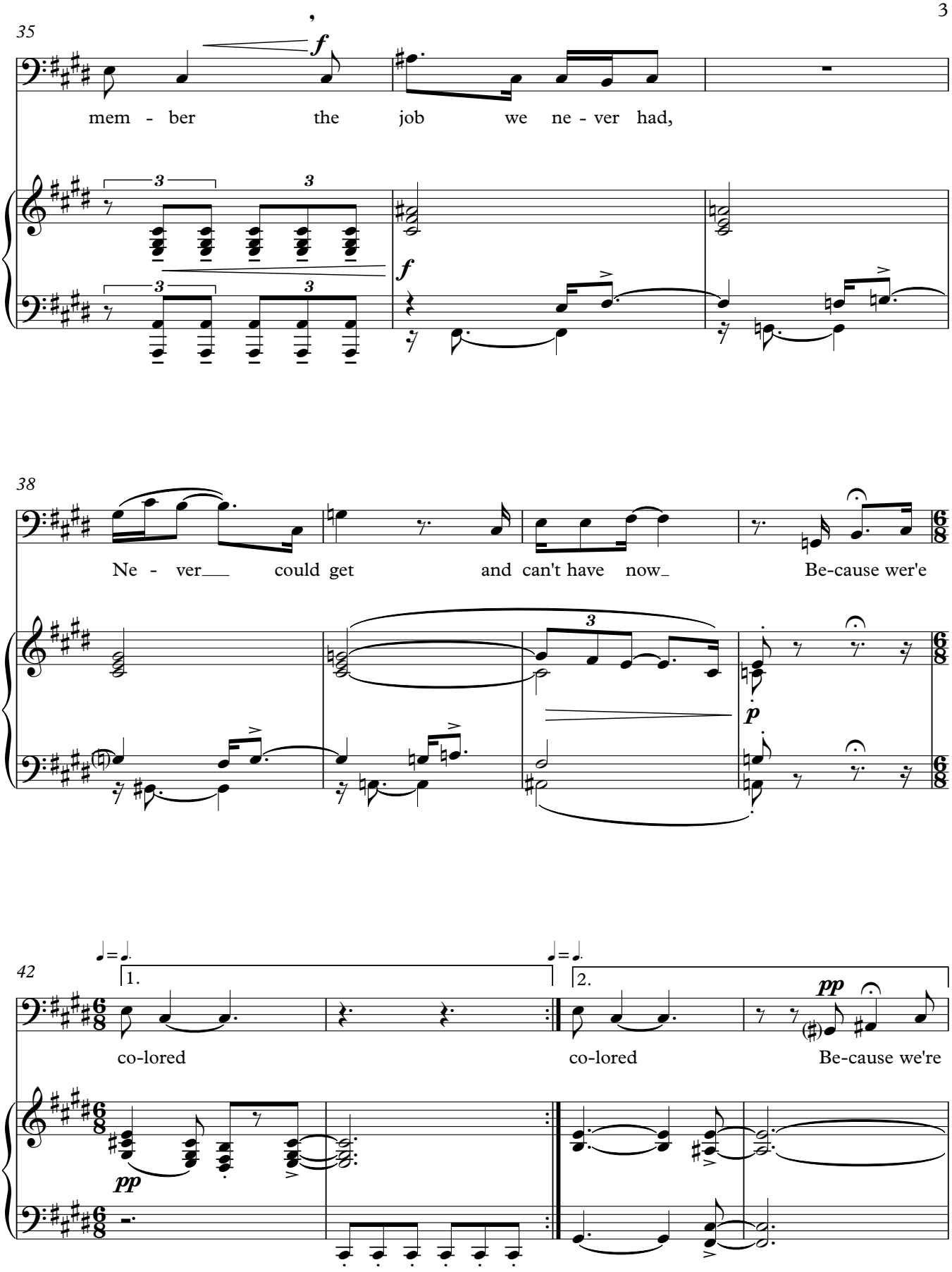
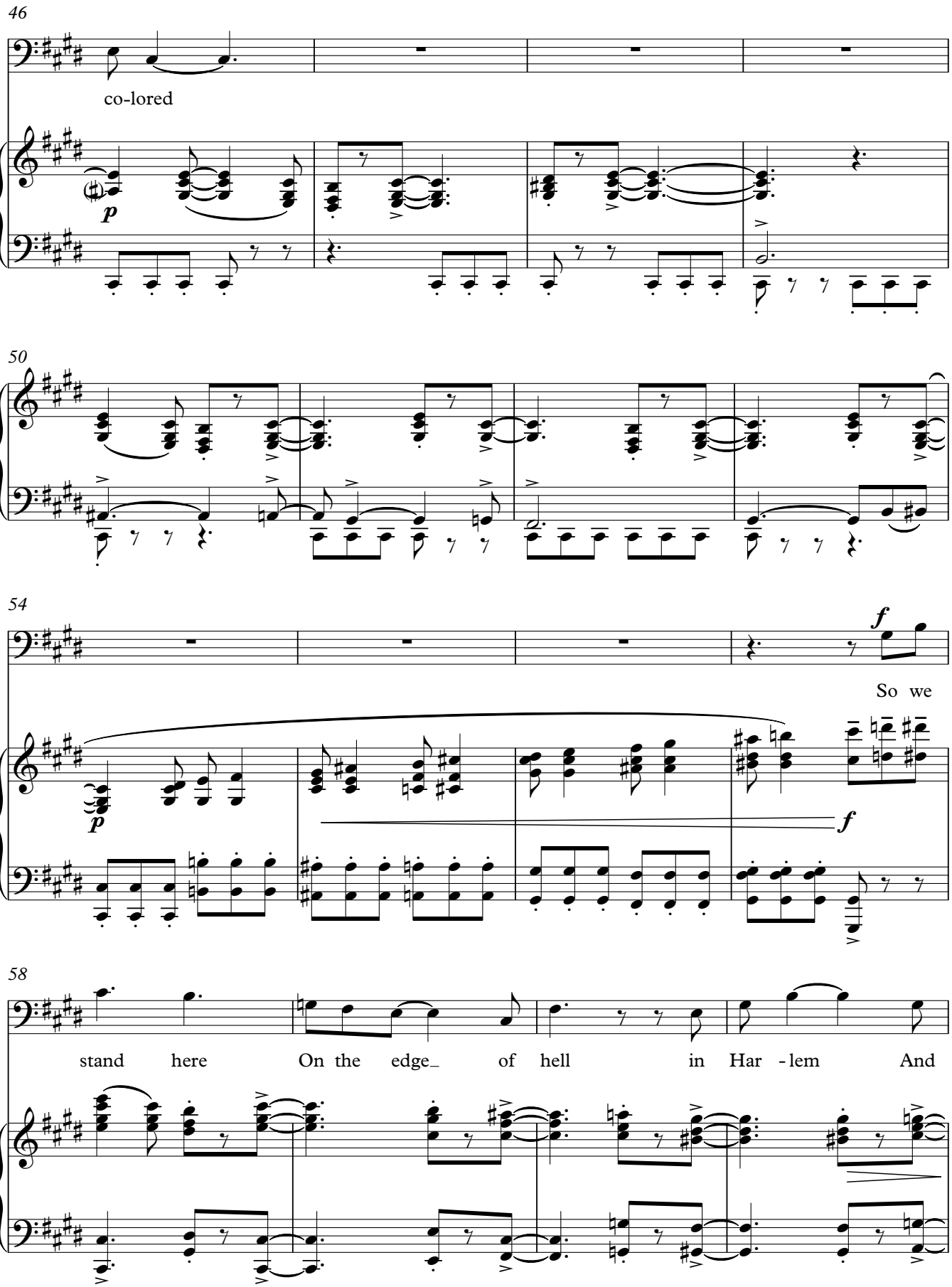
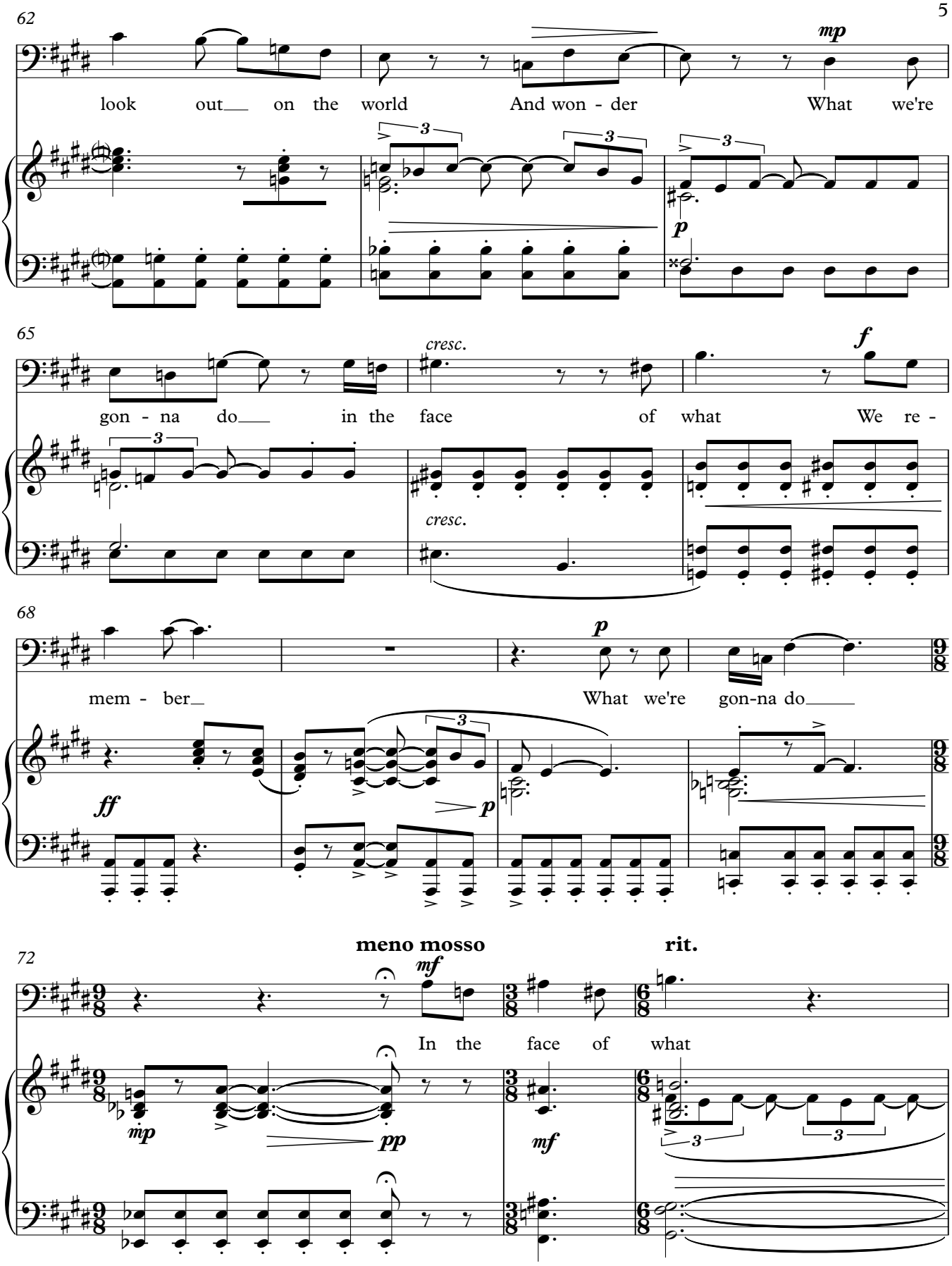
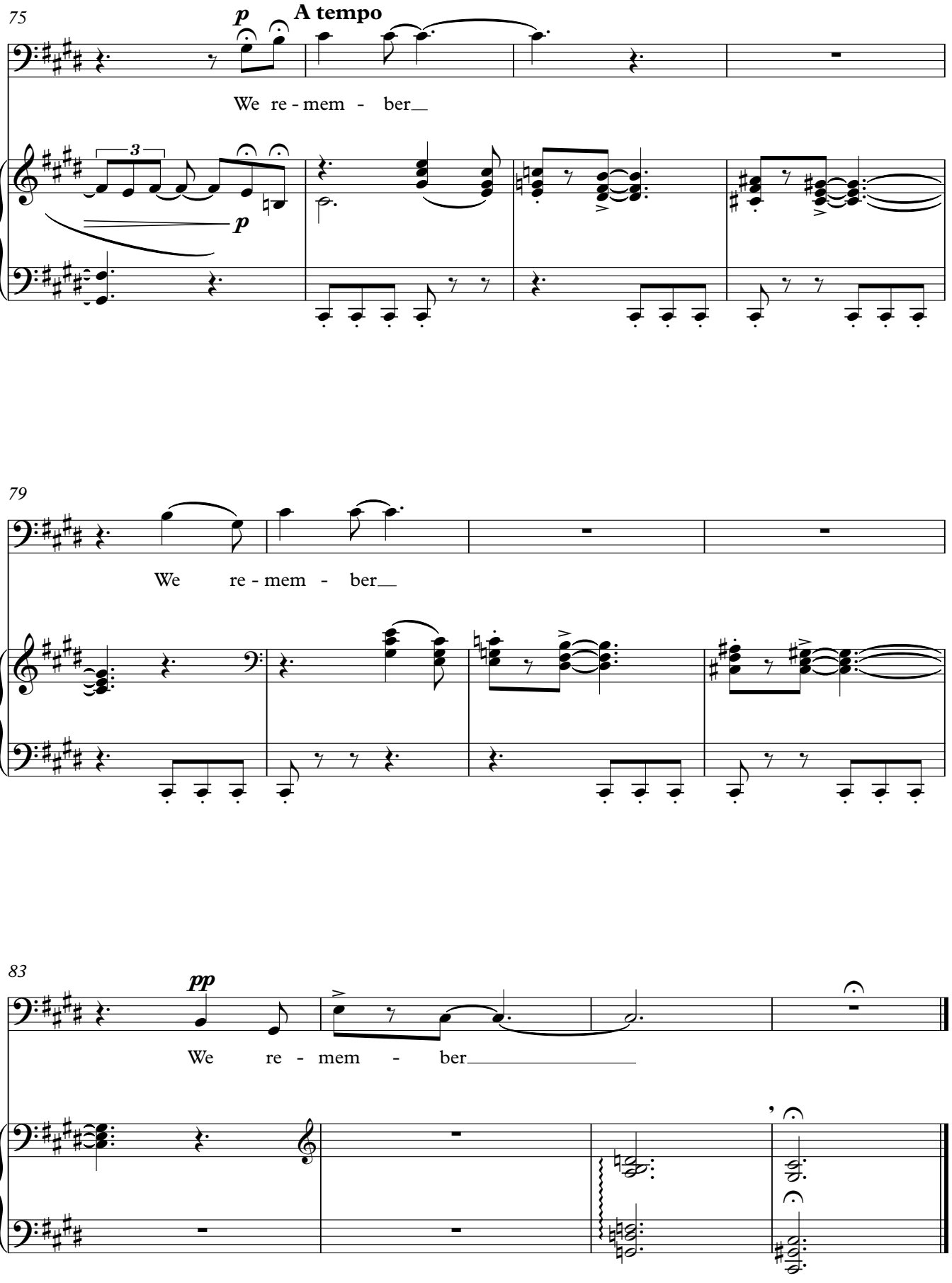

