Ric Graebner

8 Songs

for Soprano and Piano

on poems by

Emily Dickinson

2021

8 Songs

Poems: Emily Dickinson

These songs can be sung separately, and in any succession.
They could also be treated as a cycle, since the poems share a common reference to the sea, and the music, completed over a relatively short period, will inevitably have some stylistic cohesion.

The presented order corresponds to the dates of the poems, which is also the order of composition.

Dickinson's punctuation has been reproduced. It contains an abundance of dashes where one might expect other marks, or none. Since there is no simple way to distinguish these typographically from the hyphens that separate syllables, singers should make a note beforehand of any potential confusion between the two.

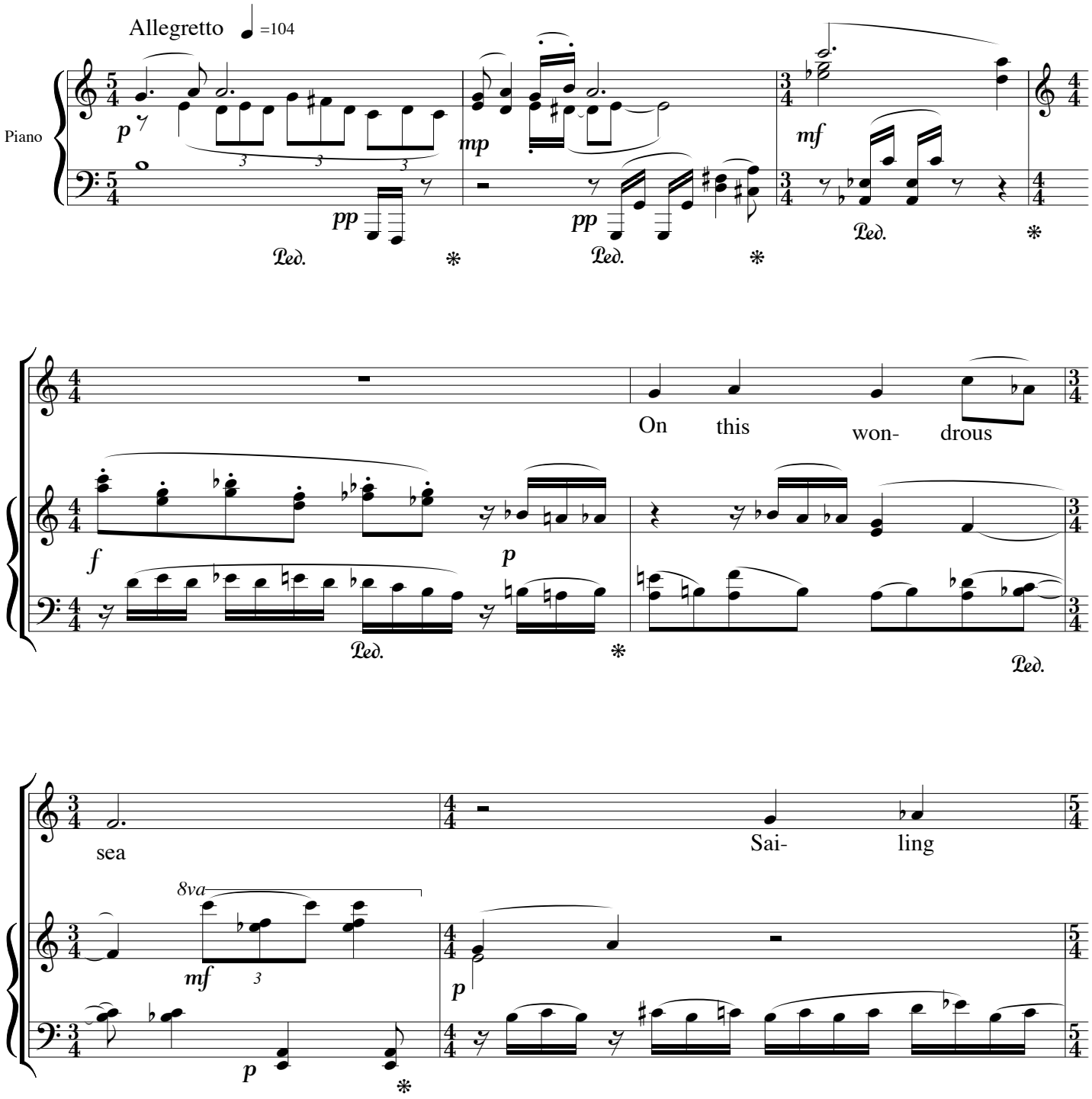
Vocal dynamics are open to interpretation, using the piano dynamics and the text as guidelines.
The singer should stress syllables as in normal speech if they conflict with the prevailing metre - for example, in the last (melismatic) section of No.3 *Adrift.*

Piano trills, in essence no different from tremolos found elsewhere, and notated with '*tr*' for layout reasons*,* are performed 'clean' - without leading or final auxiliaries. The accidental for the auxiliary is always shown, even when a natural. Its position above or below the *tr* symbol indicates whether the auxiliary is played above or below the main note. The slashed tremolo mark on chords always means fast alternation between the notes. Distribute as convenient when more than 2 notes - (e.g. No. 2 m.12: first trem. - probably perform as AE dyad, alternating with G)

Ric Graebner 2021

1.

ON THIS WONDROUS SEA



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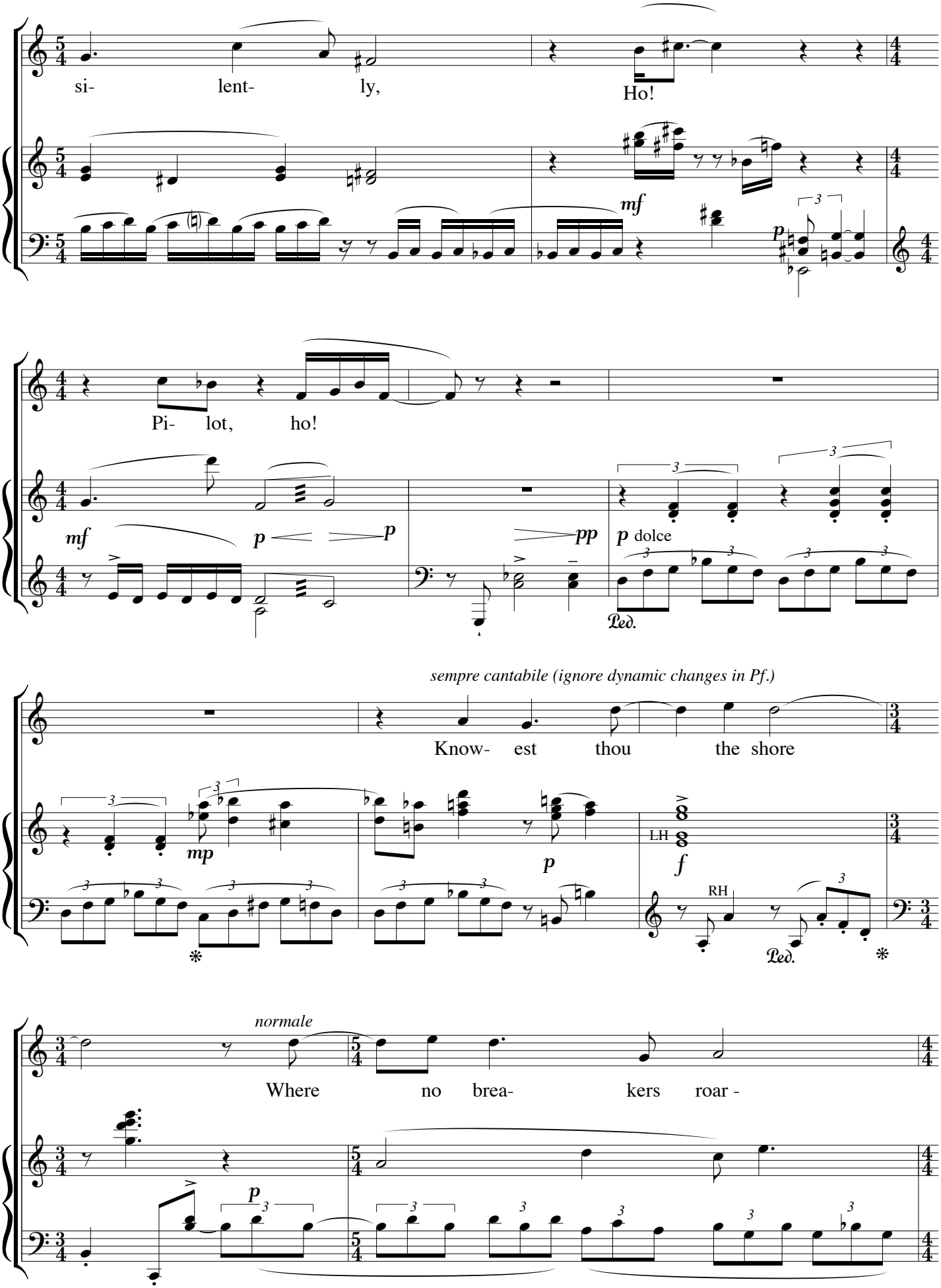
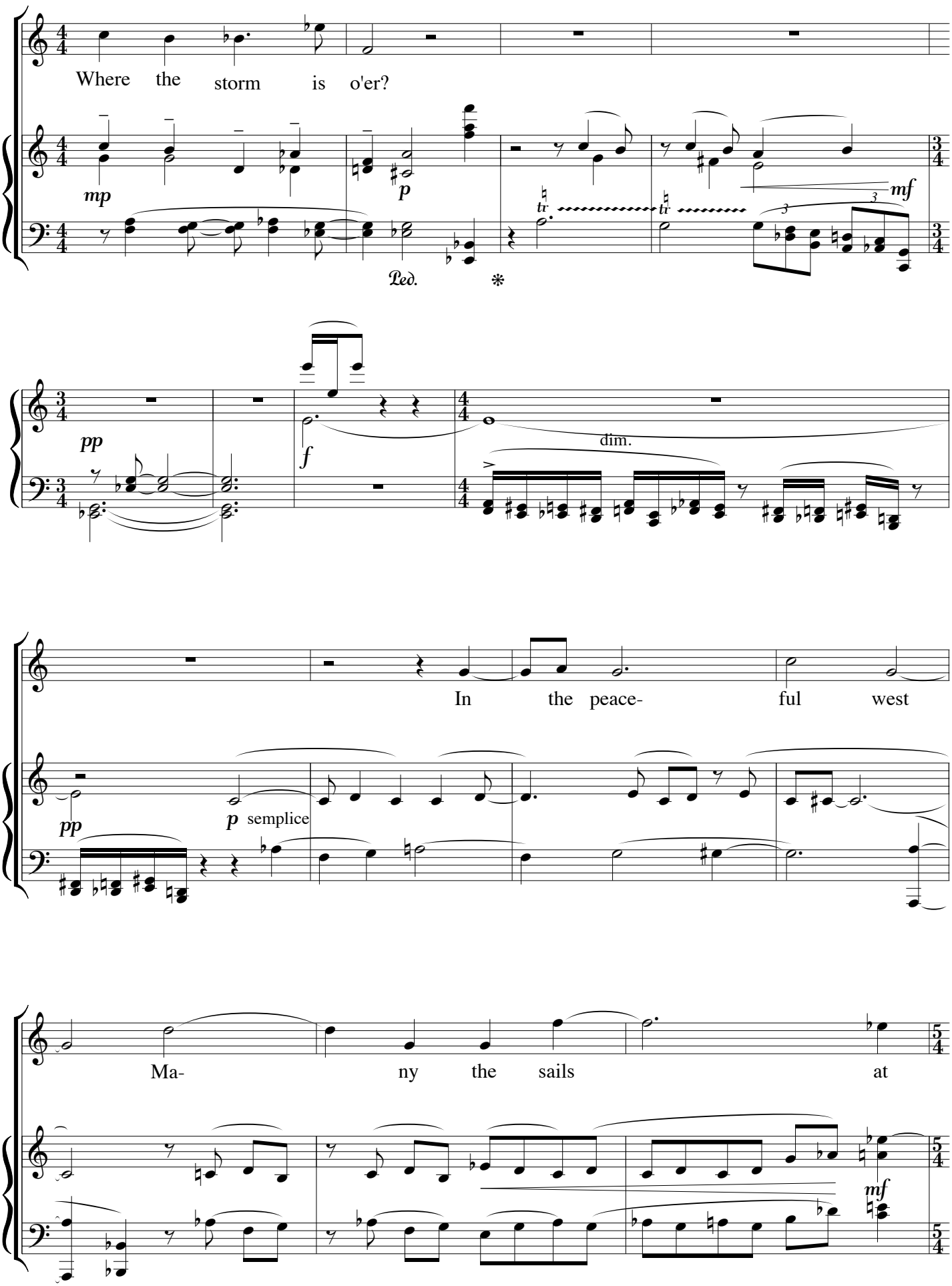
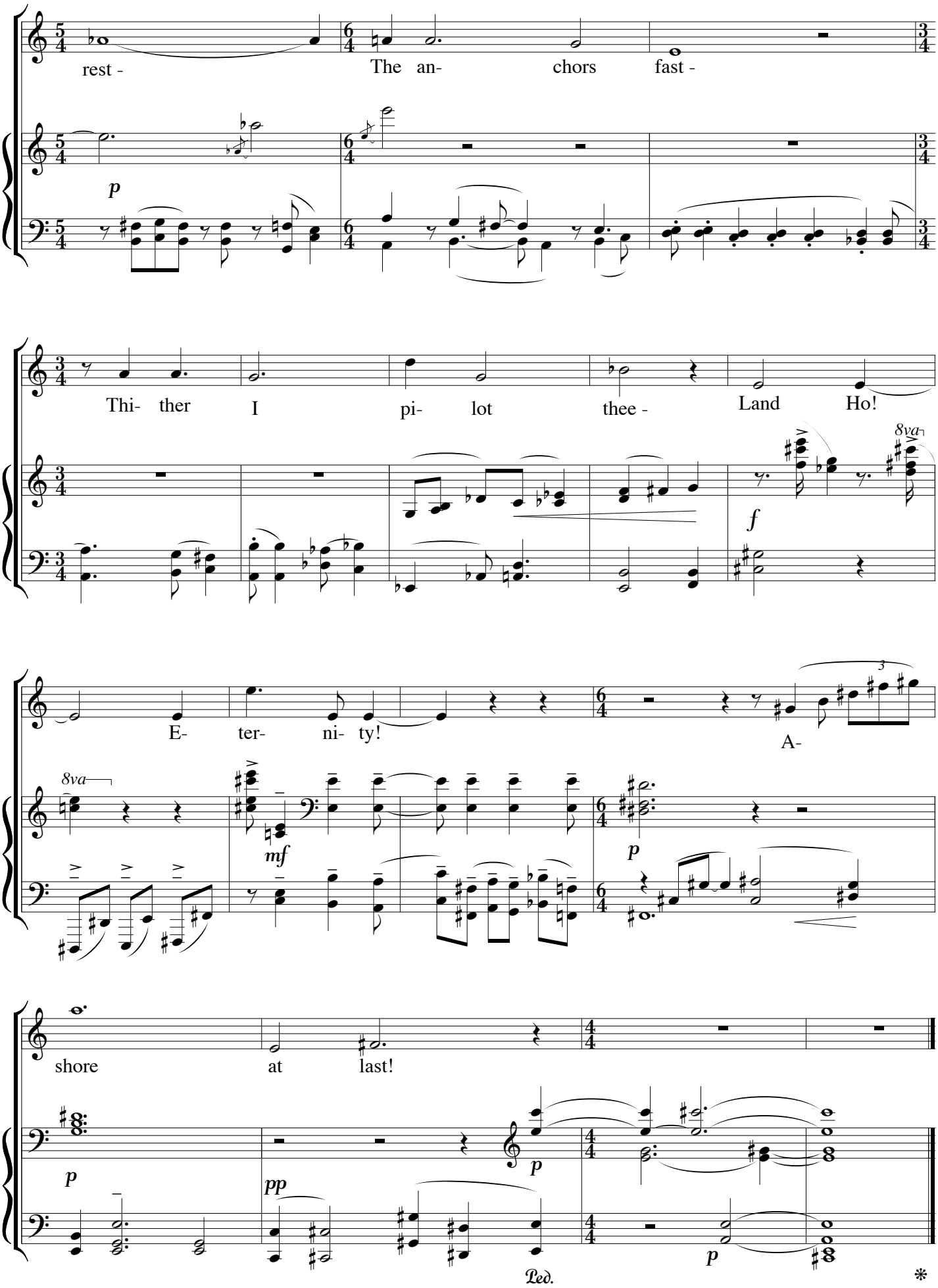
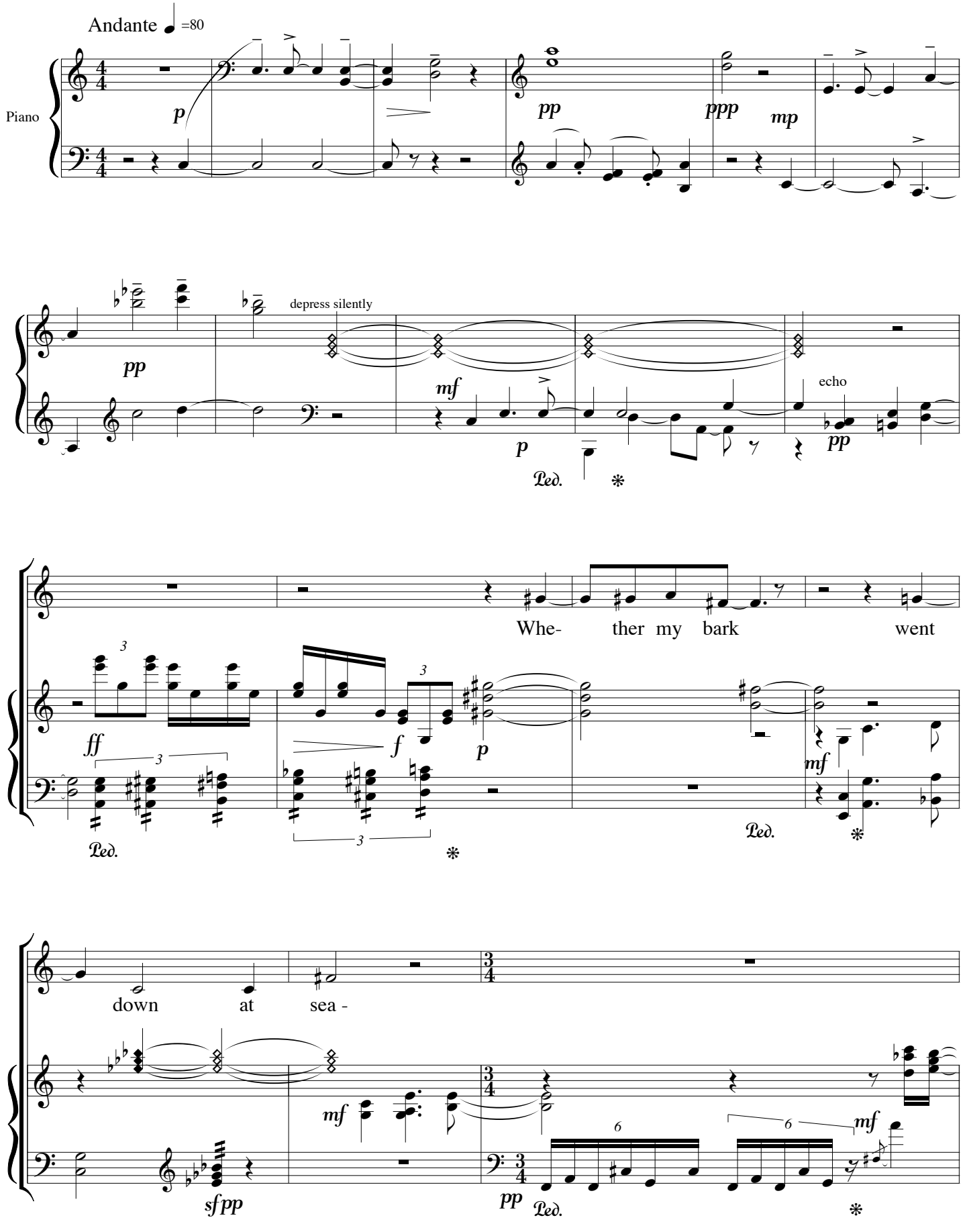

si- lent- ly,
Ho!
mf
p
Pi- lot, ho!
mf
p
p
pp
p dolce
Led.
sempre cantabile (ignore dynamic changes in Pf.)
Know- est thou the shore
mp
p
LH
f
RH
Led.
normale
Where no brea- kers roar -
p

