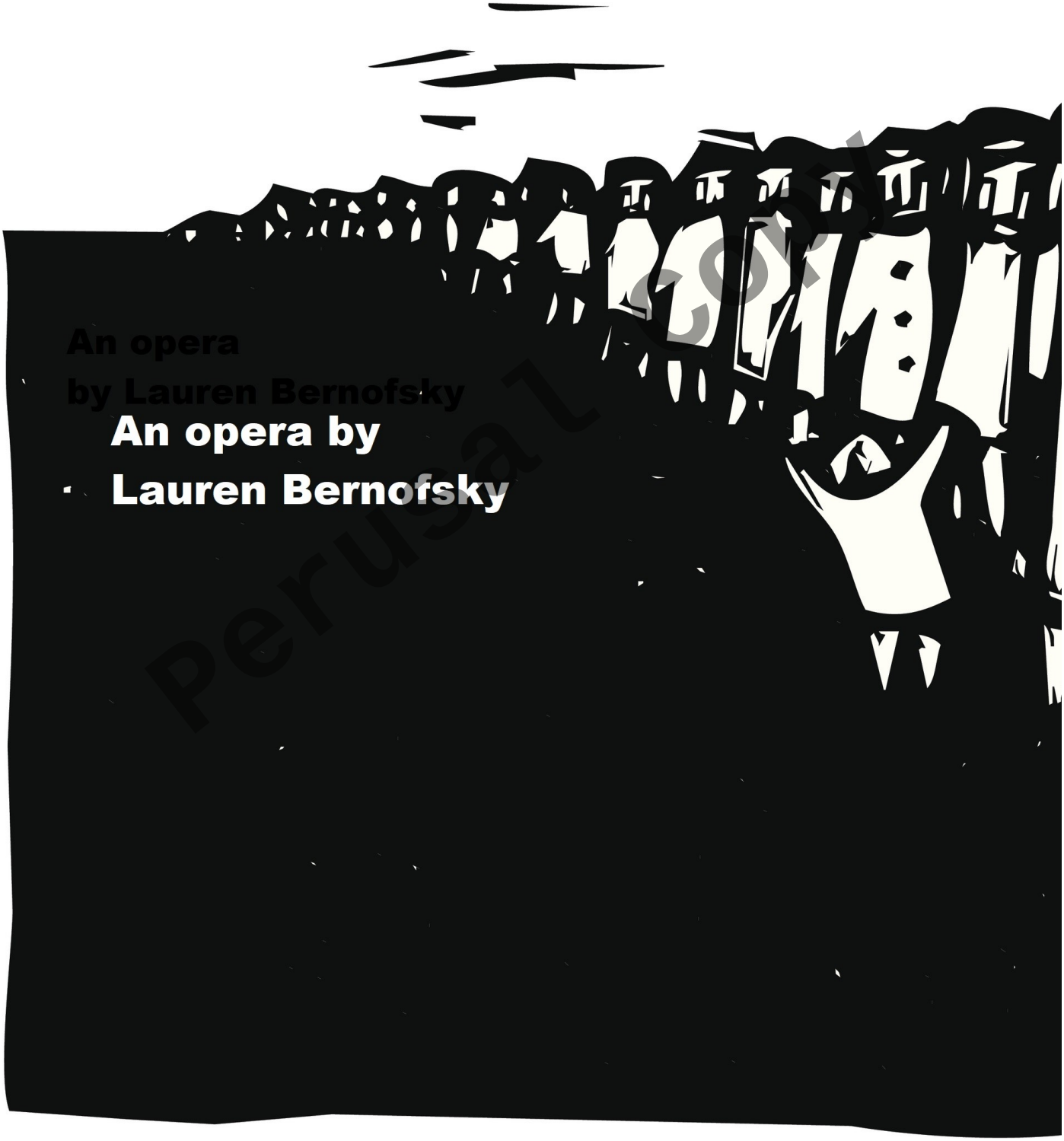
THE MENSCH



An opera
by Lauren Bernofsky

An opera by
Lauren Bernofsky

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THE MENSCH

Words and music by

LAUREN BERNOFSKY

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ACTS I, II, and part of III

Piano-Vocal Score

DESCRIPTION

THE MENSCH is an in-progress opera by Lauren Bernofsky. Set during the Holocaust, it tells the story of the historical figure Anton Schmid and his heroic work saving hundreds of Jews from the Vilna Ghetto in Lithuania.

Anton Schmid is an electrician working in Vienna. He is drafted into the Wehrmacht and sent to Vilna, Lithuania to work in an office job. On the surface he appears to do his job, but undercover he works to aid the Jews in the ghetto. He is finally discovered by the Nazis and is jailed and shortly thereafter executed.

Projected date of completion of piano-vocal score: January 1, 2025

Projected date of completion of full orchestration: June 1, 2026

Projected overal duration: 2 hours of music

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CHARACTERS

Anton Schmid, lyric tenor. Electrician. Owns shop for electro-technical equipment in Vienna.

Stefanie Schmid, lyric mezzo soprano. Anton's wife.Works in Schimd's shop.

Eduard Kanitzer, tenor. Jew who works in Schmid's electrical shop. A trained photographer who develops film on site and sells cameras, film, and accessories.

Bernhard Bernstein, lyric baritone. Jewish electrician who works in Schmid's shop.

Hans Spatzek, baritone. Gentile who works in Schmid's shop. Repairs radios.

Privat First Class Max Huppert, baritone. Behaves as a Nazi but is actually a Jew in disguise.

Pessia Aharonowicz, dramatic coloratura soprano. Escaped from Ponar and returns to ghetto.

Tema Sznajderman, dramatic coloratura soprano. Courier.

Mordechai Tenenbaum, baritone. Resistance organizer and courier.

Abba Kovner, bass. Resistance organizer, age 22 at time of Manifesto

Herman Adler, baritone. Resistance organizer.

Anita Diestler, mezzo soprano. Resistance organizer, Herman Adler's wife, former opera singer.

Lonka Kozibrodska , soprano. Courier. (Late teens/early 20s) Alias: Barbara-Anna Biernacka

Chaika Grossman, soprano. Courier. (Late teens/early 20s)

Luisa Emaitisaite, soubrette. 23-yr-old Polish Jew

Father Andreas Gdowski, bass. Elderly Catholic priest.

Liesl Kanitzer, mezzo soprano. Wife of Eduard Kanitzer.

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CHARACTERS, continued

Liesl Kanitzer, mezzo soprano. Wife of Eduard Kanitzer.

Gerhard Kanitzer, boy soprano. Son of Eduard Kanitzer (age maybe 10 – 11)

Annelie Kanitzer, child soprano. Little sister of Gerhard Kanitzer

Viennese Boy 1, boy soprano. 8 or 9

Gertha Schmid, girl soprano. Daughter of Anton Schmid. (age 13)

Jehudit (Judith) Trojak , child soprano. Age 11. Escapes from Ponar and returns to ghetto.

Pessia Aharonowicz, dramatic coloratura soprano. Escapes from Ponar and returns to ghetto.

(Dog – little dog, owned by the Schmids. Could appears in shop and in Vienna apt.)

Viennese Boy 2, boy soprano.

Viennese Boy 3, boy soprano.

Viennese Policeman, baritone. Wears Austrian police uniform and a Nazi "Hakenkreuzbind"

Frau Toper (non-singing role) Owner of clothing shop near Schmid's store.

CUSTOMER #1, baritone.

CUSTOMER #2, mezzo soprano.

Schlomo Bernowsky, tenor

SATB chorus

Children's chorus (6 – 10 children)

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THE MENSCH

Lauren Bernofsky

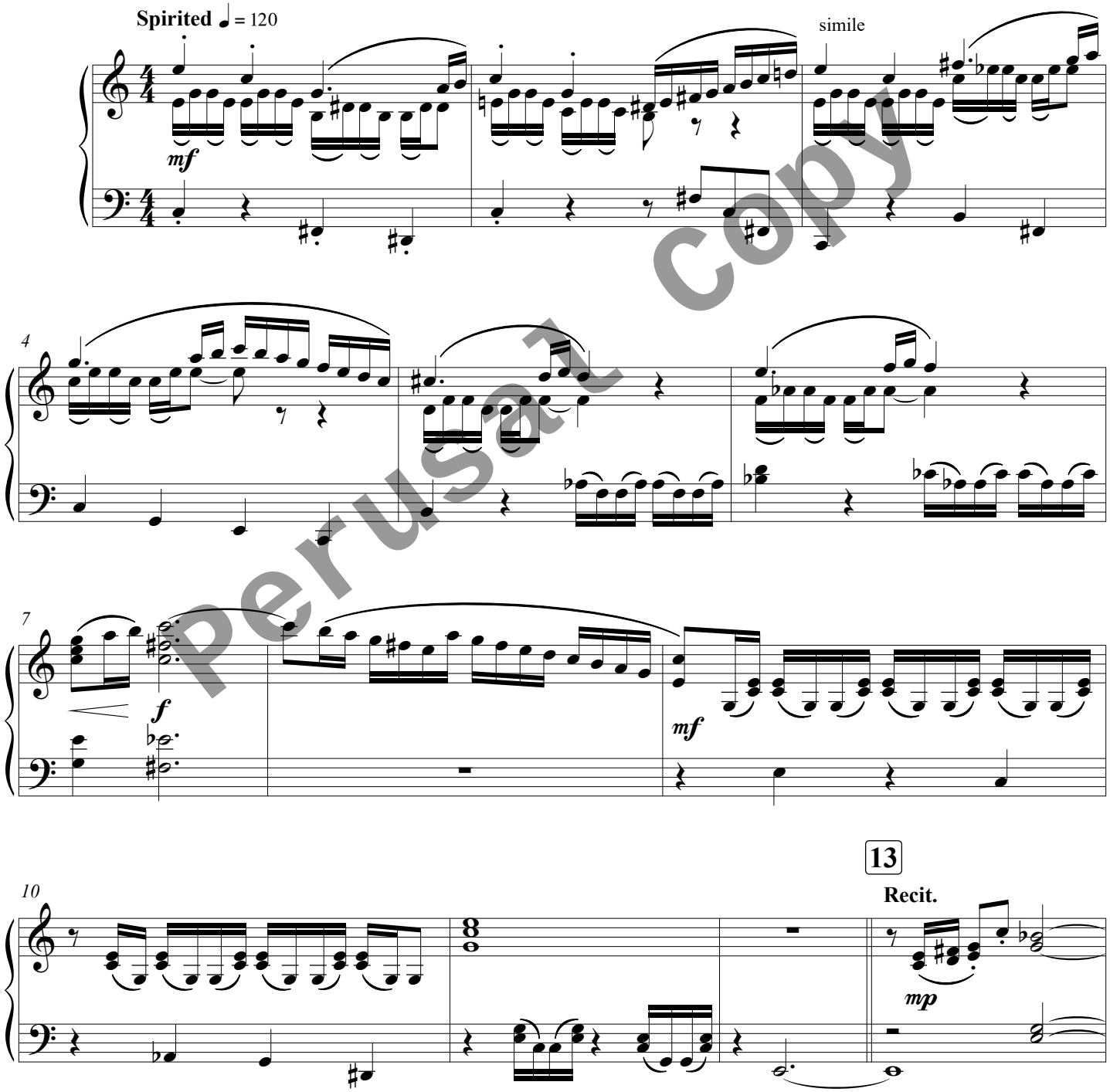
ACT I

SCENE I

[Duration 4:32]

At Schmid's electrical shop in Brigittenau, a working-class district of Vienna.

At the Shop - 1



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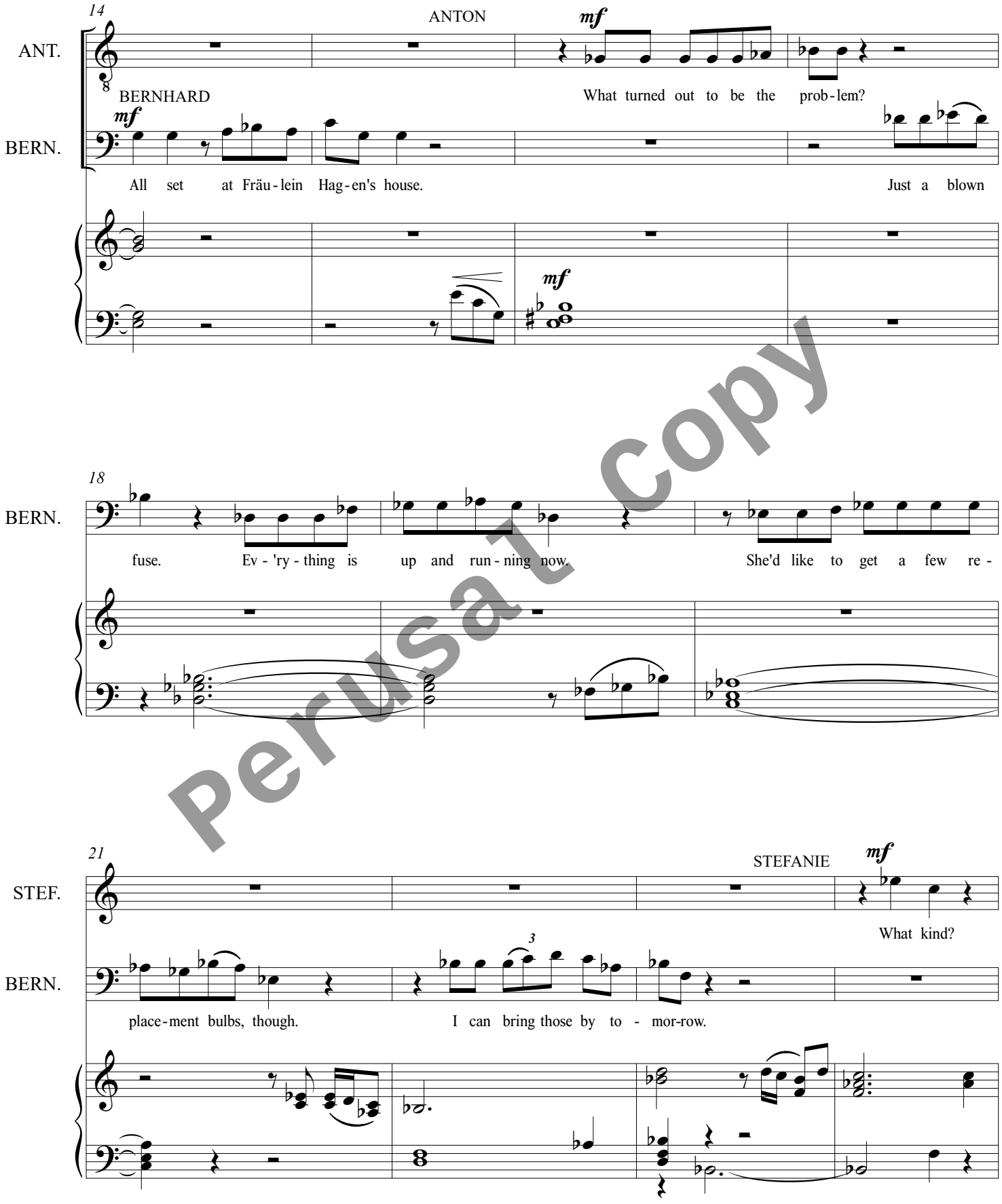

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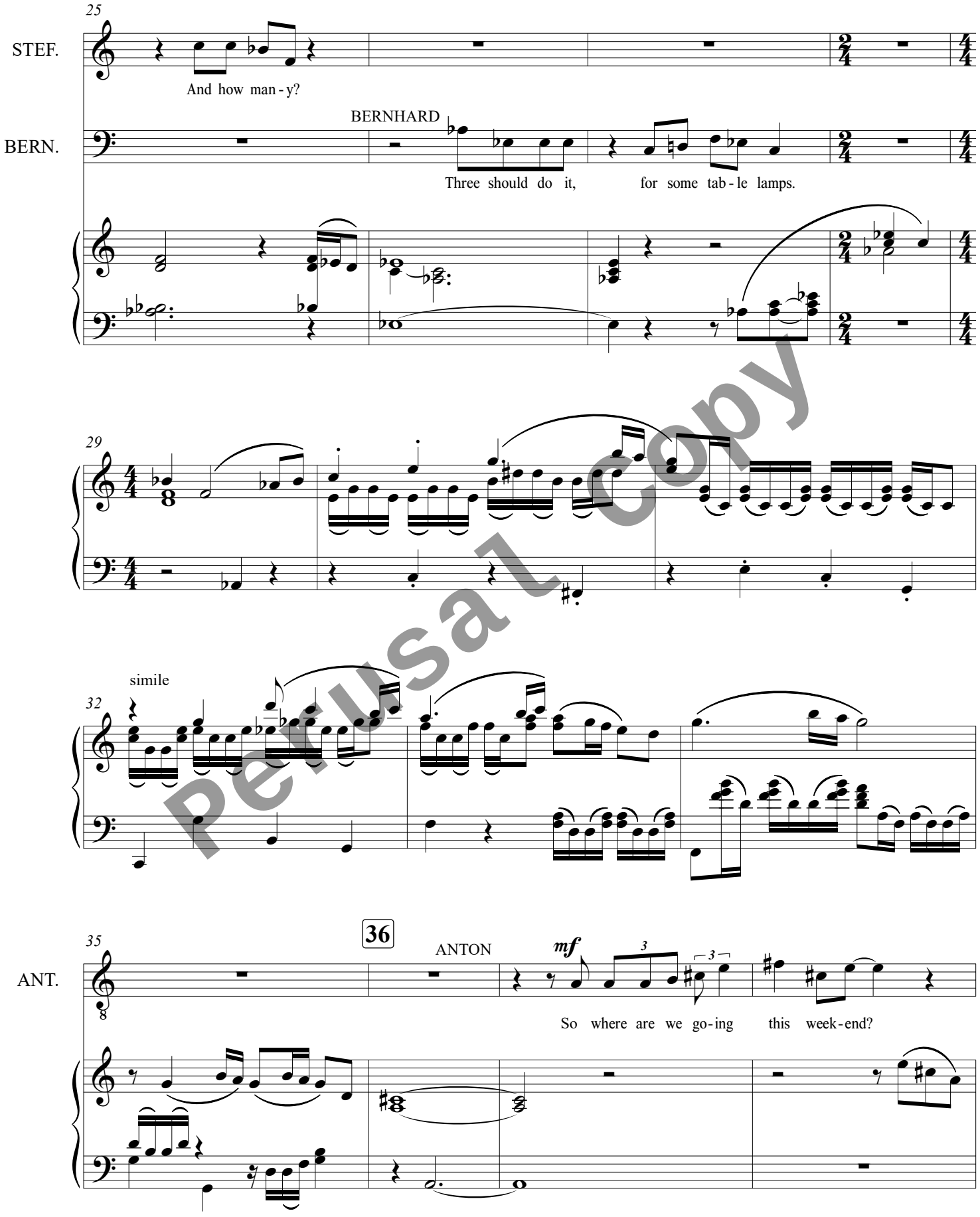

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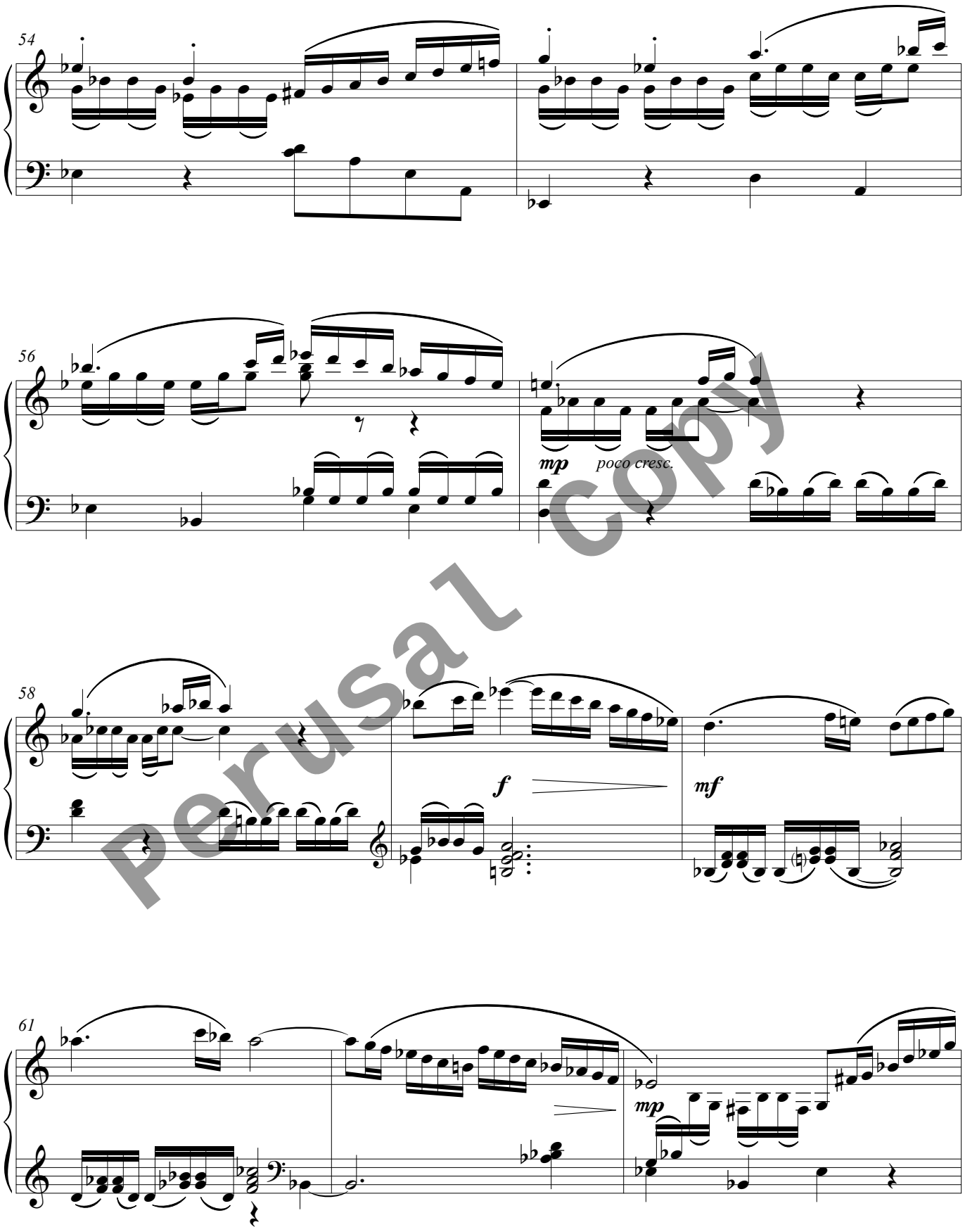

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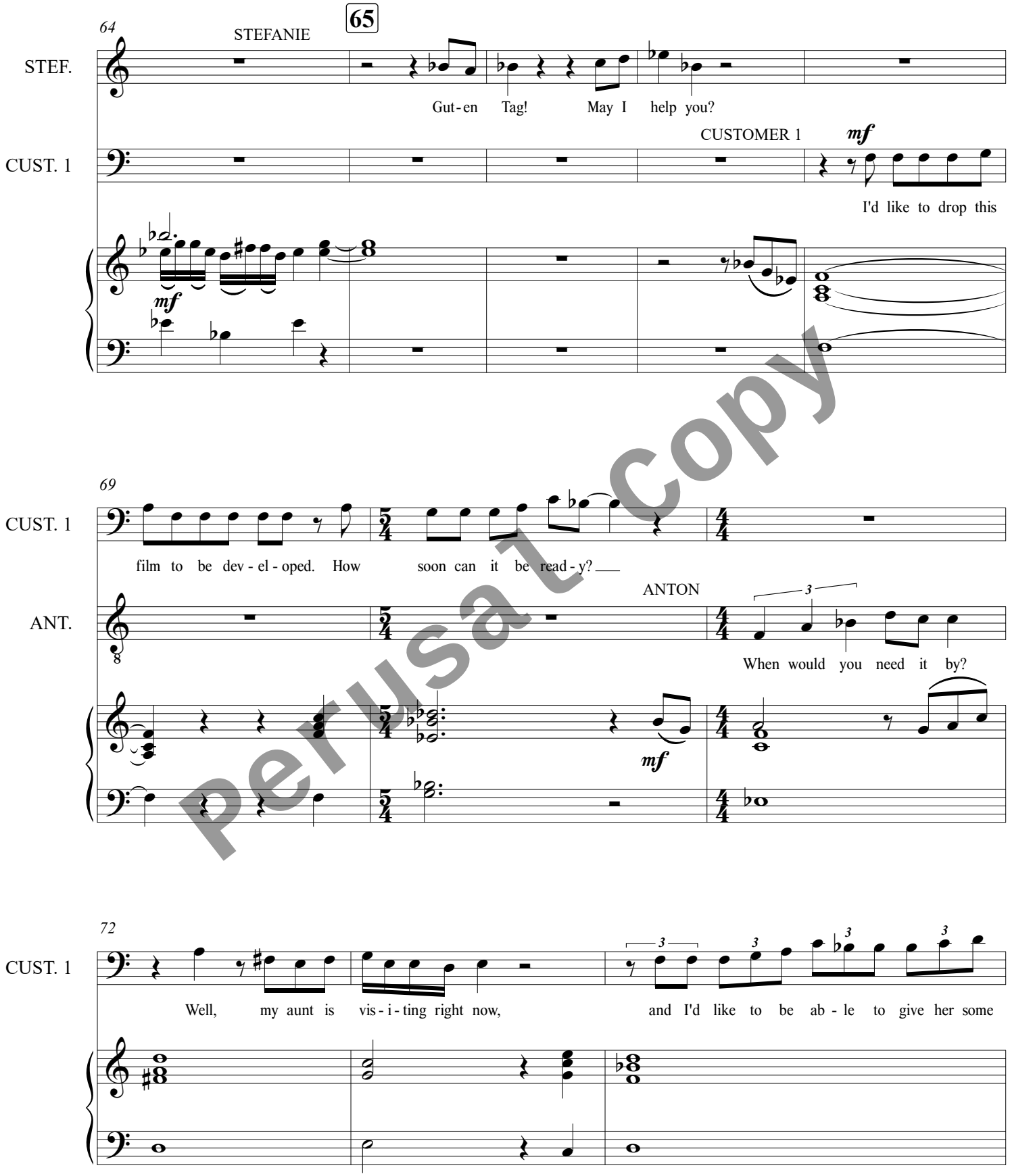

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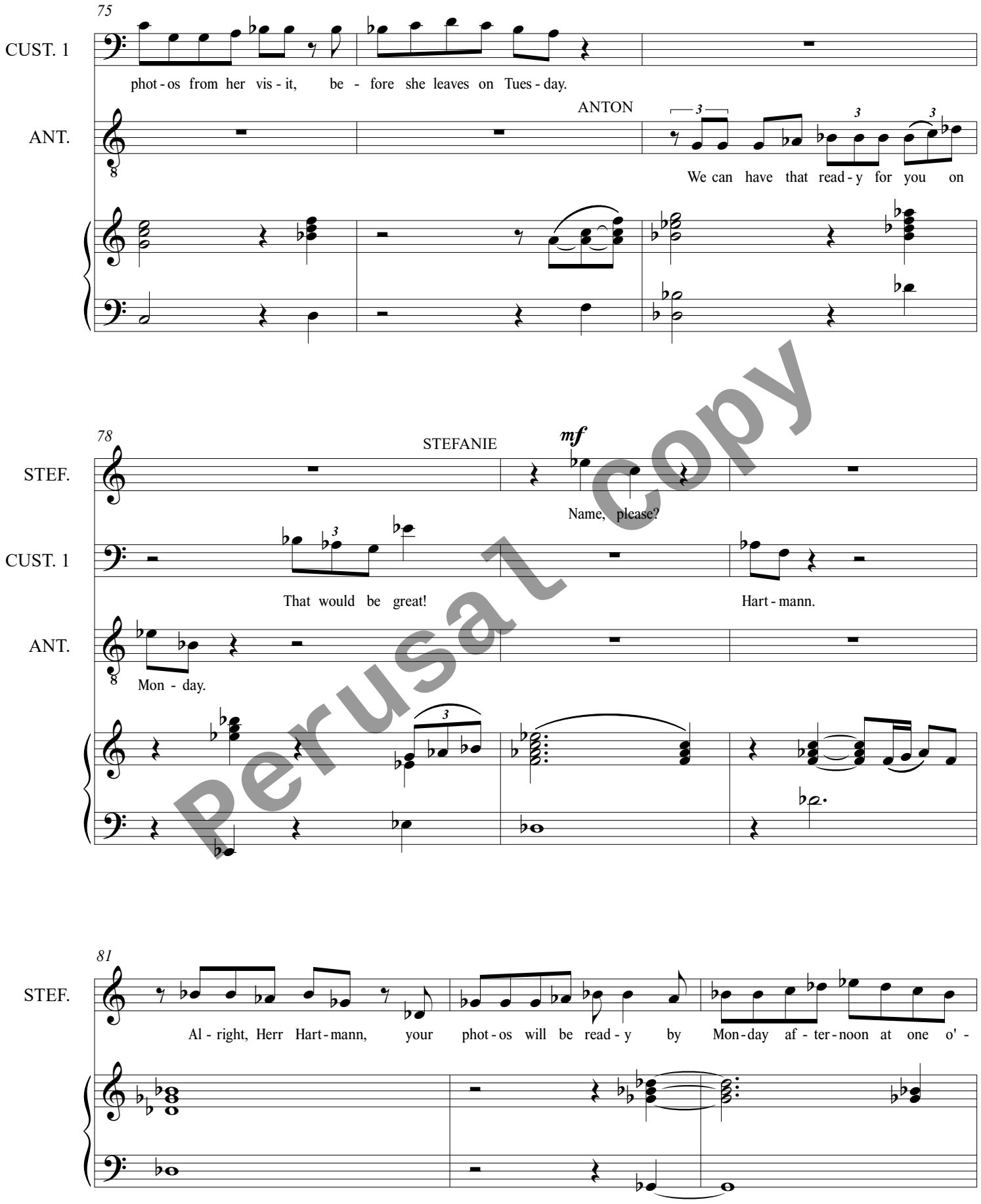

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84

STEF.

clock!

Wied-der - seh - en!

CUST. 1

Thank you!

Wie - der - seh - en!

mf

Gerhard runs in, "flying" toy plane.
Almost bumps into customer leaving.

86

ED.

EDUARD

f *mf*

Ger-hard! Be care-ful! You

f sfz

89

ED.

can't just run right in - to peop - le like that!

mf

92

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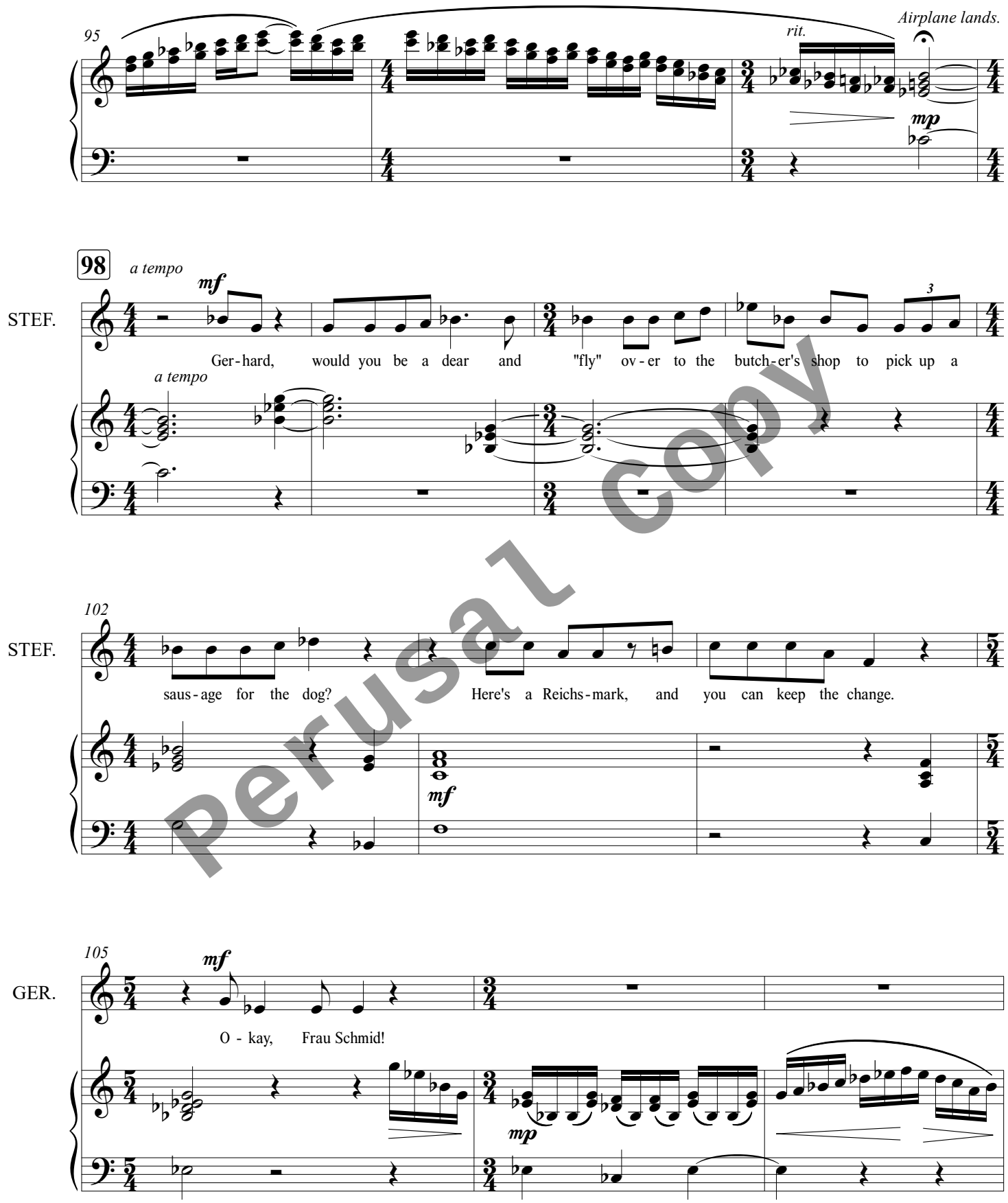

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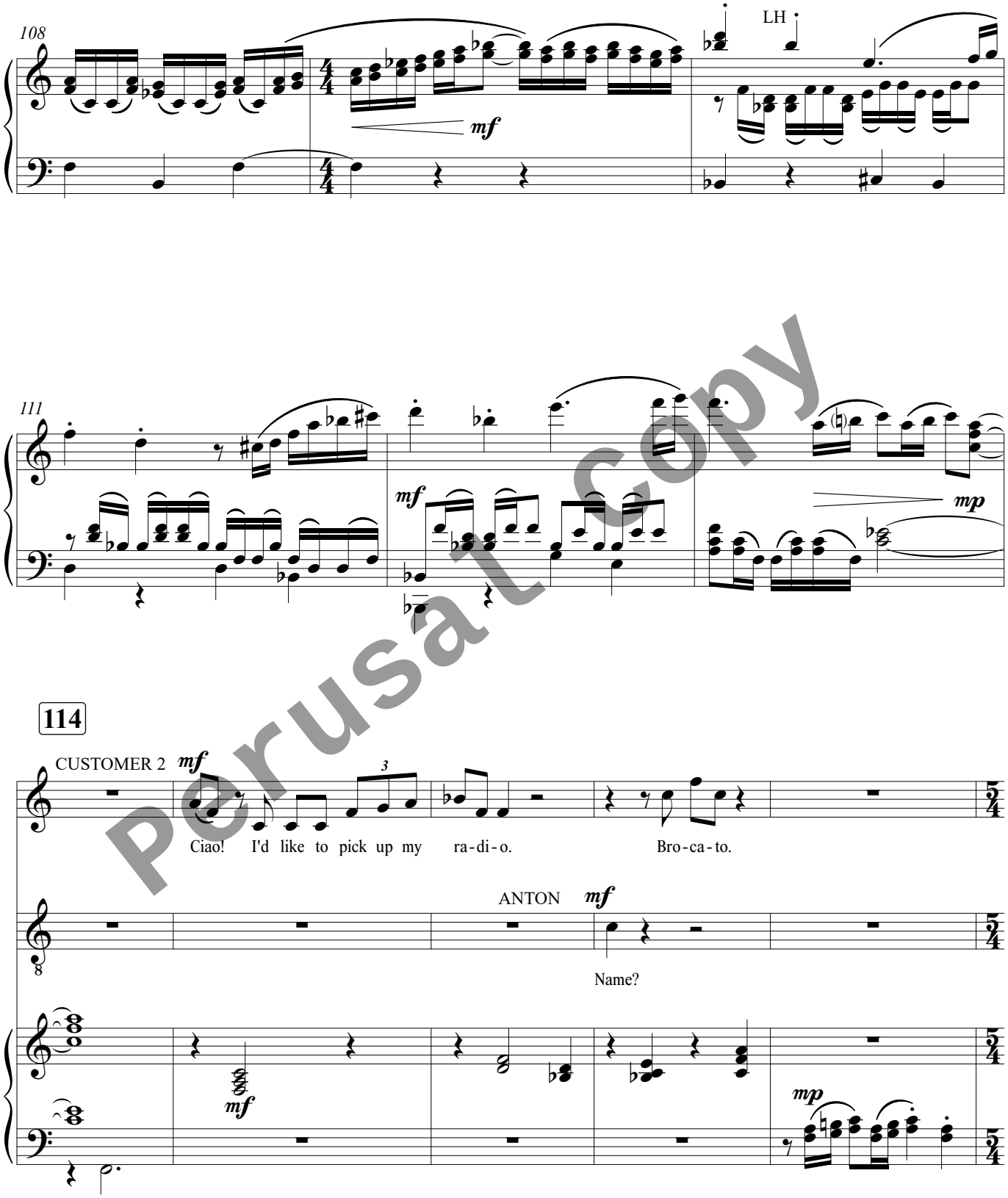

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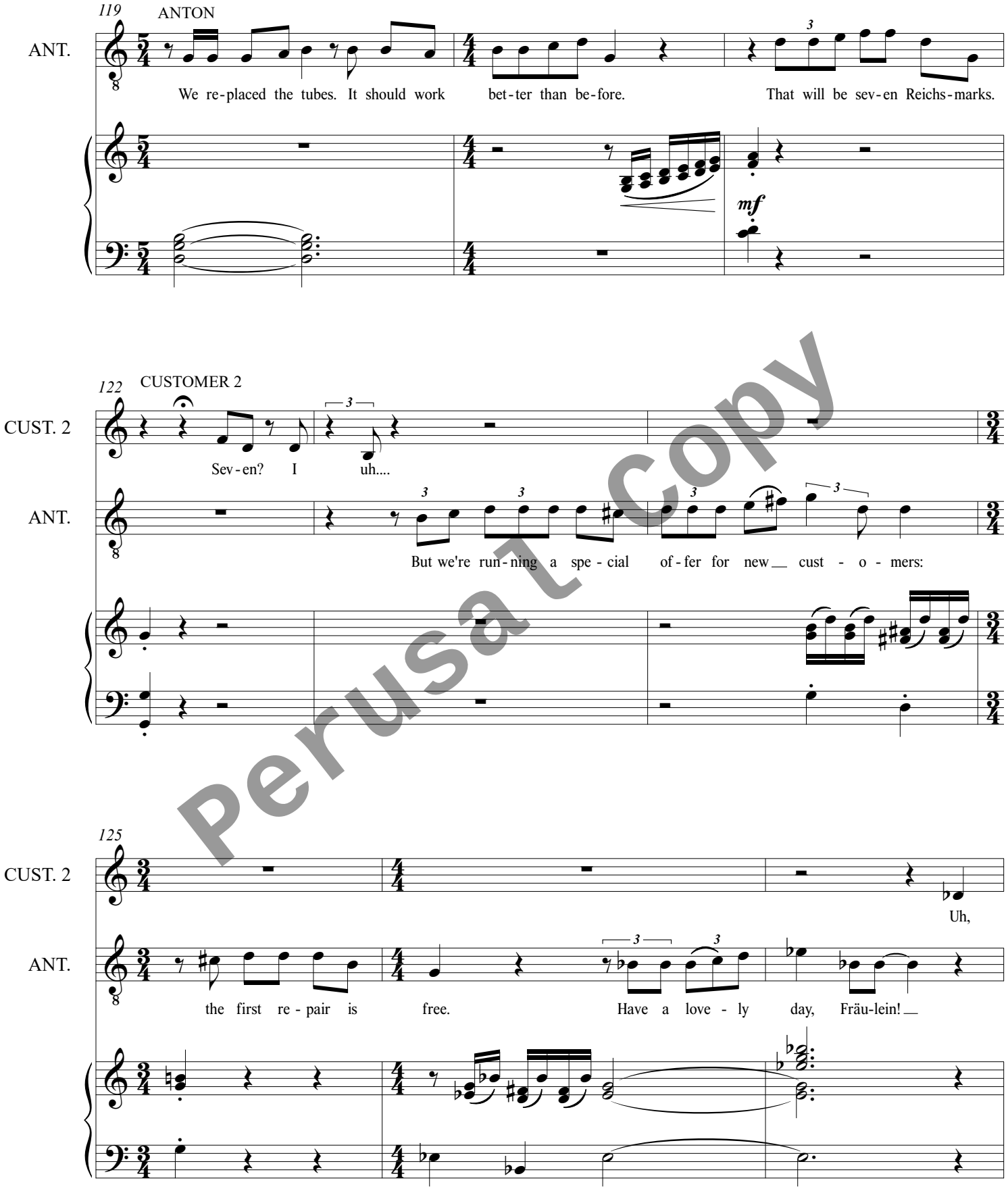

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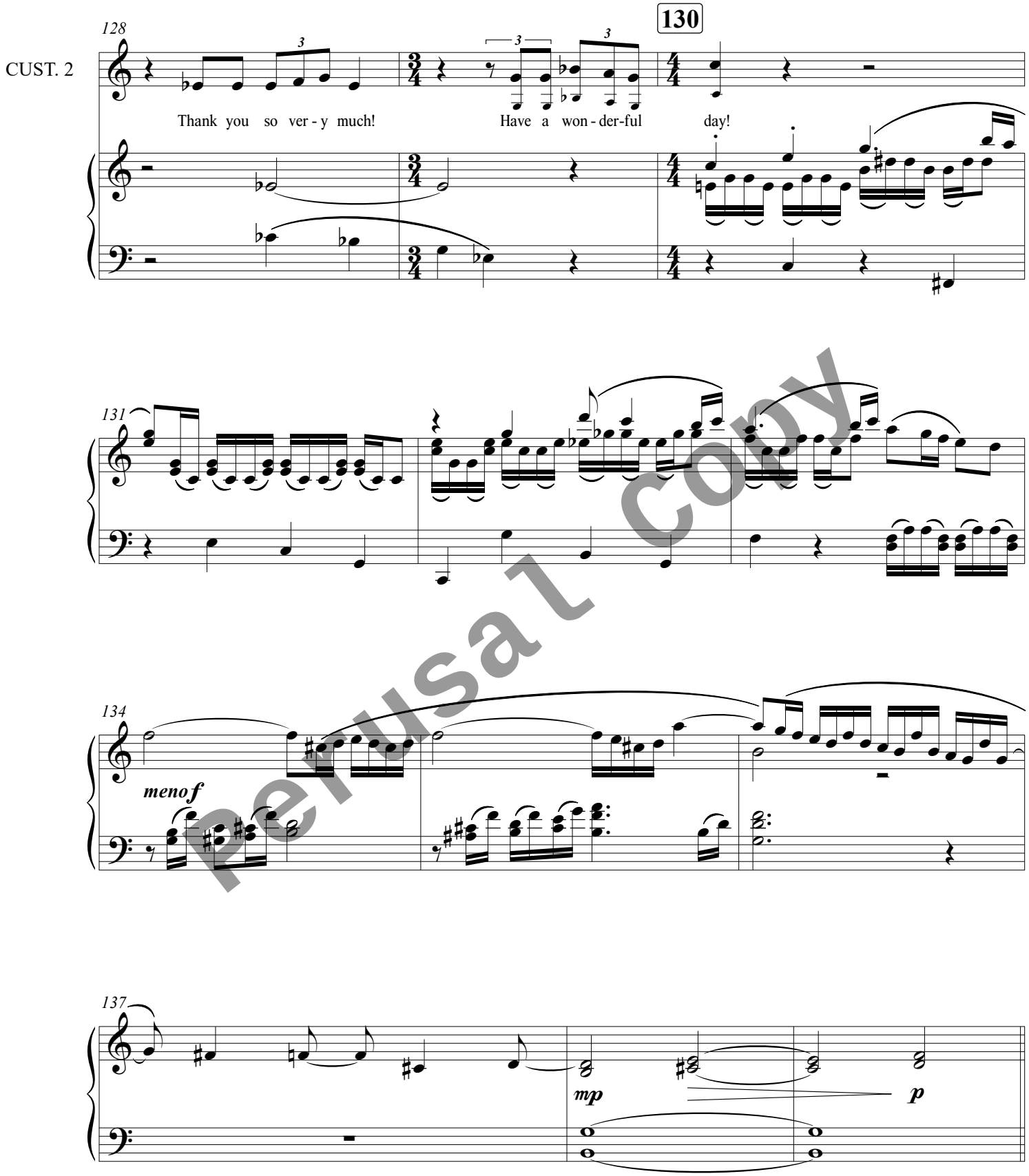

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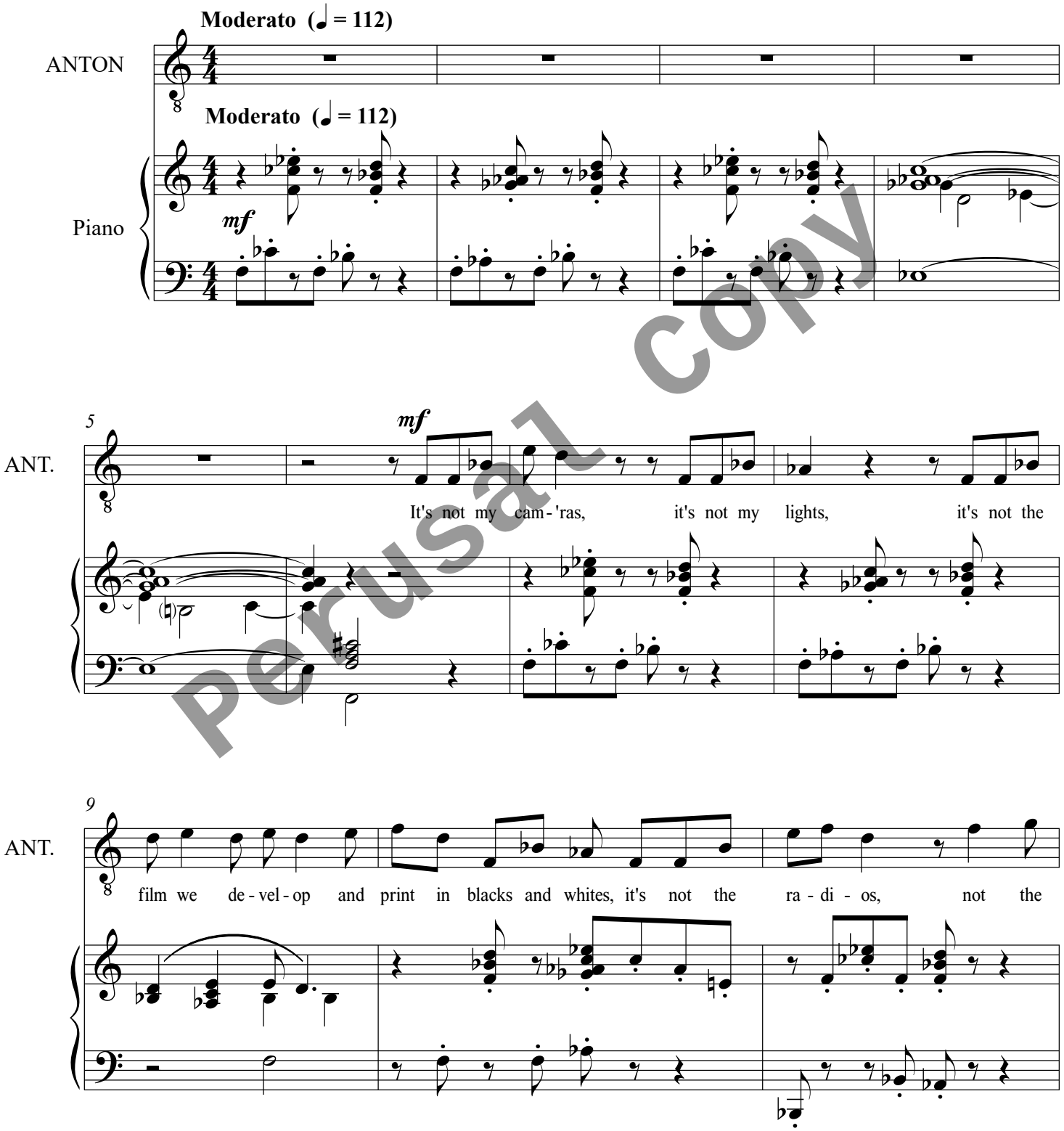
[Duration 2:00]

2. It's Not My Cameras



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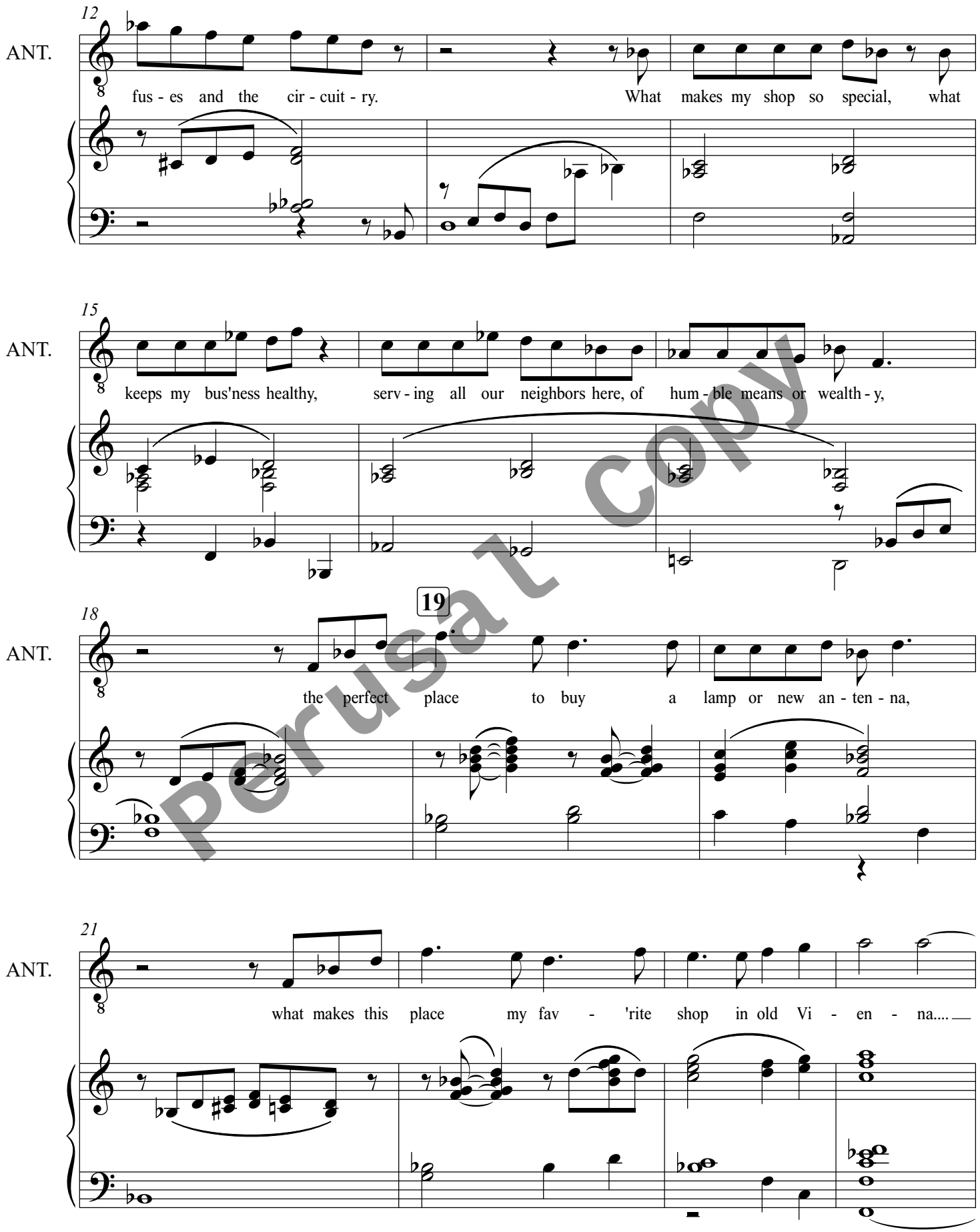

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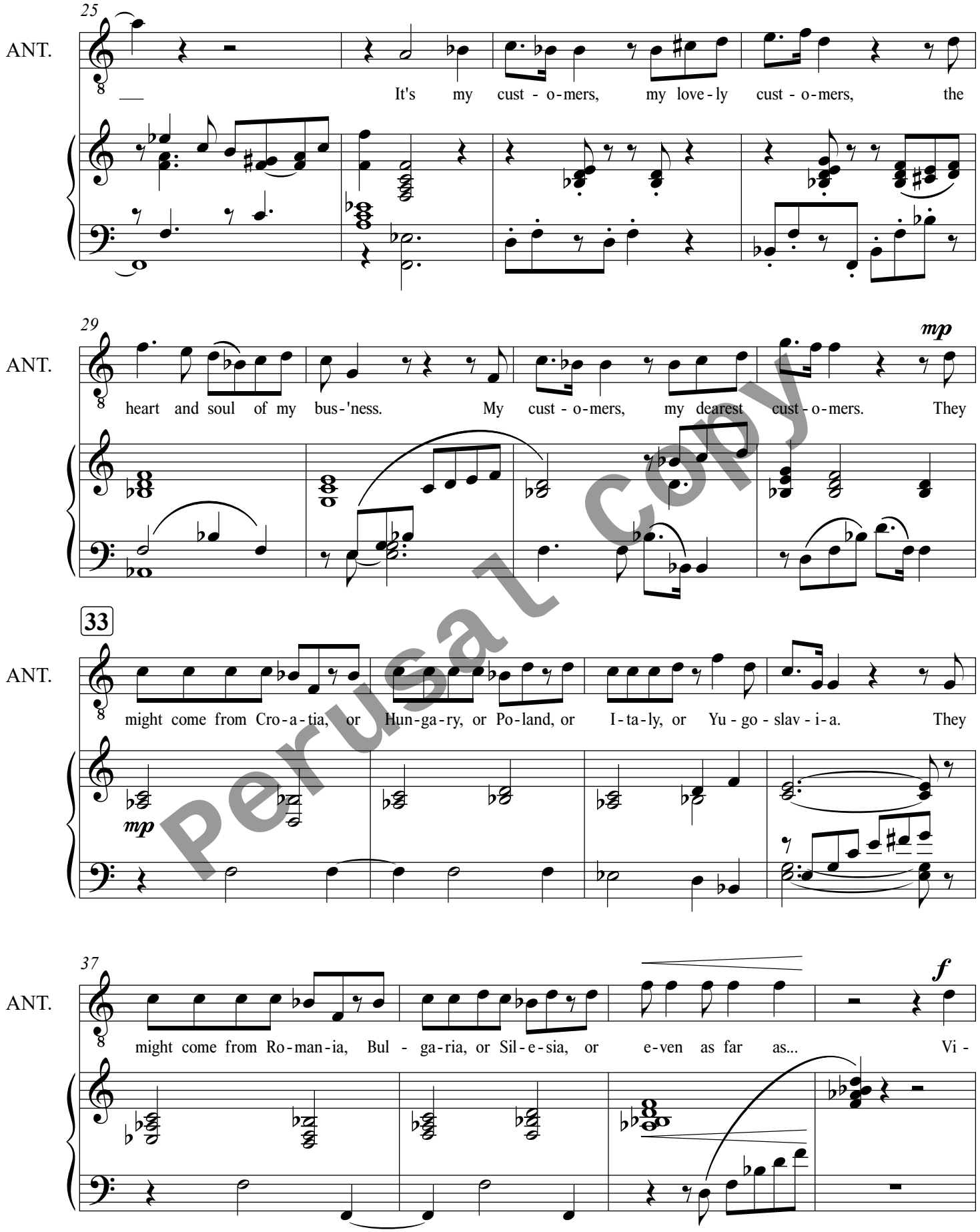

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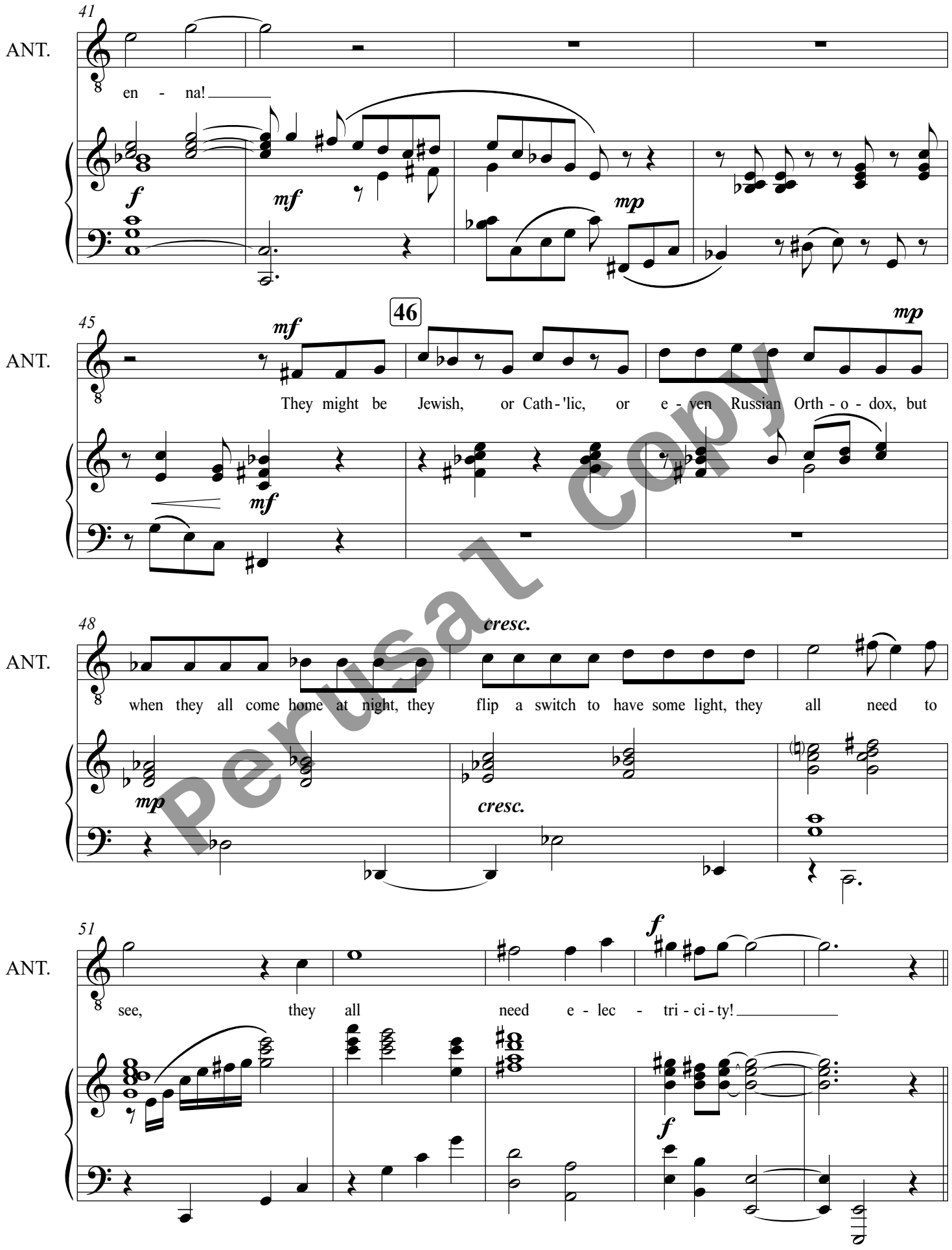

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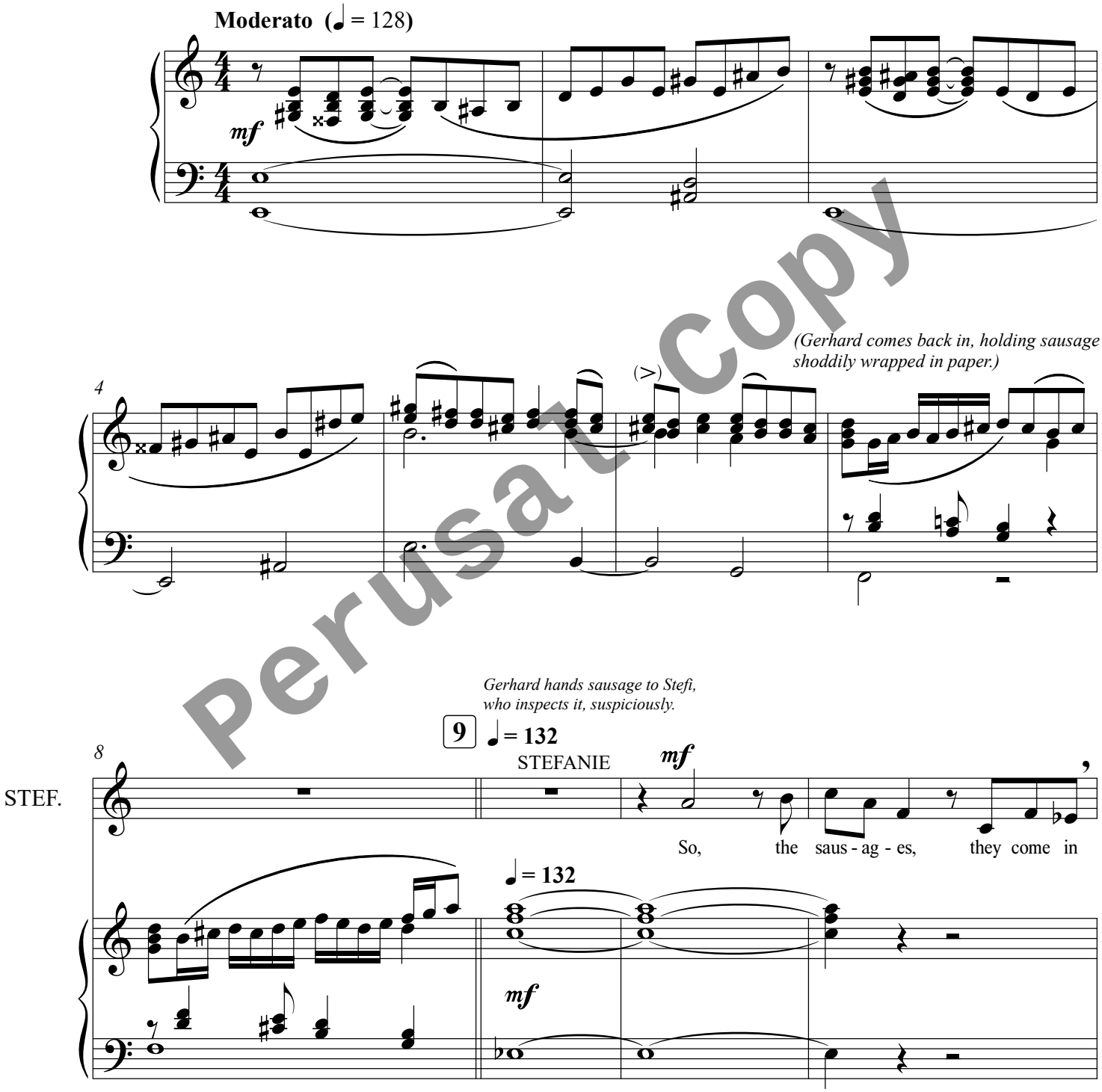
[Duration :18]

3. The Sausage



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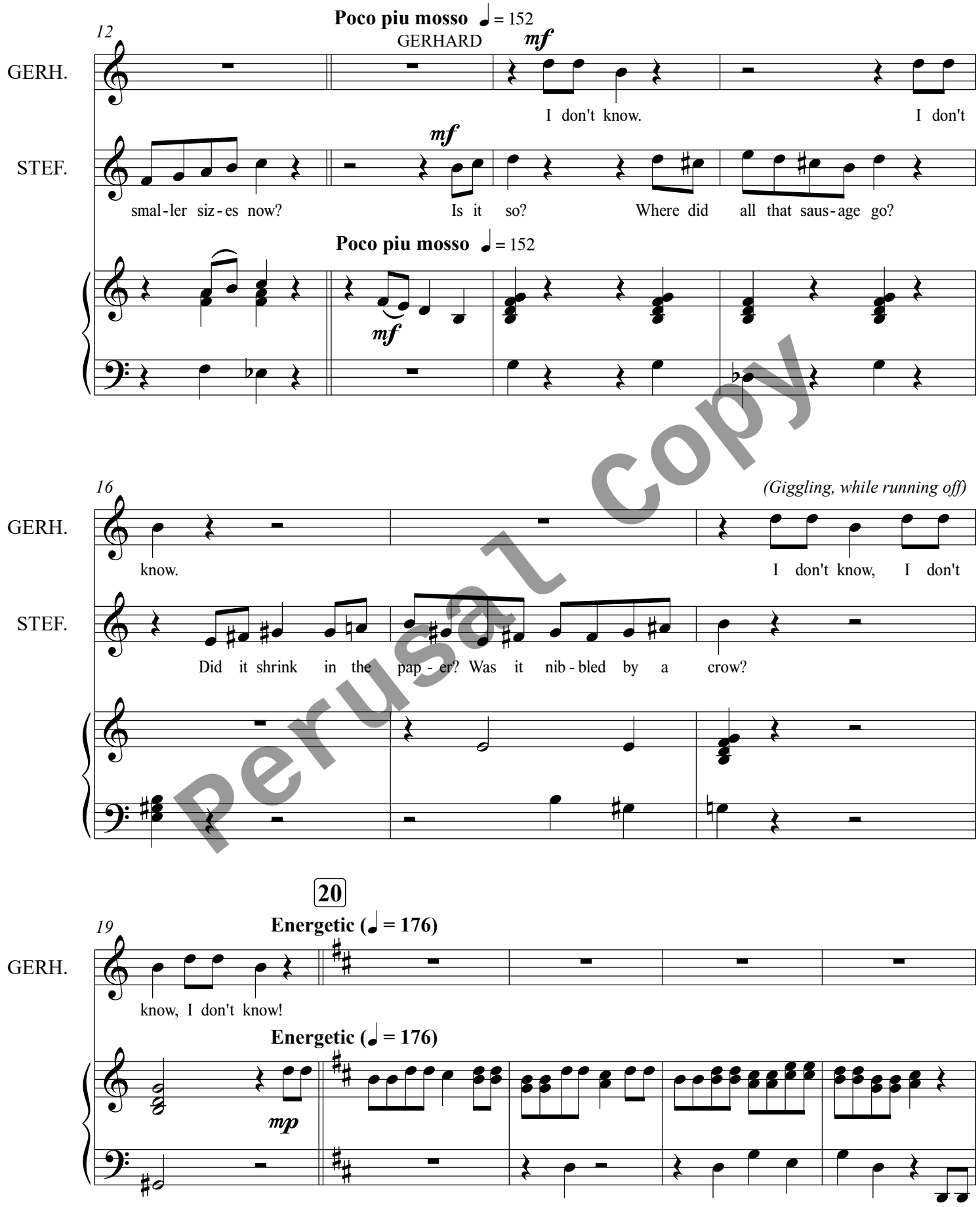

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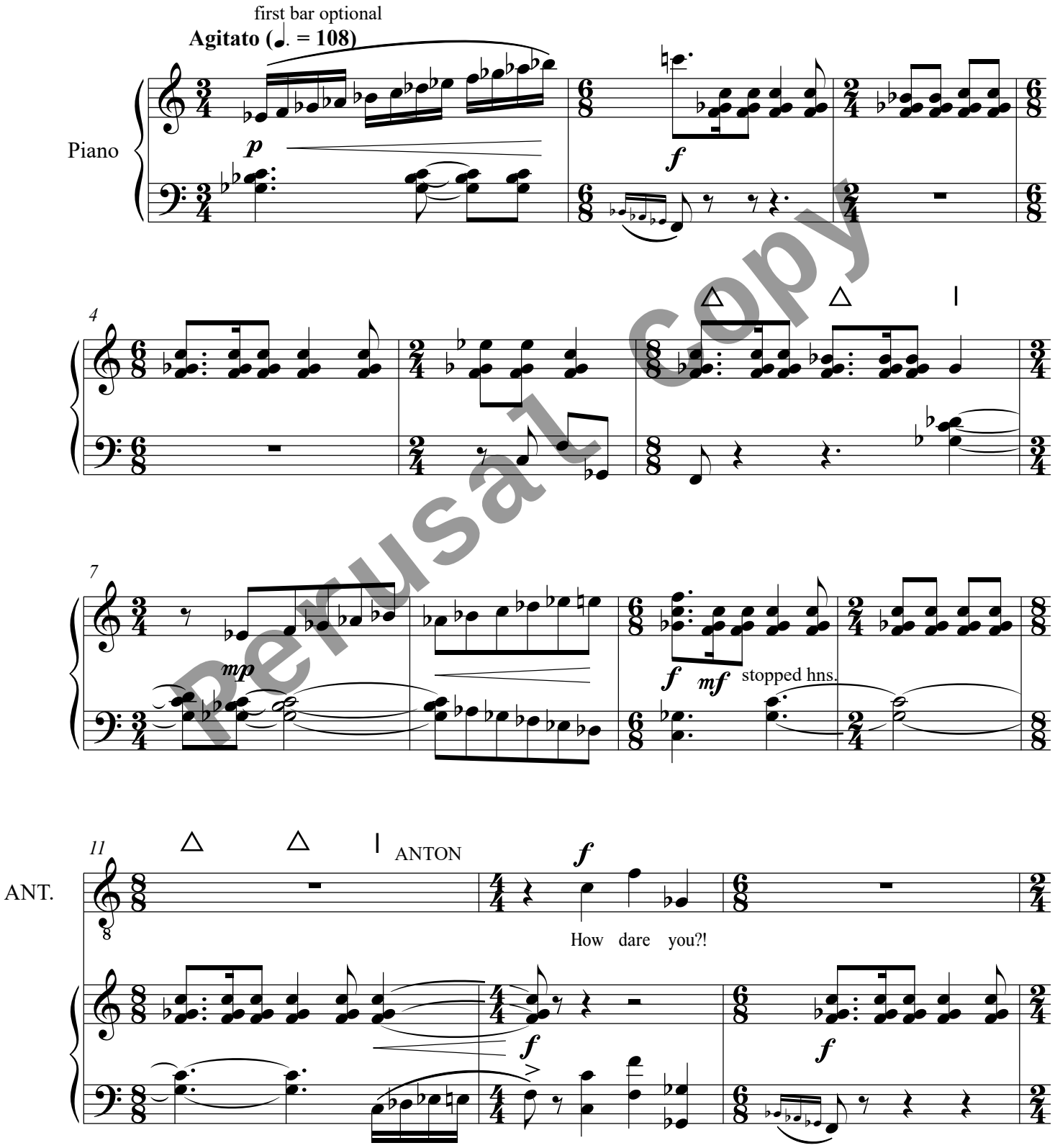
Perusal Copy

[Duration 1:40]

Schmid and his employees run outside to see what happened. A young Hitler Youth boy has thrown a rock through a shop window, and a woman stands next to her shop, crying. Schmid confronts the boy, and some other Hitler Youth friends run off to get a policeman. Gerhard Kannitzer is one of the people who witness the scene.

4. Shattered Glass



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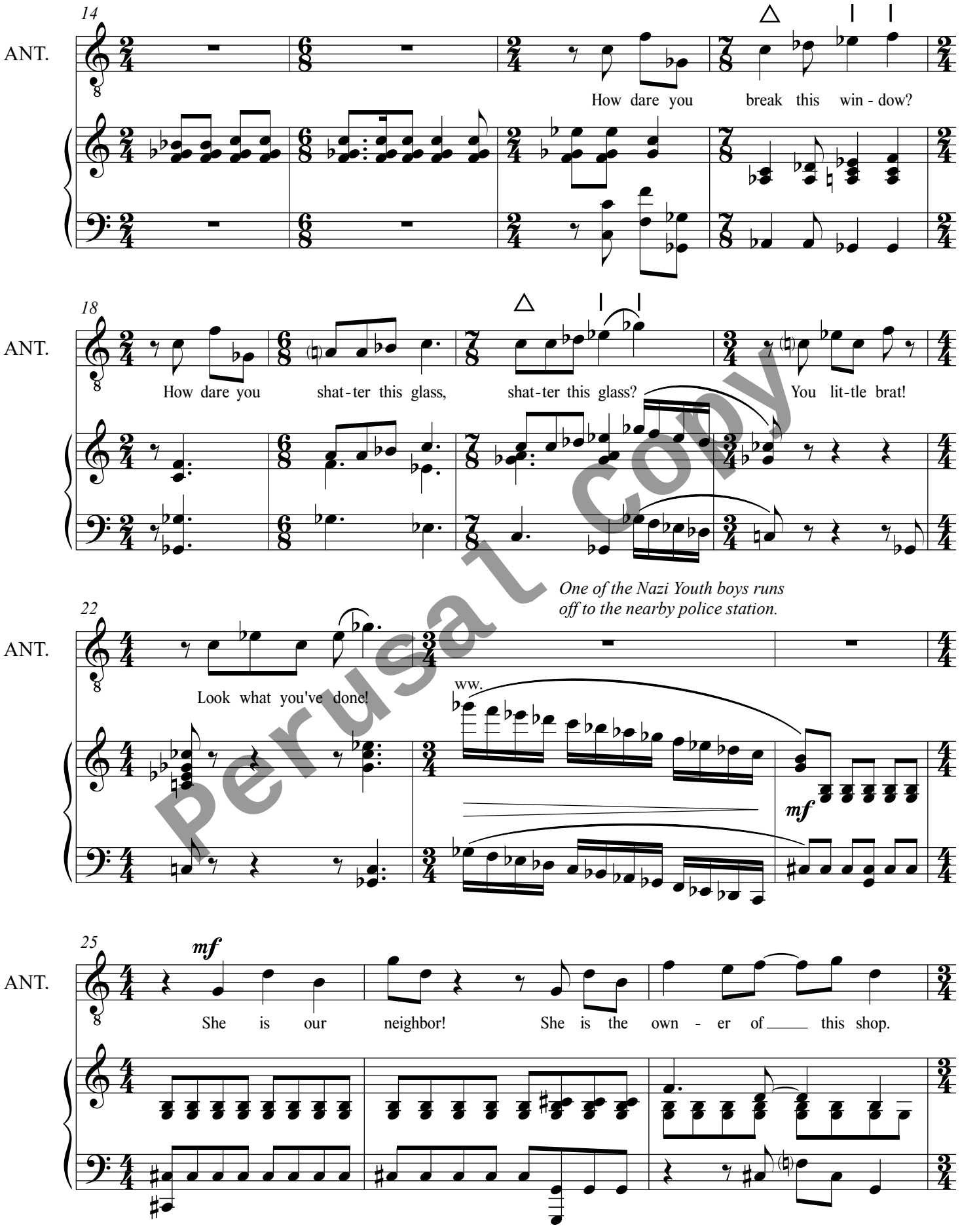

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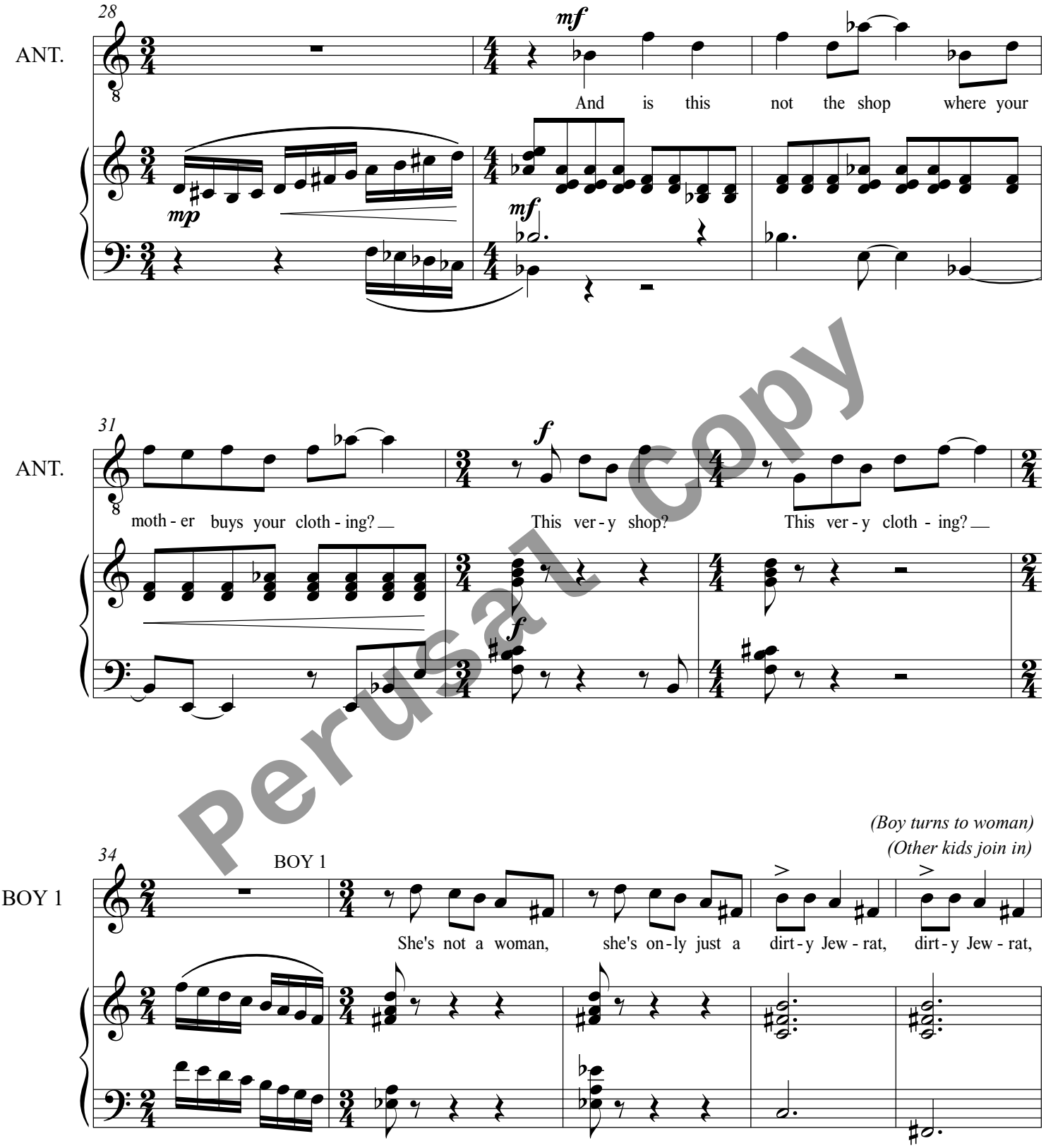

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A policeman arrives, wearing an Austrian policman's uniform but with a swastika arm band. He is already brandishing his sword.

39

// **Poco meno mosso (♩ = 116)**

BOY 1: dirt - y Jew - rat!

(slaps boy's ear) *Boy looks stunned for a moment, then runs off.* //

ANT.

POLICEMAN //

POL.: *f*

police whistle You hit this child!

Poco meno mosso (♩ = 116)

ff *f*

43

ANT.: ANTON *f*

Of course not! No child of mine would do such a

POL.

This is - n't your child!

46

ANT.: *mf* *cresc.*

ter-rib-ble thing! Just look at this brok-en win-dow, and this poor, dear wo-man!

mf

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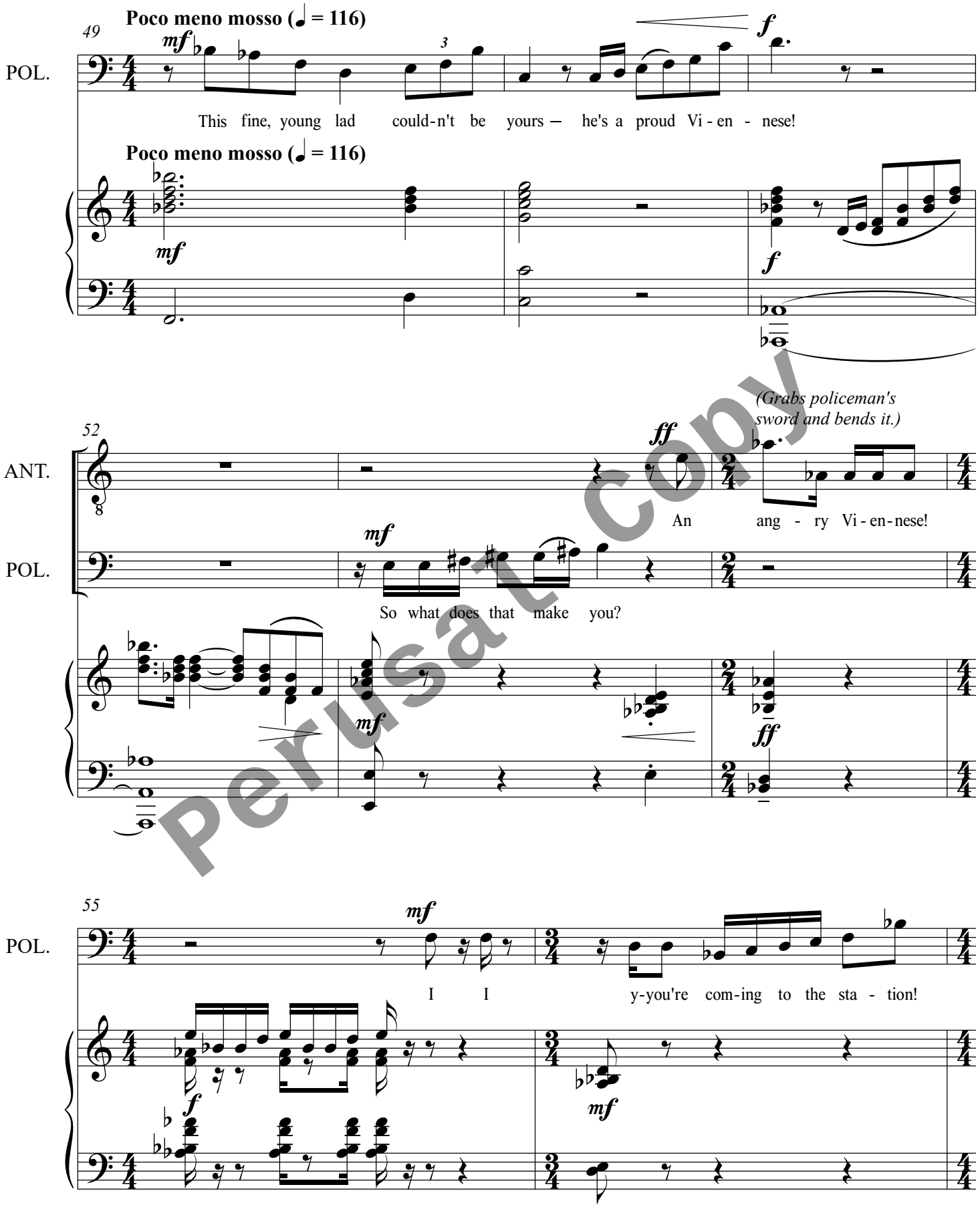

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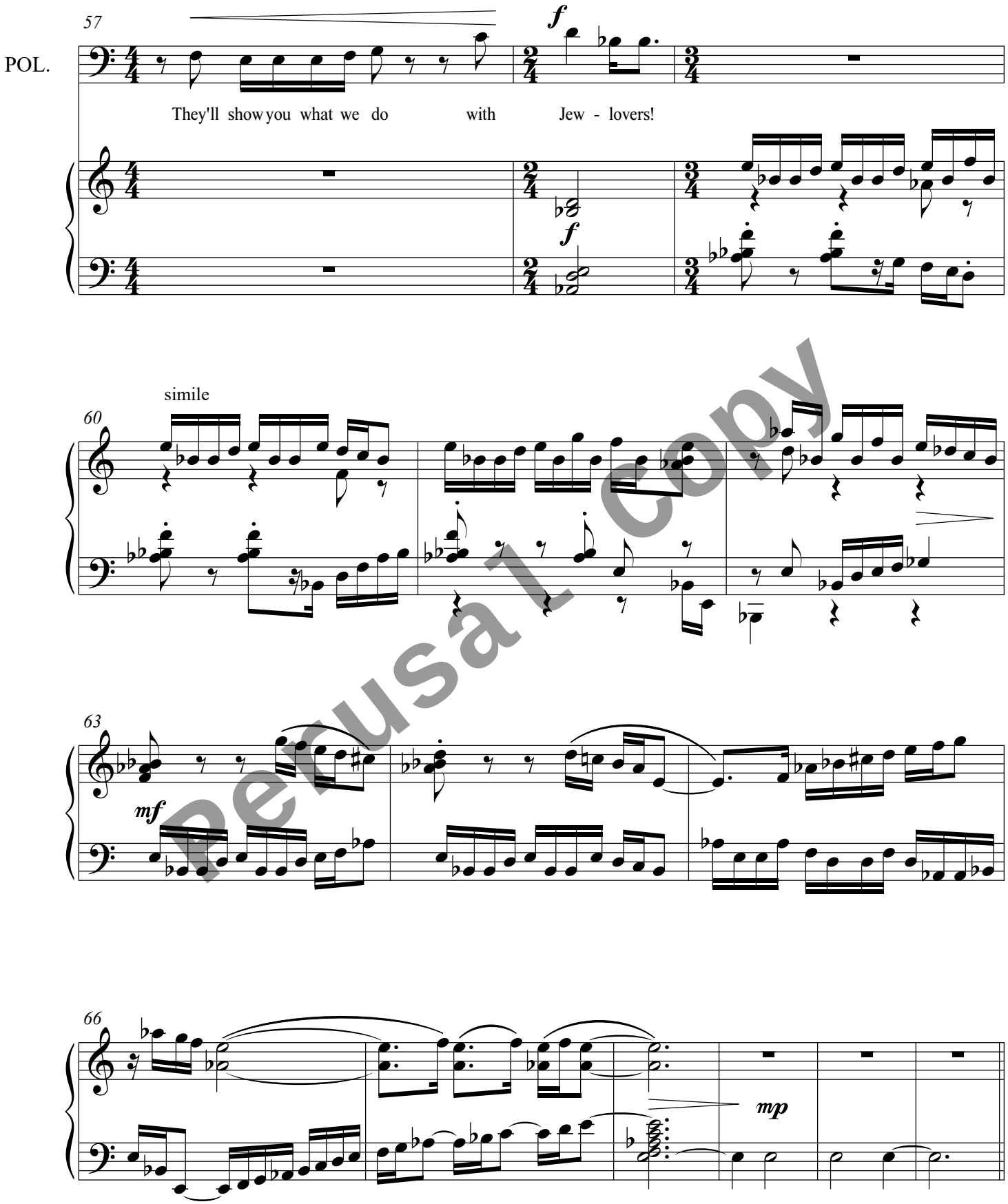

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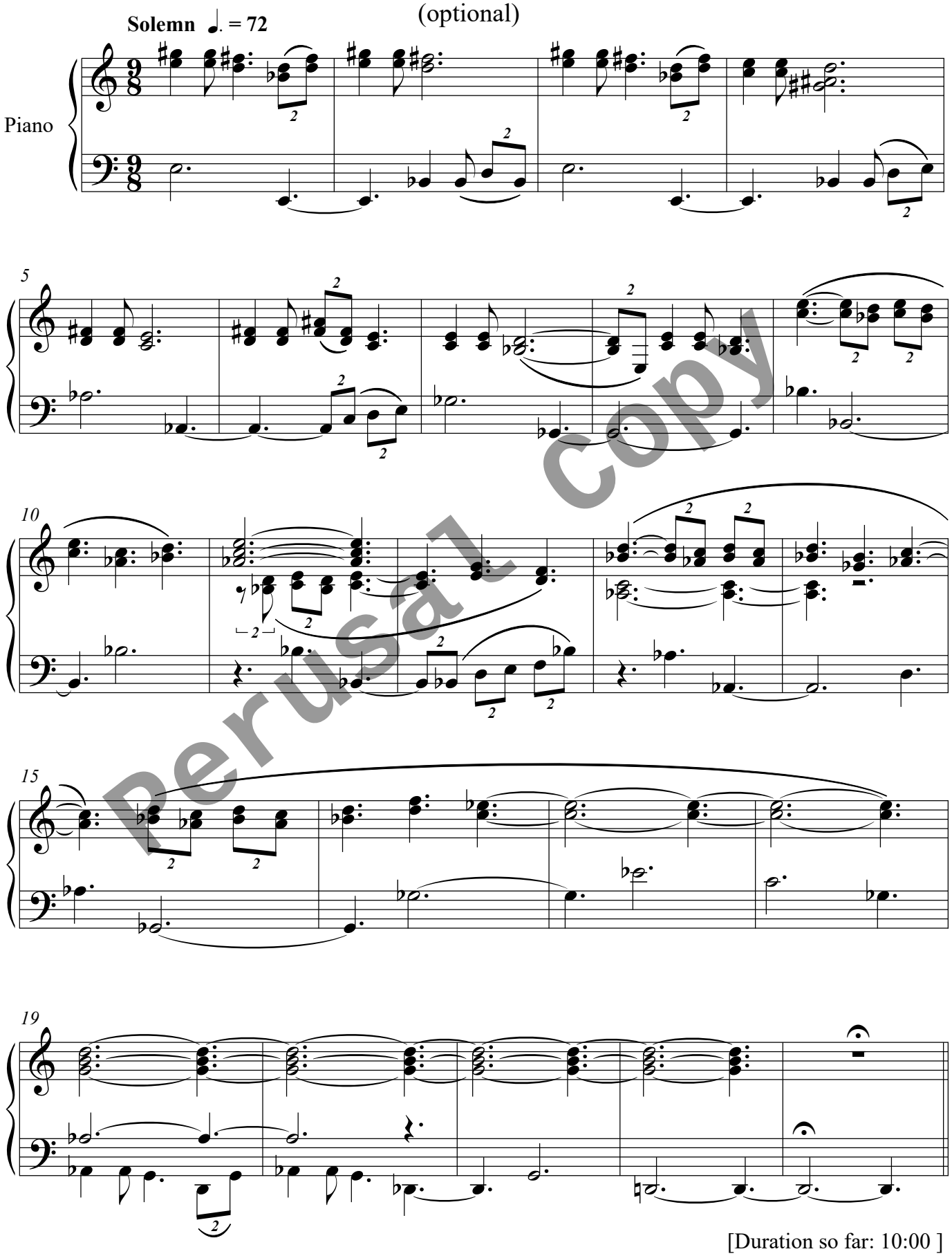
[Duration :58]

4.5 Interlude

(optional)



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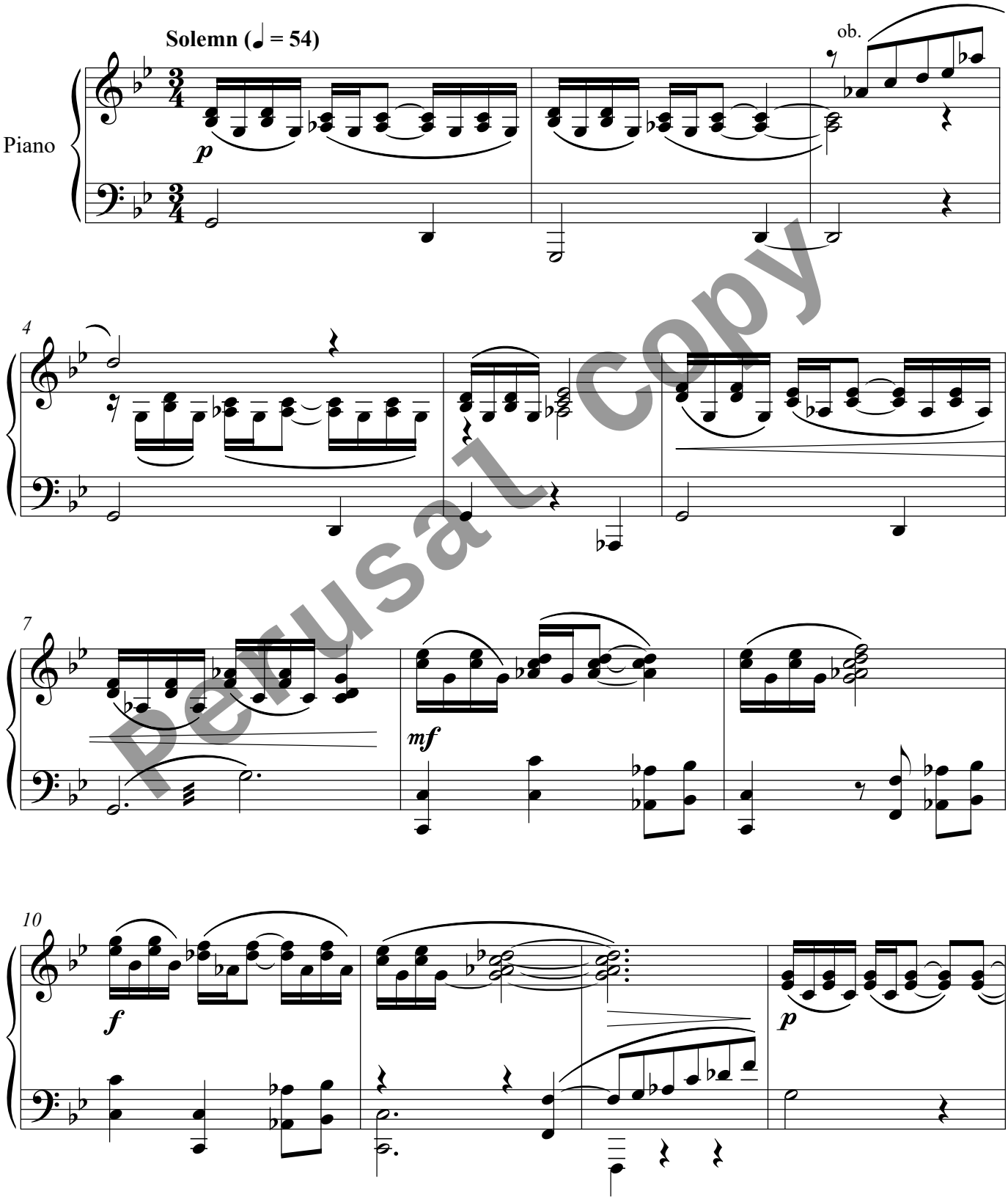
[Duration so far: 10:00]

[Duration: 3:00]

SCENE II

Setting: The Schmids' apartment.
Stefi makes dinner, Gertha helps.

5. Home for Dinner



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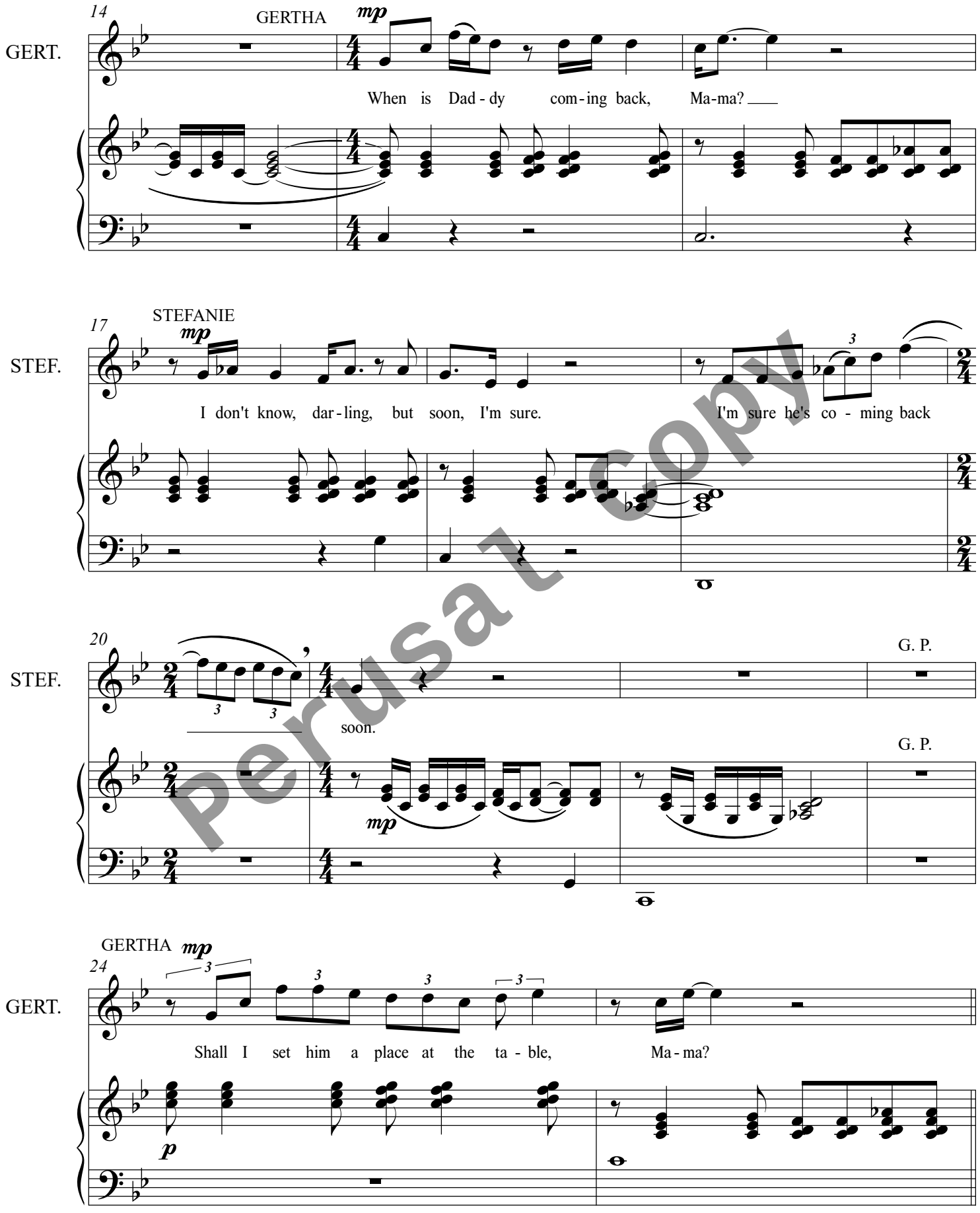

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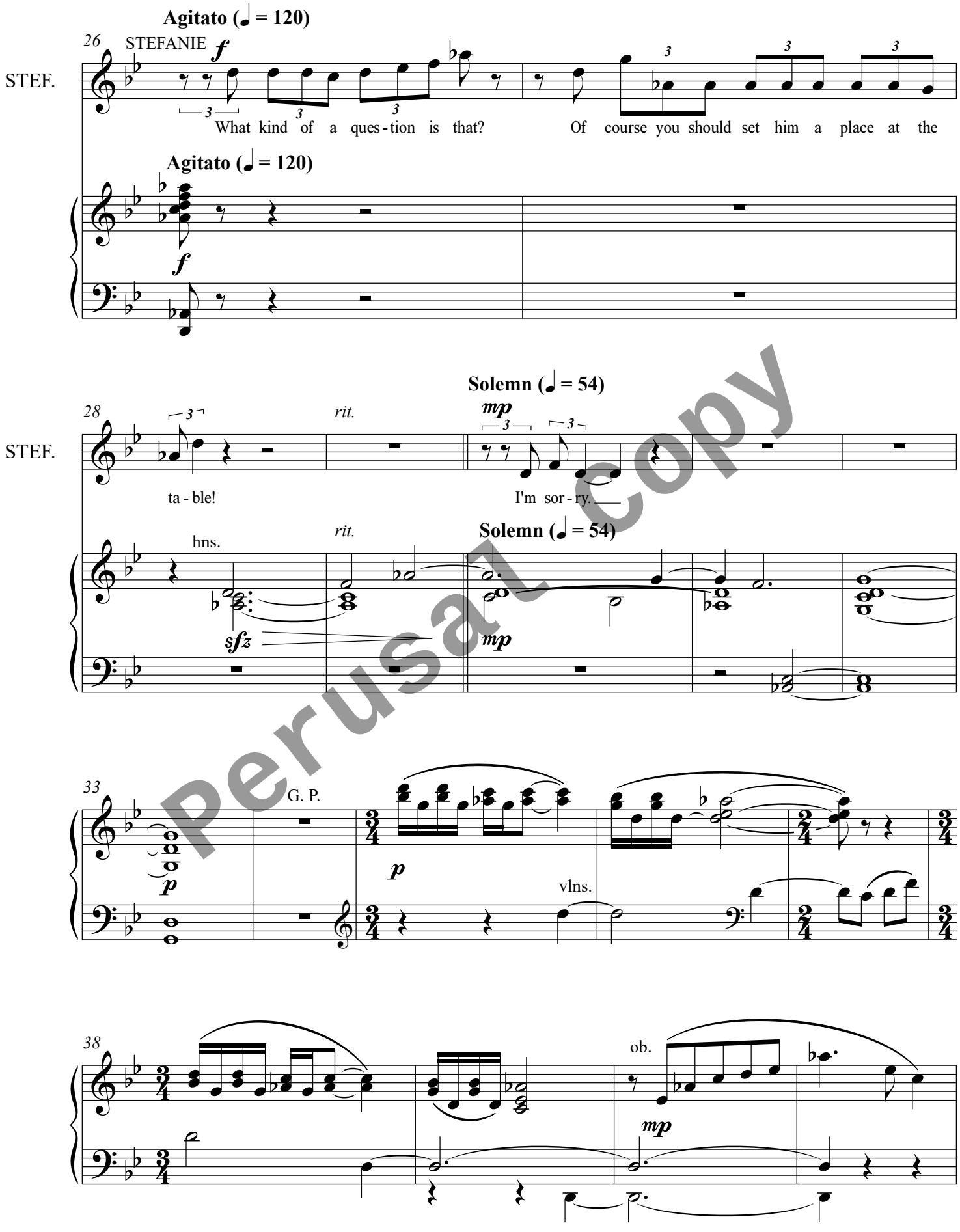

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Apt. door opens, and Toni enters.
He's been beaten up by the police.

