The Old Search for Hats

aria for mezzo-soprano and piano

Jeremy Gill

The Old Search for Hats

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text by Stephanie Fleischmann

Instrumentation

mezzo-soprano
piano

Duration

approximately 6 minutes

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Possibly we hear fragments of the call to Edward from the Hotellerie du Grand Cerf in Evreux. In which she uses code to admonish him not to abdicate. Followed by a scramble to the car. Wallis and Brownlow in the back seat, hunkered down low.

WALLIS

Well, the old search for hats story
has spun out of control, hasn't it?
Backfired,
like his majesty's Buick,
which just yesterday
carried me, racing across the Sussex Downs
blanketed in the thickest fog
that blighty isle has ever seen,
stretching all the way
across the channel
to Dieppe and on,
cloaking this piteous continent in a Schiapparelli stole
of a mist,
drenching me in a continent of woe

with only you to thank for escorting me
on this wild fishtail of a journey
away from all that,
away
from everything I have ever known or loved—
barreling towards
the never-ending search for hats,
the crowds of cameras
bottle-necking forgotten, empty towns,
causing us to swerve,
double-back on our route,
zig-zagging from Evreux to Orleans to Cannes.
I am,
I have lost my verve.

I left the country to get away
from him,
from what I did to *him*—
(and him—) *(meaning Ernest; internal, an aside)*
but no, you say,
he will follow me *(meaning the king)*
wherever I go.
In hot pursuit.
He will come,
he will let his kingdom go,
and still I must continue to serve
his every whim,
I must forgo
it all.

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Stephanie Fleischmann
(2018)

The Old Search for Hats

Jeremy Gill
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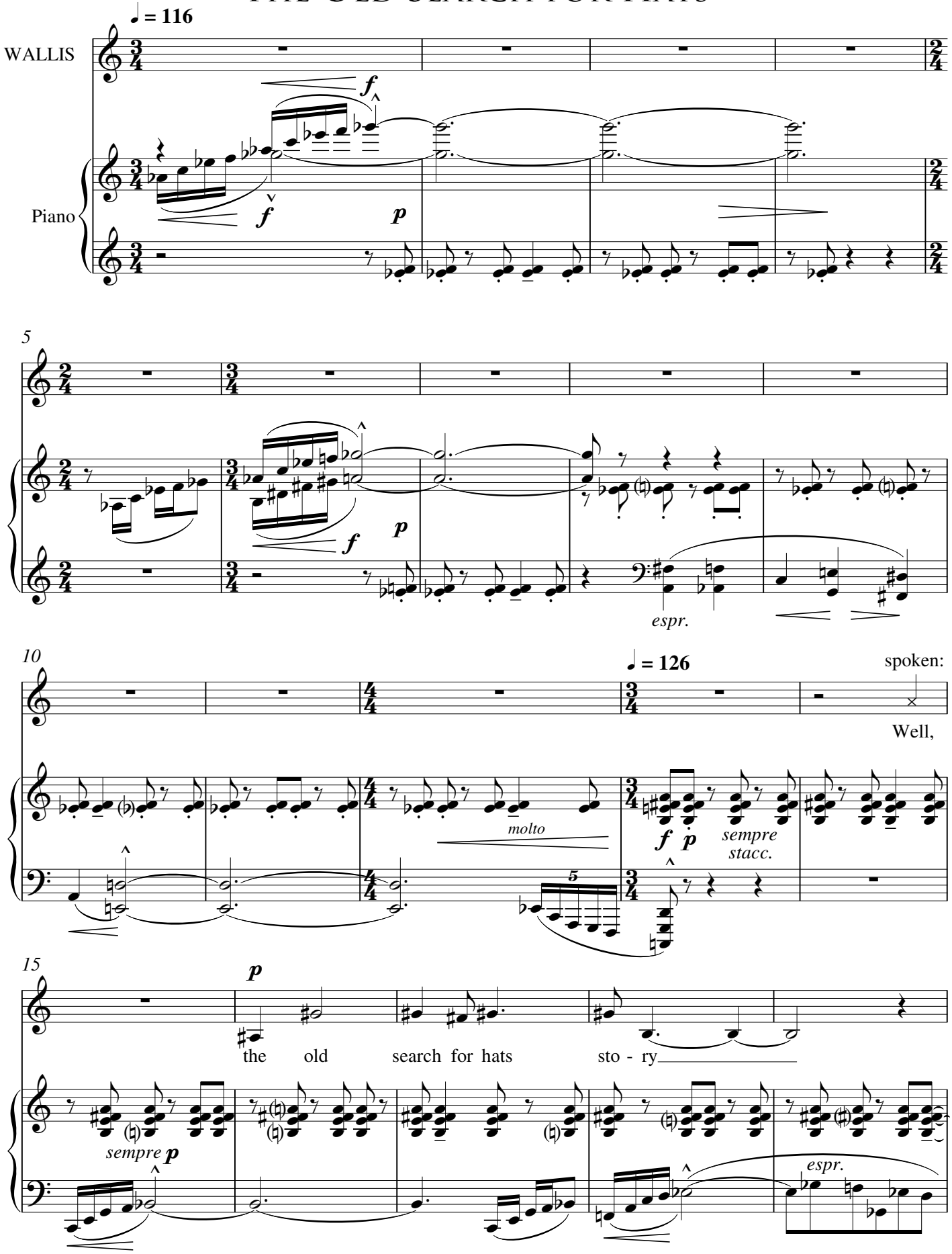

