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Author
Newell, John

Publication Date
2020

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Night Songs

for

Mezzo-soprano, Violoncello and Piano

Music by John Newell

Words by Sara Teasdale

ABIERTO MUSIC

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Night Songs

Sara Teasdale (1884 – 1933) was truly a lyric poet, one whose works are notable for their very personal emotions and clarity of expression. These qualities have made her work beg to be set to music. Many of her poems deal with the theme of night, and I had great difficulty choosing which of her poems to set for this work. All those chosen are cast in the first person.

Sara was born and grew up in St. Louis, Missouri, leading a very sheltered life. She was the youngest child of a well-to-do family; throughout her life she was physically frail and struggled with depression. She was courted by several young men, including the poet Vachel Lindsay. She turned down Lindsay's proposal of marriage, choosing instead Ernst Filsinger, a St. Louis manufacturer, whom she married in 1914. They moved to the Upper West Side of New York City two years later.

In 1918 Sara's work *Love Songs* was awarded what would later become known as the first Pulitzer Prize for poetry. In all she had published eight volumes of work. The initial happiness of Sara's marriage eroded as her husband's travels increased her loneliness. She divorced him in 1929; after a period of serious health issues she took her own life in 1933.

The poems in this set address a variety of emotions: a warm reminiscence of evenings spent in New York's Riverside Park; the innocence of a child running to her neighbor's house, accompanied by the moon; a lament that her inner turmoil prevents her from resting in the beauty of the night.

Ultimately the night and the stars seem to have become sources of solace and objects of adoration. The final poem, Winter Stars, was apparently written during the first World War; it is a paean to the "faithful beauty of the stars" that still holds forth through the sorrow she feels for "the young blood flowing beyond the sea."

I. There Will Be Stars (from Dark of the Moon, 1926)
II. Summer Night, Riverside (from Love Songs, 1917)
III. Spring Night (from Love Songs, 1917)
IV. The Kind Moon (from Helen of Troy and Other Poems, 1911)
V. June Night (from Flame and Shadow, 1920)
VI. Stars (from Flame and Shadow, 1920)
VII. Winter Stars (from Flame & Shadow, 1920)

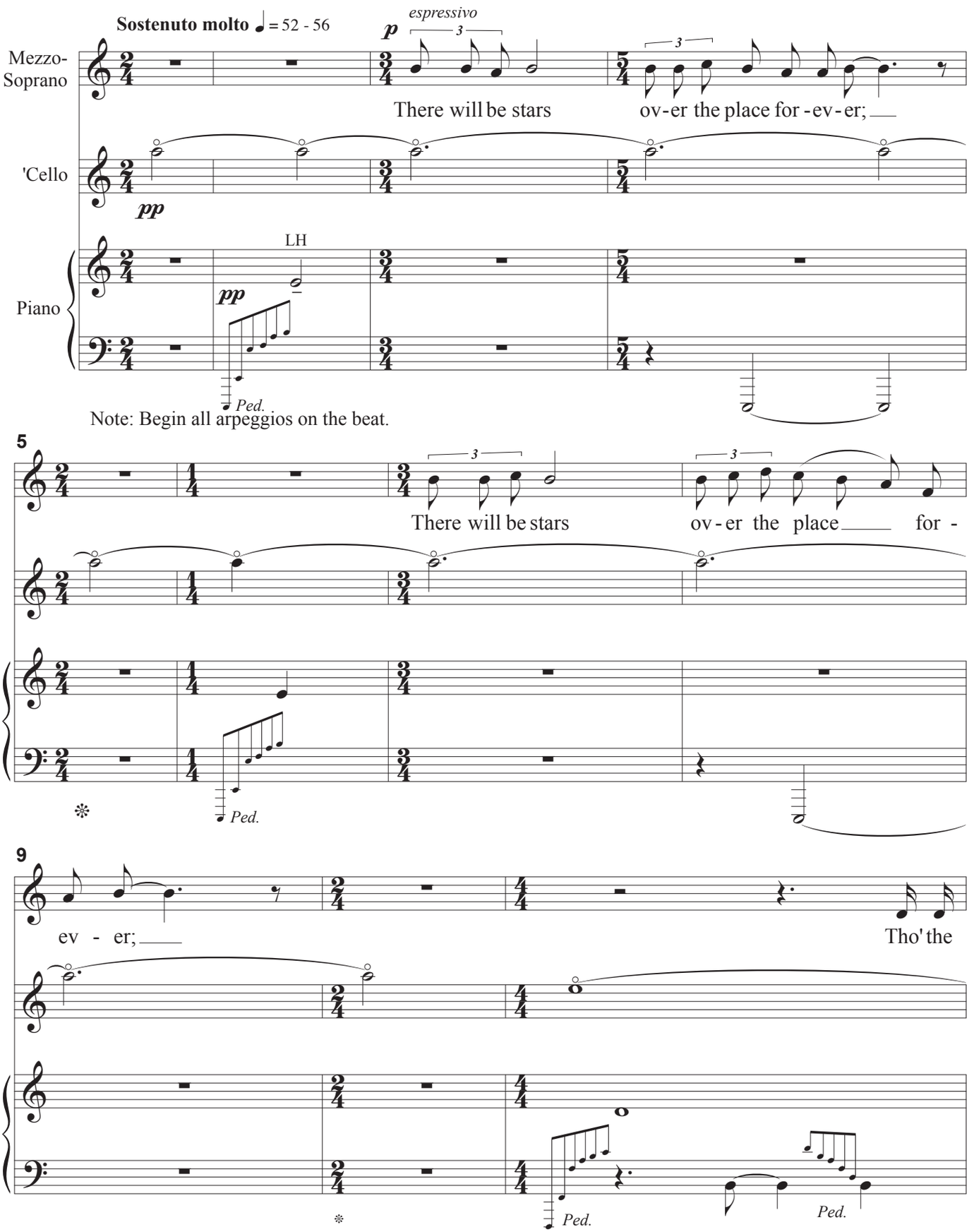
Night Songs was composed for, and is dedicated to, the Resinosa Ensemble:
Jöelle Morris (mezzo-soprano), Eliza Meyer ('cello) and Bridget Convey (piano).

