Three Songs For Longing

Jake Berran

(2023)

PERUSAL

Program Notes

The first song, "If you were coming in the Fall," is a setting of a poem by Emily Dickinson (1830-1866) of the same title. It is about waiting for a loved one to return and the struggle of not knowing whether that will happen in months, years, or at all. The changing meters and tempos reflect this uncertainty about time.

The second text is "I cannot love benevolently" from the trilogy of poems "I can only love like Tragedies" by Millie Rocco (b. 2000), a friend of mine. She writes:

This poem was a piece written with an intentional connection to Greek mythology in regards to how love can be felt differently and intensely. In a time where it can feel stereotypical to be in capital "L" love or confusing to identify emotions that aren't explicitly positive in a way that overlap with usually mutually good feelings, I found much catharsis in this piece. The connections to my emotions and the myths written by man hundred of years ago as a way to confront the same emotions let me feel seen by history.

Rocco's poem is empowering, expressive and abstractly related to longing—longing for love that is "gross" and "ruthless." Harsh turbulence quickly cools to still meditation and vice versa.

The final piece is a setting of "Morning Song" by Sara Teasdale (1884-1933), in which the narrator sees their loneliness reflected in the moon. The poem ends with the consoling message, "only the lonely are free."

Both extremities of the entire work feature a monodic "Bach partita" in the piano with blurred meter. It symbolizes both the uncertainty characterizing Dickinson's poem and the freedom at the end of Teasdale's, as if it is reaching out beyond the piece itself.

PERUSAL

Texts

If you were coming in the Fall
Emily Dickinson

If you were coming in the Fall,
I'd brush the Summer by
With half a smile, and half a spurn,
As Housewives do, a Fly.

If I could see you in a year,
I'd wind the months in balls---
And put them each in separate Drawers,
For fear the numbers fuse---

If only Centuries, delayed,
I'd count them on my Hand,
Subtracting, til my fingers dropped
Into Van Dieman's Land,

If certain, when this life was out---
That yours and mine, should be
I'd toss it yonder, like a Rind,
And take Eternity---

But, now, uncertain of the length
Of this, that is between,
It goads me, like the Goblin Bee---
That will not state--- its sting.

Morning Song
Sara Teasdale

A diamond of a morning
    Waked me an hour too soon;
Dawn had taken in the stars
    And left the faint white moon.

O white moon, you are lonely,
    It is the same with me,
But we have the world to roam over,
    Only the lonely are free.

I cannot love benevolently
Millie Rocco

My rage ripples off my heart
stopping only to realize my own power
when suddenly I understand Hera.
The girl who hurt from loving a thing so spontaneous
and even when she buried herself in the blood of women,
she returned to her throne-
claiming her place.
I need to love someone like that.
A gross, revenge driven love
that shows any who may tempt me that I am mad.
I want the same ruthlessness
that releases pent up pain
when she looked fed-up with the mortal
when I look more than court-able.
I am becoming a Fury,
only existing to spitefully torture.
Keep the cold thoughts of you close so I know not the warm ones.
And when we break,
as we will,
as so many times we have-
take my exhausted temper,
totally finished with us,
and sit on the throne on my side.

In the mountains of Olympus,
in the Hall of the Gods,
guilt me so that I may lie next to the father of Hercules.

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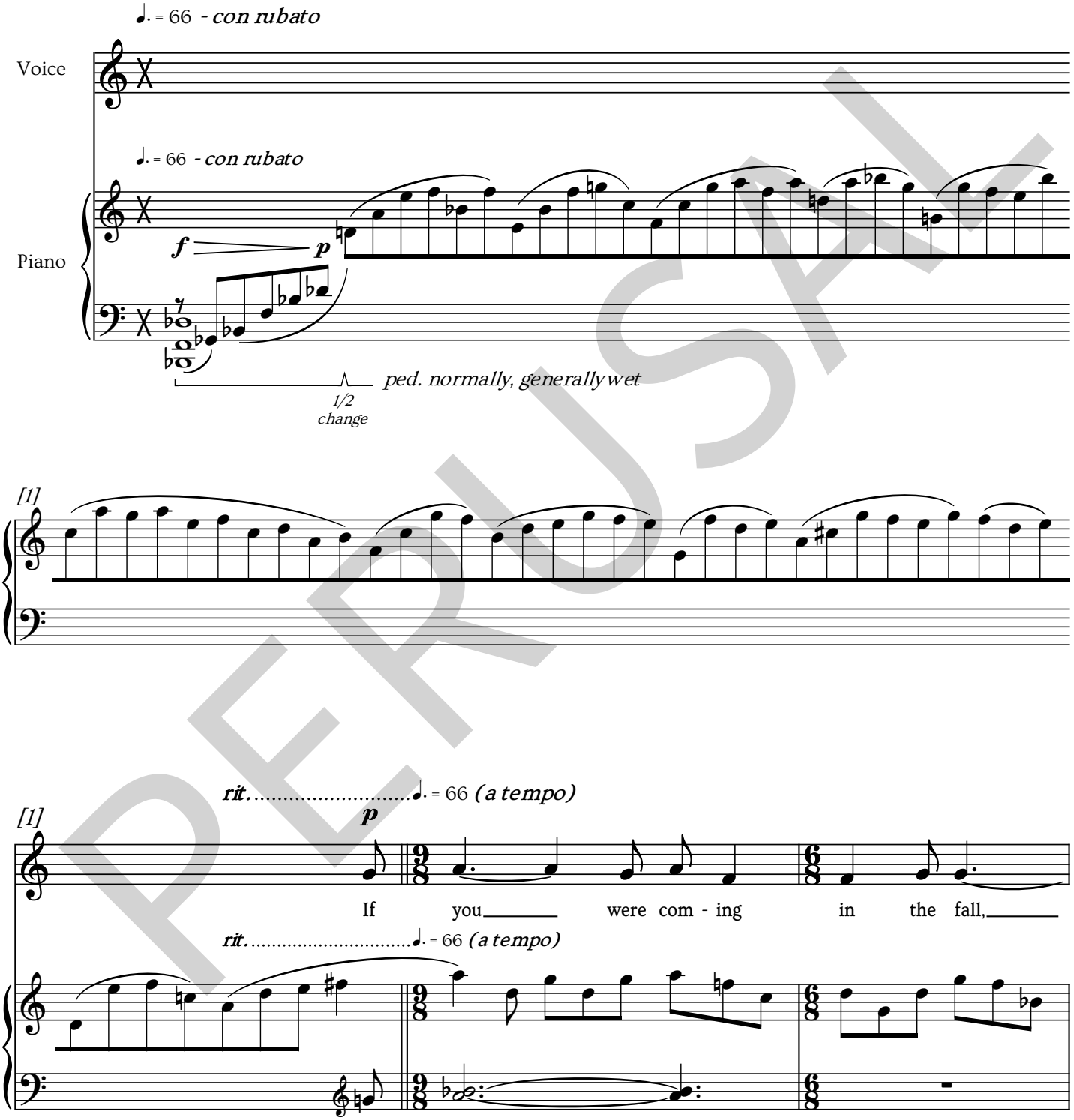
If you were coming in the fall

for high voice (C4-A5)

Emily Dickinson

Jake Berran



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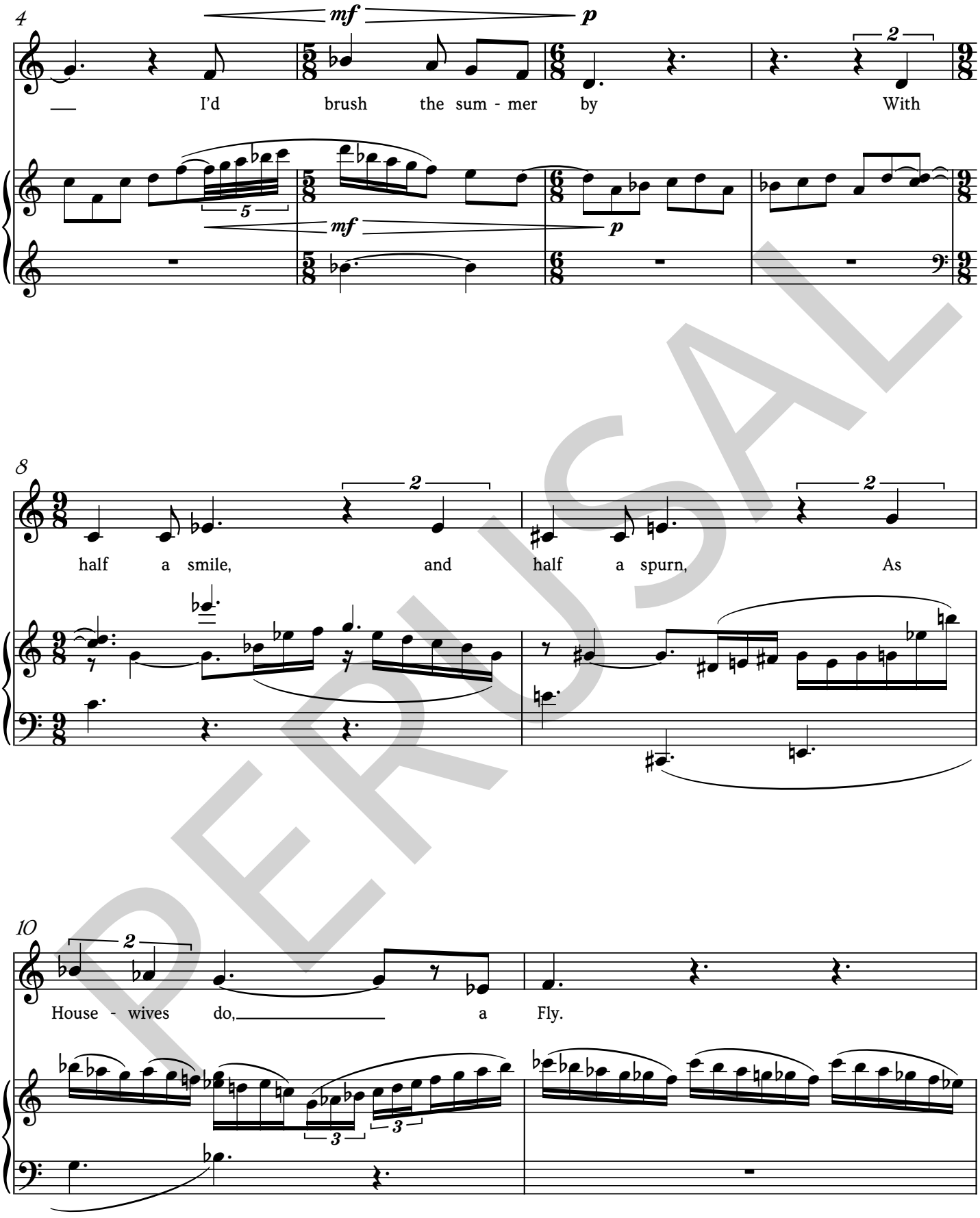
4
mf
p
I'd brush the sum - mer by With
mf
p
8
half a smile, and half a spurn, As
10
House - wives do, a Fly.

