JUDITH SHATIN

Akhmatova Songs

Mezzo and Piano

Mendigo Music

Program Note

The composition of *Akhmatova Songs* was inspired by Stanley Kunitz's translations of this poetry. However, I decided to set the poetry in the original Russian, with the assistance of my friend and colleague Sharon Leiter, whose own translation of the three poems accompanies the score. The Russian has its own particular rhythm, sonic contour and imagery, and I welcomed the opportunity to explore them. The three poems I have chosen share themes of loss and transcendence, as does much of Akhmatova's poetry. Having lived from 1889-1966, Akhmatova's creative years spanned many of the cataclysms that characterized what she called "the real twentieth century". Her poems *Requiem* and *Poem Without a Hero* are two of her most eloquent responses to these times of terror. The first poem, The Muse, concerns the gift of the muse, the tension and meaning of the creative process. The second, *Everything is Plundered*, ponders terrible extremities, puts them in a larger perspective, and reflects on human resilience. The last, *The Souls of All My Dears*, is a poignant tribute to Akhmatova's own past, with her early years spent in Tsarskoye Selo where Pushkin had attended the Lyceum. Here, she sees her own place as a singer of poems. In my musical setting,, I sought to embody elements of the poetry, with a tone of voice that ranges from velvet to violent. The harmonic language likewise reflects a range from consonant and warm, to austere and dissonant. *Akhmatova Songs* was commissioned and premiered by the Sistrum Ensemble at Strathmore Hall in Rockville, MD in 1986. It was recorded by Da Capo Chamber Players on *Dreamtigers*, a portrait album of my chamber music (Innova 613). I am grateful to Professor Laurence R. Richter, expert on Russian phonetics and diction for singers, and Lecturer at Indiana University, for his invaluable help in creating a new transliteration for the 2007 edition of *Akhmatova Songs.* –JS

Translations by Sharon Leiter

1. The Muse

When late at night I wait for her arrival,
My life seems to hang by a thread.
What are homage, youth or freedom compared to
My dear guest with the flute in her hand?

And now she's come. She sheds her heavy wrappings
And looks attentively at me. I guess,
"Are you the one who dictated to Dante
The lines of his *Inferno*?" She answers, "Yes."

2. All is Plundered

All is plundered, betrayed, torn asunder,
The wing of black death gleams in flight.
All is gnawed by sorrowing hunger–
Why then have our hearts filled with light?

By day, wondrous woods near the city
Send cherries' sweet breath drifting by.
At night the new galaxies glitter
From deep in the clear July sky.

And miracles walk near the houses
Adrift in their dirt and their stones–
That thing we've forever desired,
That no one has ever known.

3. The Souls of All My Dear Ones

The souls of all my dear ones are on high stars.
How good, there's no one left for me to lose
And I can weep. The air of Tsarskoye Selo
Was made for songs to echo through.

Touching the bright September waters
A silver willow idles by the shore.
Out of the past, in silence,
My shadow comes to me once more.

So many lyres hang on these branches,
And yet. It seems, mine has a place here, too.
And now this shower, sparse and sunstruck,
Brings consolation and good news.

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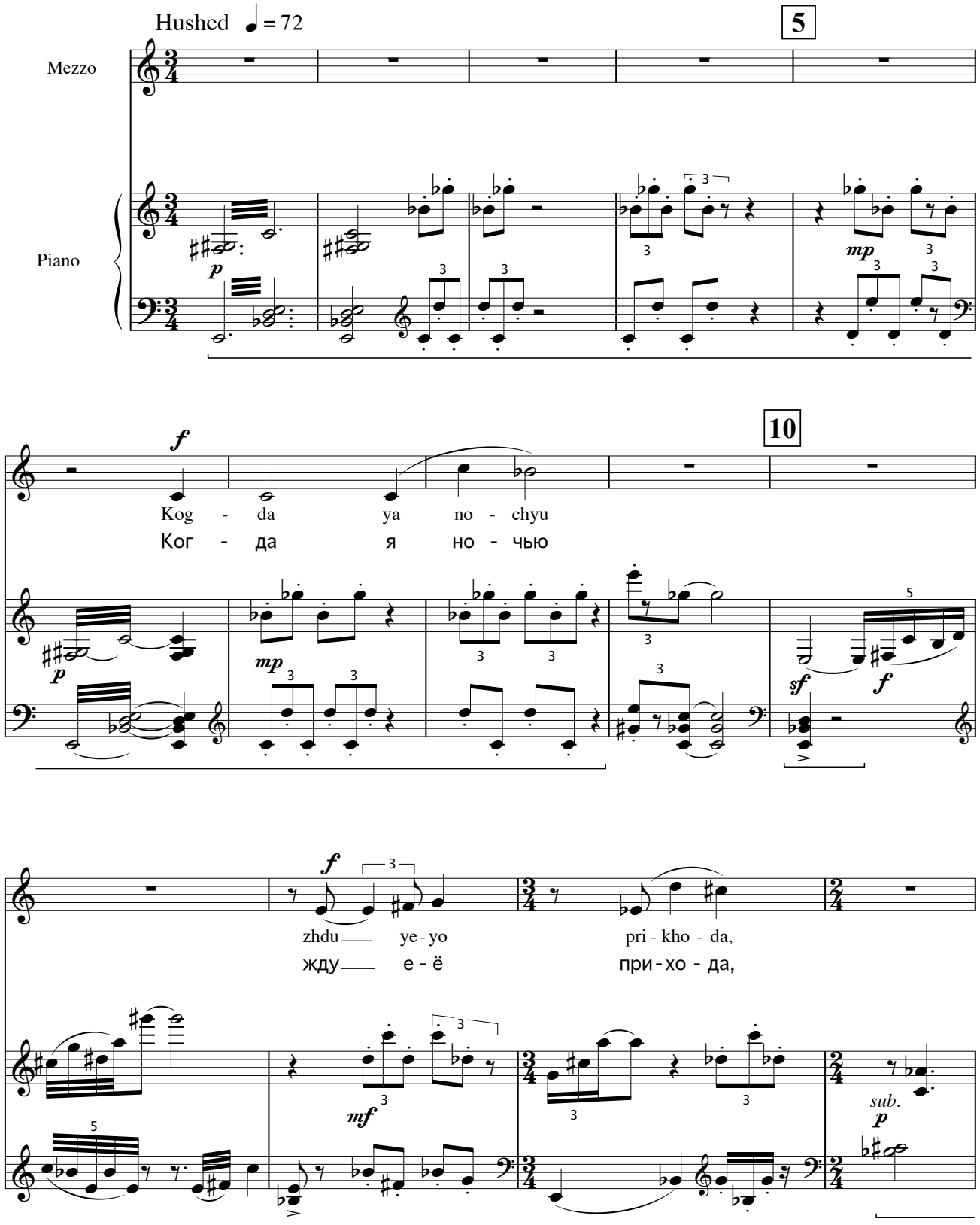
I. The Muse

