Revolution Songs

for Soprano, Violin, Cello, and Piano

to commemorate the 250th Birthday of the United States in 2026

Lyrics and/or melodies by Jonathan Odell, John H. Hewitt, Gaetano Donizetti, traditional tunes, and anonymous screeds

Music by Bill Robinson

Revolution Songs

for Soprano, Violin, Cello, and Piano

March 7—April 30, 2026
Duration: about 18’ for Eric Pritchard

In early March, 2026, my long-time collaborator Eric Pritchard asked me to arrange some Revolutionary War songs (and one from just before the Civil War) for soprano and piano trio. This was to be performed at Duke University at the end of May at a concert celebrating the 250th birthday of the US of A. Here are details about each song.

I. The Congress [4:20]

I thought I would get a start by setting pro-Tory lyrics by Jonathan Odell (1737-1818) to his song from 1776. Odell had a lot of fun publishing poems against the Revolution and in support of the Crown, and for his efforts had to flee to Nova Scotia and then to New Brunswick, as so many others did in those days. The original composition used the tune “Nancy Dawson”, which I didn’t use at all in this work; this is the only song in this cycle where the music is entirely my own.

II. Young Ladies In Town [2’]

In 1768, Bostonians refused to import commodities from Great Britain unless the import duties were repealed. The Boston News Letter published an anonymous poem asking young women to only wear American-made cloth (much like Gandhi would do to end the British Raj 140 years later). The melody used for this poem is a Scottish traditional tune frequently used for the song “Barbara Allen”. I’ve taken many liberties with the melody, and all the rest is my own.

III. The American Vicar of Bray [6']

This began with the 17th century folk melody "Country Gardens", used in *The Quaker's Opera* of 1728. "The Vicar of Bray" is a satire based on this tune about a vicar who switches sides repeatedly during changes in the Established Church through the reigns of several monarchs to keep his job. A parody of this parody, "The American Vicar of Bray", with the same chorus, came out in Rivington's Royal Gazette in 1779, poking fun at the shifting loyalties of some colonists during the war. This song, after my mutilation, is, therefore, a parody of a parody of a parody of a parody. The original is ten verses plus choruses; I have omitted two verses and only used the chorus three times. The penultimate verse uses the melody "Over the Stone", a Welsh song composed after the Battle of Bosworth Field in 1485.

IV. My Love Is Gone To Sea [2:30]

This song is from a collection of eight published in 1788, composed by Francis Hopkinson and dedicated to George Washington. Hopkinson was one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence, and was an important figure in the Revolutionary War era. He was the first published American composer. I used the lyrics and (once again) took many liberties with the tune, with all else being my own.

V. The Union Forever [2:30]

John H. Hewitt published "The Union Forever" in 1850 to cheer on the anti-secession and anti-slavery factions in the decade before the Civil War. He used a tune from *Lucia di Lammermoor* by Gaetano Donizetti. While this may seem out of place in a collection of Revolutionary War songs, the goal of the Revolution, one unified country free from foreign domination, only happened after the Civil War—when the United States became a singular, not plural, noun. All besides melody and lyrics is either mine or stolen from the best sources.

Music by Bill Robinson

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billrobinsonmusic.com
Cover art: *The Ballance of Power*, 1781, published in London

Lyrics

I. The Congress (1776)

Ye, Tories all rejoice and sing, success
to George our gracious King.
The faithful subjects tribute bring, and
execrate the Congress.
These hardy knaves and stupid fools,
some apish and pragmatic mules,
Some servile acquiescing tools,
These compose the Congress.
Then Jove resolve to send a curse, and
all the woes of life rehearse
Not plague, not famine, but much
worse,
He cursed us with a Congress.
Then peace forsook this hopeless
shore,
Then cannons blazed with horrid roar,
We hear of blood, death, wounds, and
gore,
The offspring of the Congress.
Prepare, prepare, my friends prepare,
For scenes of blood, the field of war
To royal standard we'll repair,
And curse the haughty Congress.
Huzza! Huzza! And thrice Huzza!
Return peace, harmony, and law!
Restore such times as once we saw,
And bid adieu to Congress.

Jonathan Odel

II. Young Ladies in Town

1) Young ladies in town, and those
that live 'round
Wear none but your own country
linen;
Of economy boast, let your pride be the
most
To show clothes of your own make and
spinnin'.
What if homespun, they say, be not
quite as gay
As brocades. Be not in a passion
For once it is known 'tis much worn in
town
One and all will cry out 'tis the
fashion!

2) And as one all agree, that you'll not
married be,
To such as will wear London factory;
But at first sight refuse, tell 'em such
you will choose,
As encourage our own manufactory.
No more ribbons wear, nor in rich silks
appear,
Love your country much better than
fine things,
Begin without passion, 'twill soon be
the fashion,
To grace your smooth locks with a
twine string.

3) Throw away your bohea, and your
green hyson tea,
And all things of a new fashioned
duty;
Get in a good store of the choice
Labrador,
There'll soon be enough here to suit
ye.
These do without fear and to all you'll
appear,
Fair charming, true, lovely and clever,
Though the times remain darkish,
Young men will be sparkish,
And love you much stronger than ever.

III. The American Vicar of Bray

(edited for length)

1) When Royal George rul'd o'er this
land,
And loyalty no harm meant,

For church and king I made a stand,
And so I got preferment.
I still opposed all party tricks,
For reasons I thought clear ones,
And swore it was their politics,
To make us Presbyterians.

Chorus
And this is law I will maintain,
Until my dying day, sir,
Let whatsoever king will reign,
I'll be the Vicar of Bray, sir.

2) When Stamp Act pas'd the Parliament,
To bring some grist to mill, sir,
To back it was my firm intent,
But soon there came repeal, sir.
I quickly join'd the common cry,
That we should all be slaves, sir,
The House of Commons was a sty,
The King and Lords were knaves, sir.
(Chorus)

3) A Congress now was quickly call'd,
That we might act together;
I thought that Britain would apall'd
Be glad to make fair weather,
And soon repeal th' obnoxious bill,
As she had done before, sir,
That we may gather wealth at will,
And so be tax'd no more, sir.
(Chorus)

4) But Britain was not quickly scar'd,
She told another story;
When independence was declar'd,
I figur'd as a Tory;
Declar'd it was rebellion base,
To take up arms -- I curs'd it--
For faith it seemed a settled case,
That we should soon be worsted.

5) The French alliance now came forth,
The papists flocked in shoals, sir,
Frizeur Marquises, Valets of birth,
And priests to save our souls, sir.
Our "good ally," with tow'ring wing,
Embrac'd the flattering hope, sir,
That we should own him for our king,
And then invite the Pope, sir.
(Chorus)

6) When Howe, with drums and great parade,
March'd through this famous town, sir,
I cried, "May Fame his temples shade
"With laurels for a crown, sir."
With zeal I swore to make amends
To good old constitution,
And drank confusion to the friends
Of our late revolution.

7) But poor Burgoyne's denounced my fate,
The Whigs began to glory,
I now bewail'd my wretched state,
That I was e'er a Tory,
By night the British left the shore,
Nor car'd for friends a fig, sir,
I turn'd the cat in pan once more,
And so became a Whig, sir.

8) I call'd the army butch'ring dogs,
A bloody tyrant King, sir,
The Commons, Lords, a set of rogues,
That all deserved to swing, sir.
Since fate has made us great and free,
And Providence can't falter,
So long till death my king shall be,
Unless the times should alter.
(Chorus)

(from Rivington's Royal Gazette, June 30, 1779)

IV. My Love Is Gone To Sea

1) My love is gone to sea,
Whilst I his absence mourn,
No joy shall smile on me
Until my love return,
He ask'd me for his bride,
And many vows he swore,
I blushed and soon complied
I blushed and soon complied,
My heart was his before,
My heart was his,
My heart was his before.

2) One little month was past,
And who so blest as we,
The summons came at last,
And Jemmy must to sea,
I saw his ship so gay,
Swift fly the wave-worn shore,
I wiped my tears away,
I wiped my tears away,
And saw his ship no more,
No more, no more,
And saw his ship no more.

3) When clouds shut in the sky,
And storms around me howl,
When livid lightnings fly,
And threatning thunders roll,
All hopes of rest are lost,
No slumbers visit me,
My anxious thoughts are toss'd,
My anxious thoughts are toss'd,
With Jemmy on the sea,
My thoughts are toss'd
With Jemmy on the sea.

Francis Hopkinson

V. The Union Forever!

1) Proud land of the free! Where the exile seeks rest,
And blesses the flag that waves o'er him;
Where plenty is strewn o'er the earth's verdant breast,
And man sees no danger before him.
The cry of disunion has sail'd on the air,
And traitors thy strong bonds would sever;
The demon of discord has crawl'd from his lair,
While patriots cry "Union forever!"

Chorus
Then up with our Flag! Give its Stripes to the wind,
Its Stars shall be prostrated never!
We'll leave our lov'd homes and their treasures behind
And fight for the Union forever!

2) There are hearts at the North that are true to the cause,
The South hath its Patriots undaunted;
The East and the West have their friends of the laws,
Who will always be ready when wanted.
Then, who is there fears for a Union so strong,
That the Federal Compact shall perish?
It shall last, while the sun in its pride rolls along,
And Washington's mem'ry we cherish.

Chorus

John H. Hewitt

Revolution Songs

I. The Congress [4:16]

lyrics by Jonathan Odell
music by Bill Robinson

Tory story (♪.=110)

