The Name of It is Love

A song cycle

2010

Music by

Carleton Macy

Texts by

Emily Dickinson

Composed for Emma Lynn, soprano,

and Johanna Kvam, piano

The Name of It is Love , a song cycle using the poetry of Emily Dickinson, was composed in 2010 for soprano, Emma Lynn and pianist Johanna Kvam, both of whom were students at Macalester College. I selected 5 of Dickinson's many poems on the subject of romantic love. The cycle begins with "Love, thou art high" expressing the poet's personal uncertainty about her ability to experience love. The next two poems are positive "hopes" for a successful love relationship. The 4th song is a little story about observing a pair of young lovers who's excited hearts can be seen by all. The final song/poem is Dickinson's summary reflection upon romantic love, calling it both the boon and the bane of all mankind, thus expressing the age-old theme about love: "you can't live with it and you can't live without it."

This version for soprano and string orchestra was created in 2017.

1. Love- thou art high

Love-thou art high-
I cannot climb thee-
But, were it Two-
Who knows but we-
Taking turns- at the Chimborazo-
Ducal- at last- stand up by thee-

Love- thou are deep-
I cannot cross thee-
But, were there Two
Instead of One-
Rower, and Yacht- some sovereign
Summer-
Who knows- but we'd reach the Sun?

Love- thou are Veiled-
A few- behold thee-
Smile- and alter- and prattle- and die-
Bliss- were an Oddity- without thee-
Nicknamed by God-
Eternity-

2. Let My first Knowing be of thee

Let my first Knowing be of thee
With morning's warming Light-
And my first Fearing, lest Unknowns
Engulf thee in the night-

3. If you were coming in the Fall

If you were coming in the Fall,
I'd brush the Summer by
With half a smile, and half a spurn,
As Housewives do, a Fly.

If I could see you in a year,
I'd wind the months in balls---
And put them each in separate Drawers,
For fear the numbers fuse---

If only Centuries, delayed,
I'd count them on my Hand,
Subtracting, til my fingers dropped
Into Van Dieman's Land,

If certain, when this life was out---
That yours and mine, should be
I'd toss it yonder, like a Rind,
And take Eternity---

But, now, uncertain of the length
Of this, that is between,
It goads me, like the Goblin Bee---
That will not state--- its sting.

4. The Rose did caper on her cheek

The Rose did caper on her cheek—
Her Bodice rose and fell—
Her pretty speech—like drunken men—
Did stagger pitiful—

Her fingers fumbled at her work—
Her needle would not go—
What ailed so smart a little Maid—
It puzzled me to know—

Till opposite—I spied a cheek
That bore another Rose—
Just opposite—Another speech
That like the Drunkard goes—

A Vest that like her Bodice, danced—
To the immortal tune—
Till those two troubled—little Clocks
Ticked softly into one.

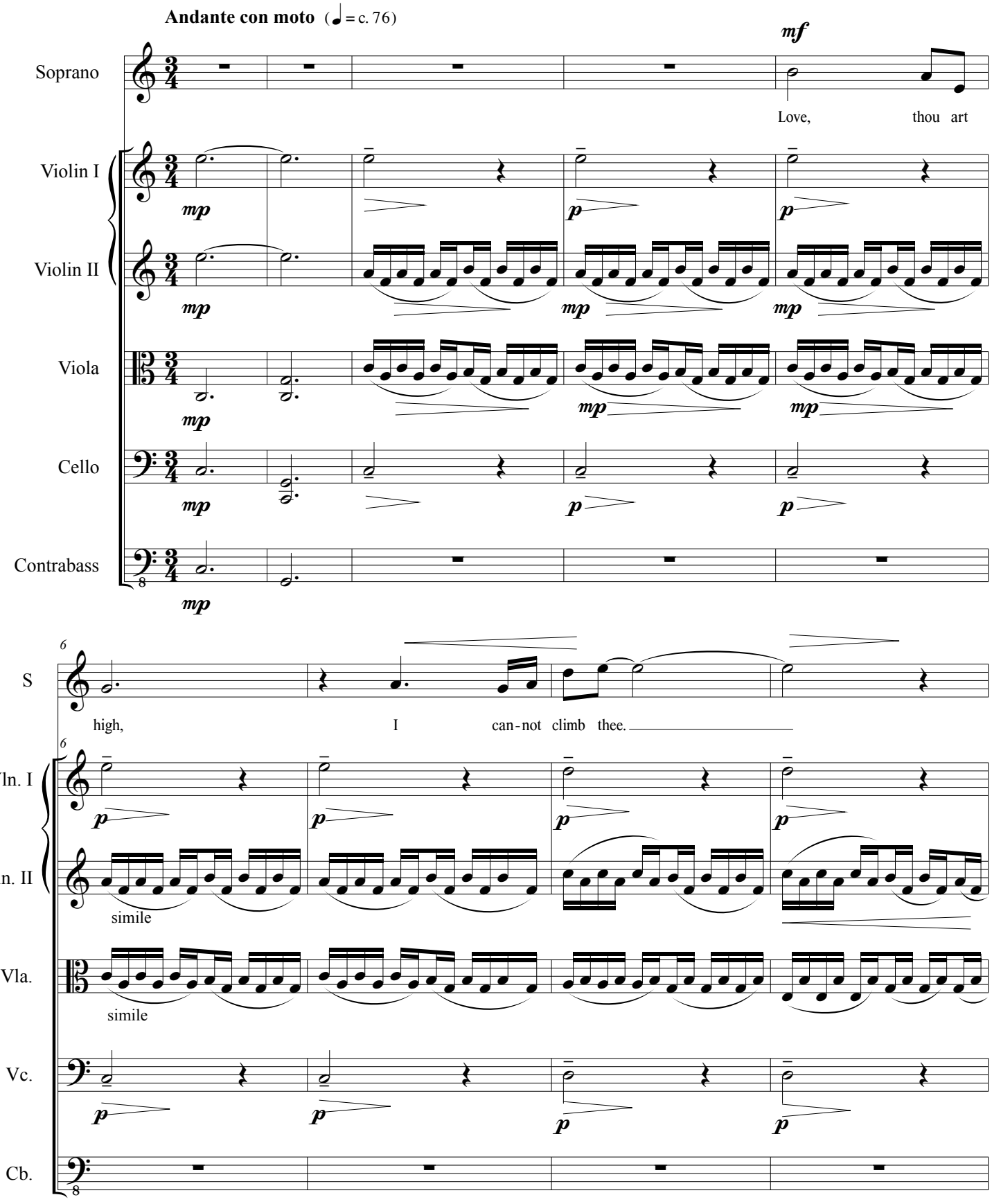
5. Behold this little Bane

Behold this little Bane—
The Boon of all alive—
As common as it is unknown
The name of it is Love—

To lack of it is Woe—
To own of it is Wound—
Not elsewhere—if in Paradise
Its Tantamount be found—

