Kirk O'Riordan

Four Beautiful Songs

for Soprano, Viola, and Piano

on Poems by Lee Upton

for more information:

www.kirkoriordan.com

Four Beautiful Songs (2017)

for Soprano, Viola, and Piano

on poems by Lee Upton

Kirk O'Riordan (b. 1968)

Notes

I. Ode on "Ode on a Grecian Urn"
II. The Age of Beauty
III. Even If
IV. The Blouse

Four Beautiful Songs is a collection of settings of poems by my close friend and colleague Lee Upton. These poems address the concept of "beauty" in different ways: from both the eye of the beholder and the beheld. These texts are witty, charming, and poignant—typical of Lee's work—and in setting them I hoped to enhance those qualities.

I would like to thank Lee for her permission to use these texts, for her collegial and friendly support and collaboration, and for her beautiful poetry.

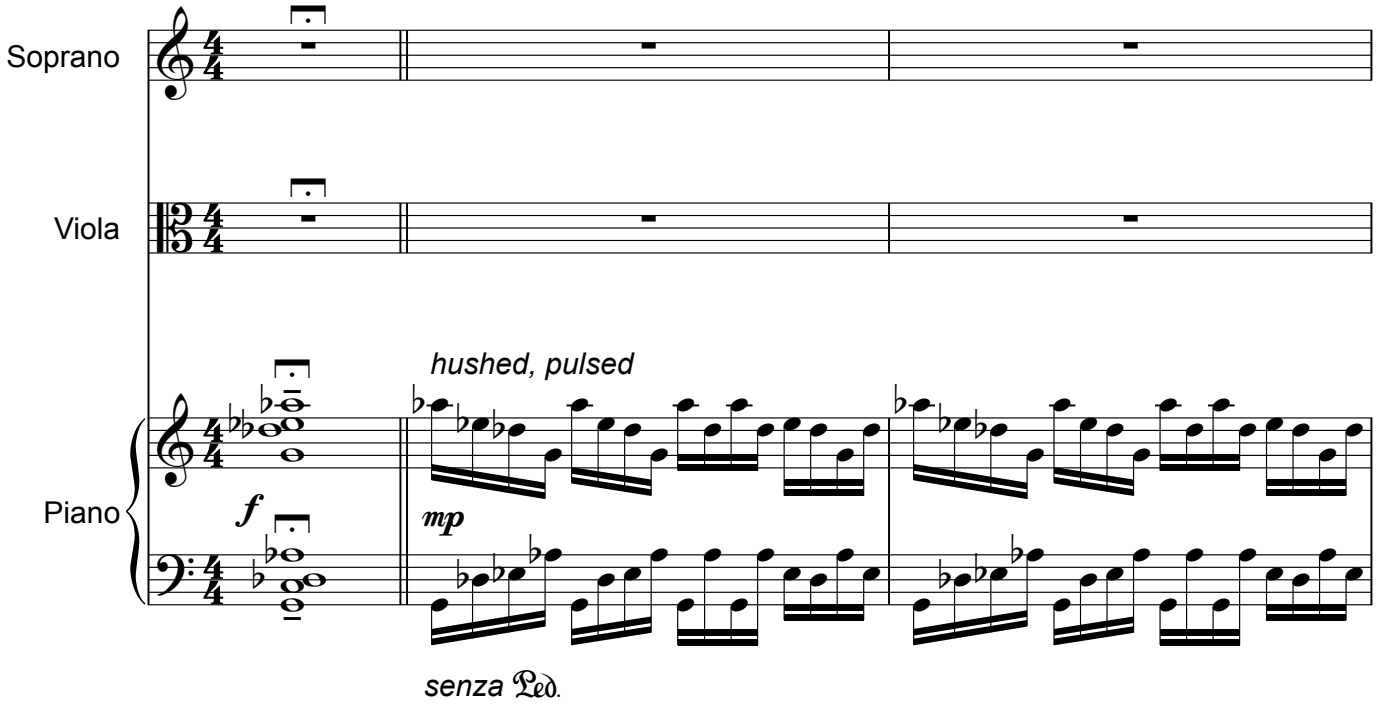
Four Beautiful Songs

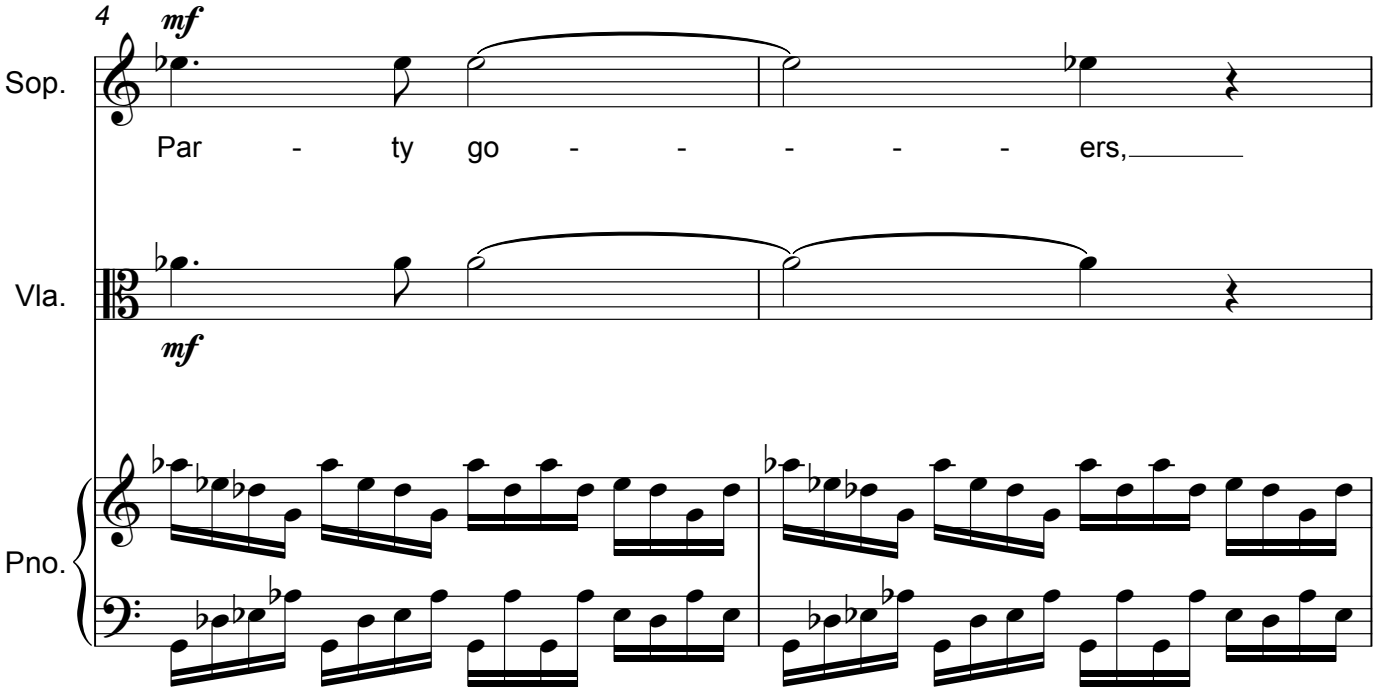
I. Ode on "Ode on a Grecian Urn"

Poems by Lee Upton

Kirk O'Riordan (2017)

with energy (♩ = 126)





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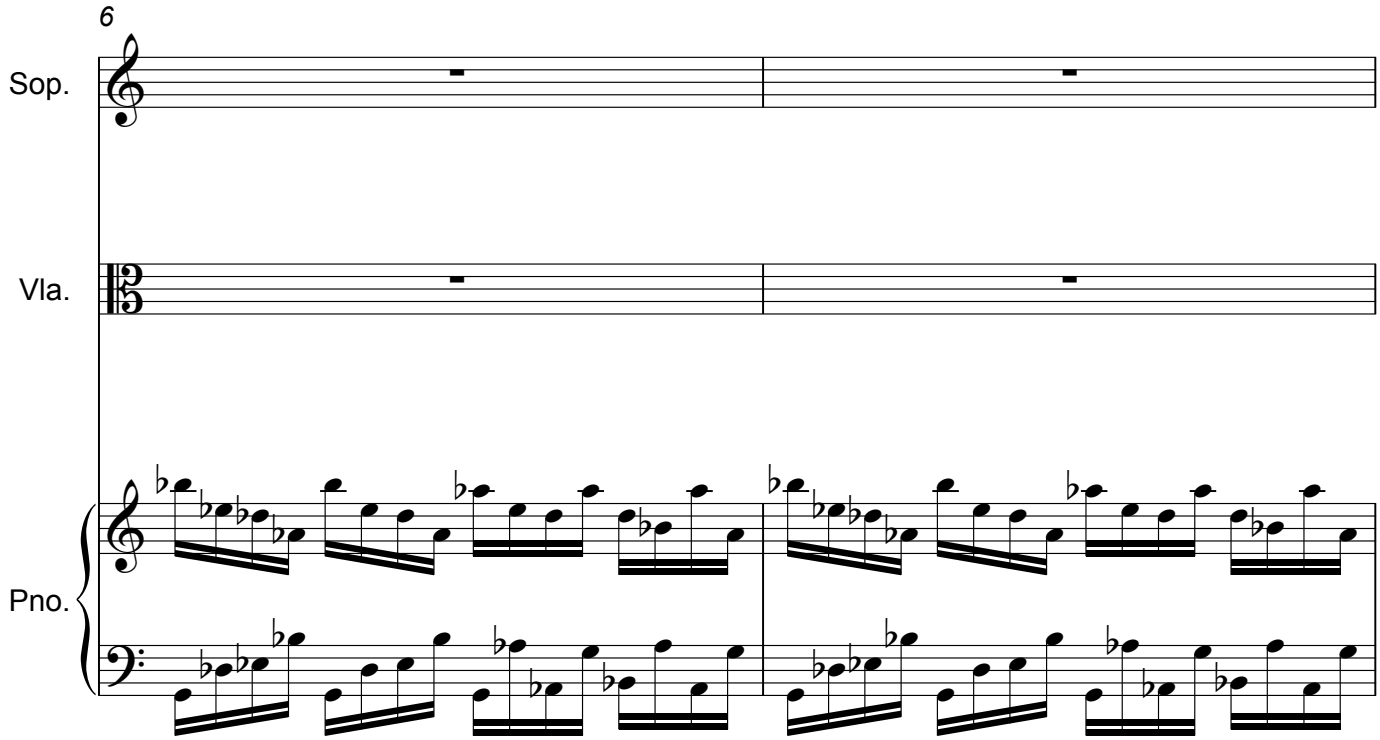
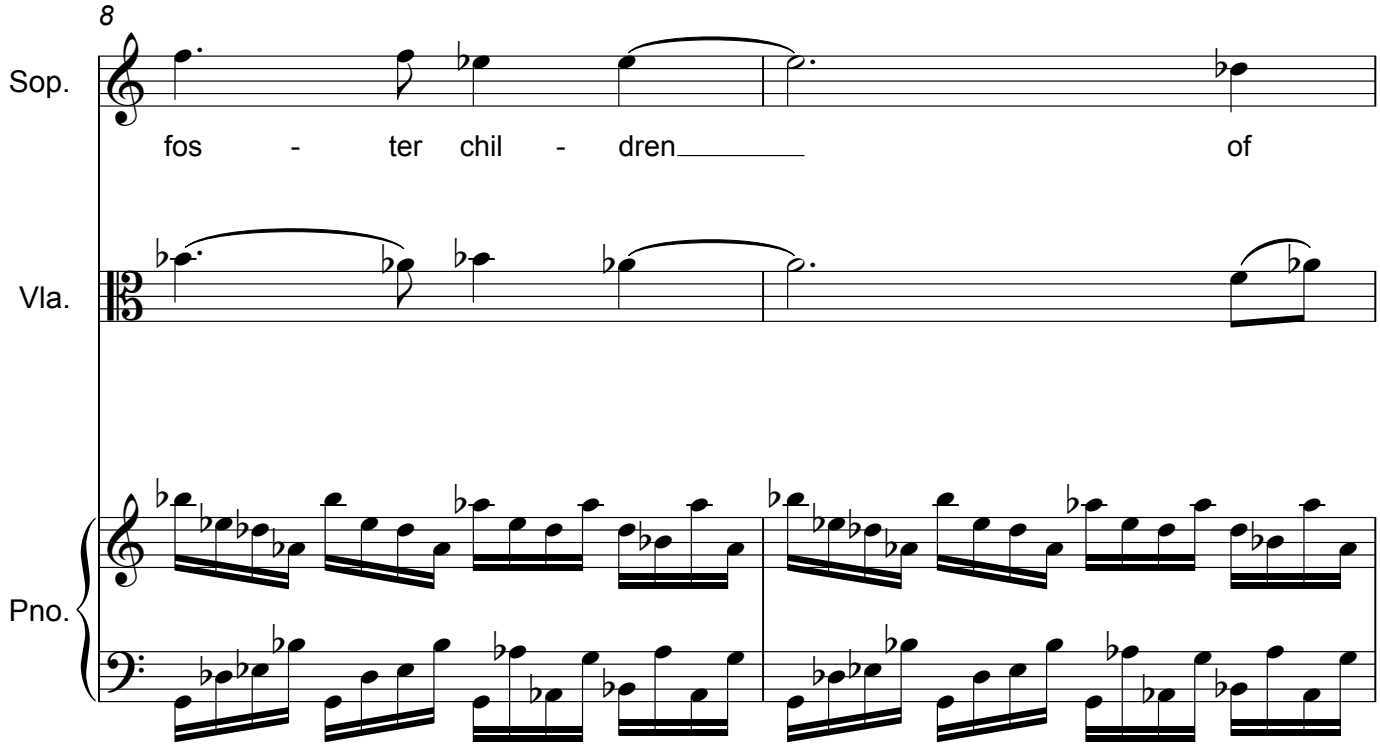
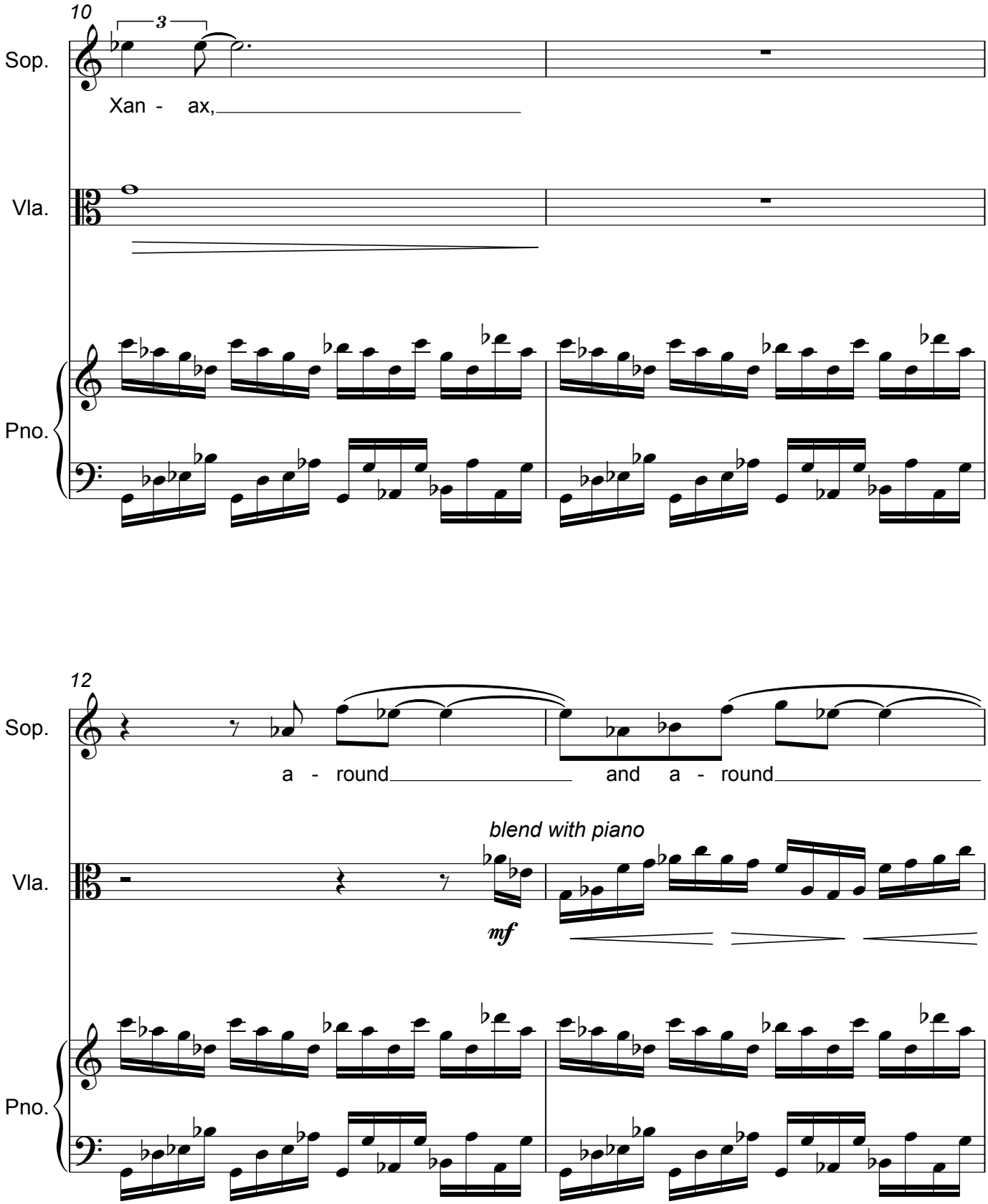
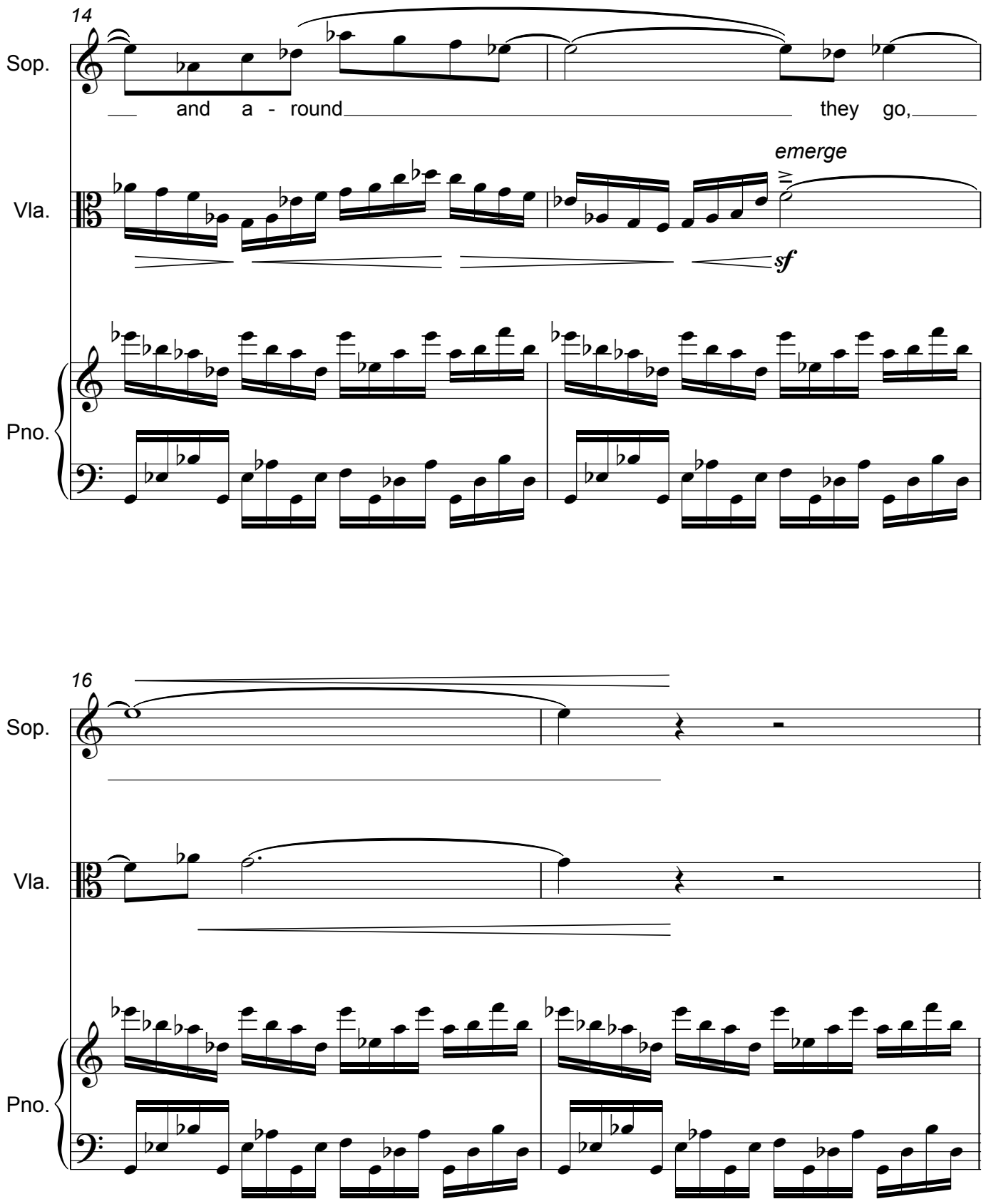
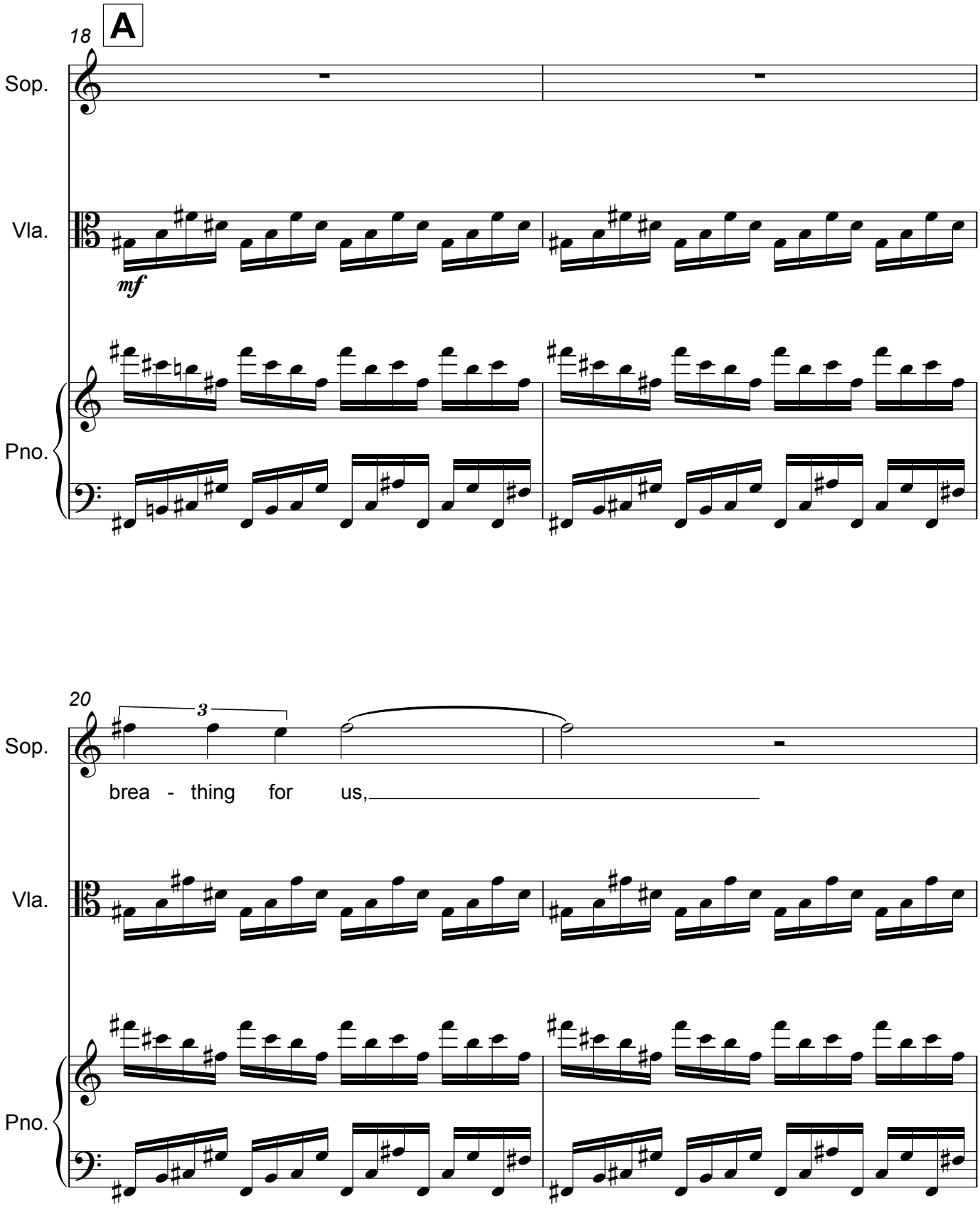
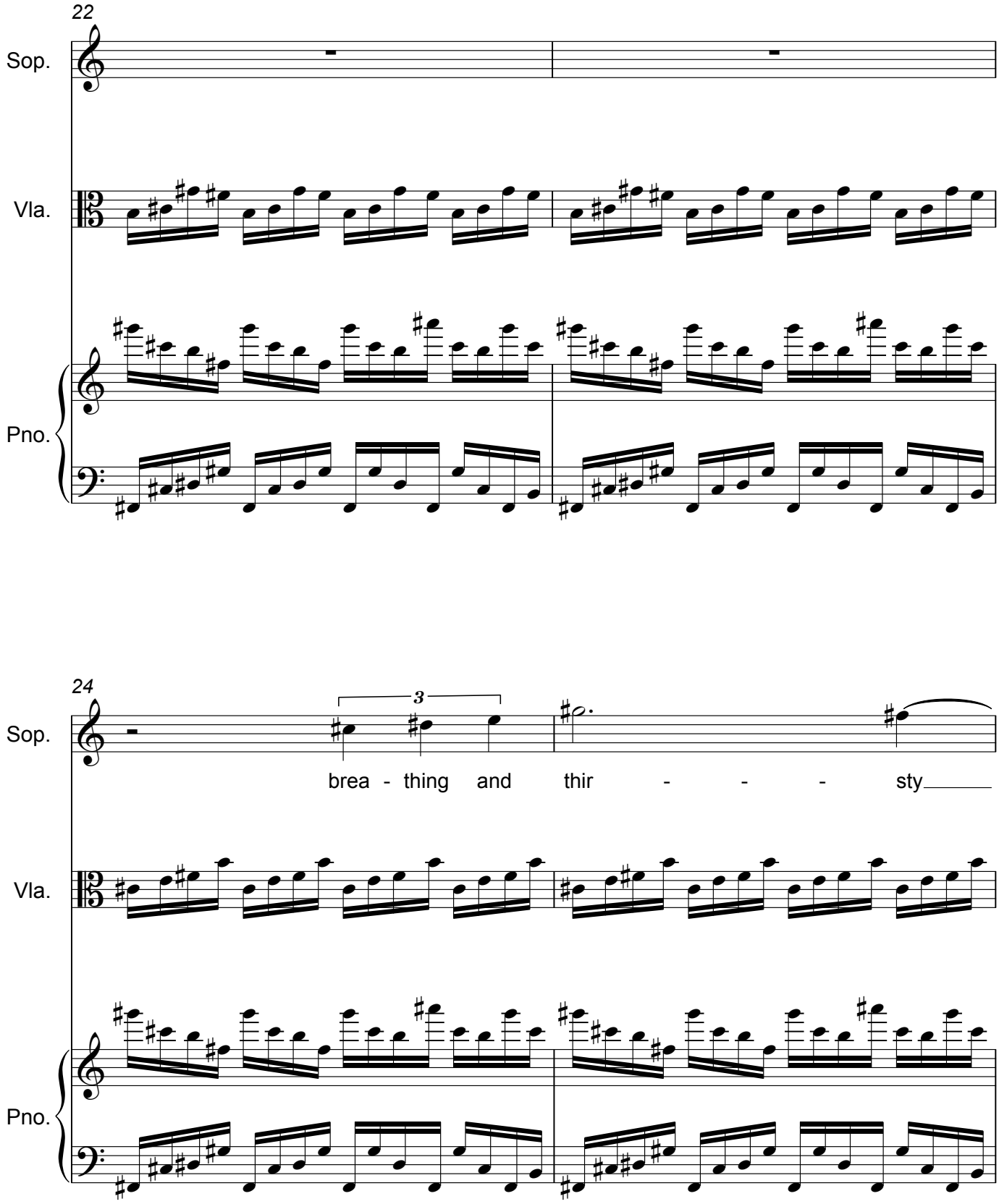

6
Sop.
Vla.
Pno.

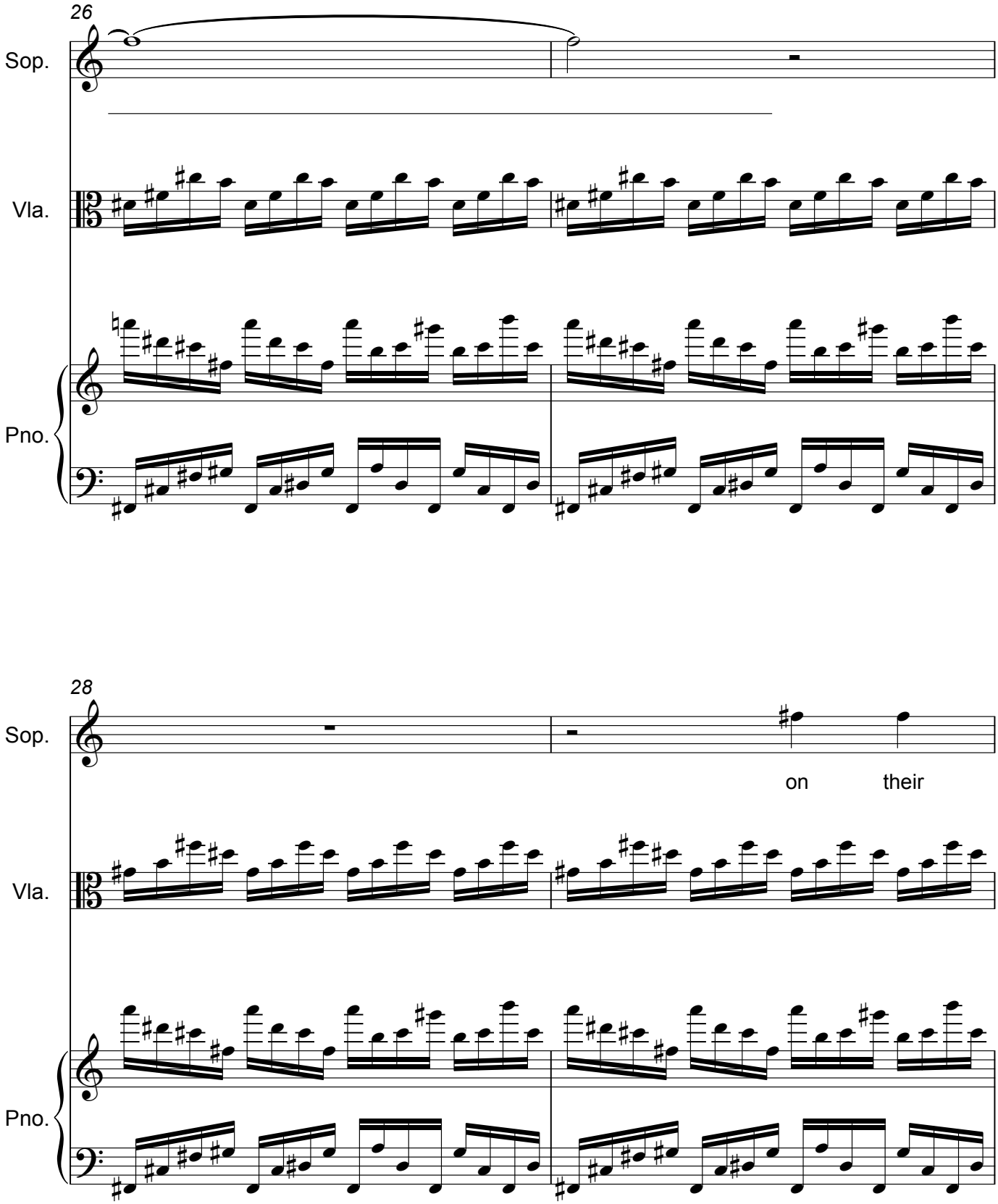

8
Sop.
fos - ter chil - dren of
Vla.
Pno.

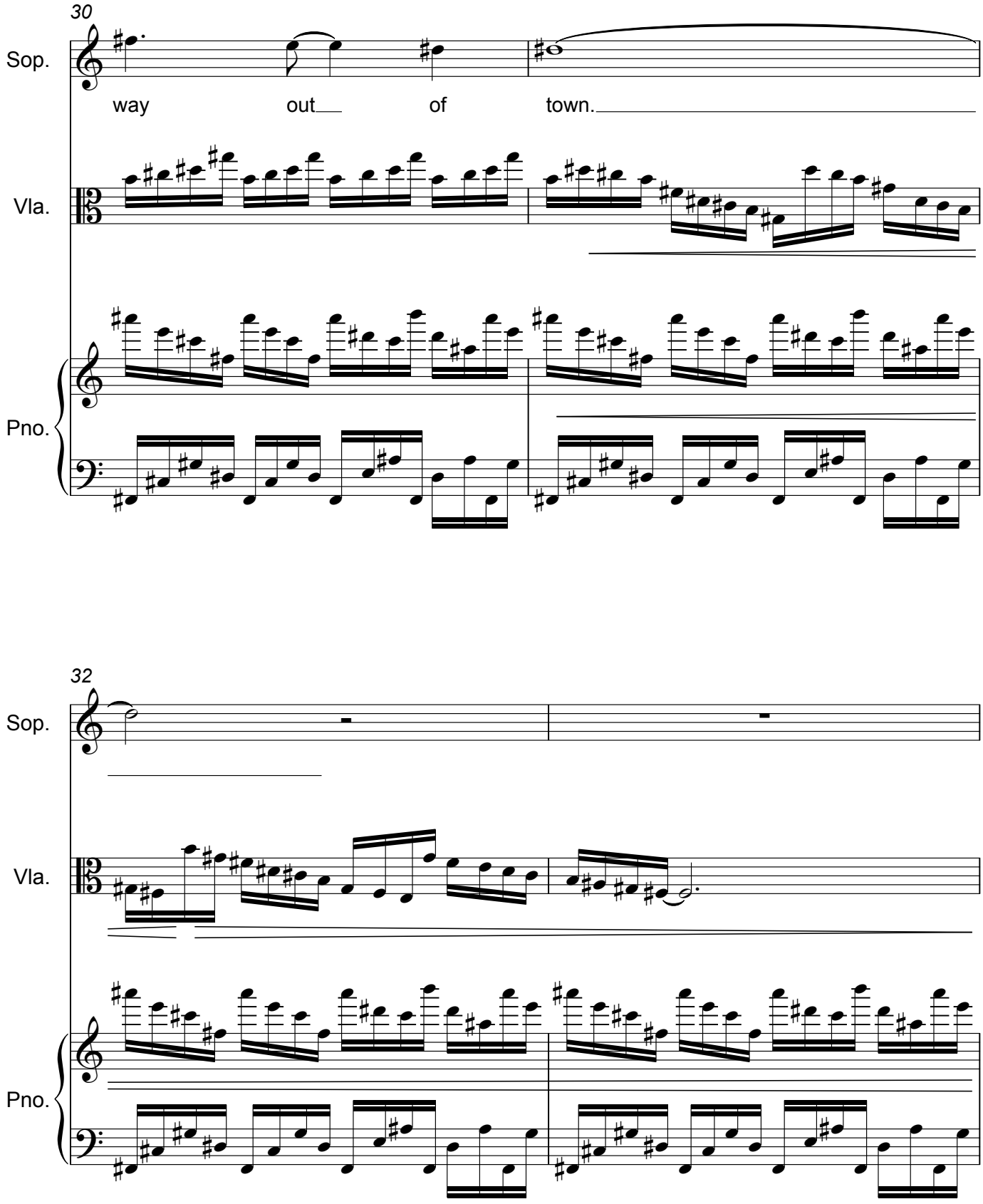

10
3
Sop.
Xan - ax,
Vla.
Pno.
12
Sop.
a - round
and a - round
blend with piano
Vla.
mf
Pno.

