Brahms's *Four Serious Songs*: Arranged for Trombone and String Orchestra

D.M.A. Document

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Abstract

The trombone is an instrument that can very closely imitate the beauty of the human voice. However, composers do not often utilize this quality in pieces written specifically for trombone. Trombone players perform songs written for voice often on recitals and other public performances to show the very singing quality of the instrument. The trombone repertoire also lacks compositions from some of the most prolific composers throughout history. Vocalists, horn players, clarinetists and violinists, to name a few, all have pieces written for them by the likes of Mozart, Beethoven, and Brahms. The trombone has no such list.

This arrangement of Johannes Brahms's *Four Serious Songs* gives the trombone player a chance to perform a piece by one of the most prolific Romantic composers. Arranged for string orchestra, this also gives the performer a chance to play in front of a large ensemble on a major concert, or with a string quintet on a recital. From the prologue, the performer will learn about Brahms's life at the time of writing this cycle, Brahms as a songwriter, and will get a detailed analysis of the *Four Serious Songs'* text and musical expression.

Dedication

For my always supportive and loving wife, Megan

Acknowledgements

This document could not have been written and my degree could not have been finished without the constant support from my wife, Megan. I would also like to express my deepest thanks to my parents for their relentless support. I would also like to express my gratitude to my family and friends who have helped me along this difficult path.

Thank you to my advisor, teacher, and friend, Joe Duchi. Your support and belief in what I can accomplish will always be deeply appreciated. Thank you to my committee, Mr. Henniss, Dr. Kinney, and Dr. Mikkelson, for your advice, support and wisdom throughout my entire degree process.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Purpose

Brahms's *Four Serious Songs* have had a special place in my own repertoire ever since being introduced to them by a former teacher. I was looking for some beautiful songs to perform on my next recital after having performed Gustav Mahler's "Songs of the Wayfarer" on a previous recital. Playing Brahms's songs and understanding the text and musical meaning touched me both musically and personally. Brahms was such a unique person, and he, I felt, opened himself up within these songs.

When deciding on a document topic, I determined that I wanted it to be something that could be used in the current trombone world. I did not want to explore a topic that was interesting, but not very applicable. I have felt for a long time that the trombone repertoire needs more music to show the musicality and vocal ability of the instrument. Sitting in the orchestra during a concerto or solo piece for other instruments by prolific composers such as Beethoven and Tchaikovsky, I am constantly thinking that there should be such amazing music for the trombone to be played in front of the orchestra. As a result, I decided it would be a great contribution to the trombone performance field to arrange Brahms's *Four Serious Songs* for trombone and string orchestra.

To accompany the arrangement I wanted to provide a general account of Brahms's song writing style, a brief analysis of the text and musical devices of the *Four Serious Songs,* and an overview of Brahms's last years alive. I feel it is important for the performer to have this knowledge in order to fully understand how to musically and intellectually play these songs.

Procedures

The first question I had when preparing to arrange the songs was what kind of ensemble to use. My original idea was to arrange the songs for a brass ensemble, but I felt the songs did not lend themselves to a brass arrangement. My next idea was to arrange the songs for orchestral winds, so that a band or an orchestra could accompany the trombone, and a wind section could produce many different colors. However, I kept hearing strings at certain parts in the songs, so I explored the possibility of arranging the songs for a chamber orchestra. In thinking further about the songs and becoming more familiar with the composition of the original piano score, the more I heard only strings. Thus, I eventually came to the conclusion that I would arrange the songs for a string orchestra.

In preparing to arrange the songs, I studied some of Brahms's orchestral string writing, mainly from his symphonies. Like many orchestral musicians, I have listened to and performed Brahms's symphonies many times throughout my career. From this experience I had the sound of his orchestration in my head, and studying his symphonies helped me to solidify this sound.

I did however have my own ideas as to how I wanted to orchestrate the songs. Above all, I wanted to portray the meaning of the text. An example of this is in the second song, measures 49 through 52 and 56 through 60. I wanted a very dark and ominous sound, so I opted to write only in the low strings. Instead of putting the top notes in one of the violin parts, I wrote the top notes in the viola and put two notes in the cello. The text at this point states that the unborn are better off than those alive or who have died, so having this very deep sound was important. Another example is in the fourth song from measure 66 to 70. The text speaks of looking at a mirror, face to face with oneself. I portrayed this image with passing triplet patterns throughout the strings, rather than just in one part. Even though I did have Brahms's string writing in mind while orchestrating, I mainly used my own ideas.

Since arranging for strings is new to me, I used a variety of sources to help me in this process. First, I used notes from my string pedagogy class that I took while pursuing my music education degree (i.e. range of each string instrument). Second, I used quick Internet searches to answer different simple inquiries (i.e. how to add pizzicato). And third, I utilized colleagues in the string field to further confirm certain details (i.e. writing open G for violins).

I obtained two other arrangements of the songs for trombone and piano and analyzed each to see the similarities and differences between these arrangements and the original. The first arrangement is by Barnaby Kerekes, published by Cherry Classic Music (2001), and the second is by Donald C. Little, published by Kagarice

Brass Editions (2005). Both editions were very loyal to the original piano part. The main differences were in the trombone part. The text was not in the solo part in either edition. There were many added articulations, tempo marks, dynamics and phrasing indications in the trombone part that are not in the original score. This comparative analysis helped me to make many decisions in my score. For example, I added the text below the trombone part so that the soloist knows what is being stated in the text and can use the natural syllables, breath marks and sentence structure of the text to phrase more like a vocalist. Like these editions, I tried to stay as loyal as I could to the original score when writing the string parts. However, there are a few differentiations in the string parts throughout. An example of this is in the second song, measures 58 and 59 in which I added a detaché line to the strings articulation emphasizing the importance of the downbeat.

Performance Practice

While arranging these songs there were many musical decisions to make outside of just orchestration. I decided to add the text into the trombone part. For some reason this is not done in many, if any arrangements of songs for trombone. I believe it is very important to know and understand the meaning of the text at all times while performing any song. This enriches the performance, as the performer is able to more fully convey the meaning of the text. I also added the text to direct the trombone player how to articulate each note and when to breathe. Simply

following the sentence structure and following the rule to not breathe in the middle of a word will help the performer understand where to take breaths.

I did not add articulations to the trombone part, however, so that the performer can make these decisions his/herself. Each syllable has its own sound in language, and I feel the trombone player should look to the text to decide how to articulate each note. With the trombone having a bigger mouthpiece, this can be achieved not just on typical syllables like 'ta' for 'T' or 'da' for 'D', but also on other words such as 's' or 'g.' The main goal is to sound as close to the human voice as possible.

The orchestration allows for a full string ensemble or a string quintet to perform. An ensemble with at least two on a part is best as there are a few areas where cellos and basses have split parts. This issue is easily facilitated, however, for a quintet, as the players will follow the rule of leaving out the doubled note.

Since I tried to stay loyal to Brahms's piano score when orchestrating, the string parts lack an overabundance of articulations and other musical markings. I used Brahms's articulations from the piano score while adding some throughout as I thought necessary (see example above regarding detaché marking). Dynamics and phrase markings are pulled strictly from the original score. I avoided adding many more musical markings so the conductor and/or soloist have an open canvas on which to work.

Review of Literature

I limited the scope of my research for this document to 'Brahms as a song composer' and 'Brahms's *Four Serious Songs*.' Since my document serves as a general overview of Brahms's last years alive, his song composition style, and a musical and text analysis of the *Four Serious Songs*, this specific search gave me more than enough sources to research.

There were three very helpful sources when learning about the *Four Serious Songs* specifically. The article by Lani Johnson, "Johannes Brahms's *Vier ernste Gesänge,* opus 121 (1896) for Bass and Piano…as Life Ends," was particularly helpful in understanding Brahms's life surrounding the composition of the songs. Johnson provides a detailed theoretical analysis of the songs as well as a brief text analysis. The article "Some Thoughts on Brahms *Four Serious Songs,"* by Anne Simpson, includes a very useful analysis of the text of the songs. Simpson breaks down the text both specifically and generally for a full understanding of the meaning. This article also provides information about Brahms's life at the time of the composition of the songs. Finally, Malcolm Boyd's article "Brahms and the Four Serious Songs" provides in-depth biographical information of Brahms at the time of composition. Boyd also gives detailed information about the compositional style of the songs.

There were two sources that were extremely helpful in understanding Brahms's song composition style. Leo Black's article "Brahms's Songs. Leo Black

Reflects on a Lifetimes Journey" provided very important information on Brahms's use of poetry and text in his songs. Lucien Stark's book, *A Guide to the Solo Songs of Johannes Brahms,* contained many interesting ideas about Brahms's song style. This source was key to understanding the true depth of Brahms's songs as a whole. Stark's book also provides a very in depth analysis of the *Four Serious Songs*, including a detailed discussion of the text, analysis of the composition, and information regarding Brahms's state of mind during the composition of the songs.

Chapter 2: Brahms's Last Years and the *Four Serious Songs*

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897) always had a vibrant social life, having many friends he kept in constant touch with through letters and visits.[1] In the last few years of his life however, this connection he had with friends and family was torn apart by death.[2] Having no wife or children, he depended on these friends and confidants for a sense of family and personal connection.[3] The deaths of great friends Elizabeth von Herzogenberg in 1892, Hermine Spies in 1893, Theodor Billroth and Hans von Bülow in 1894 and finally Clara Schumann in 1896, all contributed to a very dark and lonely end of Brahms's life.

Clara Schumann, thought by many to be the love of Brahms's life, was the most difficult for him to endure. At this time, Brahms was also in the last stage of his own life. At Clara's funeral, he showed signs of jaundice, weight loss and was

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[1] Avins, Styra. *Johannes Brahms: Life and Letters.* New York, NY: Oxford University Press Inc., 1997, 679.

[2] Simpson, Anne. "Some Thoughts on Brahms *Four Serious Songs*." *The American Music Teacher* 33, no. 2 (1983), 20.

[3] Stark, Lucien. *A Guide to the Solo Songs of Johannes Brahms.* Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1995, 6.

weakened easily.[4] This was a sure sign of the liver cancer that was afflicting him taking control.

Brahms was already very pessimistic about life, viewing life as being in a constant state of despair.[5] However, Brahms did maintain a strong sense of spirituality, although this did not translate to concrete religious beliefs.[6] In fact, he enjoyed seeking out godless texts in the Bible.[7] In a letter to Elizabeth von Herzogenberg, Brahms states about these texts:

> "*…they aren't heathenish enough for me in the Bible. I've bought the Koran, but can find nothing there either."*[8]

Brahms found dogma distasteful and did not believe in an afterlife.[9] Some critics of the time thought that even though he did not believe in the afterlife, he might have subconsciously hoped for it.[10] Watching his closest friends die at the end of his own life gave him a stronger feeling about death. He loathed it, and saw the passing of his friends as a final goodbye, lost forever.[11] At the same time, he

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[4] Avins, Styra. *Johannes Brahms: Life and Letters.* New York, NY: Oxford University Press Inc., 1997, 734.

[5] Johnson, Lani. "Johannes Brahms's Vier ernste Gesänge, opus 121 (1896) for Bass and Piano…as Life Ends." Journal of Singing 62, no. 4 (March/April 2006), 386.

[6] Beller-McKenna, Daniel. "Brahms on Schopenhauer: The *Vier ernste Gesänge,* op. 121, and late Nineteenth Century Pessimism." *Brahms Studies 1* (1994), 174.

[7] Harrison, Max. The Lieder of Brahms. New York, NY: Praeger Publishers, 1972, 73.

[8] Ibid., 73.

[9] Simpson, Anne. "Some Thoughts on Brahms *Four Serious Songs*." *The American Music Teacher* 33, no. 2 (1983), 20.

[10] Ibid., 20.

[11] Johnson, Lani. "Johannes Brahms's Vier ernste Gesänge, opus 121 (1896) for Bass and Piano…as Life Ends." Journal of Singing 62, no. 4 (March/April 2006), 386.

expressed to many friends the desirable side of death, and he viewed death as a release from this life.[12]

At the time of writing his *Four Serious Songs* Brahms spent a great deal of time contemplating death. As already stated, he was slowly dying of cancer, and his behavior became very volatile which can be seen in his uncharacteristic spats with friends.[13] He likely understood his eventual death was not far away and reacted this way as a result.[14]

He contemplated what would become of his life's work after his own death. With no wife, children, or students of note, this thought must have been overwhelming, especially considering his lack of faith in an afterlife. Brahms reasoned, whether for his own comfort or what he truly believed, that his musical work would carry on his legacy and life after death.[15] In this way, his work is his afterlife.

