(Sage) SONGS ABOUT LIFE (!)

(and Thyme....)

by

PRISCILLA McLEAN

Seven Uncommon Songs

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for Soprano and Piano

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INTRODUCTION

These songs, while addressing the heady issue of life and death, are primarily meant to be fun to sing. While the musical content is the prime reason for their existence, the composer wrote them to stretch her voice in range, breath control, flexibility, dramatic delivery, and to work with several kinds of extended vocal techniques.

For the voice student (or teacher), these can be used as "warm-up" songs and/or recital pieces. The piano part has been written specifically so that the vocalist with some piano technique could perform her own accompaniment during practice. During a recital, however, an accompanist should be used.

A sketch of each song's vocal techniques:

Song #1: a vocalise and practice on breath control and timbre changing possibilities.

Song #2: Vocal range expanding by use of glissandi (glides).

Song #3: lyrical singing and breath control, range expanding

Song #4: exploration of jazz scat singing and use of vocal improvisation.

Song #5: serious dramatic (classical) singing.

Song #6: exploring speech and singing, changing timbre on one pitch, range expanding, vocal trills and tremolos.

Song #7: use of timbre and range to stretch dramatic possibilities. This song is a musical play all in itself!

Above all, these songs, along with their thoughtful messages, will give delight and pleasure to anyone singing or listening to them!

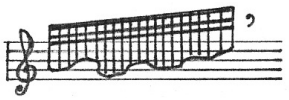
PIANO: PEDALLINGS

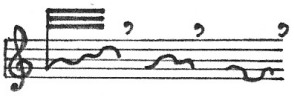
Ped. or P.I. ——^—— = Common loud pedal (furthest one on right).

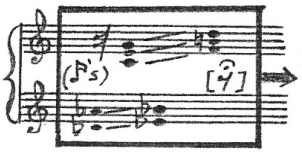
P.II.: Sost. Ped. —— = Sostenuto pedal (middle). Depress notes given, then pedal (given notes will hold while future notes will not). If pedal is not functional or missing, use P.I. in a half-position.

P.III. (Soft Ped.) —— = Soft pedal (furthest one on left).

NEW NOTATIONS

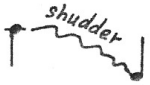
1.  = Follow contour of line while musically "laughing" very fast notes. Take short rest at ?.

2.  = Same as above, written usually for short groups of notes.

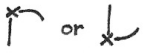
3.  = Alternating hands play 5ths (l.h.) against triads (r.h.), within range of pitches indicated, in any order. Continue doing this until arrow stops (——|).

4. = Approximate pitch

5. = Glissando: glide in direction of line drawn.

6. 

= Broken glissando, using "h"'s in a kind of tremolo, like a shudder.

7. 

= Slight gliss down/up (also called "slur" or "bend").

8. "White tone" = Without vibrato, or "non-vib".

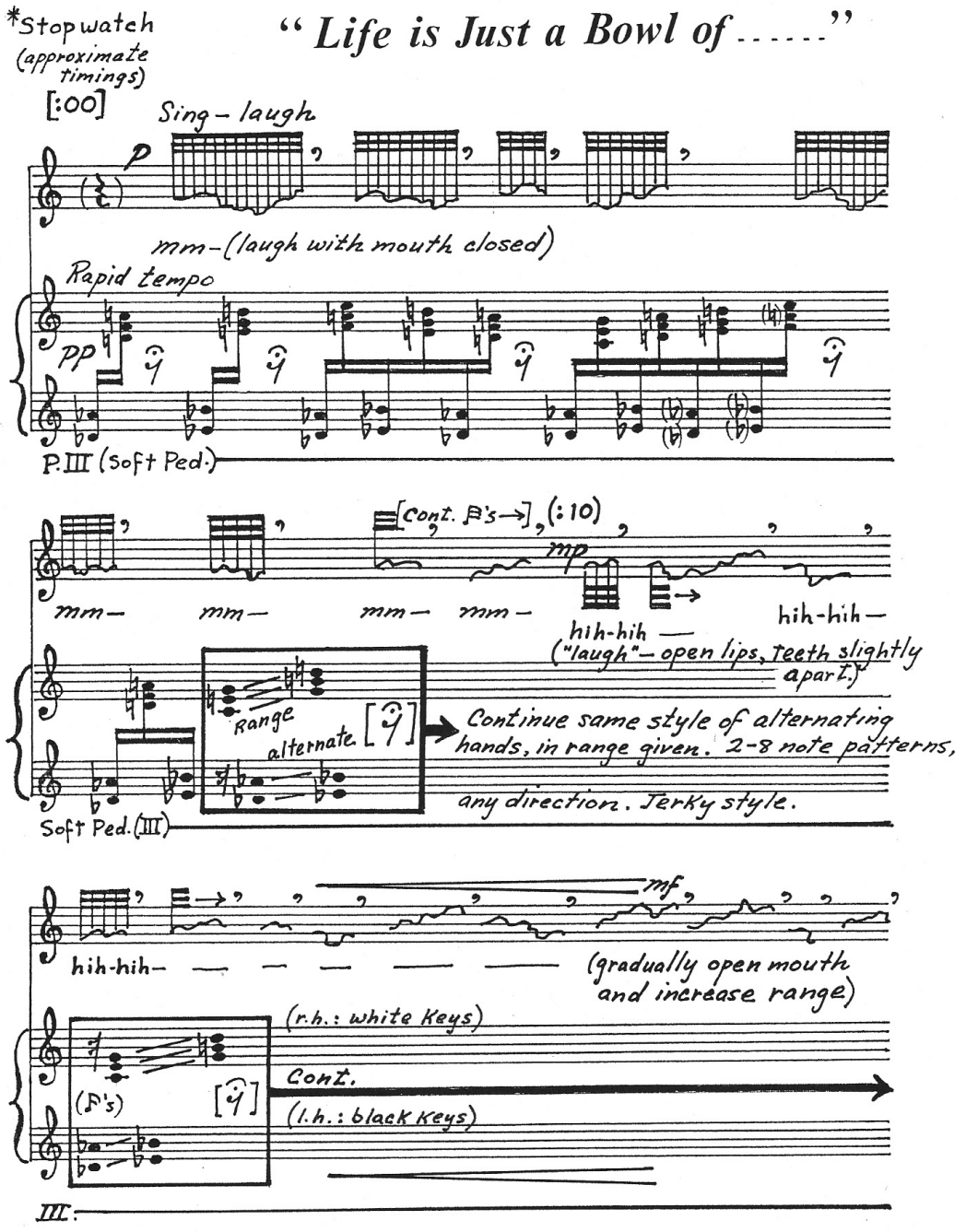
9. = Sing syllables as fast as possible on one pitch, like a tremolo.

It is important for the singer to follow the vocal directions given in the songs, as these songs explore a wide range of sound, and are most interesting when sung as animatedly and accurately as possible.

(Sage) SONGS ABOUT LIFE (!) (and Thyme...)

by

PRISCILLA McLEAN



* Stopwatch only for rehearsal.

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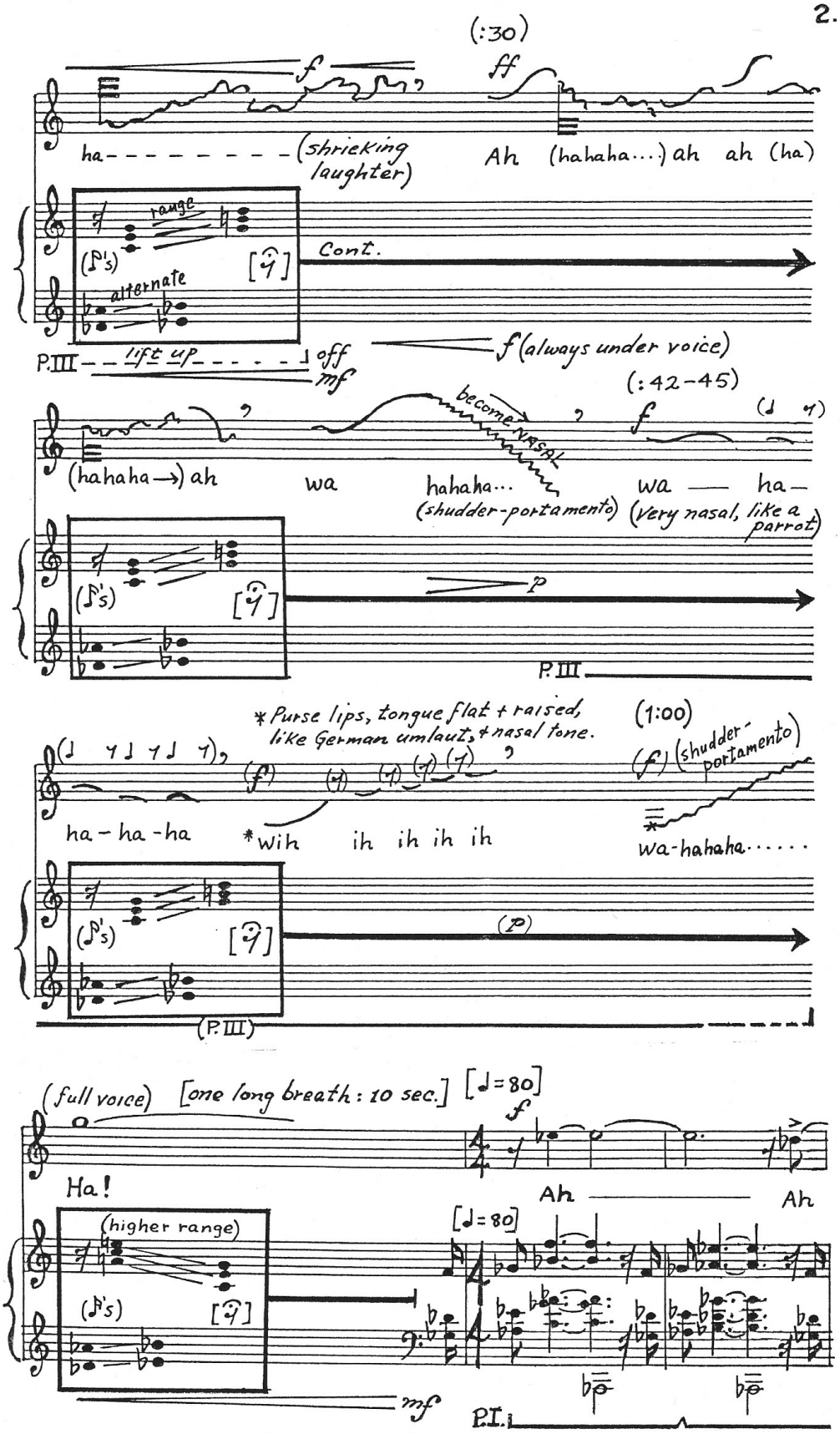
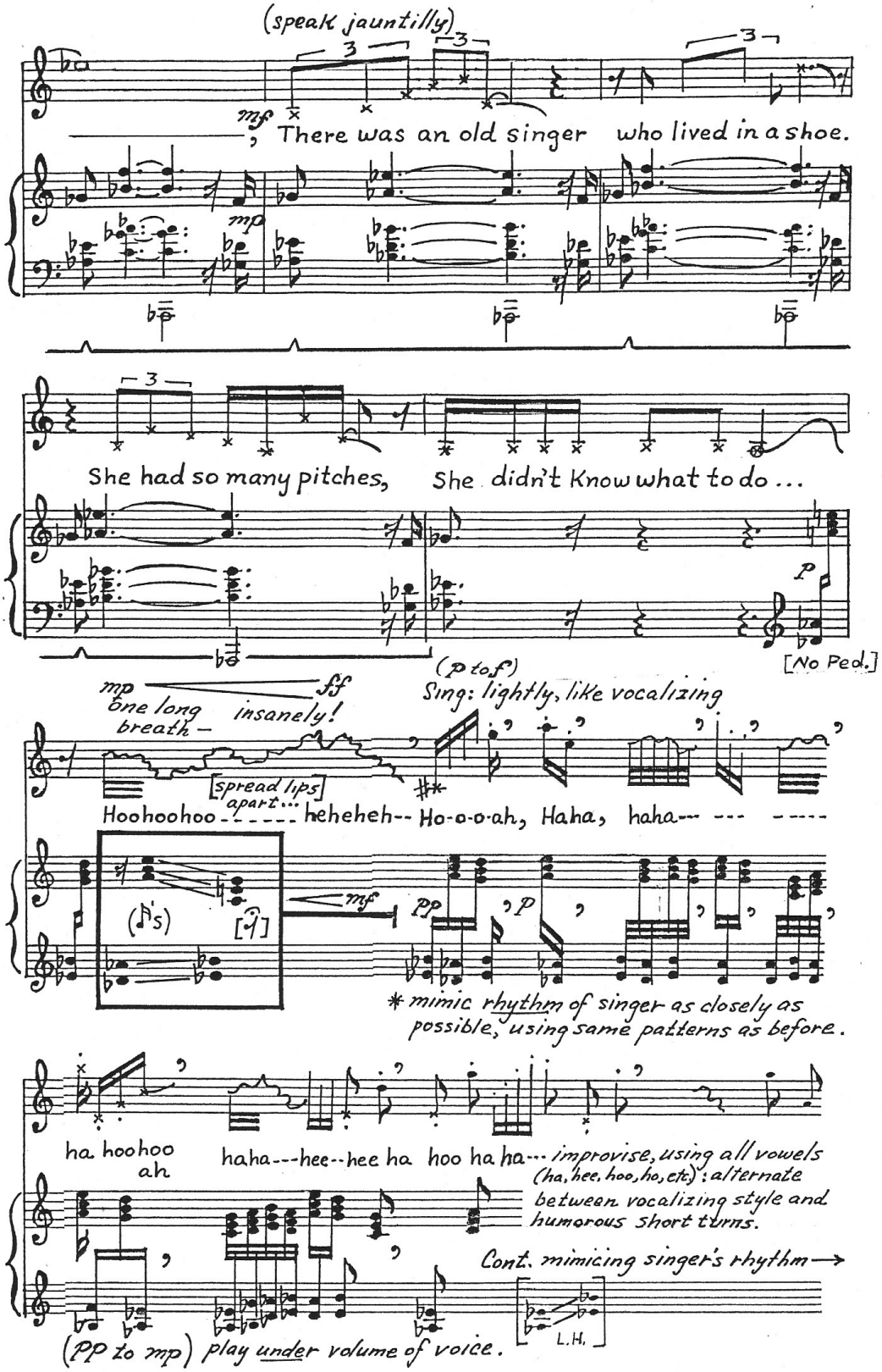
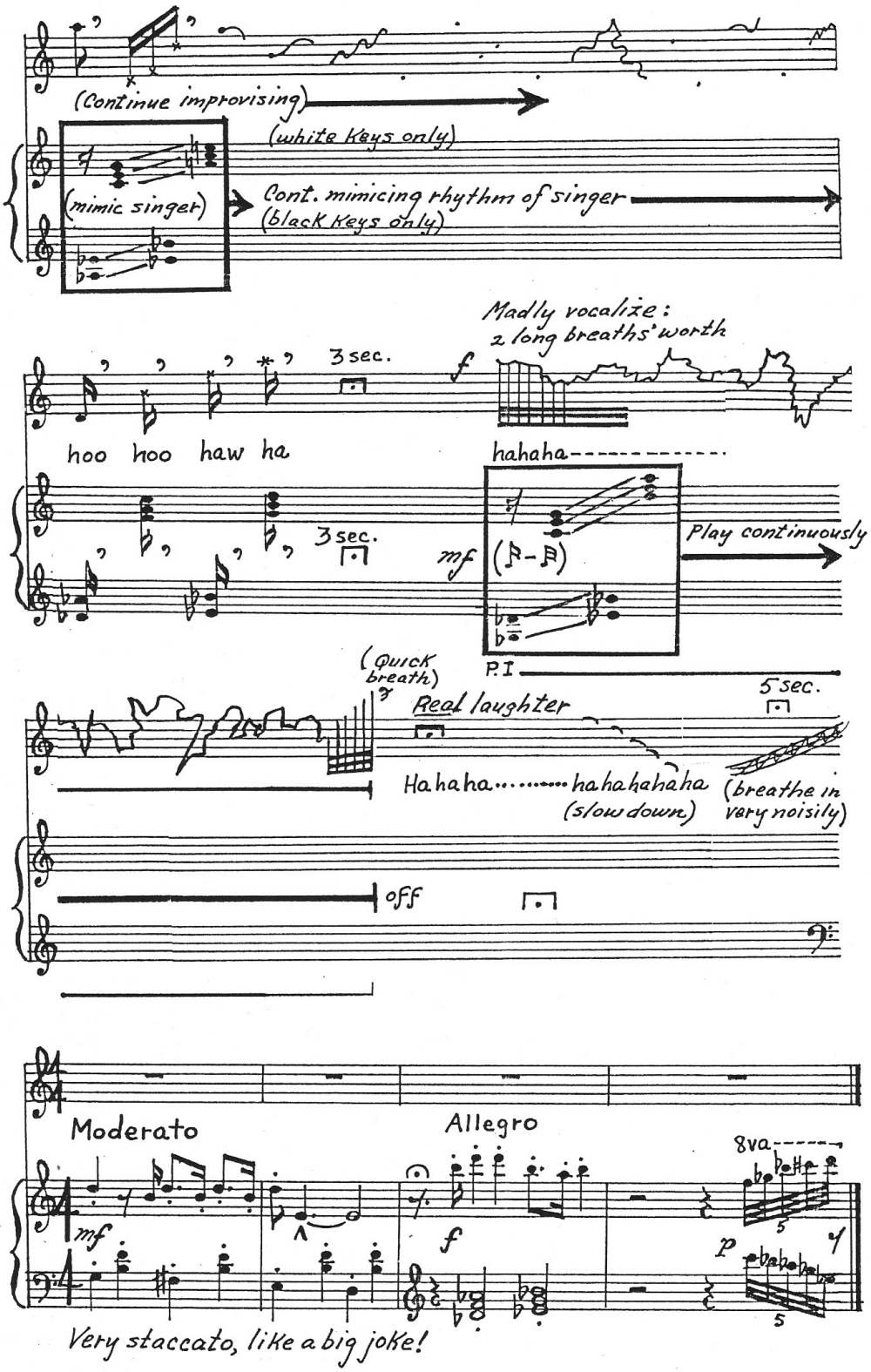