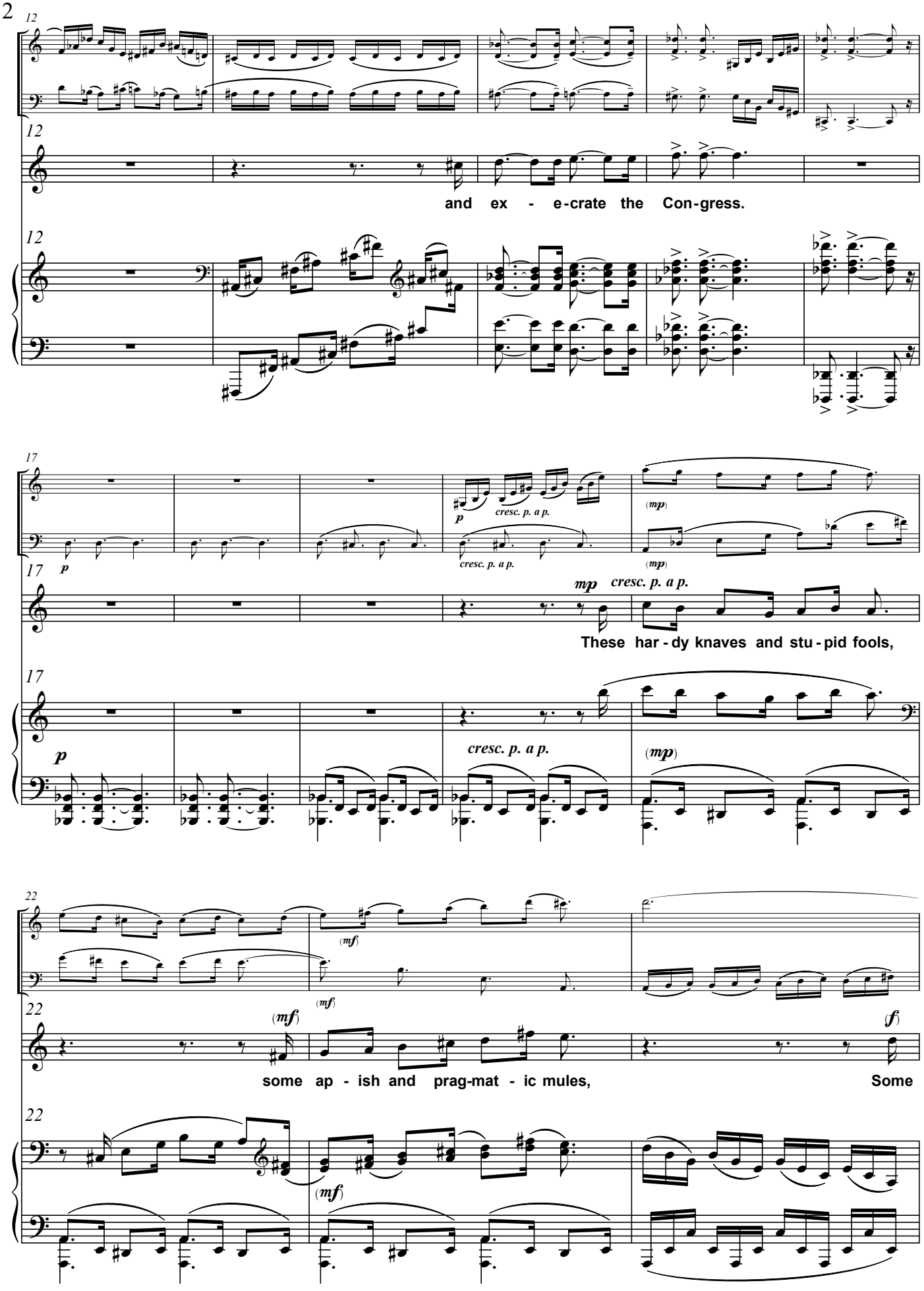
Violin
Cello
Soprano
Piano

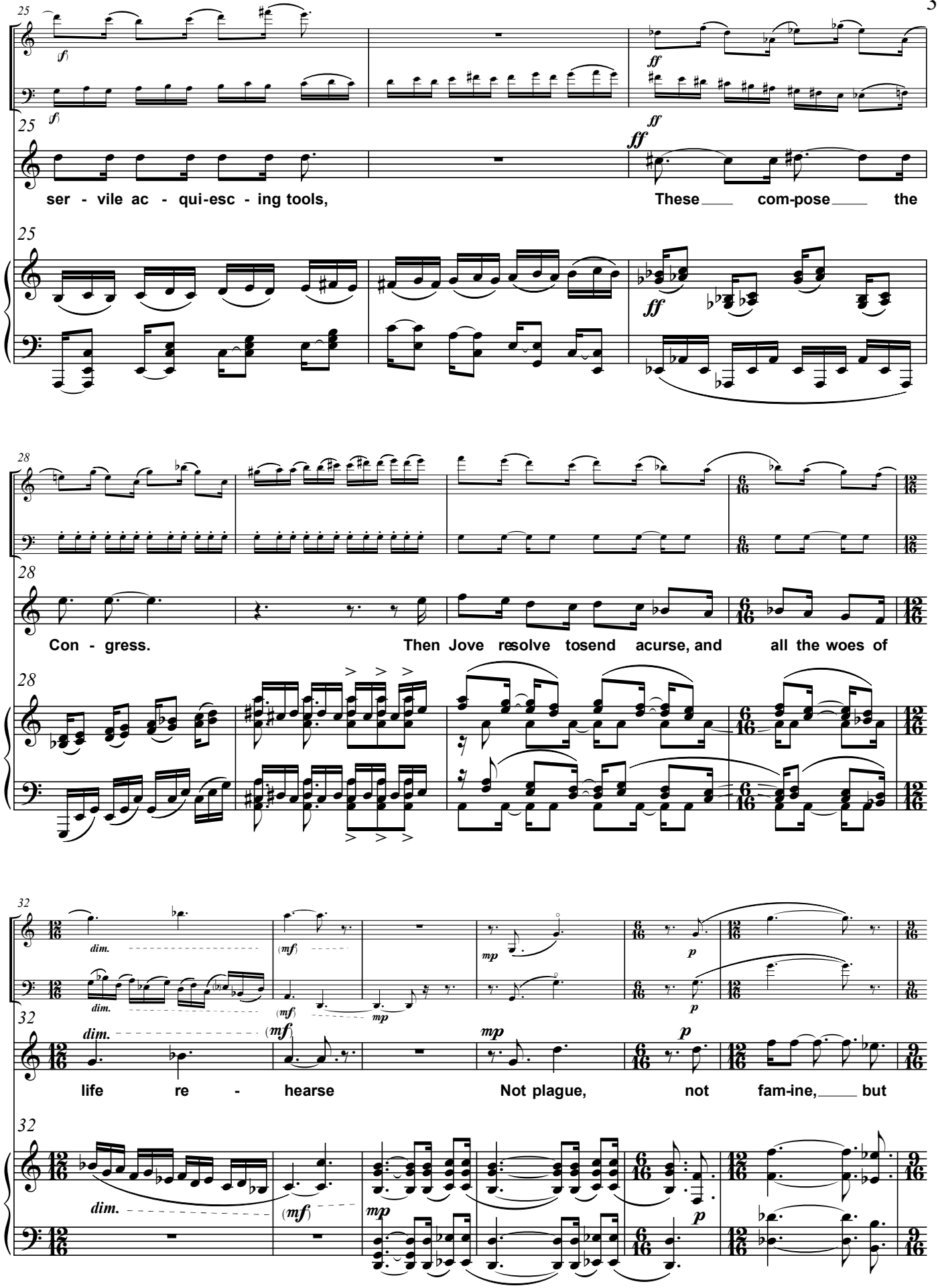
pizz. arco

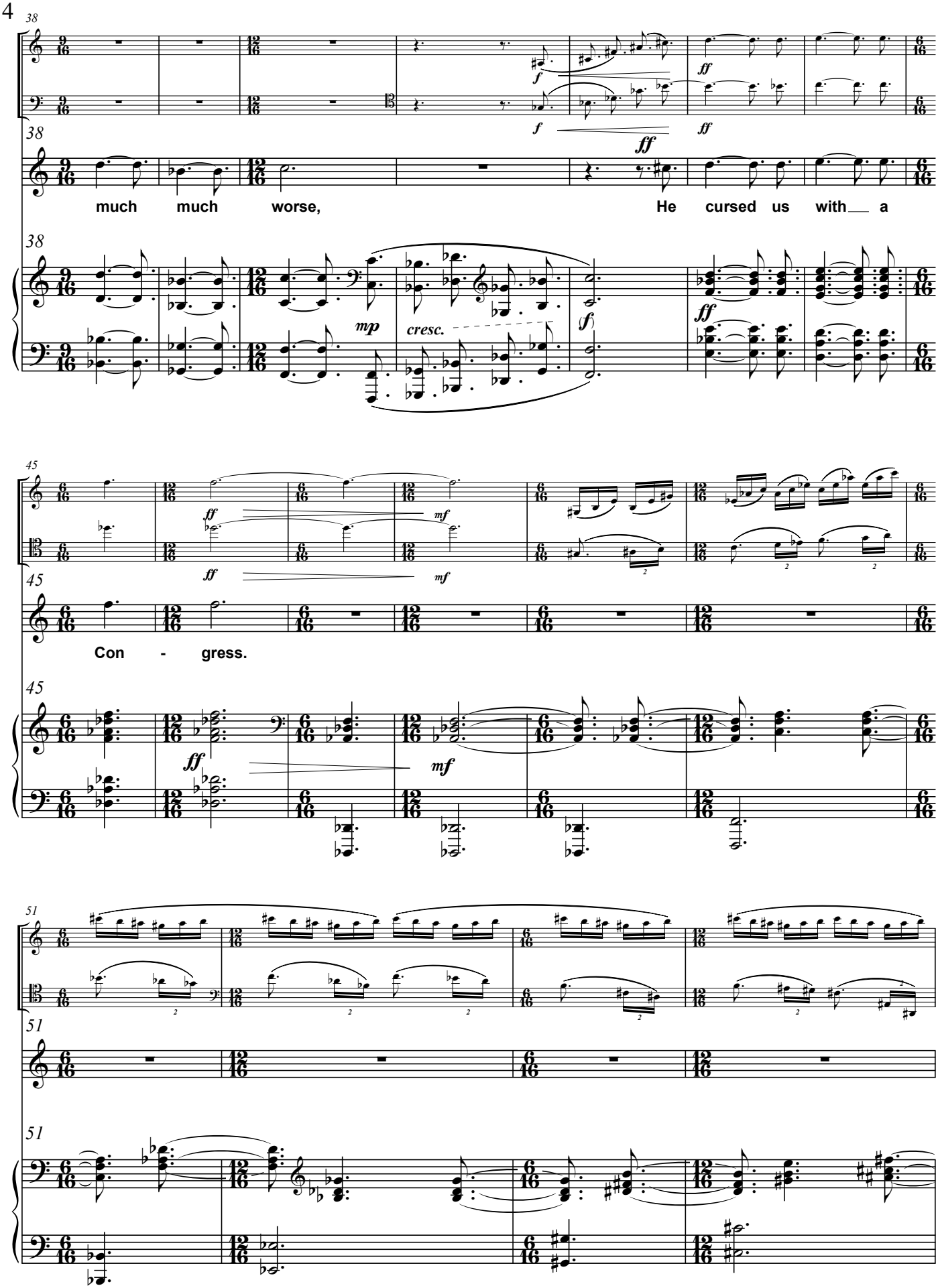
Ye To - ries all re-joice and sing,

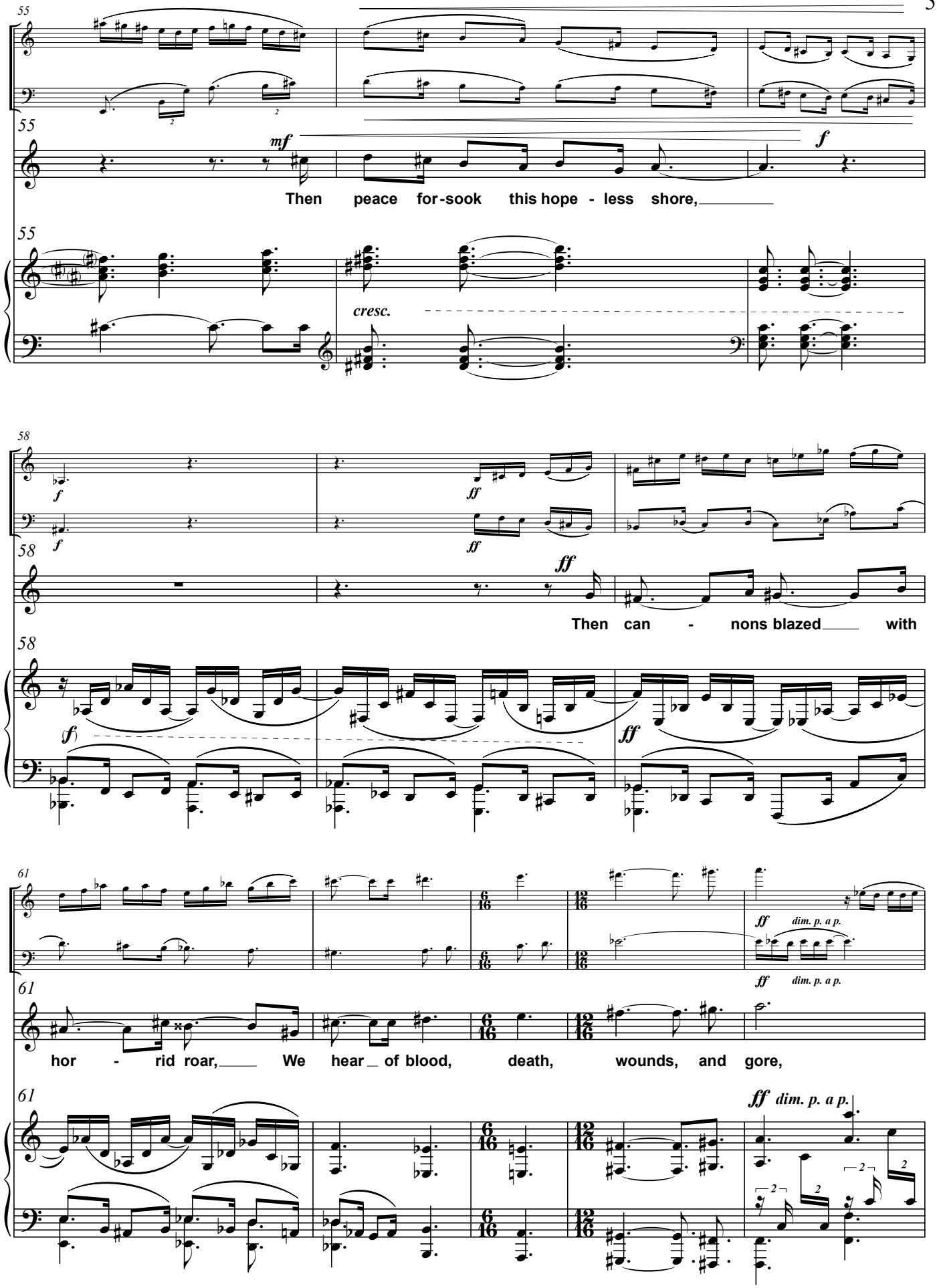
suc - cess to George our gra - cious King.

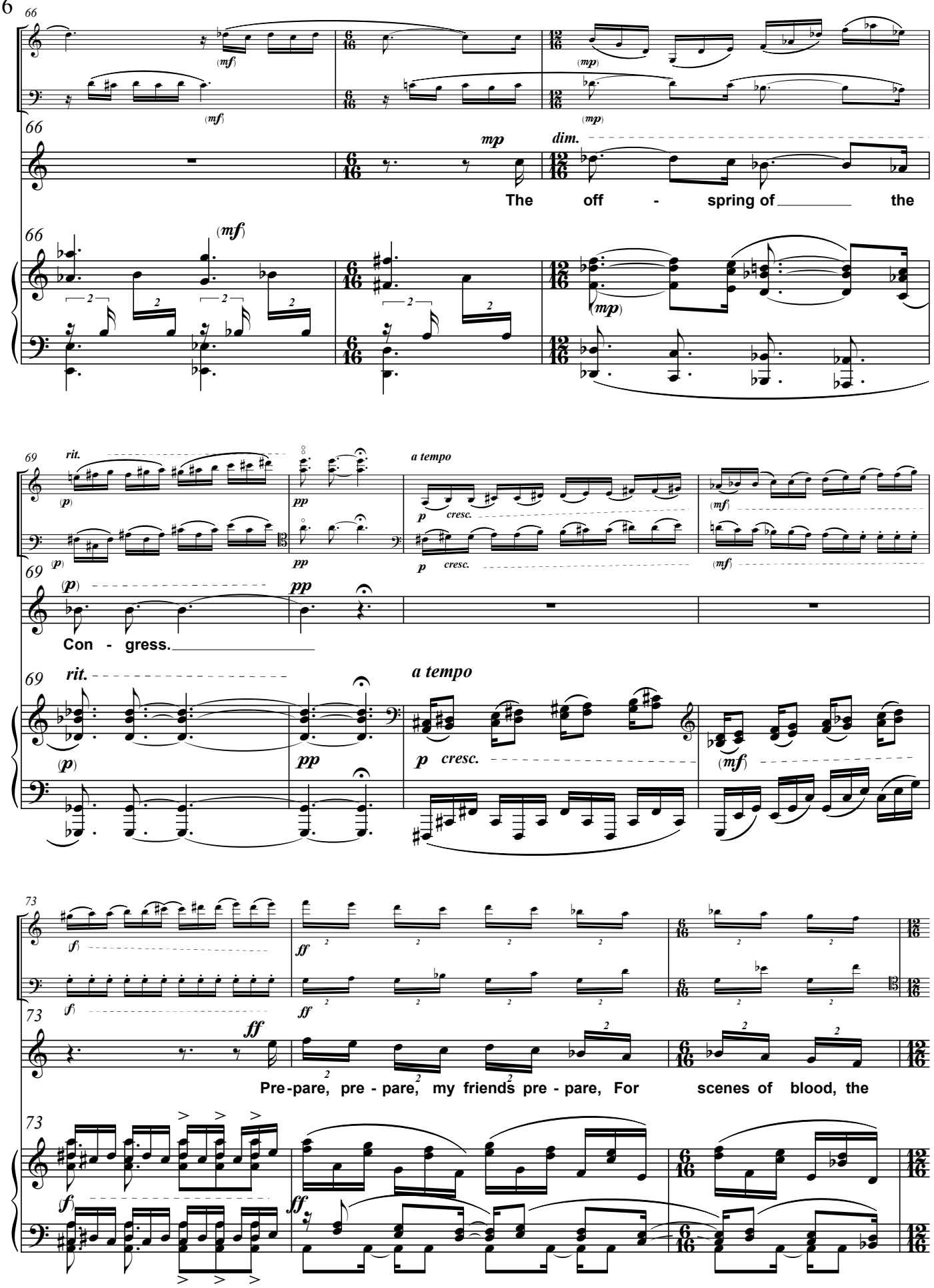
The faith-ful sub-jects trib-ute bring,

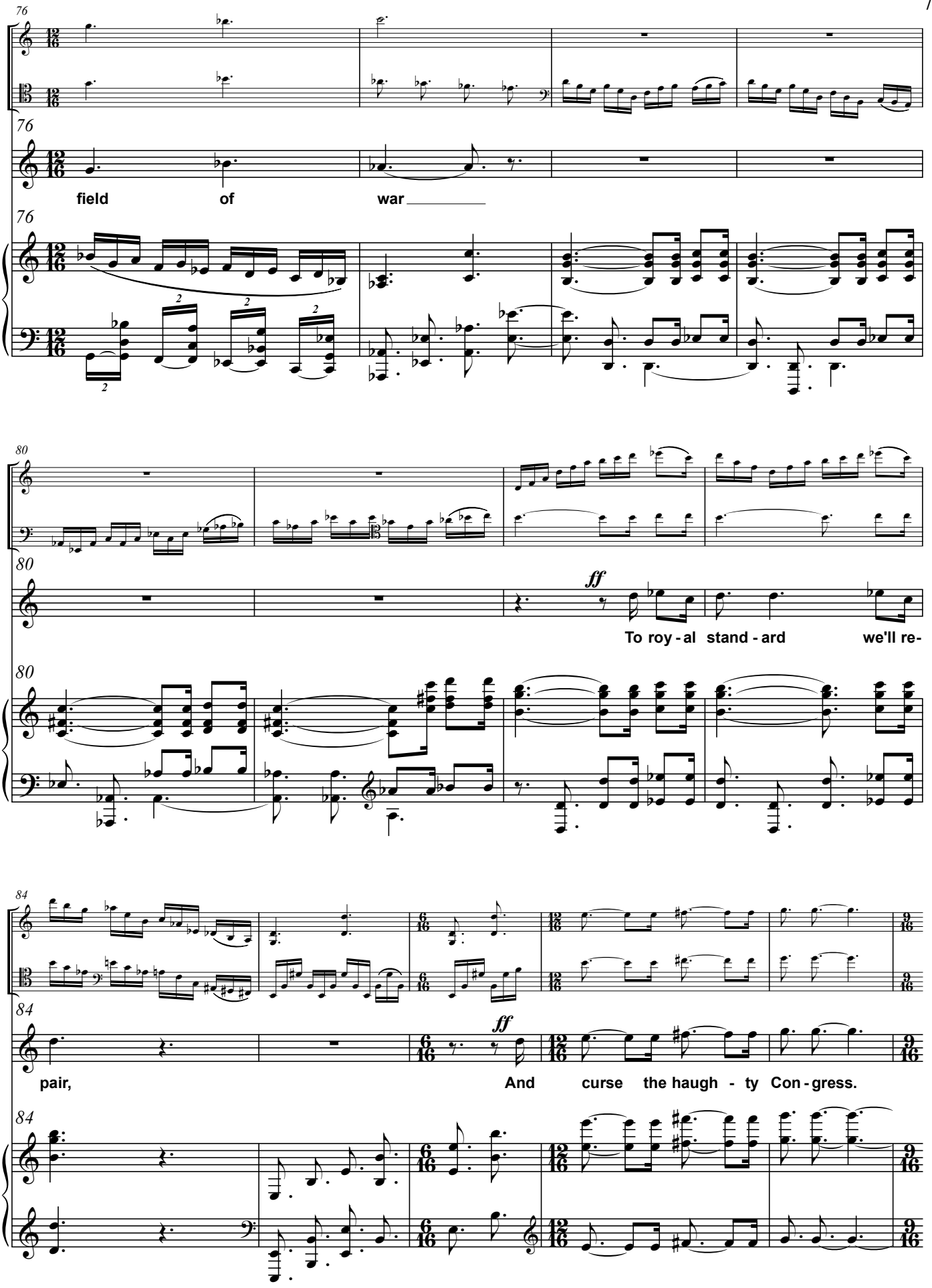

12
and ex - e-crate the Con-gress.
17
p
cresc. p. a p.
(mp)
mp
cresc. p. a p.
These har - dy knaves and stu - pid fools,
22
(mf)
(f)
some ap - ish and prag-mat - ic mules,
Some

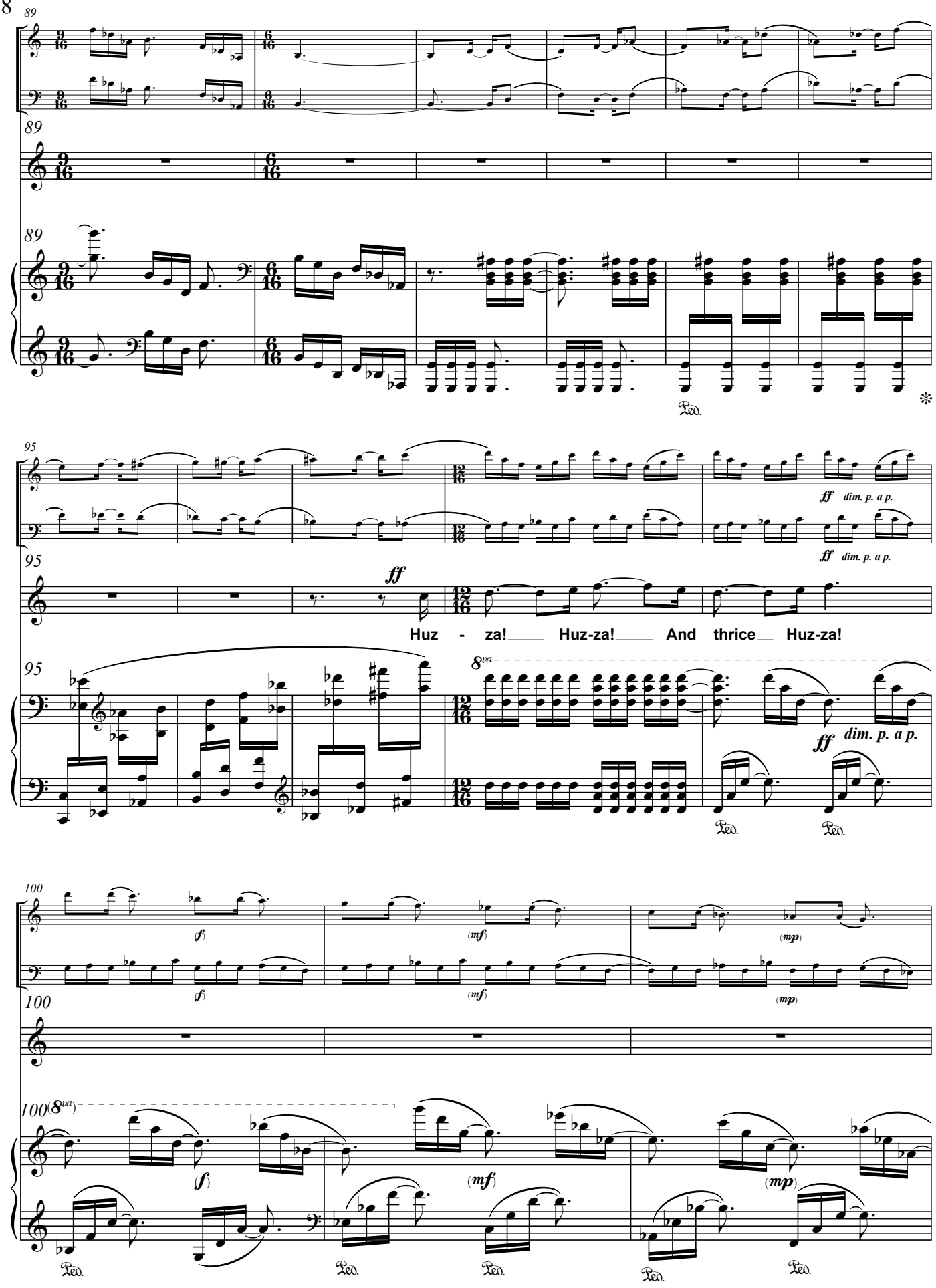

25
(f)
ff
ser - vile ac - qui-esc - ing tools,
These com-pose the
28
Con - gress.
Then Jove resolve tosend acurse, and all the woes of
32
dim.
(mf)
mp
p
life re - hearse
Not plague, not fam-ine, but

