ICE AGE

ERIC SHANFIELD

ICE AGE

Eric Shanfield | 2016 | 14'

Being a setting of "The Bush Administration"

by Frederick Seidel

Voice

Piano

This piece should be performed with the utmost simplicity, almost naiveté.

Ice Age is dedicated to Michelle Halac, who was there for me during one of the most difficult times in my life.

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ICE AGE

"The Bush Administration" by Frederick Seidel

I

The darkness coming from the mouth
Must be the entrance to a cave.
The heart of darkness took another form
And inside is the Congo in the man.
I think the Bush administration is as crazy as Sparta was.
Sparta has swallowed Congo and is famished.
The steel Spartan abs turn to fevered slush
While it digests the good that it is doing
In the desert heat. I felt a drop of rain,
Which is the next Ice Age being born.

II

I stood on Madison. The sun was shining.
I felt large drops of rain as warm as tears.
I held my hand out, palm up, the way one does.
The sun was shining, and the rain really started.
Maybe there must have been a rainbow somewhere.
I hailed a cab and as I hopped in
That was the first thing
The radio said:
They had beheaded an American.
There was a thunderclap and it poured.

III

The downpour drumming on my taxi gets the Hutu in me dancing.
Il rombo della Desmosedici makes machete music.
I crawl into a crocodile
And I go native.
The white cannibals in cowboy boots
Return to the bush
And the darkness of the brutes.
I am on all fours eating grass
So I can throw up because I like the feeling.
I crouch over a carcass and practice my eating.

IV

The United States of America preemptively eats the world.
The doctrine of eat lest you be eaten
Is famished, roars
And tears their heads off before its own is sawed off.
The human being sawing screams *God is Great!*
God is—and pours cicadas
By the tens of millions through the air.
They have risen from underground.
The voices of the risen make a summer sound.
It is pouring cicadas on Madison Avenue, making the street thick.

V

Every human being who has ever lived has died,
Except the living. The sun is shining and
The countless generations rise from underground this afternoon
And fall like rain.
I never thought that I would see your face again.
The savage wore a necklace made of beads,
And then I saw the beads were tiny human faces talking.
He starting crying and the tears were raindrops.
The raindrops were more faces.
Everybody dies, but they come back as salt and water.

VI

I am charmed by my taxi's sunny yellow reflection
Keeping abreast of the speeding taxi I'm in,
Playful and happy as a dolphin,
All the way down York Avenue to the hospital,
Right up to the bank of elevators to heaven.
I take an elevator to the floor.
Outside the picture window, rain is falling on the sunshine.
In the squeeze-hush silence, the ventilator keeps breathing.
A special ops comes in to check the hoses and the flow.
A visitor holds out his plan to taste the radiant rain.

VII

The Bush administration likes its rain sunny-side up.
I feel a mania of happiness at being alive
As I write you this suicide note.
I have never been so cheerily suicidal, so sue-seidel.
I am too cheery to be well.
George Bush is cheery as well.
I am cheeriest
Crawling around on all fours eating gentle grass
And pretending I am eating broken glass.
Then I throw up the pasture.

VIII

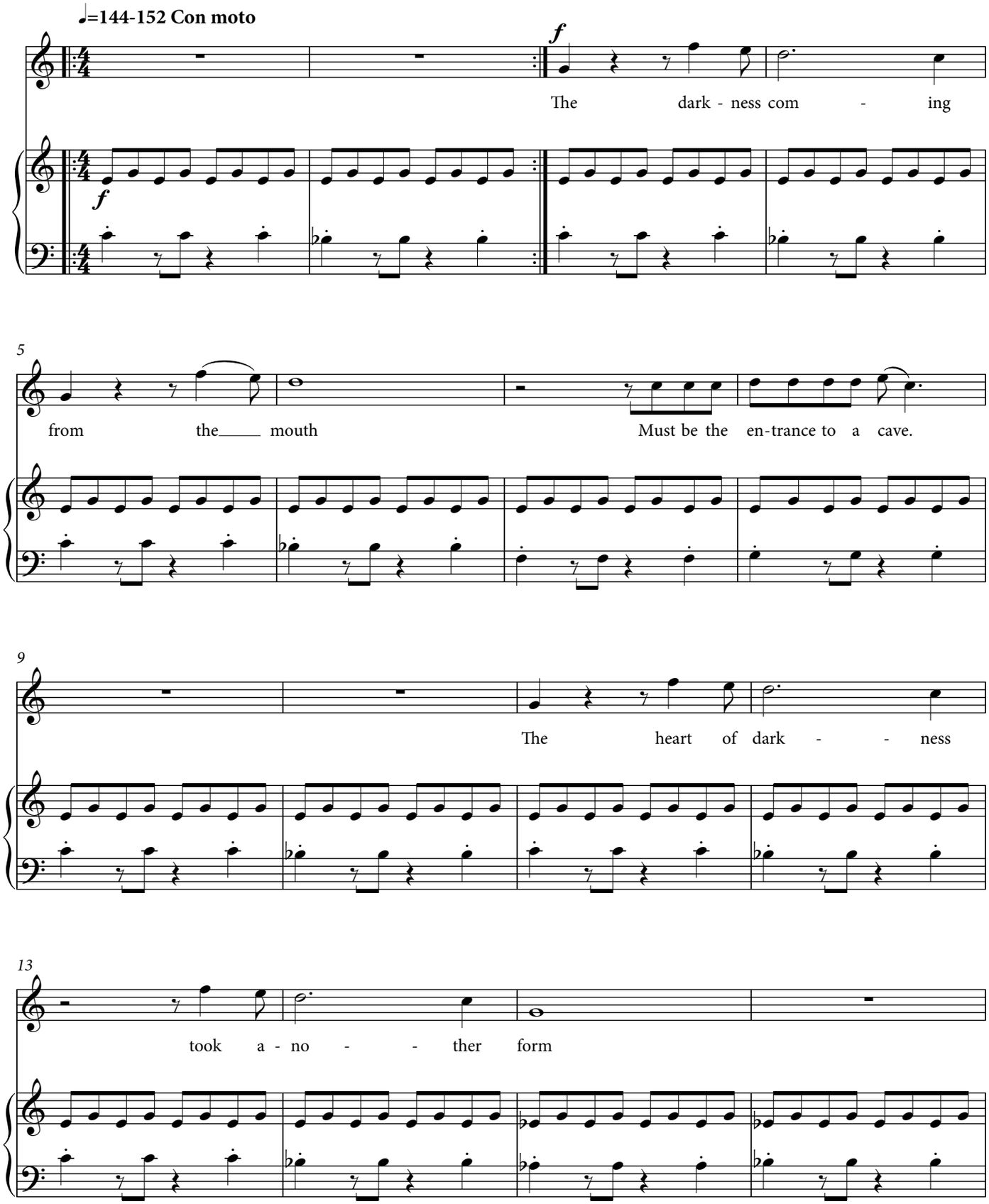
CENTCOM is drawing up war plans.
They will drop snow on Congo.
It will melt without leaving a trace, at great expense.
America will pay any price to whiten darkness.
My fellow citizen cicadas rise to the tops of the vanished Twin Towers
And float back down white as ashes
To introduce a new Ice Age.
The countless generations rise from underground this afternoon
And fall like rain.
I never thought that I would live to see the towers fall again.

ICE AGE

I

Frederick Seidel

Eric Shanfield



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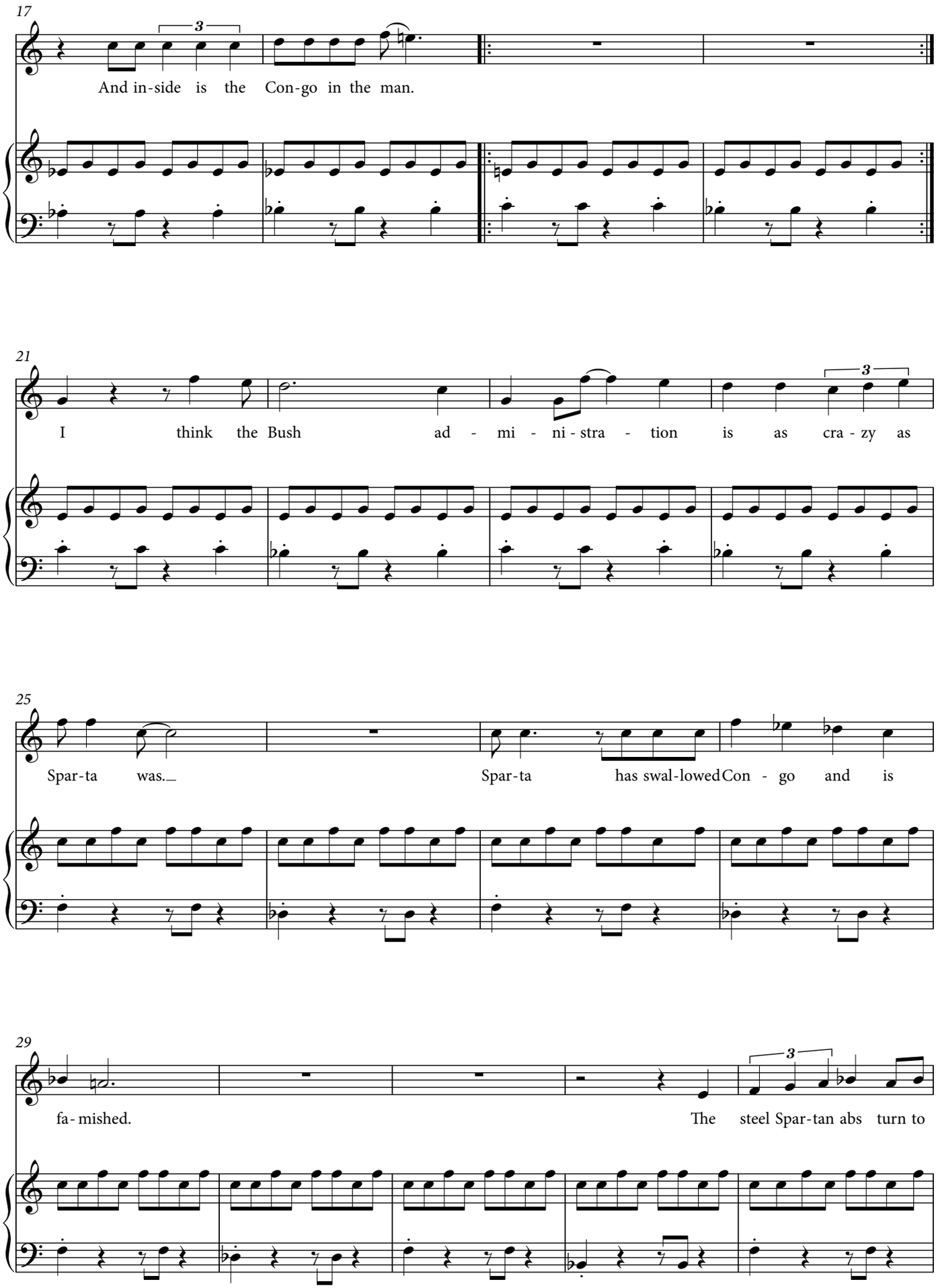
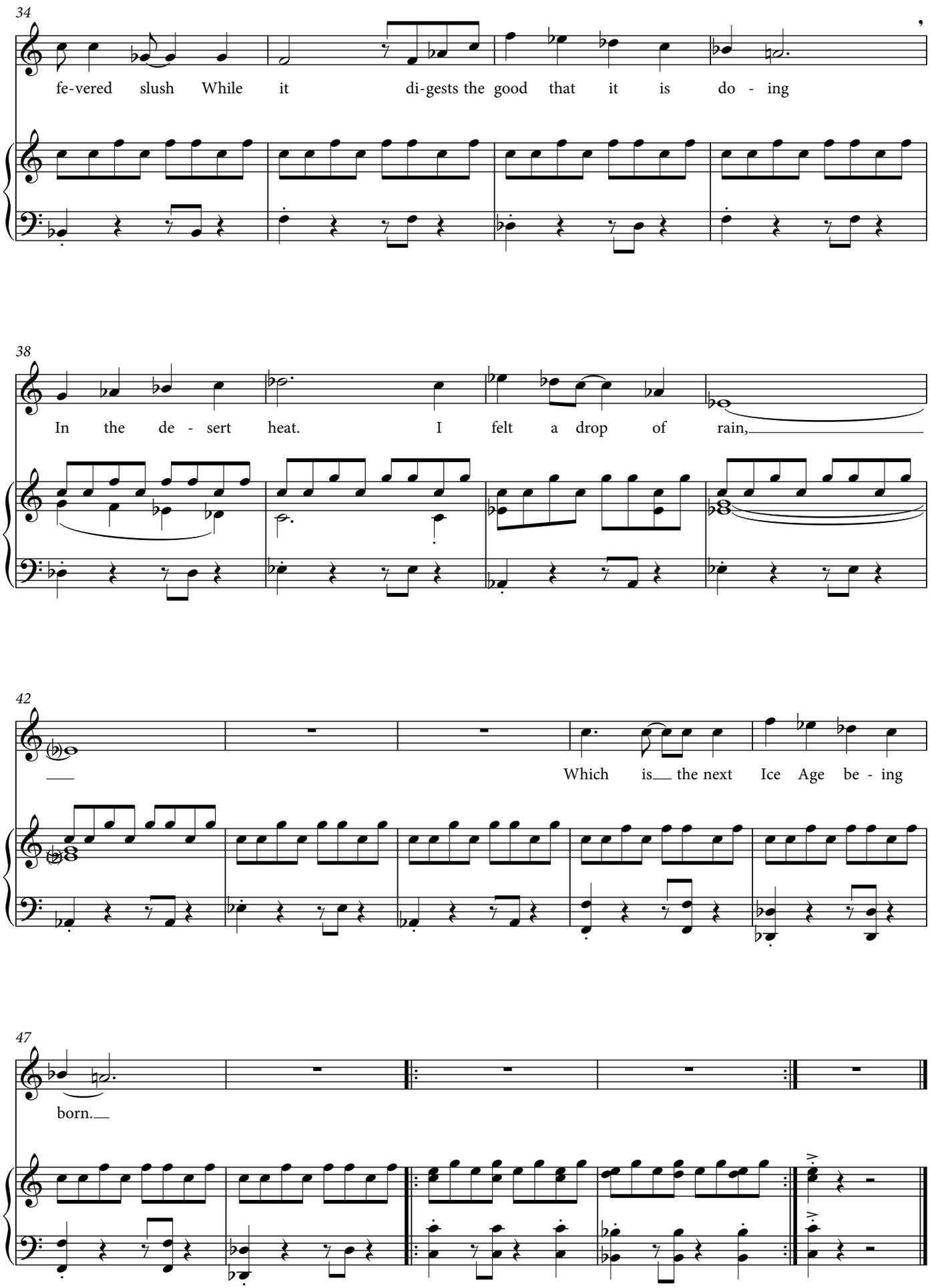