(:30)
f
ff
ha- - - - - - - - - (shrieking laughter)
Ah (hahaha...) ah ah (ha)
range
(P's)
alternate
Cont.
P.III
lift up
off
mf
f (always under voice)
(:42-45)
become nasal
(hahaha→) ah
wa
hahaha...
(shudder-portamento)
wa — ha-
(very nasal, like a parrot)
p
P.III
* Purse lips, tongue flat + raised, like German umlaut, + nasal tone.
(1:00)
(shudder-portamento)
ha-ha-ha
*wih ih ih ih ih
wa-hahaha.....
(p)
(P.III)
(full voice)
[one long breath: 10 sec.]
[♩=80]
f
Ha!
Ah — Ah
(higher range)
[♩=80]
mf
P.I.

3.


(speak jauntilly)
mf
There was an old singer who lived in a shoe.
mp
She had so many pitches, She didn't Know what to do ...
p
[No Ped.]
mp ff
one long breath – insanely!
(p to f)
Sing: lightly, like vocalizing
[spread lips apart...]
Hoohoohoo - - - - - heheheh-- Ho-o-o-ah, Haha, haha--- --- - - - -
mf
pp
p
* mimic rhythm of singer as closely as possible, using same patterns as before.
ha hoohoo ah
haha---hee--hee ha hoo ha ha--- improvise, using all vowels (ha, hee, hoo, ho, etc.): alternate between vocalizing style and humorous short turns.
Cont. mimicing singer's rhythm →
L.H.
(pp to mp) play under volume of voice.

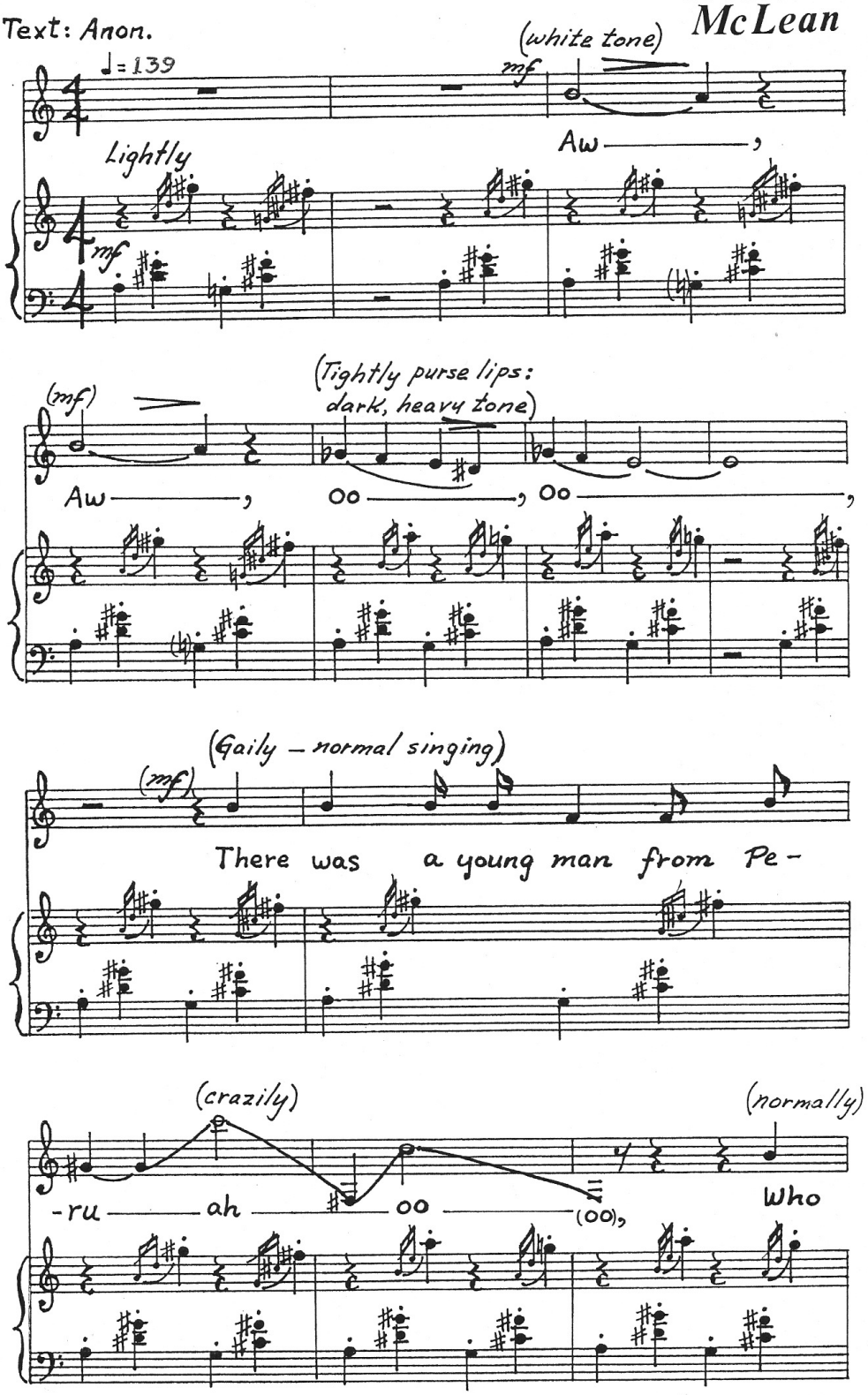

(Continue improvising)
(white keys only)
(mimic singer)
Cont. mimicing rhythm of singer
(black keys only)
Madly vocalize:
2 long breaths' worth
3 sec.
f
hoo hoo haw ha
hahaha
3 sec.
mf
Play continuously
P.I
(quick breath)
Real laughter
5 sec.
Hahaha..... hahahahaha
(slow down)
(breathe in very noisily)
off
Moderato
Allegro
8va
mf
f
p
Very staccato, like a big joke!

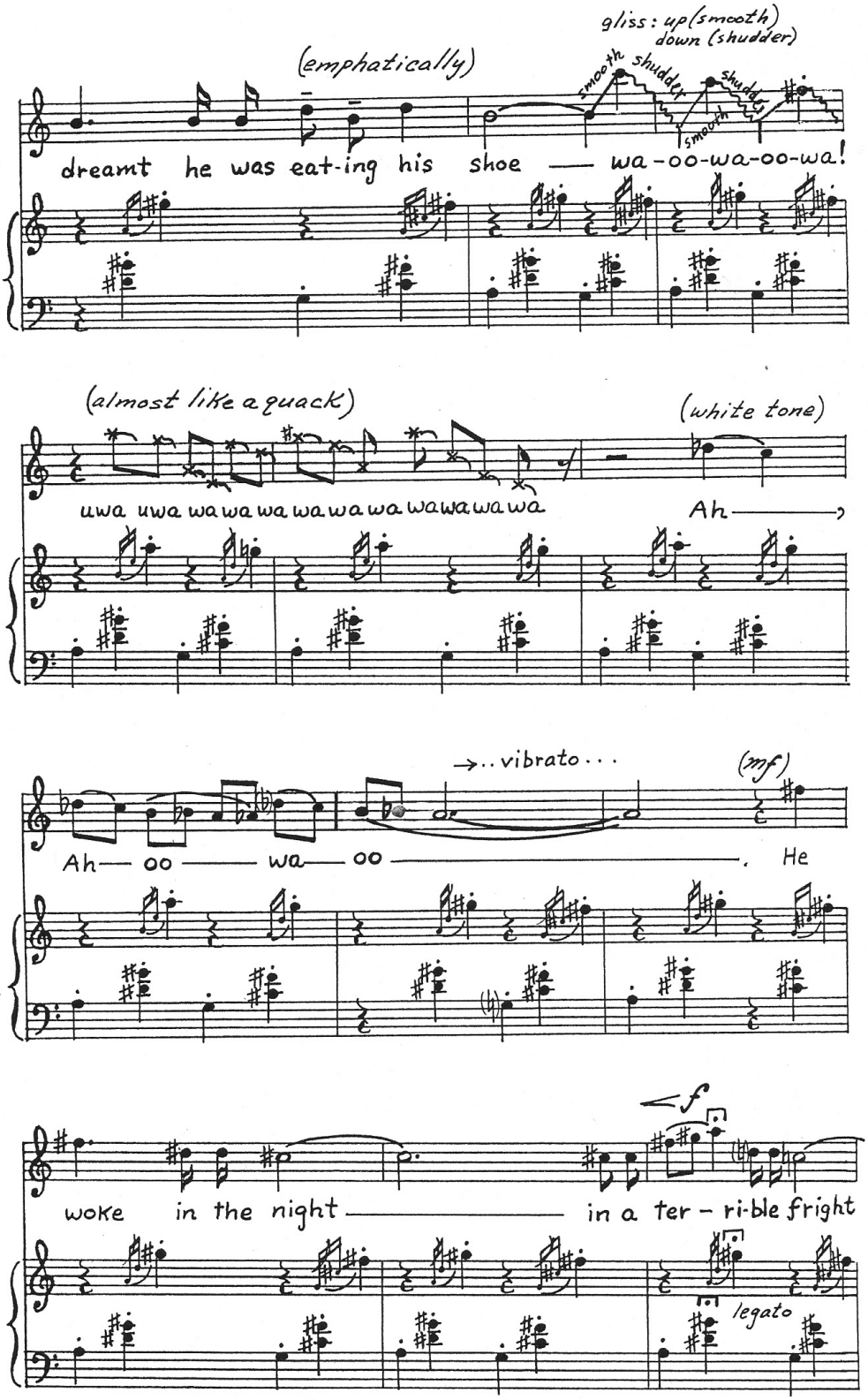
5.

Dreams —— Reality (?)

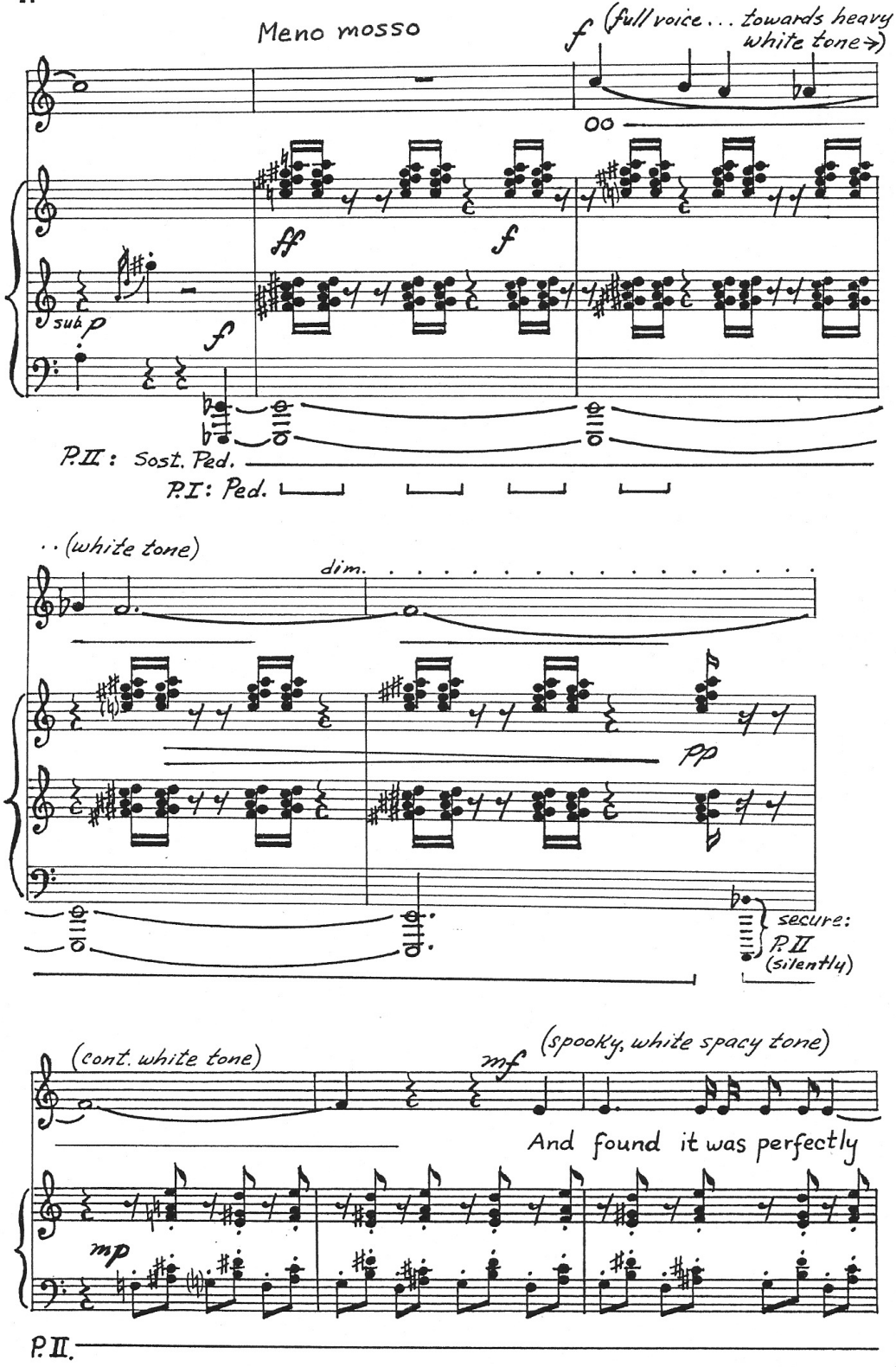
Priscilla McLean

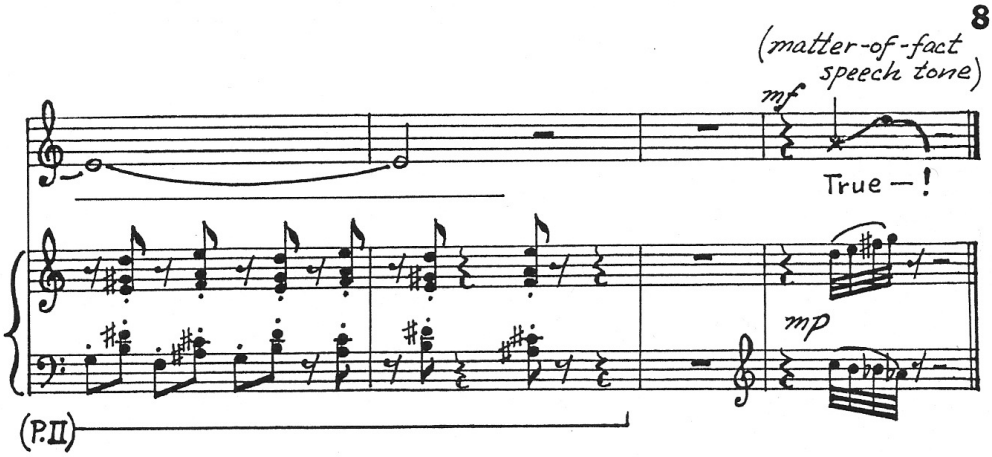
Text: Anon.




