Joanna Marsh

A Plastic Theatre

for Mezzo Soprano, SATB choir and orchestra

Text by Katie Schaag

VOCAL SCORE

Perusal copy

JOANNA MARSH

A Plastic Theatre

Katie Schaag

ACT I

In the end there is not nothing. In the end there is endless everything. The silence a deafening roar of white noise, the landscape a bottomless oasis of plasticine deathlessness. Abandoned plastic objects longing for a home.

ACT II

Plastic snaps its fingers. Plastic doesn't have time for your considered reservations, your platitudes. Plastic has business to do. Plastic believes in the ABC ethos, and plastic is always selling, always closing. Plastic is sinister and sexy, enamored of its own slick planes and glittering prisms. Believes in its own myths. Doesn't believe in yours. Don't blame plastic, blame its instrumentalizers. Plastic wants what it wants. Plastic wants what you want: utopia. Infinity. Plenitude for all. Ownership of a finely hewn bubblesphere, a delicately patterned cube, a deceptively minor key. What do we talk about when we talk about plastic? Climate of synthesizers and wax. Ecology of vinyl and bubble wrap. Dinosaur fossil fuels and robotics. Squeaky clean death. Flesh transmuted into silicone. Sophisticated preservative, bright and fresh. Its vision exceeds our attempts to restrain it. The material becomes its own promise, sliming into the horizon, blossoming onto the screen, ballooning into our hearts. Staticky it resonates. Stickily it moans. Sturdily it propogates. Silently it roams. Be still, oh dream plastic of our very own image, oh nightmare plastic of our very own dawn. Sampling a densely layered sequence, a pattern of deathly echoes.

ACT III

Just before it falls asleep, plastic has been said to make a sound that is nearly human. The horns in unison, cue the strings. Cue the rubber duckies, now the storage bins. Cue the packing peanuts, now the vegan pleather shoes. Saran-wrapped ocean waves, screeching polyethylene pill bottle seagulls, styrofoaming wind. Polymer clay starfish belly up, its soft middle, its sensitive touch.

ACT IV

A shiny plastic animal spawns a soft fleshy animal. A sinuous textured animal spawns a fleshy plastic animal. The study of animal behavior includes the recognition of diverse characteristics embedded within perceptual fields. Plastic spawns a bewildering variety of aquatic life. From one spawn to another: the progeny too great. The brood too vast. Infinite in its swaying hopefulness. Embarrassing in its persistent largess. Reverberating echo buried deep within the monstrous child. Birth as a grim oath to escape the deafening mesh. Being alive an exercise in forgetting the body, remembering the image. Being alive an exercise in remembering how to die.

ACT V

We the spurned animals full of sensations. We the spawned animals eating our fill. We the mutant mineral-vegetable-plastic-animals building our kingdom. Waiting to be called beautiful. Smooth pebbles massaging our aching limbs, sun warming our grotesque faces. No terrestrial zone is bounded by fixed geographical coordinates. When we stretch our toes, the web imperceptibly opens. We leap into the rushing current. We fix our gaze on the depths.

Reading Copy

Joanna Marsh

A Plastic Theatre (September 2023)

vocal score

Duration c.23'

A Plastic Theatre was co-commissioned by Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Society for the Liverpool Philharmonic Youth Choirs and the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Ellie Slorach on 24 March 2024 and Trondheim Symphony Orchestra and Opera for performance on 7th November 2024 conducted by Joel Sandelson. A further performance in Sydney has been sponsored by Peter McCreanor.

© 2024 Joanna Marsh
www.joannamarsh.co.uk

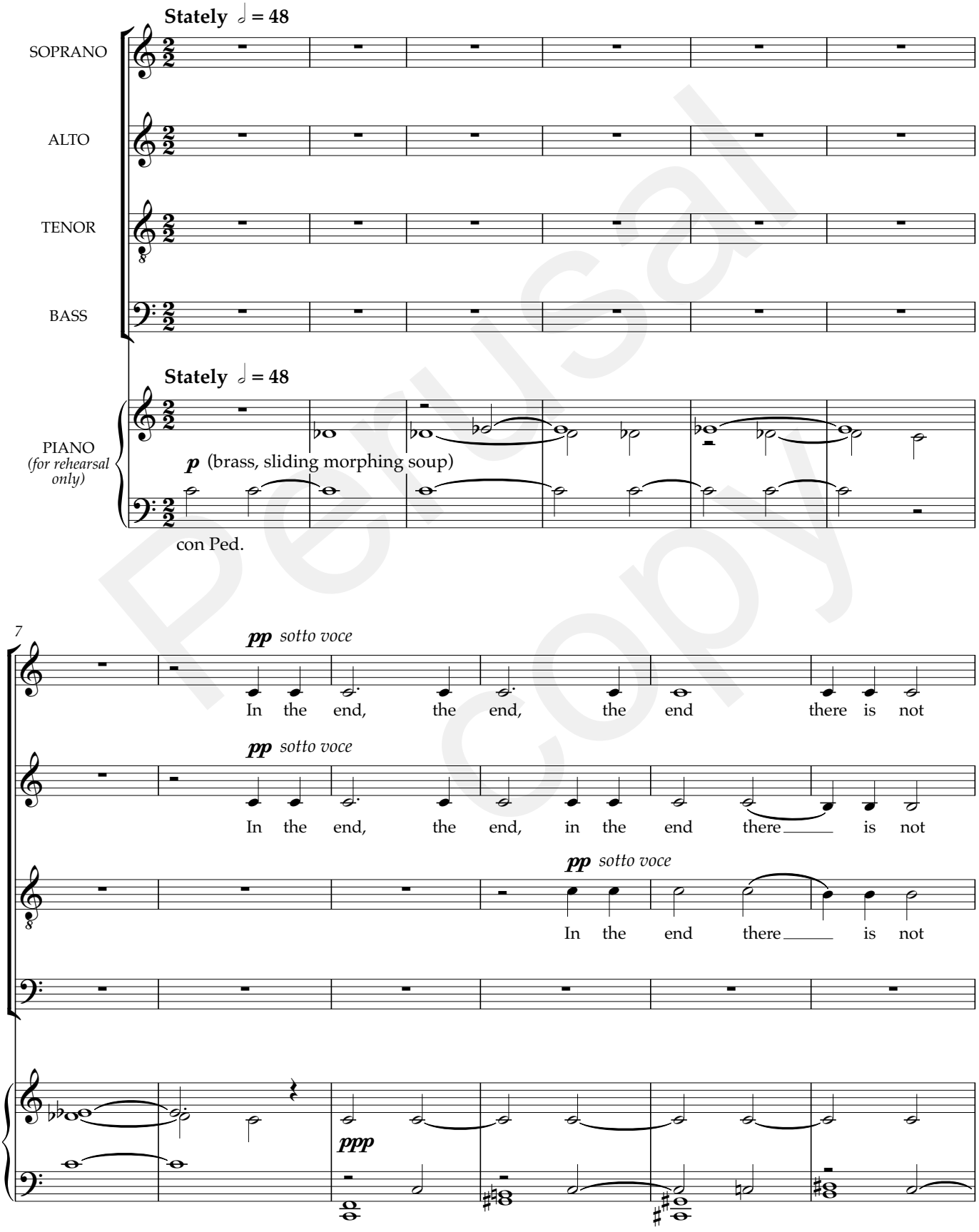
Perusal copy

Commissioned by Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Society and
Trondheim Symphony Orchestra and Opera