1. Love, thou art high

Carleton Macy

Poem by Emily Dickinson

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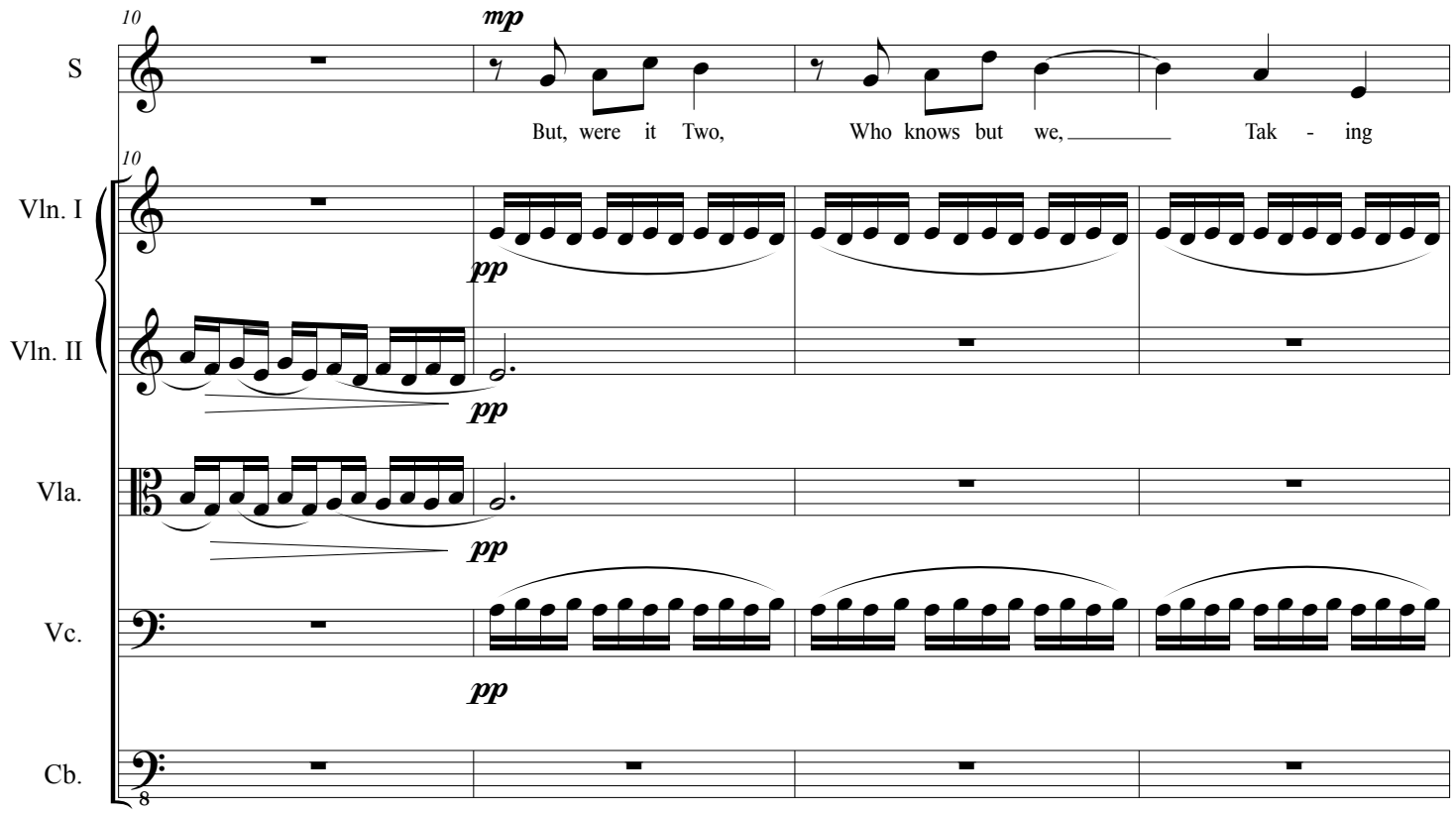
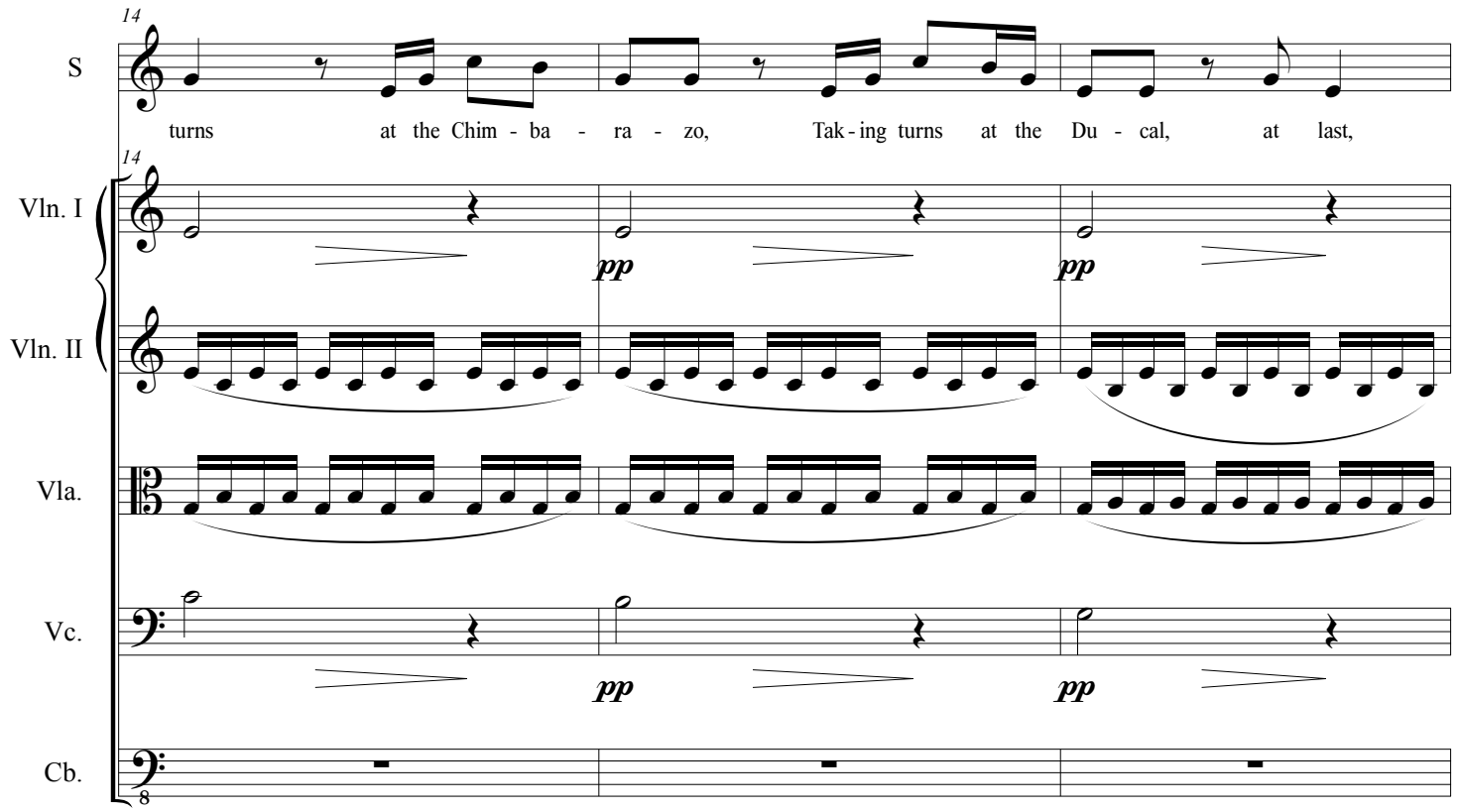
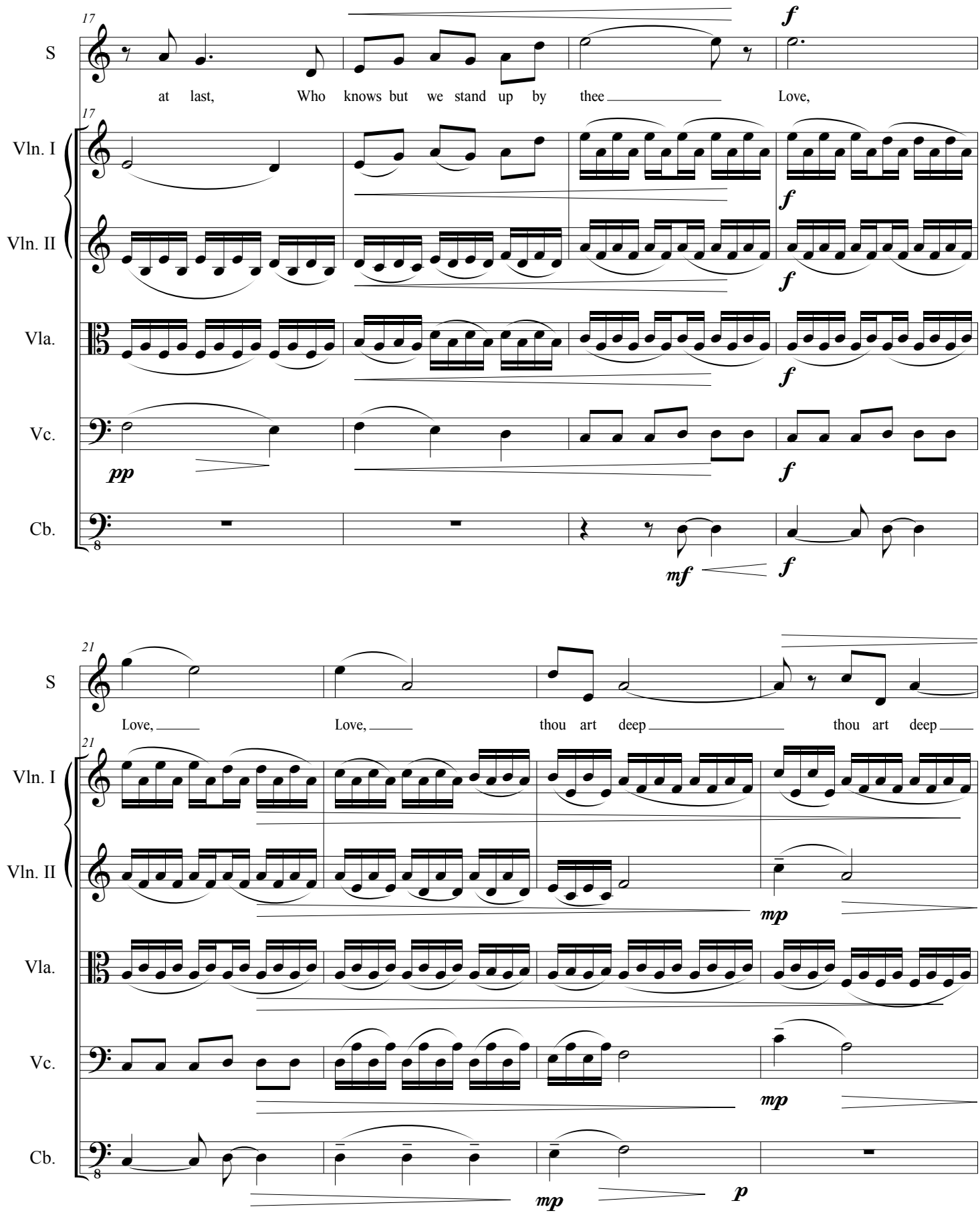
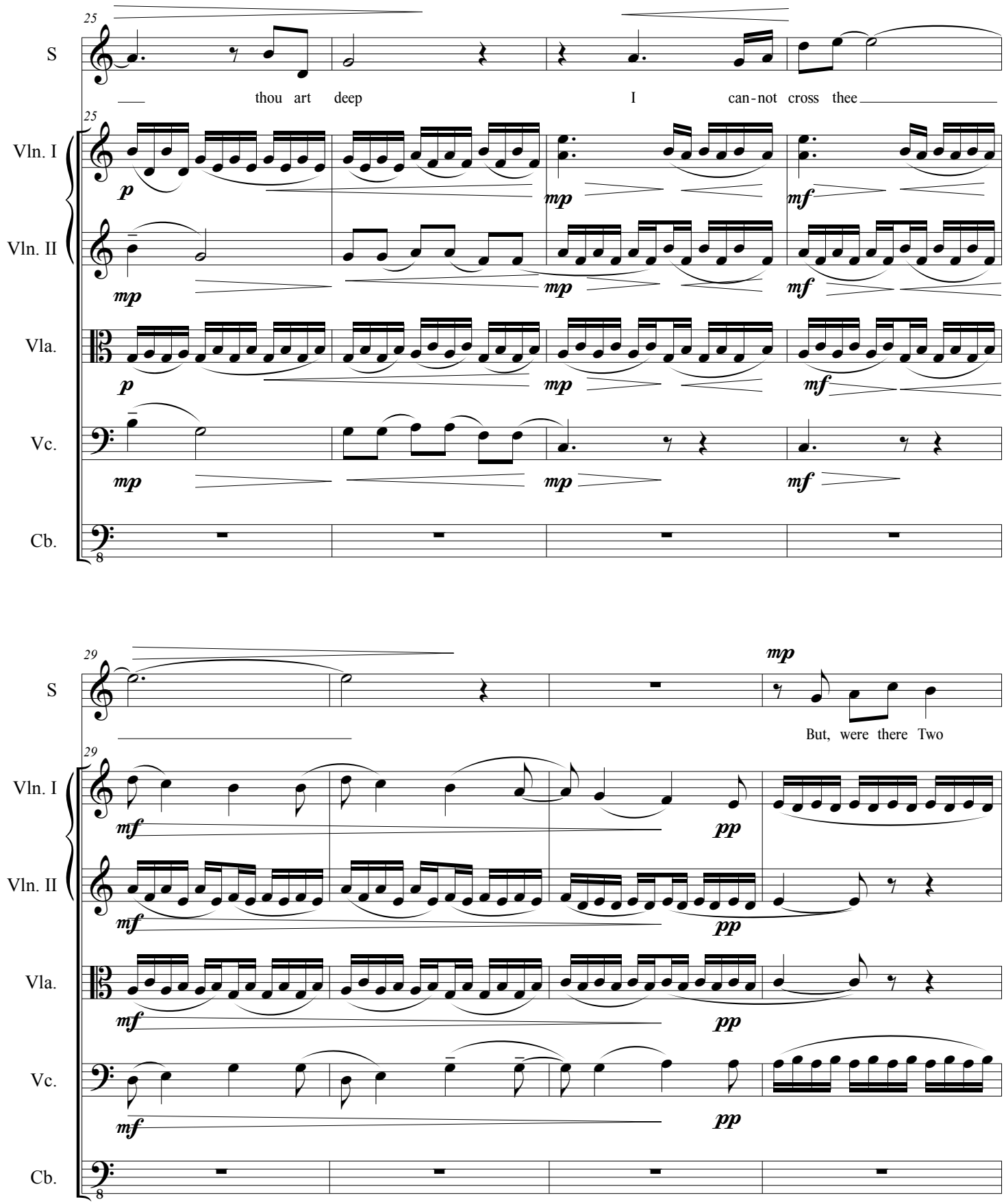
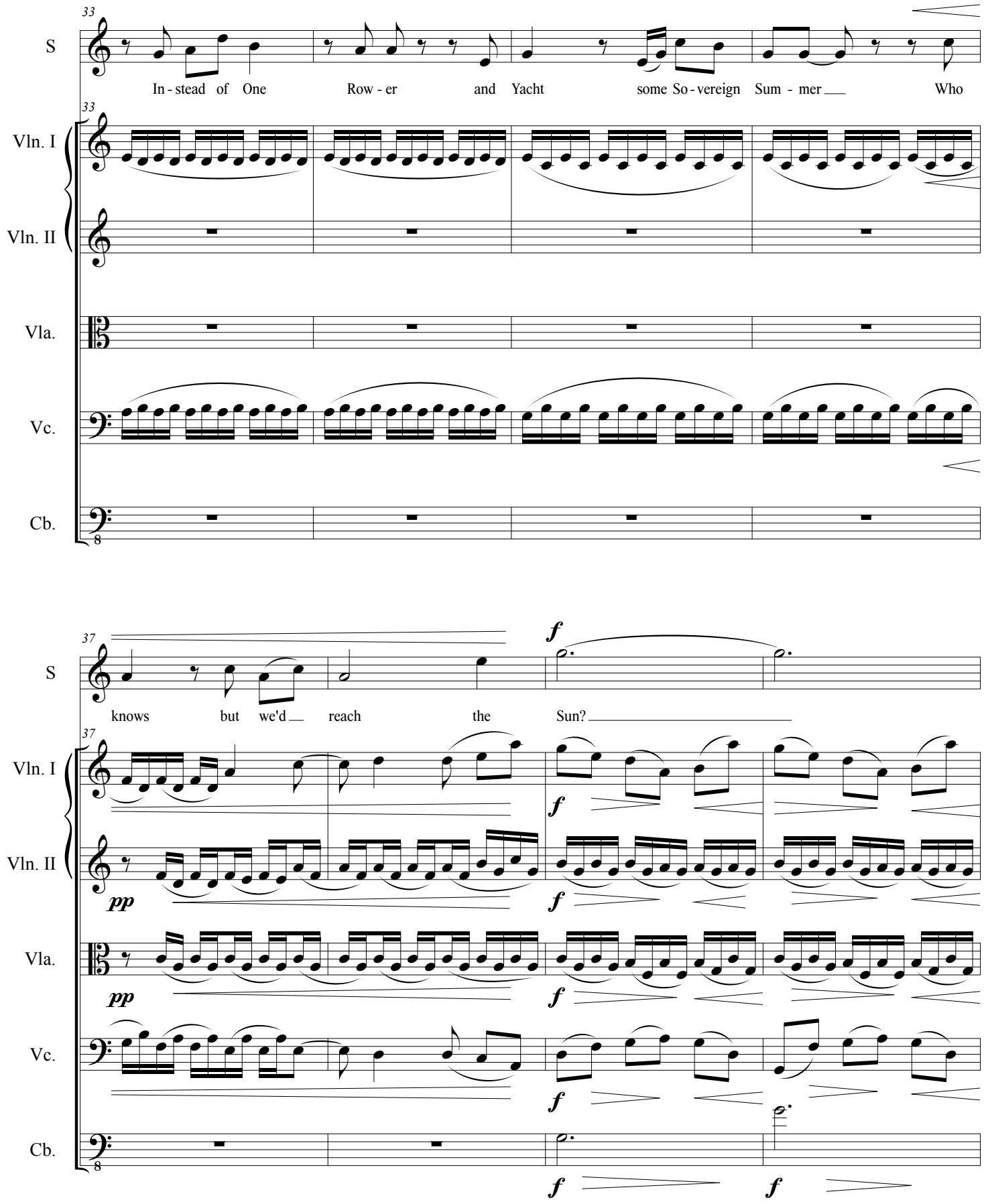
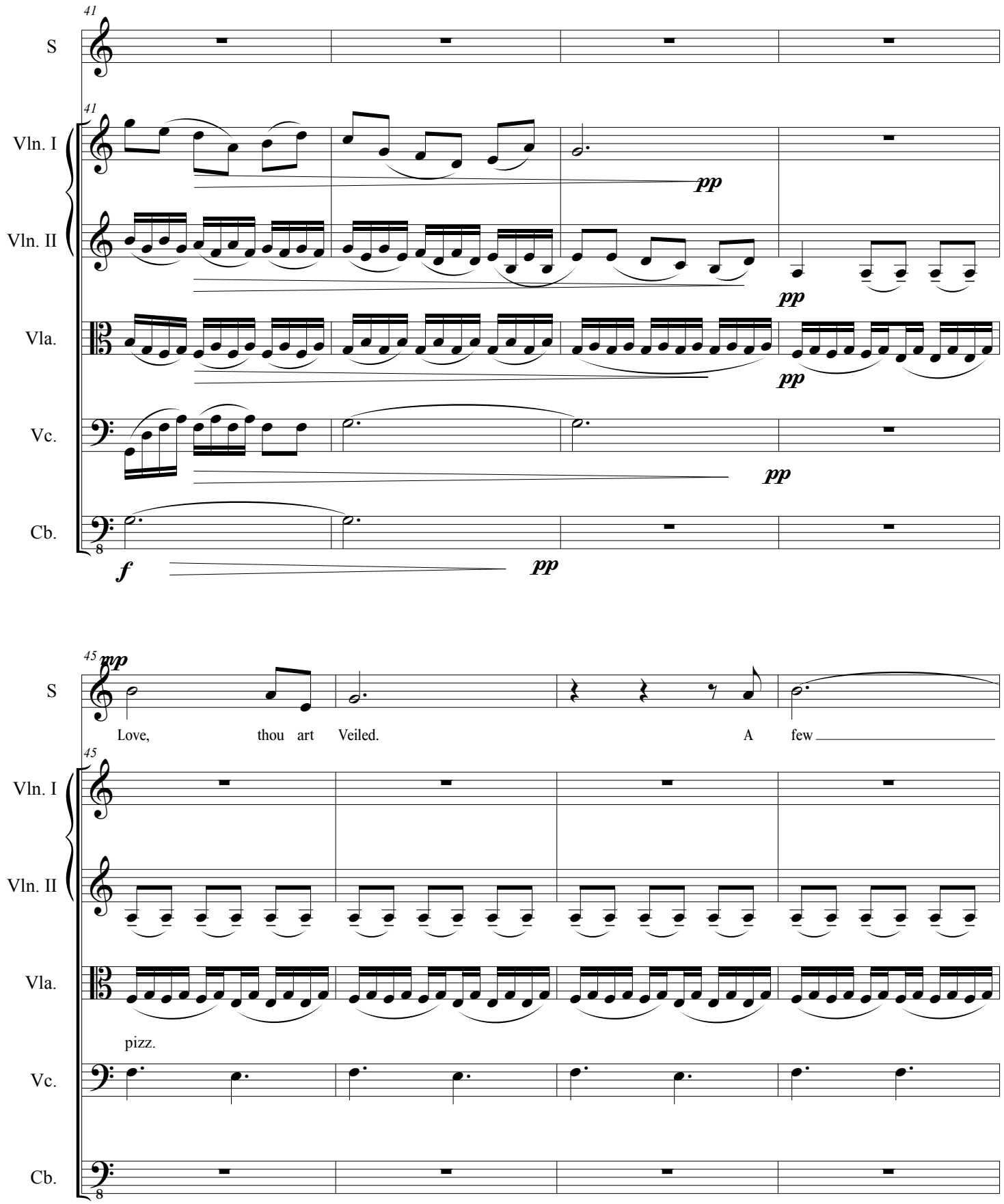
