The Hoard of the Gibbelins

Text adapted from the 1912 story by
Lord Dunsany

For horn in F (or Wagner Tuba), mezzo soprano and piano

Illustration by Sidney H. Sime (1867 - 1941)

2007

Gary Bachlund

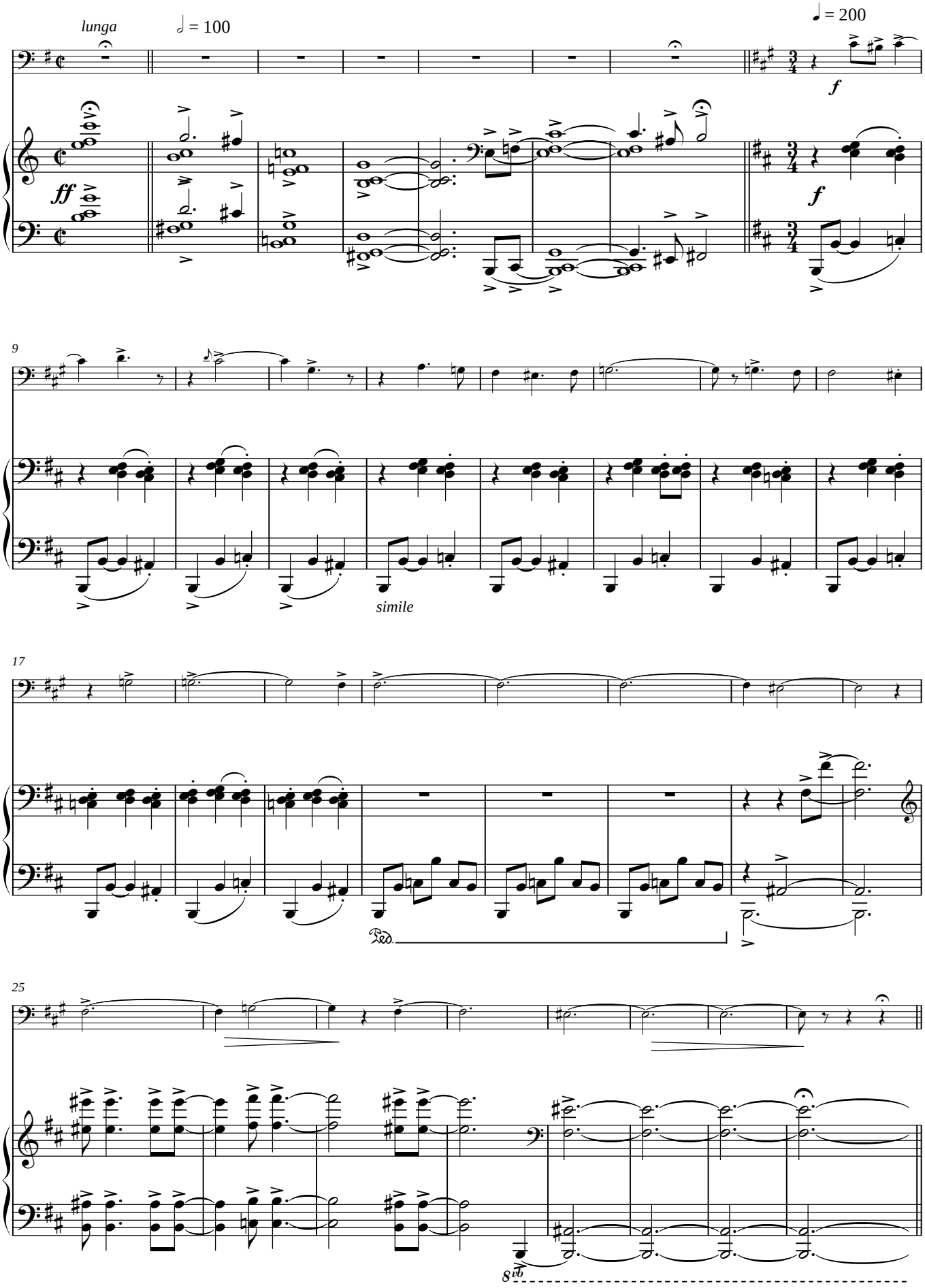
for Lynn and William Melton

Lord Dunsany (1878-1957)

The Hoard of the Gibbelins

Gary Bachlund

scored for horn in F (or Wagner tuba), mezzo soprano and piano



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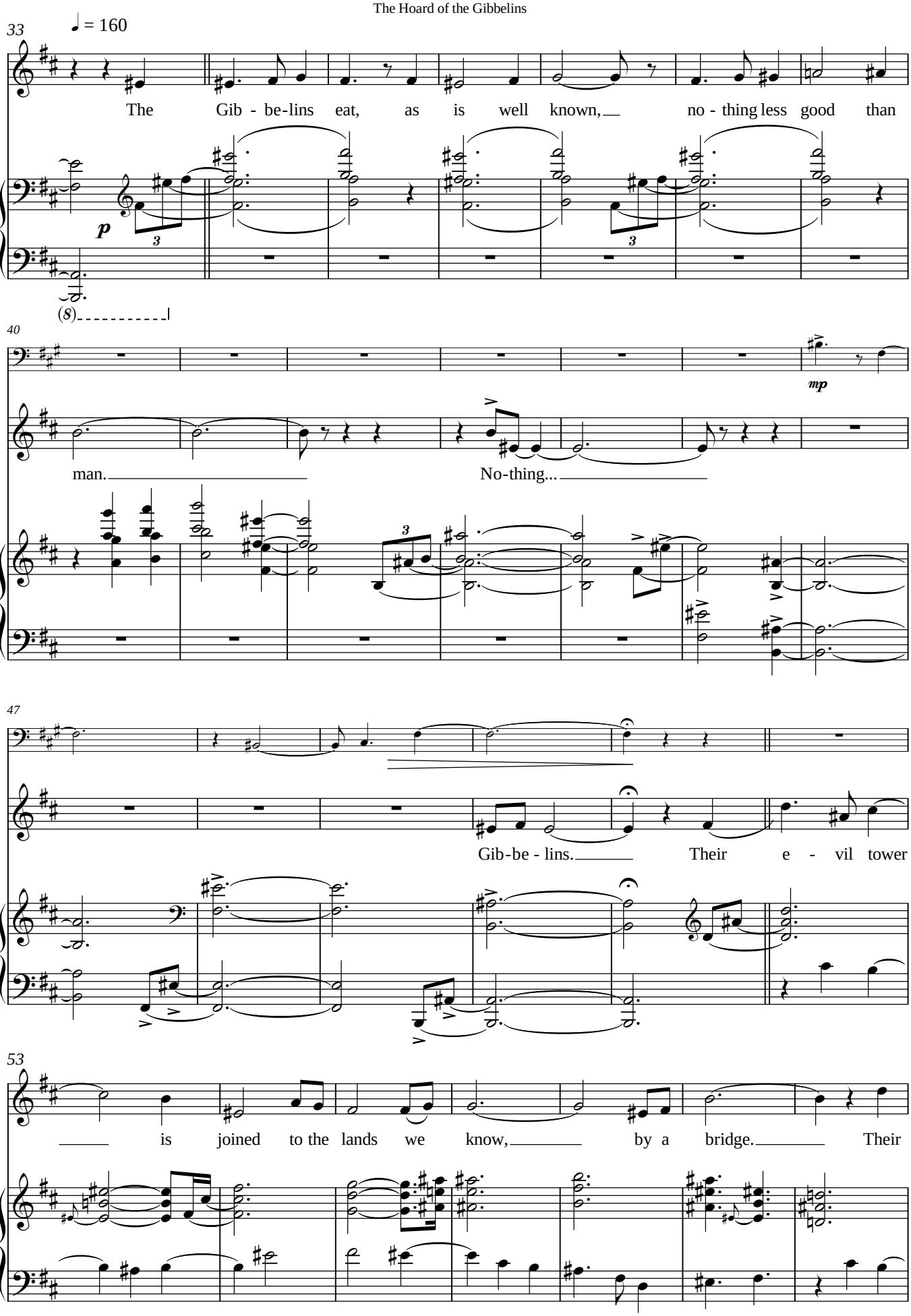
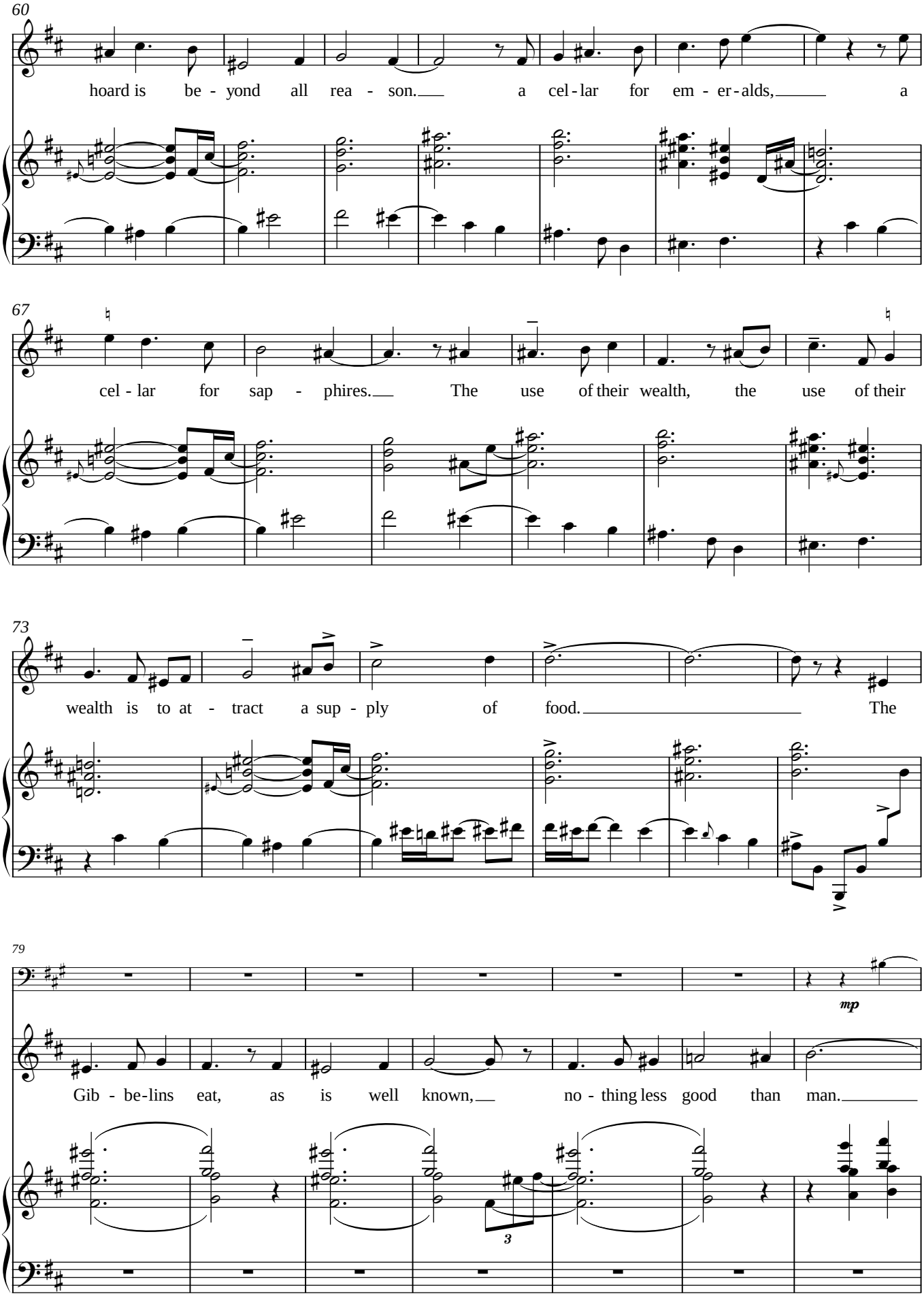
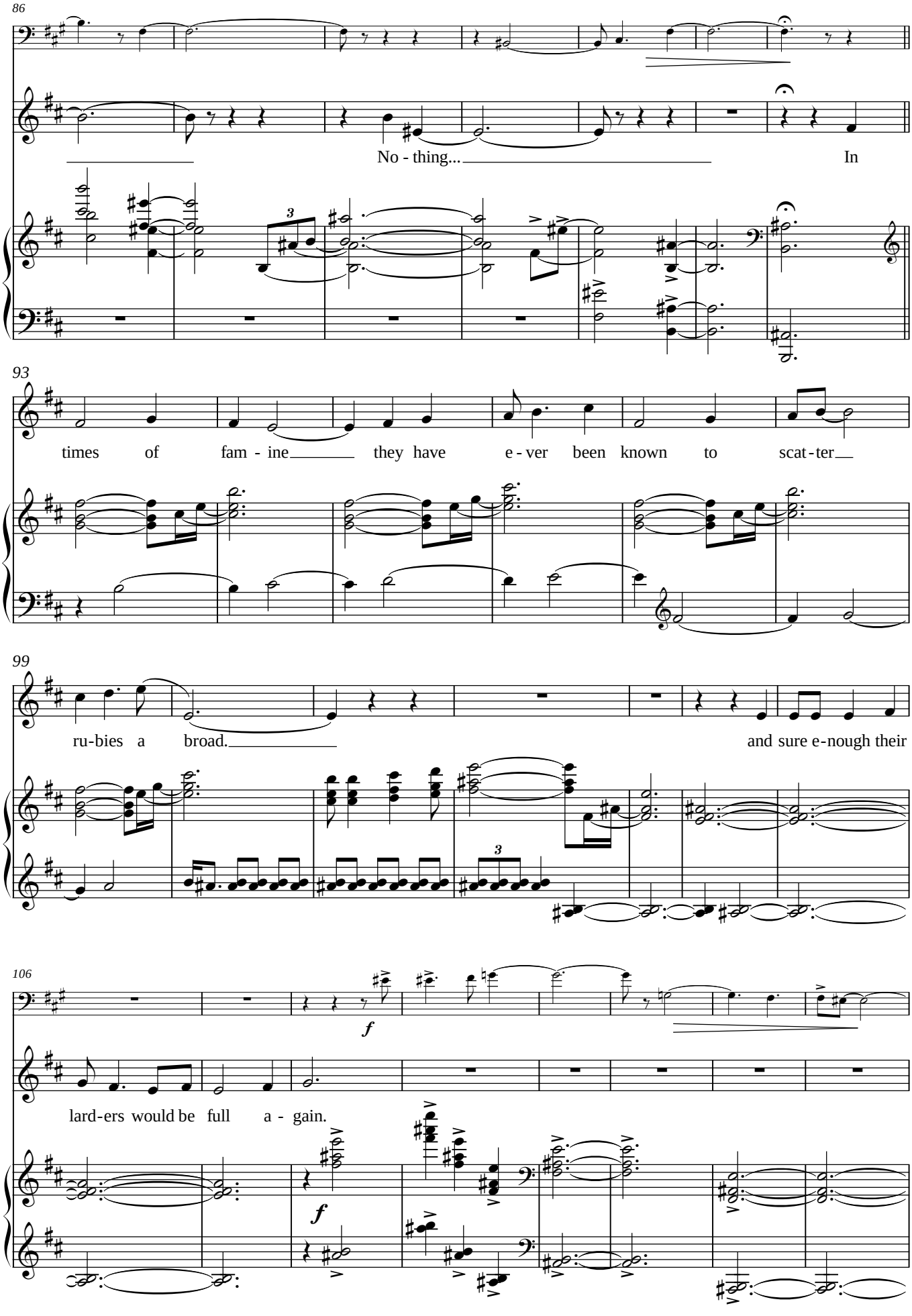
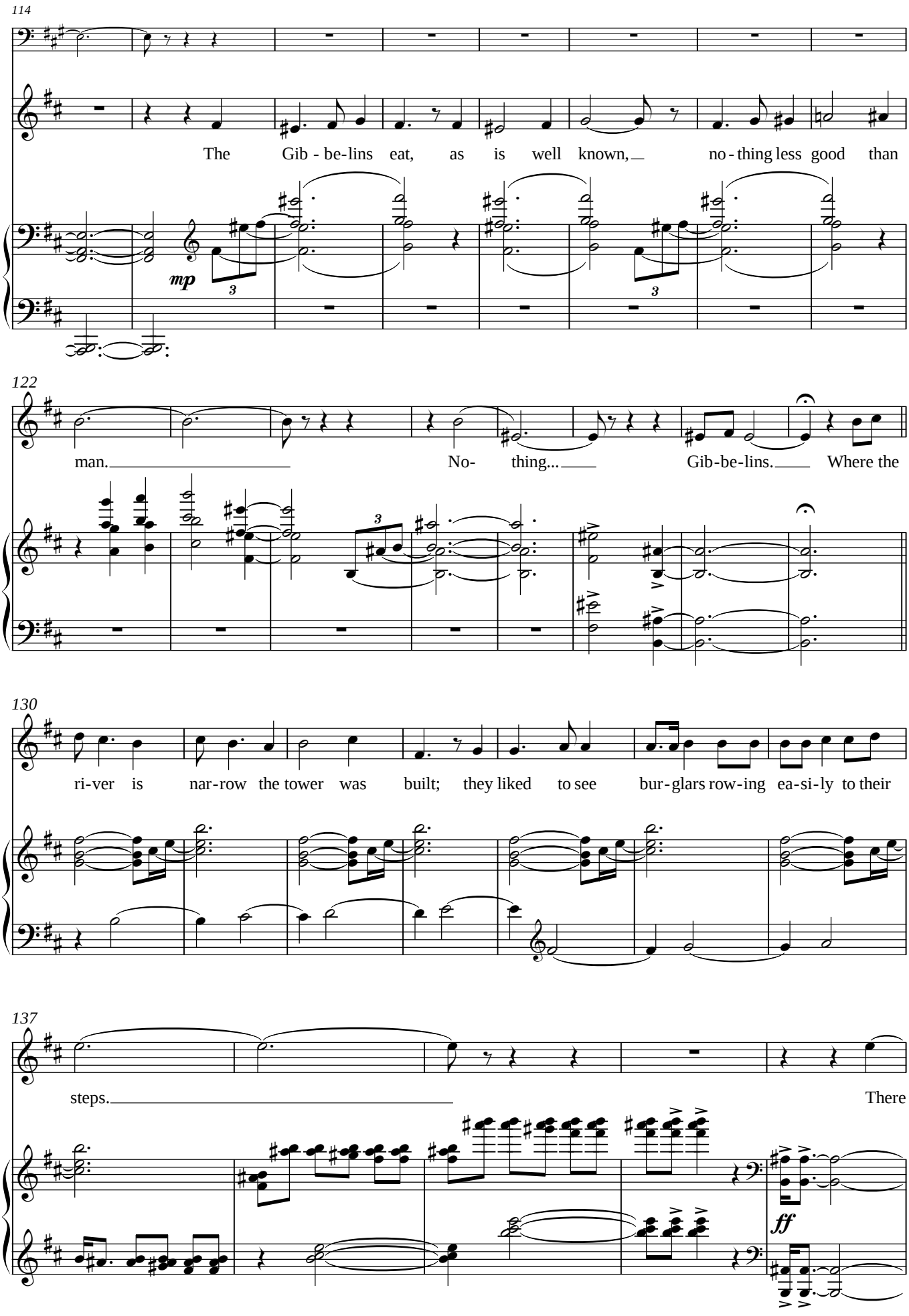