A Plastic Theatre
ACT I

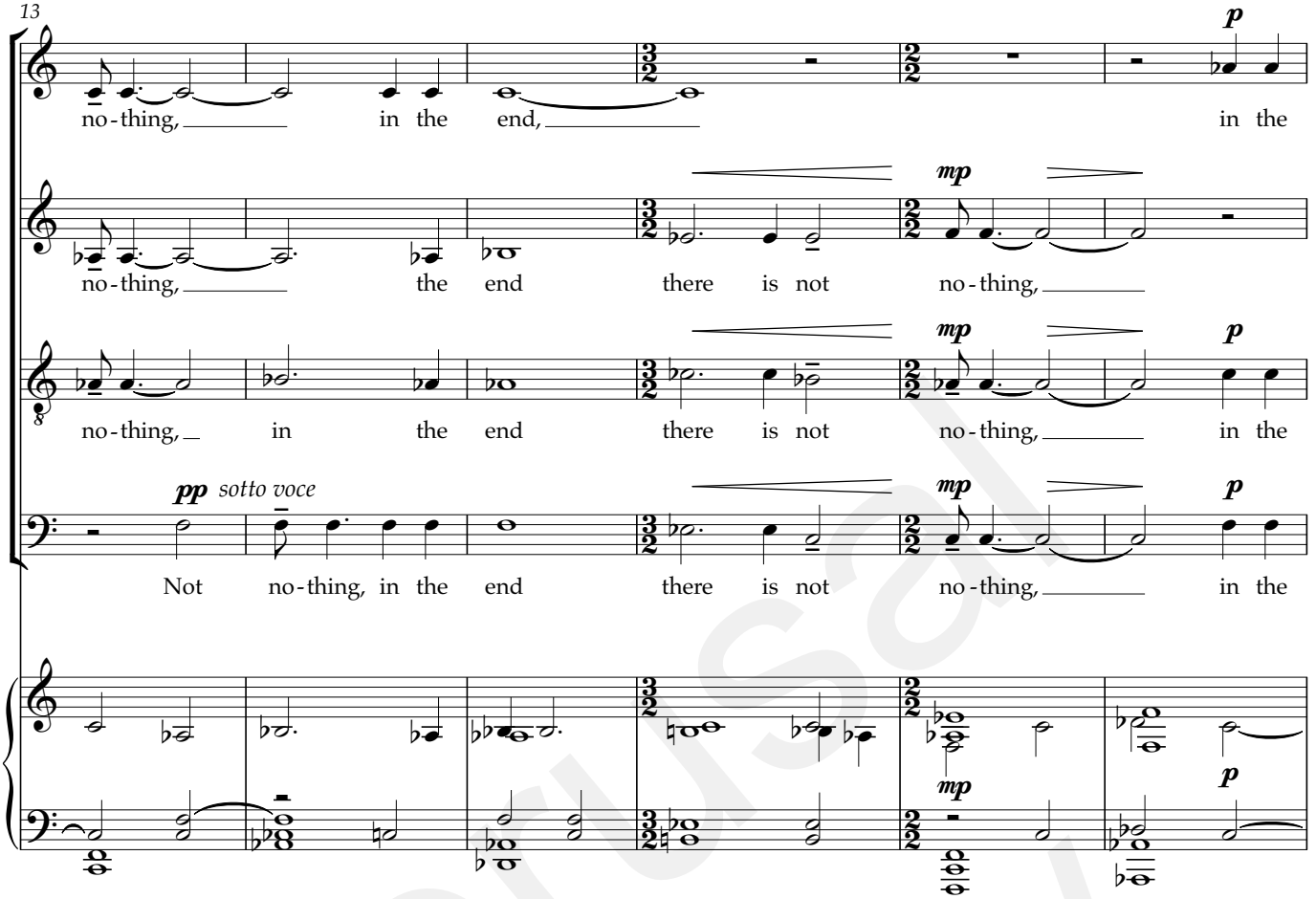
Katie Schaag

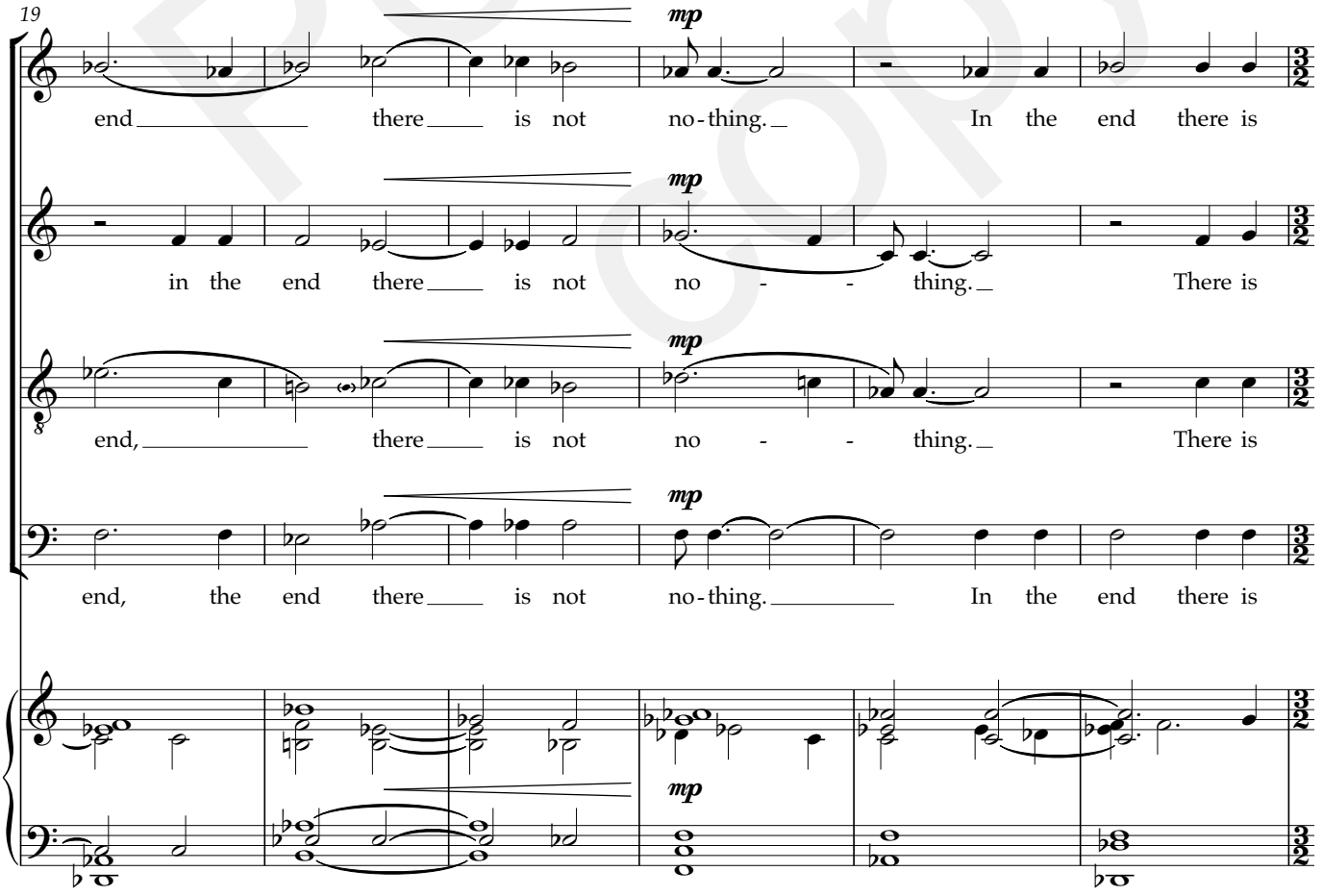
Joanna Marsh



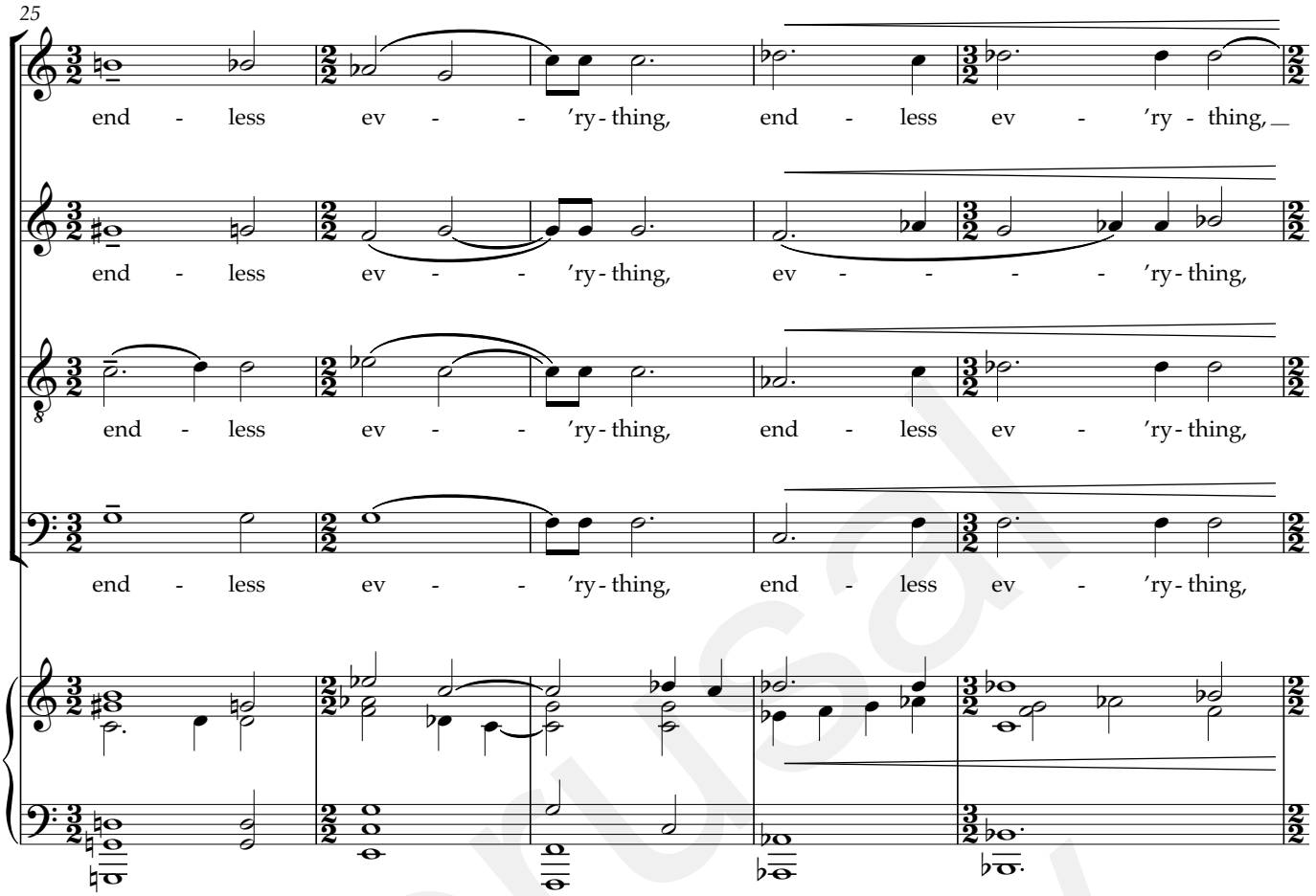
Perusal copy

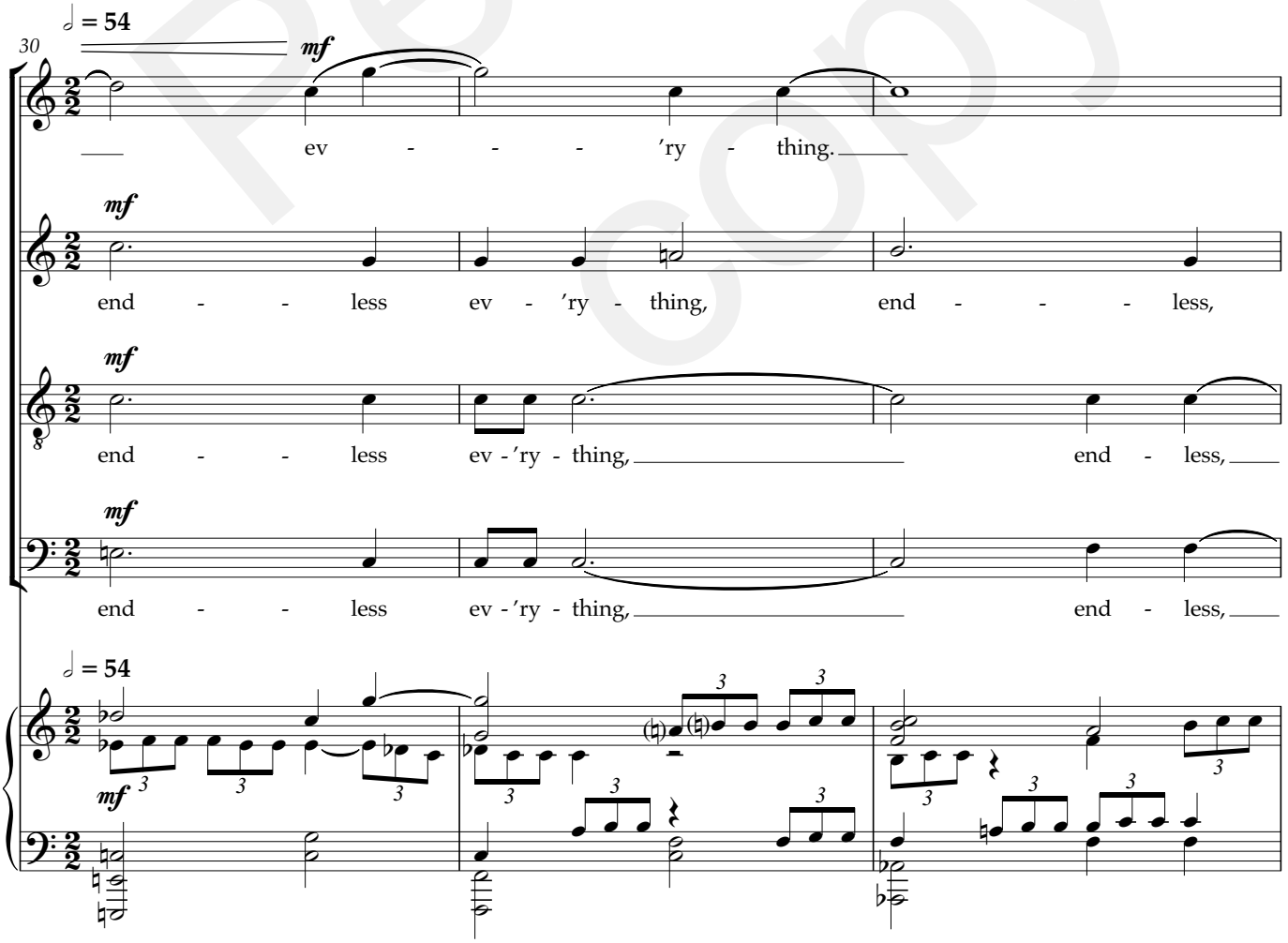
© 2024 Joanna Marsh



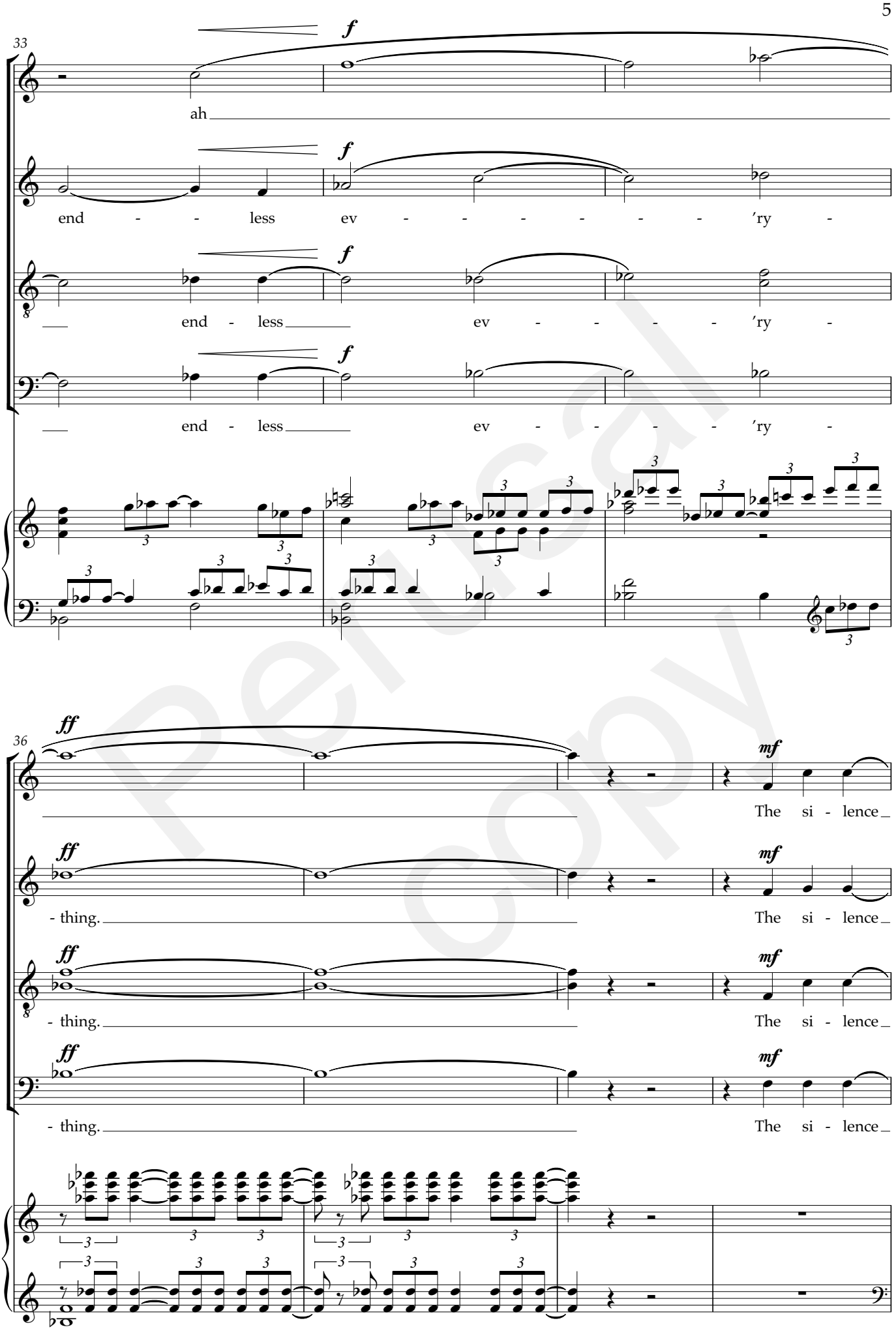


Perusal copy

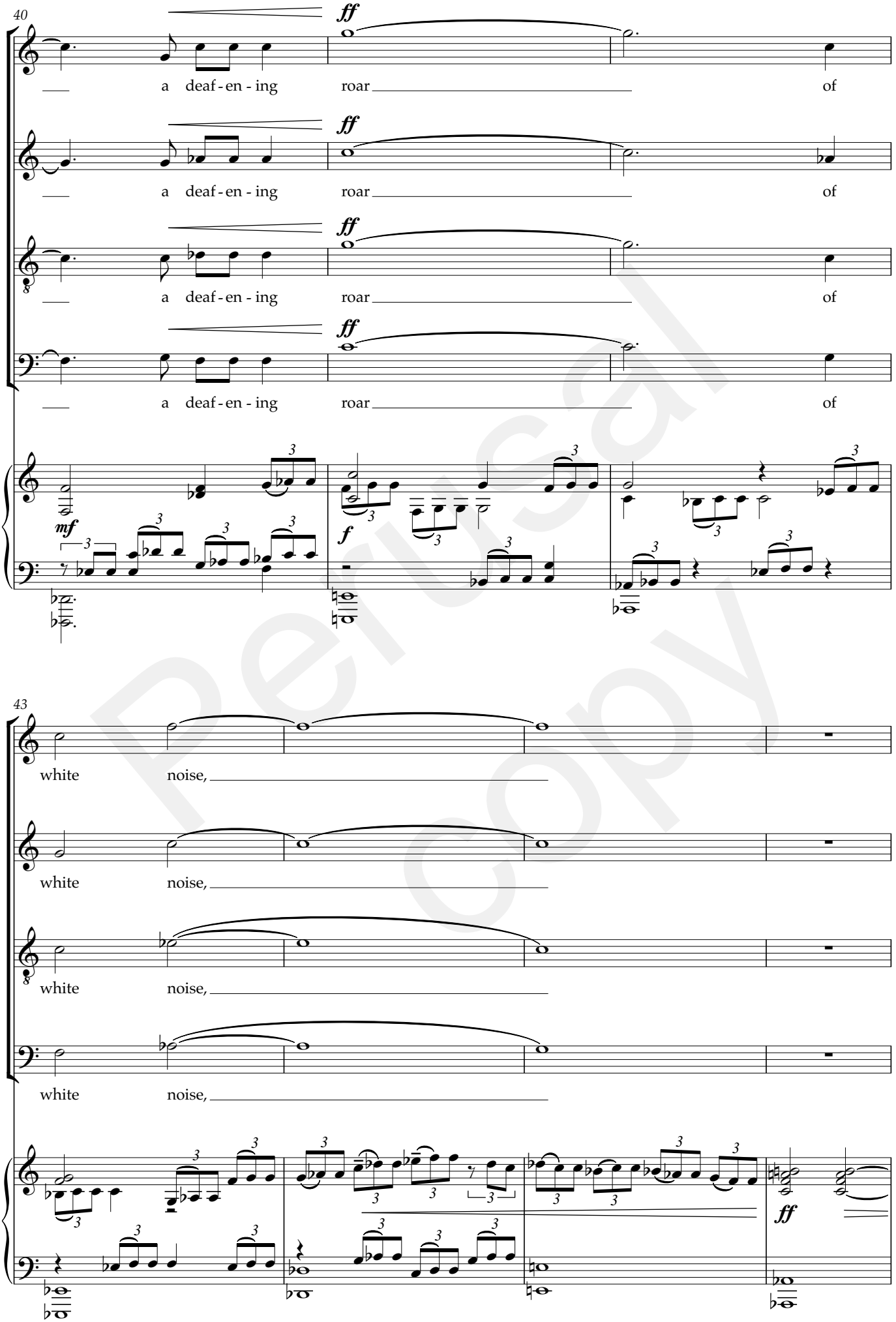




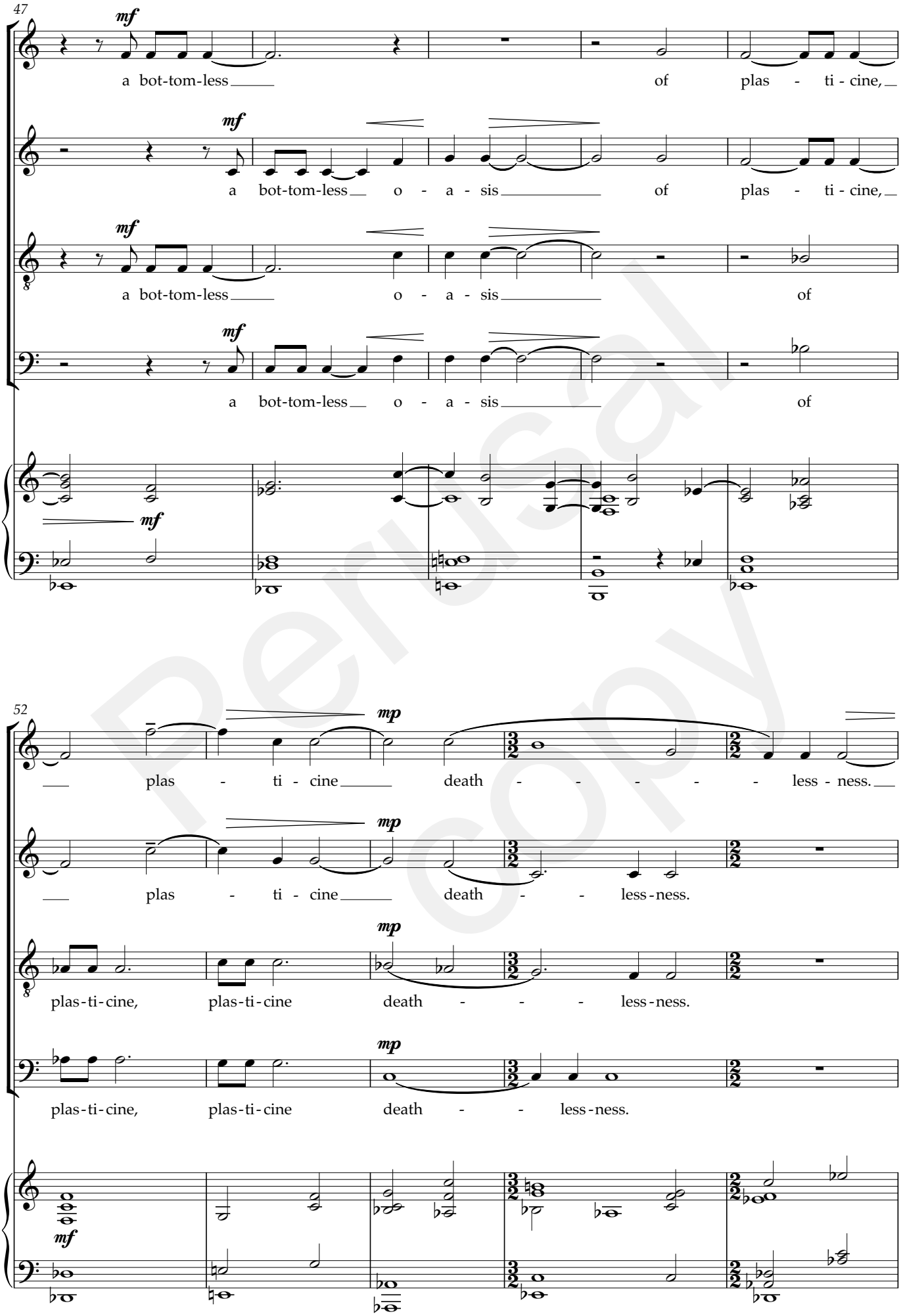
Perusal copy



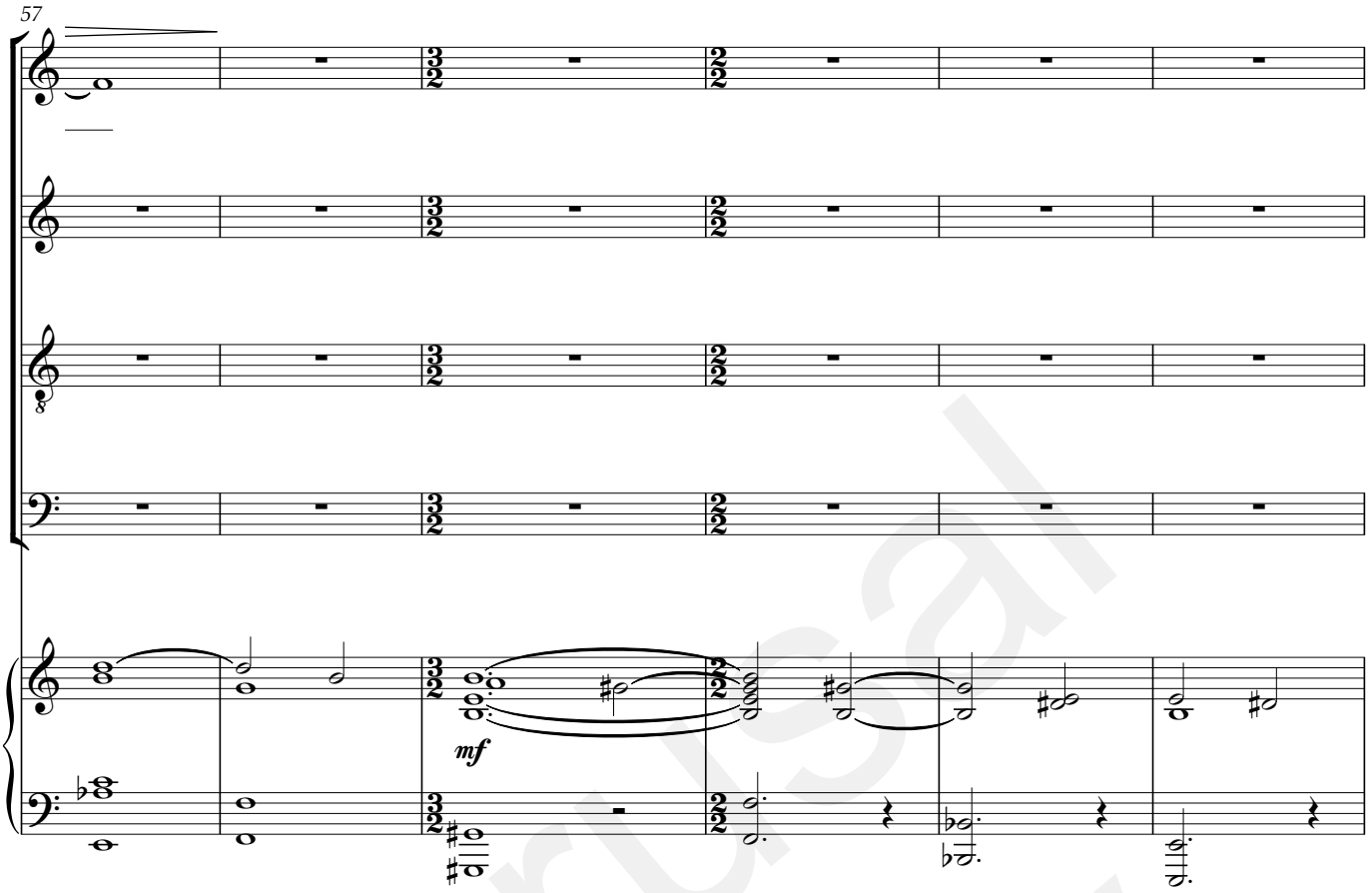
Perusal copy

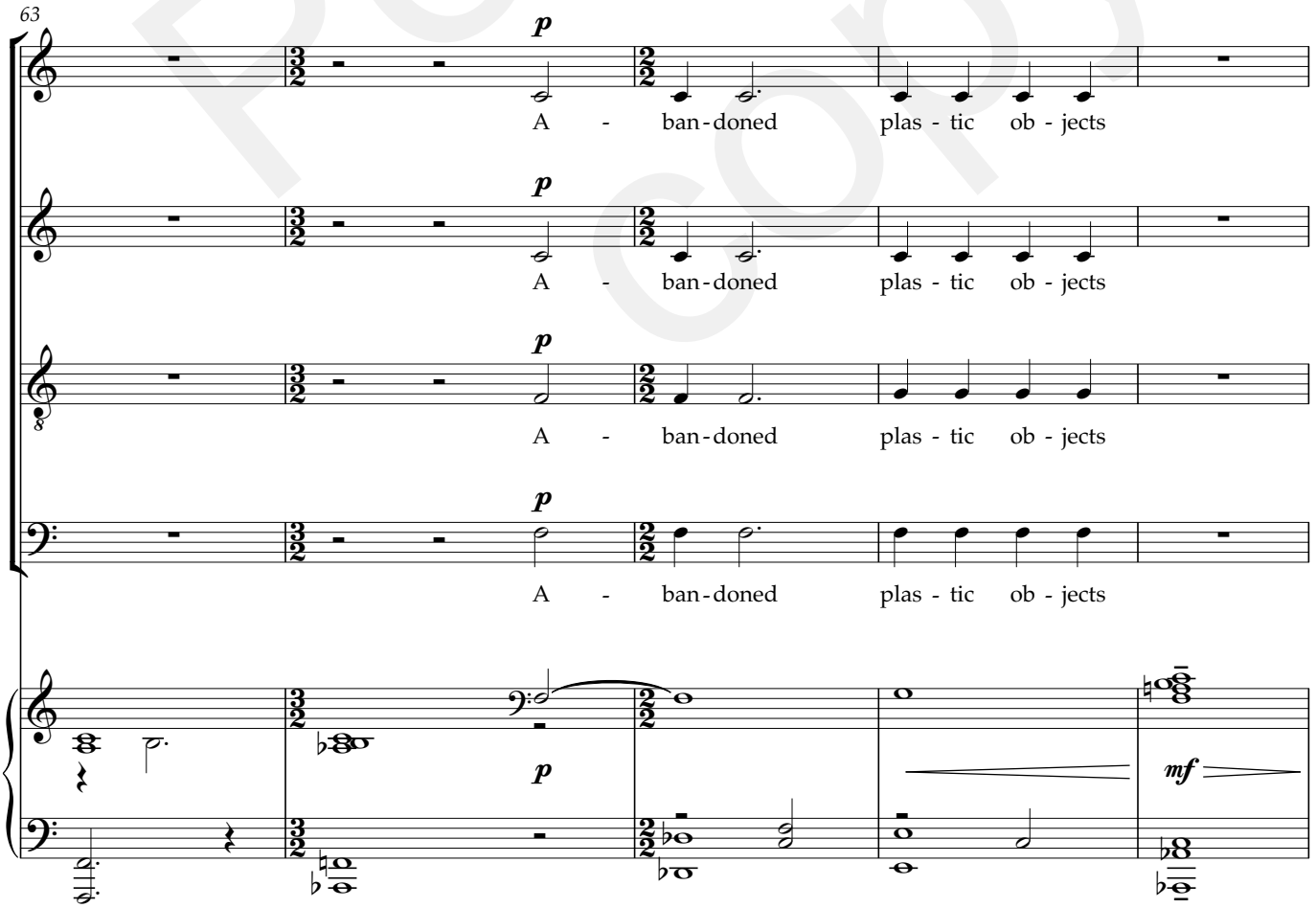


Perusal copy