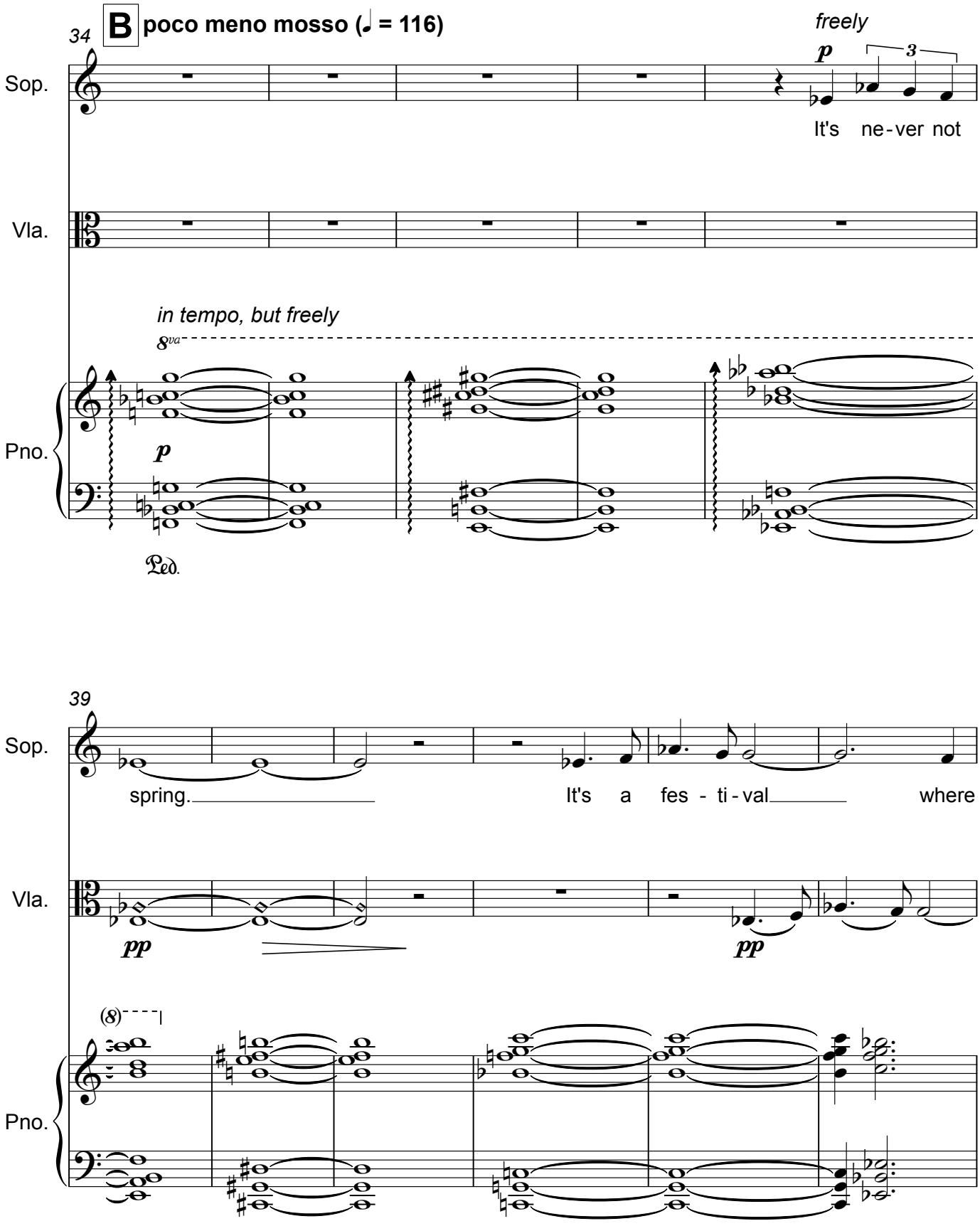

14
Sop.
and a - round
they go,
Vla.
emerge
sf
Pno.
16
Sop.
Vla.
Pno.

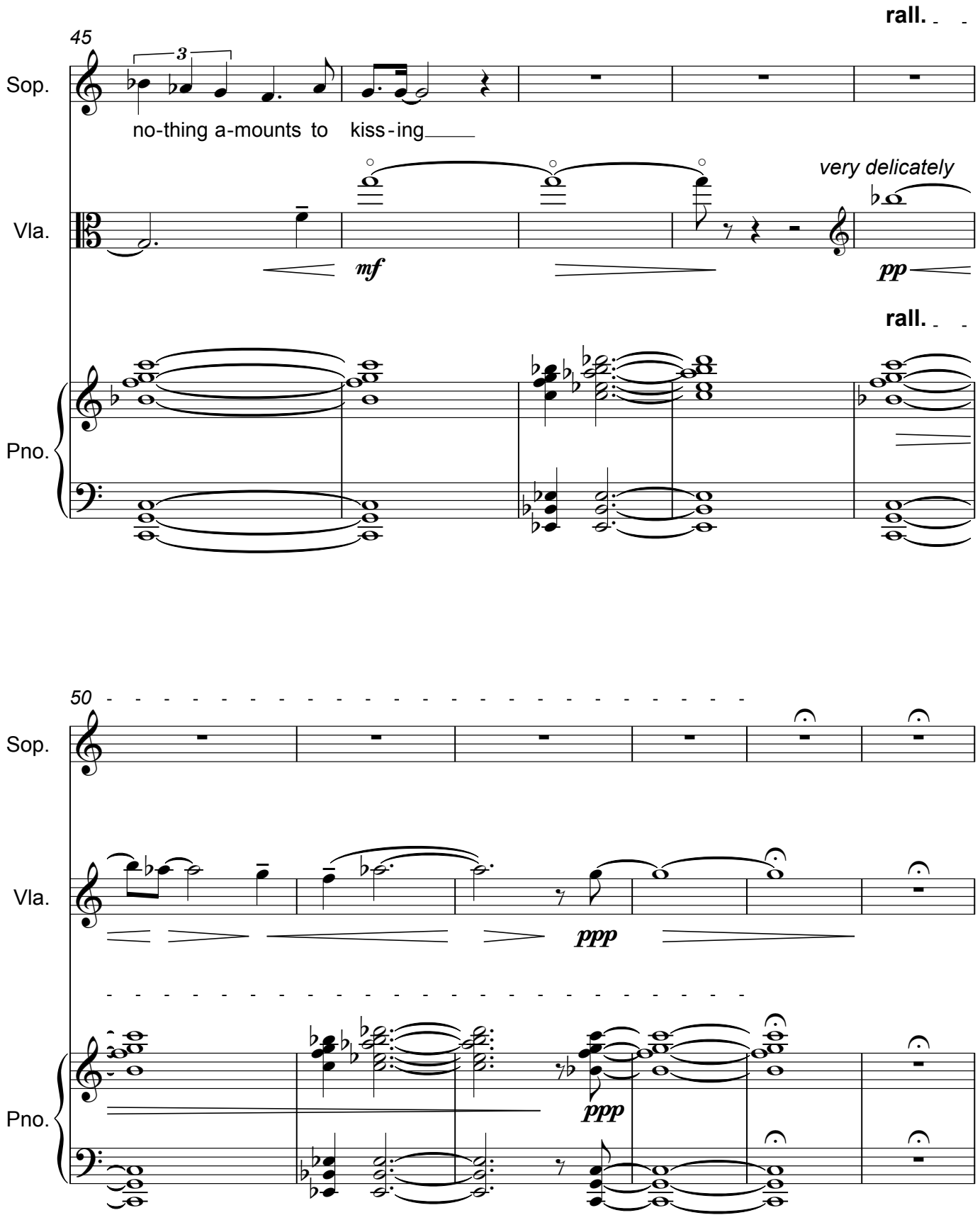

18
A
Sop.
Vla.
mf
Pno.
20
3
Sop.
brea - thing for us,
Vla.
Pno.

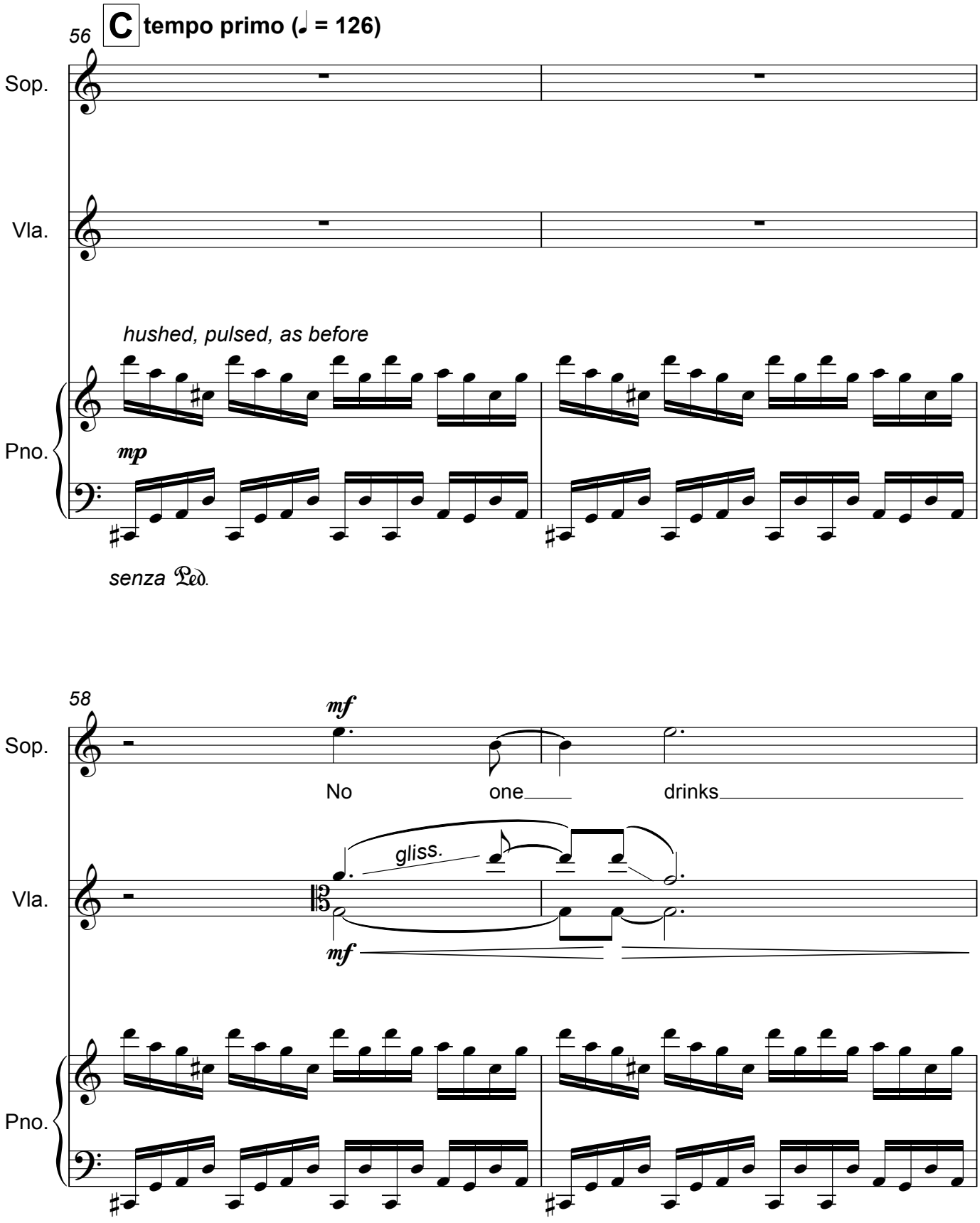

22
Sop.
Vla.
Pno.
24
Sop.
3
brea - thing and thir - - - sty
Vla.
Pno.

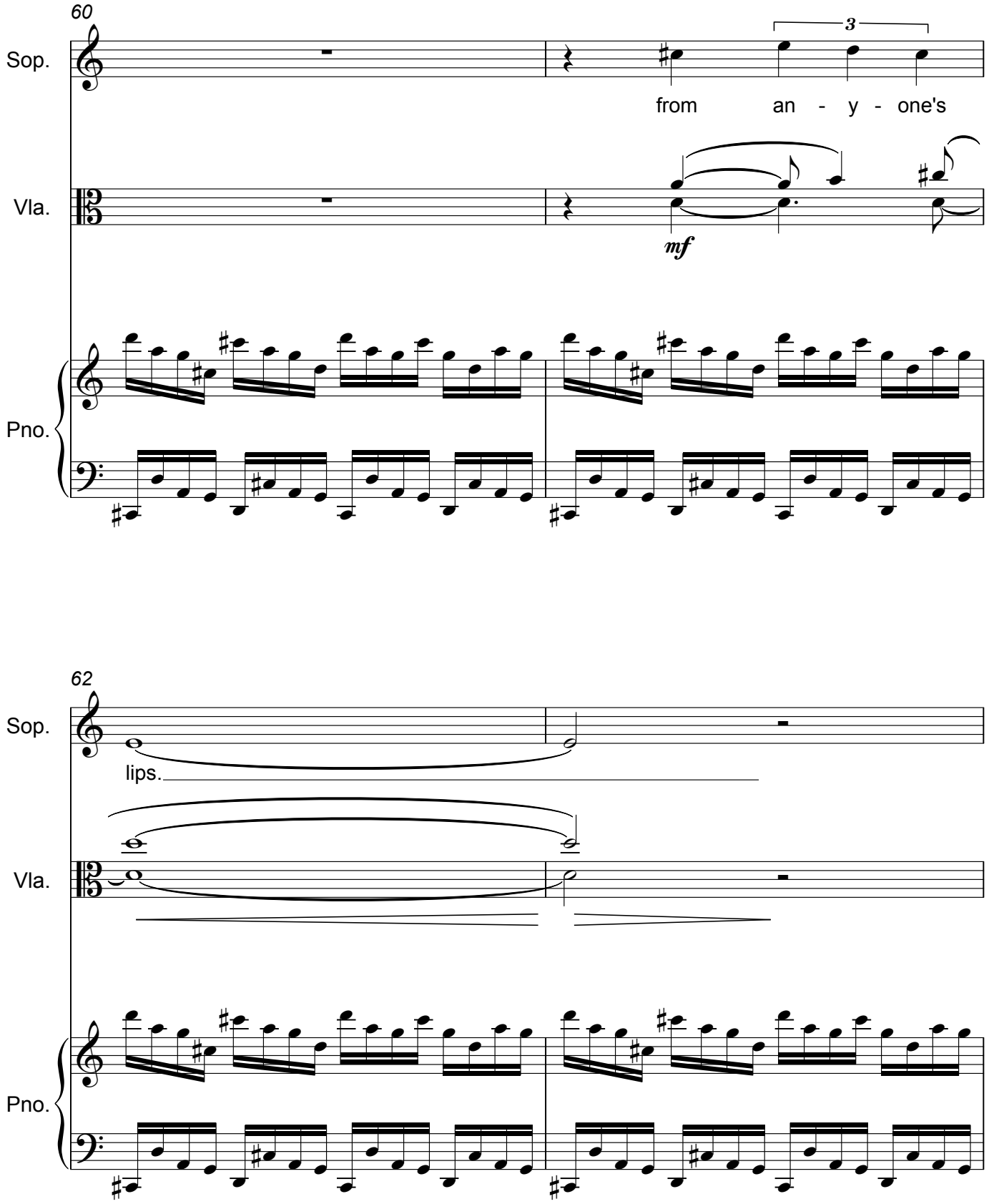

26
Sop.
Vla.
Pno.
28
Sop.
on their
Vla.
Pno.

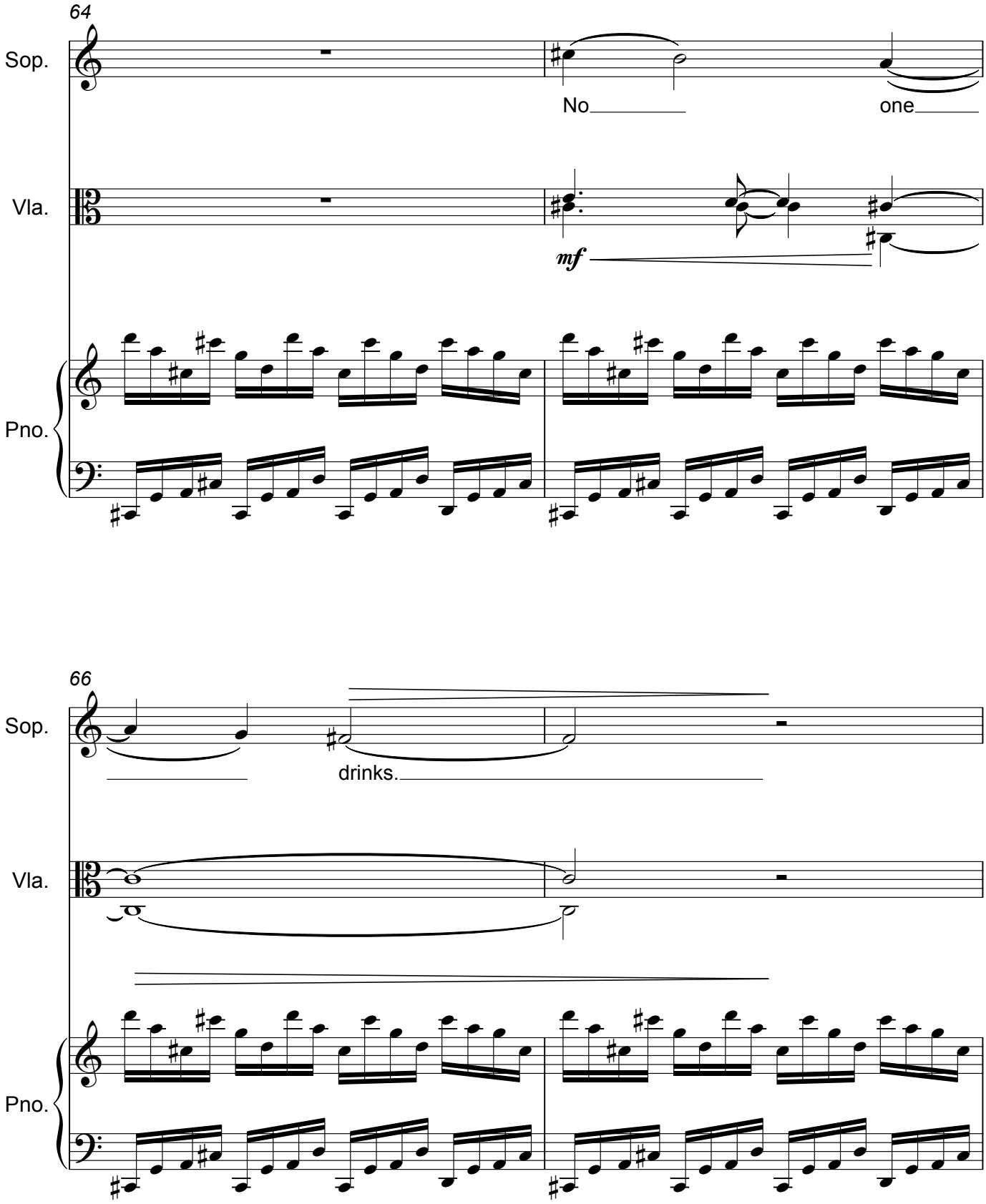

30
Sop.
way out of town.
Vla.
Pno.
32
Sop.
Vla.
Pno.

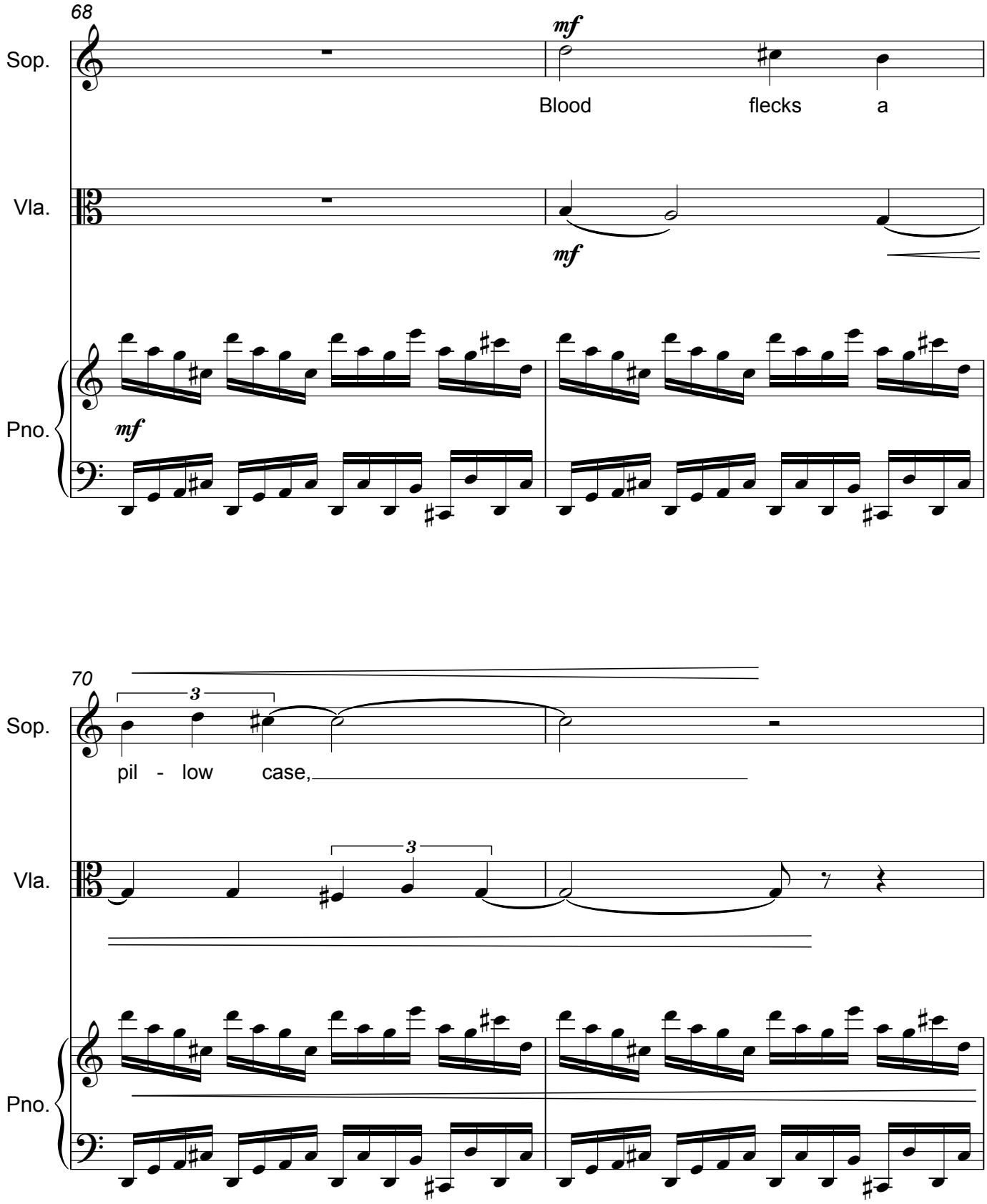

34
B poco meno mosso (♩ = 116)
freely
p
3
Sop.
It's ne-ver not
Vla.
in tempo, but freely
8va
Pno.
p
Ped.
39
Sop.
spring.
It's a fes - ti-val
where
Vla.
pp
pp
(8)
Pno.

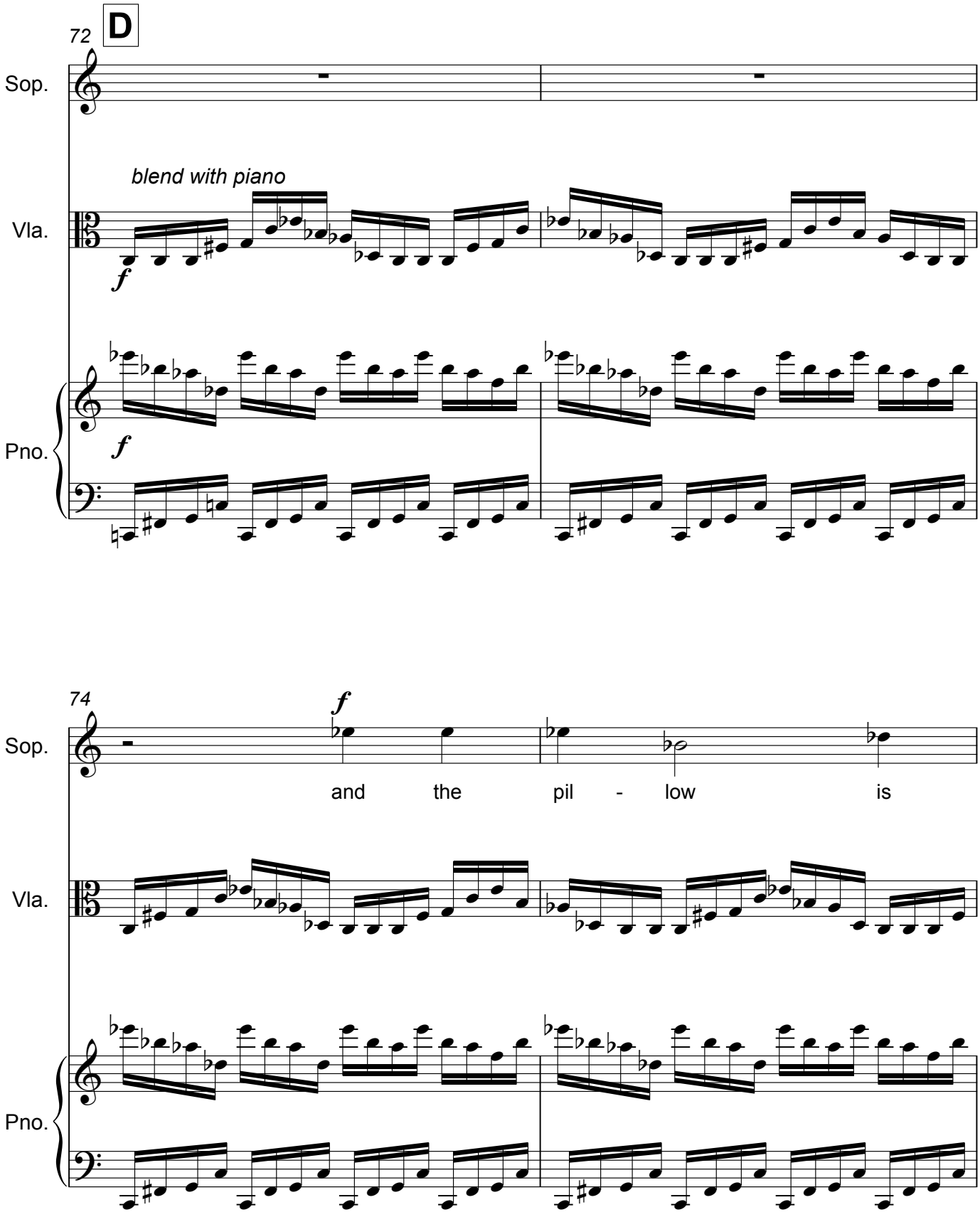

rall.
45
3
Sop.
no-thing a-mounts to kiss-ing
very delicately
Vla.
mf
pp
rall.
Pno.
50
Sop.
Vla.
ppp
Pno.
ppp

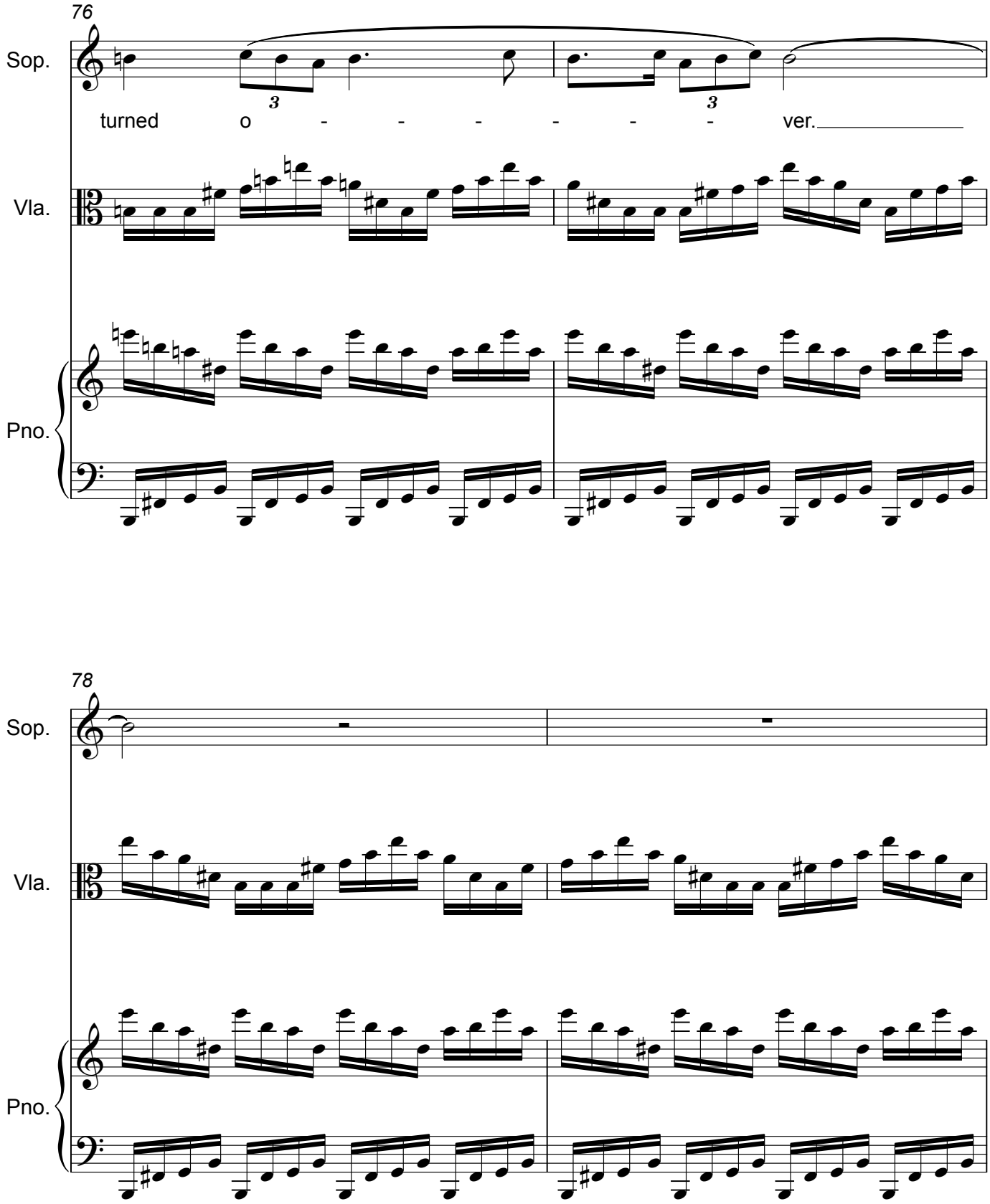

56
C tempo primo (♩ = 126)
Sop.
Vla.
hushed, pulsed, as before
Pno.
mp
senza Ped.
58
mf
Sop.
No one drinks
gliss.
Vla.
mf
Pno.