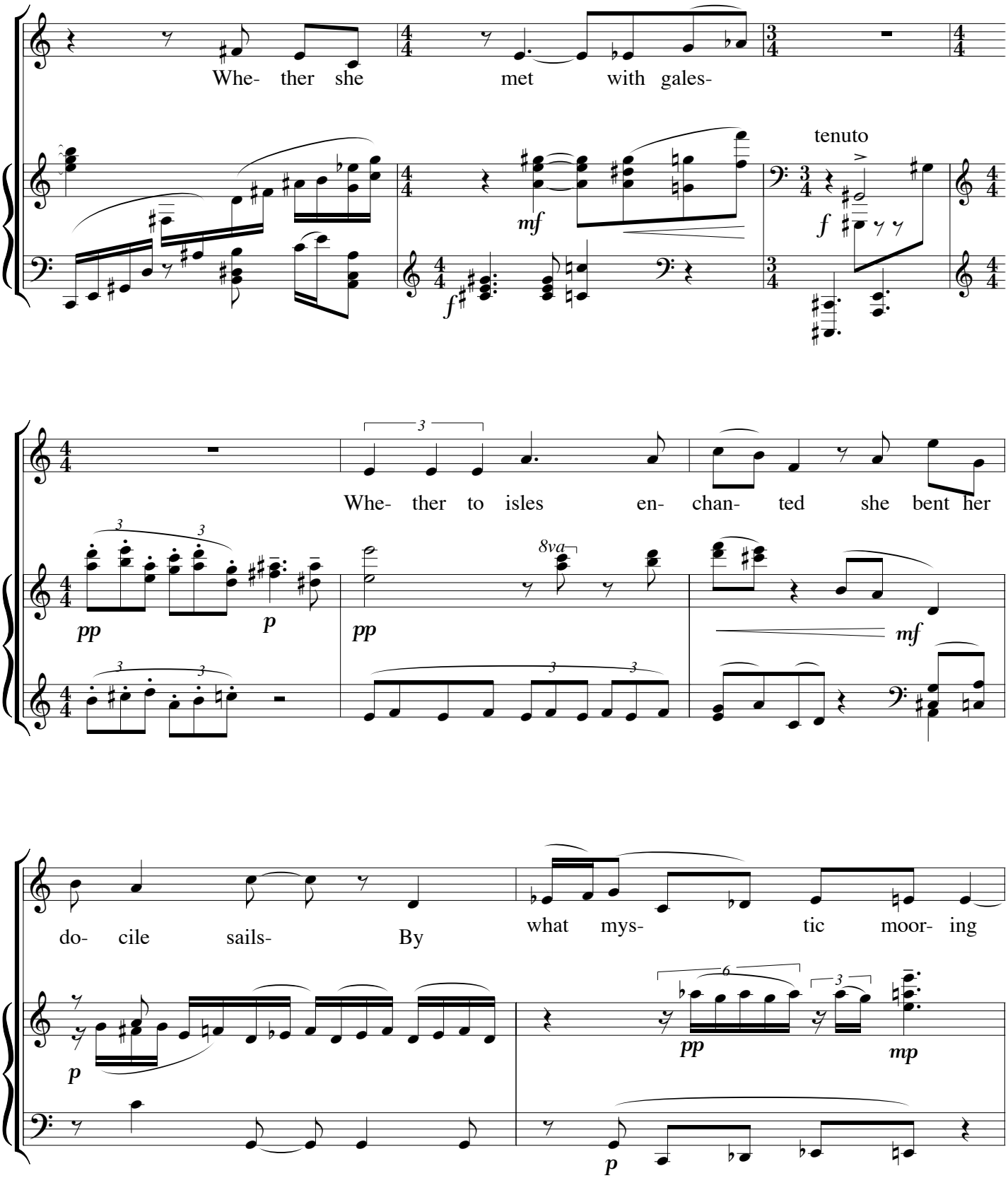

Where the storm is o'er?
mp
p
mf
Ped.
pp
f
dim.
In the peace- ful west
pp
p semplice
Ma- ny the sails at
mf

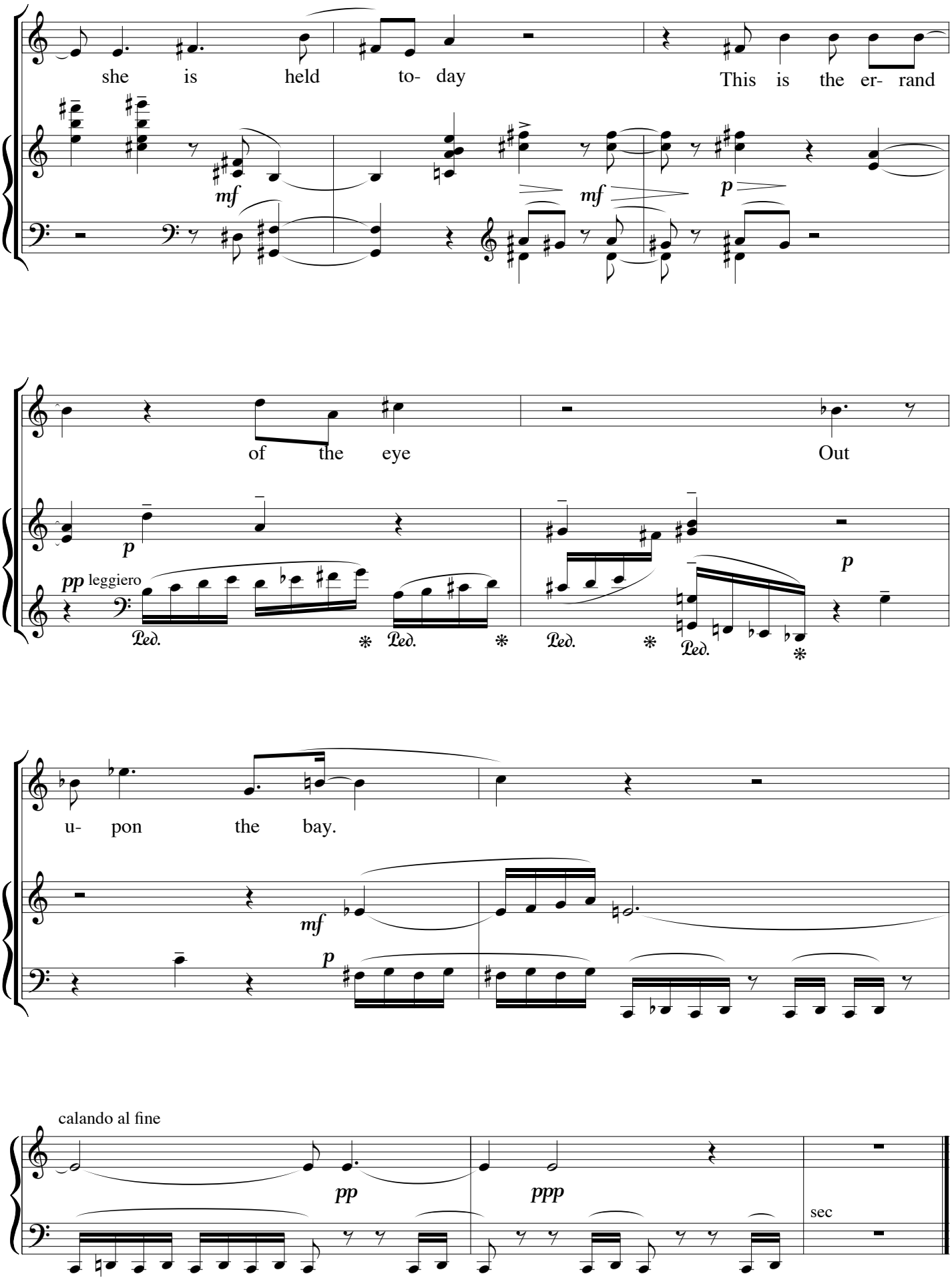

rest -
The an-
chors
fast -
Thi- ther
I
pi-
lot
thee -
Land
Ho!
E-
ter-
ni-
ty!
A-
shore
at
last!
8va
8va
p
f
mf
p
p
pp
p
p
Ped.
*

2.

WHETHER MY BARK

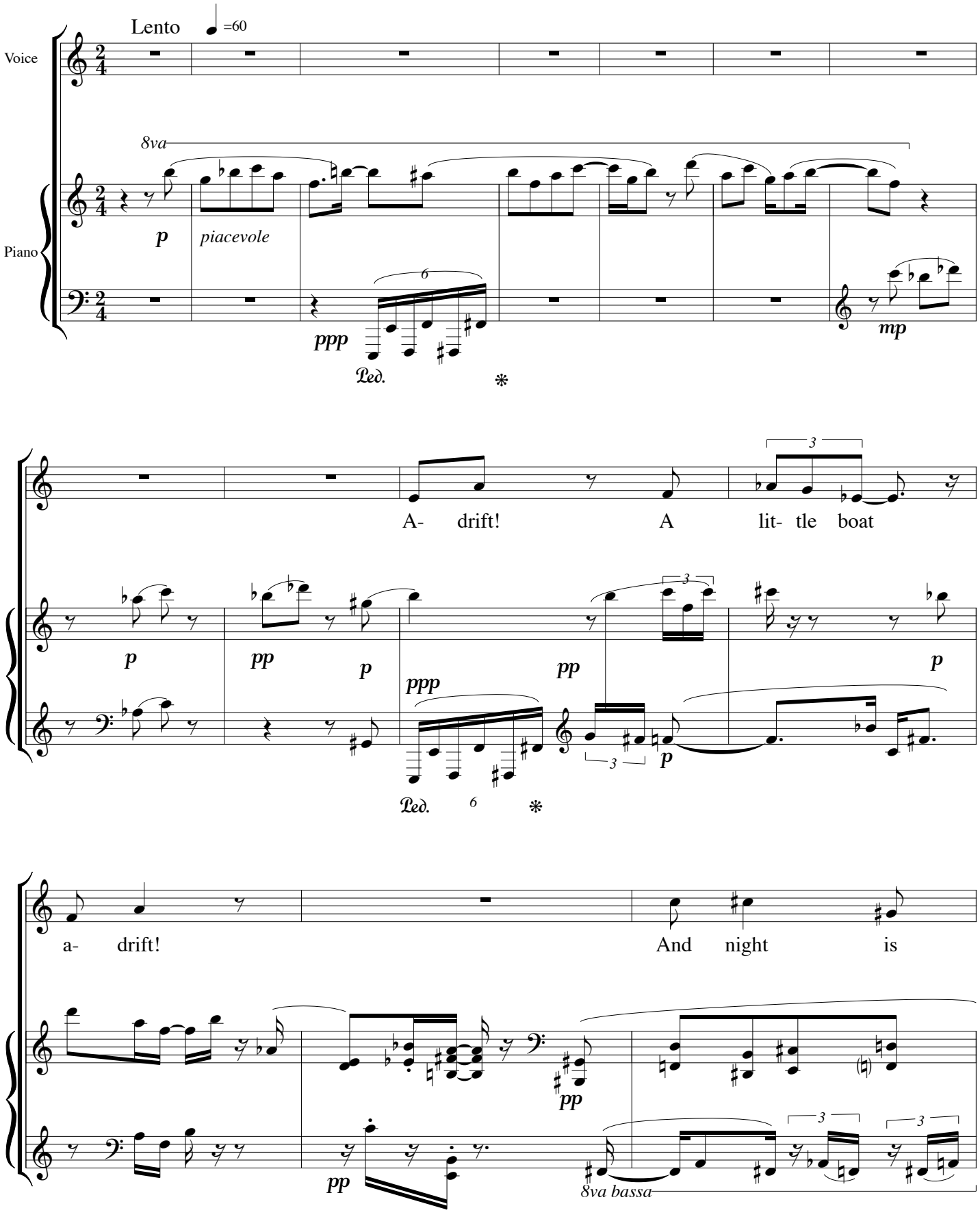


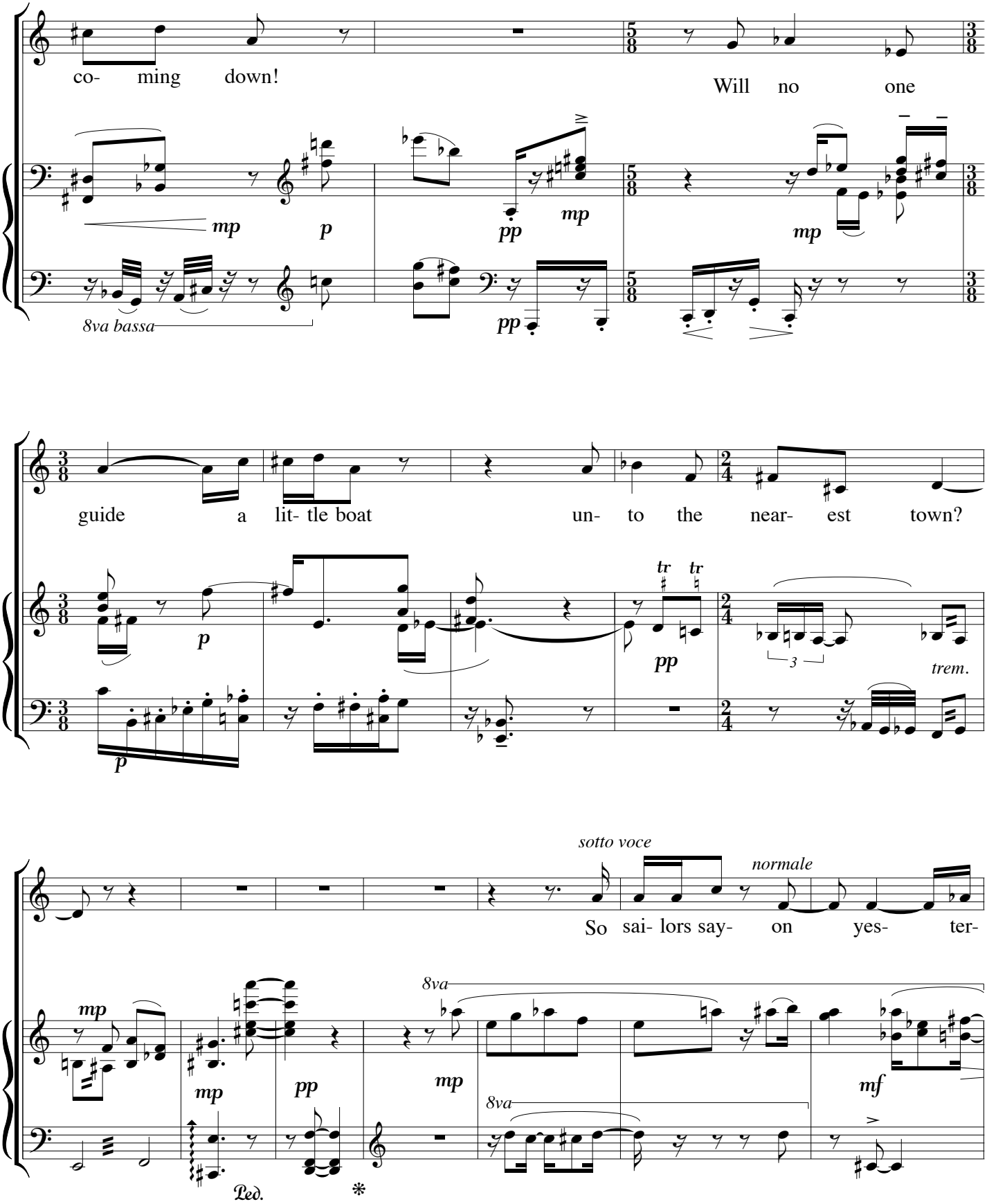

Whe- ther she met with gales-
tenuto
mf
f
Whe- ther to isles en- chan- ted she bent her
pp
p
pp
8va
mf
do- cile sails- By
what mys- tic moor- ing
p
pp
mp
p

