Peter Seabourne

Sappho Songs

Four songs in French translation by Renée Vivien

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Four Songs in translation by Renée Vivien (1903)

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1. Tu m'oublies

L'eau trouble reflète, ainsi qu'un vain miroir,
Mes yeux sans lueurs, mes paupières pâlies.
J'écoute ton rire et ta voix dans le soir…
Atthis, tu m'oublies.
Tu n'as point connu la stupeur de l'amour
L'effroi du baiser et l'orgueil de la haine;
Tu n'as désiré que les roses d'un jour,
Amante incertaine.

The turbid water reflects, as an empty mirror,
My eyes without light, my eyelids now pale.
I listen to your laughter and your voice in the evening …
Atthis, you forget me.
You knew not at all the stupor of love
The awe of a kiss and the pride of hatred;
You desired only the roses of a day,
Doubtful lover.

2. Je serai toujours vierge

Je demeurerai vierge comme la neige
Sereine, qui dort là-bas d'un blanc sommeil,
Qui dort pâlement, et que l'hiver protège
Du brutal soleil.
Et j'ignorerai la souillure et l'empreinte
Comme l'eau du fleuve et l'haleine du nord.
Je fuirai l'horreur sanglante de l'étreinte,
Du baiser qui mord.
Je demeurai vierge comme la lune
Qui se réfléchit dans le miroir du flot,
Et que le désir de la mer importune
De son long sanglot.

I shall remain virgin as the untrodden snow,
Which sleeps there of a white slumber,
Which sleeps pallidly, and which the winter protects
From the brutal sun.
And I shall not know stain or imprint
As the water of the river and the breath of the North.
I shall shun the bloody horror of embrace,
The kiss which bites.
I shall remain virgin as the moon
Which is reflected in the mirror of the stream,
And which the desire of the sea troubles
With its long sob.

3. Ondine

Ton rire est clair, ta caresse est profonde,
Tes froids baisers aiment le mal qu'ils font;
Tes yeux sont bleus comme un lotus sur l'onde,
Et les lys d'eau sont moins purs que ton front.
Ta forme fuit, ta démarche est fluide,
Et tes cheveux sont de légers réseaux;
Ta voix ruisselle ainsi qu'un flot perfide;
Tes souples bras sont pareils aux roseaux,
Aux longs roseaux des fleuves, dont l'étreinte
Enlace, étouffe, étrangle savamment,
Au fond des flots, une agonie éteinte
Dans un nocturne évanouissement.

Your laughter is clear, your caress is profound,
Your cold kisses love the harm that they do;
Your eyes are blue like a lotus on the wave,
And the water lilies are less pure than your brow..
Your form flees, your parting is fluid,
And your hair falls in gentle cascades;
Your voice streams as a treacherous tide;
Your supple arms are like reeds.
Like long river reeds, whose embrace
Entwines, chokes, strangles knowingly,
In the depths of the waves, an agony extinguished
In a nocturnal evanescence.

4. Roses du Soir

Des roses sur la mer, des roses dans le soir,
Et toi qui viens de loin, les mains lourdes de roses!
J'aspire ta beauté. Le couchant fait pleuvoir
Ses fines cendres d'or et ses poussières roses…
Des roses sur la mer, des roses dans le soir.
Un songe évocateur tient mes paupières closes.
J'attends, ne sachant trop ce que j'attends en vain,
Devant la mer pareille aux boucliers d'airain,
Et te voici venue en m'apportant des roses…
Ô roses dans le ciel et le soir ! Ô mes roses!

Roses on the sea, roses in the evening
And you, who come from afar, your hands heavy with roses!
I breathe in your beauty. The setting sun rains
Its fine cinders of gold and its dusting of roses…
Roses on the sea, roses in the evening.
An evocative dream holds my eyelids closed
I wait, not quite knowing that for which I wait in vain,
Before the sea, like shields of brass,
And here you have come bringing me roses…
Oh roses in the sky and the evening! Ah my roses!

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1. Tu m'oublies

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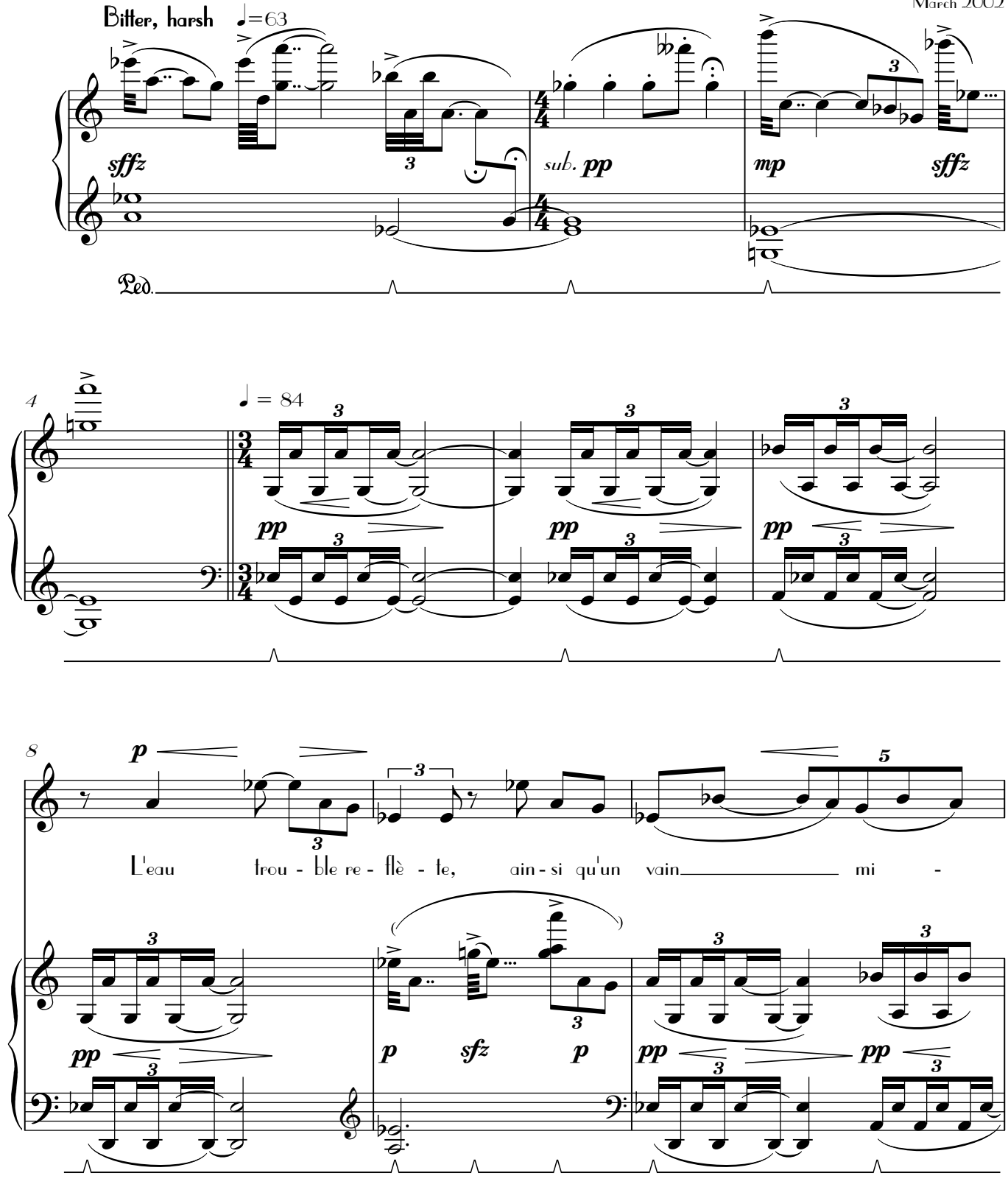
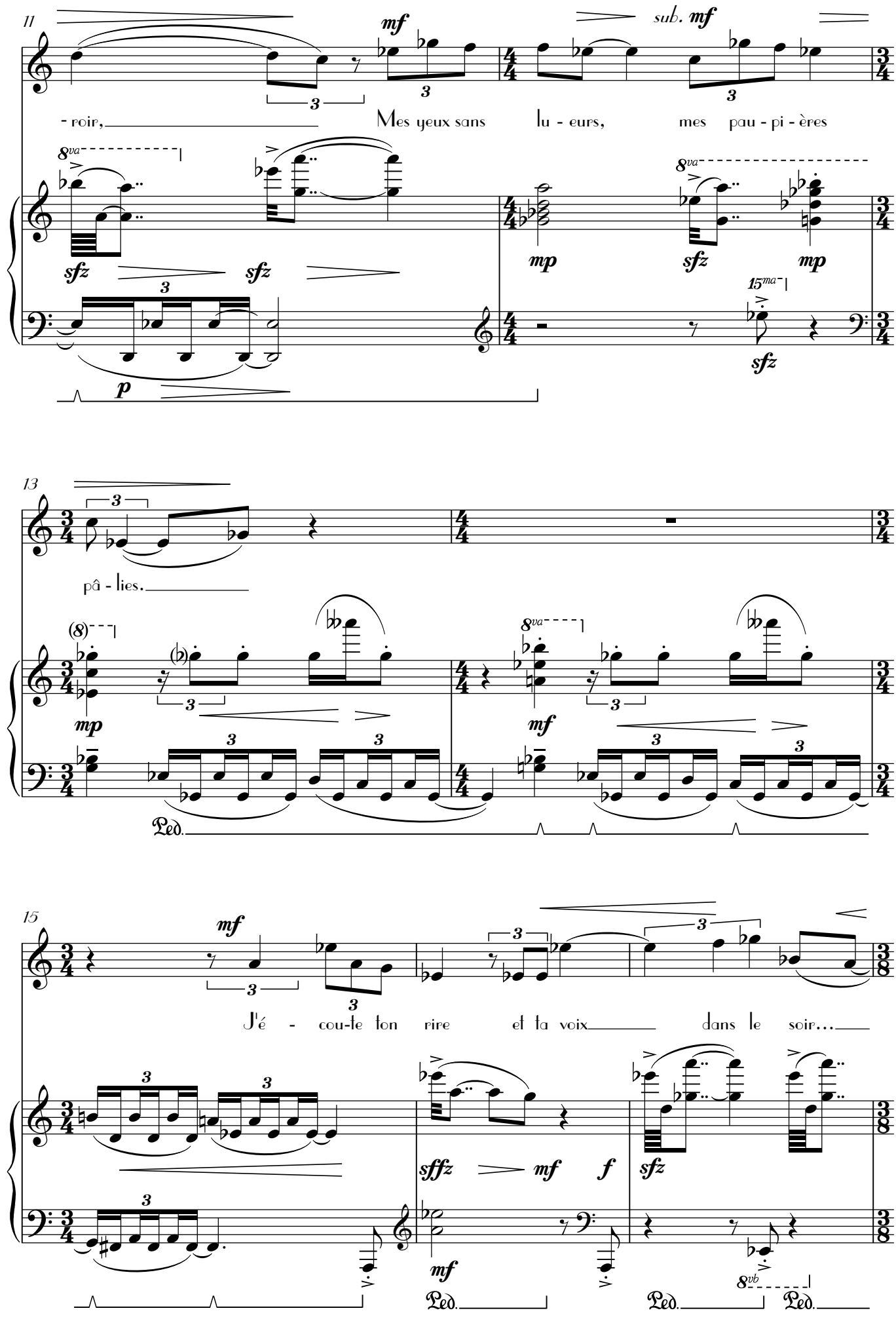
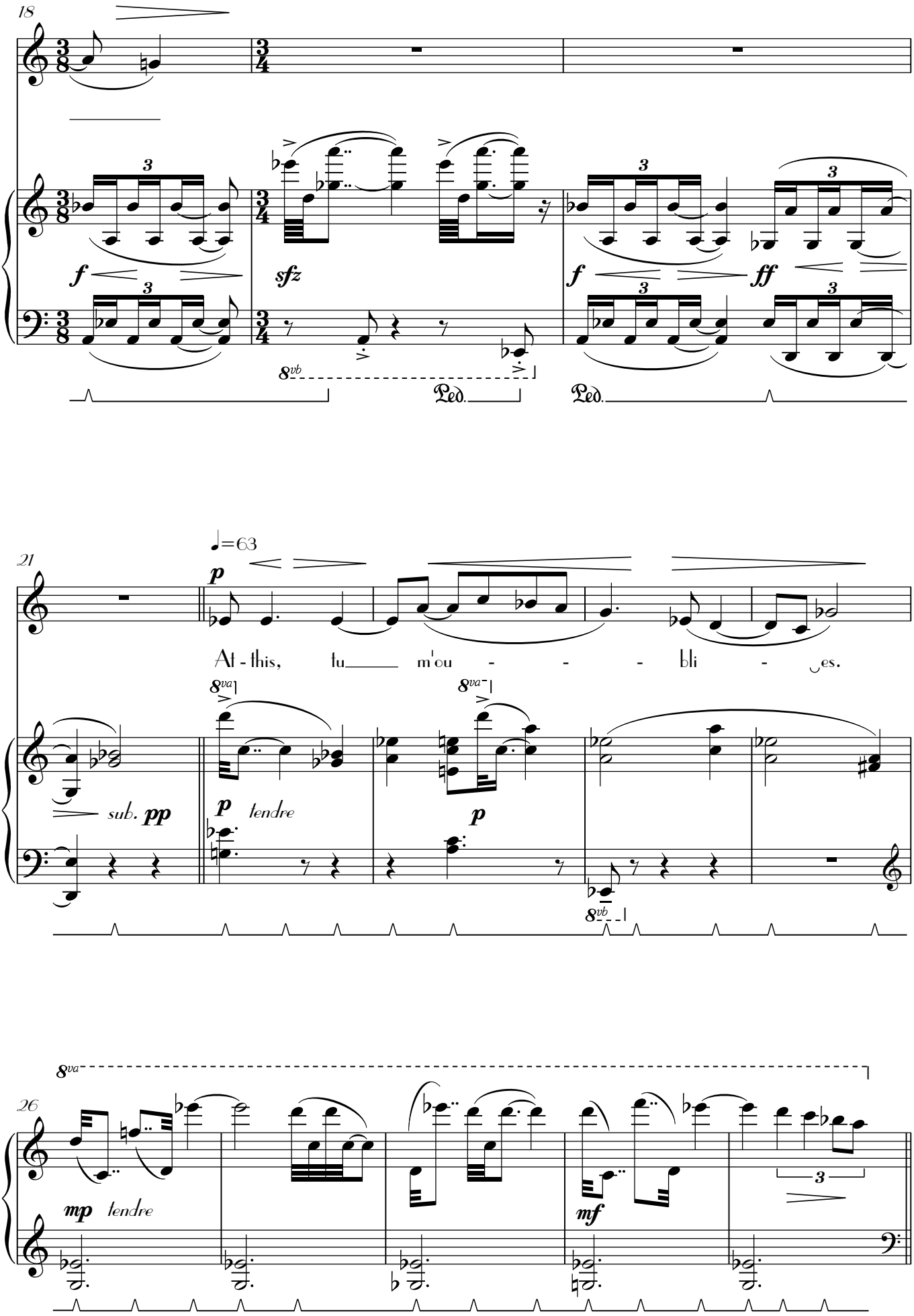
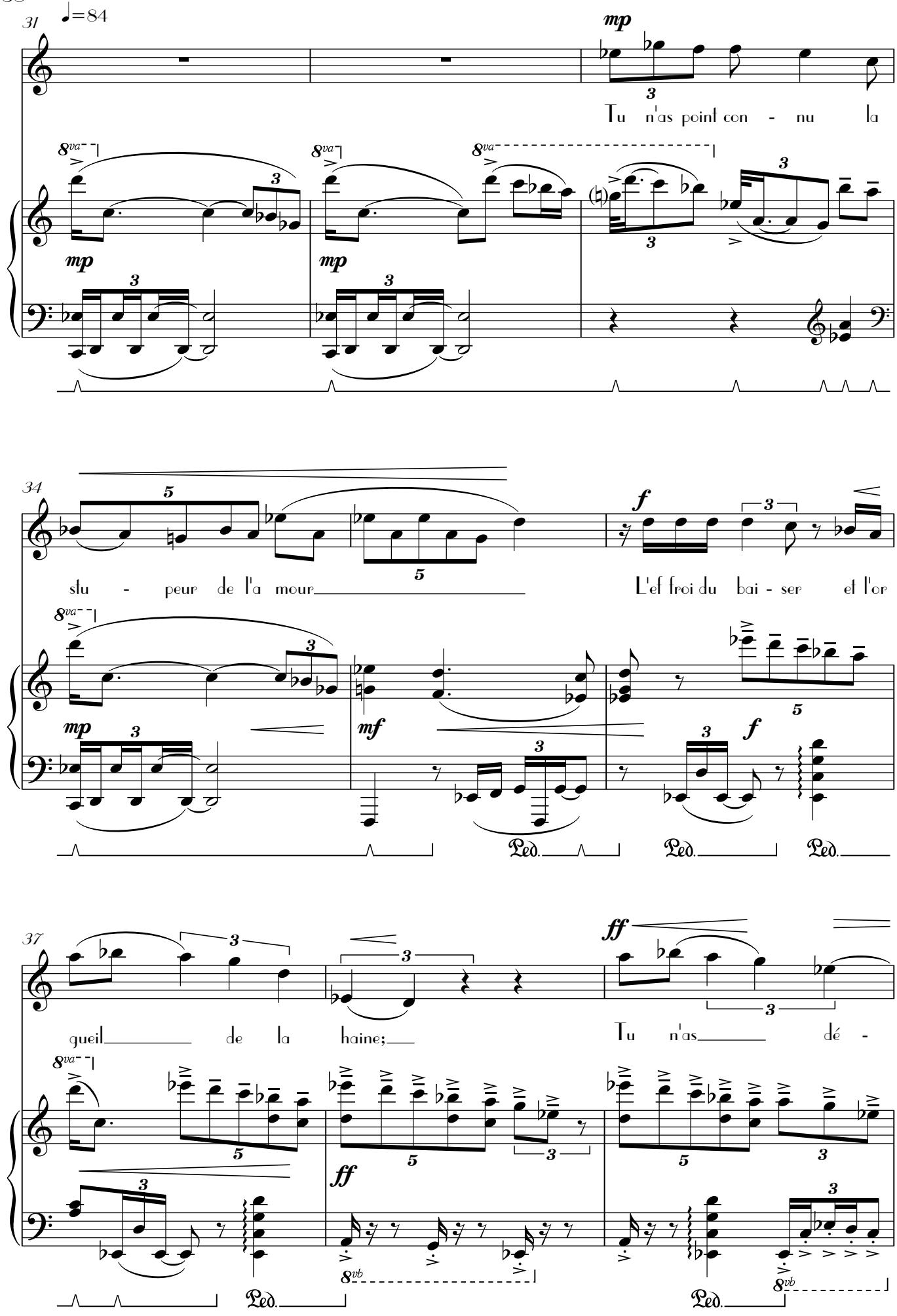
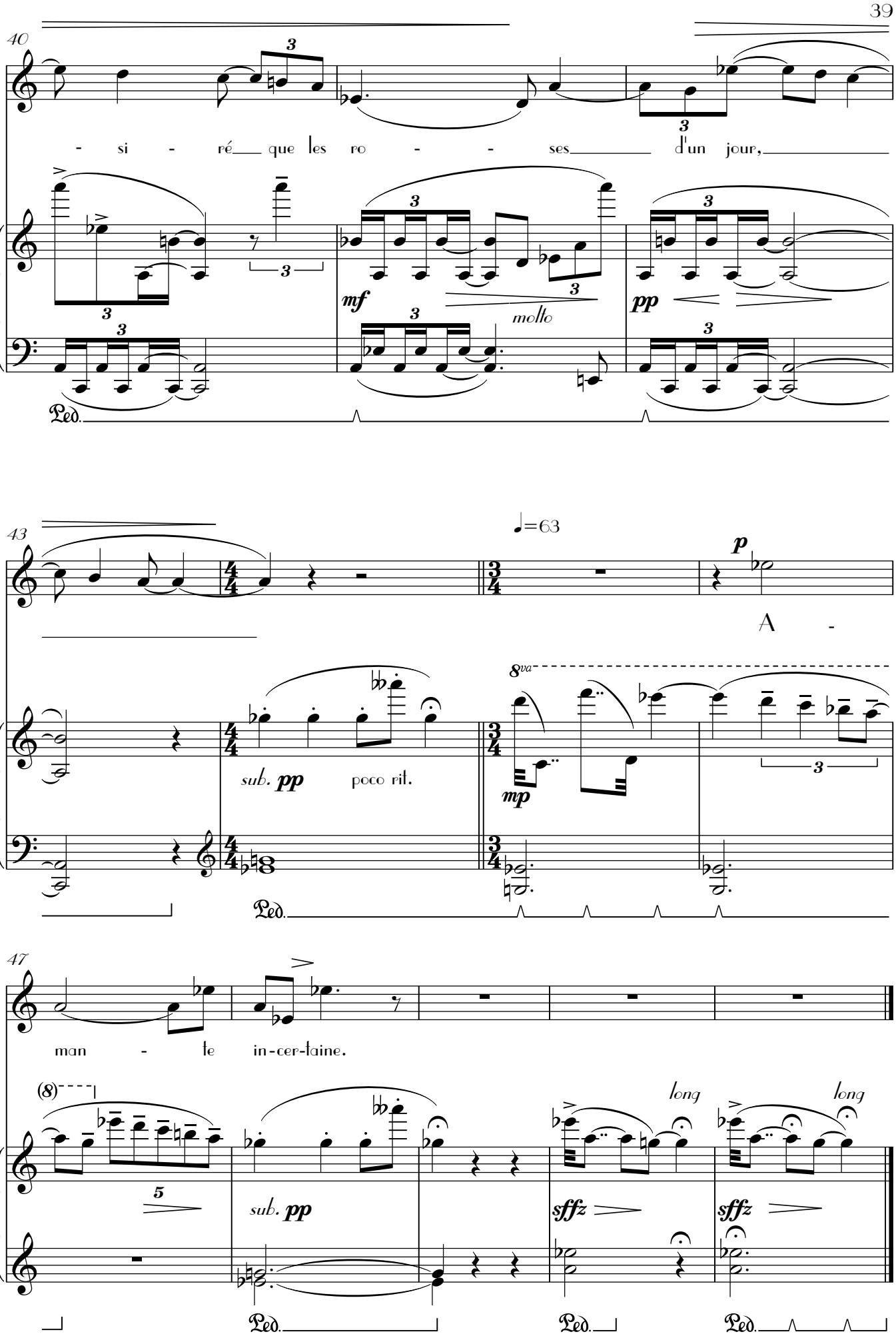
Peter Seabourne
March 2002