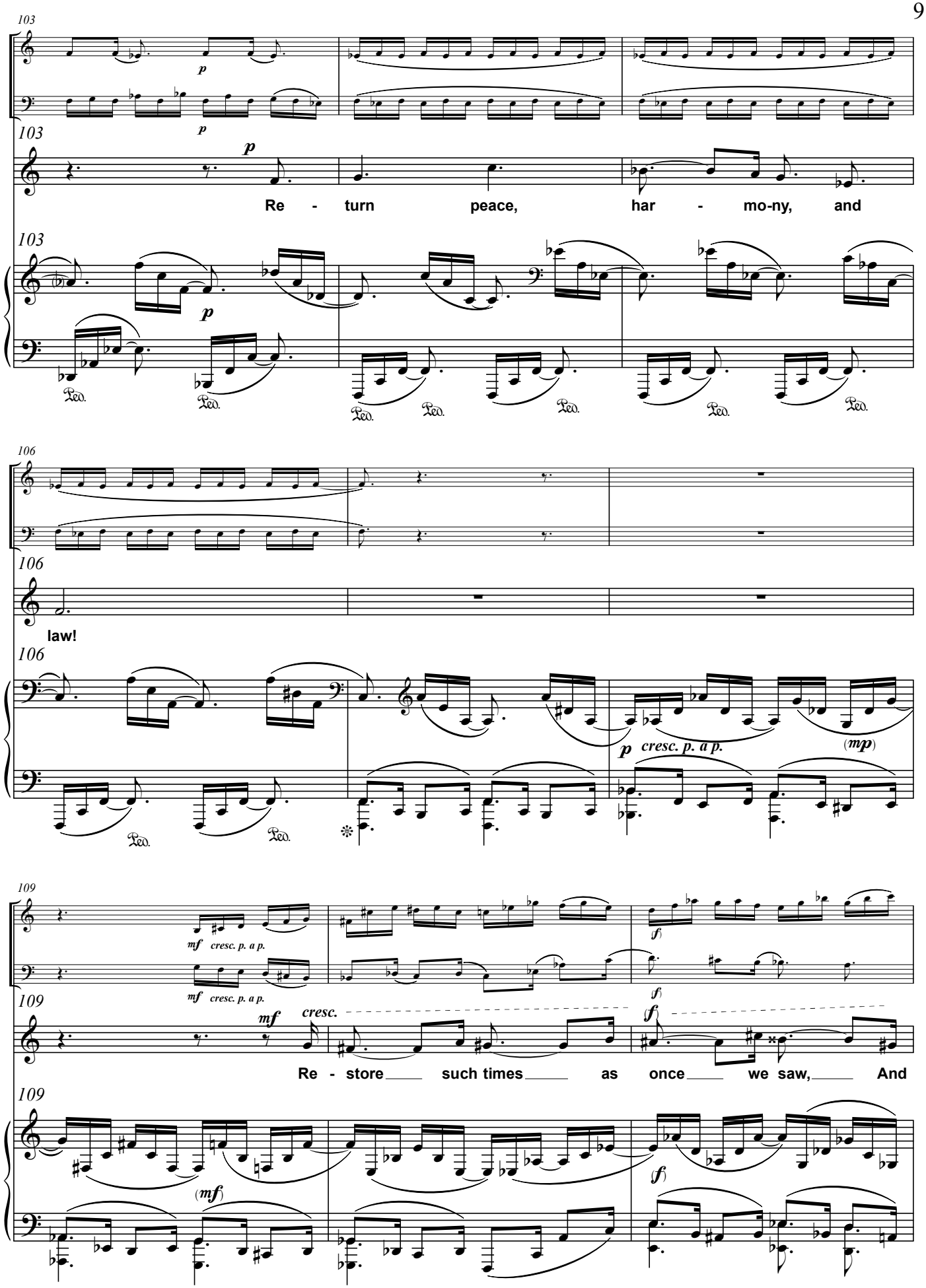

38
much much worse, He cursed us with a
45
Con - gress.
51

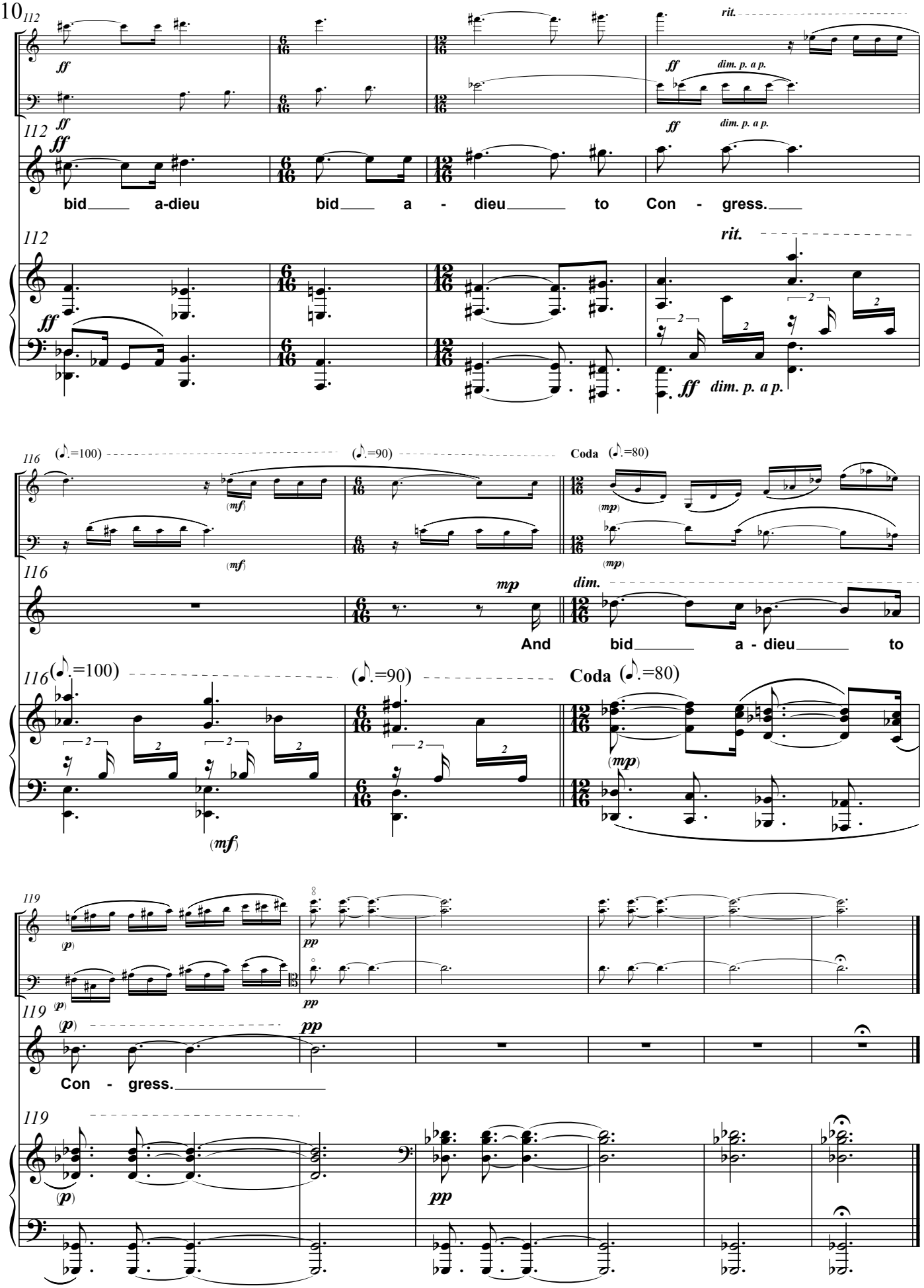

55
mf
f
Then peace for-sook this hope - less shore,
cresc.
58
f
ff
Then can - nons blazed with
61
ff dim. p. a p.
hor - rid roar, We hear of blood, death, wounds, and gore,


66
(mf)
(mp)
mp
dim.
The off - spring of the
(mf)
(mp)
69
rit.
a tempo
(p)
pp
p cresc.
(mf)
Con - gress.
73
(f)
ff
Pre-pare, pre - pare, my friends pre - pare, For scenes of blood, the


76
field of war
80
ff
To roy - al stand - ard we'll re-
84
pair,
ff
And curse the haugh - ty Con - gress.


89
95
ff
dim. p. a p.
Huz - za! Huz-za! And thrice Huz-za!
8va
100
(f)
(mf)
(mp)
Ped.


103
p
Re - turn peace, har - mo-ny, and
106
law!
p cresc. p. a p.
(mp)
109
mf cresc. p. a p.
f
mf cresc.
Re - store such times as once we saw, And
(mf)
f


112
ff
rit.
dim. p. a p.
bid a-dieu bid a - dieu to Con - gress.
116
(♪.=100)
(♪.=90)
Coda (♪.=80)
(mf)
(mp)
mp
dim.
And bid a - dieu to
119
(p)
pp
Con - gress.

II. Young Ladies in Town [2']

Anonymous lyrics
melody: "Barbara Allen"
music by Bill Robinson

(♩.=60)
Moderato fascionista

Violin
Cello
Soprano
Piano

mp *cresc.*

Young la-dies in town, and those that live 'round Wear

Moderato fascionista (♩.=60)

mf *cresc.*

none but your own coun-try lin-en; Of e-con-o-my boast, let your pride be the most To show

f

clothes of your own make and spin-nin'. What if home-spun, they say, be not quite as gay As bro-

13

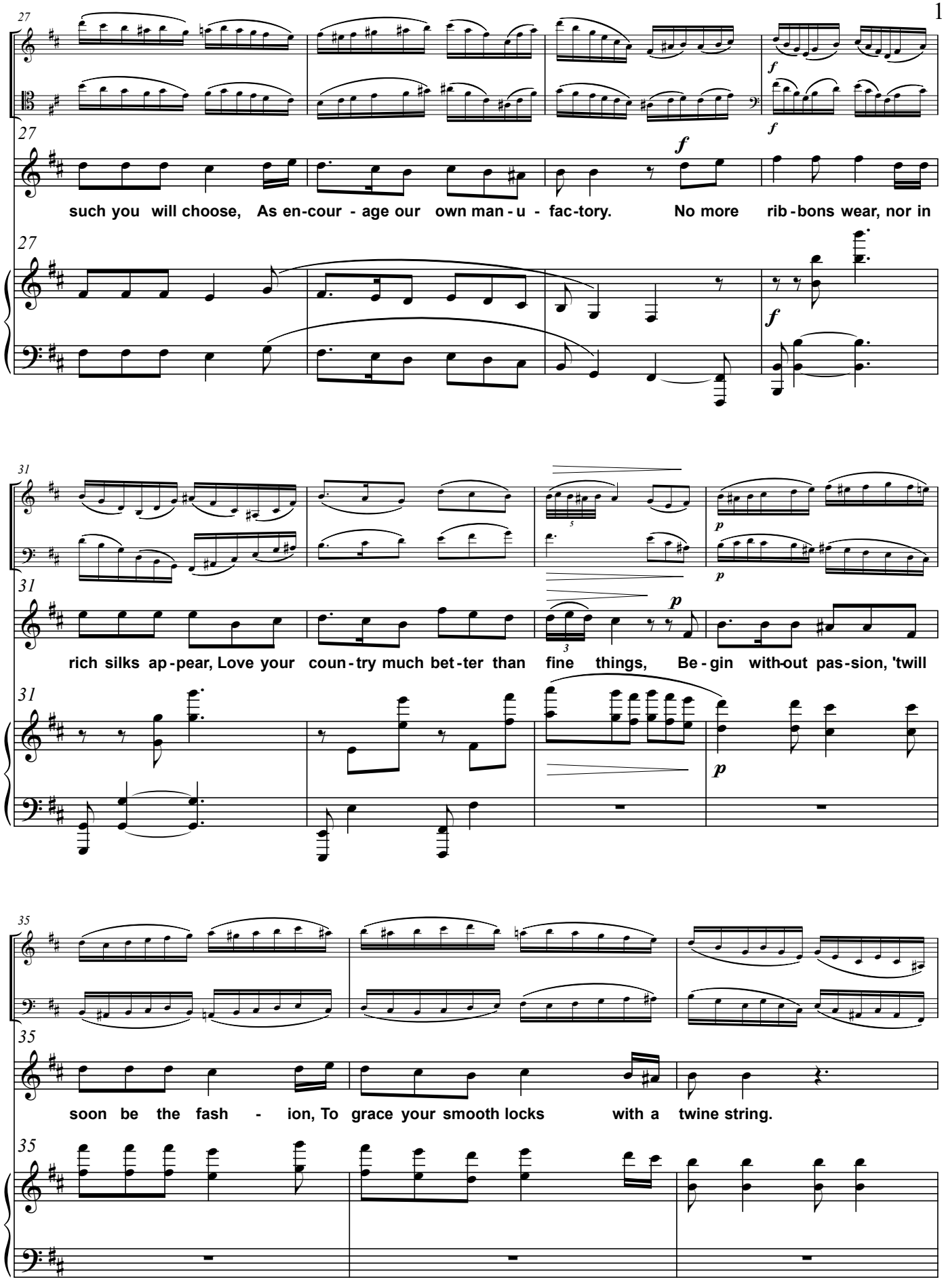
cades. Be not in a pas - sion For once it is known 'tis much worn in town One and all will cry out 'tis the

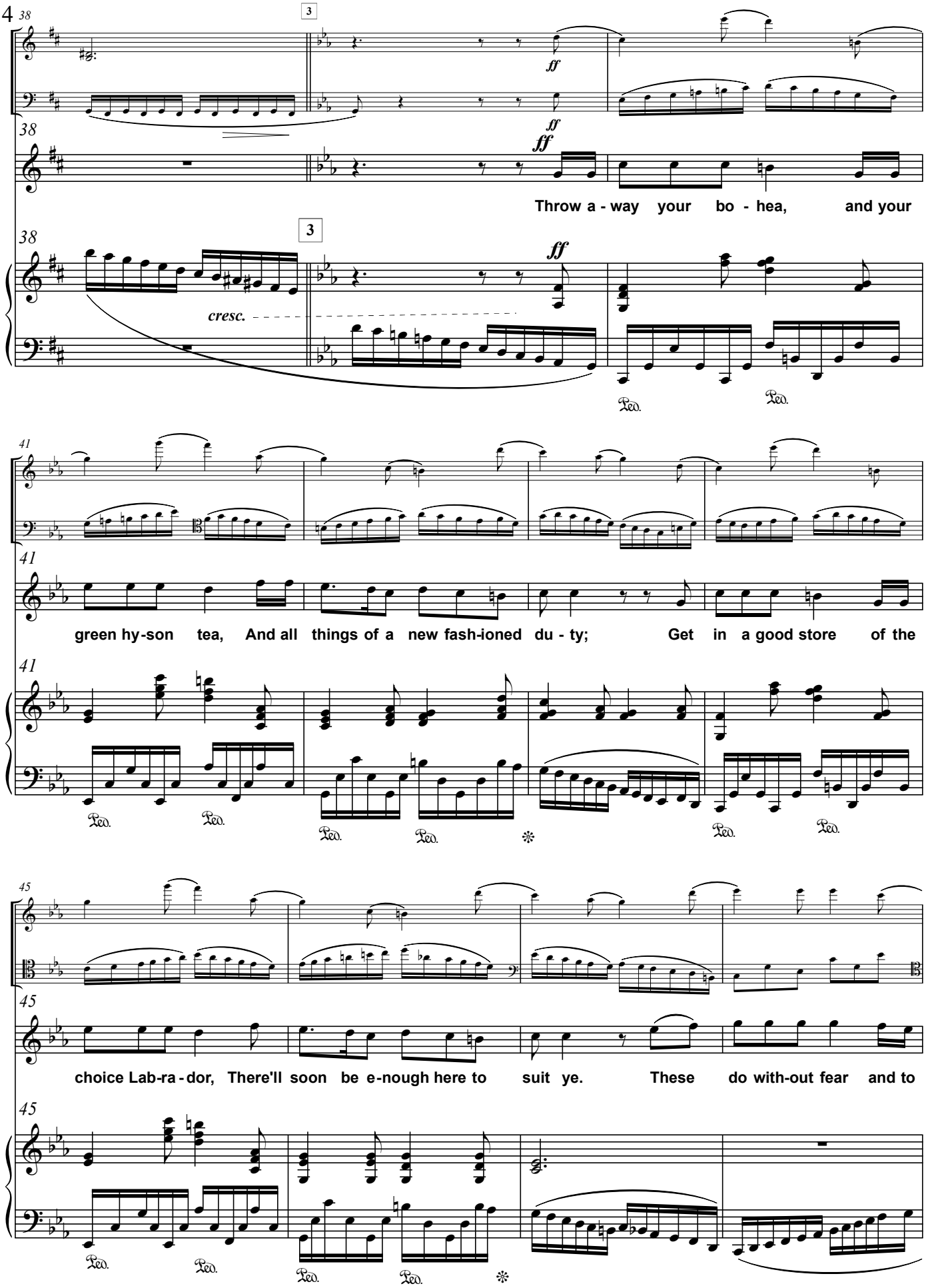
18

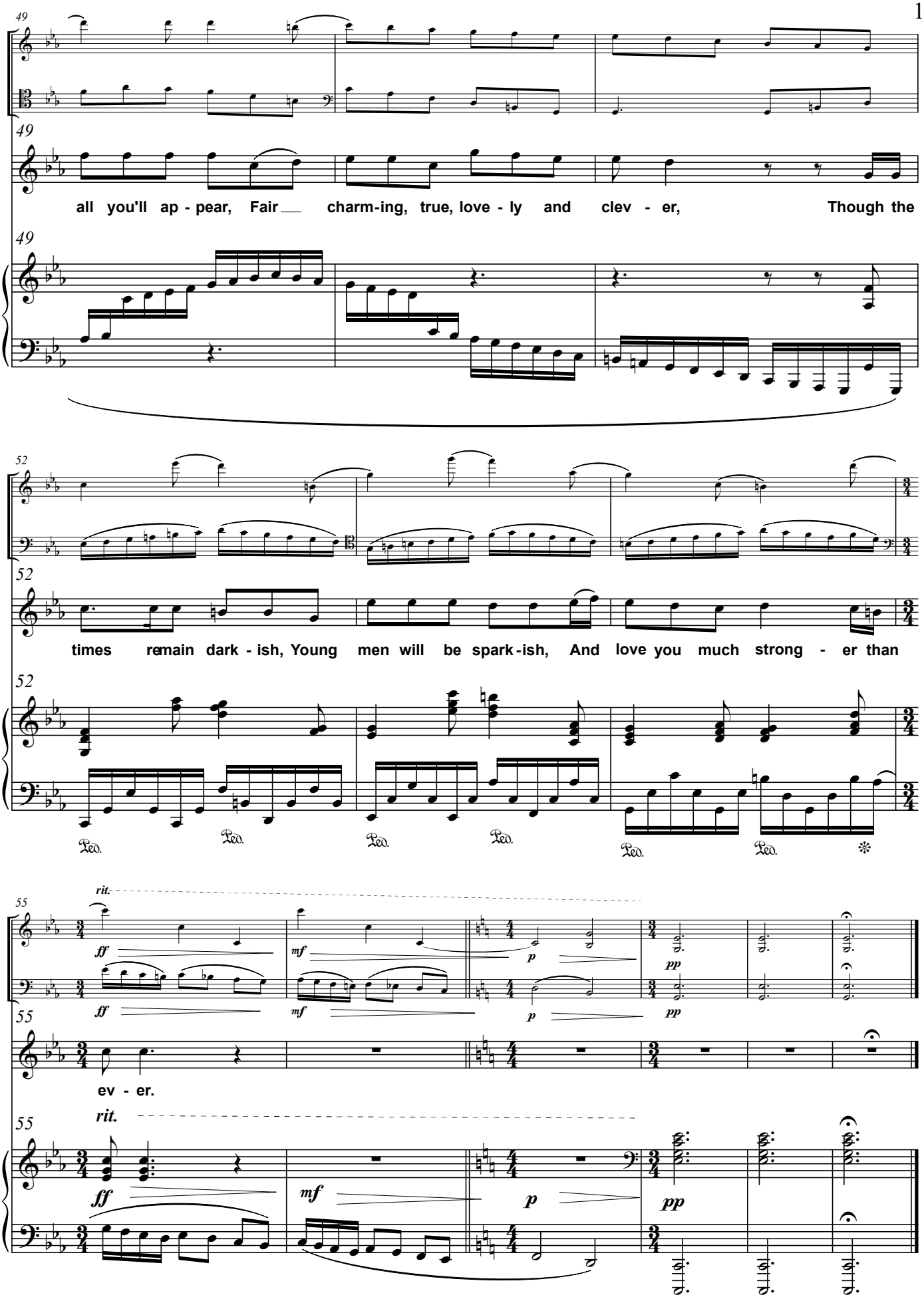
fash - ion! And as one all a - gree, that you'll