gliss: up (smooth) down (shudder)
(emphatically)
smooth
shudder
shudder
smooth
dreamt he was eat-ing his shoe — wa-oo-wa-oo-wa!
(almost like a quack)
(white tone)
uwa uwa wawawawawawawawawawawa
Ah
→.. vibrato . . .
(mf)
Ah — oo — wa — oo — . He
f
woke in the night — in a ter-ri-ble fright
legato

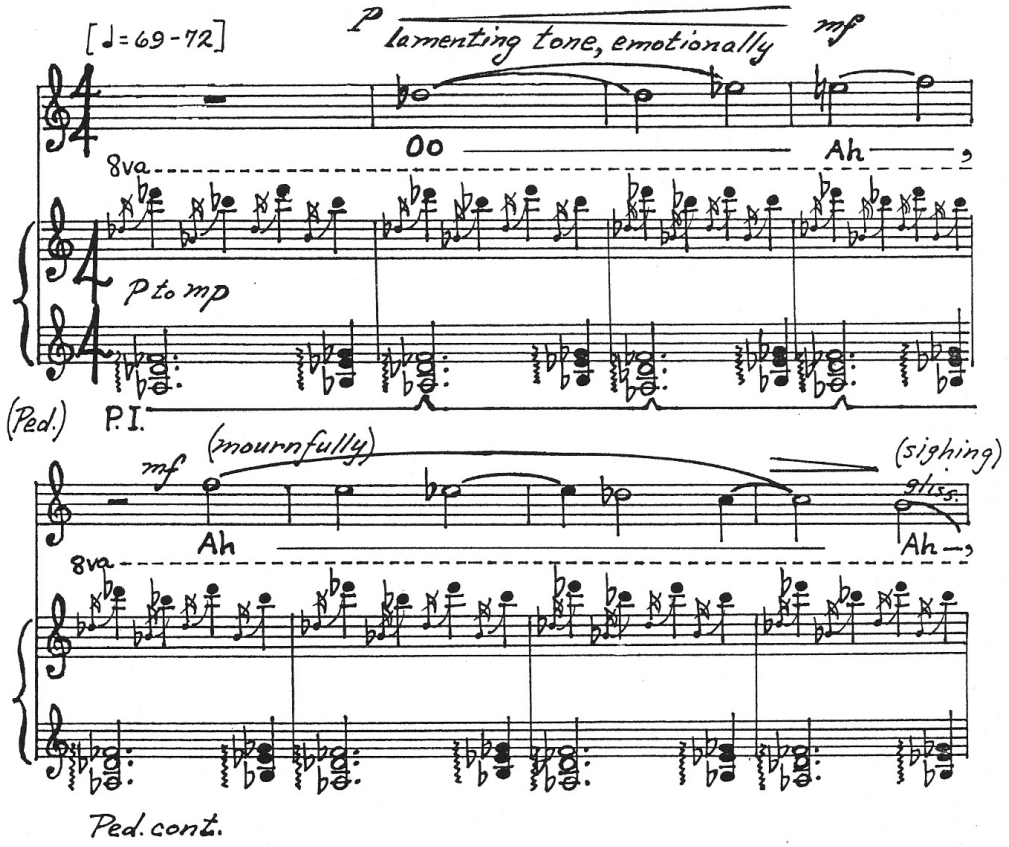
7.


Meno mosso
f (full voice . . . towards heavy white tone→)
ff
f
sub p
f
P.II: Sost. Ped.
P.I: Ped.
. . (white tone)
dim.
pp
secure:
P.II
(silently)
(cont. white tone)
mf
(spooky, white spacy tone)
And found it was perfectly
mp
P.II.



is Life Just One Big --- ?

(P.M.) ***Priscilla McLean***



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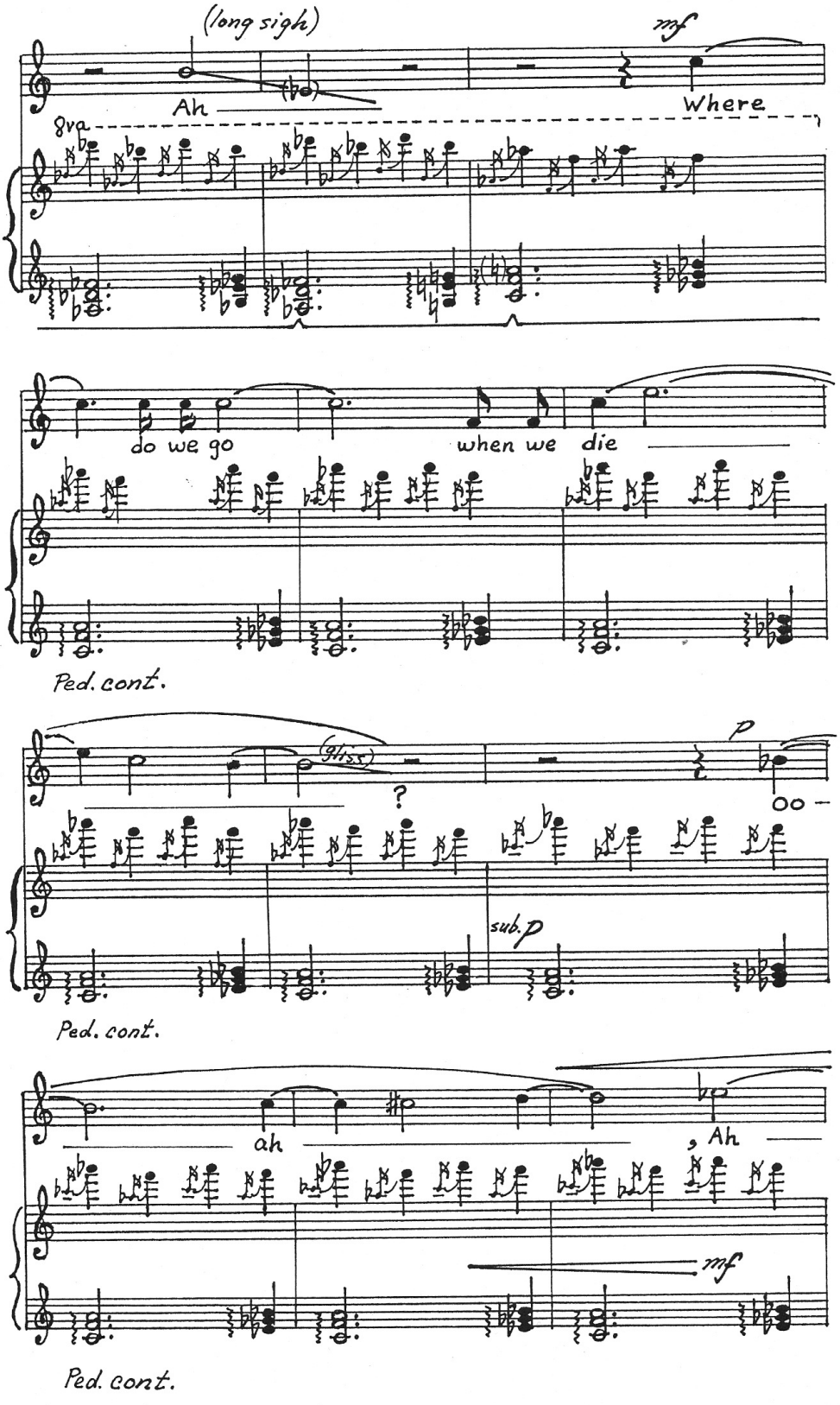
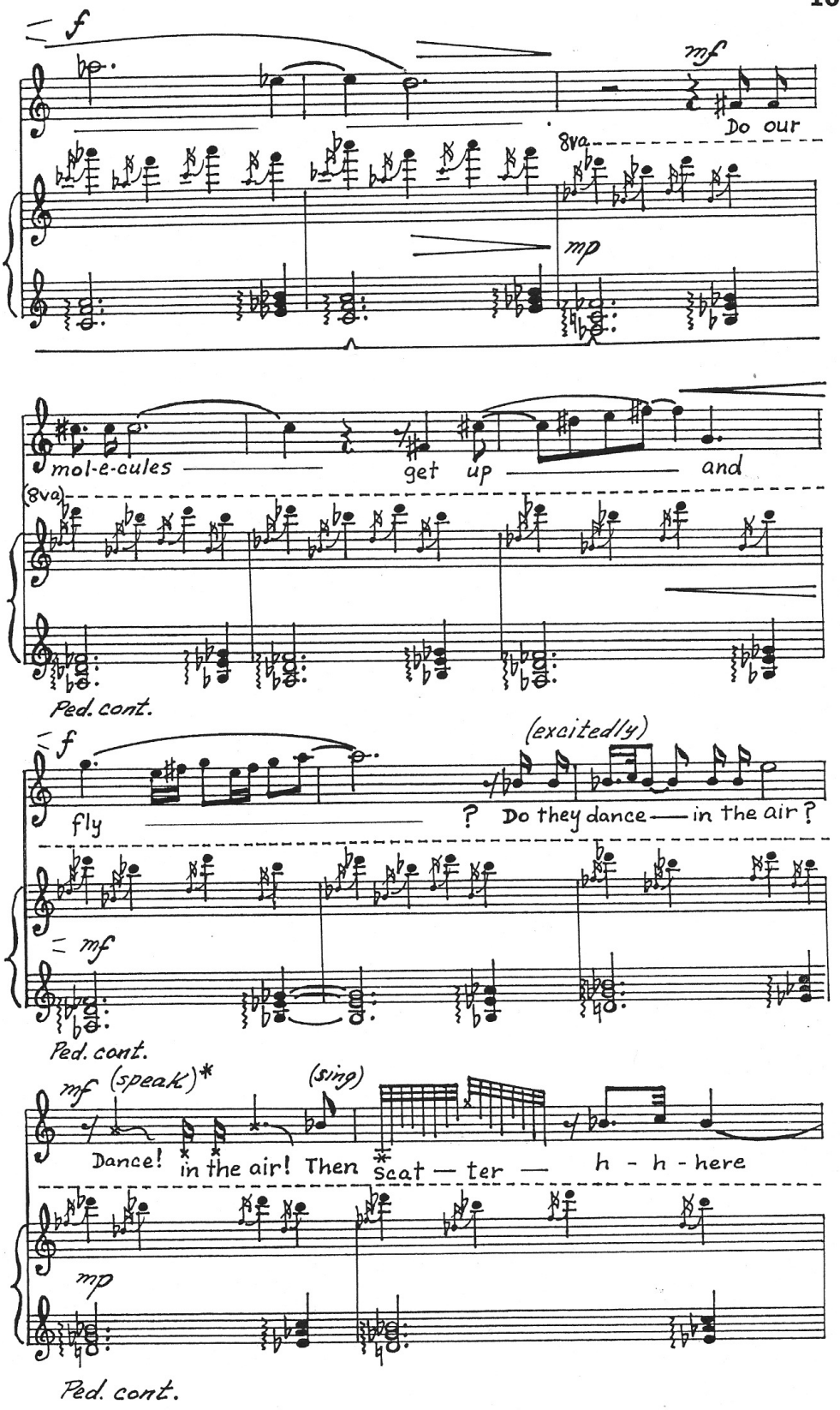
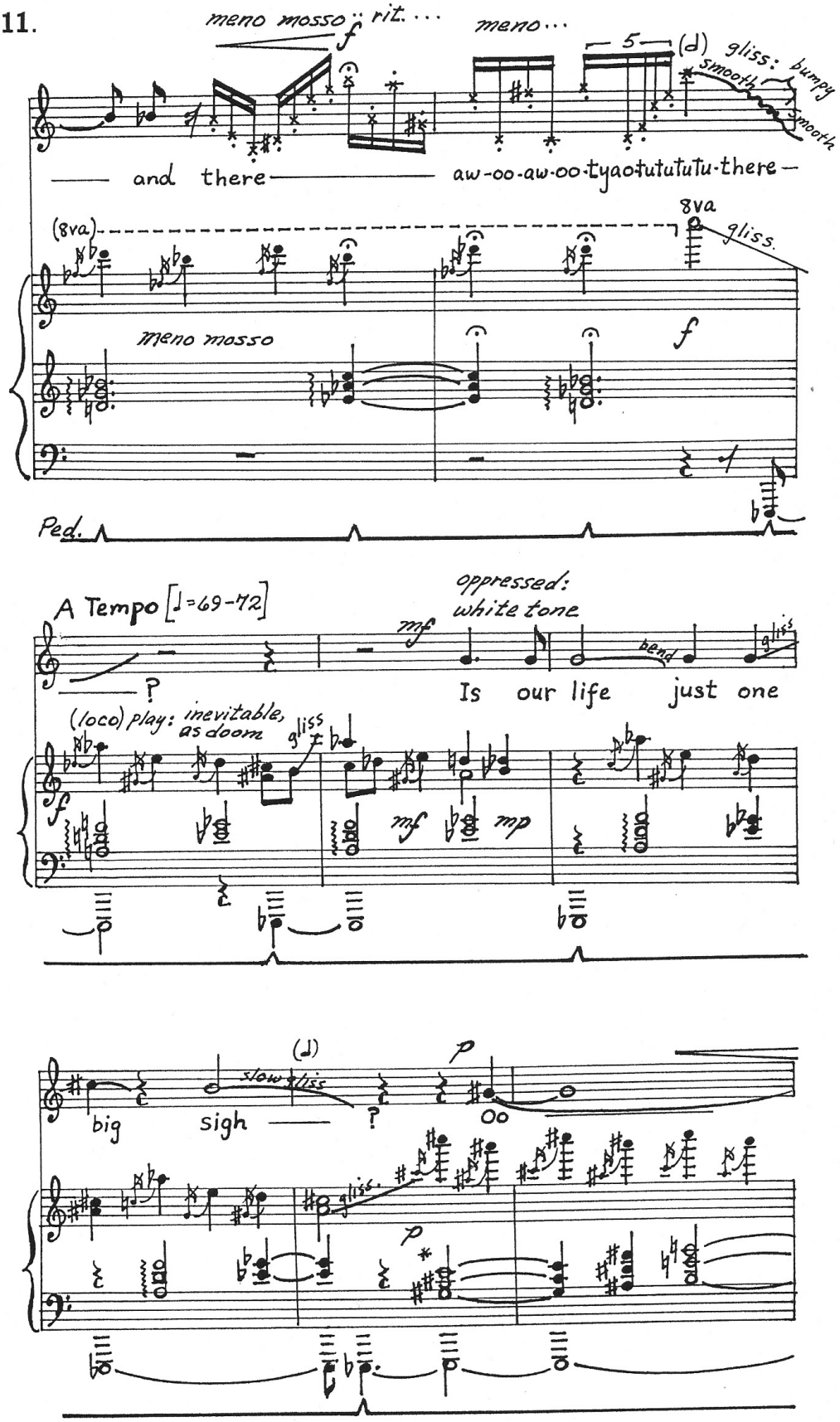

(long sigh)
mf
Ah
Where
8va
do we go
when we die
Ped. cont.
(glissz)
?
p
oo
sub. p
Ped. cont.
ah
, Ah
mf
Ped. cont.