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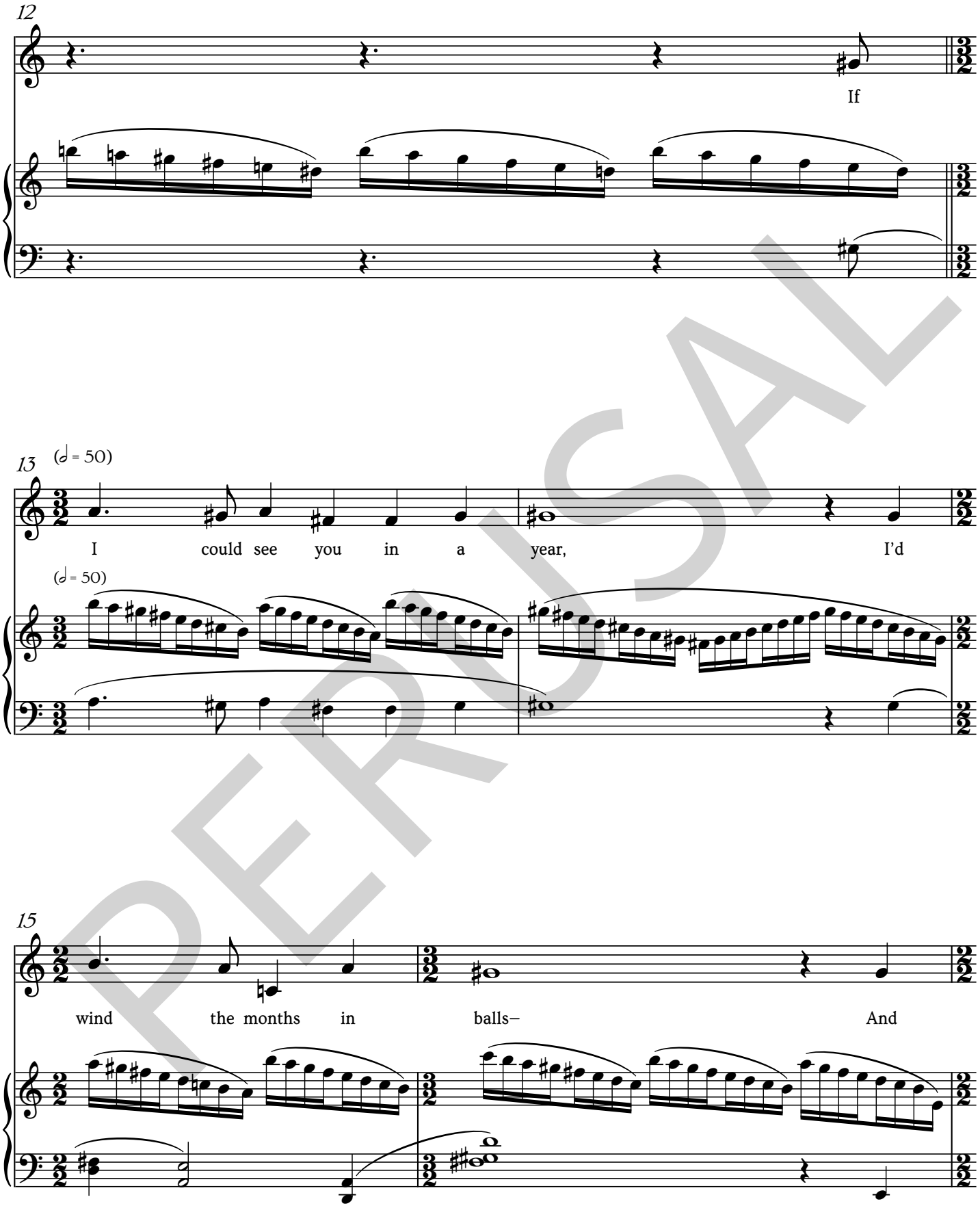
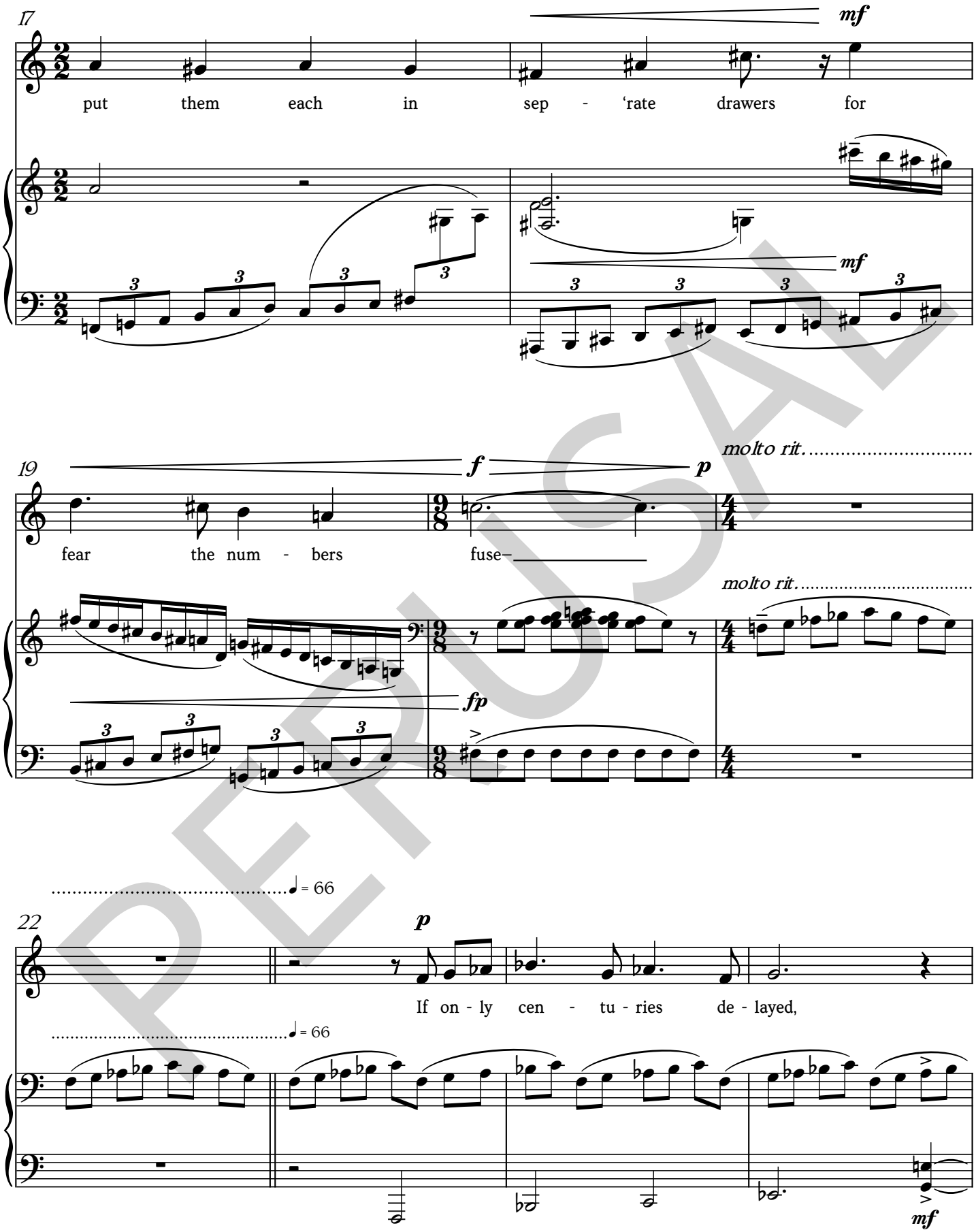
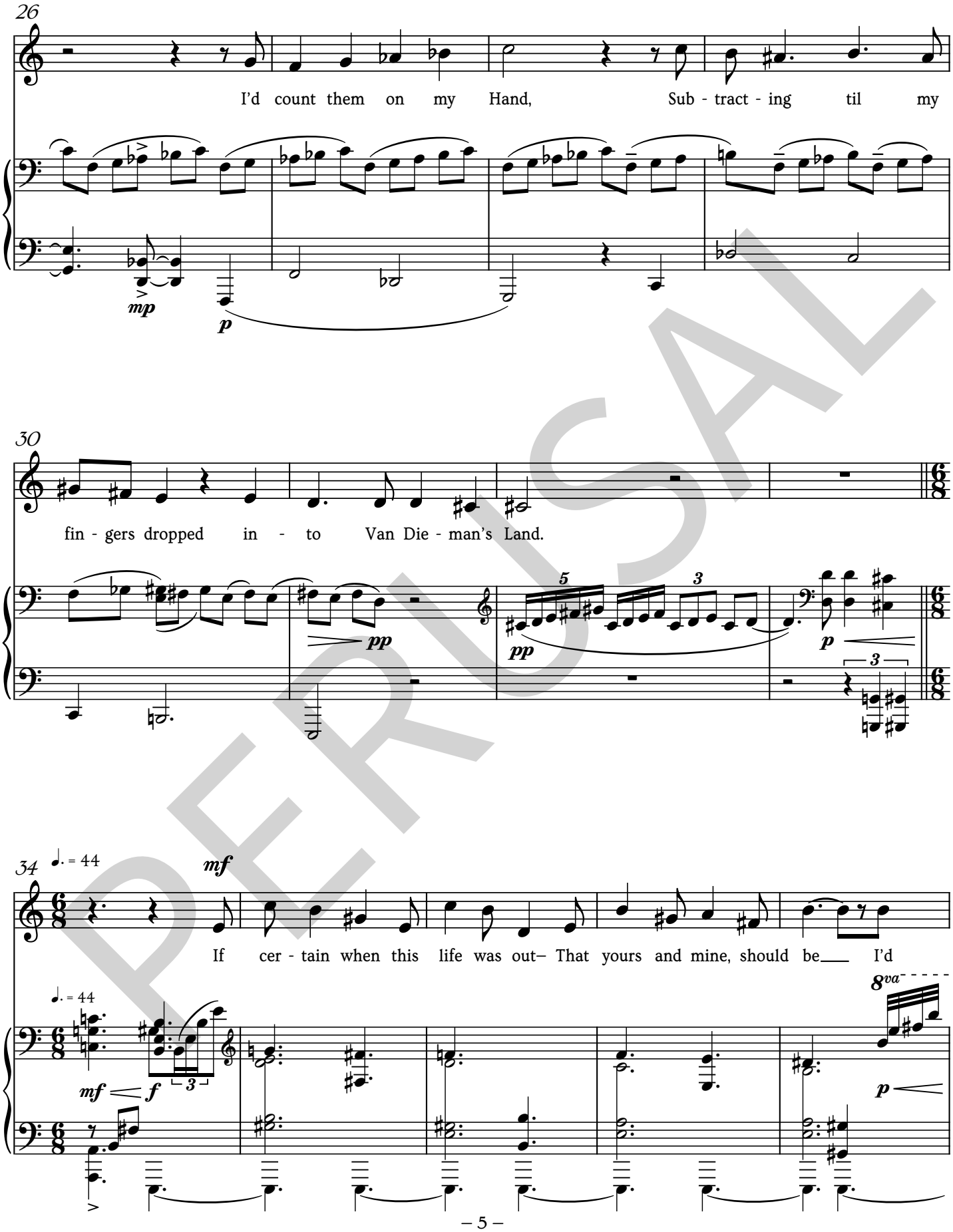

12
If
13
(𝅗𝅥 = 50)
I could see you in a year, I'd
(𝅗𝅥 = 50)
15
wind the months in balls– And

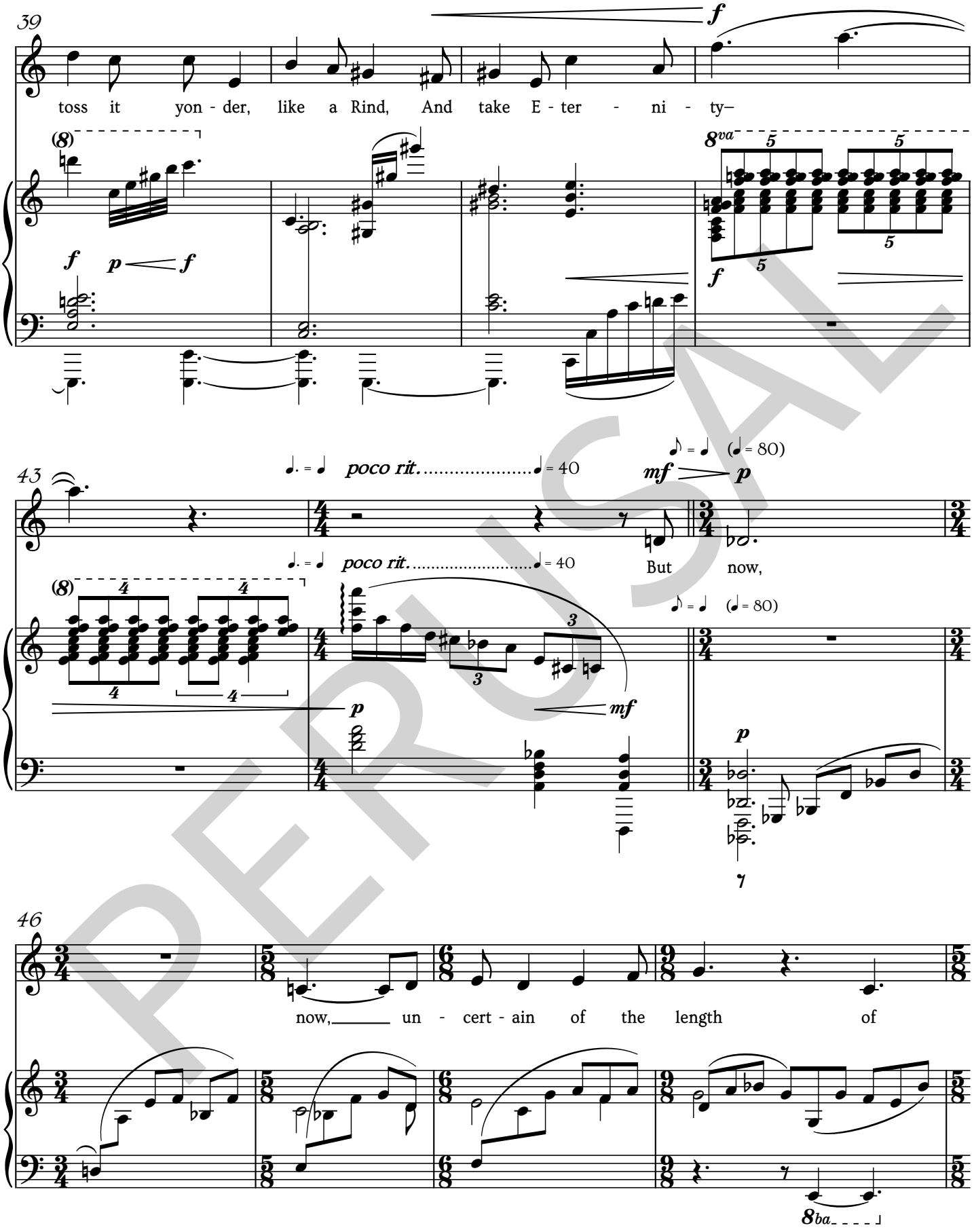
PERUSAL


17
mf
put them each in sep - 'rate drawers for
mf
19
f
p
molto rit.
fear the num - bers fuse
molto rit.
fp
22
= 66
p
If on - ly cen - tu - ries de - layed,
= 66
mf

