MARC LEMAY

INNERVISIONS

of a

Trebled Soul in a Troubled America

for six voices
(SSATTB)

dur. 11'

Words by
Courtney Michael Brown

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For Variant Six. Dedicated with love to the living memory of Courtney Michael Brown.

Premiere March 29, 2017, with Variant Six. University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia.

The composer would like to thank Kim Brown for granting permission to use Courtney's words as the text of this piece.

A portion of any proceeds from performance of this piece will be donated to the Courtney and Dominic Brown Memorial Foundation.

Full score available for rental or purchase from the composer:
marc@marclemaymusic.com

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First printing: March 2017

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COMPOSER'S NOTE

"Courtney Michael Brown: music-made man." Thus began a letter of application to the University of Pennsylvania for a joint Ph.D. program in Ethnomusicology and Africana Studies written in 2014 by Courtney Michael Brown. What followed was a work of poetry: two pages of spirit, intellect, music and wit that only Courtney could have written. Courtney was accepted to Penn and began studies in the Fall of 2015. The following summer, he died of pancreatic cancer. I include a portion of his obituary below:

> Battle Creek native Courtney Michael Brown, 31, passed away July 9, 2016, after a brief illness. Courtney was born October 30, 1984, to Kim Brown and Michael Morris. Courtney was a loving brother to Dominic, loyal friend, and accomplished academic whose voice will be deeply missed. Courtney attended Albion College, where he studied Music as the Katherine K. Westbrook Music Scholar, in addition to Ethnic Studies and English. He also gave his time in service to the Albion community. After Albion, Courtney completed a Master of Arts in American Studies, with an Emphasis on Ethnomusicology, Performance and Critical Race Studies from California State University, Fullerton.
>
> While pursuing his graduate degree, Courtney conducted extensive research, presented at academic conferences around the country, and served on the Editorial Board of California State University's American Papers. He shared himself and his education freely, teaching college courses and speaking to youth groups. He continued his studies as a William Fontaine Fellow of Africana Studies and Ethnomusicology at the University of Pennsylvania. As he pursued his doctorate, Courtney brought a fresh perspective to his field, applying rigorous academic analysis to contemporary study of black identity in today's America through examination of neo-soul music.
>
> One of Courtney's favorite, and most appropriate, quotes was "You were born an original. Don't die a copy." He was always charming, passionate, and persistent, couldn't resist a challenge, and carried himself with a singular sense of style. He had a unique ability to deeply connect with so many people in so many ways. He was a magnetic personality with an open heart, who drew people in and held them close. Courtney strove to make the world better, and when he shared himself with others he made them better, too.
>
> Courtney loved to sing and listen to music: some of his many favorites were Beyoncé, Erykah Badu, India Arie, Lalah Hathaway, and The Clark Sisters. In his work and personal relationships, he asked everyone to look beyond themselves for new perspective. Courtney was brilliant, funny, quick to laughter and full of music.

When we heard the news about Courtney, we were devastated. As he did everywhere he went, he left an indelible mark on those us in Philadelphia. In long conversations over coffee, late nights at bars and in living rooms, and sessions of hysterical laughter, he wove his way into our souls in a uniquely unforgettable way. As part of my own grieving process, I decided to compose a tribute to Courtney using some of the beautiful words he wrote in his letter of application to Penn. These words show how deeply ingrained he was in the study of American Blackness, and how important his work was and continues to be in building bridges across communities and cultures. I don't claim to speak for Courtney with this piece, but I do hope he would be tickled and honored if he heard it. We miss you, Courtney. You were born an original, you saw the uniqueness in each of us, and you left the world a much better place by your being in it.

I would like to thank Courtney's mother, Kim Brown, for her kind permission in my using this text. A portion of any proceeds from performance of this piece will be donated to the Courtney and Dominic Brown Memorial Foundation.

Text by Courtney Michael Brown

I am…music-made man
I am black keys
I am raw expression tuning to the rhythms of reality
My voice accompanied by a gentle tide of ivory keys
I am jazz—Keys,
Tame as Nina's Blues
And wild as the wind.

Blackness:
Can words describe
What it means to be ever evolving?
When words fail, [Call me…]
Music
Music remains.
Blackness:
Music has expressed, music has embodied
Every incarnation of American Blackness
And particularly, [Call me…]
My own becoming-of-age
Melodies in my pockets,
I am…
I am a product of a tele-nurtured childhood,
From the music of BET
To the black sitcoms of 90's primetime. [They call me…]
Blackness meant mainstream.
Blackness meant thug.
Blackness meant subculture.
Blackness meant Africa.

I am the b(l)ackground
They call me minor
Because I exist between the white
My voice…
My voice is a master class in double consciousness
My voice is a product of echoes and dissonances
I am the blackground yet I create complexity
I am wonder
I am structure
I am fluidity

In my tele-nurtured childhood
My vibrato was born from the speakers of my mother's Buick Century
In my tele-nurtured childhood
Blackness…
My melodies are weapons of self-determination
In my childhood
Blackness meant to choose—or be chosen.
My vibrato invokes the spirit in the dark:
Innervisions of a trebled soul in a troubled America

Melodies in my pockets,
I am wonder
I am structure
I am
…raw expression
…Black keys
…tame as Nina's Blues
…wild as the wind
I am fluidity
I am man, made music.
I am (…)
I

for Variant Six

Dedicated with love to the living memory of Courtney

INNERVISIONS
of a Trebled Soul in a Troubled America

Words
Courtney Michael Brown

Music
Marc LeMay

Very Slowly,
Serene ♩ = 52

poco rit.

A tempo

suddenly very bright

Soprano 1
I[ɑ] → [i] | am[æ] → [m] | Mu - sic - made | Man

Soprano 2
I[ɑ] → [i] | am[æ] → [m] | Mu - sic - made | Man

Alto
I[ɑ] → [i] | am[æ] → [m] | Mu - sic - made | Man

Tenor 1
I[ɑ] → [i] | am[æ] → [m] | I | am...

Tenor 2
I[ɑ] → [i] | am[æ] → [m] | I | am...

Bass
I[ɑ] → [i] | am[æ] → [m] | I | am...

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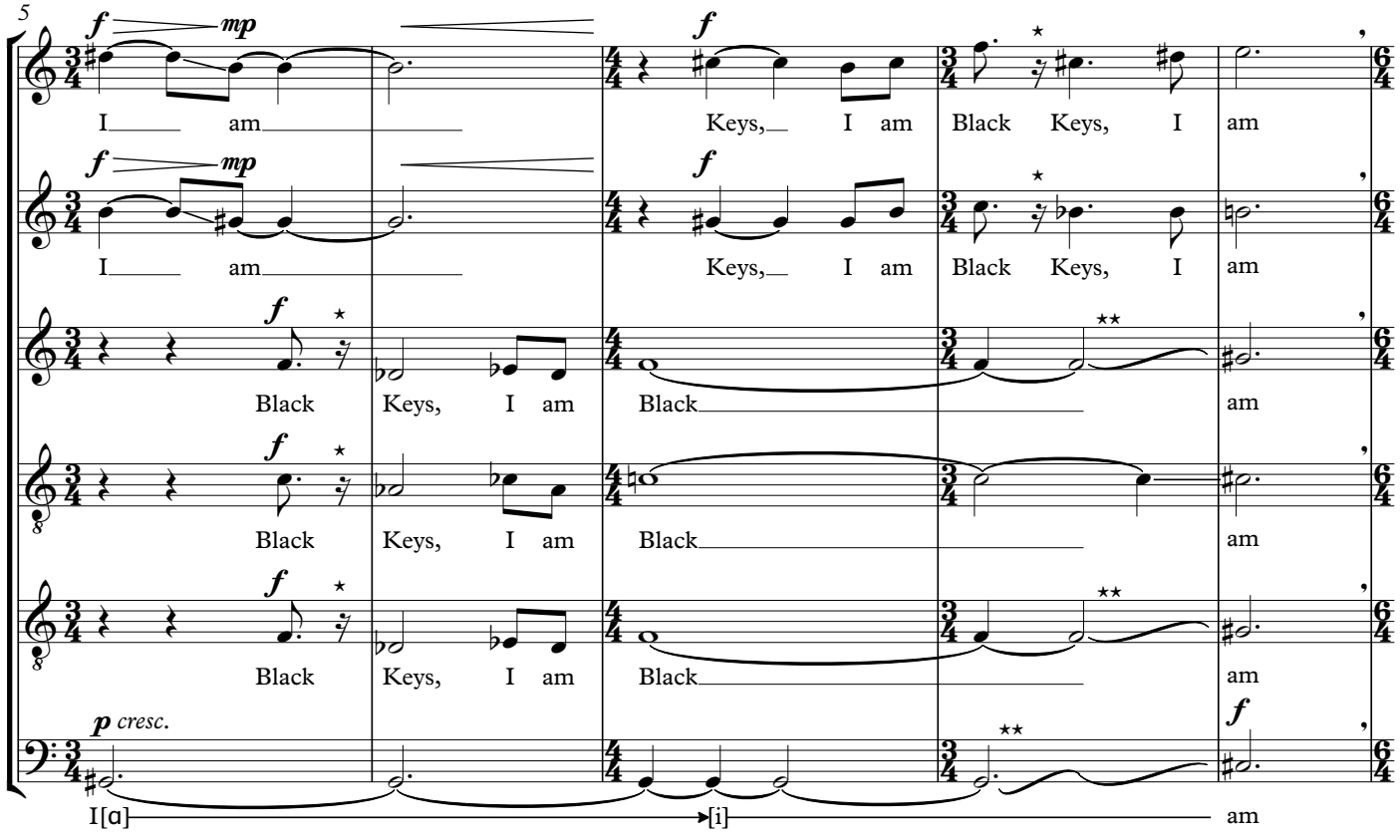
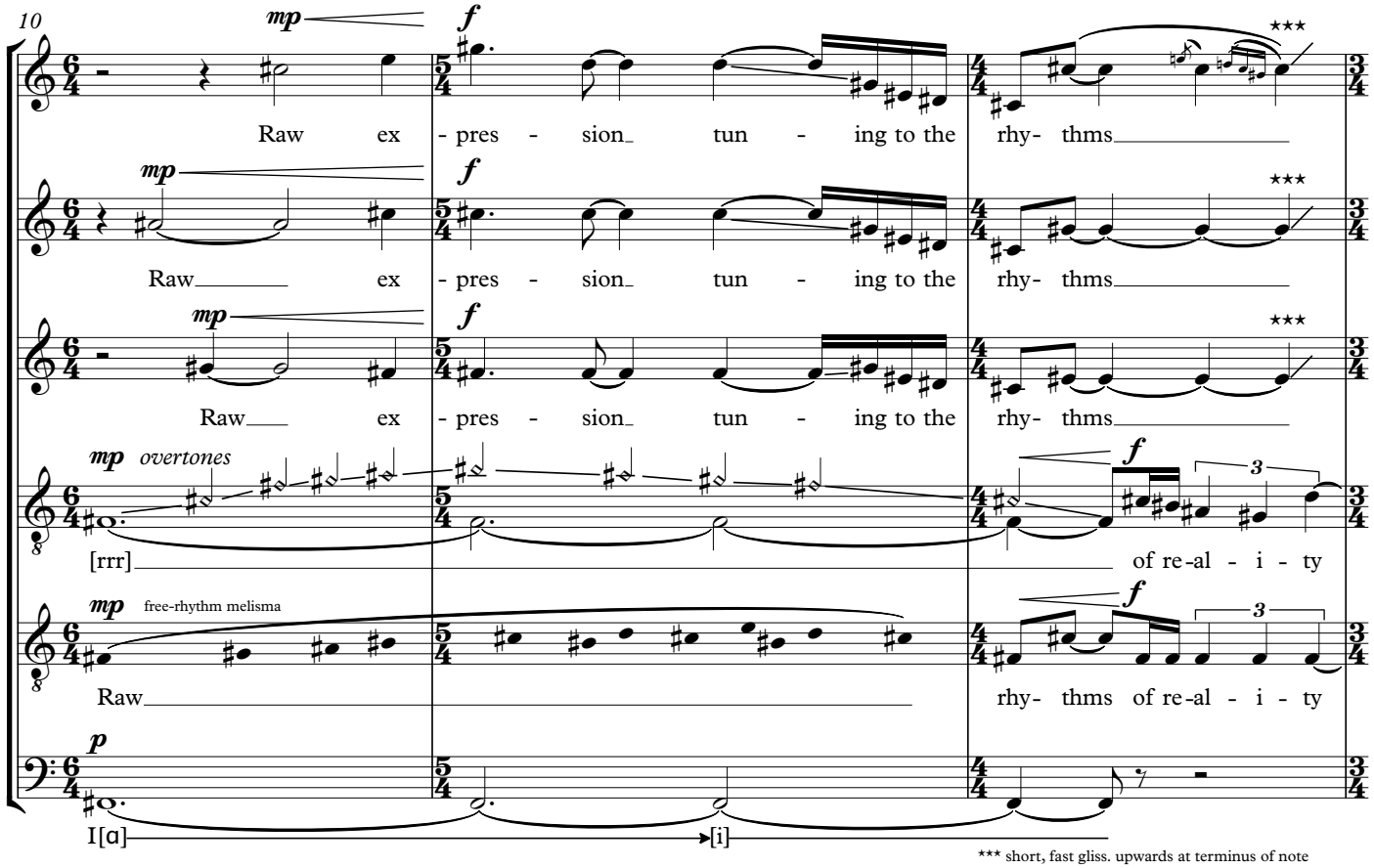
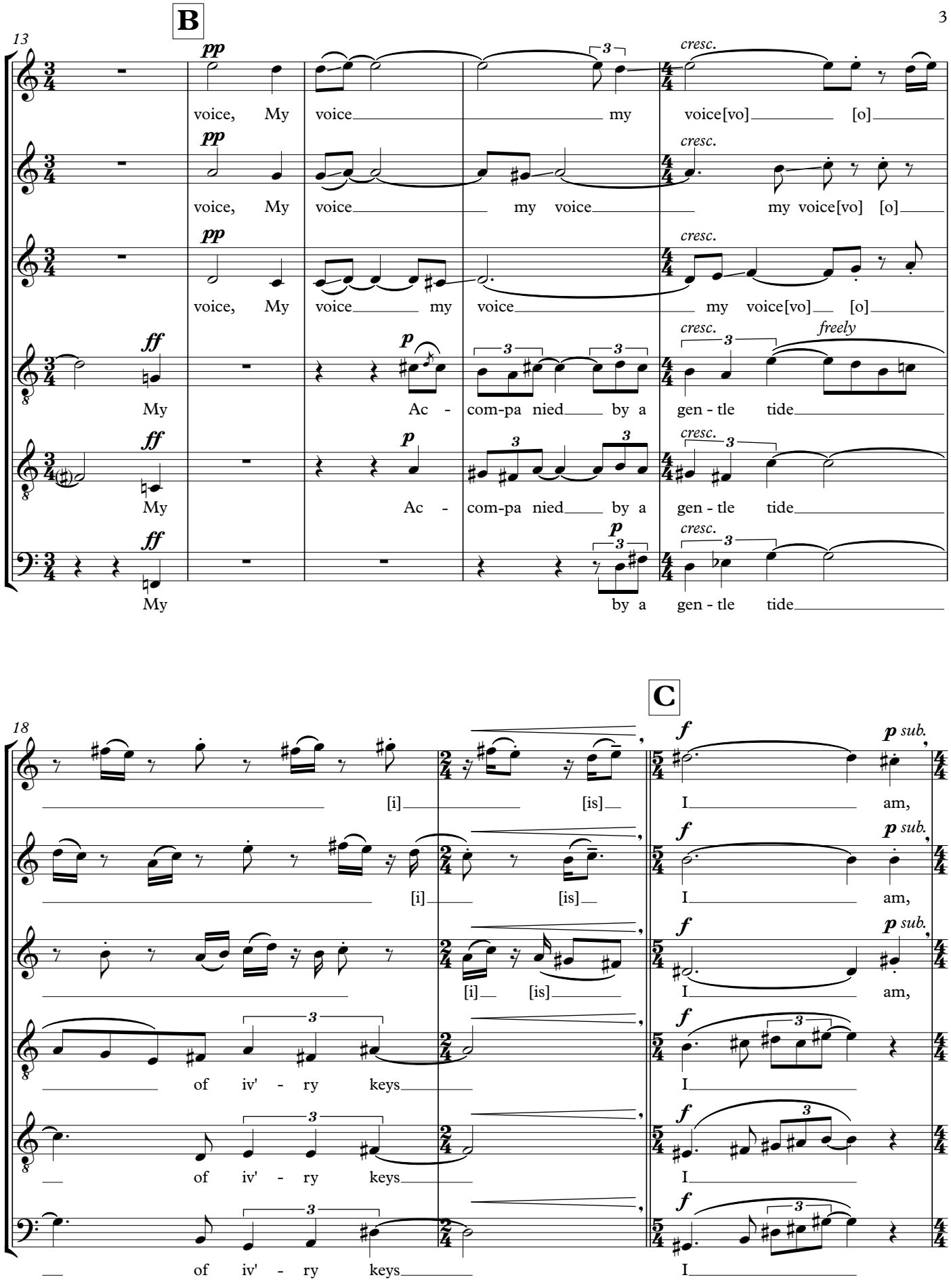
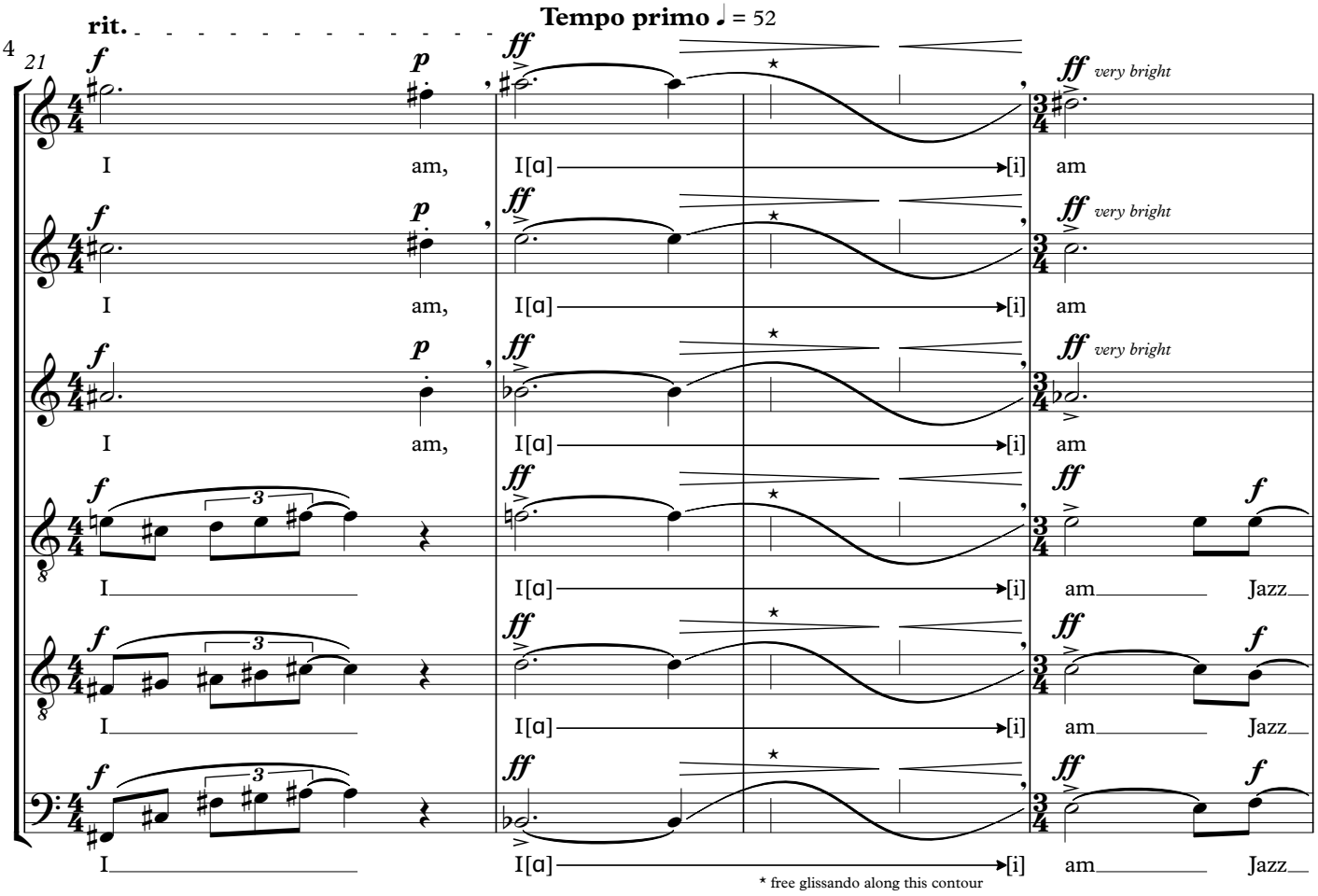
A **More briskly**