Text by Anna Akhmatova

Music by Judith Shatin



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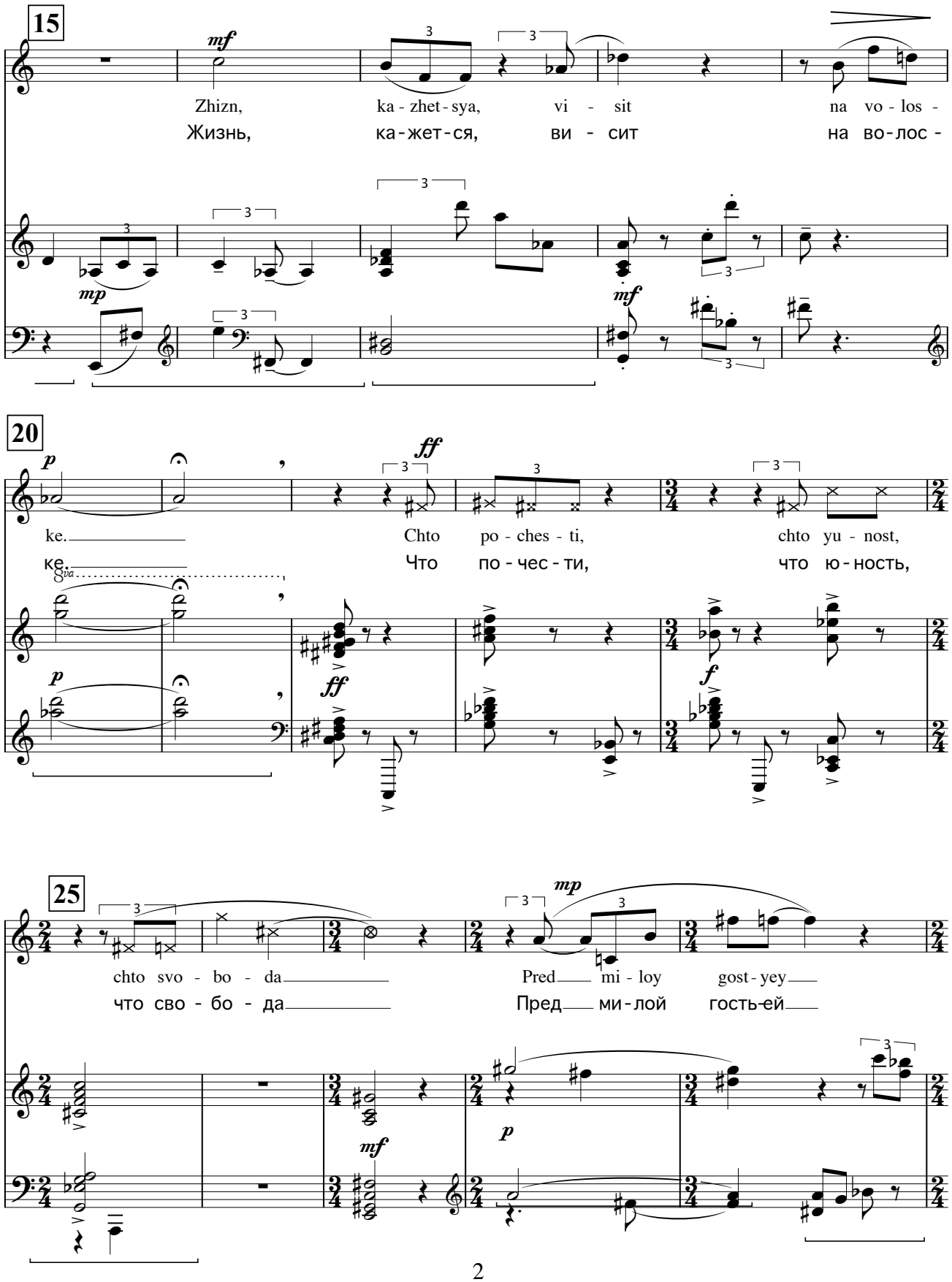
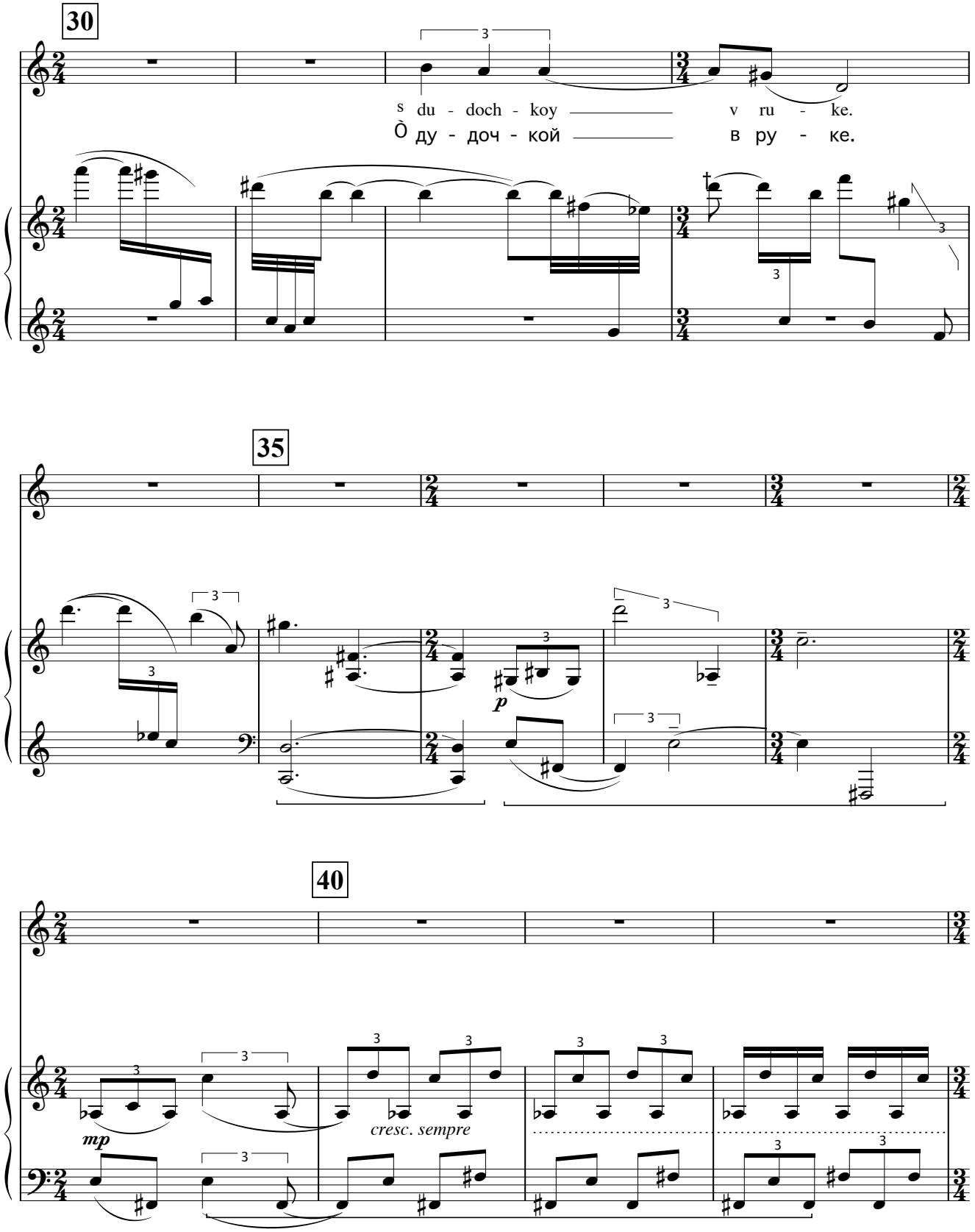
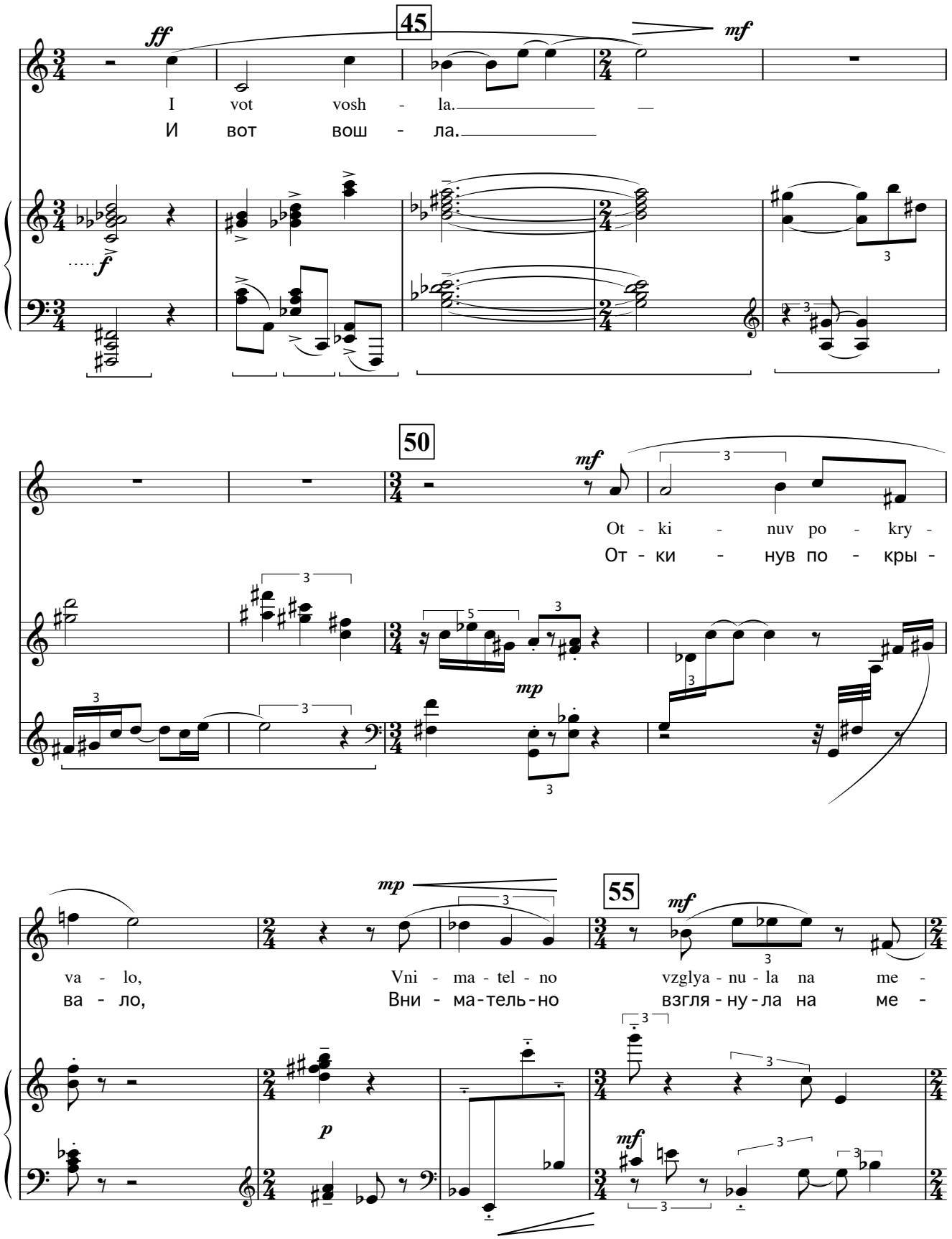
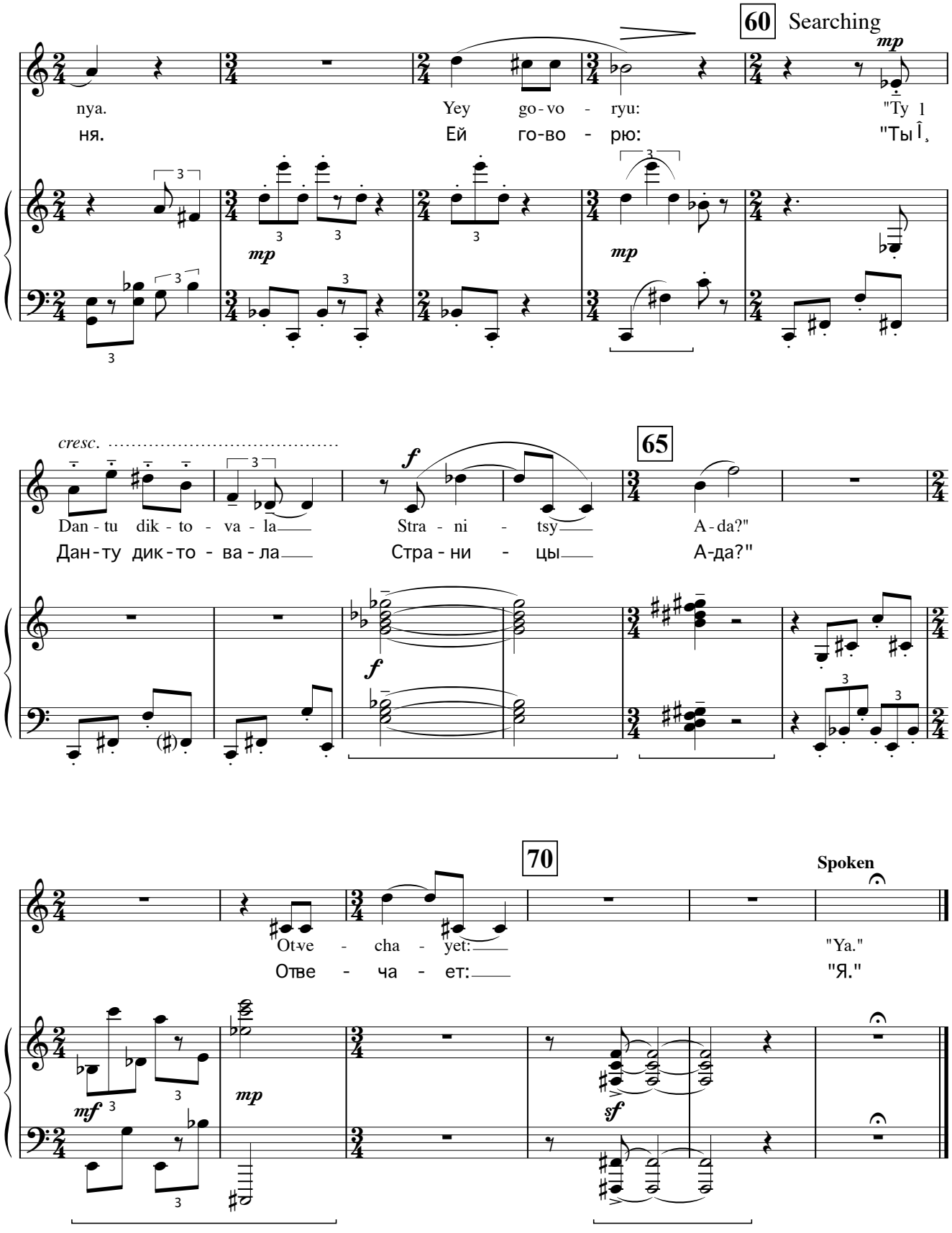
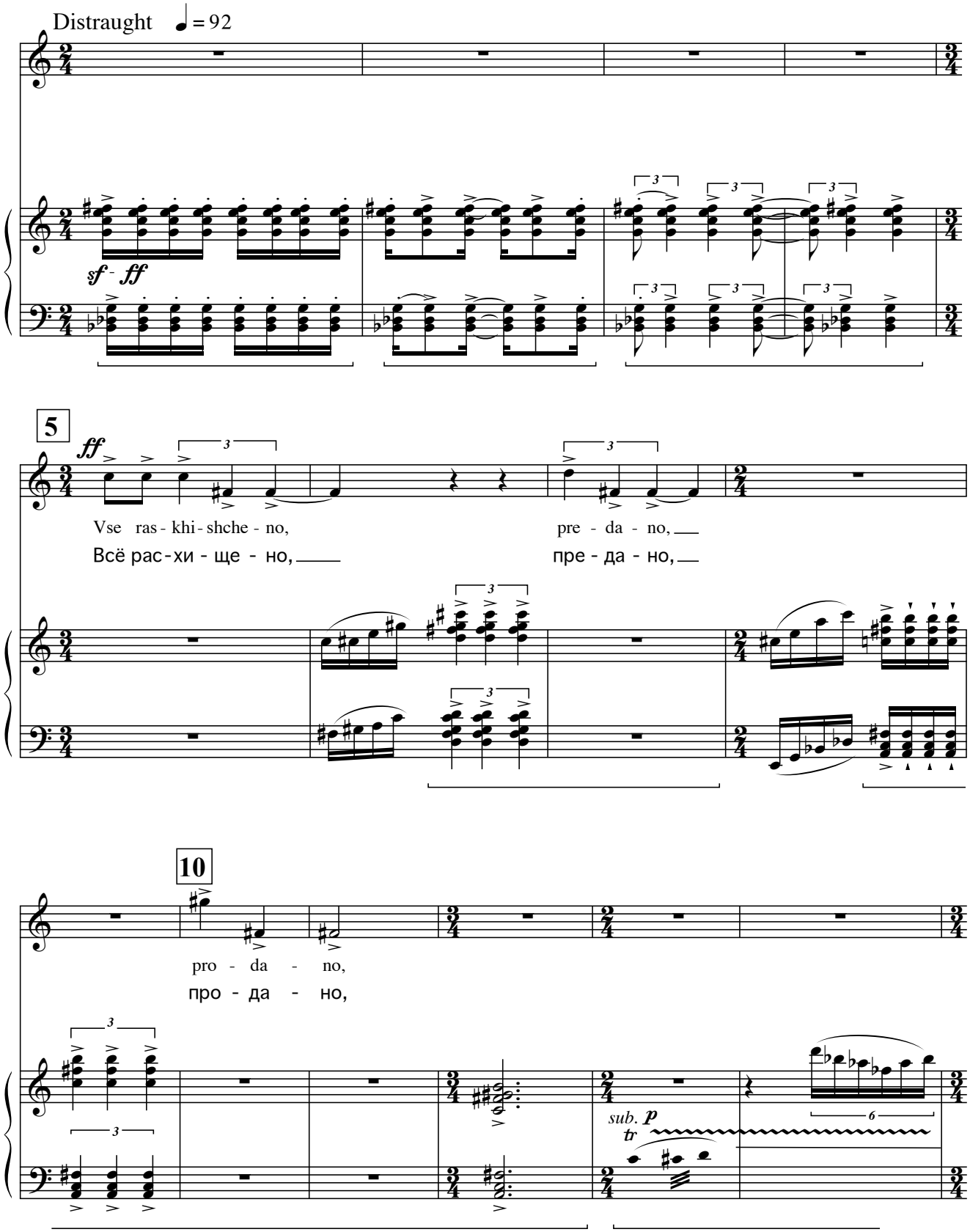

