BEGIN

for Choir (SATB), Piano and Strings

Vocal Score

Ben Ponniah

BEGIN

for Choir (SATB), Piano and Strings

(2021)

Duration: 24 minutes

Cover photograph: pxfuel.com

For more information: www.benponniah.com

INSTRUMENTATION

Choir (SATB)
Piano
Strings (min., 3, 3, 2, 2, 1*)
*Double bass(es) *ad lib* – to double the cello part an octave below.

PROGRAMME NOTE

Begin is the largest piece that I have written to date. My aim from the outset was to create a high-quality composition (forming a significant part of my PhD portfolio) that is cinematic, energetic and accessible – I took inspiration from film scores.

While exploring meditation, I happened upon quotations of Rumi, the thirteenth-century Persian poet and mystic. Like countless others, I connected with his powerful, concise and mindful writing, which contains beautiful descriptions of the natural world. I was going through a particularly challenging time while composing *Begin*. However, setting Rumi's inspirational words to music was a deeply cathartic experience.

Begin is a celebratory piece about rebirth, new beginnings and the energy one feels after healing from significant loss. This could be the loss of a friendship, relationship, job, home, one's health or a family member. The Covid-19 pandemic continues to cause devastating loss for so many at the time of writing (October 2021).

After a traumatic event, it can be very hard to hear the quiet voice from within. *Begin* is here to help anyone – that is stuck or lost – to take the first steps on their journey of self-rediscovery.

I would like to thank my PhD supervisor, Dr Phillip Cooke, for his advice and encouragement.

TEXT

I. Journey

When will you begin that long journey into yourself?

II. Stars

Let the waters settle and you will see the moon and the stars mirrored in your own being.

III. Silence

Silence is the language of God. When I am silent, I fall into the place where everything is music.

IV. Fire

Set your life on fire. Seek those who fan your flames.

Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī (1207-1273)

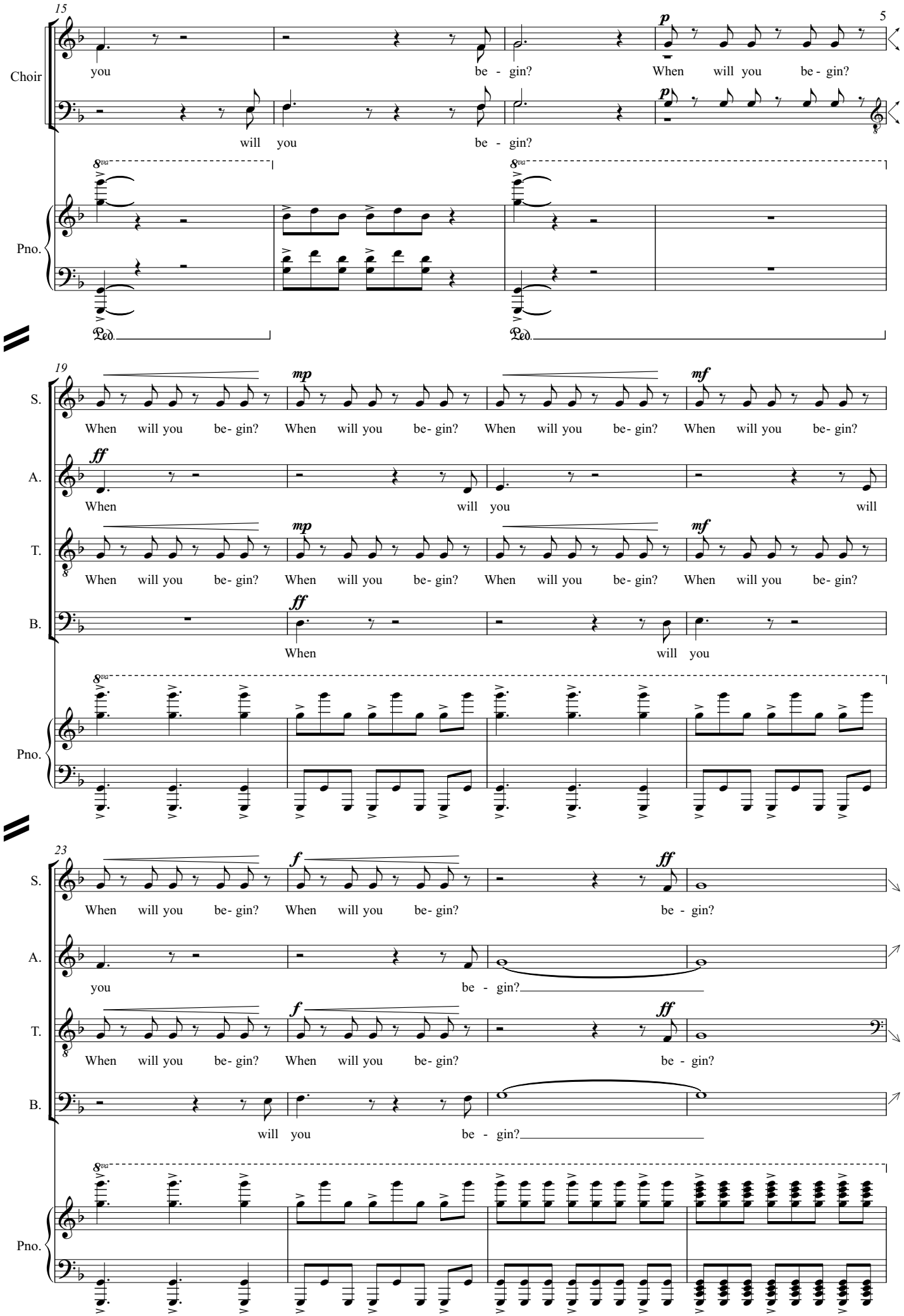
BEGIN

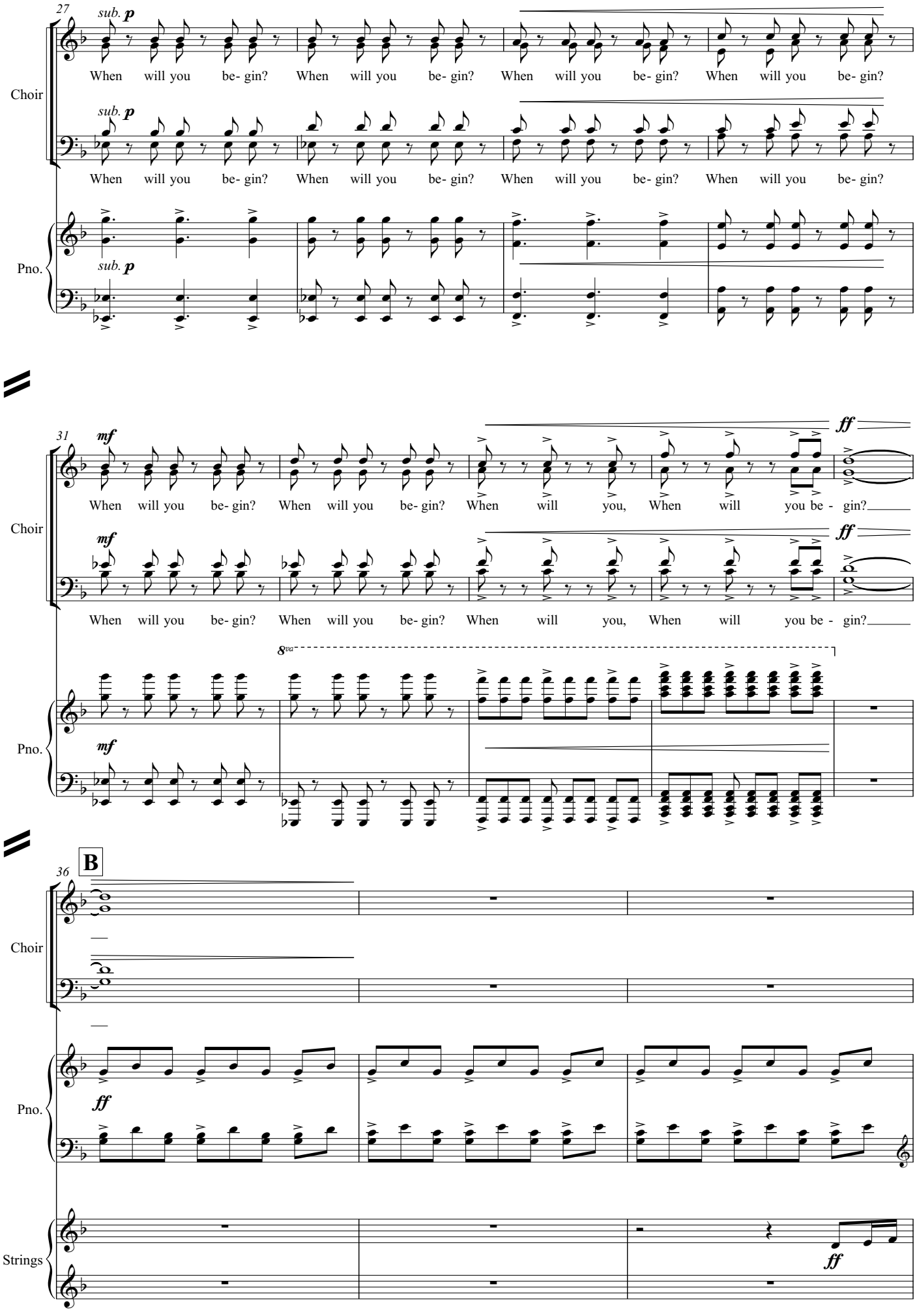
for Choir (SATB), Piano and Strings

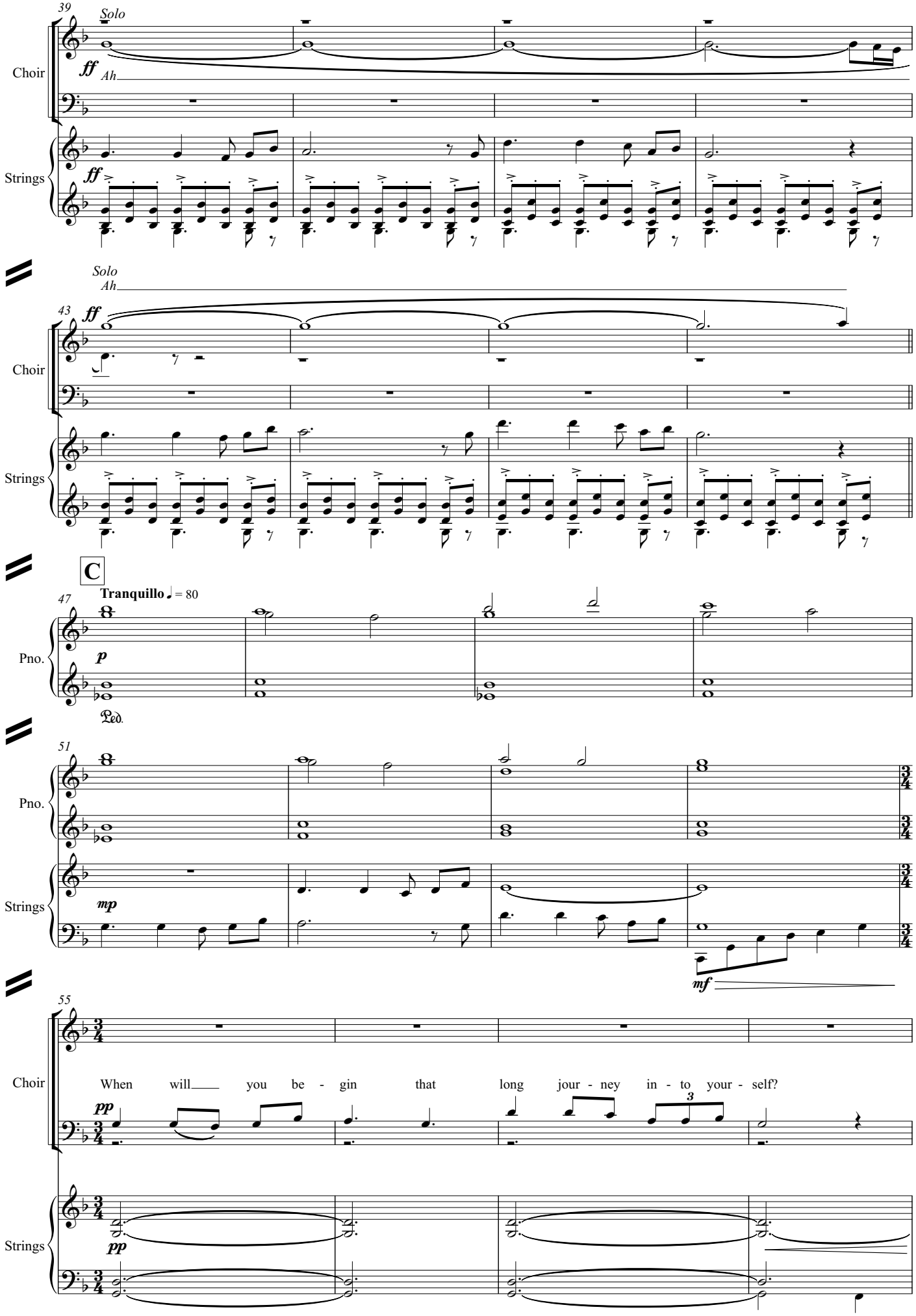
RUMI

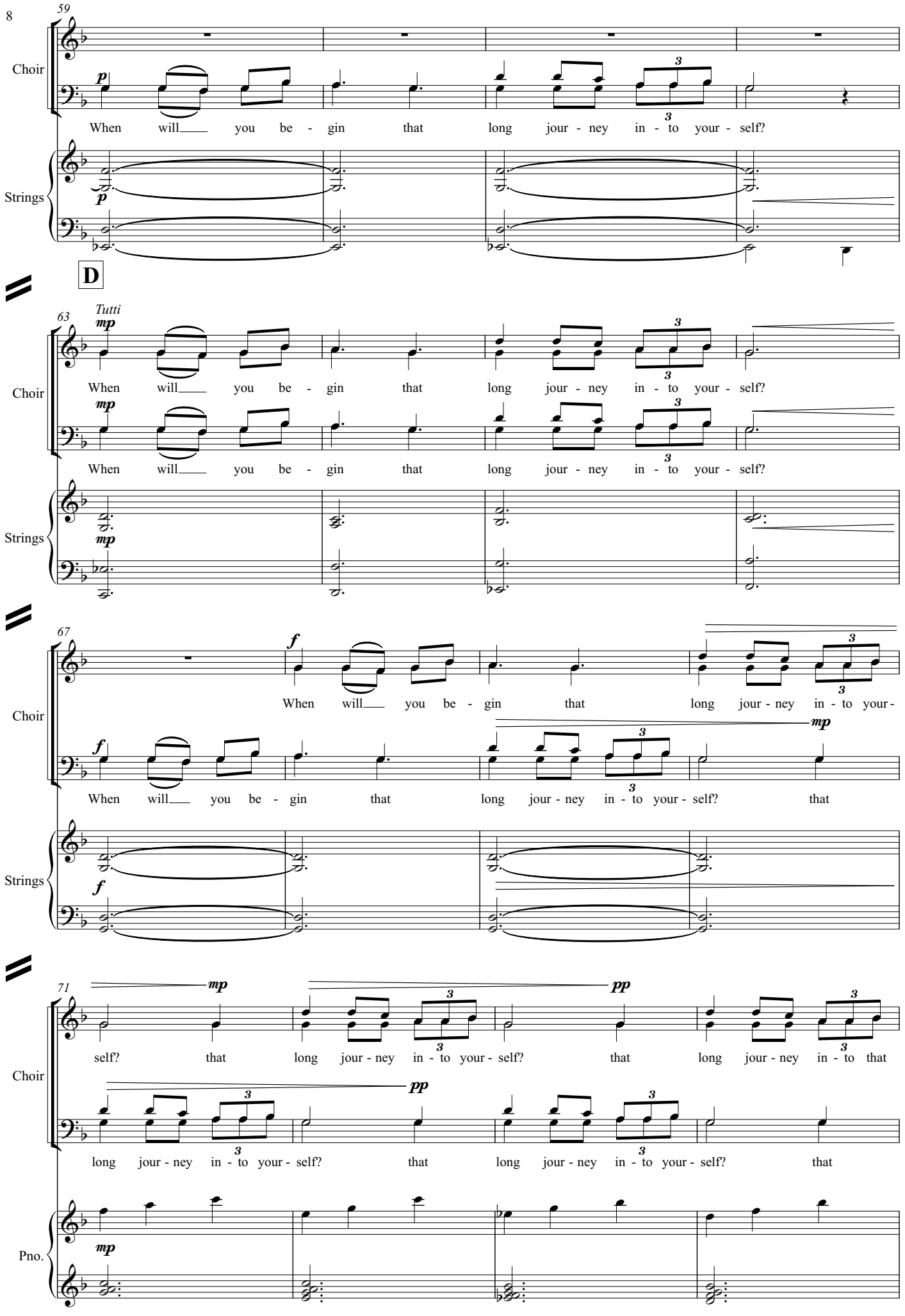
BEN PONNIAH (b. 1984)

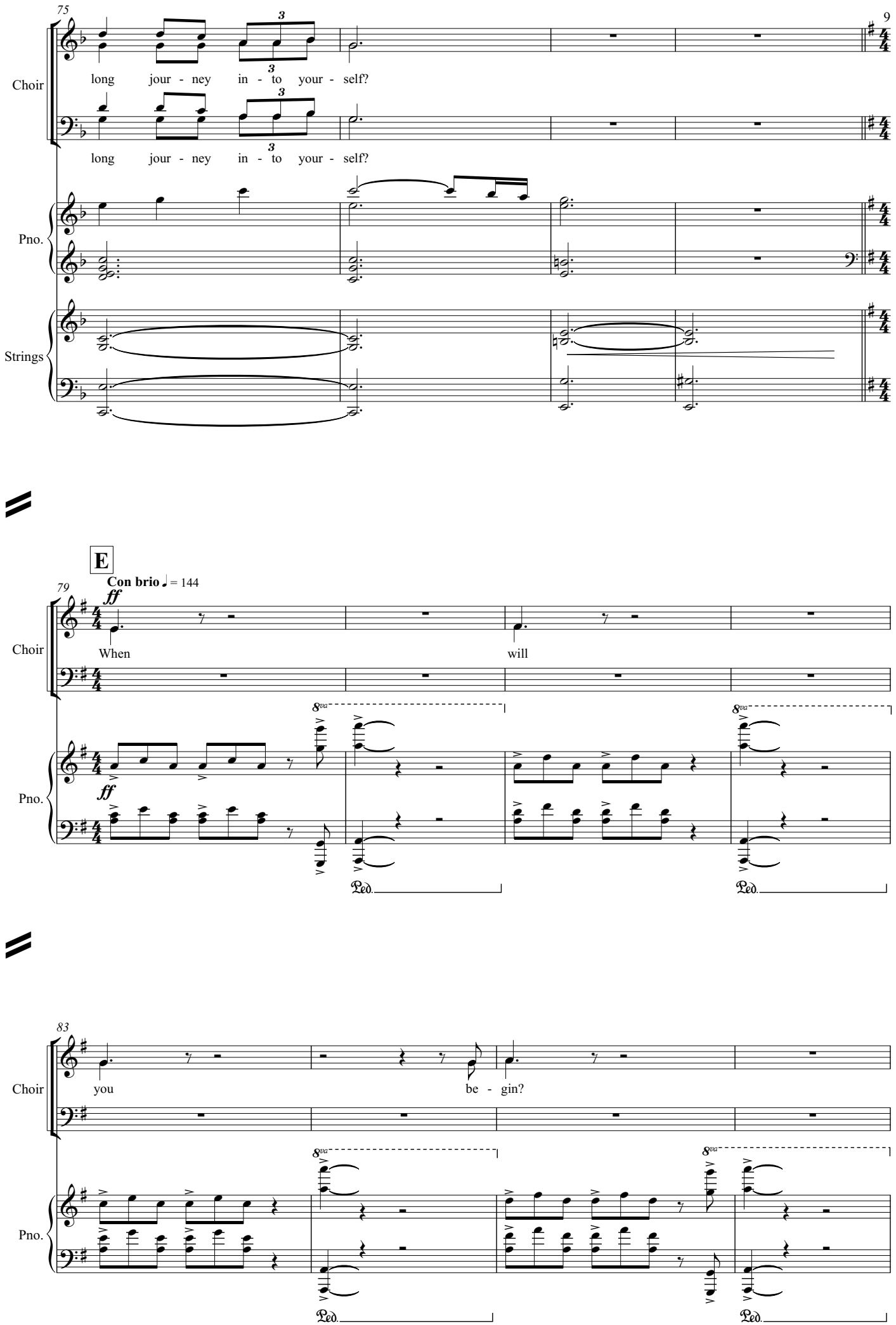
I. Journey

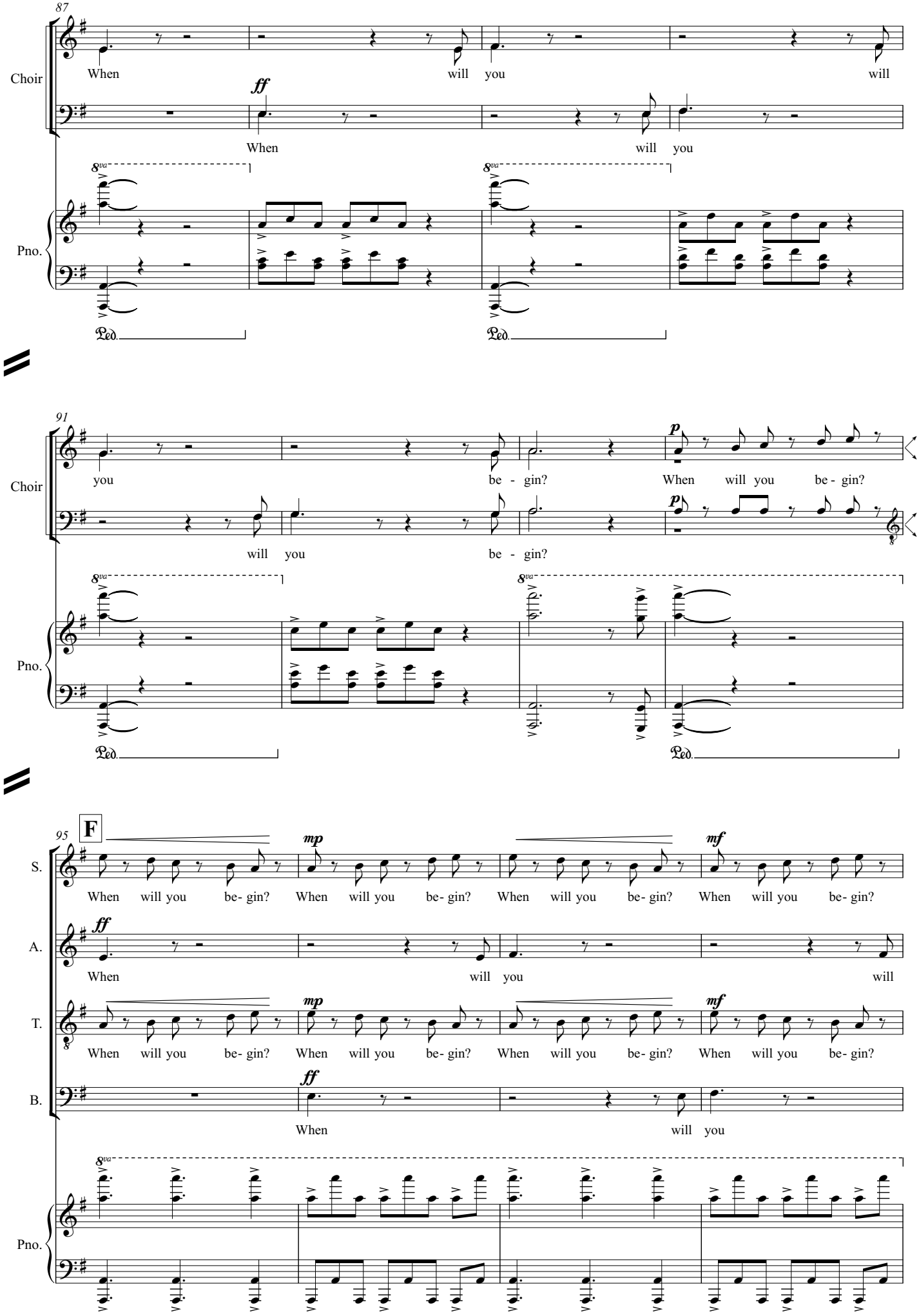

15
5
Choir
you be - gin? When will you be - gin?
will you be - gin?
p
8va
Ped.
19
S.
A.
T.
B.
Pno.
When will you be- gin? When will you be- gin? When will you be- gin? When will you be- gin?
When will you will
mp
mf
ff
23
f
When will you be- gin? When will you be- gin? be - gin?
you be - gin?
will you be - gin?