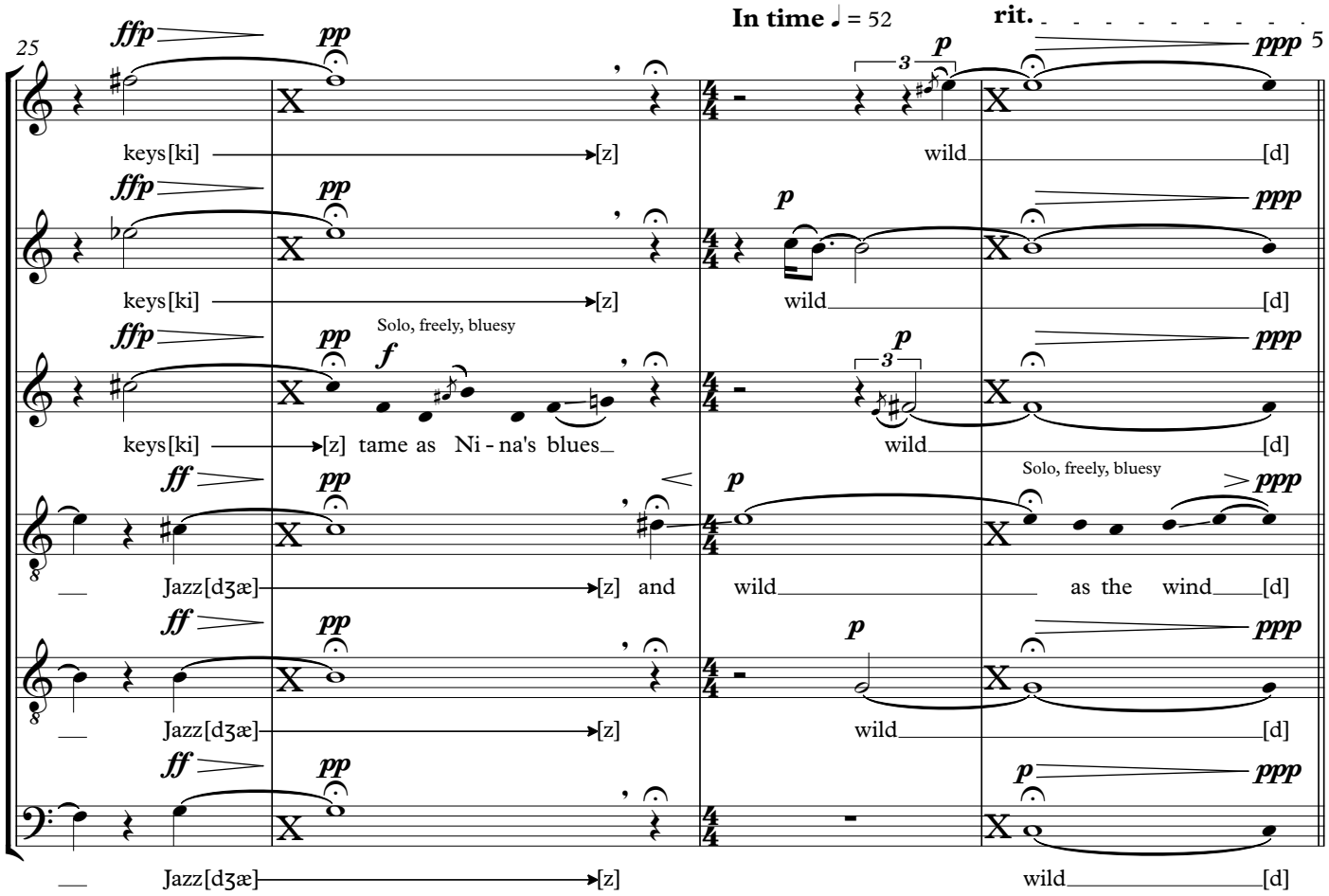
♩ = 72

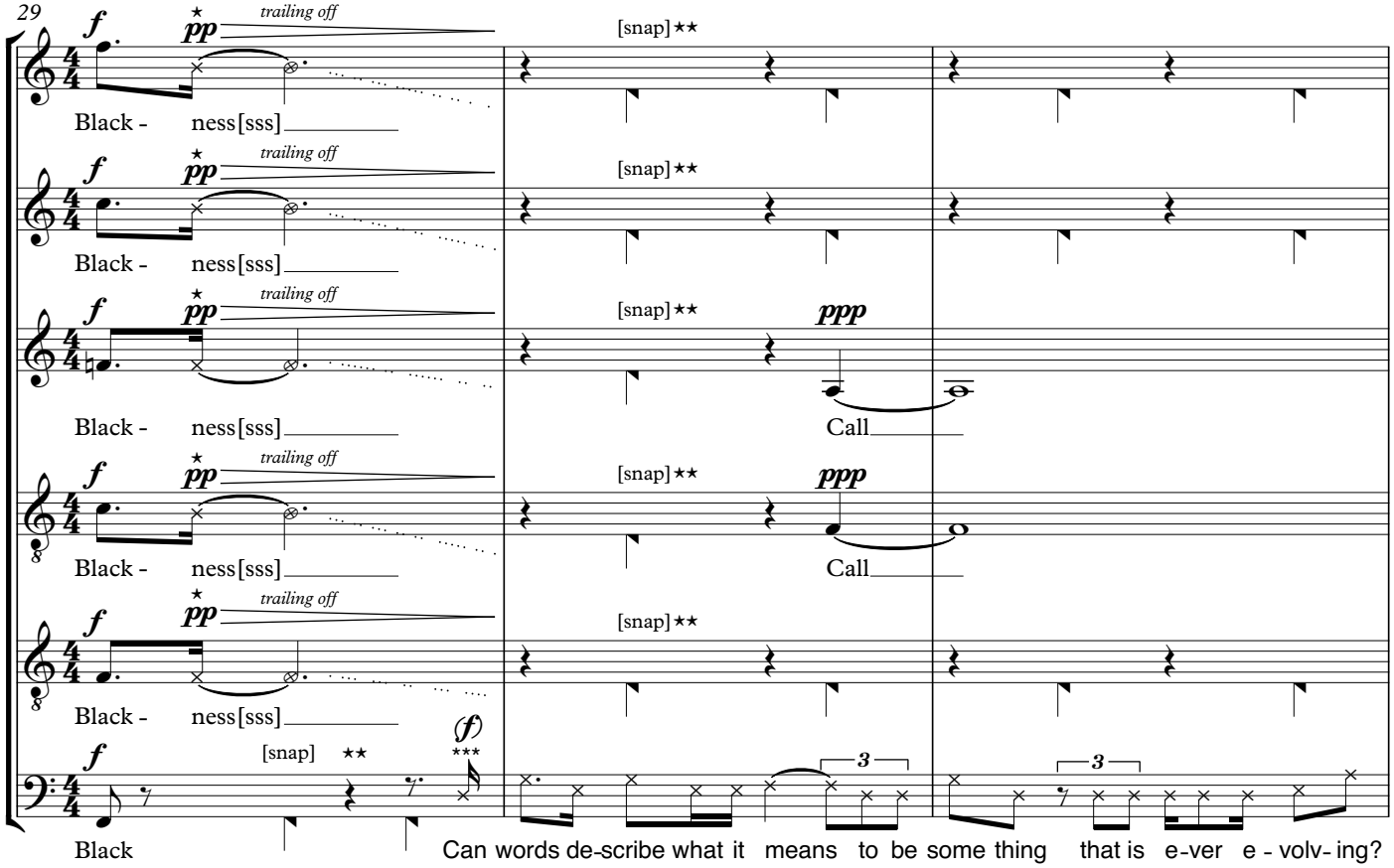




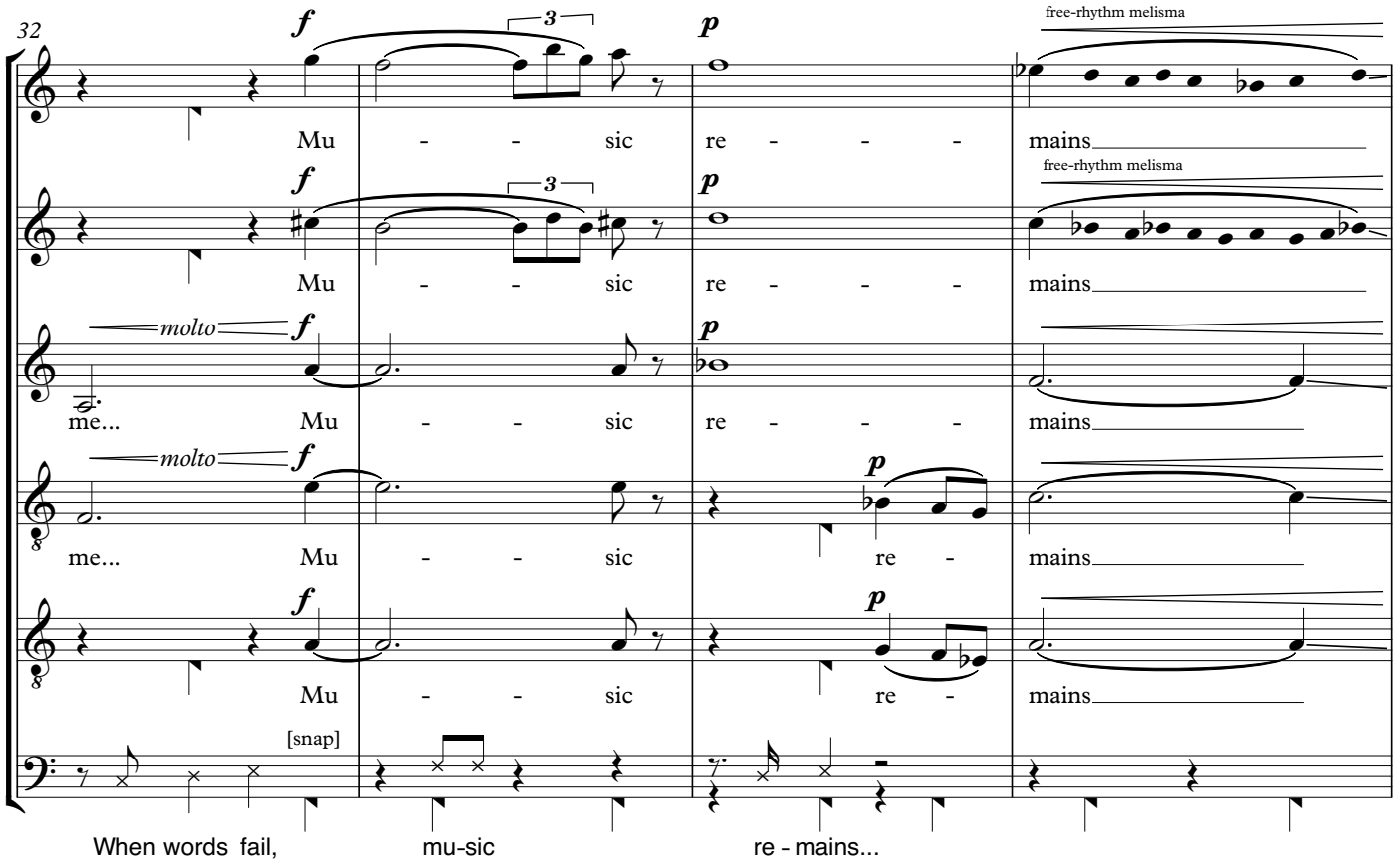

B
13
pp
cresc.
voice, My voice my voice[vo] [o]
voice, My voice my voice my voice[vo] [o]
voice, My voice my voice my voice[vo] [o]
ff
p
freely
My Ac - com-pa nied by a gen - tle tide
My Ac - com-pa nied by a gen - tle tide
My by a gen - tle tide
C
18
f
p sub.
[i] [is] I am,
[i] [is] I am,
[i] [is] I am,
of iv' - ry keys I
of iv' - ry keys I
of iv' - ry keys I

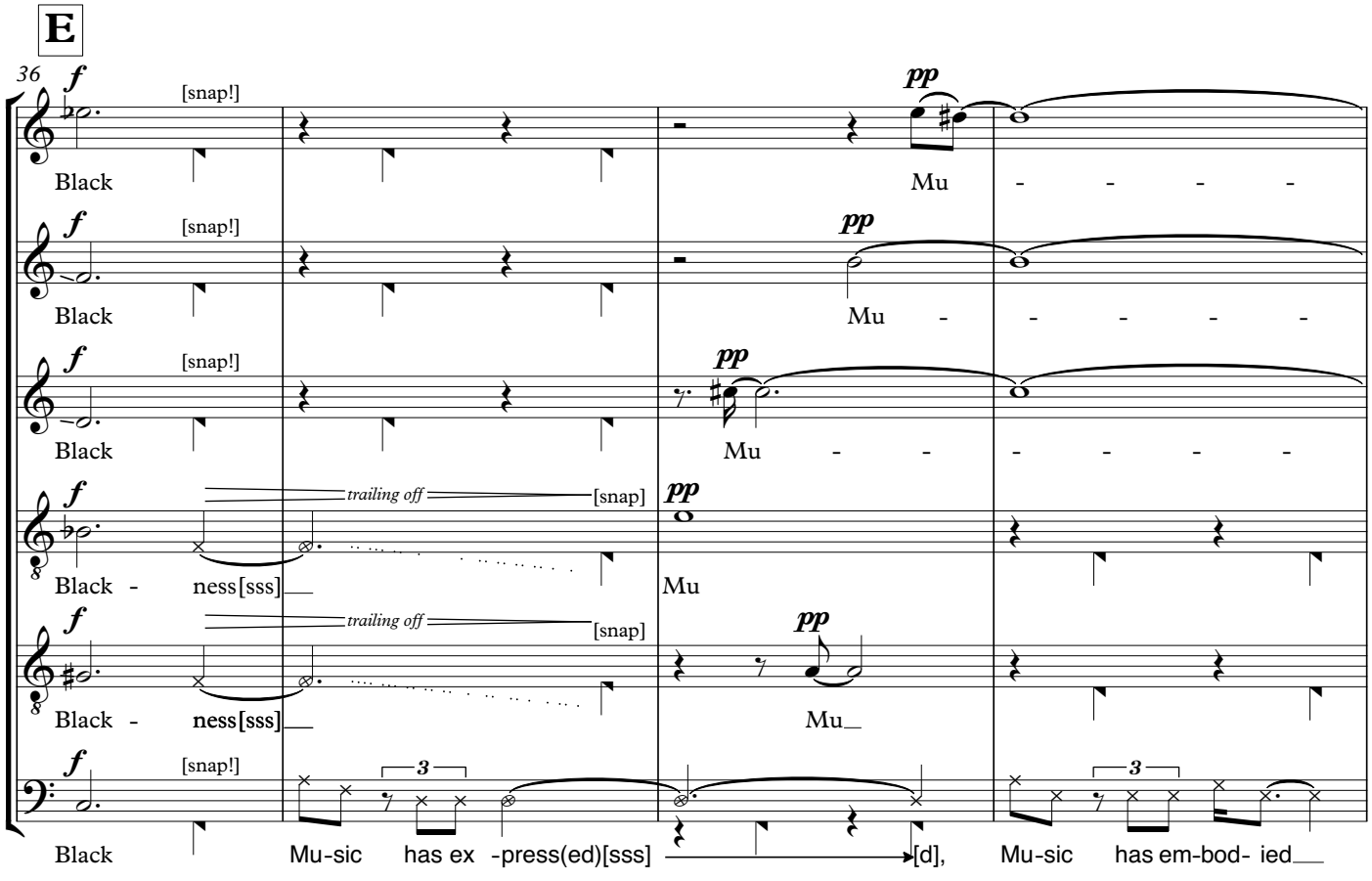

rit.
Tempo primo ♩ = 52
4
21
I am, I[ɑ] [i] am
very bright
I am, I[ɑ] [i] am
very bright
I am, I[ɑ] [i] am
very bright
I I[ɑ] [i] am Jazz
I I[ɑ] [i] am Jazz
I I[ɑ] [i] am Jazz
* free glissando along this contour

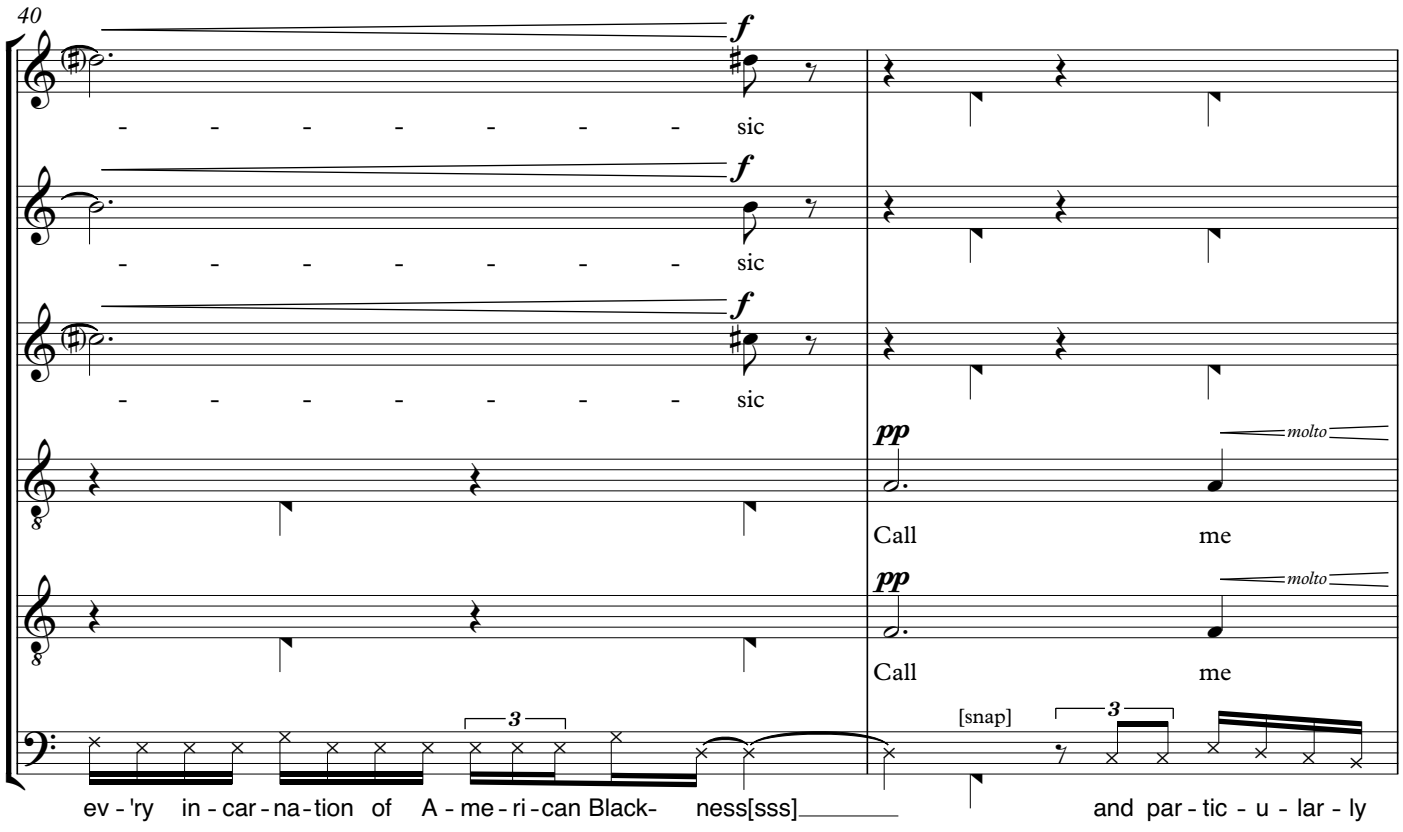


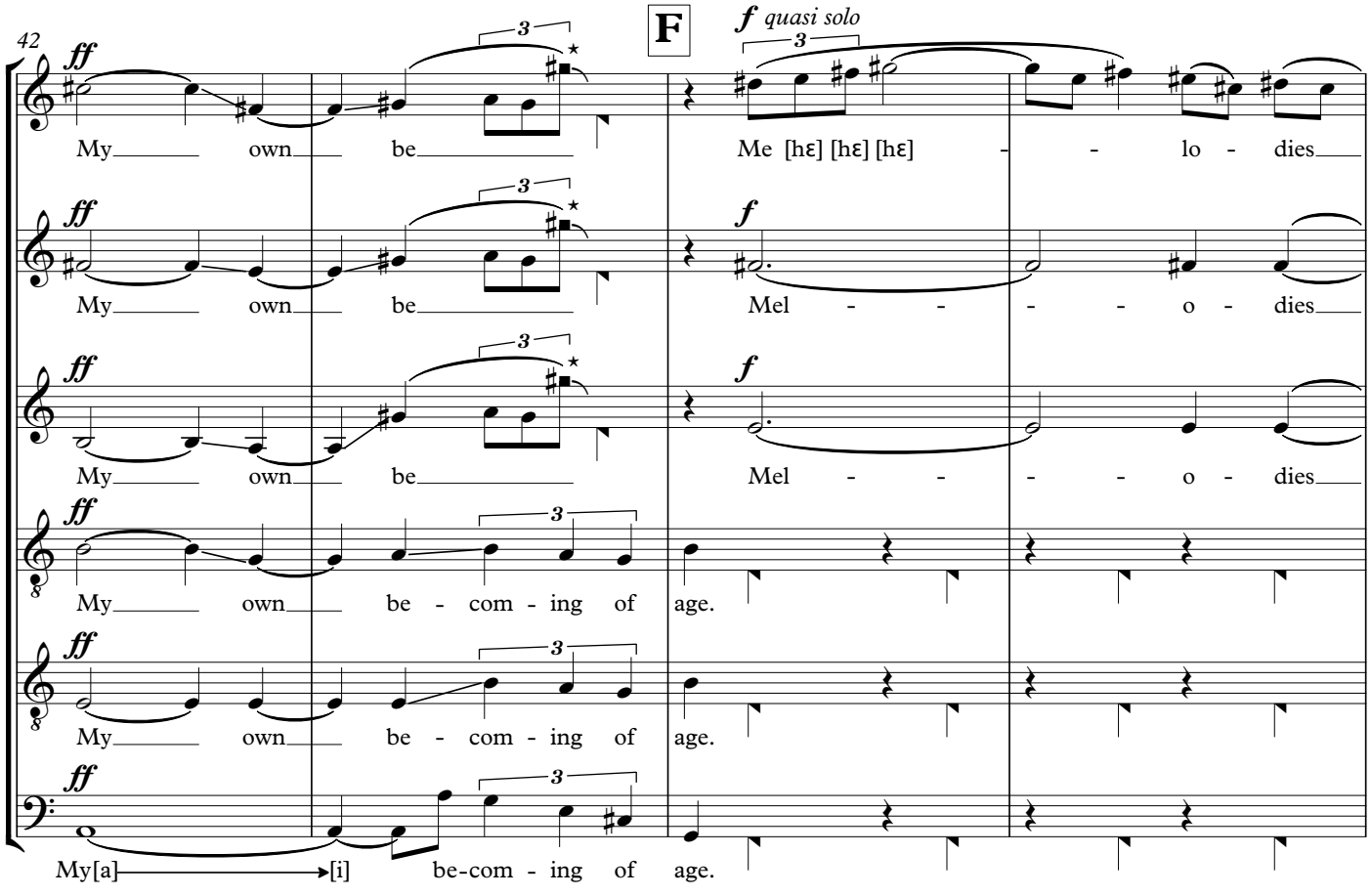


* voiced but unpitched whisper
** snap with both hands if possible
*** spoken, somewhat according to these rhythms and contours; the tone should be smooth, confident, and declamatory