33
♩ = 160
The Gib - be-lins eat, as is well known, no - thing less good than
p
(8)
40
mp
man. No-thing...
47
Gib-be - lins. Their e - vil tower
53
is joined to the lands we know, by a bridge. Their


60
hoard is be - yond all rea - son. a cel - lar for em - er - alds, a
67
cel - lar for sap - phires. The use of their wealth, the use of their
73
wealth is to at - tract a sup - ply of food. The
79
mp
Gib - be - lins eat, as is well known, no - thing less good than man.
3


86
No - thing... In
93
times of fam - ine they have e - ver been known to scat - ter
99
ru-bies a broad. and sure e-nough their
106
f
lard-ers would be full a - gain.
f


114
The Gib - be-lins eat, as is well known, no - thing less good than
mp
122
man. No- thing... Gib-be-lins. Where the
130
ri-ver is nar-row the tower was built; they liked to see bur-glars row-ing ea-si-ly to their
137
steps. There
ff

142

the Gib - be-lins lived and dis- crete - ly fed.

ff

150

The Gib - be-lins eat, as is well known, no - thing less good than man.

8va

mp

158

...no - thing less.

(8)

ff

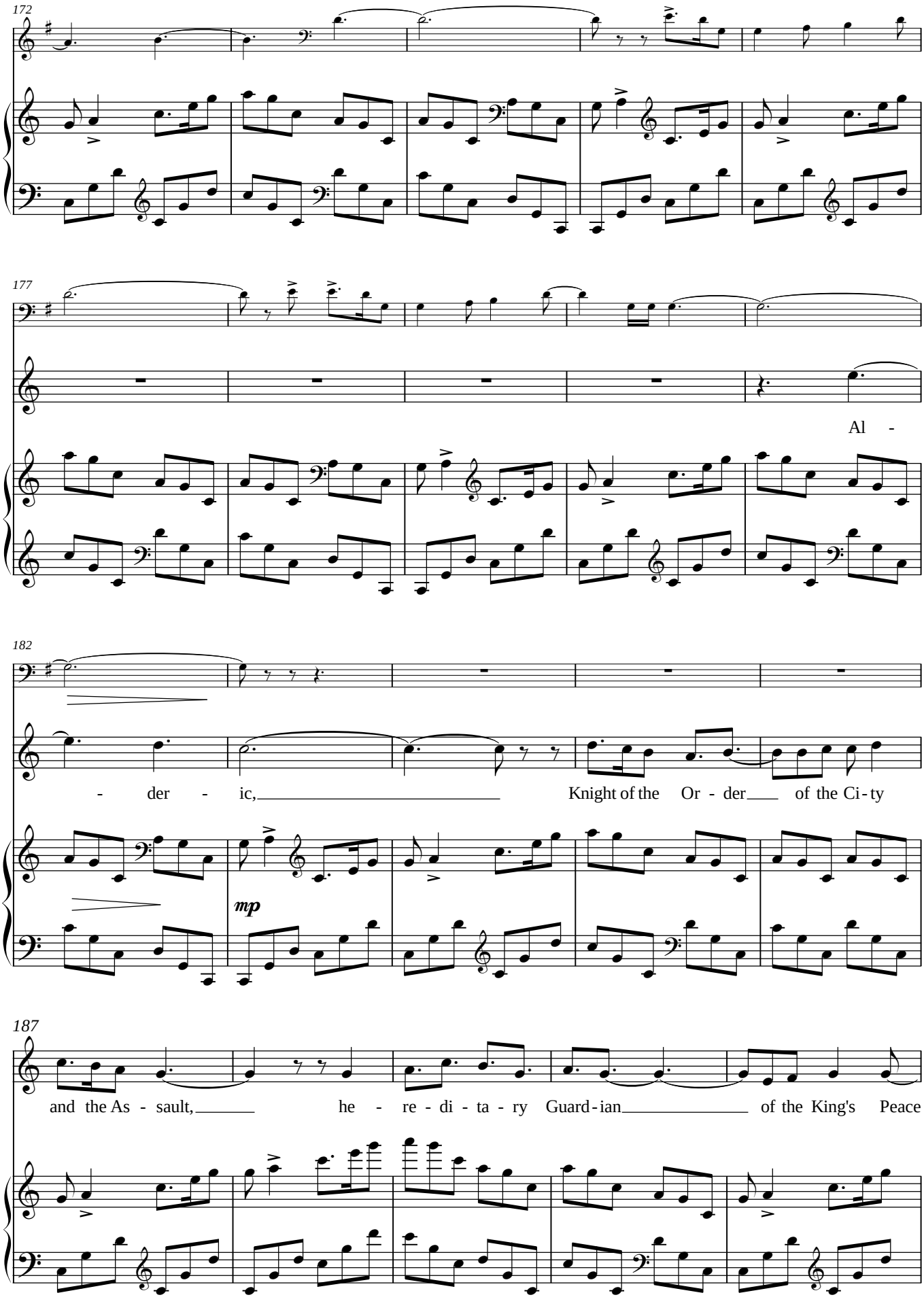
167

♩. = 90

mf

mf

Ped. Ped. simile


172
177
Al -
182
- der - ic,
Knight of the Or - der of the Ci - ty
mp
187
and the As - sault,
he - re - di - ta - ry Guard - ian
of the King's Peace

192

— of Mind, — a man not un - re-mem - bered

197

mp

— a-mong the ma-kers of myth, — Al -

202

- der - ic pon - dered — so long up on the Gib - be-lins' — hoard

207

— that by now he deemed it his. —

211

mf

217

♩ = 135 *strictly*

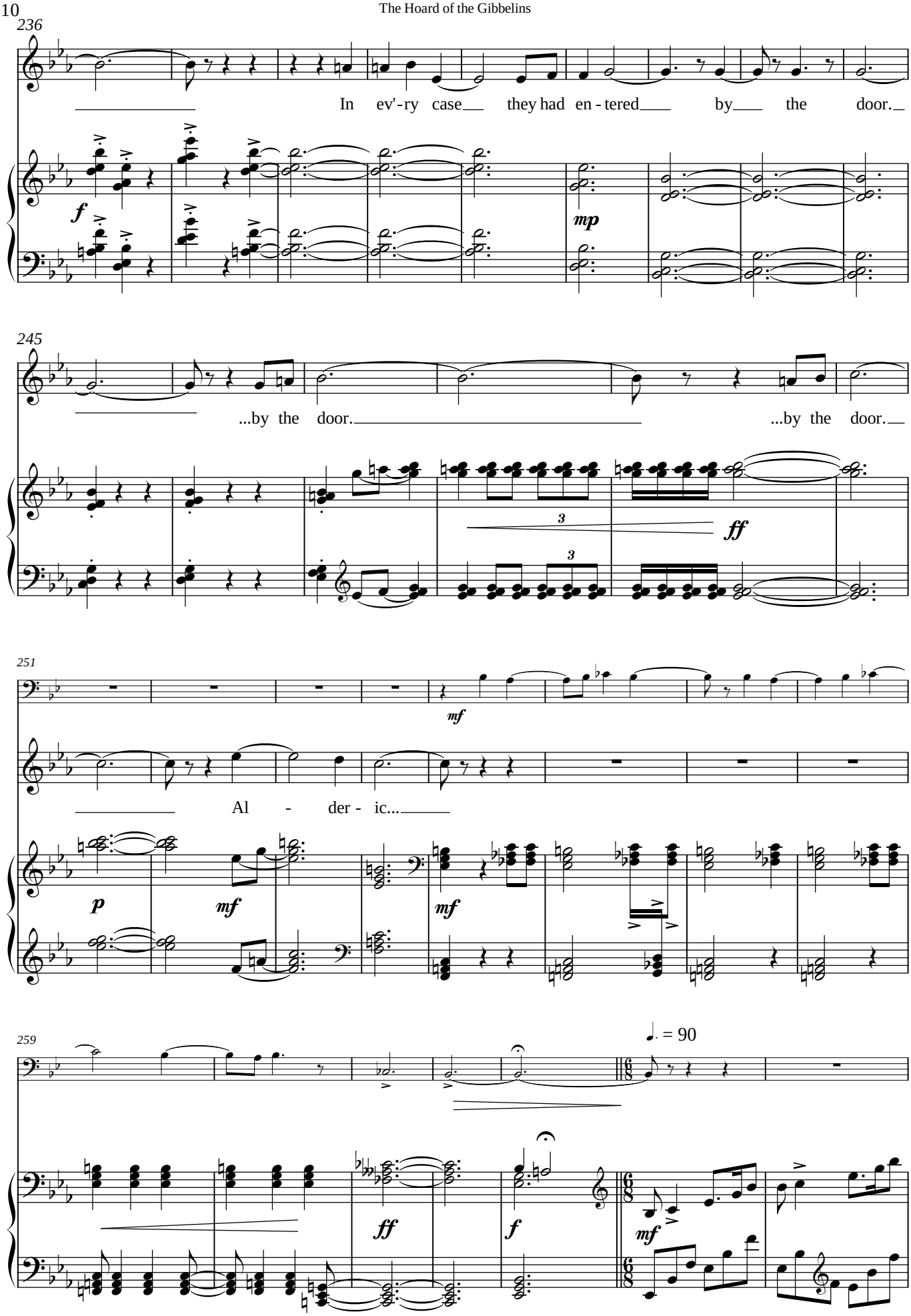
Not in the fol-ly of his youth

223

did Al-der-ic come to the tower, but he stud-ied care-ful-ly

229

for sev' ral years the man-ner in which bur-glars met their doom.


236
In ev'-ry case they had en - tered by the door.
f
mp
245
...by the door. ...by the door.
3
3
ff
251
mf
Al - der - ic...
p
mf
mf
259
𝅗𝅥. = 90
ff
f
mf

266

He con - sult - ed those who gave ad - vice. on this quest;

272

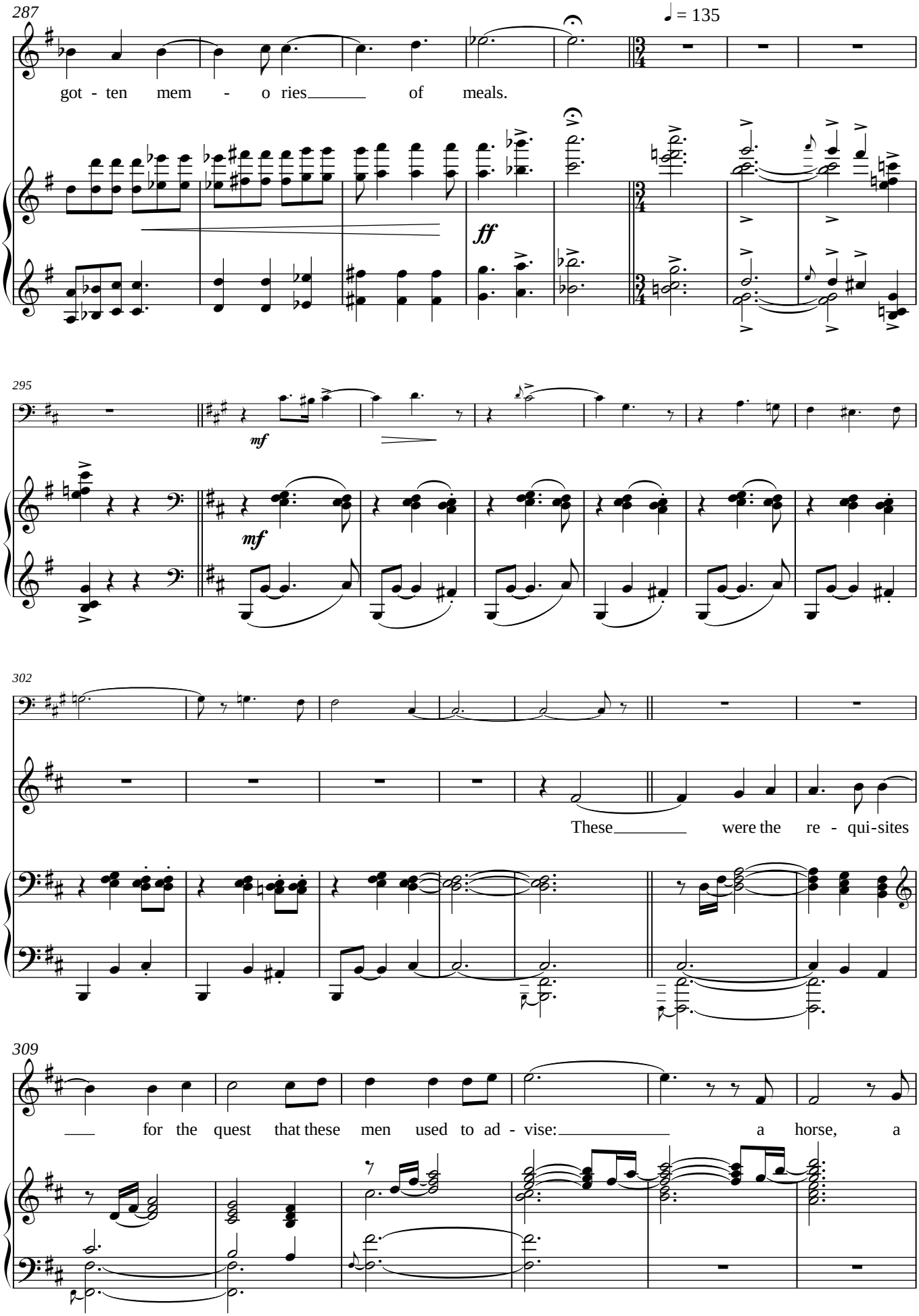
he no-ted ev' - ry de - tail, and cheer-ful-ly paid their fees,