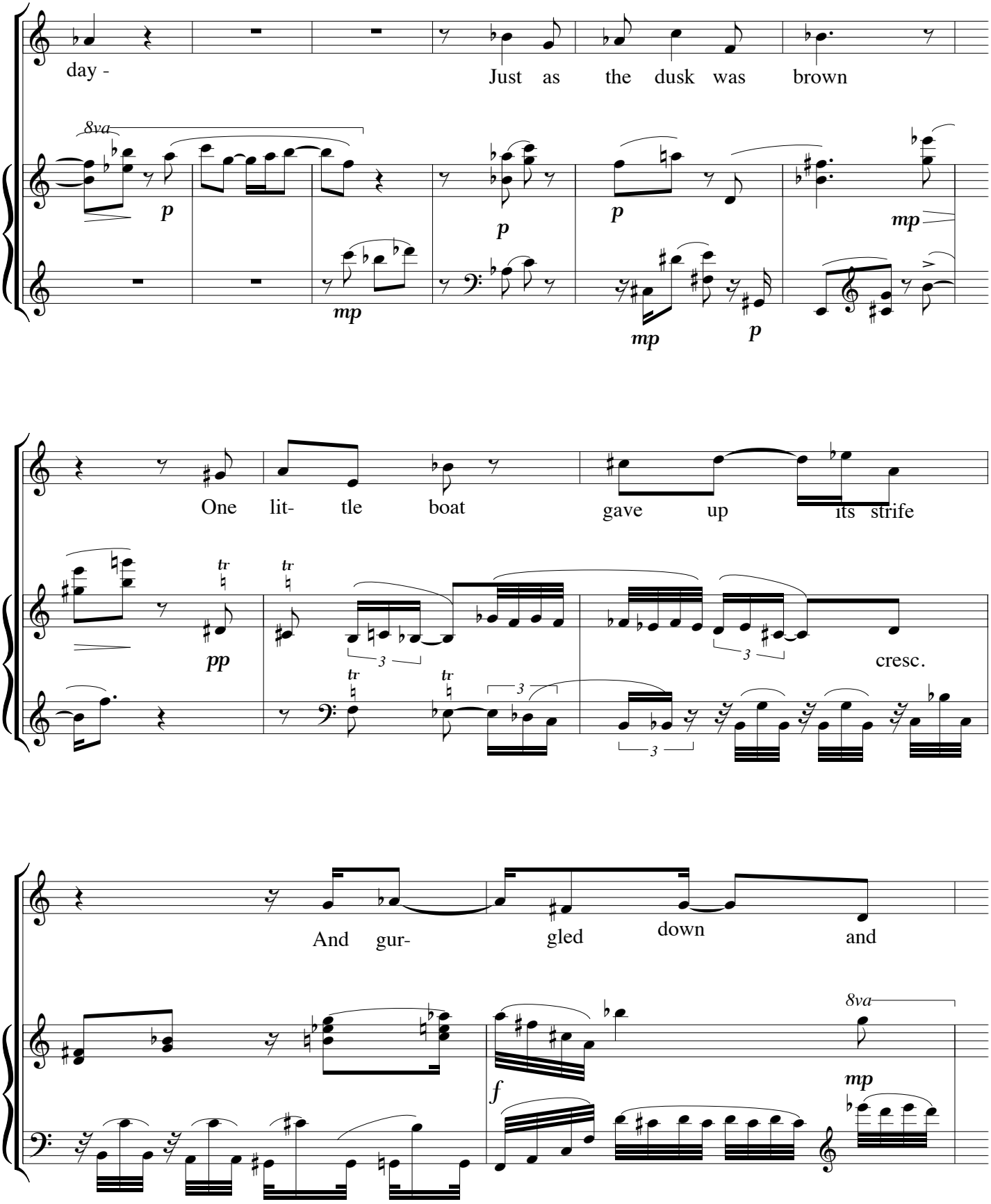

she is held to- day
This is the er- rand
mf
mf
p
of the eye
Out
p
pp leggiero
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
p
u- pon the bay.
mf
p
calando al fine
pp
ppp
sec

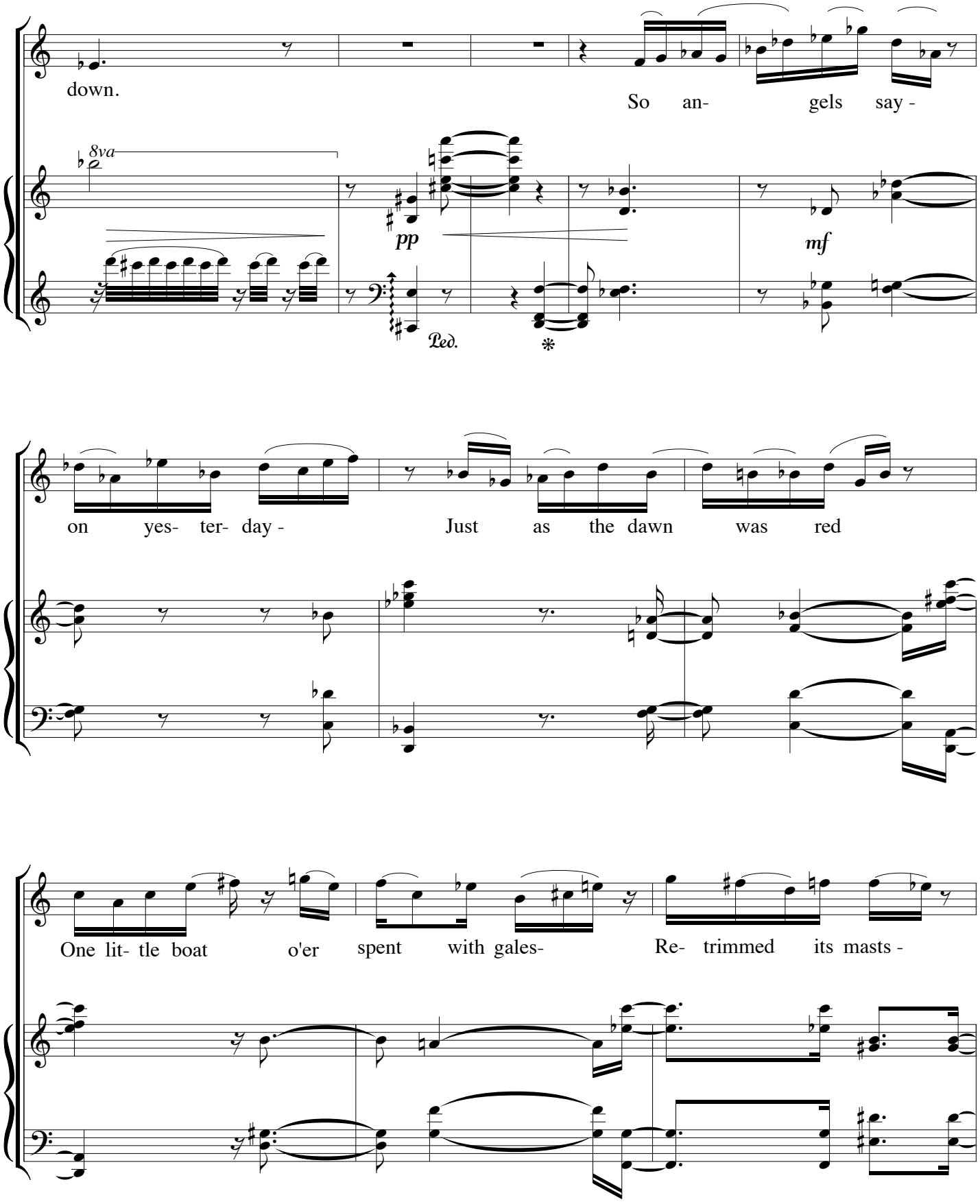
3.

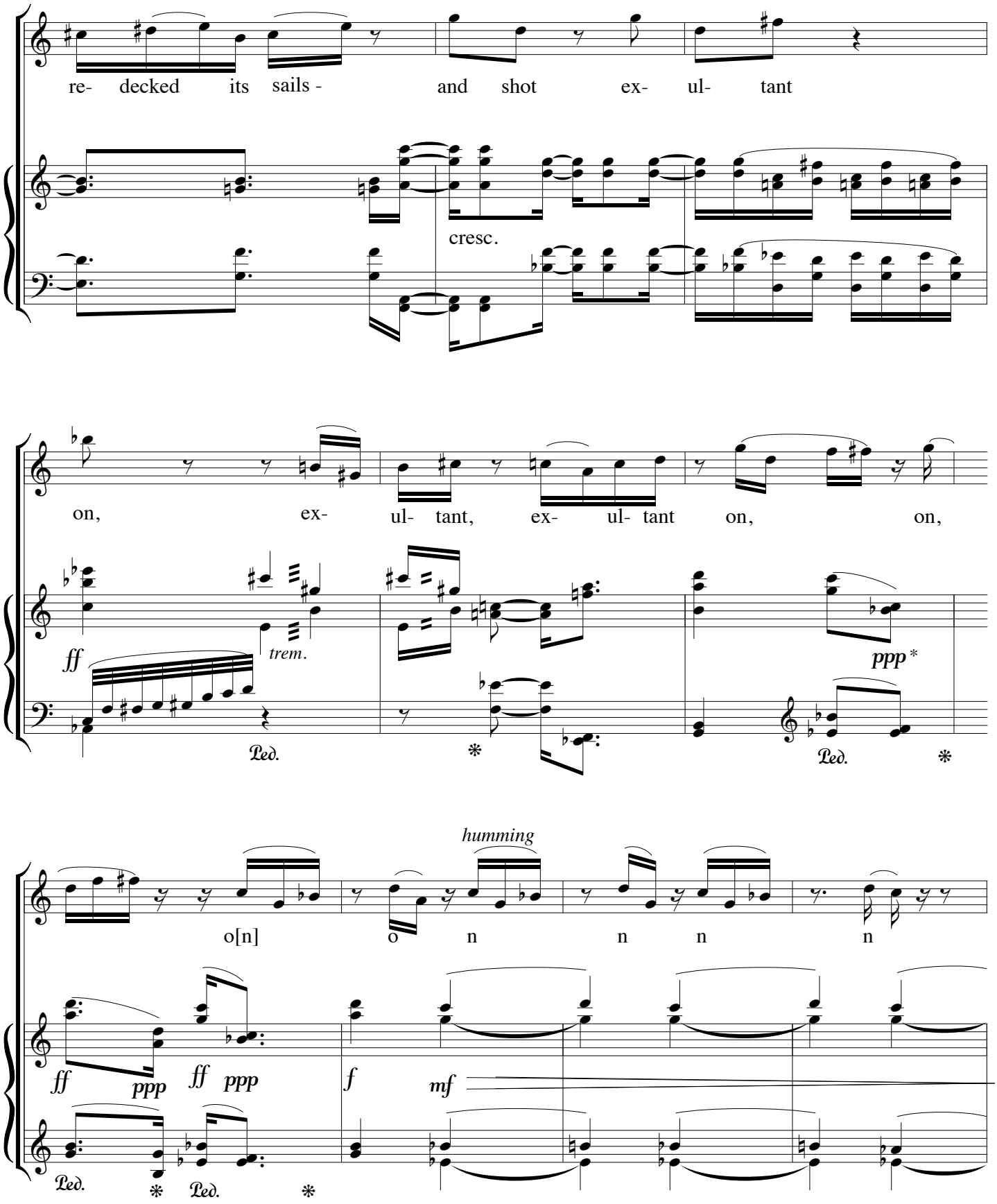
ADRIFT


Lento
=60
Voice
Piano
8va
p
piacevole
ppp
Ped.
mp
A- drift! A lit- tle boat
pp
a- drift! And night is
8va bassa

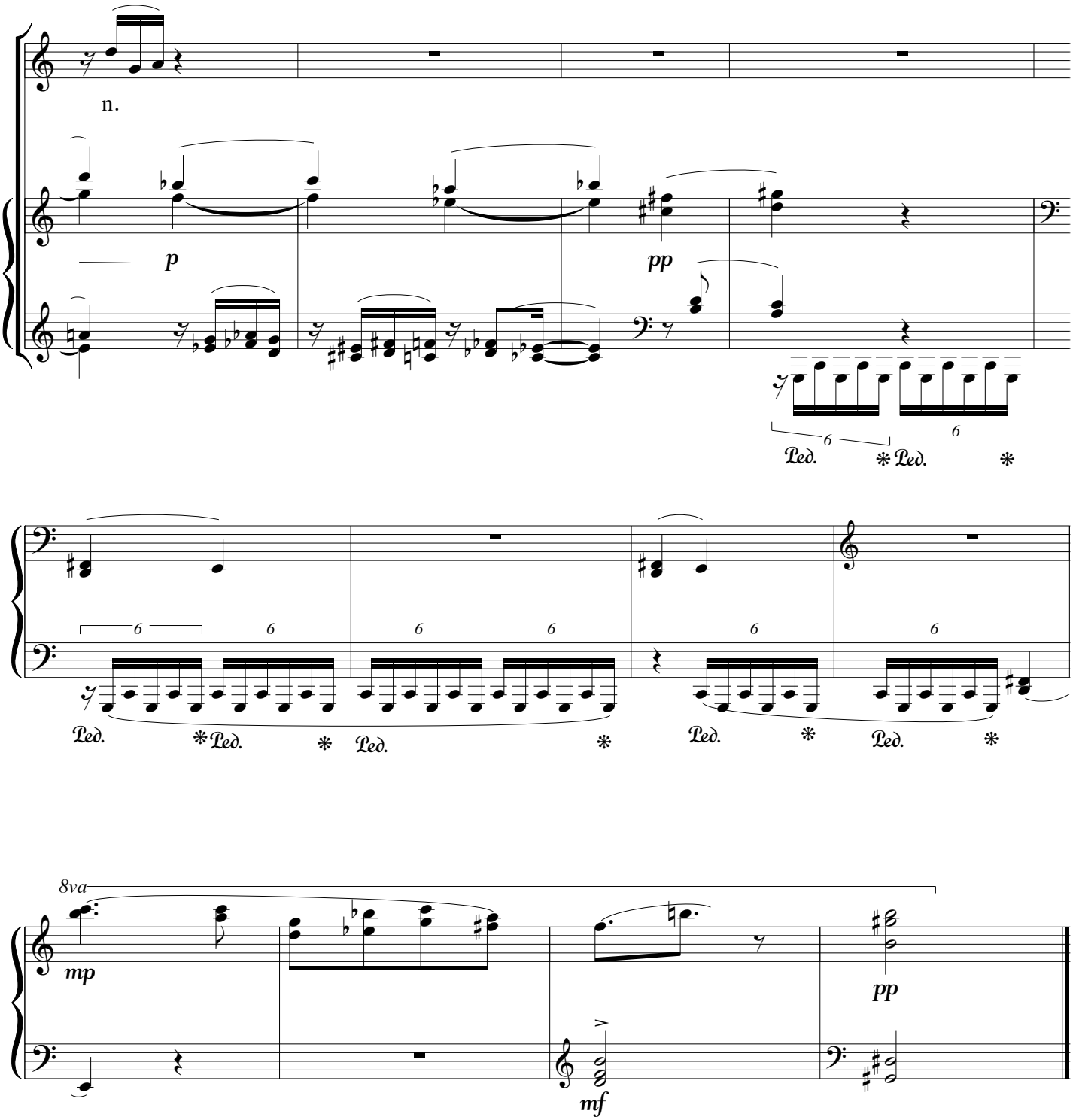

co- ming down!
Will no one
mp
p
pp
mp
mp
8va bassa
pp
guide a lit- tle boat un- to the near- est town?
p
tr tr
pp
3
trem.
p
sotto voce
normale
So sai- lors say- on yes- ter-
mp
8va
mp
mp
pp
mp
8va
mf
Ped.
*


day -
Just as the dusk was brown
8va
p
p
p
mp
mp
mp
p
One lit- tle boat
gave up its strife
tr
tr
pp
3
3
cresc.
tr
tr
3
3
And gur- gled down and
8va
f
mp


down.
So an- gels say -
8va
pp
mf
Ped.
*
on yes- ter- day -
Just as the dawn was red
One lit- tle boat o'er spent with gales-
Re- trimmed its masts -

