THISTLES AND ROSES

for Baritone & Piano

Phillip A. Cooke

THISTLES AND ROSES

for Baritone & Piano

(2019)

First performed by Jeremy Huw Williams in November 2019

For Ross Cumming with all best wishes.

Duration: 9 minutes

Cover photograph: www.scottish-at-heart.com

For more information: www.phillipcooke.com

PROGRAMME NOTE

Thistles and Roses is a setting of three songs to texts by Scottish poet Iain Crichton Smith (1928-1998) taken from his 1961 collection of the same name. Smith's poems are bleak, but humorous and highlight many of the injustices faced by Scotland over the centuries and seeks to admonish many of those individuals who may have contributed to the nation's misfortunes. The poems are not always the easiest to set to music, but there is a drama and a power in the words that drew me to attempting to make something musically appropriate and coherent that would bring something different to these texts.

Like many of my song-cycles, there are three songs: two declamatory, recitative-style pieces bookend a more melodic and humorous middle movement. The opening song 'John Knox' is built entirely of the 'bells jangles in St Andrew's town' that Smith describes, bells are present throughout in all registers of the piano (tolling a tritone or seventh) and pervade the movements that follow. The second song 'At a Céilidh' seeks to enhance Smith's stark portrayal of this musical event and the inimitable 'Miss M.'. The final song 'Culloden and After' is a desensitised take on one of the most emotive events in modern Scottish history, with a rapid-fire delivery from the baritone alternating with much more melancholy (and famous) musical material.

Each song features a musical quotation from an extant work to create another layer of musical argument, similar to how Smith layers his poetry with different meanings and characters. The first song features snippets of plainchant, the second a famous jig and the final song a Scottish ballad known the world over.

PAC

© Phillip A. Cooke (2019)

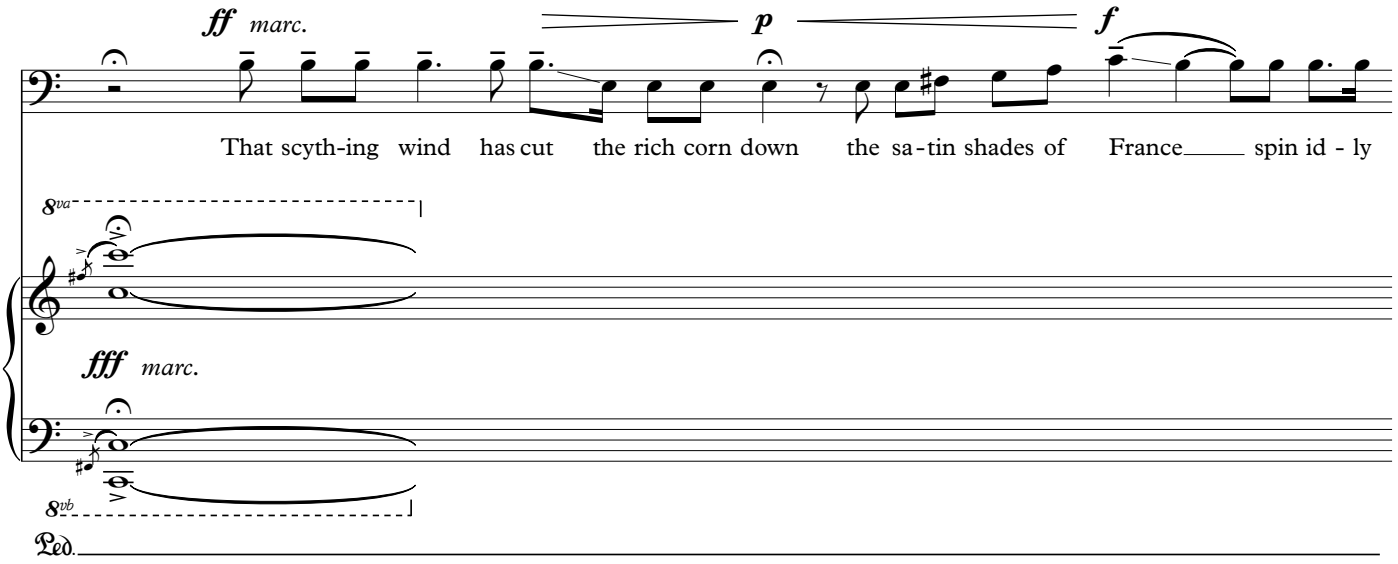
for Ross Cumming, with all best wishes

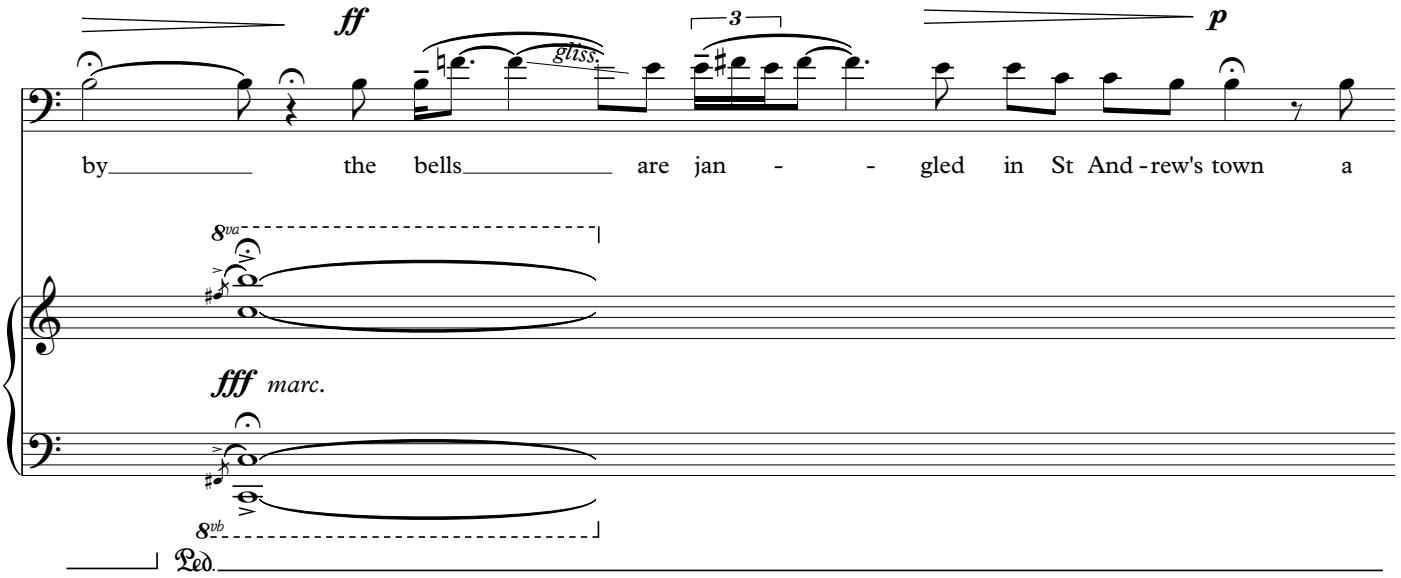
THISTLES AND ROSES

IAIN CRICHTON SMITH — Three Songs for Baritone and Piano — **PHILLIP A. COOKE (2019)**

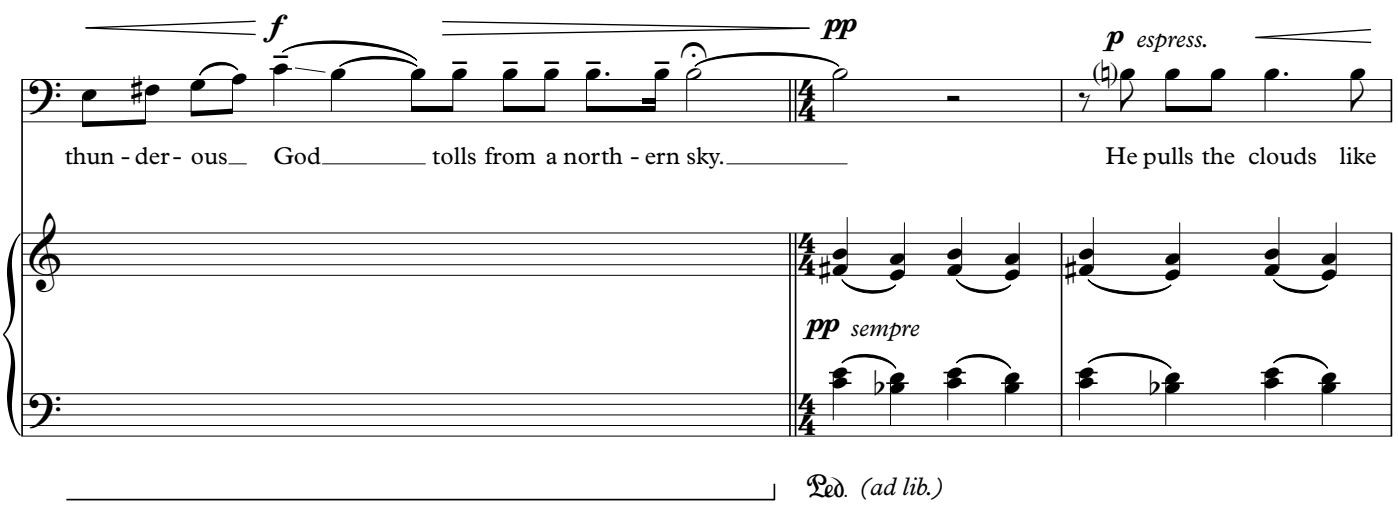
John Knox

Drammatico e furioso (senza misura) (♩=c.72)

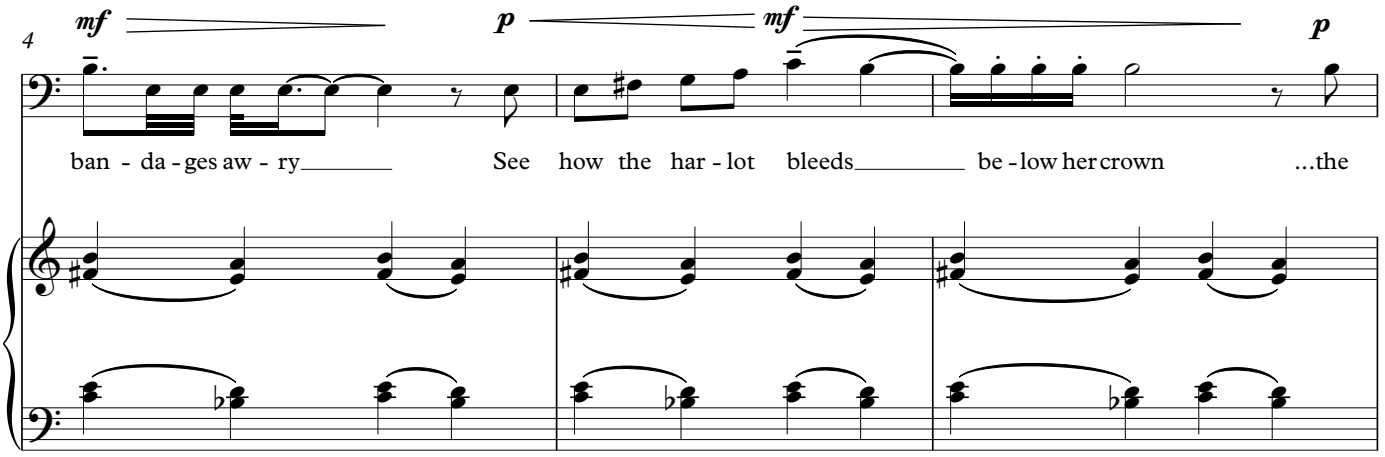


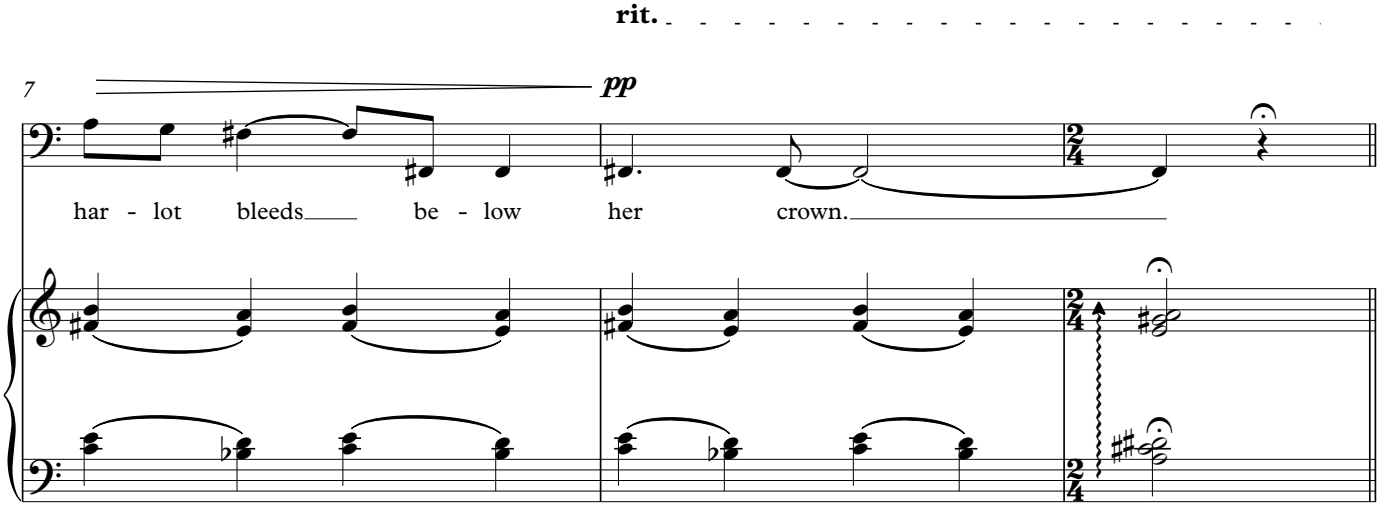


rit. - - - - - - - - - - - - **Sostenuto** (♩=c.56)