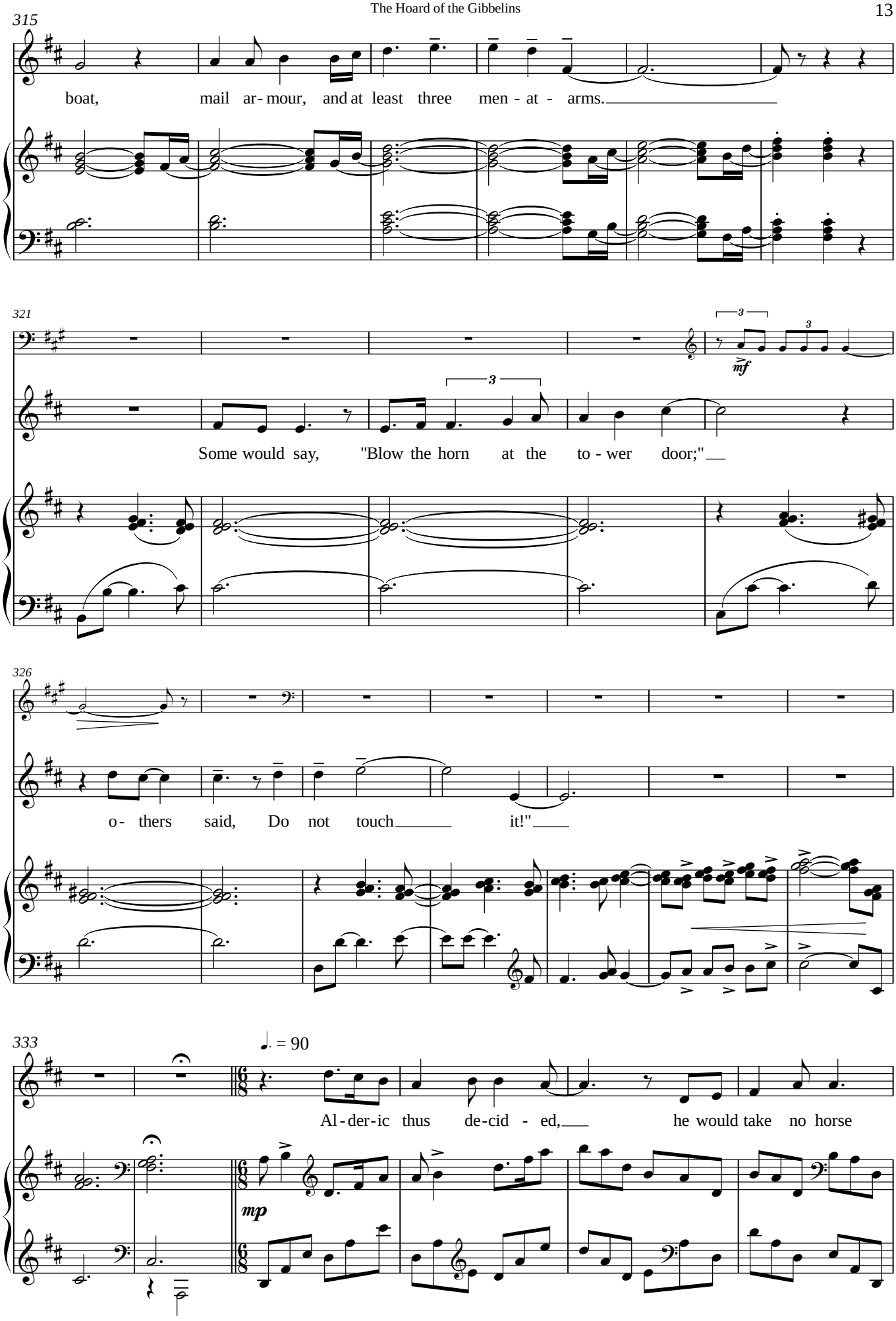
277

for what were their cli - ents now?

282

No more than ex - am - ples of the sav' - ry art, mere half - for -


287
♩ = 135
got - ten mem - o ries of meals.
ff
295
mf
mf
302
These were the re - qui-sites
309
for the quest that these men used to ad - vise: a horse, a


315
boat, mail ar- mour, and at least three men - at - arms.
321
Some would say, "Blow the horn at the to - wer door;"
326
o- thers said, Do not touch it!"
333
♩. = 90
Al - der- ic thus de-cid - ed, he would take no horse
mf
mp