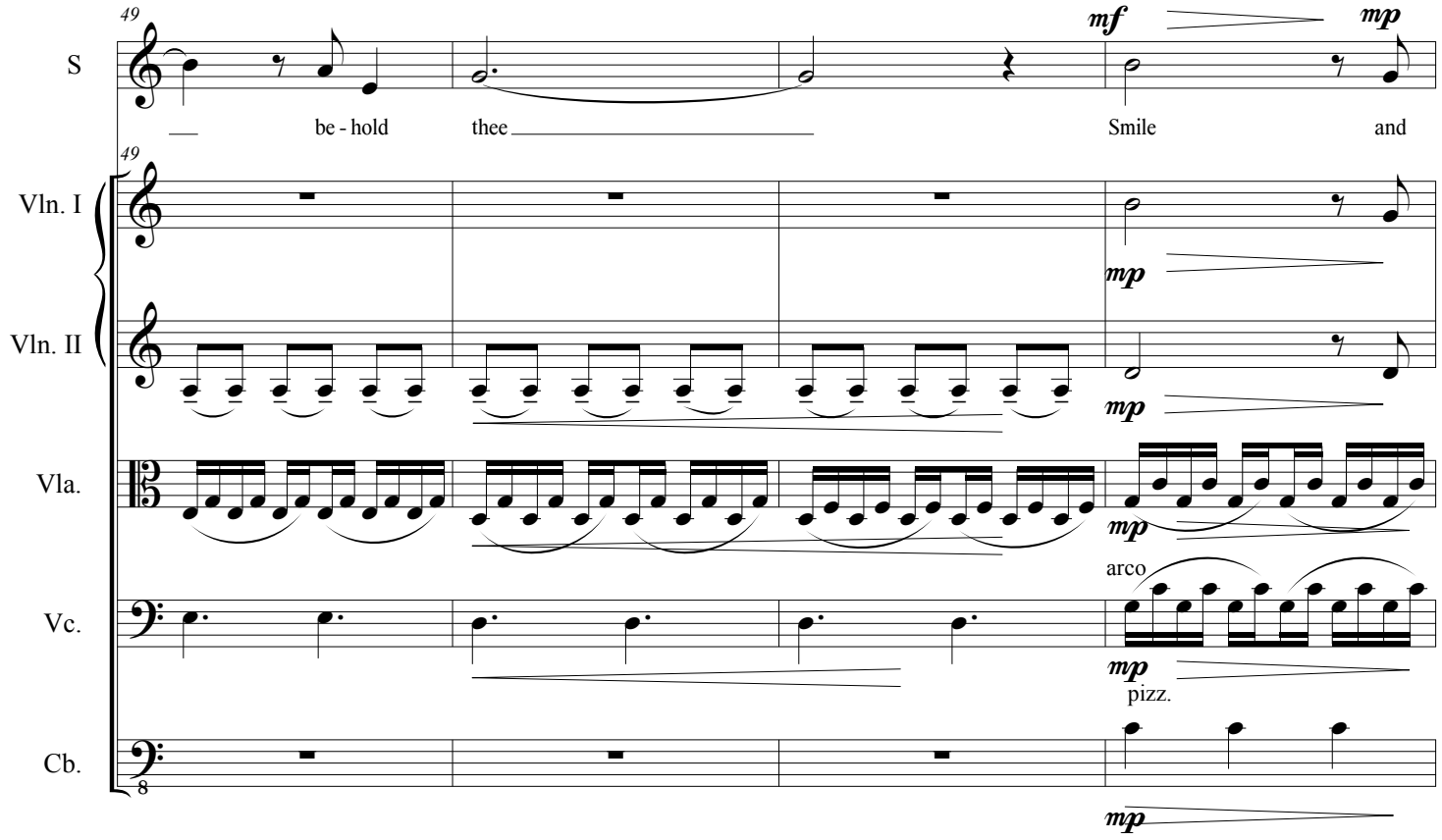
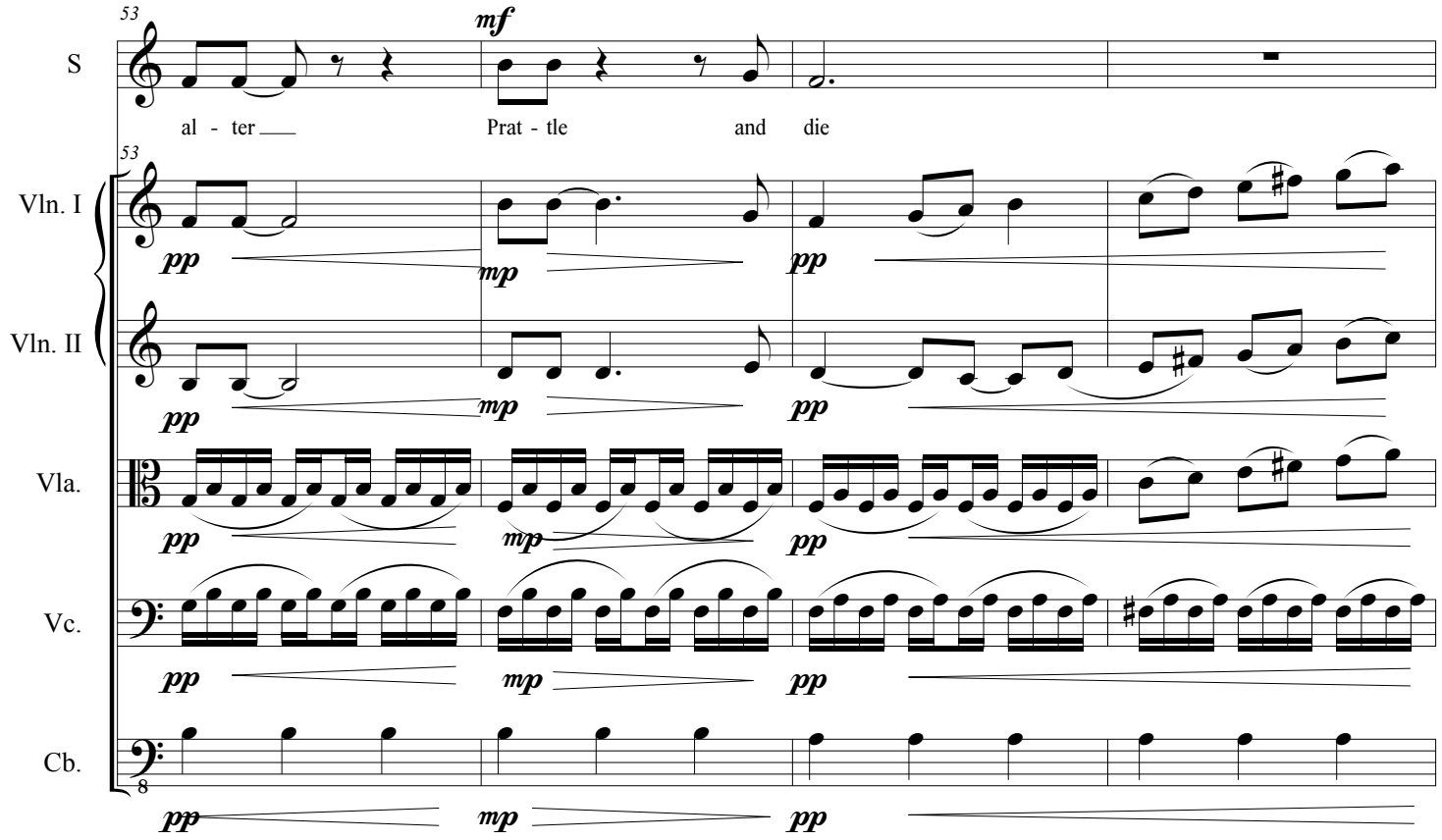
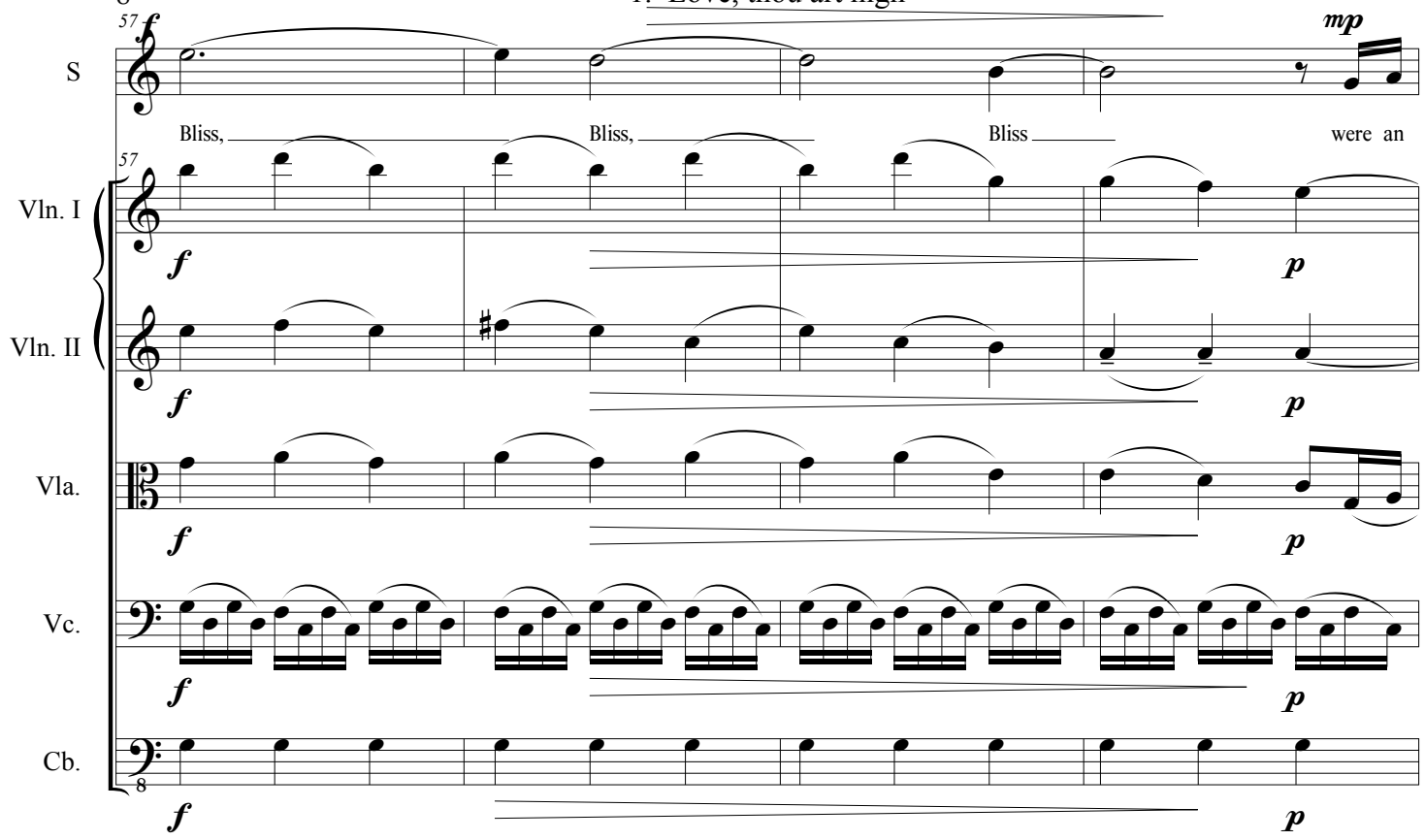
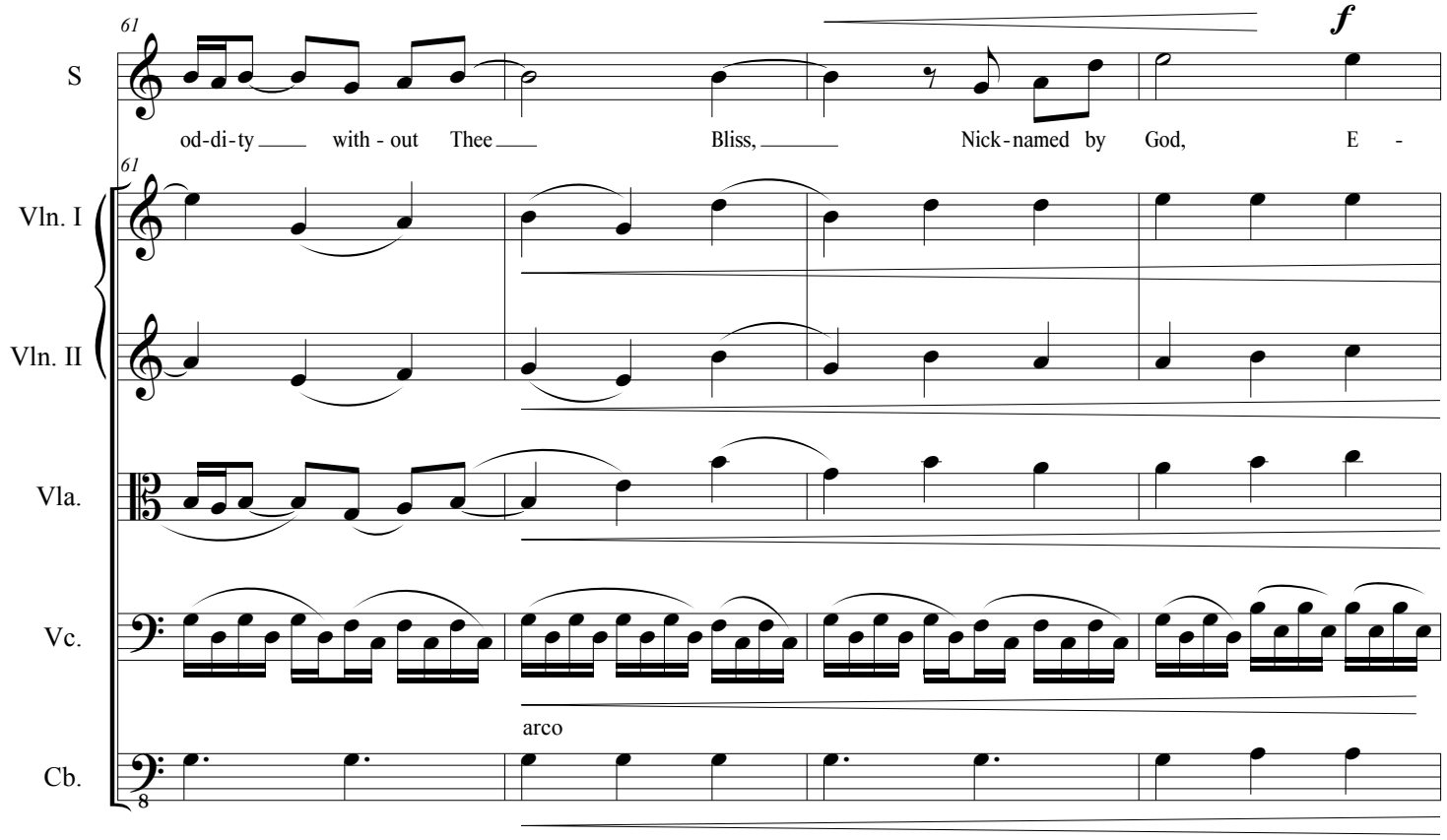
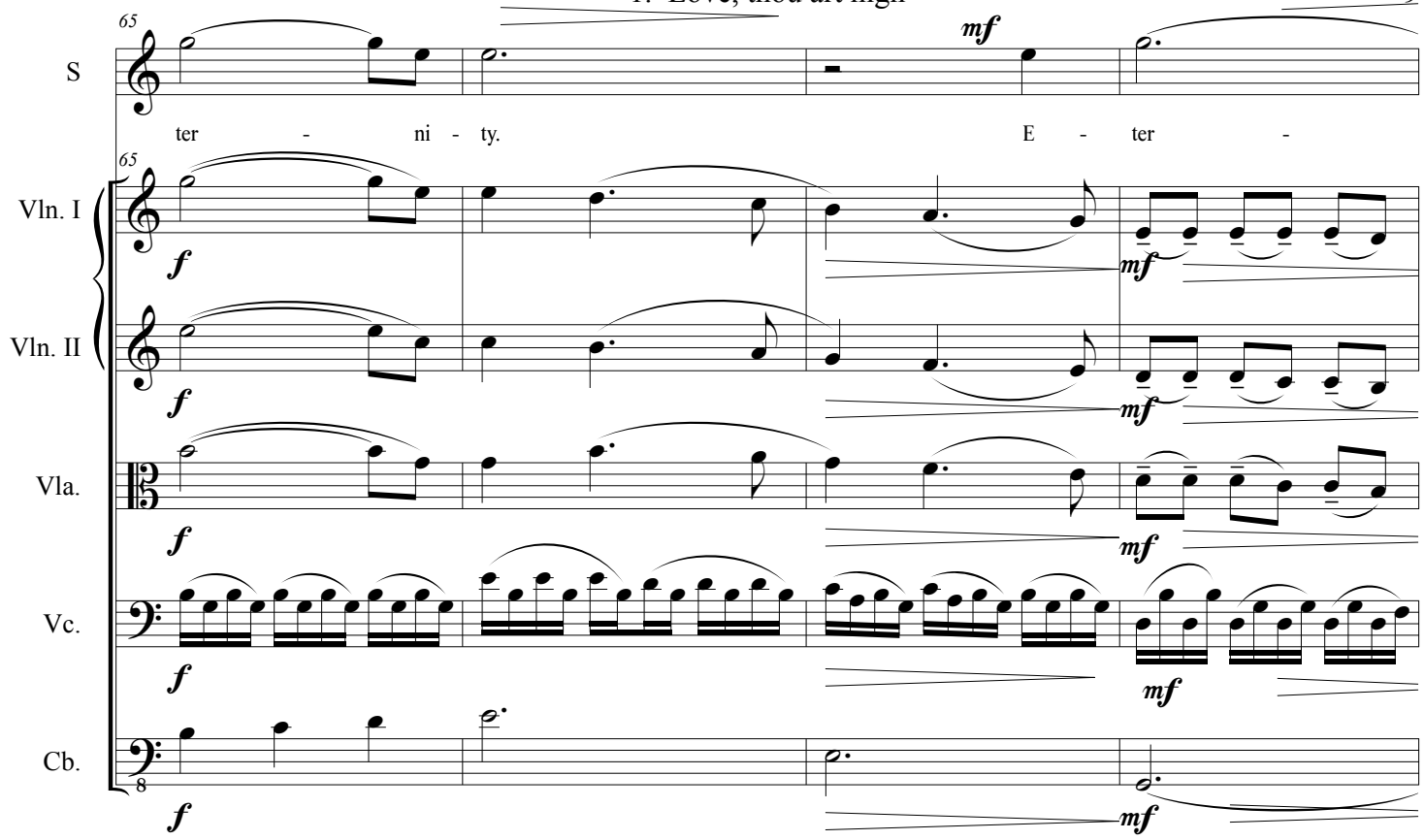
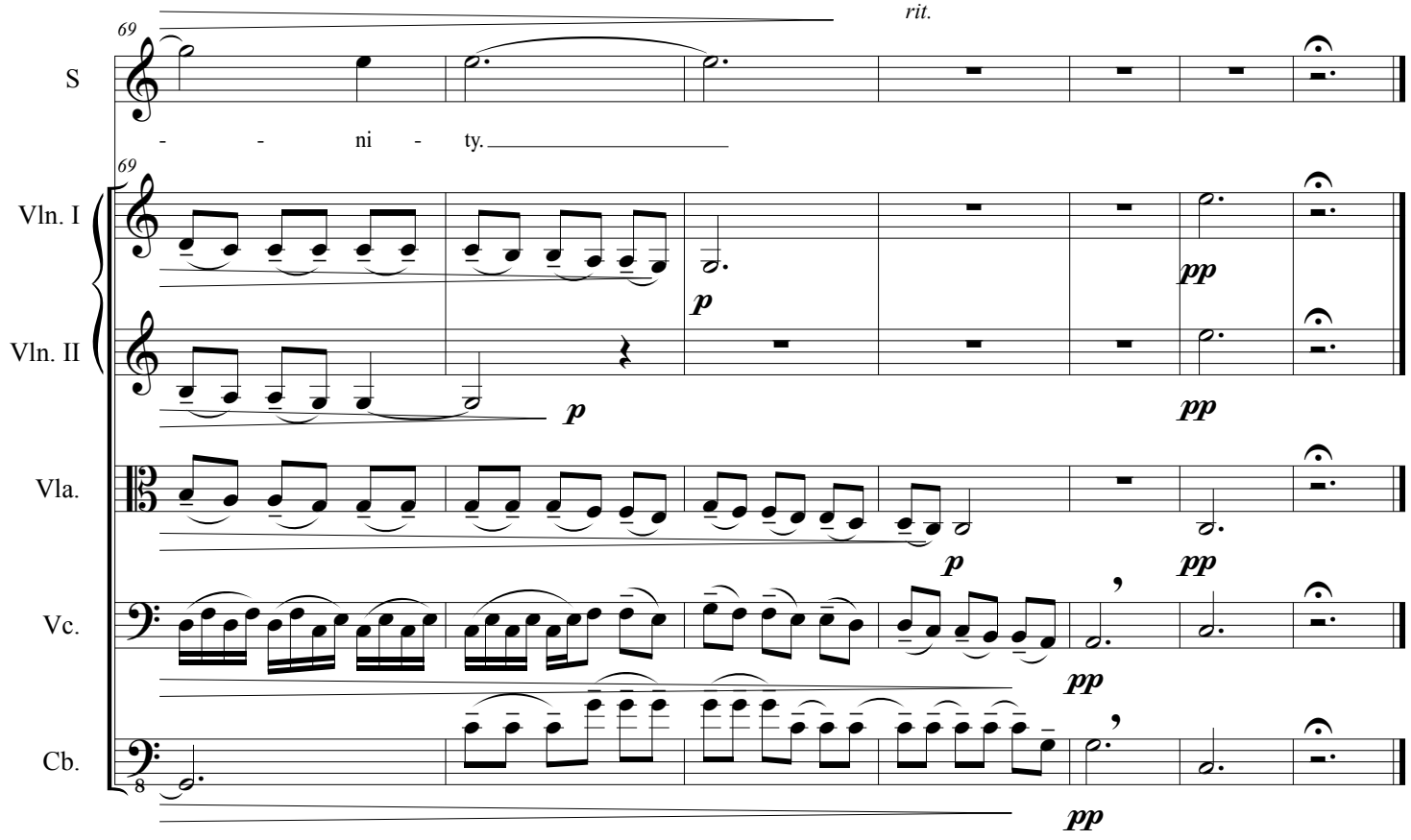
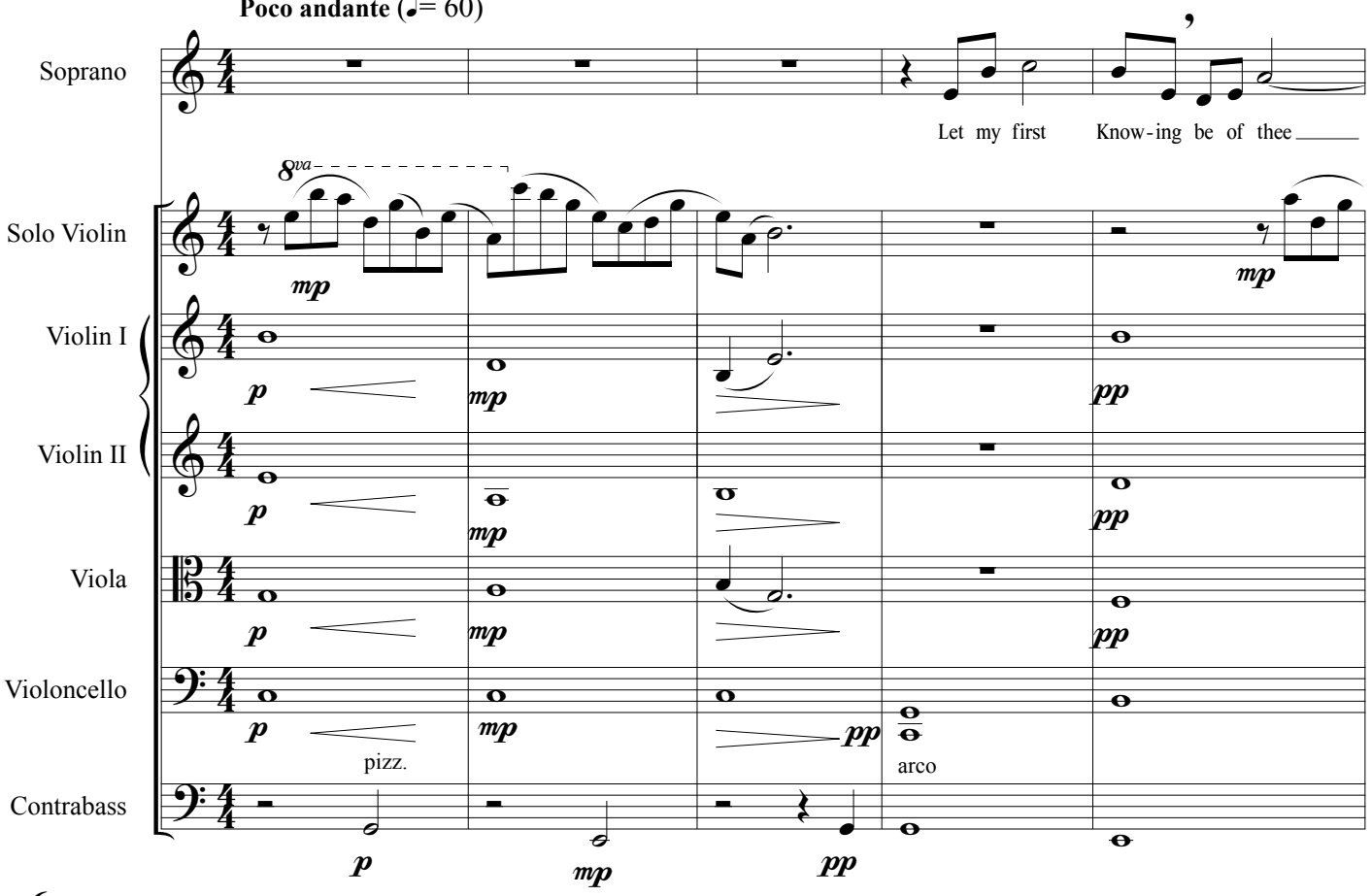
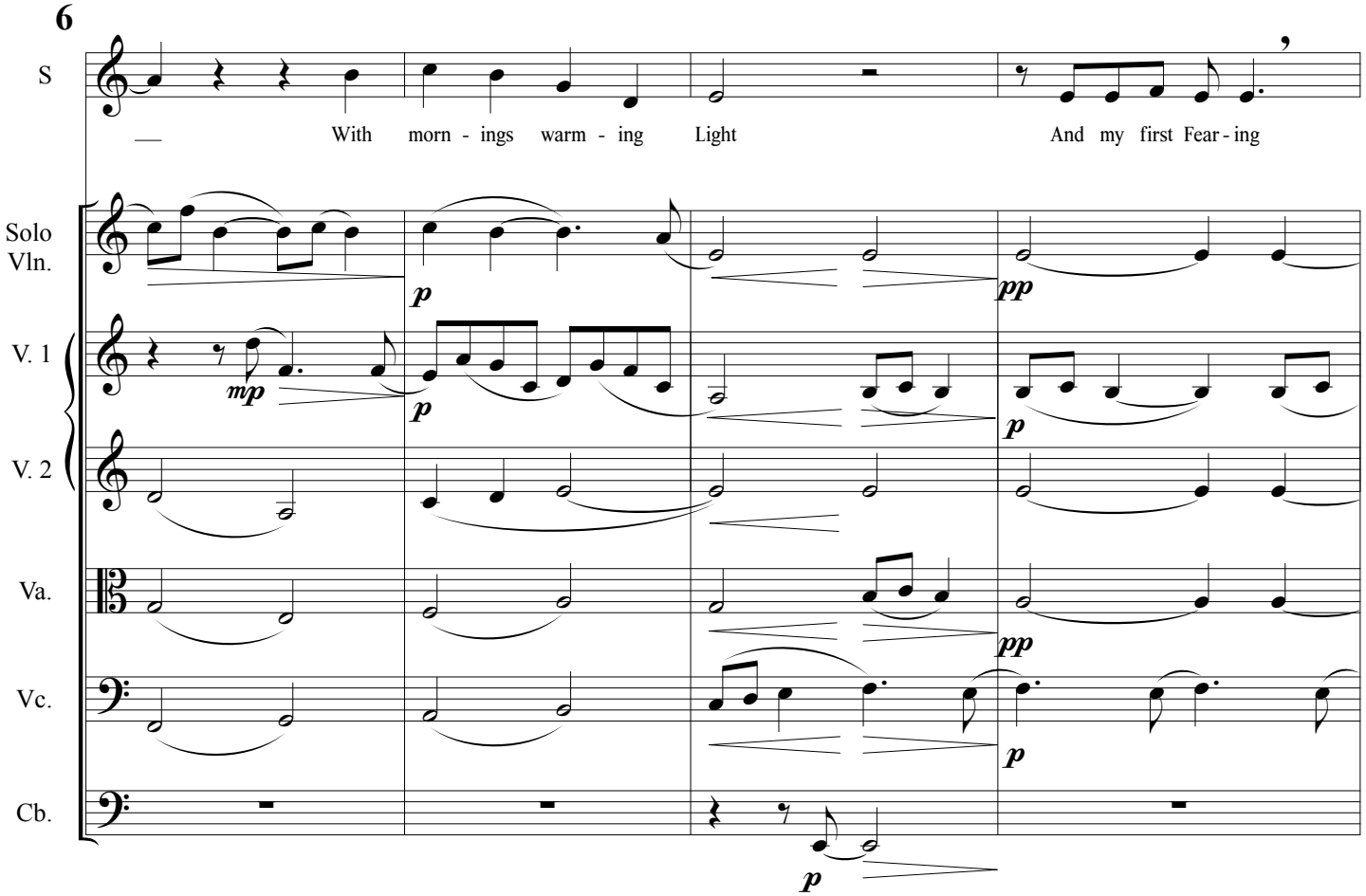