Agitato (♩ = 126)

42 STEFANIE

STEF. *f* Toni! *mf* Are you al - right?

Agitato (♩ = 126)

ww. *f* *mf*

Schmid winces in pain as Stefi puts her hands on his upper arms.

46 ANTON *mf*

ANT. I'm..... fine.

STEF.

Poco meno mosso (♩ = 112)

49 STEFANIE *f*

STEF. What did they do to you?

Poco meno mosso (♩ = 112)

f

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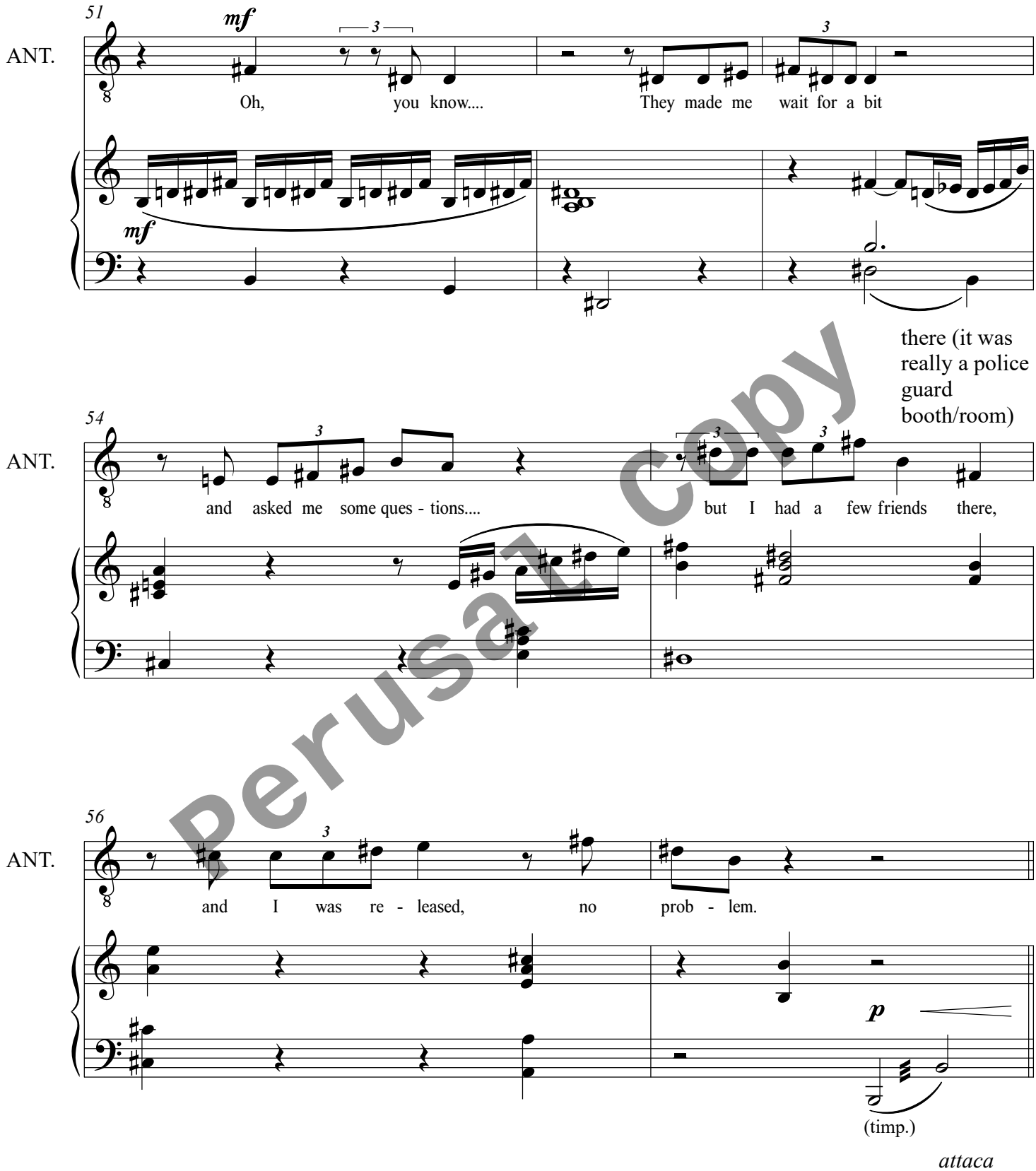

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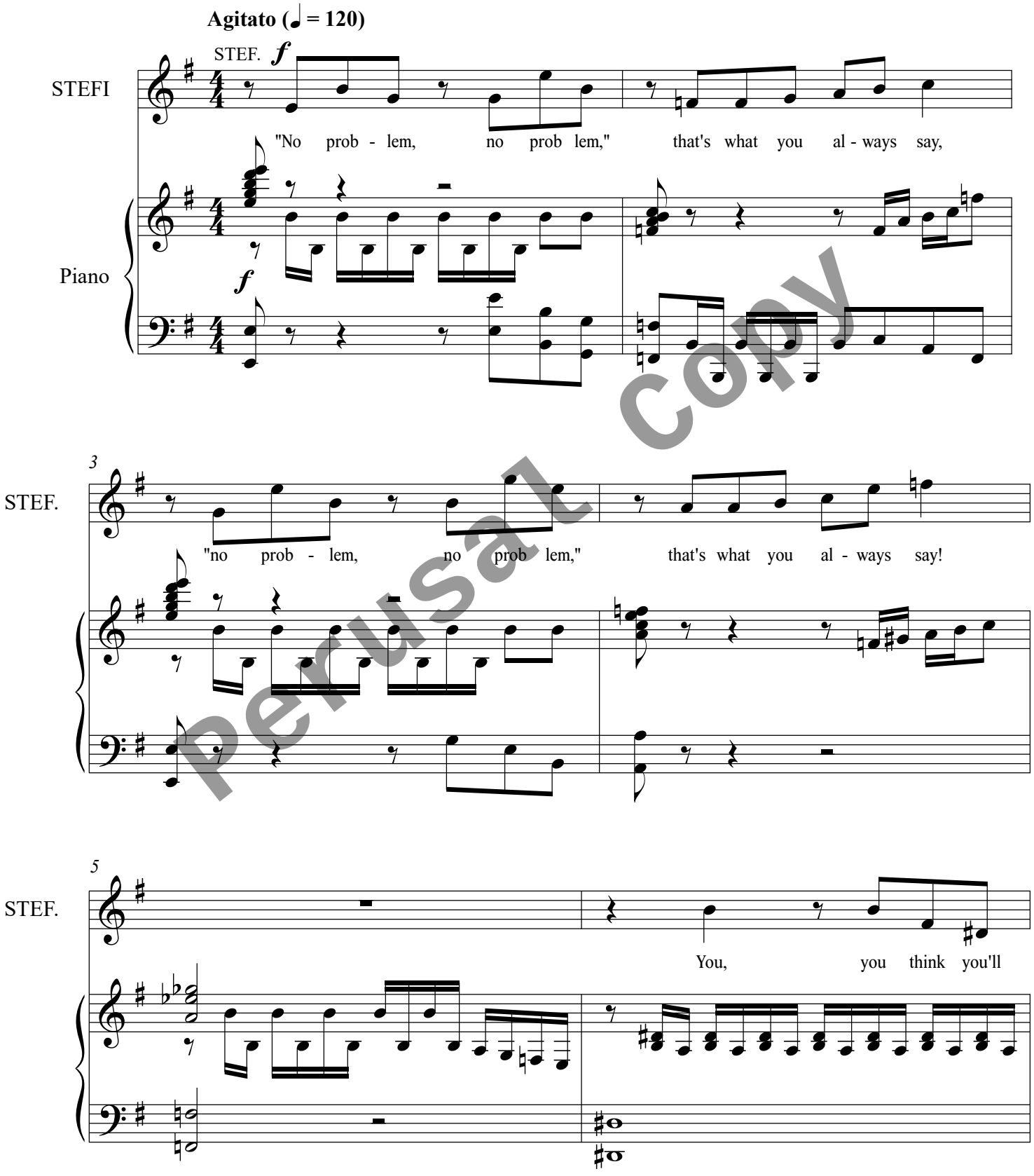
[Duration: 1:38]

6. No Problem



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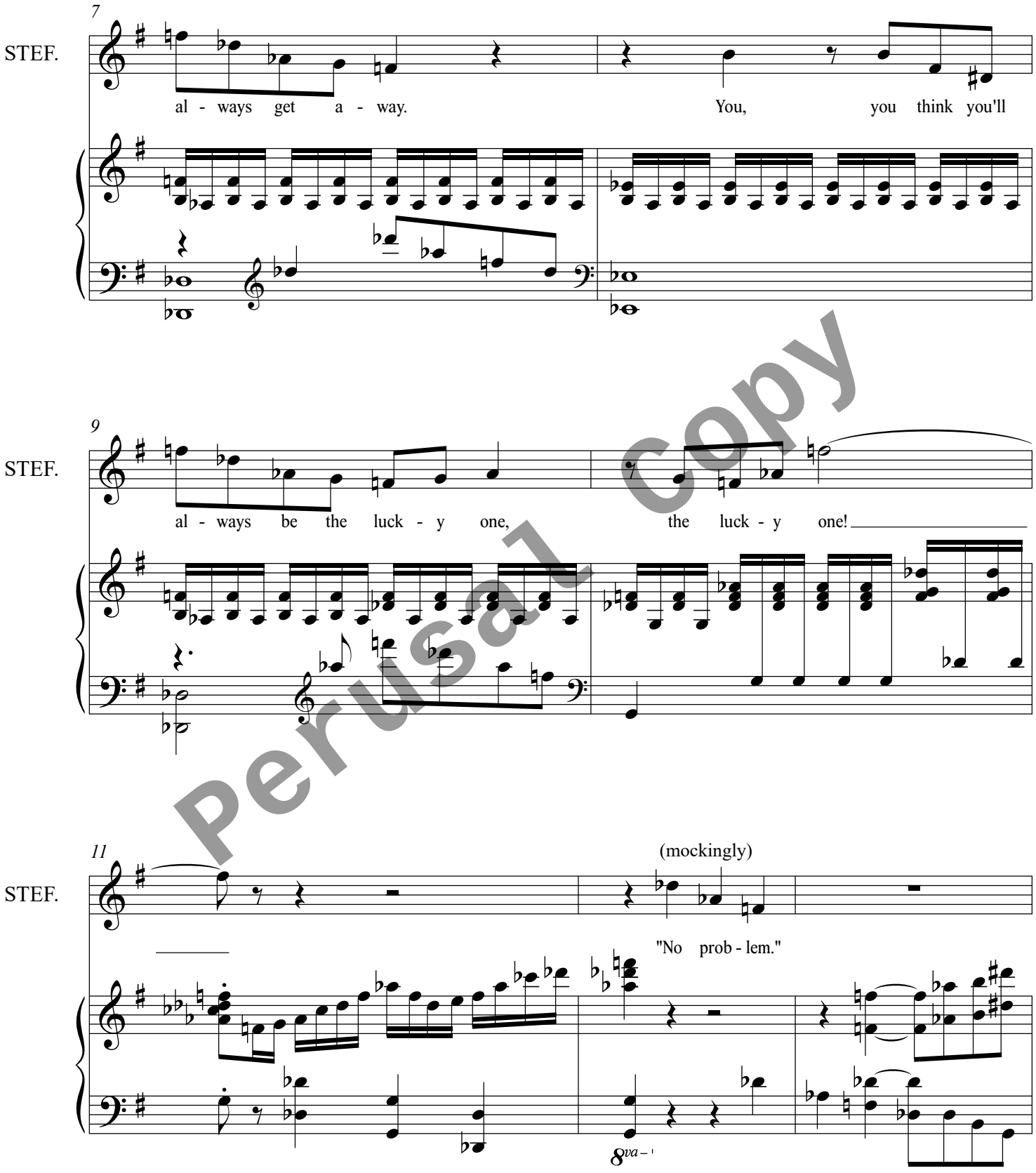

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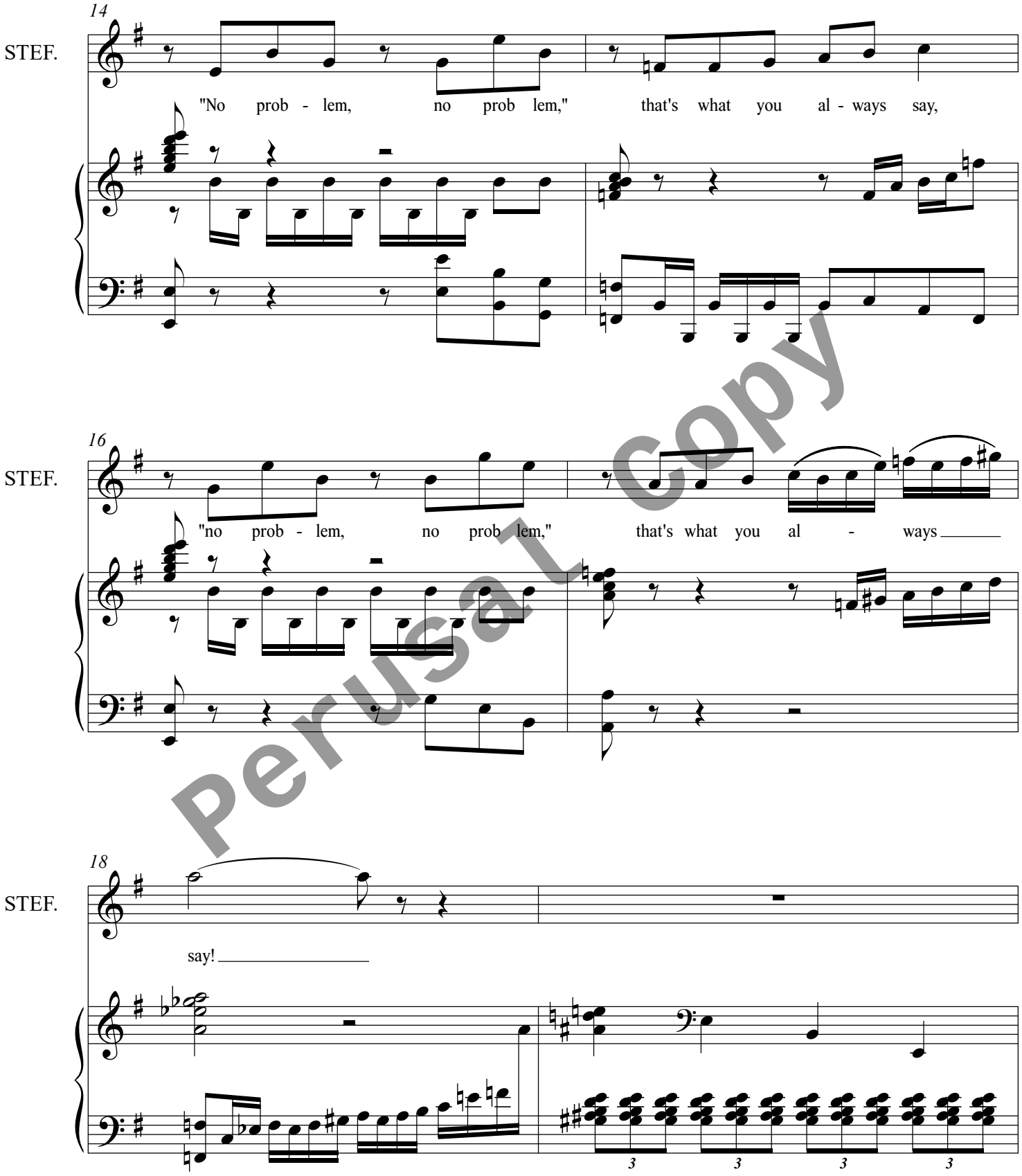

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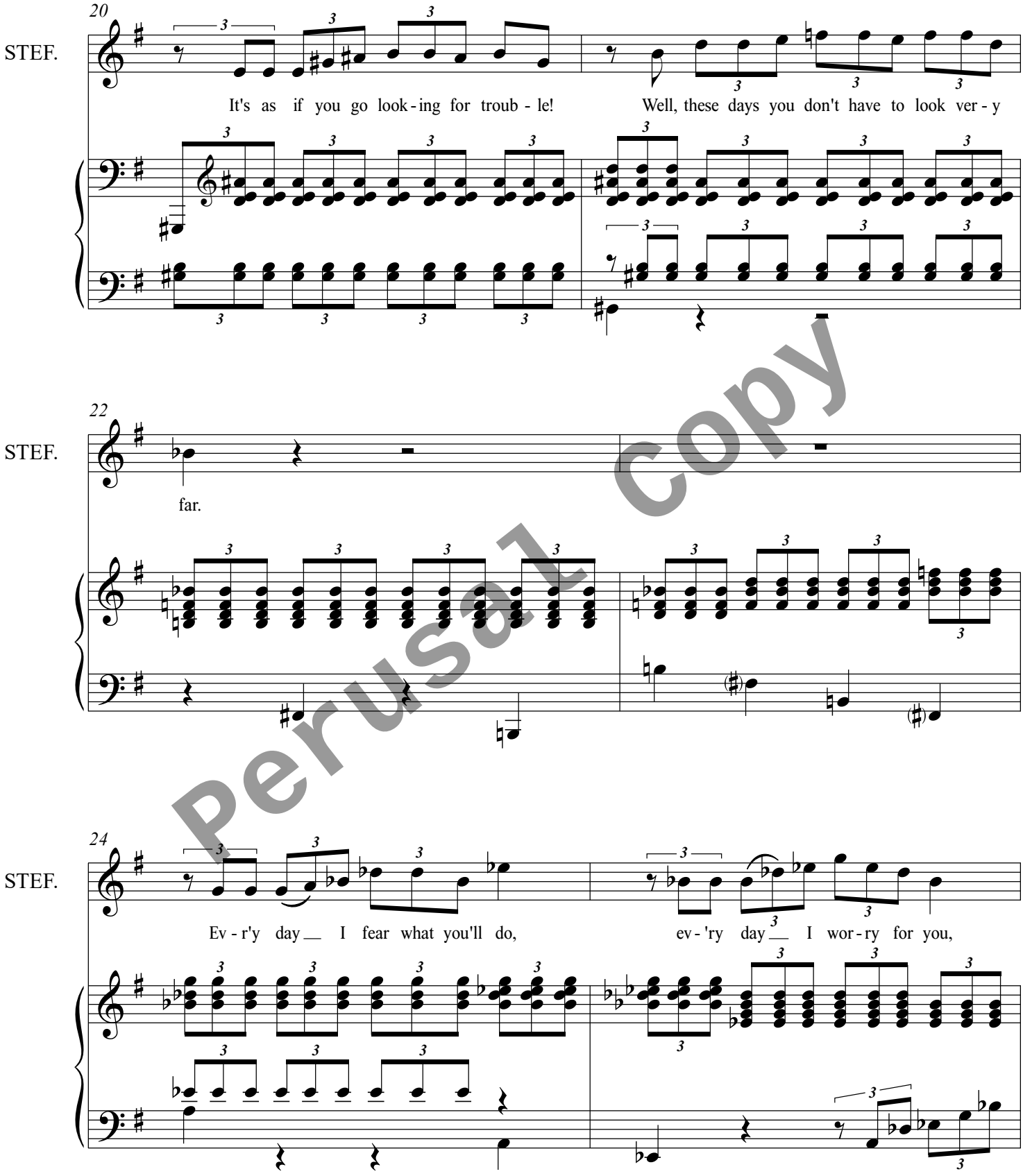

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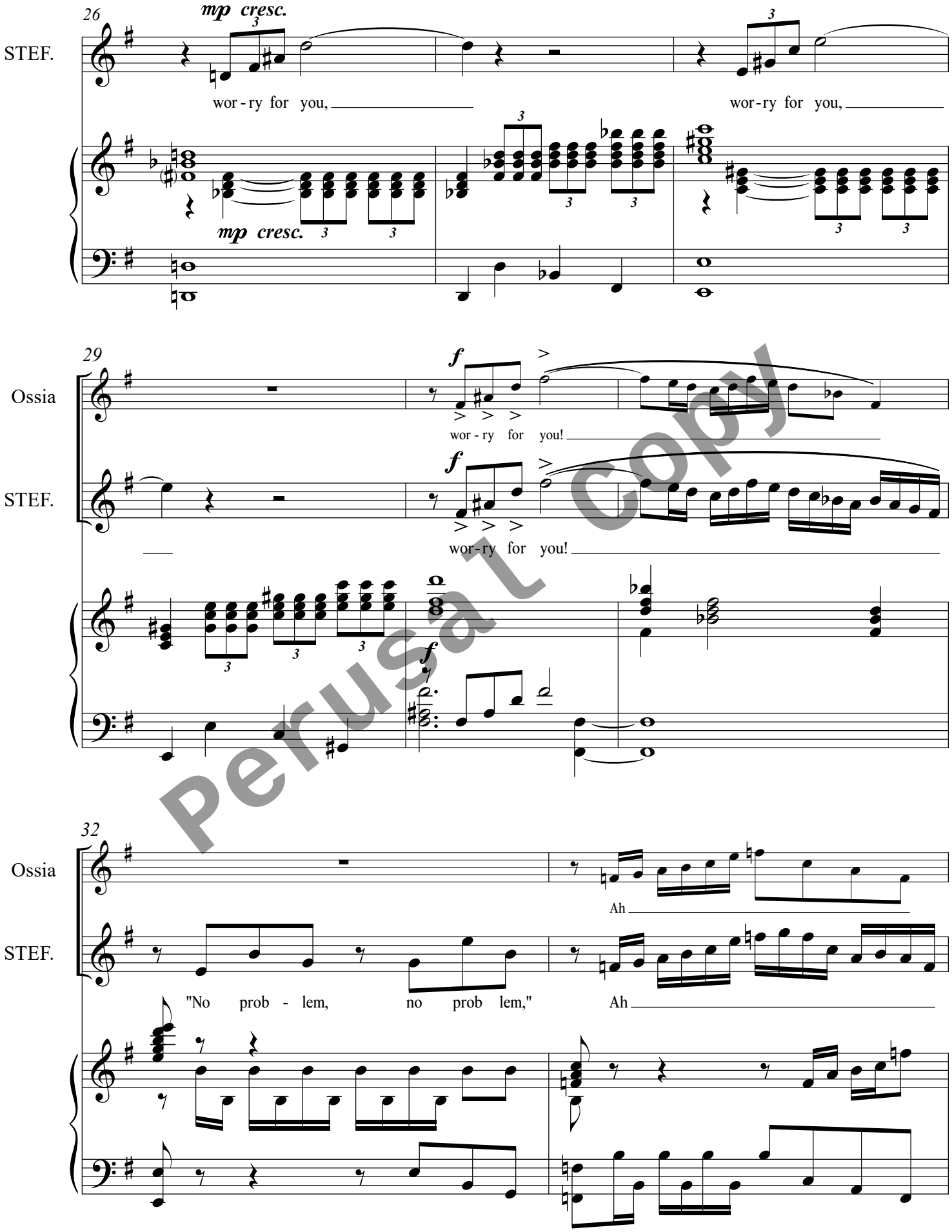

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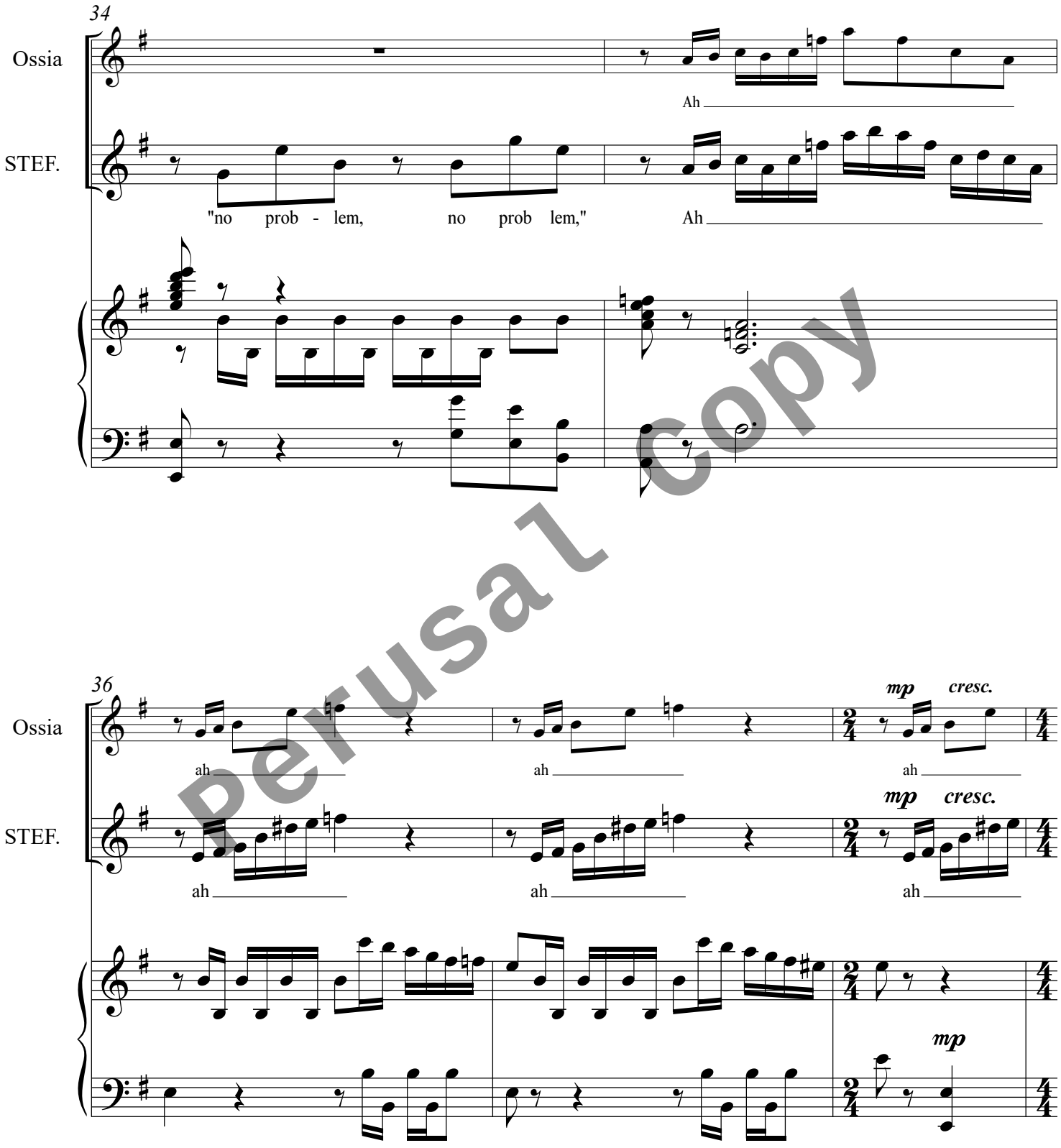

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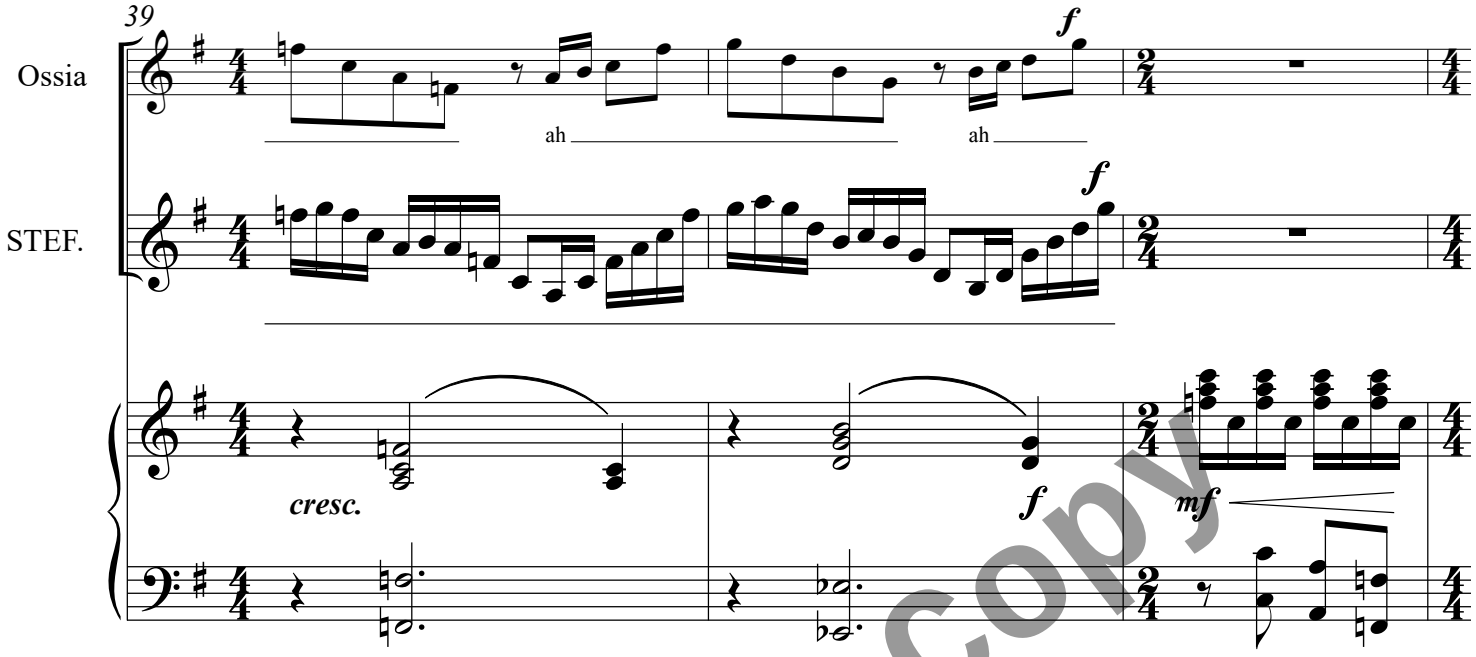

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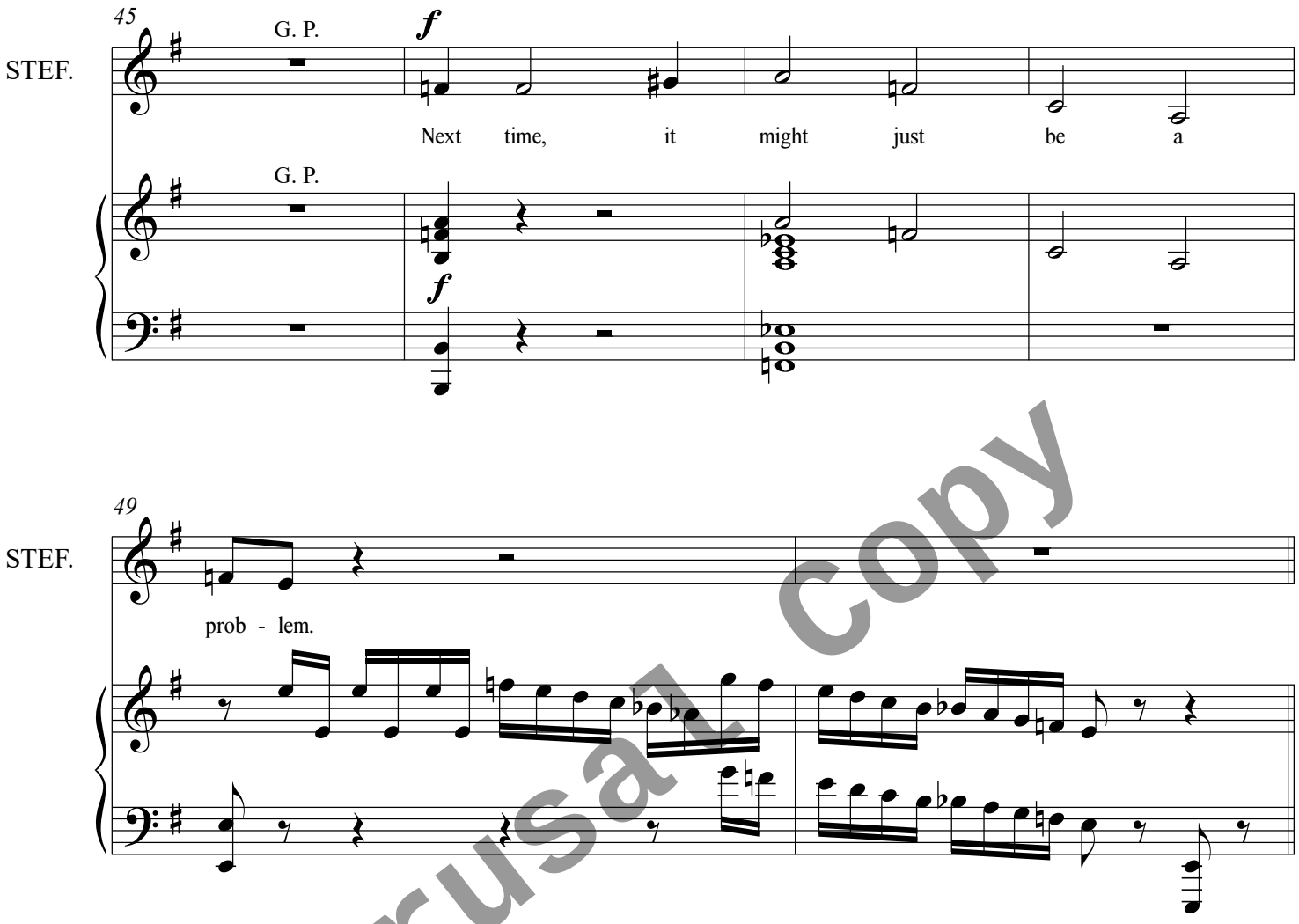

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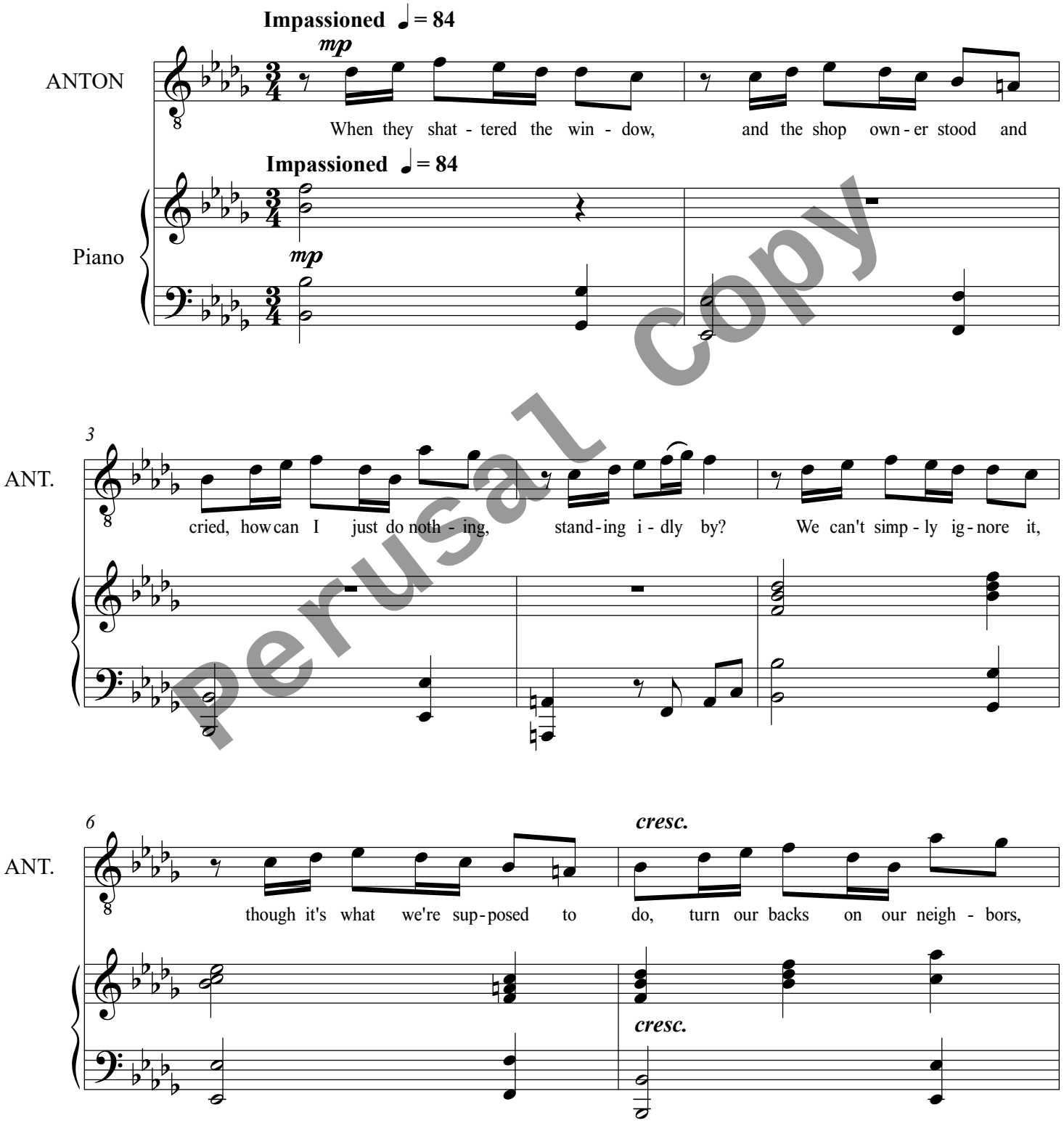
[Duration 1:48]

7. When They Shattered the Window



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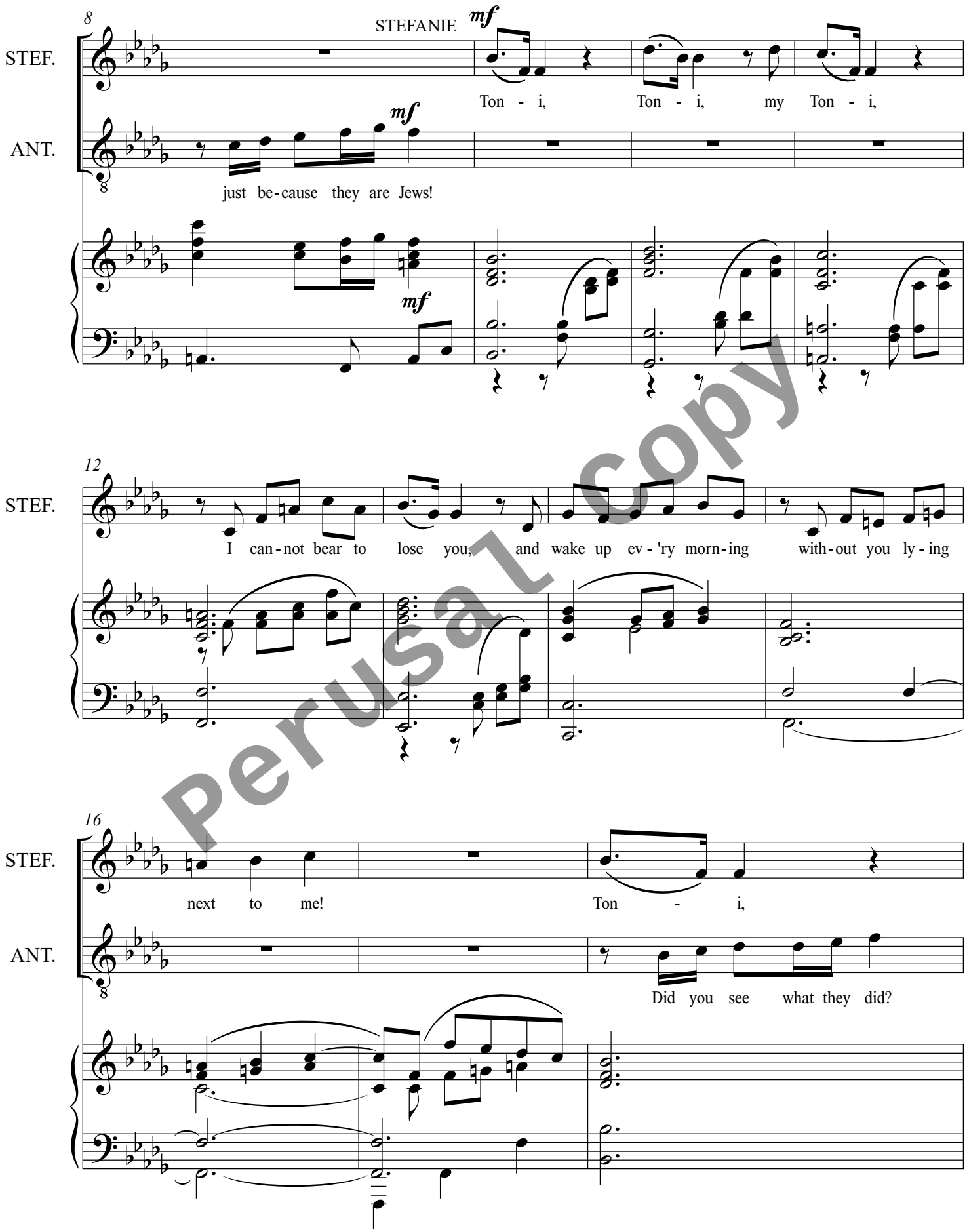

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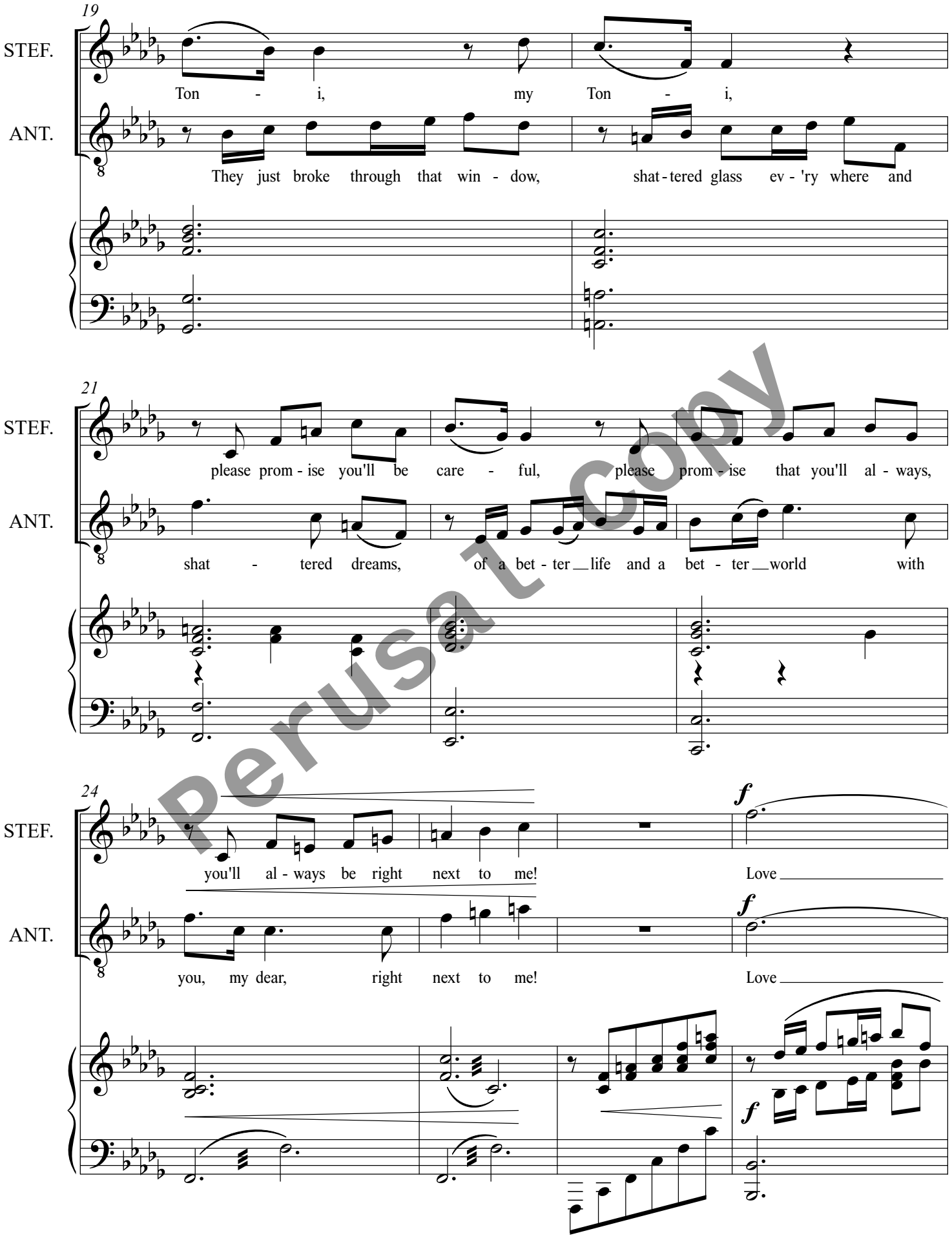

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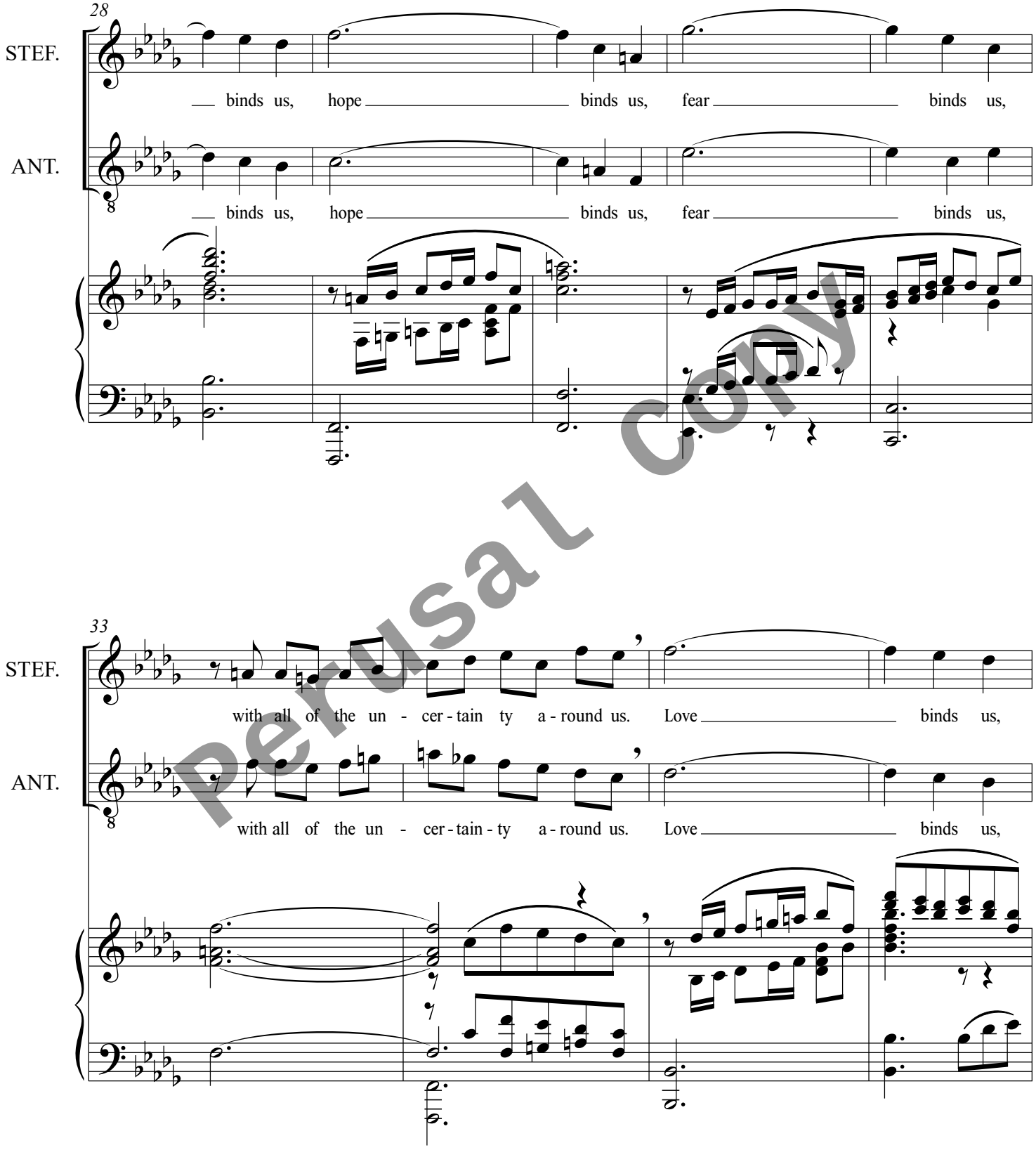

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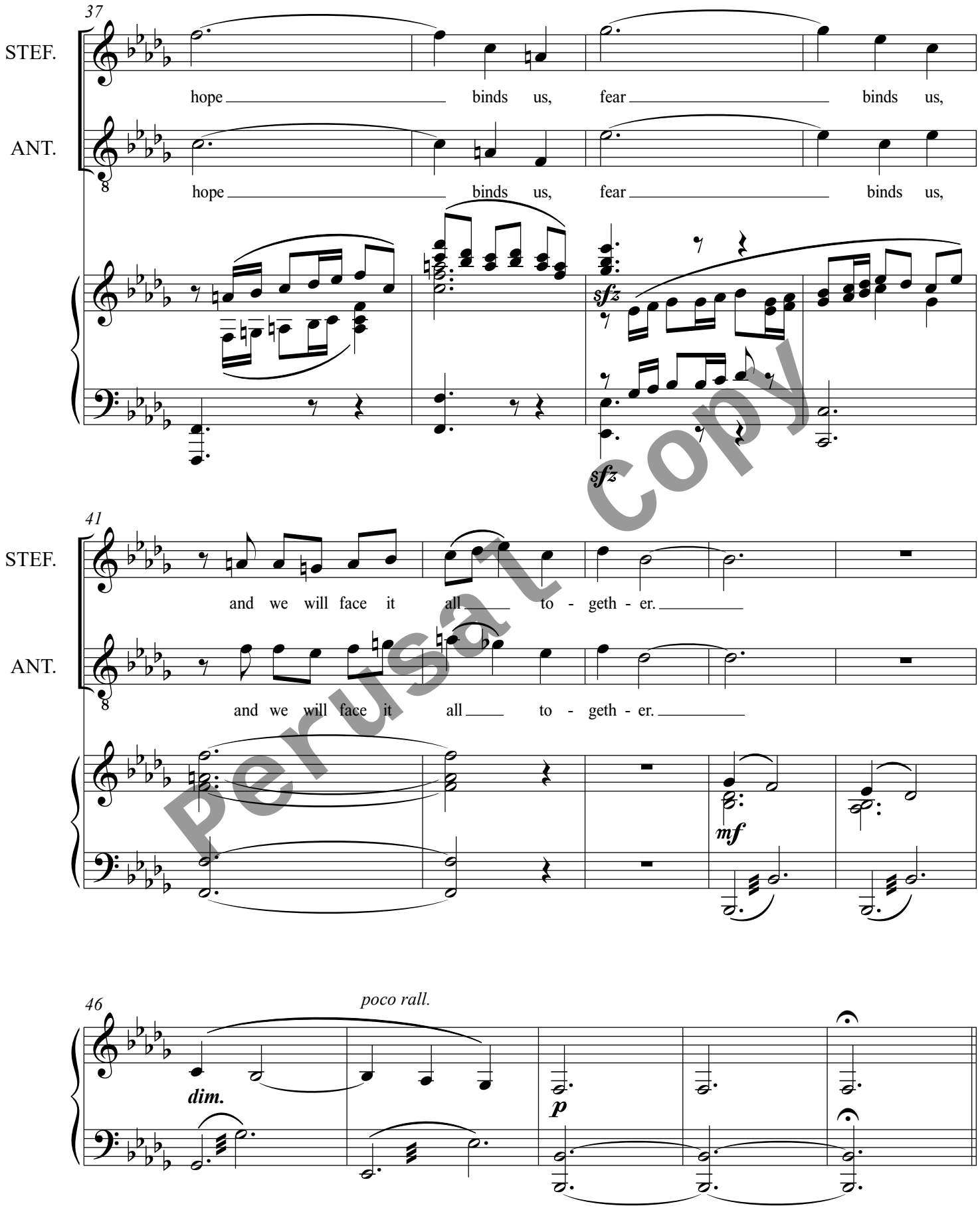

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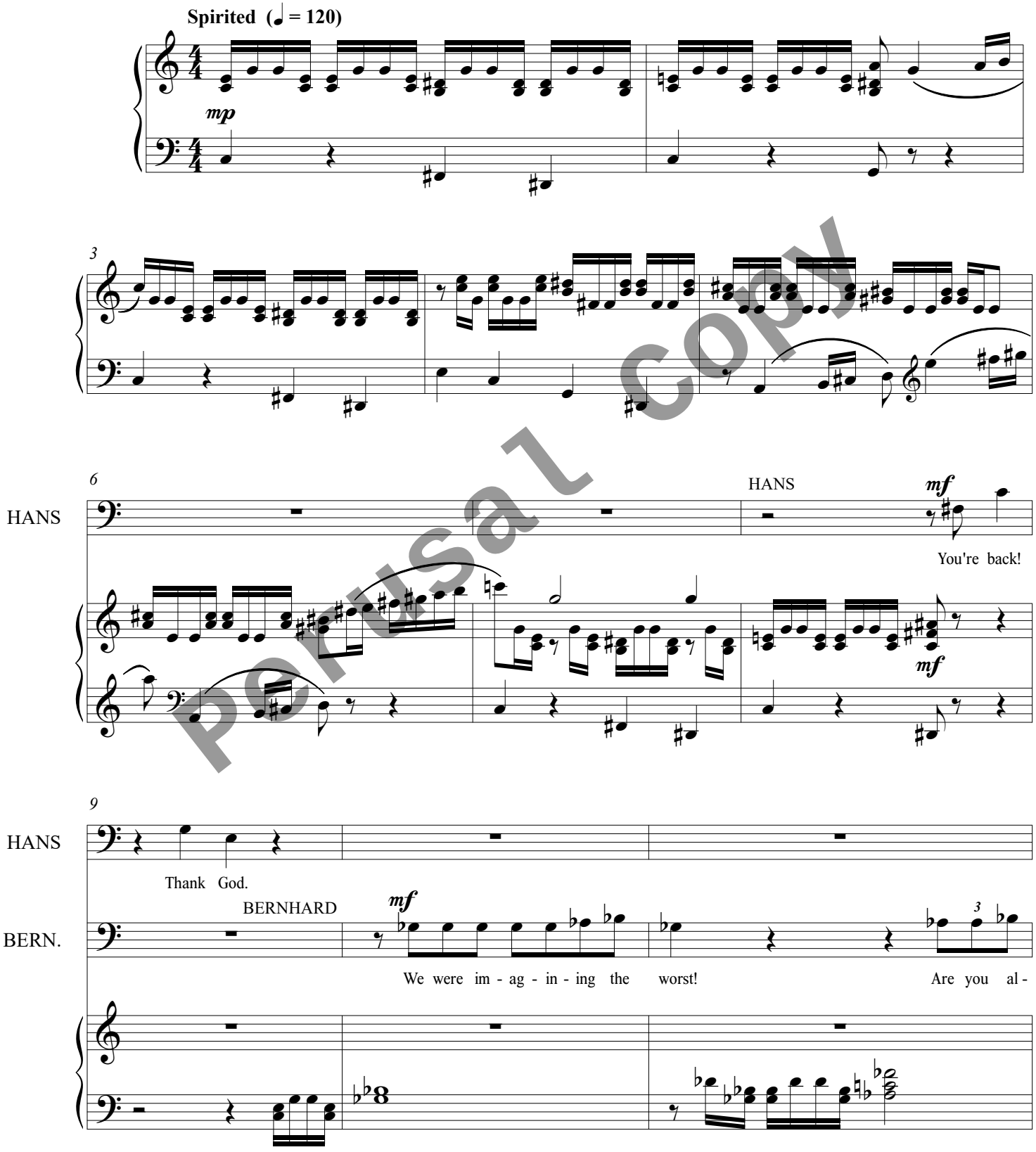
[Duration: 1:30]

SCENE III

8. At the Shop - 2



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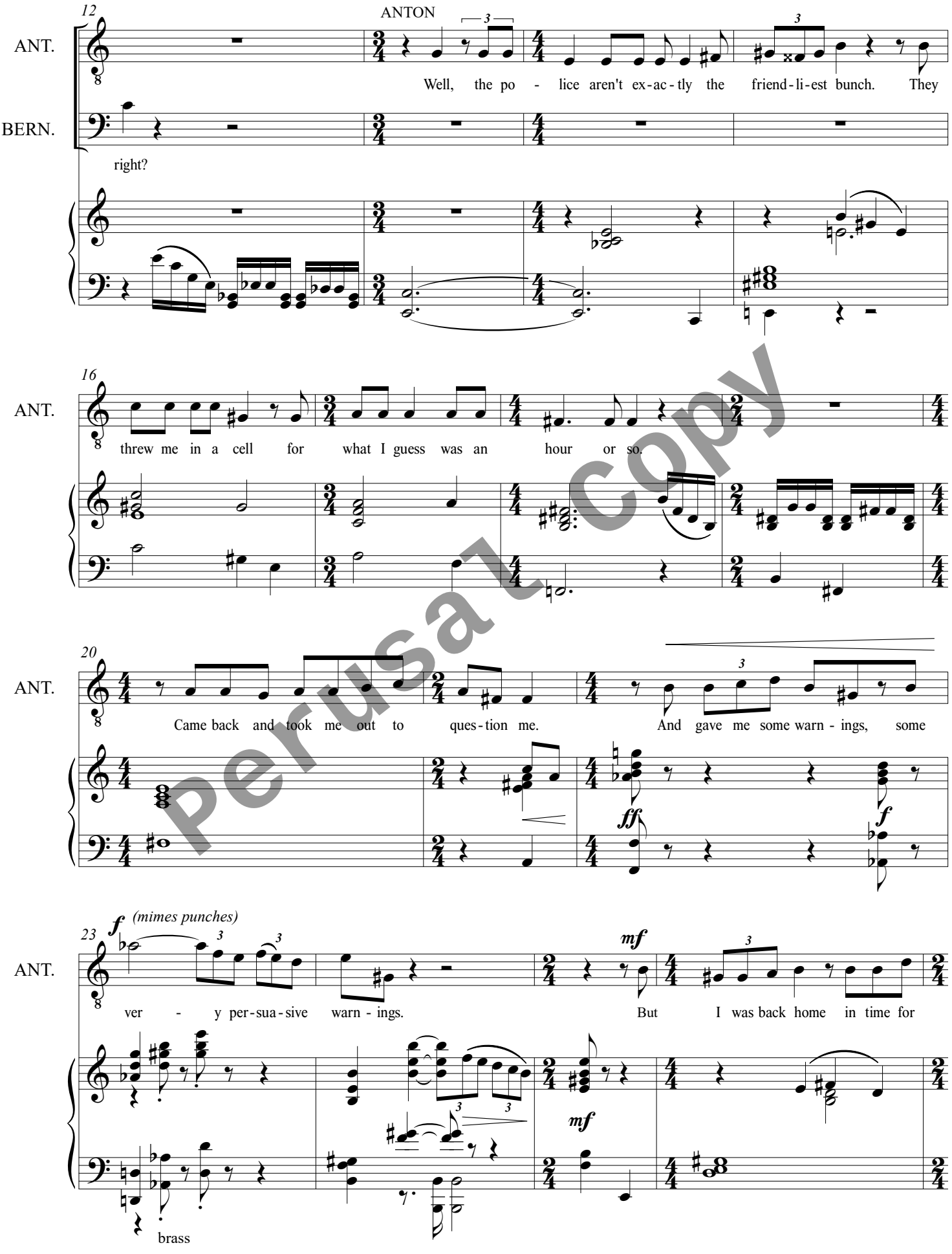

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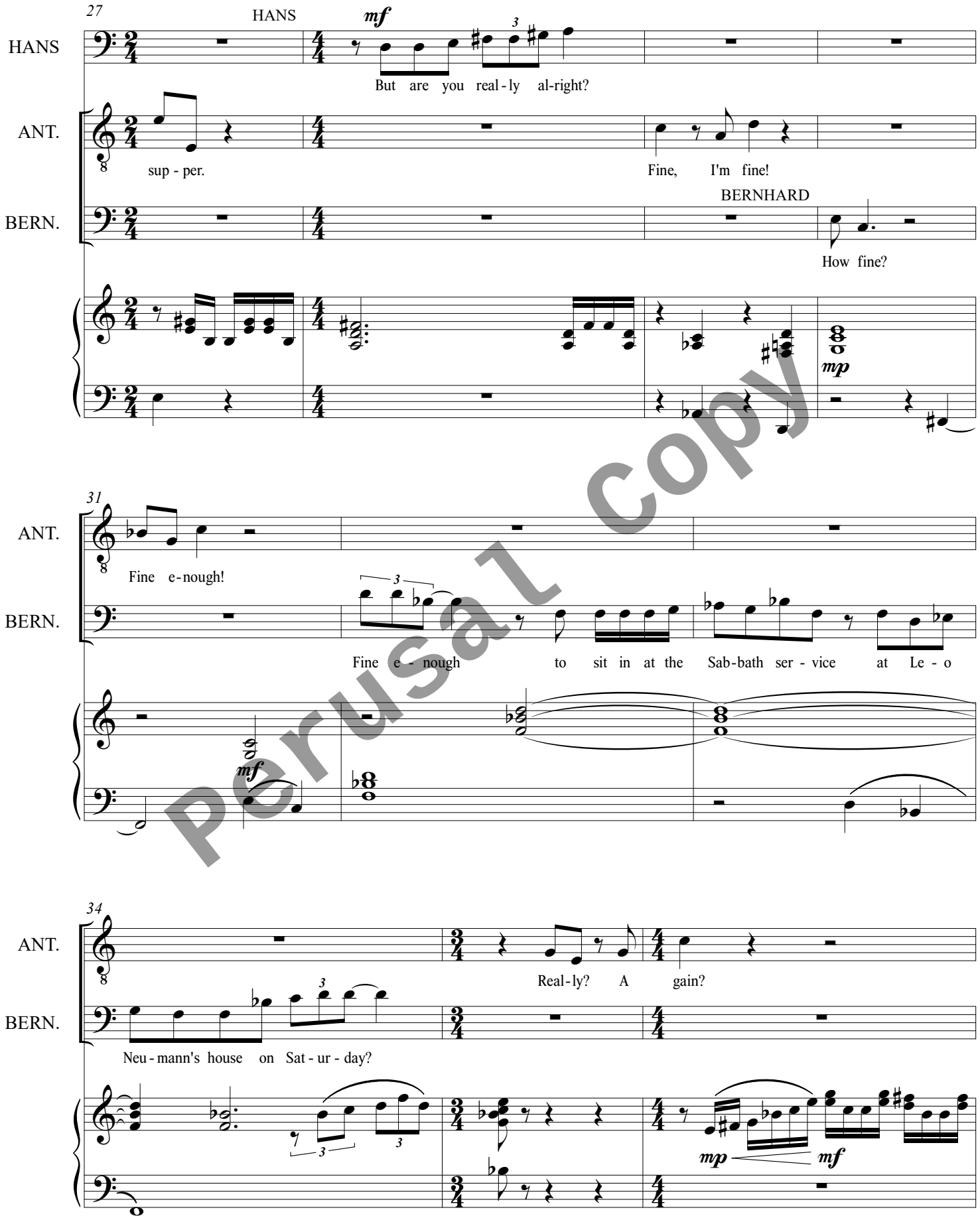

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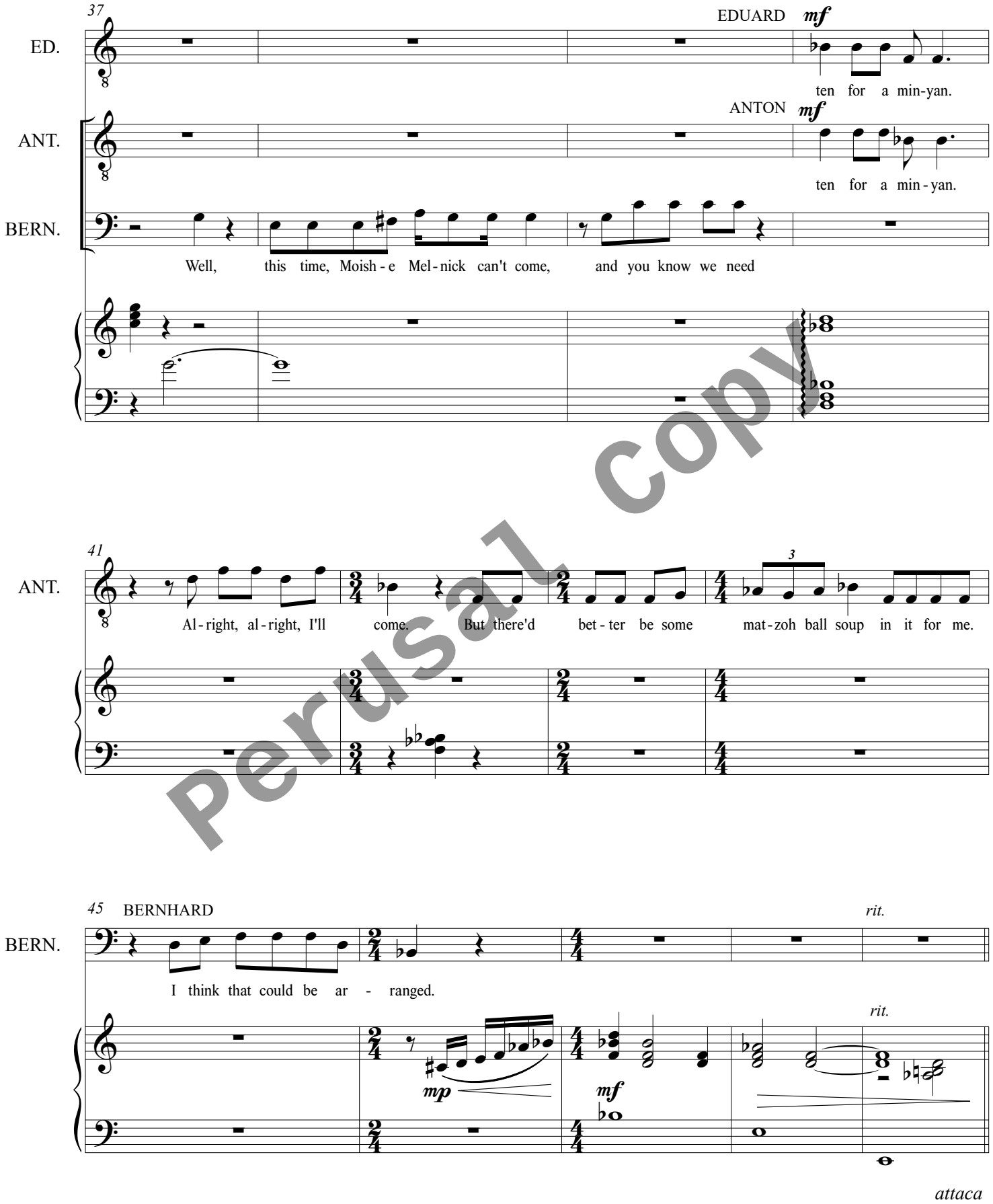
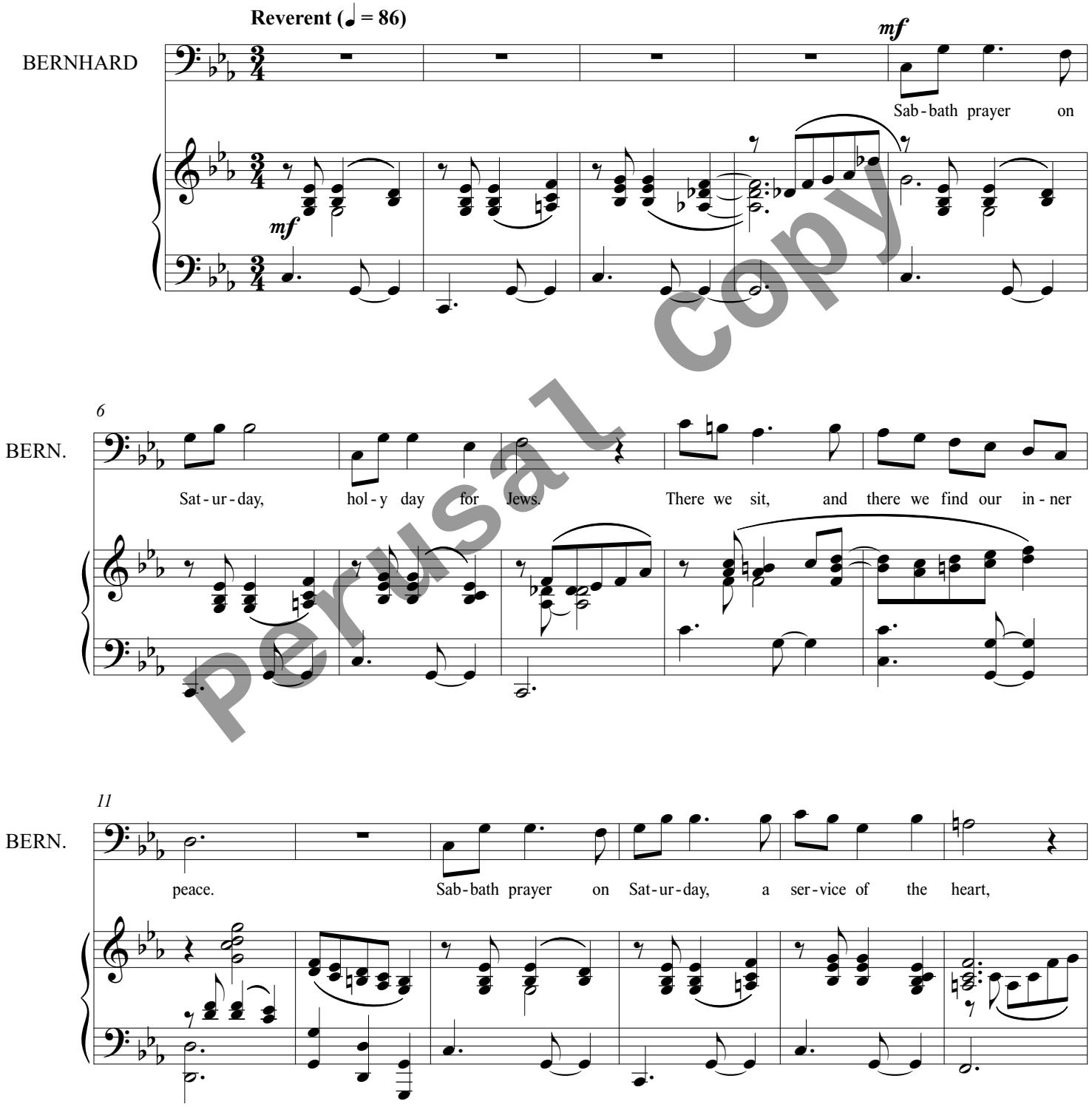


Perusal copy

[Duration: 3:03]

9. Sabbath Prayer

Note: possibly expand this into a larger group number.



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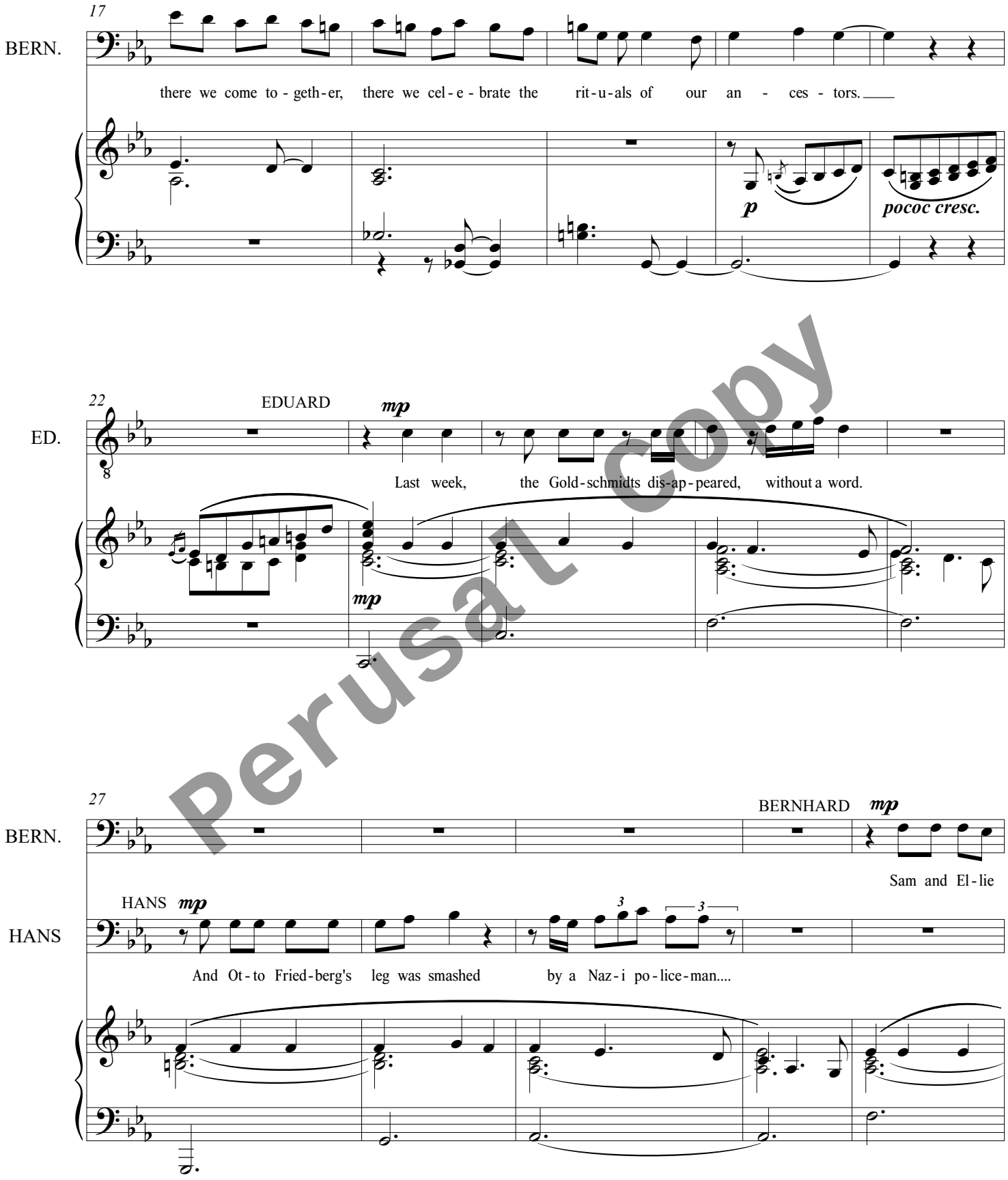

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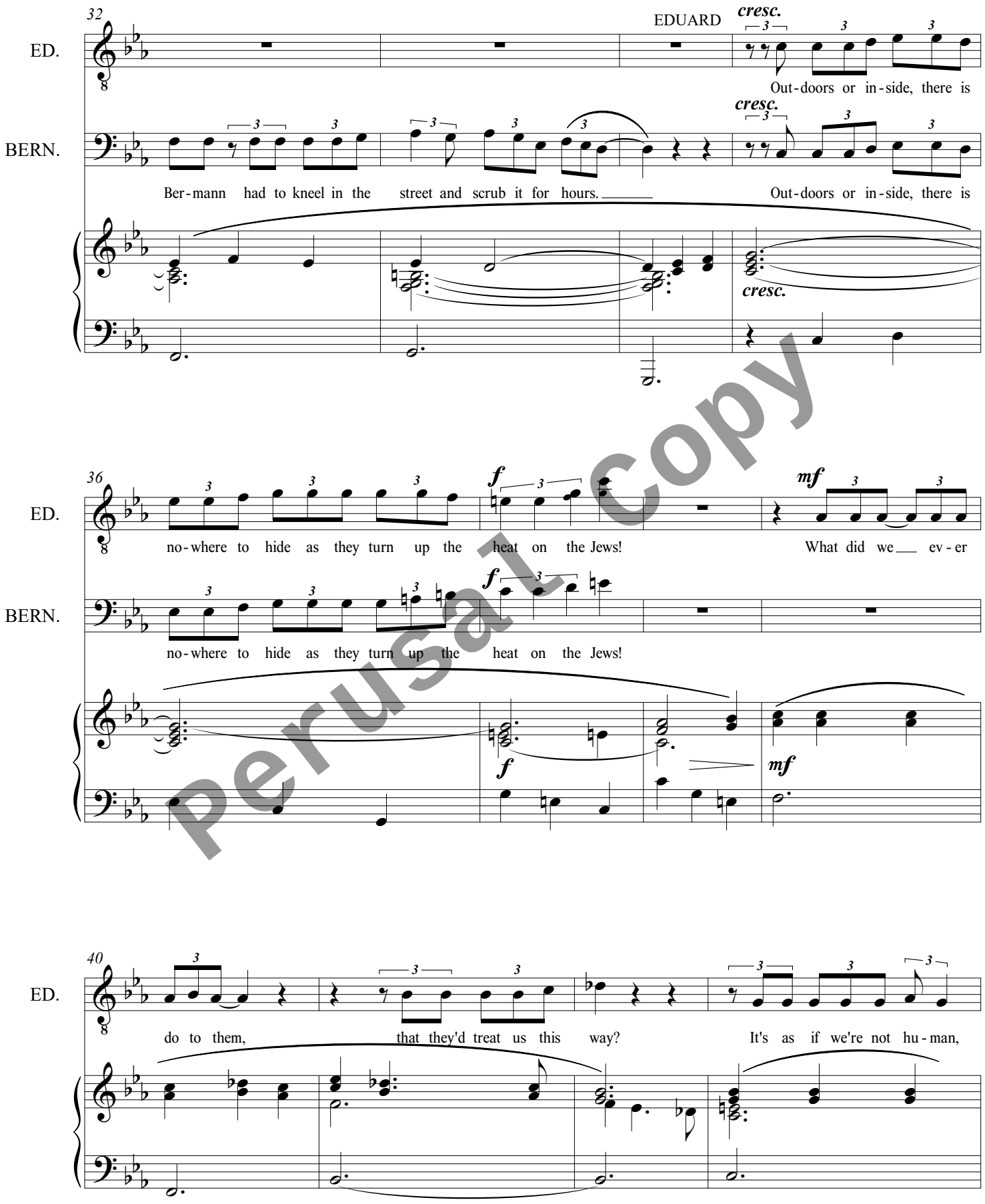

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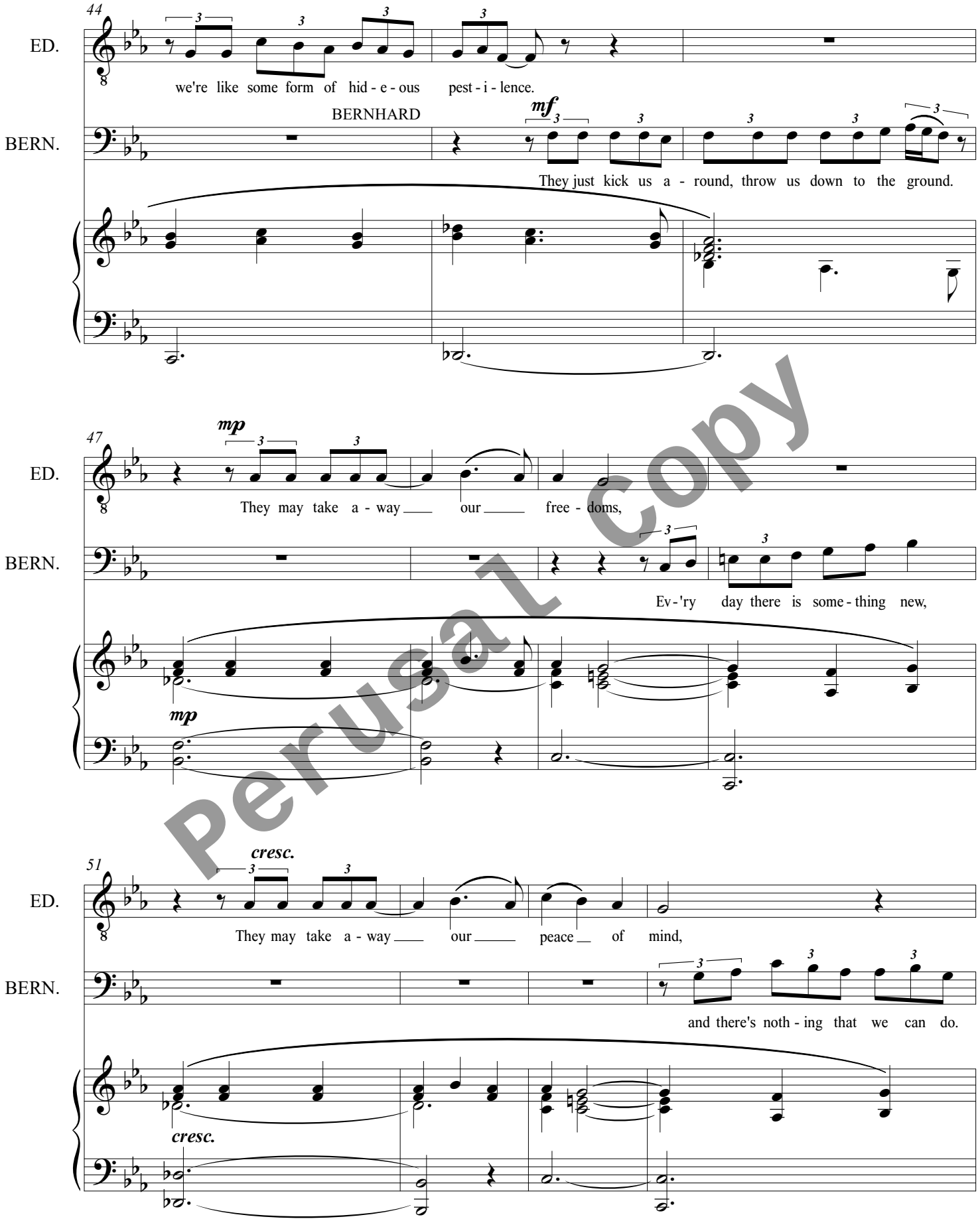

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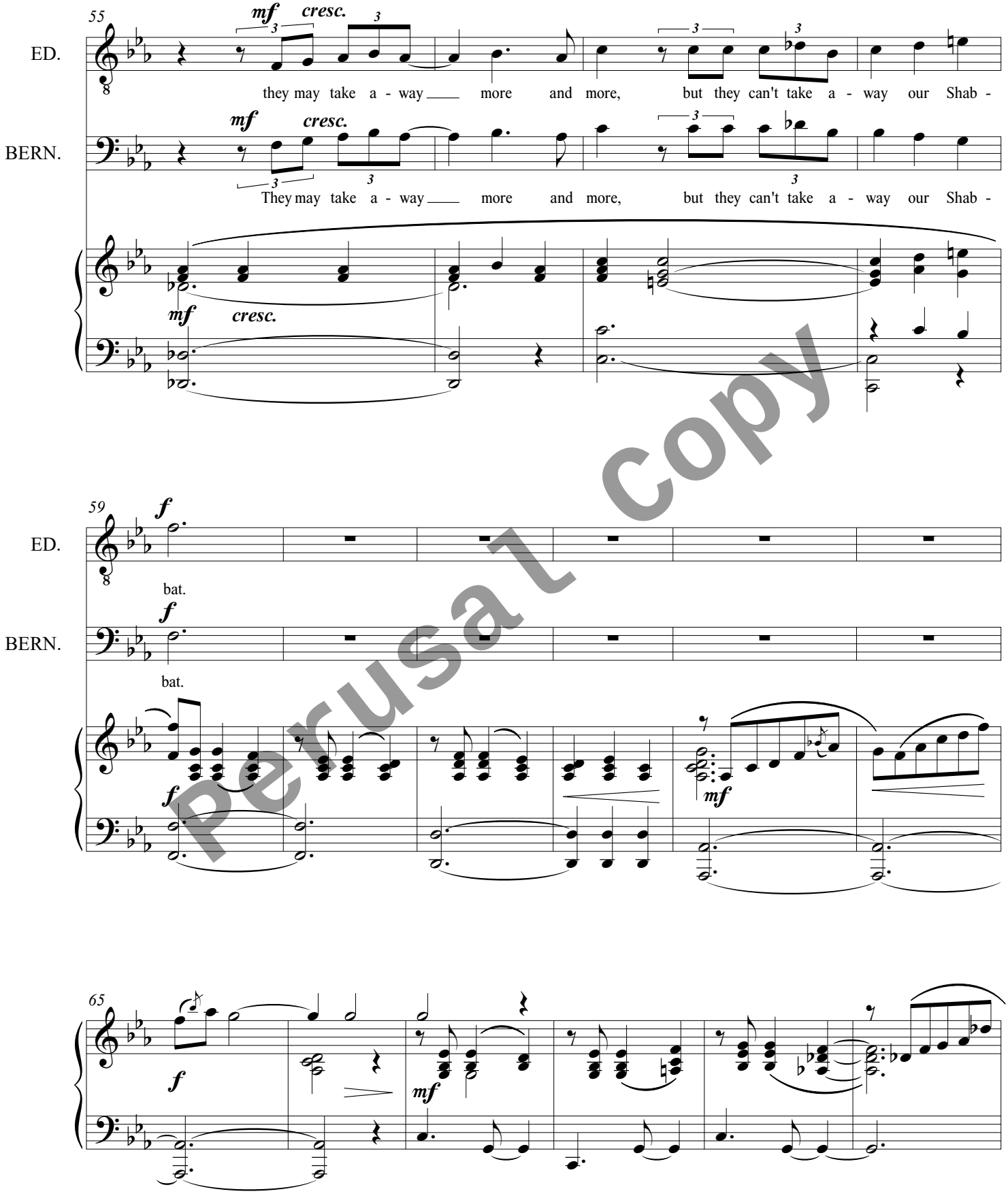

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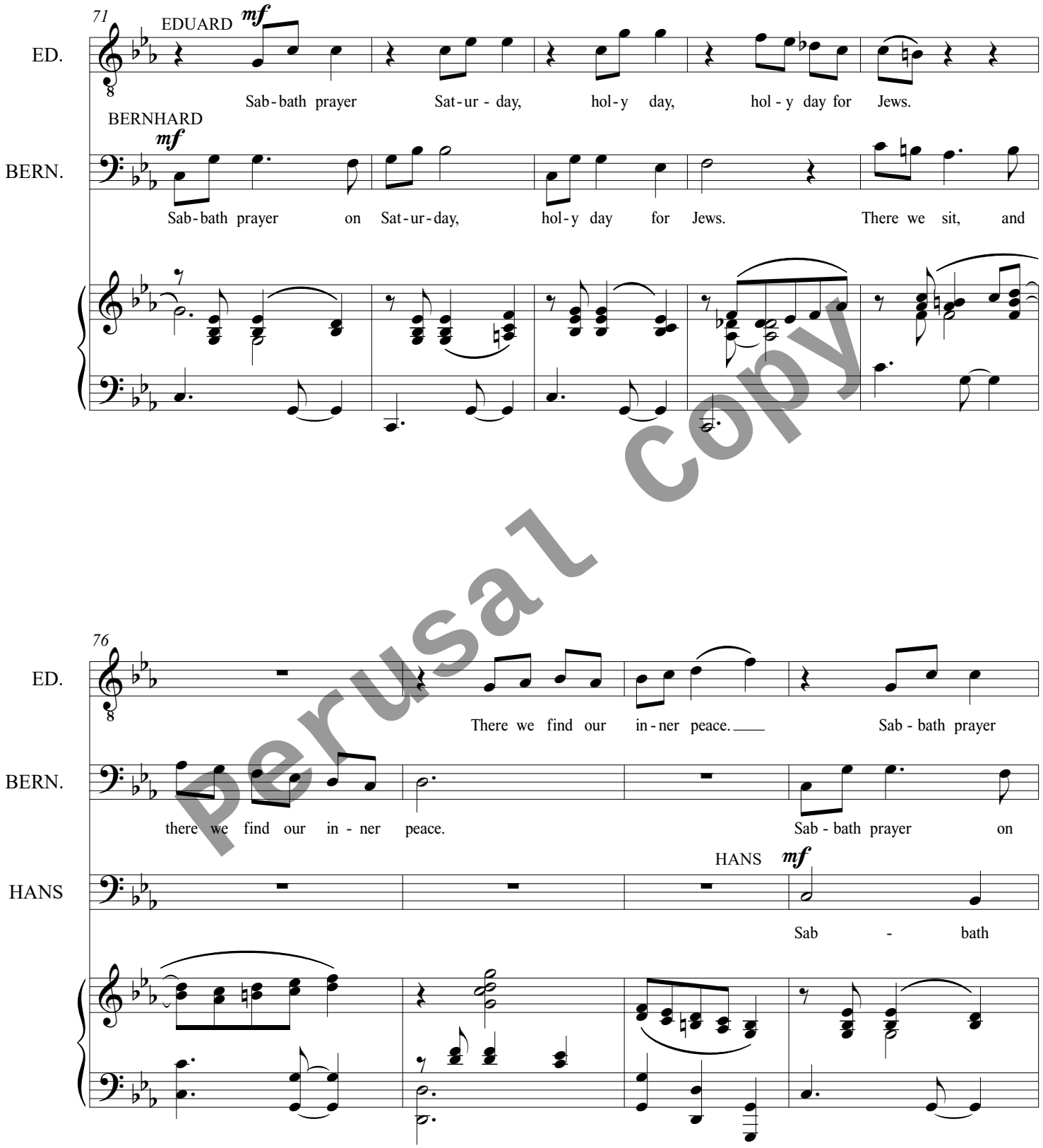

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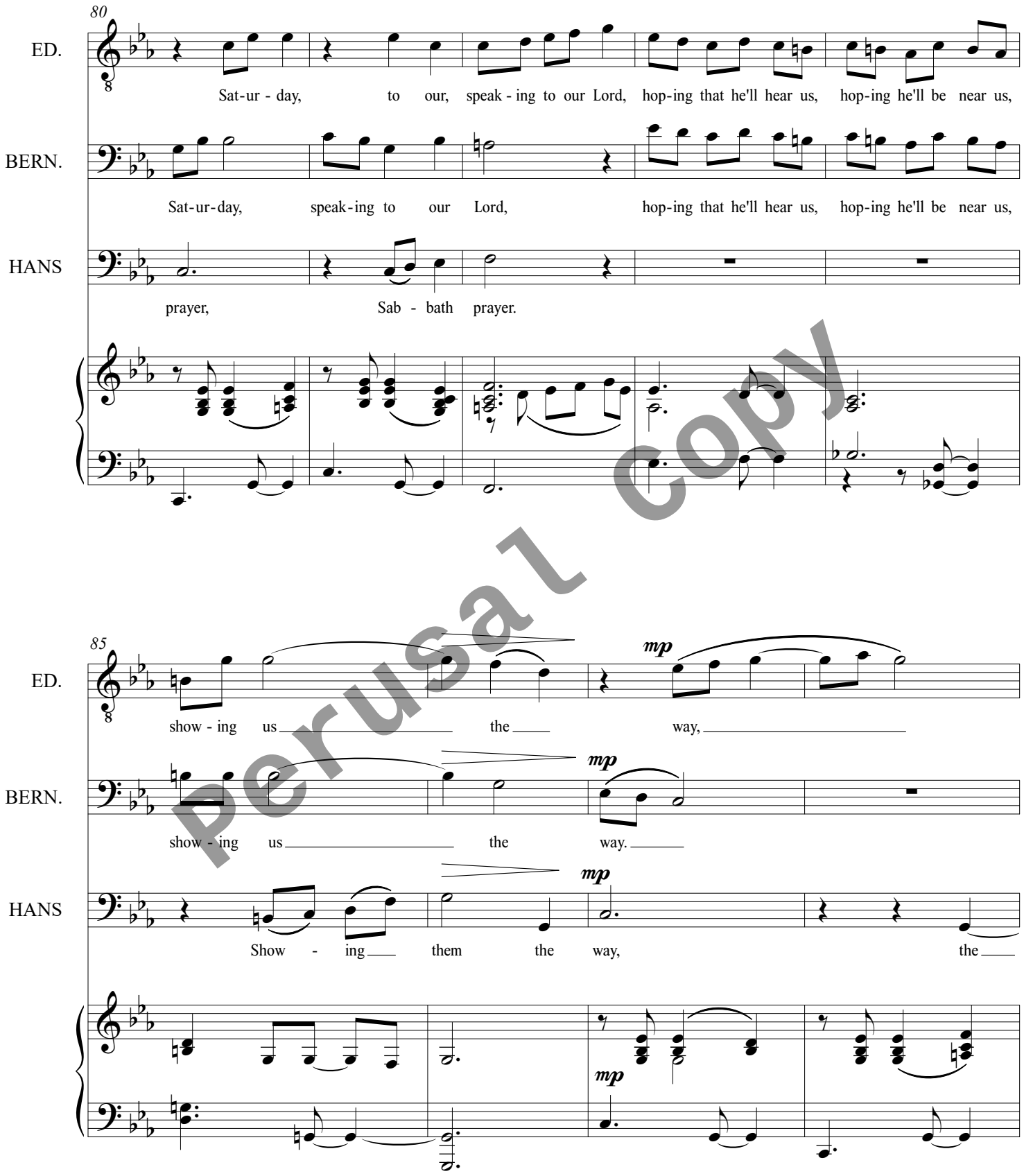

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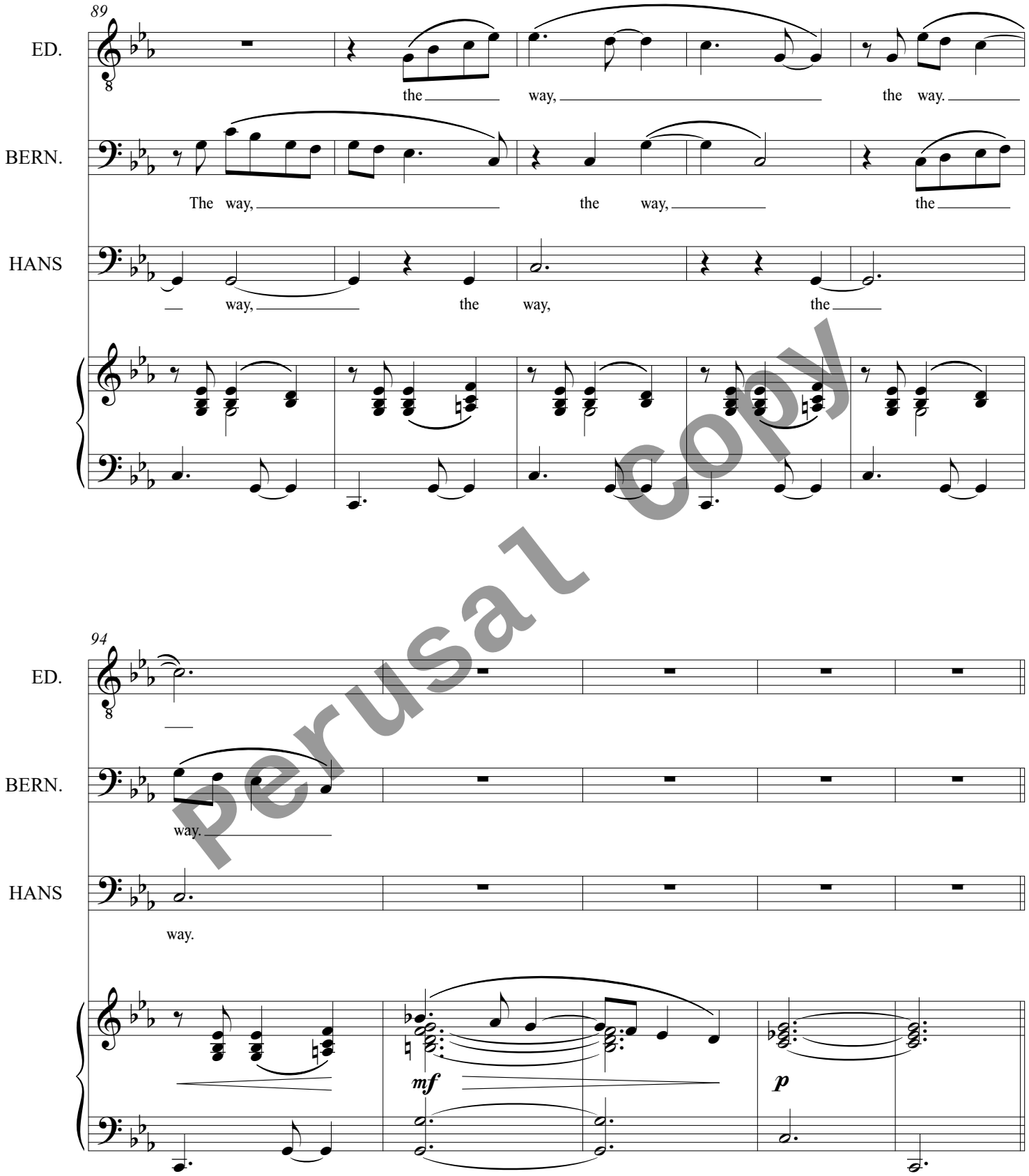


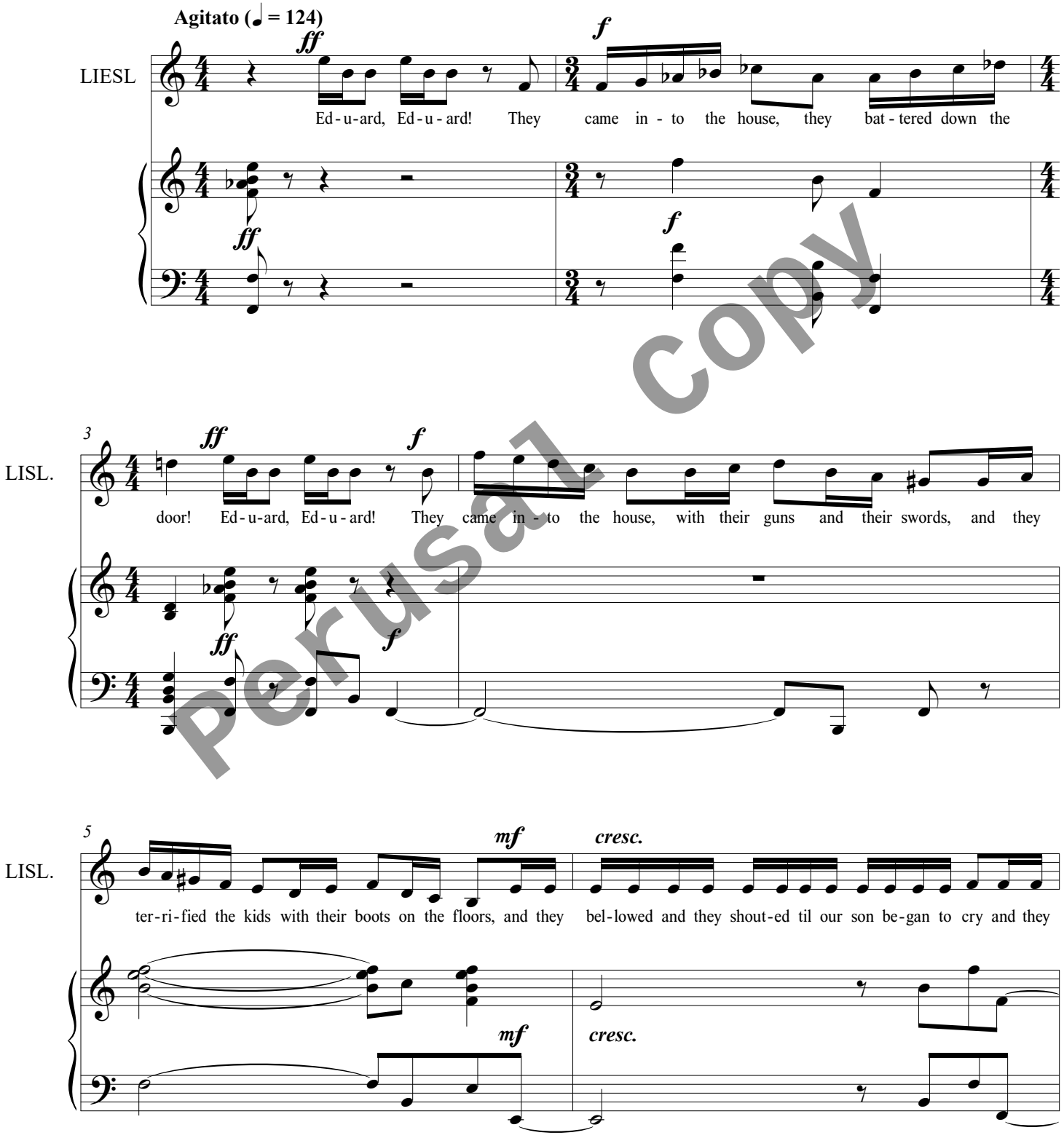
perusal copy

[Duration:1:34]

10. Pillage and Plunder

Liesl bursts into Schmid's shop.