17
And in-side is the Con-go in the man.
21
I think the Bush ad - mi - ni - stra - tion is as cra - zy as
25
Spar-ta was.
Spar-ta has swal-lowed Con - go and is
29
fa-mished.
The steel Spar-tan abs turn to

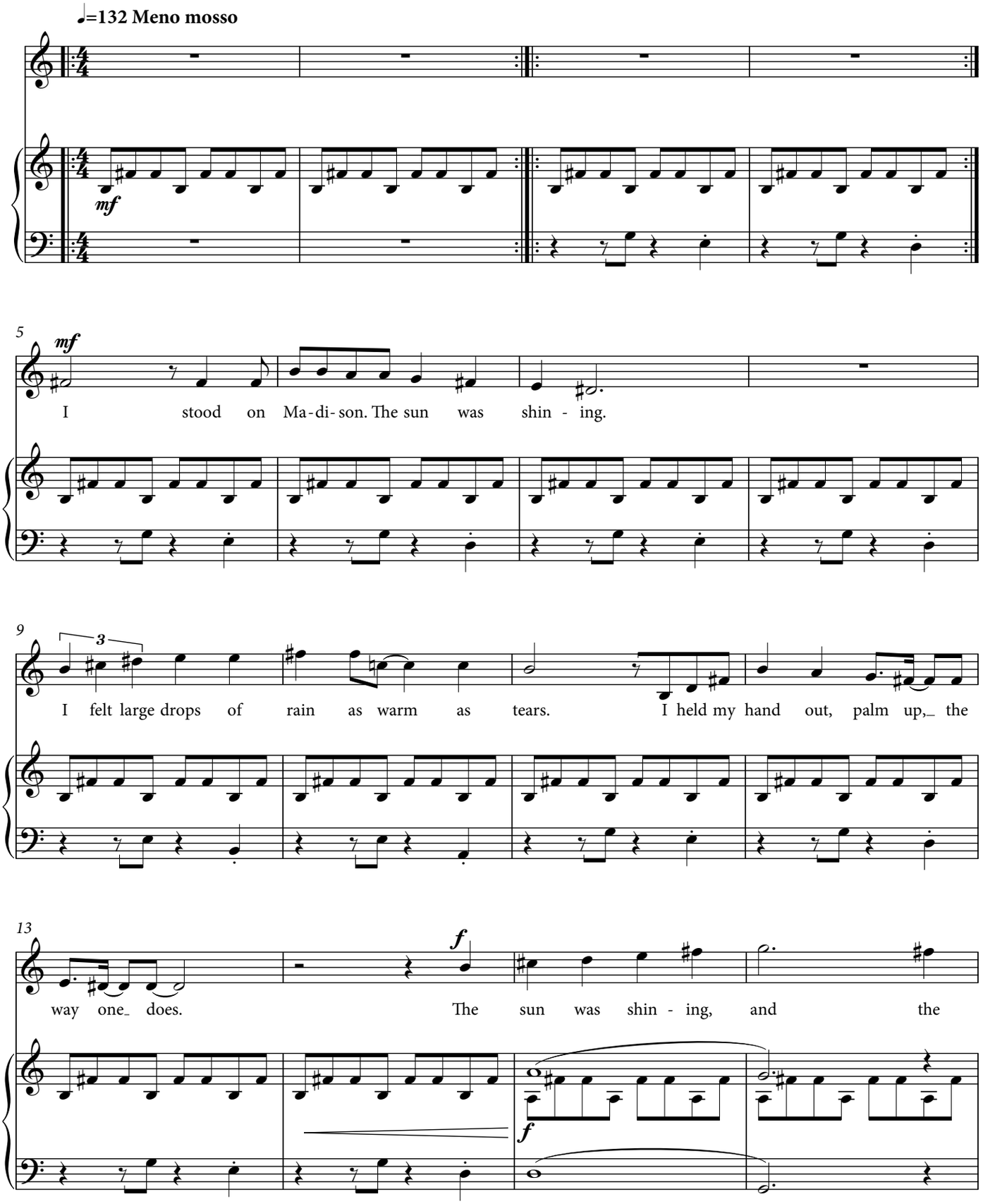

34
fe-vered slush While it di-gests the good that it is do - ing
38
In the de - sert heat. I felt a drop of rain,
42
Which is the next Ice Age be - ing
47
born.

ICE AGE

II

Frederick Seidel

Eric Shanfield



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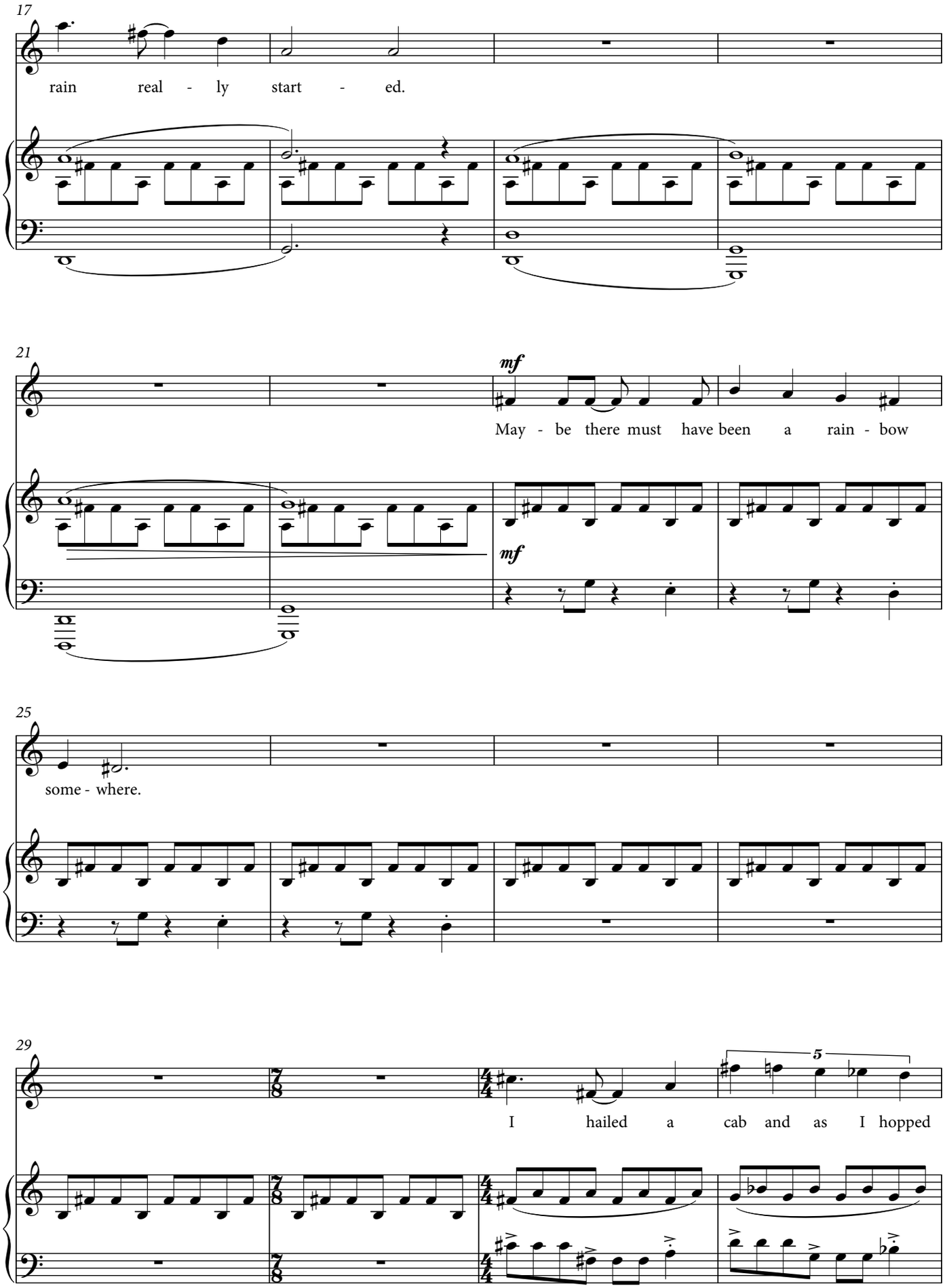
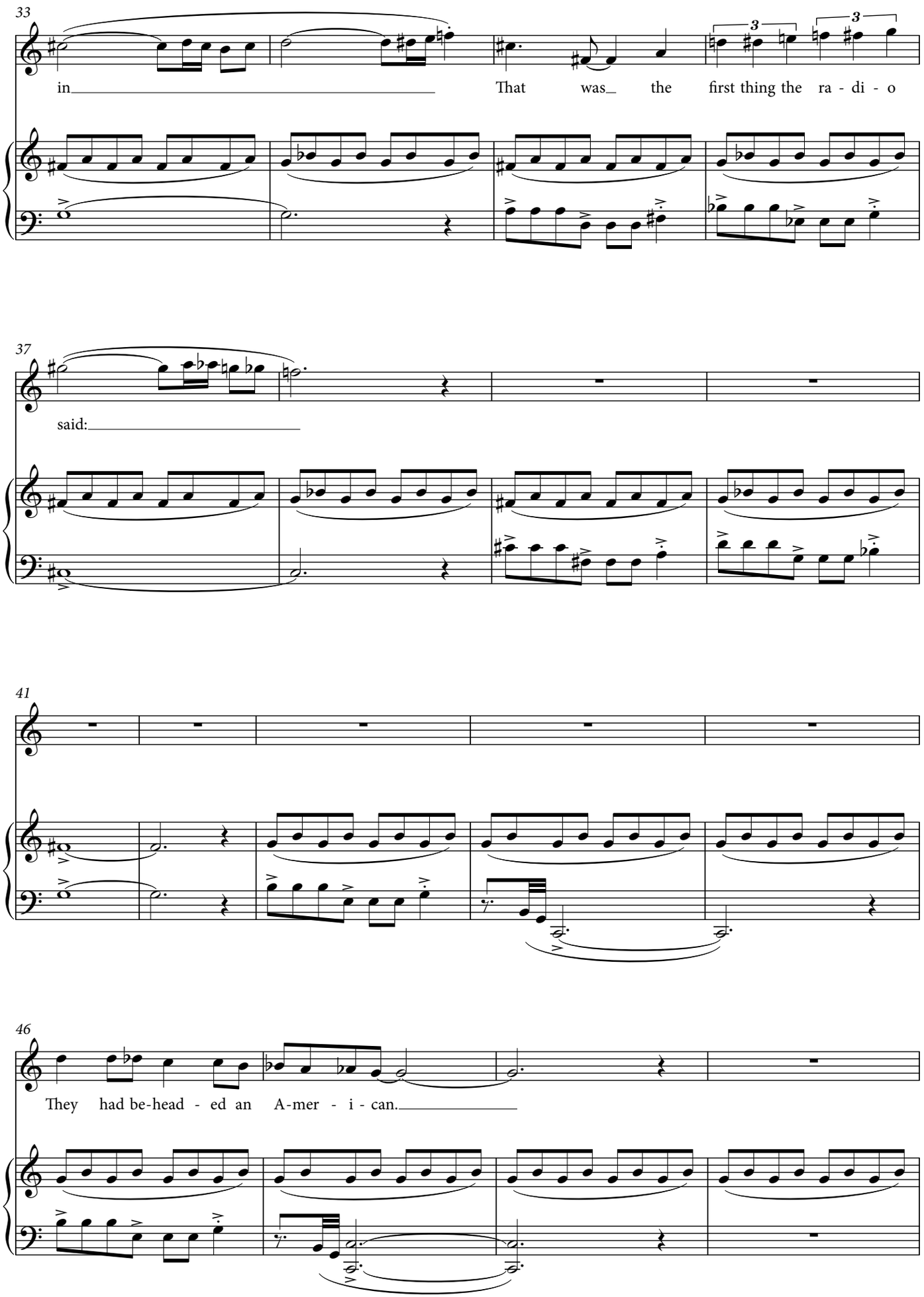
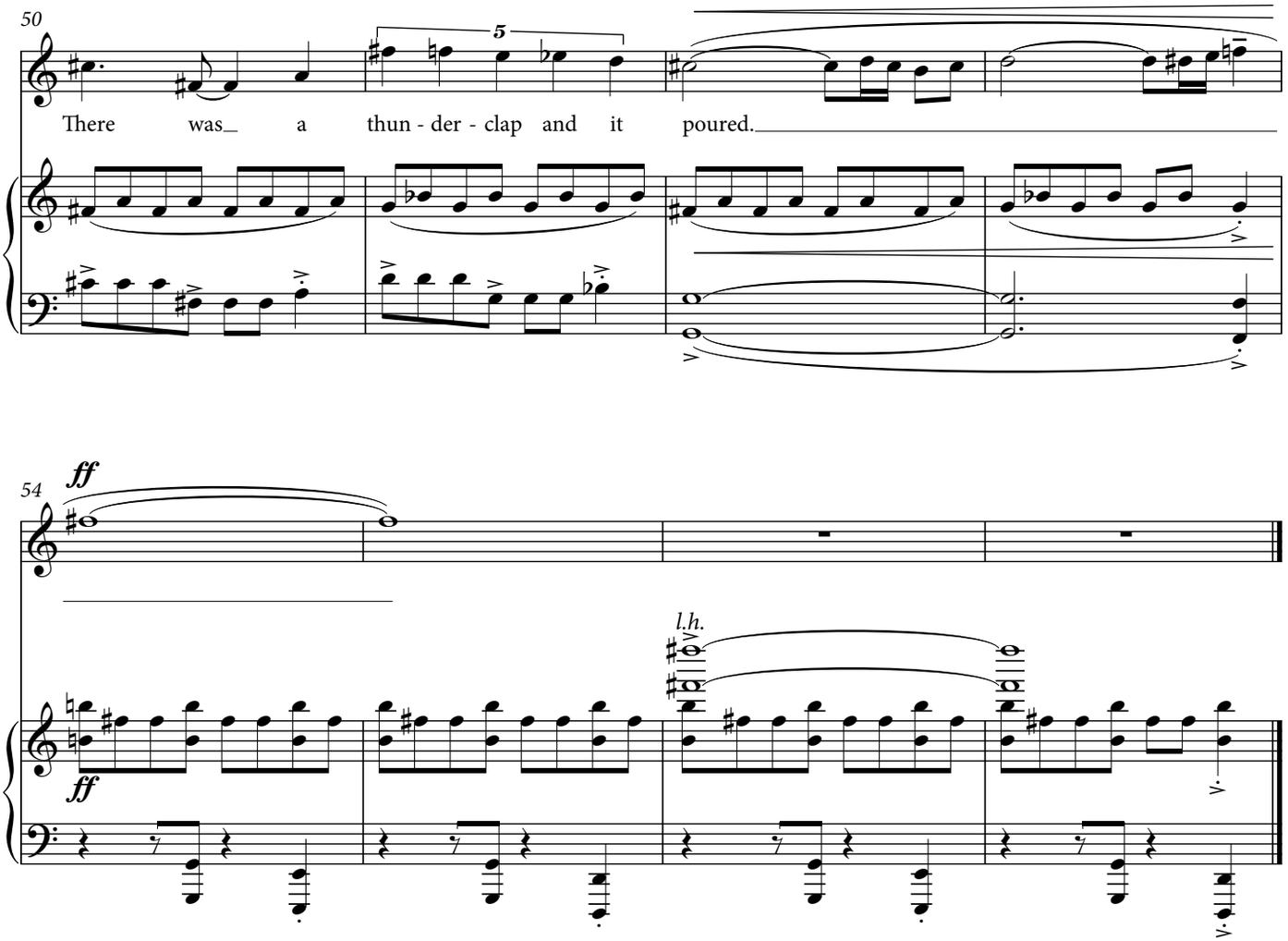