15
mf
Zhizn, ka - zhet - sya, vi - sit na vo - los -
Жизнь, ка-жет-ся, ви - сит на во-лос -
mp
mf
20
p
ff
ke.
Chto po - ches - ti, chto yu - nost,
ке.
Что по - чес - ти, что ю - ность,
8va
p
ff
f
25
chto svo - bo - da
что сво - бо - да
Pred mi - loy gost - yey
Пред ми - лой гость-ей
mp
mf
p

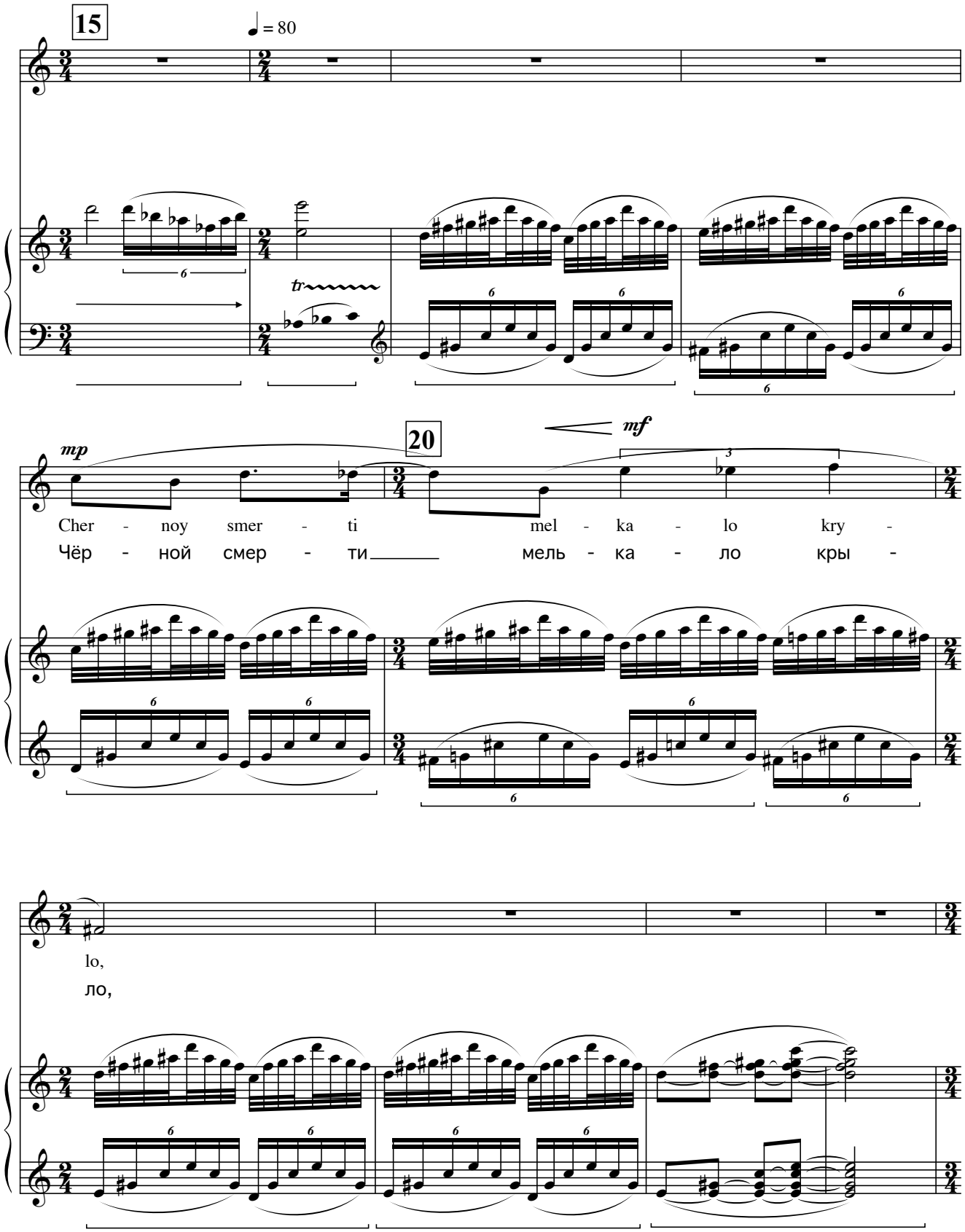

30
s du - doch - koy
v ru - ke.
Ò ду - доч - кой
в ру - ке.
35
p
40
mp
cresc. sempre