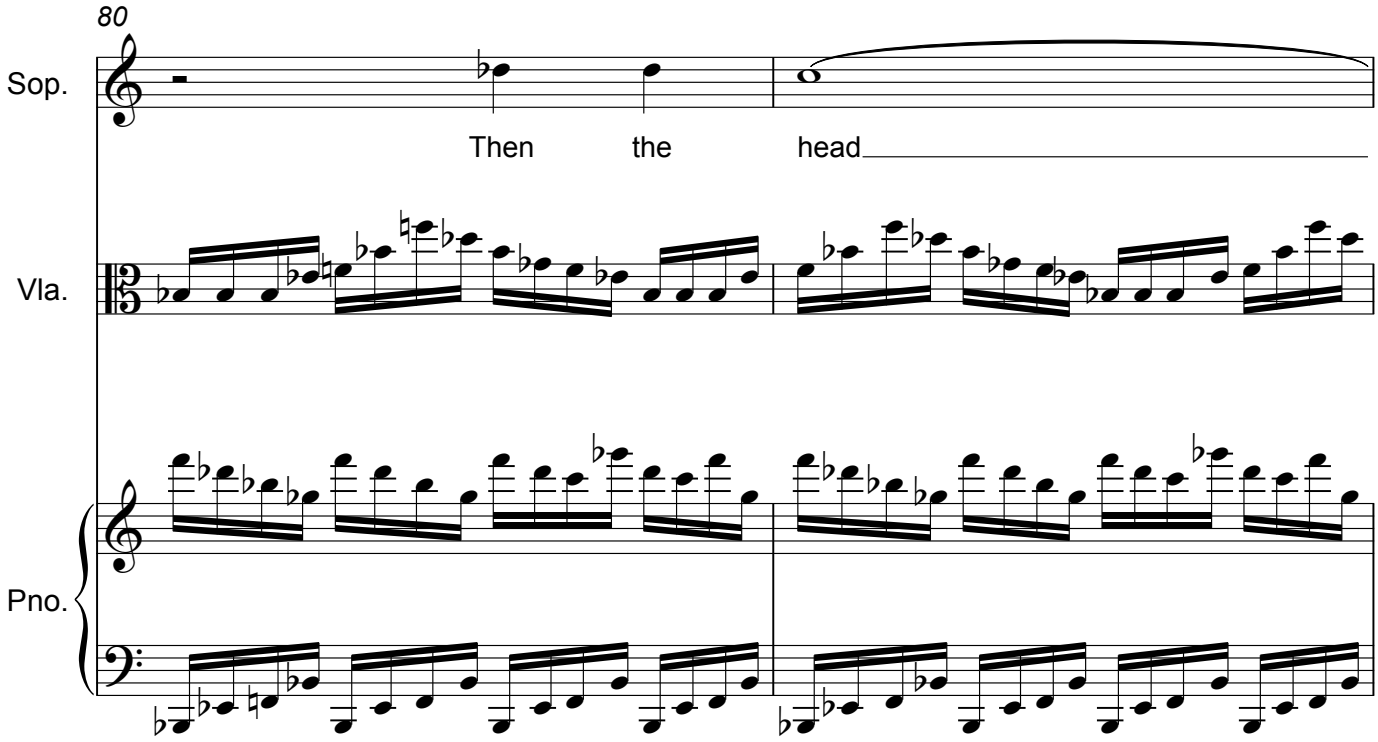

60
Sop.
3
from an - y - one's
Vla.
mf
Pno.
62
Sop.
lips.
Vla.
Pno.

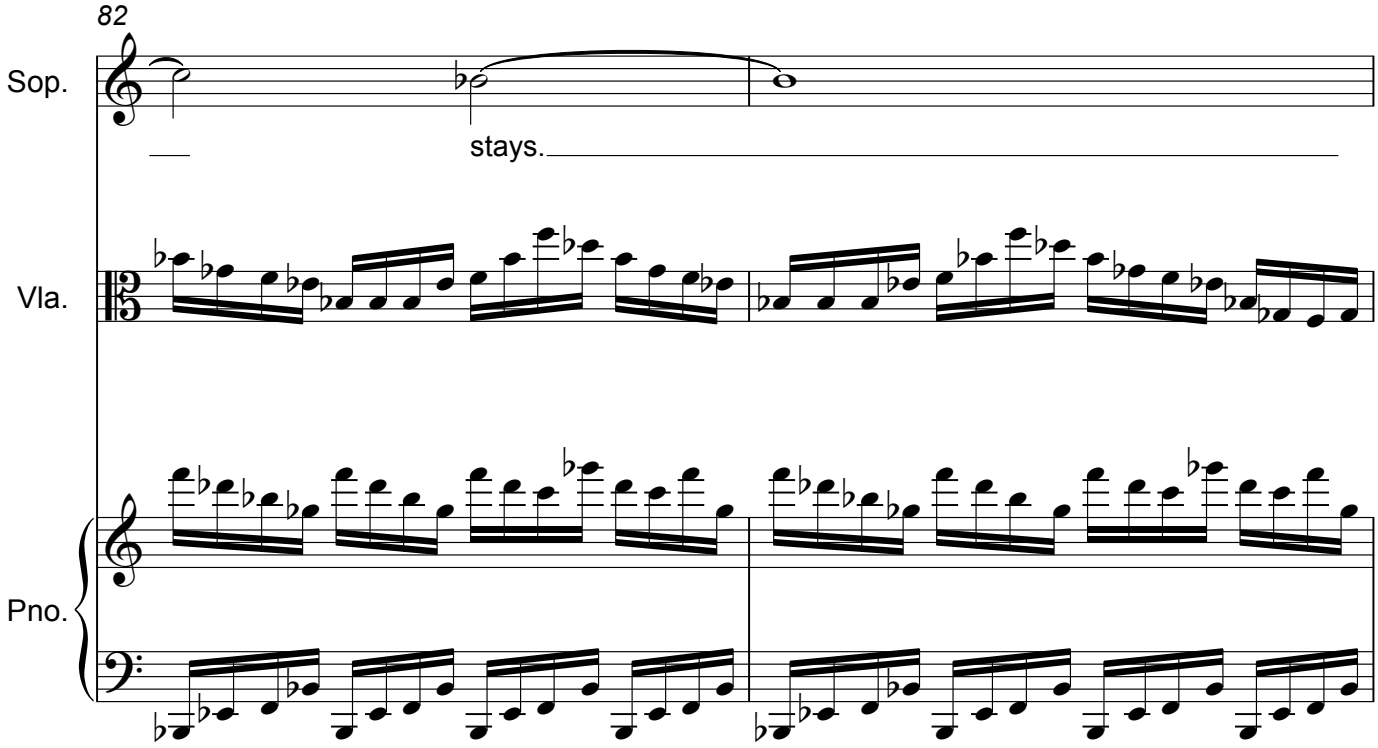

64
Sop.
No
one
Vla.
mf
Pno.
66
Sop.
drinks.
Vla.
Pno.

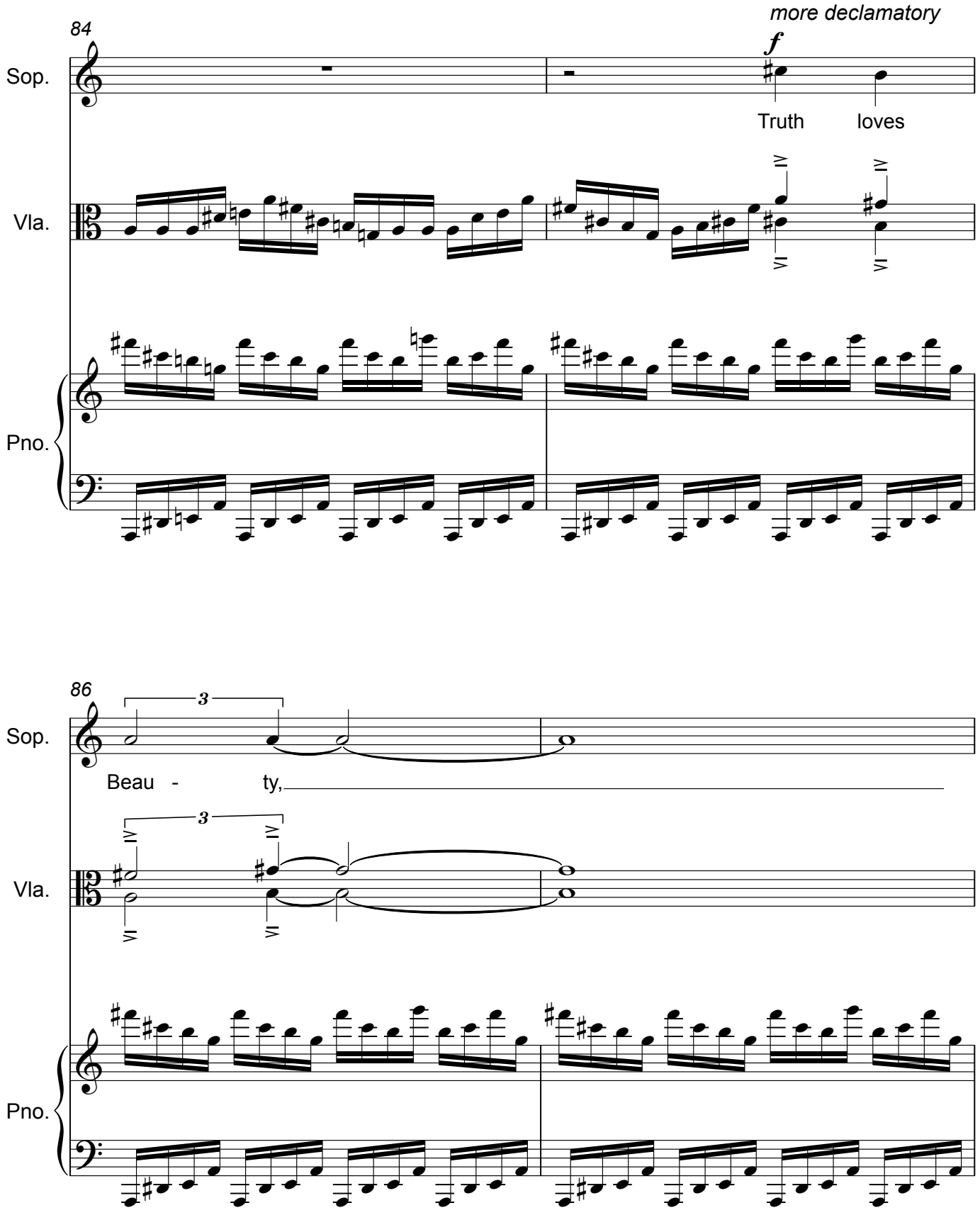

68
Sop.
mf
Blood flecks a
Vla.
mf
Pno.
mf
70
Sop.
3
pil - low case,
Vla.
3
Pno.

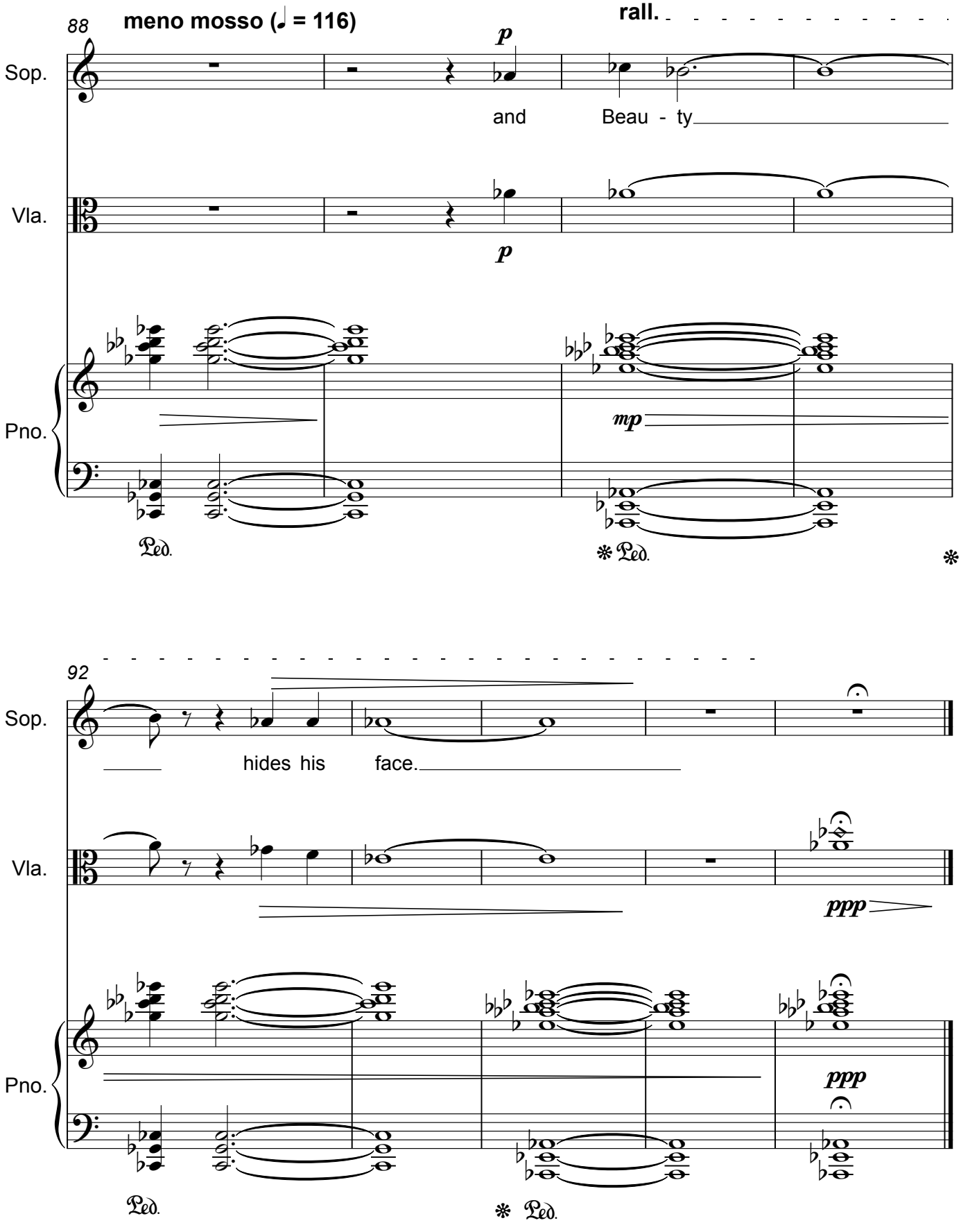

72
D
Sop.
Vla.
blend with piano
f
Pno.
f
74
f
Sop.
and the pil - low is
Vla.
Pno.

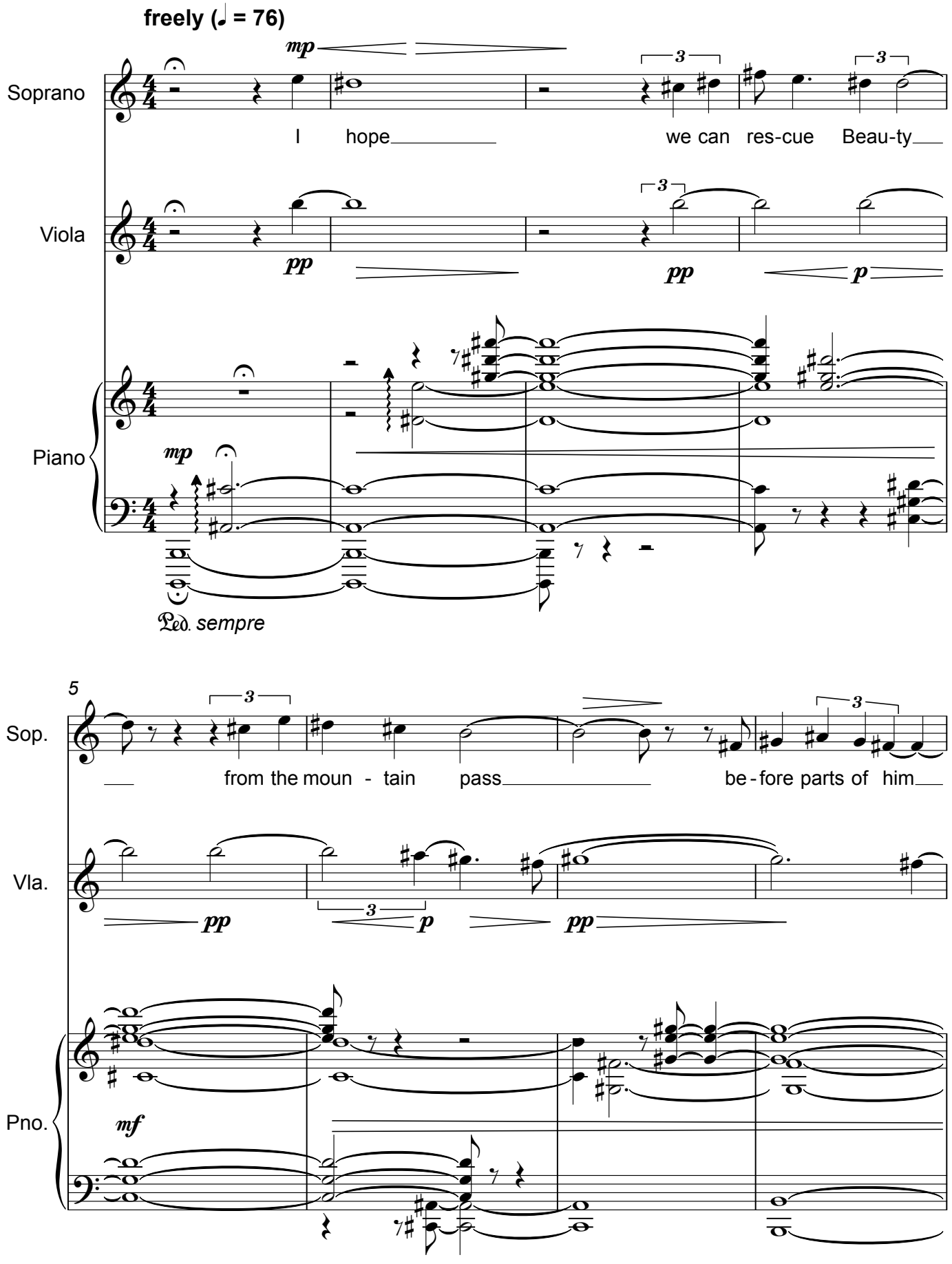

76
Sop.
turned o - - - - - - ver.
Vla.
Pno.
78
Sop.
Vla.
Pno.

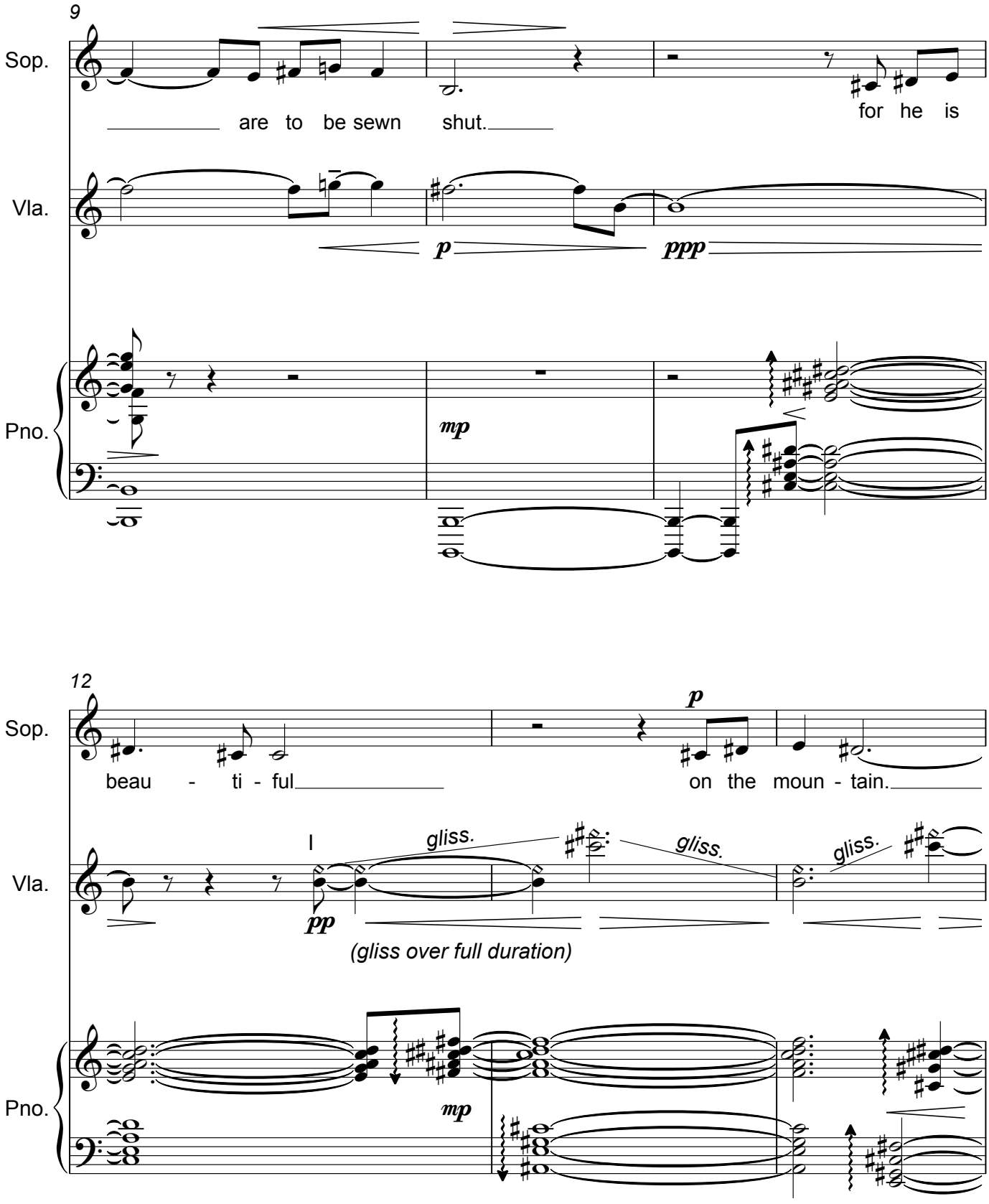

80
Sop.
Then the head
Vla.
Pno.

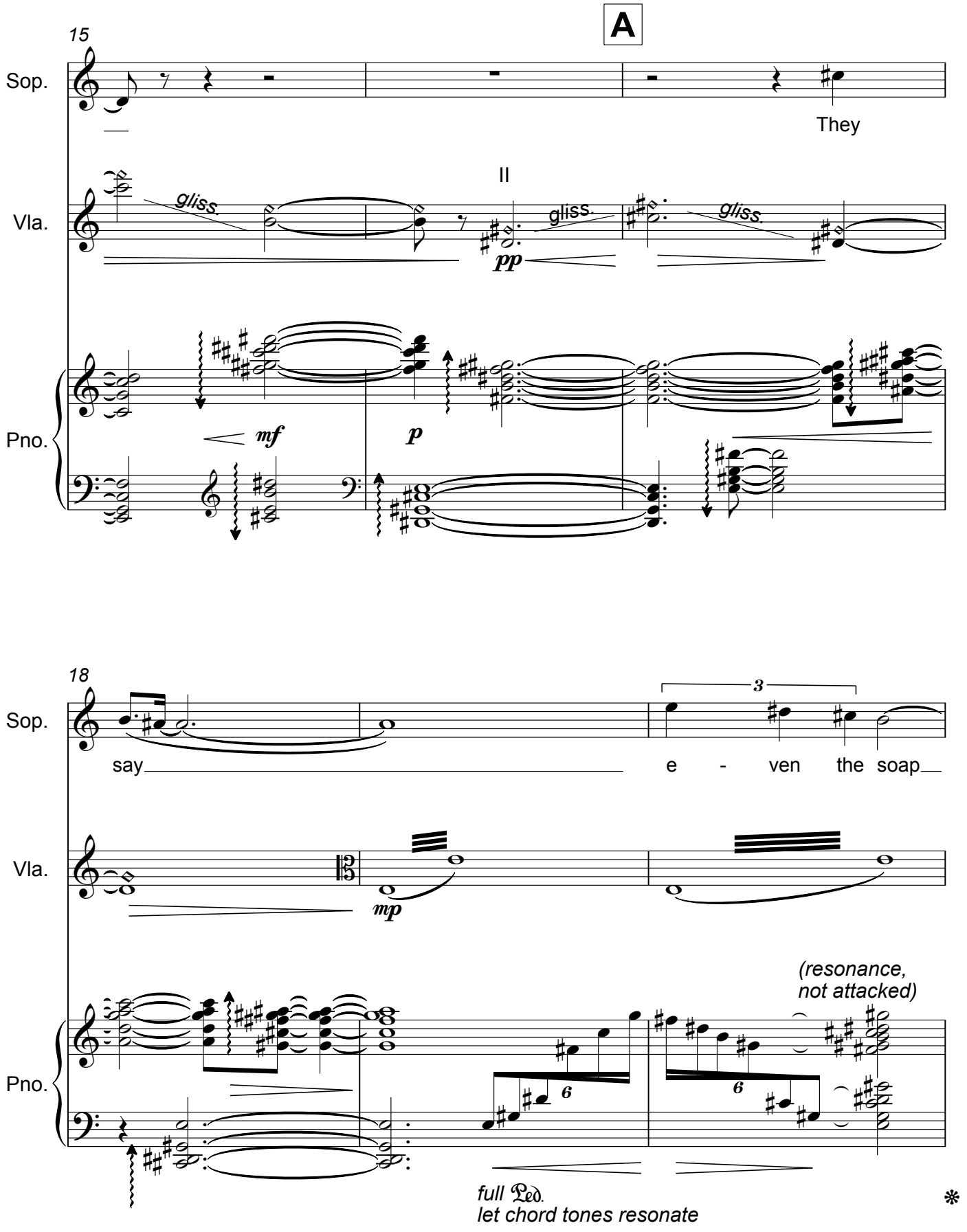

82
Sop.
stays.
Vla.
Pno.

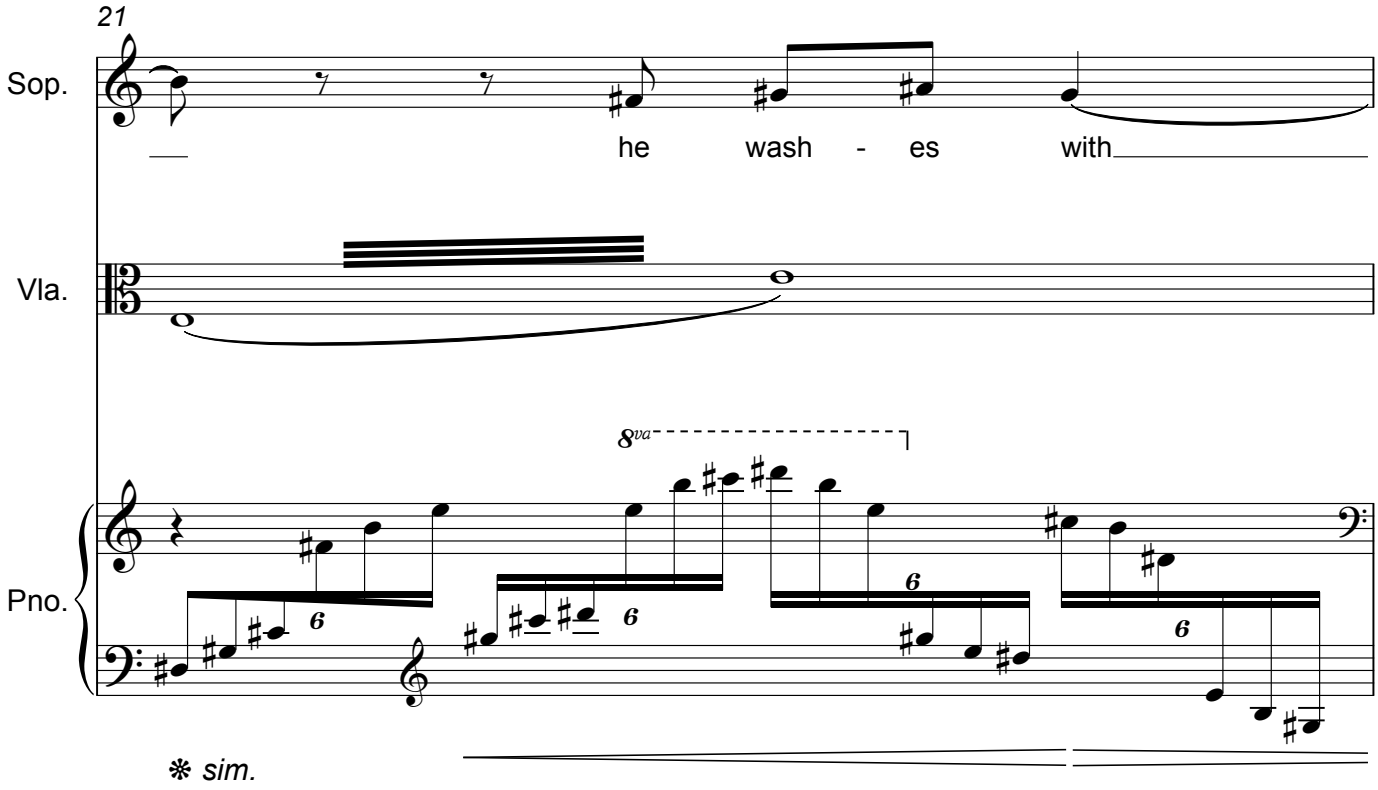

84
more declamatory
f
Sop.
Truth
loves
Vla.
IV
VI
Pno.
86
3
Sop.
Beau - ty,
3
Vla.
IV
VI
Pno.