Brahms was reluctant to enter into any situation without knowing and clearly seeing the end result.[16] He had an unwillingness to take chances in life and music. This is evidenced in his taking roughly fifteen years to complete his first symphony, much of that time spent constantly re-editing. It would anger him a great deal when critics would compare him to the likes of Bach or Beethoven, who he felt were masters and to whom he could not be compared. Also, because of this

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[12] Ibid., 386.
[13] Ibid., 386.
[14] Ibid., 386.
[15] Ibid., 397.
[16] Harrison, Max. *The Lieder of Brahms.* New York, NY: Praeger Publishers, 1972, 32.

lack of self-confidence, he did not like to disclose his innermost feelings.[17] He was extremely careful with his correspondence, even with close friends. Stating in a letter to Clara Schumann:

> *"I would like you to put on my letters a note indicating that they belong only to you and me alone."*[18]

He also urged her to destroy his past letters.[19]

With his disdain for dogma, lack of self-confidence, and fear of unforeseen consequences, it is a wonder Brahms published such a personal and dark cycle of songs as his *Four Serious Songs*. Karl Gieringer described the songs as "an overwhelming hymn to death." [20] The songs are also thought by many critics to be a requiem to his life. Brahms rarely expressed his philosophical views outside of his music.[21] With the very clear expression of life as despair and death as a release, it could be thought that Brahms was stating his philosophical view in one last statement through these songs. The fourth song does provide some hope, with text about love and charity, but not through God or religion itself. This is also another statement Brahms could be making: life is only salvaged by putting your faith and hope into love and charity, not God and the afterlife.

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[17] Parmer, Dillon R. "Musical Meaning for the Few: Instances of Private Reception in the Music of Brahms." *Current Musicology* 83 (Spring 2007), 110.

[18] Ibid., 110.

[19] Ibid., 110.

[20] Beller-McKenna, Daniel. "Brahms on Schopenhauer: The *Vier ernste Gesänge,* op. 121, and late Nineteenth Century Pessimism." *Brahms Studies 1* (1994), 171.

[21] Simpson, Anne. "Some Thoughts on Brahms *Four Serious Songs*." *The American Music Teacher* 33, no. 2 (1983), 20.

The texts of the songs overall were rather non-dogmatic. With the ideas of death being certain, a life well lived is its own reward, and love and compassion for fellow man is the highest virtue, Brahms portrays his own non-dogmatic views.[22] Brahms's pessimistic view of life and death, and his loathing the loss of his friends and family at the end of his life can be summed up by the darkest line of text from the second of the *Four Serious Songs:*

> *"the dead are better off than the living, but not as fortunate as those who have yet to be born."*

[22] Stark, Lucien. *A Guide to the Solo Songs of Johannes Brahms.* Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1995, 6.

Chapter 3: Brahms as a Song Writer

All together, Brahms published 196 songs. Song writing was a life-long process, sporadically spread throughout his life.[23] Of the songs, about half were strophic variations, a quarter strophic, and the other quarter through-composed.[24] Songs he labeled 'Lieder' were simple strophic songs, while the label 'Gesänge' was reserved for more elaborate songs.[25] Some general characteristics of Brahms's songs are: very folk-like melodies (ex. *Sonntag)*; fluid melodies with chromatic harmonies and sudden tonality shifts (ex. *Wie bist du, meine könig*); and demonstrating a feeling of longing (ex. *O Tod*).[26] Brahms was able to practice his song writing technique at an early age by practicing setting many different texts and poems to music while working at bars and brothels as a piano player.[27]

While Brahms had a strong sense of melody himself, he often turned to German folk melody as inspiration.[28] He enjoyed the simplicity and directness of

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[23] Stark, Lucien. *A Guide to the Solo Songs of Johannes Brahms.* Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1995, 1.

[24] Ibid., 1.

[25] Ibid., 2.

[26] Boyd, Malcolm. "Brahms and the Four Serious Songs." *The Musical Times* 108, no. 1493 (July 1967), 593.

[27] Black, Leo. "Brahms's Songs. Leo Black Reflects on a Lifetimes Journey." *The Musical Times* 133, no 1794 (Aug 1992), 395.

[28] Stark, Lucien. *A Guide to the Solo Songs of Johannes Brahms.* Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1995, 1.

folk melody.[29] He frequently claimed that when he wanted to invent a melody, he would look to German folksong.[30] His teacher as a youth, Eduard Marxsen, was a big proponent of folksong, thus inspiring Brahms from a young age to become familiar with German folksong.[31] The Romantic movement of nature and all things natural also helped to shape the way Brahms looked at melody and song writing. Many of his melodies are flowing and organic, like the opening of the first song in his *Four Serious Songs.* The melody is simple and flows up and down, imitating the opening ostinato, and then flows naturally out of the opening material in seamless fashion.

The song melody he chose did not always depend on the text and his melody would often be too strong for the text chosen.[32] In general, Brahms preferred the music to dominate the text.[33] However, in his *Four Serious Songs,* he intertwined them naturally and the music encapsulates the text in a very direct way. An example of this from the *Serious Songs* can be seen half way through the third song. Brahms changes from a very powerful and dark minor key when stating, "death is bitter" and switches very organically to a soft sound and major key when stating, "death is welcome."

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[29] Ibid., 3.

[30] Ibid., 3.

[31] Ibid., 3.

[32] Colles, H.C. "Brahms's Shorter Choral Works." *The Musical Times* 74, no 1083 (May 1933), 410.

[33] Simpson, Anne. "Some Thoughts on Brahms *Four Serious Songs*." *The American Music Teacher* 33, no. 2 (1983), 20.

Brahms spent a lot of time with Robert and Clara Schumann, and credits them for influencing his blending of voice and piano.[34] However, the greatest compositional influence Brahms had for his song writing was Franz Schubert.[35] Some characteristics of Schubert's song writing that Brahms adopted included the use of simple melodies, harmonic relationships to provoke emotion, and elevating the role of the piano, so that piano would participate in the meaning of the text.[36] This demonstrates again that Brahms thought of the music being as important, if not more important, than the text.

Schubert and Brahms both used strophic setting as a main vehicle in song writing, however Schubert used the strophic form extensively, almost to a fault.[37] Many of his songs were described as tedious, and begged the question of whether the entire mood of the poem could be represented with such repetition.[38] Brahms tended to be subtler about using strophic melodies, and was very careful not to use too many verses.[39] Brahms used strophic variation in many of his songs to avoid such monotony. He also used rhythmic variation to help the melodic line move along.[40]

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[34] Black, Leo. "Brahms's Songs. Leo Black Reflects on a Lifetimes Journey." *The Musical Times* 133, no 1794 (Aug 1992), 395.

[35] Stark, Lucien. *A Guide to the Solo Songs of Johannes Brahms.* Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1995, 4.

[36] Ibid., 4.

[37] Bell, A. Craig. *The Lieder of Brahms.* Yorkshire, England: The Grain-aig Press, 1979, 4.

[38] Ibid., 4.

[39] Ibid., 5.

[40] Ibid., 8.

One of Brahms's contemporaries, Hugo Wolf, held strong disdain for how Brahms composed his songs.[41] Wolf thought Brahms did not reflect the text well enough, strongly criticizing Brahms's declamation and his melodic style.[42] Wolf composed in the newer style where text dominated the melody. At the time there were two distinct styles of song writing, the newer text dominant style that Wolf utilized, and the old style where the music dominated the text, which Brahms utilized. Critics also criticized Brahms's style of song writing, comparing them to Wolf's songs.[43] This comparison did not seem to make sense, given the two different styles of song composing at the time. This likely had much to do with the two sides of German music during Brahms's career: Wagner, Wolf and other critics on the one side who criticized Brahms's approach to music.[44]

Although Brahms was criticized for his use, or misuse of declamation, it gave him a certain freedom in metrical schemes.[45] He did not always follow the rhyme scheme or syllable scheme of the text.[46] Brahms instead believed the text must yield to the flow of the musical line, and would often let awkward declamation stand in support of the melody.[47] Musicologist Eric Sams once stated:

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41 Platt, Heather. "Jenner vs. Wolf: The Critical Reception of Brahms's Songs." *The Journal of Musicology* 13, no. 3 (Summer 1995), 377.

42 Ibid., 377.

43 Ibid., 381.

44 Ibid., 379.

45 Boyd, Malcolm. "Brahms and the Four Serious Songs." *The Musical Times* 108, no. 1493 (July 1967), 594.

46 Ibid., 594.

47 Stark, Lucien. *A Guide to the Solo Songs of Johannes Brahms.* Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1995, 5.

"Brahms inhabits that hinterland of the lied where song borders on absolute music."[48]

At the same time, Brahms believed that the melody should reflect the metric motion of the text, placing stressed beats of the poem on stressed beats of the measure.[49] He would sometimes use repetition to achieve this matching of stresses. An example of manipulating the text to fit the music is in the *Four Serious Songs*, song number 1, from measure 50 to measure 55. He repeats the text "*aufwärts fahre"* three times to end the phrase melodically, harmonically and metrically to his satisfaction.

Brahms did not like to word paint, but rather he would portray the meaning or mood of the text as a whole.[50] One example is the use of descending thirds. Brahms used this device over and over when setting a death motive.[51] An example of this motive in his *Four Serious Songs* can be found in the second song, from measure 36 through measure 40. The text in these measures speaks of praising the dead. The use of falling thirds against the backdrop of such ominous harmony is haunting and it almost overwhelms the meaning of the text. Another example of falling thirds representing death is the beginning of the third song. The opening motive, B to G, then E to C, declares "*Oh, Death."* The piano answers this exclamation

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[48] Platt, Heather. "Jenner vs. Wolf: The Critical Reception of Brahms's Songs." *The Journal of Musicology* 13, no. 3 (Summer 1995), 391.

[49] Stark, Lucien. *A Guide to the Solo Songs of Johannes Brahms.* Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1995, 5.

[50] Ibid., 4.

[51] Ibid., 4.

with falling thirds in the bass. This not only demonstrates Brahms's death motive, but also shows the importance of using the piano to portray the mood of the text.

Brahms also adhered to pauses in the text and he would often use a brief interlude or cadence to show the pause.[52] One example of this is in song number four of the *Four Serious Songs* in measures 22 through 23. Brahms brings the phrase to a close with a V-I cadence before introducing the next line of text.

Brahms considered the bass line to be almost as important to the song as the melody, and he aimed to create sturdiness and freshness in his bass lines.[53] When composer George Henschel asked Brahms about his song writing technique, Brahms stated:

> *"In writing songs you must endeavor to invent, simultaneously with the melody, a healthy, powerful bass."*[54]

Brahms also stated to music critic Max Graf:

> *"When I look over a new song I always cover the middle voices. I only want to see the melody and bass. If these two are right, everything is right."*[55]

There are examples of this prioritizing of the bass line in each of the *Four Serious Songs.* In the first song, straight away the bass starts an ostinato of the main

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[52] Platt, Heather. "Jenner vs. Wolf: The Critical Reception of Brahms's Songs." *The Journal of Musicology* 13, no. 3 (Summer 1995), 388.

[53] Stark, Lucien. *A Guide to the Solo Songs of Johannes Brahms.* Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1995, 4.

[54] Ibid., 4.

[55] Ibid., 4.

melody. Giving this melody immediately to the bass shows the significance of the role of the bass. Without the drive and character of the bass line in the second song, the mood and overall feeling of the entire song would be lost. This is evident most compellingly in measure 56. This measure is the most haunting and darkest moment of all four songs, with the text stating how much better off the unborn are than both the living and dead. Brahms gives the bass the eerie leading tone sequence of A# to B first, and then the voice imitates it later in the measure. This is a very important moment in the songs, and will be explained in greater detail in the next chapter. In the third song Brahms imitates the opening interval of the descending third in the bass, after the original statement in the melody. His decision to imitate in the bass and not the inner or top voices demonstrates the importance Brahms put on the bass voice. In the last song the bass is much busier and is melodically more important than the other voices, especially in measures 3 through 6, and other measures like it throughout, where the bass plays the moving line while the melody is stagnant.