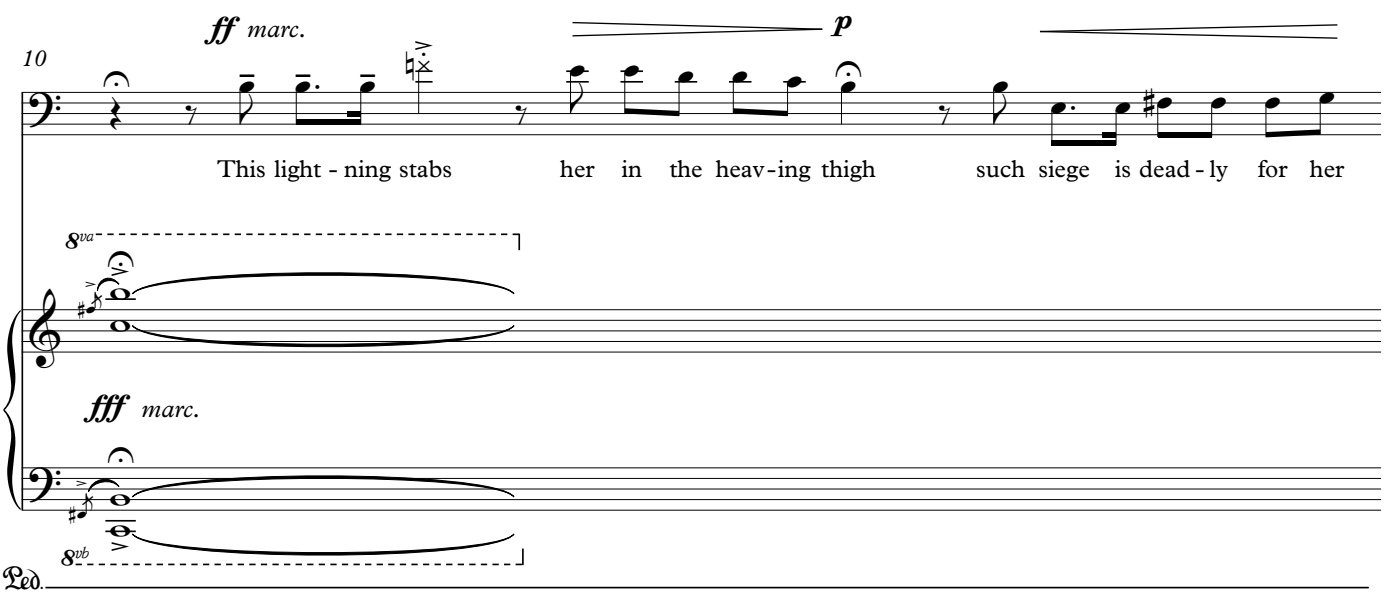


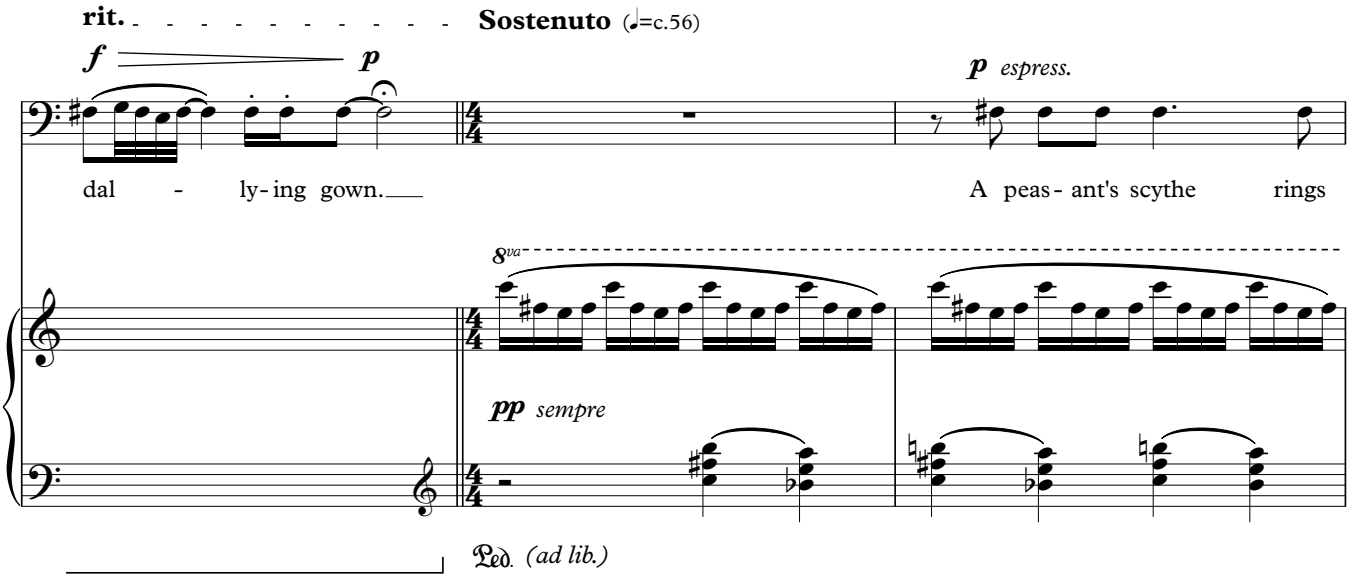
© Phillip A. Cooke 2019 (www.phillipcooke.com)