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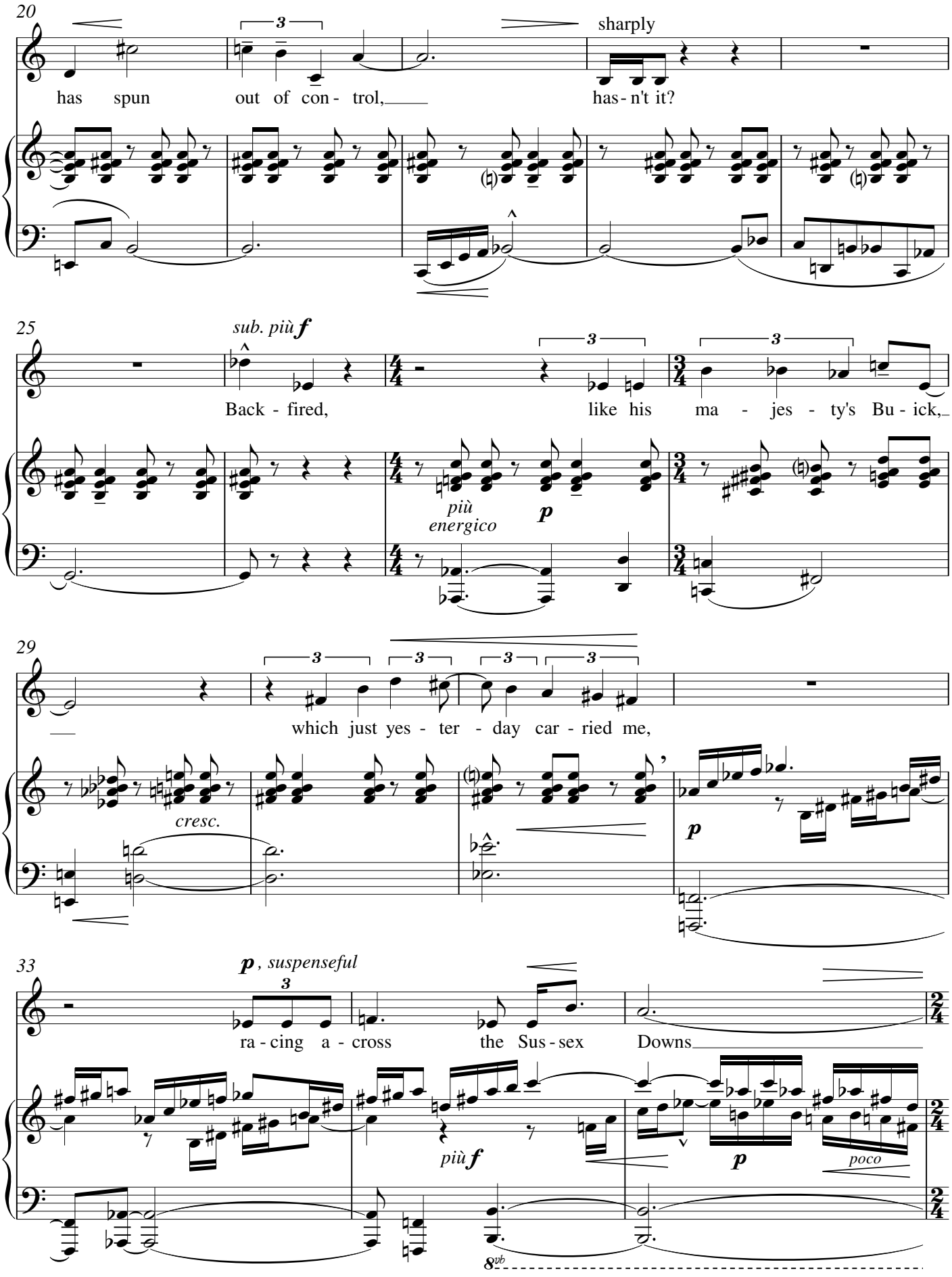