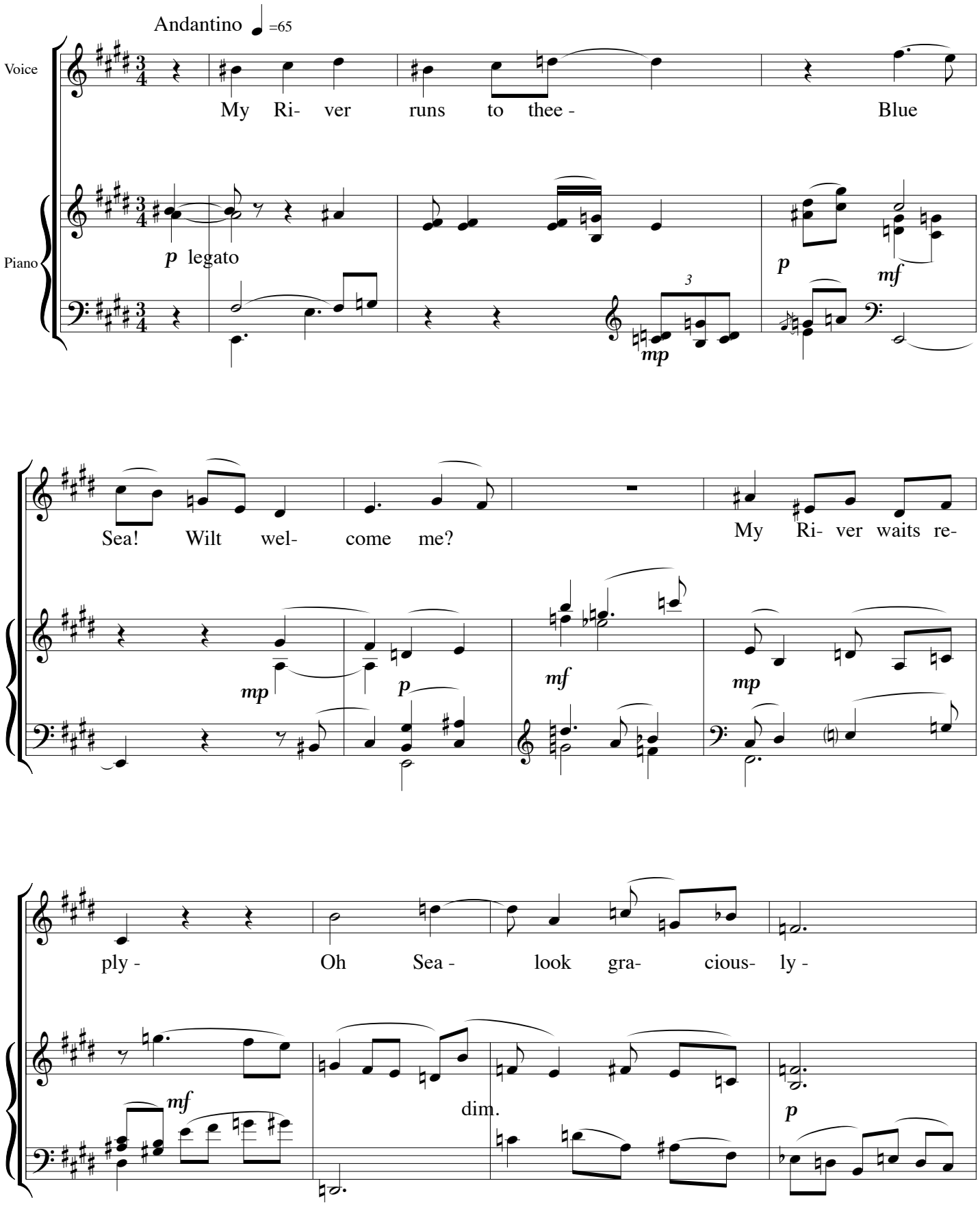


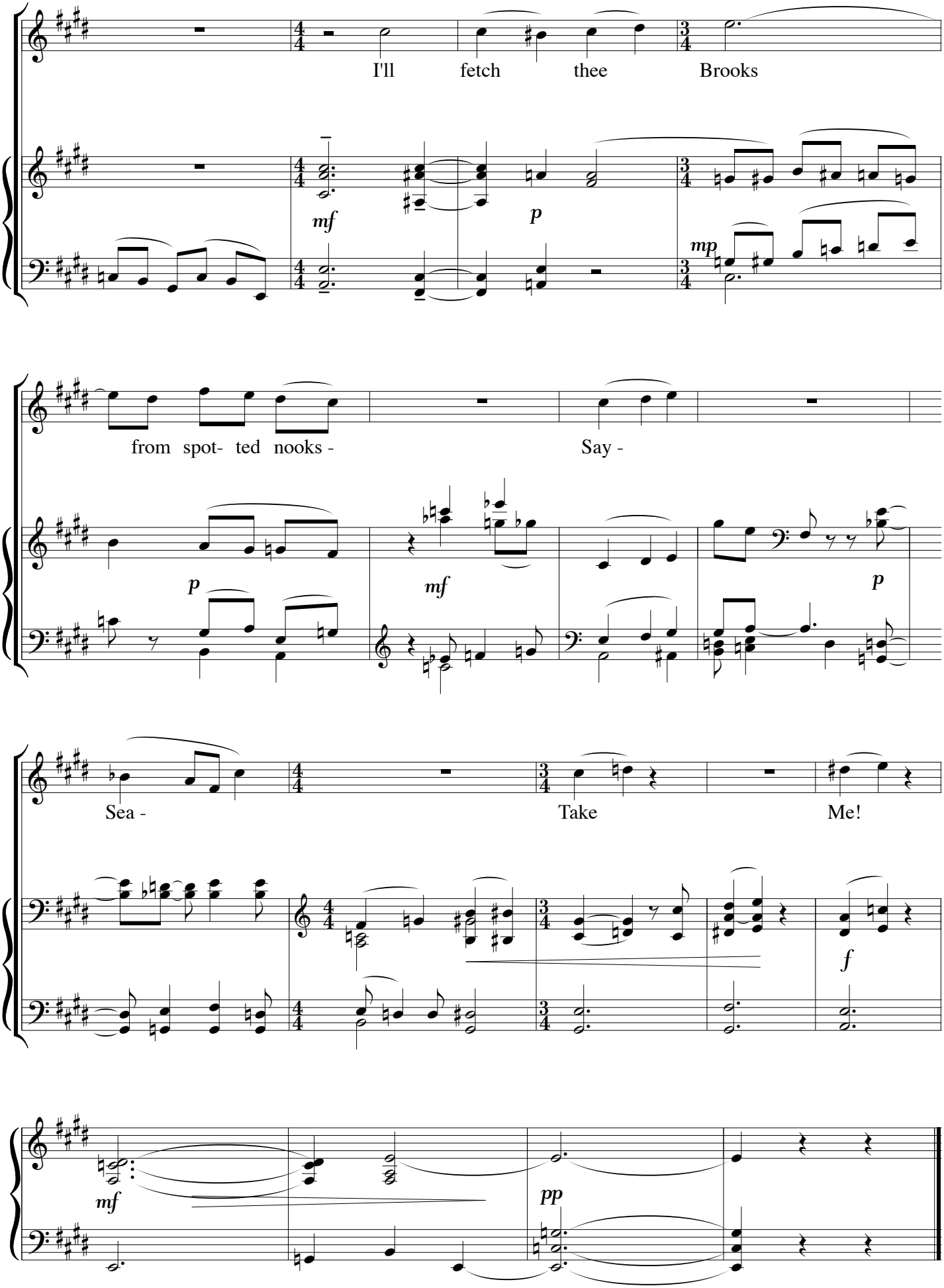
* These ppp's to be played more like a resonance than an attack.


n.
p
pp
6
6
Ped.
Ped.
6
6
6
6
6
6
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
8va
mp
pp
mf

4.

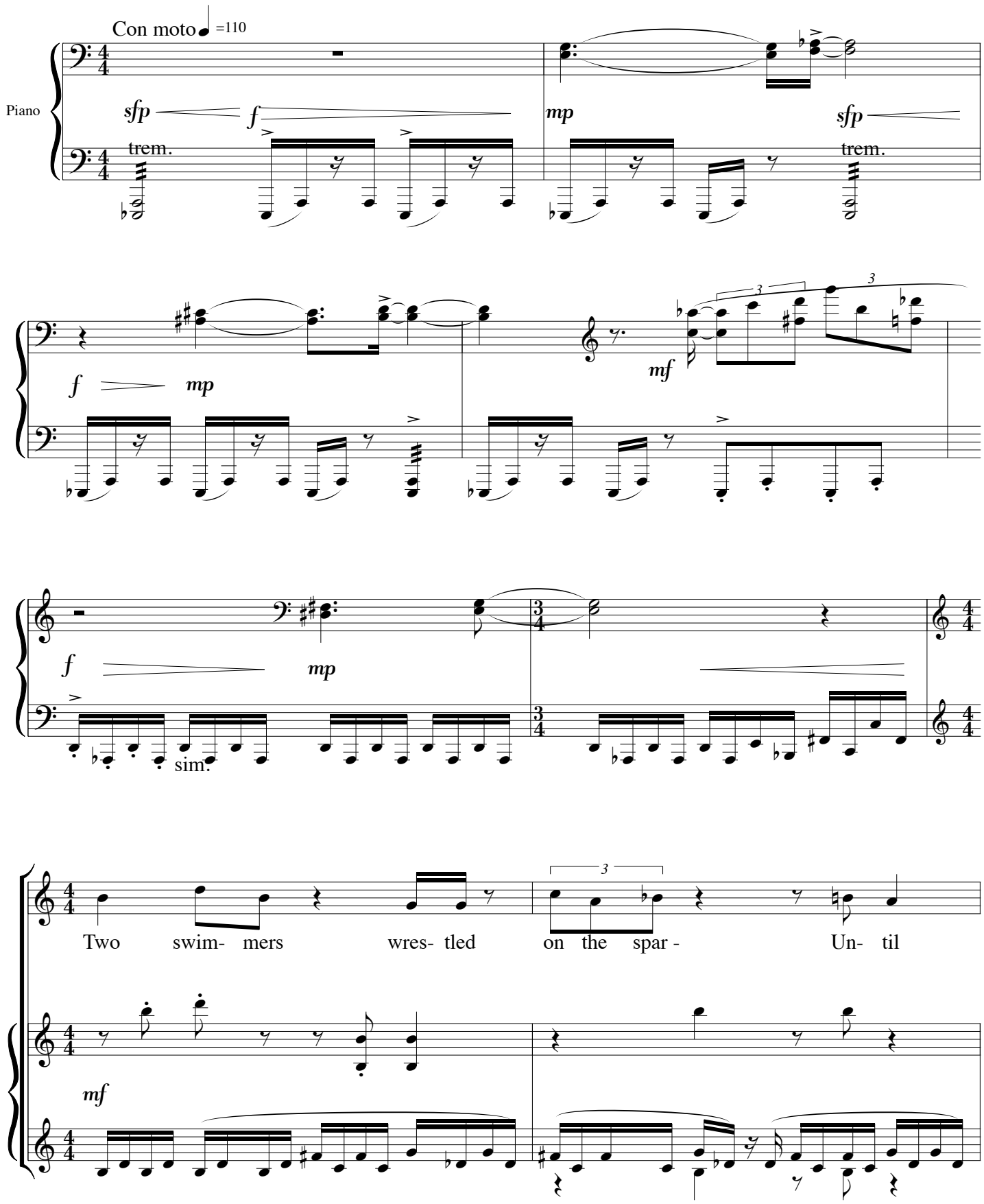
BLUE SEA

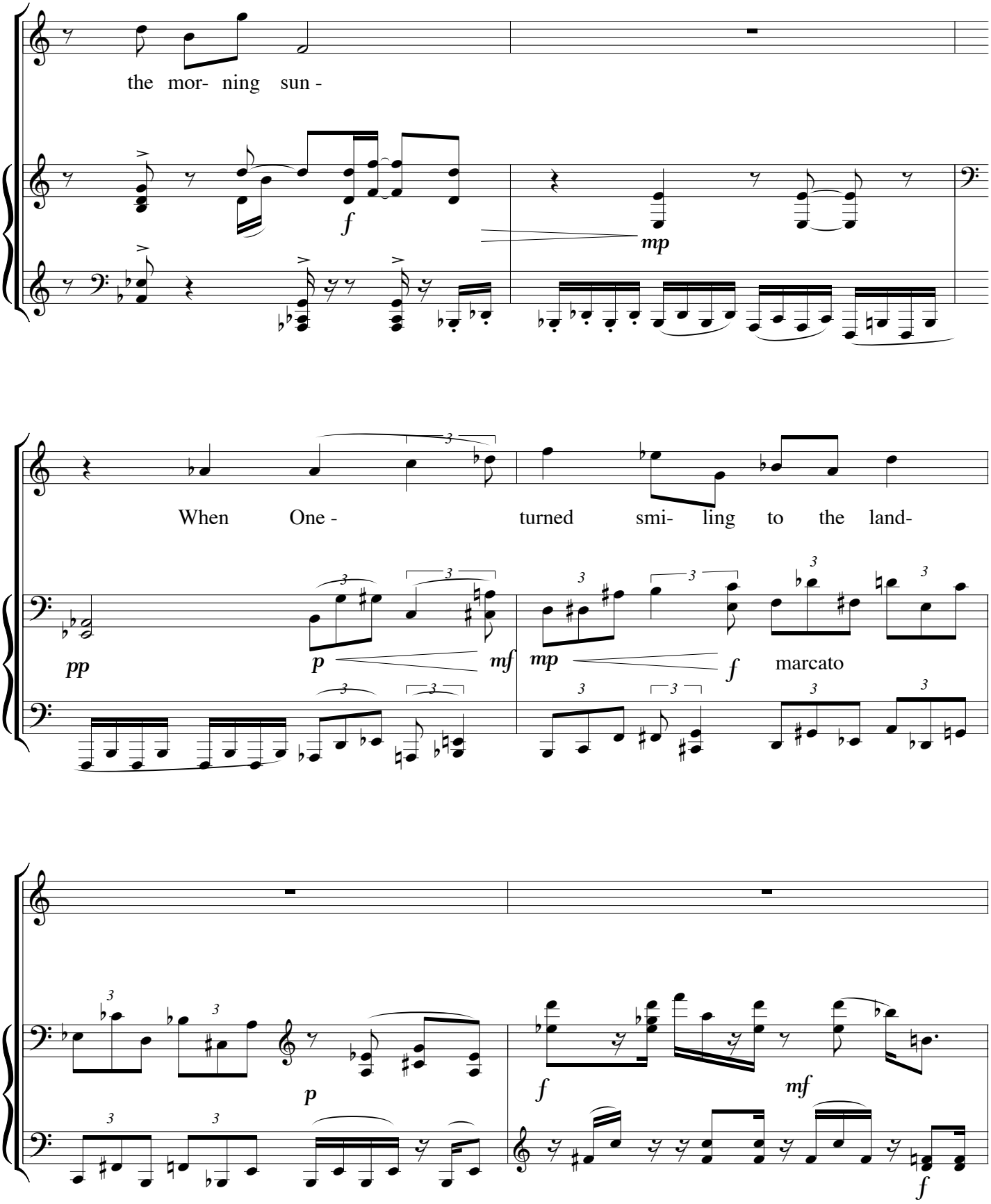

Andantino ♩=65
Voice
Piano
My Ri- ver runs to thee - Blue
p legato
p
mf
3
mp
Sea! Wilt wel- come me?
My Ri- ver waits re-
mp
p
mf
mp
ply -
Oh Sea - look gra- cious- ly -
mf
dim.
p

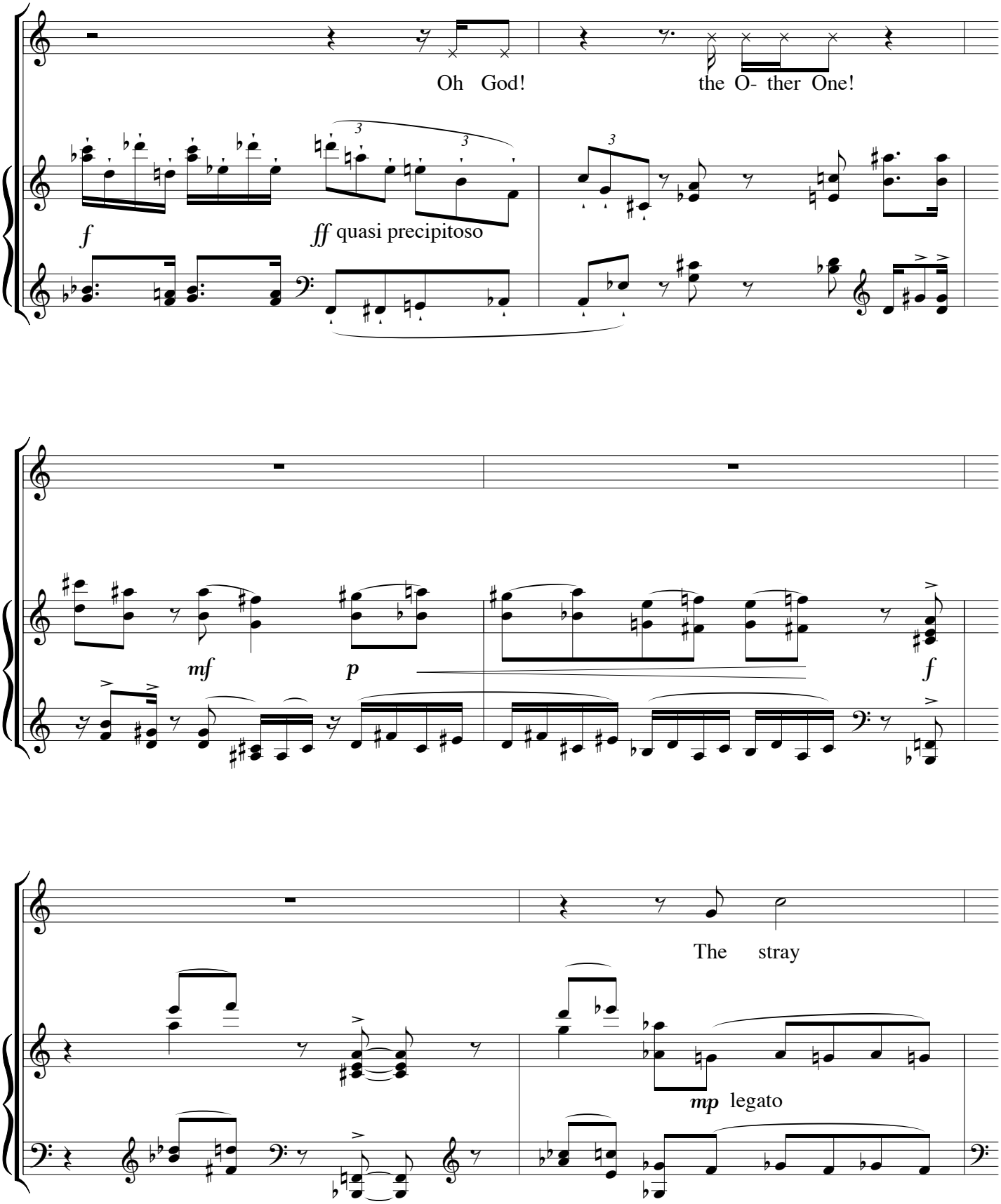

I'll fetch thee Brooks
mf
p
mp
from spot- ted nooks -
Say -
p
mf
p
Sea -
Take
Me!
f
mf
pp

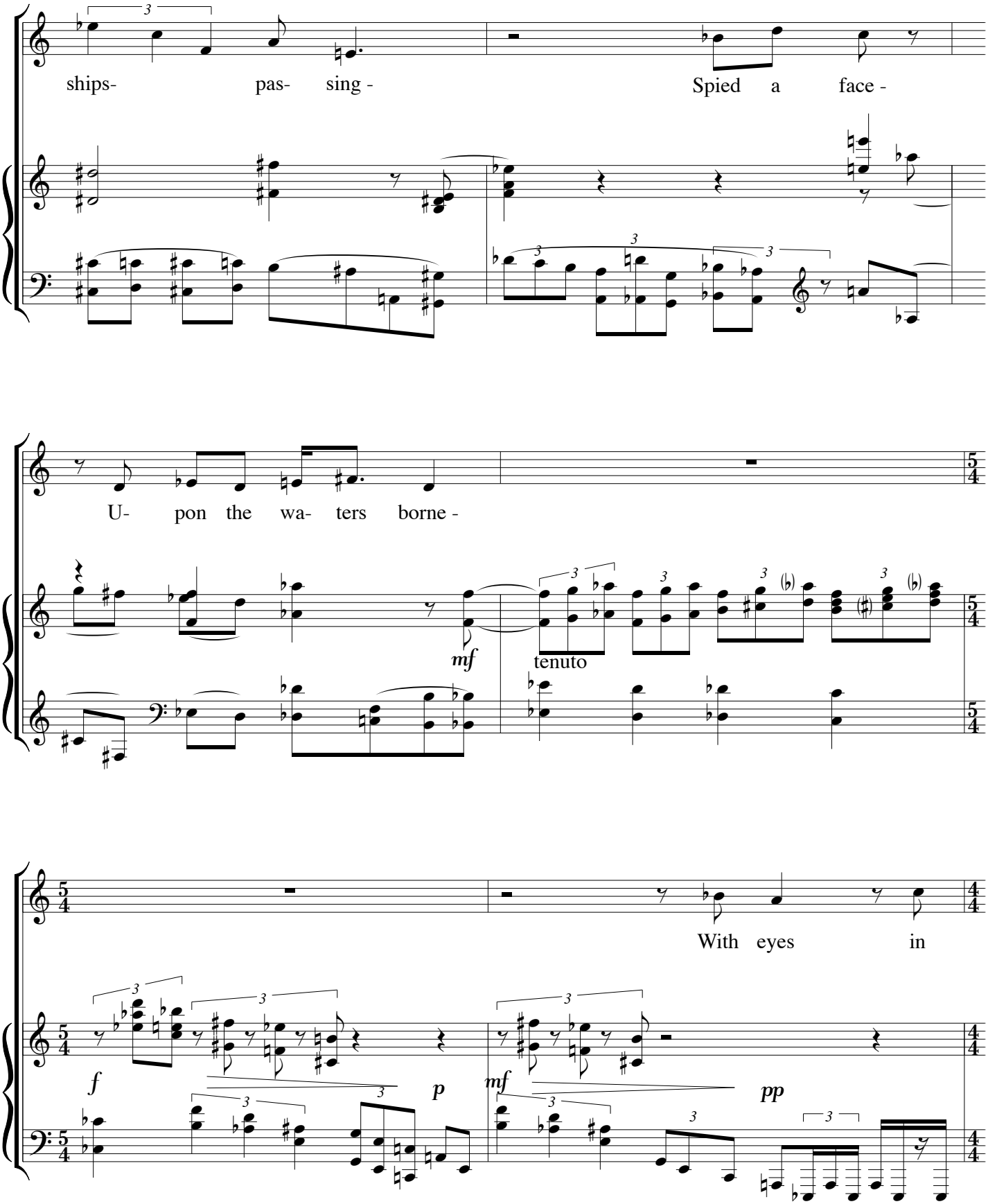
5.