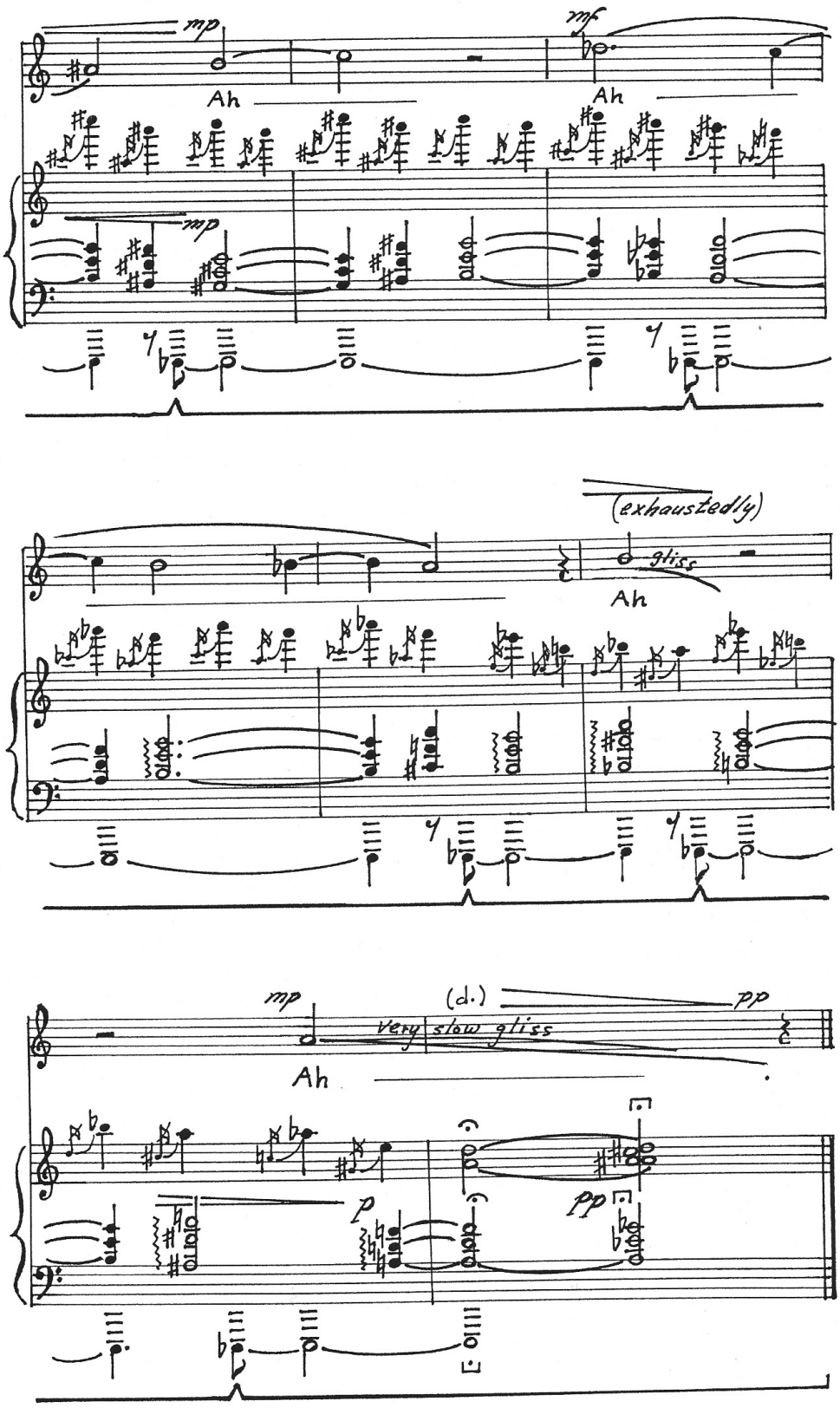


*Singer may be freer with rhythm here.

11.


meno mosso
rit.
meno...
5
(d) gliss: bumpy
smooth
smooth
and there
aw-oo-aw-oo-tyao-tututututu-there
8va
(8va)
gliss.
meno mosso
f
Ped.
A Tempo [♩=69-72]
oppressed:
white tone
mp
bend
gliss
?
Is our life just one
(loco) play: inevitable,
as doom
gliss
f
mf
mp
(♩)
slow gliss
p
big sigh
?
oo
gliss.
p
*

*no roll.


mp
Ah
mf
Ah
mp
(exhaustedly)
gliss
Ah
mp
(d.)
pp
very slow gliss
Ah
p
pp

13.

Here Today, Gone Tomorrow .....

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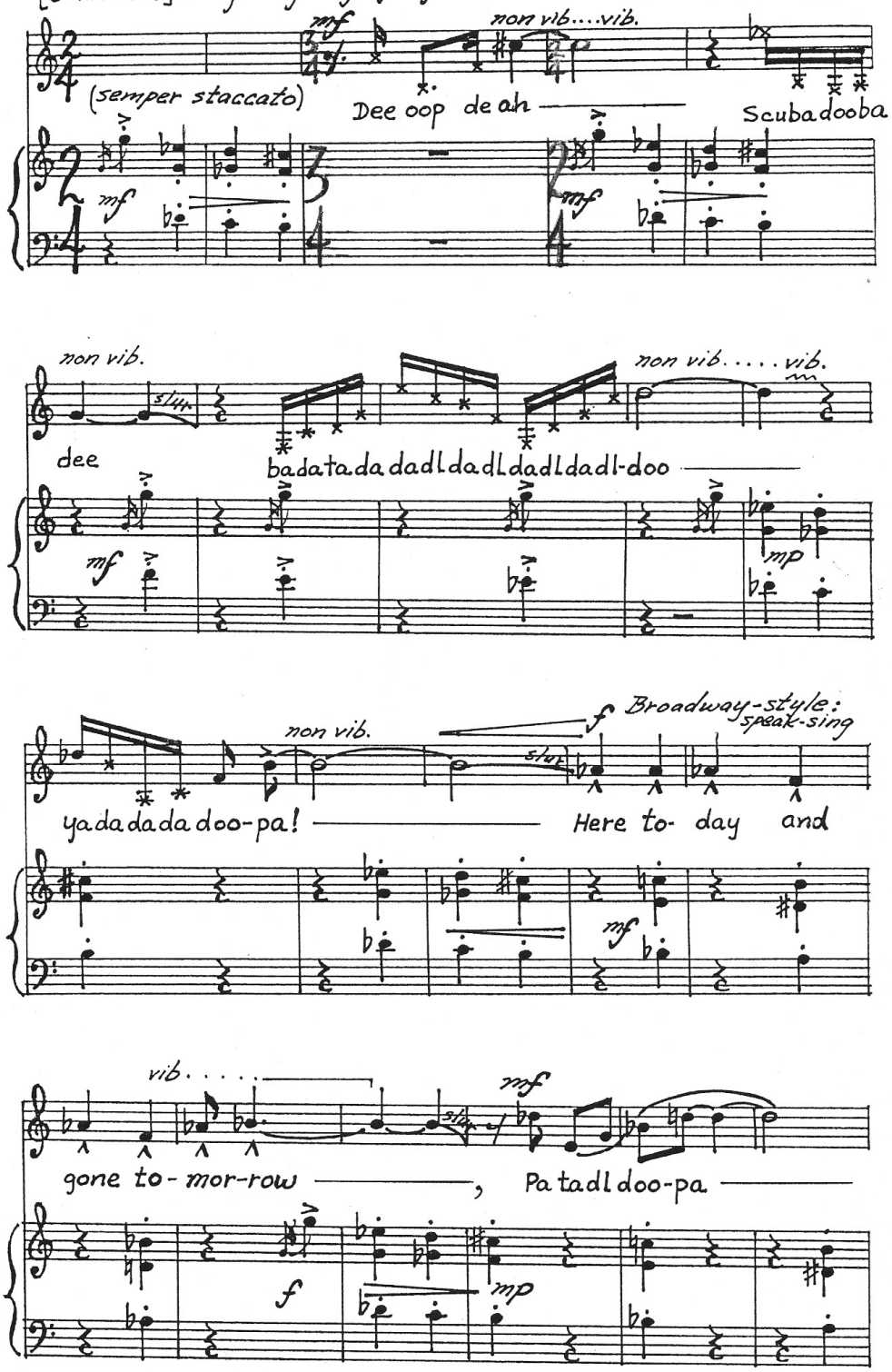

[♩=120-126] Always sing very lightly*

non vib....vib.
(semper staccato)
Dee oop de ah
Scubadooba

non vib.
slur
dee
badatadadadldadldadldadl-doo
non vib.....vib.

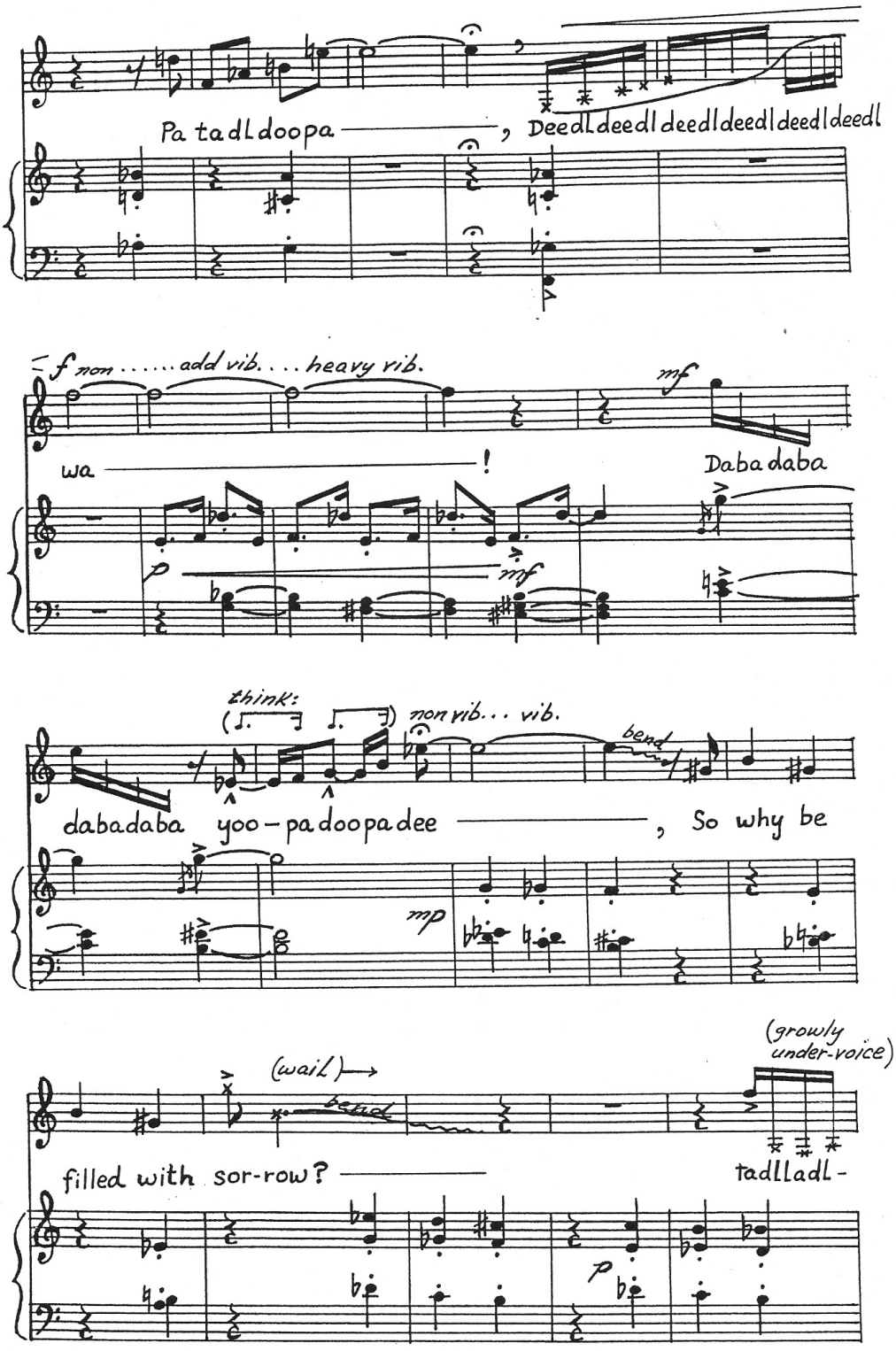
non vib.

Broadway-style: speak-sing
slur
yadadadadoo-pa!
Here to- day and

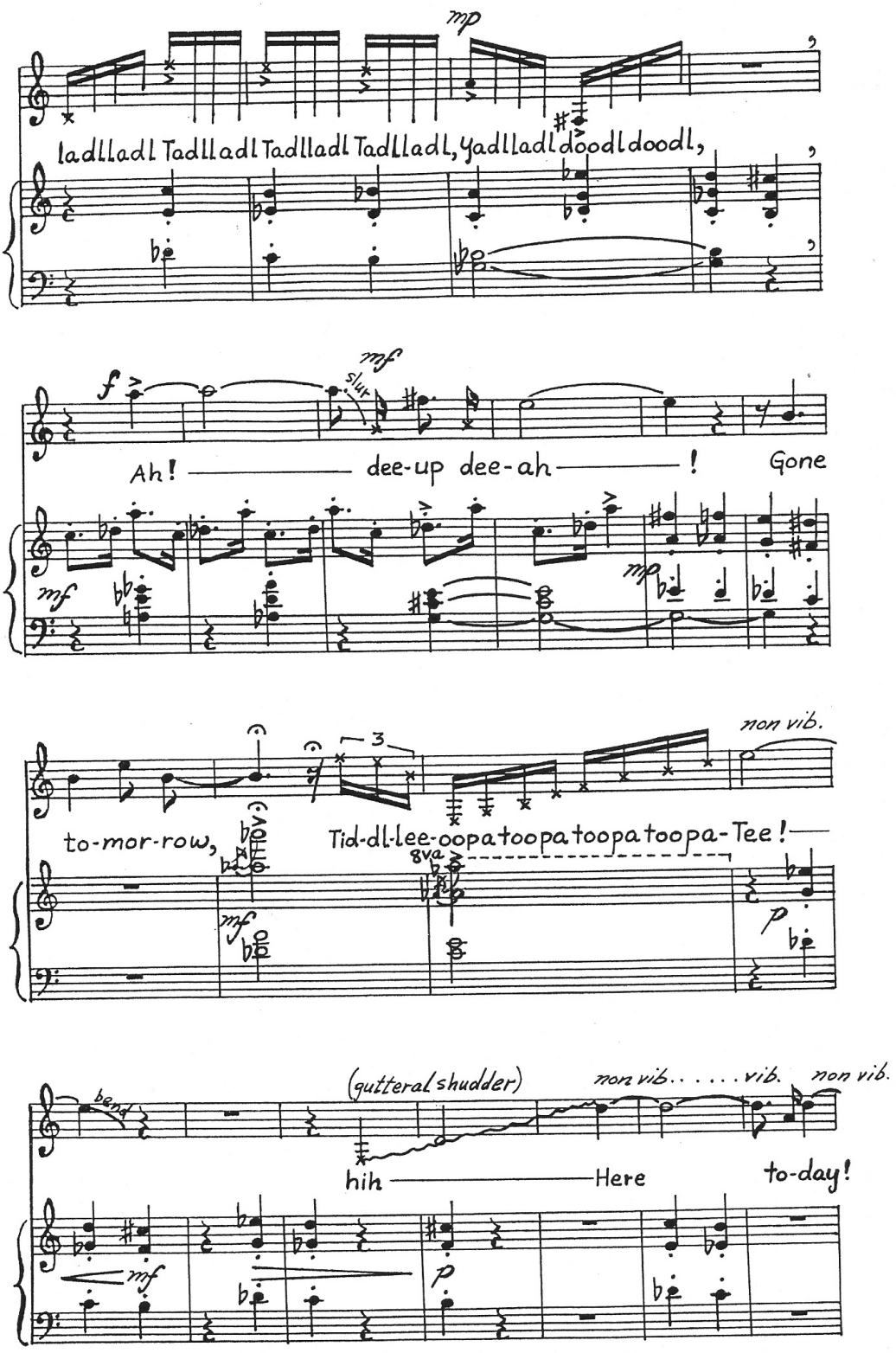
vib.....