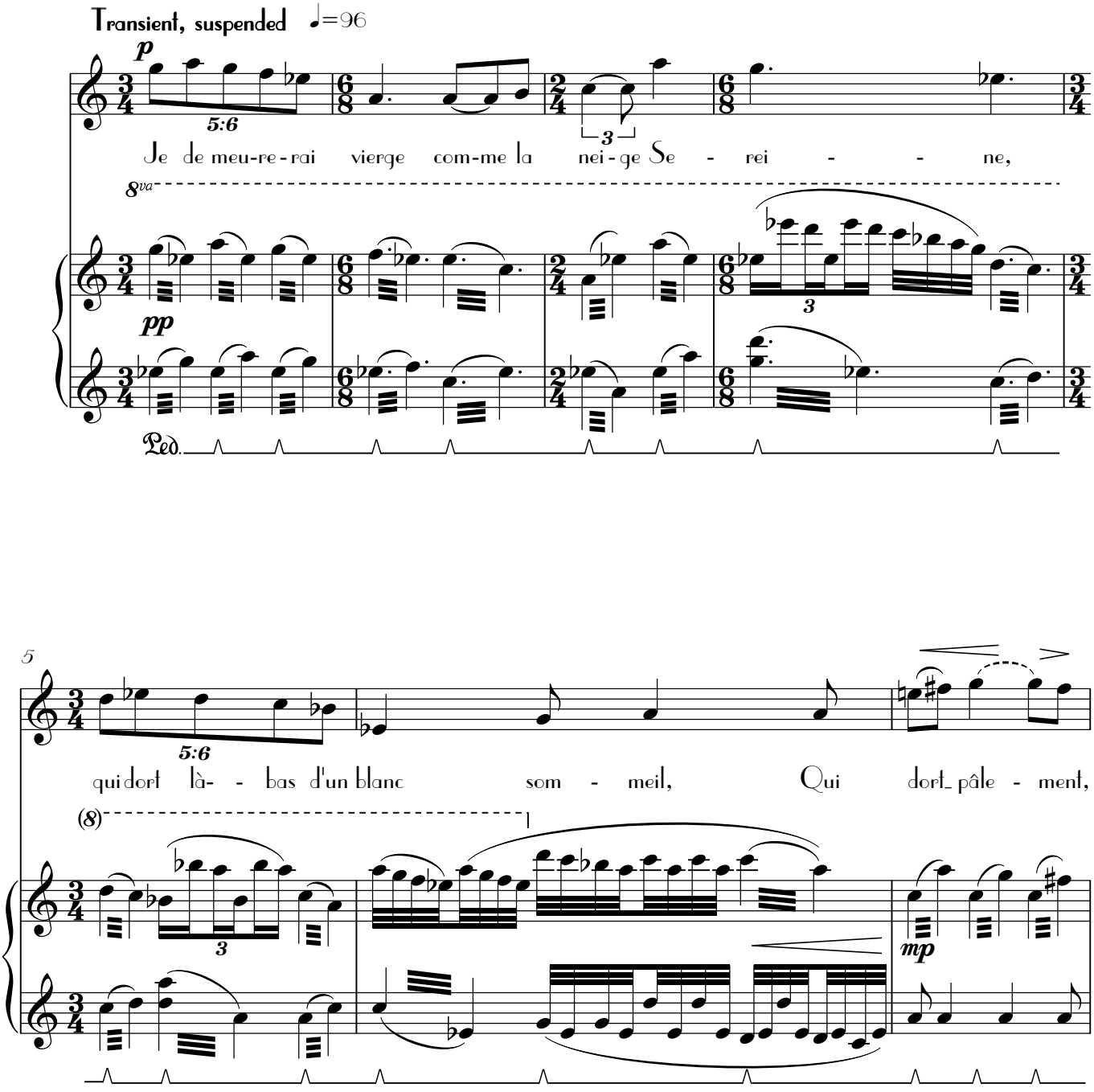

11
mf
sub. mf
- roir,
Mes yeux sans lu - eurs, mes pau - pi - ères
8va
sfz
sfz
mp
sfz
mp
15ma
sfz
p
13
pâ - lies.
(8)
mp
8va
mf
Ped.
15
mf
J'é - cou-te ton rire et ta voix dans le soir...
sffz
mf
f
sfz
mf
8vb
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.

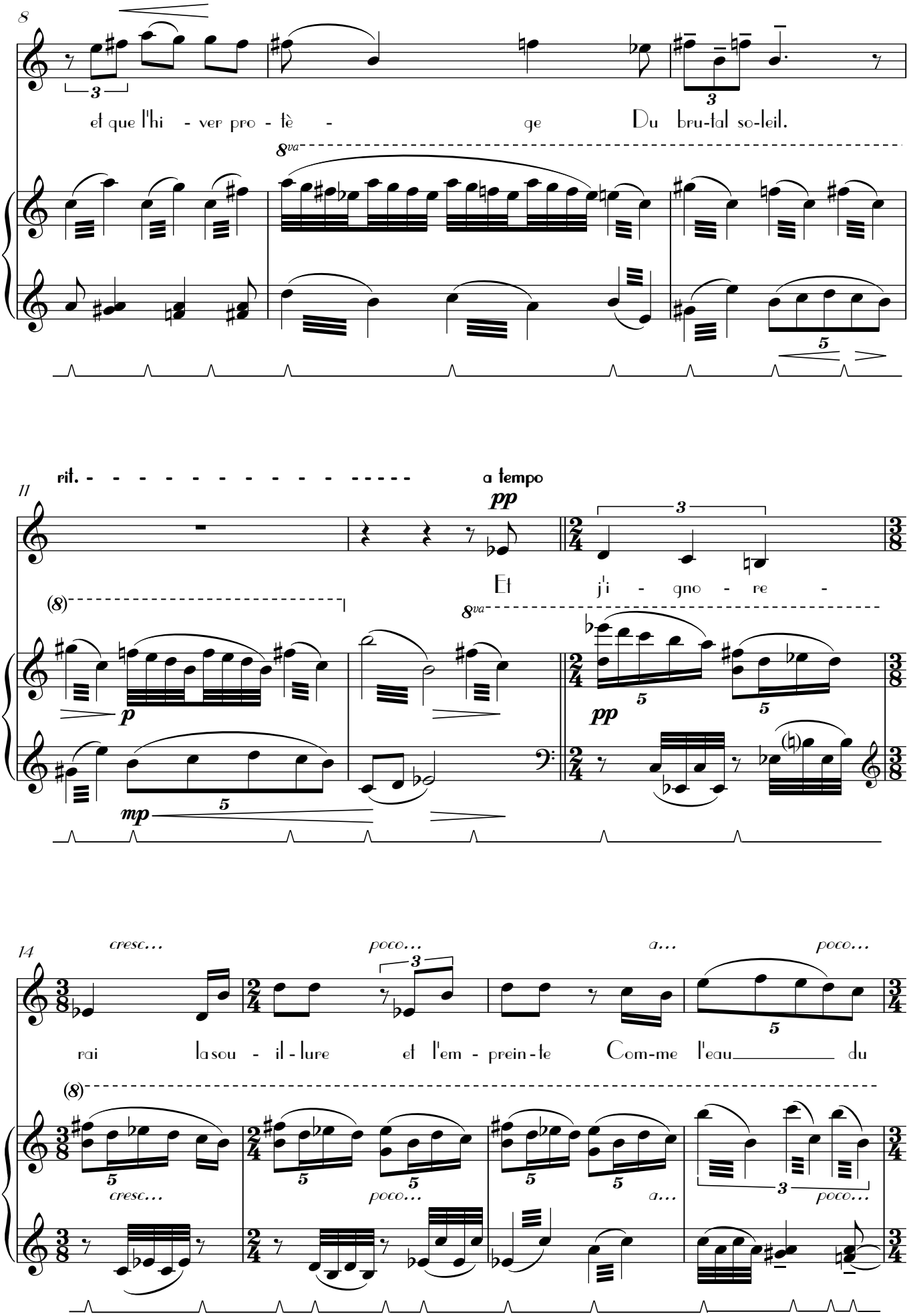

18
f
sfz
f
ff
8vb
Ped.
Ped.
21
♩=63
p
At - this, tu m'ou - - - bli - es.
8va
8va
sub. pp
p tendre
p
8vb
8va
26
mp tendre
mf
3

