VO0013-V

Vasken Ohanian

Mountain Songs

with poetry by Li Bai

For Solo Tenor and Piano

1. The Waterfall
2. The Clearing at Dawn
3. The Flocks of Birds
4. The Summit Temple
5. The Green Mountain
6. Down the Mountain

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VAOMusic

For my good friend, Emilio Valdez.
May this piece be an escape to the
wilderness, wherever you are.

Poetry by Li Bai

1. The Waterfall (excerpt)

... Oh mountains of renown that I adore,
You fill my heart with deep repose.
No longer need I take the potions of precious stones,
You can wash the earth stains from my face.
    Let me be with the things I love,
    And leave the world of man forever.

2. The Clearing at Dawn (trans. Arthur Waley)

The fields are chill, [and] the sparse rain has stopped;
The colors of spring teem on every side.
The pond is full with leaping fish;
The green boughs droop with singing thrushes.
The flowers of the field have dabbled their
    powdered cheeks;
The mountain grasses are bent, level at the waist.
By the bamboo stream, the last fragment of cloud
    Blown by the wind, slowly scatters away.

3. Flocks of Birds

Flocks of birds are flying high in the distance;
A lonely cloud wanders, alone.
The Peak and I sit, facing one another, sharing a mutual
    gaze, never tiring;
There is only the mountain.

4. The Summit Temple

The Summit Temple is a hundred feet high,
Here I could pluck the stars with my hand.
I dare not speak aloud in the silence,
For fear of waking the people of heaven.

5. The Green Mountain

If you ask me why I live on the green mountain,
I will smile, my heart at ease.
    Peach blossoms float down mountain streams....
    There is no other heaven on earth.

6. Down the Mountain

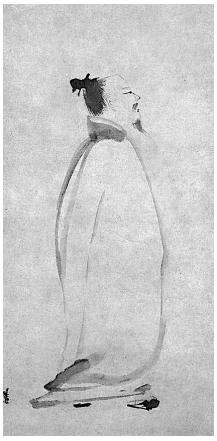
As I went down the Jade Mountain in the evening,
    Moonlight was my escort home.
Looking back, I saw my path lying in the deep shadow.
I reached the farmhouse of a friend,
    and a young boy opened the thorny gate.
We traversed the secluded path through the bamboo,
Where green vines caught on my clothes.

Happily I cried, "Here may we rest!"
I passed the time drinking with my friend,
Singing, "The Wind in the Pines."

We finished our song as the stars faded away.
You were happy my friend, and so was I,
And together, we let the world go by

Composers Note:

Li Bai was one of China's most prominent figures in poetry during the Tang Dynasty. His poetry is known for its Romanticism and vivid imagery. Unlike Western-European poetry, which tends to flow more fluidly, Tang Dynasty, Chinese poetry strings together characters like precious stones. While I use English translations of Li Bai's poetry in *Mountain Songs*, giving the work western fluidity, each song works like an inset jewel, preserving the aformentioned characteristic of Tang Dynasty Poetry.



About the Poet:

During the rise of the Golden Age of Chinese Poetry, Li Bai was one its most renown poets. A deeply romantic figure, his thousands of poems are full with rich imagery. They often describe his life and experiences, traveling, visiting friends, and immersing himself in nature. Although China would experience conflict toward the end of Li Bai's life, his early works show a glimpse of what it was like to live carefree during the height of the prosperous Tang Dynasty.

Duration:

18:00

About the Composer:

As a composer and conductor, Vasken Ohanian is known for the expressivity in his music making. He strives to compose music that is relevant to the human experience, often incorporating elements of his Armenian heritage in his compositions. He is a former winner of the *Annual Kris Getz Composition Competition* and a recipient of the *Dean Emeritus Luis Costa Award for Music*. As a conductor, he formerly served as Co-director and Resident Conductor for the 4th Annual *Hot Air Music Festival*.

Vasken Ohanian received his Bachelor of Music in Composition from the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, studying under Elinor Armer. He holds a double Master of Music in Composition and Choral-Conducting from the Bob Cole Conservatory of Music, studying with Dr. Martin Herman (Composition) and Dr. Jonathan Talberg (Choral-Conducting).

Learn more at: www.vaskenohanian.com

Performing a work by Vasken Ohanian in your upcoming recital or concert?
We'd love to hear about it! Contact us at: **www.vaskenohanian.com/contact**

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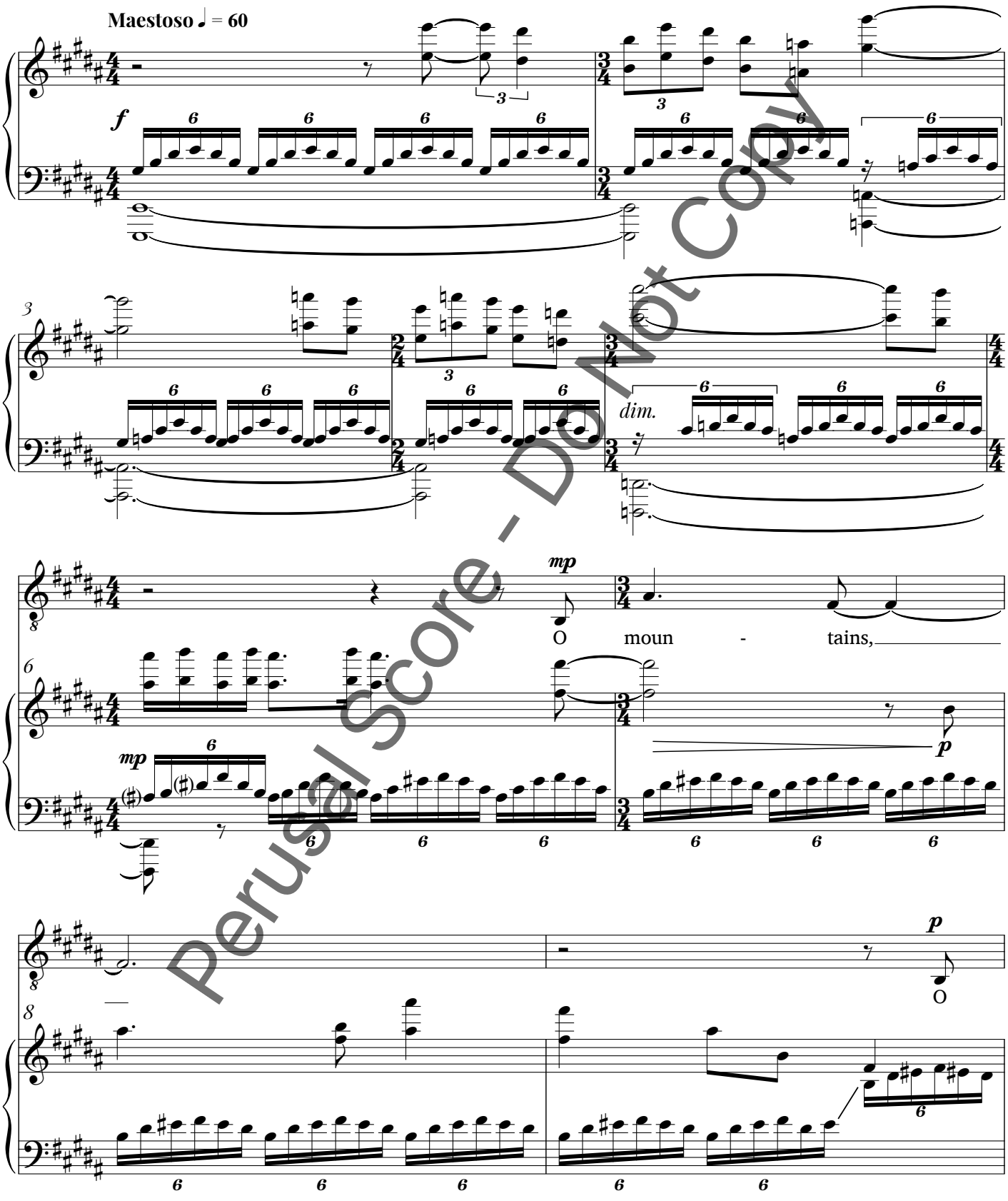
1. The Waterfall

Li Bai (701-762) Vasken Ohanian (b. 1990)



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moun - tains of re - nown that I a - dore,

cresc

you fill my heart with

deep re - pose

No

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lon - ger need I take the po - tion of

pre - - cious stones,

you can

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wash the earth stains

21

from my face.