23

not mar-ried be, To such as will wear Lon-don fac - tory; But at first sight re - fuse, tell 'em

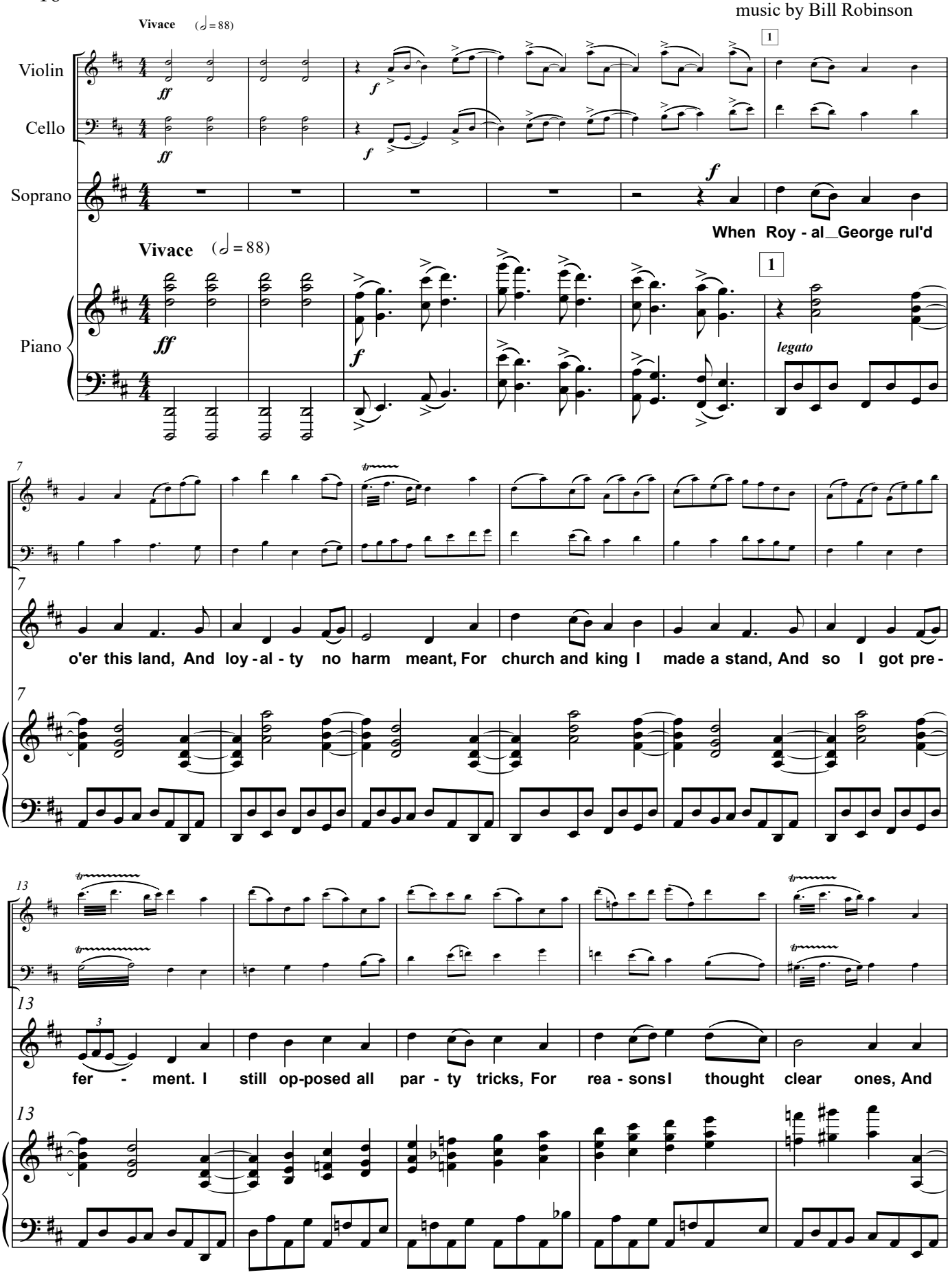

27
such you will choose, As en-cour - age our own man - u - fac-tory. No more rib-bons wear, nor in
31
rich silks ap-pear, Love your coun-try much bet-ter than fine things, Be-gin with-out pas-sion, 'twill
35
soon be the fash - ion, To grace your smooth locks with a twine string.

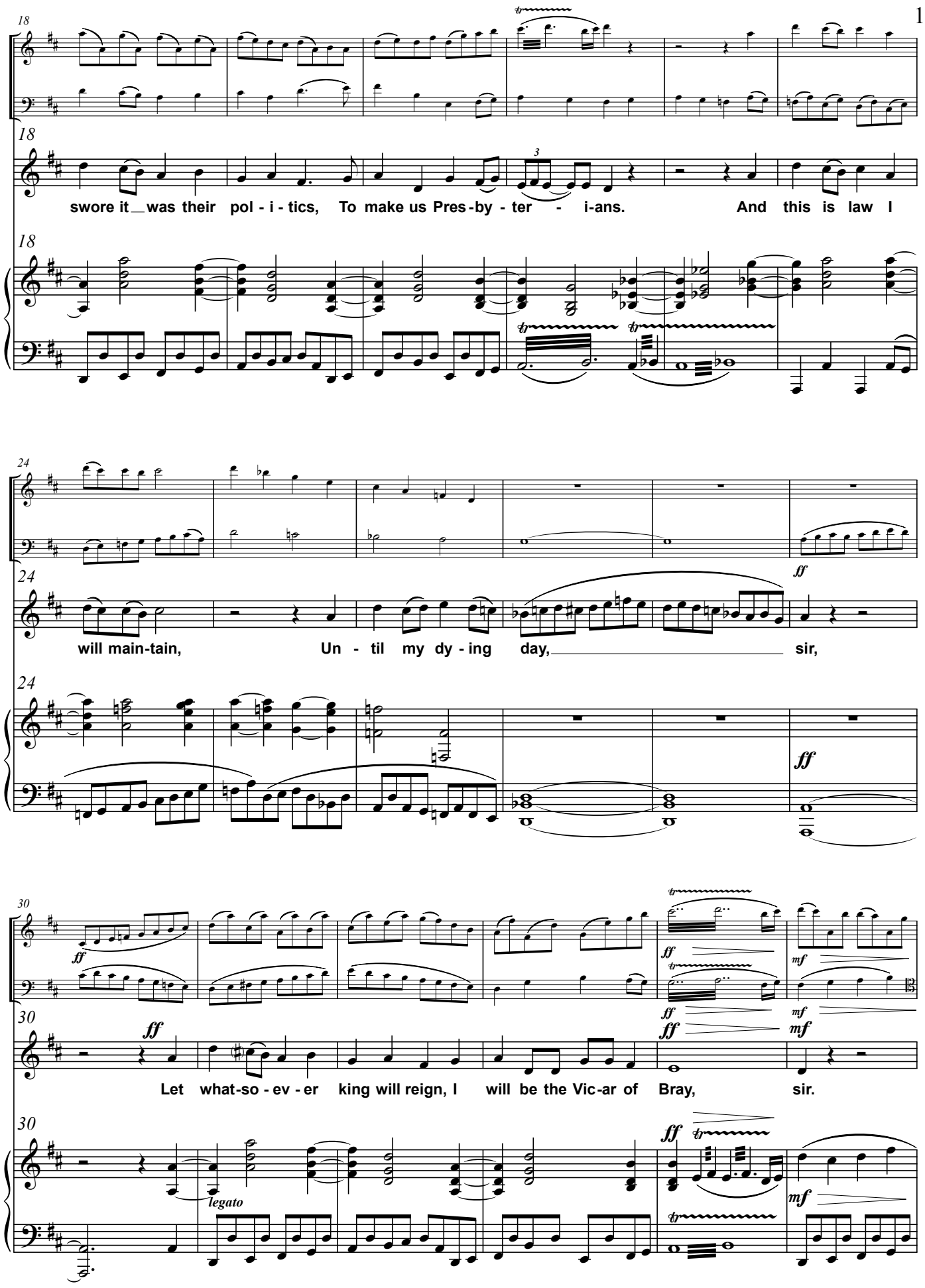

38
3
ff
Throw a - way your bo - hea, and your
cresc.
41
green hy-son tea, And all things of a new fash-ioned du - ty; Get in a good store of the
45
choice Lab-ra - dor, There'll soon be e-nough here to suit ye. These do with-out fear and to

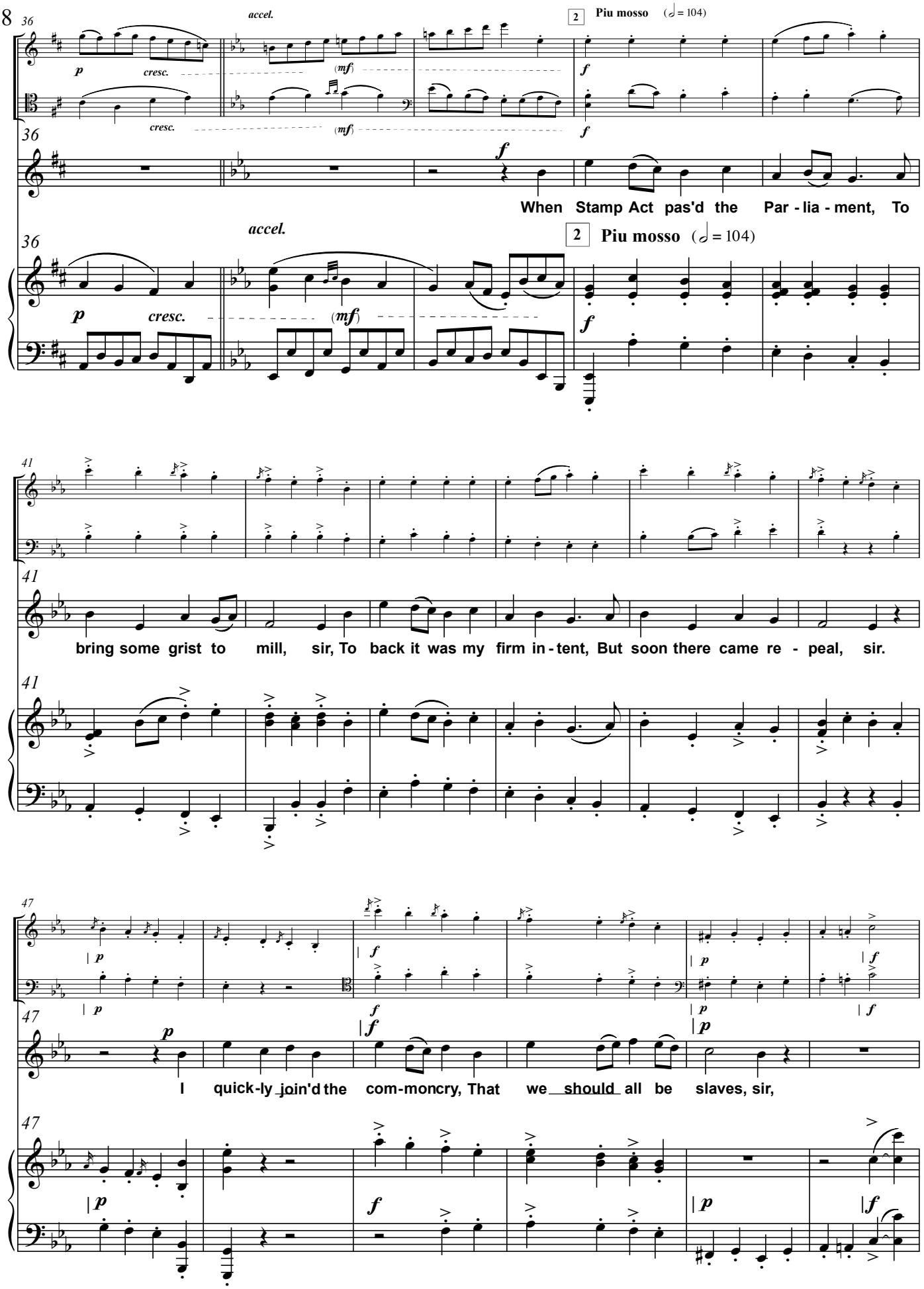

49
all you'll ap - pear, Fair charm-ing, true, love - ly and clev - er, Though the
52
times remain dark - ish, Young men will be spark-ish, And love you much strong - er than
Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped.
55
rit.
ff mf p pp
ev - er.
rit.

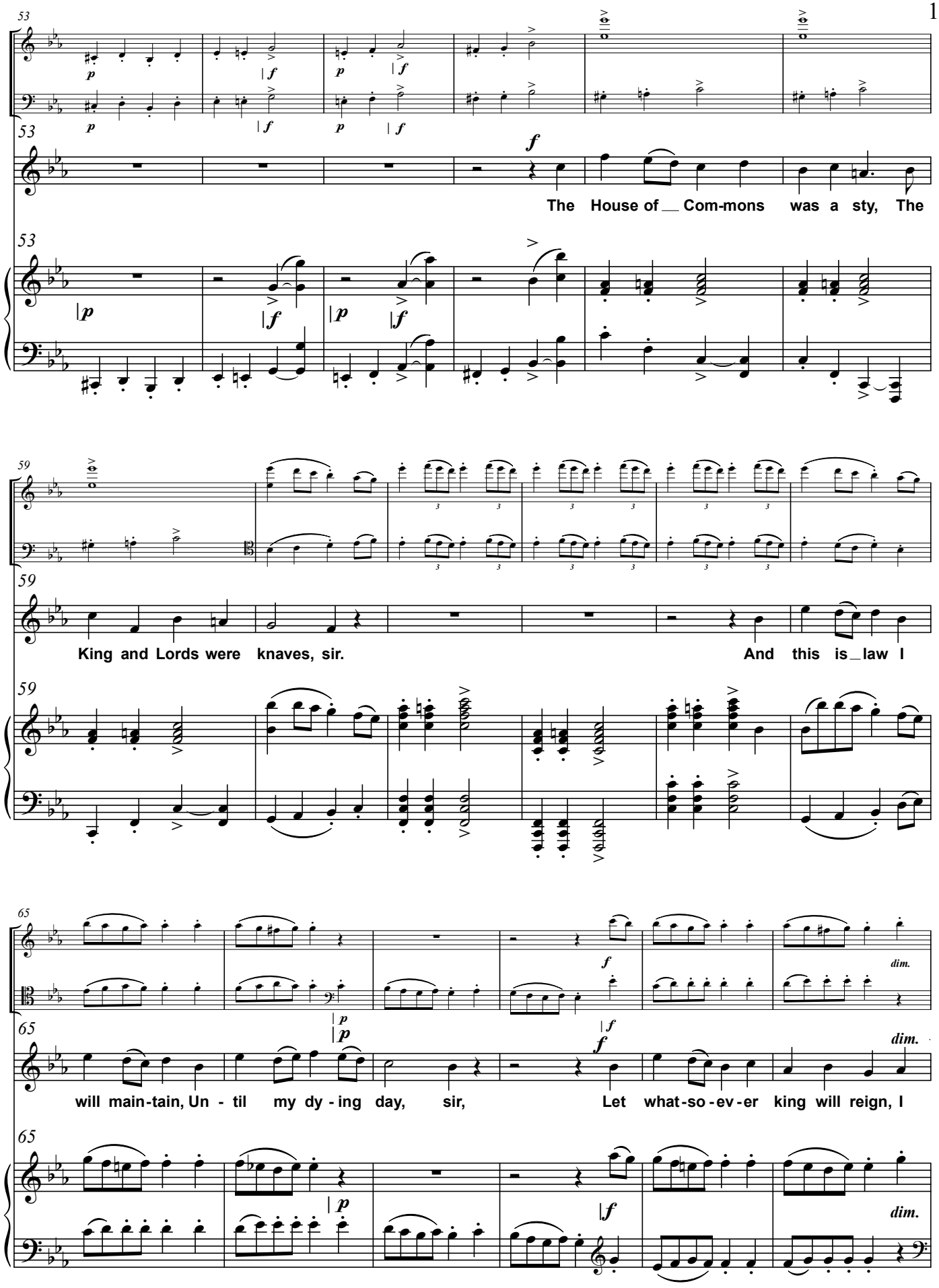
III. The American Vicar of Bray [6']