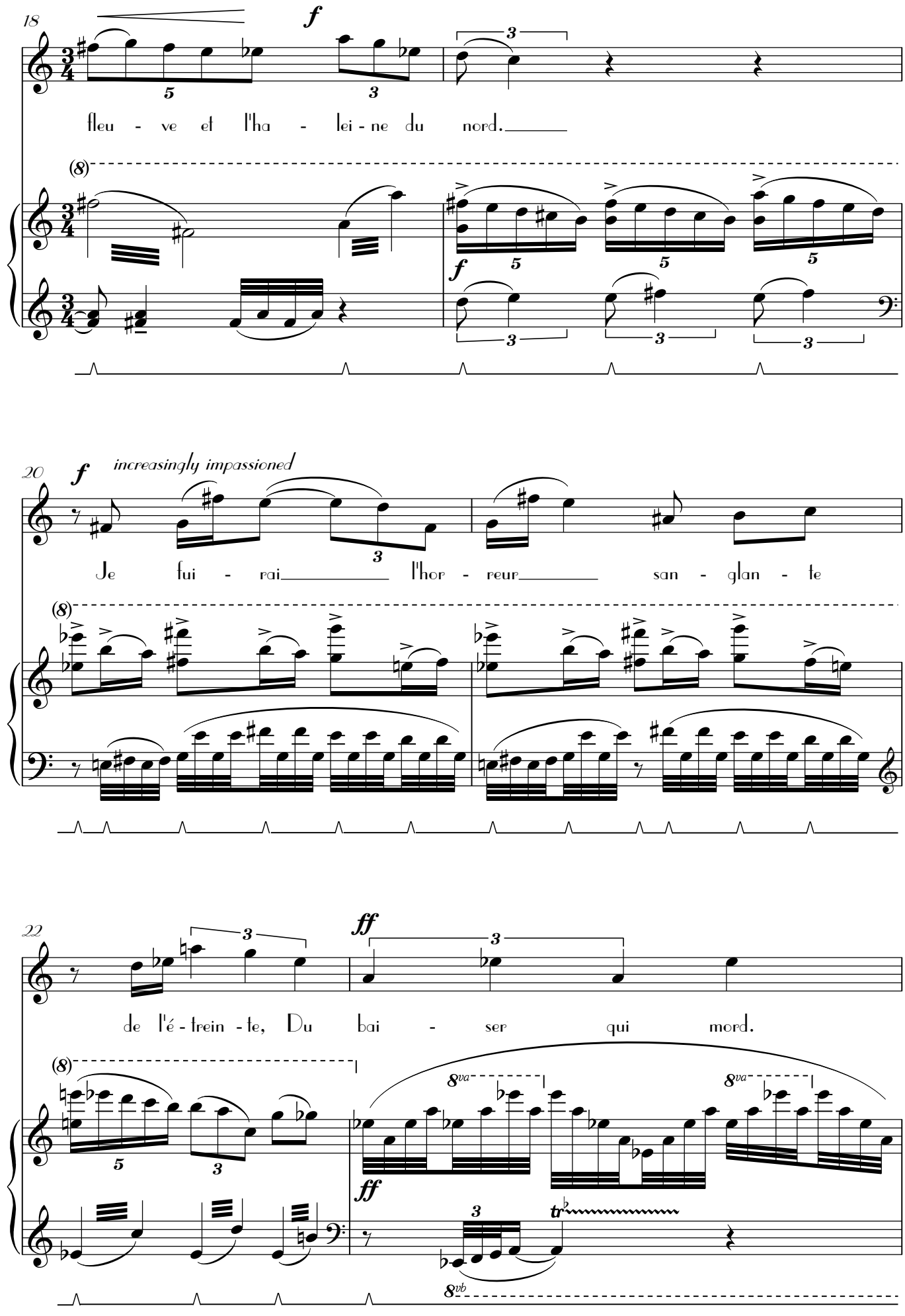

31
♩=84
mp
Tu n'as point con - nu la
34
stu - peur de l'a mour
L'ef froi du bai - ser et l'or
mf
f
Ped.
37
queil de la haine;
Tu n'as dé -
ff
8va
8vb

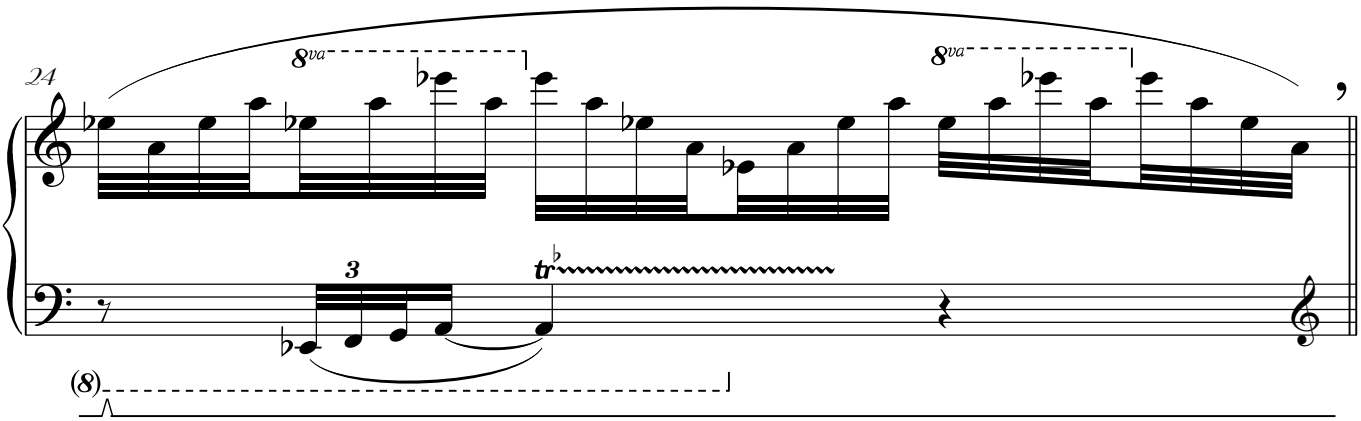

40
- si - ré que les ro - - ses d'un jour,
mf
molto
pp
Ped.
43
♩=63
p
A -
sub. pp
poco rit.
8va
mp
Ped.
47
man - te in-cer-taine.
(8)
5
sub. pp
long
long
sffz
sffz
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.