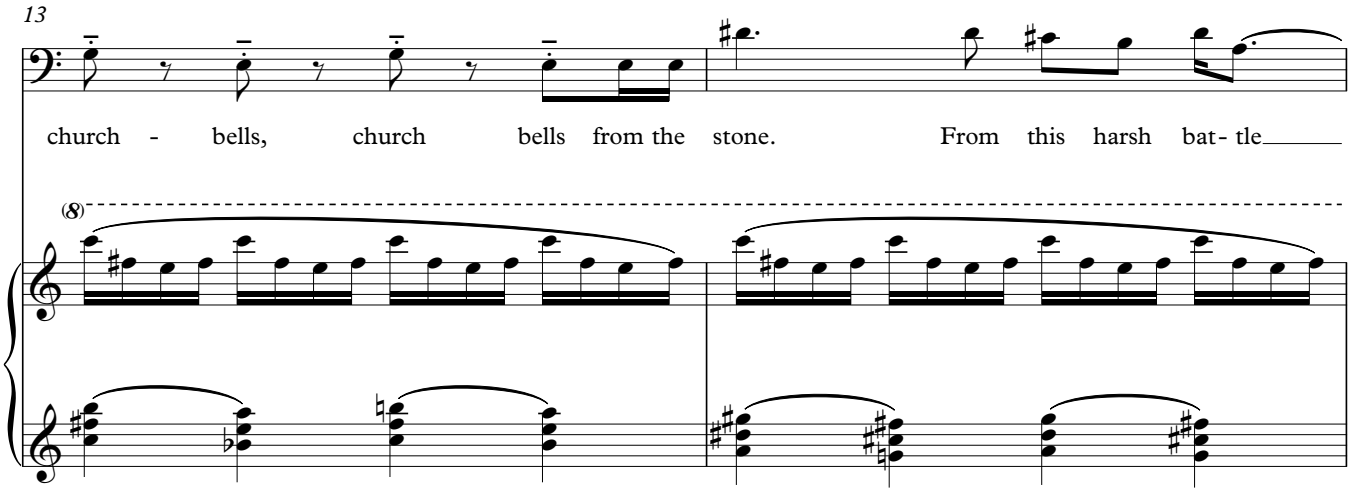


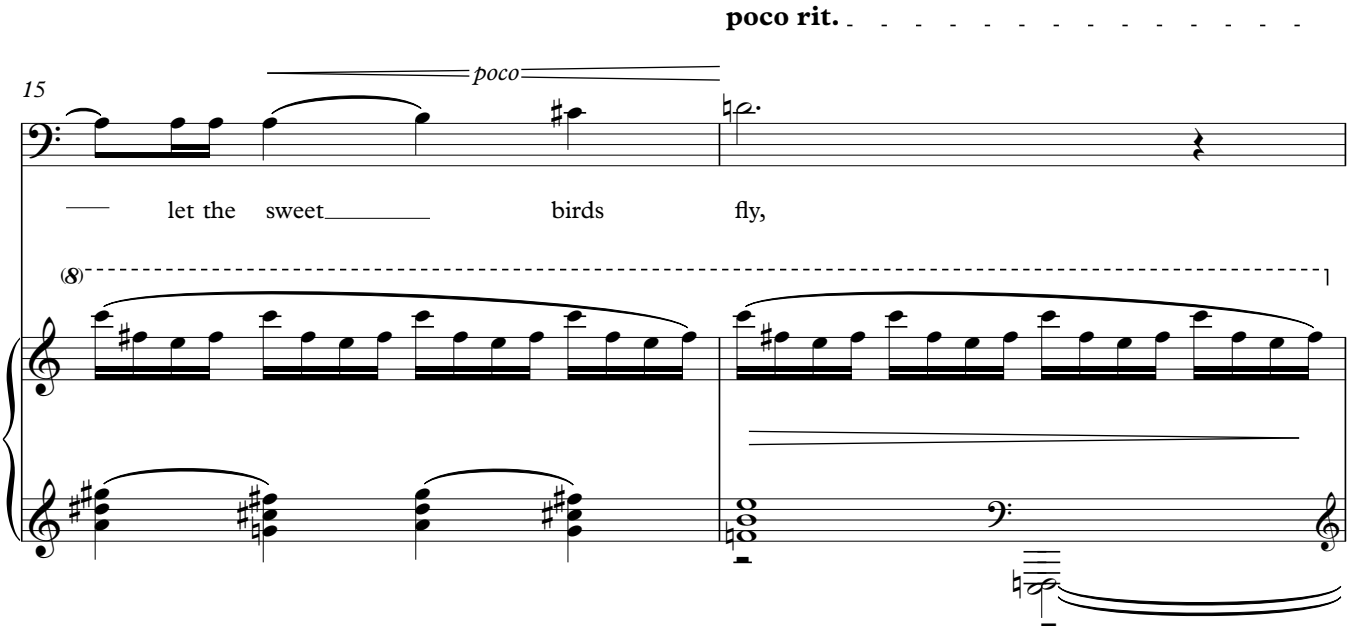


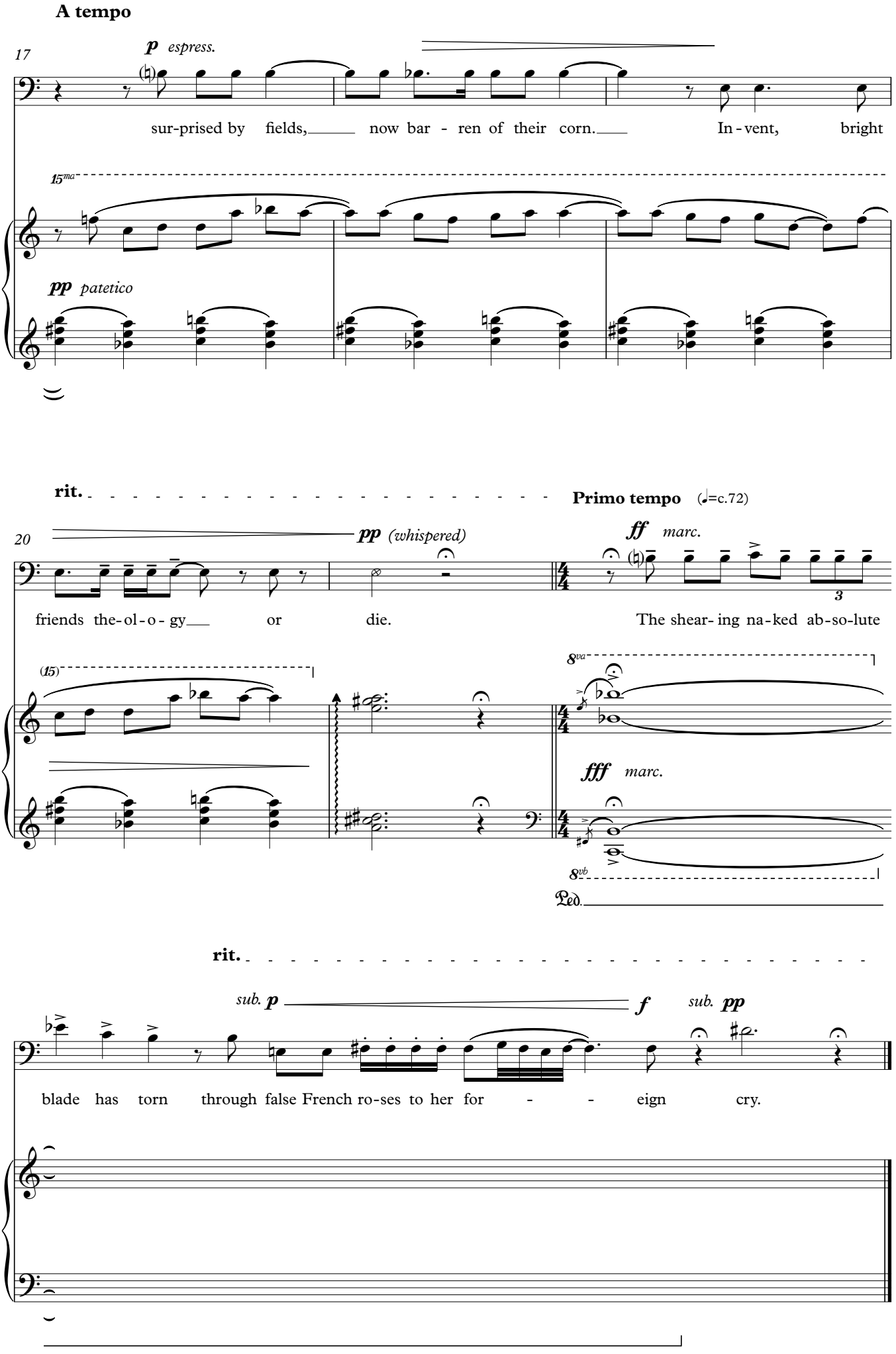
Primo tempo (senza misura) (♩=c.72)



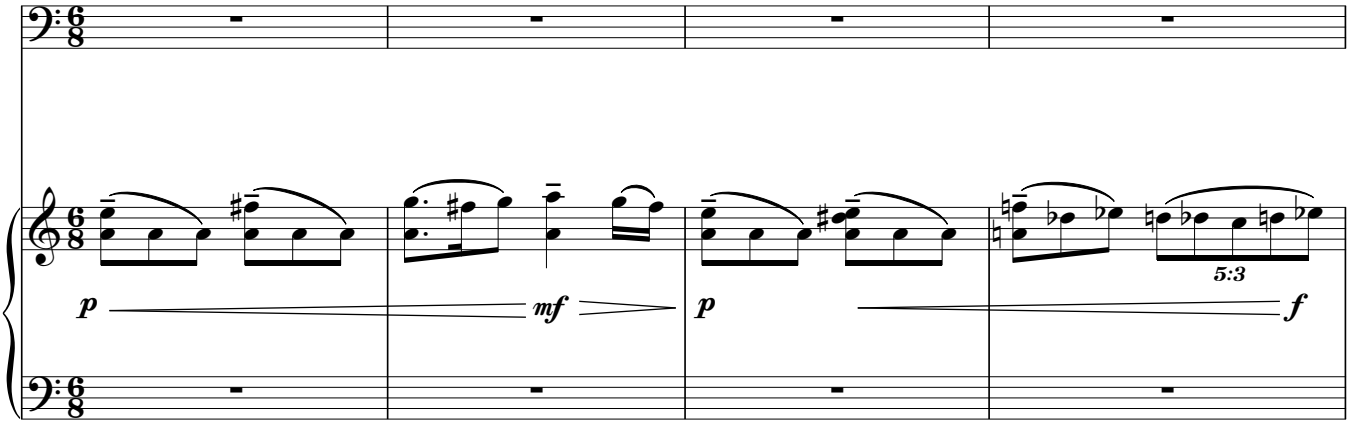

rit.
Sostenuto (♩=c.56)
f
p
p espress.
dal - ly-ing gown.
A peas - ant's scythe rings
8va
pp sempre
Ped. (ad lib.)


13
church - bells, church bells from the stone.
From this harsh bat - tle
(8)


poco rit.
poco
15
let the sweet
birds fly,
(8)


A tempo
17
p espress.
sur-prised by fields, now bar - ren of their corn. In - vent, bright
15ma
pp patetico
rit.
Primo tempo (♩=c.72)
20
pp (whispered)
ff marc.
friends the-ol-o-gy or die. The shear-ing na-ked ab-so-lute
3
(15)
8va
fff marc.
8vb
Ped.
rit.
sub. p
f
sub. pp
blade has torn through false French ro-ses to her for - - eign cry.

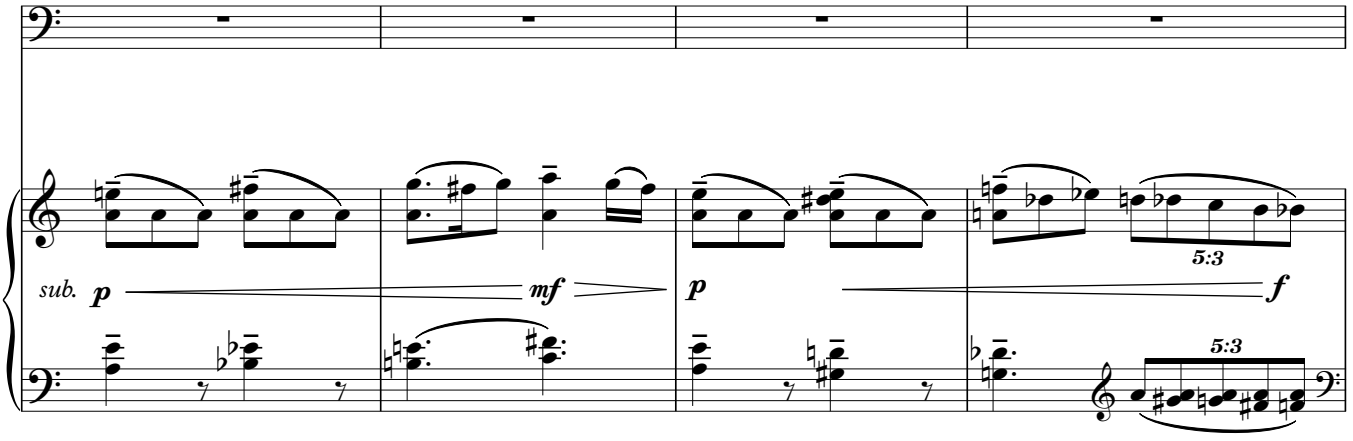
Andante con spirito (♩.=c.72)



Ped. *(ad lib.)*

rit.