Night Songs

I. There Will Be Stars

Sara Teasdale

John Newell



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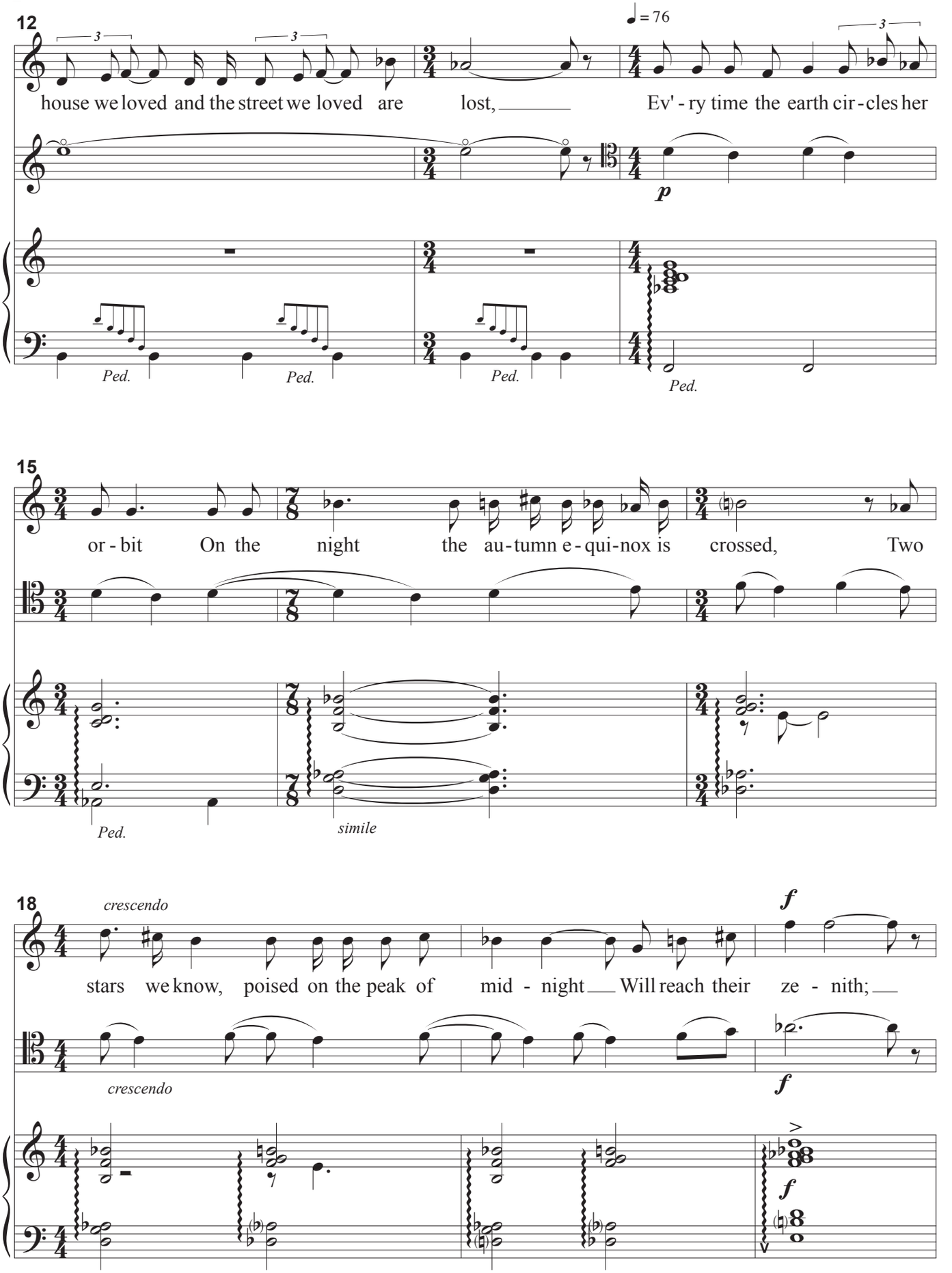
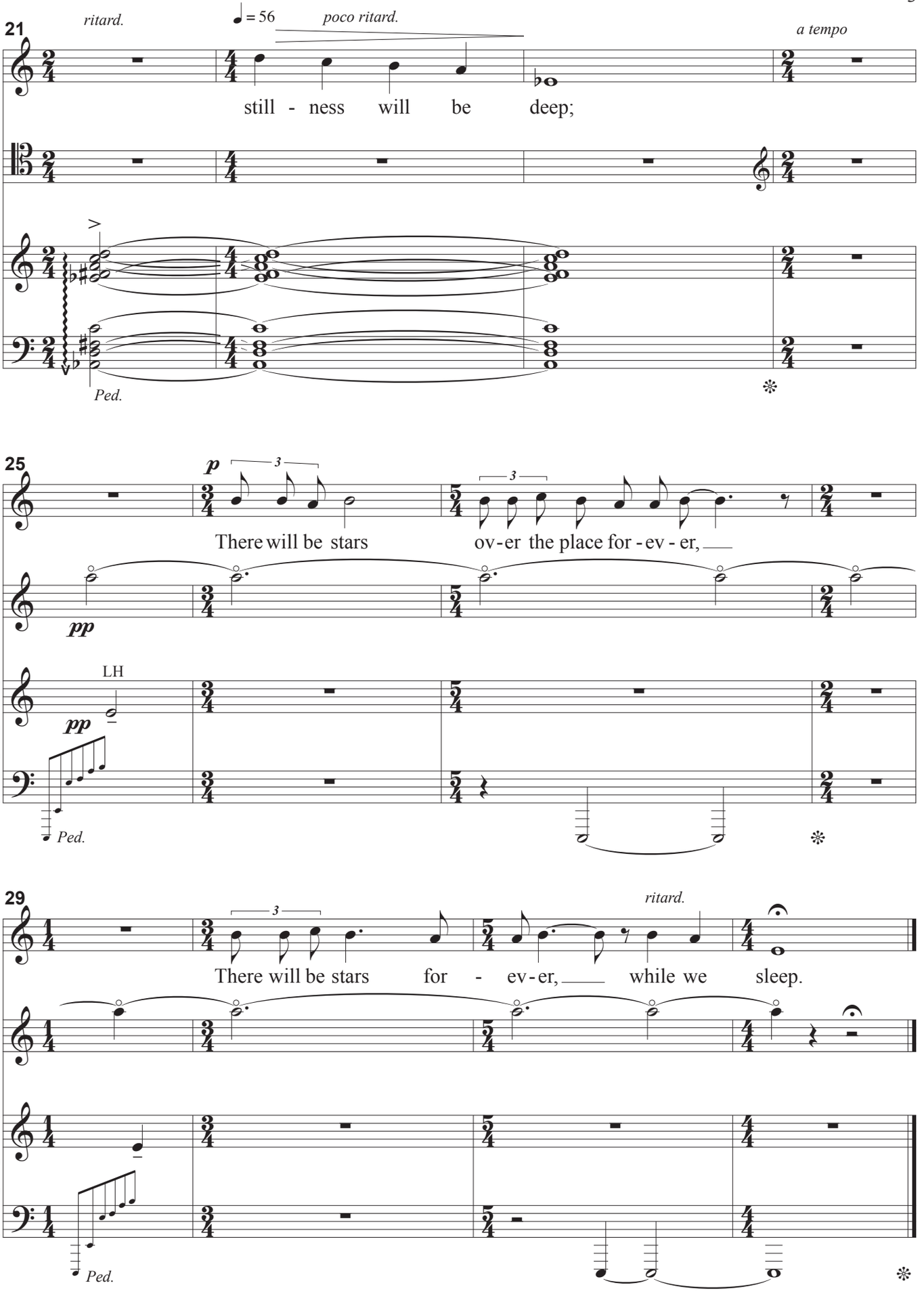
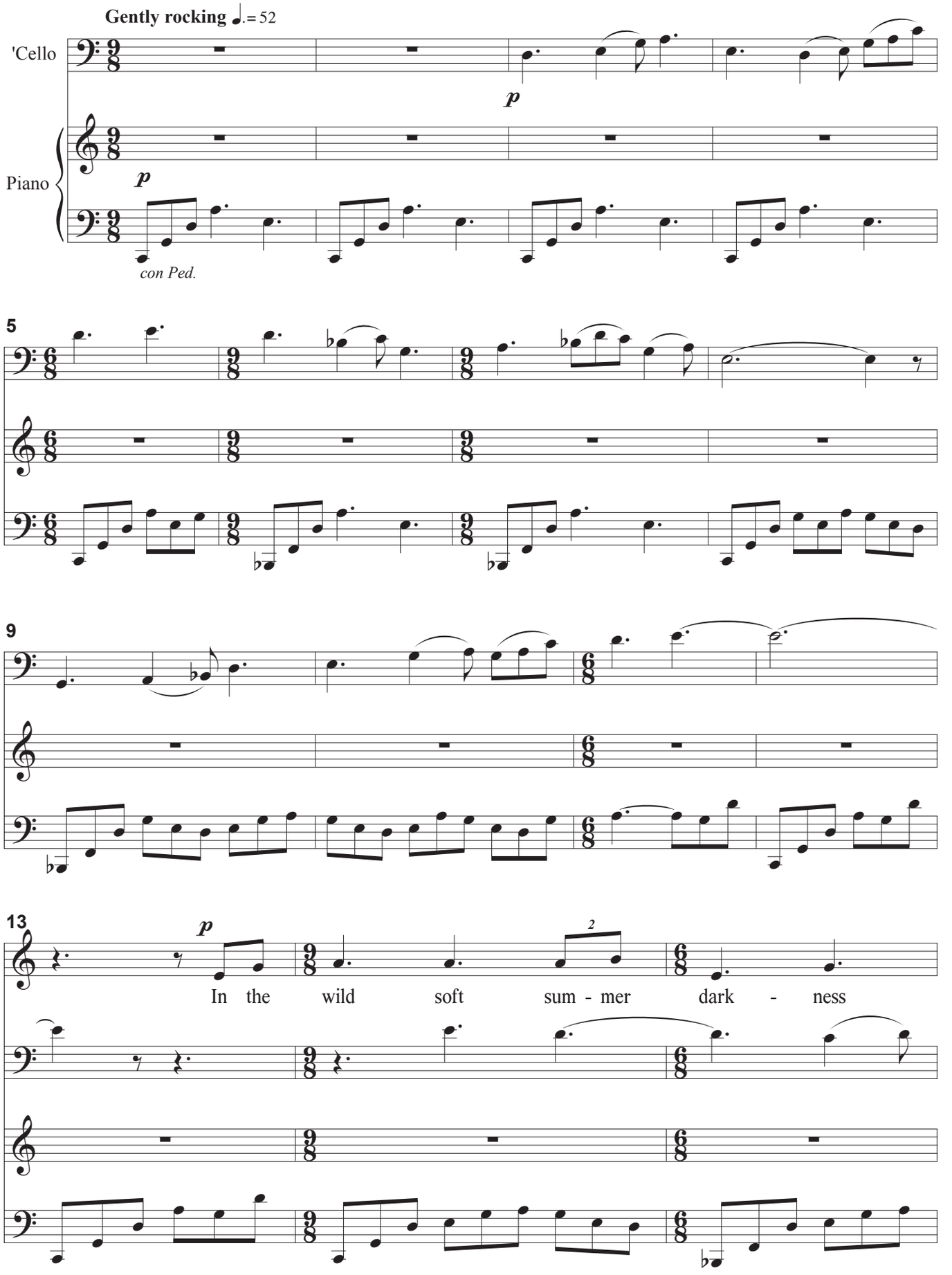
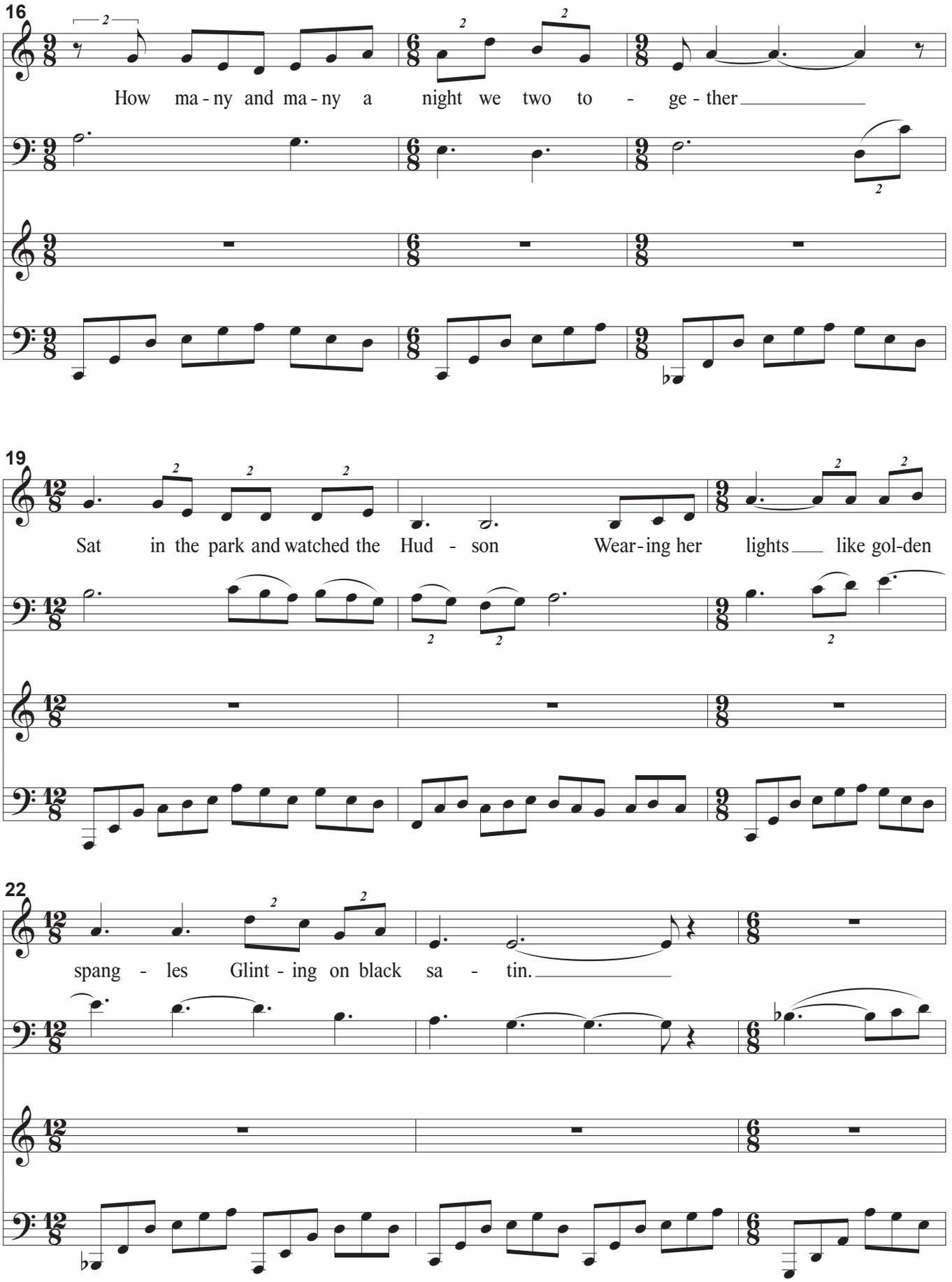
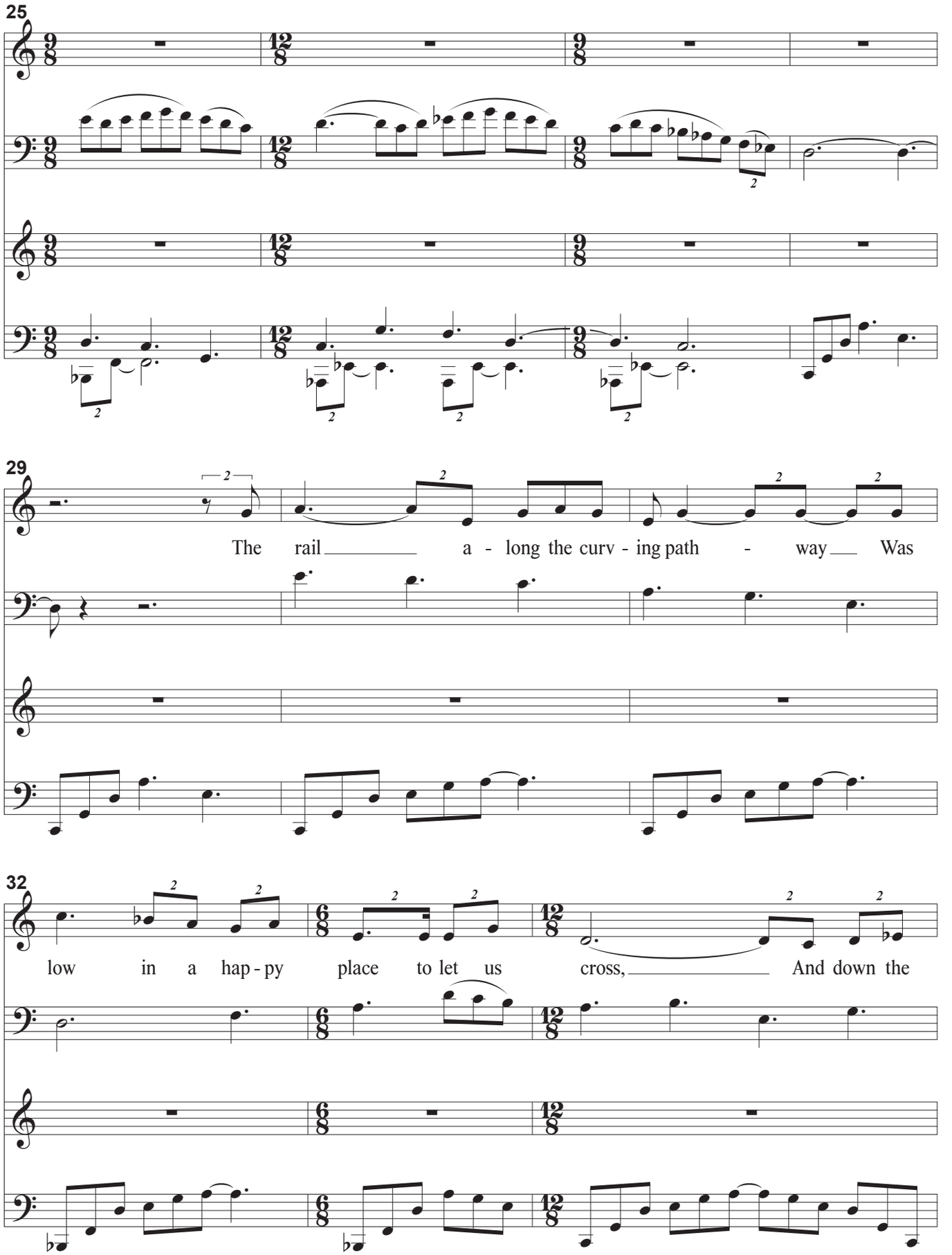

12
house we loved and the street we loved are lost,
Ev' - ry time the earth cir - cles her
♩ = 76
p
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
15
or - bit On the night the au - tumn e - qui - nox is crossed, Two
Ped.
simile
18
crescendo
stars we know, poised on the peak of mid - night Will reach their ze - nith;
crescendo
f
f
f

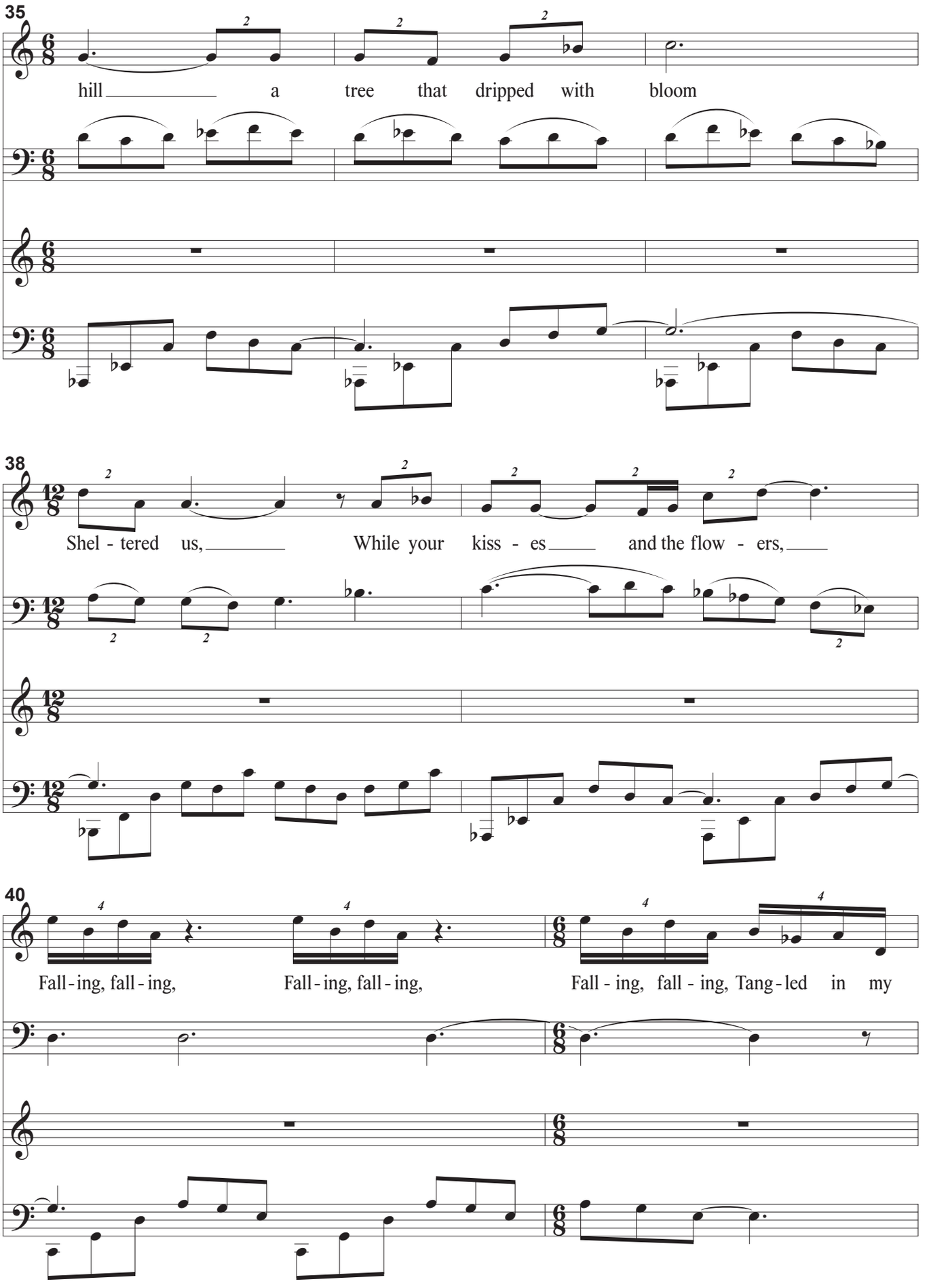

21
ritard.
♩ = 56
poco ritard.
a tempo
still - ness will be deep;
Ped.
25
p
There will be stars over the place for - ev - er,
pp
LH
pp
Ped.
29
ritard.
There will be stars for - ev - er, while we sleep.
Ped.