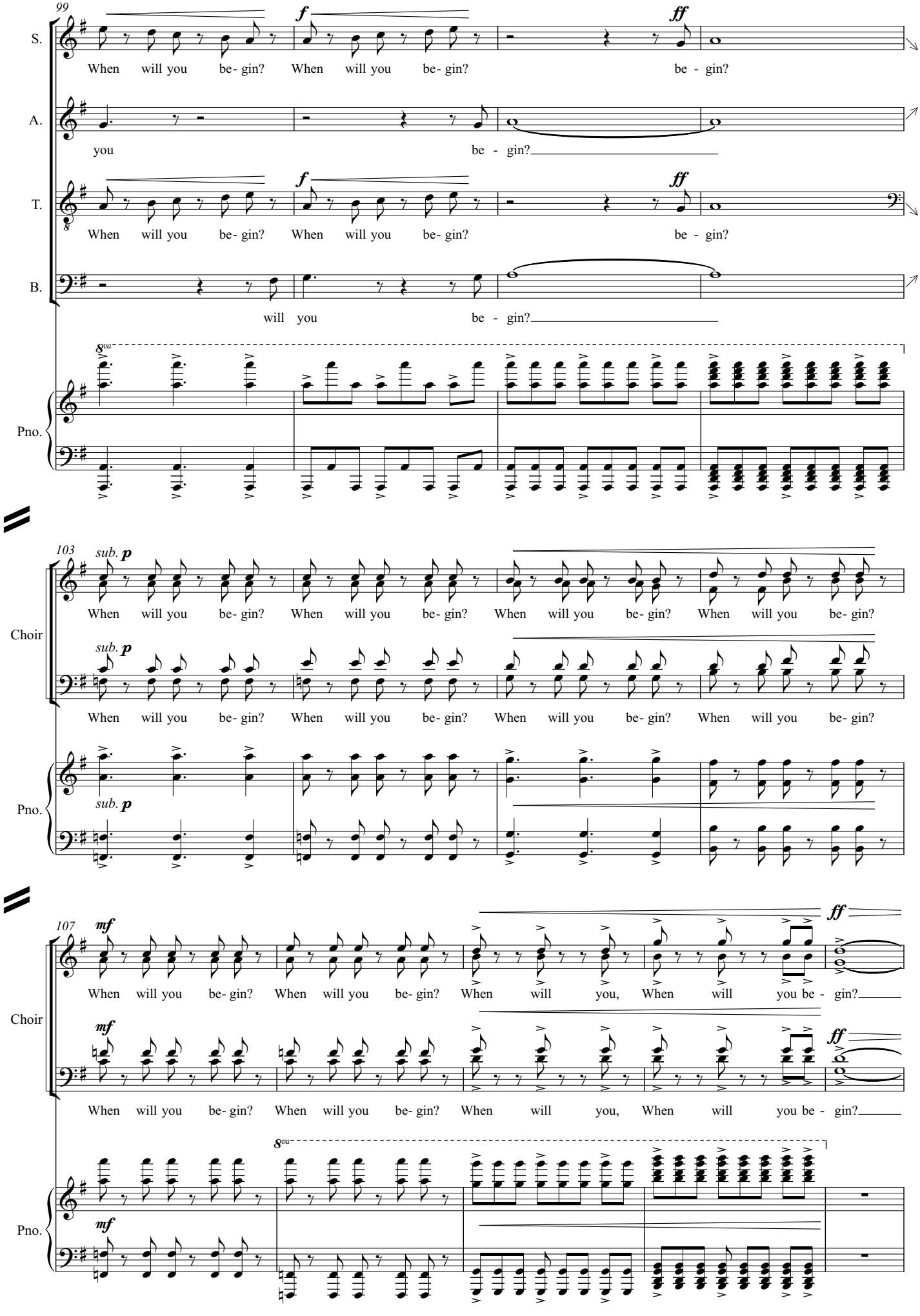

27
sub. p
When will you be- gin? When will you be- gin? When will you be- gin? When will you be- gin?
Choir
sub. p
When will you be- gin? When will you be- gin? When will you be- gin? When will you be- gin?
Pno.
sub. p
31
mf
ff
When will you be- gin? When will you be- gin? When will you, When will you be - gin?
Choir
mf
ff
When will you be- gin? When will you be- gin? When will you, When will you be - gin?
8va
Pno.
mf
36
B
Choir
Pno.
ff
Strings
ff

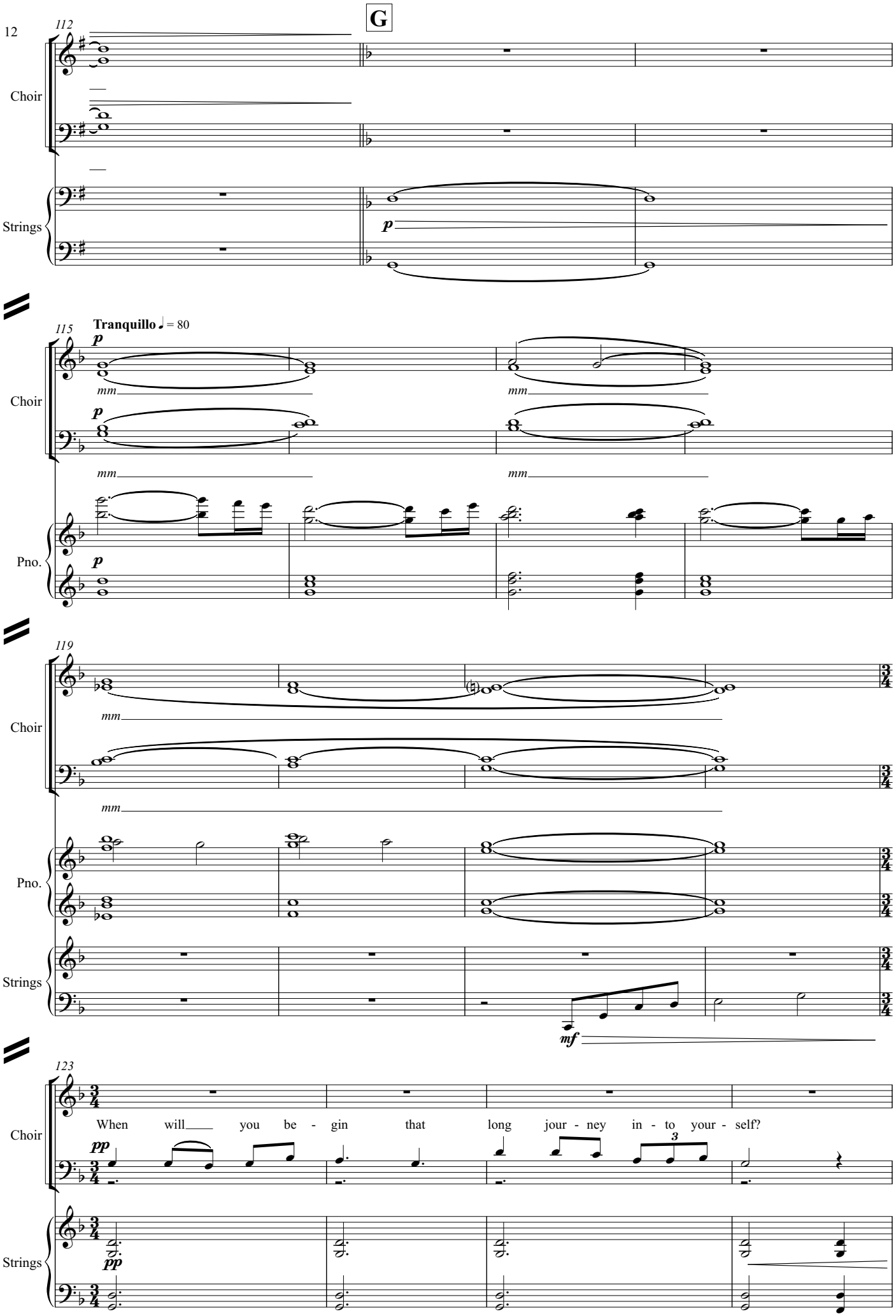

39
Solo
ff
Ah
Choir
Strings
ff
Solo
Ah
43
ff
Choir
Strings
C
Tranquillo ♩ = 80
47
Pno.
p
Ped.
51
Pno.
Strings
mp
mf
55
Choir
When will you be - gin that long jour - ney in - to your - self?
pp
3
Strings
pp

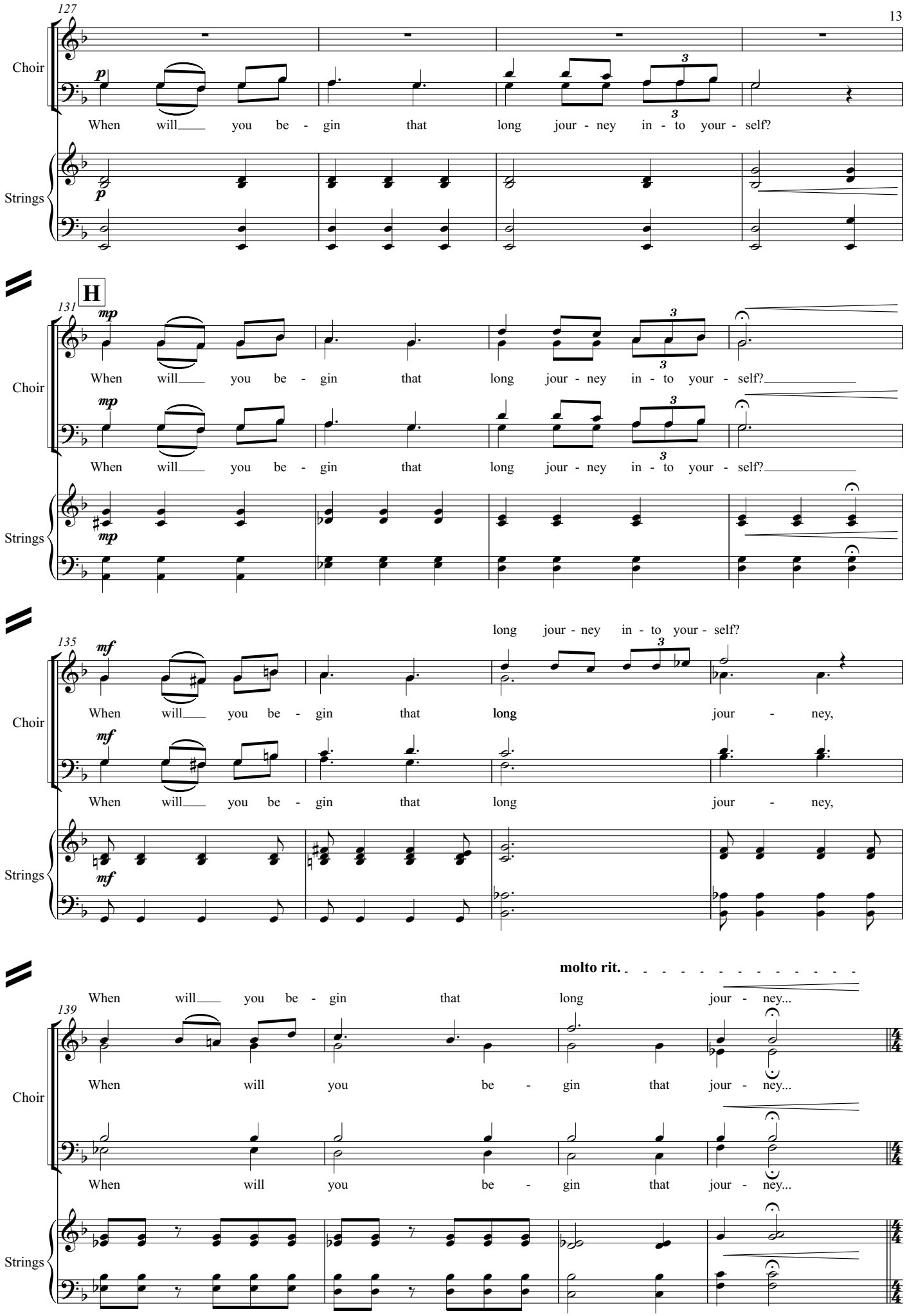

59
Choir
p
When will you be - gin that long jour - ney in - to your - self?
Strings
p
D
63
Tutti
mp
When will you be - gin that long jour - ney in - to your - self?
Choir
mp
When will you be - gin that long jour - ney in - to your - self?
Strings
mp
67
f
When will you be - gin that long jour - ney in - to your -
Choir
f
When will you be - gin that long jour - ney in - to your - self? that
mp
Strings
f
71
mp
pp
self? that long jour - ney in - to your - self? that long jour - ney in - to that
Choir
pp
long jour - ney in - to your - self? that long jour - ney in - to your - self? that
Pno.
mp

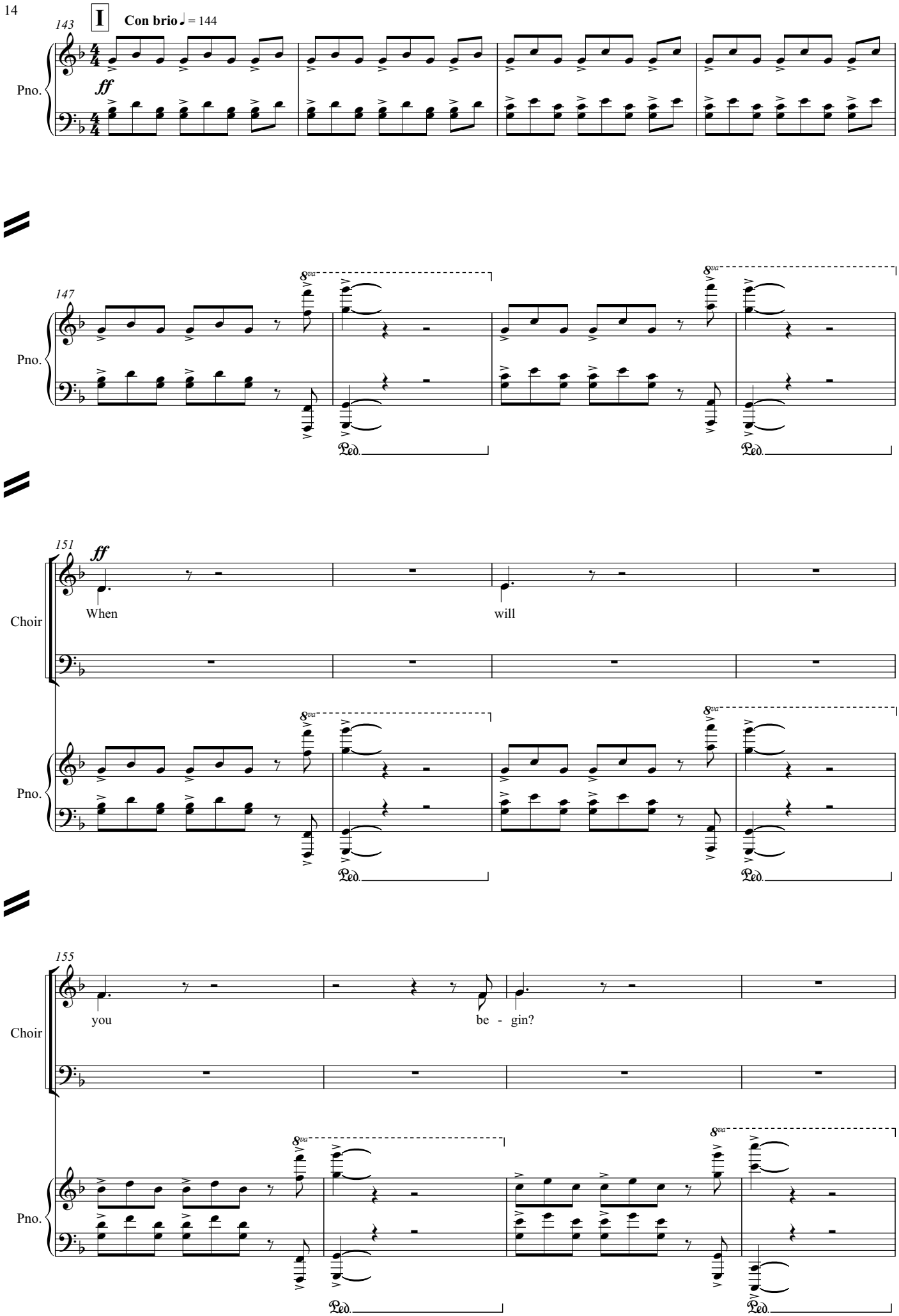

75
9
Choir
long jour - ney in - to your - self?
long jour - ney in - to your - self?
Pno.
Strings
E
Con brio ♩= 144
79
ff
When
will
Choir
Pno.
8va
Ped.
83
you
be - gin?
Choir
Pno.
8va
Ped.

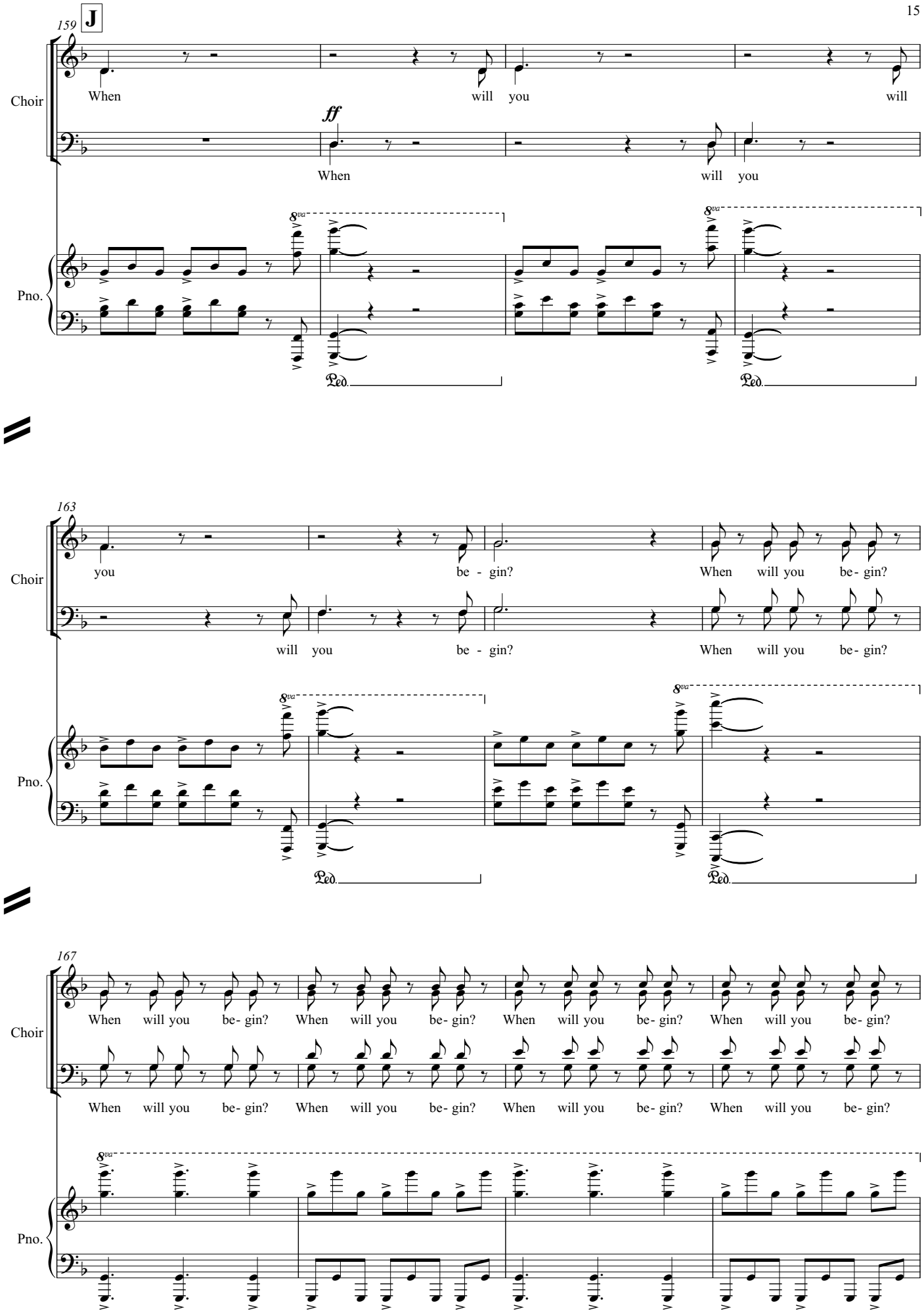

87
Choir
When will you will
ff
When will you
8va
Pno.
Ped.
91
Choir
you be - gin? When will you be - gin?
p
will you be - gin?
8va
Pno.
Ped.
95
F
S.
When will you be- gin? When will you be- gin? When will you be- gin? When will you be- gin?
mp
mf
A.
ff
When will you will
T.
When will you be- gin? When will you be- gin? When will you be- gin? When will you be- gin?
B.
When will you
8va
Pno.

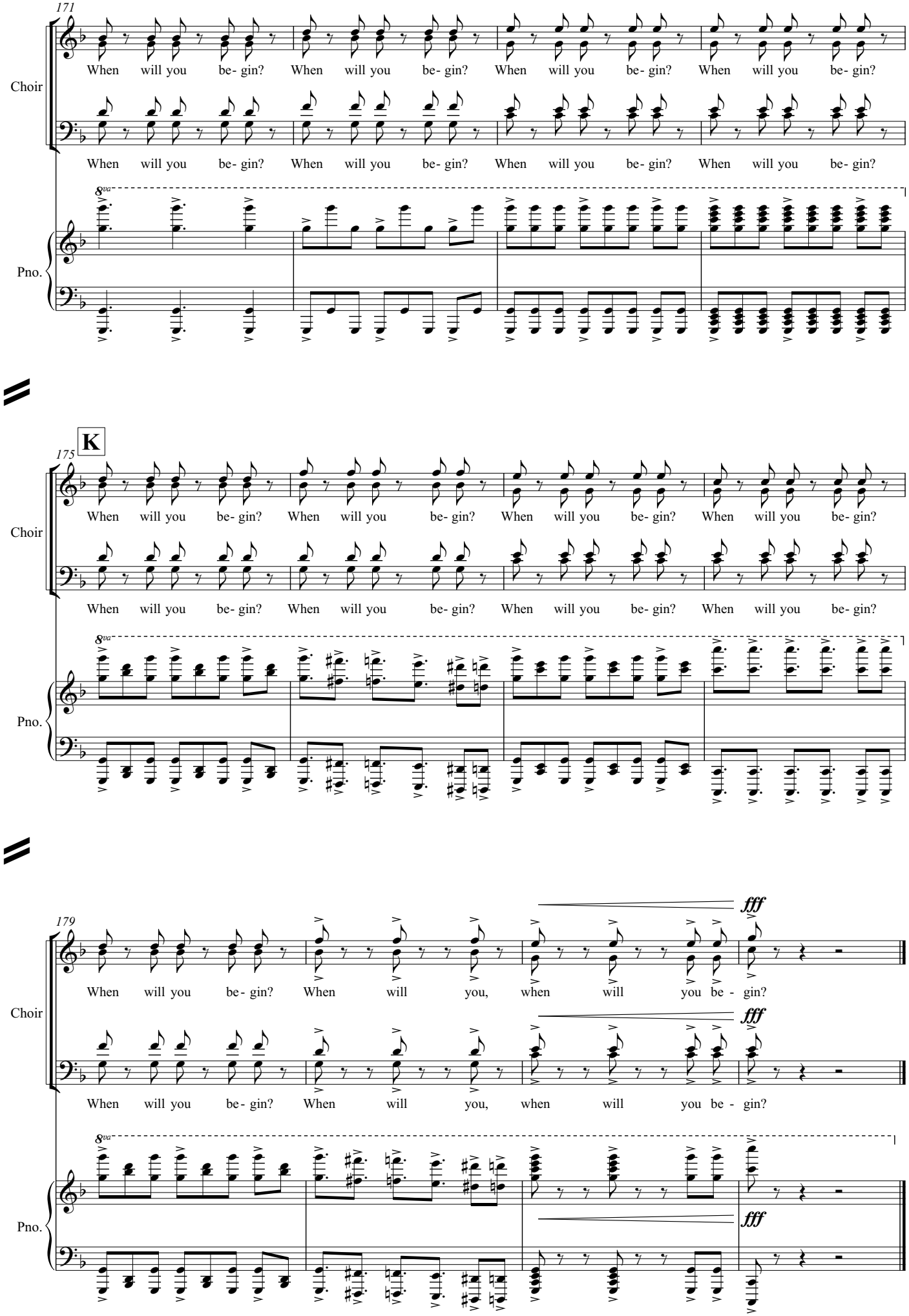

99
S.
When will you be- gin? When will you be- gin? be - gin?
A.
you be - gin?
T.
When will you be- gin? When will you be- gin? be - gin?
B.
will you be - gin?
f
ff
8va
Pno.
103
sub. p
Choir
When will you be- gin? When will you be- gin? When will you be- gin? When will you be- gin?
107
mf
When will you be- gin? When will you be- gin? When will you, When will you be - gin?