339

down to the ri-ver's edge, he would not row in a boat,

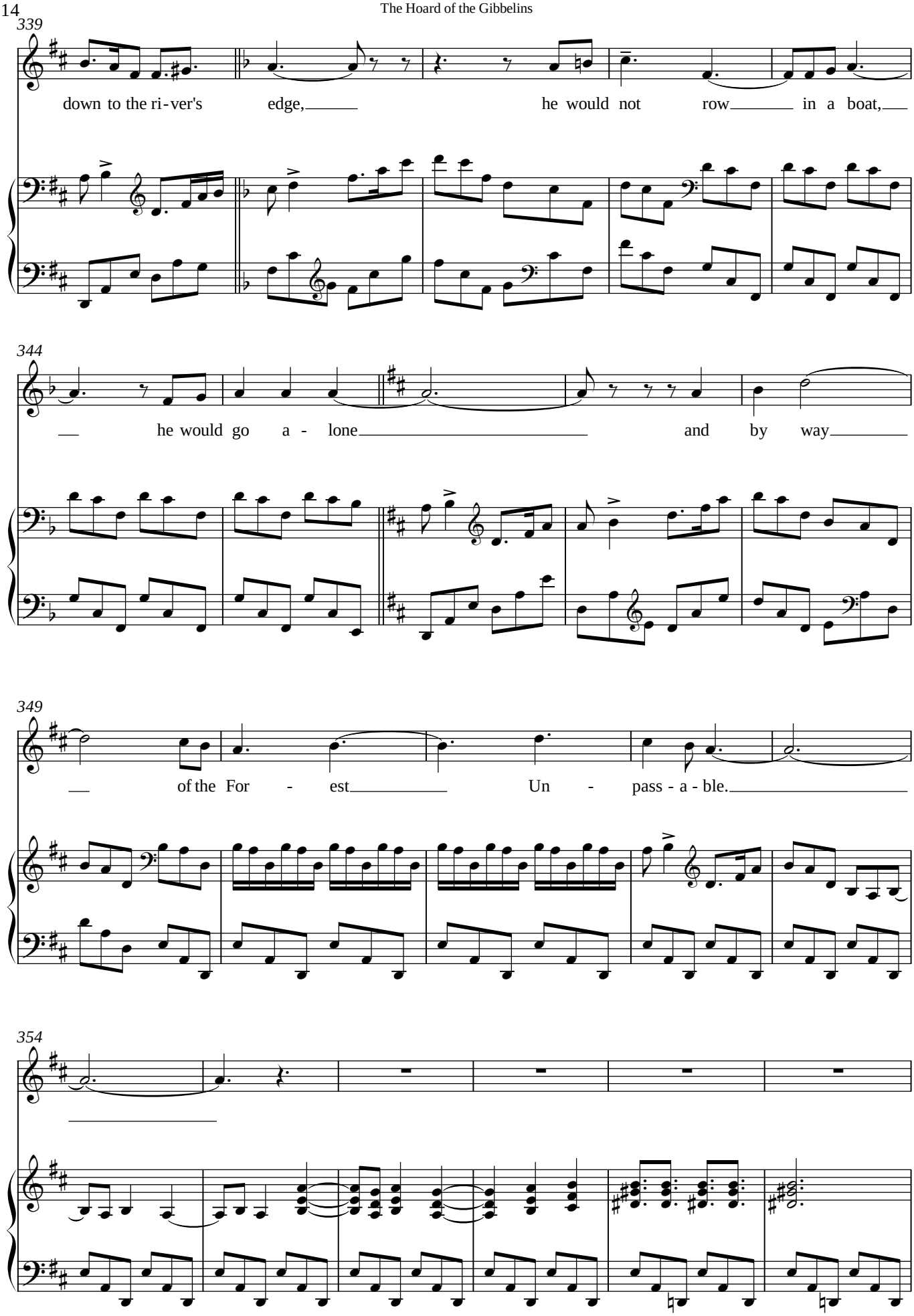
344

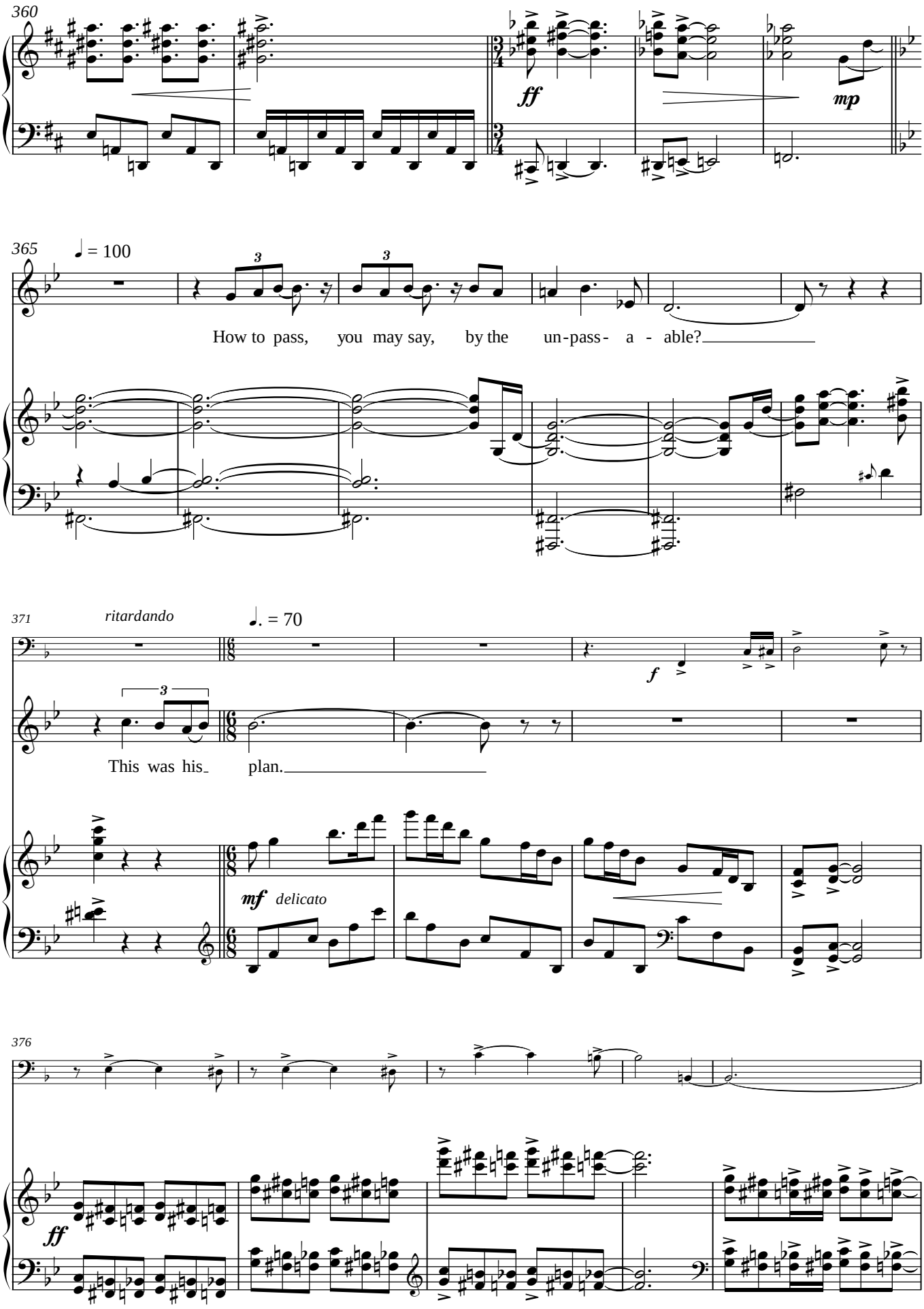
he would go a - lone and by way

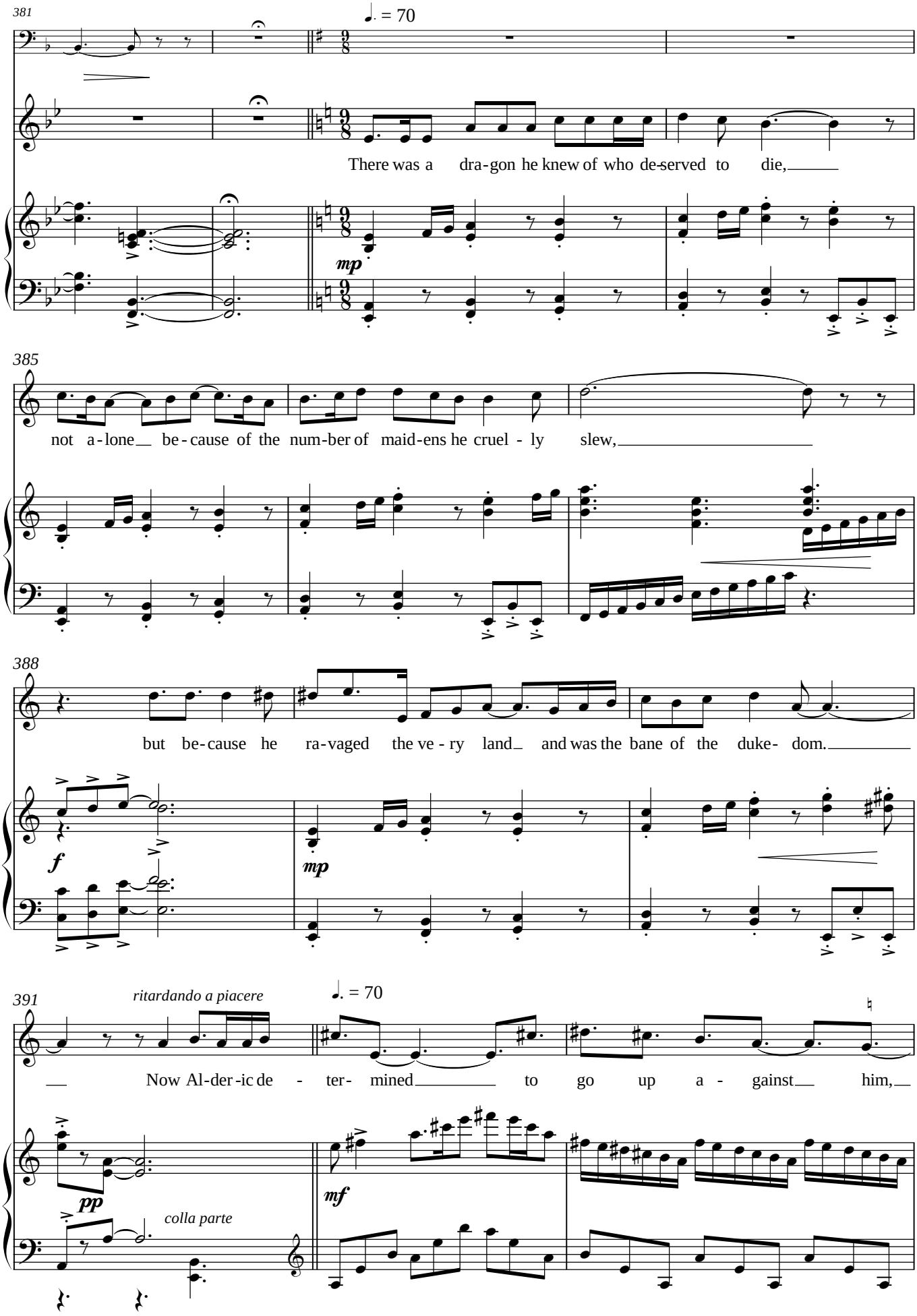
349

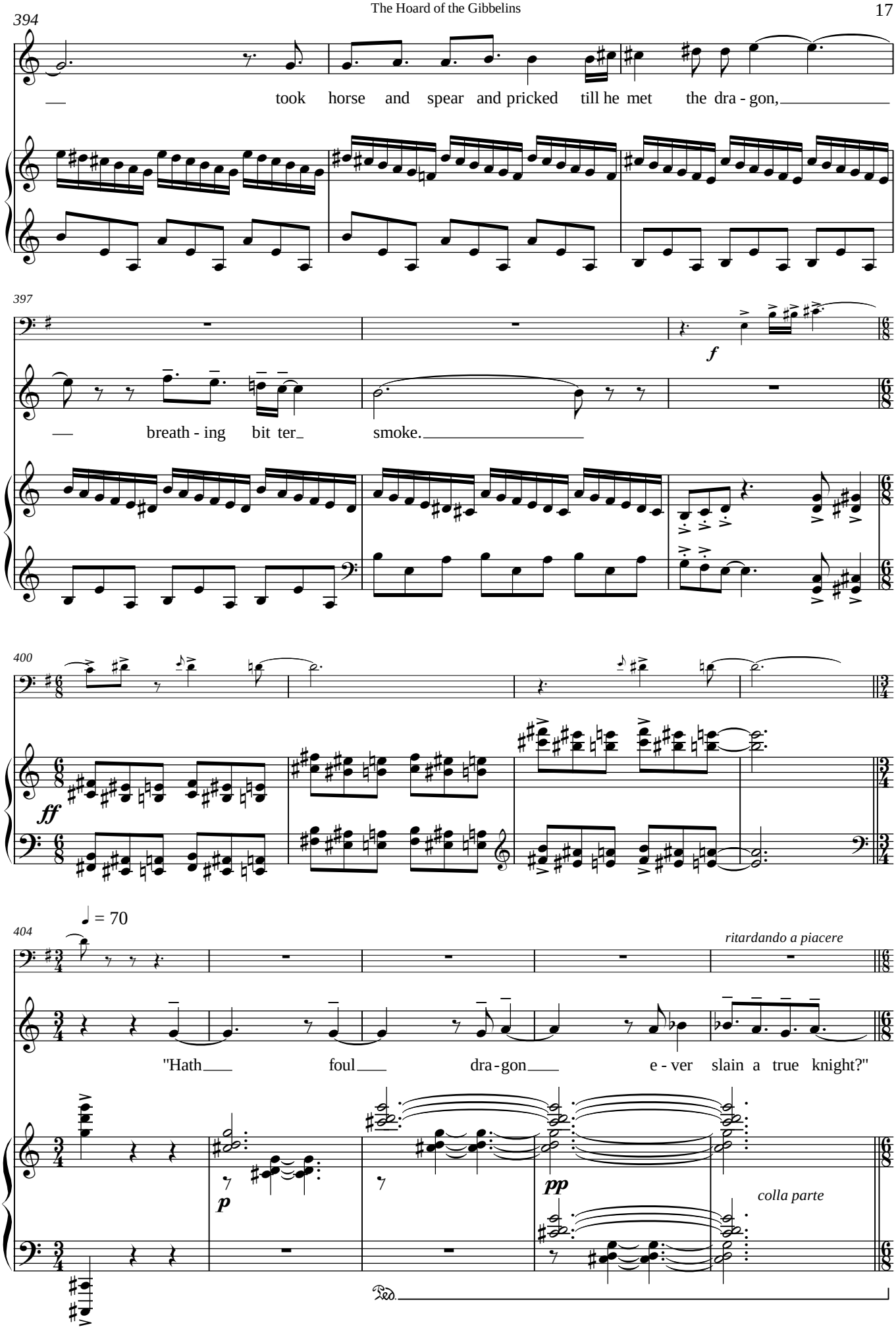
of the For - est Un - pass - a - ble.

354




360
ff
mp
365
♩ = 100
How to pass, you may say, by the un-pass- a - able?
371
ritardando
♩. = 70
f
This was his plan.
mf delicato
376
ff


381
♩. = 70
There was a dra-gon he knew of who de-served to die,
mp
385
not a-lone be-cause of the num-ber of maid-ens he cruel - ly slew,
388
but be-cause he ra-vaged the ve - ry land and was the bane of the duke- dom.
f
mp
391
ritardando a piacere
♩. = 70
Now Al-der-ic de - ter- mined to go up a - gainst him,
pp
colla parte
mf


394
took horse and spear and pricked till he met the dra - gon,
397
f
breath - ing bit ter smoke.
400
ff
404
♩ = 70
ritardando a piacere
"Hath foul dra - gon e - ver slain a true knight?"
p
pp
colla parte
Ped.

409 ♩. = 70

p

mf

414

p

And well the dra-gon knew that this had ne-ver been;

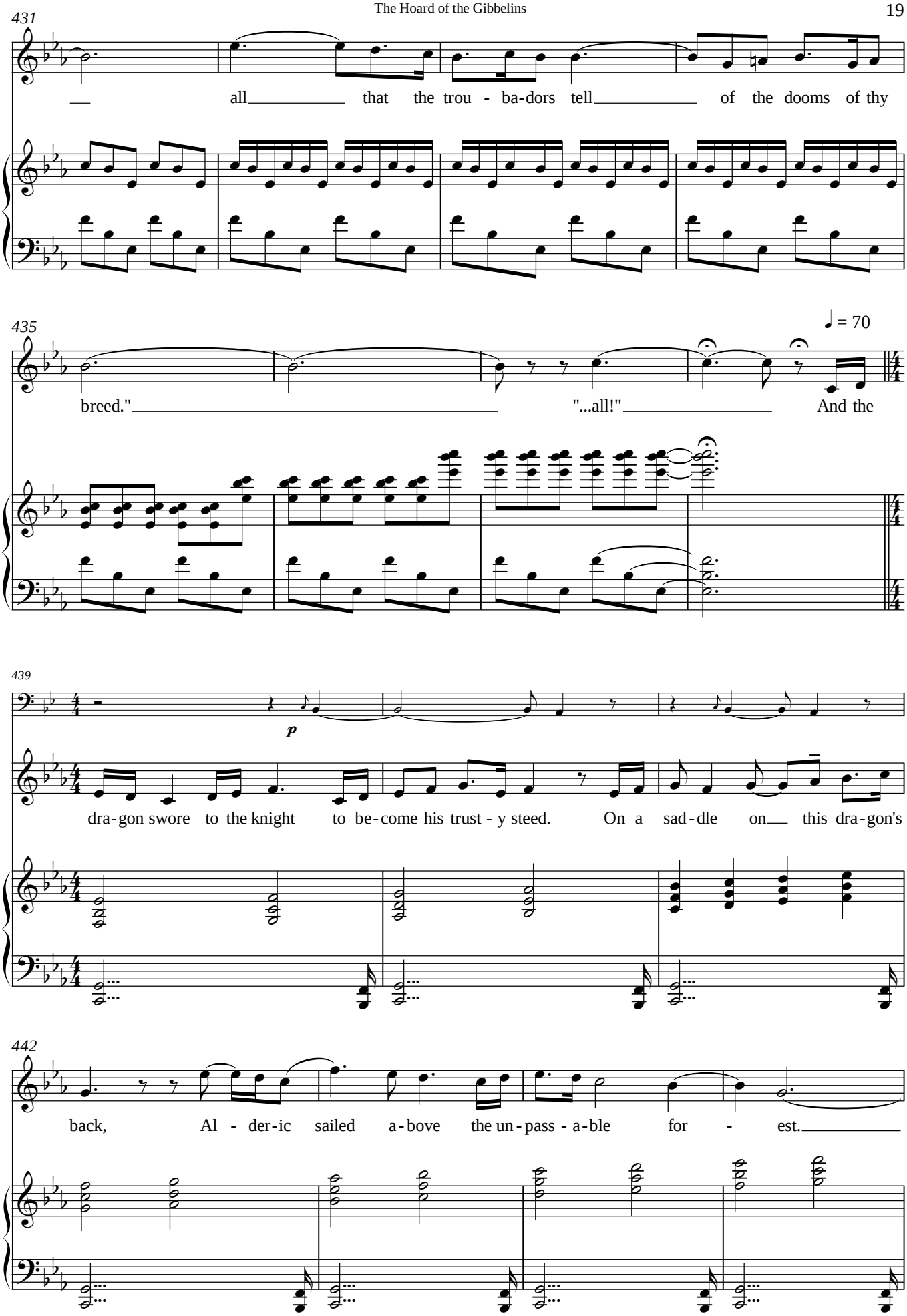
420 ♩. = 90

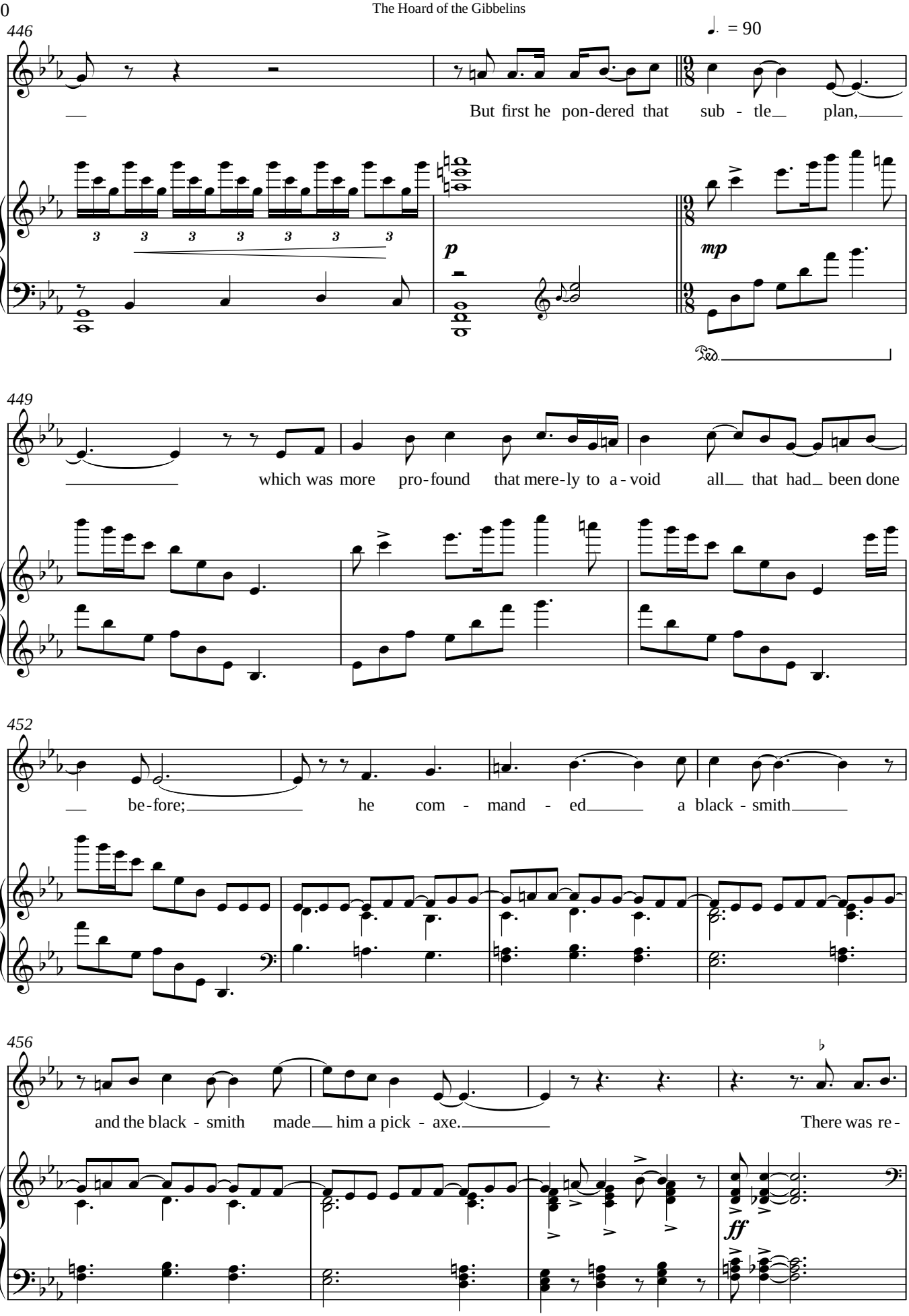
He hung his head. "Then," said the knight, "thou shalt be my

mp

426

trust - y steed, and if not, by this spear there shall be - fall thee


431
all that the trou - ba-dors tell of the dooms of thy
435
♩ = 70
breed." "...all!" And the
439
p
dra-gon swore to the knight to be-come his trust - y steed. On a sad-dle on this dra-gon's
442
back, Al - der-ic sailed a-bove the un-pass - a-ble for - est.


446
♩. = 90
But first he pon-dered that sub - tle plan,
p
mp
Ped.
449
which was more pro-found that mere-ly to a - void all that had been done
452
be-fore; he com - mand - ed a black - smith
456
and the black - smith made him a pick - axe. There was re -
ff

460

joic - ing. There was re - joic - ing.

464

♩. = 70

Men hoped that when the Gib-be-lins were robbed, they would shat-ter their bridge,