Agitato (♩ = 124)



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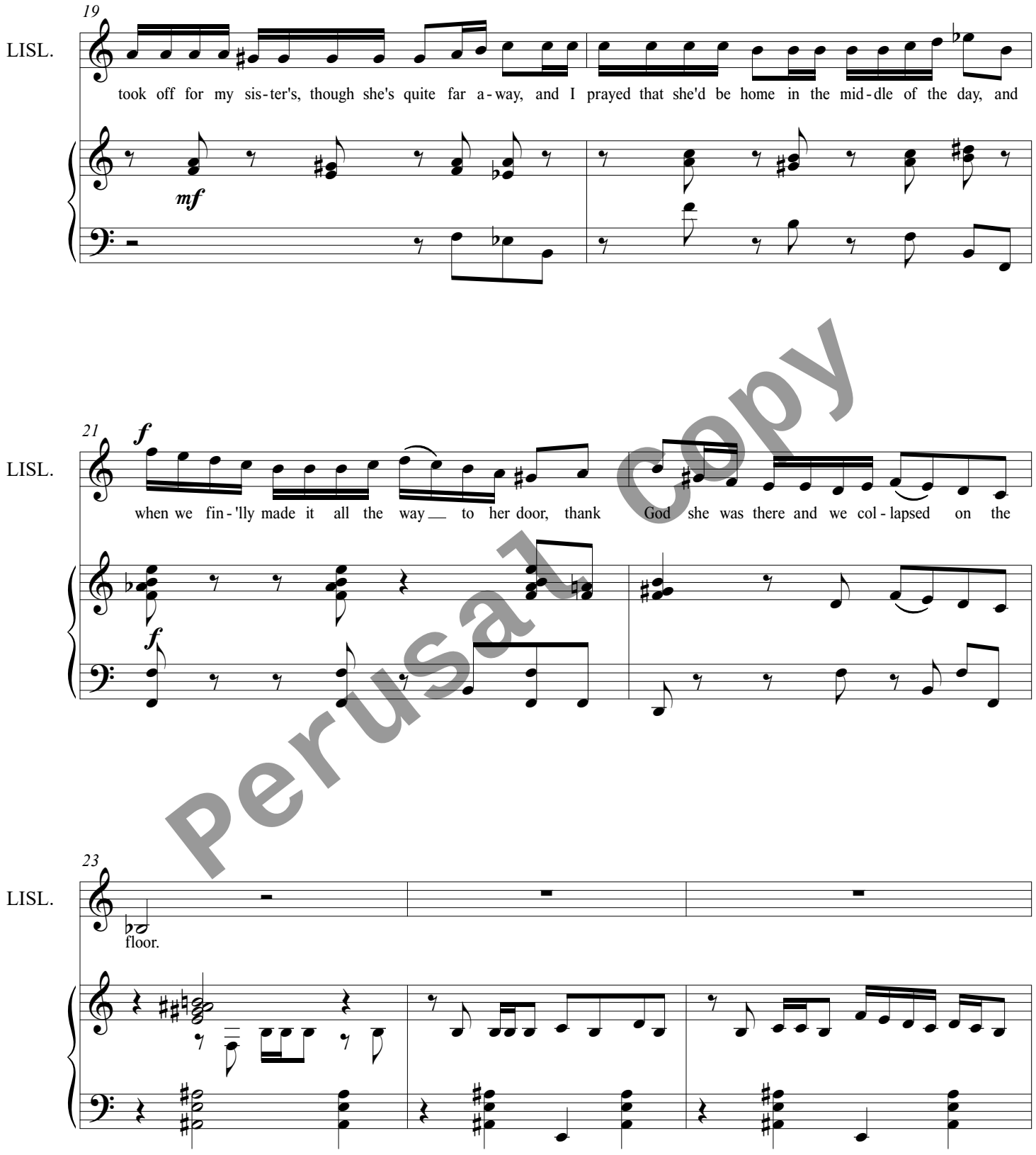
Perusal Copy

Perusal Copy



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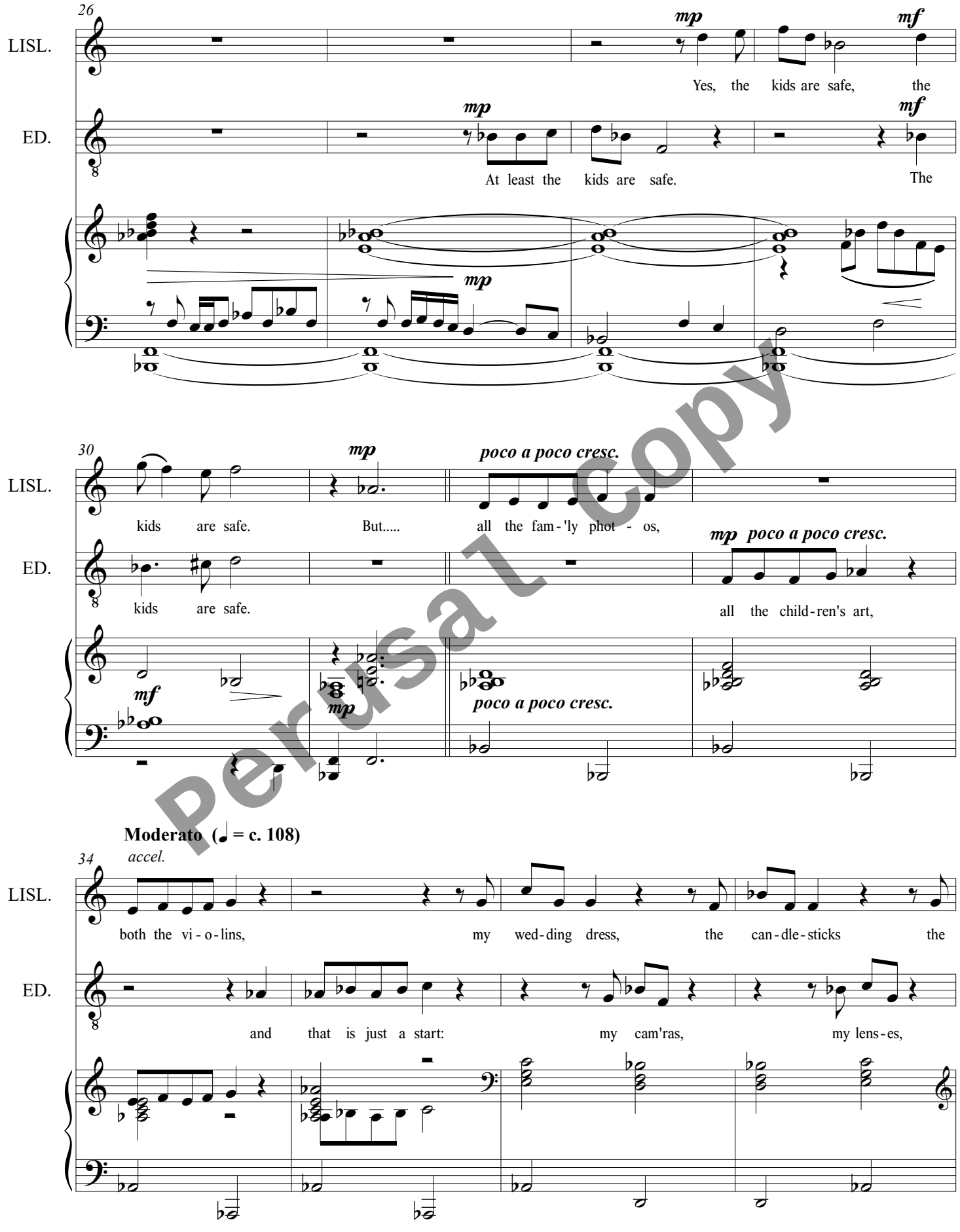

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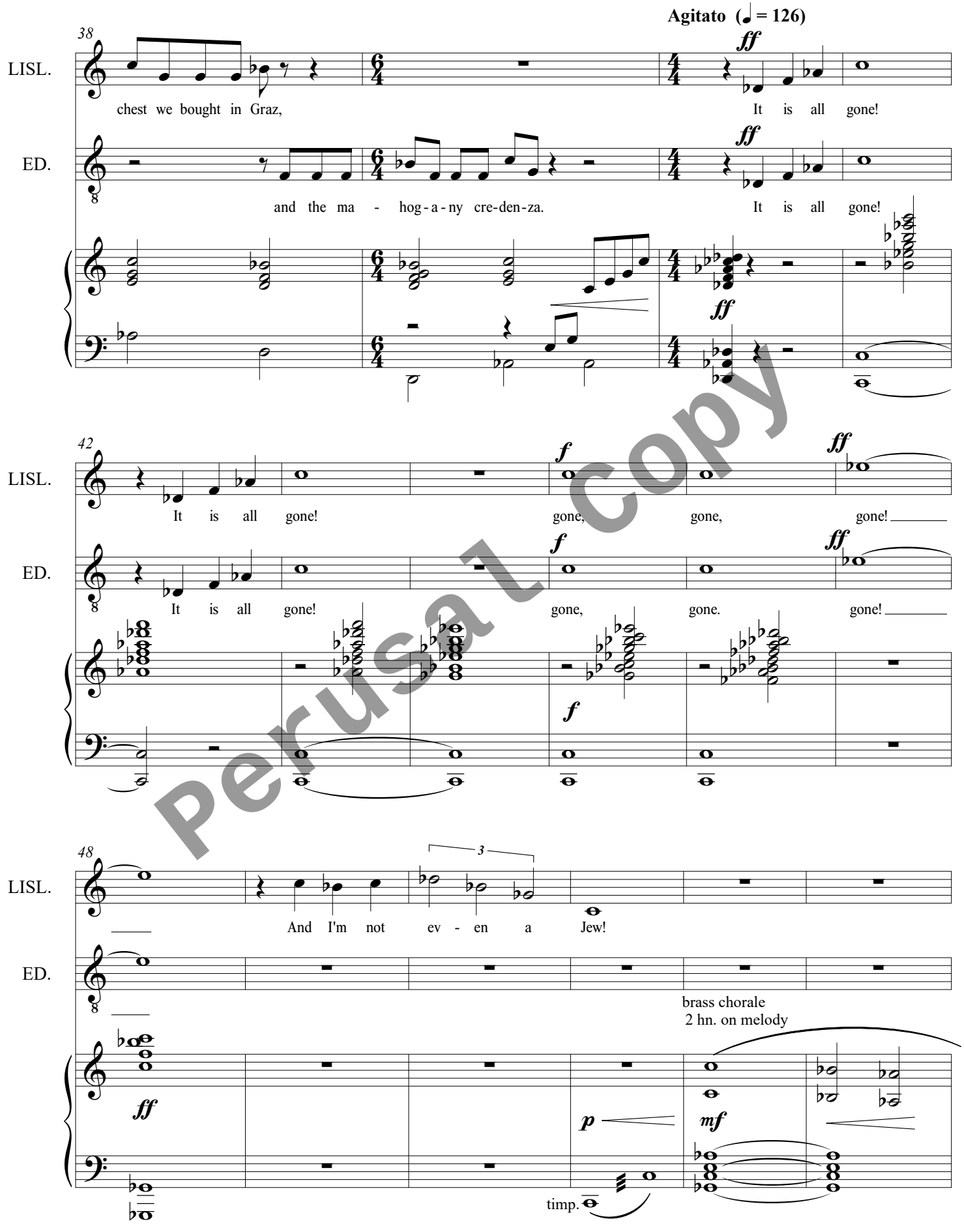

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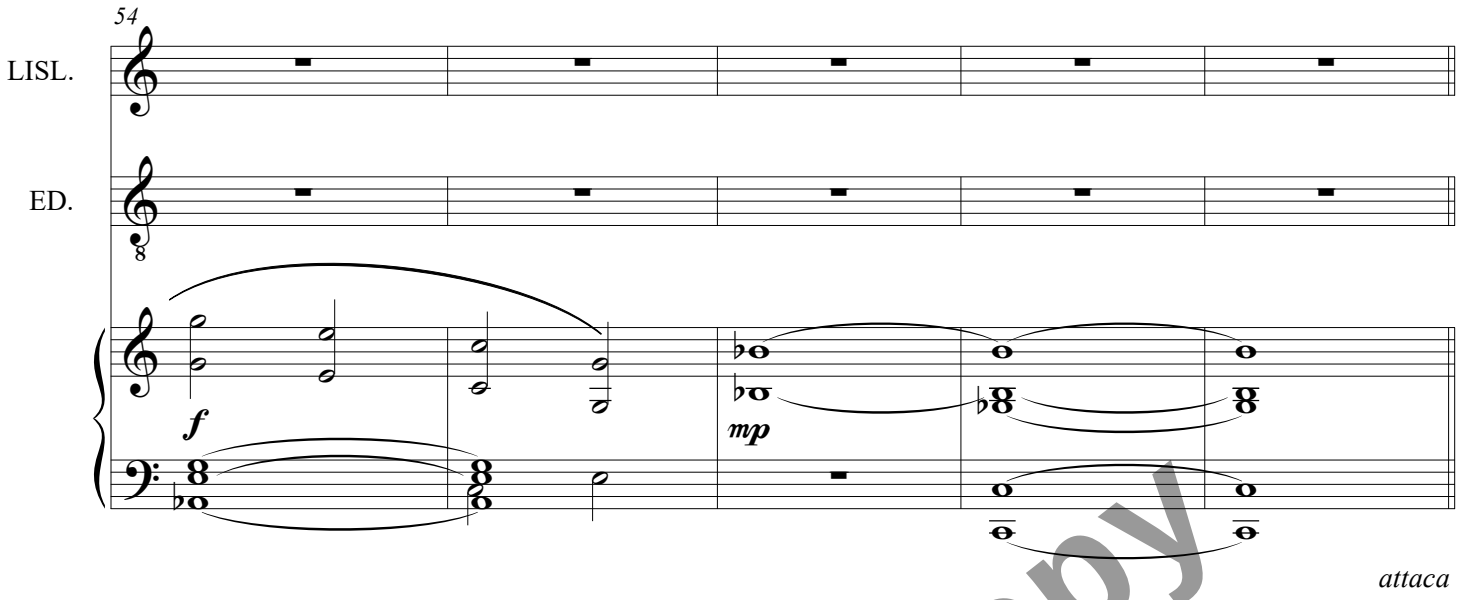
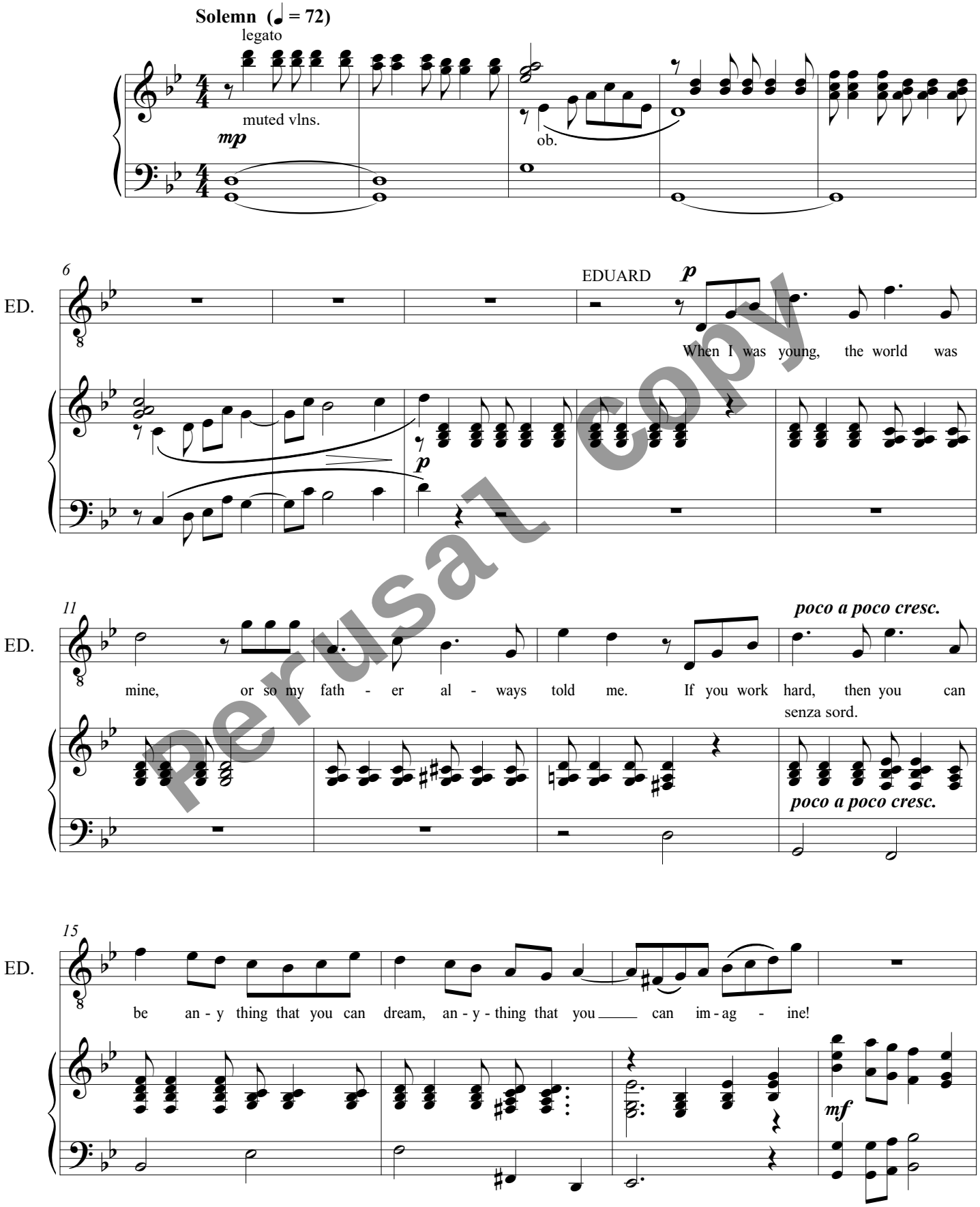


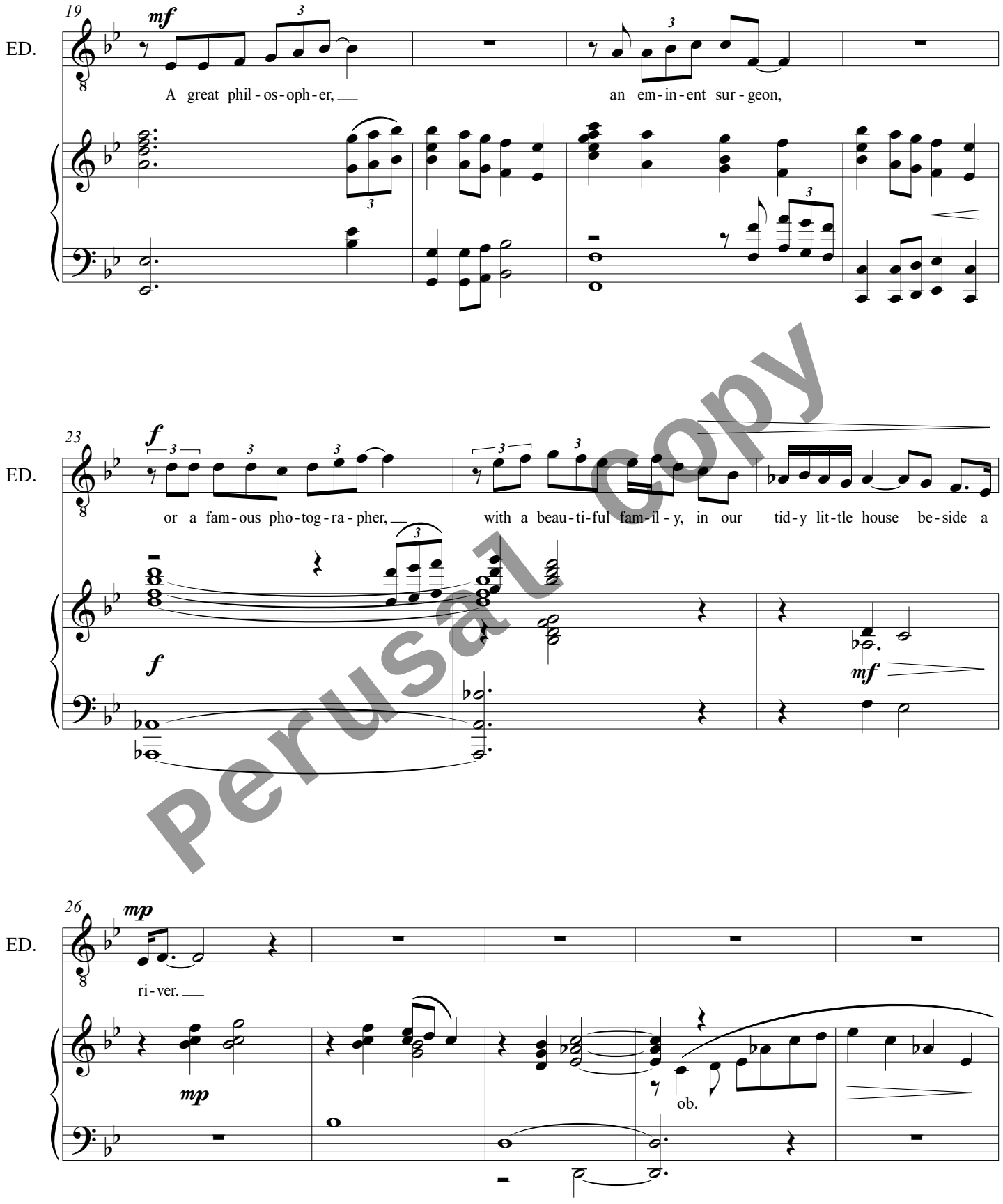
Perusal copy

[Duration: 3:00]

11. When I Was Young



Perusal Copy



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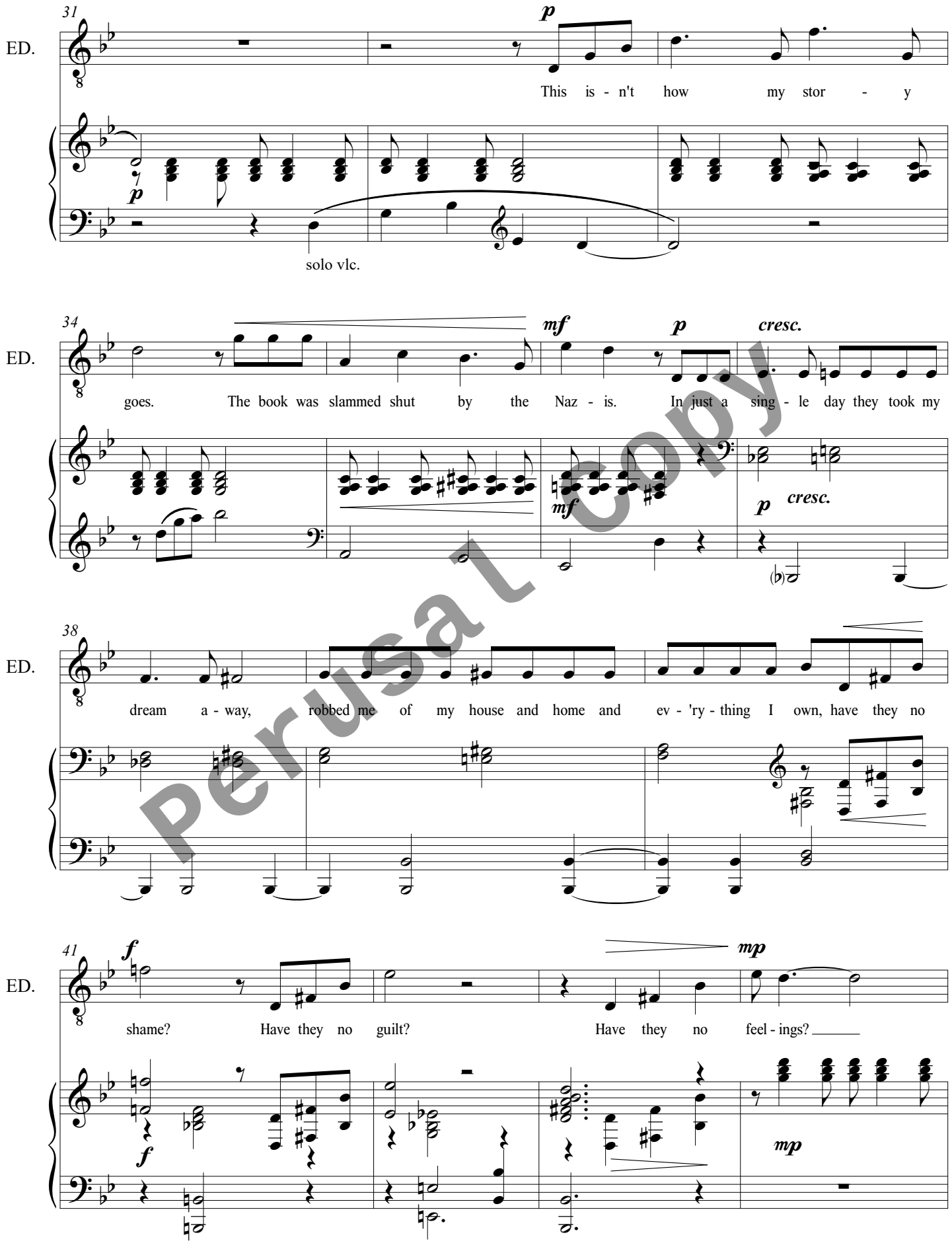

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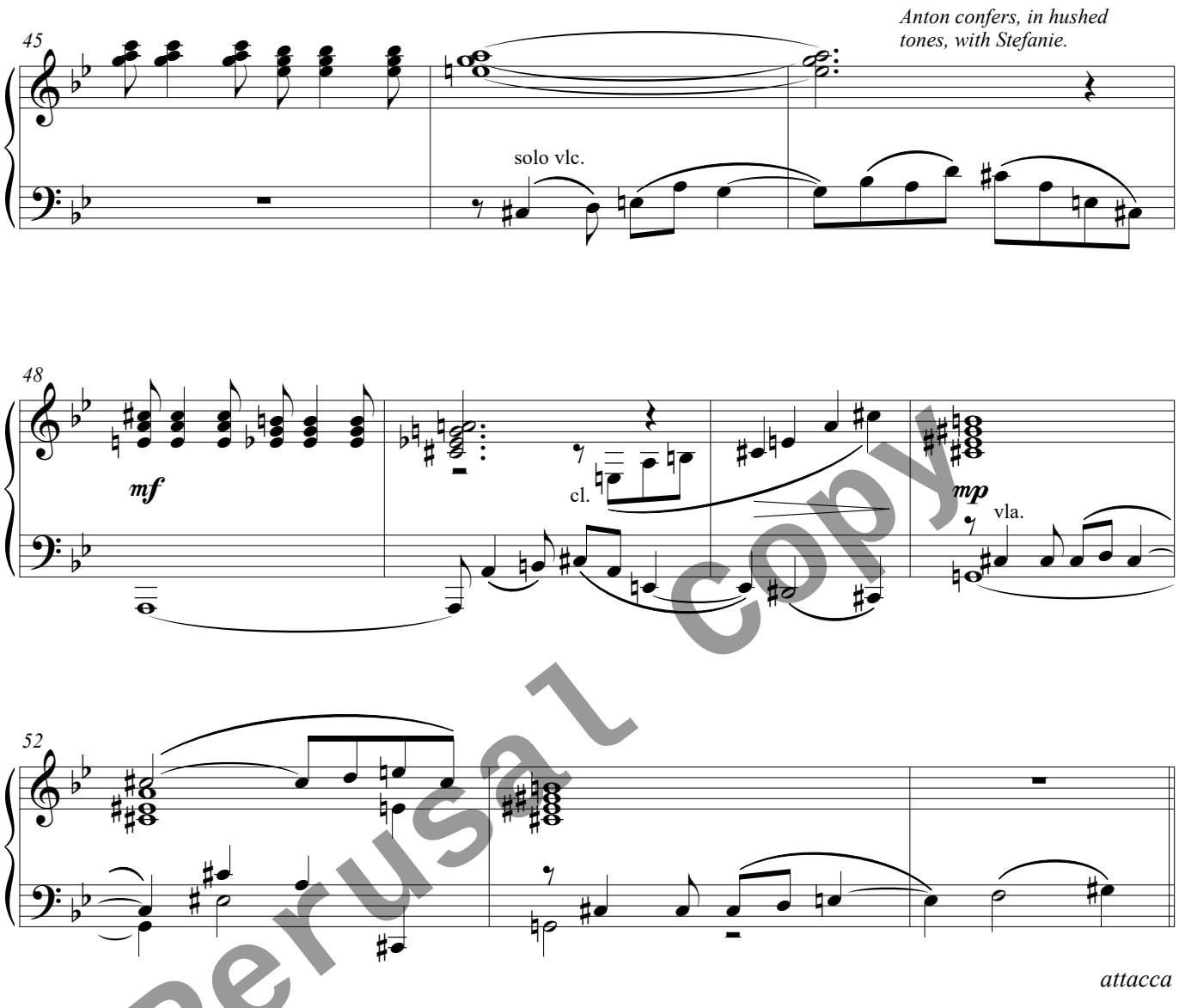
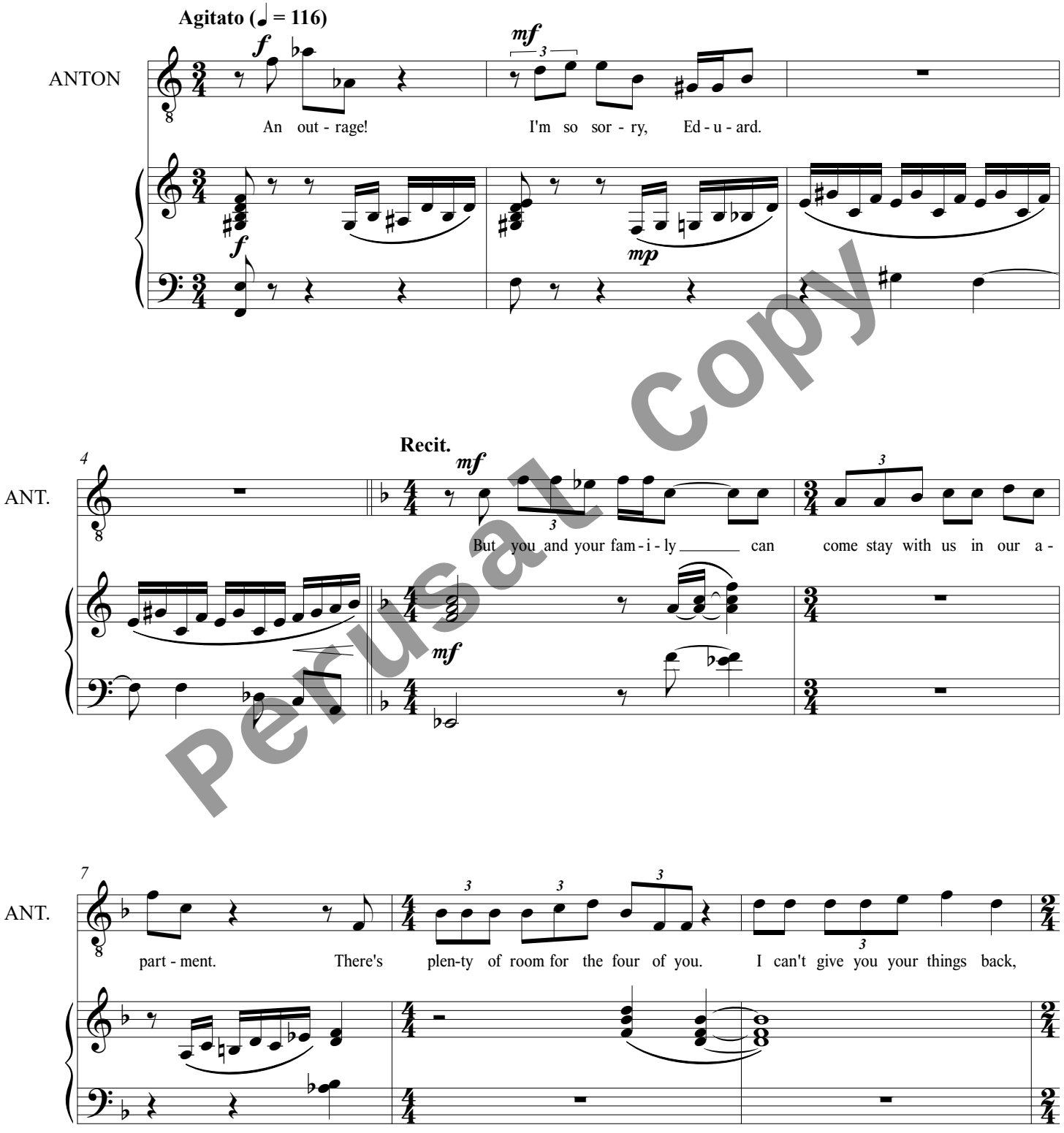


Perusal copy

[Duration: :55]

12. An Outrage



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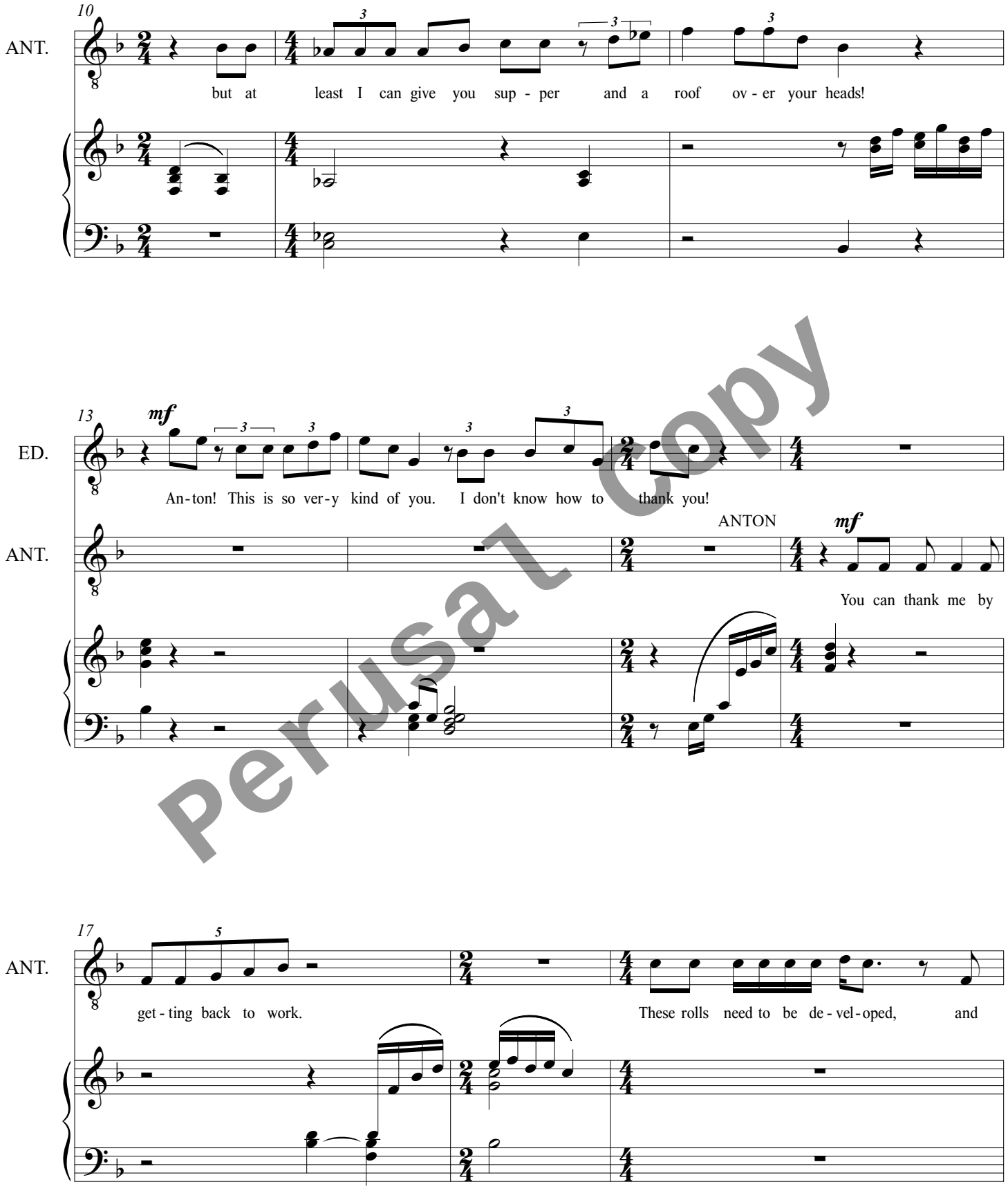

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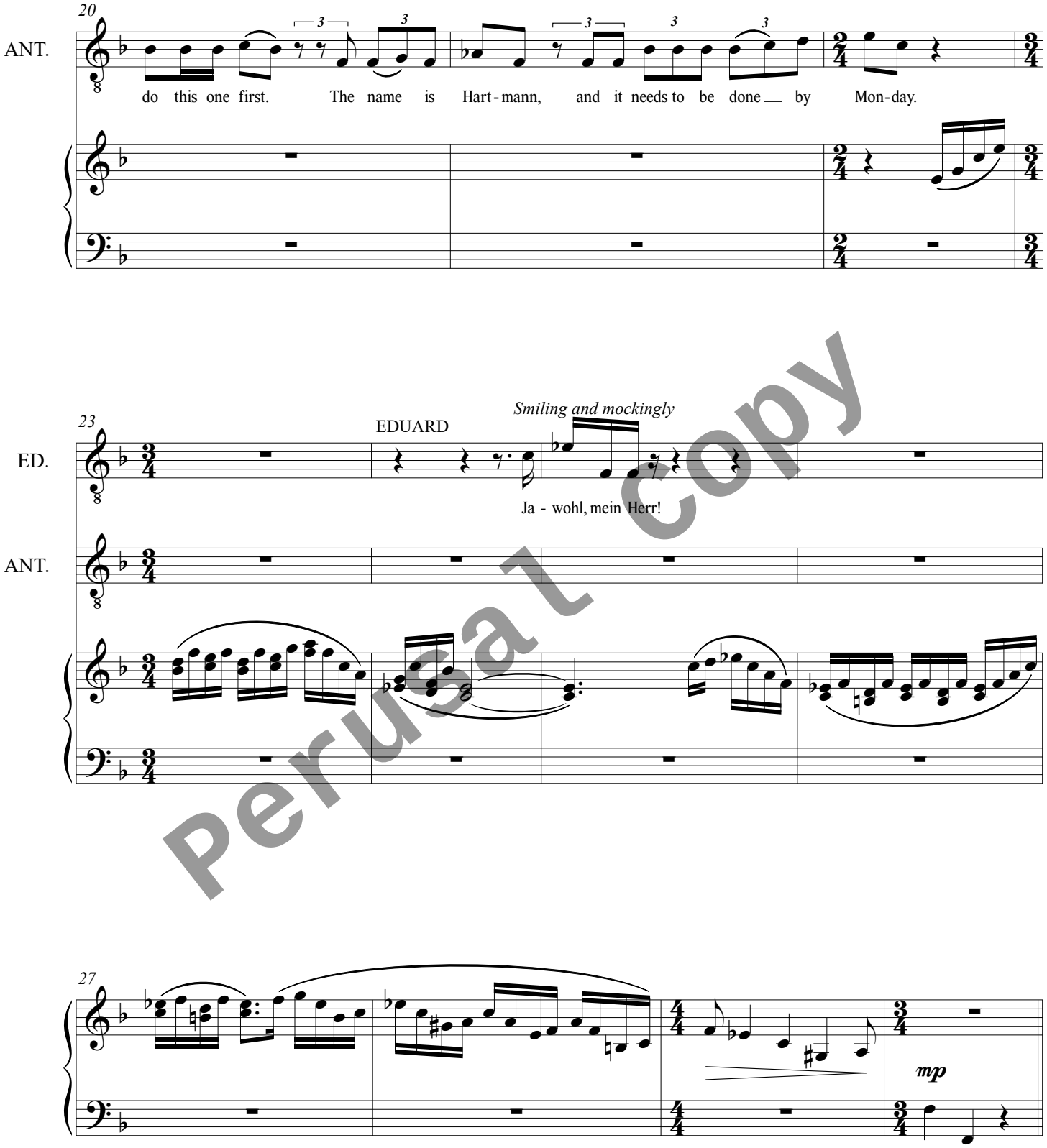


Perusal copy

[Duration:1:08]

SCENE IV

In Schmid's apartment. Seated at the dinner table are Schmid, Eduard, and Liesl. Gertha, Gerhard, and his sister Annelie are seated nearby playing "Schere, Stein, Papier" ("Scissors, Paper, Rock"). Stefi enters carrying the day's mail.

13. After Dinner

Schmid, Eduard, and Liesl quietly talking/laughing.

Spirited (♩ = 96)

mf

4

7 ANNELIE *poco più mosso*

f

a tempo

ANL.

Scis - sors cuts through pap - er!

p

mf

10 LISL. LIESL *poco più mosso*

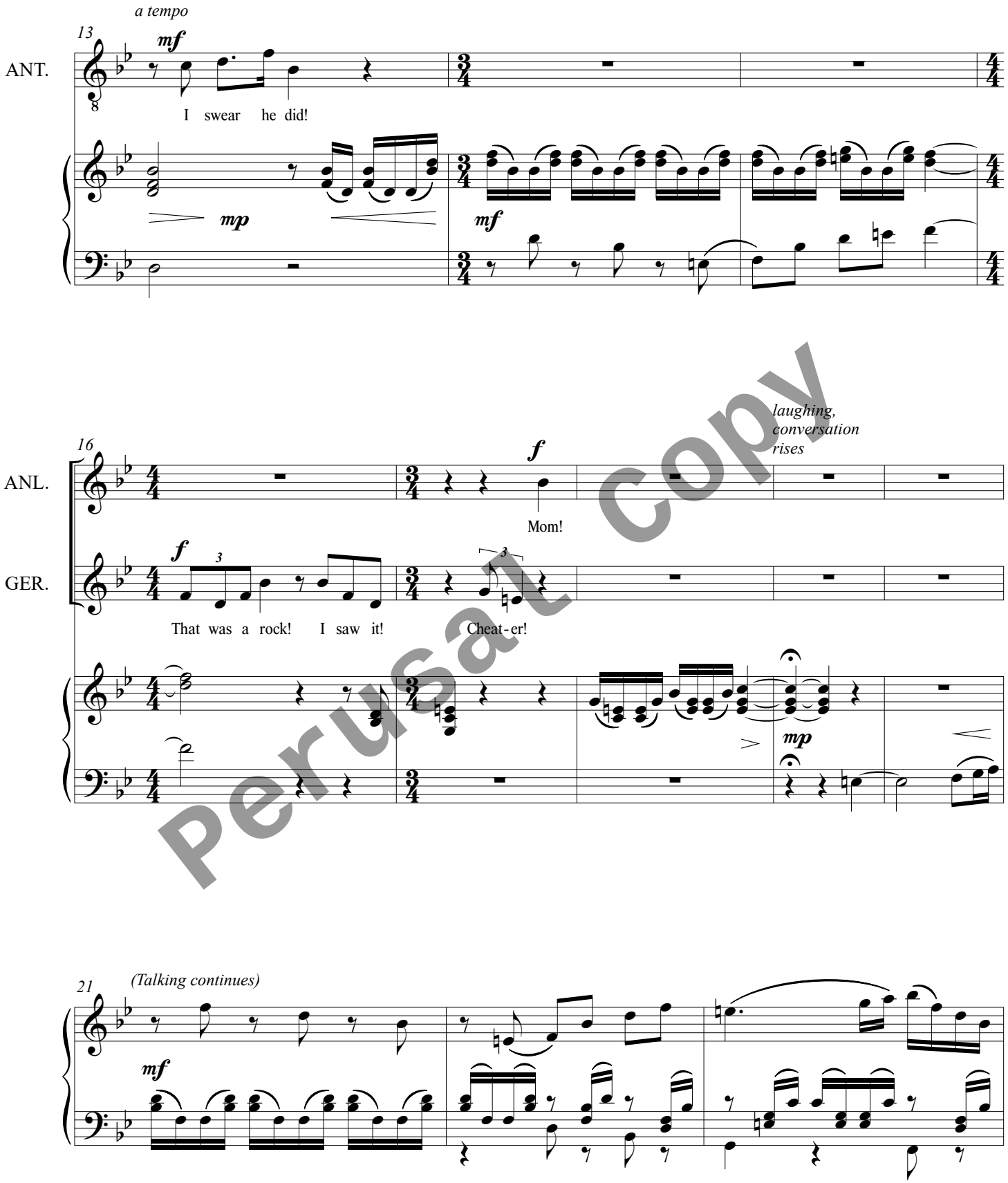
mf

He did - n't real - ly say that, did he?

mp

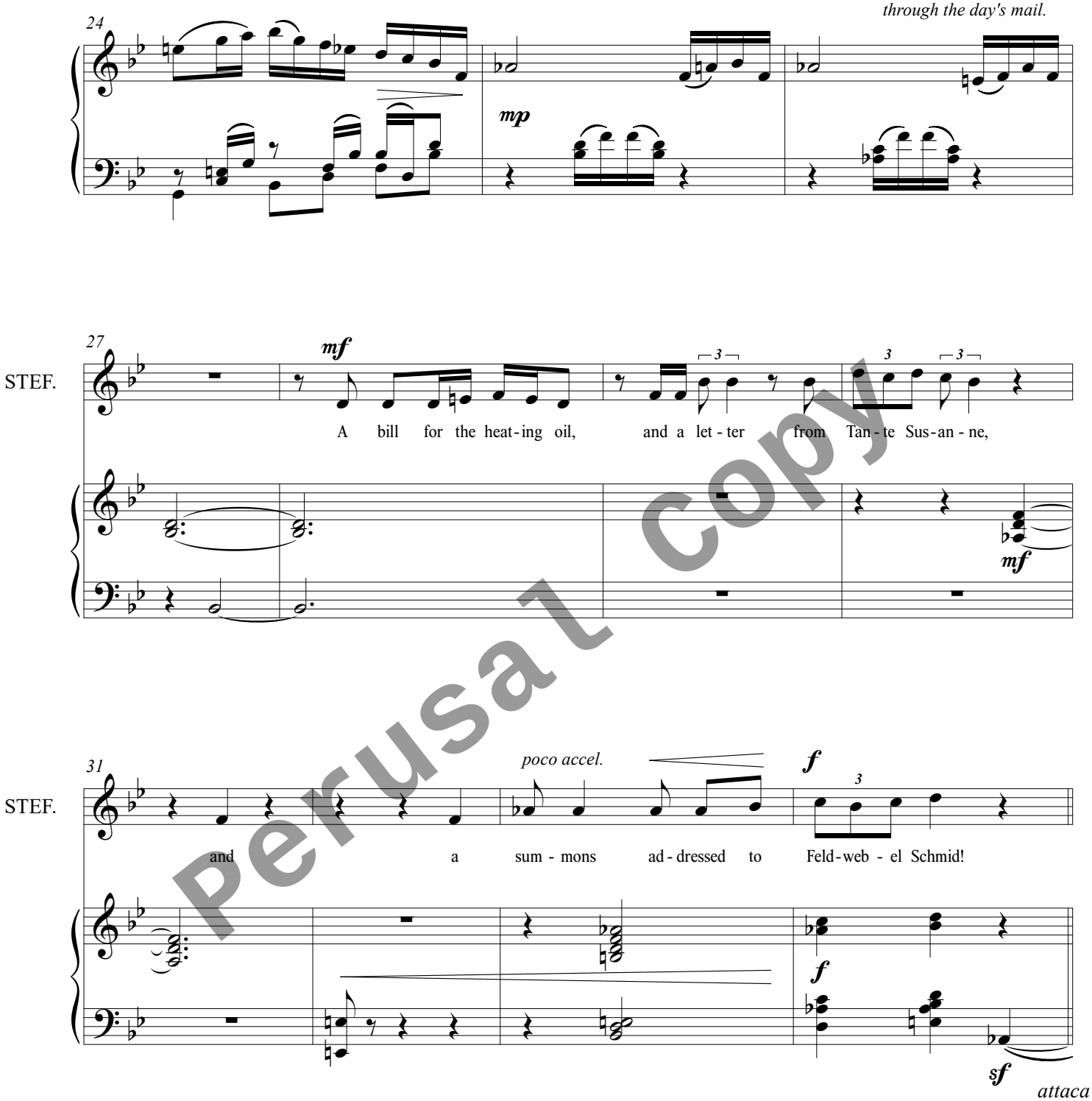
mf

Perusa Copy



Perusal Copy

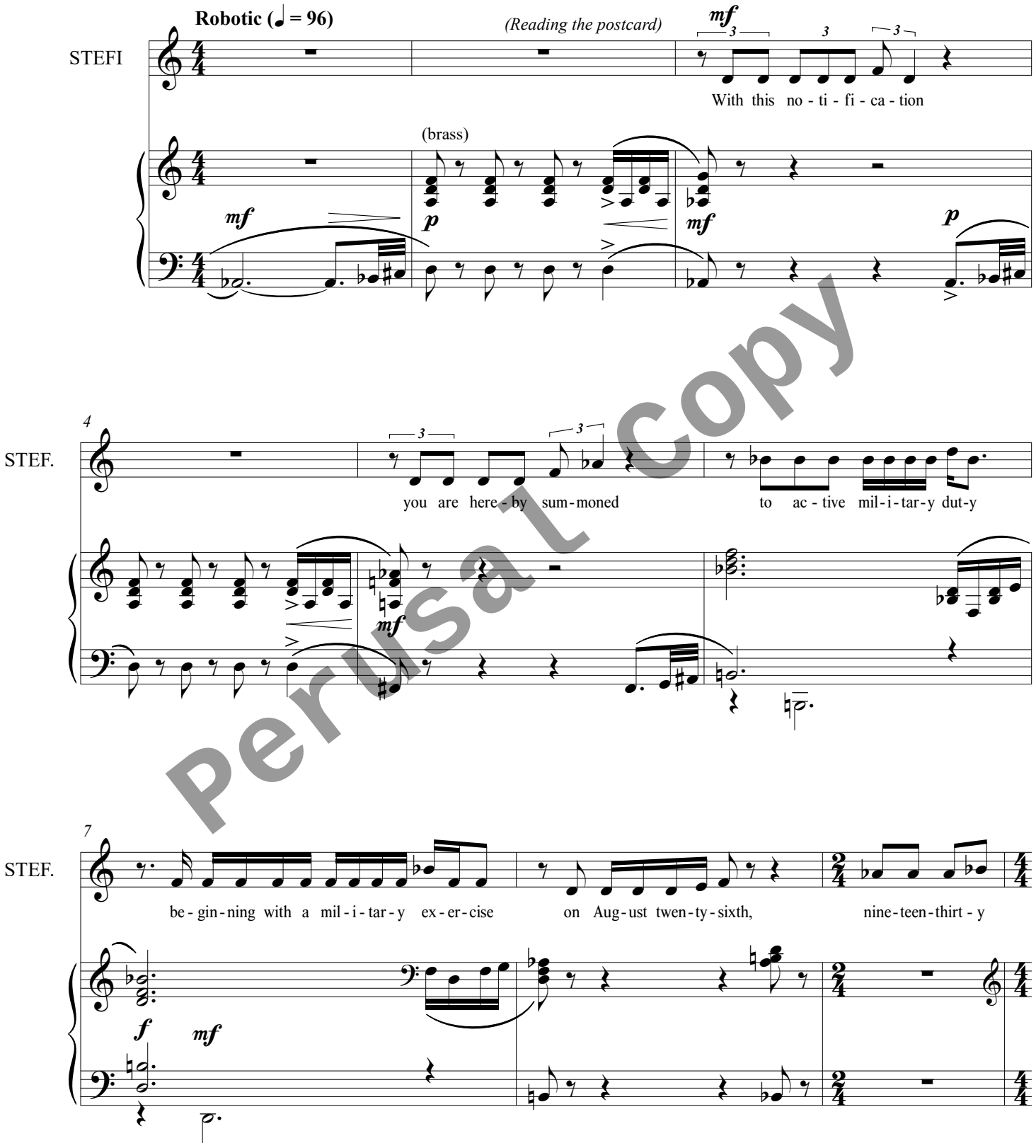
Stefanie enters, looking through the day's mail.



Perusal Copy

[Duration: 1:30]

14. Summons



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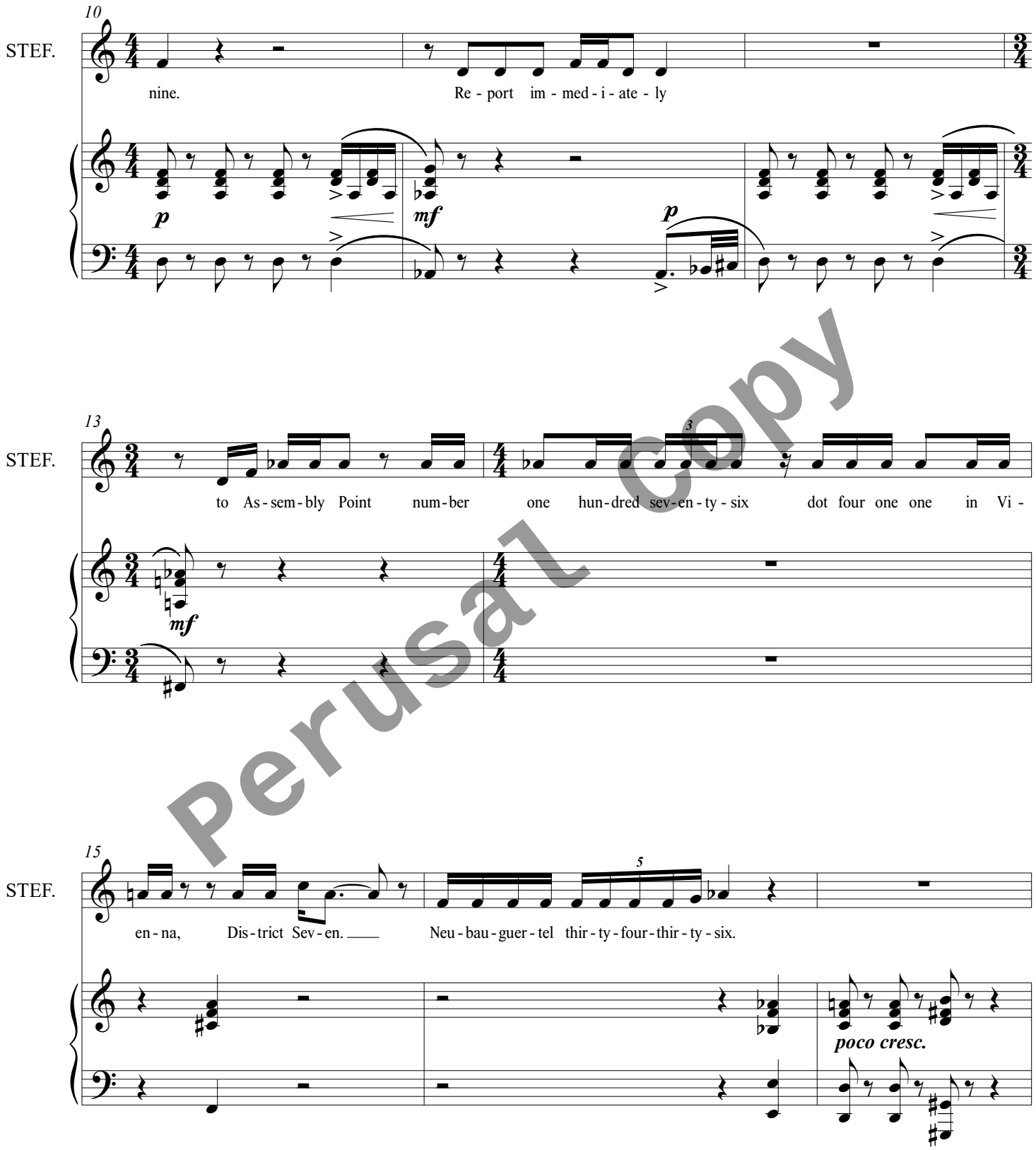

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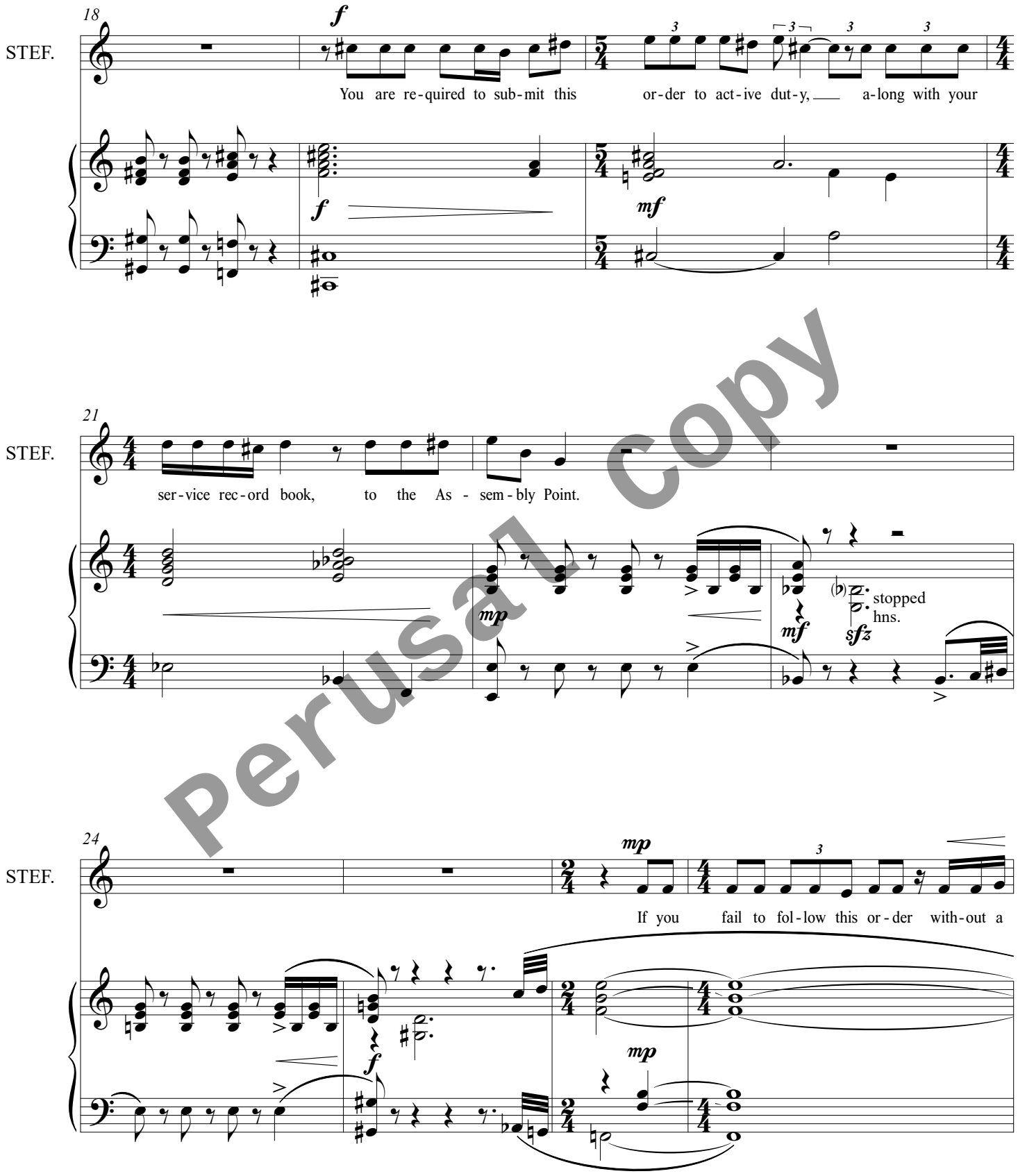

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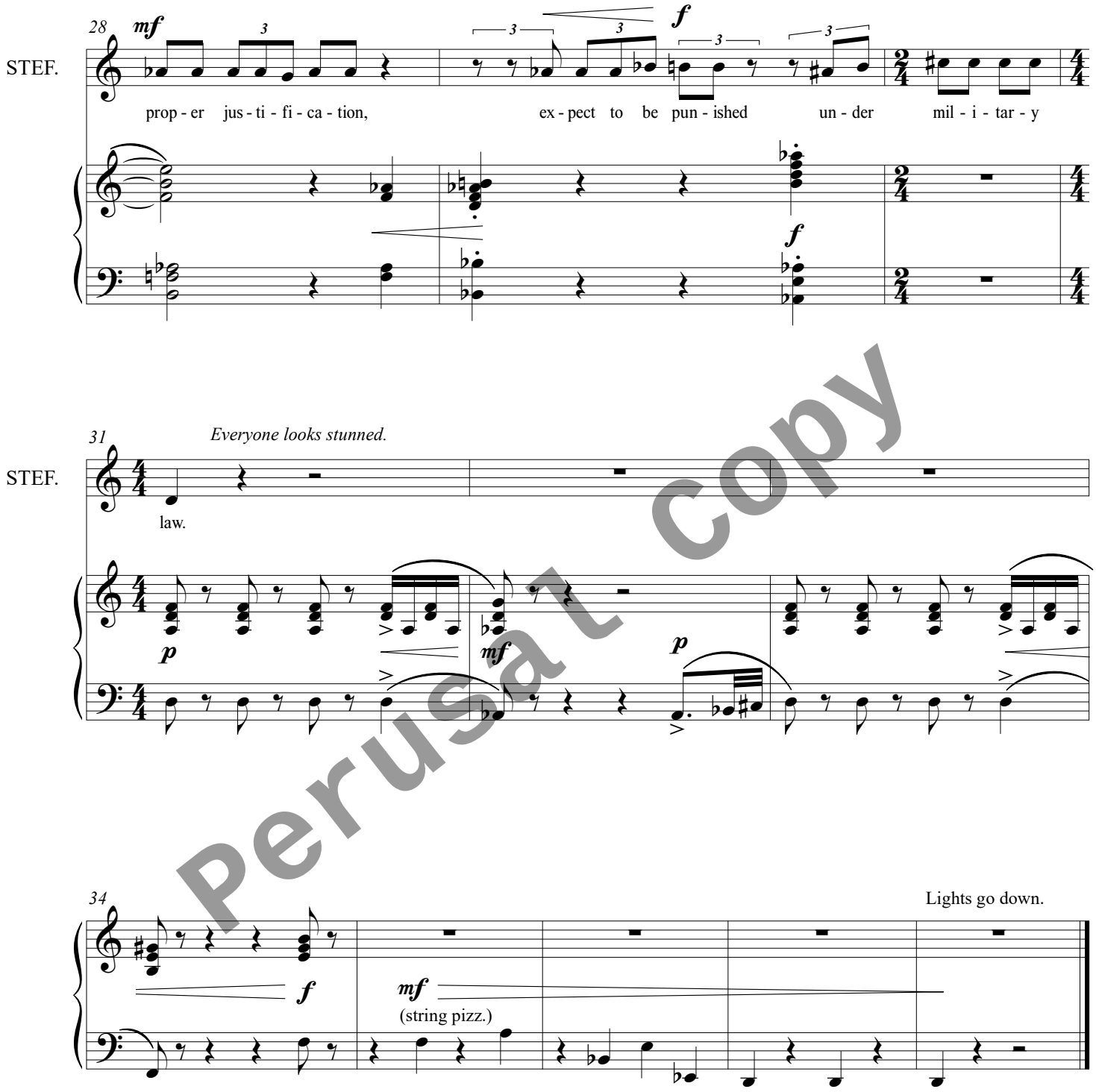


Perusal Copy

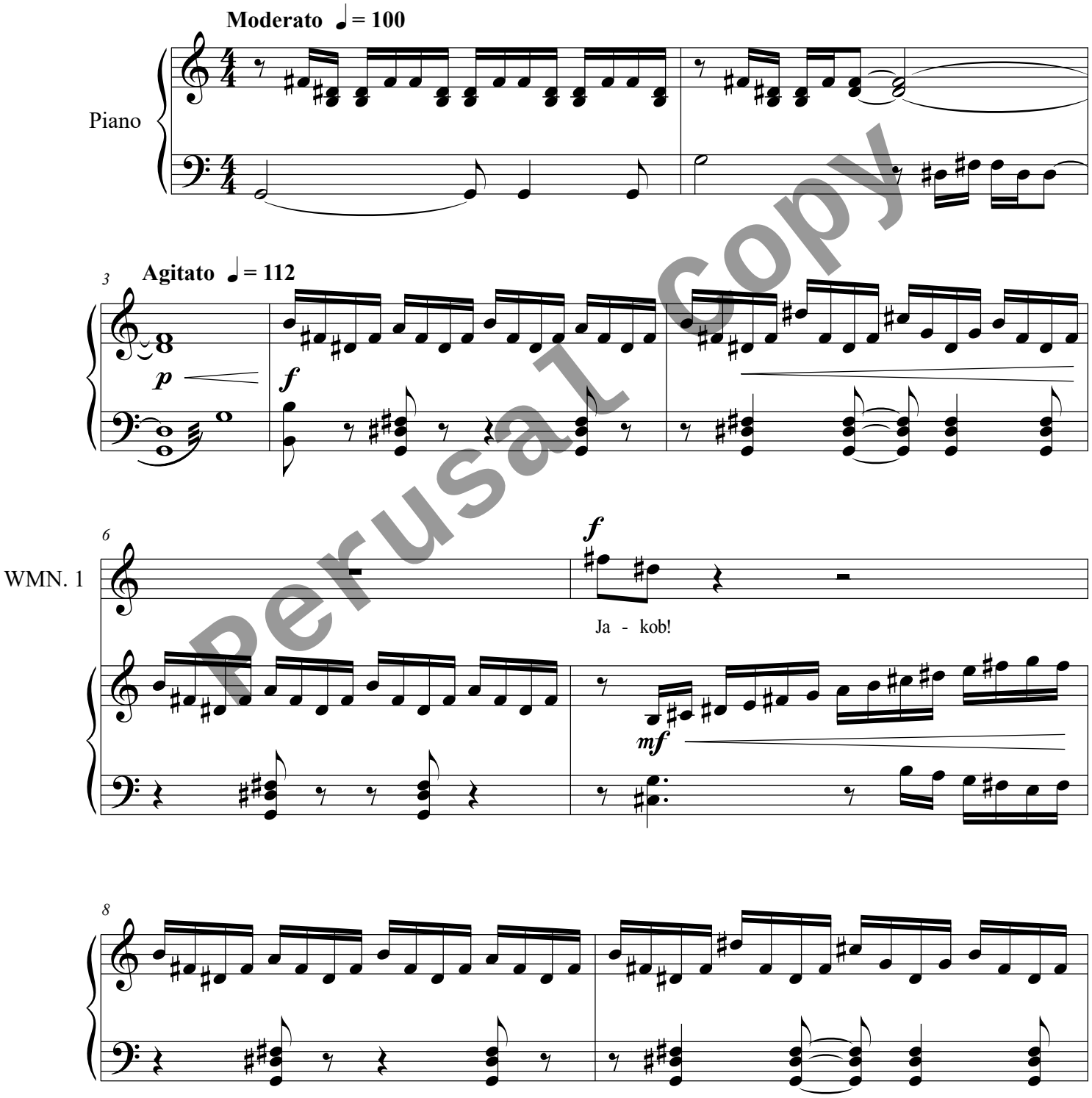
END OF ACT I

[Duration:2:42]

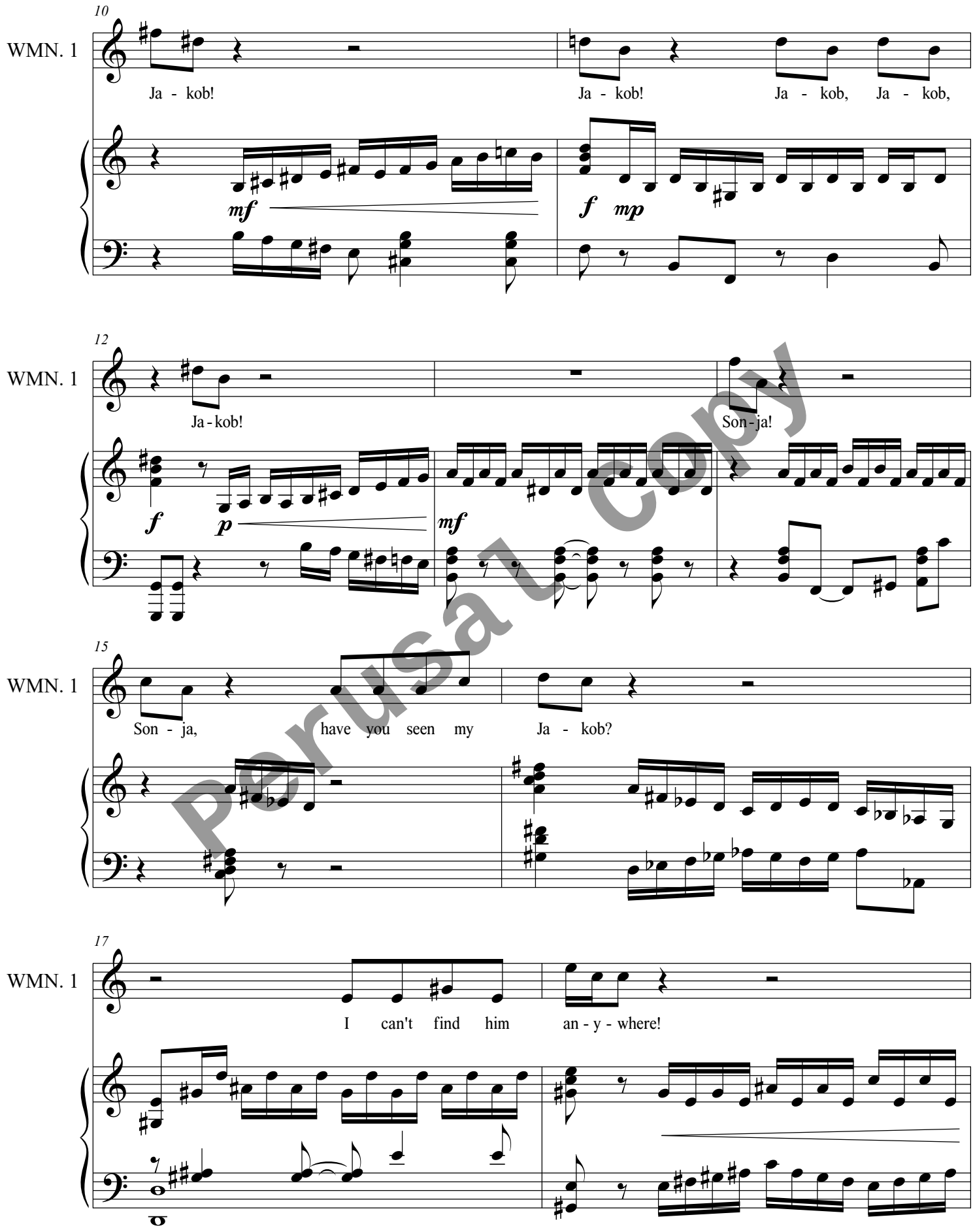
Setting:Street scene. Dilapidated buildings. Crowded, dirty, many Jews (adults and children) sitting on sidewalks or milling about, most in ragged clothing. Some people sitting/standing silently with vacant stares. A woman is frantically searching for her husband.

ACT II

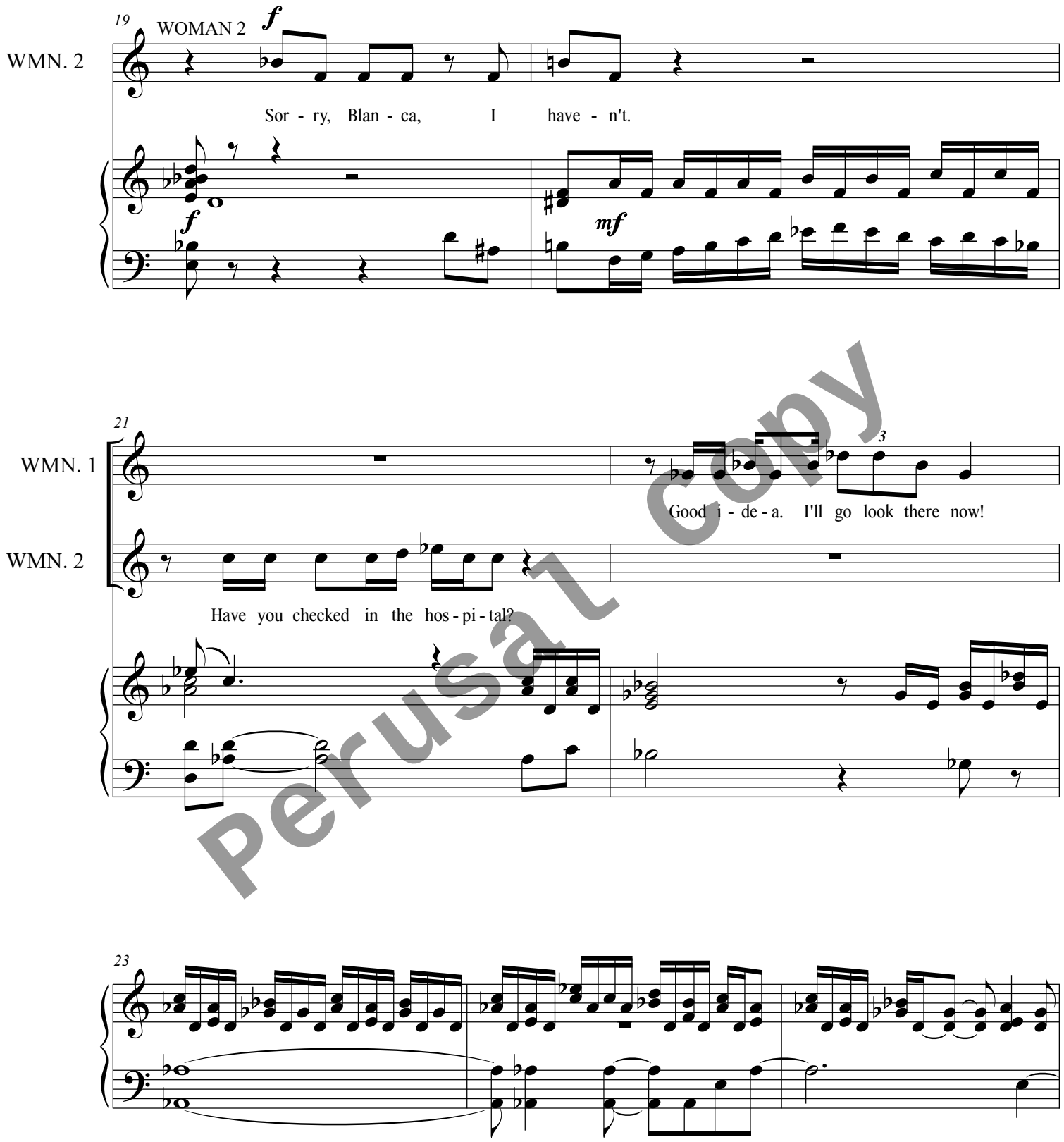
15. In the Ghetto



Perusal Copy


10
WMN. 1
Ja - kob!
Ja - kob!
Ja - kob, Ja - kob,
mf
f mp
12
WMN. 1
Ja - kob!
Son - ja!
f
p
mf
15
WMN. 1
Son - ja, have you seen my Ja - kob?
17
WMN. 1
I can't find him an - y - where!

Perusa Copy



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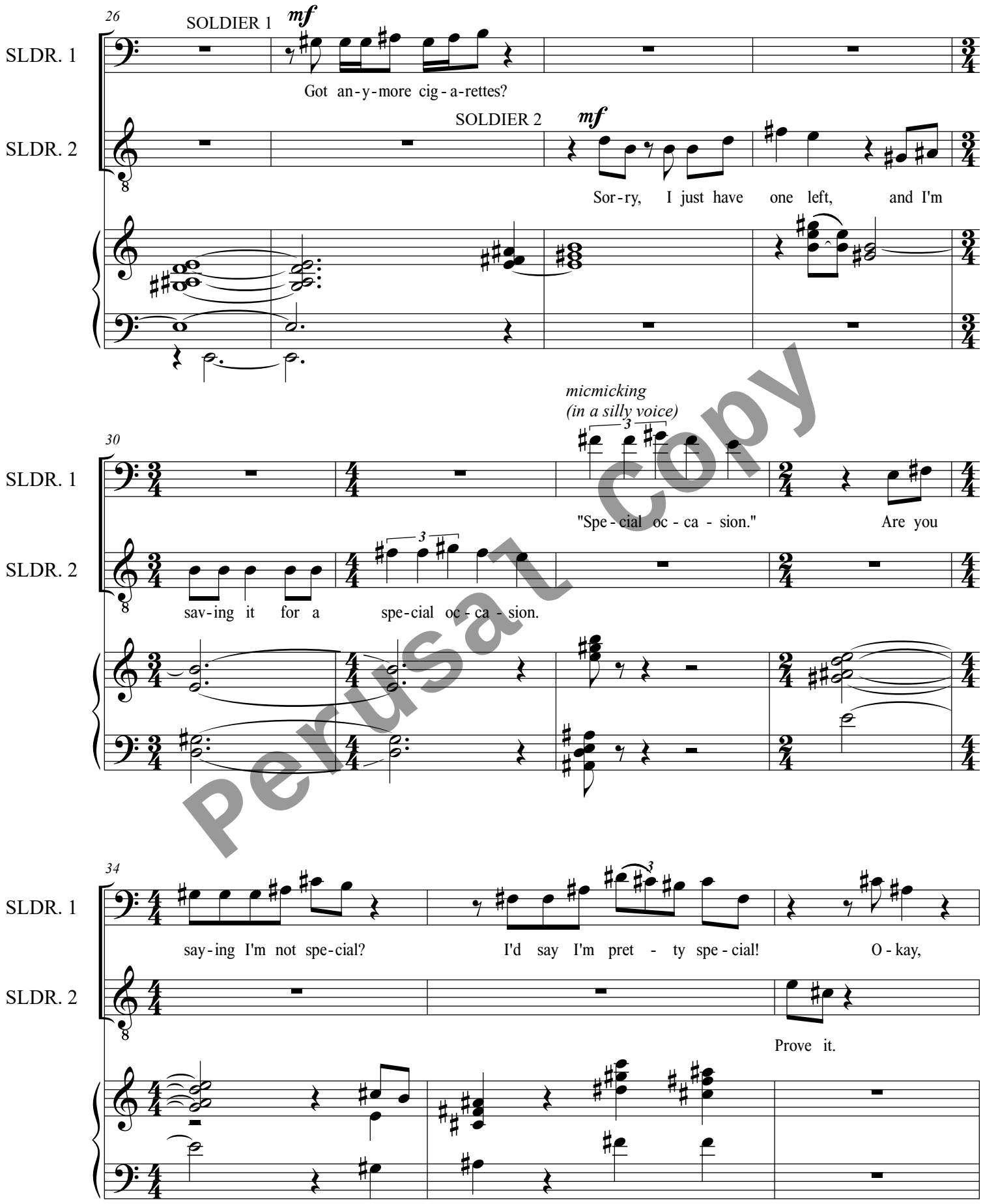


Perusal Copy

Soldier 1 takes his bayonet and whisks the hat off the head of a seated elderly Jewish man. Man, with great difficulty, gets up to retrieve hat.
Option 1: Soldier shoots hat.
Option 2: Soldier shoots man.

37

SLDR. 1

watch this:

p *cresc.*

42

SLDR. 2

Repeat ad lib. *a tempo*

SOLDIER 2

That's the best that you can do?

Soldiers walk off, laughing and talking inaudibly.

Repeat ad lib. *a tempo*

ff *f*

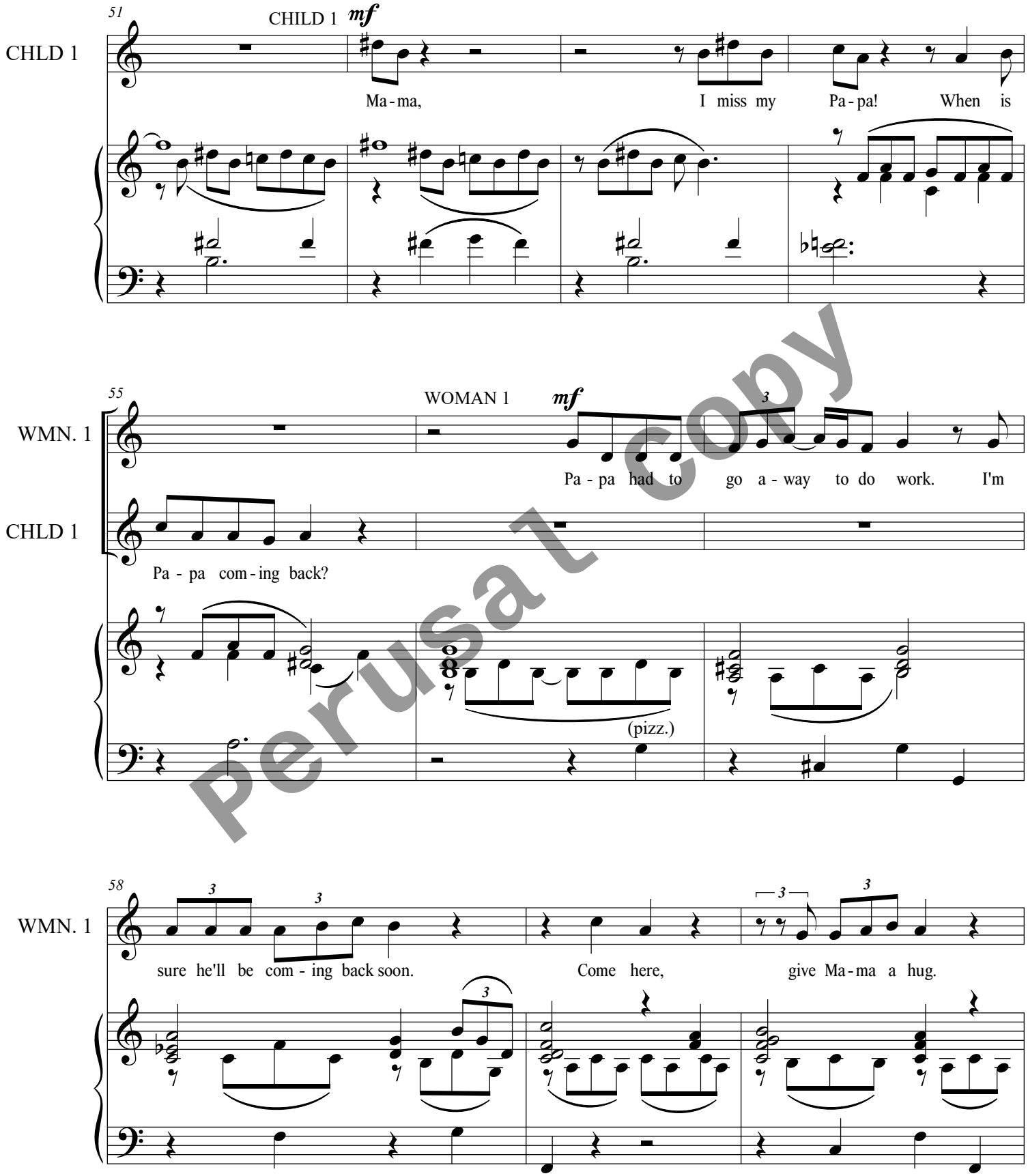
46

f

48

p

Perusal Copy



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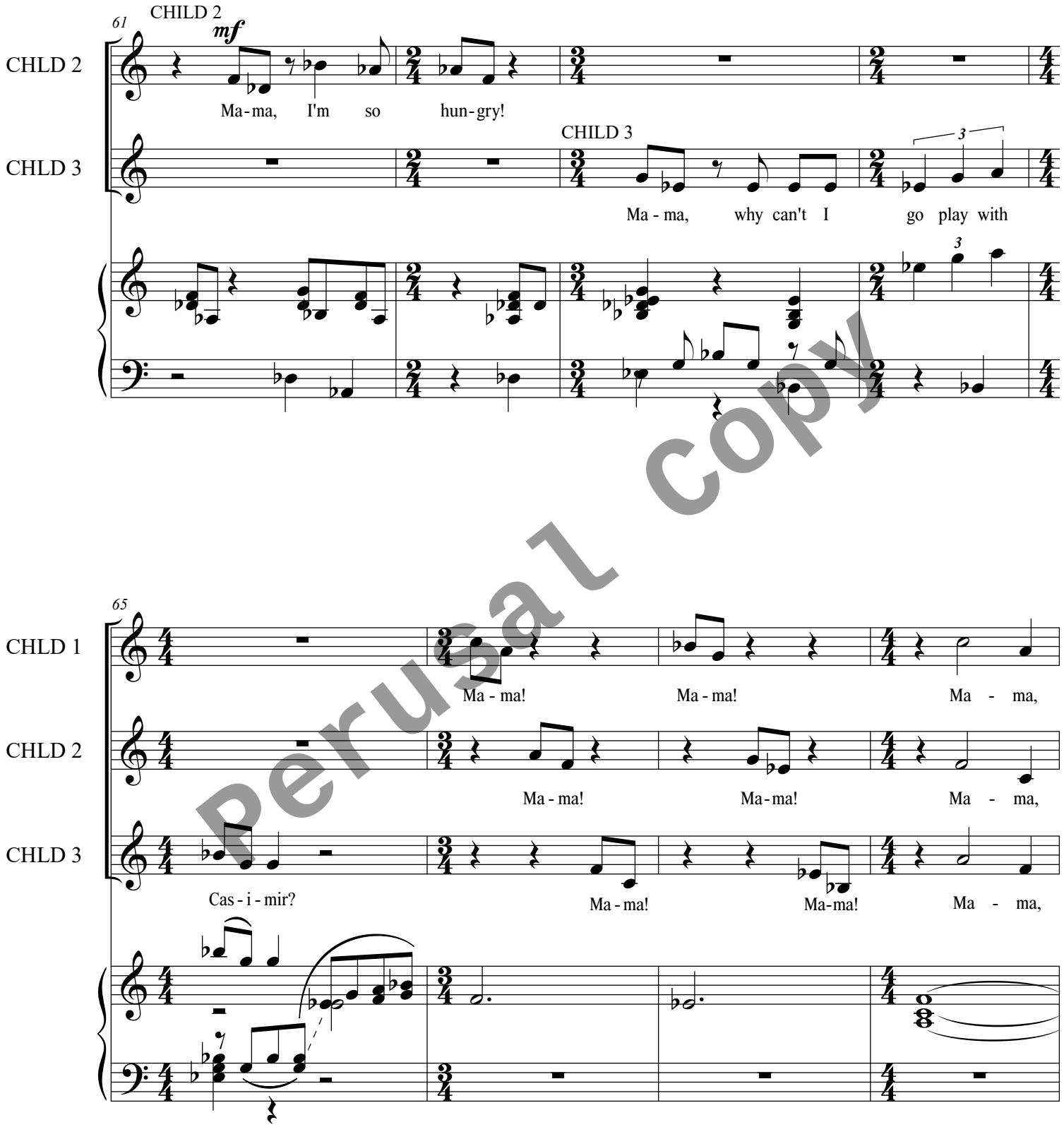

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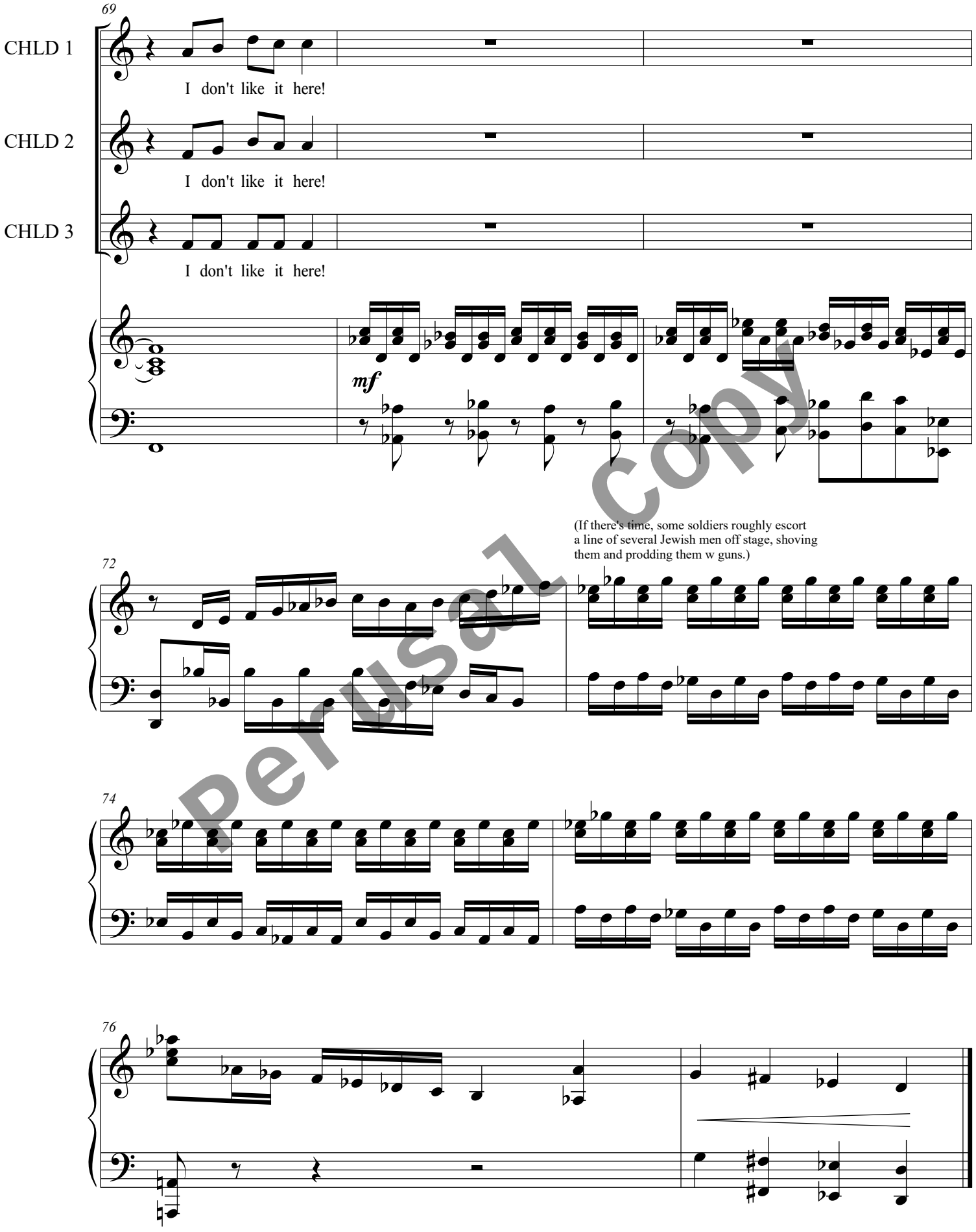


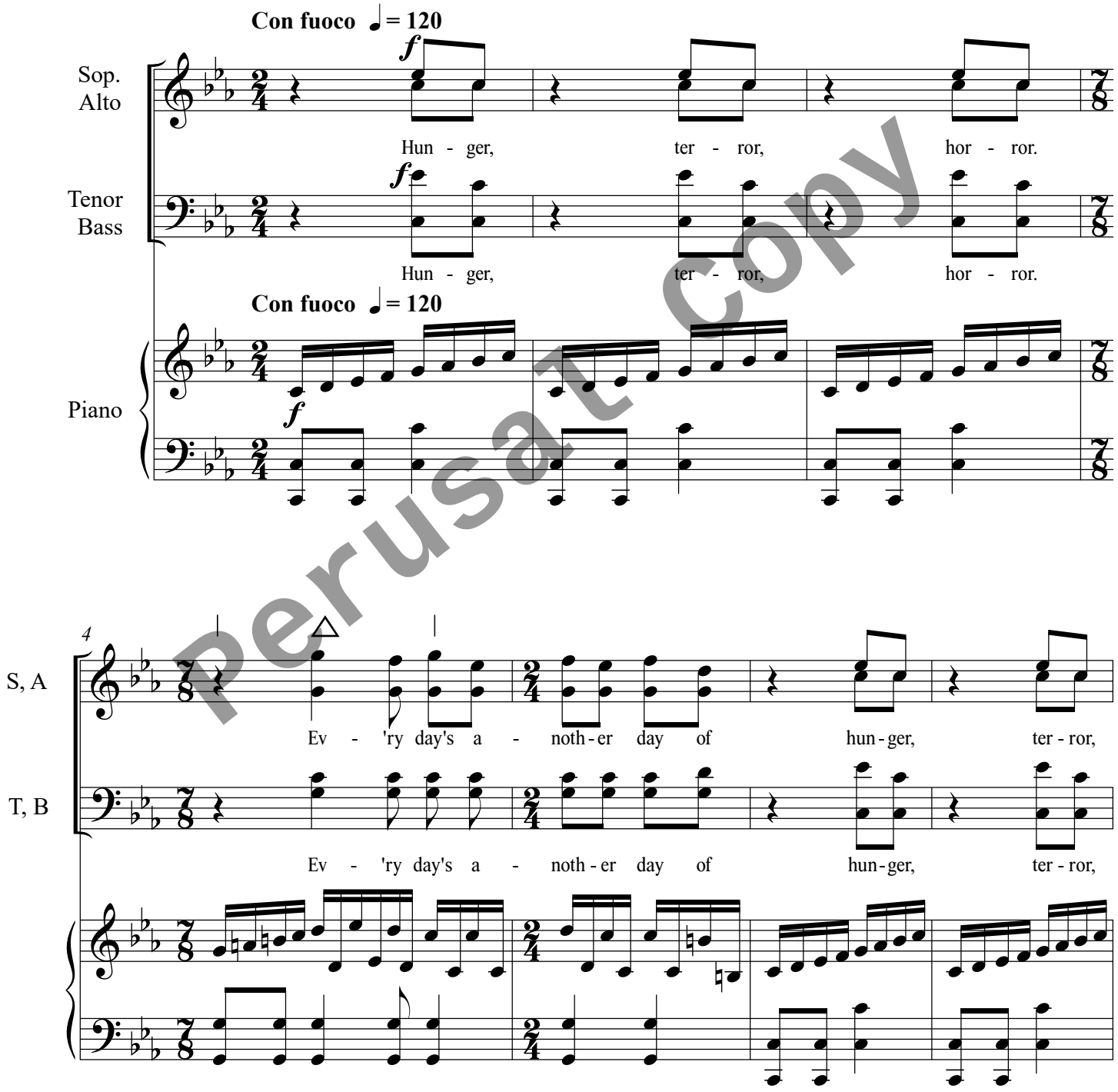
Perusal copy

[Duration: :51]

Setting: Street scene in the ghetto. Streets are crowded with Jews in ragged clothing sitting, standing, crouching, etc.