17
rain real - ly start - ed.
21
mf
May - be there must have been a rain - bow
mf
25
some - where.
29
I hailed a cab and as I hopped
5


33
in
That was the first thing the ra - di - o
37
said:
41
46
They had be-head - ed an A-mer - i - can.


50
5
There was a thun - der - clap and it poured.
54
ff
l.h.
ff

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III

Frederick Seidel

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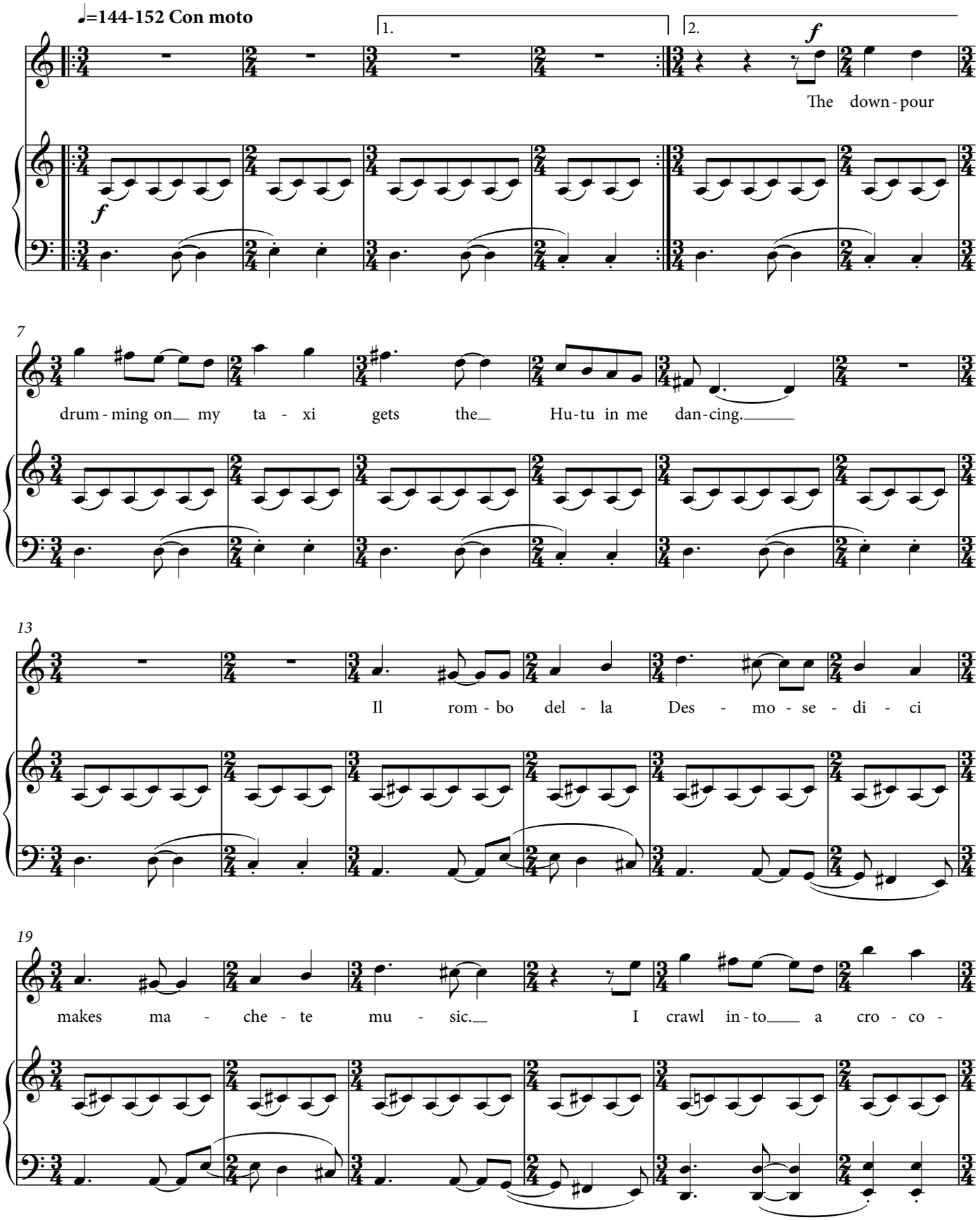

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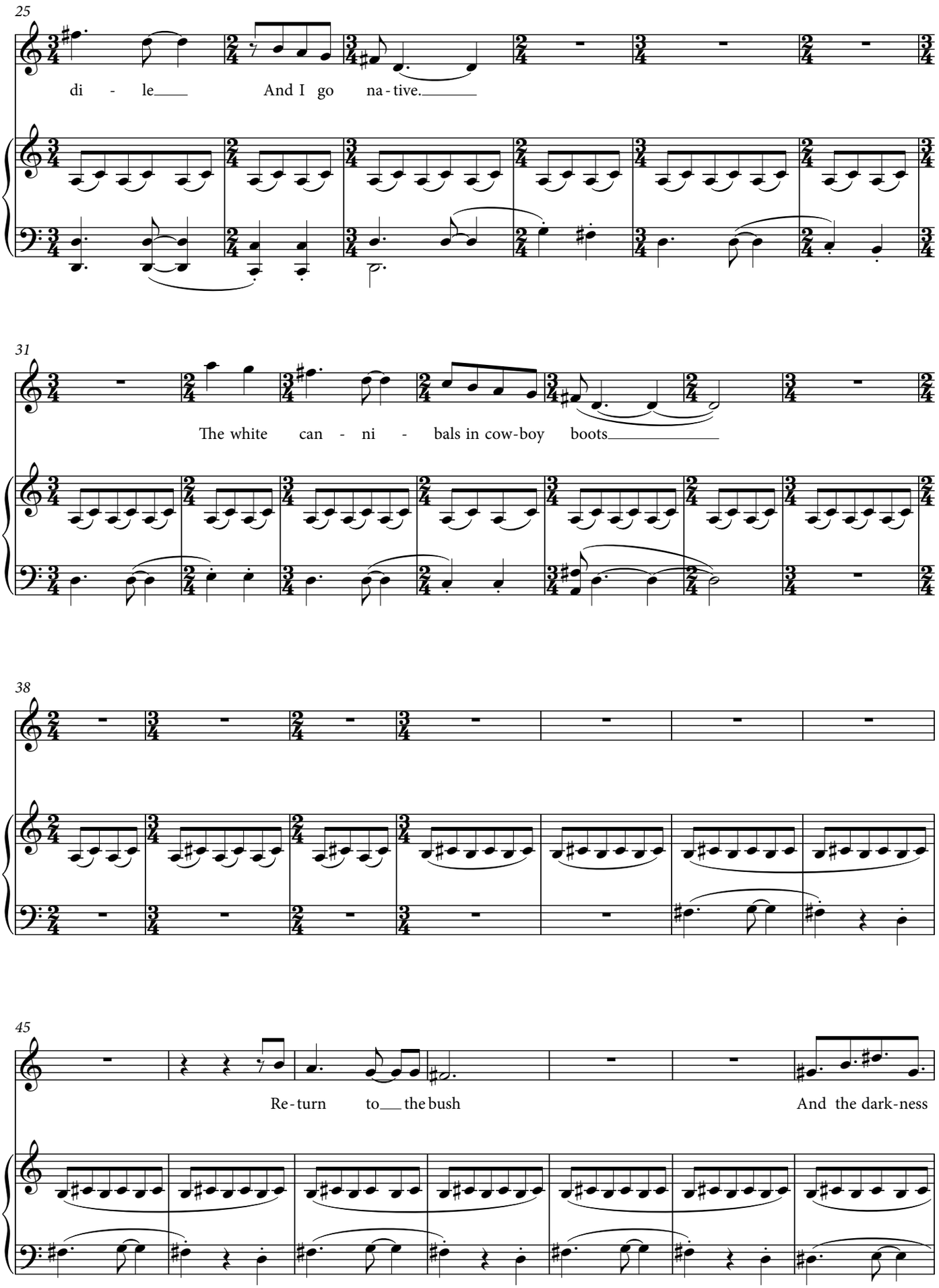
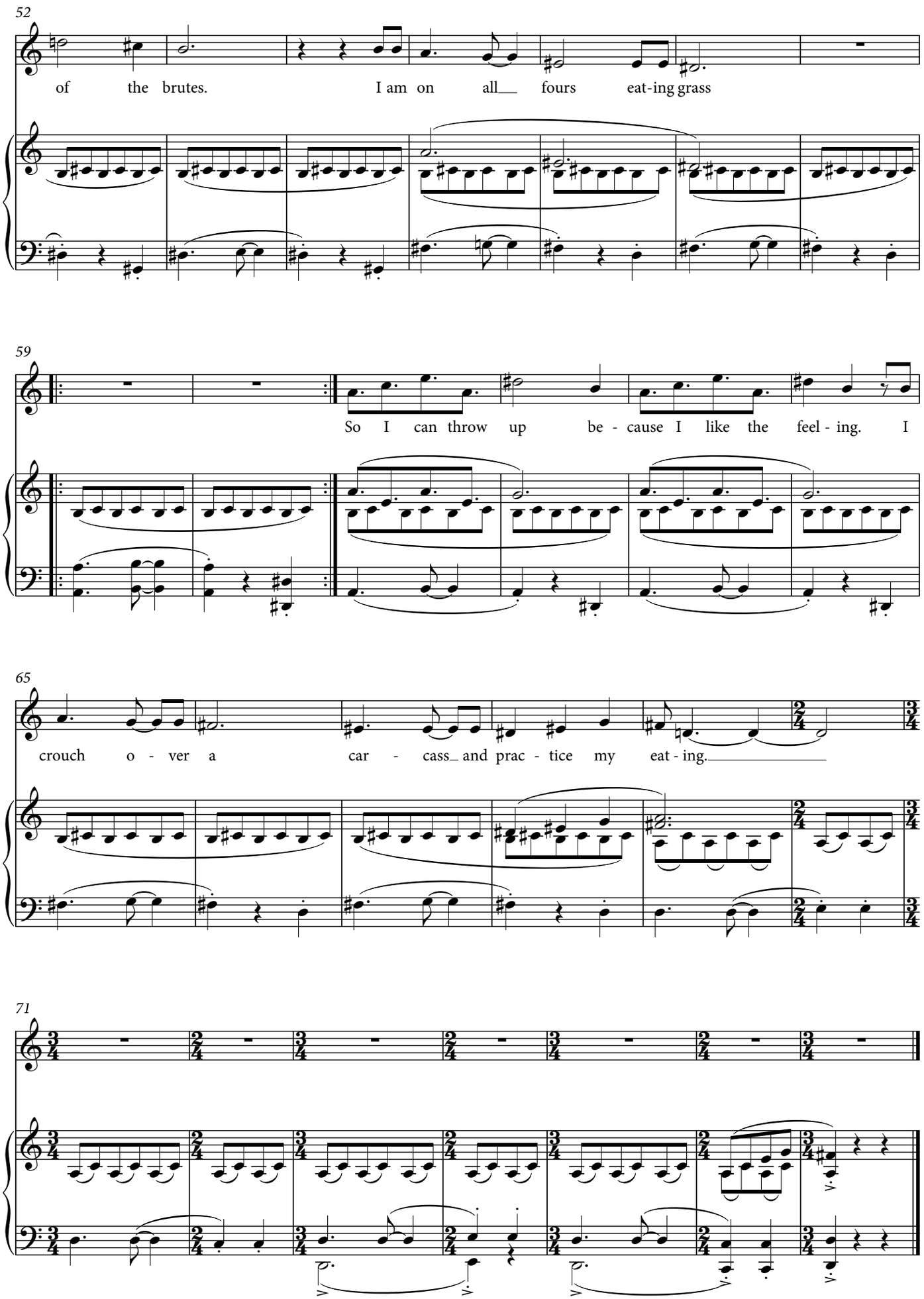

