TWO IMMIGRANTS

FOR SATB CHOIR, CELLO, AND PIANO

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MUSIC BY JENNI BRANDON

POEM BY MAYA PORCELLI

JENNI BRANDON
MUSIC

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A Great American Love Story
Poem by Maya Porcelli

Two immigrants
Came together
Hoping to create a mosaic
Out of broken glass.
There were borders
Running through them,
As natural as the
Veins running through
Their bodies.

They were
Ill-fitting puzzle pieces,
Stuck between oil and water.
They promised their mothers
They would not forget her,
So they spoke the language
She taught them
In hushed whispers,

Two immigrants
Came together;
Trying to feel less
Homesick.
Home is where the heart is
And they thought
That their hearts
Were far from them,
Stuck to the gates of
Ellis Island.

They wept in
Each other's arms
Under the smog-covered moon
For their lost
Brothers and sisters,

So they created
Makeshift hearts
From yellowed picture albums
And music sheets.

Two immigrants
Came together
And made each other
Their home.

Two Immigrants tells the story of two young immigrants who come to America from a different land. They seek out what many immigrants did in coming to America – a chance to build a life, grow a career and family, and live the American dream. This poem by Maya Porcelli, a student at California School of the Arts – San Gabriel, is inspired by the family story of Dr. Michael J. Patzakis and Susan Giorkaris Patzakis, whose families came through Ellis Island early in the 20th century. This poem beautifully tells of what their parents left behind, but in coming together they created a new story of love, family, and hope, and so many opportunities for their children and grandchildren. I think it captures not only a beautiful tribute to their family and Greek heritage, but tells the story of the spirit and harmony of many immigrants who came to America's shores from another country.

The music moves through light and darkness as the immigrants are faced with heartache and loss. The cello adds a deep, resonant voice of the immigrant as they search for their footing in the rocky terrain of a new language, new experiences, and new emotions. The choir explores these emotions, supported by the piano's often forward movement like that of a large ship crossing the ocean on its way to Ellis Island. The work ends with a feeling of hope as the immigrants create a new life in this new land.

It is truly an honor to write this work to celebrate the life and honor the family of Dr. and Mrs. Patzakis, and to have the California School of the Arts – San Gabriel Valley Choir under the direction of Ryan Brown give the world premiere. A big thank you to Theresa Patzakis for supporting the creation of this work in honor of her parents, and to Katherine Powers, director of the Vocal Arts Department of CSArts-SGV.

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Dedicated with love and gratitude to Dr. Michael and Susan Patzakis and in tribute to our ancestors whose hopes and dreams continue to inspire us. From your children and grandchildren.

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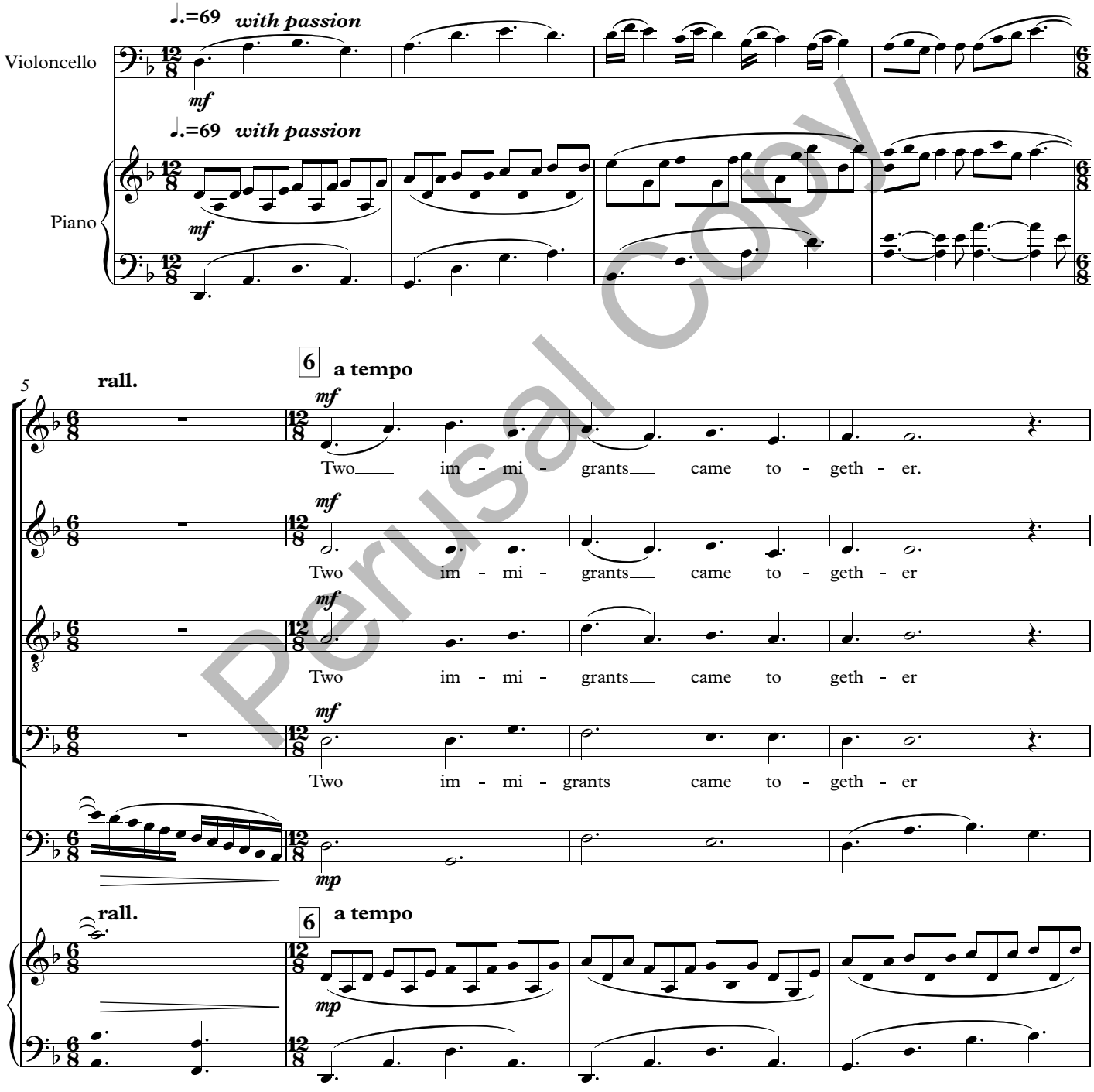