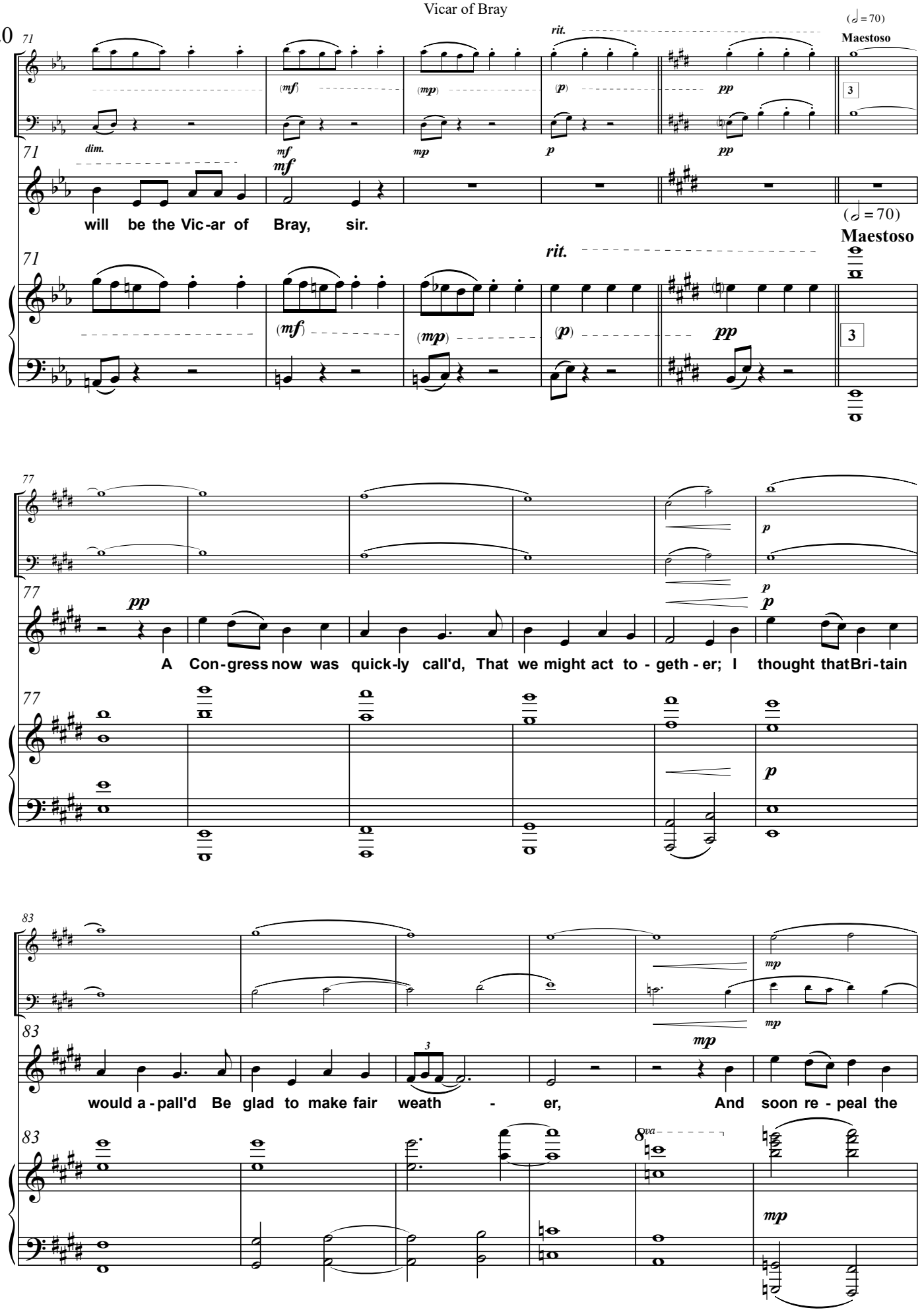
melody: "Country Gardens"
anonymous lyrics
music by Bill Robinson

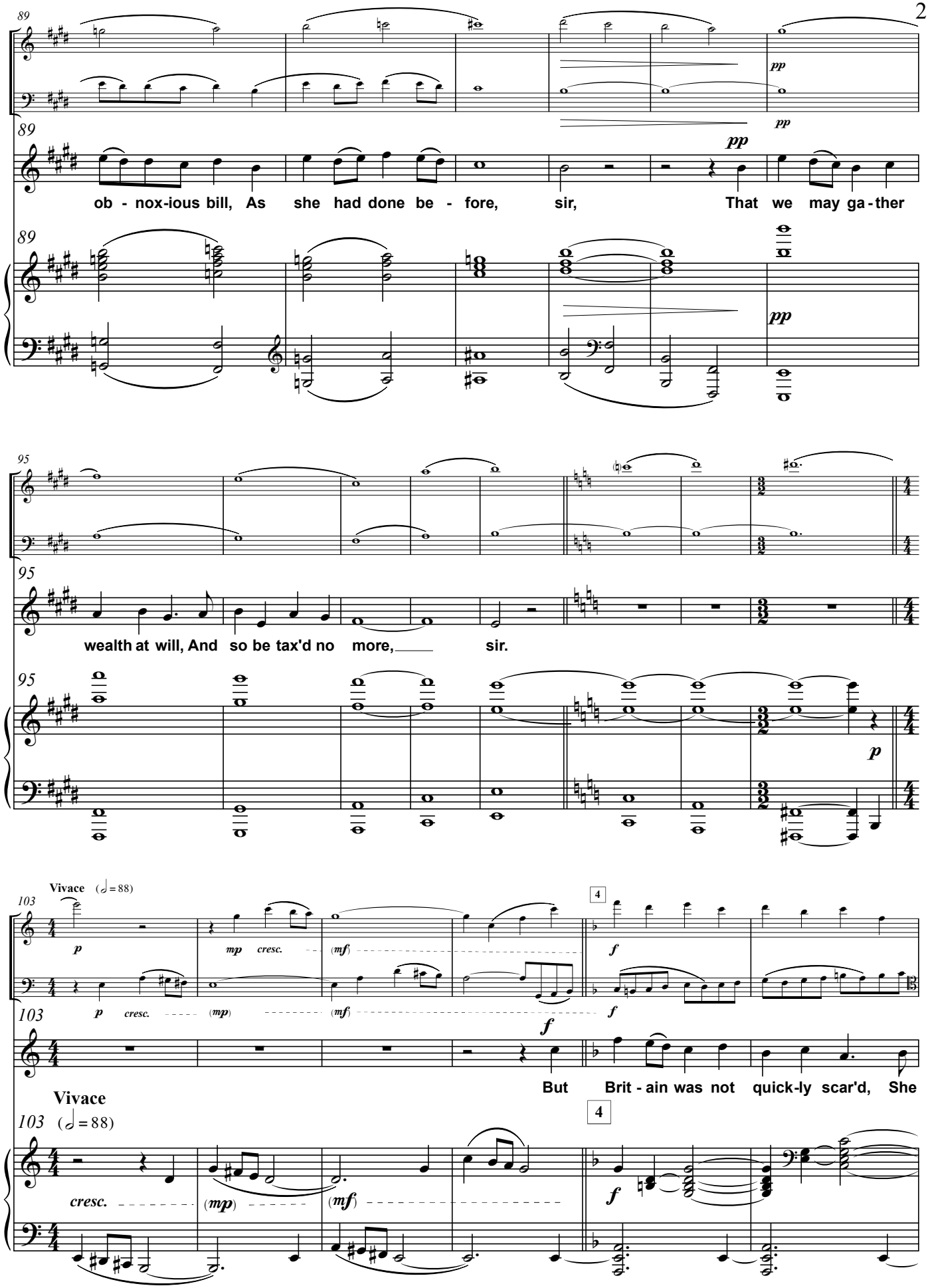


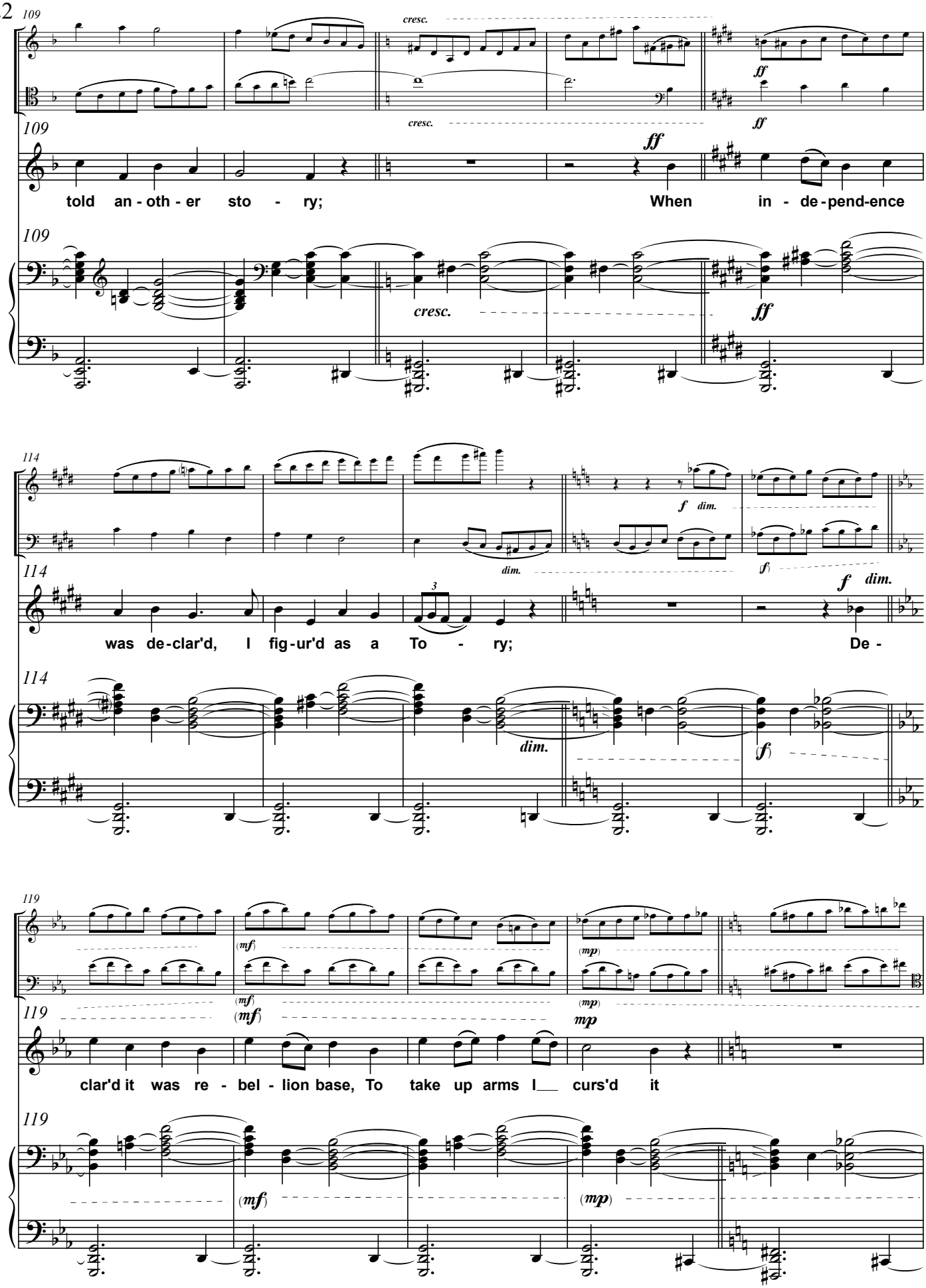

18
swore it was their pol - i - tics, To make us Pres - by - ter - i-ans. And this is law I
24
will main-tain, Un - til my dy - ing day, sir,
30
Let what-so - ev - er king will reign, I will be the Vic-ar of Bray, sir.
legato

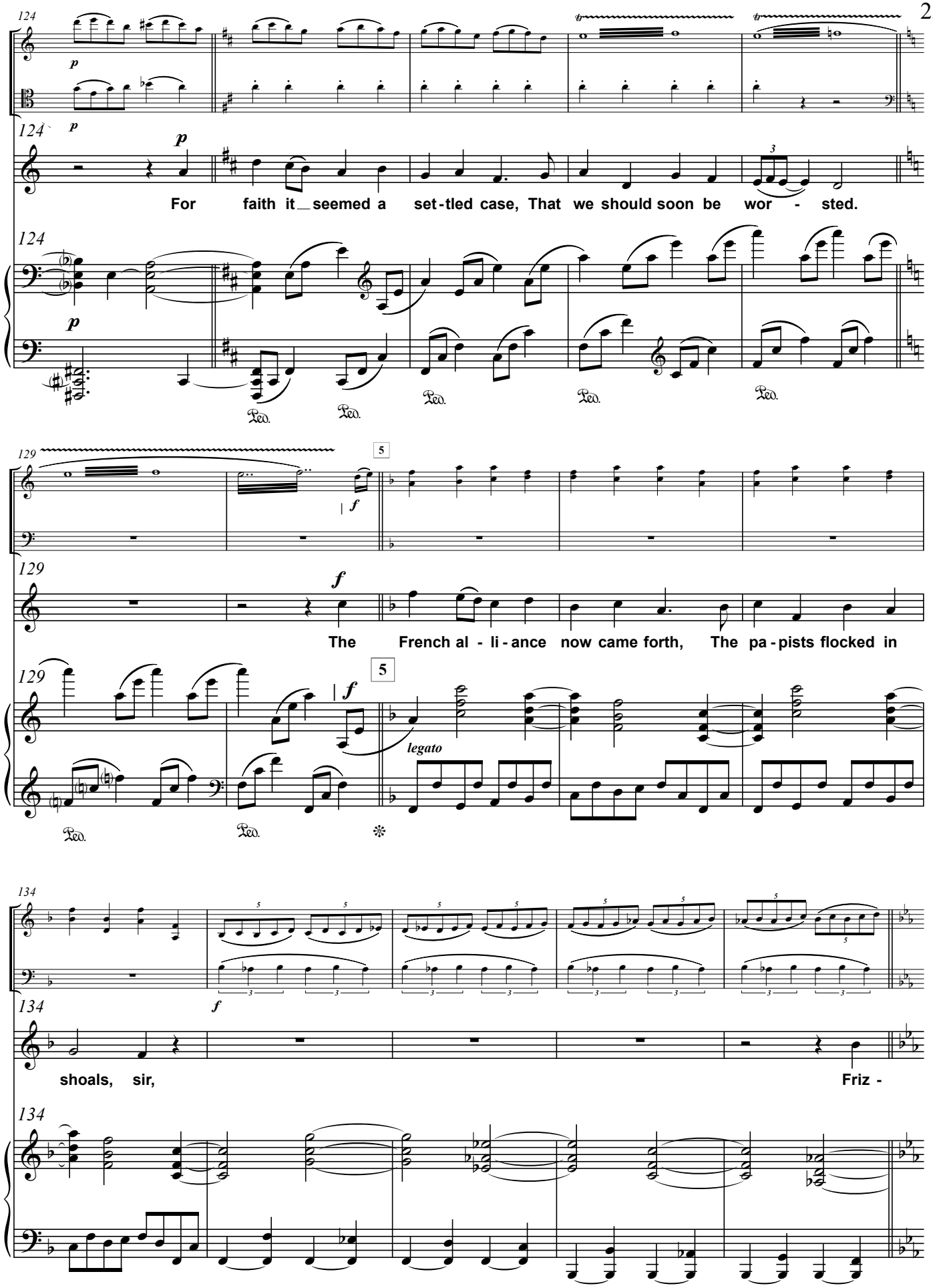

36
accel.
2
Piu mosso (♩ = 104)
p
cresc.
(mf)
f
When Stamp Act pas'd the Par - lia - ment, To
41
bring some grist to mill, sir, To back it was my firm in - tent, But soon there came re - peal, sir.
47
I quick-ly join'd the com-moncry, That we should all be slaves, sir,

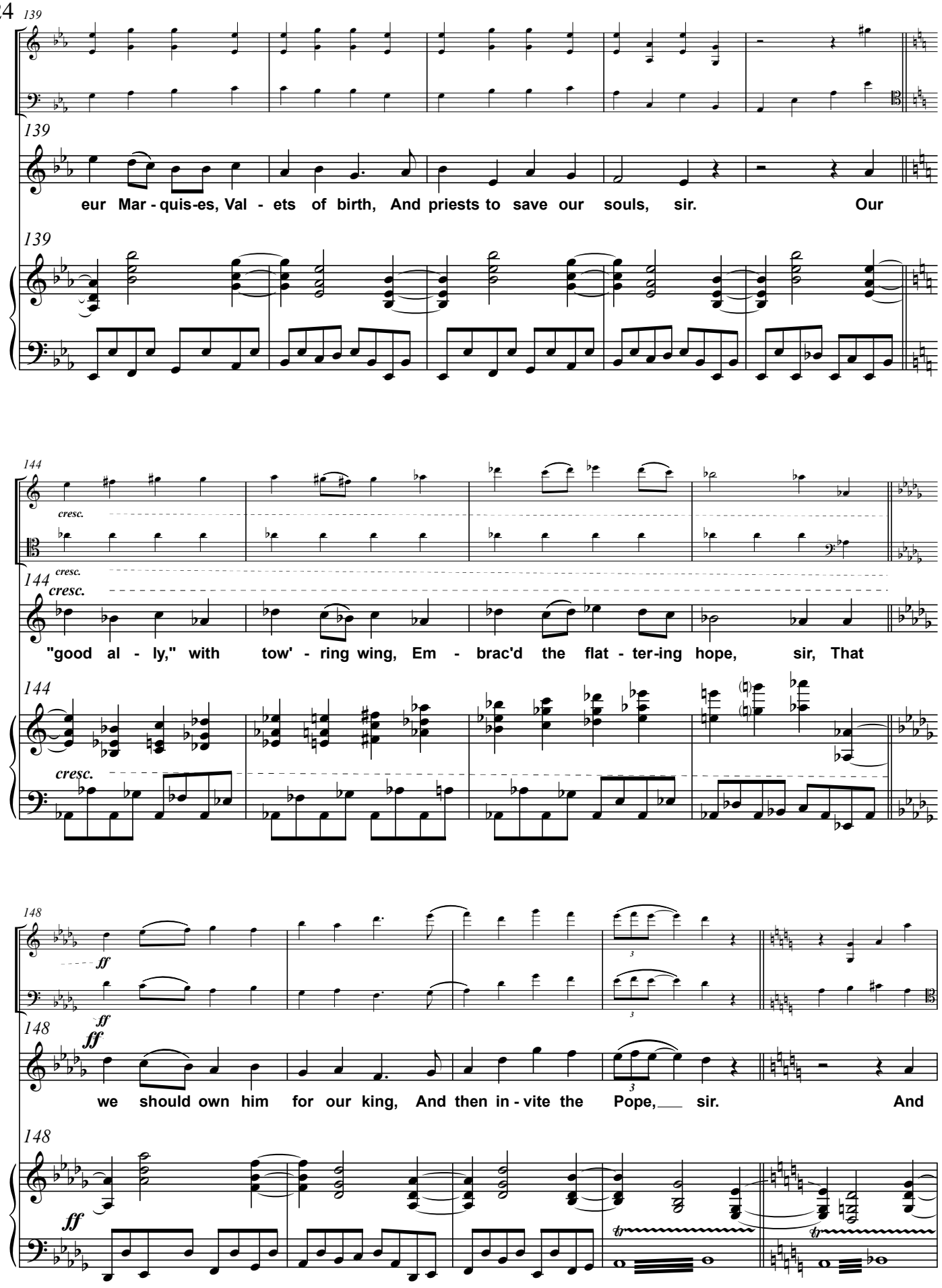

53
The House of Com-mons was a sty, The
59
King and Lords were knaves, sir. And this is law I
65
will main-tain, Un - til my dy - ing day, sir, Let what-so - ev - er king will reign, I
dim.