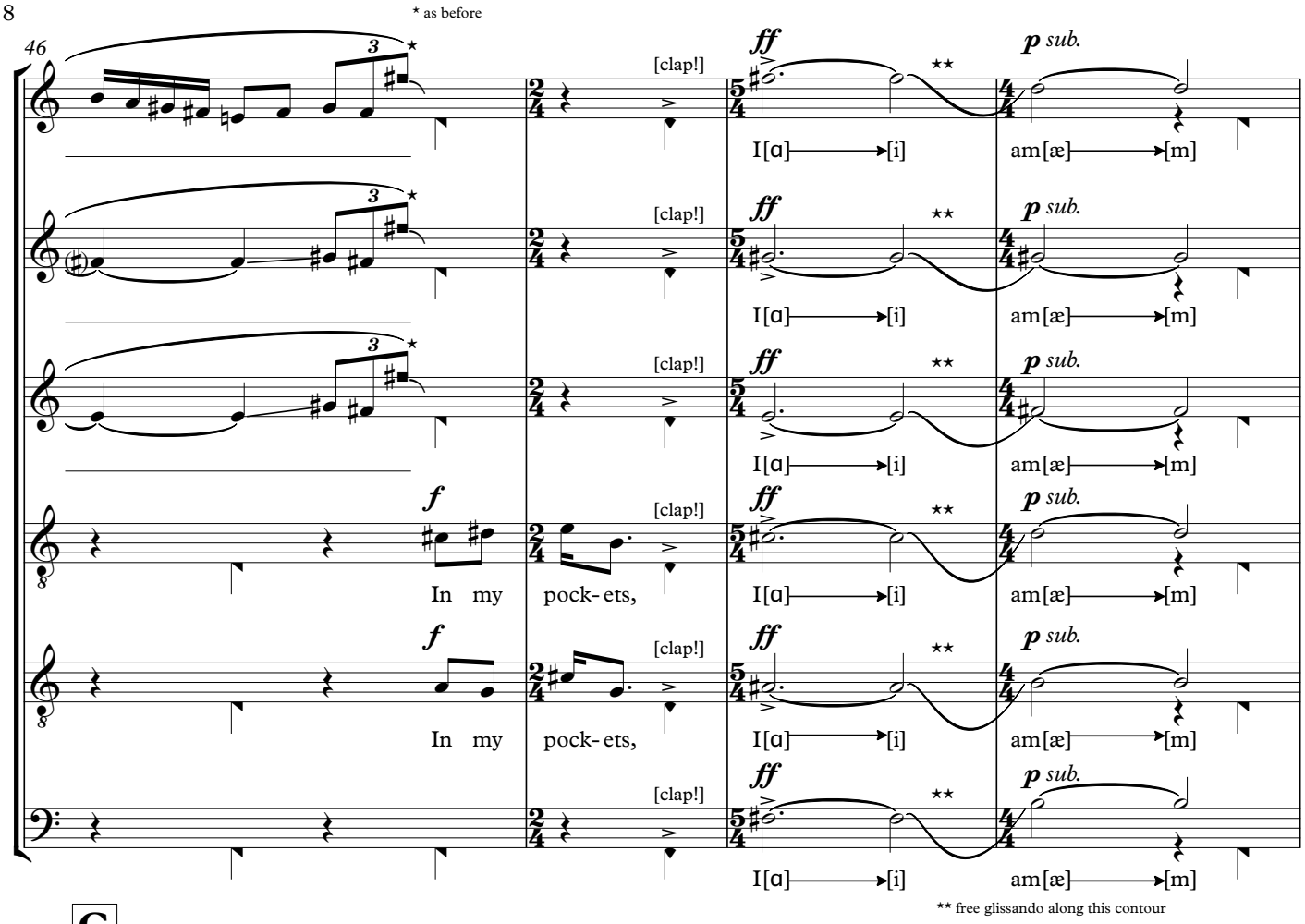

32
f
p
3
free-rhythm melisma
Mu - - sic re - - - mains
molto
me...
[snap]
When words fail, mu-sic re - mains...


E
36
[snap!]
pp
Black
Mu - - - - -
trailing off
[snap]
Black - ness[sss]
Mu
Mu-sic has ex -press(ed)[sss]
[d],
Mu-sic has em-bod- ied

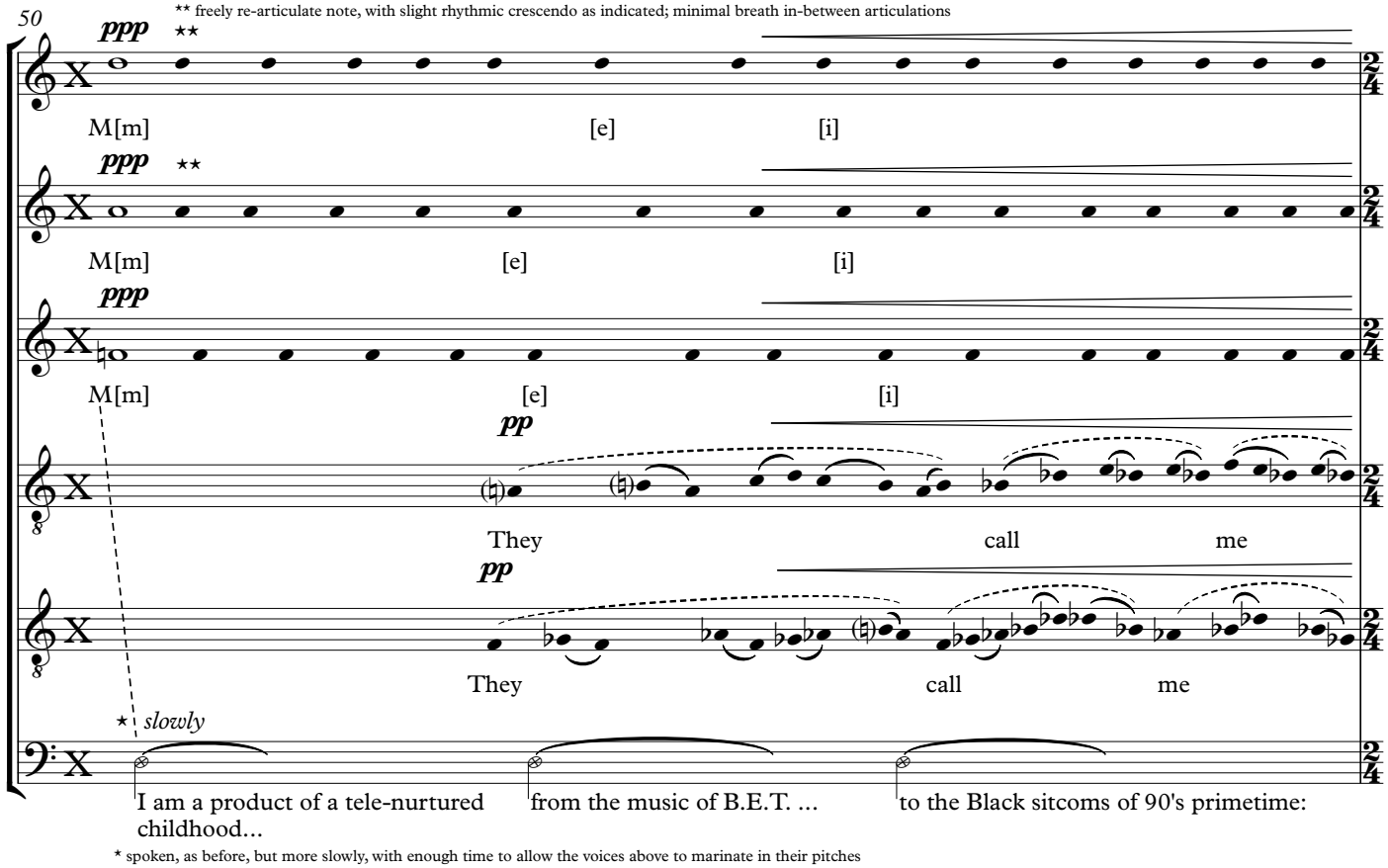




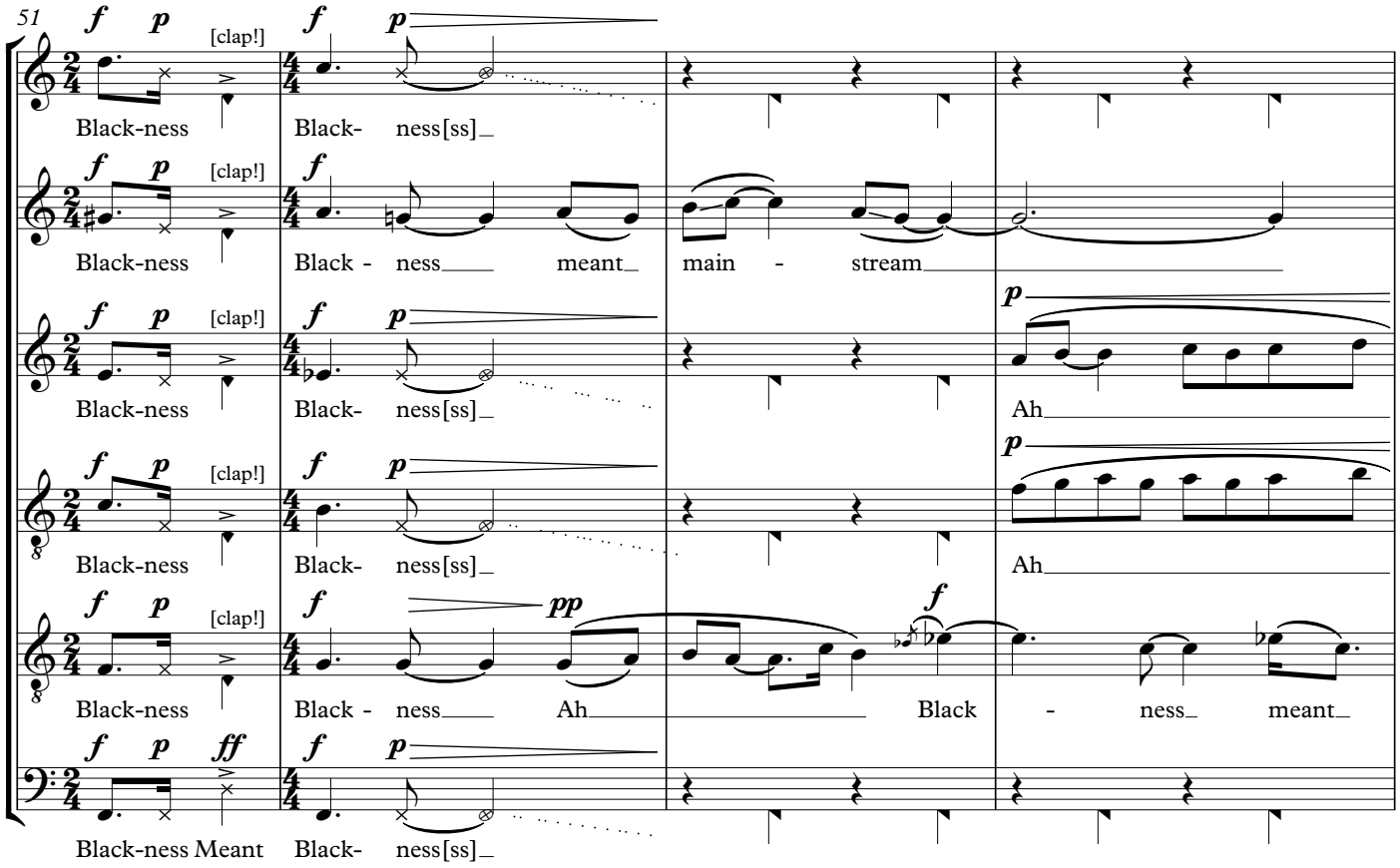
* Balkan-style flip to head voice terminated with small fall; the flip need not be a precise octave as indicated