25
di - le
And I go na - tive.
31
The white can - ni - bals in cow-boy boots
38
45
Re - turn to the bush
And the dark-ness


52
of the brutes. I am on all fours eat-ing grass
59
So I can throw up be - cause I like the feel - ing. I
65
crouch o - ver a car - cass and prac - tice my eat - ing.
71

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IV

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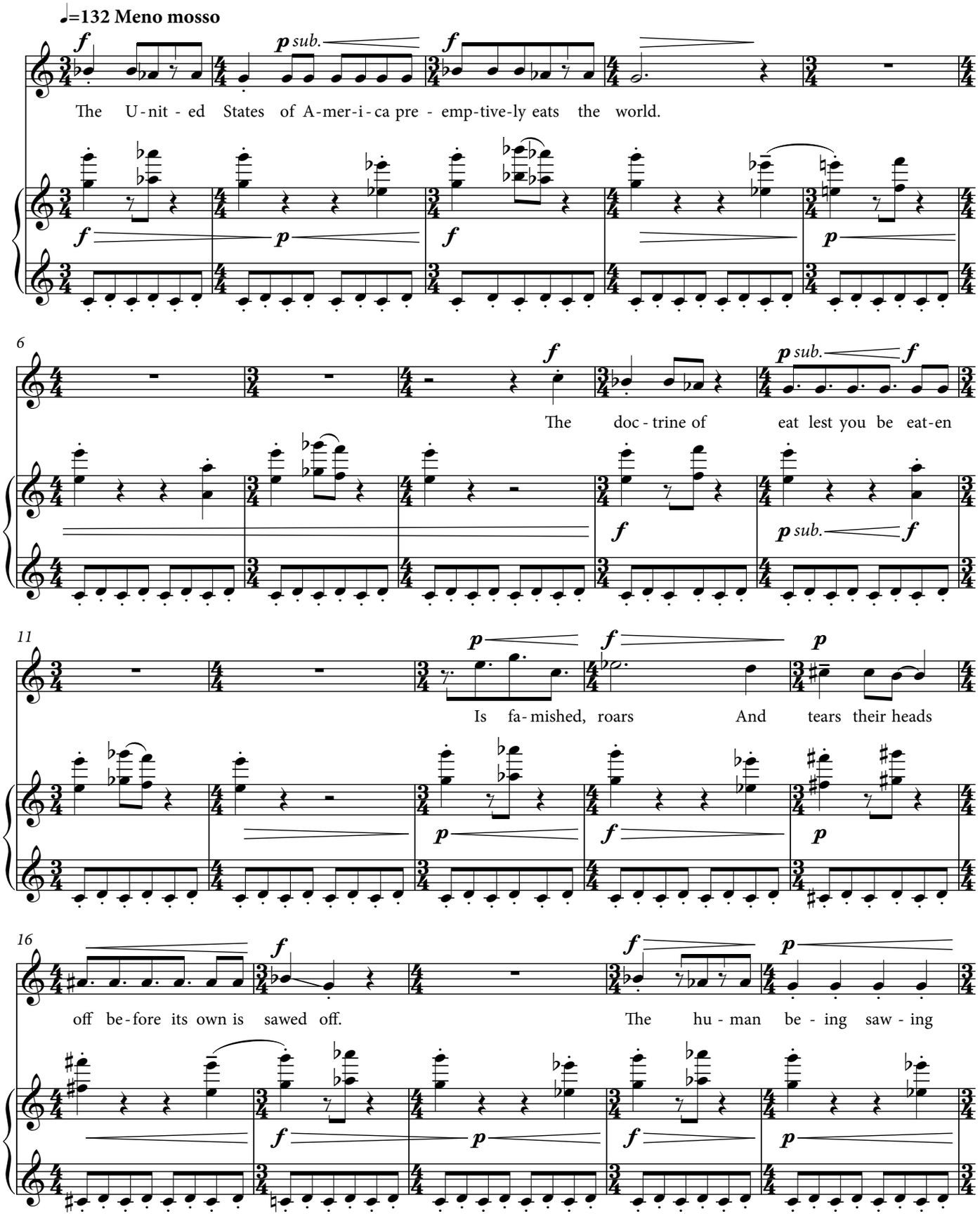

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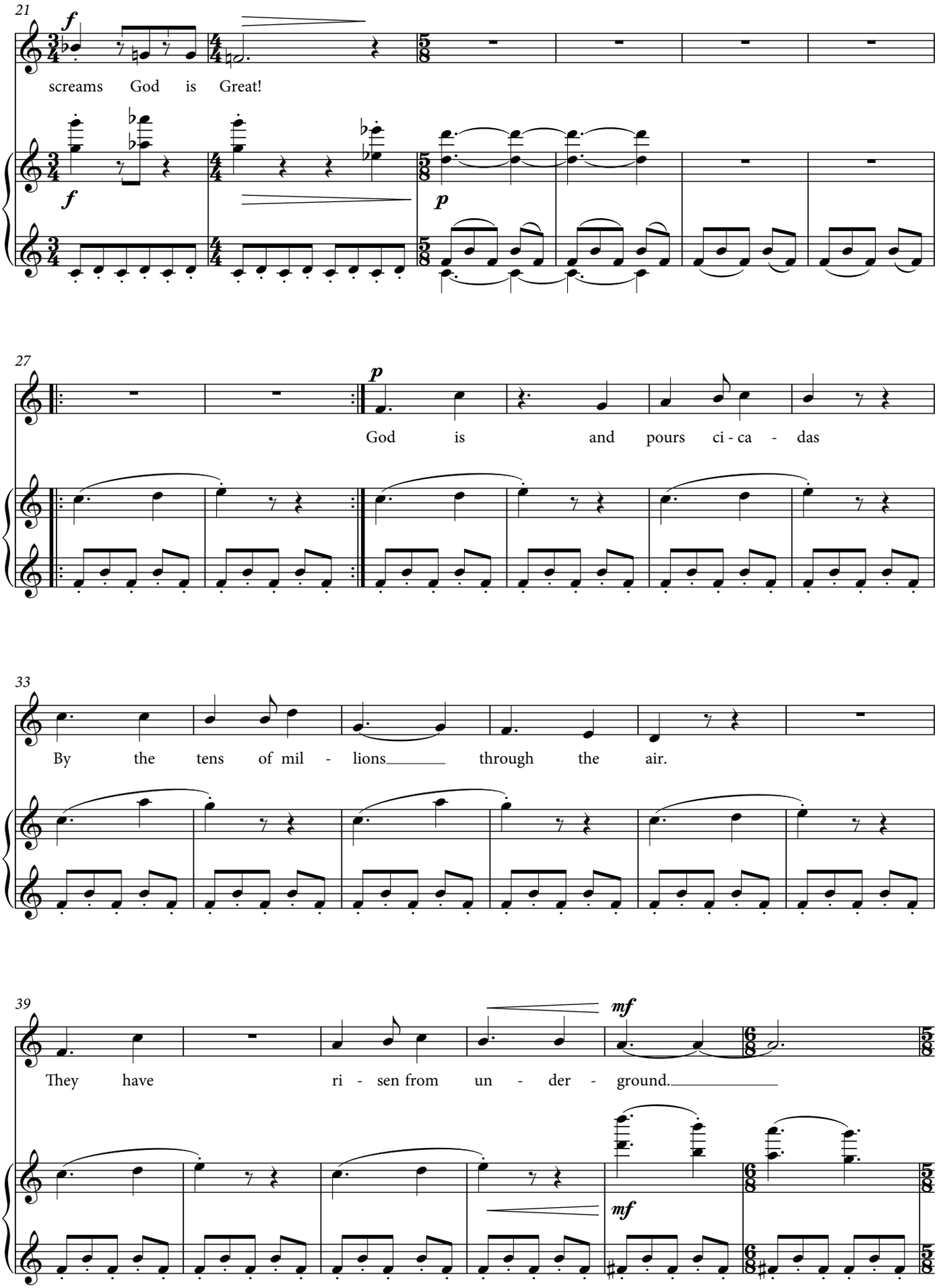
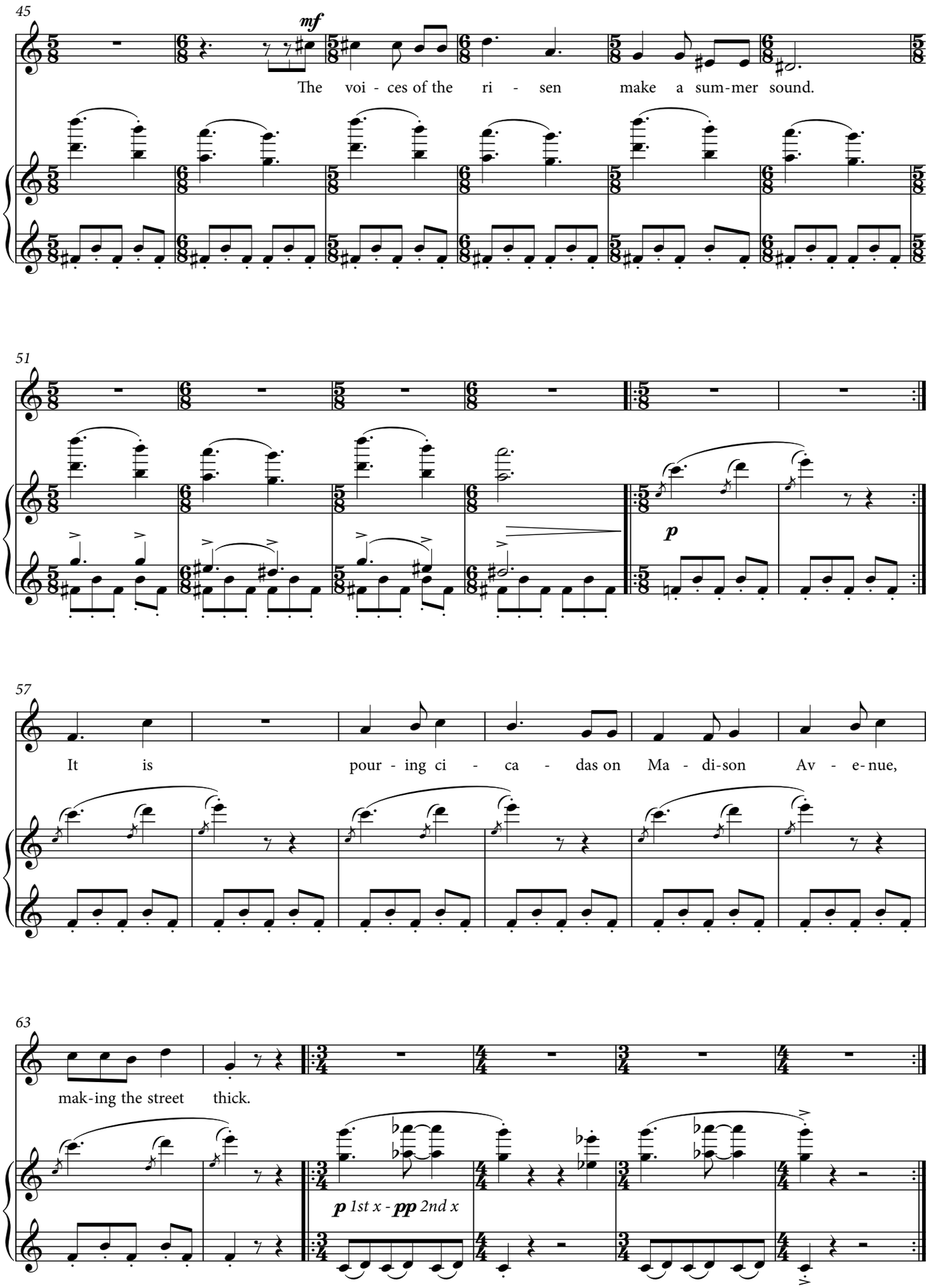