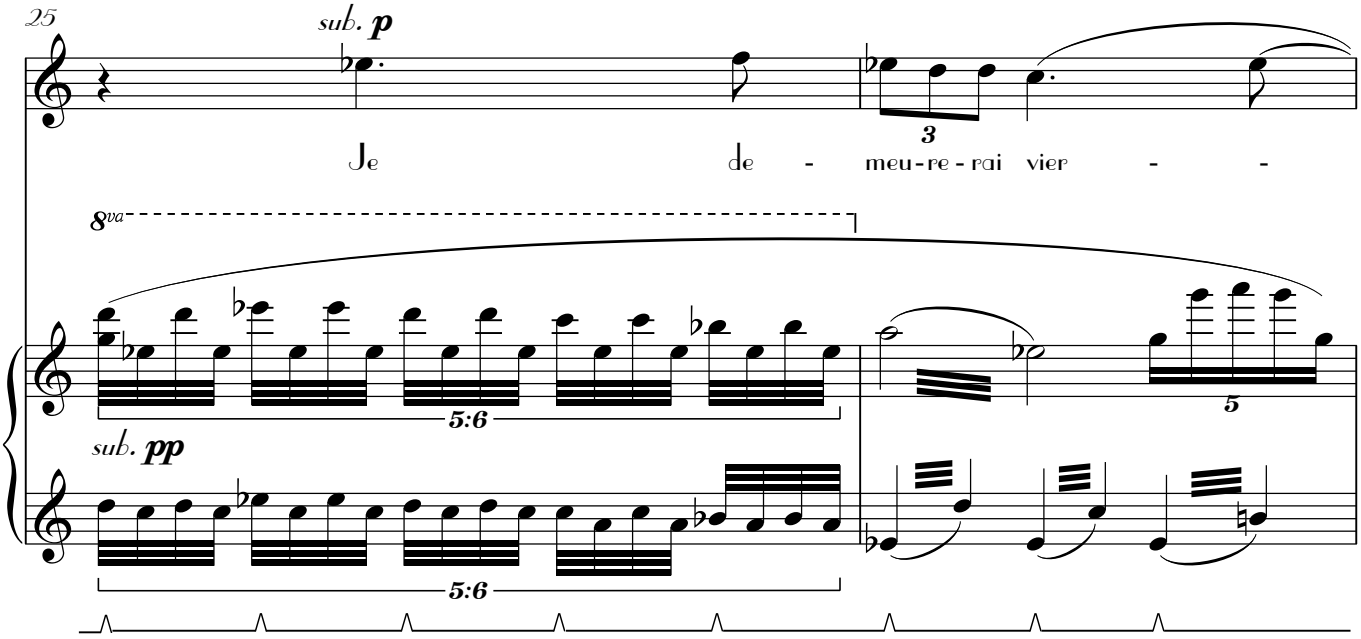
2. Je serai toujours vierge

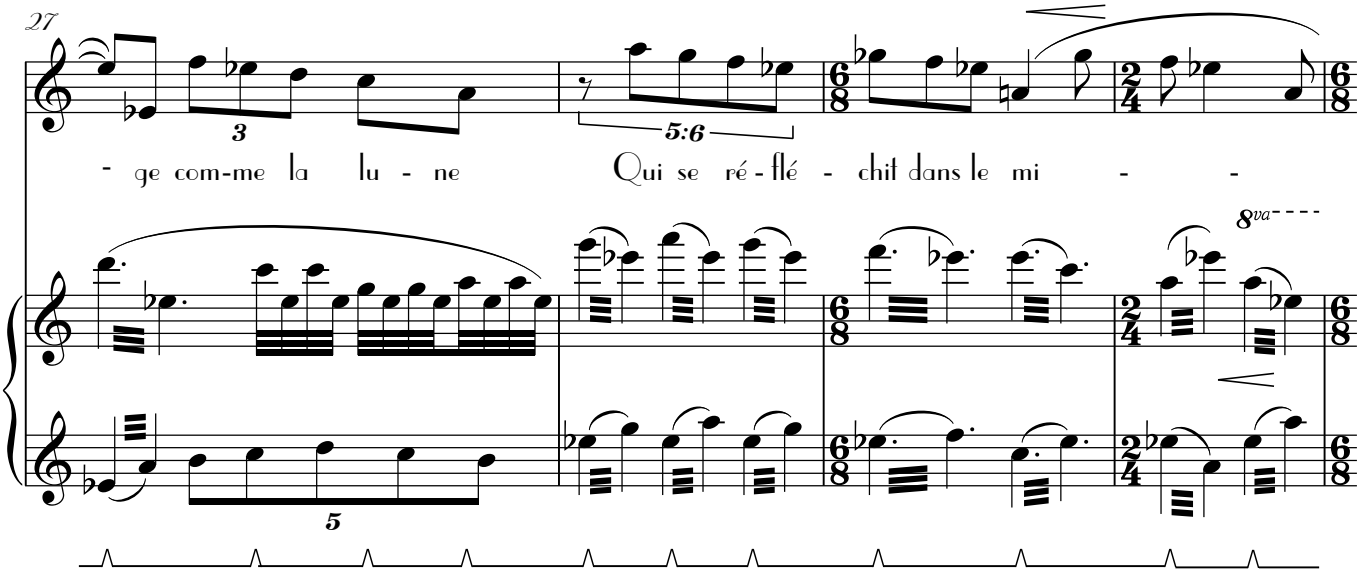


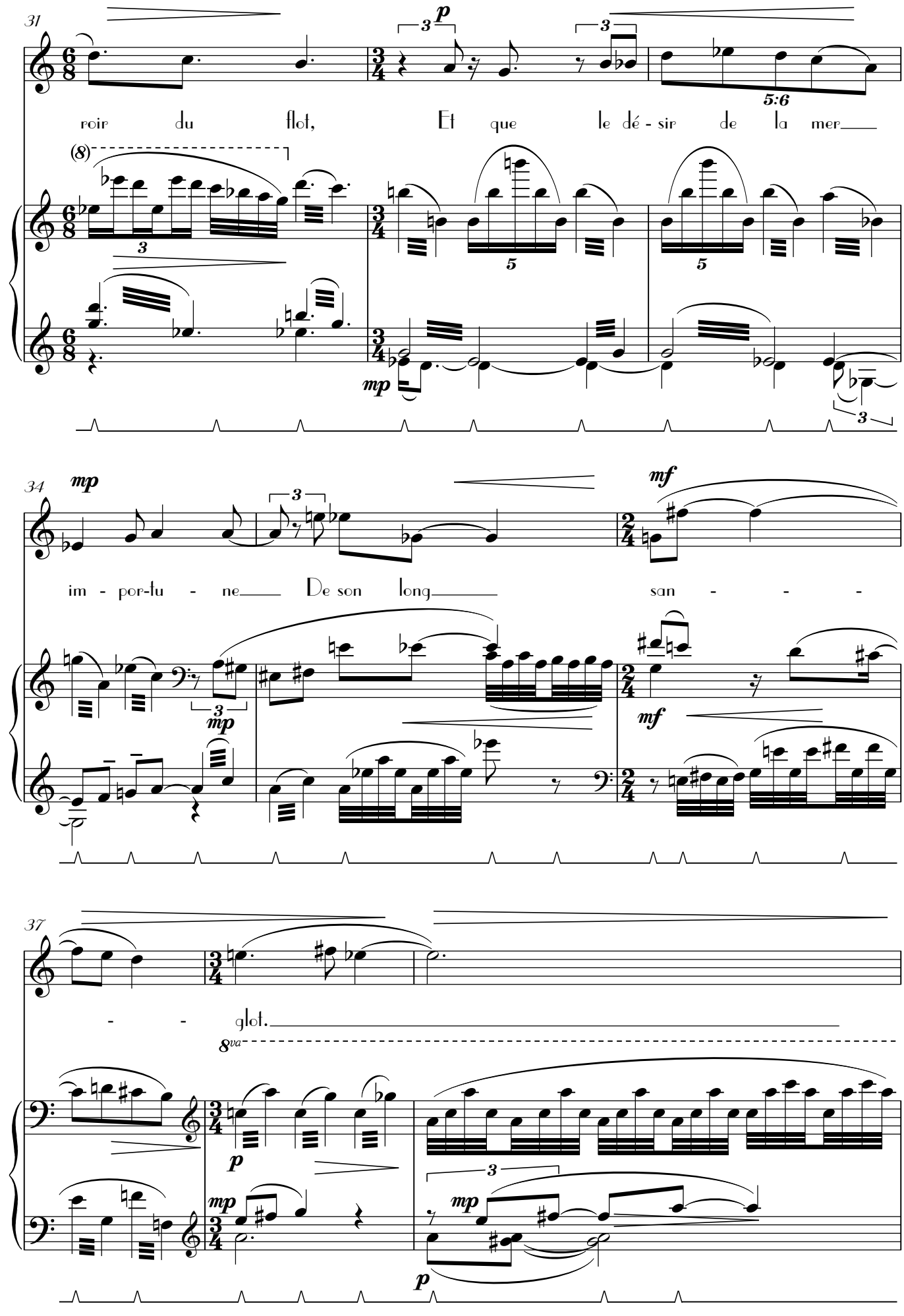

8
et que l'hi - ver pro - tè - ge Du bru-tal so-leil.
8va
11
rit.
a tempo
pp
Et j'i - gno - re -
(8)
8va
p
pp
mp
14
cresc...
poco...
a...
poco...
rai la sou - il - lure et l'em - prein - te Com-me l'eau du
(8)
cresc...
poco...
a...
poco...

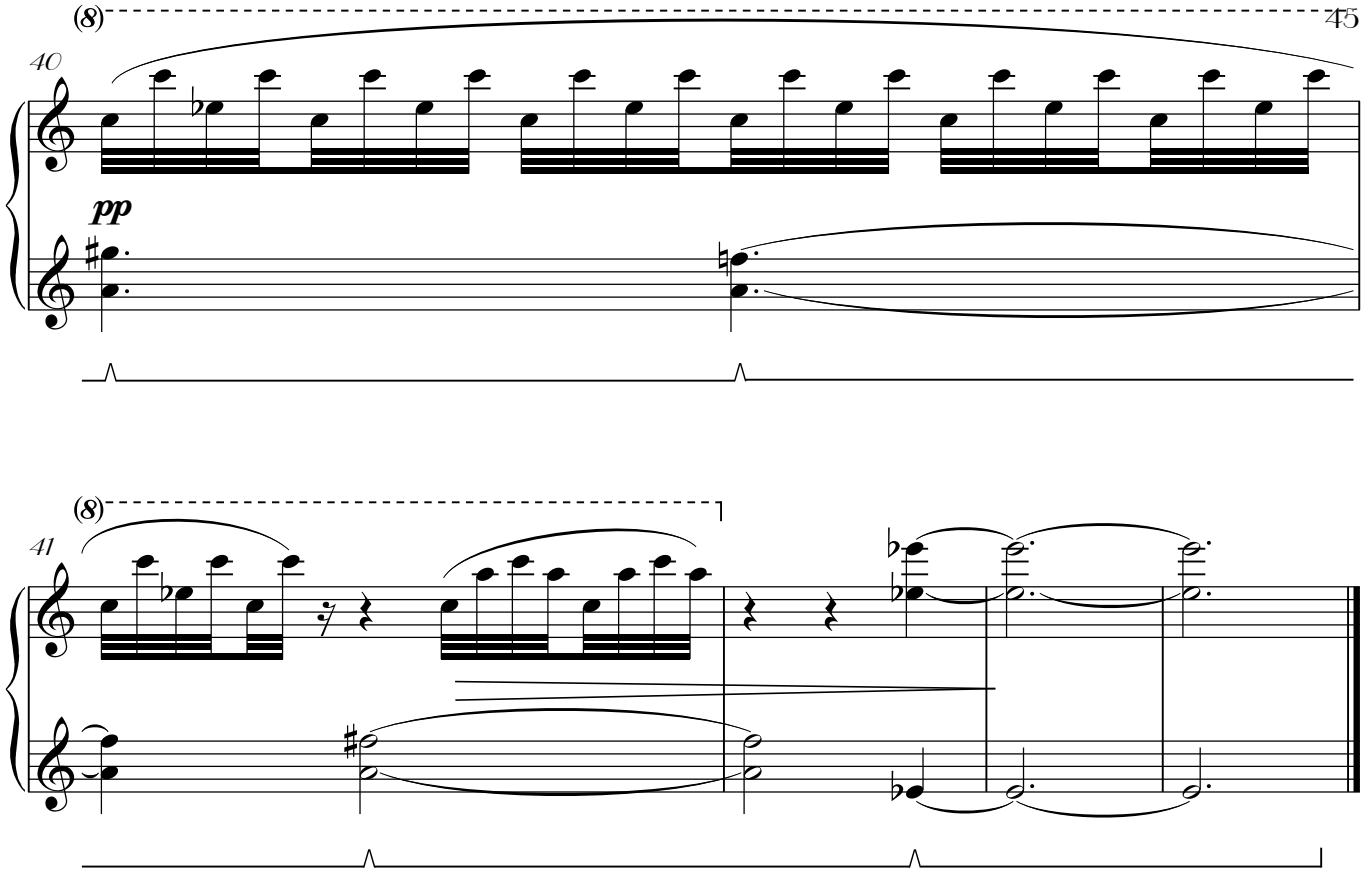

18
f
fleu - ve et l'ha - lei - ne du nord.
(8)
f
20
f
increasingly impassioned
Je fui - rai l'hor - reur san - glan - te
(8)
22
ff
de l'é - trein - te, Du bai - ser qui mord.
(8)
8va
8va
ff
tr
8vb


24
8va
8va
3
tr
(8)


25
sub. p
Je de - meu-re-rai vier - -
3
8va
5:6
5
sub. pp
5:6

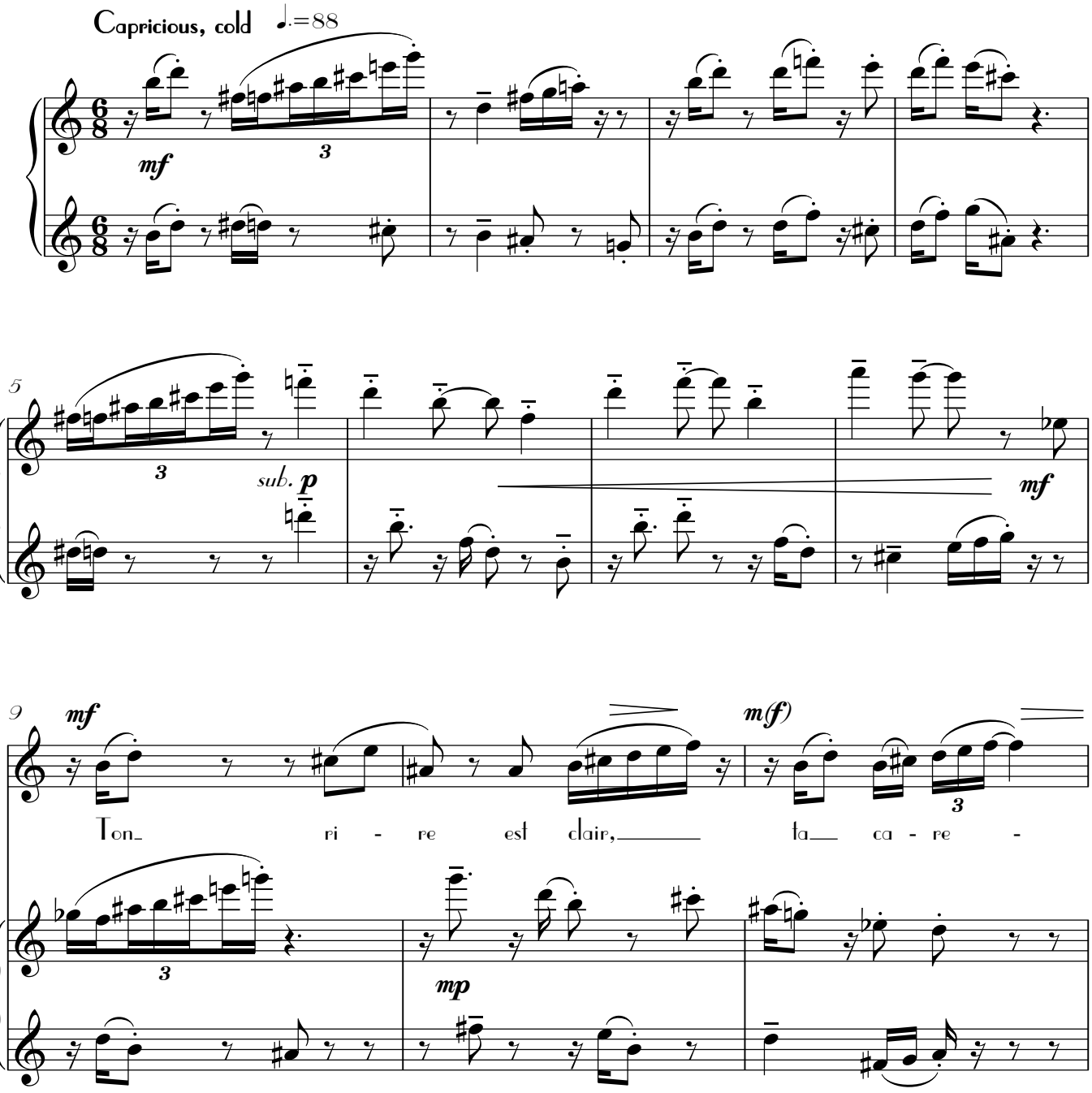

27
3
- ge com-me la lu - ne
5:6
Qui se ré-flé - chit dans le mi - -
8va
5

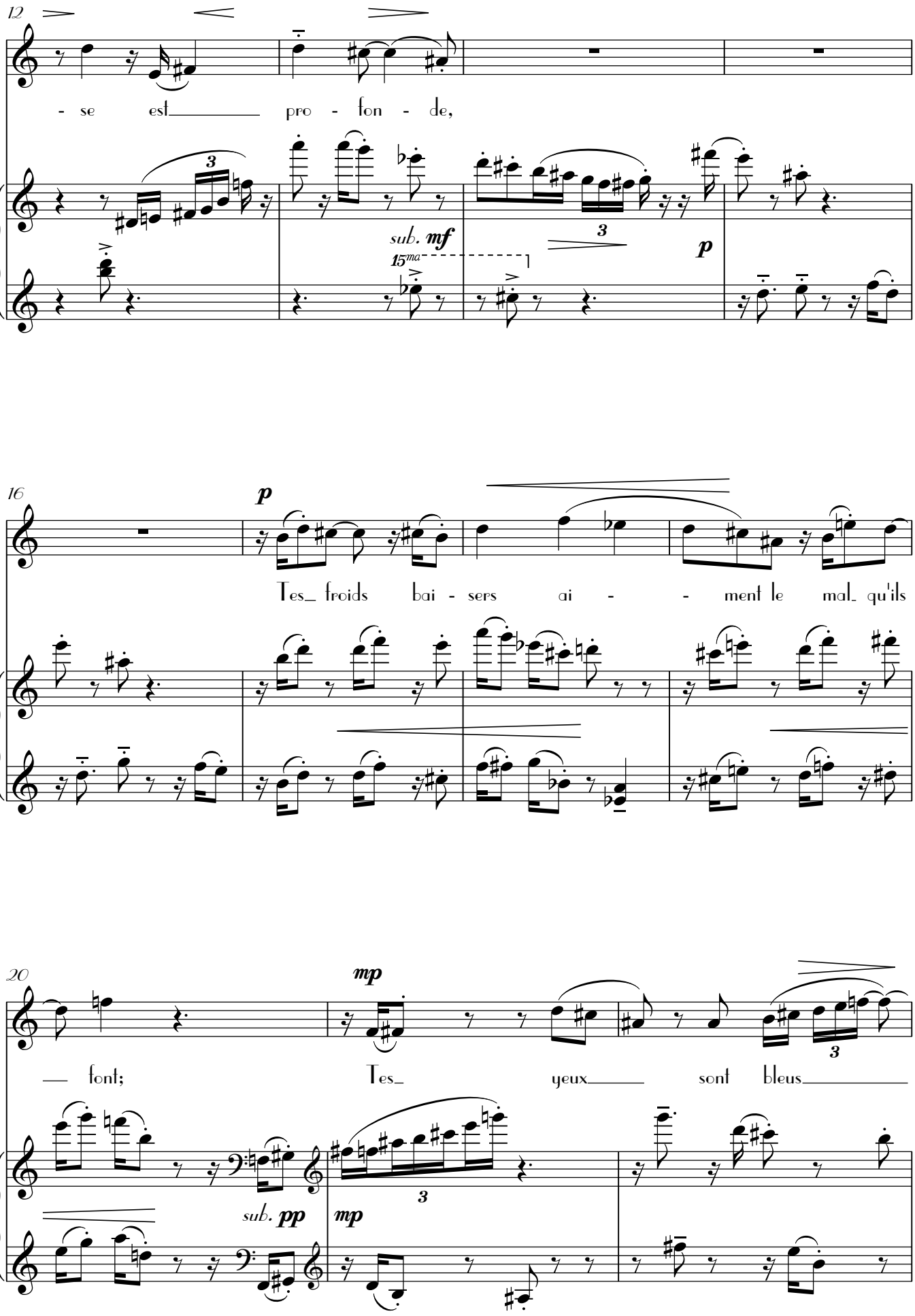

31
roir du flot, Et que le dé - sir de la mer
34
im - por-tu - ne De son long san - - -
37
- - glot.