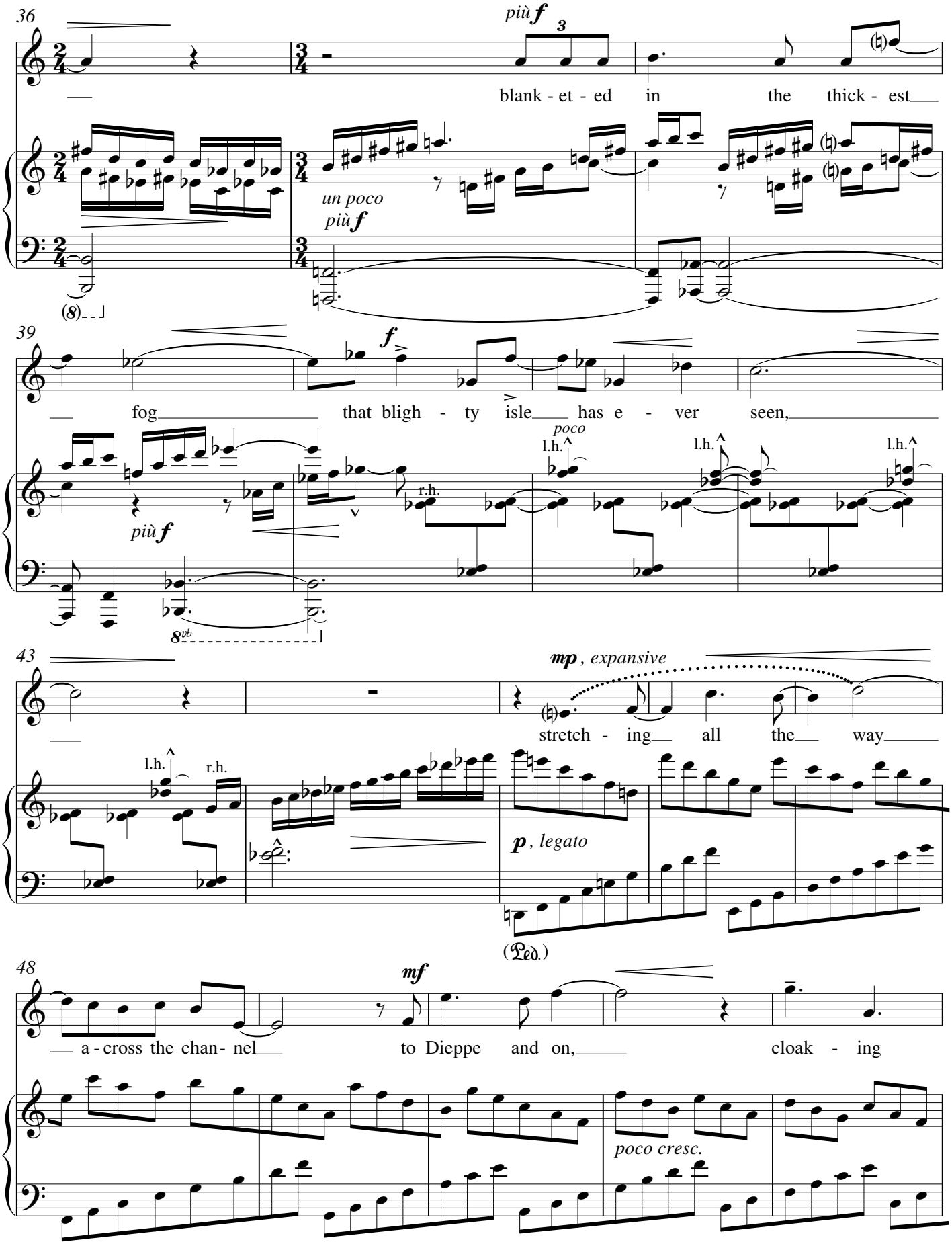