5

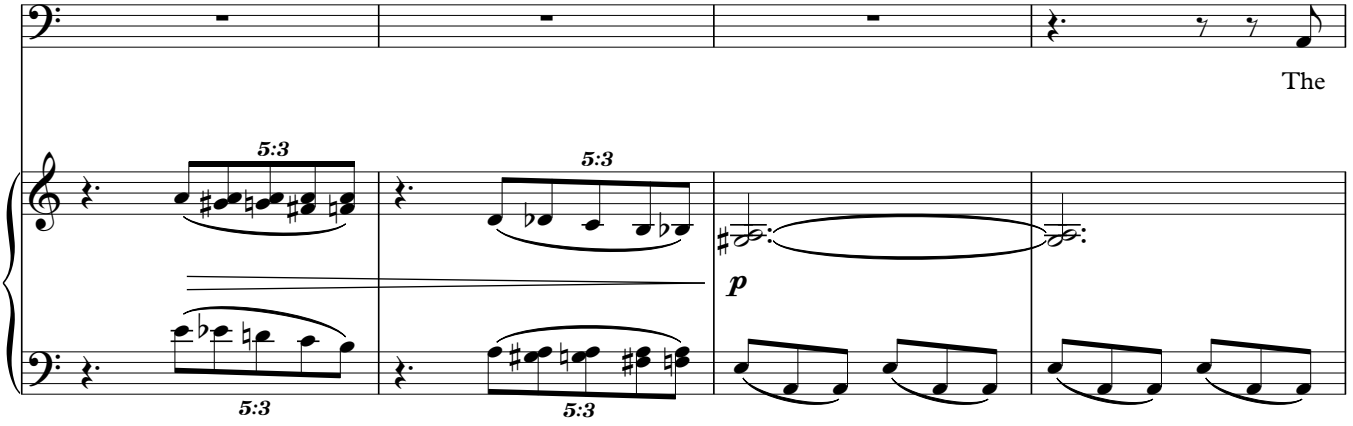


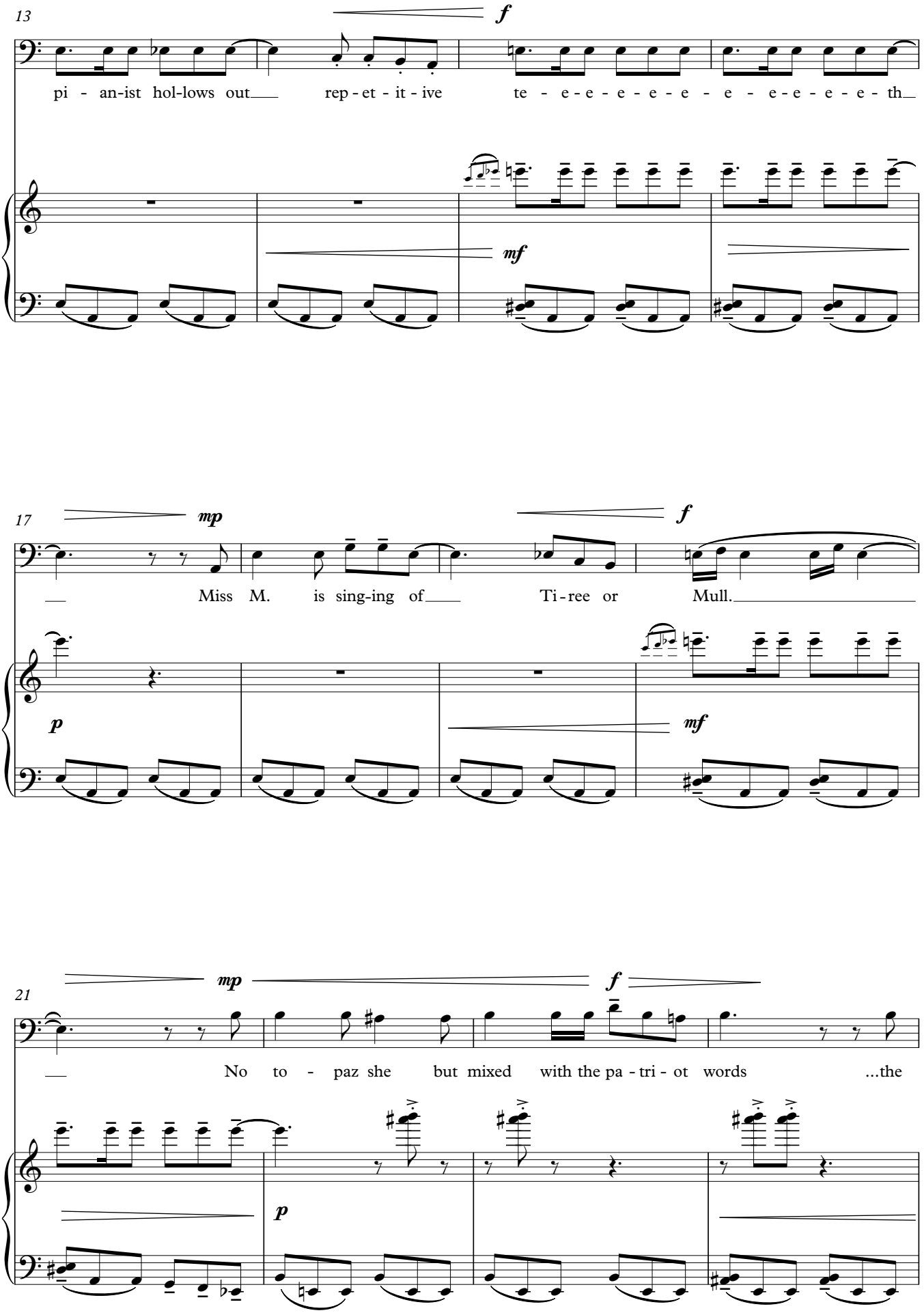
A tempo

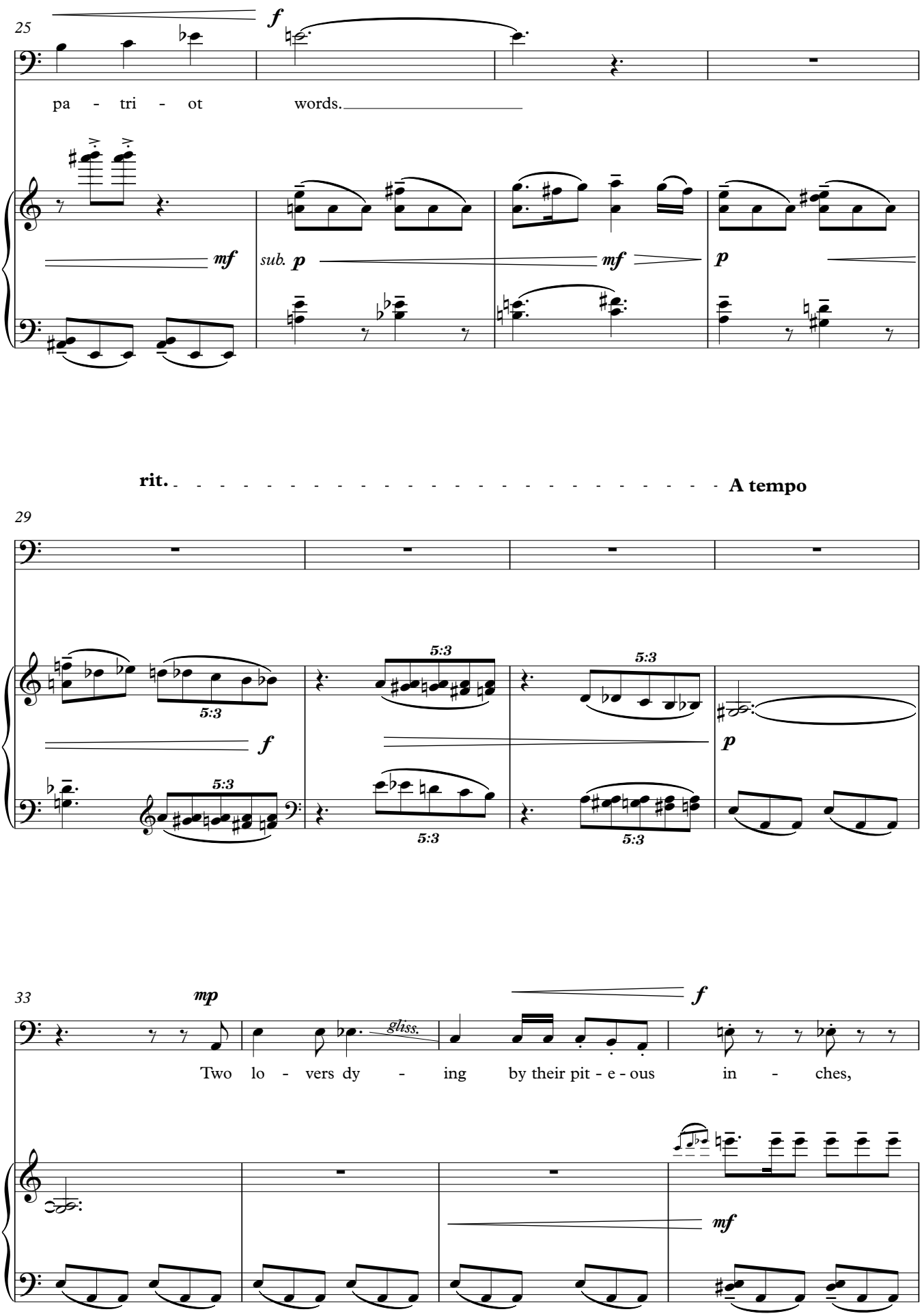
9

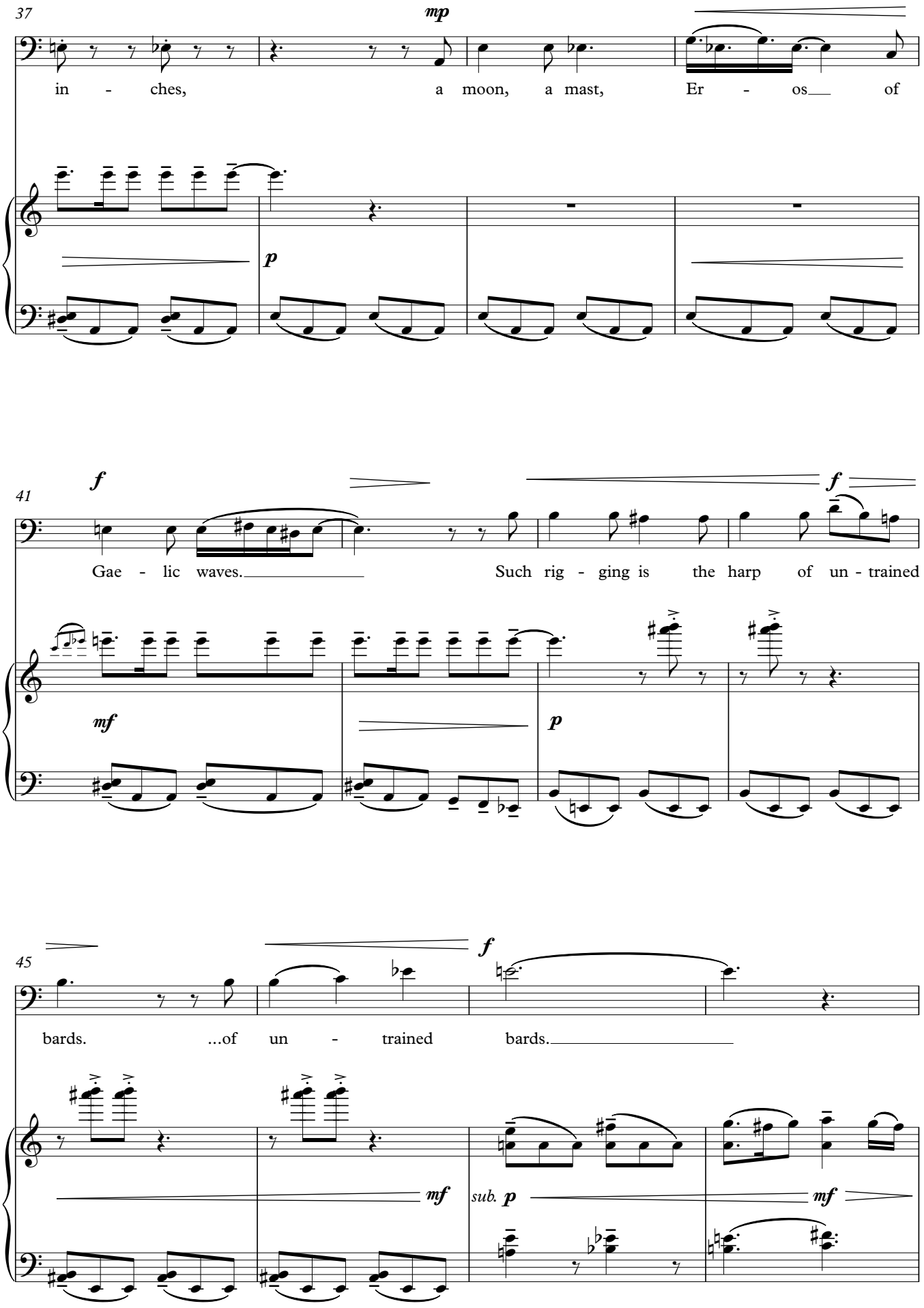
mp

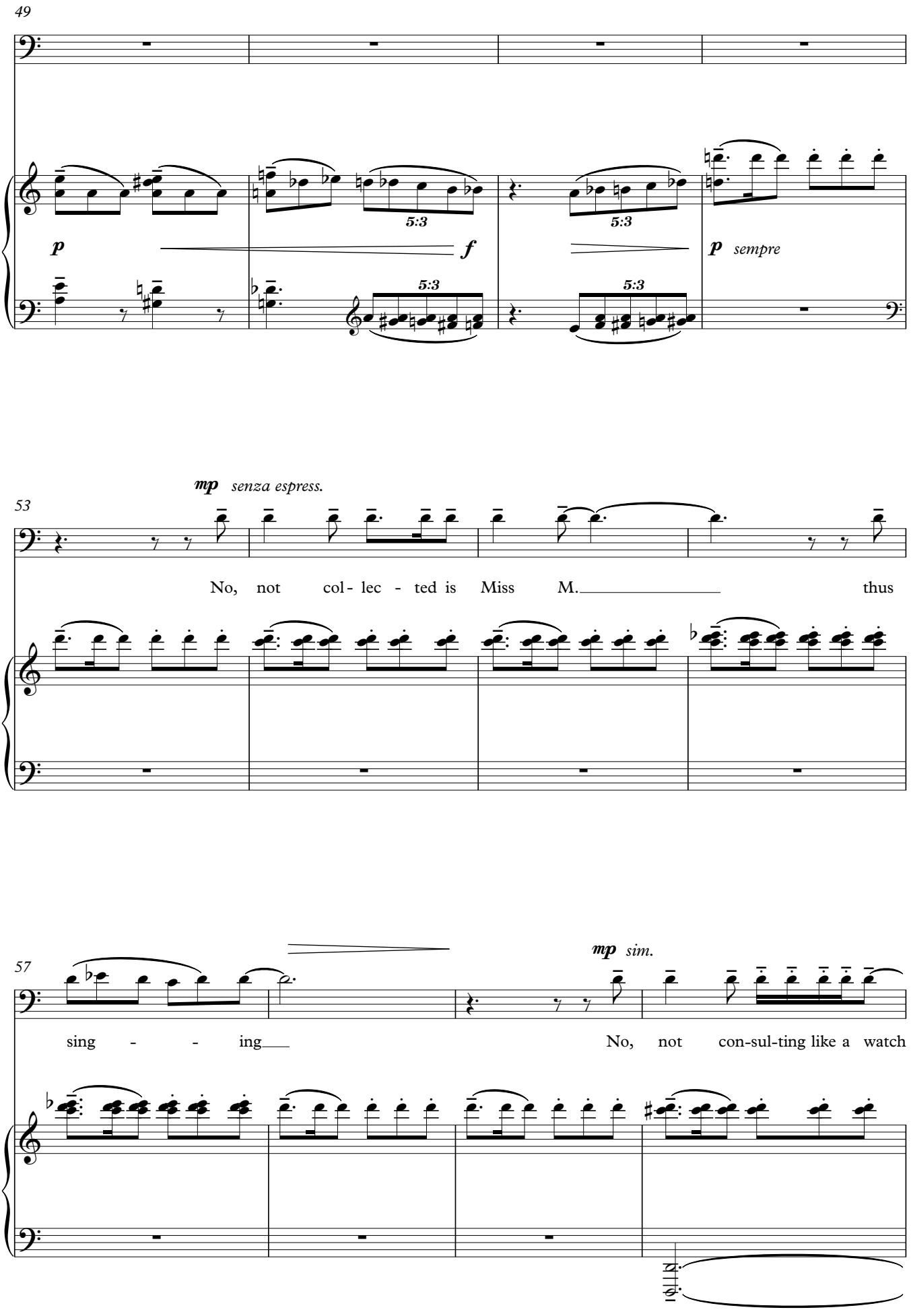
The

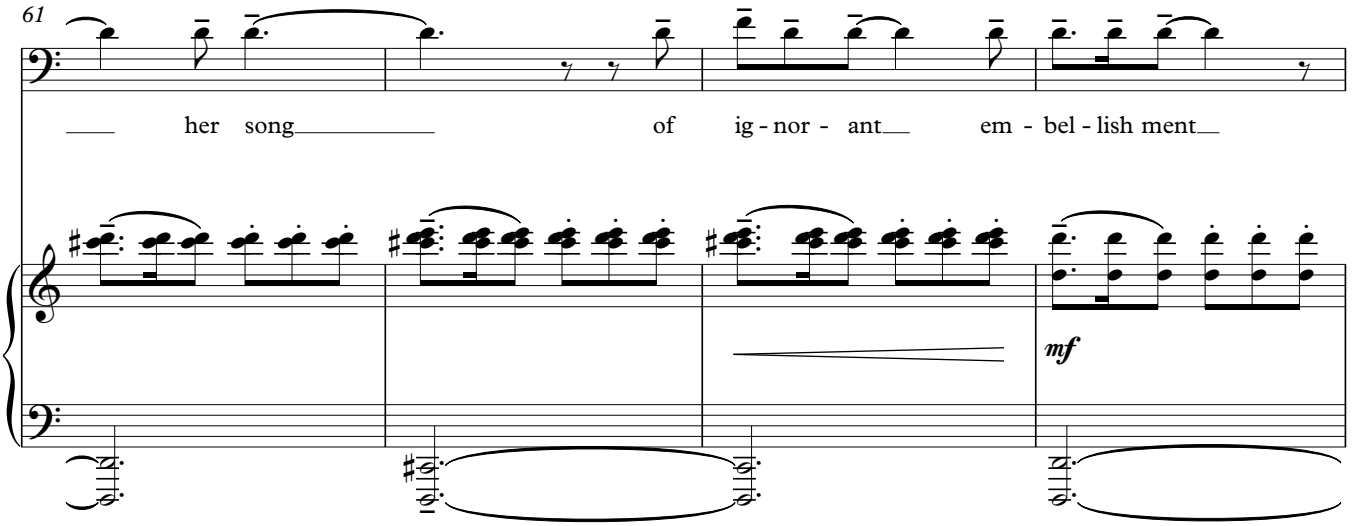



13
f
pi - an-ist hol-lows out rep - et - it - ive te - e - e - e - e - e - e - e - e - e - e - th
mf
17
mp
f
Miss M. is sing-ing of Ti - ree or Mull.
p
mf
21
mp
f
No to - paz she but mixed with the pa - tri - ot words ...the
p