20
mp
p
mf
kicks in the back, The old "Be pa- tient" They told us be - fore.
25
f
Sure, we re-mem - ber Now when the man at the
29
cor - ner store Says su - gar's gone up a - no - ther two cents, And
32
mf
p
bread one, And there's a new tax on ci - ga - rettes We re -
p


35
mem - ber the job we ne - ver had,
38
Ne - ver could get and can't have now Be-cause wer'e
42
1.
co-lored
2.
co-lored
Be-cause we're

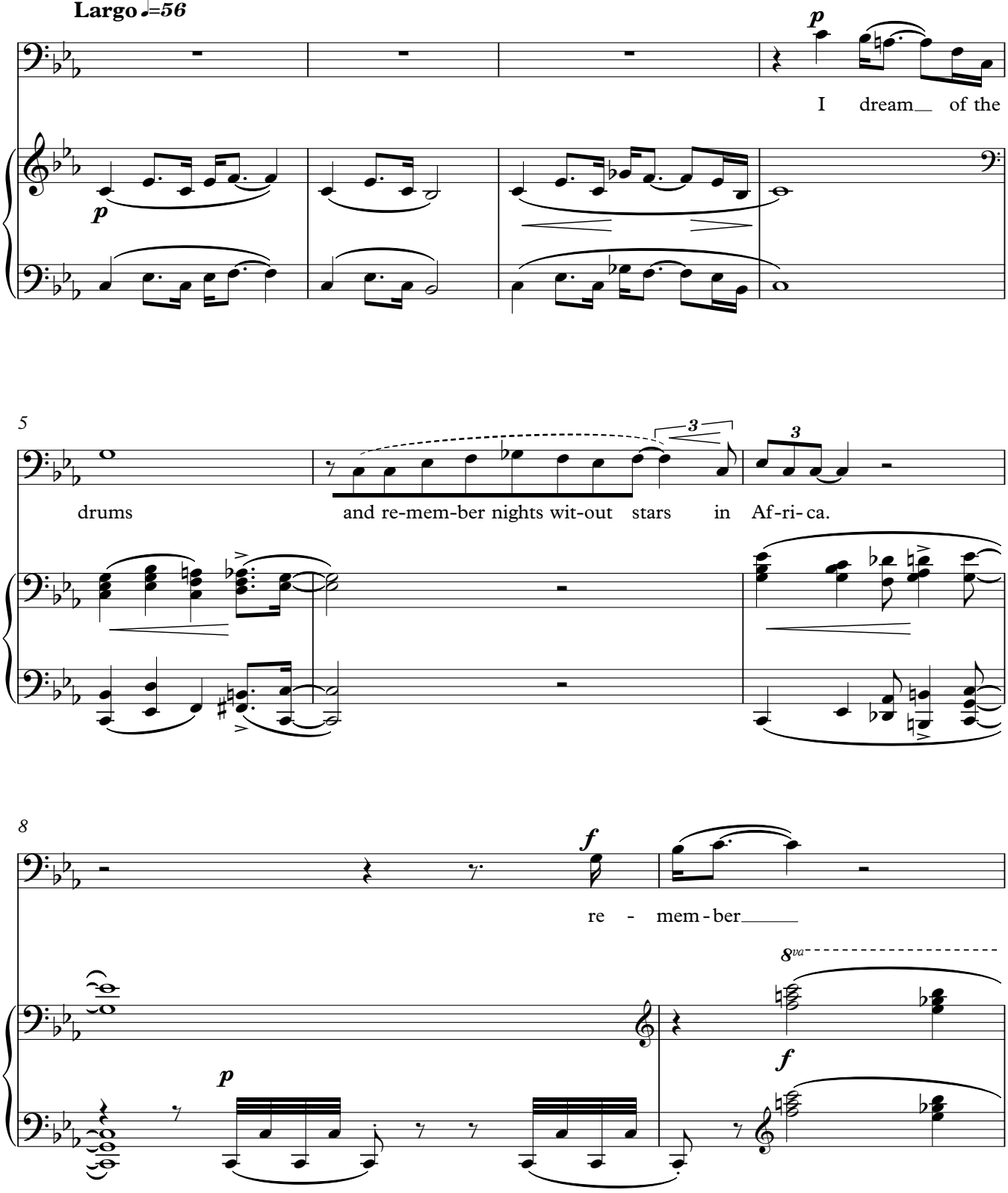

46
co-lored
p
50
54
f
So we
p
f
58
stand here On the edge_ of hell in Har - lem And


62
look out on the world
And won - der
What we're
mp
p
65
gon - na do in the face
of what
We re -
cresc.
cresc.
f
68
mem - ber
What we're gon-na do
p
ff
p
72
meno mosso
rit.
In the face of what
mf
mp
pp
mf


75
p
A tempo
We re - mem - ber
3
p
79
We re - mem - ber
83
pp
We re - mem - ber

Drums

Music by Avner Finberg
Text by Langston Hughes



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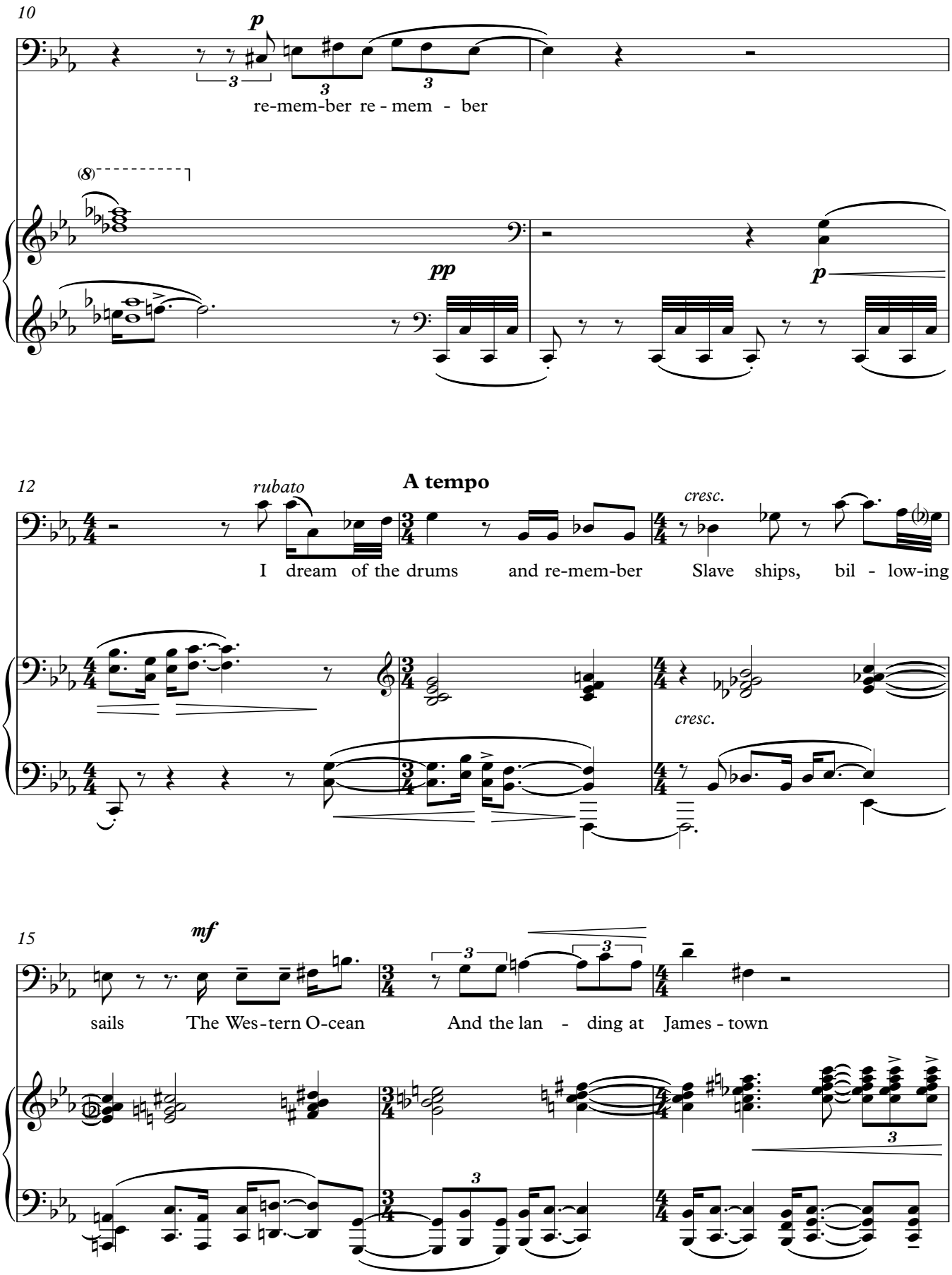
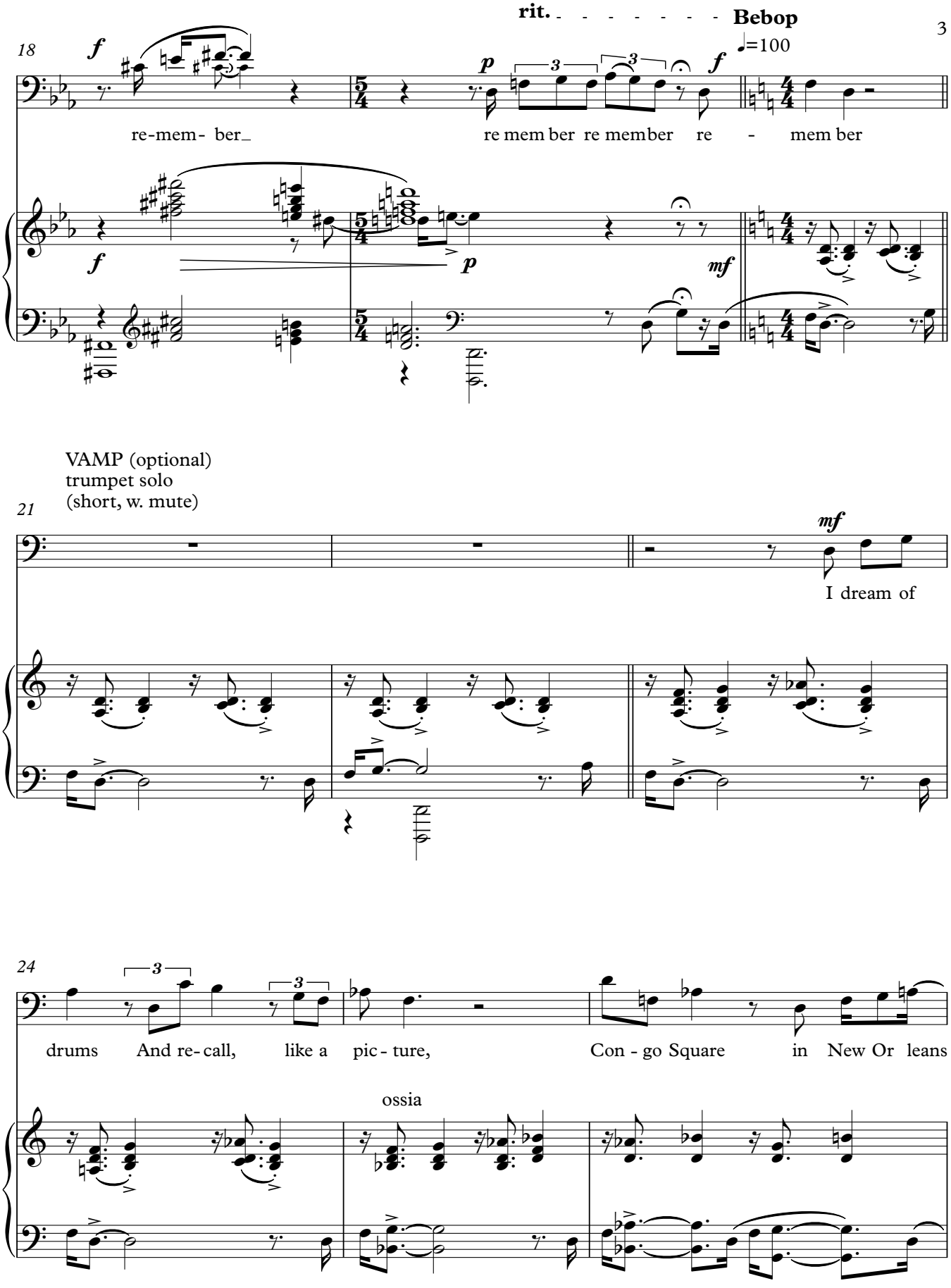
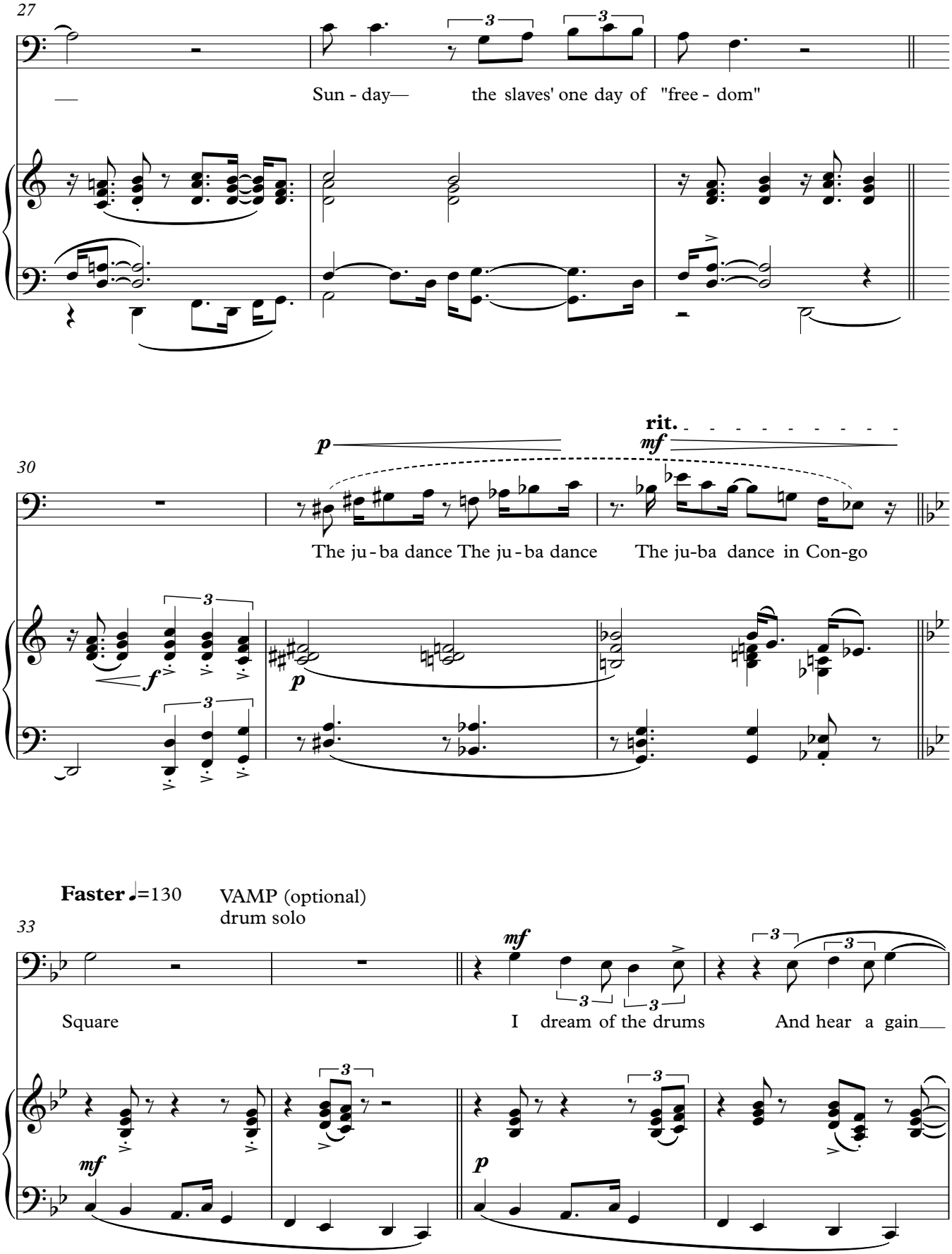