10
mp
S
But, were it Two, Who knows but we, Tak - ing
10
Vln. I
pp
Vln. II
pp
Vla.
pp
Vc.
pp
Cb.
8

14
S
turns at the Chim - ba - ra - zo, Tak - ing turns at the Du - cal, at last,
14
Vln. I
pp
pp
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
pp
pp
Cb.
8

17
S
at last, Who knows but we stand up by thee Love,
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
f
pp
mf
21
Love, Love, thou art deep thou art deep
mp
p

25
S
thou art deep
I can-not cross thee
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
p
mp
mf
29
But, were there Two
pp

33
S
In - stead of One Row - er and Yacht some So - vereign Sum - mer Who
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
37
knows but we'd reach the Sun?
f
pp

41
S
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
pp
f
45
Love, thou art Veiled. A few
pizz.

49
S
be - hold
thee
Smile
and
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
arco
pizz.
Cb.
mf
mp

53
S
al - ter
Prat - tle
and
die
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
pp
mp

1. Love, thou art high

65
S
ter - ni - ty. E - ter -
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
f
mf

69
rit.
S
- - ni - ty.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
p
pp

2. Let my first Knowing be

Carleton Macy

Poem by Emily Dickinson

Poco andante (♩= 60)

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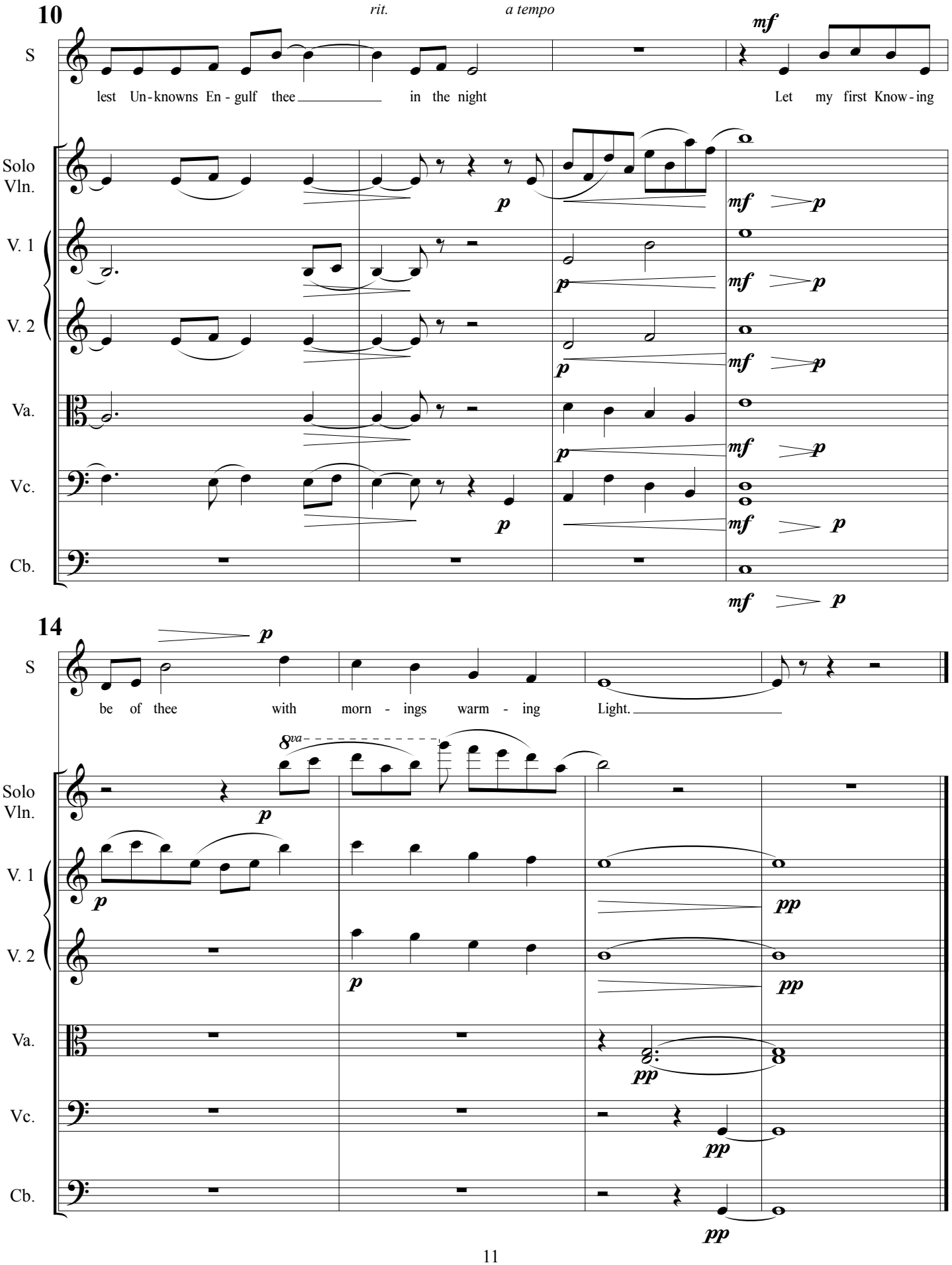
10
rit.
a tempo
S
lest Un-knowns En-gulf thee in the night
Let my first Know-ing
Solo Vln.
V. 1
V. 2
Va.
Vc.
Cb.
14
be of thee with morn-ings warm-ing Light.
8va