Brahms was also criticized for the poems he used, as most of his songs used poems written by minor poets.[56] The relative quality of the poems became unimportant to Brahms, as he looked for poetry that would arouse a lyrical response.[57] With the importance Brahms placed on the music as compared to the

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[56] Stark, Lucien. *A Guide to the Solo Songs of Johannes Brahms.* Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1995, 5.

[57] Ibid., 5.

text, he also looked for poems that would not interfere with creation of the song.[58] He also believed that truly great poetry did not need music to improve it but was complete by itself.[59] In the *Four Serious Songs*, he chose biblical texts, not poems. He often probed Biblical text for questioning philosophical issues including the very nature of life and the human condition.[60] In his *Four Serious Songs,* Brahms used Biblical texts to question many things about life, including how people live their lives, the idea of an afterlife, seeing death as both an enemy and welcome fate, and finally whether charity and love are all humans need to overcome the tribulations of life. It is as if there is a struggle between Brahms's life experience and the words of the Bible.

The *Four Serious Songs* can be looked at as Brahms's last chance to express what life has meant to him.[61] He struggled within himself, against outside critics, against religion, and against death itself. Of all of his songs these prove to be the last and quite possibly the greatest in composition and meaning.

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[58] Ibid., 5.

[59] Ibid., 5.

[60] Beller-McKenna, Daniel. *Brahms and the German Spirit.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004, 34.

[61] Friedlaender, Max. *Brahms's Lieder: An Introduction to the songs for One and Two Voices.* London, England: Oxford University Press Inc., 1928, 189.

Chapter 4: The *Four Serious Songs*

Brahms wrote his *Four Serious Songs* in May of 1896 and they were published later that year. The songs were dedicated to artist Max Klinger and this dedication was a gesture of gratitude for Klinger's *Brahms-Phantasie,* a cycle of drawings inspired by Brahms's works.[62] Brahms died less than a year later, leaving these songs as his last cycle.

The texts used for these songs are all Biblical. The first two songs draw from Ecclesiastes from the Old Testament, and the third song draws from Ecclesiasticus from the Apocrypha texts. These three texts are all wisdom texts, used for teaching nature and reality. The text in song four draws from the first Corinthians, or letter from Paul, which comes from the New Testament. These texts were often used to comfort the bereaved, especially those of the lower class and the unfortunate.[63] Even though all of the texts are Biblical and deal with life and spirituality, there is not one mention of God or Christ, which is significant for understanding Brahms's view of religion and spirituality.[64]

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[62] Stark, Lucien. *A Guide to the Solo Songs of Johannes Brahms.* Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1995, 343.

[63] Ibid., 344.

[64] Beller-McKenna, Daniel. *Brahms and the German Spirit.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004, 34.

The time leading to the composition of these songs was very sad and full of depression and despair for Brahms as many of Brahms's closest friends were sick and dying. Closest to him, Clara Schumann died just after the completion of the songs. Many contemporaries of Brahms and historians since have mentioned the idea that the songs were composed for Clara. Brahms himself mentions that this is not true, as the songs were written before Clara's death on May, 20, 1896.[65] In a letter to Clara's daughter, Marie, Brahms states:

> *"If you should receive a volume of 'serious songs' in a few days time, do not misunderstand it…I wrote them in the first week of May."*[66]

Brahms joked that he wrote these songs for himself for his birthday.[67] His cynical nature led him to nickname the songs "Schnadahüpferl," which is South German, meaning a lively dance song for harvest time.[68] He also liked to insert the adjective "godless" where he could when describing the songs.[69] It is strange that Brahms spoke of the songs in such a manner, since he consulted friend and solicitor Gustav Ophüls about legal ramifications of publishing such agnostic themed songs.[70] Given the climate of the late Nineteenth Century in Europe at the time, an offense such as putting forth heretical literature or art could be punishable by jail. Before

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[65] Simpson, Anne. "Some Thoughts on Brahms *Four Serious Songs*." *The American Music Teacher* 33, no. 2 (1983), 20.

[66] Ibid., 20.

[67] Frisch, Walter, ed. *Brahms and his World.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990, 177.

[68] Stark, Lucien. *A Guide to the Solo Songs of Johannes Brahms.* Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1995. 343.

[69] Ibid., 343.

[70] Boyd, Malcolm. "Brahms and the Four Serious Songs." *The Musical Times* 108, no. 1493 (July 1967), 594.

sending a copy of the songs to music critic and friend Heinrich von Herzogenberg, Brahms wrote in a letter:

> *"I have a trifle to send you, which may cause you to attack my unchristian principles in your new paper."*[71]

Brahms also made the decision to call the songs 'serious' instead of 'sacred' even though all of the texts were from the Bible.[72]

Brahms sent the songs to many people, including composer and friend Julius Otto Grimm, who had just lost his wife.[73] In a letter Grimm states:

> *"The songs are splendid and stir powerfully. I admire in equal measure <u>how</u> and <u>that</u> you have set these texts to music."*[74]

Many friends and acquaintances thought Brahms wrote these songs knowing very well his own fate.[75] Following Brahms's death, friend Alwin V. Beckerath wrote a letter recalling Brahms playing the songs for a group of friends the summer before his death:

> *"we were all deeply moved and a sorrowful premonition filled my heart."*[76]

Musicologist Karl Gieringer sums up the songs:

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[71] Ibid., 594.

[72] Ibid., 593.

[73] Avins, Styra. *Johannes Brahms: Life and Letters.* New York, NY: Oxford University Press Inc., 1997, 738.

[74] Ibid., 738.

[75] Johnson, Lani. "Johannes Brahms's *Vier ernste Gesänge,* opus 121 (1896) for Bass and Piano…as Life Ends." *Journal of Singing* 62, no. 4 (March/April 2006), 397.

[76] Frisch, Walter, ed. *Brahms and his World.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990, 177.

"the next to last utterance of an artist who has cared, toiled, and to whom death came as a destroyer of a rich life still full of plans."[77]

The *Four Serious Songs* were first performed on November 9, 1896 at Saal Bösendorfer in Vienna. The bass soloist was Anton Sistermans and the pianist was Anton Rückauf. After Brahams's death, Herr Sistermans toured Germany and Austria performing the songs in many cities as a requiem tour for Brahms. [78]

[77] Simpson, Anne. "Some Thoughts on Brahms *Four Serious Songs*." *The American Music Teacher* 33, no. 2 (1983), 20.

[78] Ibid., 177.

Chapter 5: The First Song

The first song is set to a text from Ecclesiastes chapter 3, verses 19-22, from the Old Testament. The overall message of this text is grim, citing the line of text: "Therefore I saw that there is nothing better, than that a man should rejoice in his own works; for that is his portion," urging man to enjoy his work, for this is his only salvation. The very first line, "For that which befalleth men befalleth beasts," suggests that men and beasts are equal in God's eyes, that their fate is the same.[79] For both of these statements, the same musical verse is used. At the end of the song the question is asked, "for who shall bring him to see what shall be after him?" This last line defines Brahms's own idea of what shall come after death.

The key of this song is D minor and Brahms keeps the entire song in D minor without any major shift. However, he uses the note A, the dominant, a great deal compared to other notes. It pulls the listener to the A so much that there could be a doubt of the key at times. This feeling of instability reflects the message of the text. The best example of this is the opening motive. The A note is in three voices, with the D minor line given an almost secondary role.

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[79] Johnson, Lani. "Johannes Brahms's *Vier ernste Gesänge,* opus 121 (1896) for Bass and Piano…as Life Ends." *Journal of Singing* 62, no. 4 (March/April 2006), 390.

Brahms uses many different musical settings for these ideas. The overall style of the melody is strophic, using the same musical line for each verse. The opening motive is very slow and plodding.[80] It portrays the feeling of defeat, of great depression of what life is and means. In measures 50 through 55 Brahms uses an ascending musical line when the text asks "Who knoweth if the spirit of man goeth upward," and then uses a descending musical line in measures 64 through 72 to finish the question, "the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth?" This is very clever of Brahms, since the text is comparing the fate of the supposedly highest form of life, which is man, and lowest, the beast.

The last line of text, as stated above, wonders what comes after death. In Brahms's mind, this is the biggest question. He uses an open fifth harmony to suggest this longing and empty feeling in measures 96 and 97.[81] An open fifth is one of the most significant ways to depict musical uncertainty, and Brahms inserts it just as this hollow question is asked.

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[80] Simpson, Anne. "Some Thoughts on Brahms *Four Serious Songs*." *The American Music Teacher* 33, no. 2 (1983), 21.

[81] Stark, Lucien. *A Guide to the Solo Songs of Johannes Brahms.* Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1995, 346.

Chapter 6: The Second Song

The text of the second song is from the Old Testament, Ecclesiastes, chapter 4, verses 1-3. From the start the idea of death is perceived by Brahms's death motive of descending thirds, stated subtlety in the opening. At the beginning, the accompaniment plays this death motive, with the voice taking it over when it enters. The text does not state outright that death is the subject, but the motive foreshadows the presence of death. Overall, the text celebrates the dead, and forces the sadness for the unjust suffering of the innocent: "So I returned, and considered all the oppressions that are done under the sun." [82]

The overall message of this text is darker than that of the first. The text exalts the dead above the living: "Therefore I praised the dead which are already dead more than the living which are yet alive." Then states that those who have yet to be born are better off yet: "And he who does not exist is better off than both." This is a very grim and desperate view of life. Besides the death motive, Brahms uses a melodic line that sounds as though it is weeping. An example of this is between measures 7 and 10. The line starts with a repeated note, then falls and

[82] Simpson, Anne. "Some Thoughts on Brahms *Four Serious Songs*." *The American Music Teacher* 33, no. 2 (1983), 21.

lands on a leading tone, not giving the listener a sense of arrival. This happens over and over again throughout the song, with the melody always seeming to be falling.

There is a moment in this song from measures 56 though 60 that is possibly the most significant, yet the quietest and darkest sounding. The text reads "ist besser, als alle beide," meaning "is better than both." This statement, referring to the unborn being better off than both the living and dead, seems to weigh heavily on Brahms. The phrase is set off by a measure long pause, the tessitura is low in both the voice and accompaniment, and the initial note is a leading tone, A-sharp, to the B natural, a strong but defiant sound. Overall there is a very desperate and guttural sound to this phrase.

After this phrase, the music immediately picks up in tempo and movement, signifying Brahms is ready to move on from such dark thoughts. This is confirmed by the tonality shifting at the end to G major, hinting at a reconciliation with the world, praising it despite its evils.[83] This is a false sense of hope, as the next song reinstates death as the ruler of men.

[83] Ibid., 21.

Chapter 7: The Third Song

The text for the third song comes from the Ecclesiaticus book in the Apocrypha, chapter 41, verses 1 and 2. The text is divided into two halves. The first half depicts death as something to dread for the young and strong, and the second half labels death as welcome for the old and weak. The contrast between these two parts is awe-inspiring. The beginning is powerful and dramatic, with a sense of longing and anger while the second part is beautiful and sweet, almost beckoning. Overall the song is a magnificent transition from the pessimistic and harsh view of the world to a more calm and inspiring welcoming of the world. Arnold Schoenberg once said of this song:

> *"..the most touching of the whole cycle – in spite of its perfection, if not because of it."*[84]

The third song not only serves as a mood shift for the cycle, but also serves as the harmonic transition. Moving from minor to major is one of music's most fundamental expressive devices.[85] It starts in a very declamatory E minor, outlining the E minor chord right away. The opening is the most obvious and most dramatic statement of Brahms's death motive, with falling thirds in the voice as well as the

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[84] Whittall, Arnold. "The *Vier ernste Gesänge* op. 121: Enrichment and Uniformity." *Brahms Biographical, Documentary and Analytical Studies* (1983), 194.

[85] Ibid., 194.

bass. The text for this statement is simply "Oh, death, oh death, how bitter you are." This line of text is significant, because Brahms calls out death personally, as if he is speaking directly to it.[86] Brahms then transitions midway through the song, at measure 18, moving swiftly to E major. The text at this point, "Oh death, how welcome are you," takes a startling turn. Death becomes a welcome guest, and the melody sounds like a love song.