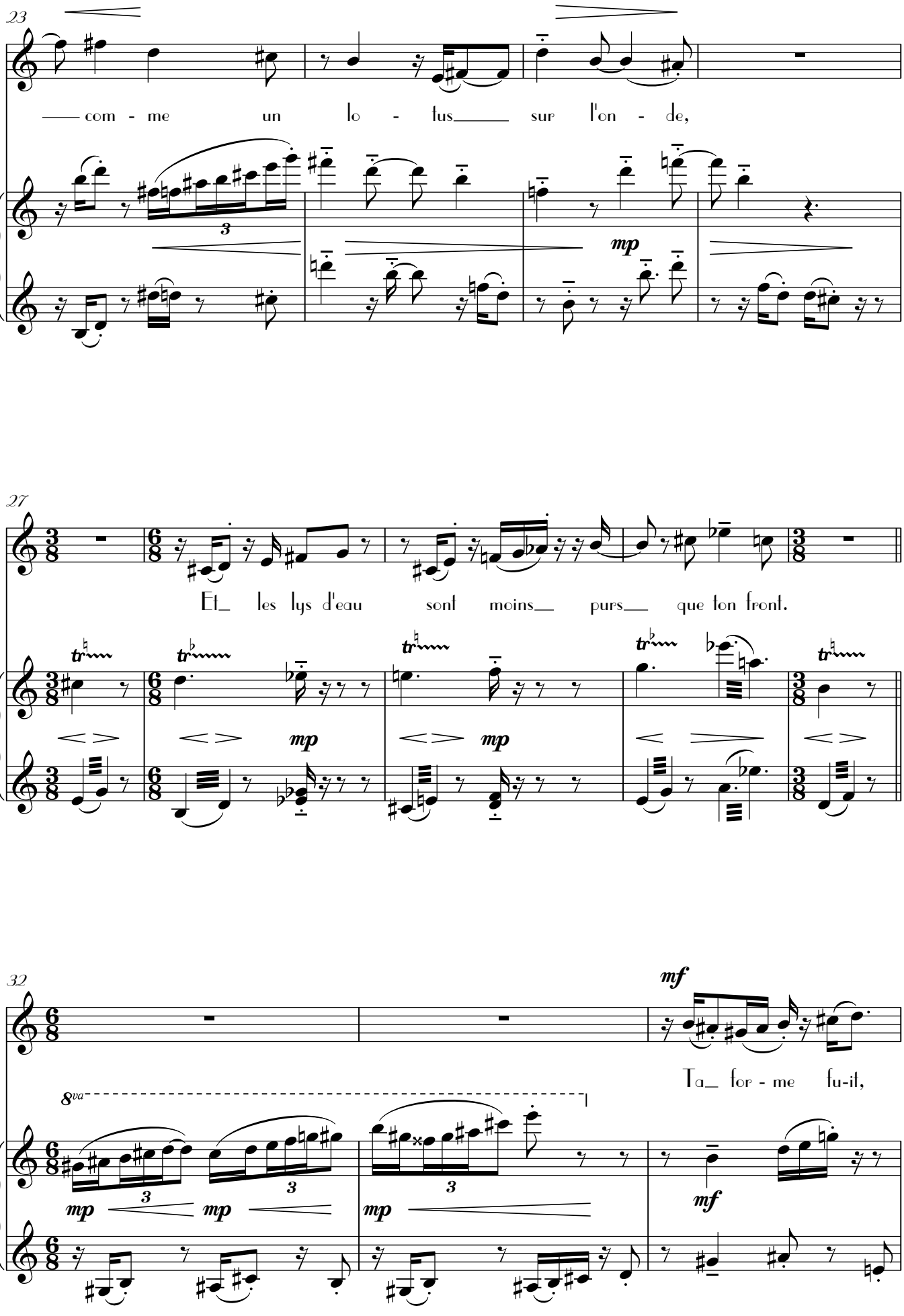

(8)
40
pp

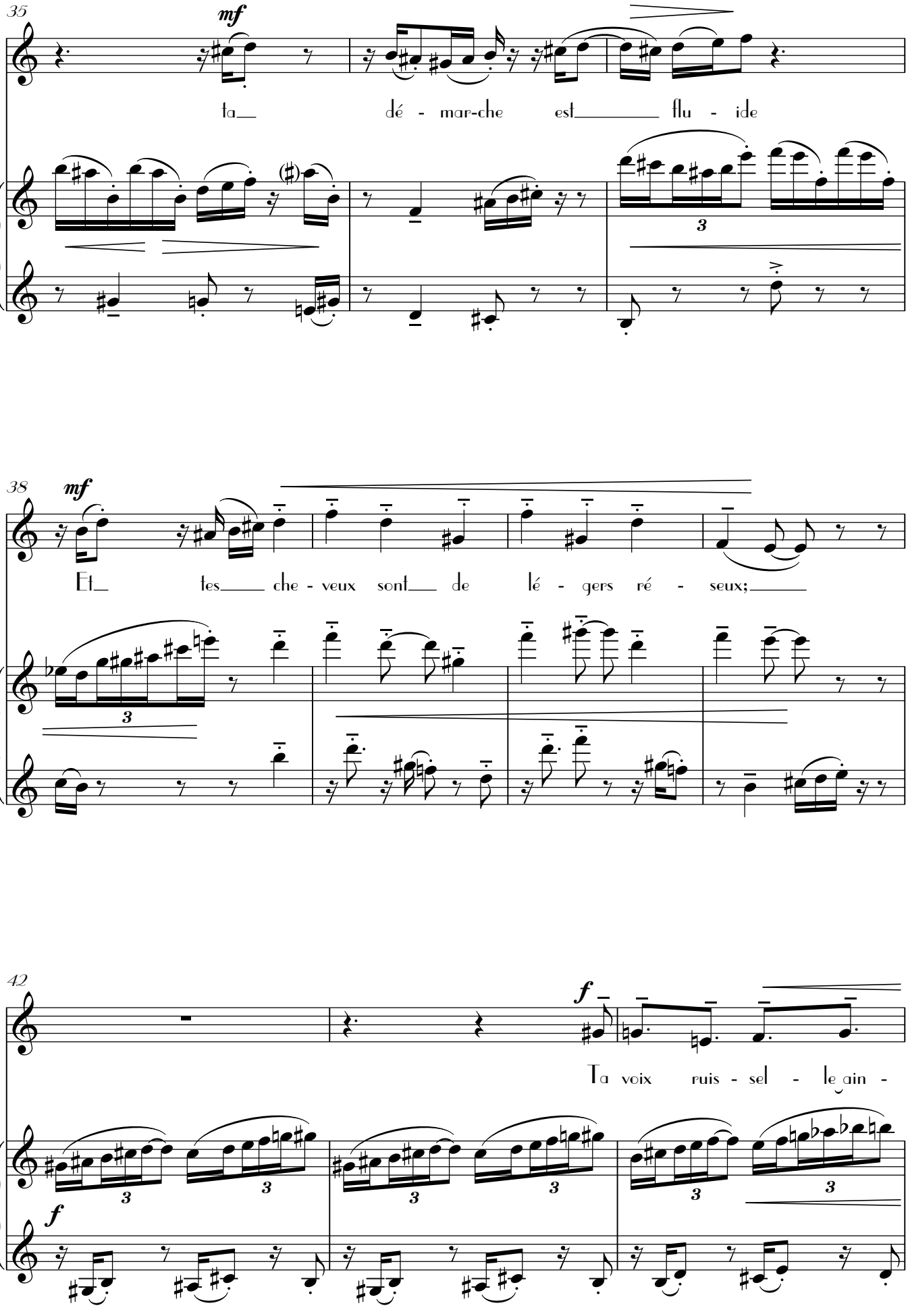
(8)
41

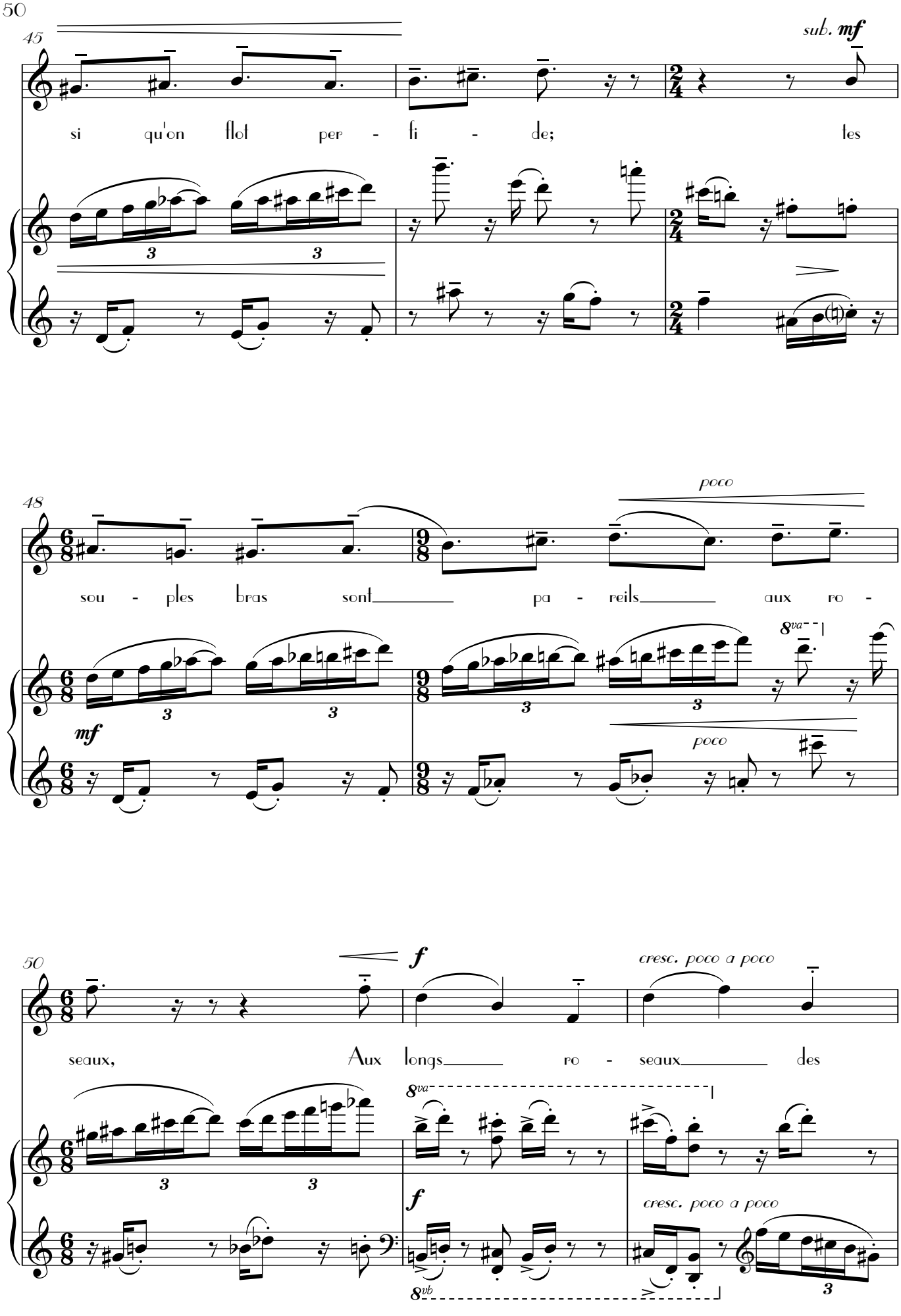
3. Ondine

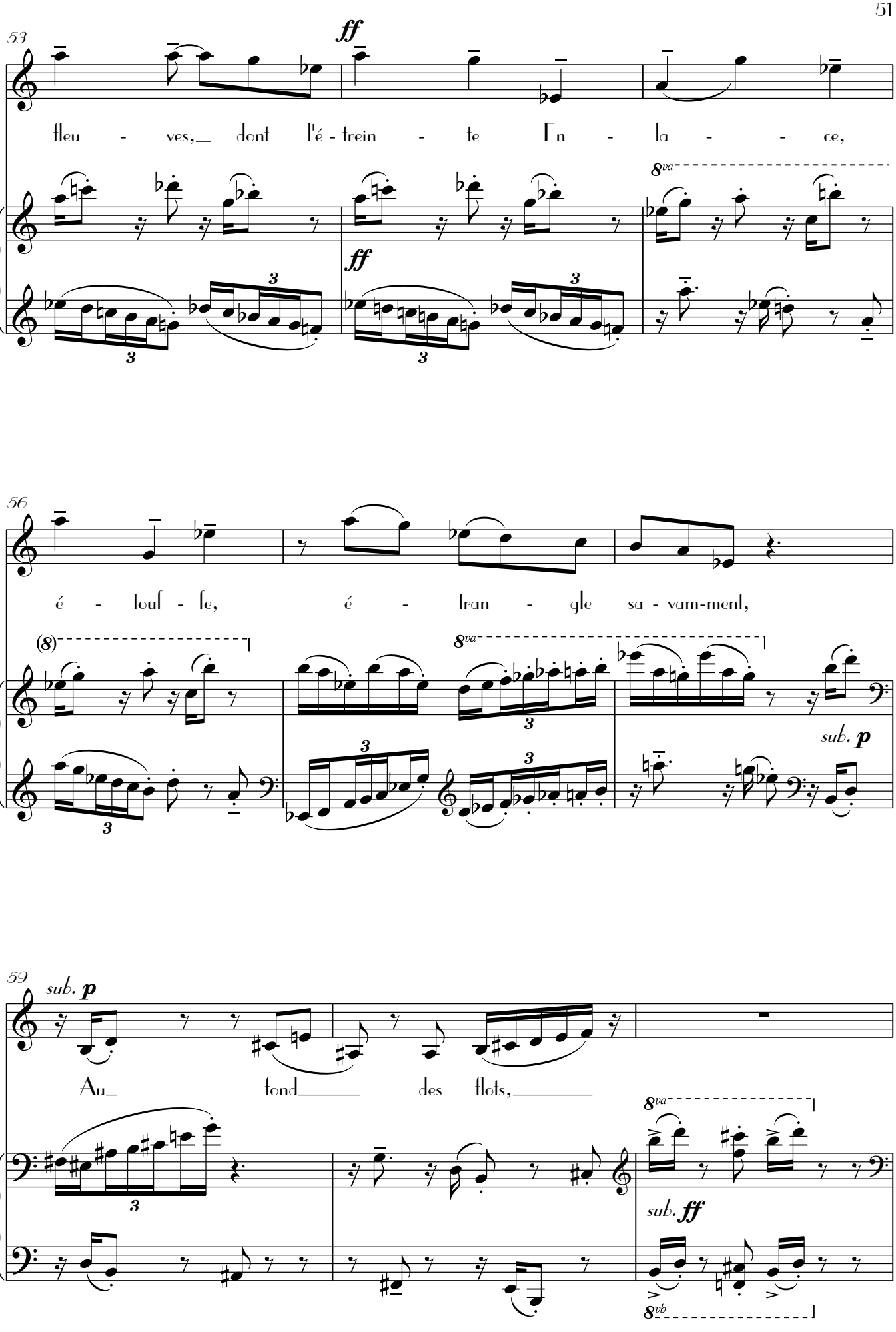

Capricious, cold
♩.=88
mf
3
5
3
sub. p
mf
9
mf
m(f)
3
Ton_ ri - re est clair,_____ ta__ ca - re -
3
mp