21
f
screams God is Great!
f
p
27
p
God is and pours ci - ca - das
33
By the tens of mil - lions through the air.
39
mf
They have ri - sen from un - der - ground.
mf


45
mf
The voi - ces of the ri - sen make a sum-mer sound.
51
p
57
It is pour - ing ci - ca - das on Ma - di-son Av - e-nue,
63
mak-ing the street thick.
p 1st x - pp 2nd x

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V

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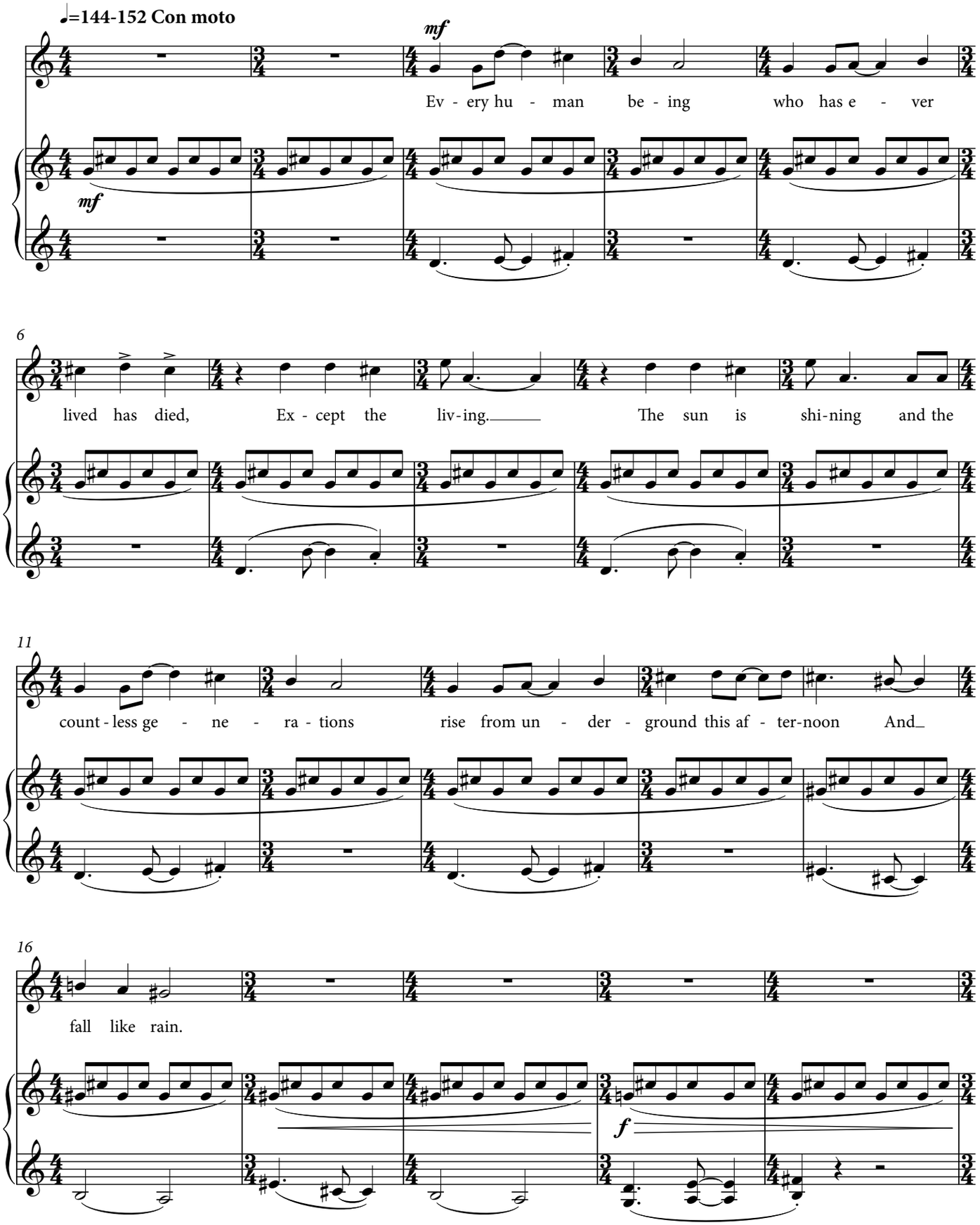

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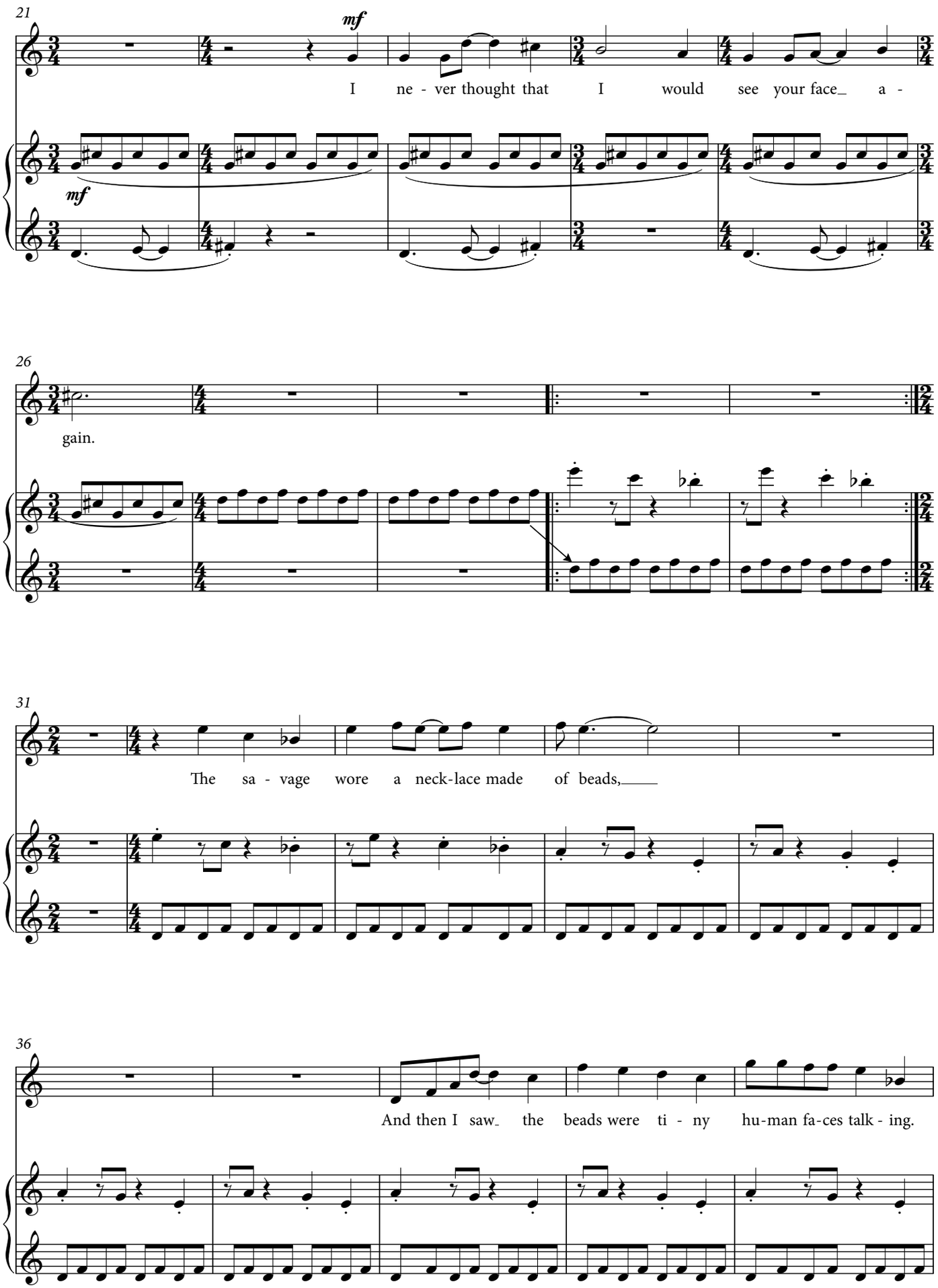
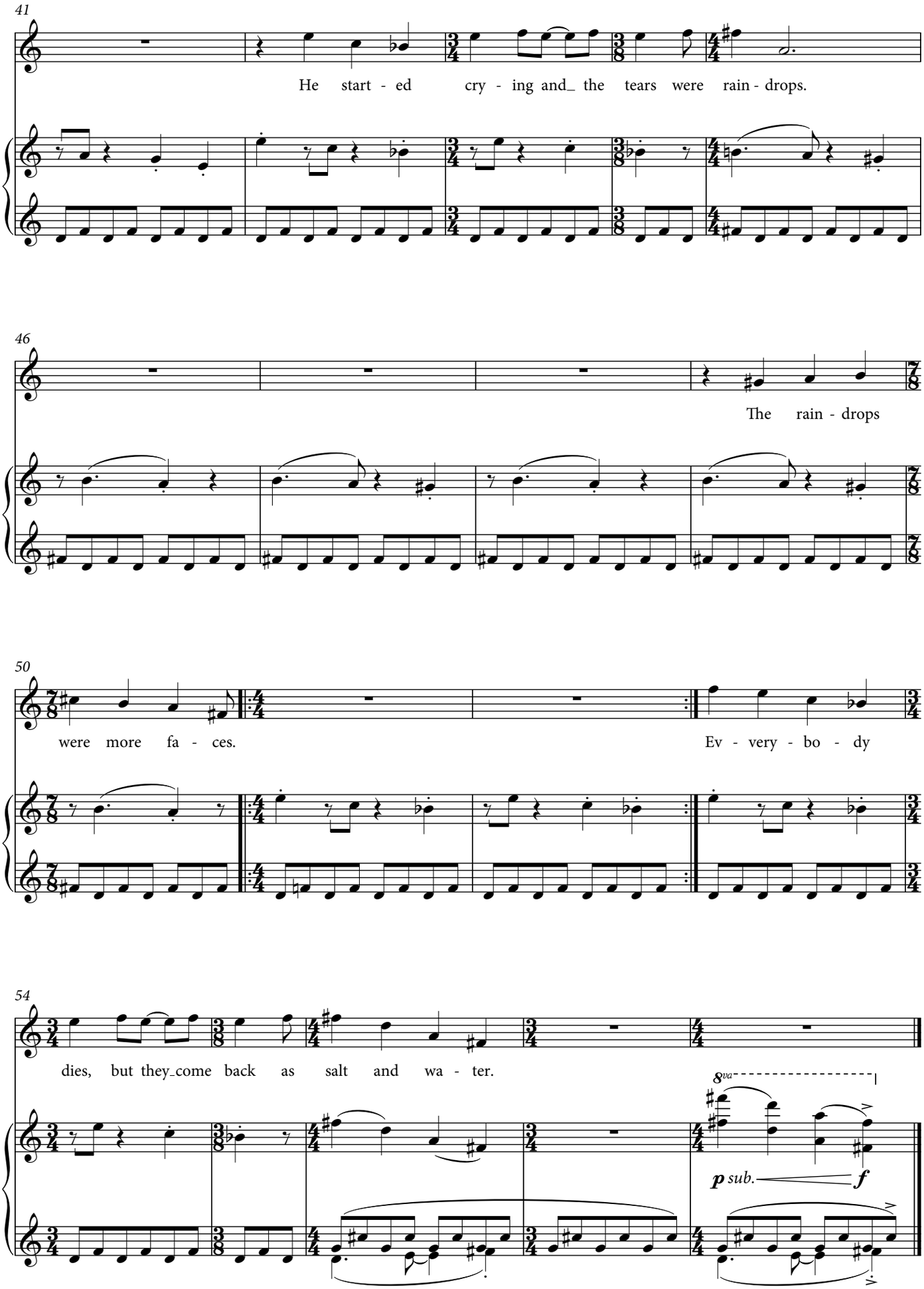

21
mf
I ne - ver thought that I would see your face a -
mf
26
gain.
31
The sa - vage wore a neck-lace made of beads,
36
And then I saw the beads were ti - ny hu-man fa-ces talk - ing.