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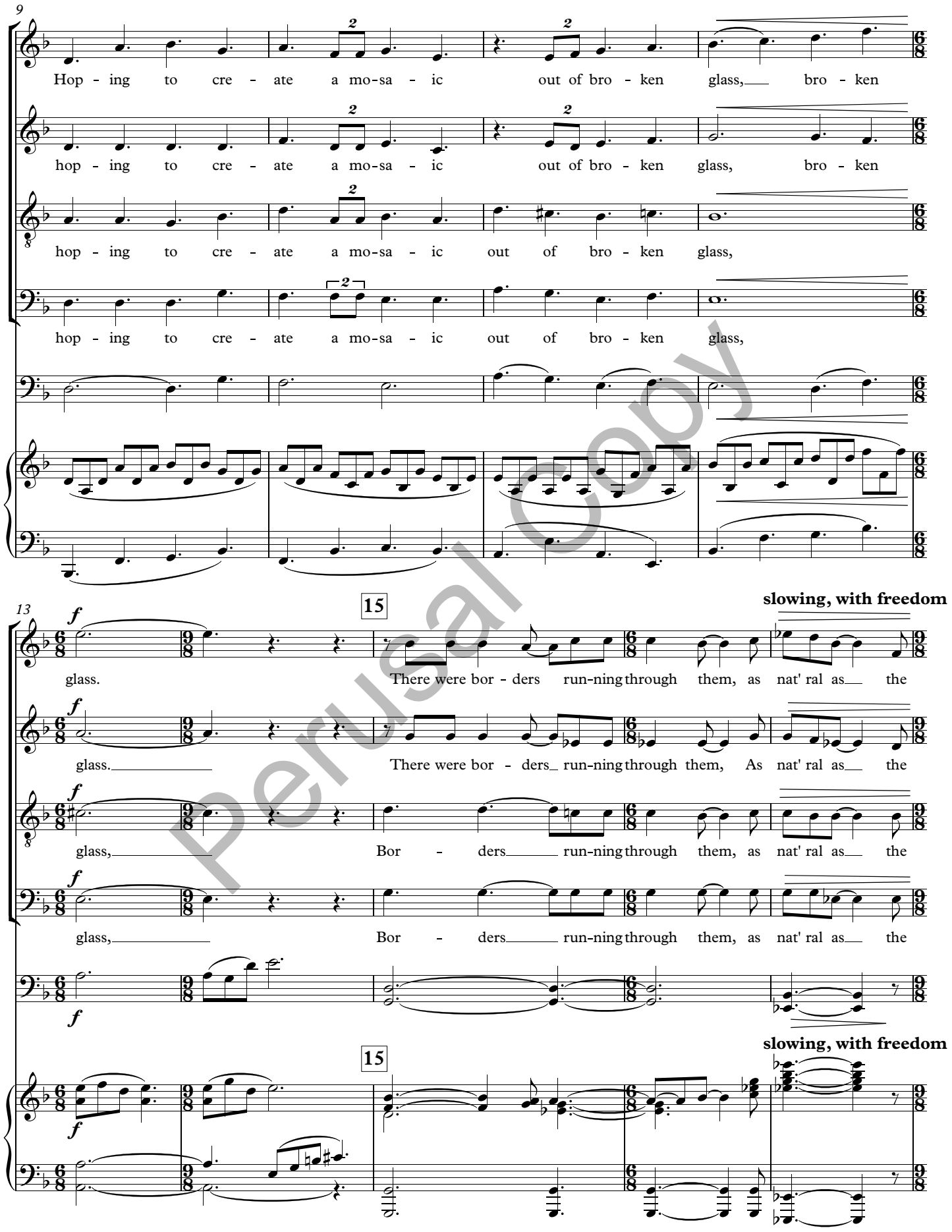

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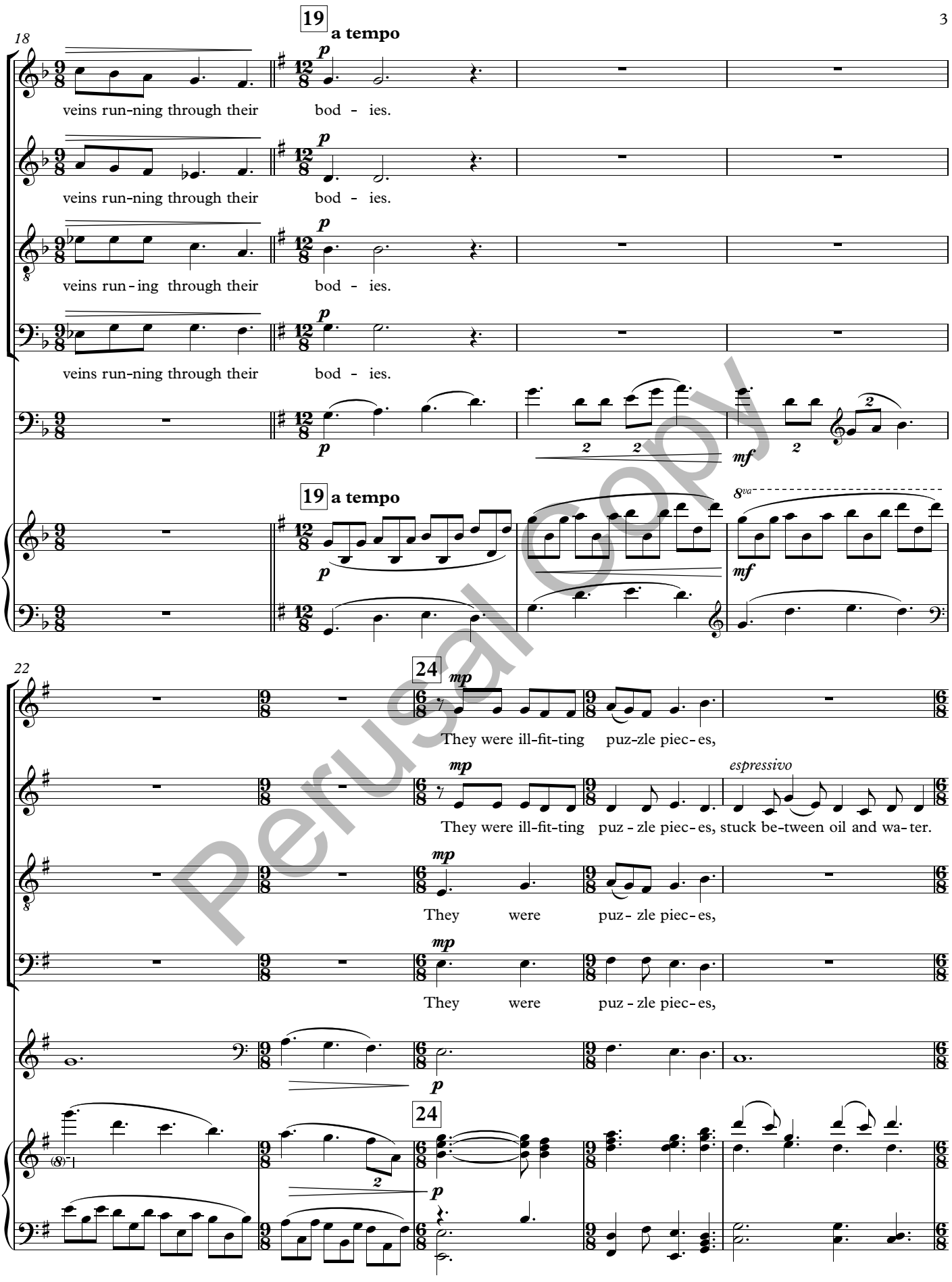

