For the Love of Bees

for

Actor

&

Solo Piano

Text & Music

By

Anna Rubin

TEXTS - For the Love of Bees by Anna Rubin

PART 1 - SWARM
Honeybees and human beings,
together over thousands of years,
first in Asia, then Africa and Europe and then to the rest of the world.

Their tiny huge herds
swarm wild and hide themselves in caves, in hollows of trees,
under eaves and in hidden spaces.
Their long tongues suck nectar from sweet flowers
and pass the golden fluid from one to another until it becomes
thick, liquid, amber gold,
stored in jeweled honeycomb.

Questing for nectar they accidentally--
By some divine natural coincidence--
spread pollen from flower to flower,
their tiny legs and nectar pouch smeared with
the sticky gold, the sticky pollen gold.

With what ingenious exuberance
did the god of all things design this miraculous process!

And so we are able to cultivate a myriad of fruits and nuts, seeds and vegetables,
and glory in our gardens of flowers,
cherry, blueberry, cranberry, gooseberry and currant, mango, orange and lime—
lemon and lavender, aster, lilly and phlox.....daisy, sesame, pumpkin, watermelon and squash....
almonds and grapes passion fruit, persimmon and pear---- plums and parsnips, parsley and mustard, alfalfa, avocado, kiwi, tangerine, eggplants and garlic, jujube and citron, chia and acai, celery and turnip, carrot and potato, basil, oregano and thyme, rosemary and lemonbalm – ah, lemonbalm, lemonbalm.

PART 2 – STING
Sting, zing, and they die.
Wings beating at furious speeds, darting here and there
And dancing their waggle[1] dance
Tilted just so in relation to their god, the sun.
They loop in figure eights, the scouts directing their little troops to the flowers
while the soldiers guard and warm the hive.
Hum and thrum,
Vicious the sting and it can kill,

[1] The *waggle* dance is a scientific term for a particular figure-eight dance of the honey bee. By performing this dance, successful foragers can share information about the direction and distance to patches of flowers yielding nectar and pollen, to water sources, or to new nest-site locations with other members of the colony.

while in every case, the bee will die.

Now, with our modern machine farming,
huge vans criss-cross, criss-cross the country with over a million bees to pollinate crops
from California to Florida,
from Michigan to Georgia,
from Texas to the Dakotas and back again--- and again.
Pesticides swarming the bees weaken the entire colony—
the entire colony of migrants, of migrant bee workers, working the fields.
Sting!
Bee sting!

PART 3 – HONEYQUEEN
The queen, the queen,
The monarch of sixty thousand,
Beloved mother of the hive.
Raised on royal jelly,
she grows in her tiny cell,
then pierces through beeswax to emerge.

In wild flight she couples with her lovers,
ten, twelve, fifteen of them
and each time her mate dies,
torn apart from this wild union,
a sacrifice for her and for the hive.

The queen lays her eggs, her thousands of eggs,
her bees clustering around,
fanning their fierce wings in a shield of warmth,
inside the hive and outside the hive,
a halo of protection, a fluttering of gold.

The nectar is stored in the comb,
and refined to intense sweetness,
honey flowing rust and gold.
And the queen reigns,
not for her own glory
but for the glory of the hive,
And for the glory of all things that flower.

PART 4 – MYTH OF THE ASSASSIN BEES
Sting – zing!
Killer bees -- assassin bees –Africanized bees -- on the loose!
Man killed by hundreds of stinging bees!
Truth or myth?

Let's start with European honeybees bred in the Americas, domesticated for centuries.
They are easy to raise though very prone to disease.
Now, let's consider bees from central southern Africa. These bees thrive in a hot dry climate, surrounded by predators, yet are tireless pollinators and makers of delicious honey.
And although their hives are small, they are more productive than European bees.

So, how did the myth of Brazilian assassin bees come about. The real story is not well known. In the 1950s, a Brazilian scientist named Warwick Kerr wanted to combine the best qualities of both African and European origin bee strains by interbreeding them. Quickly his hybrid bee was wildly successful. But he was also a brave social activist who took a public stand against the brutality of Brazil's military government. Because of his international reputation, the government was afraid to just kill him.

So, they demonized him in a propaganda campaign as a kind of Frankenstein doctor trying to destroy his country with vicious bee killers.
Sting - Zing!

But a curious thing happened. Over the years, scientists noticed that a hybrid bee, the heir of African AND European ancestry, was strong and resilient. These bees made their way gradually from Brazil to Paraguay, Bolivia, Peru – northward to Central America – and to Mexico and eventually to the Southwestern United States. This honeybee produced more honey and was less prone to disease. This unique hybrid, first bred by Dr. Kerr, transformed not only Brazil's honeybees but bees throughout the Americas. And Dr. Kerr should be remembered as a patriot and brilliant scientist.
O, the mystery of how the destinies of humans and honeybees are woven together.

PART 5 – SOLITARY
Solitary bee, living by herself,
never making honey,
Yet glorious in her power of her pollen gathering.

She tunnels deep into the earth to create her nest with honey and nectar.
Then she lay her eggs and flies off.
The male bees emerge first and await their consorts to come soon after—
and then love happens.
They couple and mate!
The male protects the area where his bee love collects pollen and nectar.
As the bee wife zooms from flower to flower, every hair on every part of her body attracts the golden dust of life.
She gathers a hundred times the pollen that a honeybee can gather.

Without a hive and without a queen,
Some call them dirt bees – mud bees --
but also marvelous names like the orange-legged furrow bee,

the blue orchard mason, the leafcutter and long-horned bee, the wool carder, the miner and the mining bee,
and that thief, the nomad bee, who steals the nests of others --
Solitary bees, alone and yet together.

PART 6 – ODE TO BEES AND THEIR KEEPERS
O honeybee,
O tiny bearer of golden life,
Who persist and survive against all odds,
Let us praise you and the beekeepers and honey gatherers,
Who have been stung with bee love.
On apartment roofs in crowded cities with hives in tumbledown fields,
in gardens and groves, prairies, plans and savannahs,
Argentinian *llanos* and Irani *wadis*,
in abandoned city lots and atop posh penthouses.
In Alpine valley and Nepali cliffs,
in backyards near freeway ramps,
the beekeepers with their tiny huge herds --
keeping alive this twenty-five century love affair with the honeybee:

From Los Angeles to Bhagdad, from Ramallah to Lahore,
from Detroit to Delano, from Honolulu to Tokyo.

Despite the odds, the collapse of so many hives,
they are surviving and somehow coping with our earth-mangling and habitat-destroying ways…..
Would you guess that bees must gather nectar from two million flowers to make one pound of honey?

O Mysterious magic of Gaia,
Gaia in her everchanging glory.
Hum and thrum -- Hum and thrum!
Sting and zing! The incessant industry of your honey factories.
Sting and zing!
The incessant inductor of your honey factories!
Her majesty the queen in all her regal authority and power
Reigns over her honeyed empire, her sweet dominion,
her fluttering, dancing realm.
We adore you, we marvel at your intricate wisdom.
All things that flower and burst with color adore you,
And silently await your precious presence and your whirring wings.
Hum and thrum, hum and thrum.

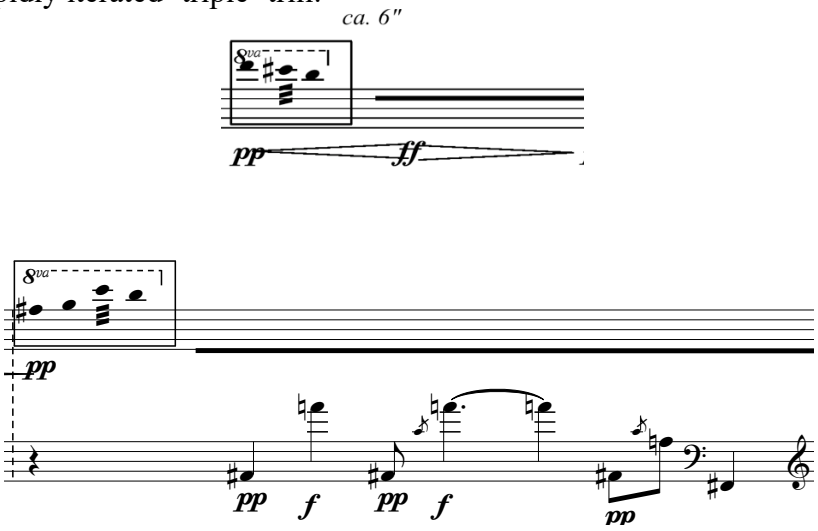
Notes on Performance of *For the Love of Bees* (2010, rev. 2019) for actor and solo piano

This suite includes six pieces– *Swarm, Sting, HoneyQueen, Myth of the Assassin Bee, Solitary Bee,* and *Ode to Bees* and *Their Keepers.* The pieces can be performed individually.

The pianist can approach tempi freely and should pedal liberally throughout. Where there is a certain resonant emphasis, I have indicated how to pedal. The harmonic blur of the frequent clusters and cluster-like effects should be emphasized.

Swarm

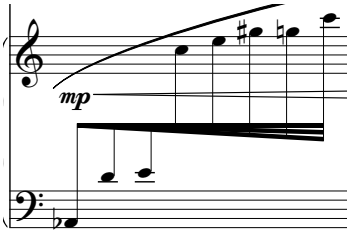
The boxed notes are played for the duration indicated. Play boxed figure below for the time indicated as a rapidly iterated 'triple' trill.



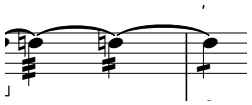
Rapidly repeat 4-note figure rapidly over left-hand notes

Sting

The basic beat for this piece is slow; rubato is encouraged along with high contrast between fast notes and long arrival/destination tones. Pedal liberally; pedaling indications are for specific effects.



Slow accelerating across beat.



Repeated note gradually slows.

HoneyQueen

The slow chords of this piece should be played rreely and langorously.

Myth of the Assassin Bees

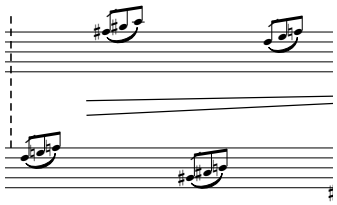
Myth of the Assassin Bees" is a fast-pulsed and syncopated exploration of virtuosic cross- hand technique with jazz-influenced chords. This piece is inspired by the jazz pianist, Chucho Valdes and refers to a widespread myth spread by the Brazilian military government of the 60s that a renowned scientist had created vidious'Frankenstein' bees that killed people. In face, Dr. Warwick Kerr, was a human rights activist as well as scientist and they spread this propaganda in order to discredit him.

Solitary Bee

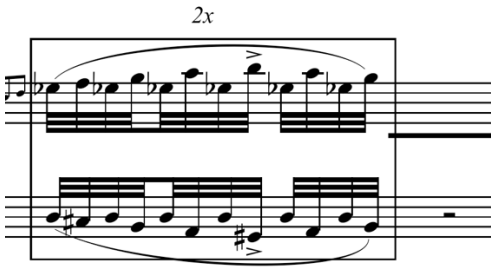
Ground bees live alone in shallow nests in the ground. While not as glamorous as honeybees, they are important pollinators.

Ode to Bees and Their Keepers

Roll grace note figures so they have a blurred effect – or *moué* (wetly) in French. When several of the grace note groups occur, they should be played one after the other in rapid succession. Boxed figures are generally repeated the number of times indicated above the box (e.g., 2x). In a few measures, the figure is repeated the length of the note indicated above (e.g., half note) as in *Swarms*.



Grace note figures.



Repeat boxed figure the designated number of times.

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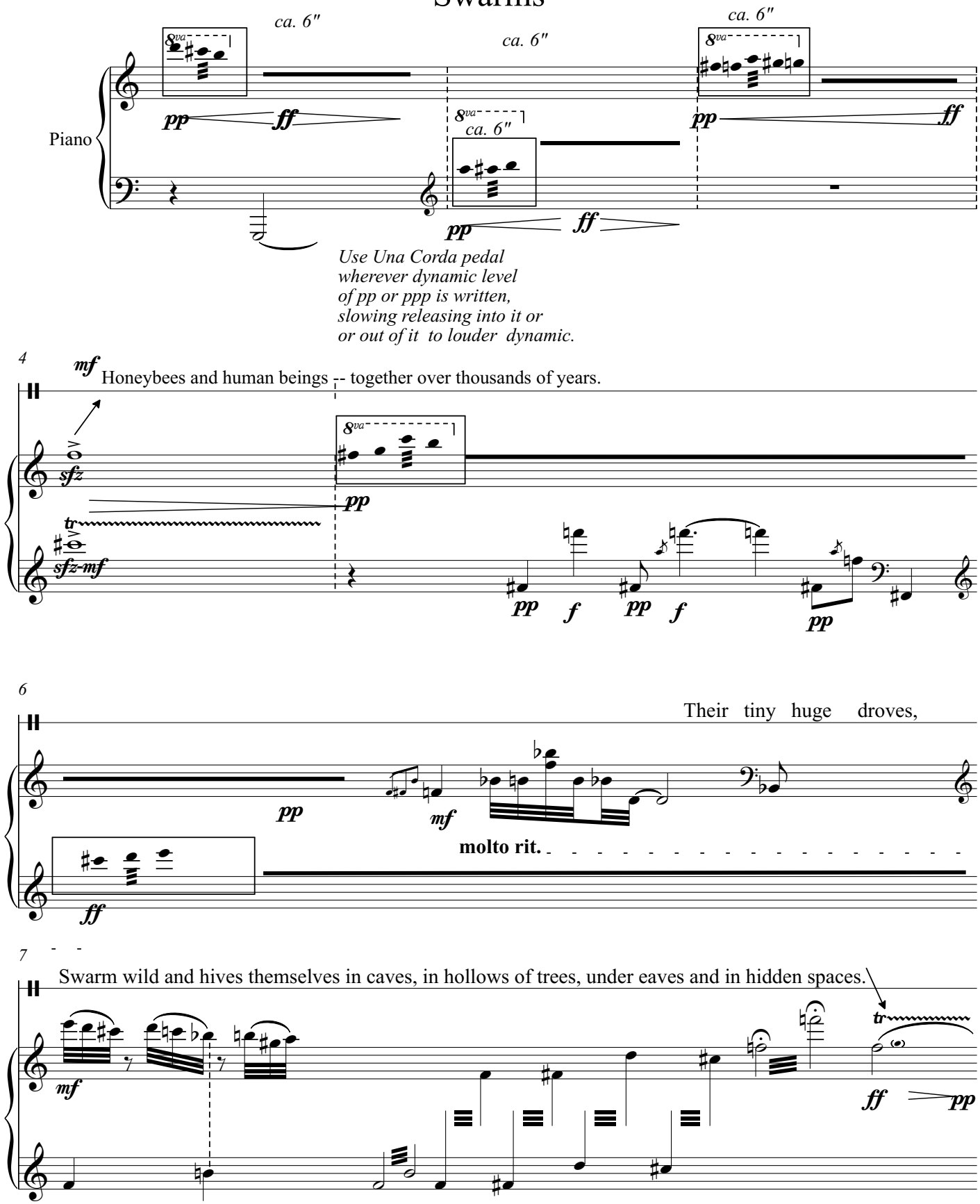
Swarms


ca. 6"
ca. 6"
ca. 6"
ca. 6"
8va
Piano
pp
ff
Use Una Corda pedal
wherever dynamic level
of pp or ppp is written,
slowing releasing into it or
or out of it to louder dynamic.
4
mf
Honeybees and human beings -- together over thousands of years.
sfz
sfz-mf
tr
f
6
Their tiny huge droves,
molto rit.
7
Swarm wild and hives themselves in caves, in hollows of trees, under eaves and in hidden spaces.

9

(tr)

pp

tr

50′

10

Their long tongues suck nectar from flowers and pass it from one bee to another until

tr

p

tr

mf p

lightly pedal

11 it becomes thick amber

liquid gold, stored in jeweled honeycomb!

ca. 4″

mf

p

Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped.

Ped.

13

Questing for nectar they accidentally--

by some divine natural coincidence--

ca. 4″

ca. 2″

ca. 2″

p

Ped.

Ped.

Ped.

14

spread pollen rom flower to flower,

subdued

f

mf

tr

p

p

Ped.

lightly pedal

rapid figures

15 *p*

the sticky gold,

p

16

the sticky pollen gold.

light dnd dry

p

f

17

With what ingenious exuberance did the god of all things design this mind boggling process!

f

18 *ca.4"*

mf-p

Ped.

20 *mf*

And so we grow a myriad of fruits and nuts, seeds and vegetables, and garden flowers

ca.2"

ca. 2"

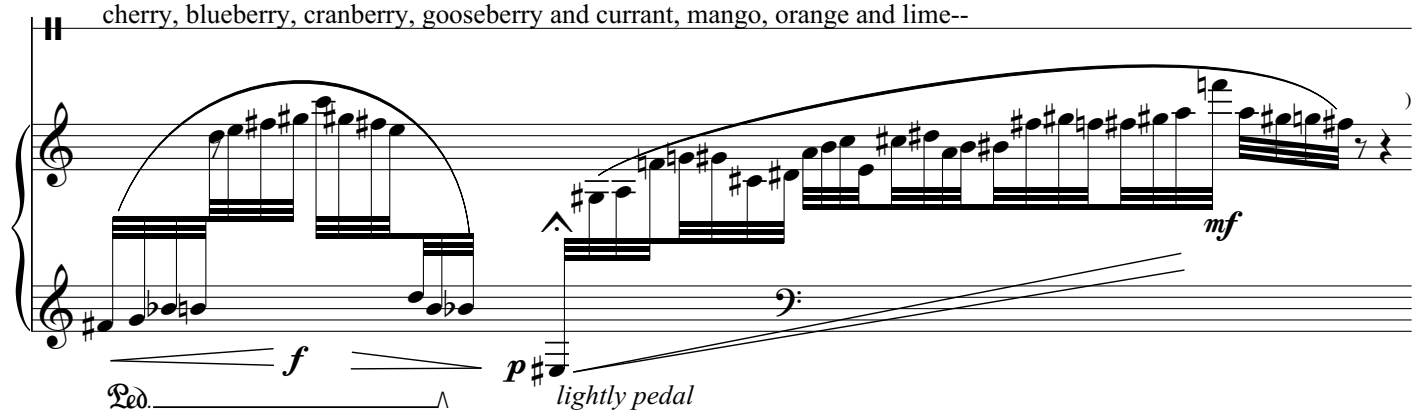
tr

p

Ped. Ped. Ped.