mp

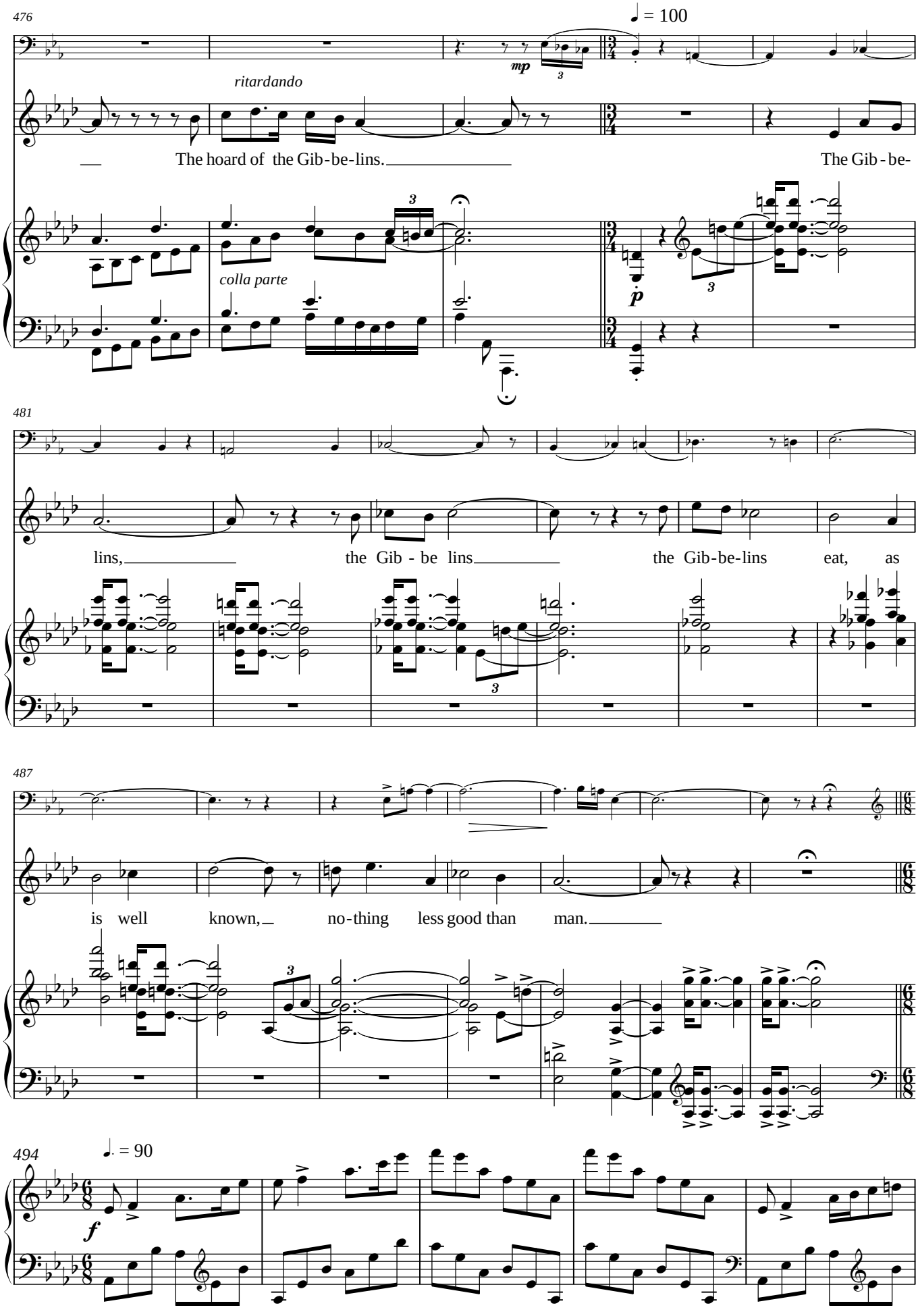
468

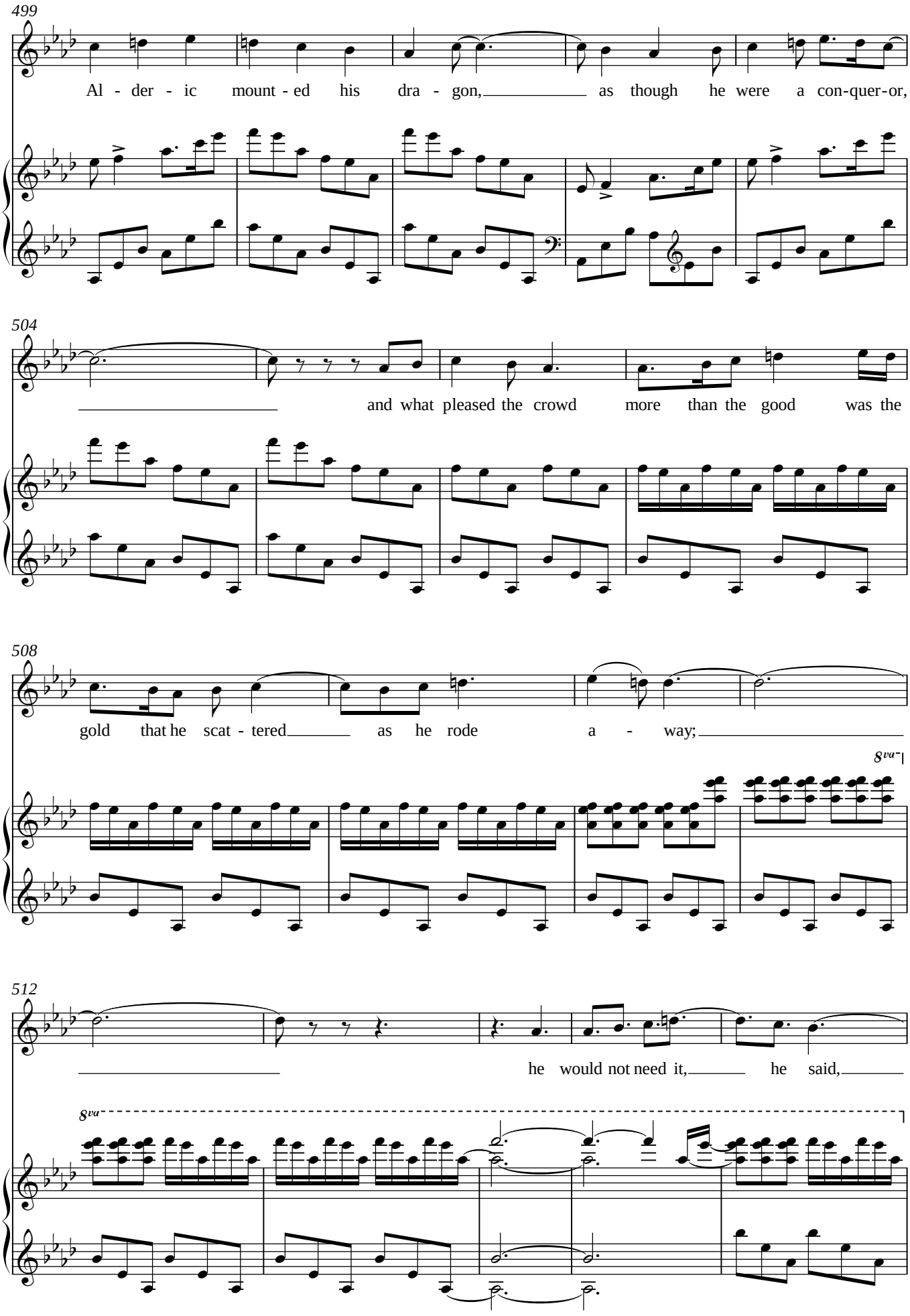
break the gold-en chain that bound them to this world. There was

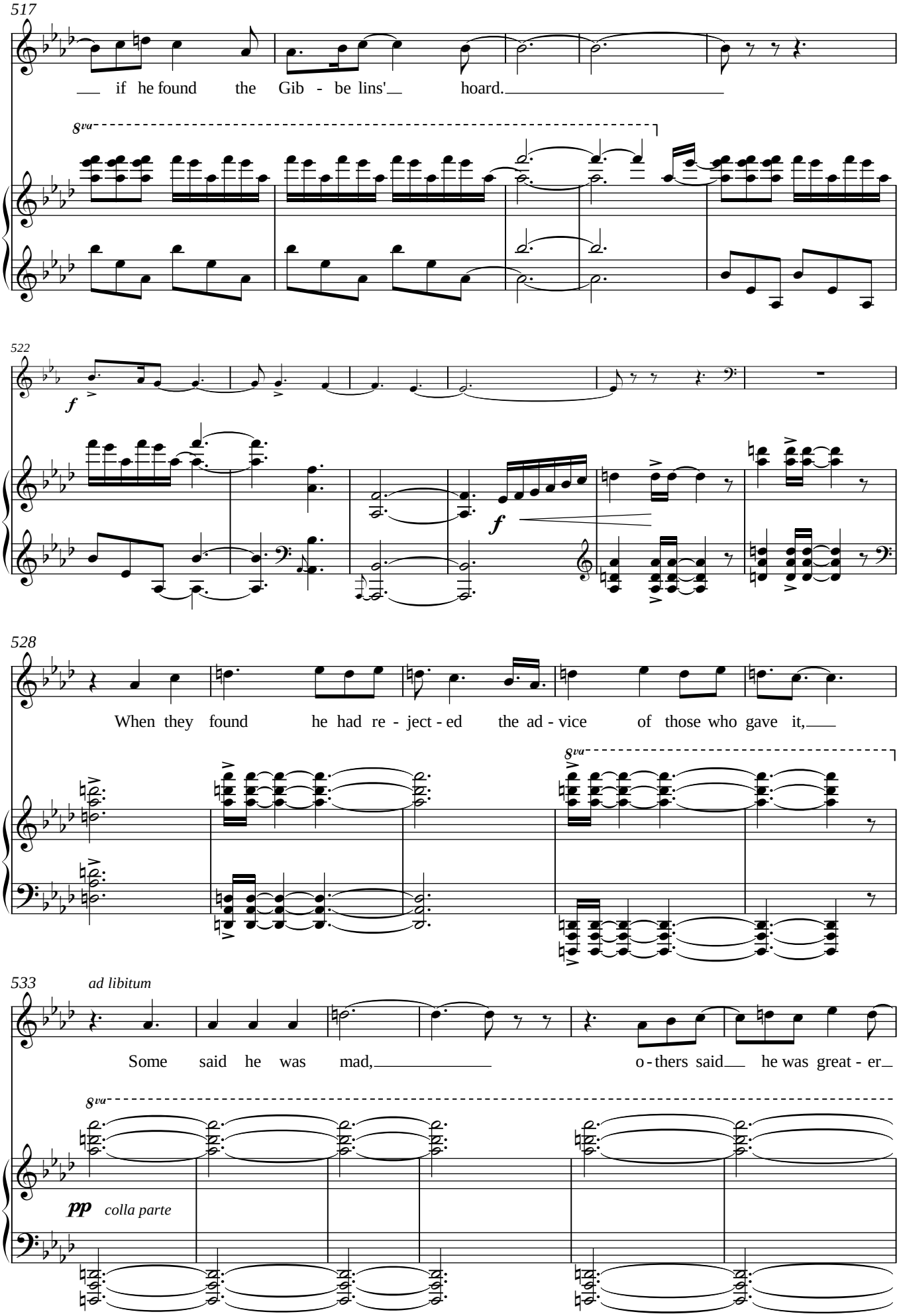
472

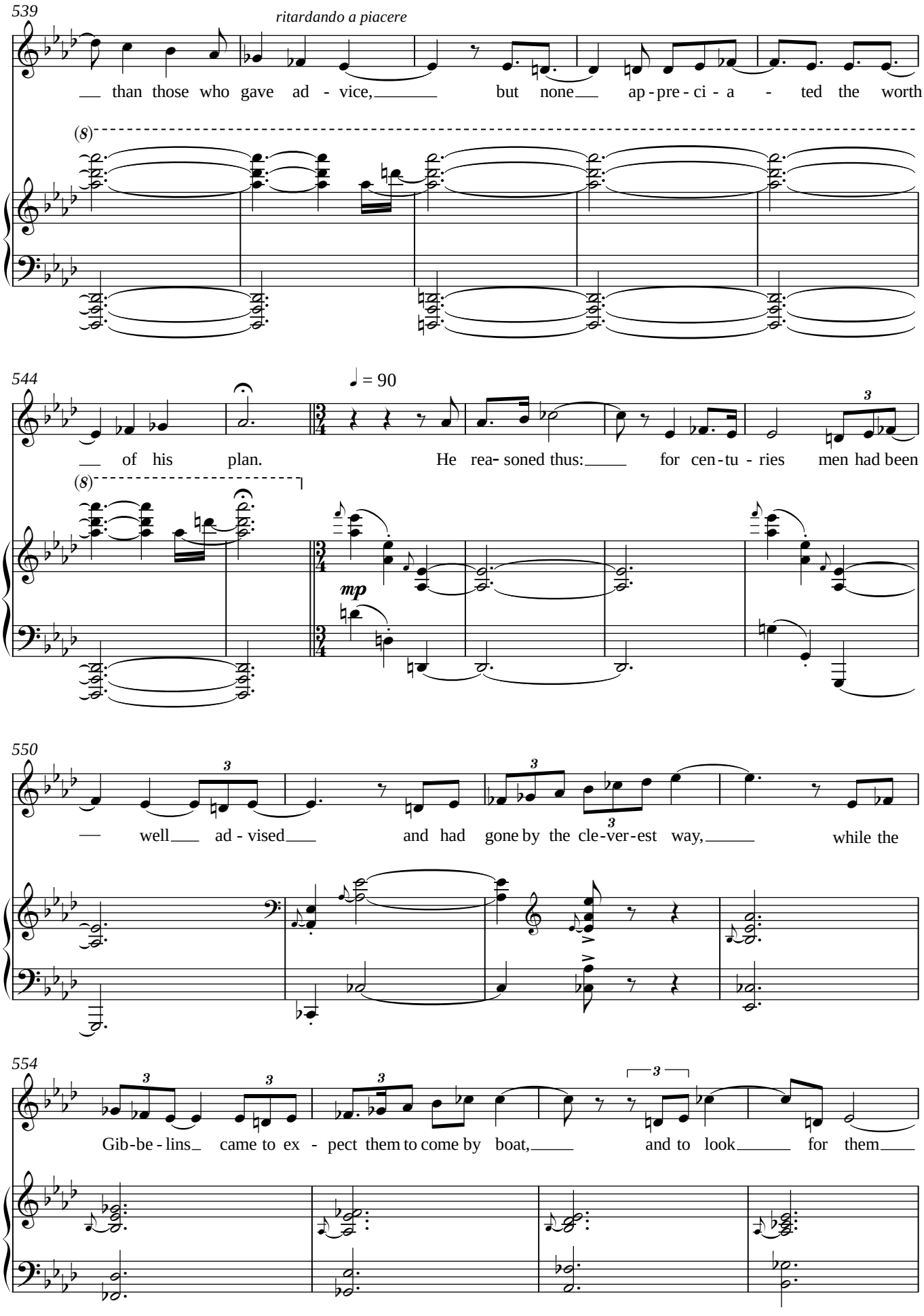
molto ritardando *a tempo*

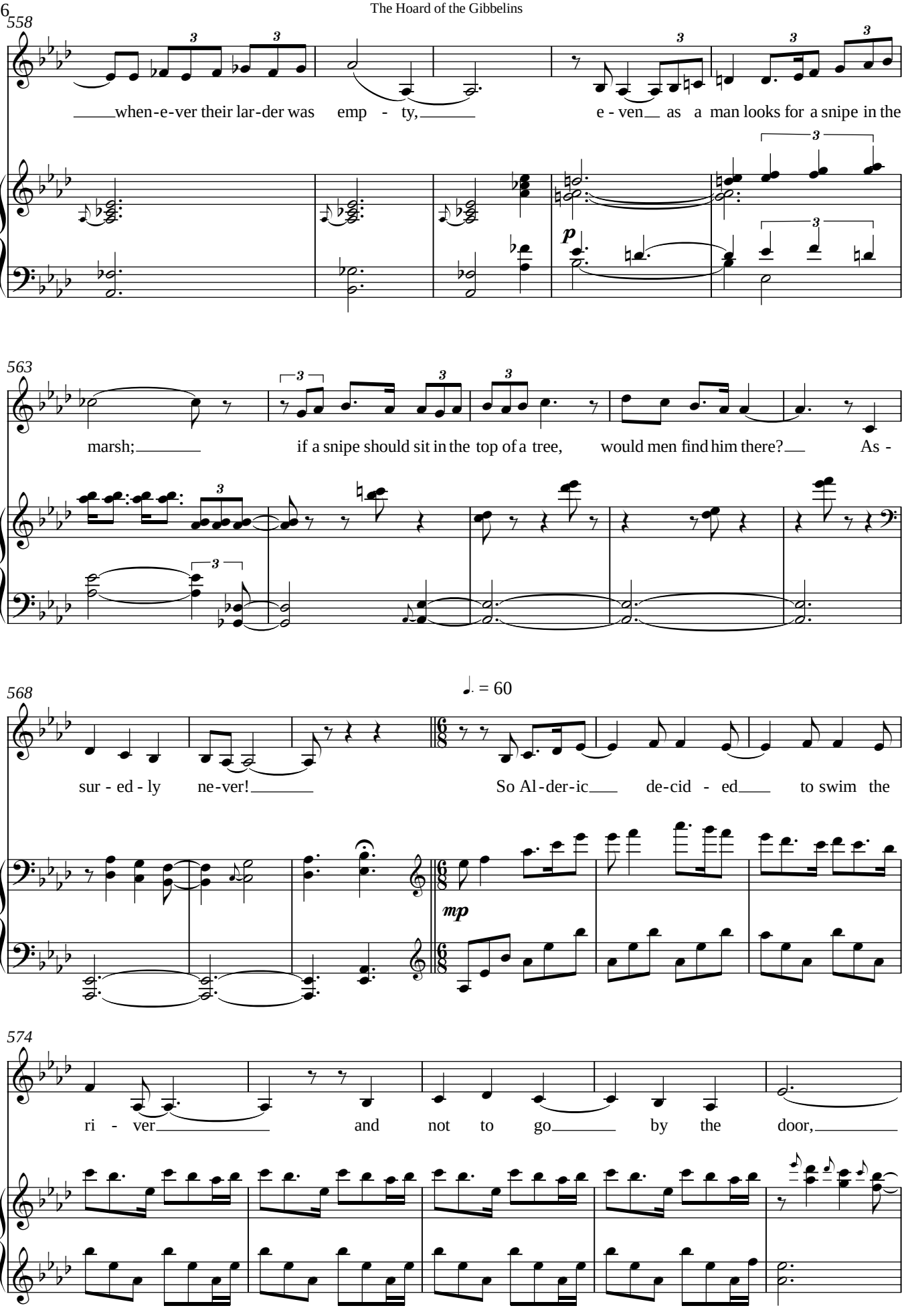
lit-tle love for the Gib-be-lins, though all men en-vied their hoard.