41
He start - ed cry - ing and_ the tears were rain - drops.
46
The rain - drops
50
were more fa - ces.
Ev - very - bo - dy
54
dies, but they_come back as salt and wa - ter.
8va
p sub.
f

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VI

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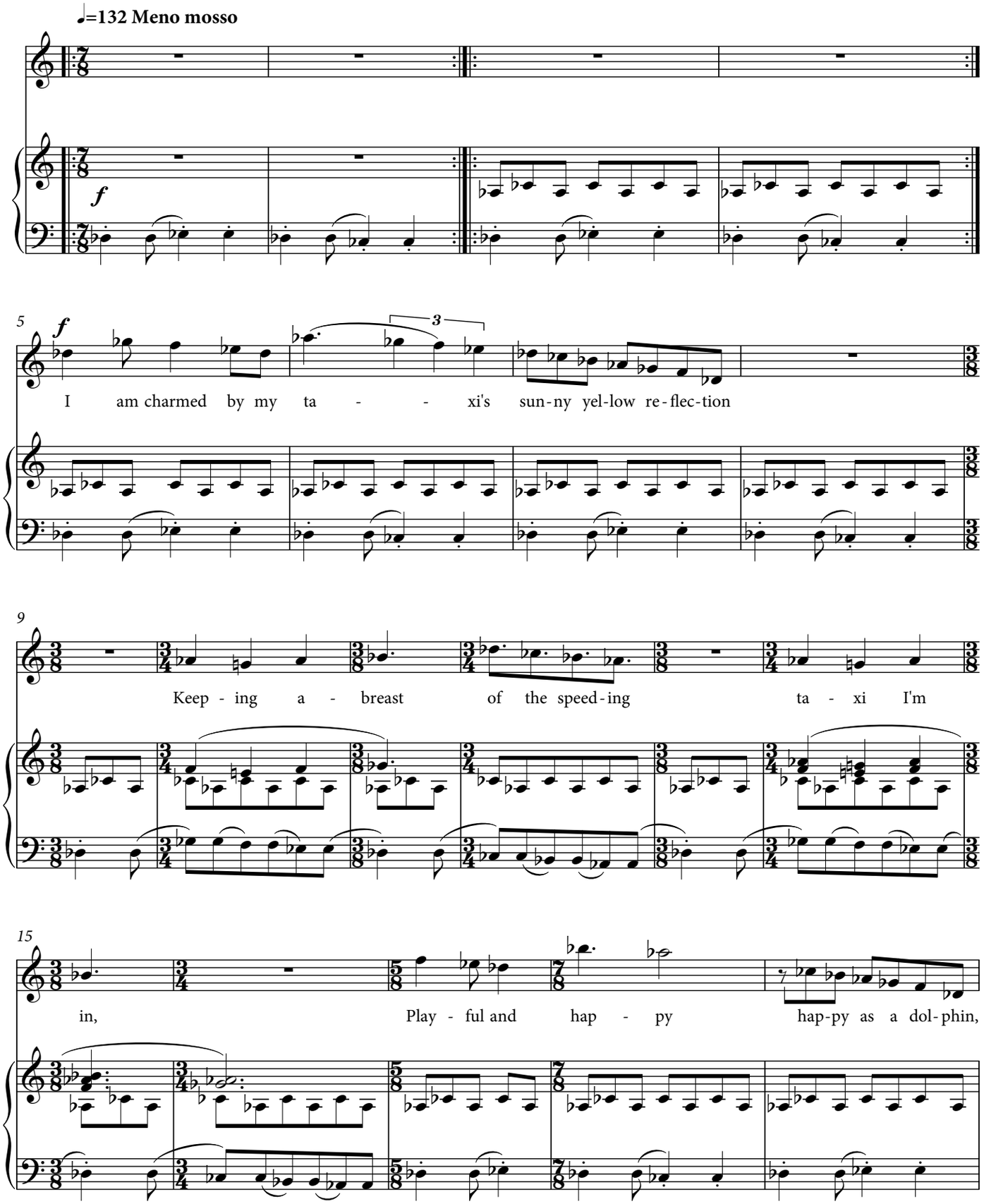

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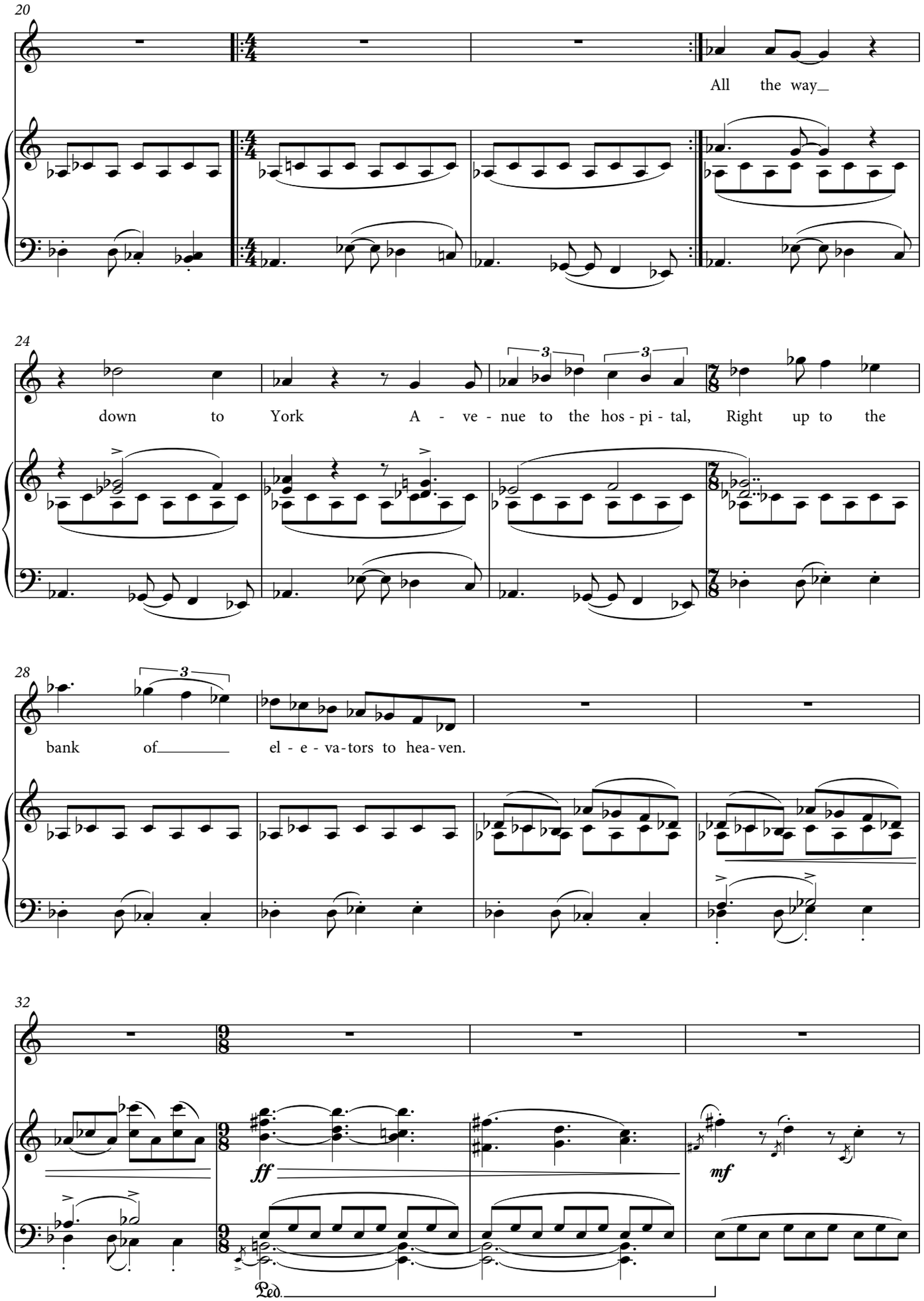

20
All the way
24
down to York A - ve - nue to the hos - pi - tal, Right up to the
28
bank of el - e - va - tors to hea - ven.
32
ff
mf
Ped.

36

mf

I take an e - le - va - tor to the floor.

40

Out-side the pic - ture win-dow, rain is fall-ing on the sun - shine.

44

In the squeeze-hush si - lence the ven - ti - la - tor keeps breath-ing.

48

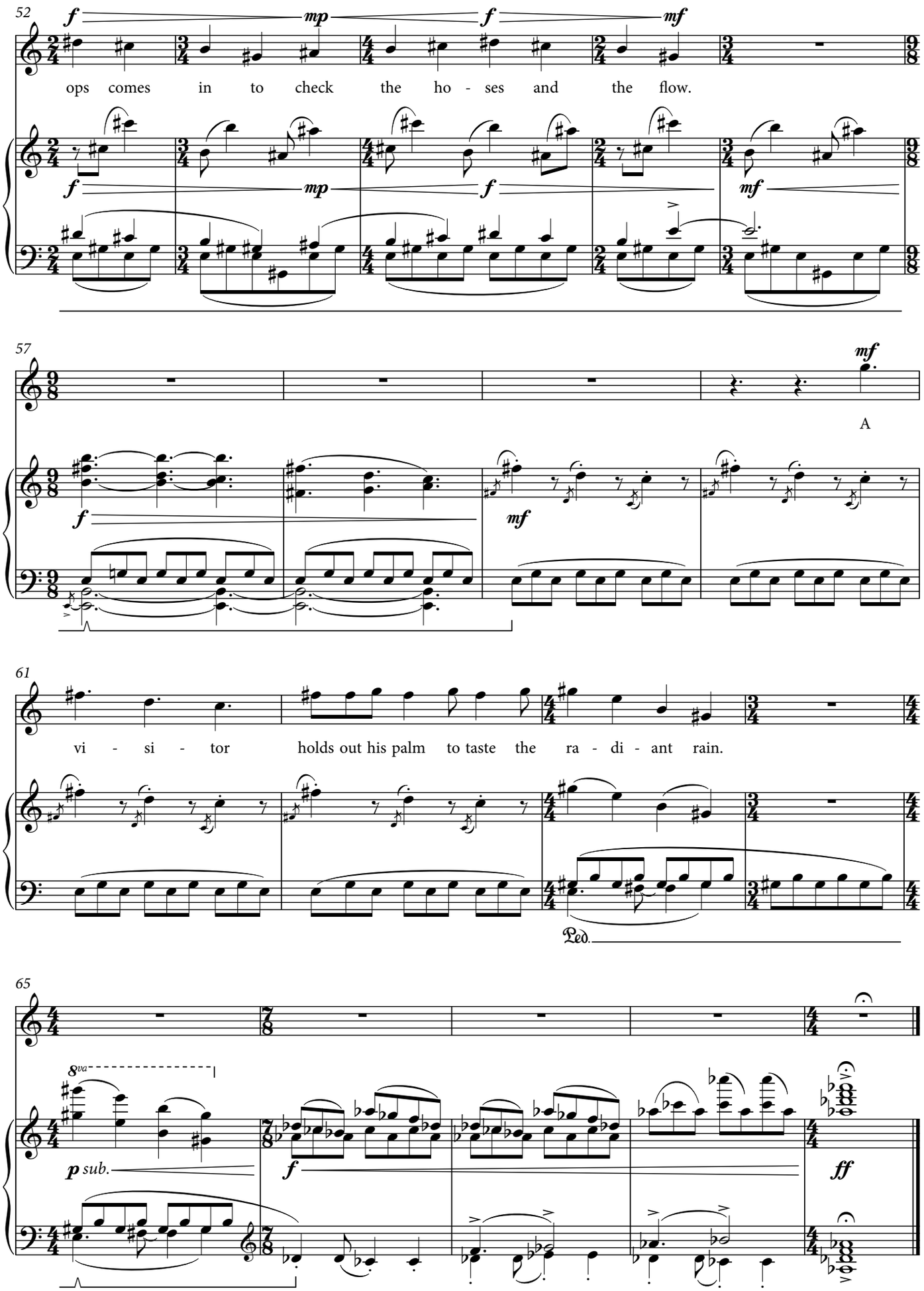
mf

A spec - ial

mf

mf

Ped.