22

mf

Let me be with the things I

23

sfp

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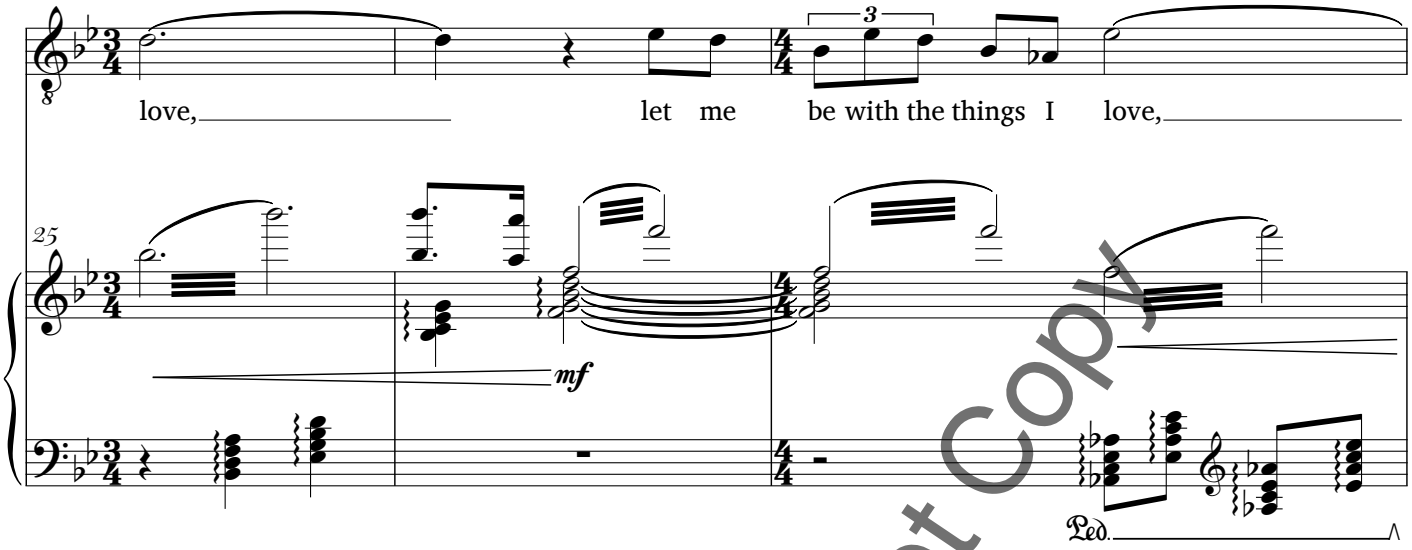

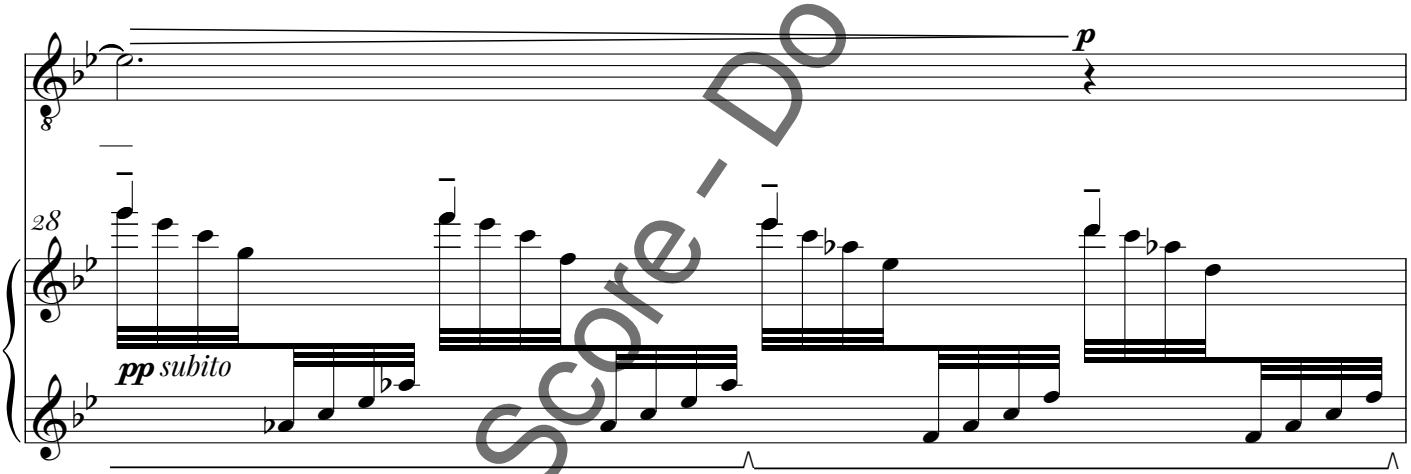

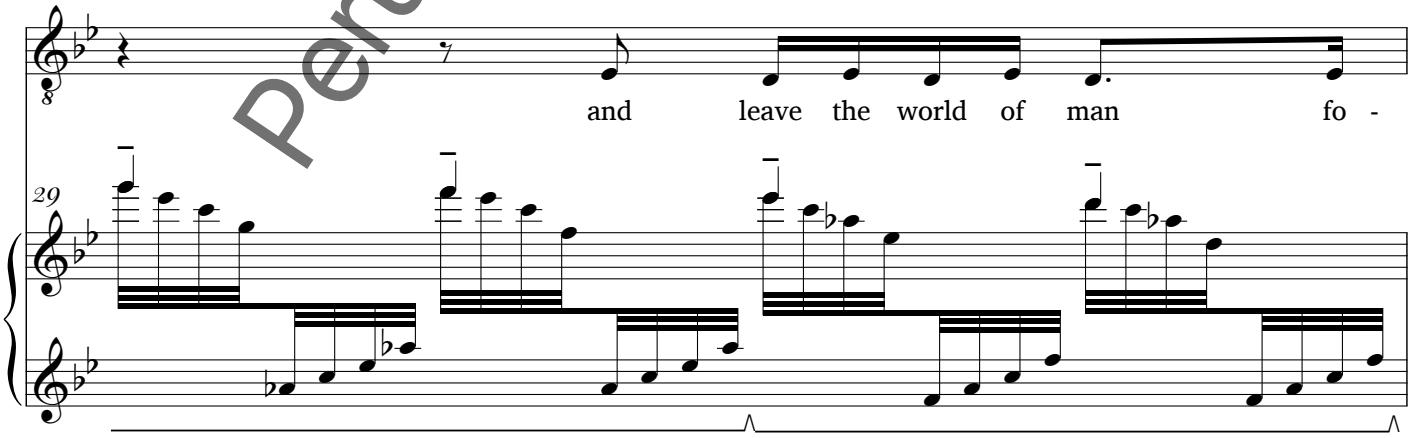

(simile)

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cresc.

re - - - - - - ver!

33

piu stringendo

O moun - - tains, O

34

molto rit.

moun - tains, O moun - tains, O

35

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a tempo

rit.

ff *mp*

moun - tains,

36

ff *p*

Ped.

meno mosso

rall.

let me be with the things I love,

38

and leave the world of man fo - re - - ver.

40

dim.

pp

8vb

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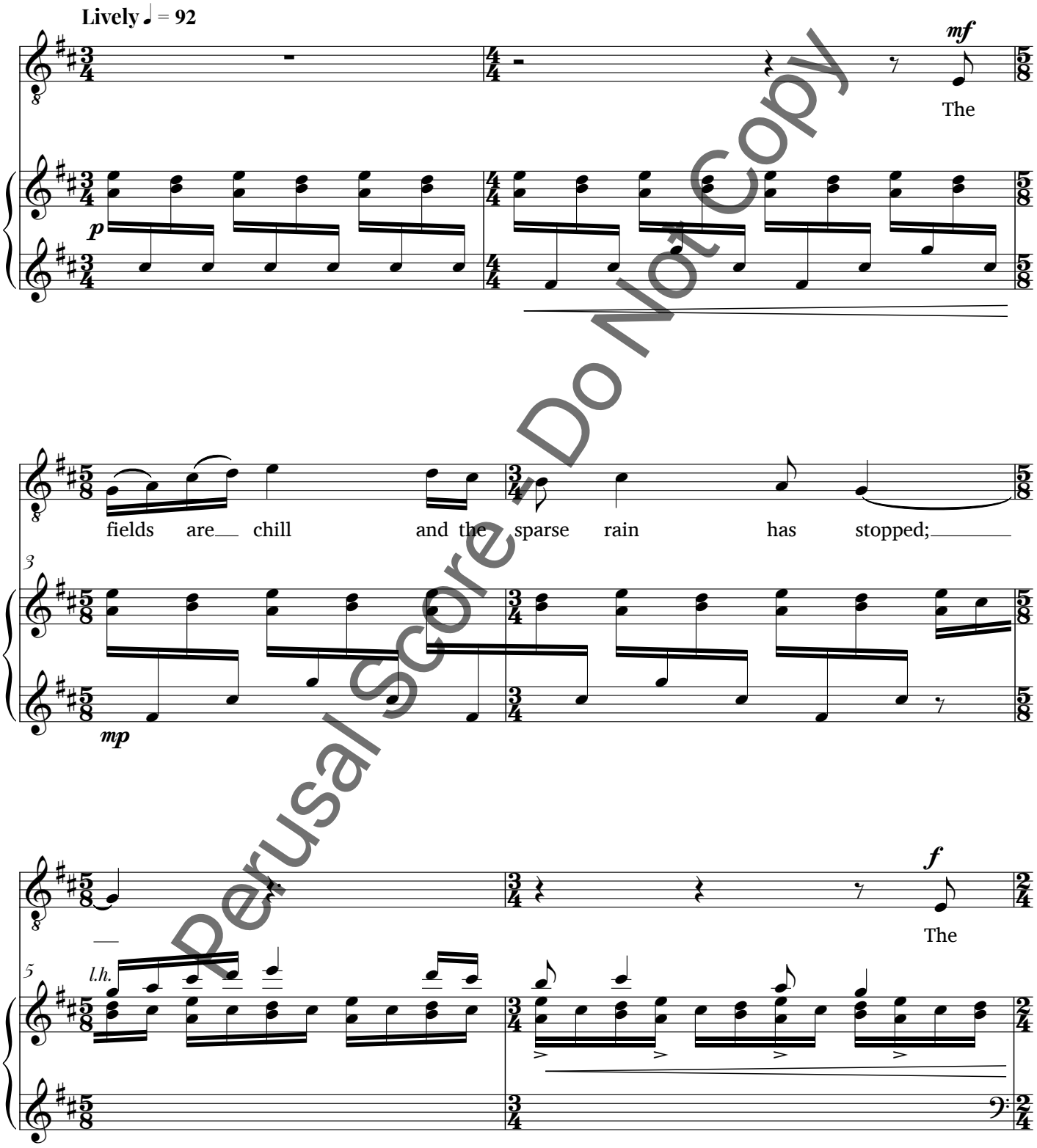
2. The Clearing at Dawn