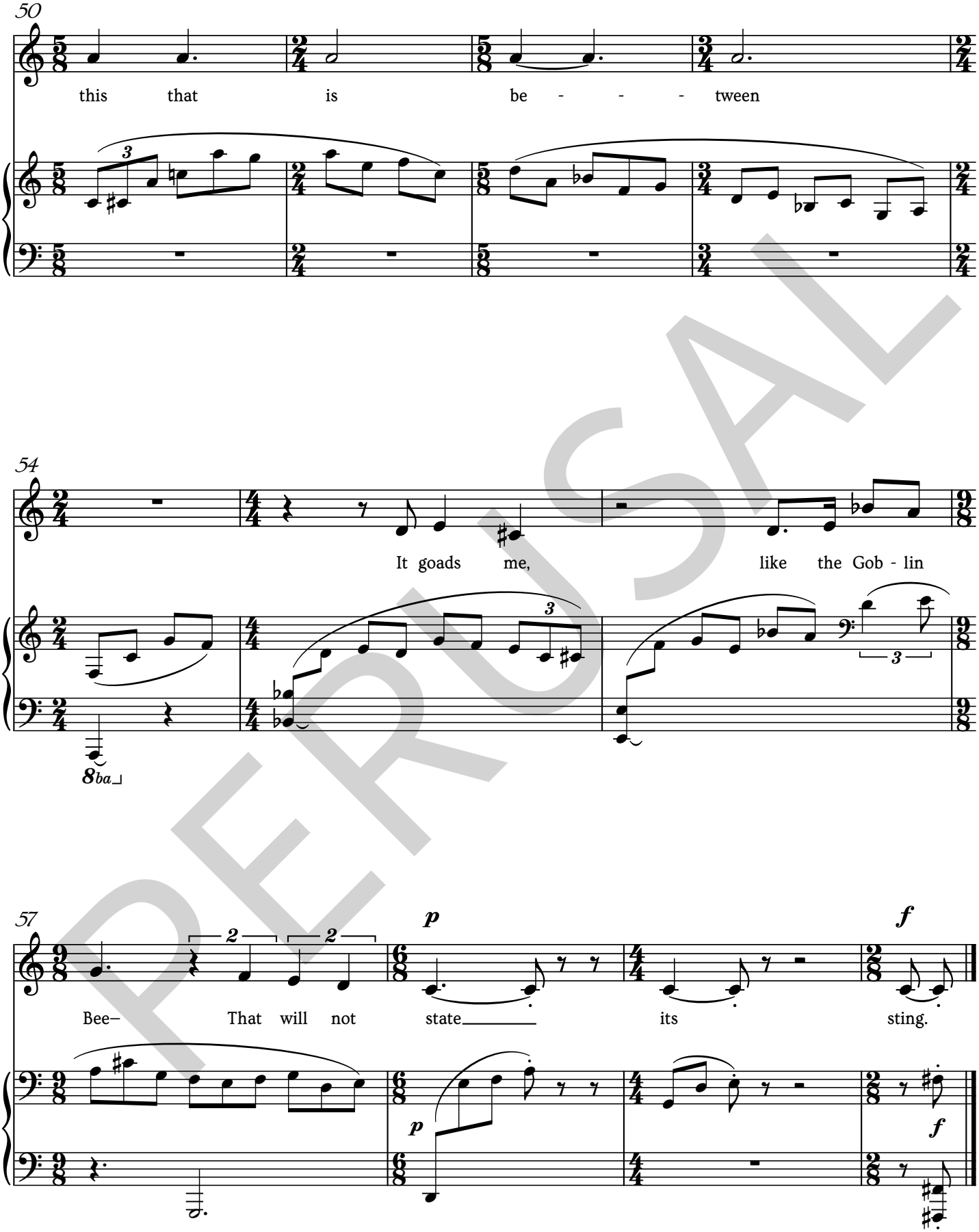
PERUSAL


26
I'd count them on my Hand, Sub - tract - ing til my
mp
p
30
fin - gers dropped in - to Van Die - man's Land.
pp
pp
p
34
mf
If cer - tain when this life was out– That yours and mine, should be I'd
mf
f
8va
p

PERUSAL


39
toss it yon - der, like a Rind, And take E - ter - ni - ty–
43
poco rit. ..... = 40
But now,
46
now, un - cert - ain of the length of

PERUSAL


50
this that is be - - - tween
54
It goads me, like the Gob - lin
8ba
57
Bee– That will not state its sting.
p
f