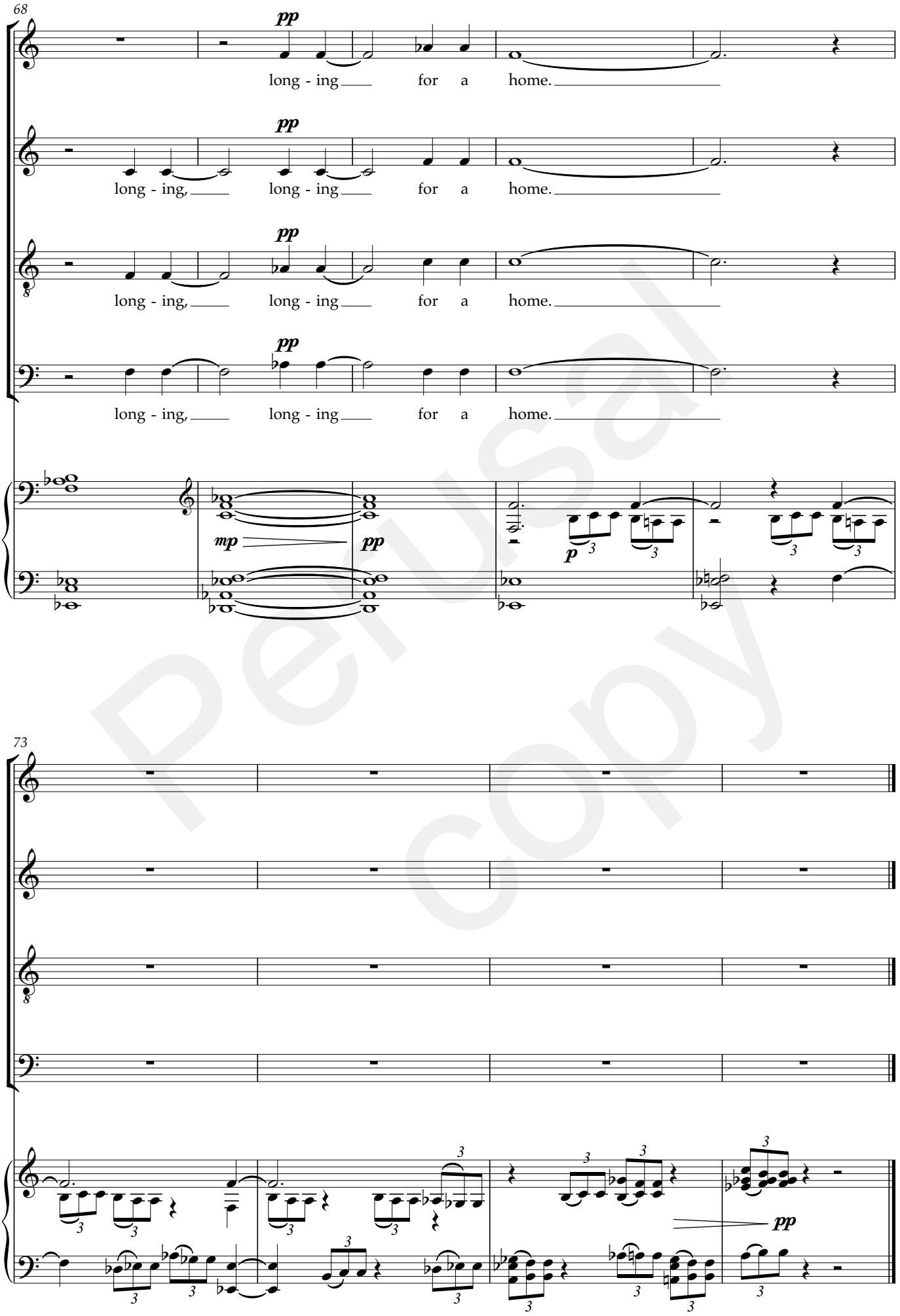


Perusal copy



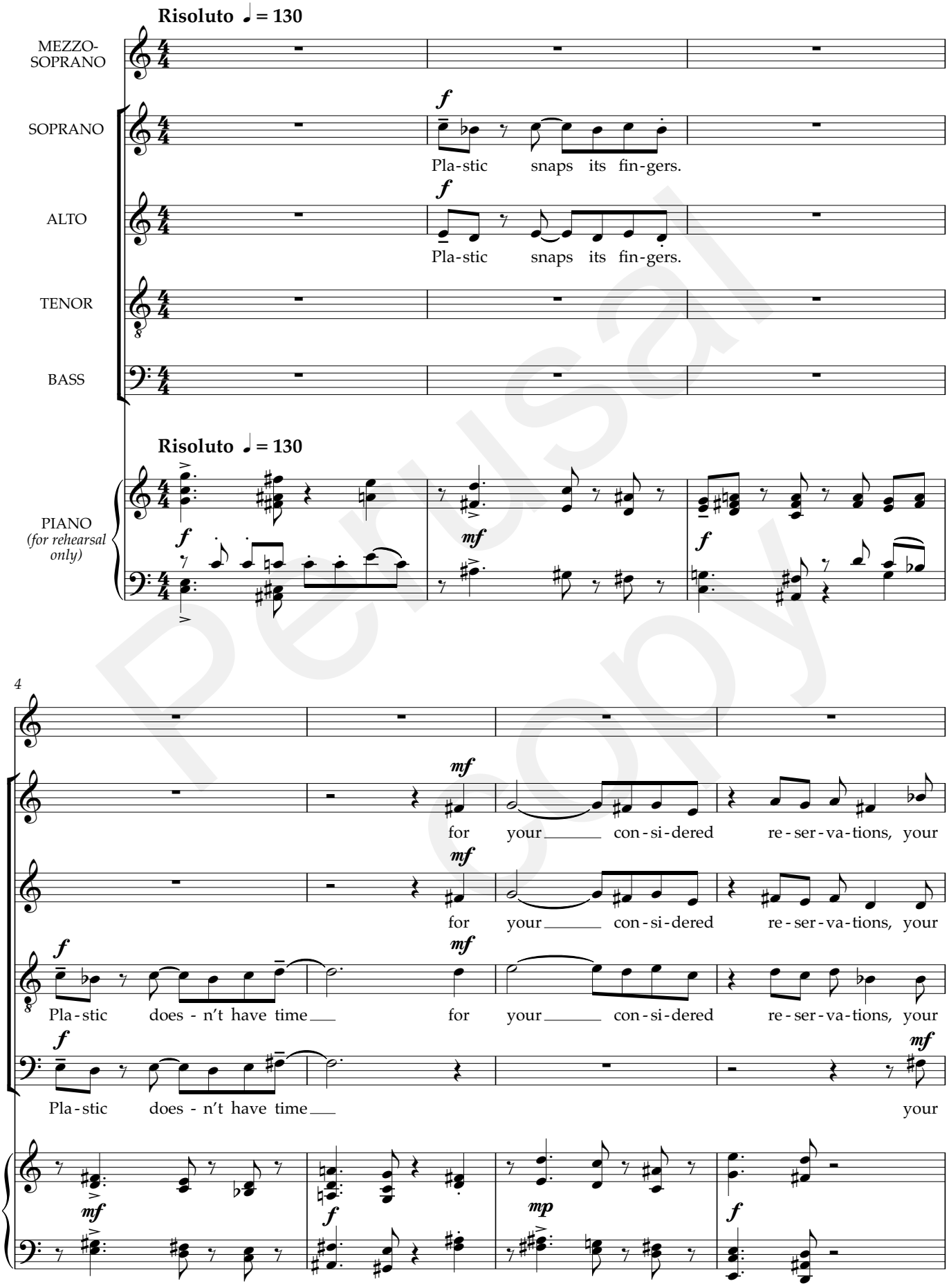


Perusal copy



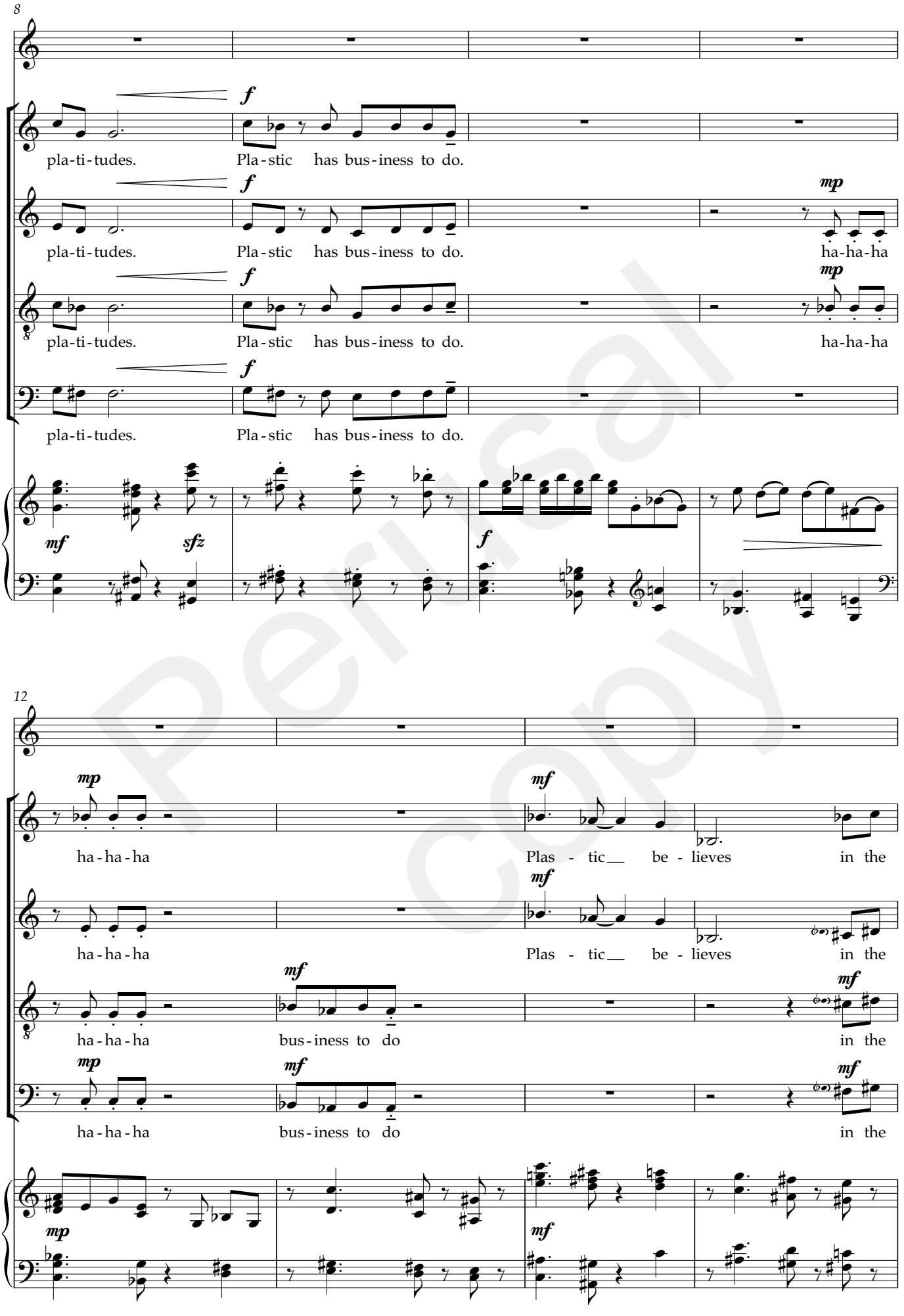
Perusal copy

ACT II

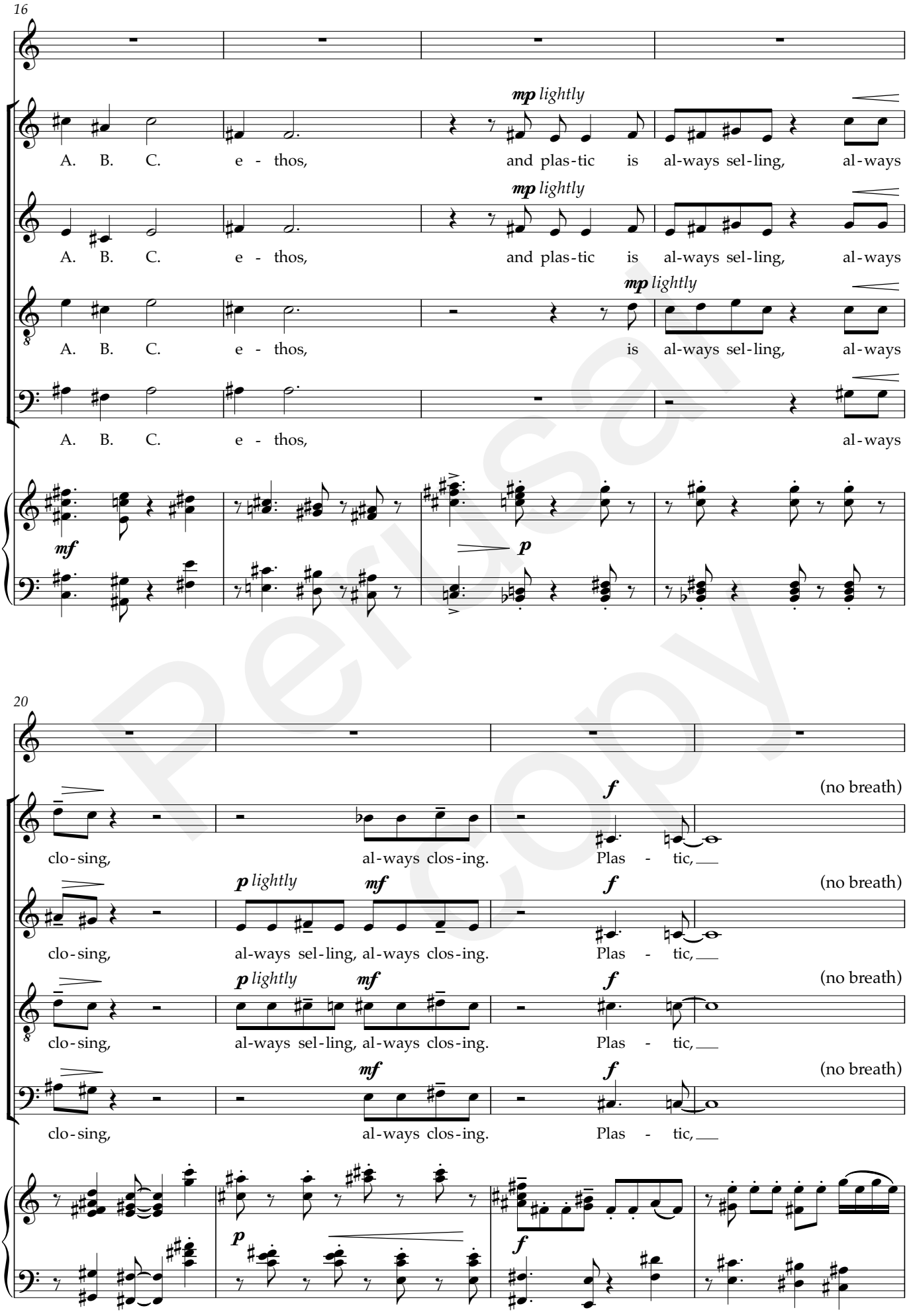


Perusal copy

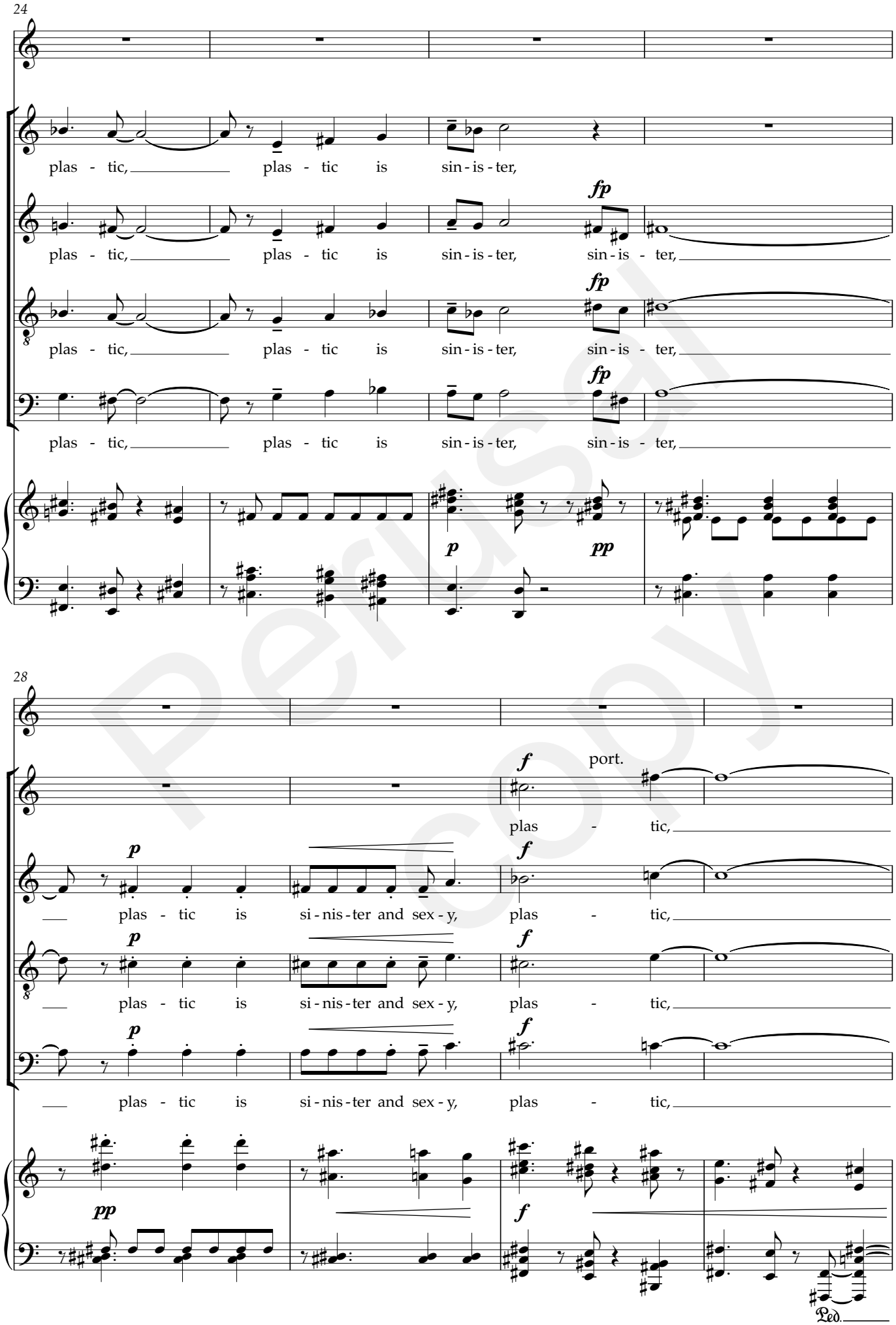
© 2024 Joanna Marsh



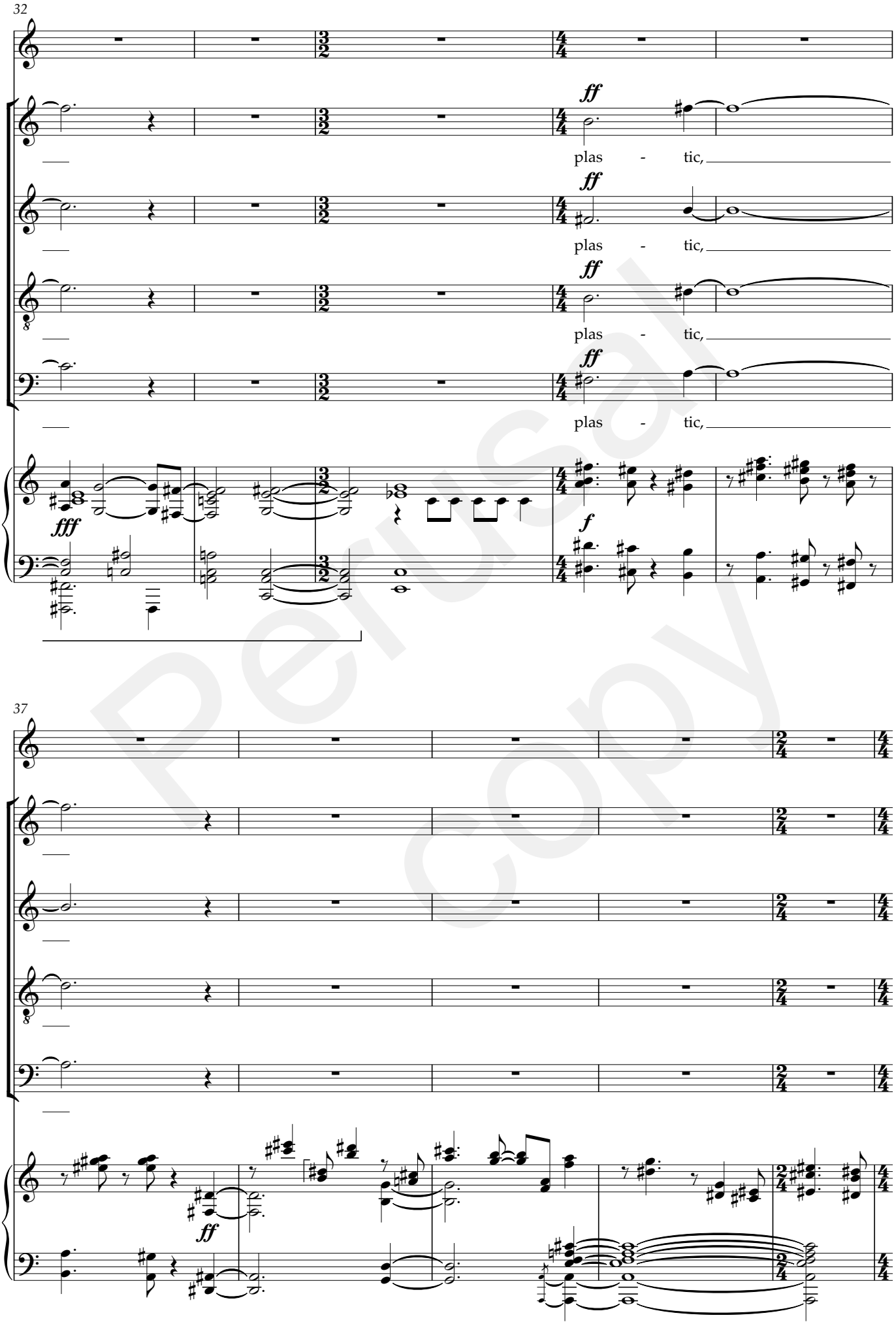
Perusal copy



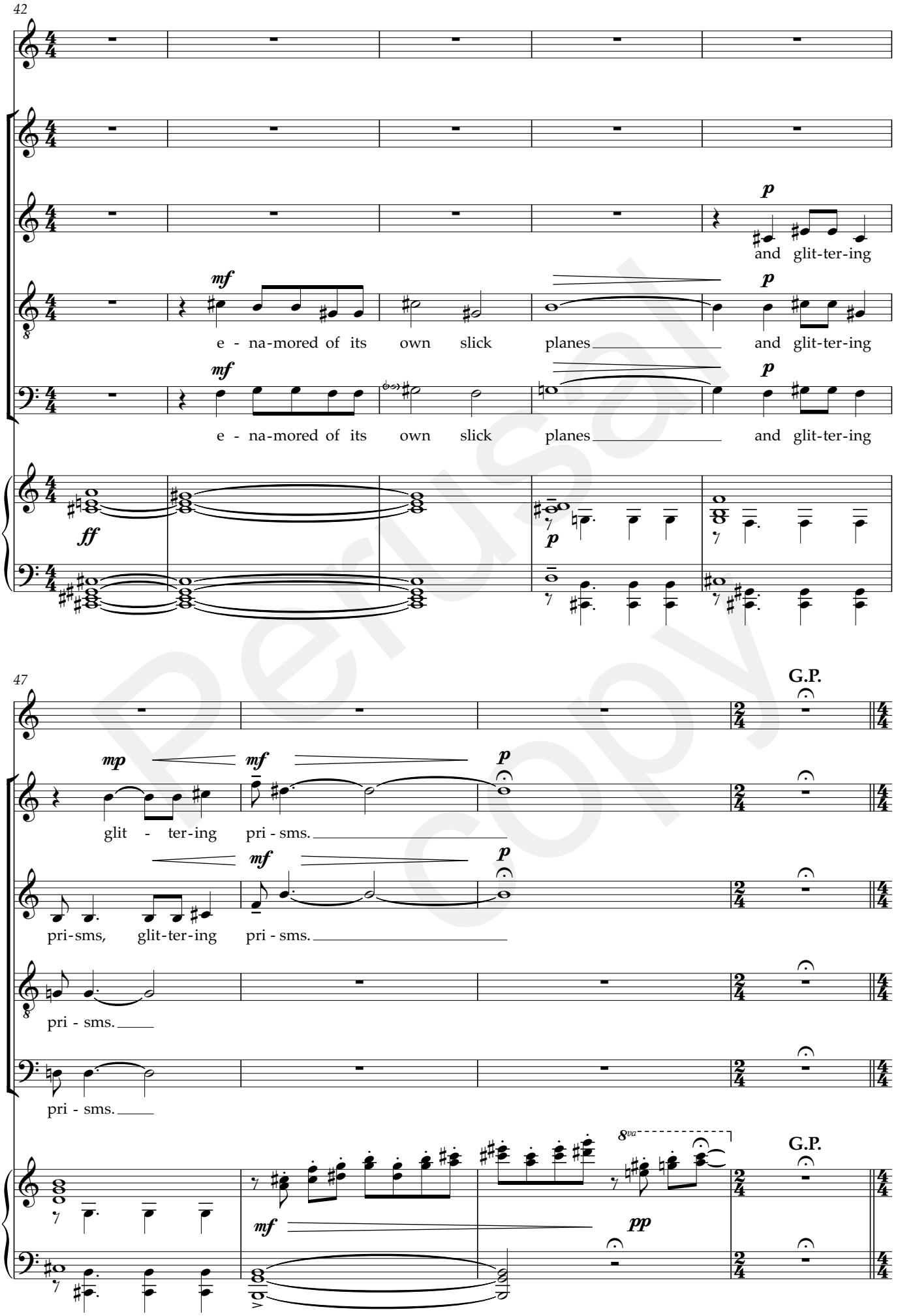
Perusal copy



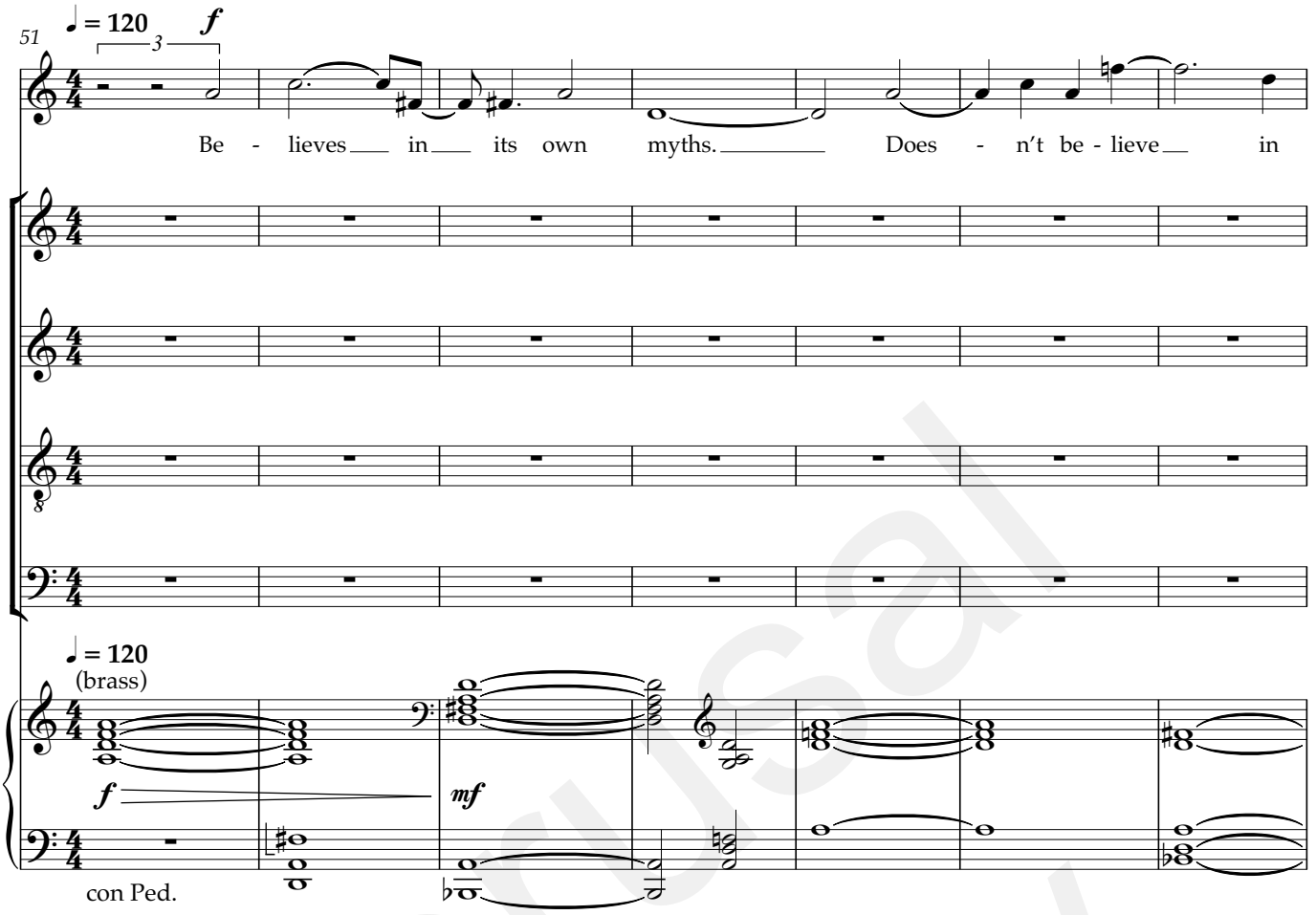
Perusal copy

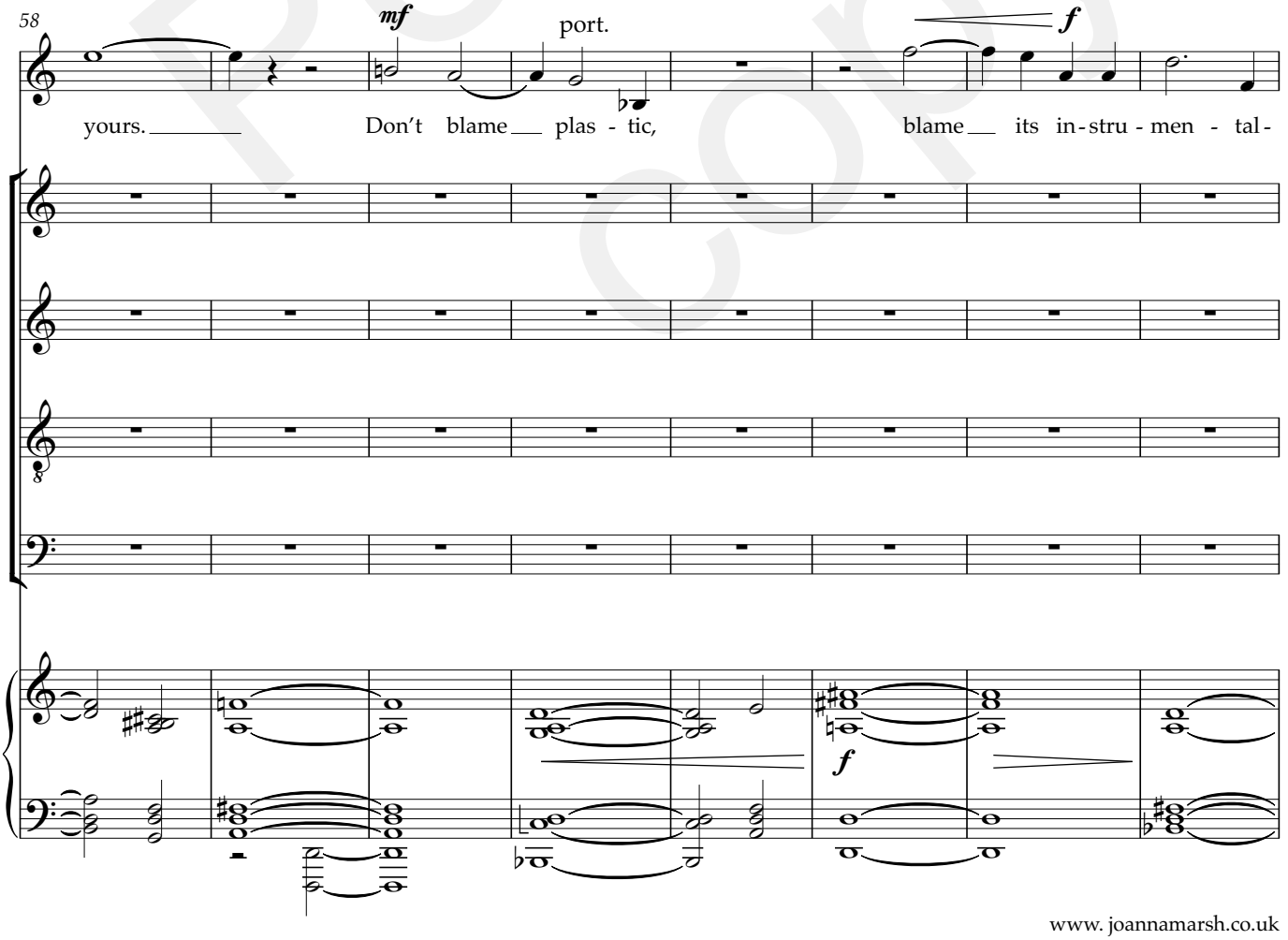


Perusal copy

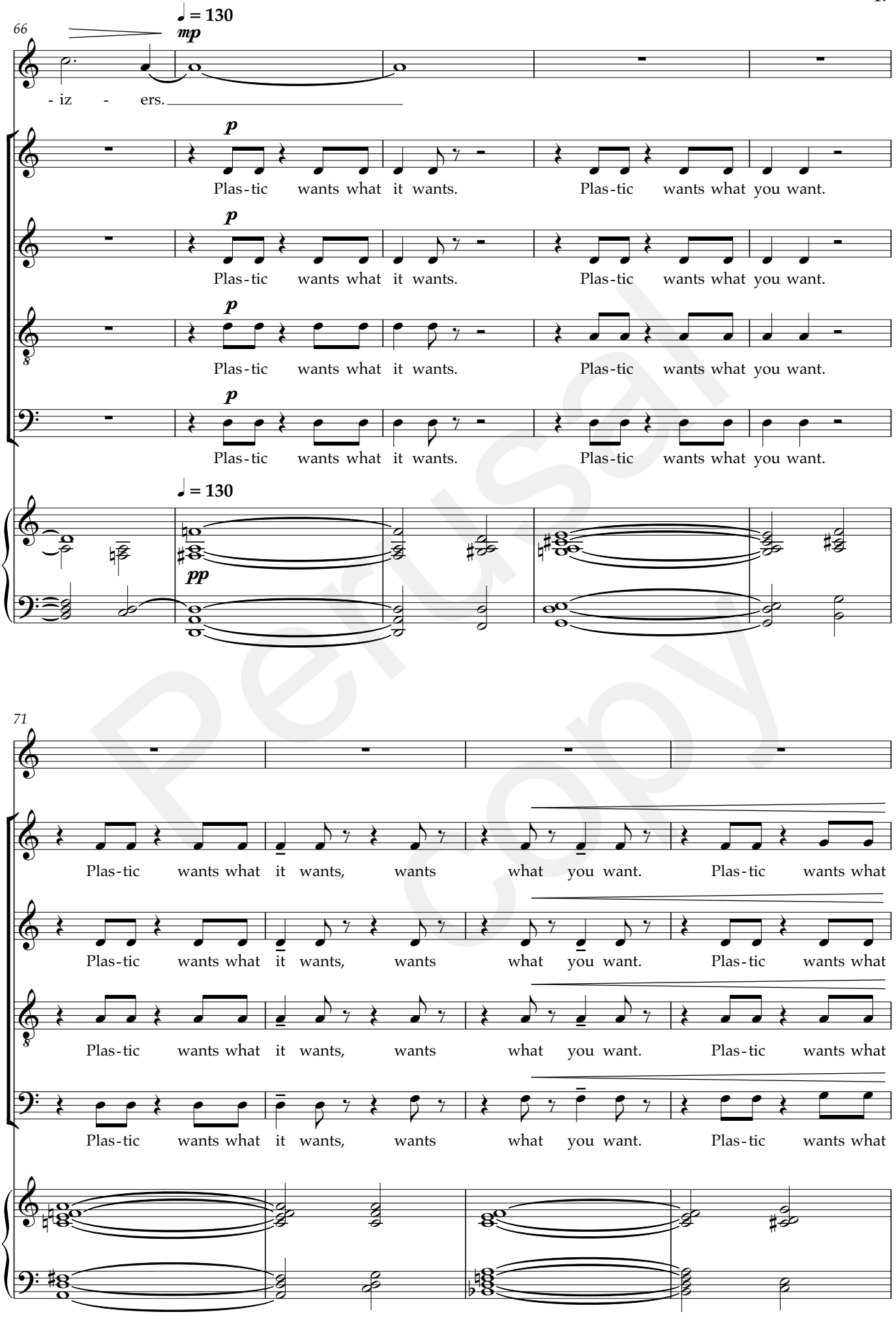