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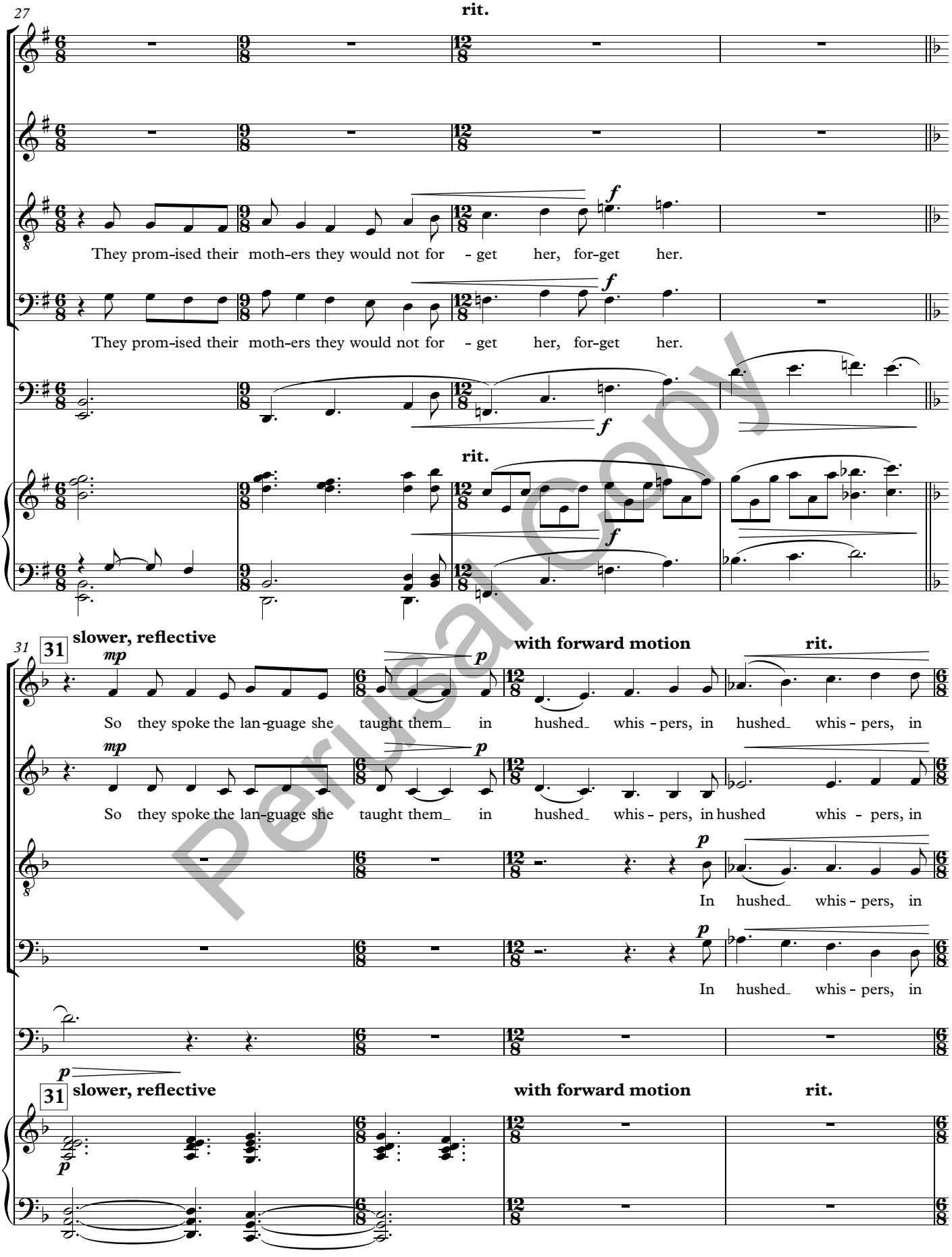