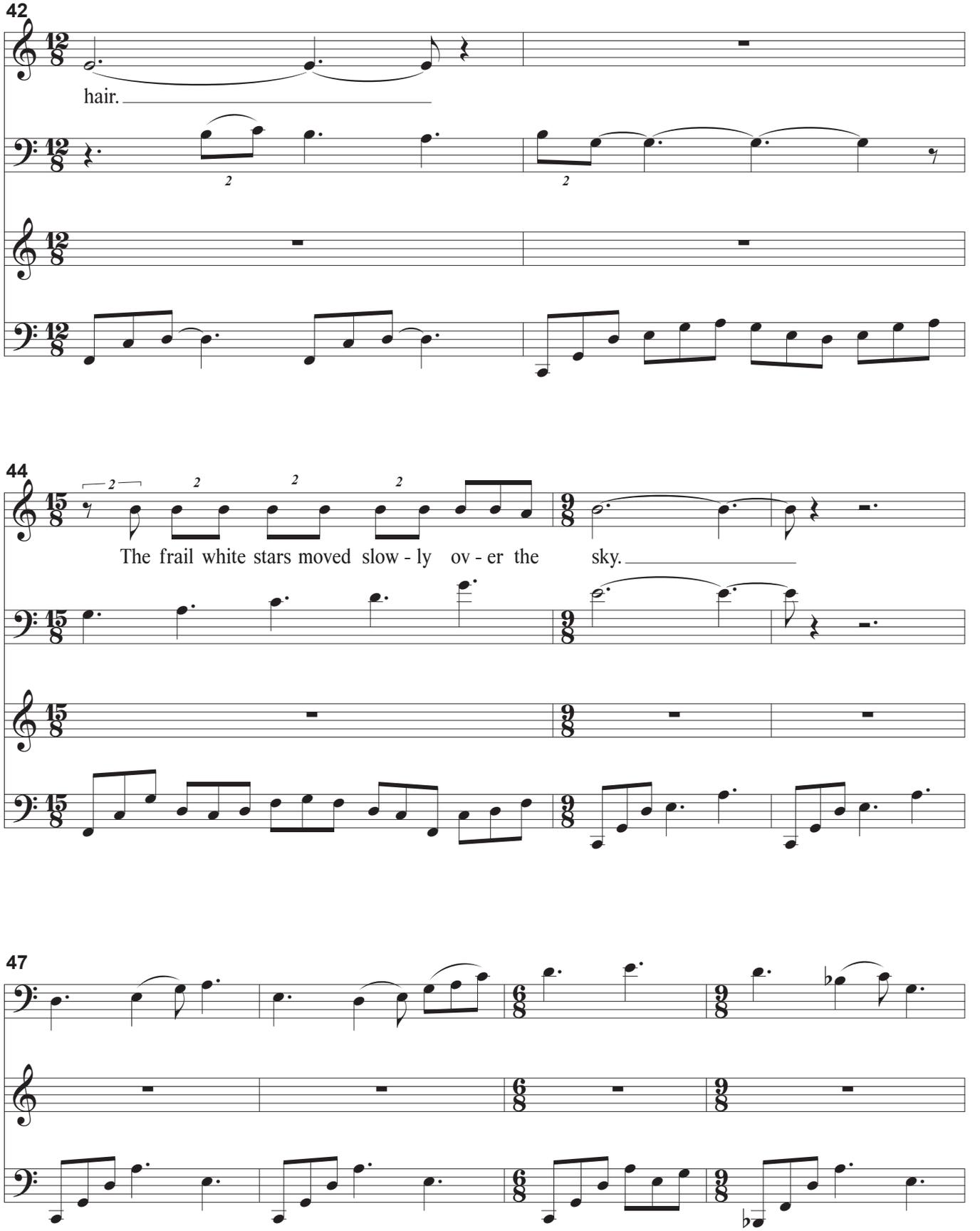
II. Summer Night, Riverside

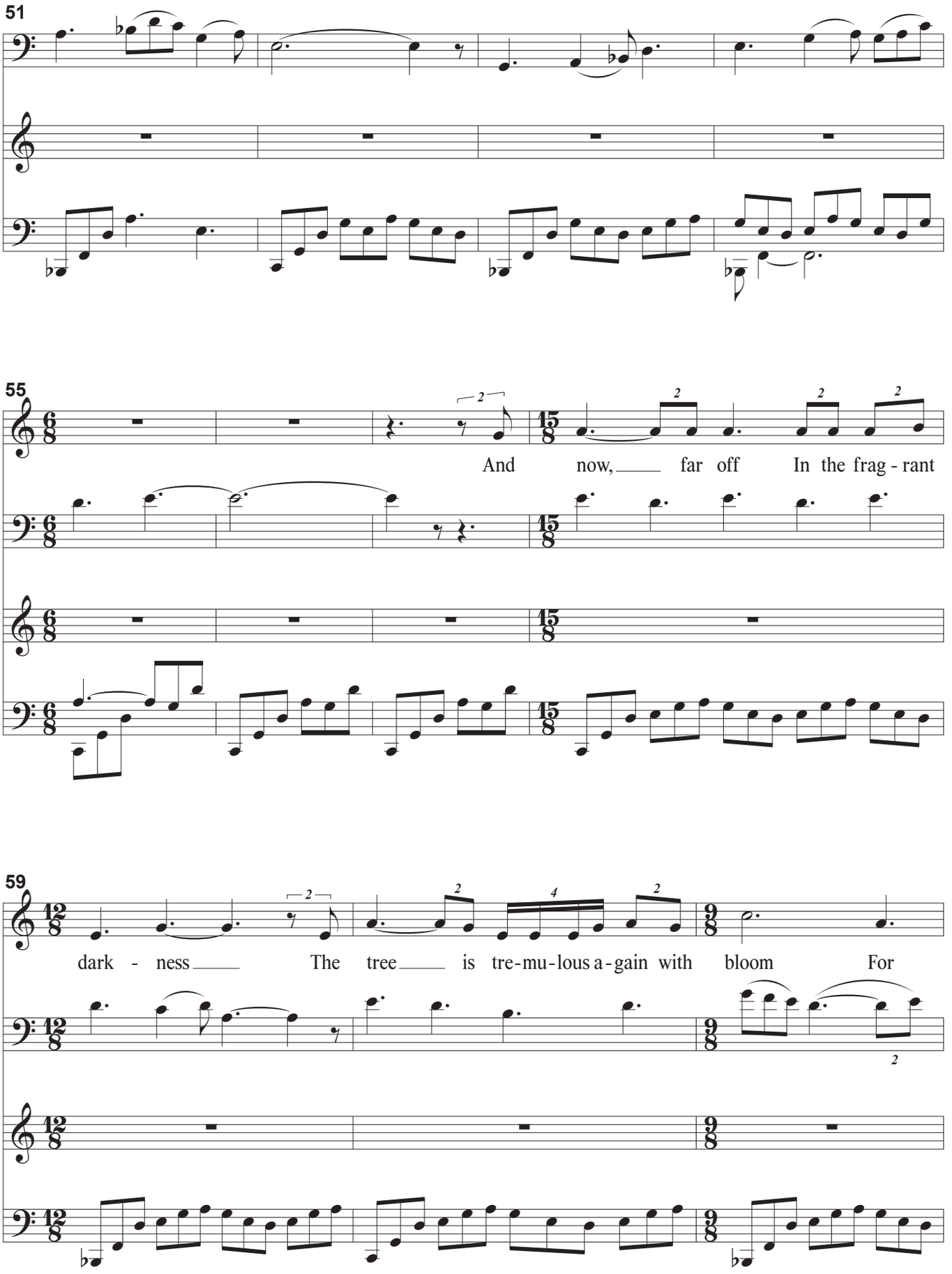


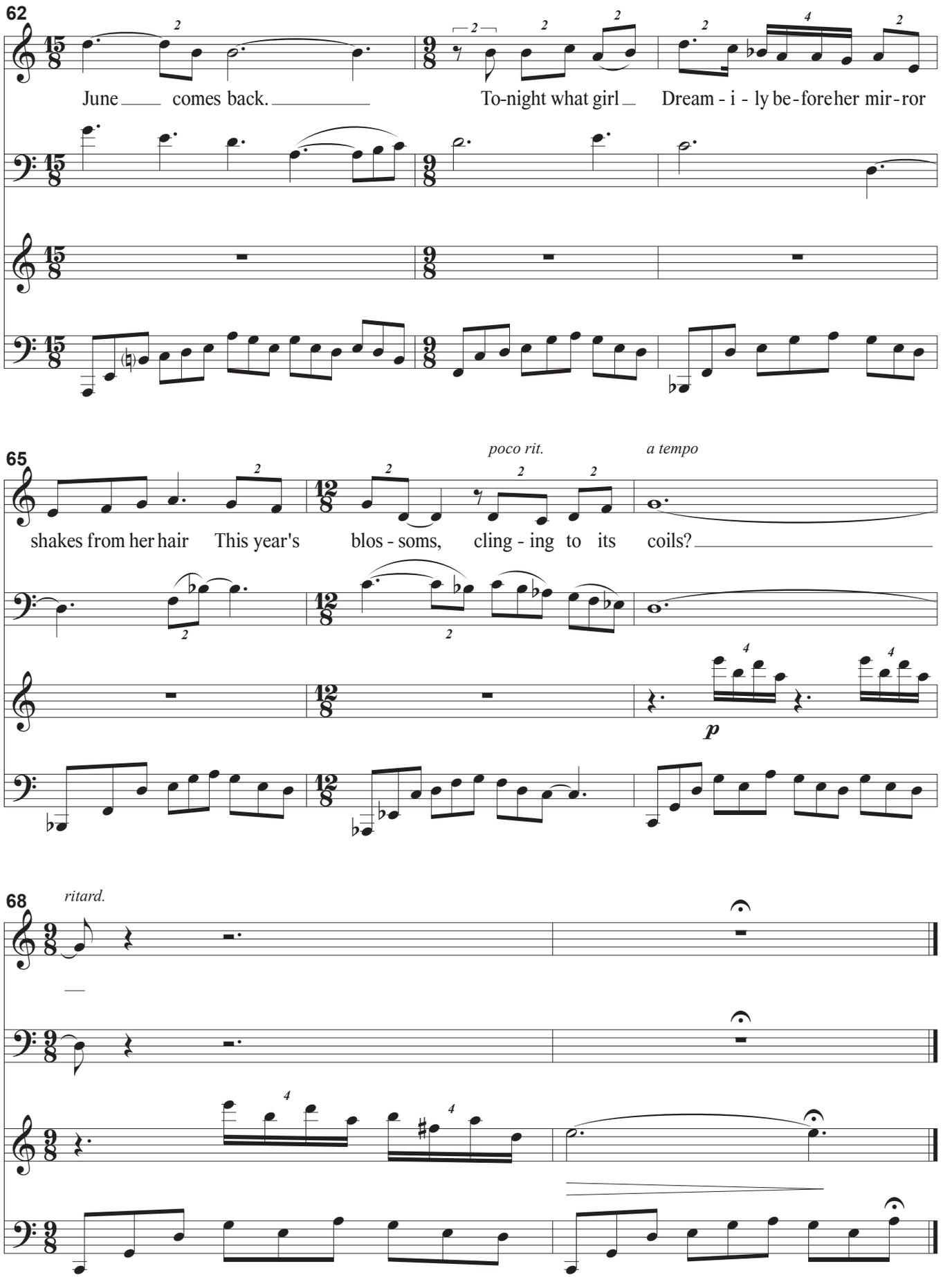

16
How ma - ny and ma - ny a night we two to - ge - ther
19
Sat in the park and watched the Hud - son Wear - ing her lights like gol-den
22
spang - les Glint - ing on black sa - tin.


25
29
The rail a - long the curv - ing path - way Was
32
low in a hap - py place to let us cross, And down the

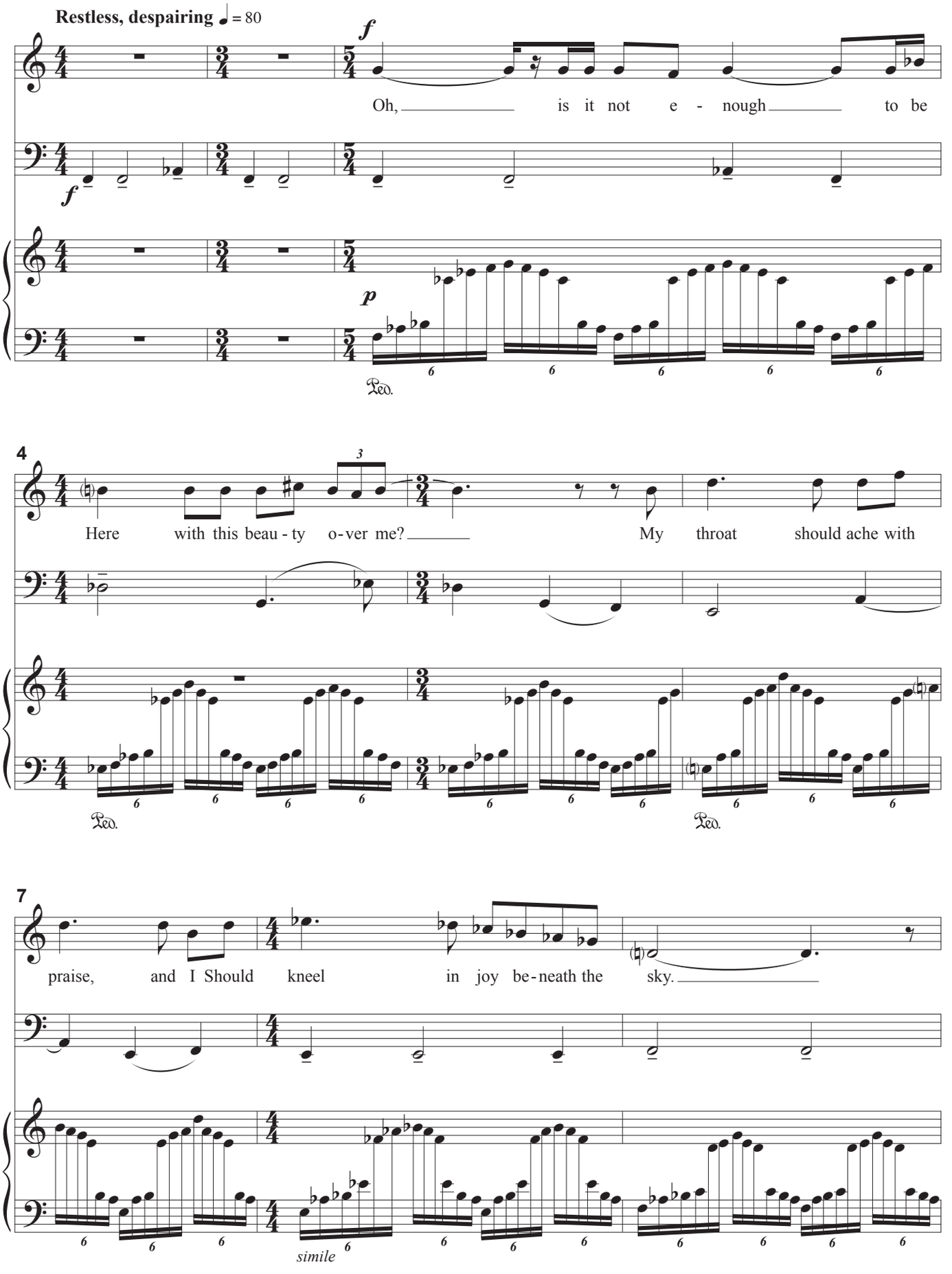

35
hill a tree that dripped with bloom
38
Shel - tered us, While your kiss - es and the flow - ers,
40
Fall - ing, fall - ing, Fall - ing, fall - ing, Fall - ing, fall - ing, Tang - led in my