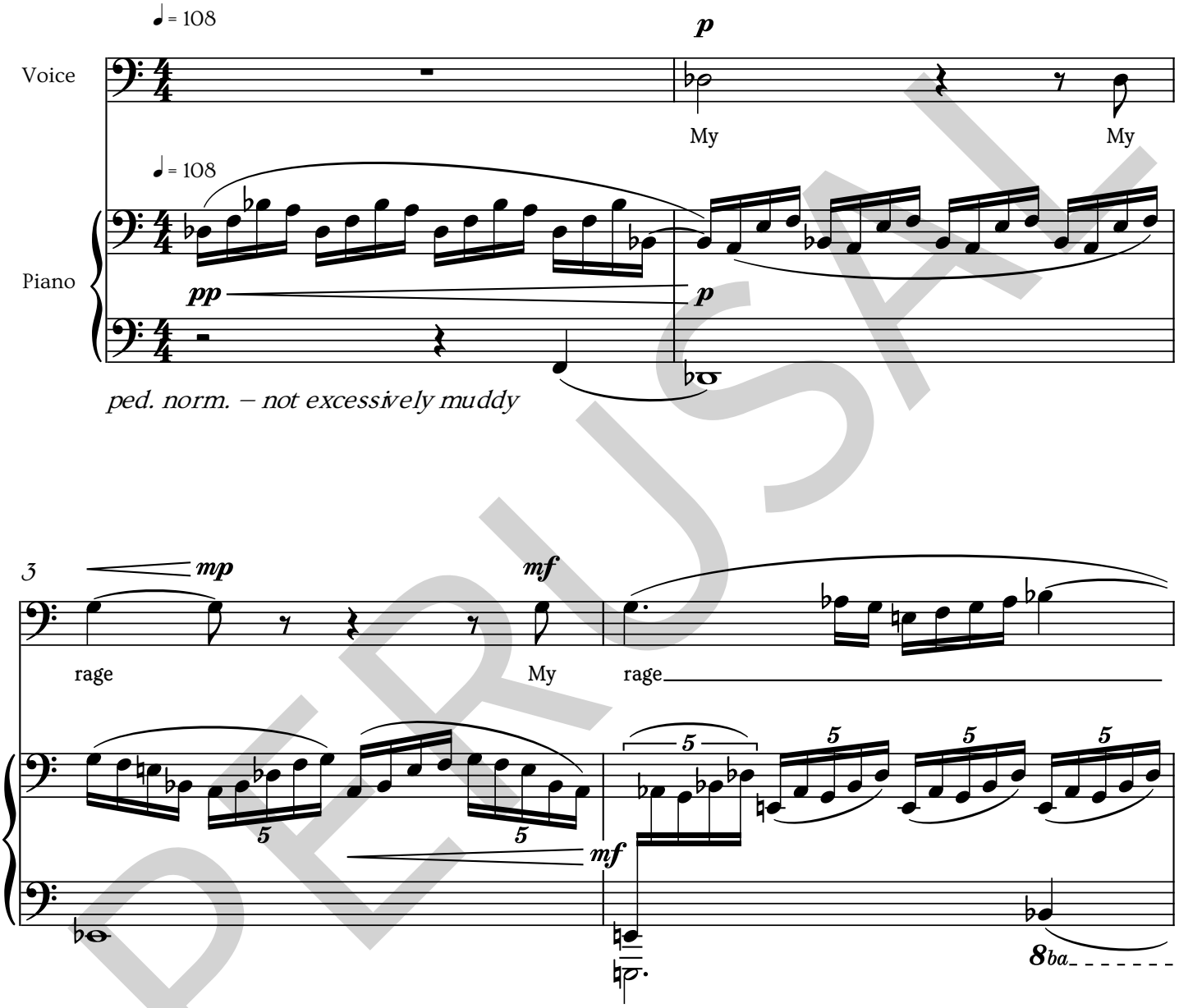
PERUSAL

I cannot love benevolently

for low voice

Millie Rocco

Jake Berran



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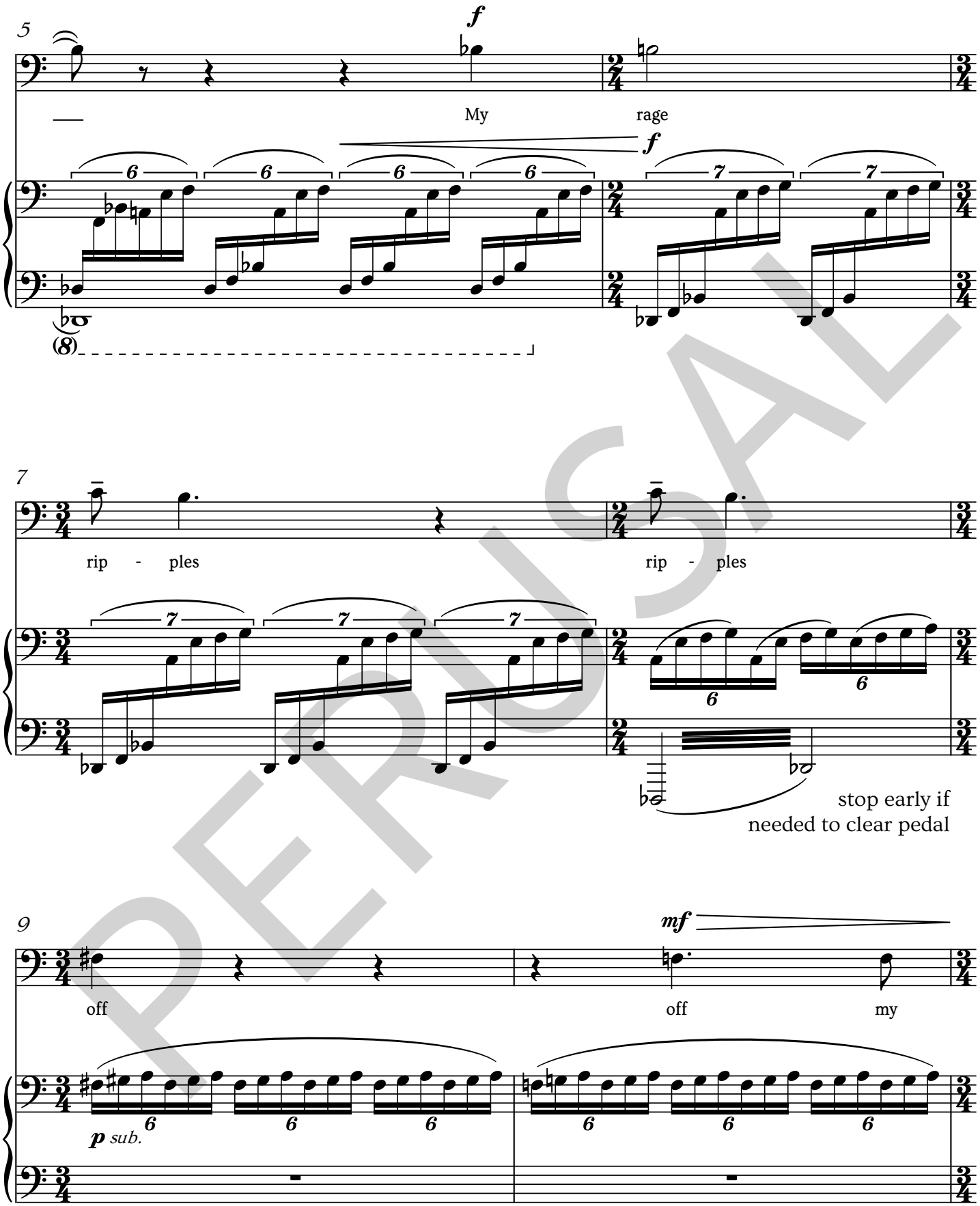
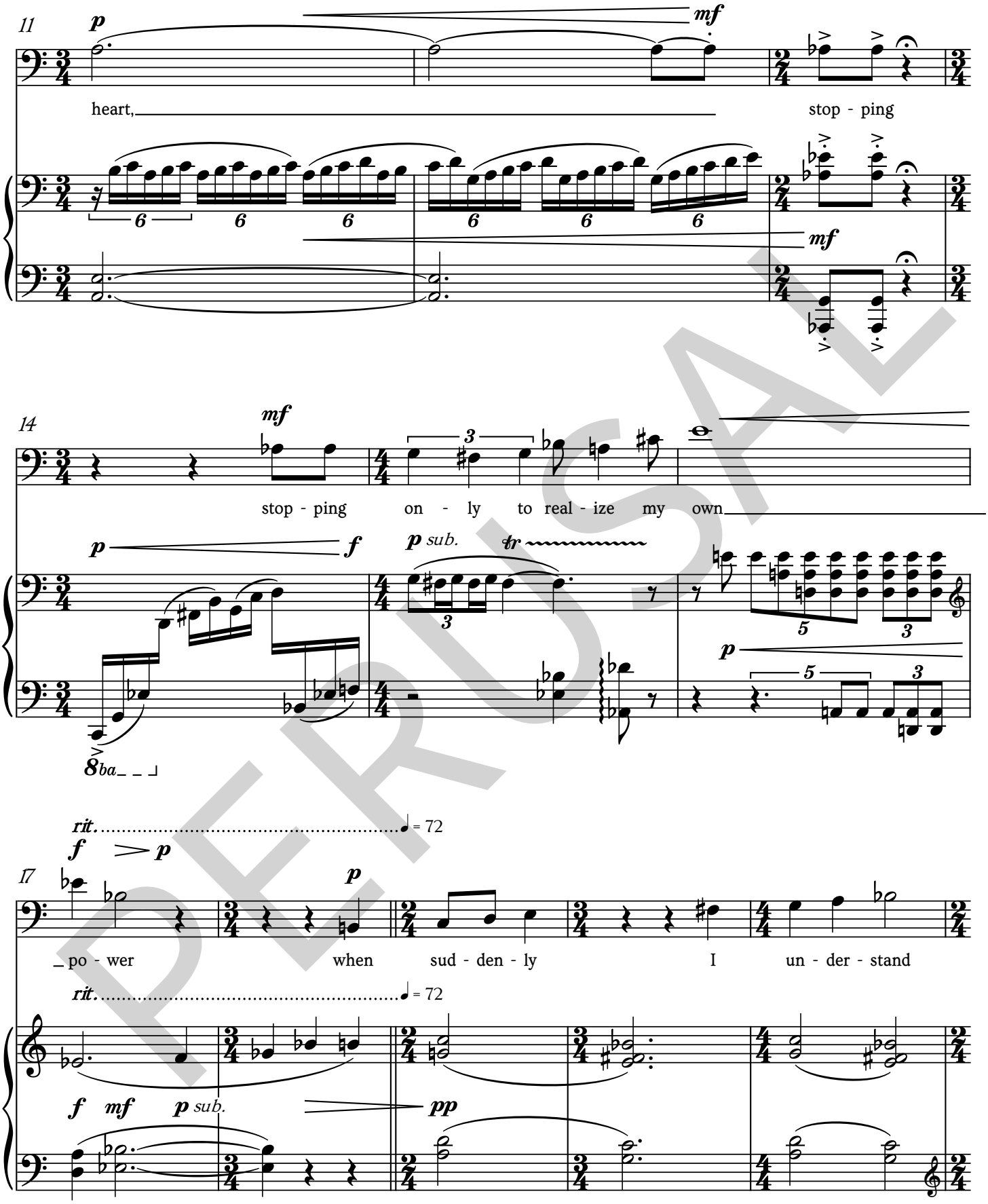
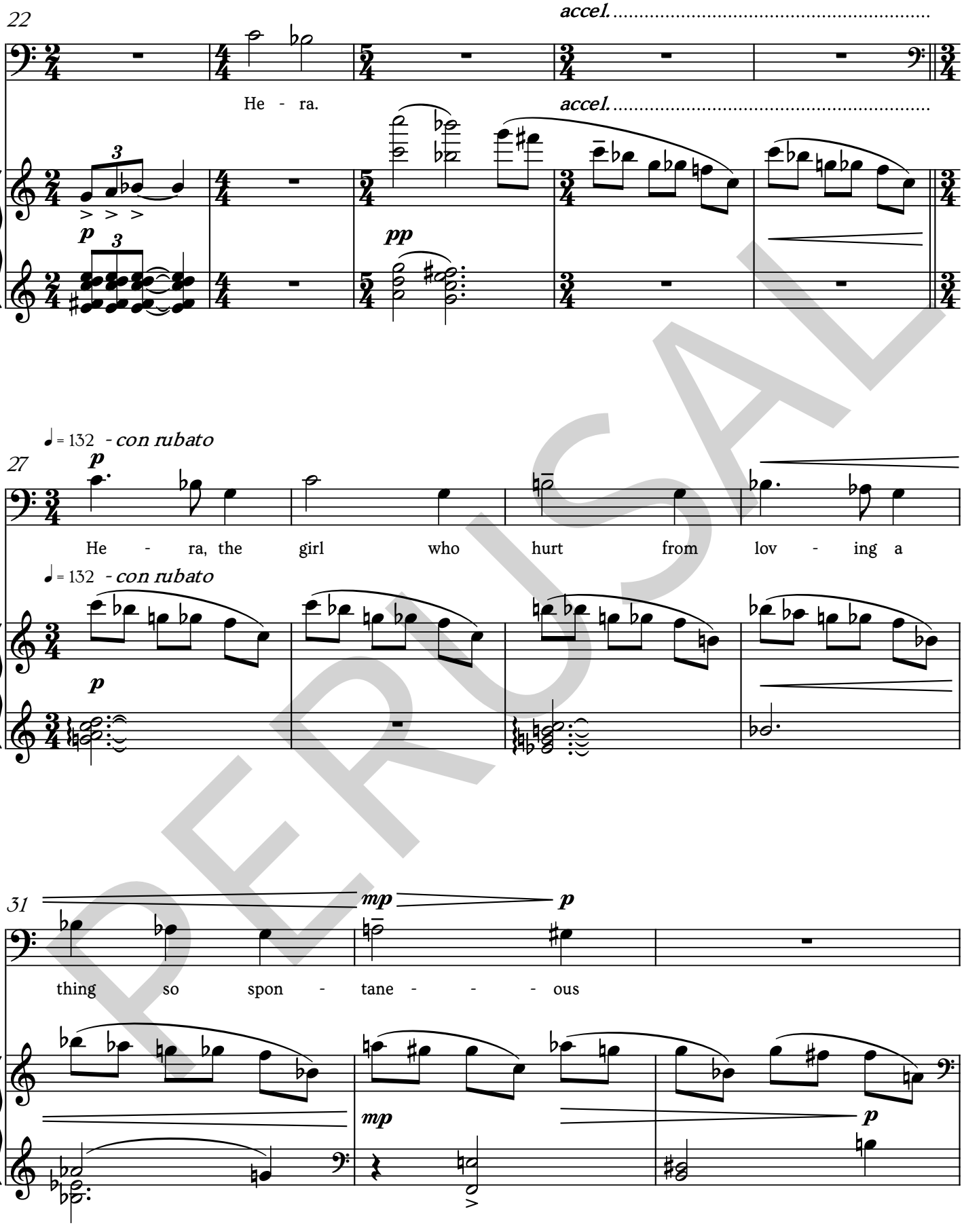

5
f
My
rage
f
7
rip - ples
rip - ples
stop early if
needed to clear pedal
9
mf
off
off
my
p sub.

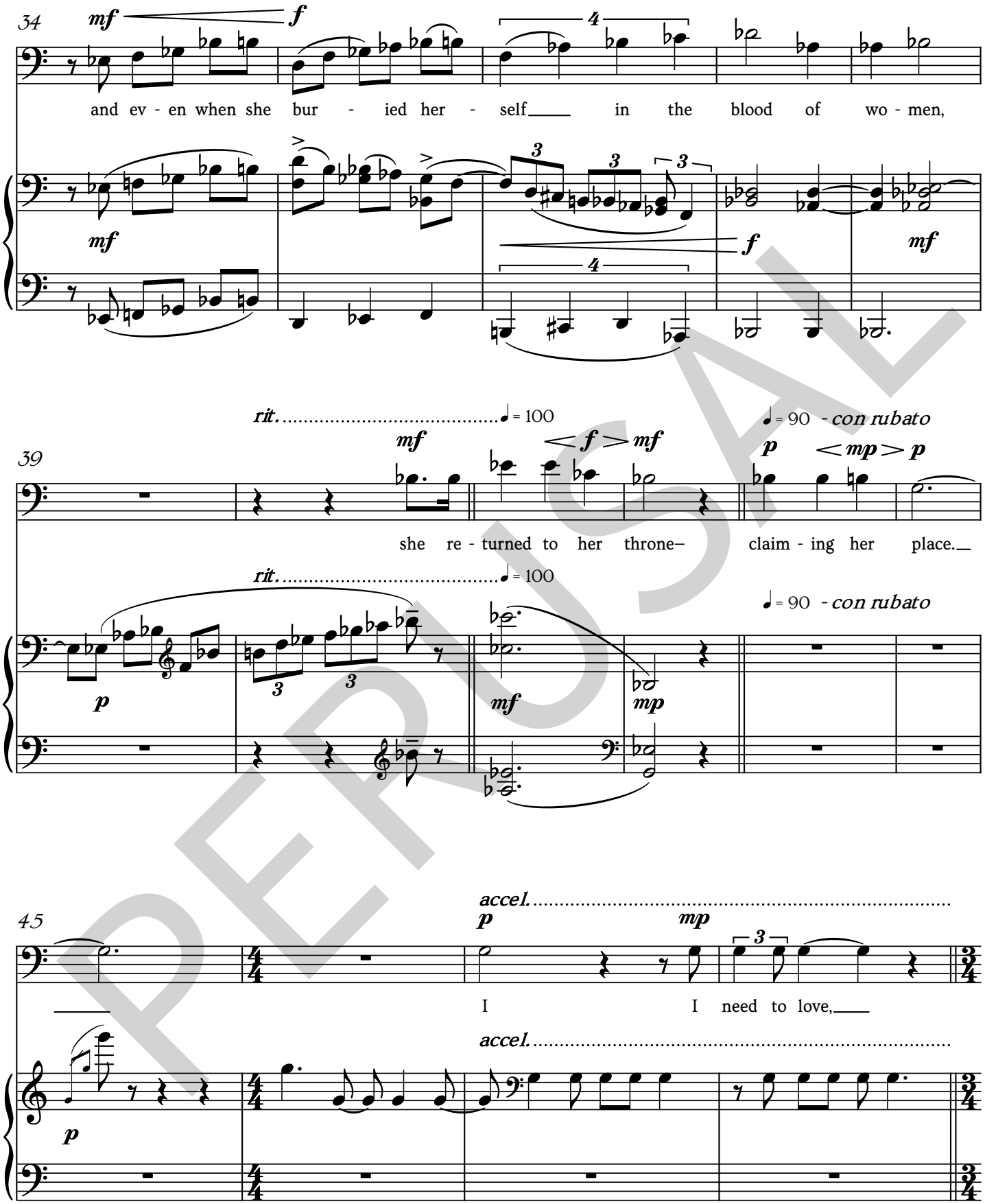
PERUSAL


11
p
mf
heart,
stop - ping
mf
14
mf
stop - ping on - ly to real - ize my own
p
f
p sub.
tr
8ba
rit. ♩ = 72
f
p
17
p
po - wer when sud - den - ly I un - der - stand
rit. ♩ = 72
f
mf
p sub.
pp