Li Bai (701-762)
trans. Arthur Waley

Vasken Ohanian (b. 1990)



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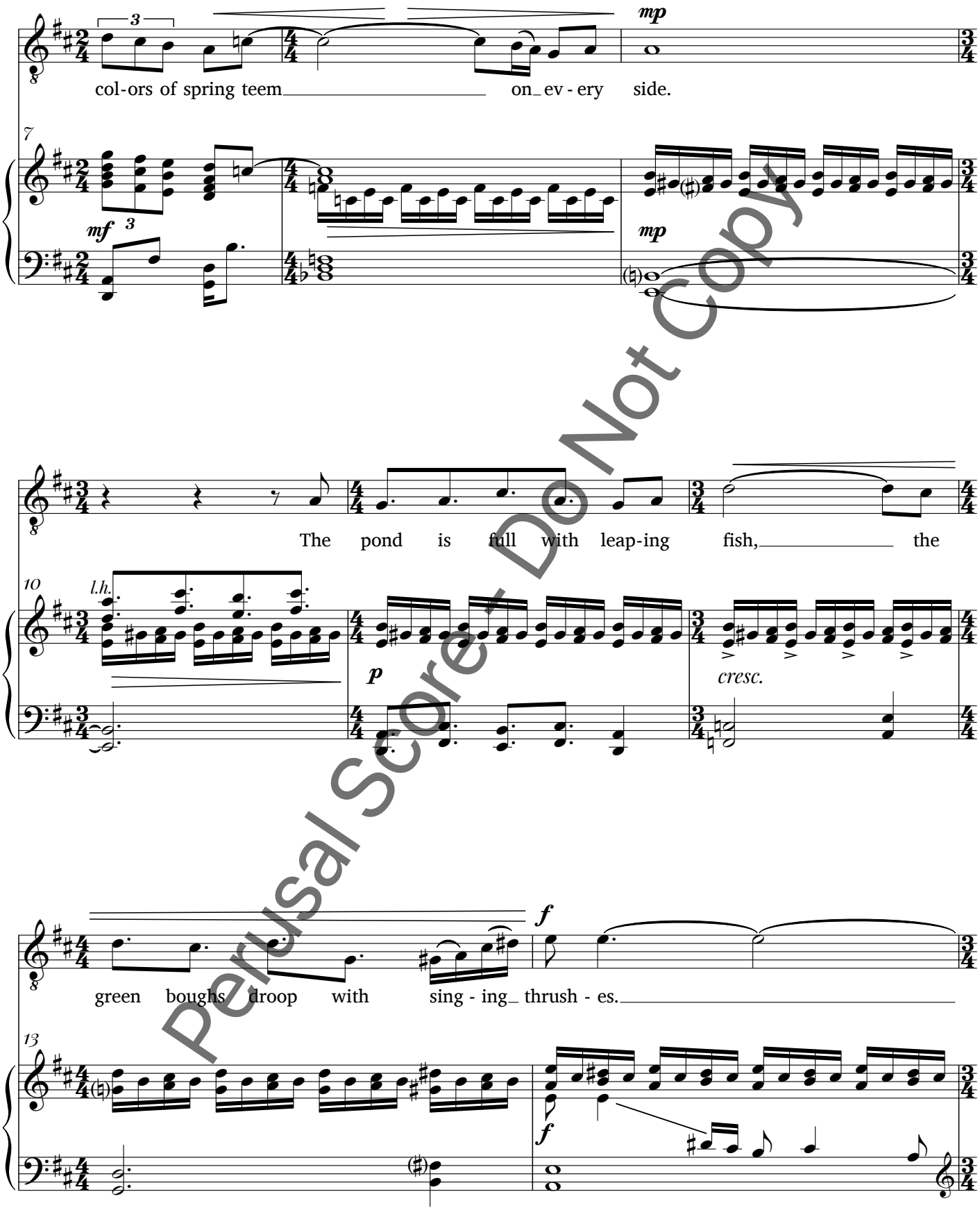

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The

15

mp

flow - ers of the field have dab - bled their pow - dered

17

3

3

cheeks;

p

19

l.h.

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mp

3

By the bam - boo streams the last

31

frag - ment of cloud blown by the

33

wind slow - ly

35

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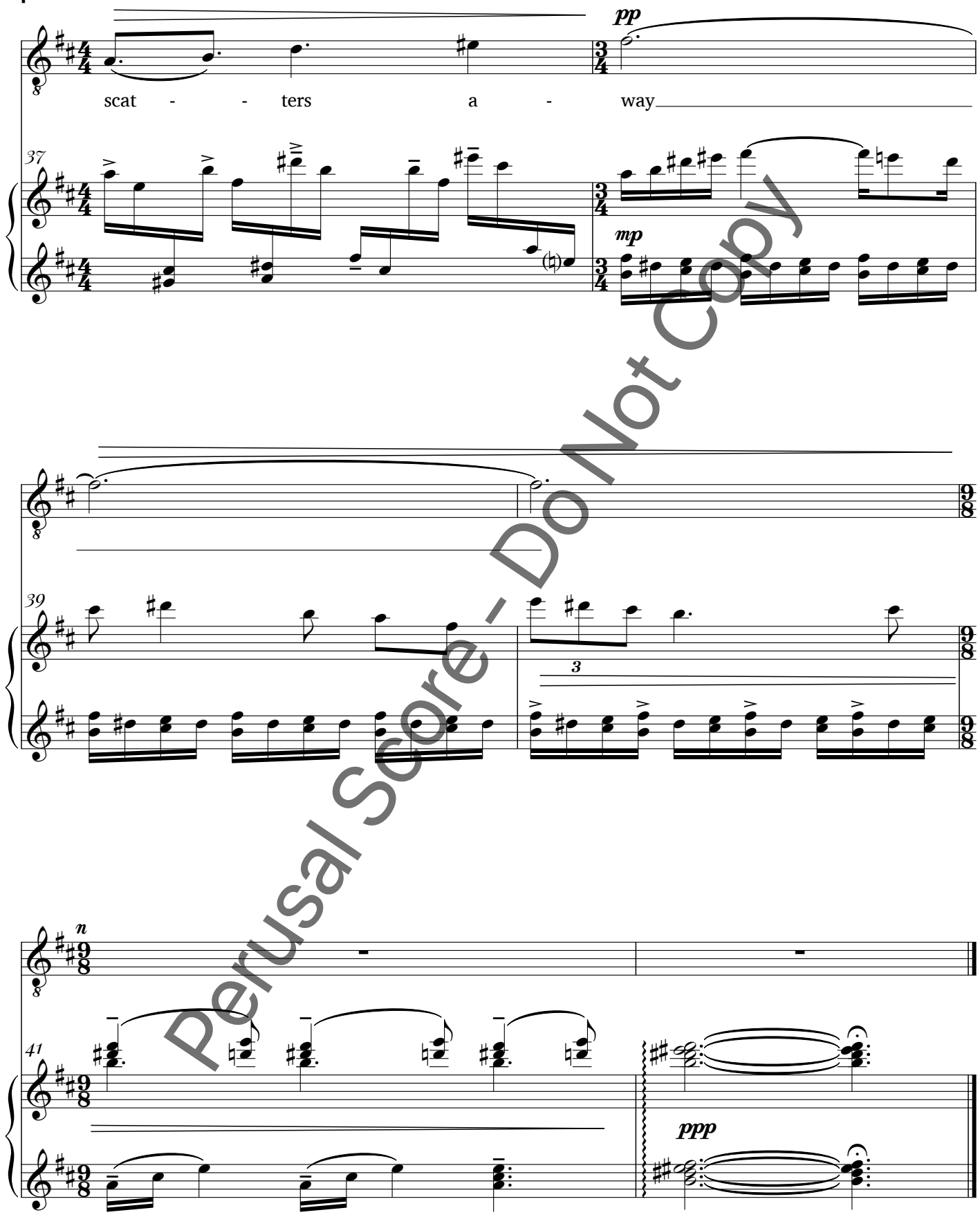