Brahms employs many musical devices to convey the meaning of the text outside of the death motive, especially rhythm and texture. The opening death motive uses longer notes, drawing out the despair and anger toward death.[87] The beginning has quicker rhythm, representing the more prosperous man.[88] This occurs specifically at measures 6 through 10, where the text states that the man "who has good life and enough and a sorrow-free life and who is fortunate in all things" should dread death the most. Brahms then slows the rhythm down at the transition to E major, where the text states the man "who is weak and old, and is beset by all sorrows, and has nothing better to hope for." Friend and music critic Heinrich von Herzogenberg said of the song's change in harmony and mood:

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[86] Johnson, Lani. "Johannes Brahms's *Vier ernste Gesänge,* opus 121 (1896) for Bass and Piano…as Life Ends." *Journal of Singing* 62, no. 4 (March/April 2006): 390.

[87] Simpson, Anne. "Some Thoughts on Brahms *Four Serious Songs*." *The American Music Teacher* 33, no. 2 (1983), 21.

[88] Stark, Lucien. *A Guide to the Solo Songs of Johannes Brahms.* Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1995, 348.

"How beautifully it swells out of the E major part! One does not expect that it (it being death) could be adorned with such full, such delightfully austere, and yearningly tender harmonies."[89]

Brahms uses musical texture to separate the image of the strong man and weak man.[90] At measures 9 and 10 the piano is full and playing long quarter notes against eighth note up beats while the text states he "who is fortunate in all things, and still pleased to eat well." Later in the song, measures 26 and 27, the text states the man "who is weak and old, and is beset by all sorrows," Brahms uses the piano in its lower register and a very soft, flowing chordal accompaniment.

The song comes to an end very peacefully, as if Brahms is communicating his acceptance of death. Eric Sams wrote of the song:

"it is the consummation of all Brahms's song music."[91]

It can also be thought as the consummation of Brahms's resignation to life as it is, and the release death provides.

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[89] Friedlaender, Max. *Brahms's Lieder: An Introduction to the songs for One and Two Voices.* London, England: Oxford University Press Inc., 1928, 191.

[90] Simpson, Anne. "Some Thoughts on Brahms *Four Serious Songs*." *The American Music Teacher* 33, no. 2 (1983), 21.

[91] Ibid., 21.

Chapter 8: The Fourth Song

The text of the fourth song is from the New Testament, first Corinthians, chapter 13, verses 1-3 and 12-13. This text is in stark contrast to the first three songs, focusing on wisdom, prophecy, faith, hope, and above all, love. The transition of the third song from minor to major sticks here, unlike the false hope of the same shift at the end of the second song.

The mood of the fourth song is much different from the others. Some think Brahms added this song to soften the blow of the message presented by the first three songs. The fourth song may have been so different and so much more hopeful in meaning and sound because Brahms feared the backlash of the public.[92] As mentioned earlier, he also feared breaking the law, so this song could be what Brahms used to gain acceptance and not offend the powers that be.[93] Some critics of the time, and since, believe the fourth song should not be part of the cycle. Critic Eric Sams writes of the fourth song:

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[92] Boyd, Malcolm. "Brahms and the Four Serious Songs." *The Musical Times* 108, no. 1493 (July 1967), 594.

[93] Ibid., 594.

"the last (fine though it is) is usually thought to be the least compelling."[94]

However, in contrast, friend and composer Hans Gal states he believes the fourth song is the "mightiest" of the cycle.[95] Overall, the reception of the last song compared to the first three was quite varied.

The opening of the song is immediately vibrant and jubilant, using the full range of the piano. The rhythm is lively and the harmony is unmistakably major. The opening vocal line, stating: "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal." The mood of the text obviously changes from sulking in the despair of death to an exuberant rant about angels and charity, and the quick moving melody accompanied by a full piano sound portrays this appropriately.

This lively music continues through measure 48, when the music changes character and the key changes dramatically. The key is now B major, however C-flat major could have made more sense harmonically. Brahms seems to be recalling the intense moment of the second song, measures 56 through 60, where Brahms uses the A-sharp leading tone to B natural.[96] The text discusses looking at oneself in a mirror, ominously staring back at yourself: "For now we see through a mirror,

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[94] Beller-McKenna, Daniel. "Brahms on Schopenhauer: The *Vier ernste Gesänge,* op. 121, and late Nineteenth Century Pessimism." *Brahms Studies 1* (1994), 170.

[95] Simpson, Anne. "Some Thoughts on Brahms *Four Serious Songs*." *The American Music Teacher* 33, no. 2 (1983), 21.

[96] Beller-McKenna, Daniel. "Brahms on Schopenhauer: The *Vier ernste Gesänge,* op. 121, and late Nineteenth Century Pessimism." *Brahms Studies 1* (1994),184.

darkly; but then face to face." Brahms subtly relates these two moments by using the same tonic note, B.

The end of the song states simply what the meaning of the entire song is: "And now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love." The lush melody, maintained is in E-flat major this time (changed to B major the first time), and flows over a very full and rhythmic accompaniment. The piano utilizes triplets, almost as if angels are playing harps.[97]

The songs have been described as behaving like an opera, the opening not relating to end of the story. [98] The songs as a whole might be taken to reflect Brahms's life; though he experienced much despair and tragedy in his life, he eventually let love rescue him from a dark and lonely death.

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[97] Stark, Lucien. *A Guide to the Solo Songs of Johannes Brahms.* Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1995, 348.

[98] Whittall, Arnold. "The *Vier ernste Gesänge* op. 121: Enrichment and Uniformity." *Brahms Biographical, Documentary and Analytical Studies* (1983), 191.

Chapter 9: Conclusions and Further Research

Johannes Brahms had a great deal of success throughout his life and remains one of the most prolific composers of the Romantic Period. It would be hard to tell this by how pessimistic and neurotic he was during his lifetime. He never believed in himself as a great composer, he had a very protective attitude when it came to how the public perceived what he composed and what he said, and he had a very pessimistic view of life and religion. Brahms's *Four Serious Songs* were his last opportunity to reveal his inner most feelings about life and death. The first song declares the woes of life, the second the woes of death, the third states that death can be both feared and welcomed, and the last gives hope for all mankind through charity and love.

Brahms seemed to go as far as he could in portraying the songs for what they were, a final statement of his agnostic beliefs. It is peculiar that even though the texts of these songs are all based on Biblical verse, there is no mention of God. The spiritual afterlife is non-existent in these texts as well, and Brahms himself did not seem to believe in heaven or hell.

In playing this arrangement, or for that matter, the original score, it is important to have a full understanding of these ideas. Brahms was very skilled at portraying the text through his music. With this arrangement being for trombone, it

is important to see the connection between the meaning of the text and the music. To perform these songs as Brahms intended the performer must know what each line of text means and understand the overall message of each song. Not having tools a vocalist would have, i.e. facial expressions, hand gestures and text, the trombonist must use this understanding of the music to transcend the meaning to the audience through phrasing and other musical tools (ex. dynamics, articulations, tempo, etc.). Just as with any other piece of music, the main goal of this arrangement is to make the listener feel emotion.

Suggestions for Further Research

It is suggested that a further areas of research would be to arrange other songs for trombone and ensemble. This arrangement of Brahms's *Four Serious Songs* proves to be just one of many possibilities. With the output of Brahms, Schumann, Schubert, Wolf, and many others, there are countless songs that can be arranged. Each song has its own sound and meaning, so the kind of ensemble to be used can vary greatly.

Another area of research is to arrange different arias, solos and other vocal works for trombone and piano or ensemble. One example might be to arrange the "Ingemisco" from Verdi's Requiem for trombone and piano, or small ensemble. This piece would work wonderfully for trombone. Any vocal piece that can be fit into the trombones tessitura and technical capabilities would be a welcome edition to the repertoire.

Chapter 10: Translation

This translation is based on a translation found on The Schiller Institute's website: (http://www.schillerinstitute.org/lar_related/2002/lar_brahms_8-02.html). The English translation has been edited by the author for a clearer understanding of the meaning of text.

German:

I. Ecclesiastes III: 19-22

Denn es gehet dem Menschen wie dem Vieh;
wie dies stirbt, so stirbt er auch;
und haben alle einerlei Odem;
und der Mensch hat nichts mehr denn das Vieh:
denn es ist alles eitel.

Es fährt alles an einem Ort;
es ist alles von Staub gemacht,
und wird wieder zu Staub.

Wer weiß, ob der Geist des Menschen
aufwärts fahre,
und der Odem des Viehes unterwärts unter
die Erde fahre?

Darum sahe ich, daß nichts bessers ist,
denn daß der Mensch frählich sei in seiner Arbeit;
denn das ist sein Teil.

Denn wer will ihn dahin bringen,
daß er sehe, was nach ihm geschehen wird?

II. Ecclesiastes IV: 1-3

Ich wandte mich, und sahe an alle,
die Unrecht leiden unter der Sonne;
und siehe, da waren Tränen derer,
die Unrecht litten und hatten keinen Tröster,
und die ihnen Unrecht täten, waren zu mächtig,
daß sie keinen Träster haben konnten.

Da lobte ich die Toten,
die schon gestorben waren,
mehr als die Lebendigen,

English:

I. Ecclesiastes III: 19-22

For that which befalleth men befalleth beasts,
as the one dieth, so dieth the other;
and they have all one breath;
so that a man hath no preeminence above a beast:
for all is vanity.

All go unto one place;
all are of the dust
and all turn to dust again.

Who knoweth if the spirit of man
goeth upward,
and the spirit of the beast
that goeth downward to the earth?

Therefore I saw that there is nothing better,
than that a man should rejoice in his own works;
for that is his portion:

for who shall bring him to see
what shall be after him?

II. Ecclesiastes IV: 1-3

So I returned, and considered
all the oppressions that are done under the sun:
and behold the tears of those
who were wronged, and they had no comforter;
and they who wronged them were too mighty,
but they had no comforter.

Therefore I praised the dead
which are already dead
more than the living
which are yet alive.

die noch das Leben hatten;
und der noch nicht ist, ist besser, als alle beide,
und des Bösen nicht inne wird,
das unter der Sonne geschieht.

III. Ecclesiasticus XLI: 1-2

O Tod, o Tod, wie bitter bist du,
wenn an dich gedenket ein Mensch,
Der gute Tage und genug hat
und ohne Sorge lebet,
und dem es wohl geht in allen Dingen
und noch wohl essen mag!
O Tod, o Tod, wie bitter bist du.

O Tod, wie wohl tust du dem Dürftigen,
der da schwach und alt ist,
der in allen Sorgen steckt,
und nichts Bessers zu hoffen,
Noch zu erwarten hat!
O Tod, o, Tod, wie wohl tust du.

IV. 1 Corinthians XIII: 1-3, 12-13

Wenn ich mit Menschen und mit Engelszungen redete,
und hätte der Liebe nicht,
so wär' ich ein tönend Erz,
oder eine klingende Schelle.

Und wenn ich weissagen könnte,
und wüßte alle Geheimnisse
und alle Erkenntnis,
und hätte allen Glauben, also,
daß ich Berge versetzte;
und hätte der Liebe nicht,
So wäre ich nichts.

Und wenn ich alle meine Habe den Armen gäbe,
und ließe meinen Leib brennen,
und hätte der Liebe nicht,
so wäre mir's nichts nütze.

Wir sehen jetzt durch einen Spiegel
in einem dunkeln Worte,
dann aber von Angesicht zu Angesichte.

Jetzt erkenne ich's stückweise,
dann aber werd ich's erkennen,
gleich wie ich erkennet bin.

Nun aber bleibet Glaube, Hoffnung, Liebe,
diese drei;
aber die Liebe ist die größeste unter ihnen.

And he who does not exist is better off than both,
who hath not seen the evil work
that is done under the sun.

III. Ecclesiasticus XLI: 1-2

Oh, death, oh death, how bitter you are,
in the thoughts of a man
who has good life and enough
and a sorrow-free life
and who is fortunate in all things,
and still pleased to eat well!
Oh, death, oh death, how bitter you are,

Oh death, how welcome are you to the needy one,
Who is weak and old,
and is beset by all sorrows,
and has nothing better to hope for
nor to expect;
Oh death, oh death, how welcome are you.

IV. 1 Corinthians XIII: 1-3, 12-13

Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels,
and have not charity,
I am become as sounding brass,
or a tinkling cymbal.

And though I have the gift of prophecy,
and understand all mysteries,
and all knowledge;
and though I have all faith,
so that I could remove mountains,
and have not charity,
I am nothing.

And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor,
and though I give my body to be burned,
and have not charity,
it profiteth me nothing.