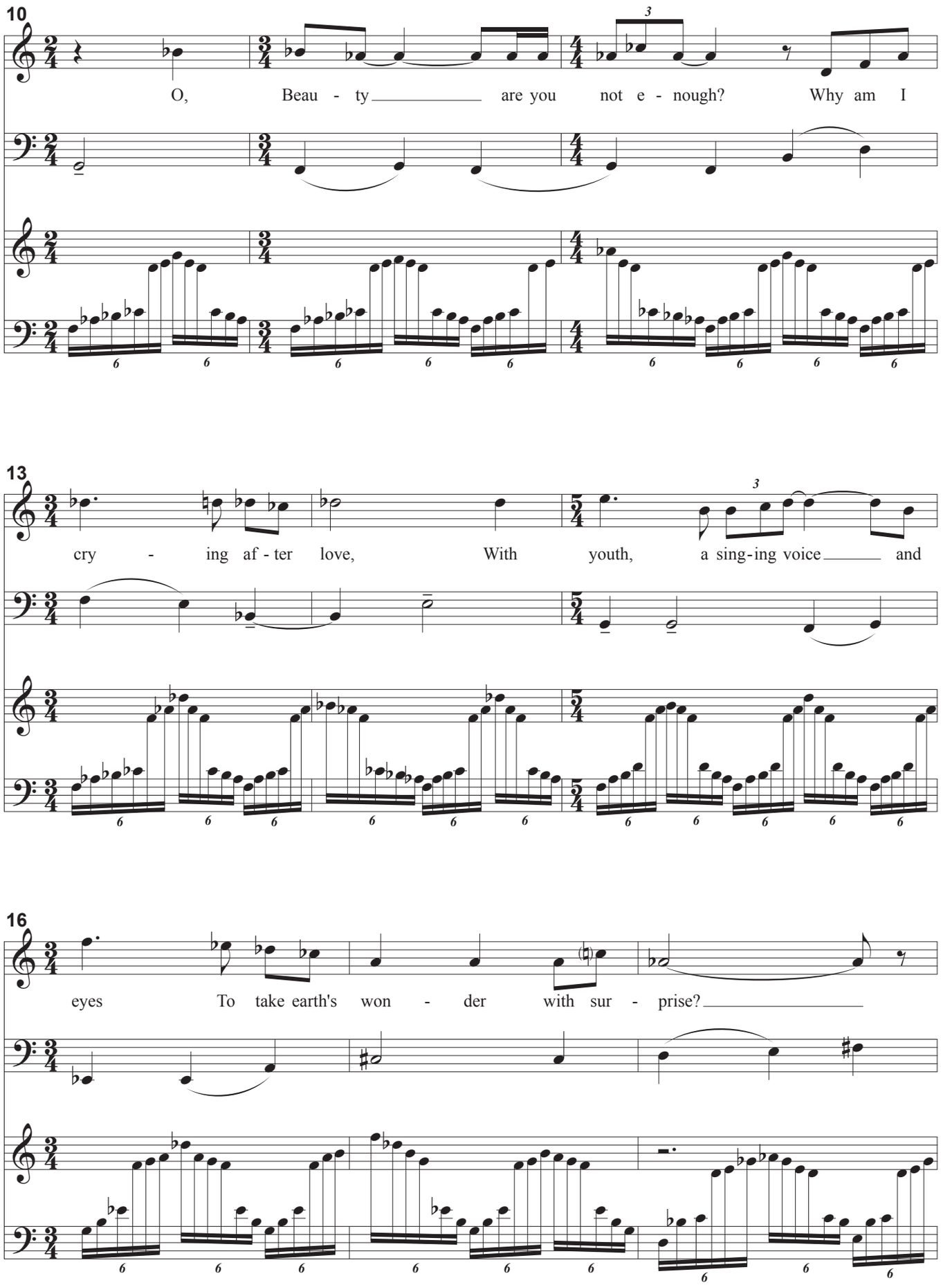

42
hair.
44
The frail white stars moved slow - ly ov - er the sky.
47

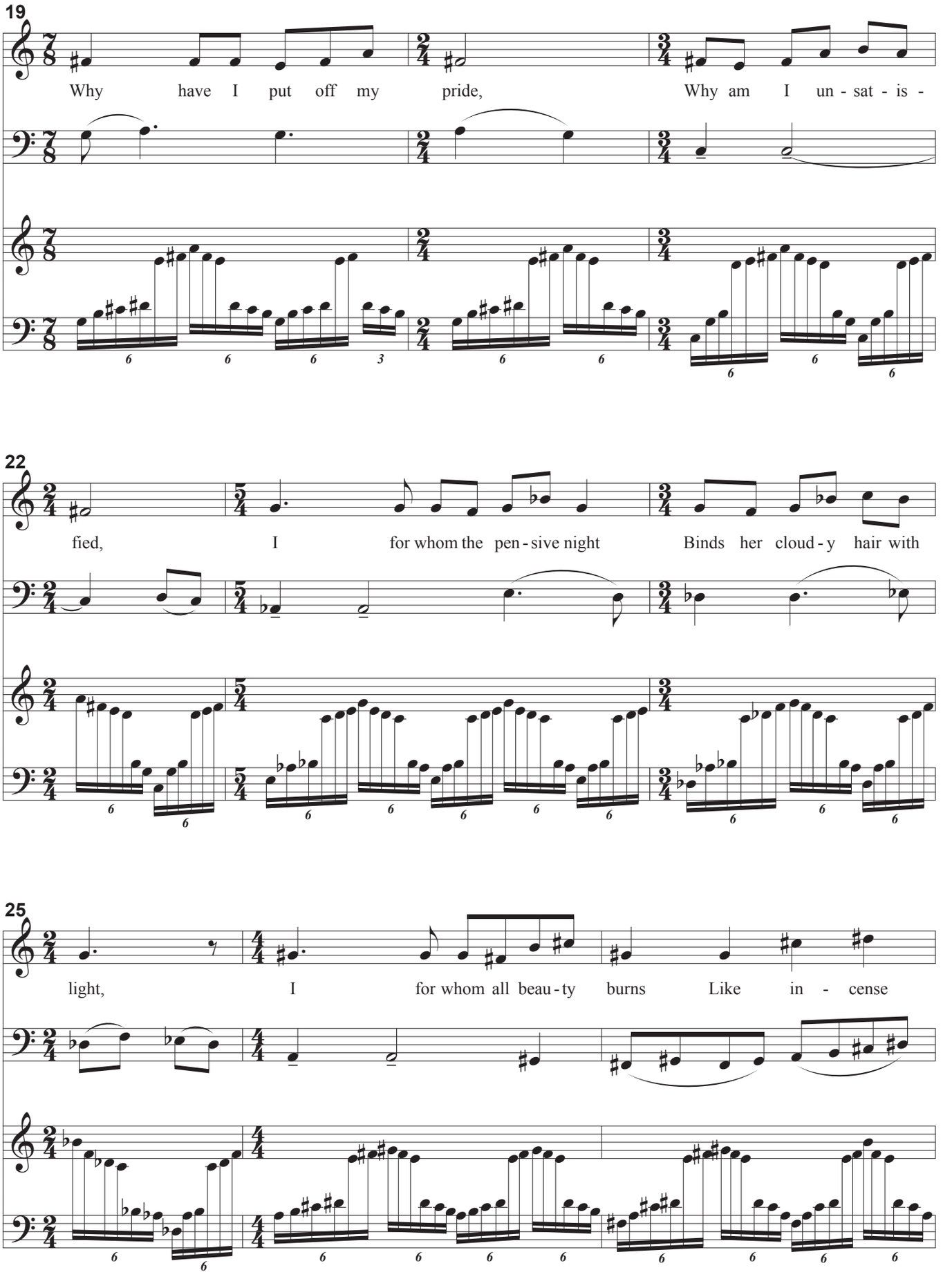

51
55
And now, far off In the frag - rant
59
dark - ness The tree is tre-mu-lous a-gain with bloom For

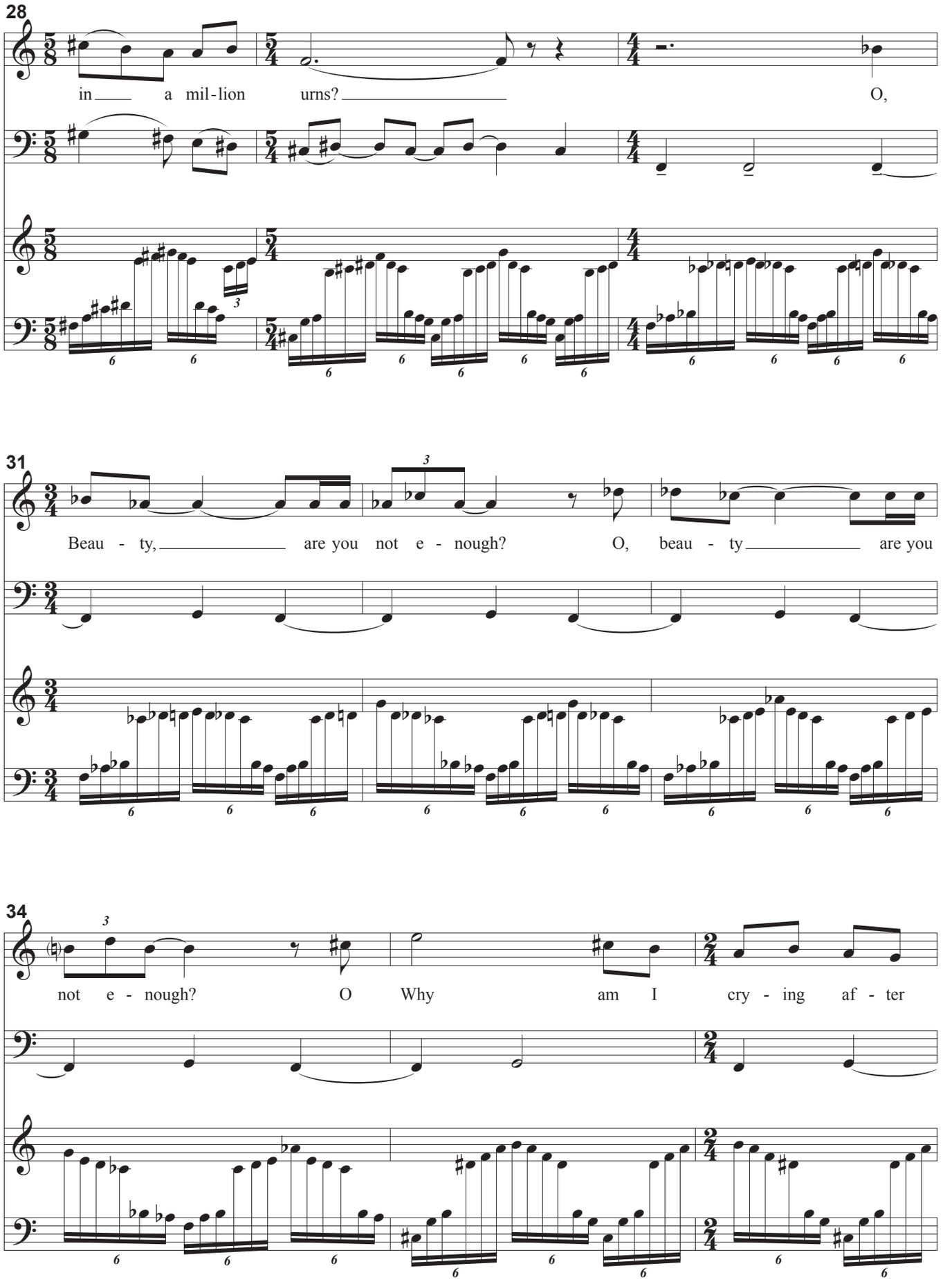

62
June comes back.
To-night what girl
Dream - i - ly be - fore her mir - ror
65
poco rit.
a tempo
shakes from her hair
This year's
blos - soms,
cling - ing to its
coils?
p
68
ritard.