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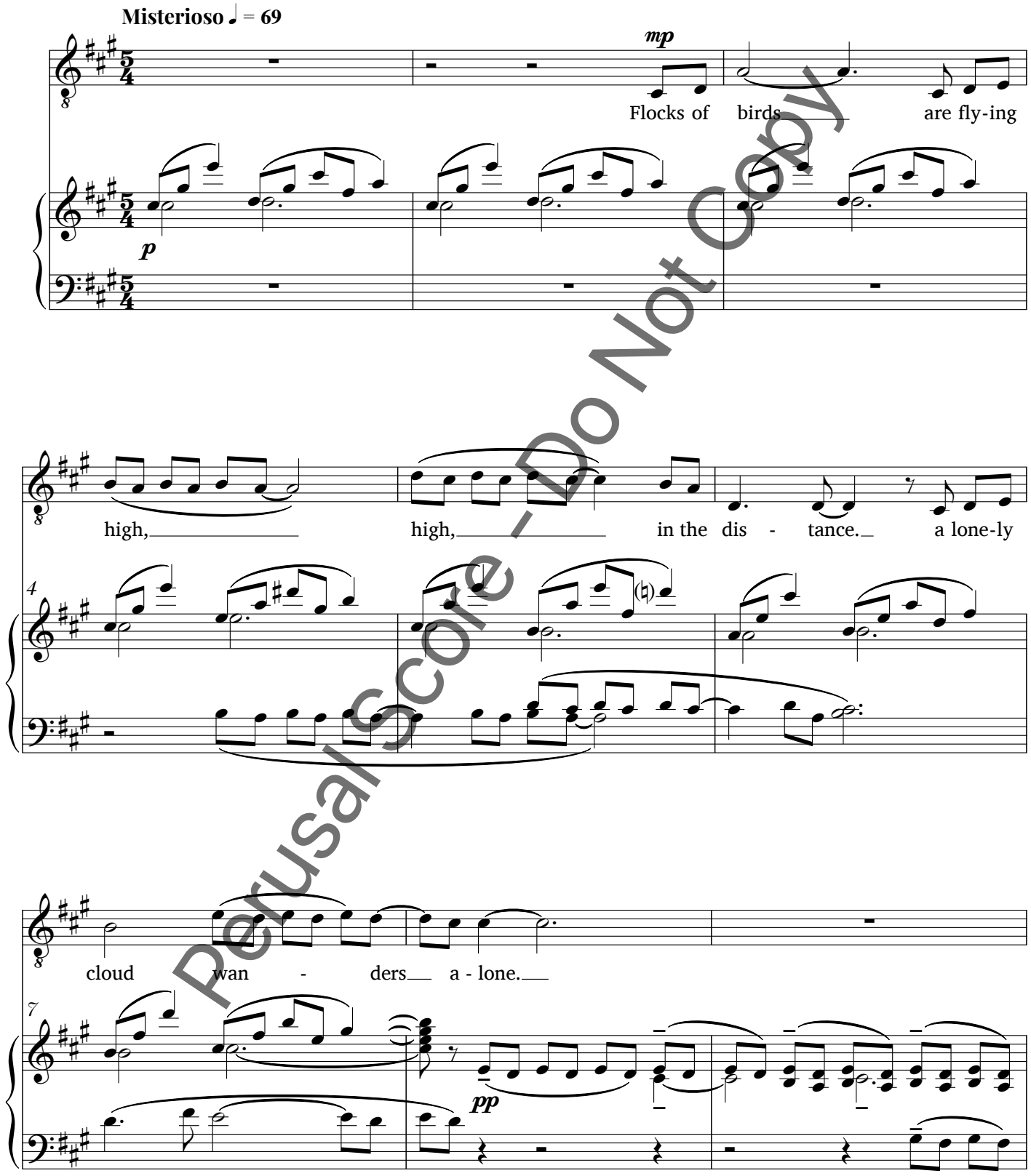
3. Flocks of Birds

Li Bai (701-762) Vasken Ohanian (b. 1990)



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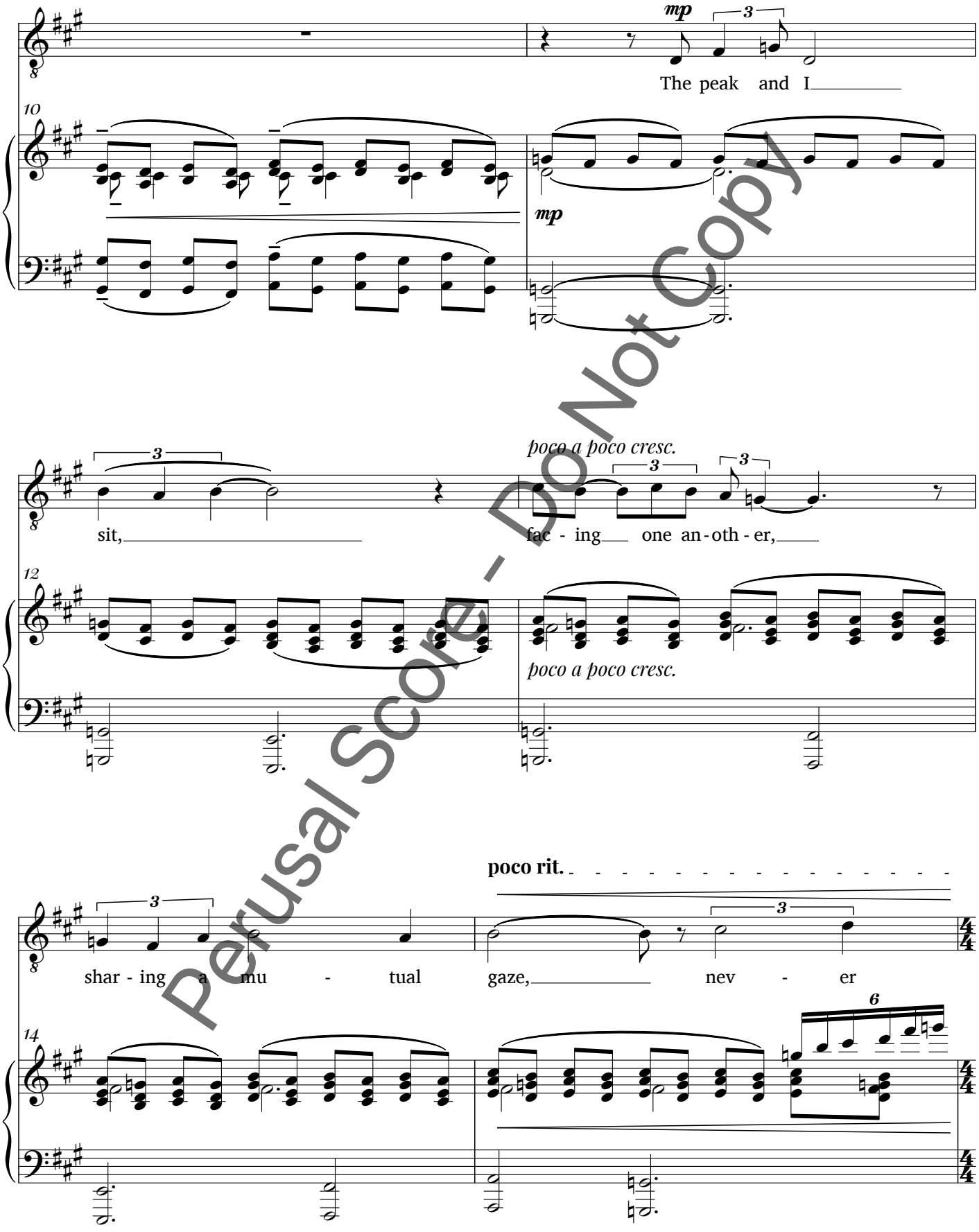

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rit.

p

There is

23

mf *mp* *p*

poco meno mosso

non dim.

Tempo I ♩ = 69

on - ly the moun - tain.

27

rall.

