LIBBY LARSEN

PHARAOH SONGS

for Baritone and Piano

FULL SCORE

translated from the ancient Egyptian
by John L. Foster

Perusal

KENWOOD EDITIONS

Libby Larsen

PHARAOH SONGS

for Baritone and Piano

Premiered by Alan Dunbar, baritone, and Mark Bilyeu, piano
August 7, 2017
Source Song Festival
Sundin Hall, Hamline University, St. Paul, Minnesota

PROGRAM NOTE

In 2003, browsing the shelves of poetry at one of my favorite book stores, I came across a volume of ancient Egyptian love poems, translated into English by John L. Foster. I took the book off the shelf and opened it. As it happens, though not nearly as often as I wish it would, the poems literally sang off the page. Some were sensual, some were quite funny, all of them were as relevant to today as they were to 1300 BC when they were created. I knew that I wanted to work with these poems as much and as often as I could. An opportunity presented itself in a commission from Lotte Lehmann Foundation, for which I set I love you through the daytimes. Ever since then I've been hungry to make a grouping of them. Pharaoh Songs, for bass/baritone and piano, sets five more of the poems. I created a loose, fantasized narrative which exists solely in the mind of the lover. Desire, fantasy, tension, frustration, reunion and fulfillment are projected on the object of the lover's desire.

My thanks to Mark Bilyeu and Clara Osowski for giving me the opportunity to create Pharaoh Songs, and to Alan Dunbar for his willingness to travel back in time (way back) to inhabit the poems and become love-lorn in ancient Egypt.

~Libby Larsen

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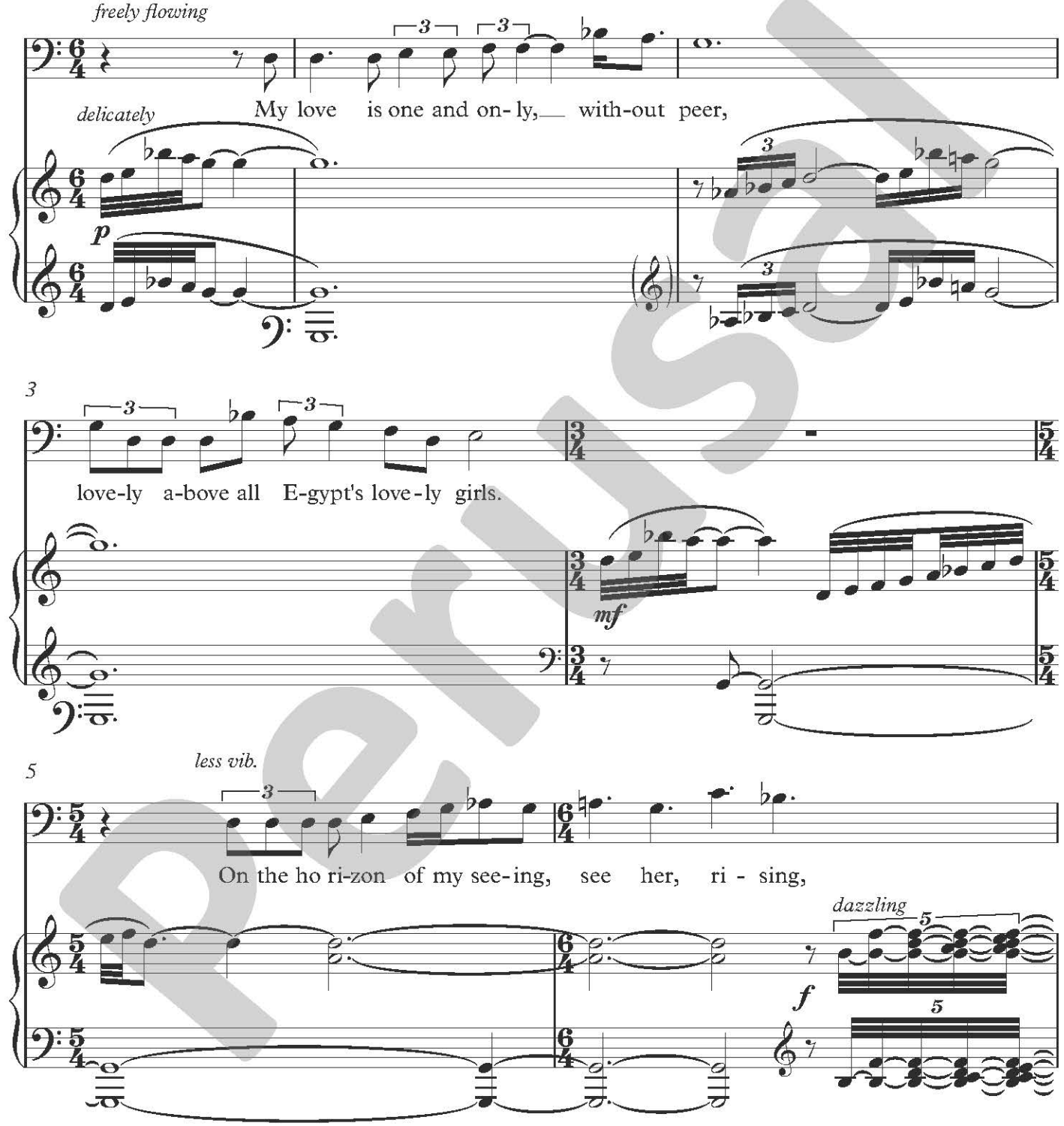
Perusal

My love is one and only, without peer

Translated from
the ancient Egyptian
by John L. Foster

Libby Larsen



Perusal

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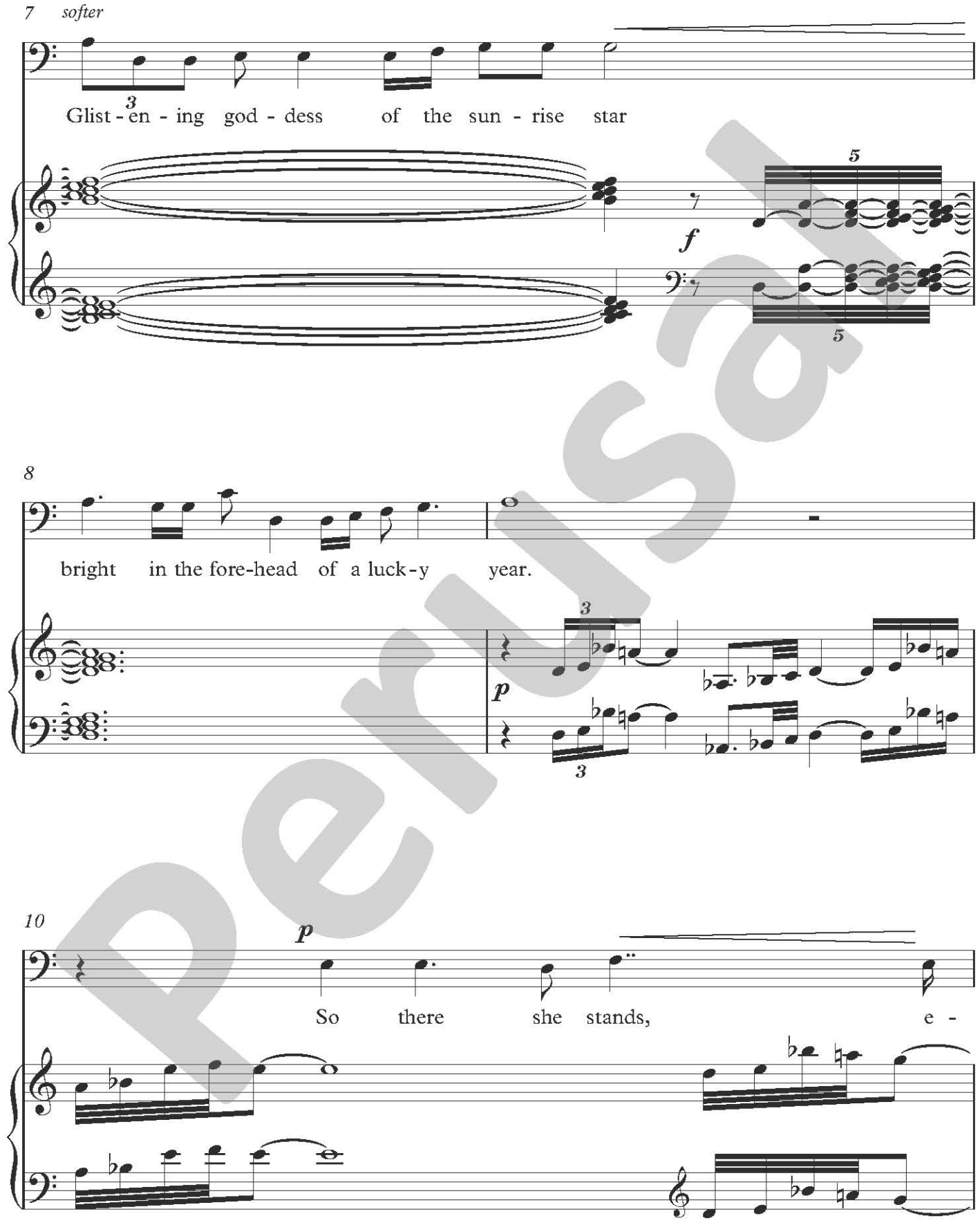
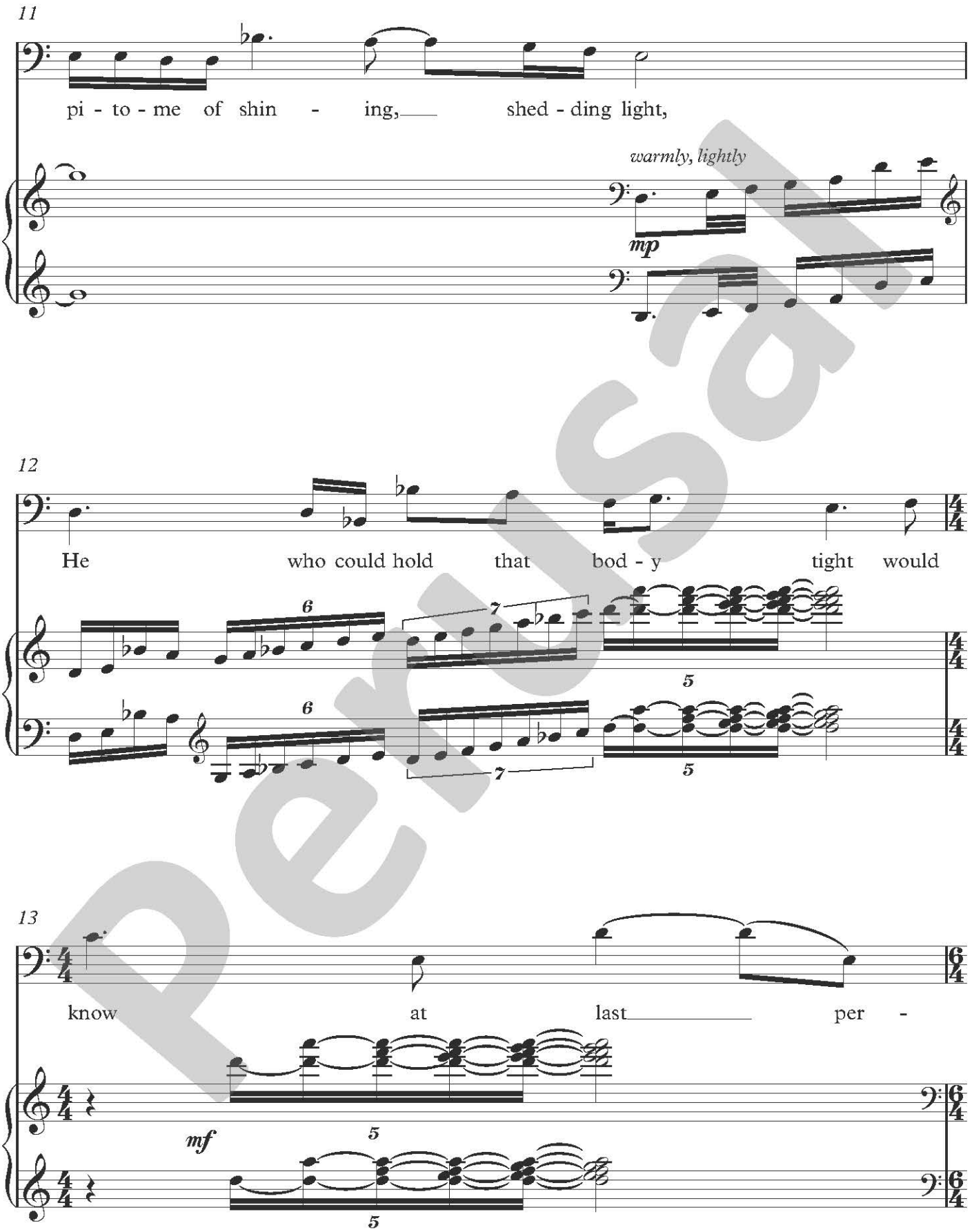
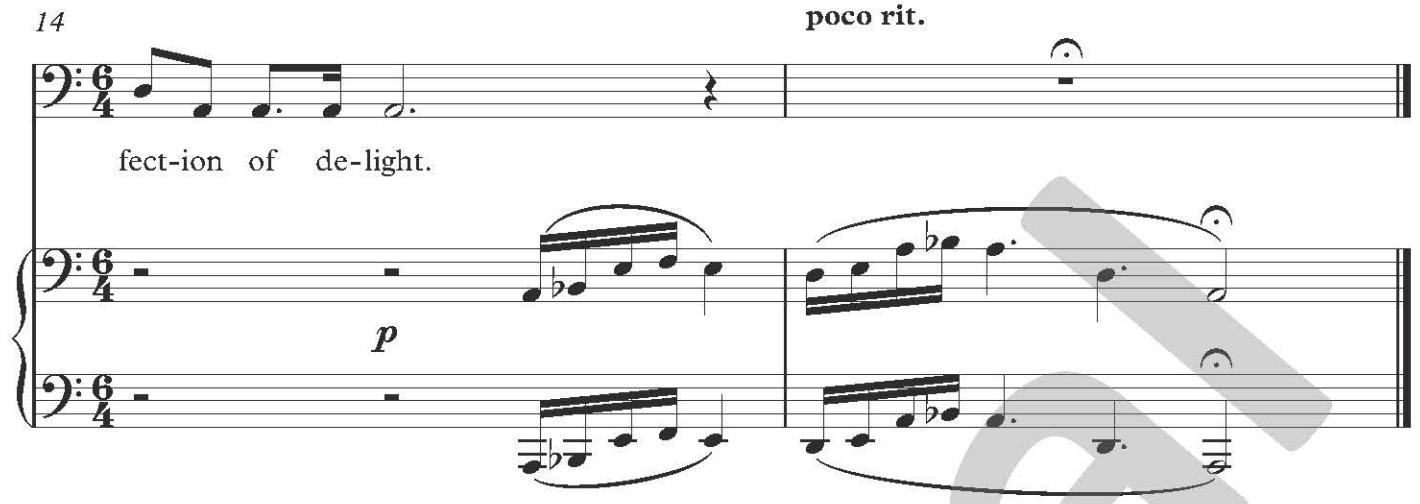