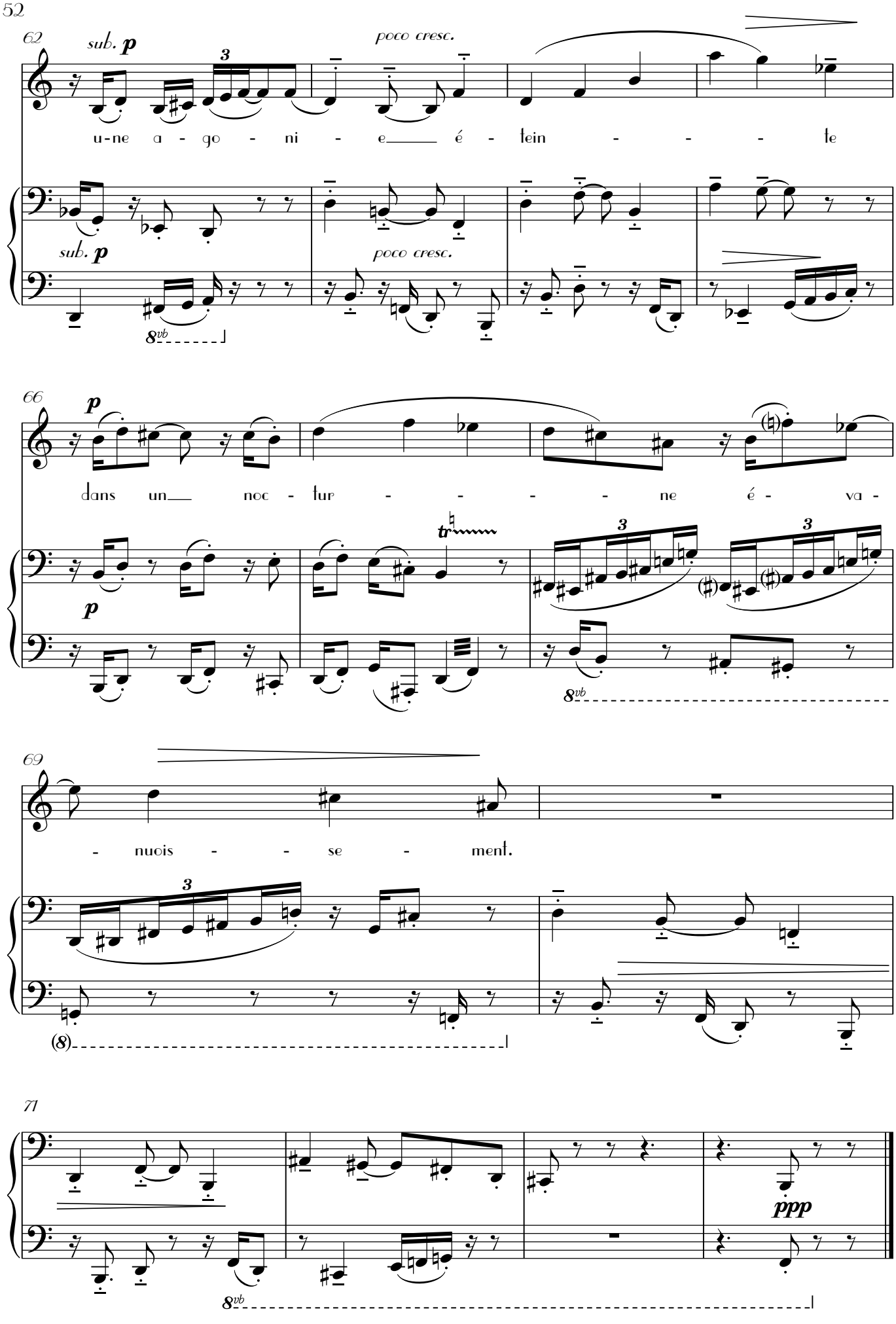

12
- se est pro - fon - de,
sub. mf
15ma
p
16
p
Tes_ froids bai - sers ai - - ment le mal_ qu'ils
20
mp
font; Tes_ yeux sont bleus
sub. pp
mp


23
com - me un lo - tus sur l'on - de,
mp
27
Et les lys d'eau sont moins purs que ton front.
mp
mp
32
mf
Ta for - me fu-it,
8va
mp
mp
mp
mf

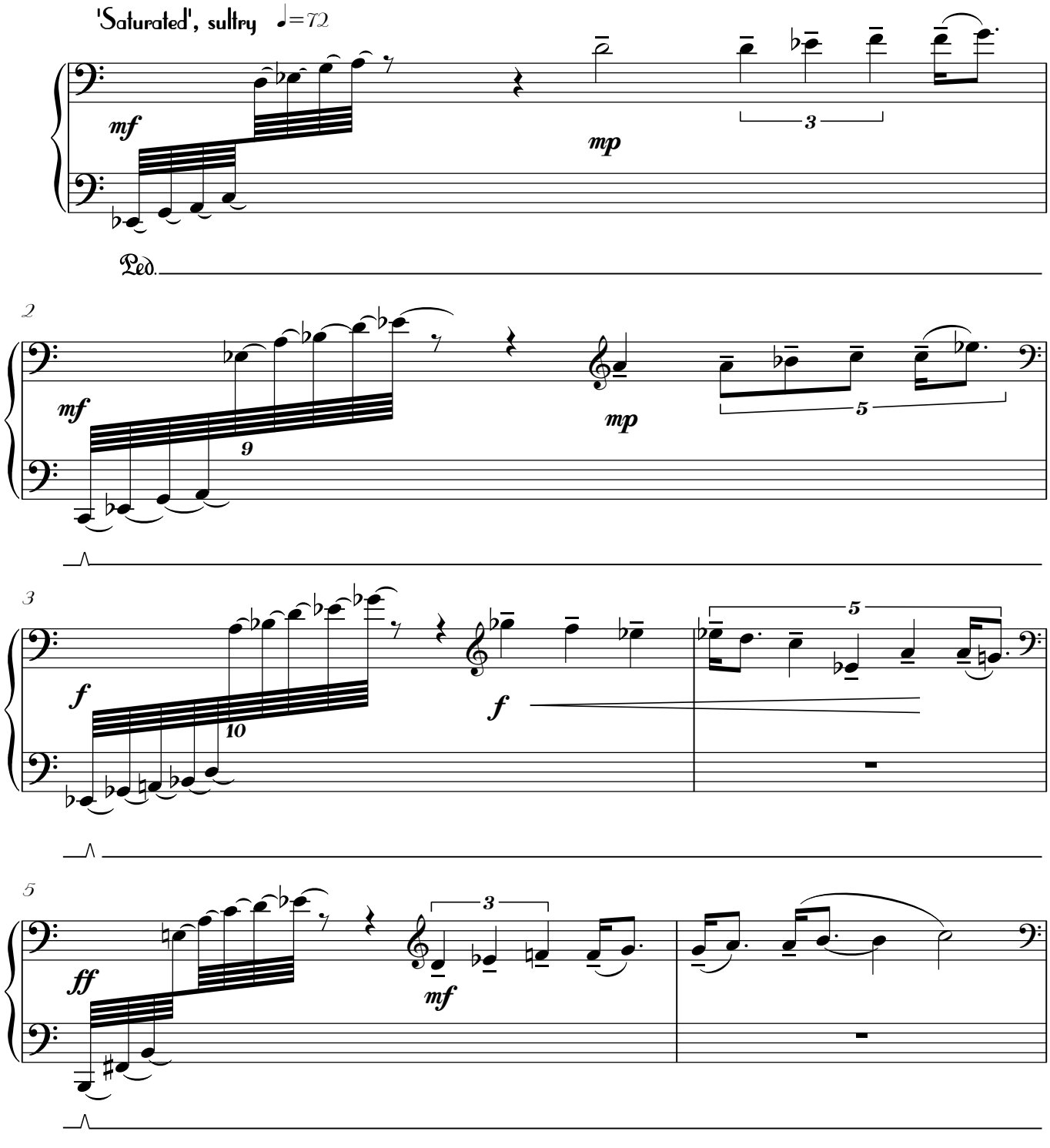

35
mf
ta dé - mar-che est flu - ide
38
mf
Et tes che - veux sont de lé - gers ré - seux;
42
f
Ta voix ruis - sel - le ain -
f

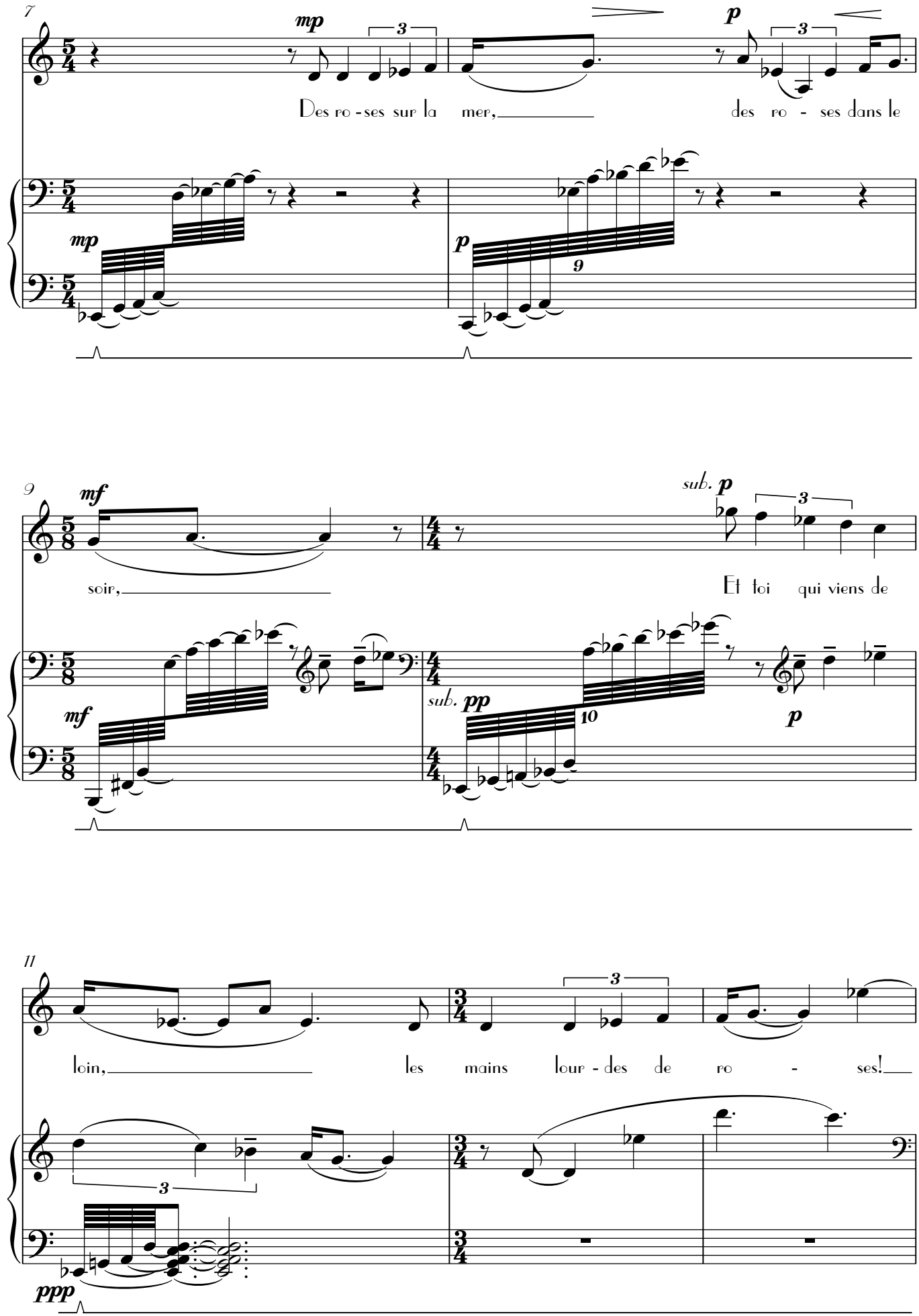

45
sub. mf
si qu'on flot per - fi - de; tes
48
poco
sou - ples bras sont pa - reils aux ro -
8va
mf
poco
50
f
cresc. poco a poco
seaux, Aux longs ro - seaux des
8va
f
cresc. poco a poco
8vb

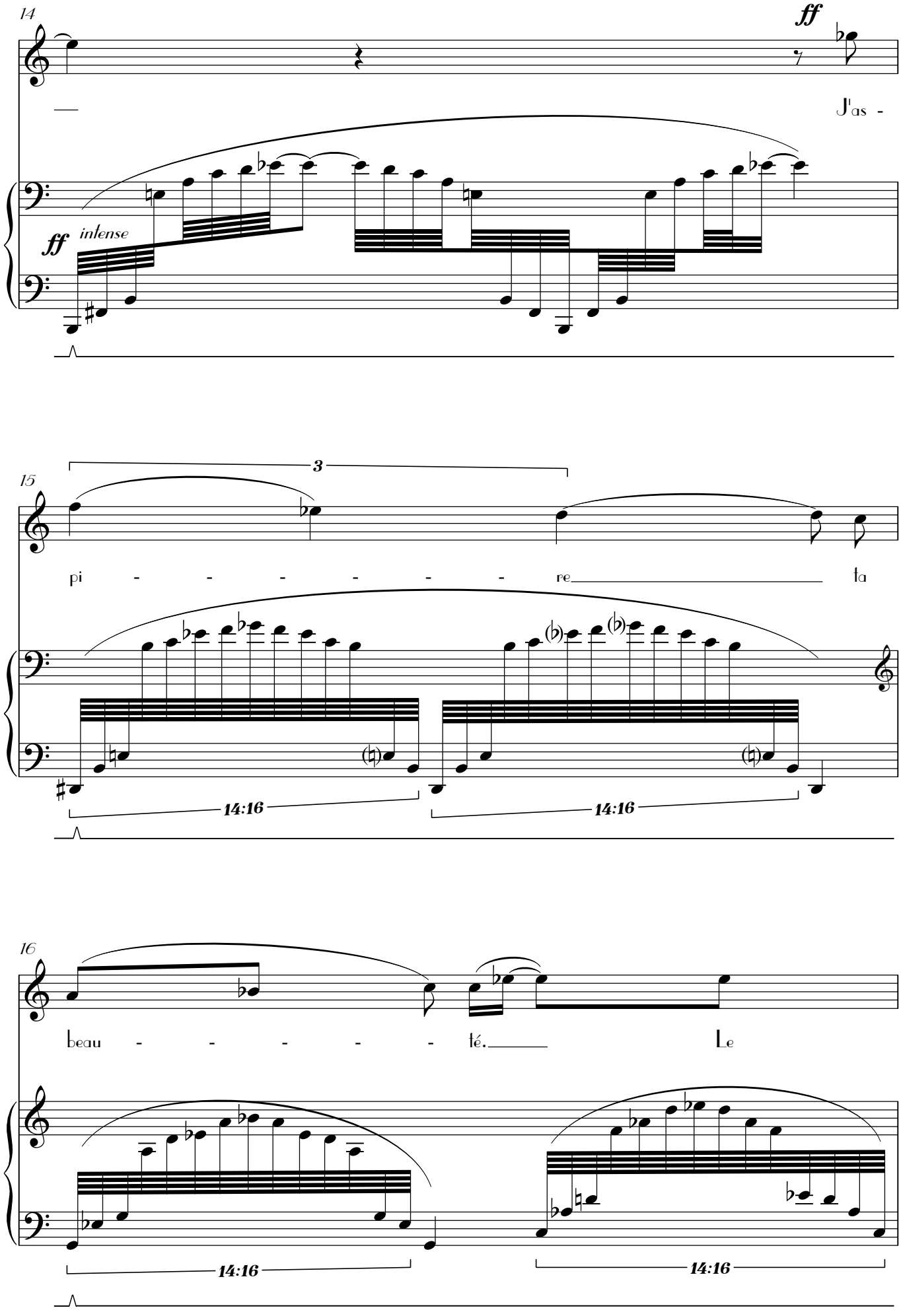

53
ff
fleu - ves, dont l'é - trein - te En - la - - ce,
8va
ff
56
é - touf - fe, é - tran - gle sa - vam-ment,
(8)
8va
sub. p
59
sub. p
Au fond des flots,
8va
sub. ff
8vb