G
112
Choir
Strings
p
115
Tranquillo ♩ = 80
Choir
Pno.
mm
119
Choir
Pno.
Strings
mf
123
Choir
When will you be - gin that long jour - ney in - to your - self?
pp
Strings

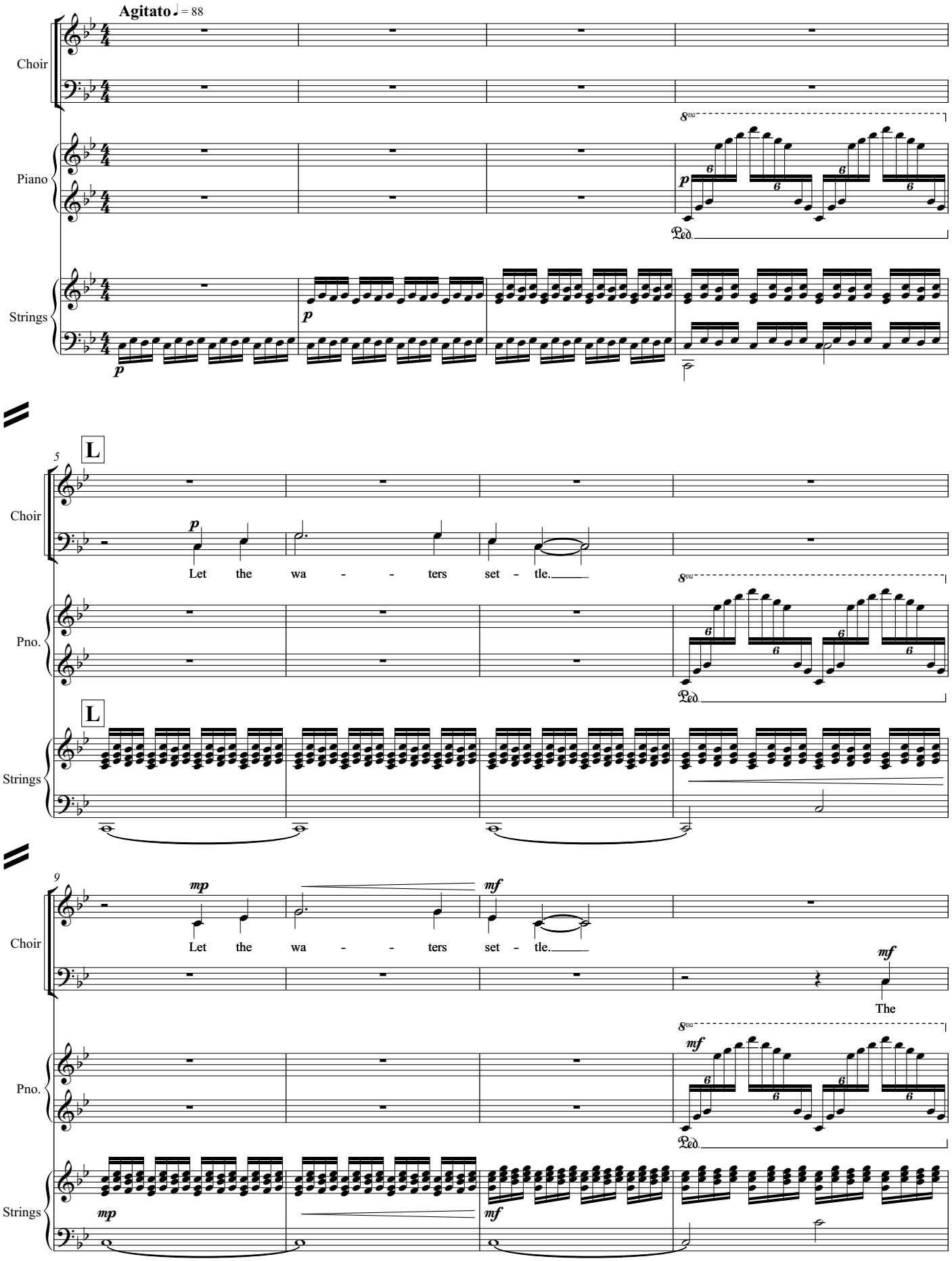

127
Choir
Strings
When will you be - gin that long jour - ney in - to your - self?
H
131
When will you be - gin that long jour - ney in - to your - self?
When will you be - gin that long jour - ney in - to your - self?
long jour - ney in - to your - self?
135
When will you be - gin that long jour - ney,
When will you be - gin that long jour - ney,
molto rit.
139
When will you be - gin that long jour - ney...
When will you be - gin that jour - ney...
When will you be - gin that jour - ney...

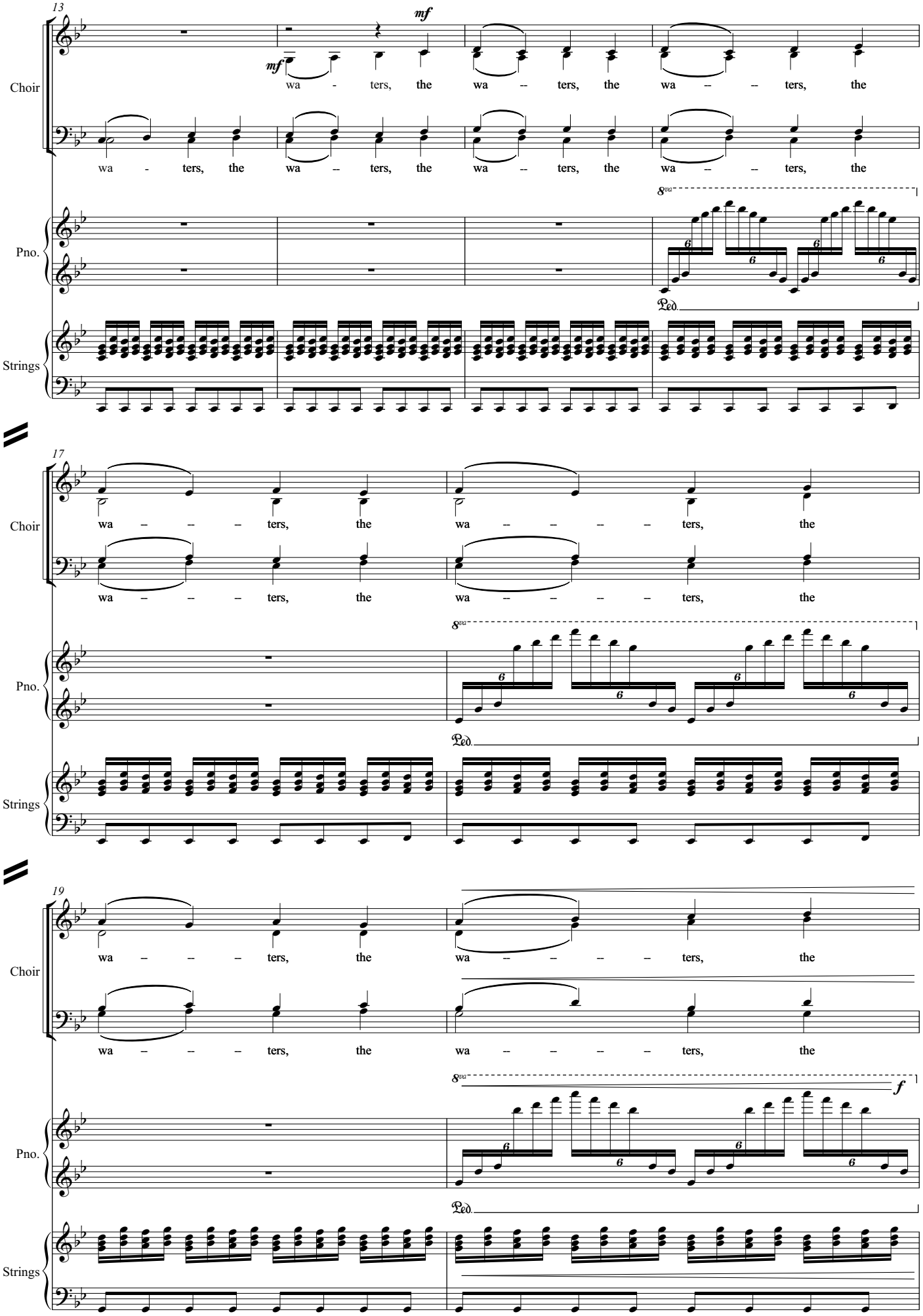

I
Con brio ♩= 144
143
ff
Pno.
147
8va
Ped.
151
ff
Choir
When
will
155
you
be - gin?

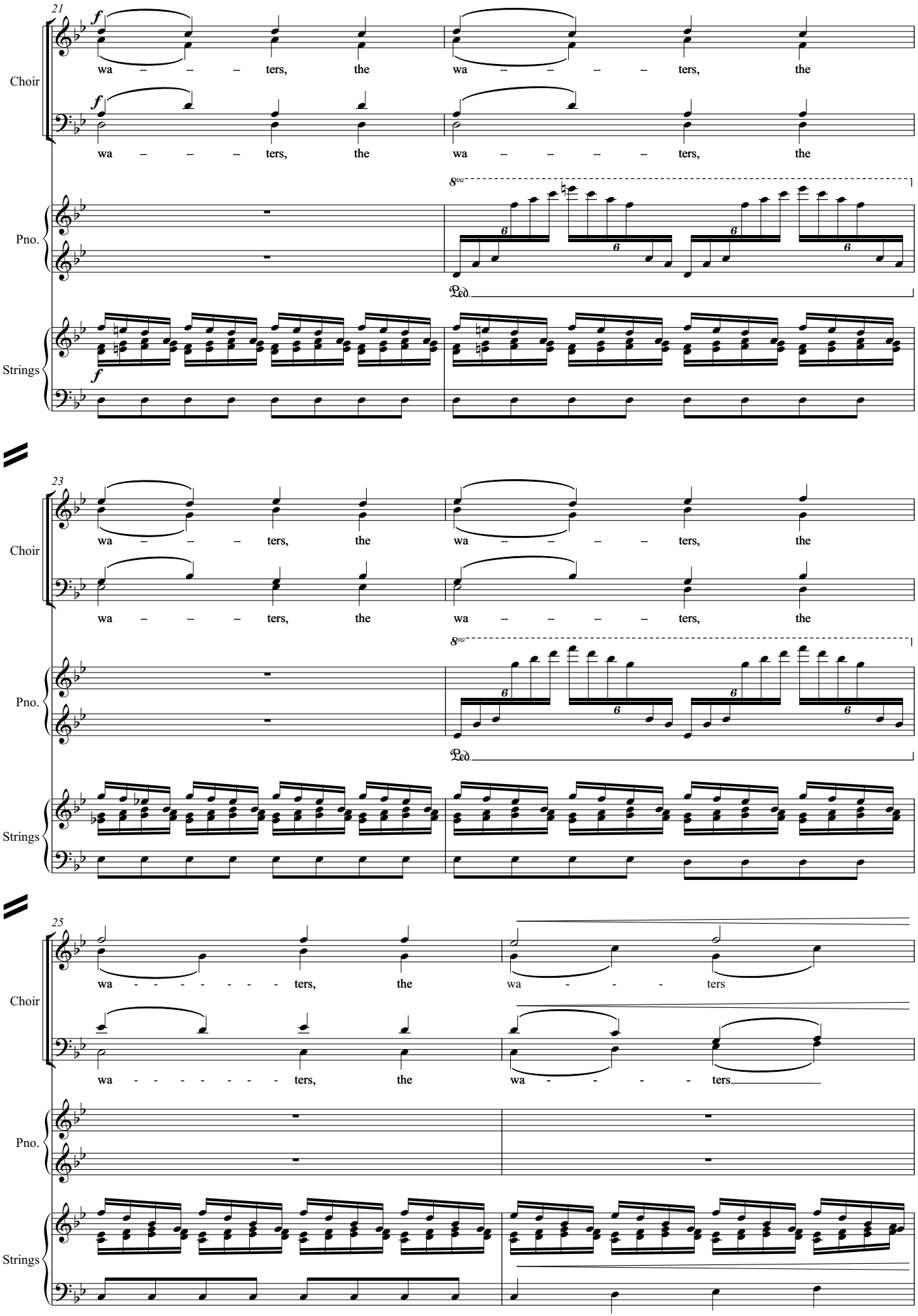

159
J
Choir
When
will you
will
ff
When
will you
Pno.
8va
Ped.
163
Choir
you
be - gin?
When will you be- gin?
will you be - gin?
When will you be- gin?
Pno.
8va
Ped.
167
Choir
When will you be- gin?
When will you be- gin?
When will you be- gin?
When will you be- gin?
When will you be- gin?
When will you be- gin?
When will you be- gin?
When will you be- gin?
Pno.
8va

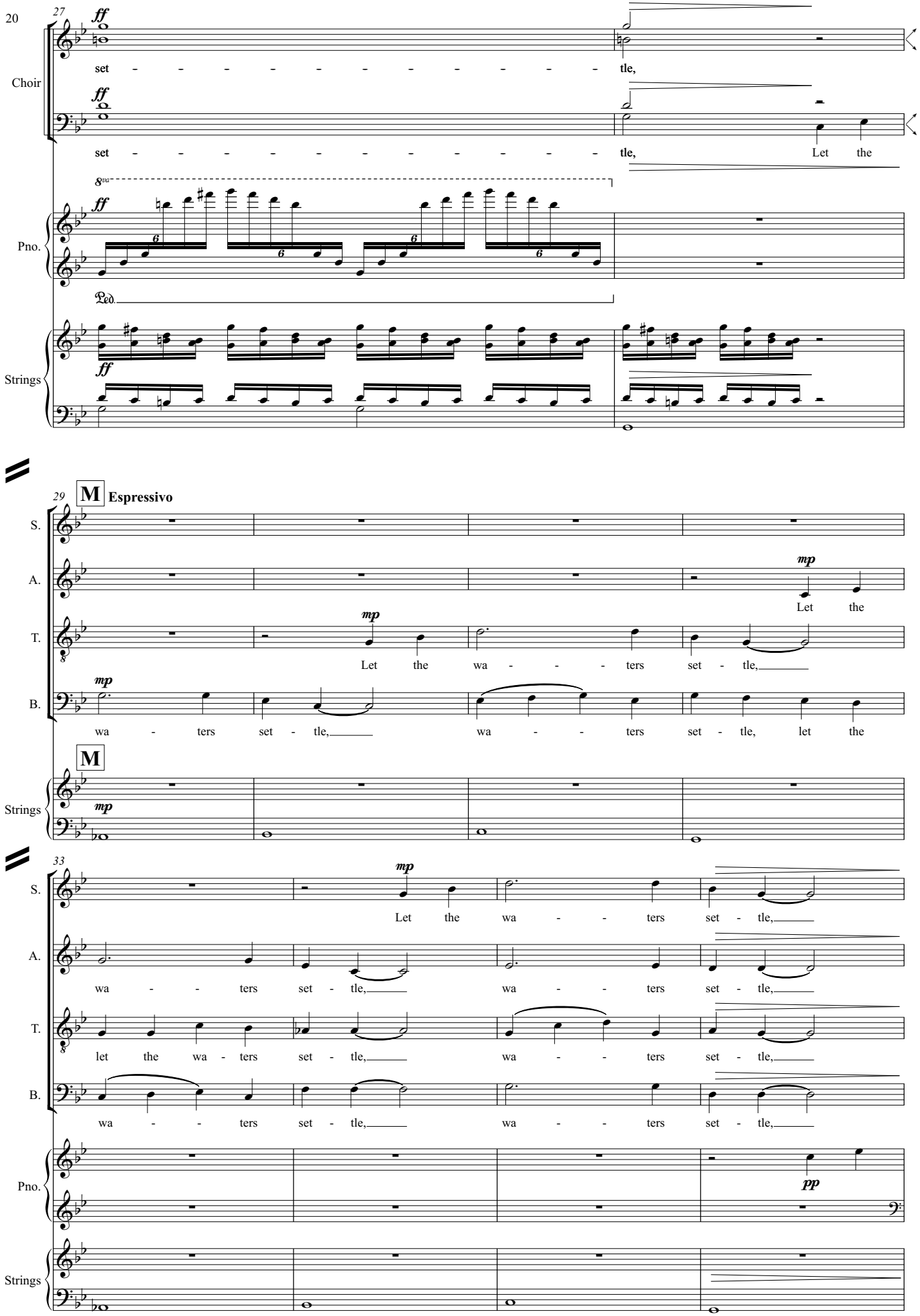

171
Choir
When will you be- gin? When will you be- gin? When will you be- gin? When will you be- gin?
When will you be- gin? When will you be- gin? When will you be- gin? When will you be- gin?
8va
Pno.
175
K
Choir
When will you be- gin? When will you be- gin? When will you be- gin? When will you be- gin?
When will you be- gin? When will you be- gin? When will you be- gin? When will you be- gin?
8va
Pno.
179
fff
Choir
When will you be- gin? When will you, when will you be - gin?
When will you be- gin? When will you, when will you be - gin?
8va
fff
Pno.

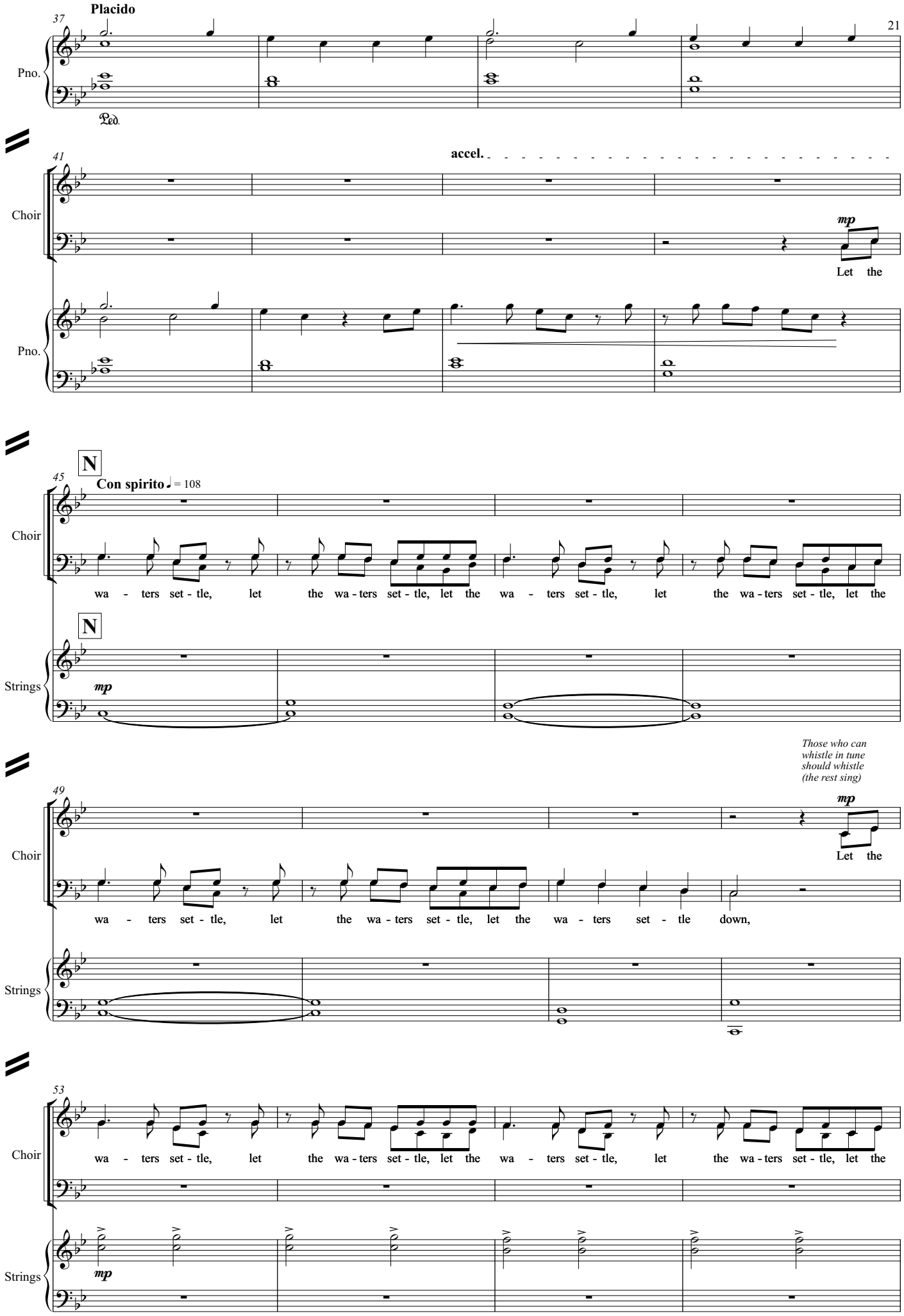
II. Stars

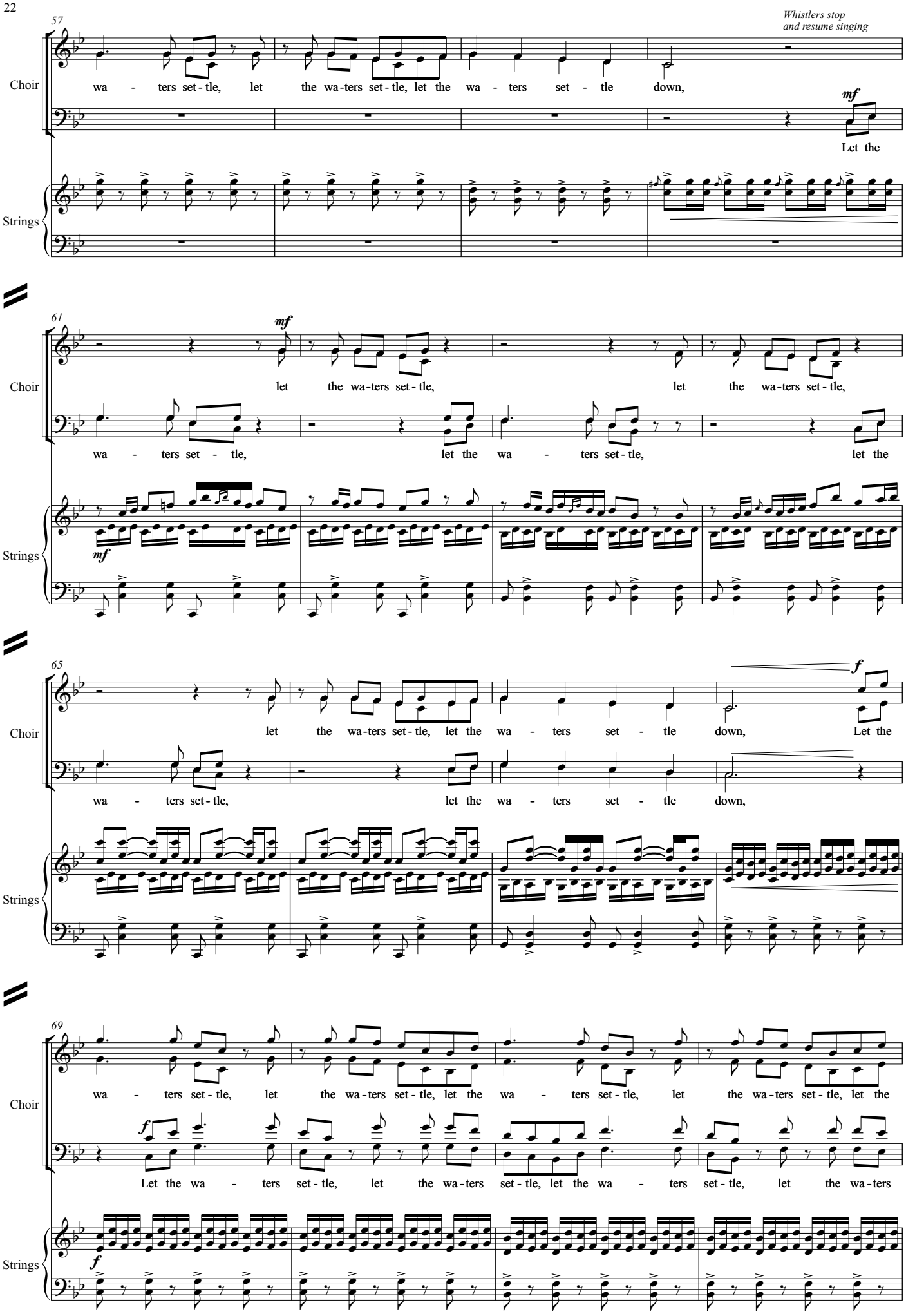

Agitato ♩= 88
Choir
Piano
Strings
8va
Ped.
5
L
Let the wa - - ters set - tle.
Pno.
9
mp
mf
The