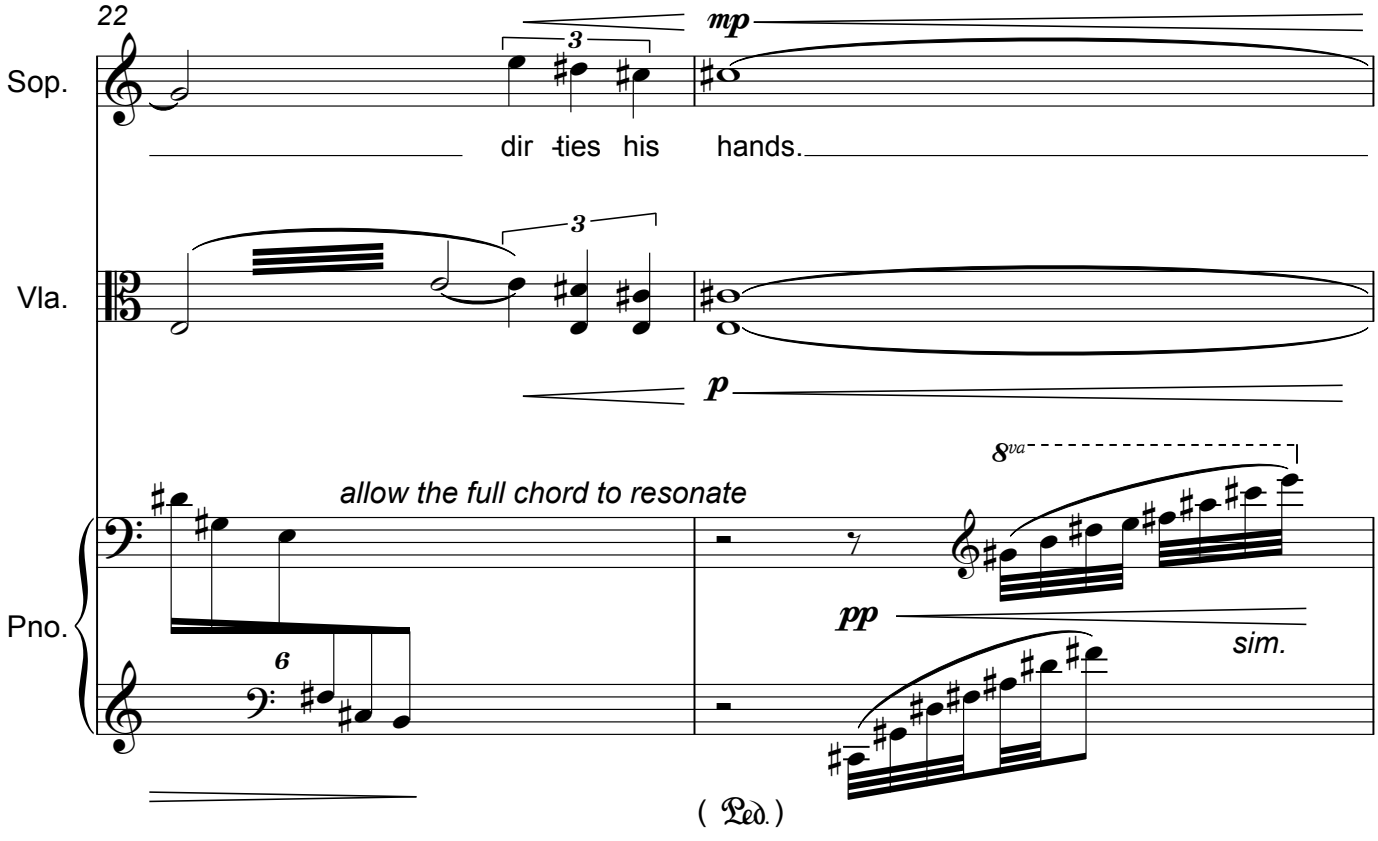

88
meno mosso (♩ = 116)
rall.
Sop.
p
and
Beau - ty
Vla.
p
Pno.
mp
Ped.
Ped.
92
Sop.
hides his
face.
Vla.
ppp
Pno.
ppp
Ped.
Ped.

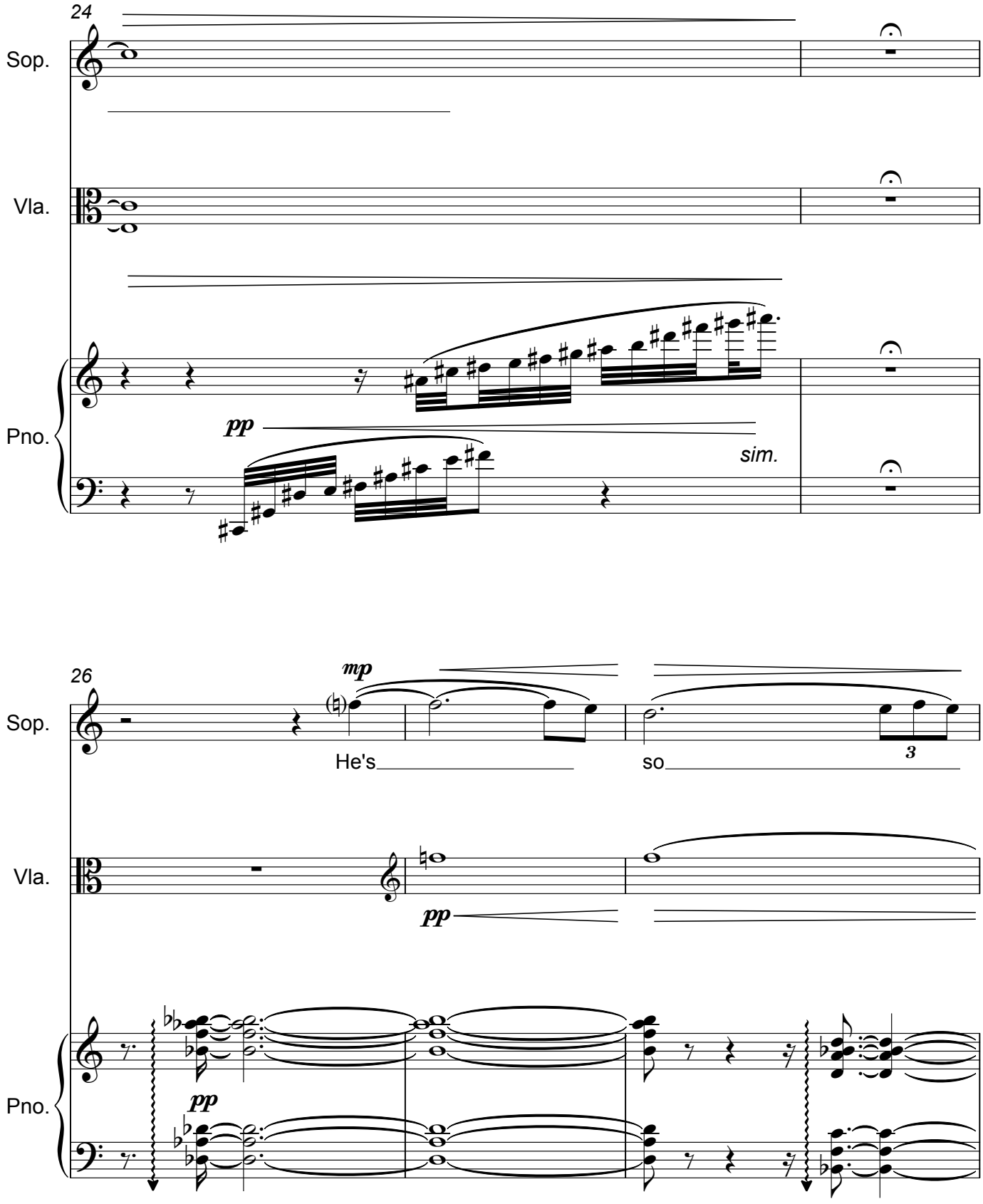

freely (♩ = 76)
Soprano
Viola
Piano
mp
pp
p
I hope we can res-cue Beau-ty
Ped. sempre
5
Sop.
Vla.
Pno.
mf
from the moun - tain pass be - fore parts of him

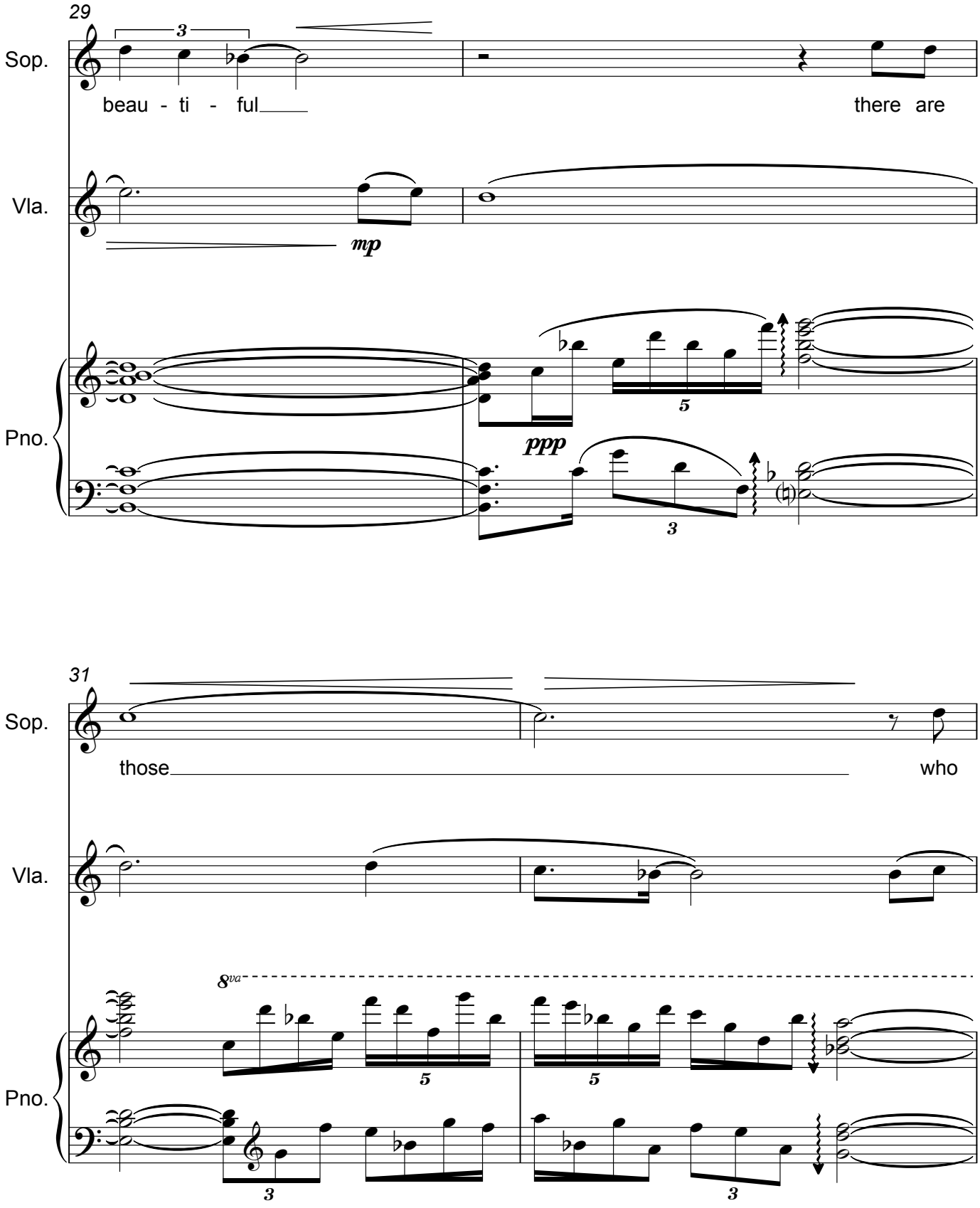

9
Sop.
are to be sewn shut.
for he is
Vla.
p
ppp
Pno.
mp
12
Sop.
p
beau - ti - ful
on the moun - tain.
Vla.
I
gliss.
gliss.
gliss.
pp
(gliss over full duration)
Pno.
mp

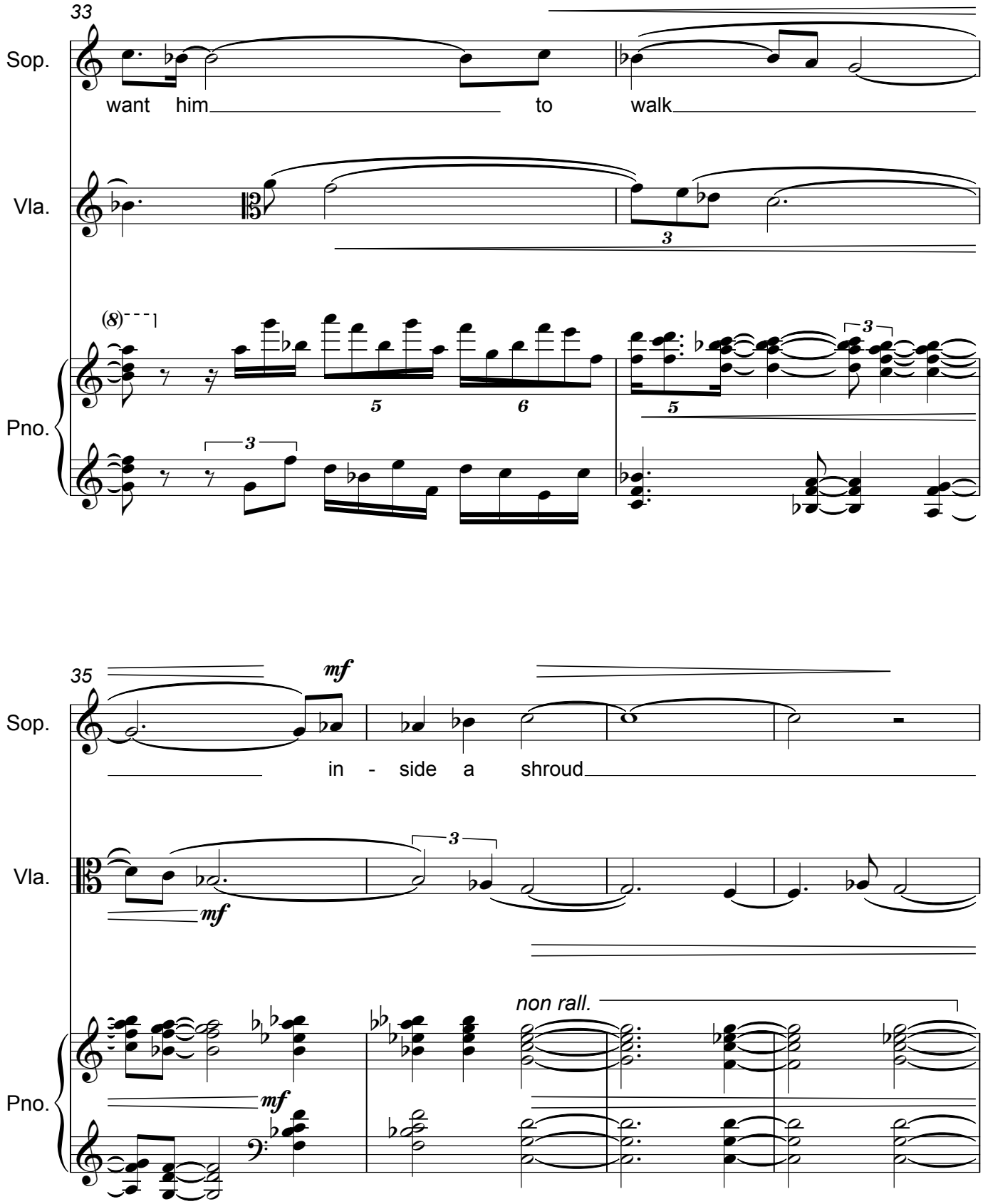

A
15
Sop.
They
Vla.
gliss.
gliss.
gliss.
II
pp
Pno.
mf
p
18
Sop.
say
e - ven the soap
3
Vla.
mp
(resonance,
not attacked)
Pno.
6
6
full Ped.
let chord tones resonate
*