7 softer
Glist - en - ing god - dess of the sun - rise star
f
8
bright in the fore-head of a luck - y year.
p
10
p
So there she stands, e -

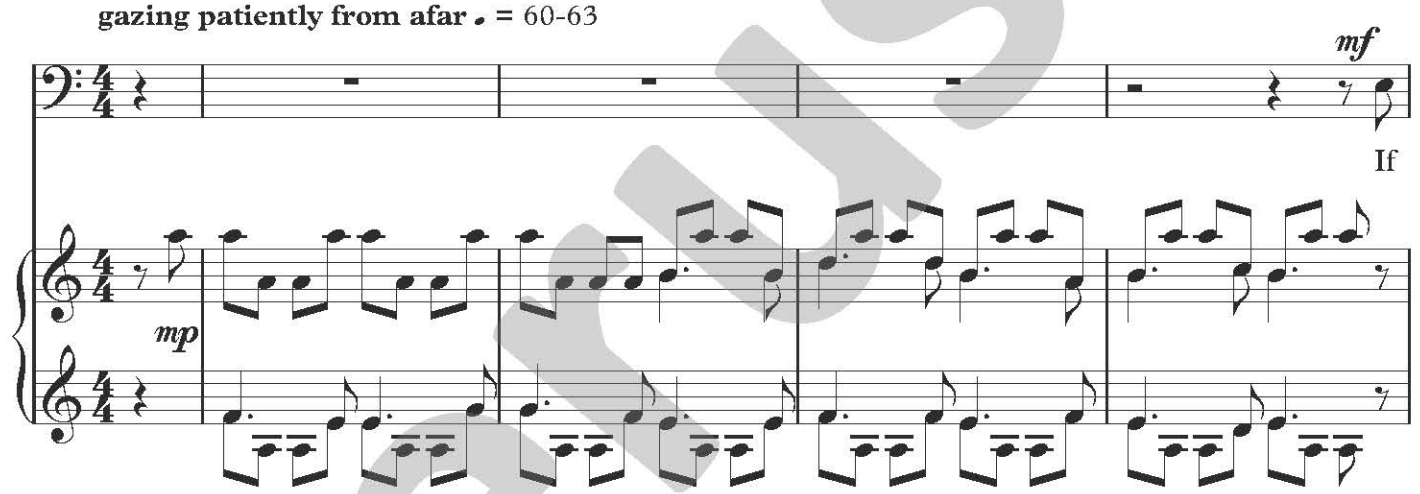
Perusal

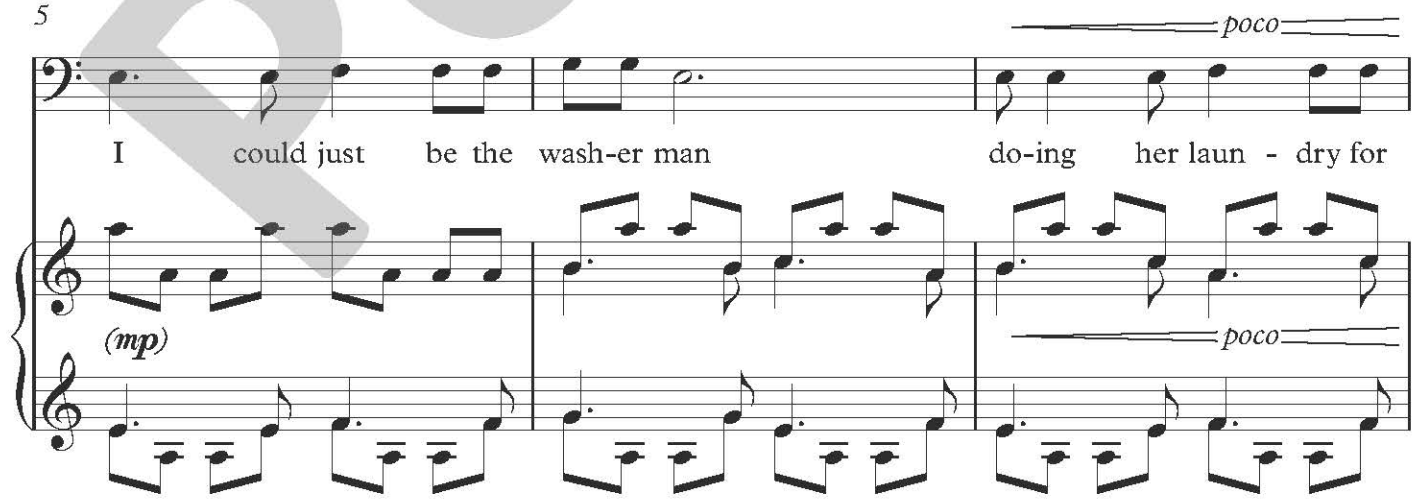

11
pi - to - me of shin - ing, shed - ding light,
warmly, lightly
mp
12
He who could hold that bod - y tight would
6
7
5
6
7
5
13
know at last per -
mf
5
5