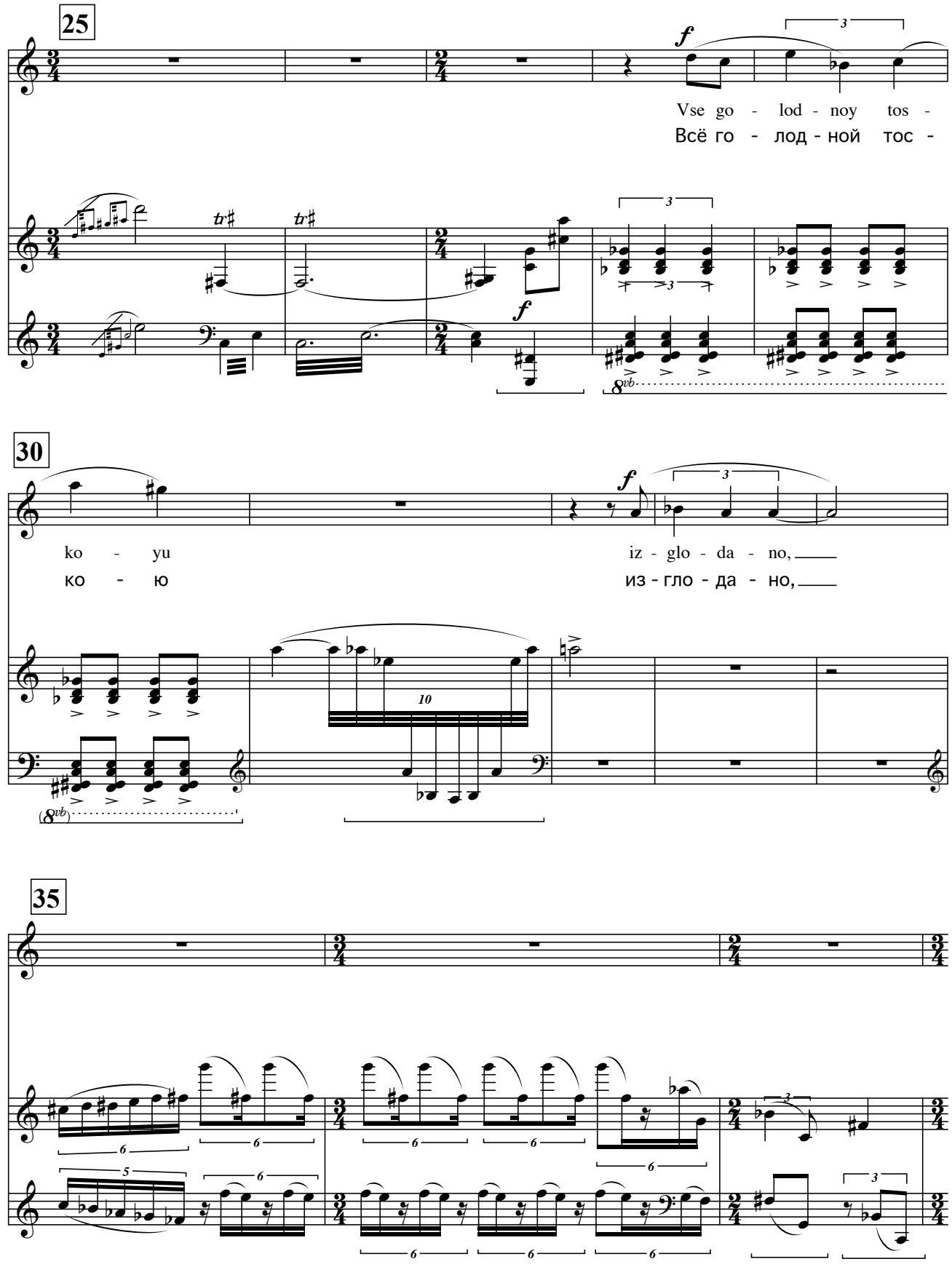

45
ff
mf
I vot vosh - la.
И вот вош - ла.
f
50
mf
Ot - ki - nuv po - kry -
От - ки - нув по - кры -
mp
mp
55
mf
va - lo, Vni - ma - tel - no vzglya - nu - la na me -
ва - ло, Вни - ма - тель - но взгля - ну - ла на ме -
p
mf

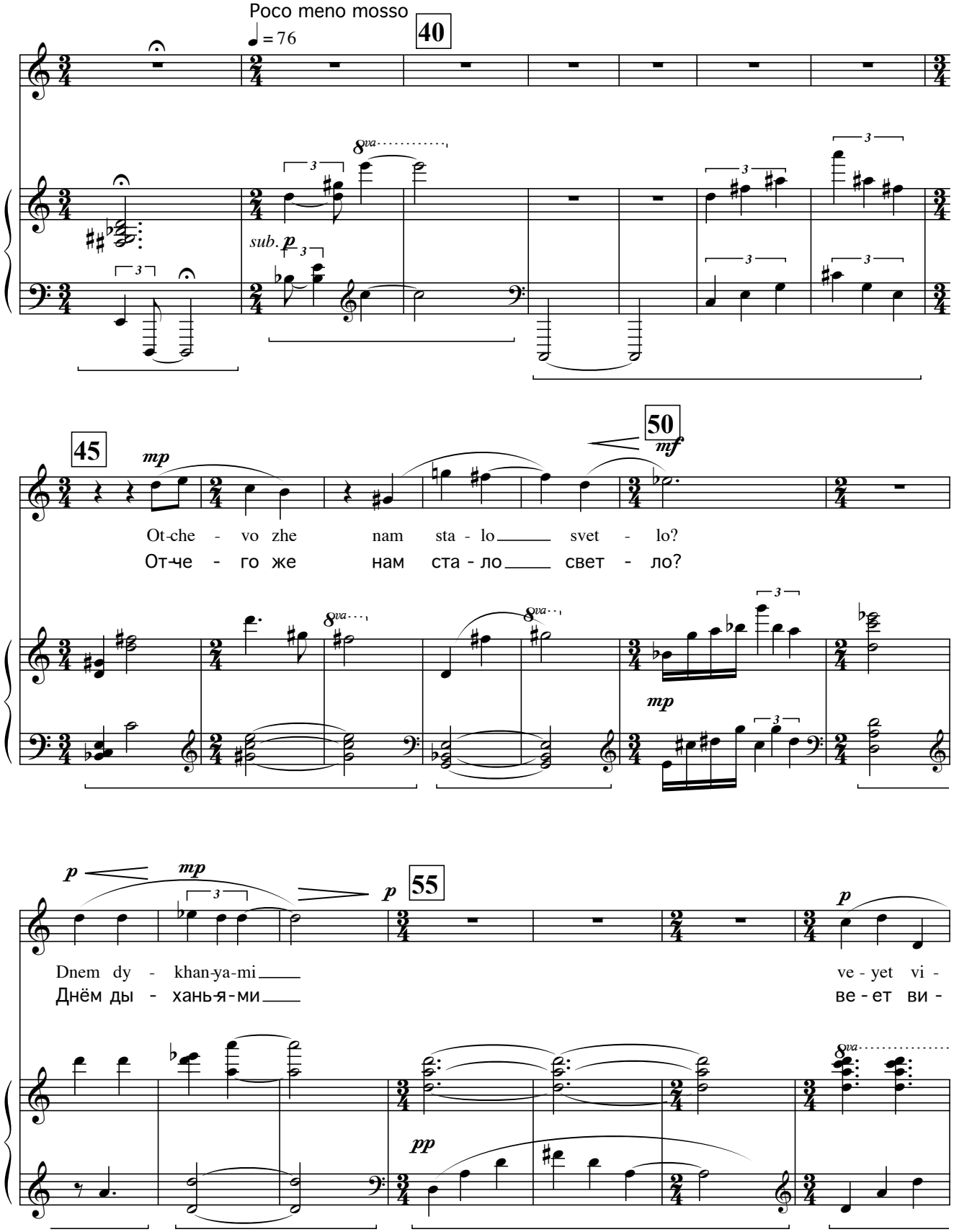

60 Searching
mp
nya.
Yey go-vo - ryu:
"Ty l
ня.
Ей го-во - рю:
"Ты Î¸
mp
mp
cresc.
65
f
Dan-tu dik-to - va-la
Stra - ni - tsy
A-da?"
Дан-ту дик-то - ва-ла
Стра - ни - цы
А-да?"
f
70
Spoken
Ot-ve - cha - yet:
"Ya."
Отве - ча - ет:
"Я."
mf
mp
sf