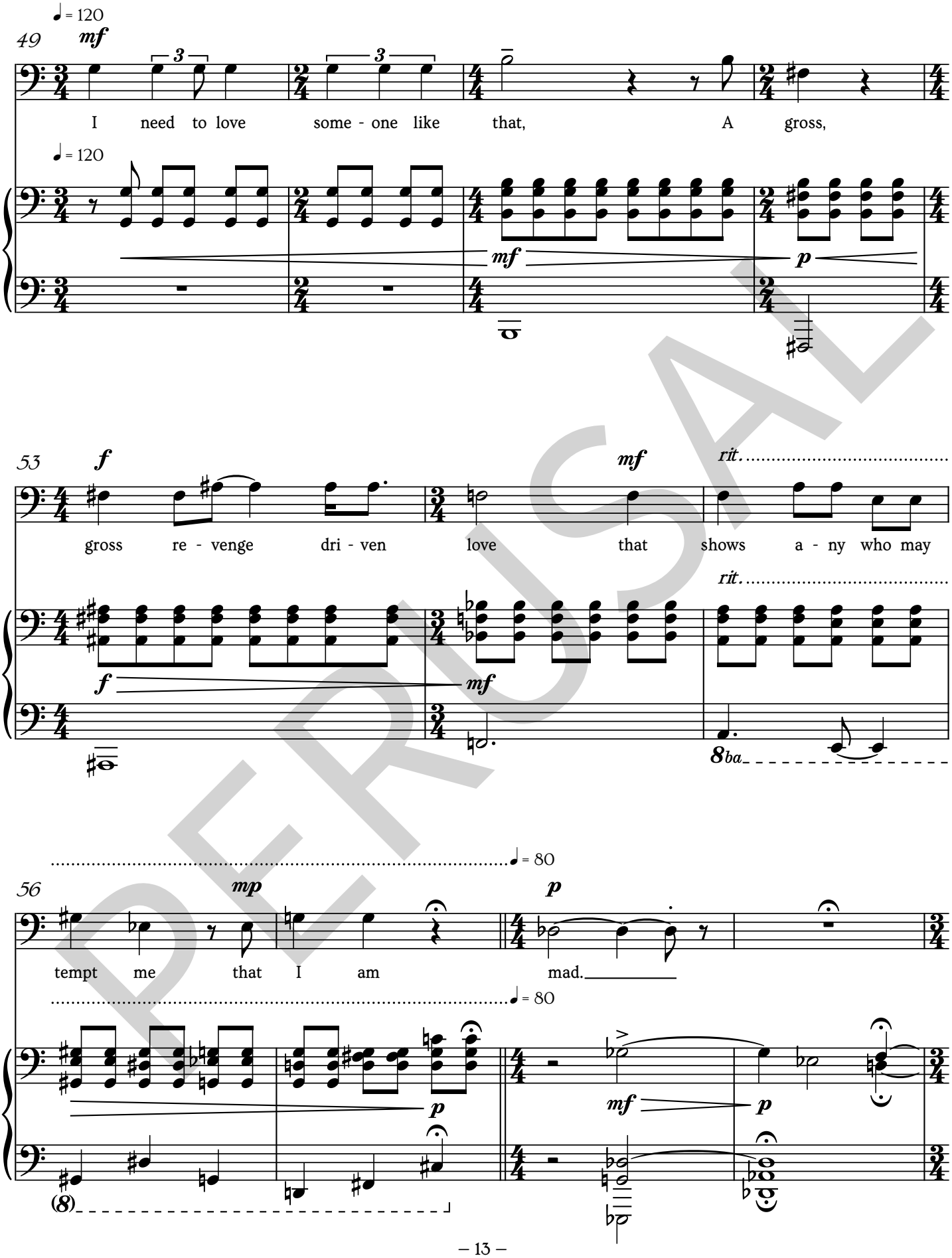
PERUSAL


22
accel.
He - ra.
accel.
p
pp
27
♩ = 132 - con rubato
He - ra, the girl who hurt from lov - ing a
♩ = 132 - con rubato
p
31
mp
p
thing so spon - tane - - - ous
mp
p

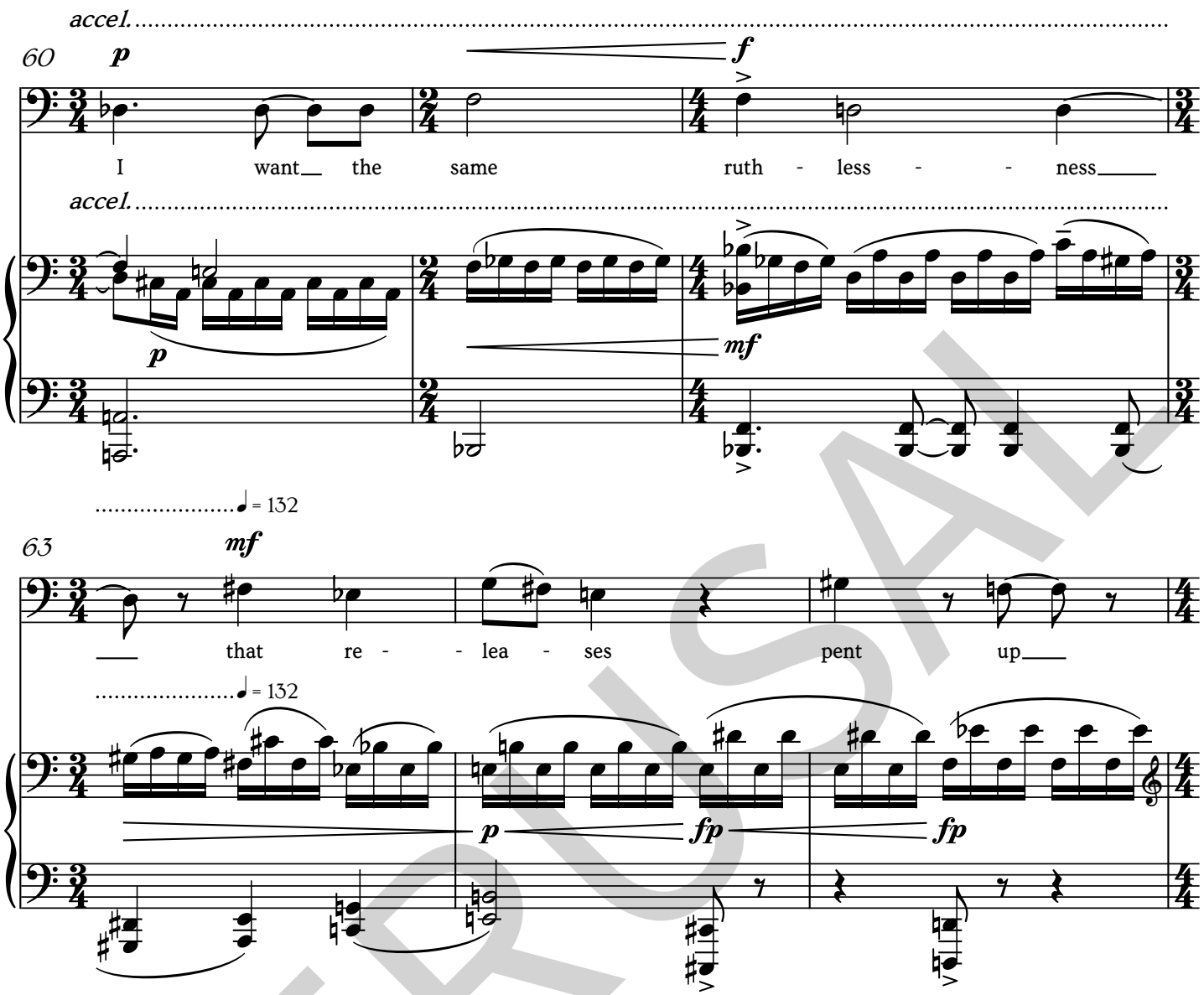
PERUSAL


34
mf
f
4
and ev - en when she bur - ied her - self in the blood of wo - men,
mf
3
3
3
f
4
mf
rit.
♩ = 100
mf
< f > mf
♩ = 90 - con rubato
p
< mp > p
39
she re - turned to her throne— claim - ing her place.
rit.
♩ = 100
♩ = 90 - con rubato
p
3
3
mf
mp
45
accel.
p
mp
3
I I need to love,
accel.
p

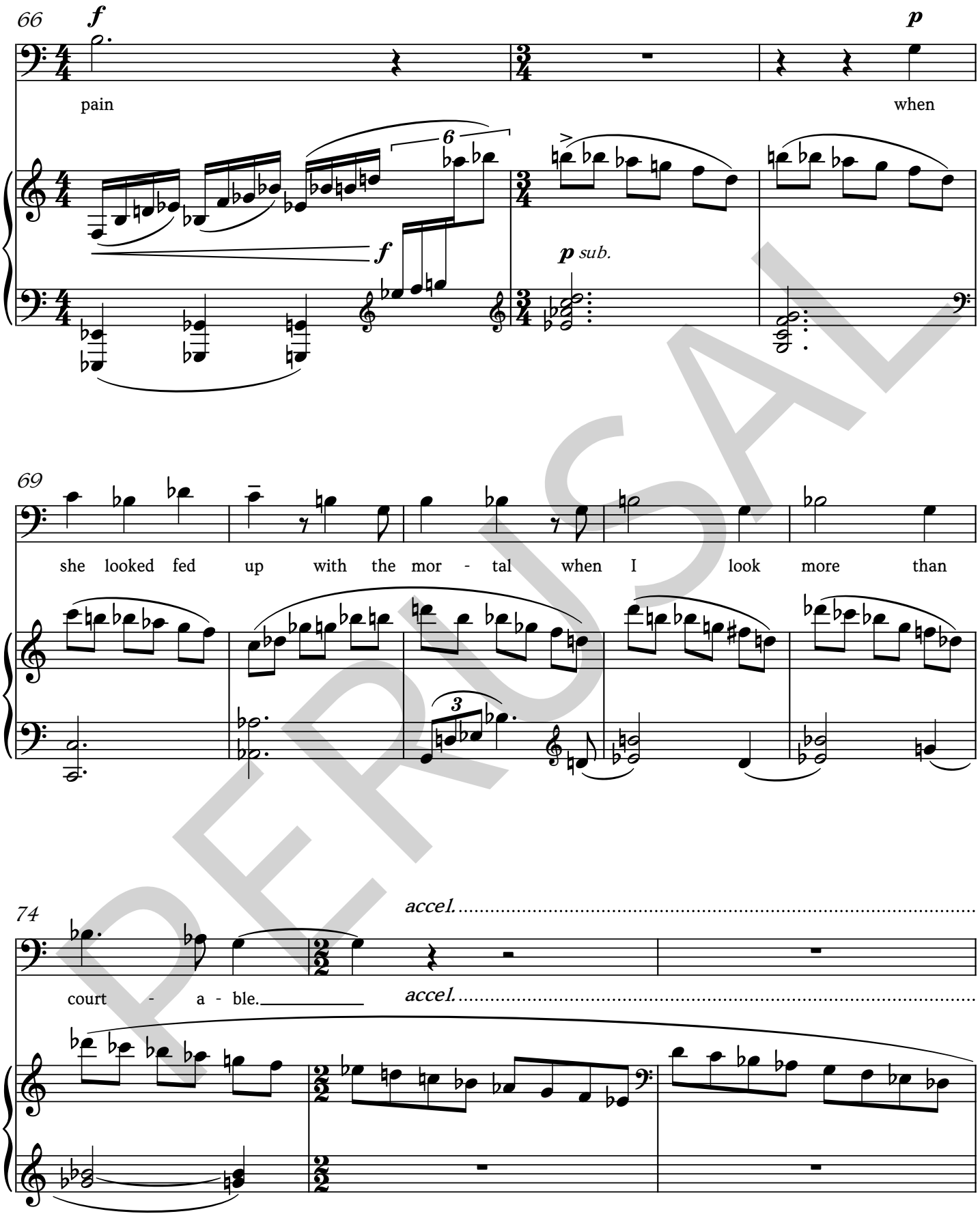
PERUSAL


49
♩ = 120
mf
I need to love some - one like that, A gross,
mf
p
53
f
mf
rit.
gross re - venge dri - ven love that shows a - ny who may
8ba
56
♩ = 80
mp
p
tempt me that I am mad.
mf
(8)