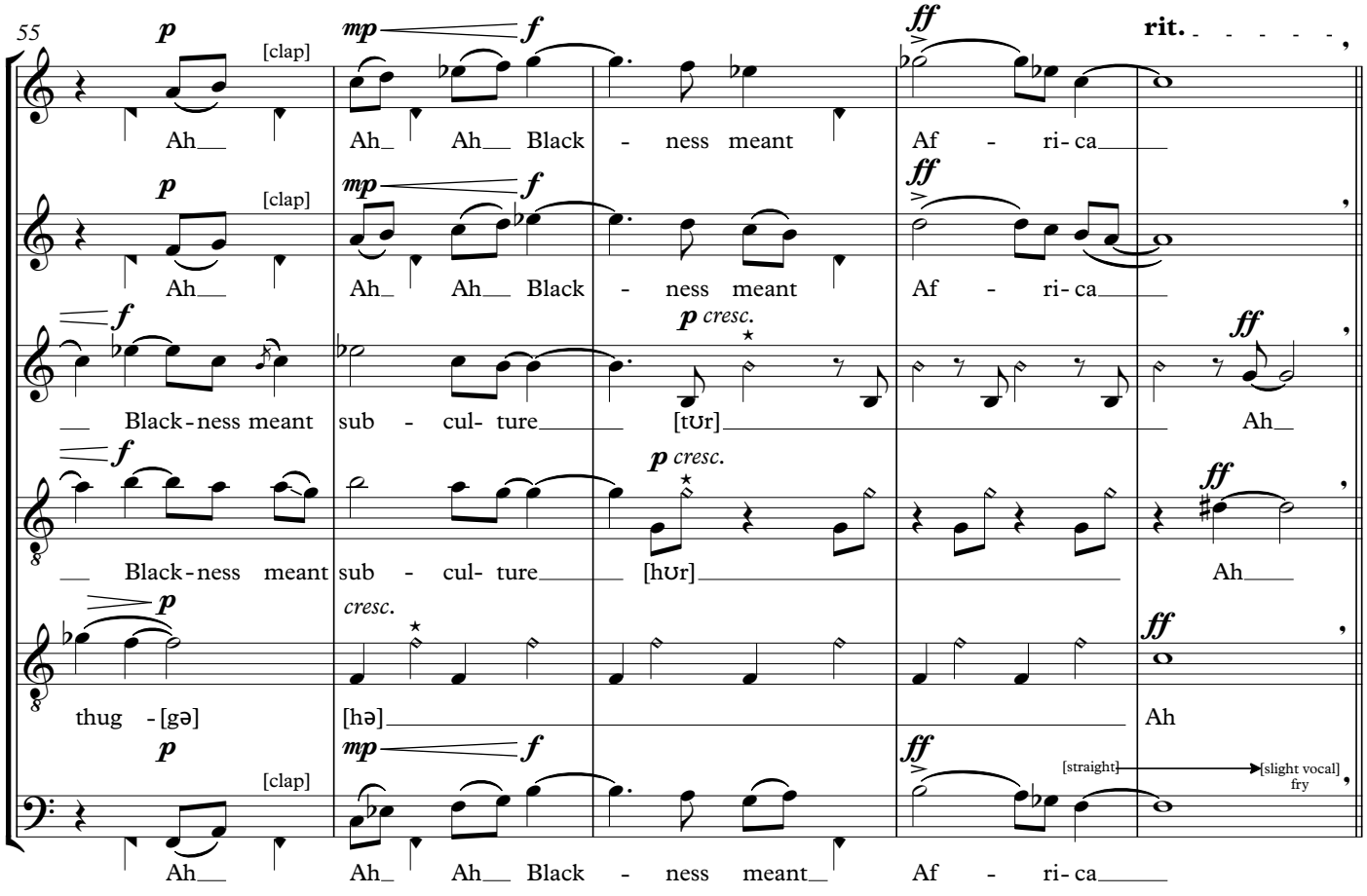


G **Freely but slowly**



H **In time** (♩ = 80)





* Pitched inhale, as loud as possible and as close to indicated pitch as possible (pitch need not be precise)

I **Tempo primo** (♩ = 52)

60

I

I

I am the back - ground

I am the black - ground

I

I

Me

Call Ooh[u]

They Ooh[u]

Mi - nor

Mi - nor

M[m]

M[m]

*Yes, this text is correct! The original text read "B(l)ackground"

