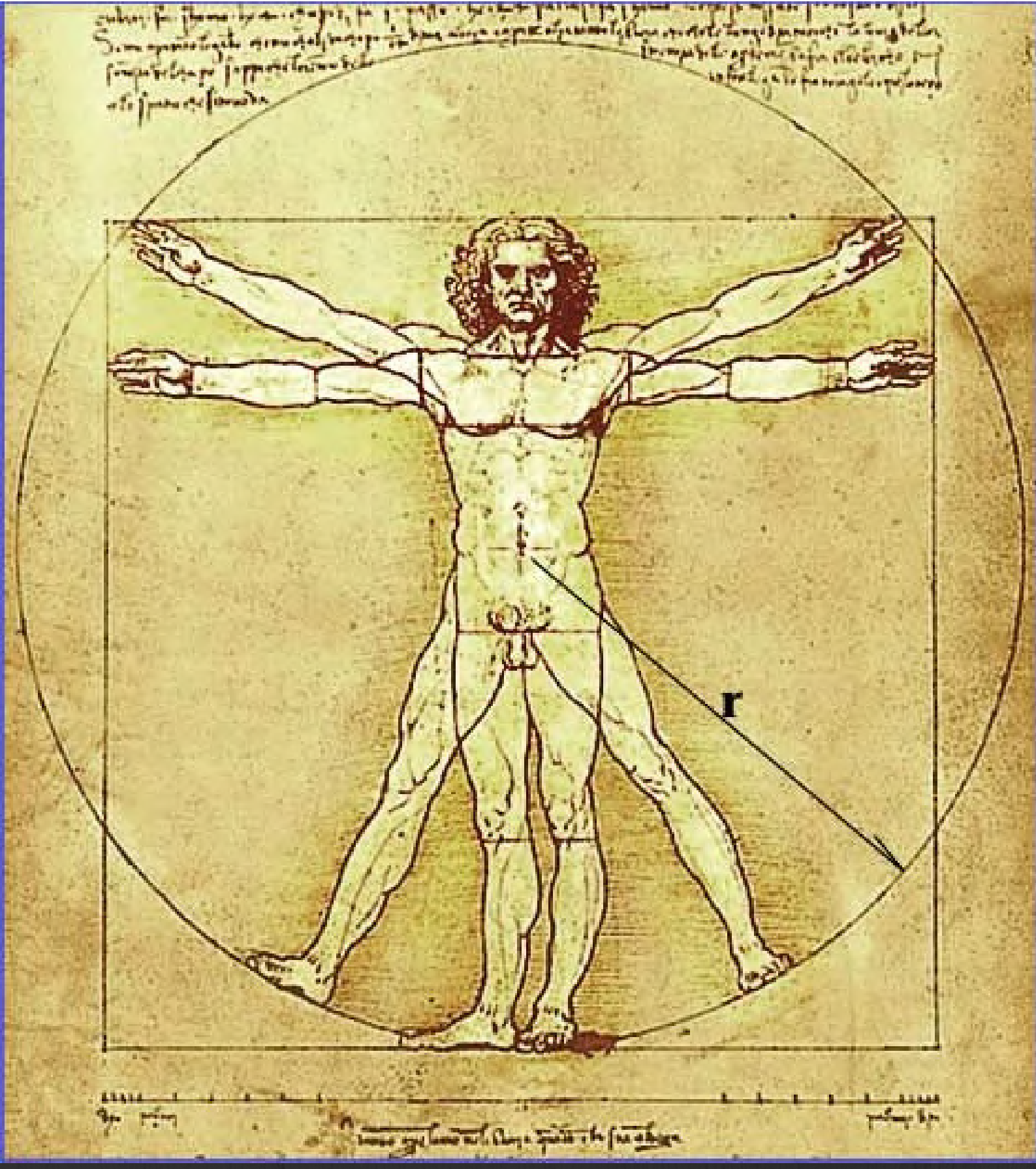


# As Above, So Below

## Five Vitruvian Nocturnes for Piano

Tom Armitage

# As Above, So Below

*Five Vitruvian Nocturnes*
*for Piano*

Tom Armitage

# ***As Above, So Below***

by Tom Armitage

Duration: *c.* 15’

## *Programme Note*

*As Above, So Below* is a collection of five Vitruvian Nocturnes - nocturnes inspired and shaped by the nature and influence of Leonardo da Vinci's 'Vitruvian Man'. "As Above, So Below" is an inscription set below the ‘Vitruvian Man’ as a reminder that we are all made in God’s image. The Vitruvian Man has its five dimensions - a number shrouded in mystique - and he fits within the perfect circle and also within the square. This is a duality that displays spirit and matter in union - humanity with the Divine and substance with fantasy.

This collection of nocturnes deals with the duality between the stillness and fantasy of the night and, as Vitruvian Nocturnes, thus also dealing with the duality between materialism and humanism. Each nocturne is accompanied by a quote attributed to a humanist author.

The first nocturne, accompanied by Rilke's quote, which lends the suggestion of innocence and potential, is juxtaposed with a melody from Bernard de Ventadorn's *Can vei la lauzeta mover,* which scorns the same view of nature with jealousy.

The second nocturne, accompanied by George Carlin's blunt point of view on gender equality, contains a pianistic translation of an earlier vocal work based on the text of a Trobairitz, Azelais de Porcairagues.

The third, despairing over mankind's lack or loss of direction, seeks to find something which is already there.

The fourth, although quoting Wangari Maathai's words on human rights, is also an homage to Morten Feldman's words that "the life of the sound is in the decay". May I also add that the life of the sound is also in the consciousness that both preceeds and inspires it. The consciousness is the reasoning behind the action and it is the anchoring that gives the action its strength. It is the breath support projecting the spoken word. And the monumental impact of staying silent can be just as impactful as action itself.