Perusal copy

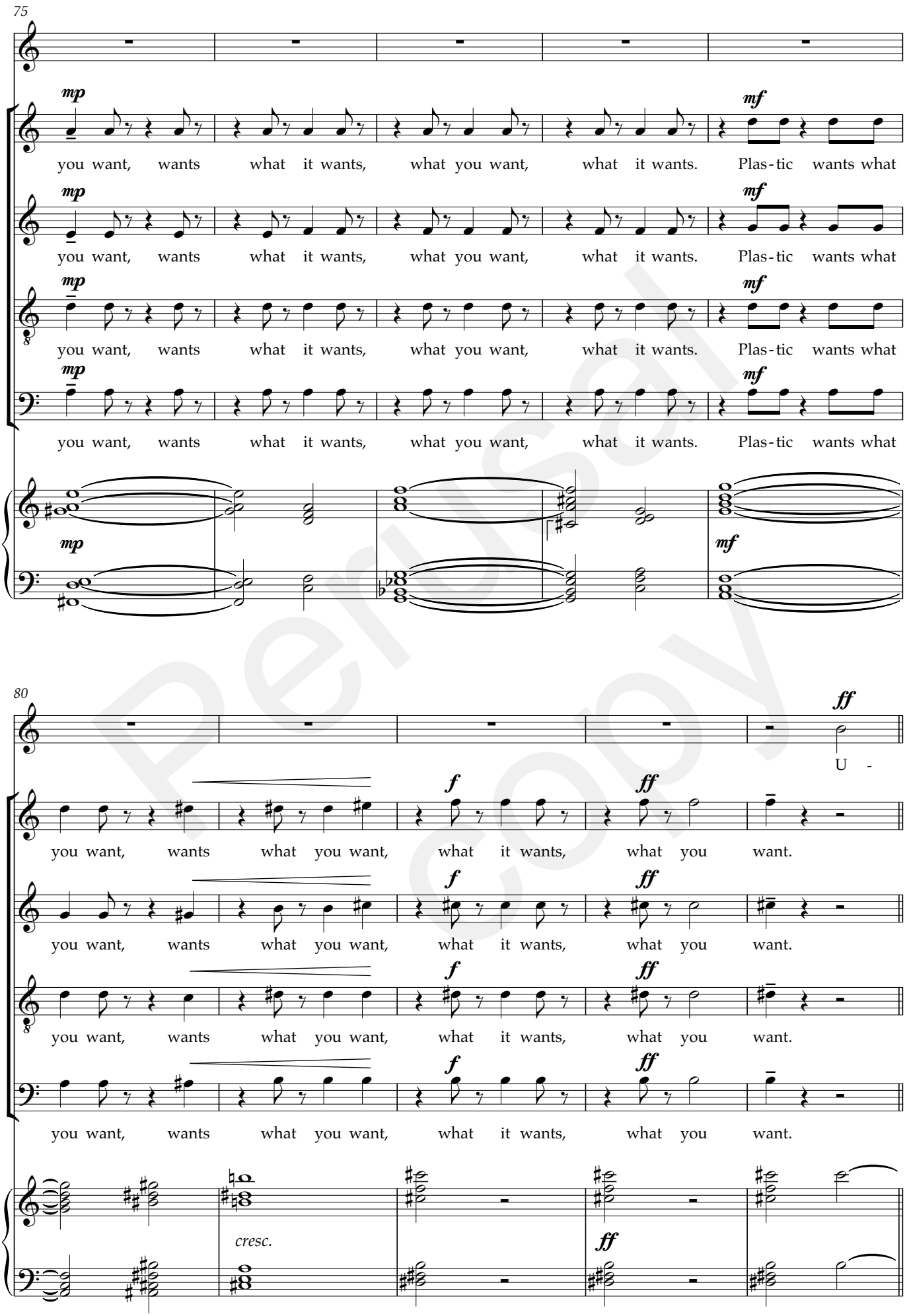




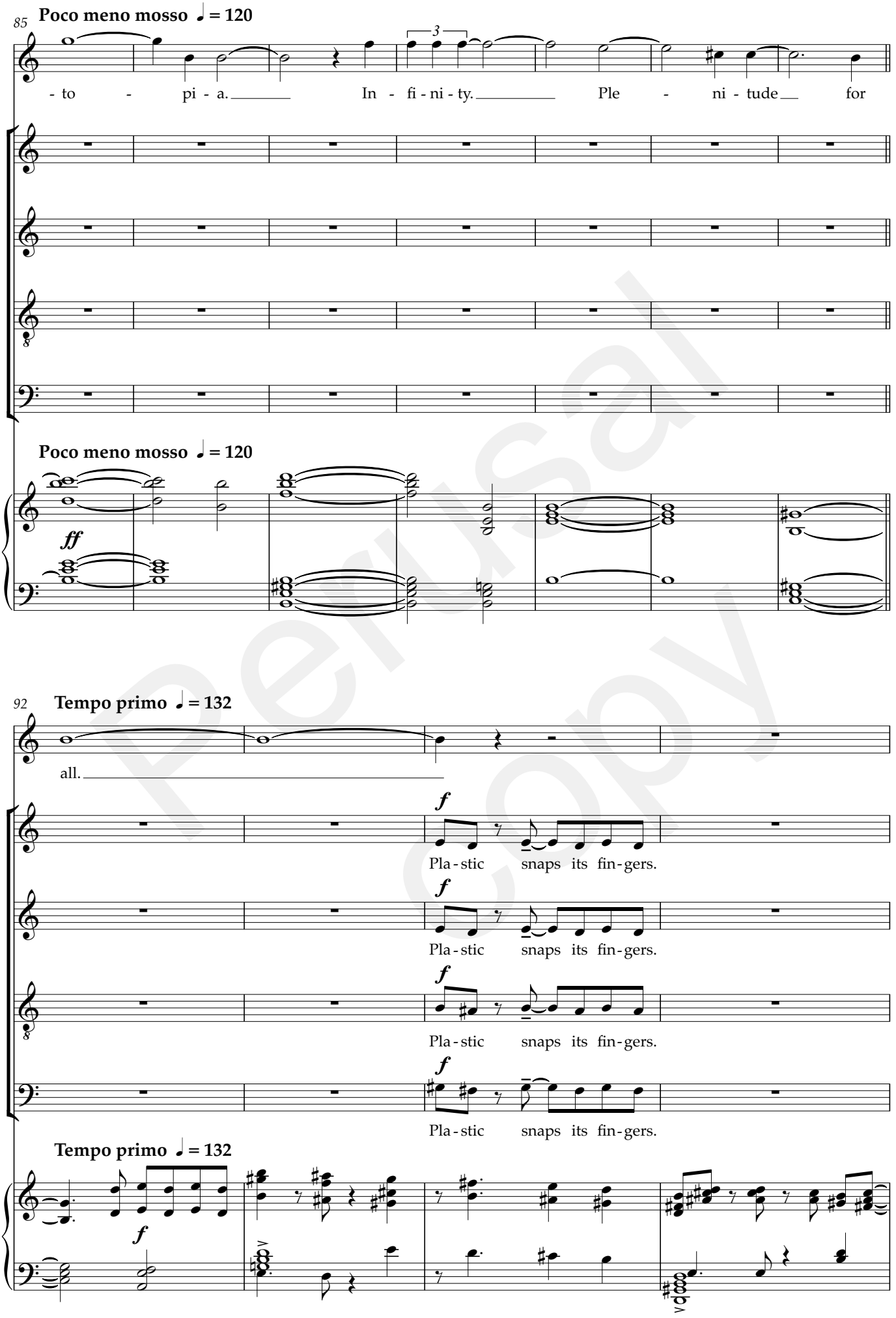
Perusal copy



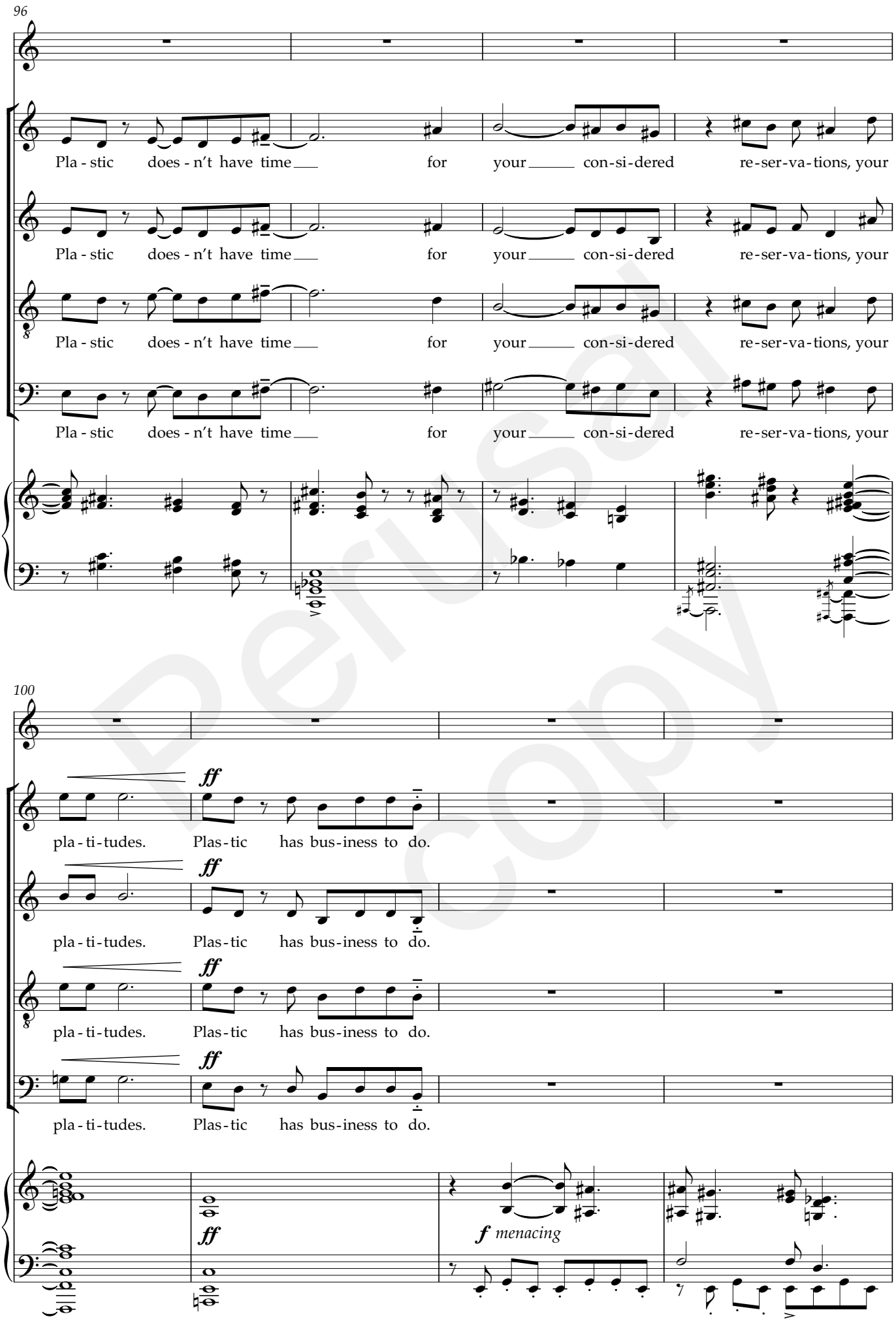
Perusal copy



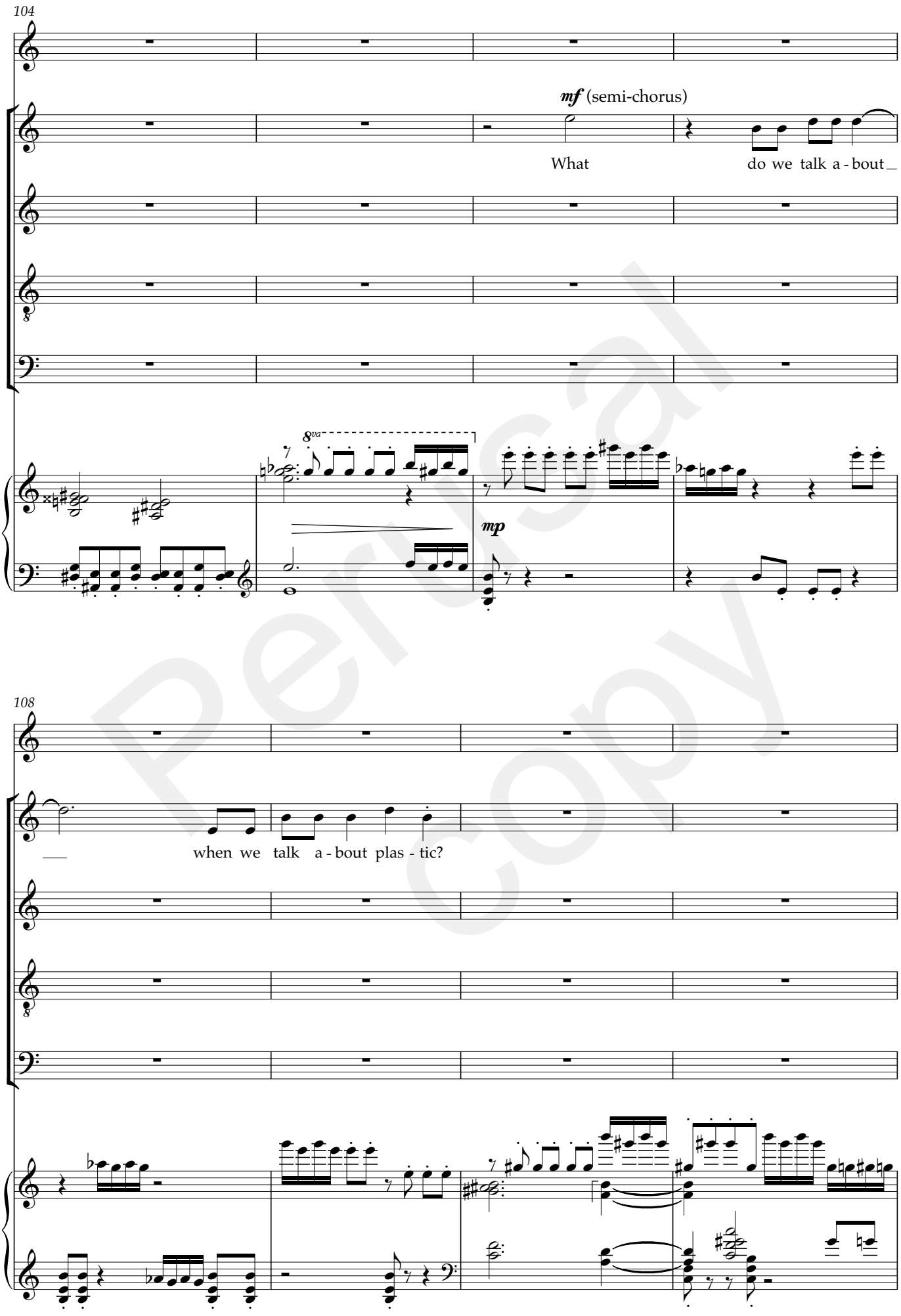
Perusal copy



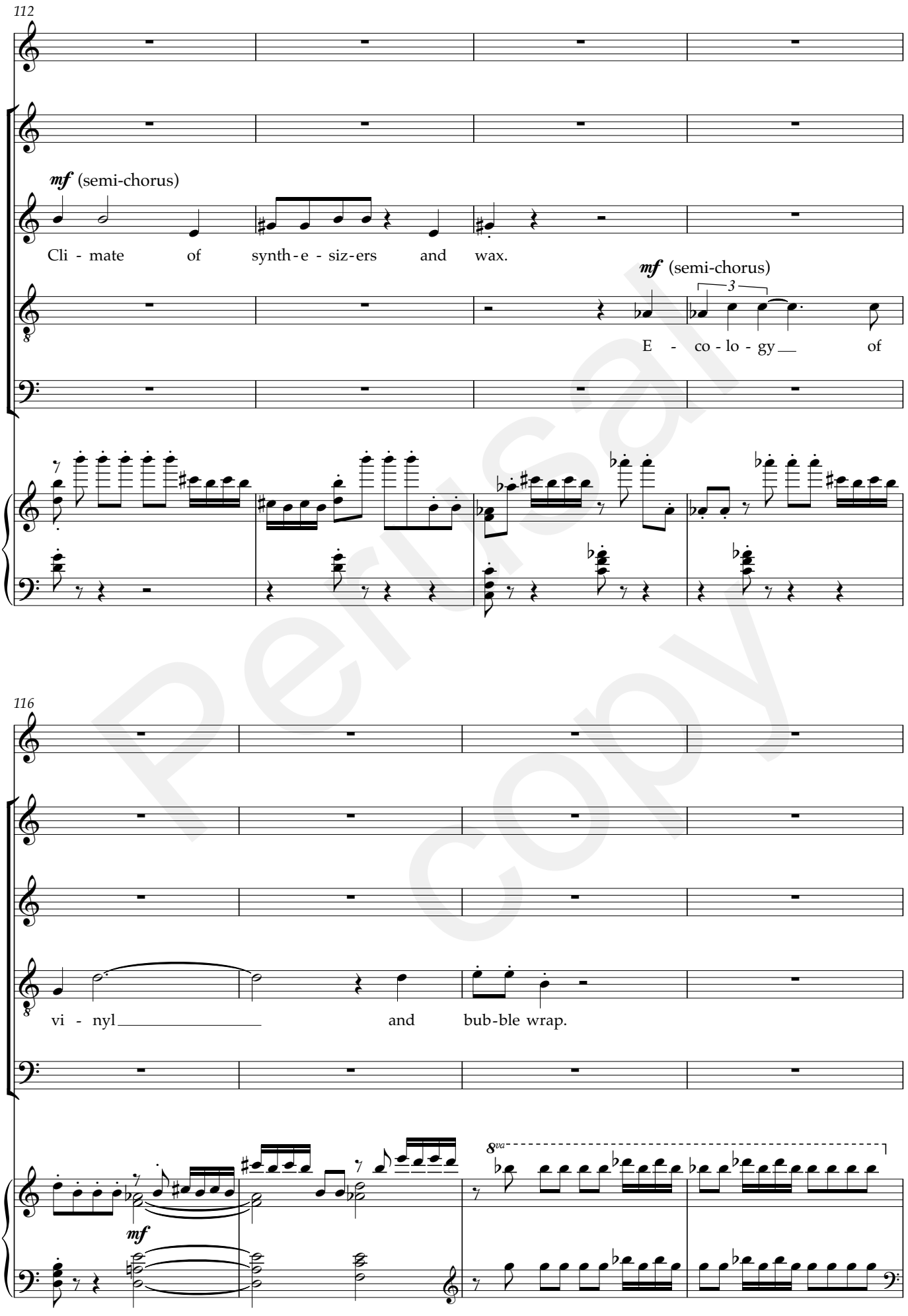
Perusal copy



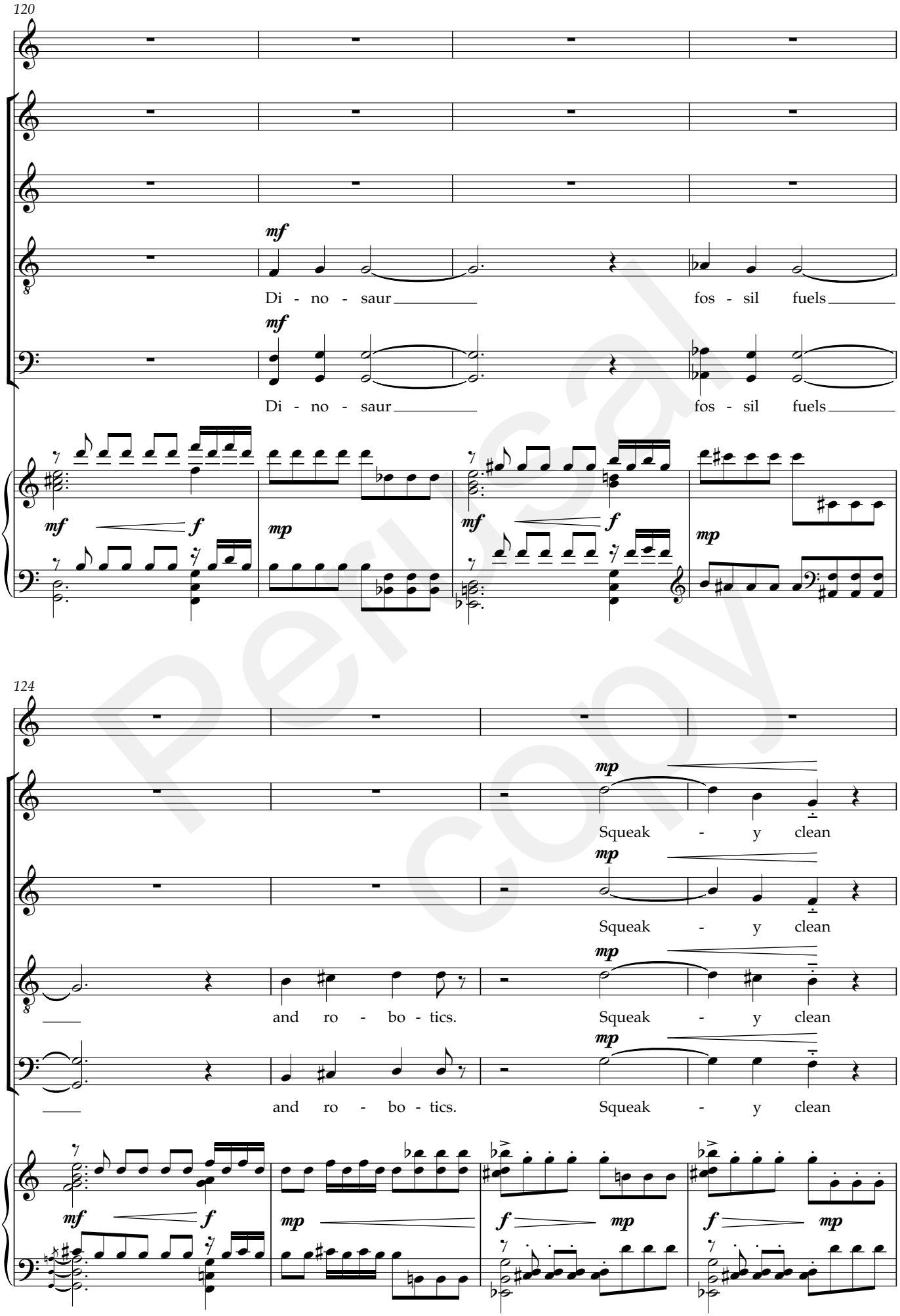
Perusal copy



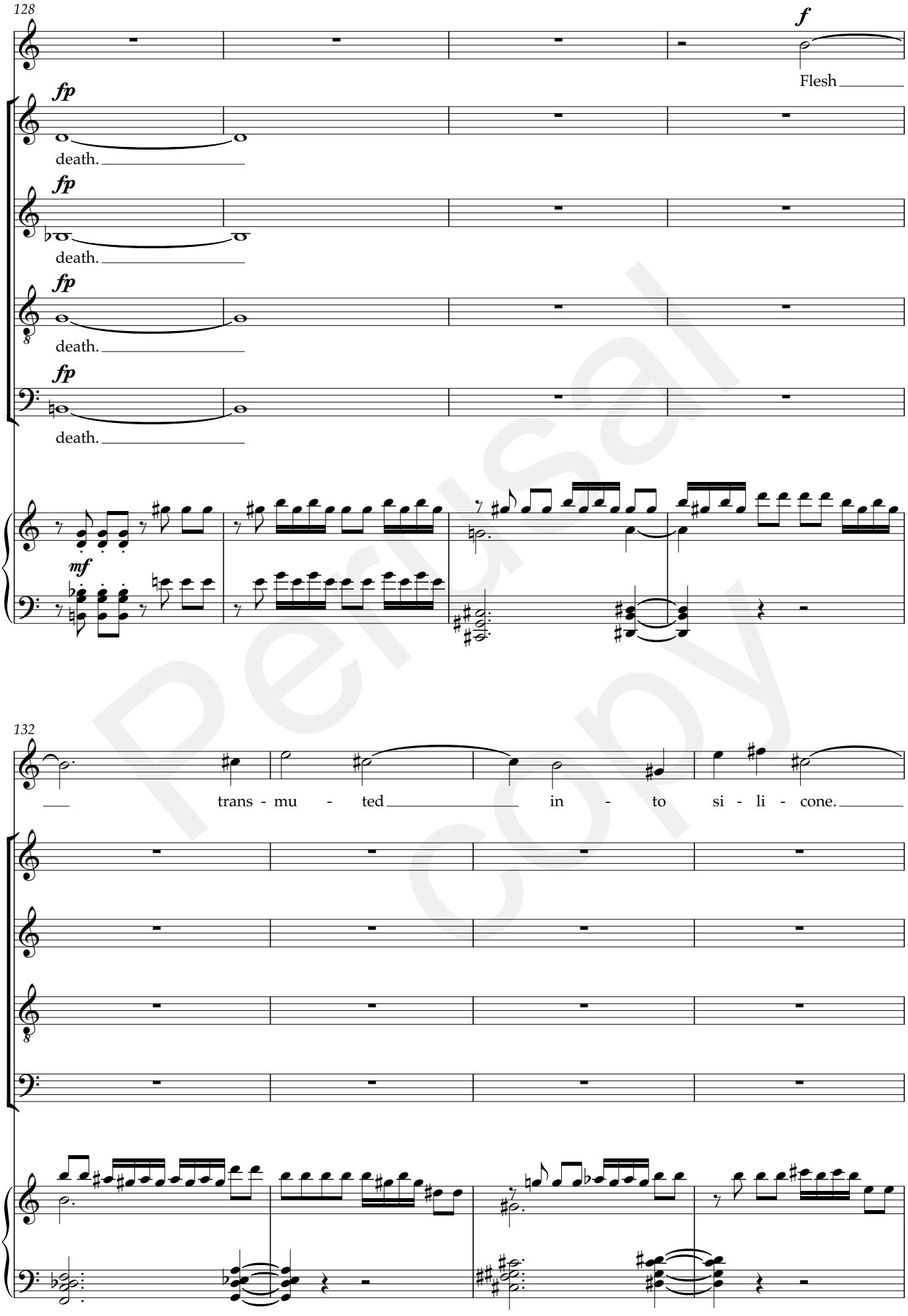
Perusal copy



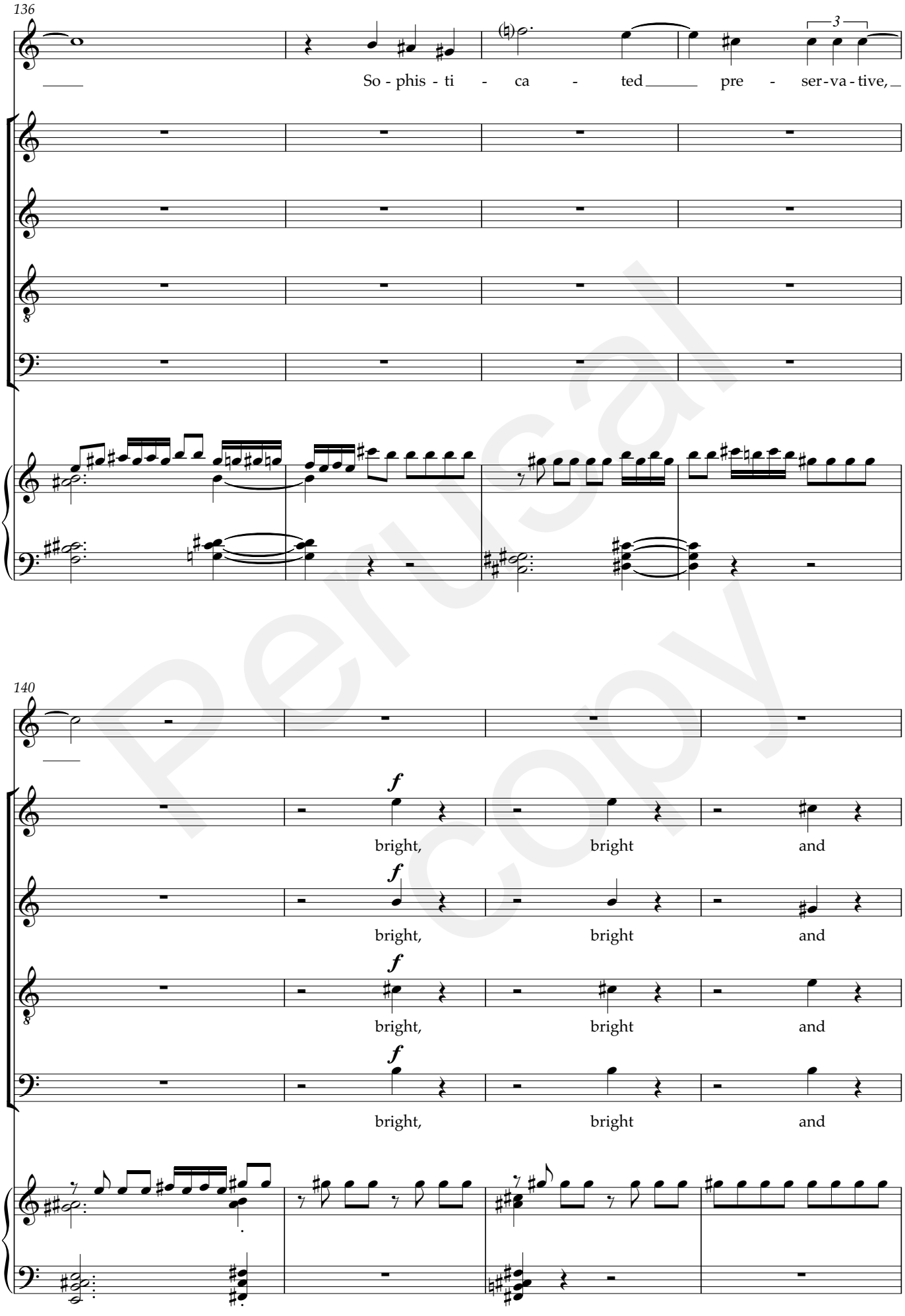
Perusal copy



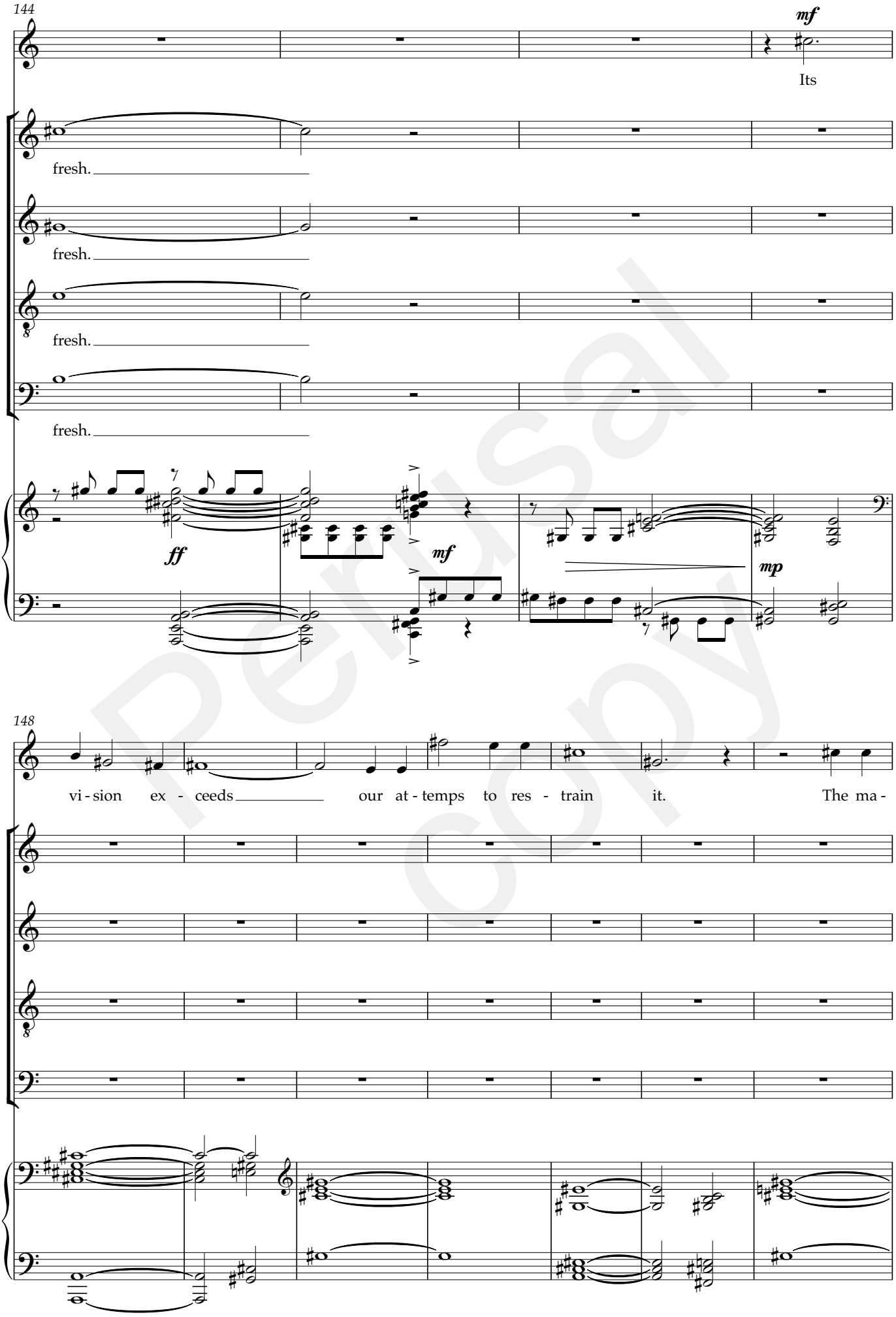
Perusal copy



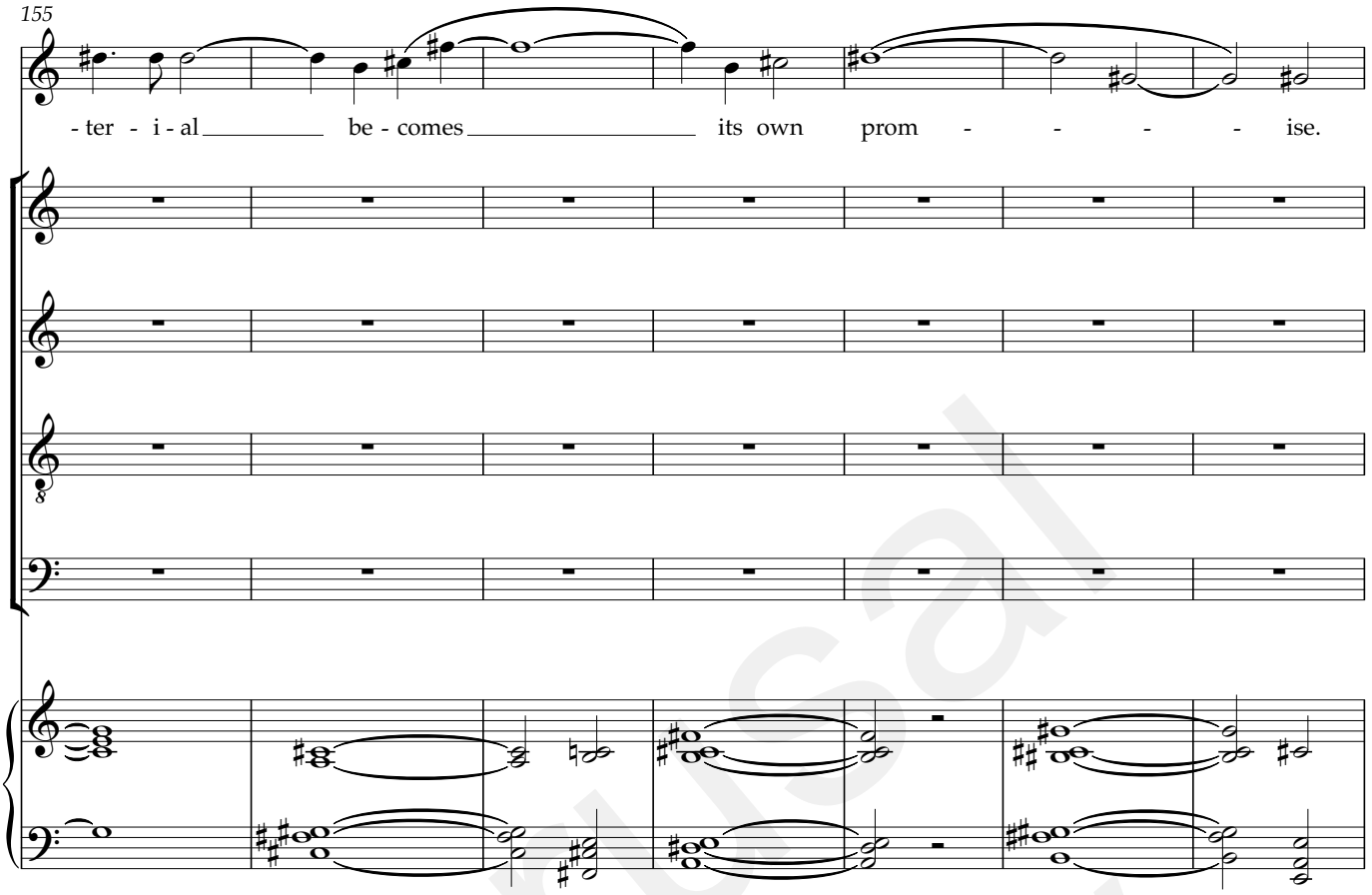