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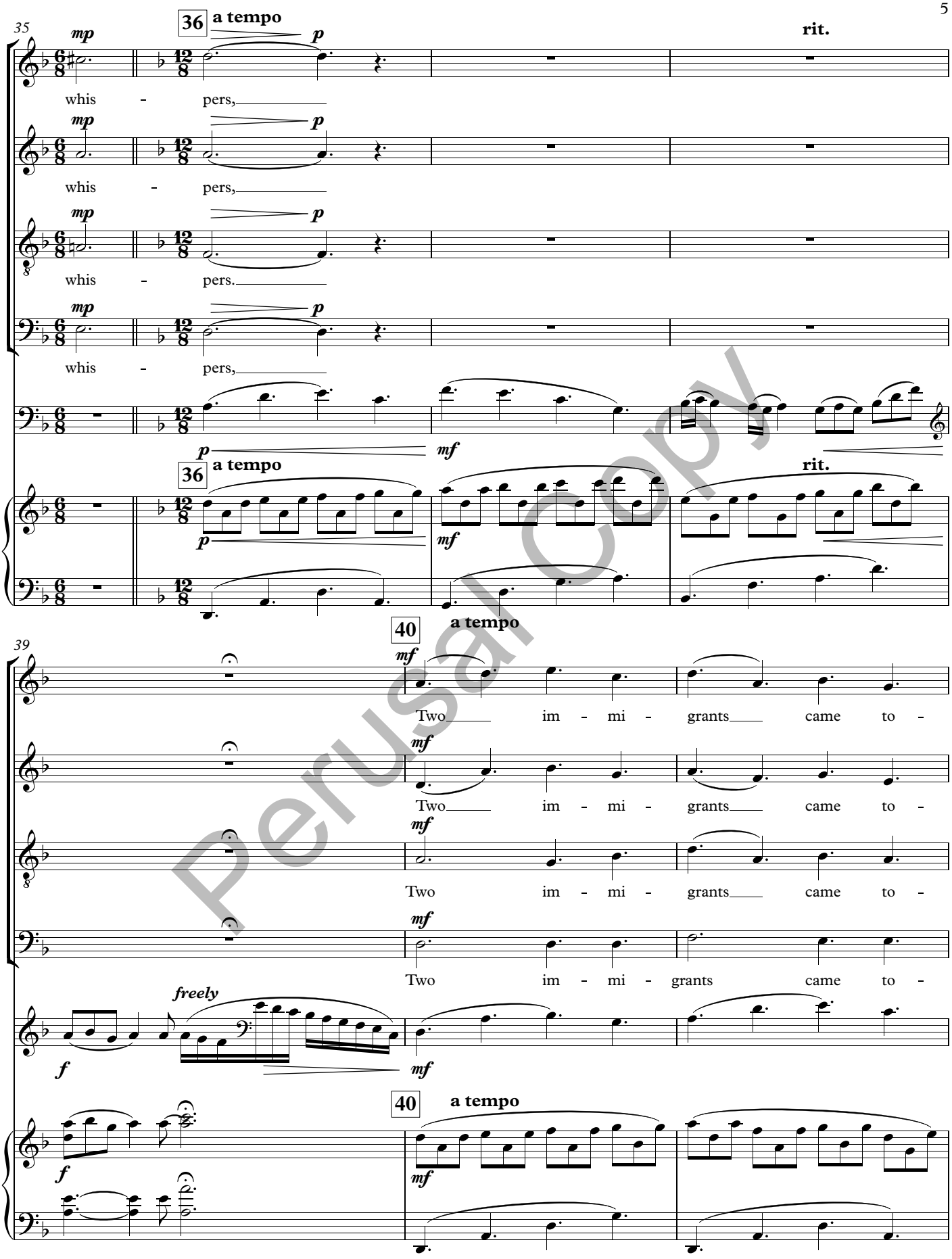

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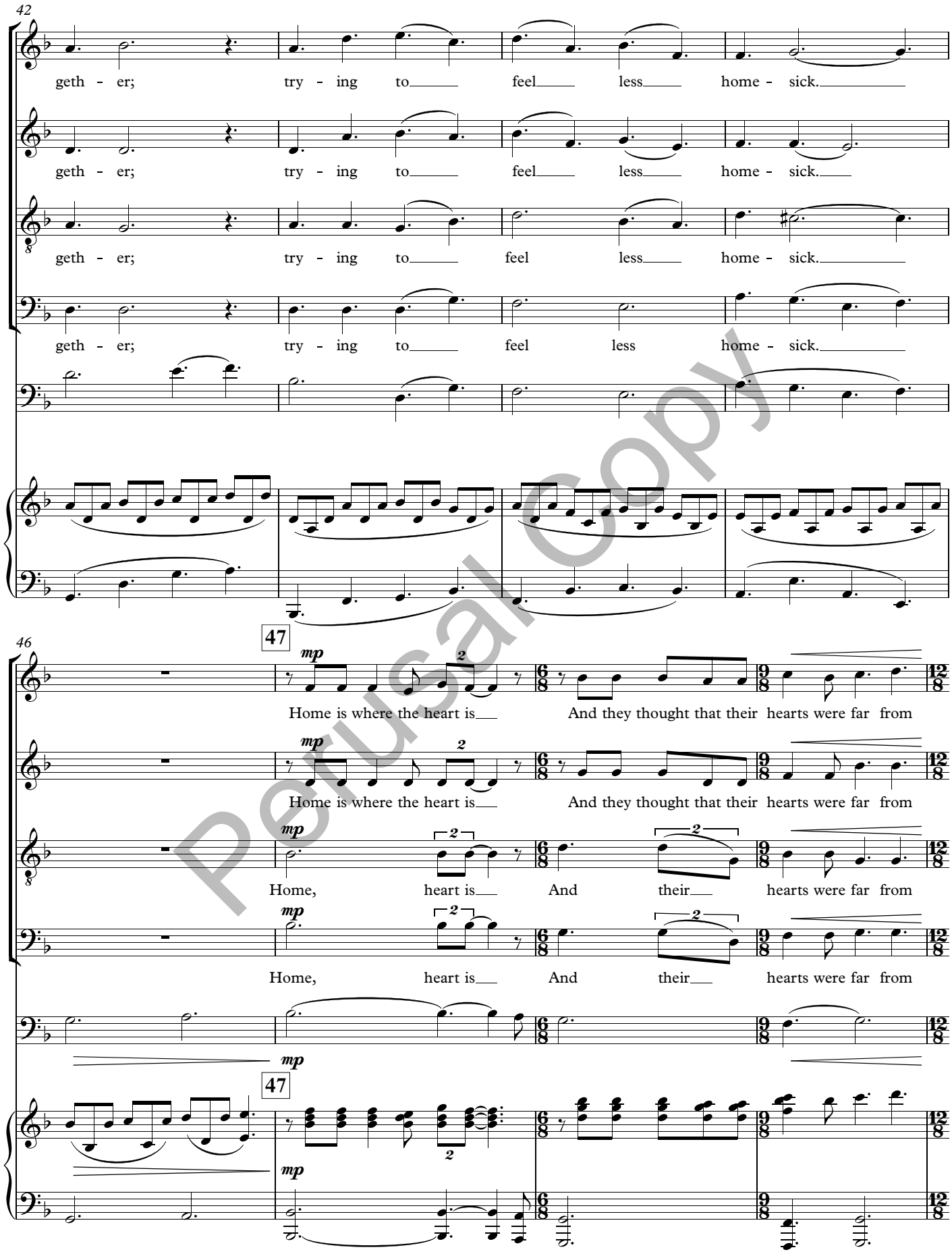