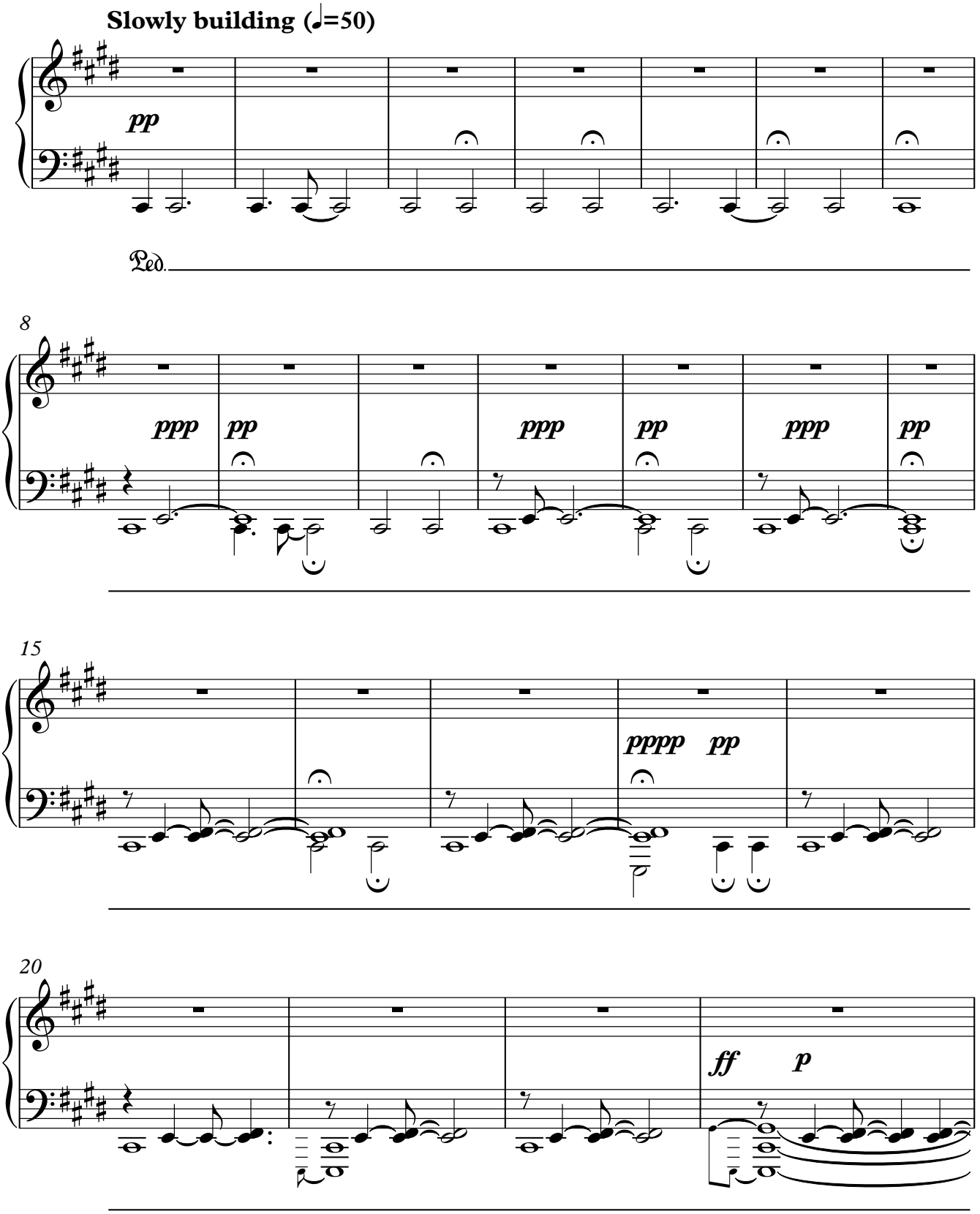
And the fifth nocturne, suggesting that mankind alone has the answers, takes a swipe at God by presenting the Gregorian chant of the *Lux Aeterna* as quoted from the 'Liber Usualis' with all reference to God and the supernatural removed.

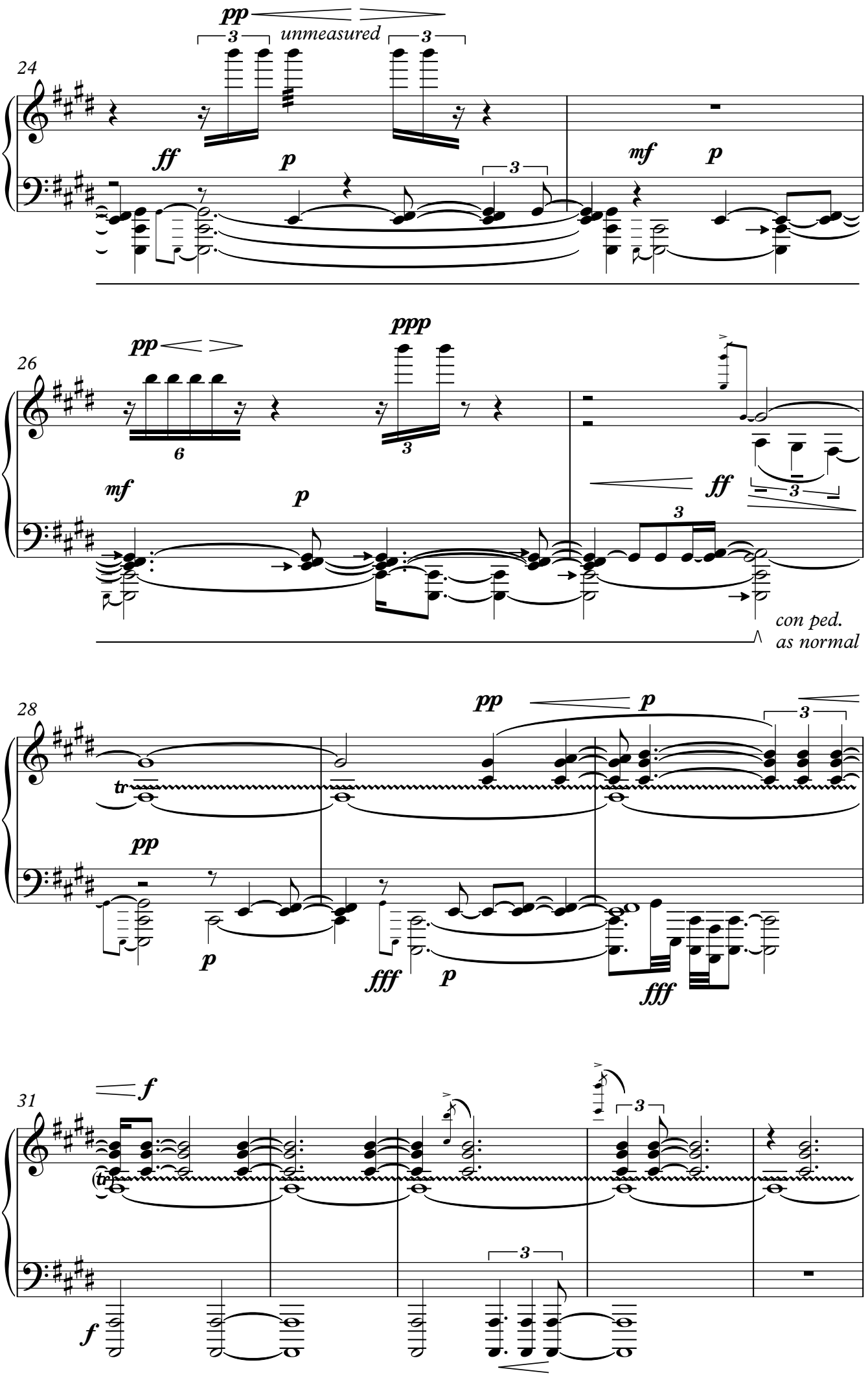
*As Above, So Below*
© Tom Armitage 2017

*"It's Spring again.*
*The Earth is like a child that knows poems by heart."*
*- Rainer Maria Rilke*

# 1.

4th August 2015
'Can vei la lauzeta mover'
by Bernart de Ventadorn, 12th Century melody