J **In time, but faster** ♩ = 72

64

My voice

My voice

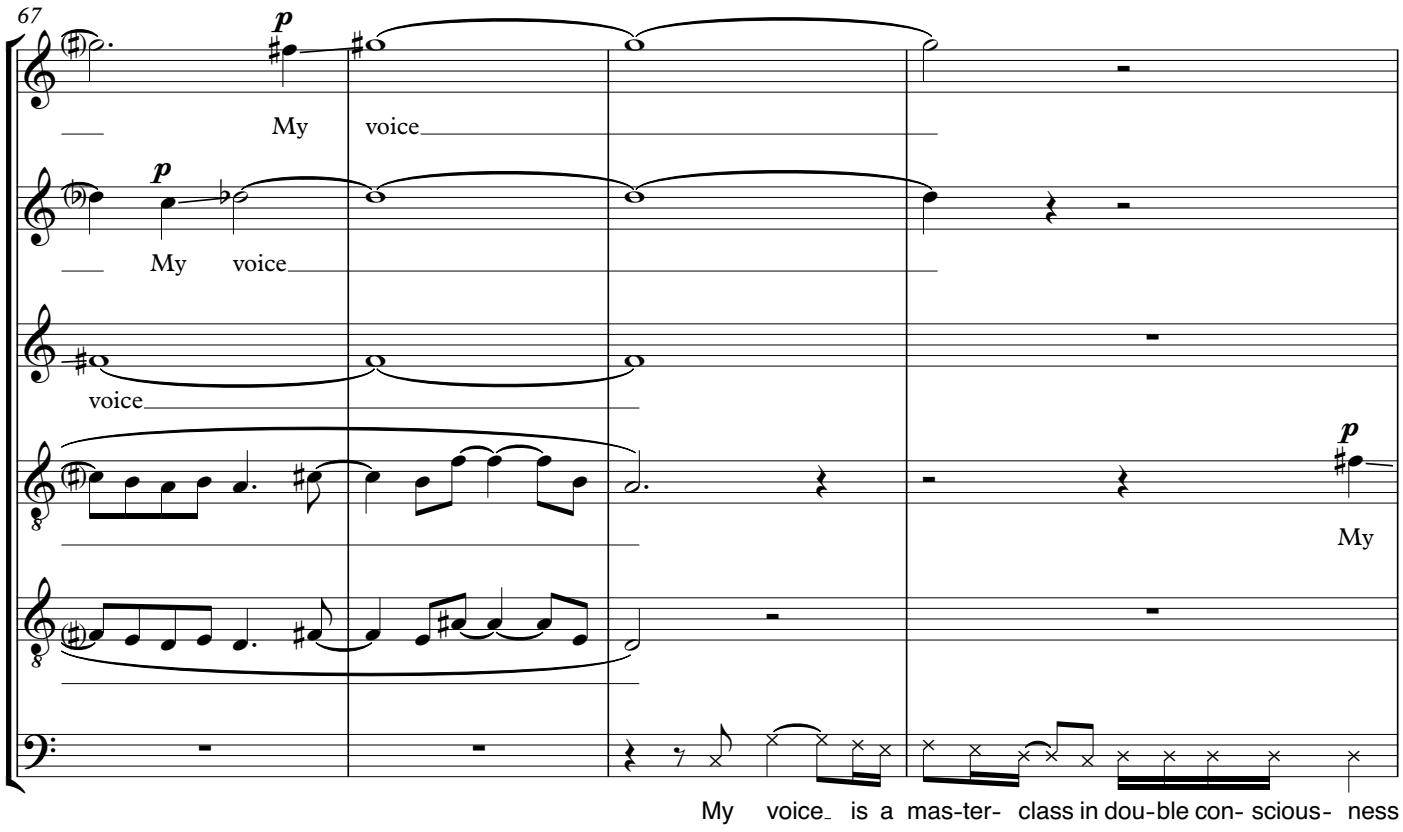
My voice My

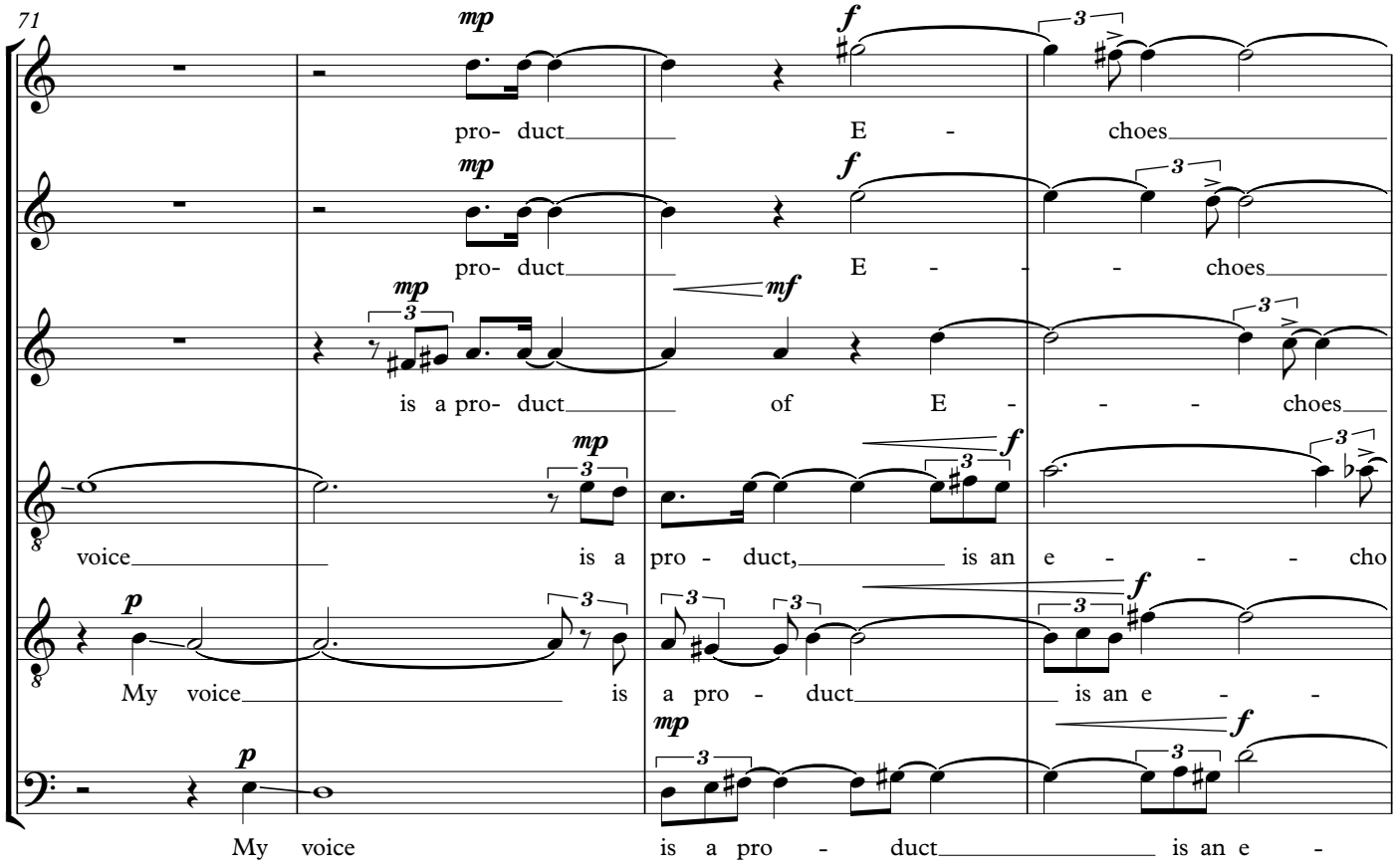
Ah

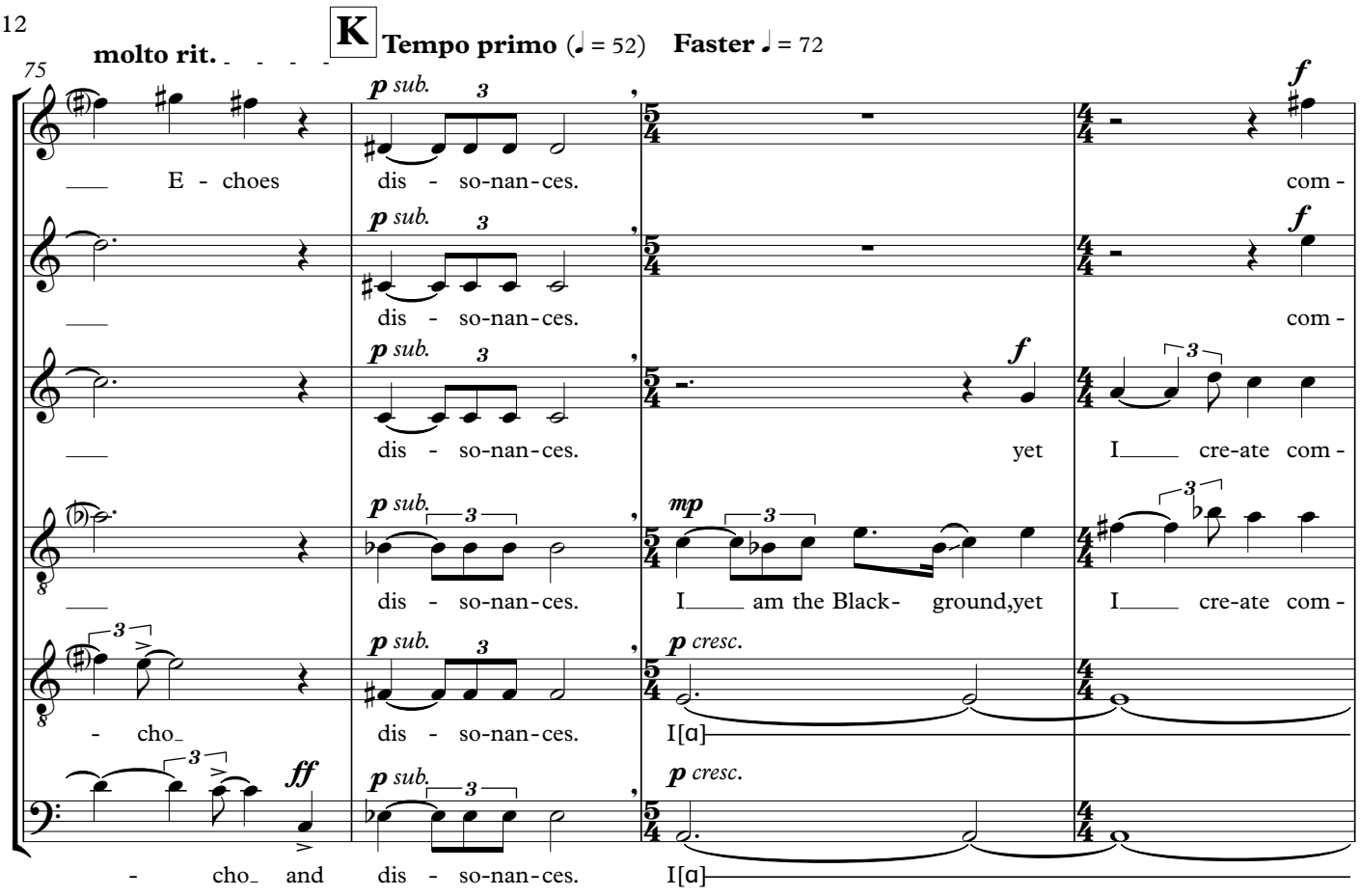
Solo, freely, bluesy

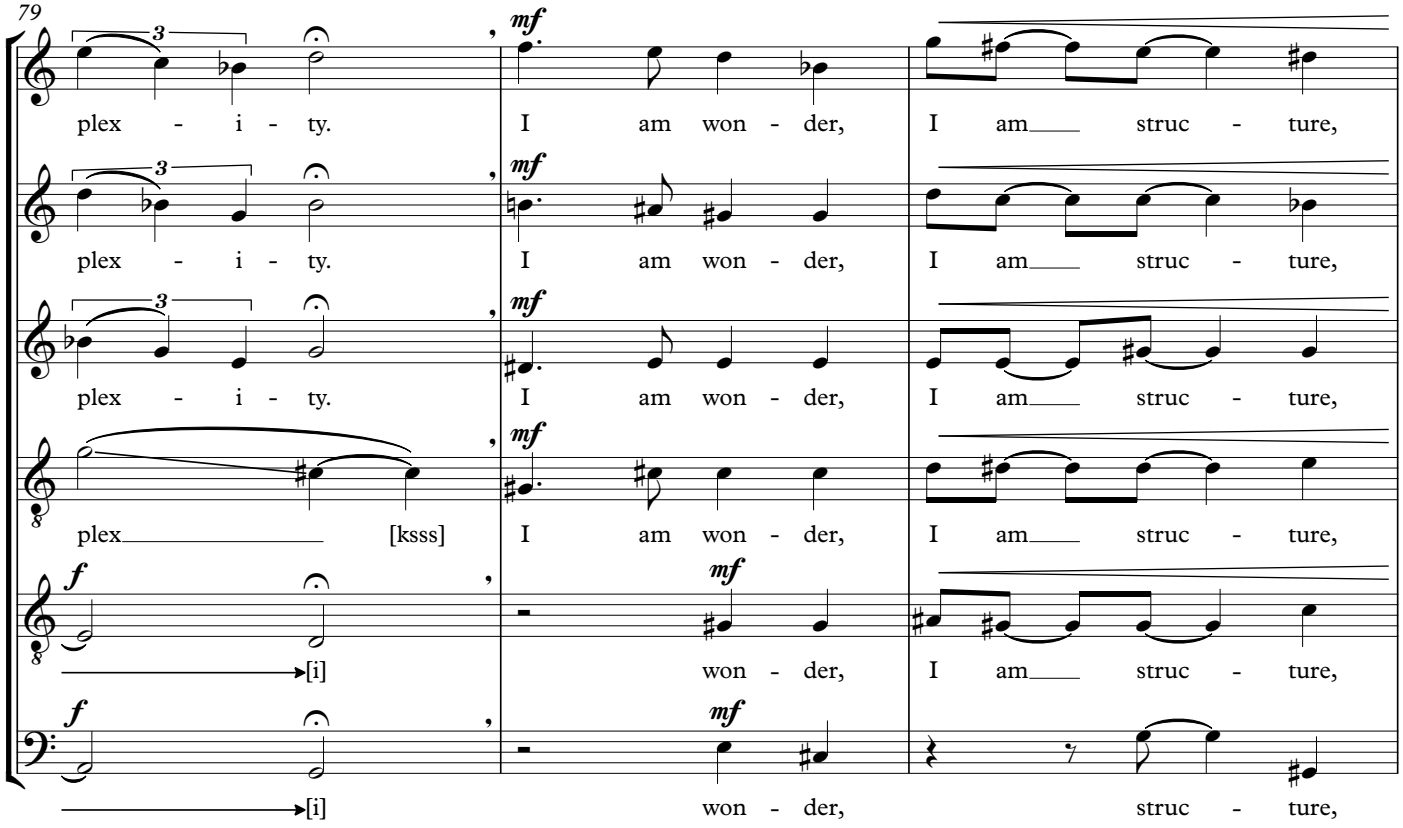
Be-cause I ex - ist be - tween the white.

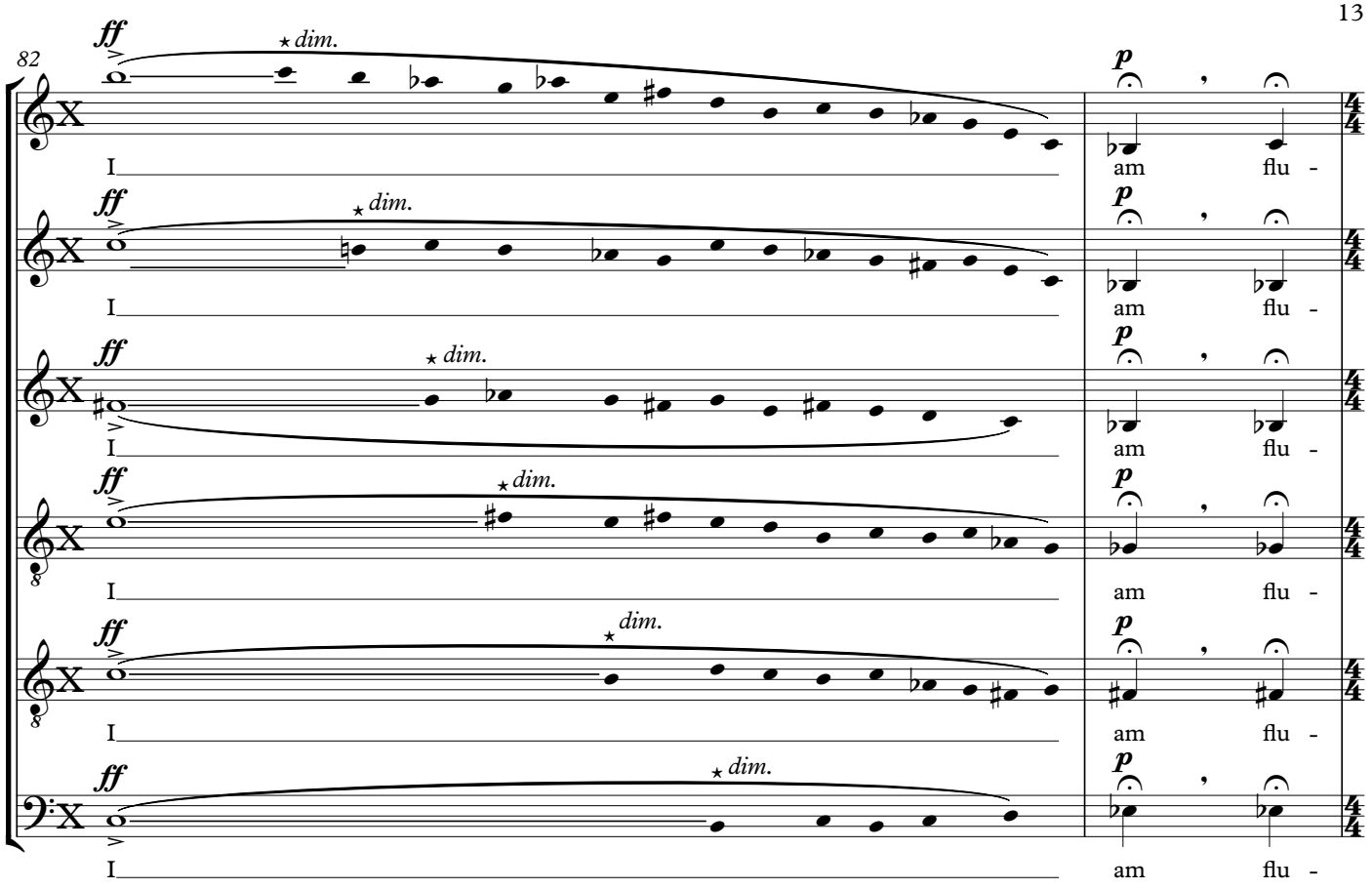
Ah

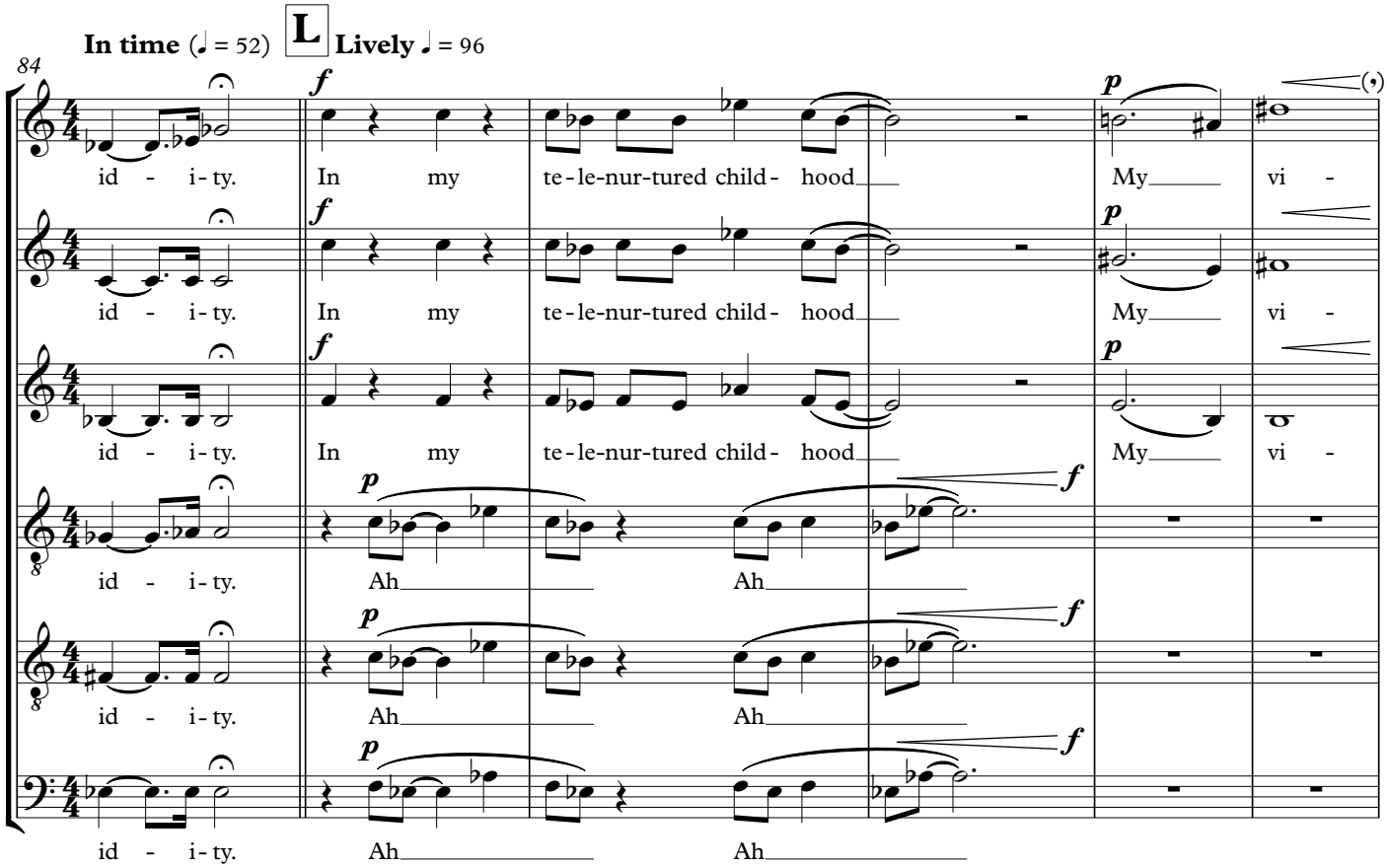