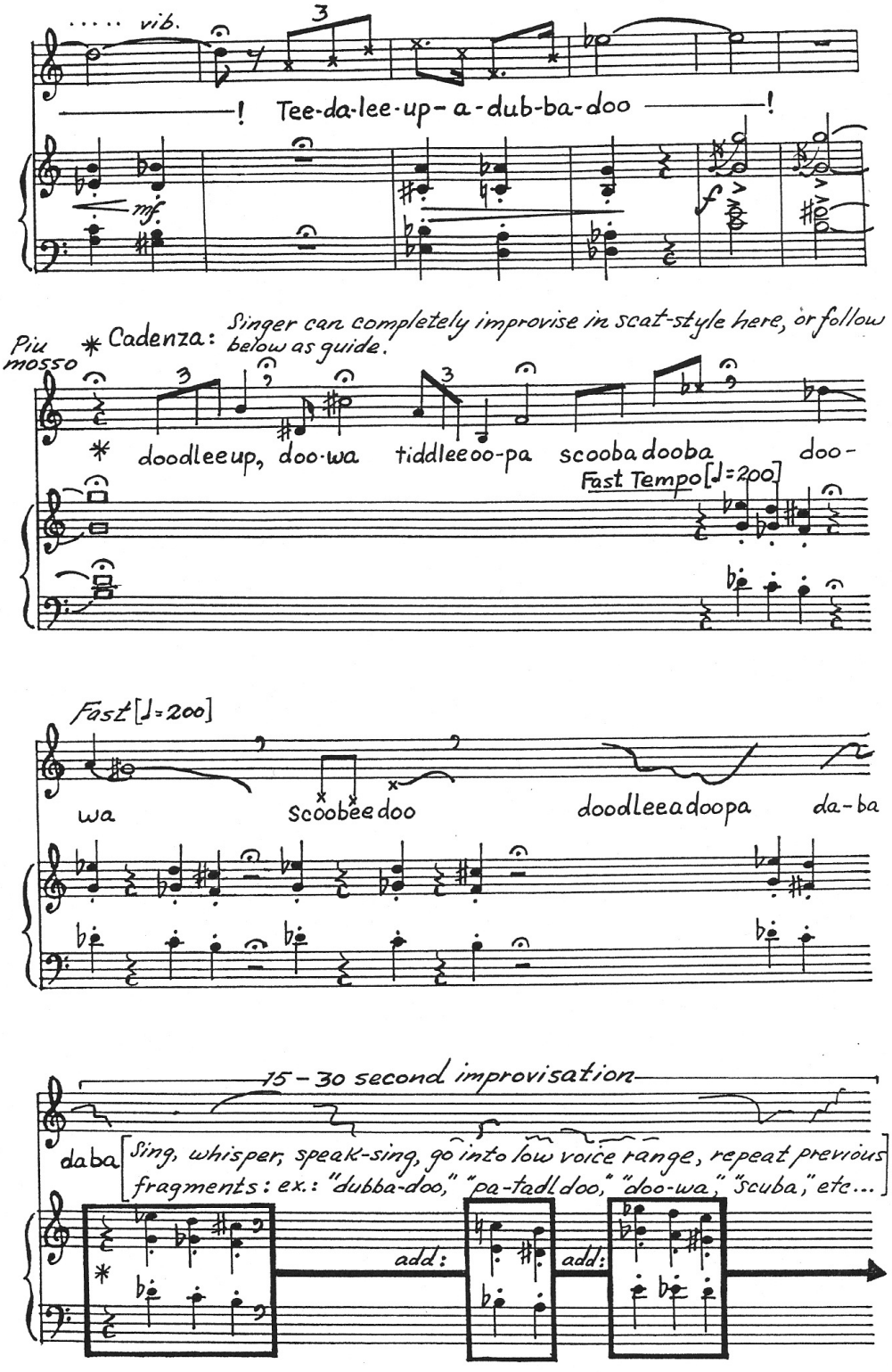
slur
gone to-mor-row
Pa tadl doo-pa

* Scat-style: soprano can invent other scat syllables, if desired.


Pa ta dl doopa ——— , Deedl deedl deedl deedl deedl deedl deedl
f non ..... add vib. .... heavy vib.
mf
wa ——— !
Daba daba
p
mf
think:
non vib... vib.
bend
dabadaba yoo-pa doopa dee ——— , So why be
mp
(growly under-voice)
(wail)
bend
filled with sor-row? ———
tadlladl-
p

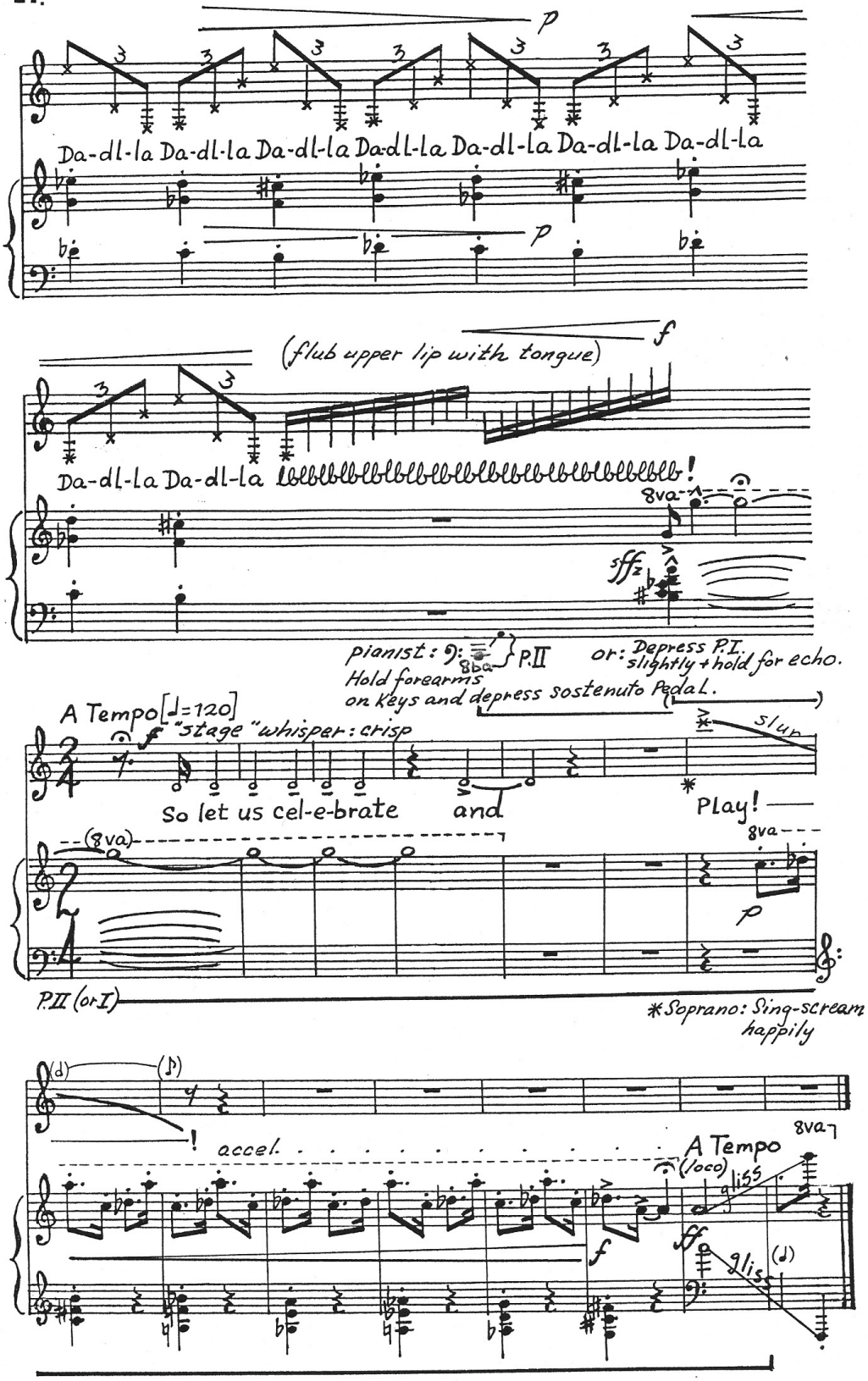
15.


mp
ladlladl Tadlladl Tadlladl Tadlladl, yadlladl doodl doodl,
f
mf
slur
Ah! dee-up dee-ah ! Gone
mf
mp
non vib.
to-mor-row, Tid-dl-lee-oopa toopa toopa toopa-Tee!
8va
mf
p
bend
(gutteral shudder)
non vib. . . . . vib.
non vib.
hih Here to-day!
mf
p



* Play chords in any order, using previous line as guide. Gradually add other chords (in boxes) at times. Use plenty of rests.

17.


p
Da-dl-la Da-dl-la Da-dl-la Da-dl-la Da-dl-la Da-dl-la Da-dl-la
p
(flub upper lip with tongue)
f
Da-dl-la Da-dl-la
8va
sfffz
pianist:
8ba
P.II
or: Depress P.I. slightly + hold for echo.
Hold forearms on keys and depress sostenuto Pedal.
A Tempo [♩=120]
"stage" whisper: crisp
f
So let us cel-e-brate and
slur
Play!
8va
(8va)
p
P.II (or I)
*Soprano: Sing-scream happily
(d)
(p)
!
accel.
8va
A Tempo
(loco)
gliss
f
ff
gliss
(d)

What Reason Why?

P.M.

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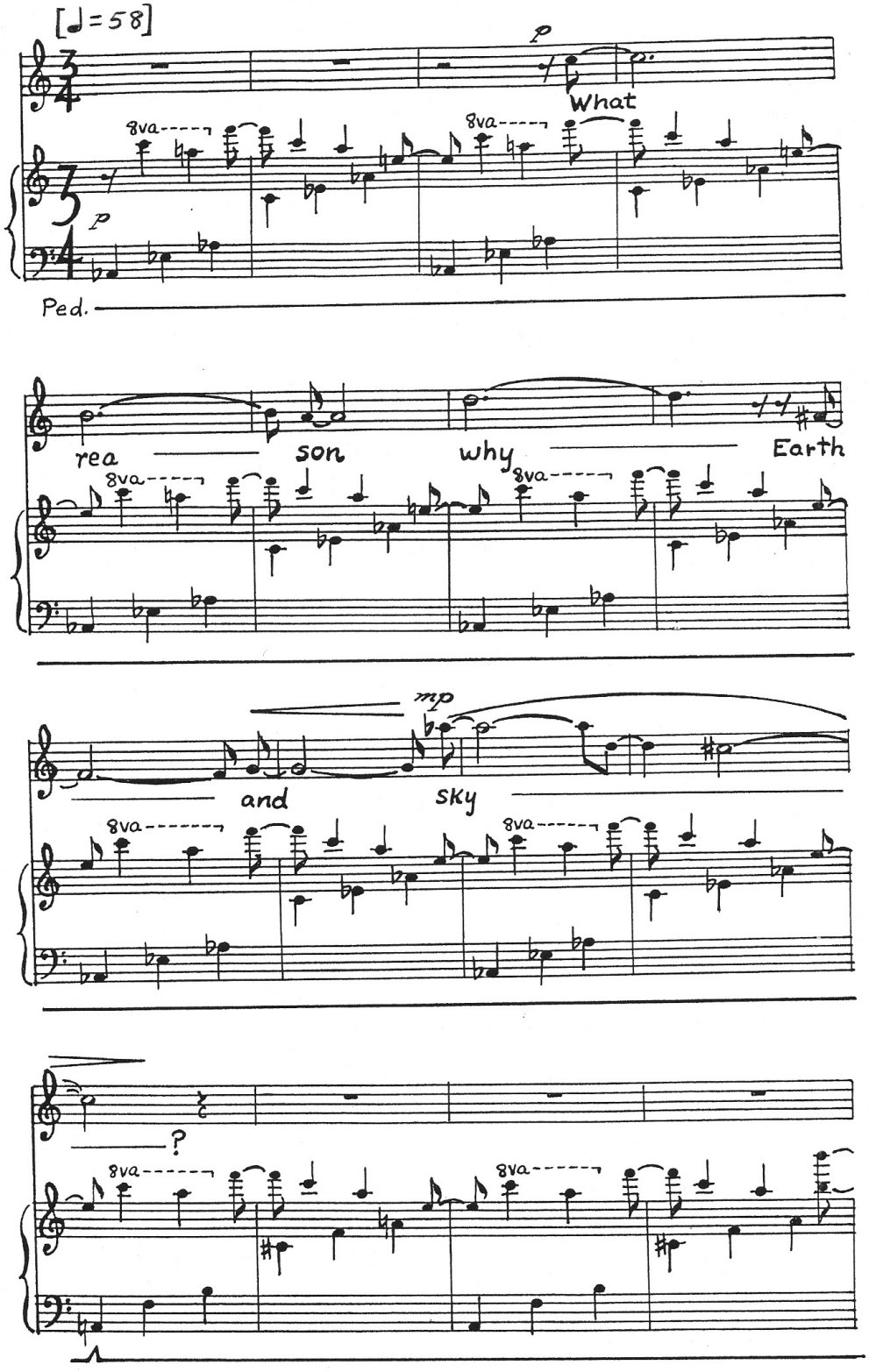
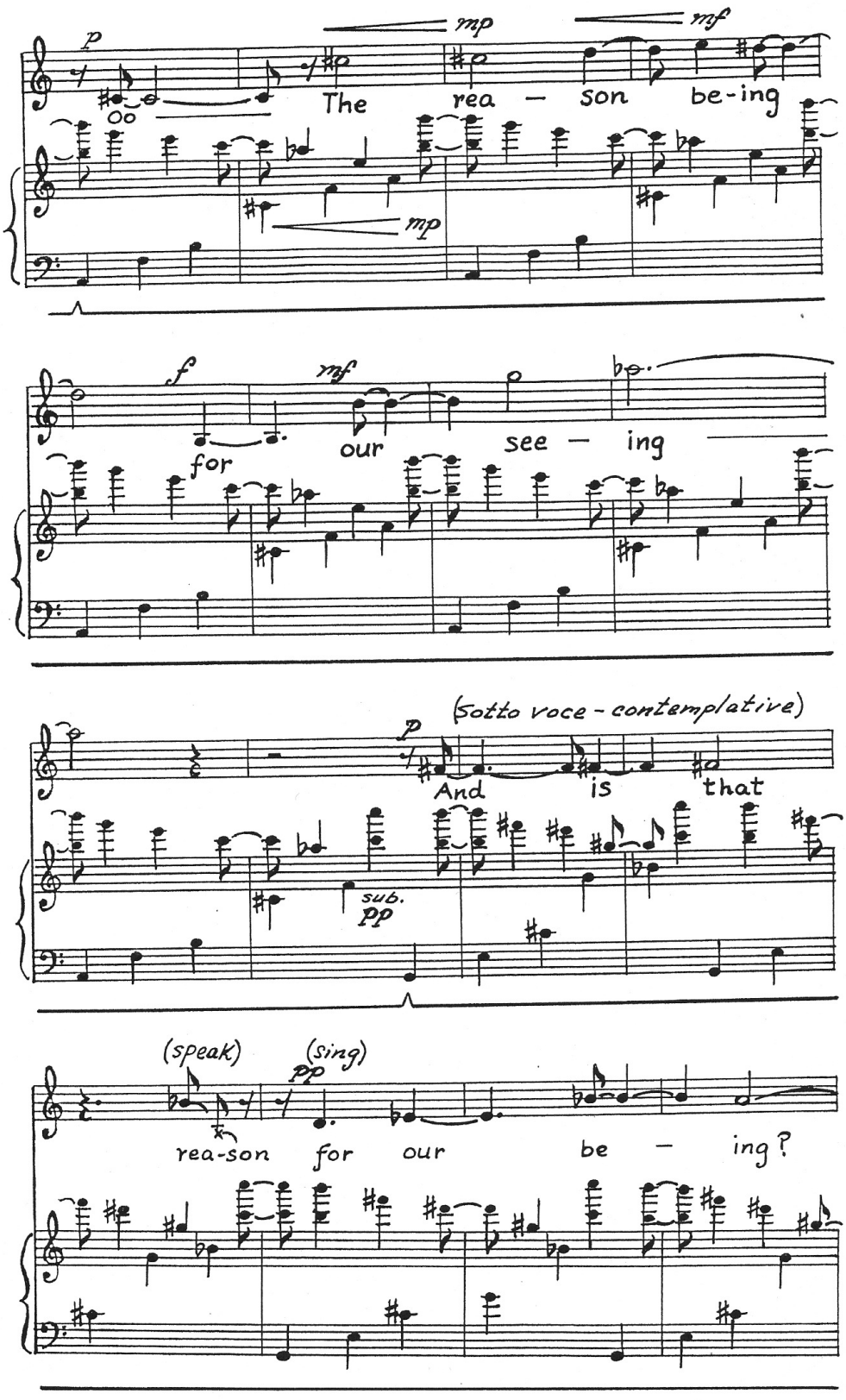
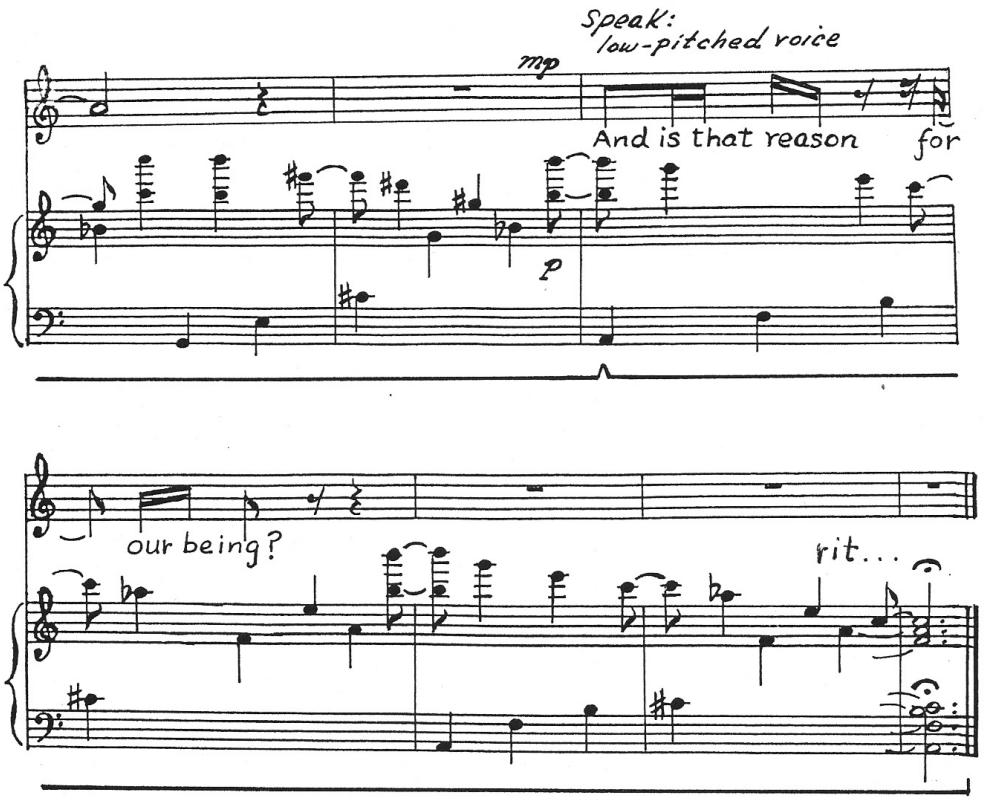