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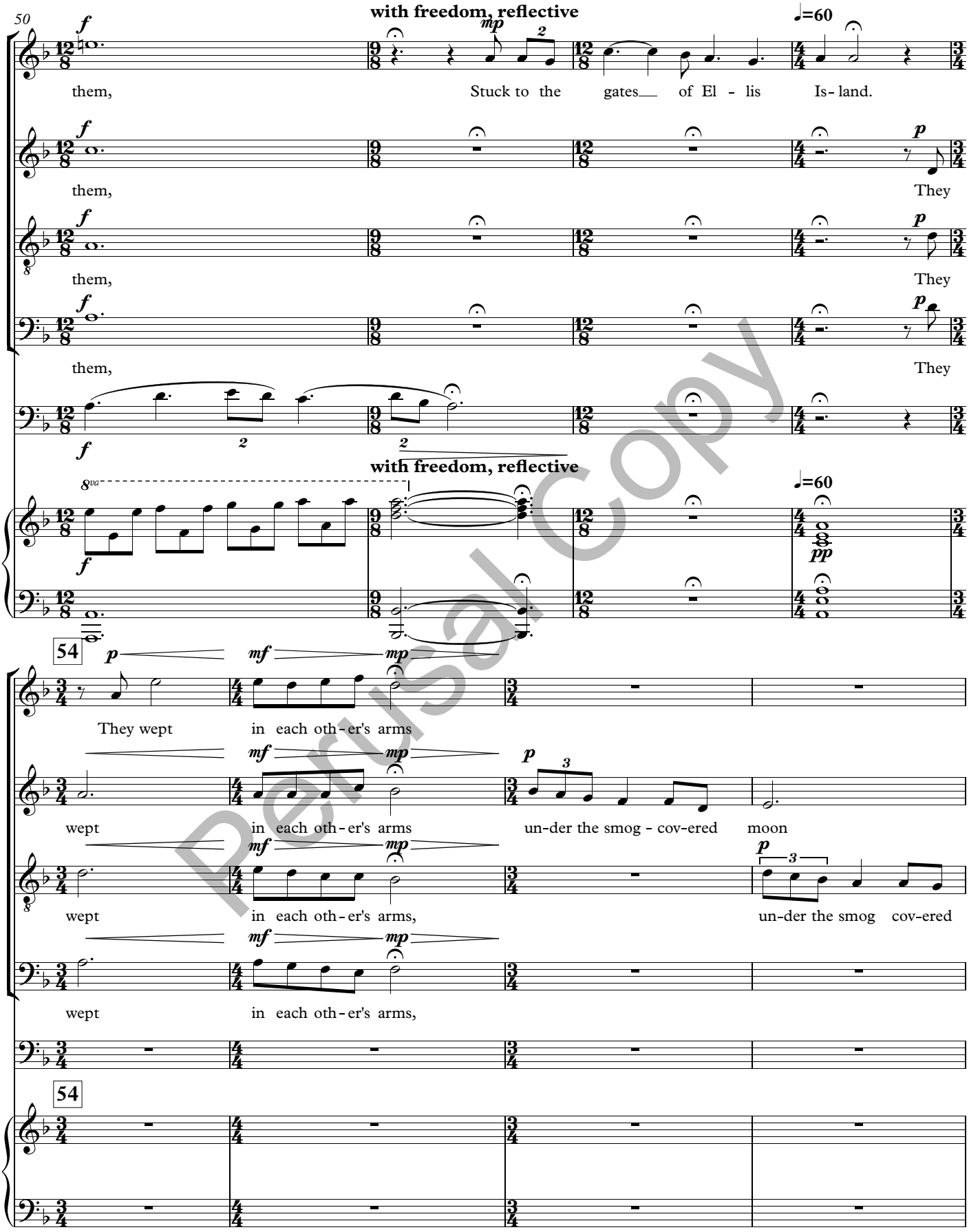

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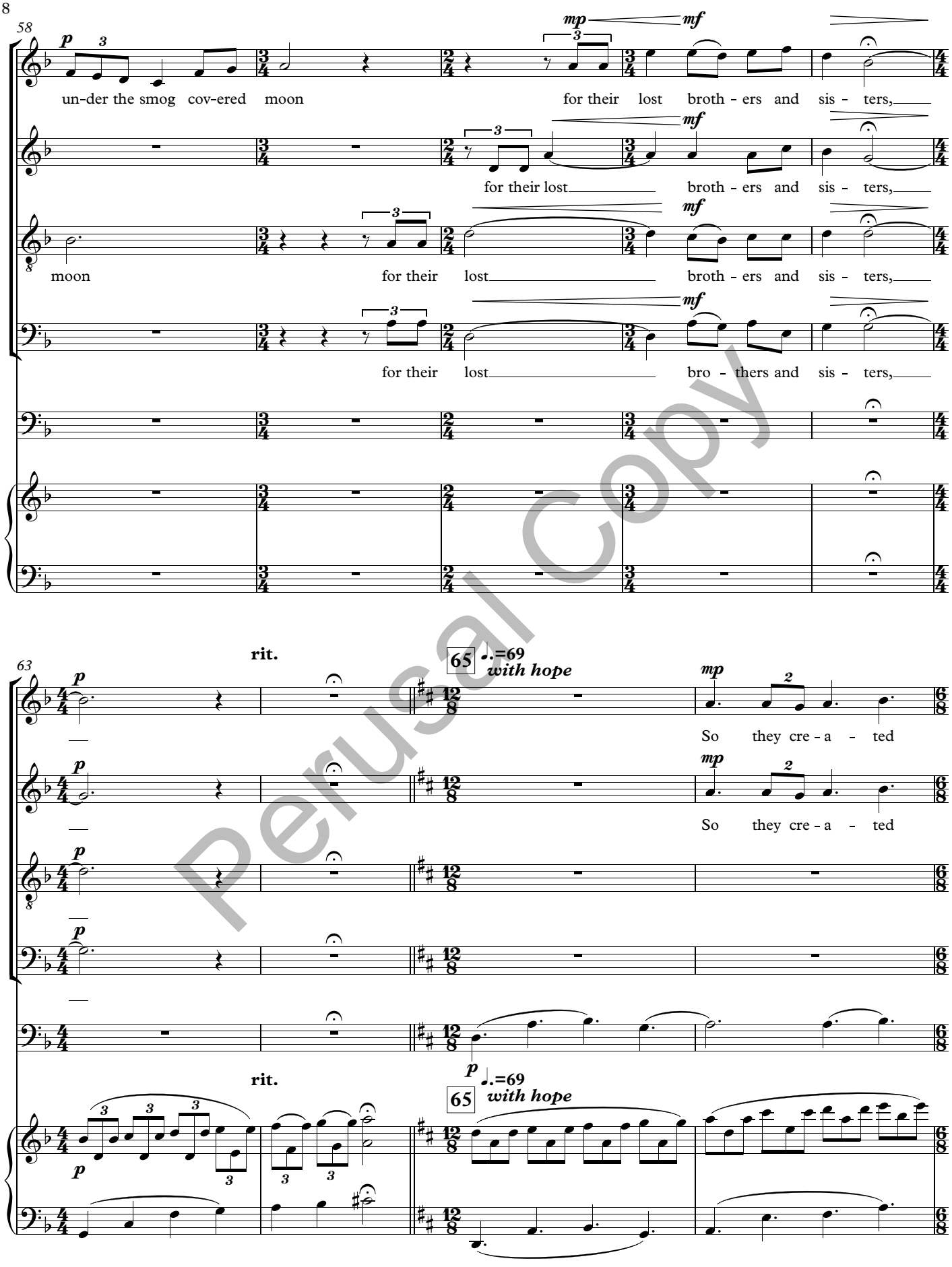