3. If you were coming in the Fall

poem by Emily Dickinson

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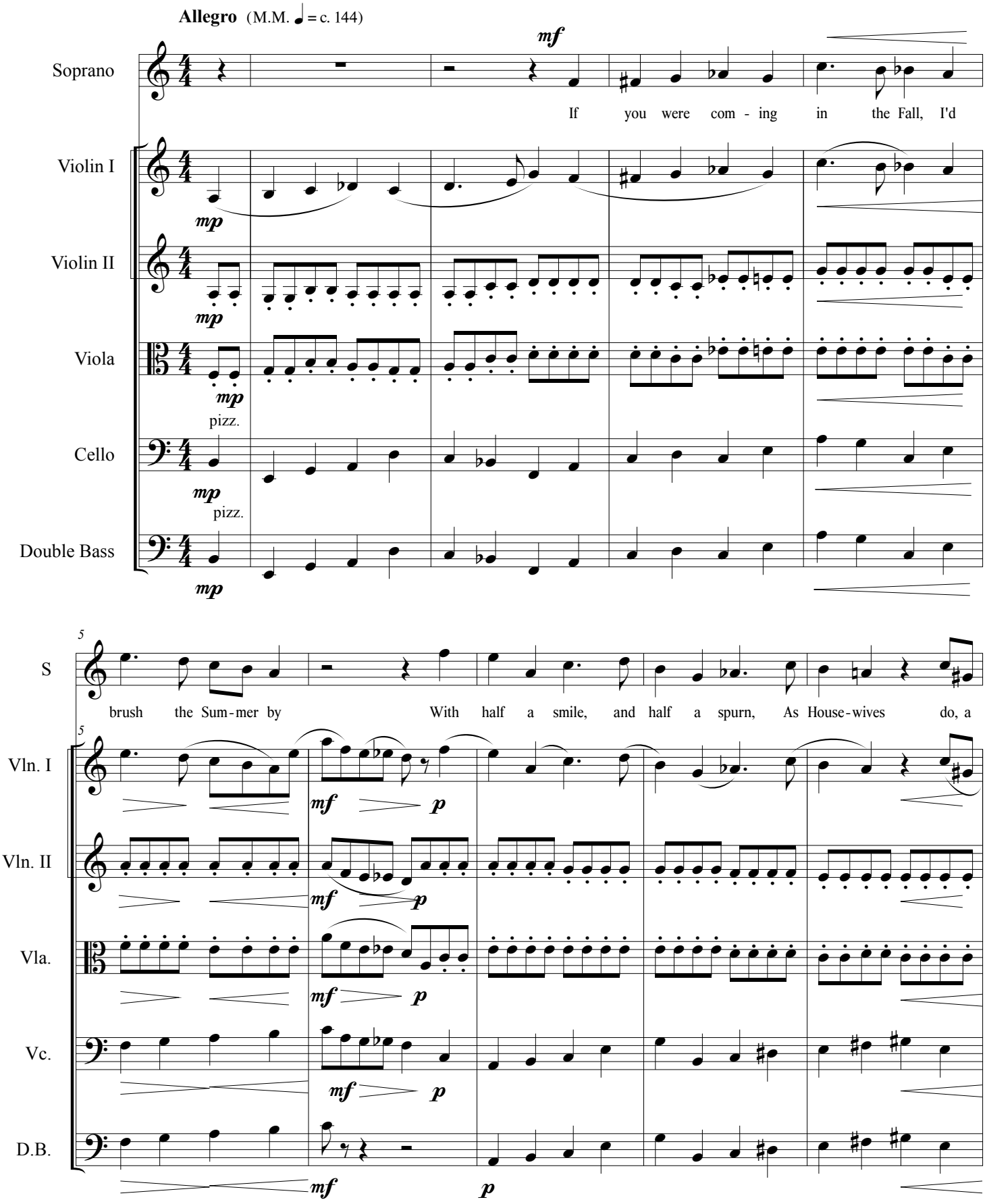
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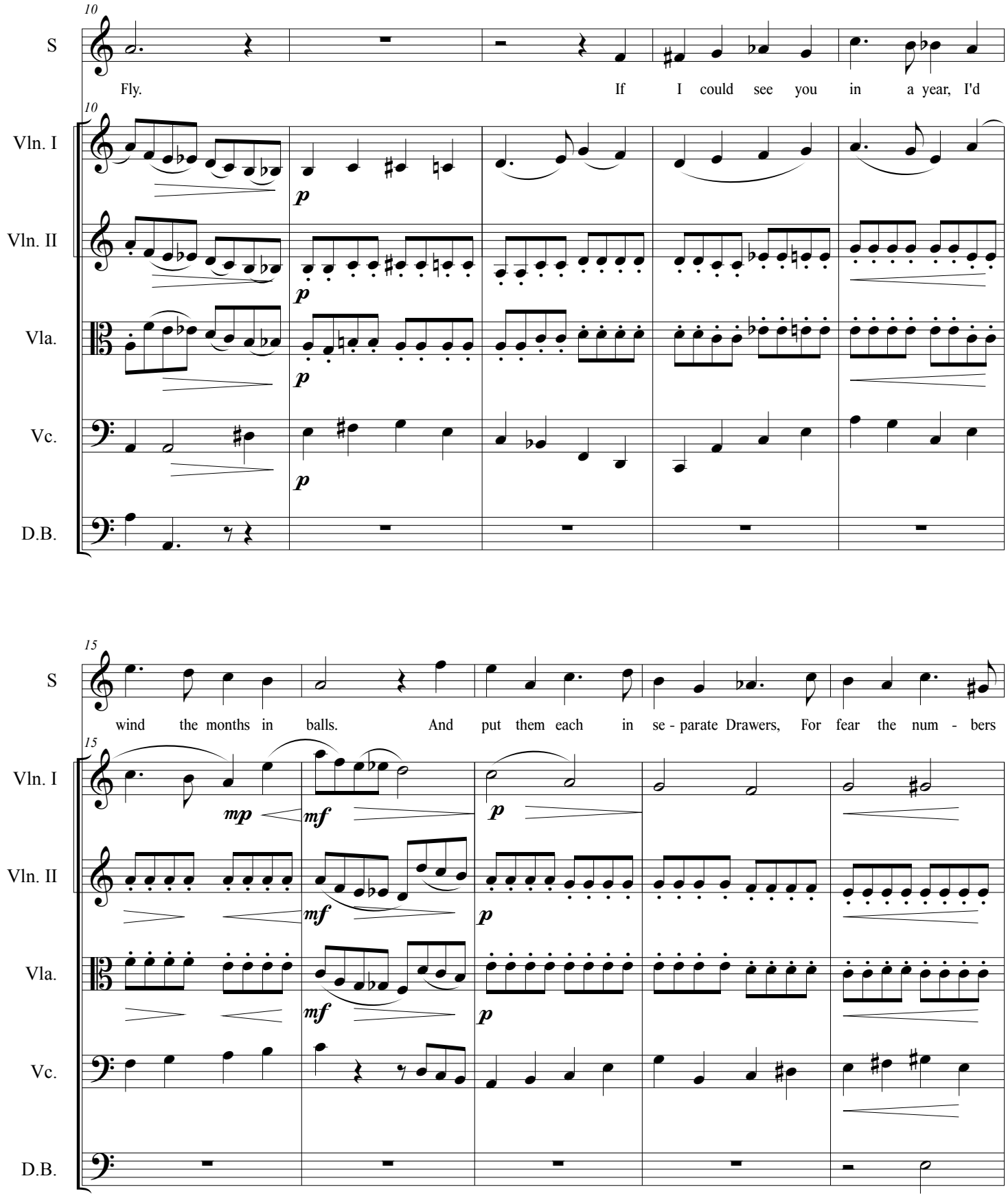
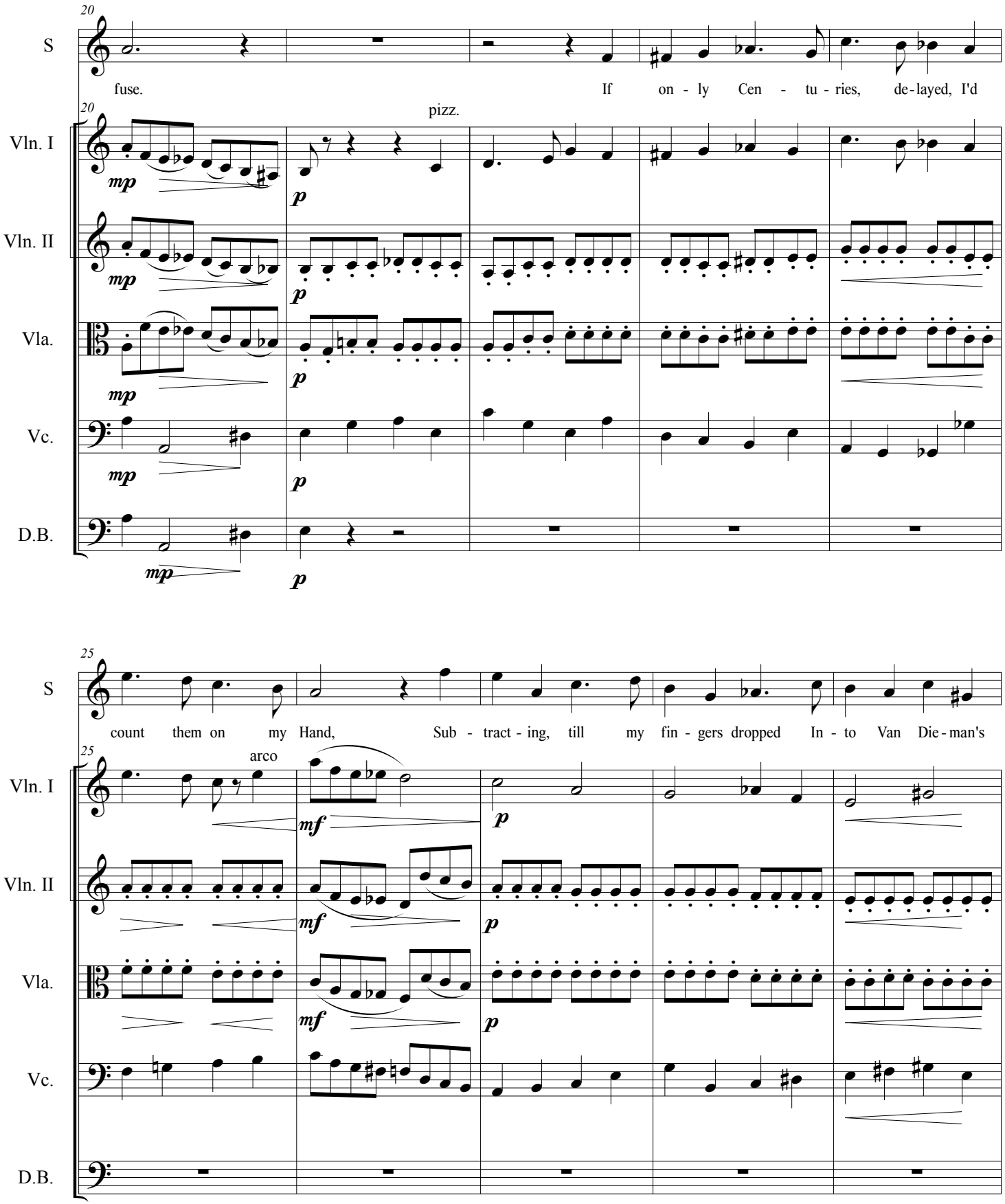