ACT II

16. Chorus-1



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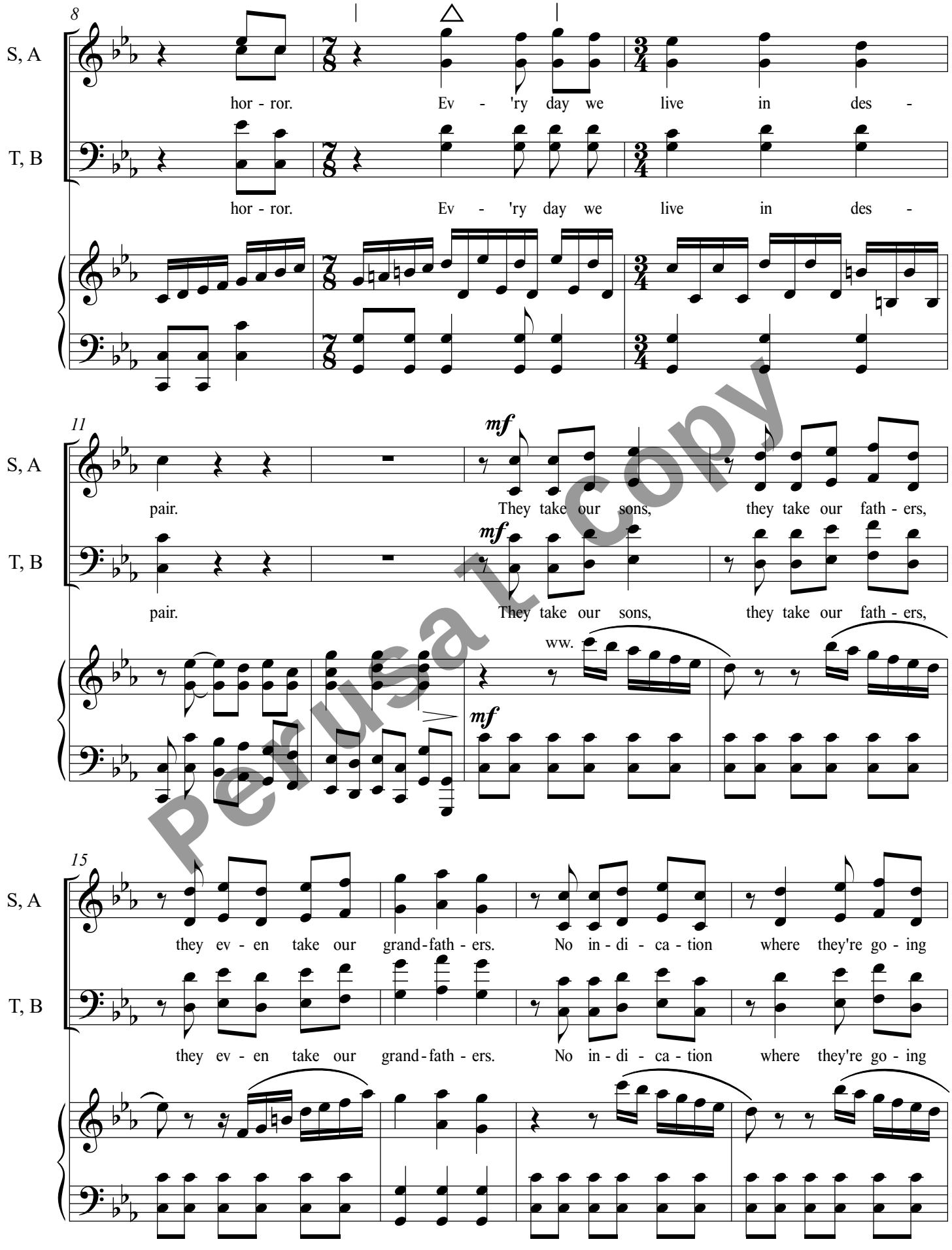
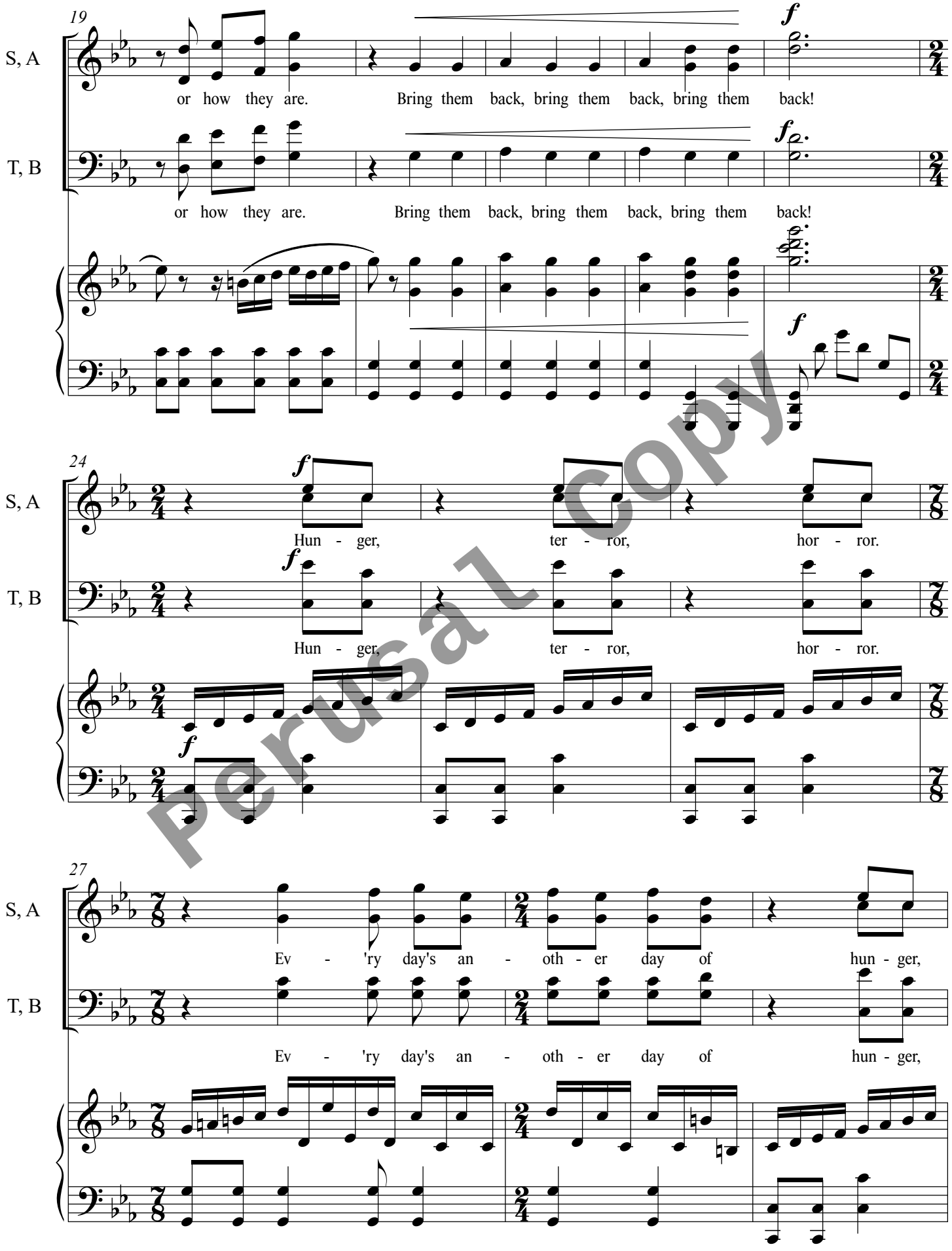
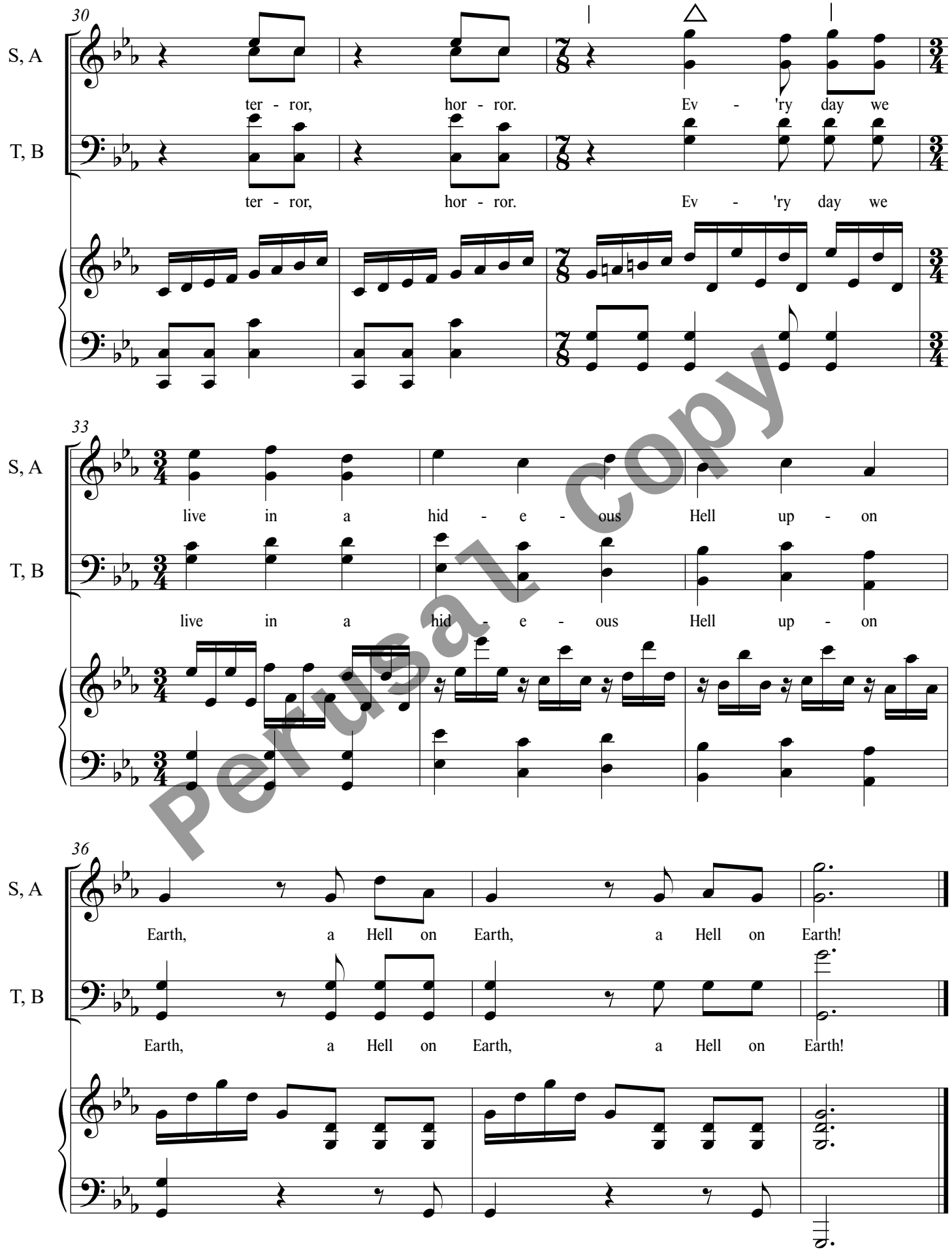


Perusal Copy

16. Chorus-1



Perusal Copy



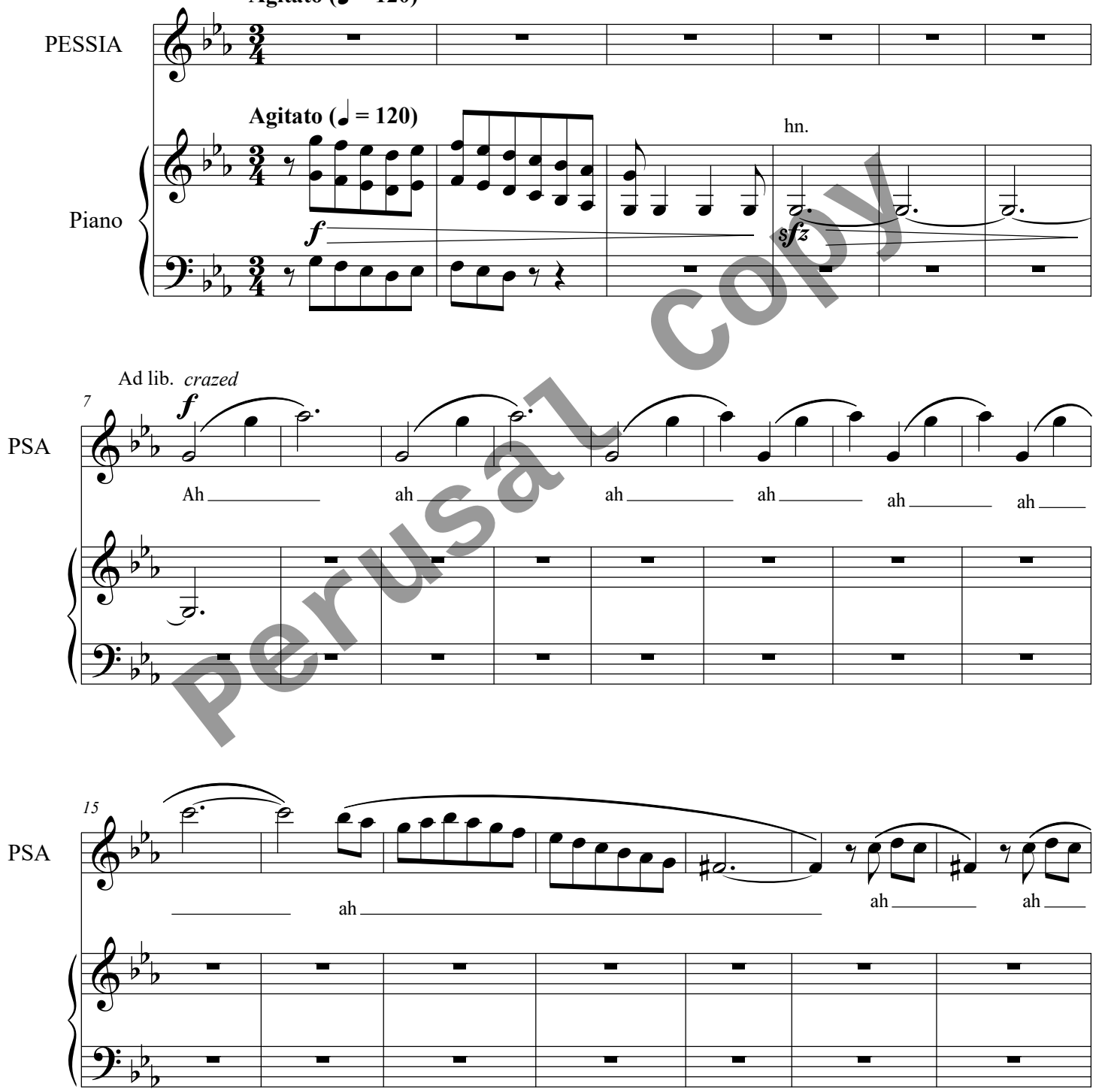
Perusal Copy

[Duration: 3:22]

Setting: Street scene in the ghetto. Pessia Aharonowicz runs onto stage and reports that she has seen the mass killings at Ponary.

17. Pessia's Story

Maybe add some interlude music for the street scene



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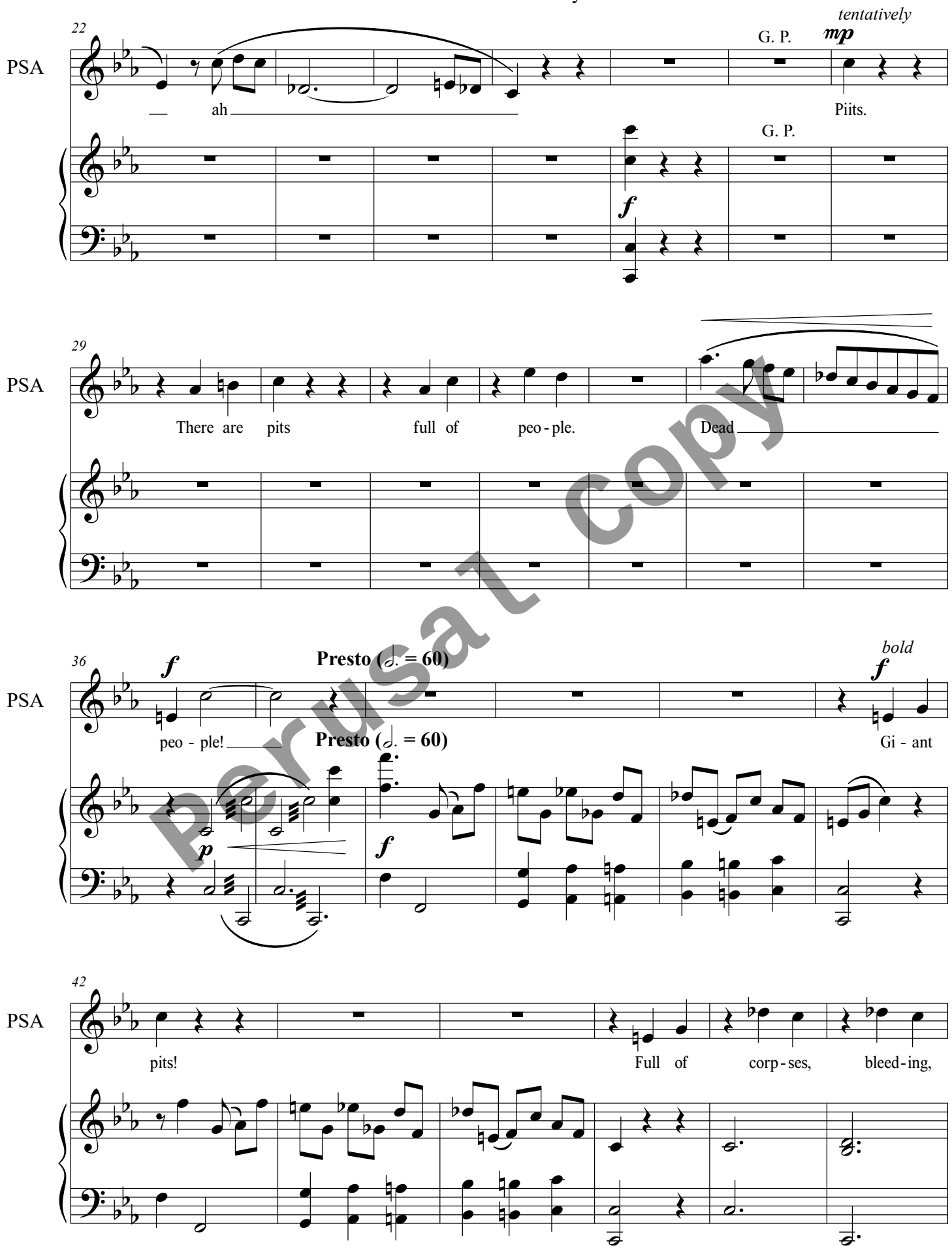

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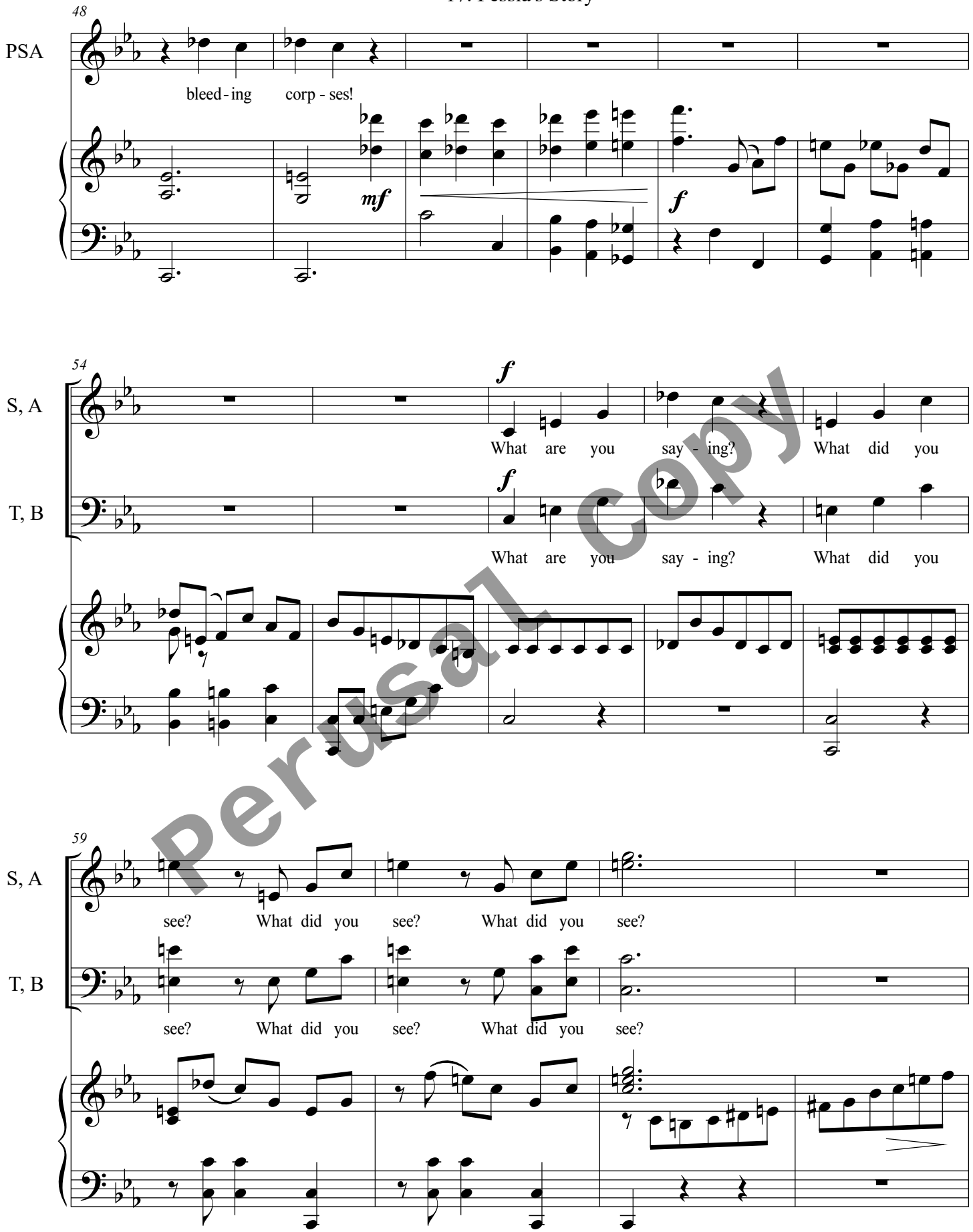

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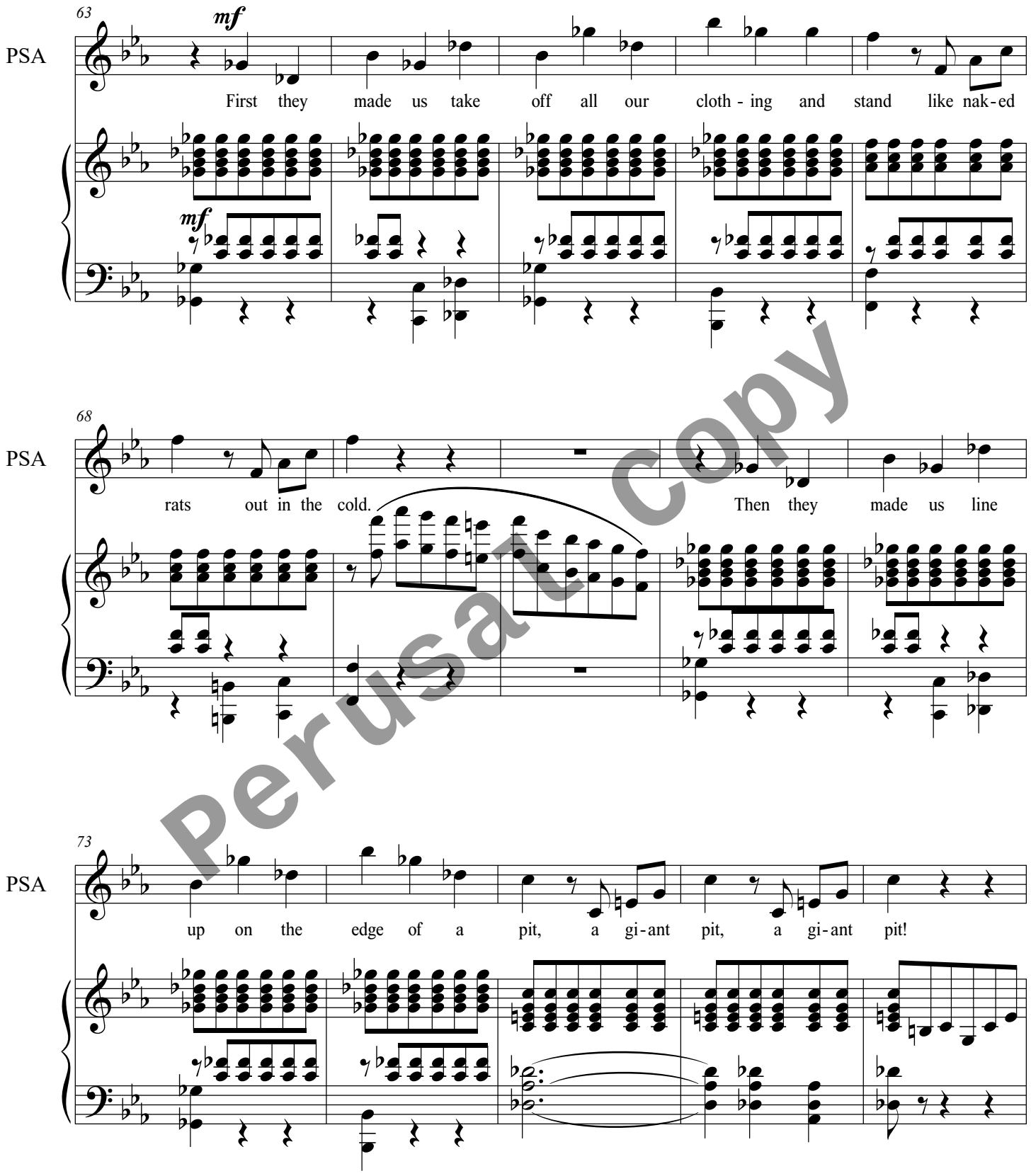

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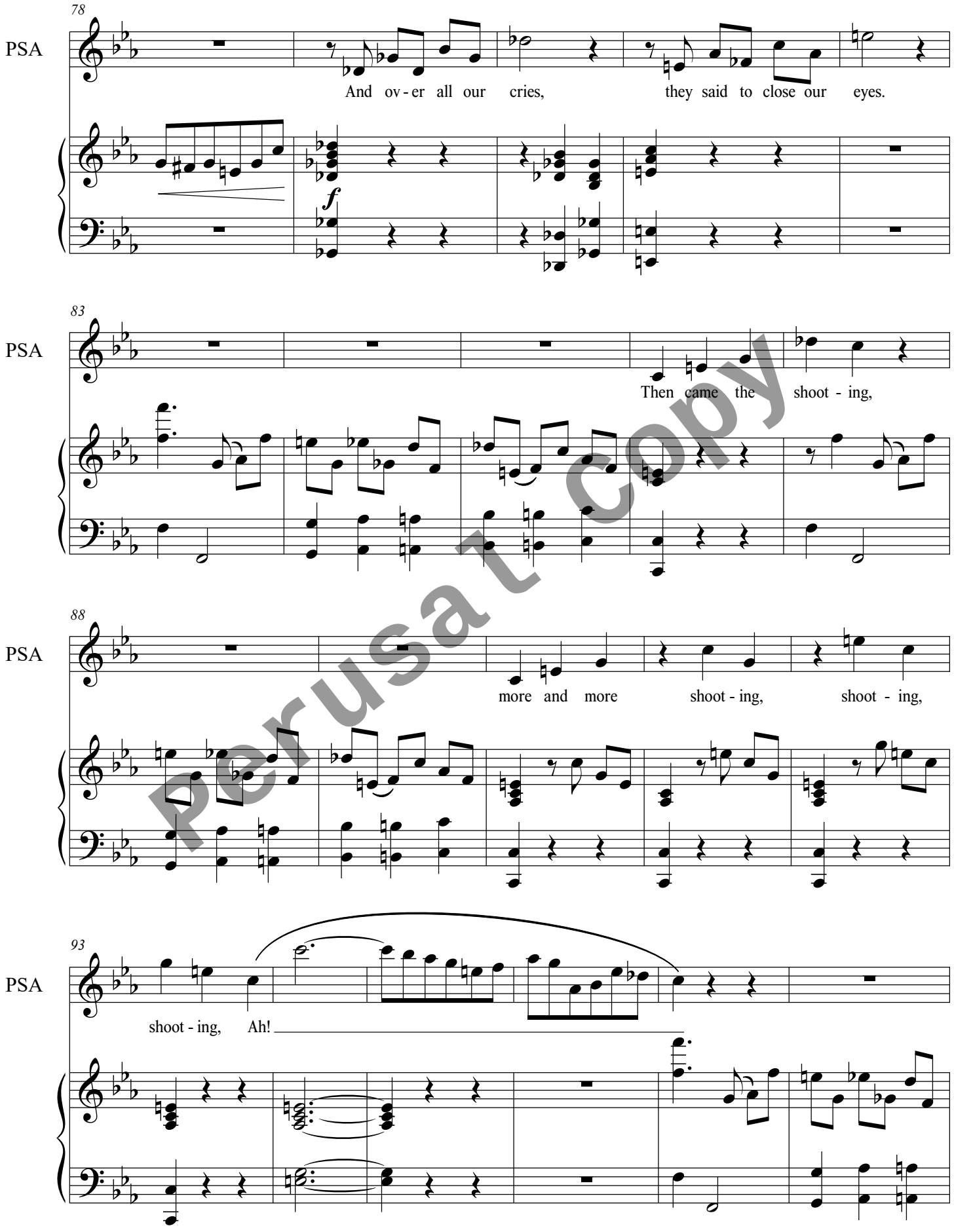

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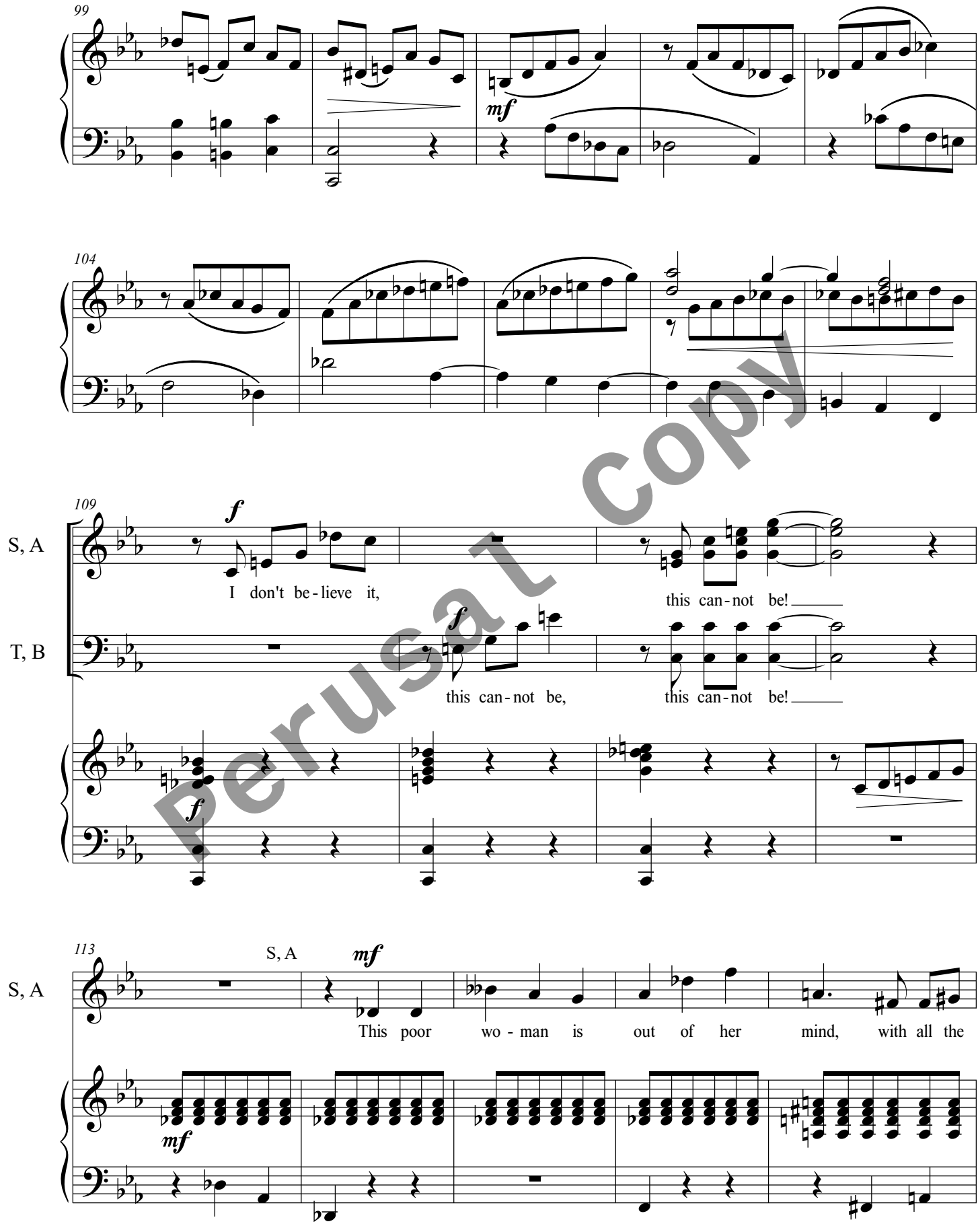

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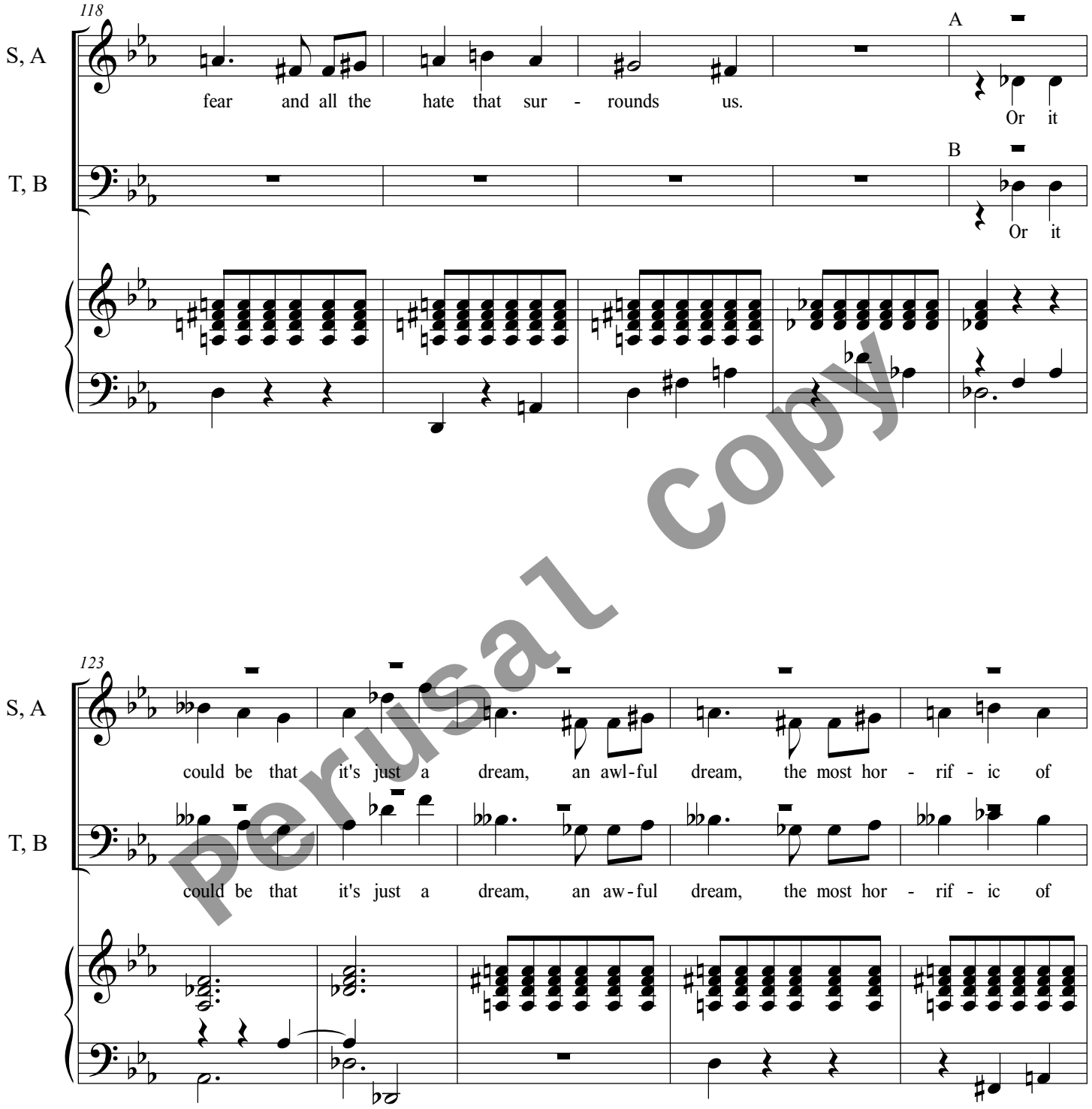

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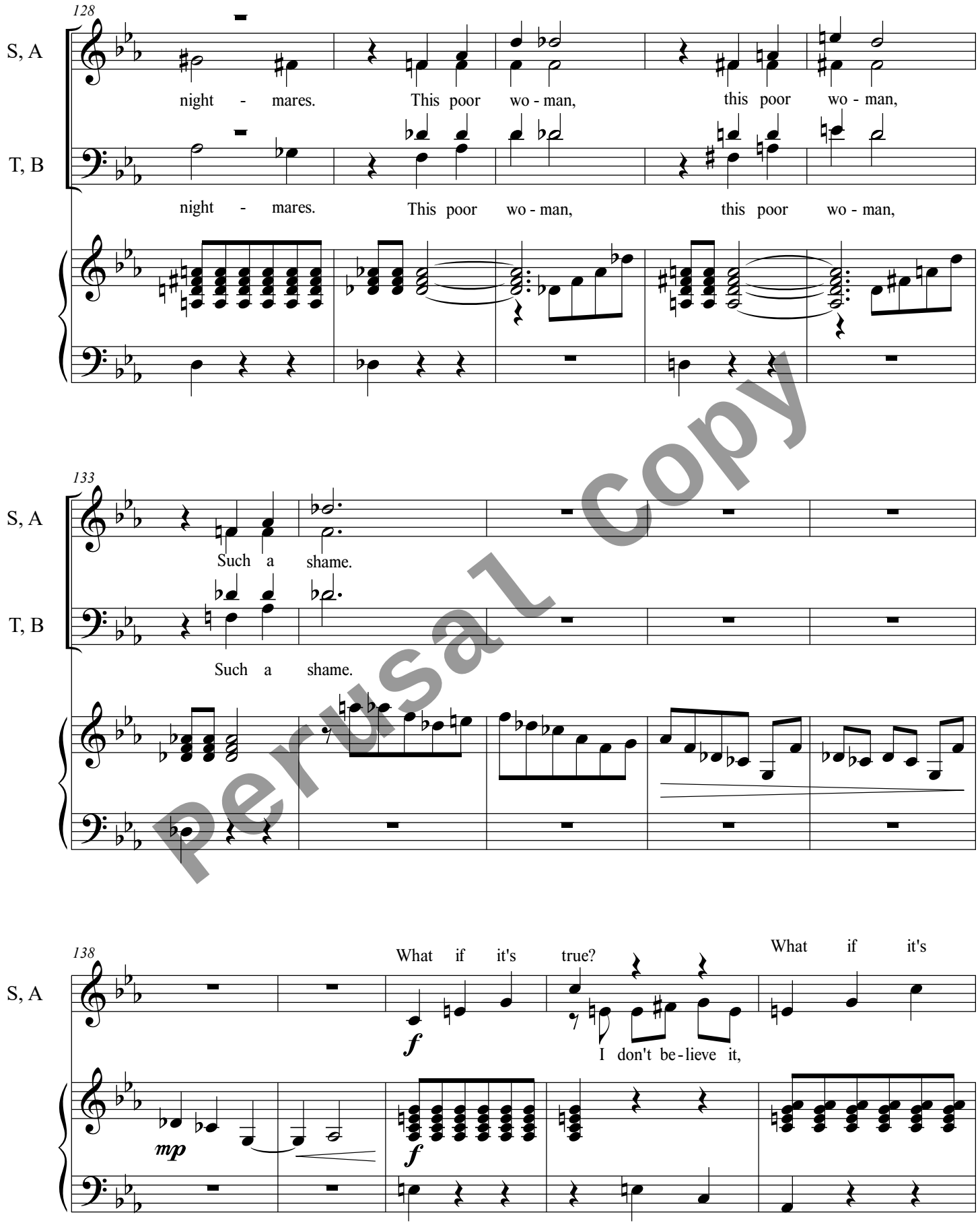

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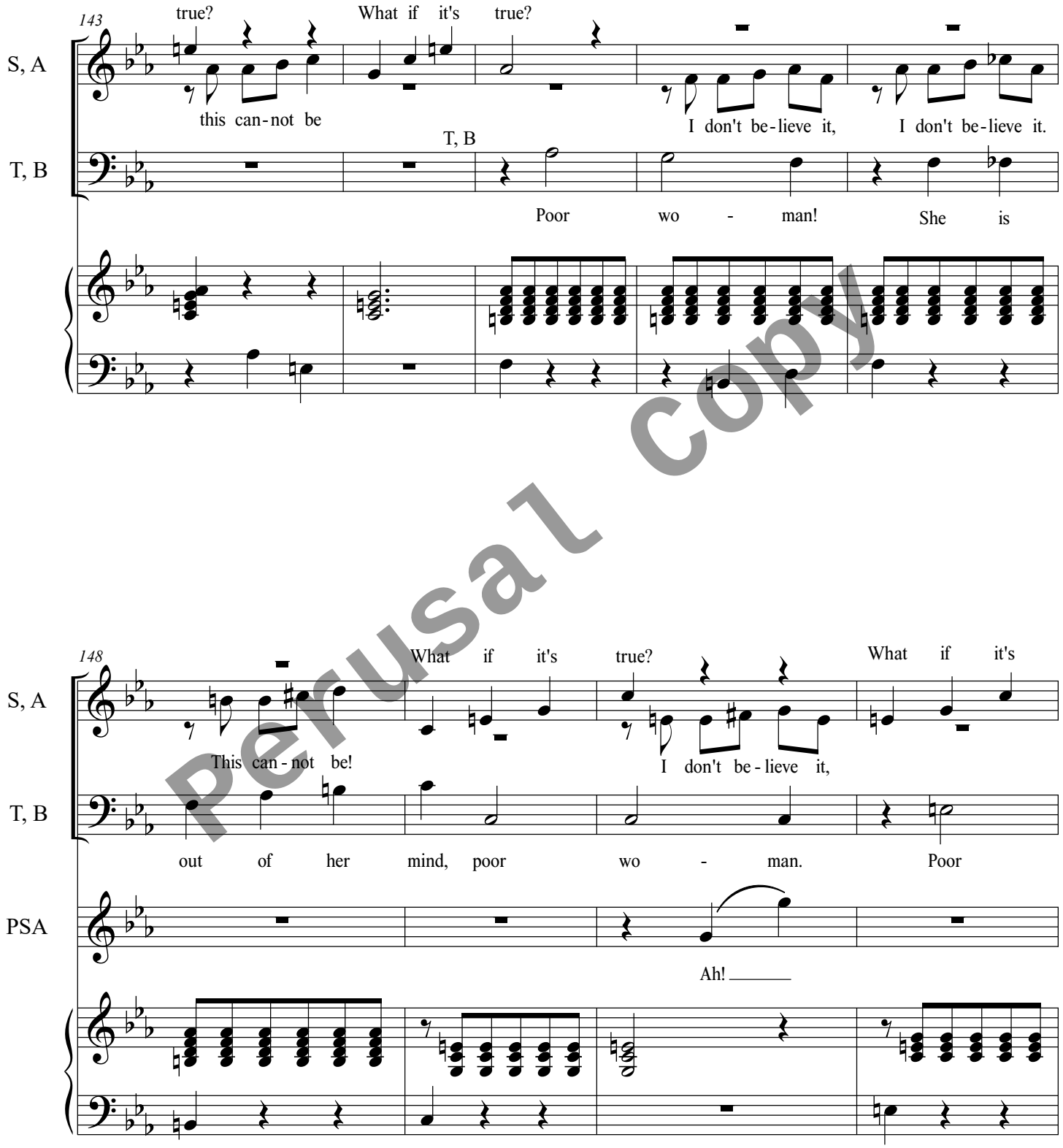

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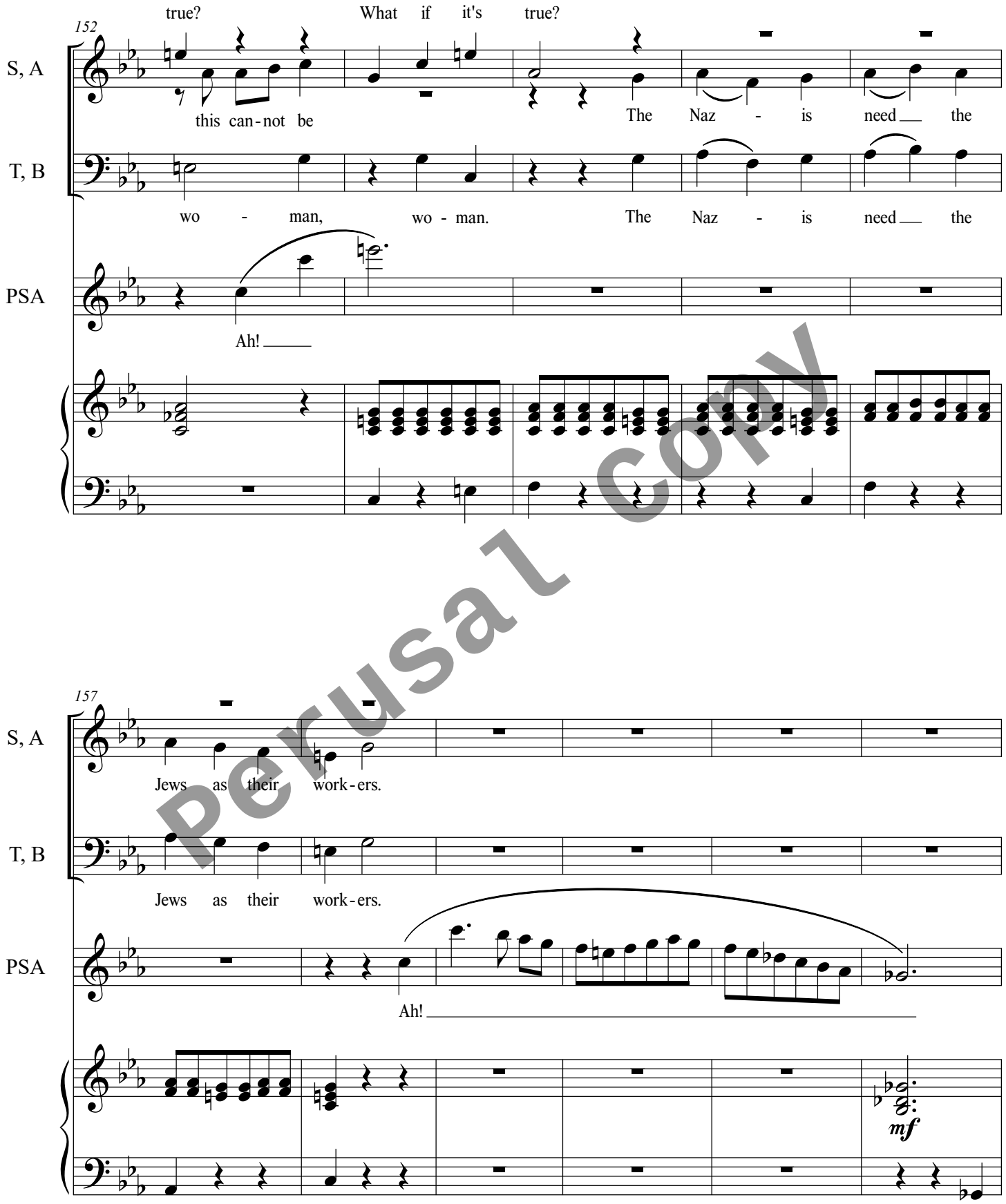

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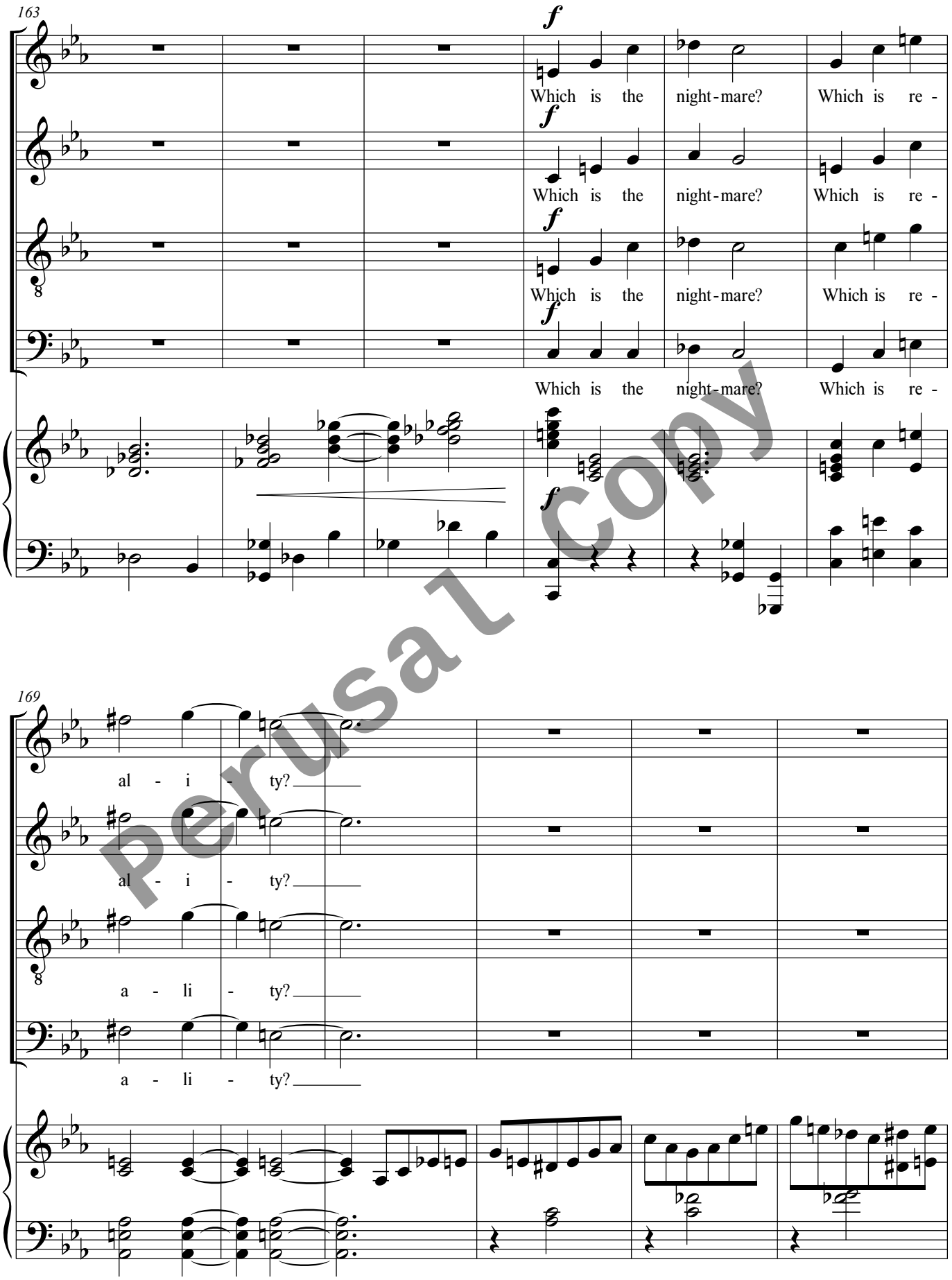
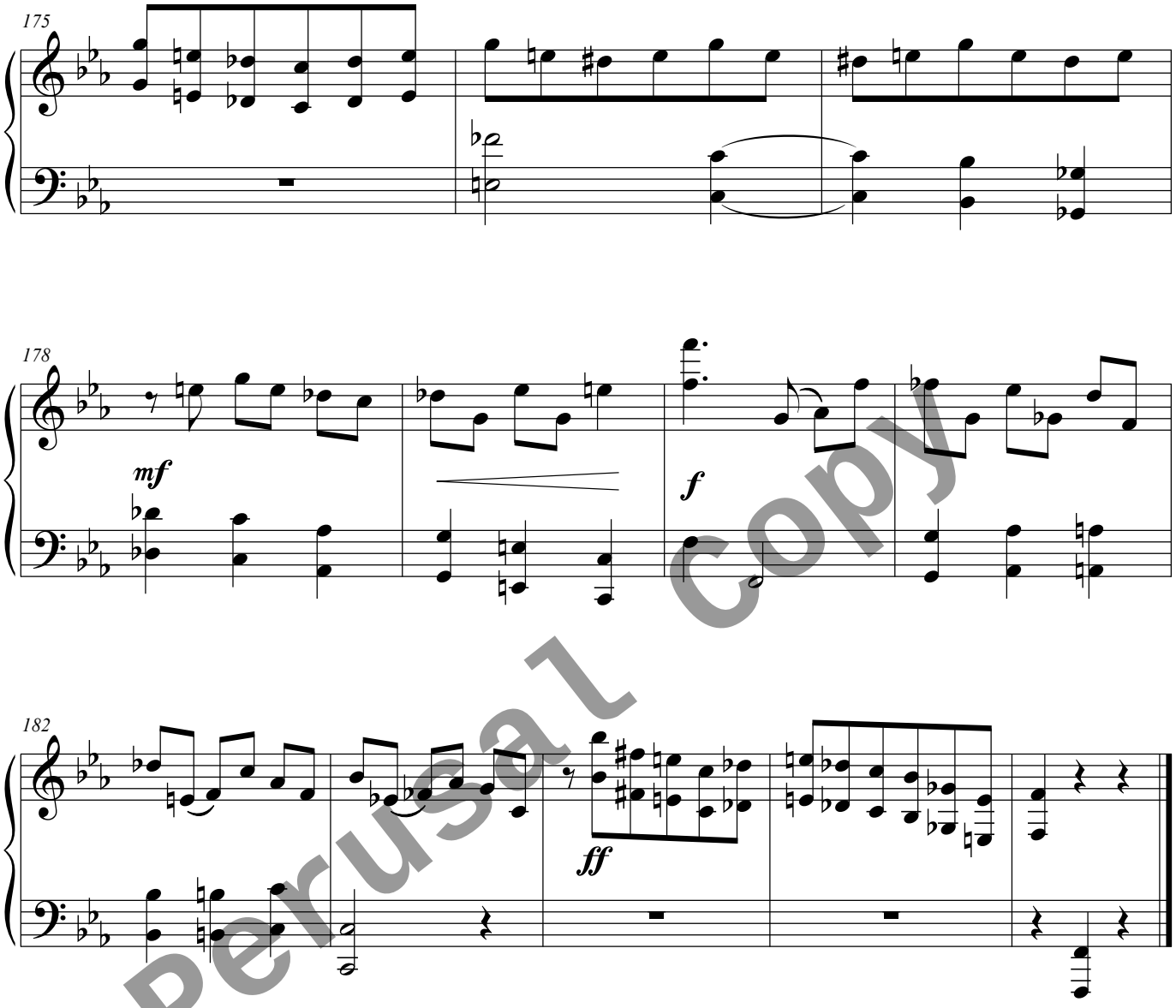


Perusal Copy

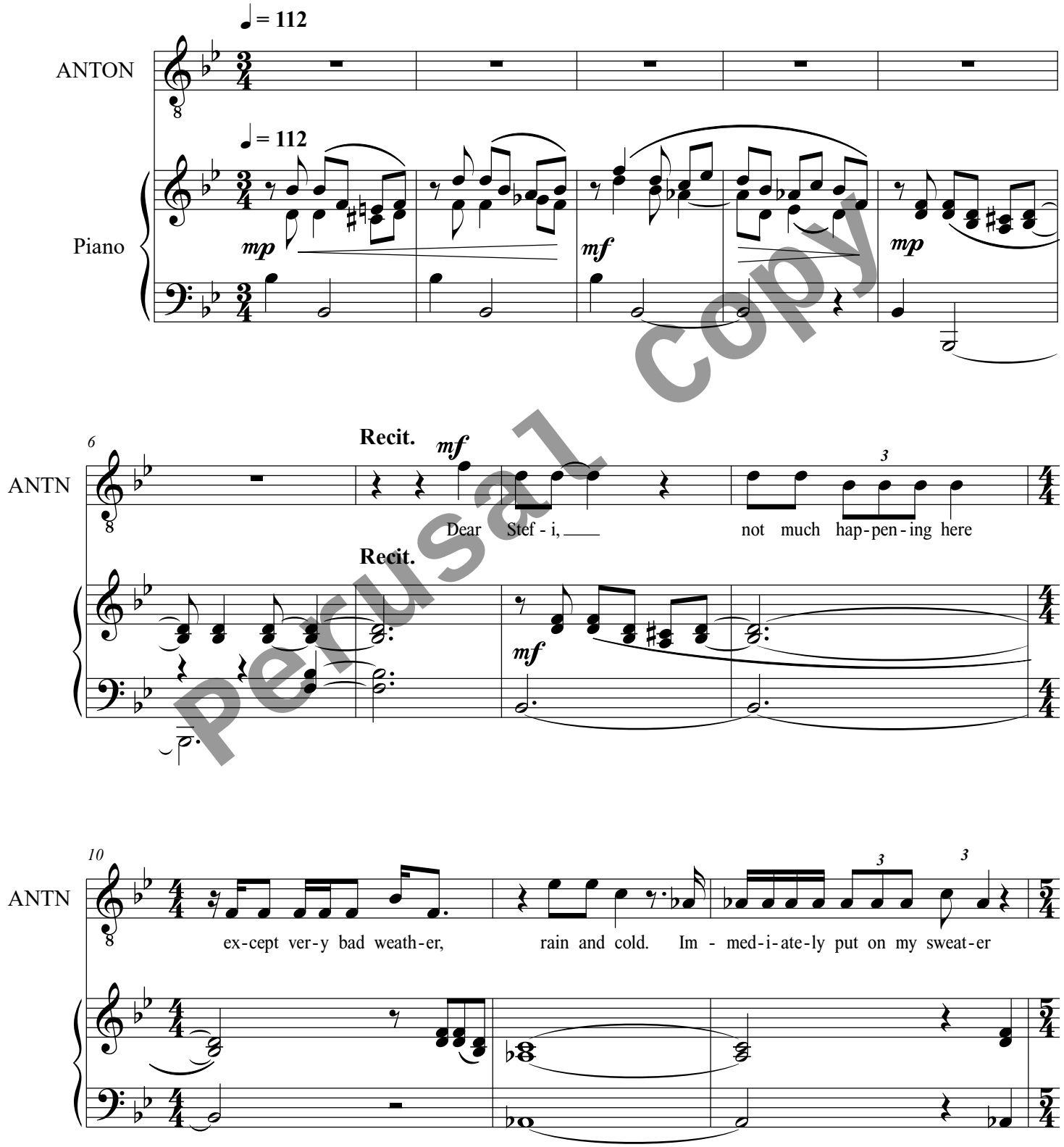


Perusal Copy

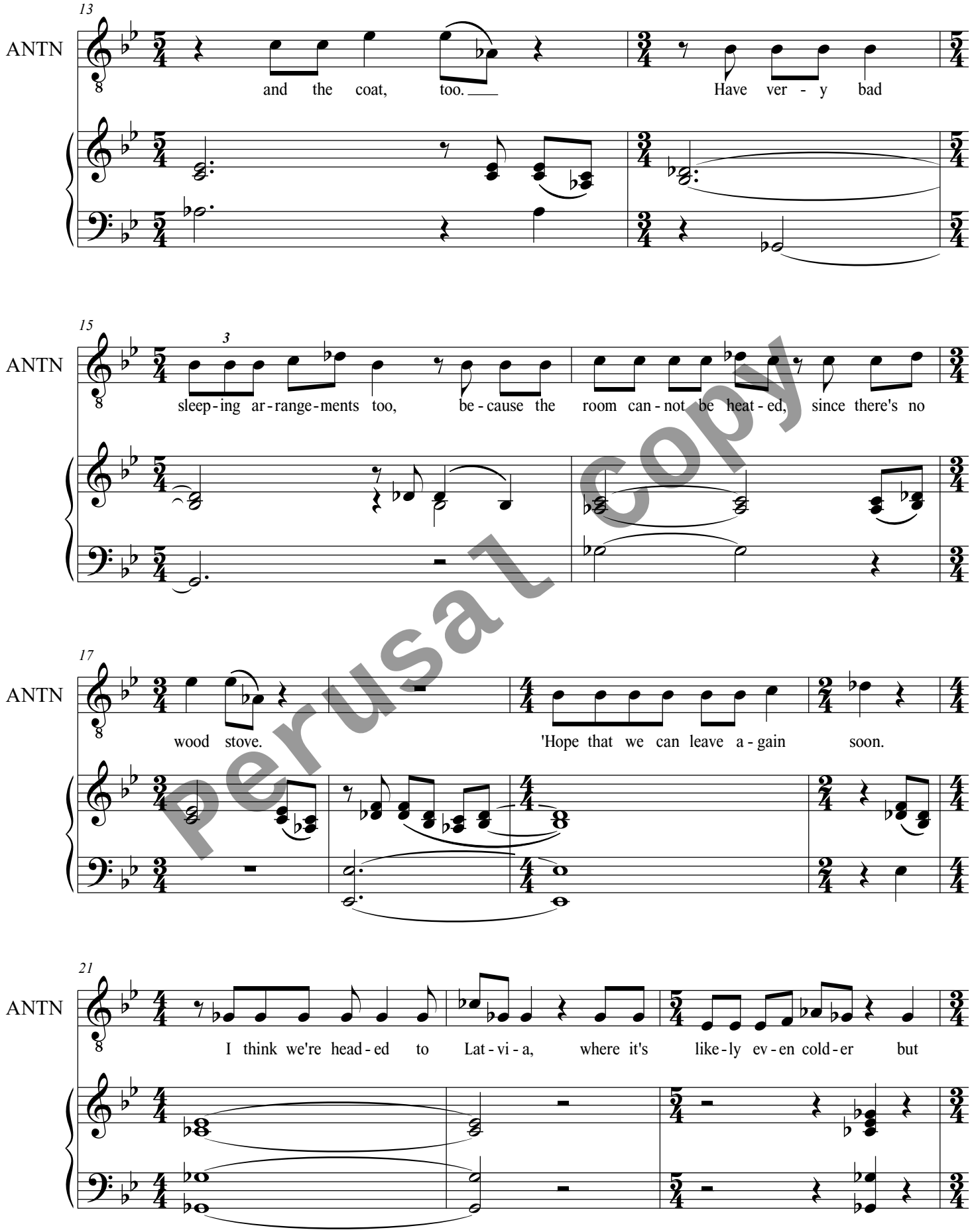
[Duration: 1:26]

Setting: We see Schmid in a non-descript small room writing a letter to Stefi.

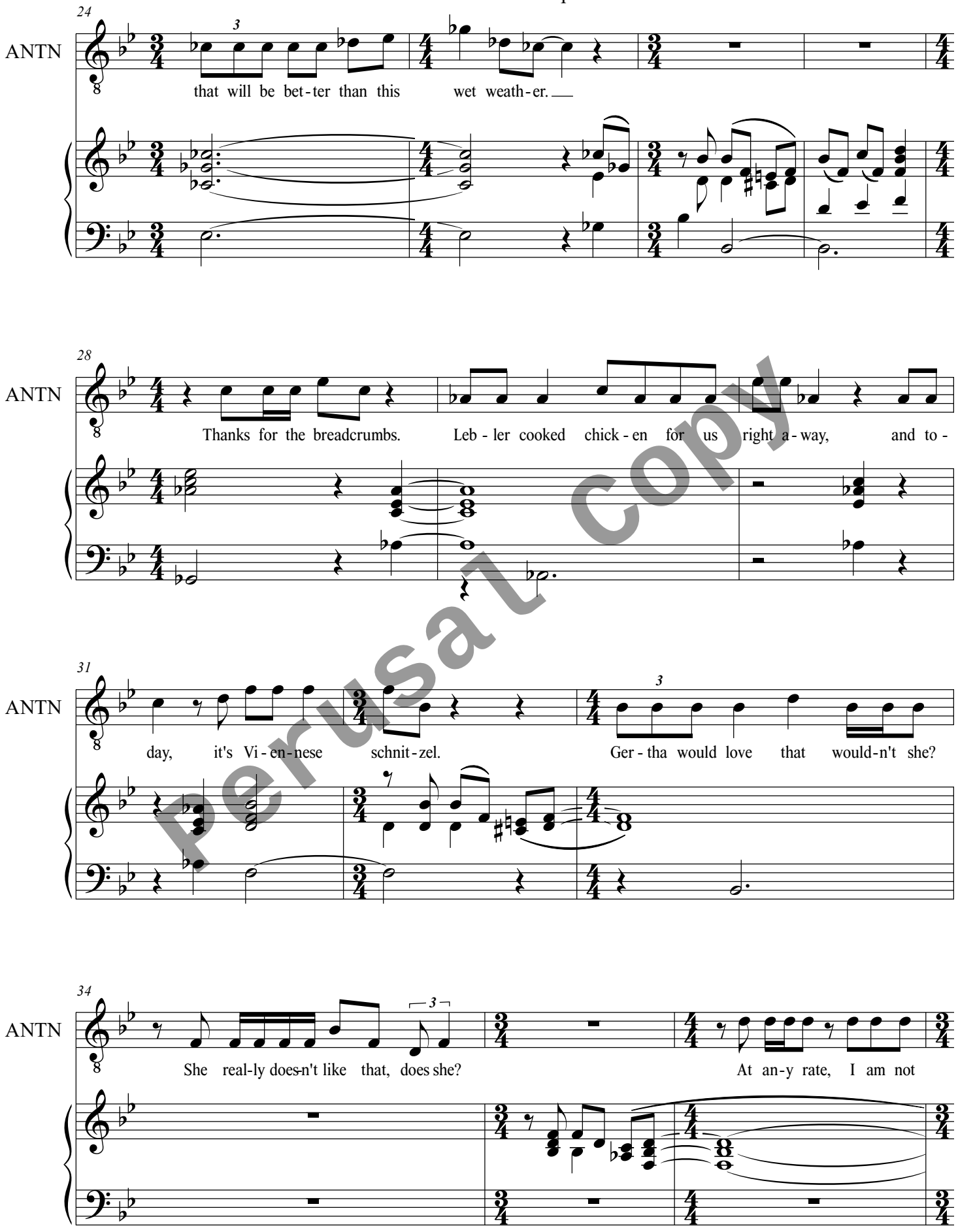
18. Letter of Sept. 1



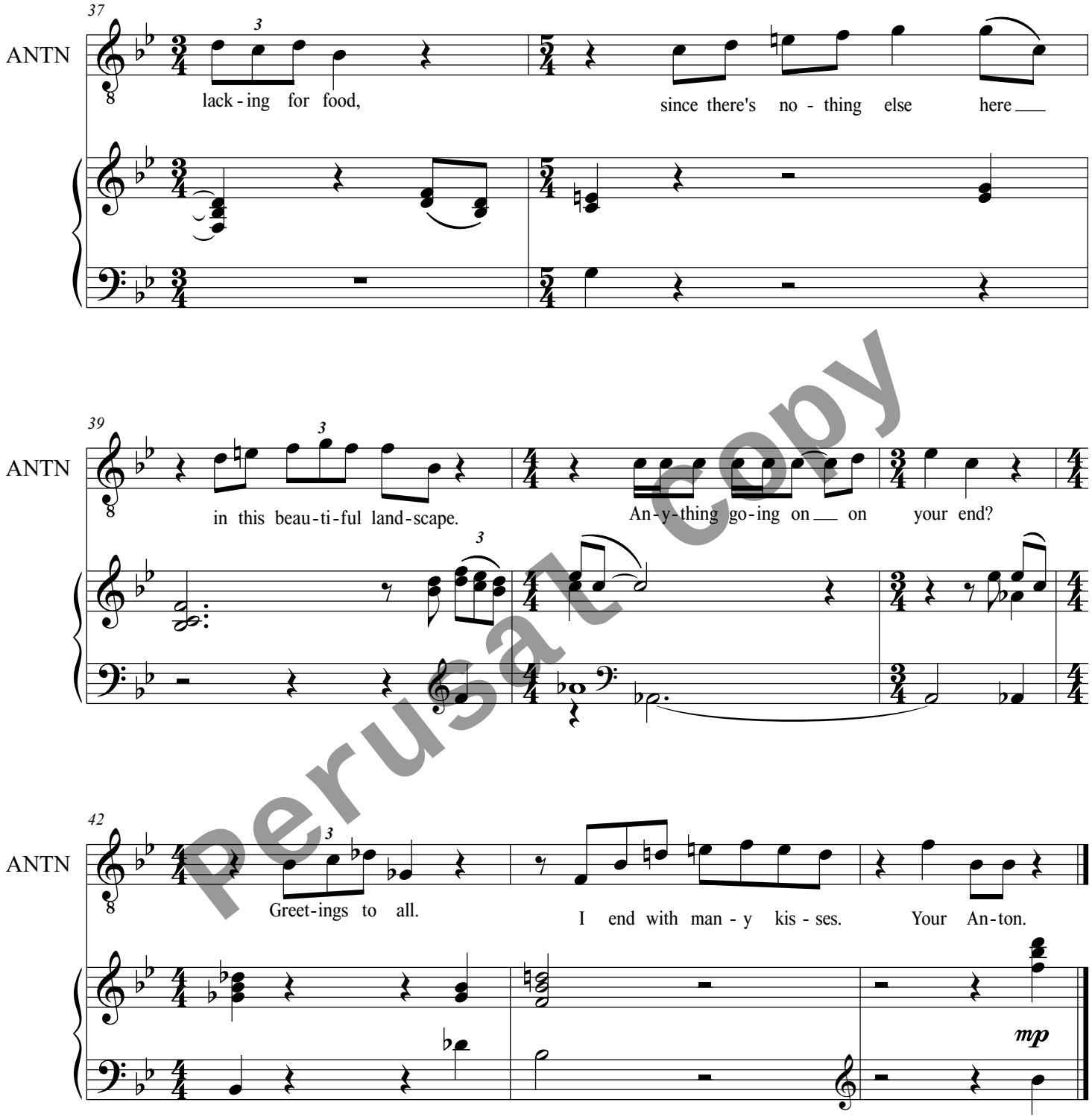
Perusal Copy



Perusal Copy



Perusal Copy

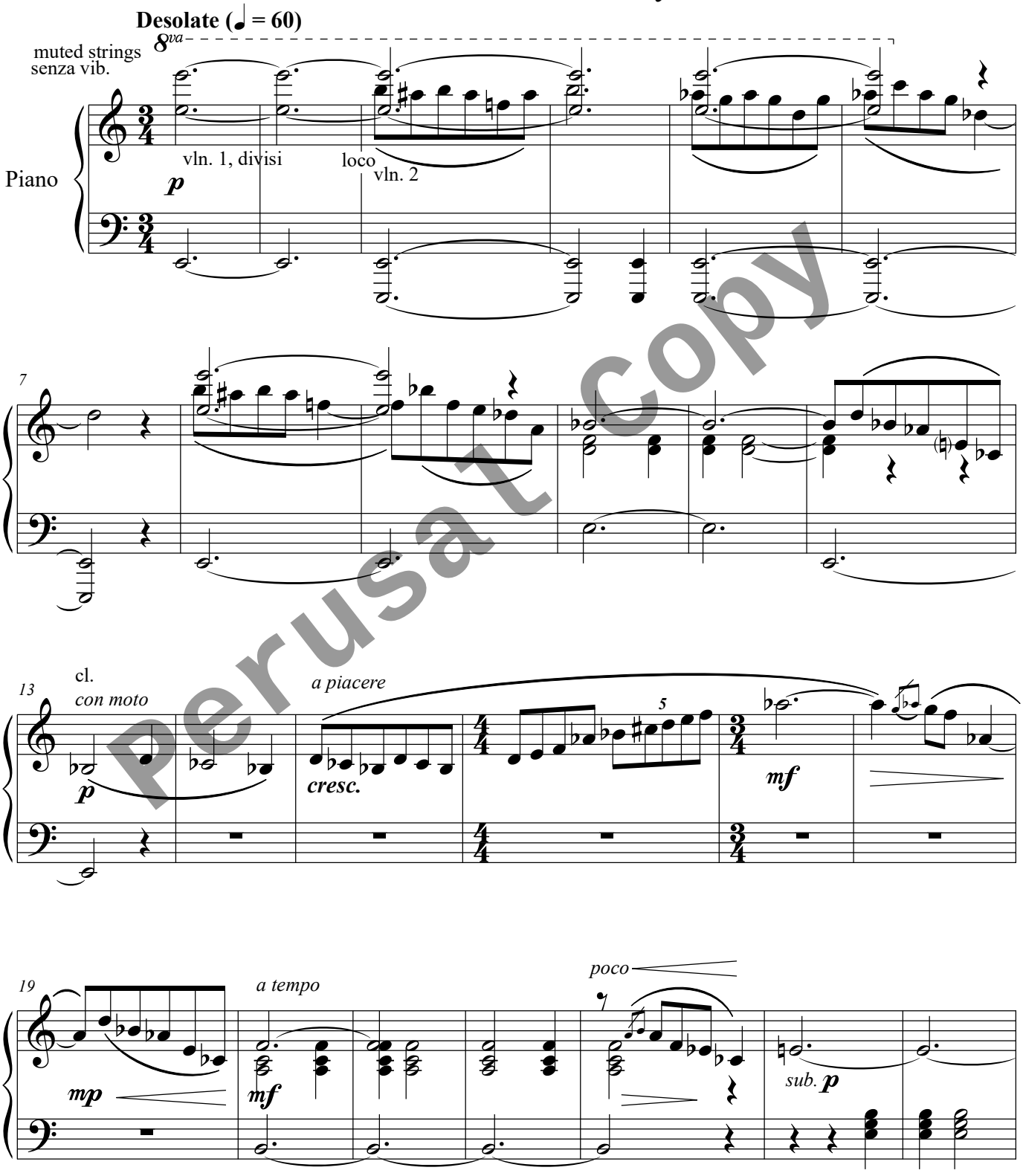


Perusal Copy

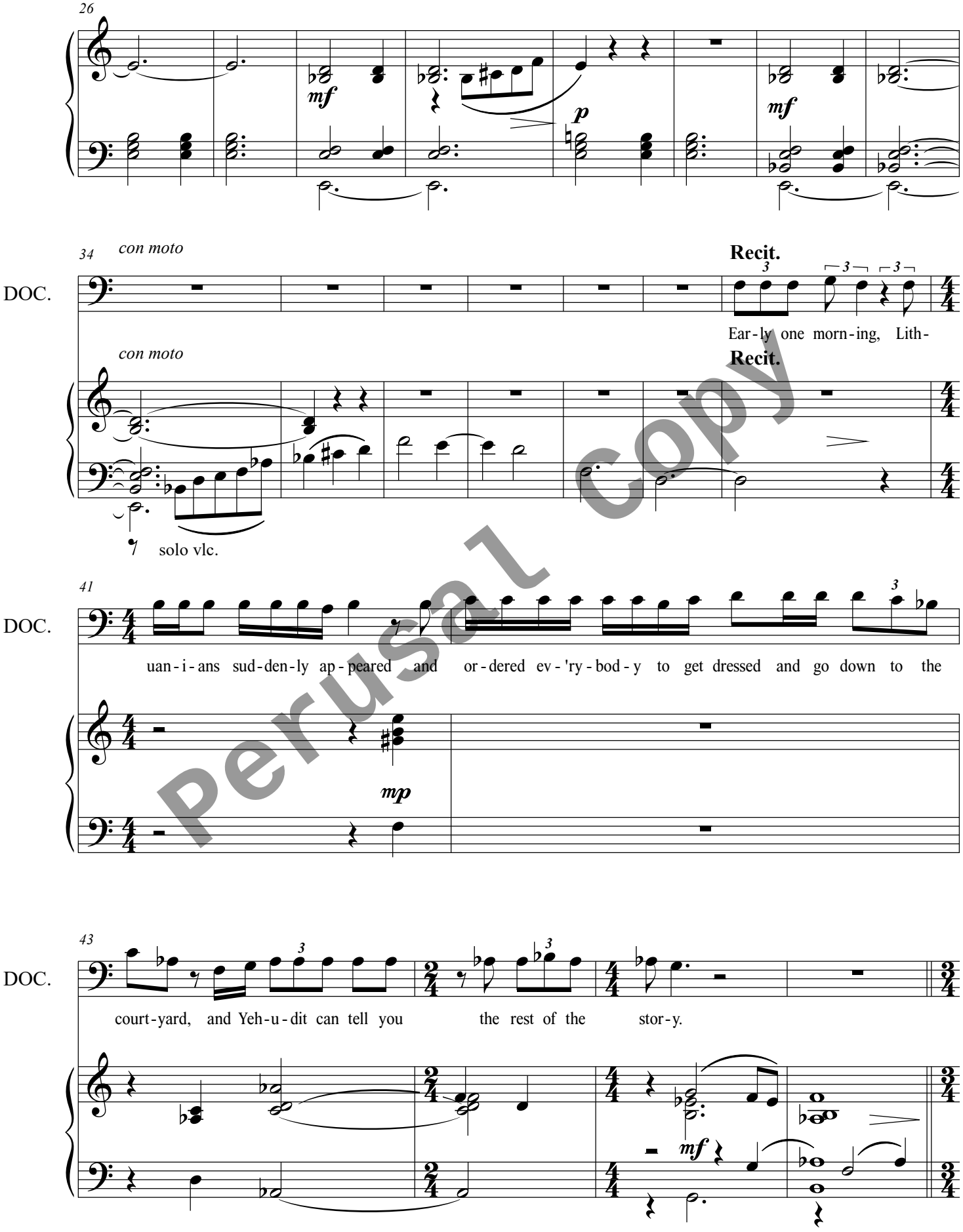
[Duration: 5:27 (until m. 52)]

Setting: In the ghetto hospital, 11-year-old Yehudit Trojak lies in a hospital bed. Her shoulder and upper arm are bandaged. The doctor welcomes Abba Kovner into the room and leads him over to Yehudit.

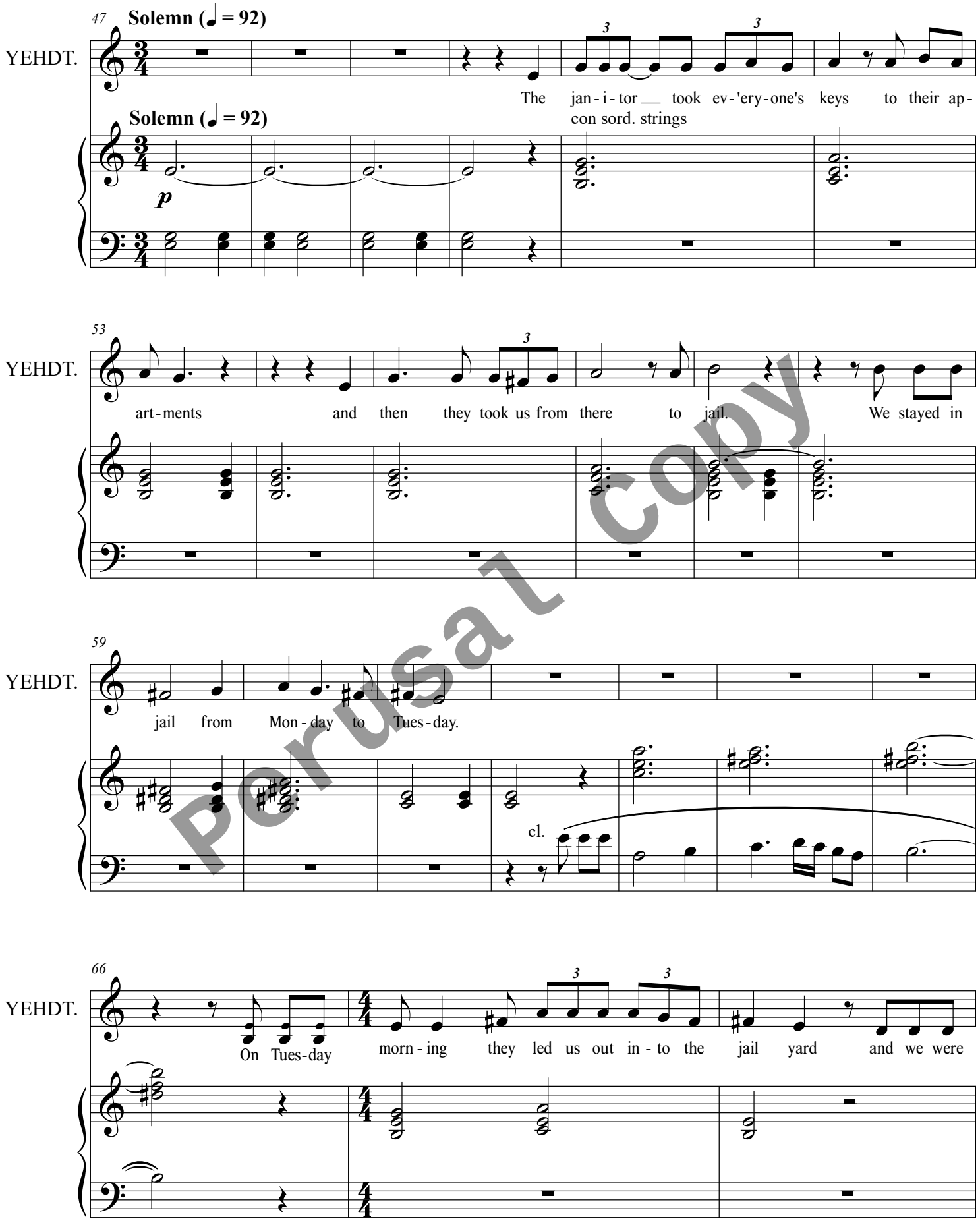
19. Yehudit's Story



Perusal Copy



Perusal Copy



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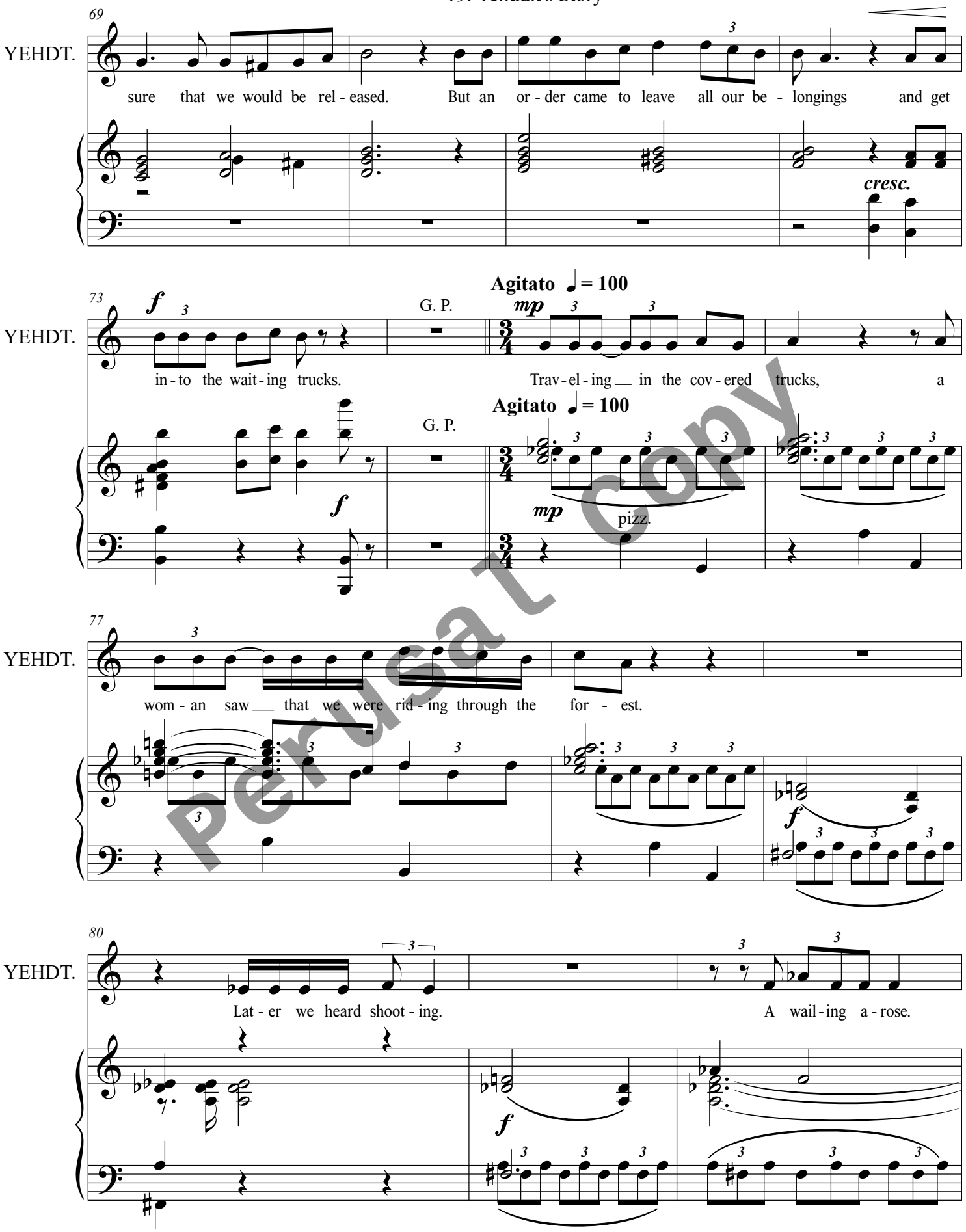

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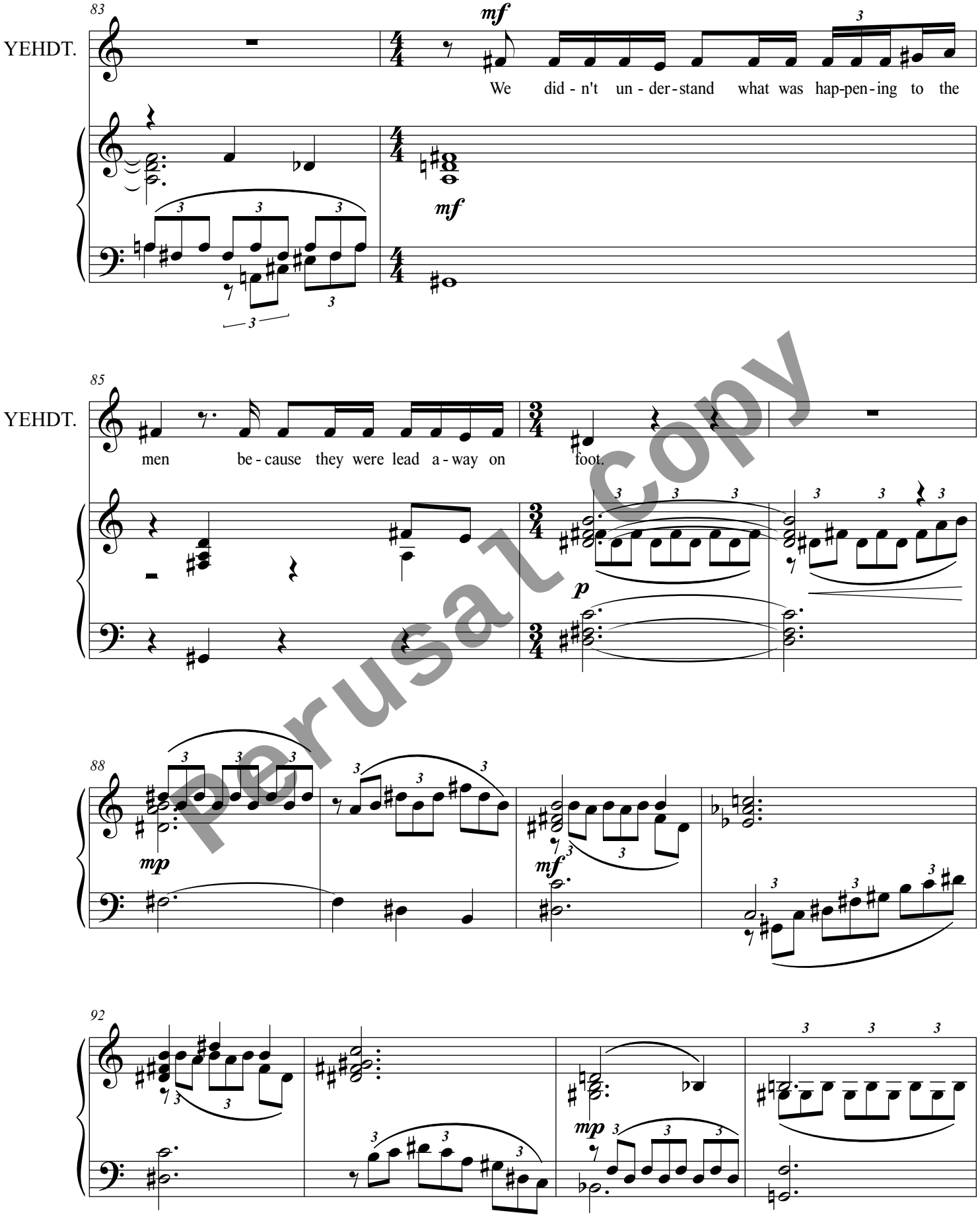

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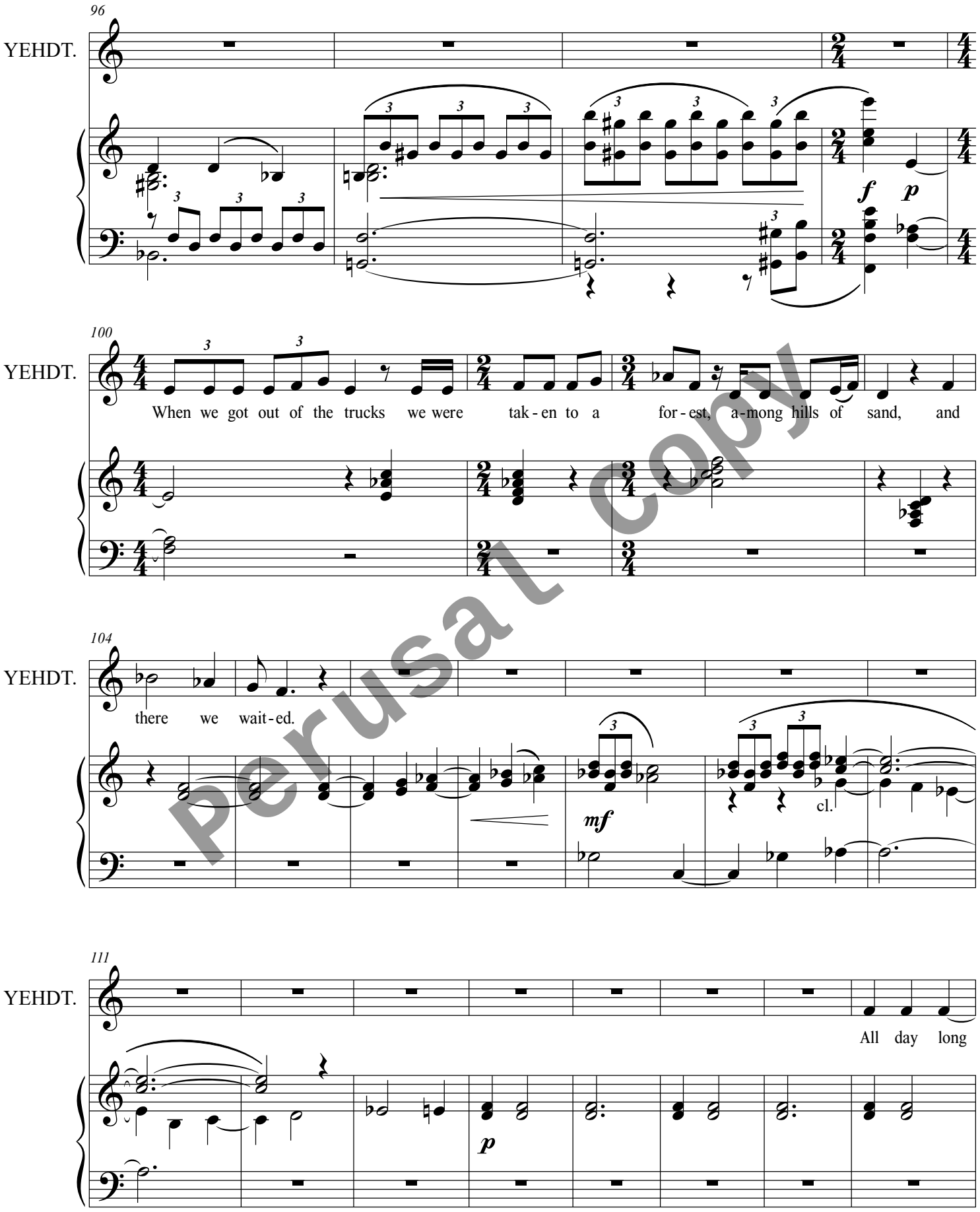

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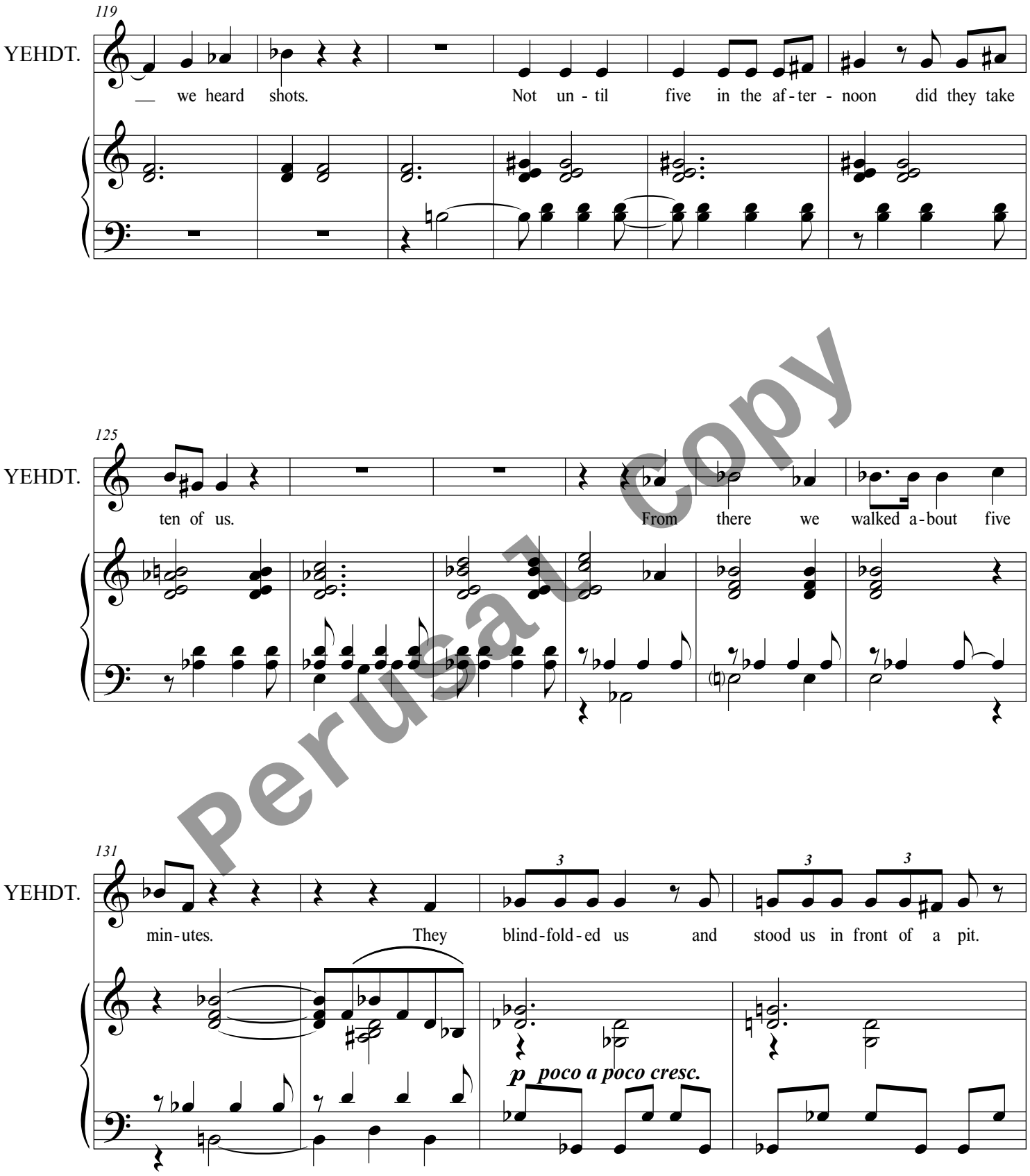

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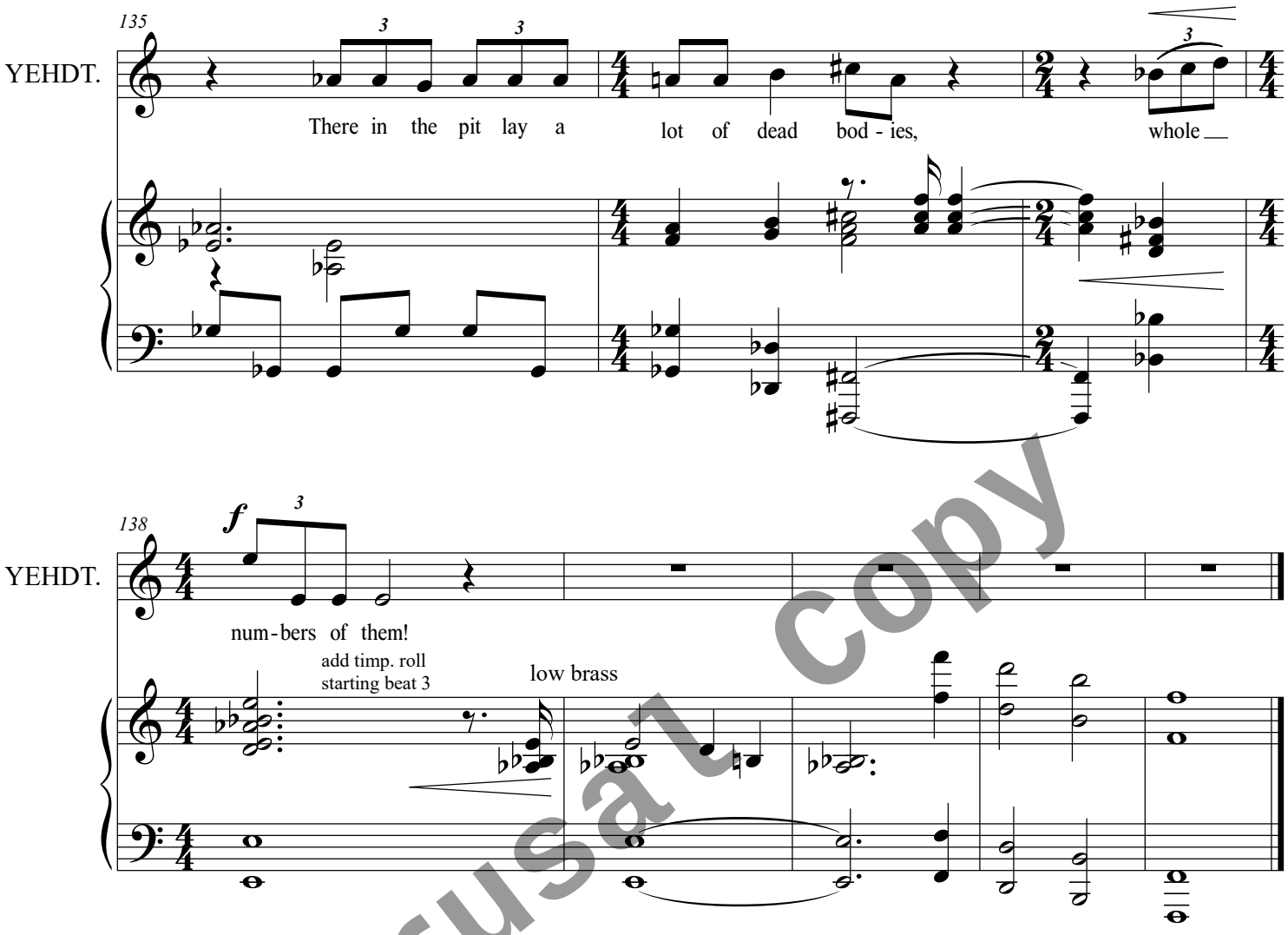
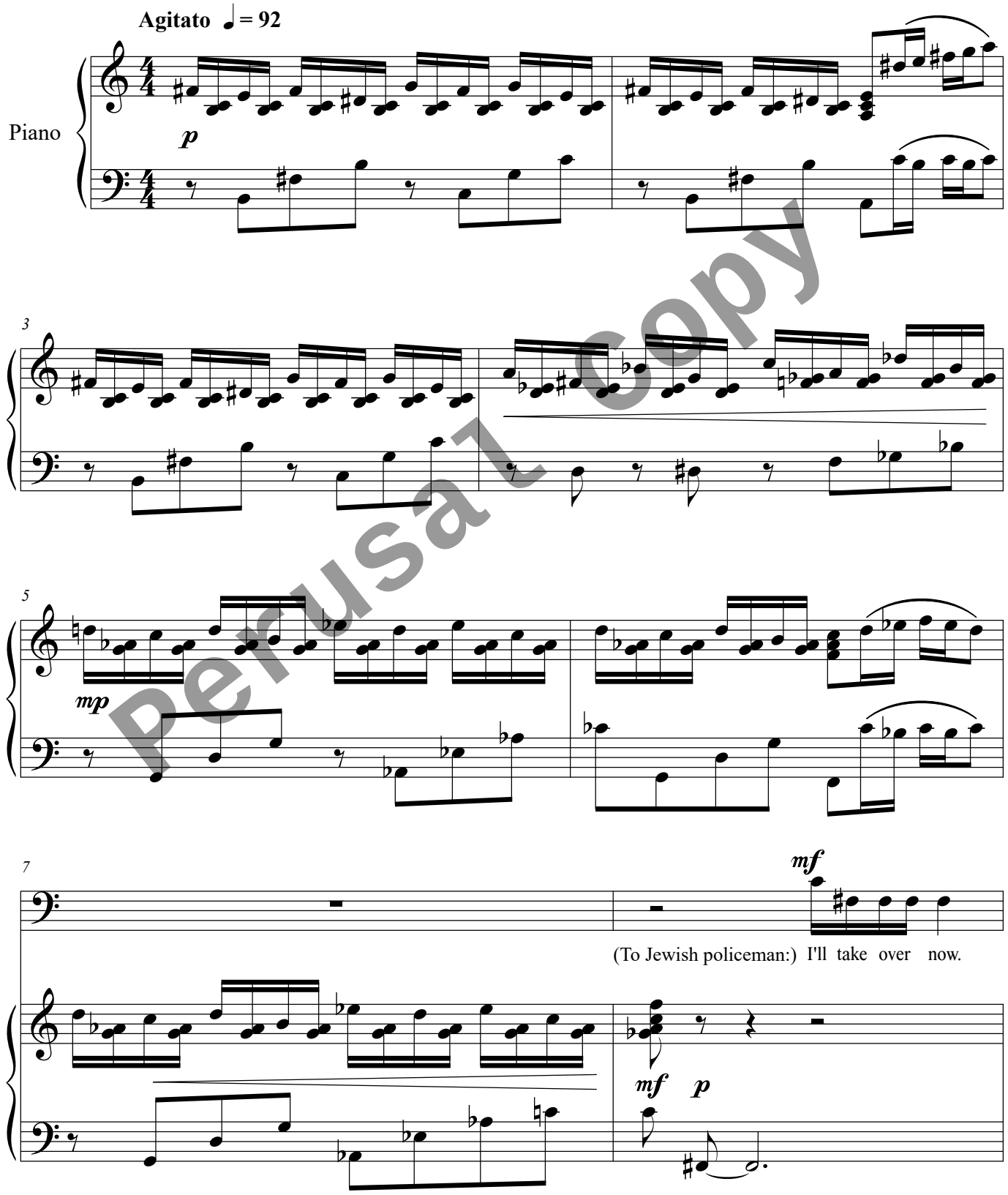


Perusal copy

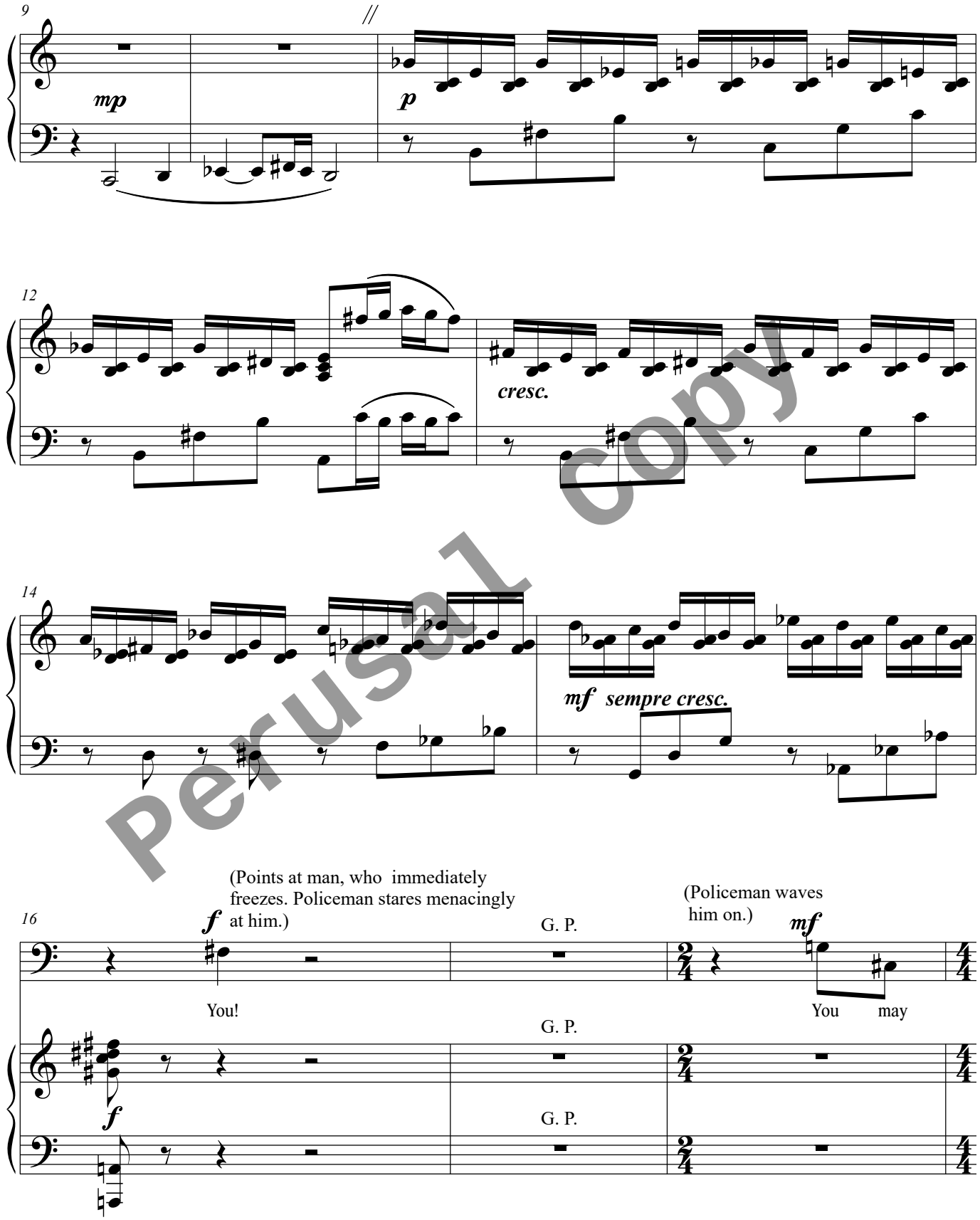
[Duration 1:40]

Setting:At the ghetto gate. Jewish men (and some women) are returning from work. A Jewish policeman is stationed at gate.