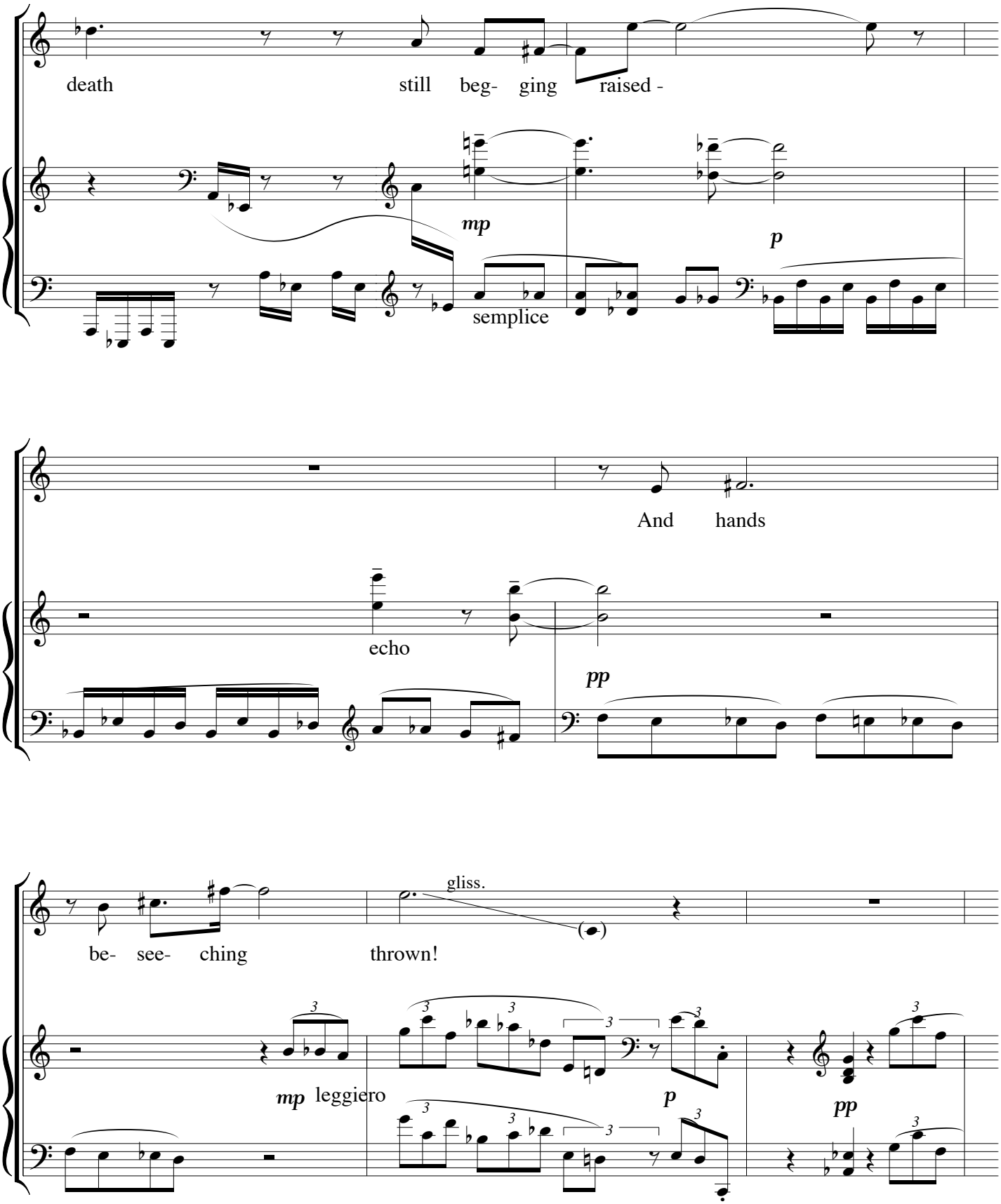
TWO SWIMMERS

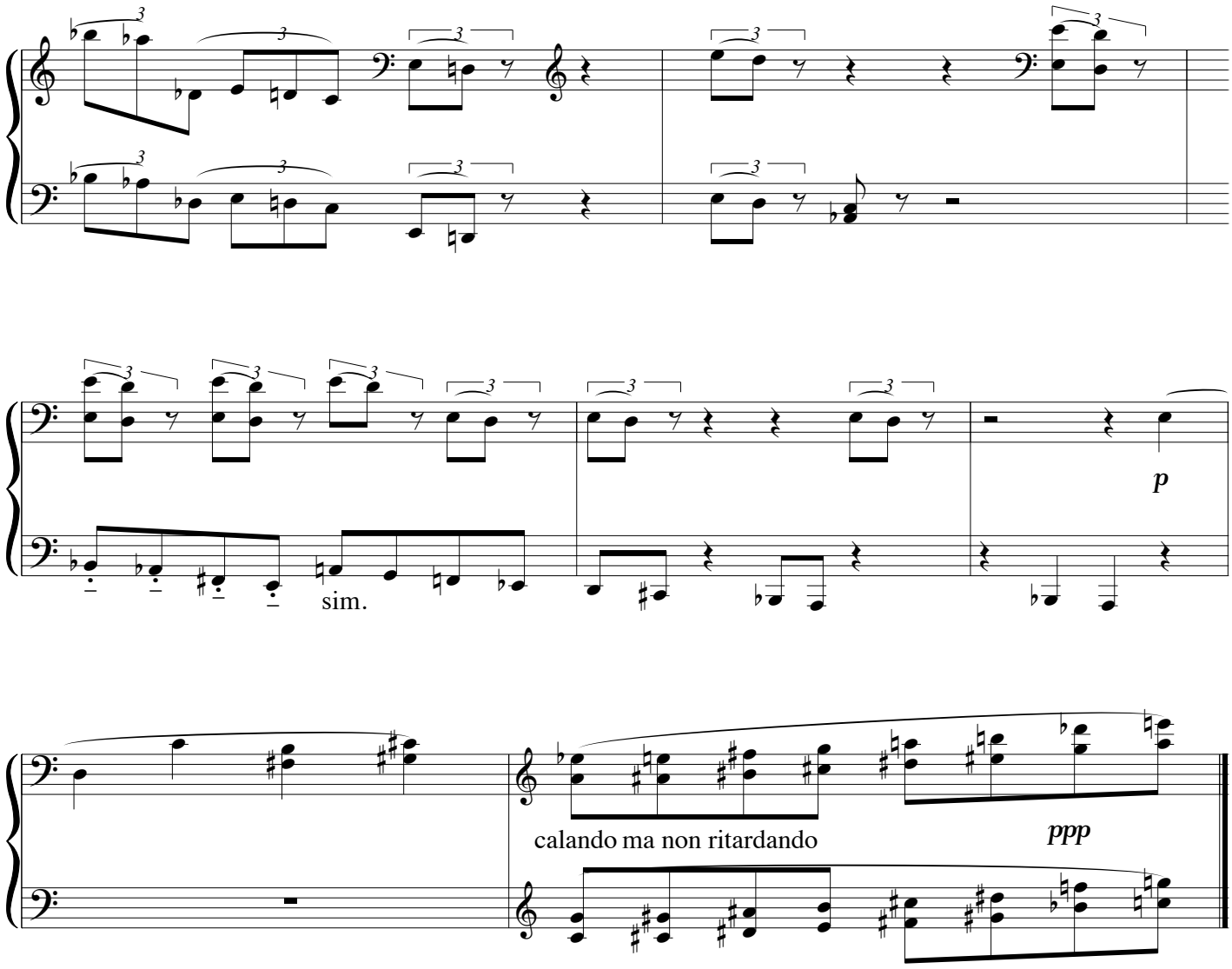



the mor- ning sun -
f
mp
When One - turned smi- ling to the land-
pp
p
mf
mp
f
marcato
p
f
mf
f


Oh God!
the O- ther One!
f
ff quasi precipitoso
mf
p
f
The stray
mp legato

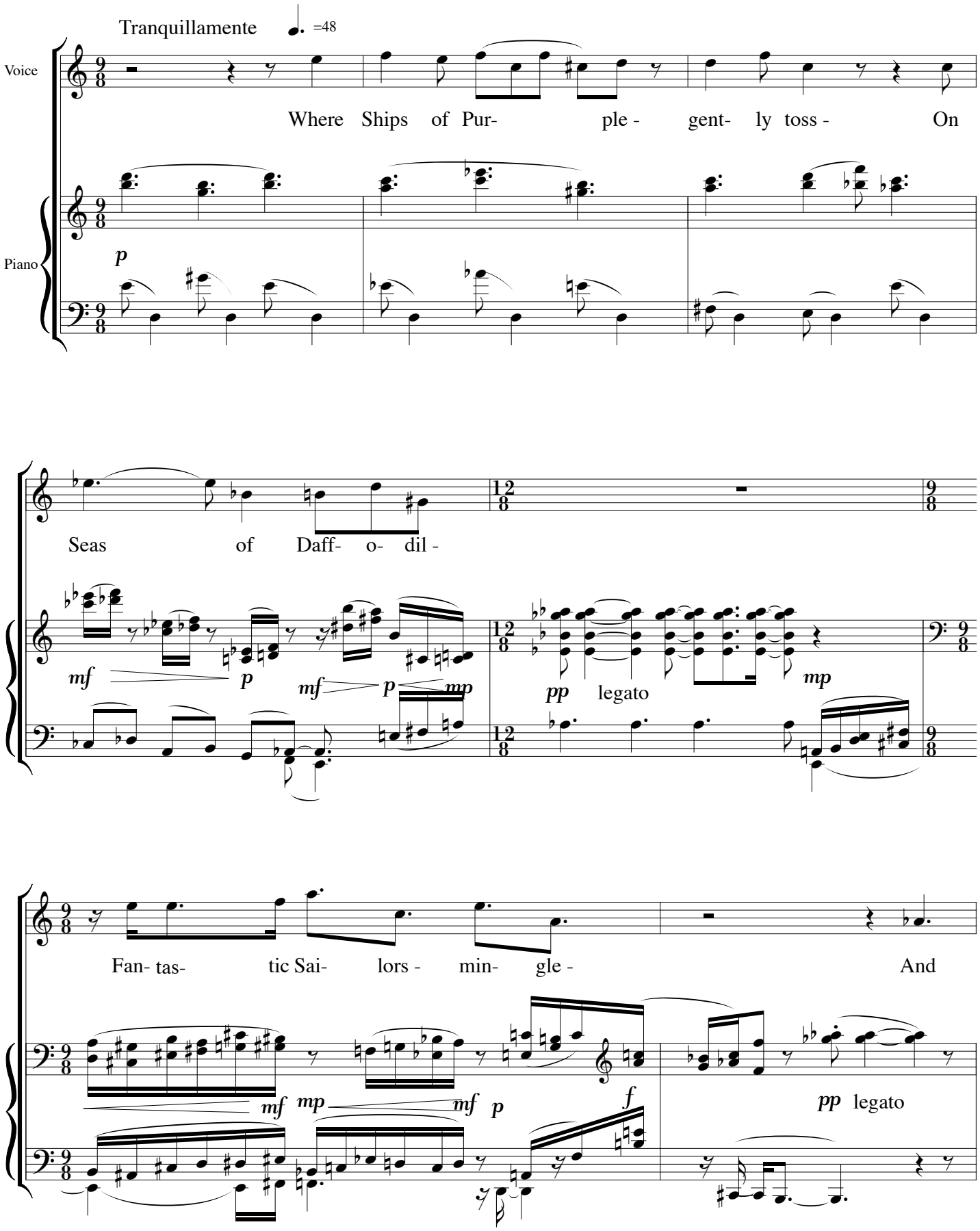

ships- pas- sing -
Spied a face -
U- pon the wa- ters borne -
mf
tenuto
With eyes in
f
p
mf
pp

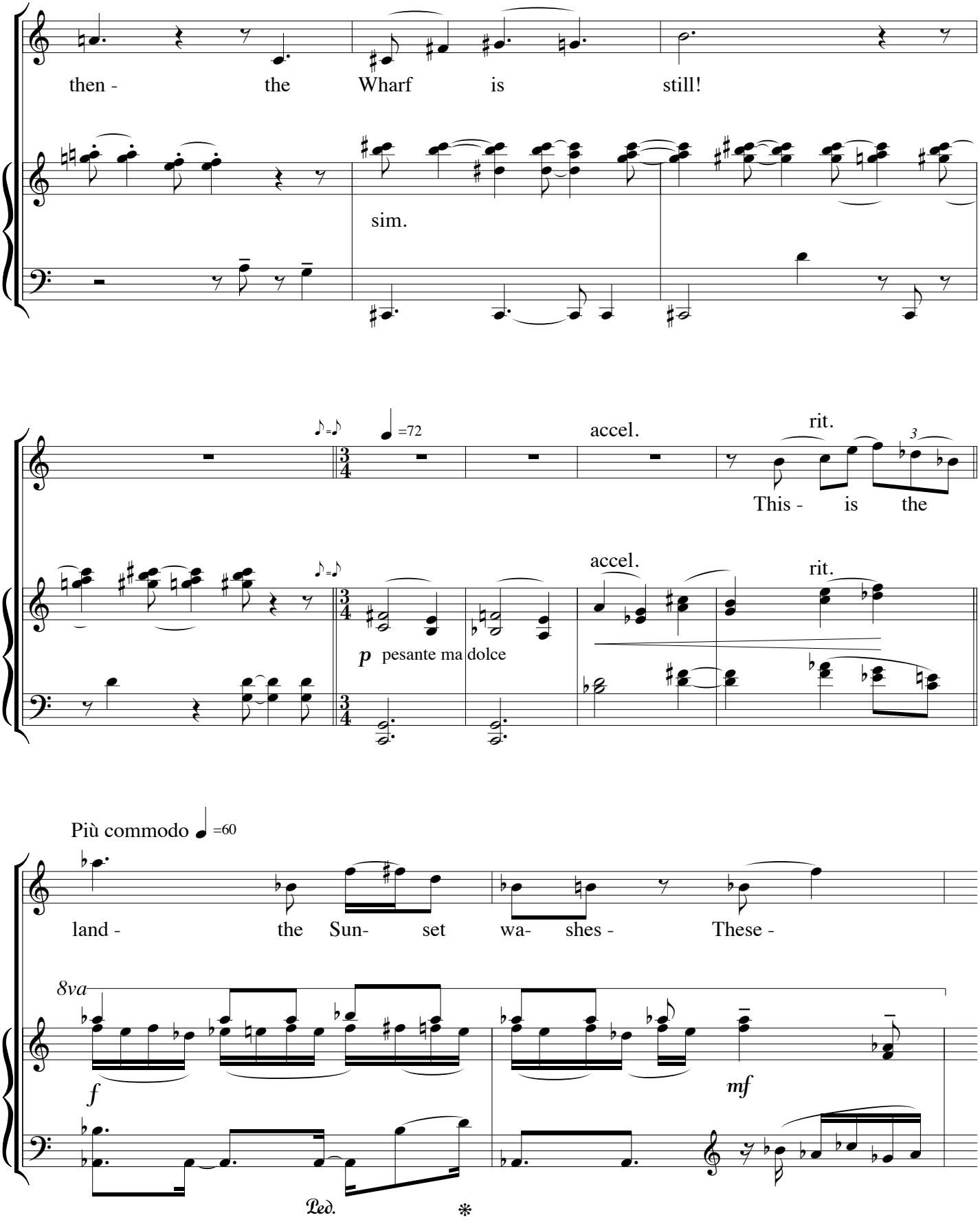

death
still beg- ging raised -
mp
p
semplice
And hands
echo
pp
gliss.
be- see- ching
thrown!
mp leggiero
p
pp