Perusal



If I could just be the washerman





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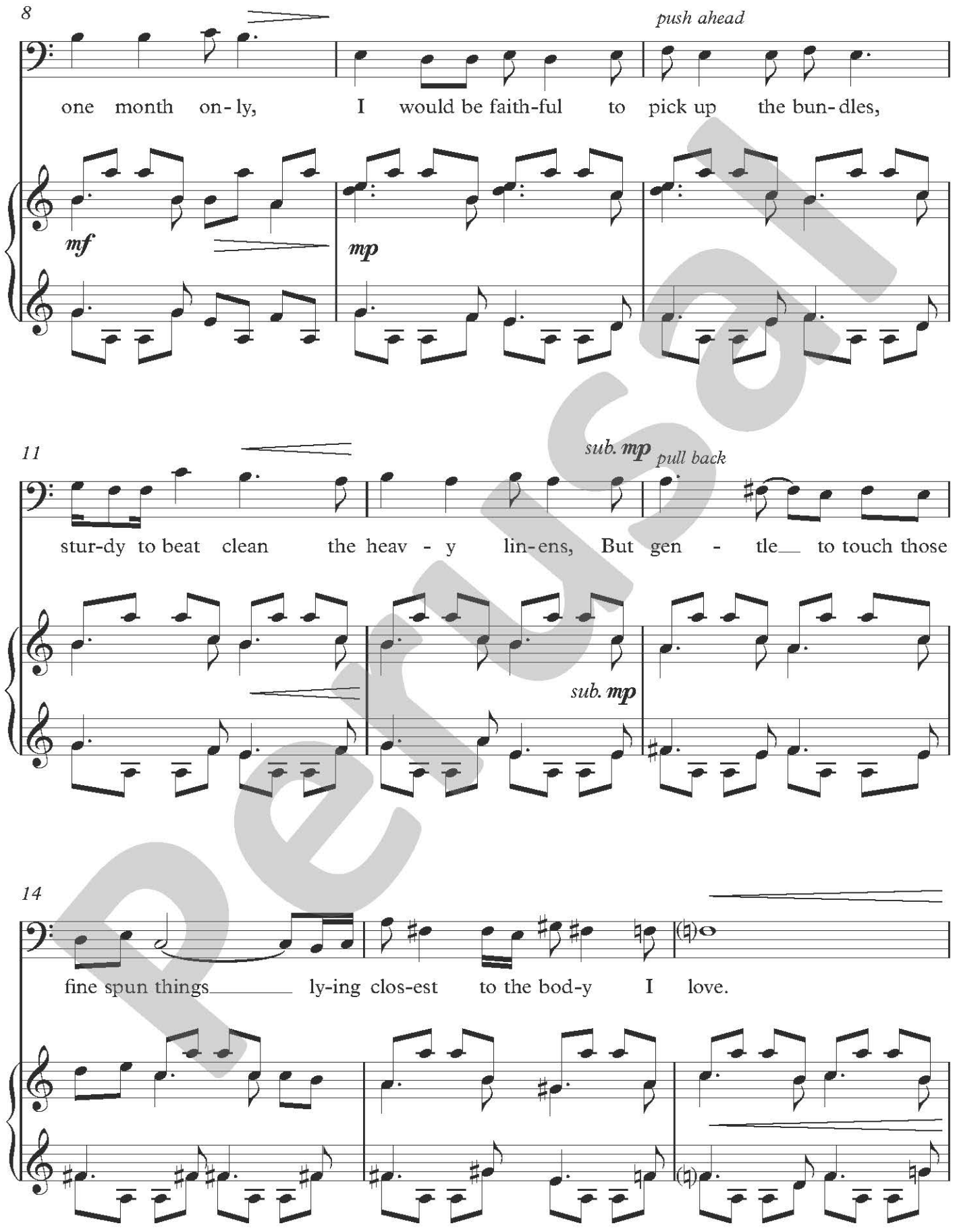
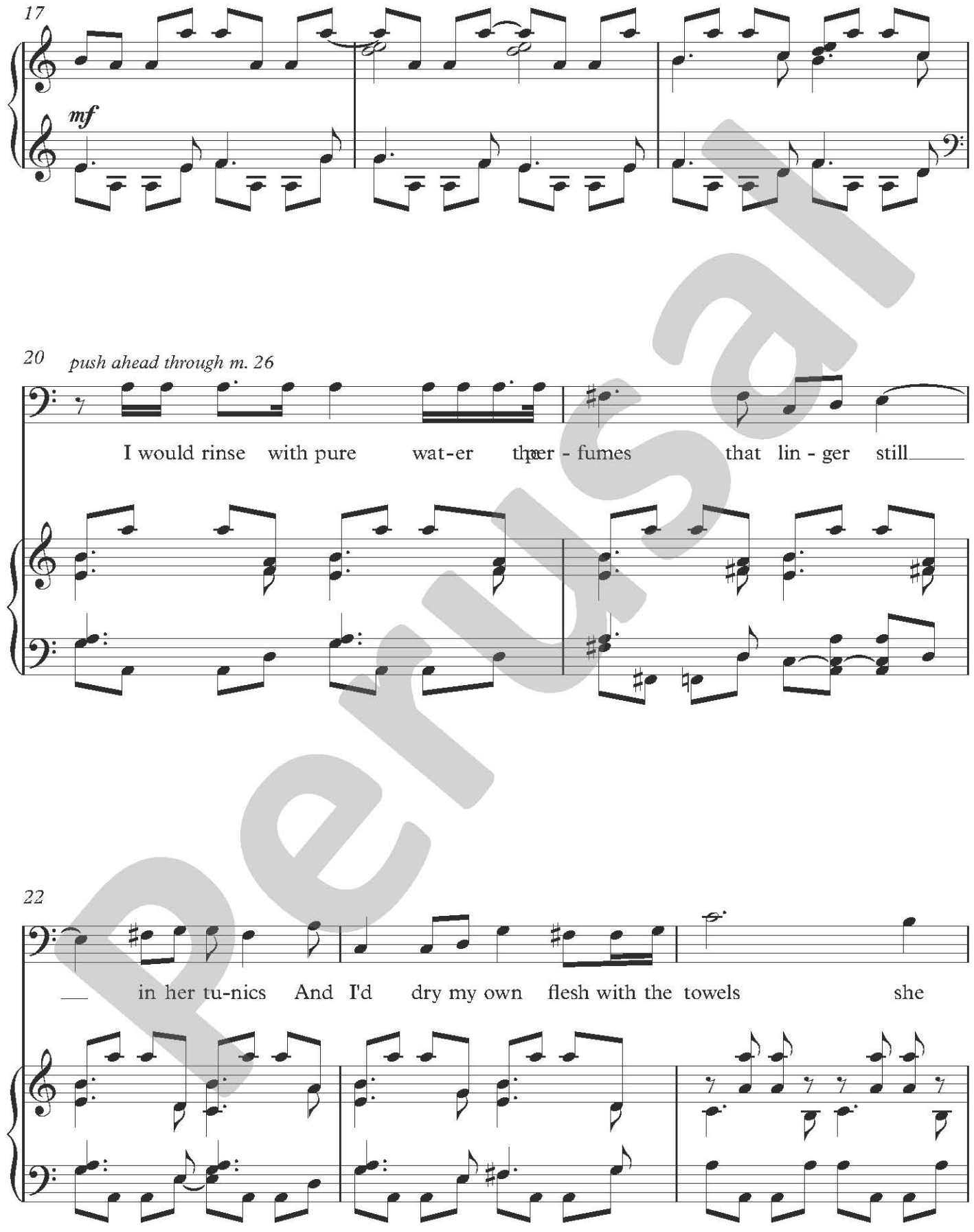
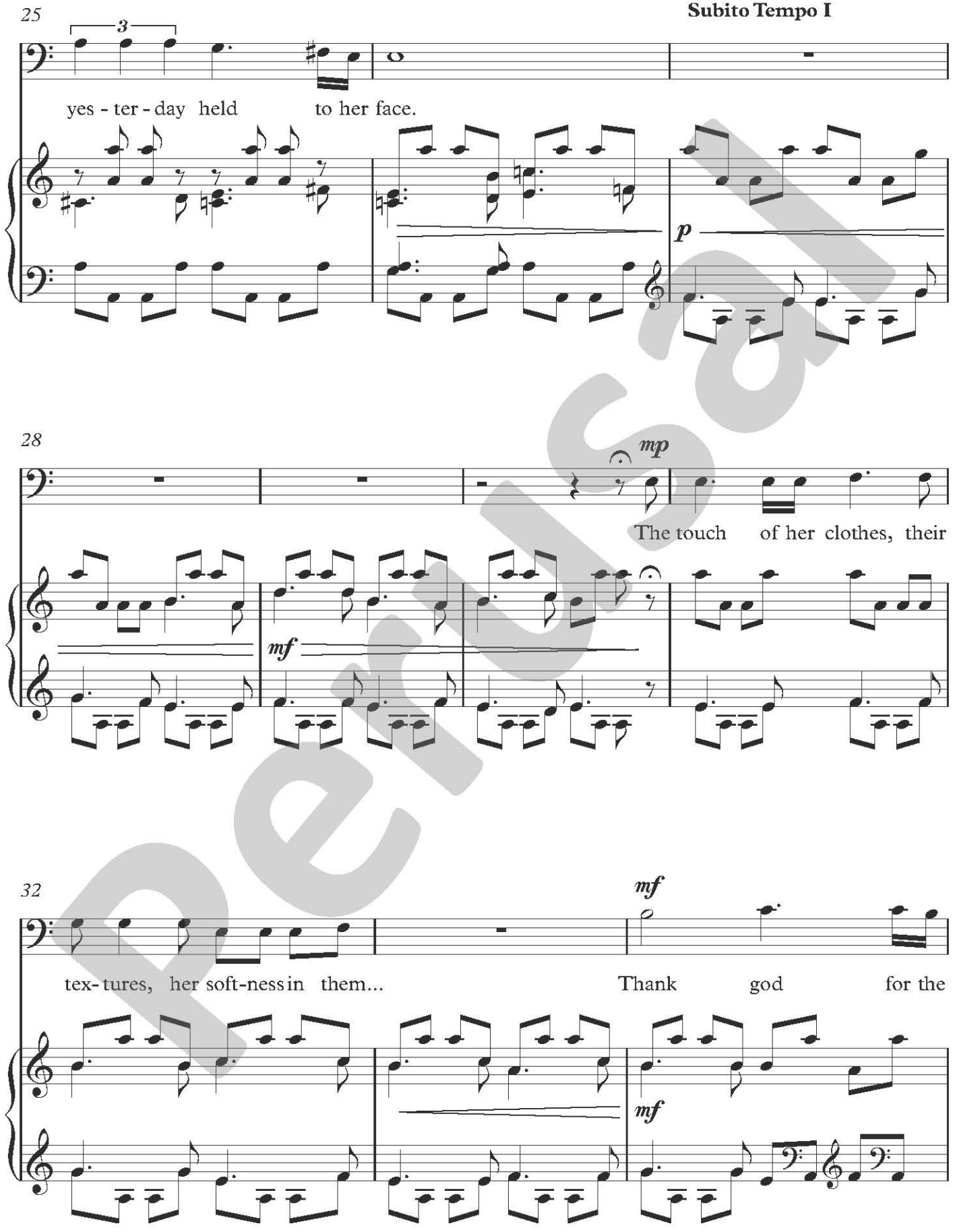

8
push ahead
one month on- ly, I would be faith-ful to pick up the bun- dles,
mf
mp
11
sub. mp
pull back
stur-dy to beat clean the heav - y lin-ens, But gen - tle to touch those
sub. mp
14
fine spun things ly-ing clos-est to the bod-y I love.