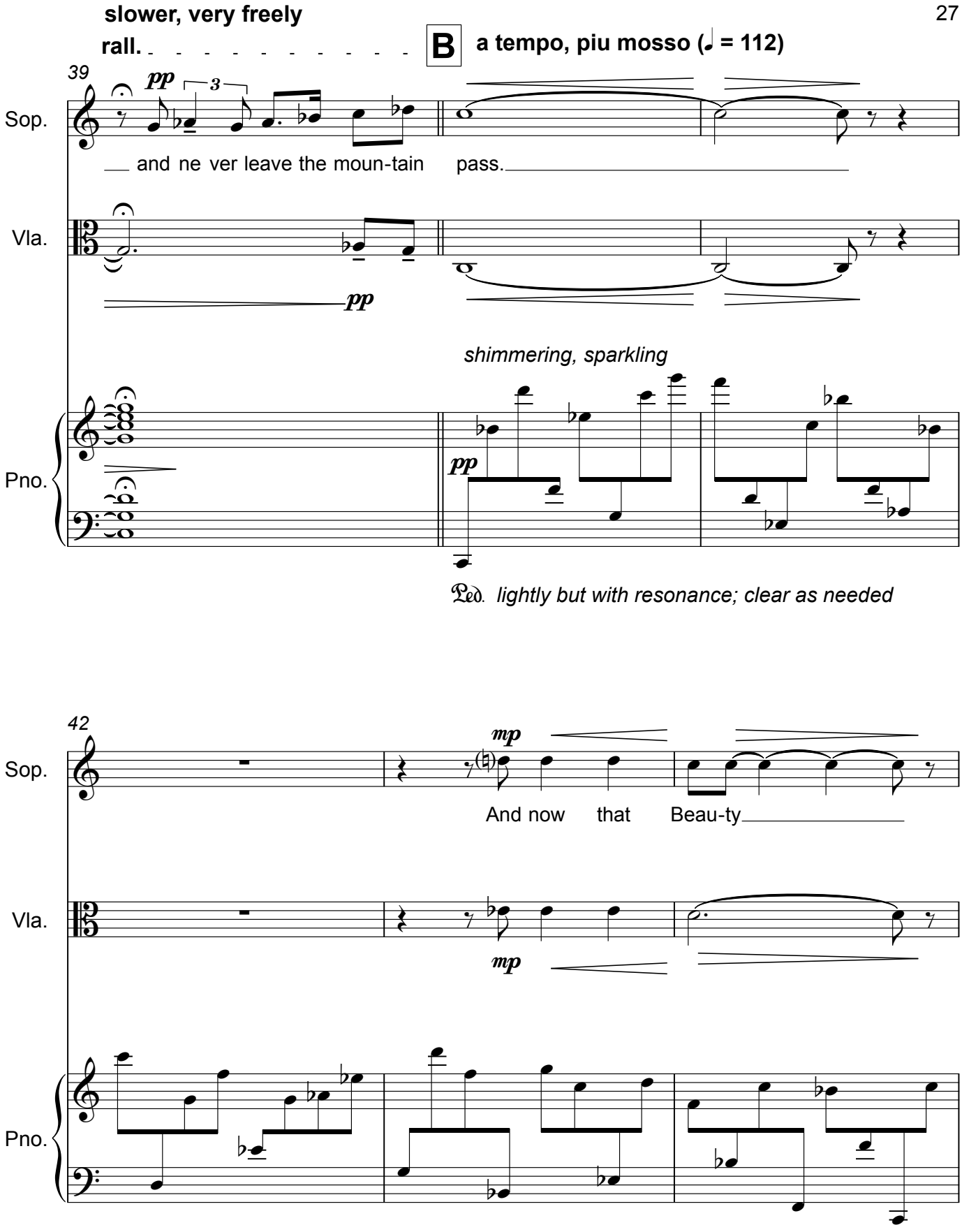

21
Sop.
he wash - es with
Vla.
8va
Pno.
6
6
6
6
❊ sim.

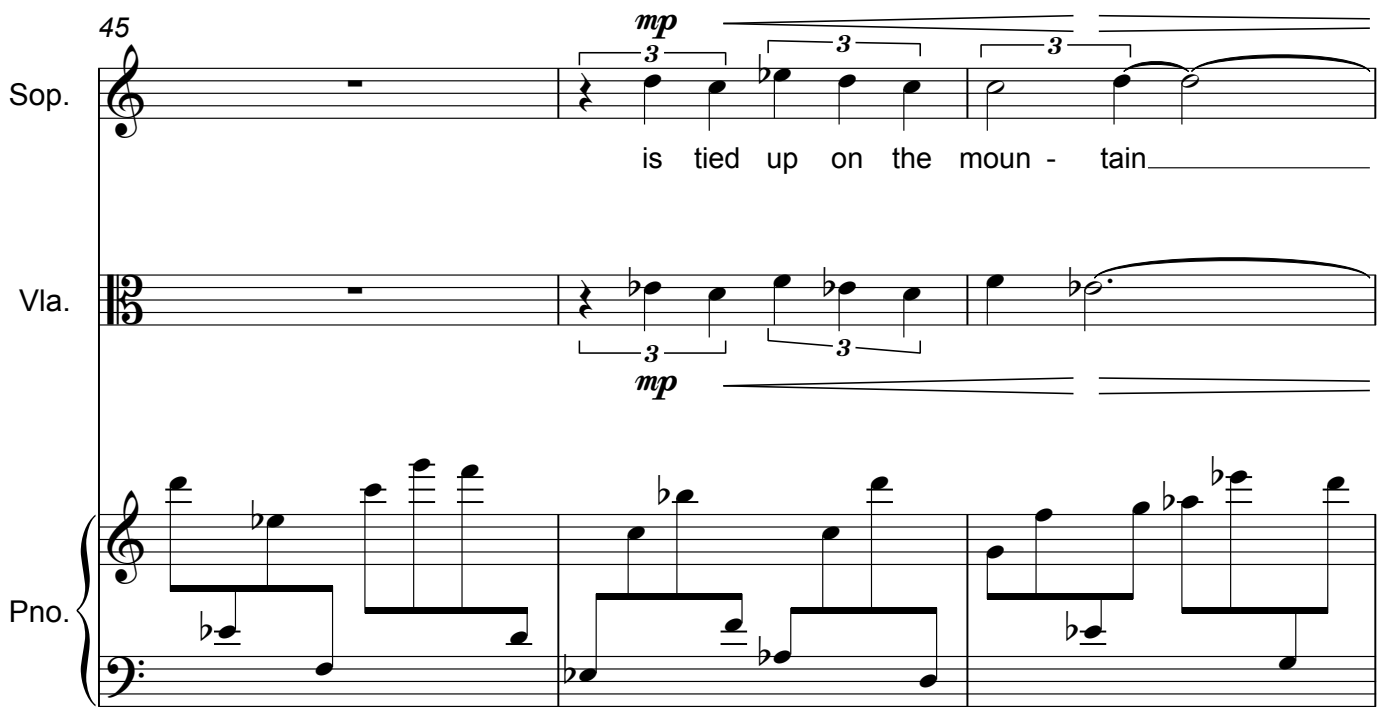

22
Sop.
3
mp
dir - ties his hands.
Vla.
3
p
allow the full chord to resonate
8va
Pno.
6
pp
sim.
(Ped.)

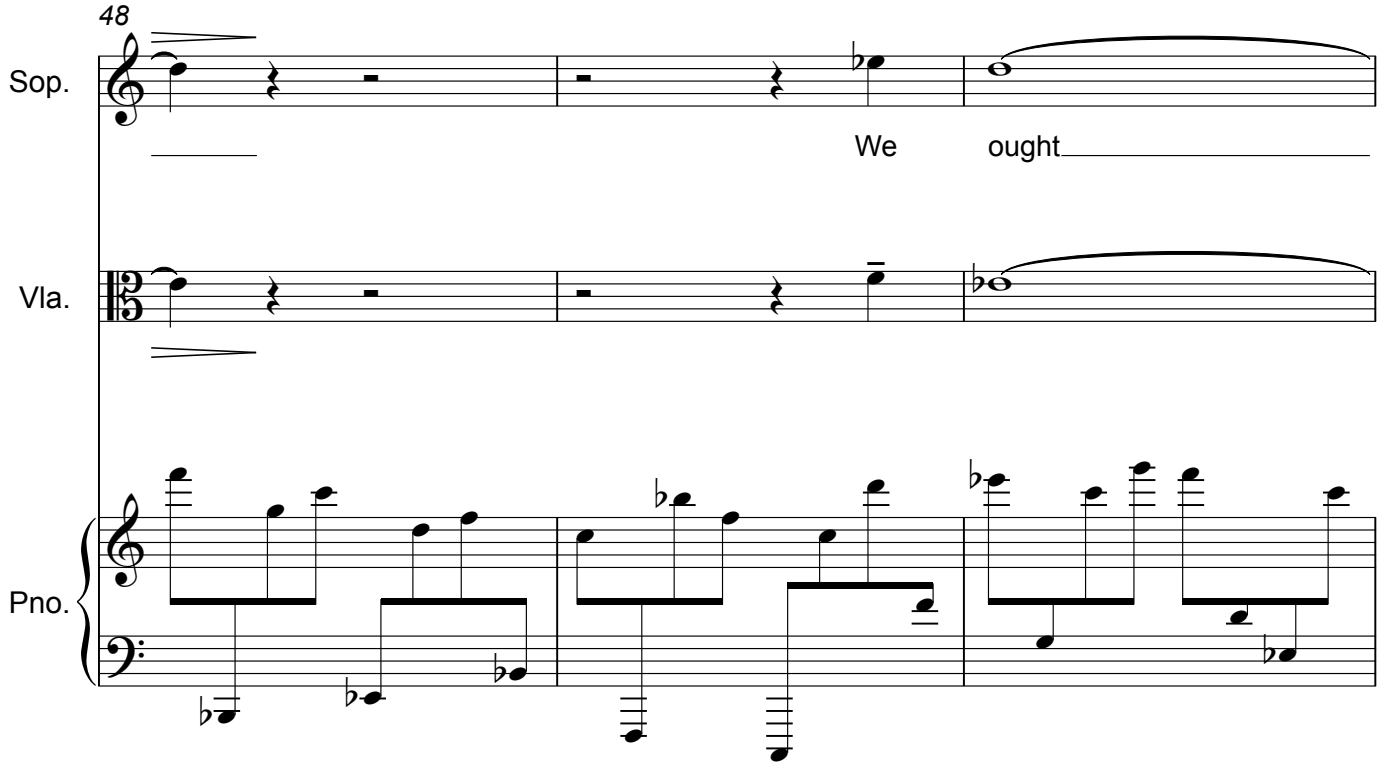

24
Sop.
Vla.
Pno.
pp
sim.
26
mp
He's
so
3
pp
pp

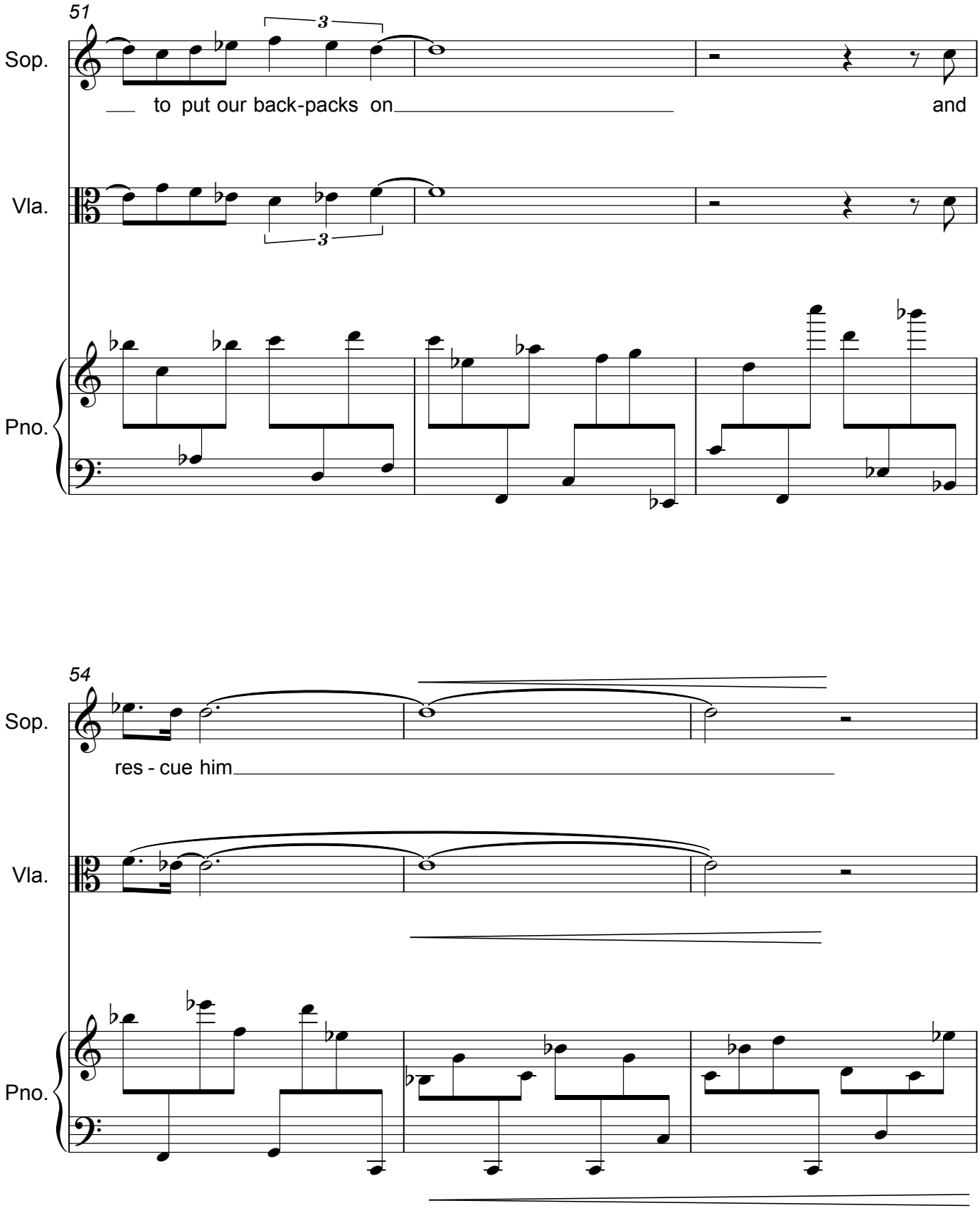

29
Sop.
beau - ti - ful
there are
Vla.
mp
Pno.
ppp
31
Sop.
those
who
Vla.
8va
Pno.

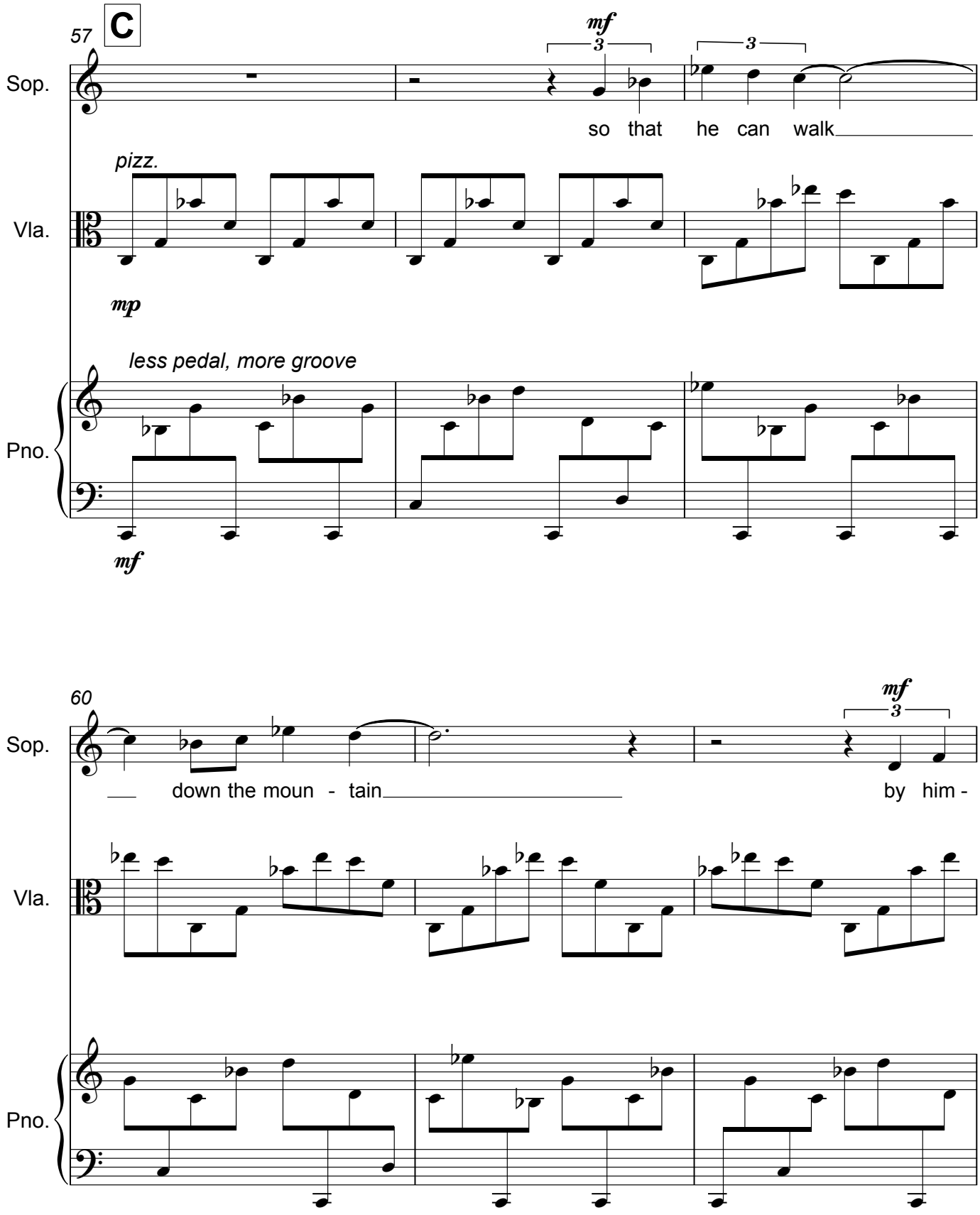

33
Sop.
want him to walk
Vla.
Pno.
35
mf
Sop.
in - side a shroud
Vla.
mf
non rall.
Pno.
mf

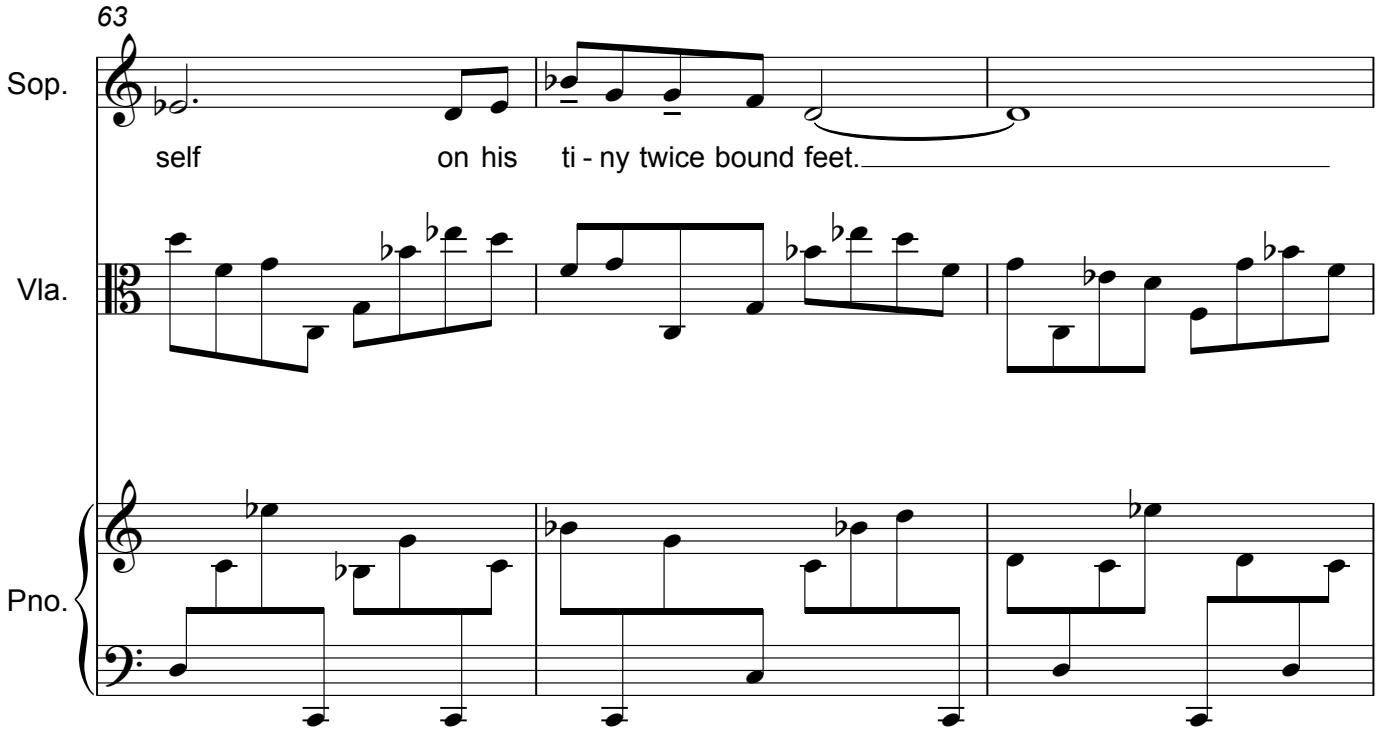

slower, very freely
rall.
B
a tempo, piu mosso (♩. = 112)
39
Sop.
Vla.
Pno.
pp
3
and ne ver leave the moun-tain pass.
shimmering, sparkling
Ped. lightly but with resonance; clear as needed
42
mp
And now that Beau-ty

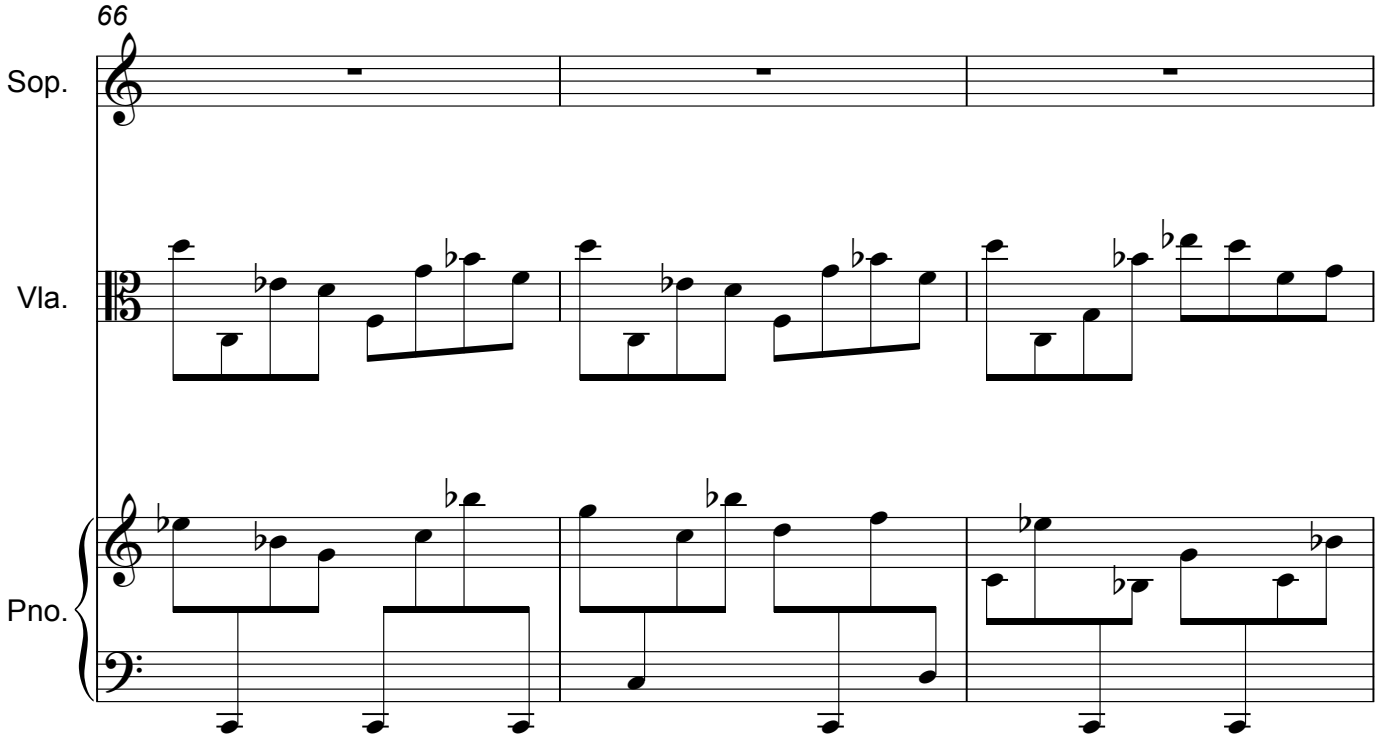

45
mp
Sop.
is tied up on the moun - tain
Vla.
mp
Pno.

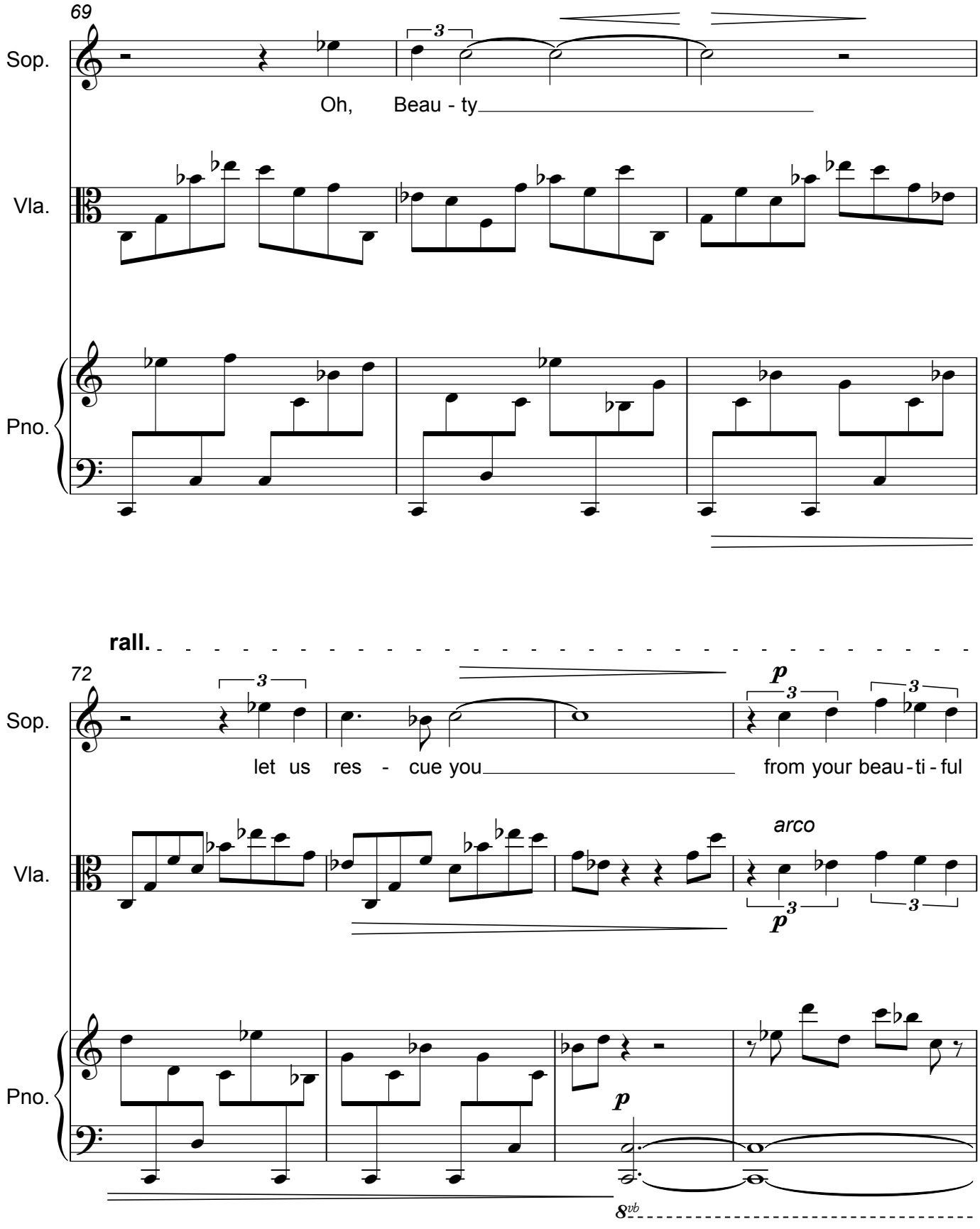

48
Sop.
We ought
Vla.
Pno.

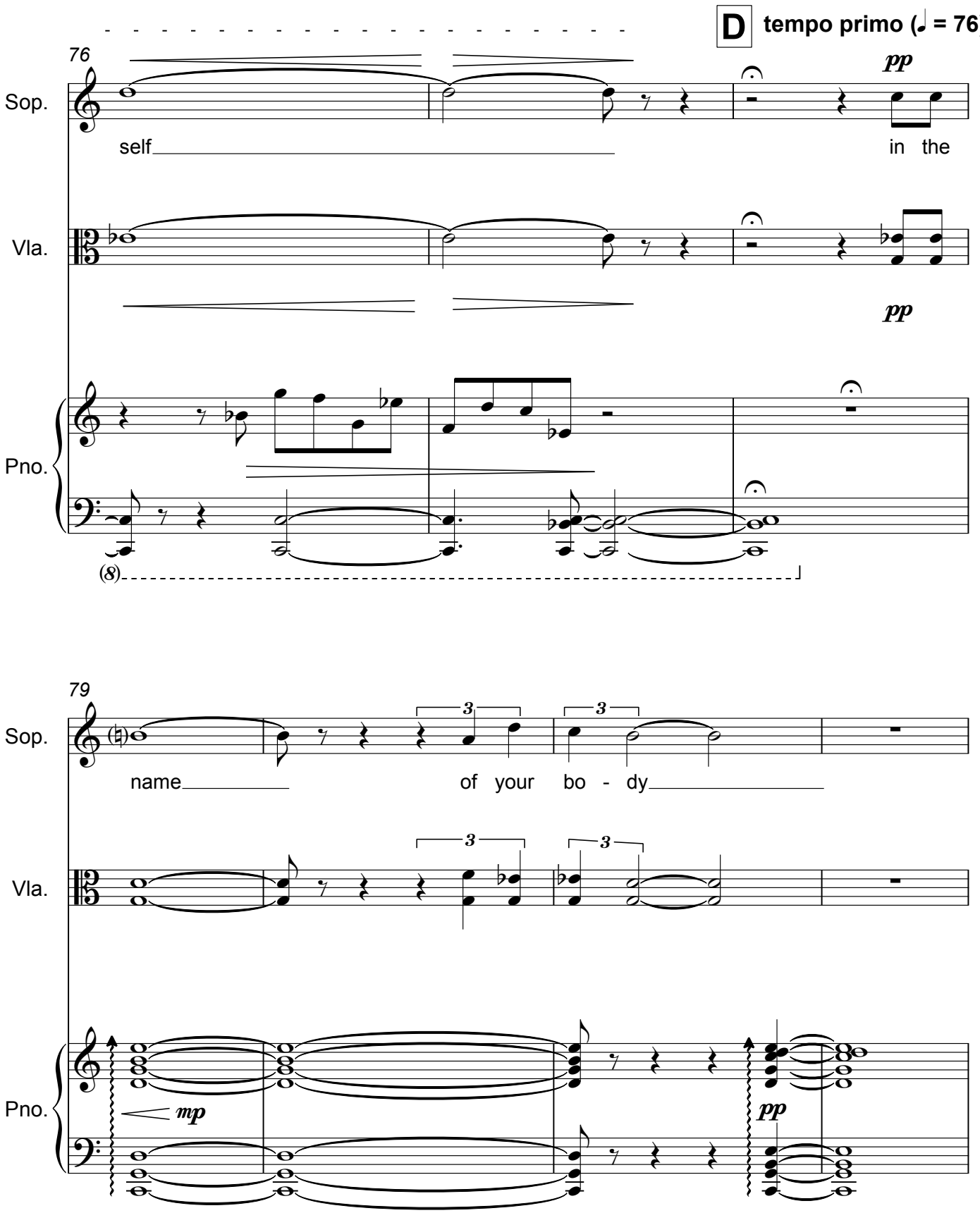

51
Sop.
to put our back-packs on
and
Vla.
Pno.
54
Sop.
res - cue him
Vla.
Pno.

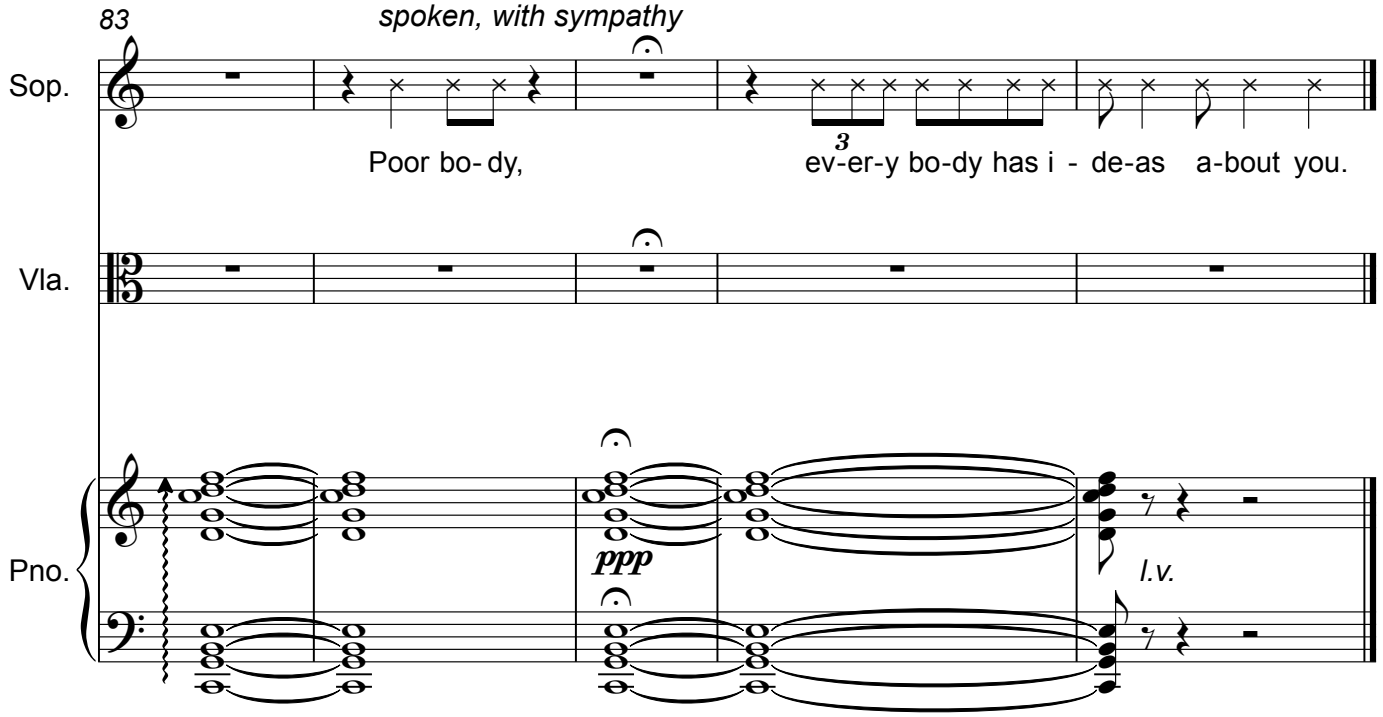

57
C
mf
3
3
Sop.
so that he can walk
pizz.
Vla.
mp
less pedal, more groove
Pno.
mf
60
mf
3
Sop.
down the moun - tain
by him -
Vla.
Pno.