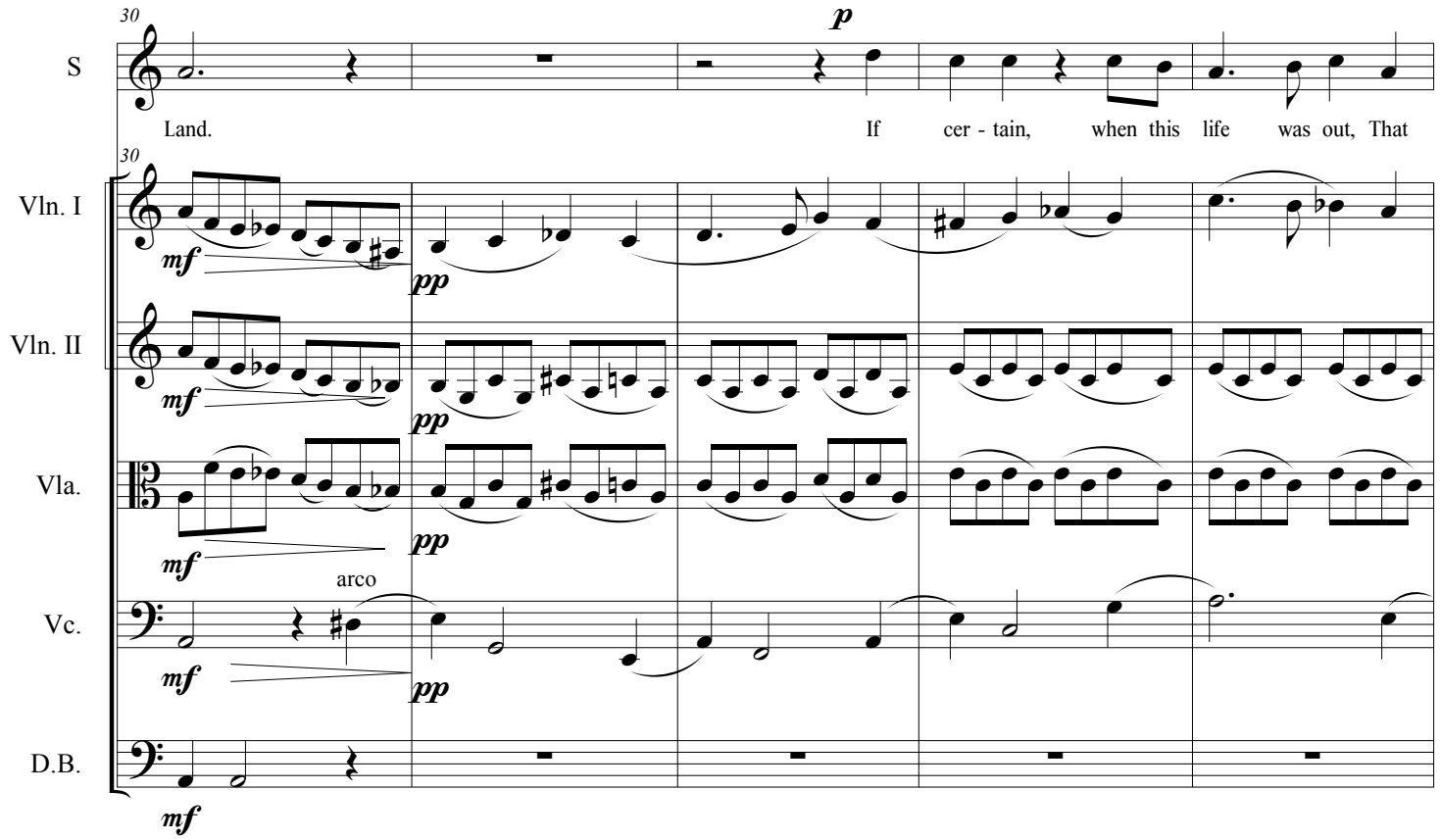
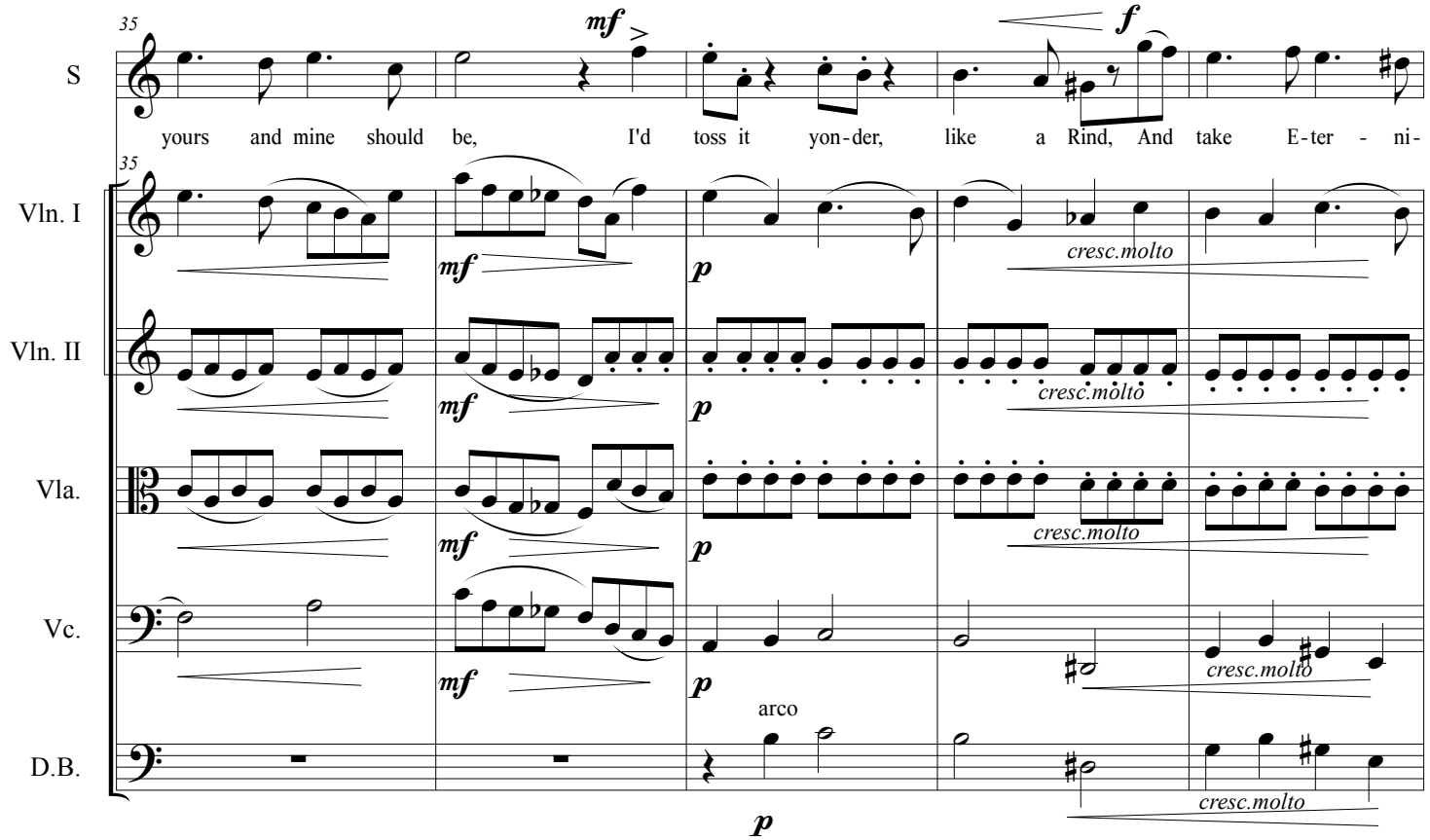
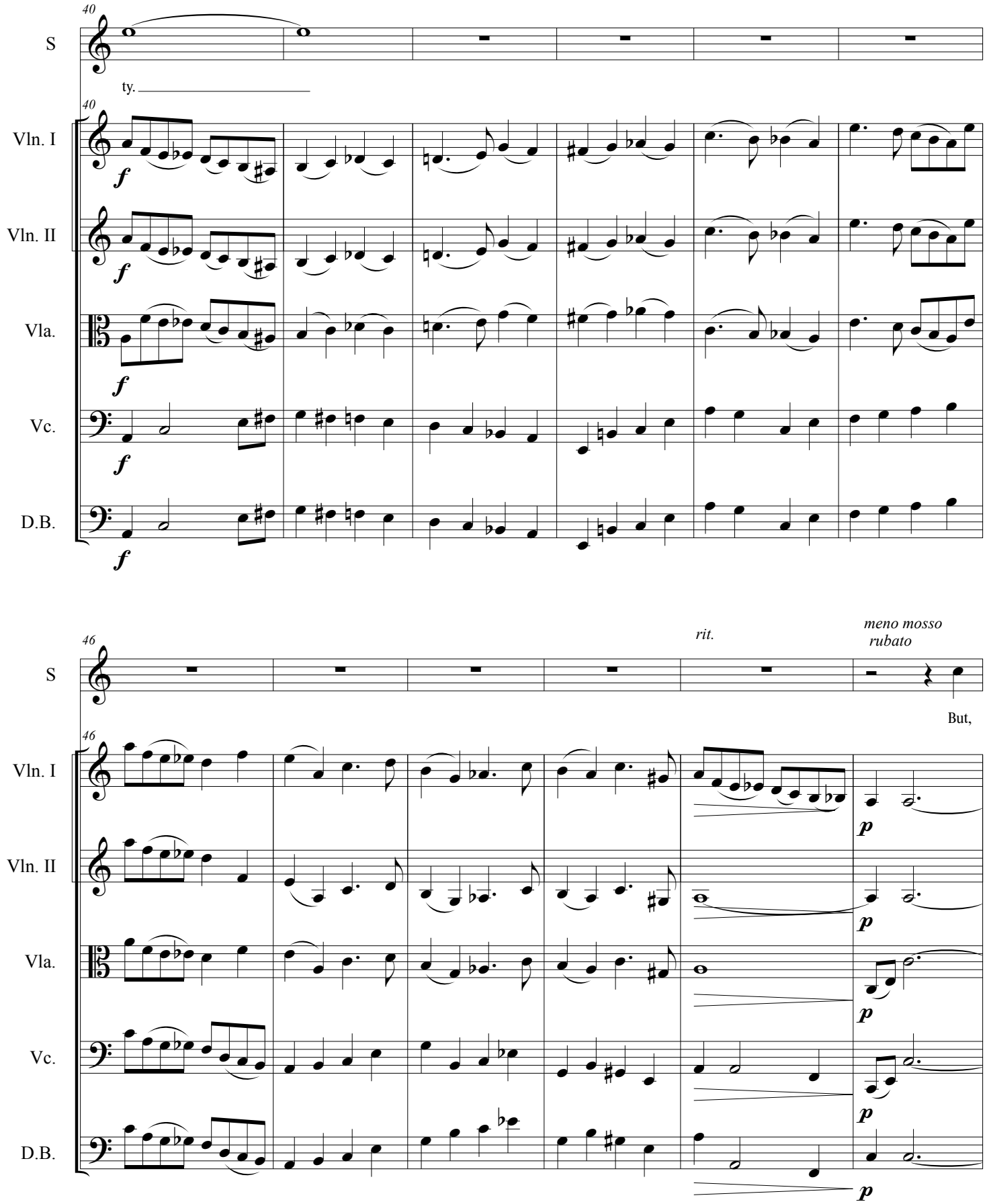
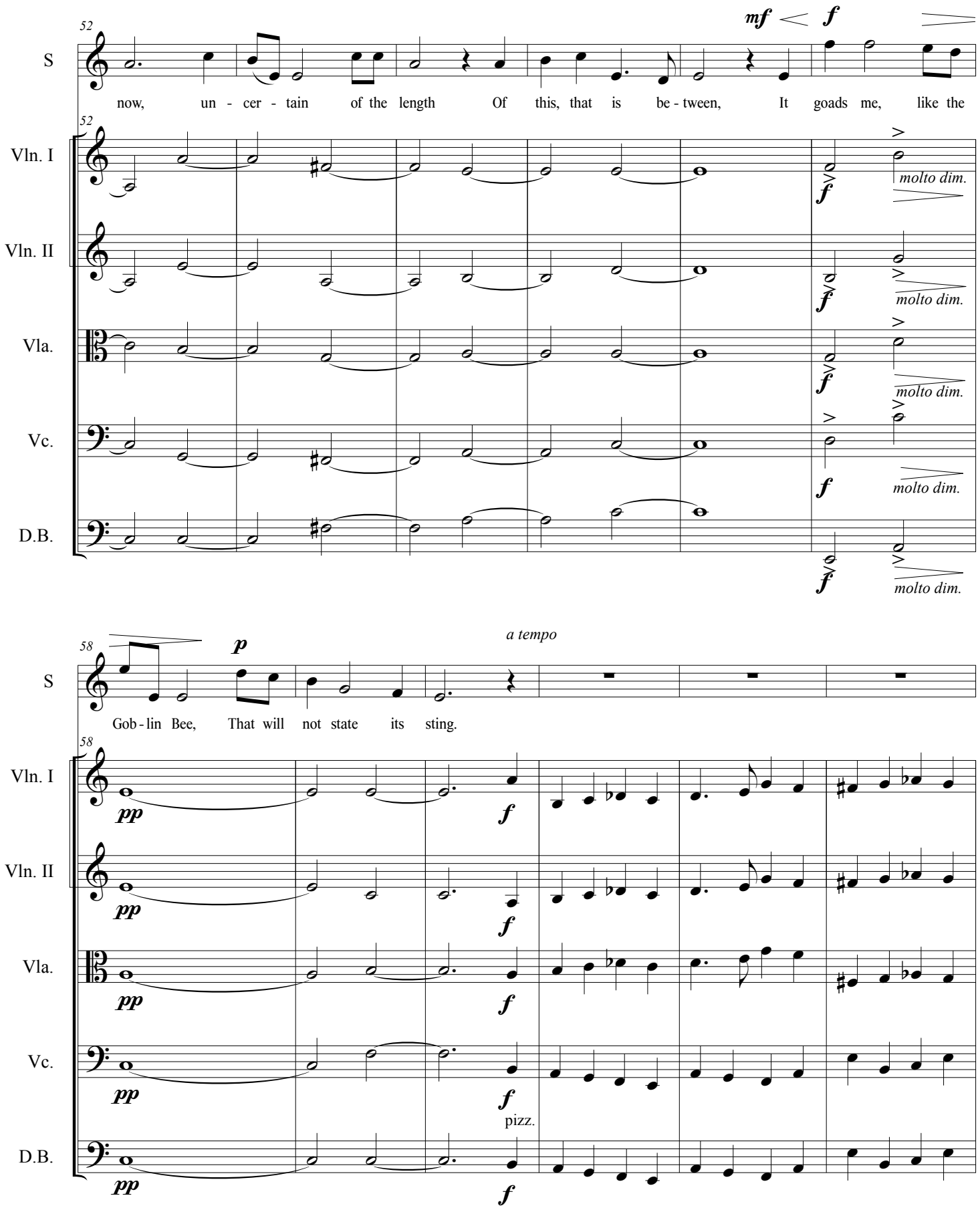
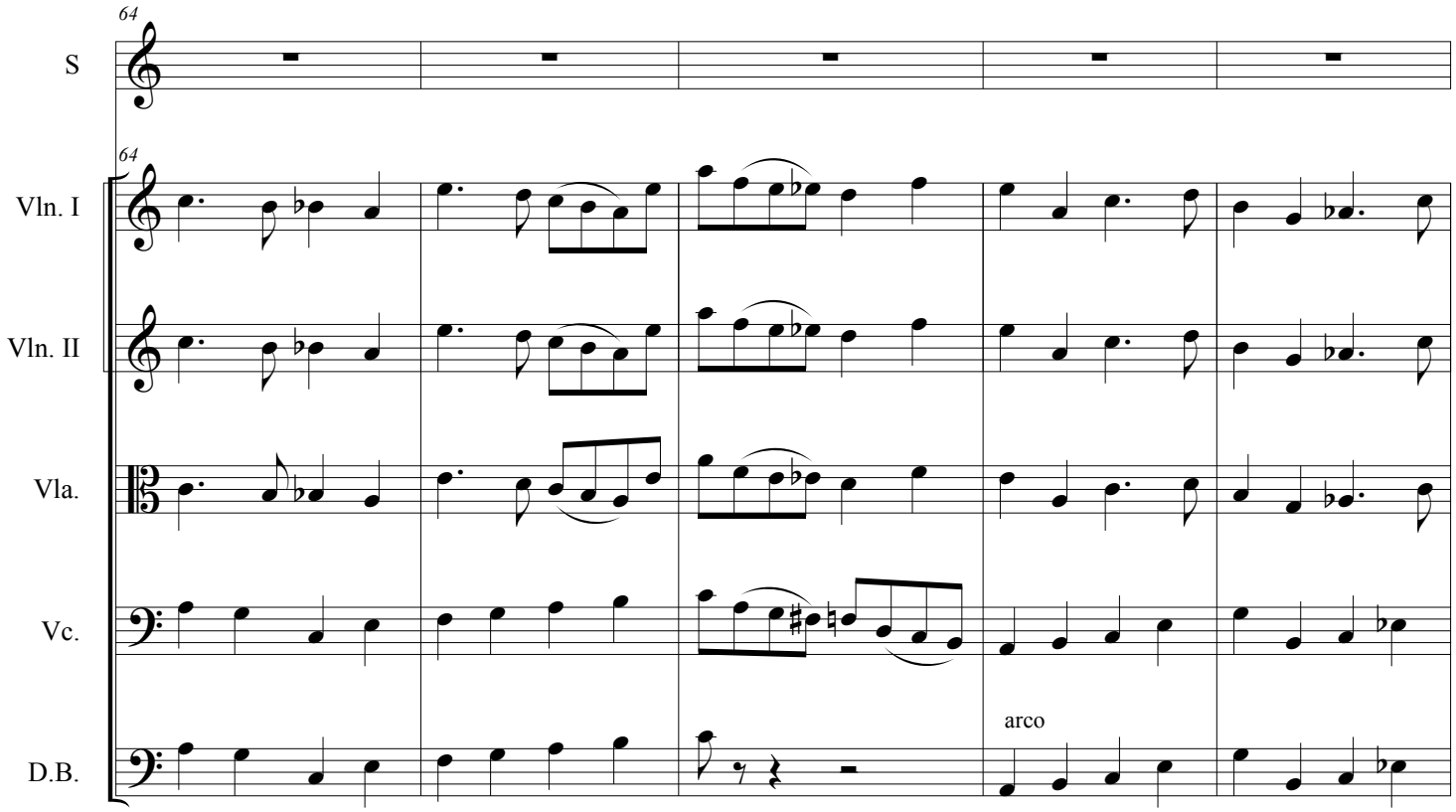
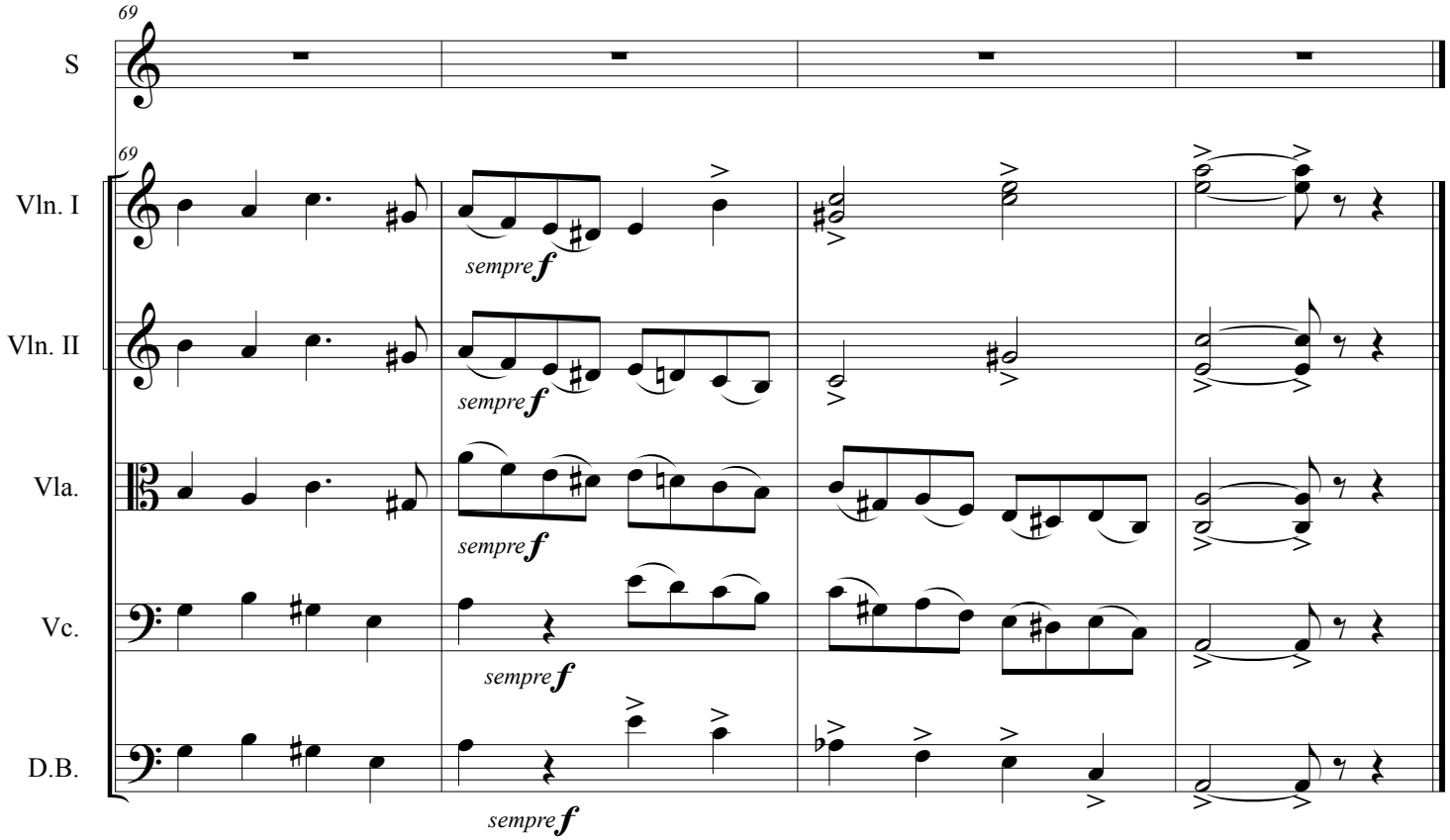
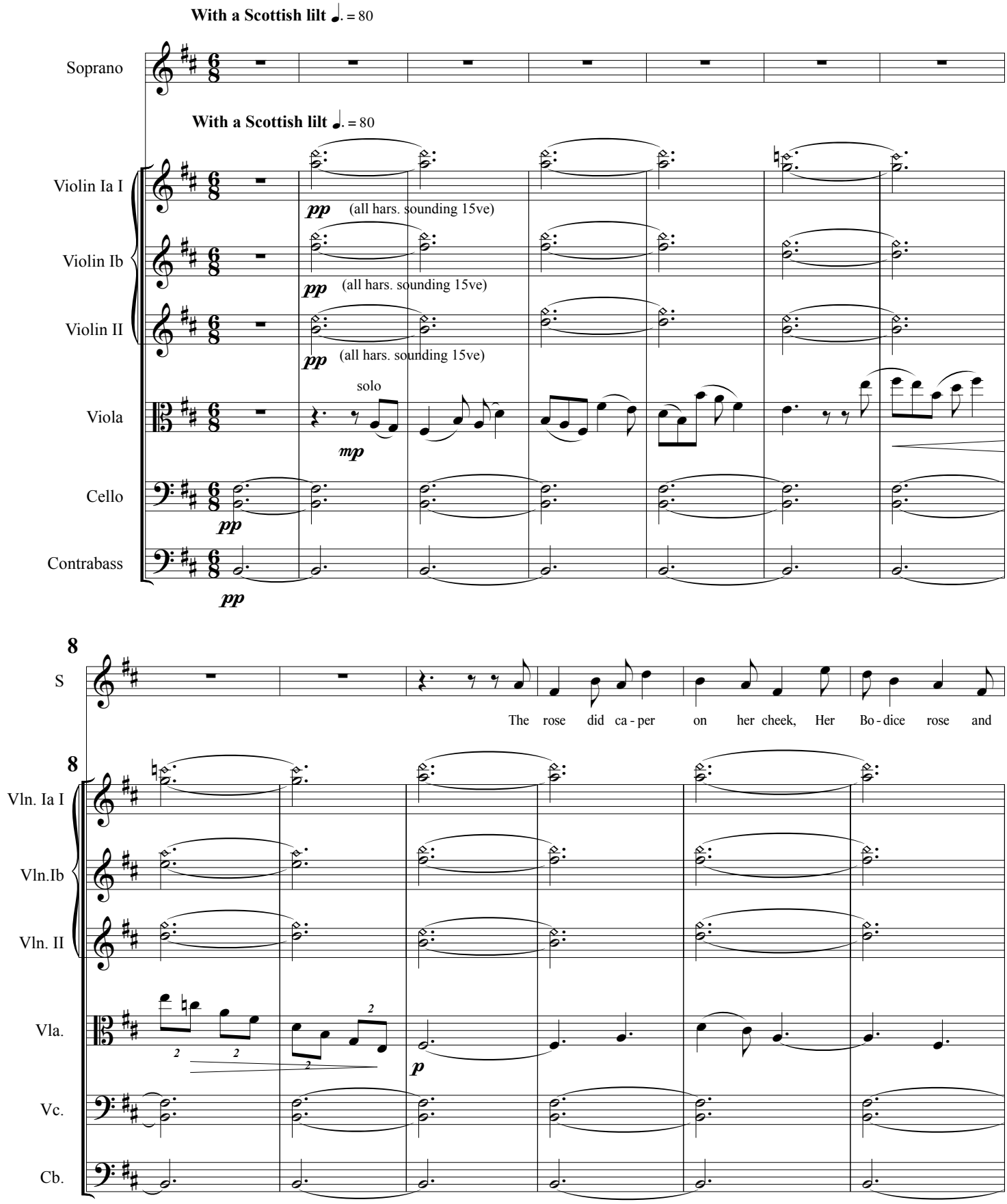