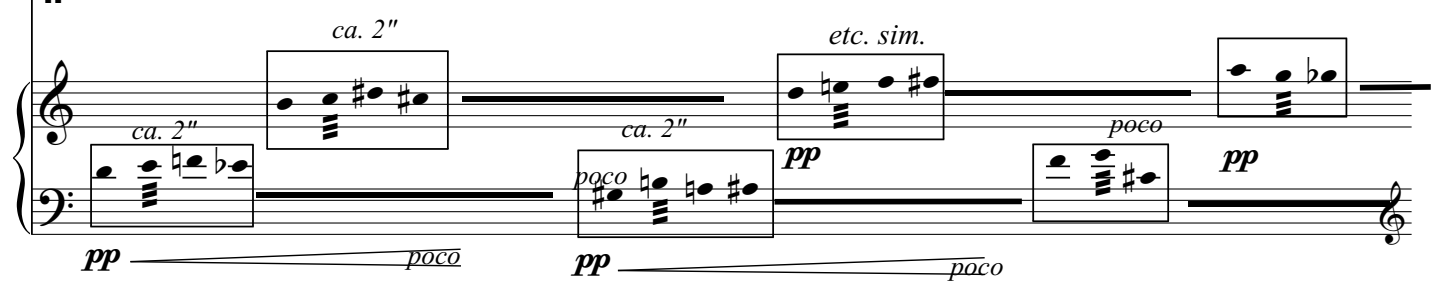
21

cherry, blueberry, cranberry, gooseberry and currant, mango, orange and lime--



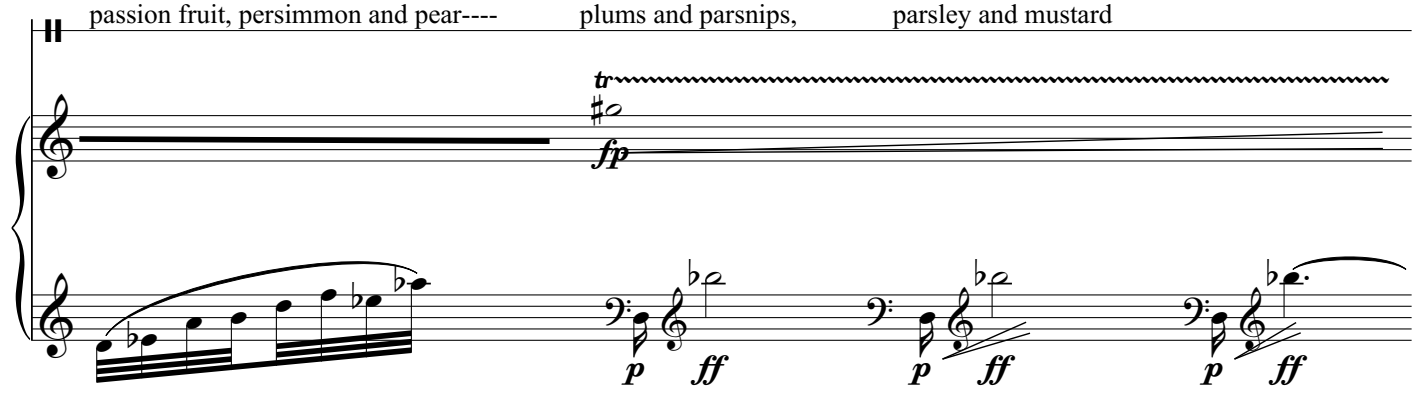
22

lemon and lavender, lilly and phlox.....daisy --- sesame, pumpkin, watermelon and squash.... almonds and grapes,



23

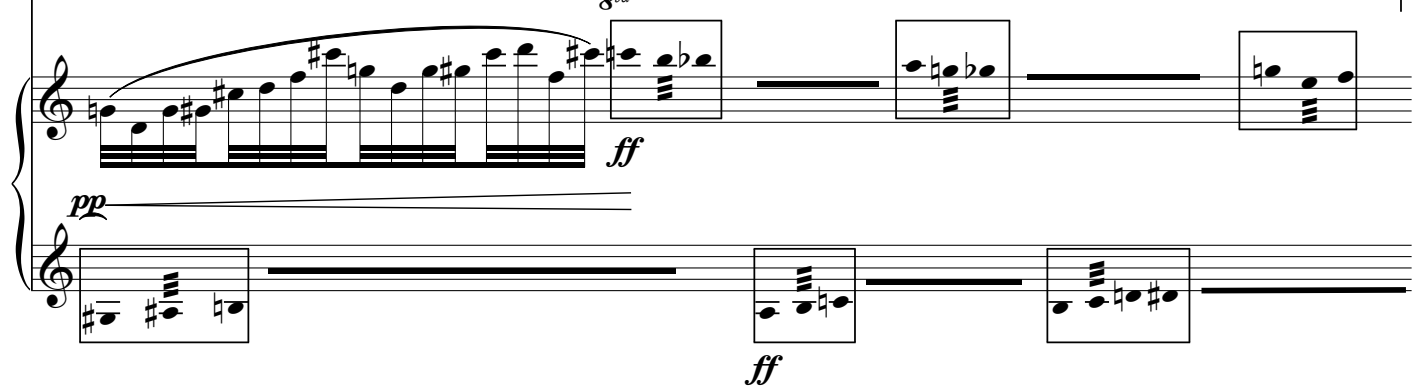
passion fruit, persimmon and pear---- plums and parsnips, parsley and mustard



24

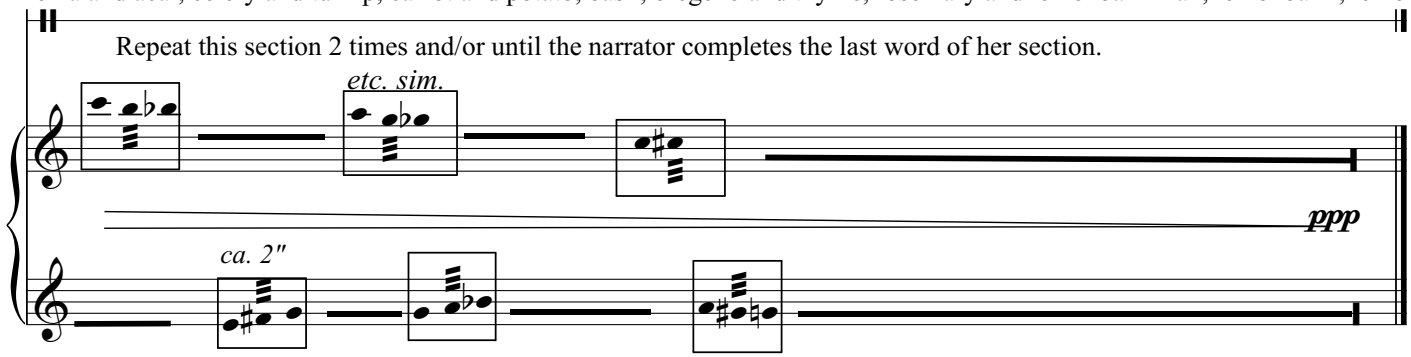
alfalfa, avocado, kiwi, tangerine, egggplants and garlic, jujube and citron,

Play each box around 1 sec. before proceeding to the next, allowing for smooth overlap.

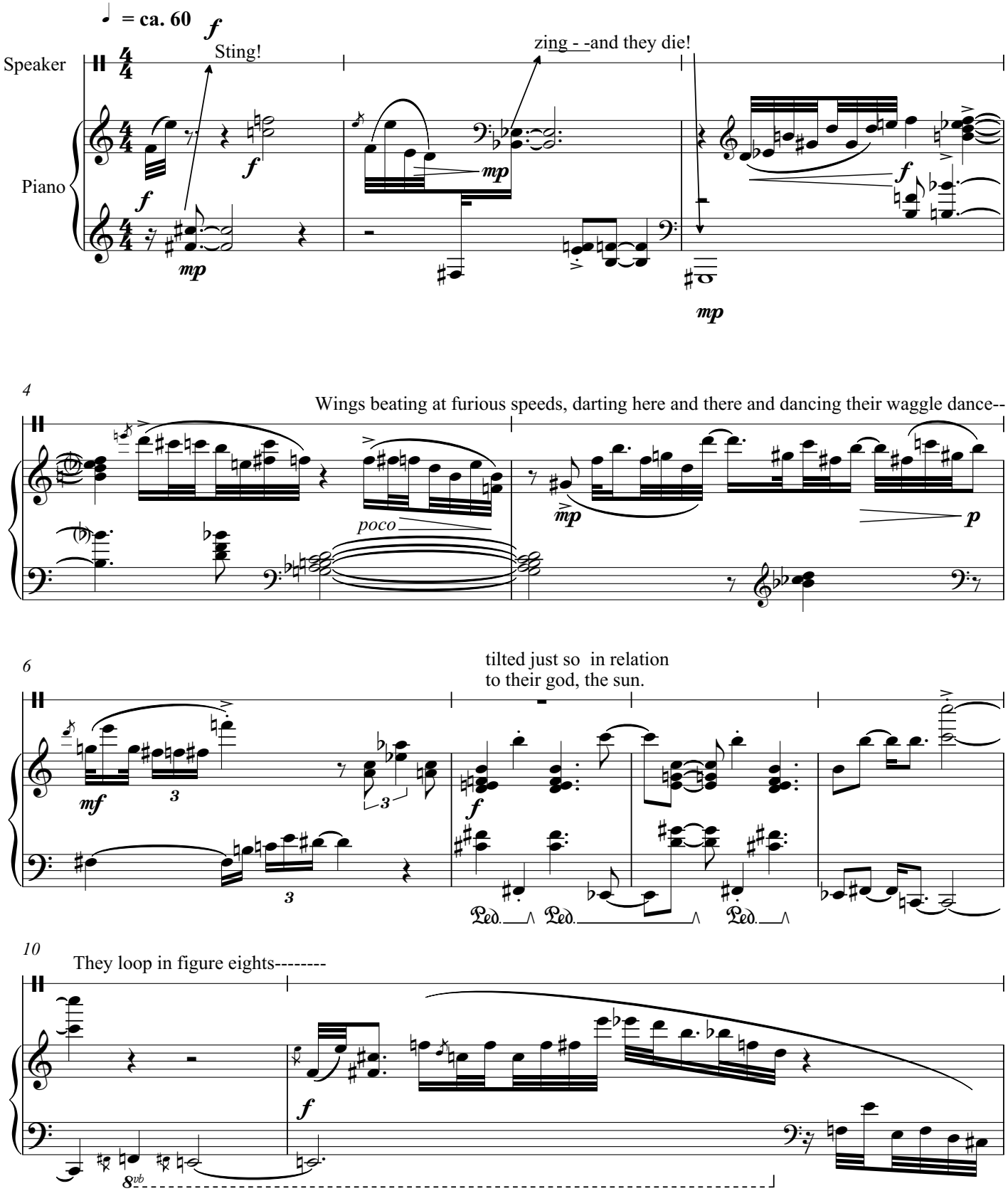


(Gradually get softer and softer until narrator is whispering, addding items in parens until pianist finishes playing).

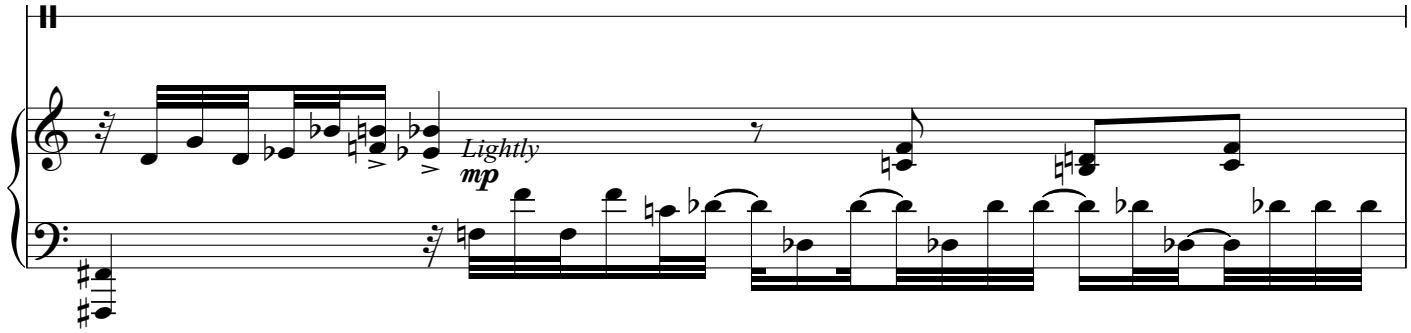
25
chia and acai, celery and turnip, carrot and potato, basil, oregeno and thyme, rosemary and lemonbalm - ah, lemonbalm, lemonblam.



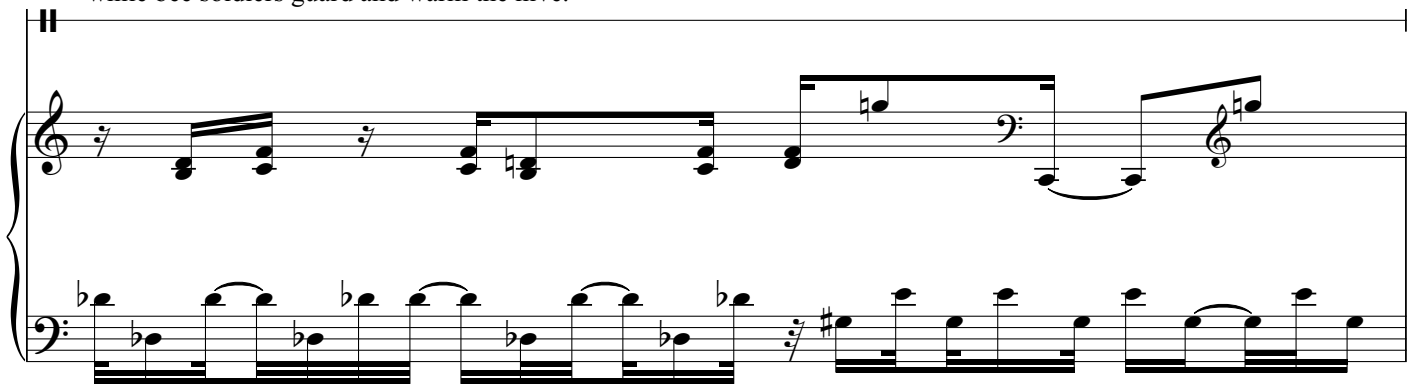
Sting!


♩ = ca. 60
f
Speaker
Sting!
zing - -and they die!
Piano
mp
4
Wings beating at furious speeds, darting here and there and dancing their waggle dance--
poco
p
6
tilted just so in relation
to their god, the sun.
mf
Ped.
10
They loop in figure eights--------
8vb

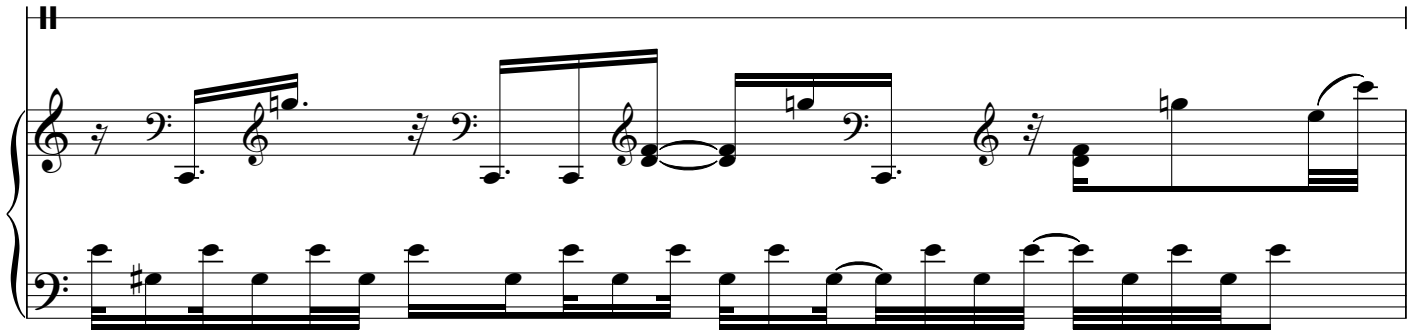
12 the scouts directing their tiny troops to the flowers



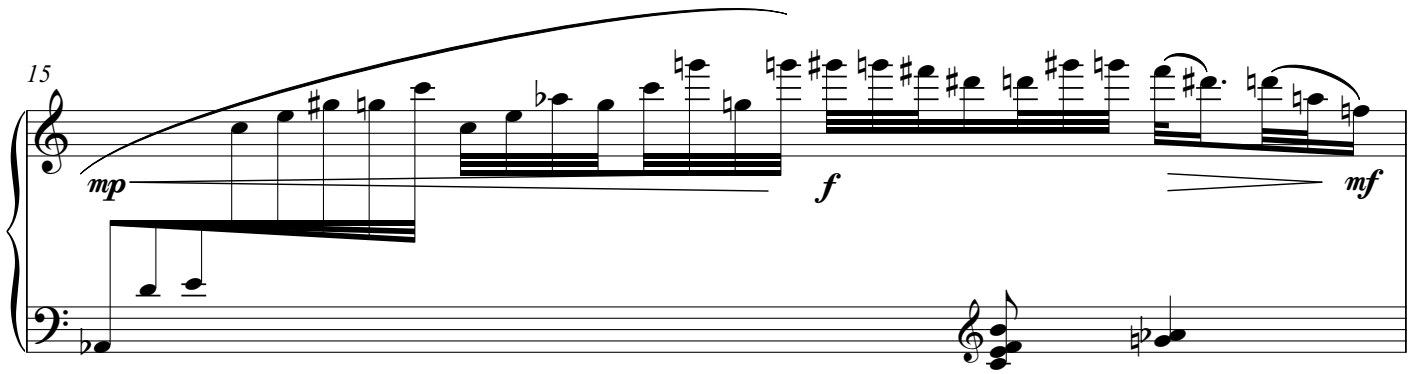
13 while bee soldiers guard and warm the hive.