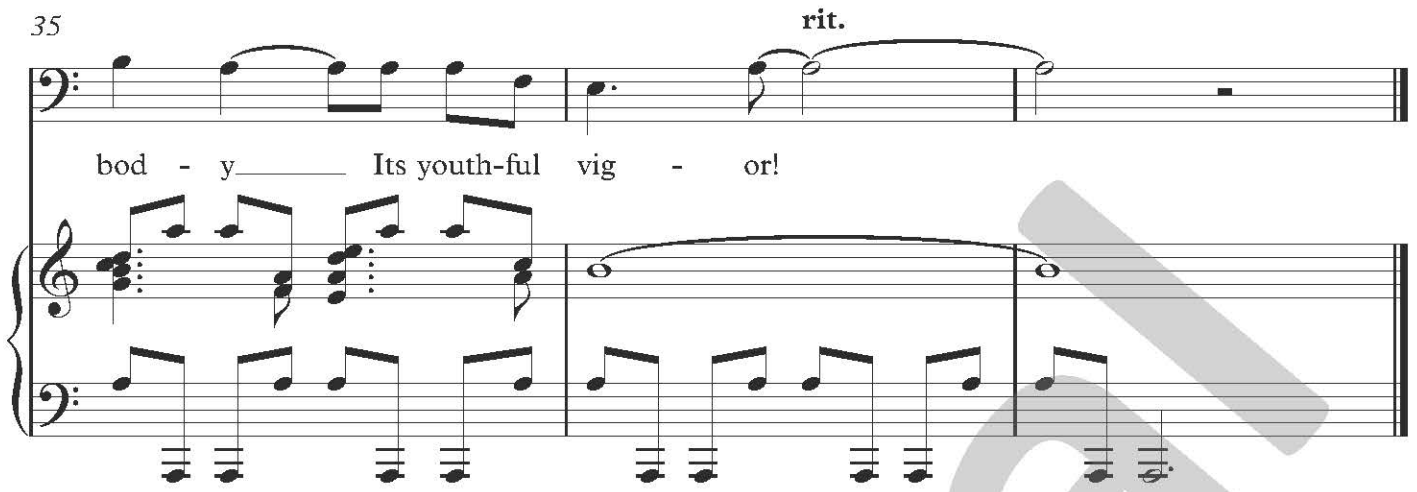
Perusal


17
mf
20
push ahead through m. 26
I would rinse with pure wat-er ther - fumes that lin - ger still
22
in her tu-nics And I'd dry my own flesh with the towels she

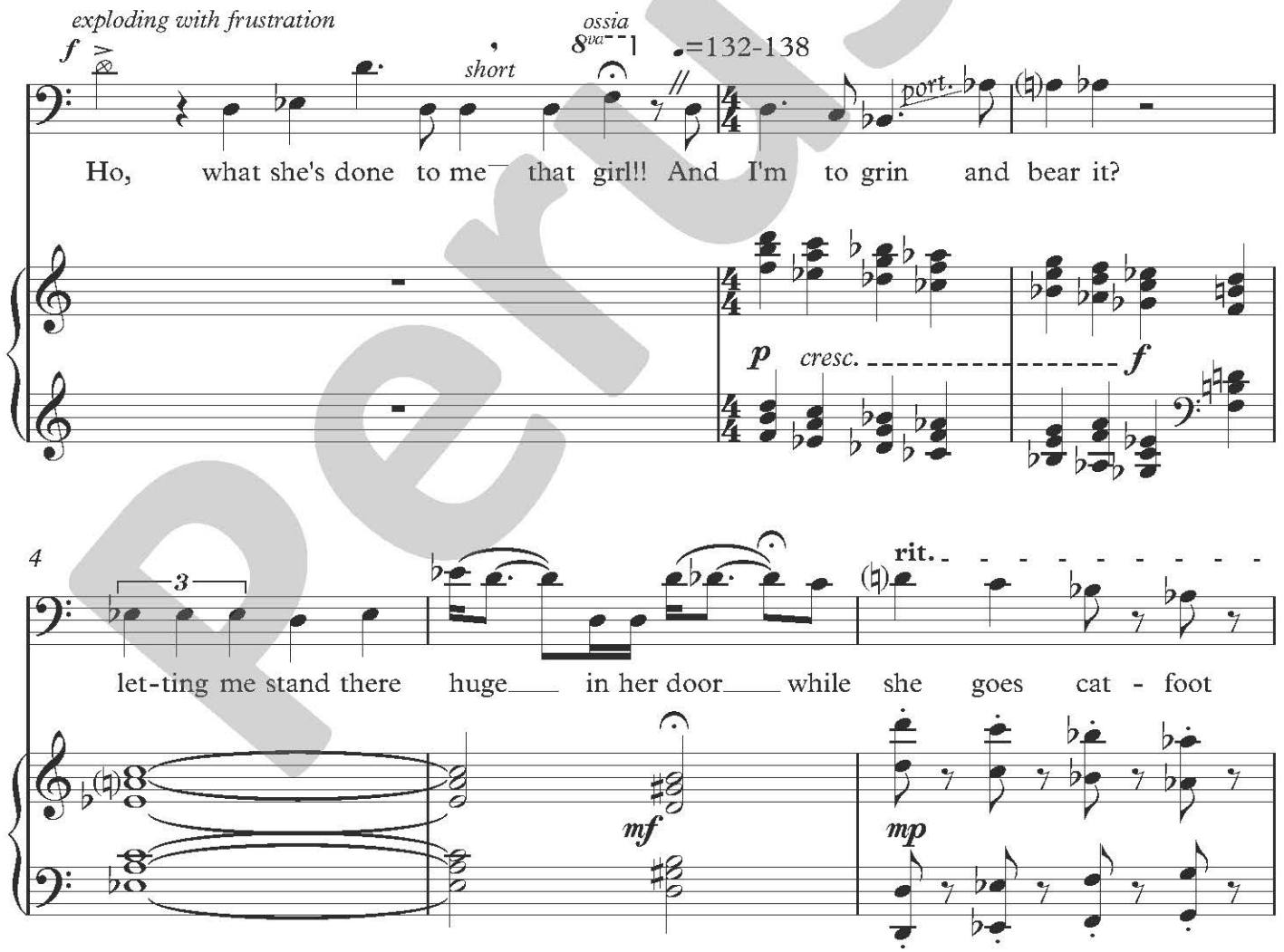
Perusal


25
3
Subito Tempo I
yes - ter - day held to her face.
p
28
mp
The touch of her clothes, their
mf
32
mf
tex- tures, her soft-ness in them...
Thank god for the
mf

Perusal



Ho, what she's done to me—that girl



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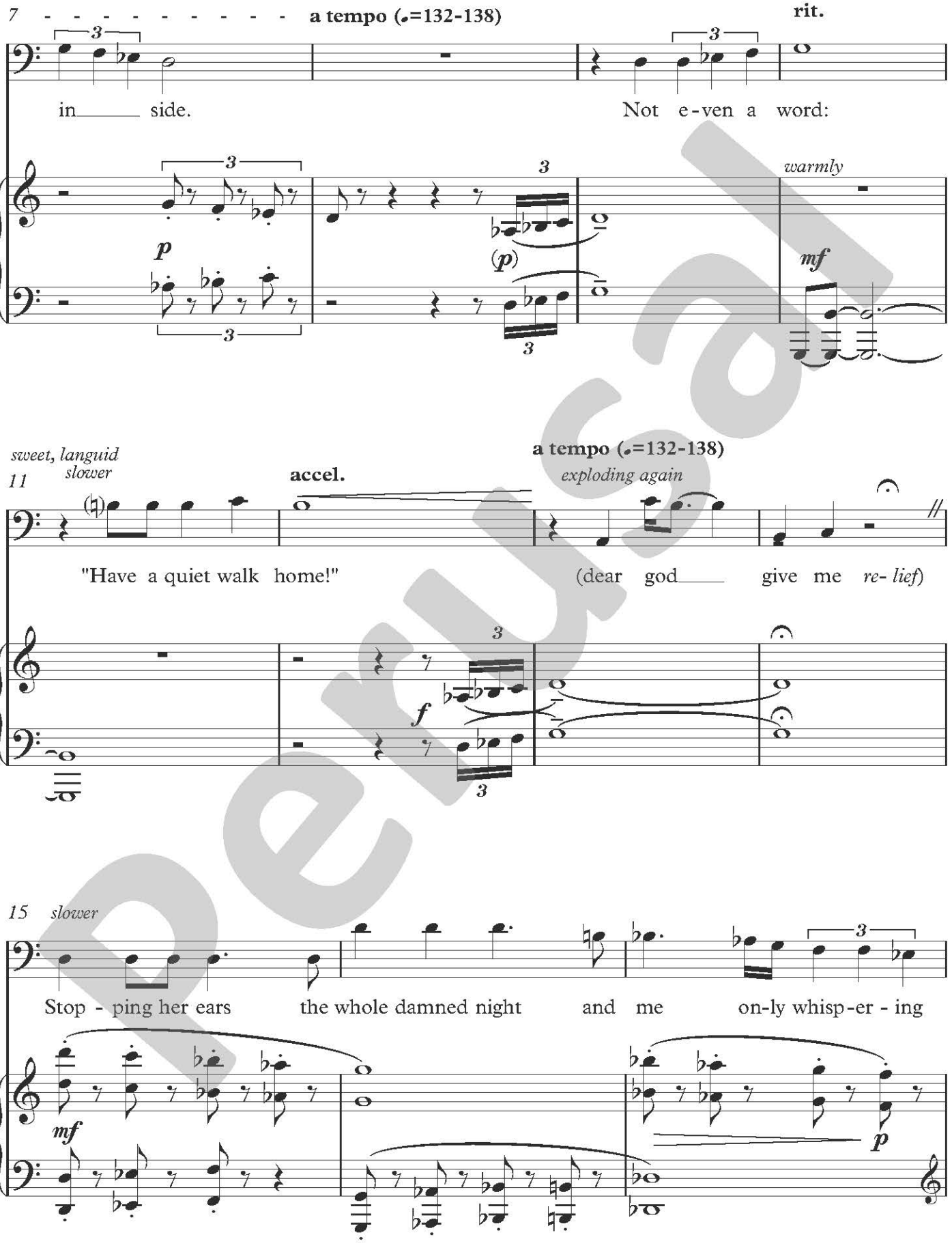
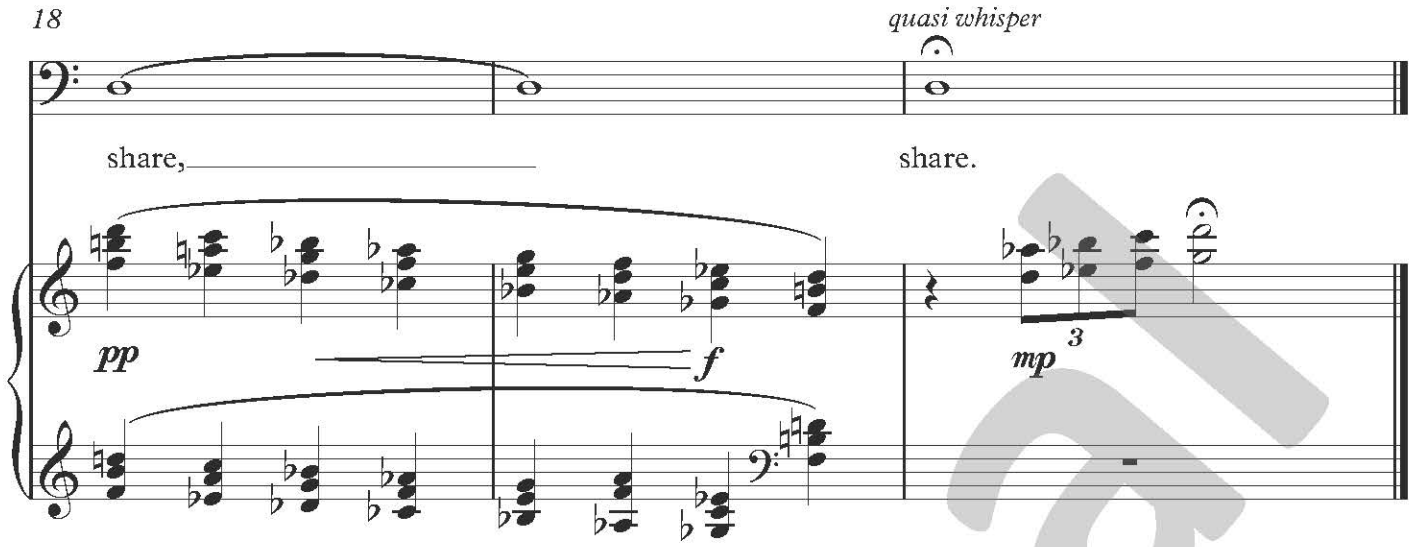
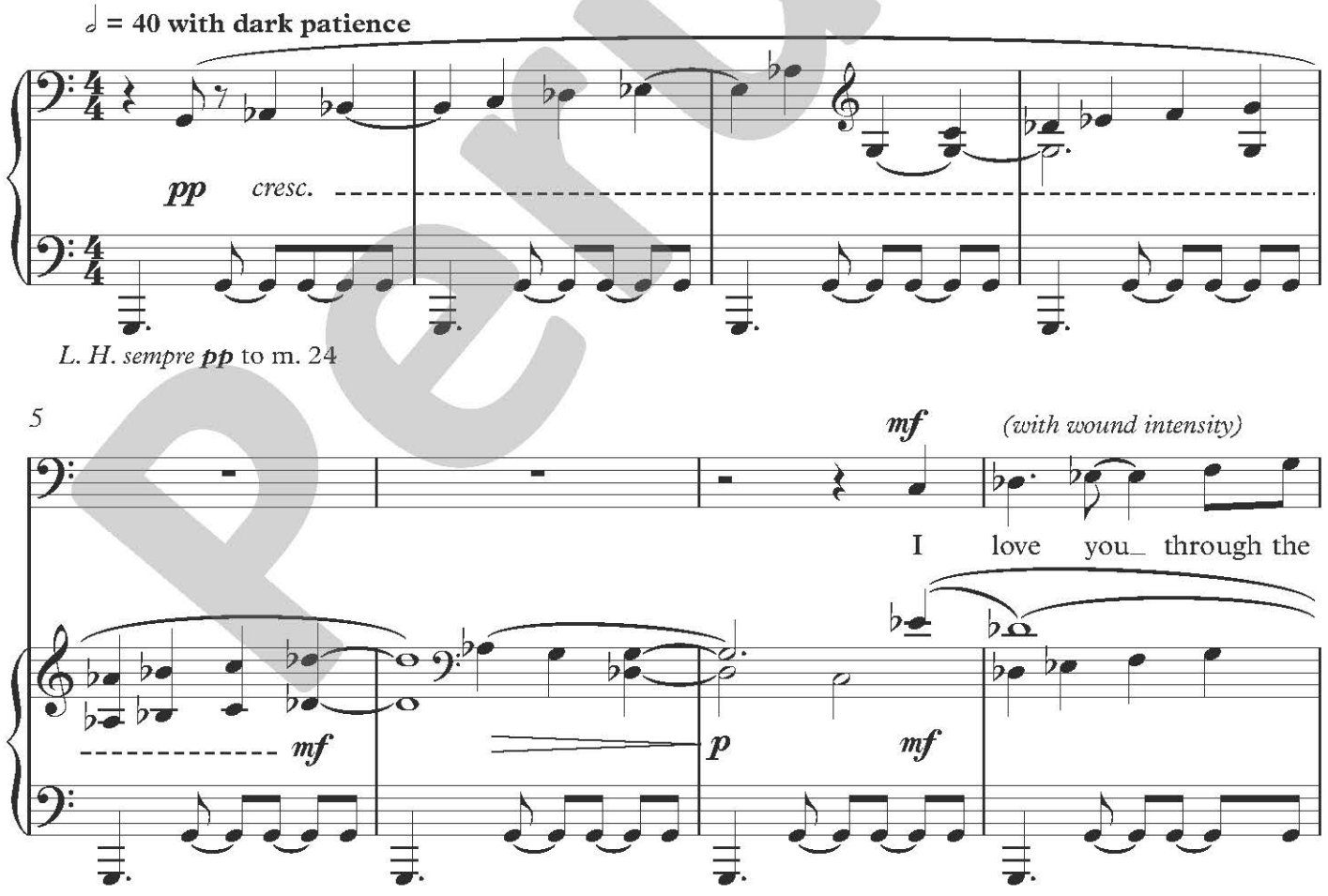