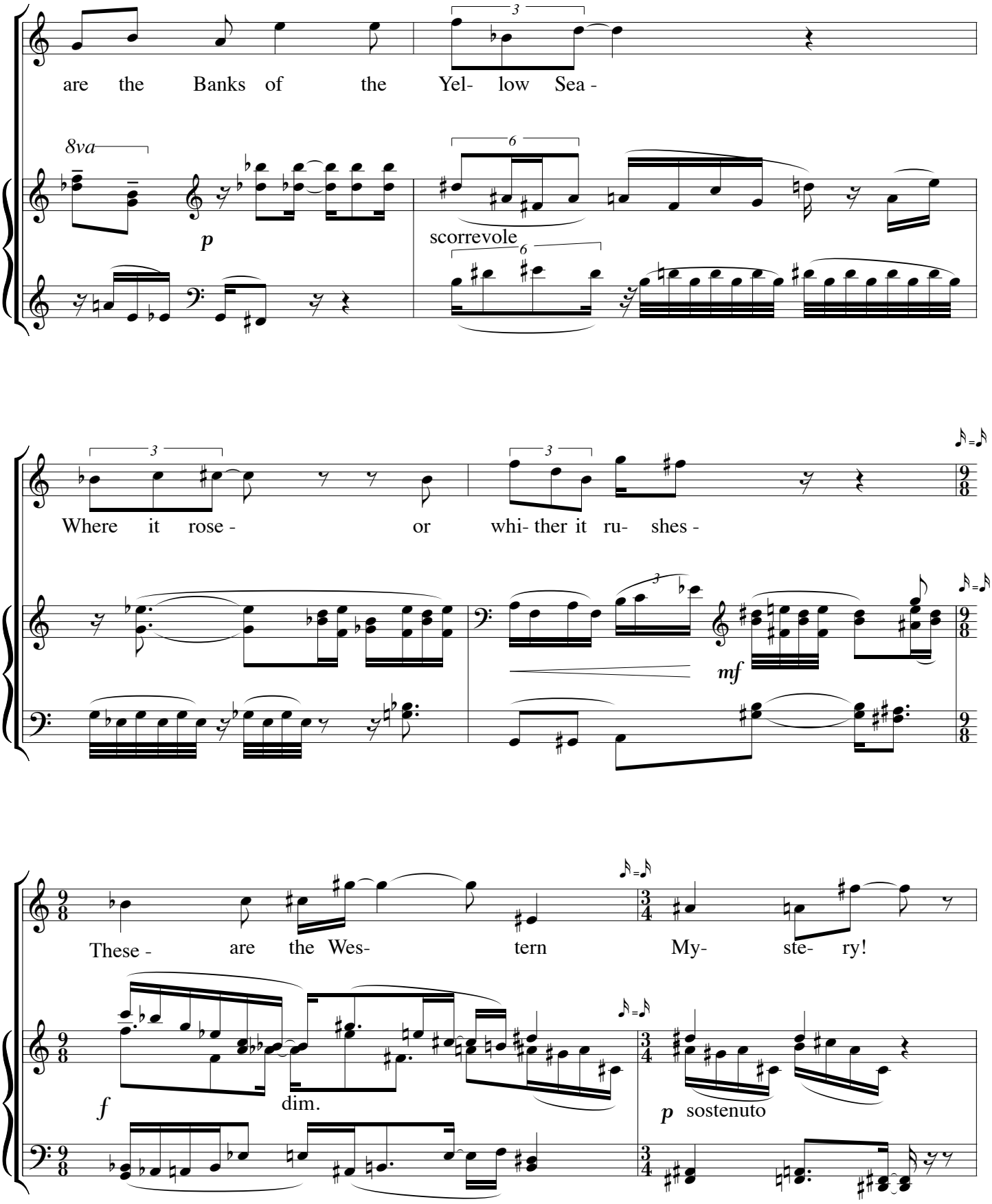

sim.
p
calando ma non ritardando
ppp

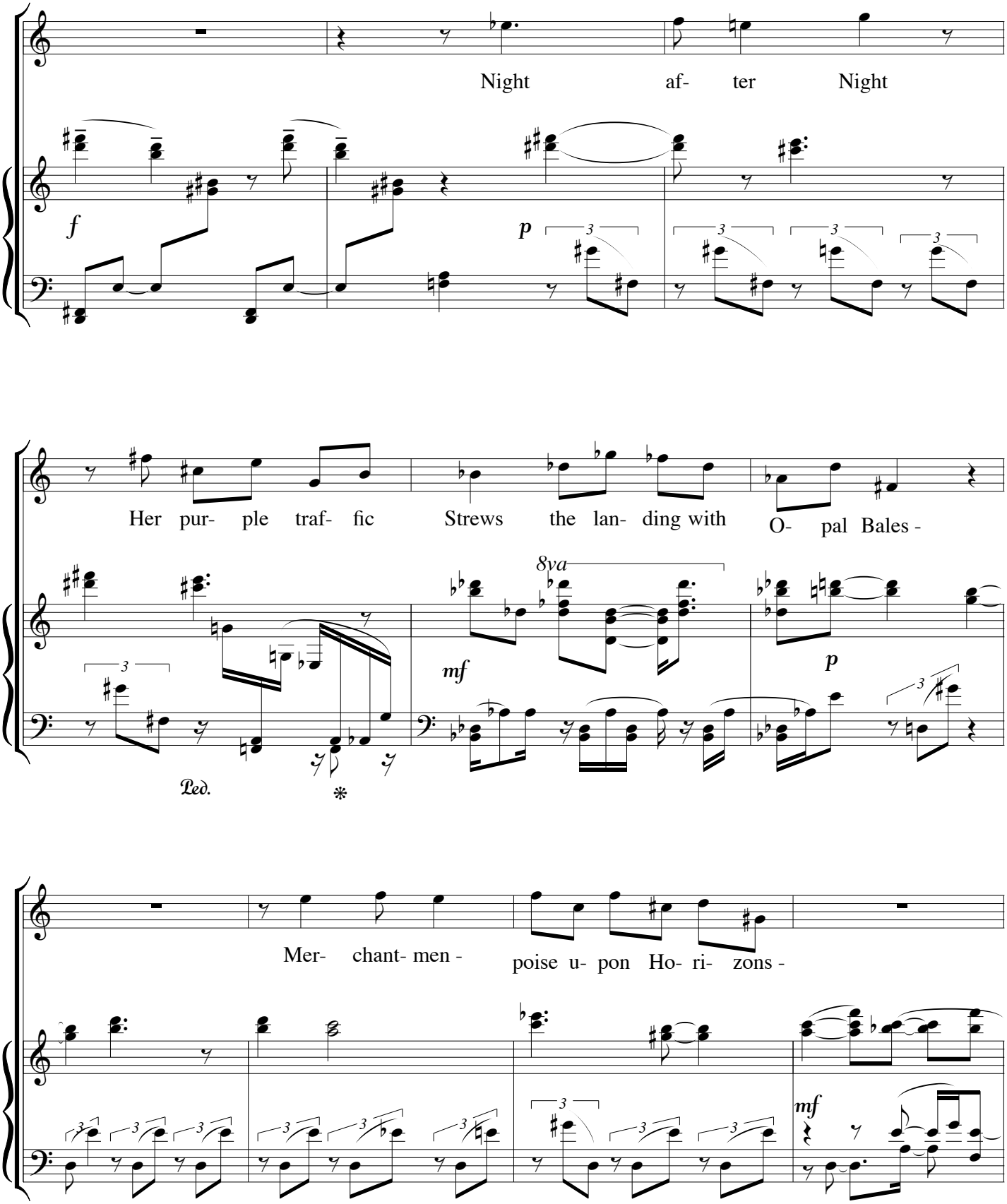
6.

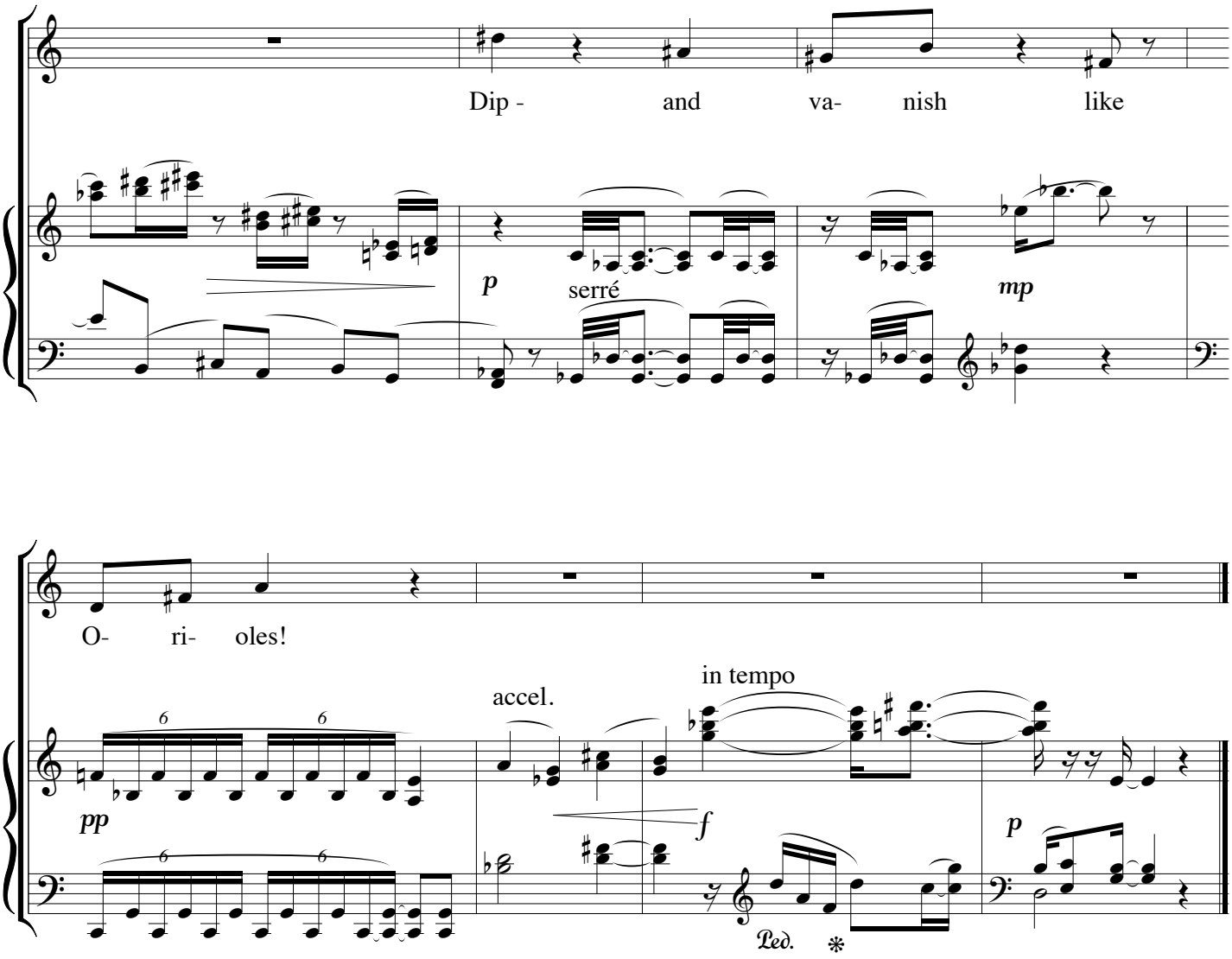
WHERE SHIPS OF PURPLE



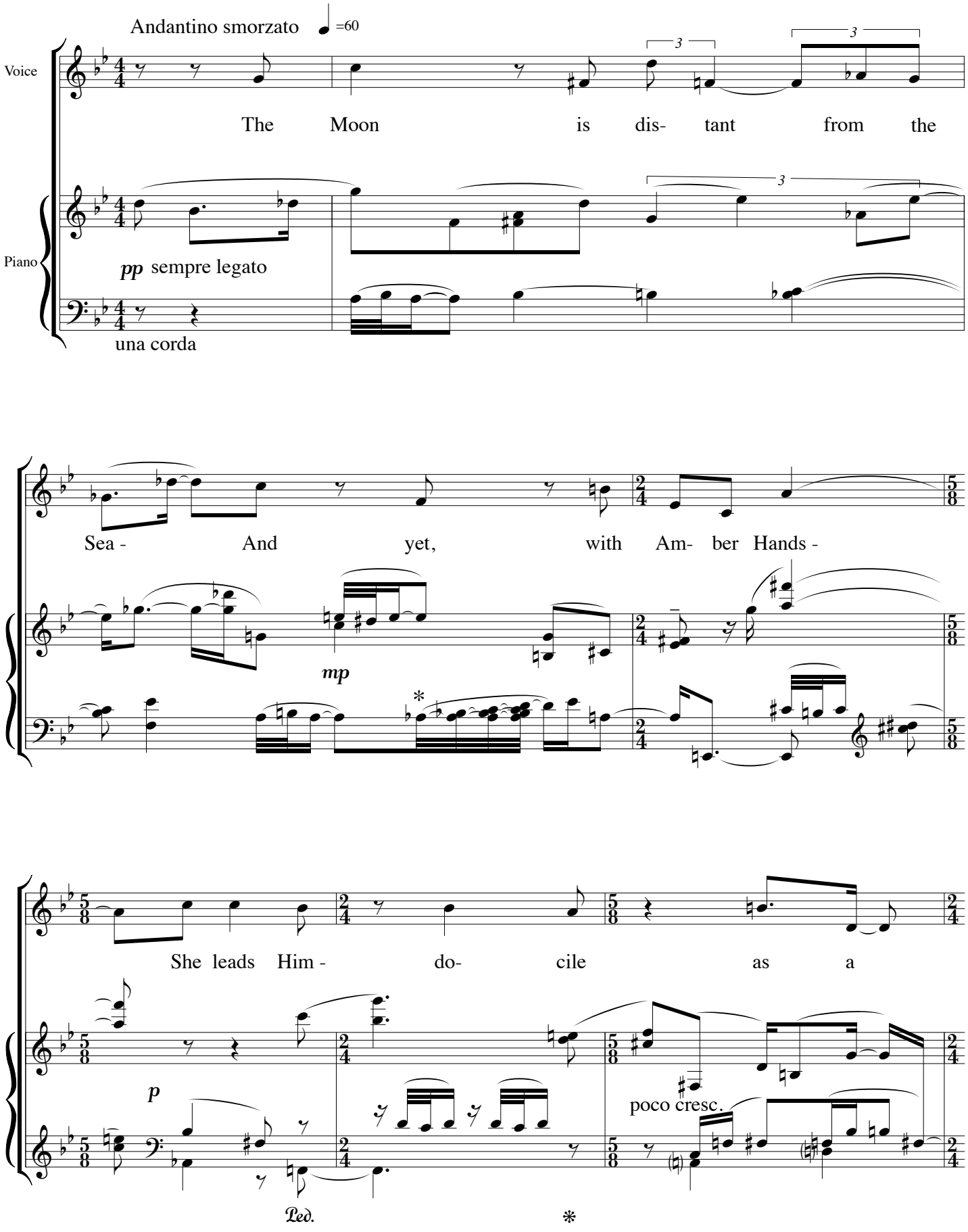

then - the Wharf is still!
sim.
accel.
rit.
This - is the
accel.
rit.
p pesante ma dolce
Più commodo =60
land - the Sun- set wa- shes - These -
8va
f
mf
Ped.
*


are the Banks of the Yel- low Sea -
8va
p
scorrevole
Where it rose - or whi- ther it ru- shes -
mf
These - are the Wes- tern My- ste- ry!
f
dim.
p sostenuto

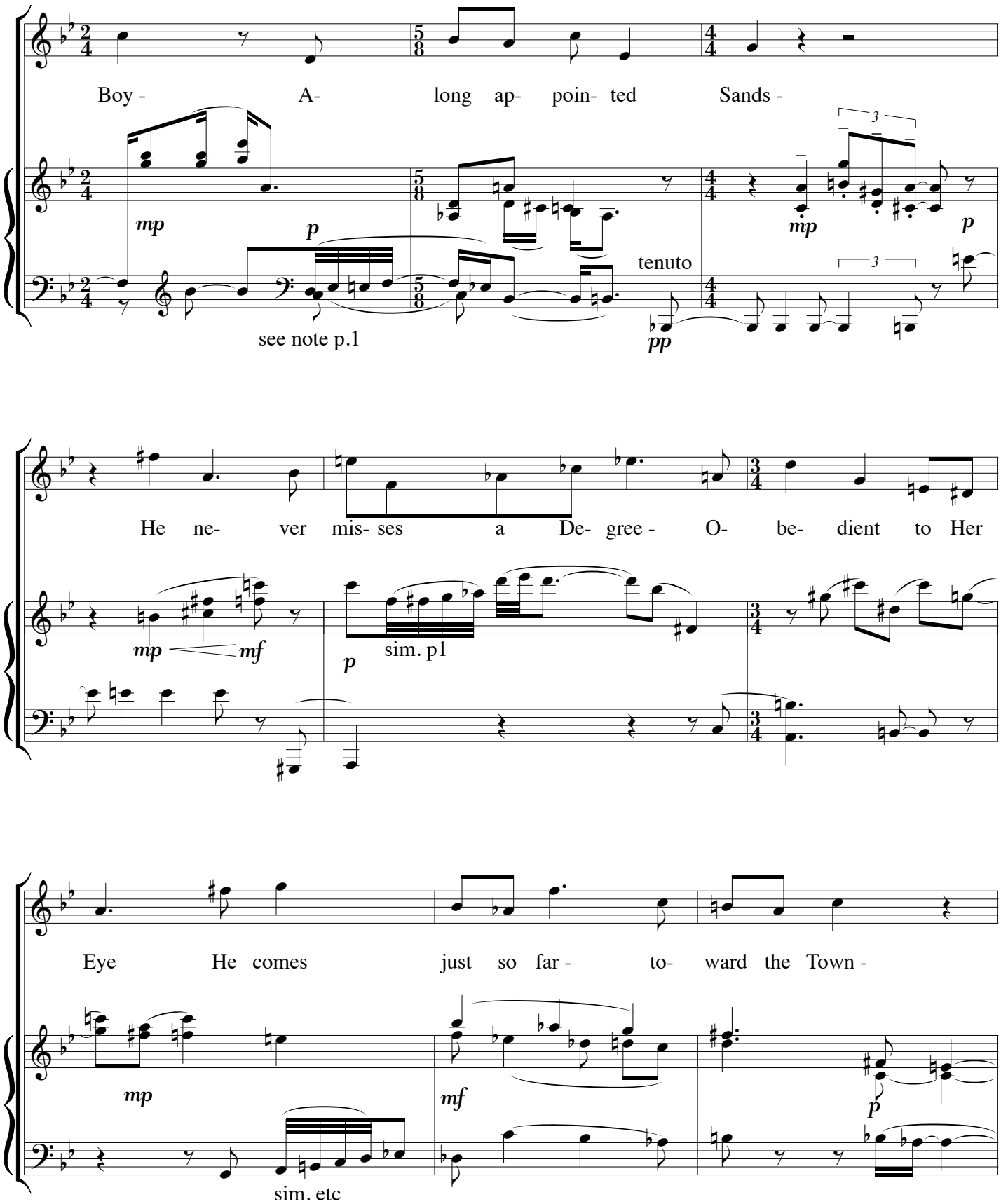

Night af- ter Night
f
p
Her pur- ple traf- fic Strews the lan- ding with O- pal Bales -
8va
mf
p
Ped.
*
Mer- chant- men - poise u- pon Ho- ri- zons -
mf