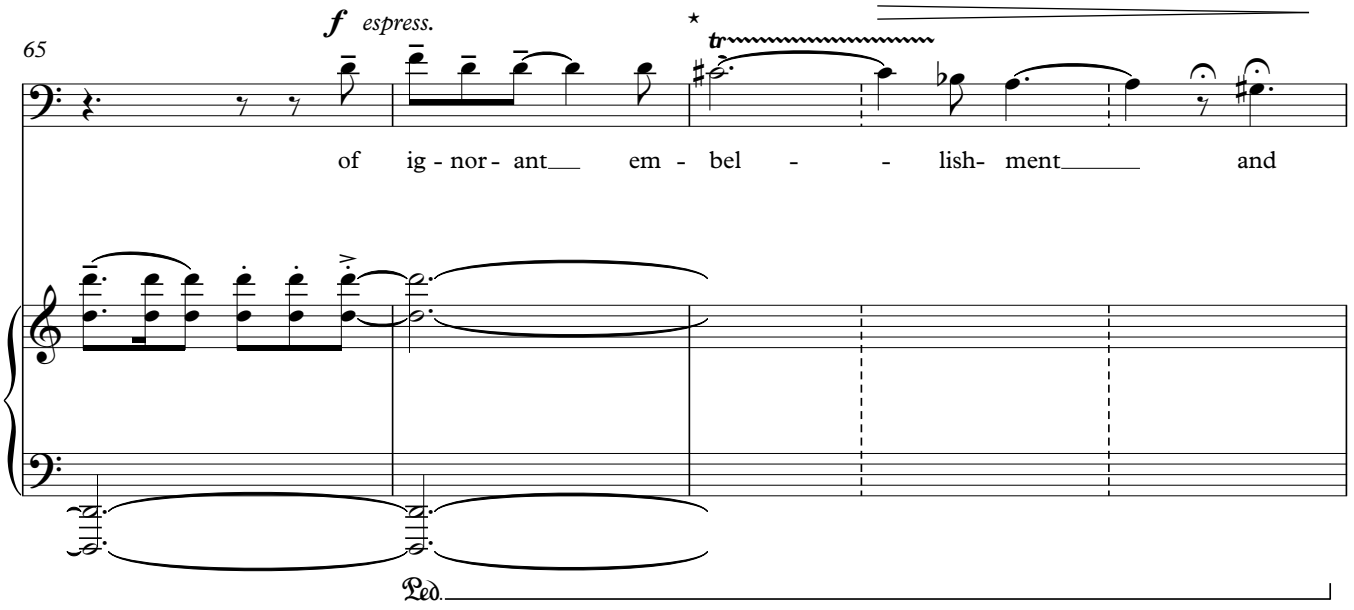

25
f
pa - tri - ot words.
mf
sub. p
mf
p
rit.
A tempo
29
5:3
5:3
5:3
5:3
5:3
f
p
33
mp
gliss.
f
Two lo - vers dy - ing by their pit - e - ous in - ches,
mf


37
mp
in - ches, a moon, a mast, Er - os of
p
41
f
f
Gae - lic waves. Such rig - ging is the harp of un - trained
mf
p
45
f
bards. ...of un - trained bards.
mf
sub. p
mf


49
p
5:3
f
5:3
5:3
p sempre
53
mp senza espress.
No, not col- lec - ted is Miss M. thus
57
mp sim.
sing - - ing
No, not con-sul-ting like a watch

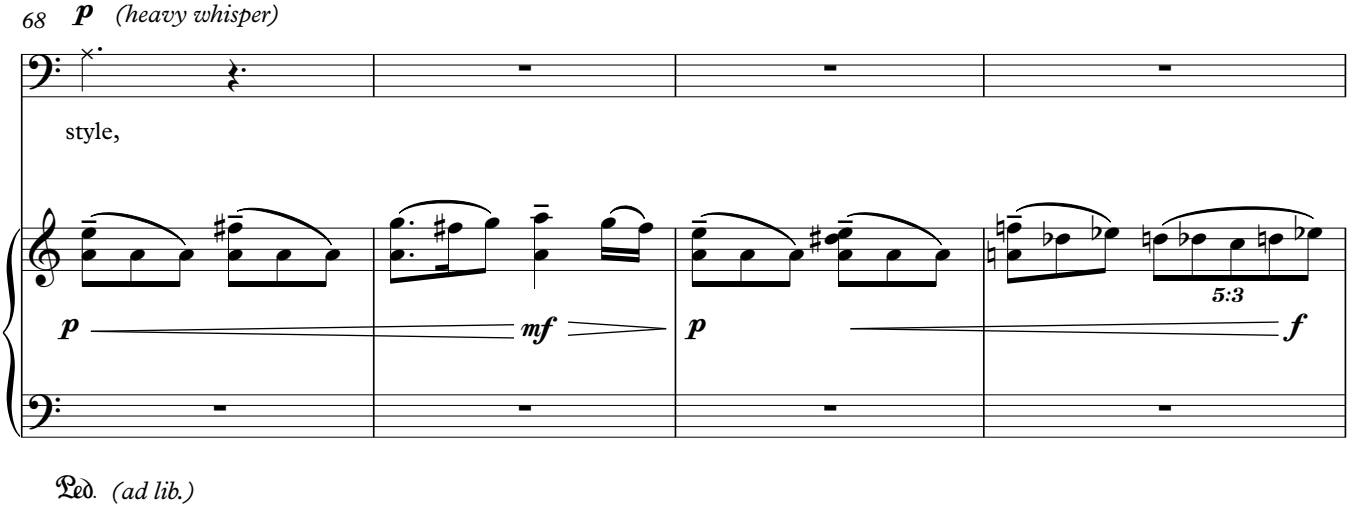


rit.



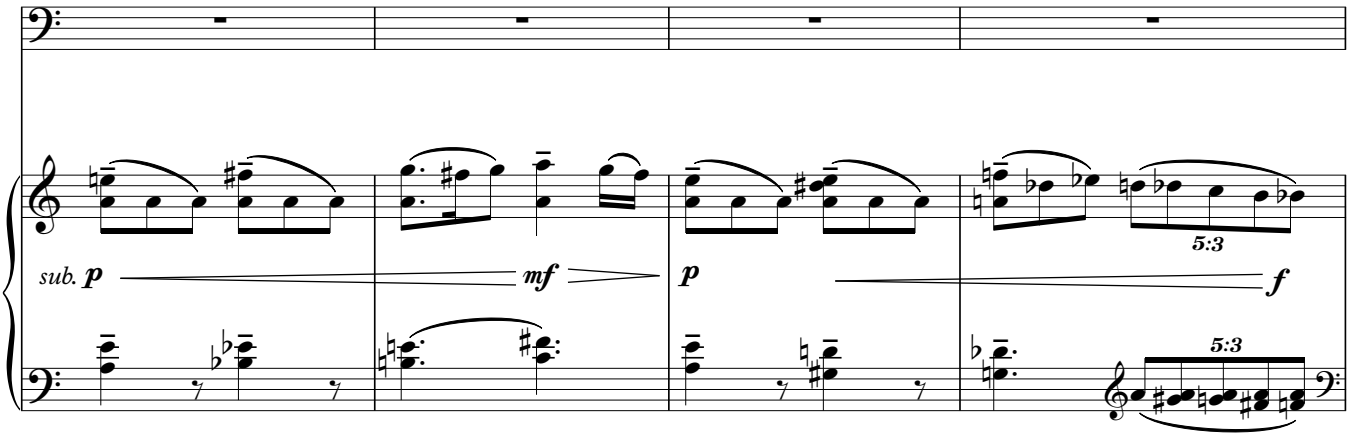
⋆ Freely - make this trill as extravagant as desired

A tempo



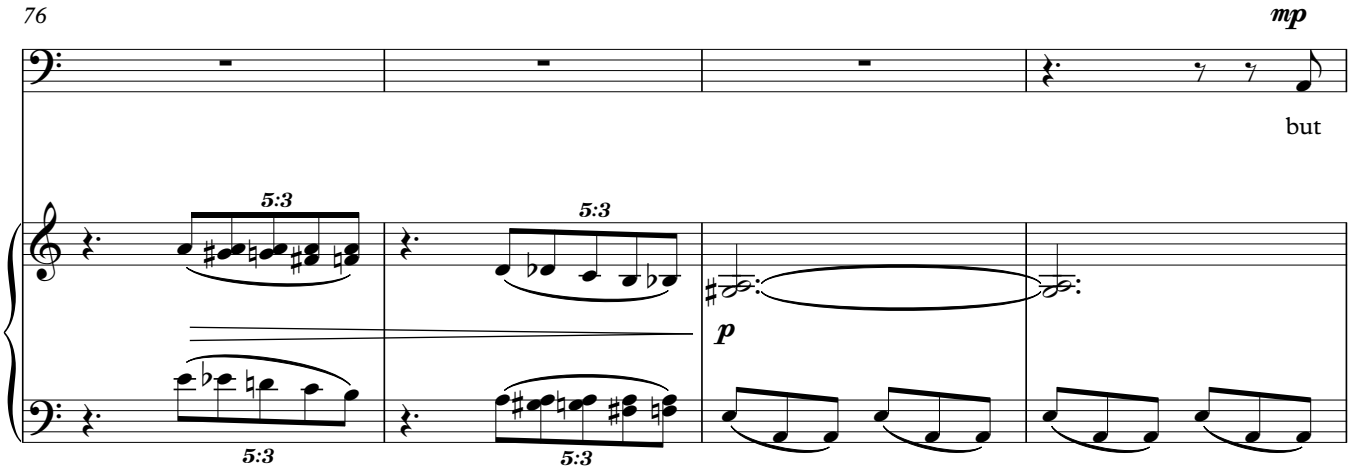
rit.