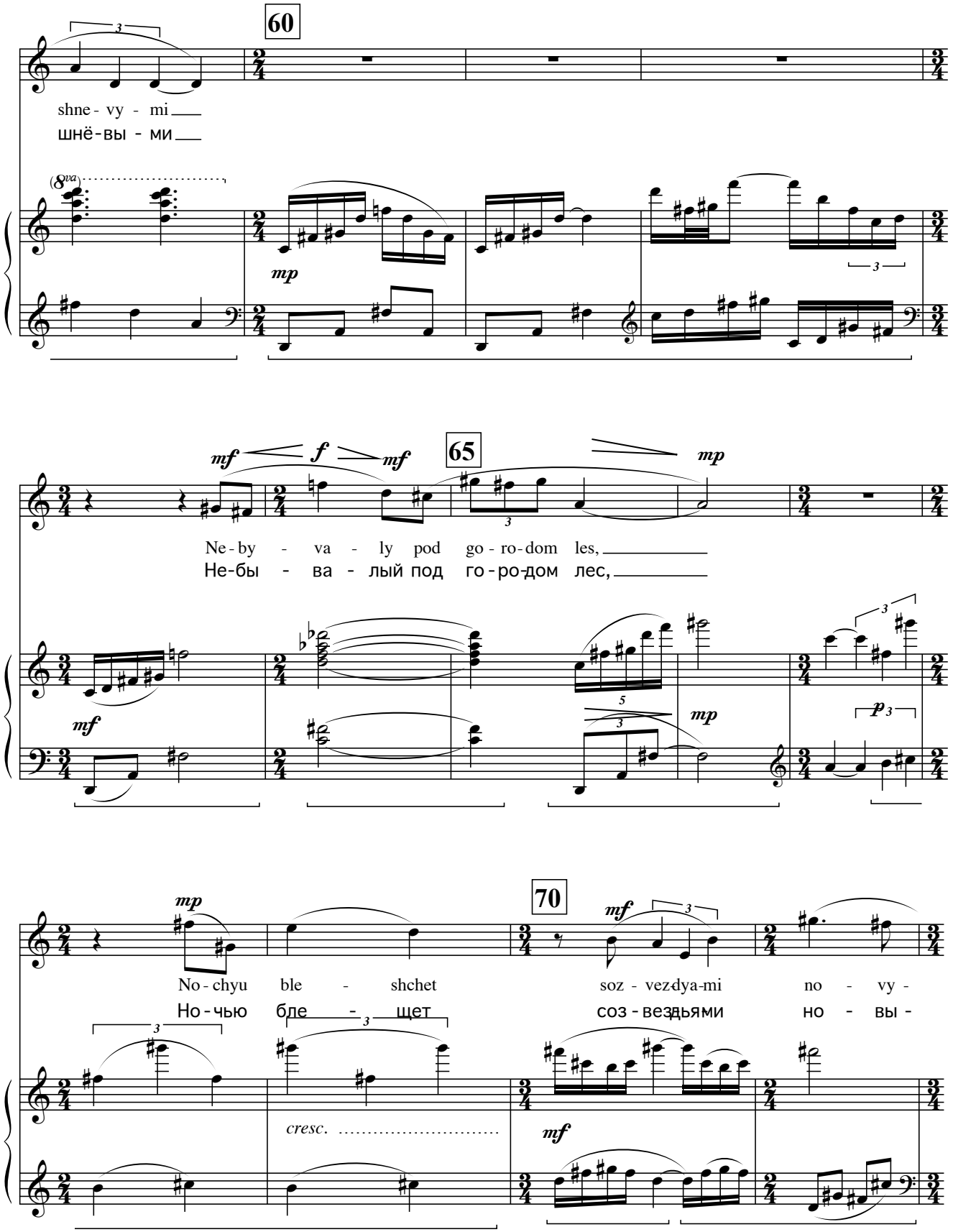
II. All is Plundered

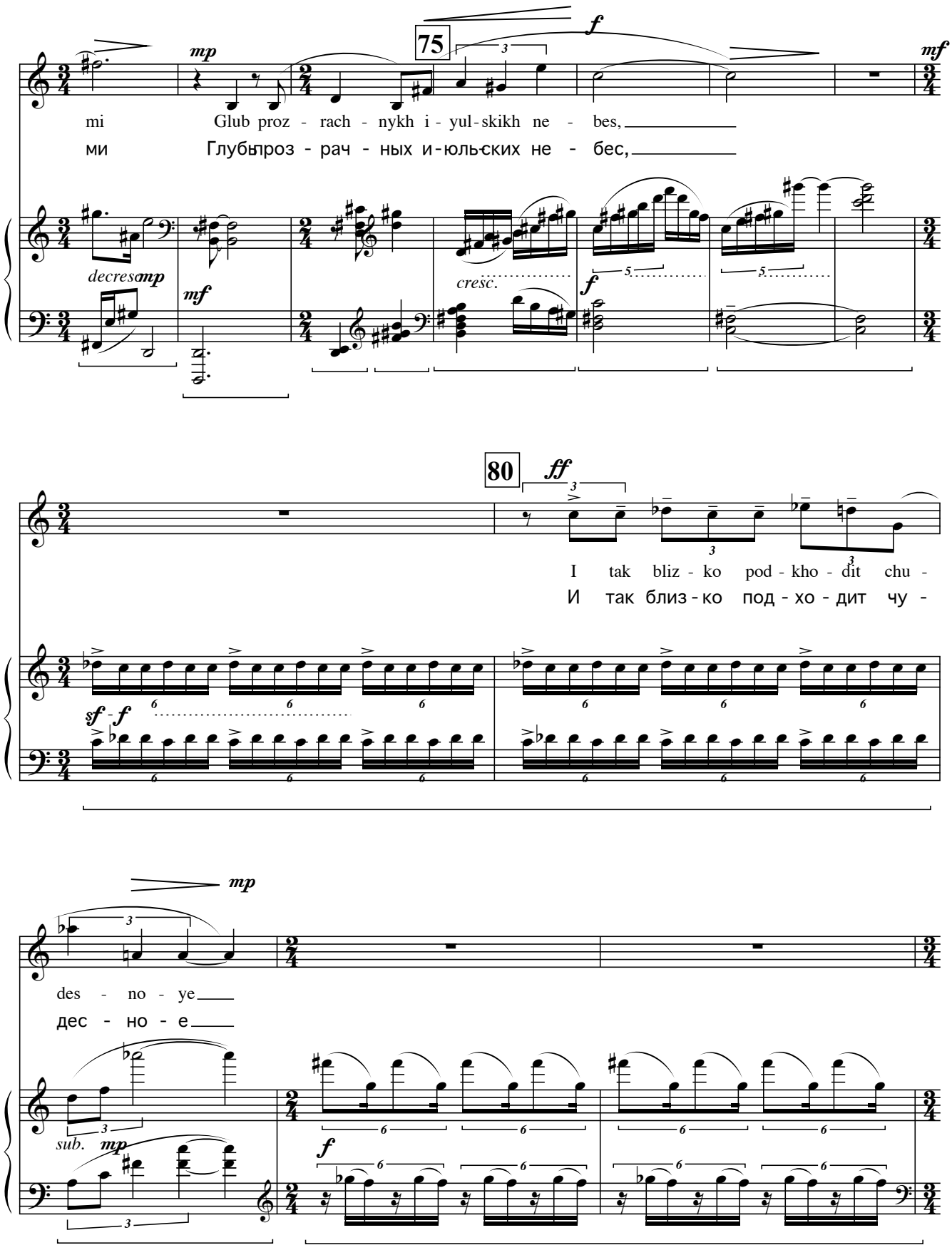


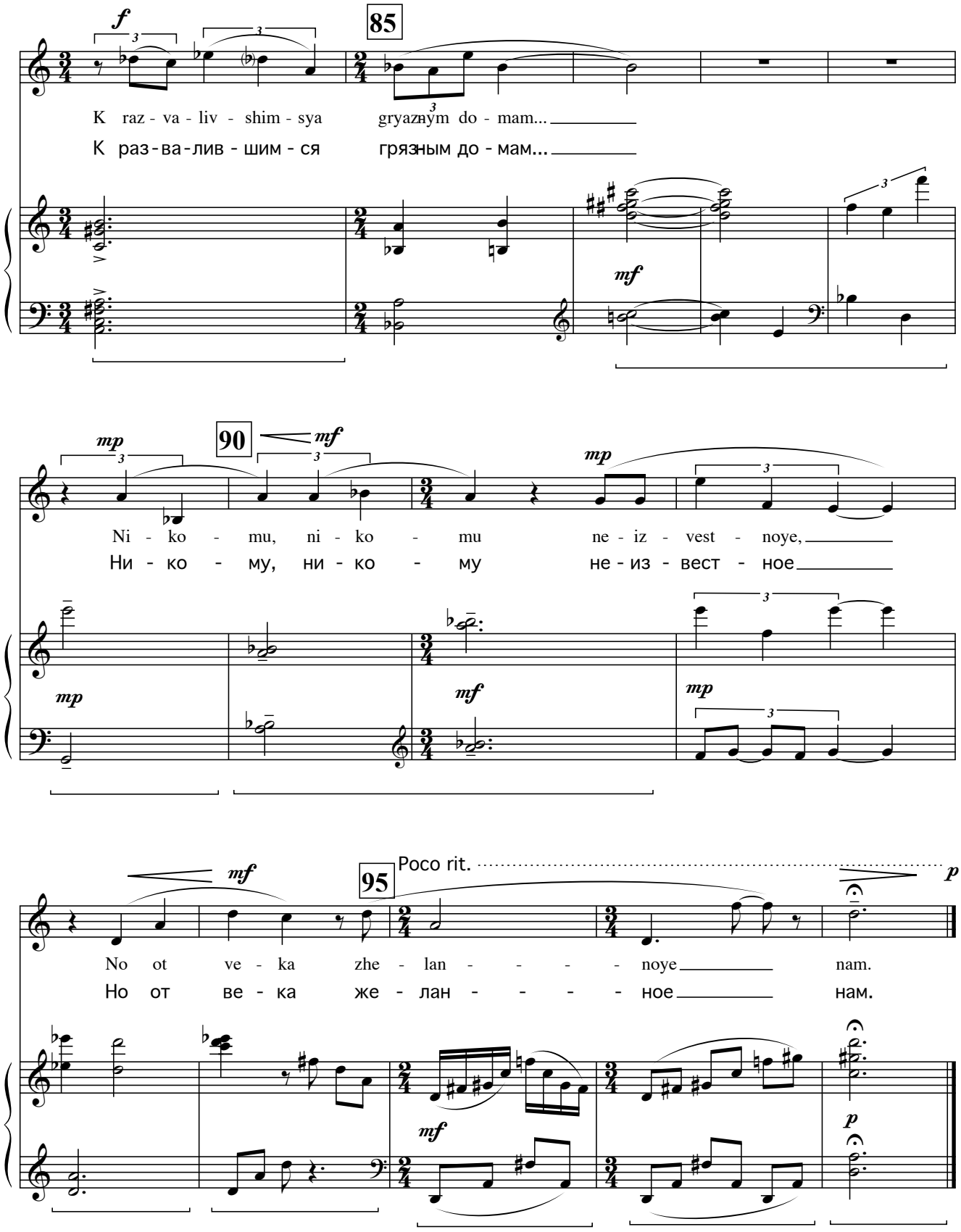

15
♩ = 80
tr
20
mp
mf
Cher - noy smer - ti mel - ka - lo kry -
Чёр - ной смер - ти мель - ка - ло кры -
lo,
ло,


25
Vse go - lod - noy tos -
Всё го - лод - ной тос -
30
ko - yu
ко - ю
iz - glo - da - no,
из - гло - да - но,
35

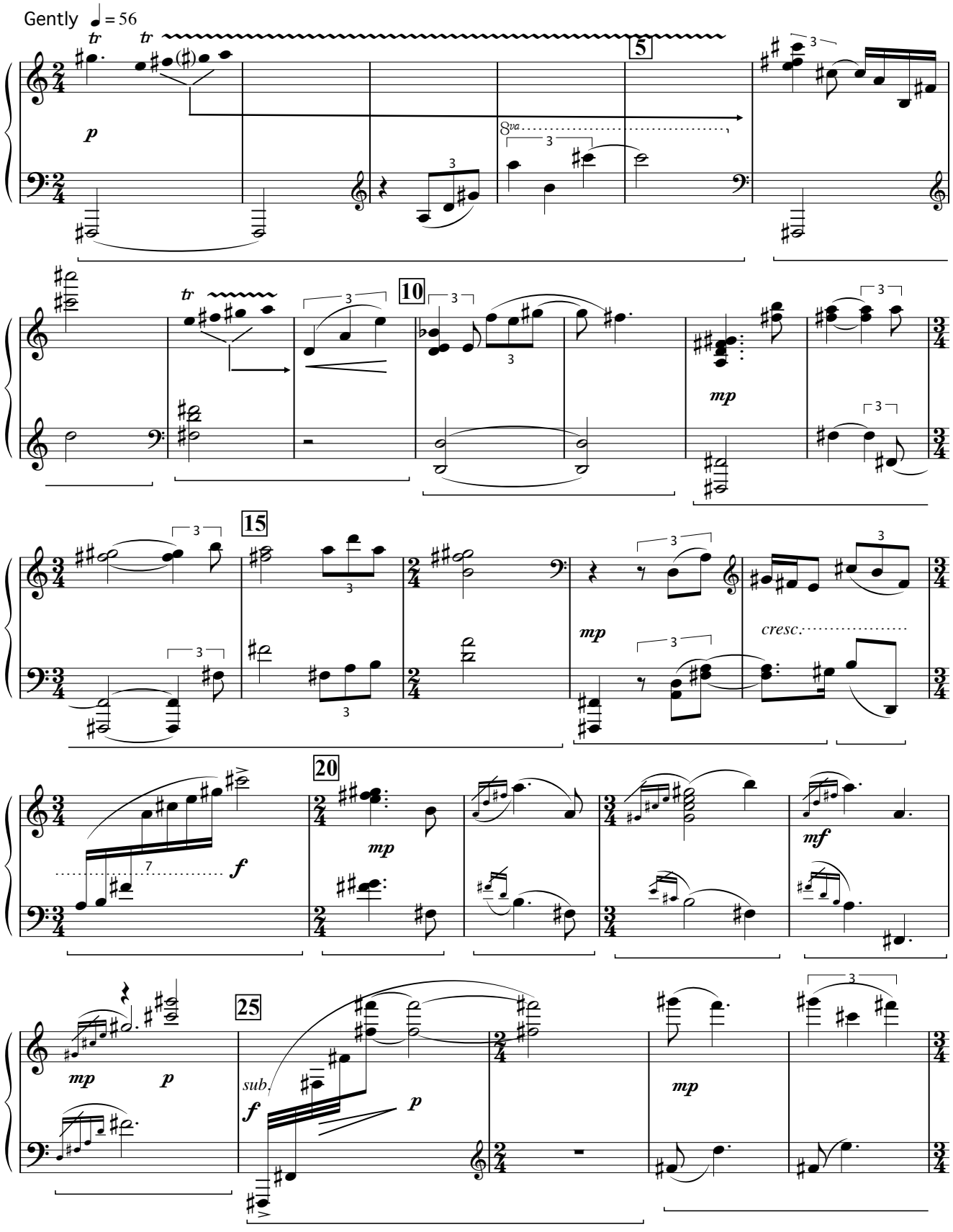

Poco meno mosso
♩ = 76
40
sub. p
45
mp
50
mf
Ot-che - vo zhe nam sta - lo svet - lo?
От-че - го же нам ста - ло свет - ло?
mp
p
mp
p
55
Dnem dy - khan-ya-mi
Днём ды - хань-я-ми
ve - yet vi -
ве - ет ви -
pp