7
a tempo (♩.=132-138)
rit.
in side.
Not e-ven a word:
warmly
sweet, languid
slower
11
accel.
a tempo (♩.=132-138)
exploding again
"Have a quiet walk home!"
(dear god give me re-lief)
15
slower
Stop - ping her ears
the whole damned night
and me
on-ly whisp-er - ing

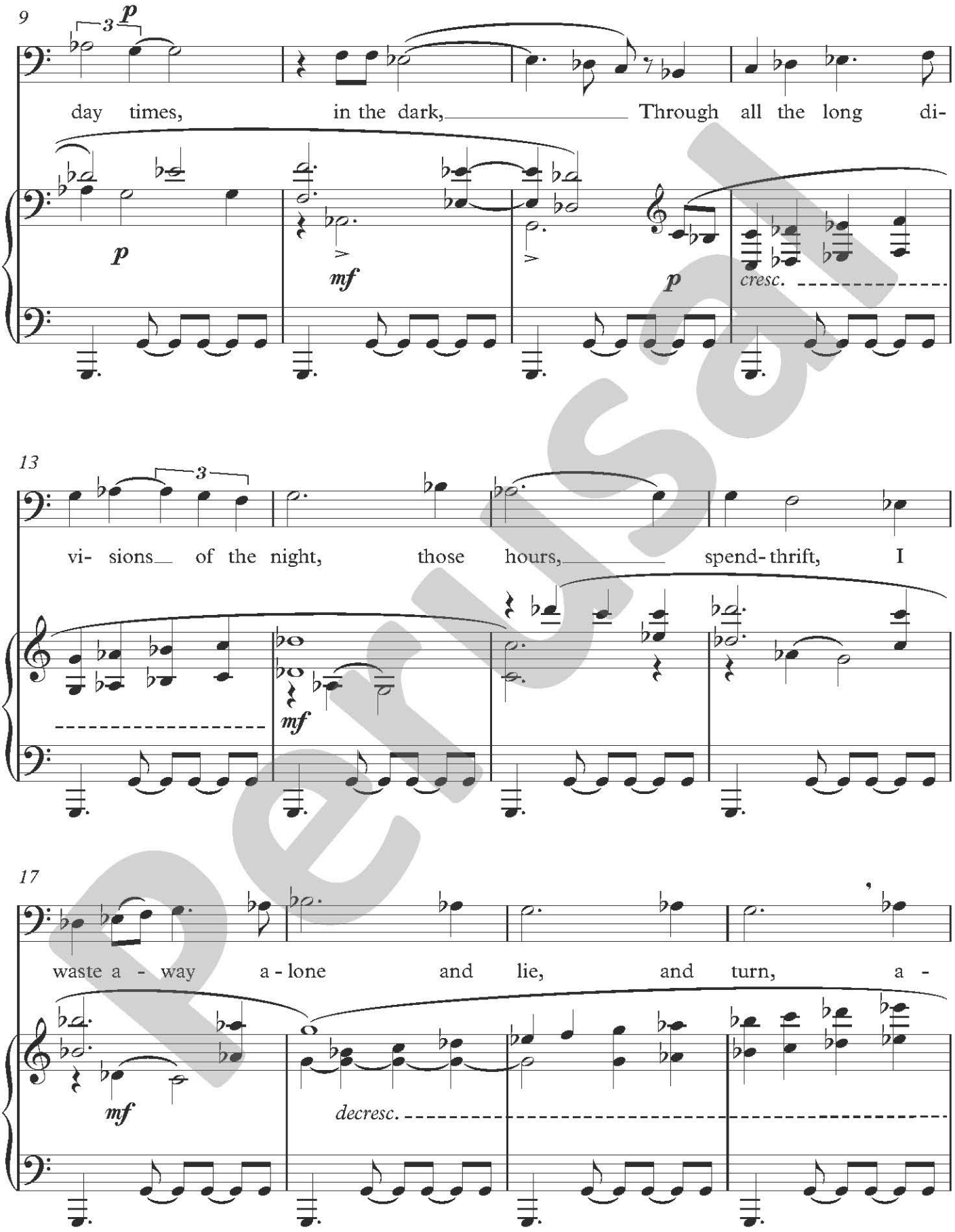
Perusal



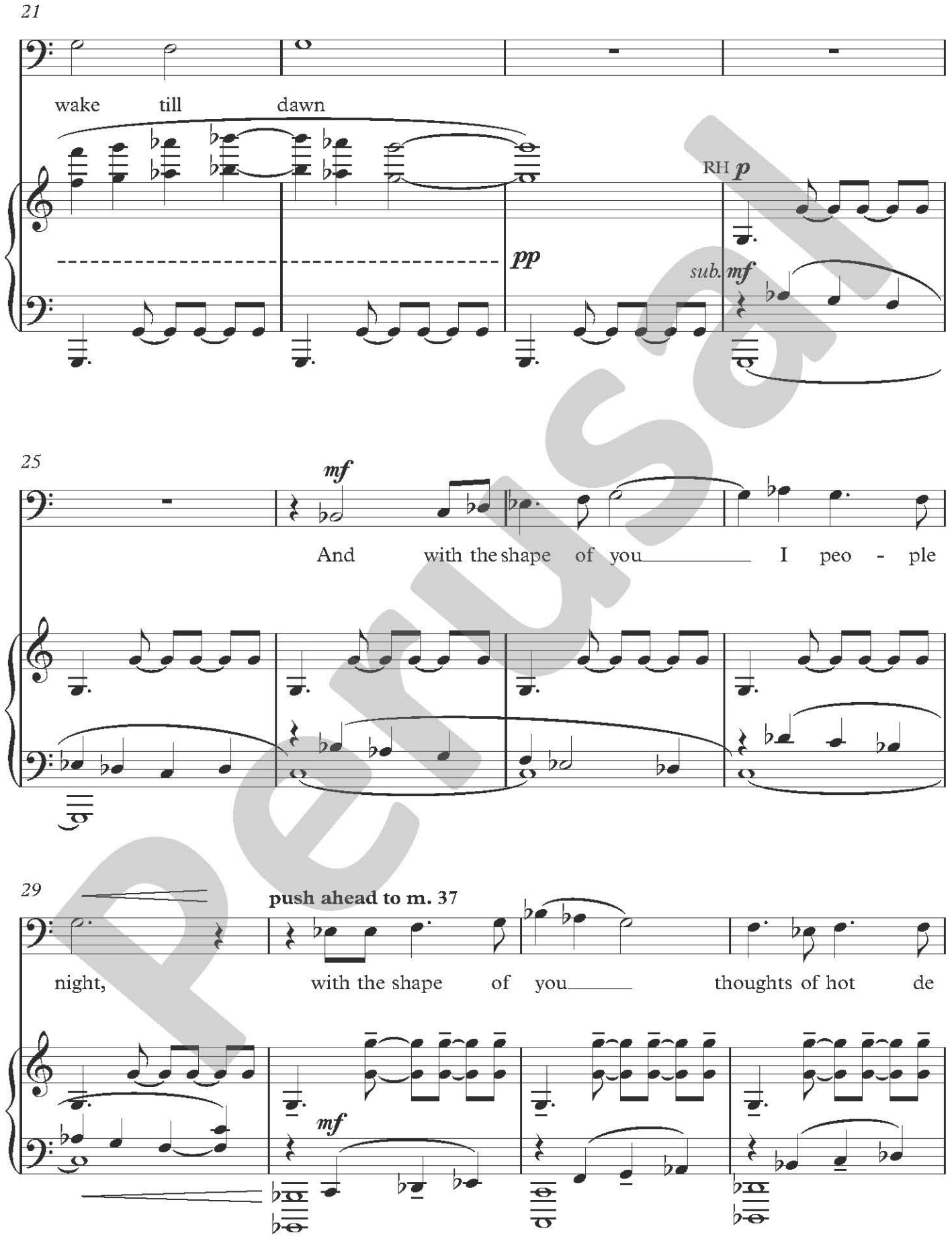
I love you through the daytimes



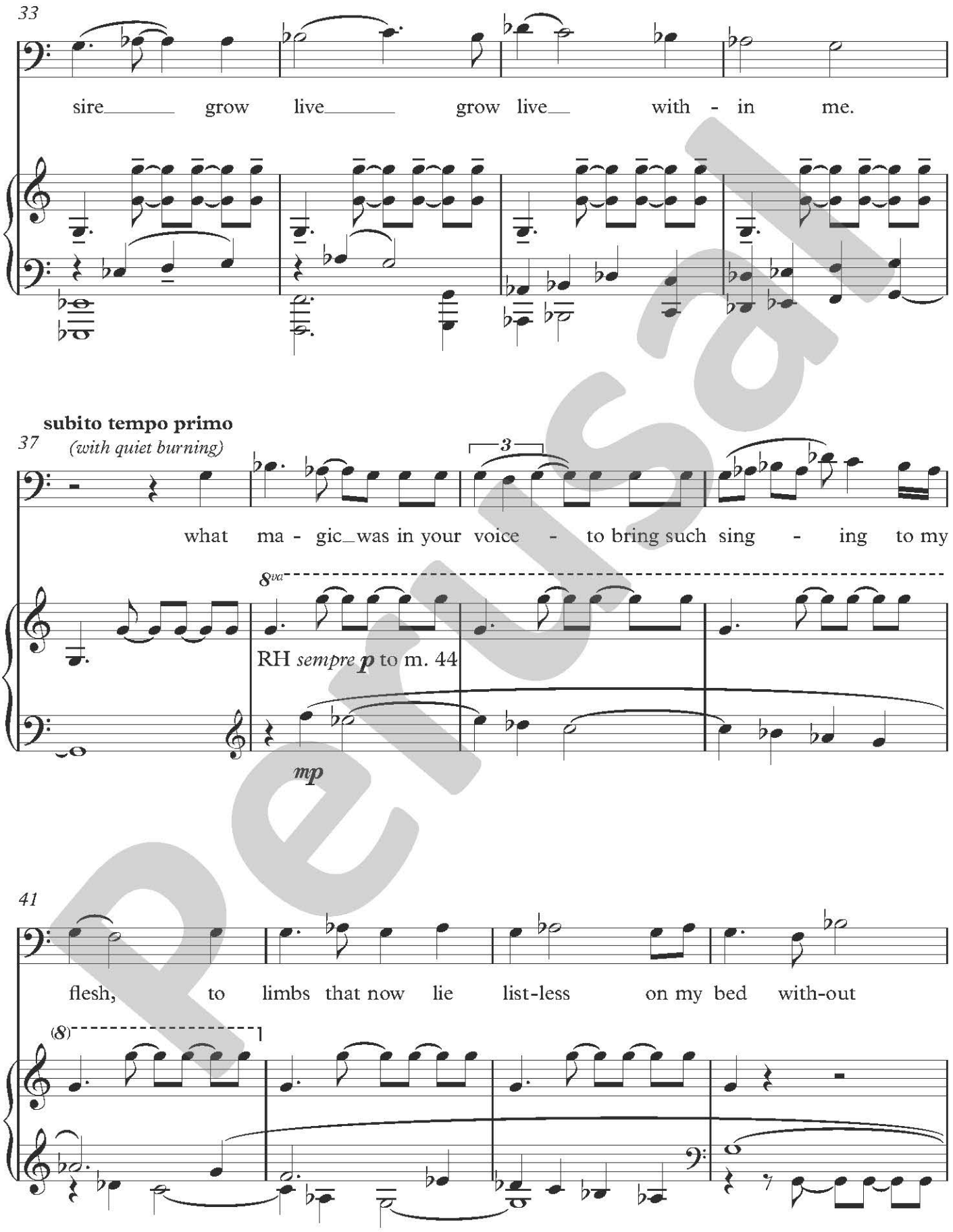
Perusal


9
p
3
day times, in the dark, Through all the long di-
p
mf
p
cresc.
13
3
vi- sions of the night, those hours, spend- thrift, I
mf
17
waste a - way a - lone and lie, and turn, a -
mf
decresc.

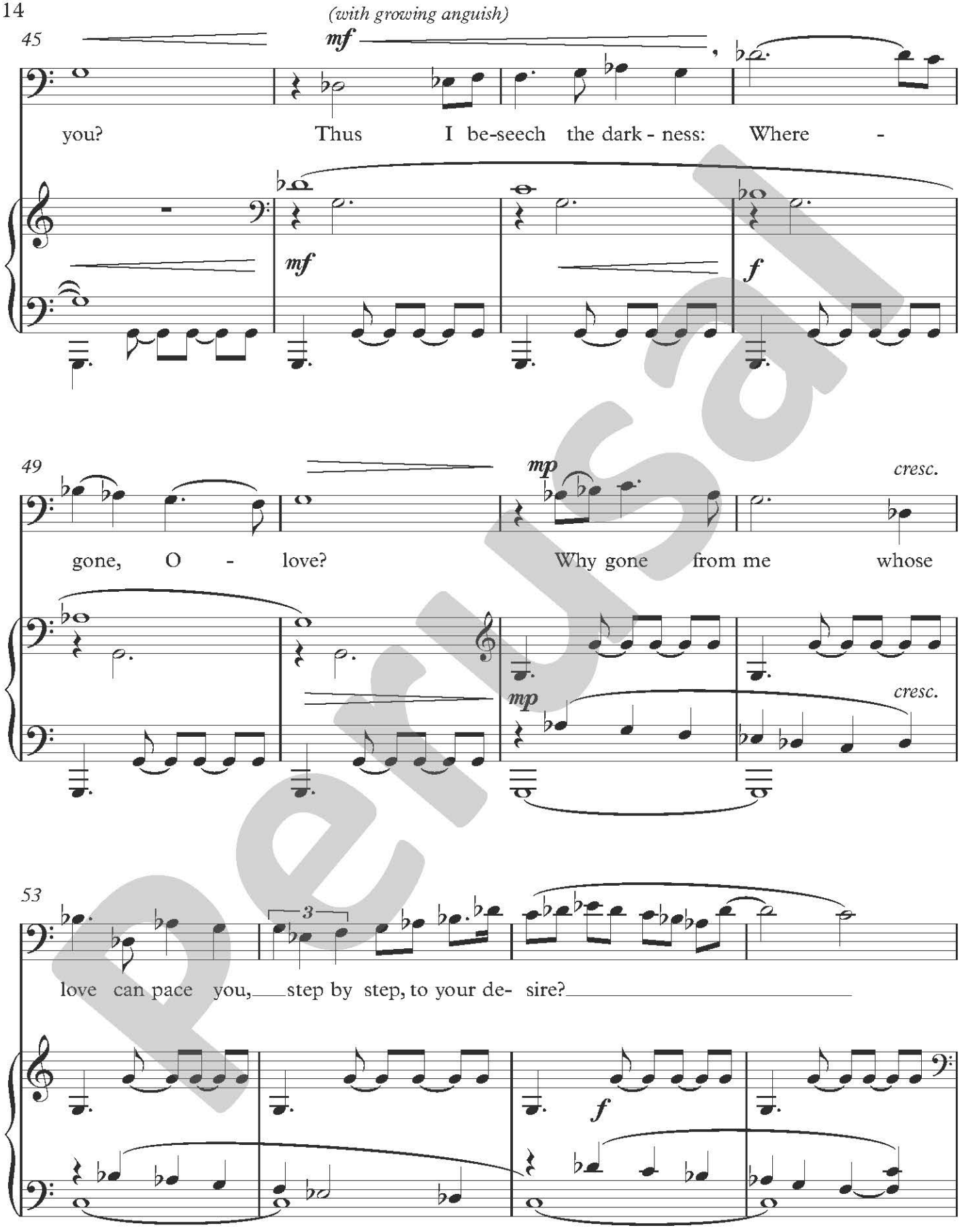
Perusal


21
wake till dawn
RH p
pp
sub. mf
25
mf
And with the shape of you I peo - ple
29
push ahead to m. 37
night, with the shape of you thoughts of hot de
mf

Perusal


33
sire grow live grow live with - in me.
subito tempo primo
37
(with quiet burning)
3
what ma - gic was in your voice - to bring such sing - ing to my
8va
RH sempre p to m. 44
mp
41
flesh, to limbs that now lie list-less on my bed with-out
(8)

Perusal


(with growing anguish)
45
mf
you?
Thus I be-seech the dark - ness: Where -
mf
f
49
mp
cresc.
gone, O - love?
Why gone from me whose
mp
cresc.
53
love can pace you, step by step, to your de- sire?
3
f

Perusal

(with deep emptiness)

57

mf

No lo-ving voice re- piles.

sub. mp

mf

8vb

61

rit.

rit.

a tempo

And I per-ceive how much I am a - lone.