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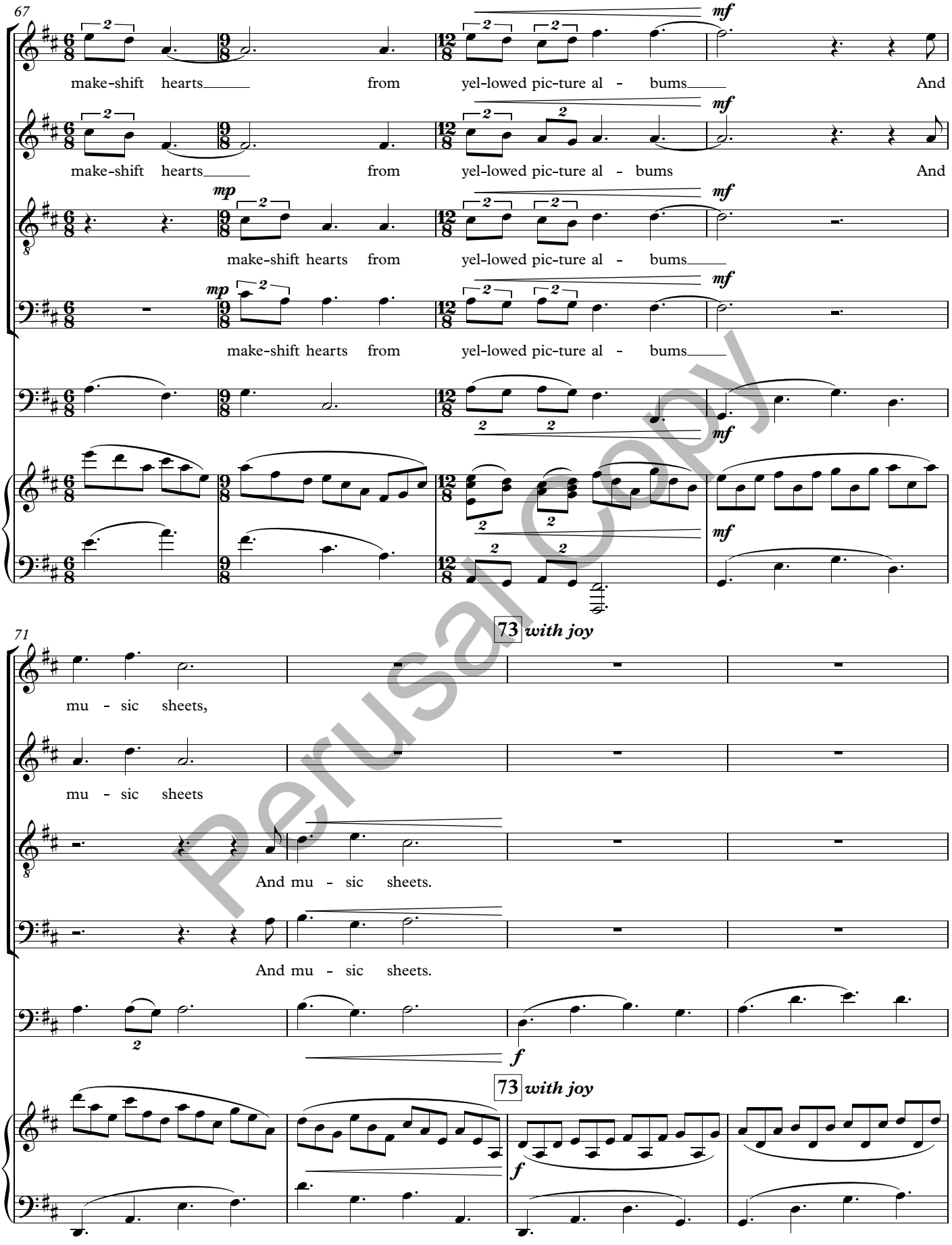

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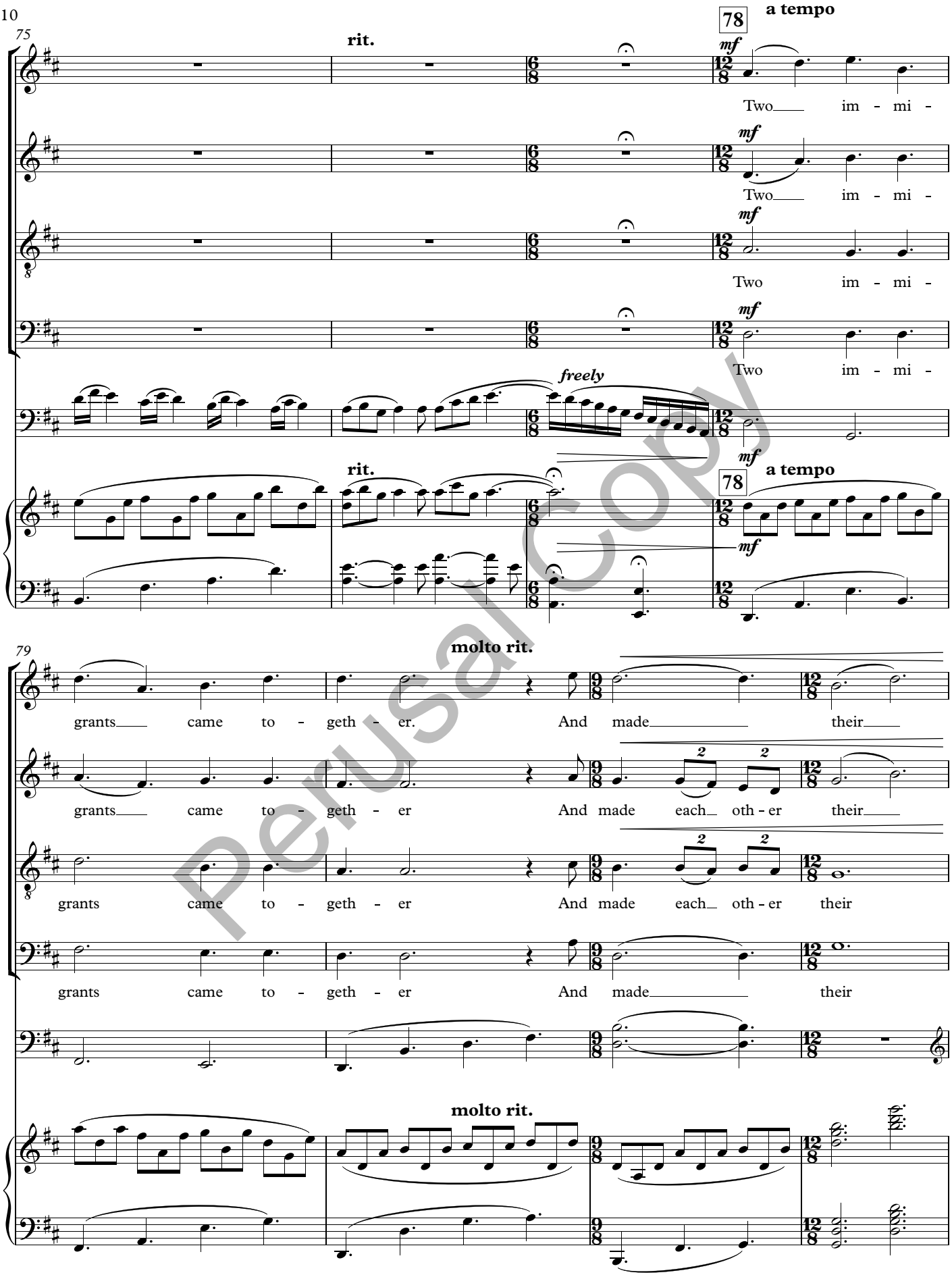