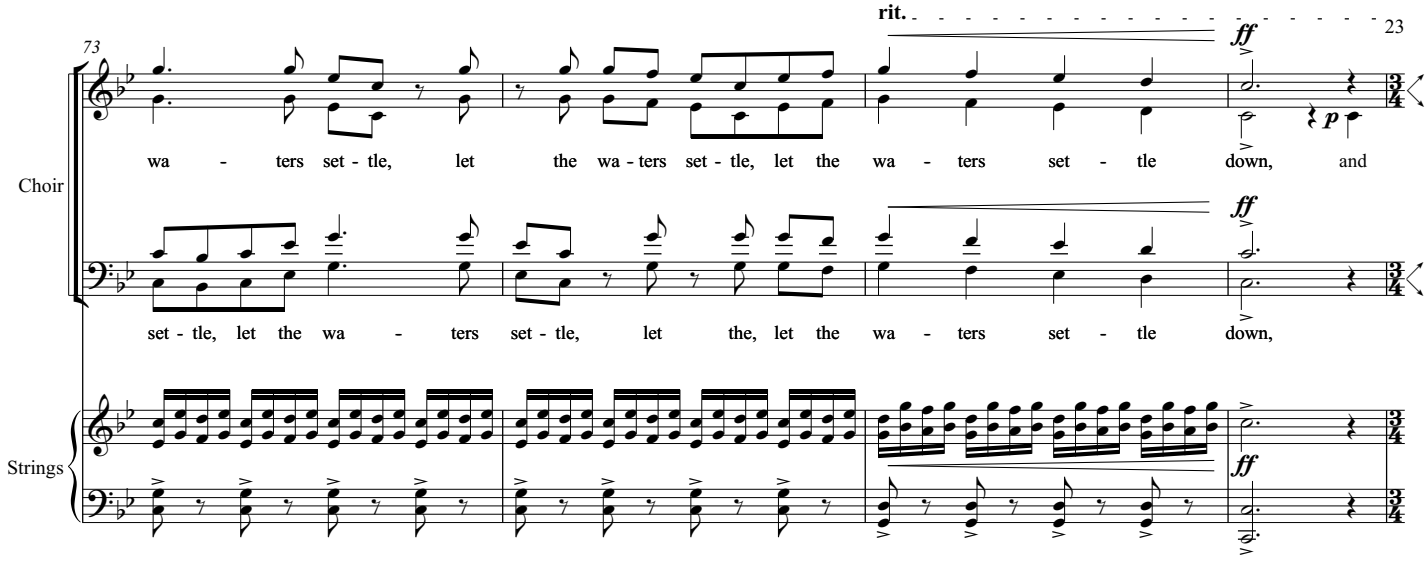

13
mf
Choir
wa - ters, the wa -- ters, the wa -- -- ters, the
Pno.
Strings
17
wa -- -- -- ters, the wa -- -- -- -- ters, the
19
f

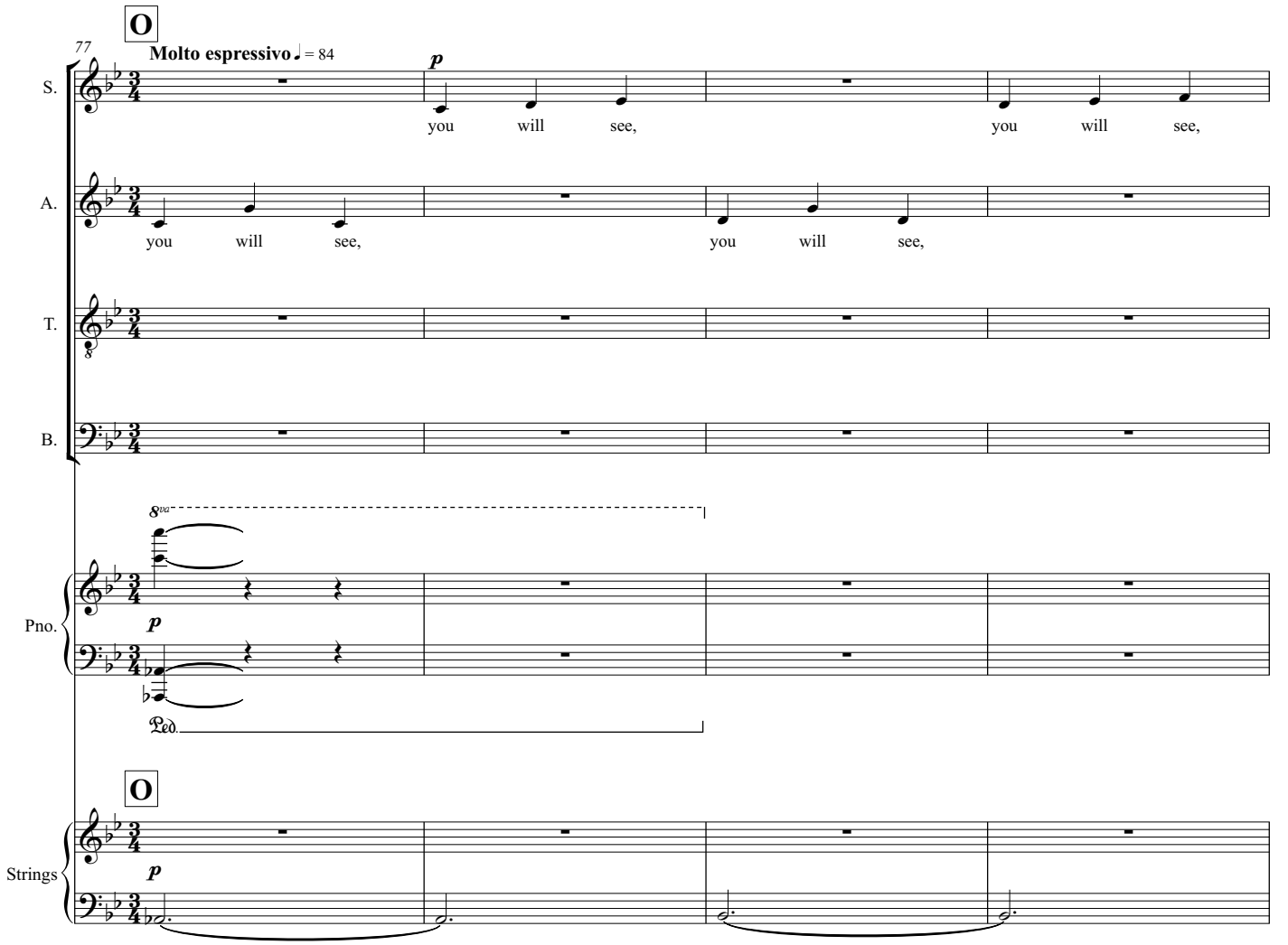

21
Choir
wa – – – ters, the wa – – – – ters, the
wa – – – ters, the wa – – – – ters, the
Pno.
8va
Ped.
Strings
23
Choir
wa – – – ters, the wa – – – – ters, the
wa – – – ters, the wa – – – – ters, the
Pno.
8va
Ped.
Strings
25
Choir
wa - - - - - - - ters, the wa - - - ters
wa - - - - - - - ters, the wa - - - - ters
Pno.
Strings

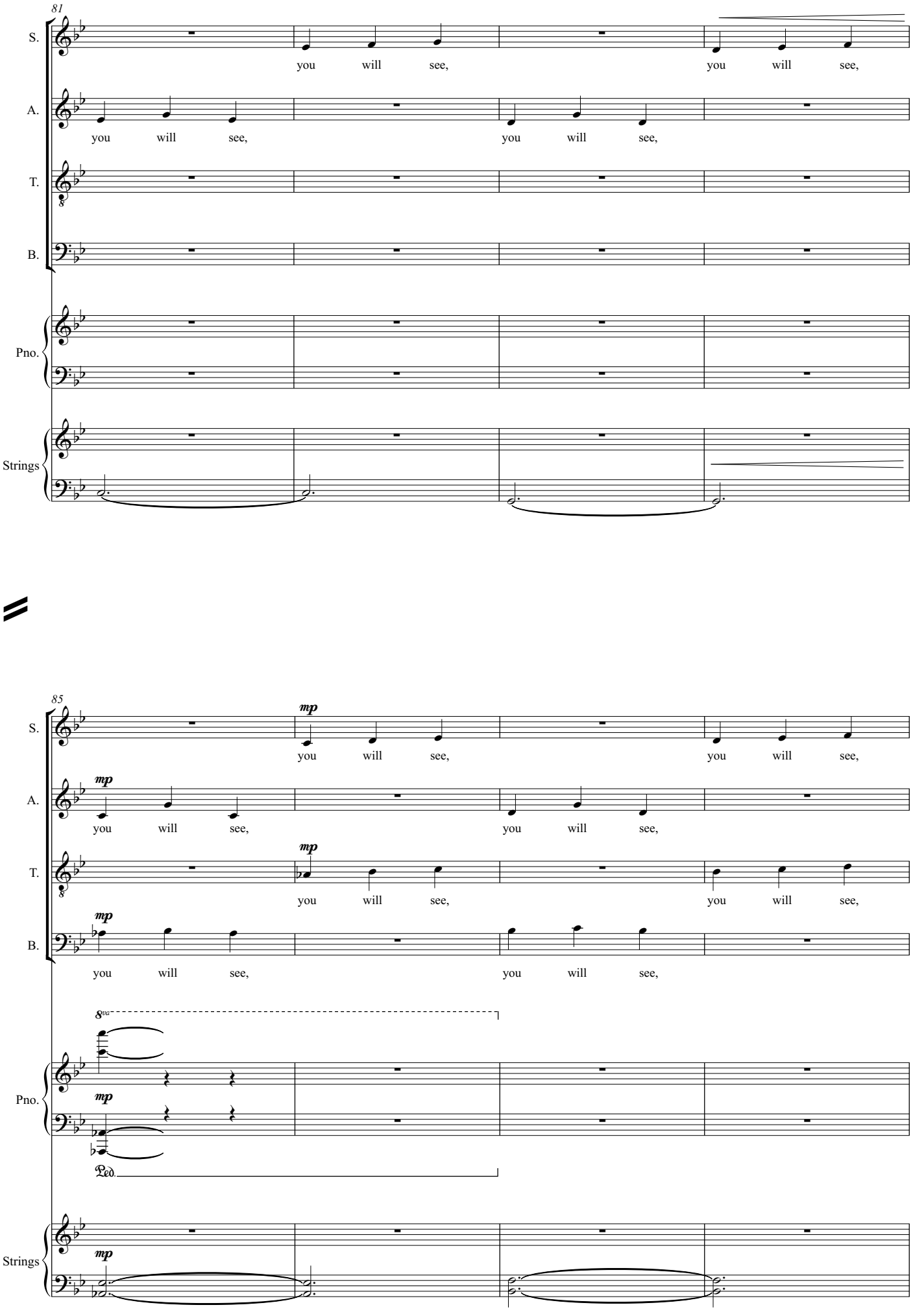

27
Choir
ff
set - - - - - - - - - - - tle,
set - - - - - - - - - - - tle, Let the
8va
Pno.
Ped.
Strings
29
M
Espressivo
S.
A.
T.
B.
mp
Let the
Let the wa - - - ters set - tle,
wa - ters set - tle, wa - - ters set - tle, let the
M
Strings
33
S.
A.
T.
B.
Let the wa - - - ters set - tle,
wa - - ters set - tle, wa - - ters set - tle,
let the wa - ters set - tle, wa - - ters set - tle,
wa - - ters set - tle, wa - - ters set - tle,
Pno.
pp
Strings

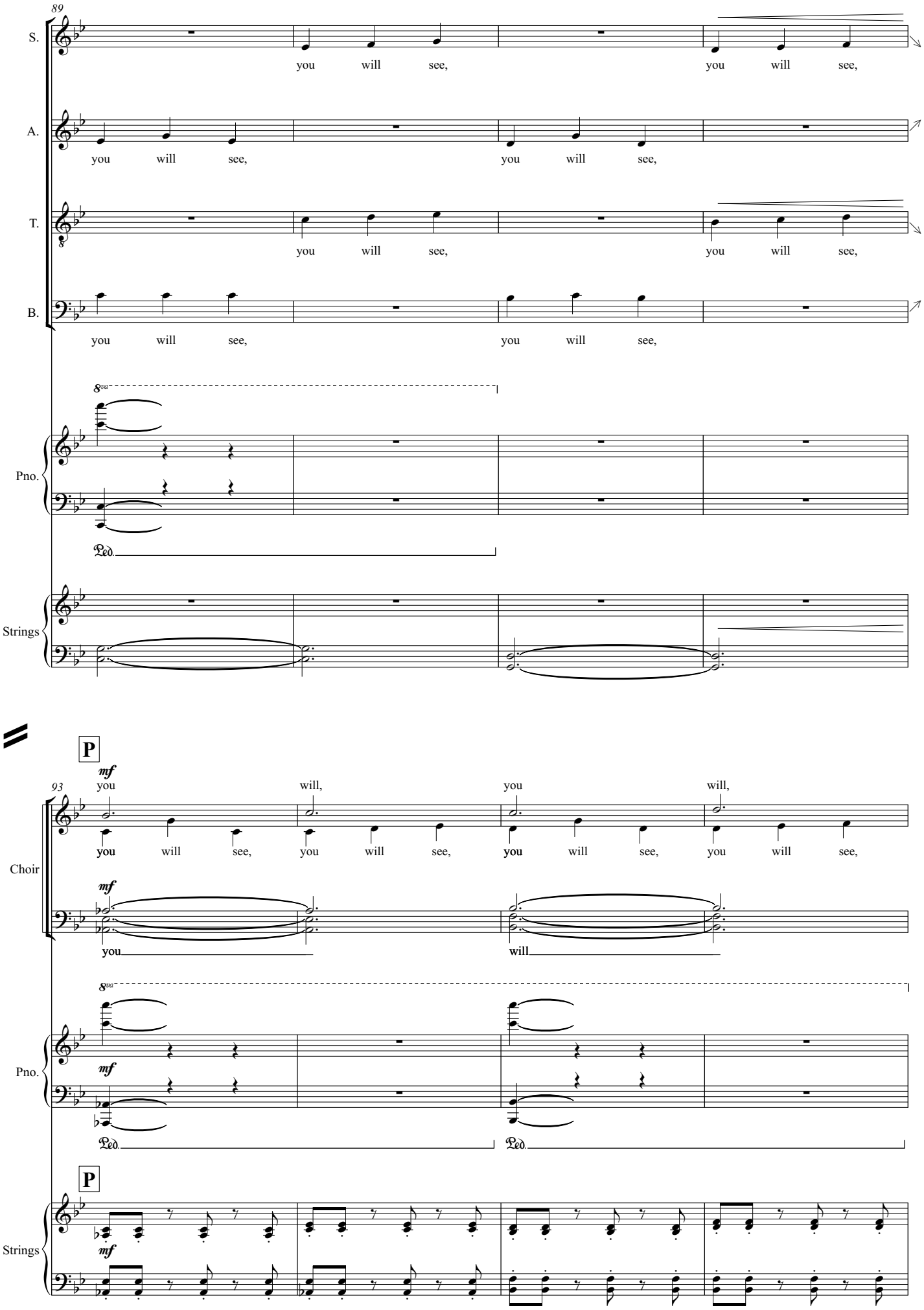

Placido
37
Pno.
Ped.
41
accel.
Choir
mp
Let the
Pno.
N
45
Con spirito ♩ = 108
Choir
wa - ters set - tle, let the wa - ters set - tle, let the wa - ters set - tle, let the wa - ters set - tle, let the
N
Strings
mp
Those who can whistle in tune should whistle (the rest sing)
49
Choir
mp
Let the
wa - ters set - tle, let the wa - ters set - tle, let the wa - ters set - tle down,
Strings
53
Choir
wa - ters set - tle, let the wa - ters set - tle, let the wa - ters set - tle, let the wa - ters set - tle, let the
Strings
mp

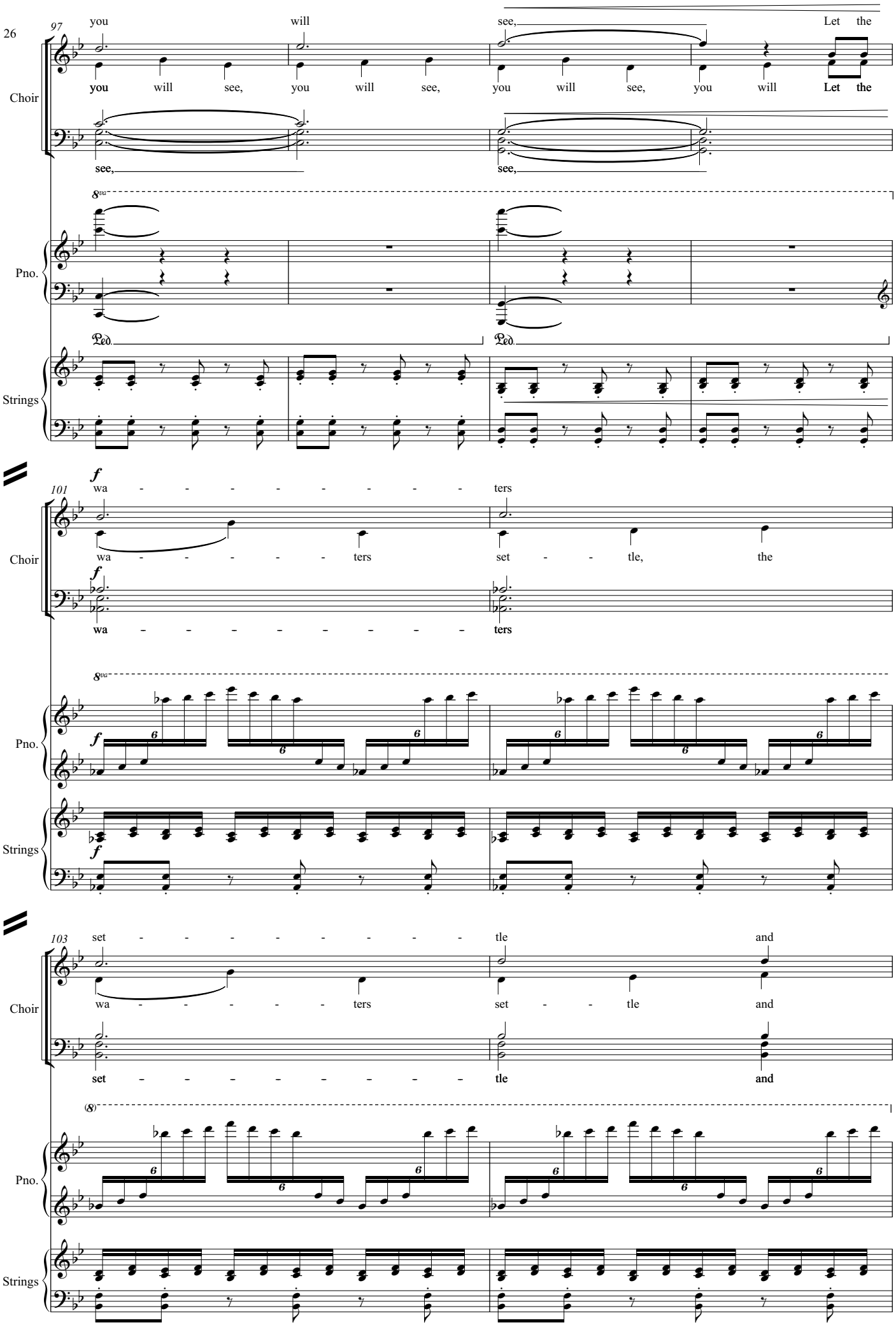

57
Whistlers stop
and resume singing
Choir
wa - ters set - tle, let the wa-ters set - tle, let the wa - ters set - tle down,
mf
Let the
Strings
61
mf
Choir
let the wa-ters set - tle, let the wa-ters set - tle,
wa - ters set - tle, let the wa - ters set - tle, let the
Strings
mf
65
f
Choir
let the wa-ters set - tle, let the wa - ters set - tle down, Let the
wa - ters set - tle, let the wa - ters set - tle down,
Strings
69
Choir
wa - ters set - tle, let the wa-ters set - tle, let the wa - ters set - tle, let the wa-ters set - tle, let the
f
Let the wa - ters set - tle, let the wa-ters set - tle, let the wa - ters set - tle, let the wa-ters
Strings
f

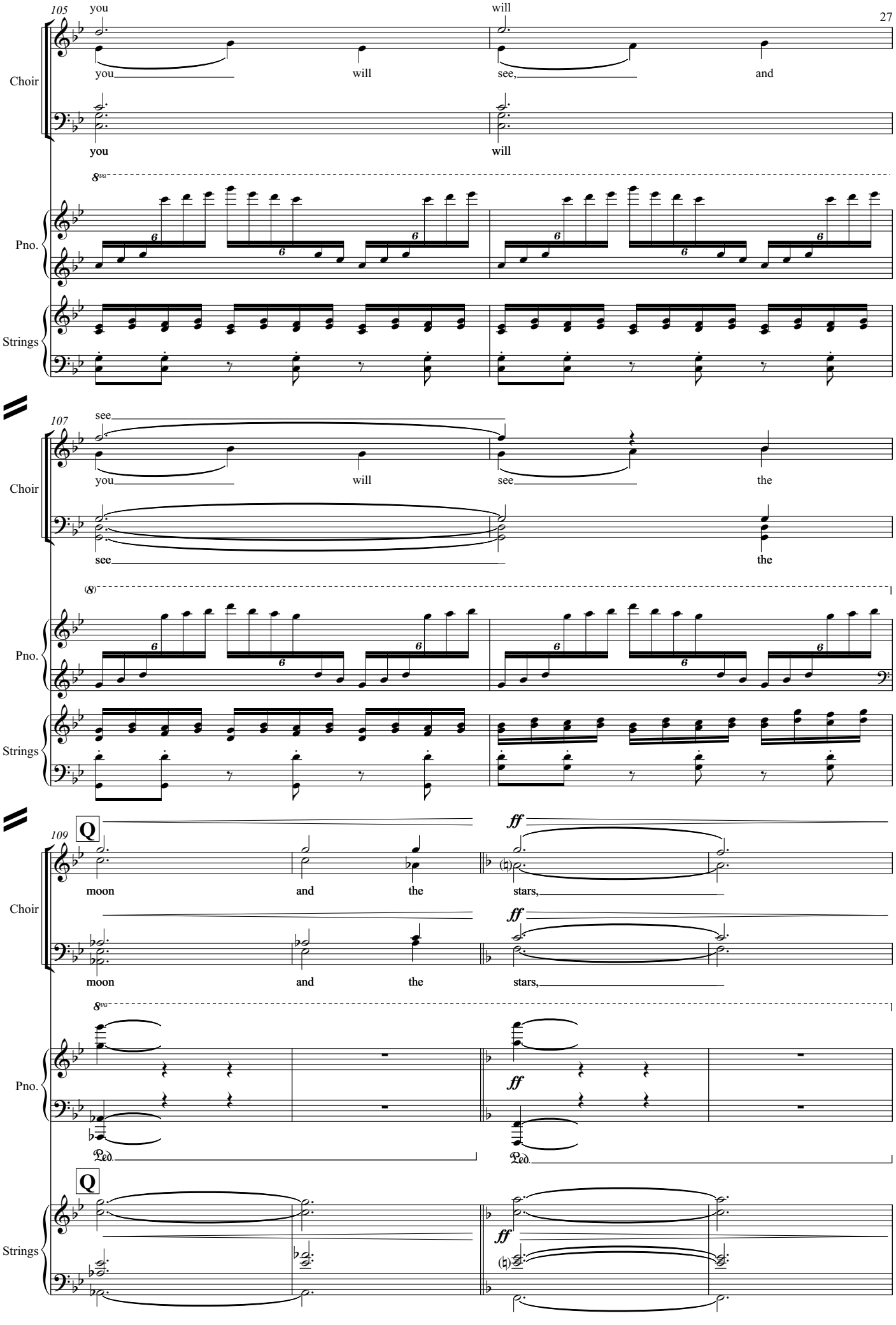

rit.
73
Choir
wa - ters set - tle, let the wa - ters set - tle, let the wa - ters set - tle down, and
set - tle, let the wa - ters set - tle, let the, let the wa - ters set - tle down,
Strings
ff
p