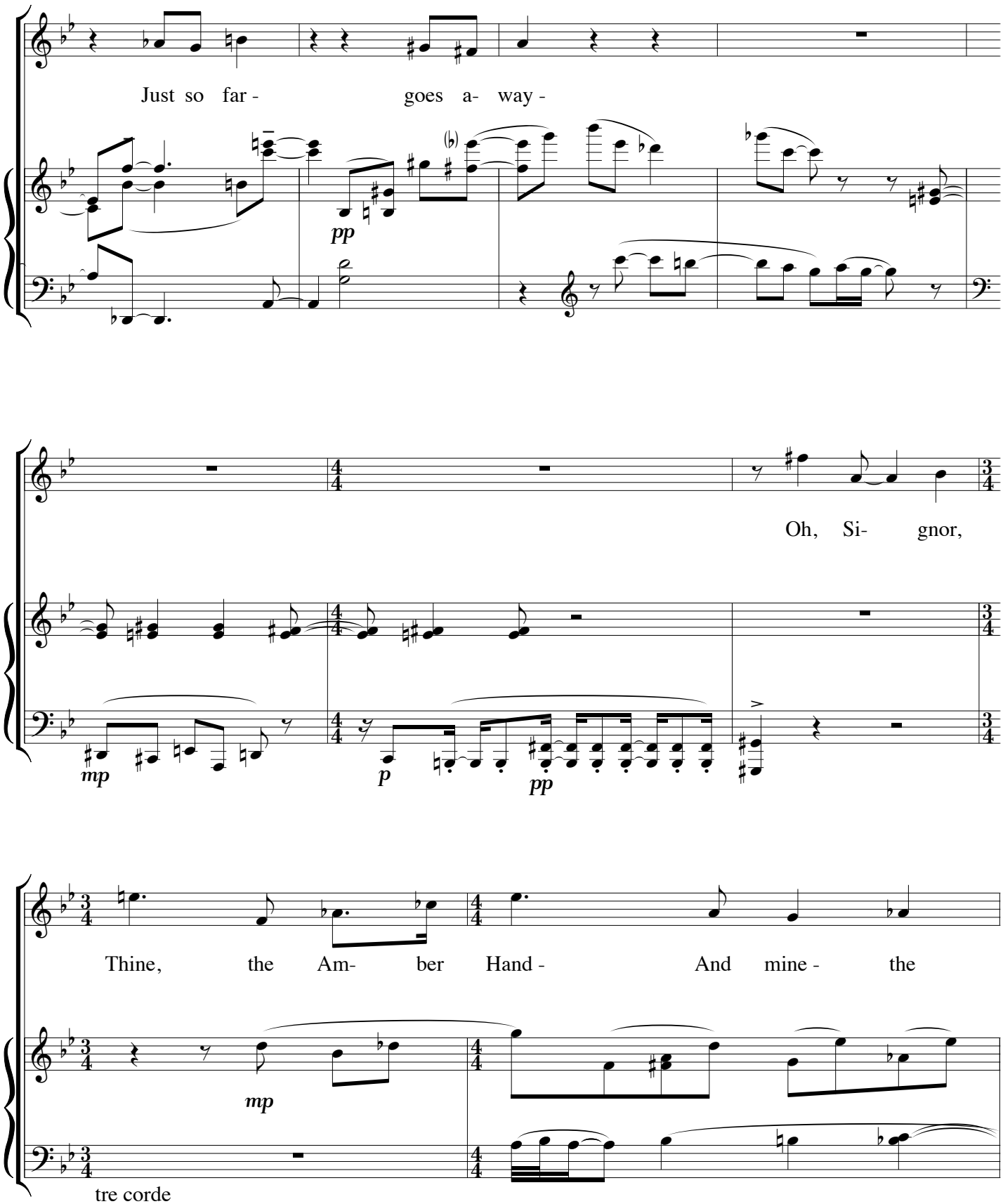

Dip - and va- nish like
p
serré
mp
O- ri- oles!
accel.
in tempo
pp
f
p
Led.

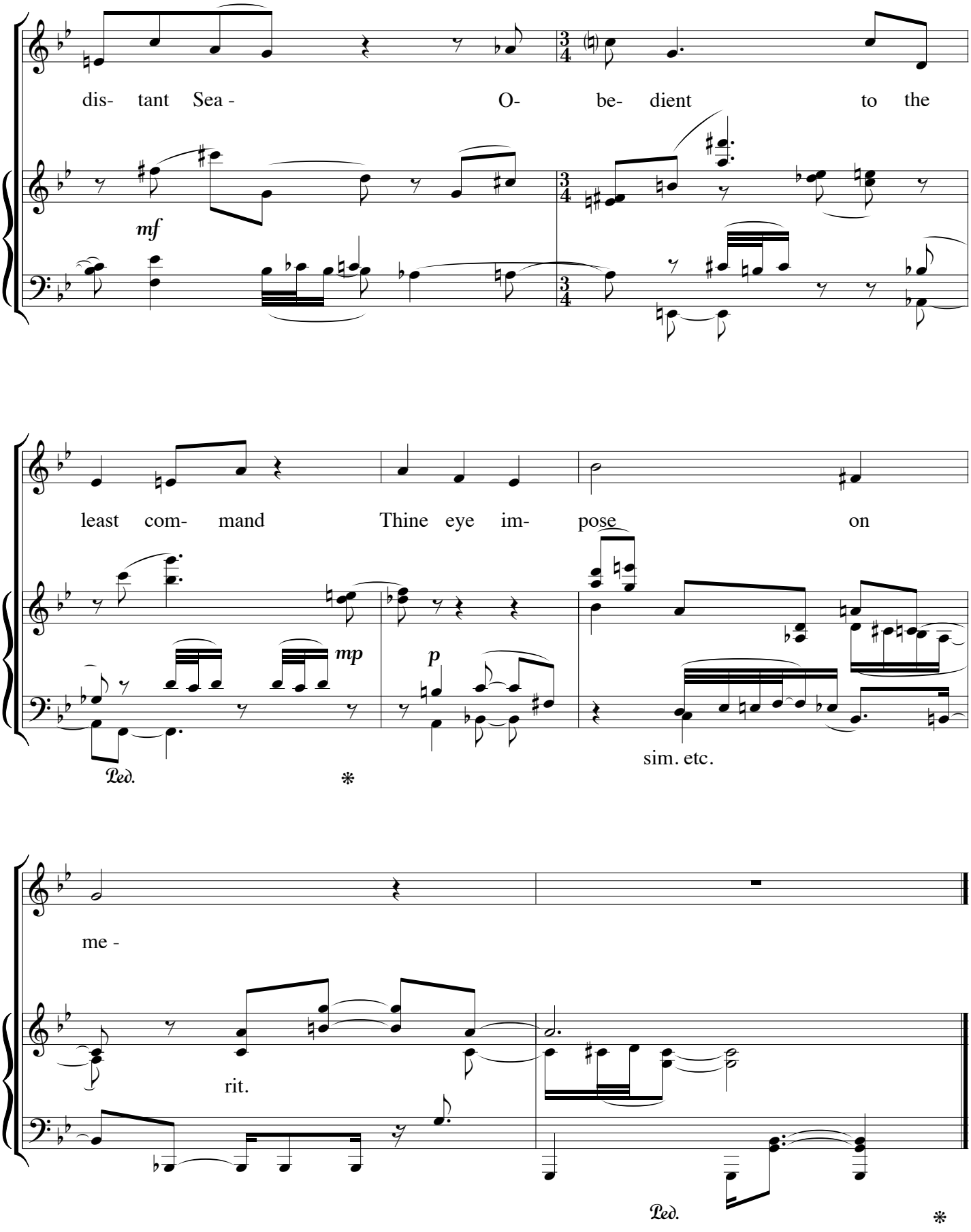
7.
THE MOON



* Without emphasis - like an Aeolian harp. Similar 32nd figures to be sustained the same way.

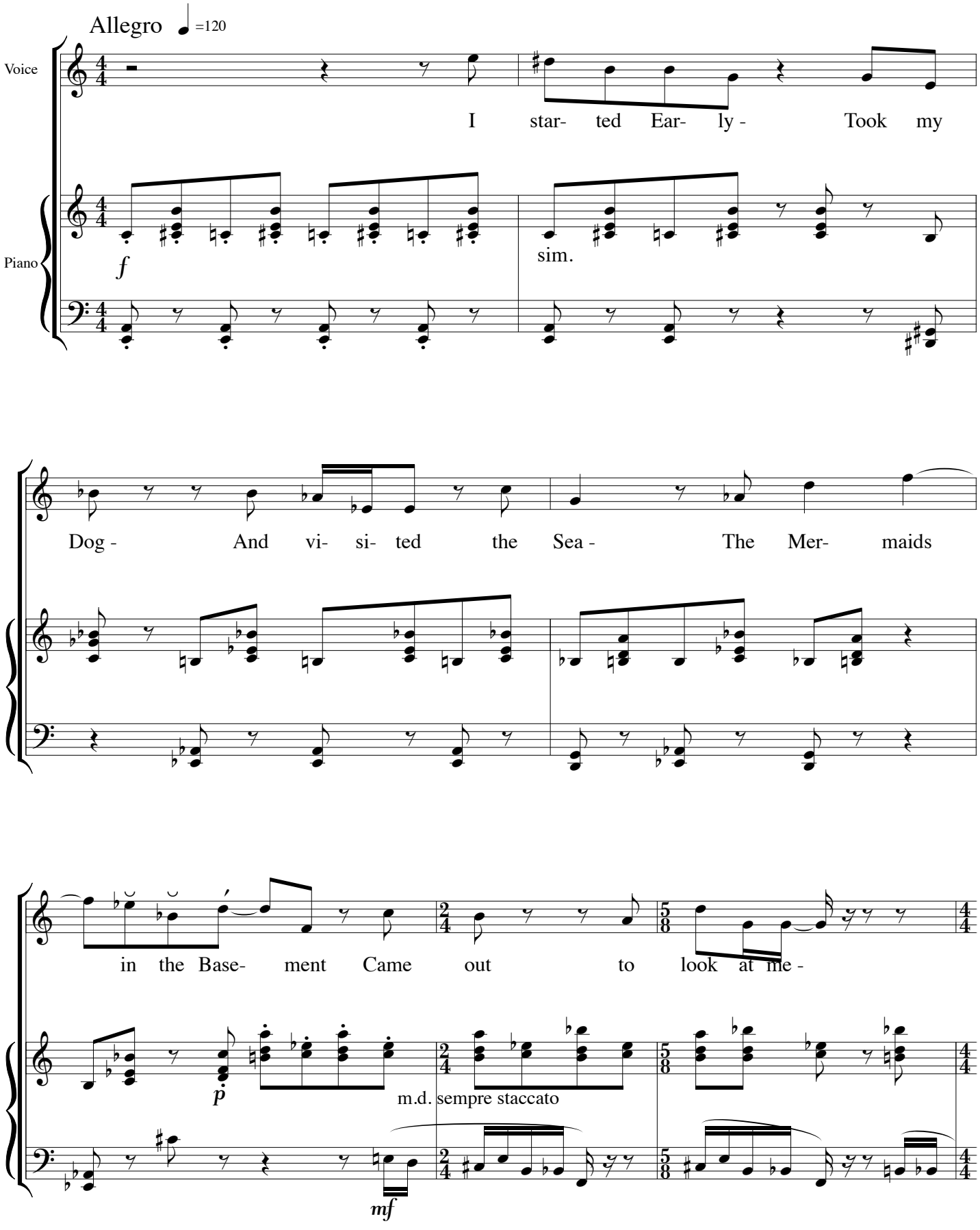

Boy - A- long ap- poin- ted Sands -
mp
p
mp
p
tenuto
see note p.1
pp
He ne- ver mis- ses a De- gree - O- be- dient to Her
mp
mf
p
sim. p1
Eye He comes just so far - to- ward the Town -
mp
mf
p
sim. etc

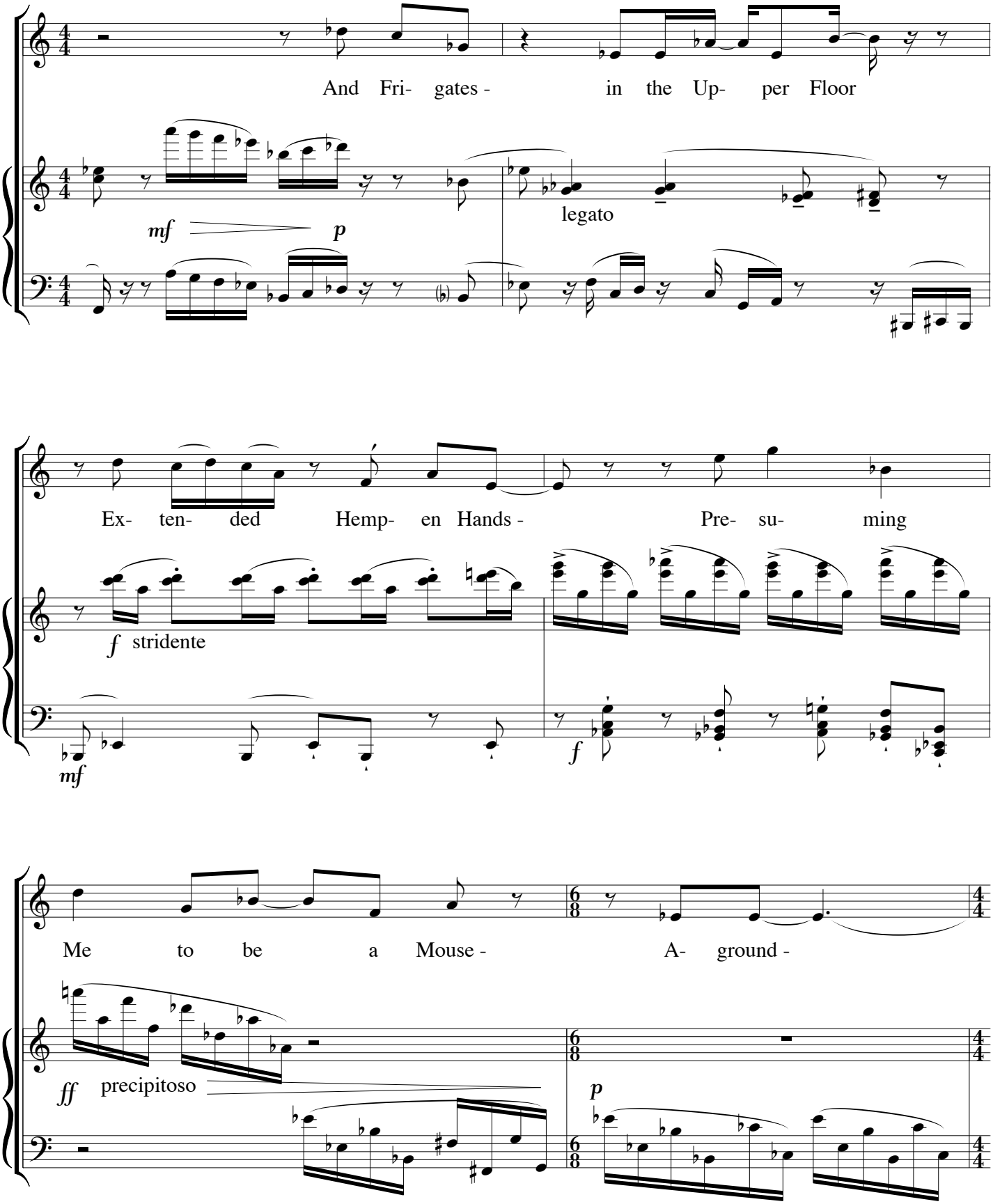

Just so far - goes a- way -
pp
Oh, Si- gnor,
mp
p
pp
Thine, the Am- ber Hand - And mine - the
mp
tre corde