72

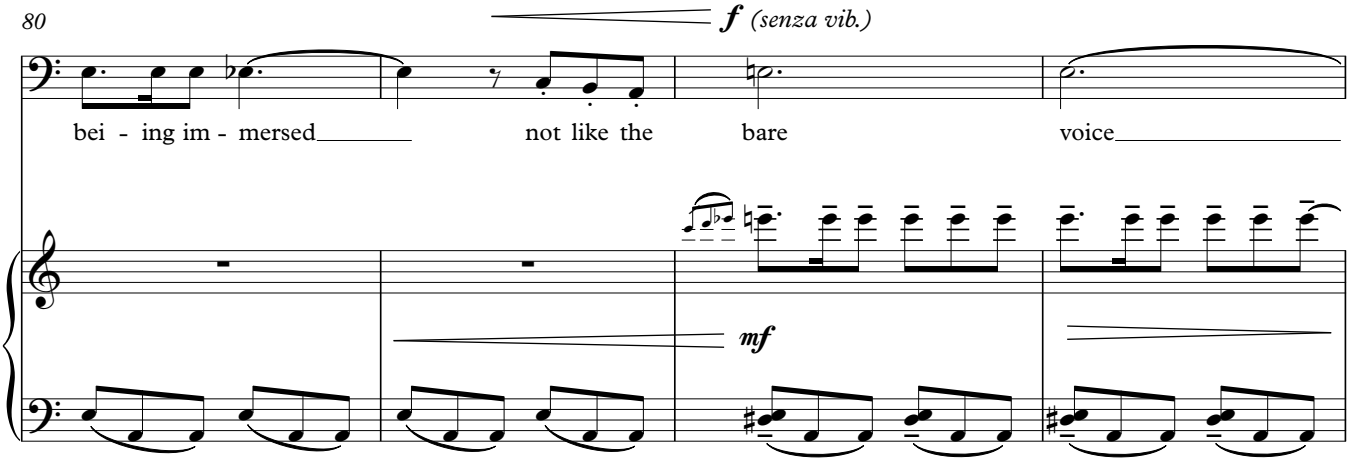


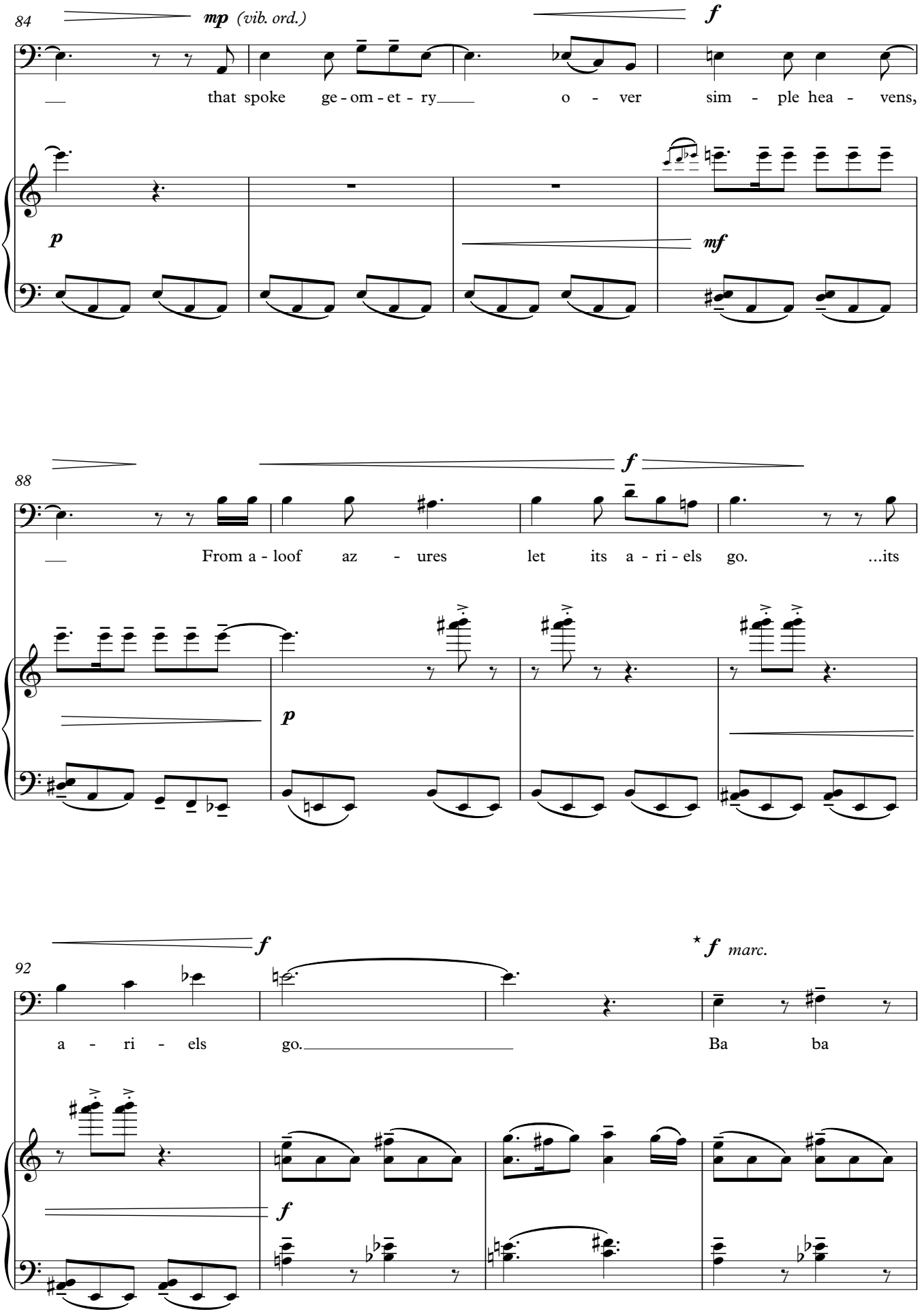
A tempo

76



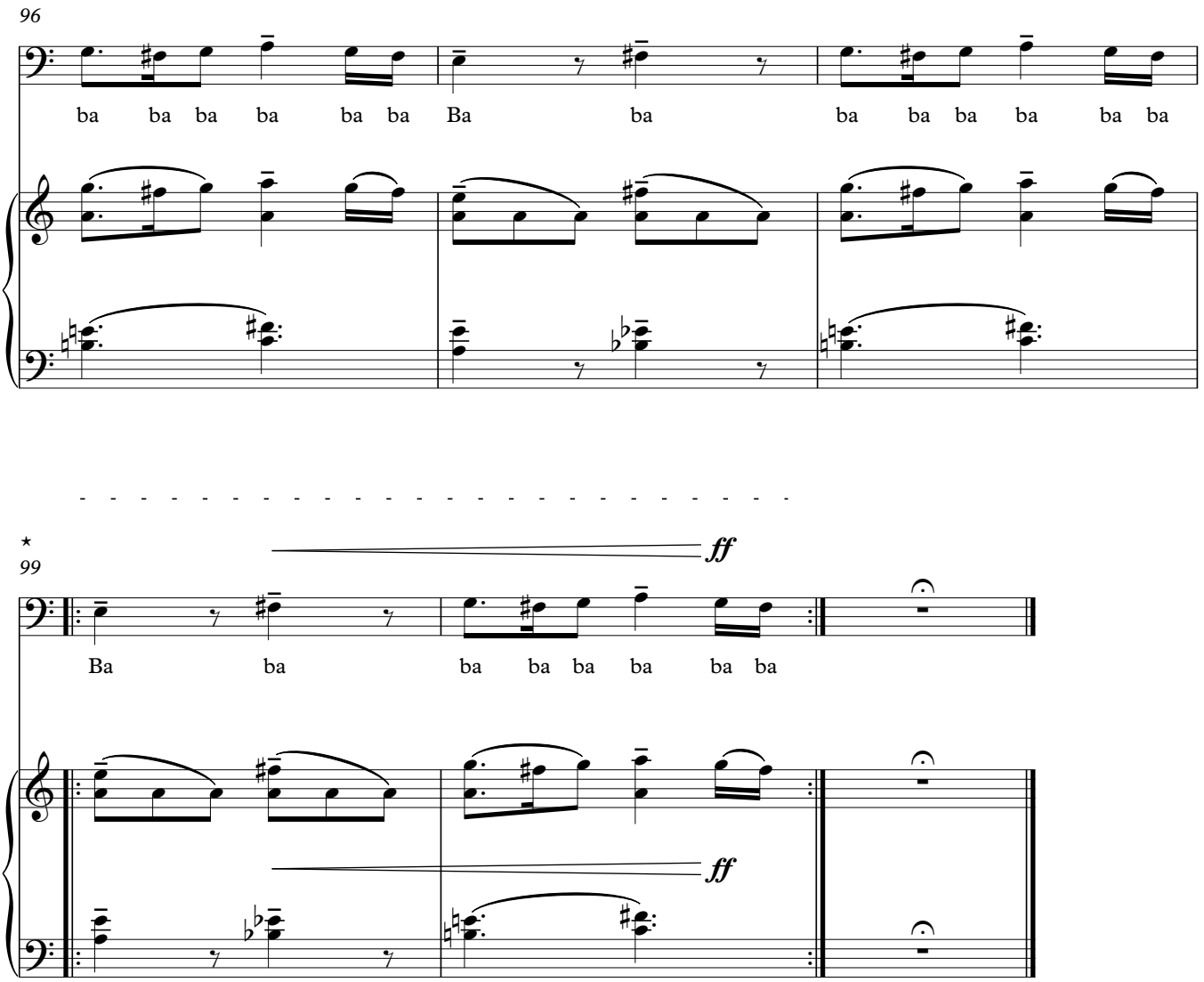
80





* Baritone raucosly imitates accompaniment melody (can stamp foot as well if warranted)

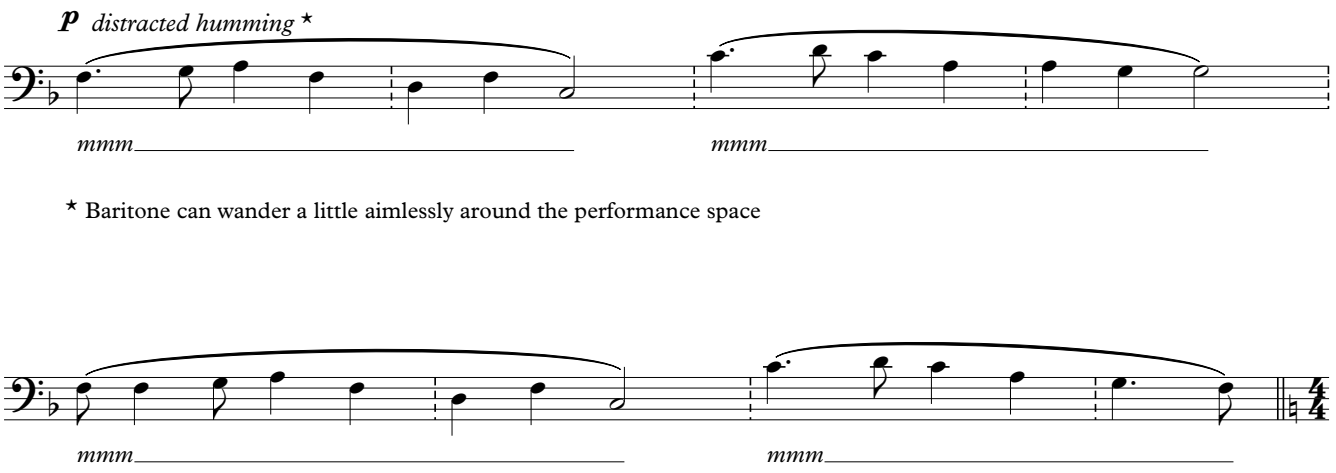
accel.



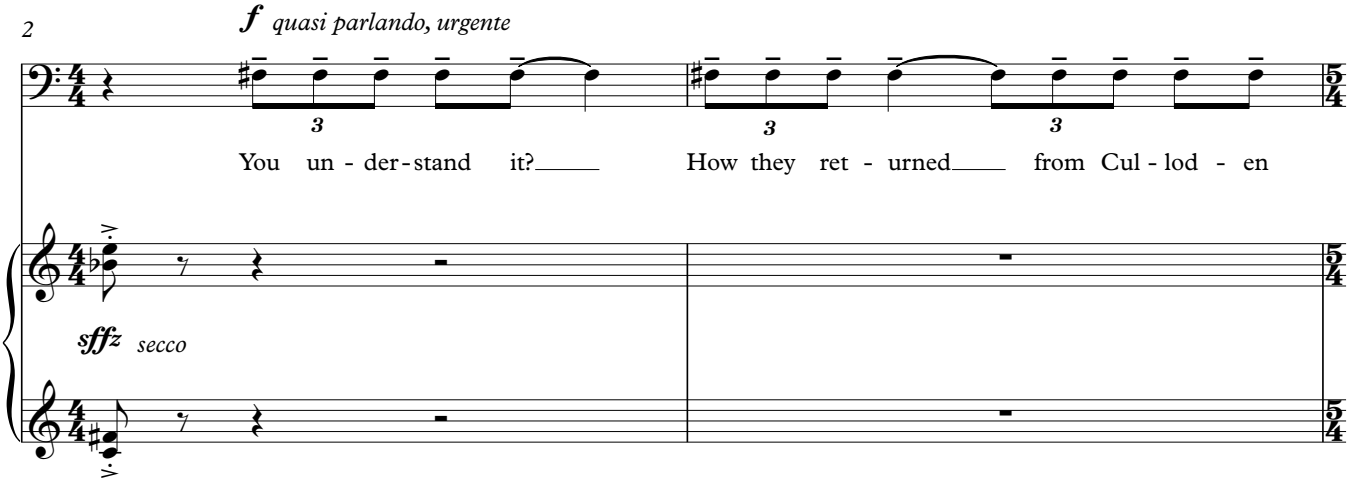
⋆ These bars can be repeated for as long as possible to emphasise the effect