10
p
re-mem-ber re - mem - ber
(8)
pp
p
12
rubato
A tempo
cresc.
I dream of the drums and re-mem-ber Slave ships, bil - low-ing
cresc.
15
mf
sails The Wes-tern O-cean And the lan - ding at James - town


rit.
Bebop
♩=100
18
re-mem- ber_
re mem ber re member re - mem ber
VAMP (optional)
trumpet solo
(short, w. mute)
21
I dream of
24
drums And re- call, like a pic - ture, Con - go Square in New Or leans
ossia


27
Sun - day— the slaves' one day of "free - dom"
30
p
rit.
mf
The ju - ba dance The ju - ba dance The ju-ba dance in Con-go
f
p
Faster ♩=130
VAMP (optional)
drum solo
33
mf
Square
I dream of the drums
And hear a gain
mf
p

37

Jel-ly Roll's pi - a - no, Bud - dy Bol den's

42

trum pet, Kid O - ry's trom-bone St. Cry's ban-jo

46

I hear the drums and

Tempo primo

49

♩=56

f

I re - mem-ber Jazz!

8va

f

53

p *dolce*

I dream___ of the drums

(8)

p

loco

mf

56

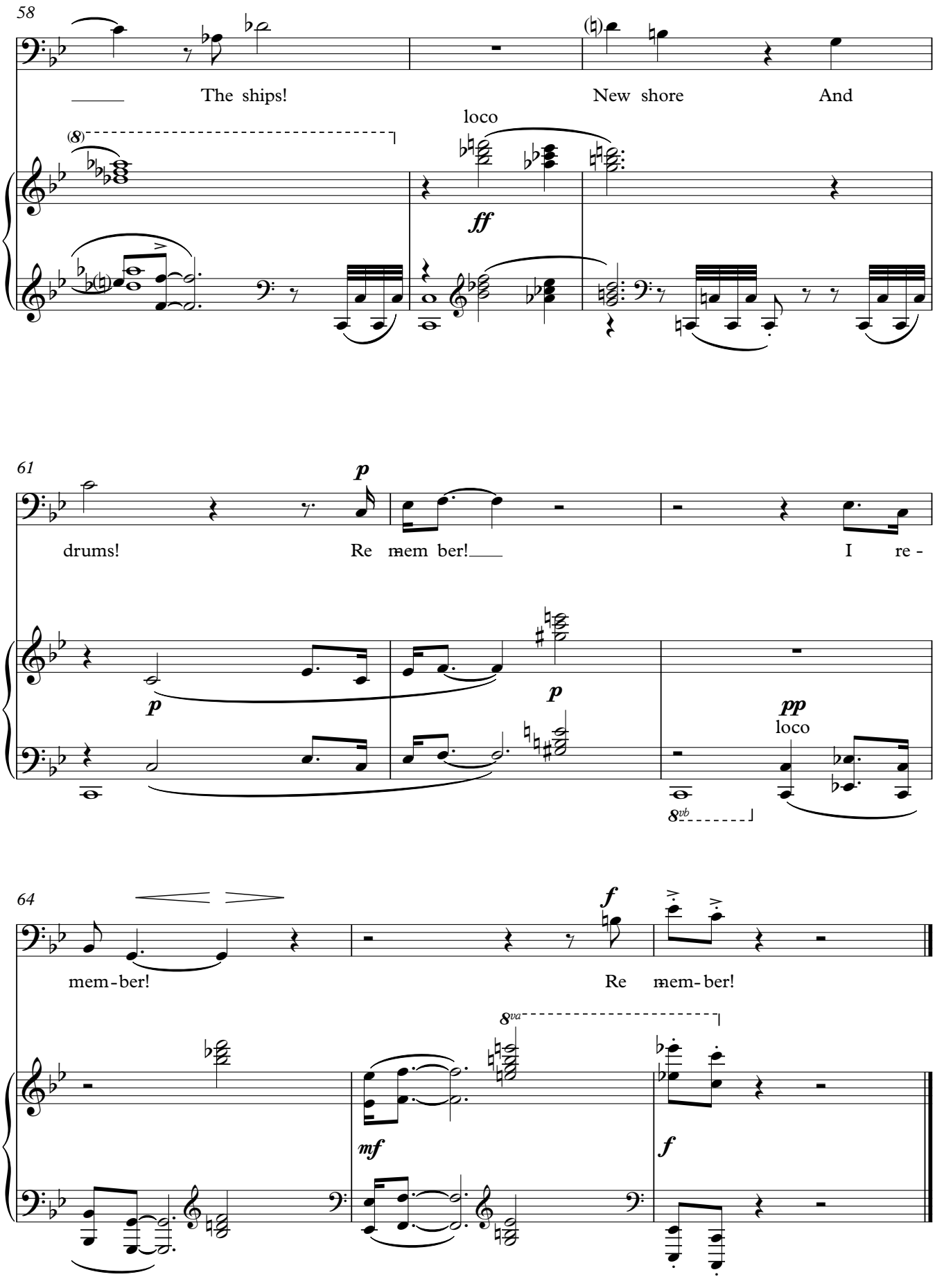
f

And re - mem - ber. Af - ri - ca!___

p

8va

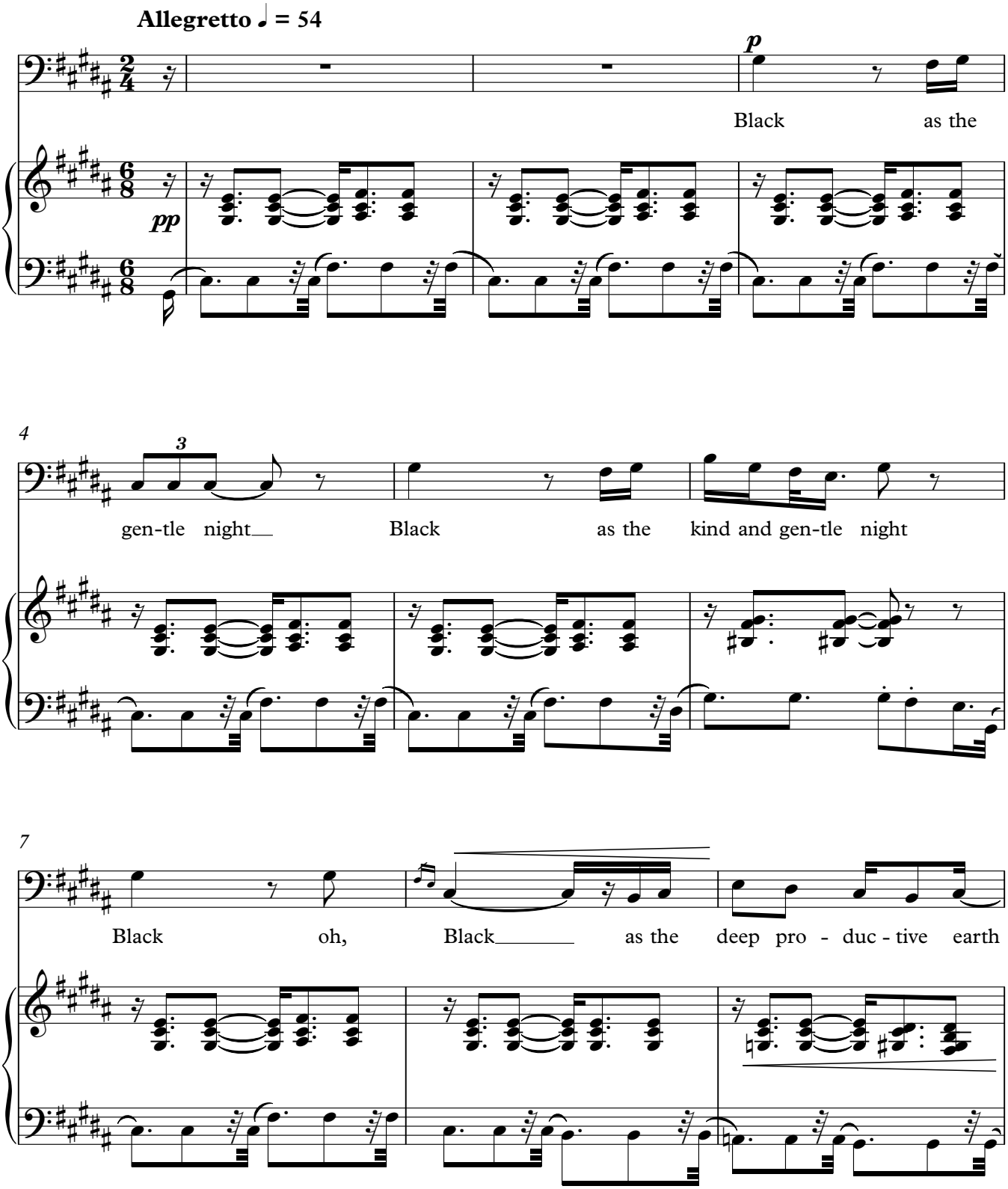
f


58
The ships!
New shore
And
loco
ff
61
drums!
Re mem ber!
I re -
p
p
p
pp
loco
8vb
64
mem-ber!
Re mem-ber!
f
8va
mf
f

Me And My Song

Langston Hughes

Avner Finberg



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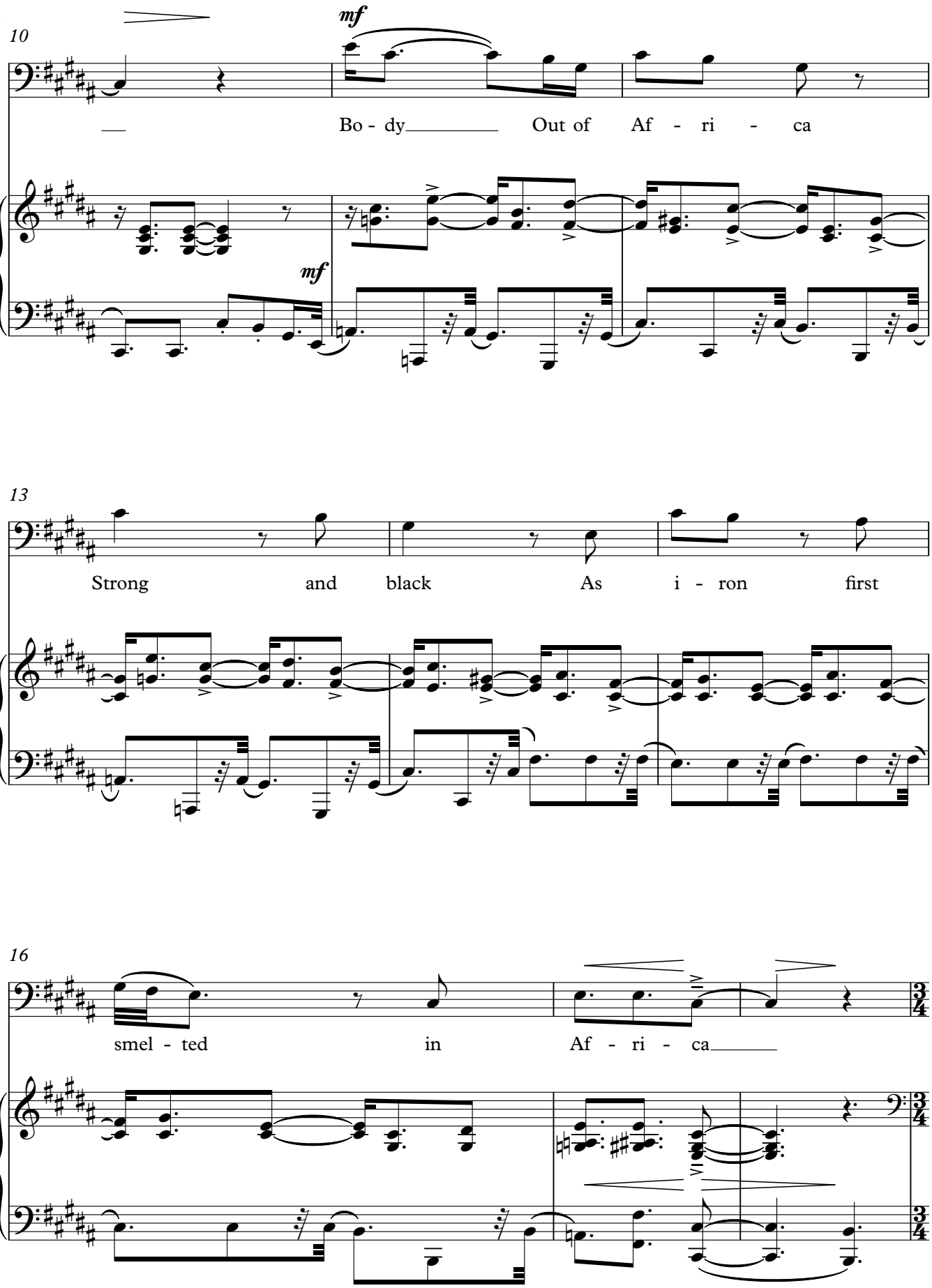
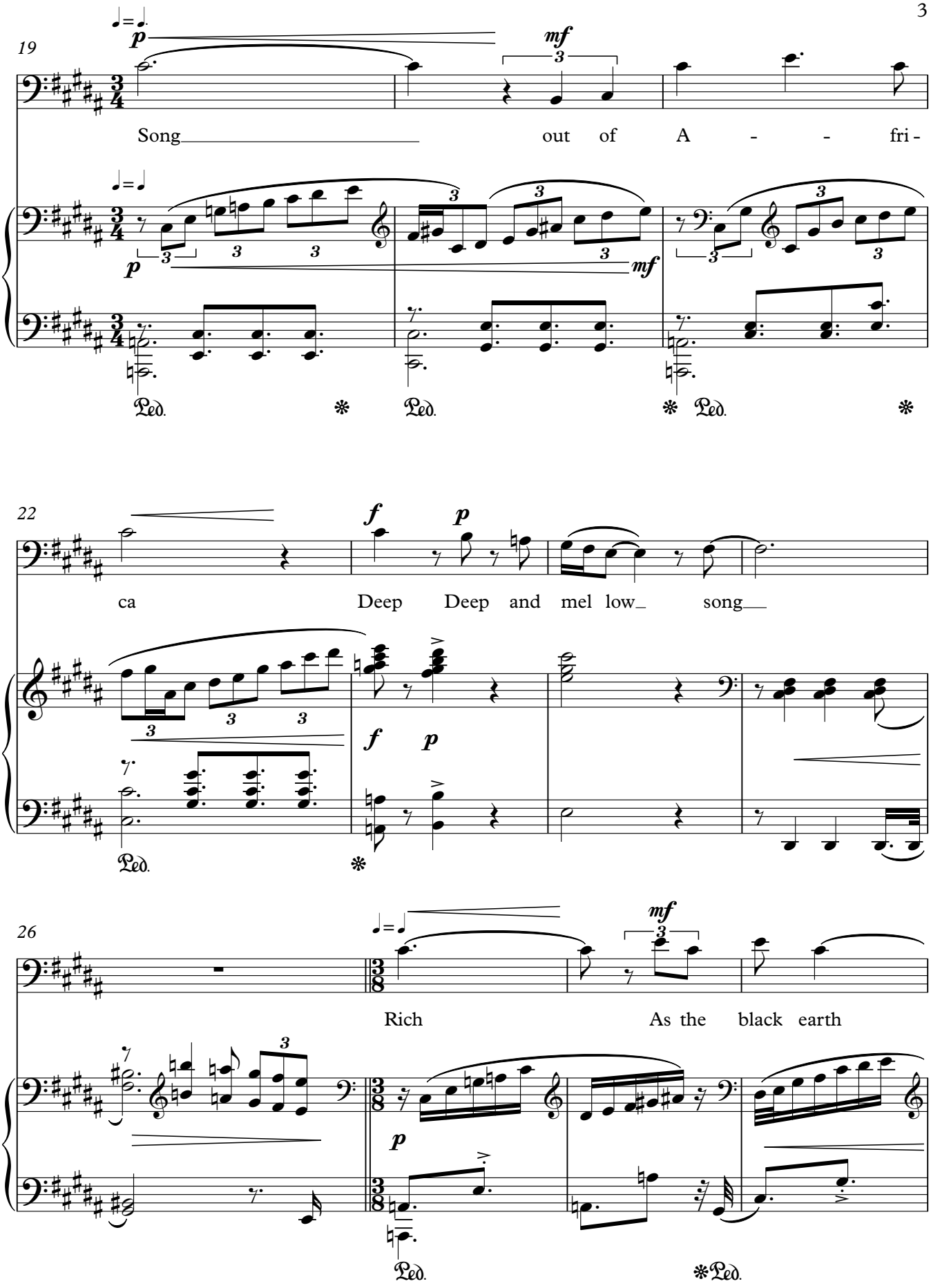
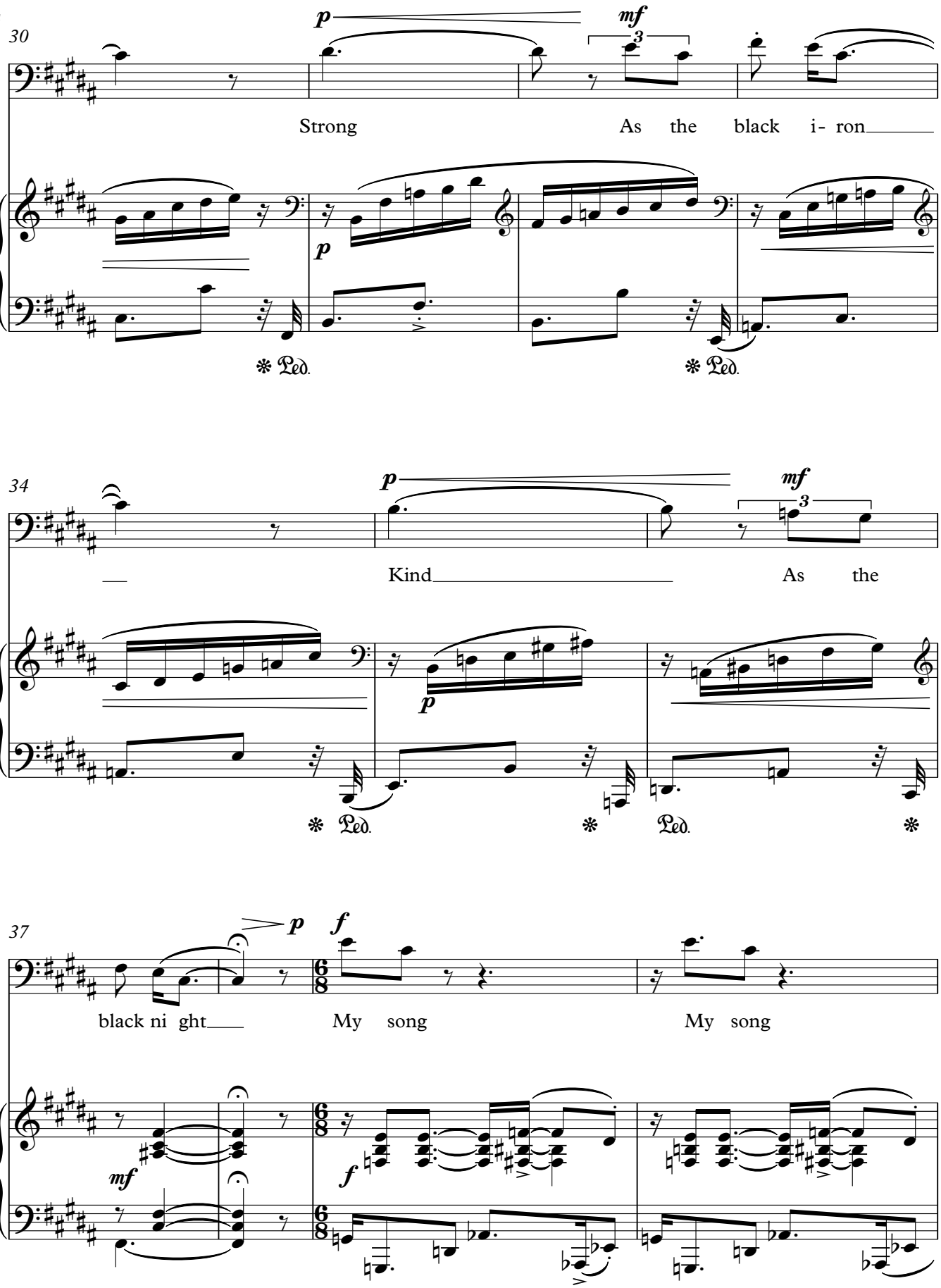
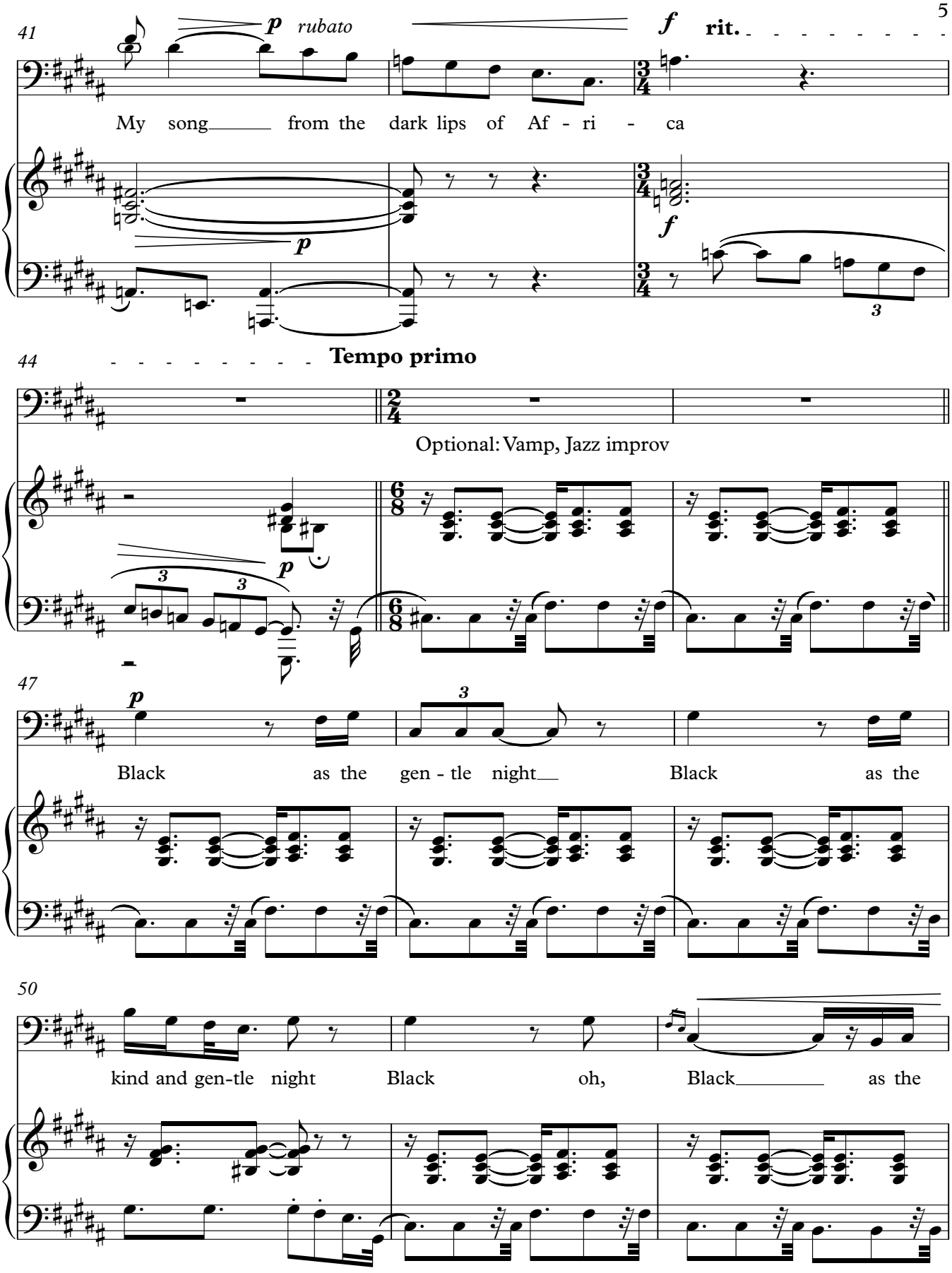