p

65

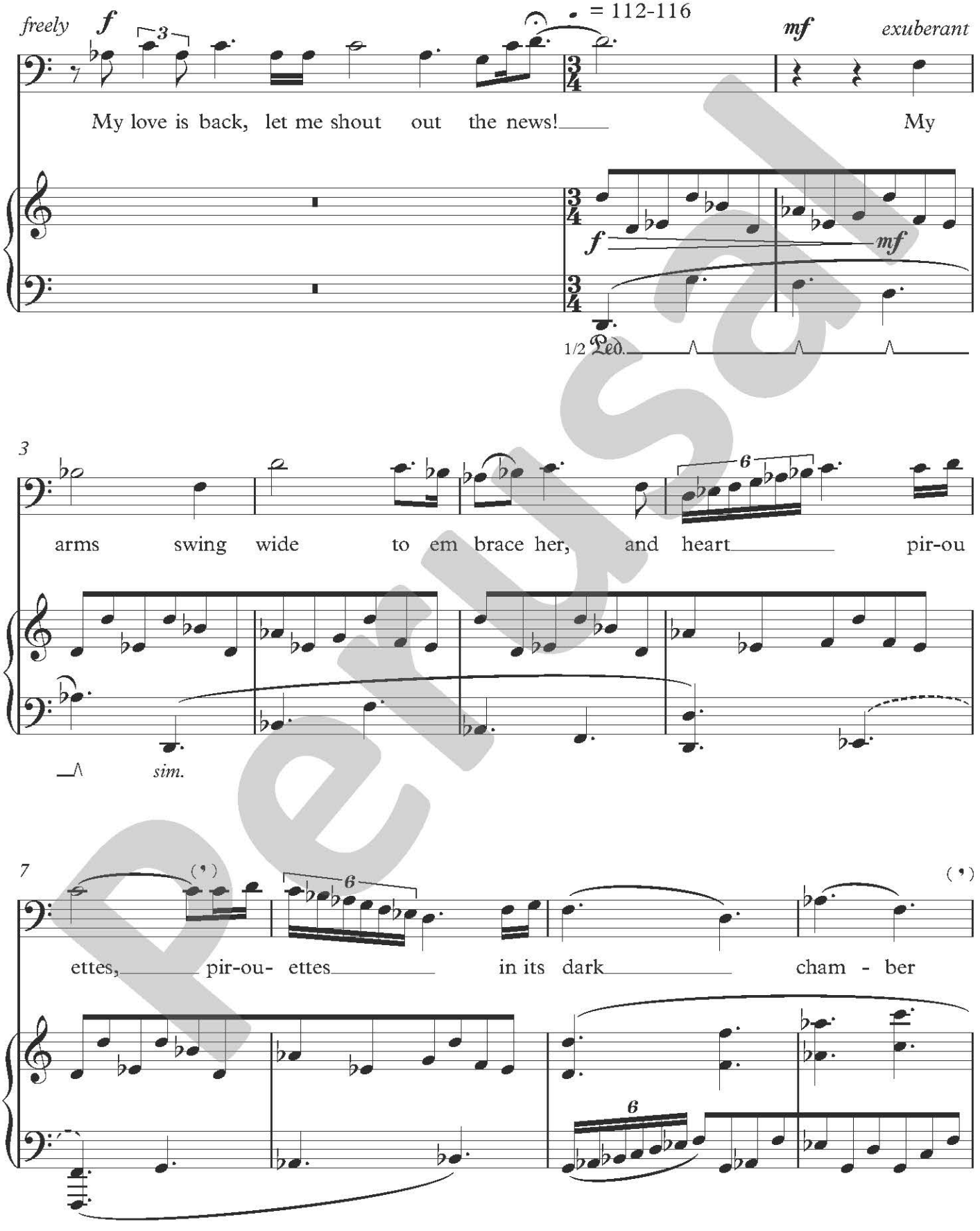
rit. to end

68

dim. al niente

Perusal

My love is back



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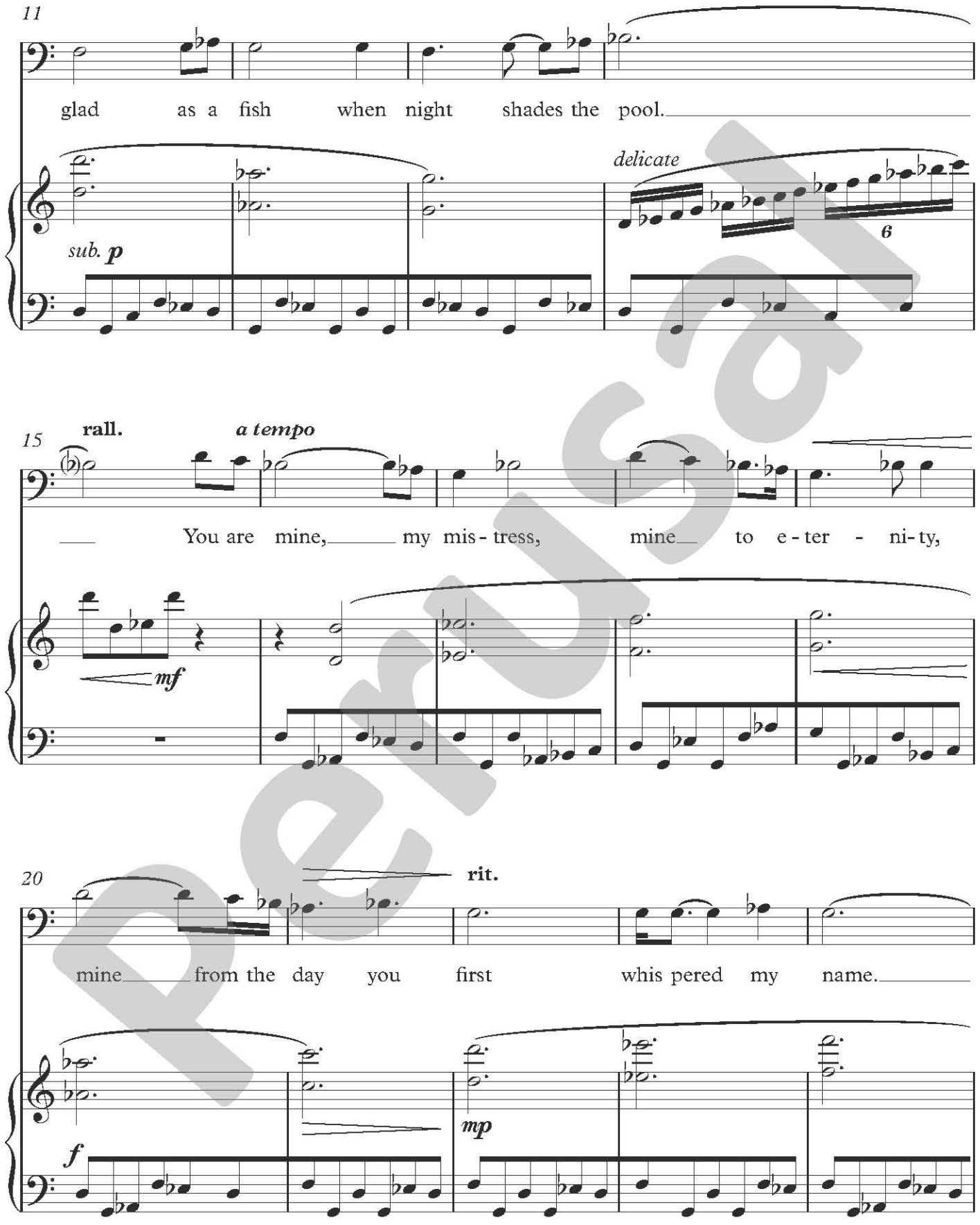
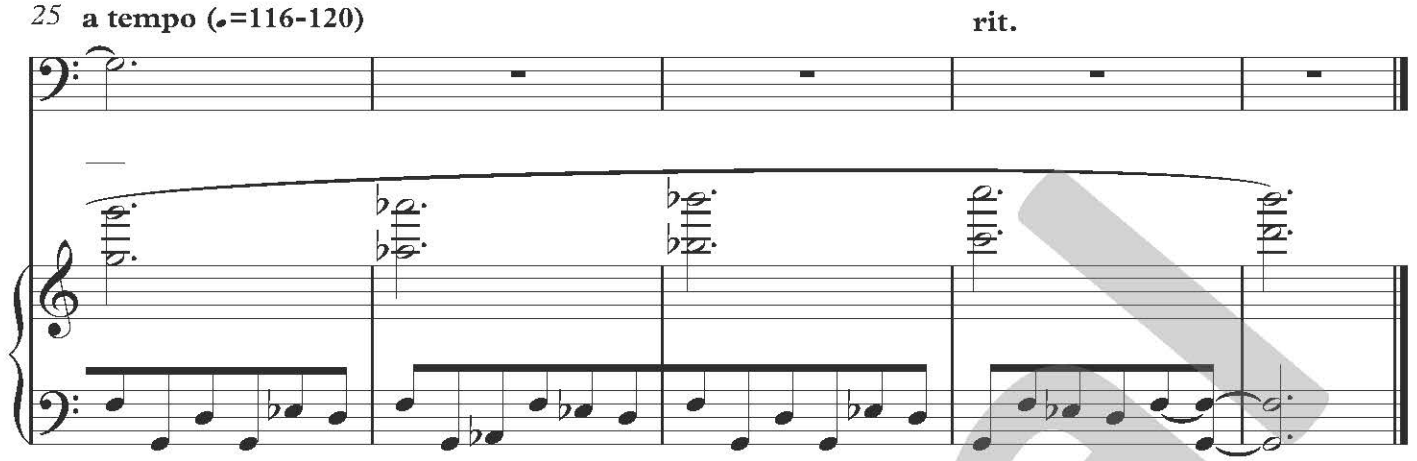
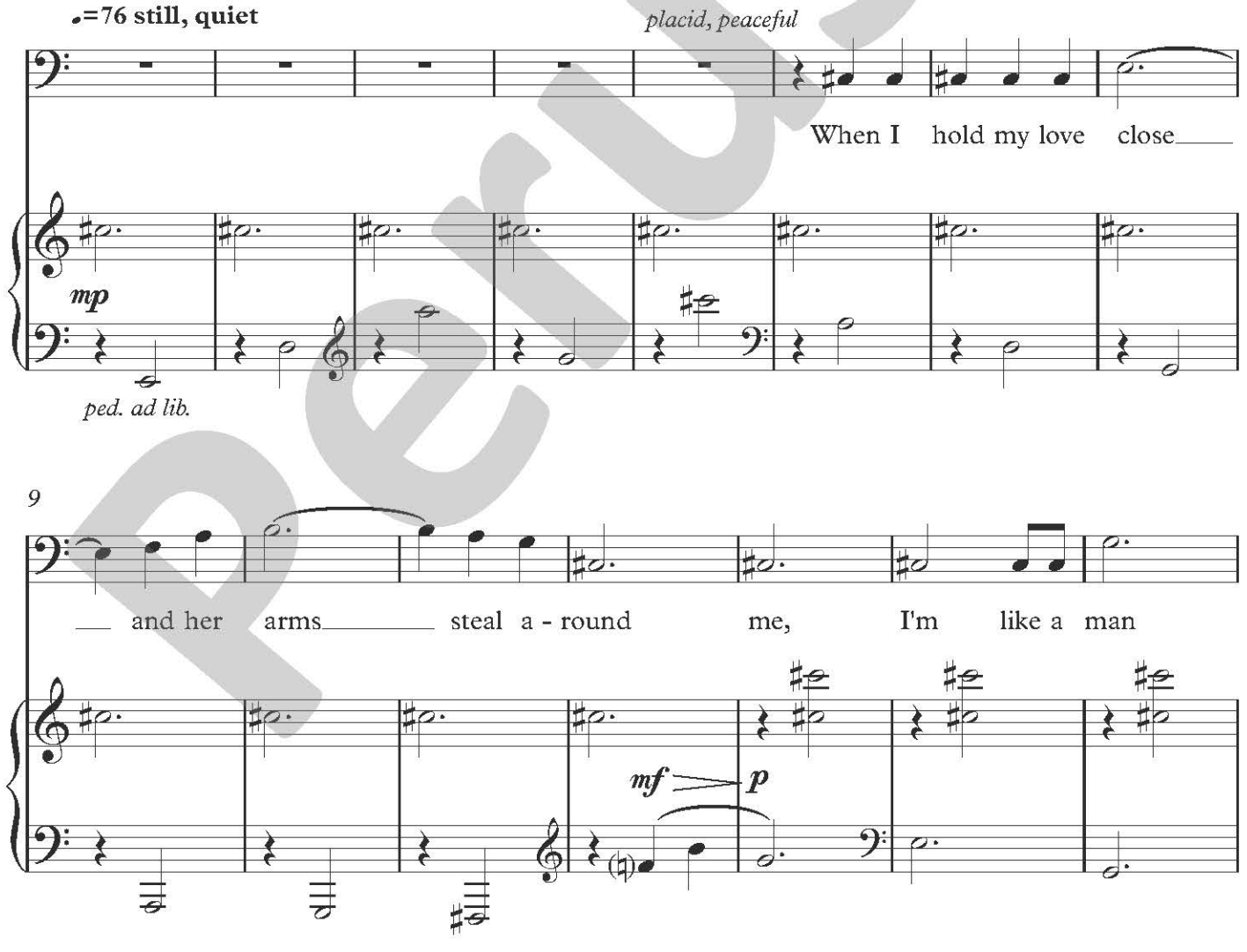