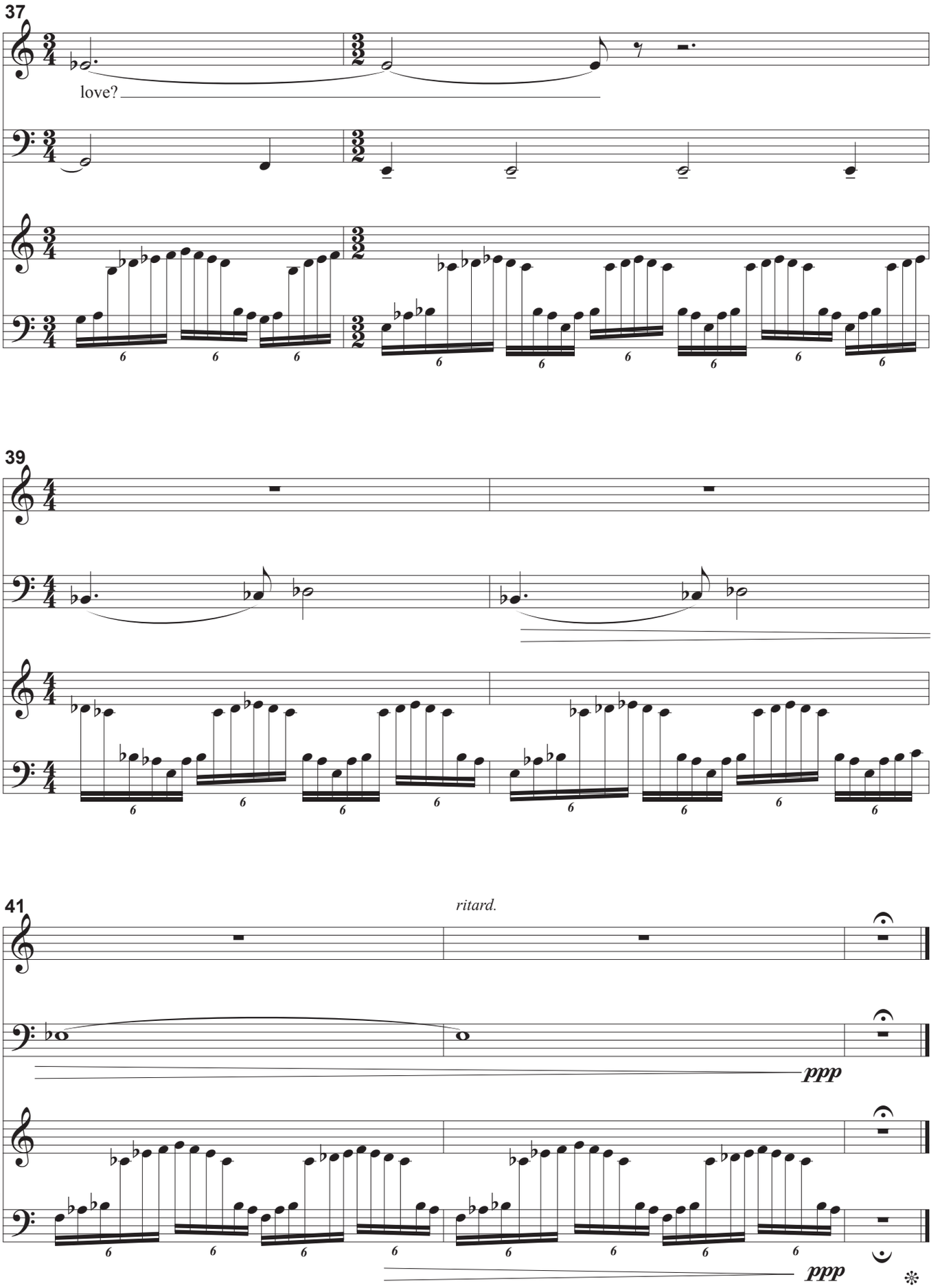
III. Spring Night



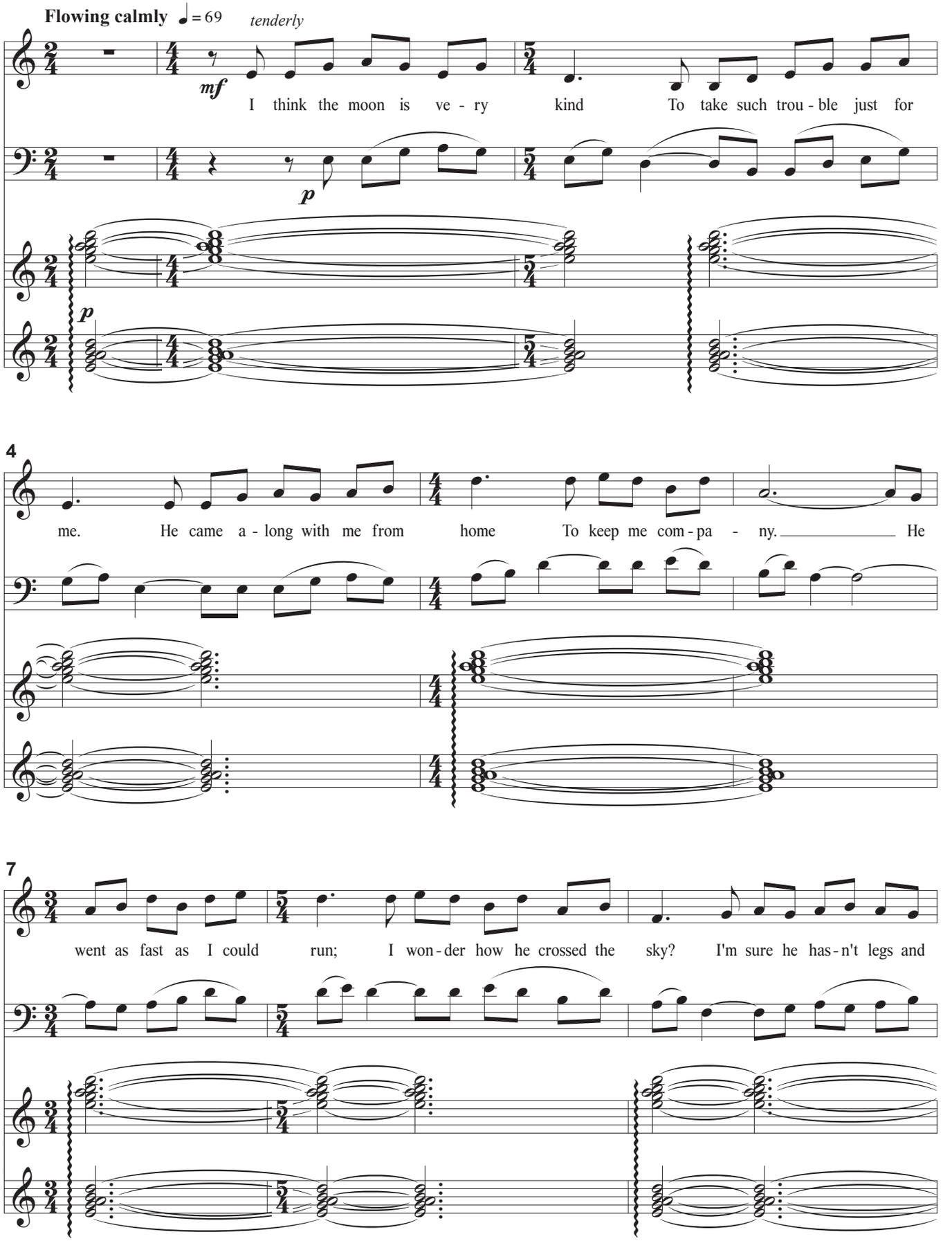

10
O, Beau - ty are you not e - nough? Why am I
13
cry - ing af - ter love, With youth, a sing-ing voice and
16
eyes To take earth's won - der with sur - prise?

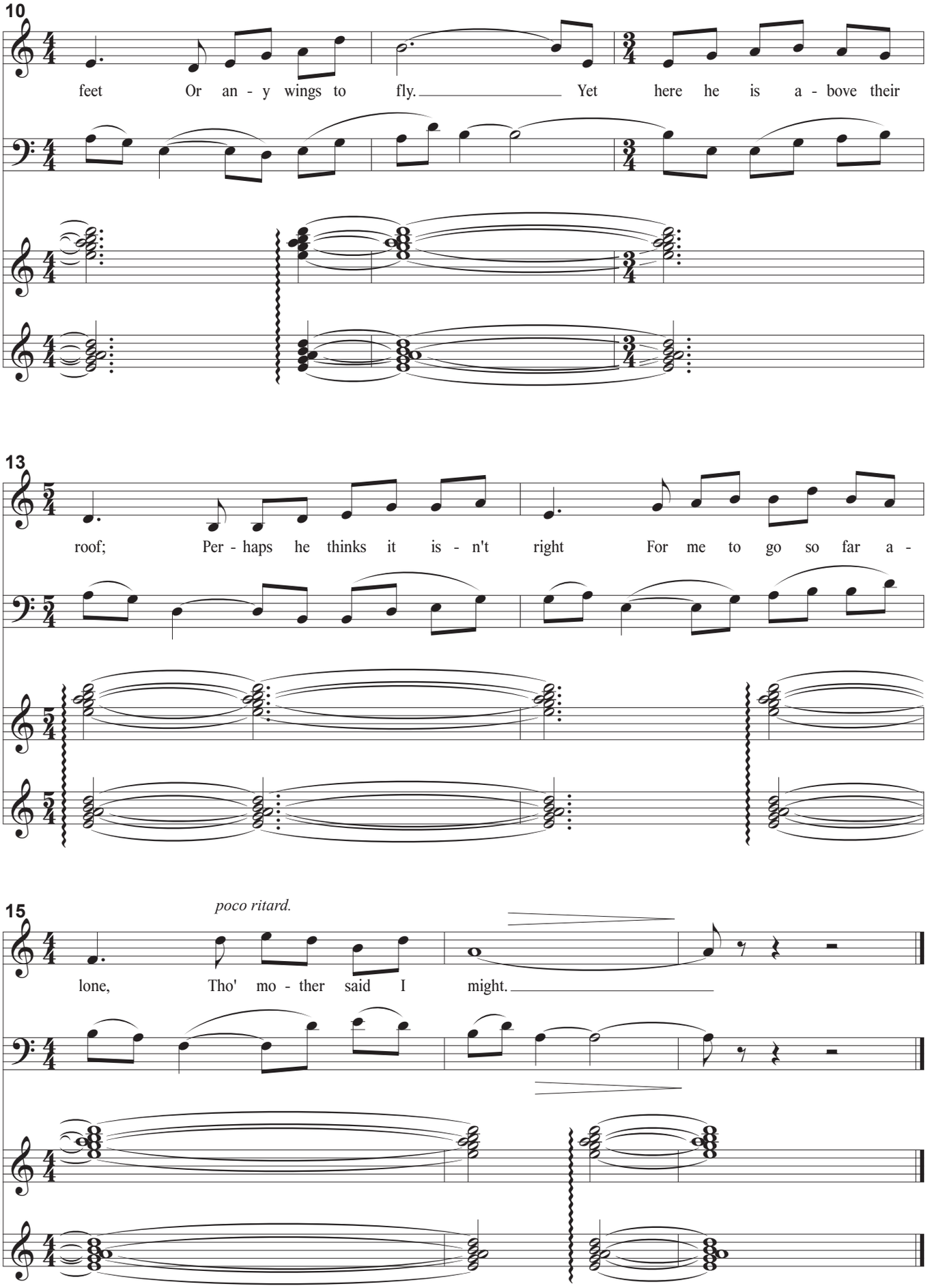

19
Why have I put off my pride, Why am I un - sat - is -
22
fied, I for whom the pen - sive night Binds her cloud - y hair with
25
light, I for whom all beau - ty burns Like in - cense


28
in a mil-lion urns? O,
31
Beau - ty, are you not e - nough? O, beau - ty are you
34
not e - nough? O Why am I cry - ing af - ter