30

pp

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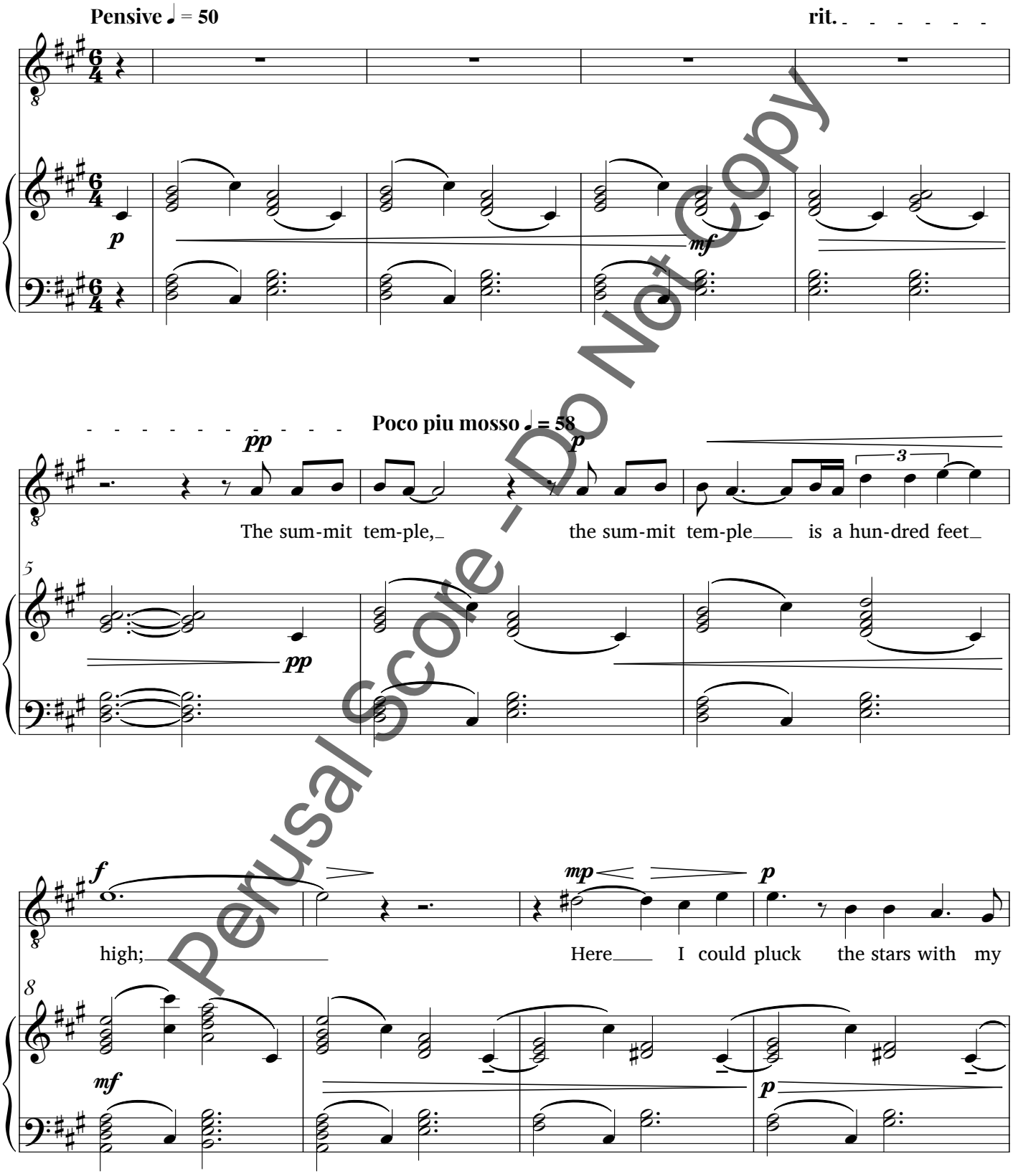
4. The Summit Temple

Li Bai (701-762)

Vasken Ohanian (b. 1990)



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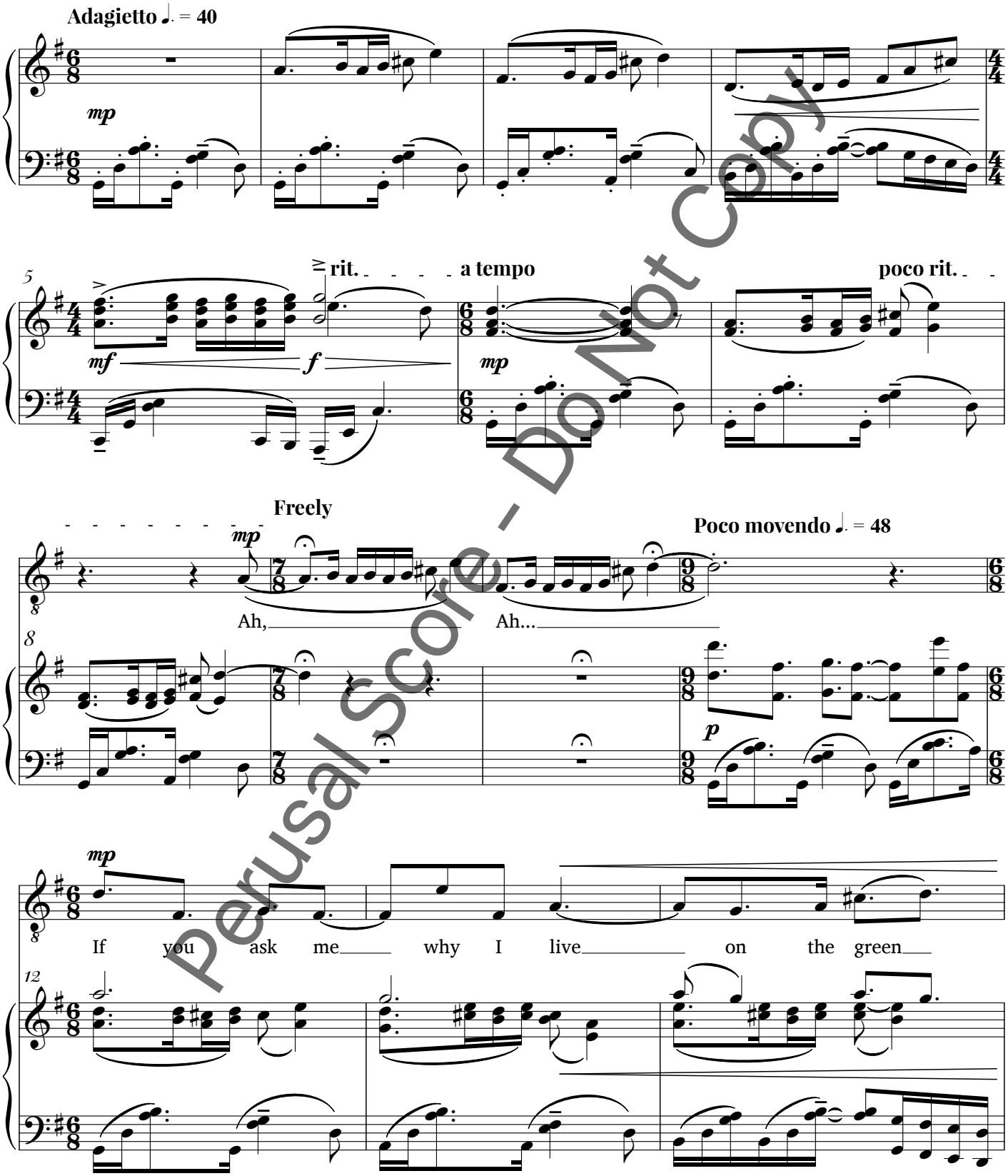
5. The Green Mountain

Li Bai (701-762)

Vasken Ohanian (b. 1990)



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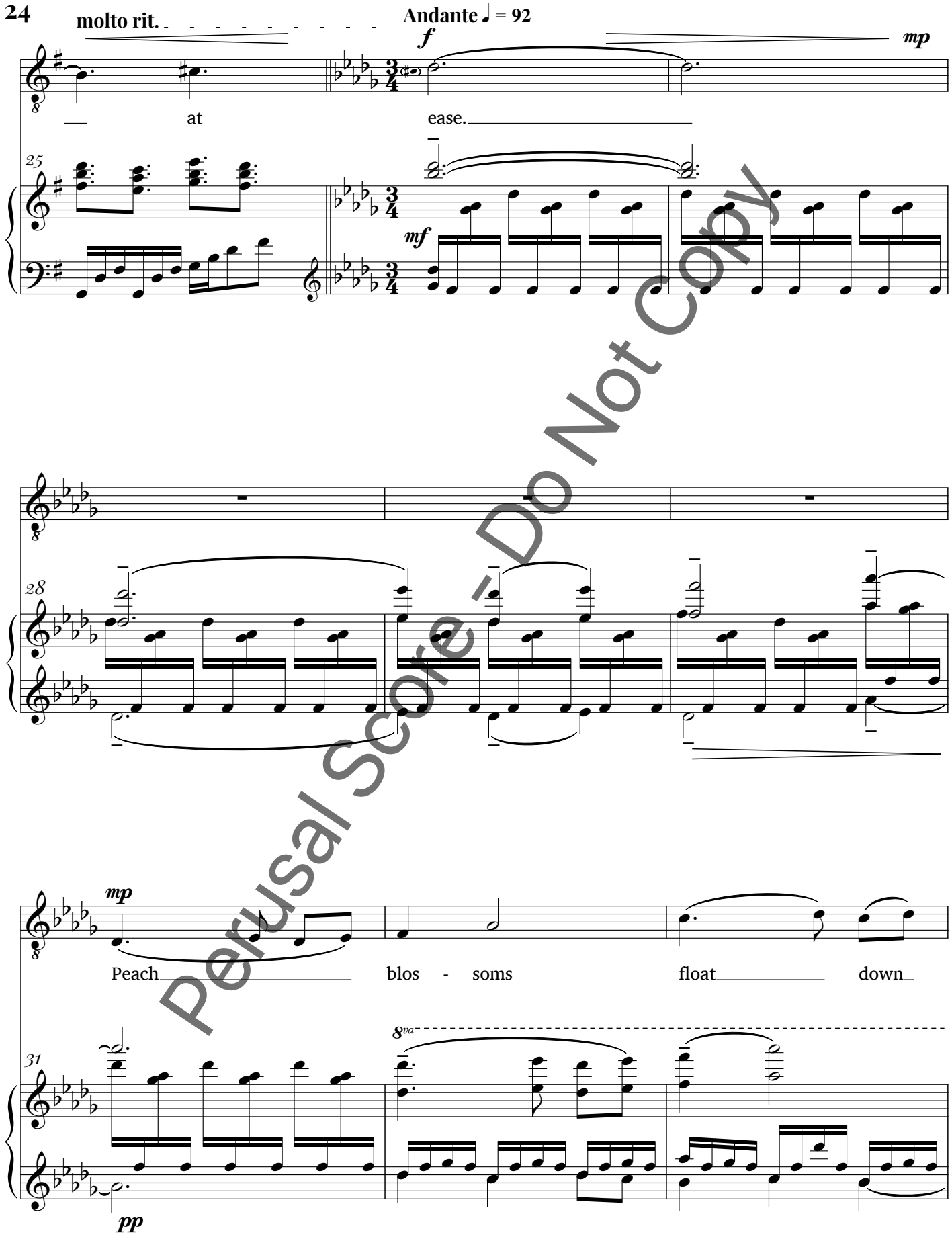