10
mf
Bo - dy Out of Af - ri - ca
mf
13
Strong and black As i - ron first
16
smel - ted in Af - ri - ca


19
Song out of A - - fri -
22
ca Deep Deep and mel low_ song__
26
Rich As the black earth


30
p
mf
3
Strong
As the black i- ron
p
Ped.
Ped.
34
p
mf
3
Kind
As the
p
Ped.
Ped.
37
p
f
black ni ght
My song
My song
mf
f


41
p rubato
f rit.
My song from the dark lips of Af - ri - ca
p
f
3
44
Tempo primo
Optional: Vamp, Jazz improv
p
3
3
47
p
3
Black as the gen - tle night Black as the
50
kind and gen-tle night Black oh, Black as the

53

mf

deep pro - duc - tive earth Bo - dy Out of

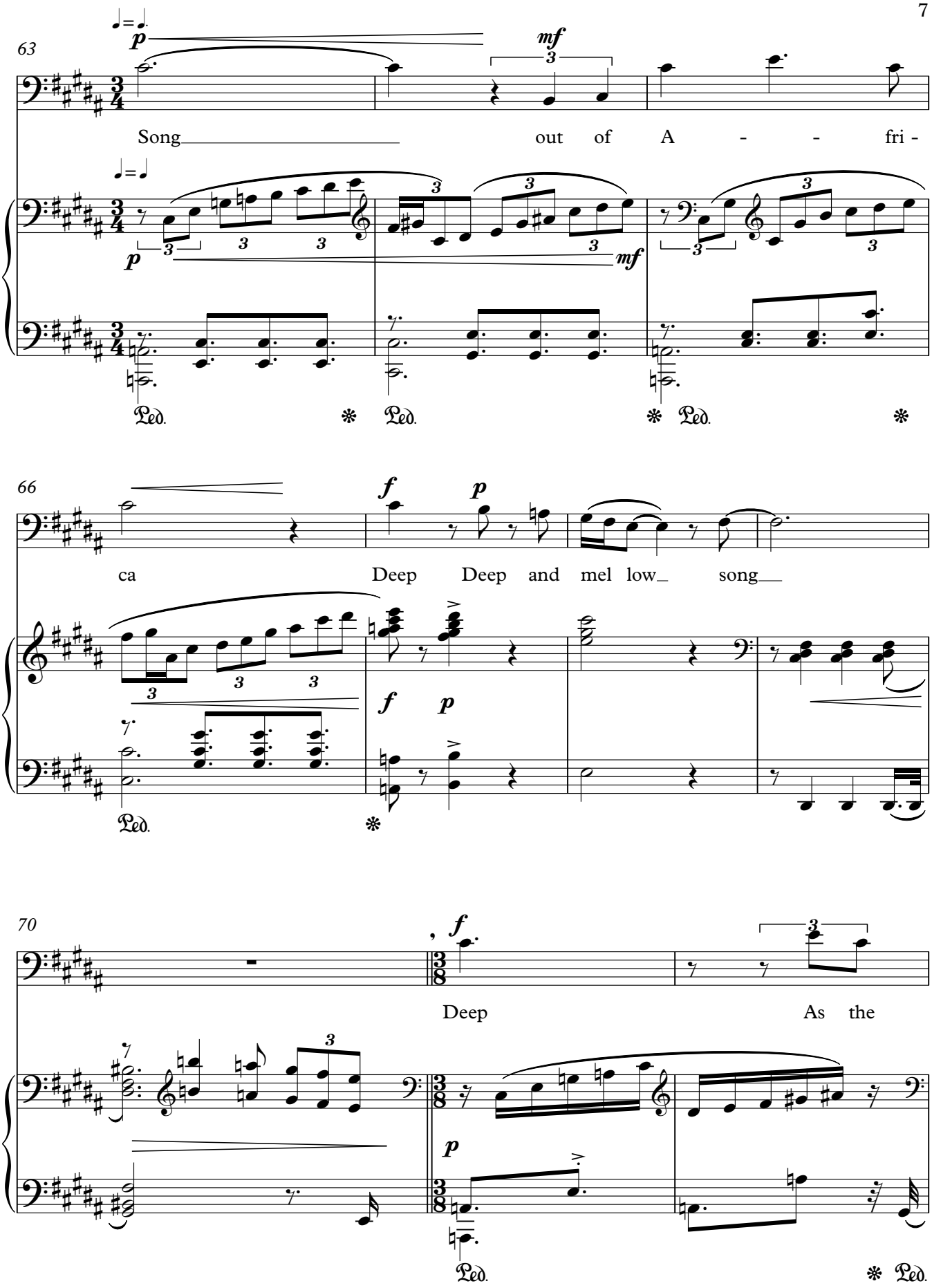
mf

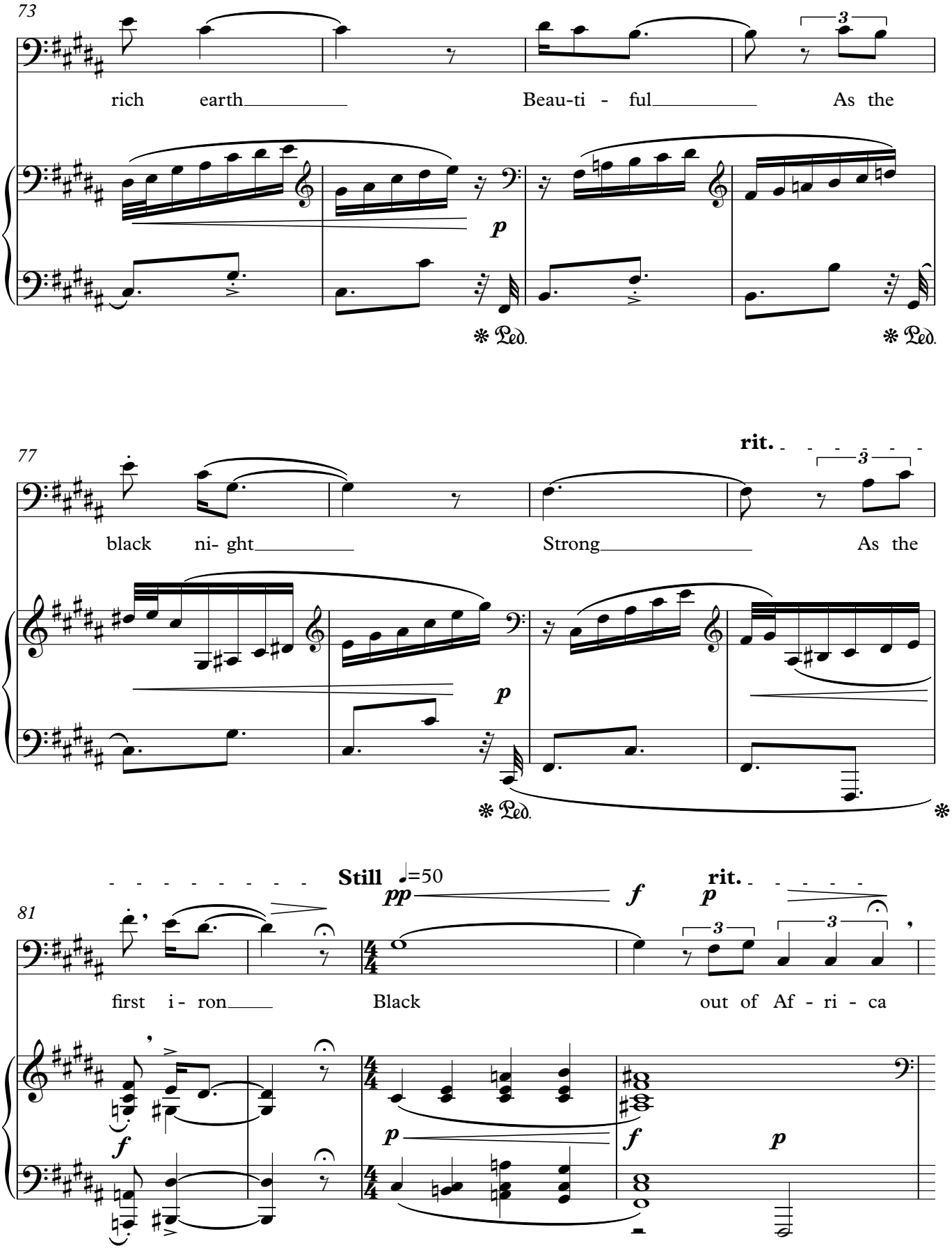
56

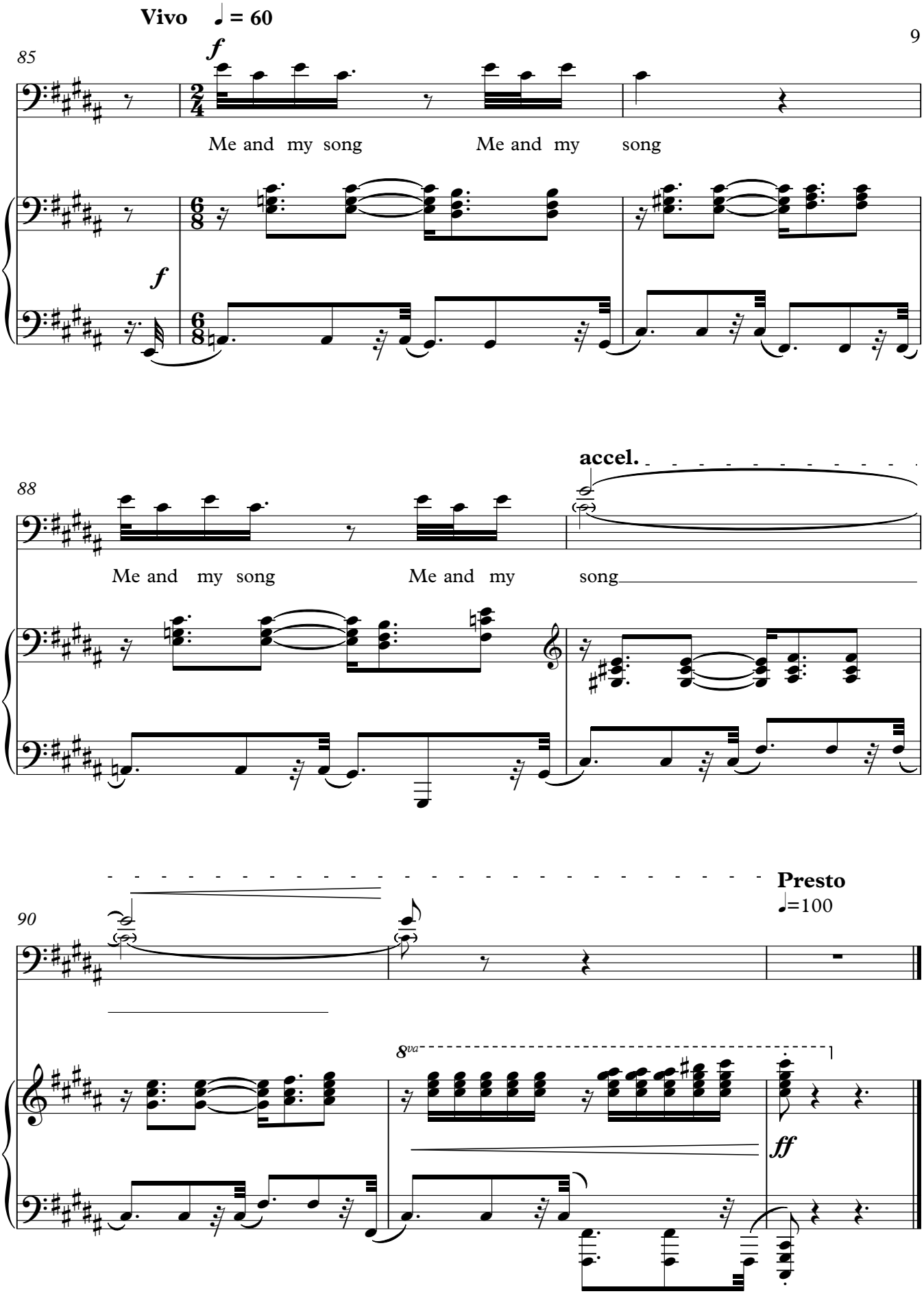
Af - ri - ca Strong and black As

59

i - ron first smel ted in Af - ri - ca


63
Song out of A - - fri -
66
ca Deep Deep and mel low_ song__
70
Deep As the


73
rich earth
Beau-ti - ful
As the
p
Ped.
Ped.
77
rit.
black ni- ght
Strong
As the
p
Ped.
Still ♩=50
81
pp
f
rit.
p
first i- ron
Black
out of Af - ri - ca
f
p
f
p
p