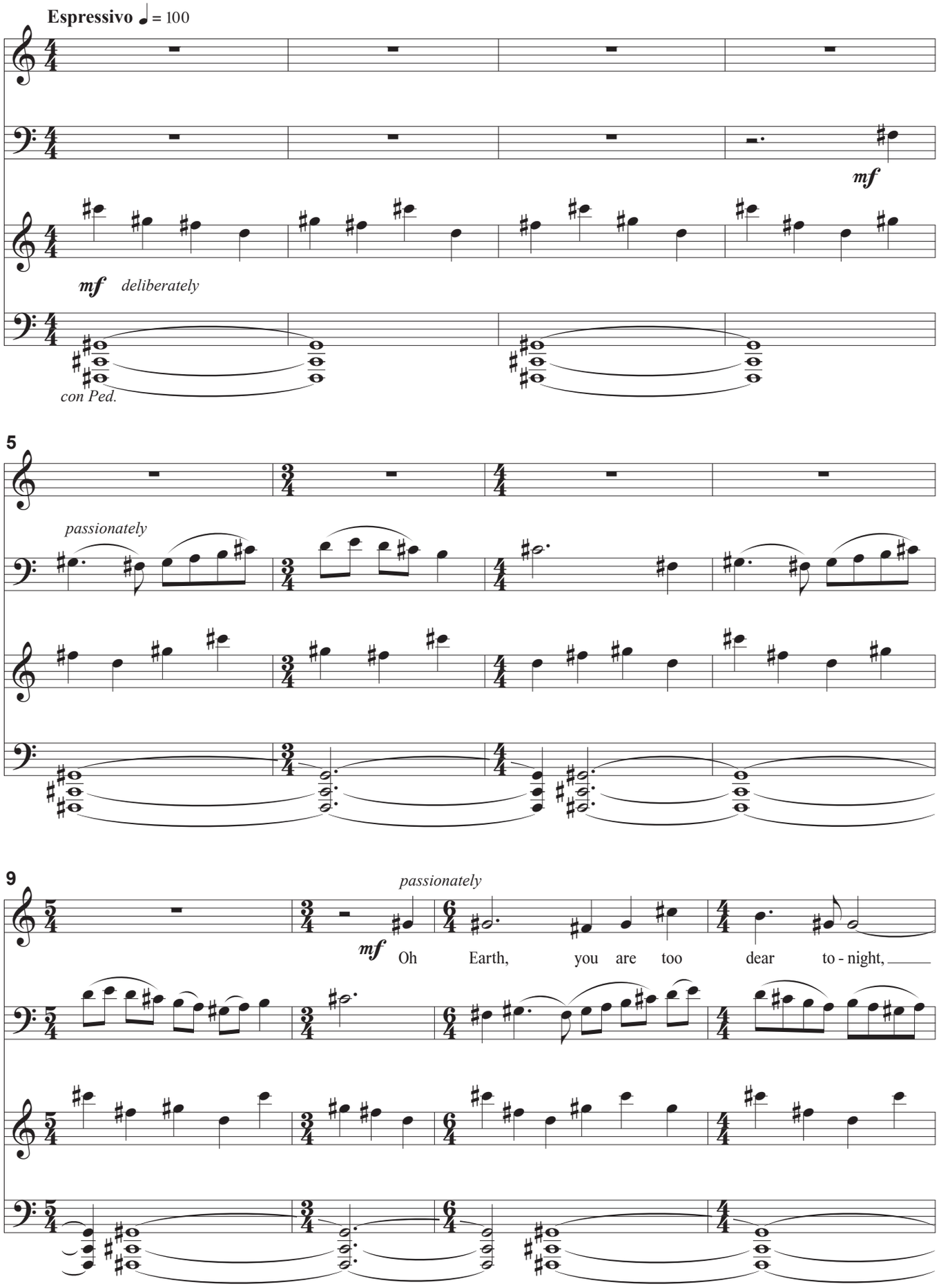

37
love?
39
41
ritard.
ppp
ppp

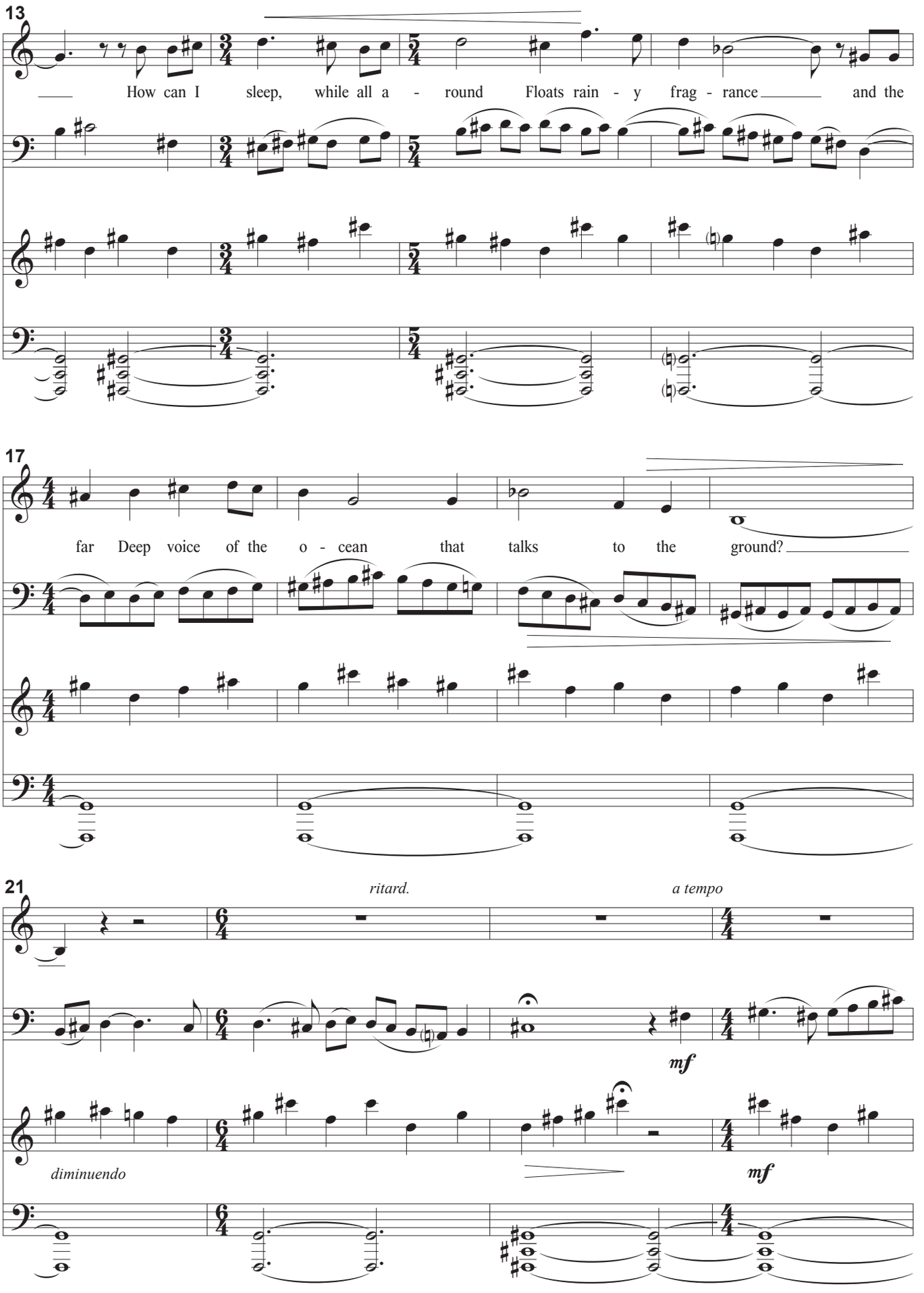
IV. The Kind Moon

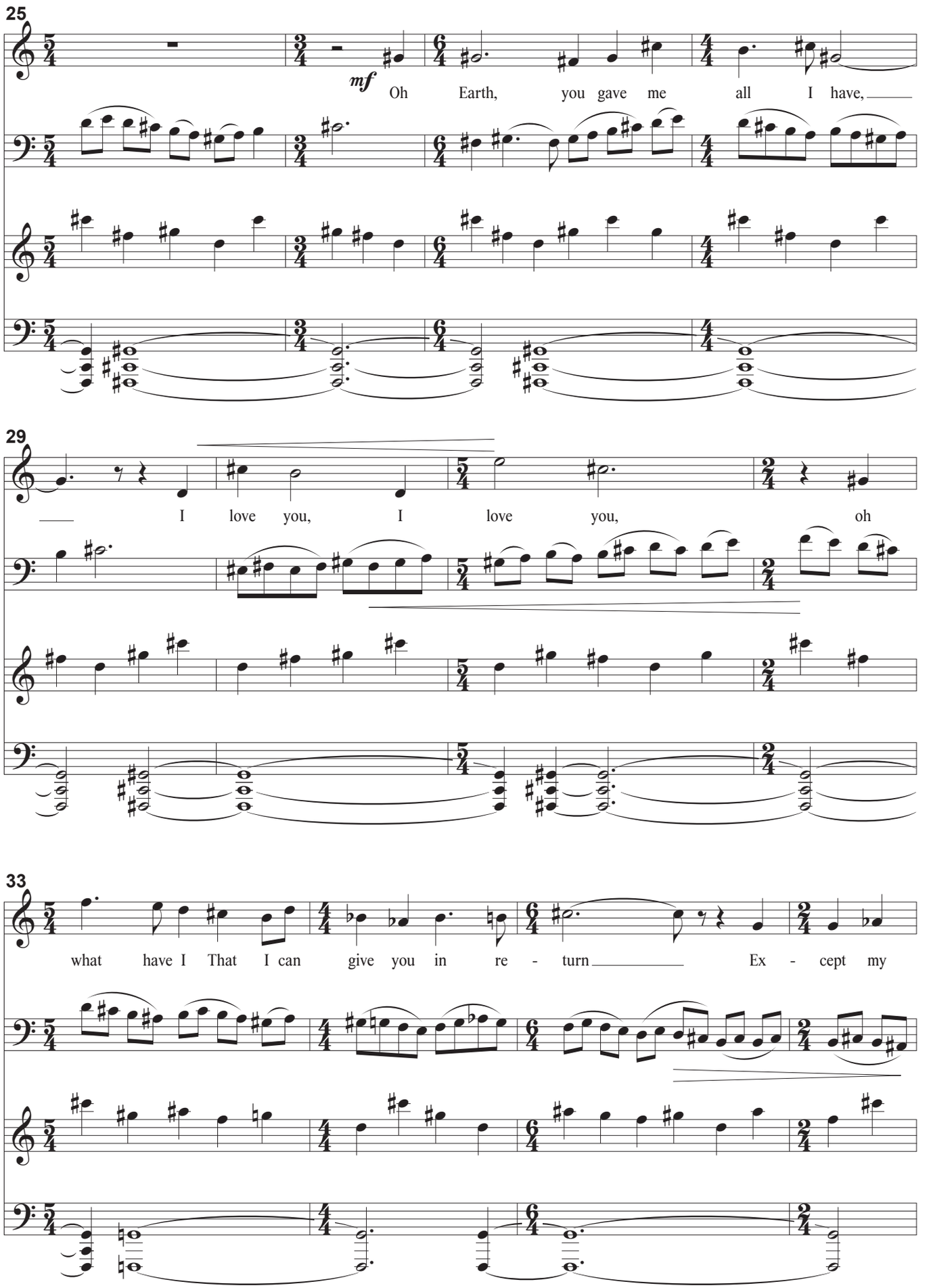


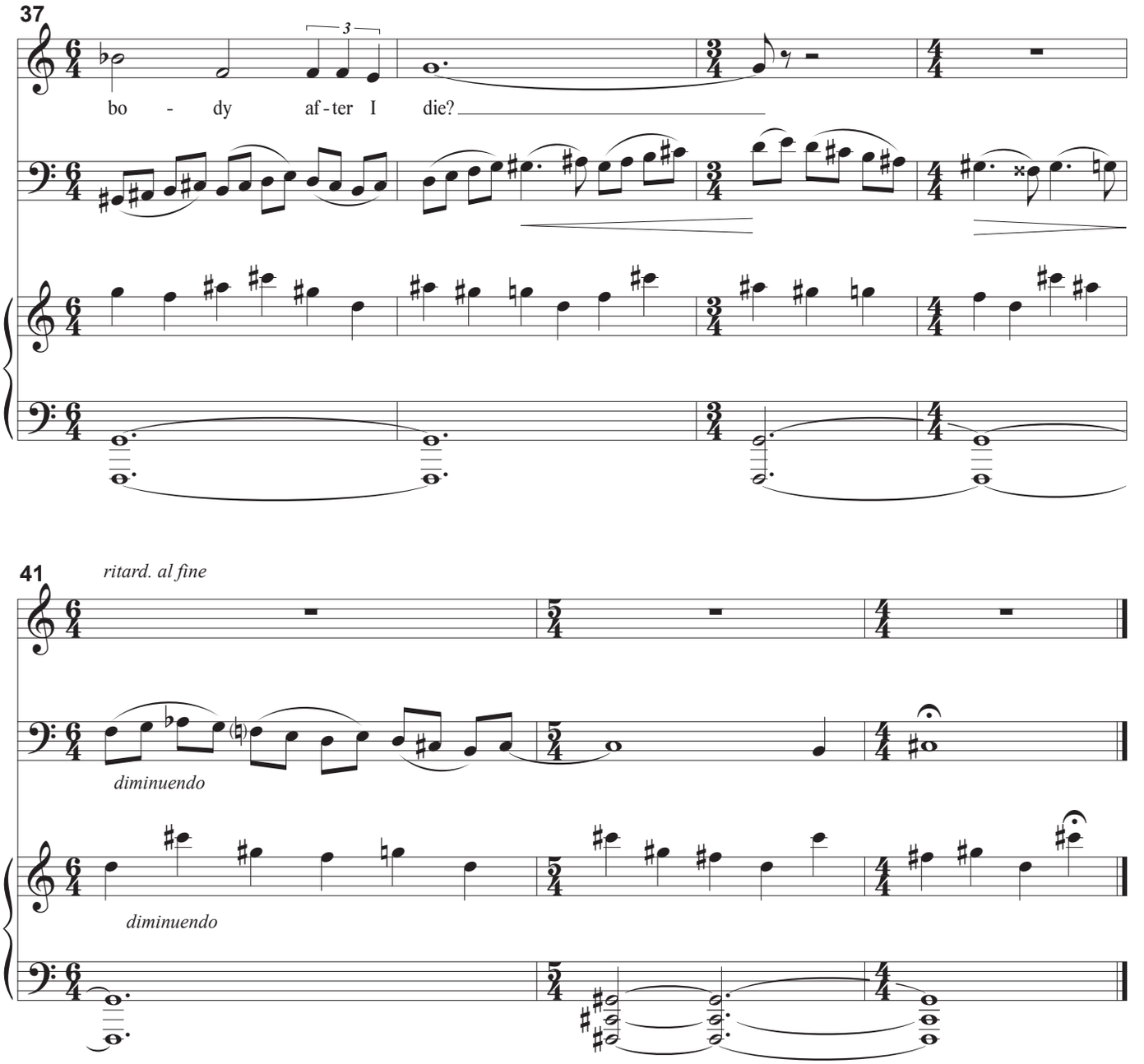

10
feet Or an - y wings to fly. Yet here he is a - bove their
13
roof; Per - haps he thinks it is - n't right For me to go so far a -
15
poco ritard.
lone, Tho' mo - ther said I might.

V. June Night

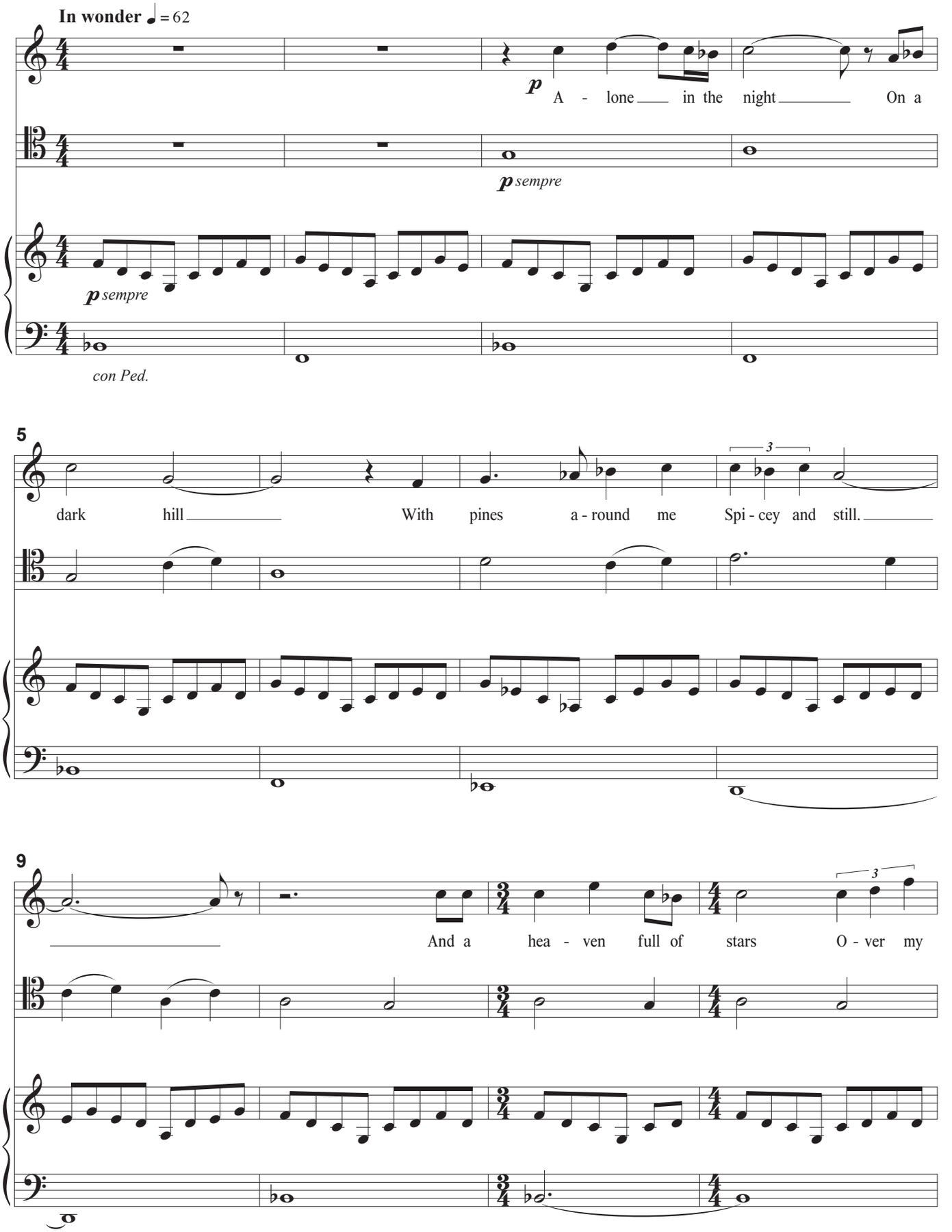

Espressivo ♩ = 100
mf
mf deliberately
con Ped.
5
passionately
9
passionately
mf Oh Earth, you are too dear to - night,