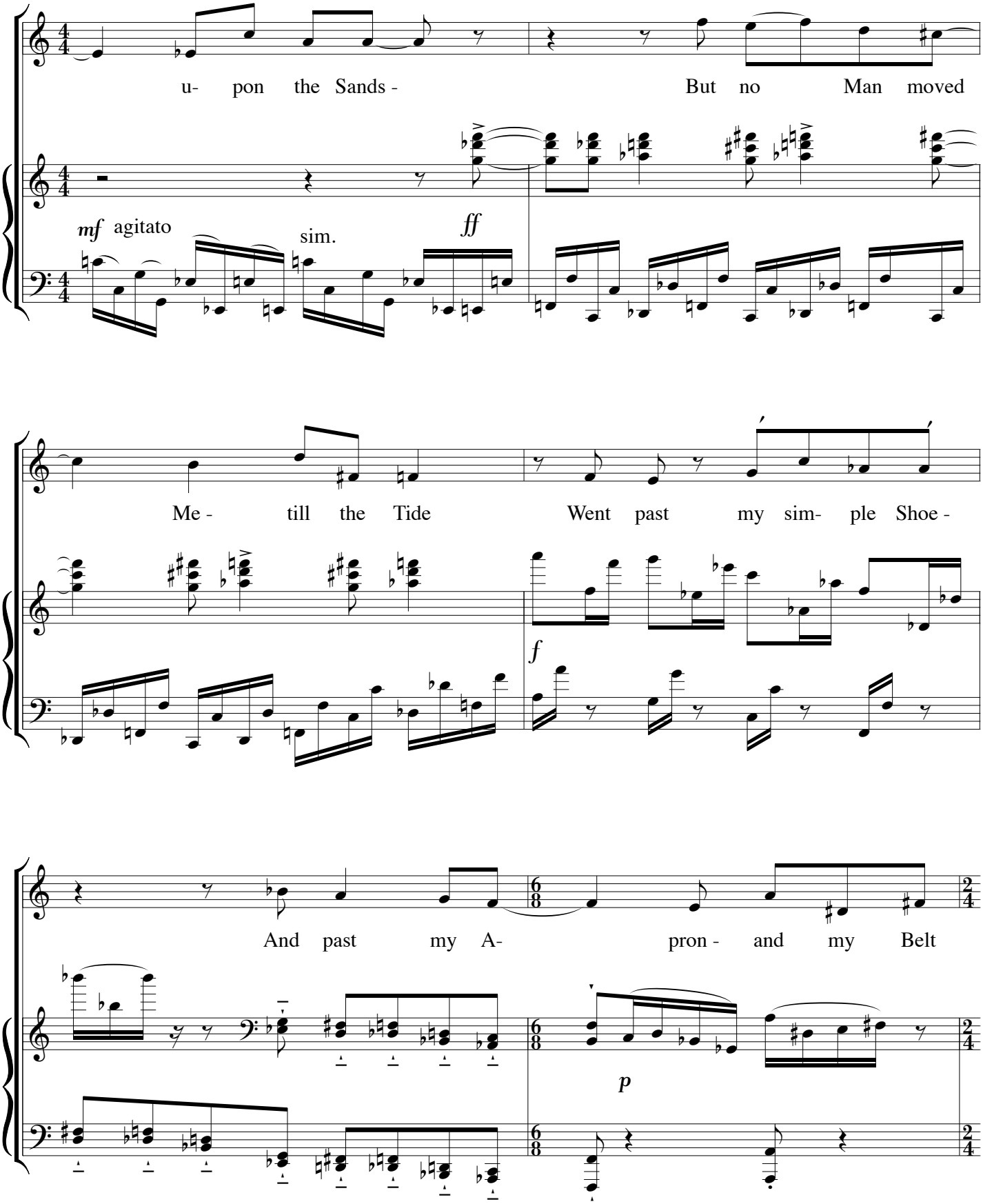

dis- tant Sea - O- be- dient to the
mf
least com- mand Thine eye im- pose on
mp
p
Ped.
*
sim. etc.
me -
rit.
Ped.
*

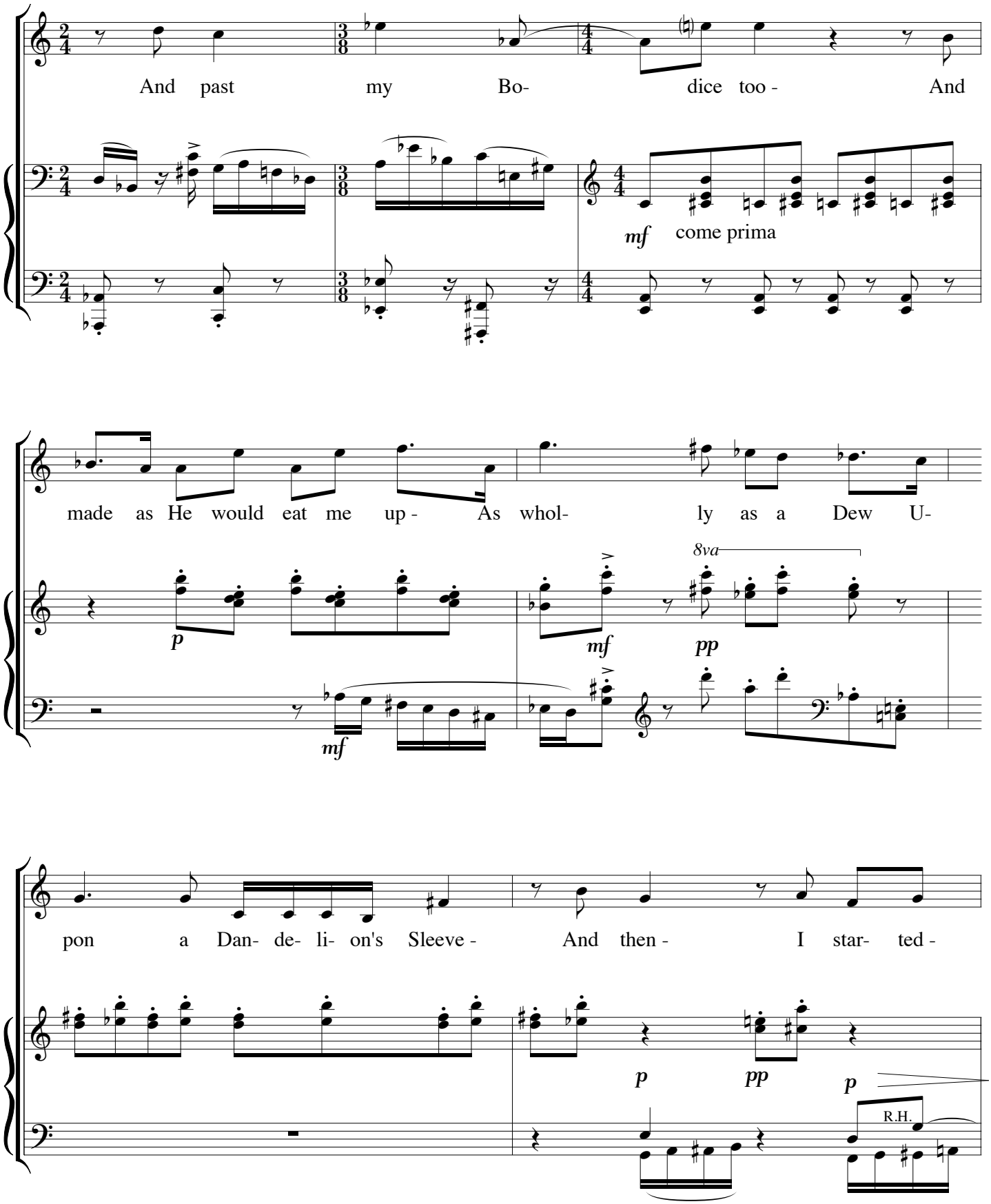
8.

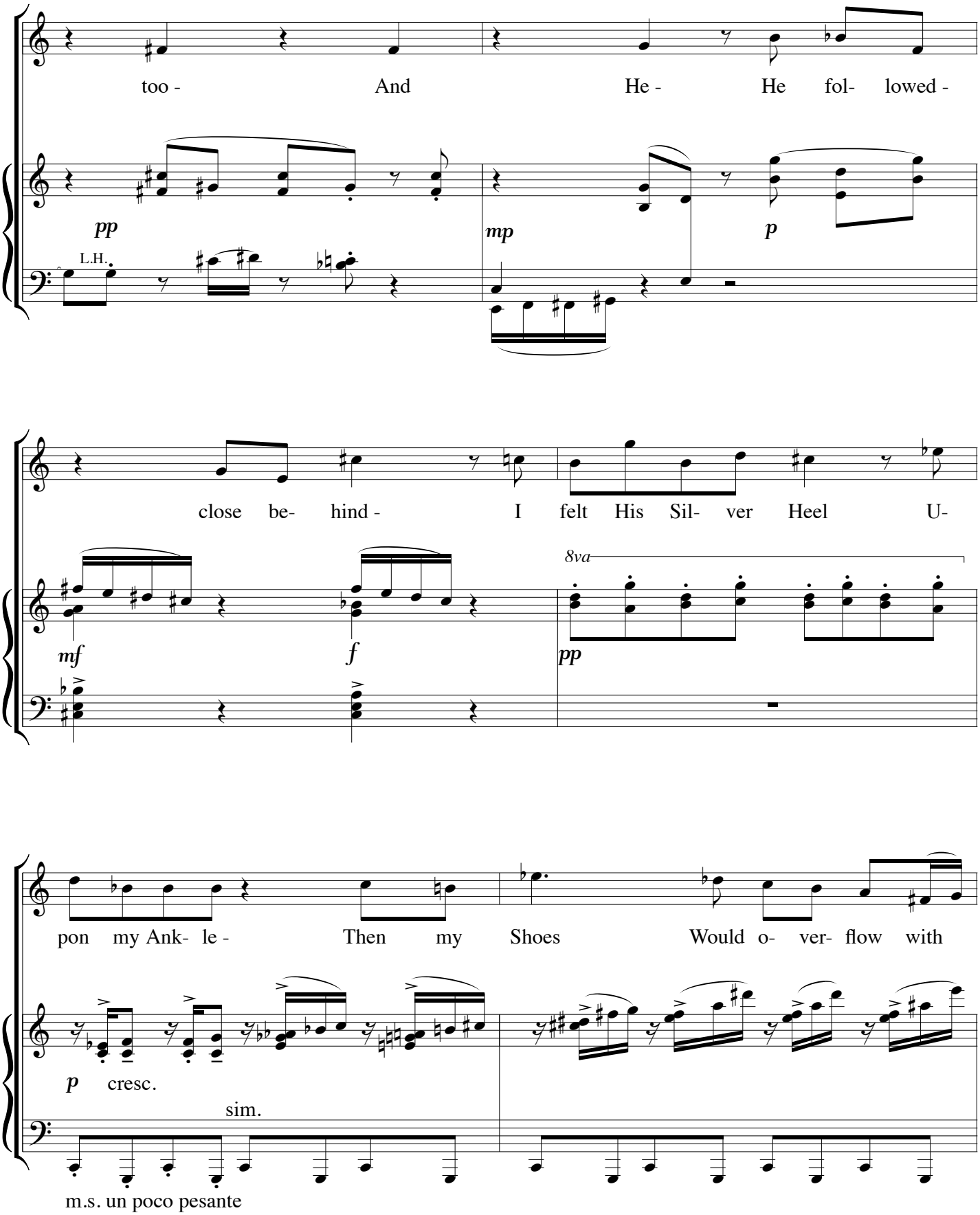
I STARTED EARLY

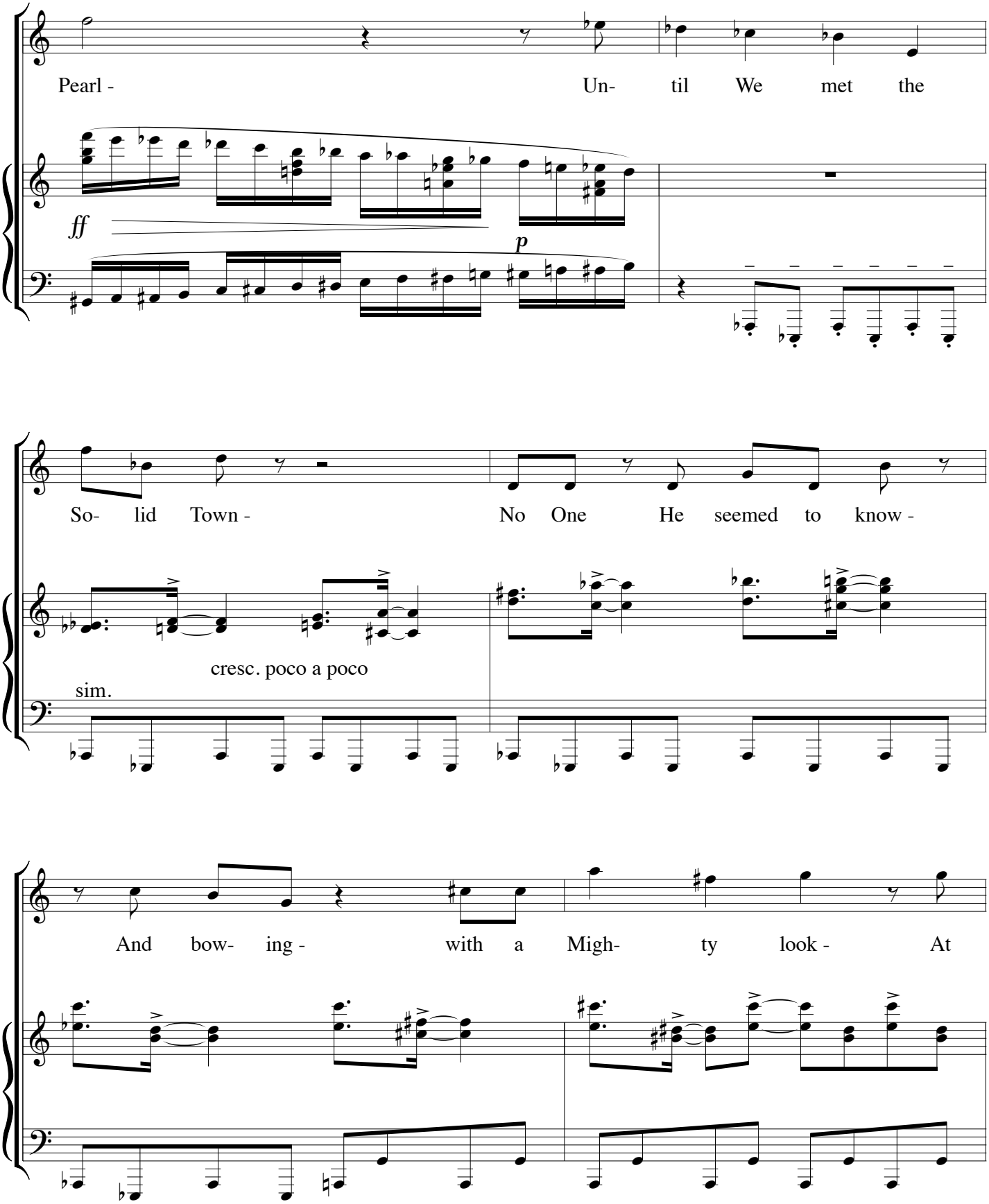


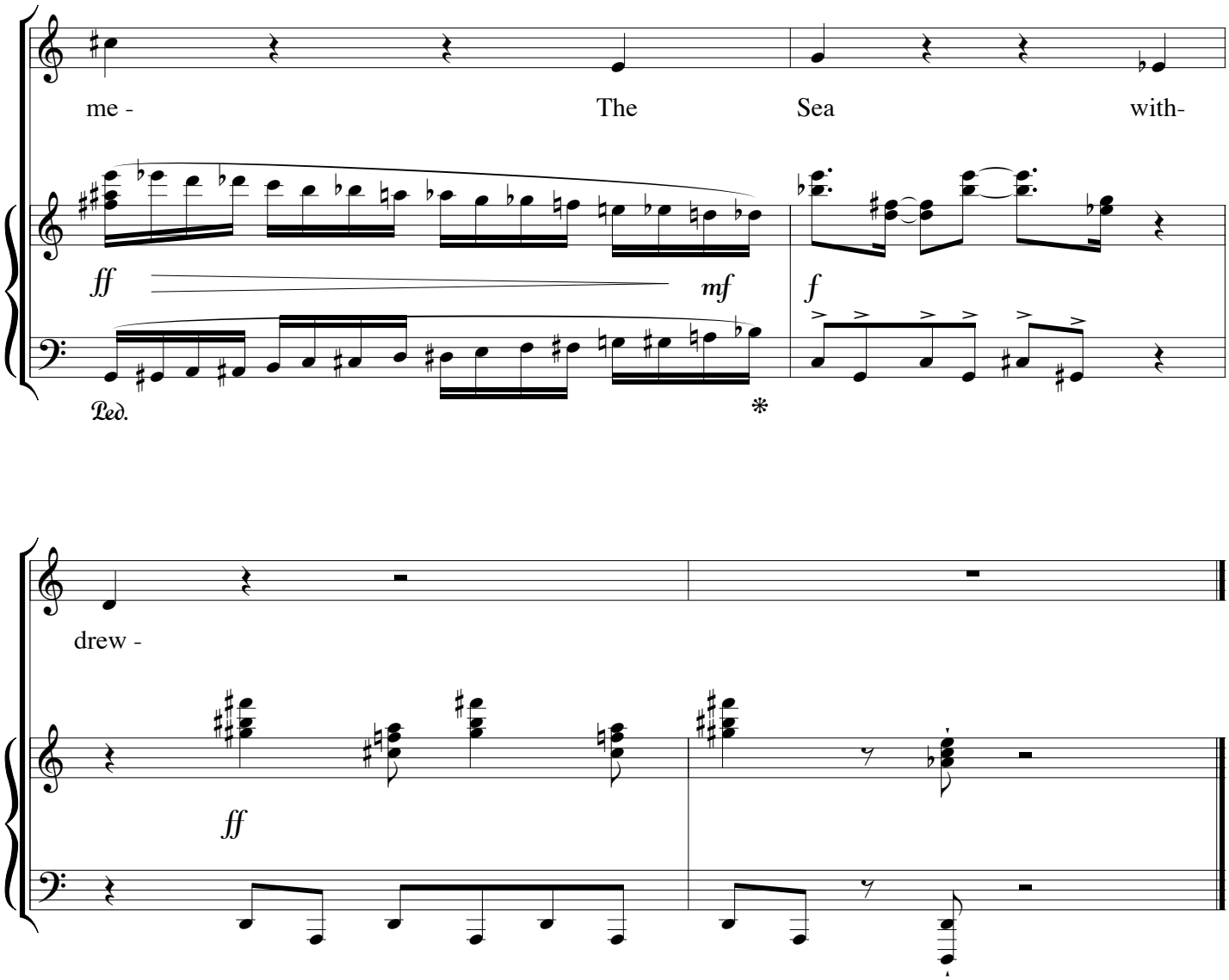

And Fri- gates - in the Up- per Floor
mf
p
legato
Ex- ten- ded Hemp- en Hands - Pre- su- ming
f stridente
mf
f
Me to be a Mouse - A- ground -
ff precipitoso
p


u- pon the Sands -
But no Man moved
mf agitato
sim.
ff
Me - till the Tide
Went past my sim- ple Shoe -
f
And past my A-
pron - and my Belt
p


And past my Bo- dice too - And
mf come prima
made as He would eat me up - As whol- ly as a Dew U-
p
mf
8va
pp
mf
pon a Dan- de- li- on's Sleeve - And then - I star- ted -
p
pp
p
R.H.


too - And He - He fol- lowed -
pp
L.H.
mp
p
close be- hind - I felt His Sil- ver Heel U-
mf
f
8va
pp
pon my Ank- le - Then my Shoes Would o- ver- flow with
p cresc.
sim.
m.s. un poco pesante


Pearl - Un- til We met the
ff
p
So- lid Town - No One He seemed to know -
cresc. poco a poco
sim.
And bow- ing - with a Migh- ty look - At


me -
The
Sea
with-
ff
mf
f
Ped.
*

drew -
ff