19.

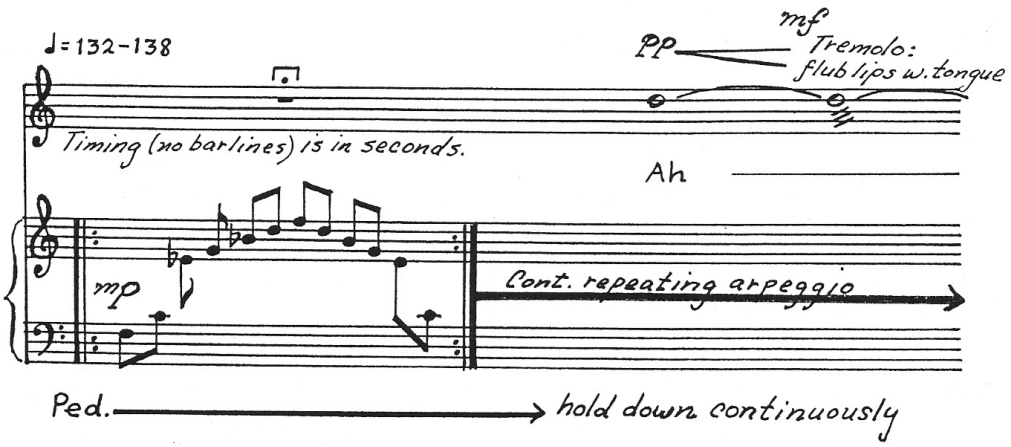

p
mp
mf
The rea — son be-ing
mp
f
mf
for our see — ing
(sotto voce - contemplative)
p
And is that
sub.
pp
(speak)
(sing)
pp
rea-son for our be — ing?



P. M.

Life is a Merry-go-round.

Priscilla
Mc Lean



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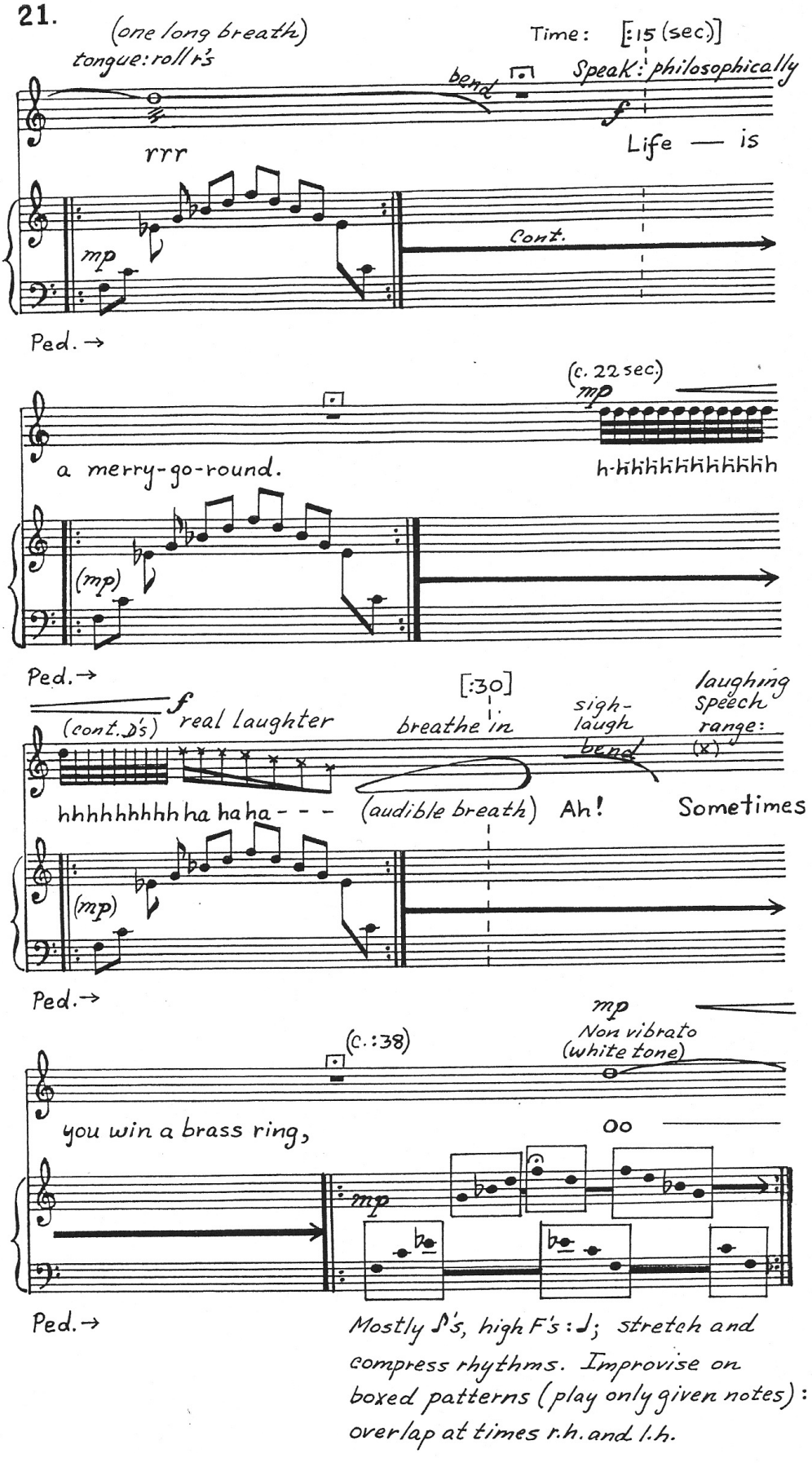
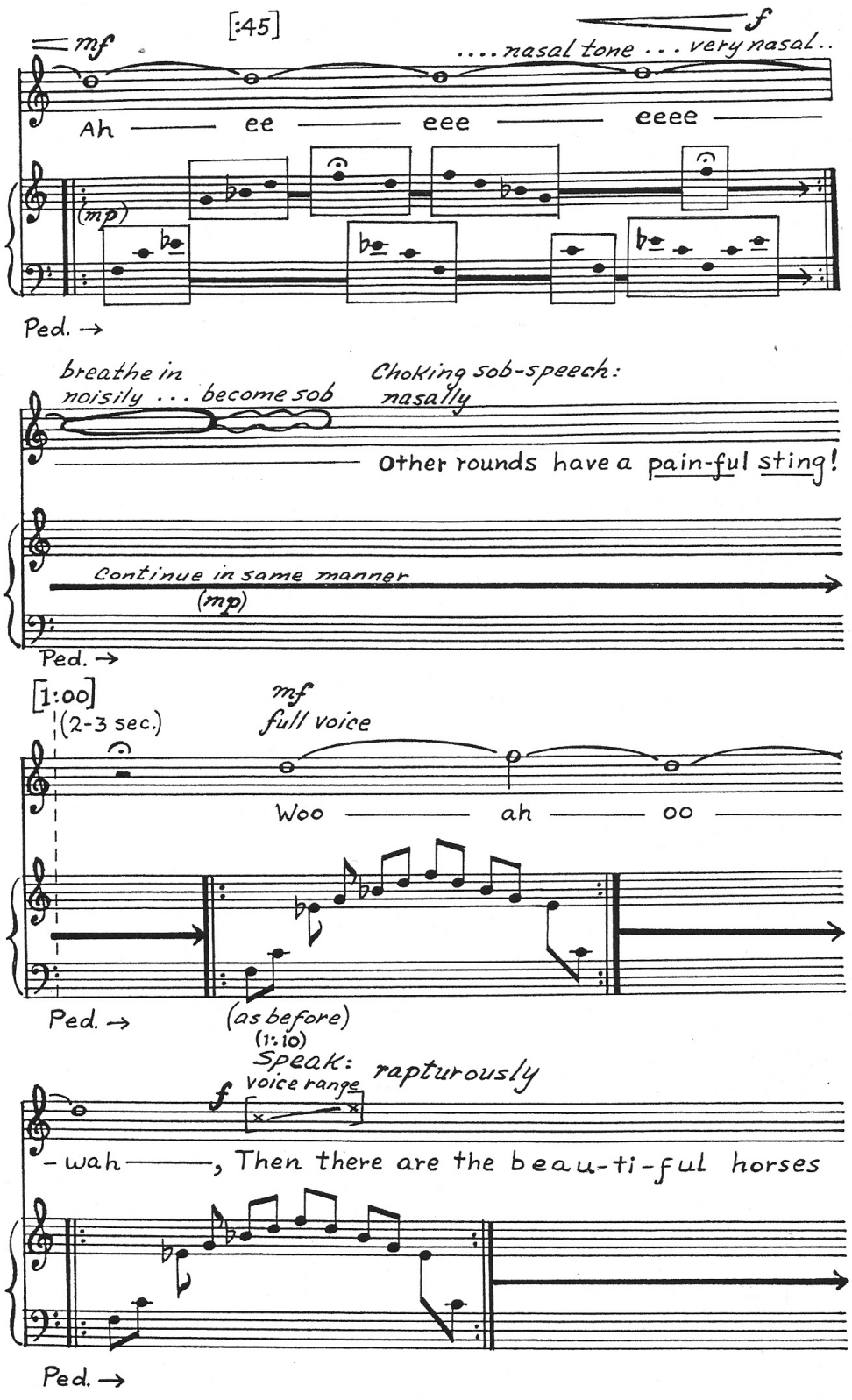
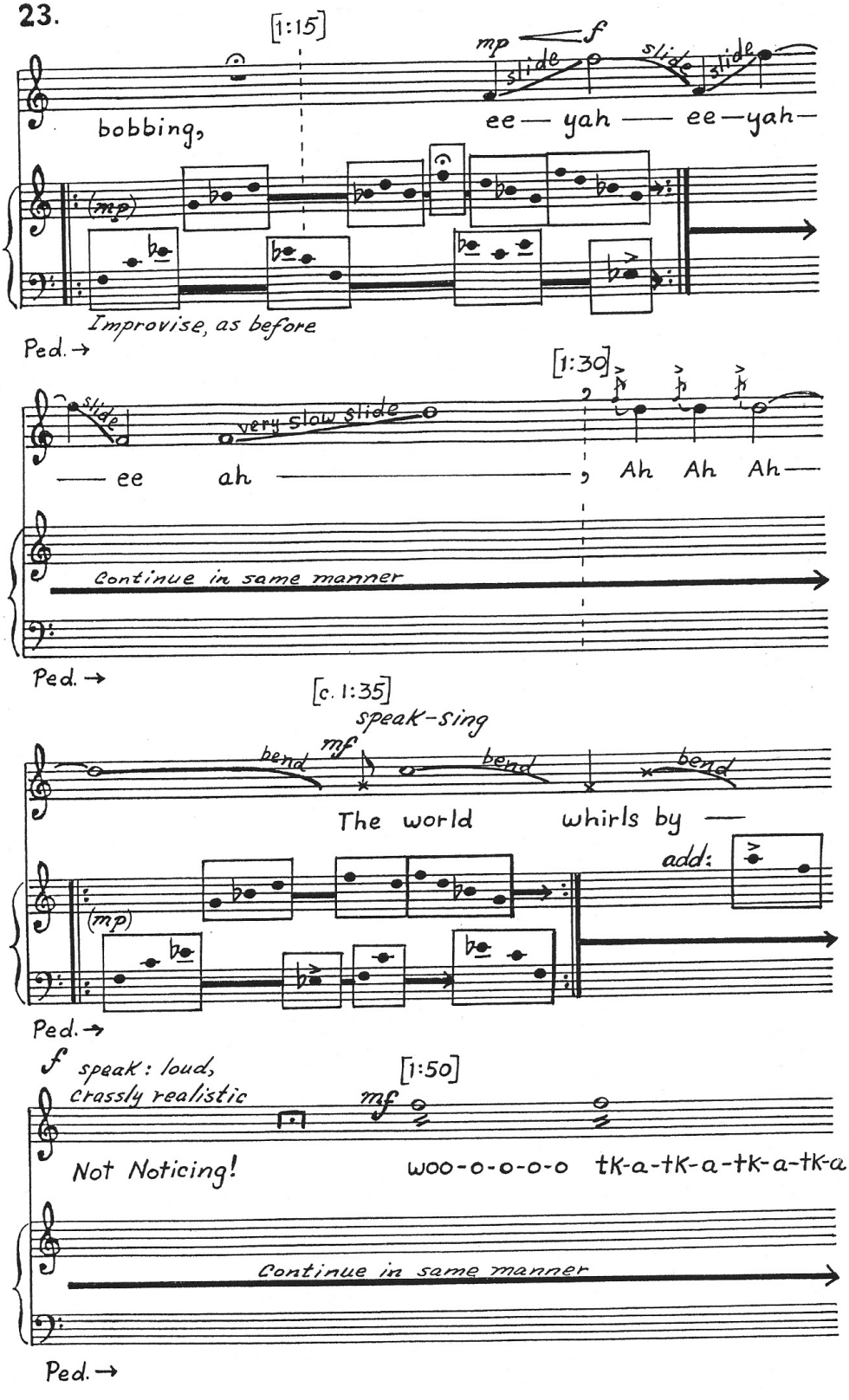
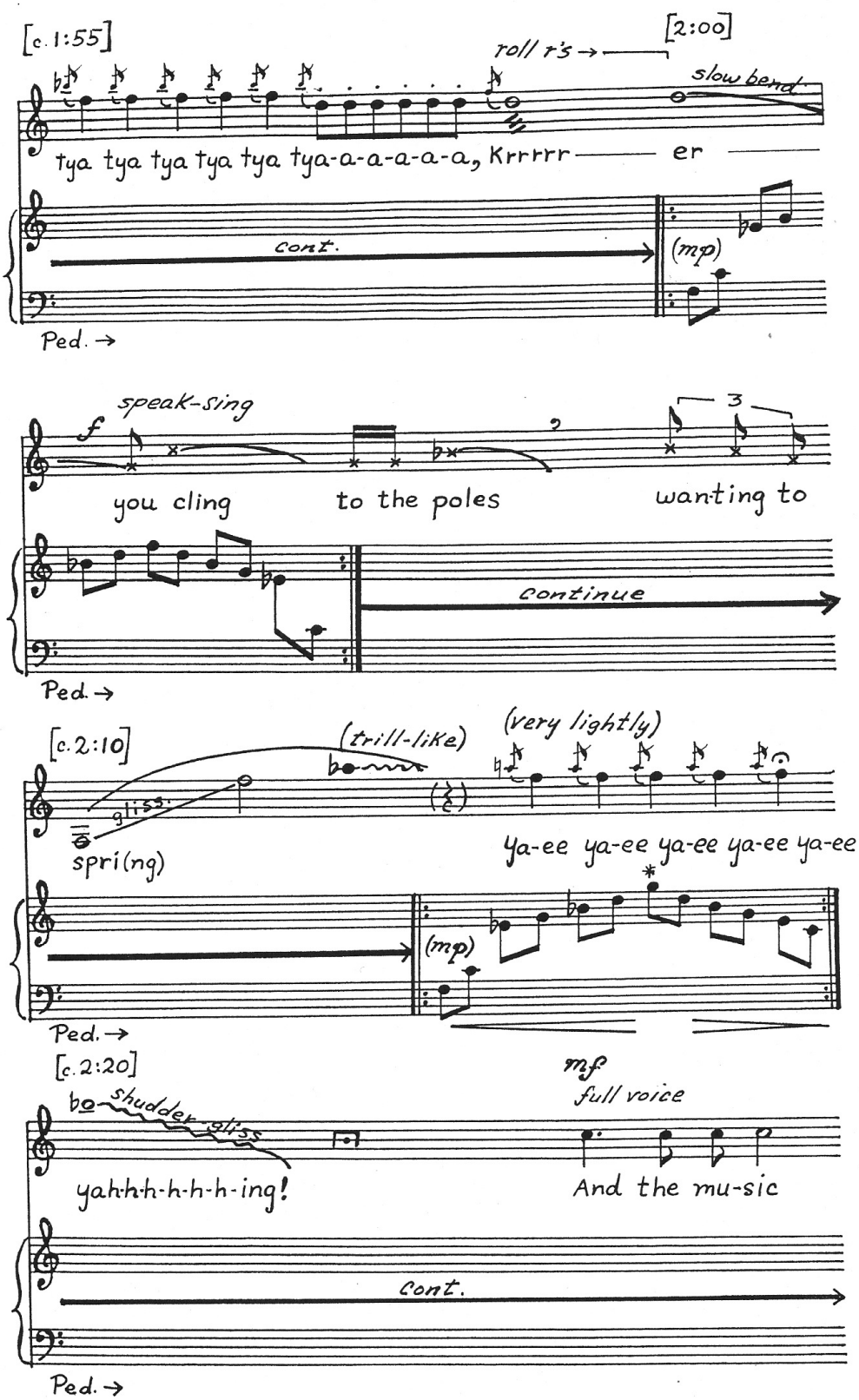