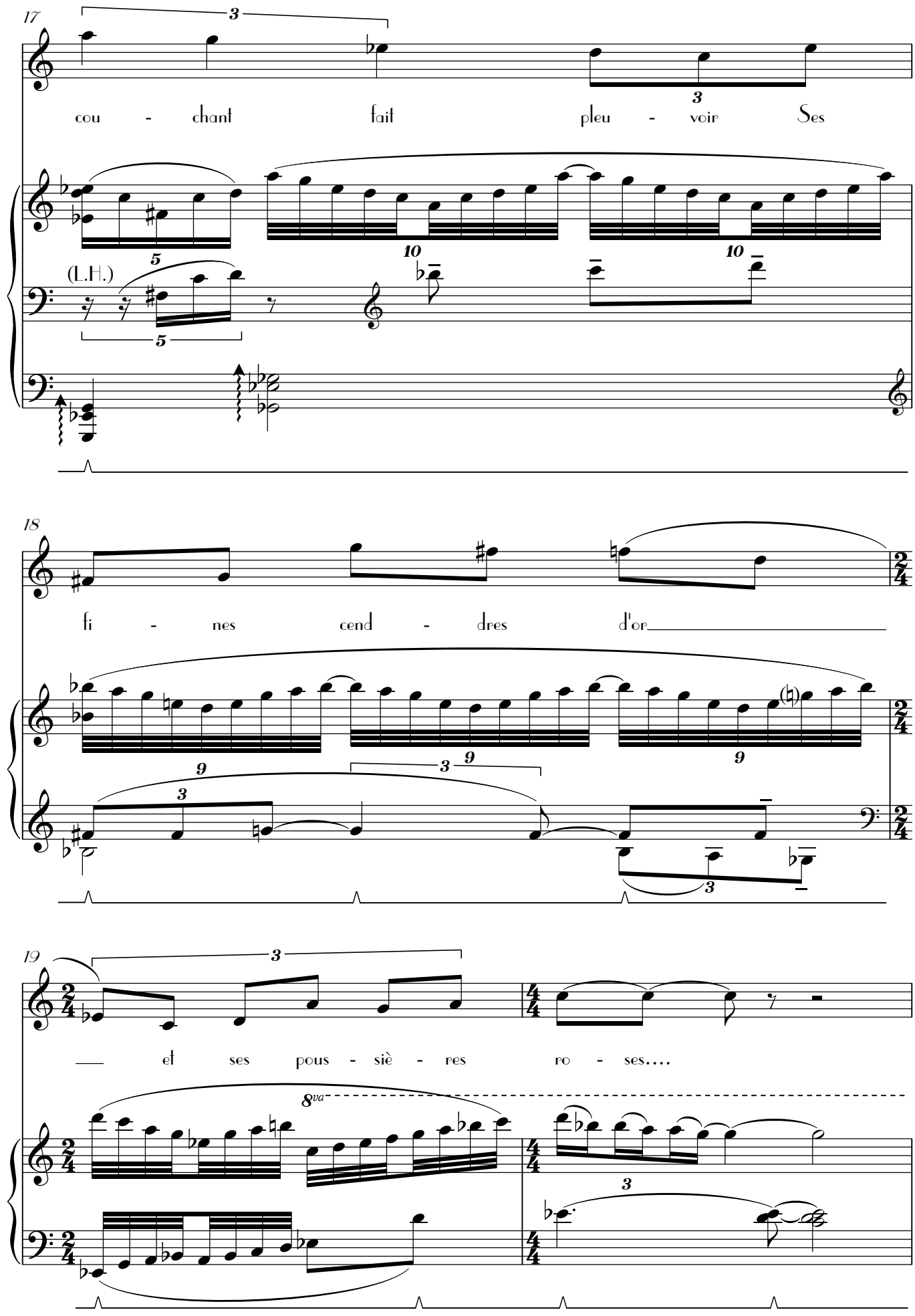

62
sub. p
poco cresc.
u-ne a - go - ni - e é - tein - - - te
sub. p
poco cresc.
8vb
66
p
dans un noc - tur - - - - ne é - va -
p
tr
8vb
69
- nuois - - se - ment.
(8)
71
ppp
8vb