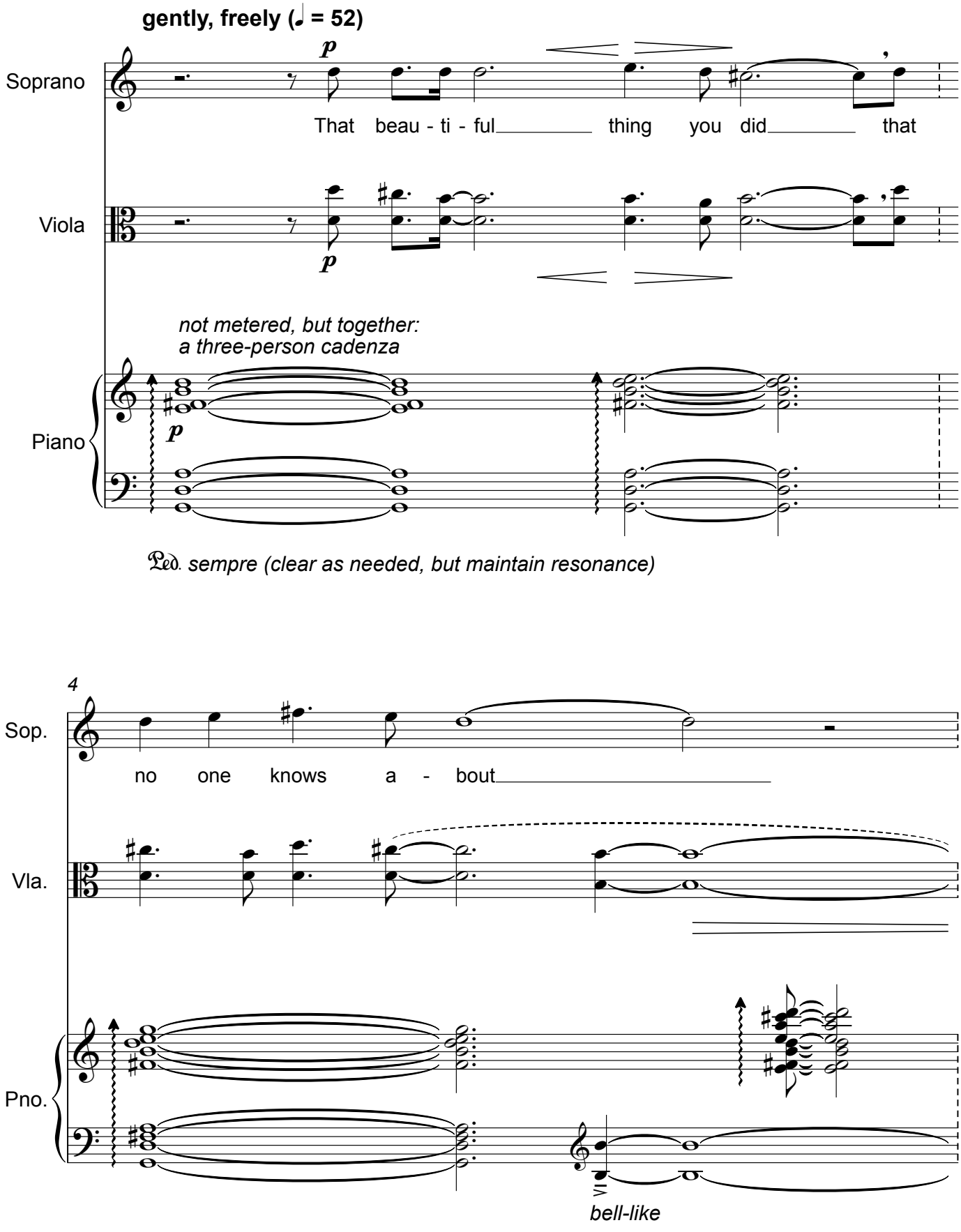

63
Sop.
self on his ti - ny twice bound feet.
Vla.
Pno.

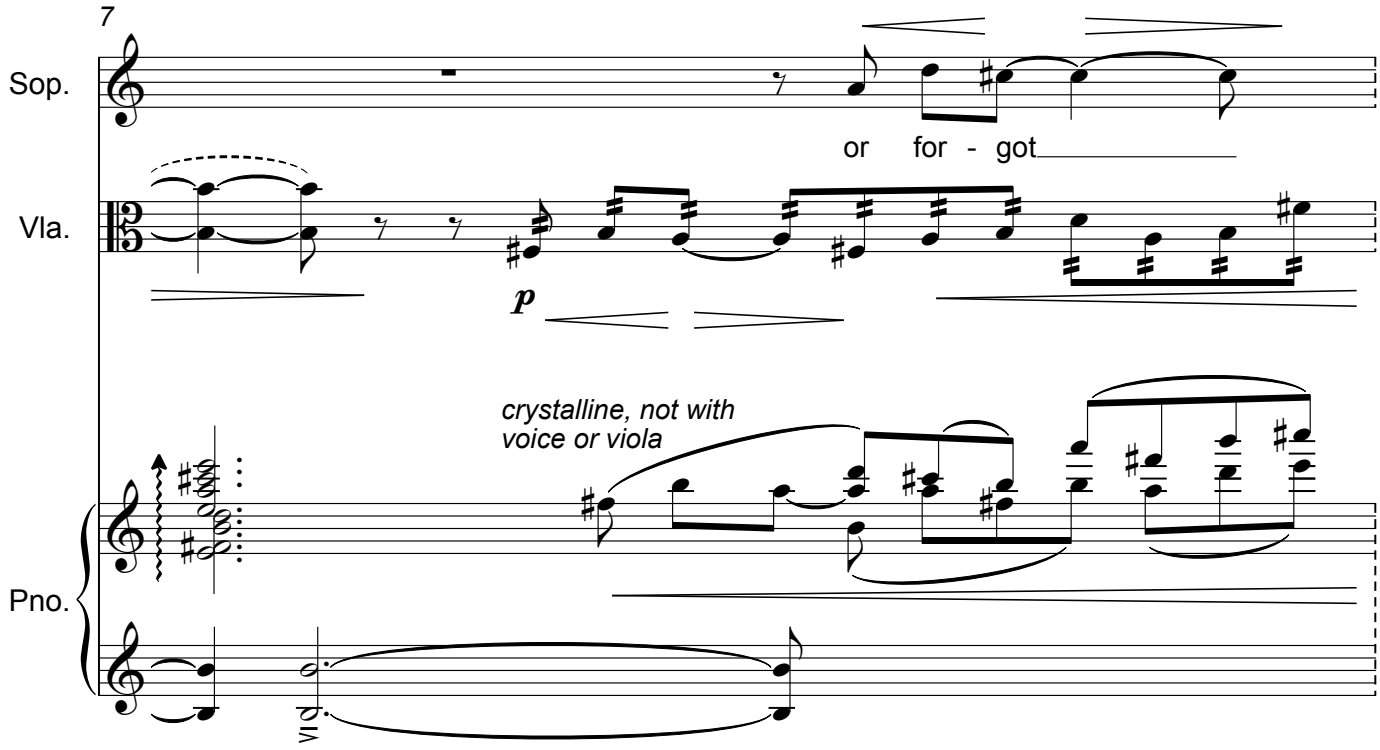

66
Sop.
Vla.
Pno.

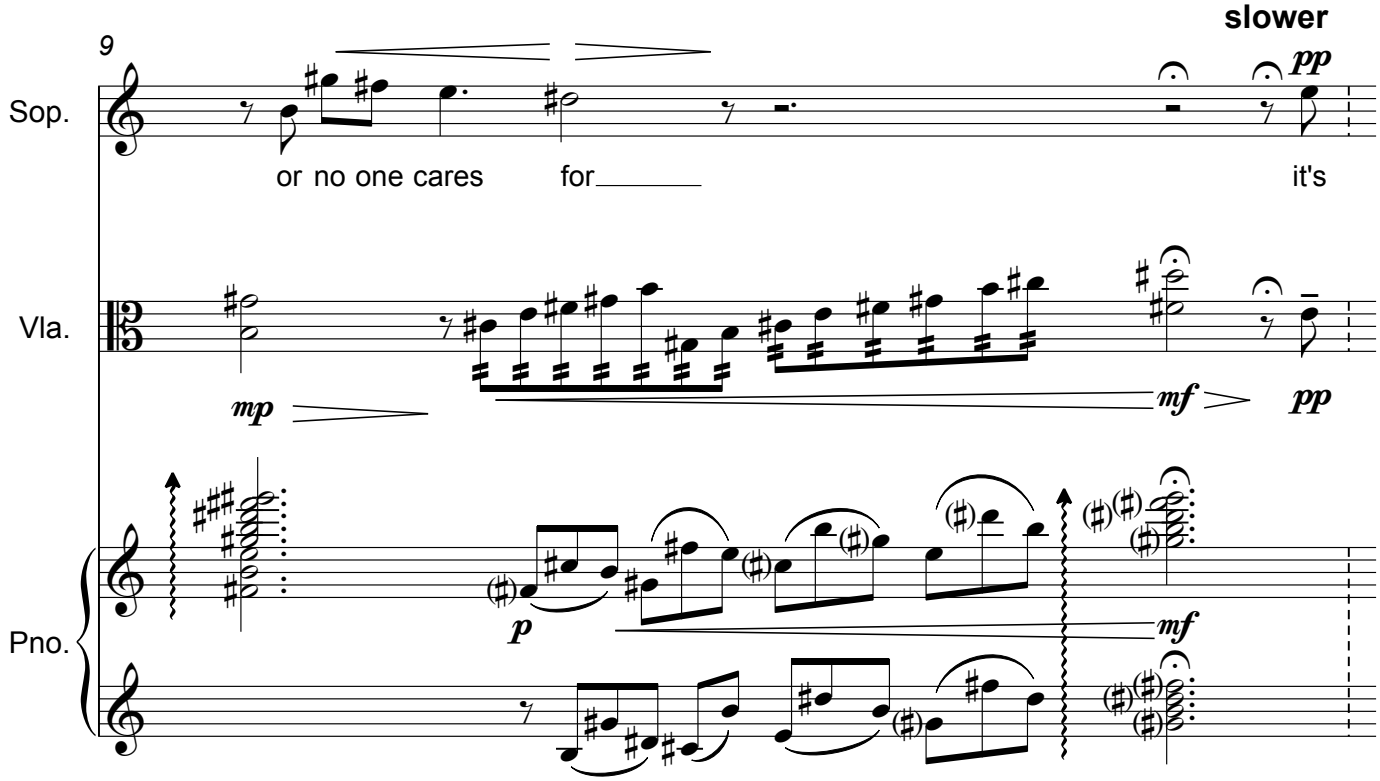

69
Sop.
Oh, Beau - ty
Vla.
Pno.
rall.
72
Sop.
let us res - cue you
from your beau - ti - ful
arco
Vla.
Pno.
8vb

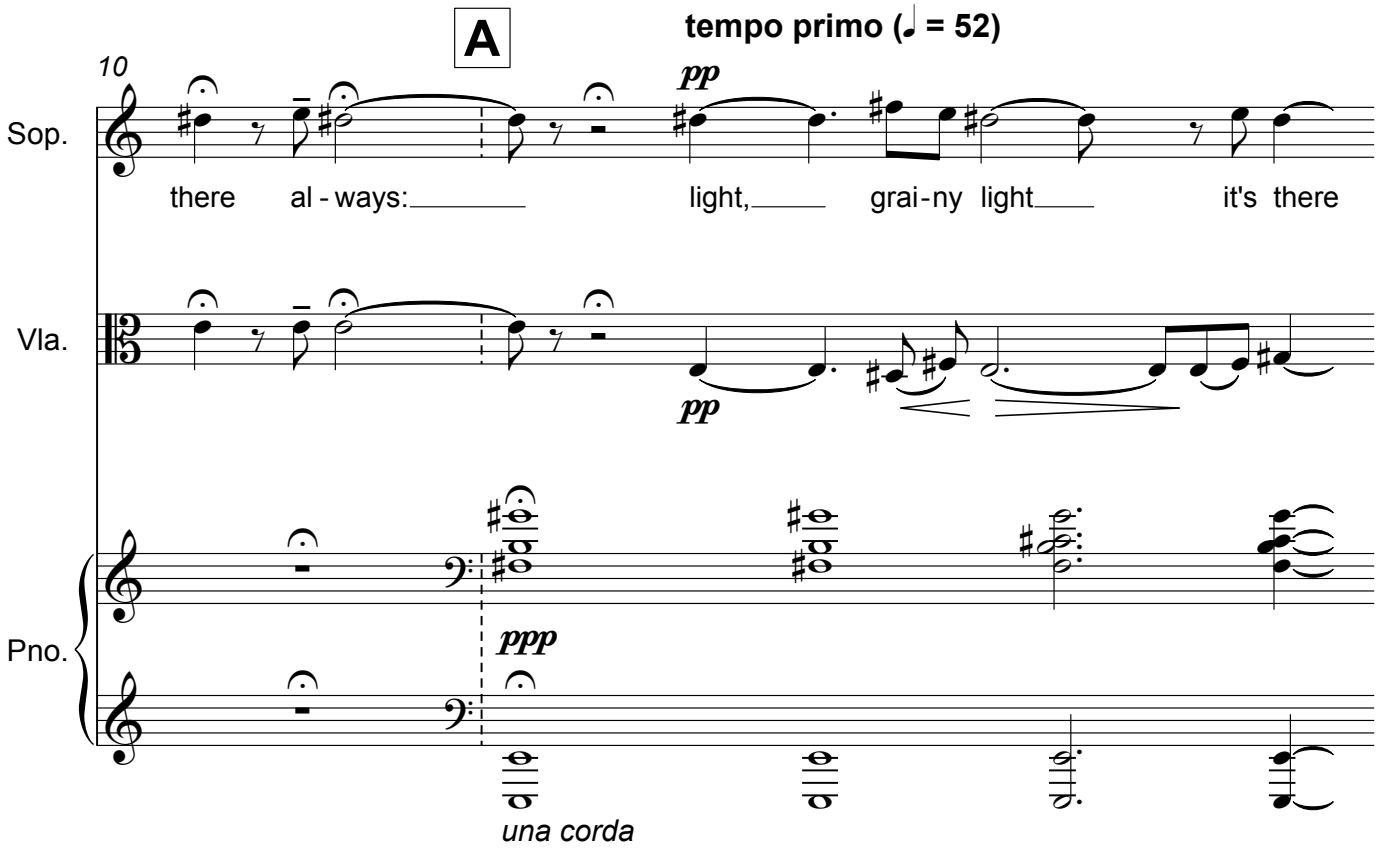

D
tempo primo (♩ = 76)
76
Sop.
self
in the
Vla.
pp
pp
Pno.
(8)
79
Sop.
name
of your bo - dy
3
3
Vla.
3
3
Pno.
mp
pp

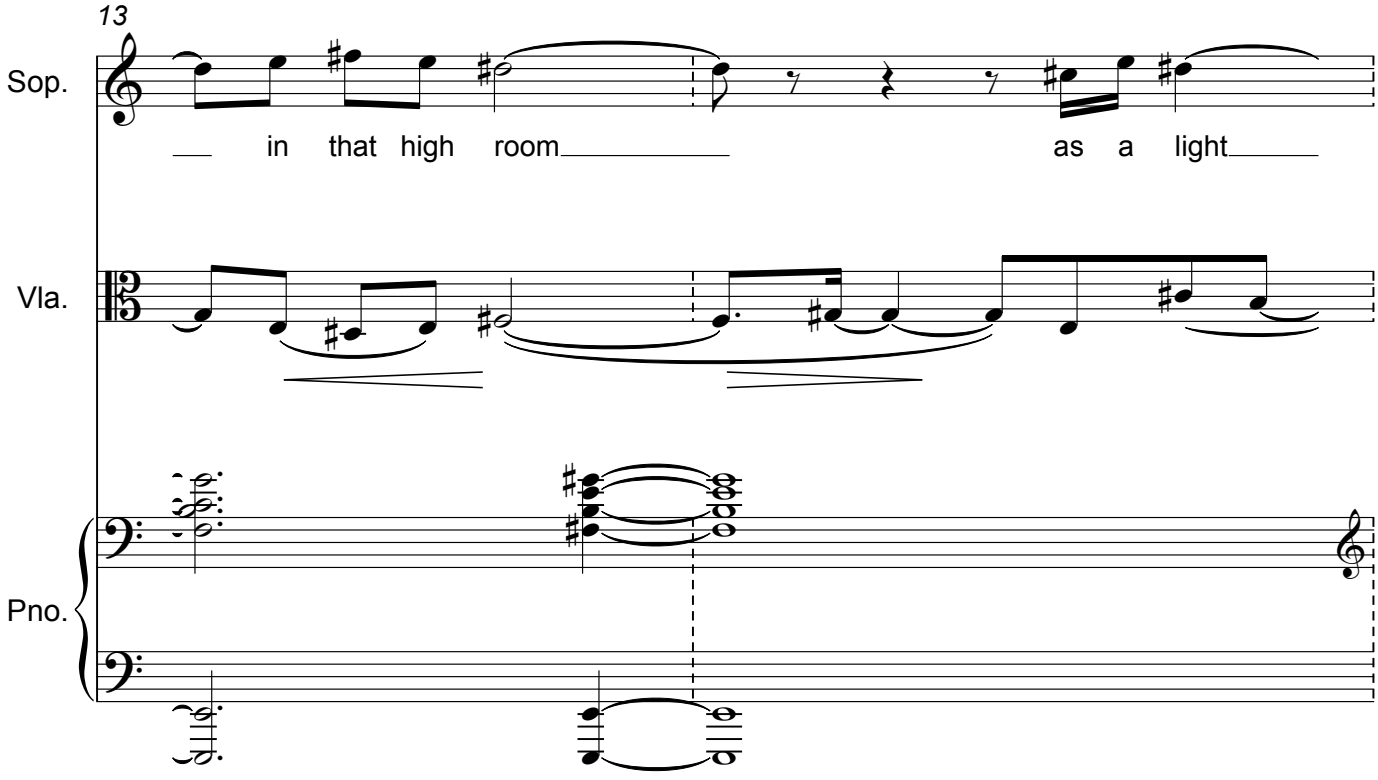

83
spoken, with sympathy
Sop.
Poor bo- dy,
3
ev-er-y bo-dy has i - de-as a-bout you.
Vla.
Pno.
ppp
l.v.

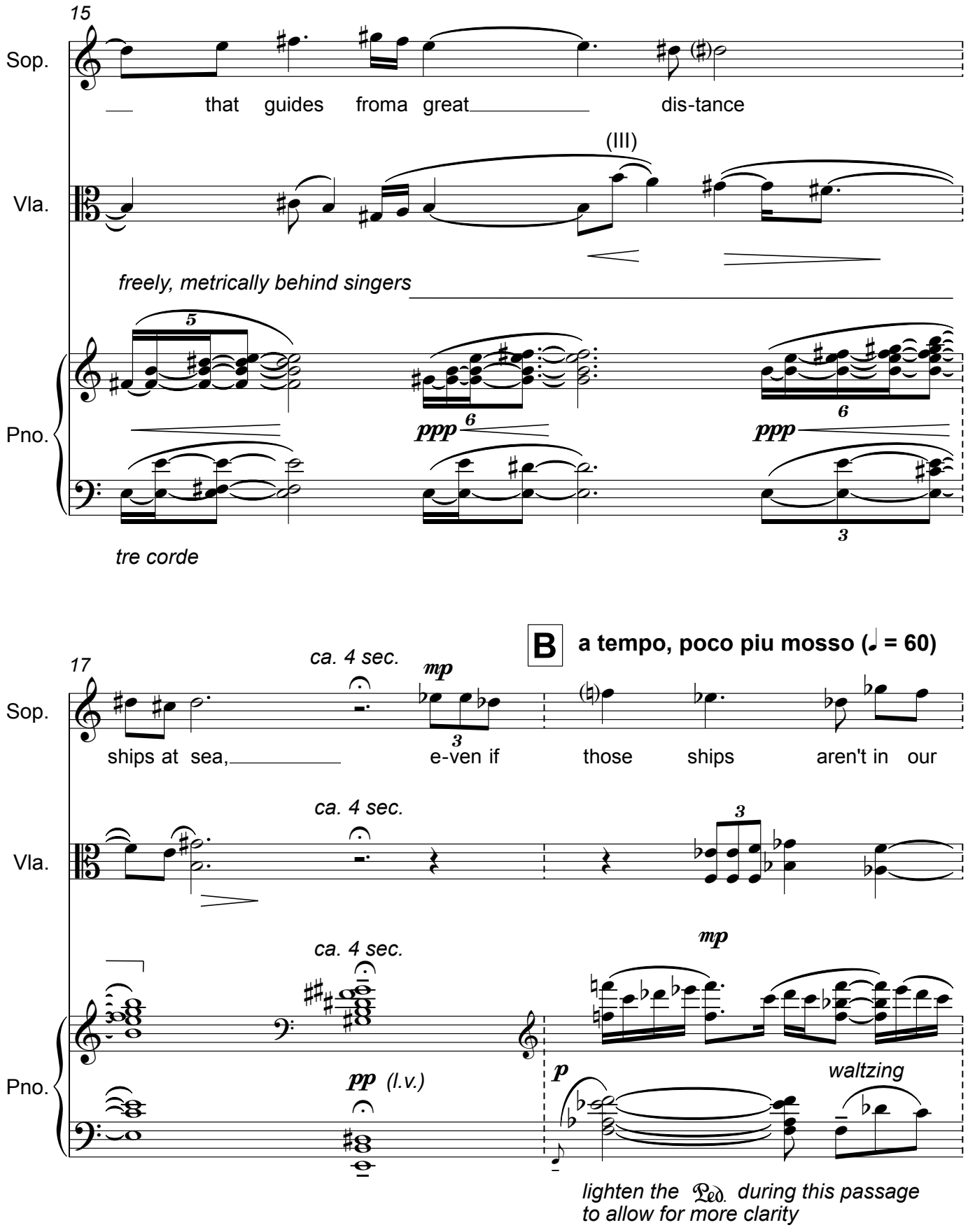

gently, freely (♩ = 52)
Soprano
That beau - ti - ful thing you did that
Viola
not metered, but together:
a three-person cadenza
Piano
Ped. sempre (clear as needed, but maintain resonance)
4
Sop.
no one knows a - bout
Vla.
Pno.
bell-like

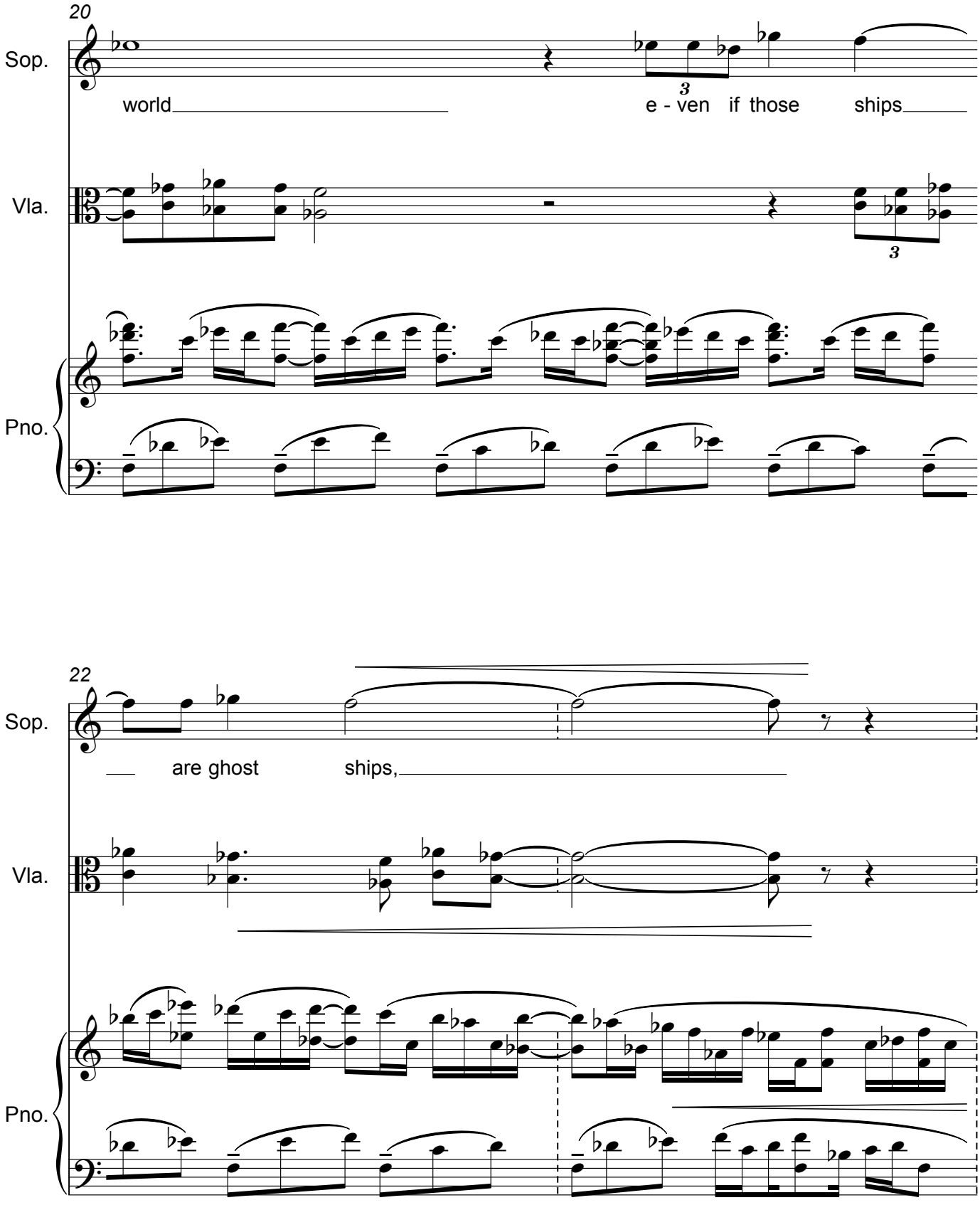

7
Sop.
or for - got
Vla.
p
crystalline, not with
voice or viola
Pno.

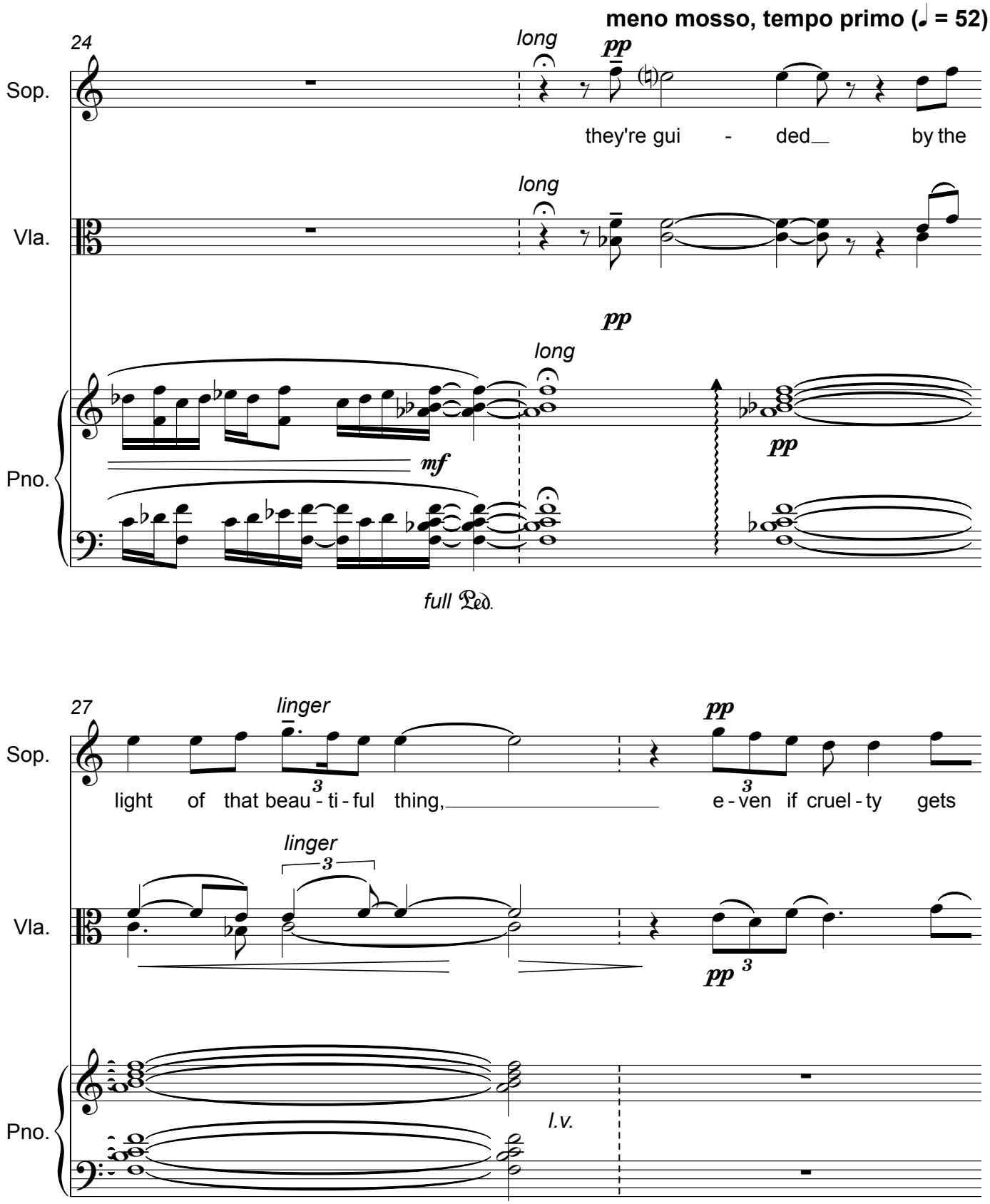

slower
9
Sop.
or no one cares for
it's
pp
Vla.
mp
mf
pp
Pno.
p
mf

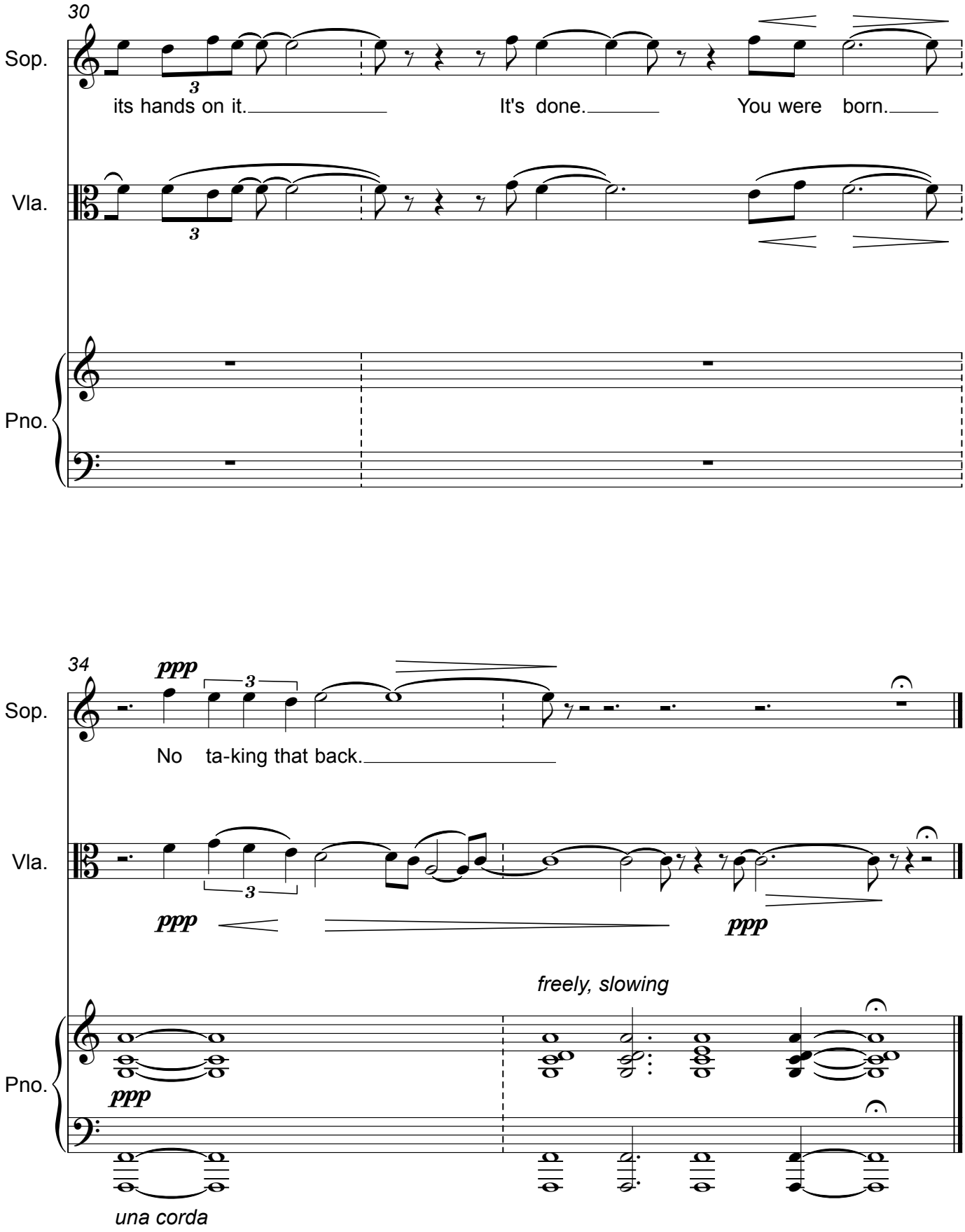

A
tempo primo (♩ = 52)
10
Sop.
there al - ways: light, grai - ny light it's there
Vla.
Pno.
pp
pp
ppp
una corda


13
Sop.
in that high room as a light
Vla.
Pno.


15
Sop.
that guides froma great dis-tance
(III)
Vla.
freely, metrically behind singers
Pno.
ppp
ppp
tre corde
B
a tempo, poco piu mosso (♩ = 60)
17
ca. 4 sec.
mp
Sop.
ships at sea, e-ven if those ships aren't in our
ca. 4 sec.
Vla.
ca. 4 sec.
mp
pp (l.v.)
p
waltzing
Pno.
lighten the Ped. during this passage
to allow for more clarity


20
Sop.
world
e - ven if those ships
Vla.
Pno.
22
Sop.
are ghost ships,
Vla.
Pno.


meno mosso, tempo primo (♩ = 52)
24
long
pp
Sop.
they're gui - ded by the
long
Vla.
pp
long
mf
pp
Pno.
full Ped.
27
linger
pp
Sop.
light of that beau - ti - ful thing, e - ven if cruel - ty gets
linger
Vla.
pp
l.v.
Pno.


30
Sop.
its hands on it.
It's done.
You were born.
Vla.
Pno.
34
ppp
Sop.
No ta-king that back.
Vla.
ppp
ppp
freely, slowing
Pno.
ppp
una corda

IV. The Blouse

delicately, with sadness (♩. = 76)

Soprano

Viola

shimmering, bell-like, but legato

Piano

p

Ped. *lightly for top-voice resonance; clear as needed*

4

Sop.

mp

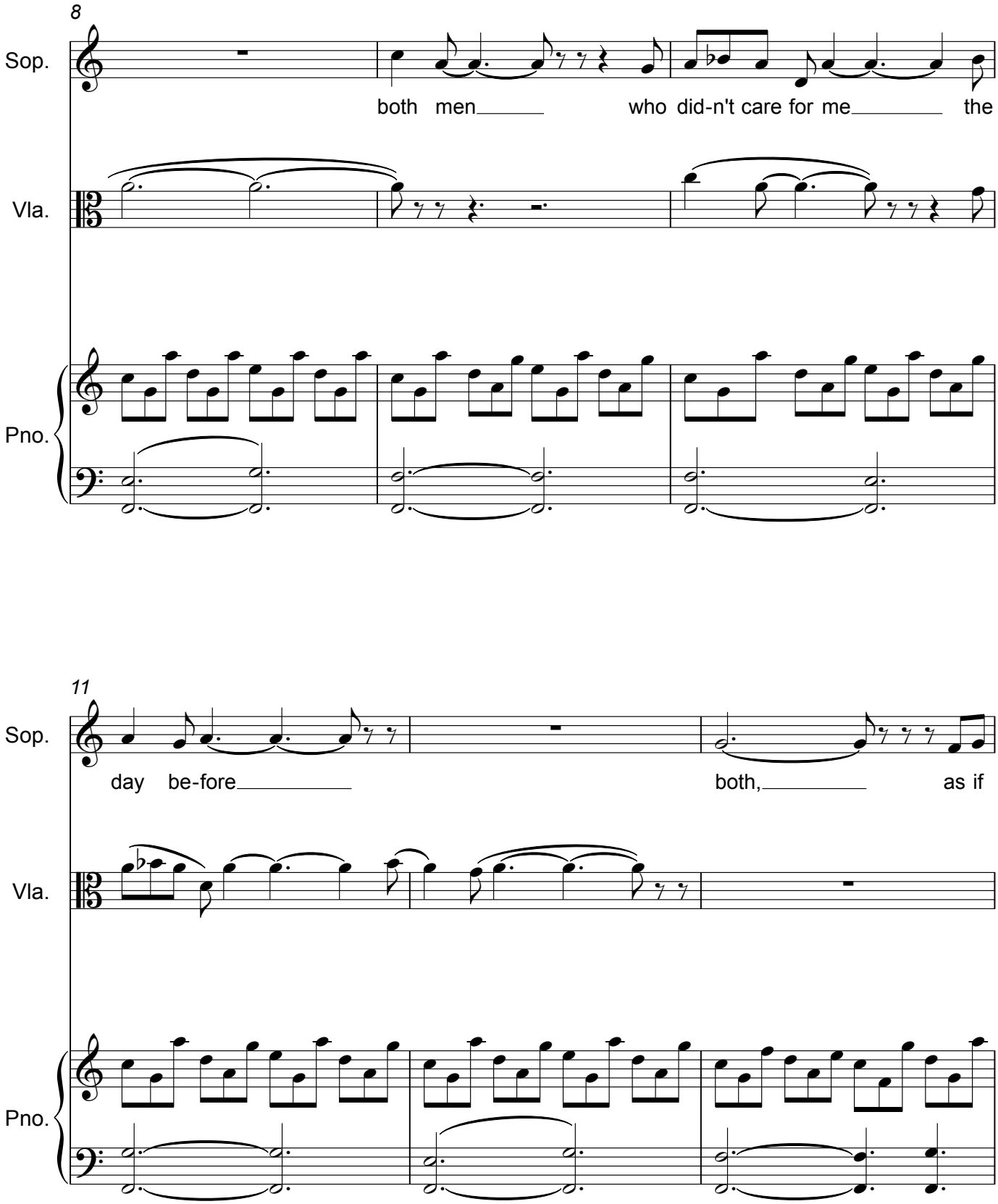
The day I wore the blouse

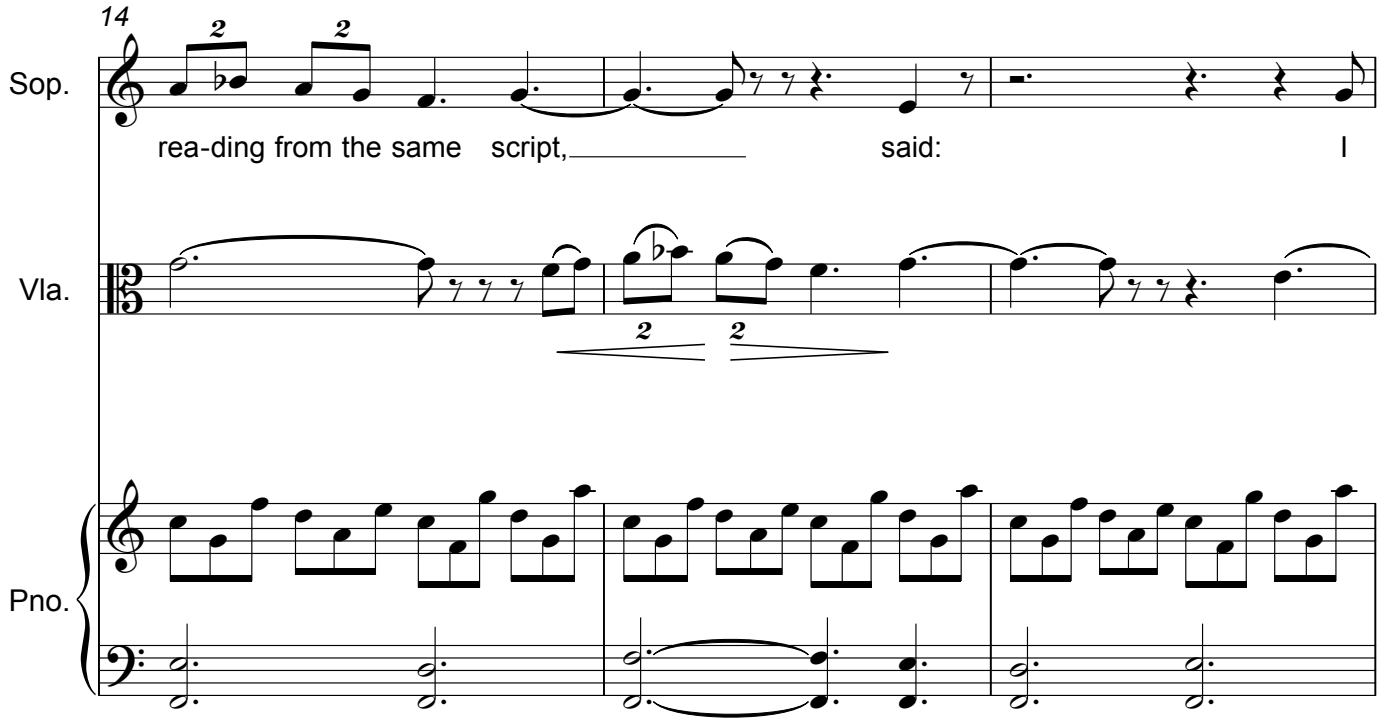
Vla.