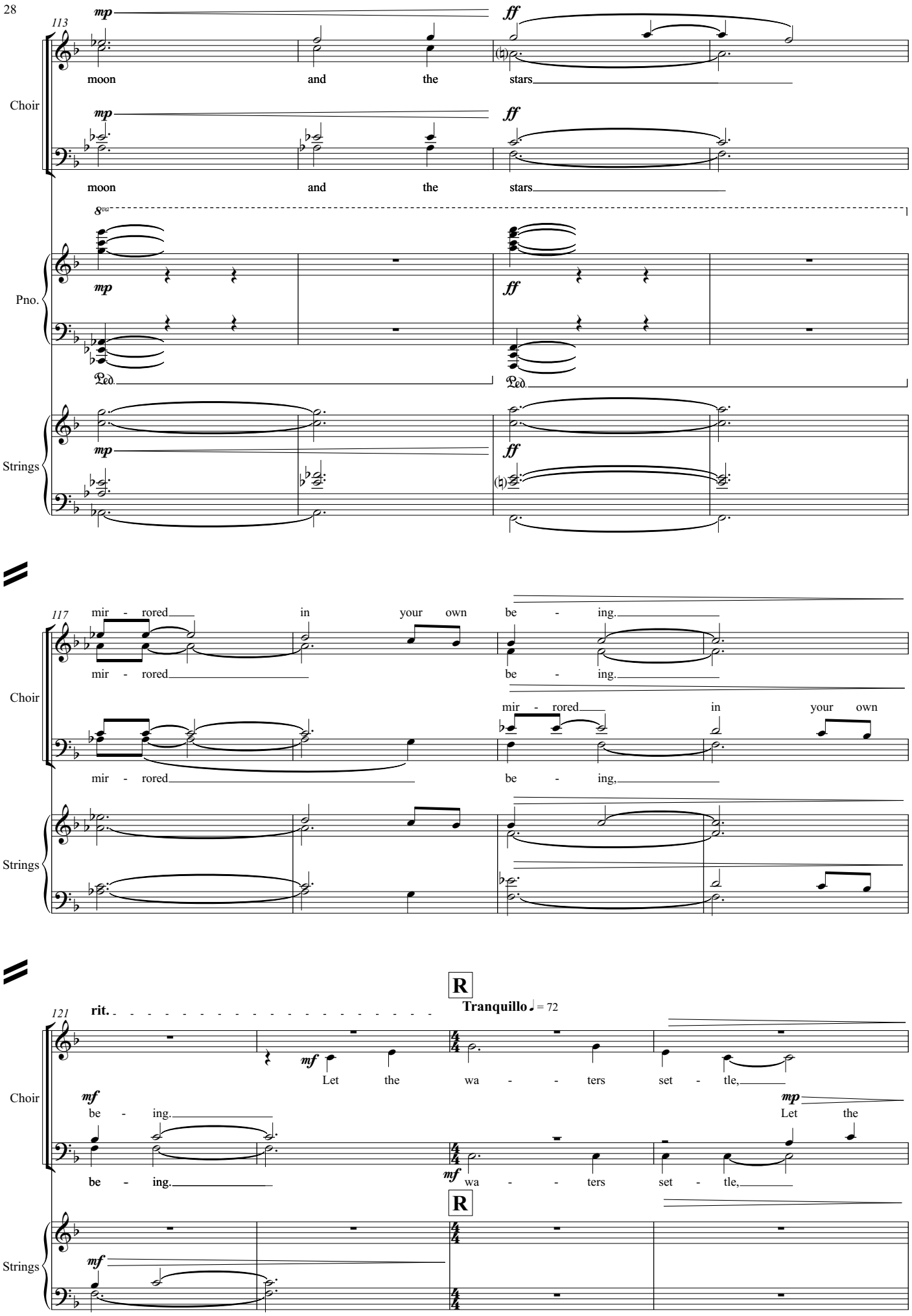

O
77
Molto espressivo ♩ = 84
S.
A.
T.
B.
p
you will see, you will see,
you will see, you will see,
8va
Pno.
Ped.
O
Strings
p

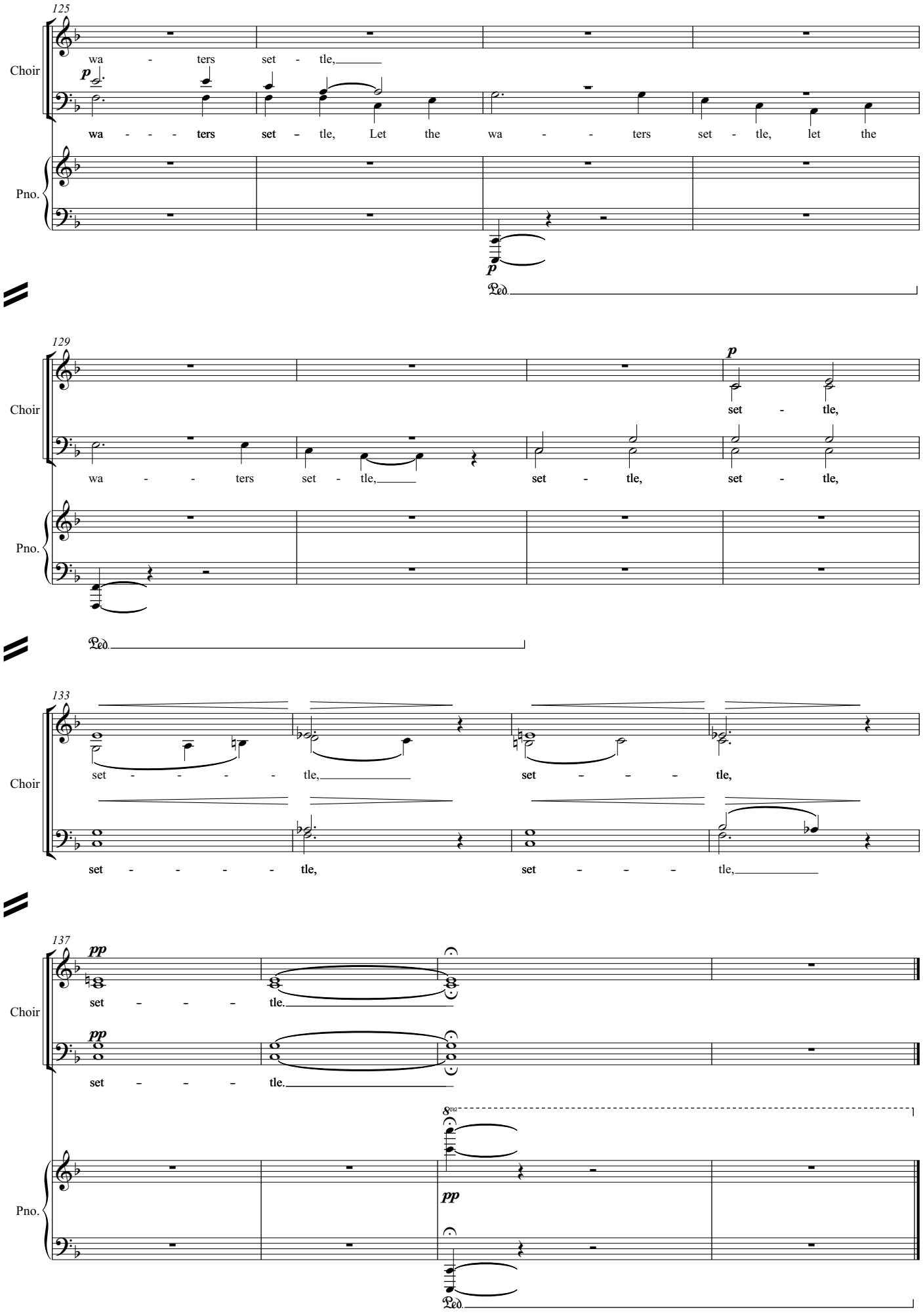

81
S.
you will see, you will see,
A.
you will see, you will see,
T.
B.
Pno.
Strings
85
mp
you will see, you will see,
mp
you will see, you will see,
mp
you will see, you will see,
mp
you will see, you will see,
8va
mp
Ped.
mp


89
S.
you will see, you will see,
A.
you will see, you will see,
T.
you will see, you will see,
B.
you will see, you will see,
8va
Pno.
Ped.
Strings
P
mf
93
you will, you will,
Choir
you will see, you will see, you will see, you will see,
mf
you
will
8va
Pno.
mf
Ped.
Ped.
P
Strings
mf

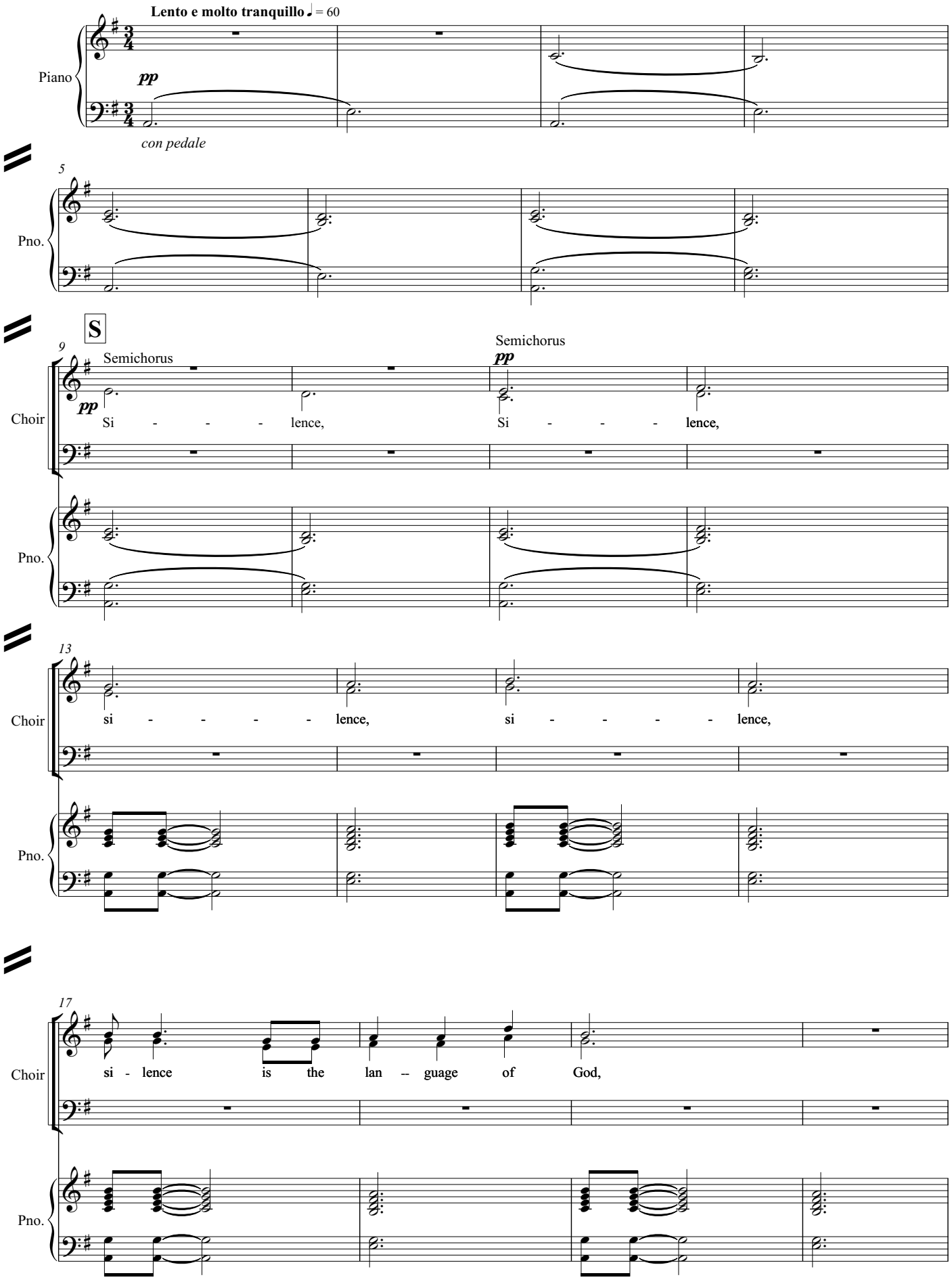

97
you
will
see,
Let the
Choir
you will see, you will see, you will see, you will Let the
see,
see,
8va
Pno.
Ped.
Ped.
Strings
101
f
wa - - - - - - - - - ters
Choir
wa - - - - - ters set - - tle, the
f
wa - - - - - - - - - ters
8va
Pno.
f
f
Strings
103
set - - - - - - - - - tle and
Choir
wa - - - - - ters set - - tle and
set - - - - - - - - - tle and
(8)
Pno.
Strings

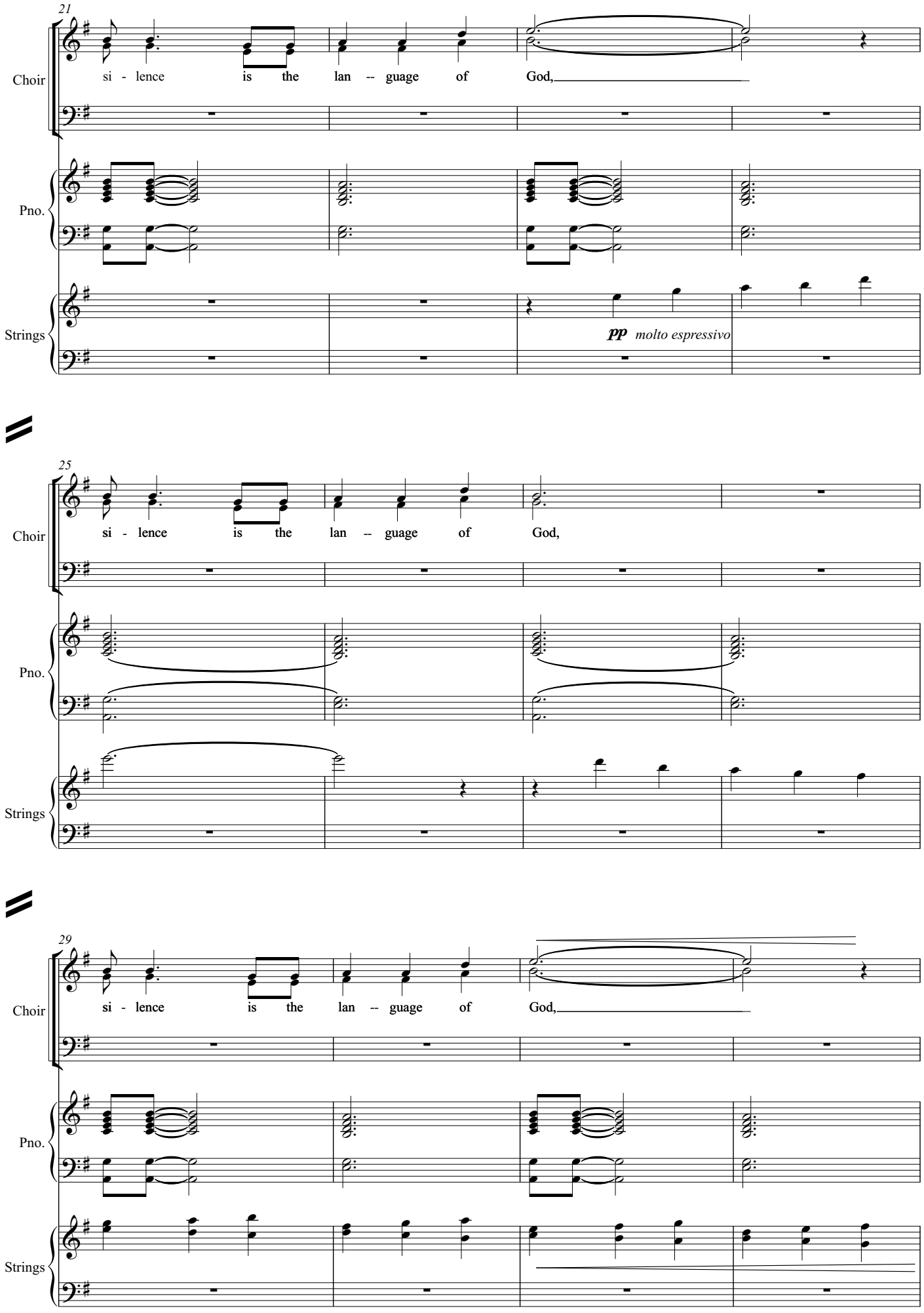

105
you
will
Choir
you
will
see,
and
you
will
8va
Pno.
Strings
107
see
Choir
you
will
see
the
see
the
(8)
Pno.
Strings
109
Q
ff
Choir
moon
and
the
stars,
moon
and
the
stars,
8va
Pno.
ff
Ped.
Ped.
Q
Strings
ff

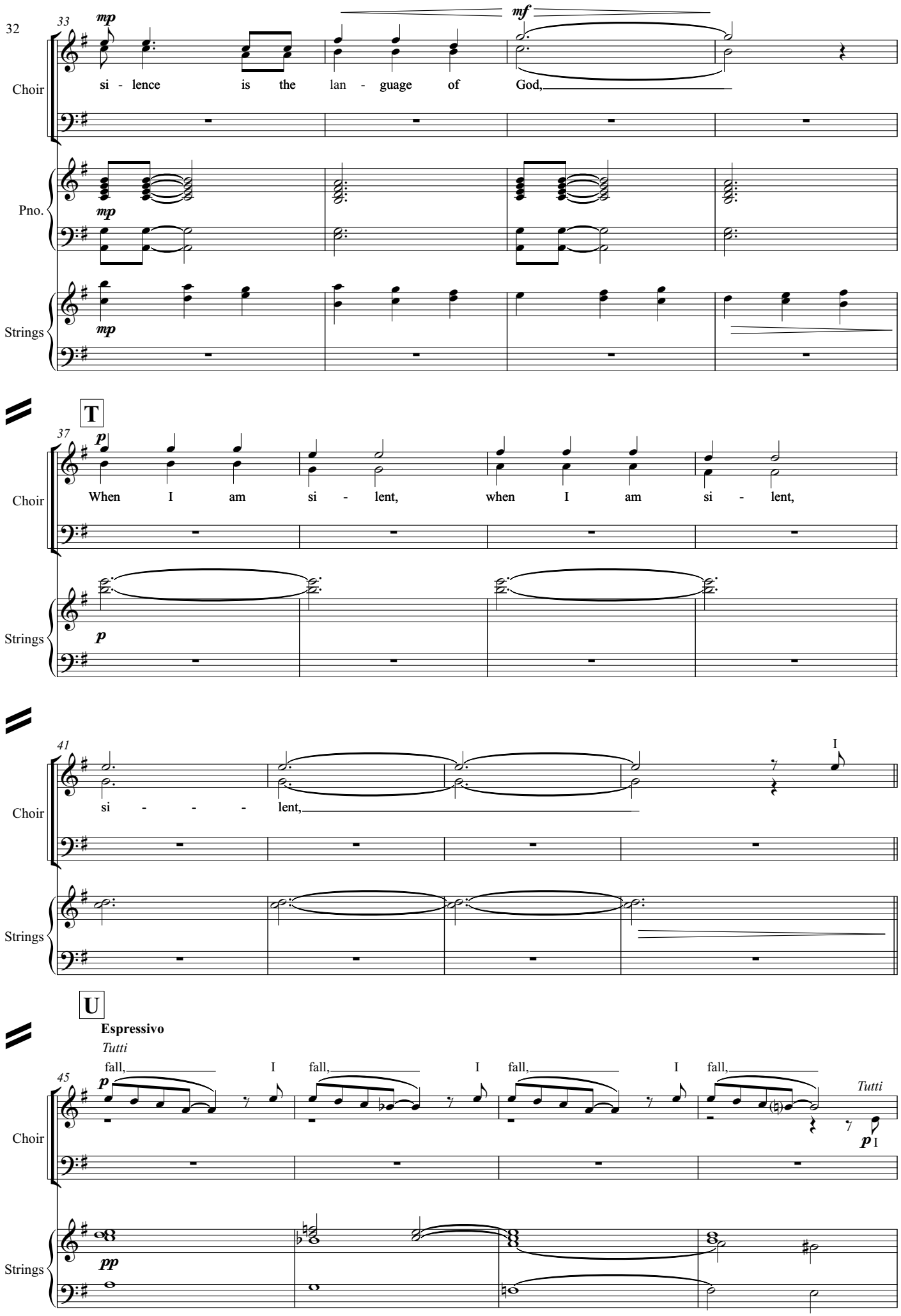

113
mp
ff
moon and the stars
Choir
Pno.
8va
Ped.
Strings
117
mir - rored in your own be - ing.
be - ing,
121
rit.
R
Tranquillo ♩= 72
mf
Let the wa - - ters set - tle,
be - ing.
mp
Let the

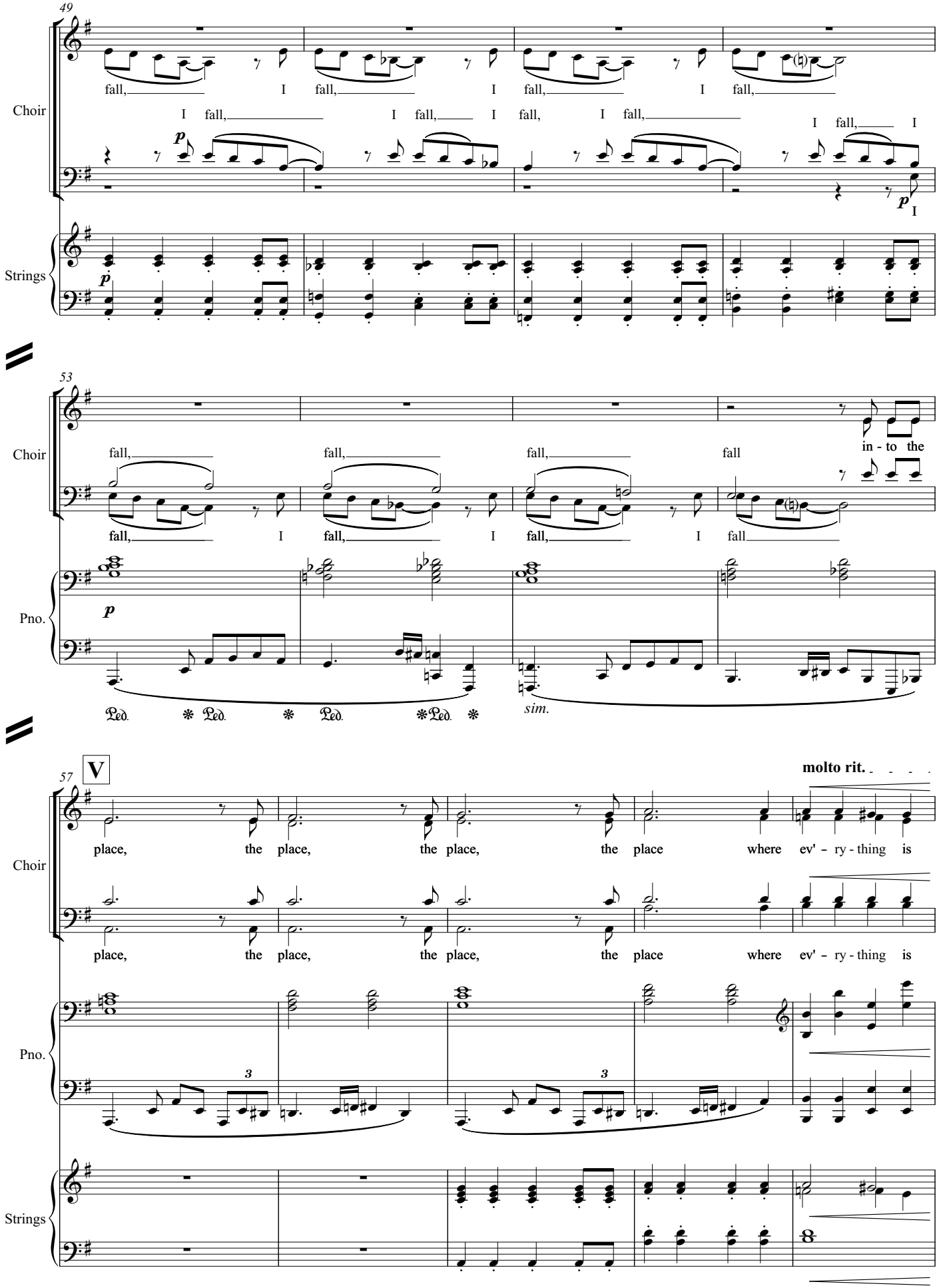

125
Choir
wa - ters set - tle,
p
wa - - - ters set - tle, Let the wa - - ters set - tle, let the
Pno.
p
Ped.
129
Choir
p
set - tle,
wa - - ters set - tle, set - tle, set - tle,
Pno.
Ped.
133
Choir
set - - - - - tle, set - - - tle,
set - - - - - tle, set - - - tle,
137
Choir
pp
set - - - tle.
pp
set - - - tle.
Pno.
8va
pp
Ped.