71
dim.
mf
will be the Vic-ar of Bray, sir.
(mf)
(mp)
(p)
rit.
pp
(♩ = 70)
Maestoso
3
77
pp
A Con-gress now was quick-ly call'd, That we might act to - geth - er; I thought that Bri-tain
83
would a - pall'd Be glad to make fair weath - er, And soon re - peal the
3
8va


89
pp
pp
89
pp
ob - nox-ious bill, As she had done be - fore, sir, That we may ga - ther
89
pp
95
wealth at will, And so be tax'd no more, sir.
95
p
Vivace (♩= 88)
103
p
mp cresc.
(mf)
4
f
103
p cresc.
(mp)
(mf)
f
But Brit - ain was not quick-ly scar'd, She
Vivace
103 (♩= 88)
cresc.
(mp)
(mf)
4
f


109
cresc.
ff
told an - oth - er sto - ry; When in - de - pend-ence
114
f dim.
dim.
was de - clar'd, I fig - ur'd as a To - ry; De -
119
(mf)
(mp)
clar'd it was re - bel - lion base, To take up arms I curs'd it


124
p
For faith it seemed a set-tled case, That we should soon be wor - sted.
Ped.
129
f
The French al - li-ance now came forth, The pa-pists flocked in
5
legato
134
shoals, sir, Friz -


139
eur Mar - quis-es, Val - ets of birth, And priests to save our souls, sir. Our
144
cresc.
"good al - ly," with tow' - ring wing, Em - brac'd the flat - ter-ing hope, sir, That
148
ff
we should own him for our king, And then in - vite the Pope, sir. And

153

153

this is law I will main-tain, Un - til my dy - ing day, sir, Let what-so - ev - er king will reign, I

153

159

(♪=♪) rit.

159

will be the Vic-ar of Bray, sir. When

159

(♪=♪) rit.

Drunken Jig (♩.=100)

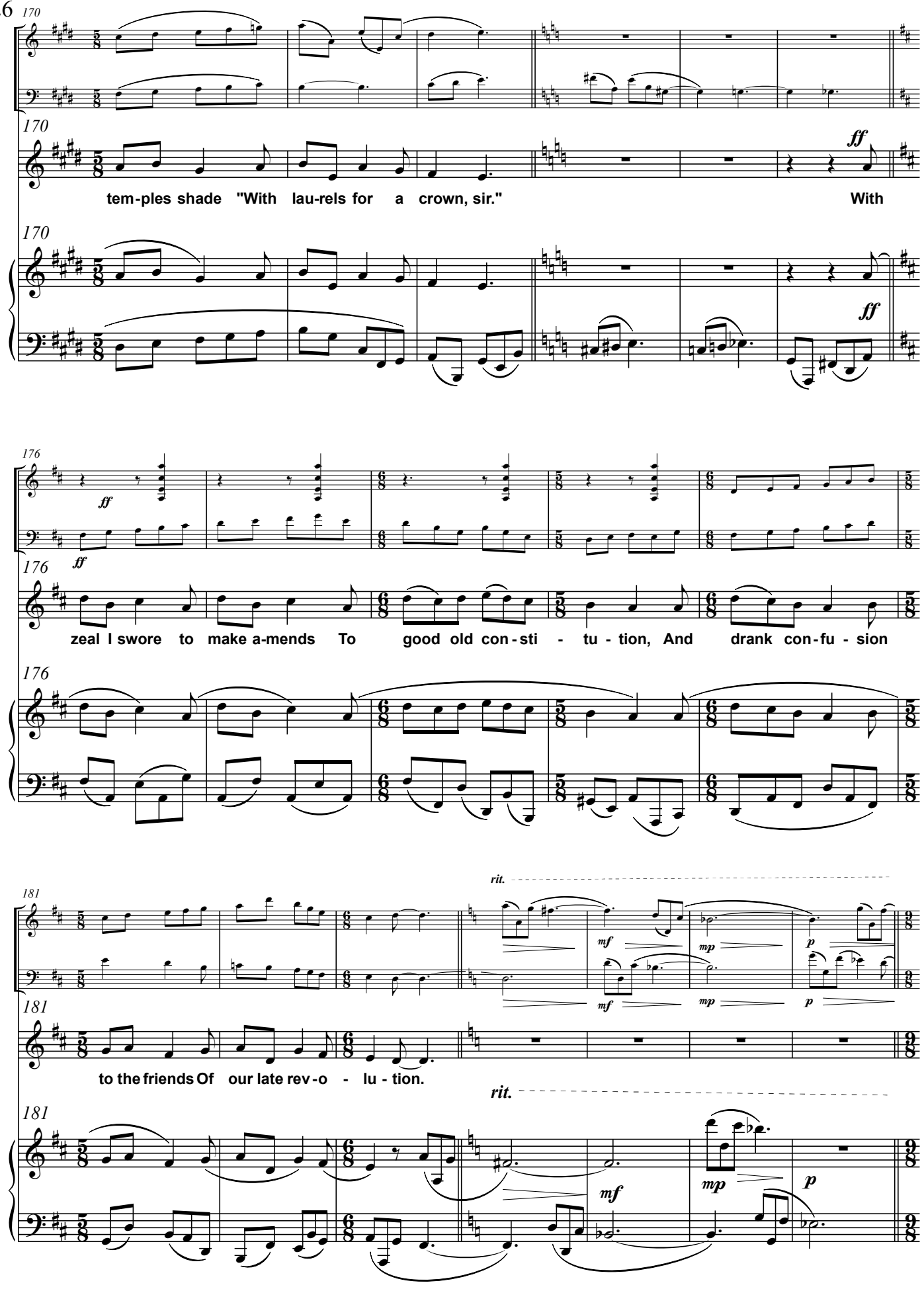
6

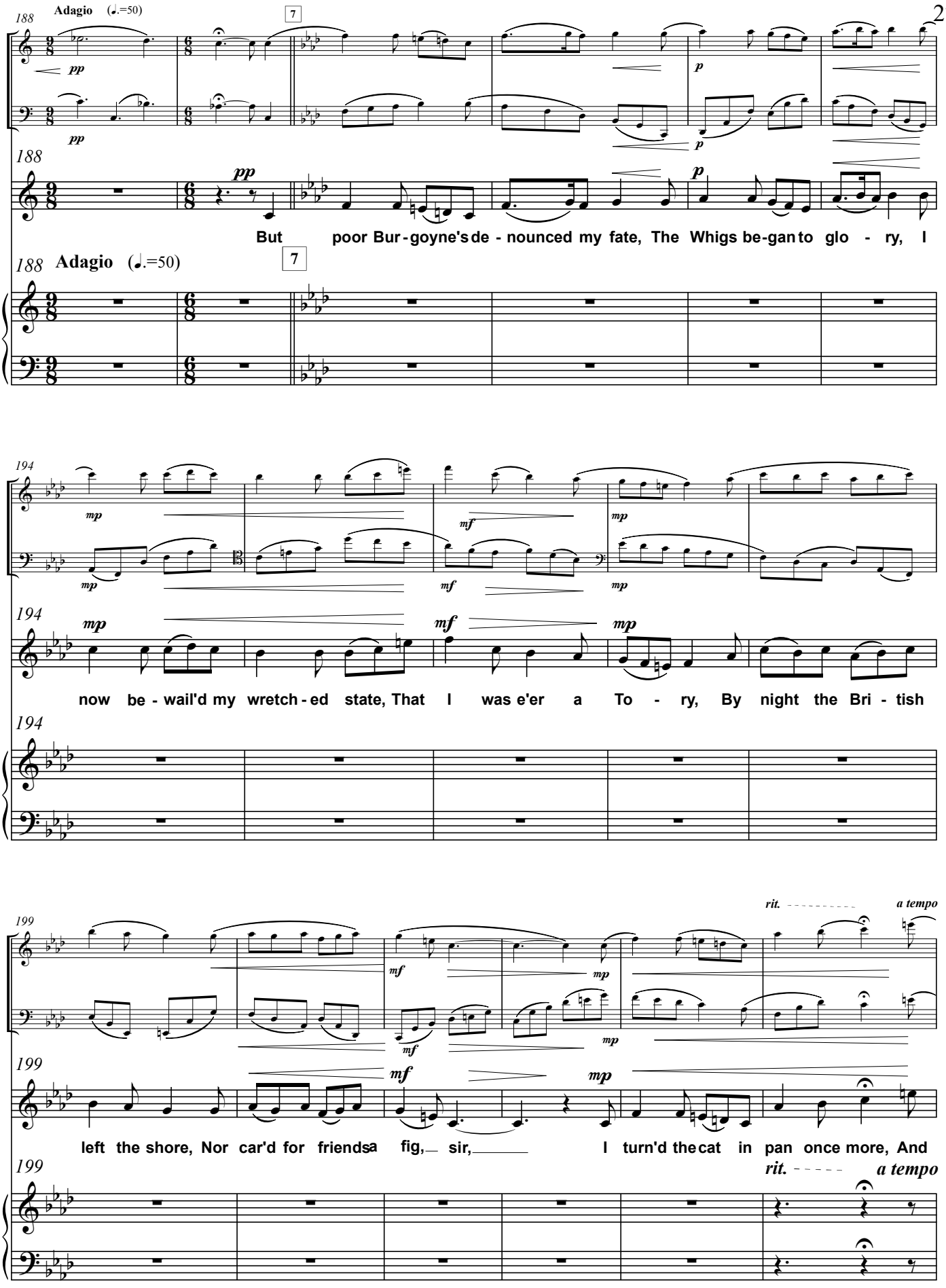
165

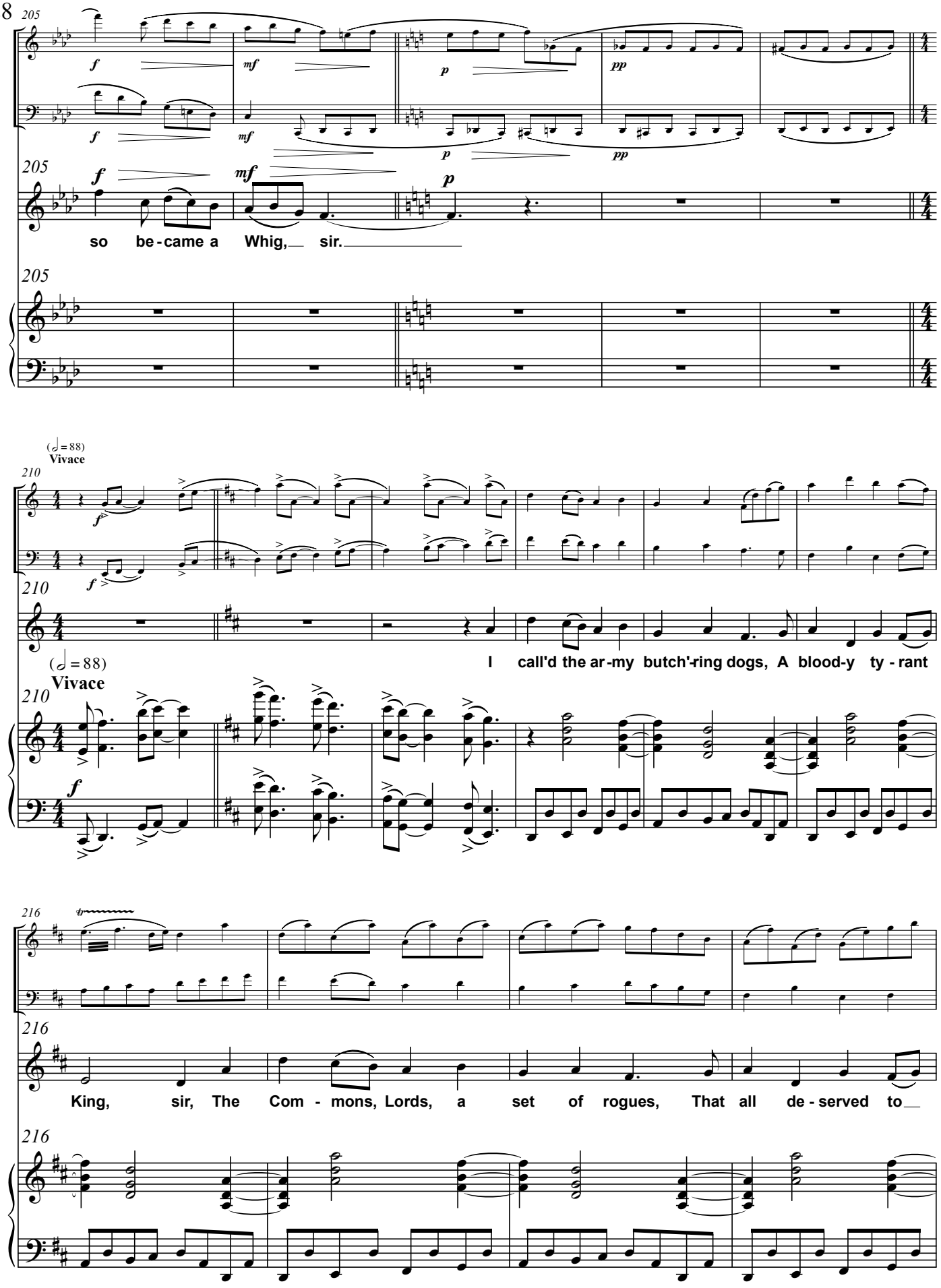
Howe, with drums and great pa-rade, March'd through this fa-mous town, sir, I cried, "May Fame his

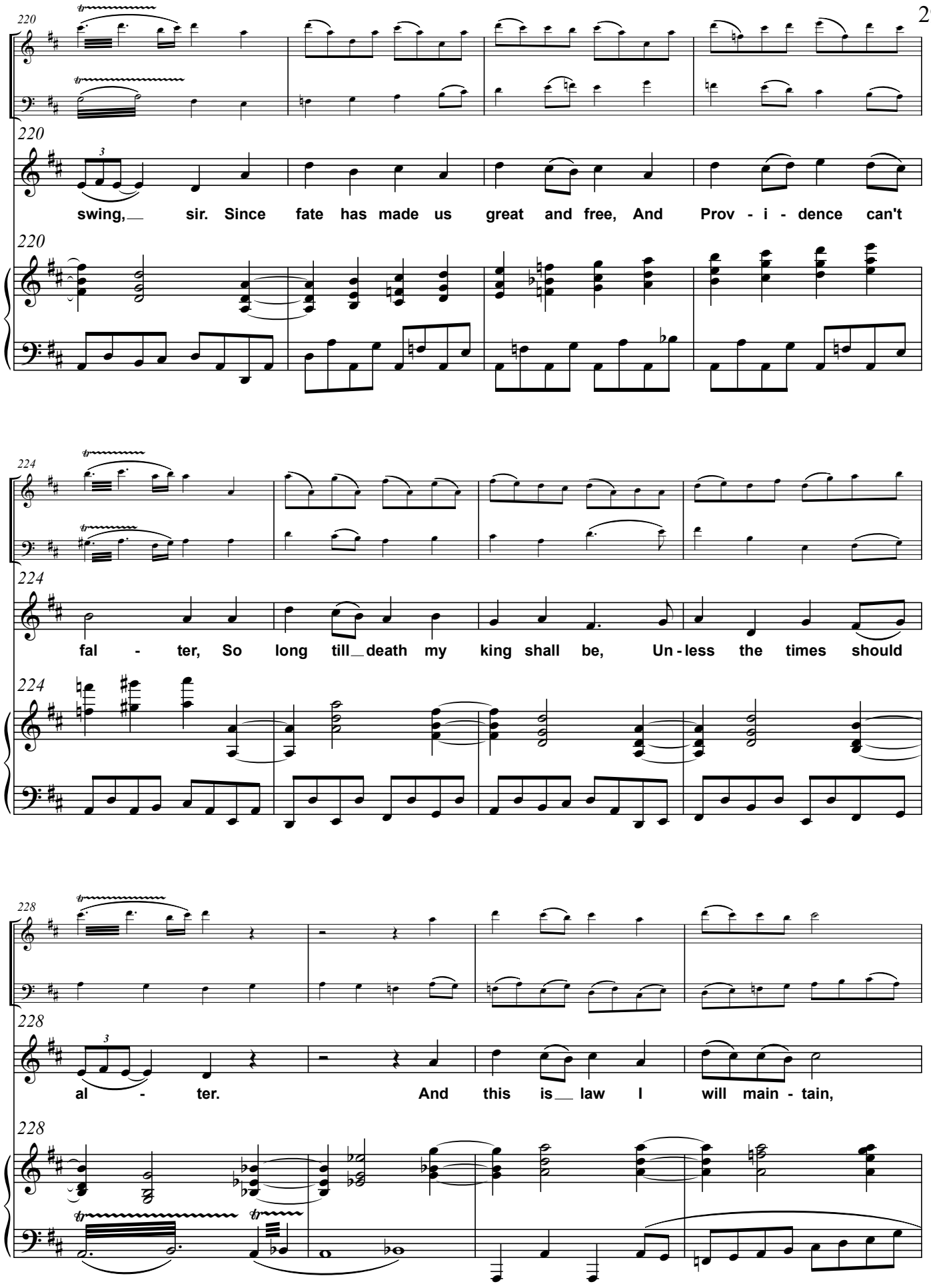
6

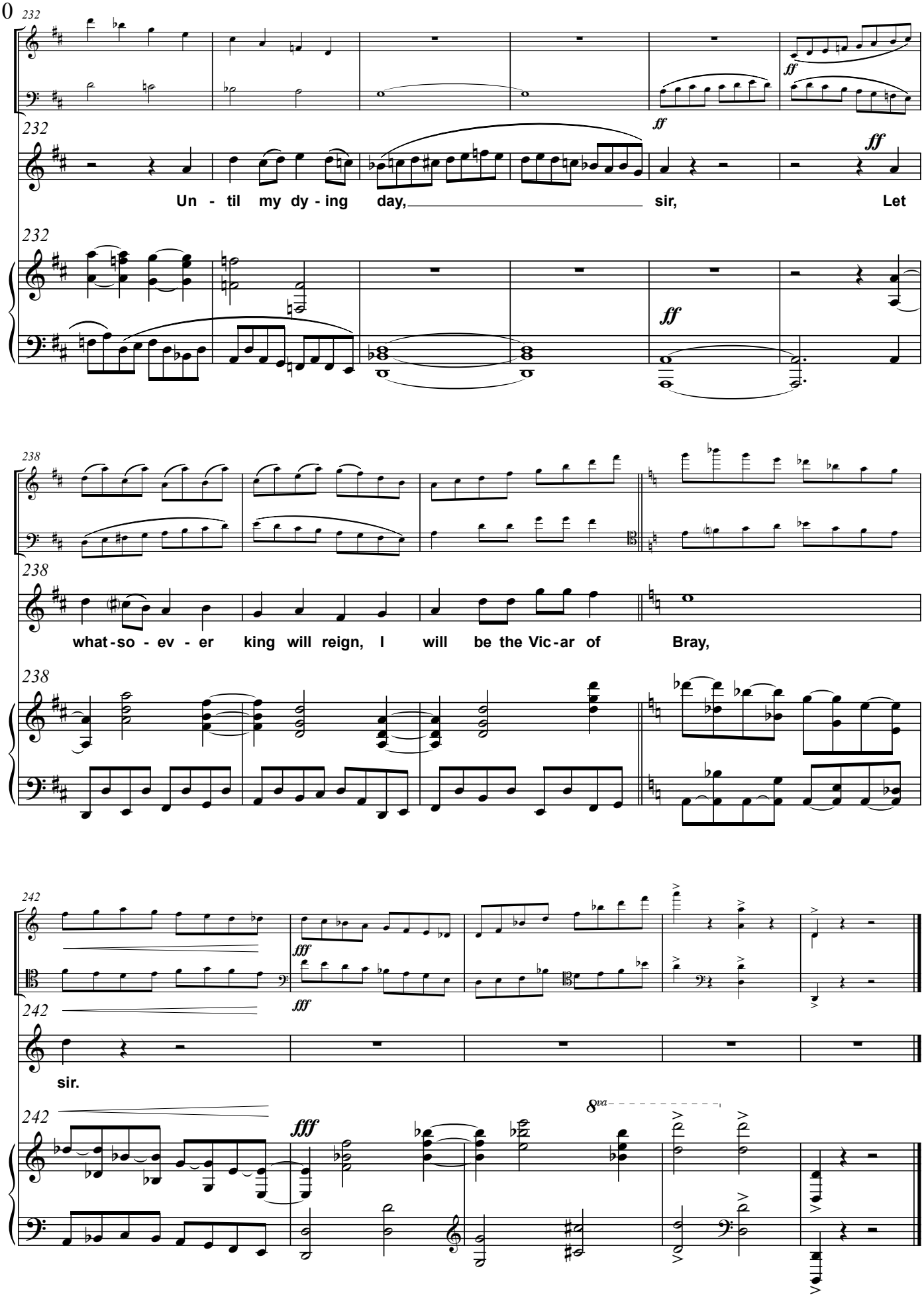
Drunken Jig (♩.=100)