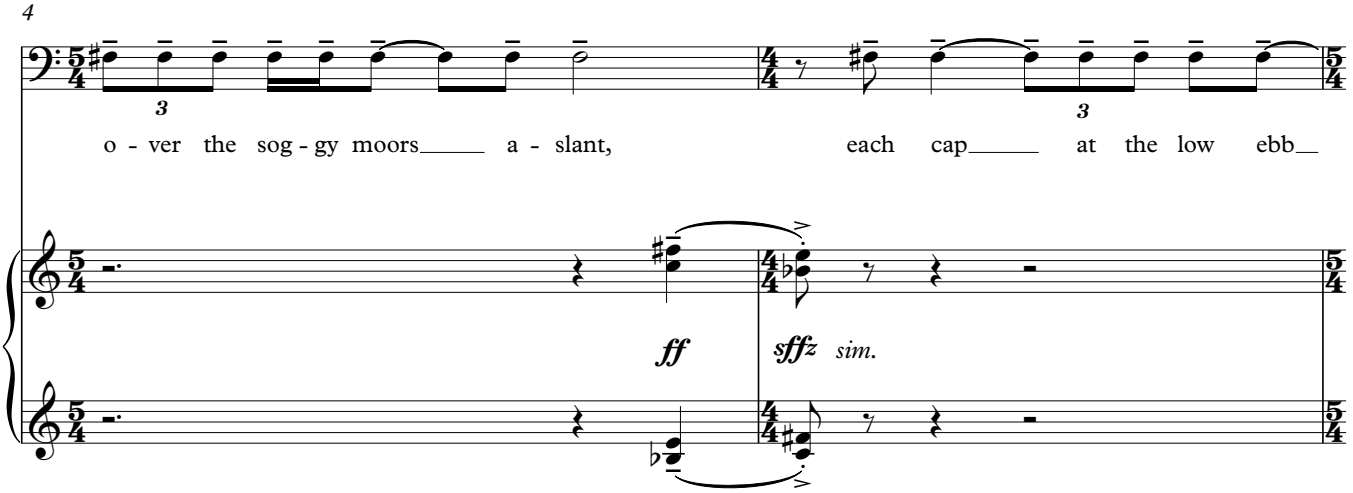
Culloden and After

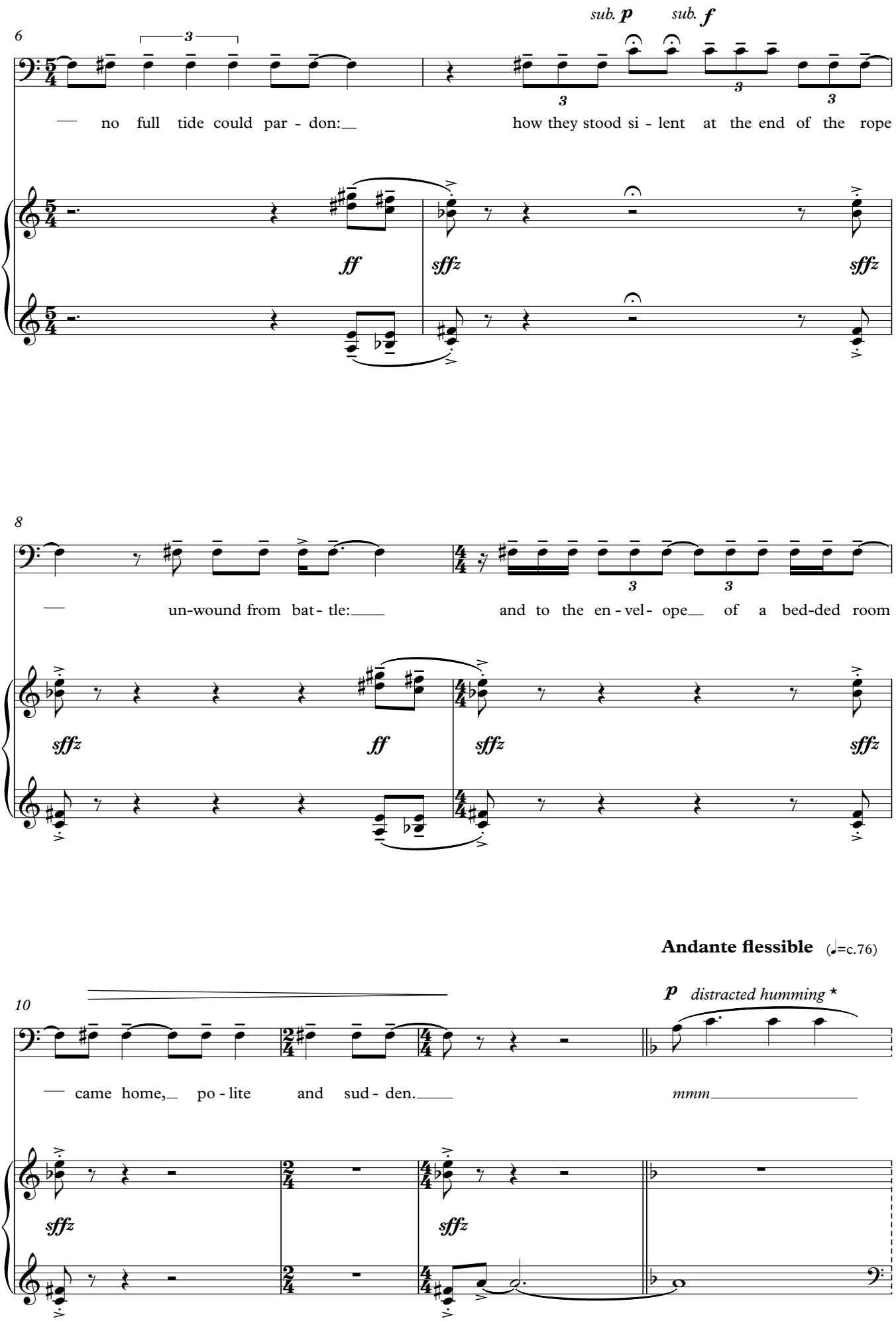
Andante flessible (♩=c.76)

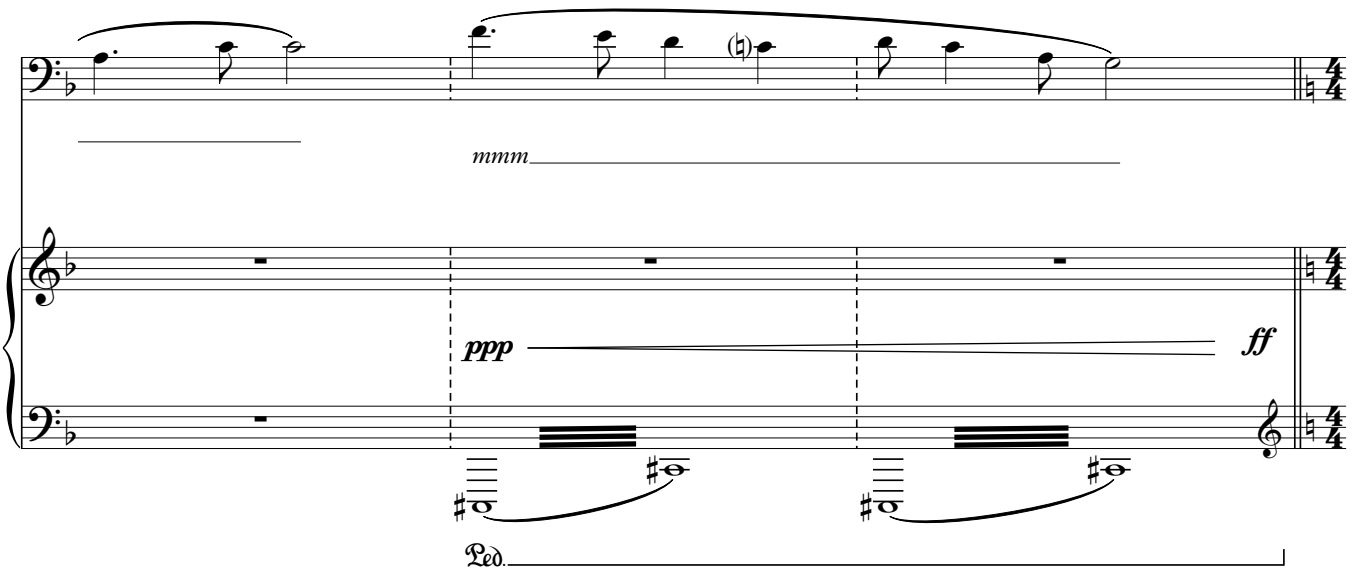


Subito allegro (tempo flessible) (♩=c.120)