Mostly ♪'s, high F's: ♩; stretch and compress rhythms. Improvise on boxed patterns (play only given notes): overlap at times r.h. and l.h.

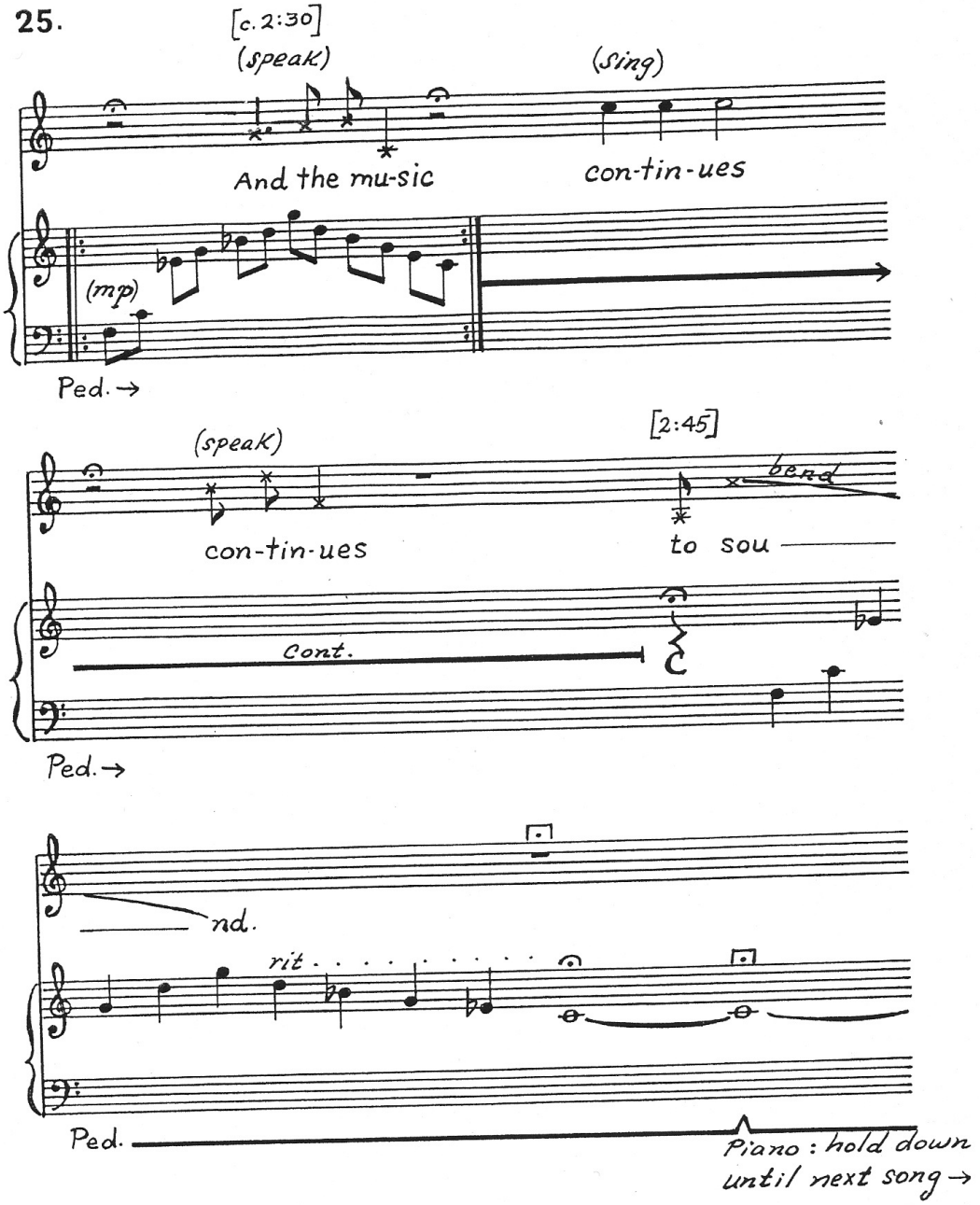

[:45]
mf
f
....nasal tone . . . very nasal..
Ah — ee — eee — eeee —
(mp)
Ped. →
breathe in noisily . . . become sob
Choking sob-speech: nasally
Other rounds have a pain-ful sting!
Continue in same manner
(mp)
Ped. →
[1:00]
(2-3 sec.)
mf
full voice
Woo — ah — oo —
Ped. →
(as before)
(1:10)
Speak: rapturously
f
voice range
-wah —, Then there are the beau-ti-ful horses
Ped. →

23.


[1:15]
mp
f
slide
slide
slide
bobbing,
ee — yah — ee — yah —
(mp)
Improvise, as before
Ped.
[1:30]
slide
very slow slide
— ee ah —
Ah Ah Ah —
Continue in same manner
Ped.
[c. 1:35]
speak-sing
bend
mf
bend
bend
The world whirls by —
add:
(mp)
Ped.
f speak: loud, crassly realistic
[1:50]
mf
Not Noticing!
woo-o-o-o-o tk-a-tk-a-tk-a-tk-a
Continue in same manner
Ped.

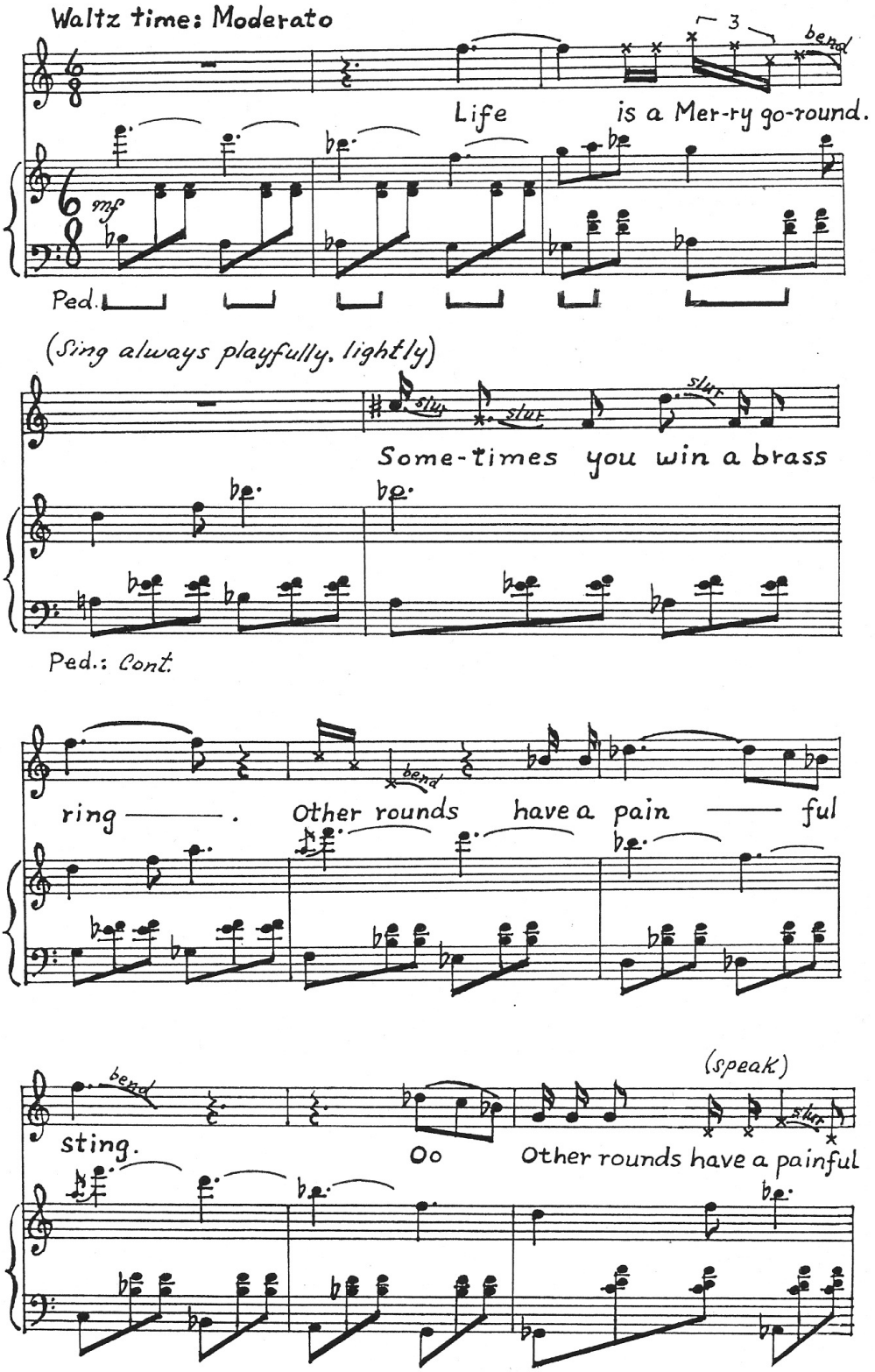

[c. 1:55]
roll r's →
[2:00]
slow bend
tya tya tya tya tya tya-a-a-a-a-a, Krrrrr —— er ——
cont.
(mp)
Ped. →
speak-sing
f
you cling to the poles wanting to
3
continue
Ped. →
[c. 2:10]
(trill-like)
(very lightly)
gliss.
spri(ng)
Ya-ee ya-ee ya-ee ya-ee ya-ee
(mp)
Ped. →
[c. 2:20]
mf
full voice
shudder-gliss
yahhhhhhhhing!
And the mu-sic
cont.
Ped. →