Perusal copy

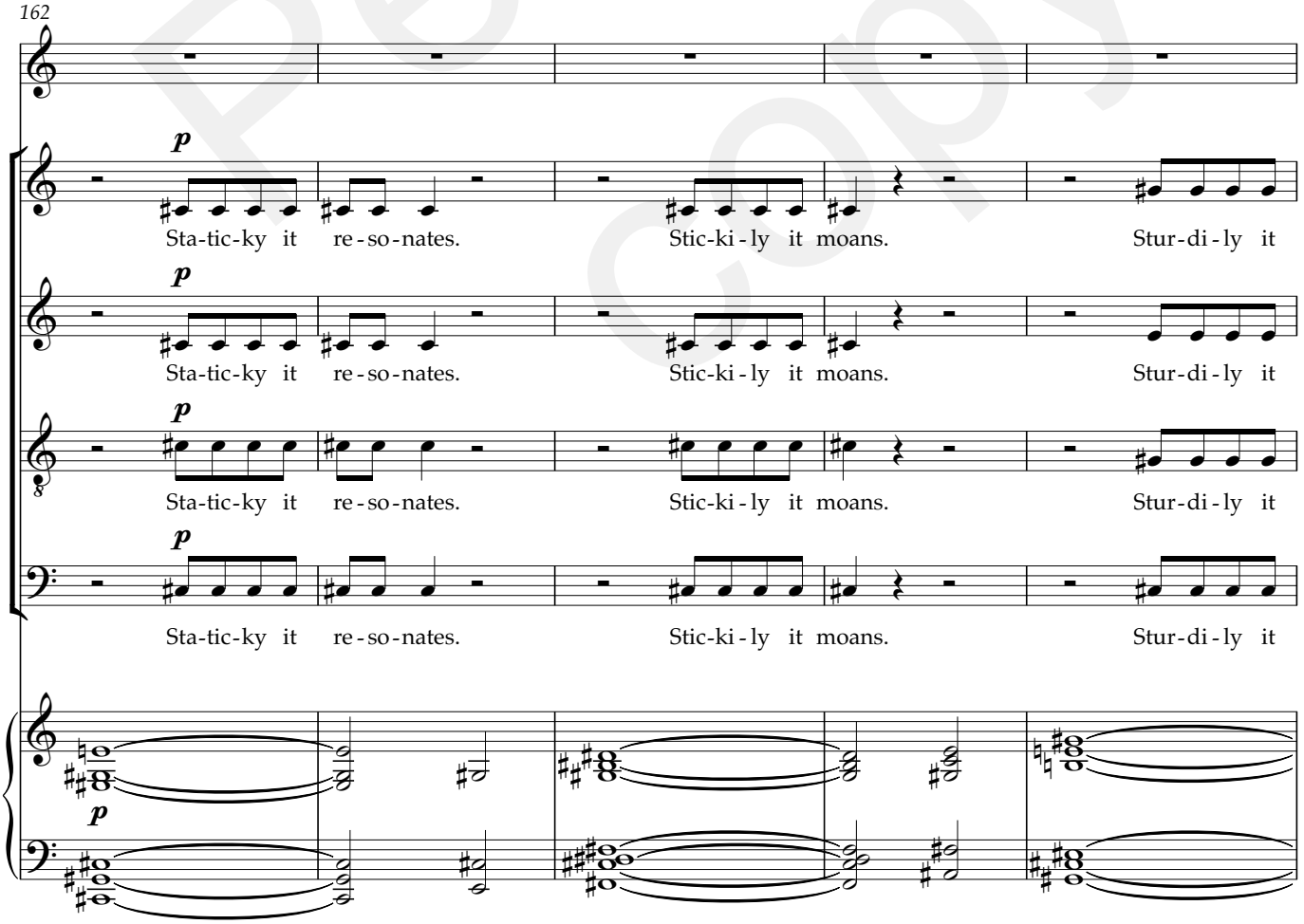


Perusal copy

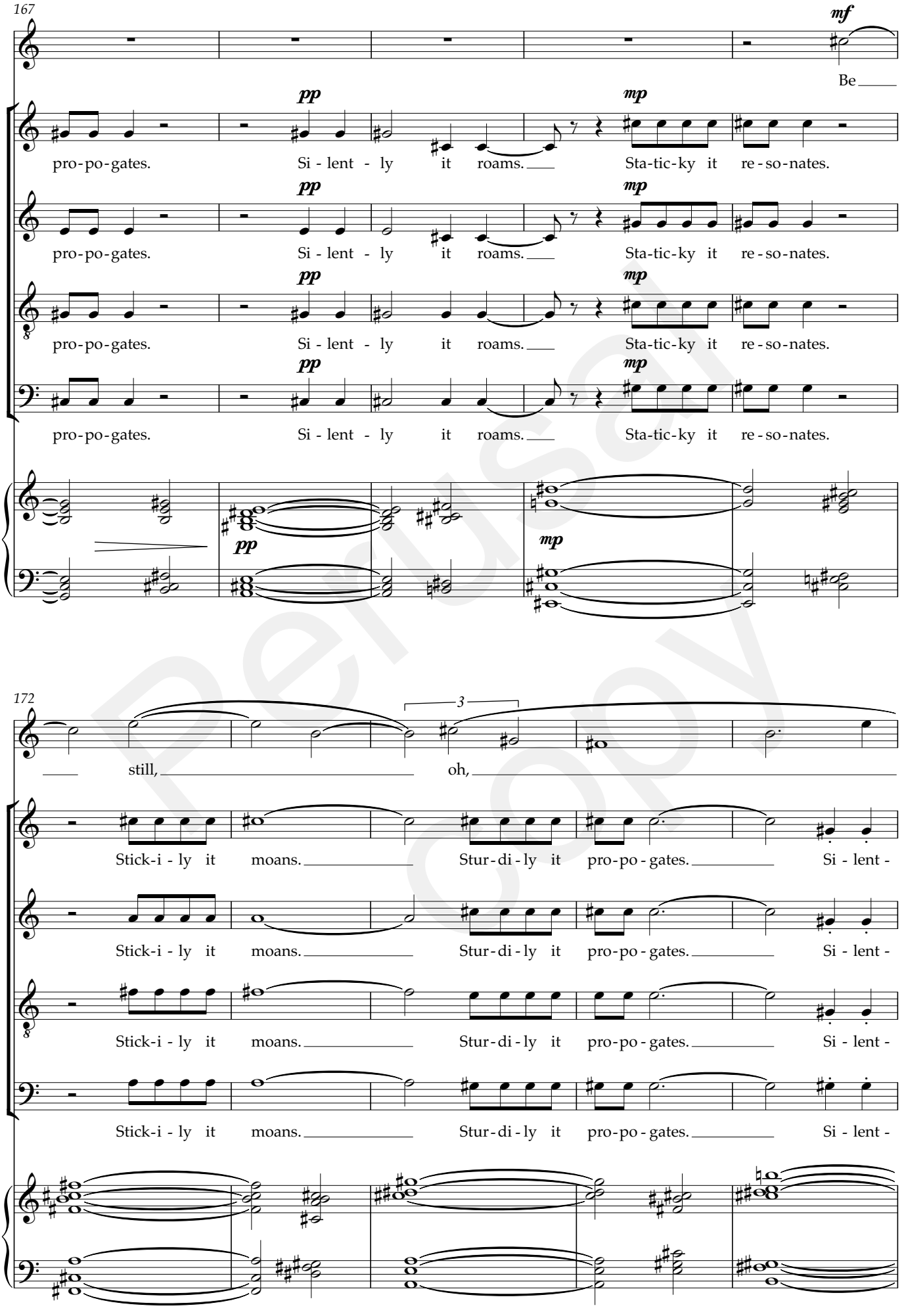


Perusal copy

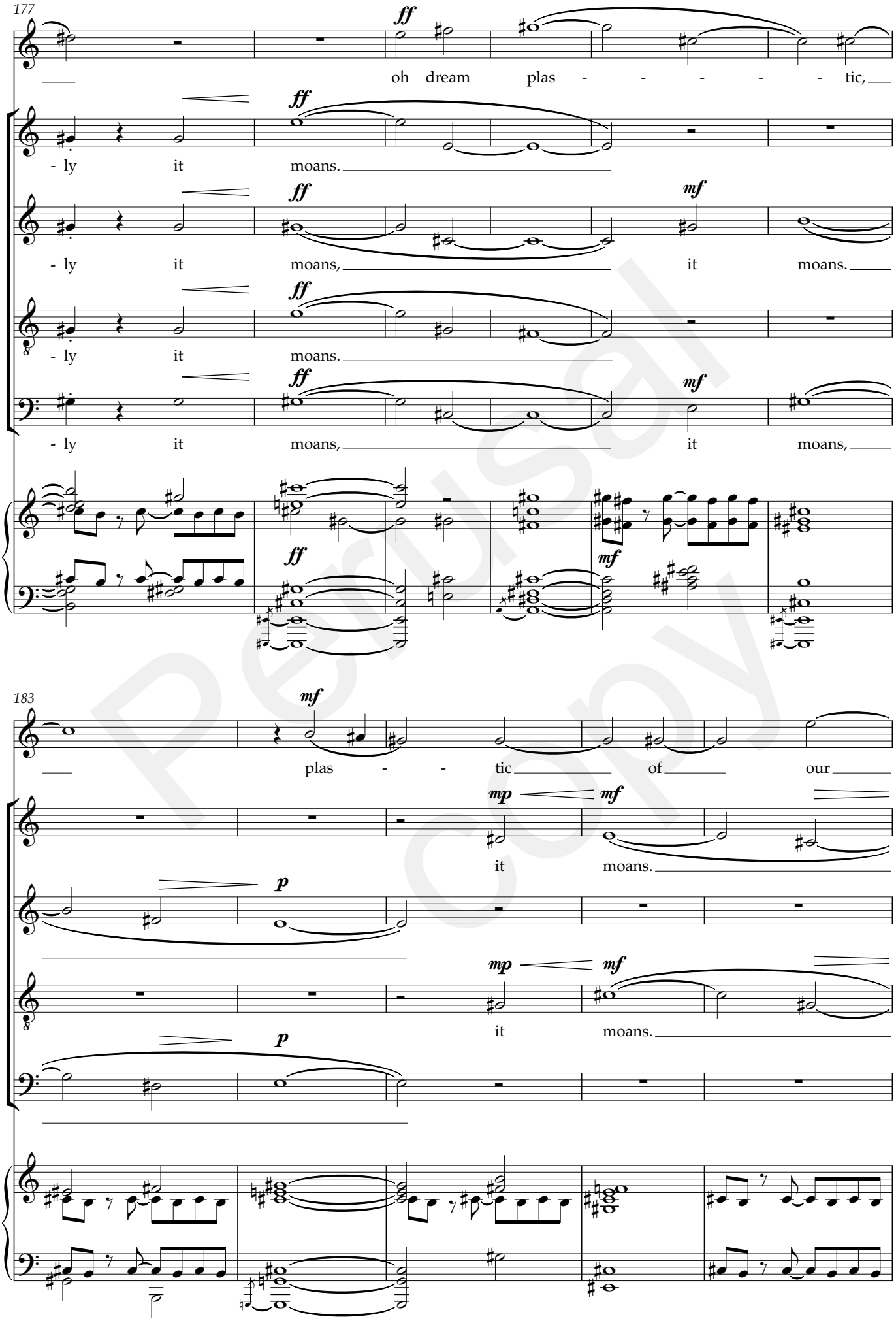




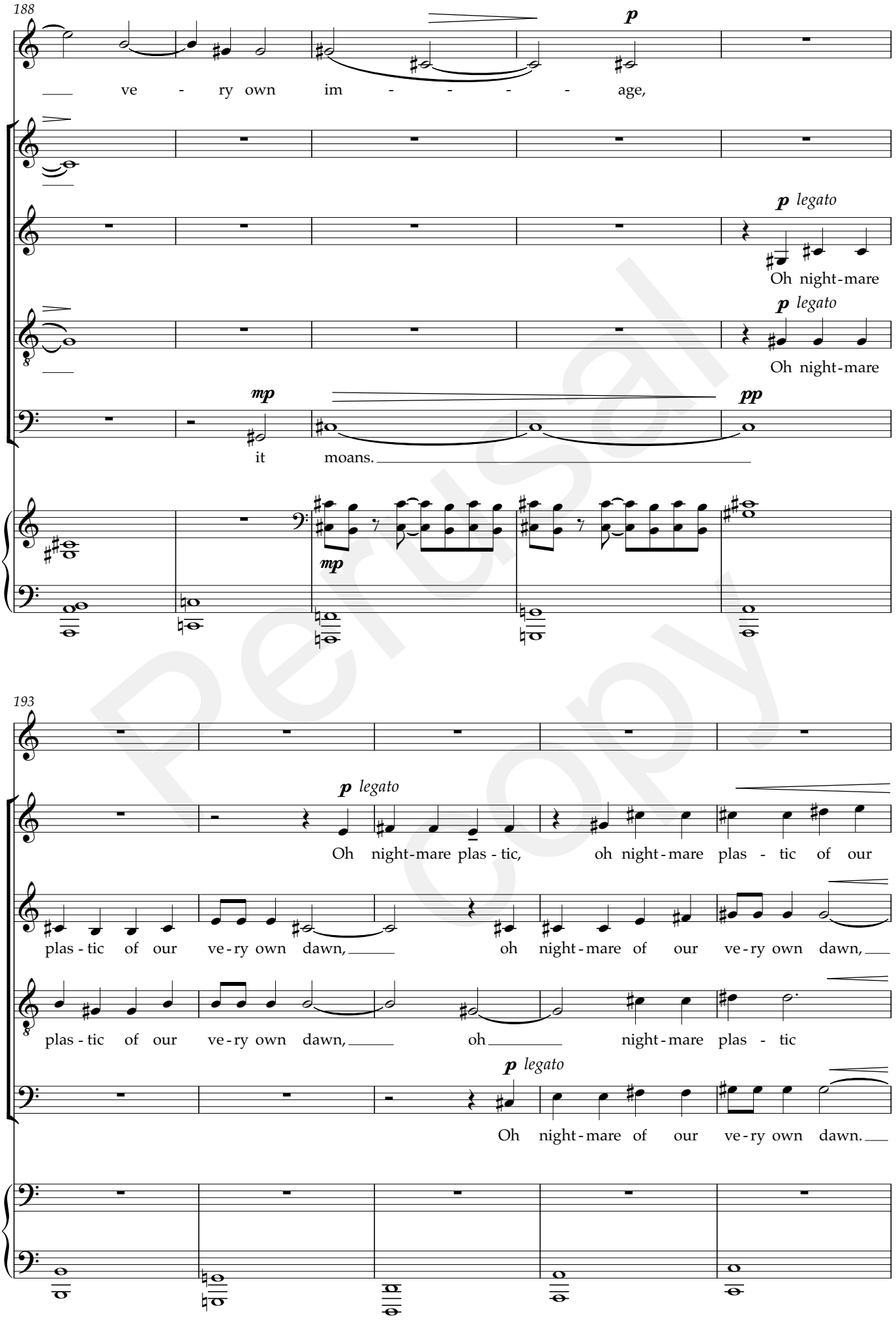
Perusal copy



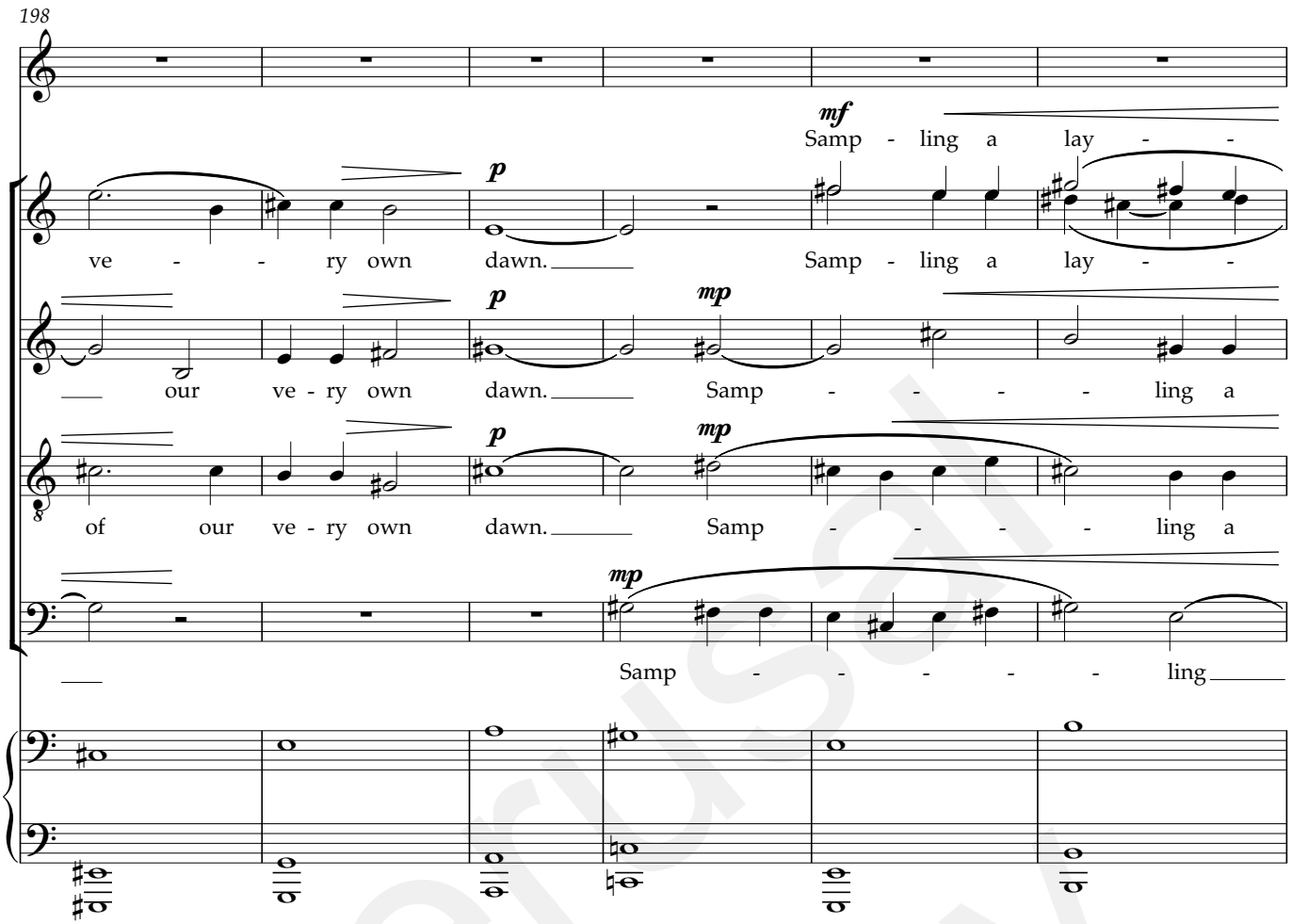
Perusal copy

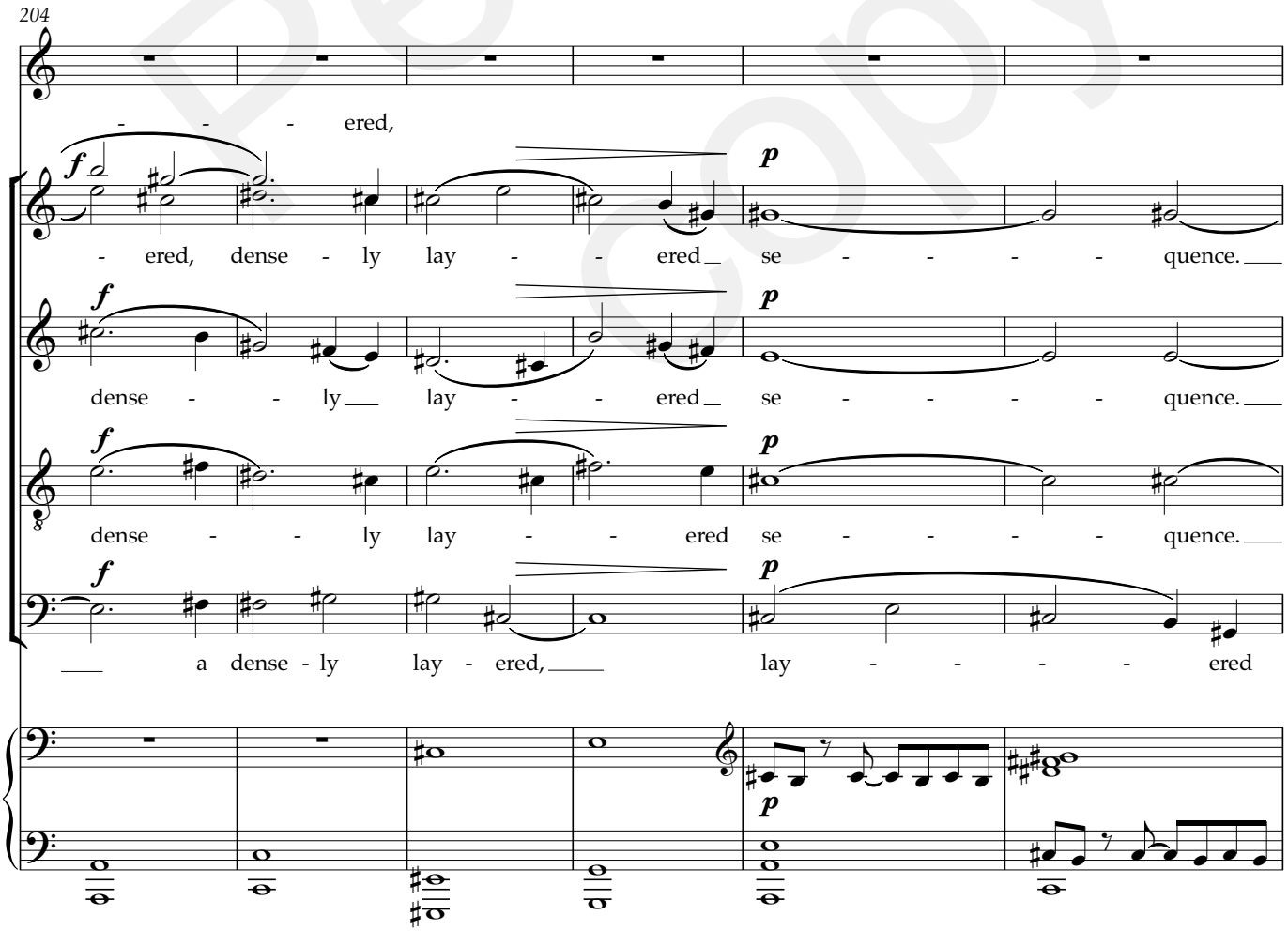


Perusal copy

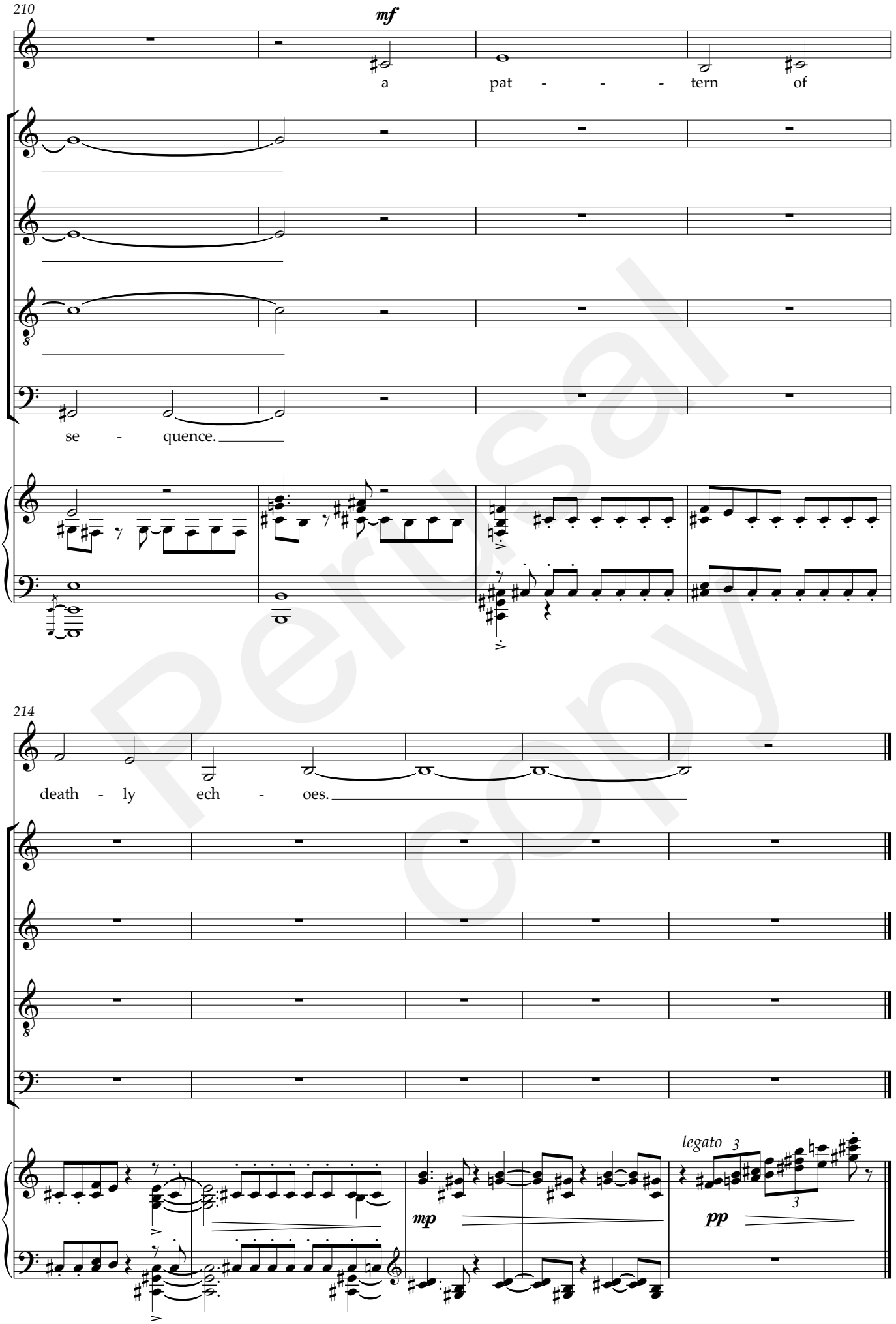


Perusal copy



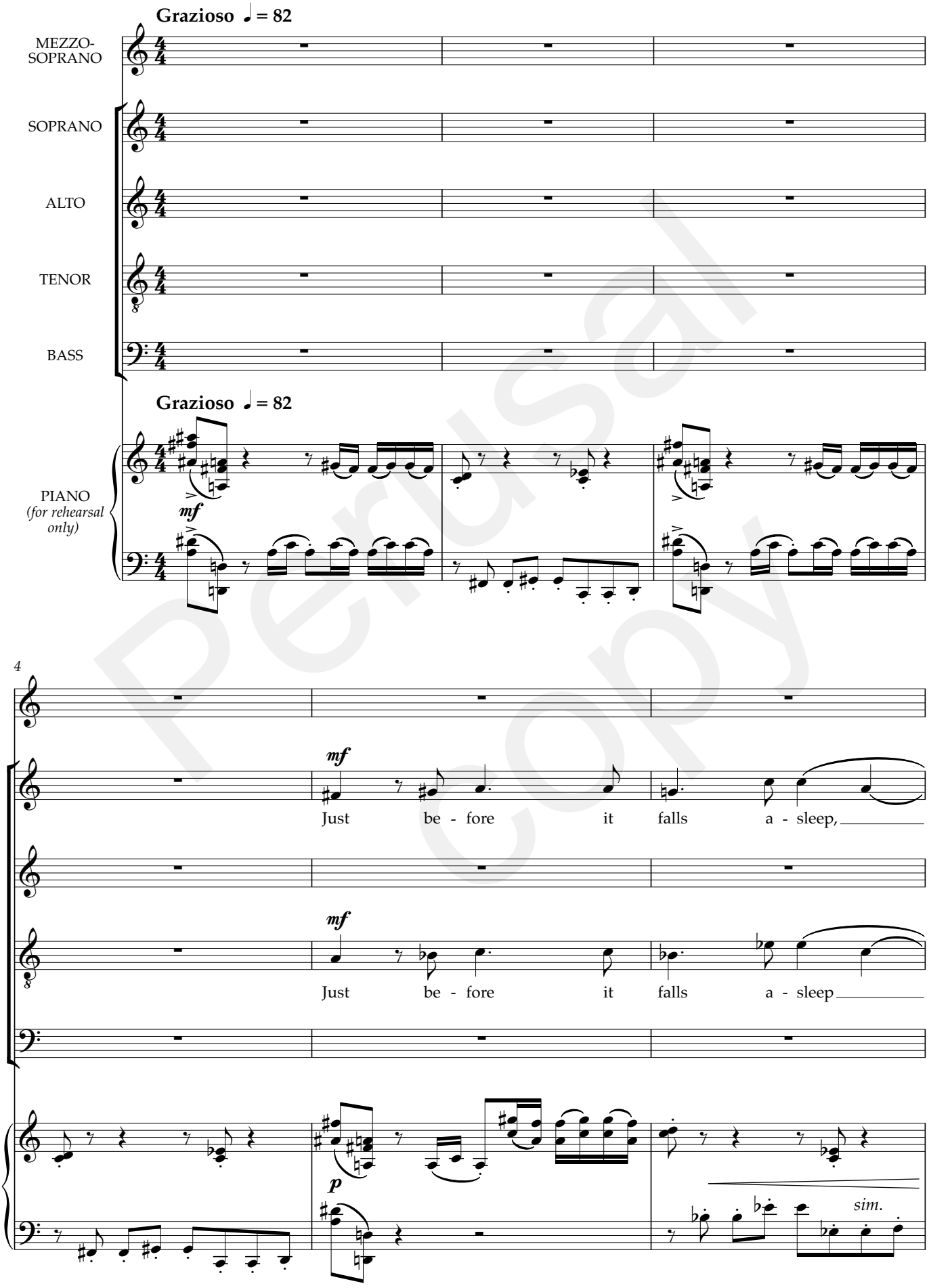


Perusal copy



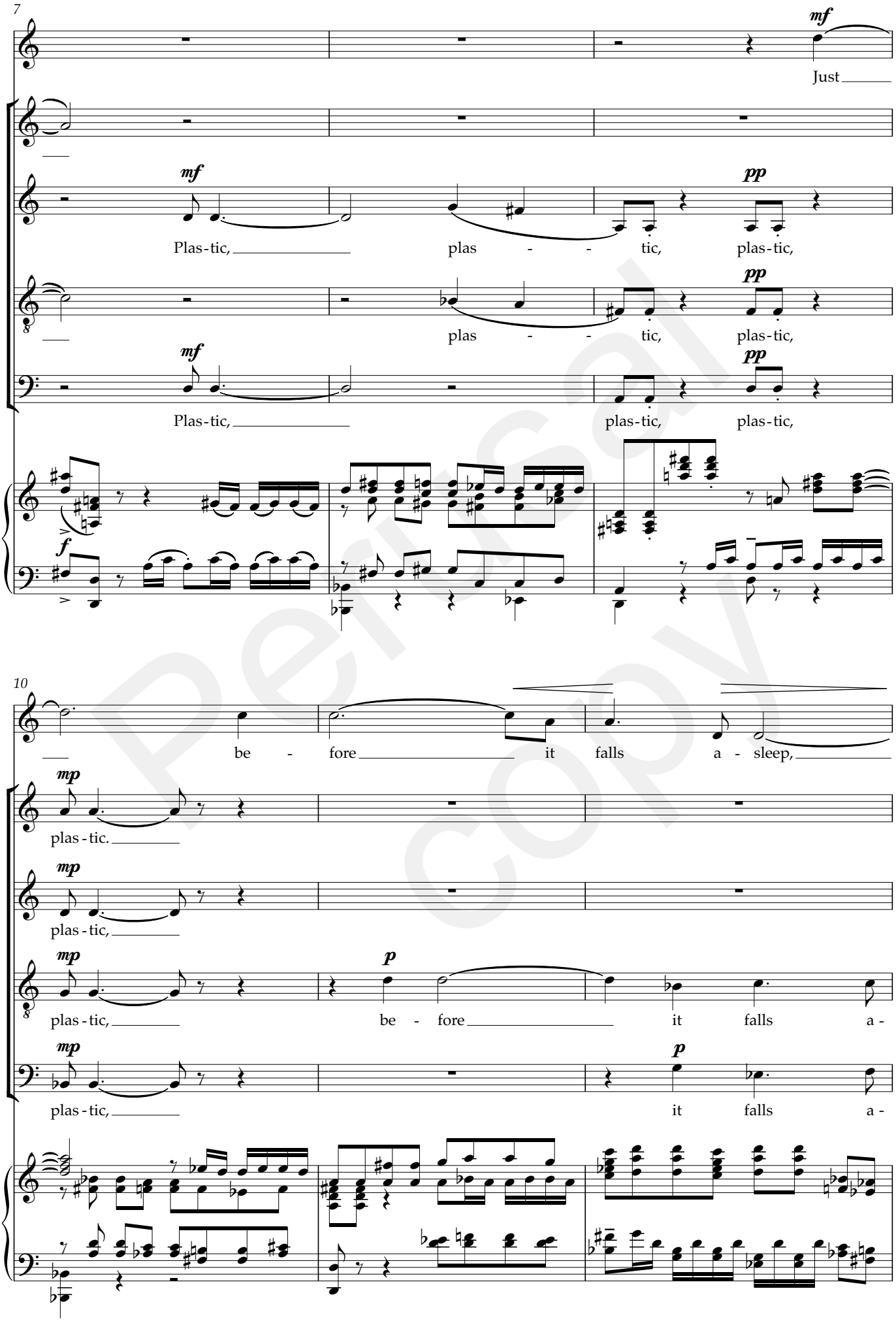
Perusal copy

ACT III