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pp
unmeasured
ff
p
mf
p
26
pp
ppp
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as normal
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pp
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31
f
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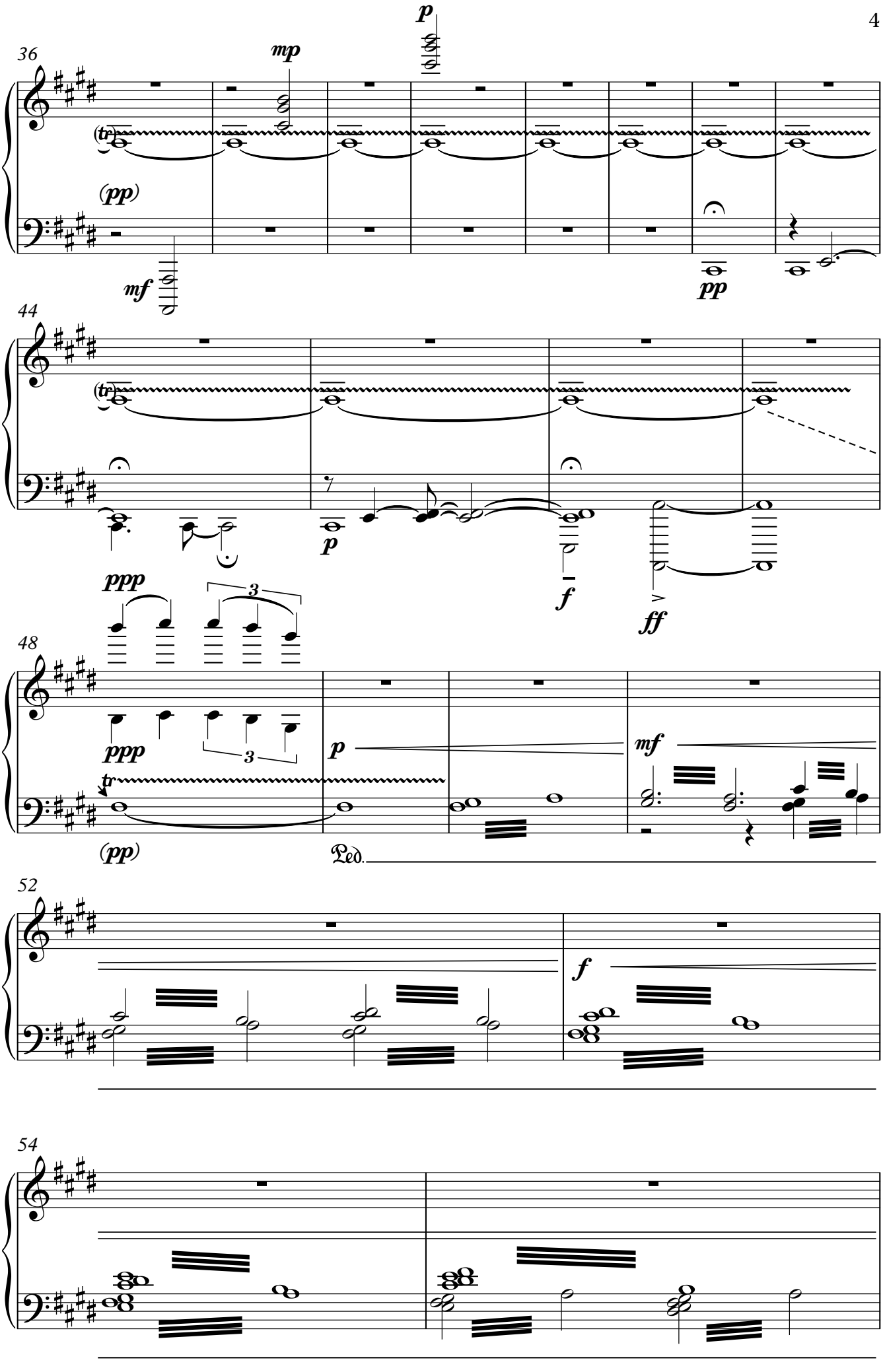
36
mp
p
(tr)
(pp)
mf
pp
44
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f
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3
48
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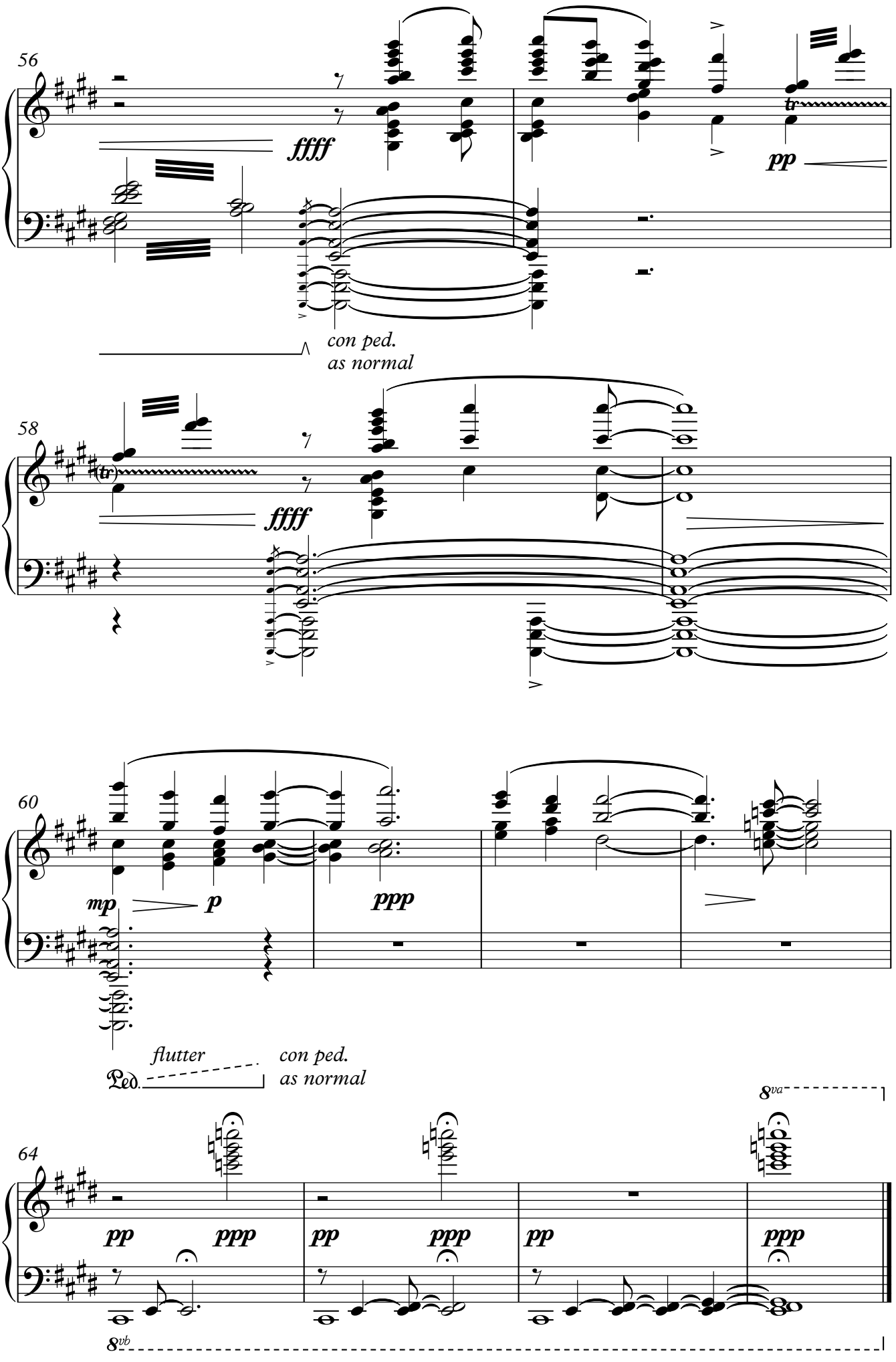
Ped.
52
f
54