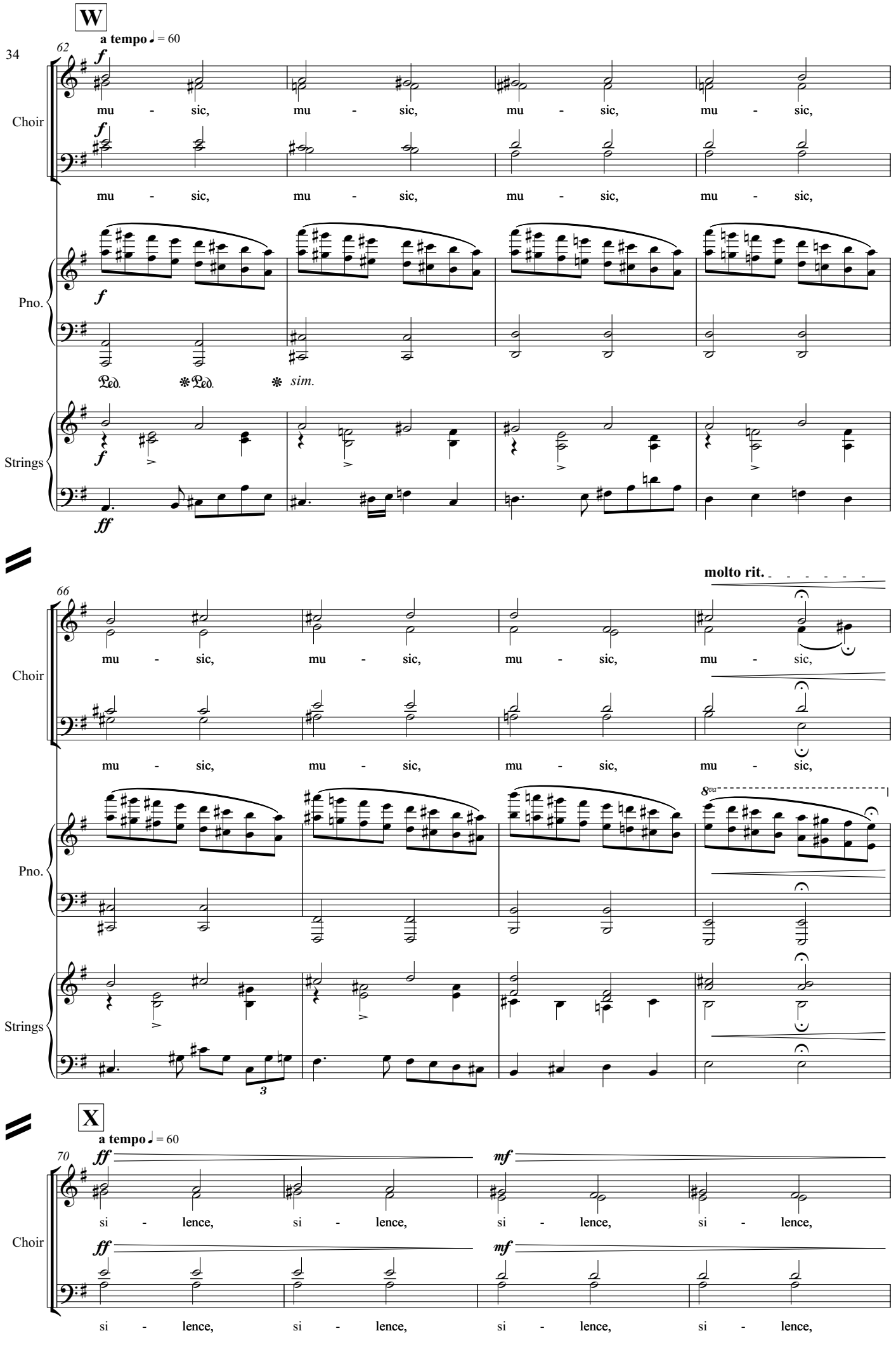
III. Silence

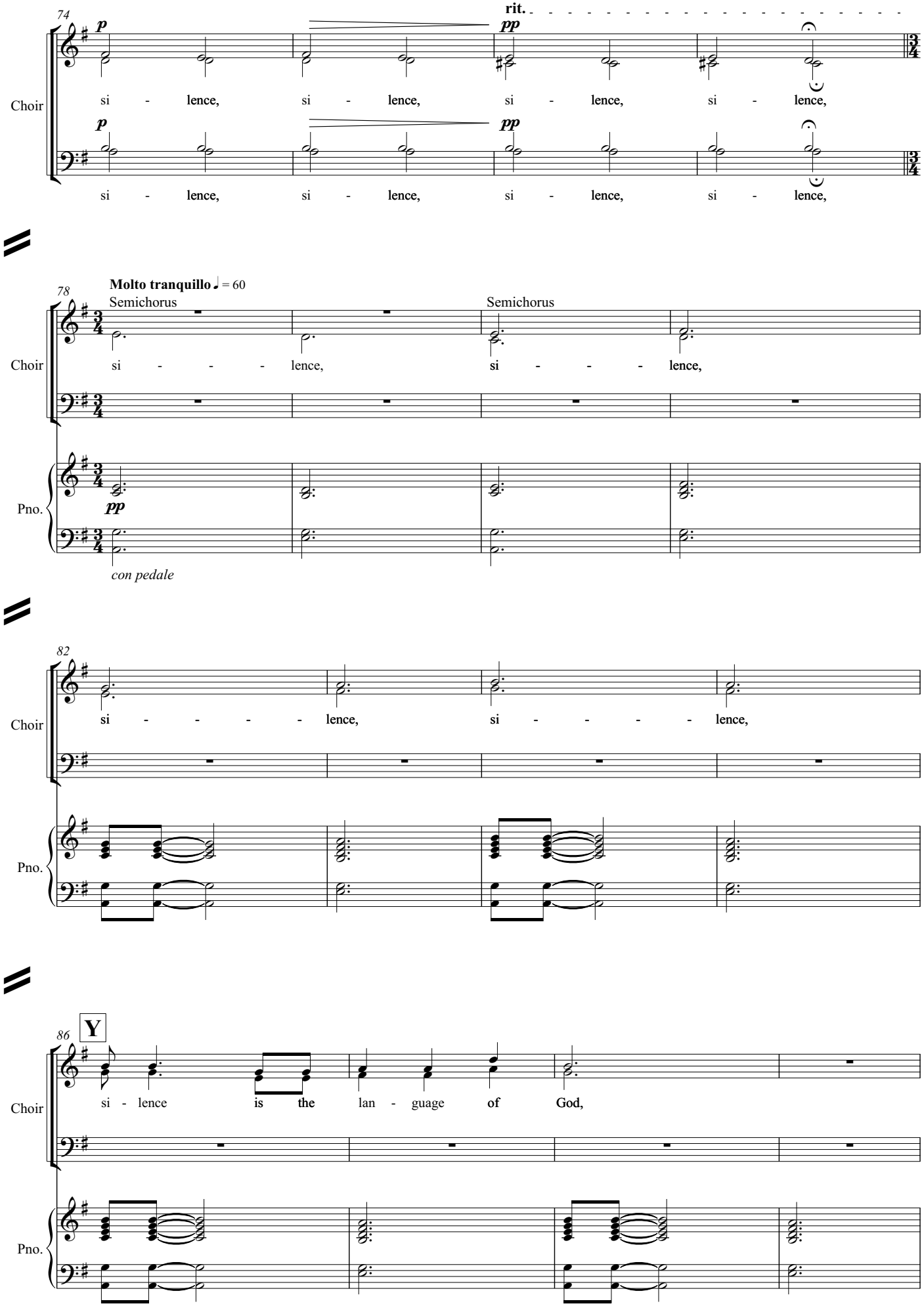

Lento e molto tranquillo ♩ = 60
Piano
pp
con pedale
5
Pno.
S
9
Semichorus
pp
Choir
Si - - - - lence,
Semichorus
pp
Si - - - - lence,
Pno.
13
Choir
si - - - - - lence,
si - - - - - lence,
Pno.
17
Choir
si - lence is the lan -- guage of God,
Pno.

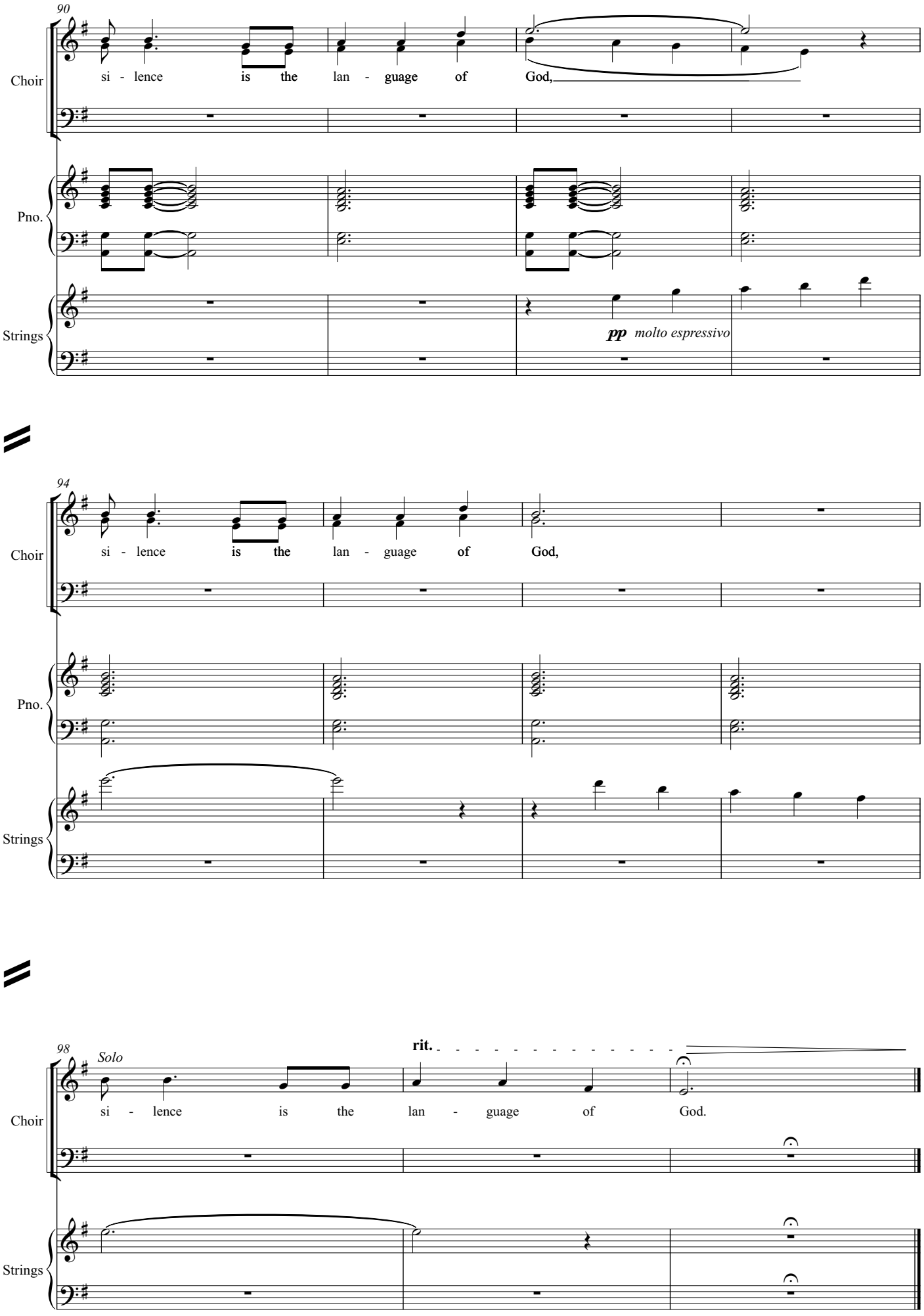

21
Choir
si - lence is the lan -- guage of God,
Pno.
Strings
pp molto espressivo
25
Choir
si - lence is the lan -- guage of God,
Pno.
Strings
29
Choir
si - lence is the lan -- guage of God,
Pno.
Strings


32
33
mp
mf
si - lence is the lan - guage of God,
Choir
Pno.
mp
Strings
mp
T
37
p
When I am si - lent, when I am si - lent,
Choir
Strings
p
41
si - - - lent,
I
Choir
Strings
U
Espressivo
Tutti
45
fall, I fall, I fall, I fall,
p
Tutti
p I
Choir
pp
Strings

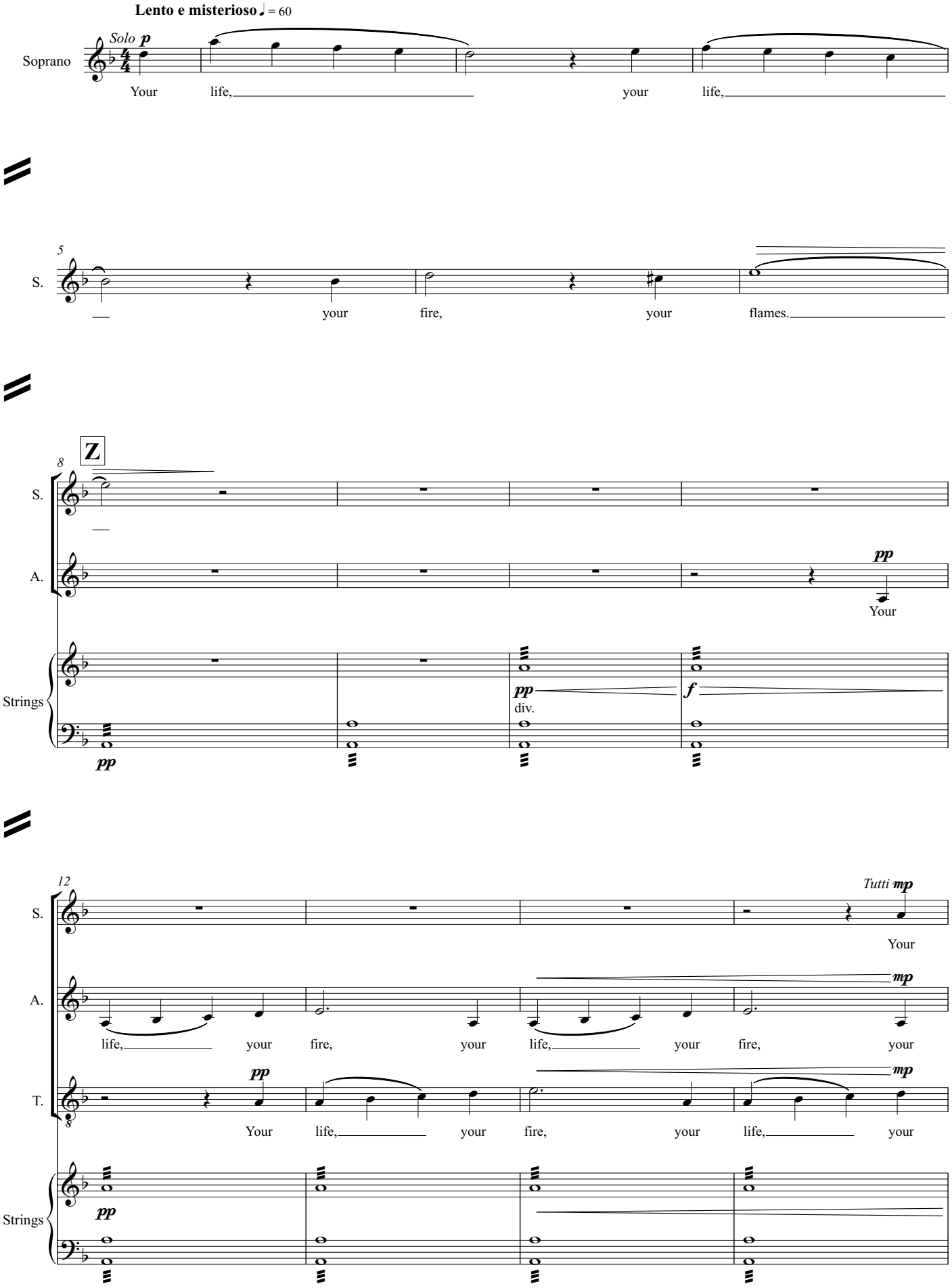

49
Choir
fall, I fall, I fall, I fall,
I fall, I fall, I fall, I fall,
I fall, I
p
I
Strings
p
53
Choir
fall, fall, fall, fall
in - to the
fall, I fall, I fall, I fall
Pno.
p
Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped. *
sim.
57
V
molto rit.
Choir
place, the place, the place, the place where ev' - ry - thing is
place, the place, the place, the place where ev' - ry - thing is
Pno.
3
3
Strings

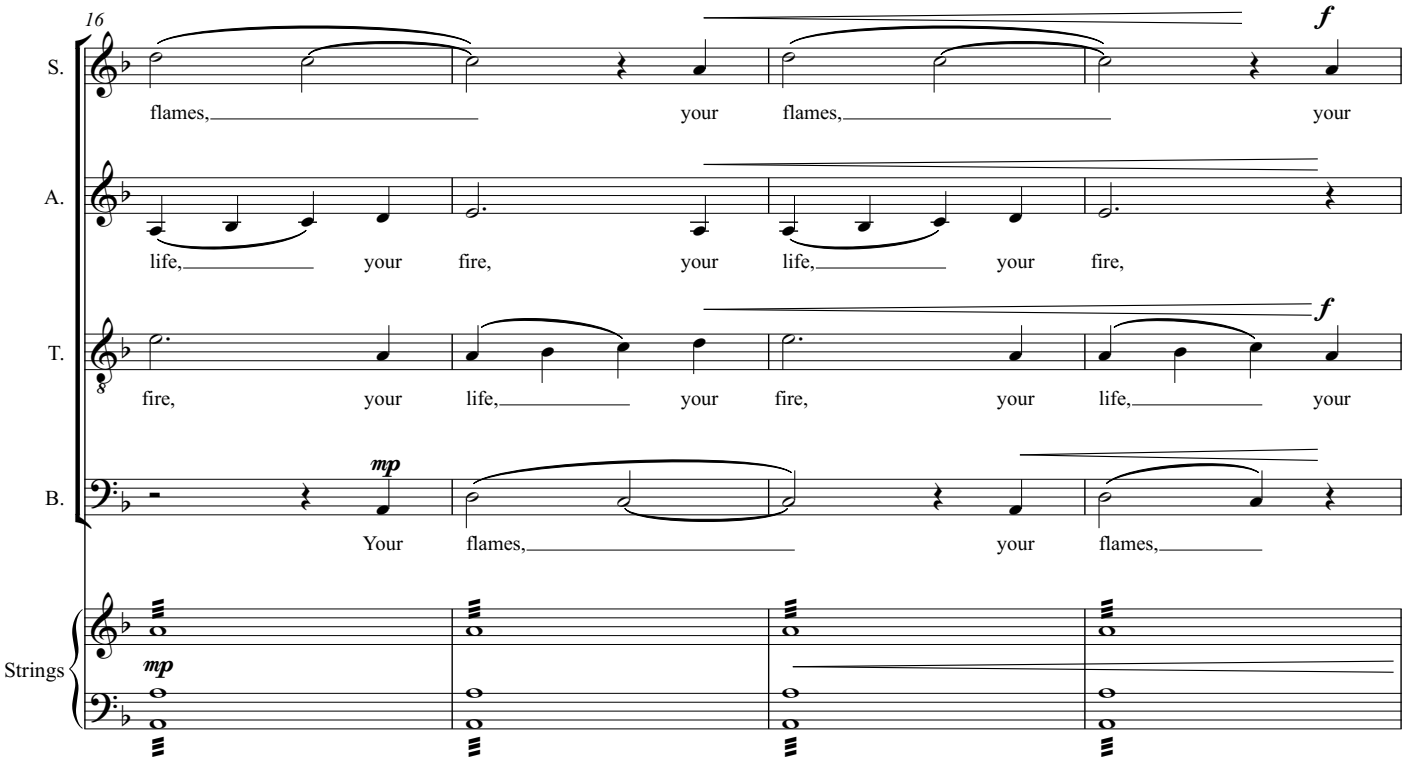

W
a tempo ♩ = 60
62
Choir
mu - sic, mu - sic, mu - sic, mu - sic,
mu - sic, mu - sic, mu - sic, mu - sic,
Pno.
Ped. * Ped. * sim.
Strings
molto rit.
66
Choir
mu - sic, mu - sic, mu - sic, mu - sic,
mu - sic, mu - sic, mu - sic, mu - sic,
8va
Pno.
Strings
3
X
a tempo ♩ = 60
70
Choir
si - lence, si - lence, si - lence, si - lence,
si - lence, si - lence, si - lence, si - lence,