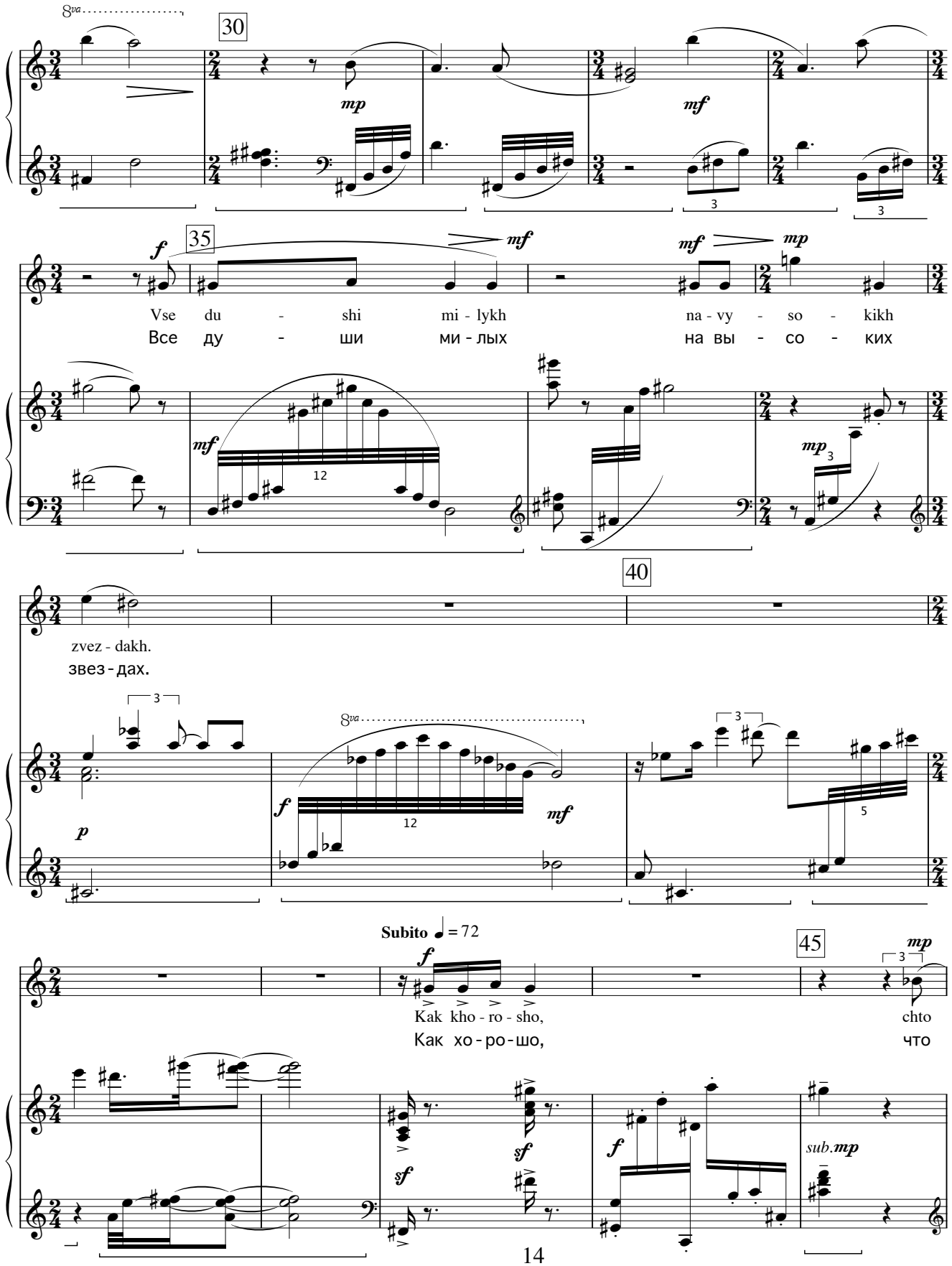

60
shne - vy - mi
шнё - вы - ми
(8va)
mp
65
mf
f
mf
mp
Ne - by - va - ly pod go - ro - dom les,
Не - бы - ва - лый под го - ро - дом лес,
mf
mp
p
70
mp
mf
No - chyu ble - shchet soz - vez - dya - mi no - vy -
Но - чью бле - щет соз - вездьями но - вы -
cresc.
mf

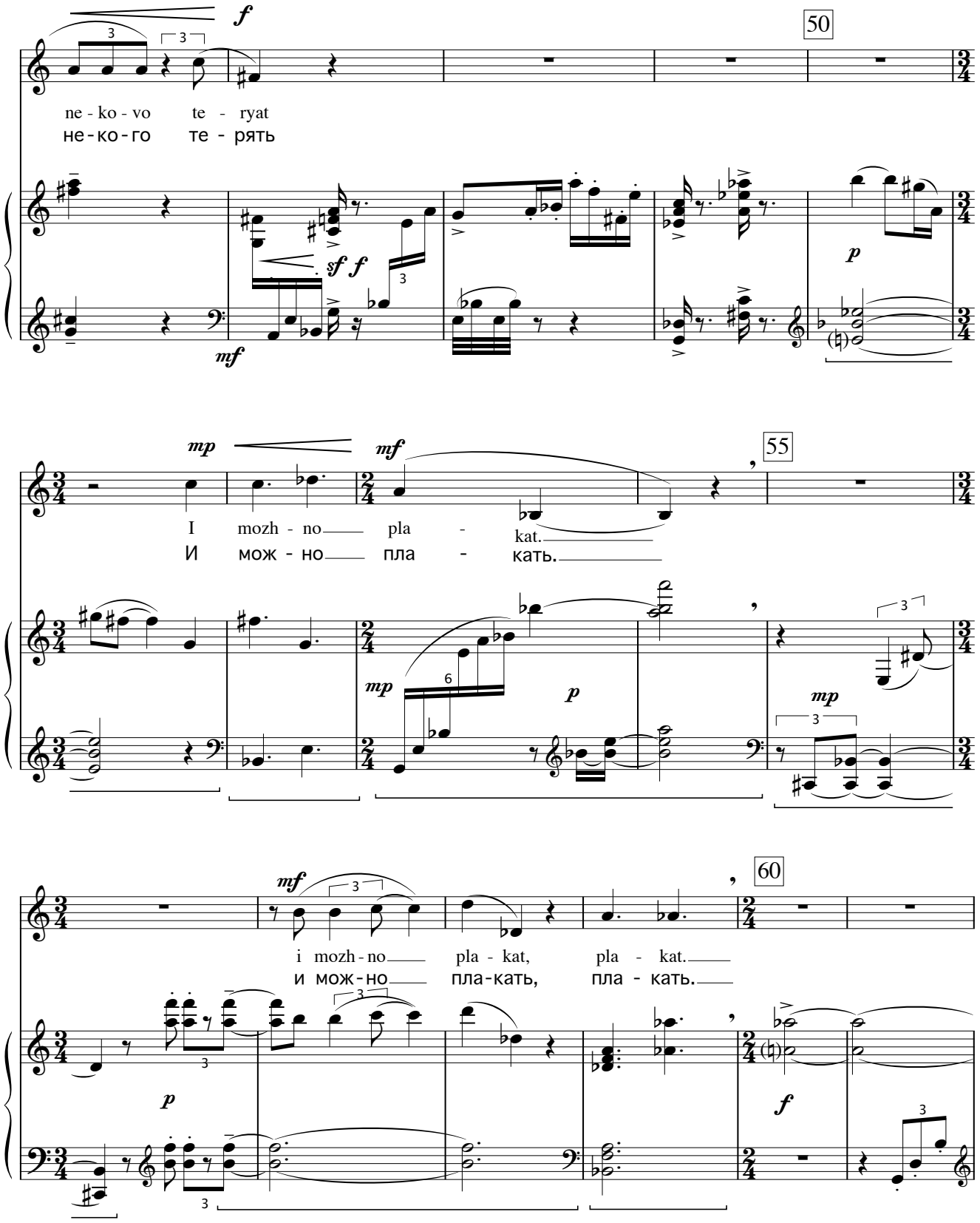

75
mp
f
mf
mi
Glub proz - rach - nykh i - yul - skikh ne - bes,
ми
Глубь-проз - рач - ных и - юль-ских не - бес,
decresc mp
mf
cresc.
f
80
ff
I tak bliz - ko pod - kho - dit chu -
И так близ - ко под - хо - дит чу -
sf - f
mp
des - no - ye
дес - но - е
sub. mp
f