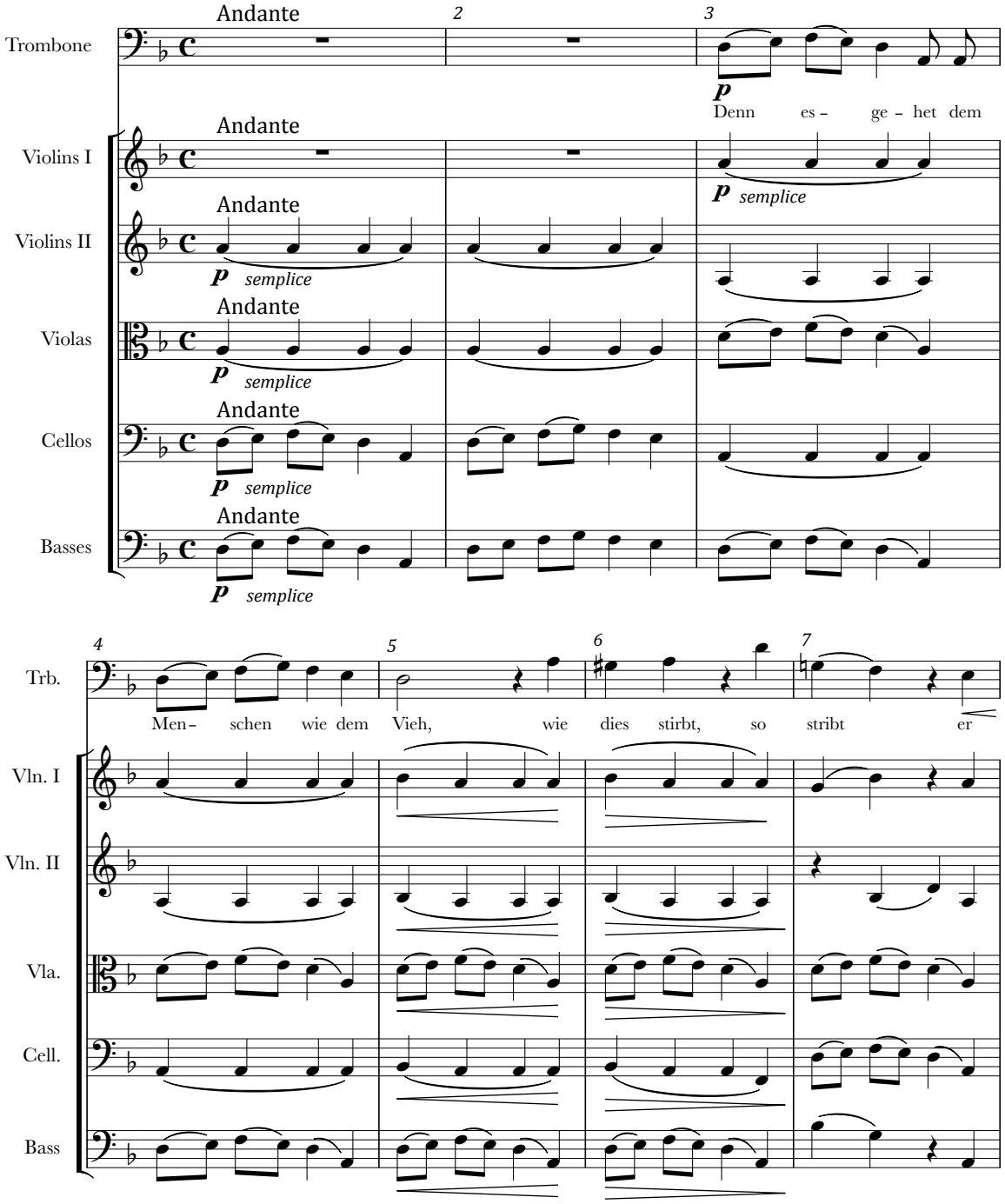
For now we see through a mirror,
darkly;
but then face to face;

now I know in part;
but then I shall know
even as also I am known.

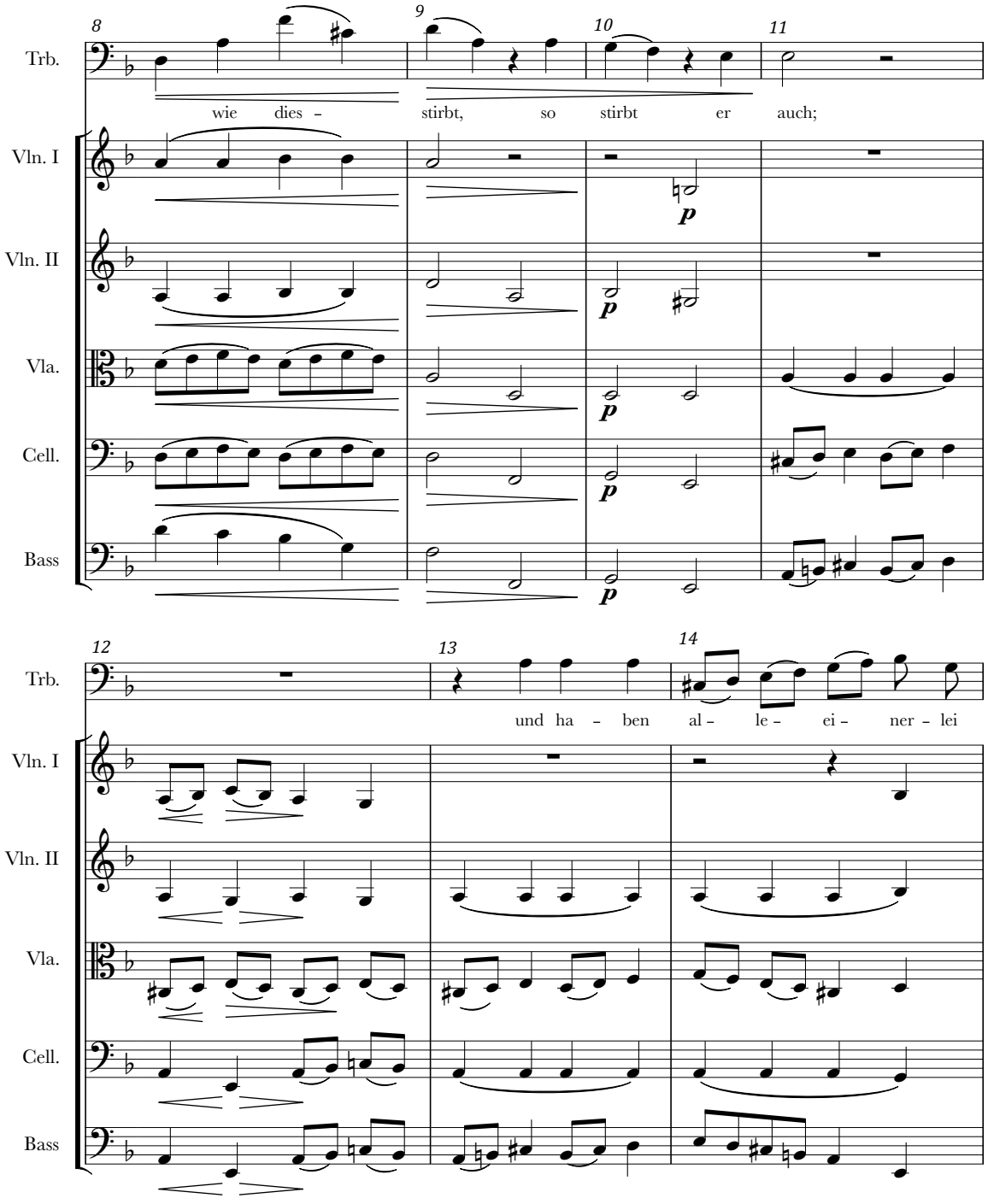
And now abideth faith, hope, love,
these three;
but the greatest of these is love.