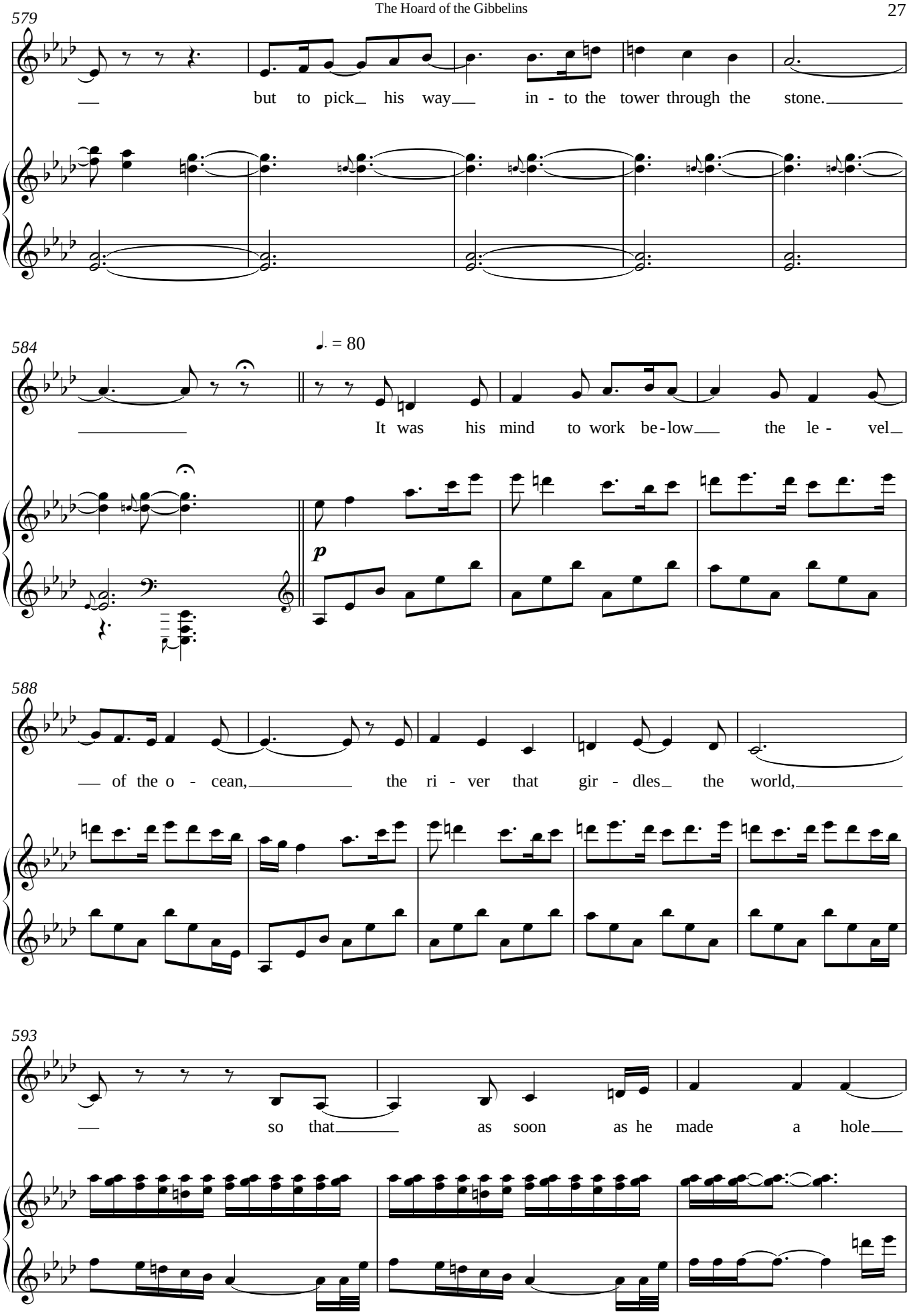

476
♩ = 100
mp
ritardando
The hoard of the Gib-be-lins.
The Gib-be-
colla parte
p
481
lins,
the Gib - be lins
the Gib-be-lins
eat, as
487
is well known,
no-thing less good than man.
494
♩. = 90
f


499
Al - der - ic mount - ed his dra - gon, as though he were a con-quer-or,
504
and what pleased the crowd more than the good was the
508
gold that he scat - tered as he rode a - way;
8va
512
he would not need it, he said,
8va


517
if he found the Gib - be lins' hoard.
8va
522
f
f
528
When they found he had re - ject - ed the ad - vice of those who gave it,
8va
533
ad libitum
Some said he was mad, o - thers said he was great - er
8va
pp
colla parte


539
ritardando a piacere
than those who gave ad - vice, but none ap - pre - ci - a - ted the worth
(8)
544
♩ = 90
of his plan. He rea- soned thus: for cen - tu - ries men had been
(8)
mp
550
well ad - vised and had gone by the cle - ver - est way, while the
554
Gib - be - lins came to ex - pect them to come by boat, and to look for them


558
when-e-ver their lar-der was emp - ty, e - ven as a man looks for a snipe in the
p
563
marsh; if a snipe should sit in the top of a tree, would men find him there? As -
568
♩. = 60
sur - ed - ly ne-ver! So Al-der-ic de-cid - ed to swim the
mp
574
ri - ver and not to go by the door,


579
but to pick his way in - to the tower through the stone.
584
♩. = 80
It was his mind to work be - low the le - vel
p
588
of the o - cean, the ri - ver that gir - dles the world,
593
so that as soon as he made a hole

596

— in the wall, a

599

hole in the wall, the wa - ter should pour in,

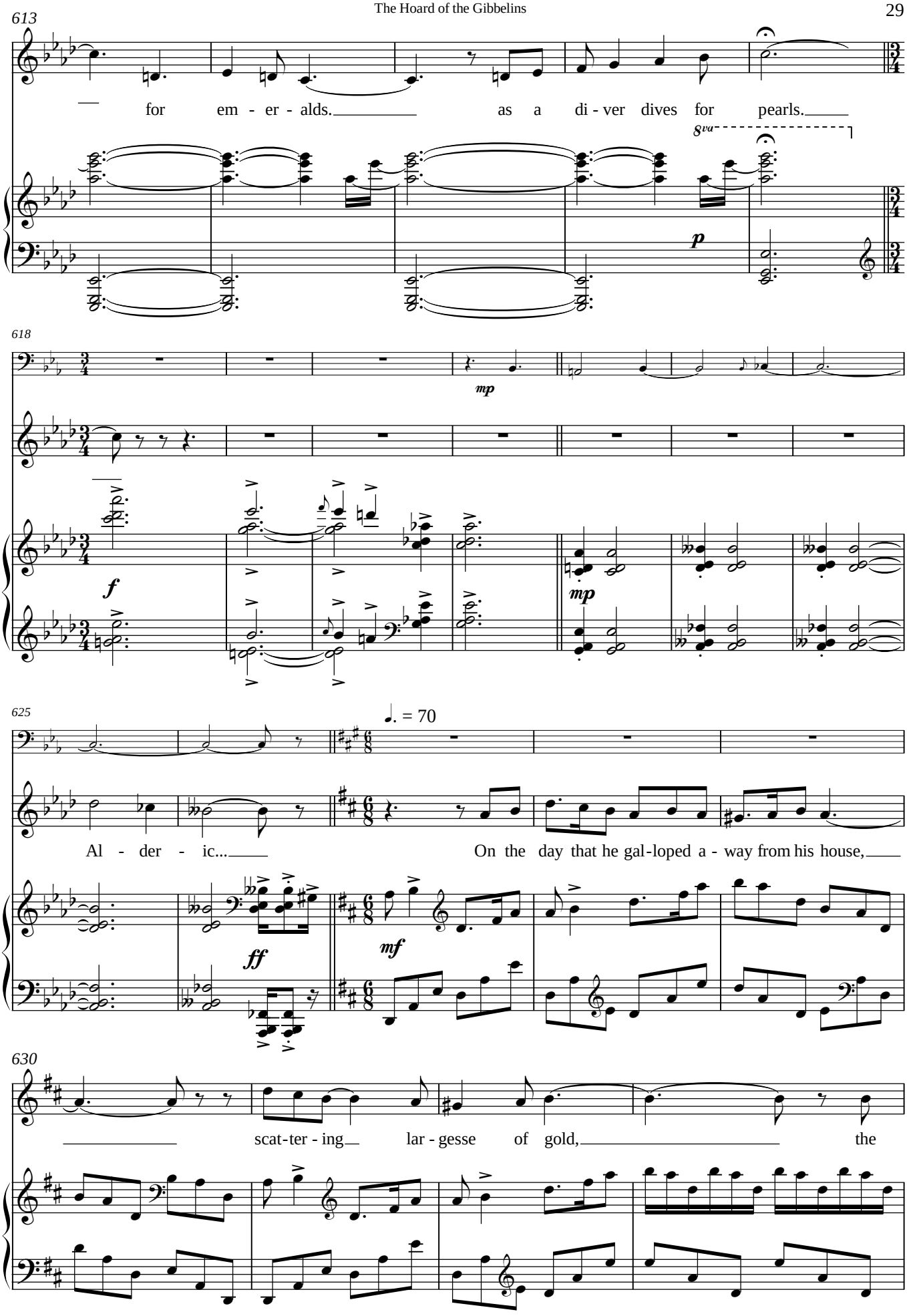
603

con - found - ing the Gib-be lins,

607

meno mosso

flood - ing the cel - lars; There - in he would dive


613
for em - er - alds.
as a di - ver dives for pearls.
8va
p
618
mp
f
mp
625
Al - der - ic...
On the day that he gal-loped a - way from his house,
ff
mf
630
scat-ter - ing lar - gesse of gold,
the

634

dra - gon snap - ping at mai - dens, as he went,

638

they came to the ar - bor - e-al pre - ci

8va

642

pice of the un - pass - a-ble for - est. The dra-gon rose at

646

mf

it with a rus - tle of wings.

ff

649

652

♩. = 60

Soon e - ven there twi - light was fa - ding a way;

mp

657

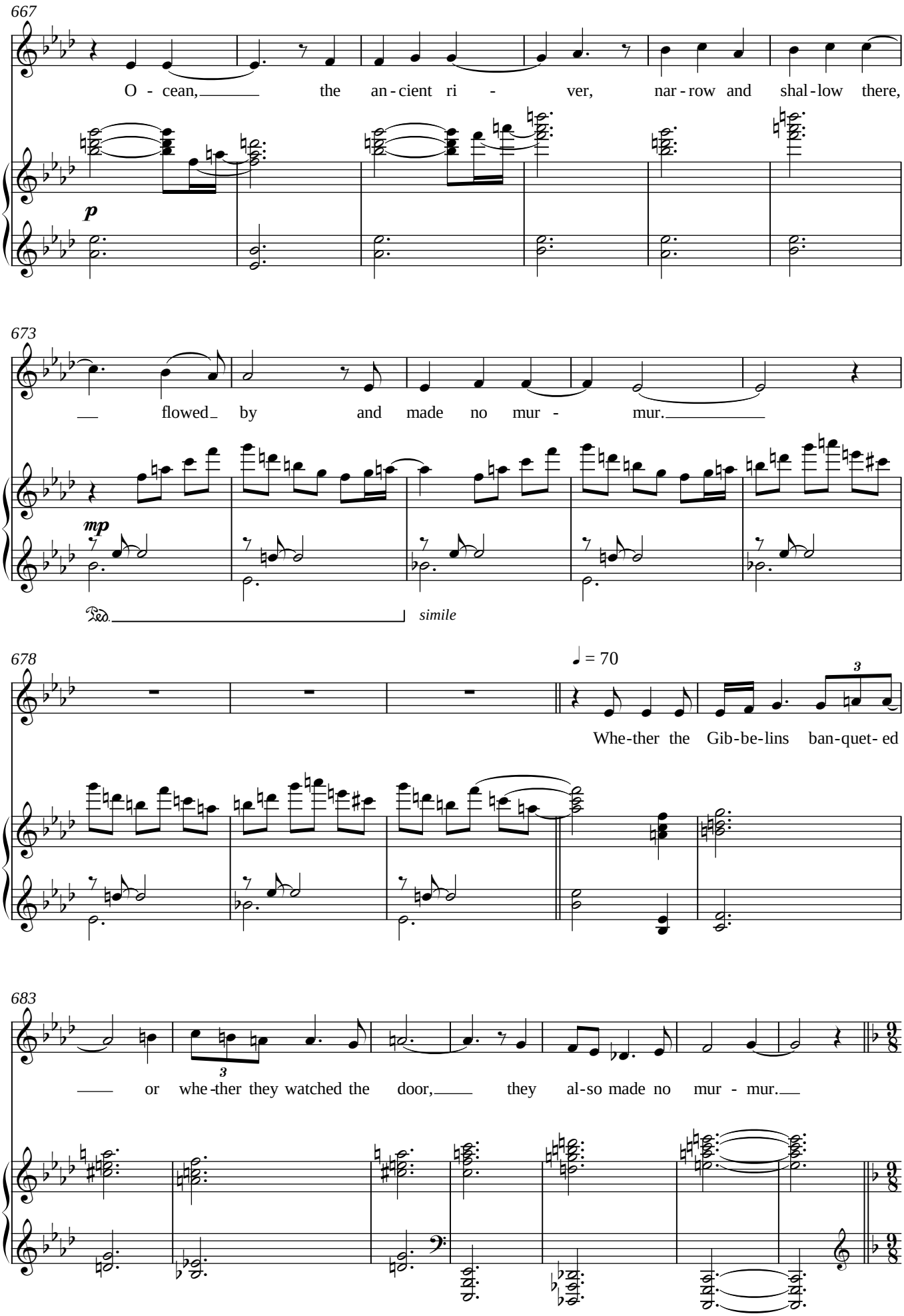
when they de-scend-ed at the edge of the world,

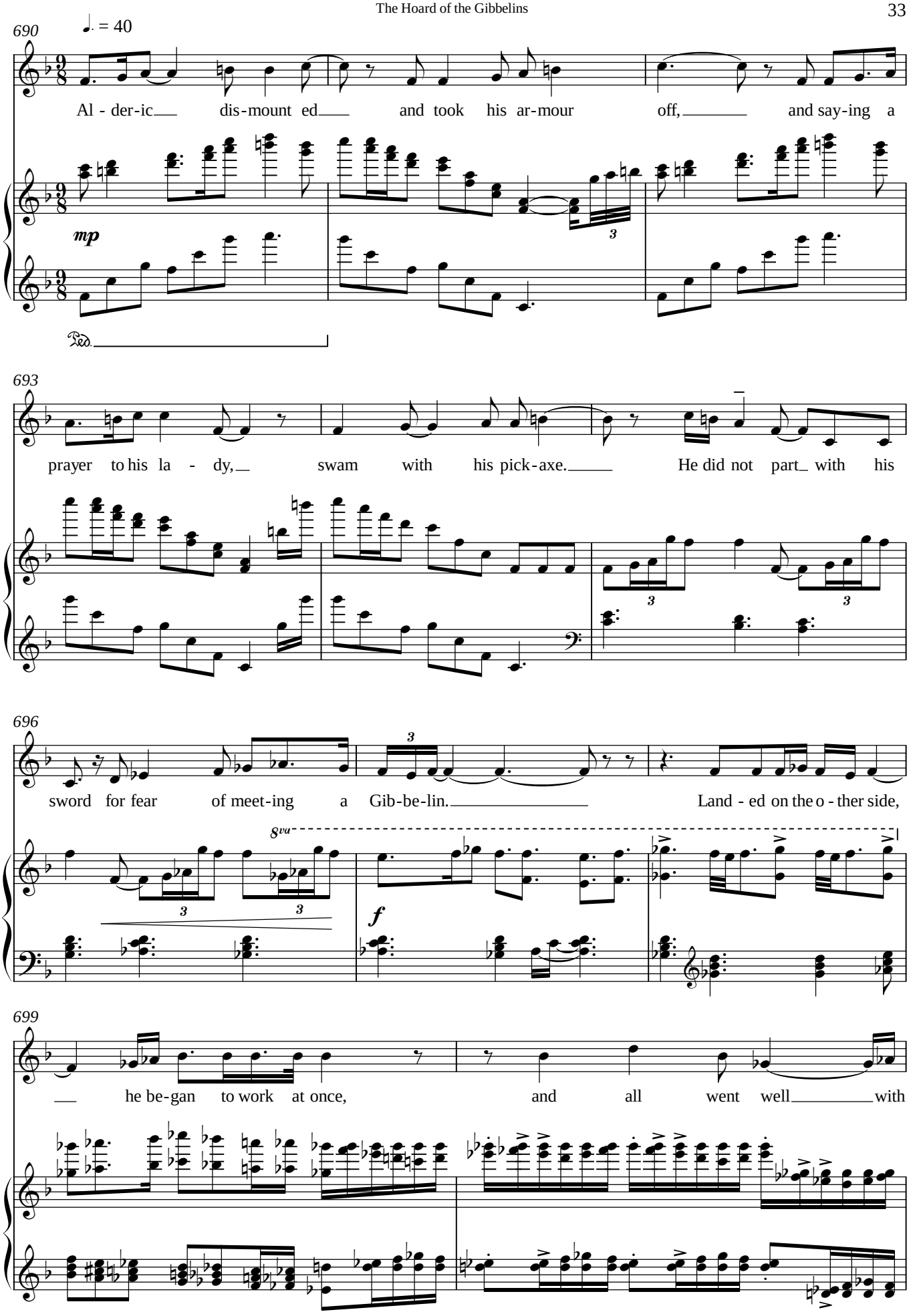
661

♩ = 90

it was night and the moon was shin - ing.

pp


667
O - cean, the an - cient ri - ver, nar - row and shal - low there,
p
673
flowed by and made no mur - mur.
mp
Ped.
simile
678
♩ = 70
Whe-ther the Gib-be-lins ban-quet- ed
683
or whe-ther they watched the door, they al-so made no mur - mur.