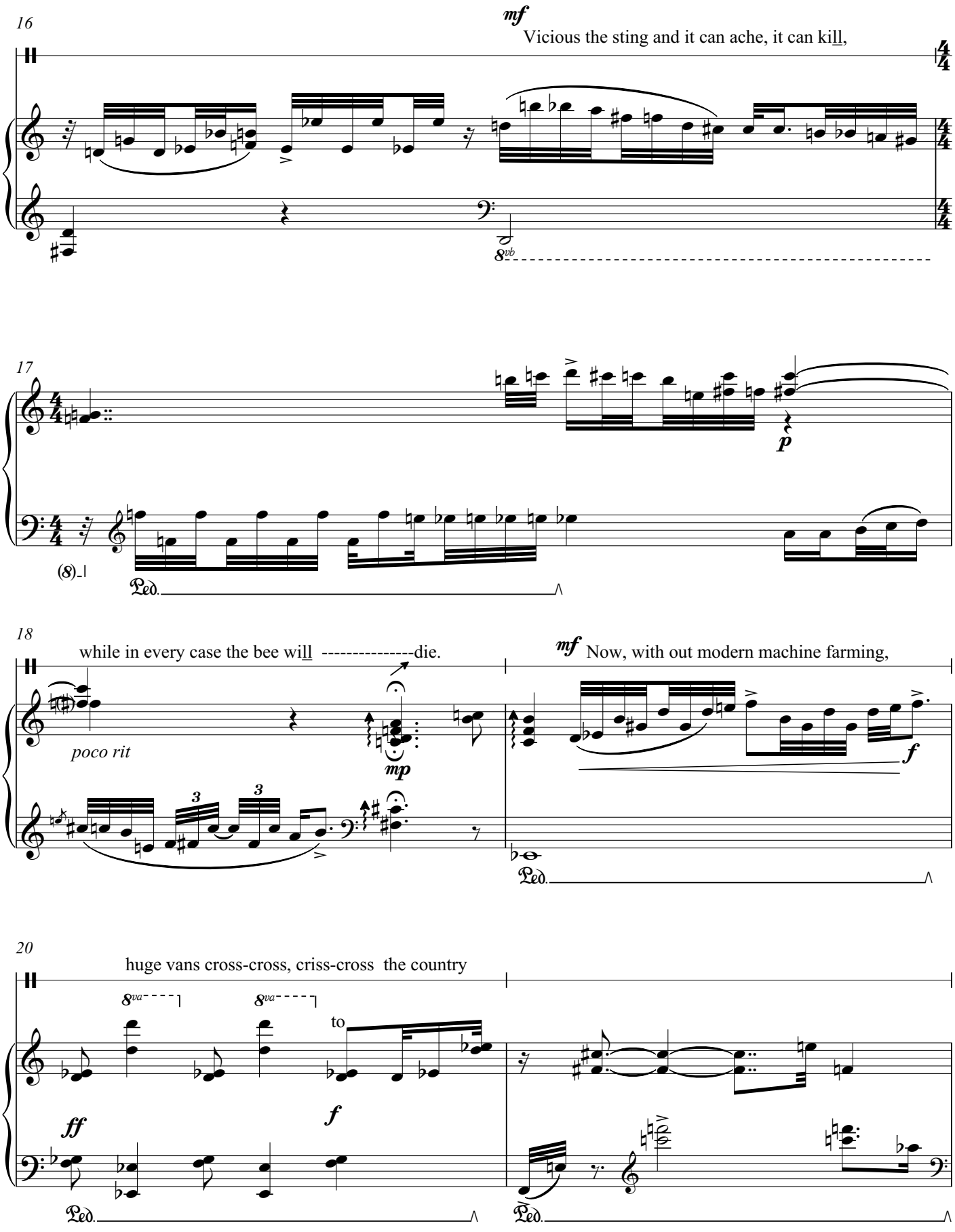


14 Hummm..... and thrumm.....

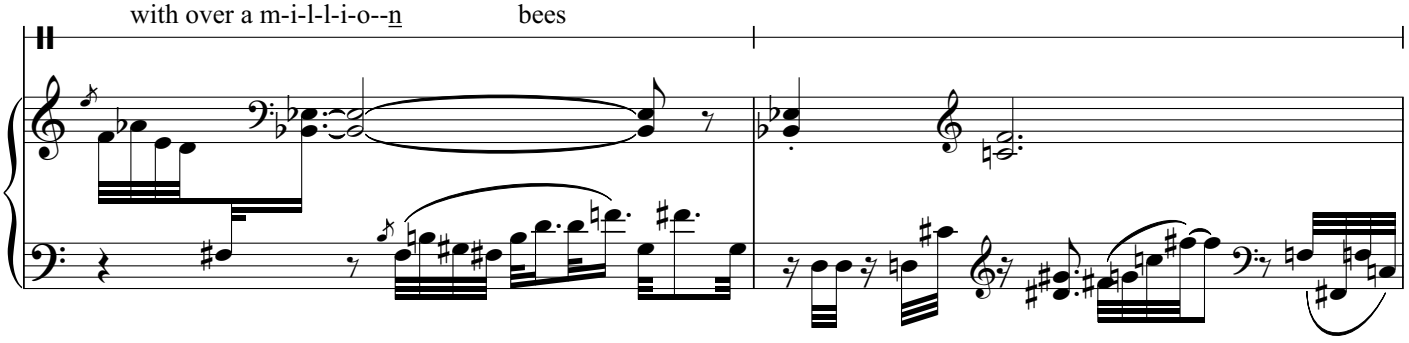


15

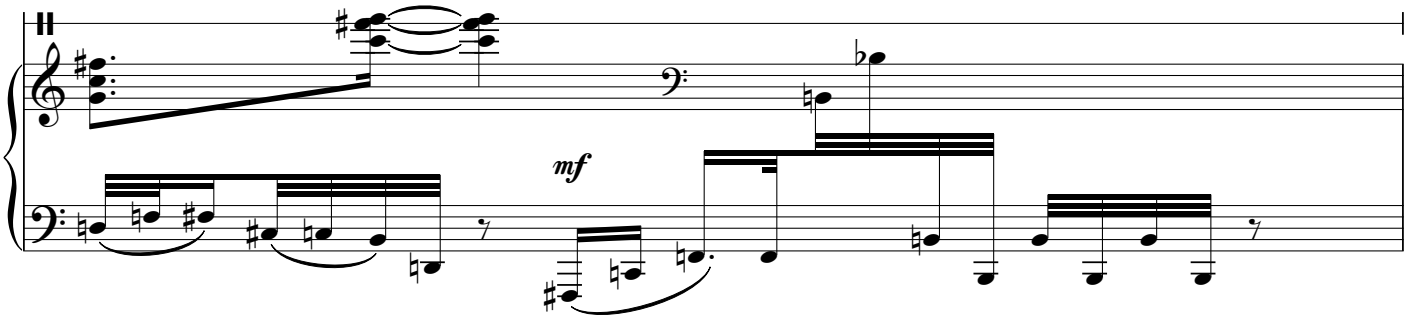



16
mf
Vicious the sting and it can ache, it can kill,
8vb
17
p
(8)
Ped.
18
while in every case the bee will ----------die.
poco rit
mp
mf Now, with out modern machine farming,
f
Ped.
20
huge vans cross-cross, criss-cross the country
8va
8va
to
ff
f
Ped.
Ped.

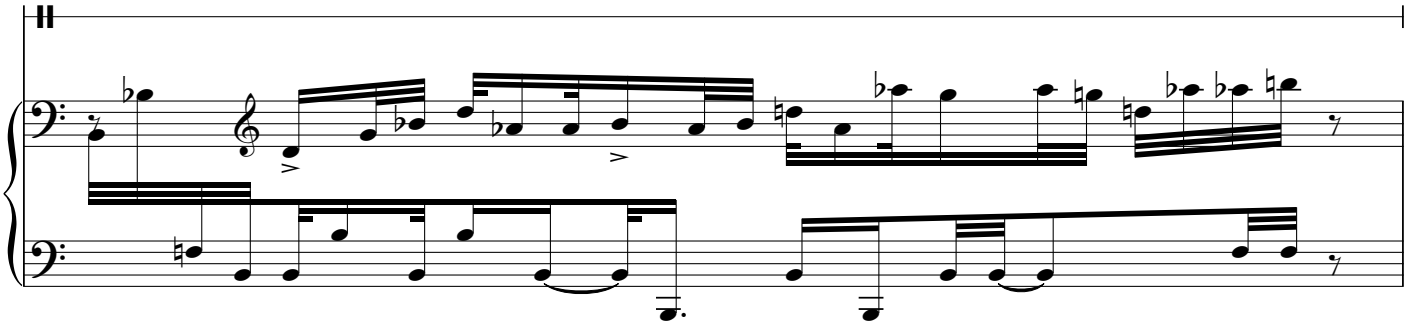
22 with over a m-i-l-l-i-o--n bees



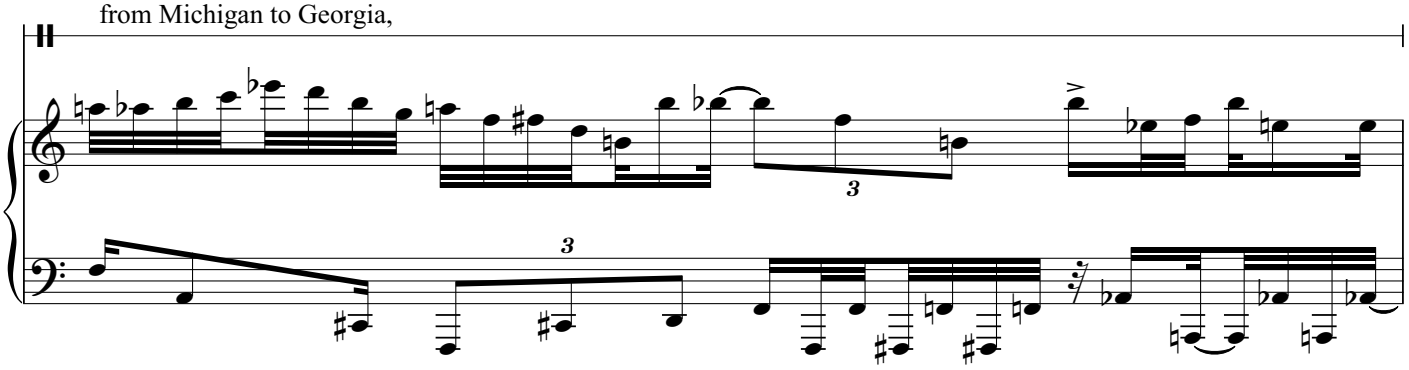
24 to pollinate the crops

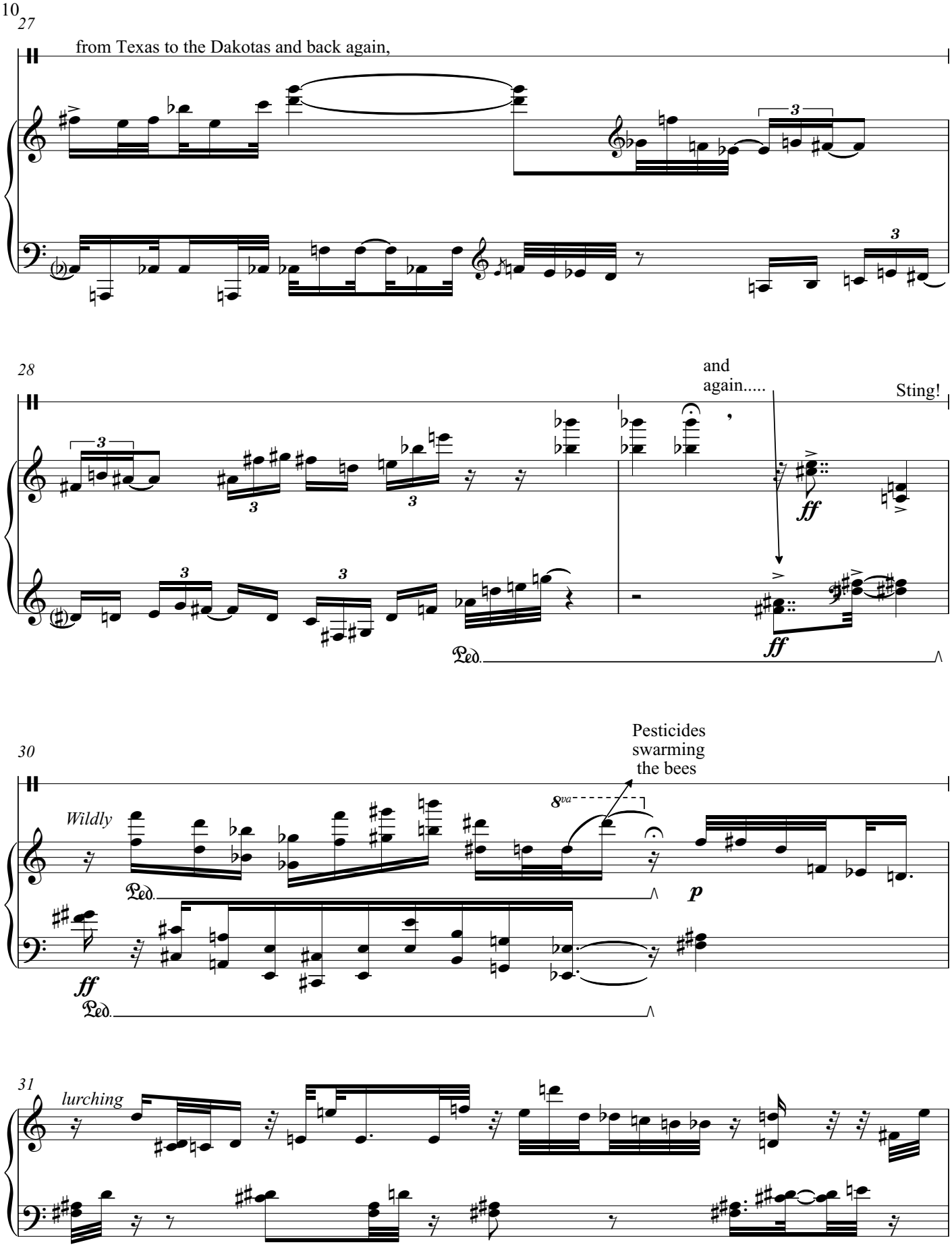


25 from California to Florida,



26 from Michigan to Georgia,




27
from Texas to the Dakotas and back again,
28
and
again.....
Sting!
ff
ff
Ped.
30
Pesticides
swarming
the bees
Wildly
8va
p
ff
Ped.
Ped.
31
lurching

32

weaken the
entire colony--

p the entire
colony

8va

ff

Ped.

33

of migrant bee
workers

pp

tr

poco

Ped.

Ped.

35

working the fields,

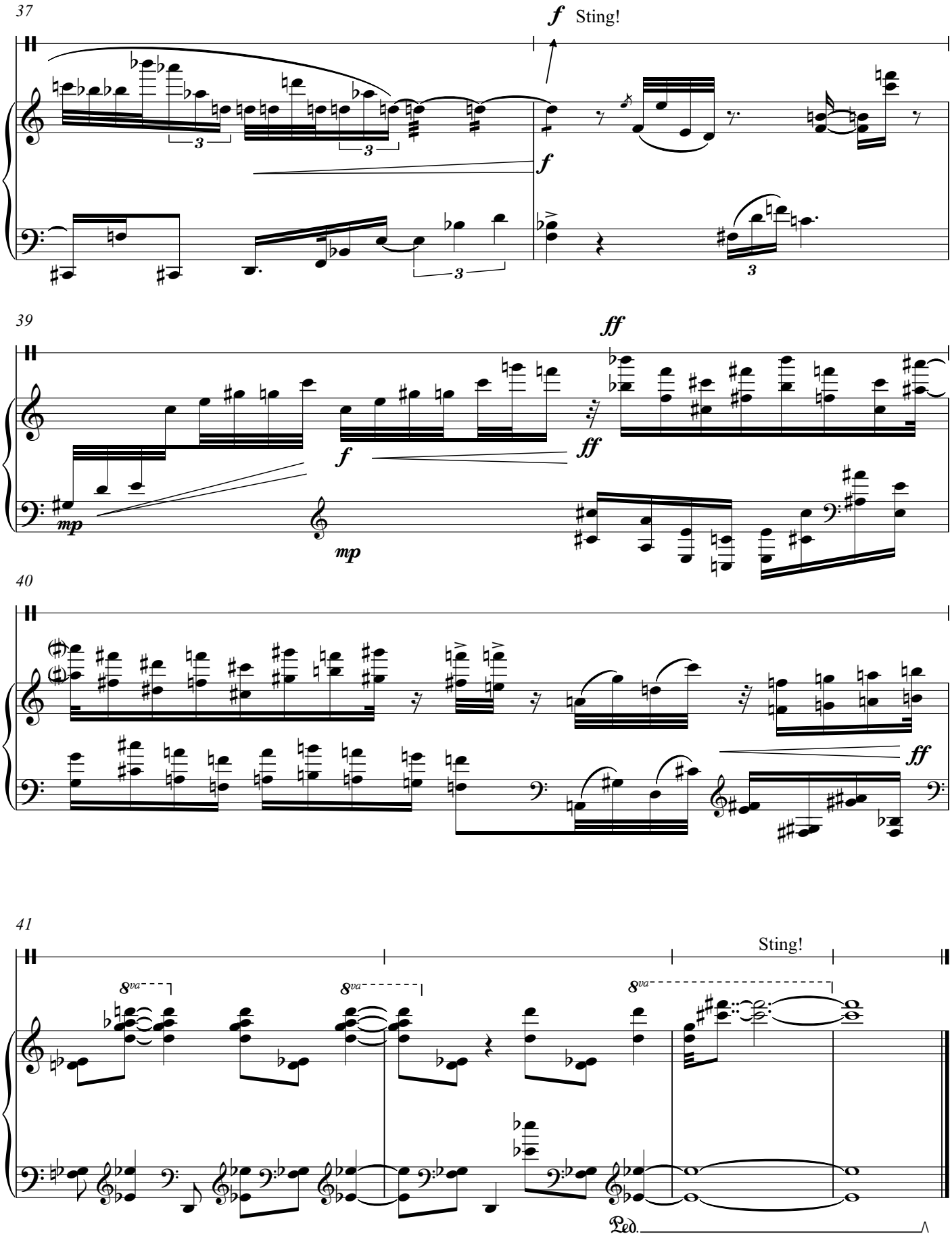
(tr)

p

lightly pedal

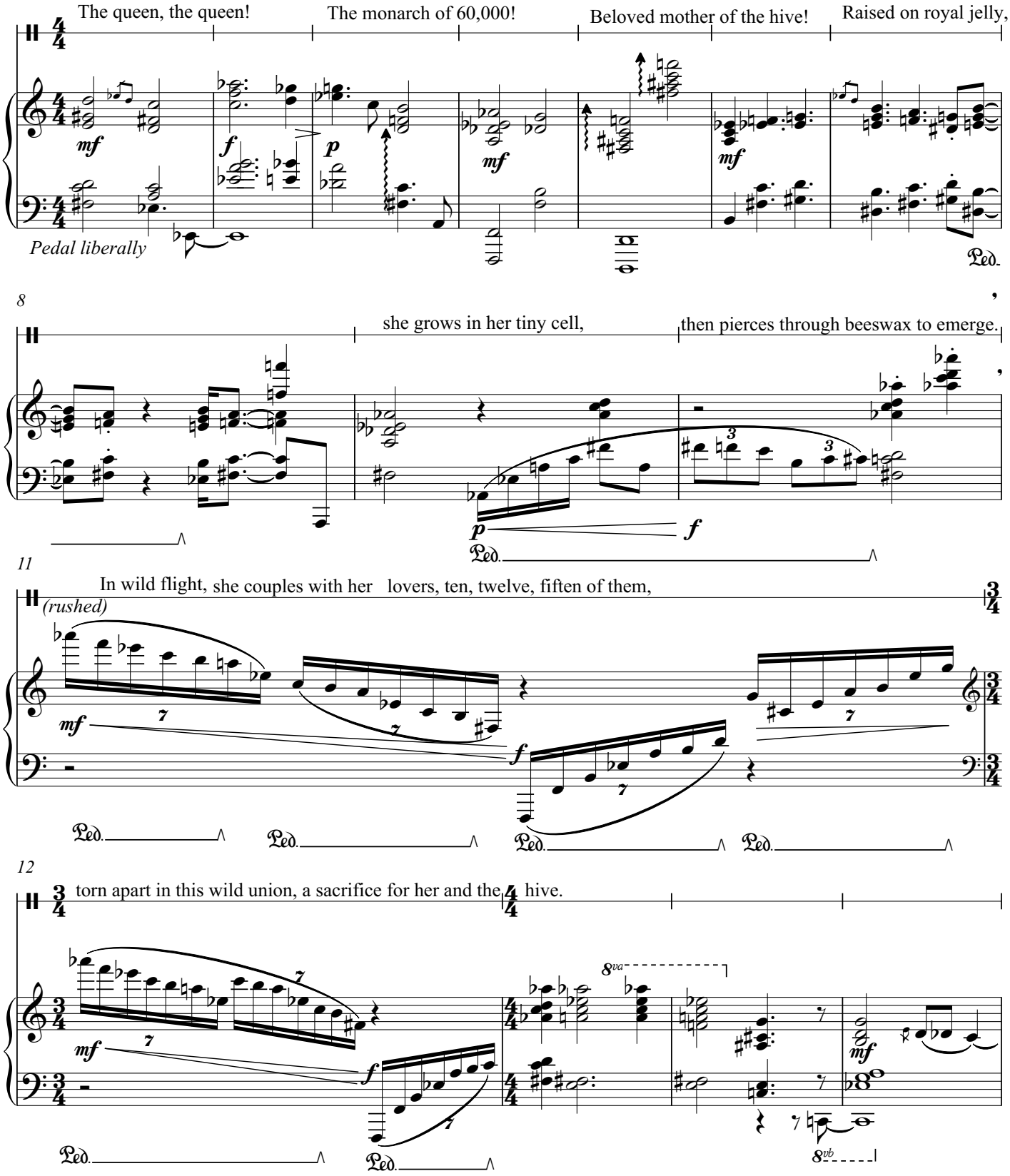
36

working the fields.