170
ff
tem-ples shade "With lau-rels for a crown, sir." With
176
zeal I swore to make a-mends To good old con-sti - tu - tion, And drank con-fu - sion
181
rit.
mf
mp
p
to the friends Of our late rev-o - lu - tion.


188
Adagio (♩.=50)
7
pp
p
But poor Bur - goyne's de - nounced my fate, The Whigs be-gan to glo - ry, I
194
mp
mf
now be - wail'd my wretch - ed state, That I was e'er a To - ry, By night the Bri - tish
199
rit.
a tempo
left the shore, Nor car'd for friends a fig, sir, I turn'd the cat in pan once more, And

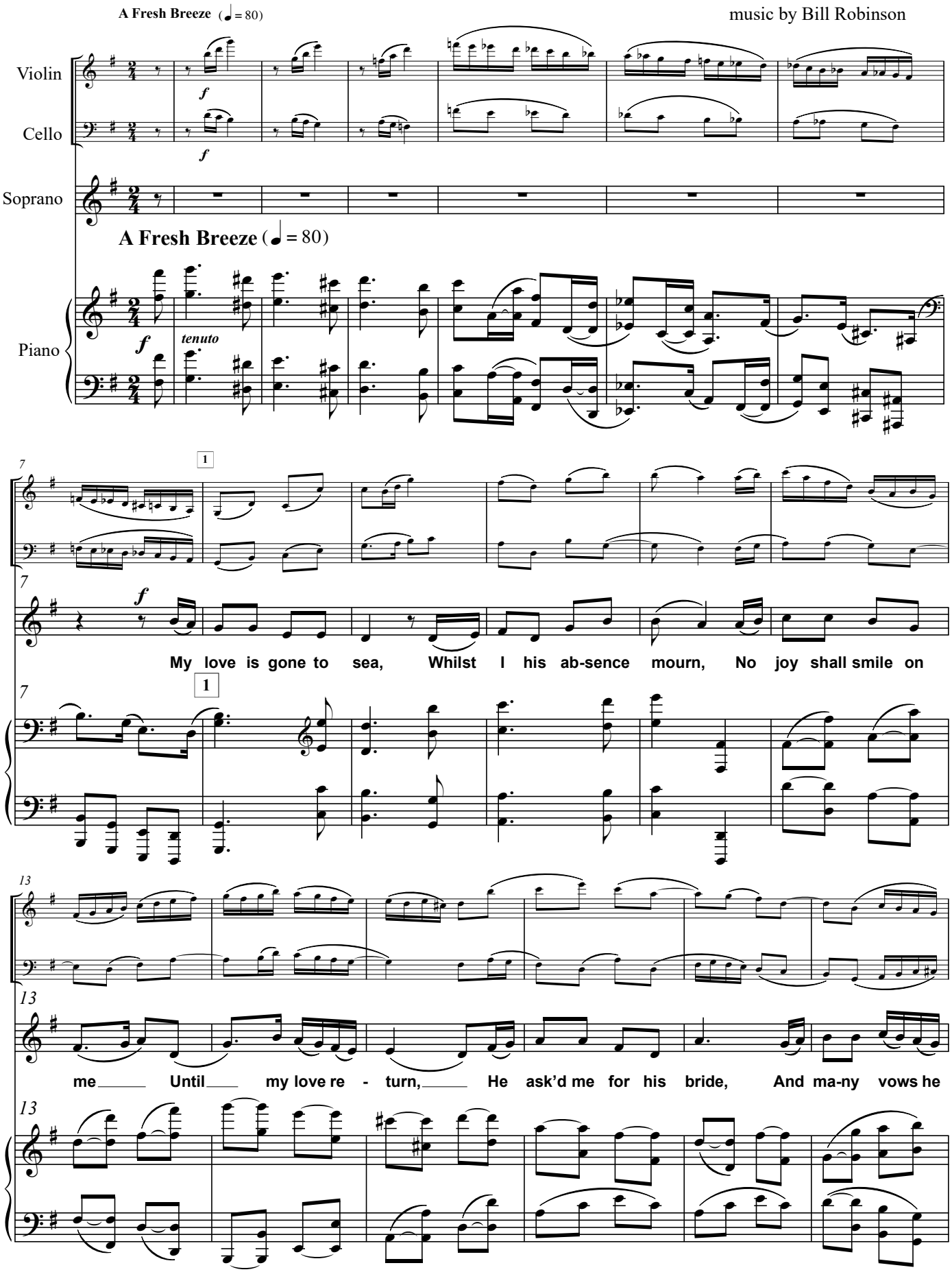

205
f
mf
p
pp
so be-came a Whig, sir.
(♩ = 88)
Vivace
210
I call'd the ar-my butch'-ring dogs, A blood-y ty-rant
216
tr
King, sir, The Com-mons, Lords, a set of rogues, That all de-served to


220
swing, sir. Since fate has made us great and free, And Prov - i - dence can't
224
fal - ter, So long till death my king shall be, Un - less the times should
228
al - ter. And this is law I will main - tain,


232
ff
Un - til my dy - ing day, sir, Let
238
what - so - ev - er king will reign, I will be the Vic - ar of Bray,
242
fff
sir.
8va

IV. My Love Is Gone To Sea [2:30]

lyrics and melody by Francis Hopkinson
music by Bill Robinson



19

swore, I blushed and soon com - plied I blushed and soon com - plied, My

24

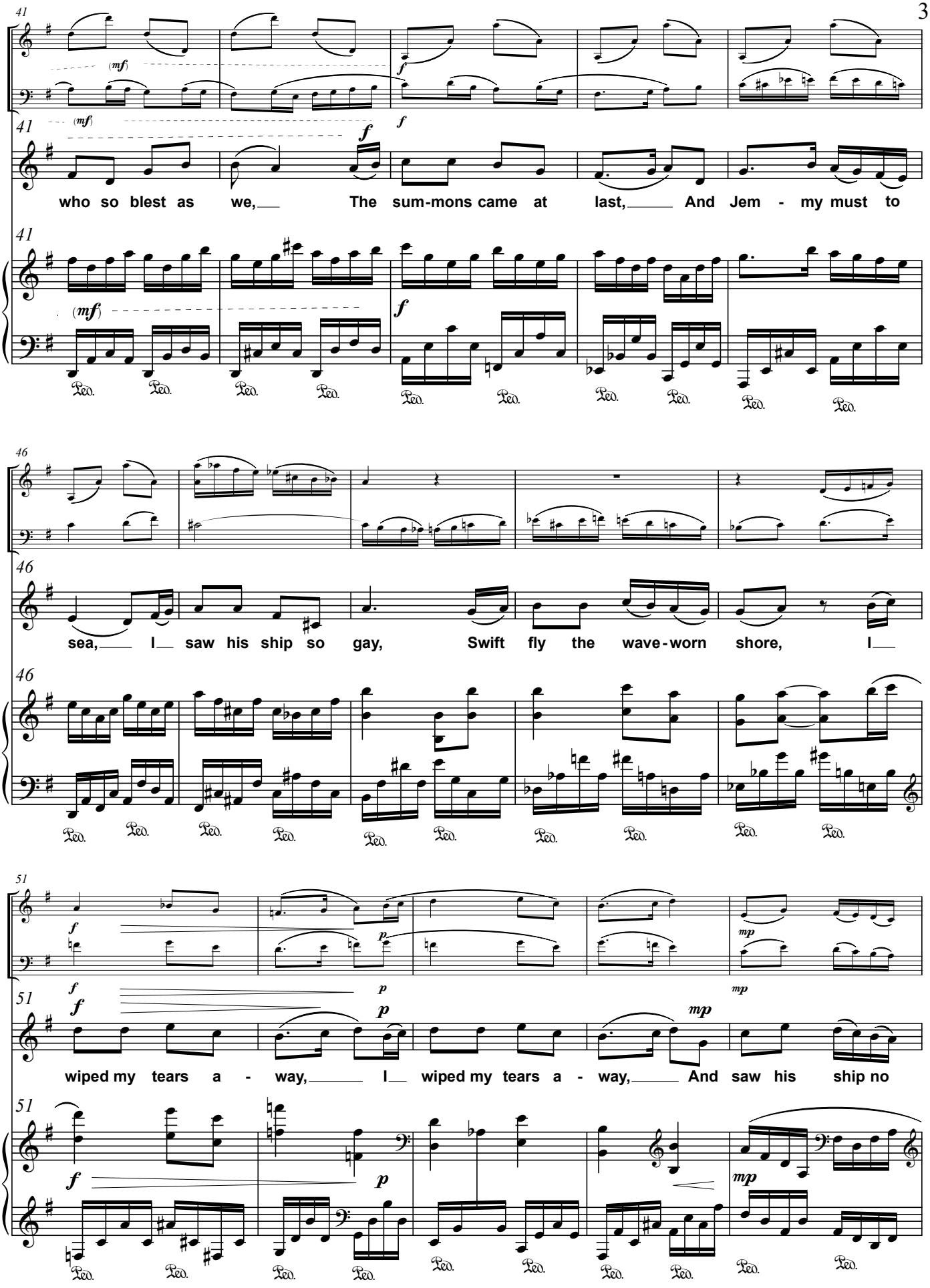
heart was his be - fore, My heart was his, My heart was his be - fore.

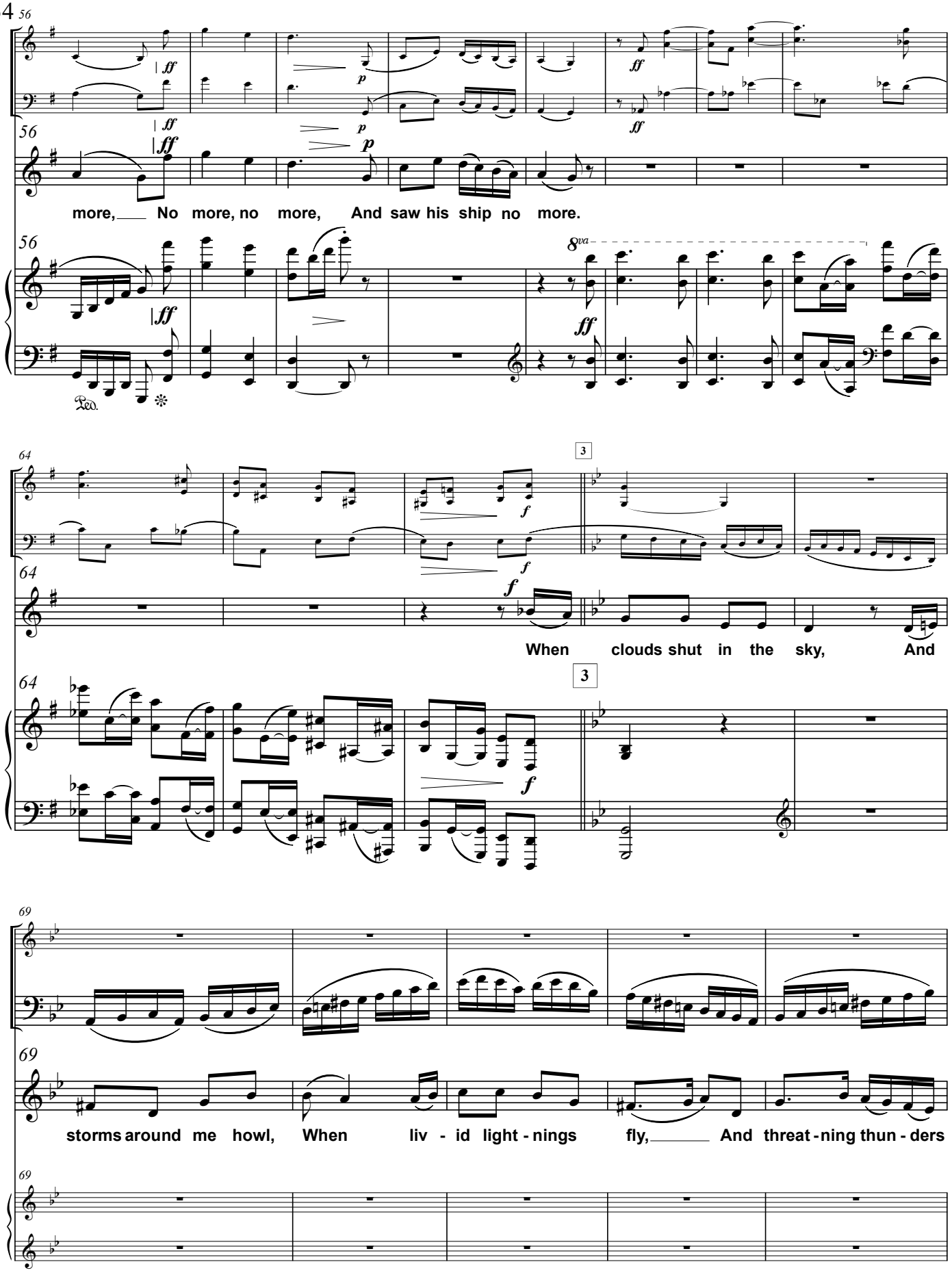
33

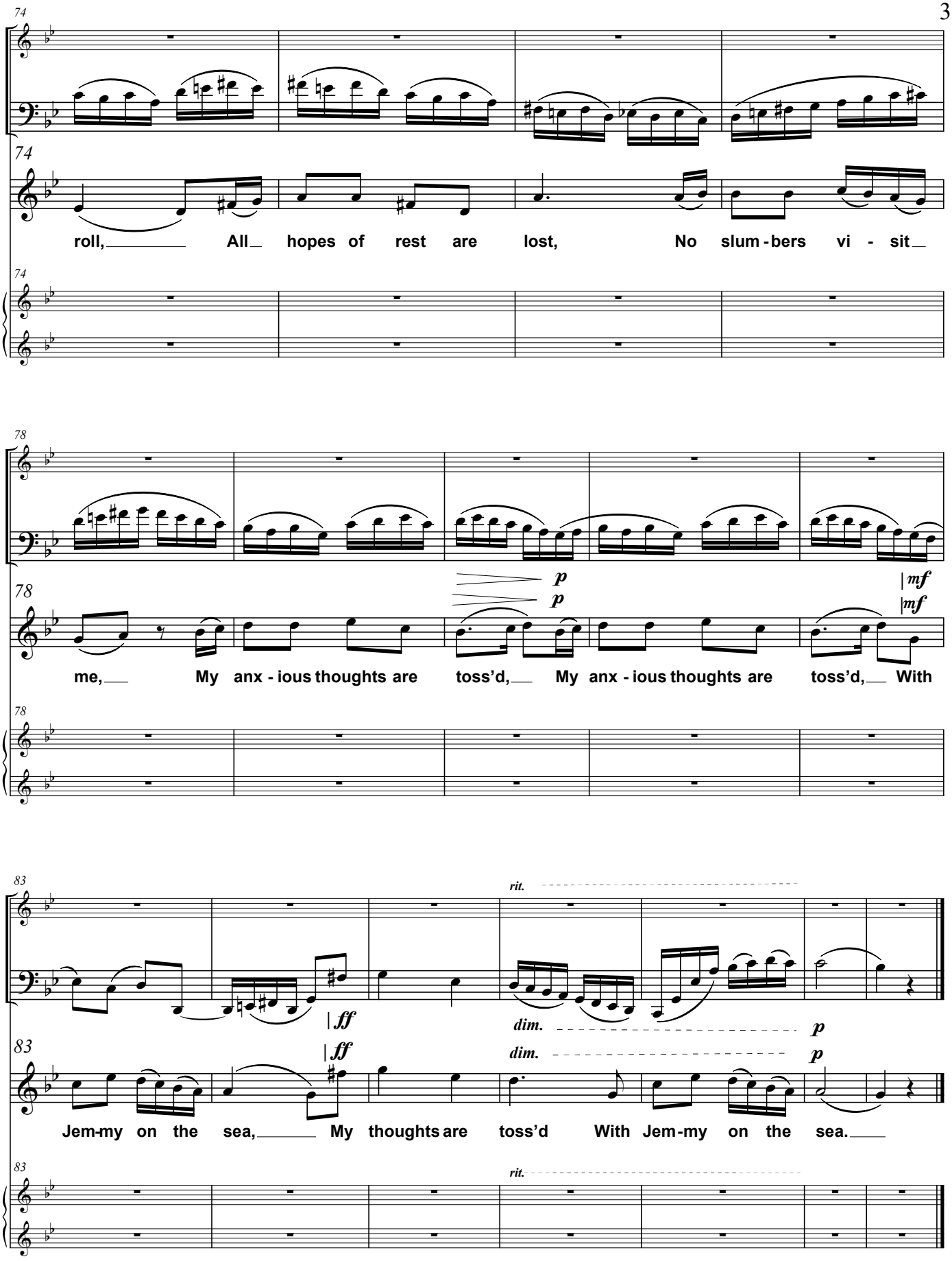
Meno mosso (♩ = 70)

One lit - tle month was past, And

Meno mosso (♩ = 70)


41
(mf)
f
who so blest as we, The sum-mons came at last, And Jem - my must to
46
sea, I saw his ship so gay, Swift fly the wave-worn shore, I
51
wiped my tears a - way, I wiped my tears a - way, And saw his ship no
p
mp
Ped.