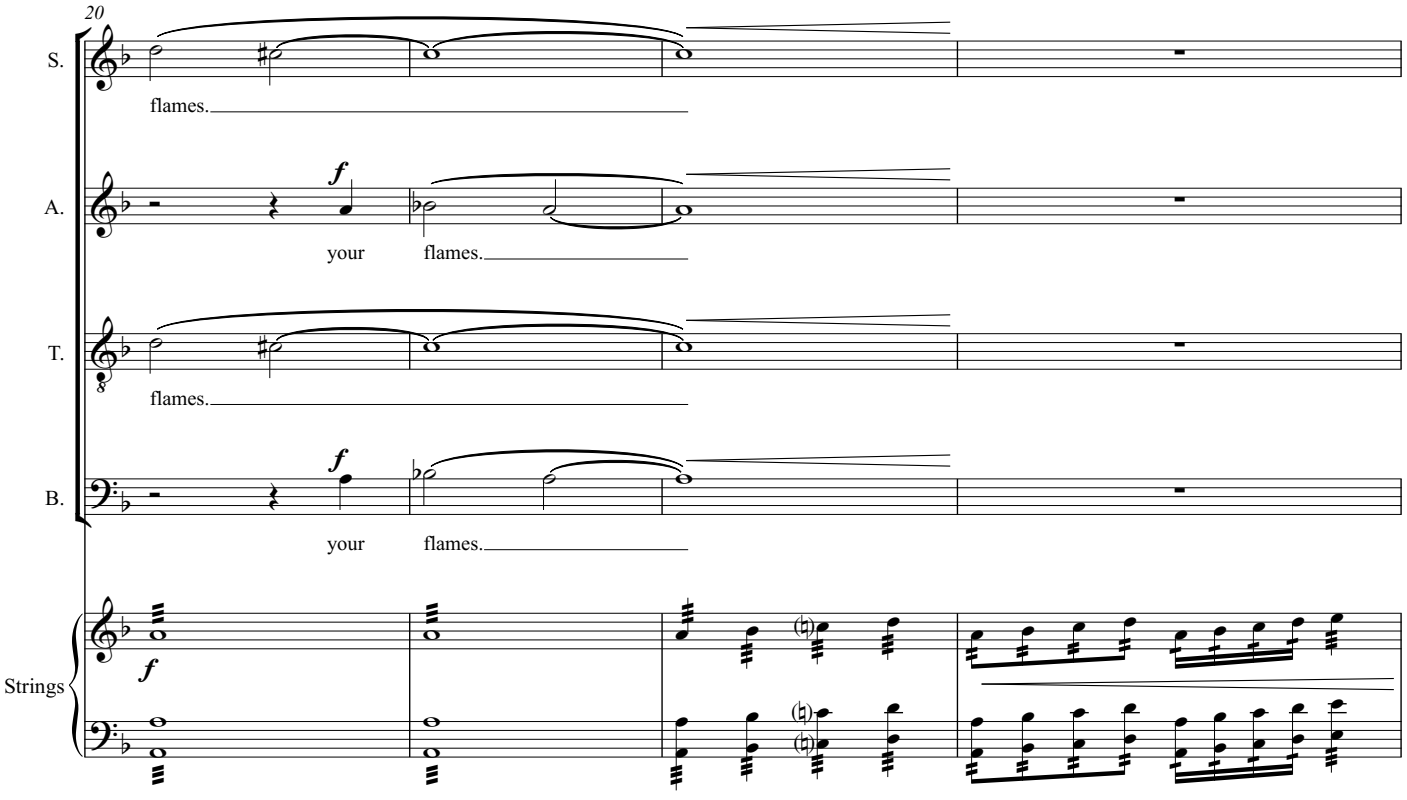

74
rit.
p
pp
Choir
si - lence, si - lence, si - lence, si - lence,
si - lence, si - lence, si - lence, si - lence,
78
Molto tranquillo ♩ = 60
Semichorus
Semichorus
si - - - - lence, si - - - - lence,
Pno.
pp
con pedale
82
si - - - - - lence, si - - - - - lence,
86
Y
si - lence is the lan - guage of God,

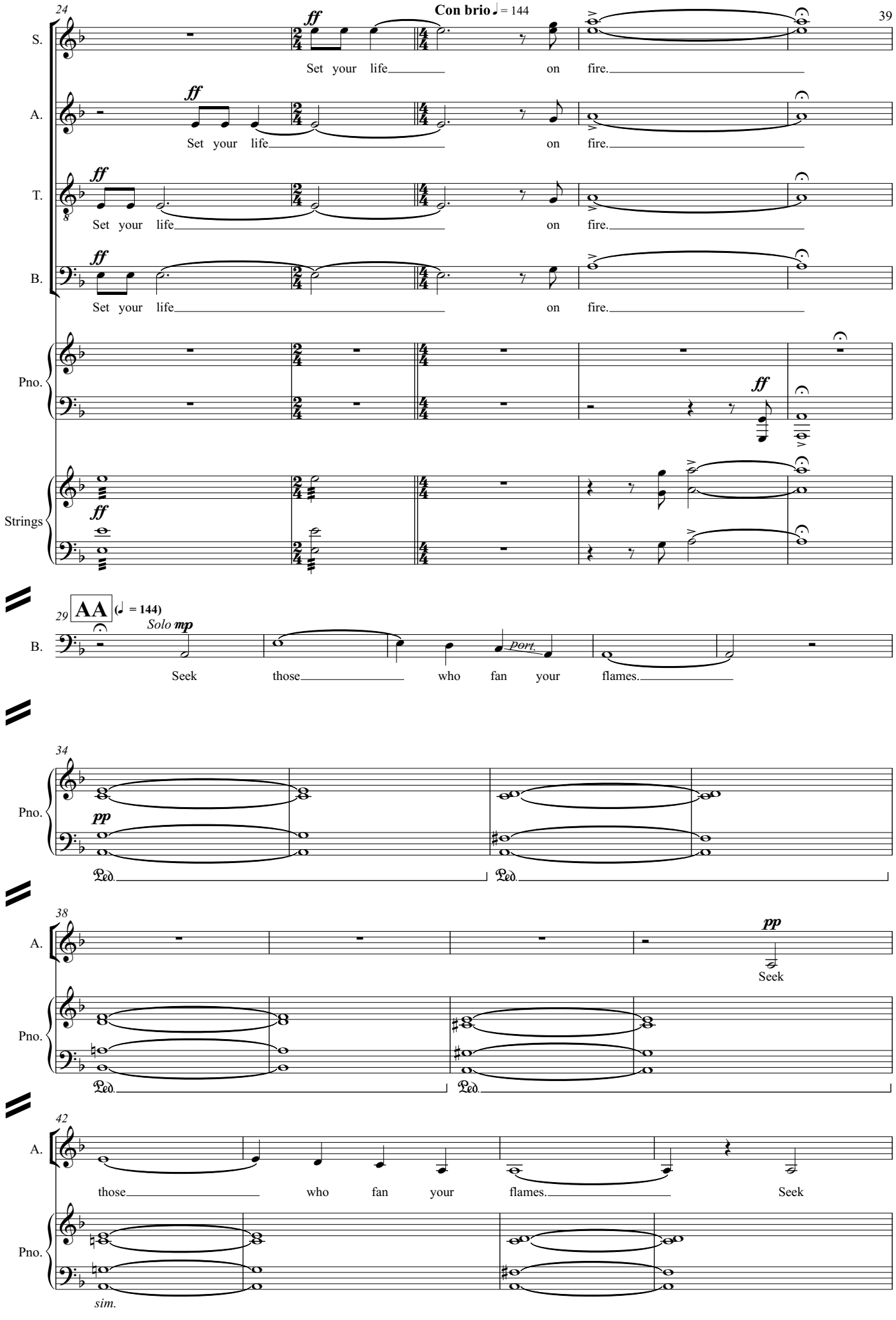

90
Choir
si - lence is the lan - guage of God,
Pno.
Strings
pp molto espressivo
94
Choir
si - lence is the lan - guage of God,
Pno.
Strings
98
Solo
rit.
Choir
si - lence is the lan - guage of God.
Strings

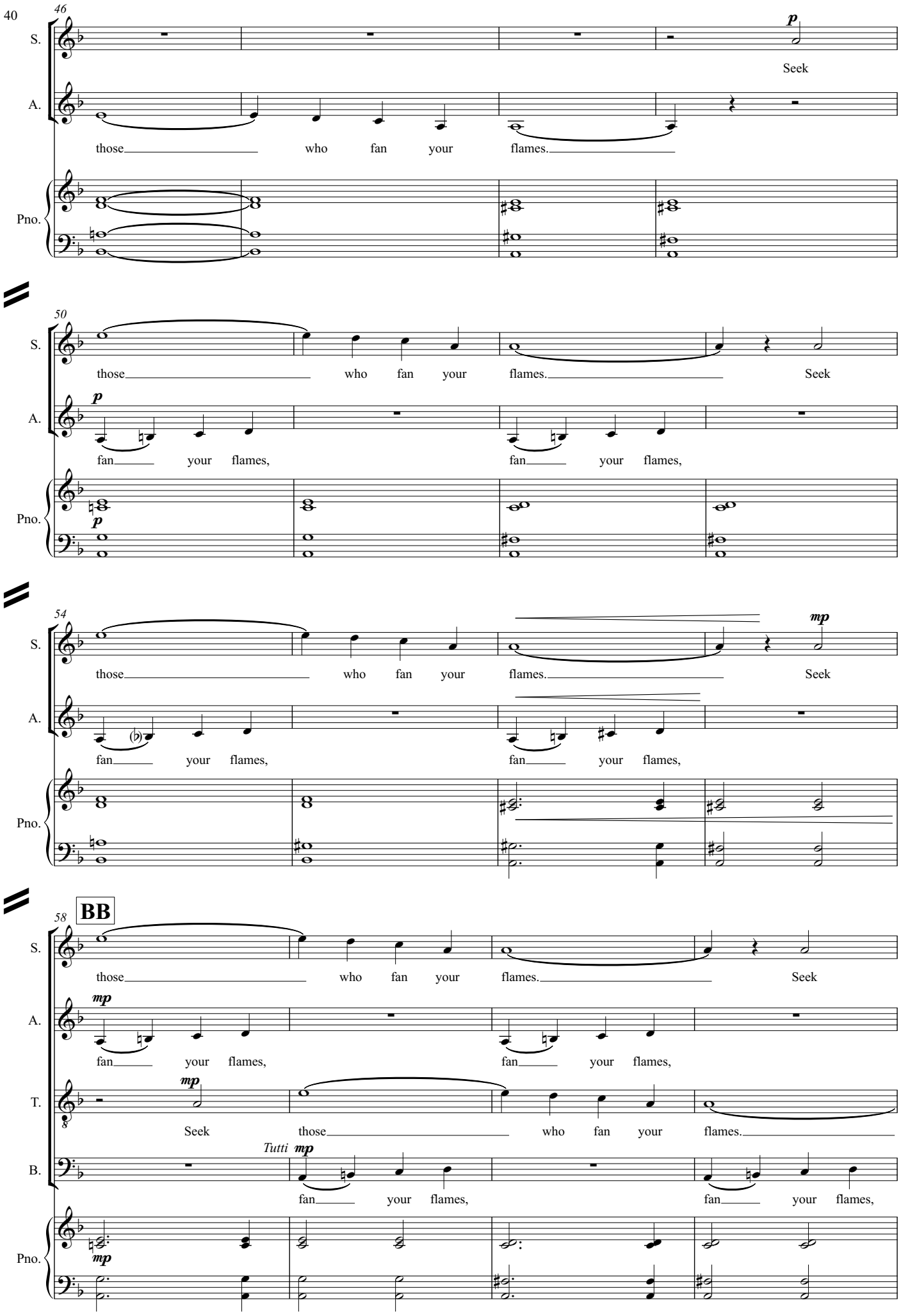
IV. Fire

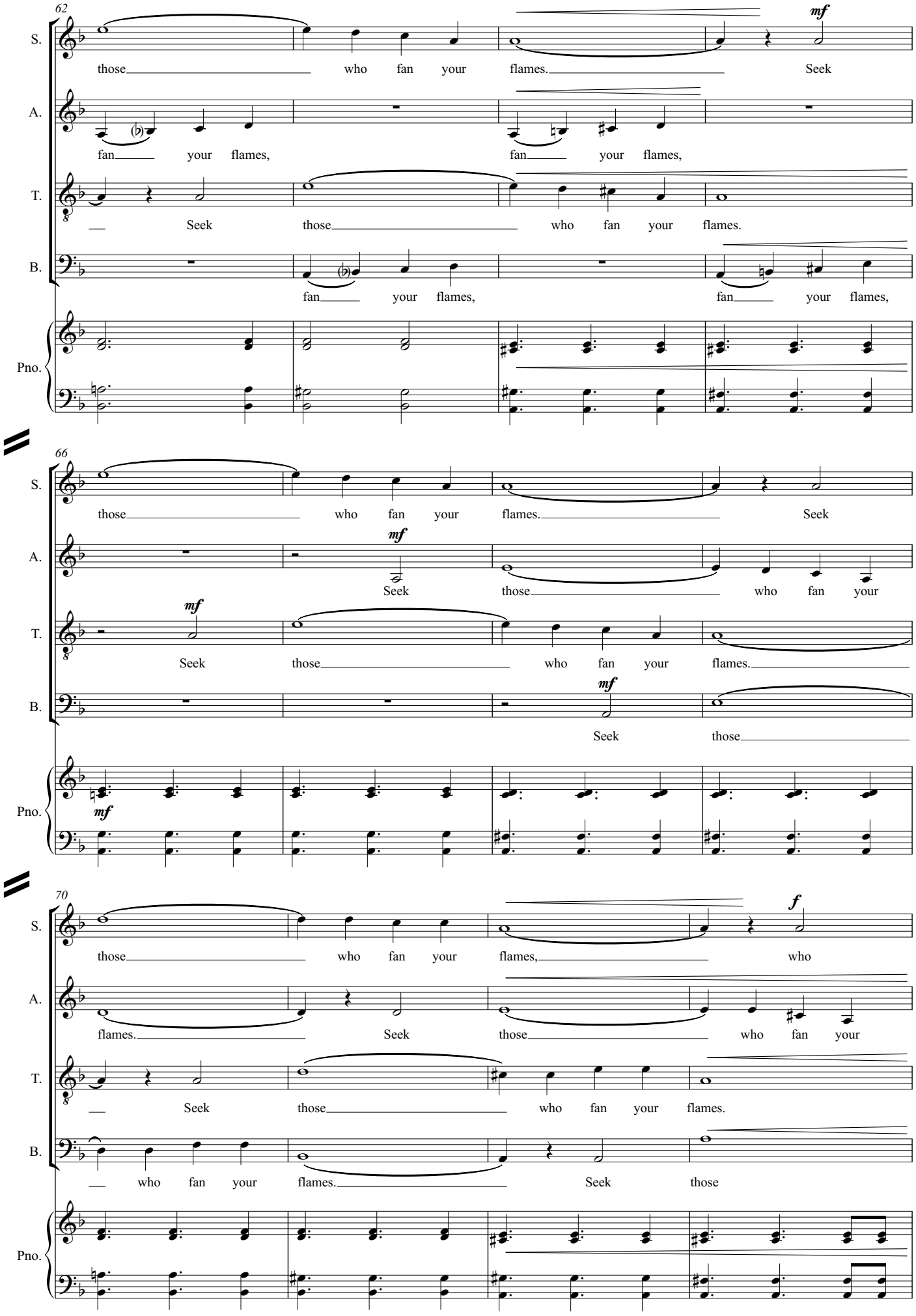

Lento e misterioso ♩ = 60
Soprano
Solo p
Your life, your life,
5
S.
your fire, your flames.
Z
8
S.
A.
pp
Your
Strings
pp
div.
f
12
Tutti mp
S.
Your
A.
mp
life, your fire, your life, your fire, your
T.
pp
mp
Your life, your fire, your life, your
Strings
pp

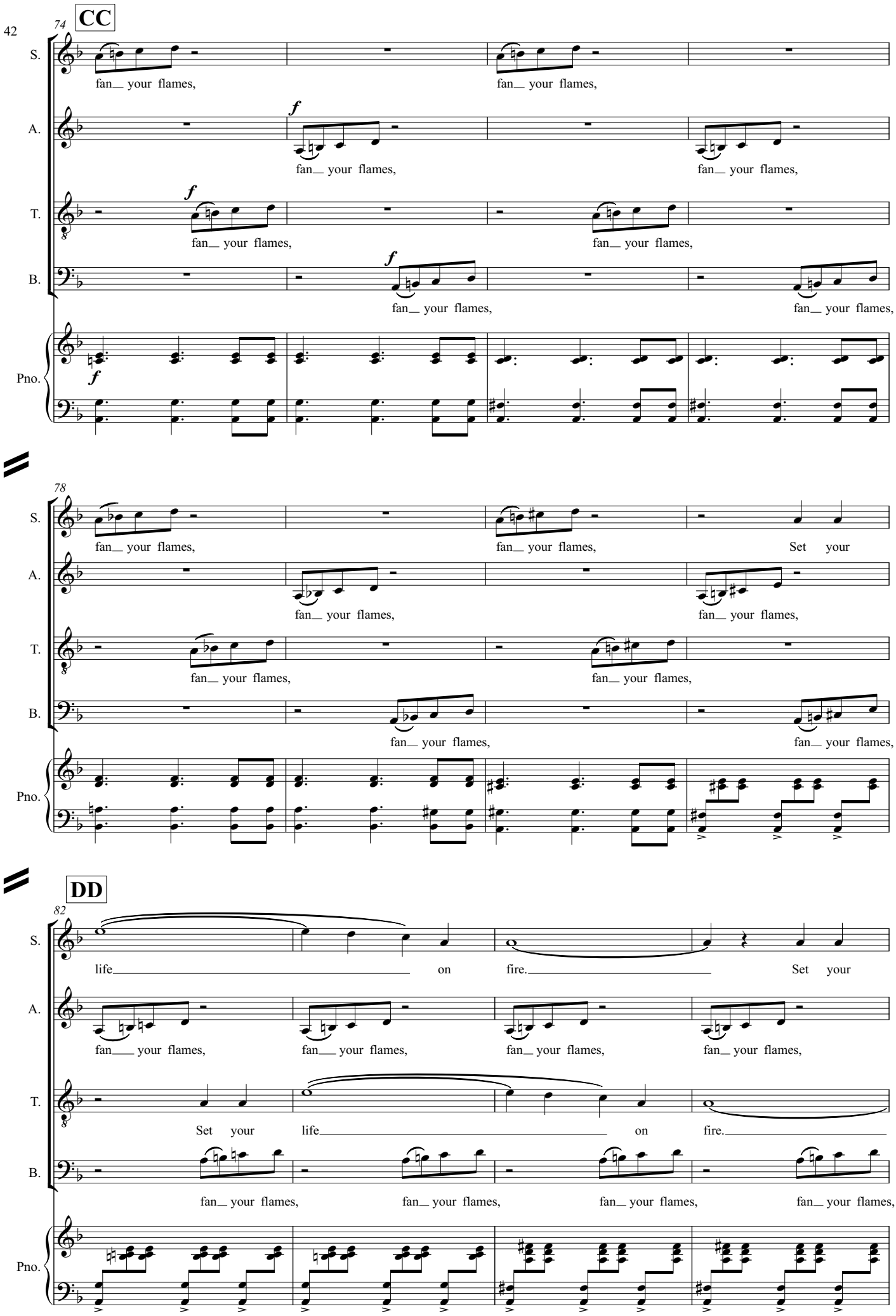

16
S.
flames, your flames, your
A.
life, your fire, your life, your fire,
T.
fire, your life, your fire, your life, your
B.
Your flames, your flames,
Strings
f
mp

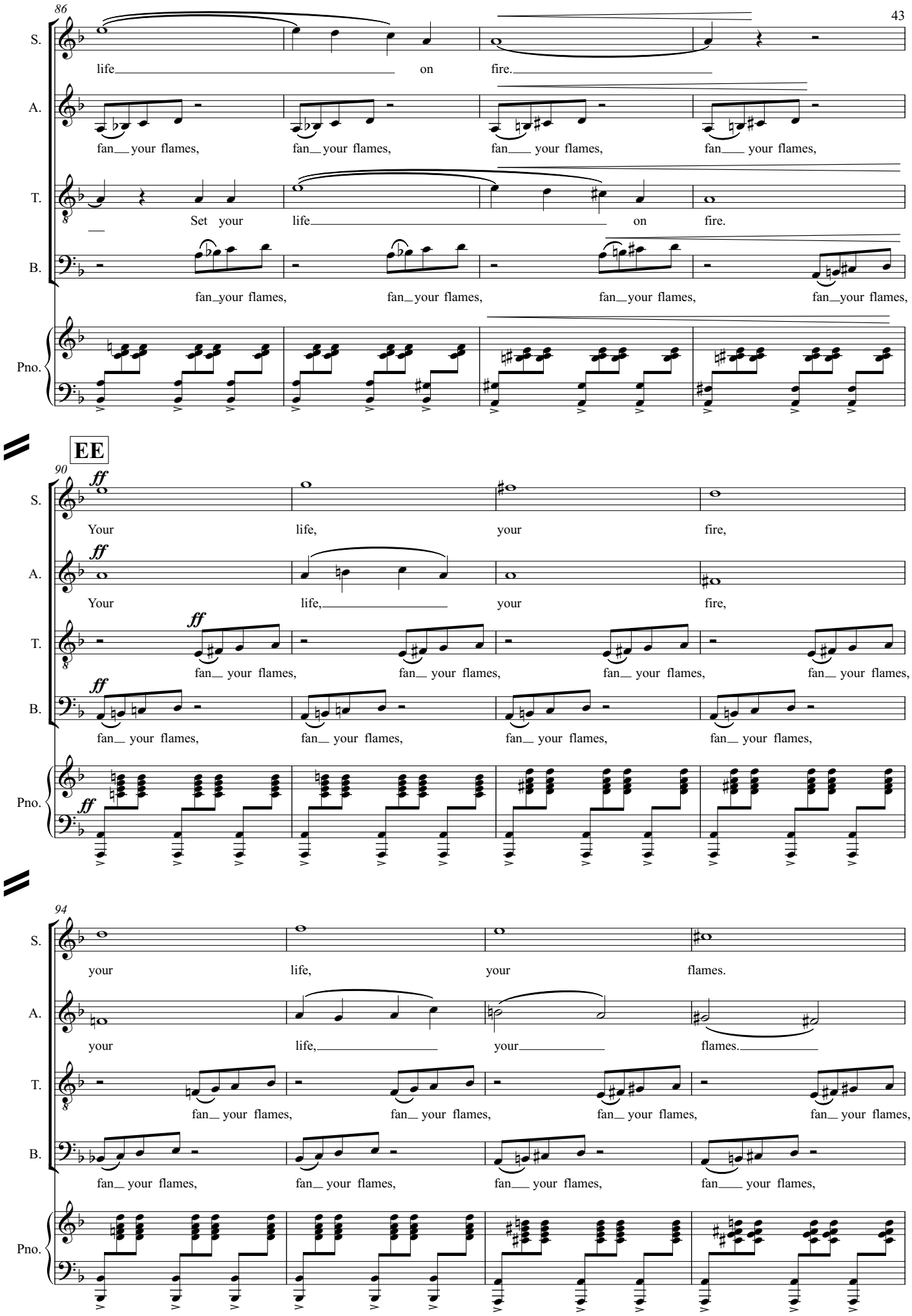

20
S.
flames.
A.
your flames.
T.
flames.
B.
your flames.
Strings
f

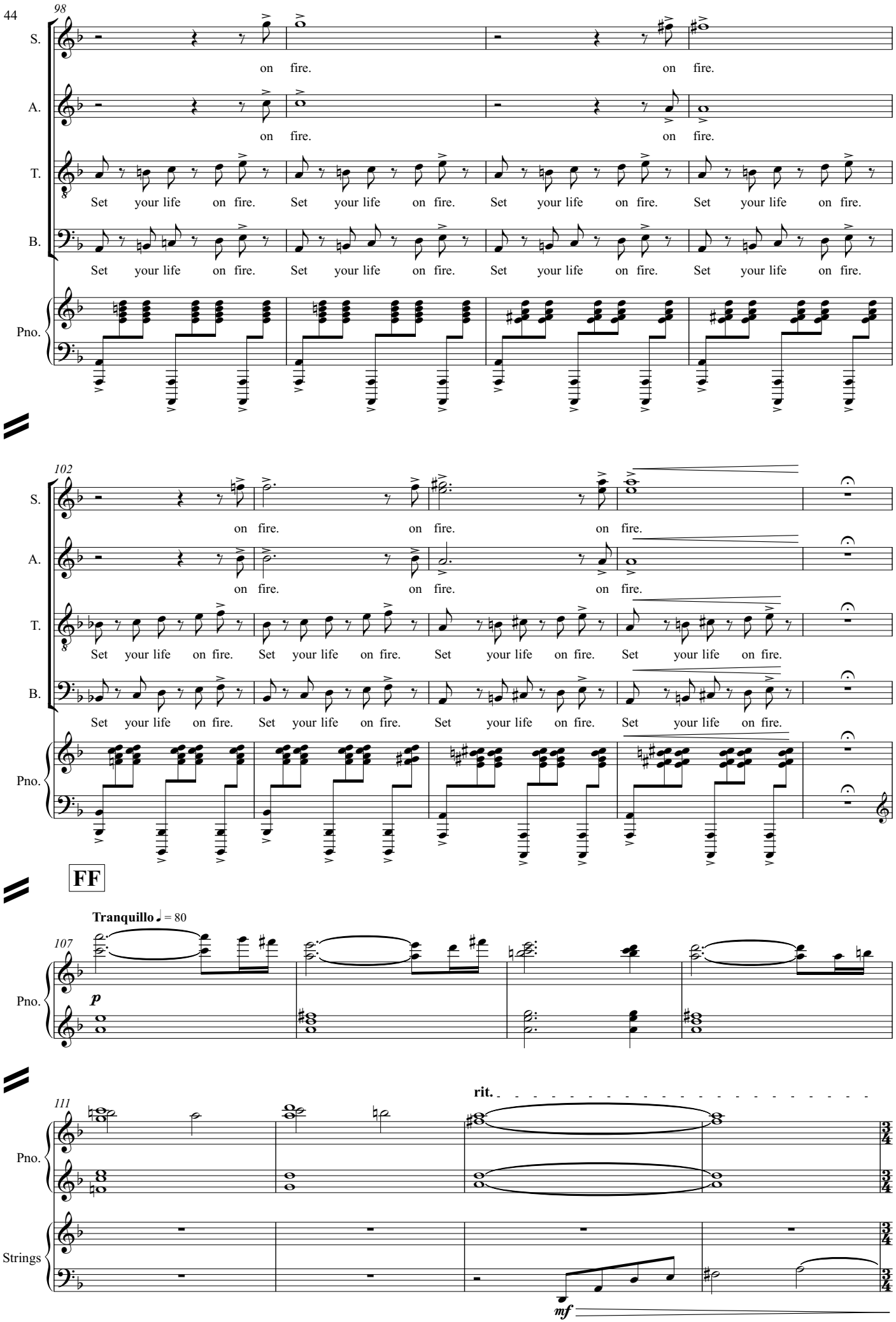

24
Con brio ♩= 144
S.
A.
T.
B.
Pno.
Strings
ff
Set your life on fire.
29
AA (♩ = 144)
Solo mp
port.
Seek those who fan your flames.
34
pp
Ped.
38
Seek
42
those who fan your flames. Seek
sim.