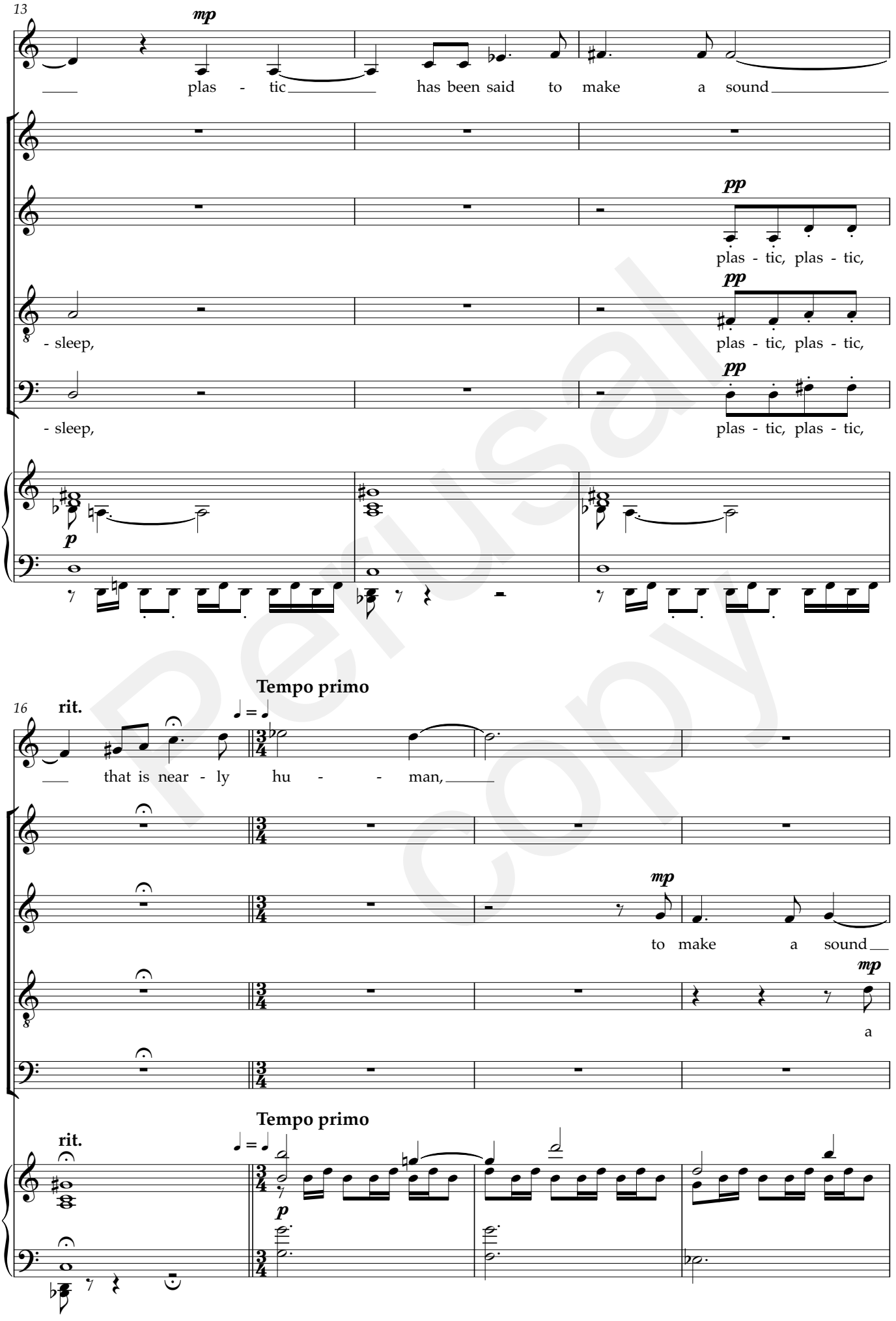


Perusal copy

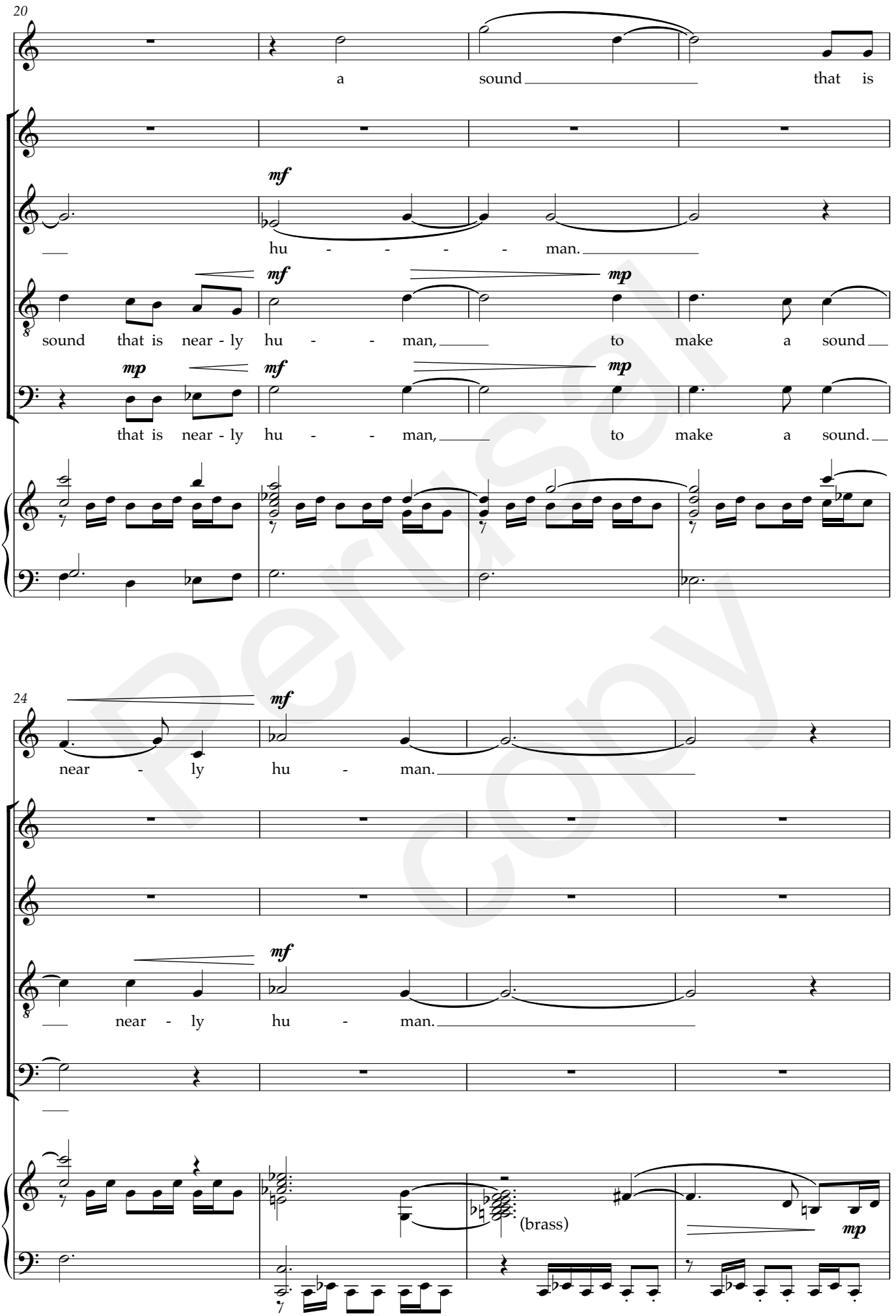
© 2024 Joanna Marsh



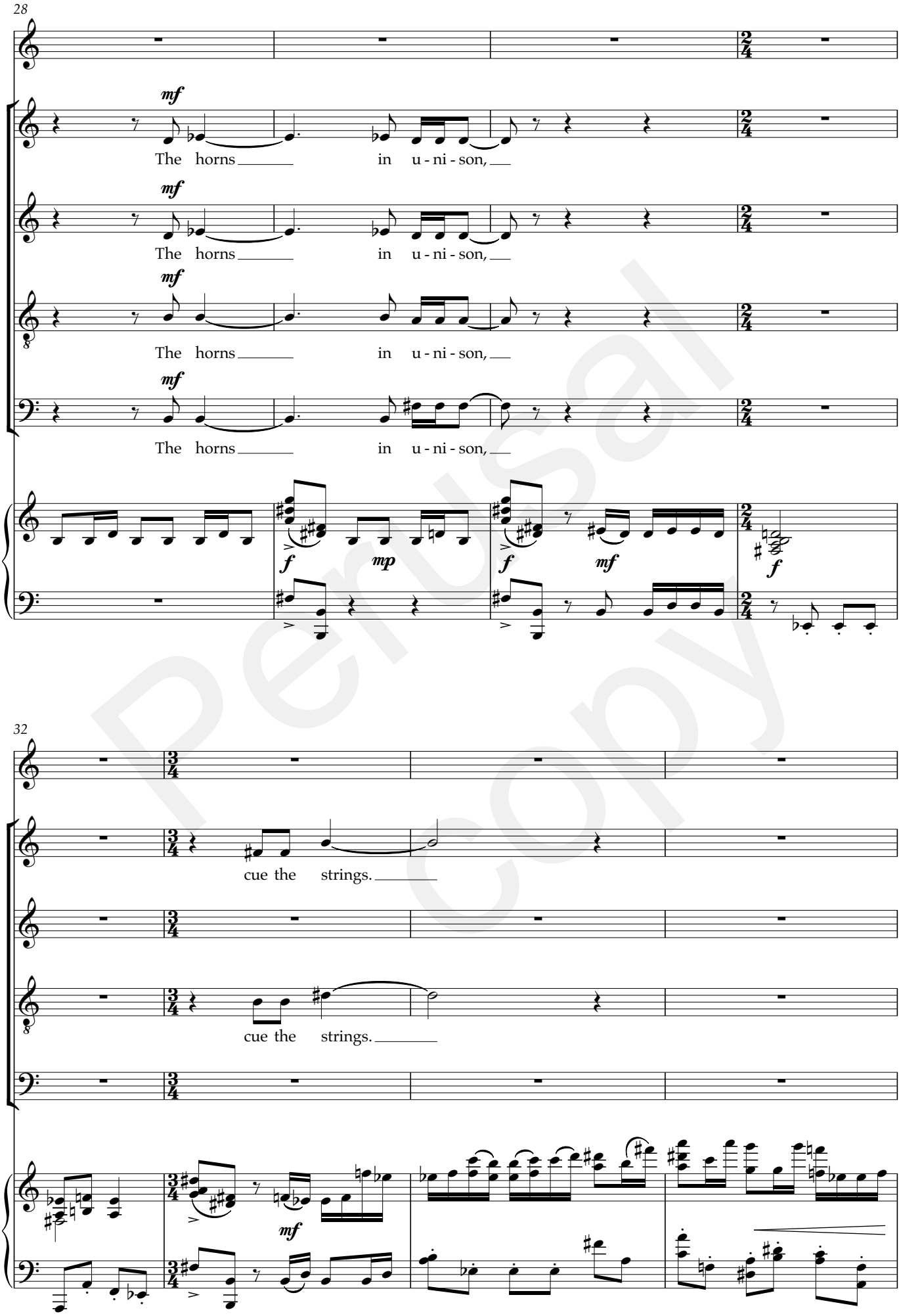
Personal copy



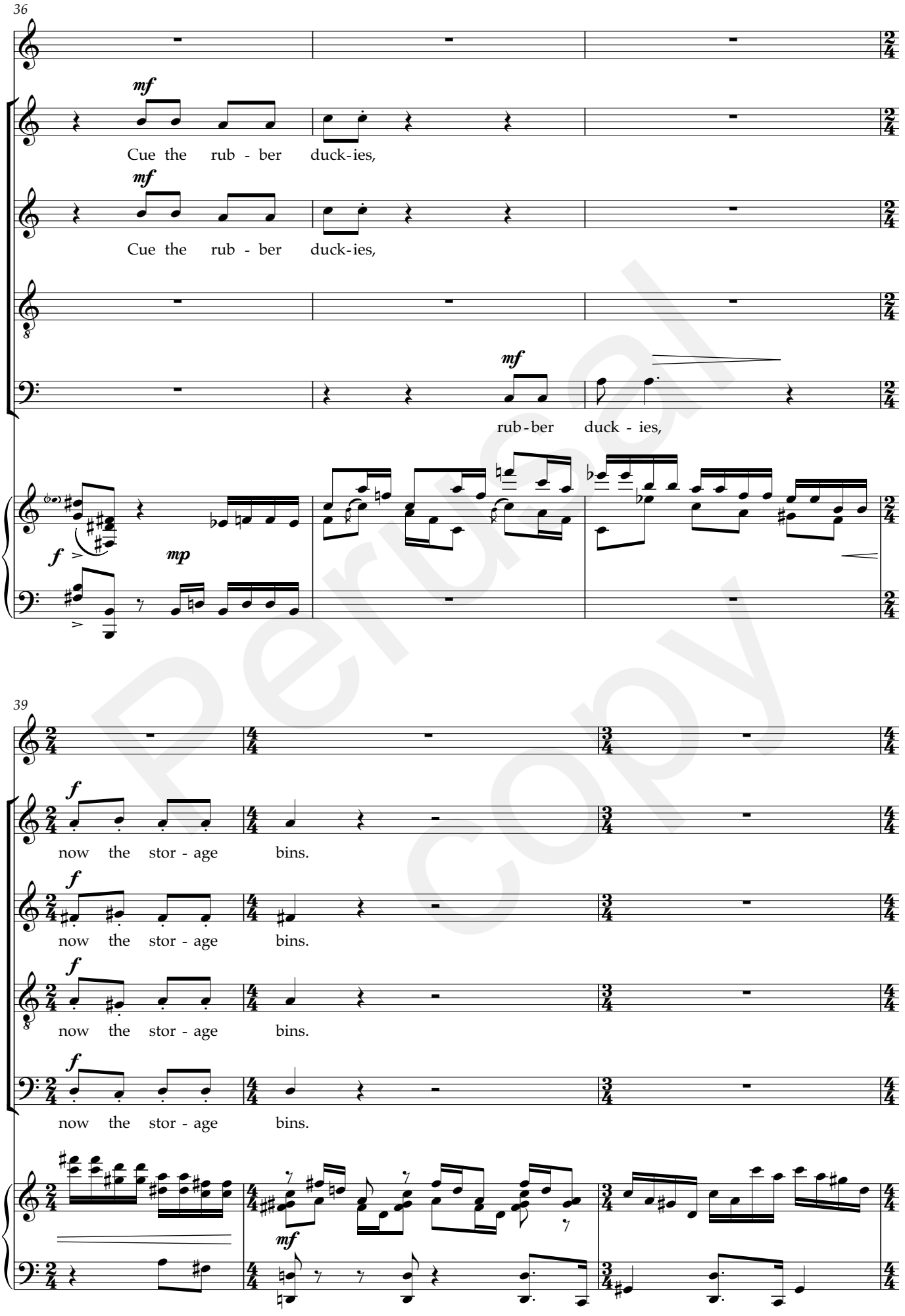
Perusal copy



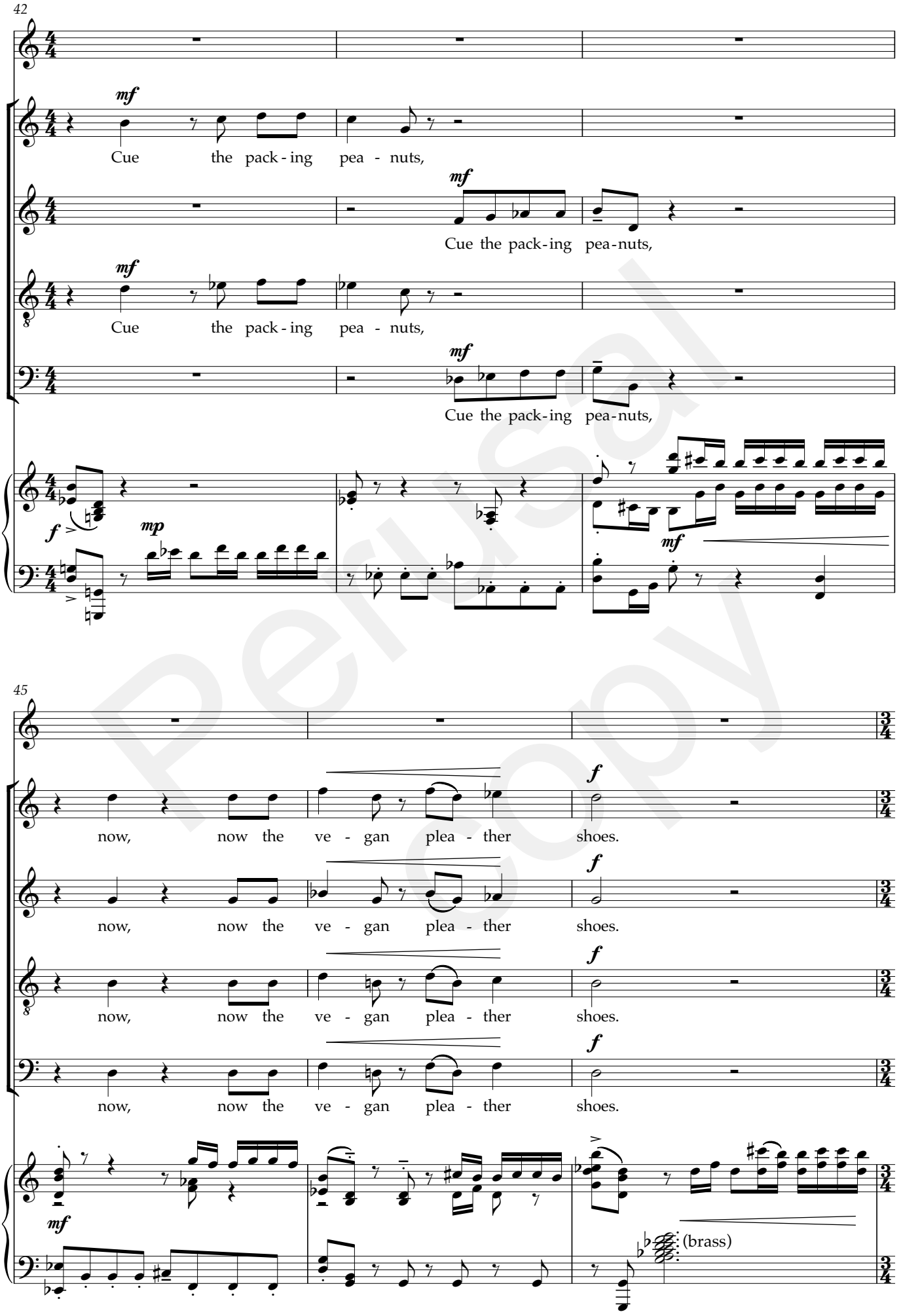
Perusal copy



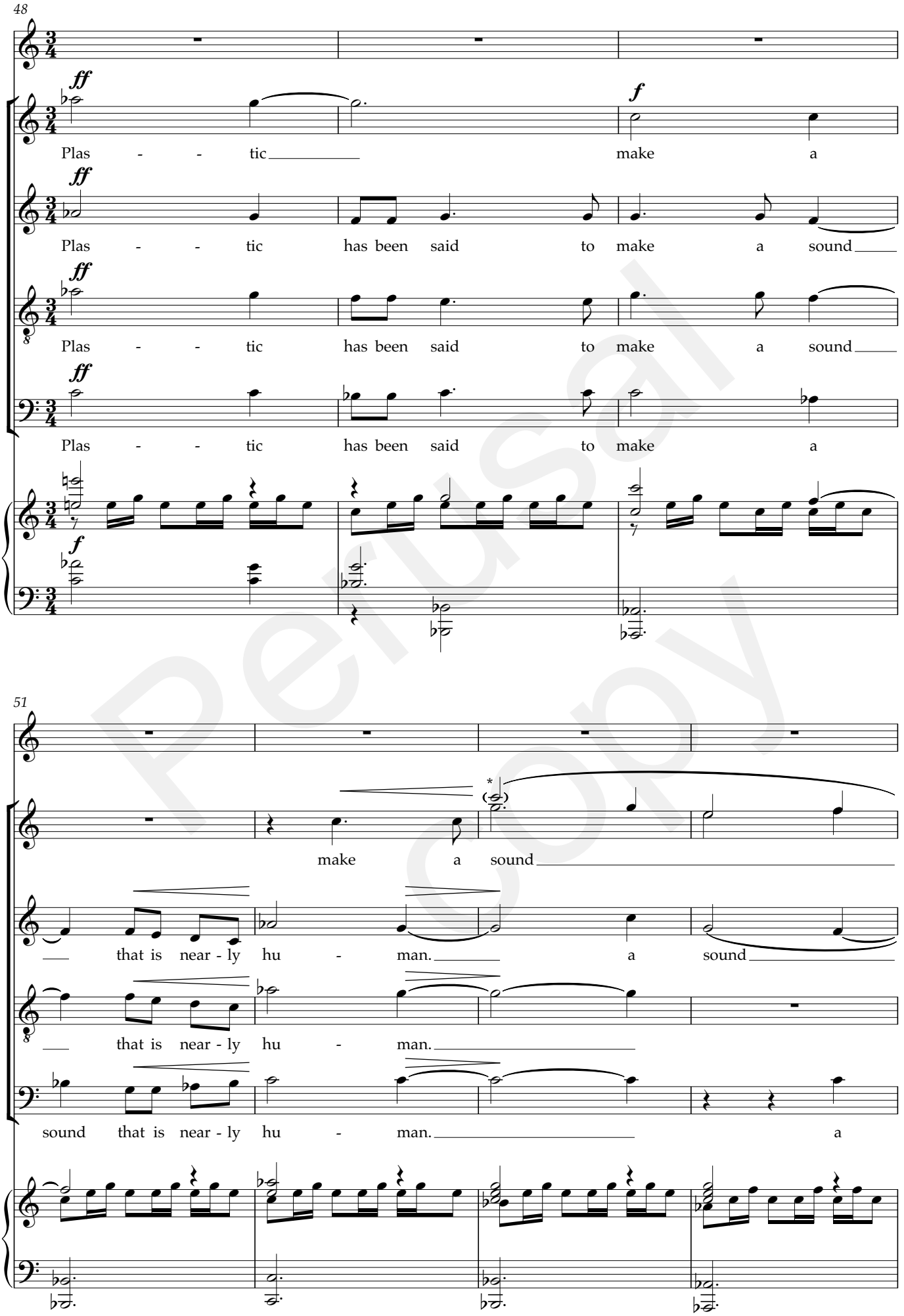
Perusal copy



Personal copy

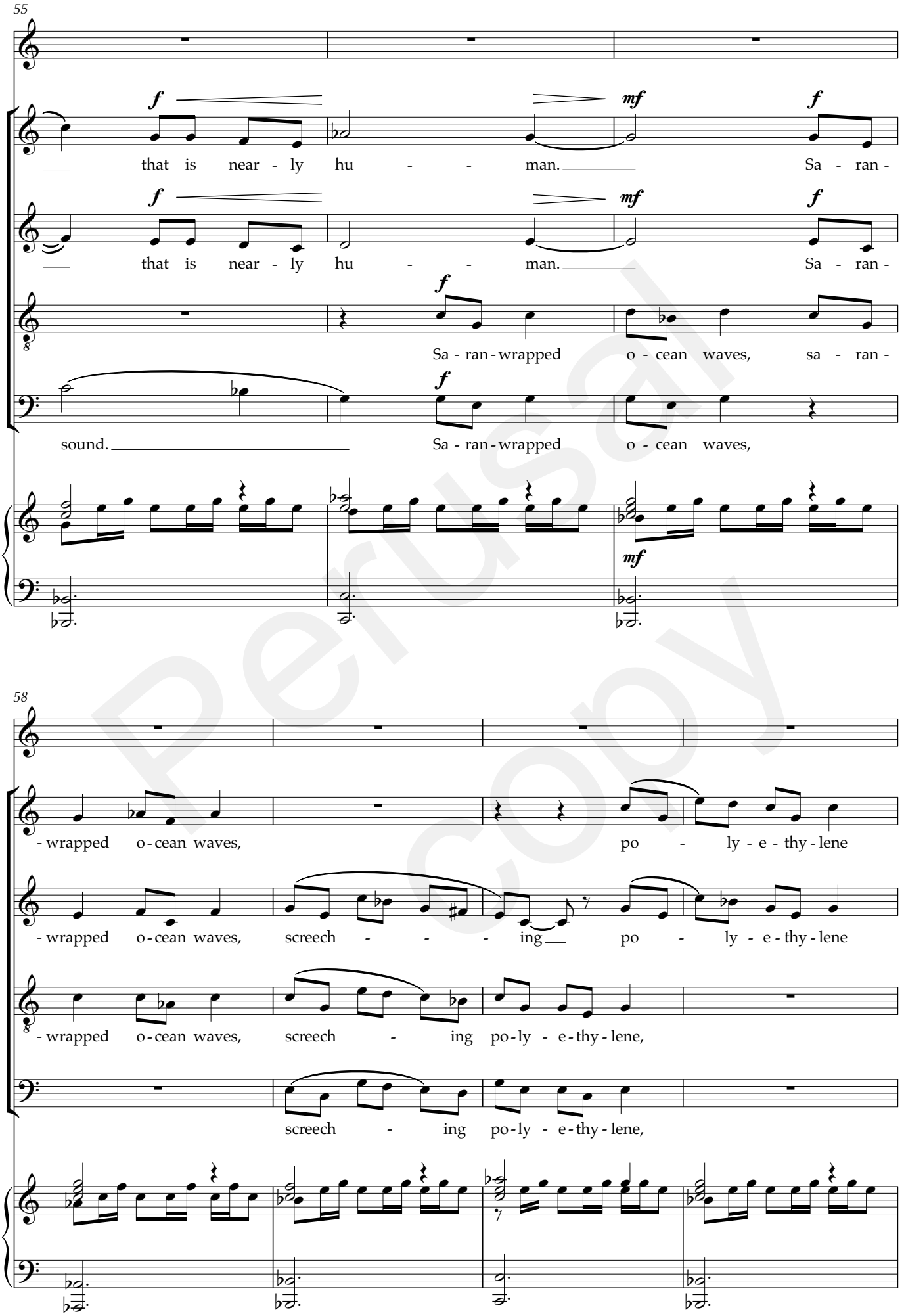


Perusal copy

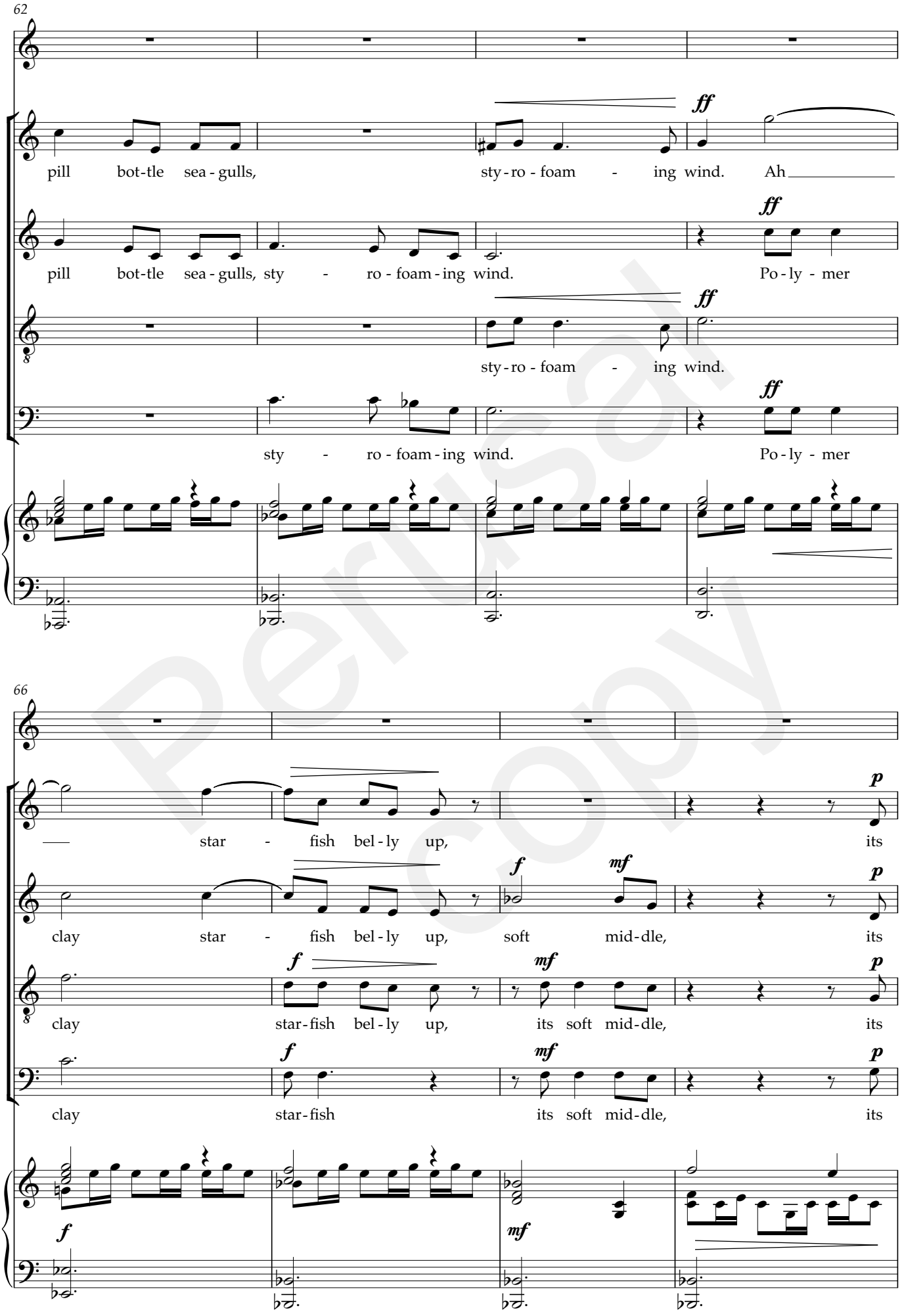


Perusal copy

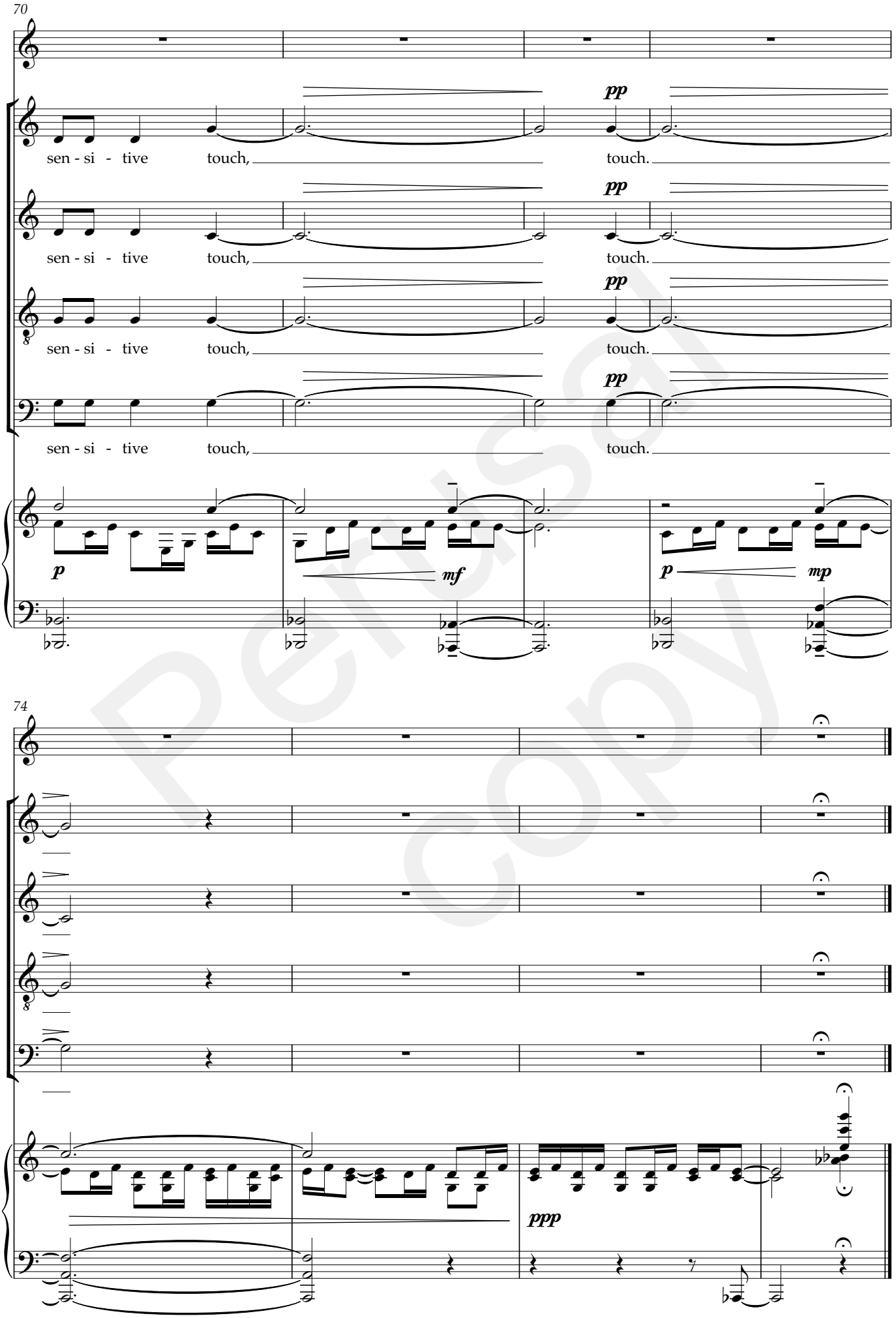
* Three or four clear voices.