67
p
My voice
p
My voice
voice
p
My
My voice is a mas-ter- class in dou-ble con- scious- ness

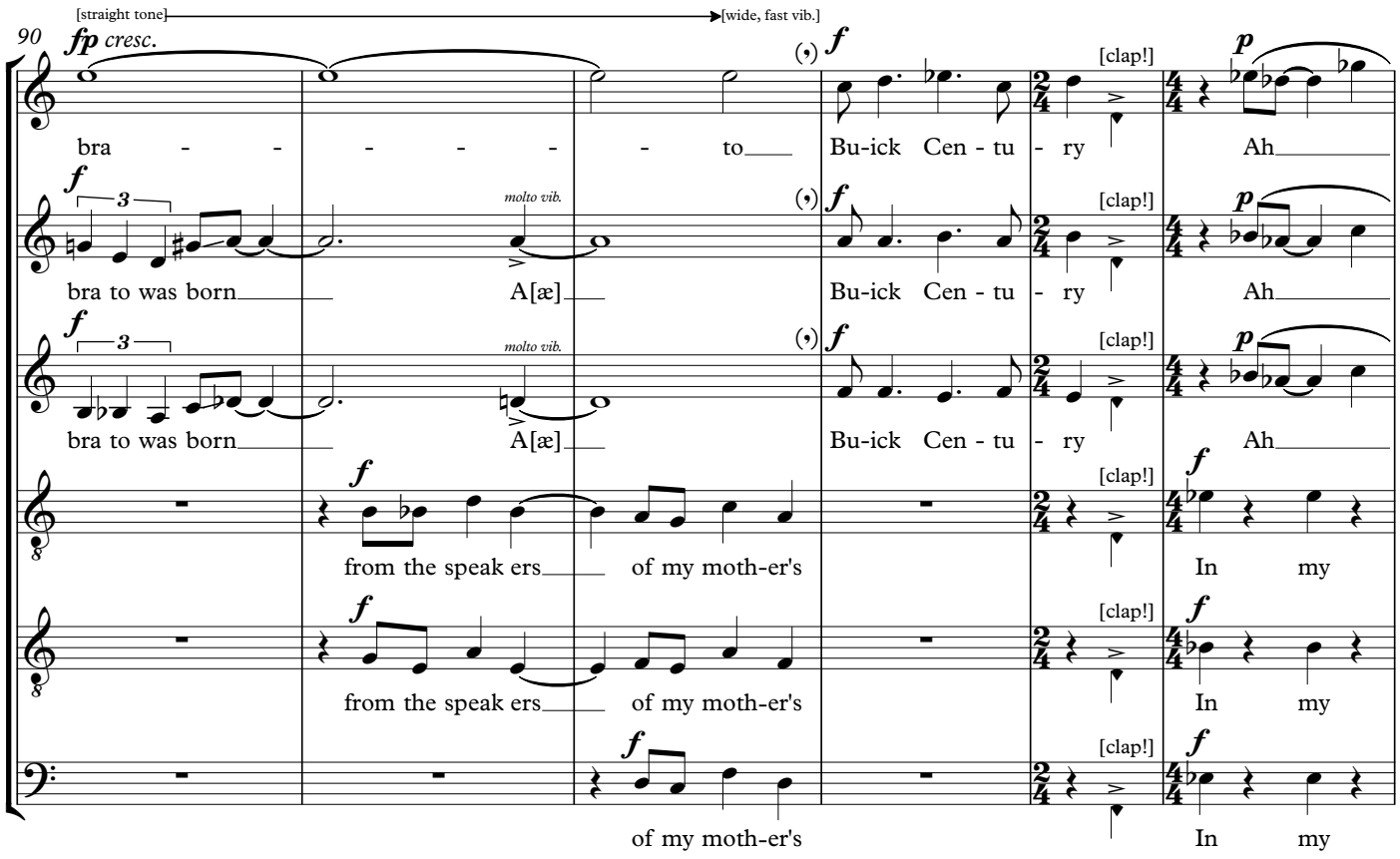

71
mp
f
pro- duct E - choes
mp
f
pro- duct E - - - choes
mp
mf
is a pro- duct of E - - - choes
mp
f
voice is a pro - duct, is an e - - - cho
p
f
My voice is a pro - duct is an e -
mp
p
My voice is a pro - duct is an e -