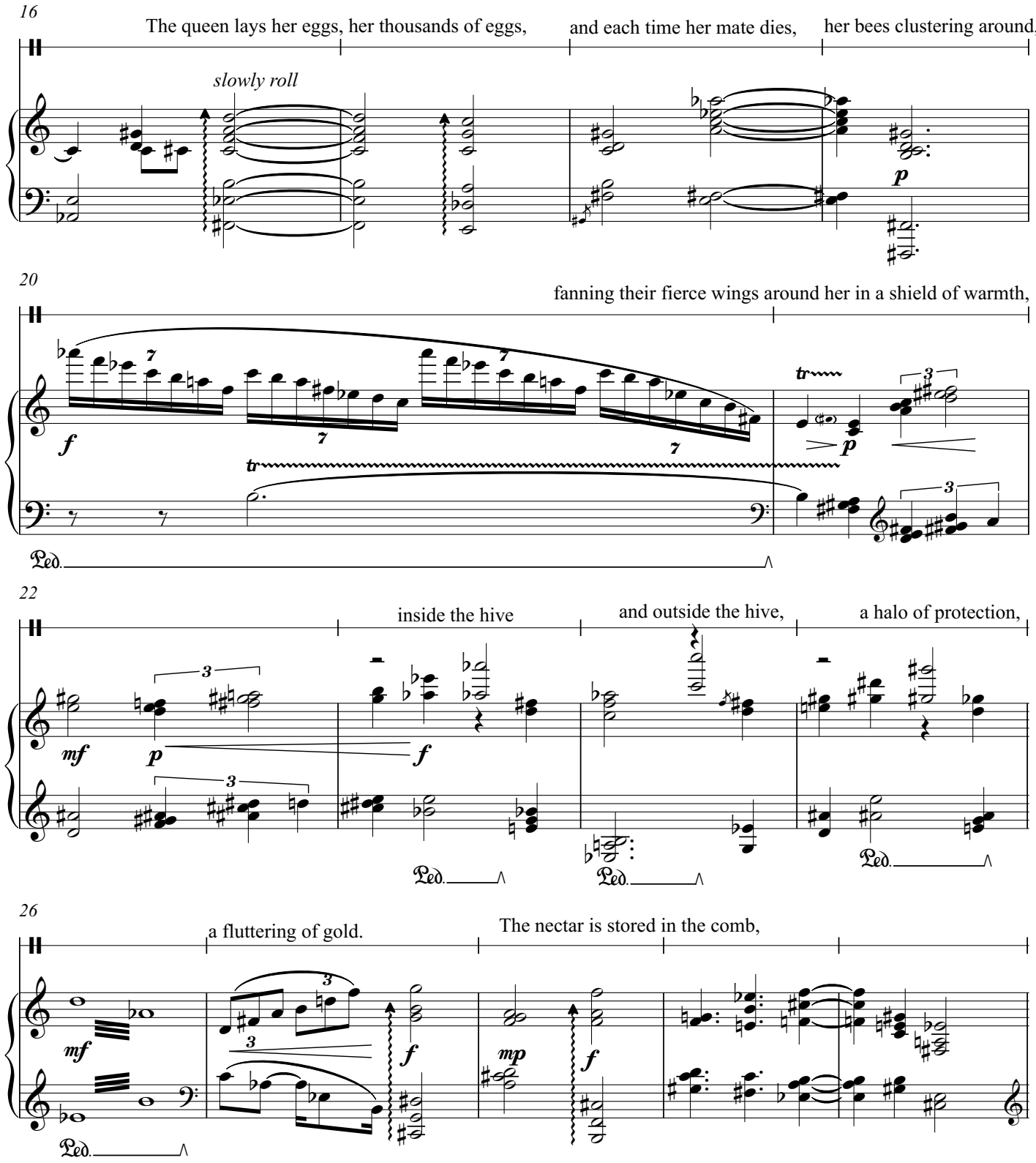

37
f Sting!
f
39
ff
f
ff
mp
mp
40
ff
41
Sting!
8va
8va
8va
Ped.

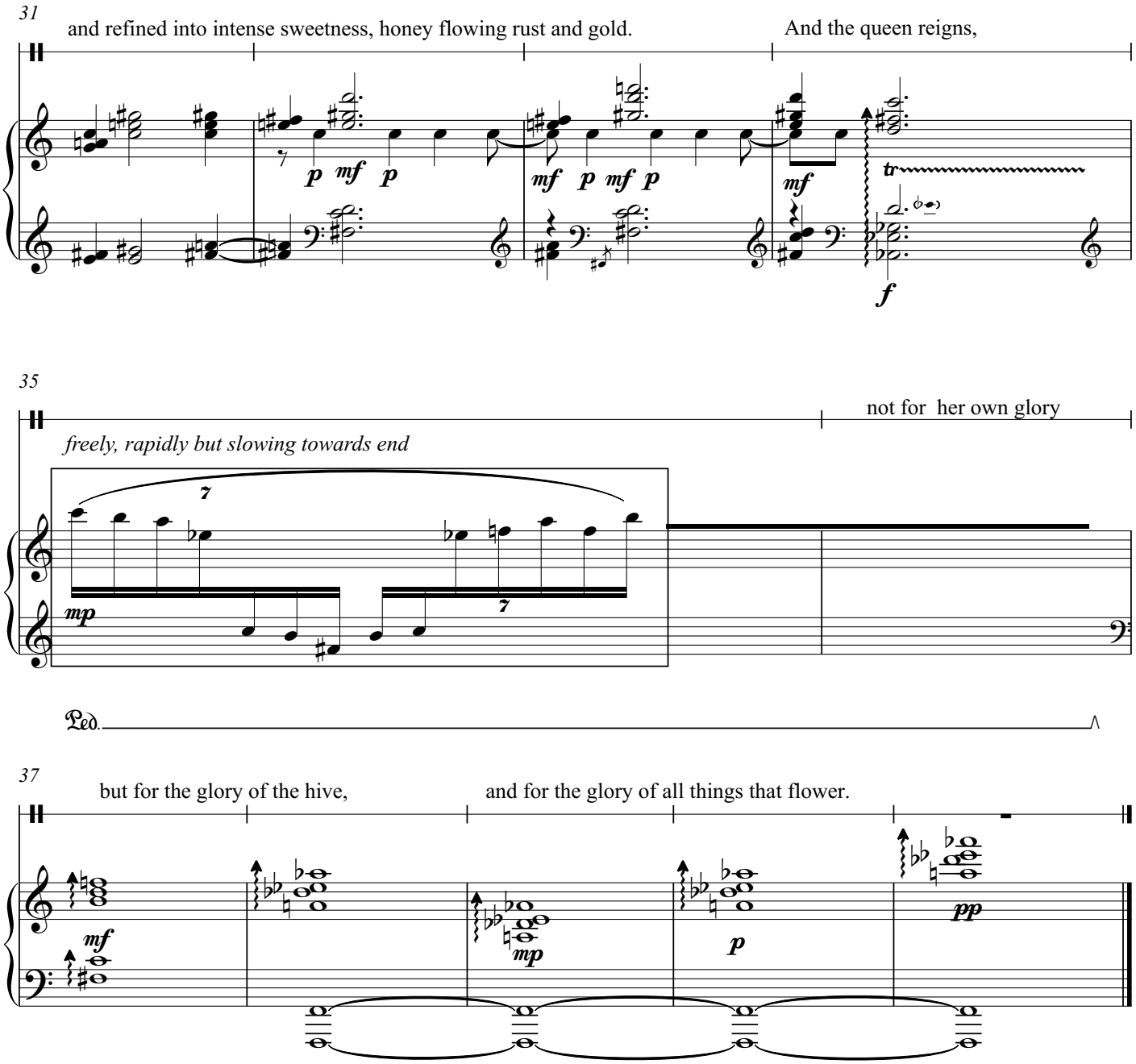
Honey Queen

Meastoso
♩ = ca. 72

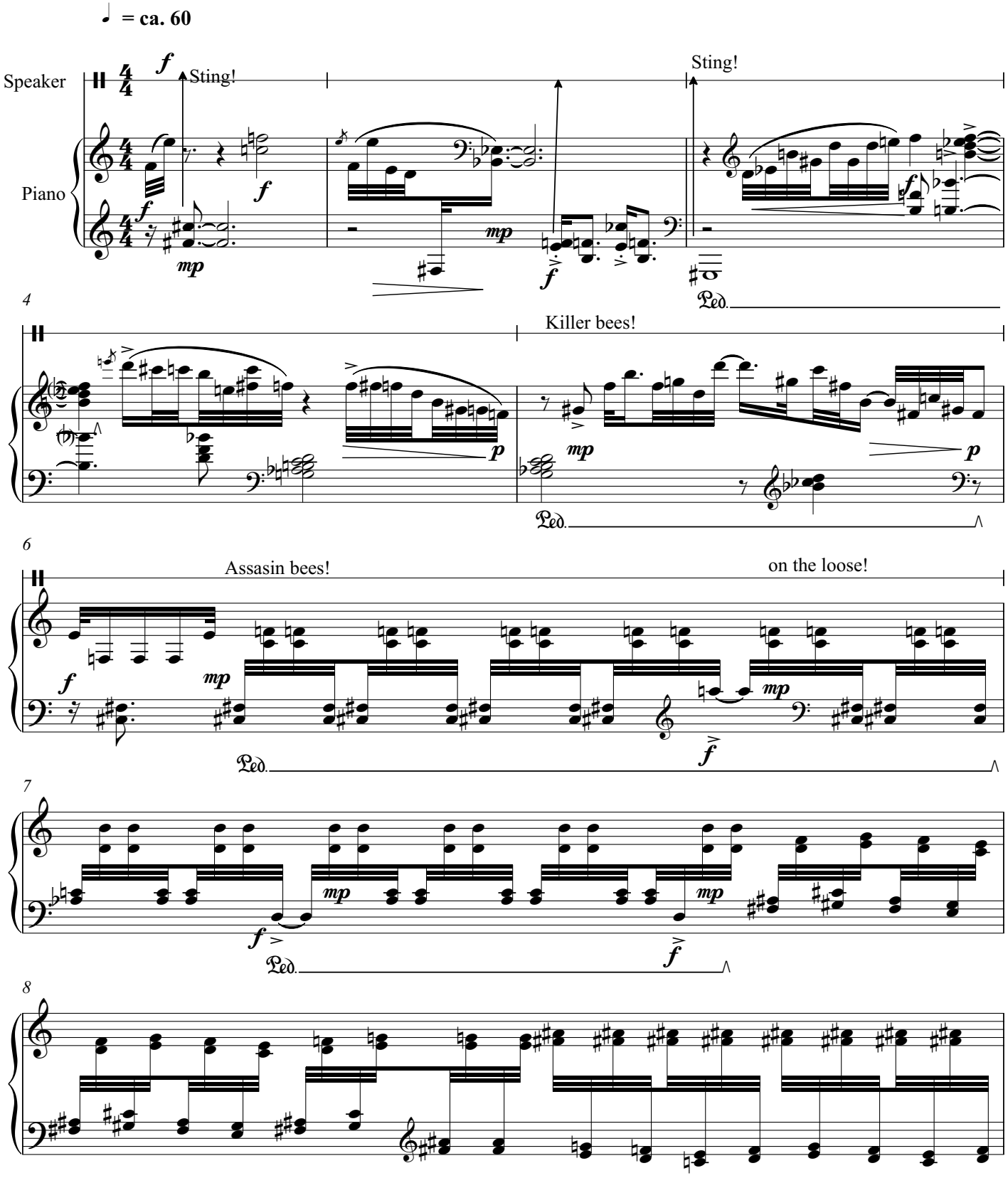


Honey Queen


16
The queen lays her eggs, her thousands of eggs,
and each time her mate dies,
her bees clustering around,
slowly roll
20
fanning their fierce wings around her in a shield of warmth,
22
inside the hive
and outside the hive,
a halo of protection,
26
a fluttering of gold.
The nectar is stored in the comb,


31
and refined into intense sweetness, honey flowing rust and gold.
And the queen reigns,
p mf p
mf p mf p
mf
tr
f
35
not for her own glory
freely, rapidly but slowing towards end
7
mp
7
Ped.
37
but for the glory of the hive,
and for the glory of all things that flower.
mf
mp
p
pp

The Myth of Assassin Bees



1.26

9

Man killed by hundreds of stinging bees!

10

Truth or myth!

11

Truth or myth!

12

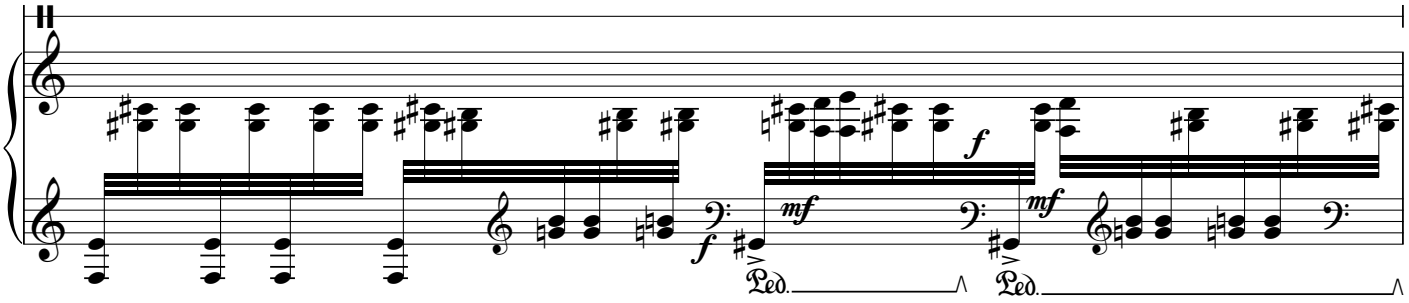
Let's start with European honeybees bred in the Americas,

poco rit.

13

domesticated for centures.

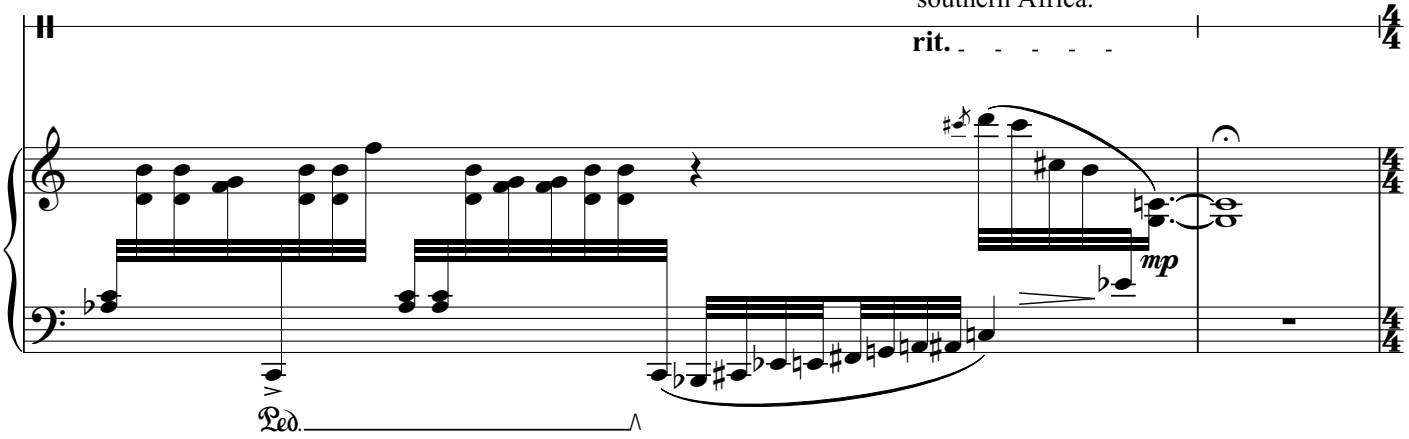
14



15

Now, let's consider bees from central southern Africa.

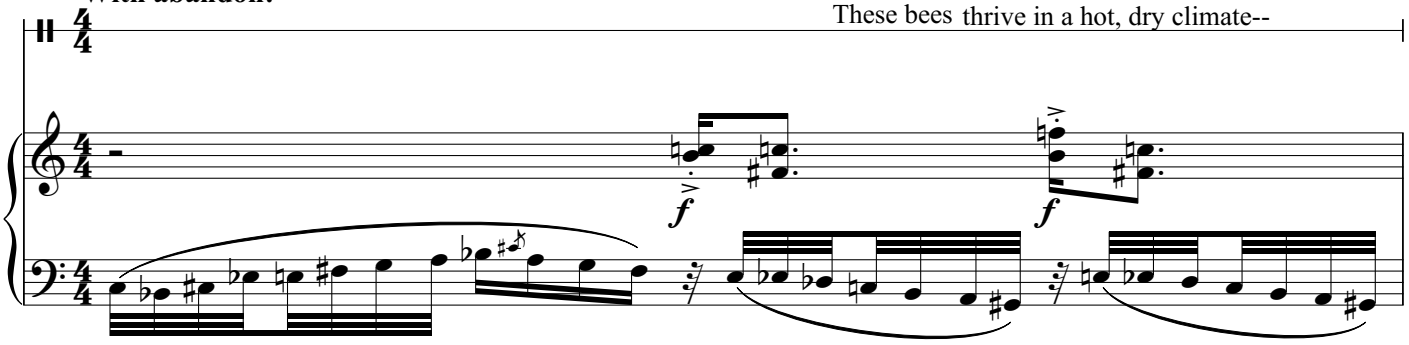
rit.



17

With abandon!

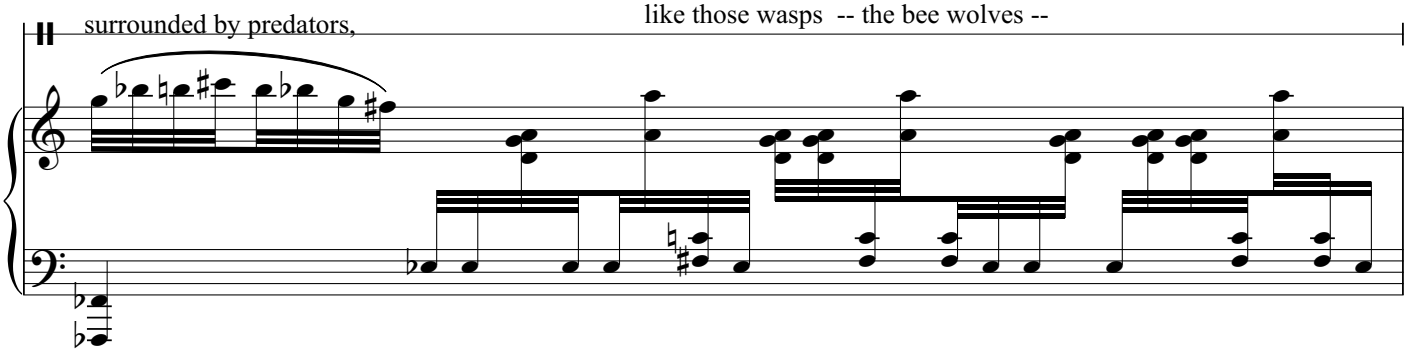
These bees thrive in a hot, dry climate--