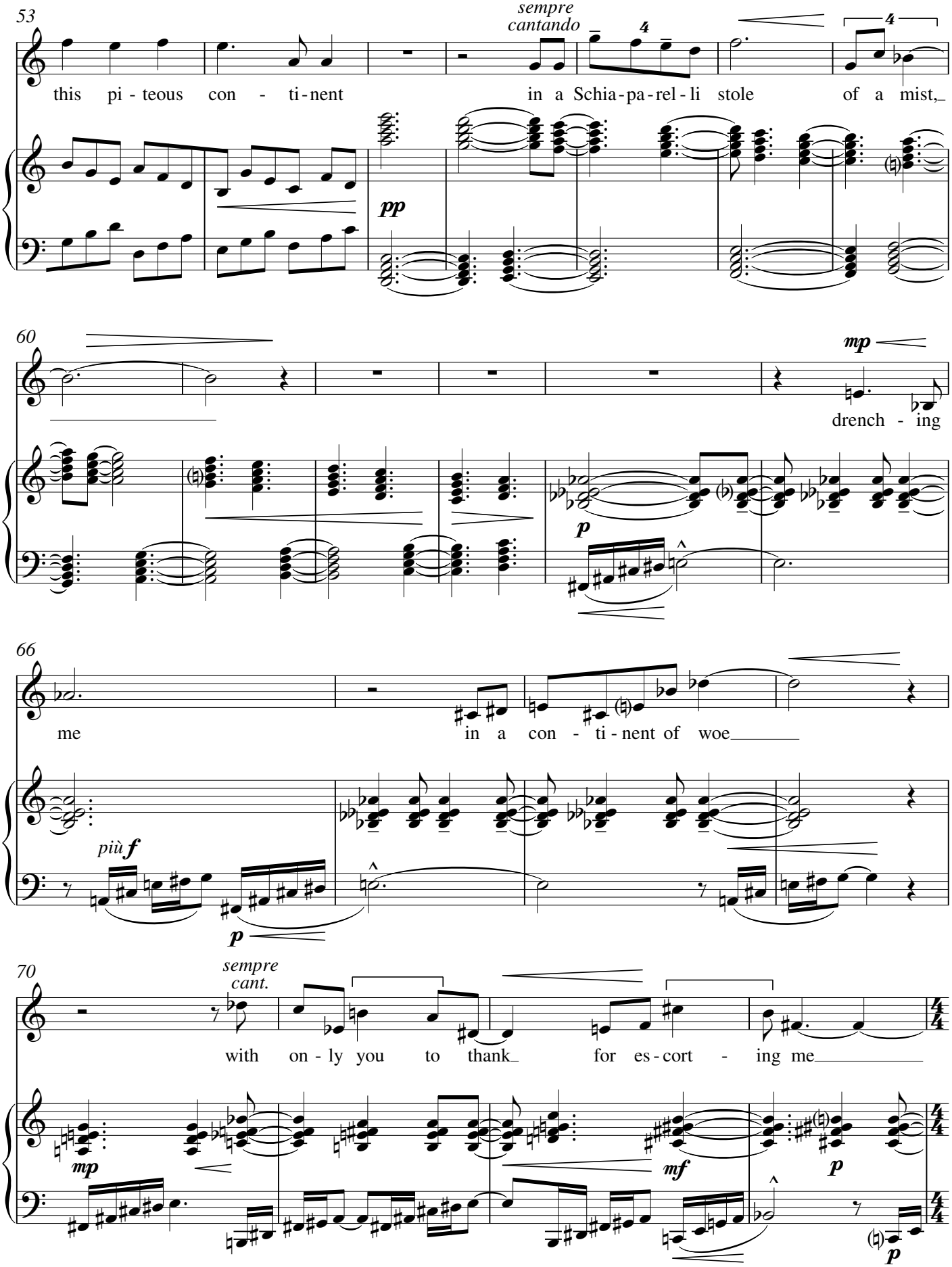
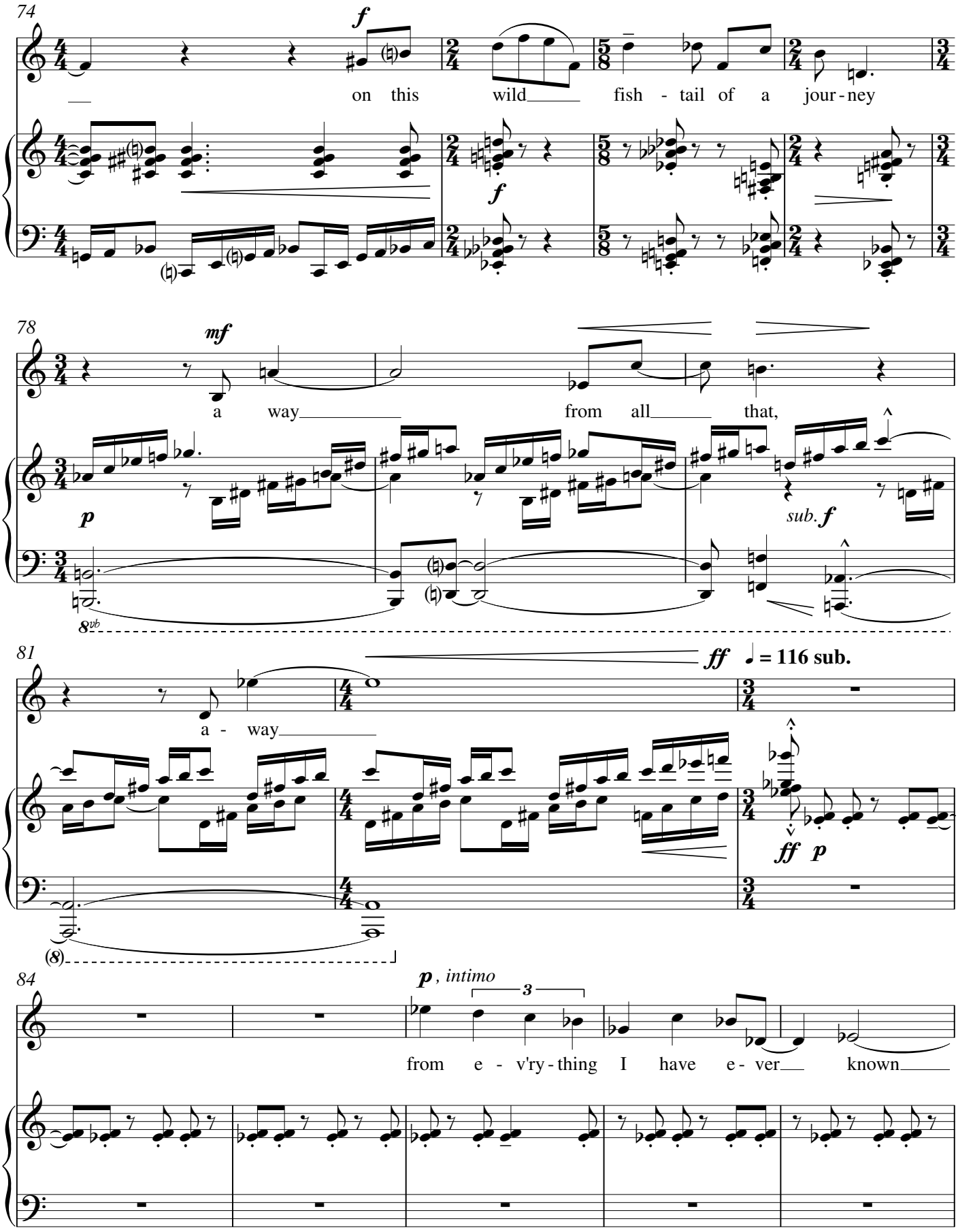