52
f
mp
f
mf
ops comes in to check the ho - ses and the flow.
f
mp
f
mf
57
mf
A
f
mf
61
vi - si - tor holds out his palm to taste the ra - di - ant rain.
Ped.
65
8va
p sub.
f
ff

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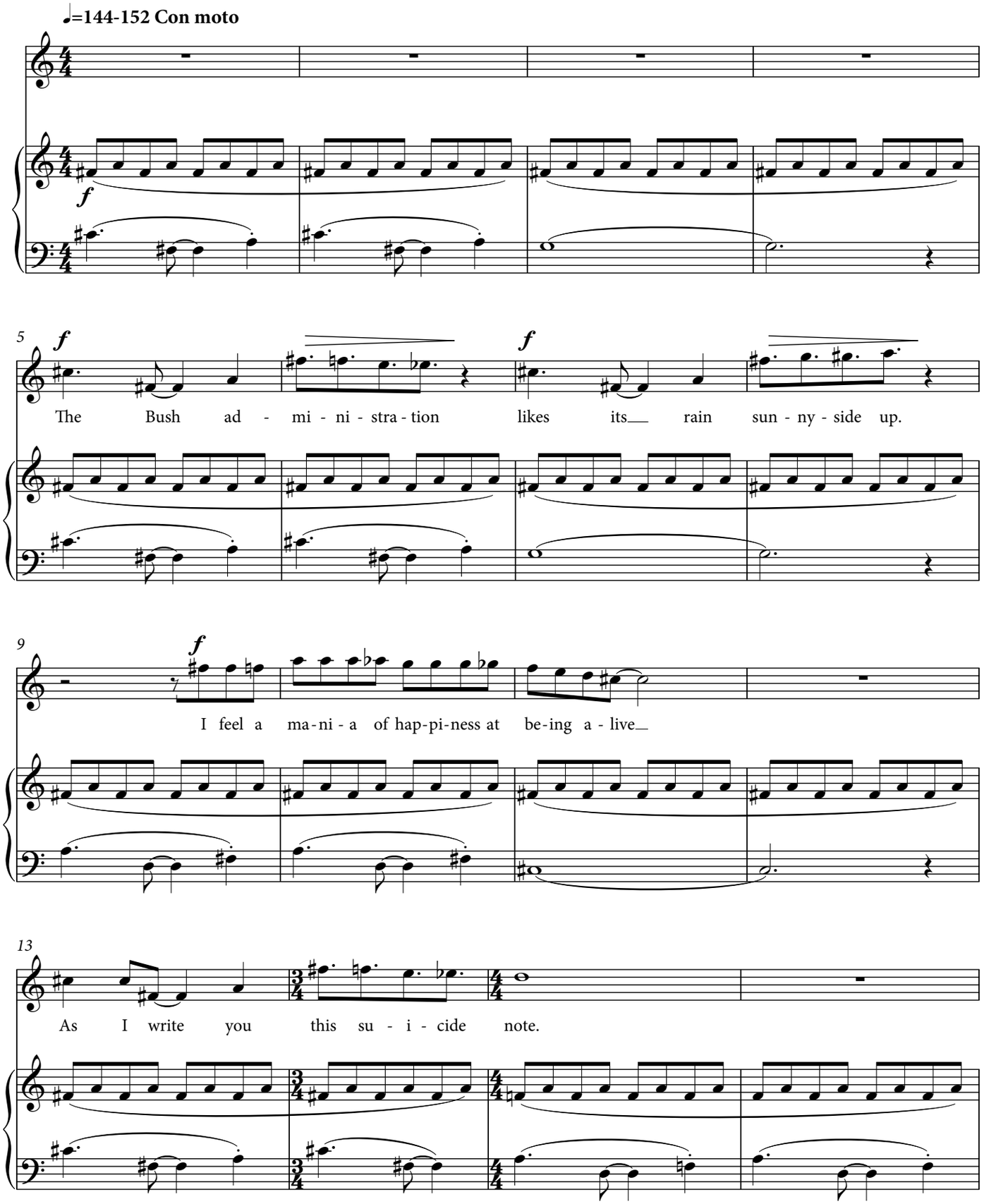

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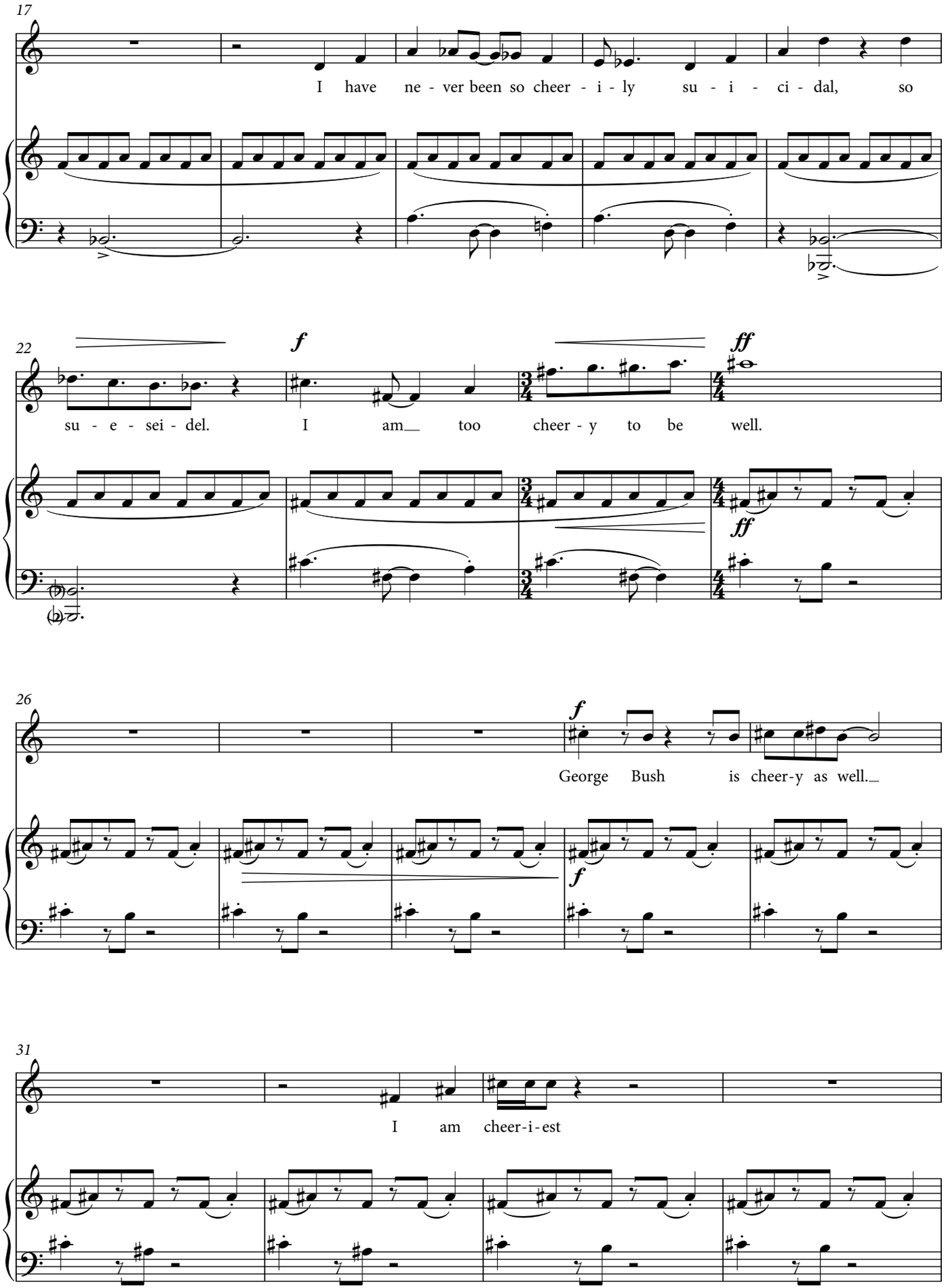
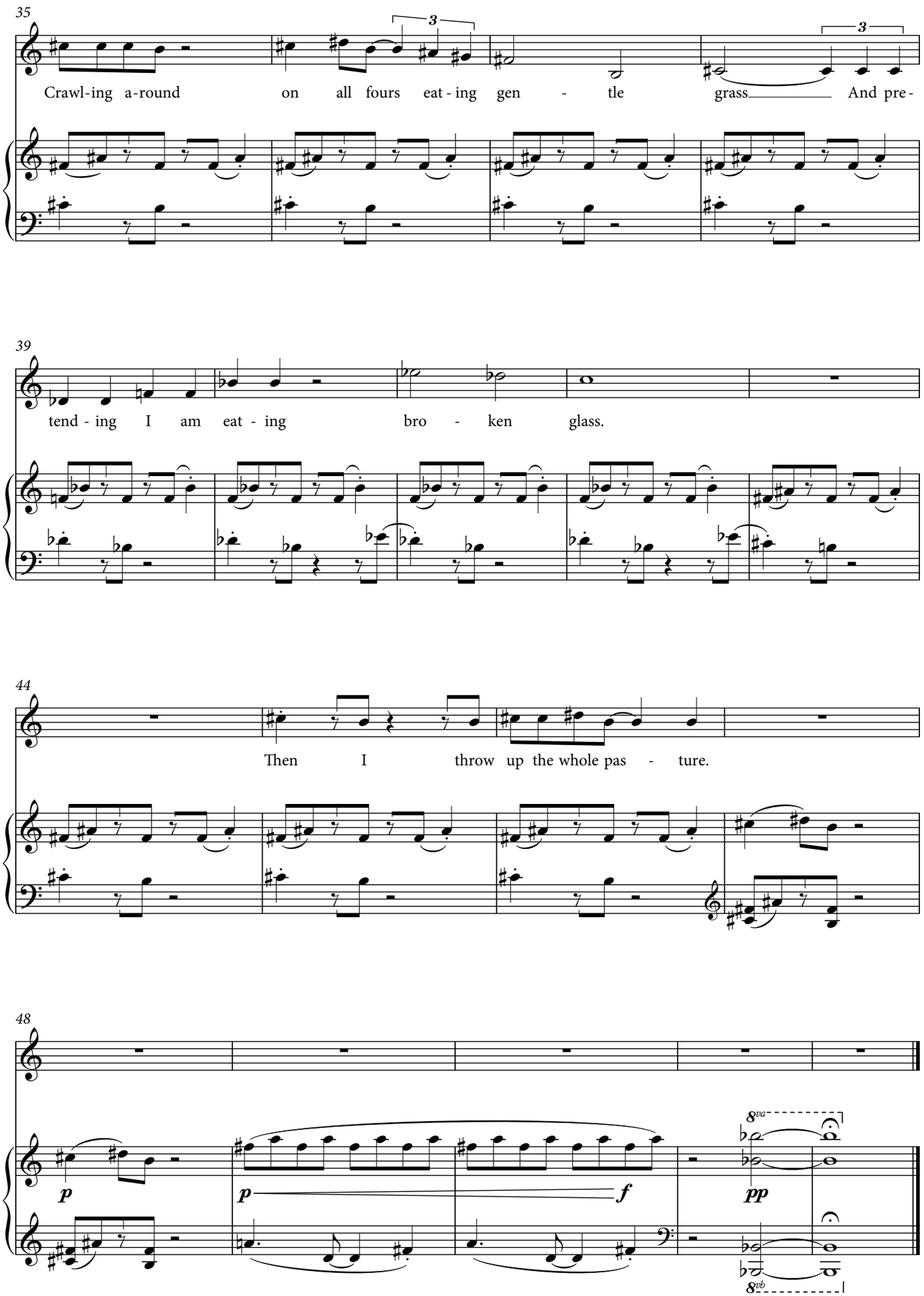

17
I have ne - ver been so cheer - i - ly su - i - ci - dal, so
22
f
ff
su - e - sei - del. I am too cheer - y to be well.
ff
26
f
George Bush is cheer-y as well.
f
31
I am cheer-i-est


35
Crawl-ing a-round on all fours eat - ing gen - tle grass And pre-
39
tend - ing I am eat - ing bro - ken glass.
44
Then I throw up the whole pas - ture.
48
p
p
f
pp
8va
8vb

ICE AGE

VIII

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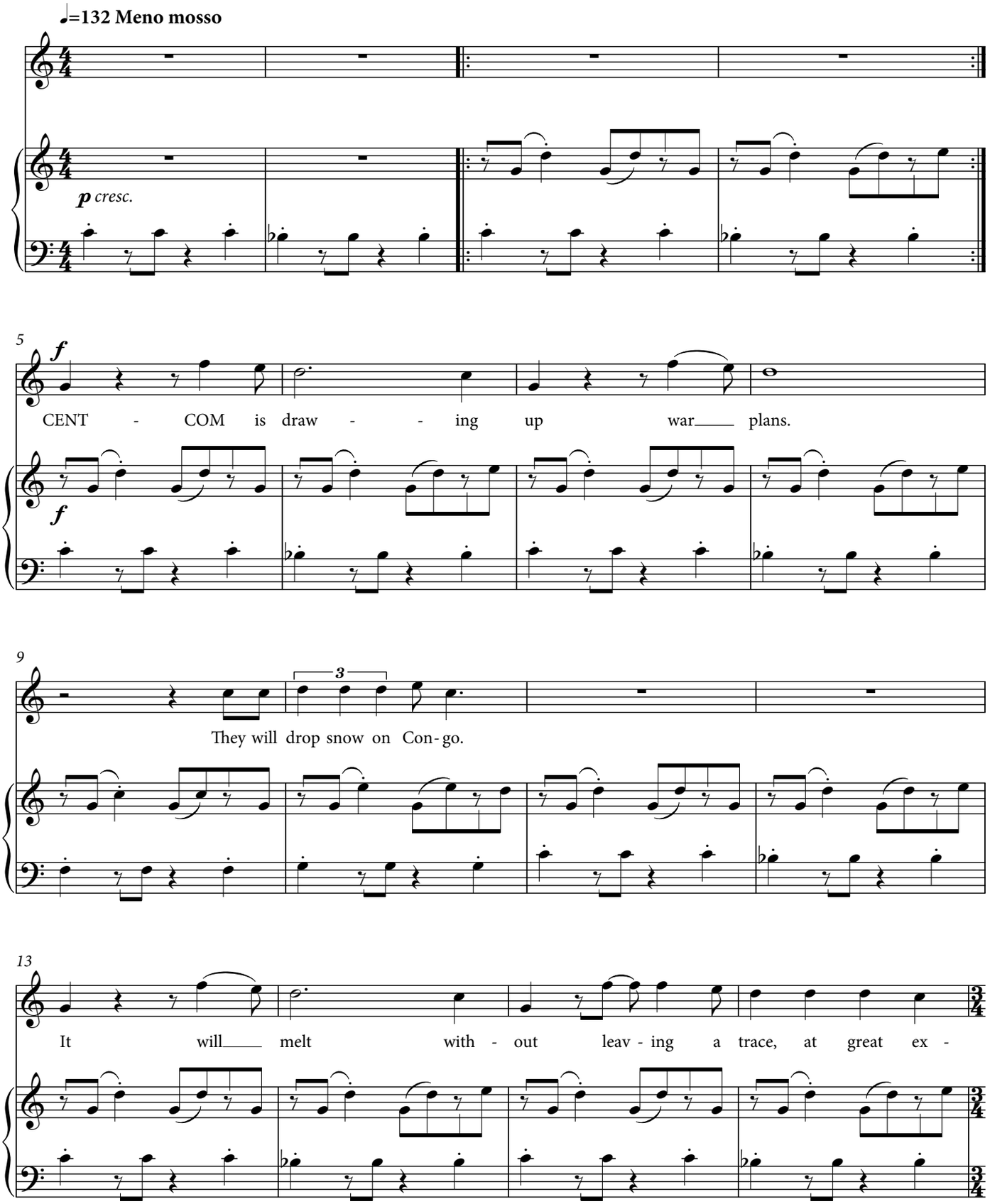