56
ff
p
more, No more, no more, And saw his ship no more.
8va
Ped.
64
f
When clouds shut in the sky, And
3
69
storms around me howl, When liv - id light - nings fly, And threat - ning thun - ders


74
74
roll, All hopes of rest are lost, No slum - bers vi - sit
74
78
78
p
p
mf
mf
me, My anx - ious thoughts are toss'd, My anx - ious thoughts are toss'd, With
78
83
rit.
ff
ff
dim.
dim.
p
p
Jem-my on the sea, My thoughts are toss'd With Jem-my on the sea.
83
rit.
83

V. The Union Forever [2:20]

lyrics byJohn H. Hewitt (1850)
melody by Gaetano Donizetti
music by Bill Robinson

Operatunistic (♩ = 120)

Violin
Cello
Soprano
Piano

Operatunistic (♩ = 120)

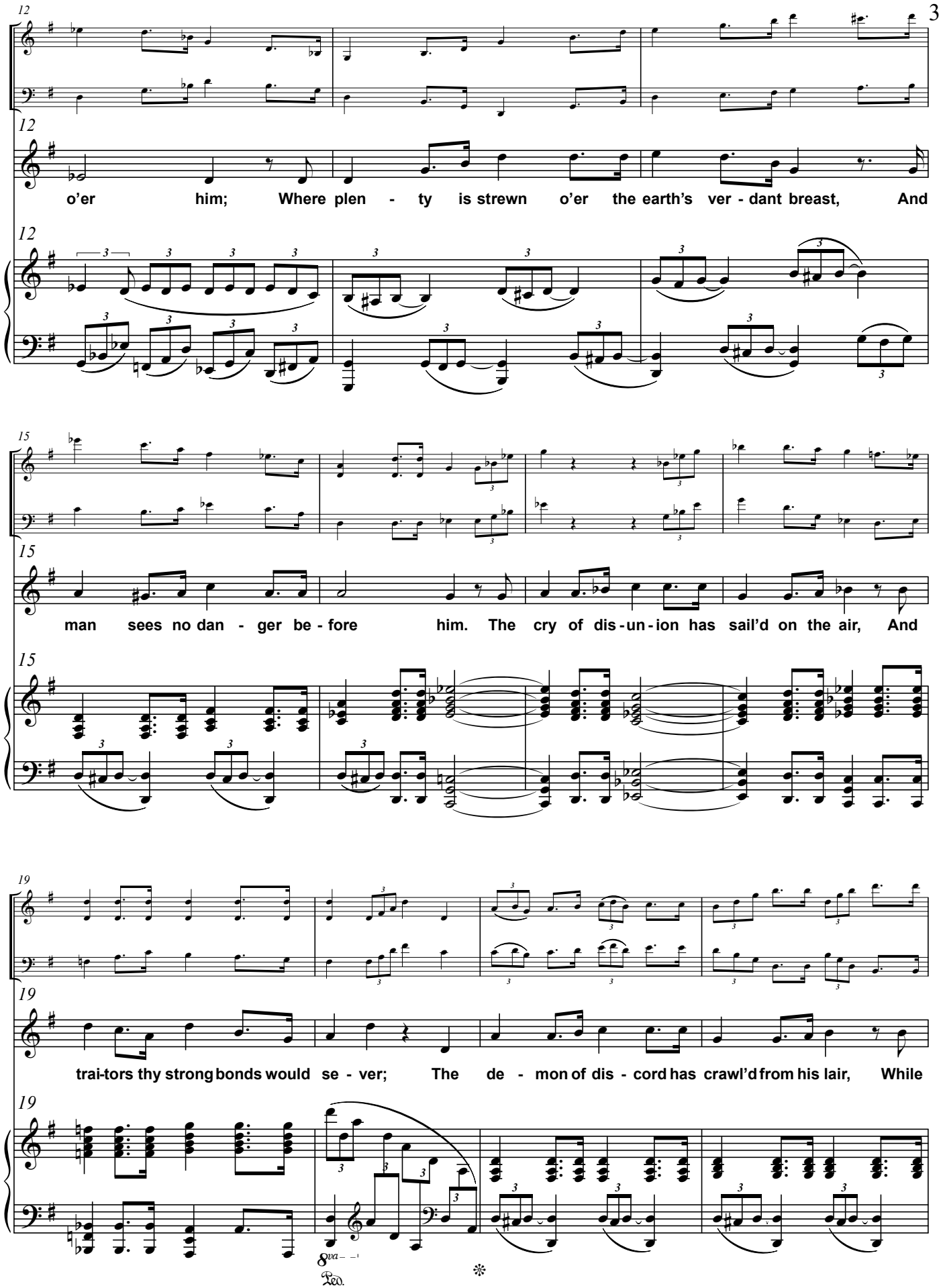
f

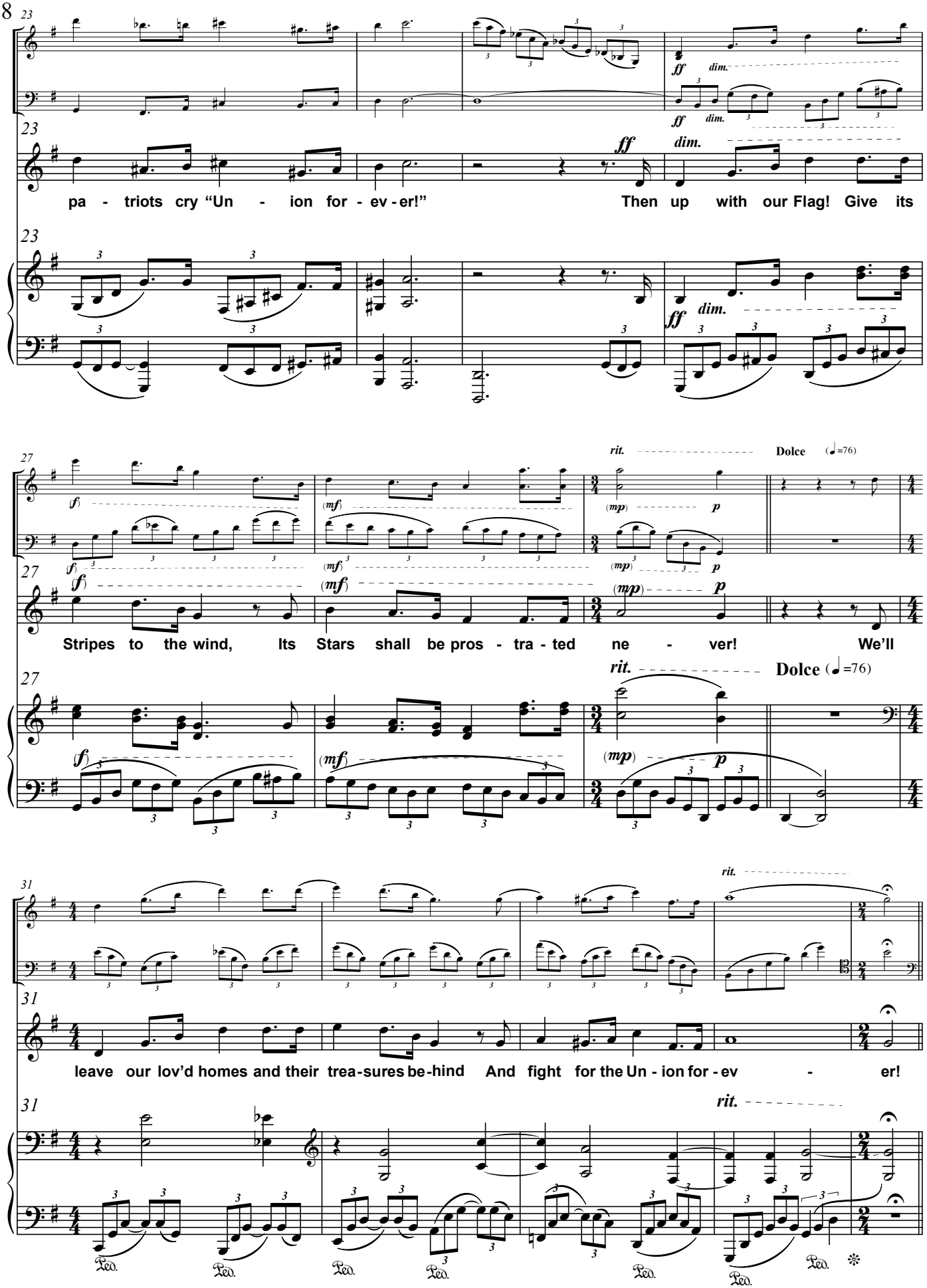
cresc.

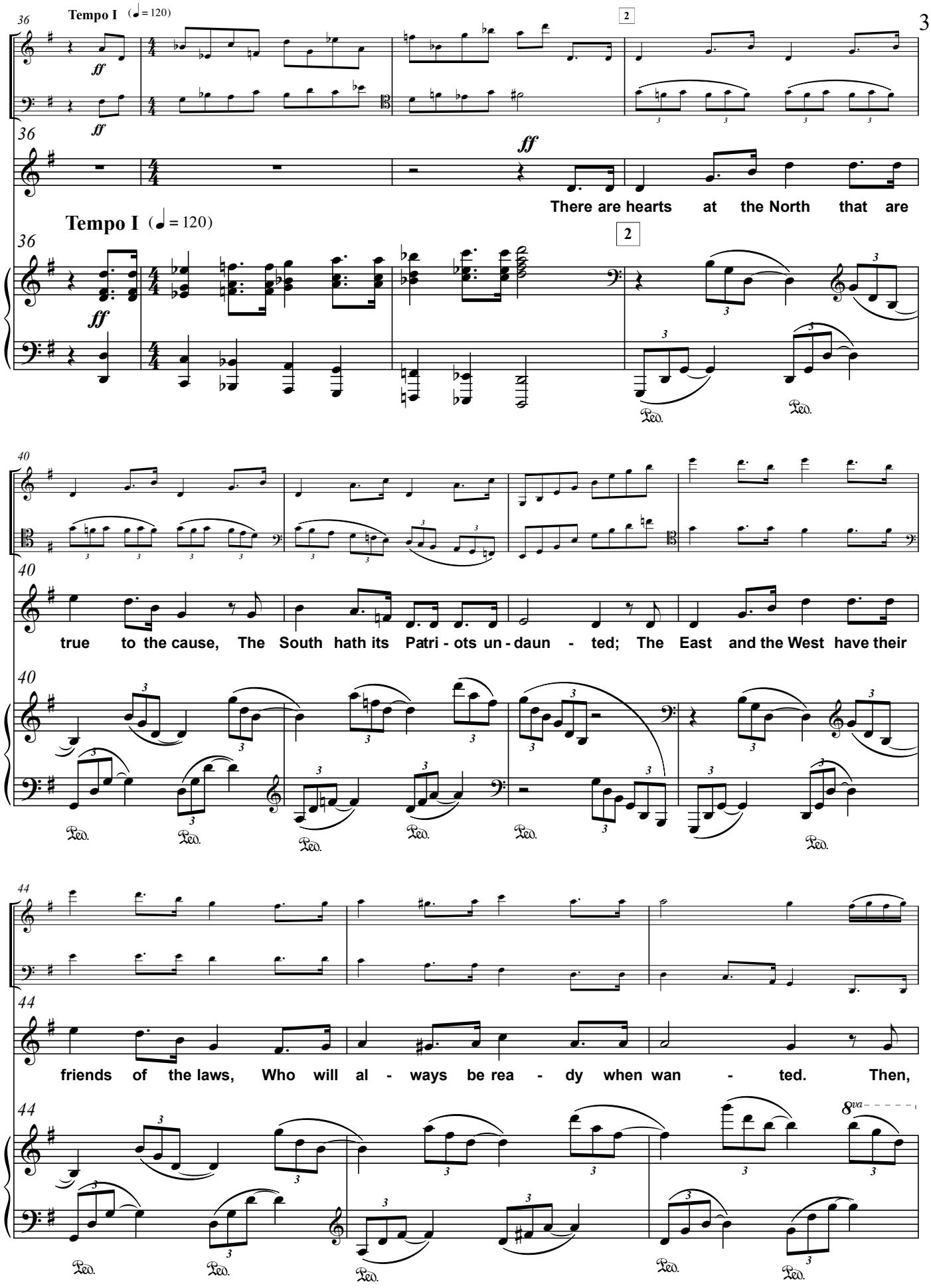
ff

Proud

land of the free! Where the ex - ile seeks rest, And bles - ses the flag that waves


12
o'er him; Where plen - ty is strewn o'er the earth's ver - dant breast, And
15
man sees no dan - ger be - fore him. The cry of dis - un - ion has sail'd on the air, And
19
trai-tors thy strong bonds would se - ver; The de - mon of dis - cord has crawl'd from his lair, While
8va
Ped.


23
ff
dim.
pa - triots cry "Un - ion for - ev - er!"
Then up with our Flag! Give its
27
(f)
(mf)
(mp)
p
rit.
Dolce (♩=76)
Stripes to the wind, Its Stars shall be pros - tra - ted ne - ver! We'll
31
leave our lov'd homes and their trea - sures be - hind And fight for the Un - ion for - ev - er!
Ped.


36
Tempo I (♩ = 120)
ff
2
There are hearts at the North that are
40
true to the cause, The South hath its Patri - ots un - daun - ted; The East and the West have their
44
friends of the laws, Who will al - ways be rea - dy when wan - ted. Then,
8va
Ped.

47

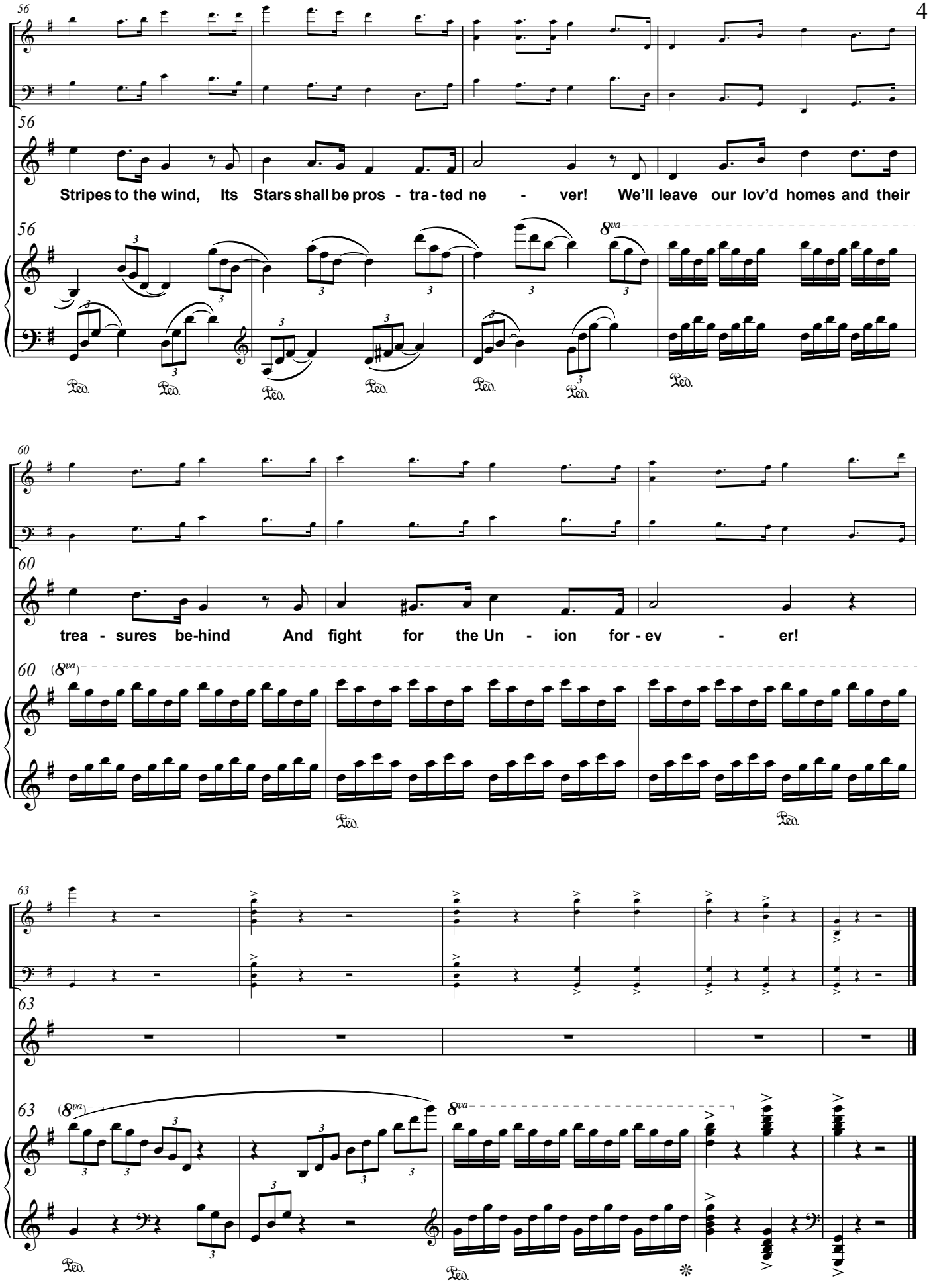
who is there fears for a Un - ion so strong, That the Fed - er - al Com - pact shall

50

per - ish? It shall last, while the sun in its pride rolls a-long, And

53

Wash - ing - ton's mem - 'ry we cher - ish. Then up with our Flag! Give its


56
Stripes to the wind, Its Stars shall be pros - tra - ted ne - ver! We'll leave our lov'd homes and their
8va
Ped.
60
trea - sures be-hind And fight for the Un - ion for - ev - er!
(8va)
63