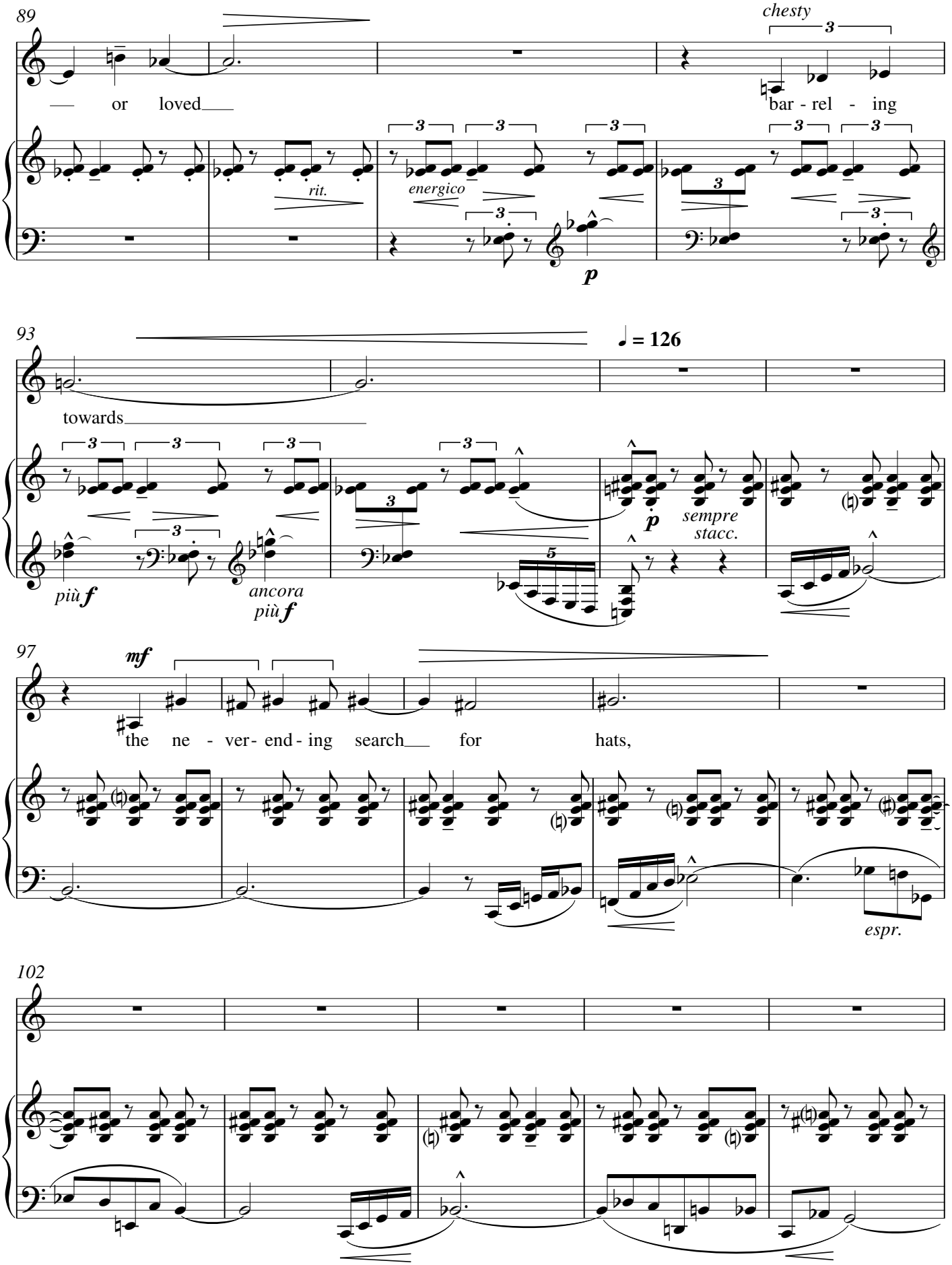
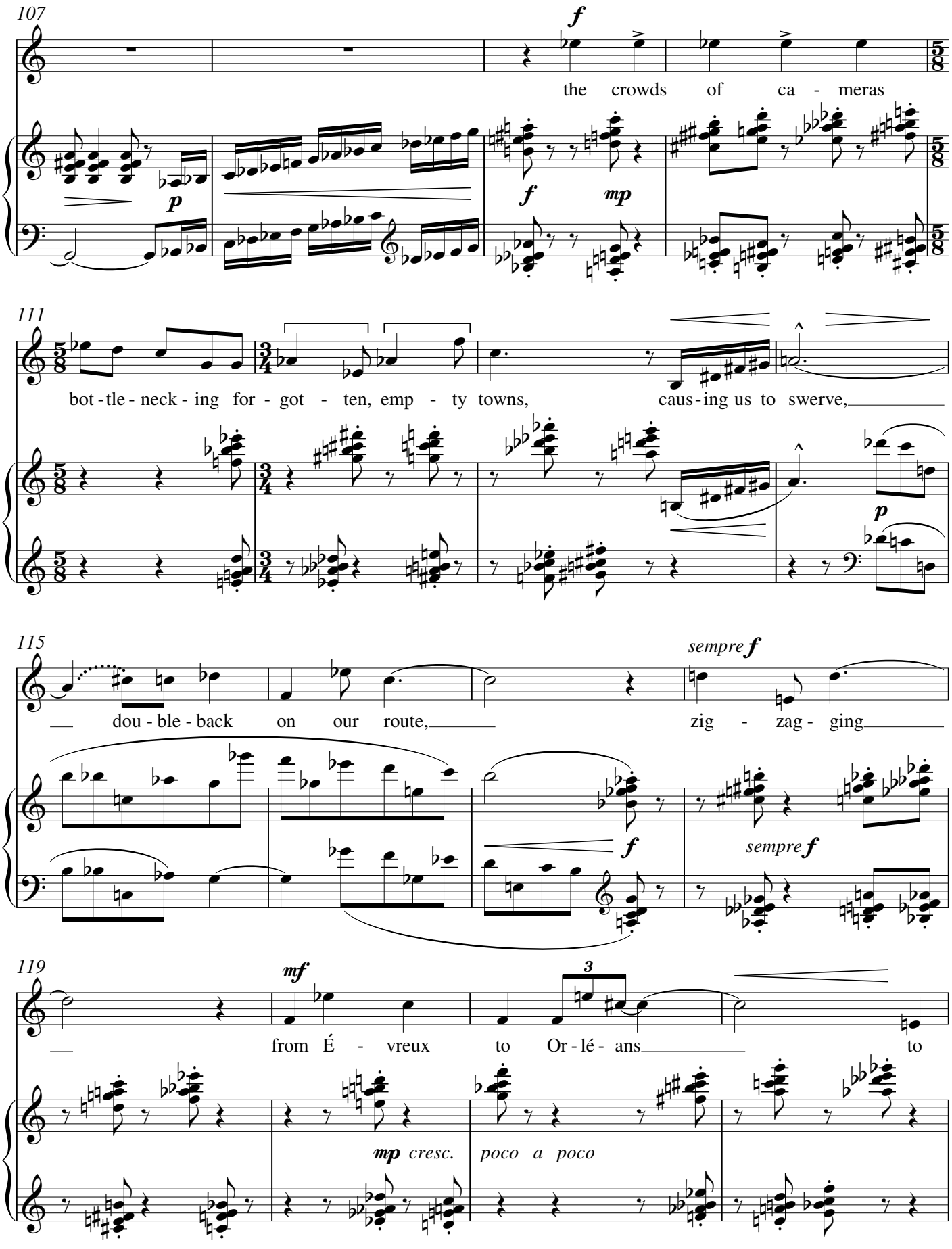