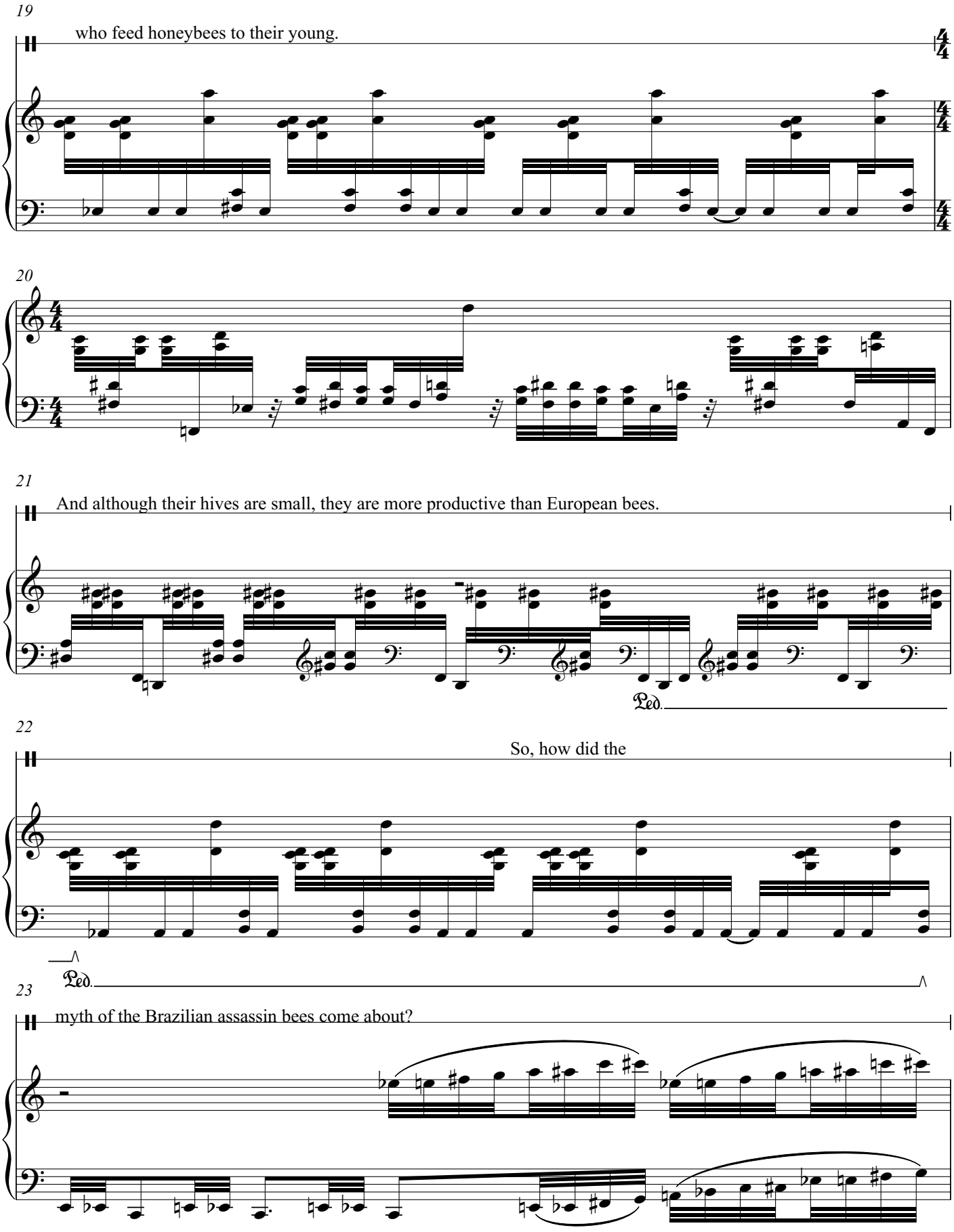


18

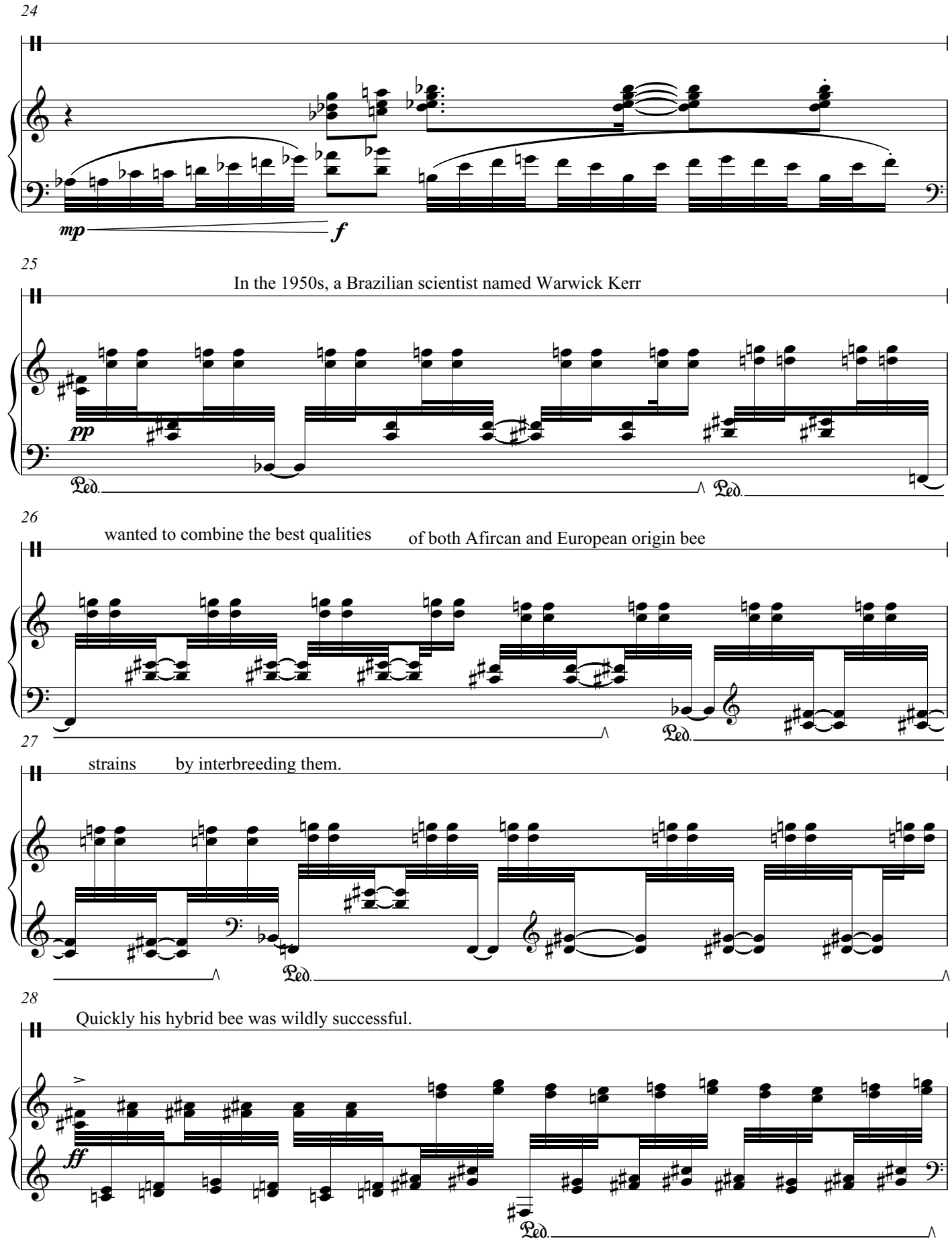
surrounded by predators,

like those wasps -- the bee wolves --



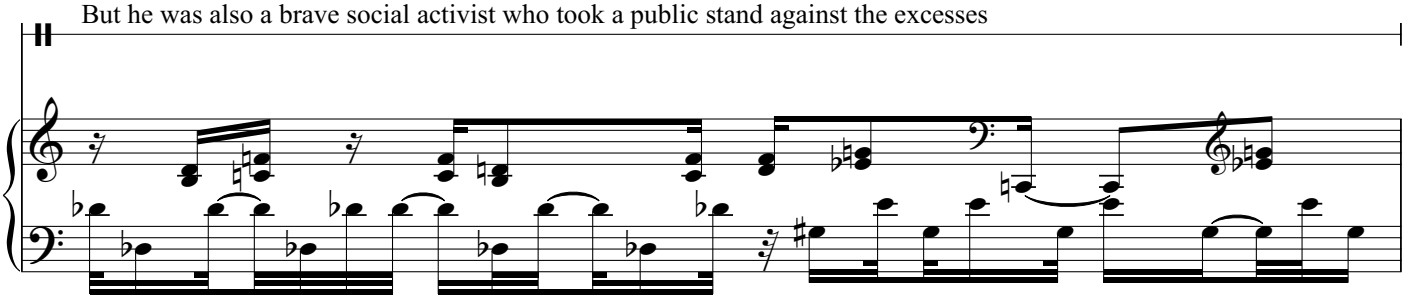


The real story is not well known.


24
mp
f
25
In the 1950s, a Brazilian scientist named Warwick Kerr
pp
Ped.
Ped.
26
wanted to combine the best qualities
of both Afircan and European origin bee
Ped.
27
strains
by interbreeding them.
Ped.
28
Quickly his hybrid bee was wildly successful.
ff
Ped.

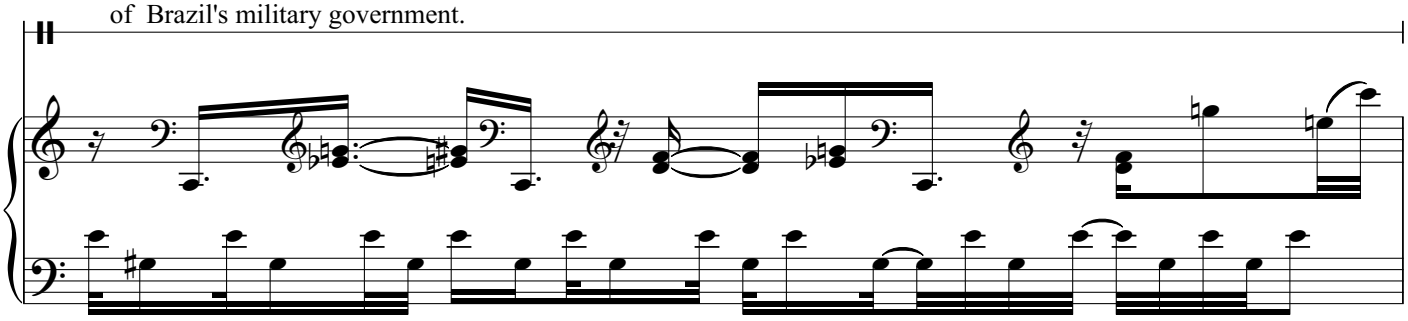
29

But he was also a brave social activist who took a public stand against the excesses



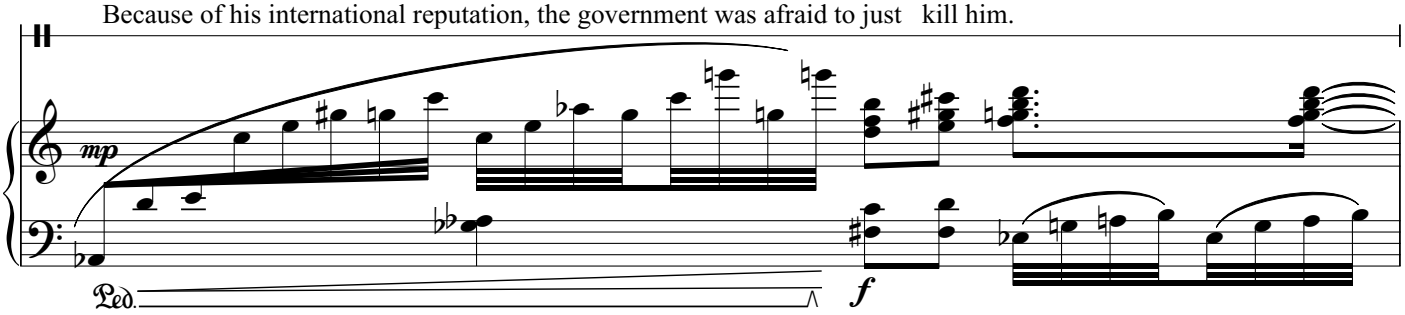
30

of Brazil's military government.



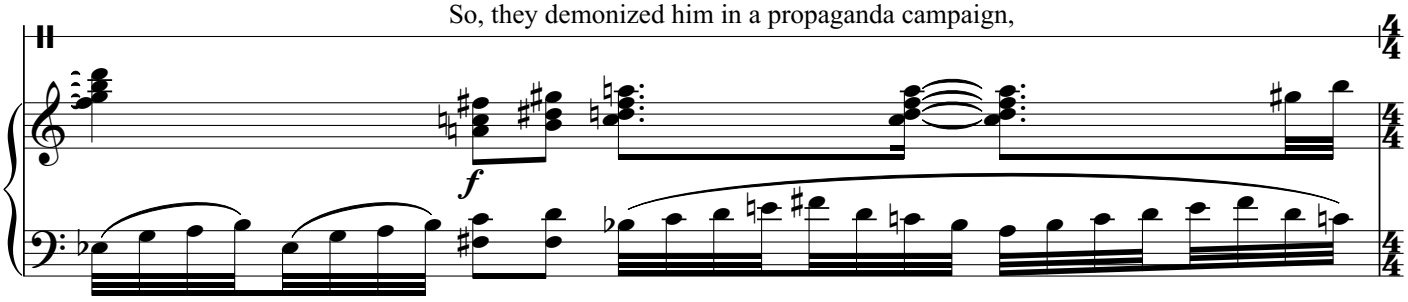
31

Because of his international reputation, the government was afraid to just kill him.



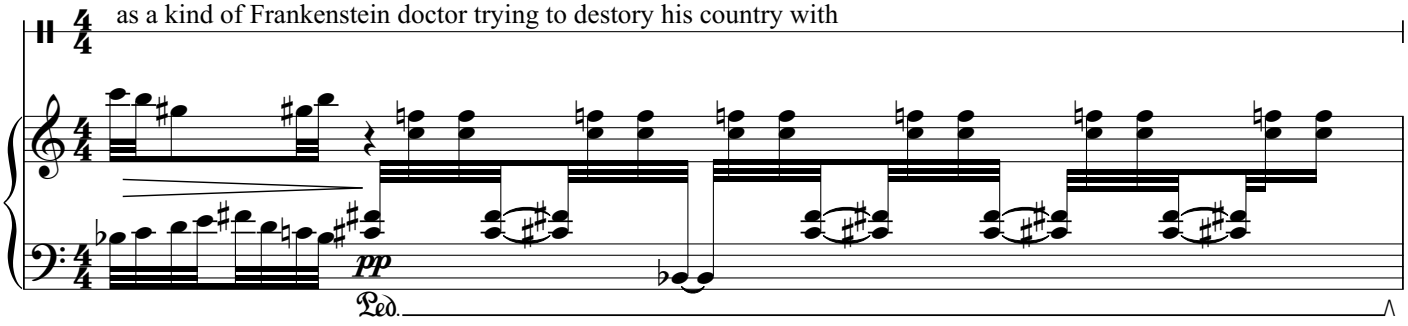
32

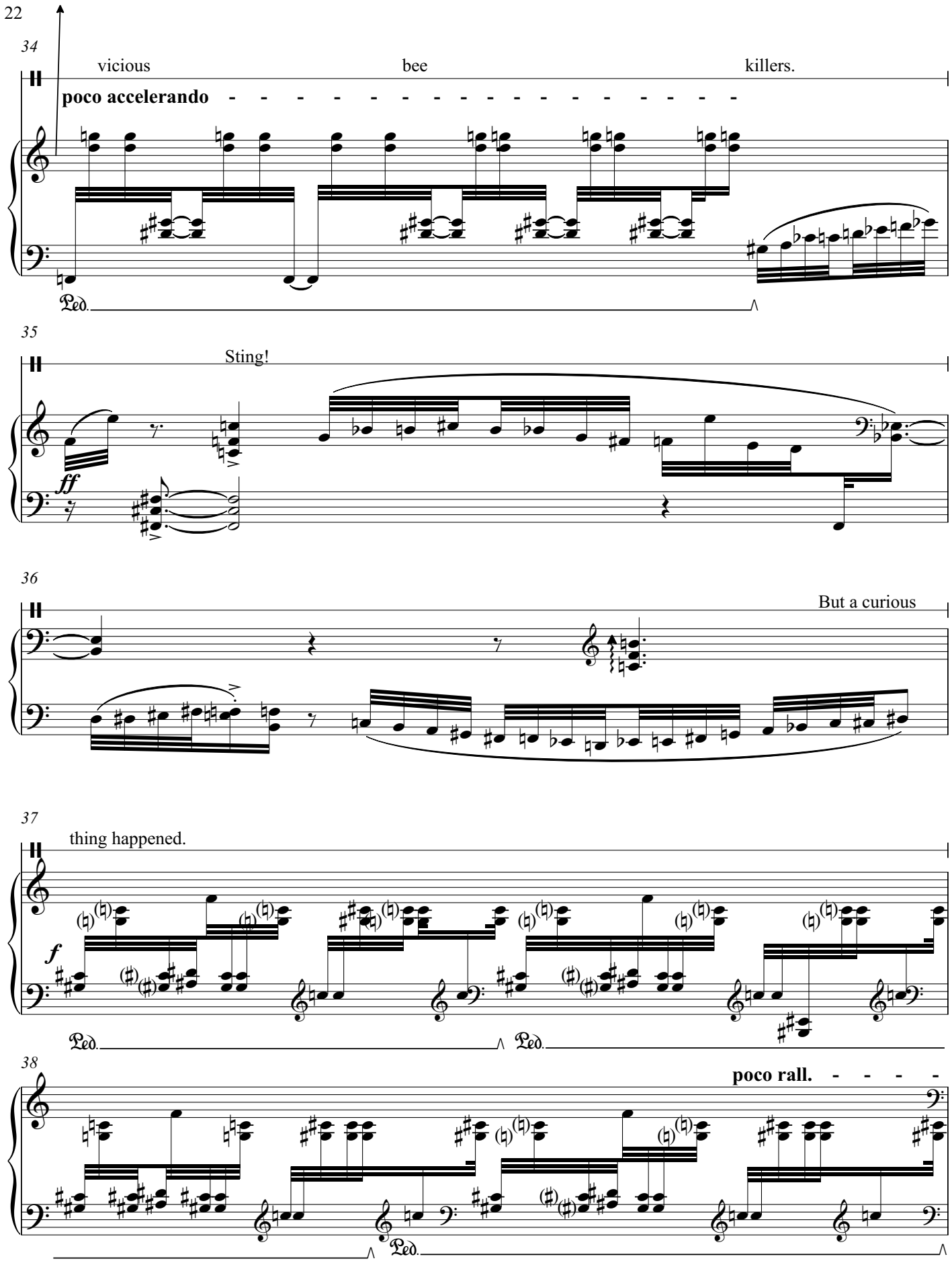
So, they demonized him in a propaganda campaign,



33

as a kind of Frankenstein doctor trying to destory his country with




34
vicious
bee
killers.
poco accelerando
Ped.
35
Sting!
ff
36
But a curious
37
thing happened.
f
Ped.
Ped.
38
poco rall.
Ped.

39

40

Over the years, scientists noticed that a hybrid bee, the heir

41

of African AND European ancestry,

was strong and resilient.