690
♩. = 40
Al - der-ic dis-mount ed and took his ar-mour off, and say-ing a
mp
Ped.
693
prayer to his la - dy, swam with his pick-axe. He did not part with his
696
sword for fear of meet-ing a Gib-be-lin. Land - ed on the o - ther side,
8va
f
699
he be-gan to work at once, and all went well with

701

him. No-thing put out its head from a - ny win - dow, all

703

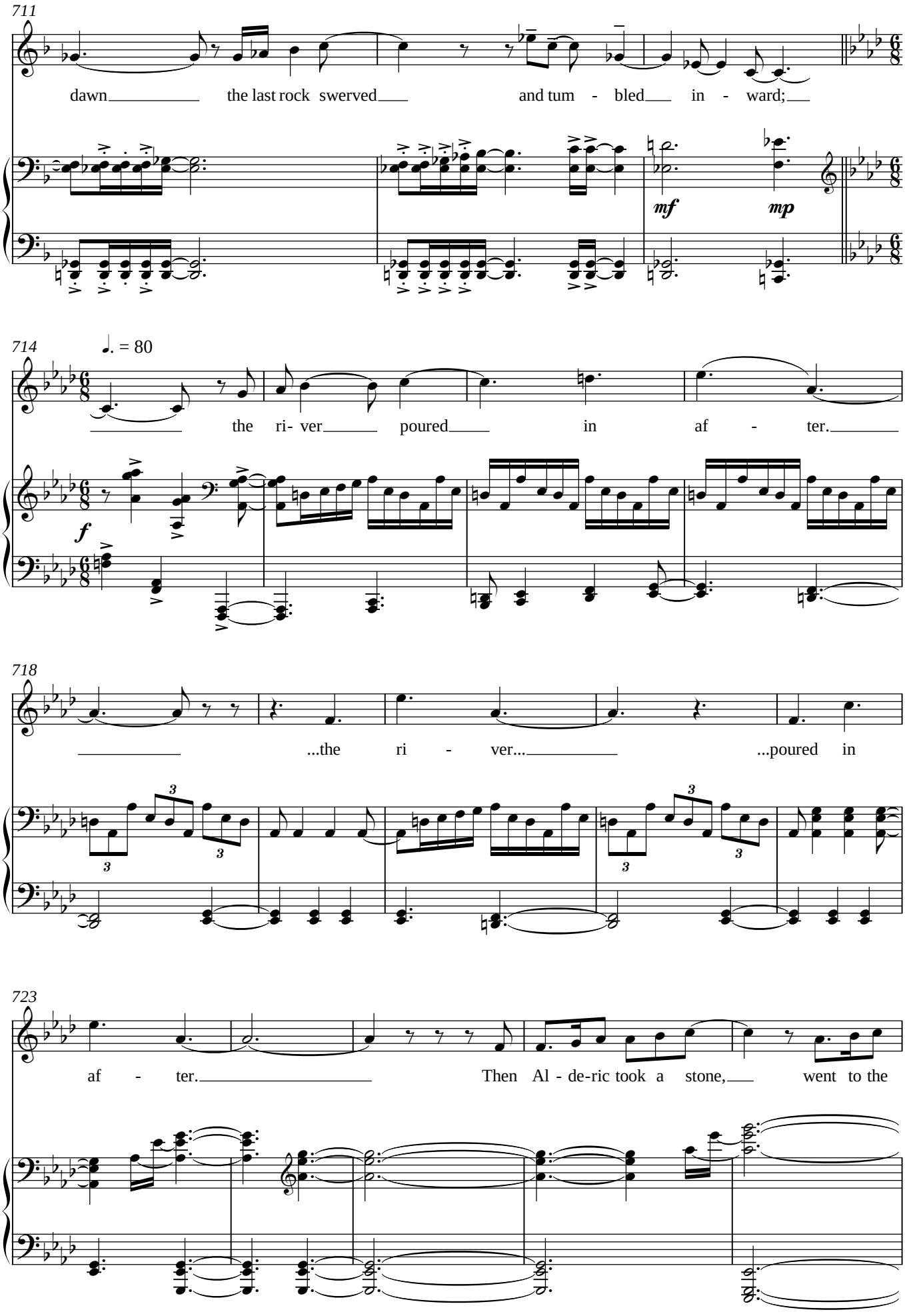
light - ed from with-in so that no - thing could see him in the

705

dark. The blows of his axe were dulled by the walls.

708

All night he worked, and at


711
dawn the last rock swerved and tum - bled in - ward;
mf
mp
714
♩. = 80
the ri- ver poured in af - ter.
f
718
...the ri - ver... ...poured in
723
af - ter. Then Al - de-ric took a stone, went to the

728 *meno mosso* *ritardando* *a tempo*

bot-tom step, and hurled it at the door; he heard the e - choes roll

colla parte *p*

733 ♩ = 100

in-to the tower. He ran back and dived through the hole in the wall.

mf *f*

738 ♩. = 90

He was in the em - er - ald cel - lar. There was no

f

743

light in the loft - y vault a - bove him, But, div- ing through twen-ty

748

feet of wa- ter, he felt the floor all rough with

753

em - er- alds, o - pen cof - fers

757

full of them.

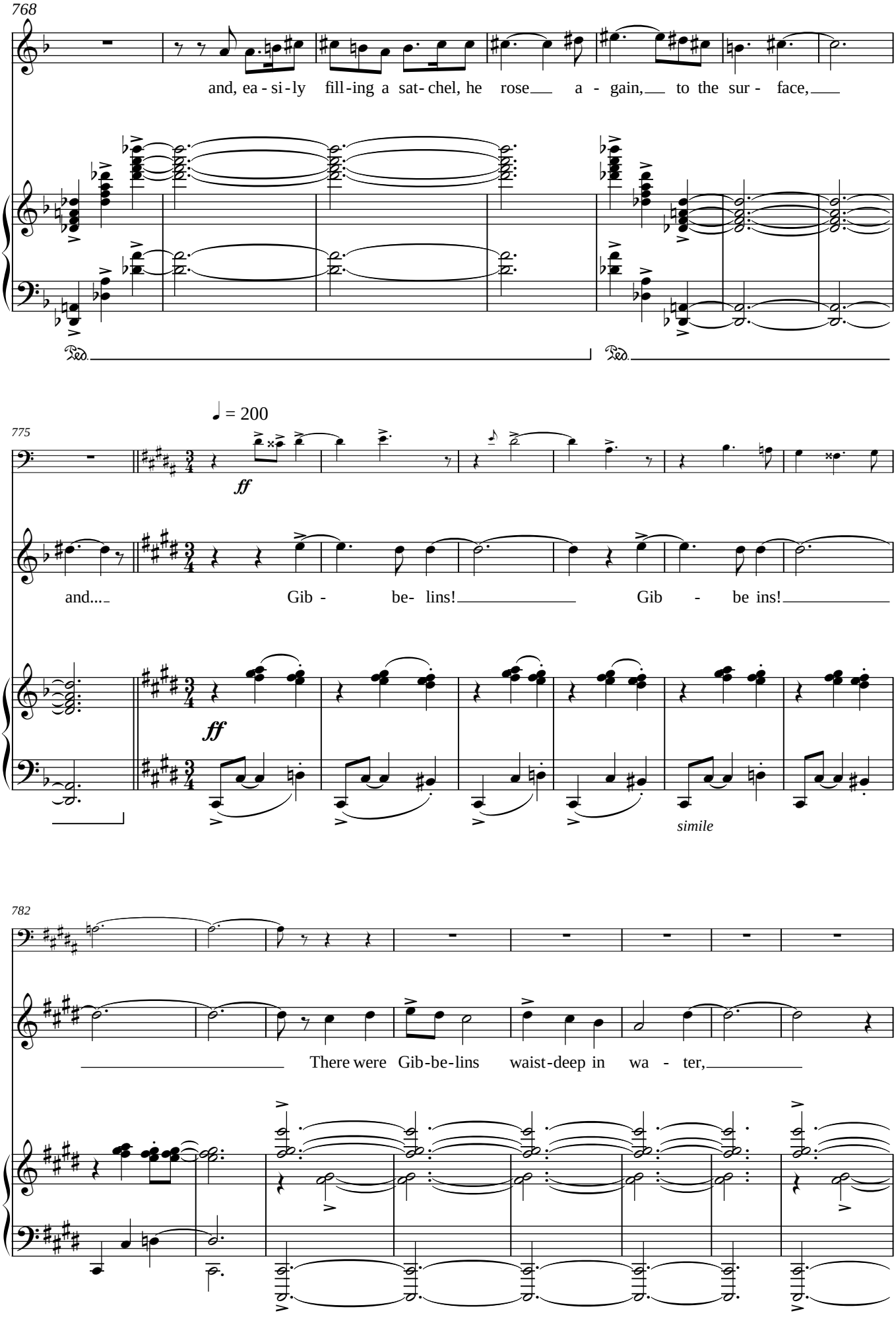
761

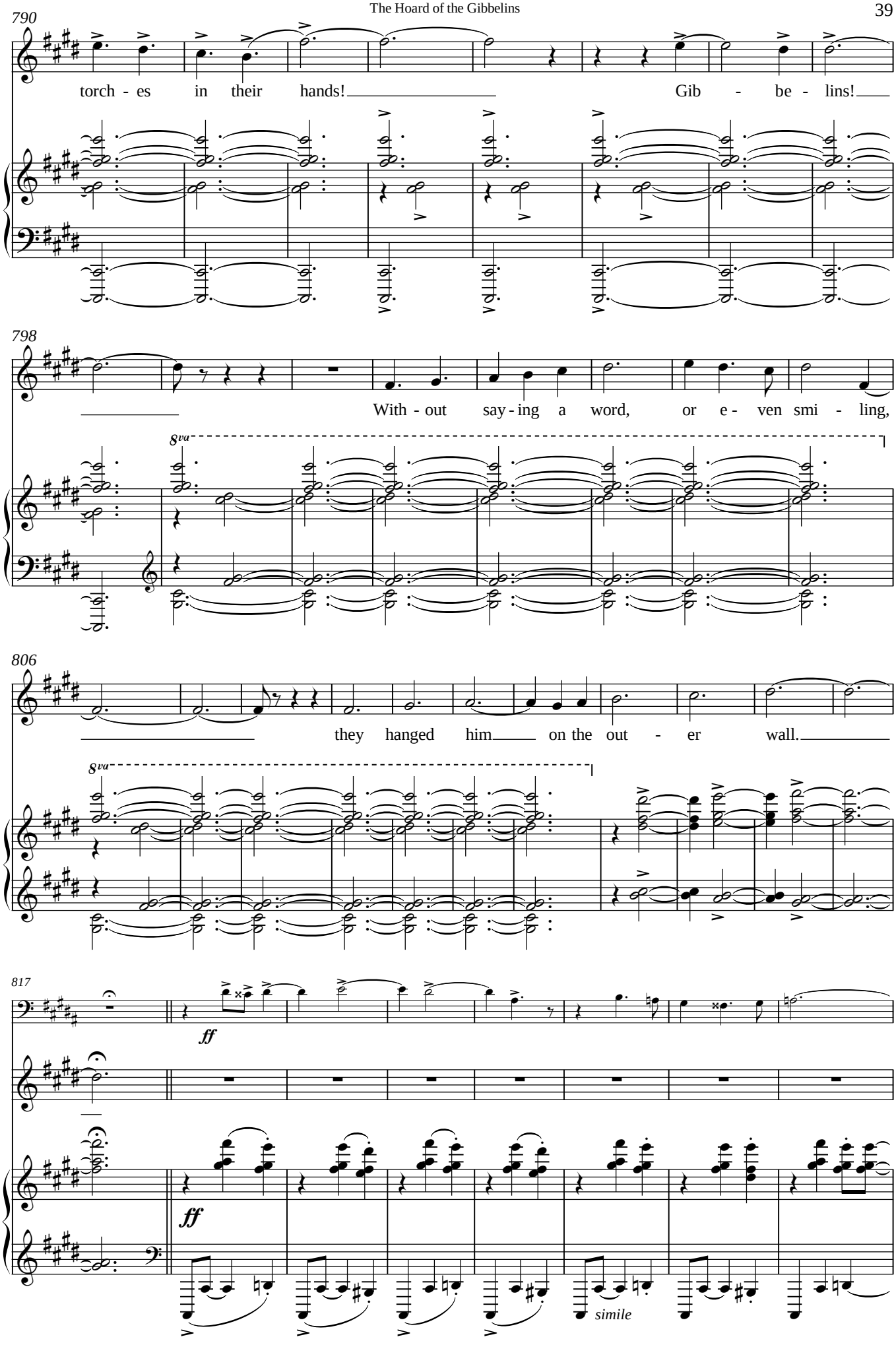
By the faint ray of the moon he saw that the wa - ter was green with them,