20
has spun out of con - trol,
sharply
has - n't it?
25
sub. più f
Back - fired,
like his ma - jes - ty's Bu - ick,
più energico
p
29
which just yes - ter - day car - ried me,
cresc.
p
33
p, suspenseful
ra - cing a - cross the Sus - sex Downs
più f
p
poco
8vb

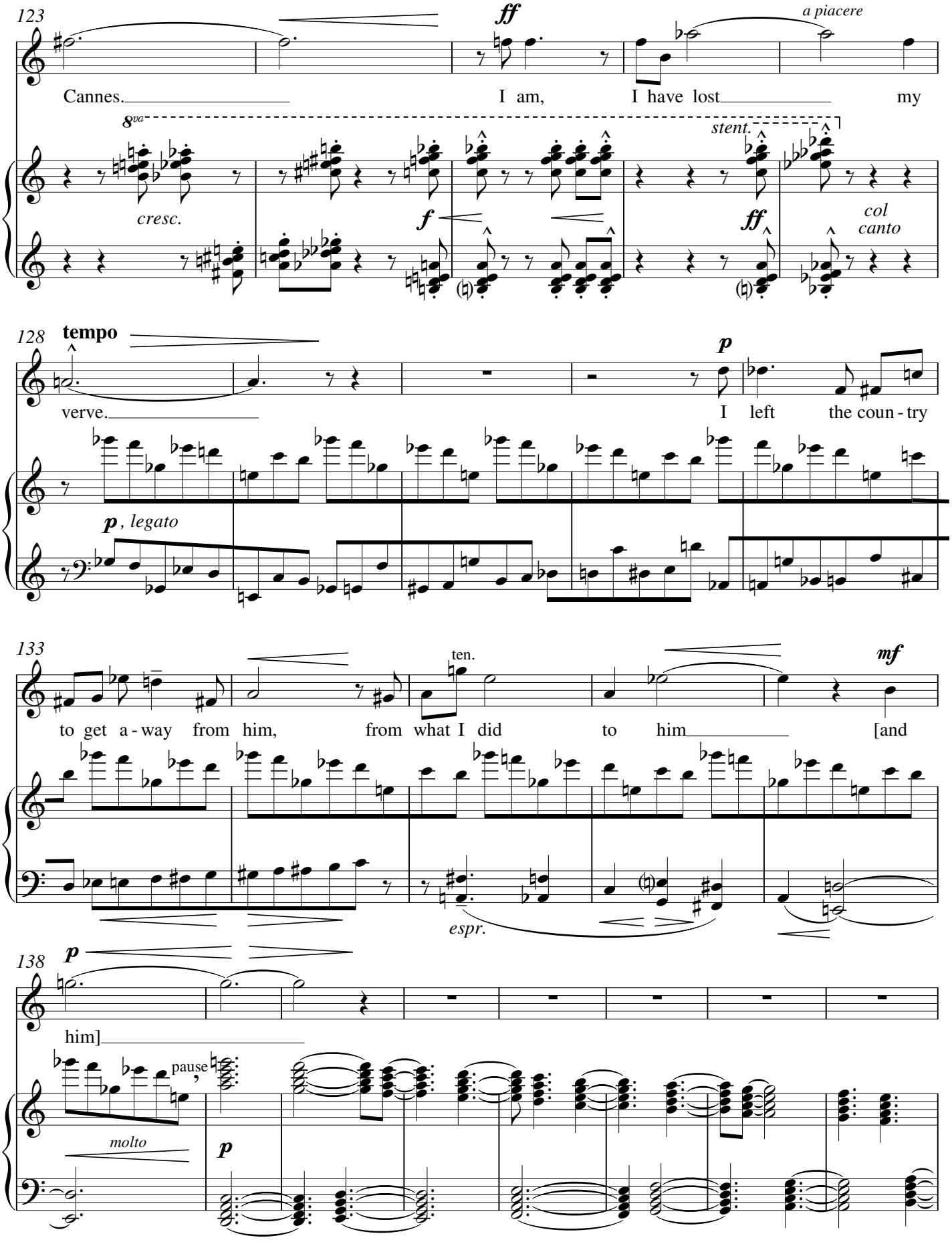

36
più f
blank - et - ed in the thick - est
un poco più f
39
f
fog that bligh - ty isle has e - ver seen,
più f
poco
l.h.