42

ca. 6 sec

Freely

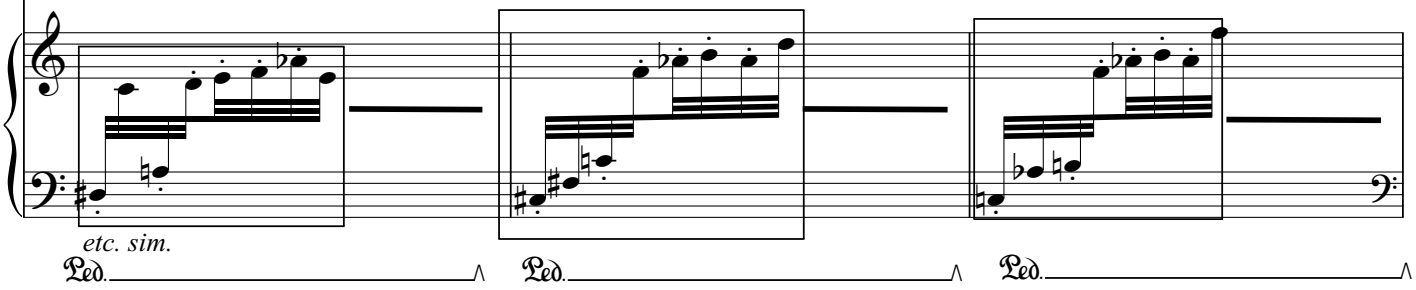
43

These bees made their way gradually from Brazil

ff afap

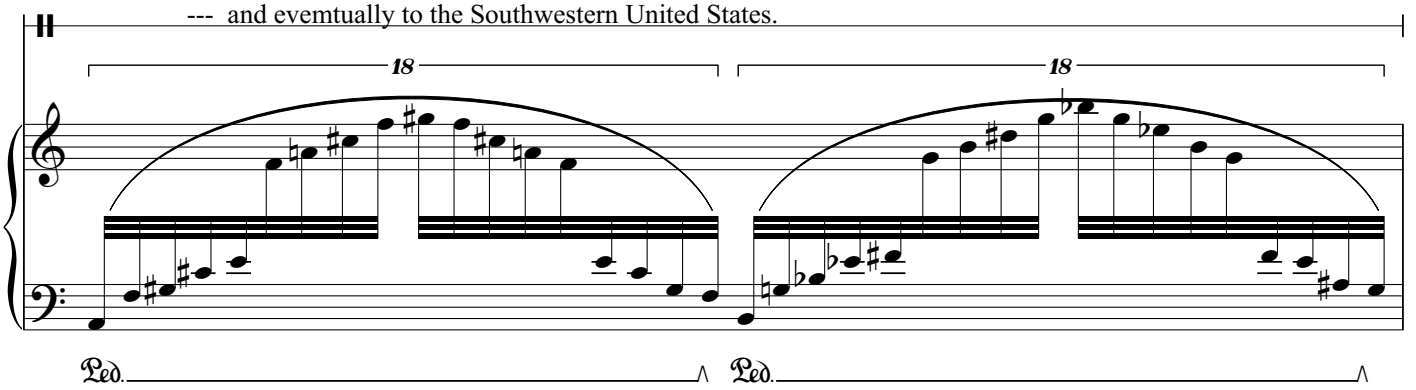
45

to Paraguay, Bolivia, Peru northward to Central America and to Mexico

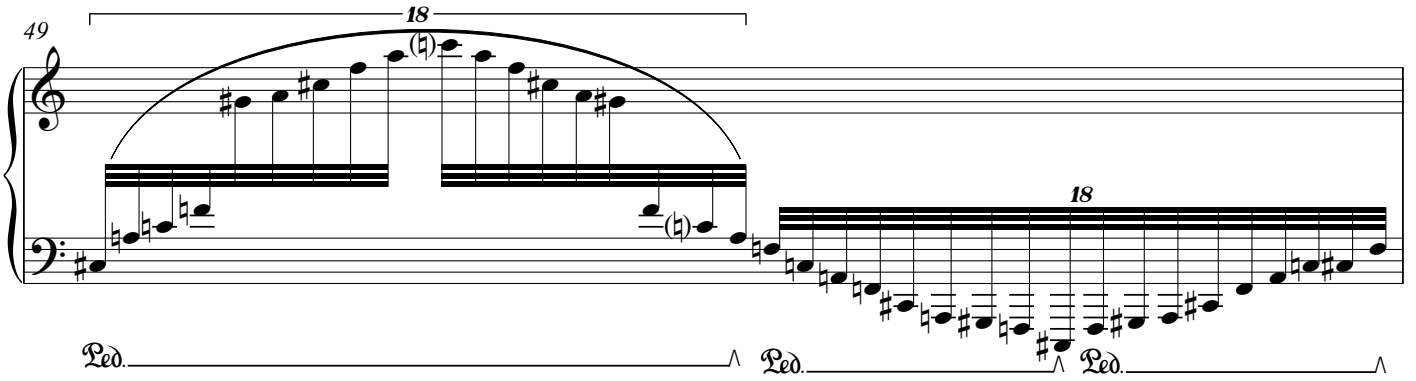


48

--- and evemtually to the Southwestern United States.

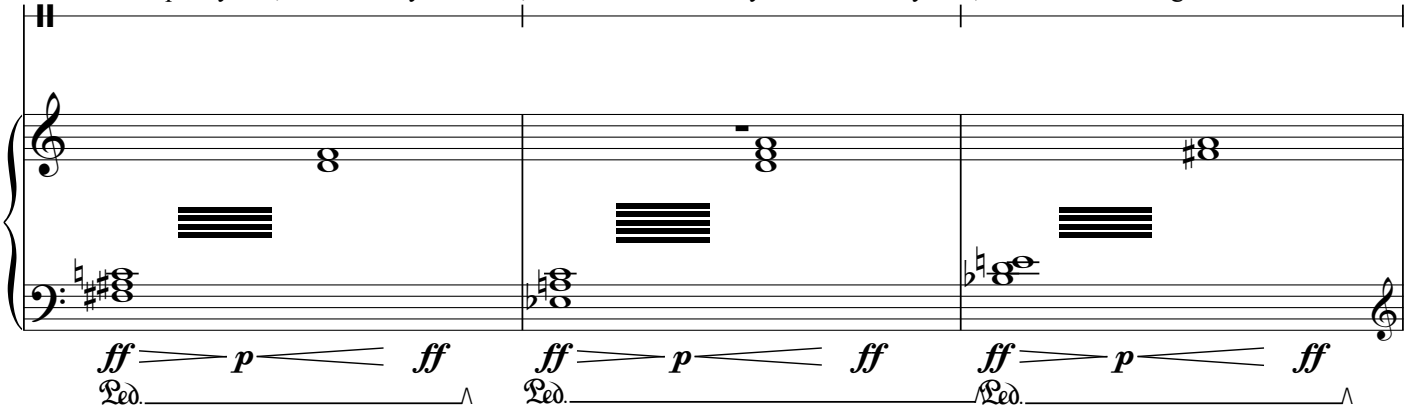


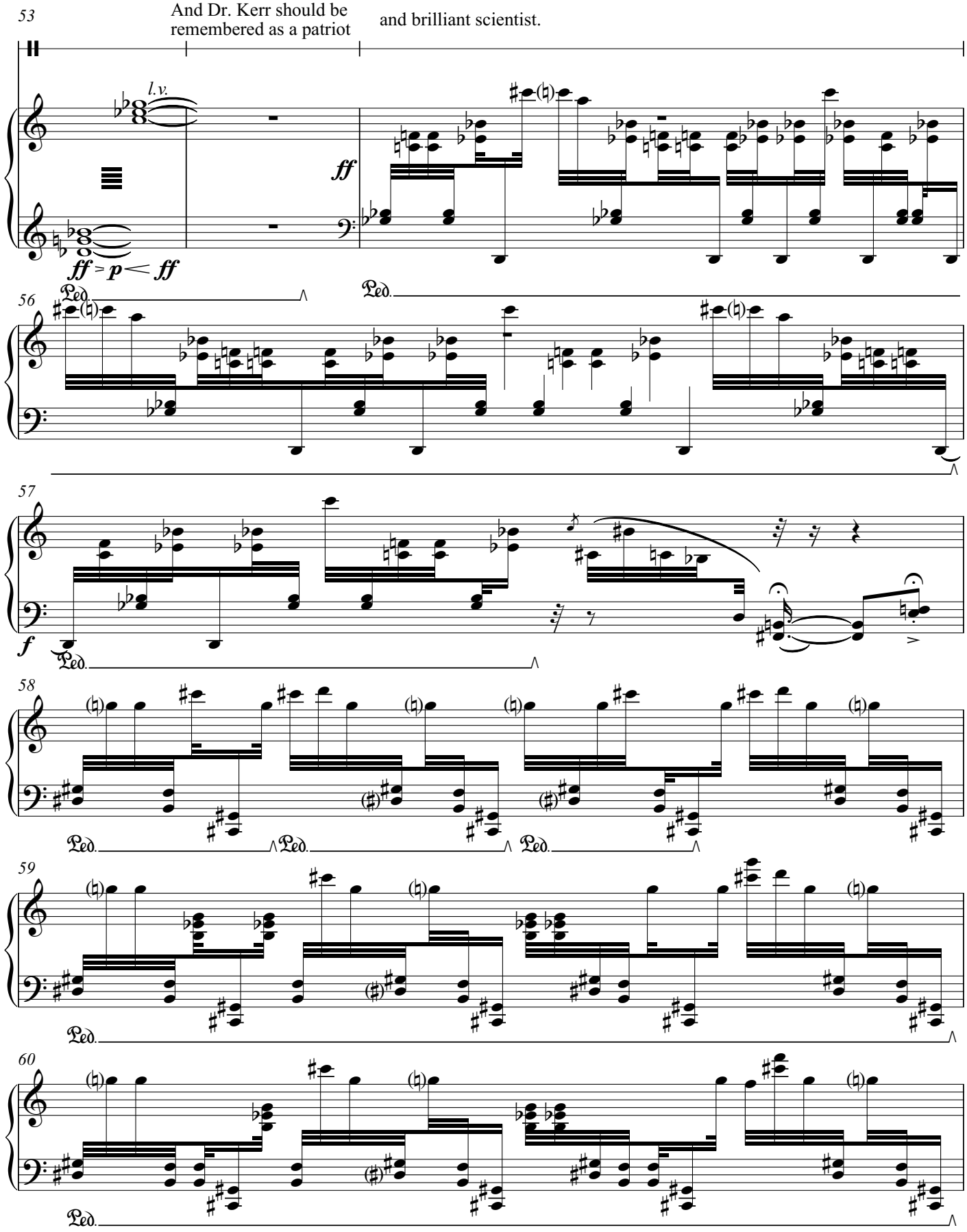
49



50

This unique hybrid, first bred by Dr. Kerr, transformed not only Brazil's honeybees, but bees throughout the Americas.




53
And Dr. Kerr should be remembered as a patriot
and brilliant scientist.
l.v.
ff
ff = p < ff
56
Ped.
57
f
Ped.
58
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
59
Ped.
60
Ped.

61

Oh, the mystery of how the destinies of humans and honey bees are woven together.

ritardando y descrendo poco a poco al fin

Ped.

62

Ped.

63

mf 8vb

Ped. ✻ Ped.

64

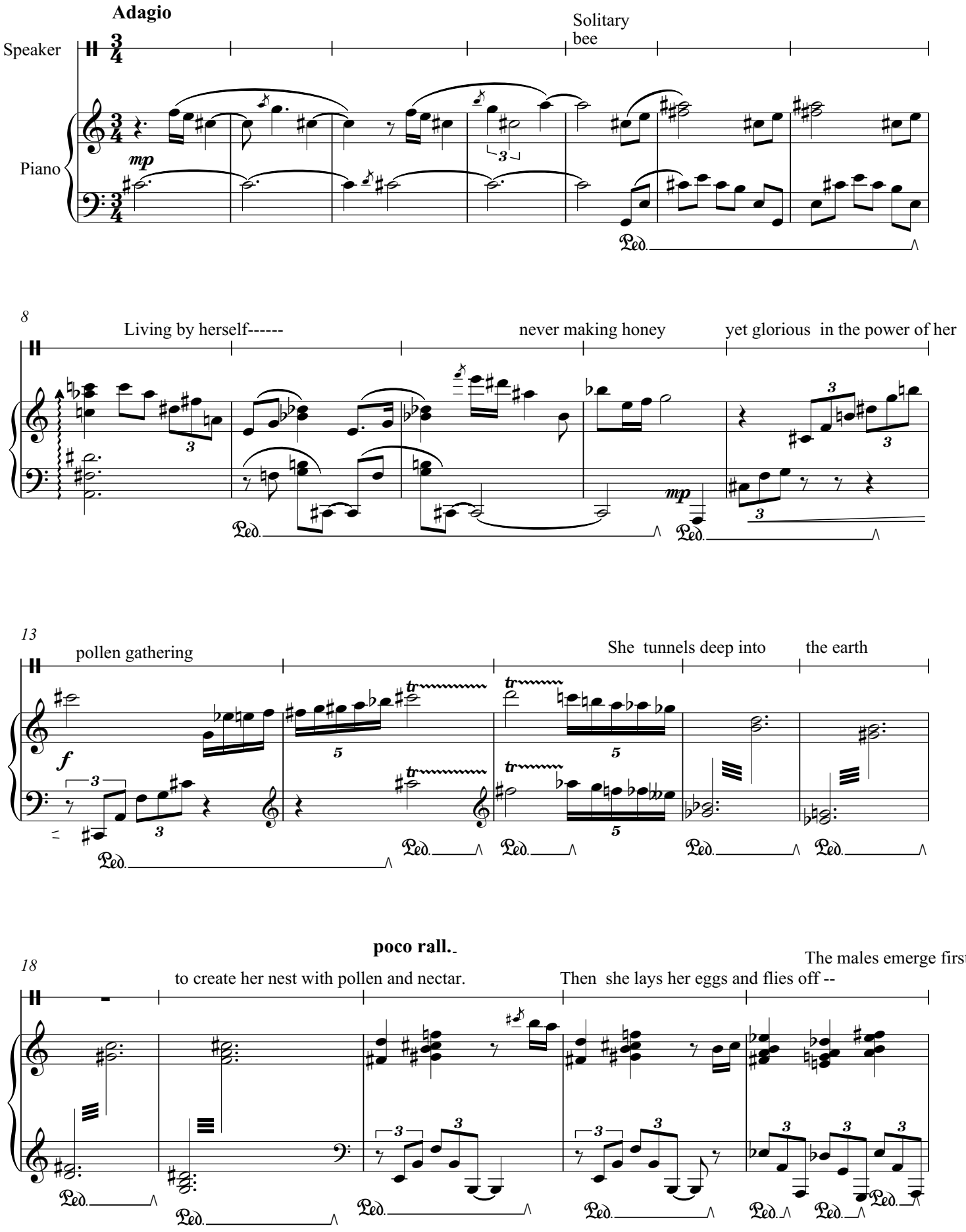
Oh, the mystery of how the destinies of humans and honeybees are woven together.

ff

8vb

✻

Solitary Bee



Lazily

♩ = ca. 60

23

await their consorts to come soon after----

And then love happens --

27

They couple in mate!

The male guards the flowers where his bee love collects her pollen and nectar.

31

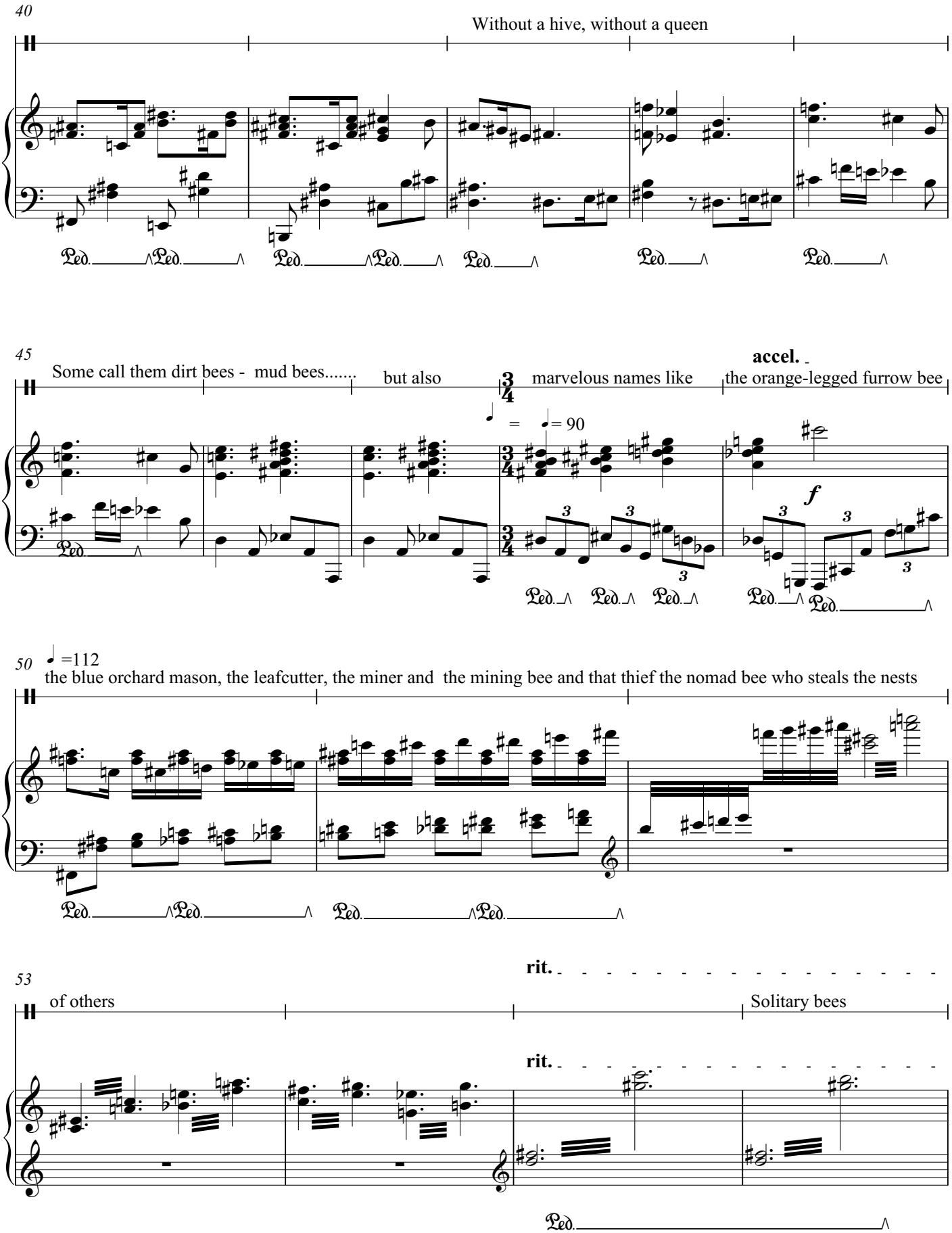
As the bee wife zooms from flower to flower, every hair on every part of her body

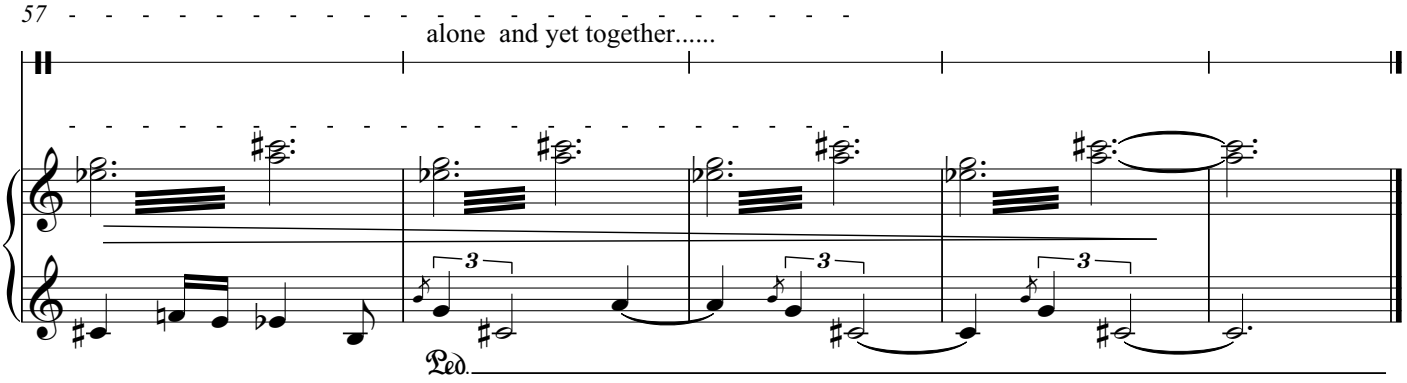
attracts the golden dust of life.

36

She gathers a hundred times the pollen

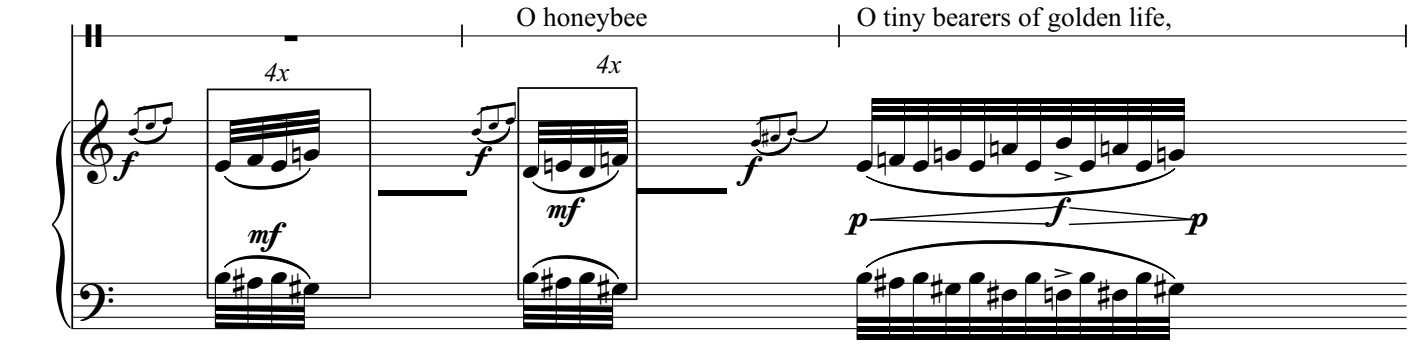
that a honeybee can gather.