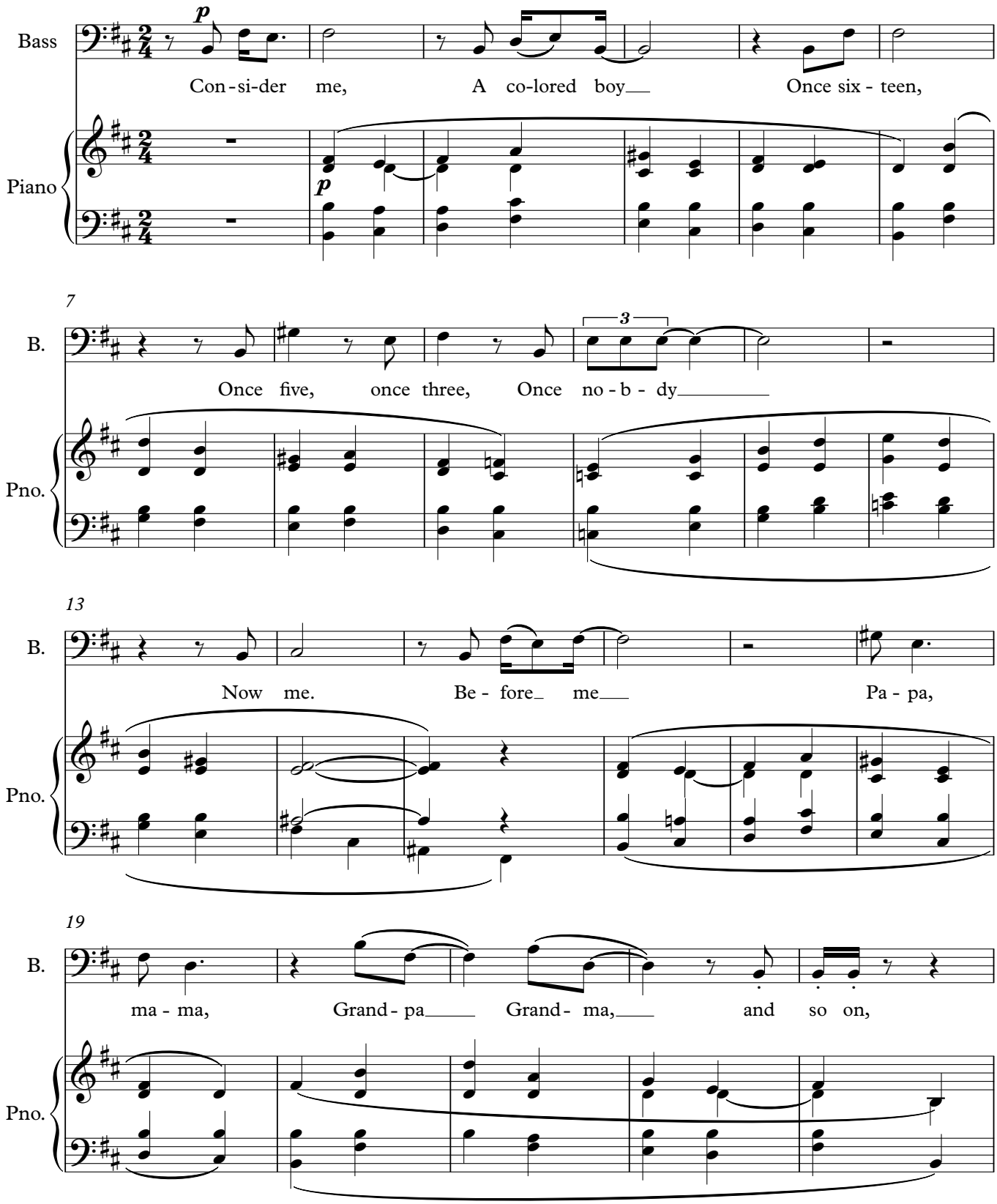

Vivo ♩= 60
85
f
Me and my song
Me and my song
f
88
accel.
Me and my song
Me and my song
90
Presto
♩=100
8va
ff