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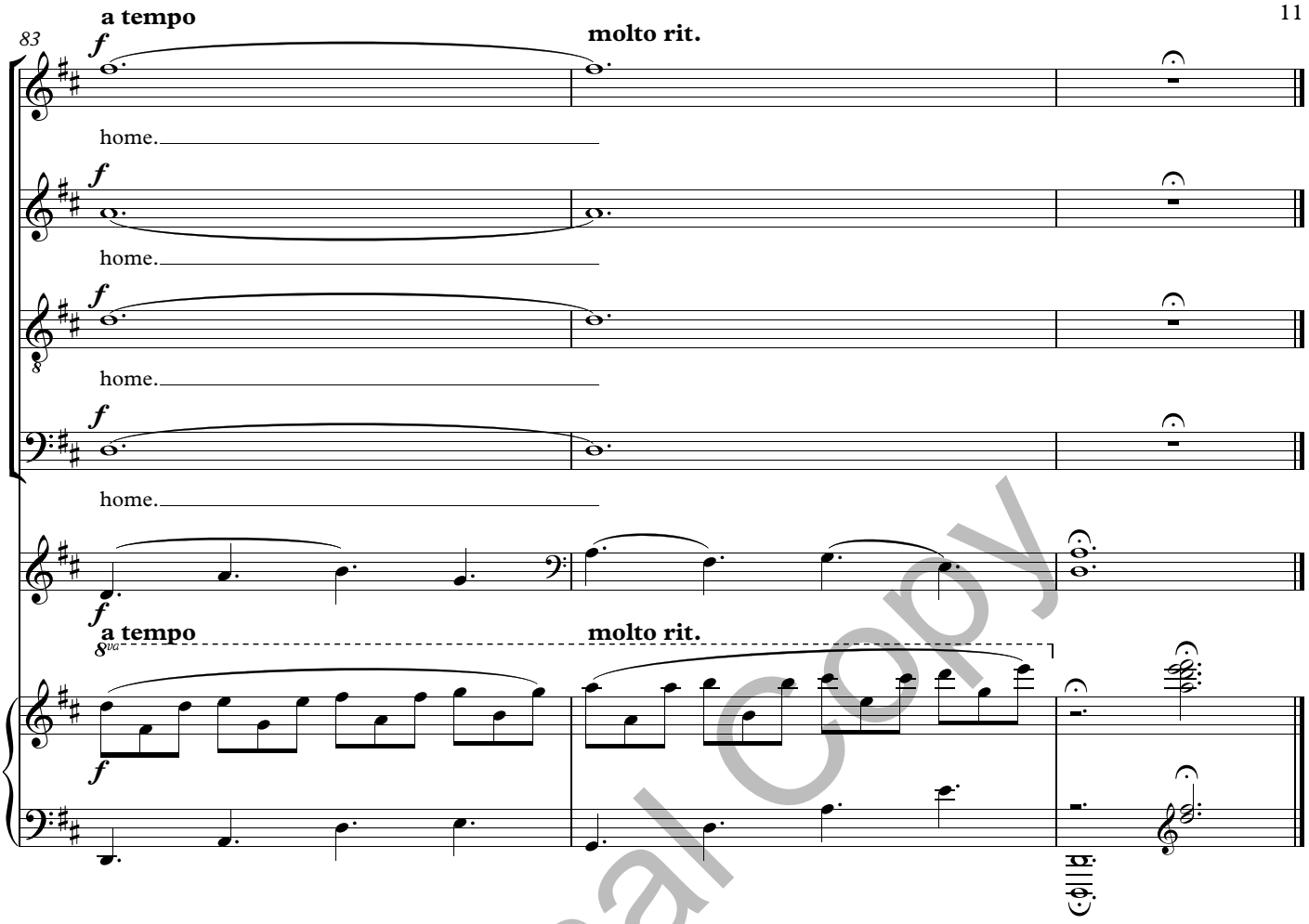