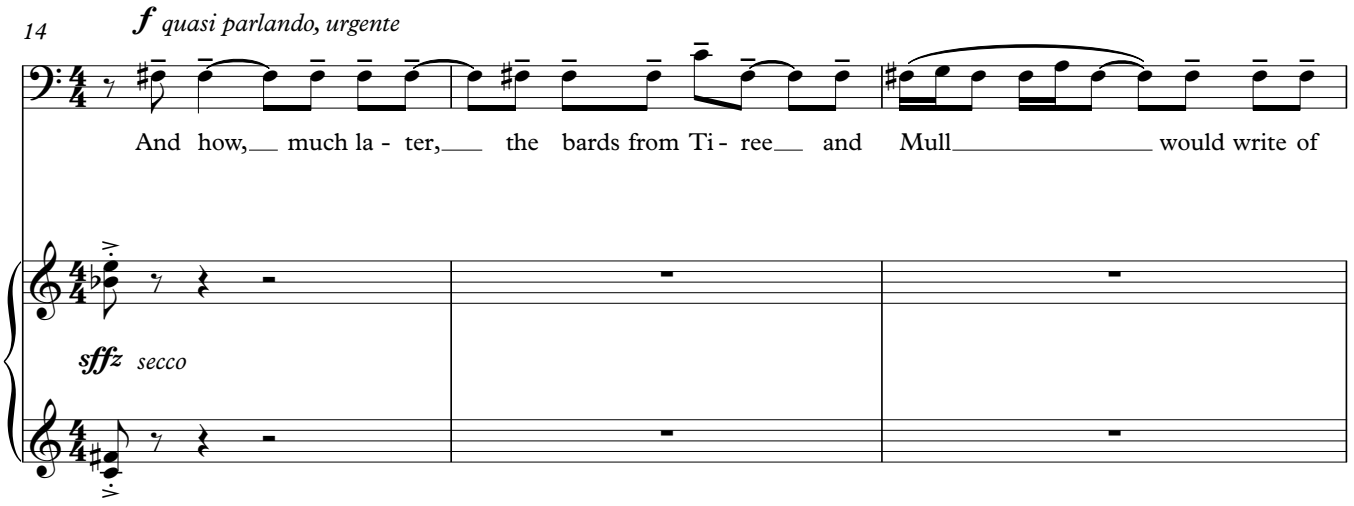


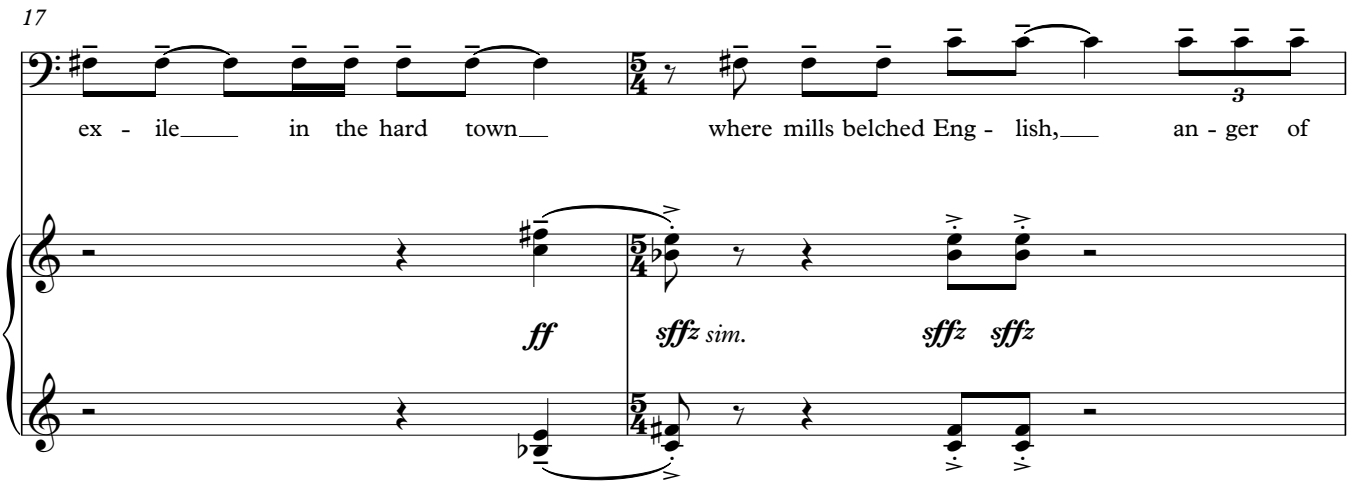


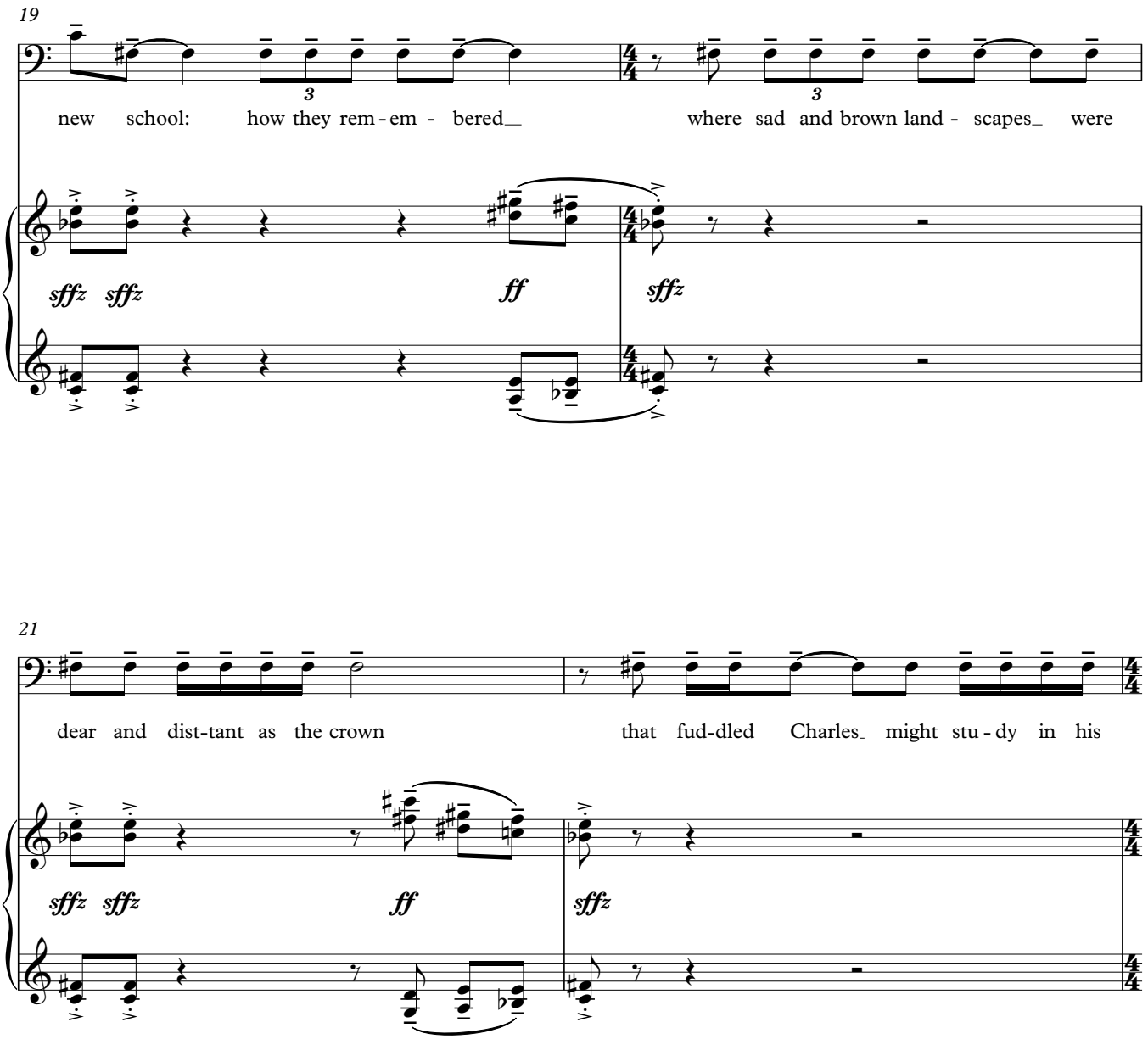

6
sub. p
sub. f
no full tide could par - don:
how they stood si - lent at the end of the rope
ff
sffz
sffz
8
un-wound from bat - tle:
and to the en - vel - ope of a bed-ded room
sffz
ff
sffz
sffz
Andante flessible (♩=c.76)
10
p distracted humming *
came home, po - lite and sud - den.
mmm
sffz
sffz

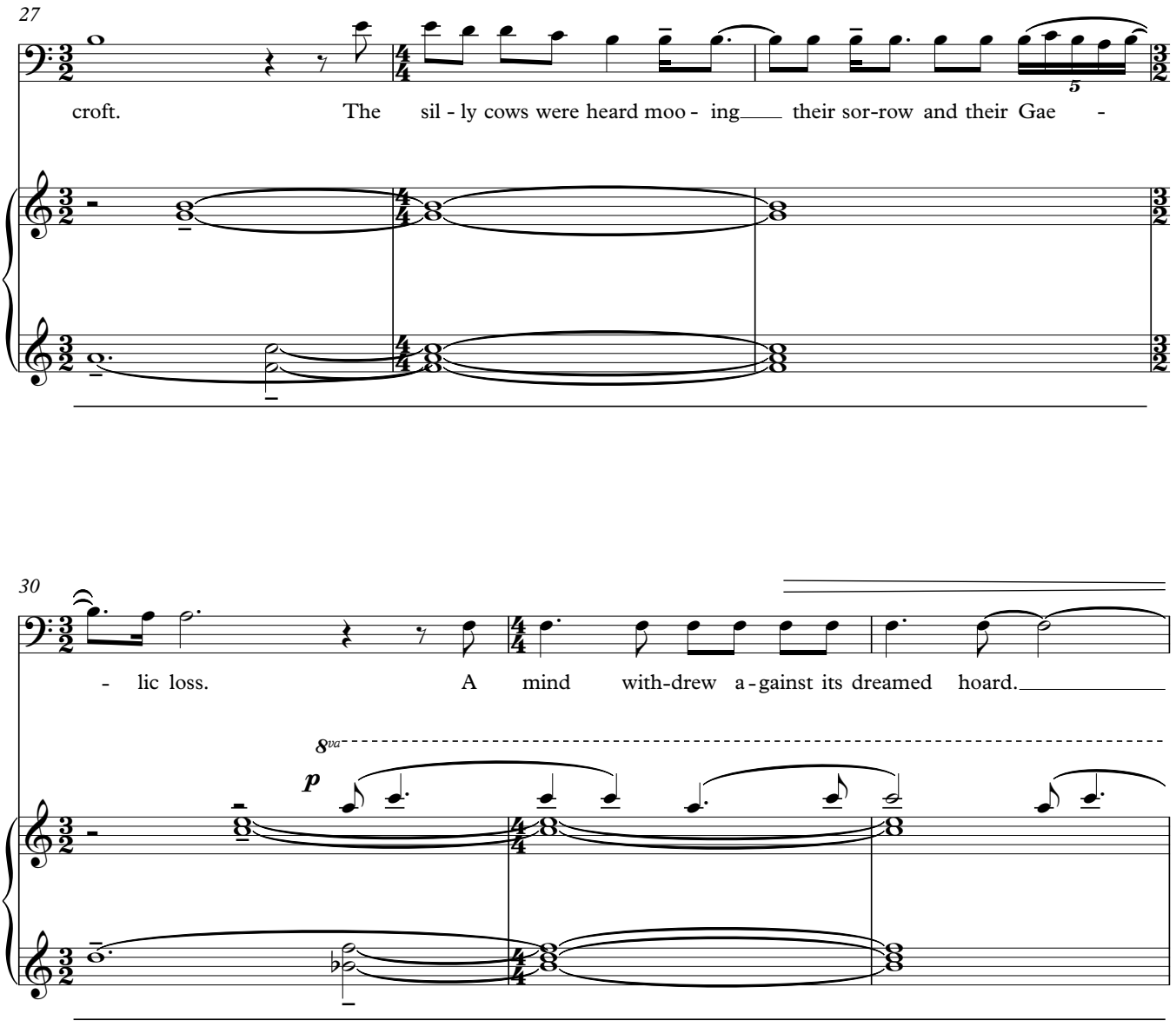


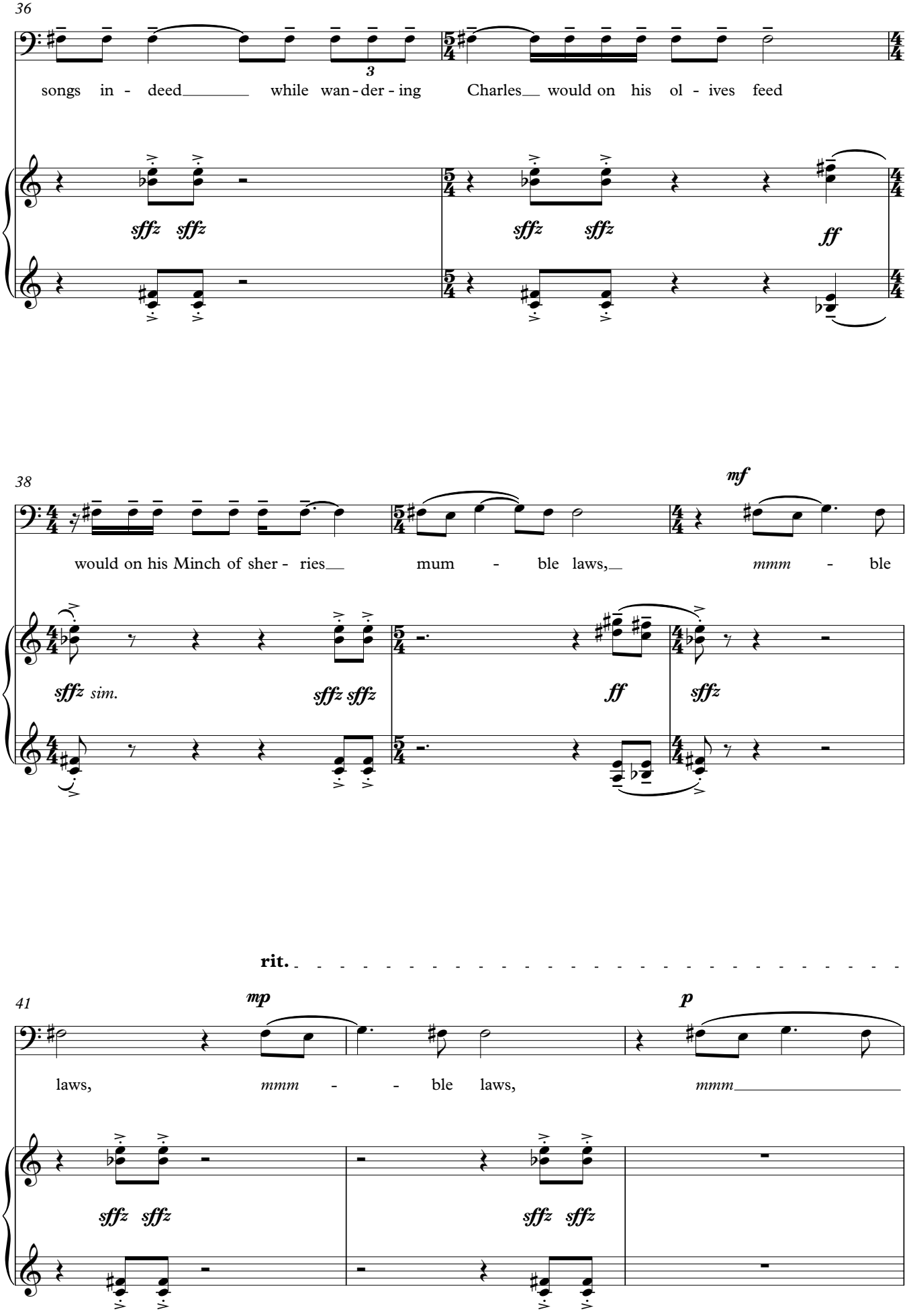
Subito allegro (tempo flessible) (♩=c.120)

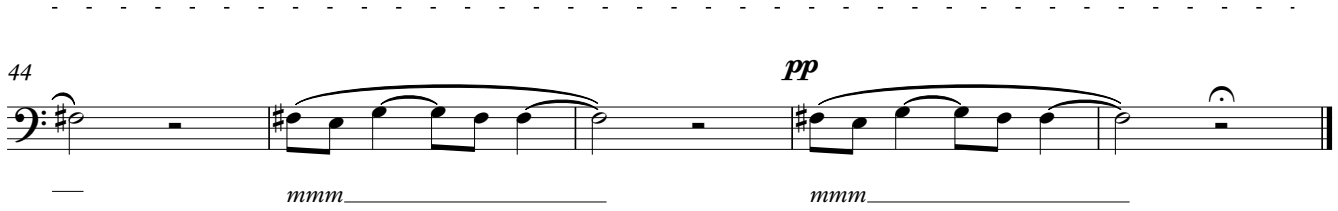





19
new school: how they rem - em - bered where sad and brown land - scapes were
sffz sffz ff sffz
21
dear and dist-tant as the crown that fud-dled Charles might stu - dy in his
sffz sffz ff sffz
rit. Adagio sostenuto (♩=c.60)
23
p espress.
ale. There was a sleep. Long fen - ces leaned ac - ross the va - cant
sffz mp sempre
Ped.


27
croft. The sil - ly cows were heard moo - ing their sor-row and their Gae -
30
- lic loss. A mind with-drew a - gainst its dreamed hoard.
8va
p
poco rit.
Subito allegro (tempo flessible) (𝅗𝅥=c.120)
33
f quasi parlando, urgente
And noth - ing to be heard but
(8)
sffz secco


36
songs in - deed while wan - der - ing Charles would on his ol - ives feed
sffz sffz
sffz sffz
ff
38
mf
would on his Minch of sher - ries mum - ble laws, mmm - ble
sffz sim.
sffz sffz
ff
sffz
rit.
41
mp
p
laws, mmm - - ble laws, mmm
sffz sffz
sffz sffz



Oldmeldrum, Old Aberdeen
May-July 2019