r.h.
8vb
43
mp, expansive
stretch - ing all the way
p, legato
(Ped.)
48
mf
a - cross the chan - nel to Dieppe and on, cloak - ing
poco cresc.

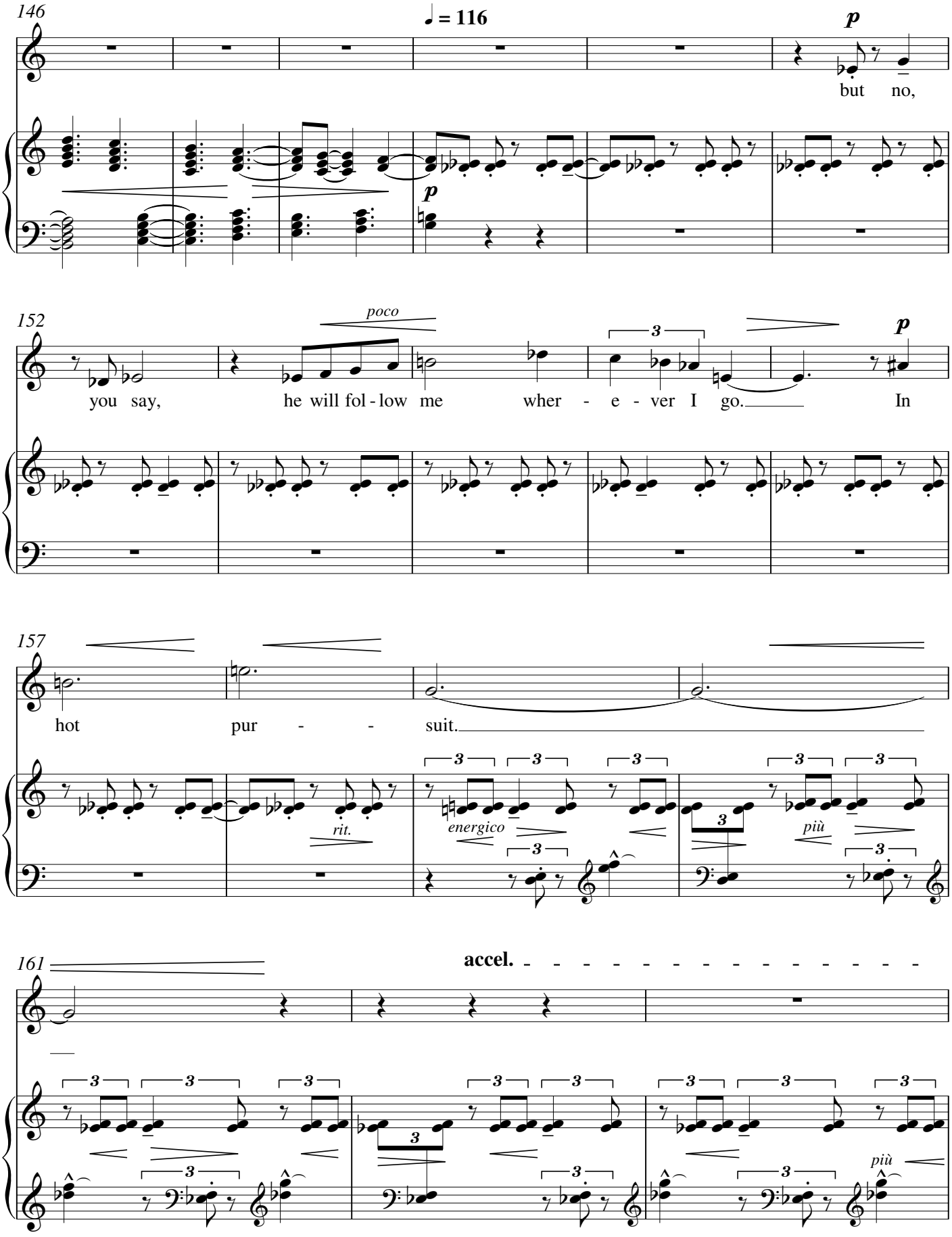

53
sempre
cantando
this pi - teous con - ti - nent
in a Schia - pa - rel - li stole
of a mist,
pp
60
mp
drench - ing
p
66
me
in a con - ti - nent of woe
più f
p
70
sempre
cant.
with on - ly you to thank
for es - cort - ing me
mp
mf
p
p