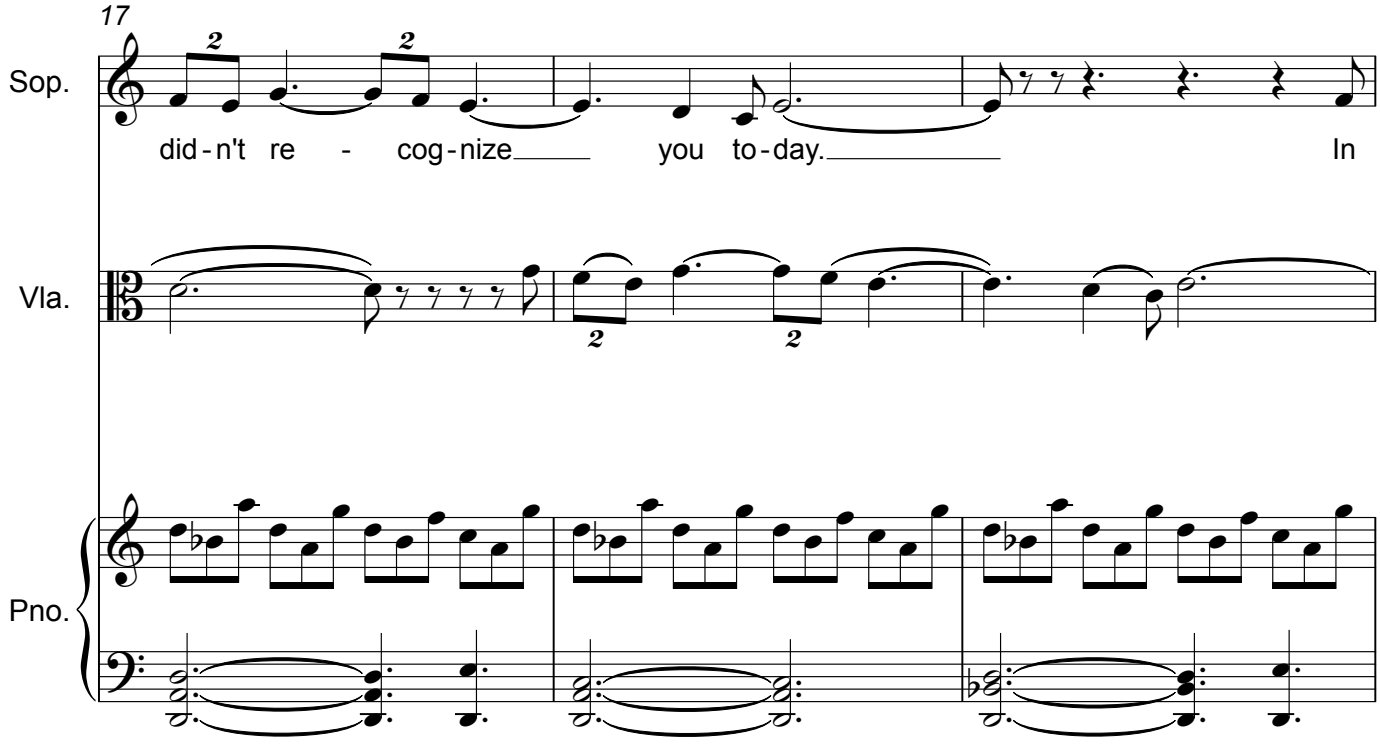
(echo)

ppp

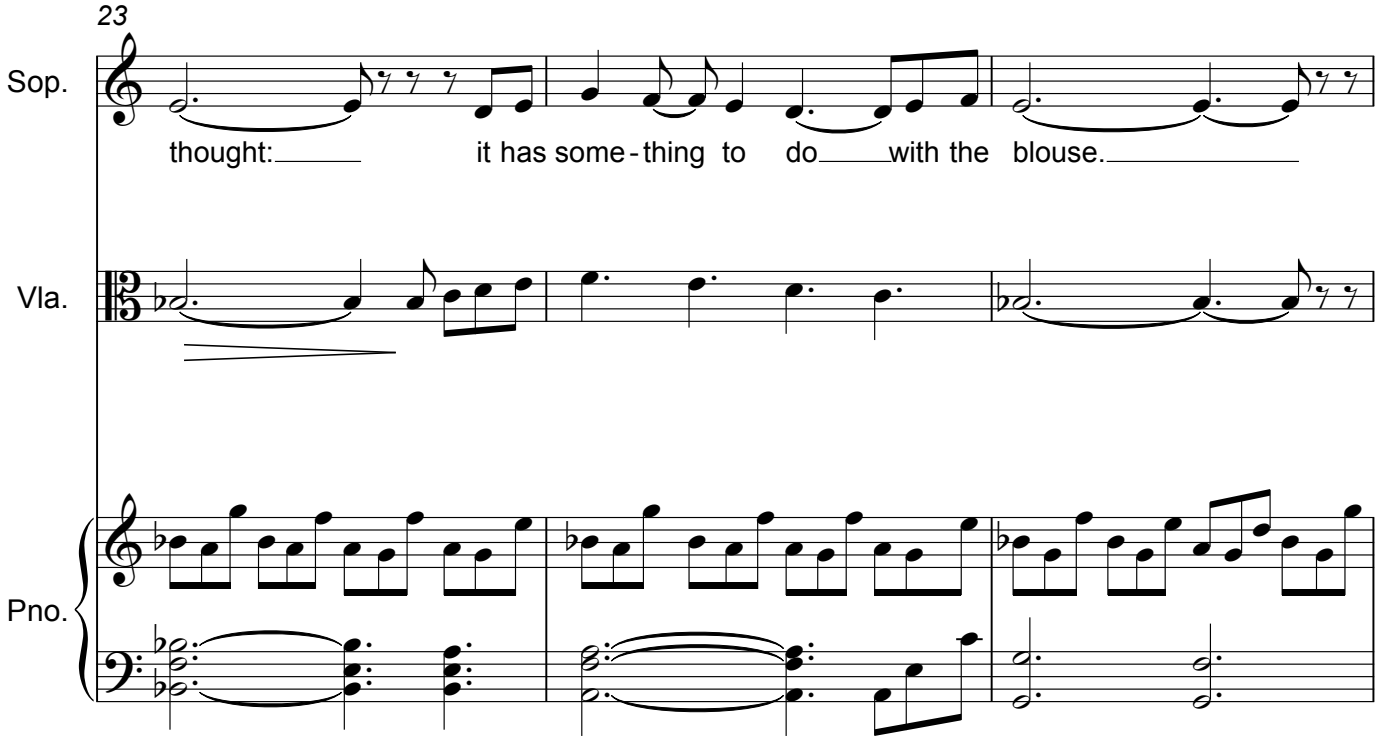
Pno.

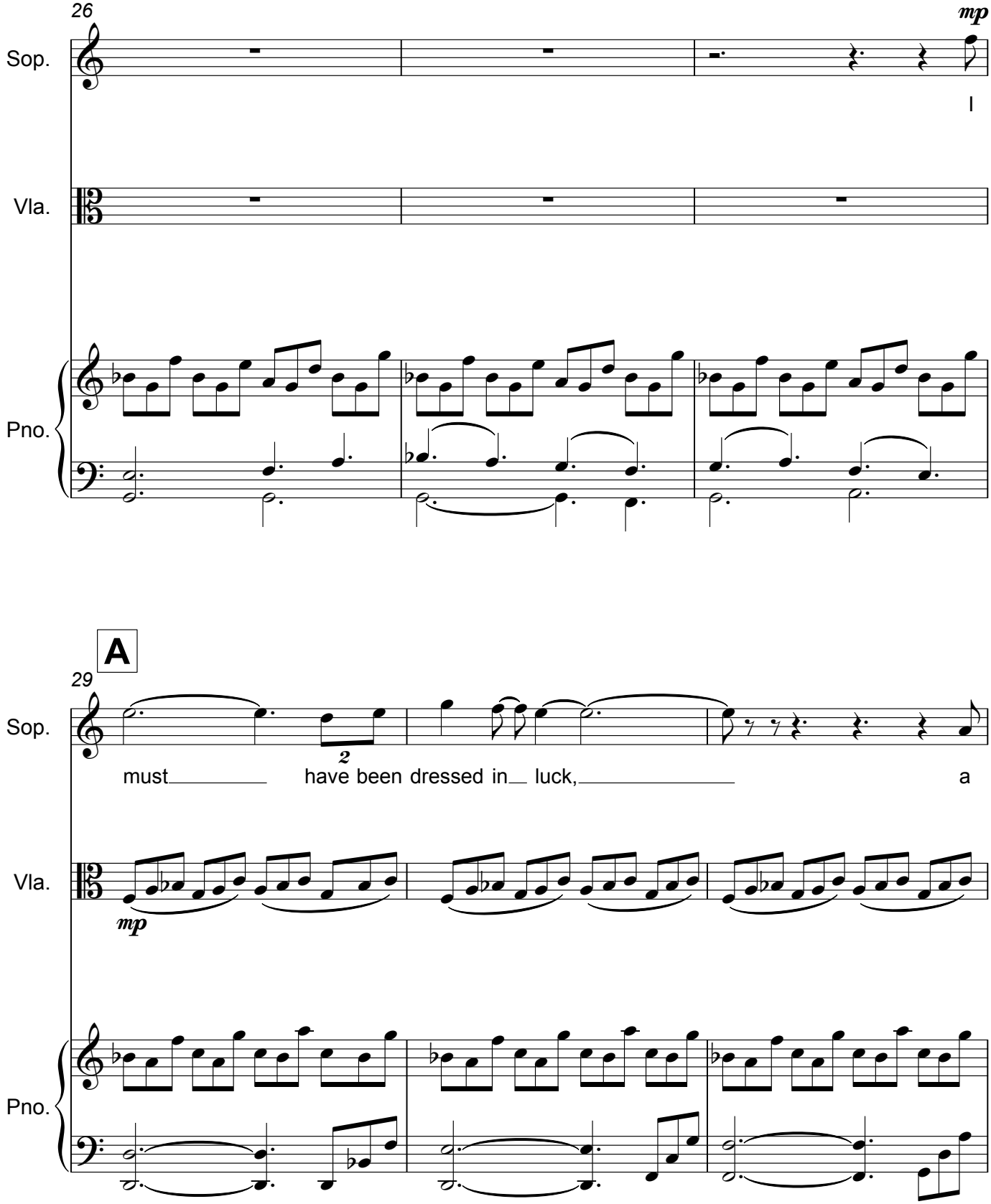

8
Sop.
both men who did-n't care for me the
Vla.
Pno.
11
Sop.
day be-fore both, as if
Vla.
Pno.

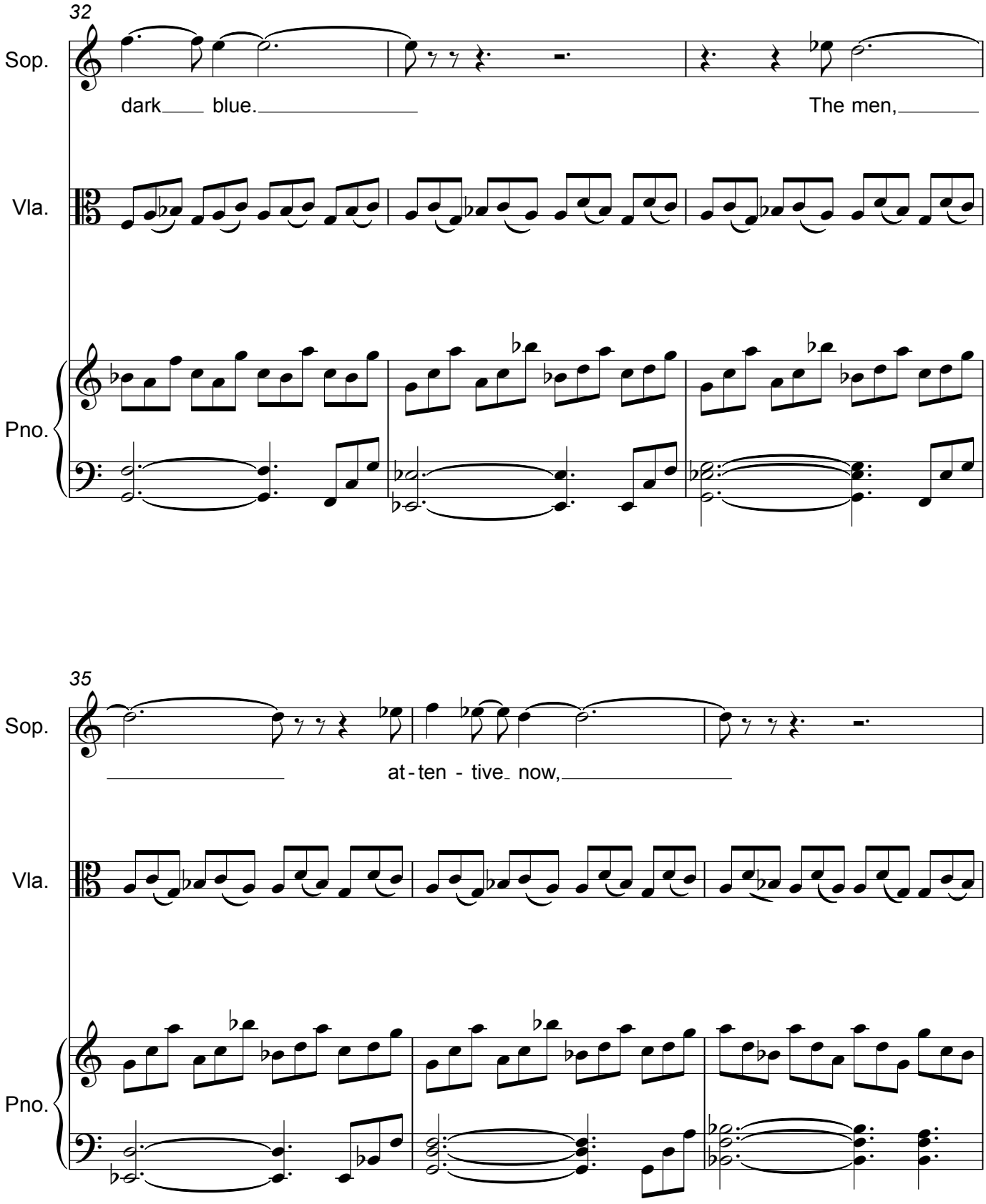

14
Sop.
rea-ding from the same script, said: I
Vla.
Pno.

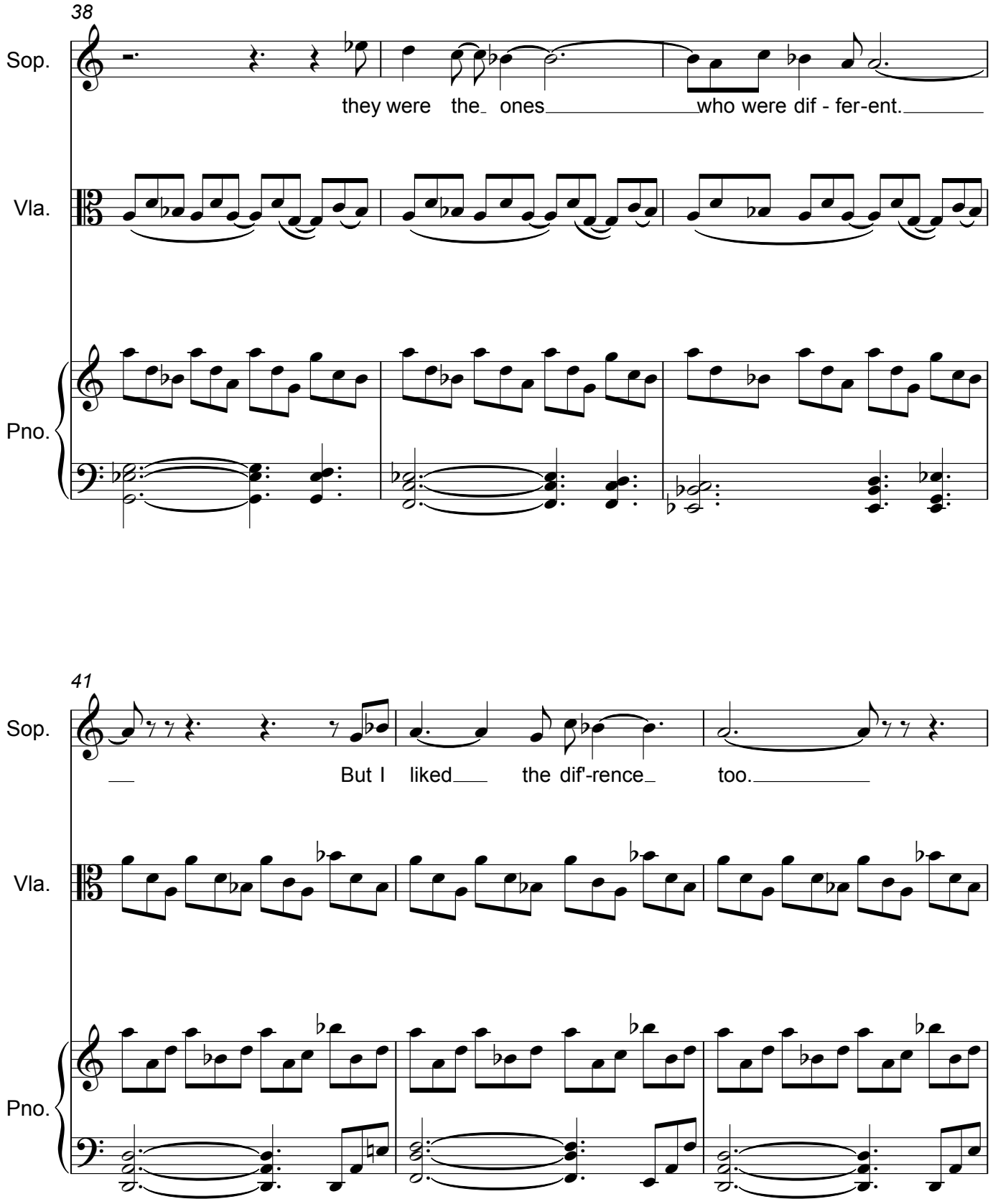

17
Sop.
did-n't re - cog-nize you to-day. In
Vla.
Pno.

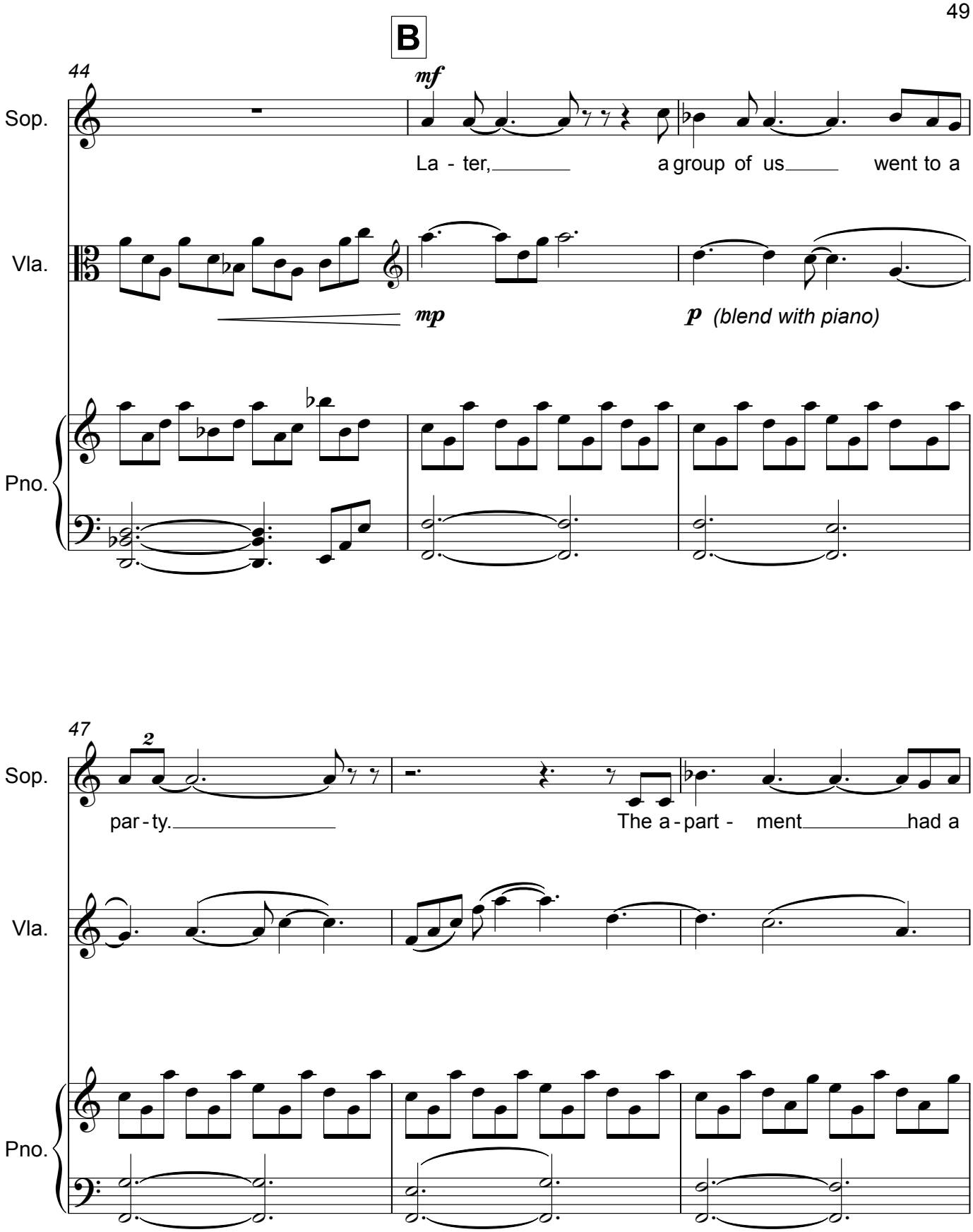
20
Sop.
tones of ap-pro-val. I
Vla.
Pno.

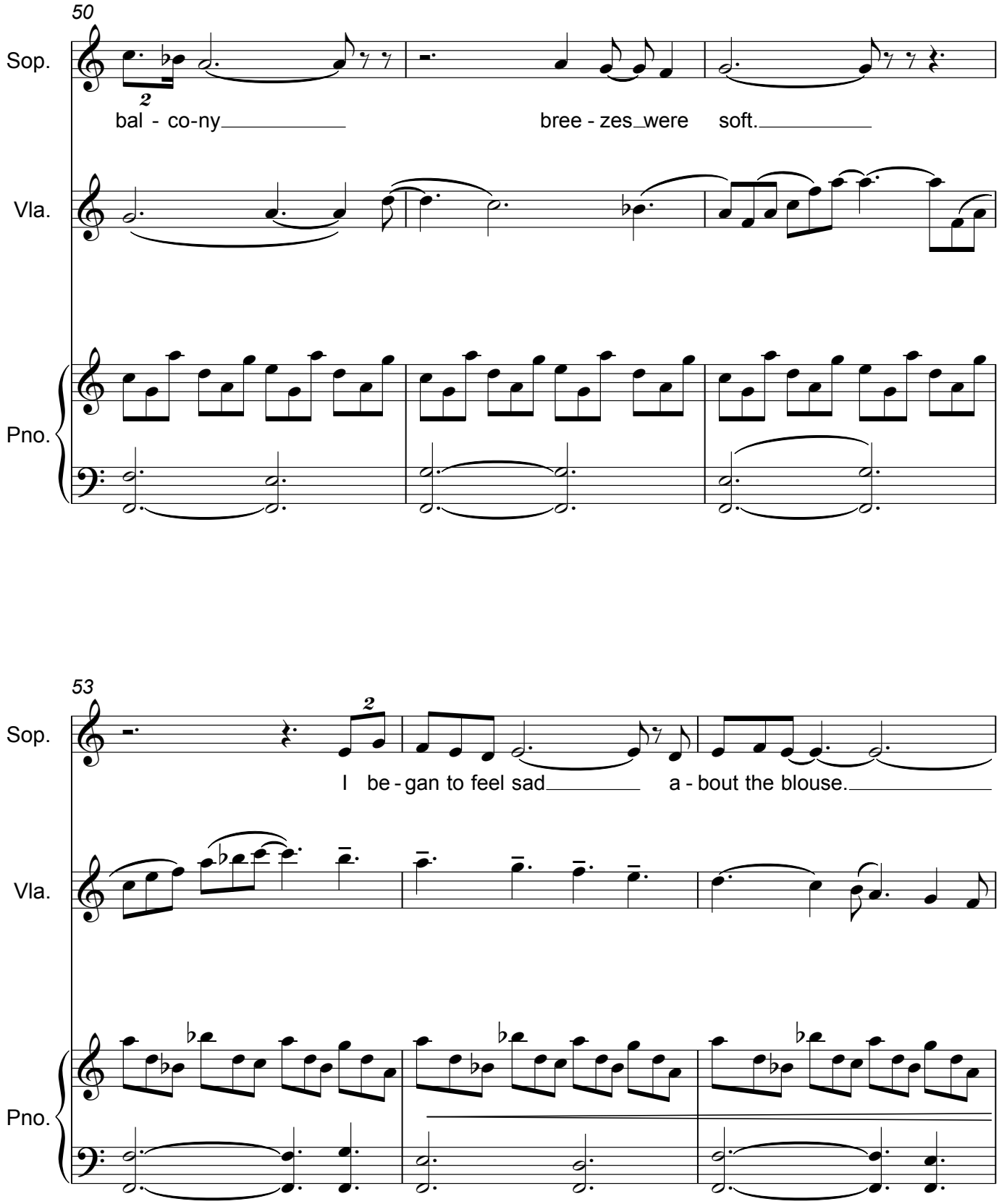

23
Sop.
thought: it has some-thing to do with the blouse.
Vla.
Pno.

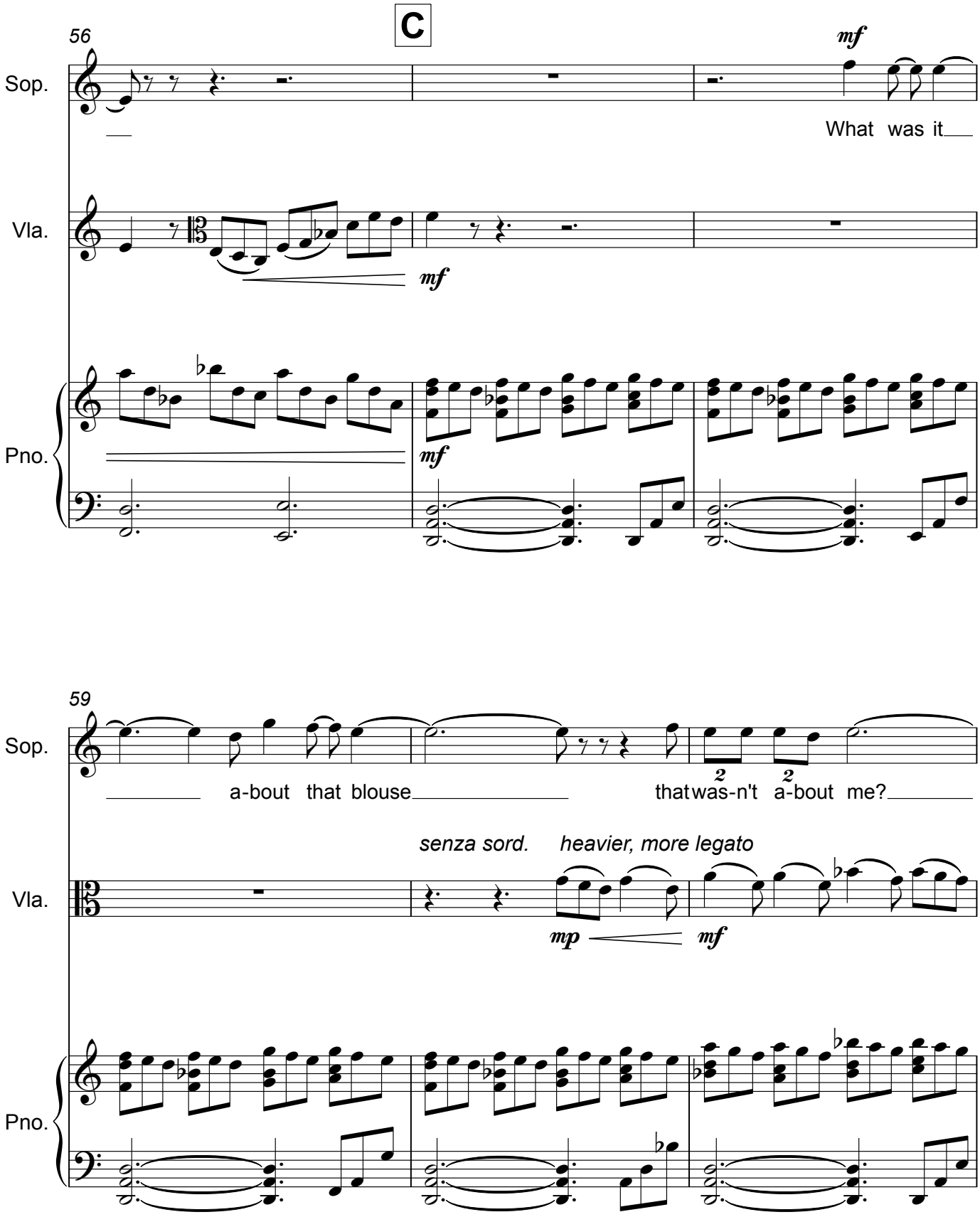

26
mp
Sop.
I
Vla.
Pno.
A
29
Sop.
must have been dressed in luck, a
Vla.
mp
Pno.