40
Without a hive, without a queen
45
Some call them dirt bees - mud bees.....
but also
marvelous names like
accel.
the orange-legged furrow bee
= = 90
f
50
=112
the blue orchard mason, the leafcutter, the miner and the mining bee and that thief the nomad bee who steals the nests
53
rit.
of others
Solitary bees
rit.

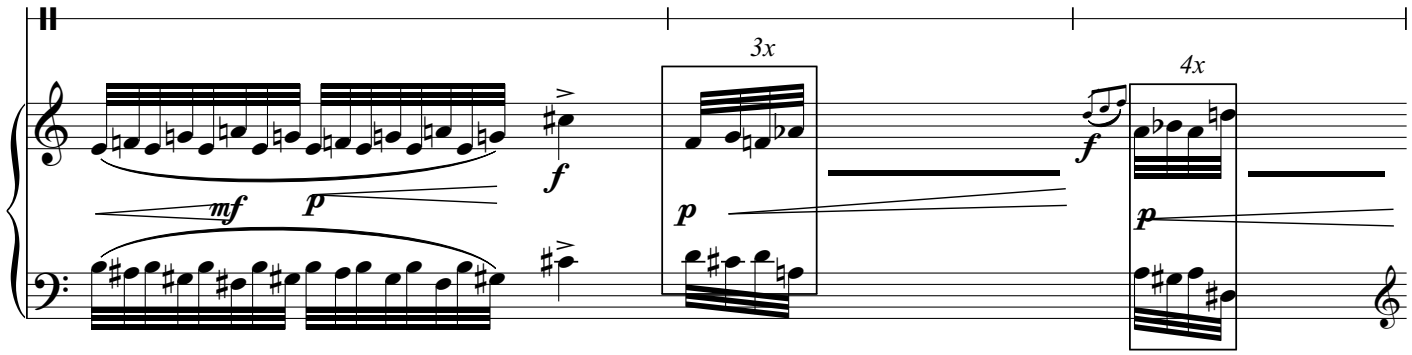

57
alone and yet together.....
Ped.

Ode to Bees and Their Keepers

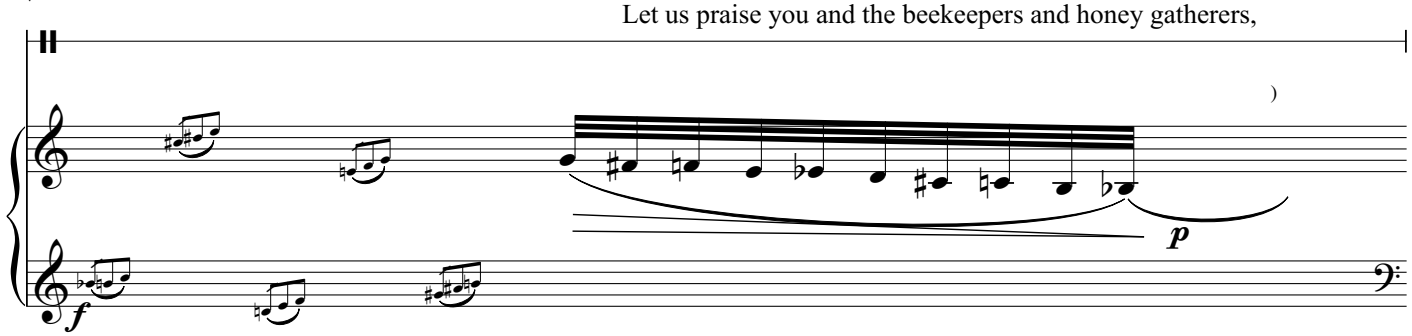
♩= ca. 60 *Espressivo, rubato*



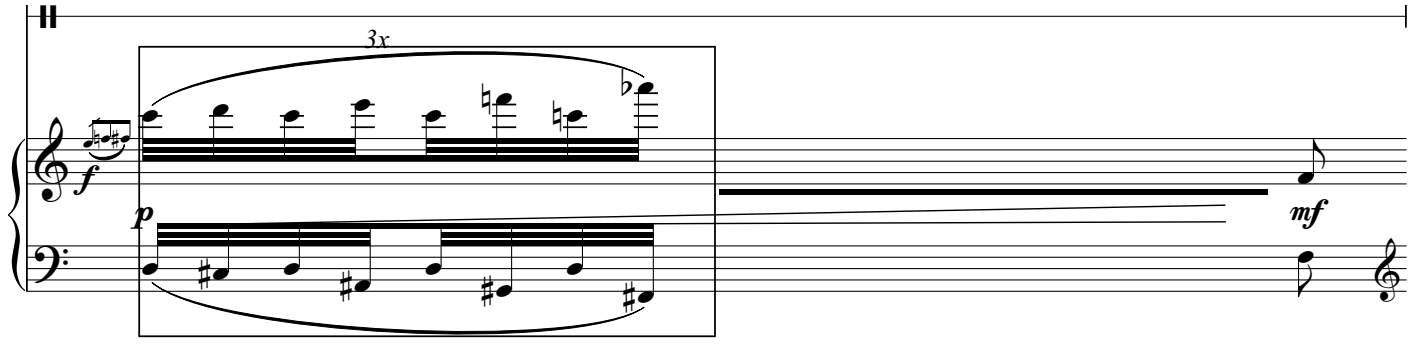
4 Who persist and manage to survive against all odds....

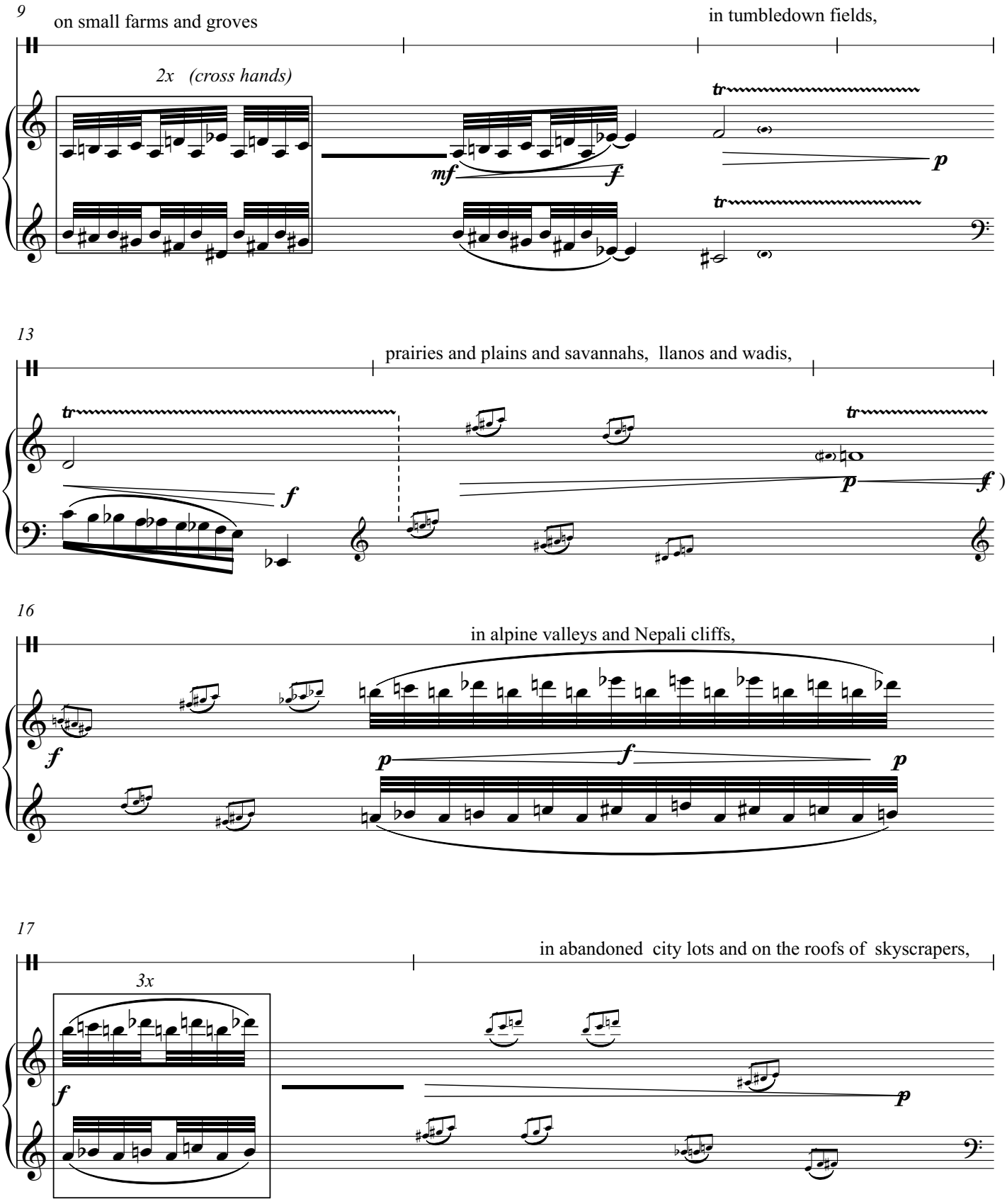


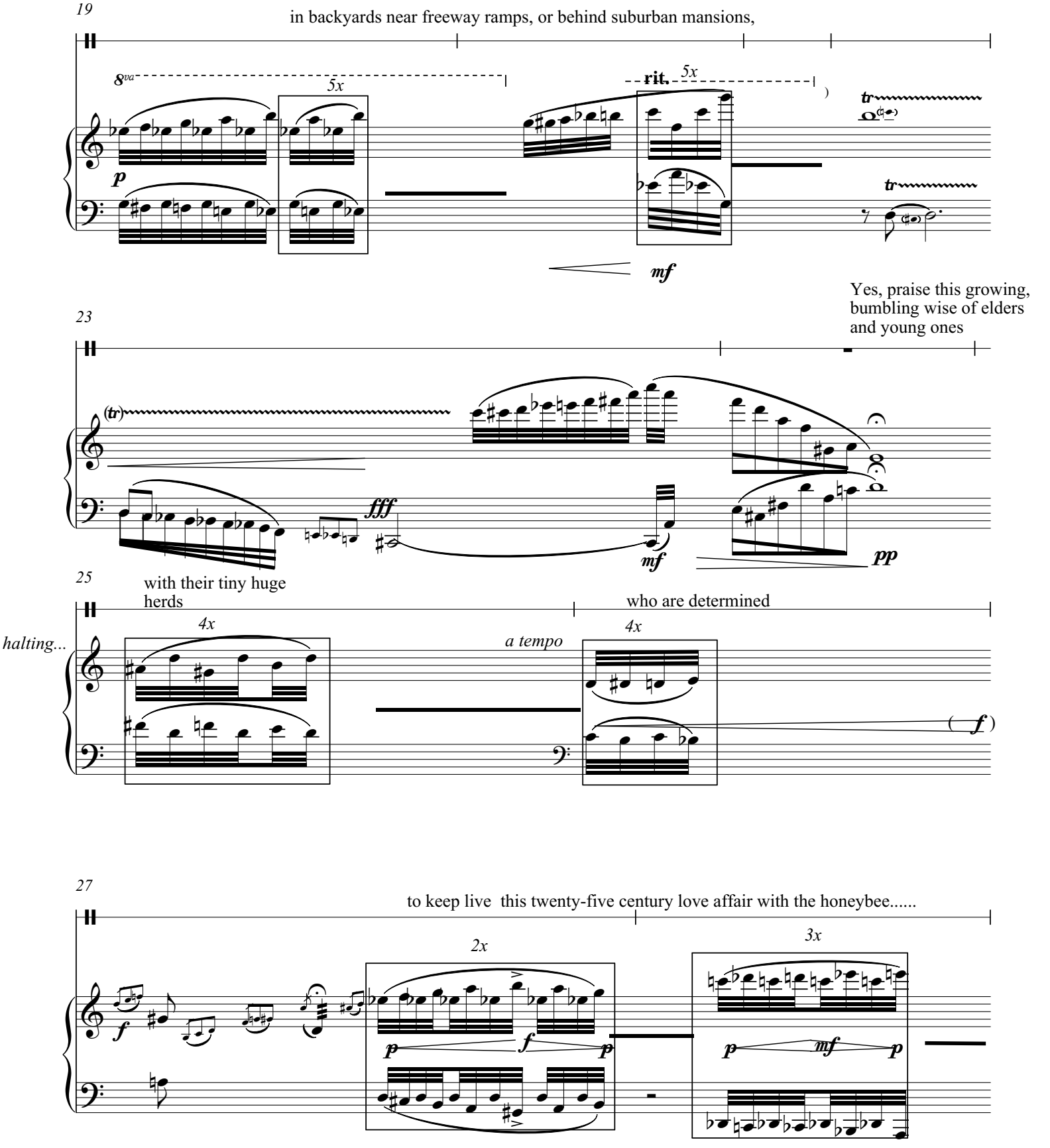
7 Let us praise you and the beekeepers and honey gatherers,



8 keeping bees because their ancestors did, or because they've been stung with bee love,




9
on small farms and groves
in tumbledown fields,
2x (cross hands)
13
prairies and plains and savannahs, llanos and wadis,
16
in alpine valleys and Nepali cliffs,
17
in abandoned city lots and on the roofs of skyscrapers,
3x


19
in backyards near freeway ramps, or behind suburban mansions,
8va
5x
rit.
5x
tr
p
mf
Yes, praise this growing,
bumbling wise of elders
and young ones
23
(tr)
fff
mf
pp
25
with their tiny huge
herds
who are determined
4x
4x
halting...
a tempo
f
27
to keep live this twenty-five century love affair with the honeybee.....
2x
3x
f
p
f
p
p
mf
p

29

fron Delhi, Rio and Caracas,

p

30

from L.A. to Bhagdad,

from Ramallah to Lahore,

tr

subito f

31

from Detroit to Delano,

to Honolulu and Tokyo

3x

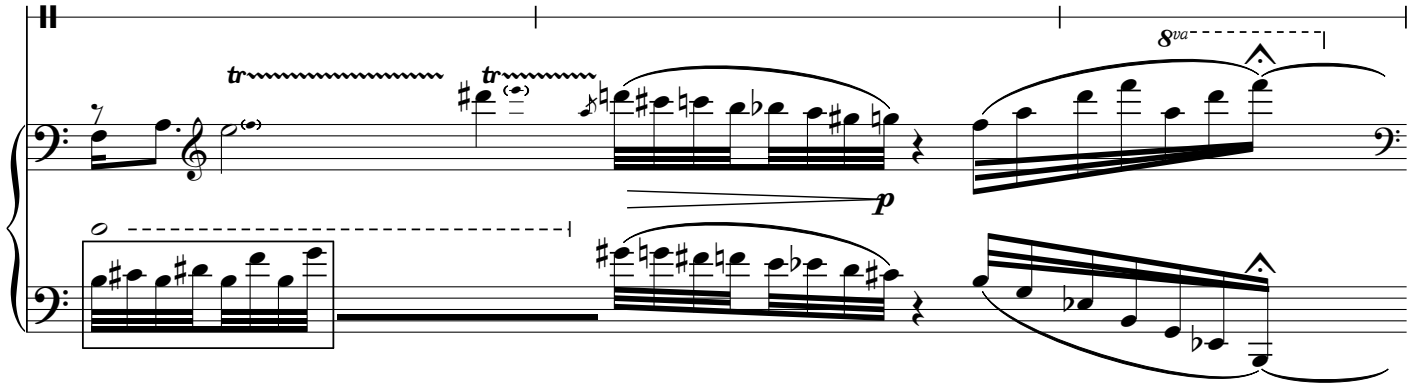
f

mp

tr

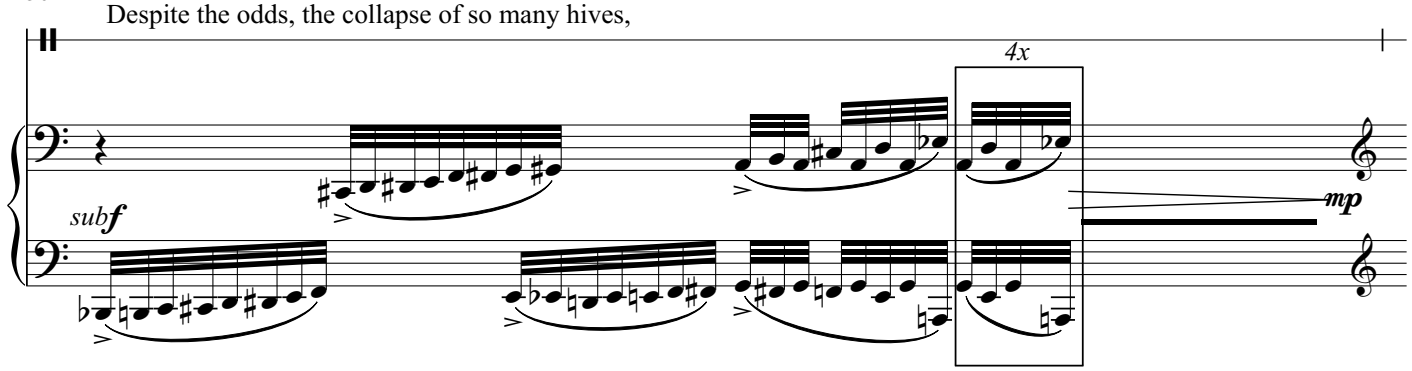
f

33

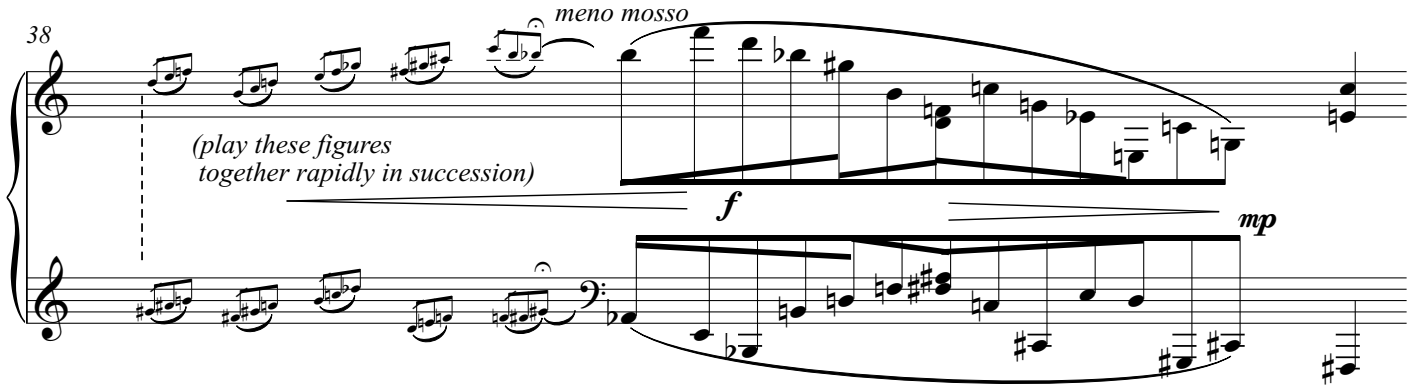


36

Despite the odds, the collapse of so many hives,

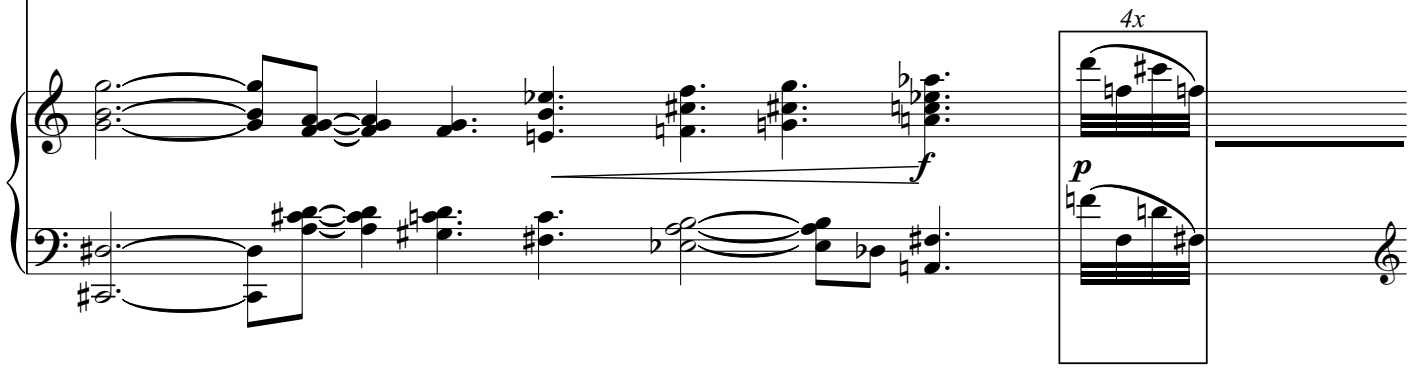


38



40

they are surviving and somehow coping with our earth-mangling and habitat-destroying ways.