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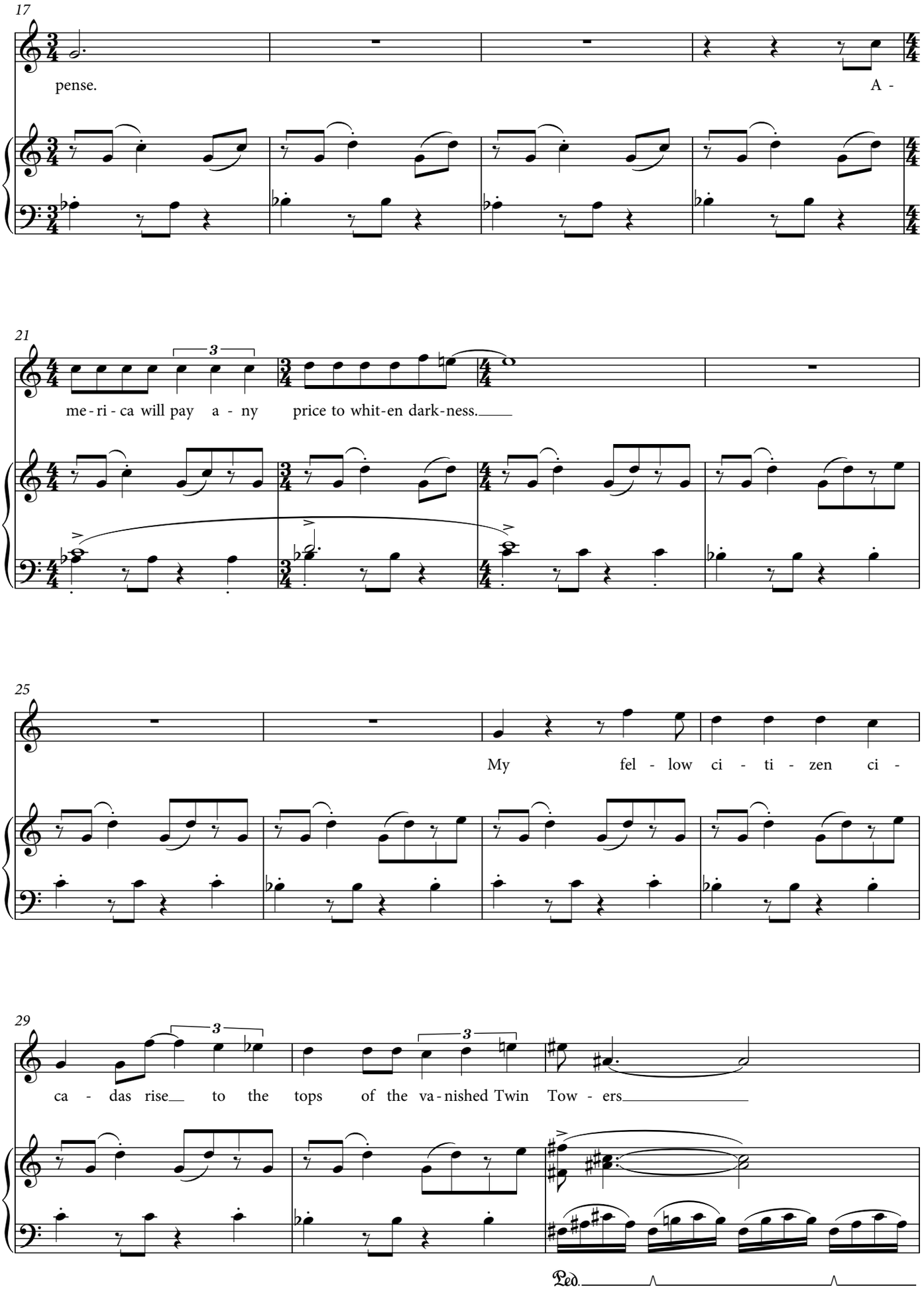
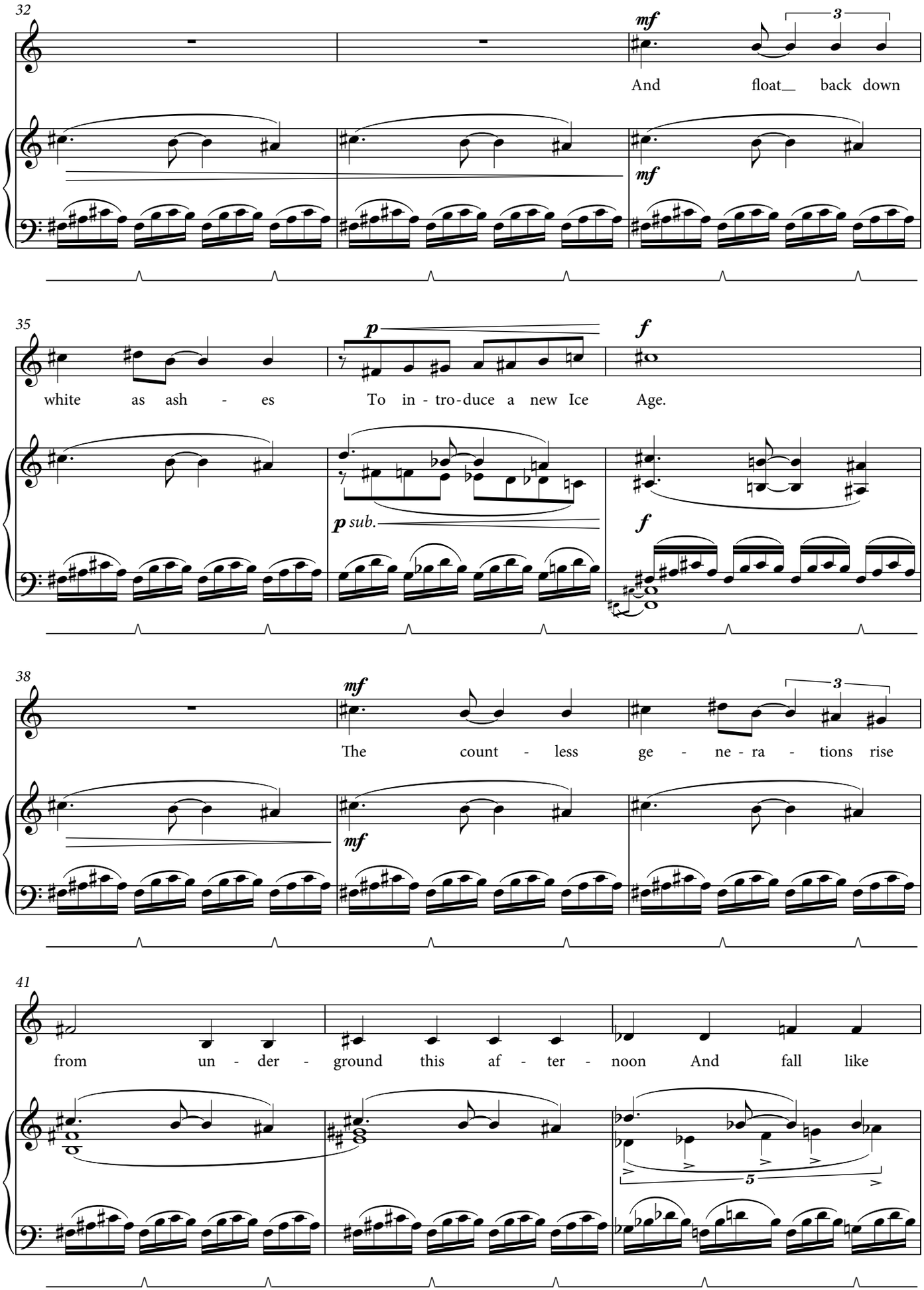
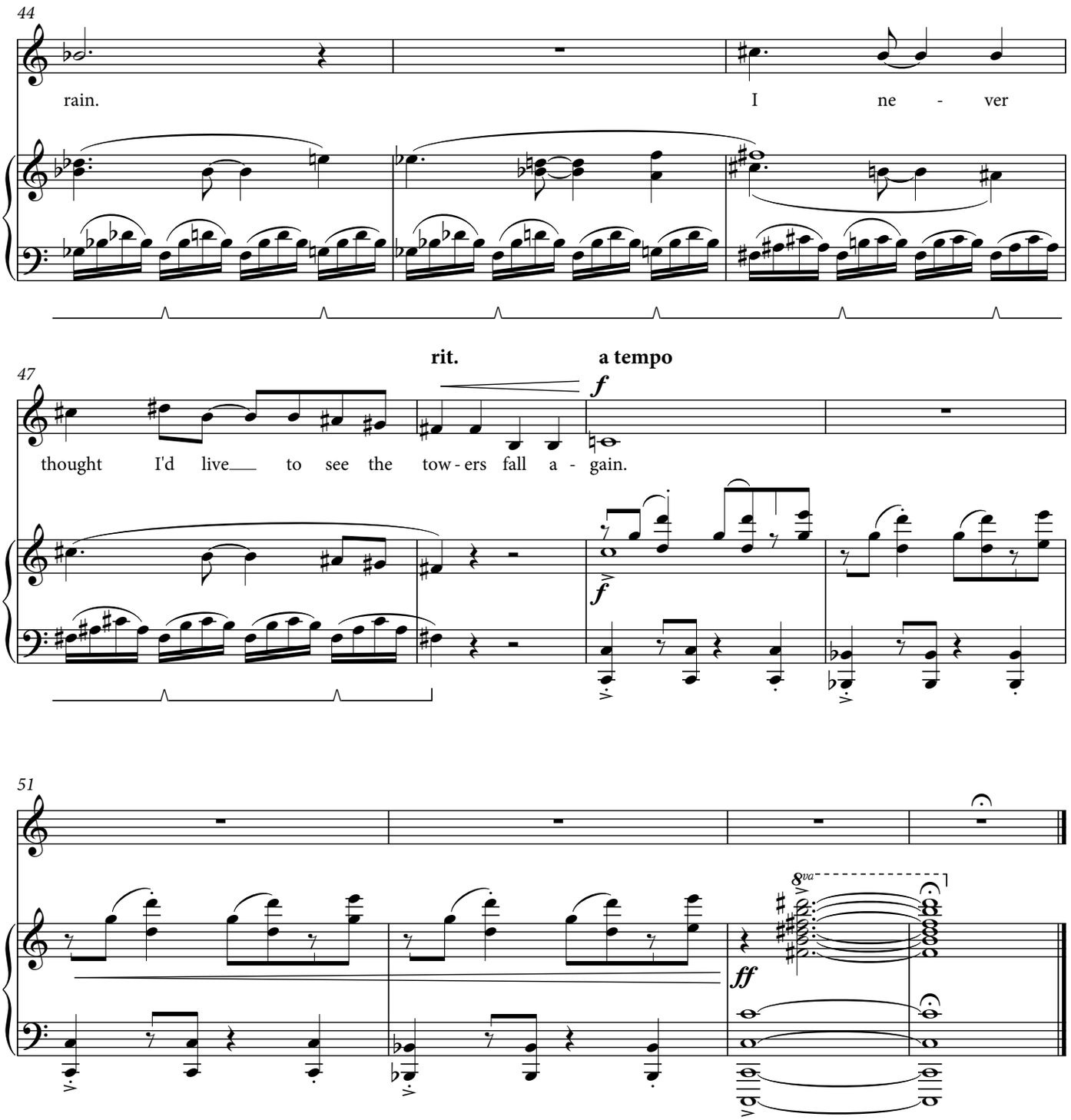

17
pense.
A -
21
me - ri - ca will pay a - ny price to whit-en dark-ness.
25
My fel - low ci - ti - zen ci -
29
ca - das rise to the tops of the va-nished Twin Tow - ers
Ped.


32
mf
3
And float back down
mf
35
p
f
white as ash - es To in - tro-duce a new Ice Age.
p sub.
f
38
mf
3
The count - less ge - ne - ra - tions rise
mf
41
from un - der - ground this af - ter - noon And fall like
5


44
rain.
I ne - ver
47
rit.
a tempo
f
thought I'd live to see the tow - ers fall a - gain.
f
51
8va
ff