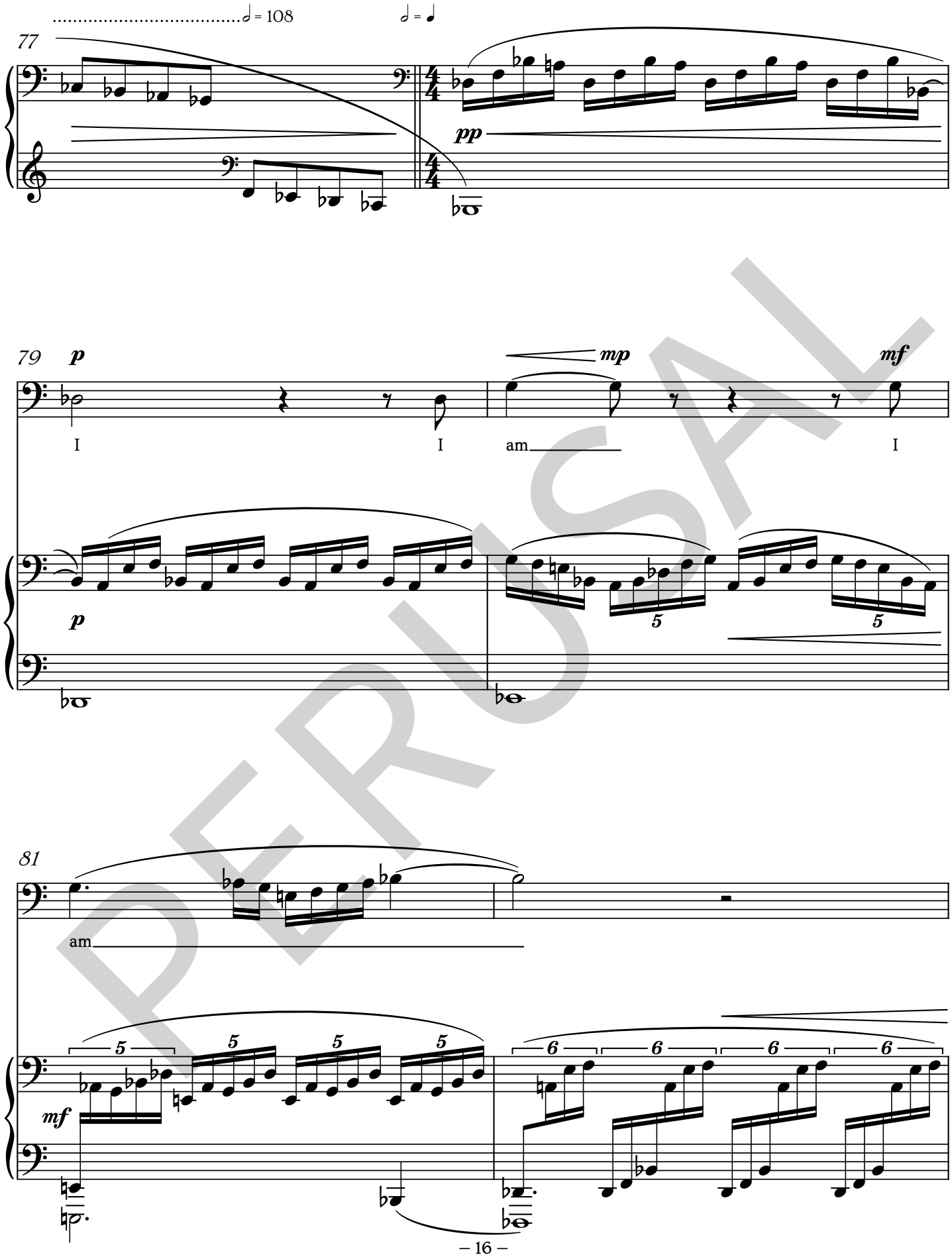
PERUSAL


accel.
60
p
f
I want the same ruth - less - - ness
accel.
p
mf
= 132
63
mf
that re - - lea - ses pent up
= 132
p
fp
fp

PERUSAL


66
f
p
pain
when
6
f
p sub.
69
she looked fed up with the mor - tal when I look more than
3
74
accel.
court - a - ble.
accel.

PERUSAL



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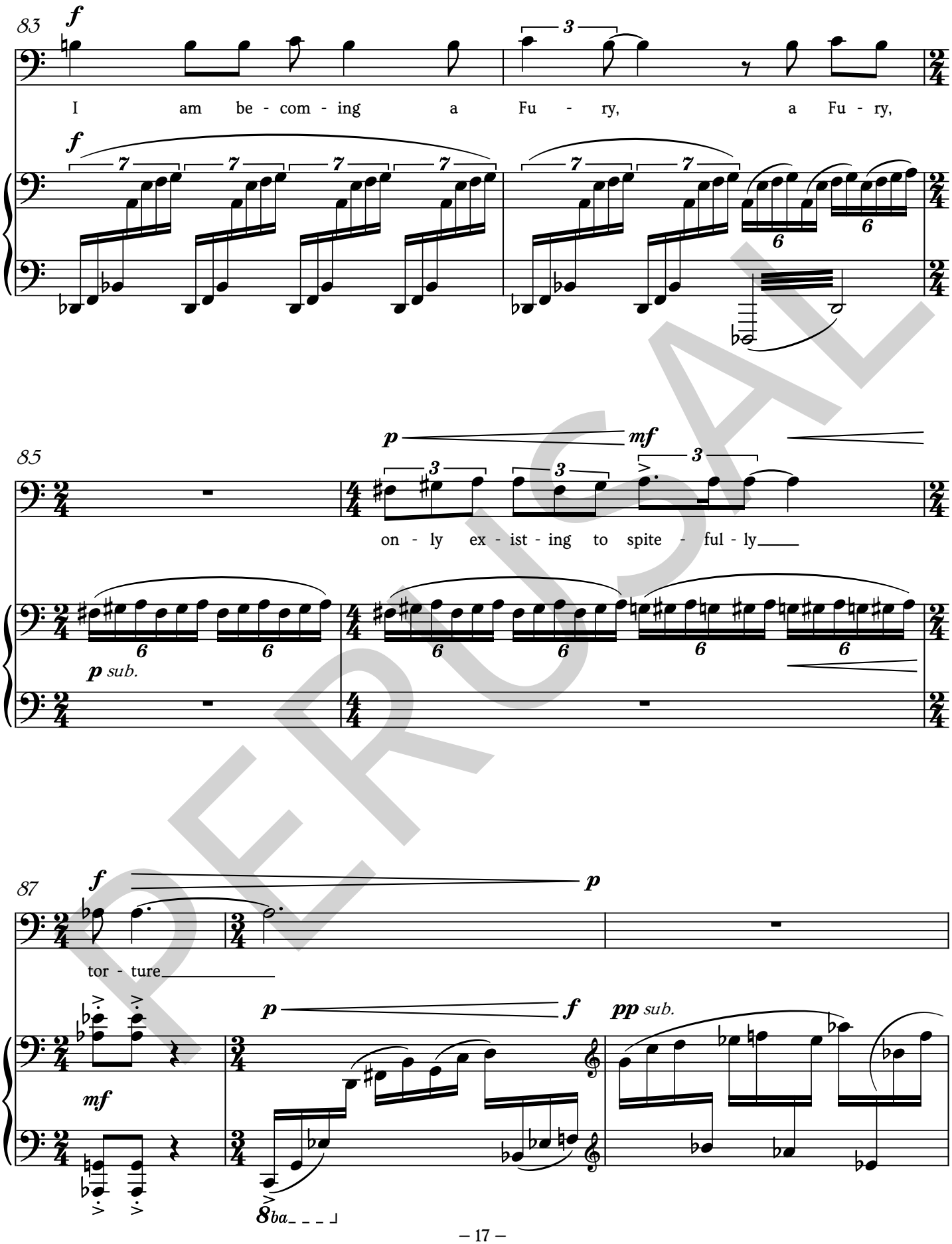
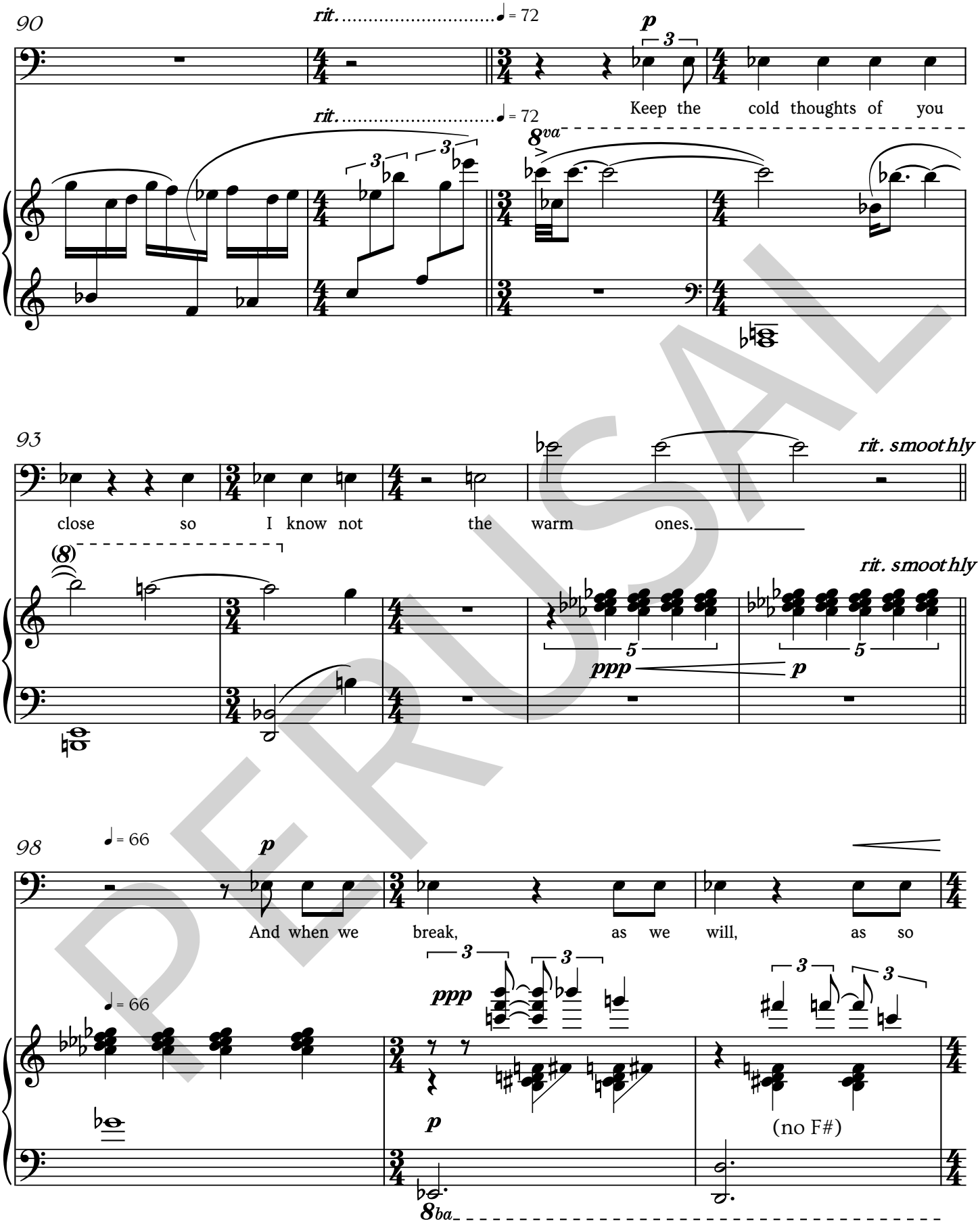
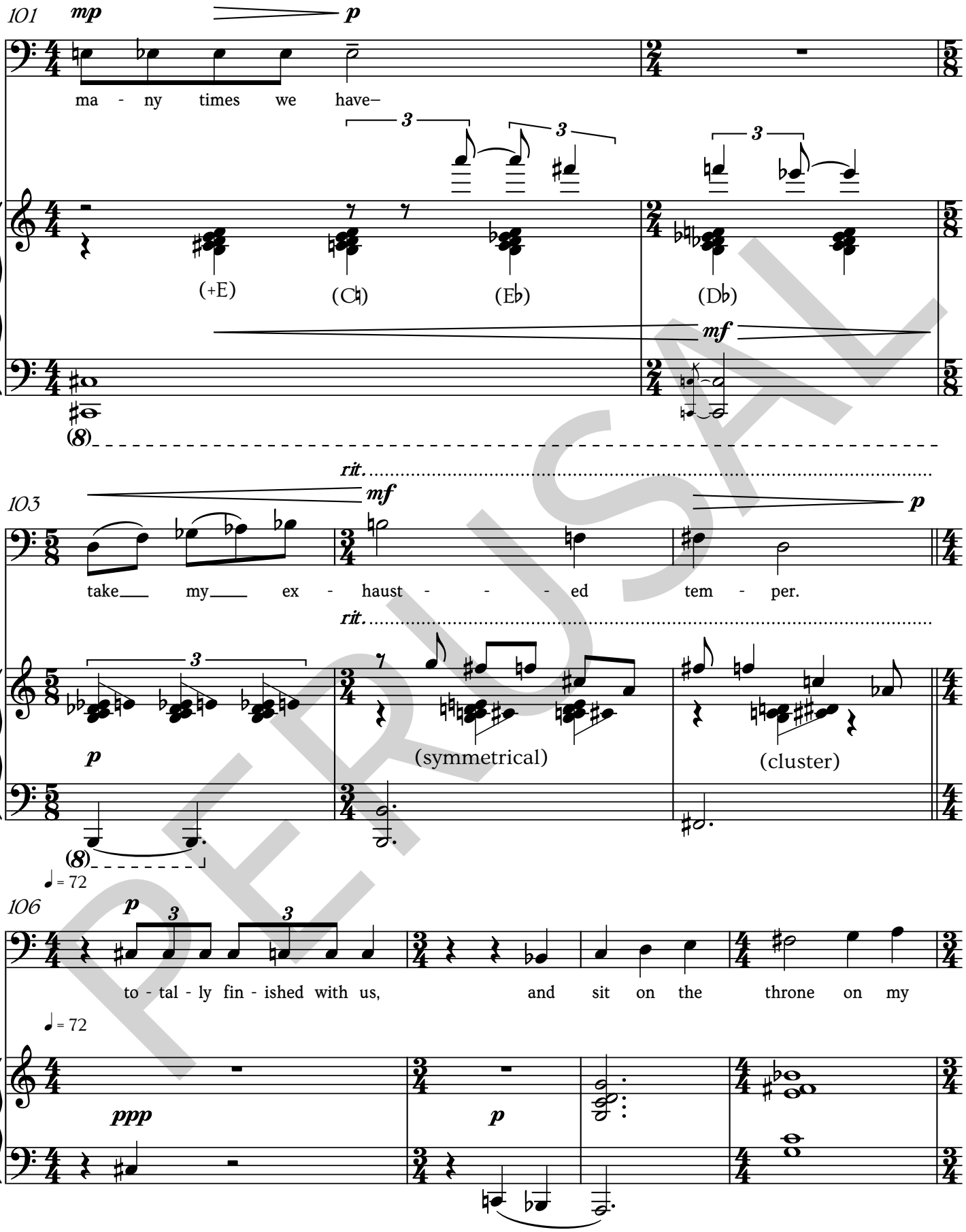