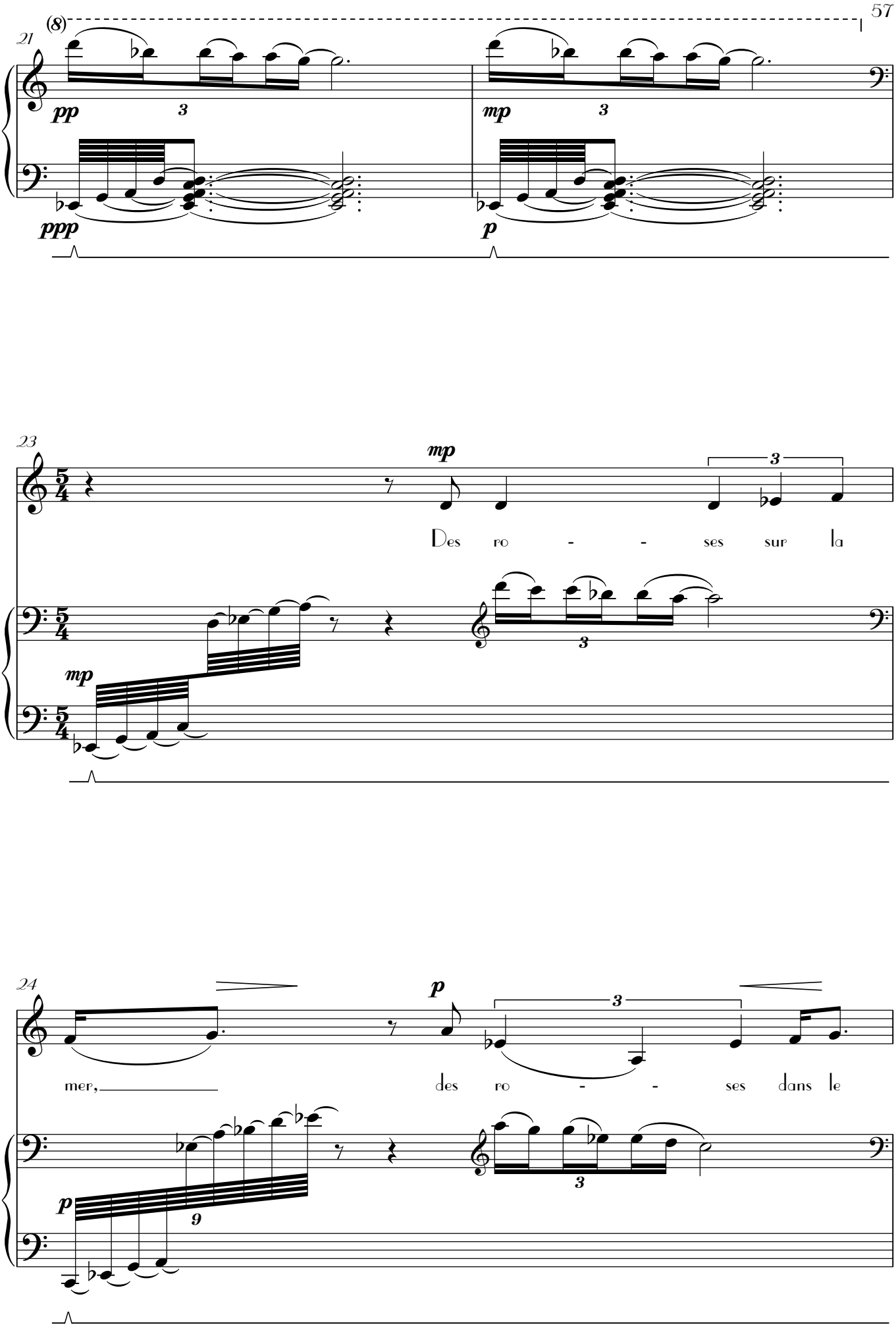
4. Roses du Soir

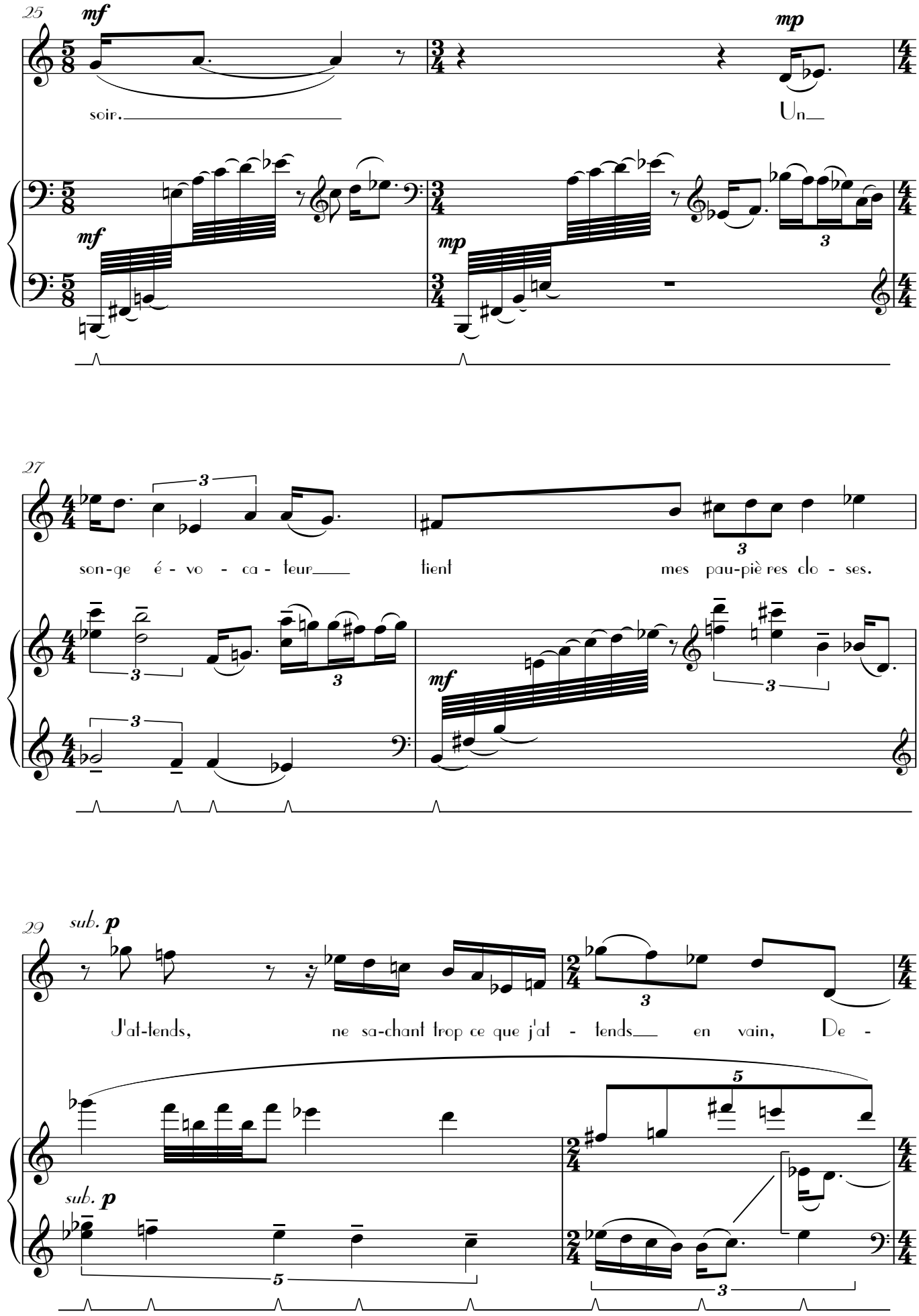


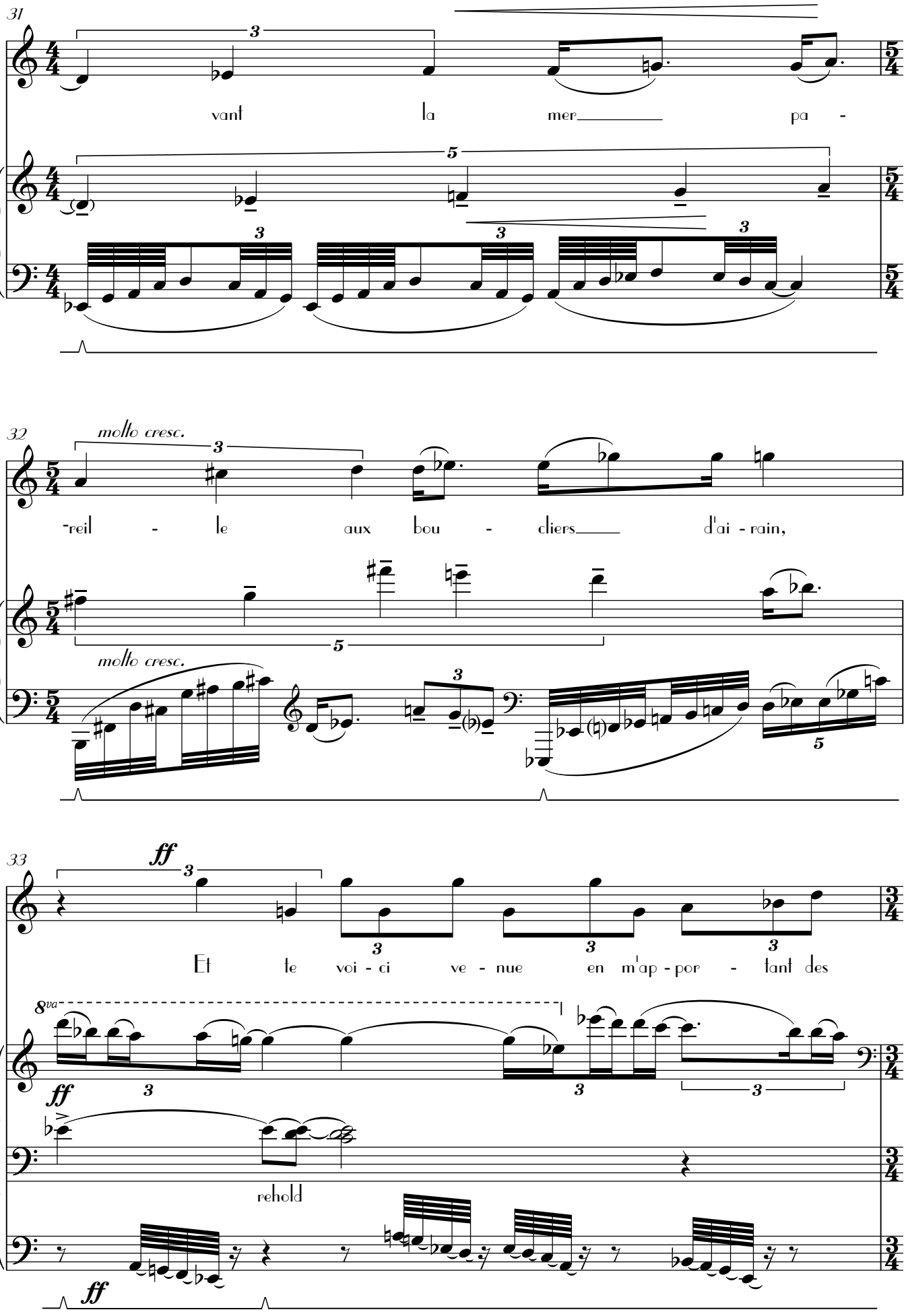

7
mp
3
p
Des ro - ses sur la mer,
des ro - ses dans le
mp
p
9
9
mf
soir,
sub. p
3
Et toi qui viens de
mf
sub. pp
10
p
11
loin,
les mains lour - des de ro - ses!
3
3
ppp

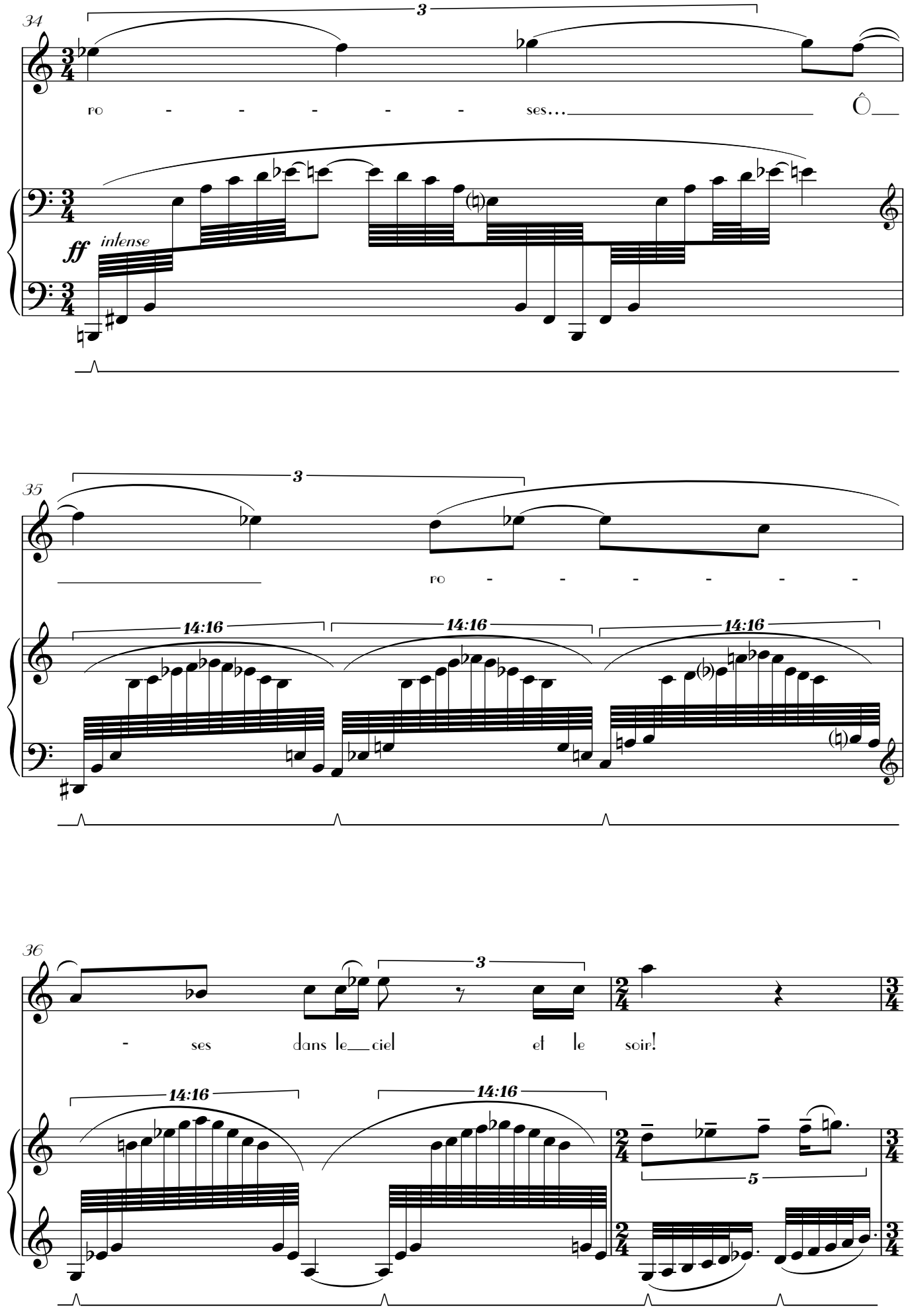

14
ff
J'as -
ff
inlense
15
3
pi - - - - - - re ta
14:16
14:16
16
beau - - - - - té. Le
14:16
14:16

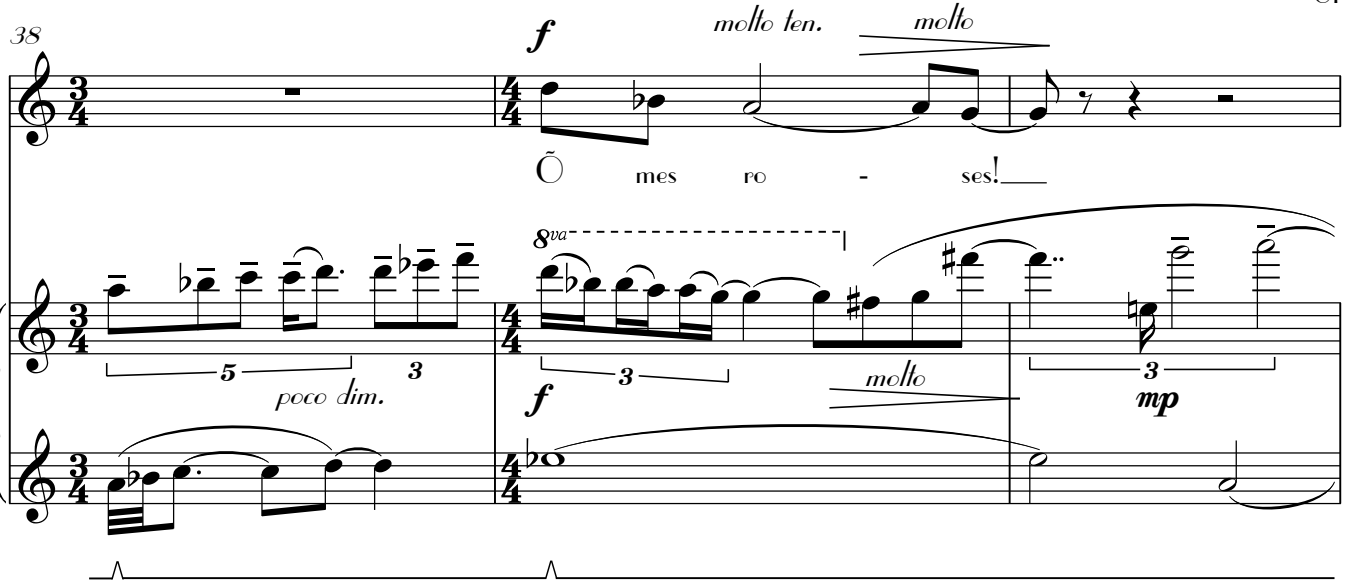

17
cou - chant fait pleu - voir Ses
(L.H.)
18
fi - nes cend - dres d'or
19
et ses pous - siè - res ro - ses....
8va

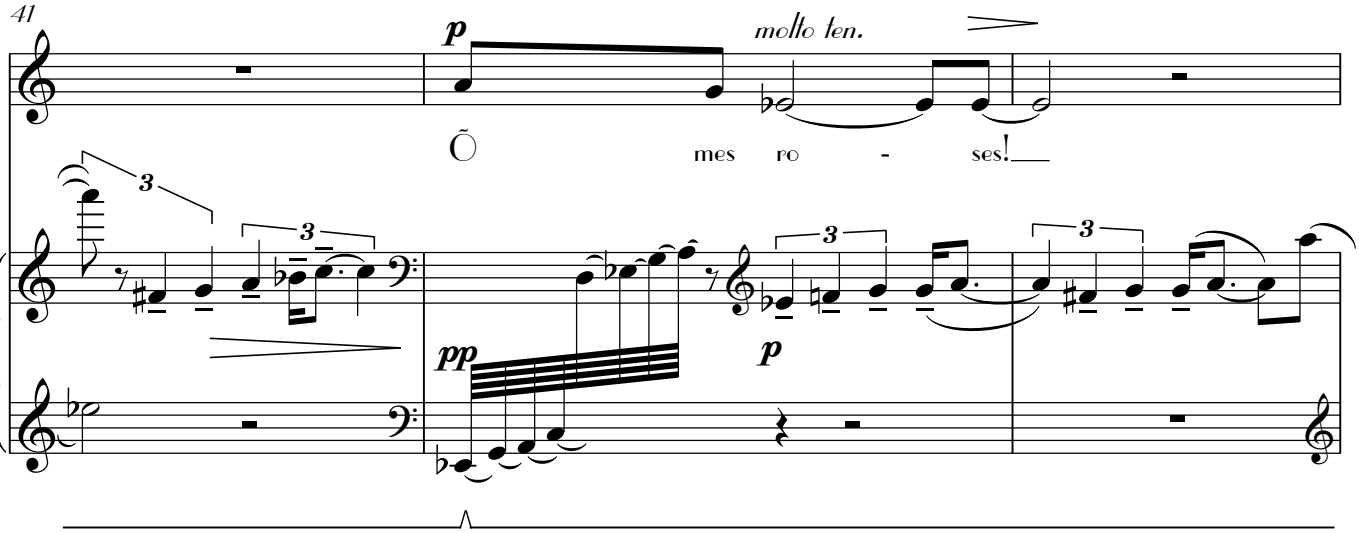

21
(8)
pp
3
ppp
mp
3
p
23
mp
3
Des ro - - ses sur la
mp
3
24
p
3
mer, des ro - - ses dans le
p
9
3

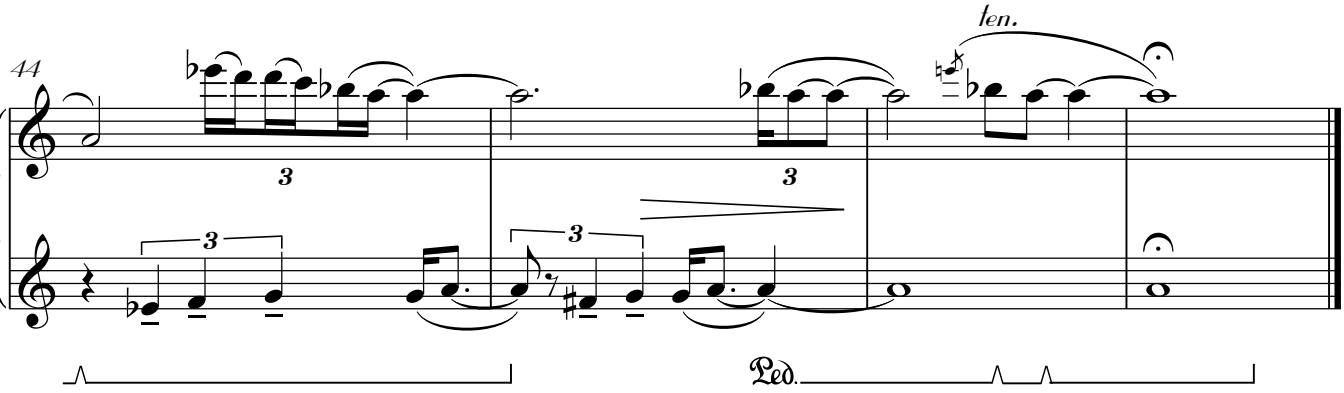

25
mf
soir.
mp
Un
mf
mp
27
son-ge é - vo - ca - teur
tient
mes pau-piè res clo - ses.
mf
29
sub. p
J'at-tends,
ne sa-chant trop ce que j'at - tends
en vain,
De -
sub. p


31
vant la mer pa -
32
molto cresc.
-reil - le aux bou - cliers d'ai - rain,
molto cresc.
33
ff
Et te voi - ci ve - nue en m'ap - por - tant des
8va
ff
rehold
ff


34
3
po - - - - - ses...
ff inlense
35
3
po - - - - - -
14:16
14:16
14:16
36
3
- ses dans le ciel et le soir!
14:16
14:16
5


38
f
molto len.
molto
Õ
mes
ro
-
ses!
8va
5
poco dim.
3
f
molto
mp


41
p
molto len.
Õ
mes
ro
-
ses!
pp
p


44
len.
Ped.