10
S
Fly.
If I could see you in a year, I'd
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
p
15
wind the months in balls. And put them each in se - parate Drawers, For fear the num - bers
mp
mf

20
S
fuse.
If on - ly Cen - tu - ries, de-layed, I'd
20
pizz.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
mp
p
25
S
count them on my Hand, Sub - tract - ing, till my fin - gers dropped In - to Van Die - man's
25
arco
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
mf
p

30
S
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
p
Land.
If cer - tain, when this life was out, That
mf
pp
arco

35
S
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
mf
f
yours and mine should be, I'd toss it yon-der, like a Rind, And take E-ter - ni-
p
cresc.molto
arco

40
S
ty.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
f
46
rit.
meno mosso
rubato
But,
p

52
S
now, un - cer - tain of the length Of this, that is be - tween, It goads me, like the
mf
f
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
molto dim.
58
p
a tempo
Gob - lin Bee, That will not state its sting.
pp
f
pizz.

64
S
64
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
arco
D.B.

69
S
69
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.
sempre f
sempre f
sempre f
sempre f
sempre f

4. The Rose did caper on her cheek

Poem by Emily Dickinson

Carleton Macy

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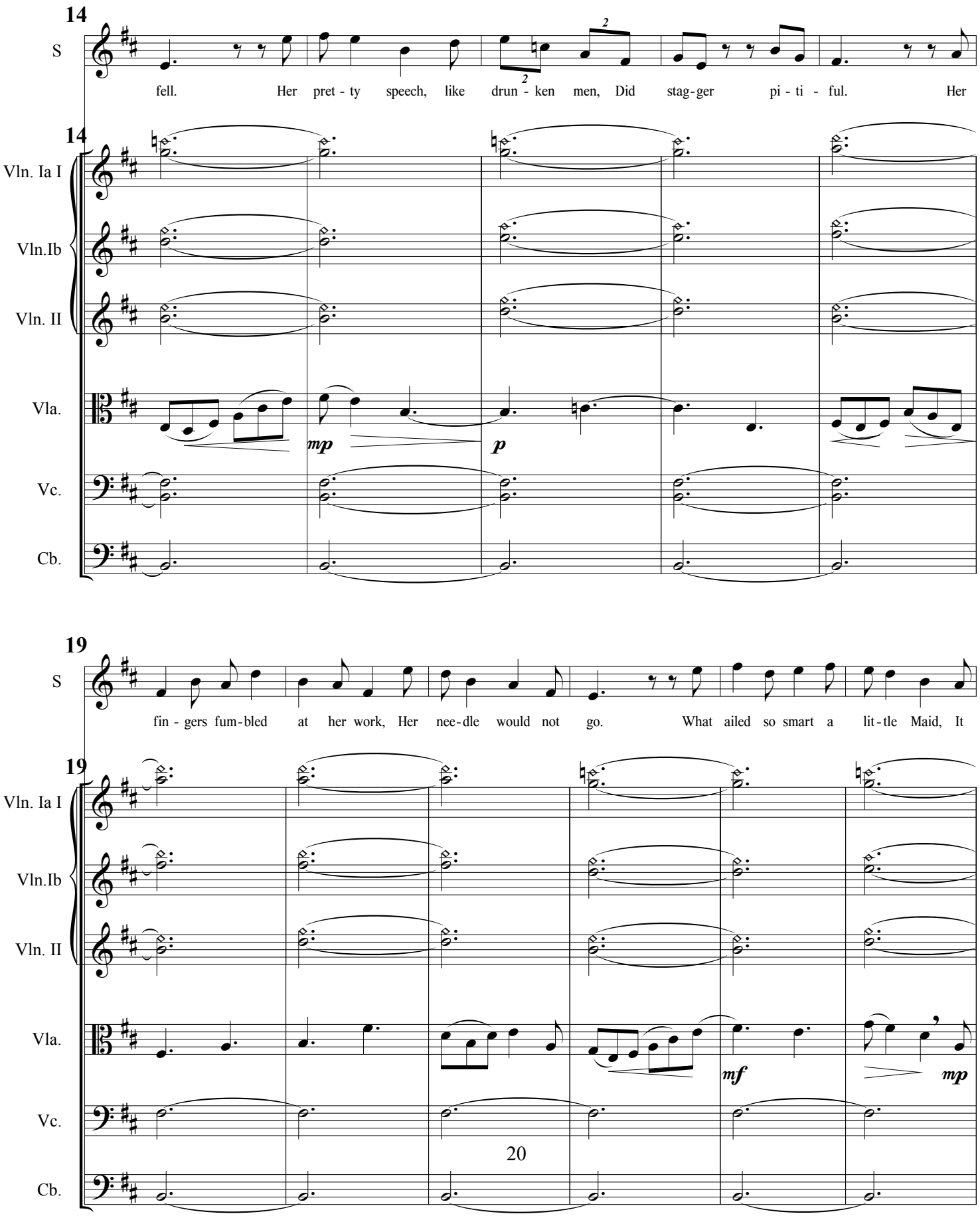
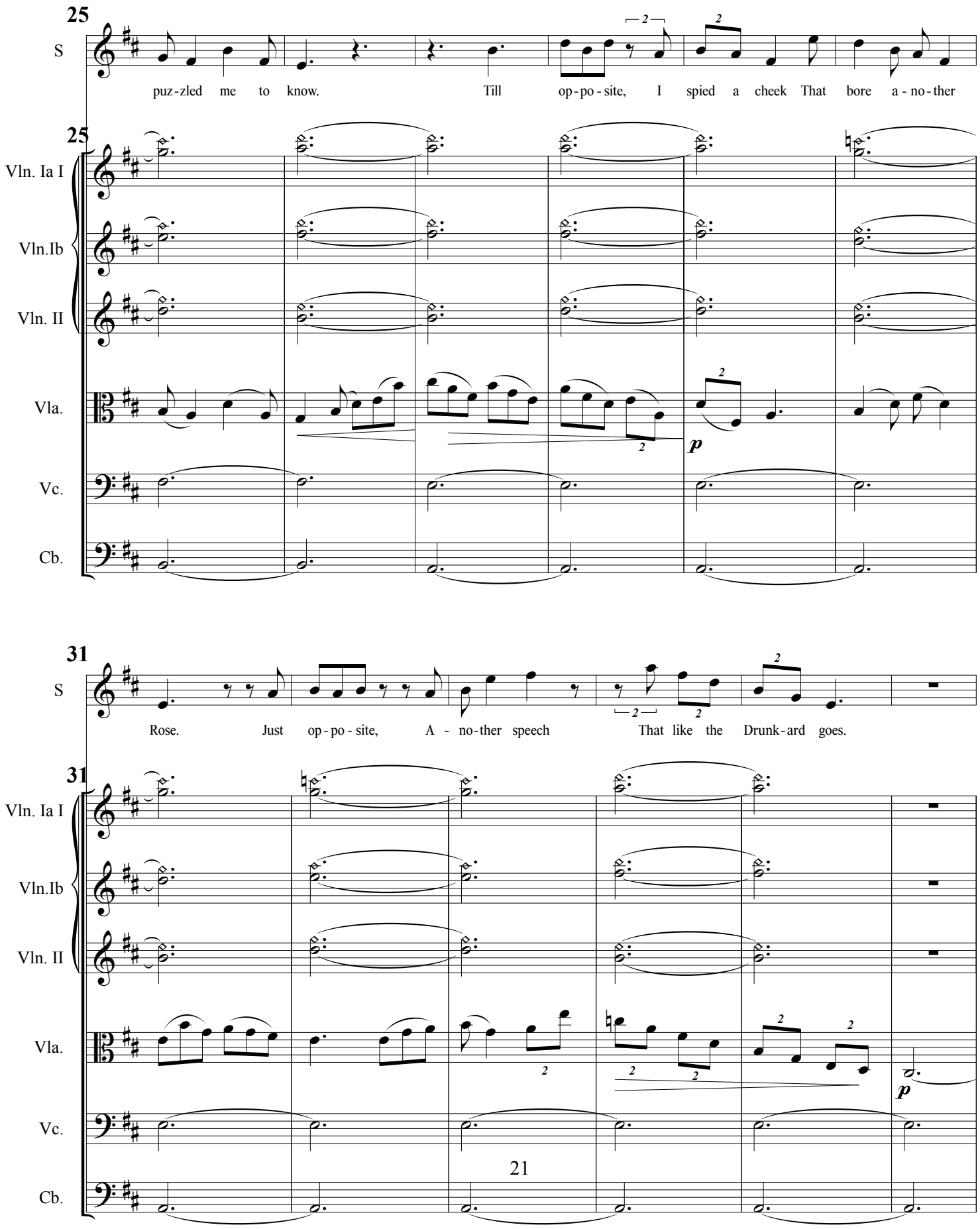
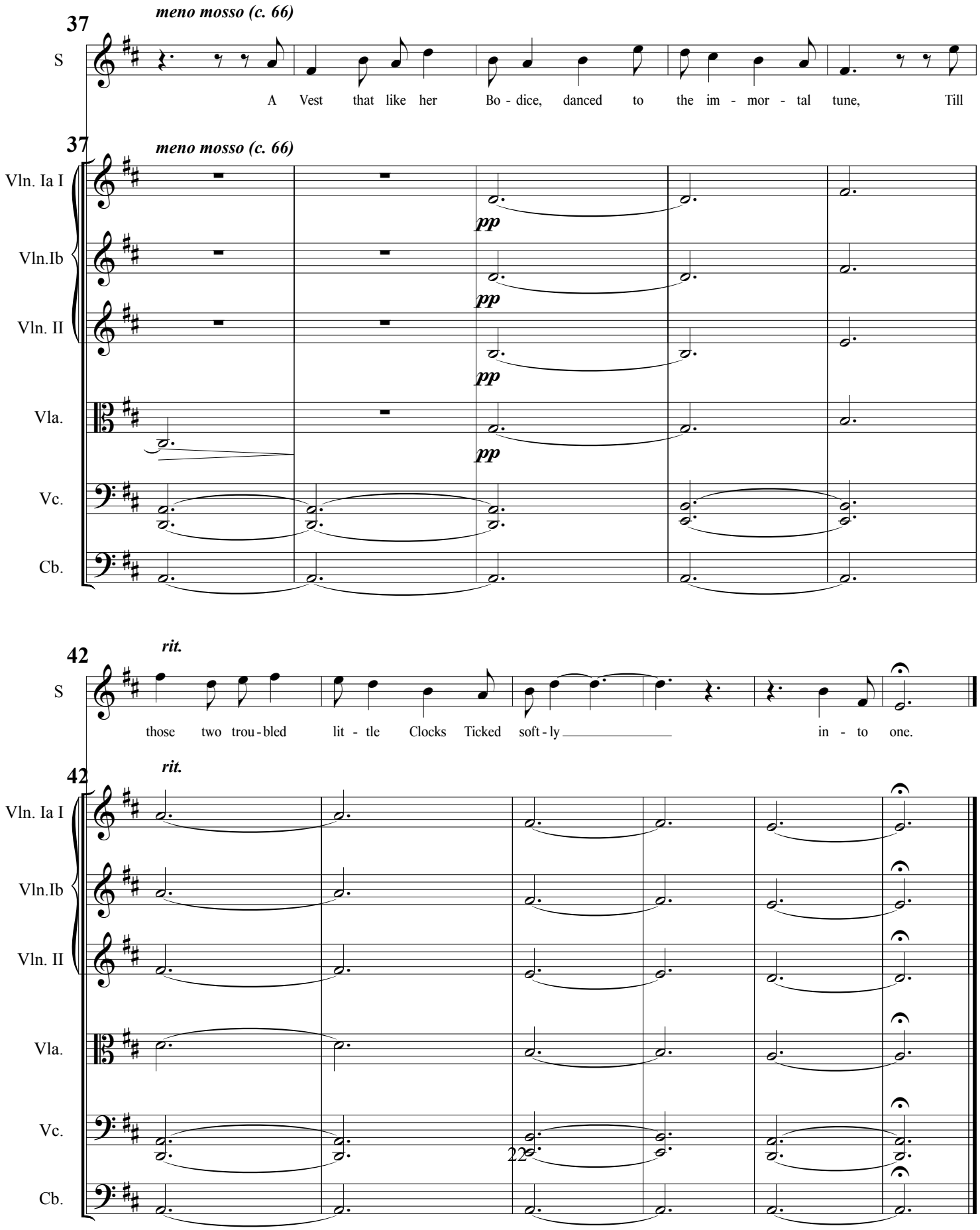
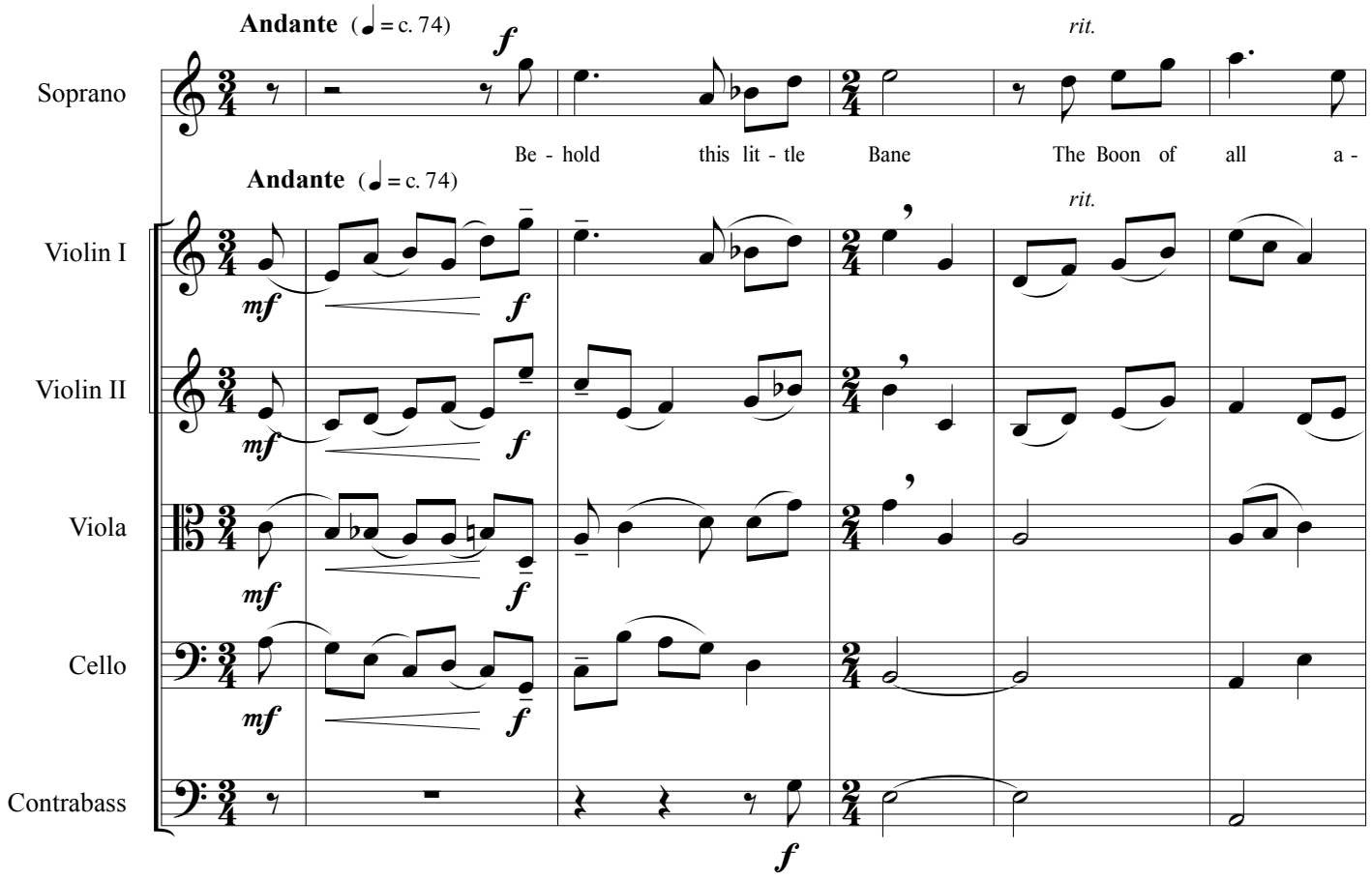
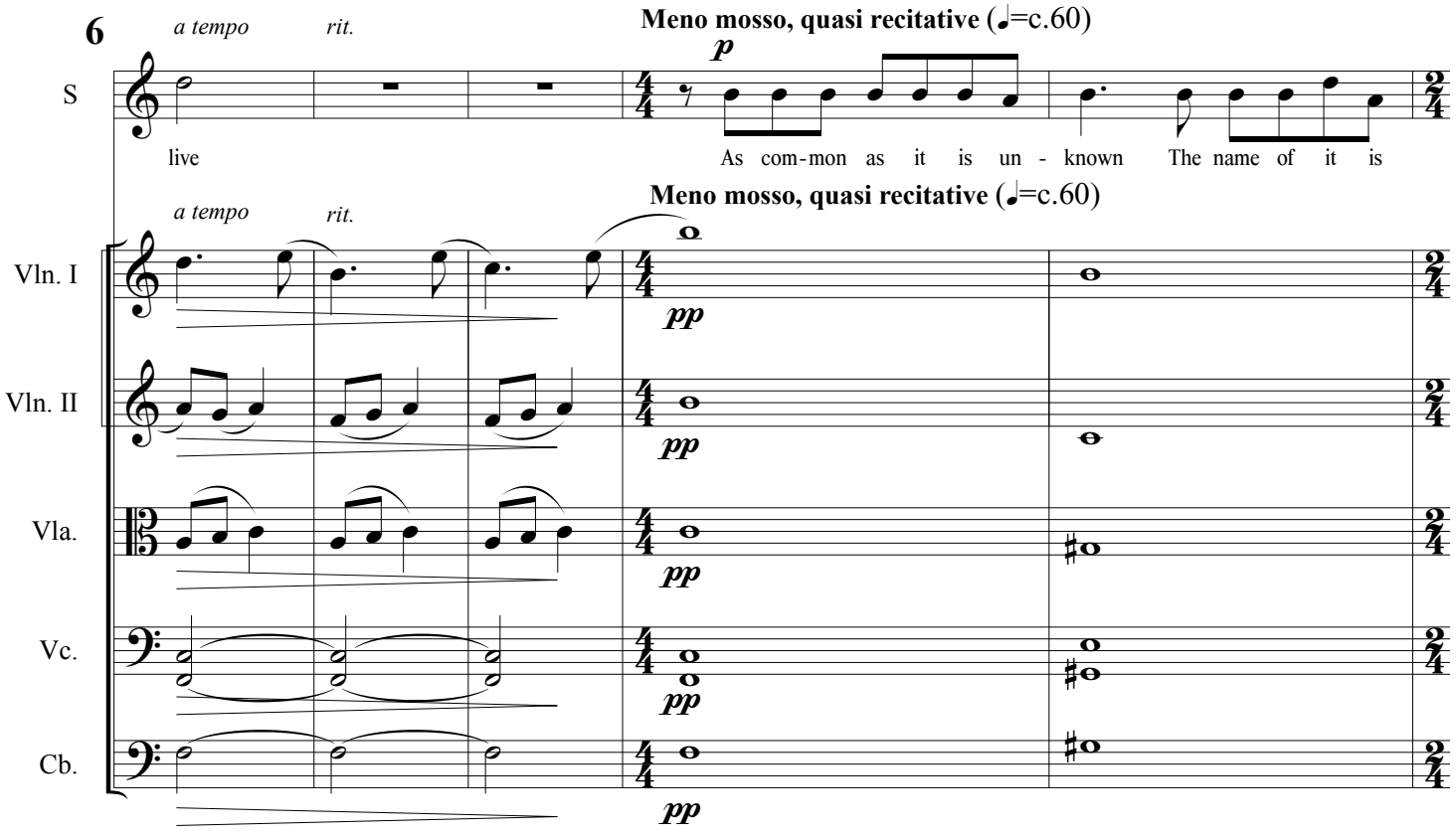

14
S
fell. Her pret - ty speech, like drun - ken men, Did stag-ger pi - ti - ful. Her
14
Vln. Ia I
Vln.Ib
Vln. II
Vla.
mp
p
Vc.
Cb.
19
S
fin - gers fum-bled at her work, Her nee-dle would not go. What ailed so smart a lit-tle Maid, It
19
Vln. Ia I
Vln.Ib
Vln. II
Vla.
mf
mp
Vc.
Cb.