20. Ghetto Gate Scene



Perusal Copy



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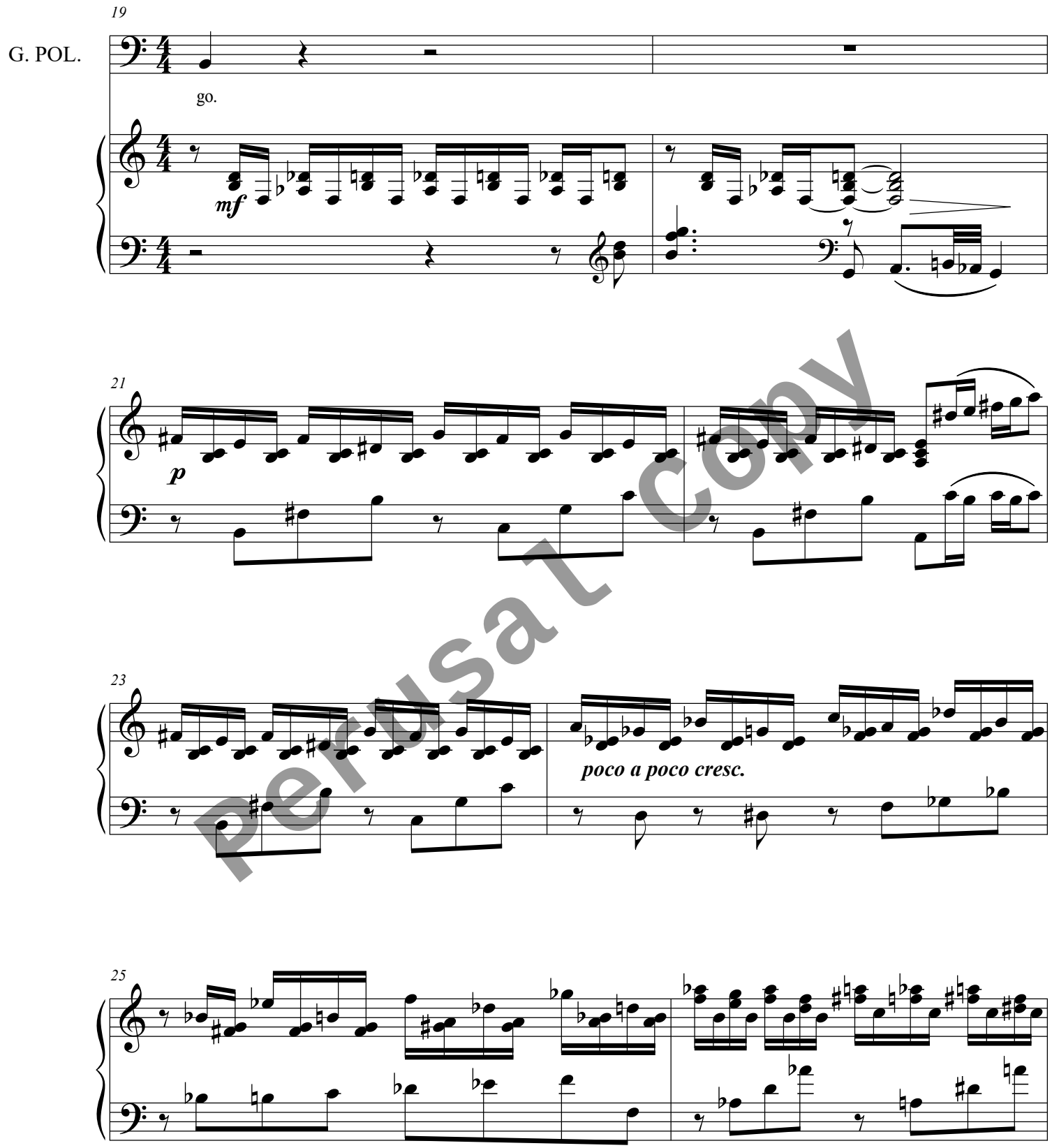

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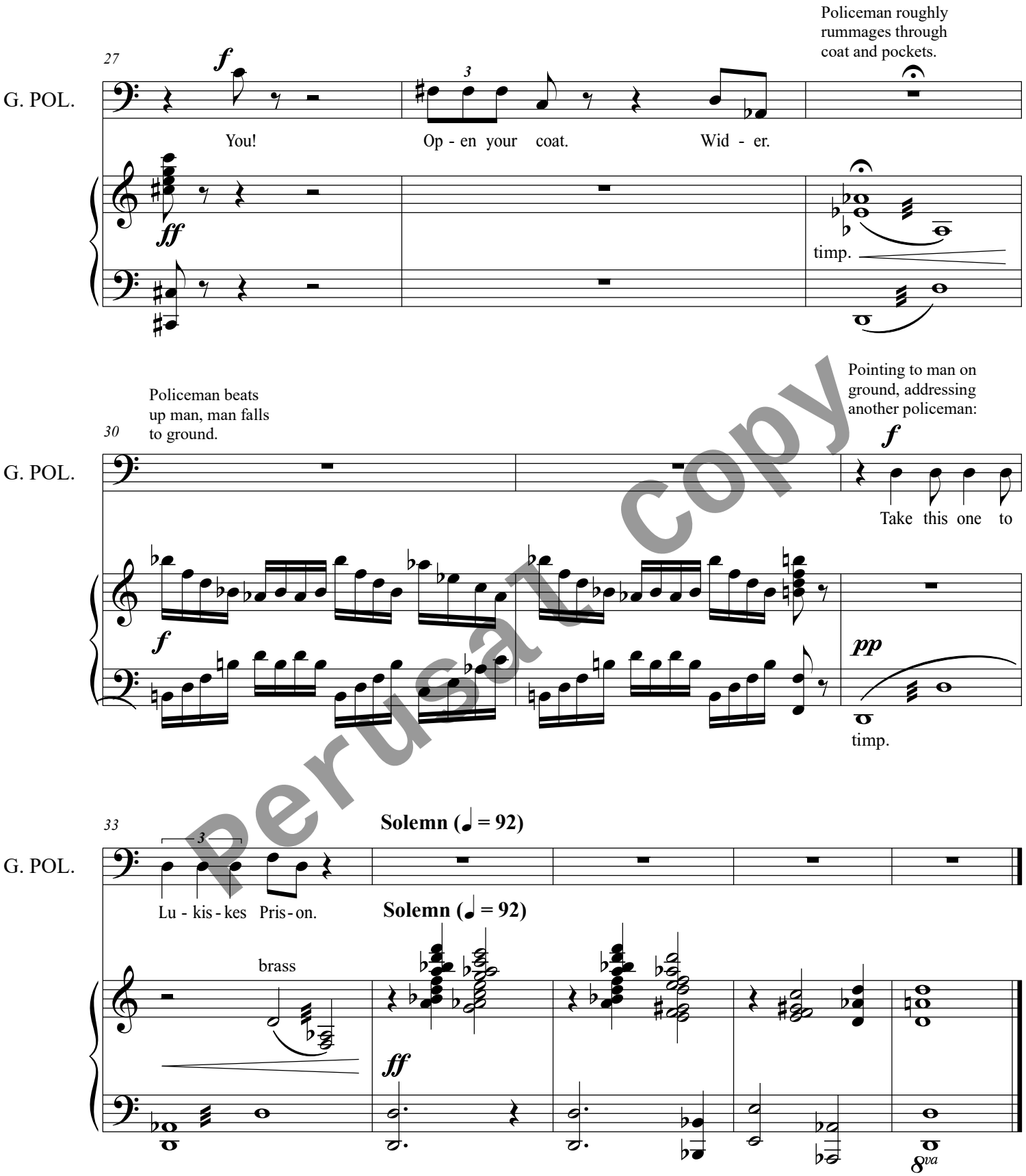
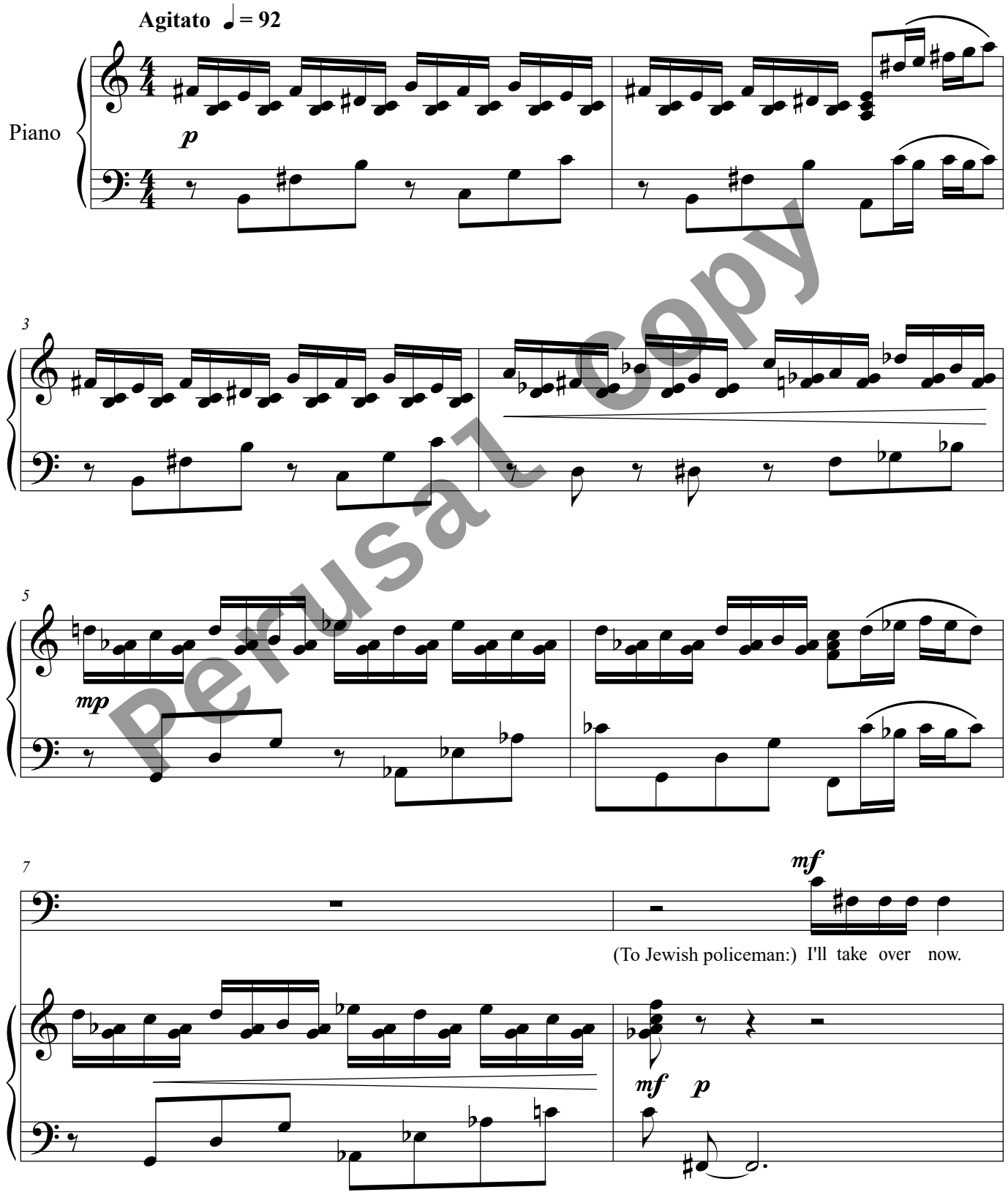


Perusal Copy

[Duration 1:40]

Setting:At the ghetto gate. Jewish men (and some women) are returning from work. A Jewish policeman is stationed at gate.

20. Ghetto Gate Scene



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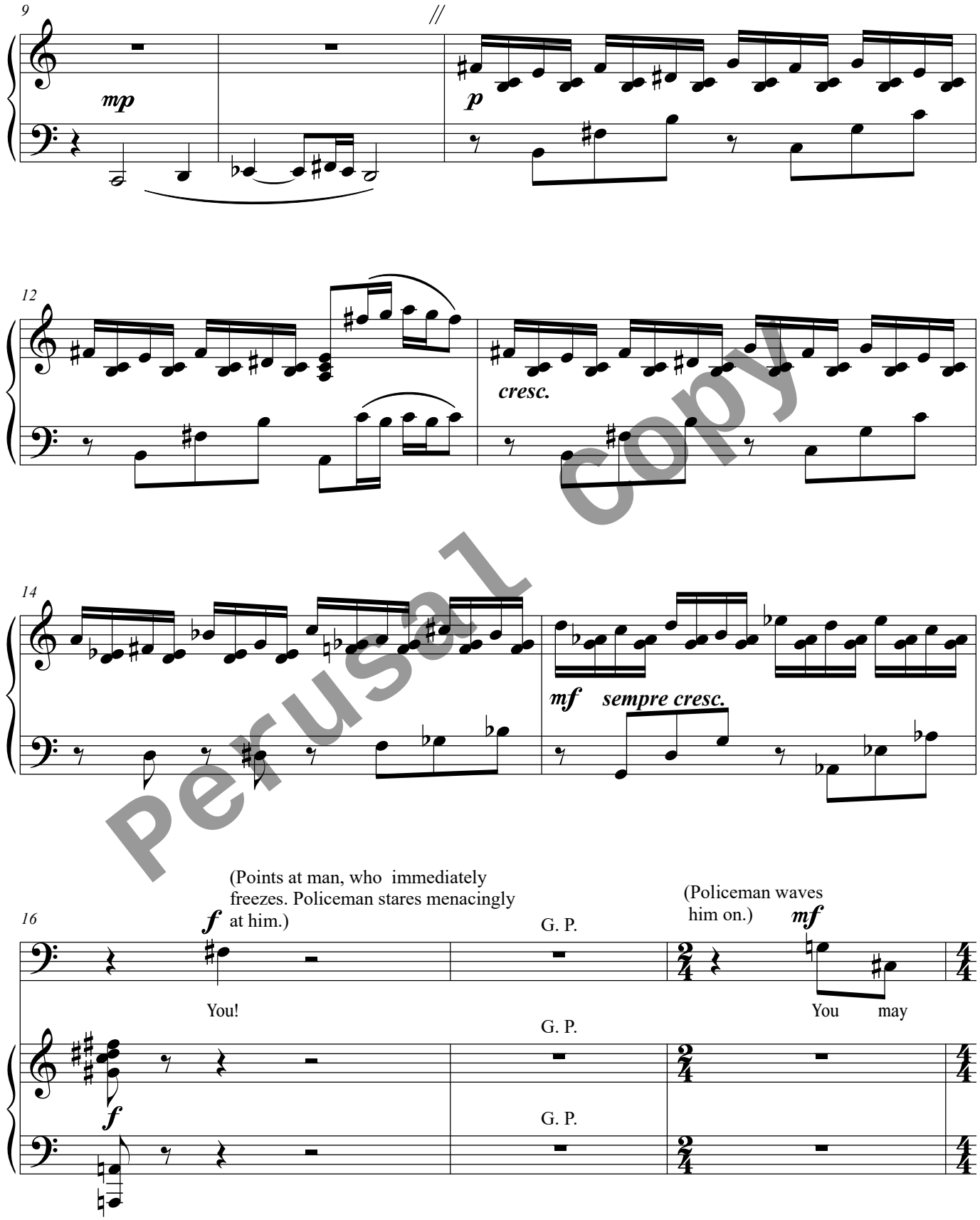

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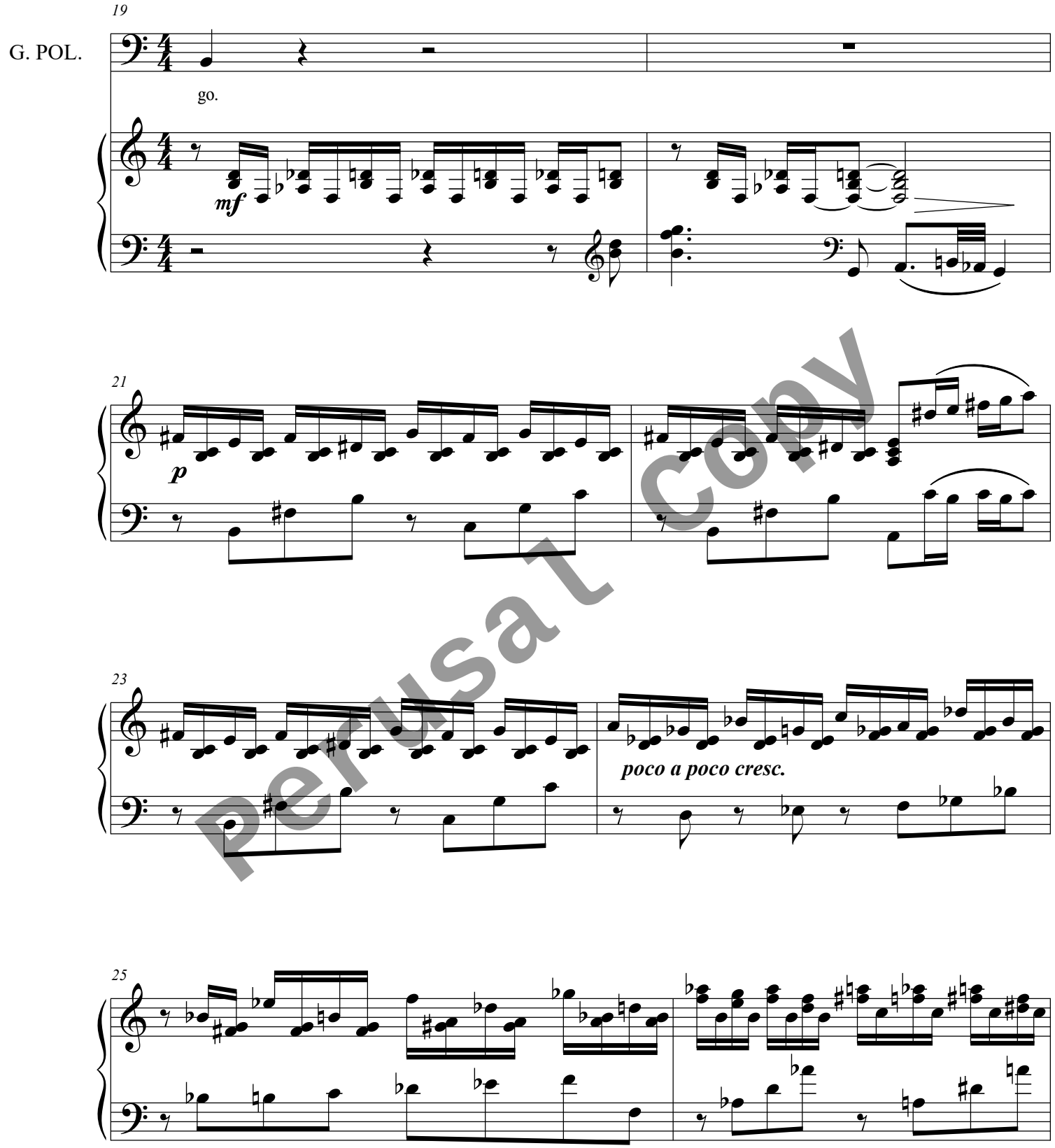

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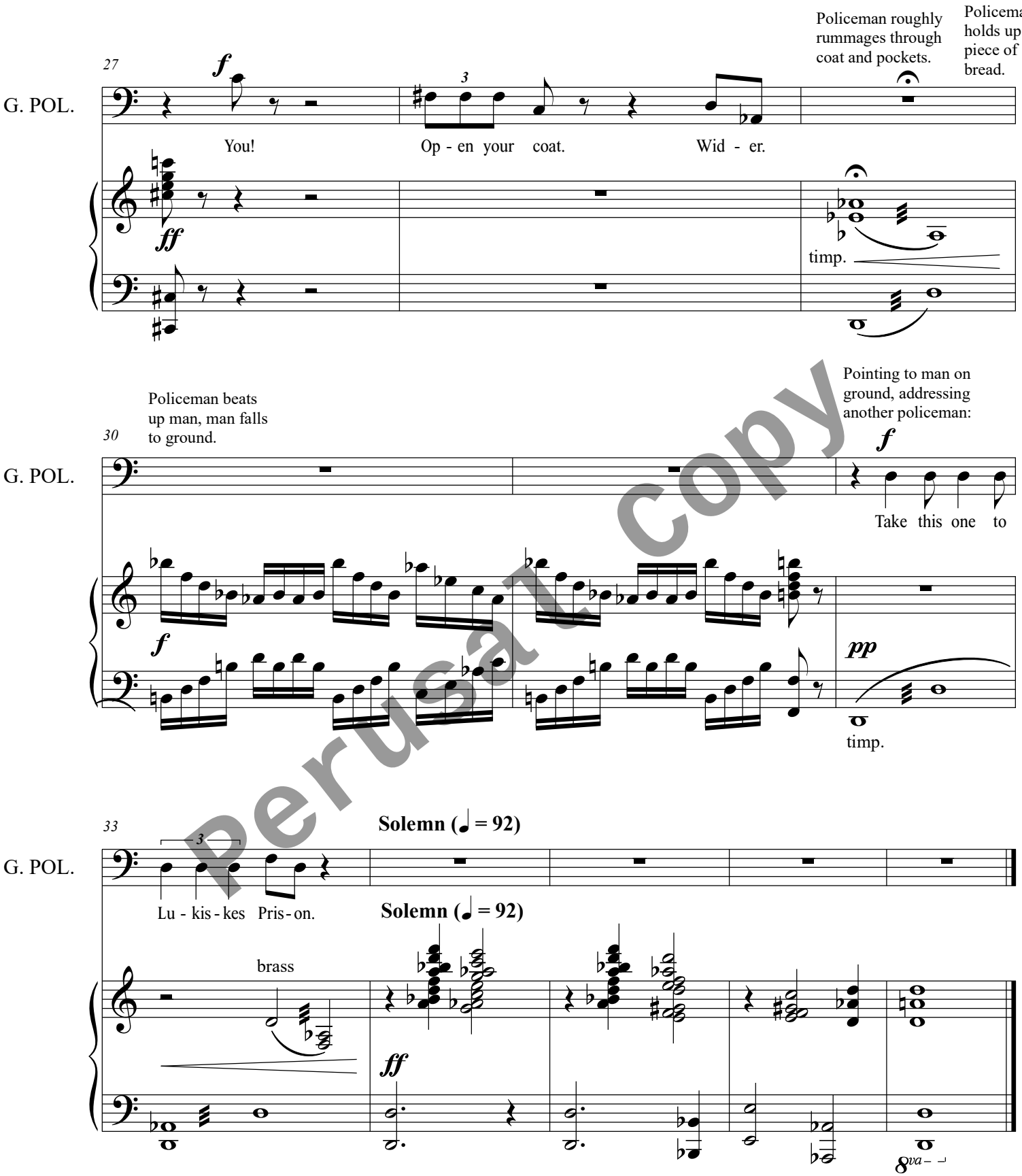
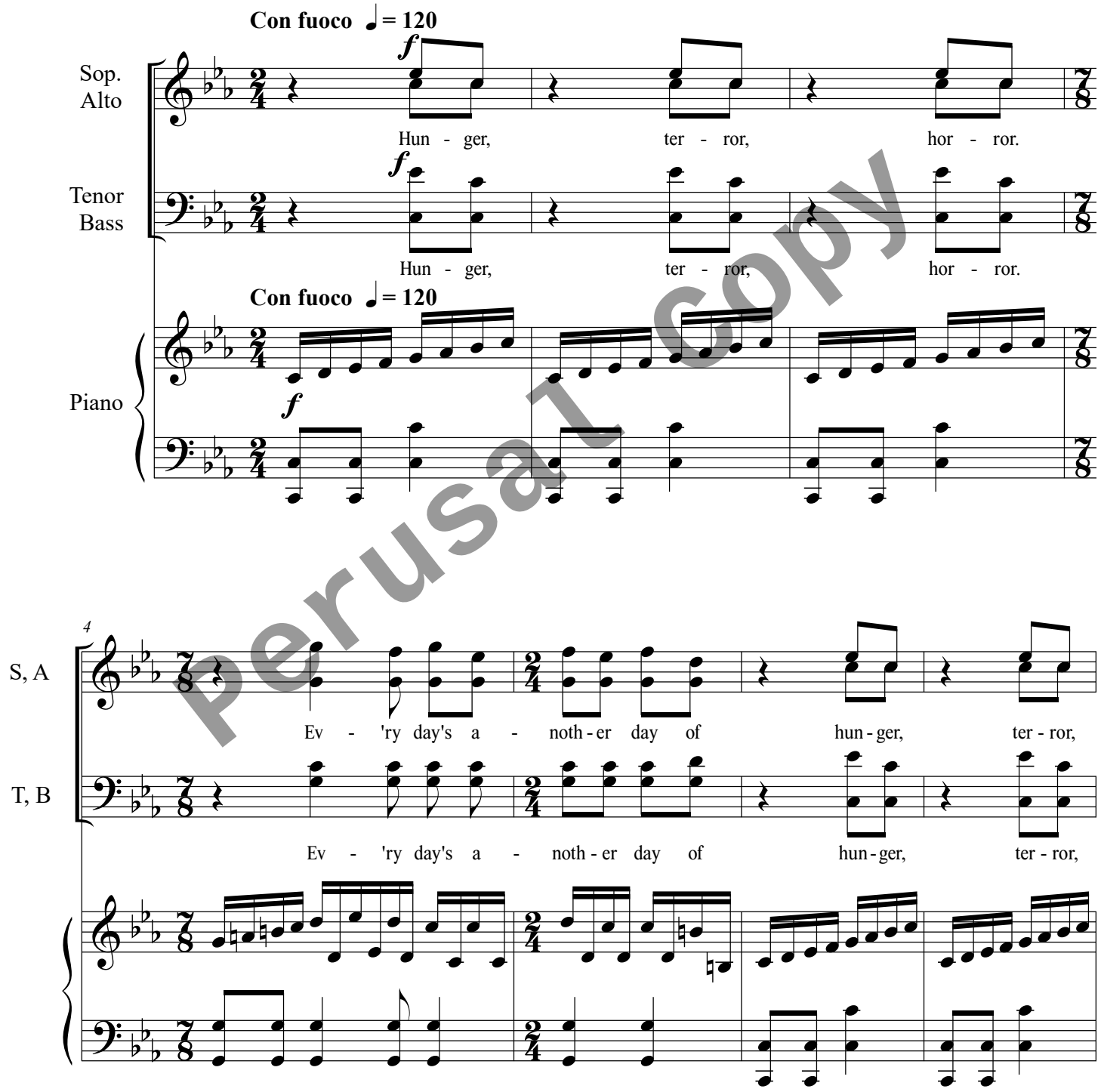


Perusal Copy

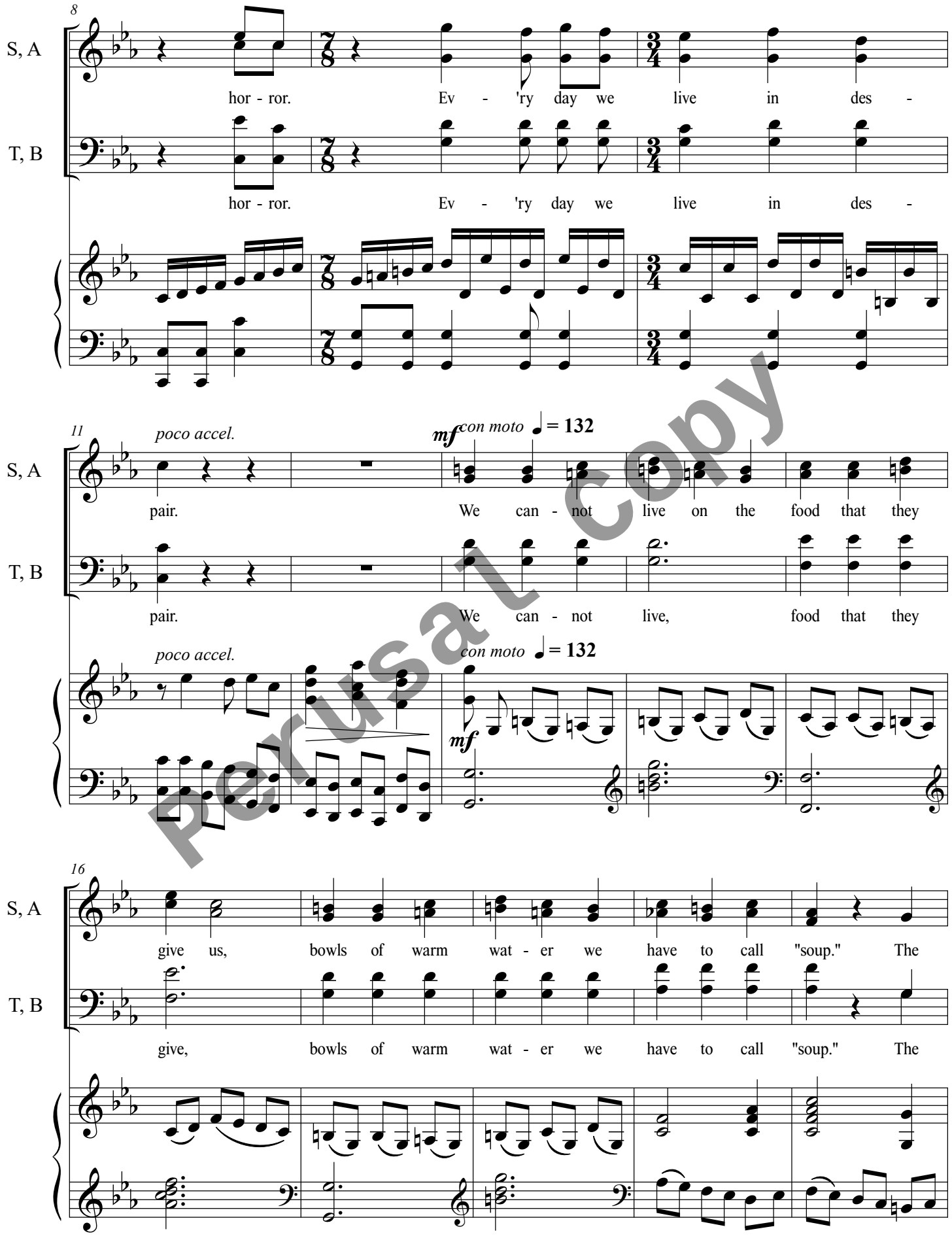
[Duration: 1:26]

Setting: Street scene in the ghetto. Streets are crowded with Jews in ragged clothing sitting, standing, crouching, etc.

21. Chorus-2

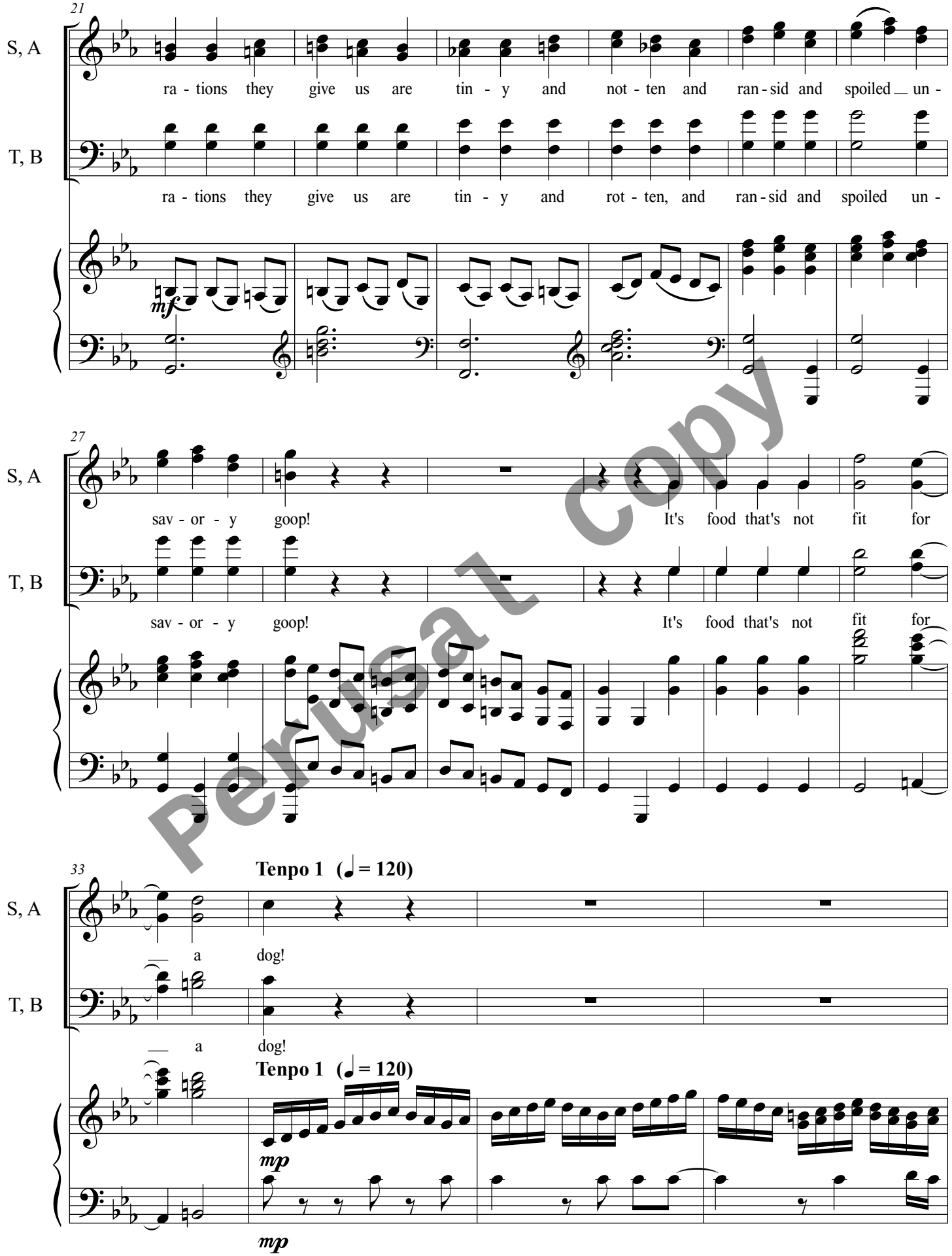


Perusal Copy



Perusal Copy

21. Chorus-2



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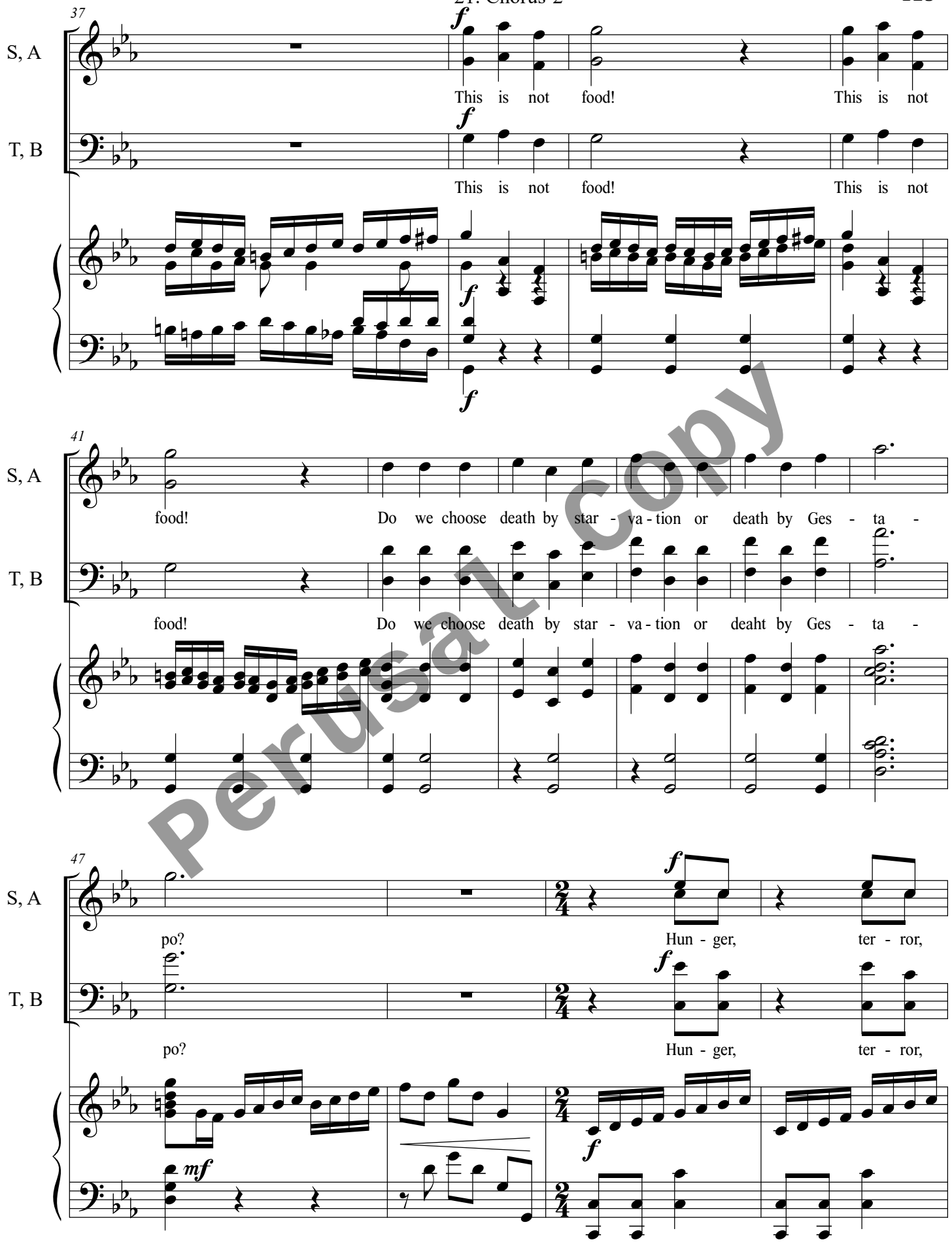
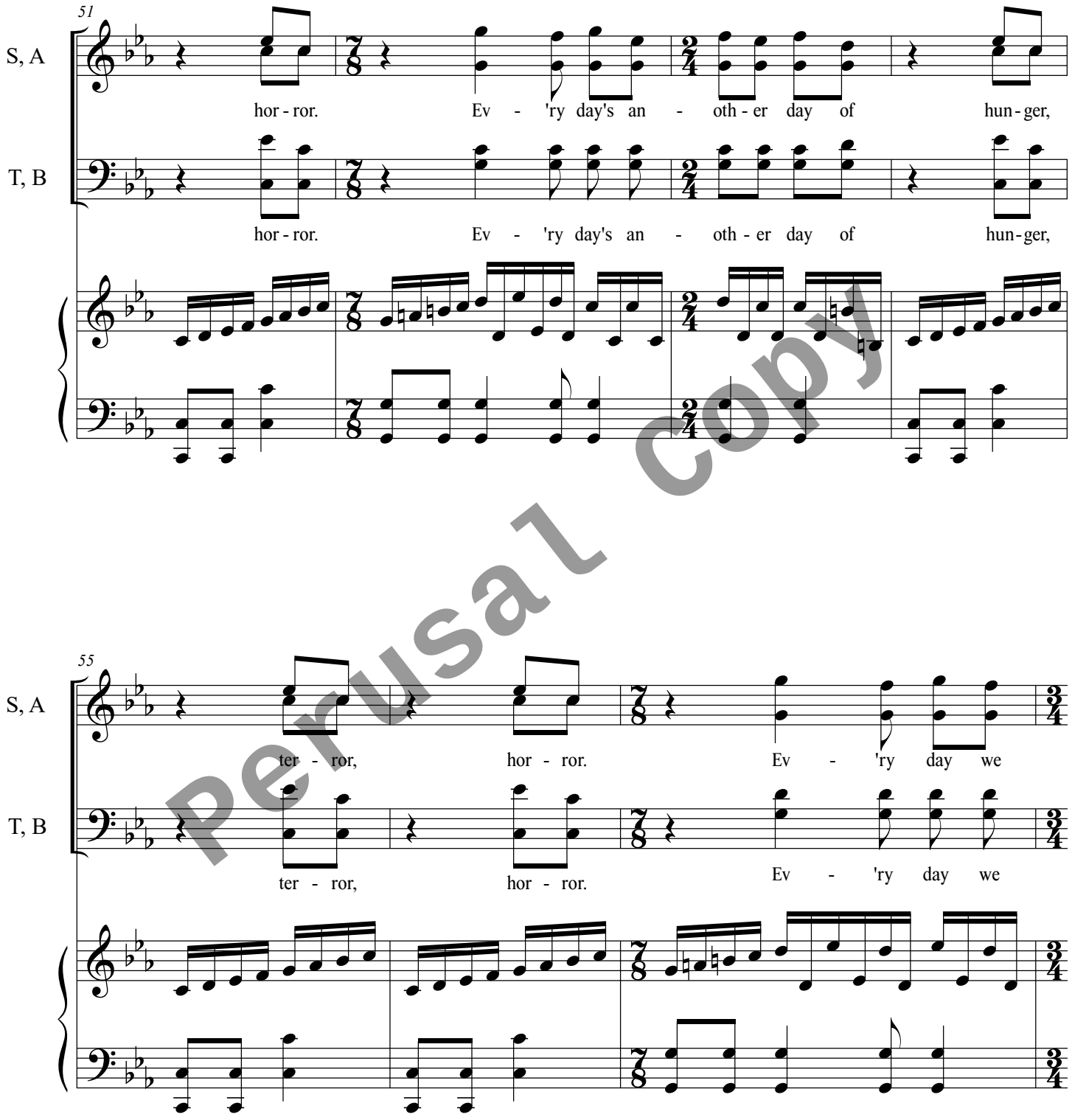


Perusal copy

21. Chorus-2



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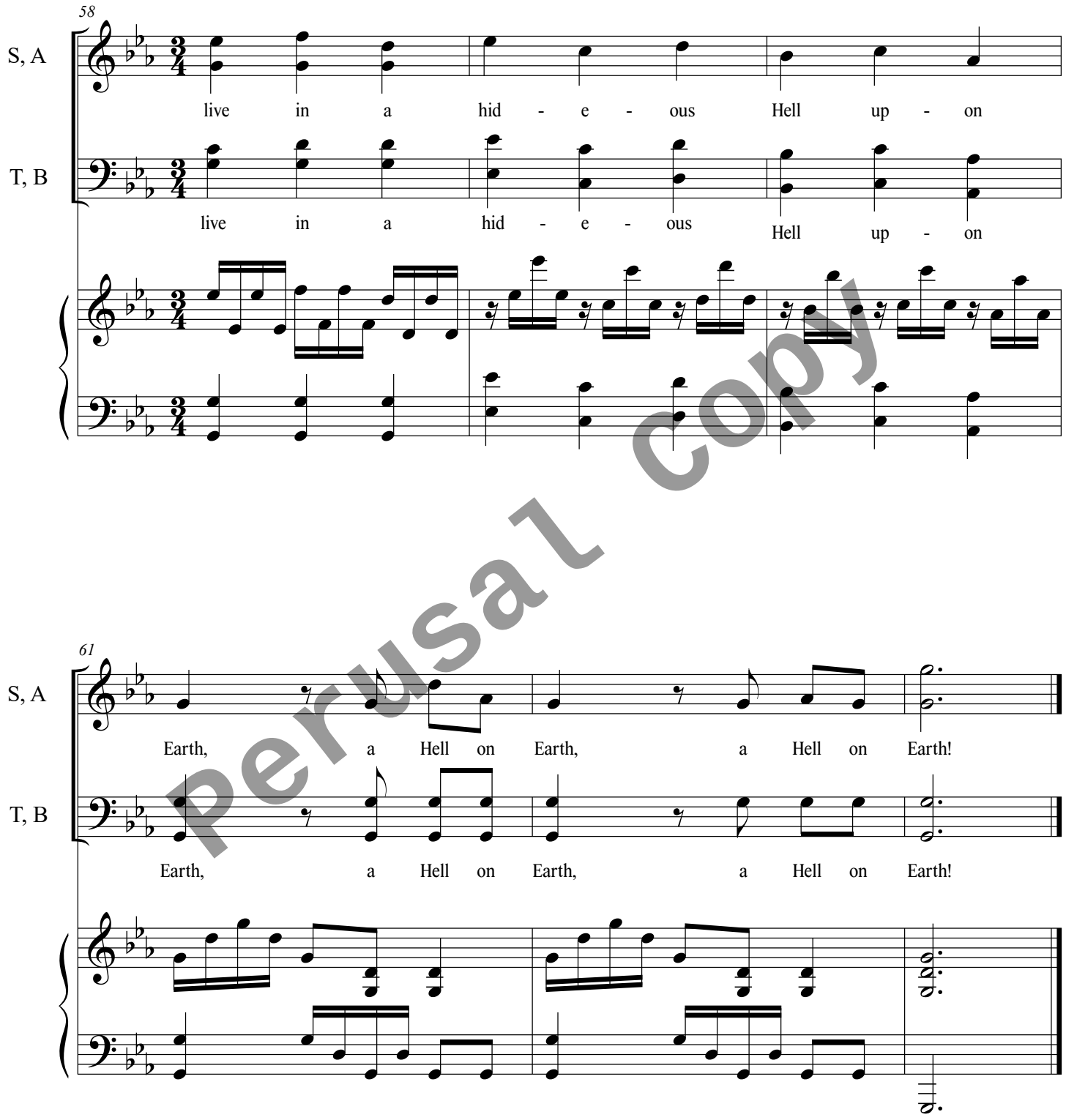
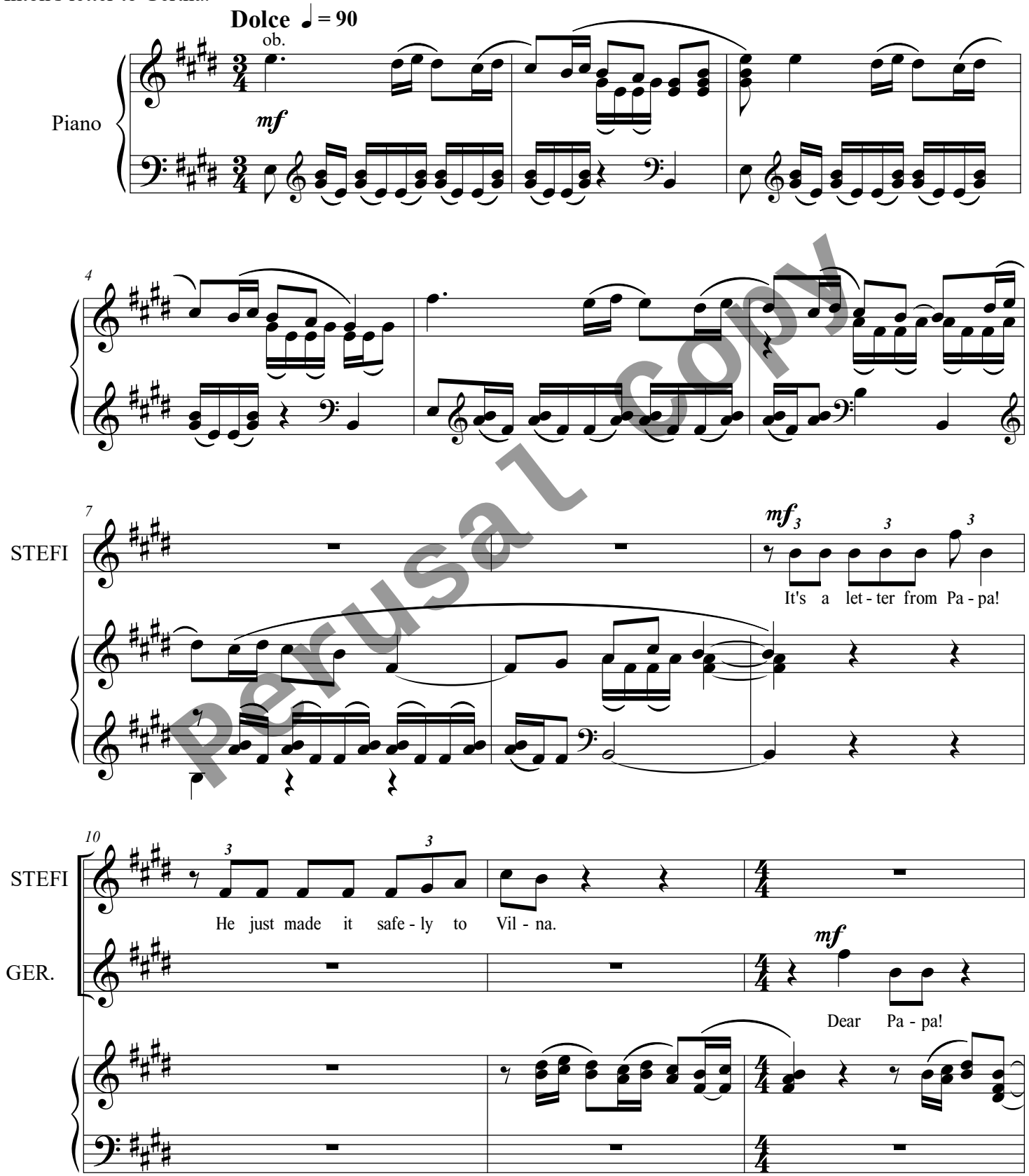


Perusal Copy

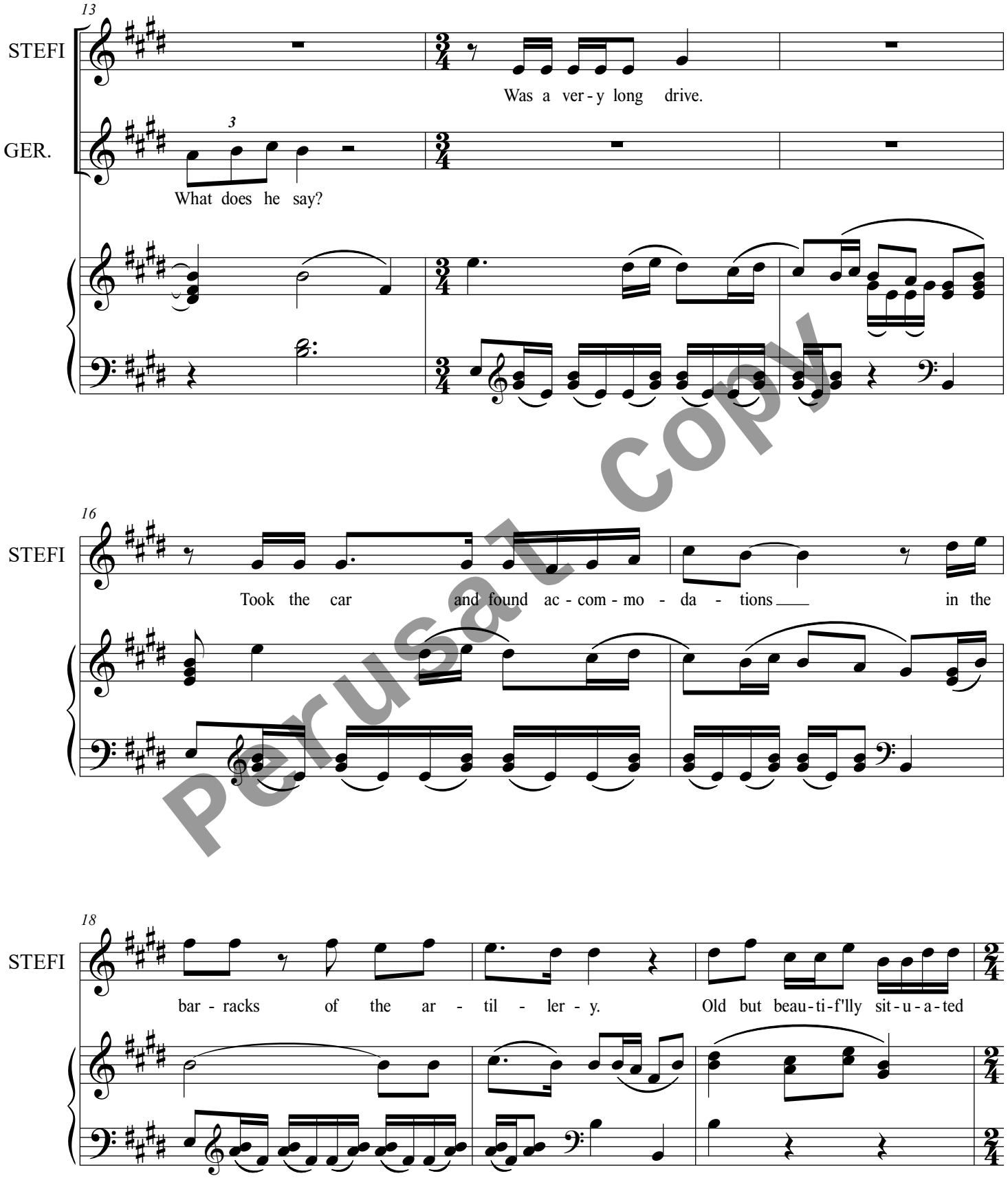
[Duration: 2:56]

Setting: The Schmids' apartment in Vienna. Stefi opens the mail and reads Anton's letter to Gertha.

22. Letter of Sept. 14, 1941



Perusal Copy



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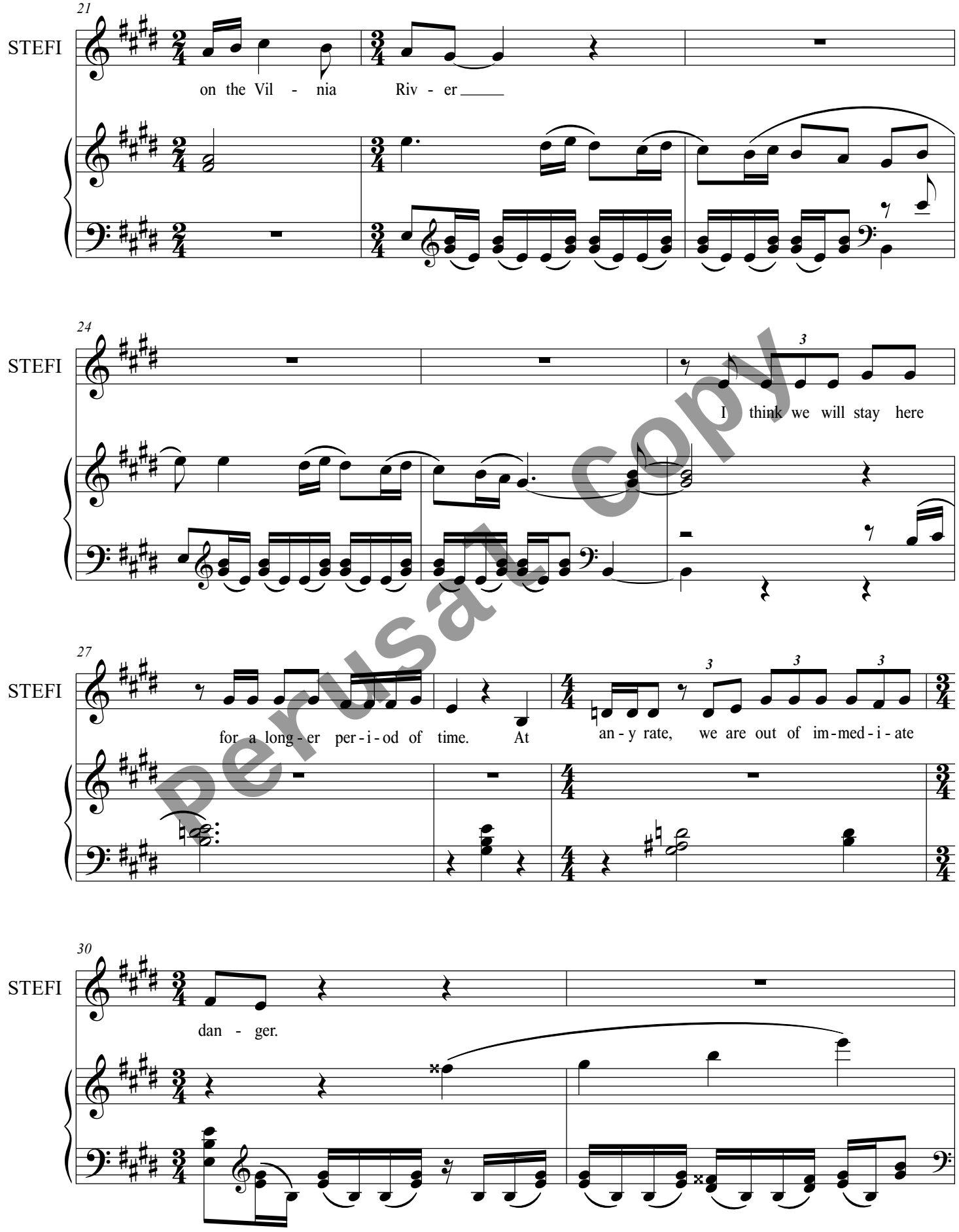

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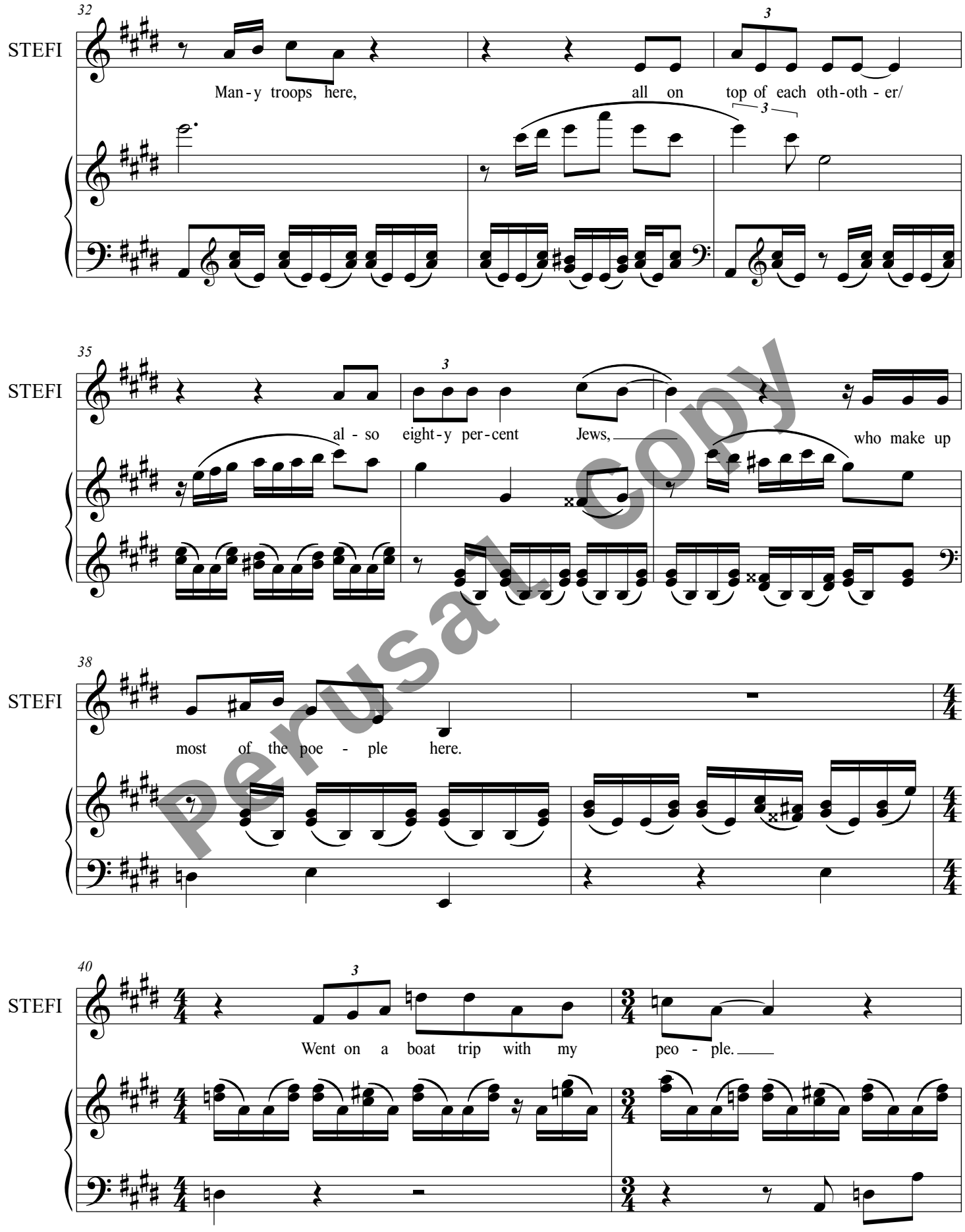
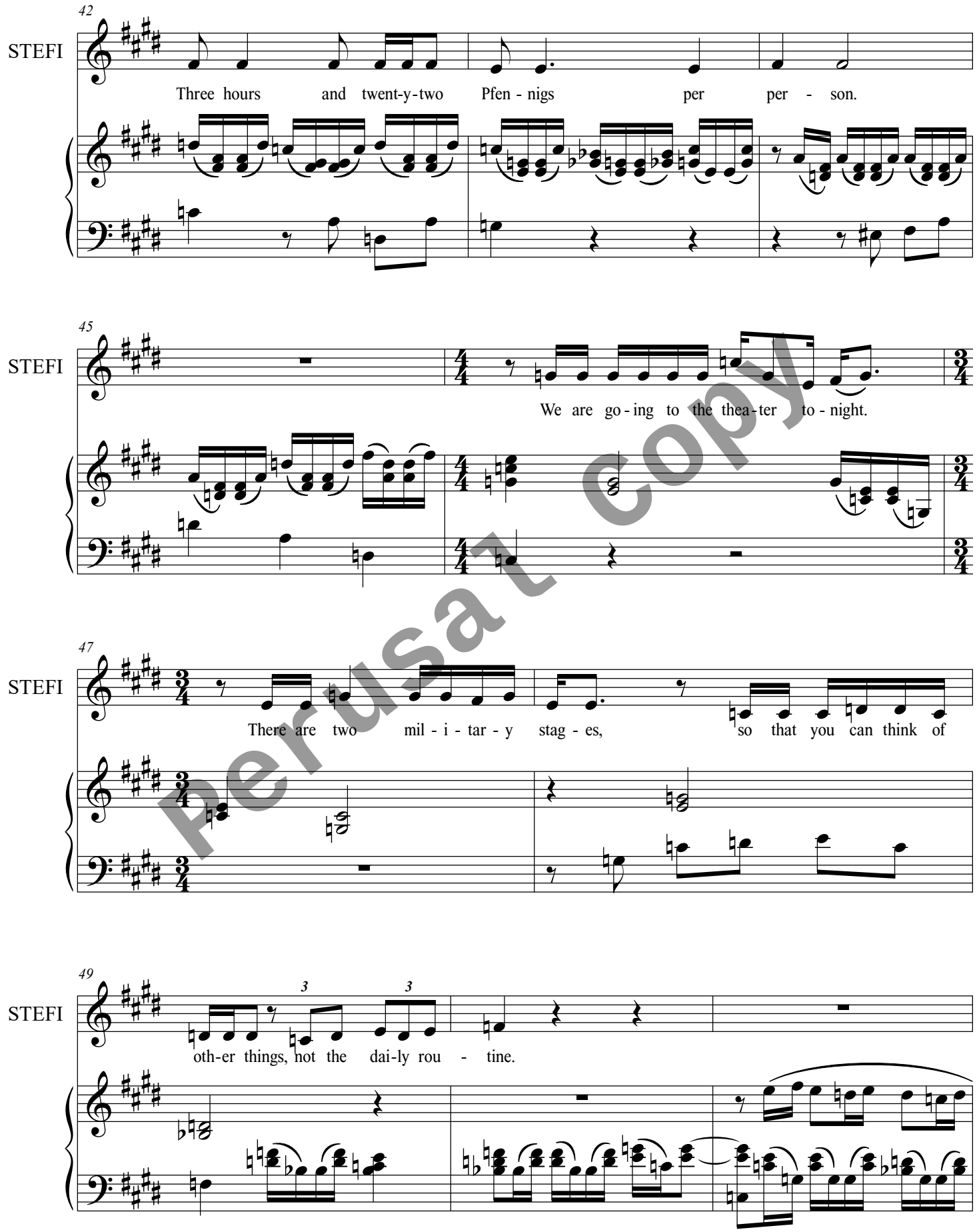


Perusal Copy



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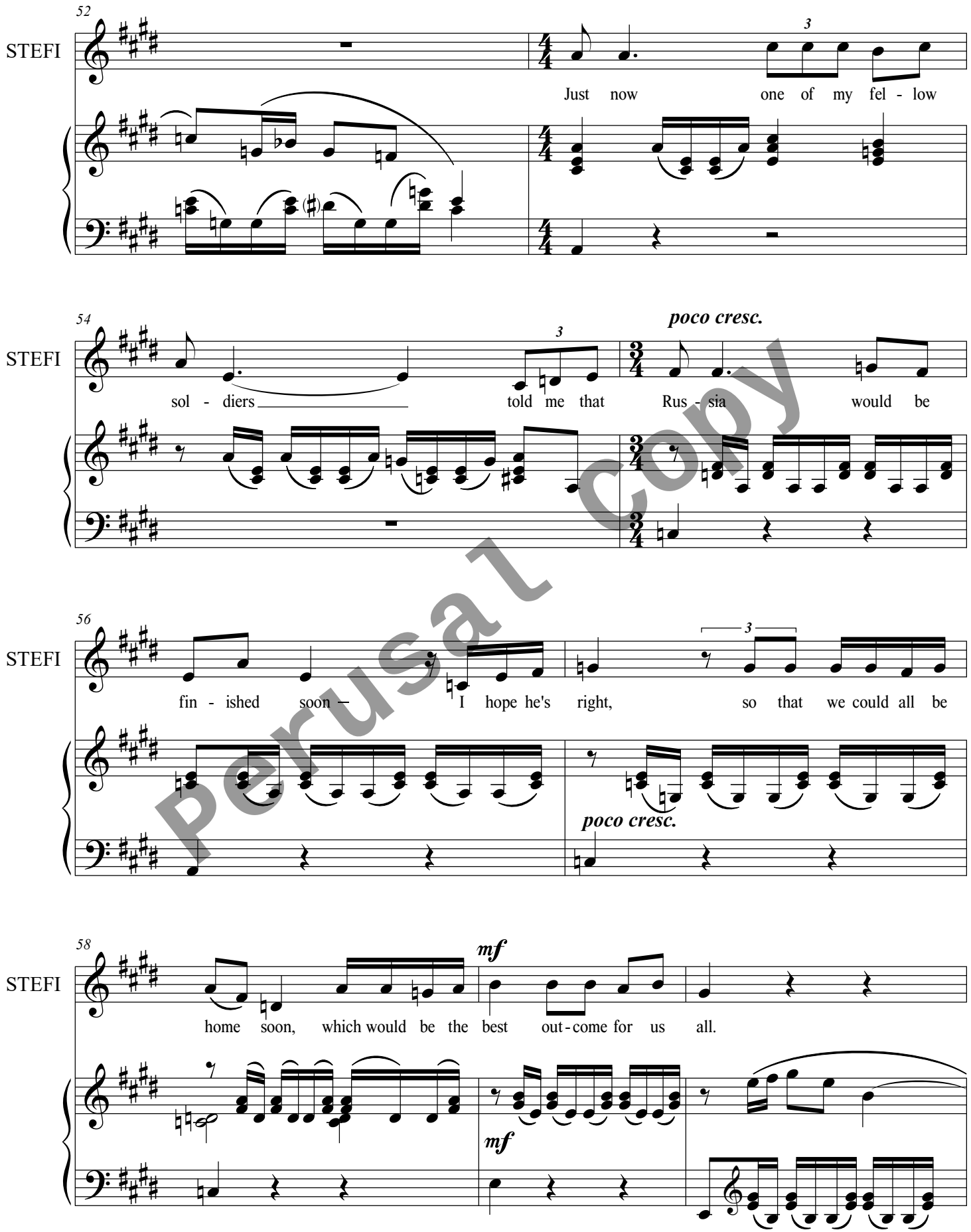

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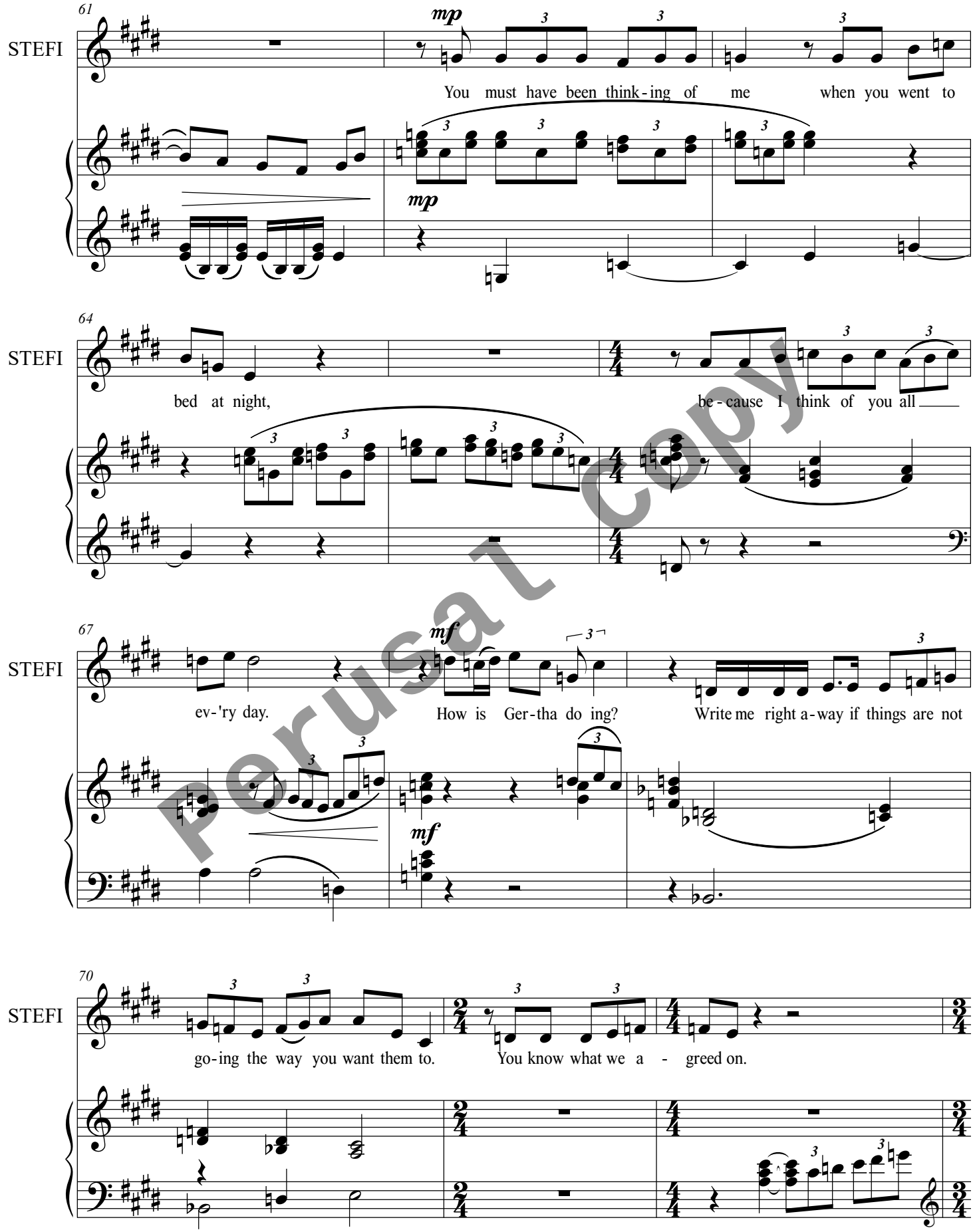

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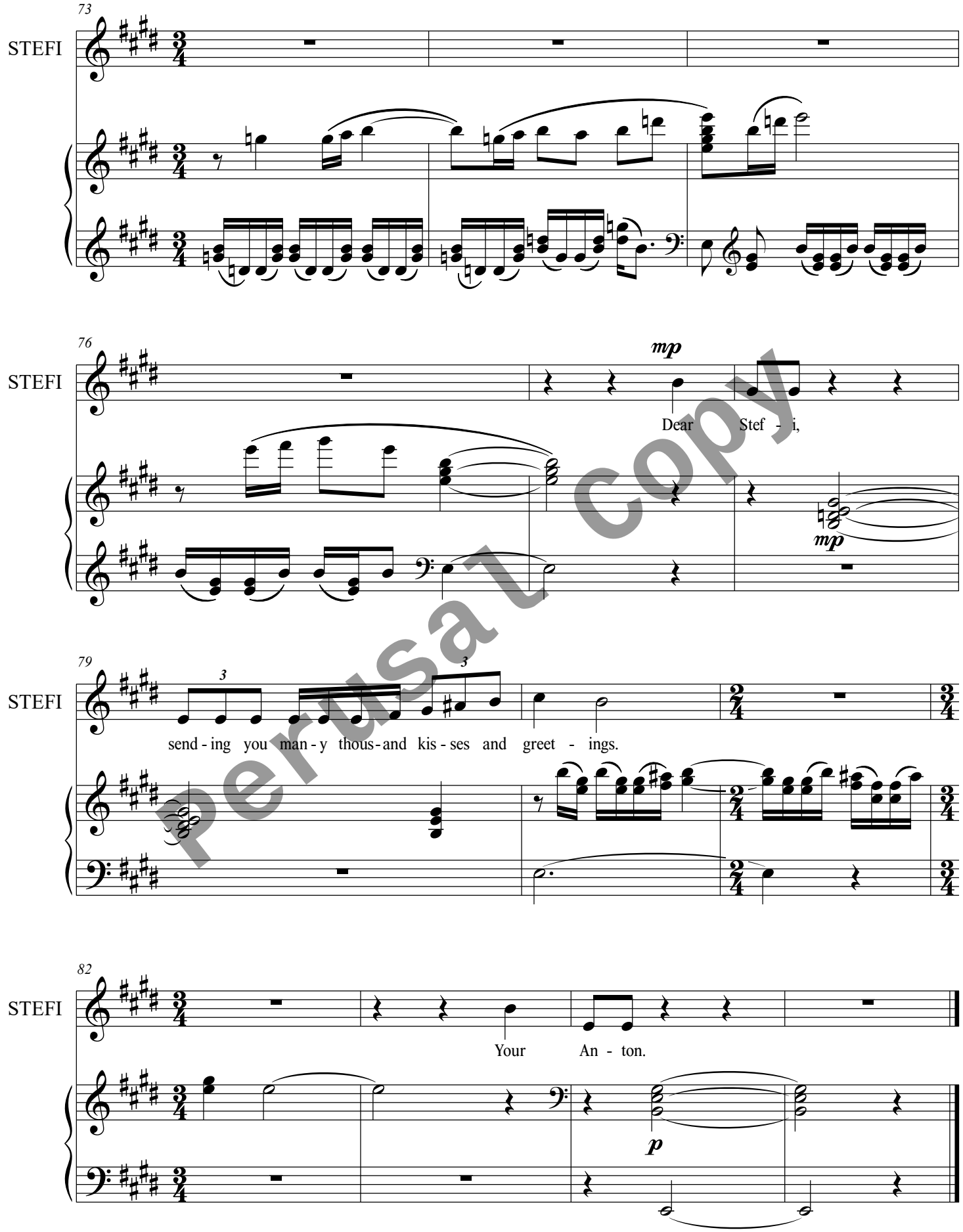
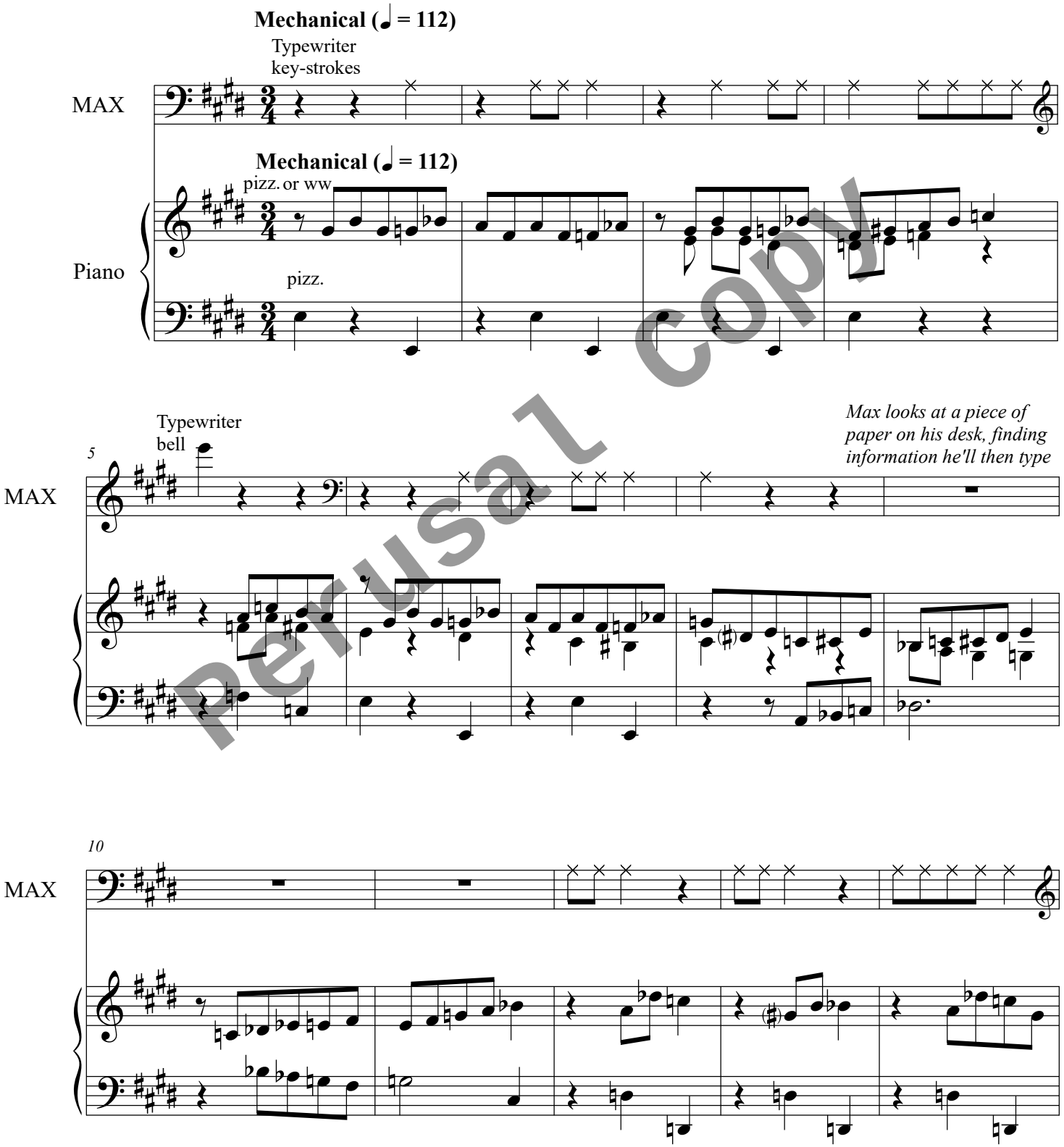


Perusal Copy

[Duration: 2:15]

Setting: Schmid's Wehrmacht office in Vilna. Schmid is seated at a desk. Max Huppert sits at another desk, typing. A number of German soldiers, bedraggeled, sit on chairs a in a waiting area.

23. Schmid's Office-1



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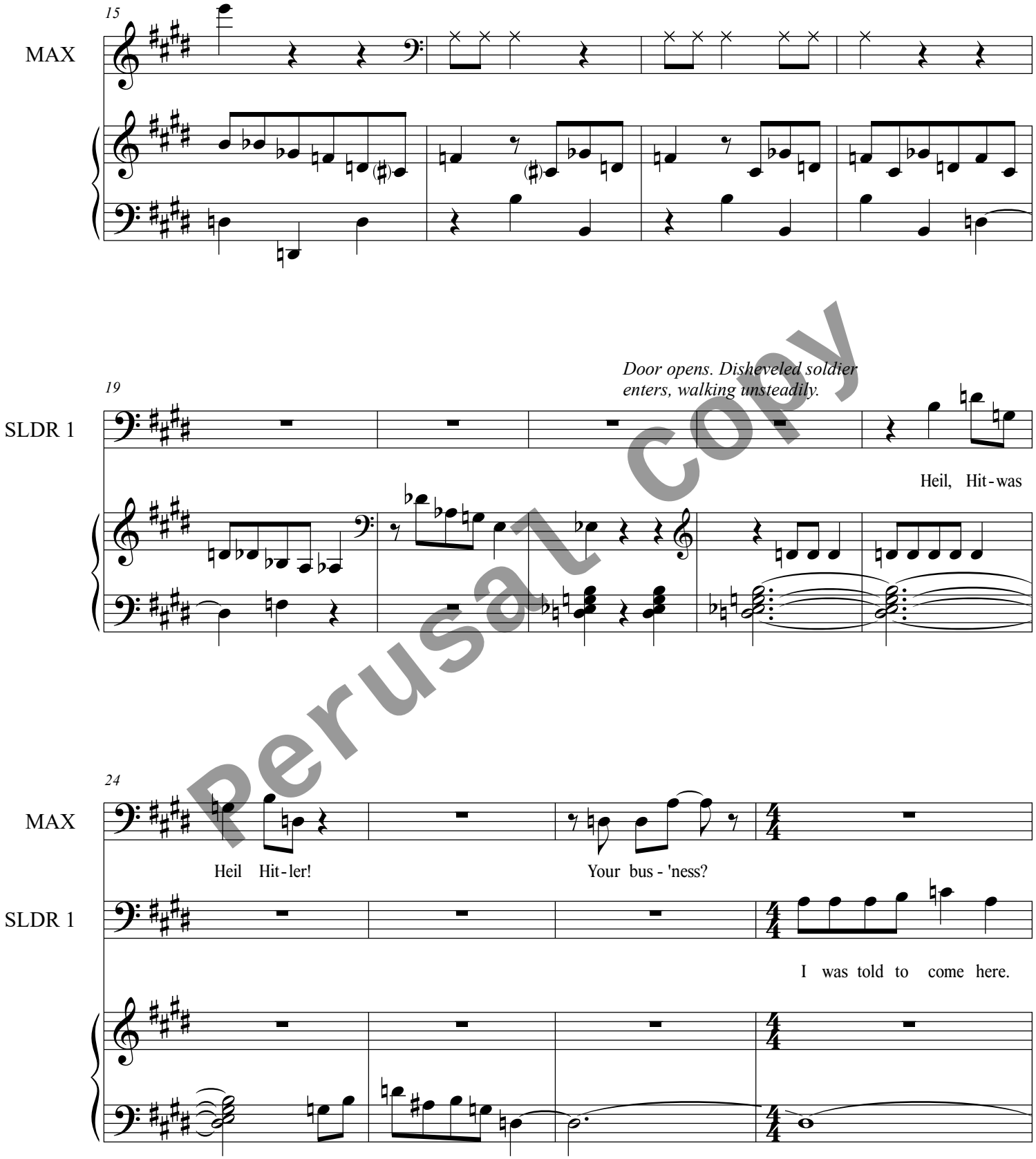

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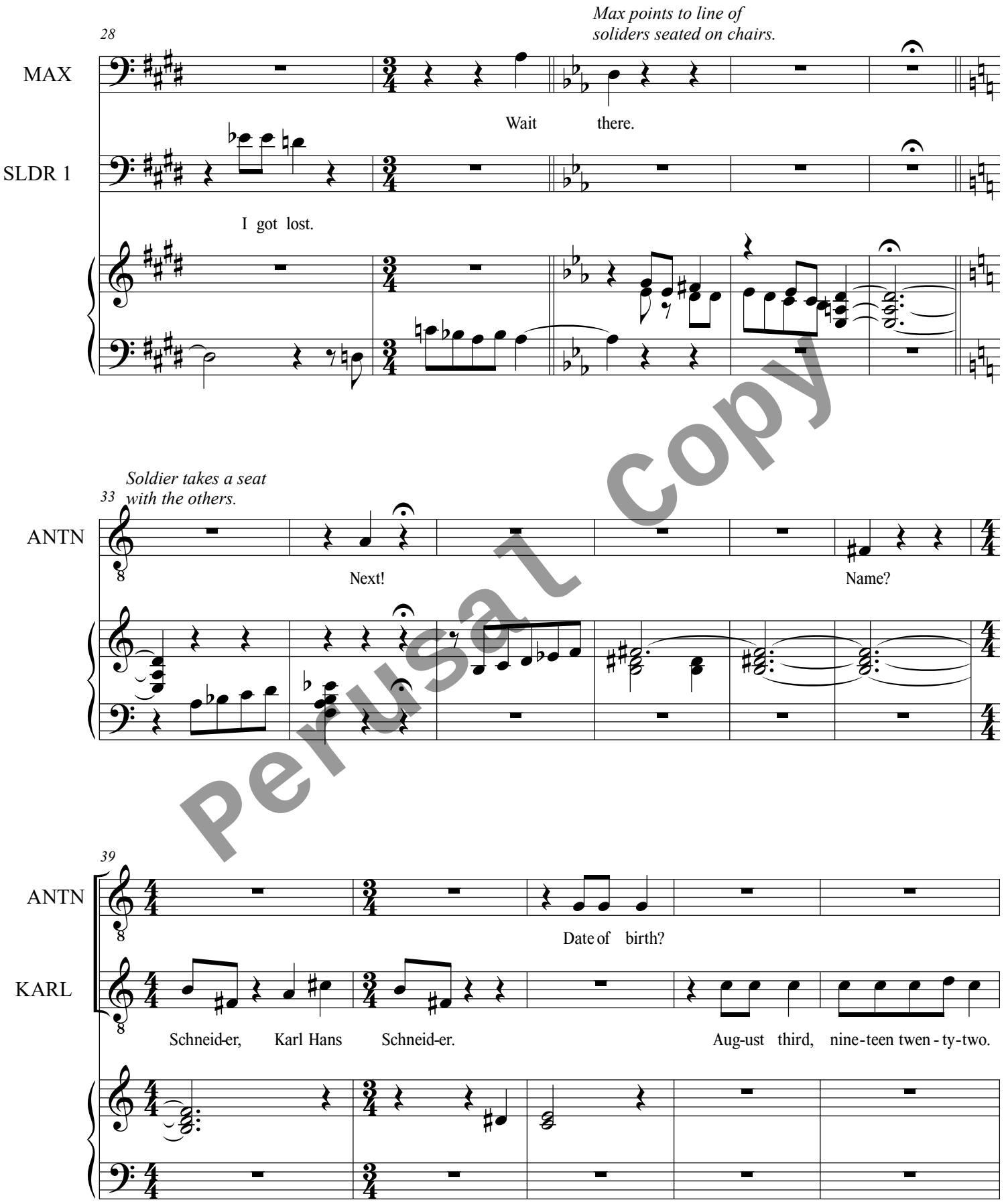

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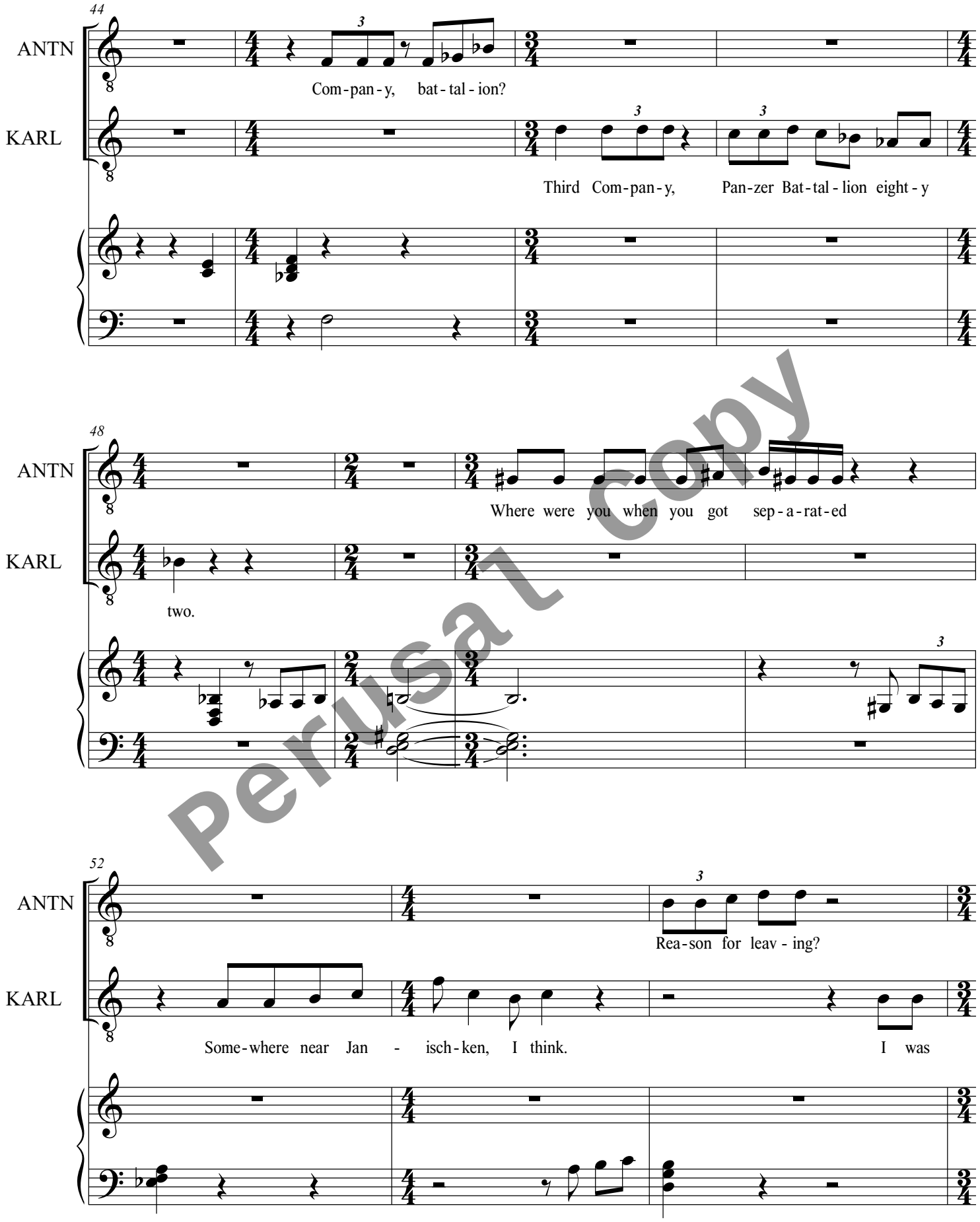

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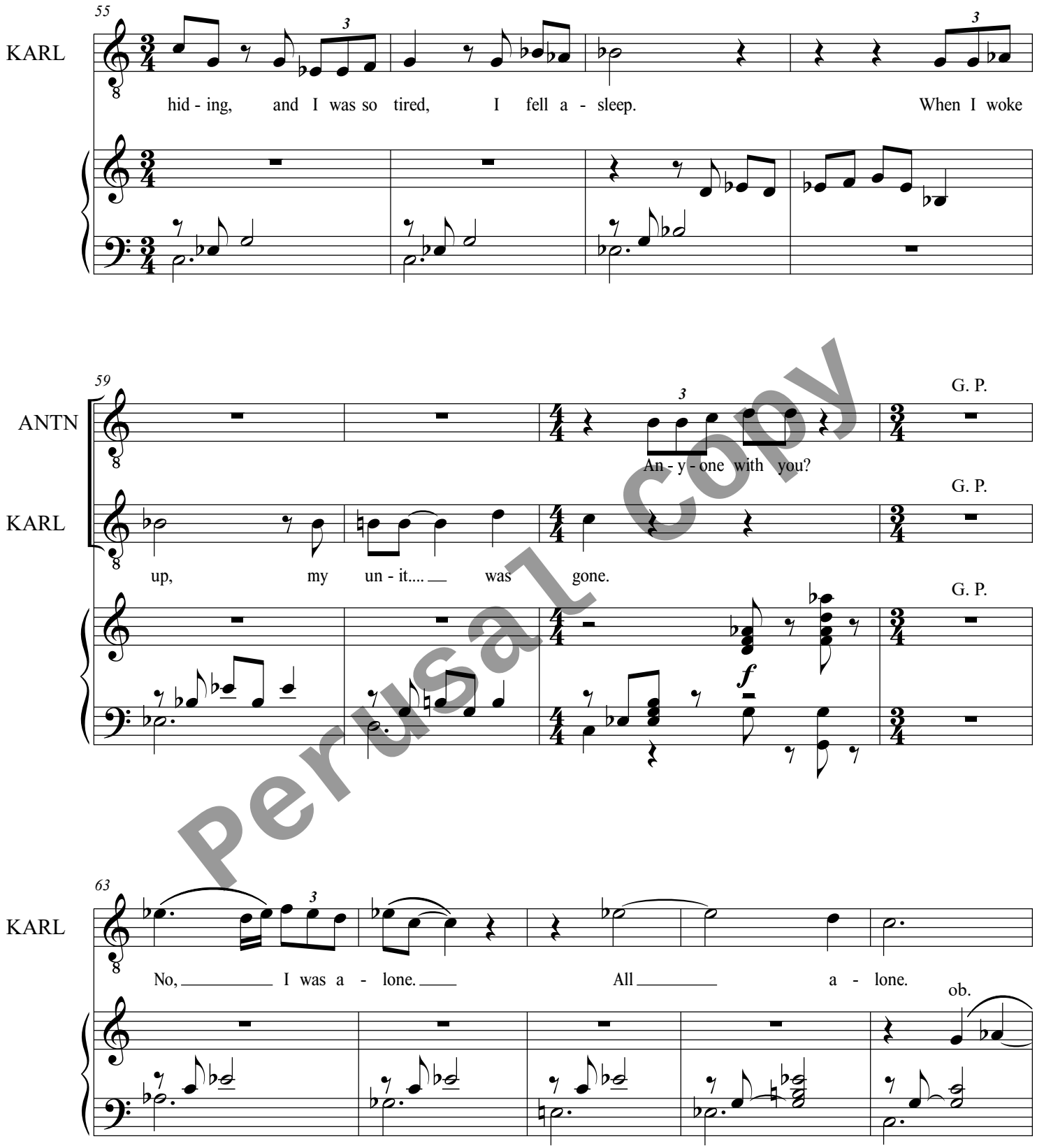
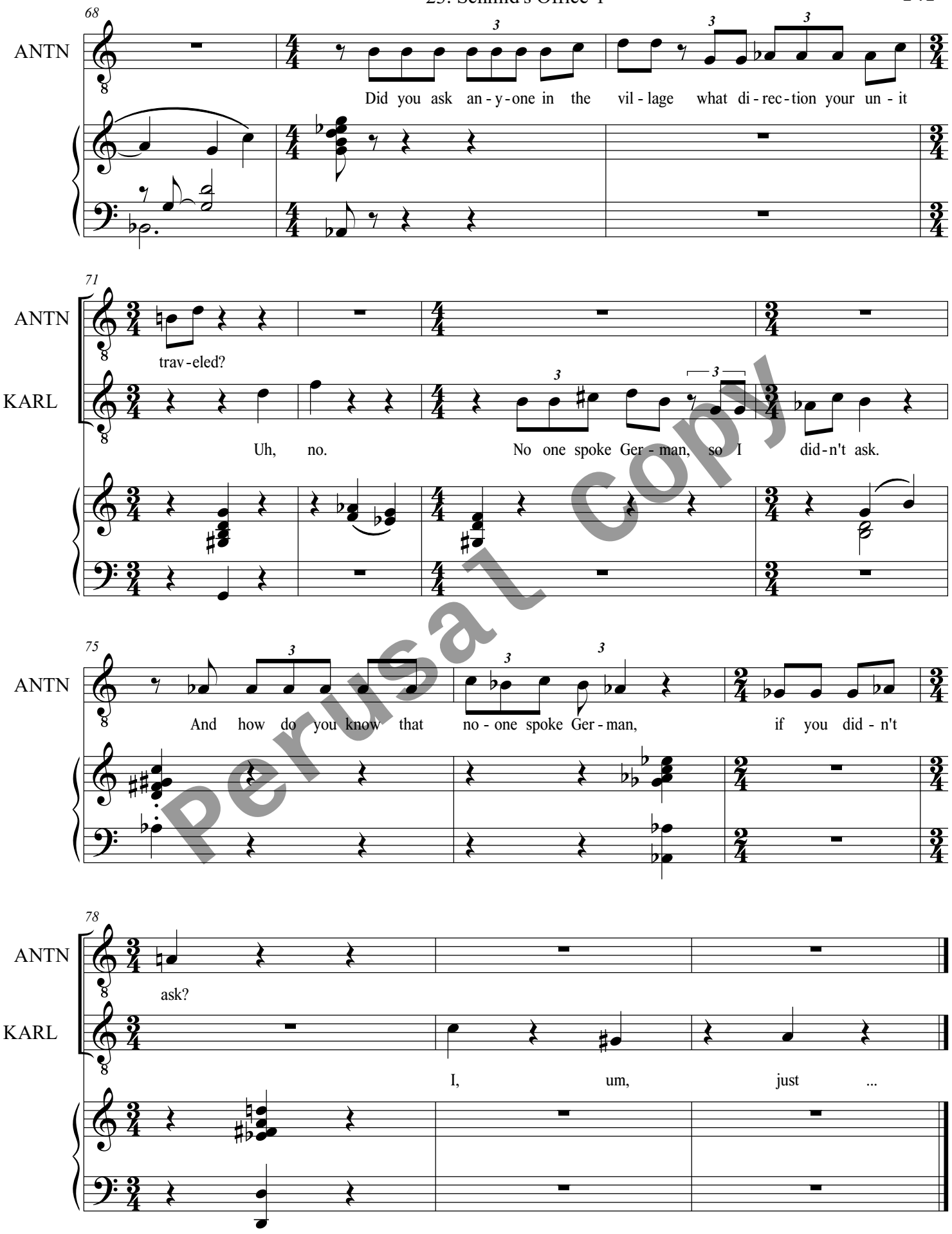


Perusal Copy

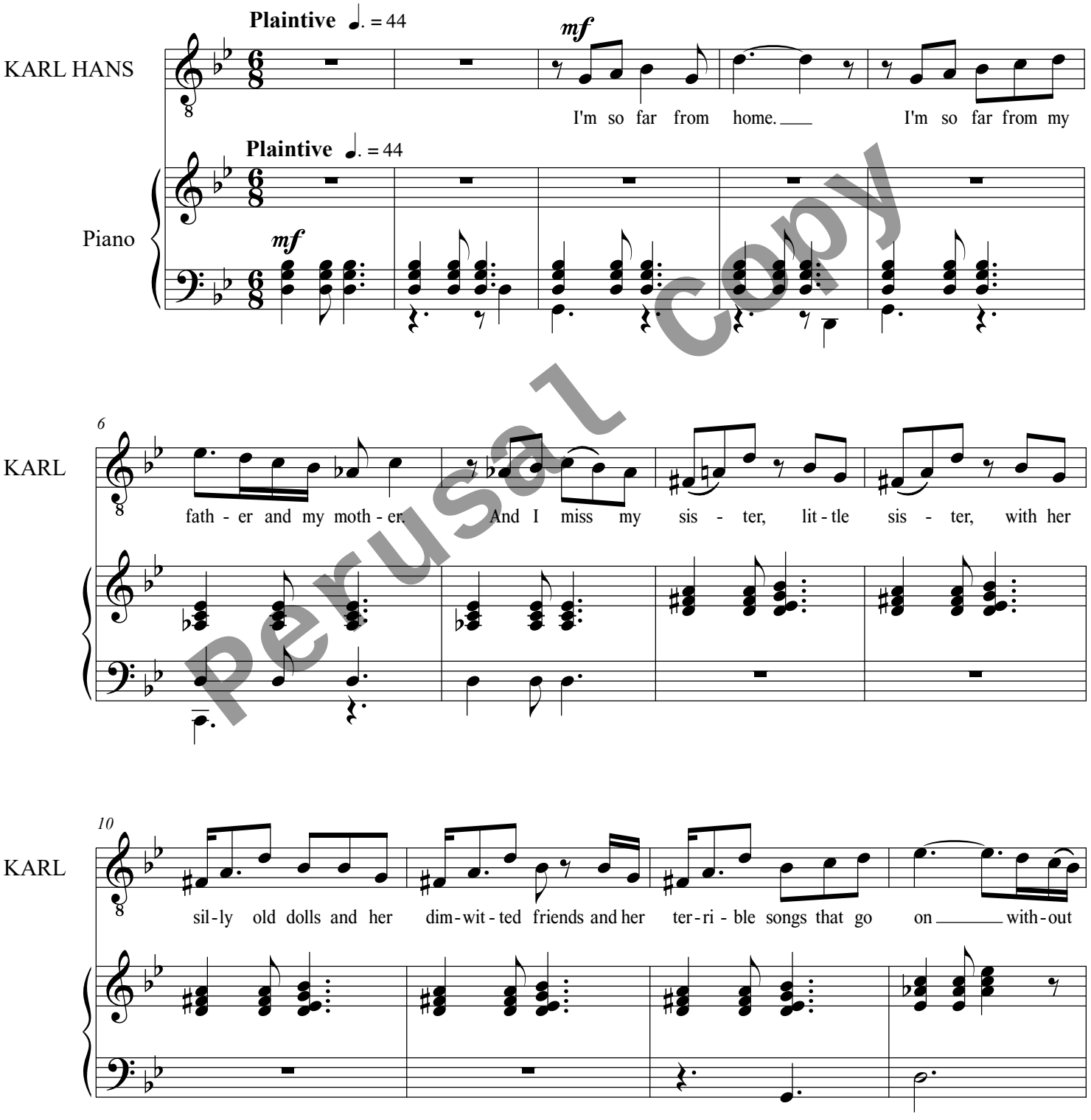


Perusal Copy

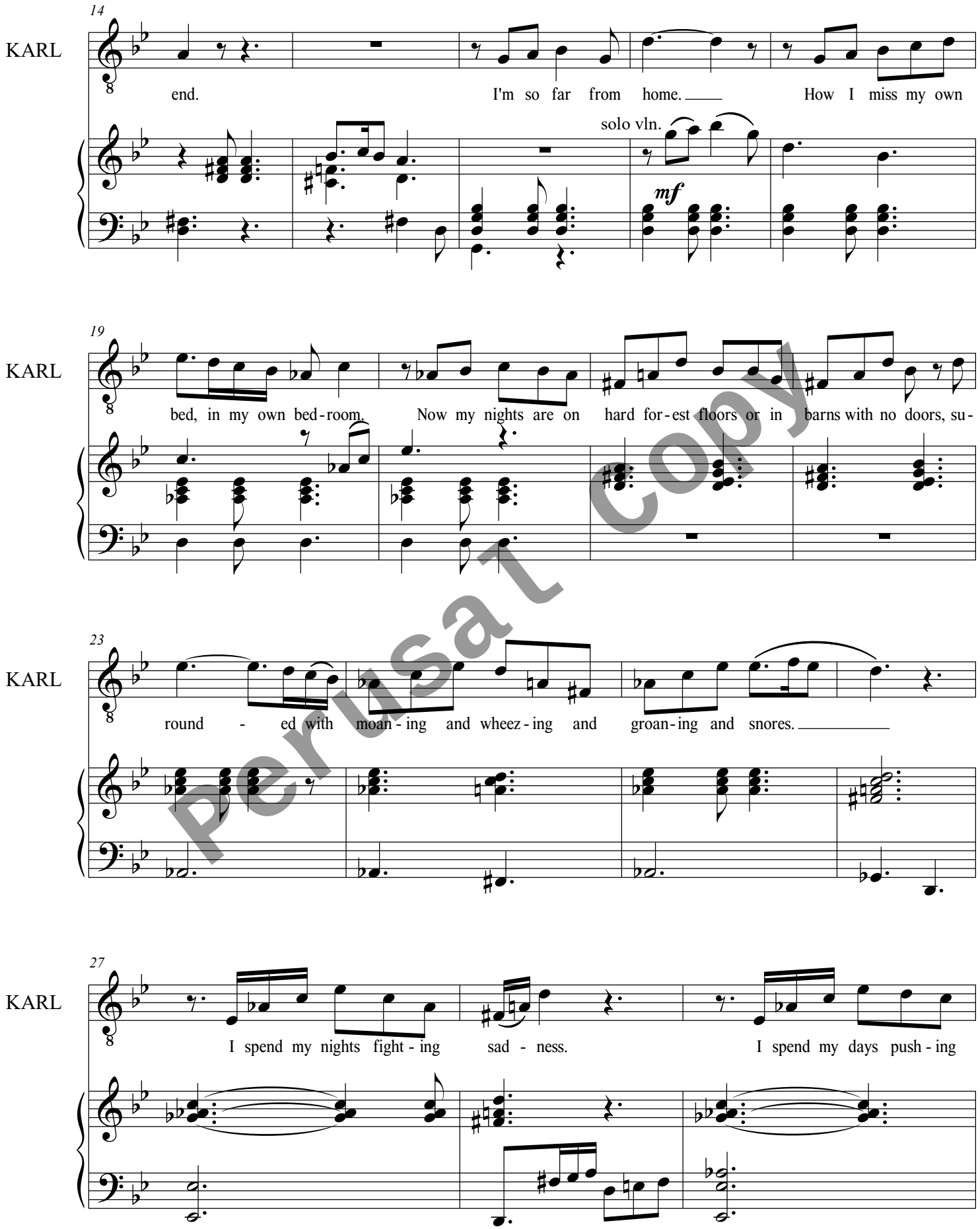
[Duration: 4:02]

Setting: Schmid's Wehrmacht office in Vilna. Schmid is seated at a desk. Max Huppert sits at another desk, typing. A number of German soldiers, bedraggeled, sit on chairs in a waiting area.