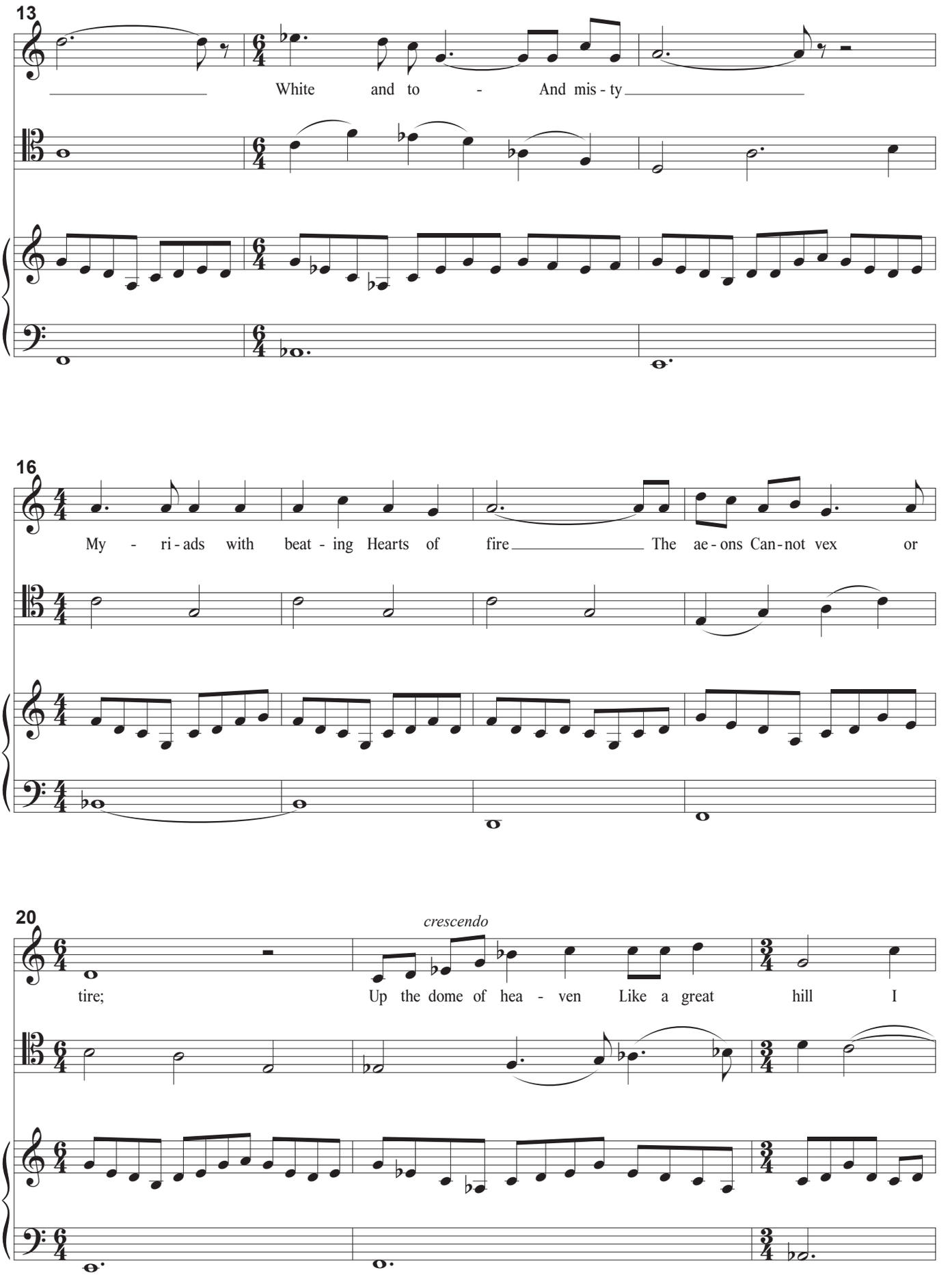

13
How can I sleep, while all a - round Floats rain - y frag - rance and the
17
far Deep voice of the o - cean that talks to the ground?
21
ritard.
a tempo
mf
diminuendo
mf

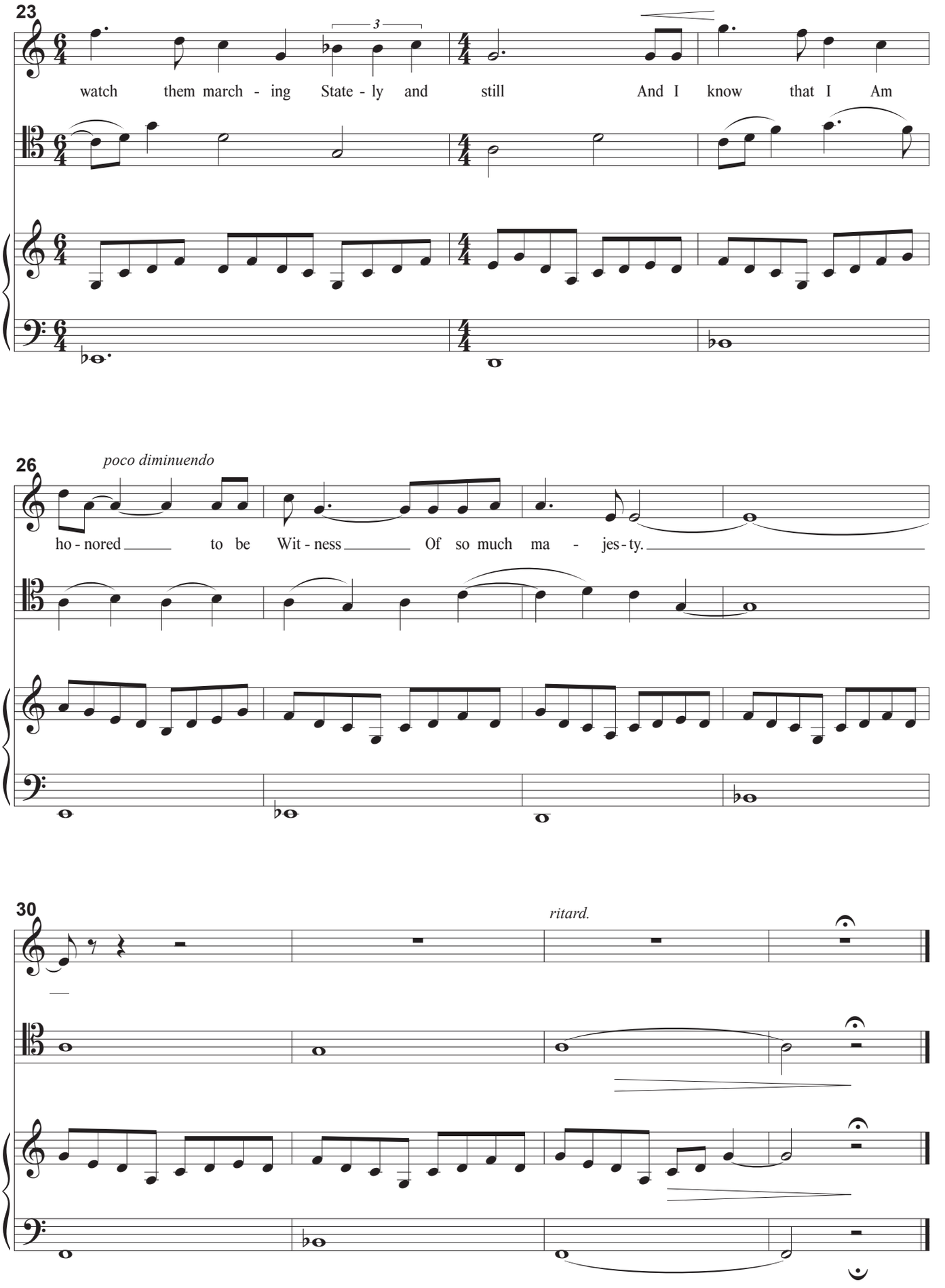

25
mf
Oh Earth, you gave me all I have,
29
I love you, I love you, oh
33
what have I That I can give you in re - turn Ex - cept my


37
bo - dy af - ter I die?
41
ritard. al fine
diminuendo
diminuendo

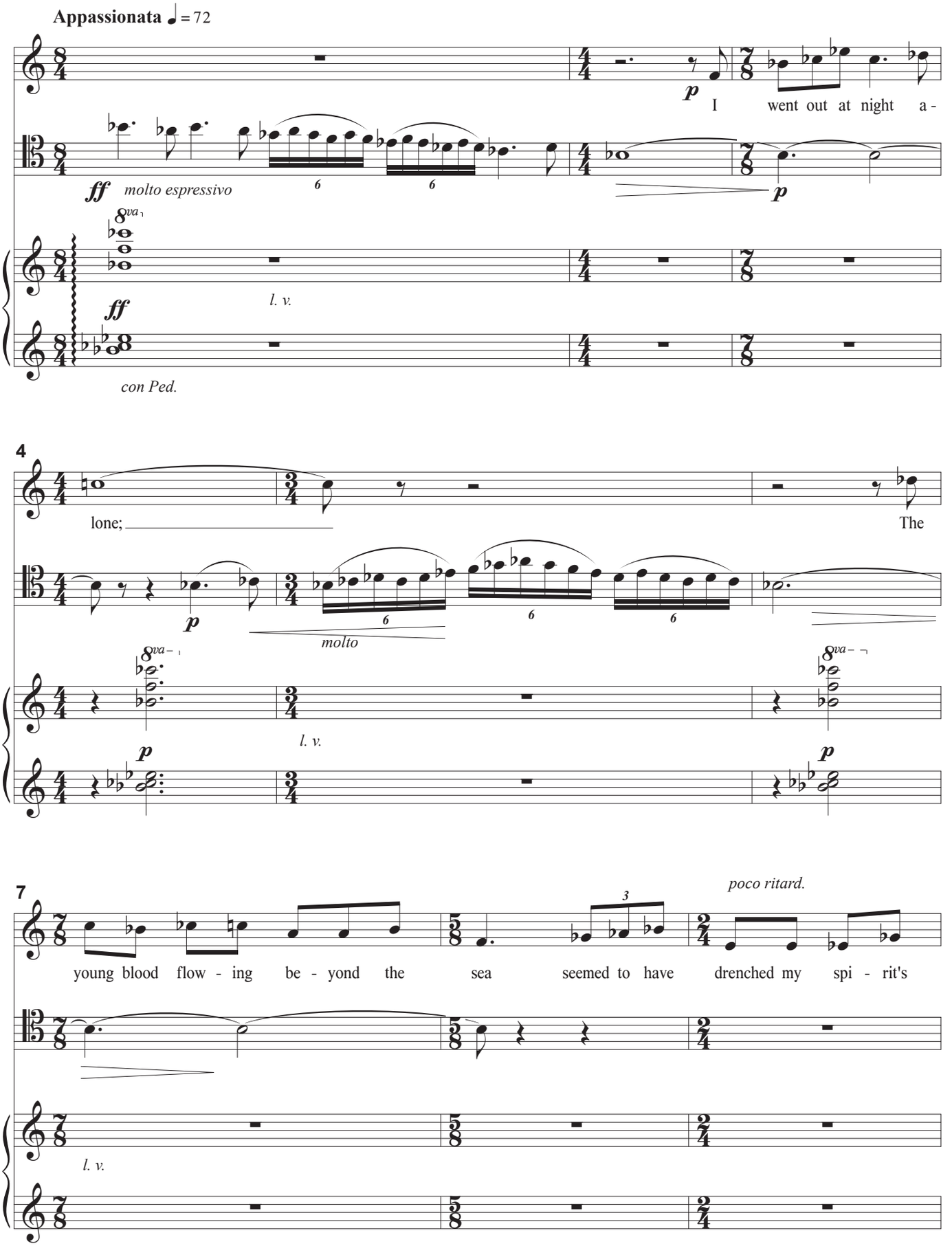
VI. Stars

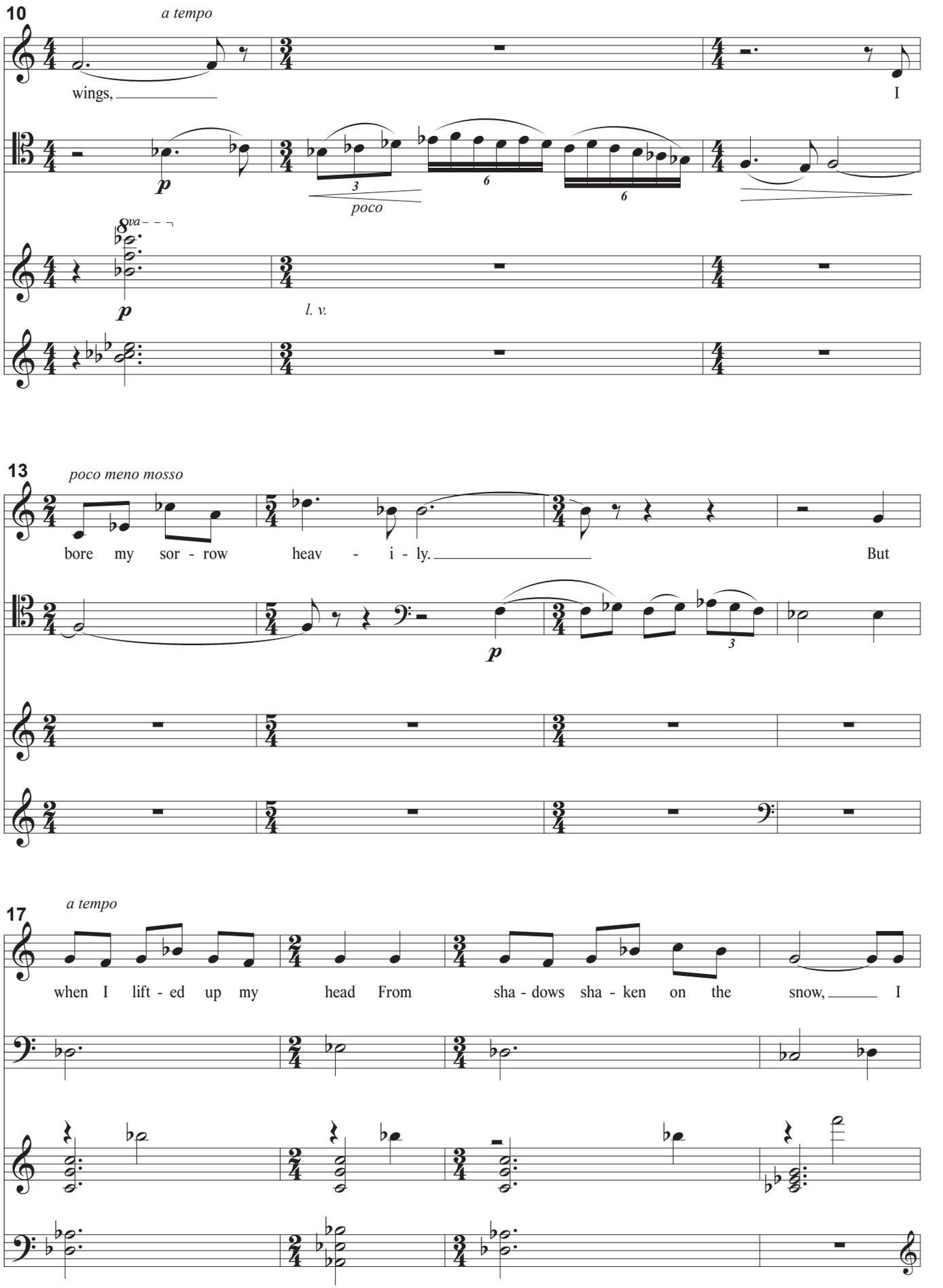

In wonder ♩ = 62
p
A - lone in the night On a
p sempre
p sempre
con Ped.
5
dark hill With pines a - round me Spi - cey and still.
3
9
And a hea - ven full of stars O - ver my
3