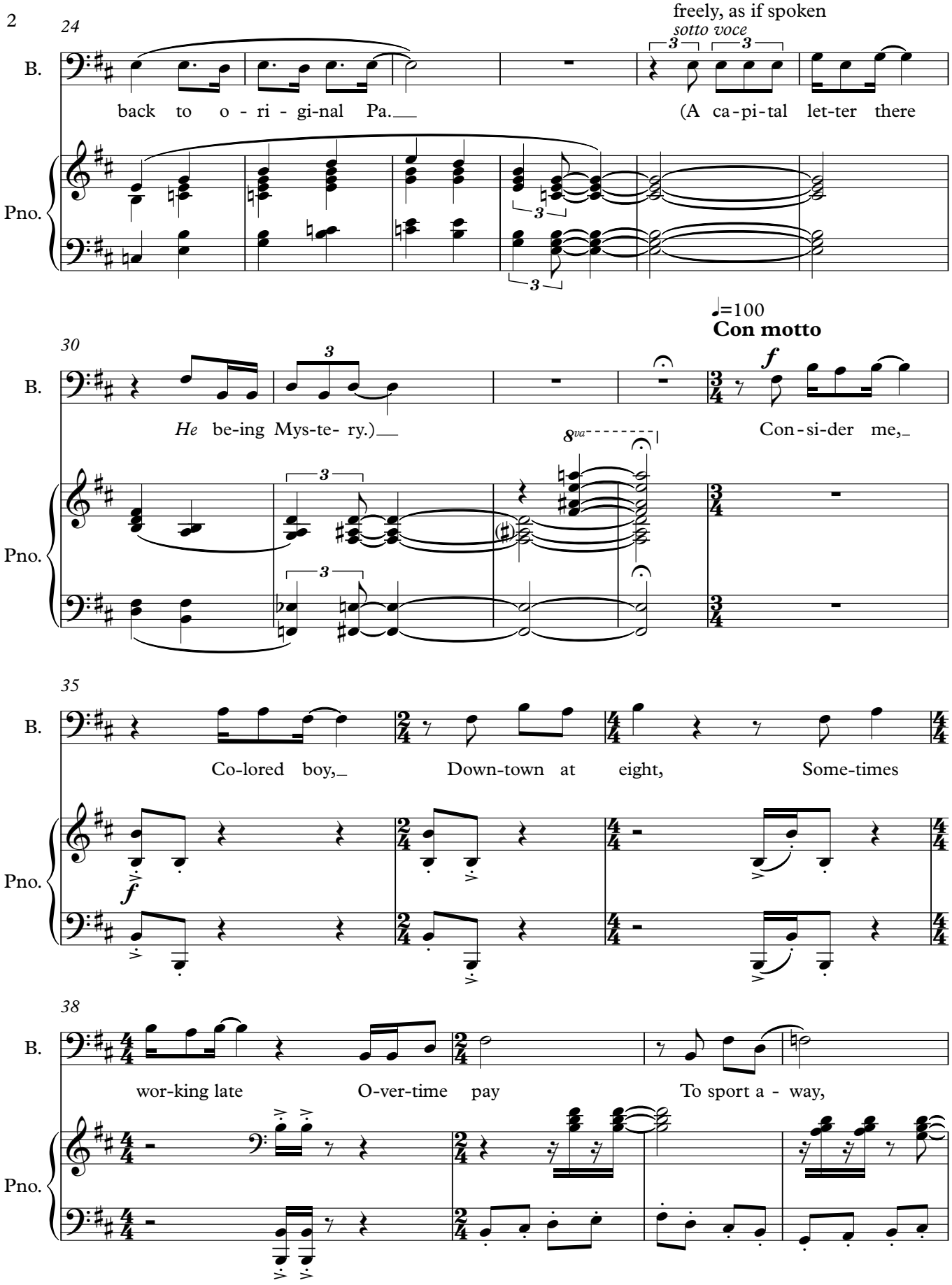
Consider Me

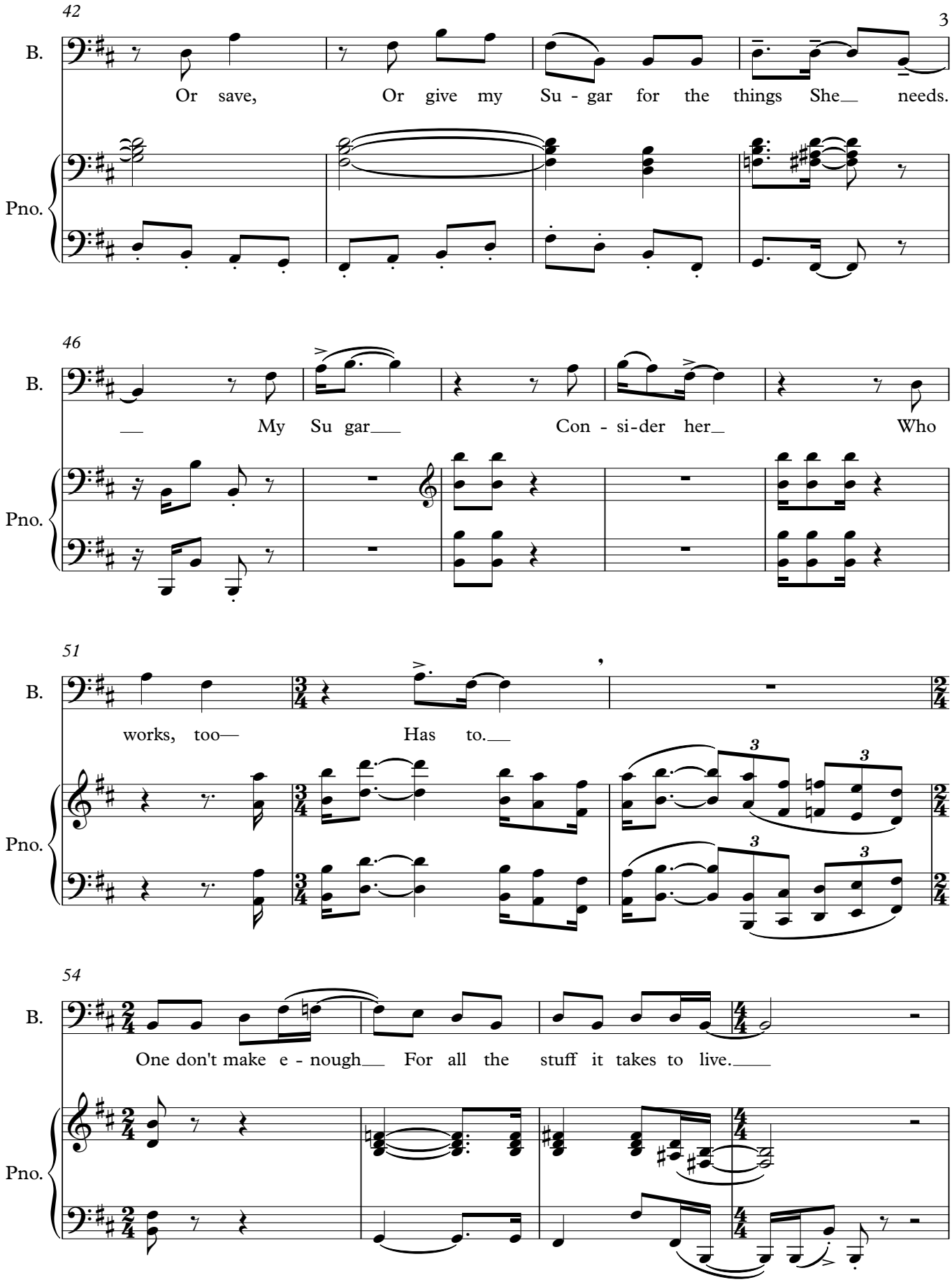
Largo

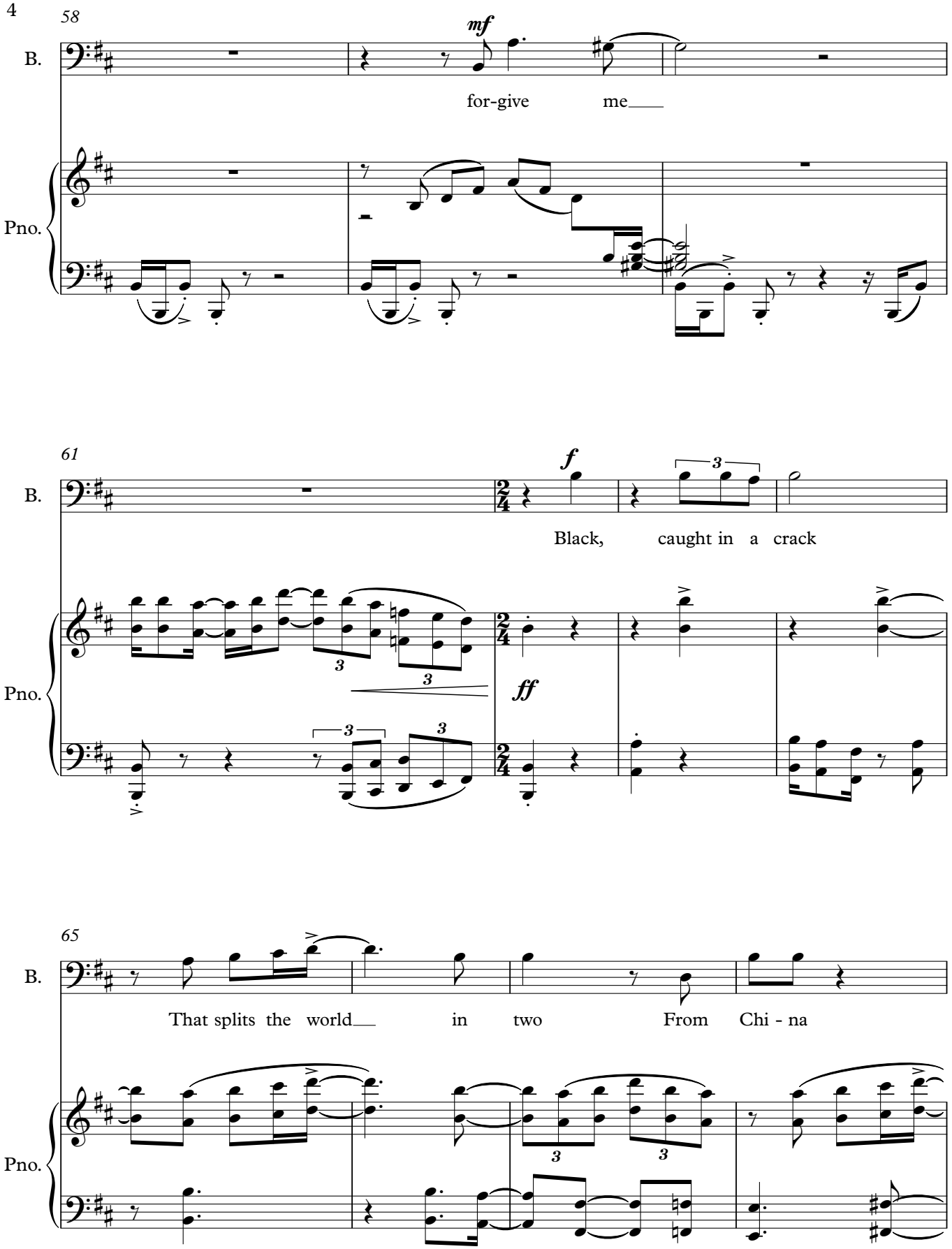
♩=72

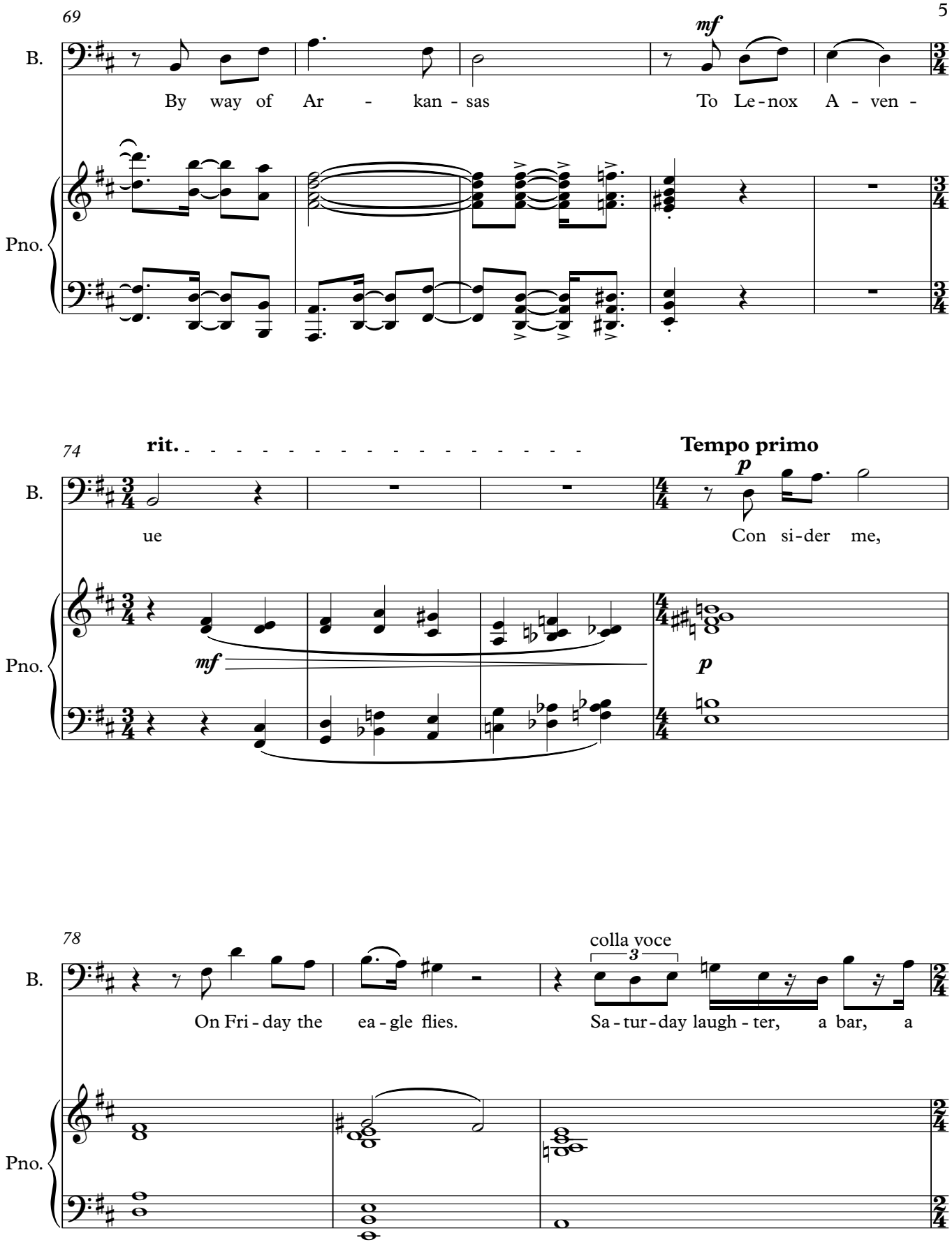
Music: Avner Finberg
Text: Langston Hughes

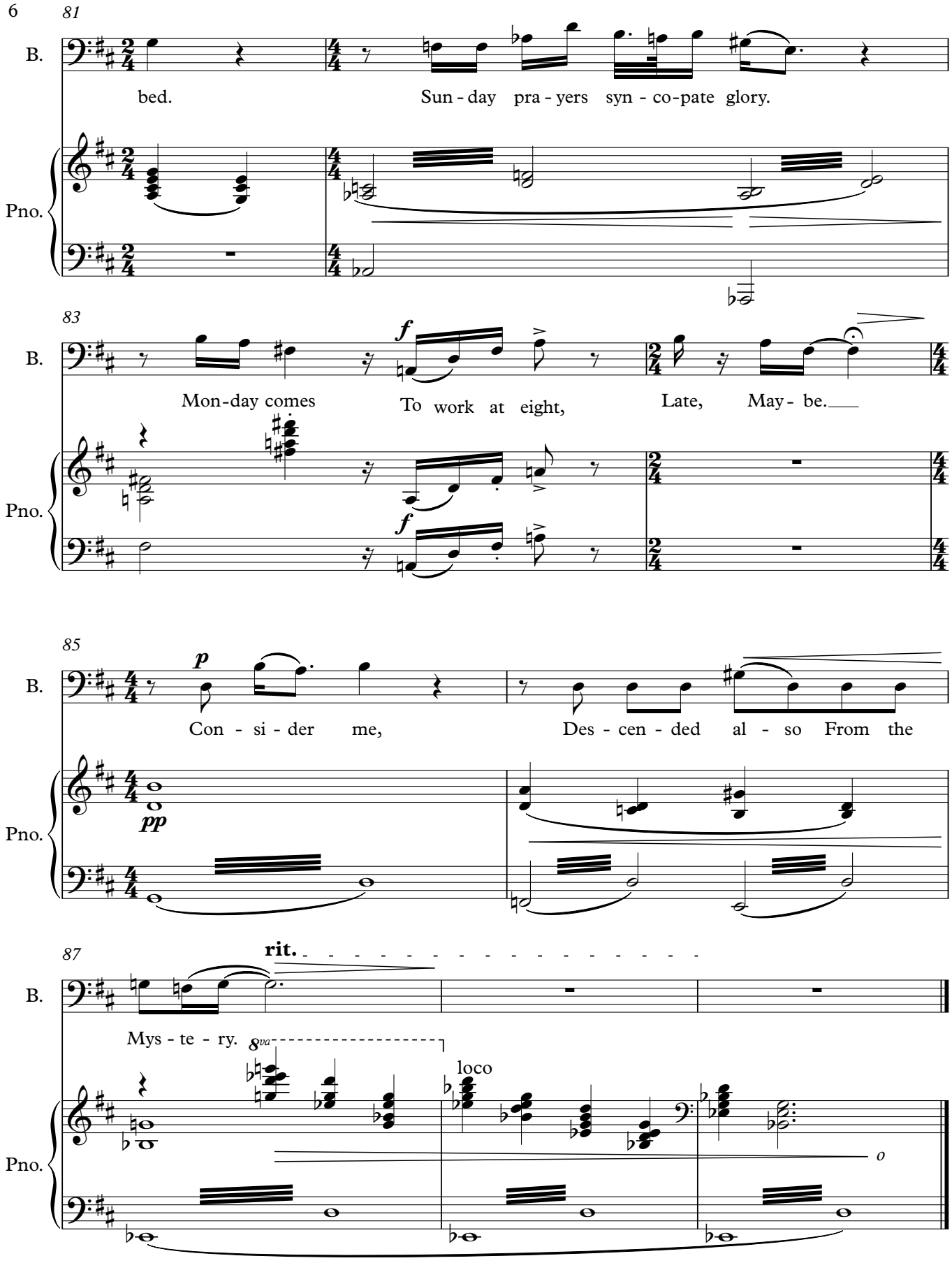



24
freely, as if spoken
sotto voce
B.
back to o - ri - gi-nal Pa.
(A ca-pi-tal let-ter there
Pno.
30
♩=100
Con motto
B.
He be-ing Mys-te- ry.)
Con-si-der me,
8va
Pno.
35
B.
Co-lored boy,
Down-town at eight,
Some-times
Pno.
38
B.
wor-king late
O-ver-time pay
To sport a - way,
Pno.


42
B.
Or save, Or give my Su - gar for the things She needs.
Pno.
46
B.
My Su gar Con - si-der her Who
Pno.
51
B.
works, too— Has to.
Pno.
54
B.
One don't make e - nough For all the stuff it takes to live.
Pno.

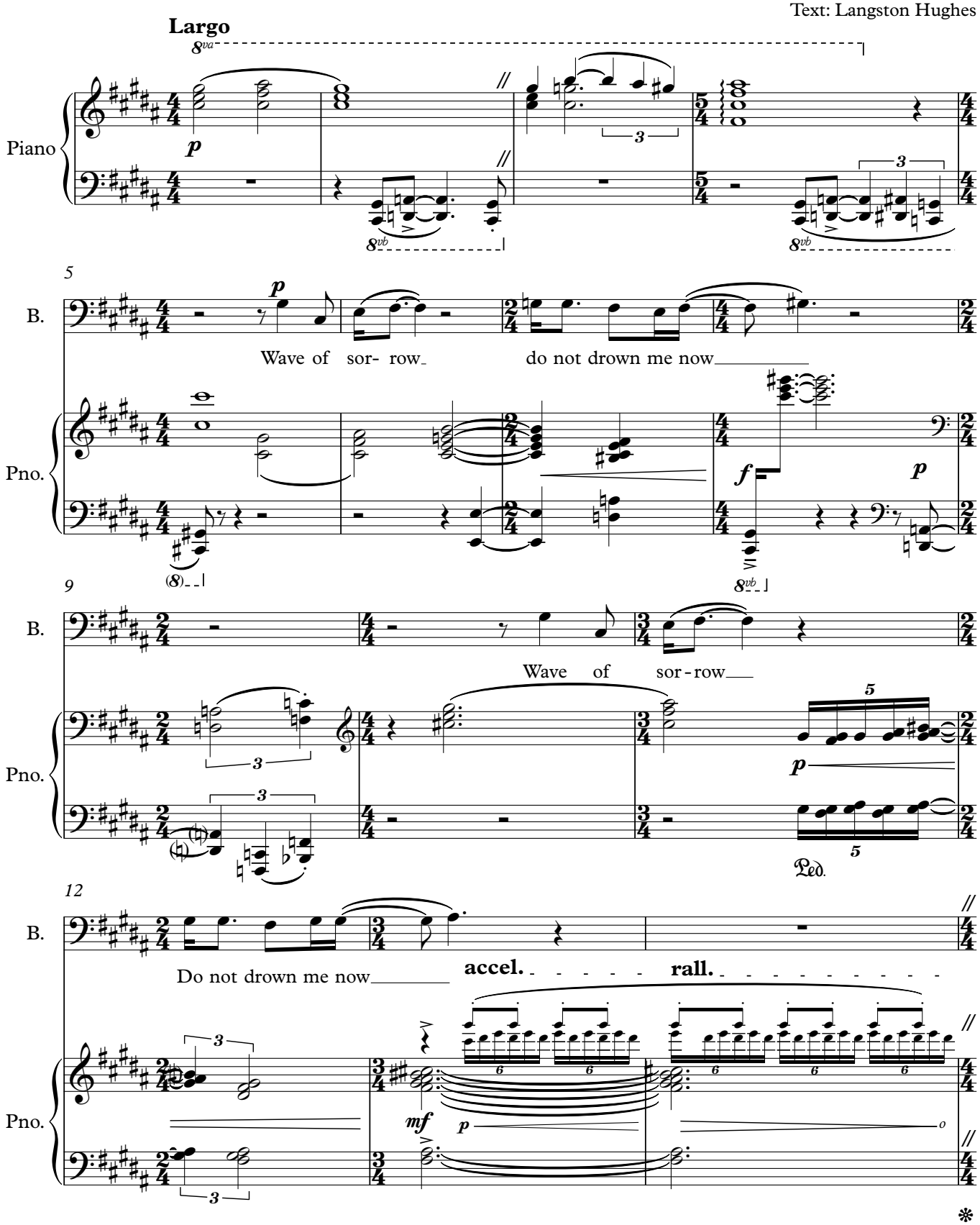

58
mf
B.
for-give me
Pno.
61
f
B.
Black, caught in a crack
Pno.
ff
65
B.
That splits the world in two From Chi - na
Pno.