24. I'm so far from home

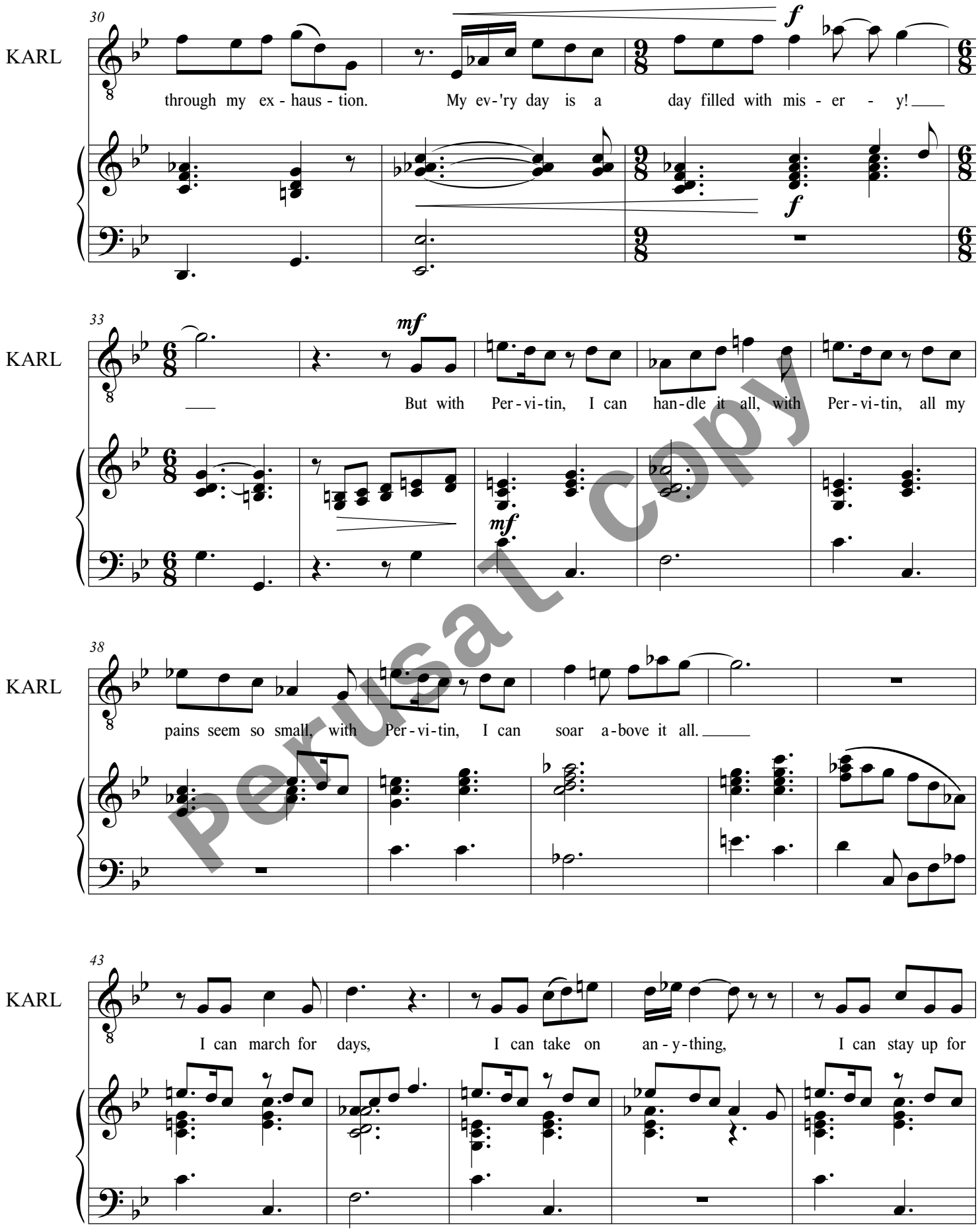


perusal Copy



Perusal Copy

24. I'm so far from home



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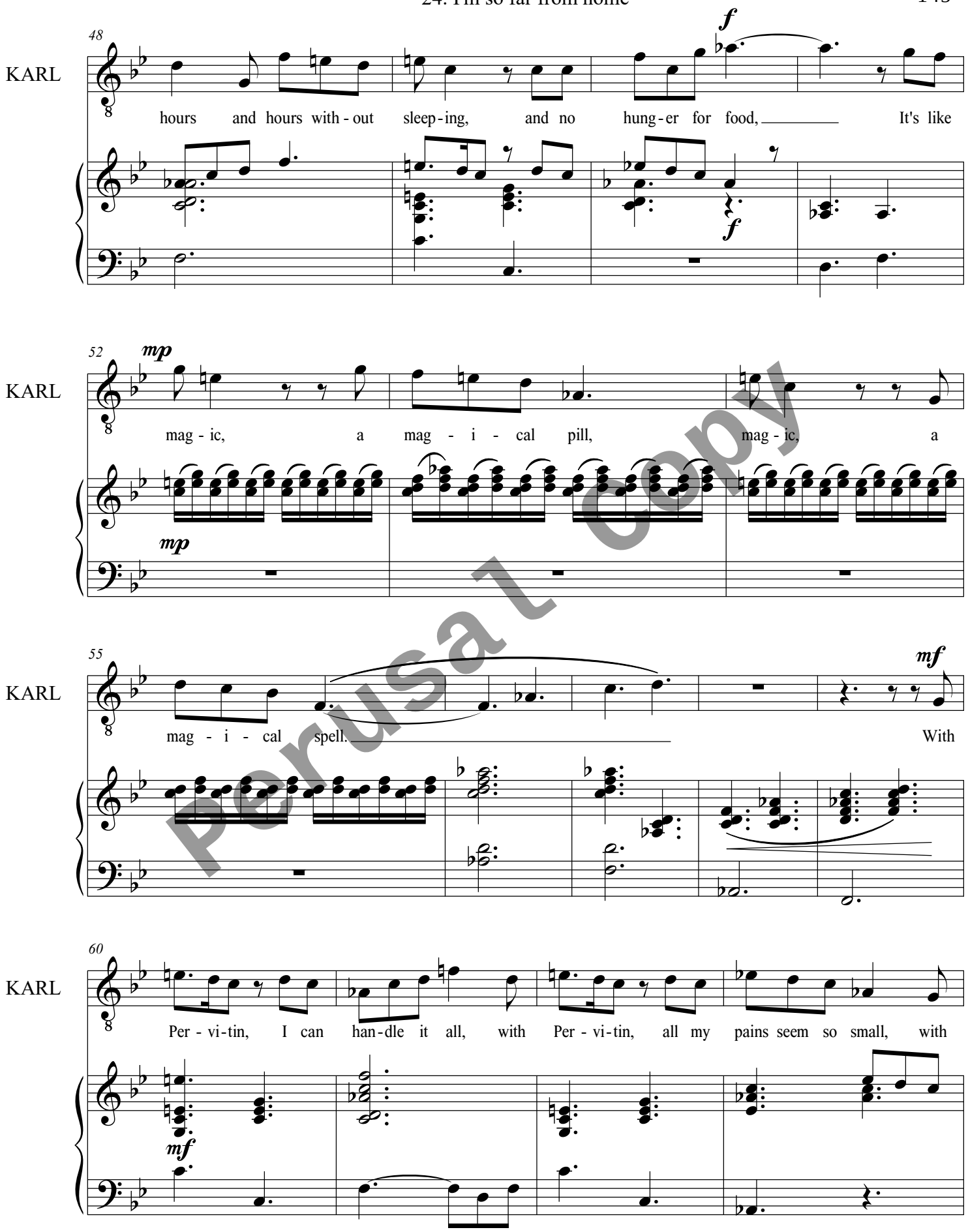

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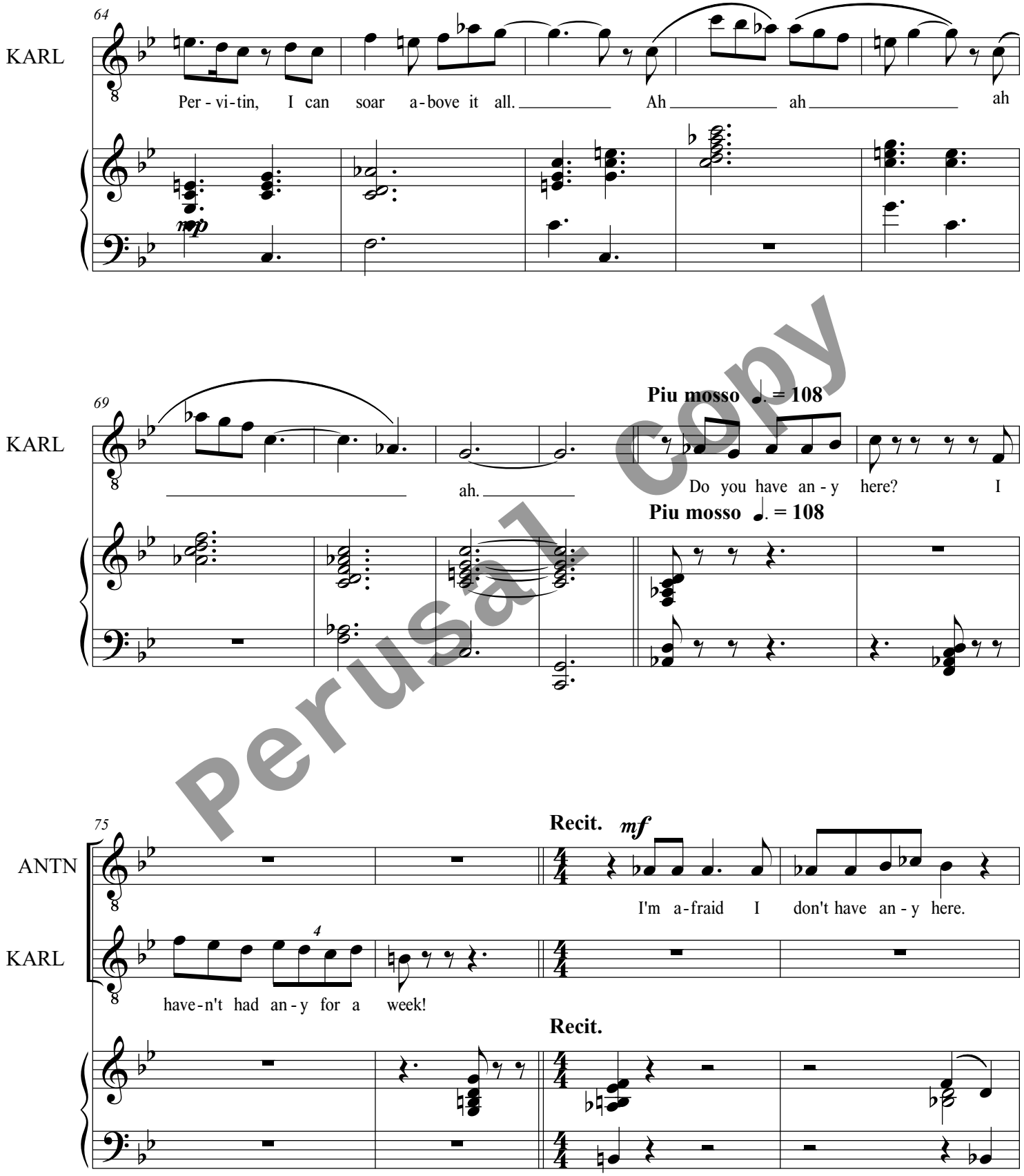

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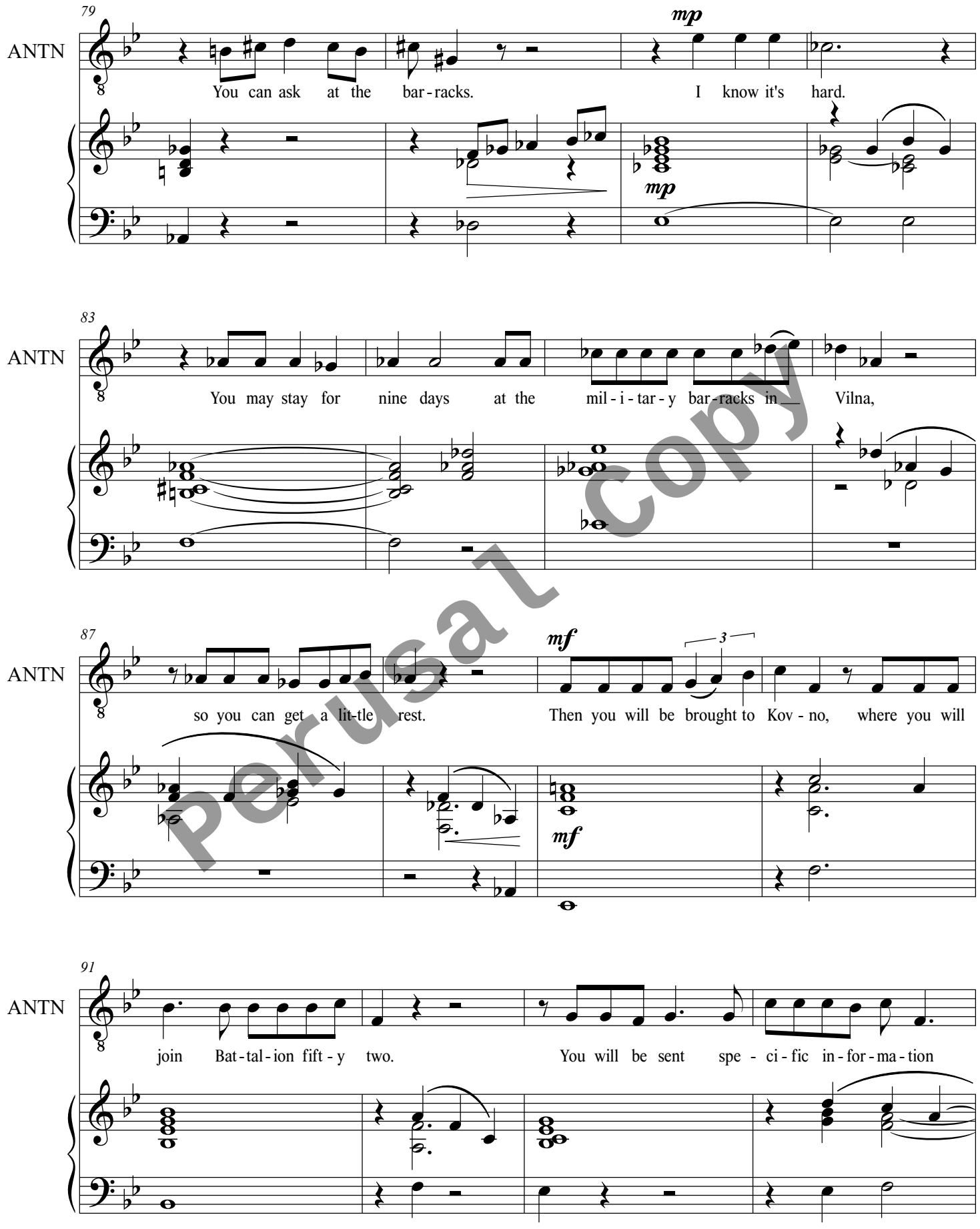

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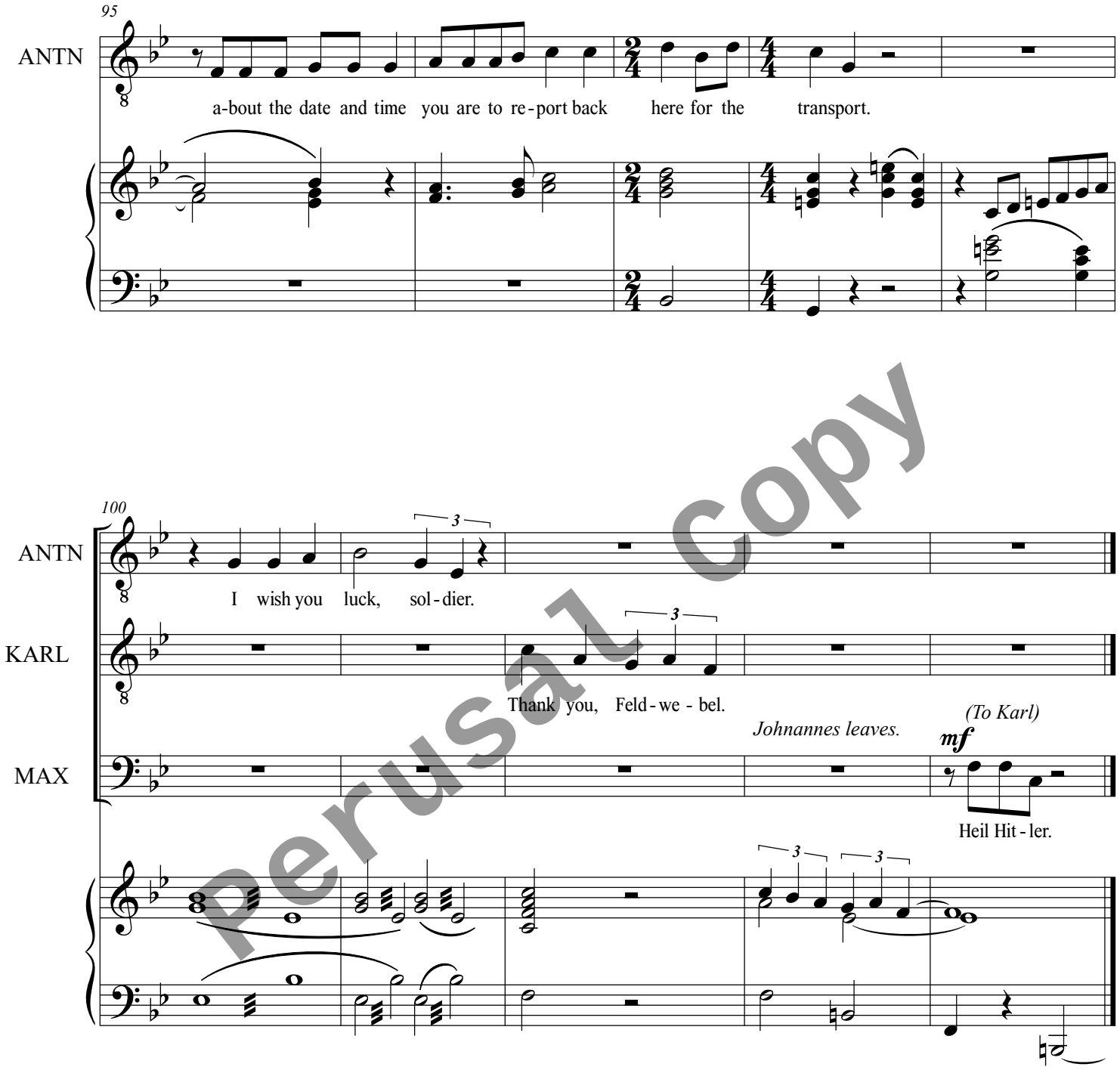
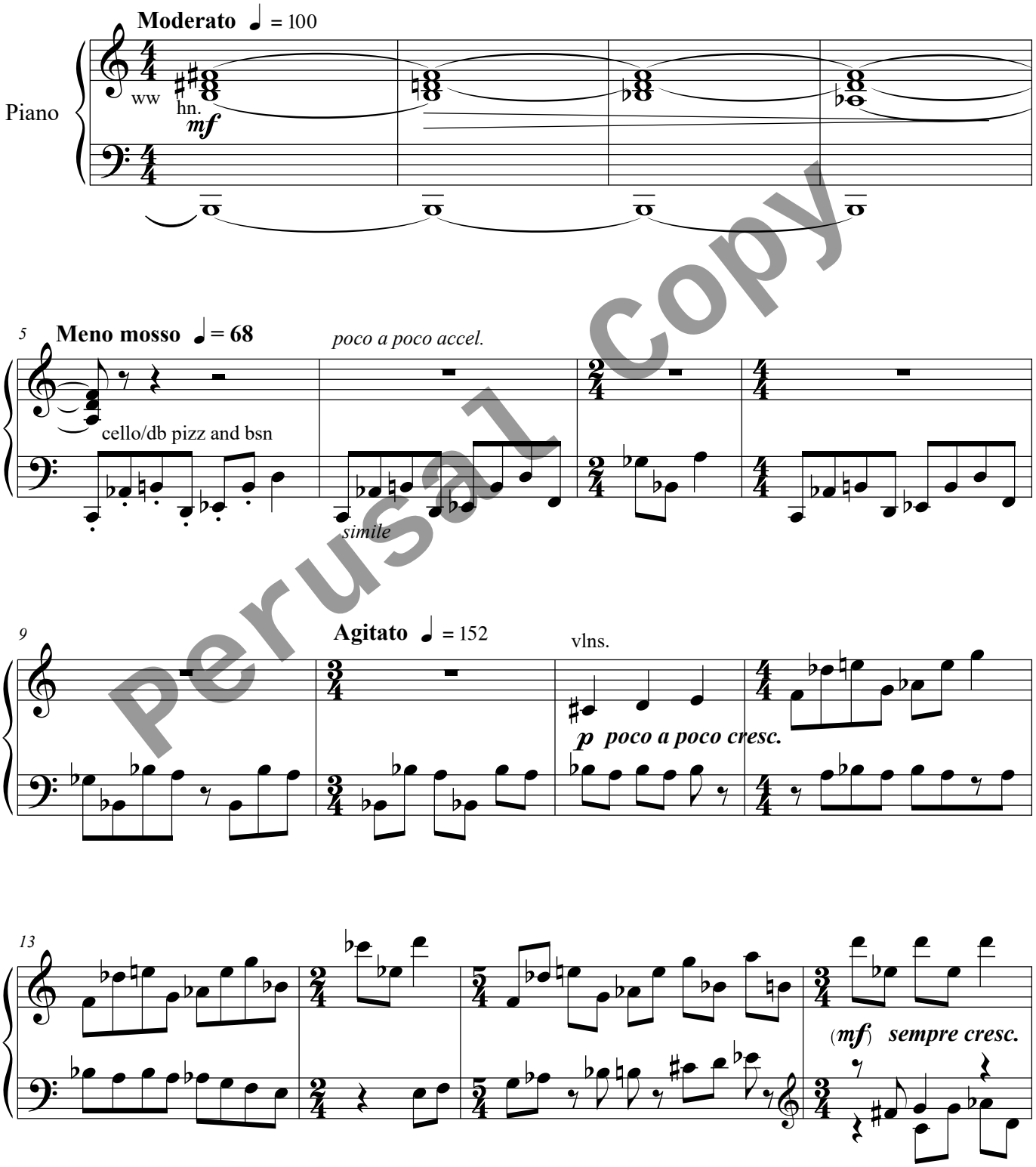


Perusal Copy

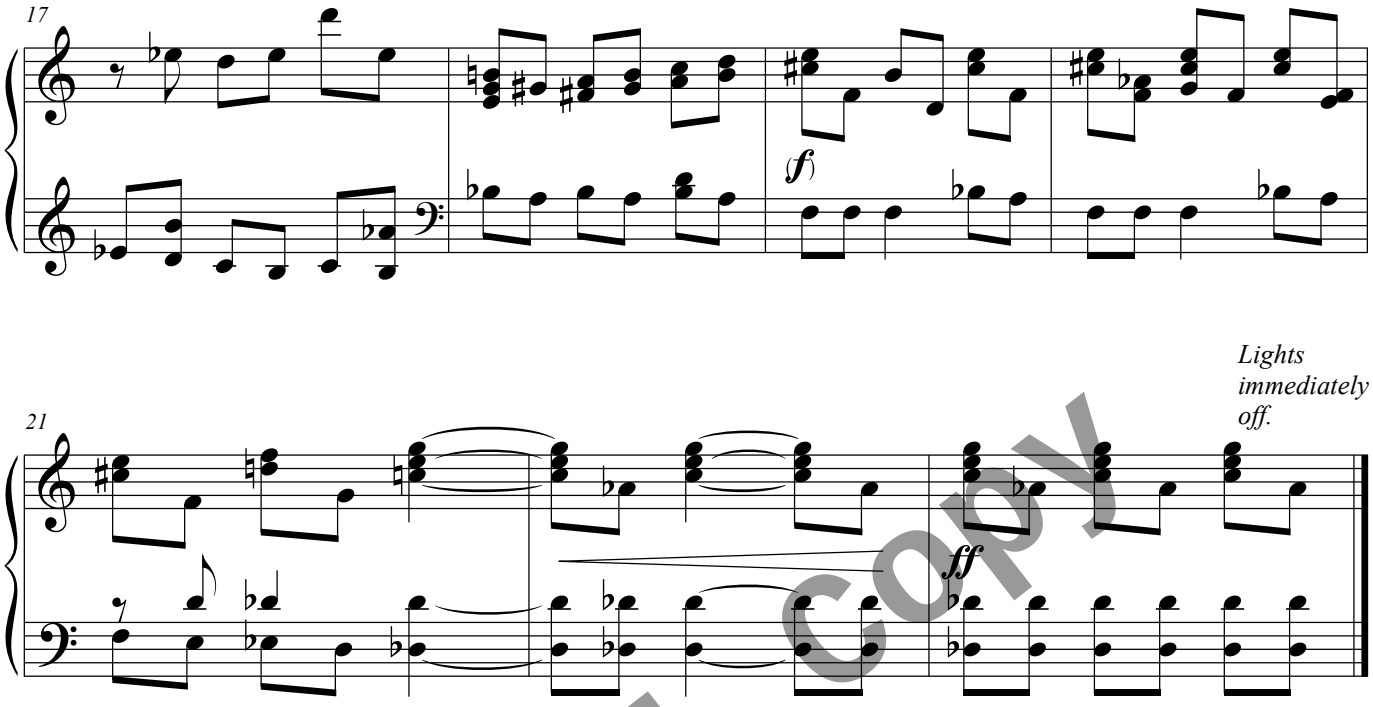
[Duration: :38]

Schmid looks outside his office window onto a staging area where Jews are being assembled before being moved on. The Jews are being cruelly mistreated by Nazi guards. Schmid is horrified at what he sees.

25. Outside the Window



Perusal Copy

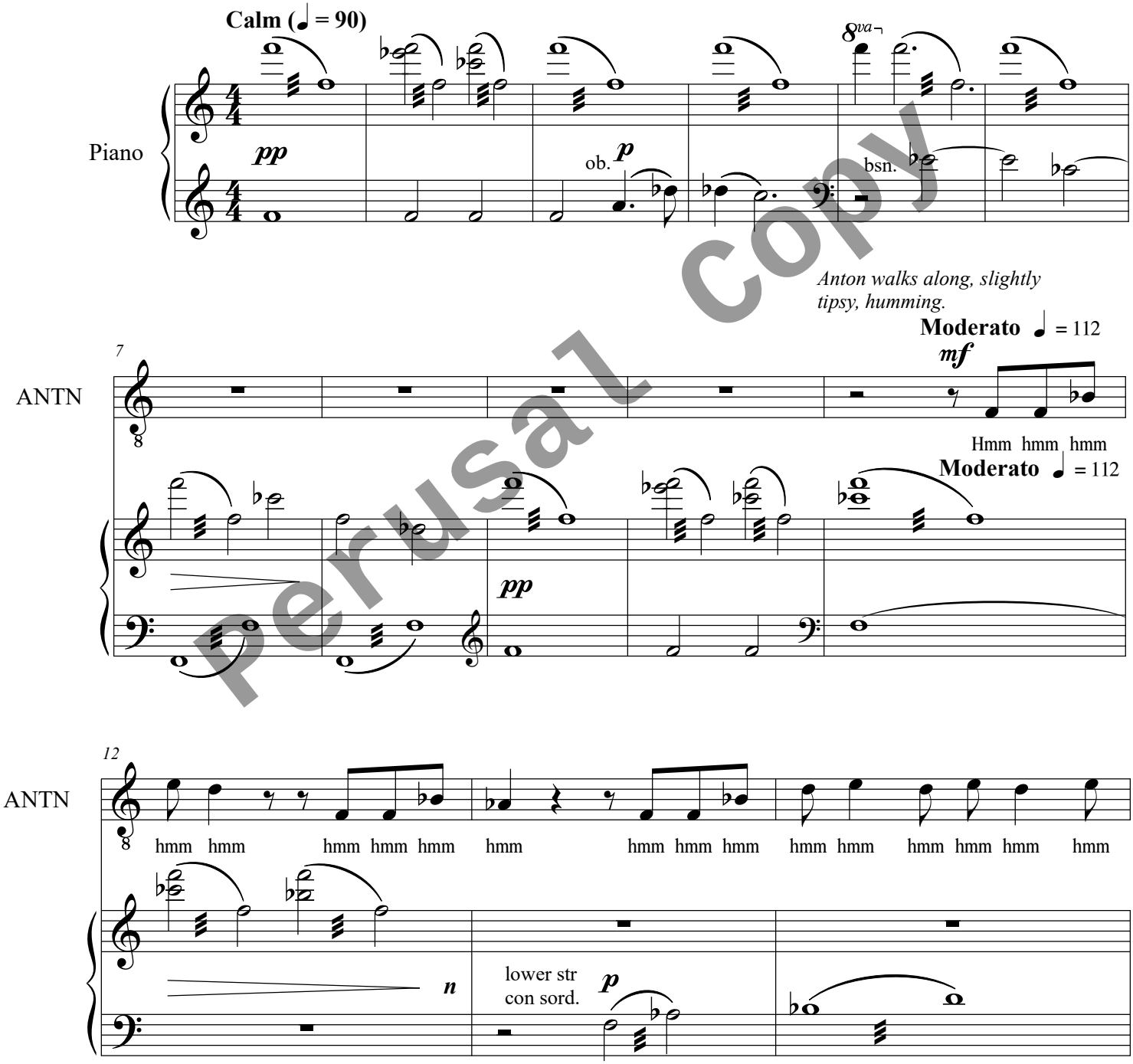


Perusal Copy

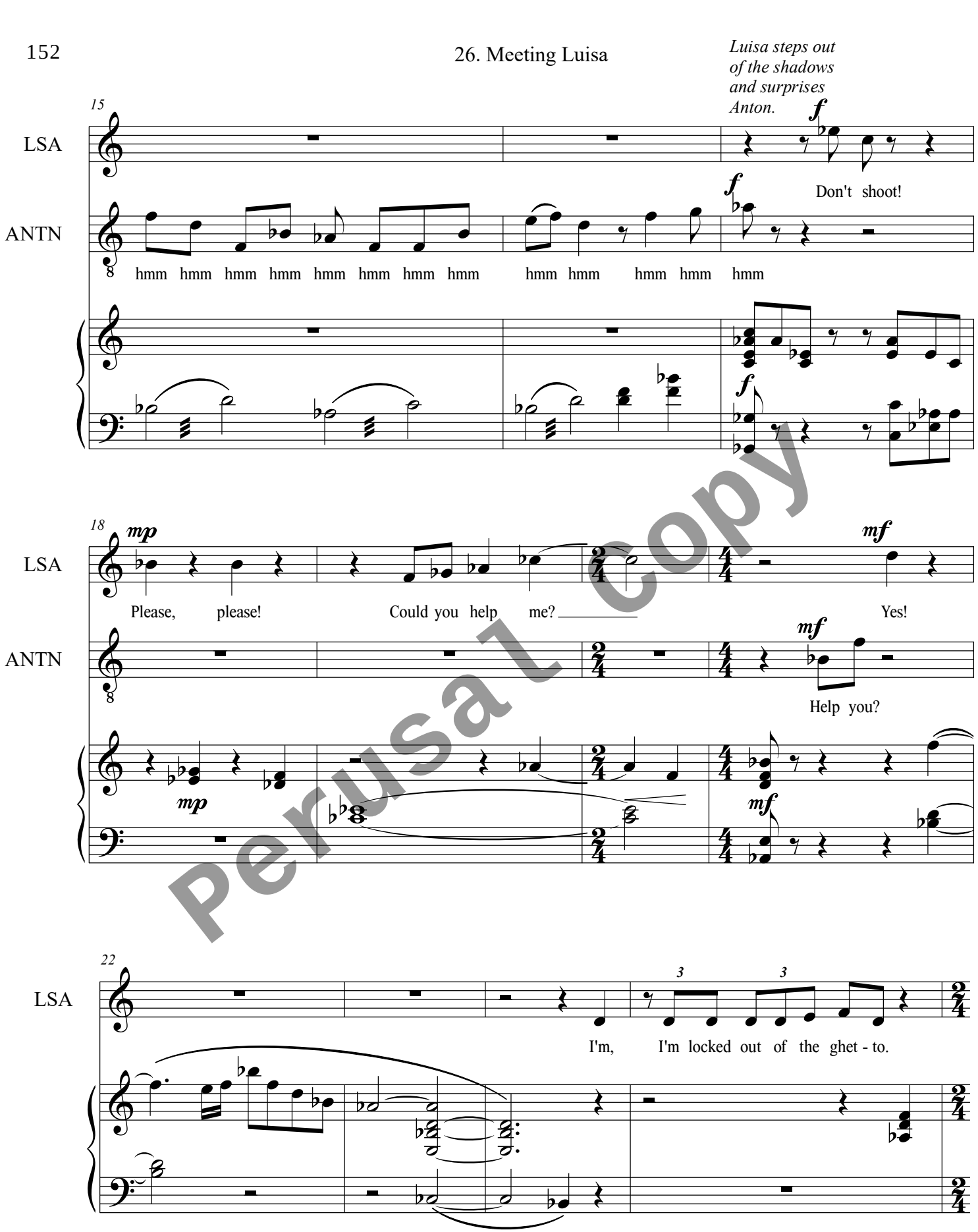
[Duration: 3:12]

Oct. 1941. Residential street in Vilna, nighttime. Anton is on his way back from the officers' club with a few drinks in him. Luisa Emaitiseite, a young Lithuanian Jew, was outside the ghetto past curfew, to avoid the raid that day. She is now locked out. She hides in the shadows of the entrance of a derelict house.

26. Meeting Luisa



Perusal Copy



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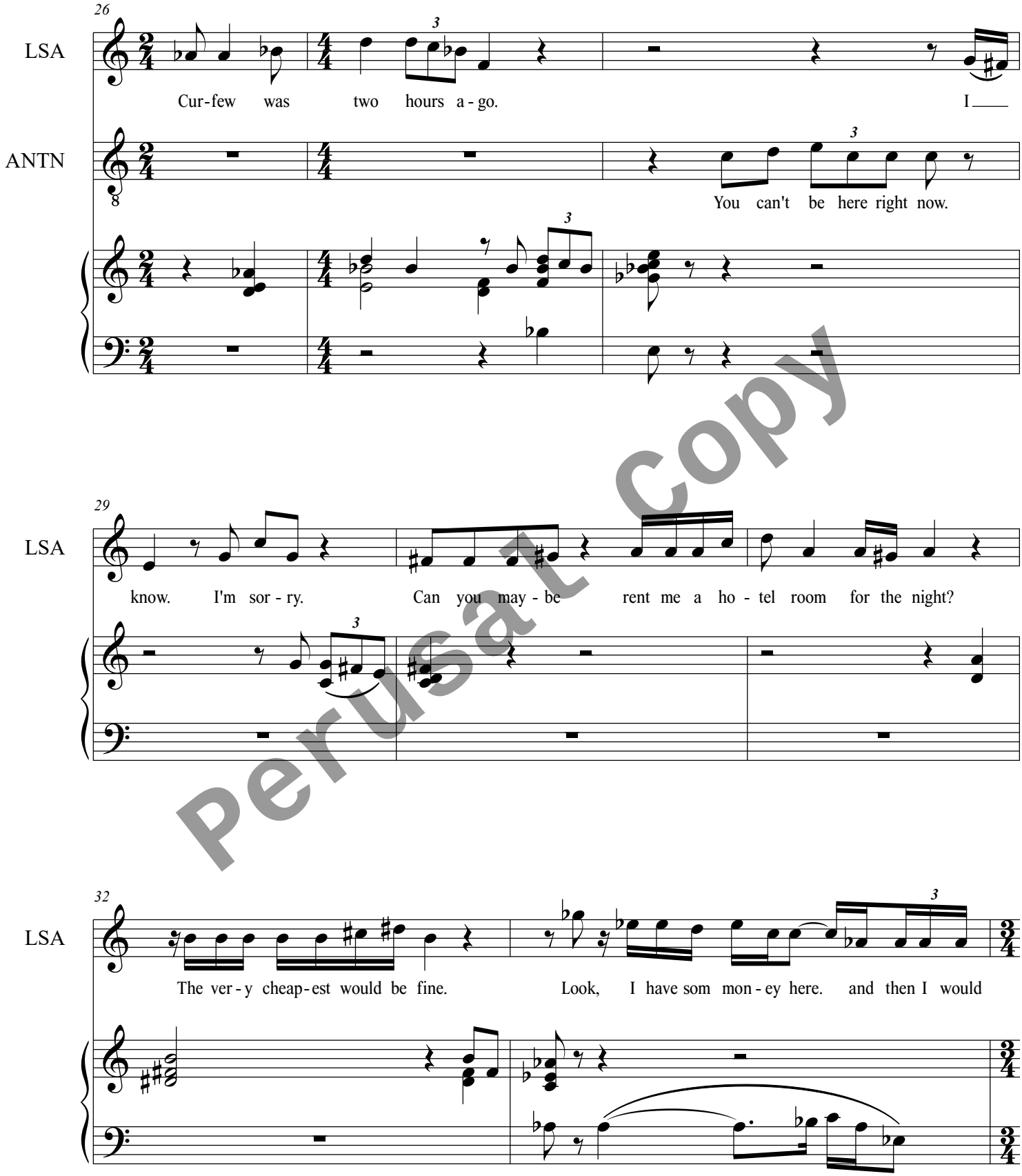

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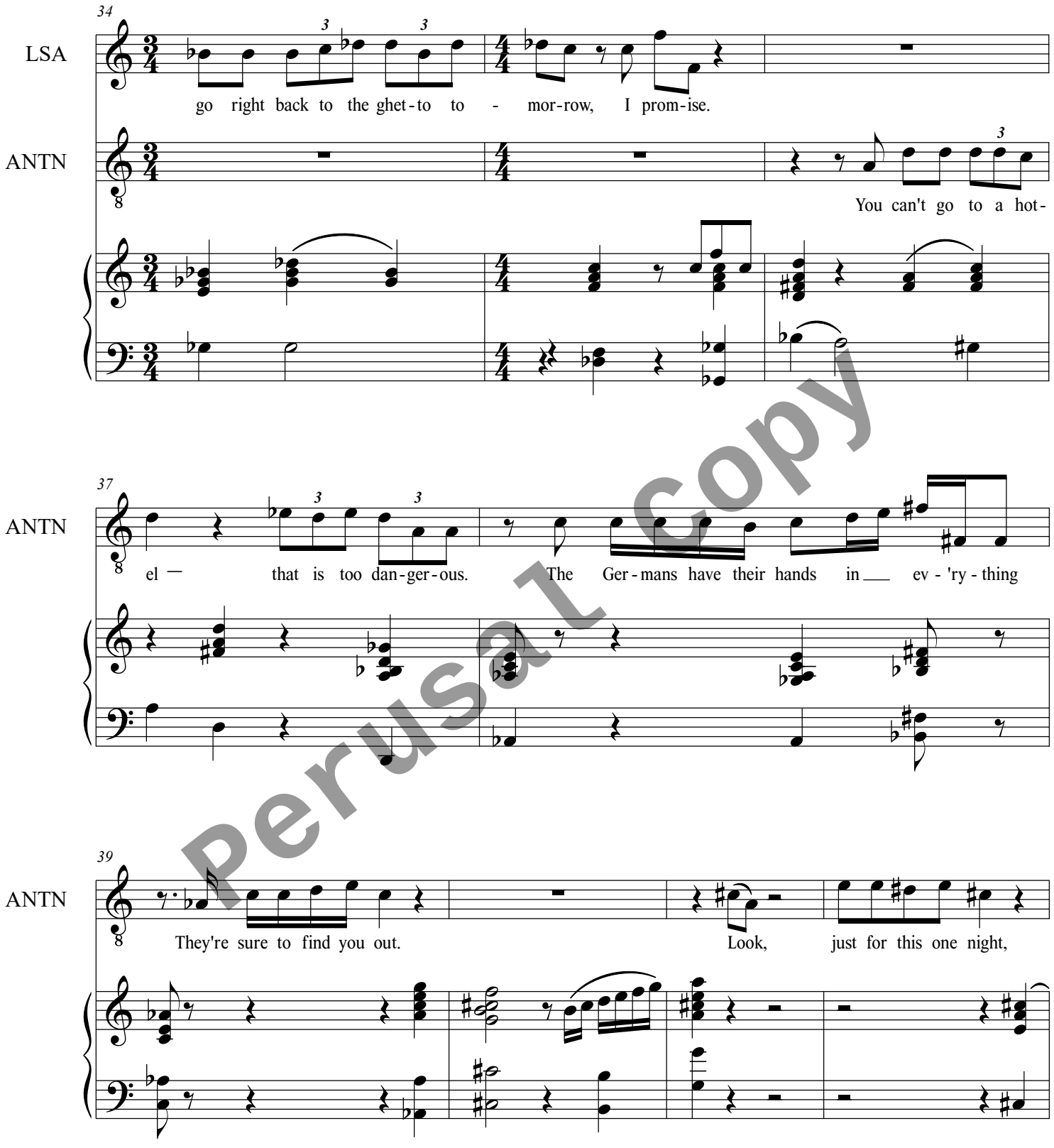

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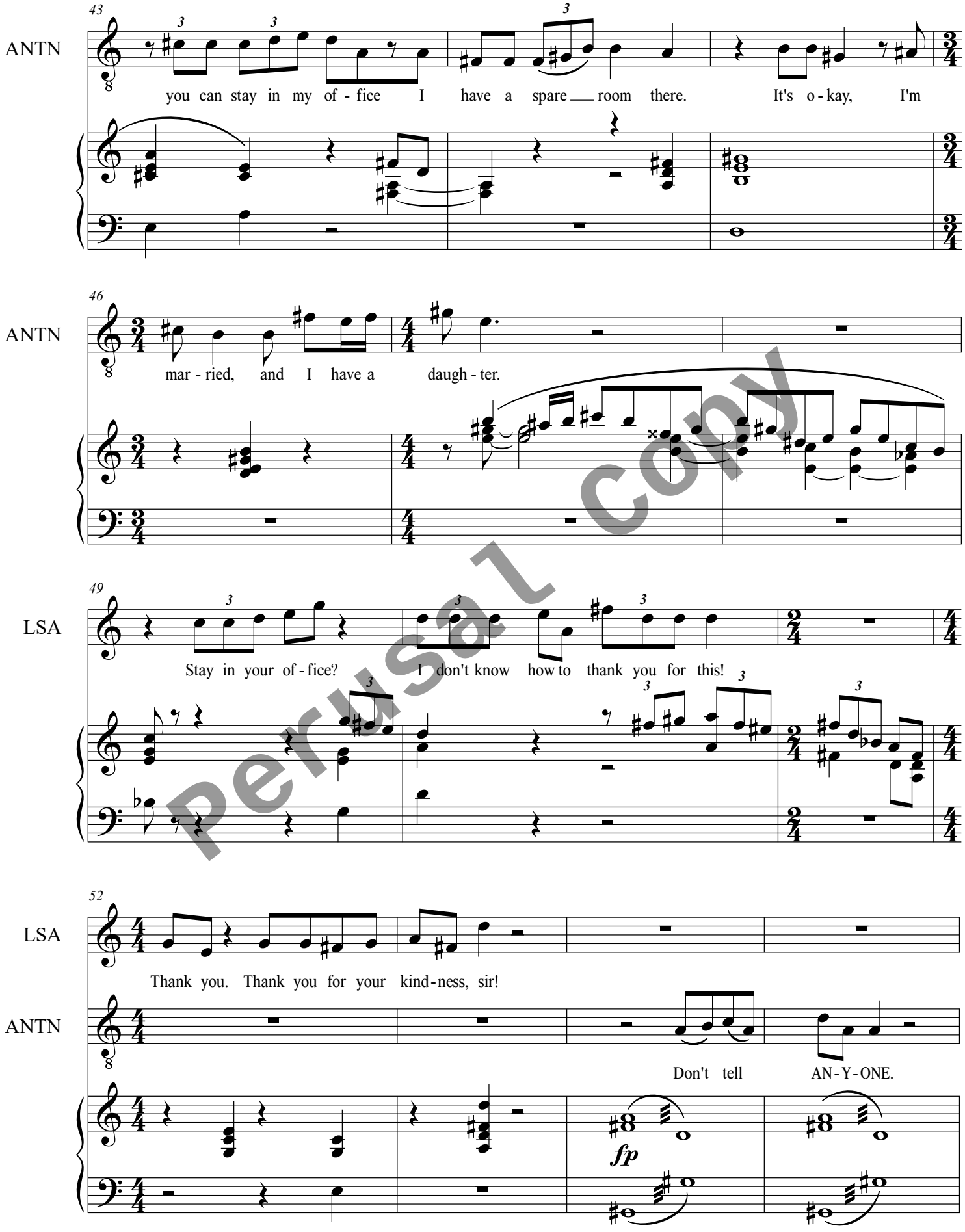

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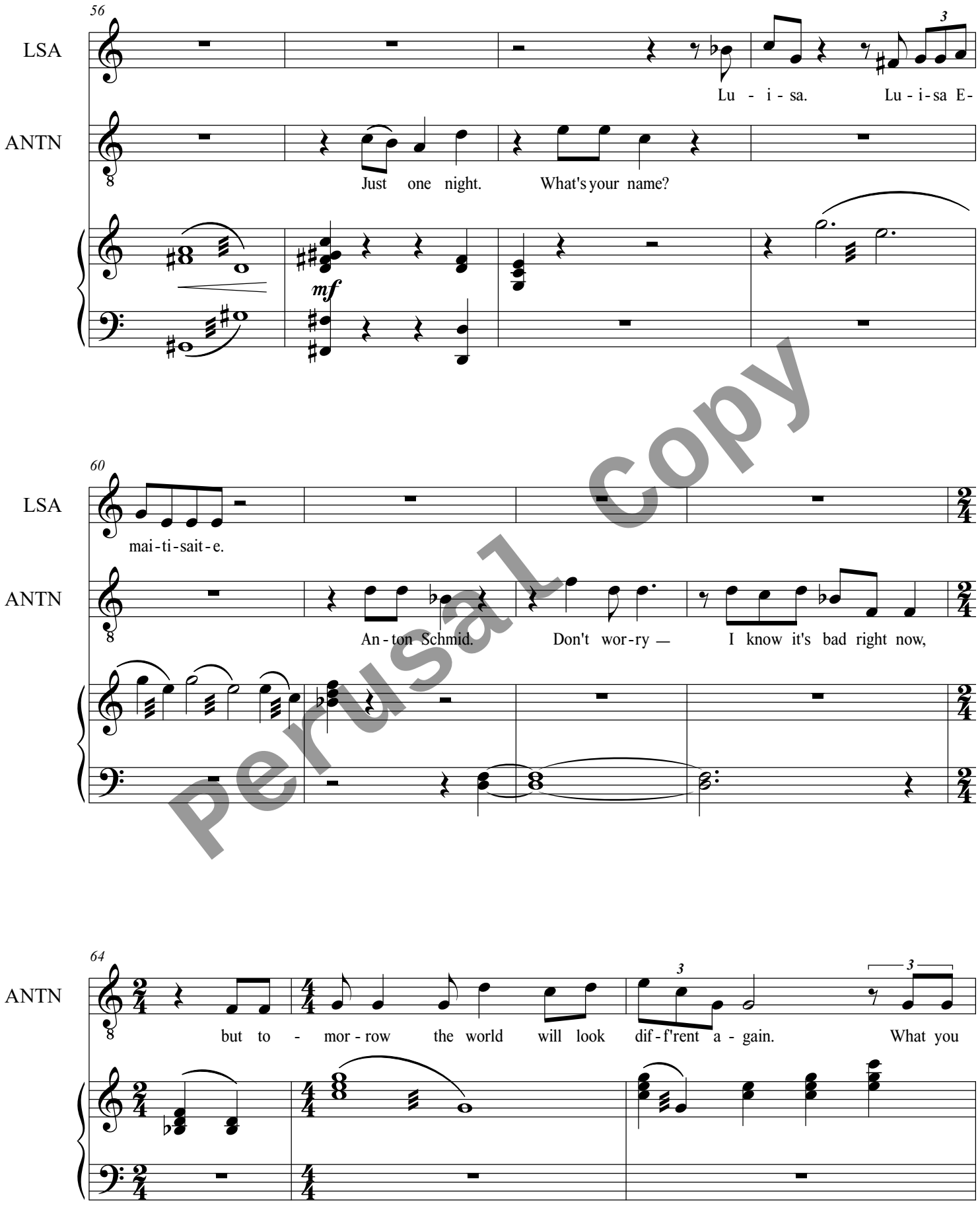

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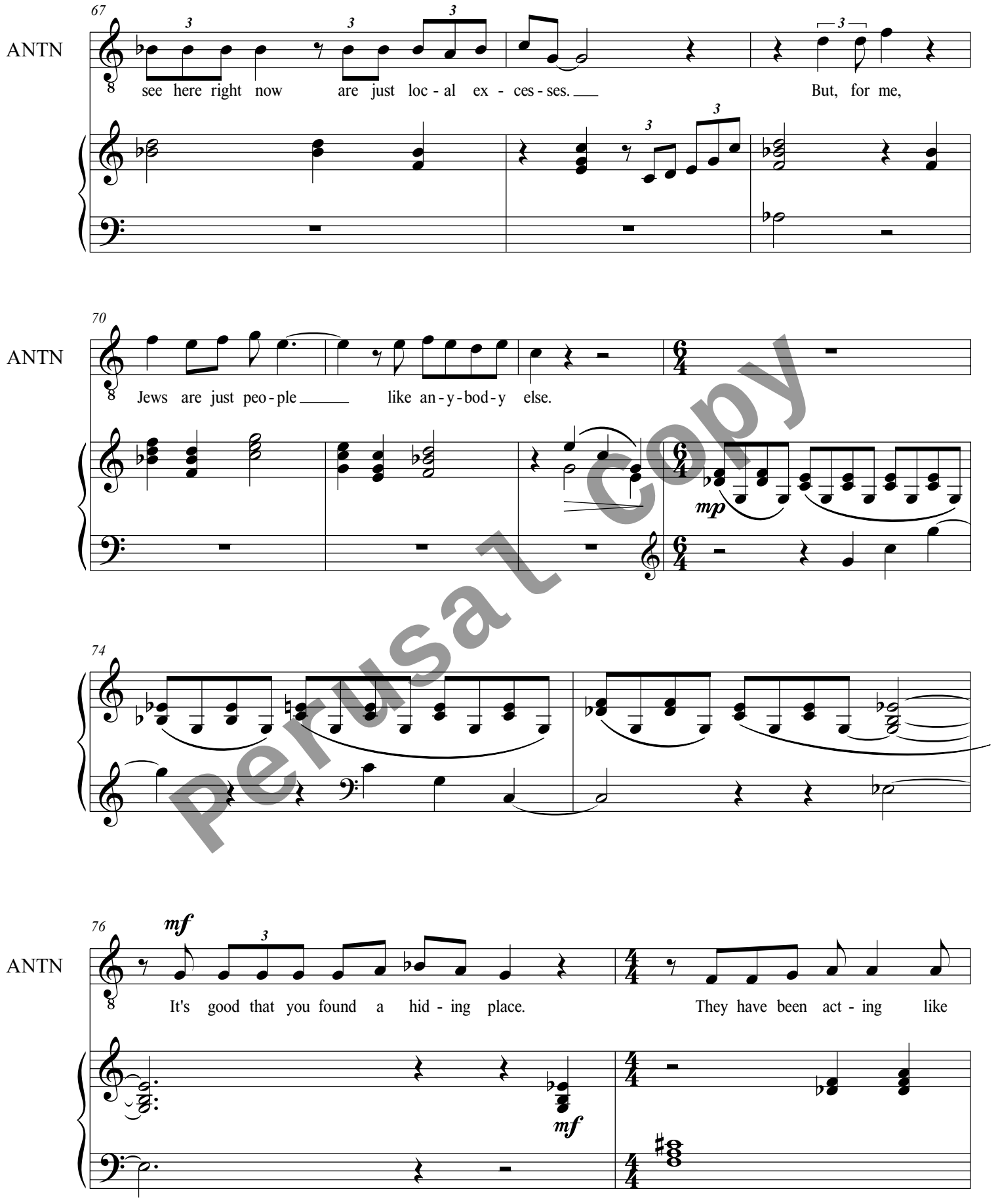


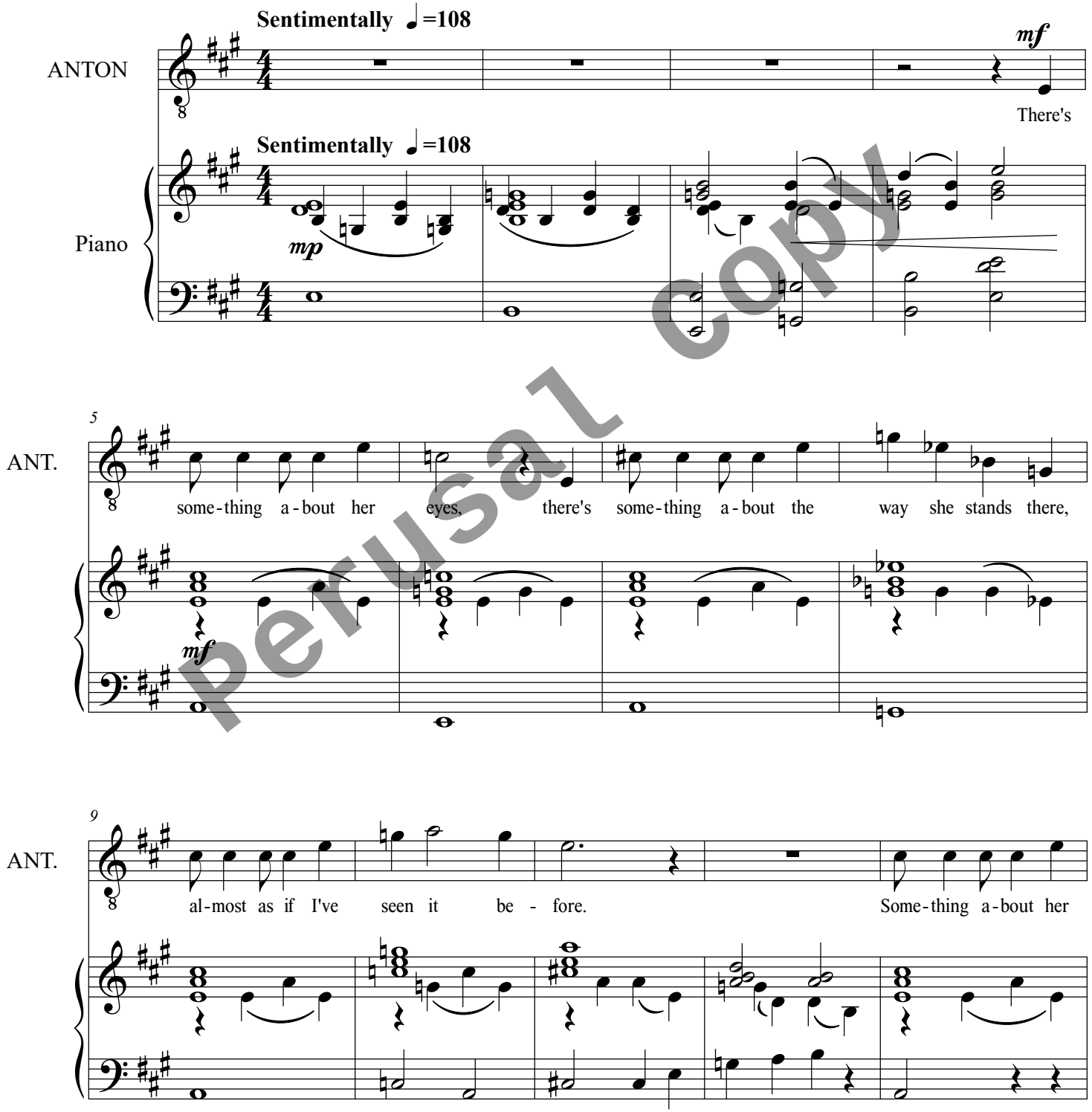
Perusal Copy

Perusal Copy

[Duration: 3:47]

Schnmid has just met Luisa, late at night on a street outside the ghetto and he muses about his daughter Gertha.

27. There's Something About Her Eyes



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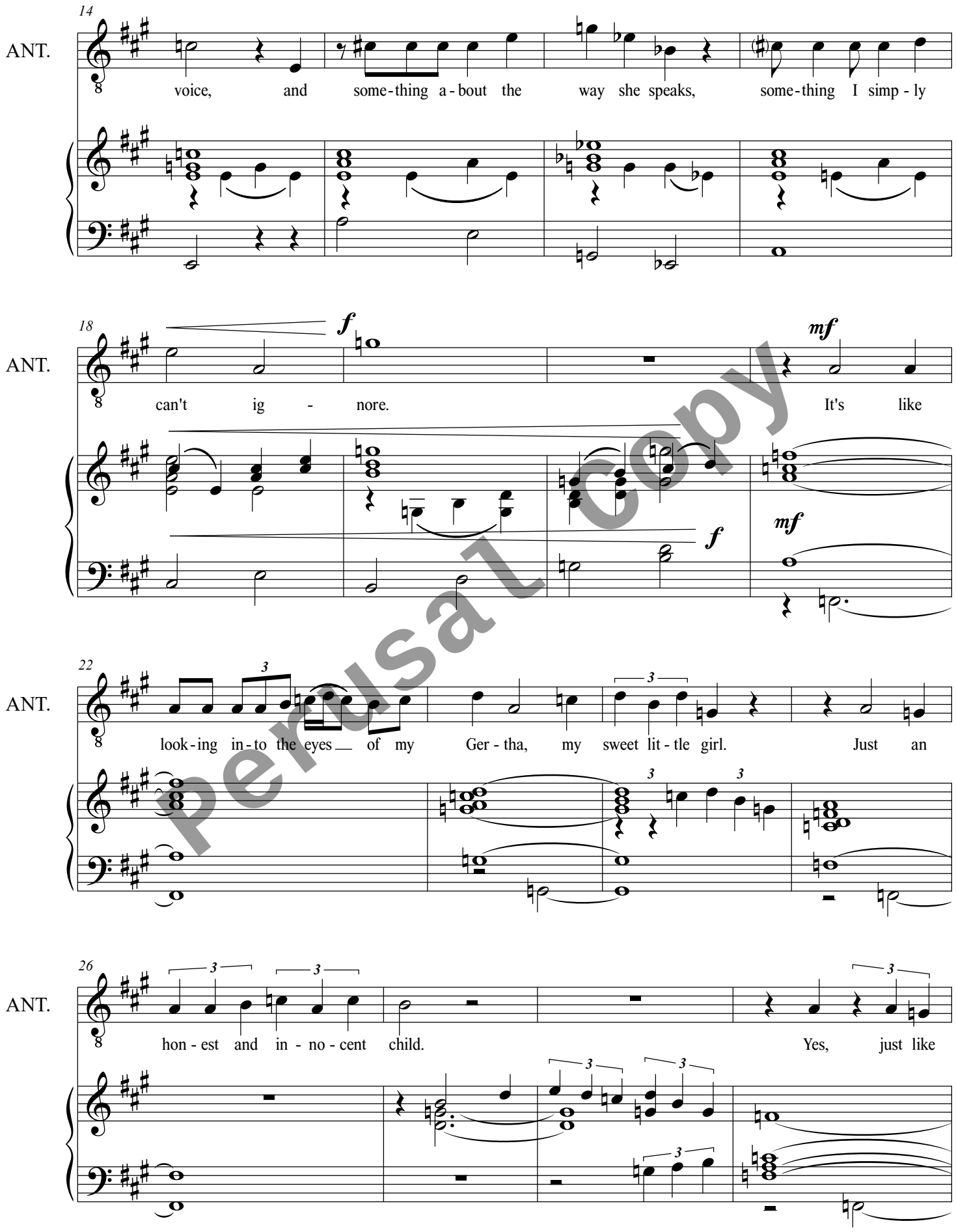

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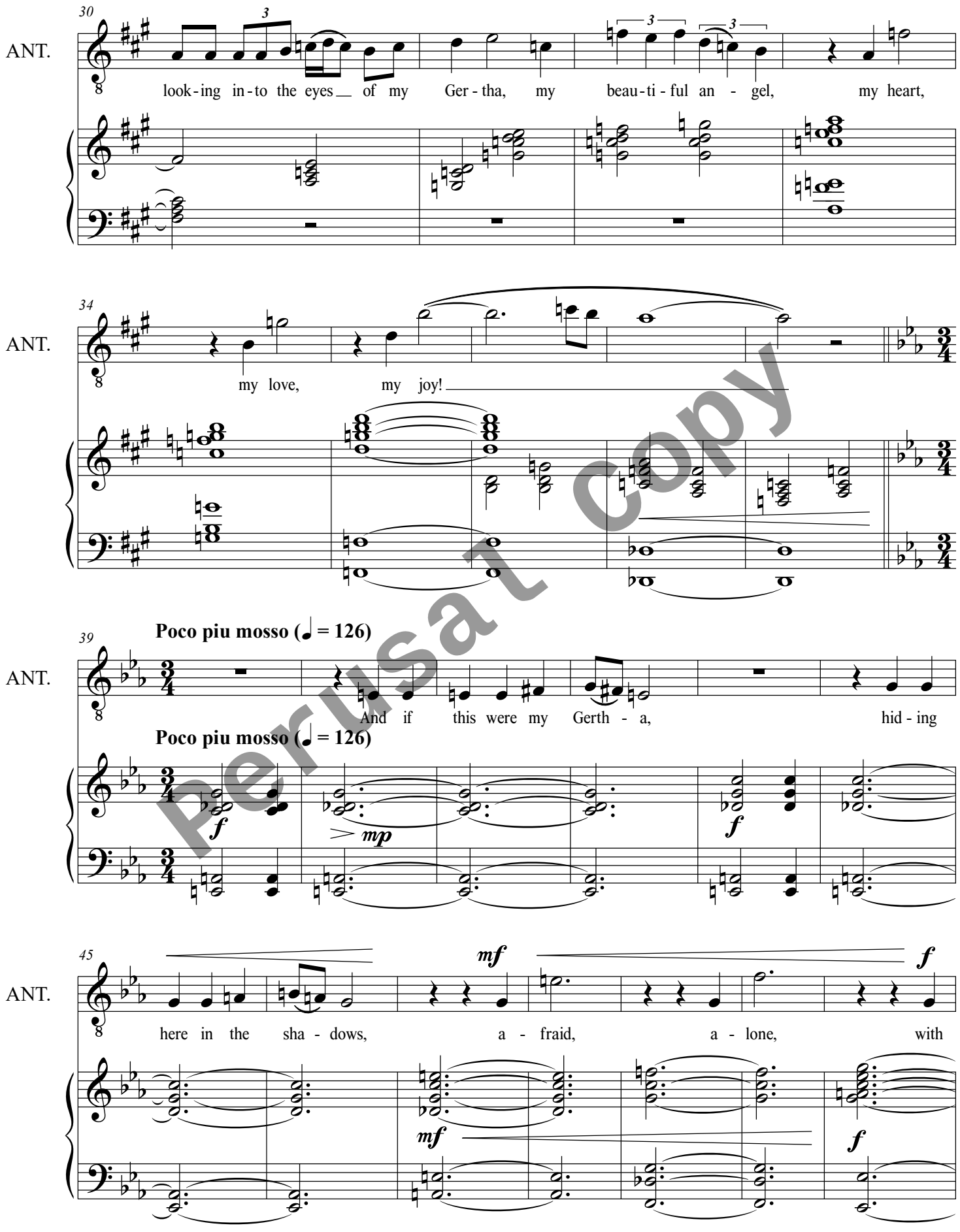

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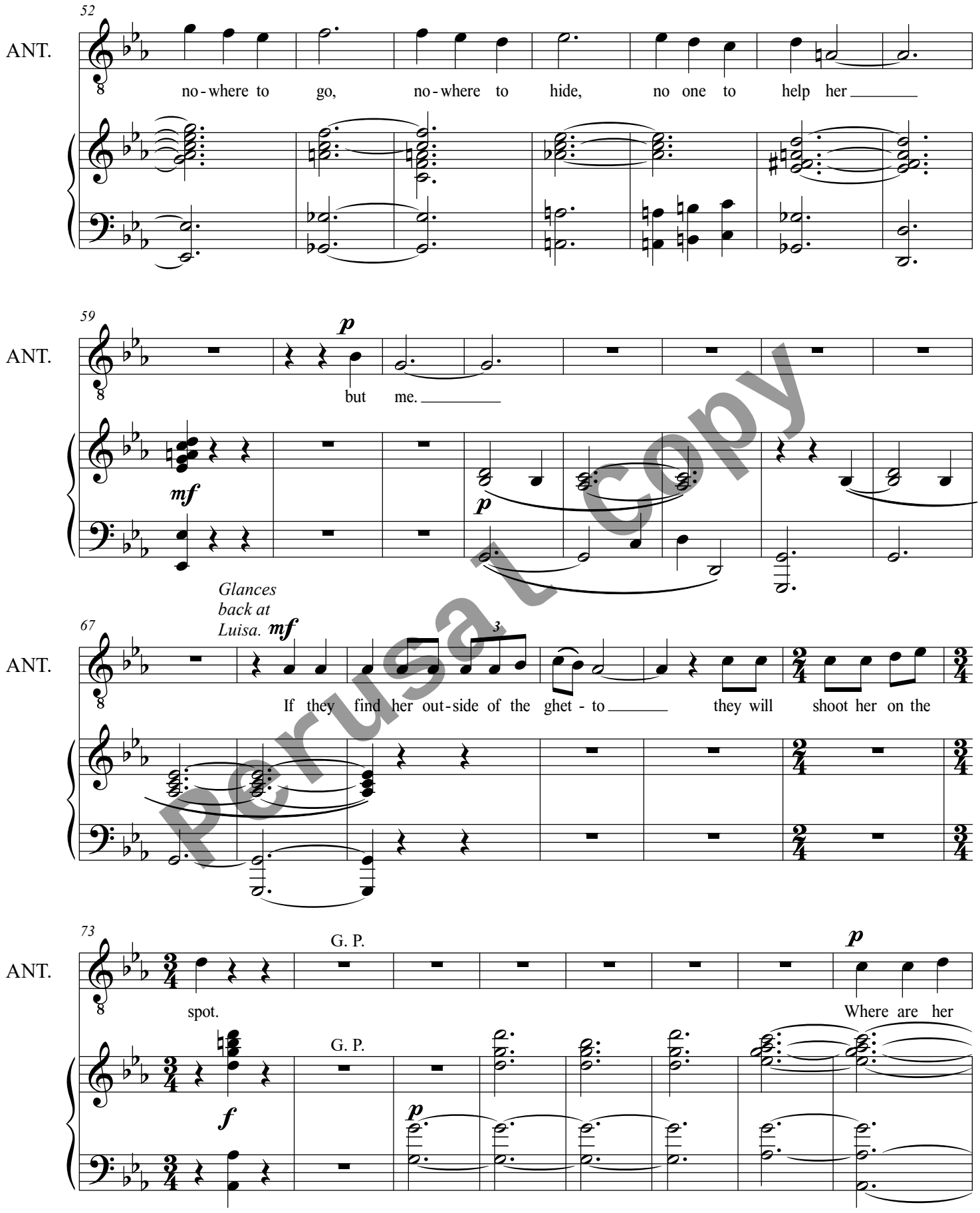

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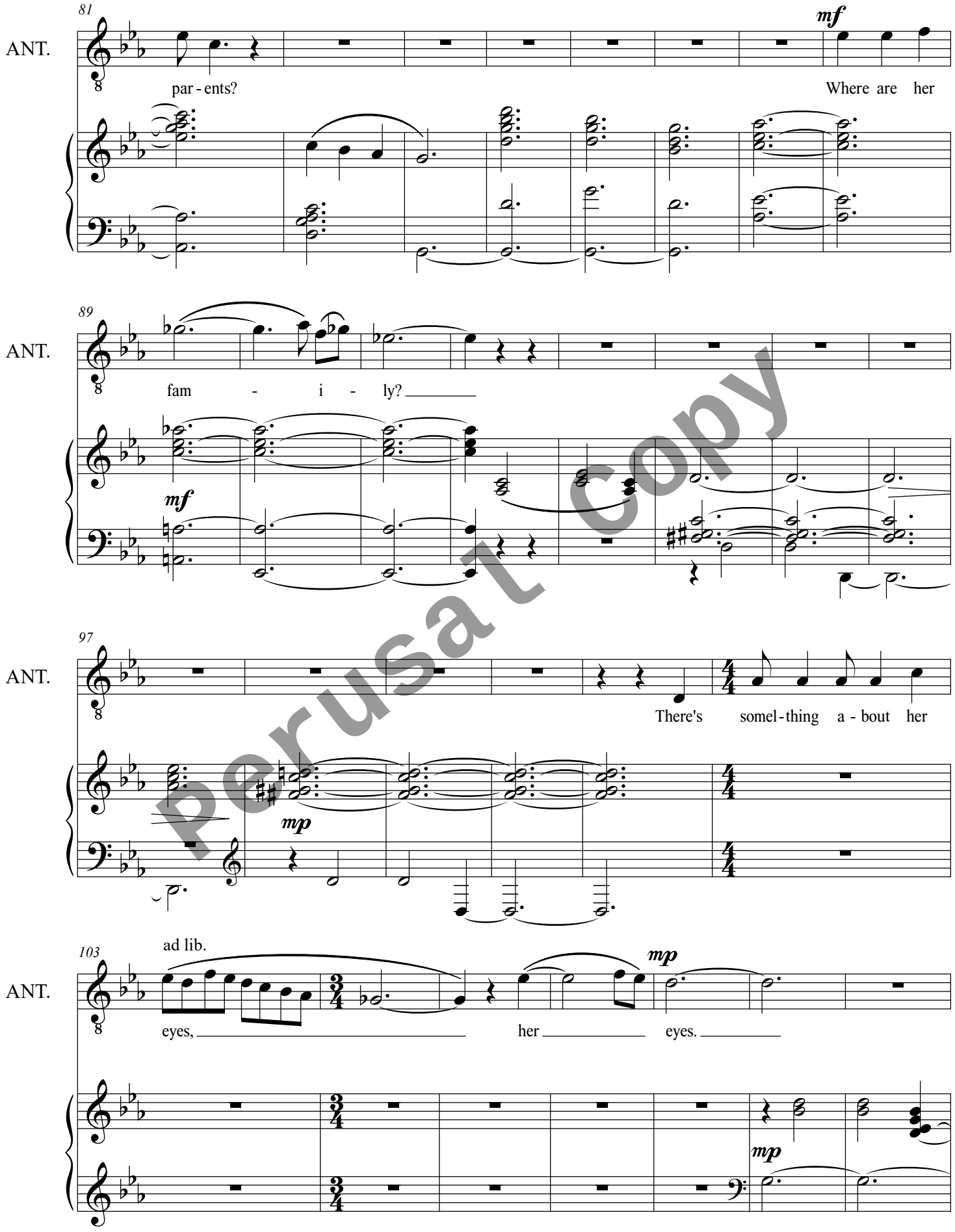

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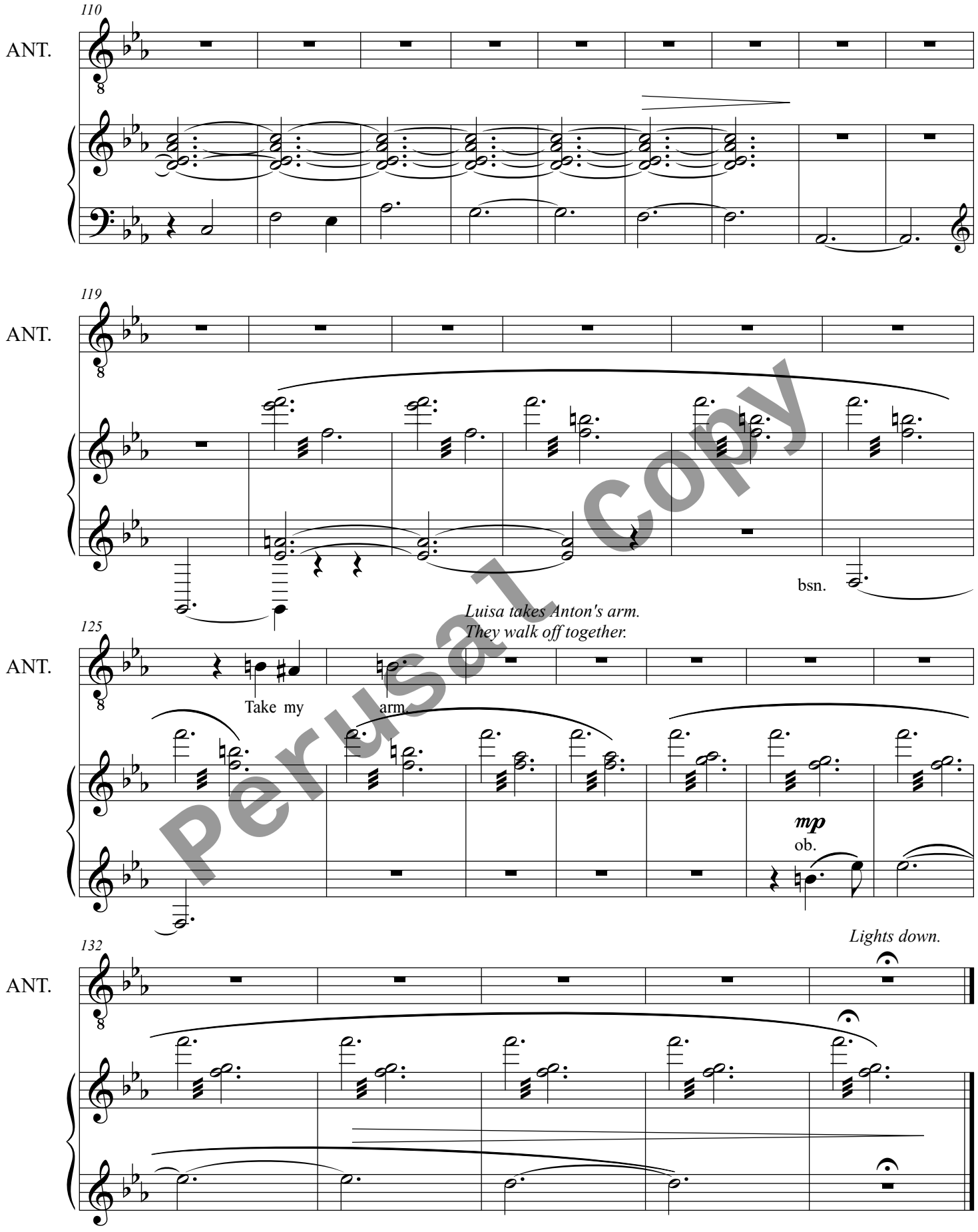
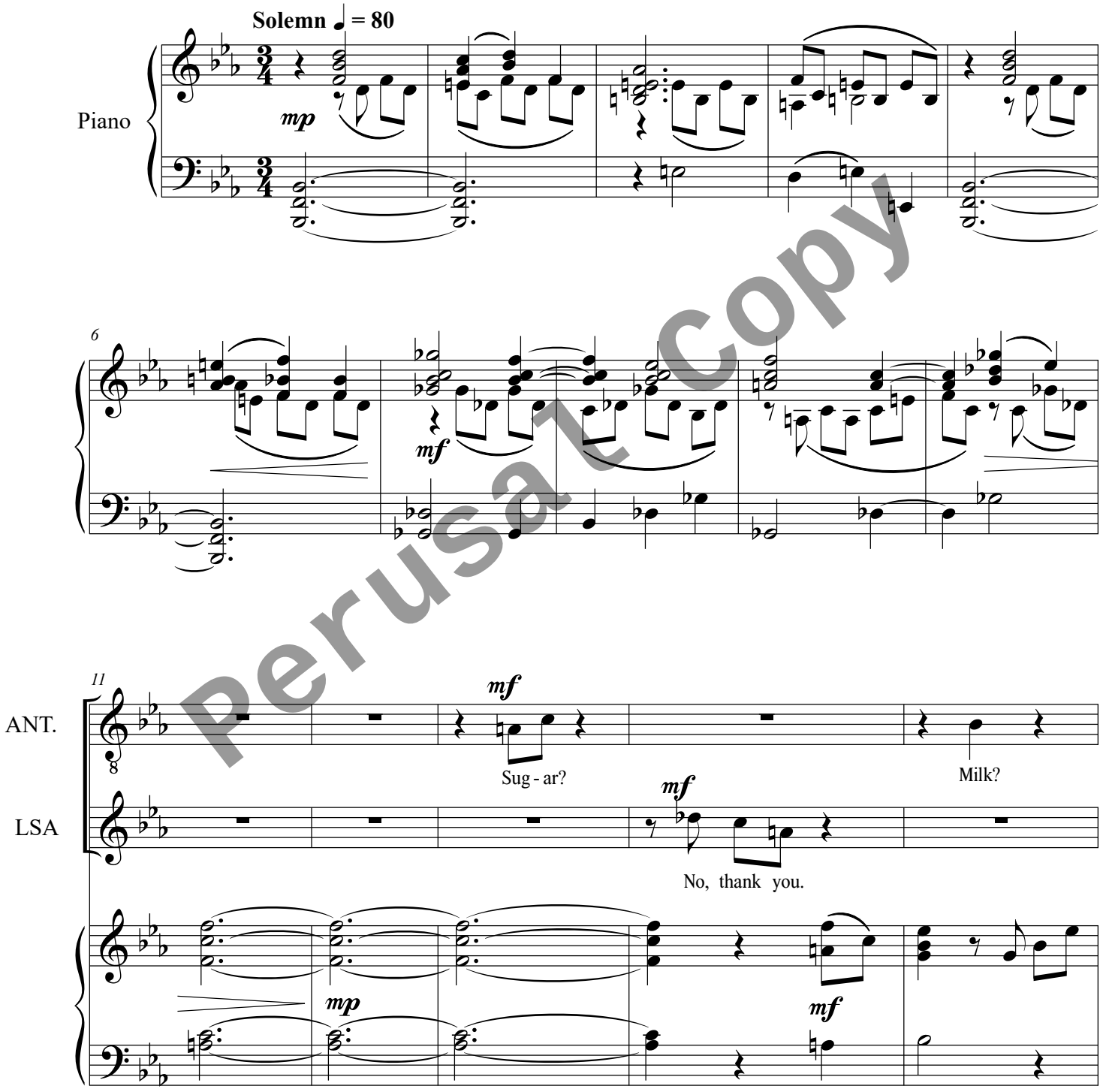


Perusal Copy

[Duration: 1:35]

In Schmid's apt. in Vilna. Morning. Luisa sits at table holding a cup of coffee. Schmid is busy in kitchen. He pours himself a cup of coffee and sits down at table.

28. Breakfast at Schmid's



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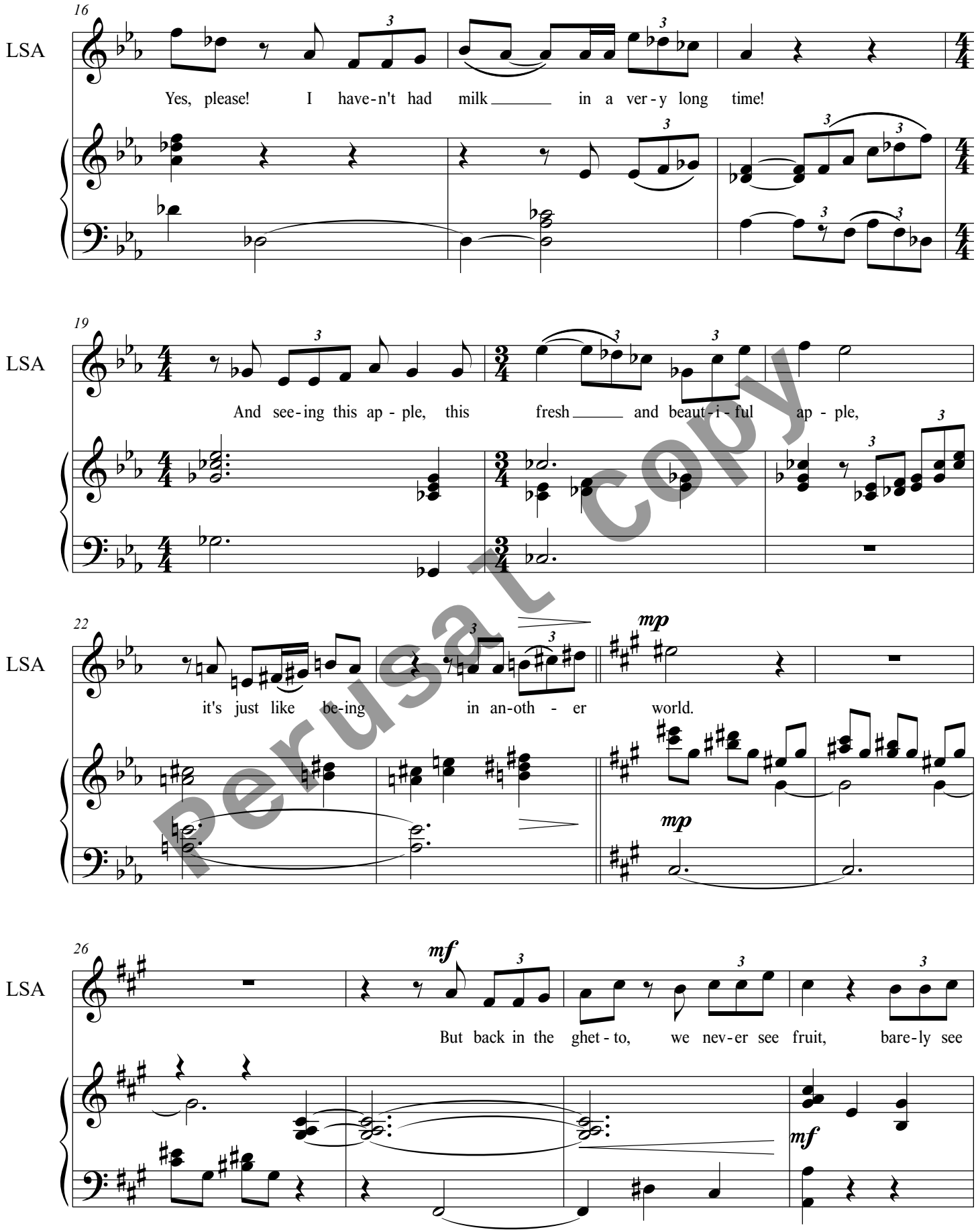
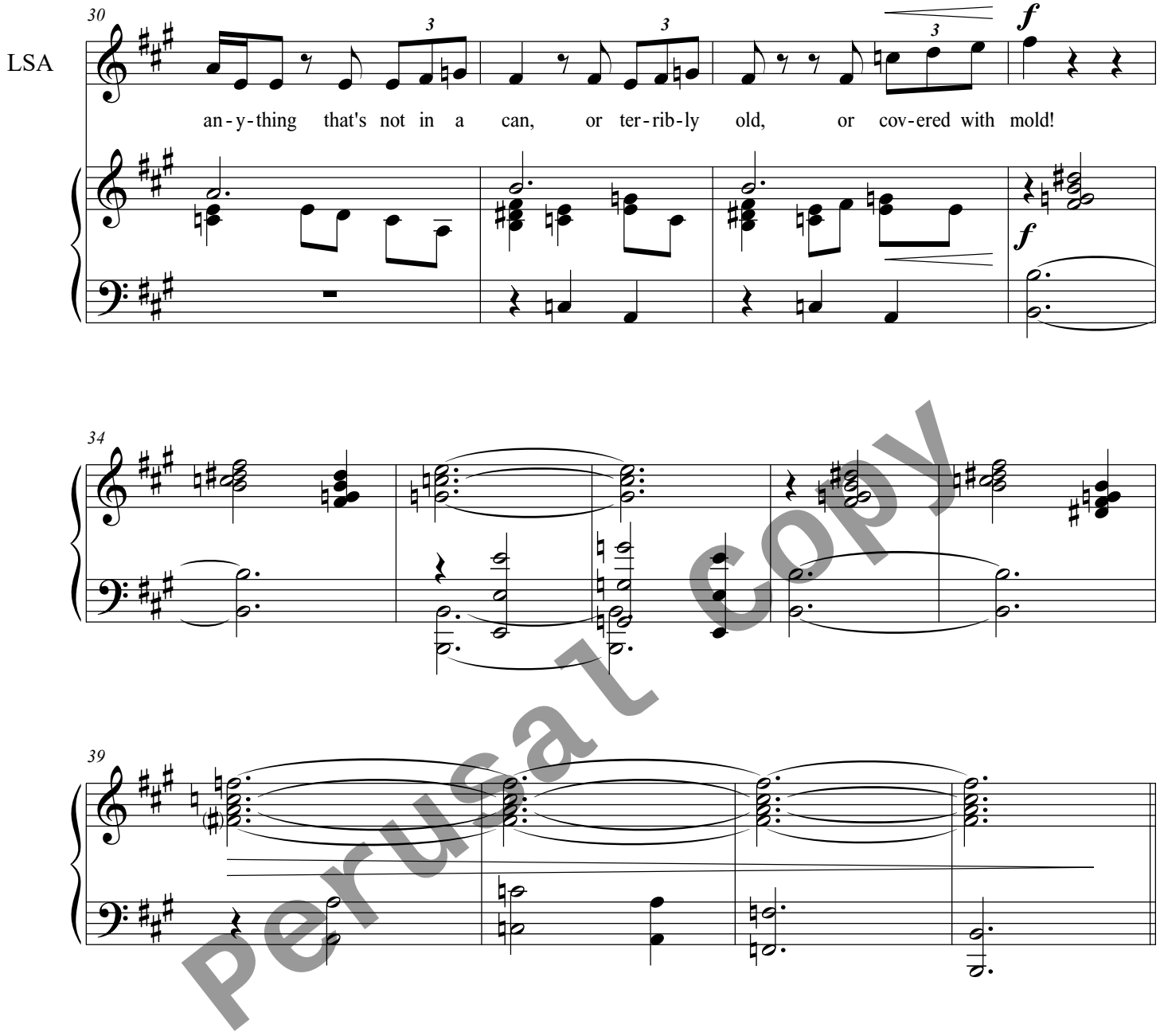


perusal Copy

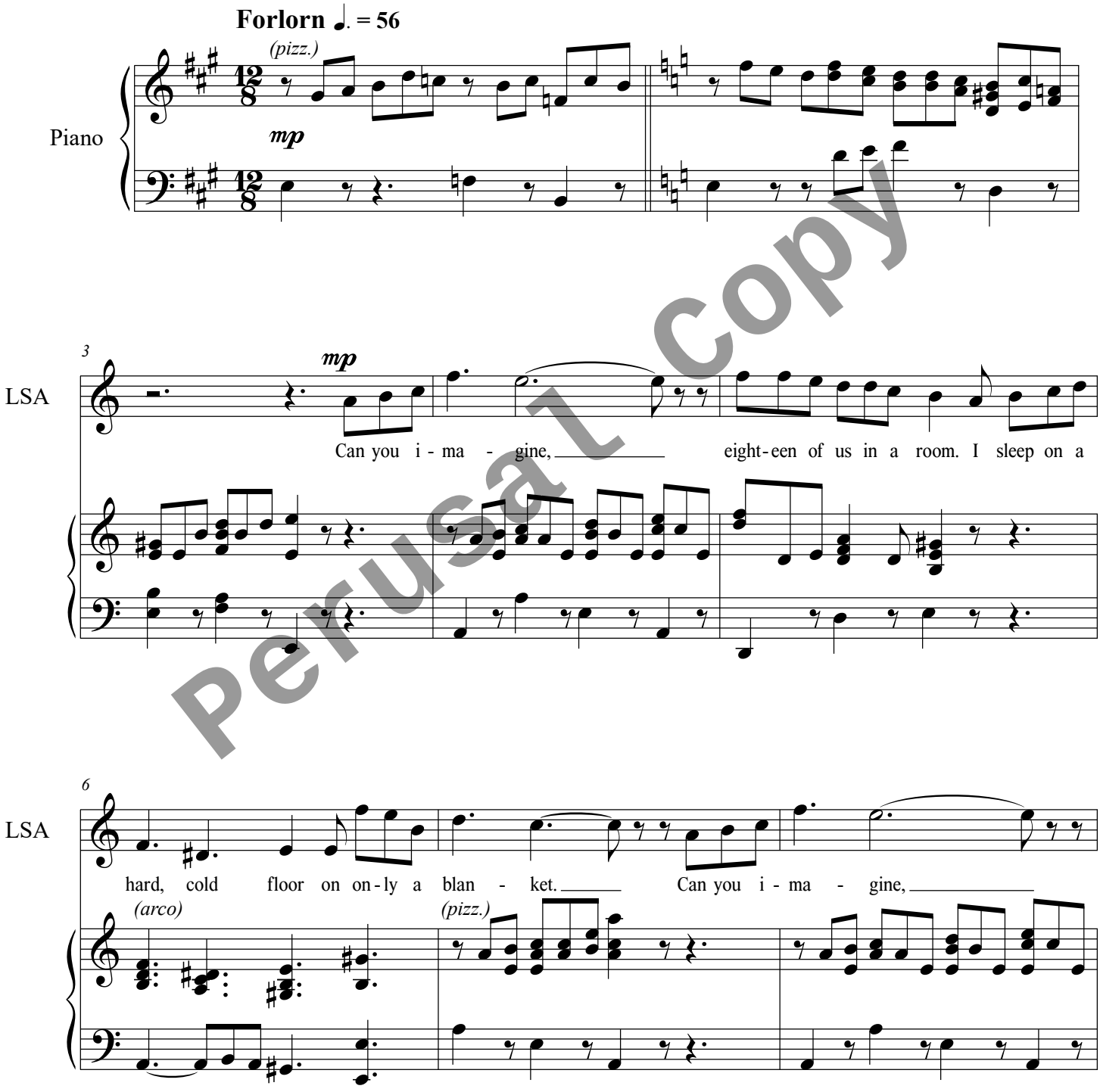


Perusal copy

[Duration: 3:35]

In Schmid's apt. in Vilna. Morning. Luisa sits at table holding a cup of coffee. Schmid is busy in kitchen. He pours himself a cup of coffee and sits down at table.