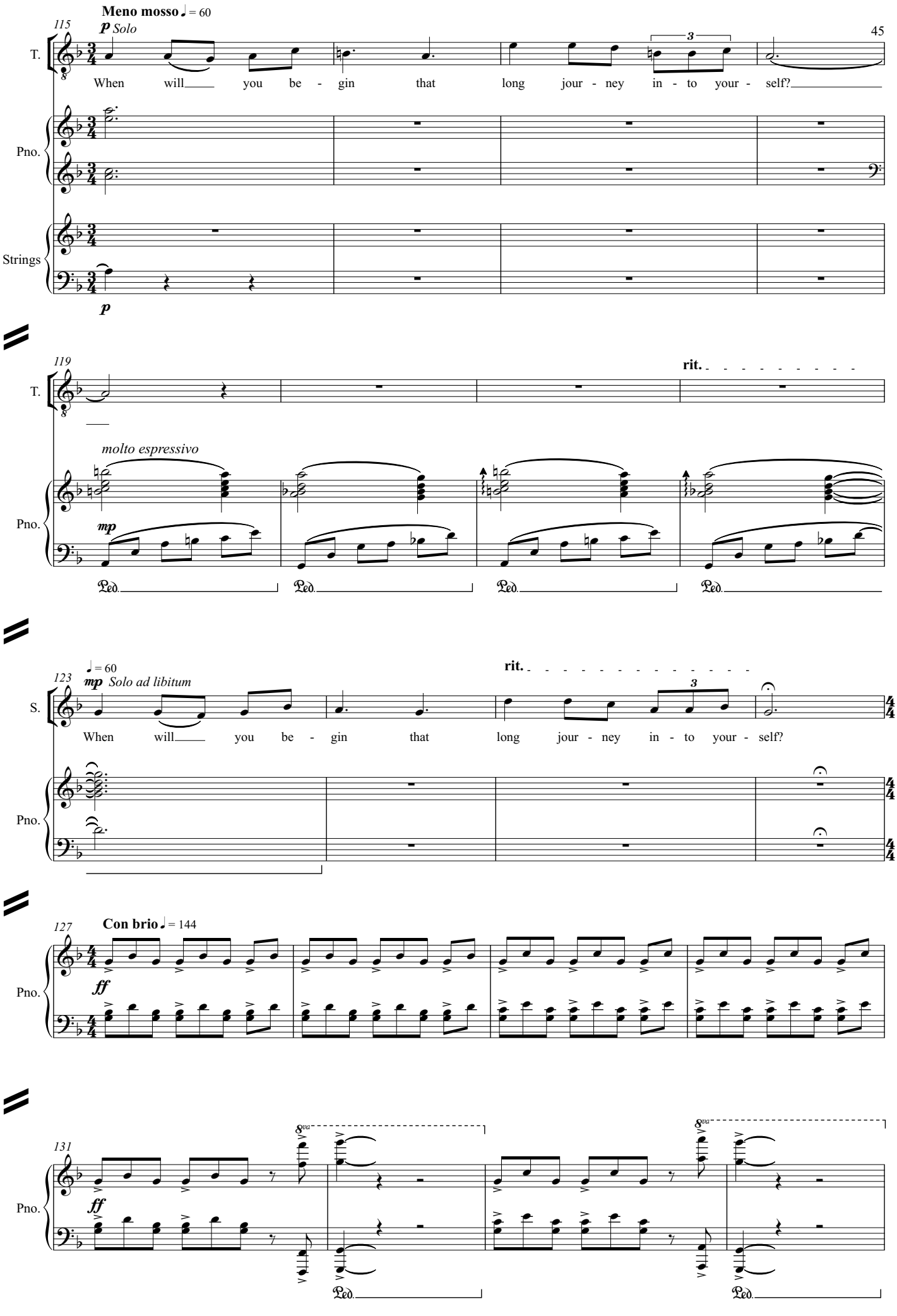

46
S.
A.
Pno.
those who fan your flames.
Seek
50
those who fan your flames. Seek
fan your flames, fan your flames,
54
those who fan your flames. Seek
fan your flames, fan your flames,
58
BB
those who fan your flames. Seek
fan your flames, fan your flames,
T.
Seek those who fan your flames.
B.
Tutti
fan your flames, fan your flames,

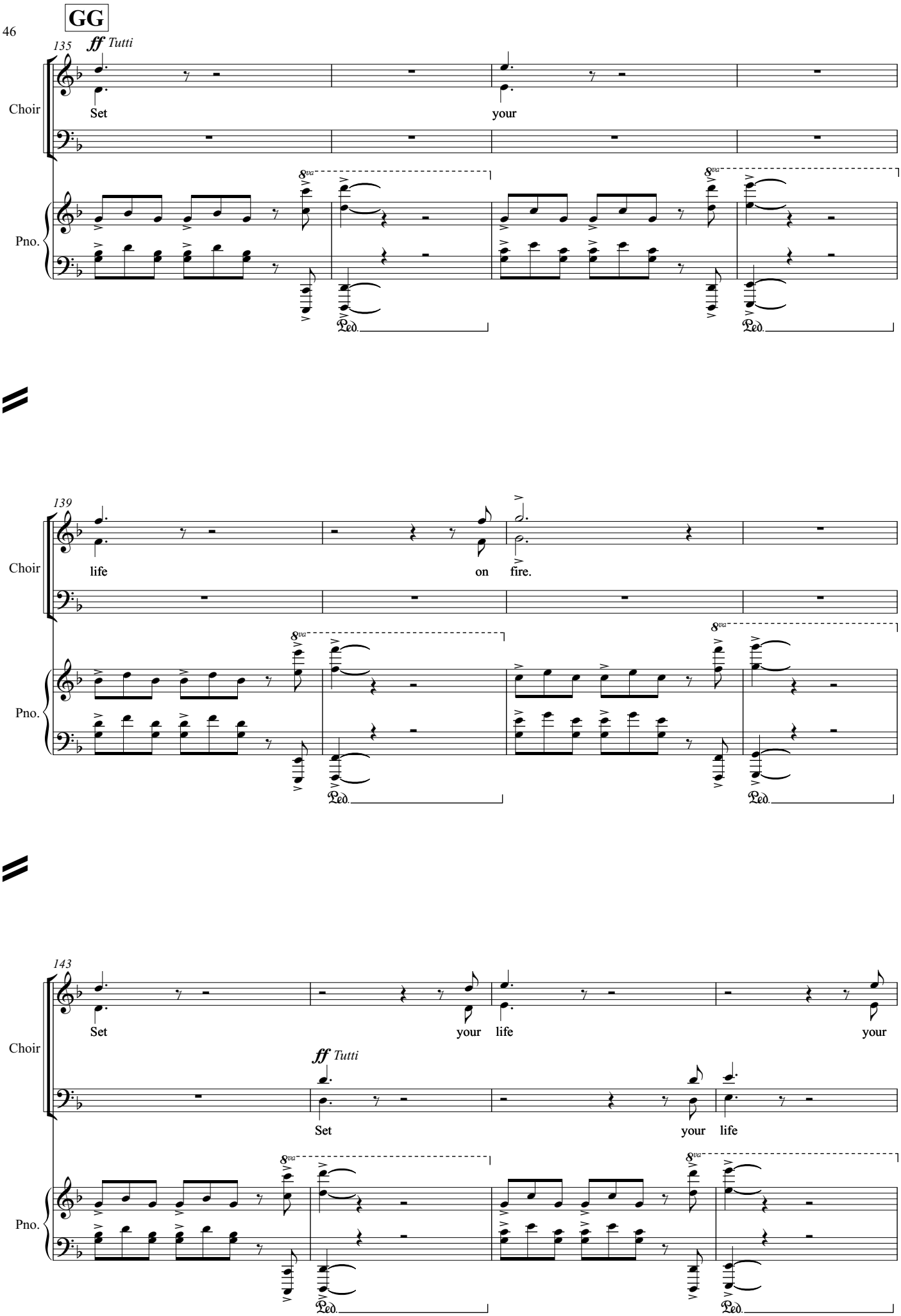

62
S.
those who fan your flames. Seek
A.
fan your flames, fan your flames,
T.
Seek those who fan your flames.
B.
fan your flames, fan your flames,
Pno.
66
S.
those who fan your flames. Seek
A.
Seek those who fan your
T.
Seek those who fan your flames.
B.
Seek those
Pno.
70
S.
those who fan your flames, who
A.
flames. Seek those who fan your
T.
Seek those who fan your flames.
B.
who fan your flames. Seek those
Pno.

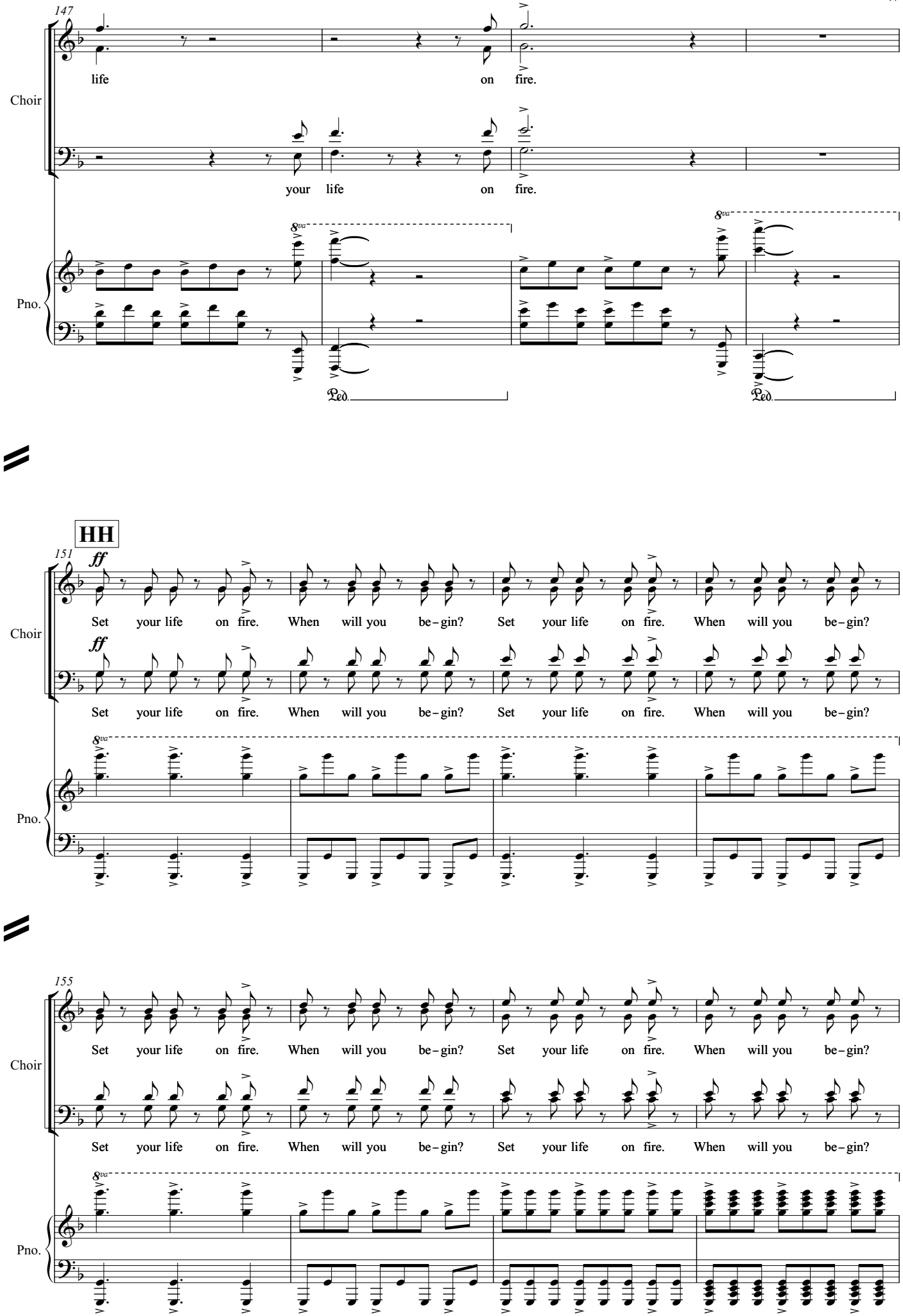

CC
74
S.
fan_ your flames,
fan_ your flames,
A.
f
fan_ your flames,
fan_ your flames,
T.
f
fan_ your flames,
fan_ your flames,
B.
f
fan_ your flames,
fan_ your flames,
Pno.
f
78
S.
fan_ your flames,
fan_ your flames,
Set your
A.
fan_ your flames,
fan_ your flames,
T.
fan_ your flames,
fan_ your flames,
B.
fan_ your flames,
fan_ your flames,
Pno.
DD
82
S.
life
on
fire.
Set your
A.
fan_ your flames,
fan_ your flames,
fan_ your flames,
fan_ your flames,
T.
Set your
life
on
fire.
B.
fan_ your flames,
fan_ your flames,
fan_ your flames,
fan_ your flames,
Pno.

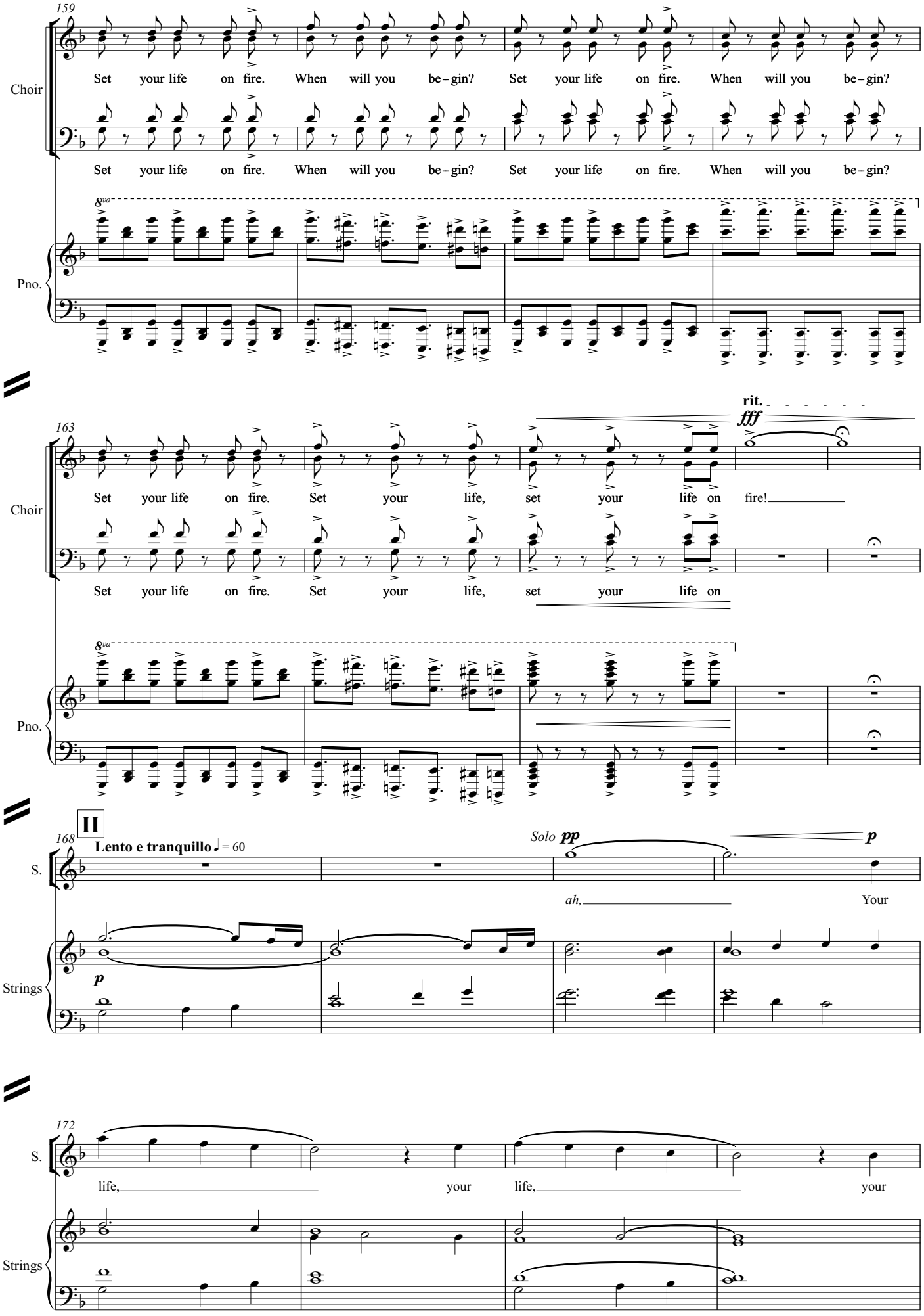

86
S.
life on fire.
A.
fan your flames, fan your flames, fan your flames, fan your flames,
T.
Set your life on fire.
B.
fan your flames, fan your flames, fan your flames, fan your flames,
Pno.
EE
90
ff
S.
Your life, your fire,
A.
Your life, your fire,
T.
fan your flames, fan your flames, fan your flames, fan your flames,
B.
fan your flames, fan your flames, fan your flames, fan your flames,
Pno.
94
S.
your life, your flames.
A.
your life, your flames.
T.
fan your flames, fan your flames, fan your flames, fan your flames,
B.
fan your flames, fan your flames, fan your flames, fan your flames,
Pno.

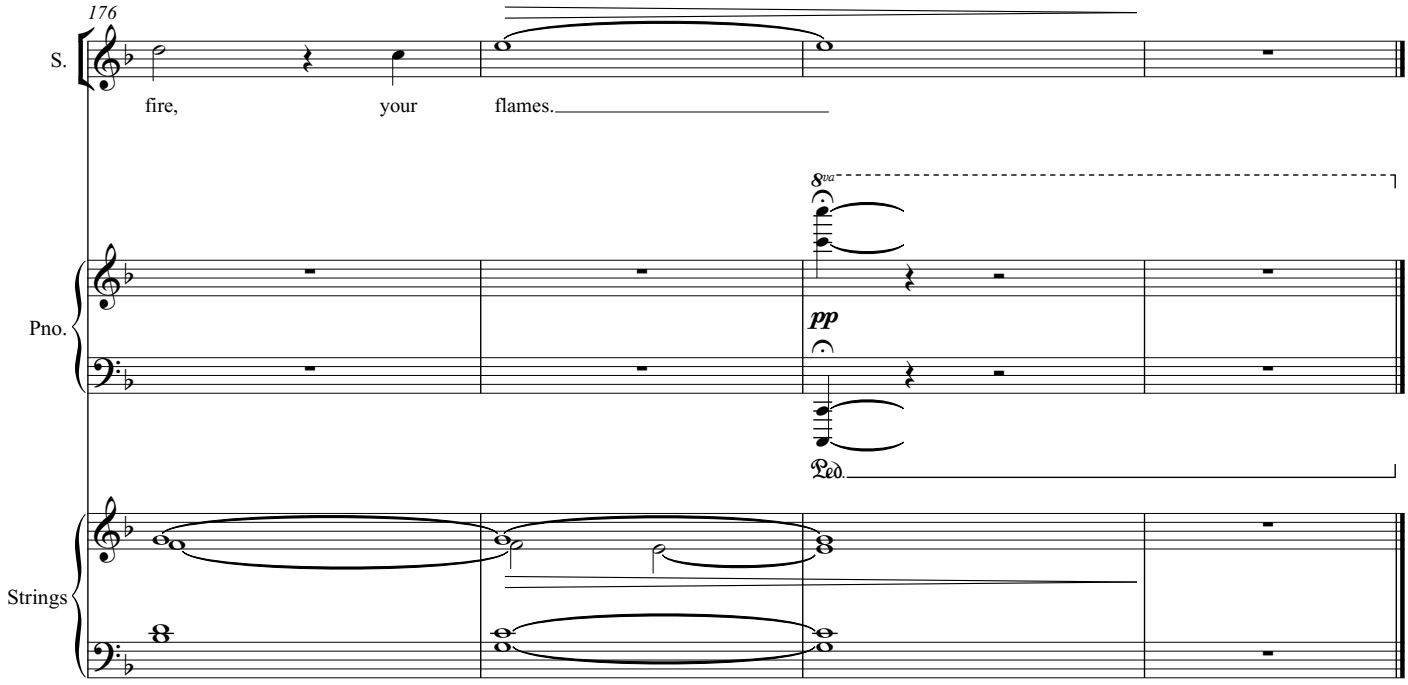

98
S.
on fire. on fire.
A.
on fire. on fire.
T.
Set your life on fire. Set your life on fire. Set your life on fire. Set your life on fire.
B.
Set your life on fire. Set your life on fire. Set your life on fire. Set your life on fire.
Pno.
102
S.
on fire. on fire. on fire.
A.
on fire. on fire. on fire.
T.
Set your life on fire. Set your life on fire. Set your life on fire. Set your life on fire.
B.
Set your life on fire. Set your life on fire. Set your life on fire. Set your life on fire.
Pno.
FF
Tranquillo ♩ = 80
107
Pno.
p
111
rit.
Pno.
Strings
mf


Meno mosso ♩ = 60
115
p Solo
T.
When will you be - gin that long jour - ney in - to your - self?
Pno.
Strings
p
119
rit.
molto espressivo
mp
Ped.
123
♩ = 60
mp Solo ad libitum
S.
When will you be - gin that long jour - ney in - to your - self?
rit.
127
Con brio ♩ = 144
ff
131
8va
ff
Ped.


GG
135
ff Tutti
Choir
Set
your
Pno.
8va
Ped.
139
life
on
fire.
143
Set
your
life
your
ff Tutti
Set
your
life


147
Choir
life
on
fire.
your
life
on
fire.
Pno.
8va
8va
Ped.
Ped.
HH
151
ff
Choir
Set your life on fire. When will you be-gin? Set your life on fire. When will you be-gin?
ff
Set your life on fire. When will you be-gin? Set your life on fire. When will you be-gin?
Pno.
8va
155
Choir
Set your life on fire. When will you be-gin? Set your life on fire. When will you be-gin?
Set your life on fire. When will you be-gin? Set your life on fire. When will you be-gin?
Pno.
8va


159
Choir
Set your life on fire. When will you be-gin? Set your life on fire. When will you be-gin?
Set your life on fire. When will you be-gin? Set your life on fire. When will you be-gin?
8va
Pno.
163
rit.
fff
Choir
Set your life on fire. Set your life, set your life on fire!
Set your life on fire. Set your life, set your life on
8va
Pno.
II
168
Lento e tranquillo ♩= 60
Solo pp
p
S.
ah,
Your
p
Strings
172
S.
life, your life, your
Strings



Chertsey,
Dec 2020 - Oct 2021