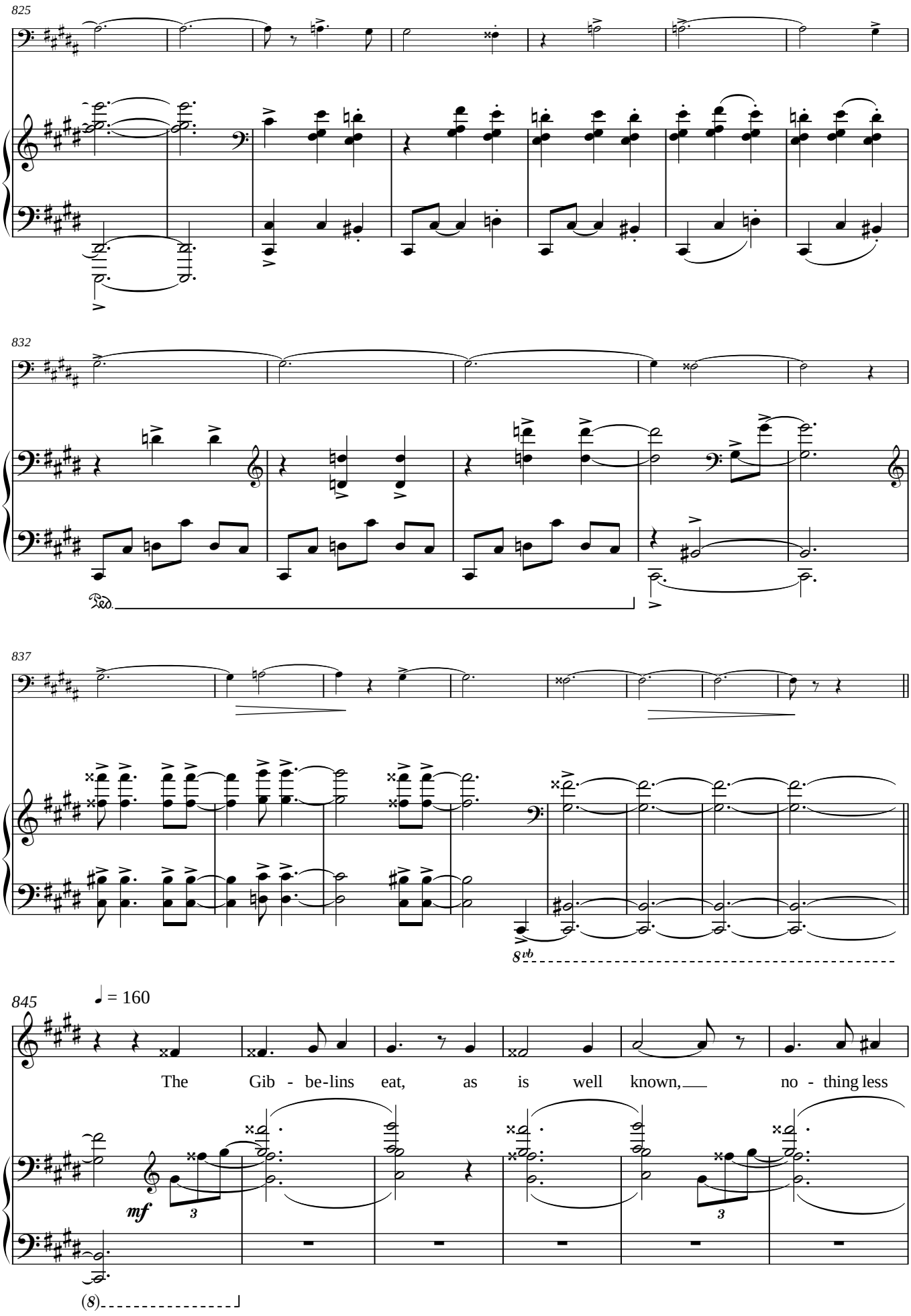
8va

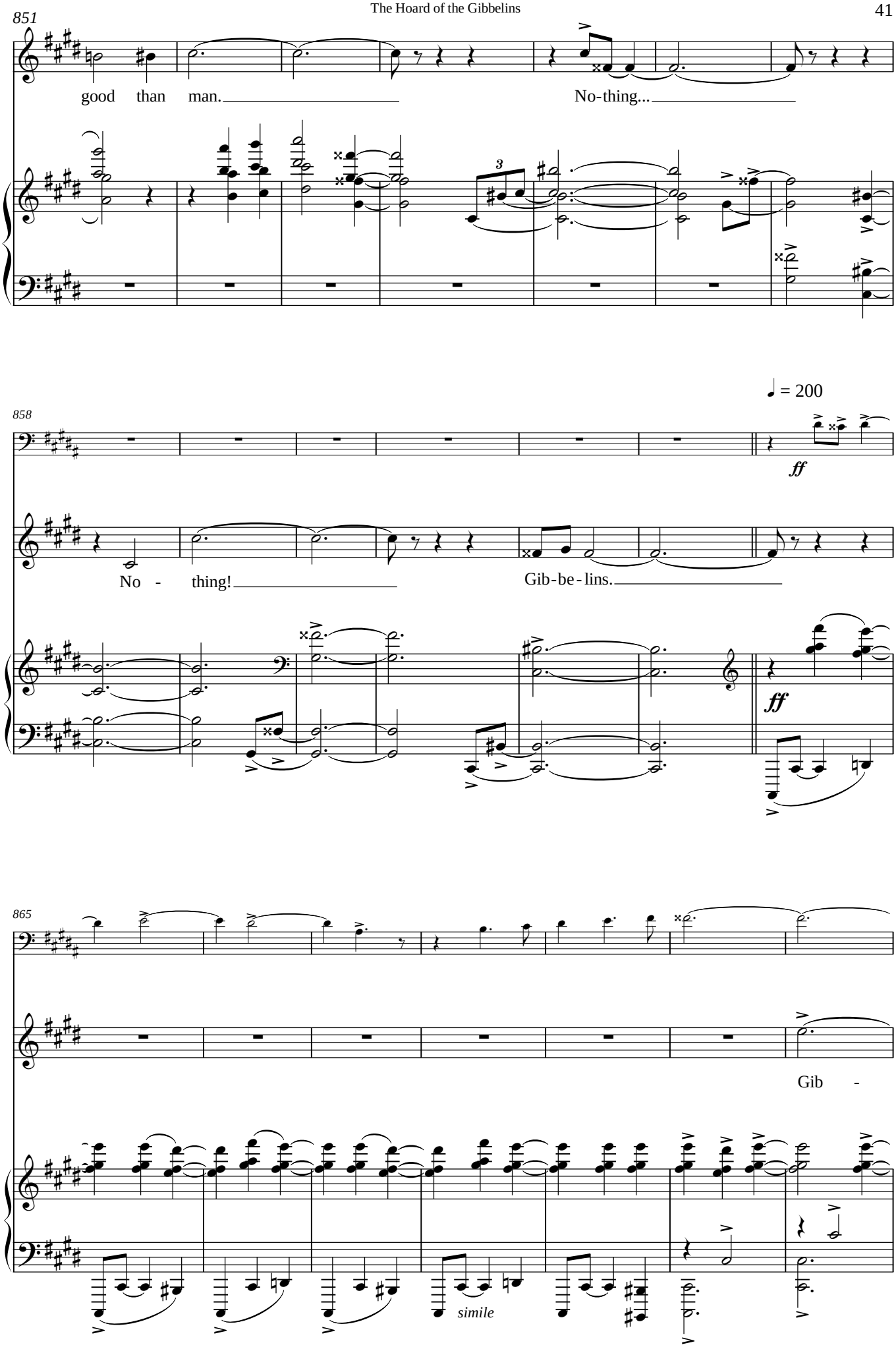
ff

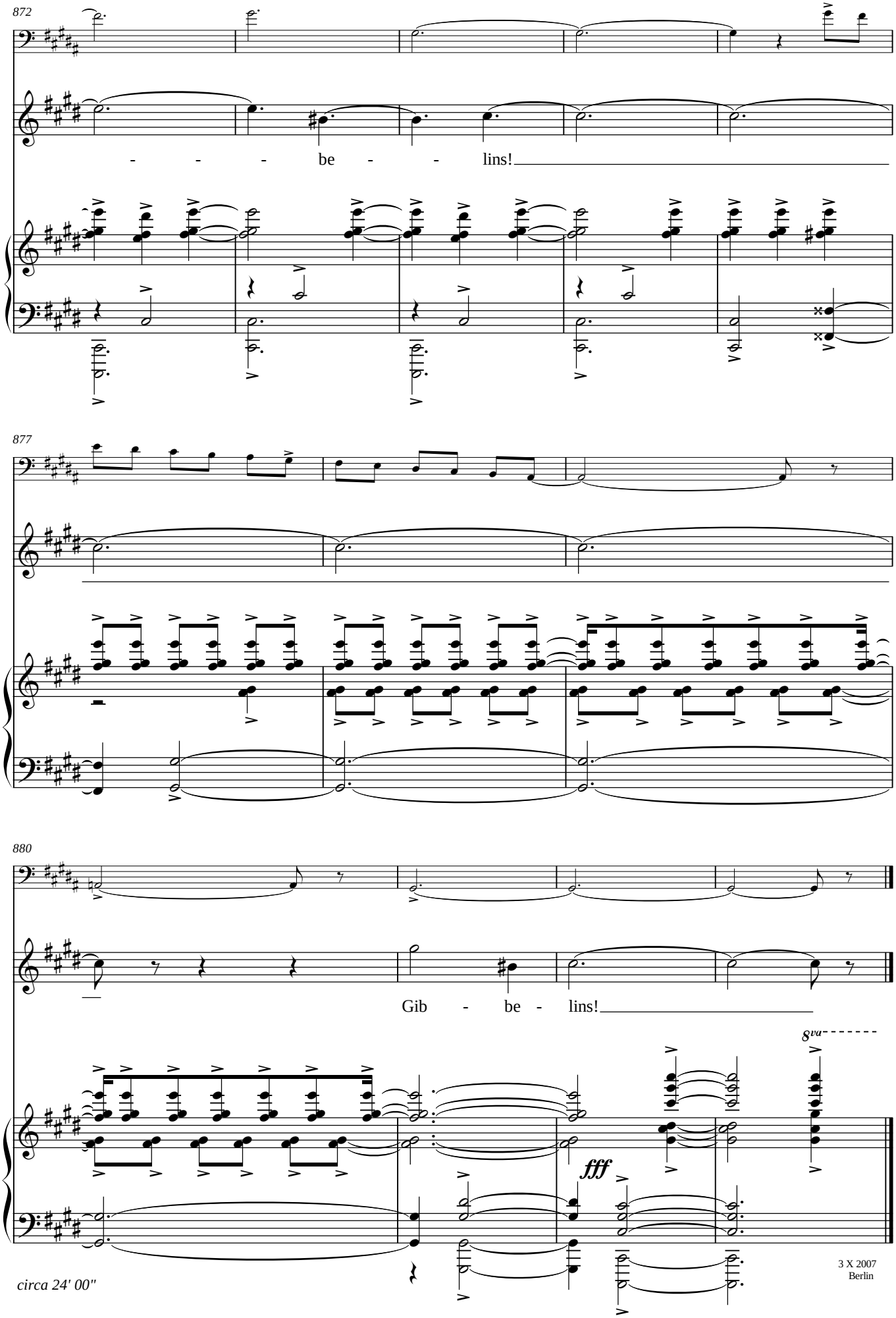
Ped.


768
and, ea - si - ly fill - ing a sat - chel, he rose a - gain, to the sur - face,
775
♩ = 200
ff
and... Gib - be- lins! Gib - be ins!
ff
simile
782
There were Gib-be-lins waist-deep in wa - ter,


790
torch - es in their hands! Gib - be - lins!
798
With - out say - ing a word, or e - ven smi - ling,
8va
806
they hanged him on the out - er wall.
8va
817
ff
ff
simile


825
832
Ped.
837
8vb
845
♩ = 160
The Gib - be-lins eat, as is well known, no - thing less
mf
3
3
(8)


851
good than man.
No-thing...
3
858
♩ = 200
ff
No - thing!
Gib-be-lins.
ff
865
Gib -
simile


872
- - - be - - lins!
877
880
Gib - be - lins!
8va
fff
circa 24' 00"
3 X 2007
Berlin

The Hoard of the Gibbelins

A scena's libretto adapted by the composer from the 1912 story of the same name by
Lord Dunsany (1878-1957)

The Gibbelins eat, as is well known,
nothing less good than man.
Their evil tower is joined to the lands we know, by a bridge.
Their hoard is beyond all reason,
a cellar for emeralds, a cellar for sapphires.
The use for their wealth is to attract a supply of food.
The Gibbelins eat, as is well known,
nothing less good than man.
In times of famine they have ever been known to scatter rubies abroad,
and sure enough their larders would be full again.
The Gibbelins eat, as is well known,
nothing less good than man.
Where the river is narrow the tower was built;
they liked to see burglars rowing easily to their steps.
There the Gibbelins lived and discreditably fed.
The Gibbelins eat, as is well known,
nothing less good than man.
Alderic, Knight of the Order of the City and the Assault,
hereditary Guardian of the King's Peace of Mind,
a man not unremembered among the makers of myth,
pondered so long upon the Gibbelins' hoard
that by now he deemed it his.
Not in the folly of his youth did Alderic come to the tower,
but he studied carefully for several years
the manner in which burglars met their doom.
In every case they had entered by the door.
He consulted those who gave advice on this quest;
he noted every detail and cheerfully paid their fees,
for what were their clients now?
No more than examples of the savoury art,
mere half-forgotten memories of a meal.
These were the requisites for the quest that these men used to advise:
a horse, a boat, mail armour, and at least three men-at-arms.
Some said, "Blow the horn at the tower door;"
others said, "Do not touch it."
Alderic thus decided:
he would take no horse down to the river's edge,
he would not row in a boat,
he would go alone and by way of the Forest Unpassable.
How to pass, you may say, by the unpassable?
This was his plan.
There was a dragon he knew of who deserved to die,
not alone because of the number of maidens he cruelly slew,
but because he ravaged the very land
land was the bane of the dukedom.
Now Alderic determined to go up against him,
took horse and spear and pricked till he met the dragon,
breathing bitter smoke.
"Hath foul dragon ever slain a true knight?"
And well the dragon knew that this had never been;
he hung his head.
"Then," said the knight,
"thou shalt be my trusty steed,
and if not, by this spear there shall befall thee
all that the troubadours tell of the dooms of thy breed."
And the dragon swore to the knight to become his trusty steed;
on a saddle on this dragon's back
Alderic sailed above the unpassable forest.
But first he pondered that subtle plan
which was more profound than merely to avoid
all that had been done before;
he commanded a blacksmith,
and the blacksmith made him a pickaxe.
There was a rejoicing.
Men hoped that when the Gibbelins were robbed,
they would shatter their bridge,
break the golden chain that bound them to the world.
There was little love for the Gibbelins,
though all men envied their hoard.
The hoard of the Gibbelins.
The Gibbelins eat, as is well known,
nothing less good than man.
Alderic mounted his dragon as though he was already a conqueror,
and what pleased the crowd more than the good
was the gold that he scattered as he rode away;
he would not need it, he said,
if he found the Gibbelins' hoard.
When they heard he had rejected the advice of those that gave it,
some said that the knight was mad,
others said that he was greater than those that gave advice,
but none appreciated the worth of his plan.
He reasoned thus:
for centuries men had been well advised
and had gone by the cleverest way,
while the Gibbelins came to expect them to come by boat
and to look for them at the door
whenever their larder was empty,
even as a man looks for a snipe in the marsh;
if a snipe should sit in the top of a tree,
would men find him there?
Assuredly never!
So Alderic decided to swim the river
and not to go by the door,
but to pick his way into the tower through the stone.
It was in his mind to work below the level of the ocean,
the river that girdles the world,
so that as soon as he made a hole in the wall
the water should pour in, confounding the Gibbelins,
flooding the cellars;
therein he would dive for emeralds
as a diver dives for pearls.
On the day that he galloped away from his home
scattering largesse of gold,
the dragon snapping at maidens as he went,
they came to the arboreal precipice of the unpassable forest.
The dragon rose at it with a rattle of wings.
Soon even there the twilight faded away;
when they descended at the edge of the world
it was night and the moon was shining.
Ocean, the ancient river, narrow and shallow there,
flowed by and made no murmur.
Whether the Gibbelins banqueted
or whether they watched by the door,
they also made no murmur.
Alderic dismounted and took his armour off,
and saying one prayer to his lady,
swam with his pickaxe.
He did not part from his sword,
for fear that he met with a Gibbelin.
Landed on the other side, he began to work at once,
and all went well with him.
Nothing put out its head from any window,
all lighted so that nothing within could see him in the dark.
The blows of his axe were dulled in the deep walls.
All night he worked, and at dawn
the last rock swerved and tumbled inwards;
the river poured in after.
Then Alderic took a stone, went to the bottom step,
and hurled it at the door;
then he ran back and dived through the hole in the wall.
He was in the emerald-cellar.
There was no light in the lofty vault above him,
but, diving through twenty feet of water,
he felt the floor all rough with emeralds,
and open coffers full of them.
By a faint ray of the moon he saw that the water was green with them,
and, easily filling a satchel,
he rose again to the surface, and….
Gibbelins! There were the Gibbelins waist-deep in water,
torches in their hands!
Without saying a word, or even smiling,
they hanged him on the outer wall.
The Gibbelins eat, as is well known,
nothing less good than man.