29. Can You Imagine?



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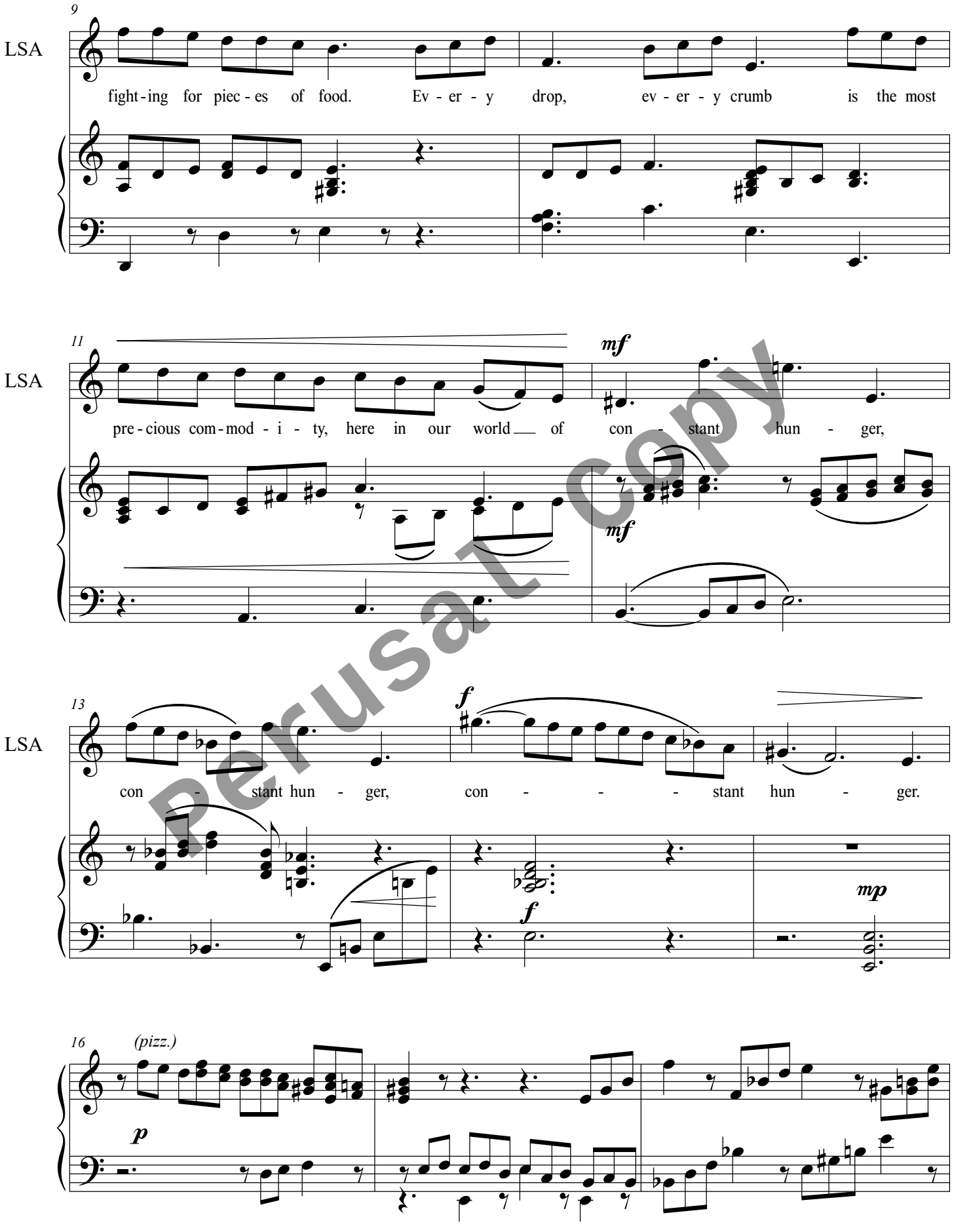

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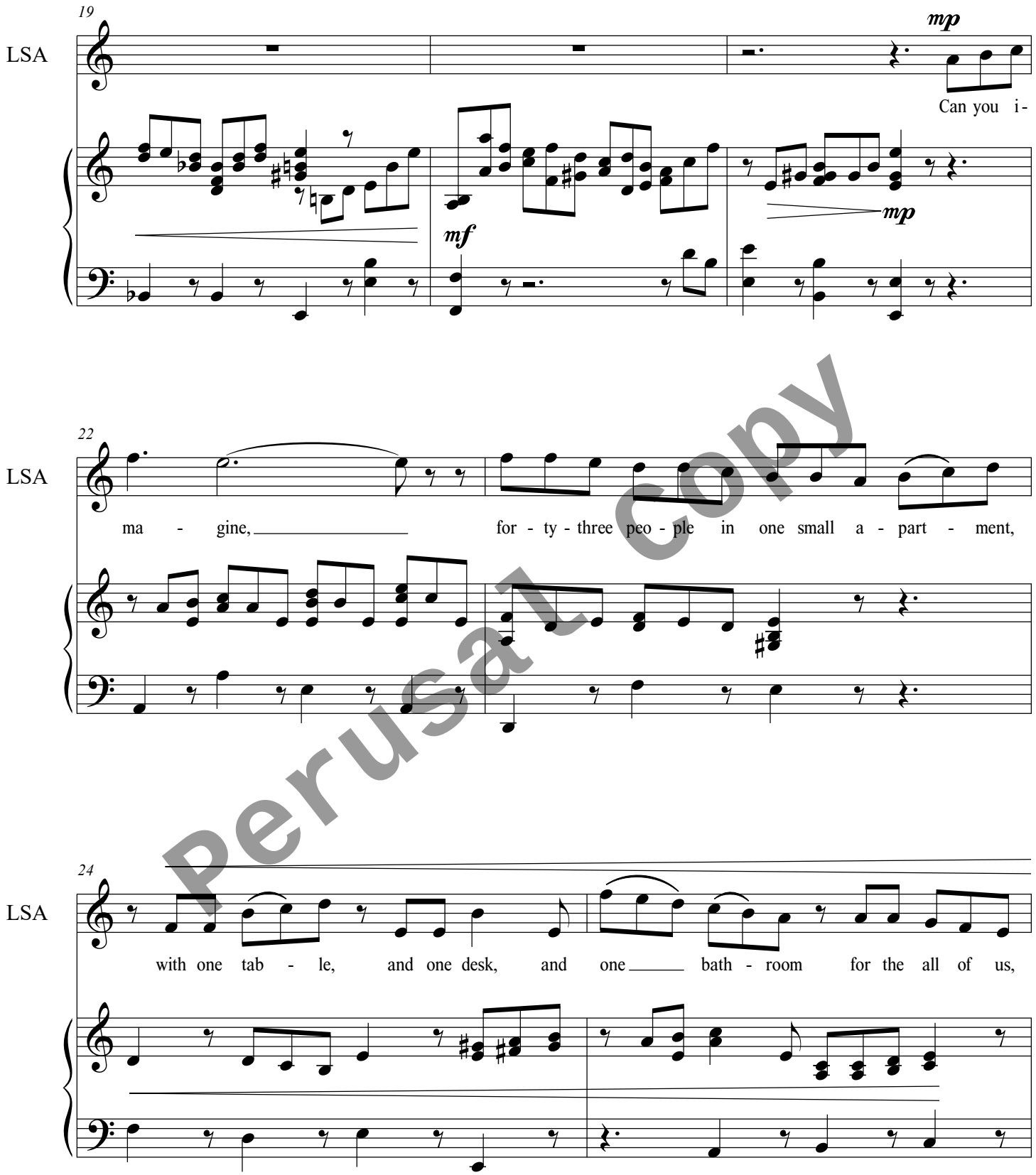

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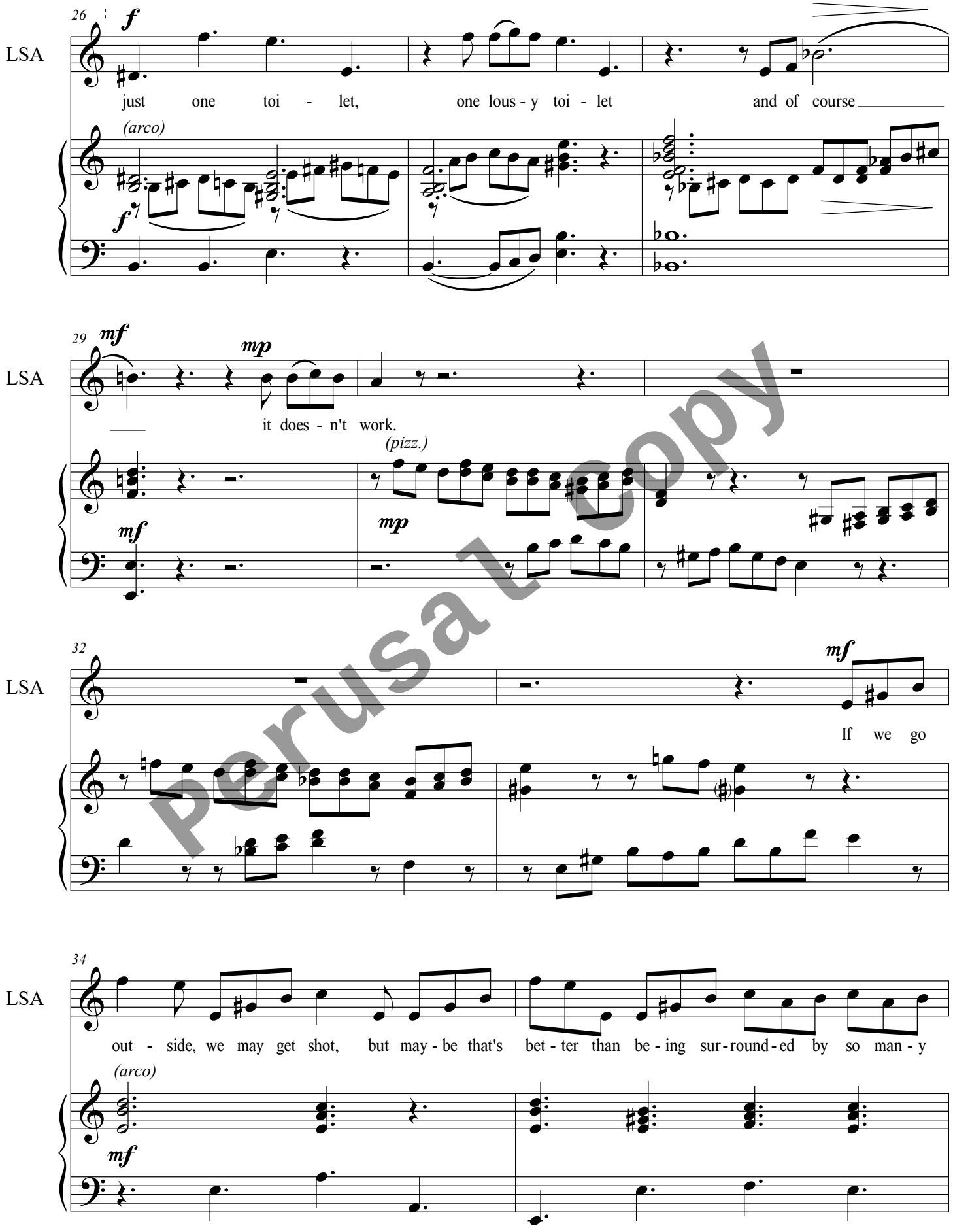

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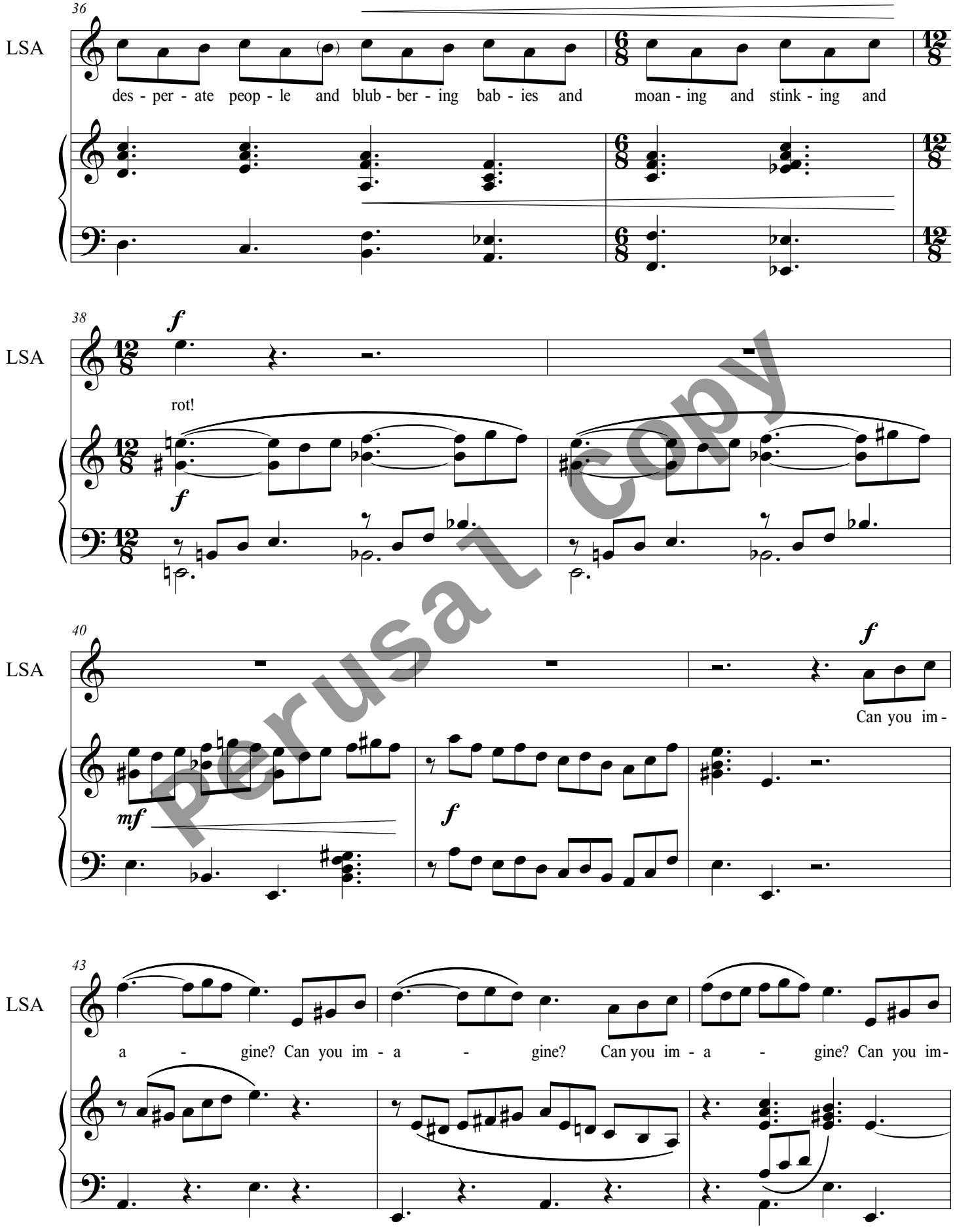

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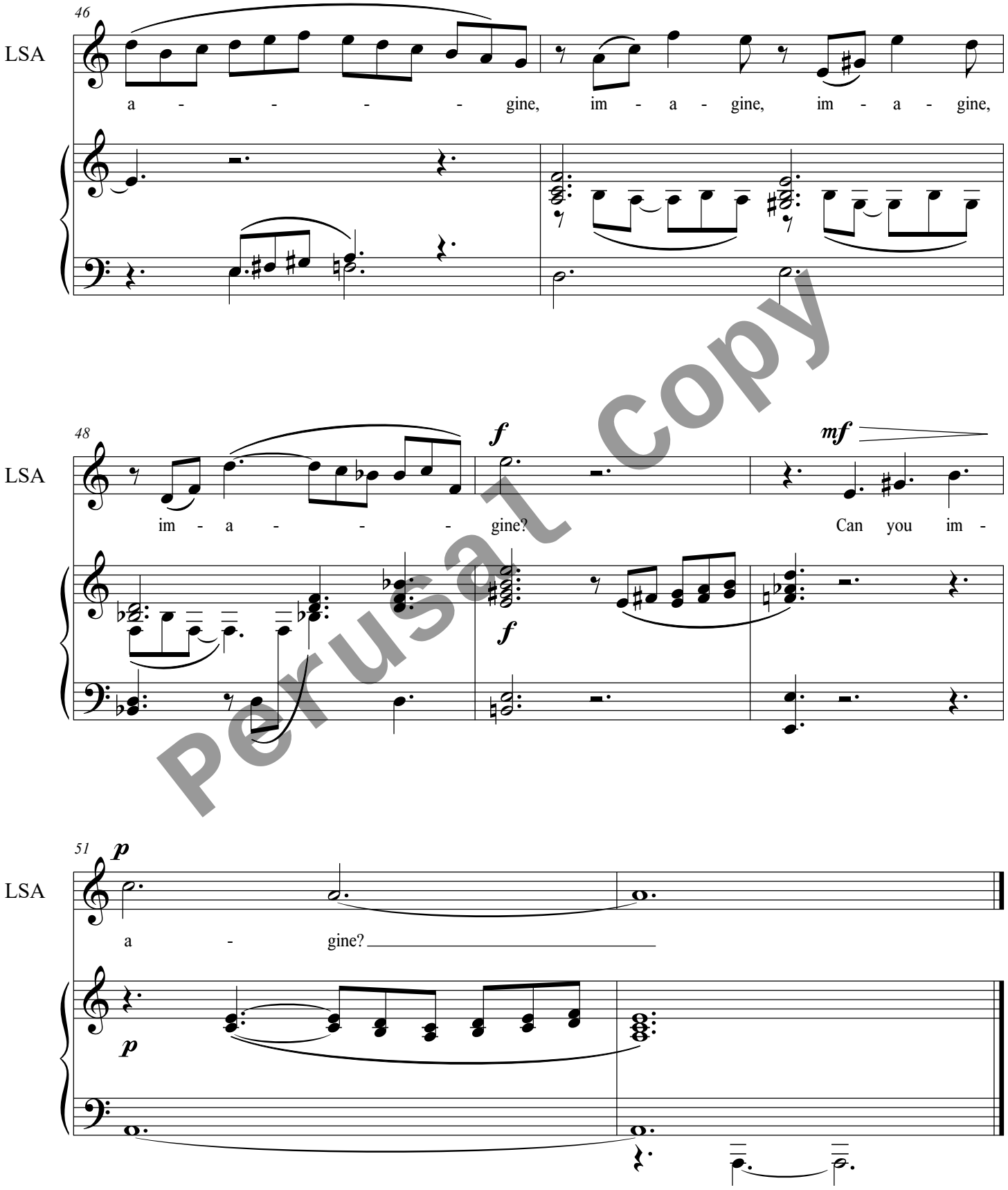
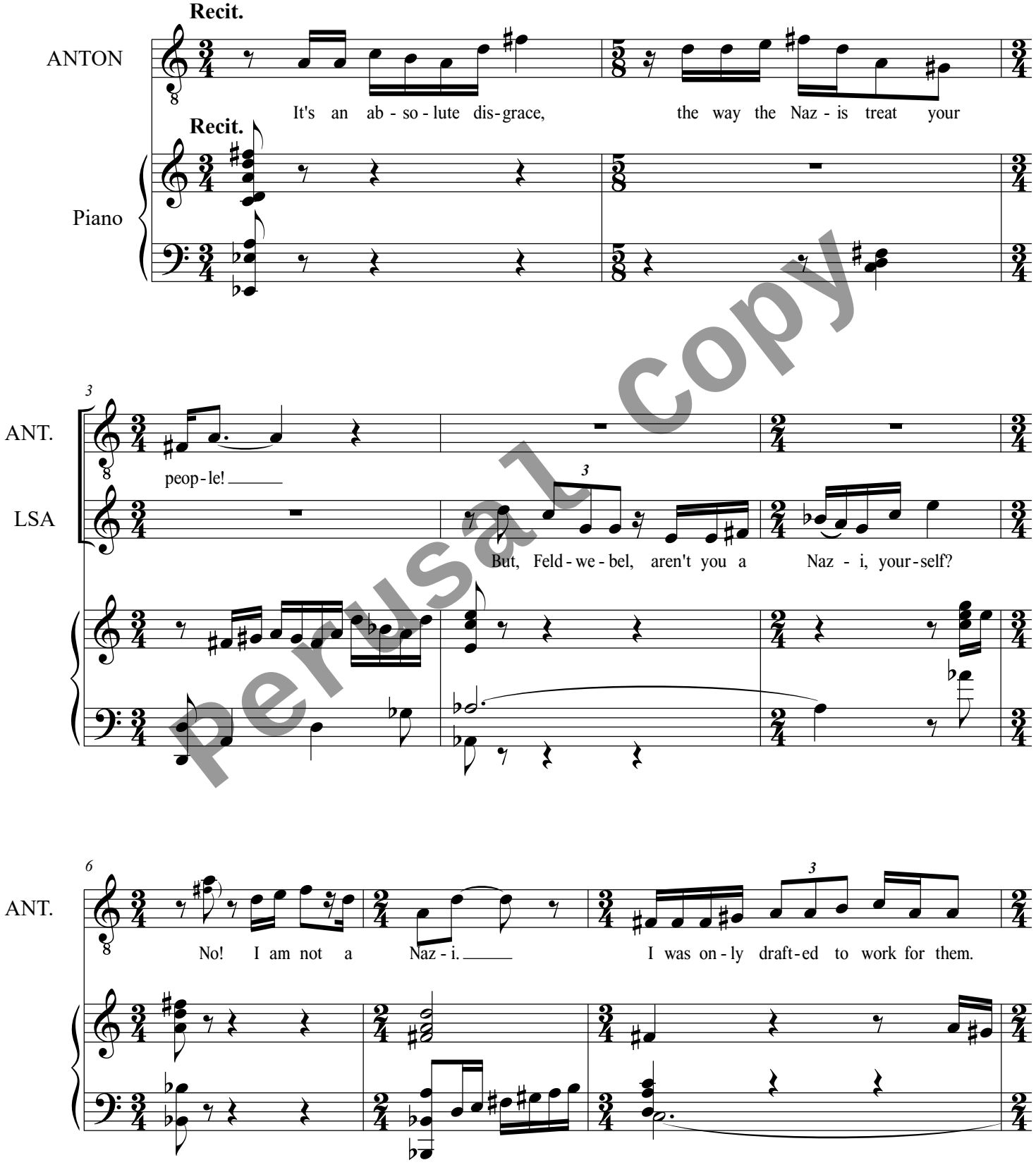


Perusal Copy

[Duration: 3:46]

Still in Anton's kitchen, Anton and Luisa continue their conversation over breakfast.

30. Where are Your Parents?



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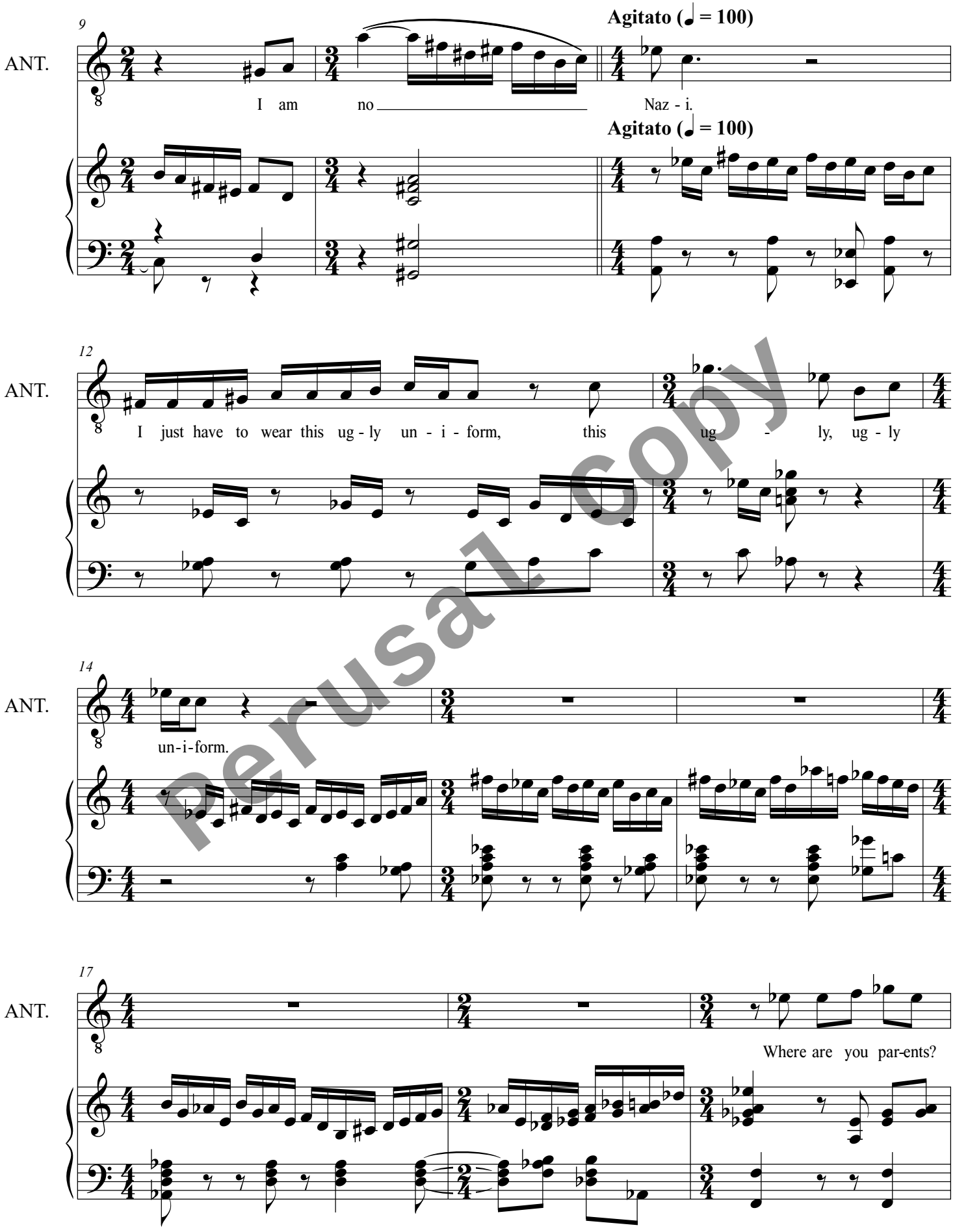

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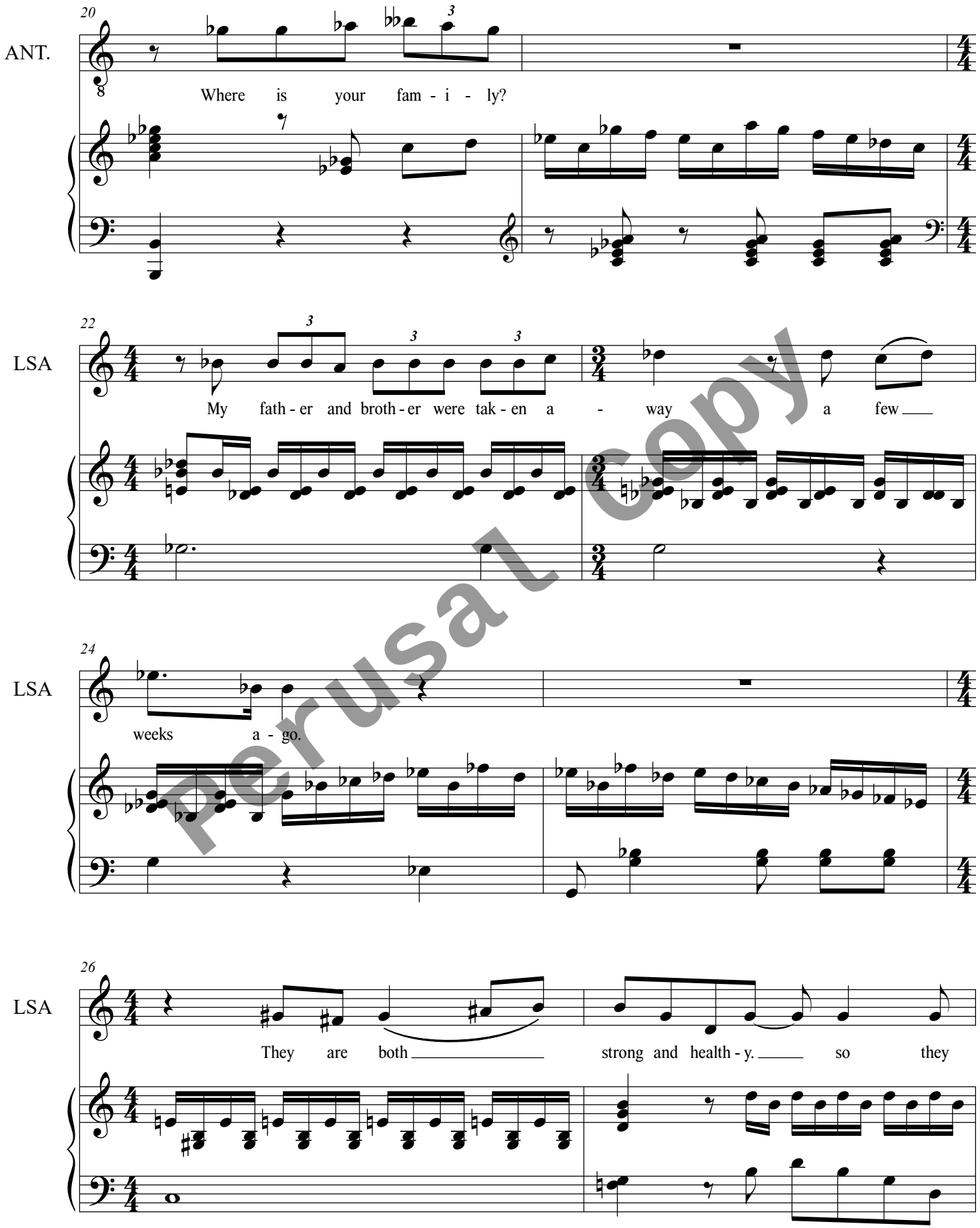

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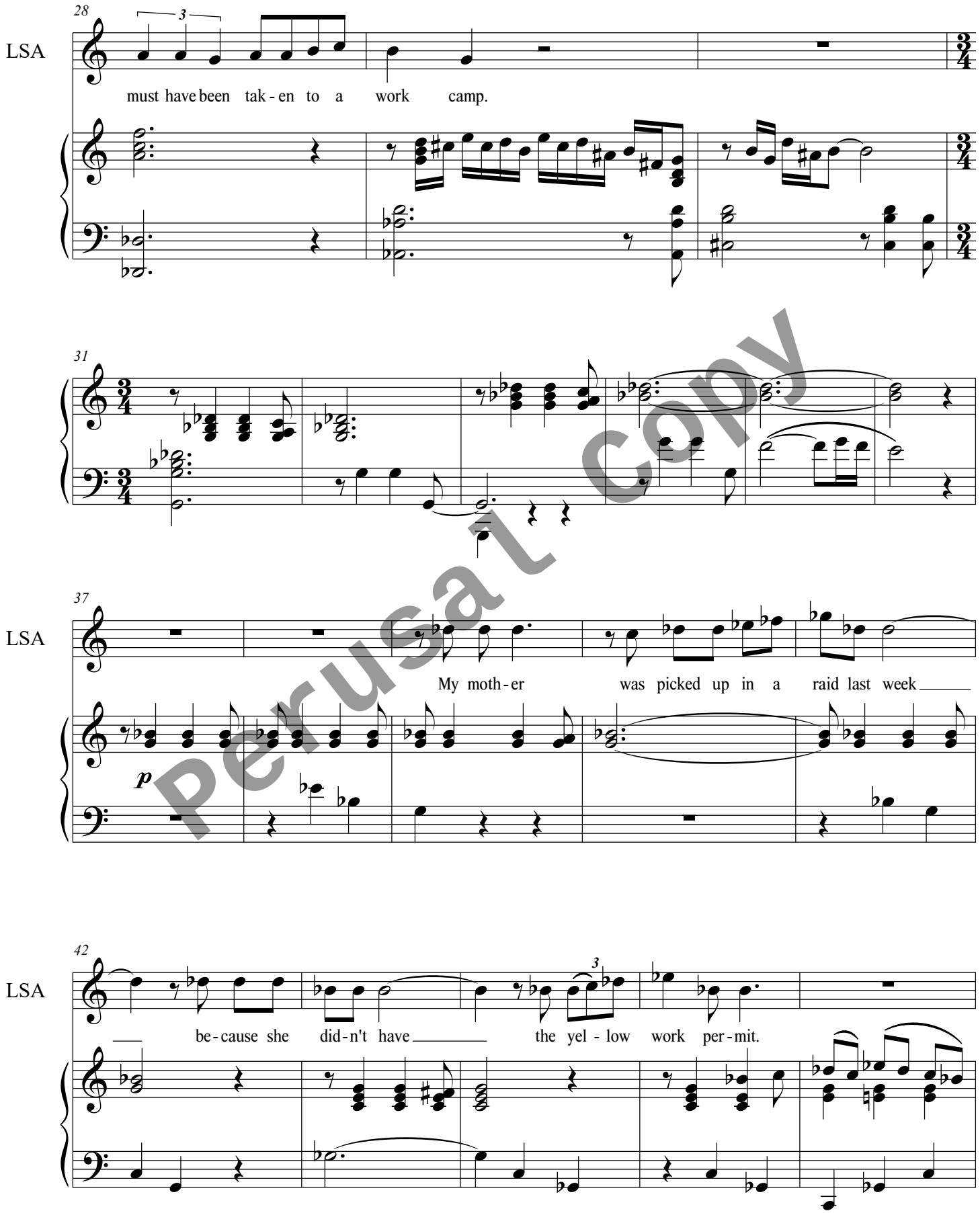

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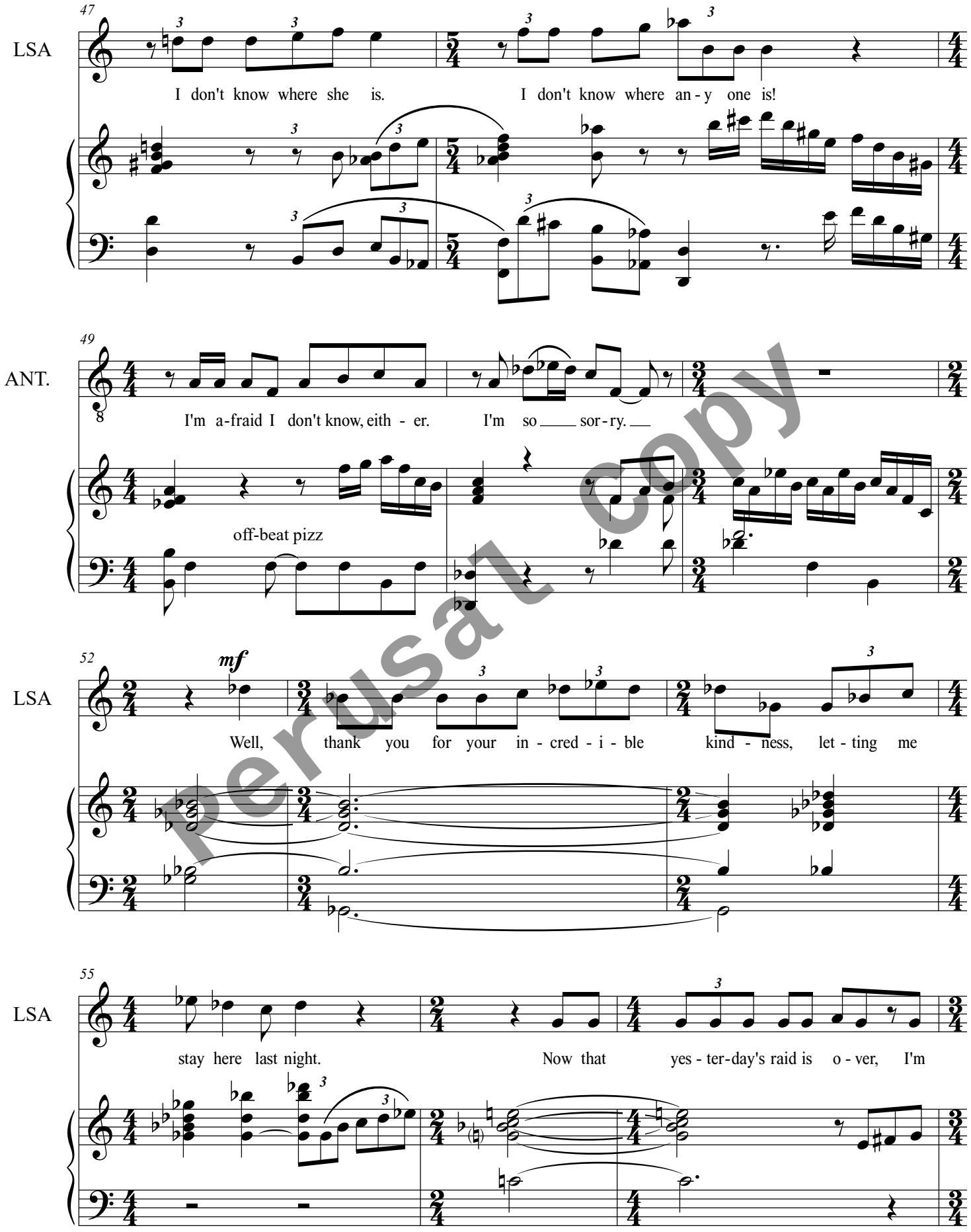

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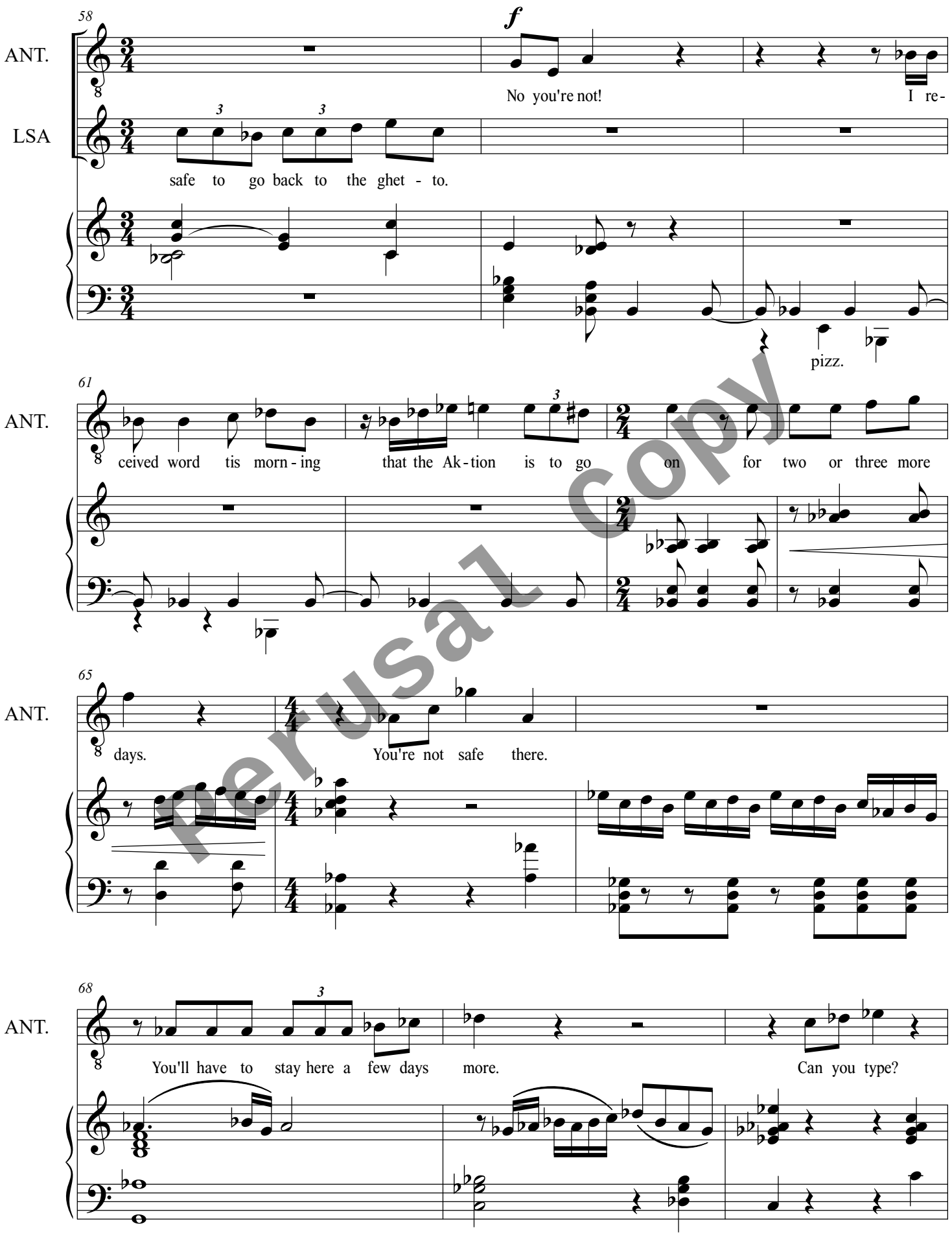

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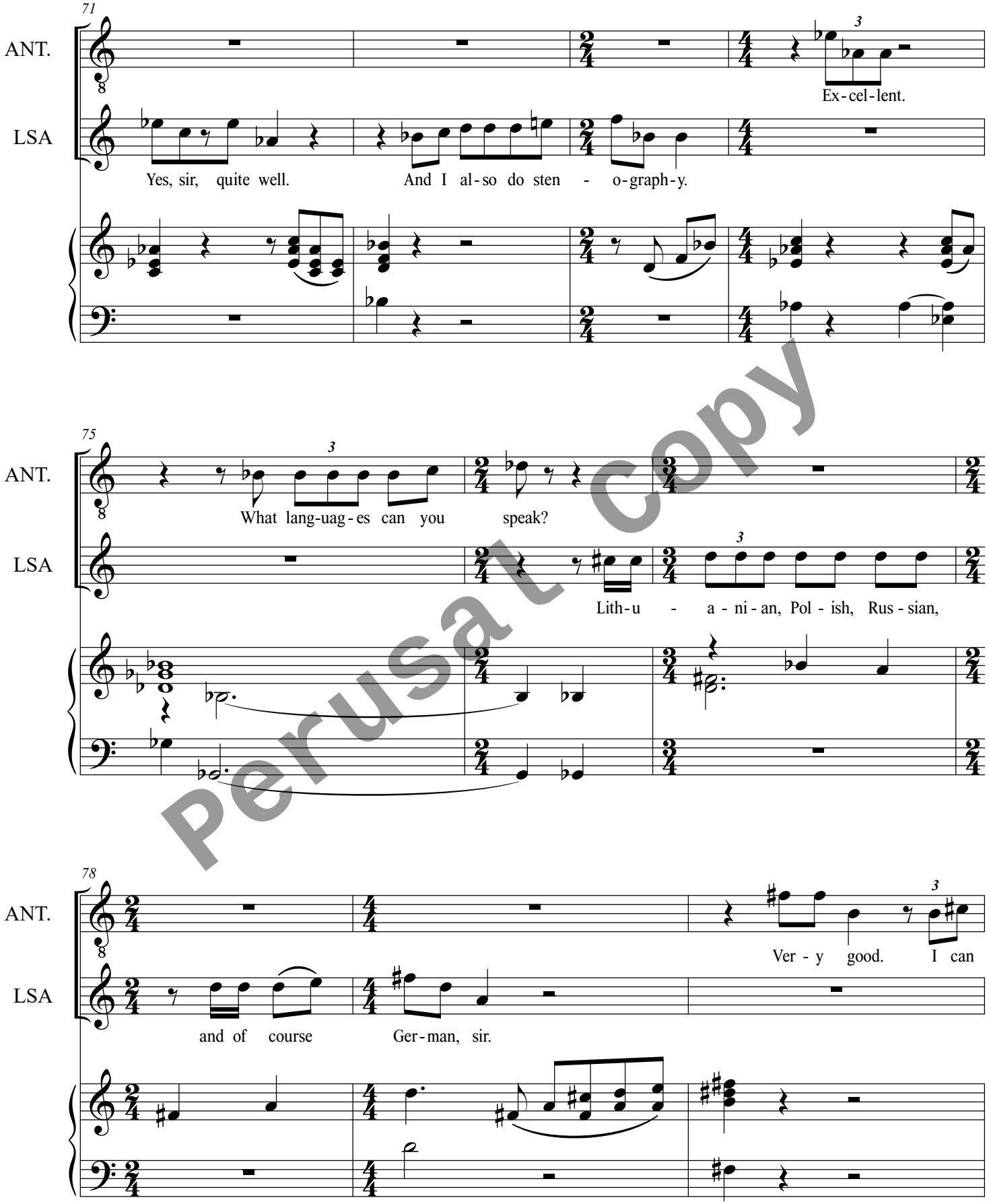

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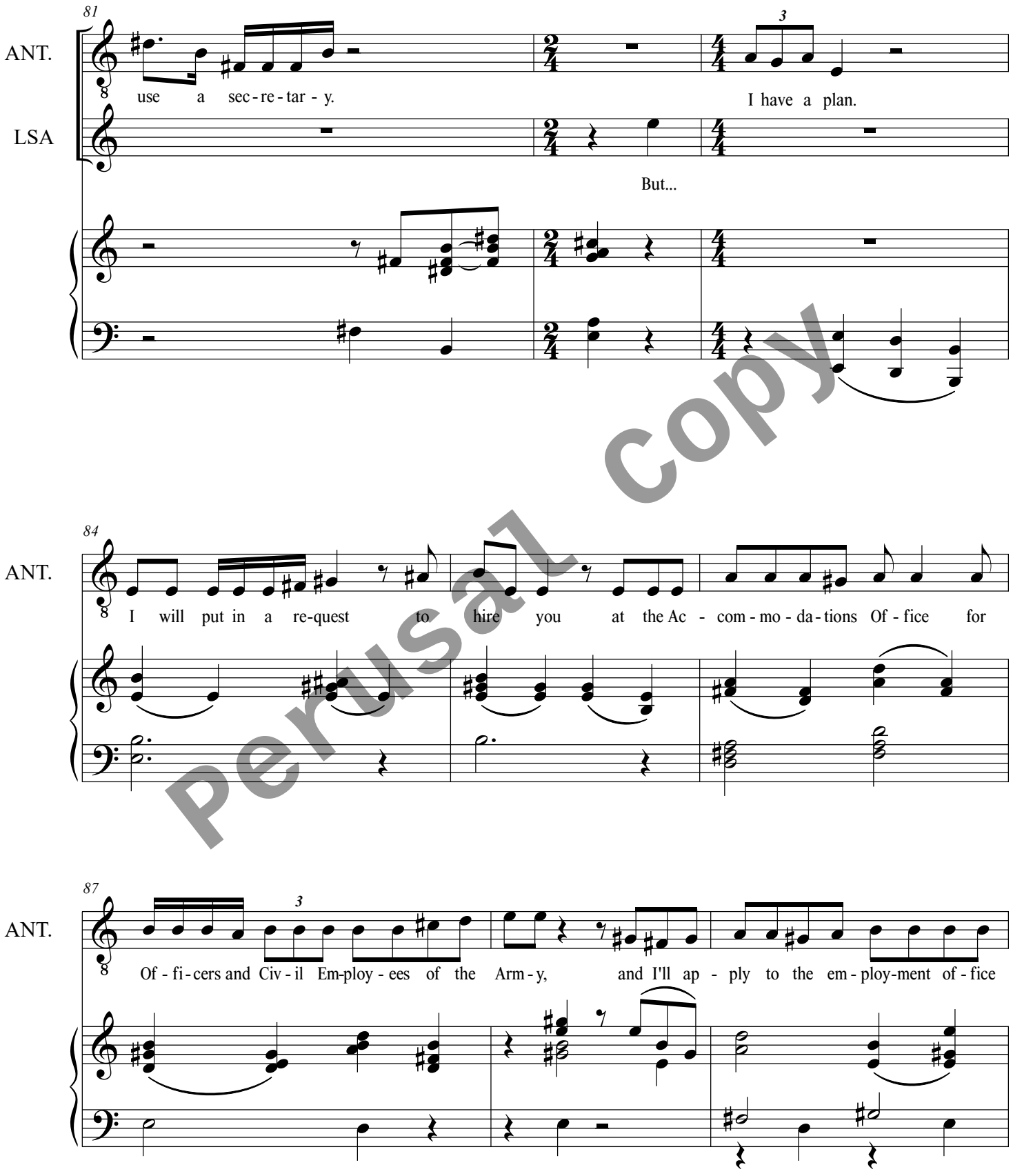

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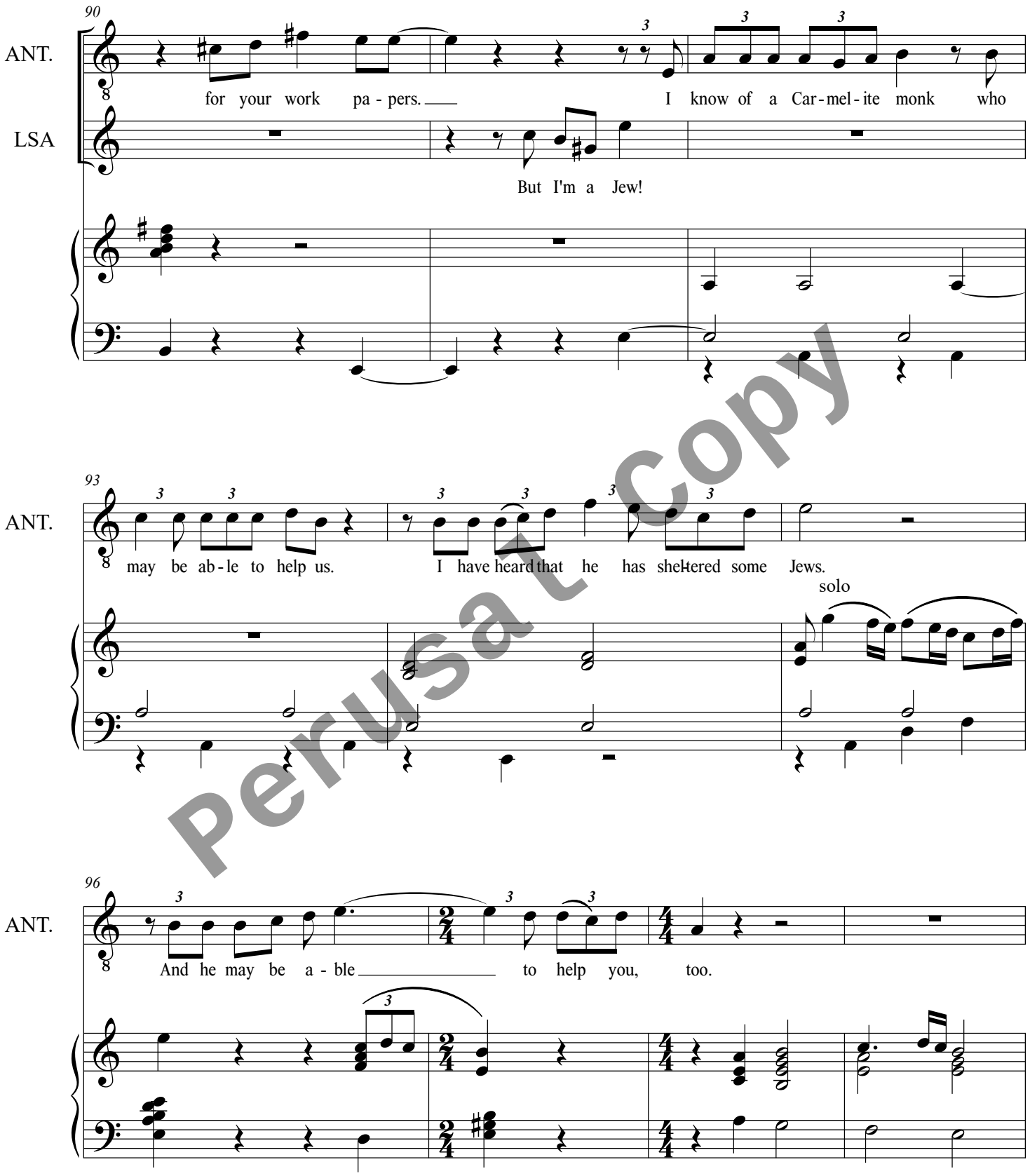

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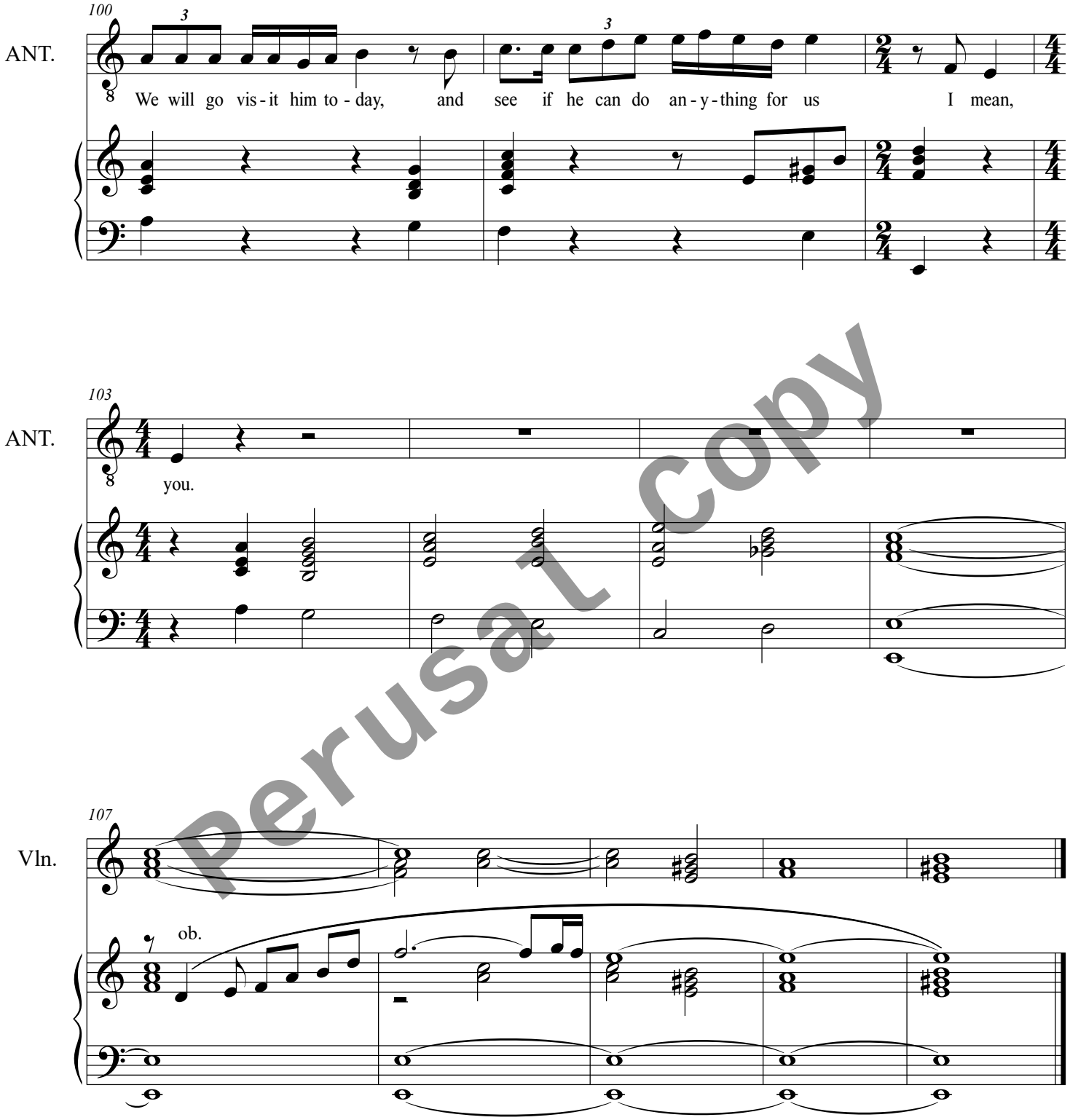
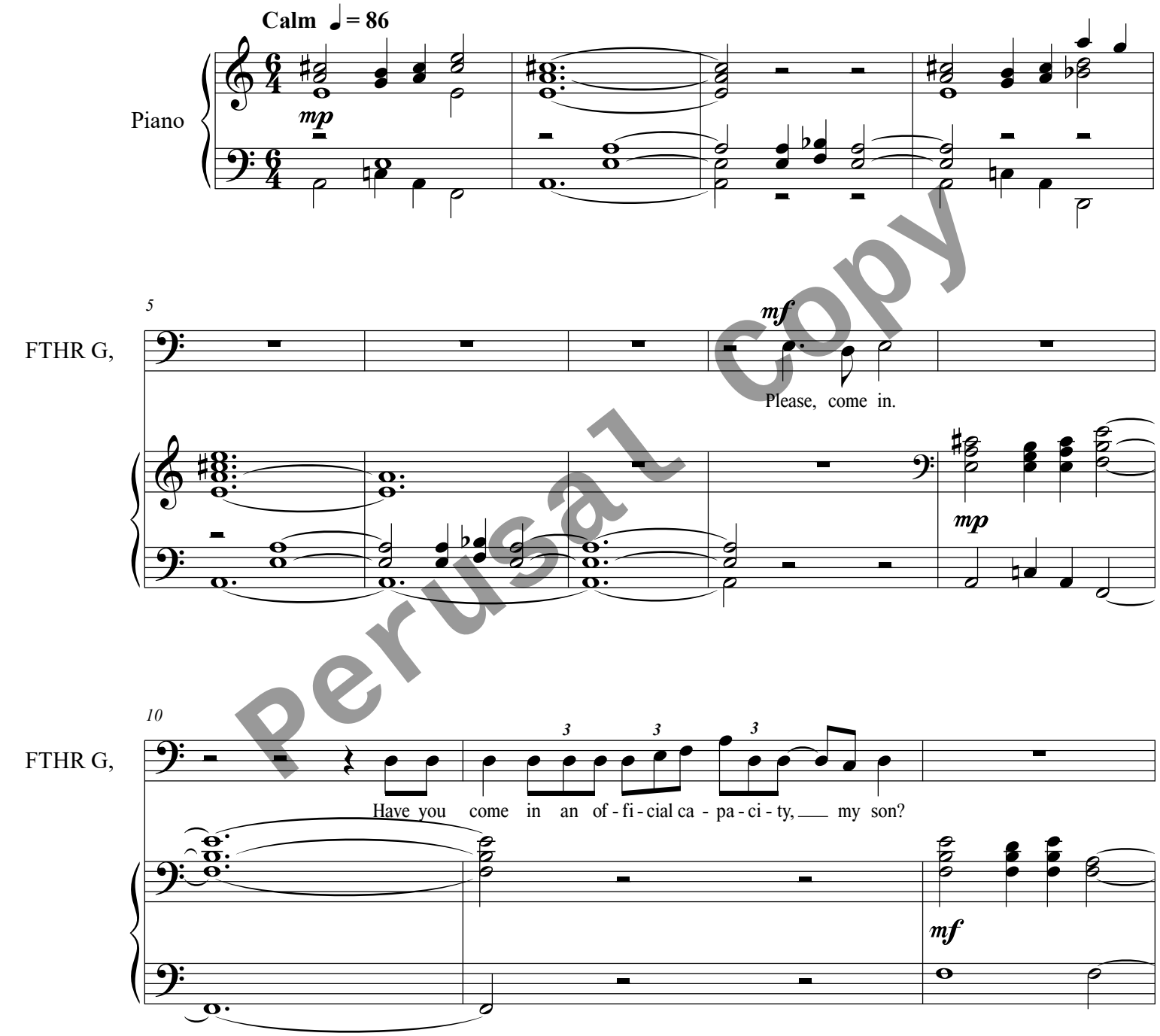


Perusal Copy

[Duration: 2:35]

Anton and Luisa visit Father Gdowsky's chambers at the Monastery of St. Theresa of the Barefoot Carmelites. They approach Gdowski, who is sitting behnd a desk (Luisa walks in timidly behind Anton.)

31. Meeting Father Gdowski



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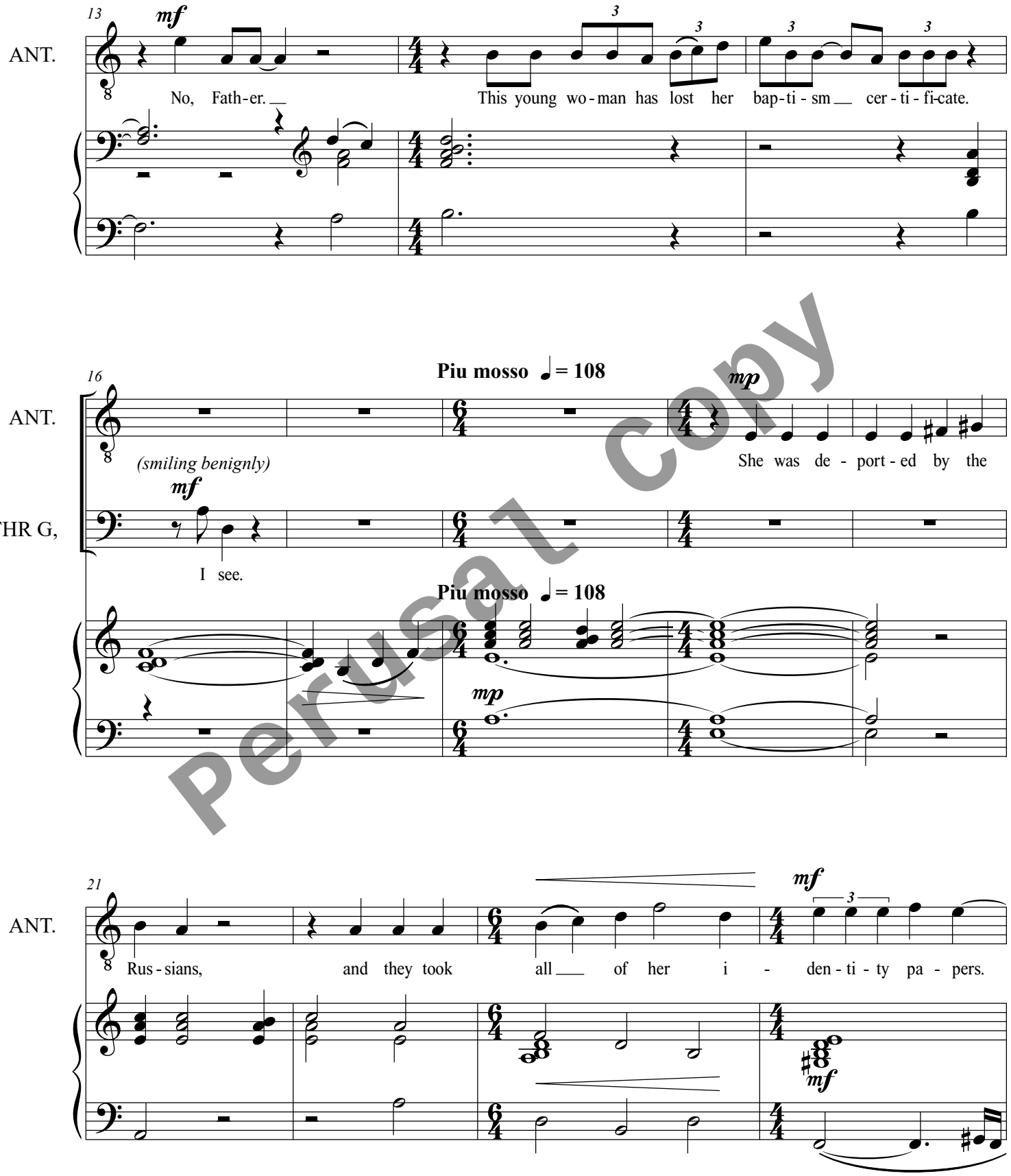

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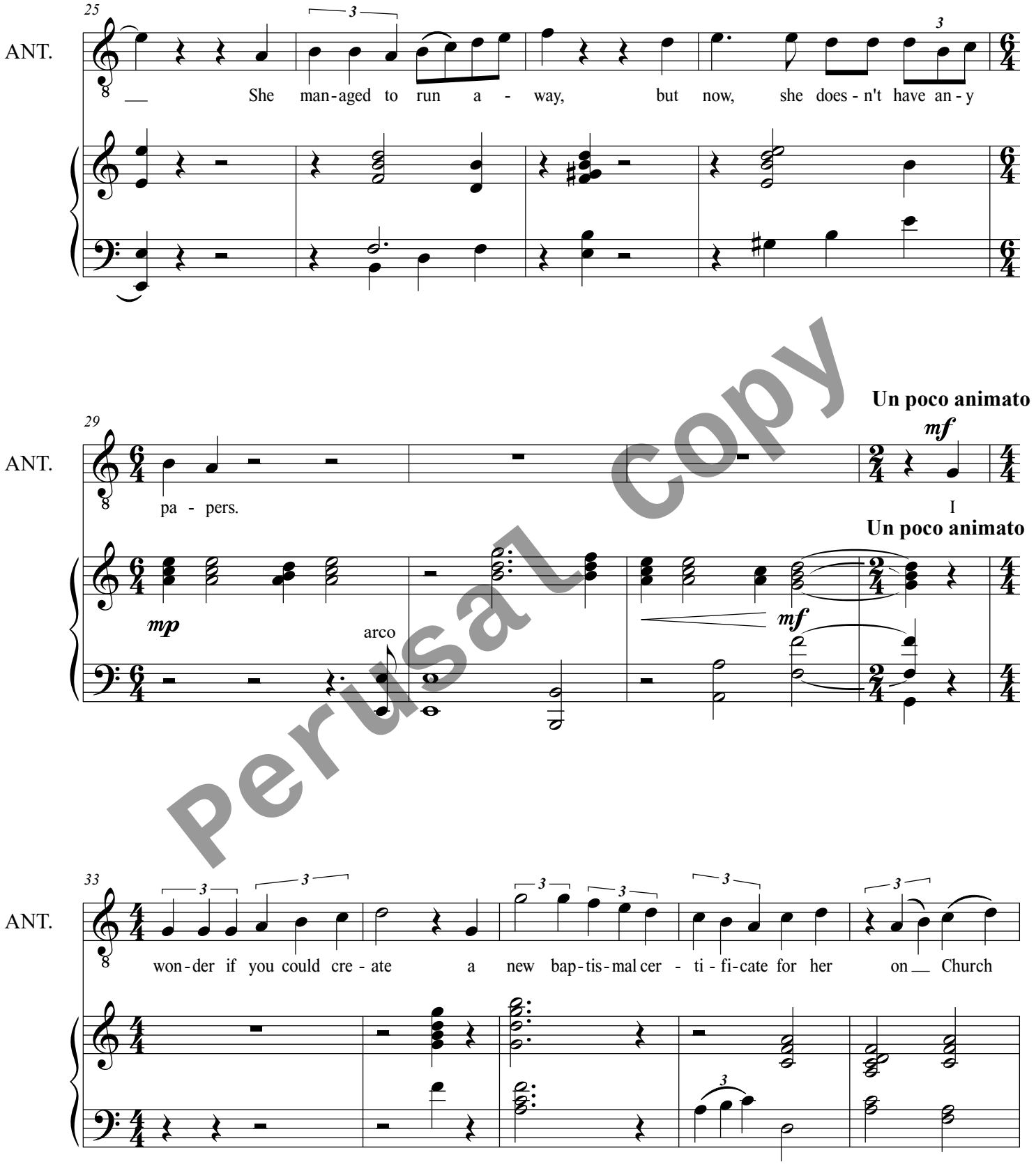

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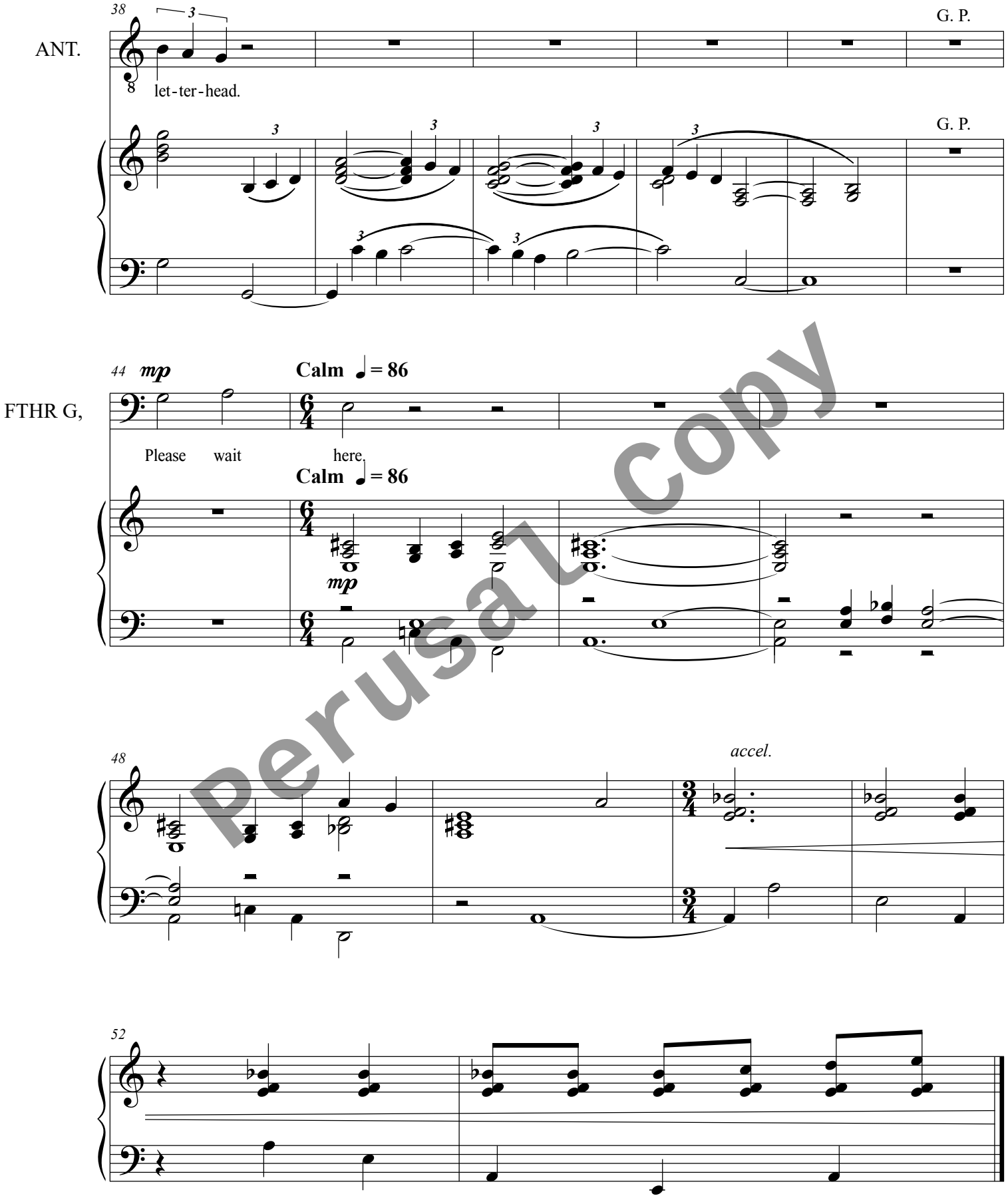
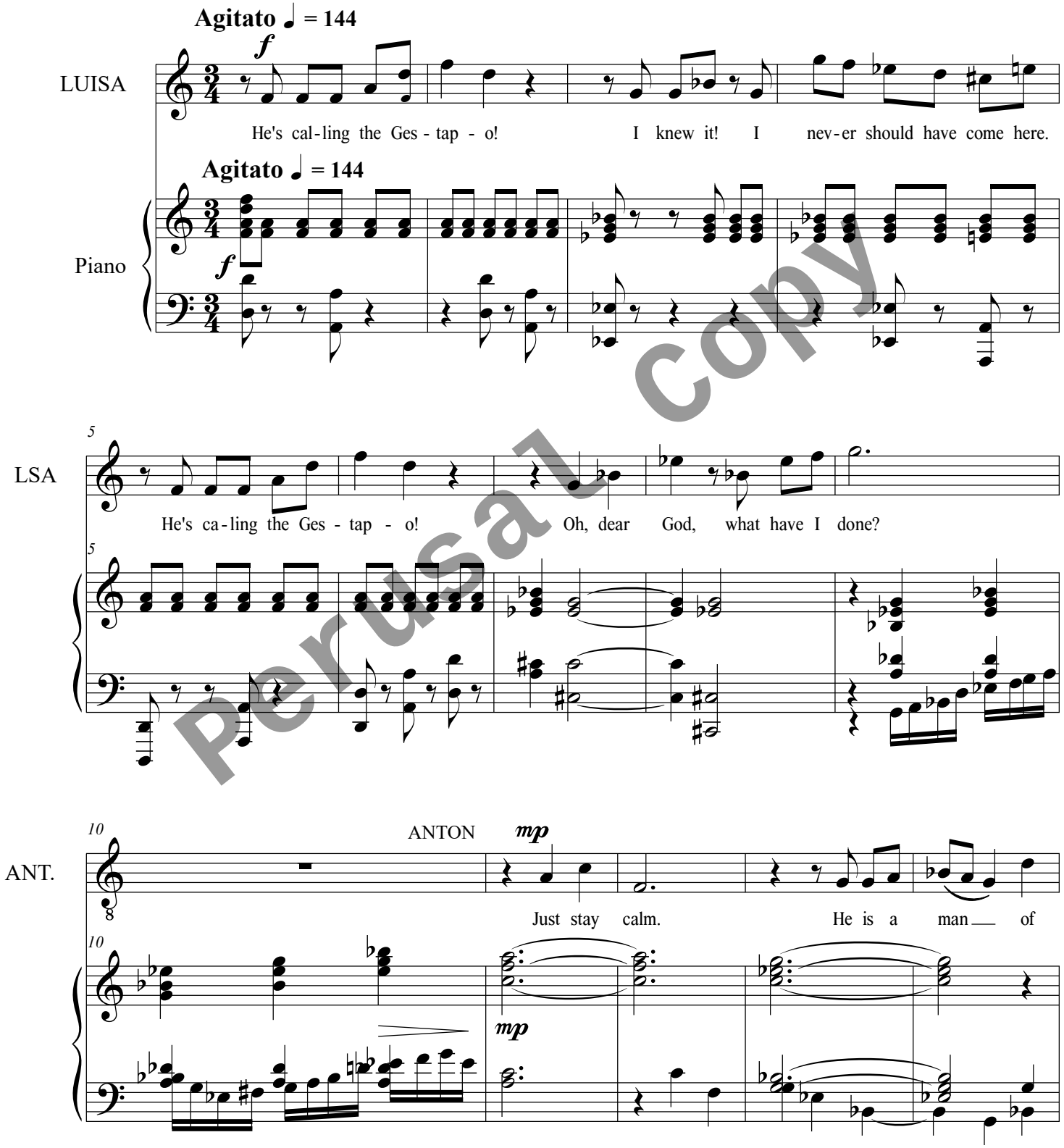


Perusal Copy

[Duration: 1:40]

Anton and Luisa wait nervously for Father Gdowsky's return.

32. He's Calling Gestapo



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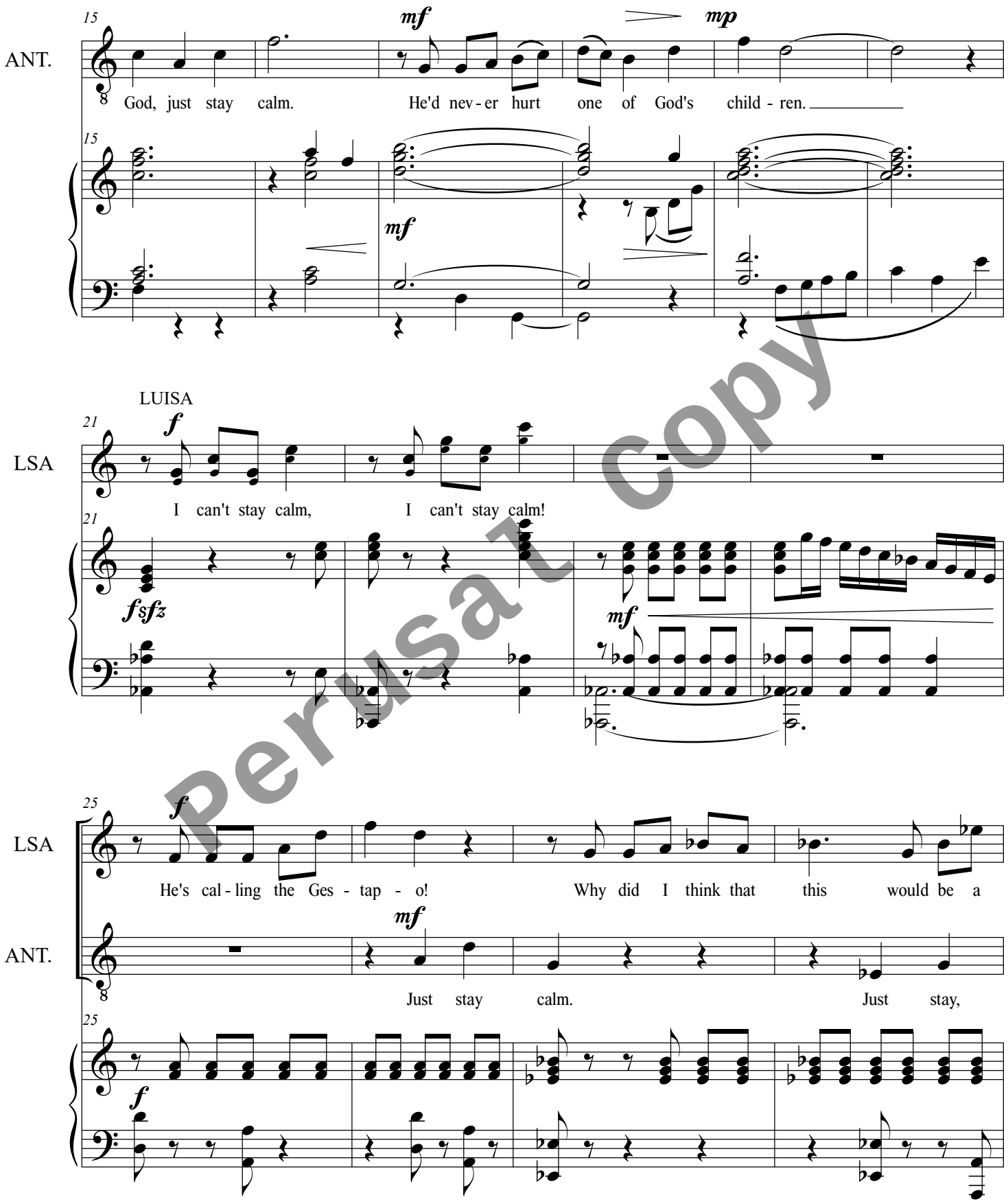

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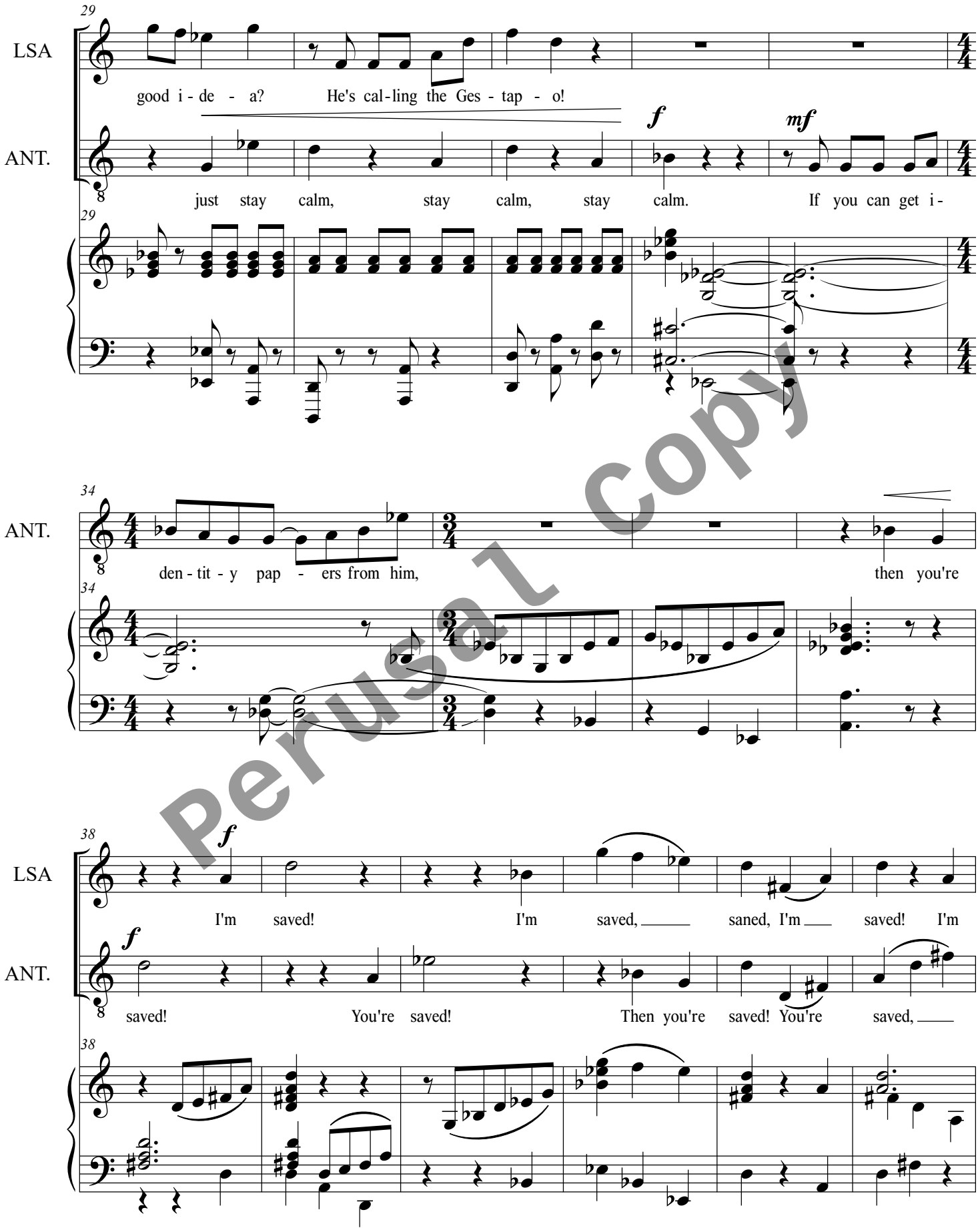

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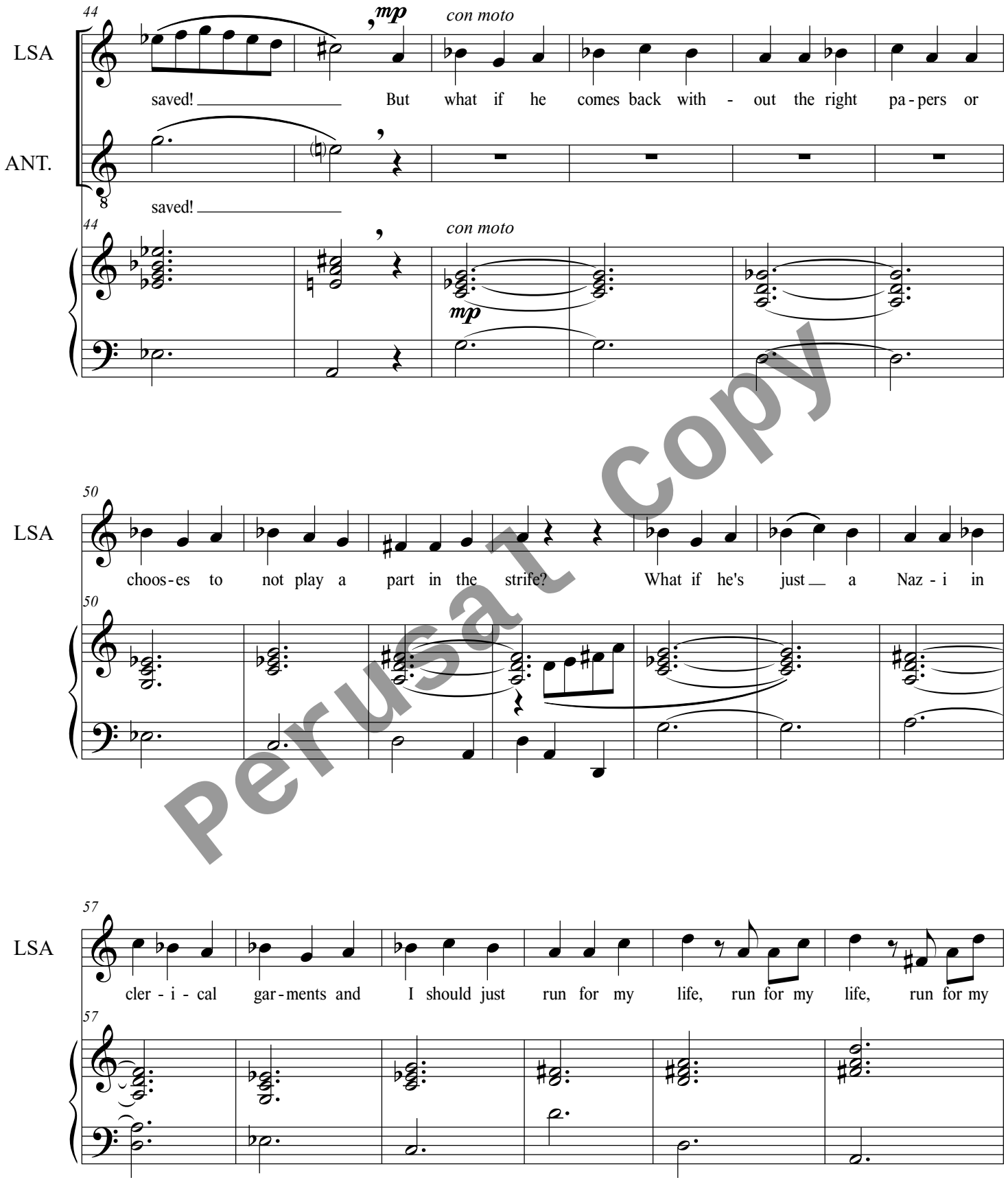

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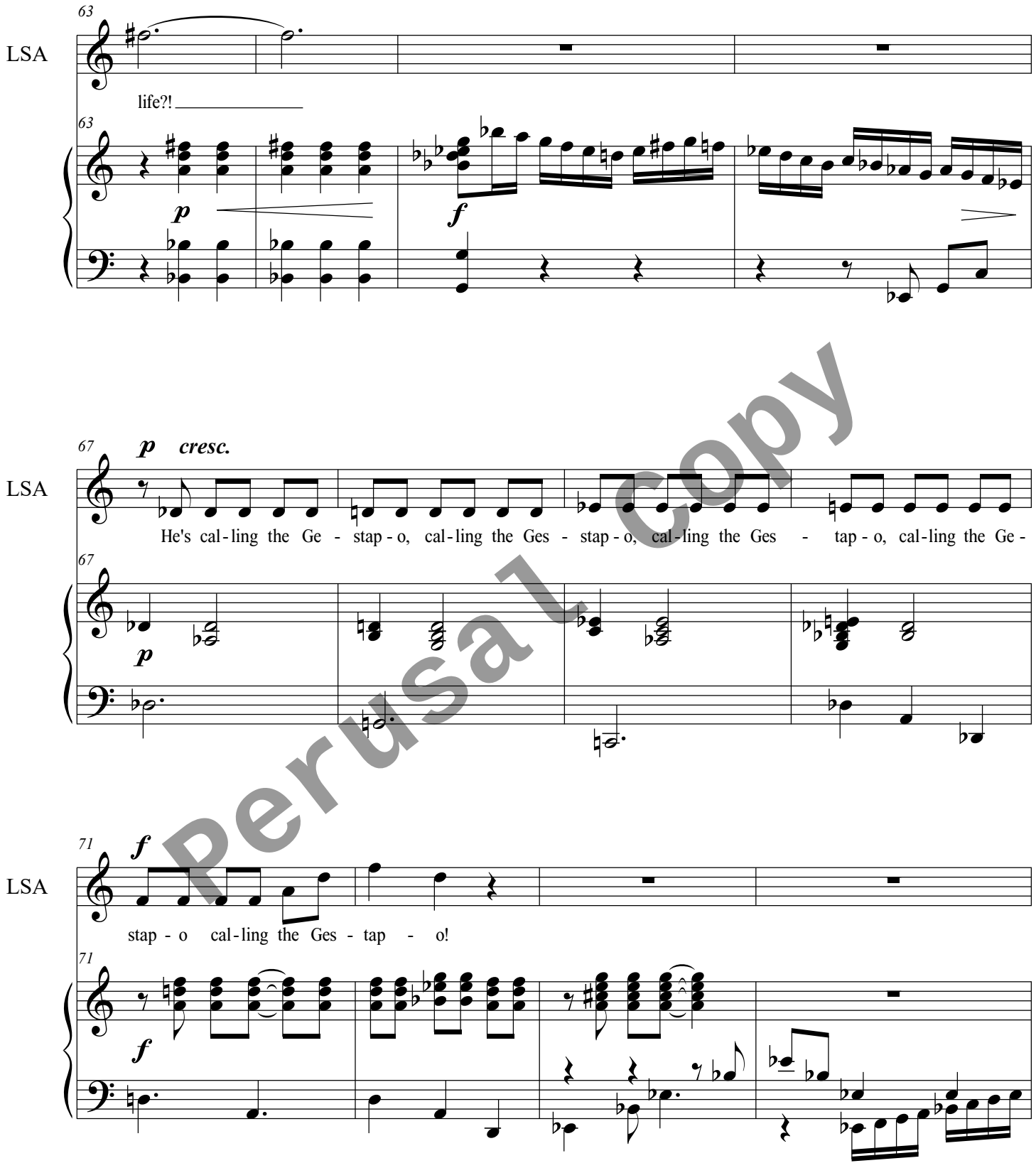

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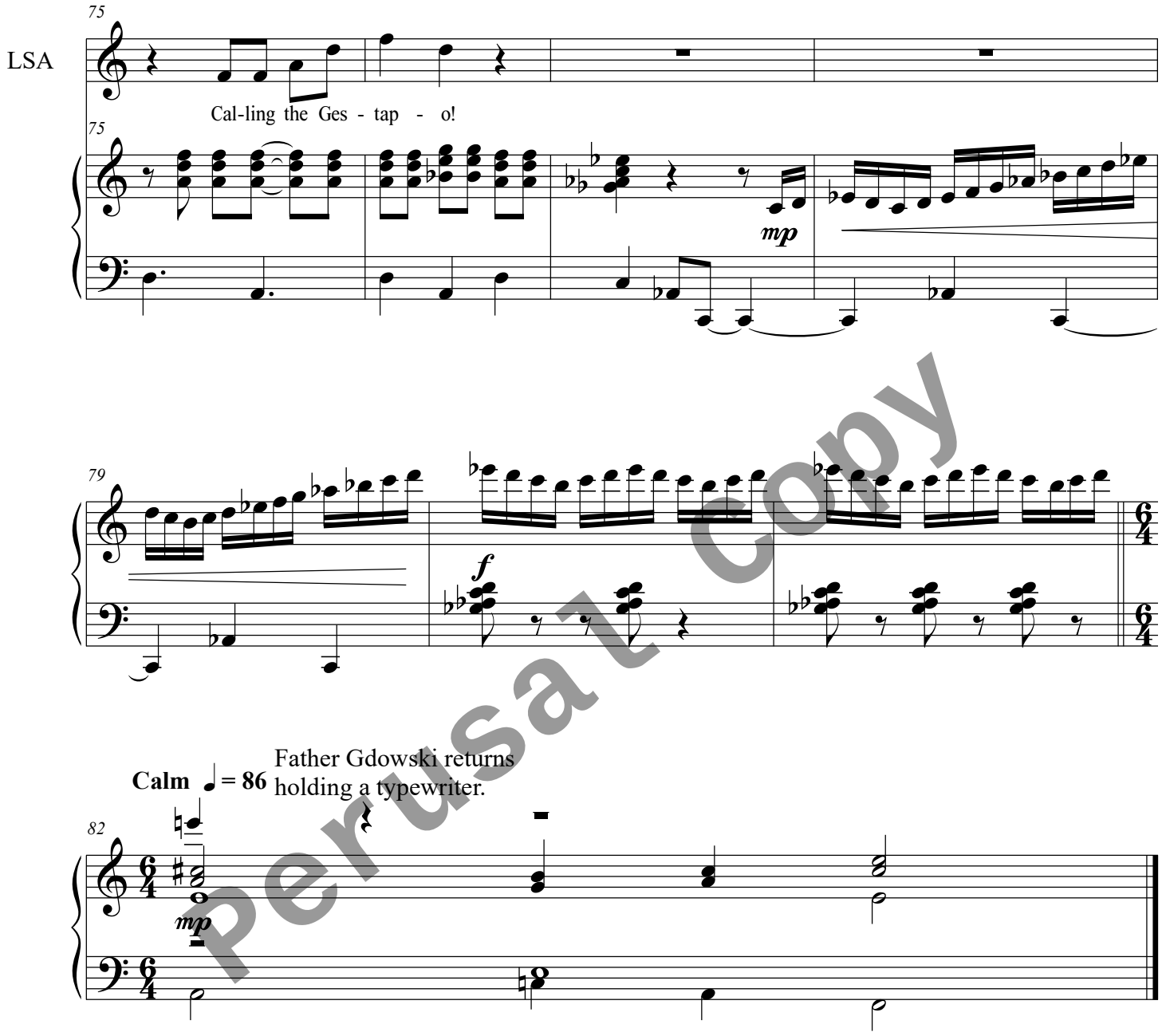
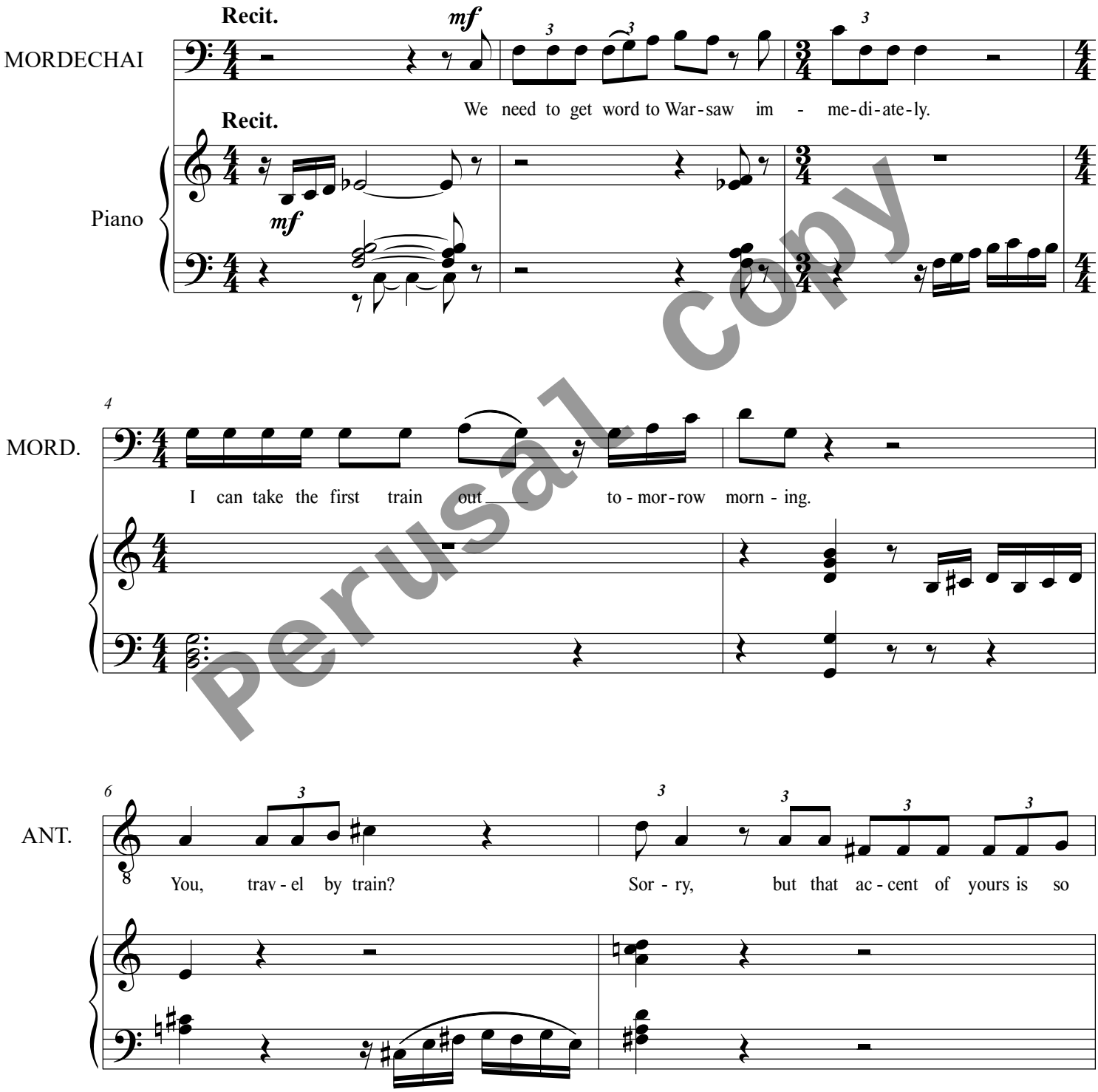


Perusal Copy

[Duratio: 5:10]

Setting: Schmid's apt. Mordechai Tenenbaum
explains how he travels in disguise

Cold-Blooded



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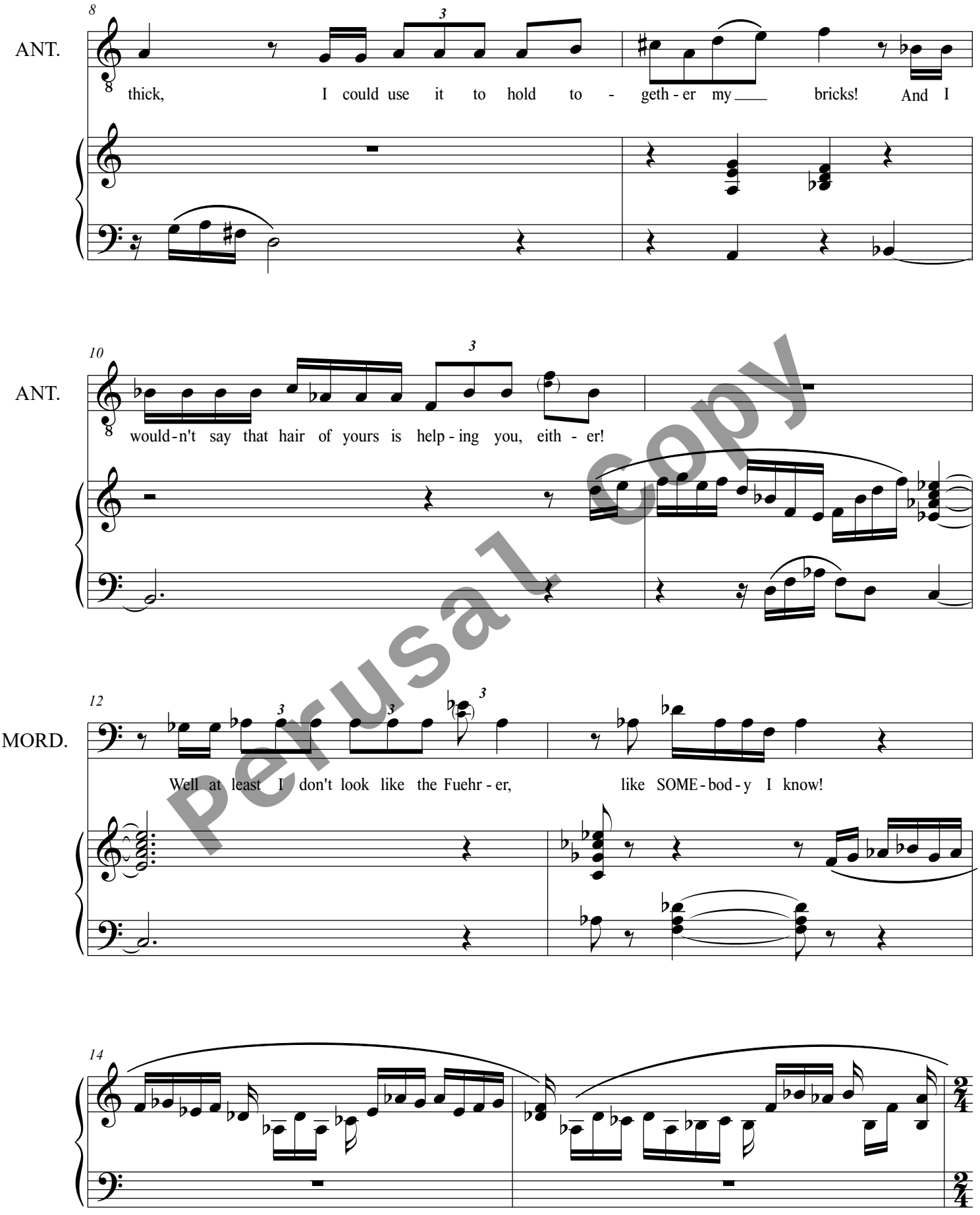