42

Would you guess

(play throughout length of left hand figures)

3″ 3″ 2″

5x

mp

f

45

that bees must gather nectar from 2 million flowers to make one pound of honey?

5x

poco

tr tr

47

O mysterious magic Gaia,

2x

5x

(tr) *mf* (tr)

f

48

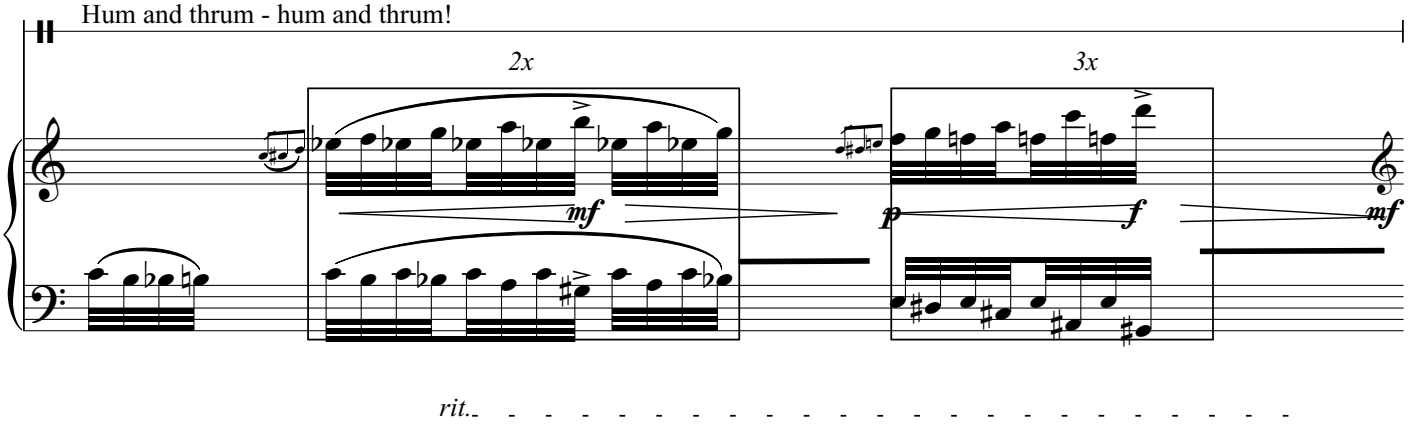
Gaia in her everychanging glory.

3x

subito *p*

49

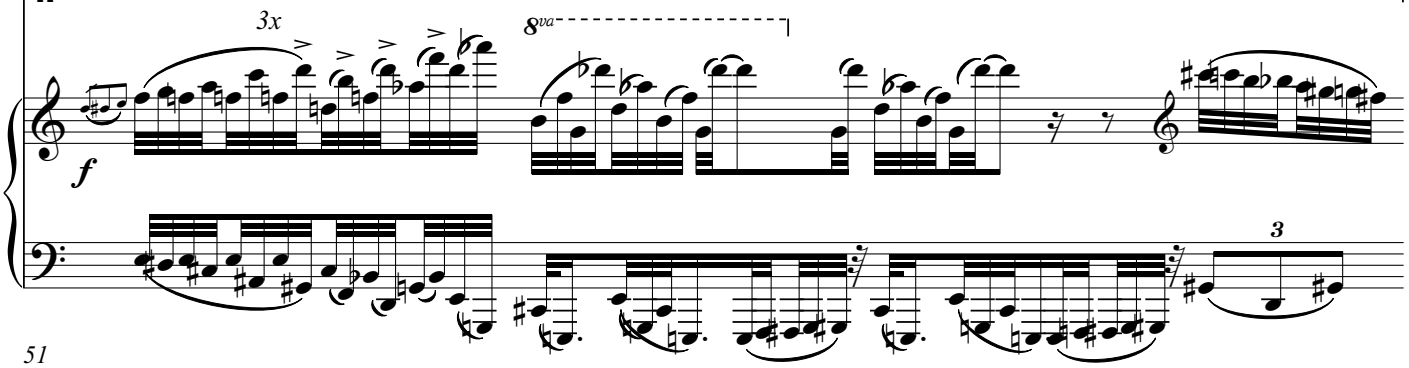
Hum and thrum - hum and thrum!



rit. -

50

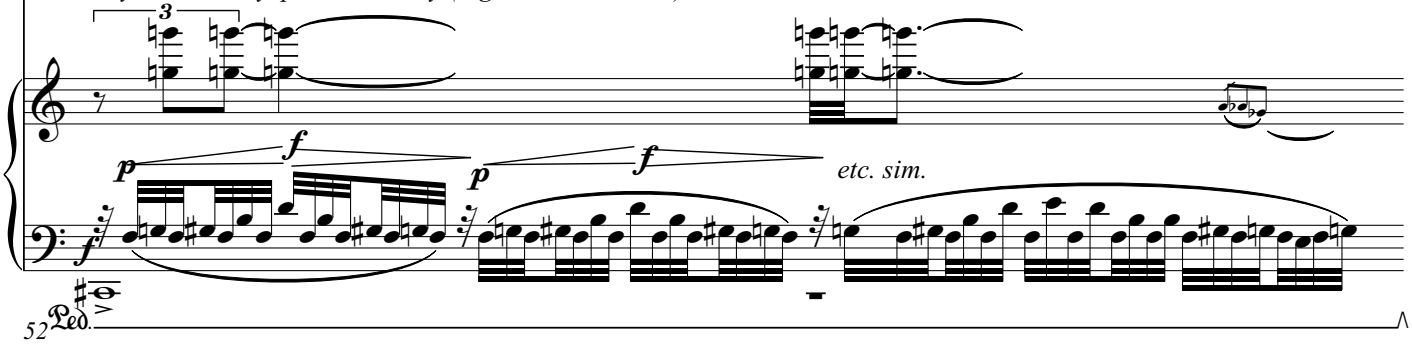
Sting and zing! The incessant industry of your honey factories!



51

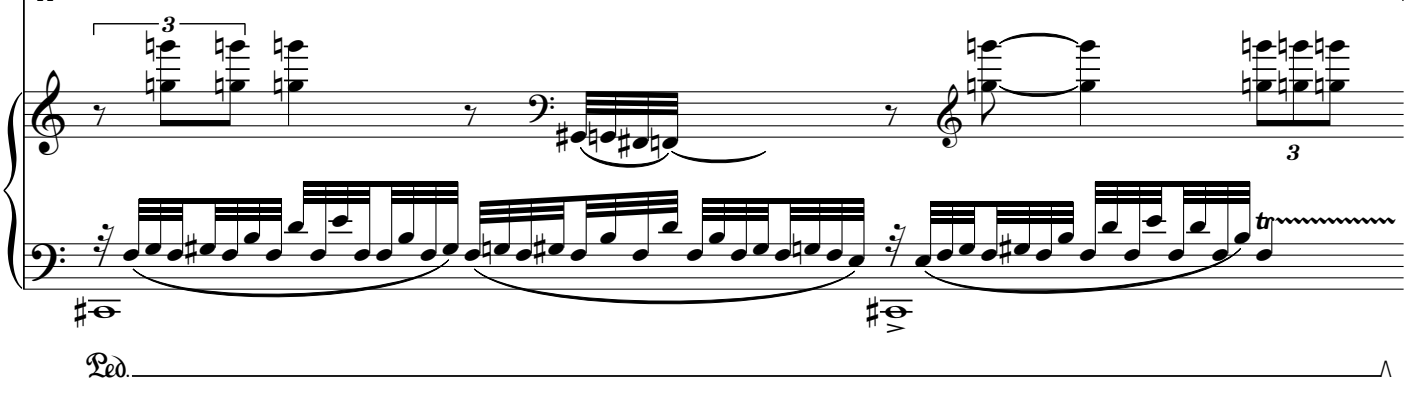
Sting and zing!

Freely, ecstatically, pedal liberally (high tones like bells)



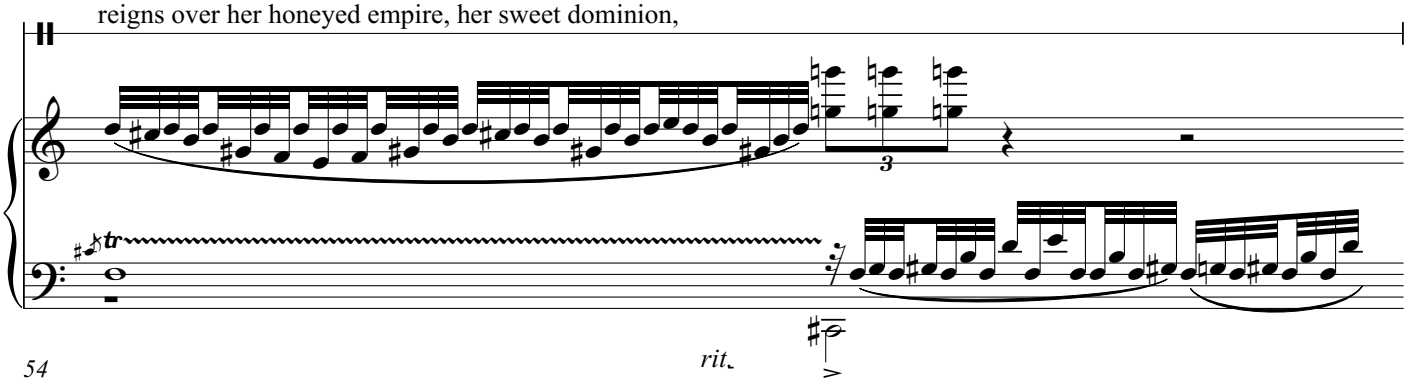
52

Her majesty, the queen in all her regal authority and power,



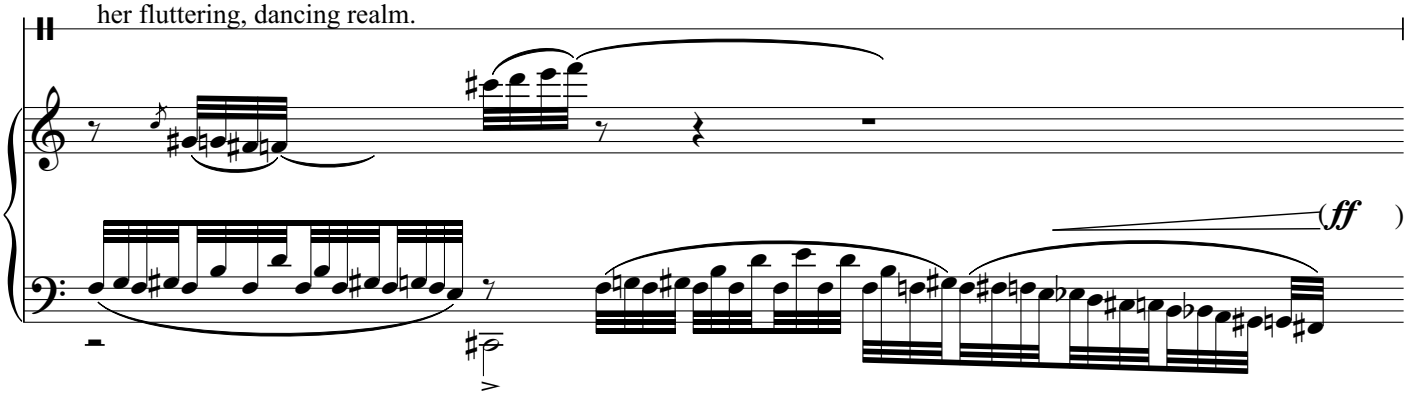
53

reigns over her honeyed empire, her sweet dominion,



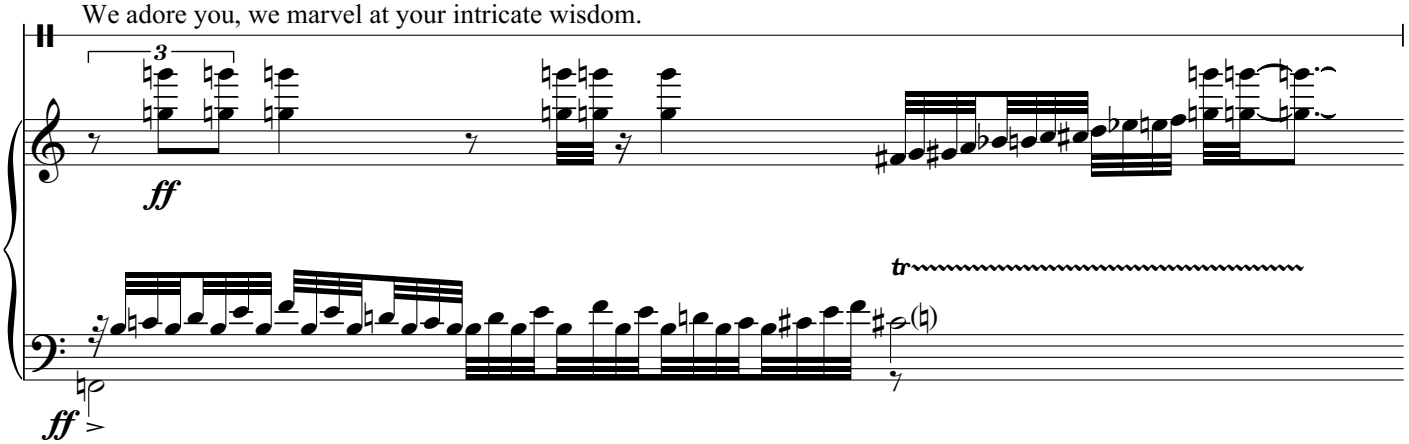
54

her fluttering, dancing realm.



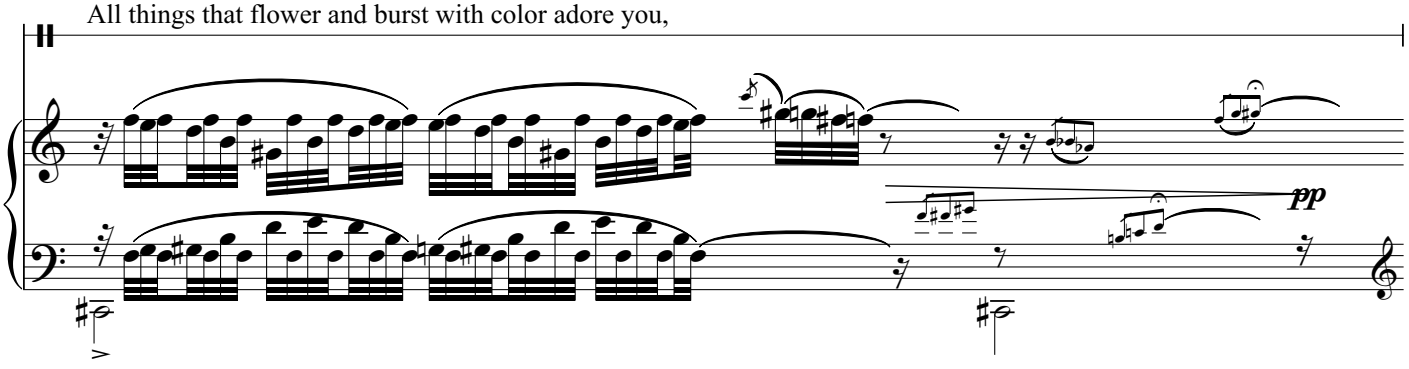
55

We adore you, we marvel at your intricate wisdom.



56

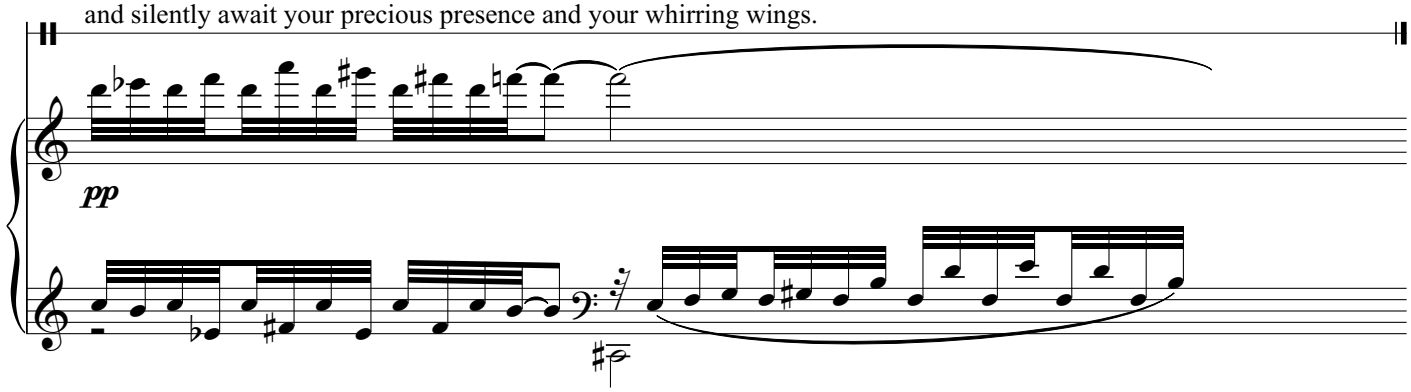
All things that flower and burst with color adore you,

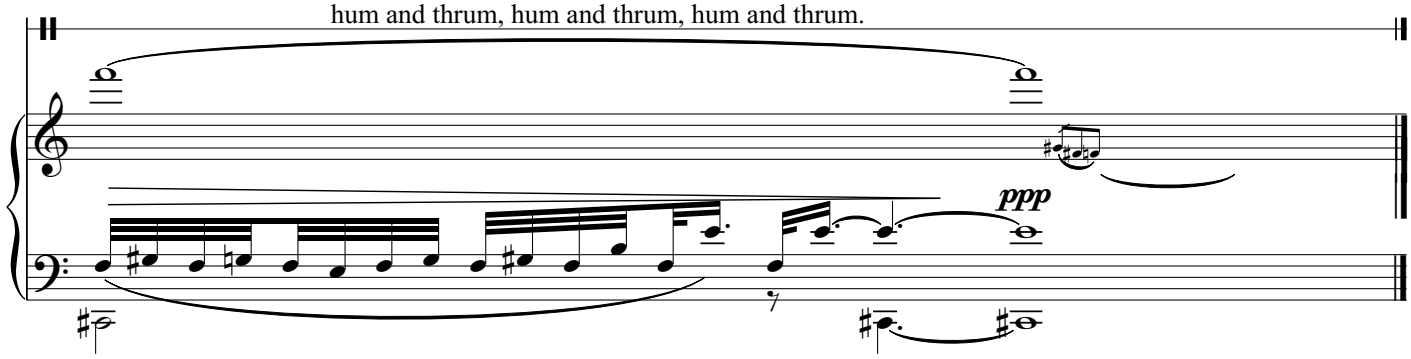


rit.

57

and silently await your precious presence and your whirring wings.



58

hum and thrum, hum and thrum, hum and thrum.