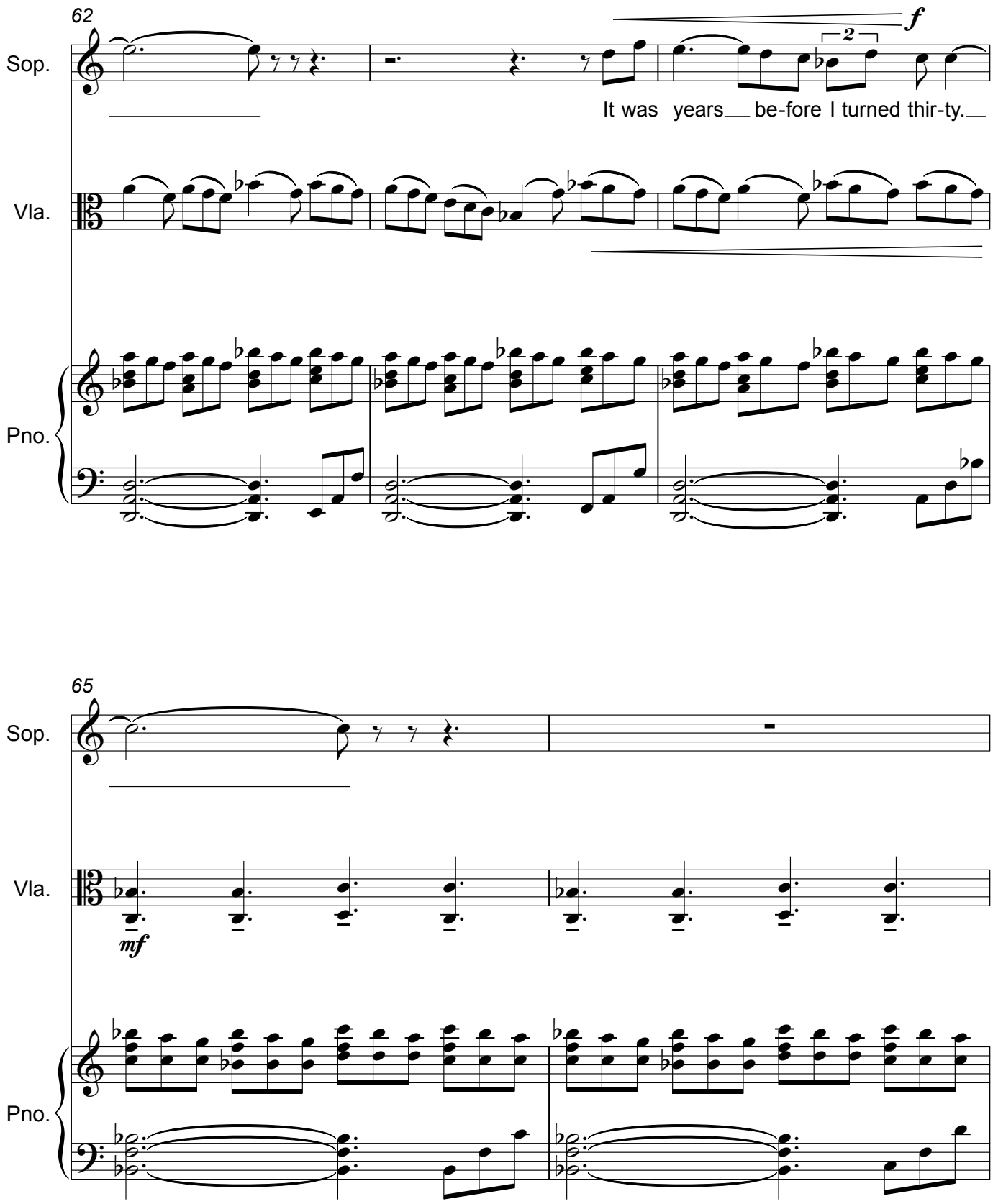

32
Sop.
dark blue.
The men,
Vla.
Pno.
35
Sop.
at - ten - tive now,
Vla.
Pno.

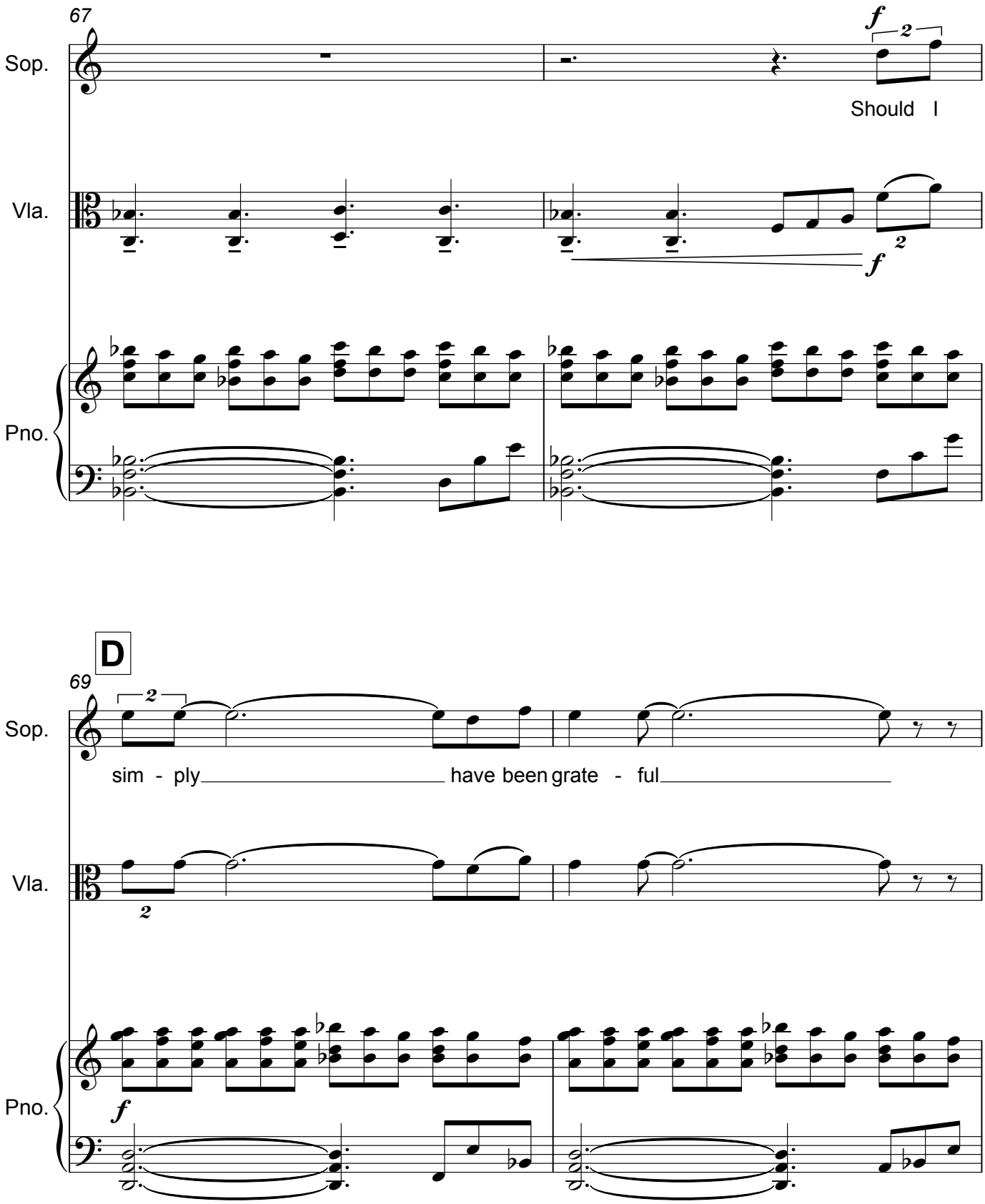

38
Sop.
they were the ones who were dif - fer-ent.
Vla.
Pno.
41
Sop.
But I liked the dif'-rence too.
Vla.
Pno.

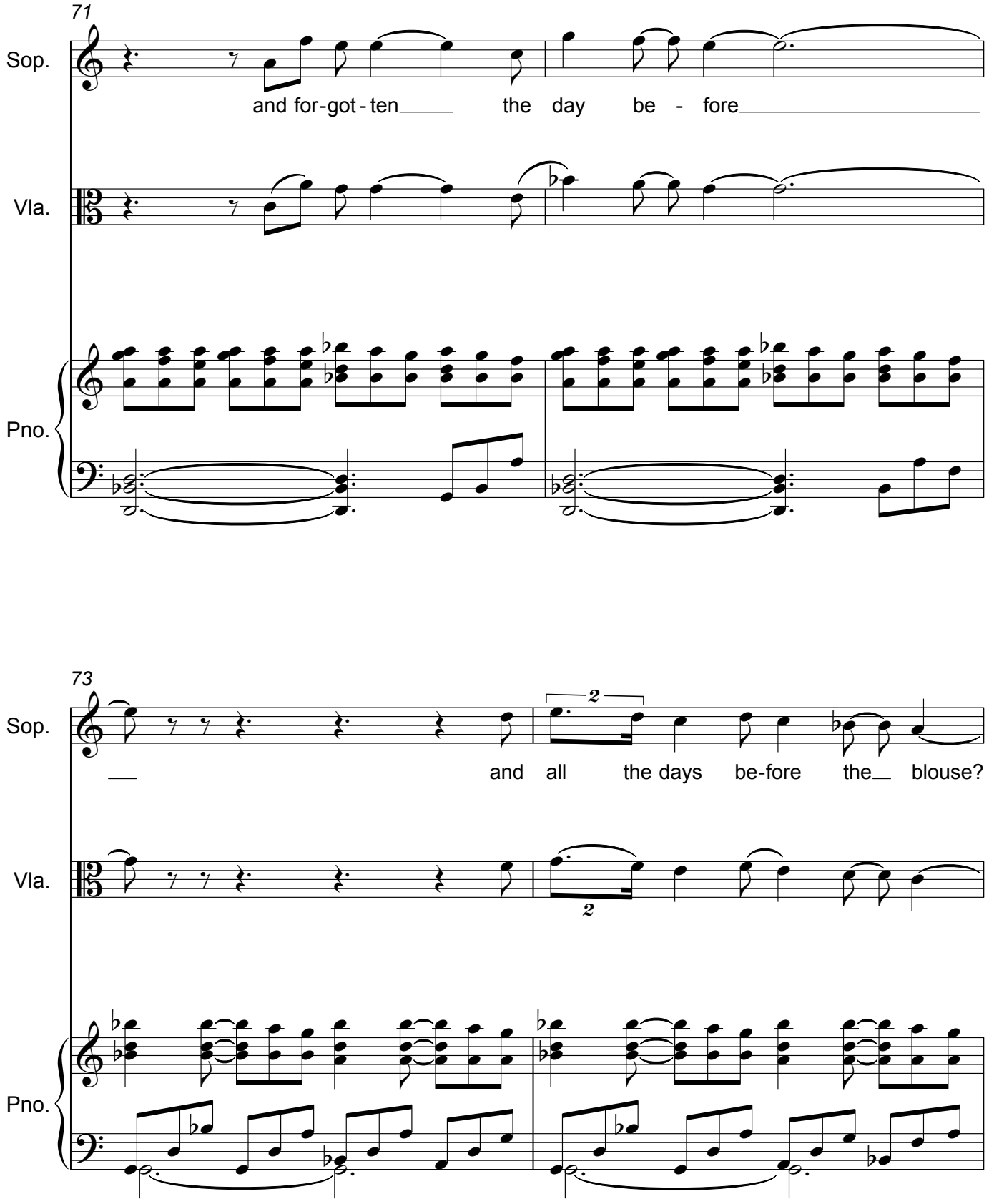

B
44
mf
Sop.
La - ter, a group of us went to a
Vla.
mp
p (blend with piano)
Pno.
47
2
Sop.
par - ty. The a - part - ment had a
Vla.
Pno.

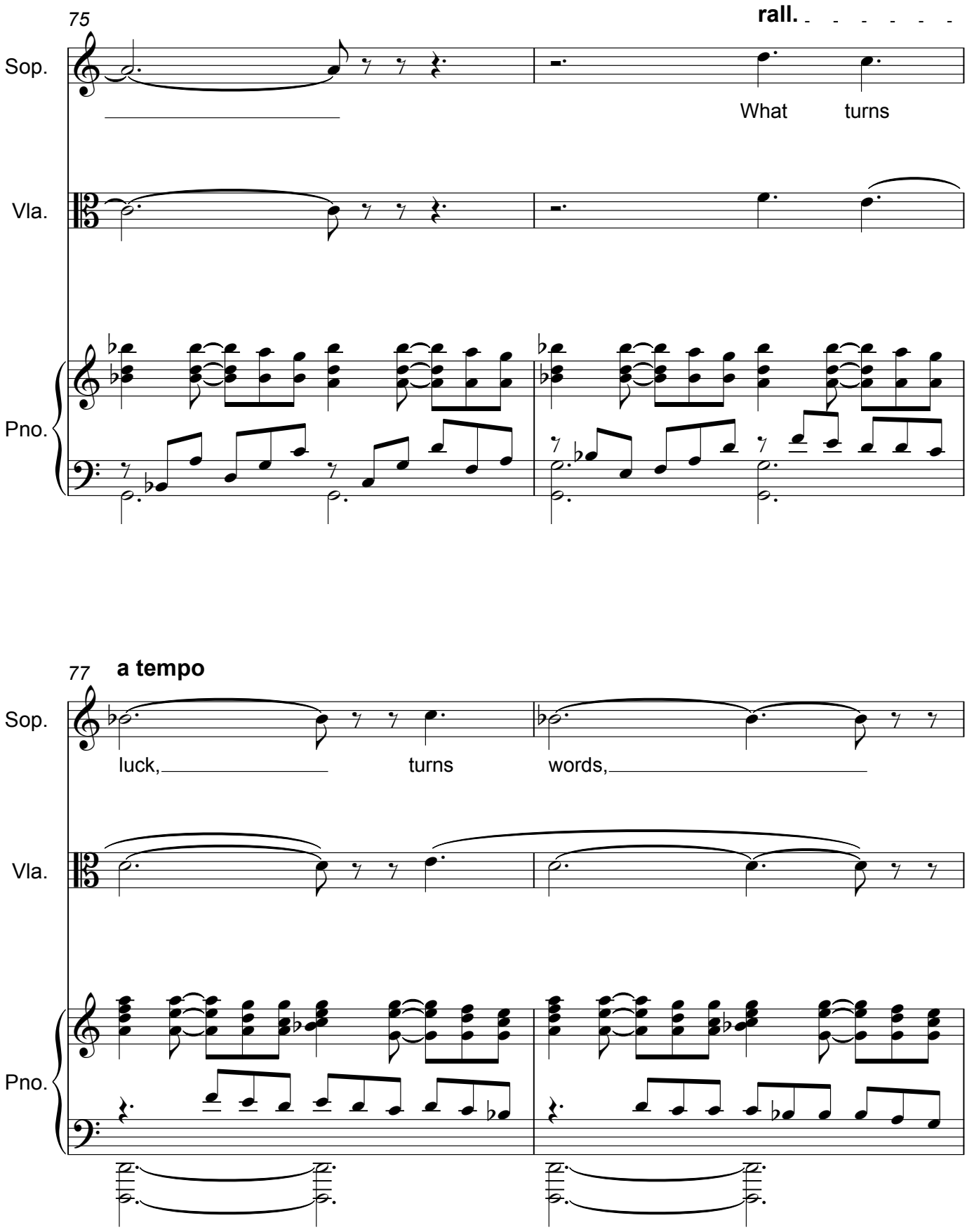

50
Sop.
Vla.
Pno.
bal - co-ny
bree - zes were soft.
53
Sop.
Vla.
Pno.
I be - gan to feel sad
a - bout the blouse.

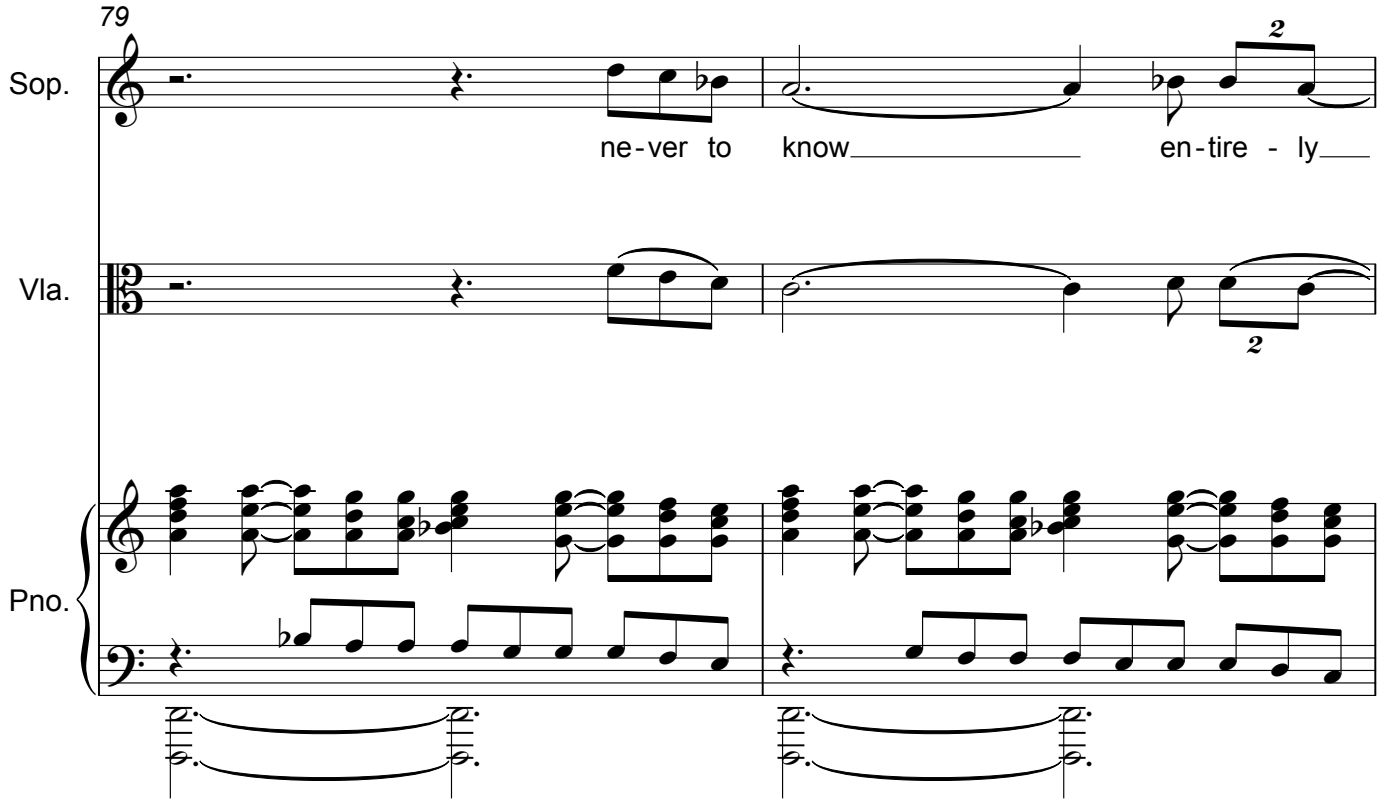

C
56
Sop.
mf
What was it
Vla.
mf
Pno.
mf
59
Sop.
a-bout that blouse
that was-n't a-bout me?
senza sord.
heavier, more legato
Vla.
mp
mf
Pno.

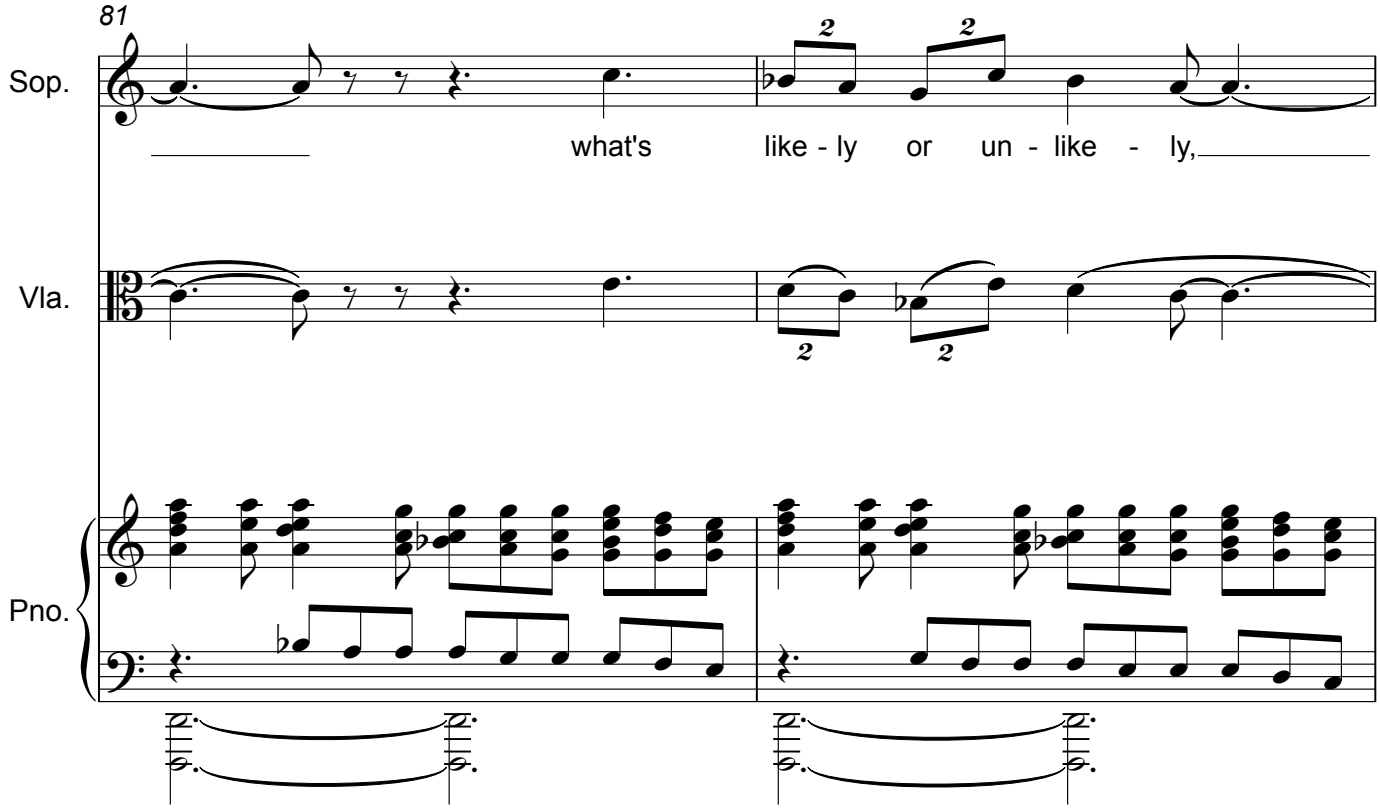

62
Sop.
Vla.
Pno.
f
2
It was years be-fore I turned thir-ty.
65
Sop.
Vla.
Pno.
mf

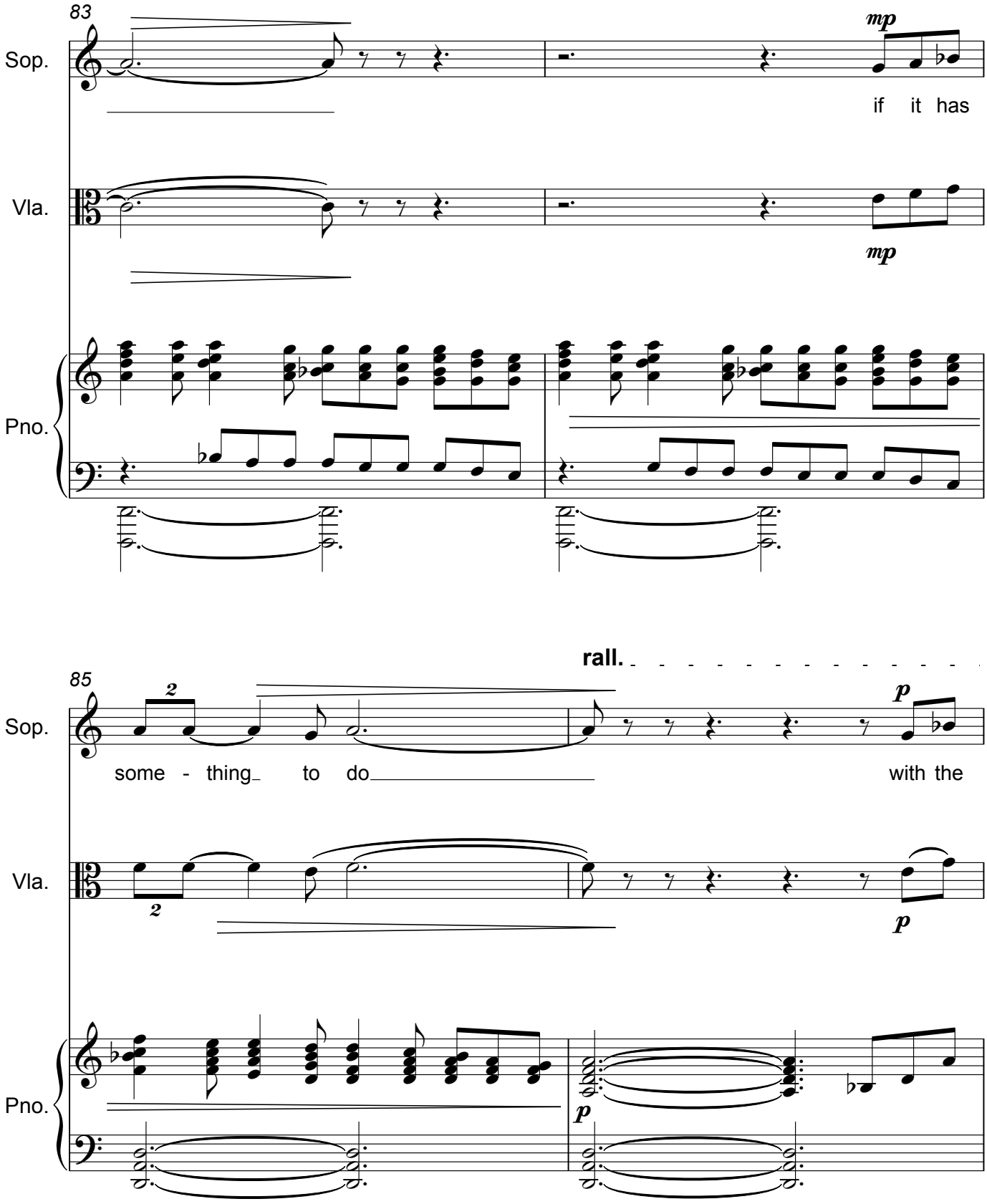

67
Sop.
Should I
Vla.
Pno.
D
69
Sop.
sim - ply have been grate - ful
Vla.
Pno.

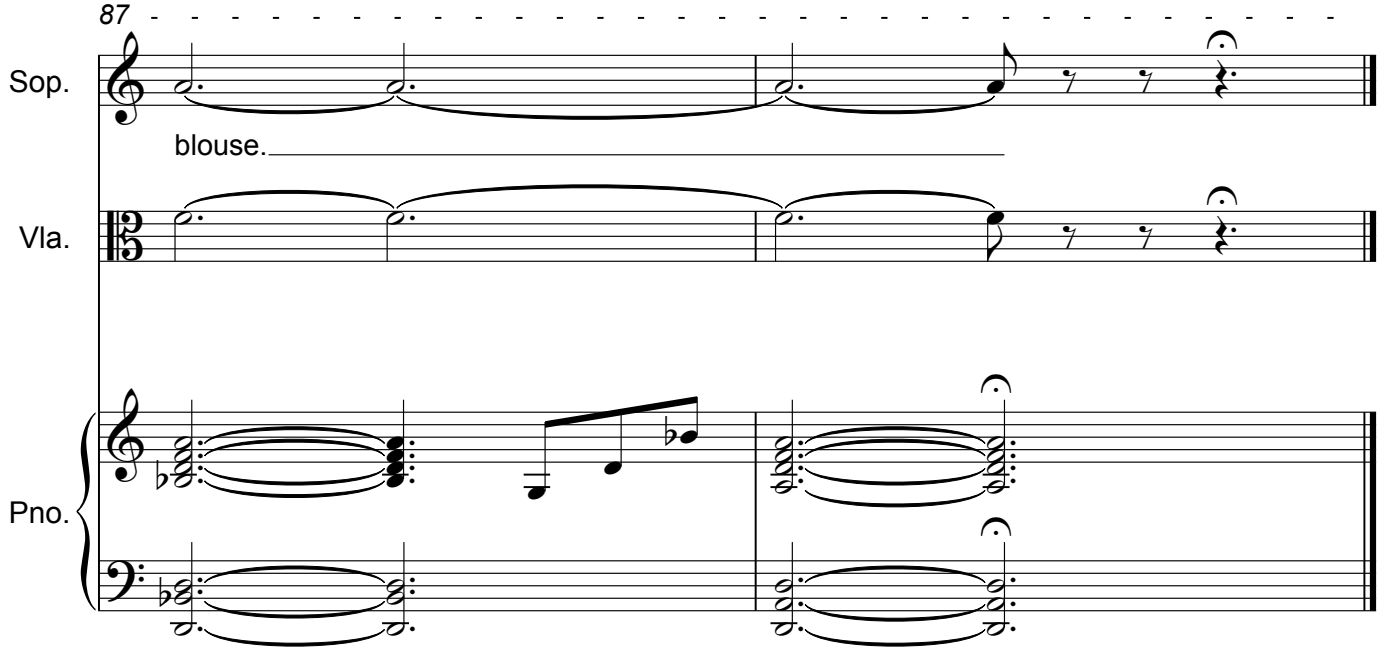

71
Sop.
and for-got-ten the day be - fore
Vla.
Pno.
73
Sop.
and all the days be-fore the blouse?
Vla.
Pno.


75
rall.
Sop.
What turns
Vla.
Pno.
77
a tempo
Sop.
luck, turns words,
Vla.
Pno.


79
Sop.
ne-ver to know en-tire - ly
Vla.
Pno.


81
Sop.
what's like - ly or un - like - ly,
Vla.
Pno.


83
Sop.
mp
if it has
Vla.
mp
Pno.
rall.
85
2
Sop.
some - thing to do with the
p
Vla.
2
p
Pno.
p


87
Sop.
blouse.
Vla.
Pno.

Kirk O'Riordan
Composer

Kirk O'Riordan's music has been referred to as "unapologetically beautiful" and is often praised for its uniquely "visual" qualities that depict a wide range of striking moods. His debut compact disk, *Strange Flowers*, was released by Ravello Records in November, 2013 and was praised by Audiophile Audition as "one of the most impressive and beautiful collections of chamber music I have heard in awhile….This is all just so lovely and invokes exactly the emotions that good music should be able to induce in all of us." Gramophone Magazine praised O'Riordan as "a composer for whom imagery is a defining inspiration.…[he] is a deeply sensitive composer who savours going gently into the night." (April 2014). His recording of his *Twenty-Six Preludes for Solo Piano*—by pianist Holly Roadfeldt—has attracted similar praise: they "are similarly atmospheric and proceed to unfold like a magical tapestry. Each of the 26 Preludes seemingly comprising of warp and weft forming a myriad of pixels of little pictures that ultimately combines to form a moveable feast for both eye and inner ear. O'Riordan's miniatures are informed by languorous beauty and profundity, the lyrical variations of each often feature elaborate embellishments, as well as sudden dissonant figurations that seem to mimic the gravity-defying leaps of the gazelle…" (World Music Report, April 2017)

O'Riordan (b. 1968) is an active composer, conductor, saxophonist, and teacher. His music has been performed in Canada, China, Costa Rica, Cyprus, Finland, Italy, and Russia; and in thirty of the fifty United States. In 2009 Dr. O'Riordan joined the faculty of Lafayette College where he serves as Associate Professor of Music and Director of Bands, teaching courses in music theory, and composition. In addition, he teaches in the First-year Seminar program and conducts the Lafayette College Concert Band and Contemporary Music Ensemble. Previously, he served on the faculties of Bucknell University, Susquehanna University, Lock Haven University, Colorado Christian University, Chandler-Gilbert Community College, and Paradise Valley Community College. He holds the Doctor of Musical Arts degree from Arizona State University (the first recipient of that degree from ASU); the Certificate of Performance in Saxophone from Northwestern University; and three Master of Music degrees (composition, saxophone performance, and conducting).

Kirk has studied composition with Rodney Rogers, Randall Shinn, James De Mars, Glenn Hackbarth, Jay Alan Yim, Burton Beerman, Marilyn Shrude, and Donald M. Wilson. He has studied saxophone with Frederick L. Hemke, John Sampen, Eugene Rousseau, and Iwan Roth.

In his free time, Kirk is an avid fan of obstacle course racing.

Music for Voices by Kirk O'Riordan

Opera

The Masque of Edgar Allan Poe (2015)
Libretto by Lee Upton

Art Song

Four Beautiful Songs (2019)
Text by Lee Upton
(soprano, viola, piano)

Three Odes (2018)
Text by Lee Upton
(soprano, bassoon)

Autumn Winds (2011)
Text by Matsuo Basho
(soprano, piano)

Bergstresser Songs (2011)
Text by Stephanie Bergstresser
(mezzo-soprano, piano)

Choral Music

The Long Art of Lingering (2017)
Text by Lee Upton
(SATB)

Lux aeterna (2008)
(SSSAAA)

Gaudete (208)
(SATB, organ)

www.kirkoriordan.com