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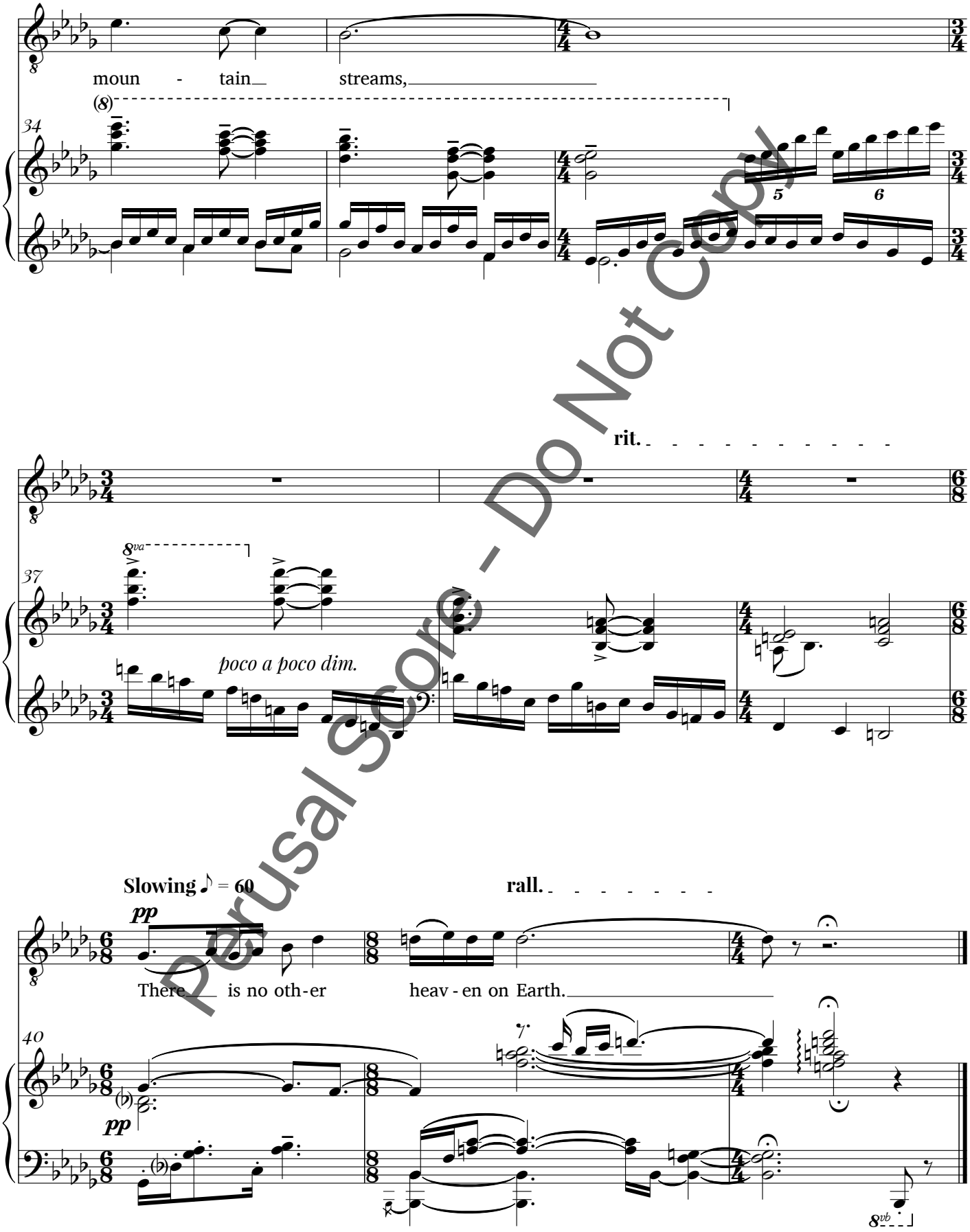

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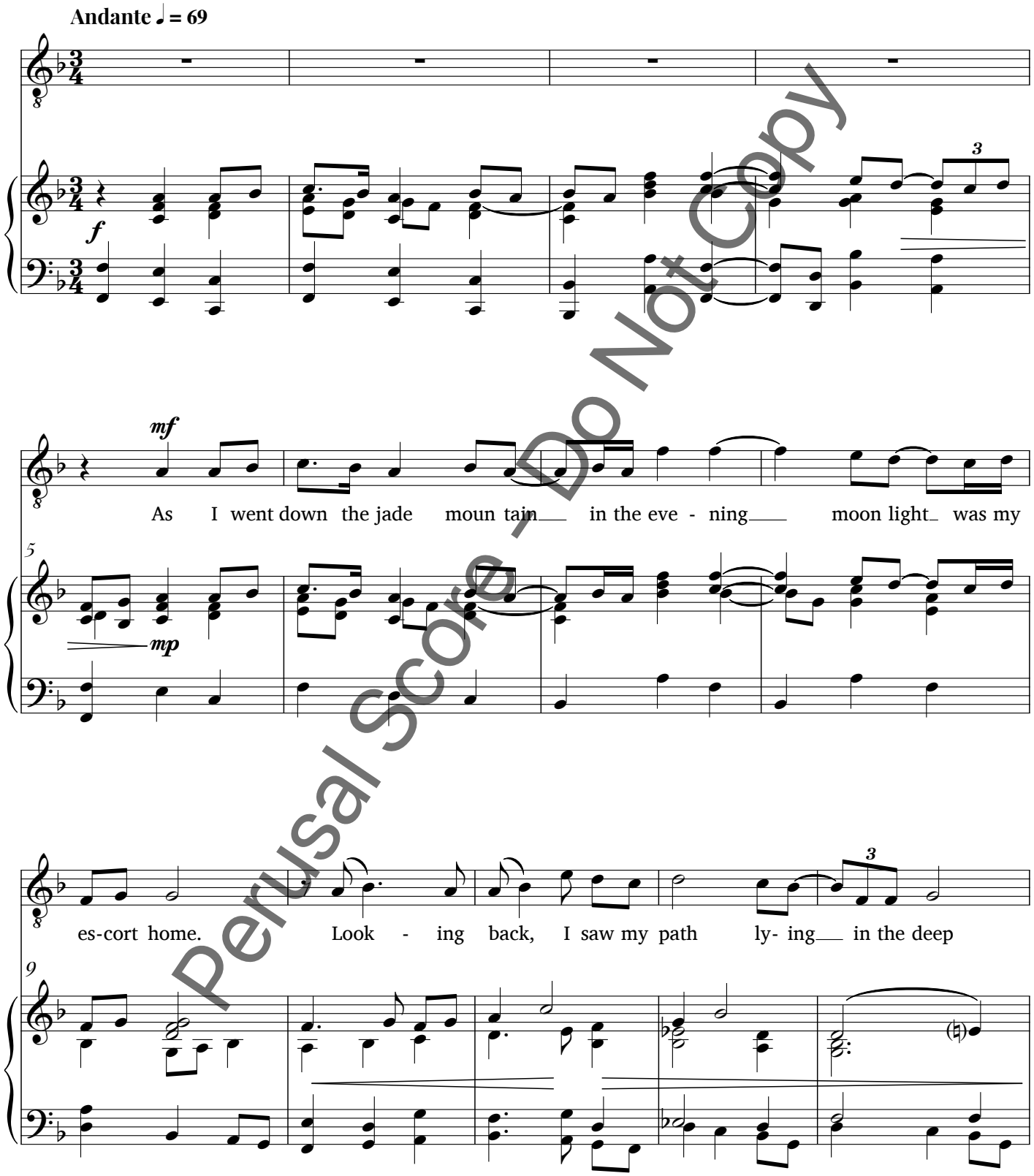
6. Down the Mountain

Li Bai (701-762)

Vasken Ohanian (b.1990)



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poco rit.

shad ow.

14

mp f

8vb

Meno mosso ♩ = 63

p

I reached the

18

pp subito

farm- house of a friend, and a young boy

mf

21

mp

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o - pened the thor - ny gate. We tra -

25

dim.

versed the se - clud - ed path through the bam -

28

pp

boo, where green vines caught on my

rit.