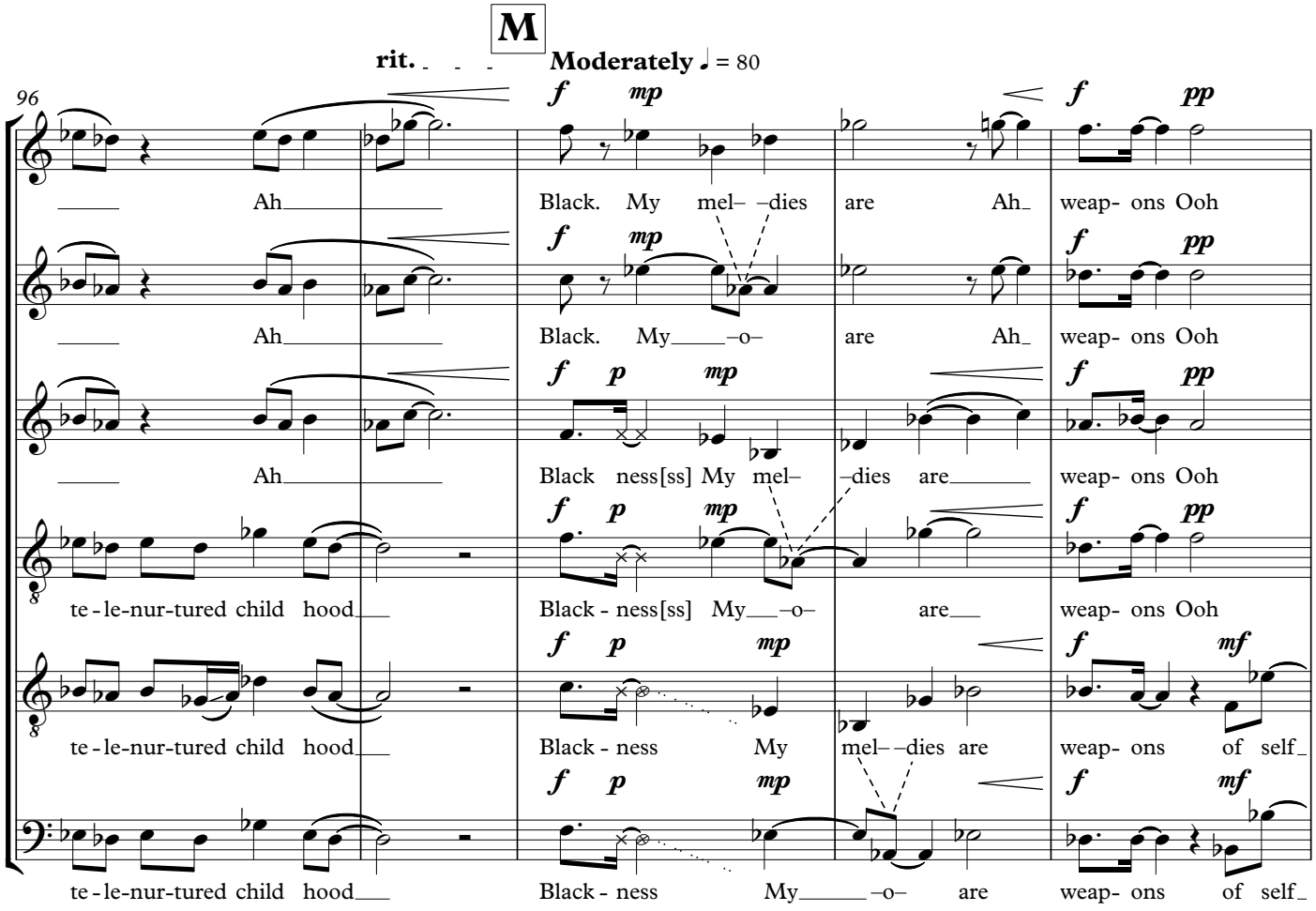

molto rit.
K
Tempo primo (♩ = 52)
Faster ♩ = 72
75
E - choes dis - so-nan-ces. com -
dis - so-nan-ces. com -
dis - so-nan-ces. yet I cre-ate com -
dis - so-nan-ces. I am the Black- ground,yet I cre-ate com -
- cho dis - so-nan-ces.
- cho and dis - so-nan-ces.
I[a]
I[a]

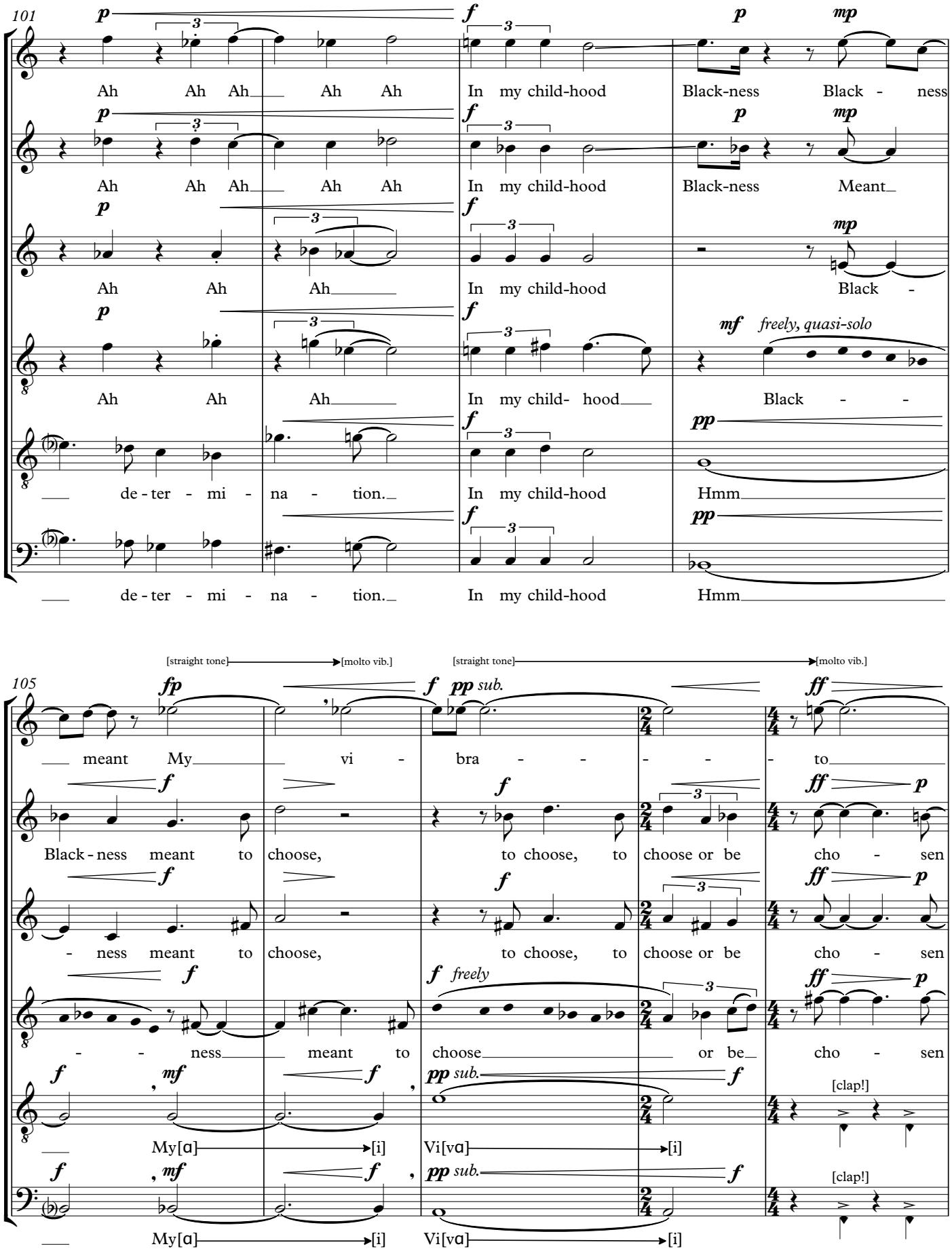

79
plex - i - ty. I am won - der, I am struc - ture,
plex - i - ty. I am won - der, I am struc - ture,
plex [ksss] I am won - der, I am struc - ture,
[i] won - der, I am struc - ture,
[i] won - der, struc - ture,


82
ff
⋆ dim.
p
I
am flu -
* Melisma these pitches, free rhythm, arrive together on "am"


84
In time (♩ = 52)
L
Lively ♩ = 96
f
p
id - i - ty.
In my te - le - nur - tured child - hood
My vi -
Ah Ah


[straight tone]
[wide, fast vib.]
90
fp cresc.
bra - - - - - - to
Bu-ick Cen - tu - ry
Ah
molto vib.
bra to was born
A[æ]
from the speak ers
of my moth-er's
In my
[clap!]


M
rit.
Moderately ♩ = 80
96
Ah
Black. My mel– –dies are Ah weap- ons Ooh
Black. My –o– are Ah weap- ons Ooh
Black ness[ss] My mel– –dies are weap- ons Ooh
te - le-nur-tured child hood
Black - ness[ss] My –o– are weap- ons Ooh
Black - ness My mel– –dies are weap- ons of self
Black - ness My –o– are weap- ons of self


101
Ah Ah Ah Ah Ah In my child-hood Black-ness Black - ness
Ah Ah Ah Ah Ah In my child-hood Black-ness Meant
Ah Ah Ah In my child-hood Black -
Ah Ah Ah In my child- hood Black - -
de - ter - mi - na - tion. In my child-hood Hmm
de - ter - mi - na - tion. In my child-hood Hmm
freely, quasi-solo
105
[straight tone] [molto vib.]
[straight tone] [molto vib.]
meant My vi - bra - - - - to
Black - ness meant to choose, to choose, to choose or be cho - sen
- ness meant to choose, to choose, to choose or be cho - sen
- - ness meant to choose or be cho - sen
My[ɑ] [i] Vi[vɑ] [i]
My[ɑ] [i] Vi[vɑ] [i]
[clap!]
[clap!]

N

110

p in - - vokes the spir - - it in the

mp freely, chant-like in - - vokes the spir - - it in the

[straight tone] *p* *cresc. poco a poco* [molto vib.] *f* –to– in the

[straight tone] *p* *cresc. poco a poco* [molto vib.] *f* *fp* –bra– Ah

[straight tone] [snap] *p* *cresc. poco a poco* [molto vib.] *f* *fp* My Ah

[straight tone] [snap] *p* *cresc. poco a poco* [molto vib.] *f* *fp* vi– Ah

molt rit. **A tempo primo** ♩ = 52

116

in the dark: *fff* IN - NER - VI - SIONS

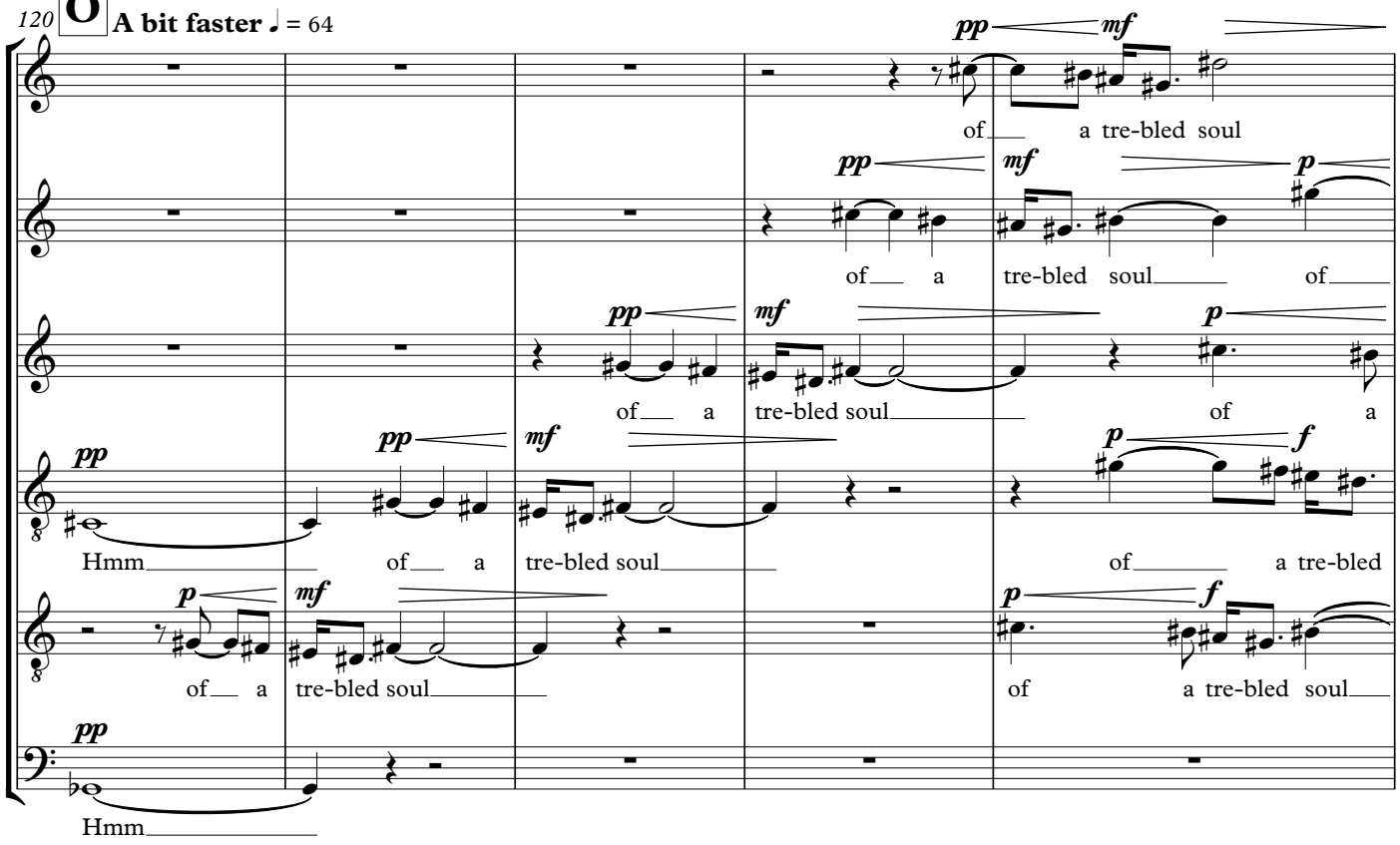
in the dark: *fff* IN - NER - VI - SIONS