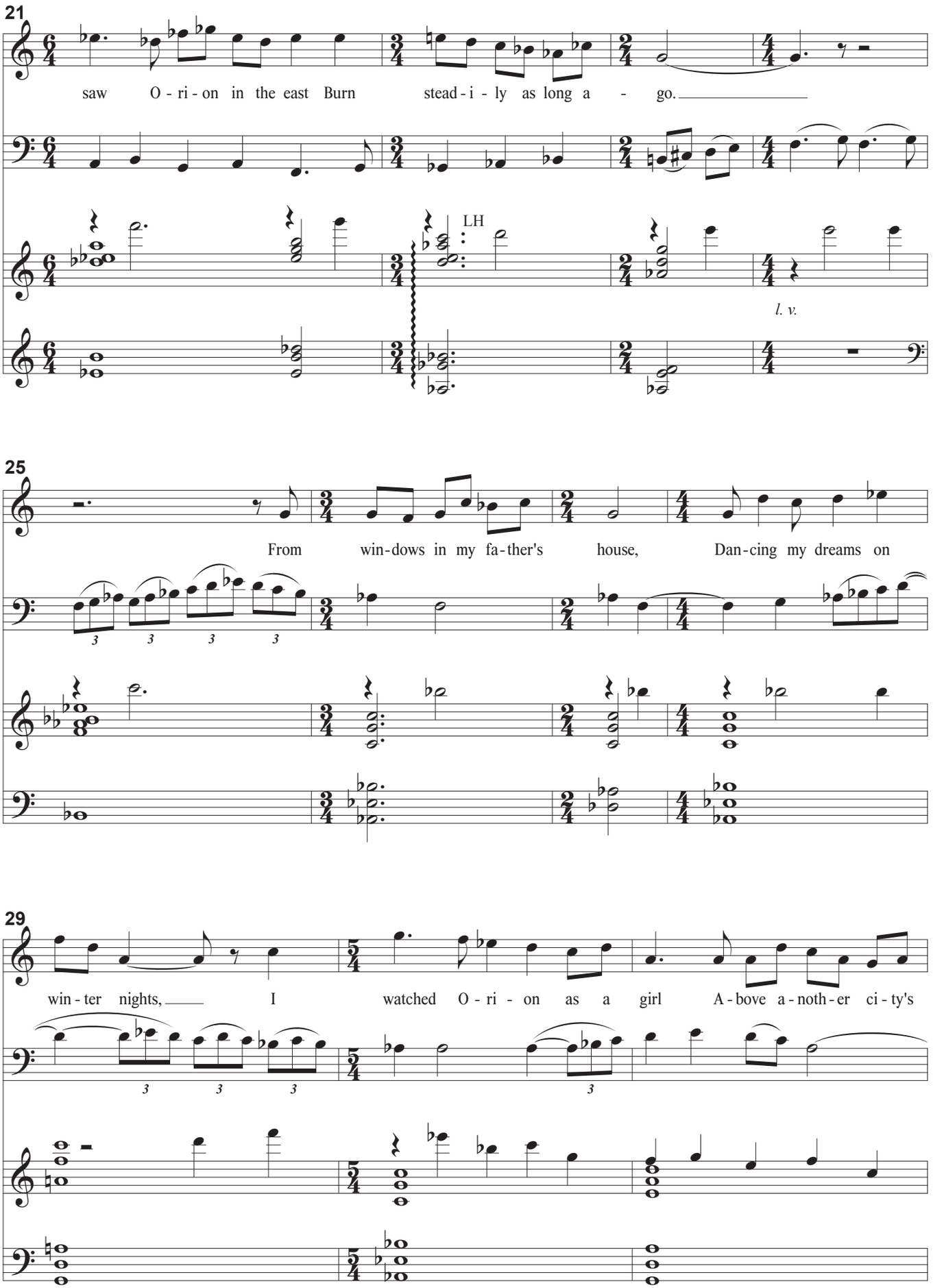

13
White and to - And mis - ty
16
My - ri - ads with beat - ing Hearts of fire The ae - ons Can - not vex or
20
crescendo
tire; Up the dome of hea - ven Like a great hill I

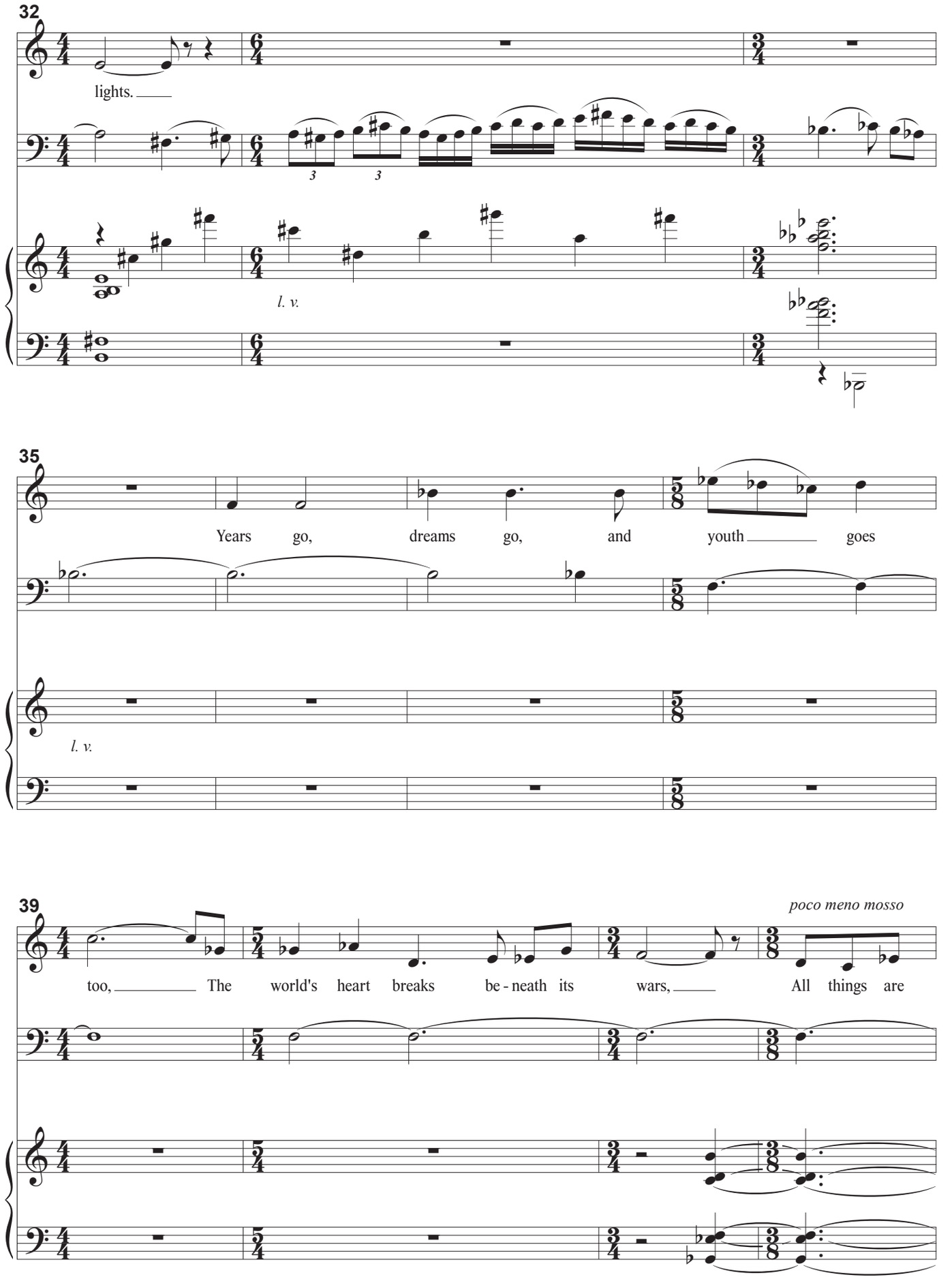

23
watch them march - ing State - ly and still And I know that I Am
26
poco diminuendo
ho - nored to be Wit - ness Of so much ma - jes - ty.
30
ritard.

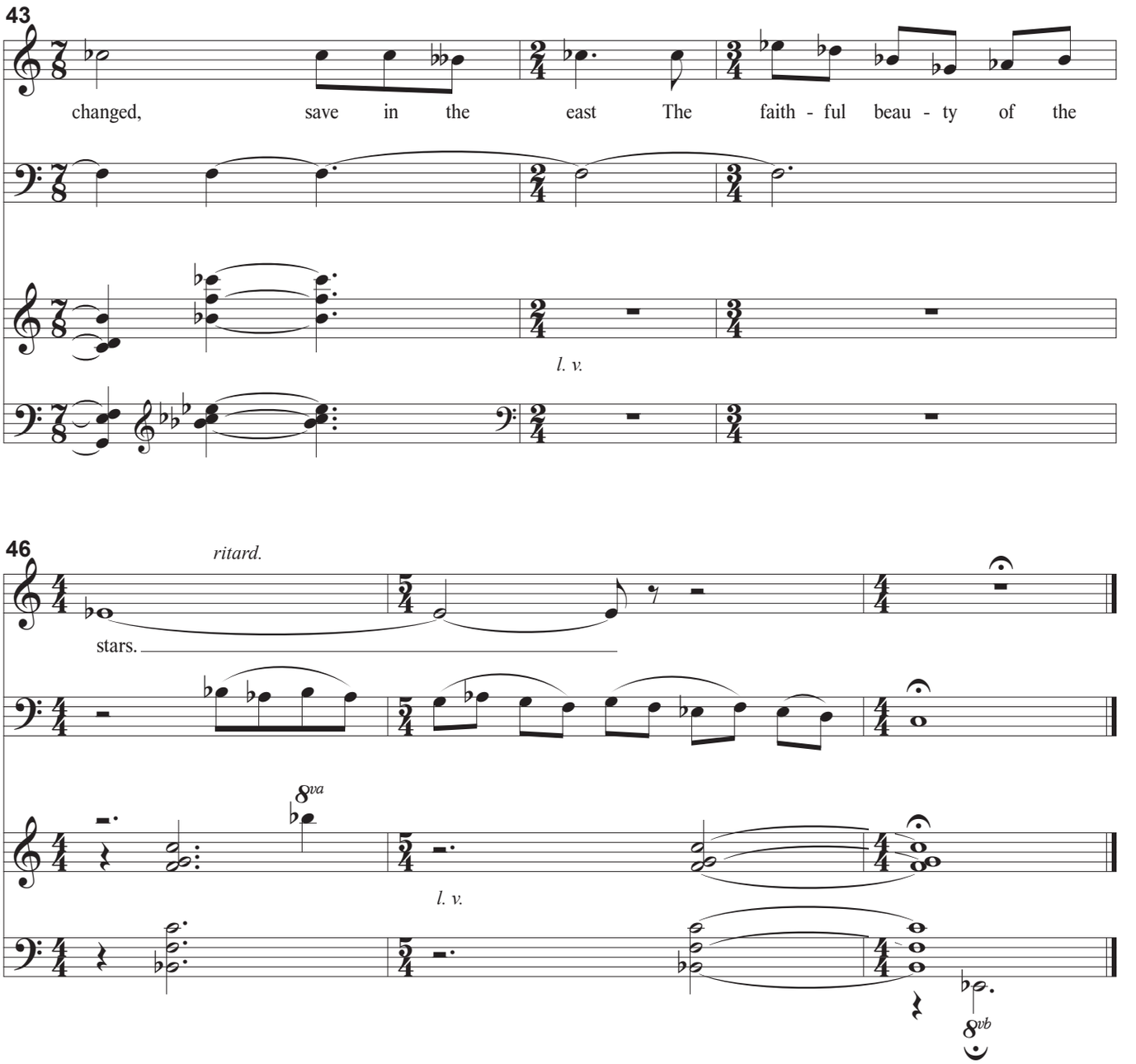
VII. Winter Stars




10
a tempo
wings,
I
p
poco
8va
p
l. v.
13
poco meno mosso
bore my sor - row heav - i - ly.
But
p
17
a tempo
when I lift - ed up my head From sha - dows sha - ken on the snow, I


21
saw O - ri - on in the east Burn stead - i - ly as long a - go.
LH
l. v.
25
From win-dows in my fa-ther's house, Dan-cing my dreams on
29
win - ter nights, I watched O - ri - on as a girl A - bove a - noth - er ci - ty's


32
lights.
l. v.
35
Years go, dreams go, and youth goes
l. v.
39
poco meno mosso
too, The world's heart breaks be - neath its wars, All things are


43
changed, save in the east The faith - ful beau - ty of the
l. v.
46
ritard.
stars.
8va
l. v.
8vb

April, 2018

John Newell

Composer John Newell draws from a variety of musical traditions. His objective is to create works that reflect his personal sensibility, and that are inspiring and rewarding for performers and listeners alike. John's works have long been noted for their originality, clarity and a lyrical expressivity. He is equally at home composing for orchestra, solo instruments, vocal ensembles and chamber groups.

Born in Charlotte, North Carolina, John graduated from Duke University, having pursued studies in composition, piano and conducting. He earned his M.F.A from California Institute of the Arts, where his primary teacher was Mel Powell. John completed his formal training at SUNY Buffalo, working with Morton Feldman as recipient of the first Edgard Varèse Fellowship. Since earning his Ph.D. in 1979 he has pursued an independent creative path.

Organizations that have commissioned works include Eight Strings & a Whistle, Atlantic Sinfonietta and Bowery Ensemble (New York), Monday Evening Concerts (Los Angeles), Enid Symphony Orchestra (Oklahoma), Resinosa Ensemble and Passamaquoddy Bay Symphony Orchestra (Maine).

His work has received support from the American Music Center, the Massachusetts Cultural Council and Meet the Composer. John's works are self-published through Abierto Music and he is a member of Broadcast Music Inc. More information is available at his web site: johnnewellmusic.com.

An accomplished pianist and conductor, John is experienced in collaborating with performers to create and present new works. He lives in Eastport, Maine; he is on the faculty of the Summerkeys program and founding director of the choral ensemble *Quoddy Voices*.

John Newell

Selected Solo and Chamber Works

Night Songs mezzo-soprano, 'cello, piano

Summer Music flute, oboe, 'cello

Fantasy viola, 'cello, piano

In Autumn violin, piano

…and nothing remains the same. flute, viola, 'cello

Three Preludes flute

A Day's Journey string quartet

Variations on Amazing Grace piano

Sequoia Quintet flute/piccolo, clarinet, oboe, horn, bassoon

Sky Music flute, clarinet, harp

Companions II piano

Song of Compassion 2 violas, keyboard, percussion

Rhapsody horn, piano

Lavender Axes flute/picc, clarinet, oboe/eh, bassoon, percussion, piano

Rondos Eb clarinet, trumpet, trombone, tuba, percussion

Knossos piano

Heterophony alto voices, violin, viola, english horn

Text soprano, violin, flute, clarinet, guitar, percussion

Image, Song, Vision flute, clarinet, violin, 'cello

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