30

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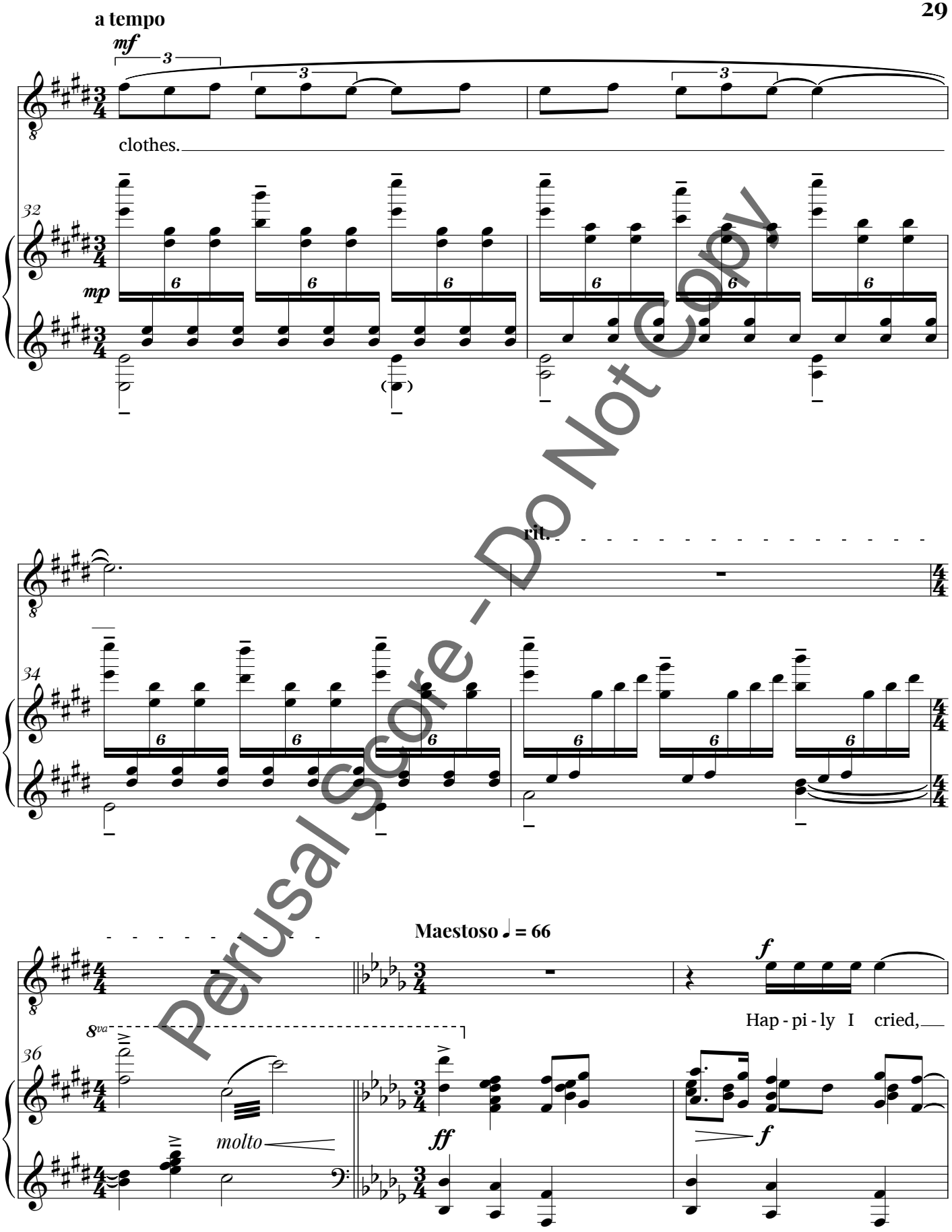

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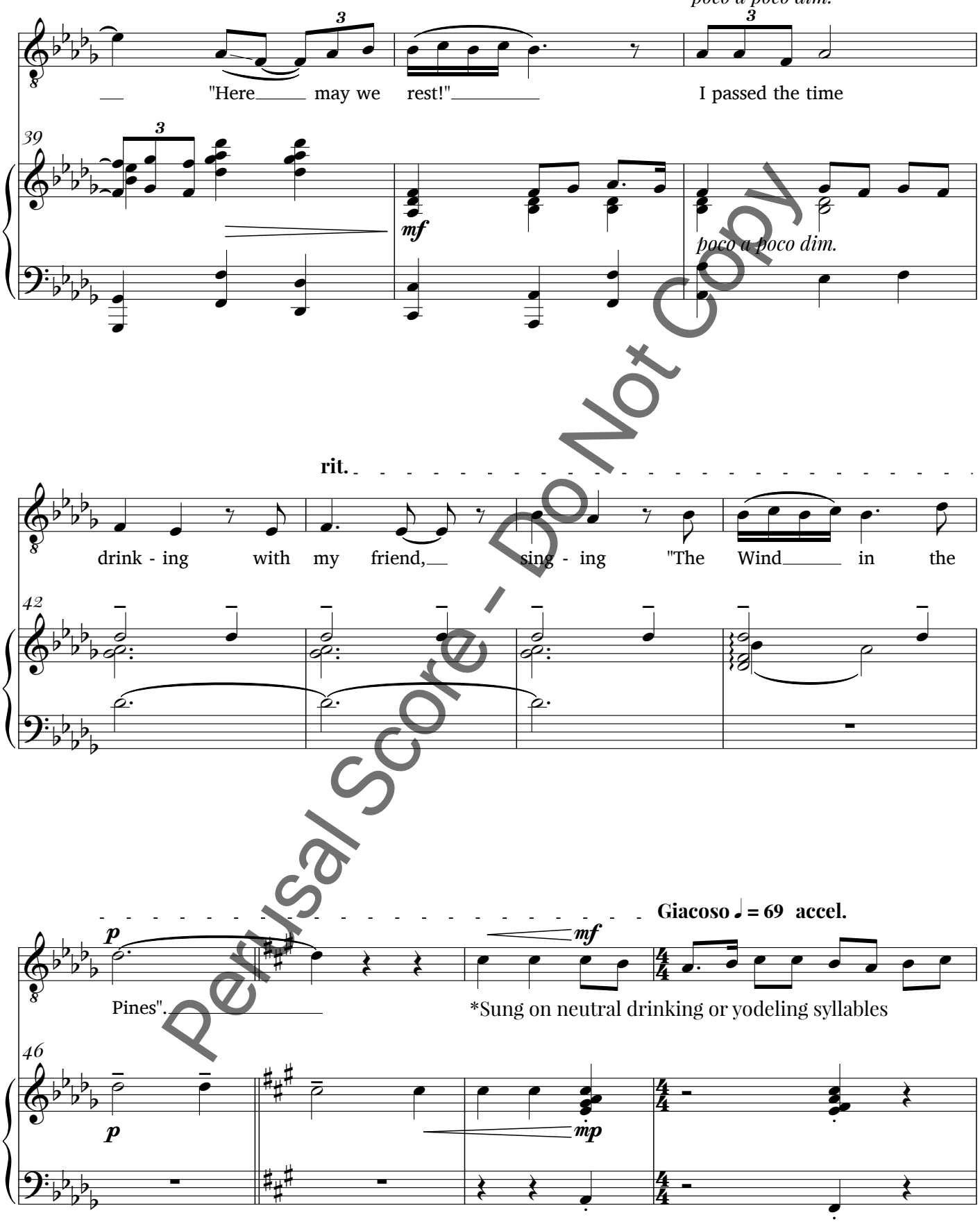

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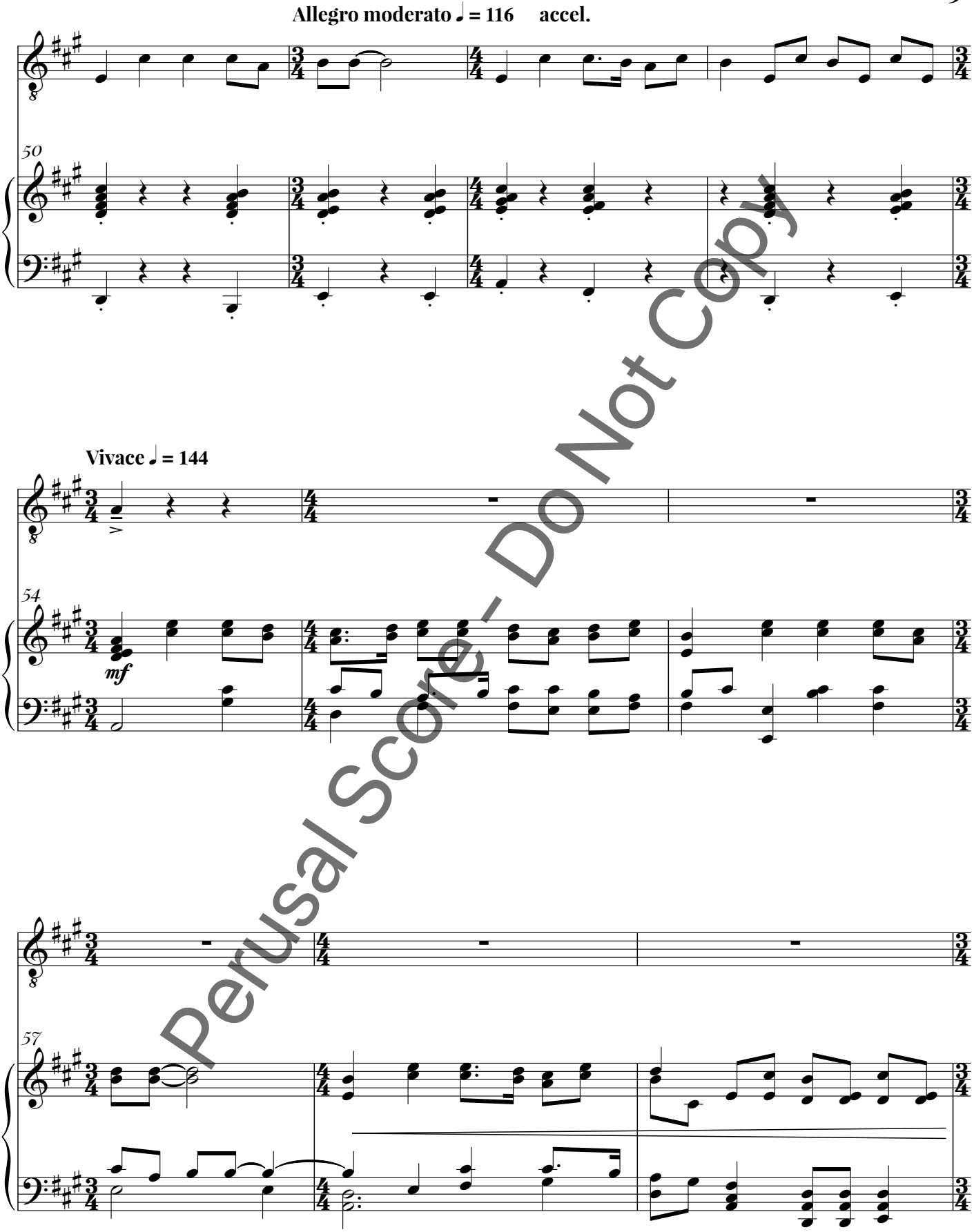