56
ffff
pp
con ped.
as normal
58
ffff
60
mp
p
ppp
flutter
Ped.
con ped.
as normal
8va
64
pp
ppp
pp
ppp
pp
ppp
8vb

*“Men are from the Earth, women are from the Earth. Deal with it.”*
*- George Carlin*

Piano translation of a 'Ar em al freg temps vengut' for soprano and string trio by Tom Armitage using a text by 12th Century Trobairitz, Azalais de Porcairagues.

*"Ar em al freg temps vengut*
*Quel gels el neus e la fainga*
*E'l aucellet estan mut;*
*C'us de chanter non s'afrainga."*

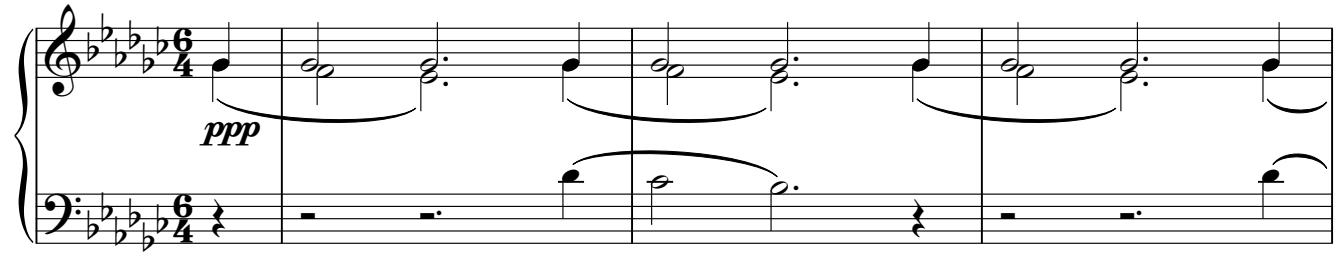
\- - -

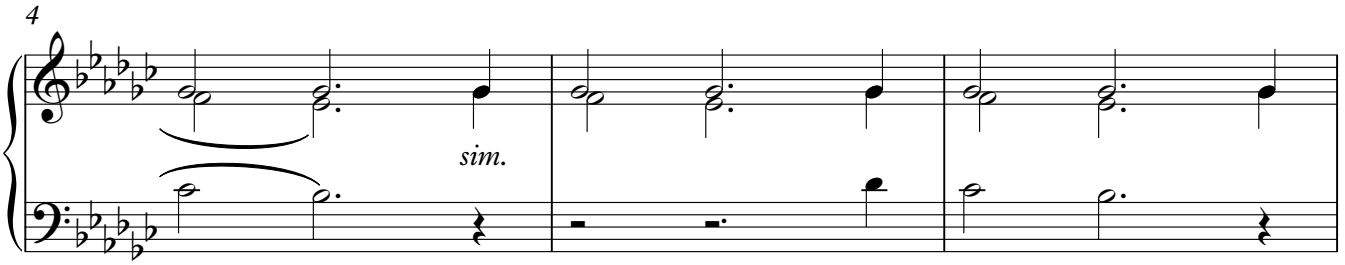
*"Now we have come to the cold time*
*When the ice and the snow and the mud*
*And the little birds are all mute;*
*For not one inclines to sing."*

# 2.

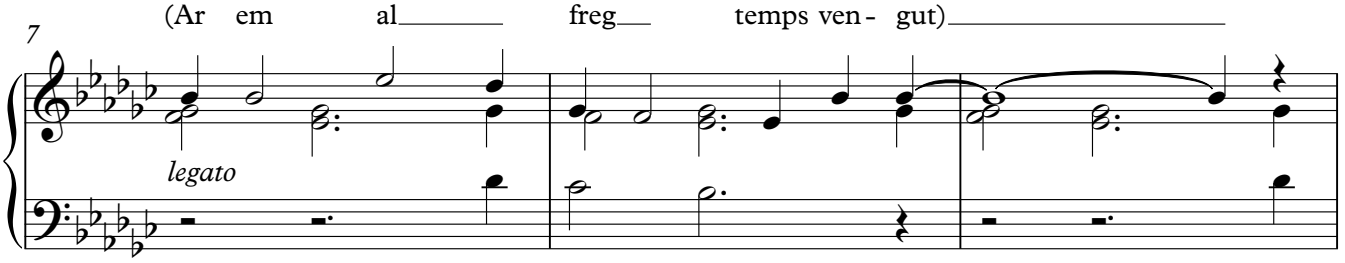
Tom Armitage
Text by Azalais de Porcairagues
(12th Century Trobairitz)