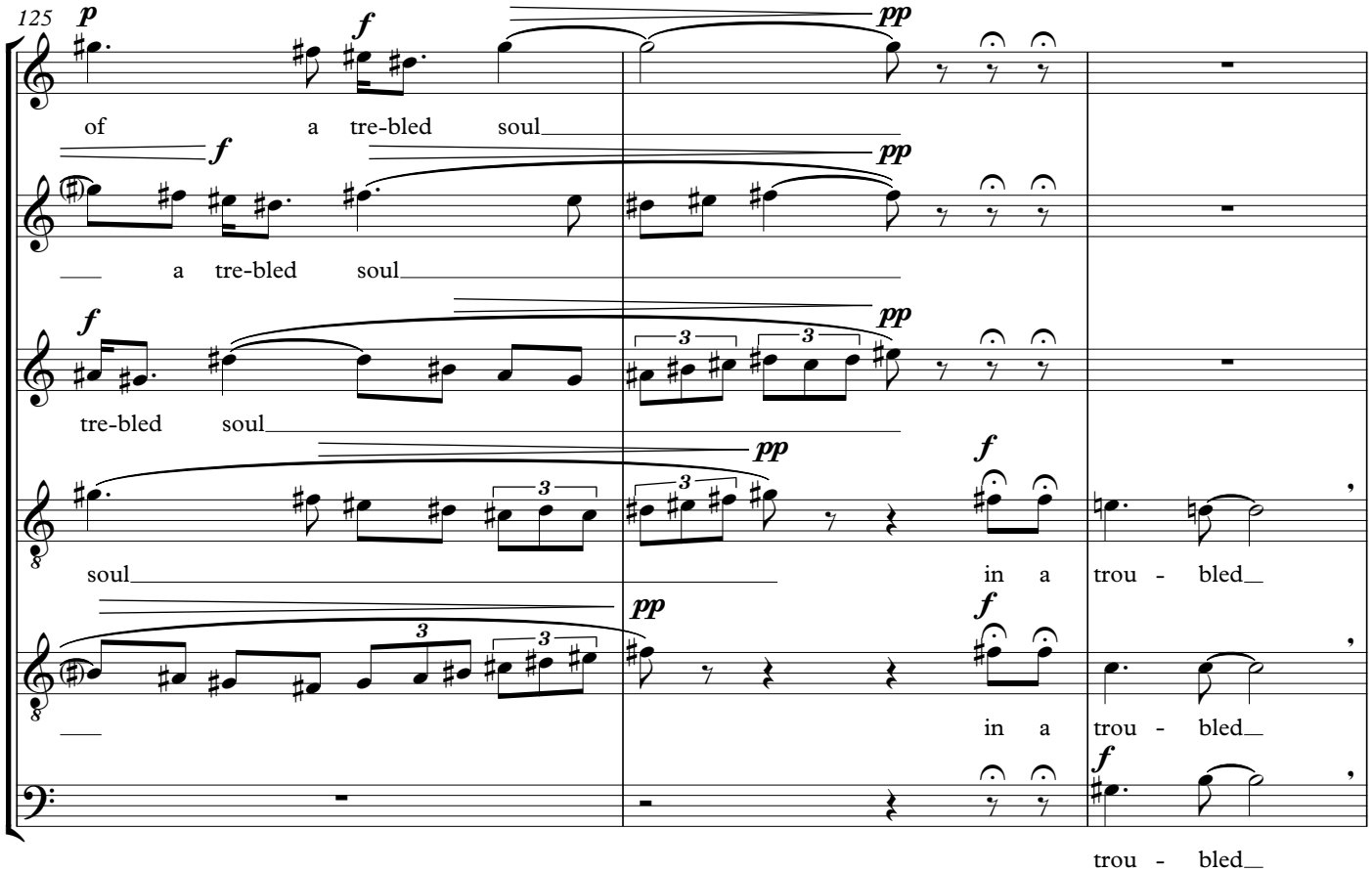
in the dark: *fff* IN - NER - VI - SIONS

f Ah *fff* IN - NER - VI - SIONS

f Ah *fff* IN - NER - VI - SIONS

Ah IN - NER - VI - SIONS


120
O
A bit faster ♩ = 64
pp mf
of a tre-bled soul
pp mf p
of a tre-bled soul of
pp mf p
of a tre-bled soul of a
pp pp mf p f
Hmm of a tre-bled soul of a tre-bled
p mf p f
of a tre-bled soul of a tre-bled soul
pp
Hmm


125
p f pp
of a tre-bled soul
f pp
a tre-bled soul
f pp
tre-bled soul
pp f
soul in a trou - bled
pp f
in a trou - bled
f
trou - bled

P

128

ff f mf mp pp

A - - ME - - RI - - - CA

freely

Freely, not too slowly

129

mf

Me - [hɛ] - [hɛ] - [hɛ] - lo-dies in my pock- ets,

Q **In time, briskly** ♩ = 72

f

I am won - der, I am

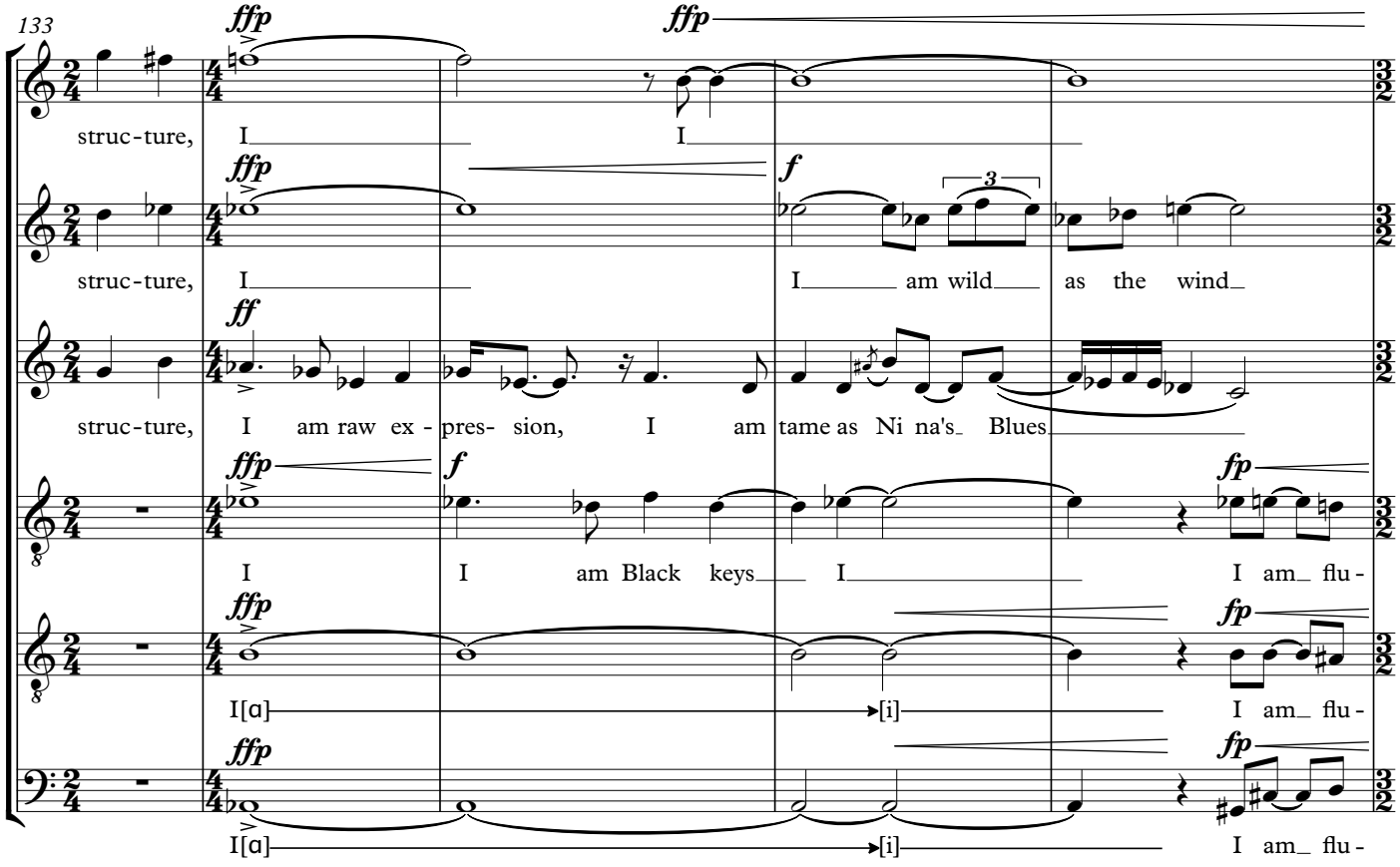
overtones

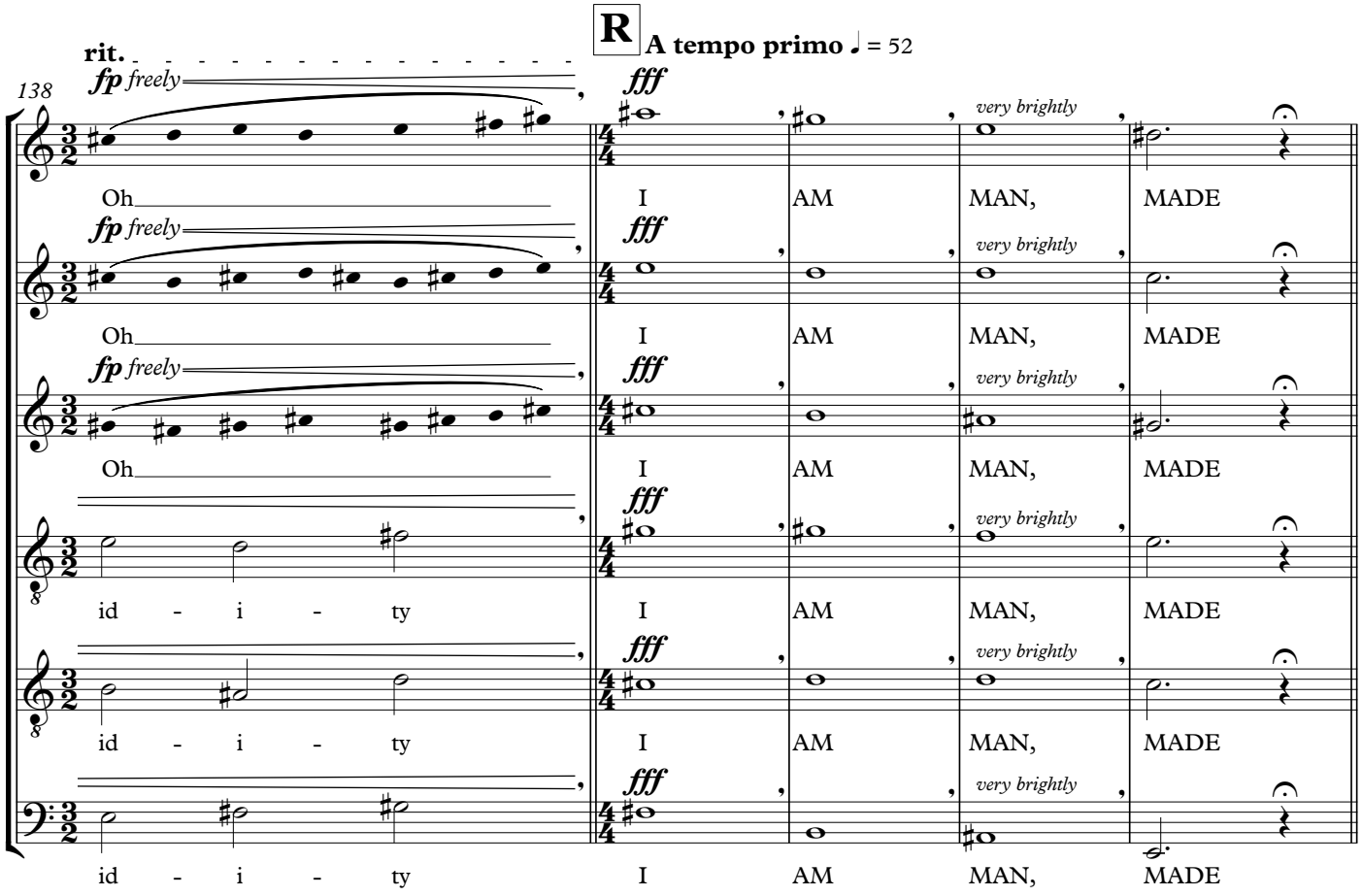
[rrr]

free-rhythm melisma

I[ɑ] - - [i] am

I[ɑ] - - - [i] am


133
ffp
struc-ture, I
ffp
struc-ture, I
ff
struc-ture, I am raw ex - pres- sion, I am tame as Ni na's Blues
ffp
f
I I am Black keys I
ffp
I[ɑ]
[i]
ffp
I[ɑ]
[i]
ffp
f
I am wild as the wind
fp
I am flu -
fp
I am flu -
fp
I am flu -


R
A tempo primo ♩ = 52
rit.
138
fp freely
fff
very brightly
Oh I AM MAN, MADE
id - i - ty I AM MAN, MADE

S **A bit faster** ♩ = 64

143

molto rit.

pp

Mu– Mu– Mu–

pp

Mu– Mu– Mu–

pp

Mu– Mu– Mu–

pp

Mu– Mu– Mu–

p

Mu - sic Mu - sic Mu - sic

p

Mu - sic Mu - sic Mu - sic

* Sing [sɪk], not [zɪk], each time

T **Very slowly** ♩ = 48

146

Freely, still very slow

p pp ppp pppp

I am I am I am

p pp ppp pppp

I am I am I am

p pp ppp pppp

I am I am I am

p pp ppp pppp

I am I am I am

p pp ppp pppp

I am I am I am

p pp ppp pppp

I am I am I am

** ppp n

I

** ppp n

I

** ppp n

I

** C.M.B.