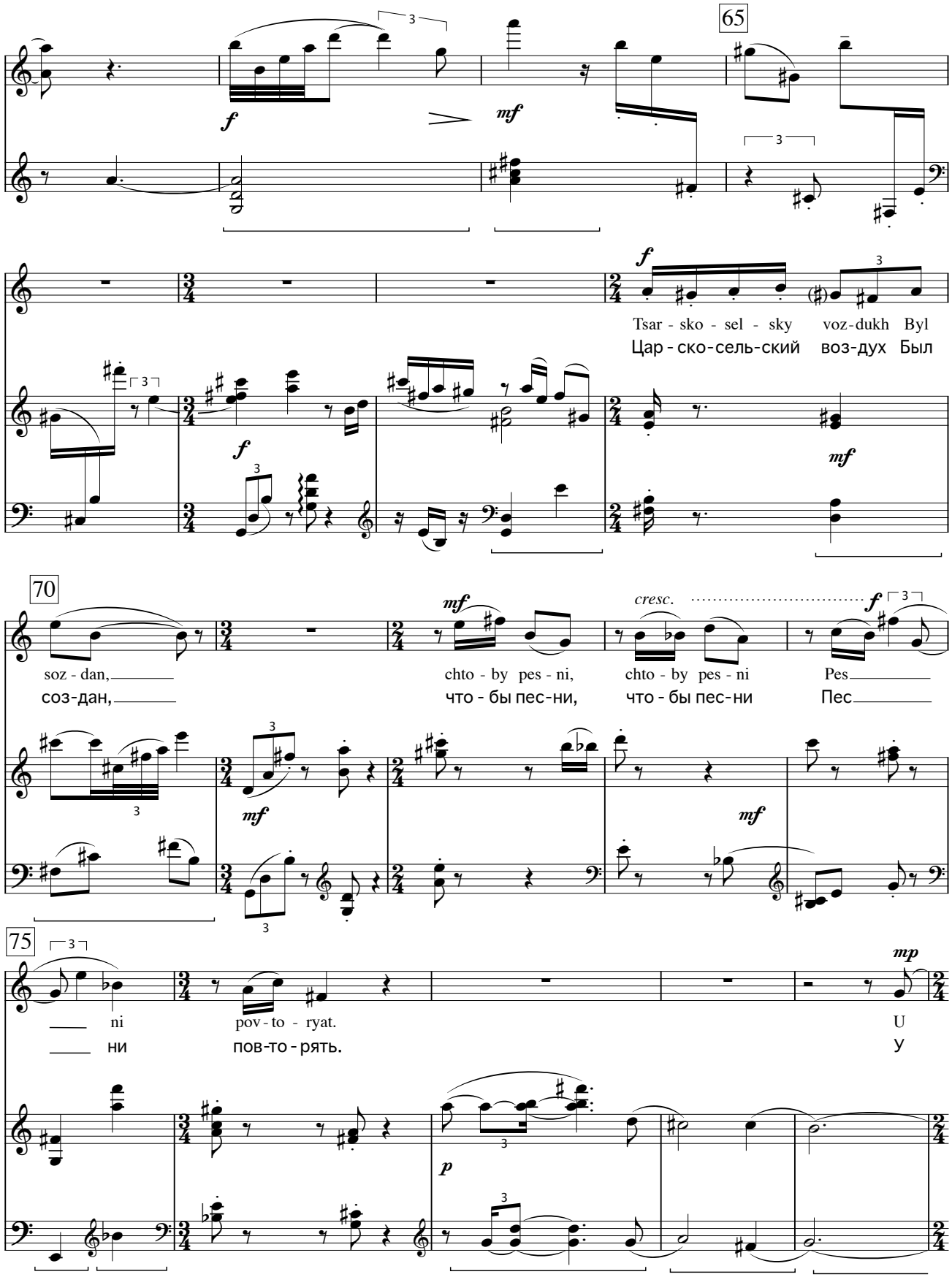

85
K raz - va - liv - shim - sya gryaznym do - mam...
К раз-ва-лив - шим - ся грязным до - мам...
90
Ni - ko - mu, ni - ko - mu ne - iz - vest - noye,
Ни - ко - му, ни - ко - му не - из - вест - ное
95
Poco rit.
No ot ve - ka zhe - lan - - - - noye nam.
Но от ве - ка же - лан - - - - ное нам.