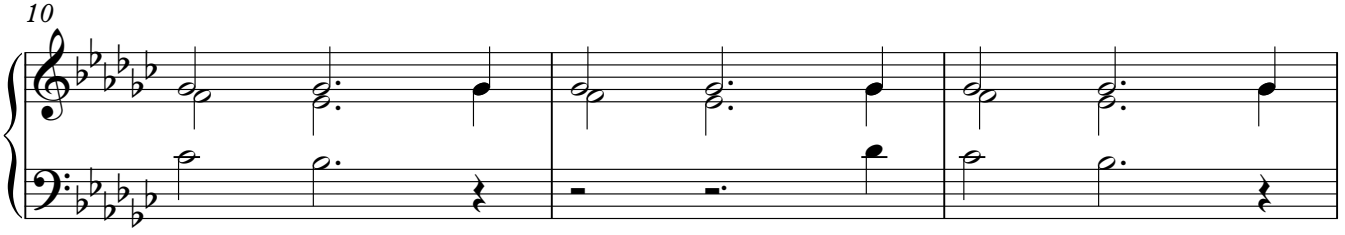
**Intimately; vulnerable (♩=58)**

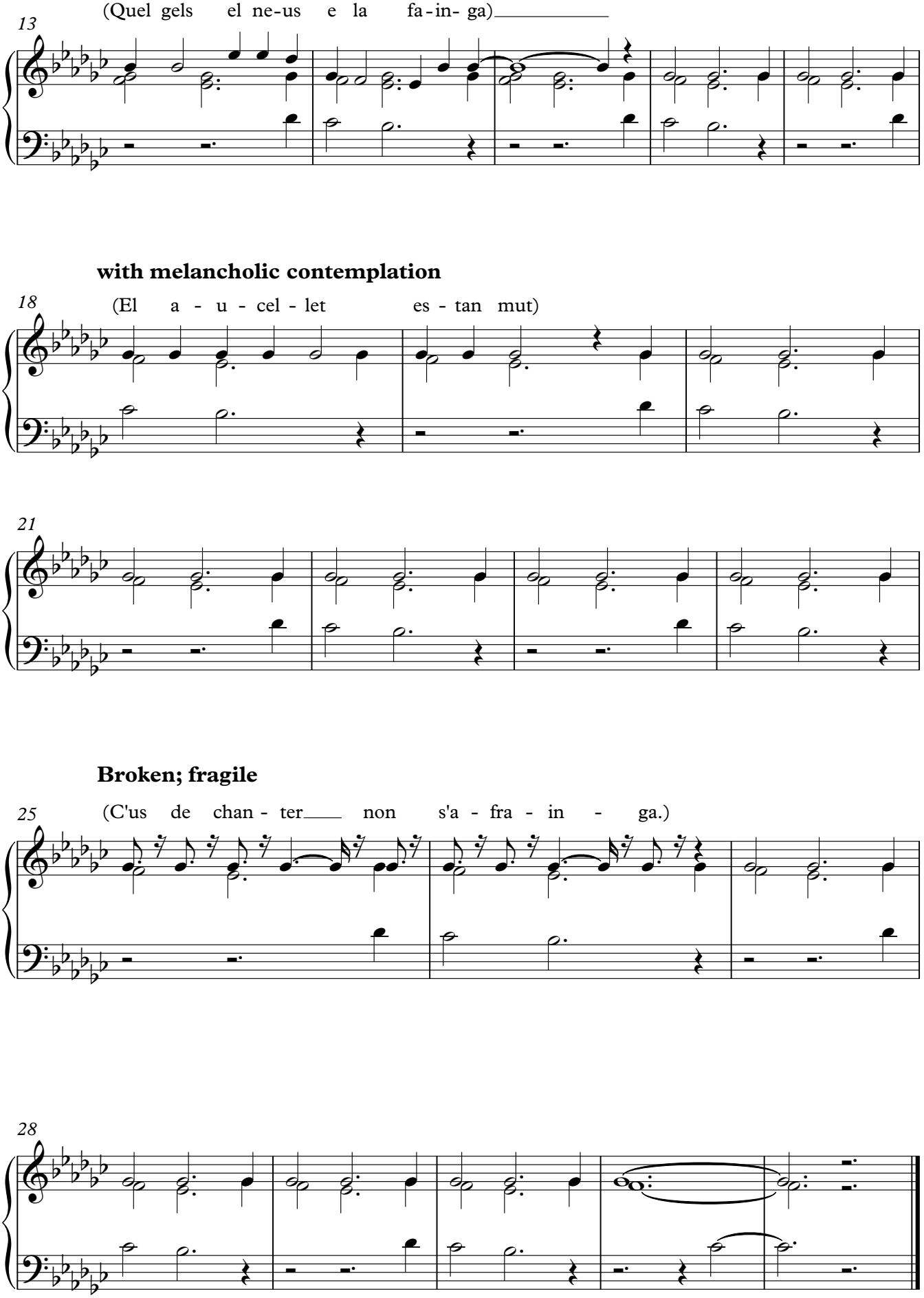



**Dolcissimo**



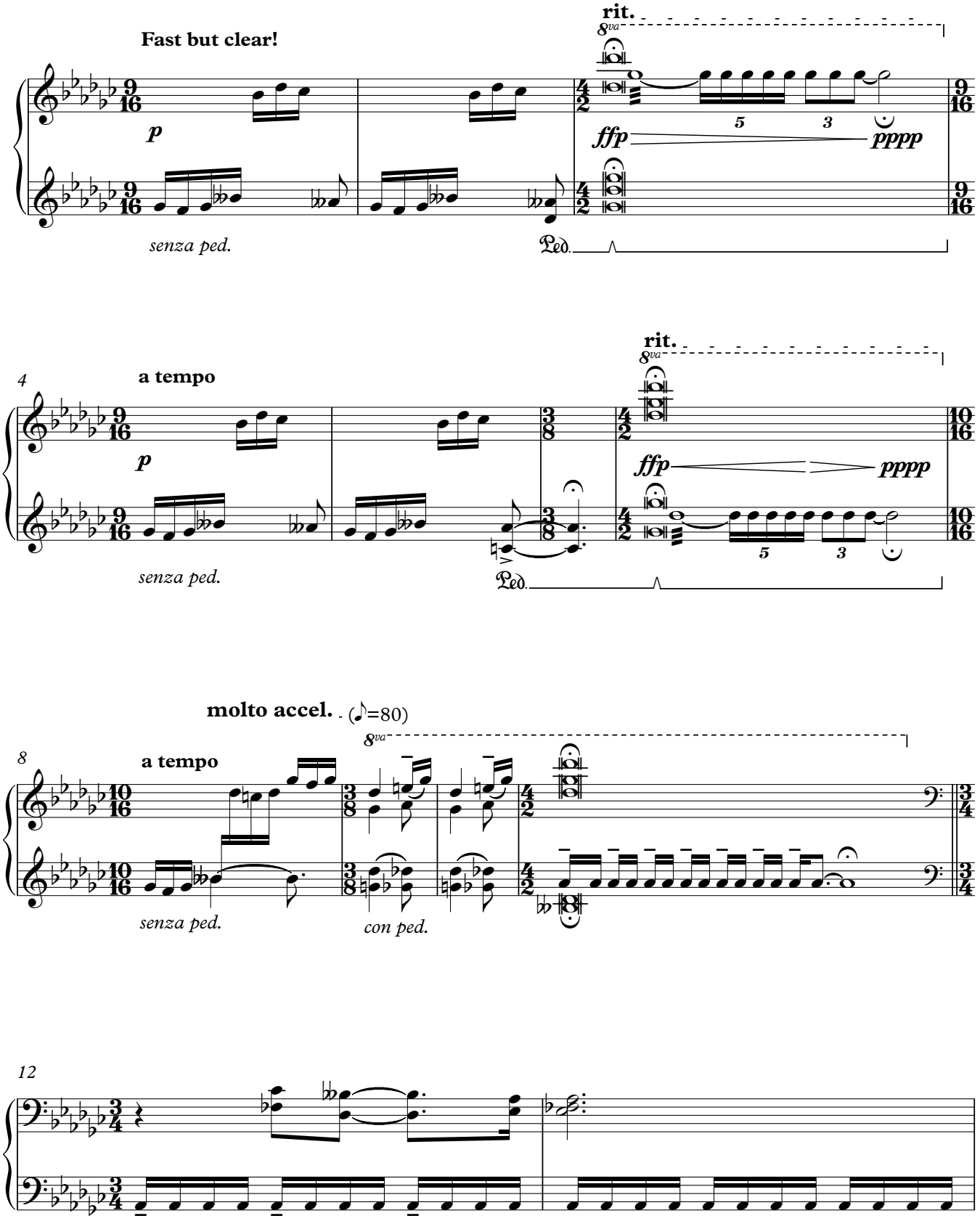



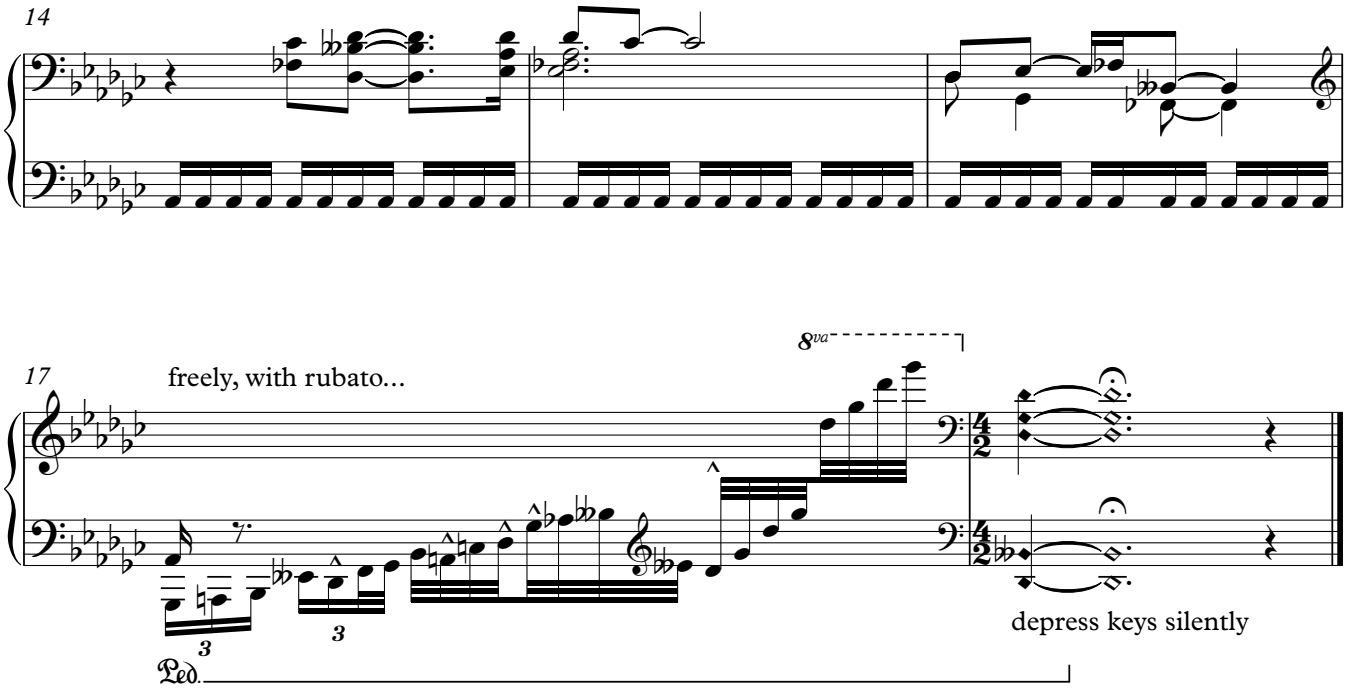

(Quel gels el ne-us e la fa-in- ga)
13
with melancholic contemplation
(El a - u - cel - let es - tan mut)
18
21
Broken; fragile
(C'us de chan - ter non s'a - fra - in - ga.)
25
28

*"Someone … tell us what's important, because we no longer know."*
*- Richard Ford*