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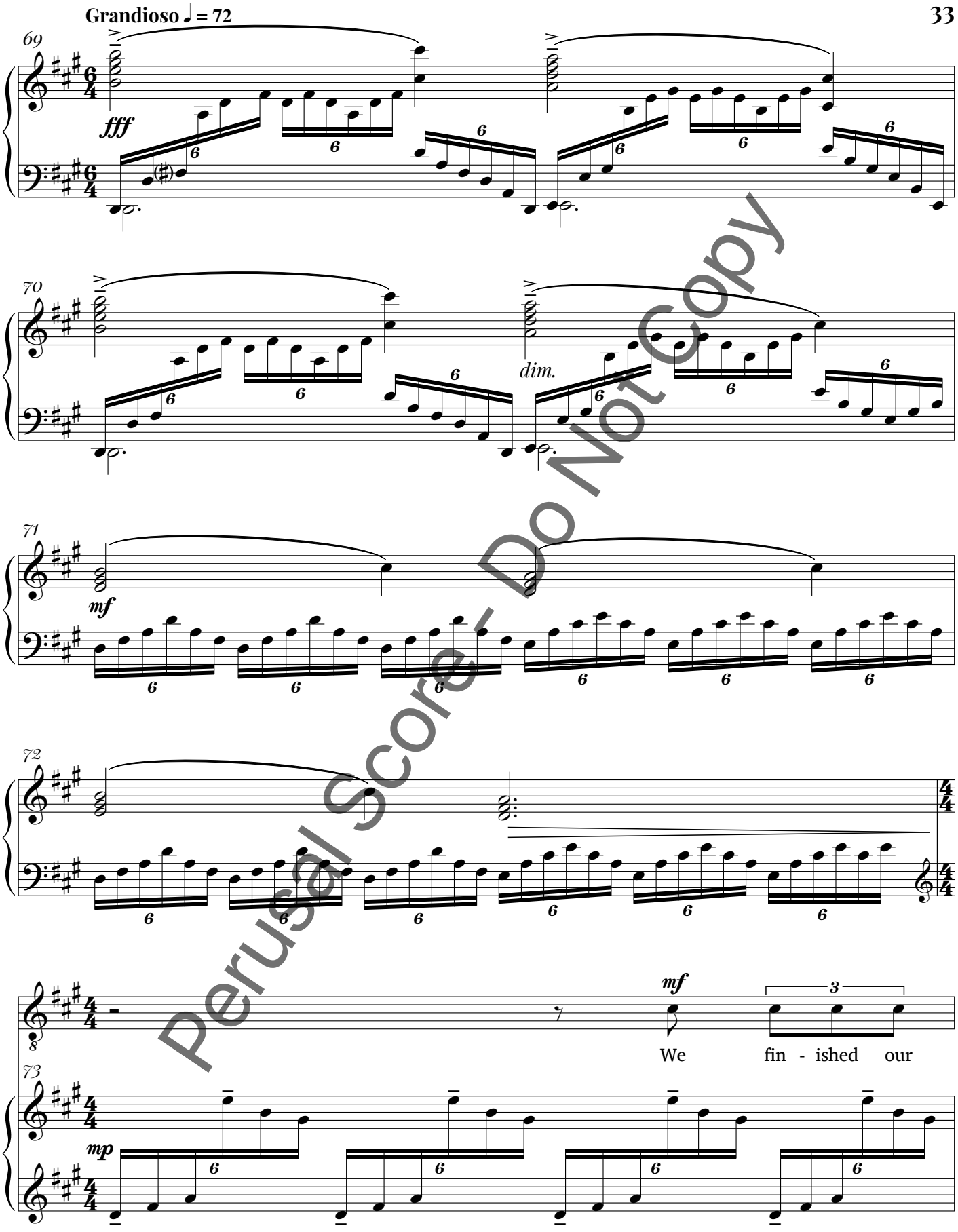

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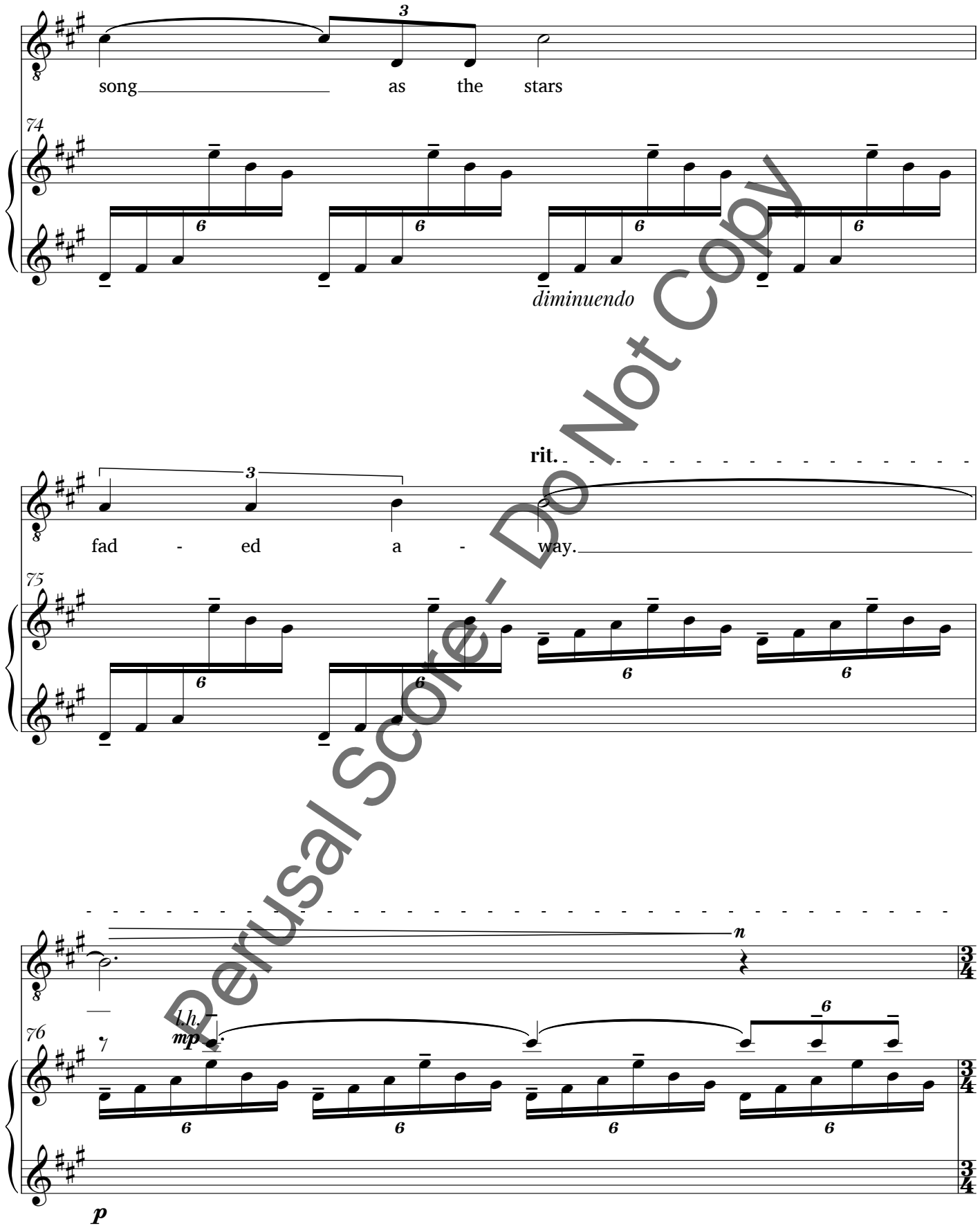

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Pensivo ♩ = 56

p

You were hap - py my friend

77

p

and so was I, and to-geth-er we let the world go by.

79

8va

pp

rall.

83

(8)

ppp

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