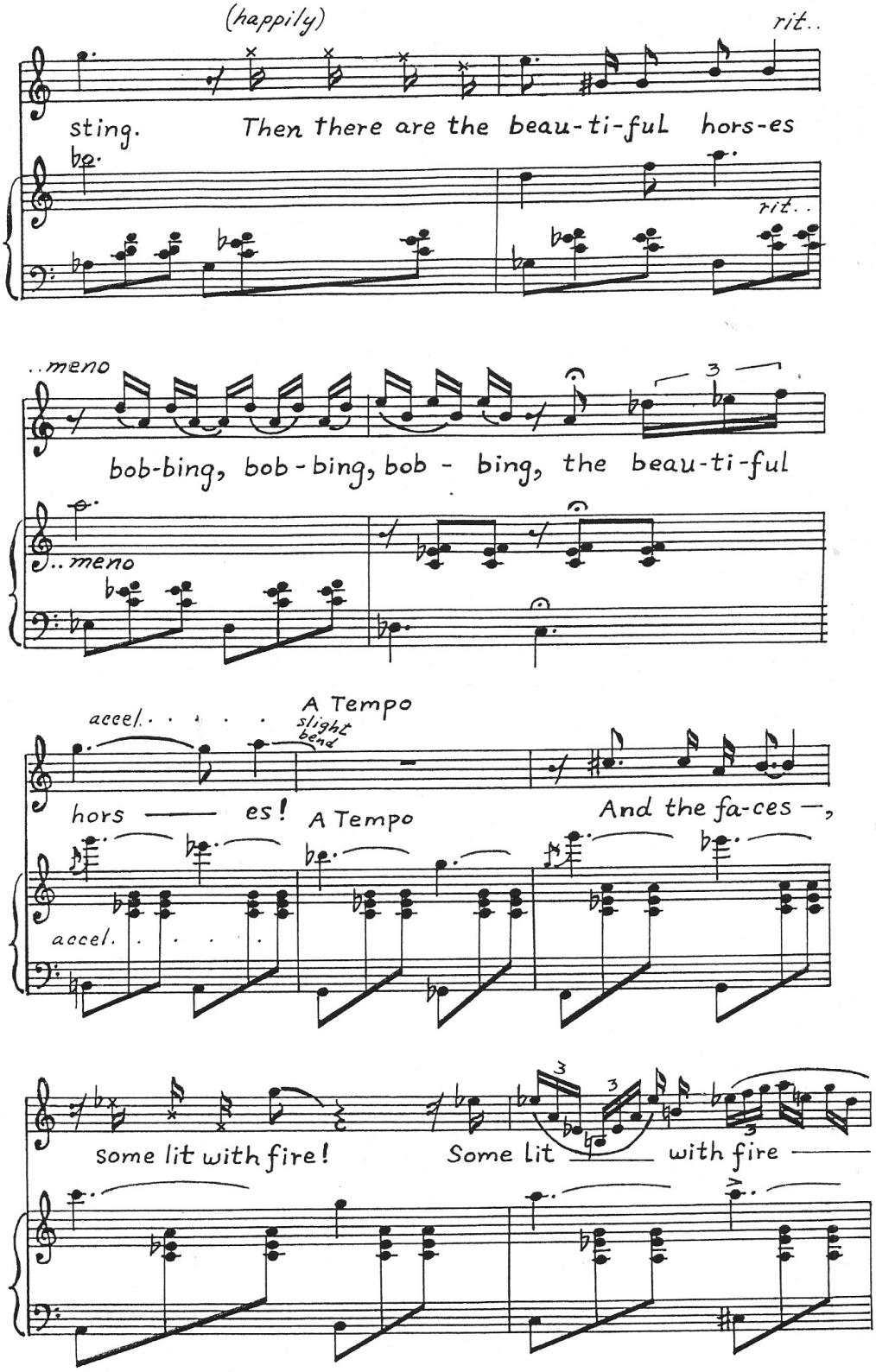
25.

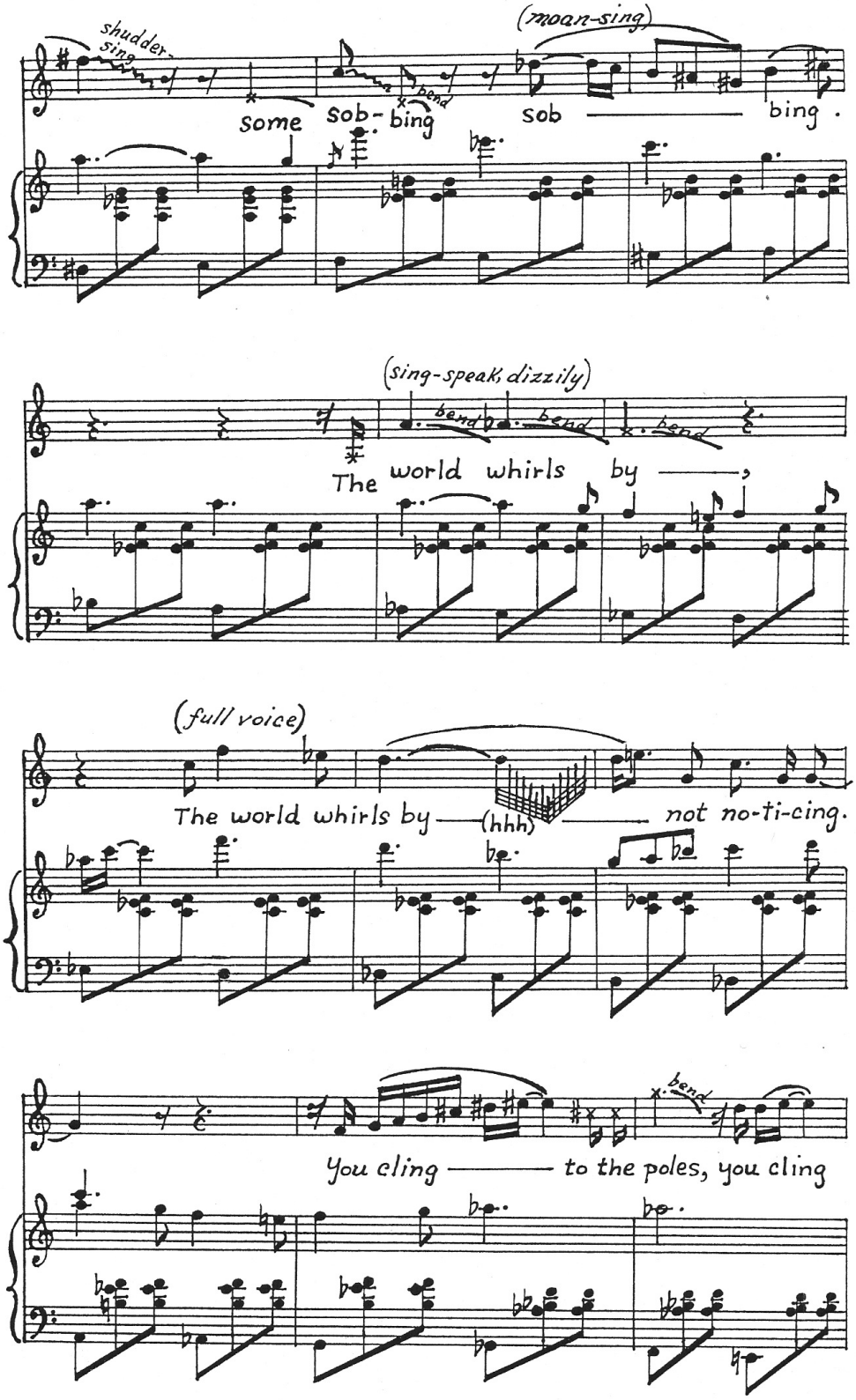

[c. 2:30]
(speak)
(sing)
And the mu-sic
con-tin-ues
(mp)
Ped. →
(speak)
[2:45]
bend
con-tin-ues
to sou
Cont.
Ped. →
nd.
rit . . . . . .
Ped.
Piano : hold down
until next song →

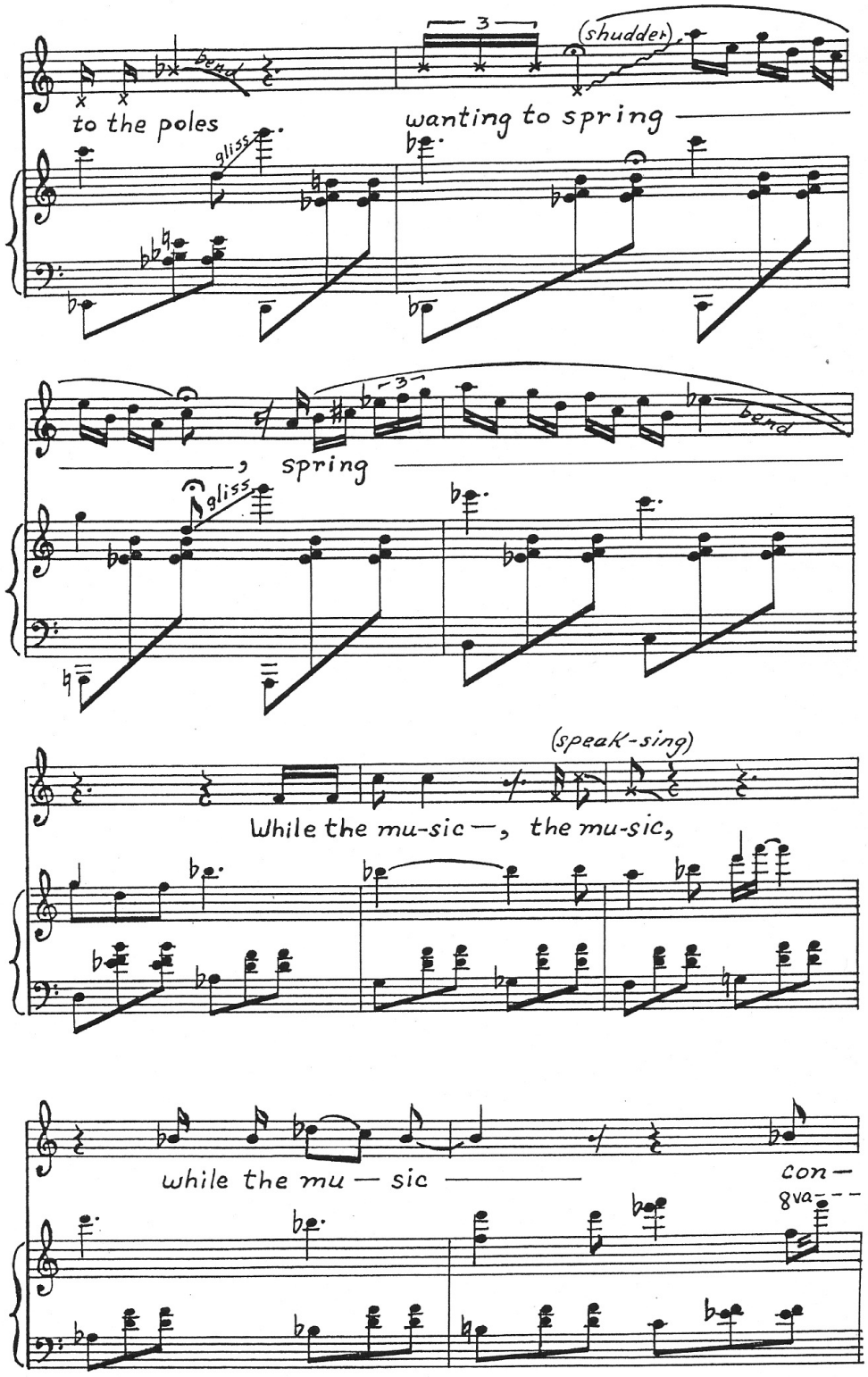
...and the Music Continues to Sound!

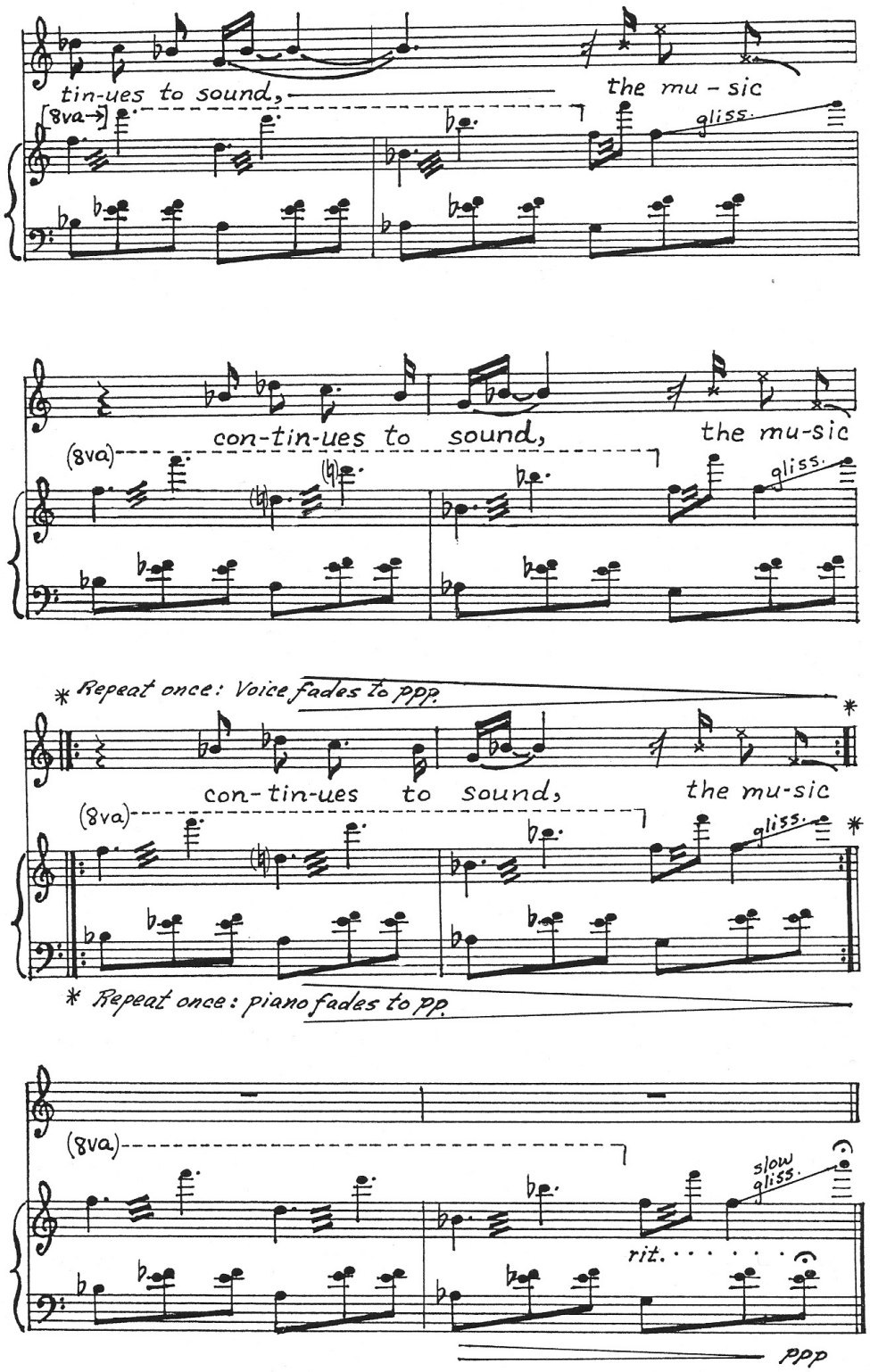
P.M. — **Priscilla Mc Lean**




(happily)
rit..
sting. Then there are the beau-ti-ful hors-es
rit..
..meno
bob-bing, bob-bing, bob - bing, the beau-ti-ful
..meno
accel. . . . . .
A Tempo
slight bend
hors — es!
A Tempo
And the fa-ces —,
accel. . . . . .
some lit with fire!
Some lit — with fire —


shudder-sing
some
sob-bing
bend
(moan-sing)
sob ——— bing.
(sing-speak, dizzily)
bend bend bend
The world whirls by ———,
(full voice)
The world whirls by ——
(hhh)
——— not no-ti-cing.
bend
You cling ——— to the poles, you cling


3
(shudder)
to the poles
wanting to spring
gliss
bend
spring
gliss
(speak-sing)
While the mu-sic —, the mu-sic,
while the mu — sic
con —
8va


tin-ues to sound,
the mu - sic
8va
gliss.
con-tin-ues to sound,
the mu-sic
(8va)
gliss.
* Repeat once: Voice fades to ppp.
con-tin-ues to sound,
the mu-sic
(8va)
gliss.
* Repeat once: piano fades to pp.
(8va)
slow gliss.
rit.
ppp