69
B.
Pno.
mf
By way of Ar - kan - sas
To Le - nox A - ven -
74
rit.
Tempo primo
ue
Con si - der me,
p
mf
p
78
colla voce
3
On Fri - day the ea - gle flies.
Sa - tur - day laugh - ter, a bar, a


81
B.
bed.
Sun - day pra - yers syn - co-pate glory.
Pno.
83
B.
Mon-day comes
To work at eight,
Late, May - be.
Pno.
85
B.
Con - si - der me,
Des - cen - ded al - so From the
Pno.
87
B.
rit.
Mys - te - ry.
8va
loco
Pno.

Island

Music: Avner Finberg
Text: Langston Hughes



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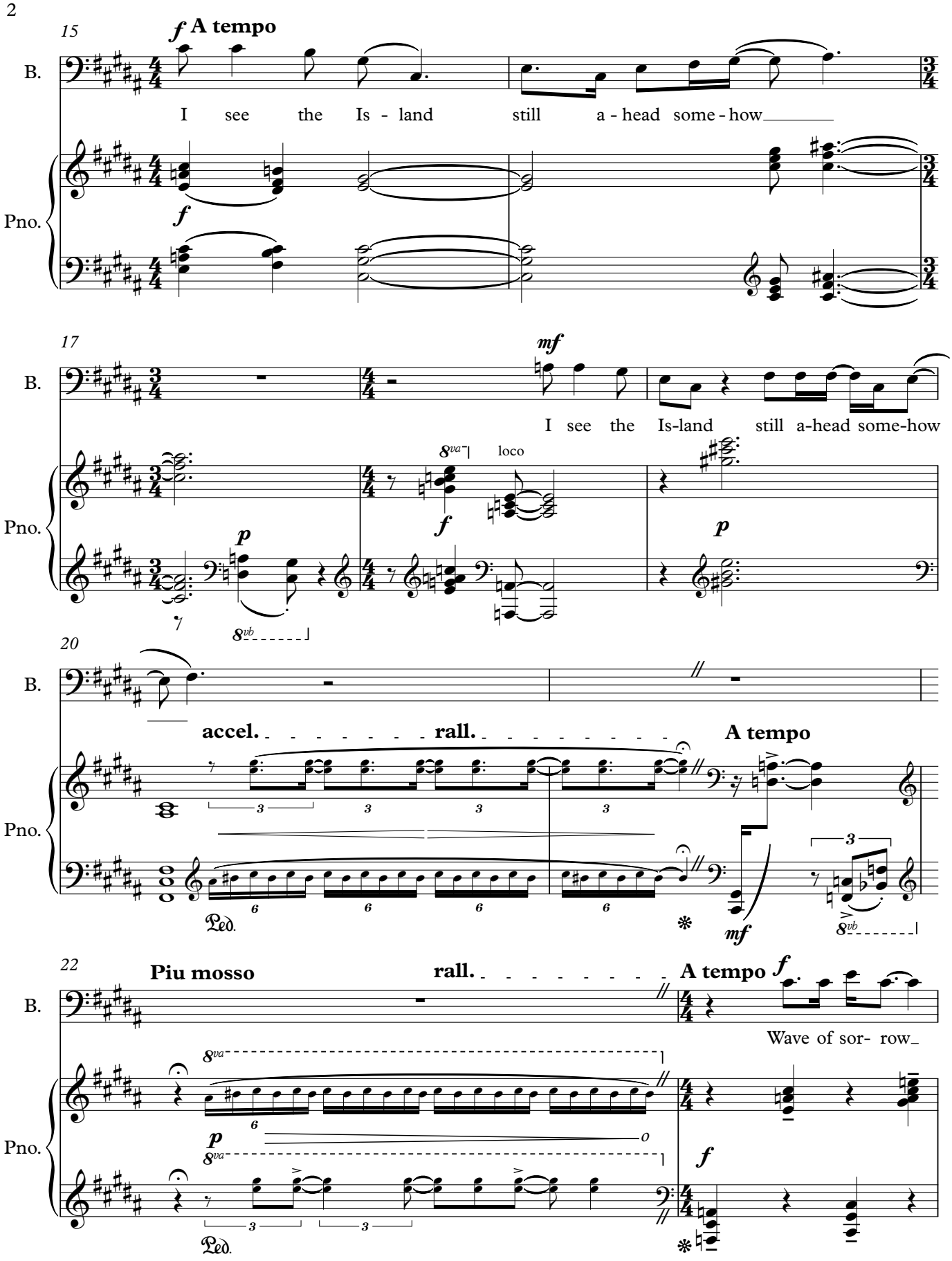
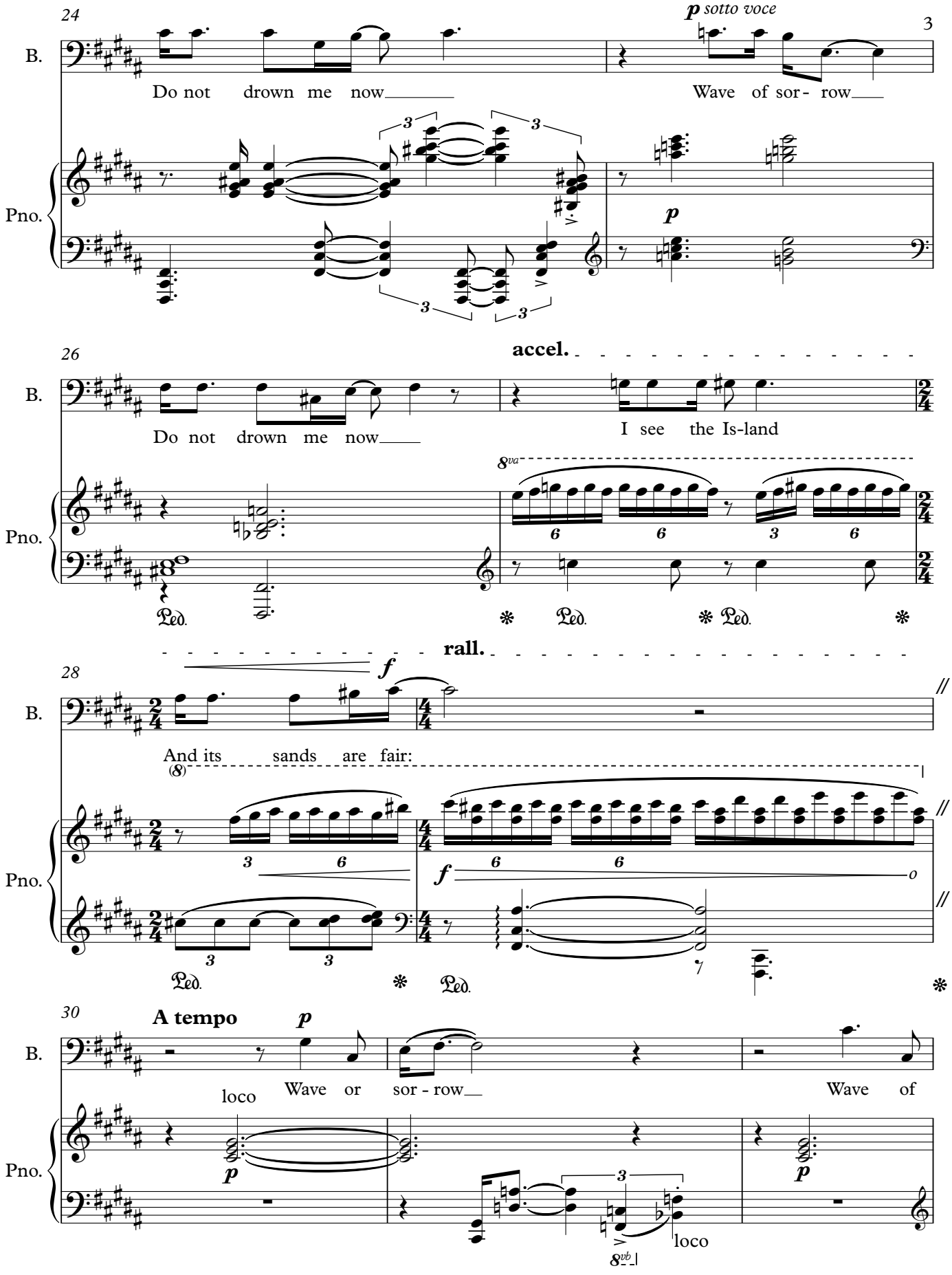
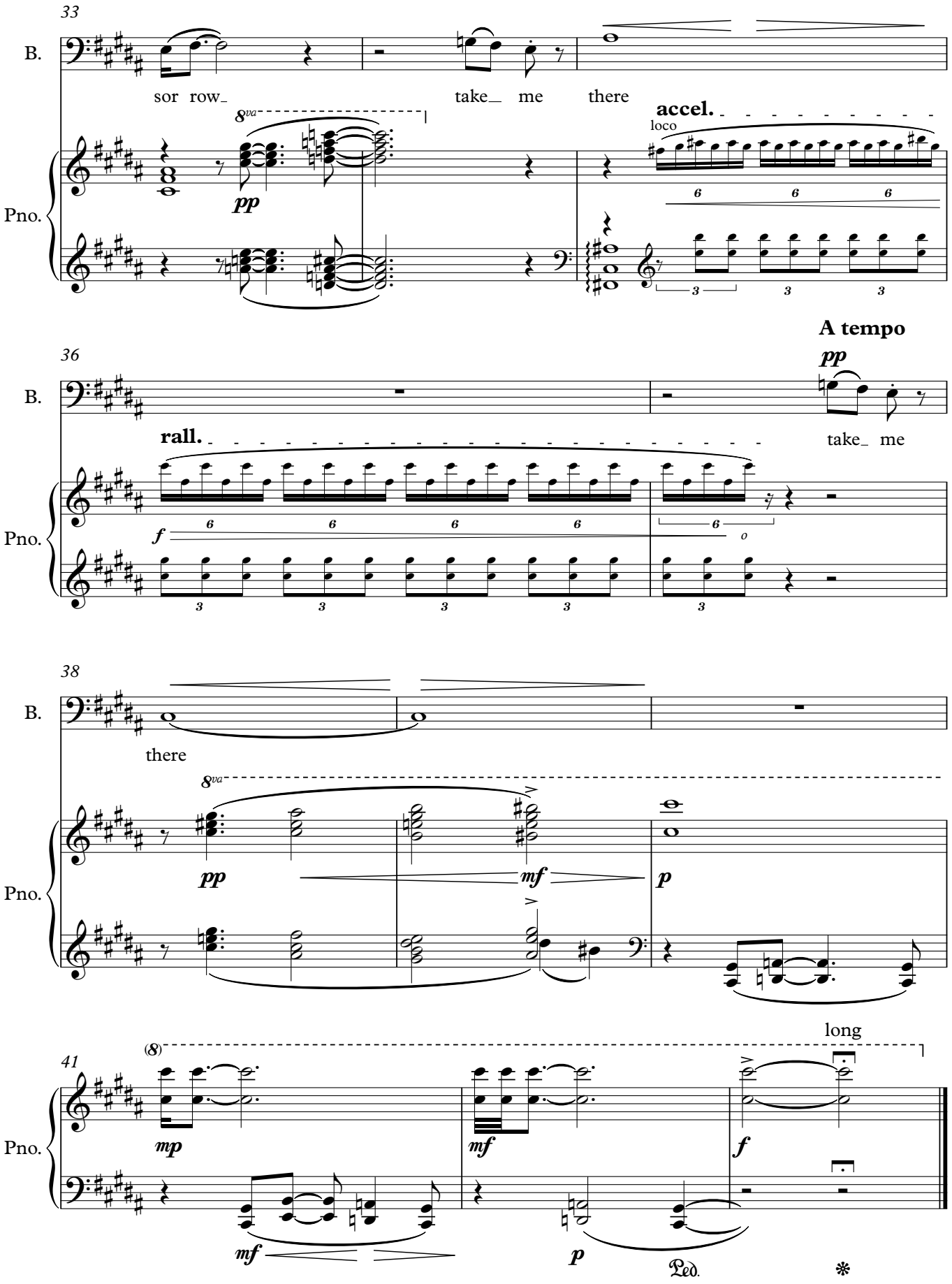

15
f A tempo
B.
I see the Is - land still a - head some - how
Pno.
17
mf
I see the Is-land still a-head some-how
8va
loco
8vb
20
accel. rall. A tempo
Ped.
22
Piu mosso
rall. A tempo
Wave of sor- row


24
p sotto voce
3
B.
Do not drown me now
Wave of sor - row
Pno.
26
accel.
B.
Do not drown me now
I see the Is-land
8va
Pno.
Ped.
rall.
28
f
B.
And its sands are fair:
(8)
Pno.
30
A tempo
p
B.
loco
Wave or sor - row
Wave of
Pno.
8vb
loco


33
B.
sor row_
take_ me there
8va
pp
accel.
loco
Pno.
36
A tempo
pp
B.
rall.
take_ me
f
Pno.
38
B.
there
8va
pp
mf
p
Pno.
long
41
(8)
mp
mf
f
Pno.
mf
p
Ped.
*