# 3.

27th March 2017

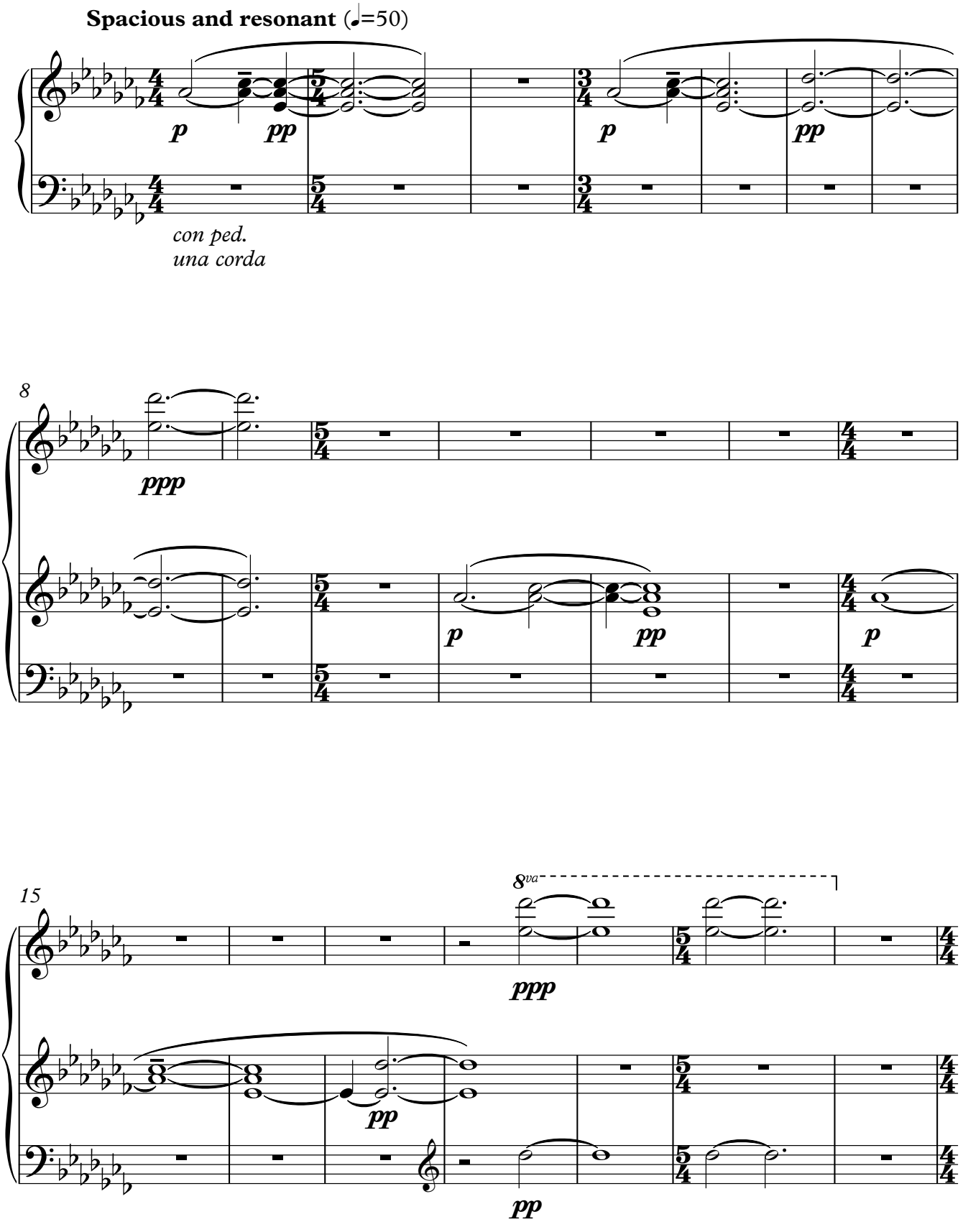


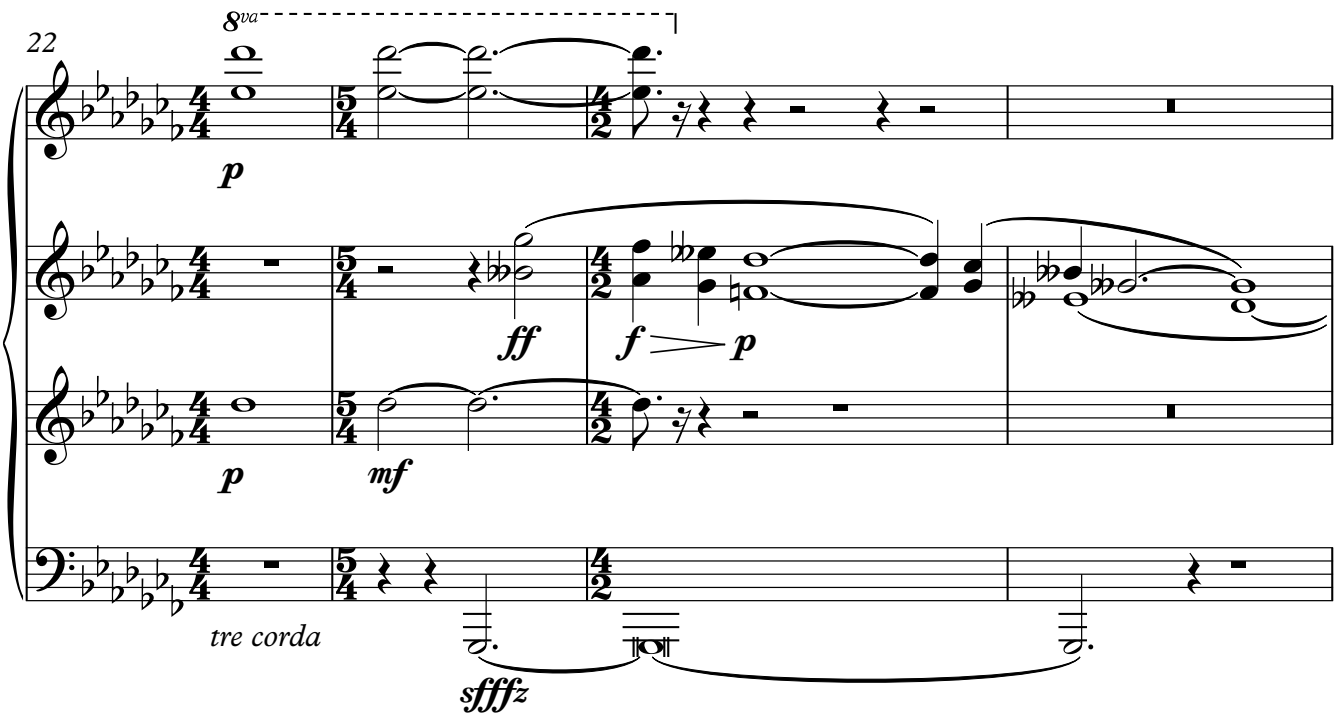

14
17
freely, with rubato...
8va
depress keys silently
Ped.

*"Human rights are not things that are put on the table for people to enjoy.*
*These are things you fight for and then you protect."*
*-Wangari Maathai*