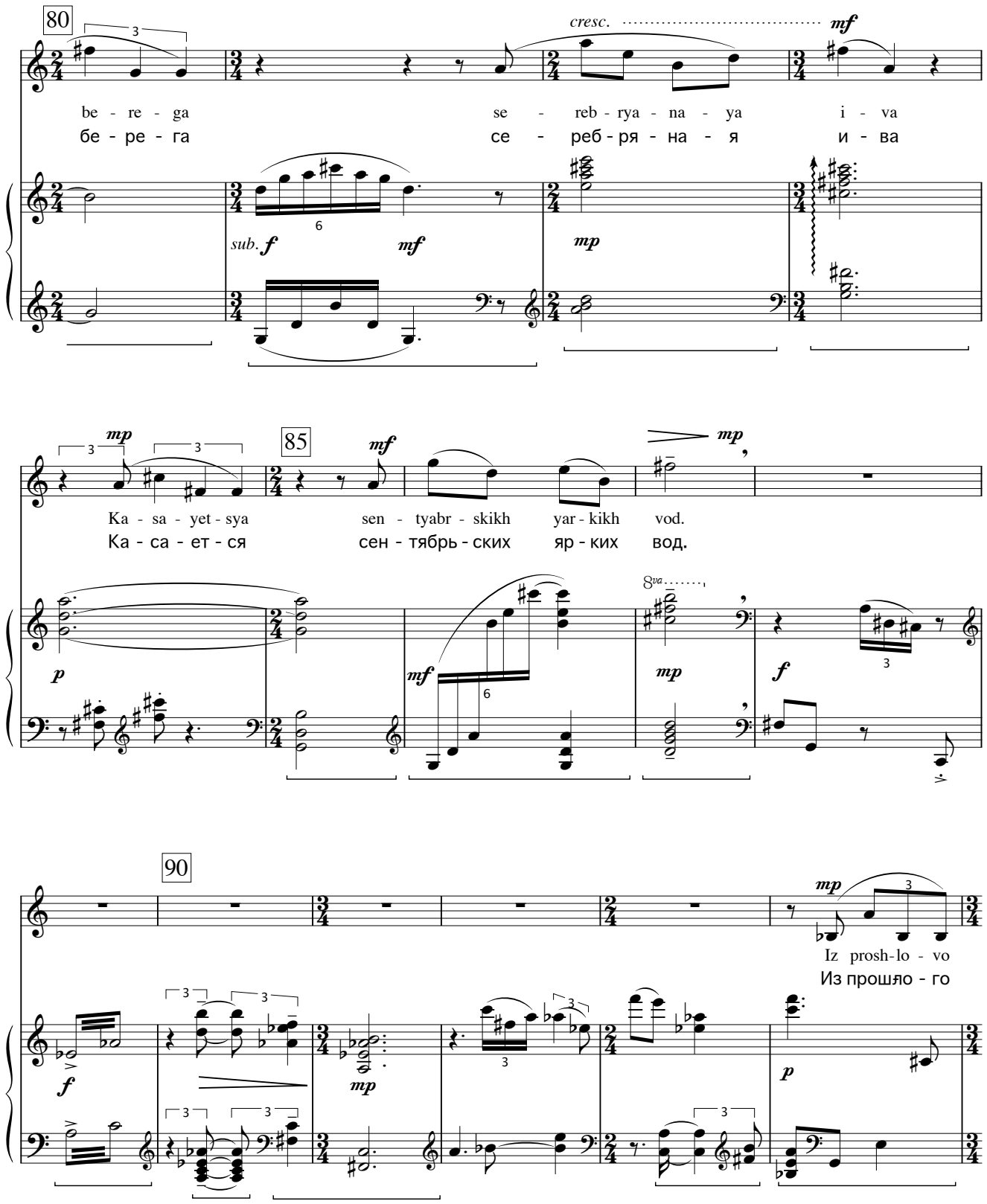
III. The Souls

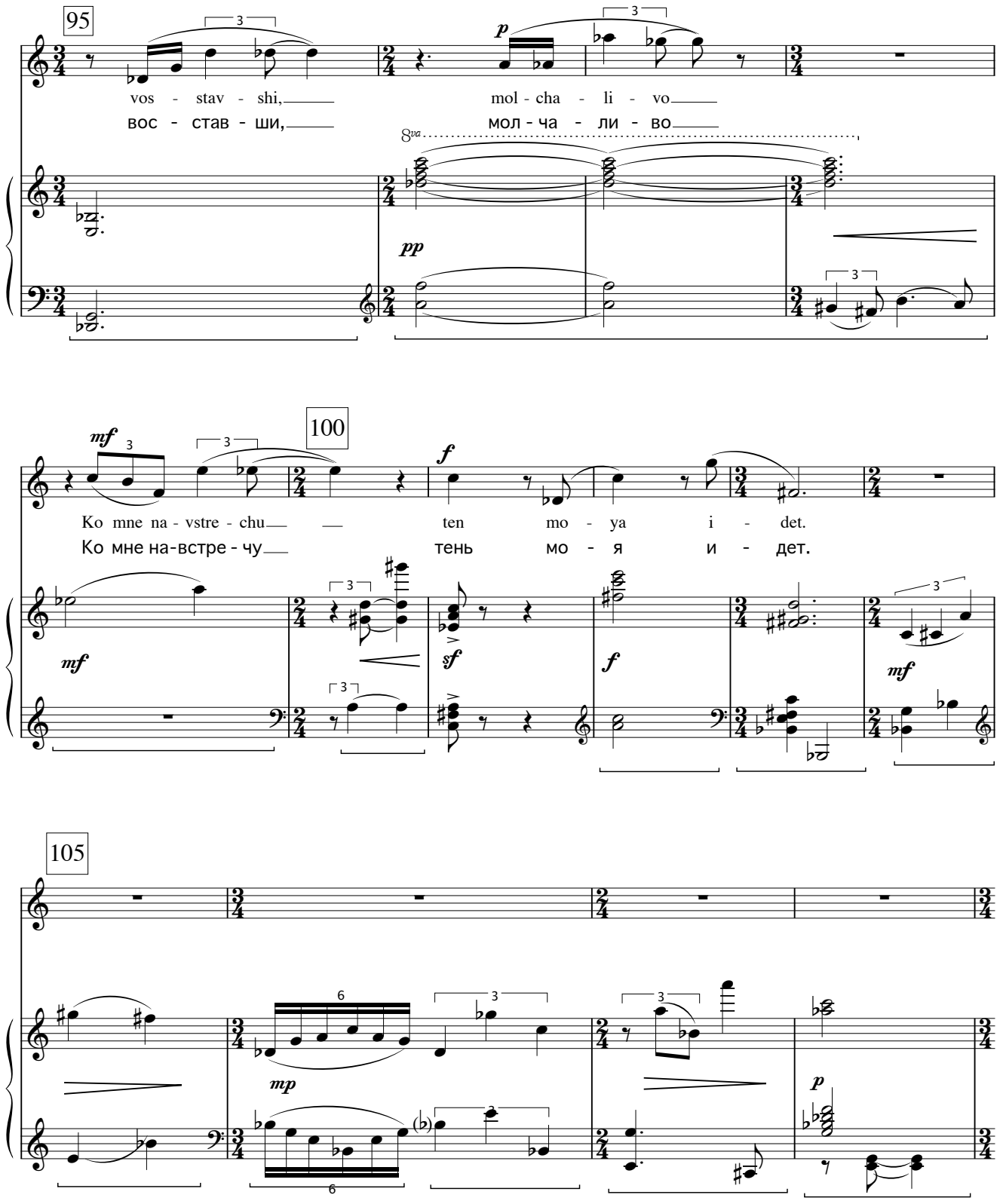


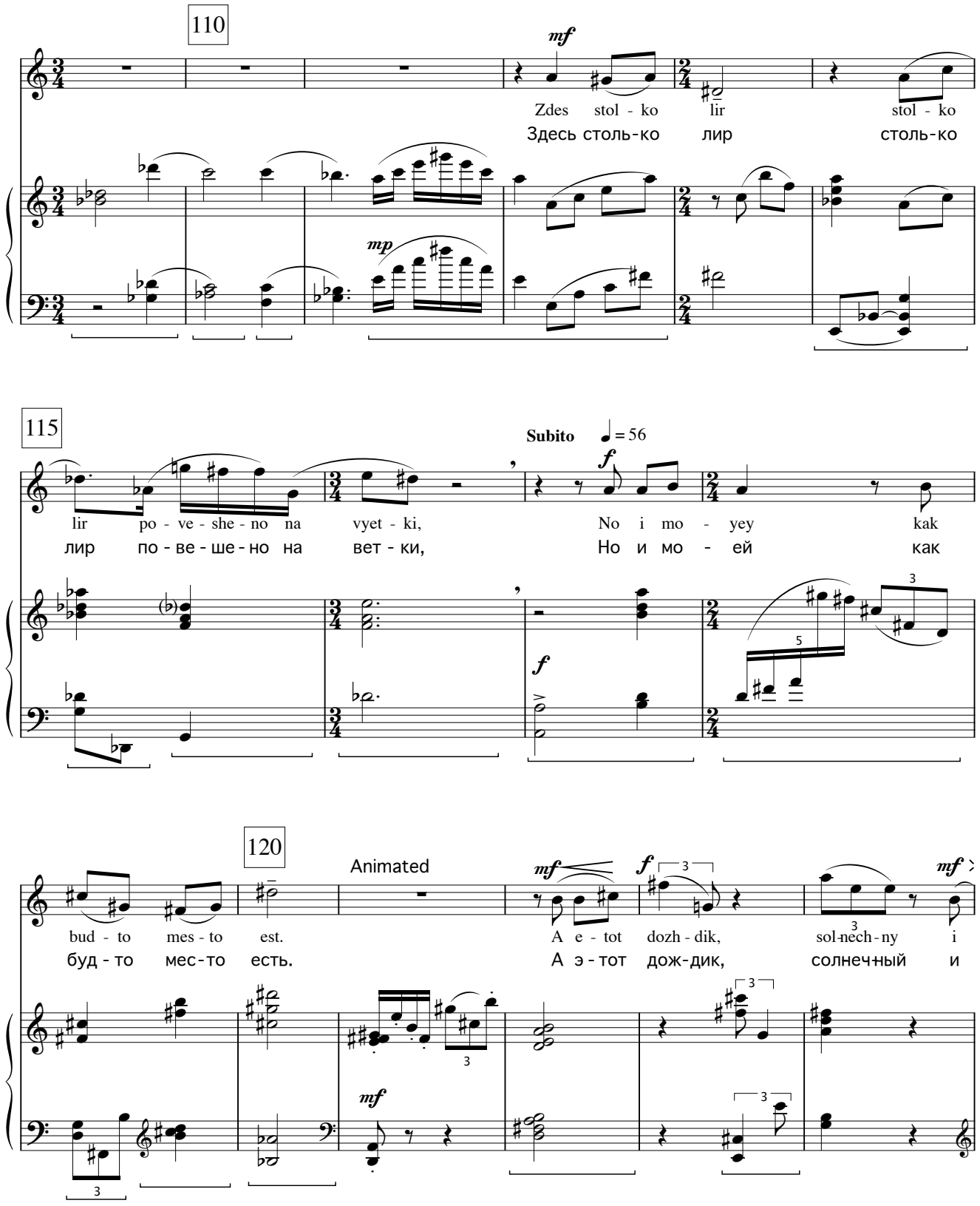

30
35
Vse du - shi mi - lykh na - vy - so - kikh
Все ду - ши ми - лых на вы - со - ких
40
zvez - dakh.
звез - дах.
Subito ♩ = 72
45
Kak kho - ro - sho,
Как хо - ро - шо,
chto
что

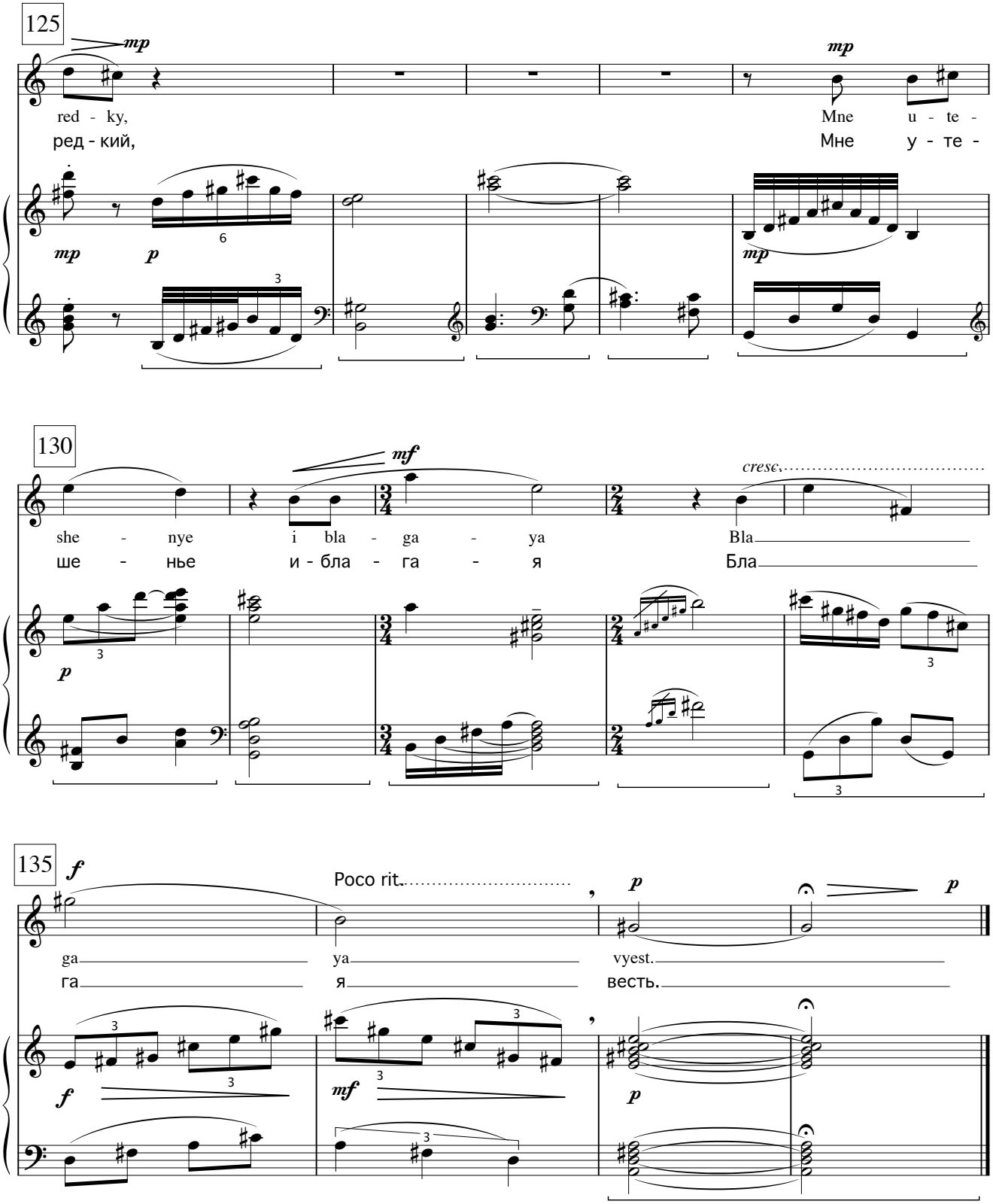

50
ne - ko - vo te - ryat
не-ко-го те - рять
55
I mozh - no pla - kat.
И мож - но пла - кать.
60
i mozh - no pla - kat, pla - kat.
и мож-но пла-кать, пла - кать.


65
f
mf
f
Tsar - sko - sel - sky voz-dukh Byl
Цар - ско-сель-ский воз-дух Был
mf
70
mf
cresc.
f
soz - dan,
соз-дан,
chto - by pes - ni,
что - бы пес-ни,
chto - by pes - ni
что - бы пес-ни
Pes
Пес
mf
mf
75
mp
ni
ни
pov - to - ryat.
пов-то - рять.
U
У
p


80
cresc.
mf
be - re - ga
se - reb - rya - na - ya
i - va
бе - ре - га
се - реб - ря - на - я
и - ва
sub. f
mf
mp
mp
85
mf
mp
Ka - sa - yet - sya
sen - tyabr - skikh
yar - kikh
vod.
Ка - са - ет - ся
сен - тябрь - ских
яр - ких
вод.
8va
p
mf
mp
f
90
mp
Iz prosh-lo - vo
Из прошяо - го
f
mp
p


95
vos - stav - shi,
вос - став - ши,
mol - cha - li - vo
мол - ча - ли - во
8va
100
Ko mne na - vstre - chu
Ко мне на-встре - чу
ten mo - ya i - det.
тень мо - я и - дет.
105


110
mf
Zdes stol - ko lir stol - ko
Здесь столь-ко лир столь-ко
mp
115
Subito ♩= 56
f
lir po - ve - she - no na vyet - ki, No i mo - yey kak
лир по - ве - ше - но на вет - ки, Но и мо - ей как
f
120
Animated
mf
f
mf
bud - to mes - to est. A e - tot dozh - dik, sol-nech - ny i
буд - то мес-то есть. А э - тот дож-дик, солнеч-ный и
mf


125
mp
mp
red - ky,
ред - кий,
Mne u - te -
Мне у - те -
mp
p
mp
130
mf
crese.
she - nye i bla - ga - ya Bla
ше - нье и - бла - га - я Бла
p
135
f
Poco rit.
p
p
ga ya vyest.
га я весть.
f
mf
p