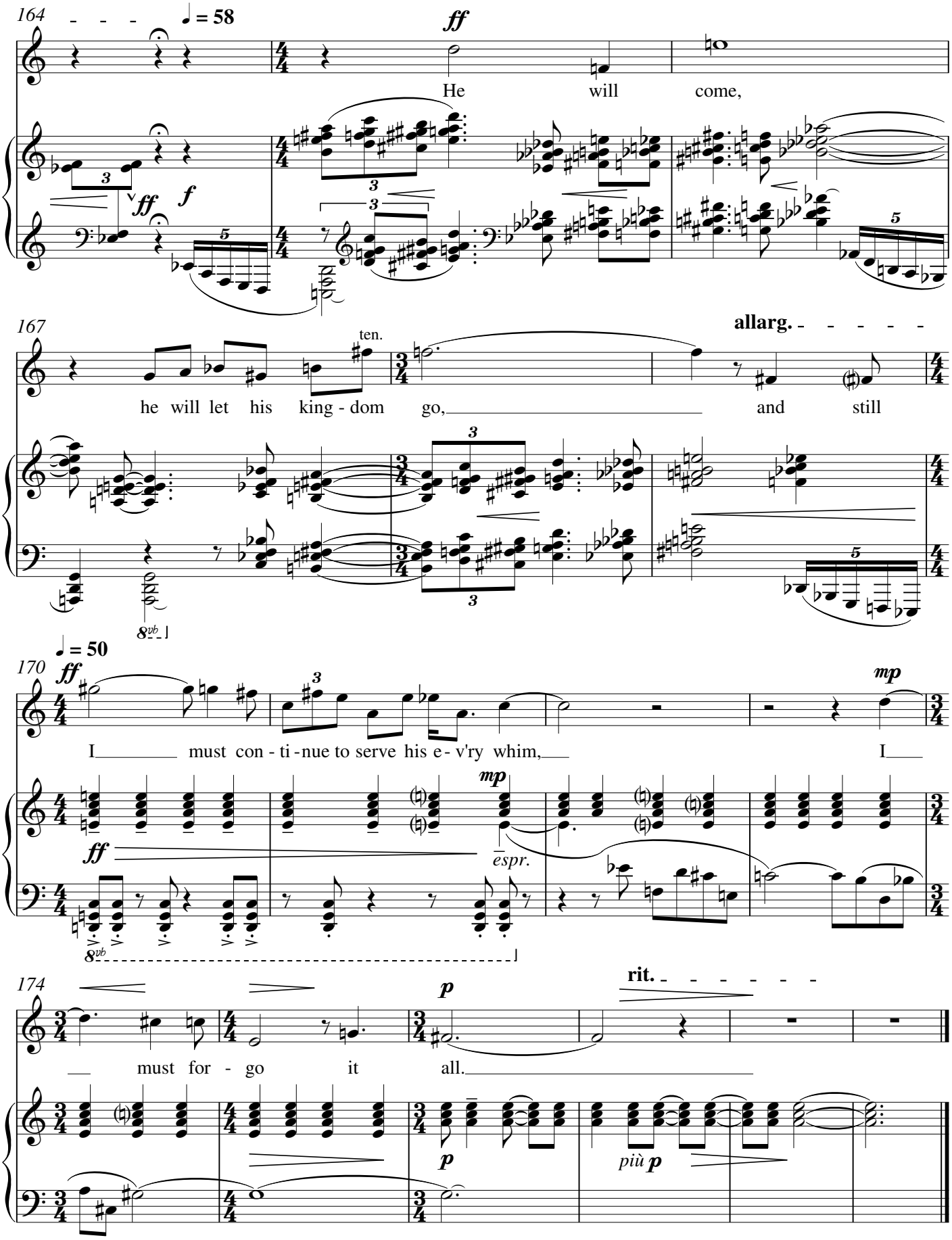

74
f
on this wild fish - tail of a jour - ney
78
mf
a way from all that,
p
sub. f
8vb
81
ff
= 116 sub.
a - way
ff p
(8)
84
p, intimo
3
from e - v'ry - thing I have e - ver known


89
chesty
— or loved—
bar - rel - ing
rit.
energico
p
93
towards—
♩ = 126
più f
ancora più f
p
sempre stacc.
97
mf
the ne - ver- end - ing search— for hats,
espr.
102


107
f
the crowds of ca - meras
p
f
mp
111
bot - tle - neck - ing for - got - ten, emp - ty towns, caus - ing us to swerve,
p
115
sempre f
dou - ble - back on our route, zig - zag - ging
f
sempre f
119
mf
from É - vreux to Or - lé - ans to
3
mp cresc.
poco a poco


123
ff
a piacere
Cannes.
I am,
I have lost
my
8va
stent.
cresc.
f
ff
col
canto
128
tempo
p
verve.
I left
the coun - try
p, legato
133
ten.
mf
to get a - way from him,
from what I did
to him
[and
espr.
138
p
him]
pause
molto
p


146
♩ = 116
p
but no,
p
152
poco
you say, he will fol - low me wher - e - ver I go. In
p
157
hot pur - - suit.
rit.
energico
più
161
accel.
più


164
♩ = 58
ff
He will come,
f
167
ten.
allarg.
he will let his king - dom go, and still
8vb
♩ = 50
170
ff
I must con - ti - nue to serve his e - v'ry whim, I
mp
espr.
8vb
174
p
rit.
must for - go it all.
p
più p