Chapter 11: Arrangement of Brahms's *Four Serious Songs*

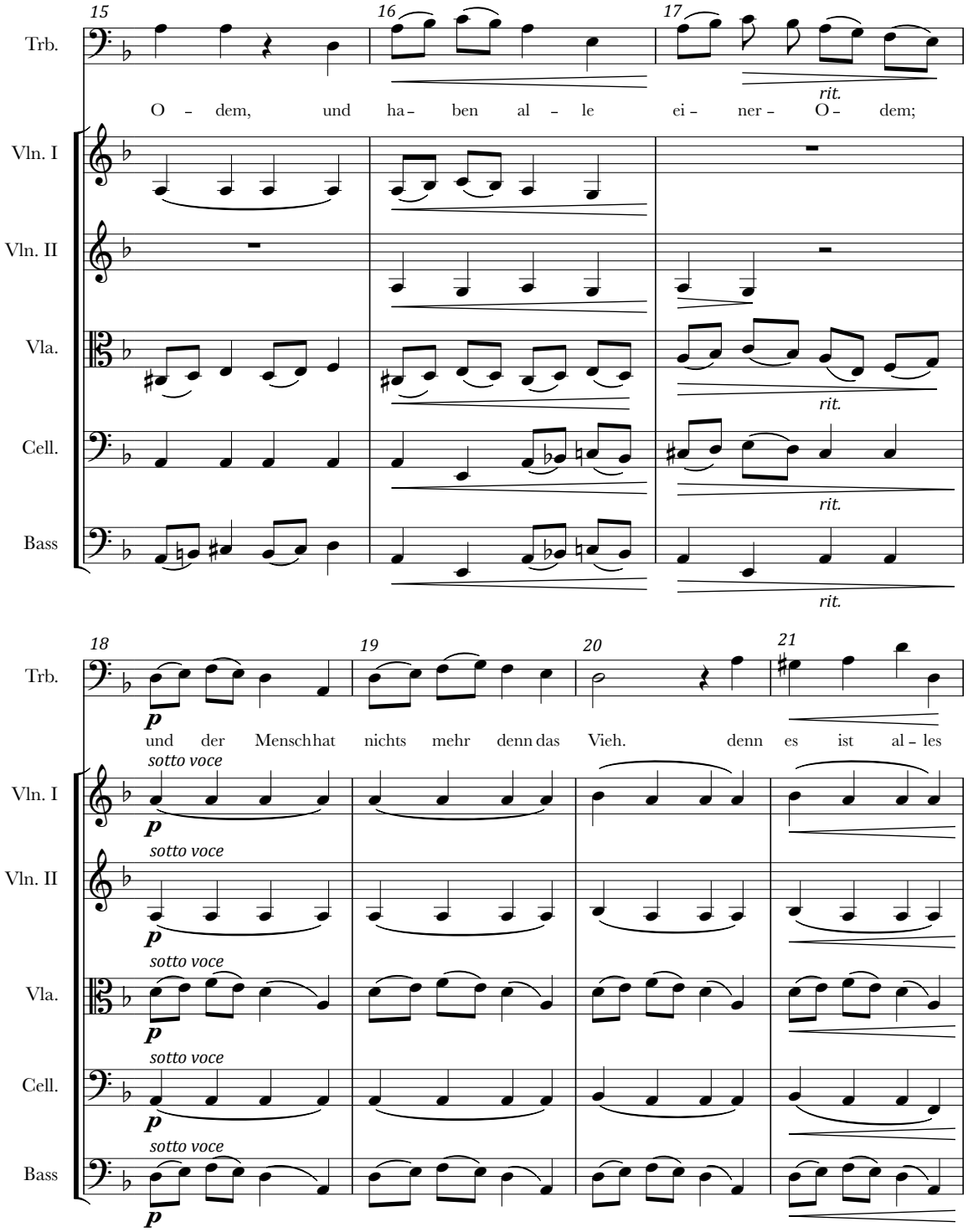
1. Ecclesiastes III: 19-22



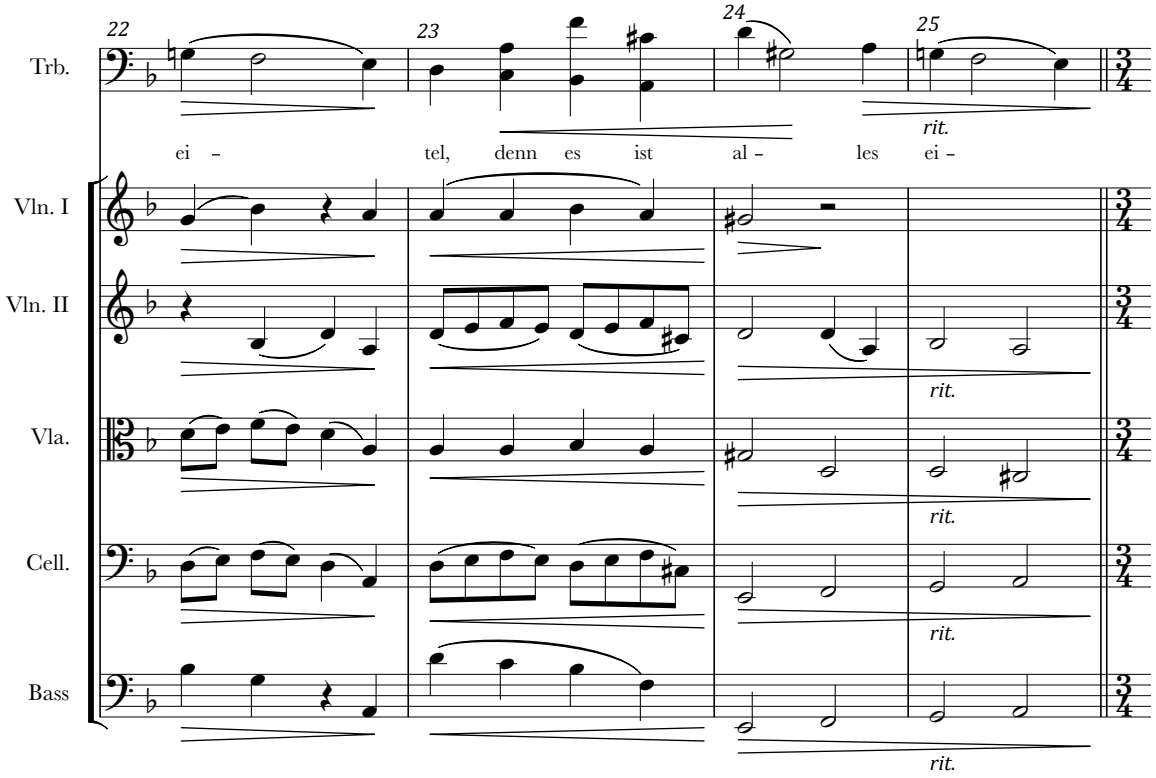
1. Ecclesiastes III: 19-22



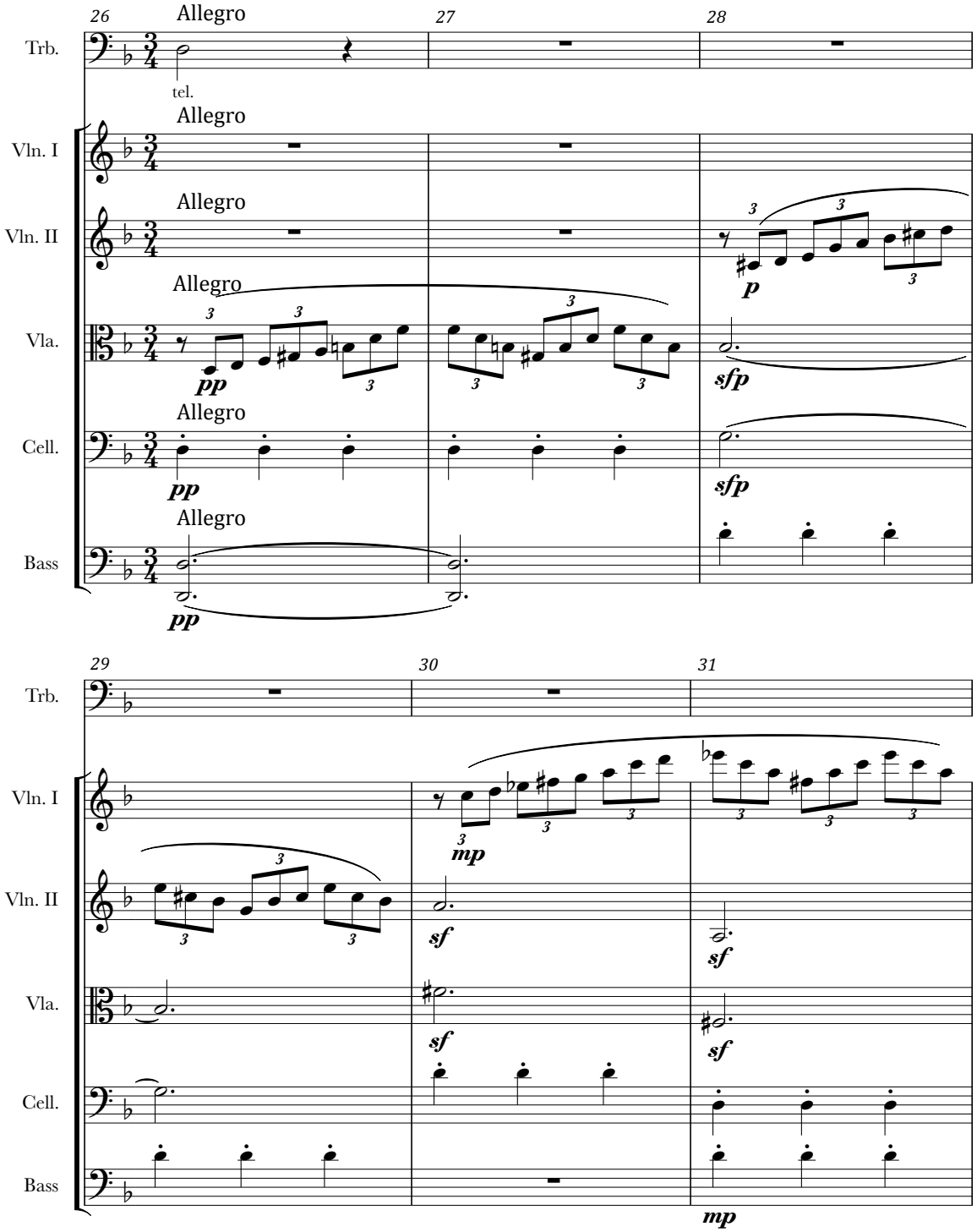
1. Ecclesiastes III: 19-22

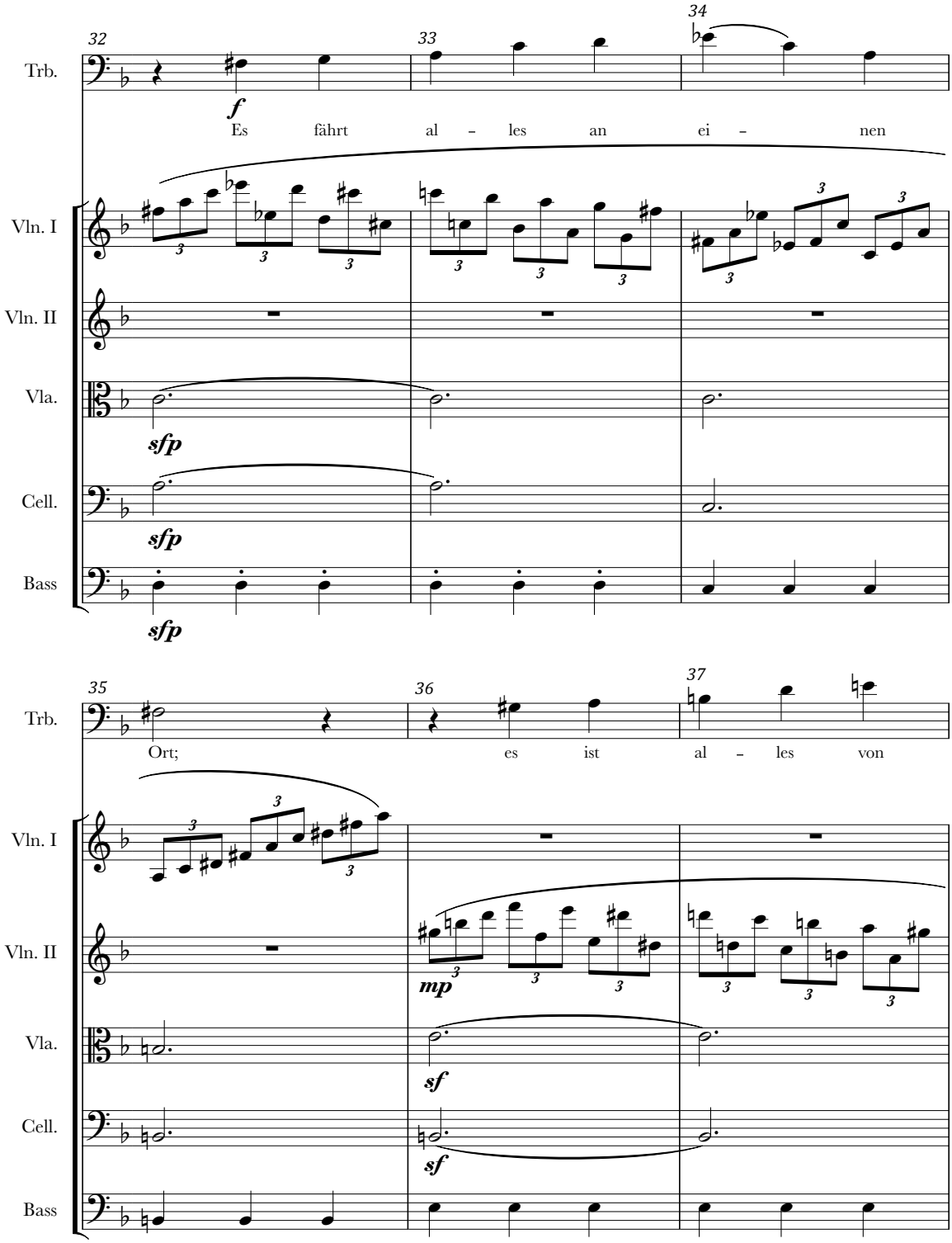


1. Ecclesiastes III: 19-22