# 4.

15th April 2015

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mf
tre corda
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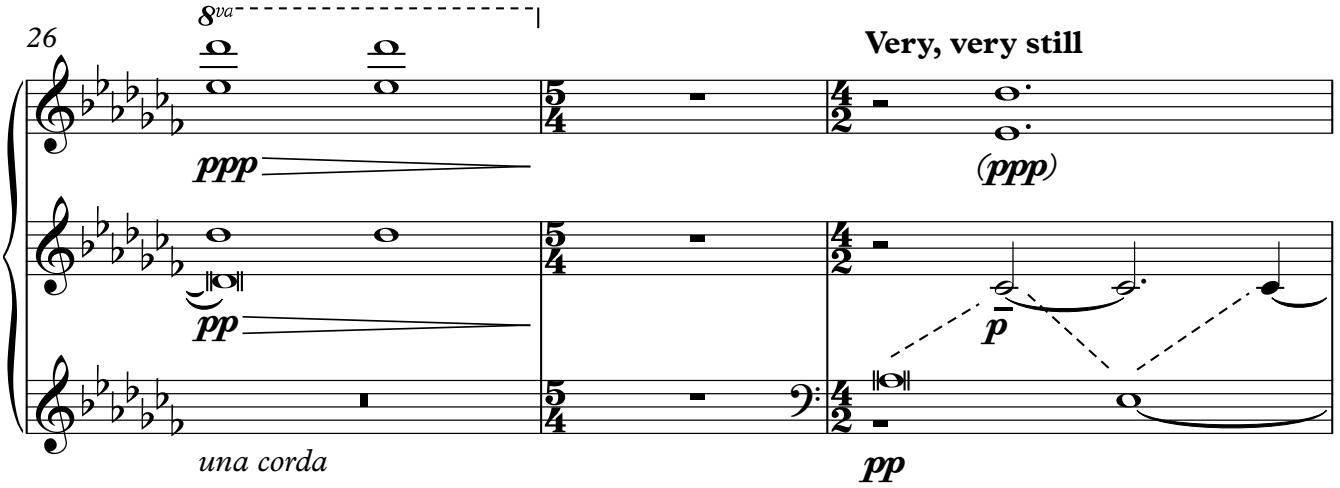
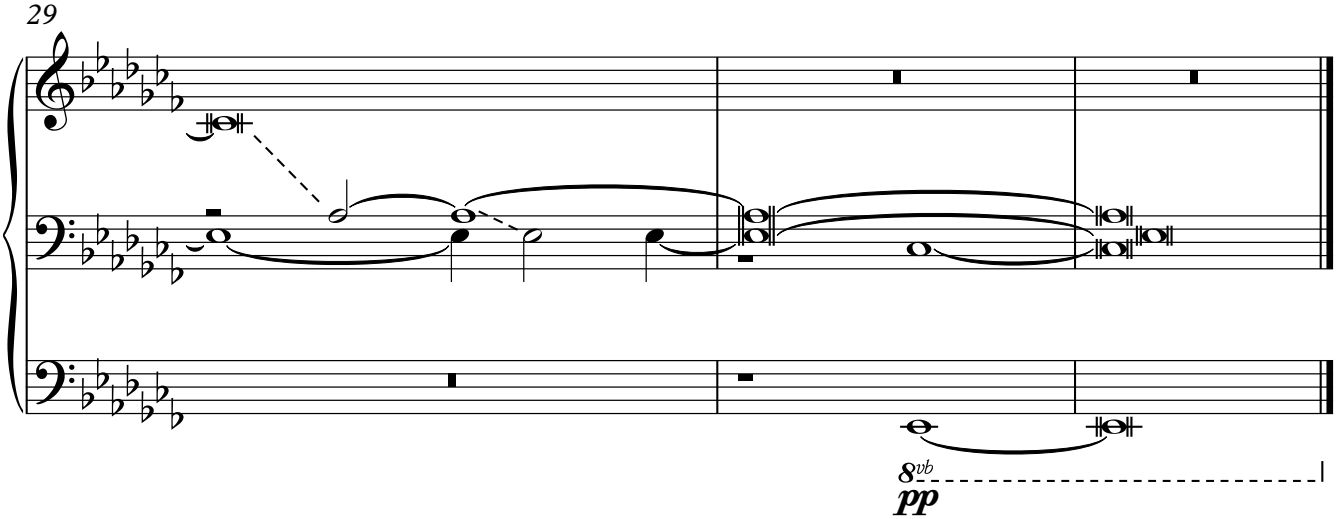
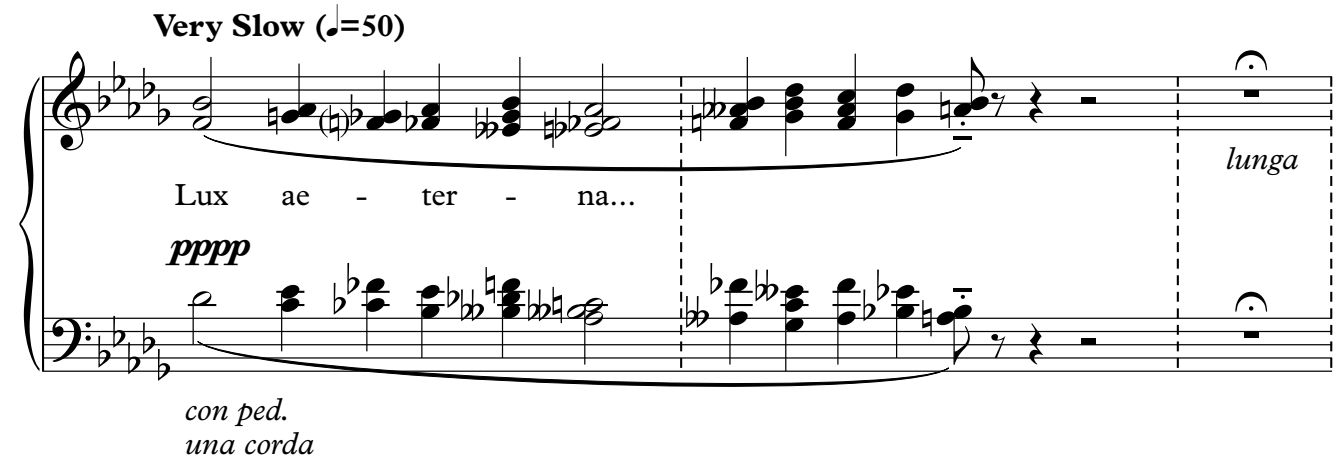

26
8va
ppp
pp
una corda
Very, very still
(ppp)
p
pp

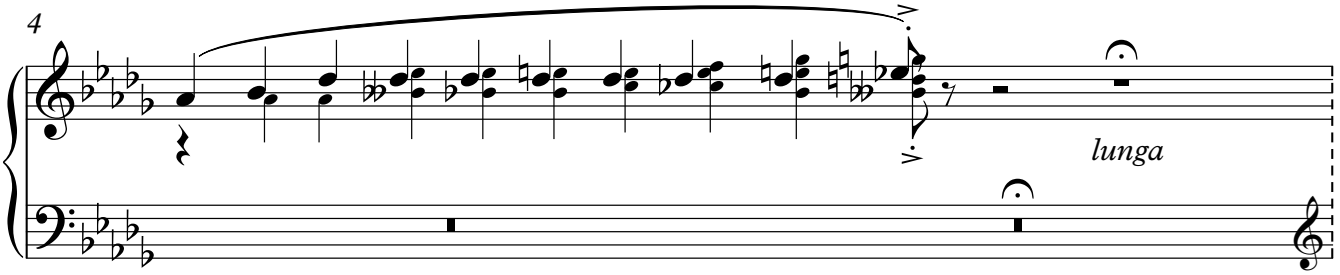

29
8vb
pp

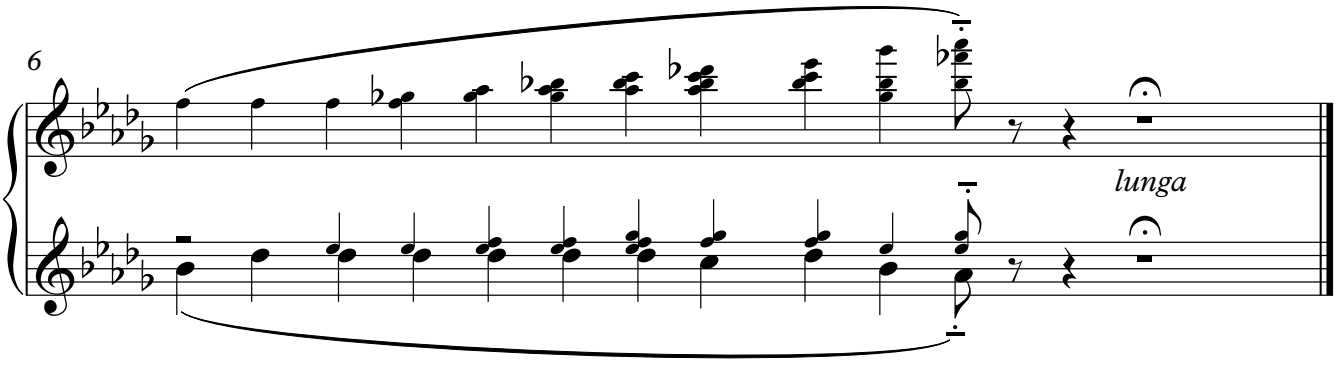
*"I feel that we should stop wasting our time trying to please the supernatural*
*and concentrate on improving the welfare of human beings.*
*I think that, uh, we should use our energy and our initiative to solve our problems,*
*and stop relying on prayer and wishful thinking.*
*If we have faith in ourselves, we won't have to have faith in gods."*
*- Ruth Hurmence Green*

# 5.

28th March 2017



*"There is light in the world, and it is us!"*
*- Eliezer Yudkowsky*