11
glad as a fish when night shades the pool.
sub. p
delicate
6
15
rall.
a tempo
You are mine, my mis - tress, mine to e - ter - ni - ty,
mf
20
rit.
mine from the day you first whis pered my name.
f
mp

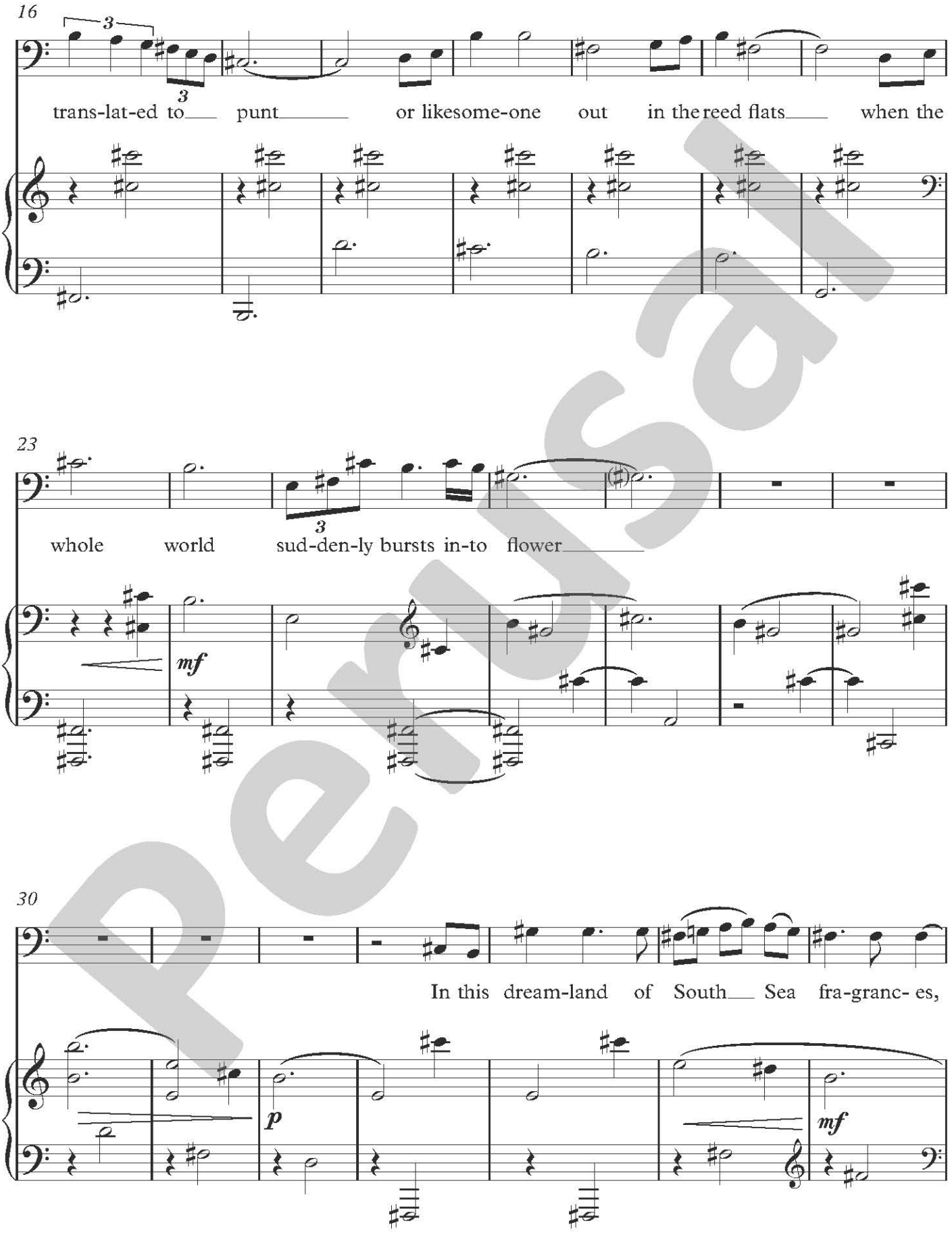
Perusal



When I hold my love close

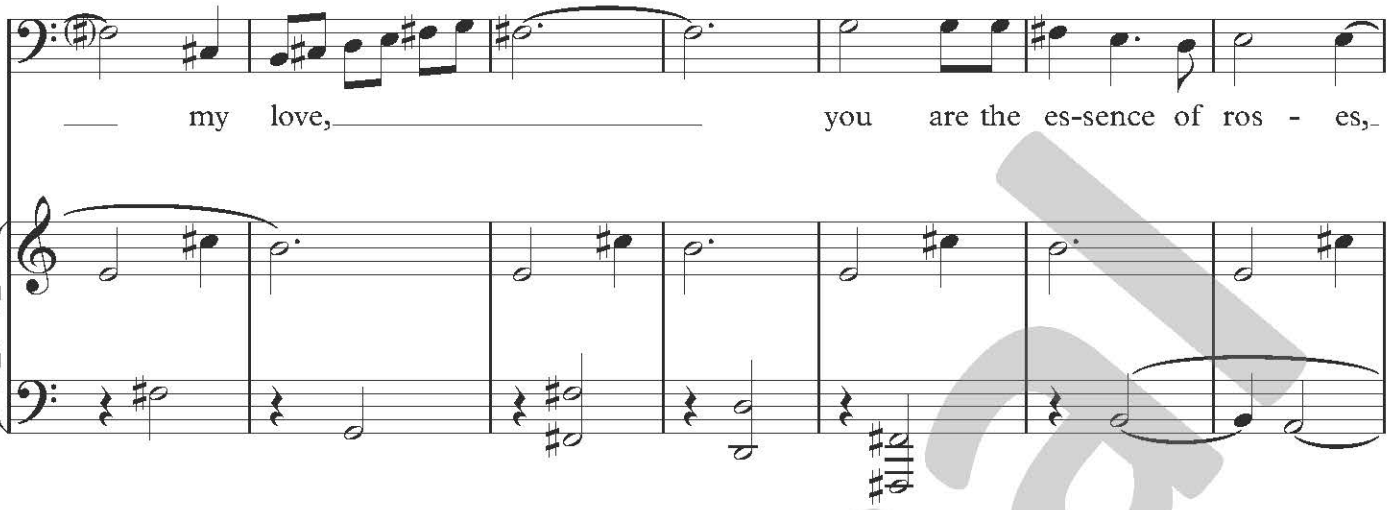


Perusal

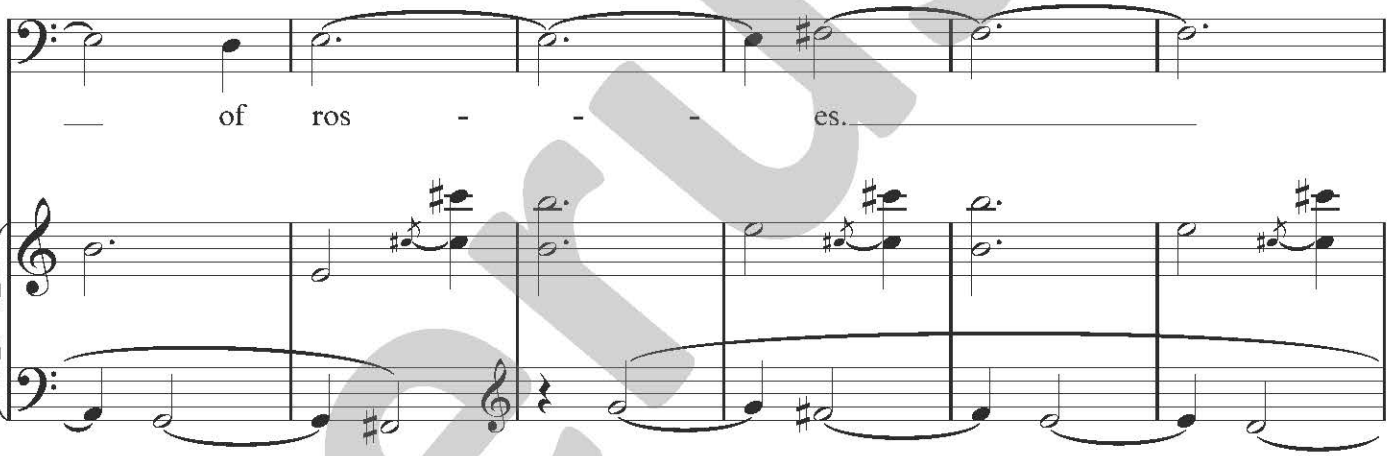

16
trans-lat-ed to punt or likesome-one out in the reed flats when the
23
whole world sud-den-ly bursts in-to flower
mf
30
In this dream-land of South Sea fra-granc- es,
p
mf

Perusal

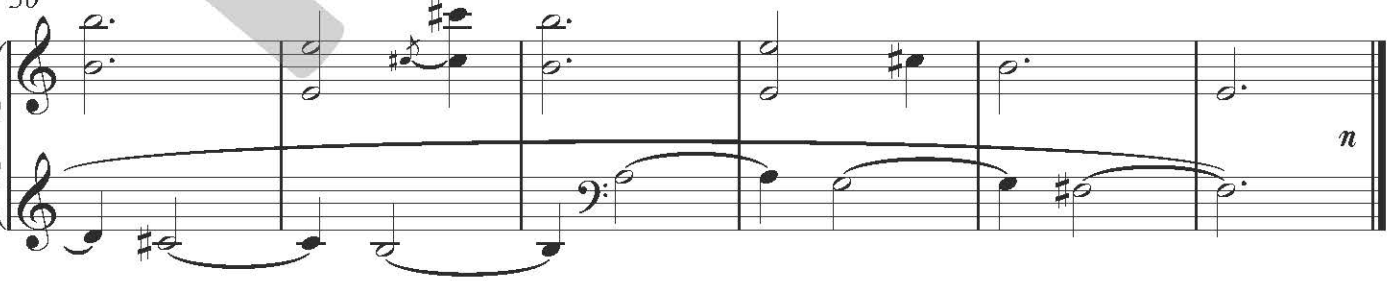
37



44



50 *diminuendo a neinte*



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