83
f
I am be - com - ing a Fu - ry, a Fu - ry,
85
p
mf
on - ly ex - ist - ing to spite - ful - ly
p sub.
87
f
p
tor - ture
mf
p
f
pp sub.
8ba

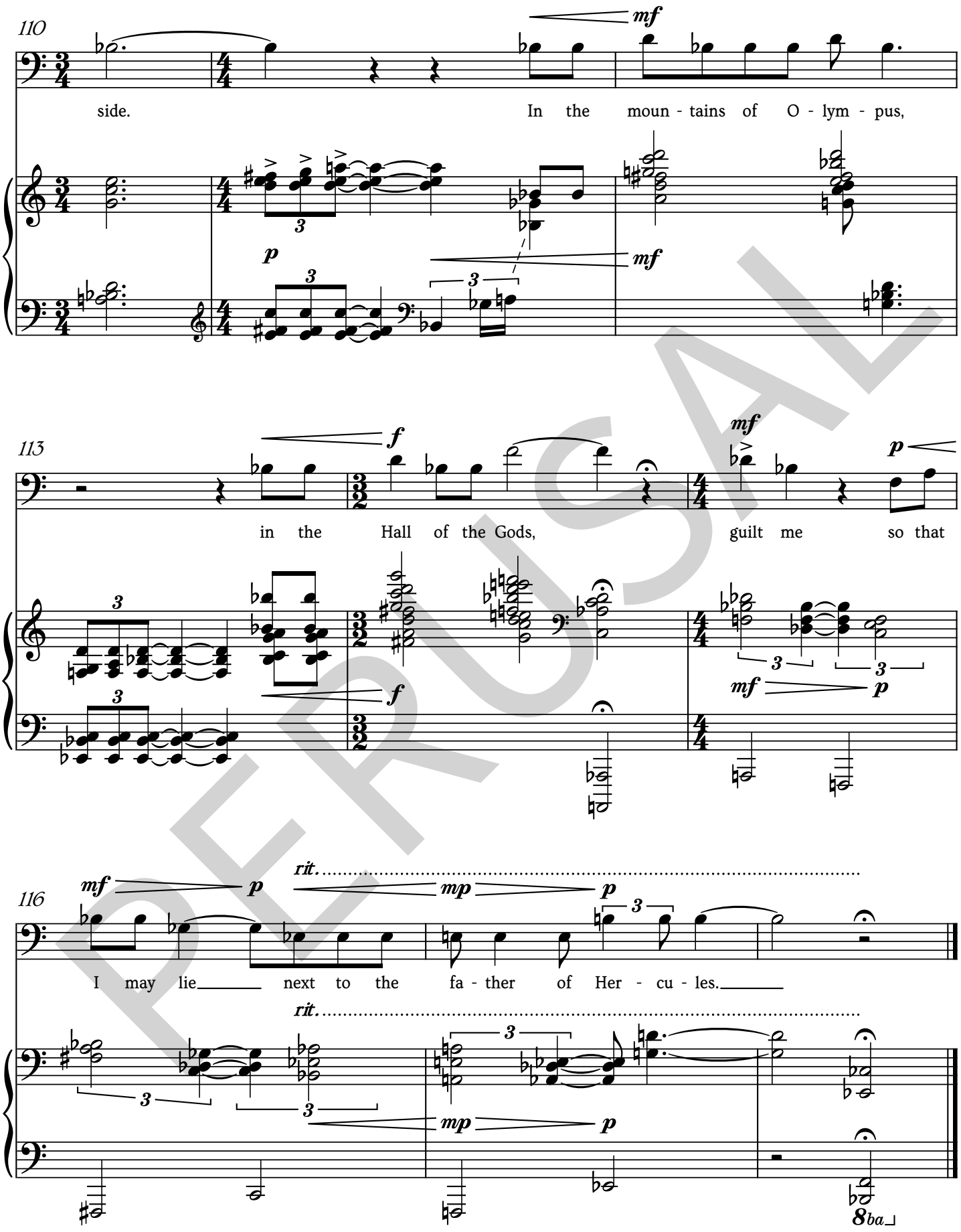
PERUSAL


90
rit. ♩ = 72
p
Keep the cold thoughts of you
rit. ♩ = 72
8va
93
close so I know not the warm ones.
rit. smoothly
(8)
rit. smoothly
ppp
p
98
♩ = 66
p
And when we break, as we will, as so
♩ = 66
ppp
p
(no F#)
8ba

PERUSAL


101
mp
p
ma - ny times we have–
3
3
3
(+E)
(C♮)
(E♭)
(D♭)
mf
(8)
rit.
mf
103
p
take my ex - haust - - - ed tem - per.
rit.
3
p
(symmetrical)
(cluster)
(8)
♩ = 72
106
p
3
3
to - tal - ly fin - ished with us, and sit on the throne on my
♩ = 72
ppp
p

PERUSAL


110
mf
side.
In the moun - tains of O - lym - pus,
p
mf
113
f
mf
p
in the Hall of the Gods,
guilt me so that
f
mf
p
116
mf
p
rit.
mp
p
I may lie next to the fa - ther of Her - cu - les.
rit.
mp
p
8ba