Perusal copy

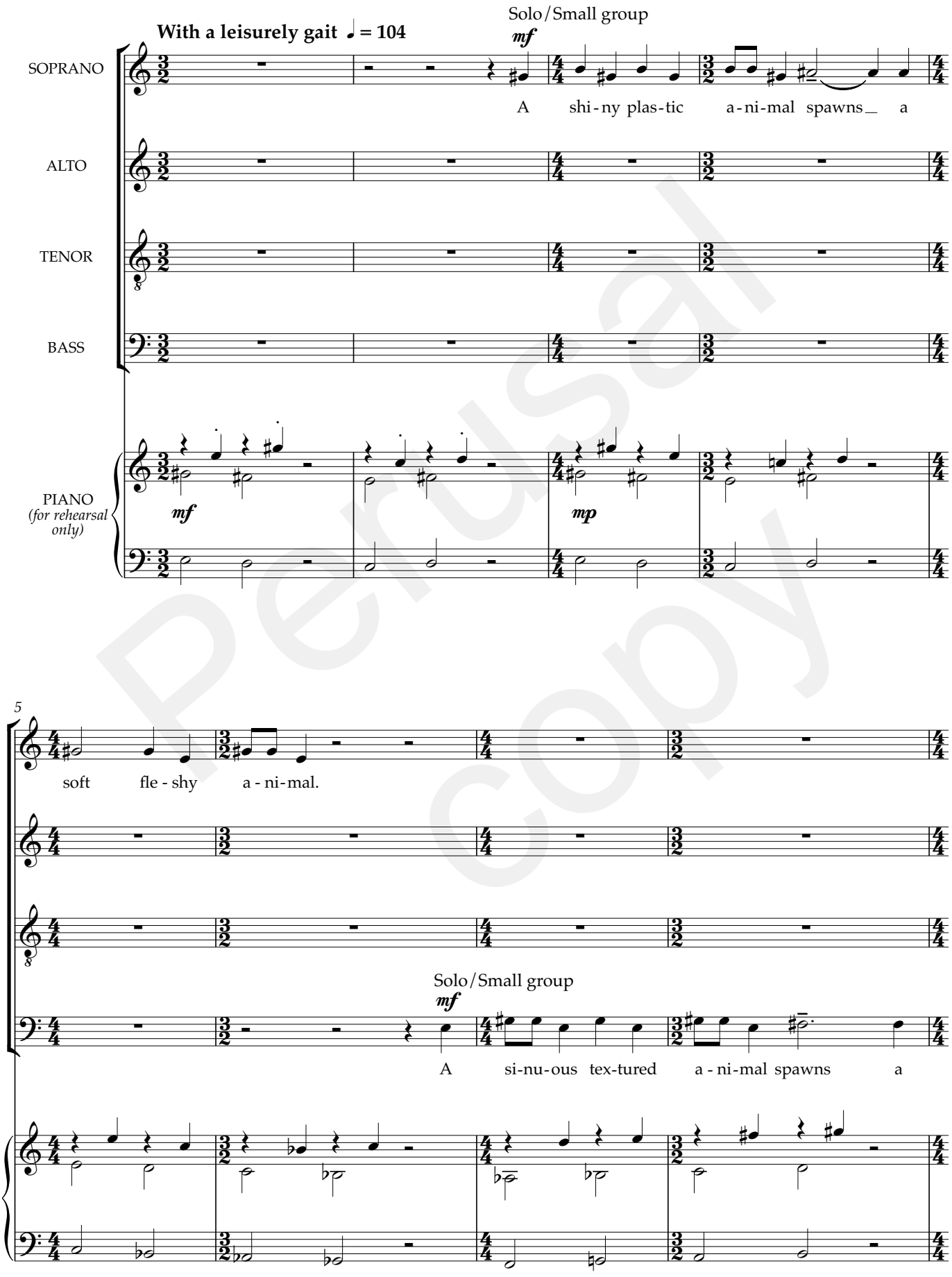


Perusal copy



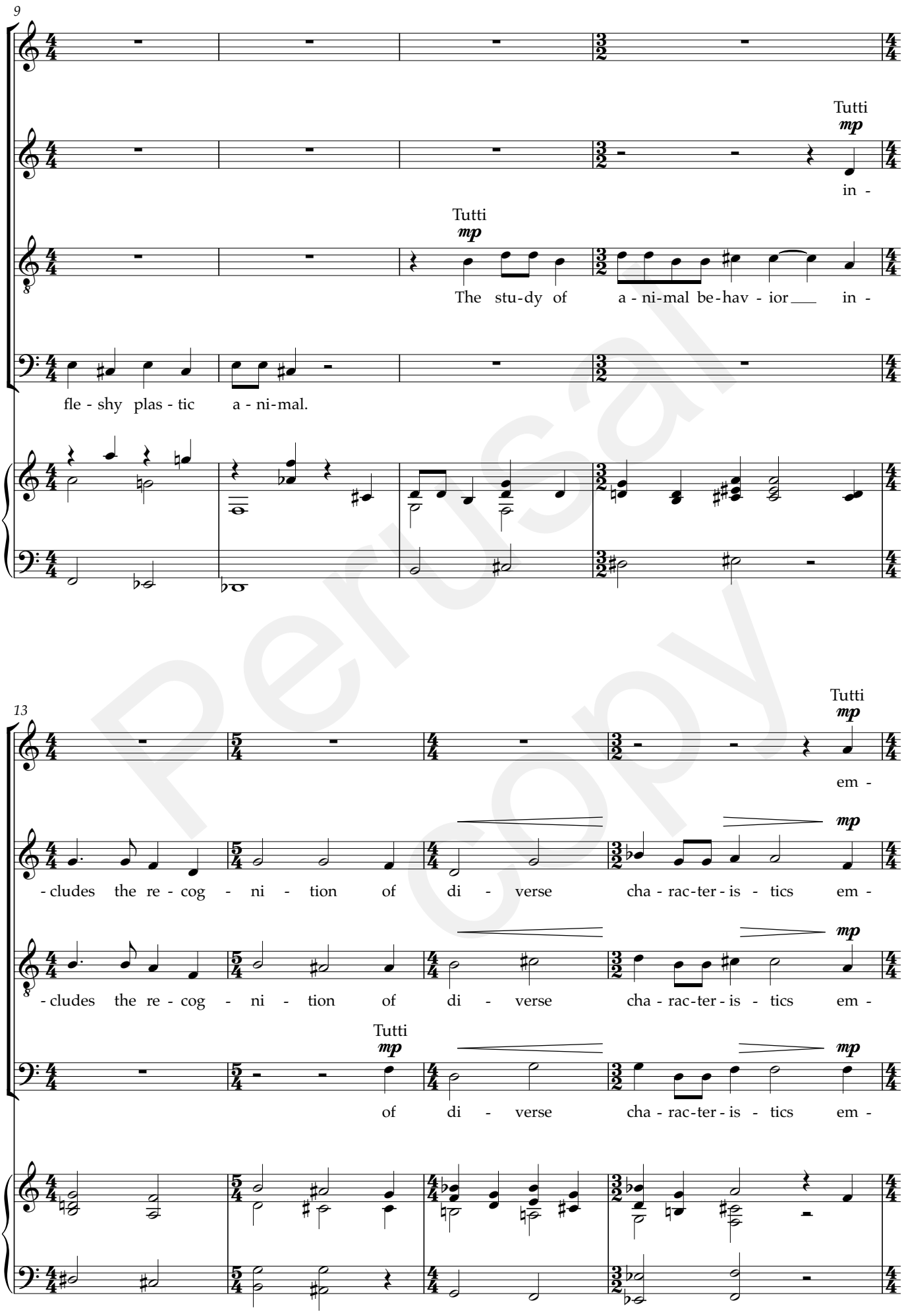
Perusal copy

ACT IV

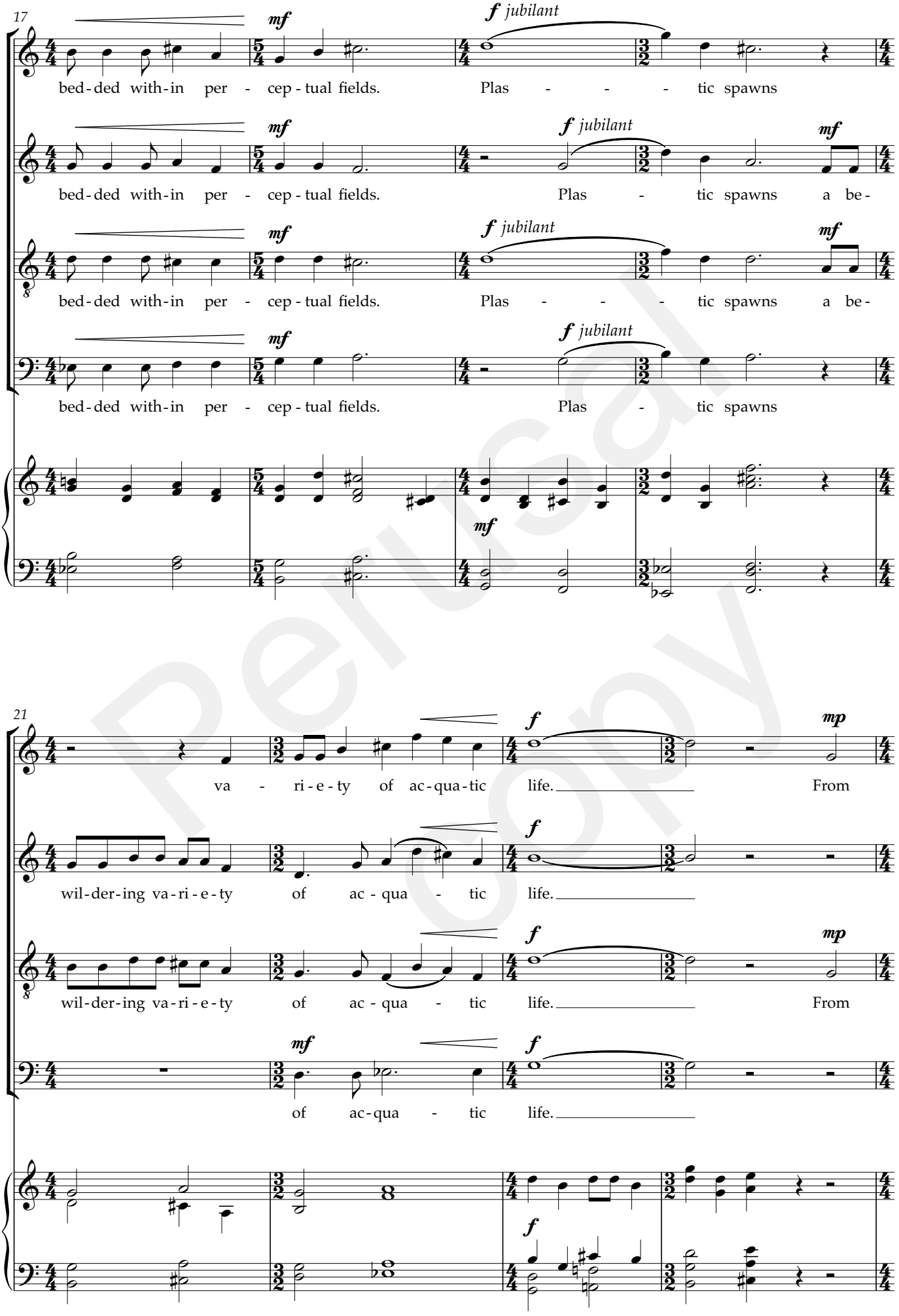


Perusal copy

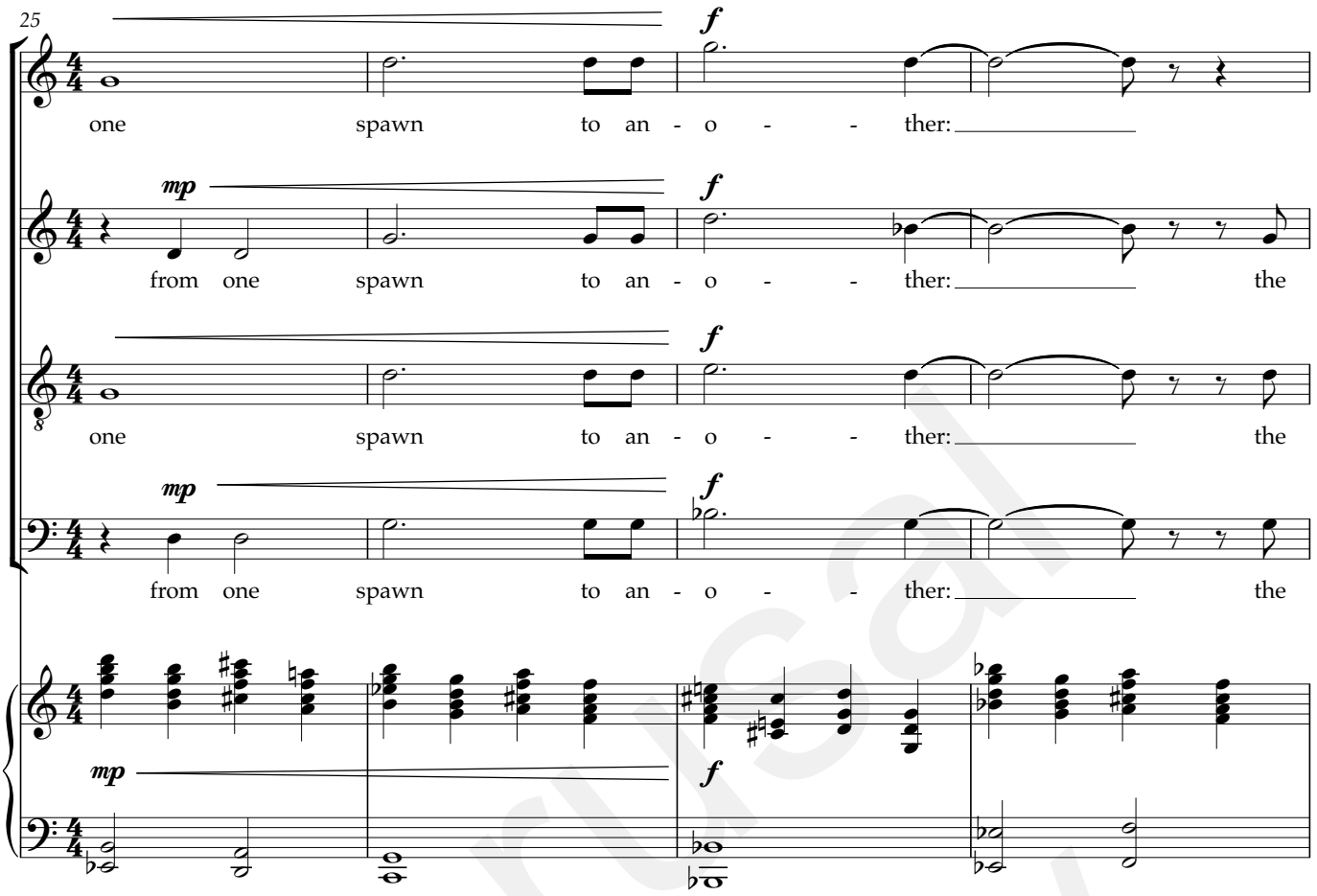
© 2024 Joanna Marsh

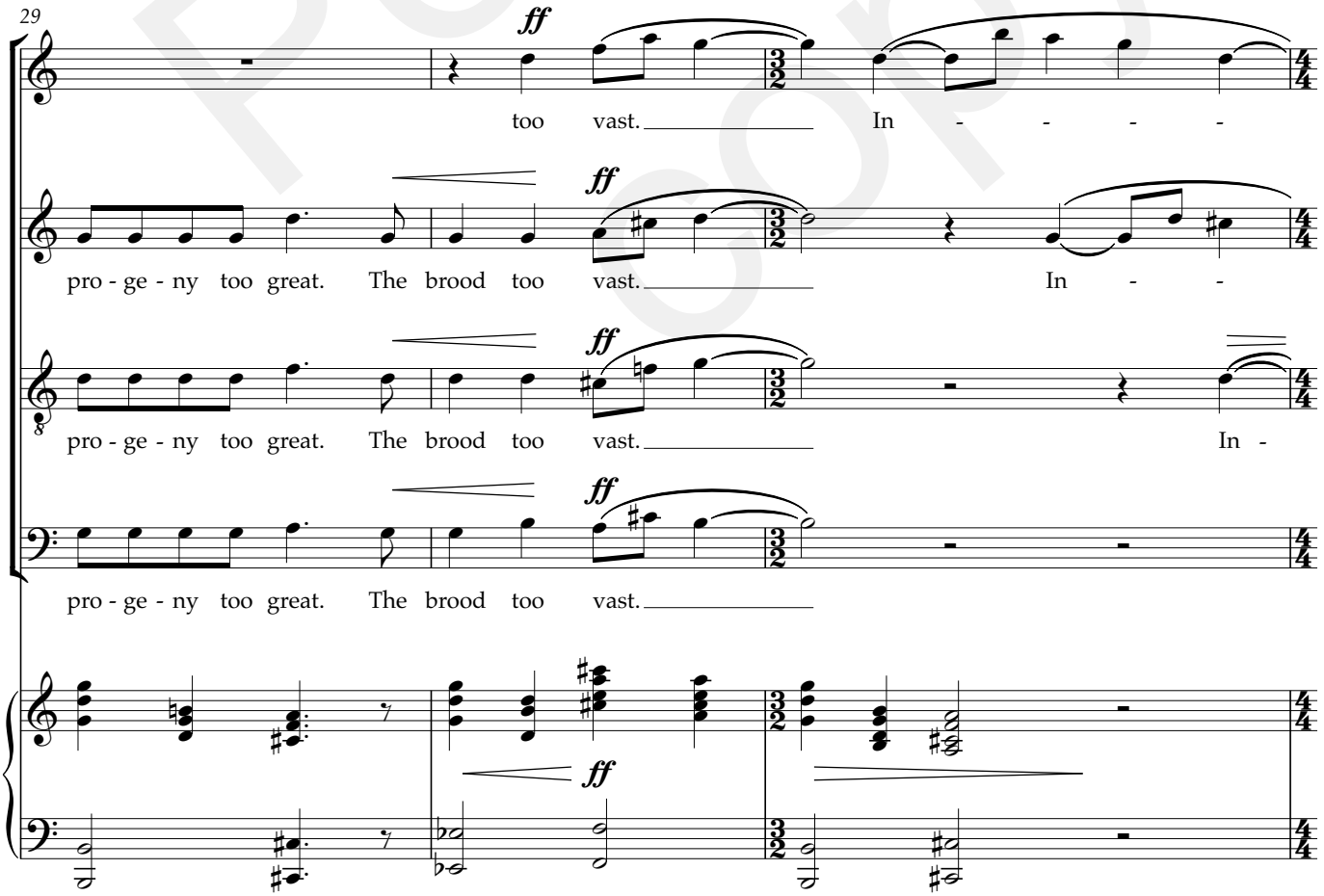


Perusal copy

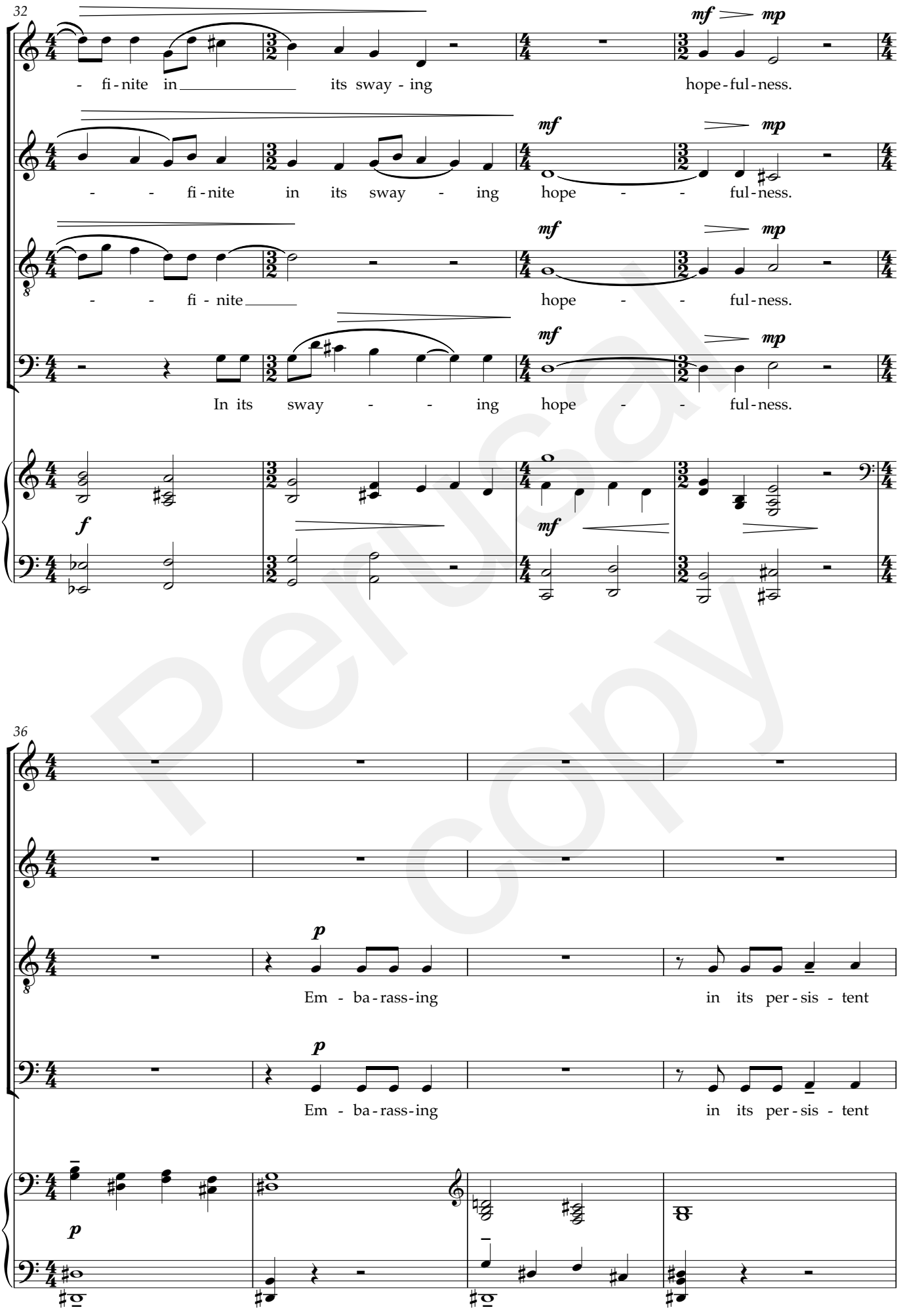


Perusal copy

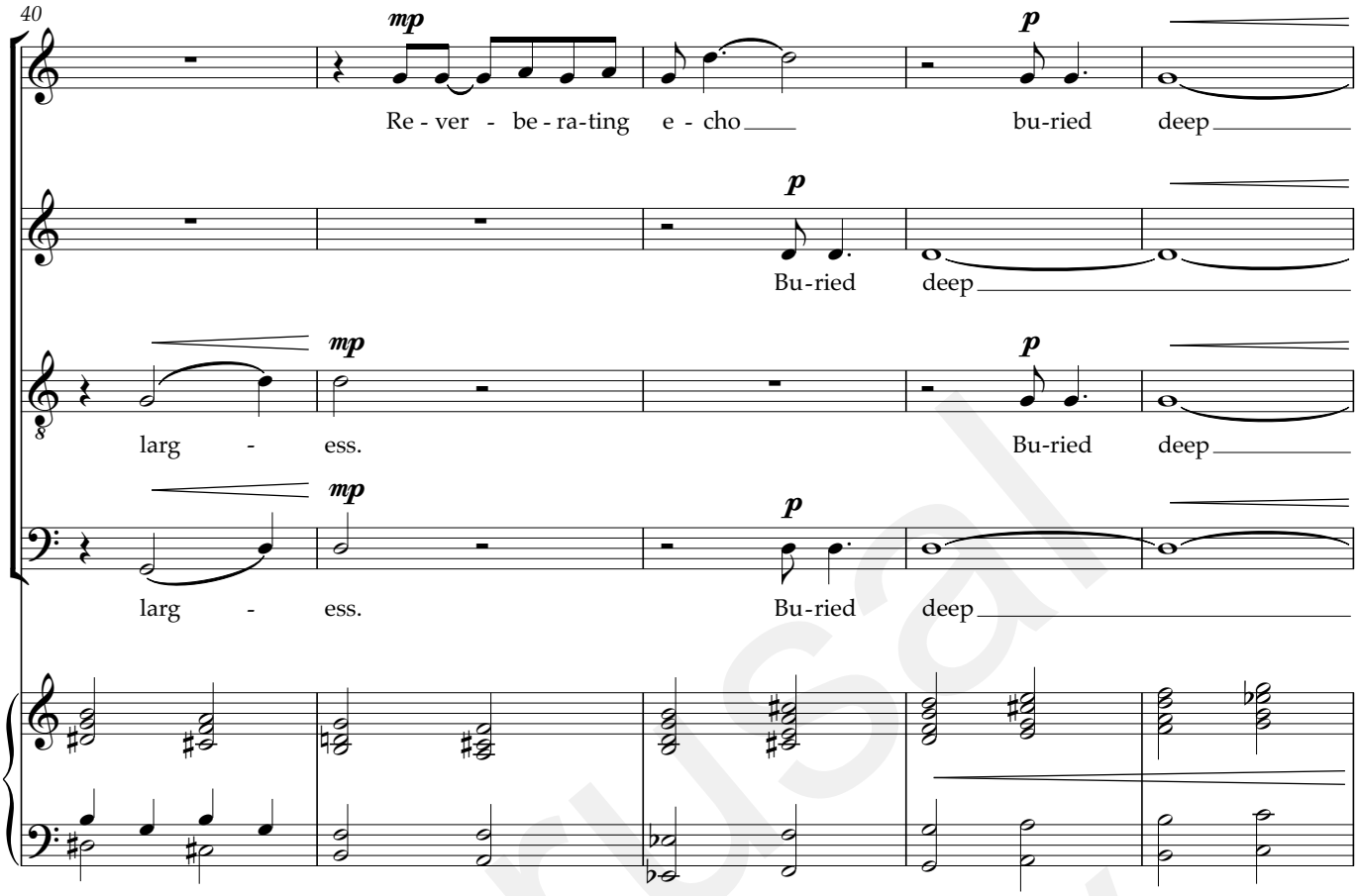


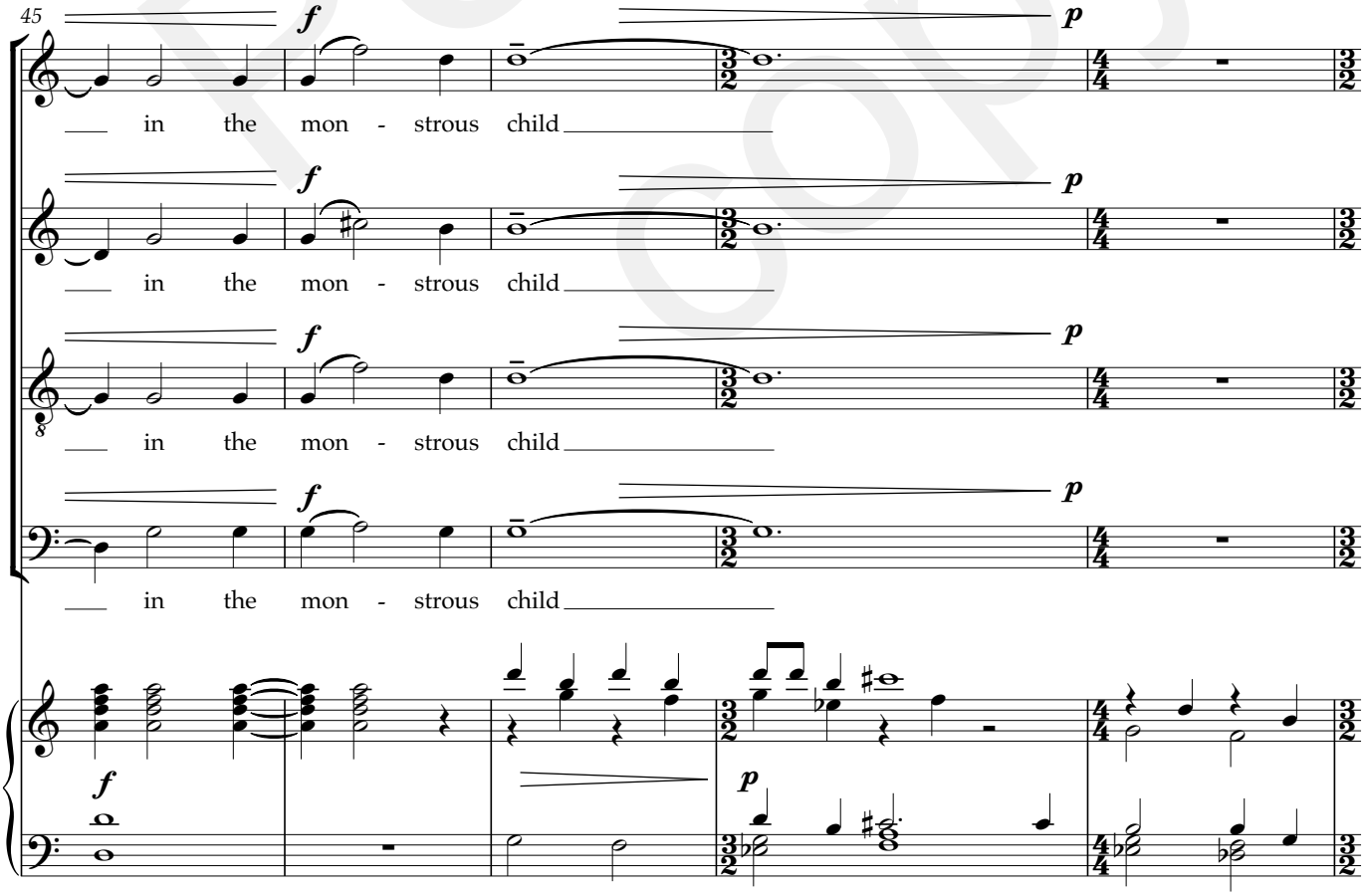


Perusal copy

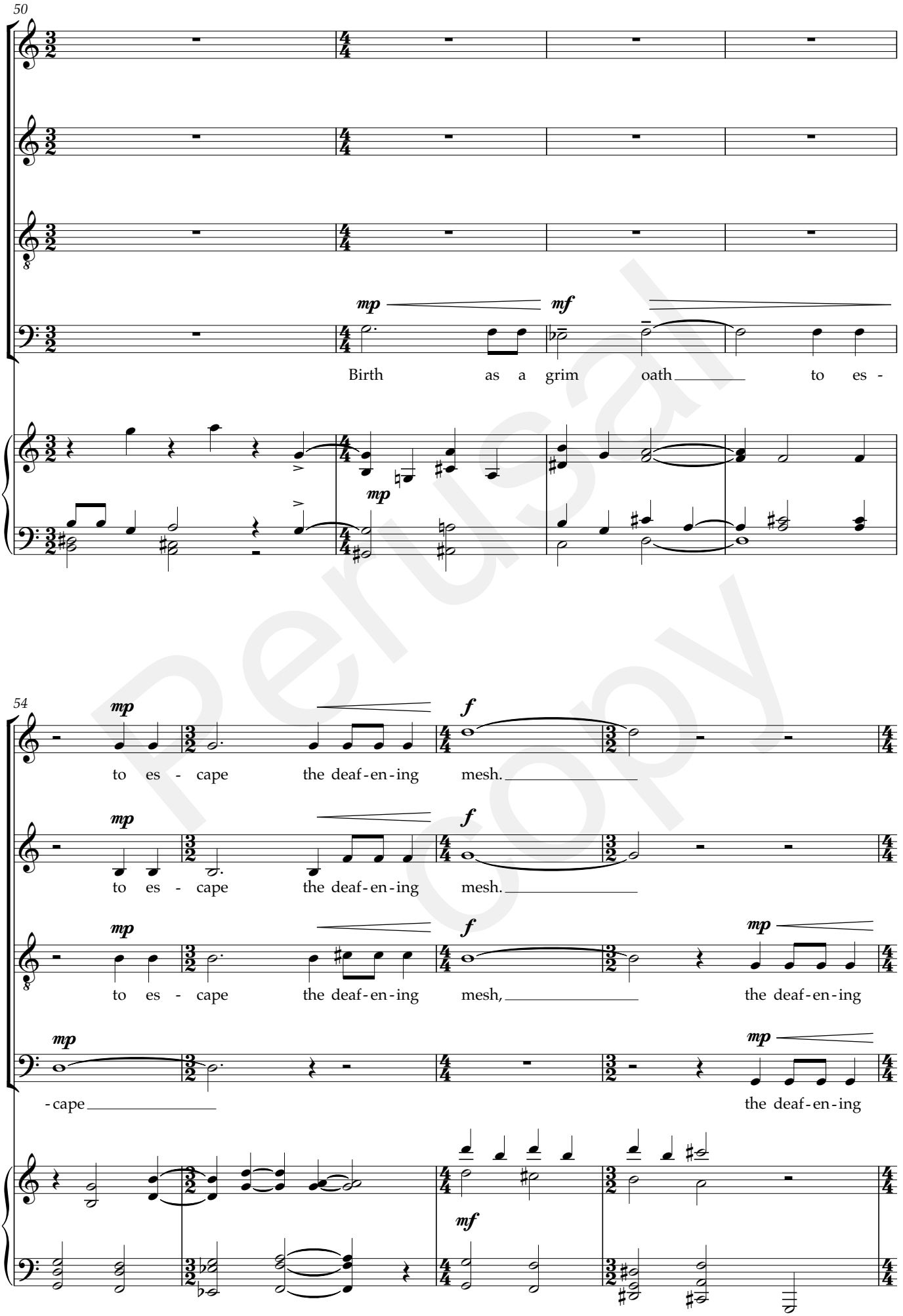


Perusal copy





Perusal copy



Perusal copy

Solo/Small group

58

mf

Be-ing a - live an ex - er - cise in for-

f

mesh.

f

mesh.

62

- get - ting

mp

for - get - ting the bo - dy, re-mem-ber-ing the

mp

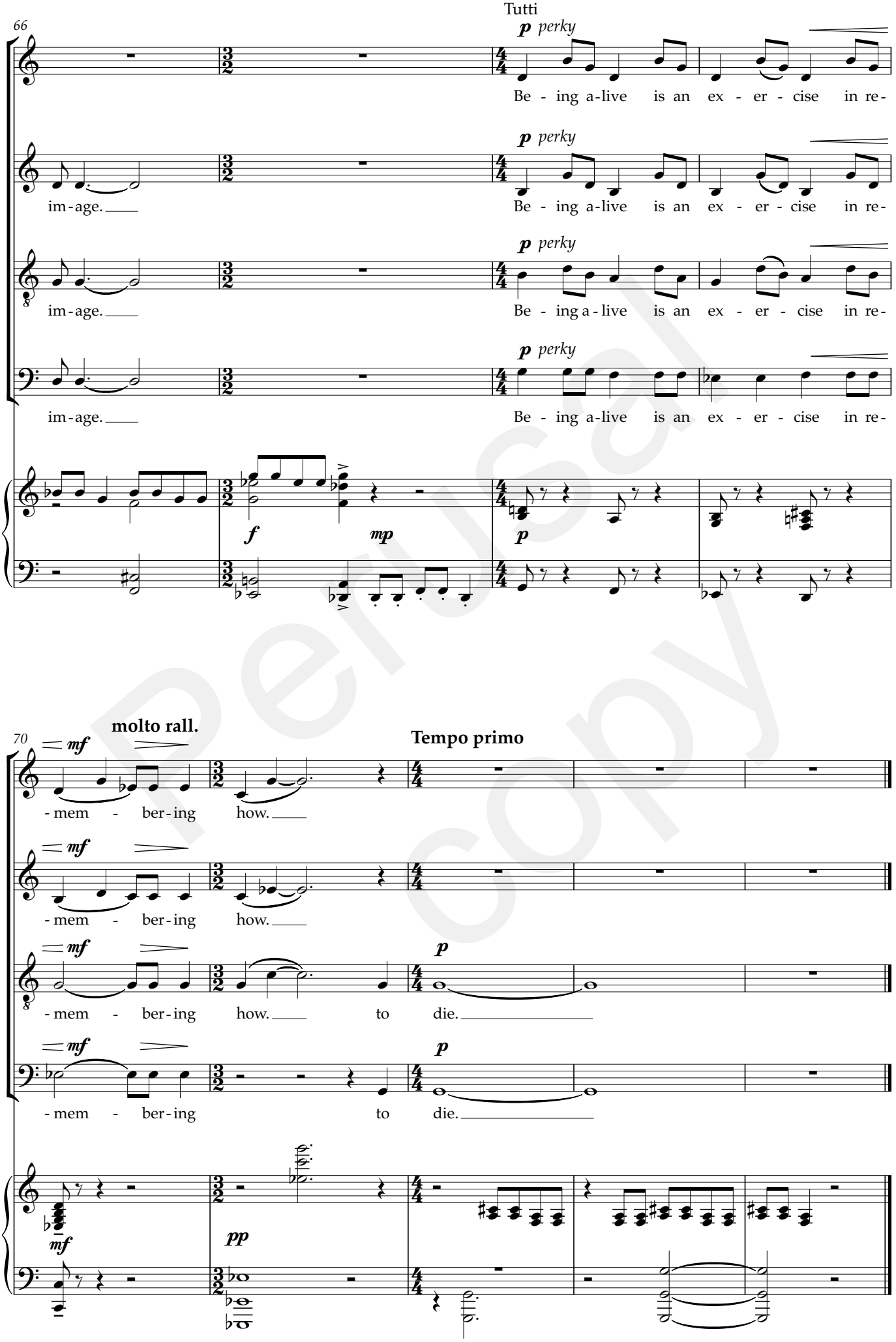
for - get - ting the bo - dy, re-mem-ber-ing the