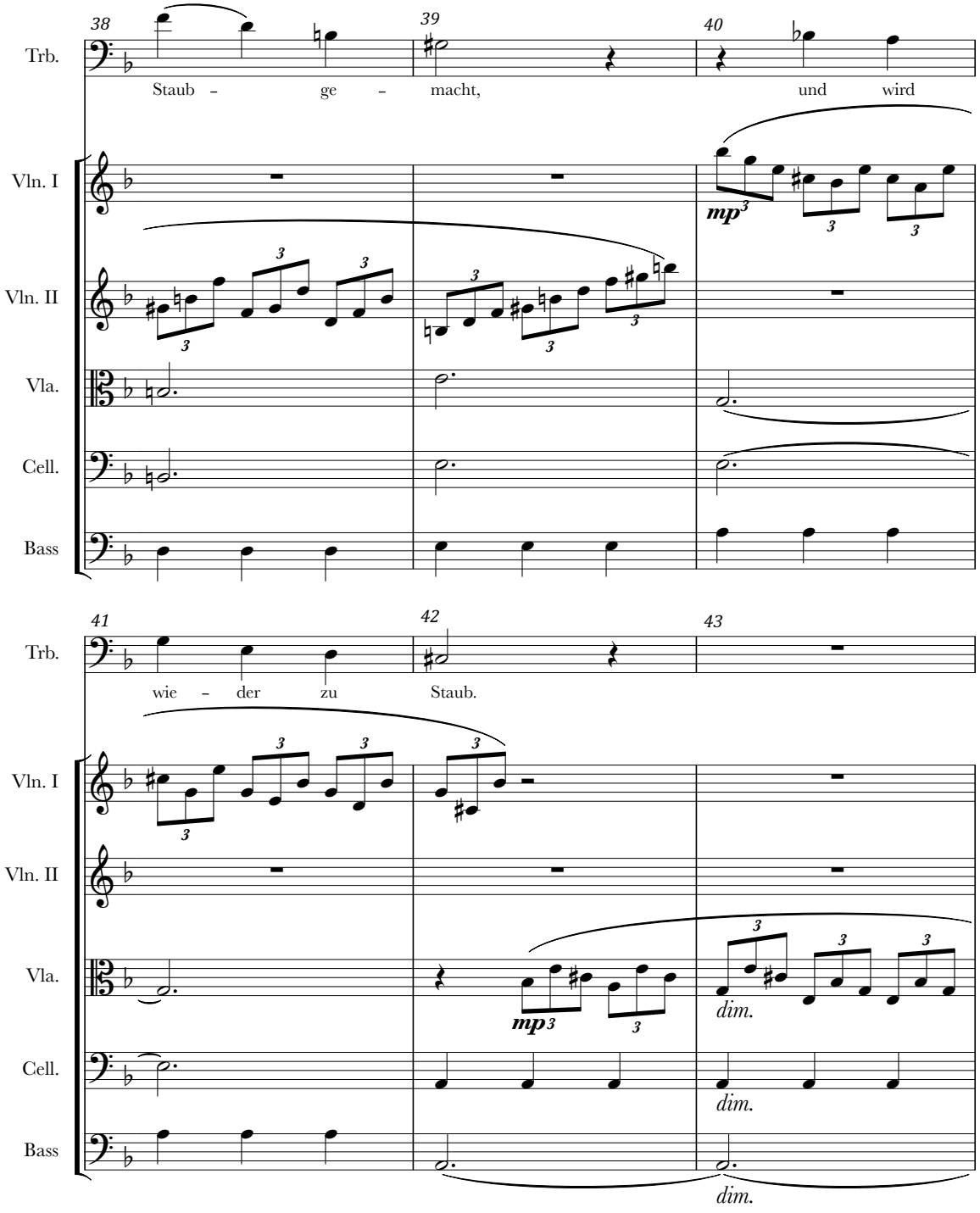


1. Ecclesiastes III: 19-22

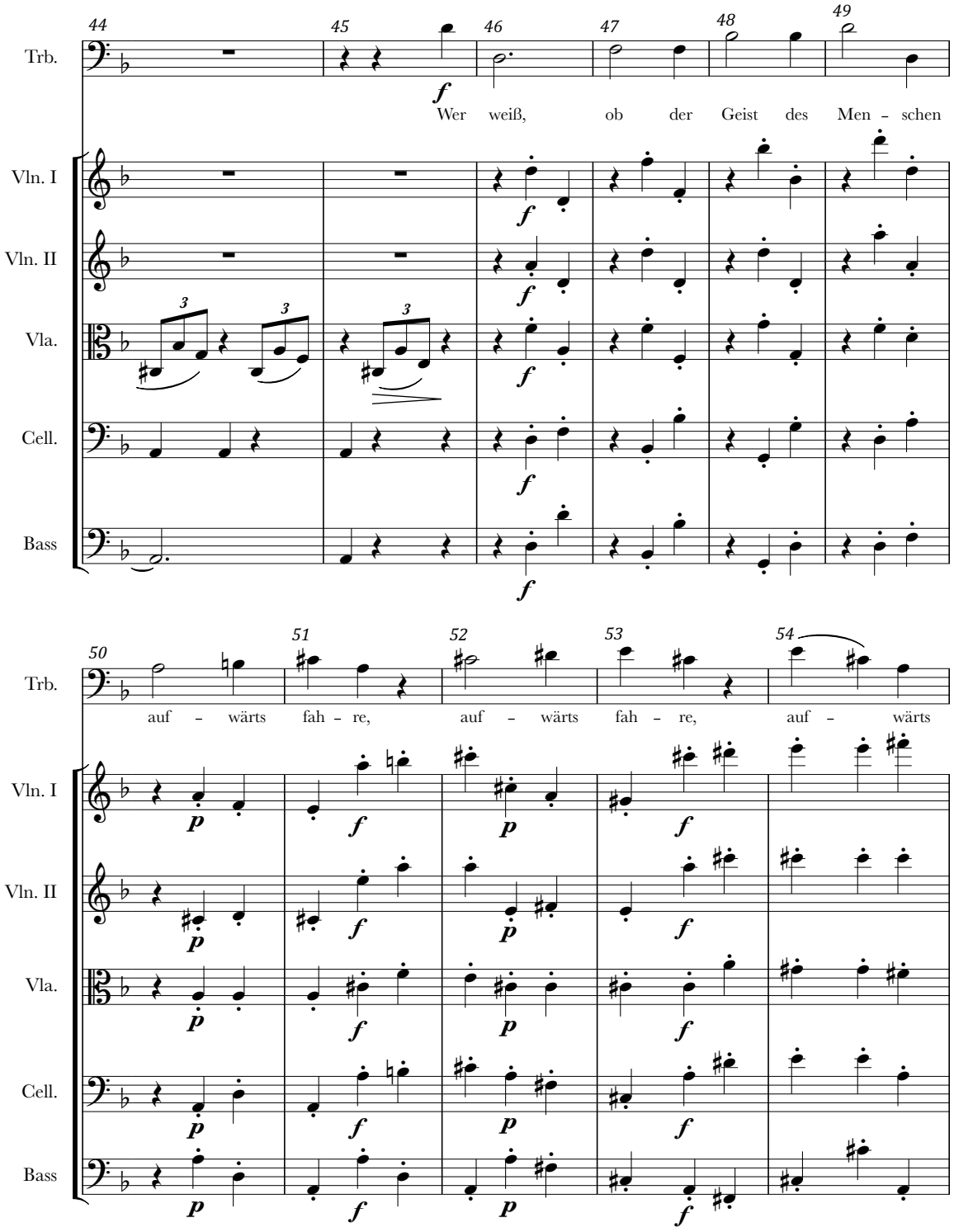


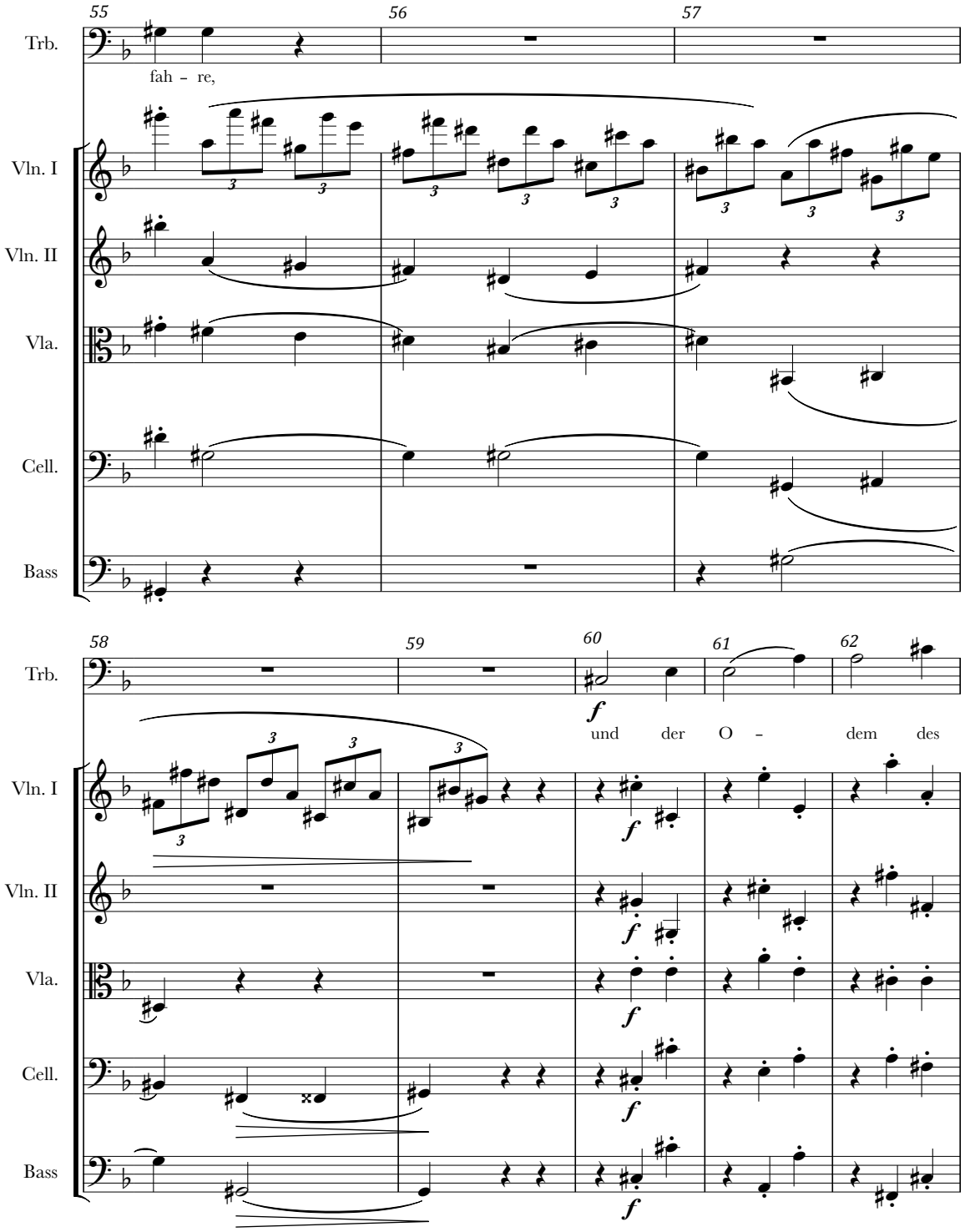

32
33
34
Trb.
f
Es fährt al – les an ei – nen
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
sfp
Cell.
sfp
Bass
sfp
35
36
37
Trb.
Ort; es ist al – les von
Vln. I
Vln. II
mp
Vla.
sf
Cell.
sf
Bass