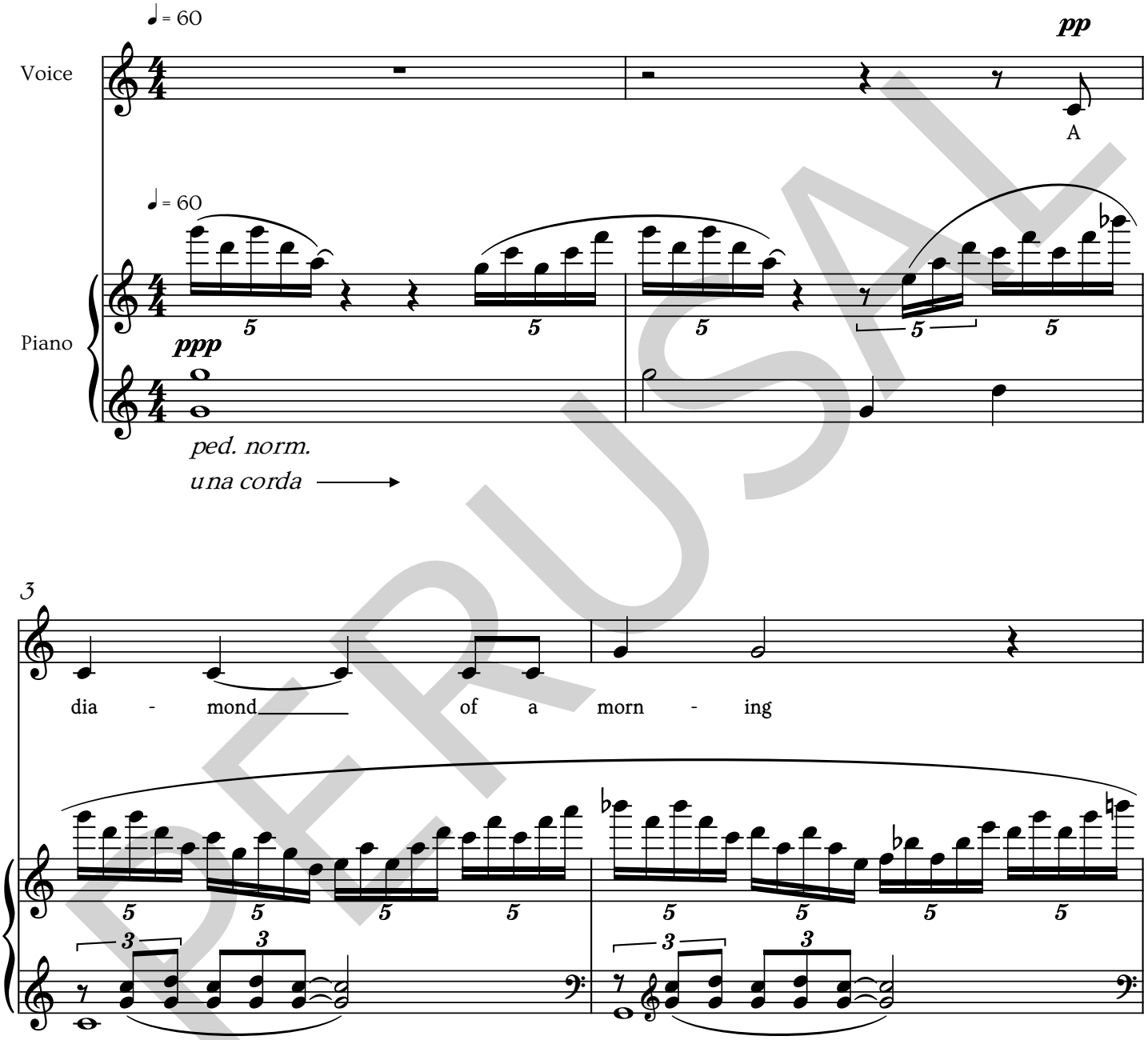
PERUSAL

Morning Song

for both voices in octaves

Sara Teasdale

Jake Berran



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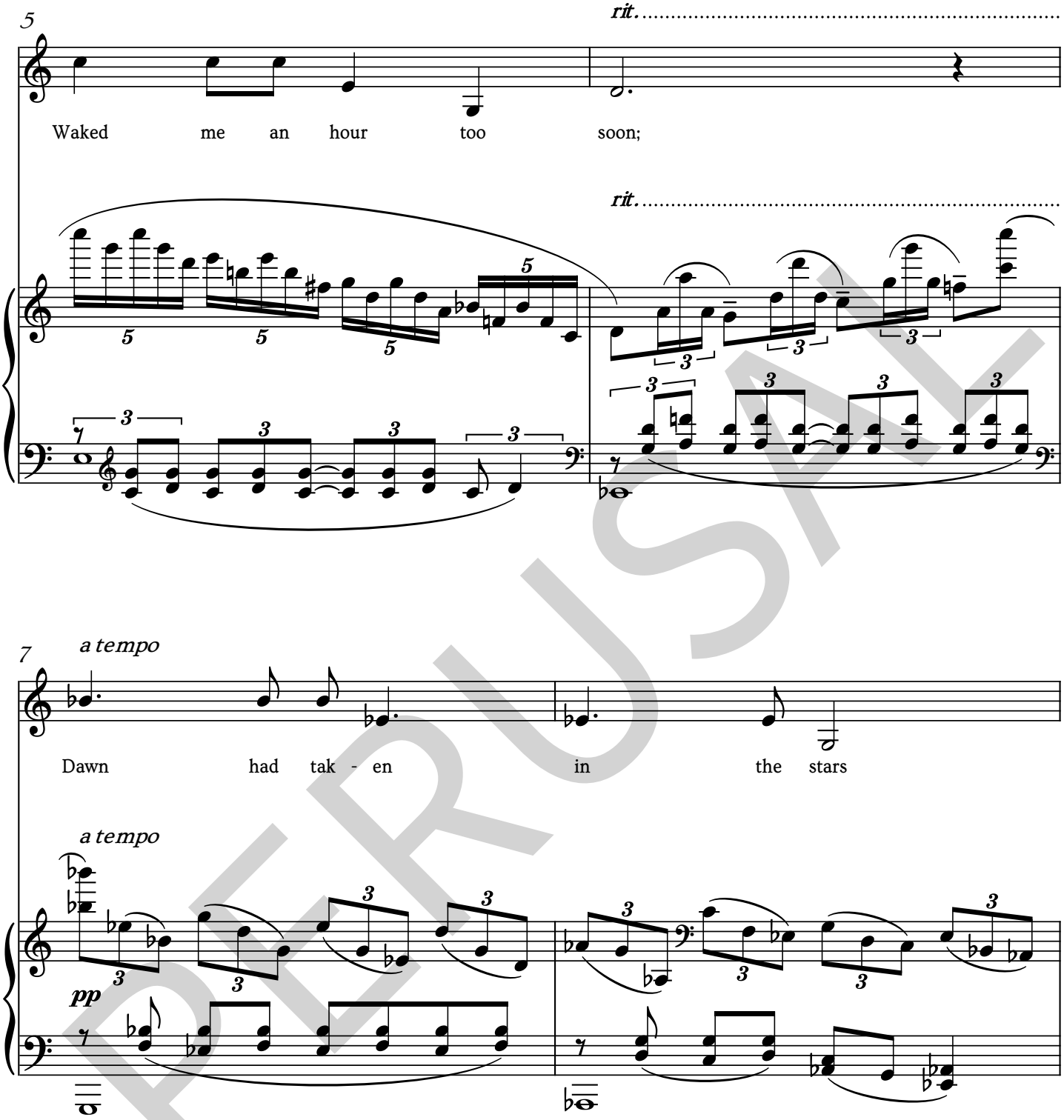
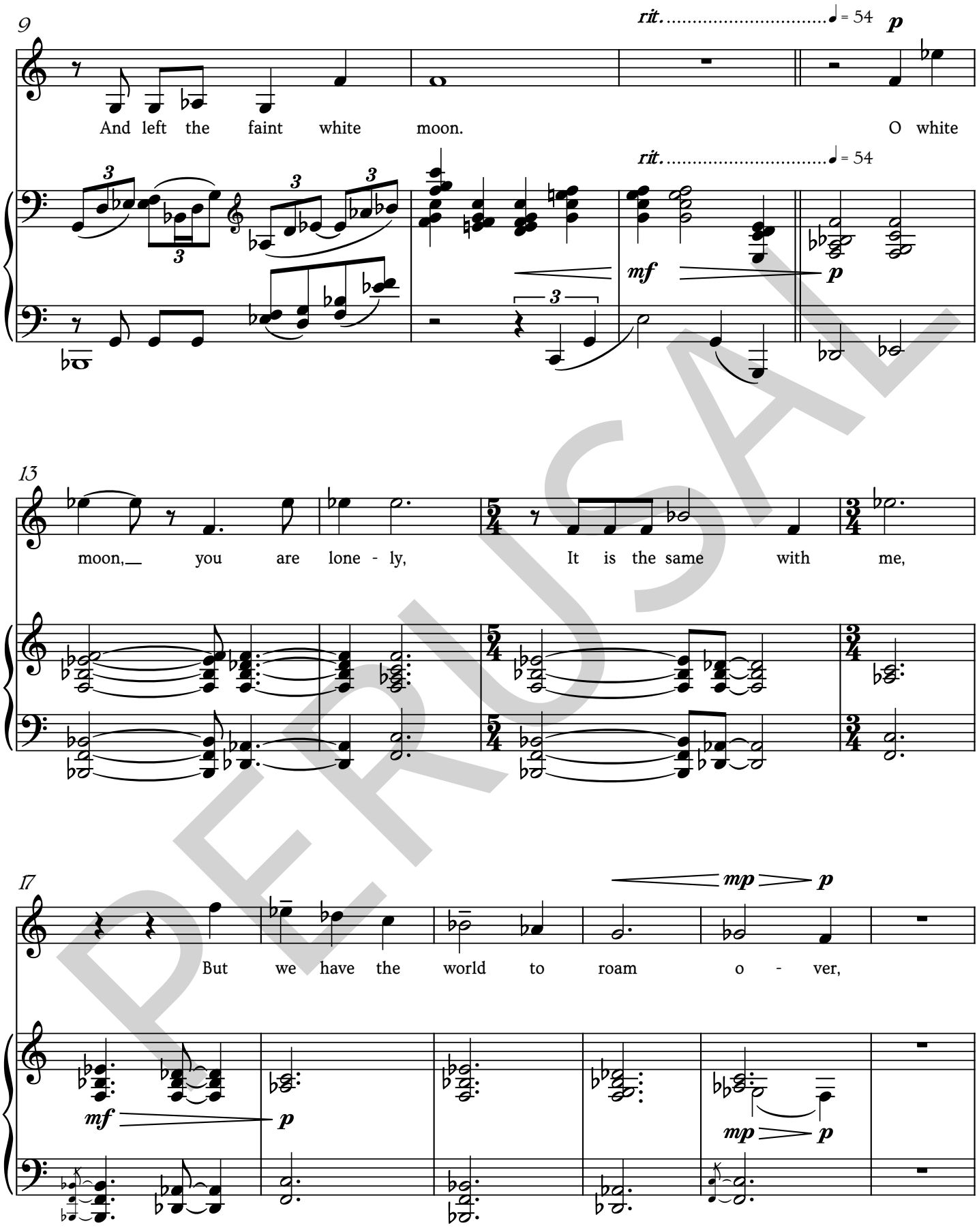
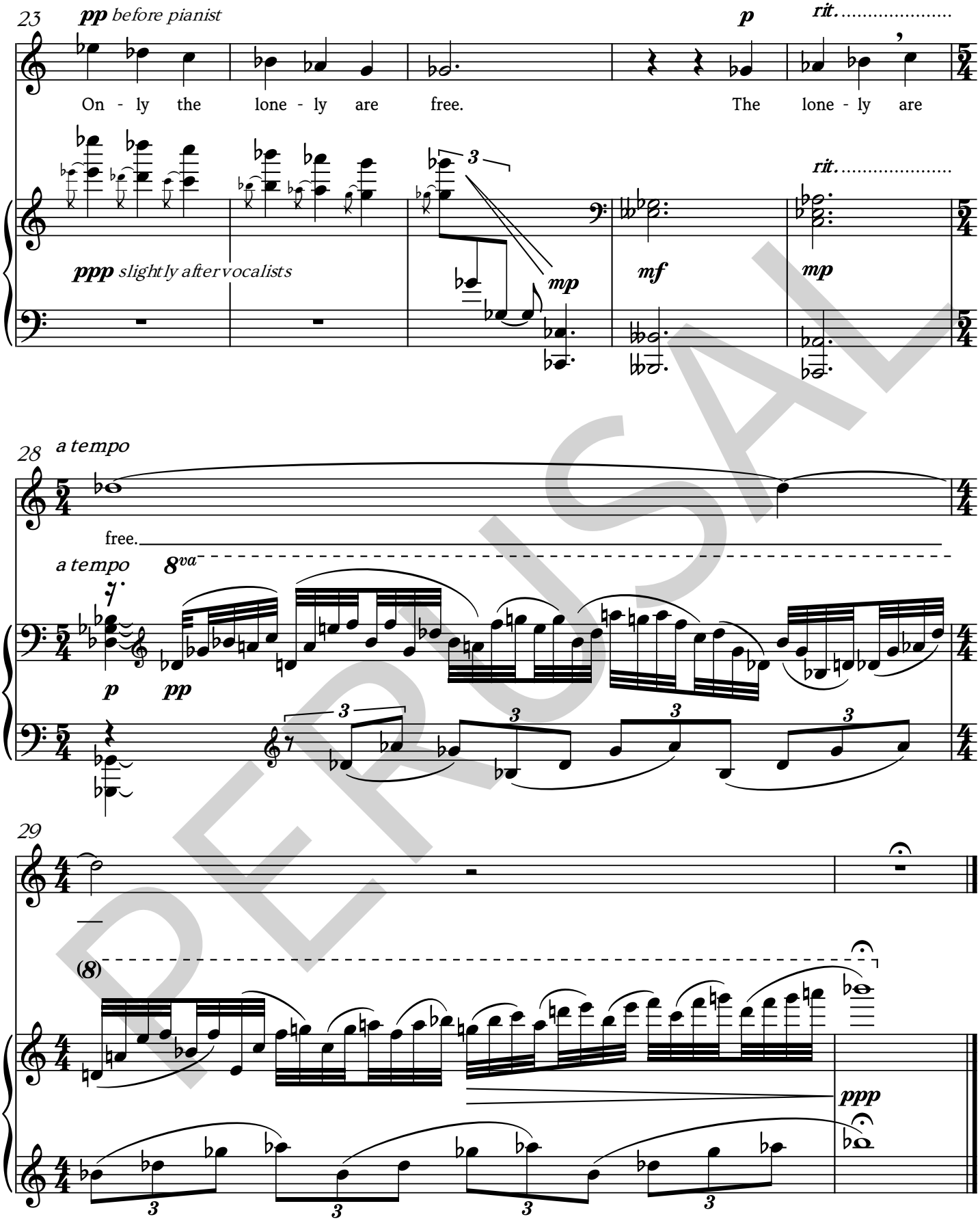

5
rit.
Waked me an hour too soon;
rit.
7
a tempo
Dawn had tak - en in the stars
a tempo
pp

PERUSAL


9
rit. ♩ = 54
p
And left the faint white moon.
O white
rit. ♩ = 54
mf
p
13
moon, you are lone - ly,
It is the same with me,
17
mp p
But we have the world to roam o - ver,
mf p
mp p

PERUSAL


23
pp before pianist
p
rit.
On - ly the lone - ly are free. The lone - ly are
ppp slightly after vocalists
mp
mf
mp
28
a tempo
free.
a tempo
8va
p
pp
29
(8)
ppp

PERUSAL