mp

for - get - ting the bo - dy, re-mem-ber-ing the

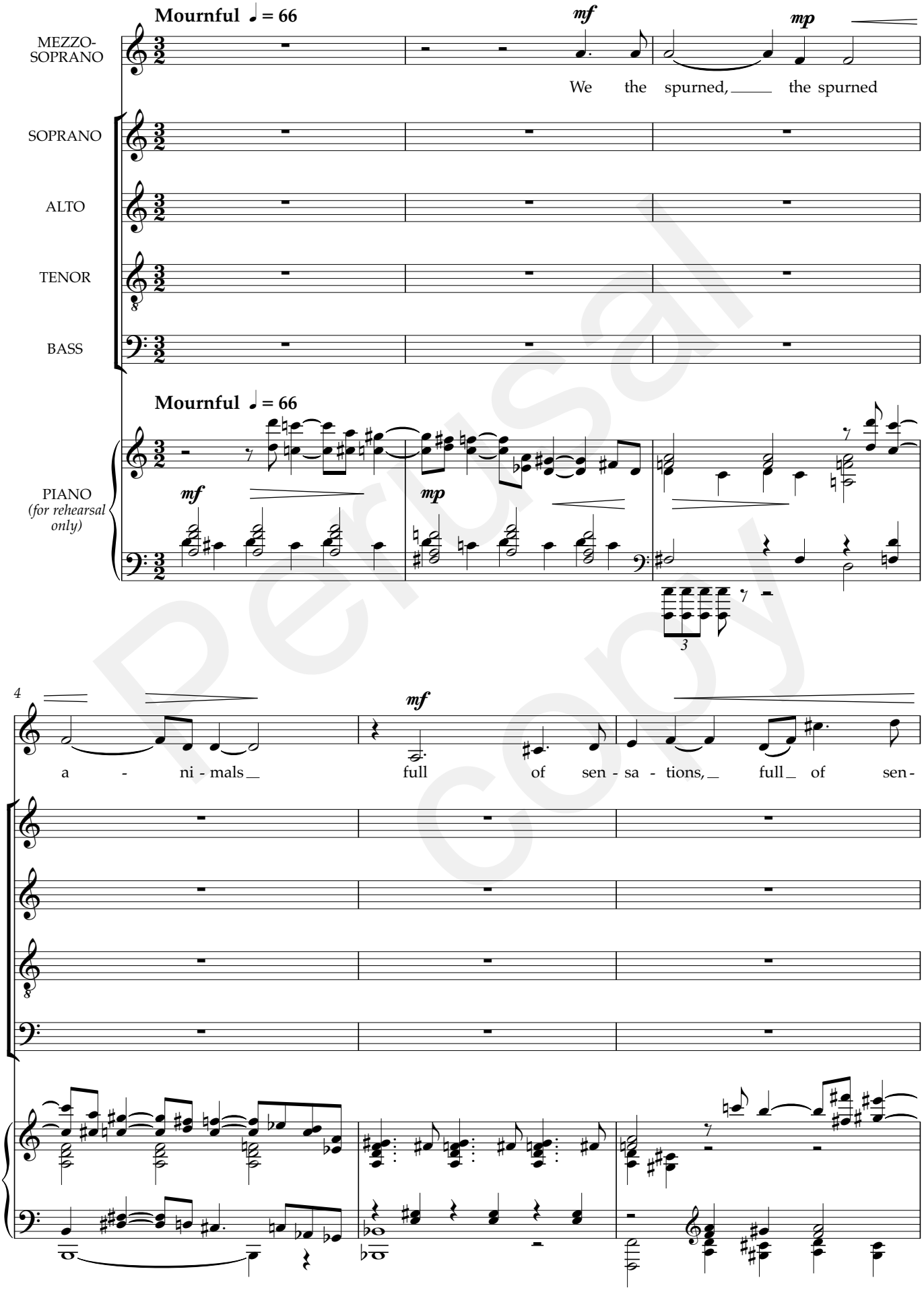
mp

Perusal copy



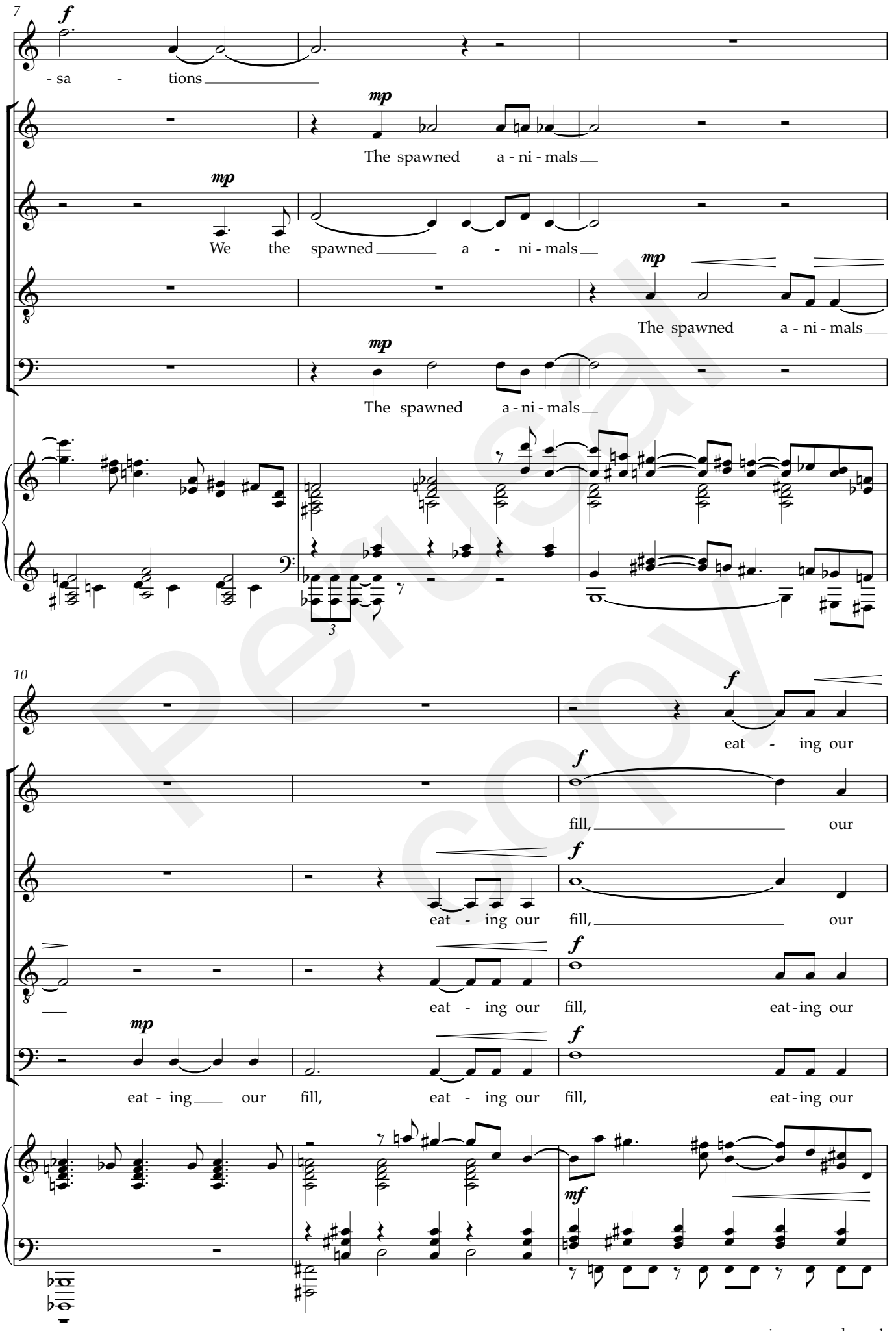
Perusal copy

ACT V

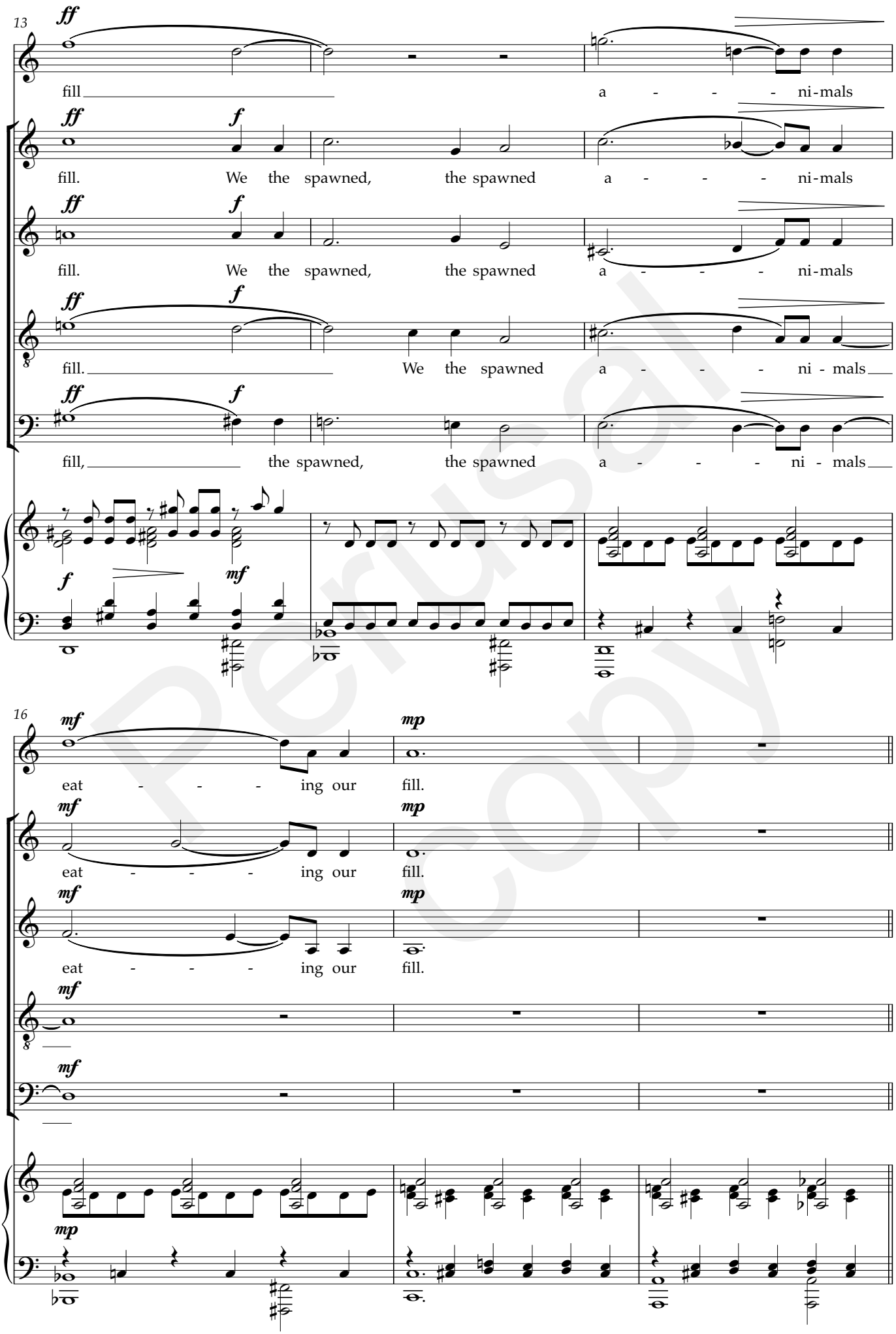


Perusal copy

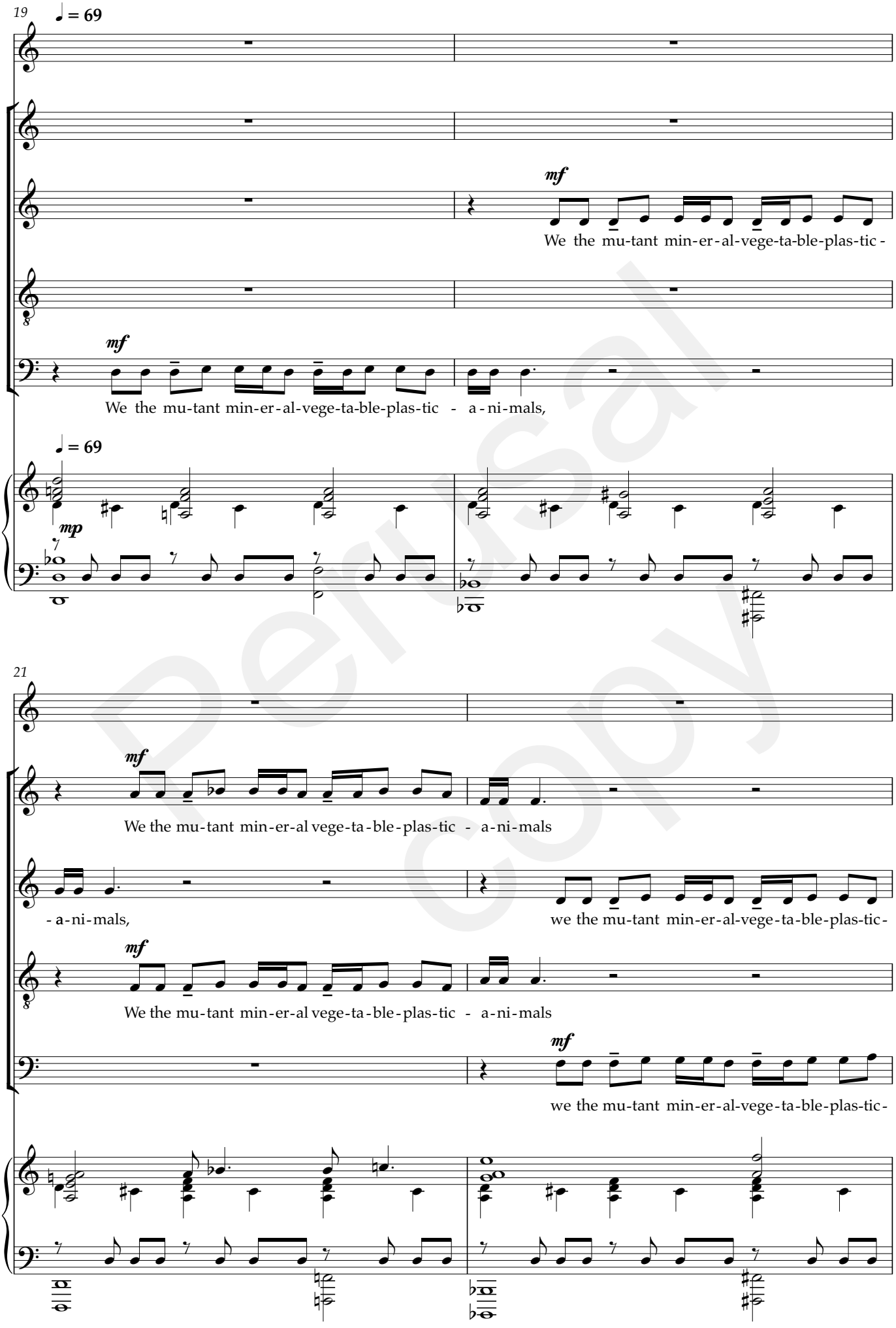
© 2024 Joanna Marsh



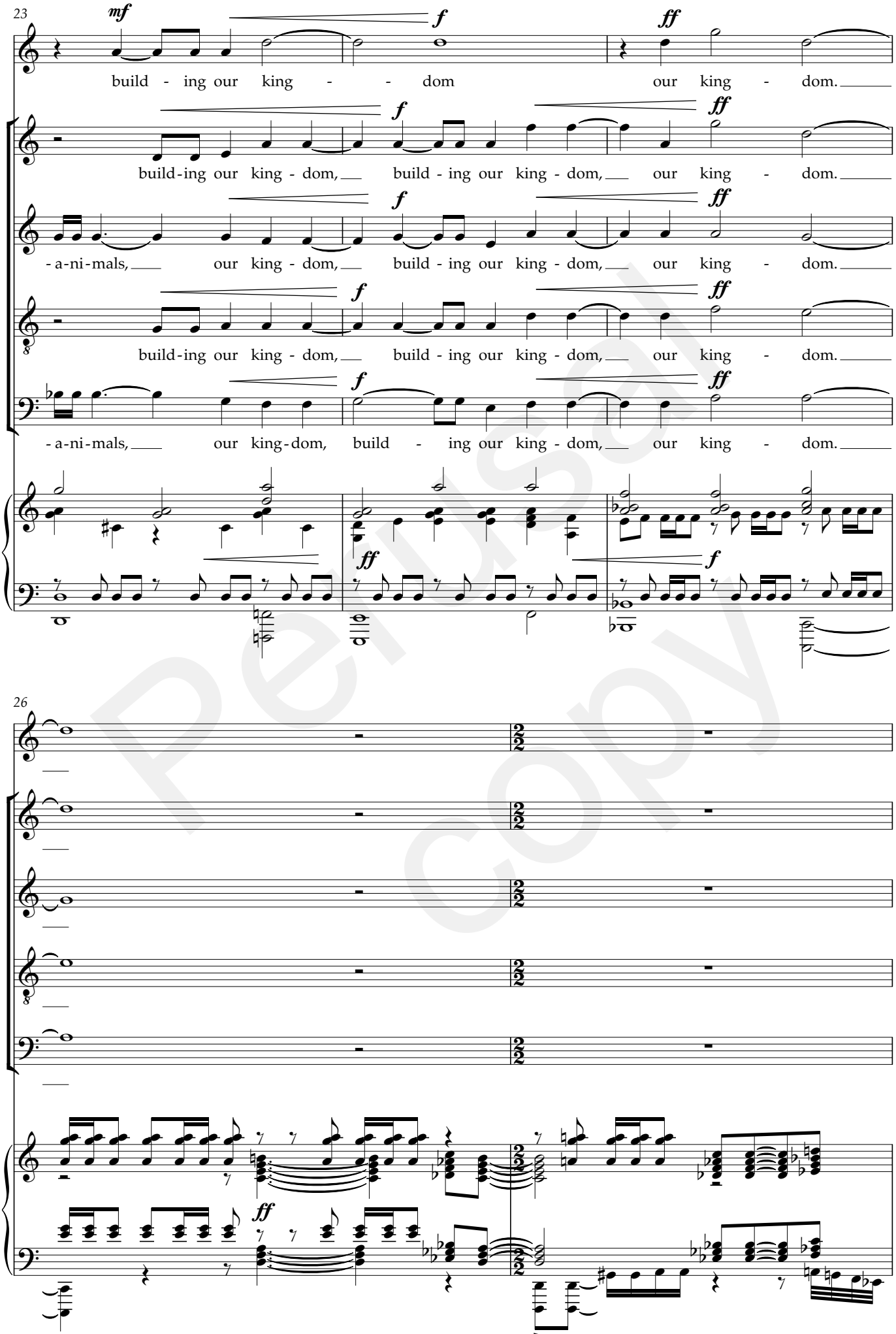
Perusal copy



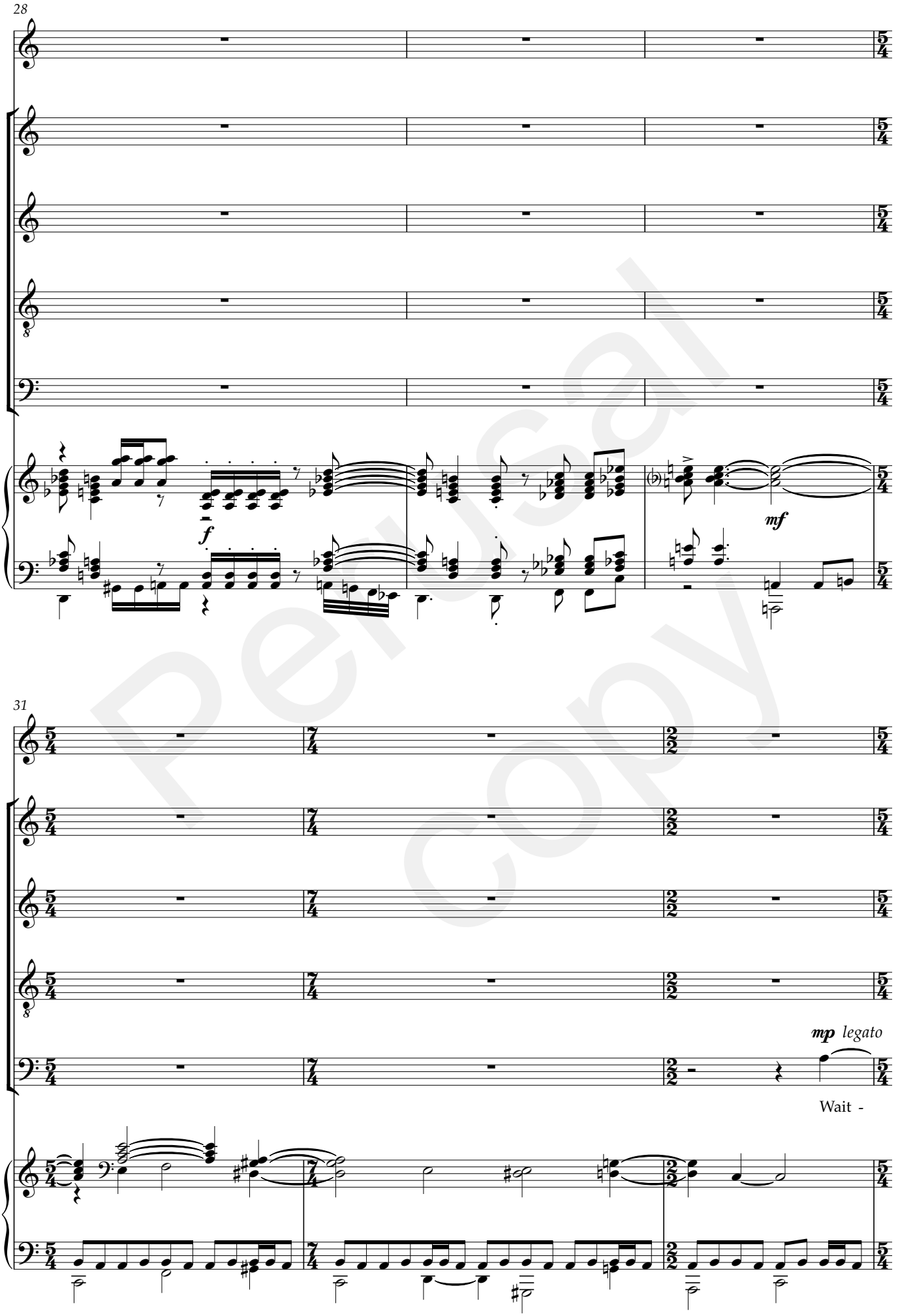
Perusal copy



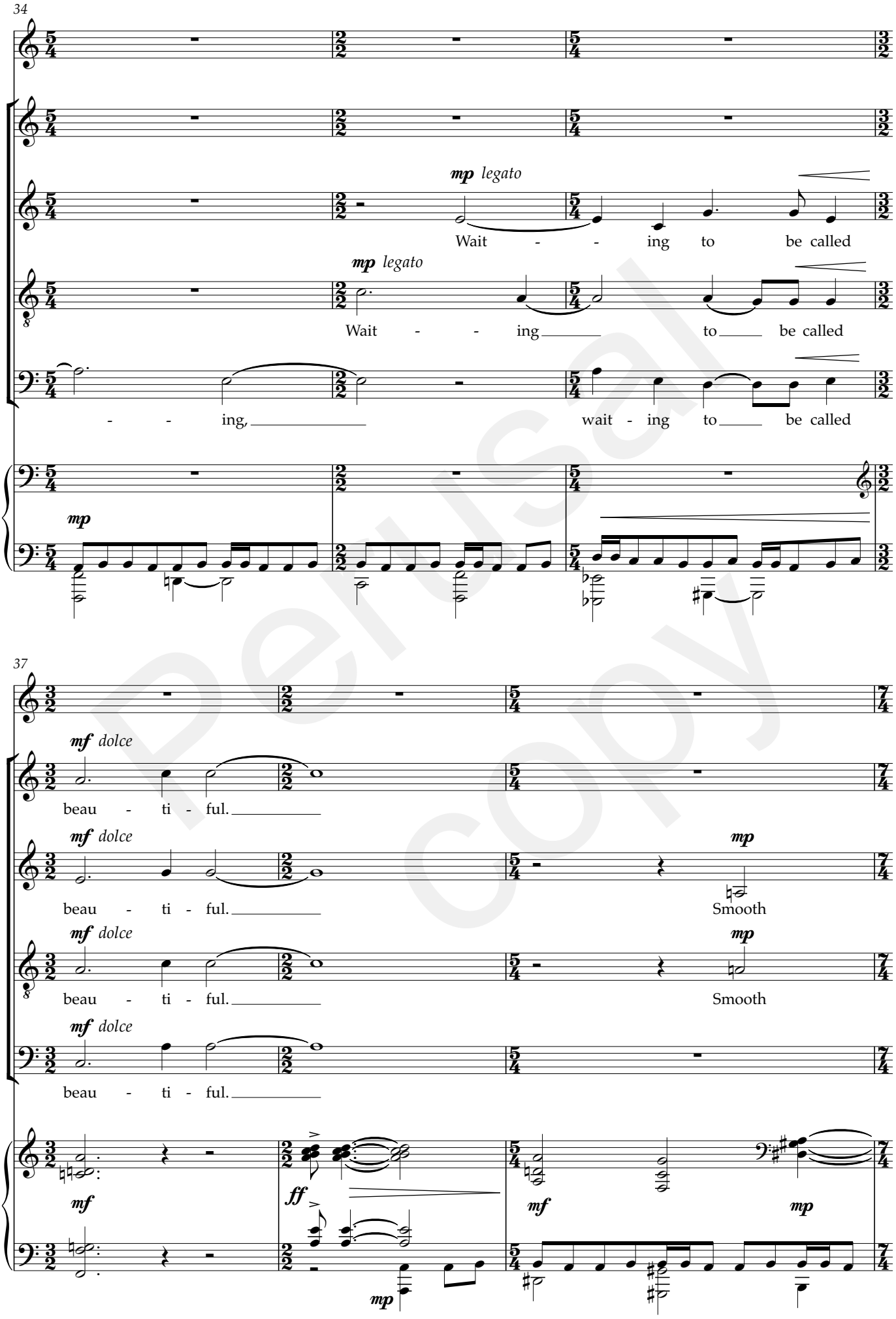
Perusal copy



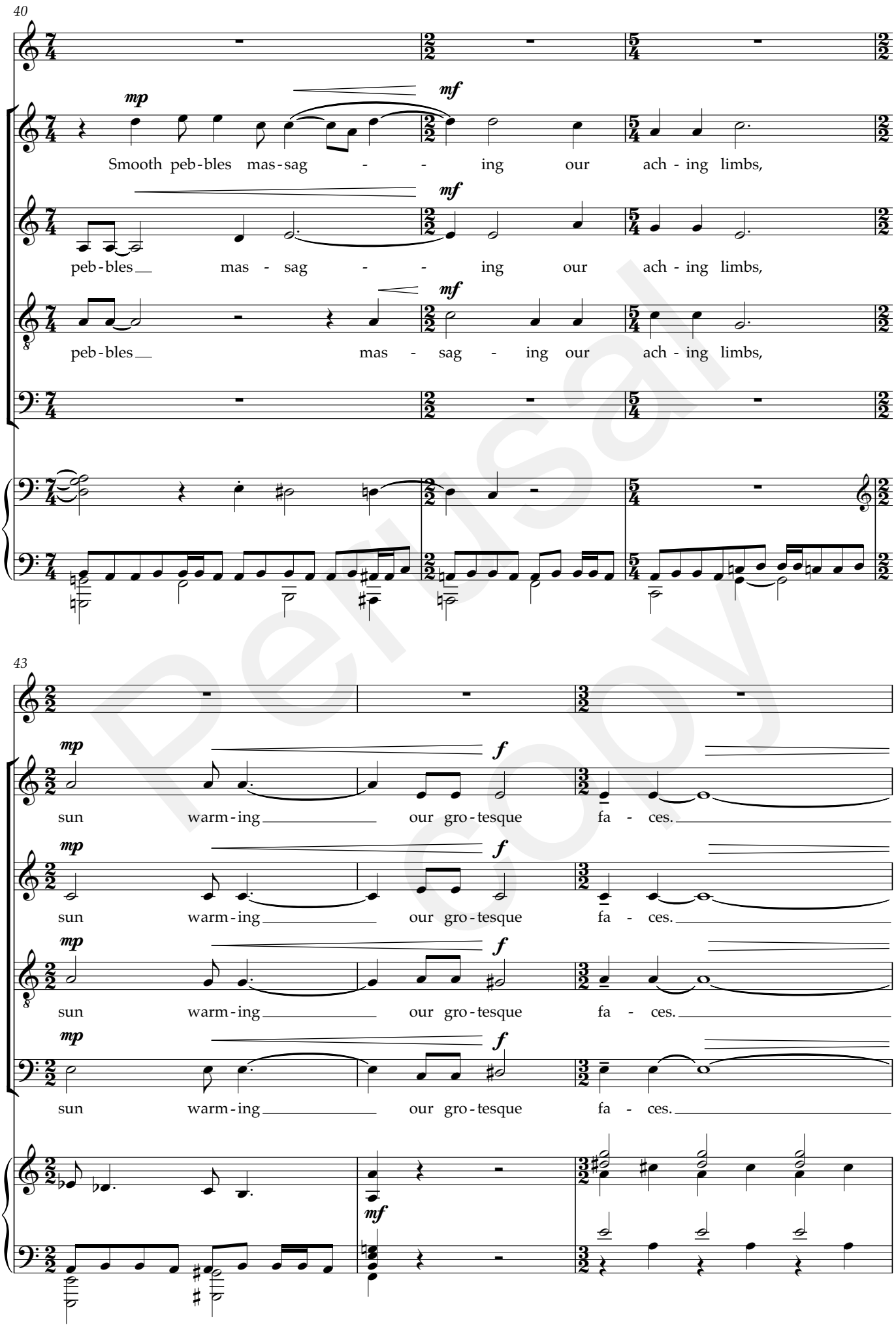
Perusal copy



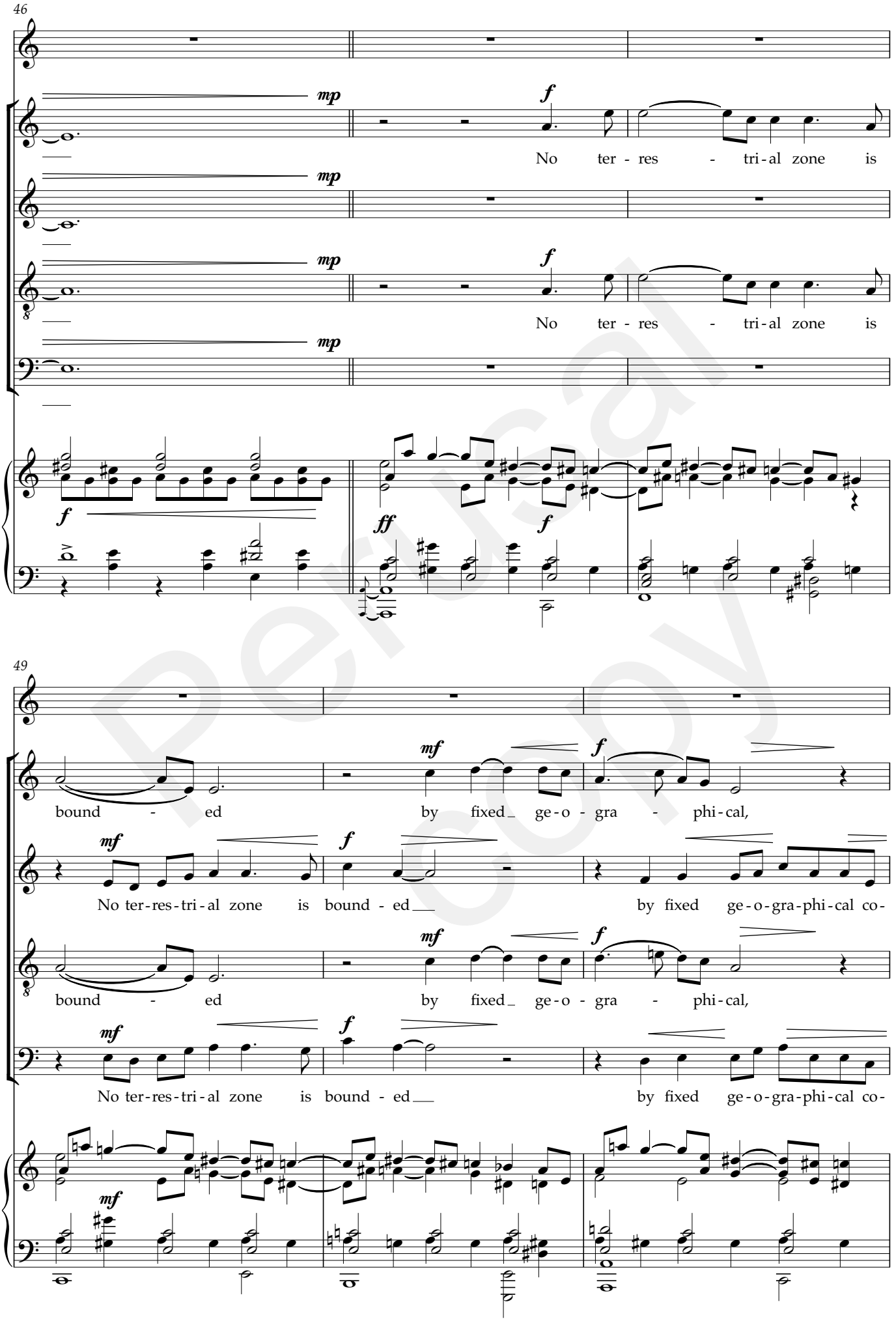
Perusal copy



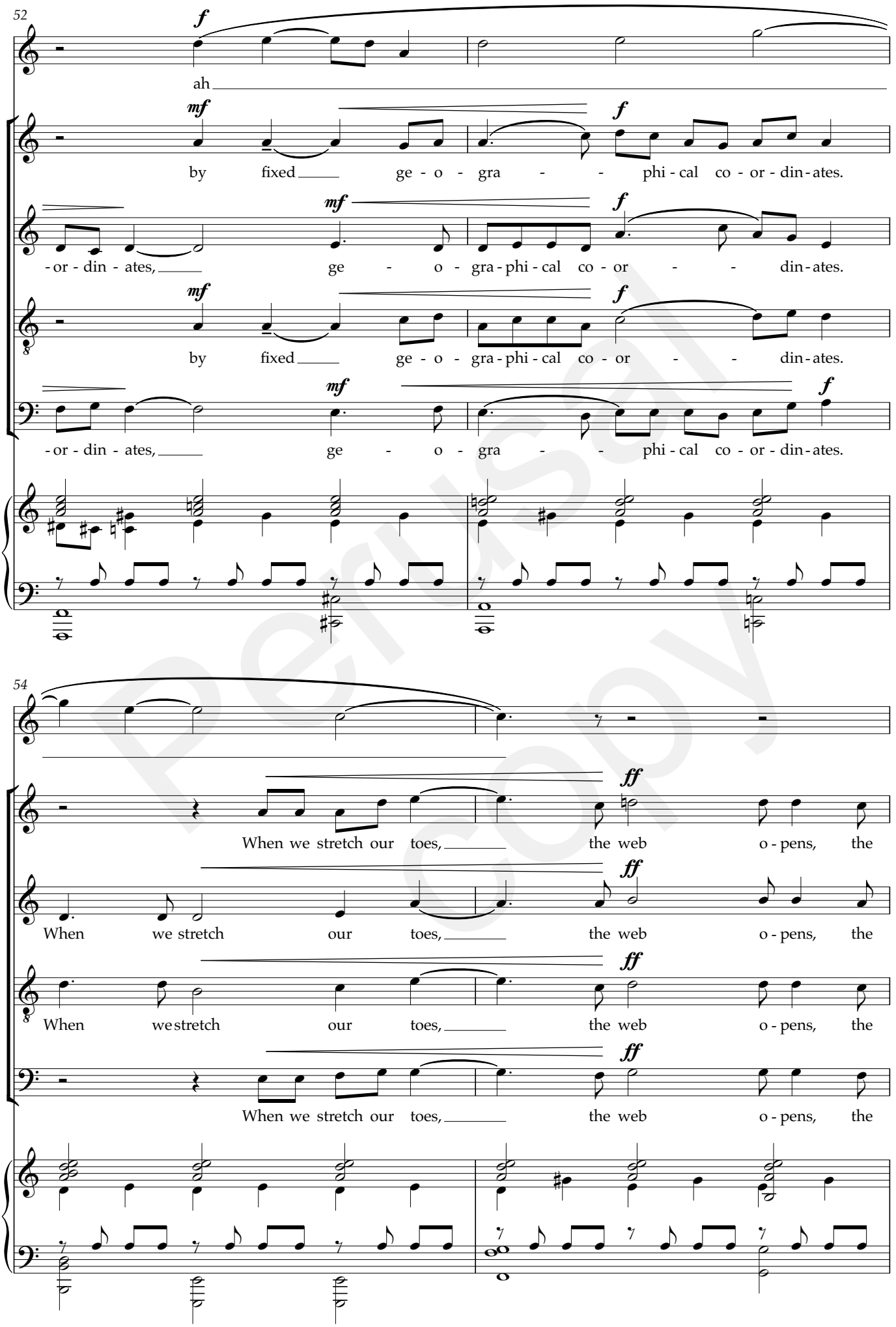
Perusal copy



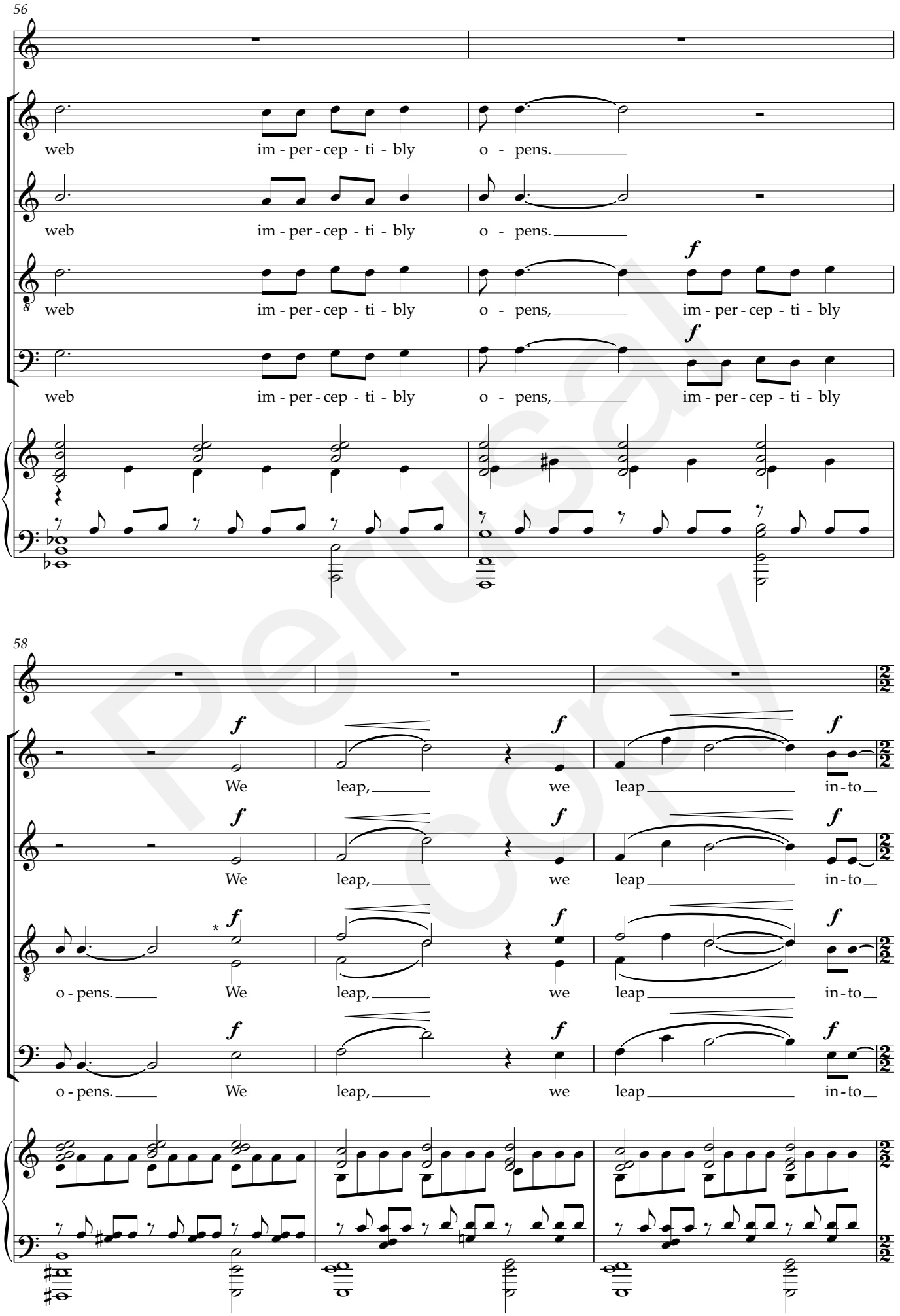
Perusal Copy



Perusal copy

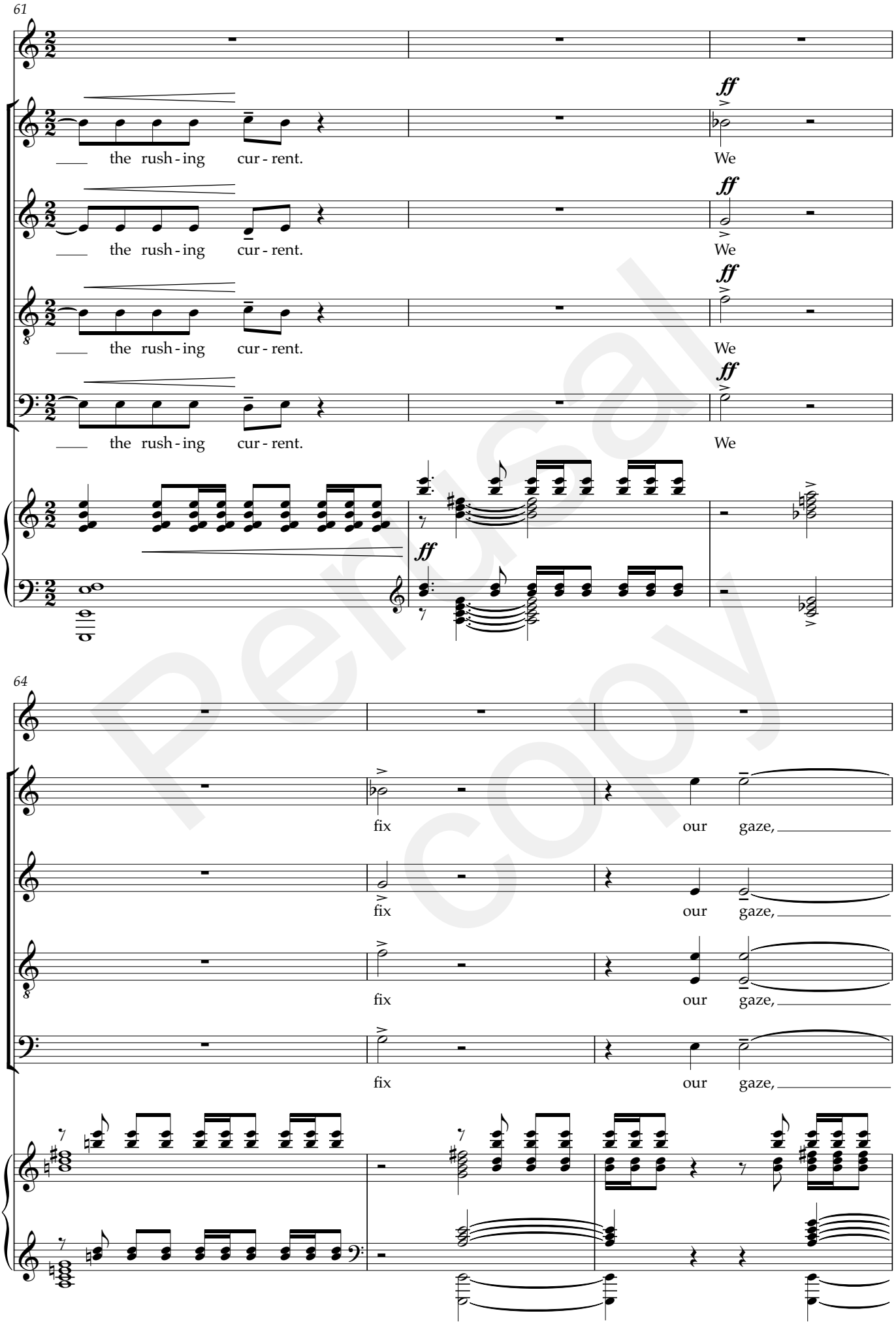


Perusal copy

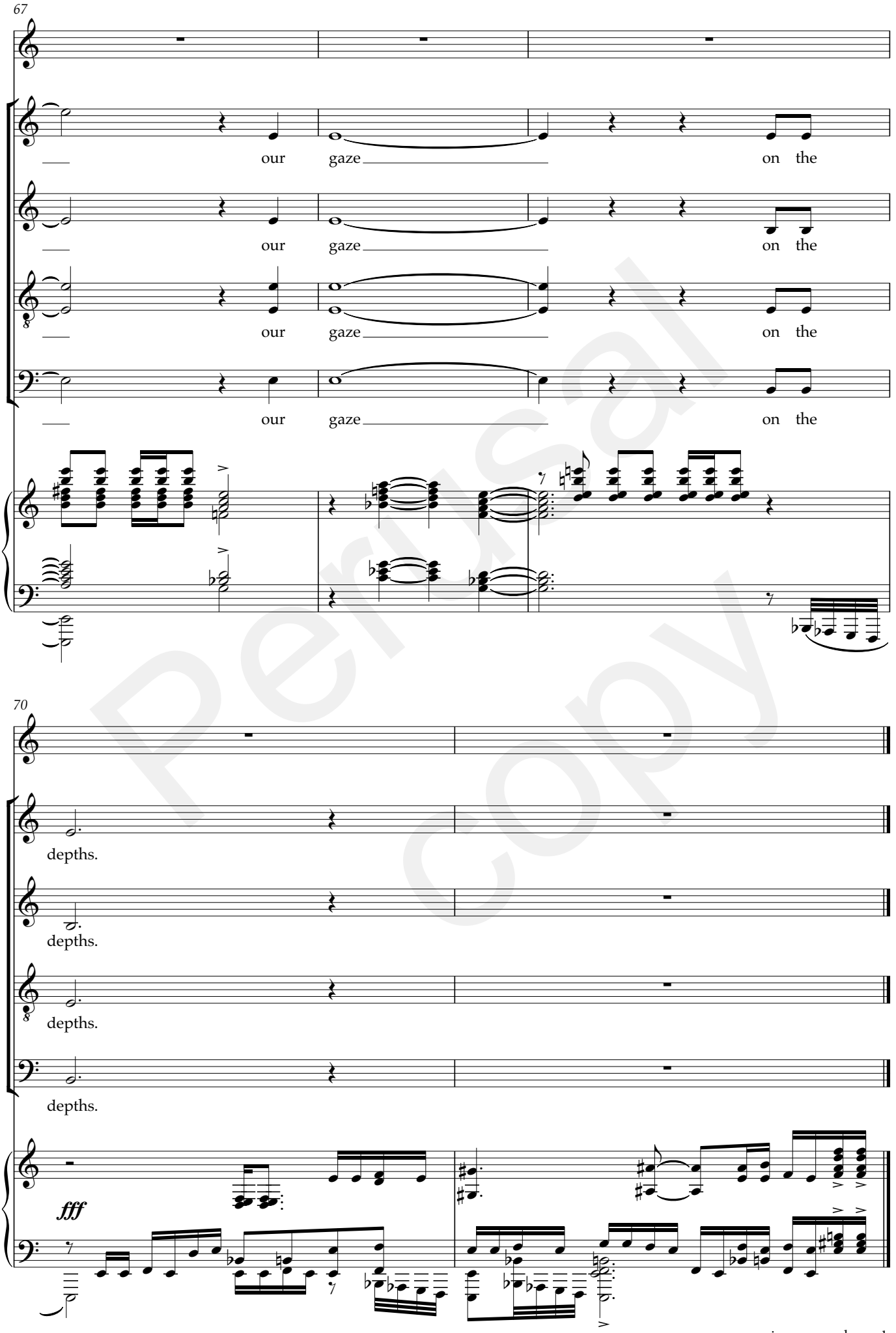


Perusal copy

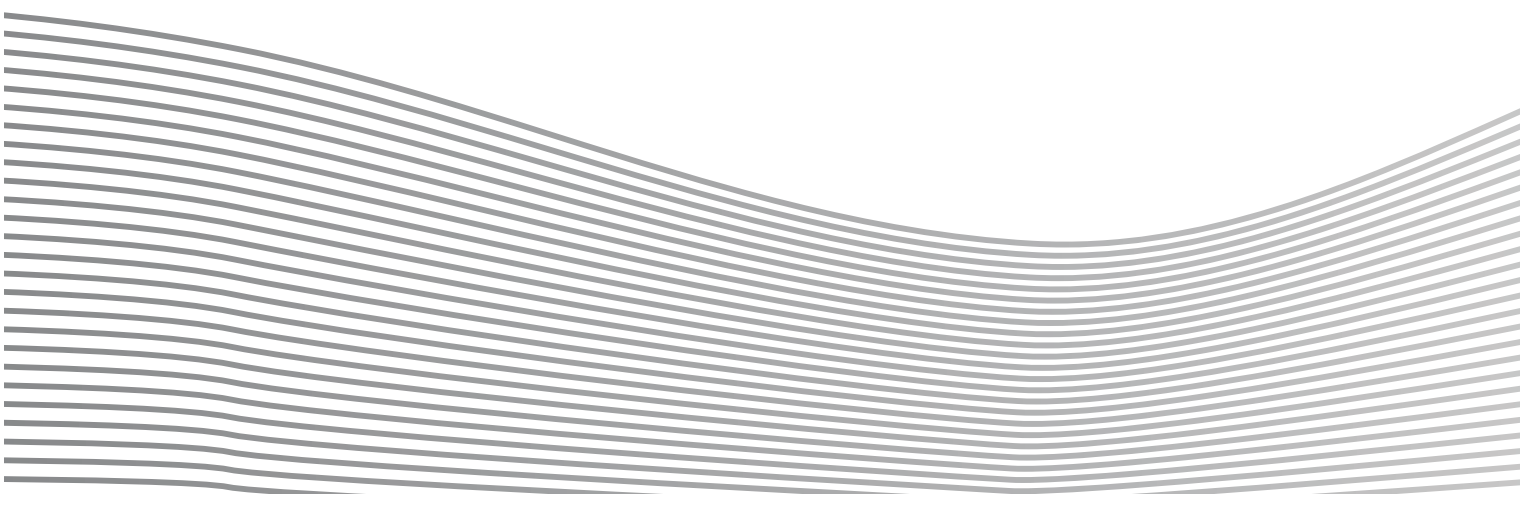
* Singers choose which pitch is more comfortable.



Personal copy



Perusal copy

Perusal copy

www.joannamarsh.co.uk