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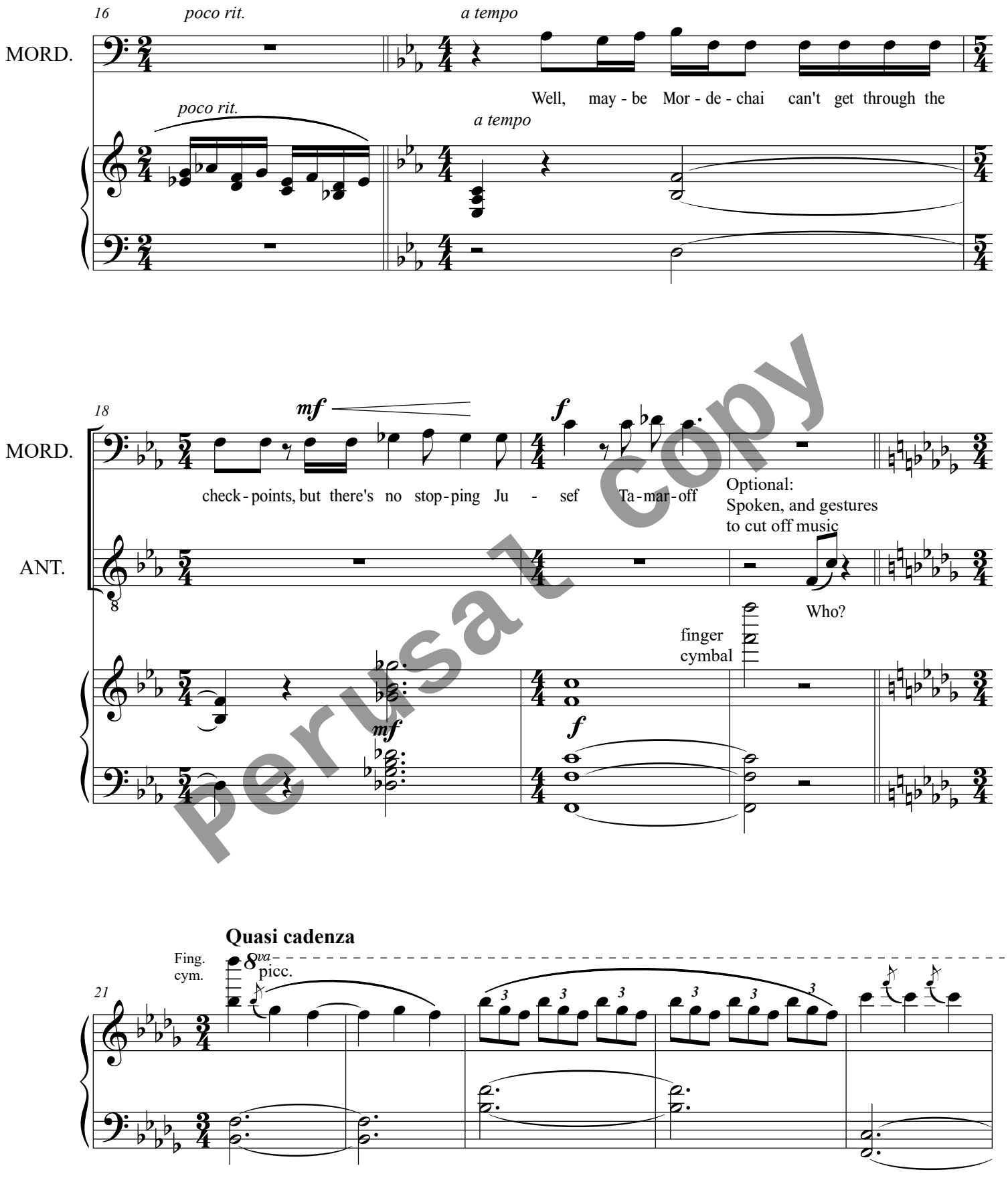

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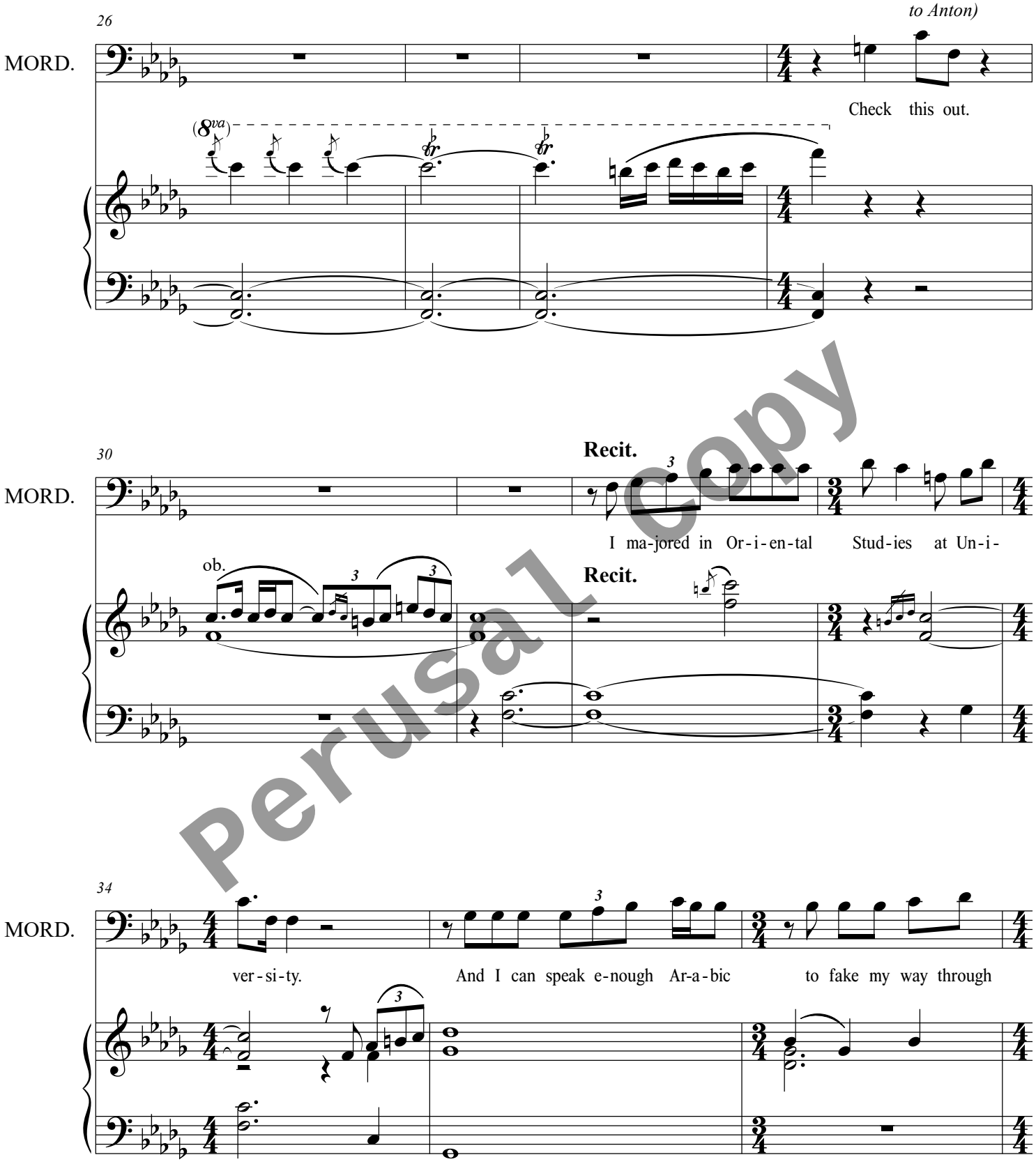

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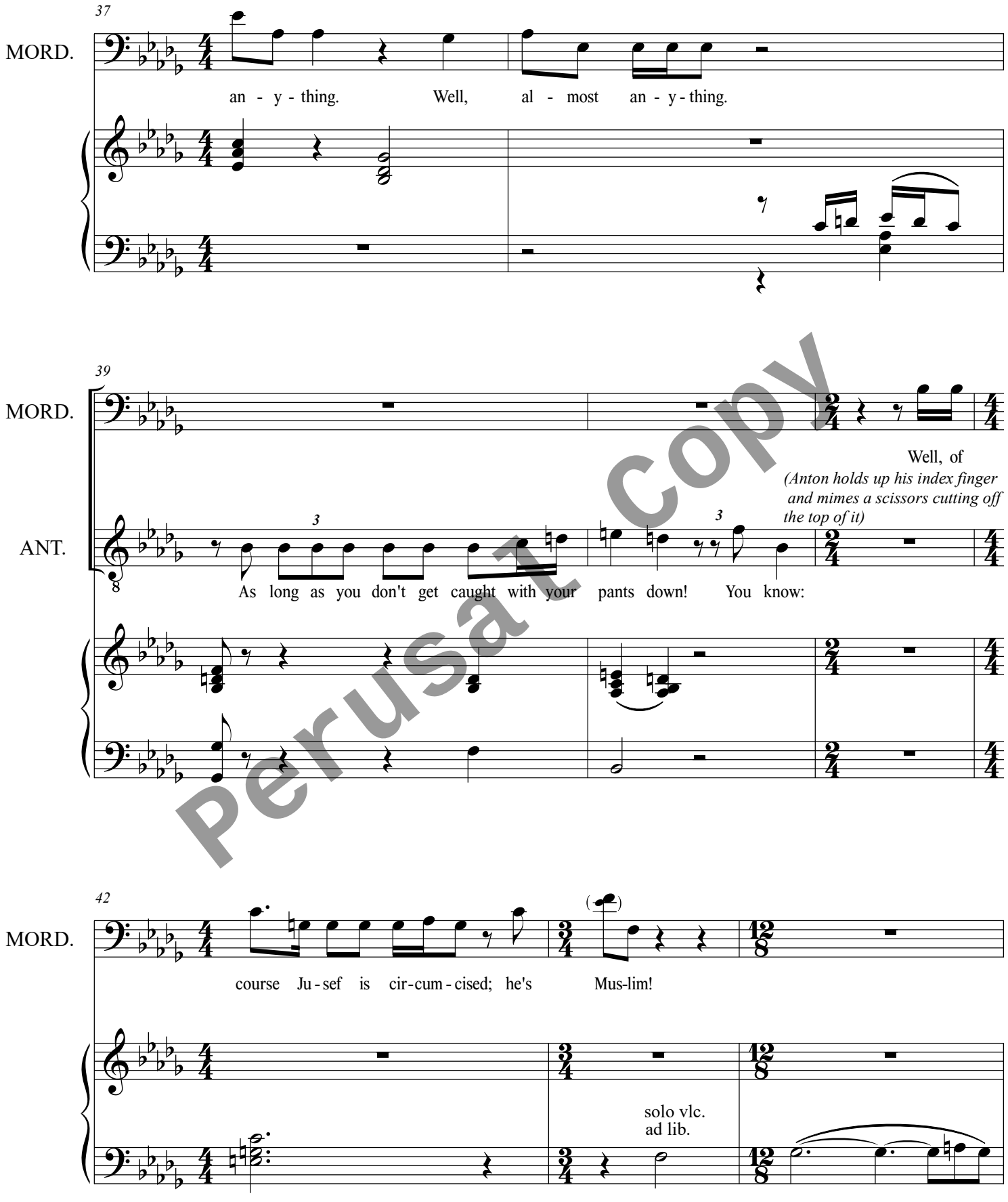

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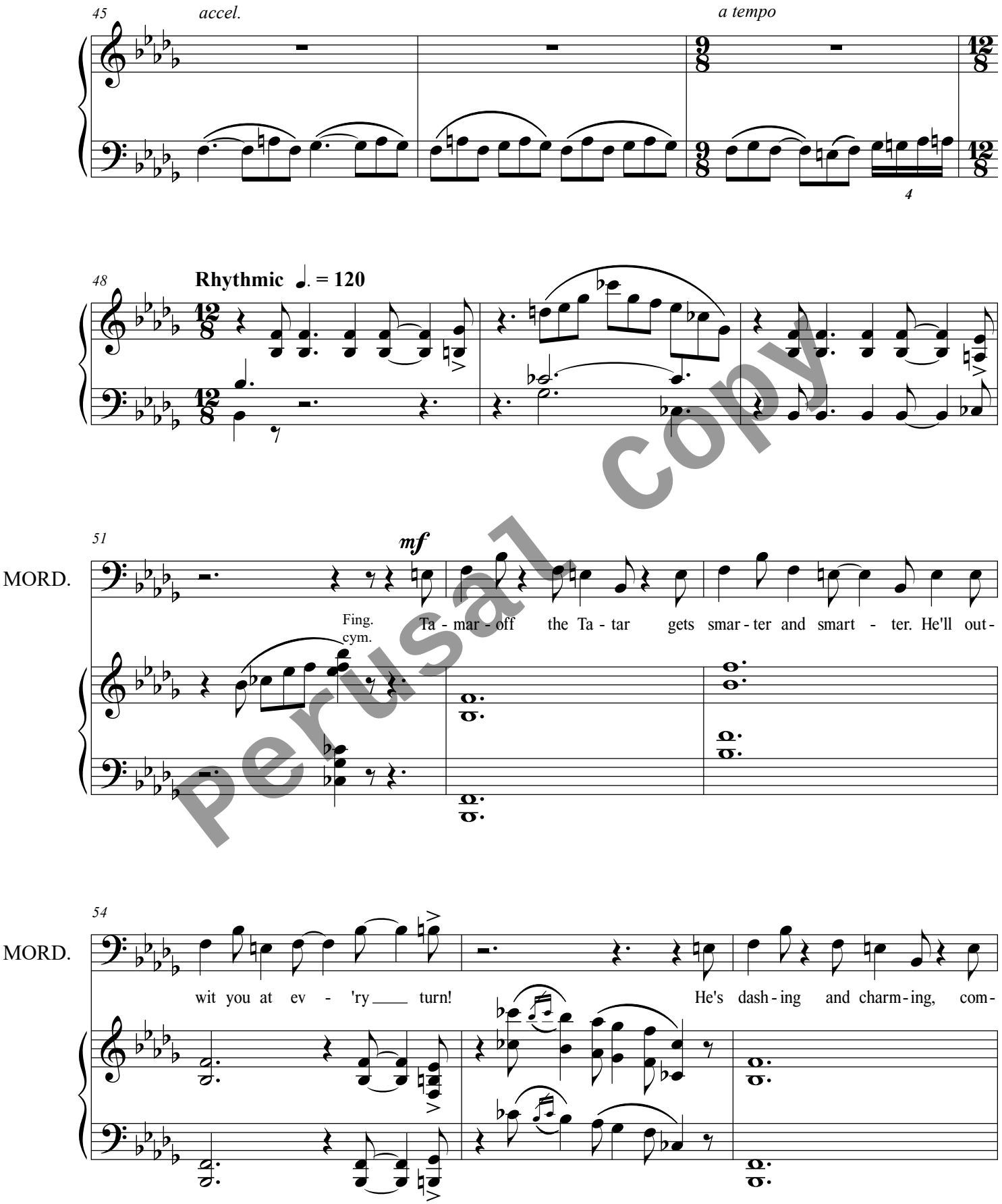

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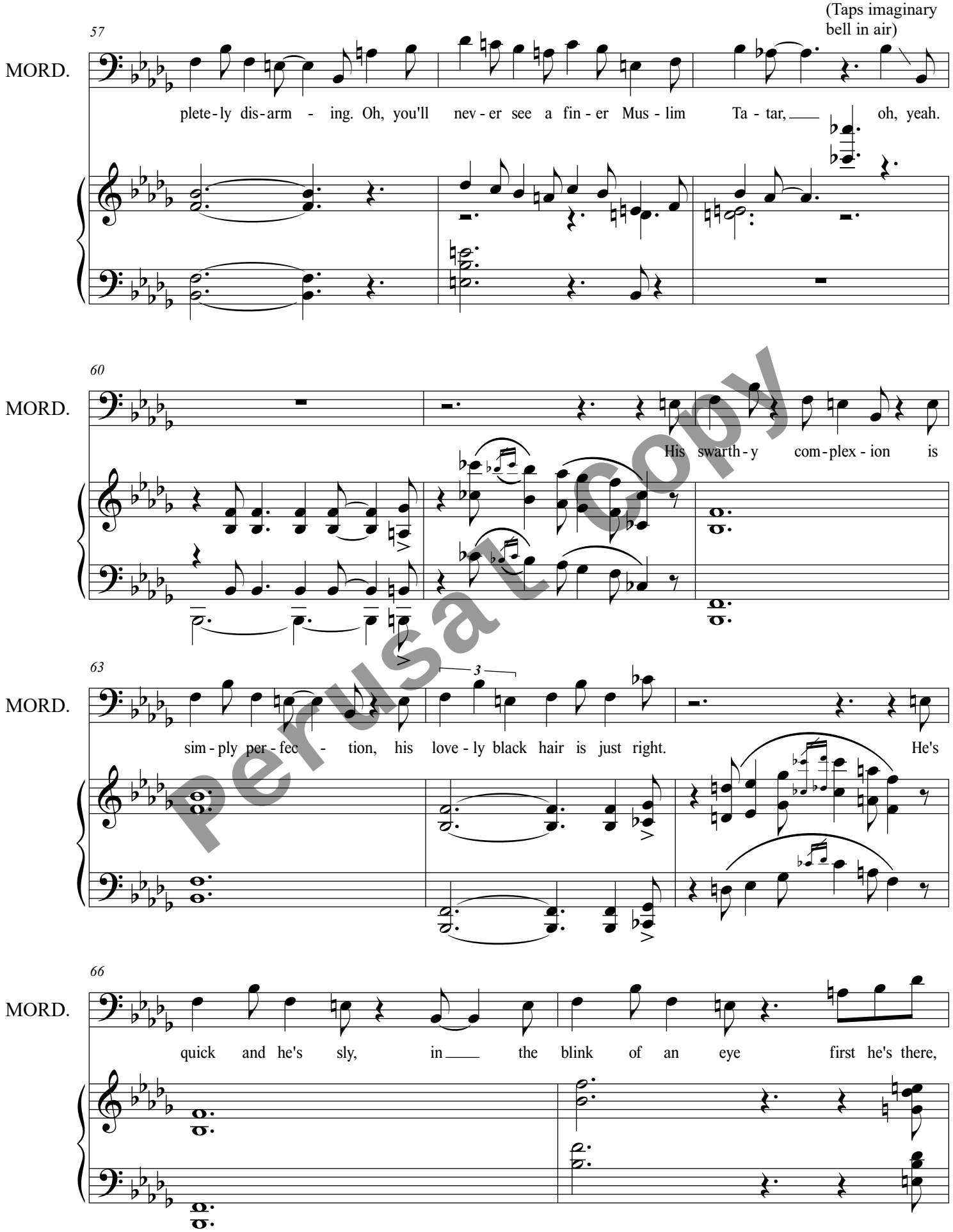

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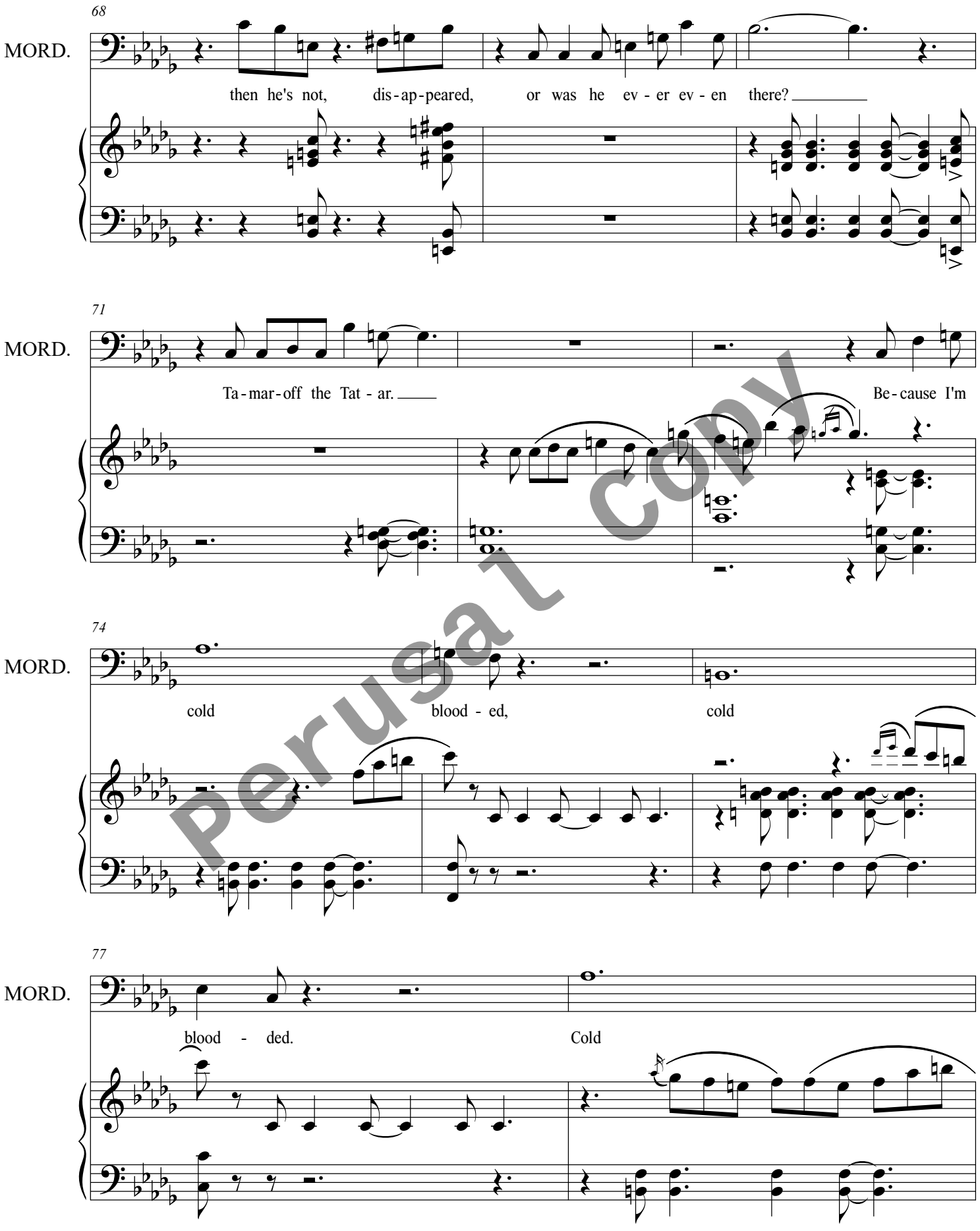

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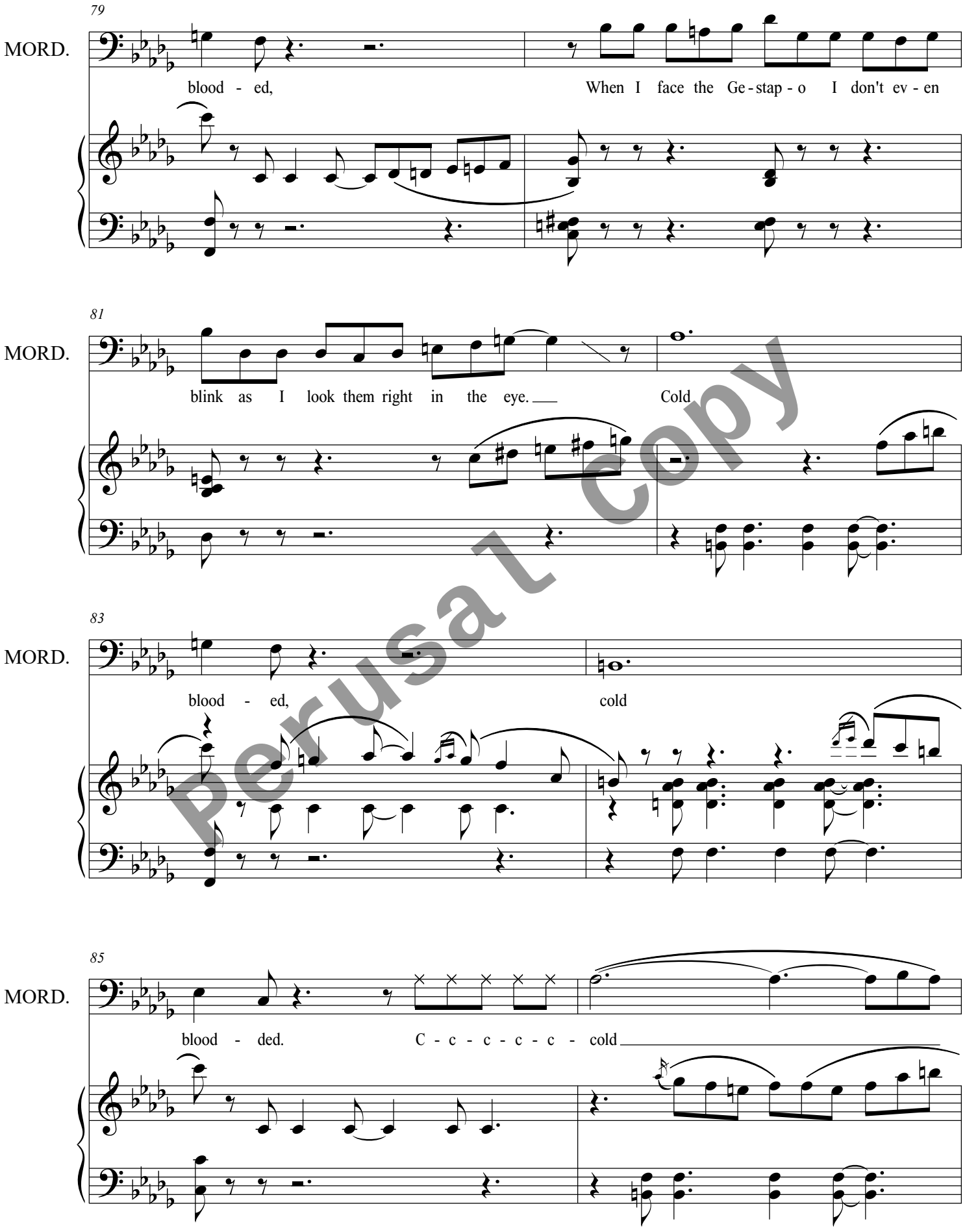

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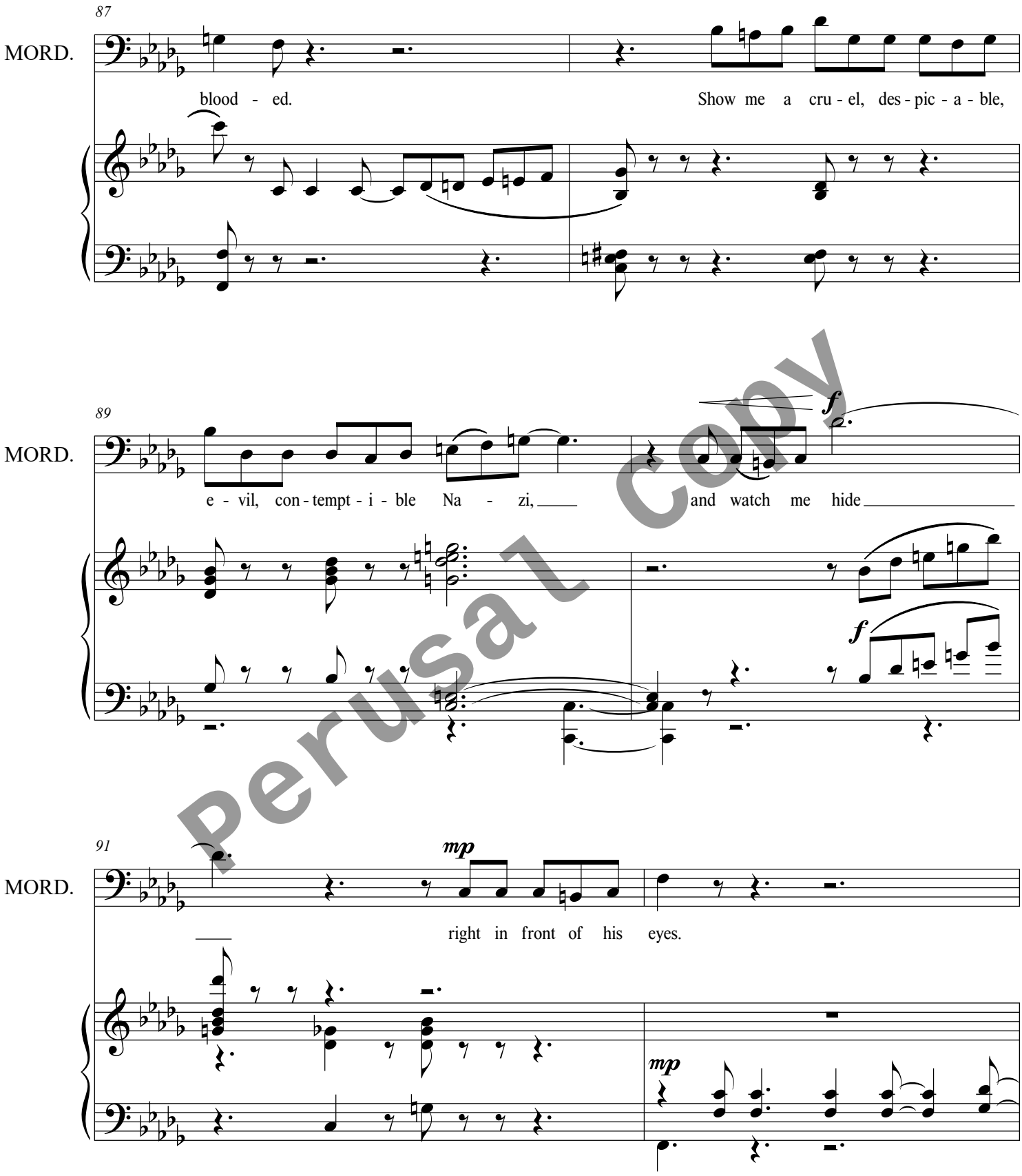

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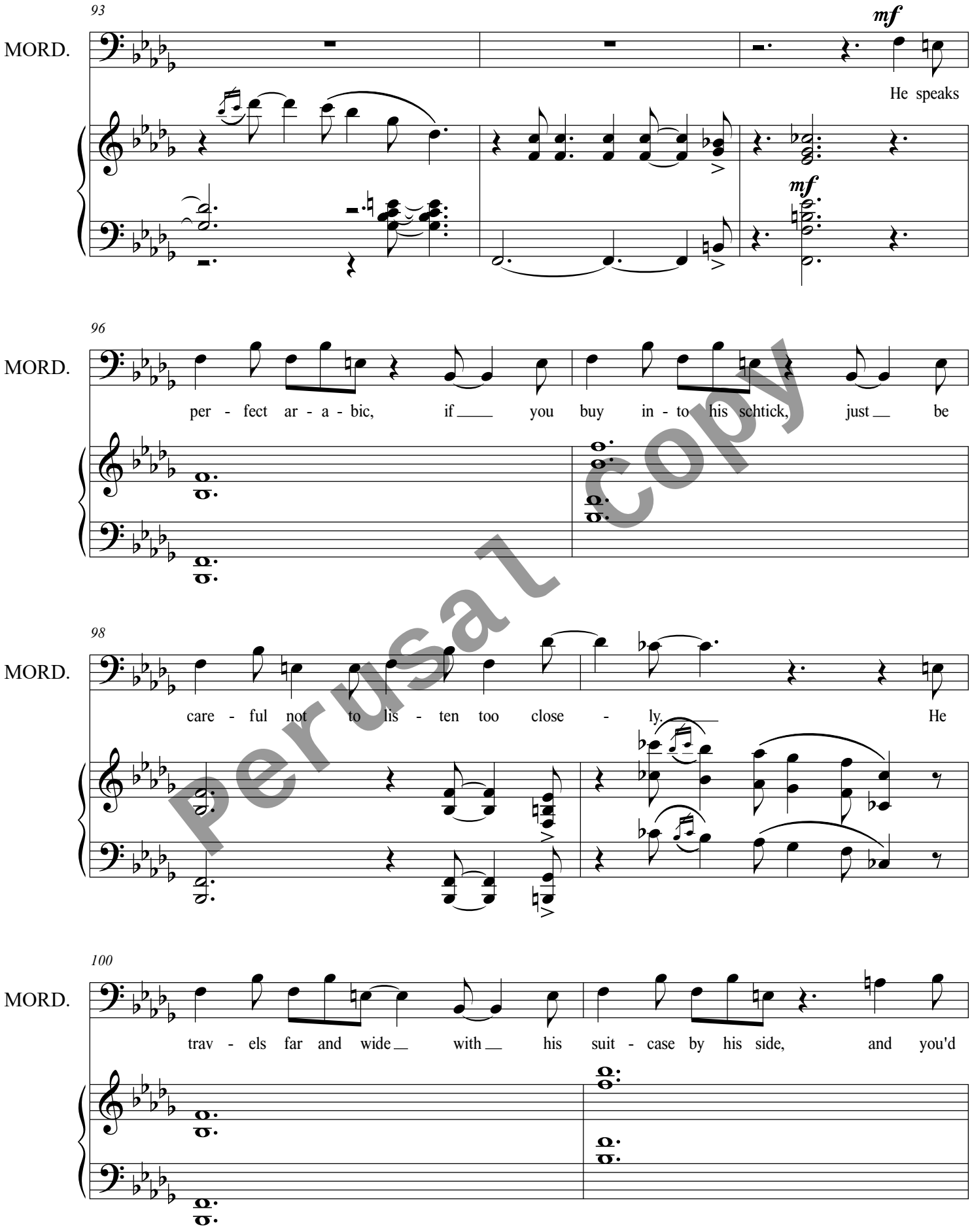

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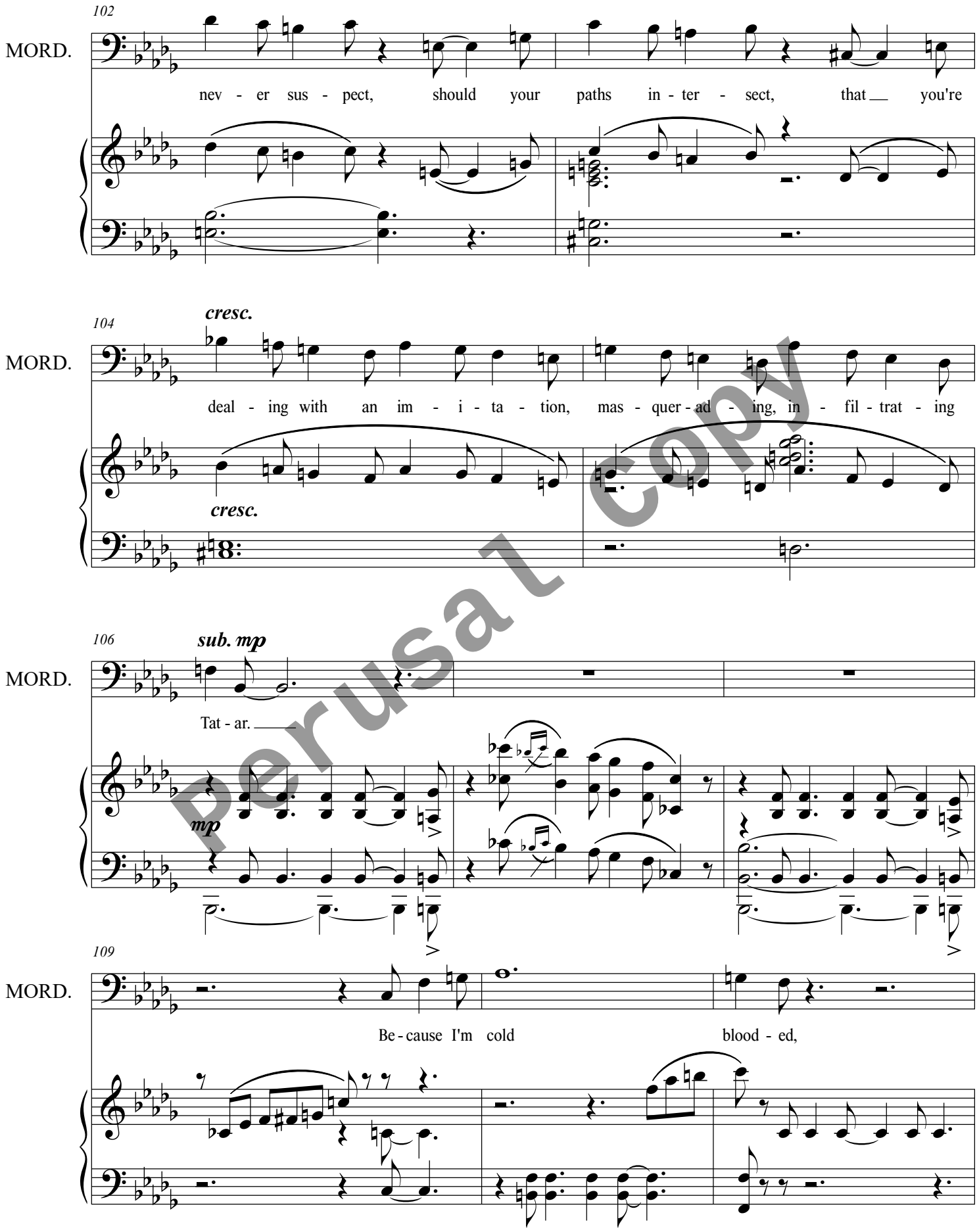

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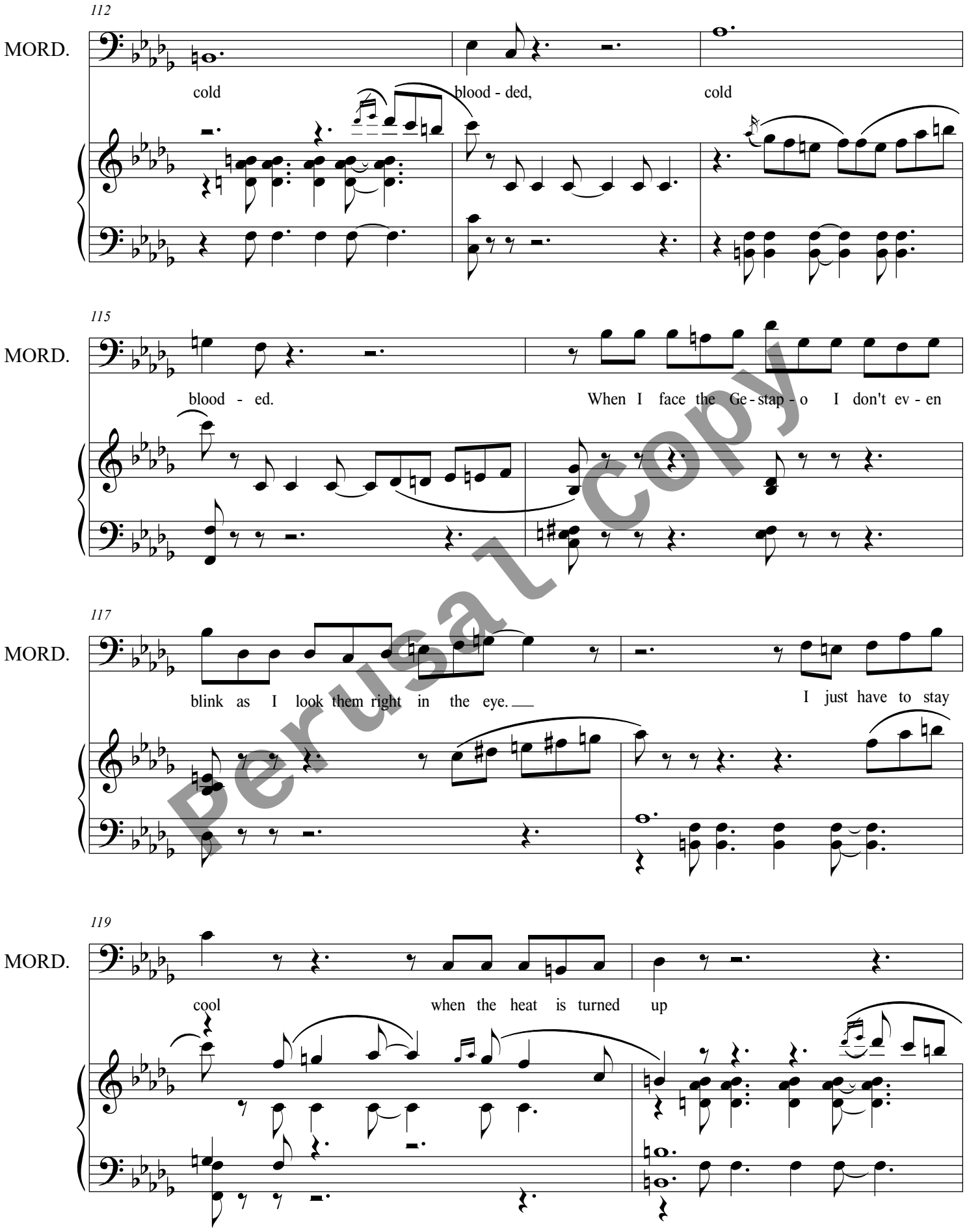

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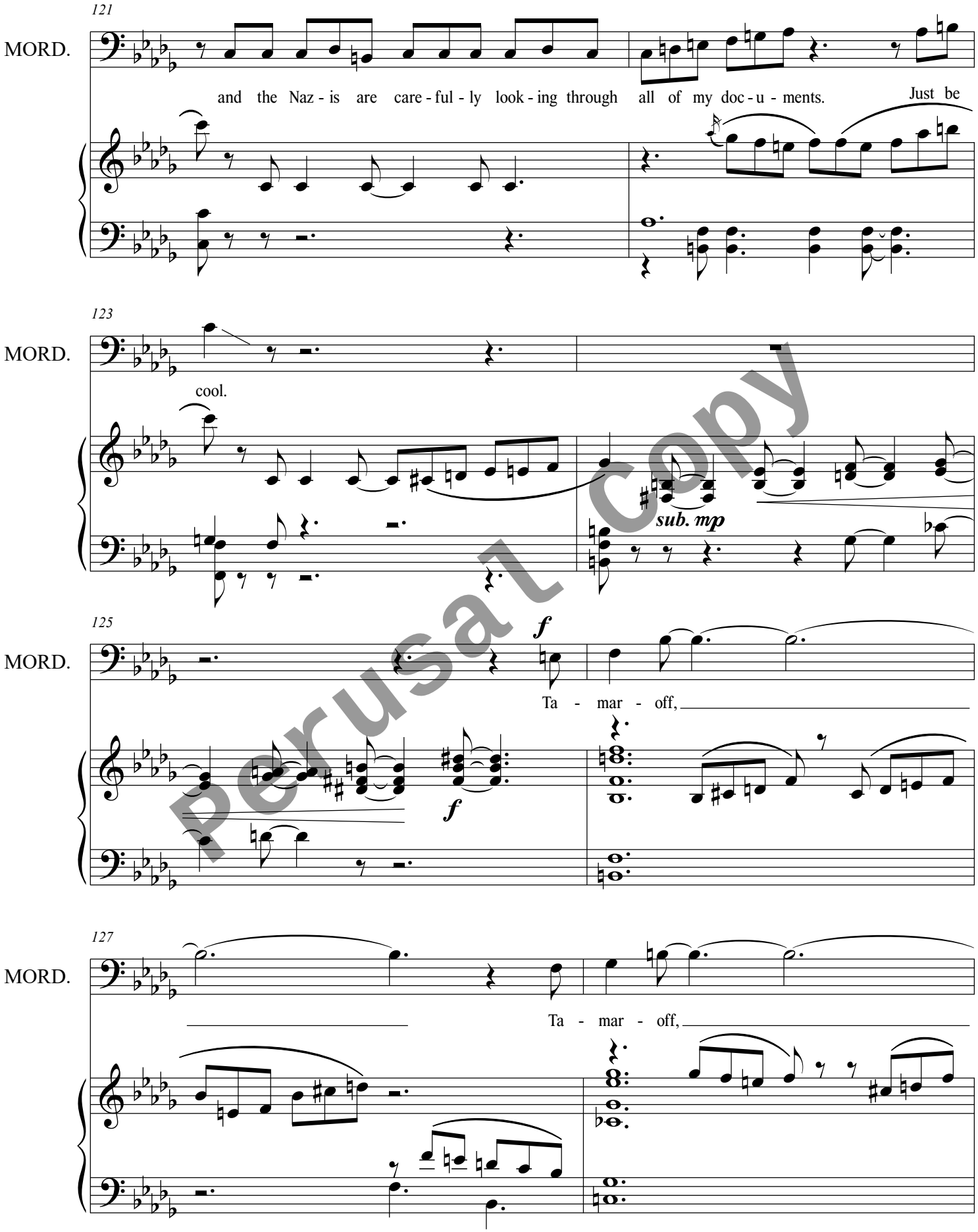

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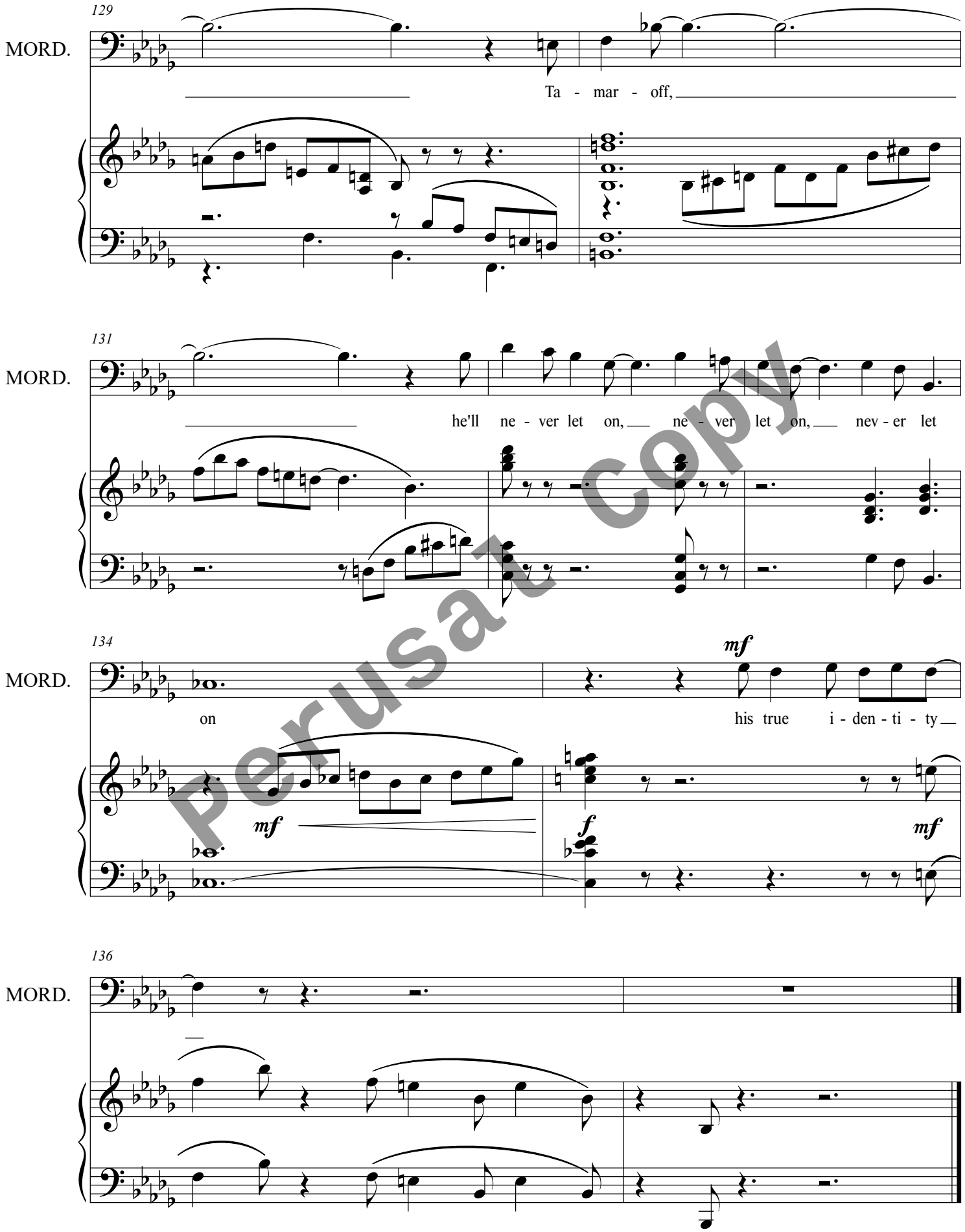

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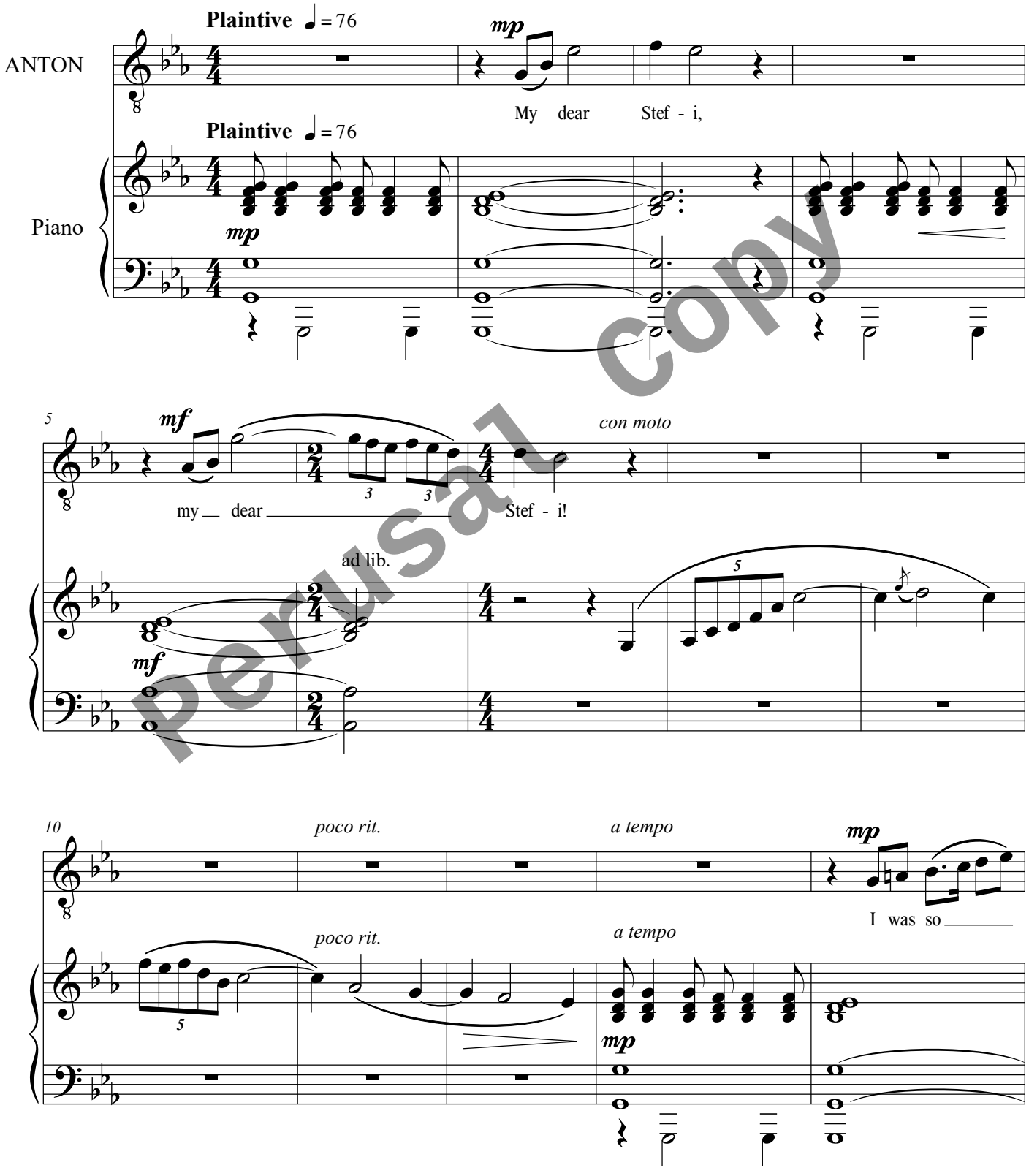
The Last Letter



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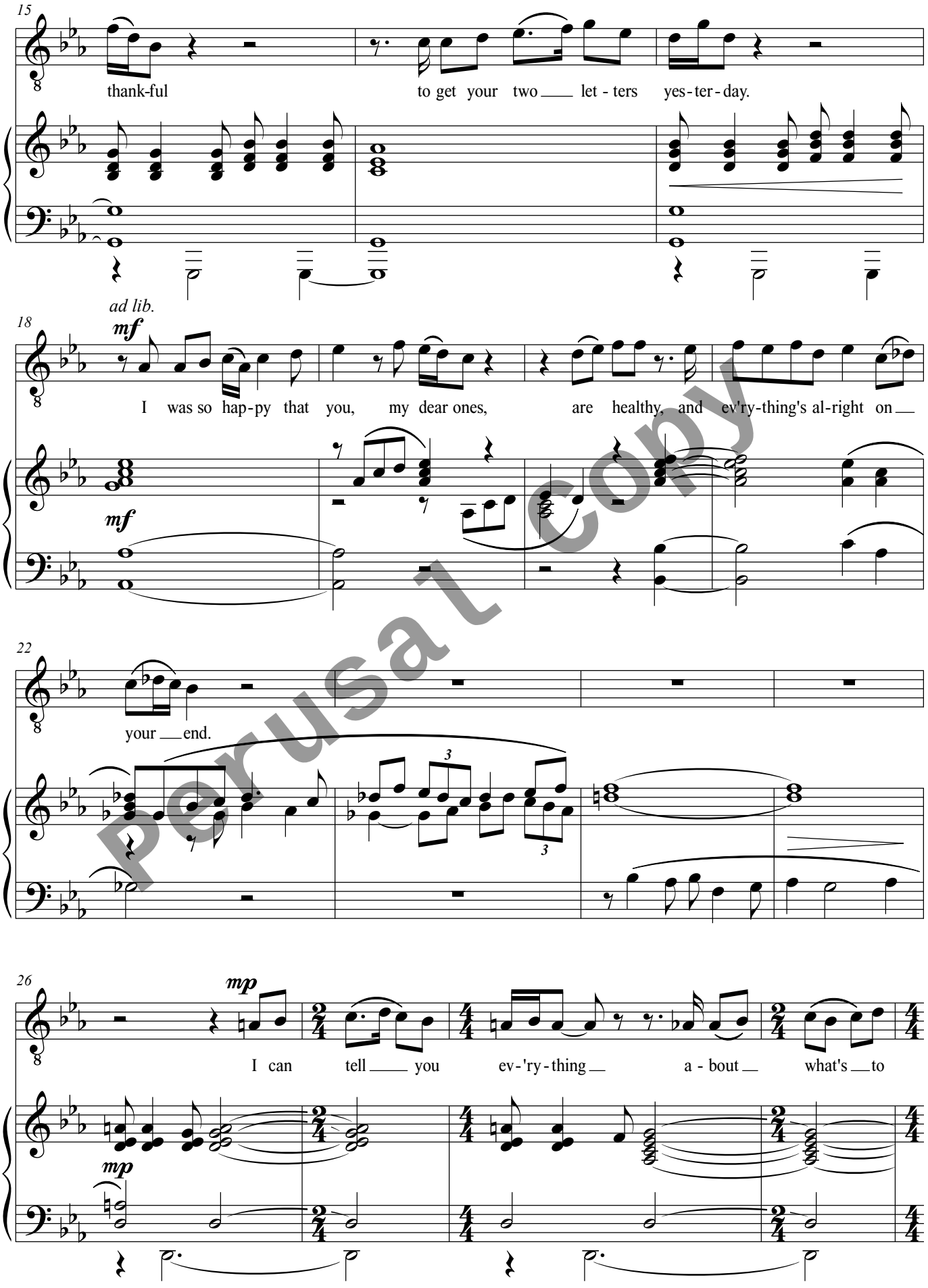

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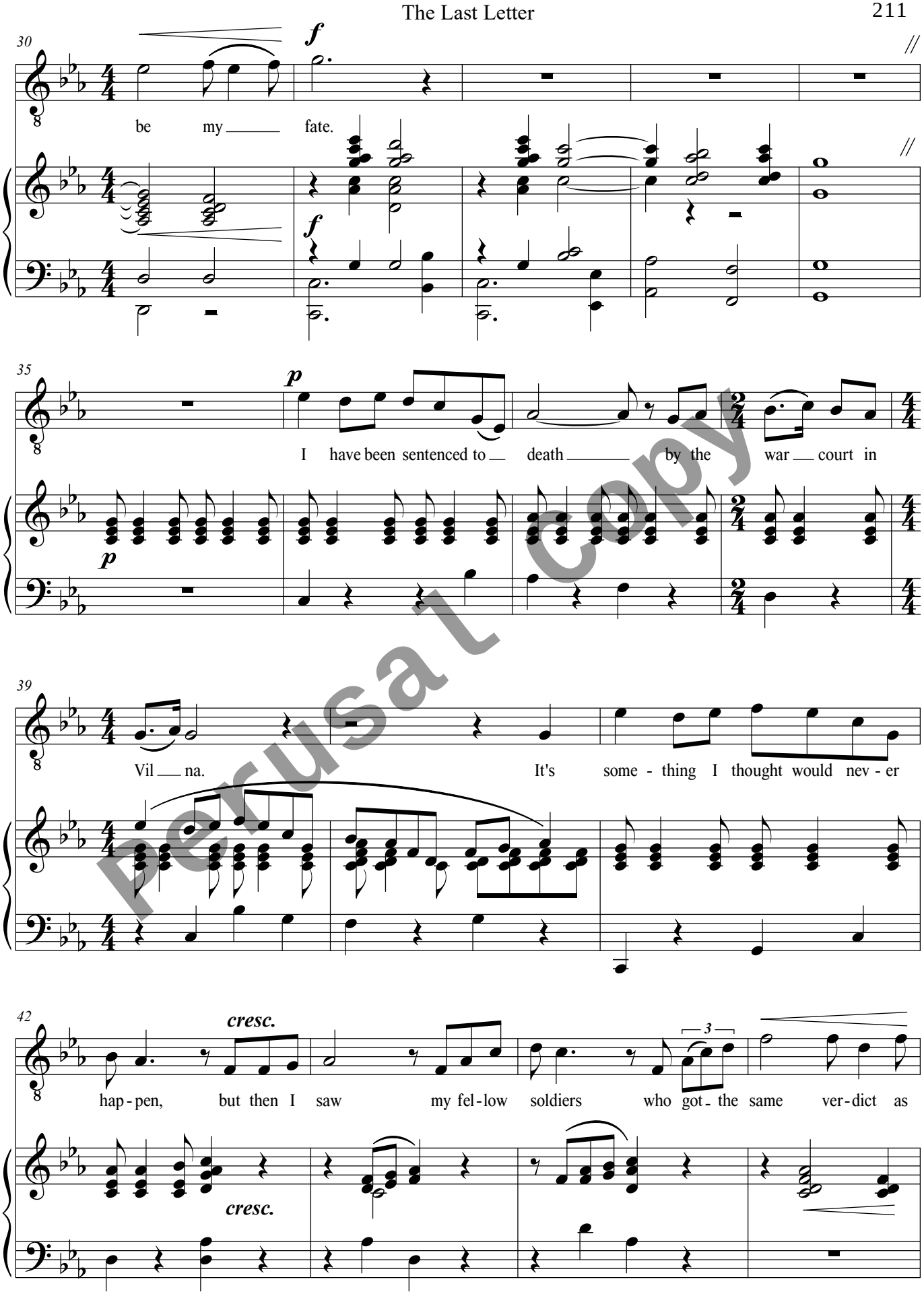

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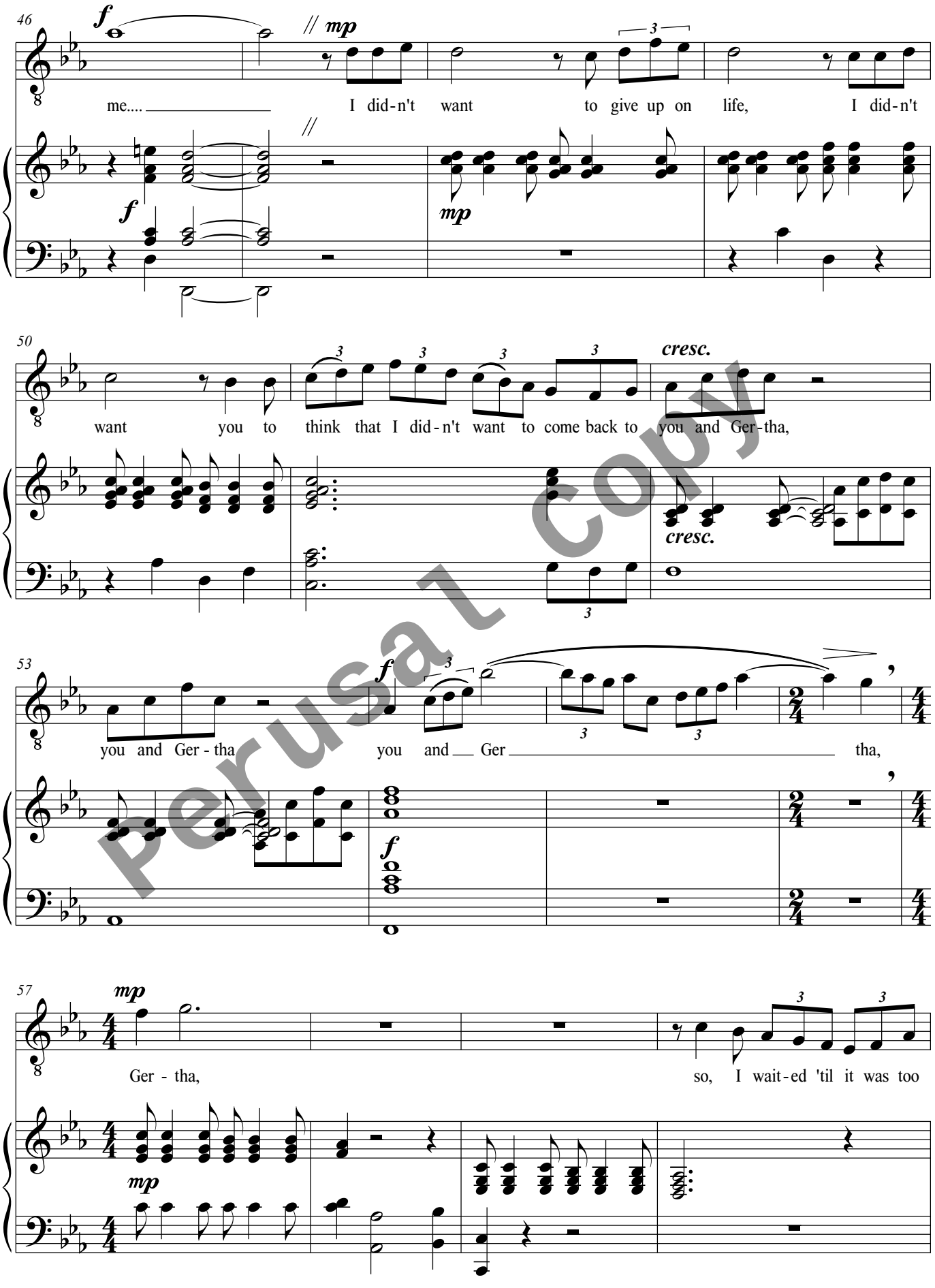

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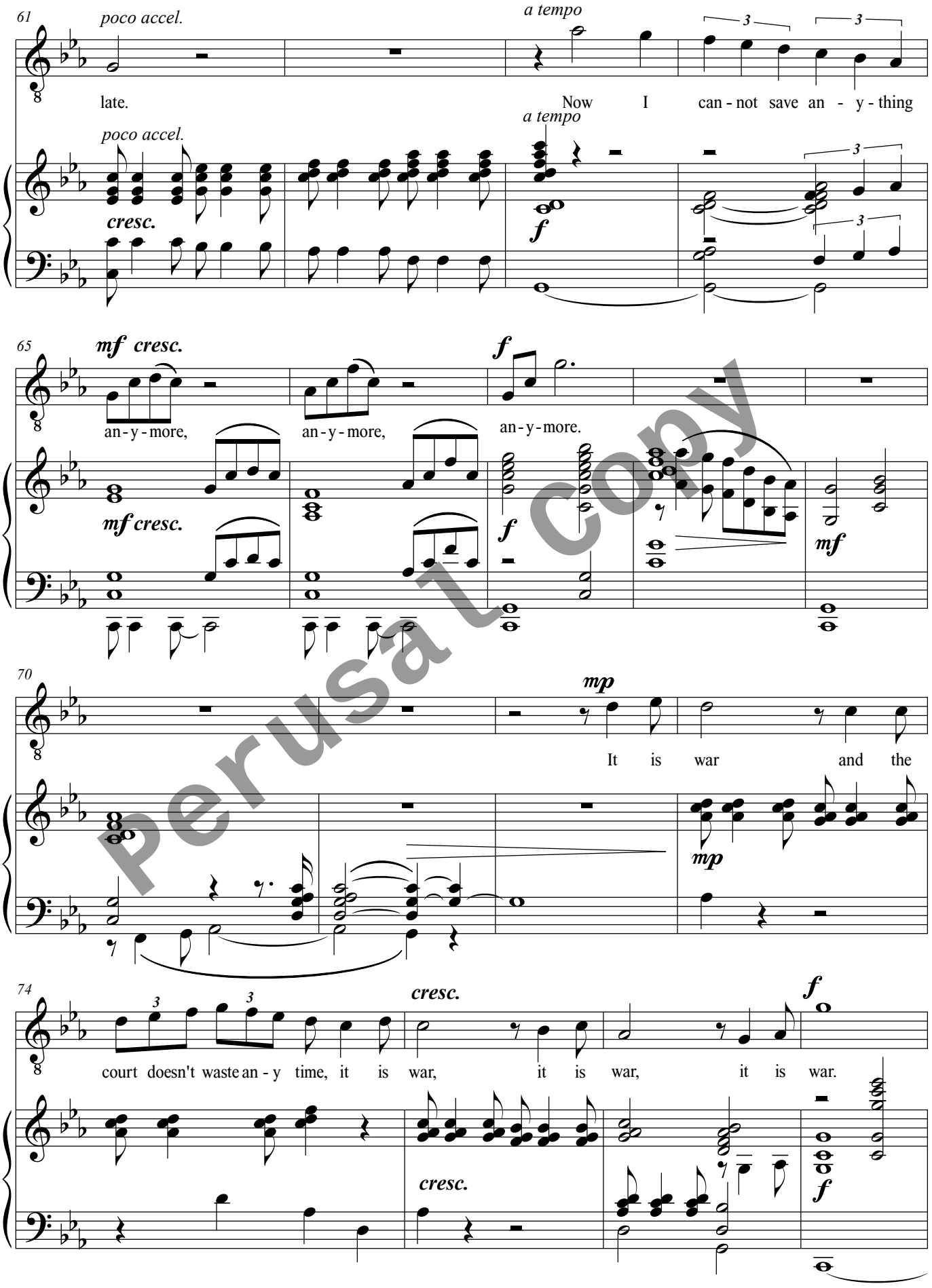

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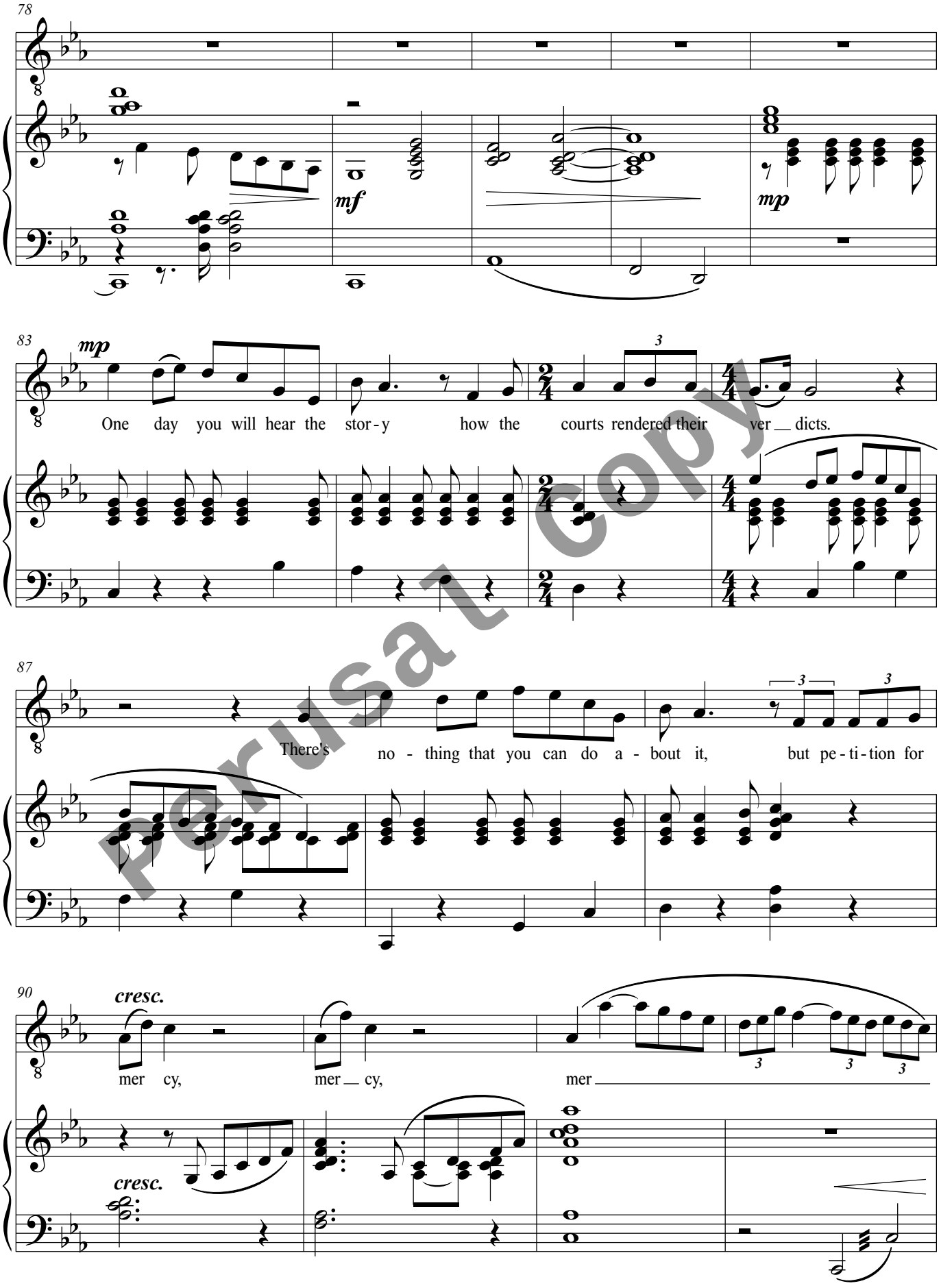

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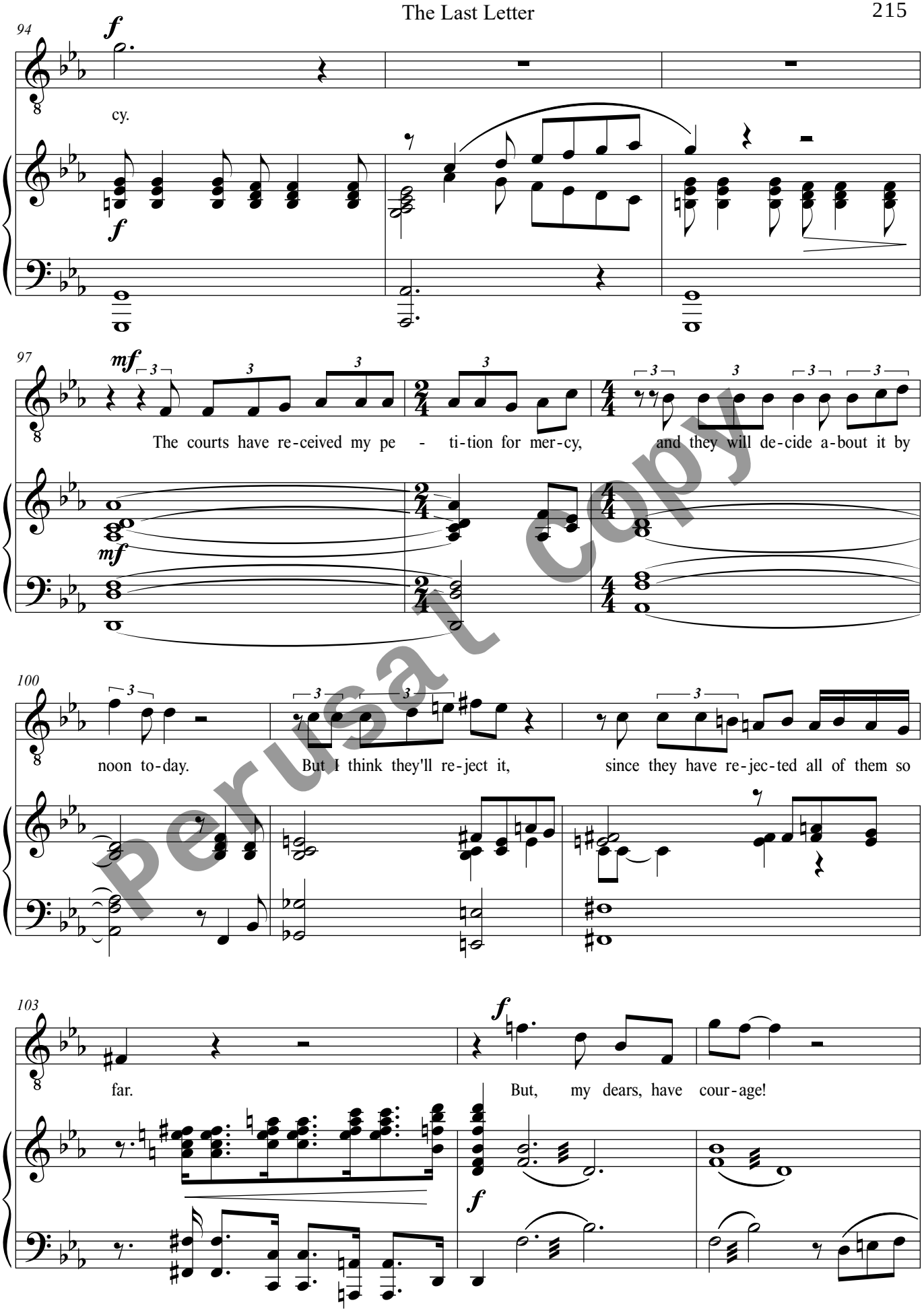

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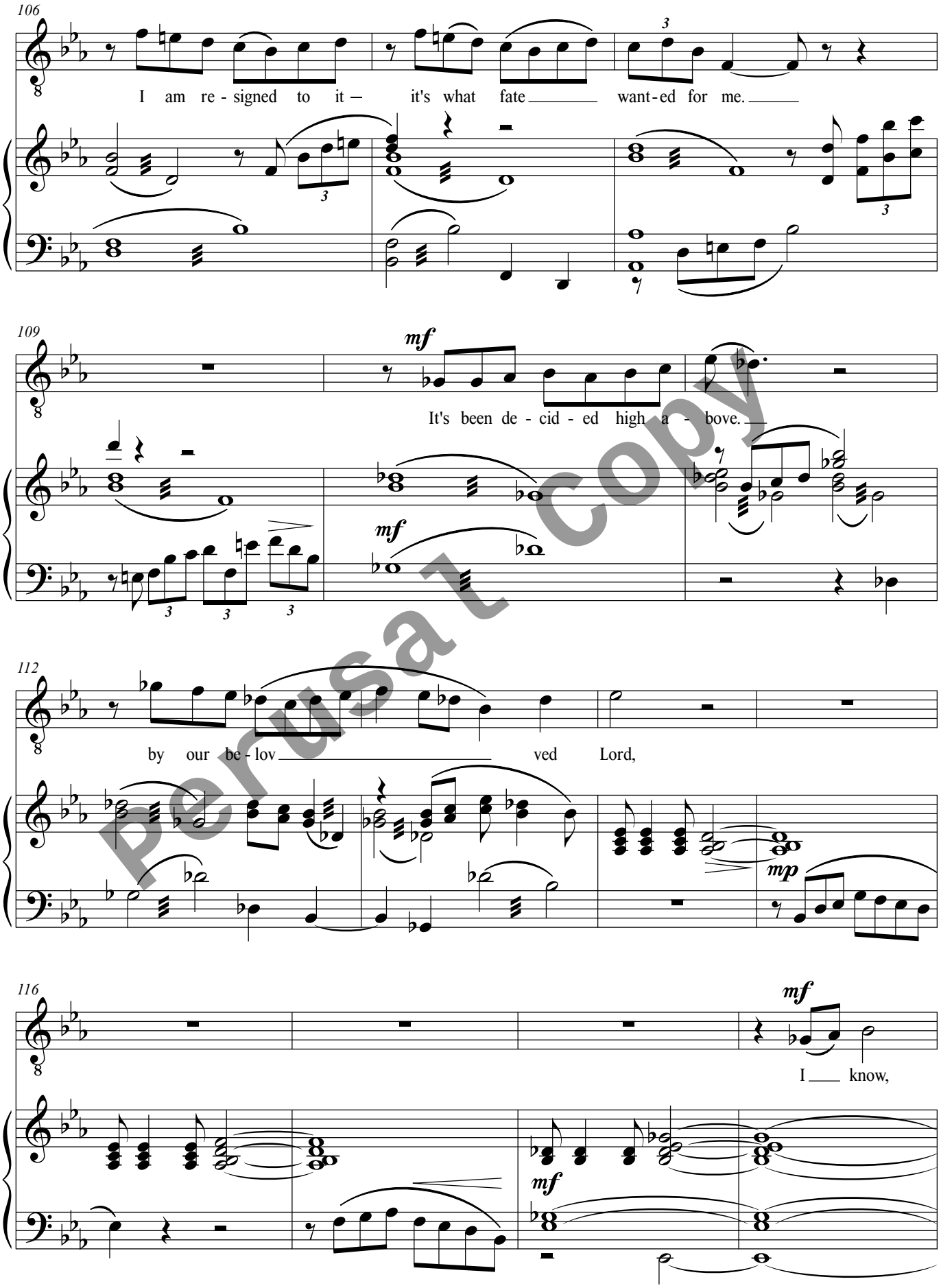

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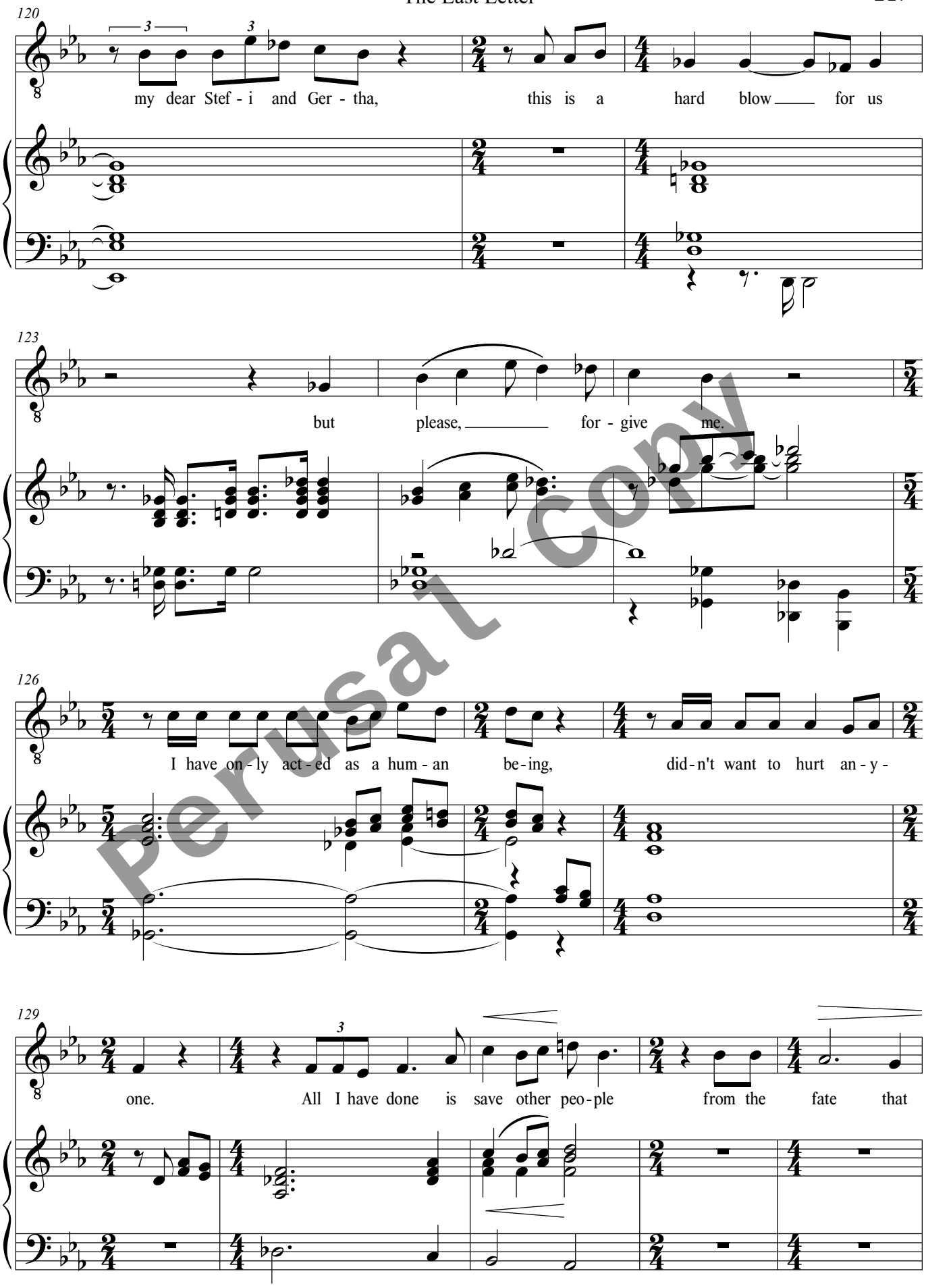

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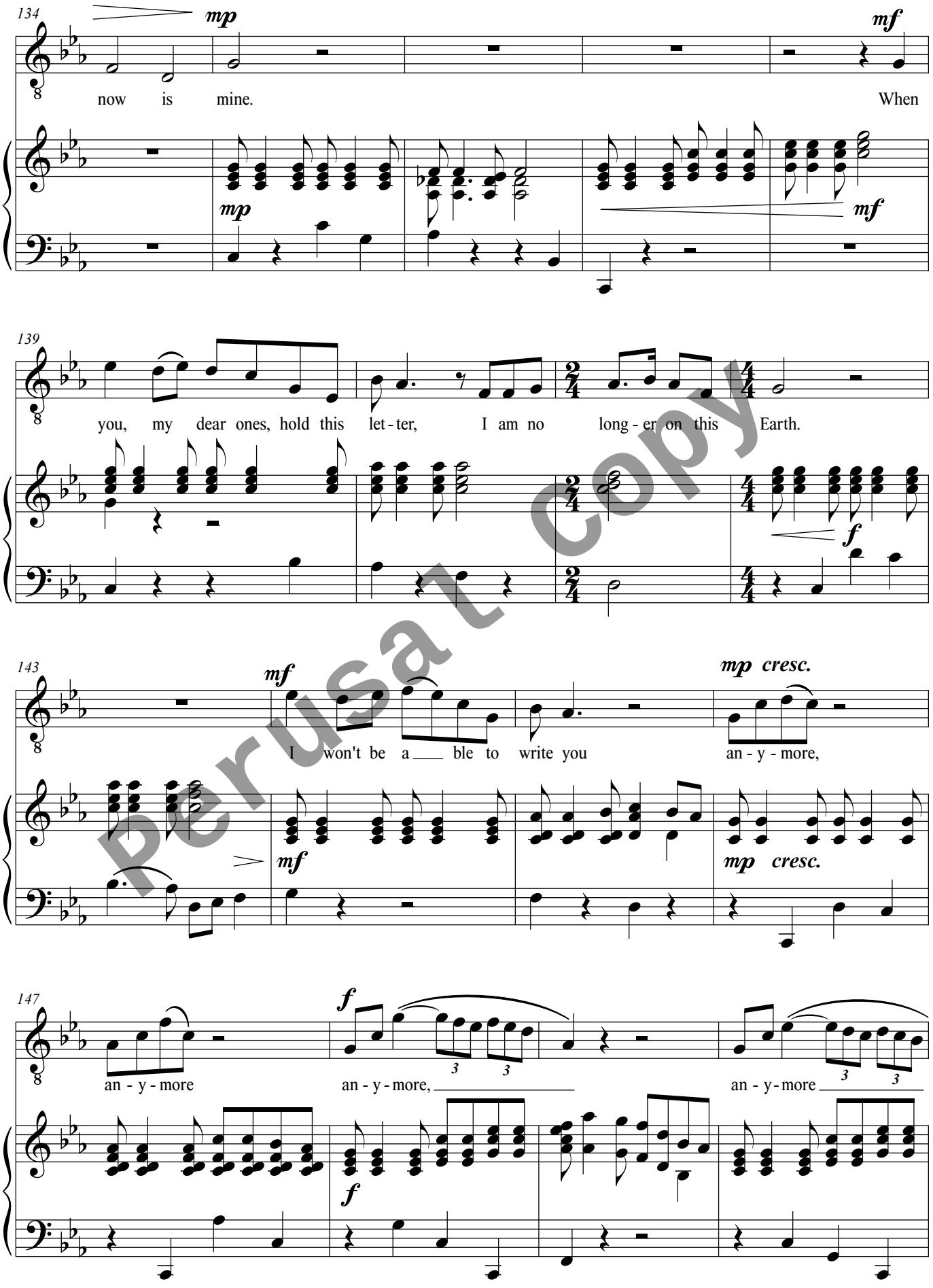

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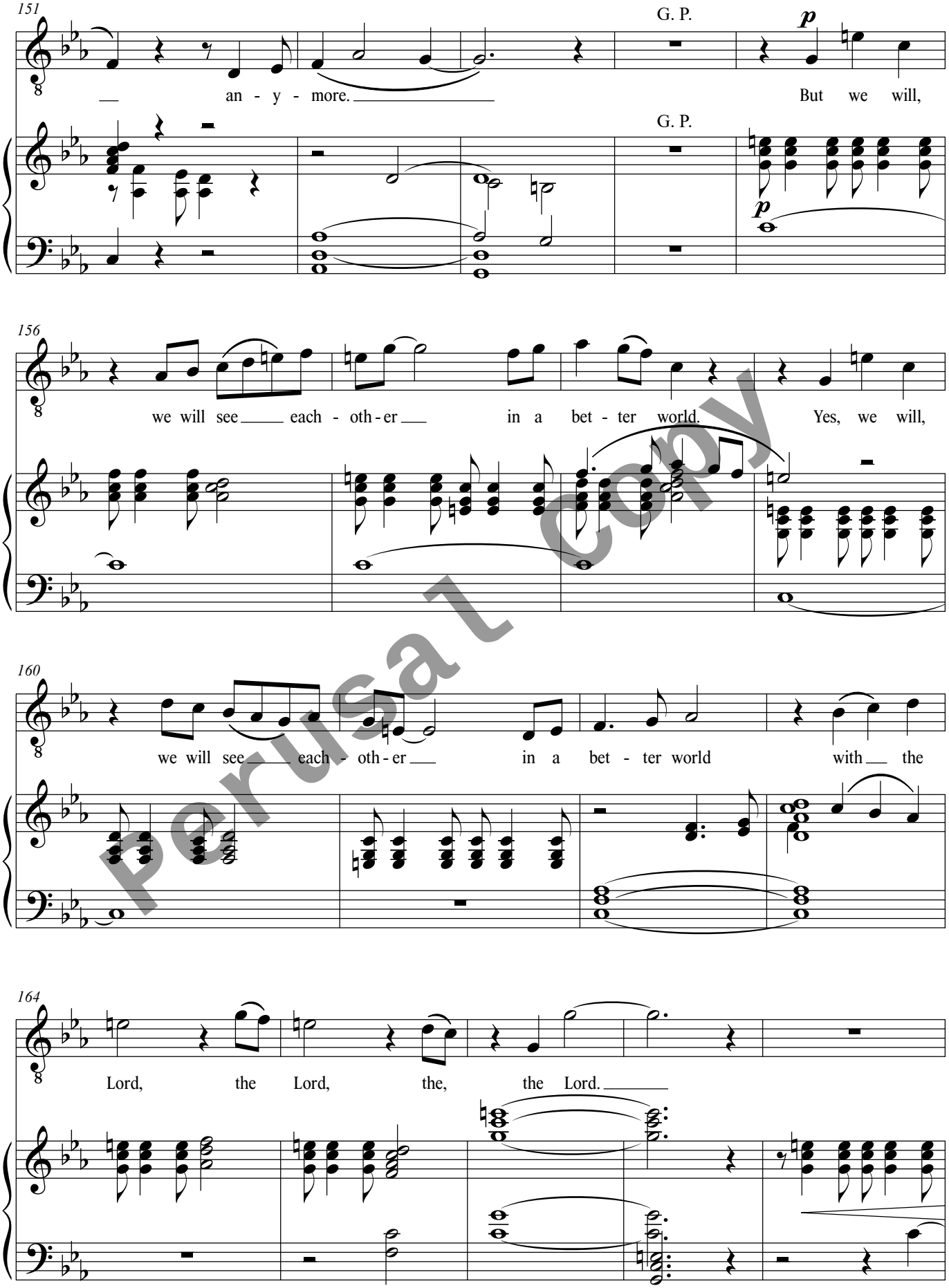

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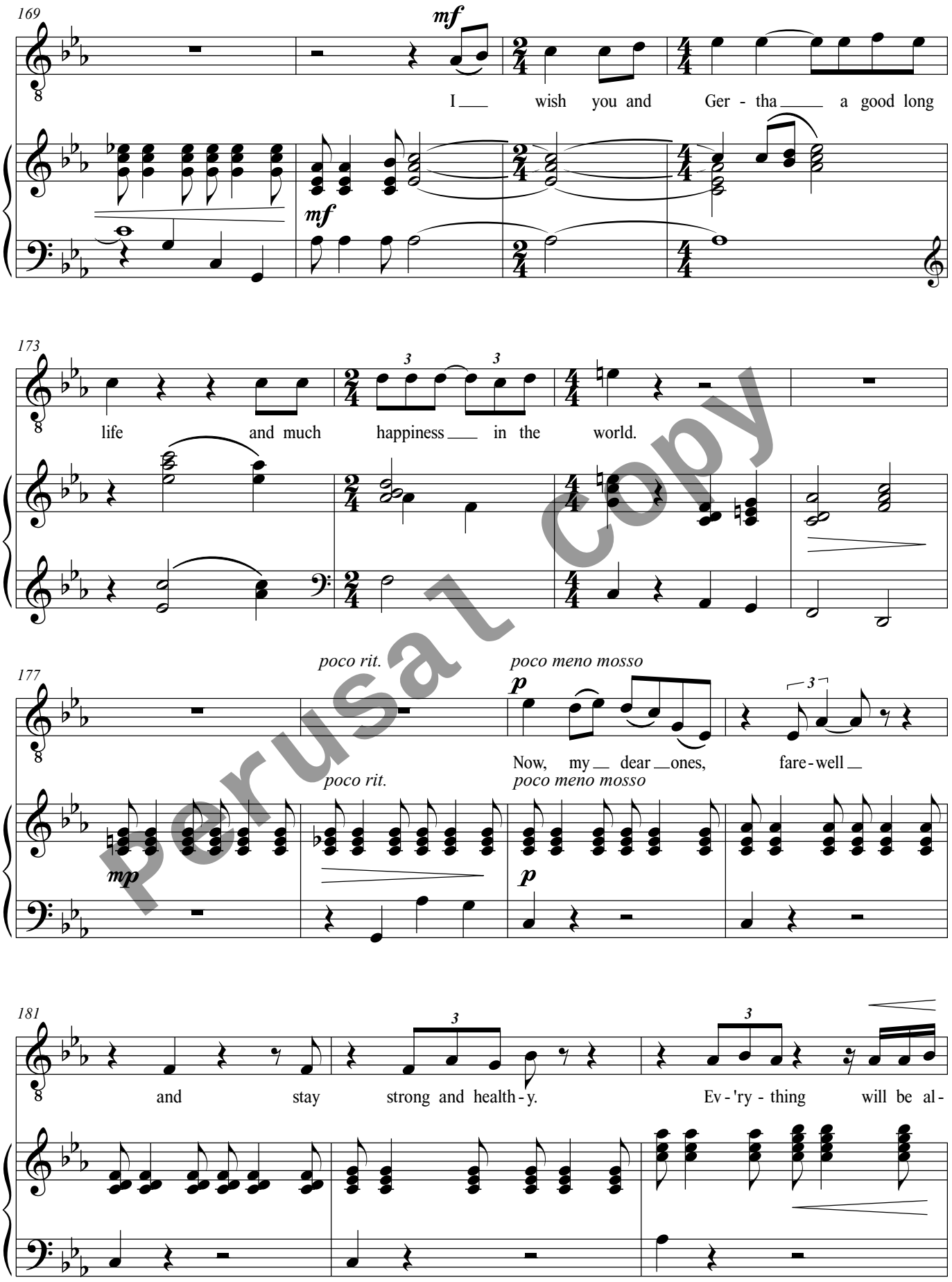

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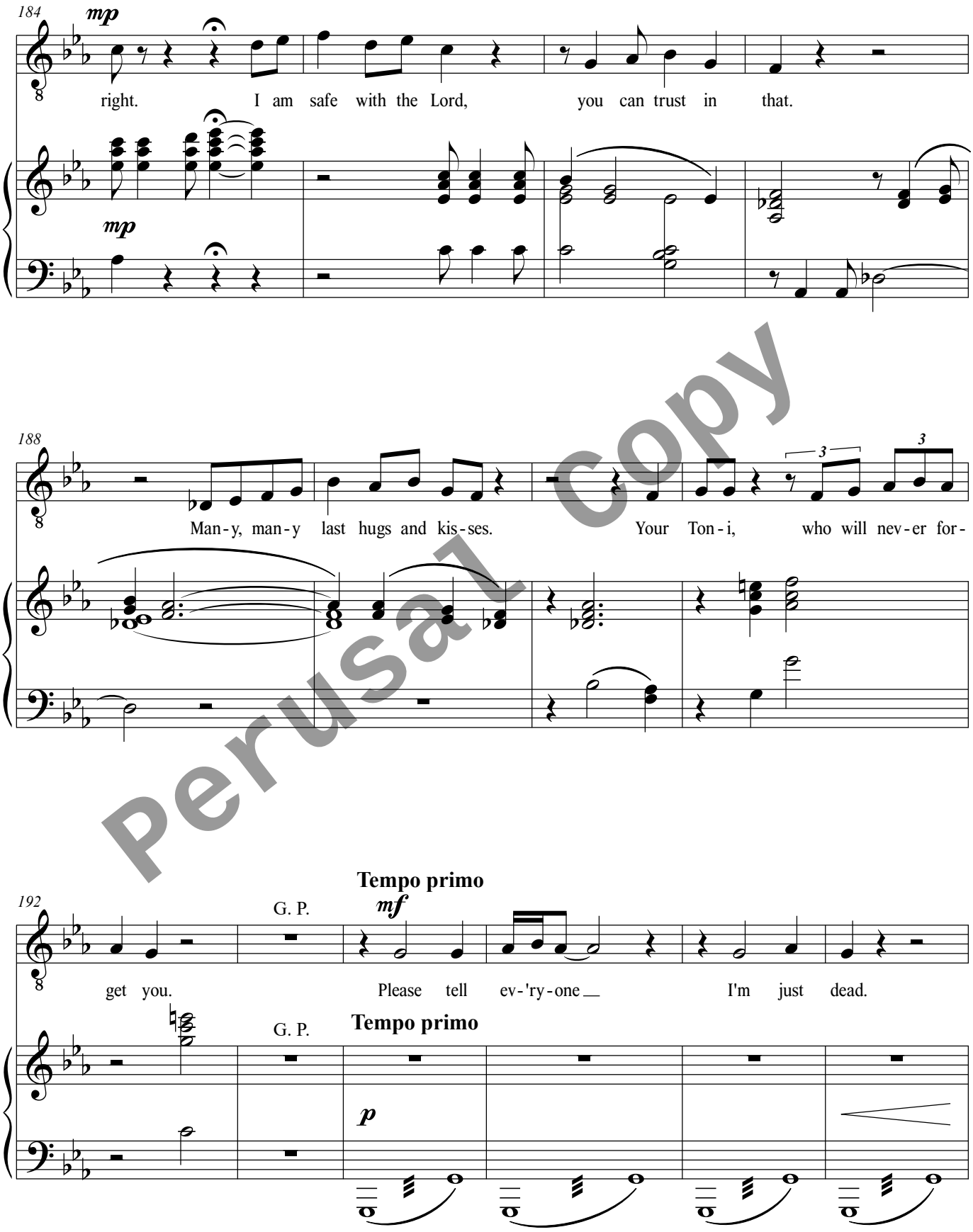

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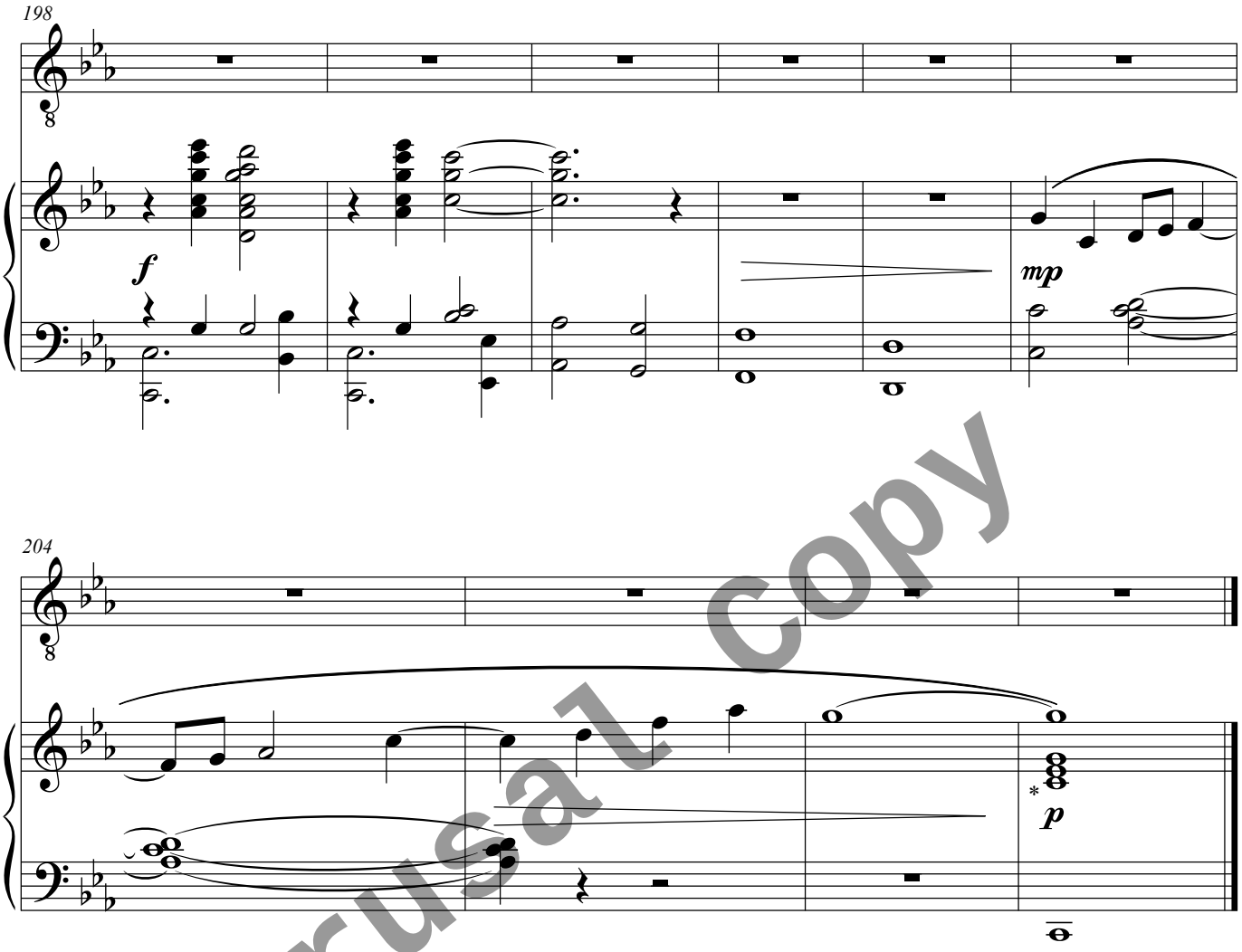

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*Chord may be played as a major chord (with an E natural), depending on staging .