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Violoncello

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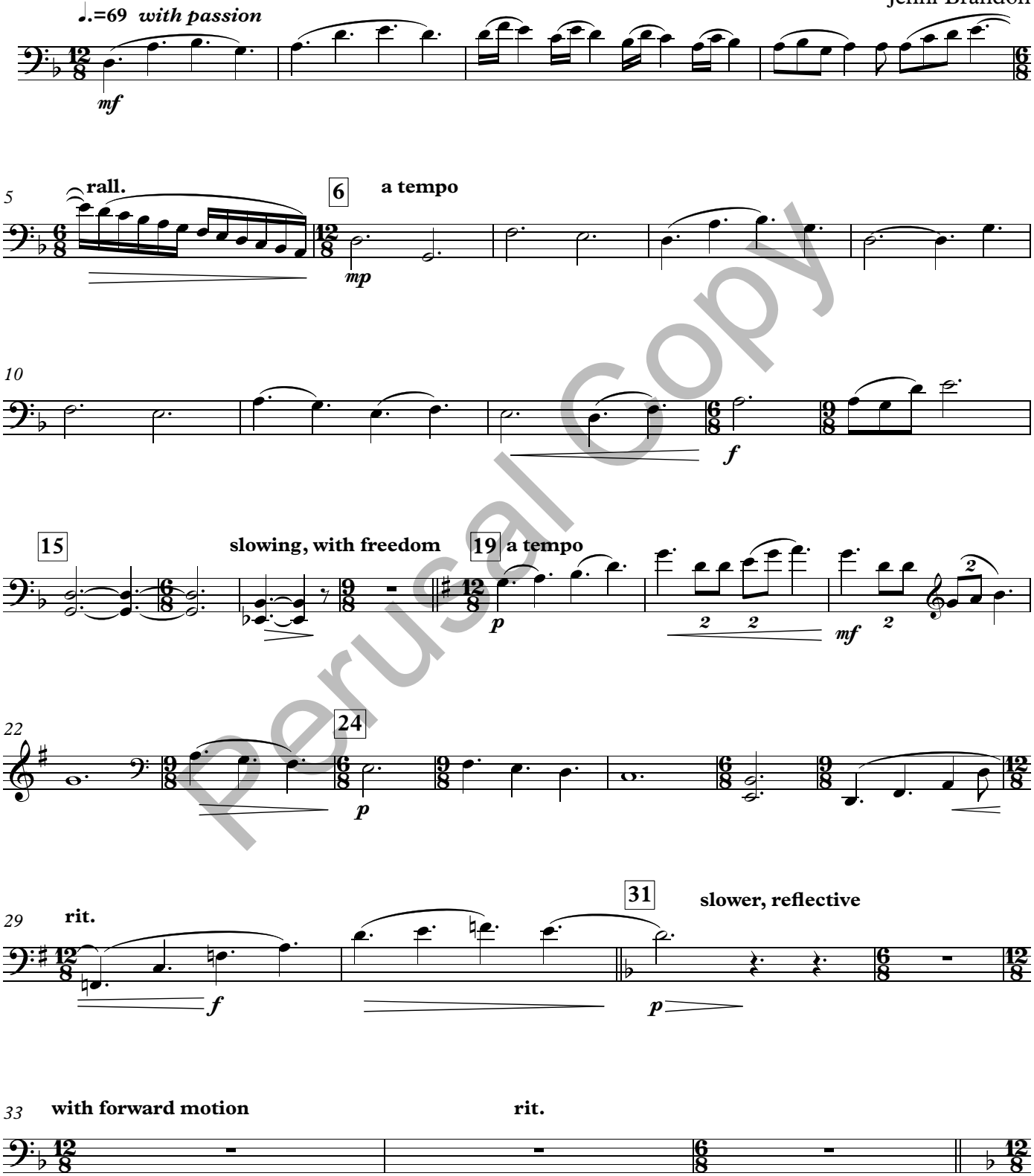

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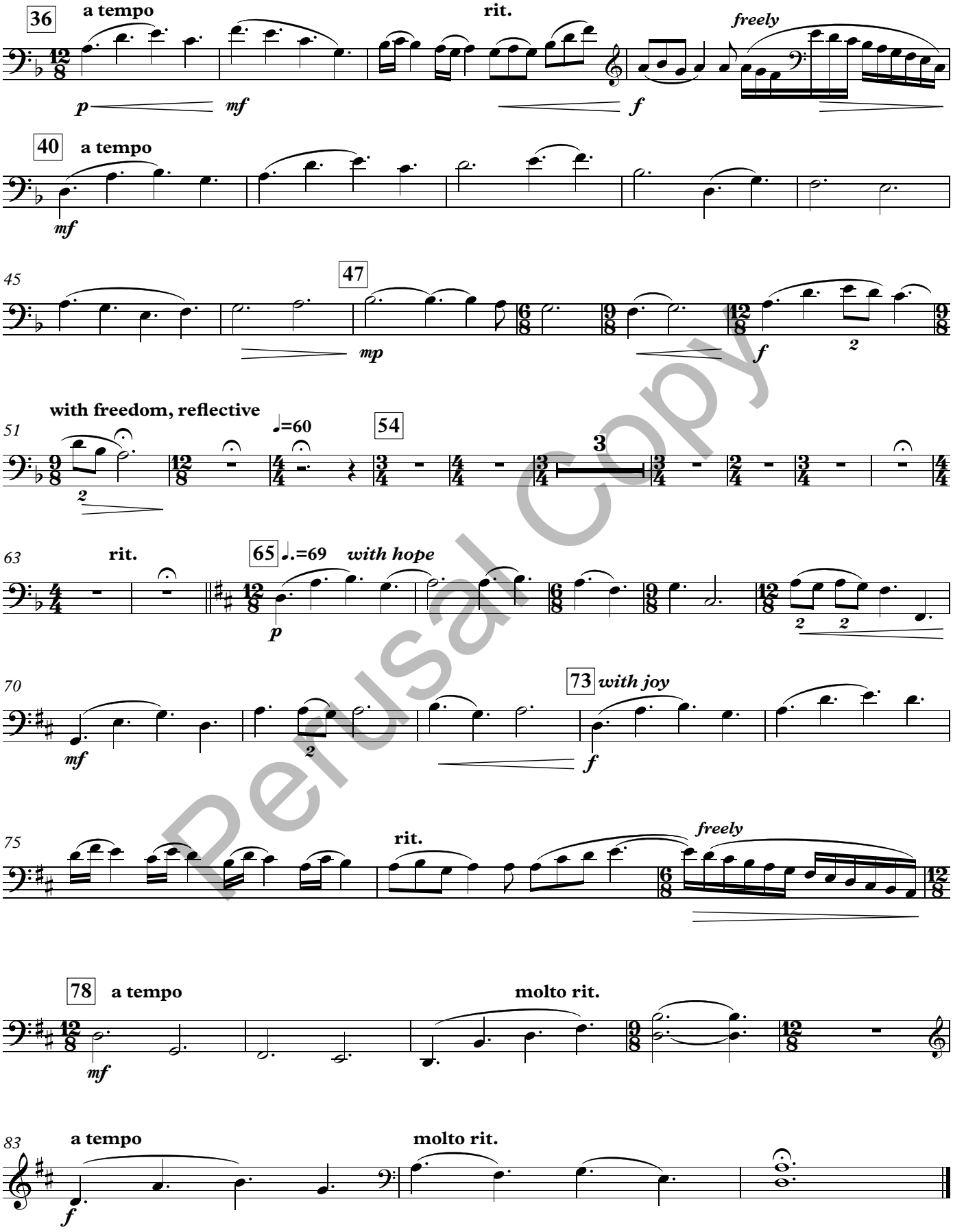

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