25
S
puz-zled me to know. Till op-po-site, I spied a cheek That bore a-no-ther
25
Vln. Ia I
Vln.Ib
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
p
31
S
Rose. Just op-po-site, A-no-ther speech That like the Drunk-ard goes.
31
Vln. Ia I
Vln.Ib
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
p

37
meno mosso (c. 66)
S
A Vest that like her Bo - dice, danced to the im - mor - tal tune, Till
37
meno mosso (c. 66)
Vln. Ia I
Vln.Ib
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
pp
pp
pp
pp
42
rit.
S
those two trou - bled lit - tle Clocks Ticked soft - ly in - to one.
42
rit.
Vln. Ia I
Vln.Ib
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.

5. Behold this little Bane

Poem by Emily Dickinson

Carleton Macy

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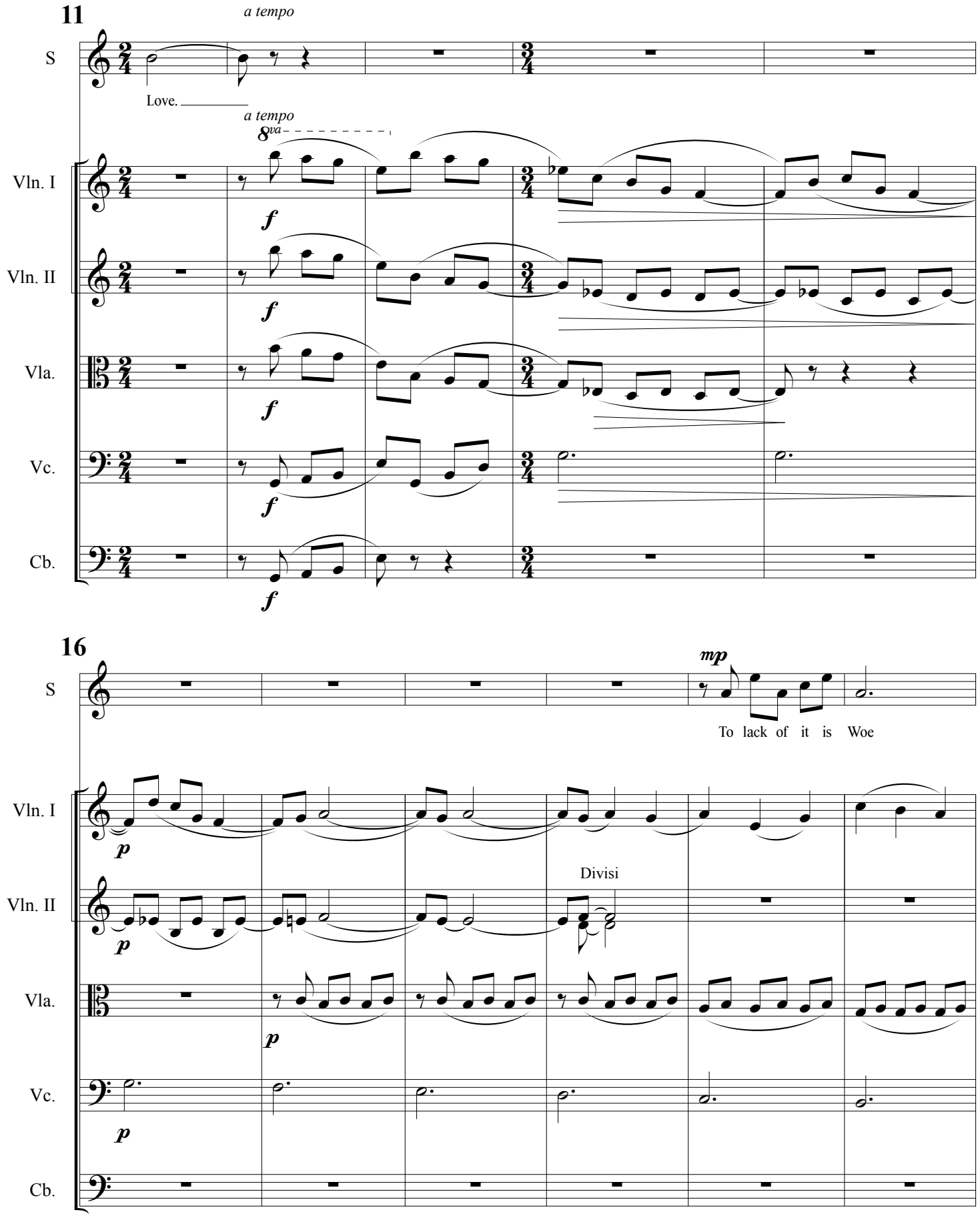
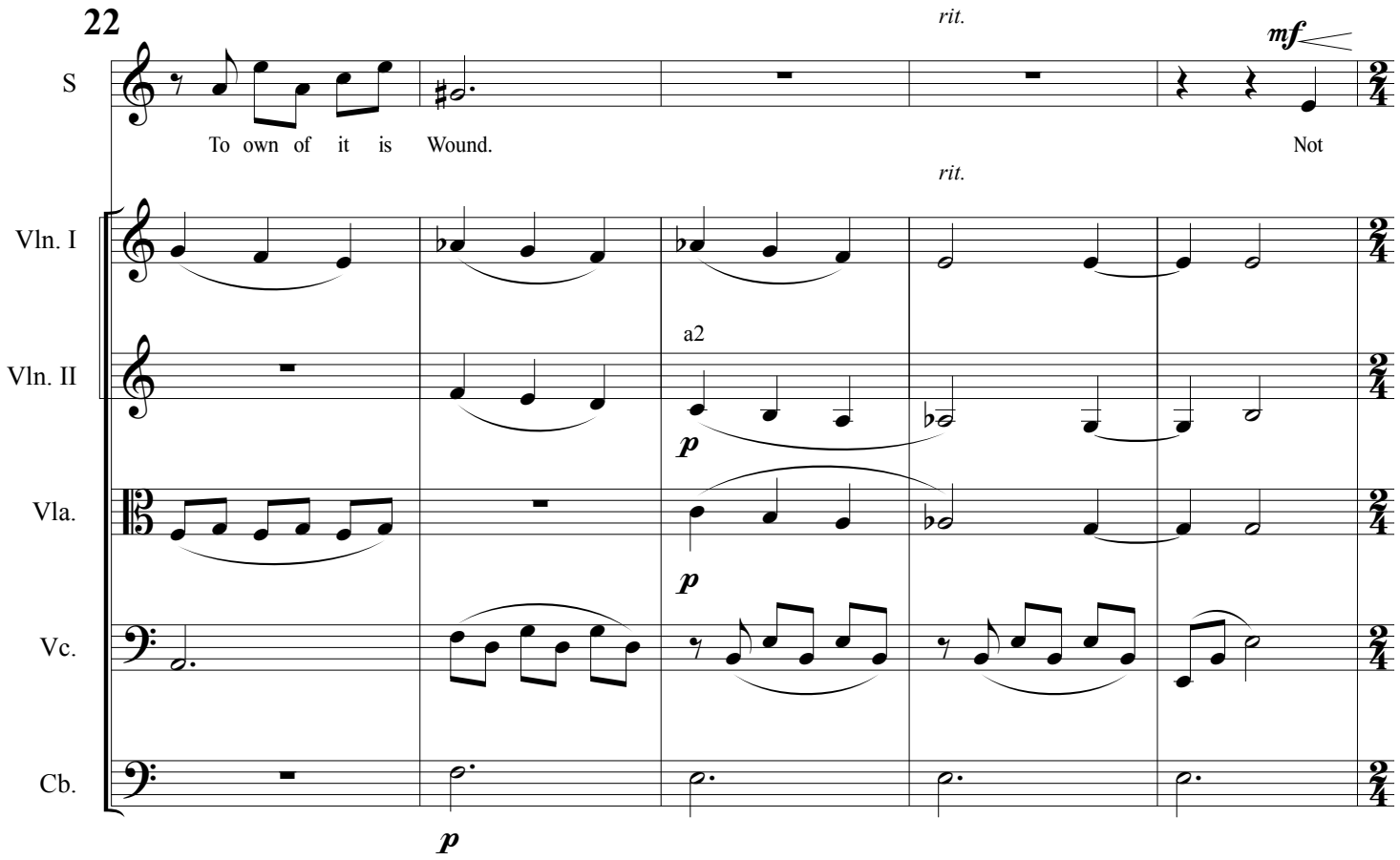
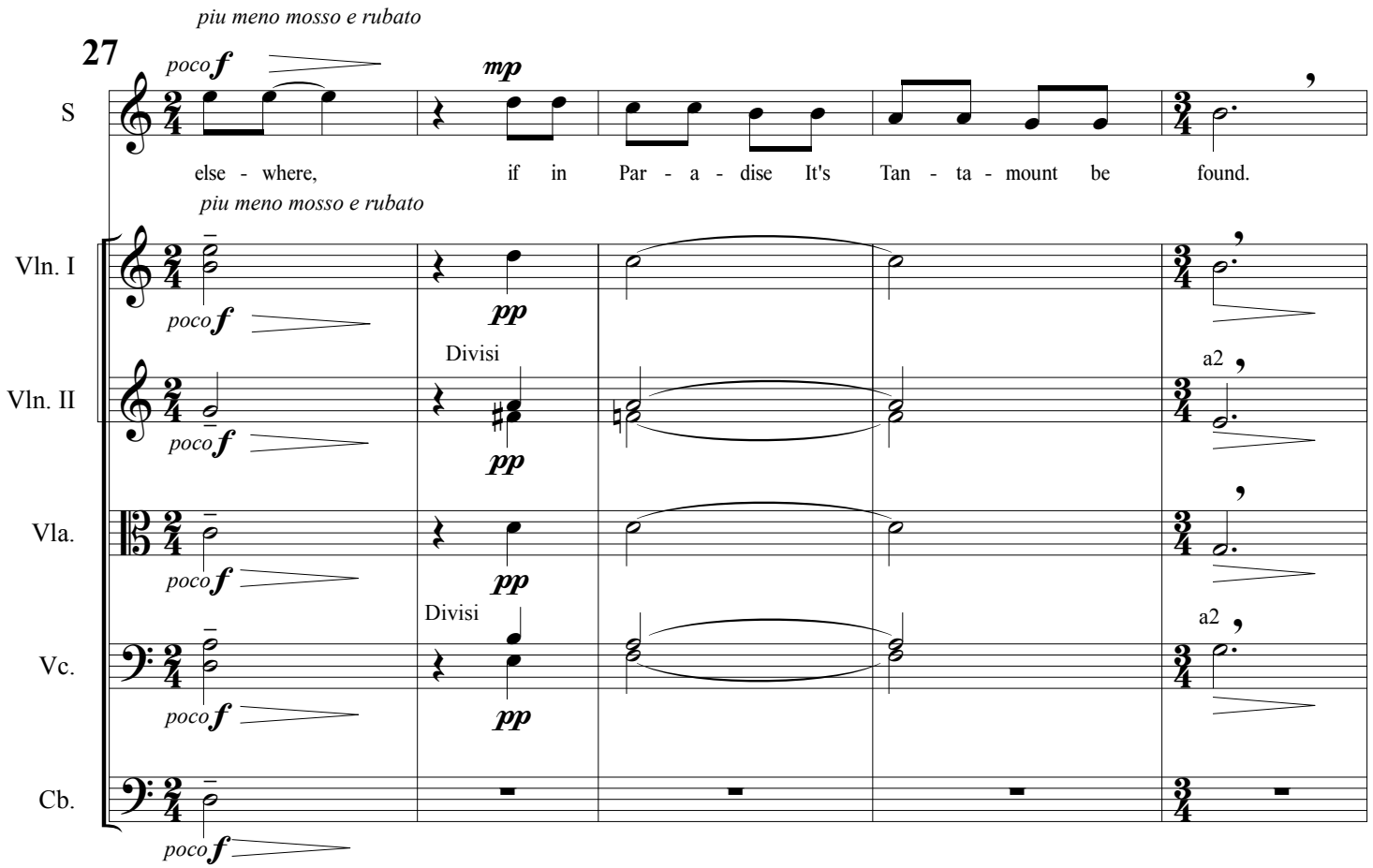
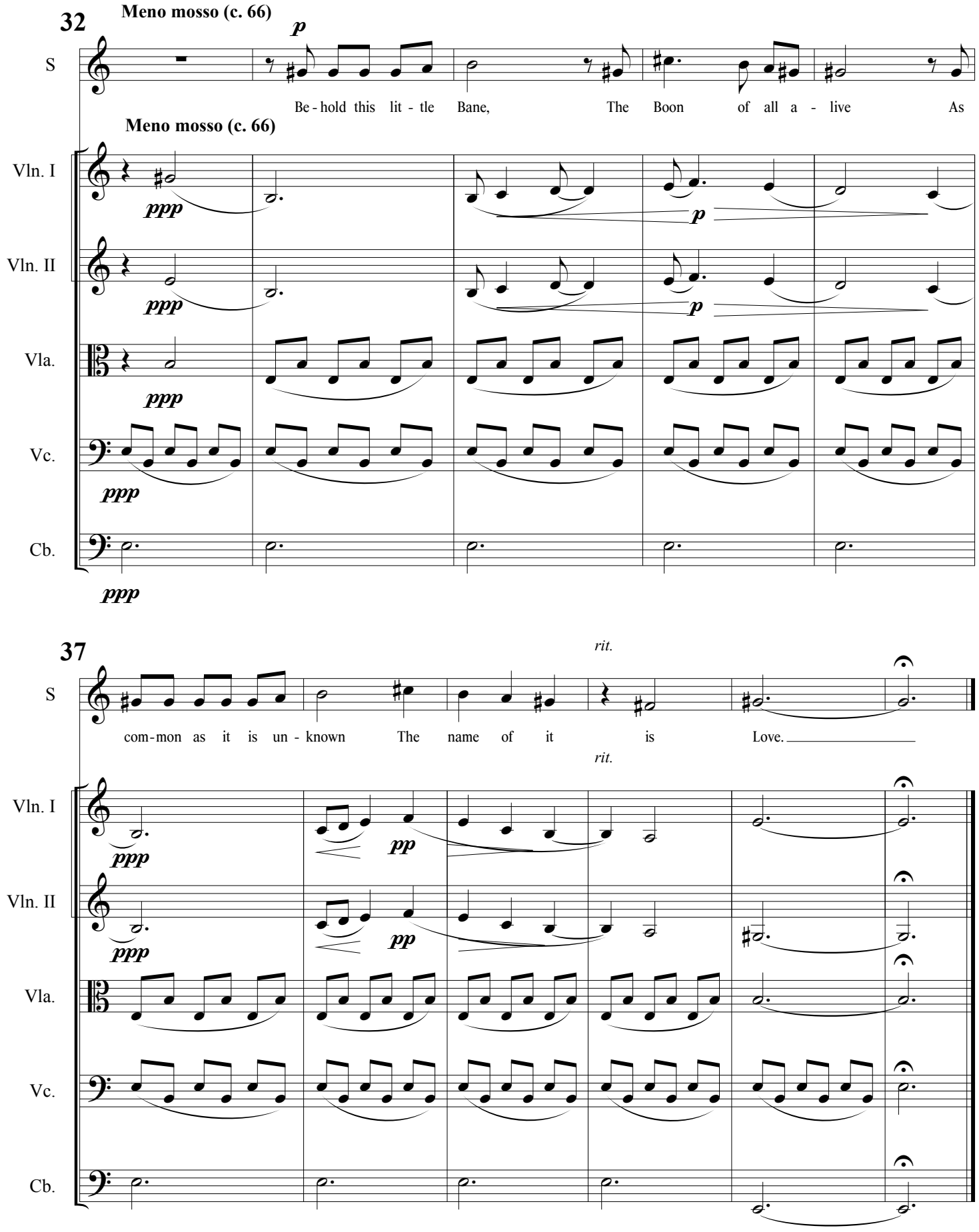

11
a tempo
S
Love.
a tempo
8va
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
f
16
mp
To lack of it is Woe
p
Divisi


22
rit.
mf
S
To own of it is Wound.
Not
rit.
Vln. I
Vln. II
a2
p
Vla.
p
Vc.
Cb.
p


piu meno mosso e rubato
27
poco f
mp
S
else - where, if in Par - a - dise It's Tan - ta - mount be found.
piu meno mosso e rubato
Vln. I
poco f
pp
Divisi
Vln. II
a2
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.

32
Meno mosso (c. 66)
p
S
Be - hold this lit - tle Bane, The Boon of all a - live As
Meno mosso (c. 66)
Vln. I
ppp
p
Vln. II
ppp
p
Vla.
ppp
Vc.
ppp
Cb.
ppp
37
rit.
S
com-mon as it is un - known The name of it is Love.
rit.
Vln. I
ppp
pp
Vln. II
ppp
pp
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.