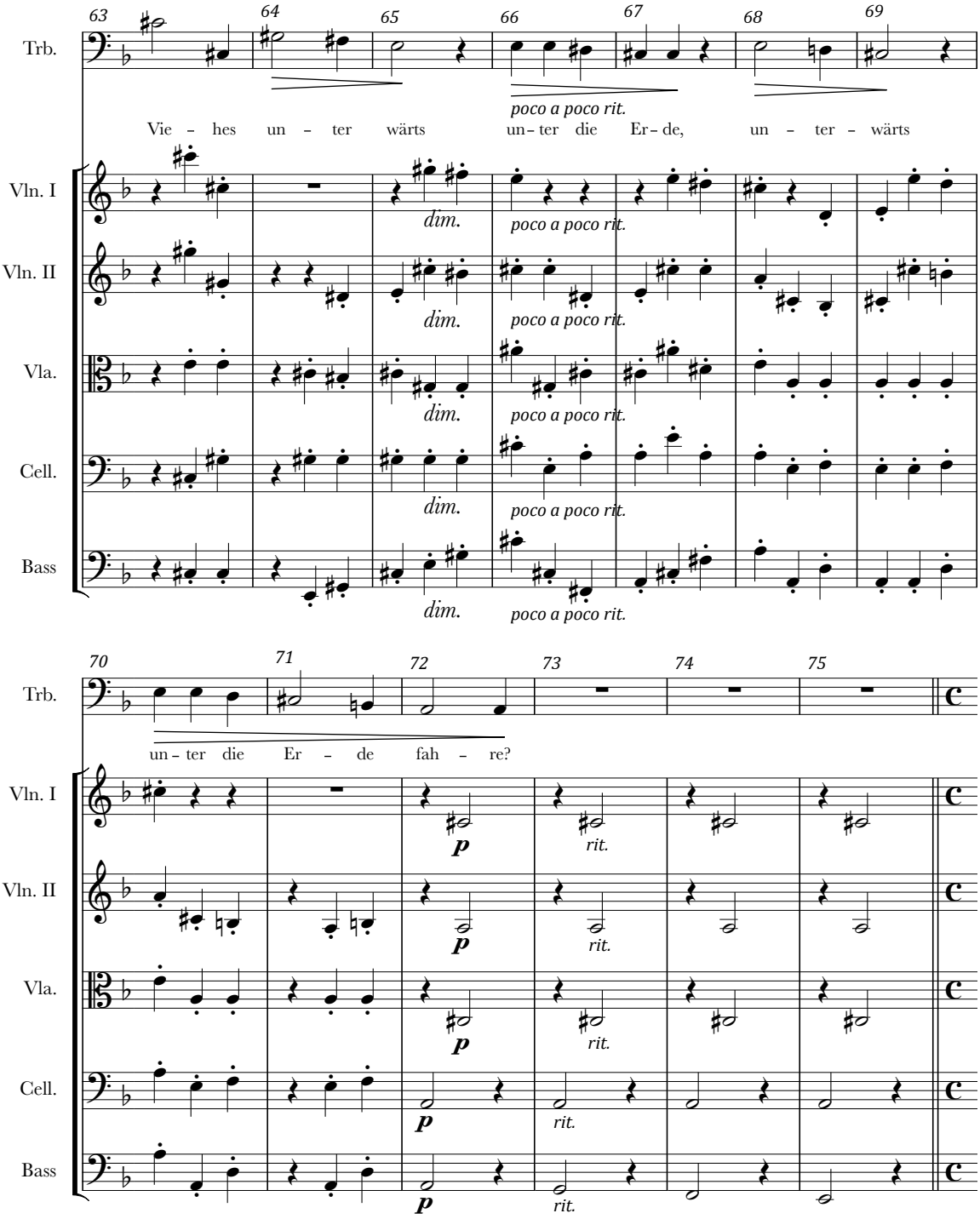
1. Ecclesiastes III: 19-22

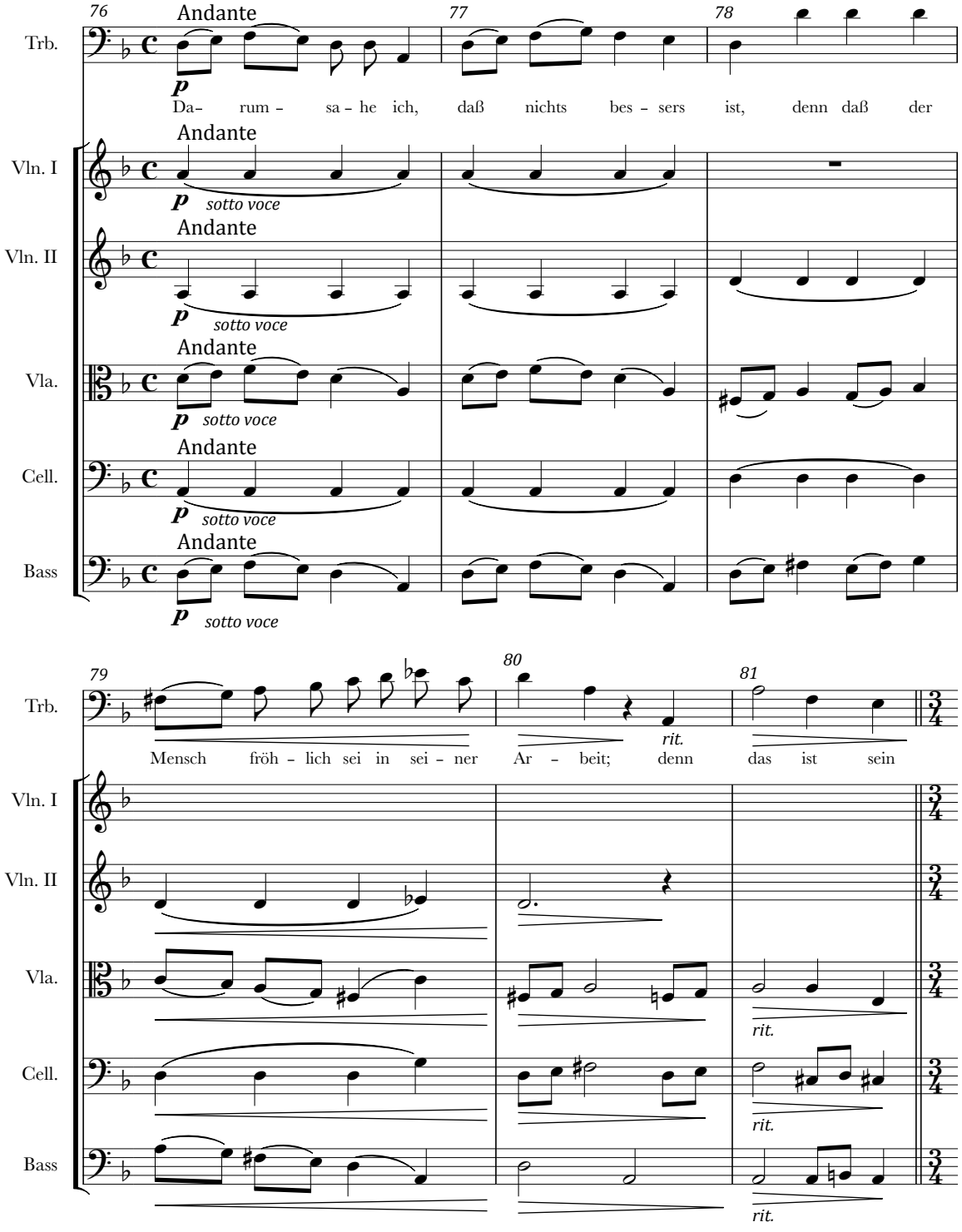


1. Ecclesiastes III: 19-22

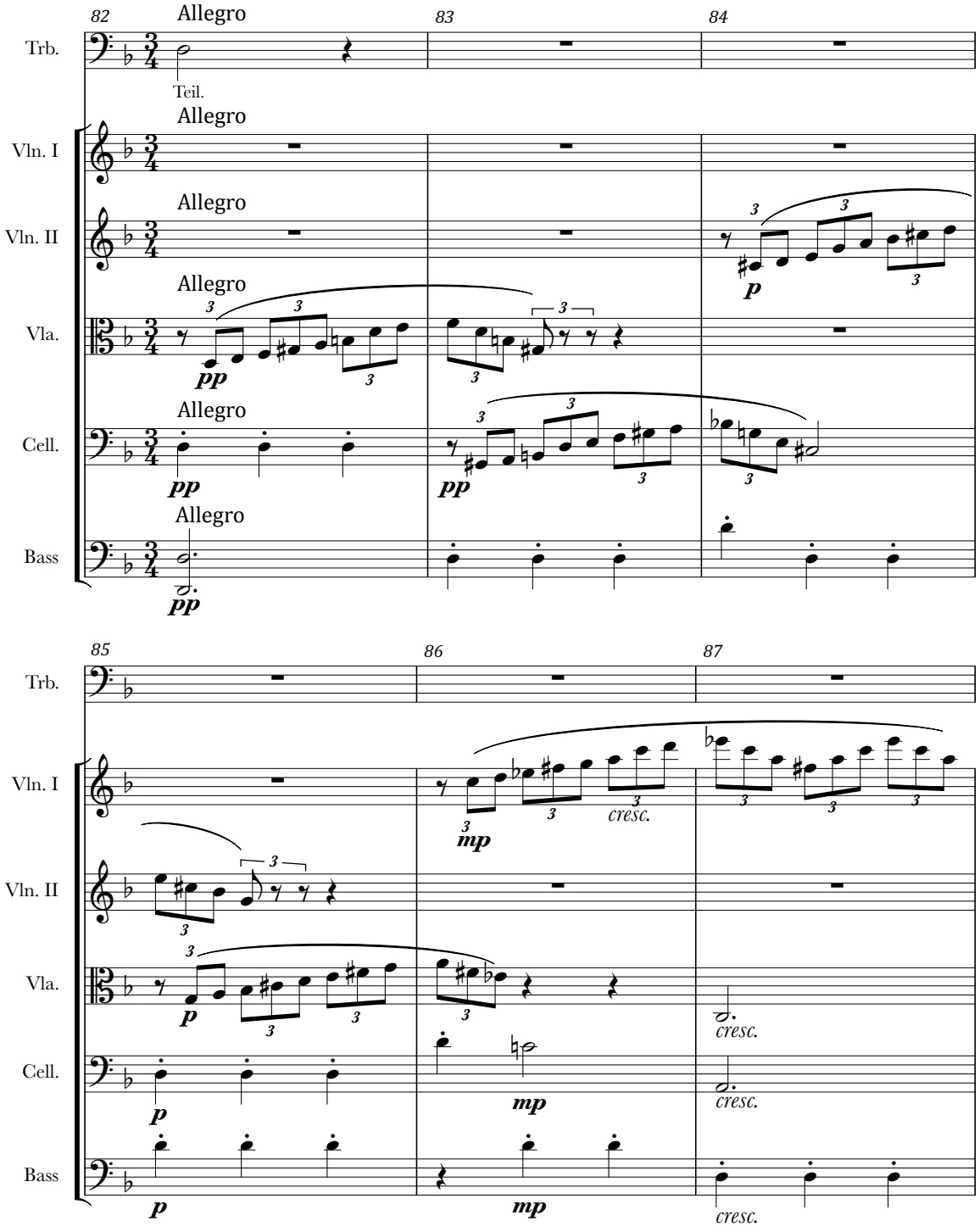


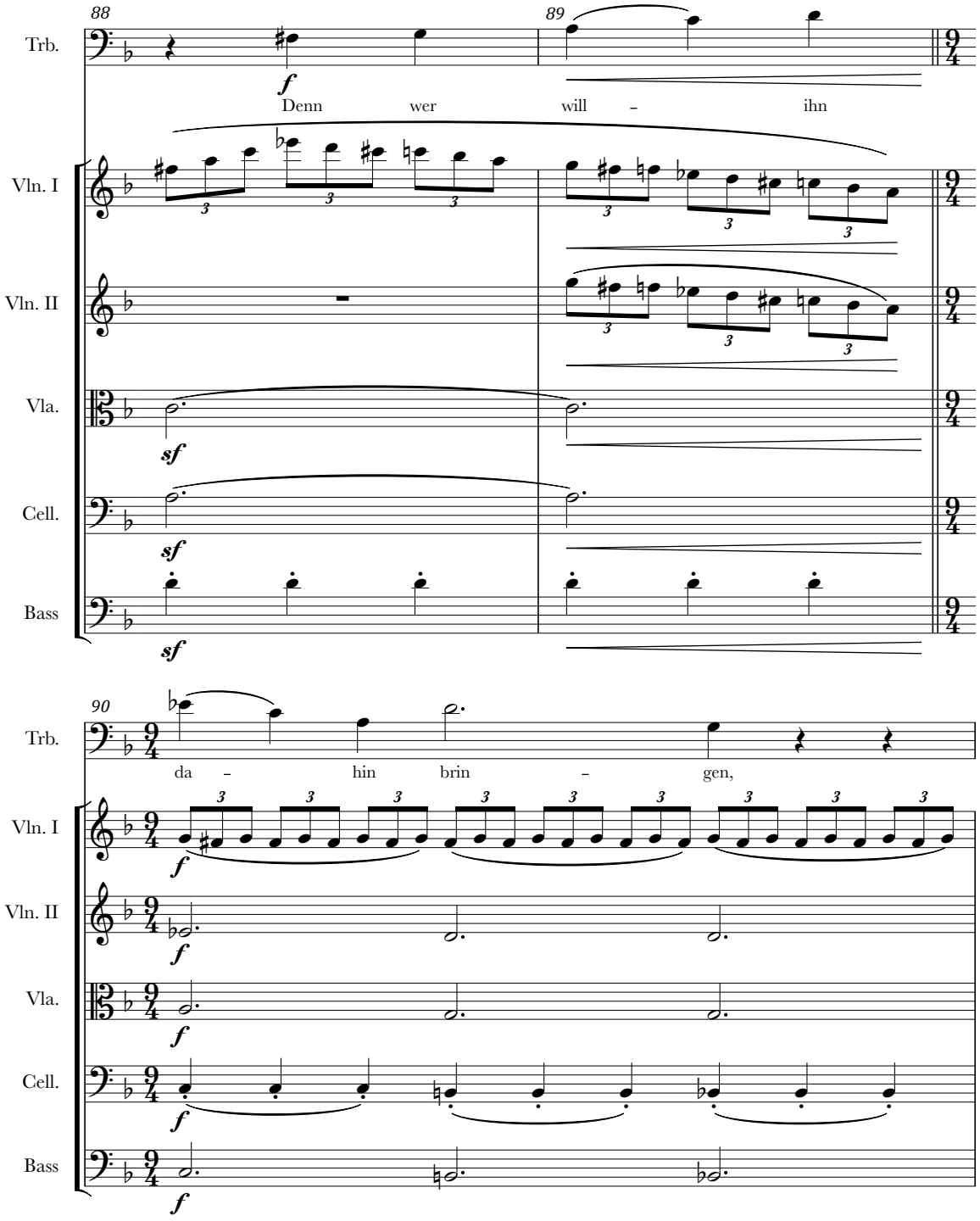

55
56
57
Trb.
fah – re,
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Cell.
Bass
58
59
60
61
62
Trb.
f
und der O – dem des
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Cell.
Bass


63
64
65
66
67
68
69
Trb.
poco a poco rit.
Vie - hes un - ter wärts un - ter die Er - de, un - ter - wärts
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Cell.
Bass
dim.
poco a poco rit.
70
71
72
73
74
75
un - ter die Er - de fah - re?
p
rit.

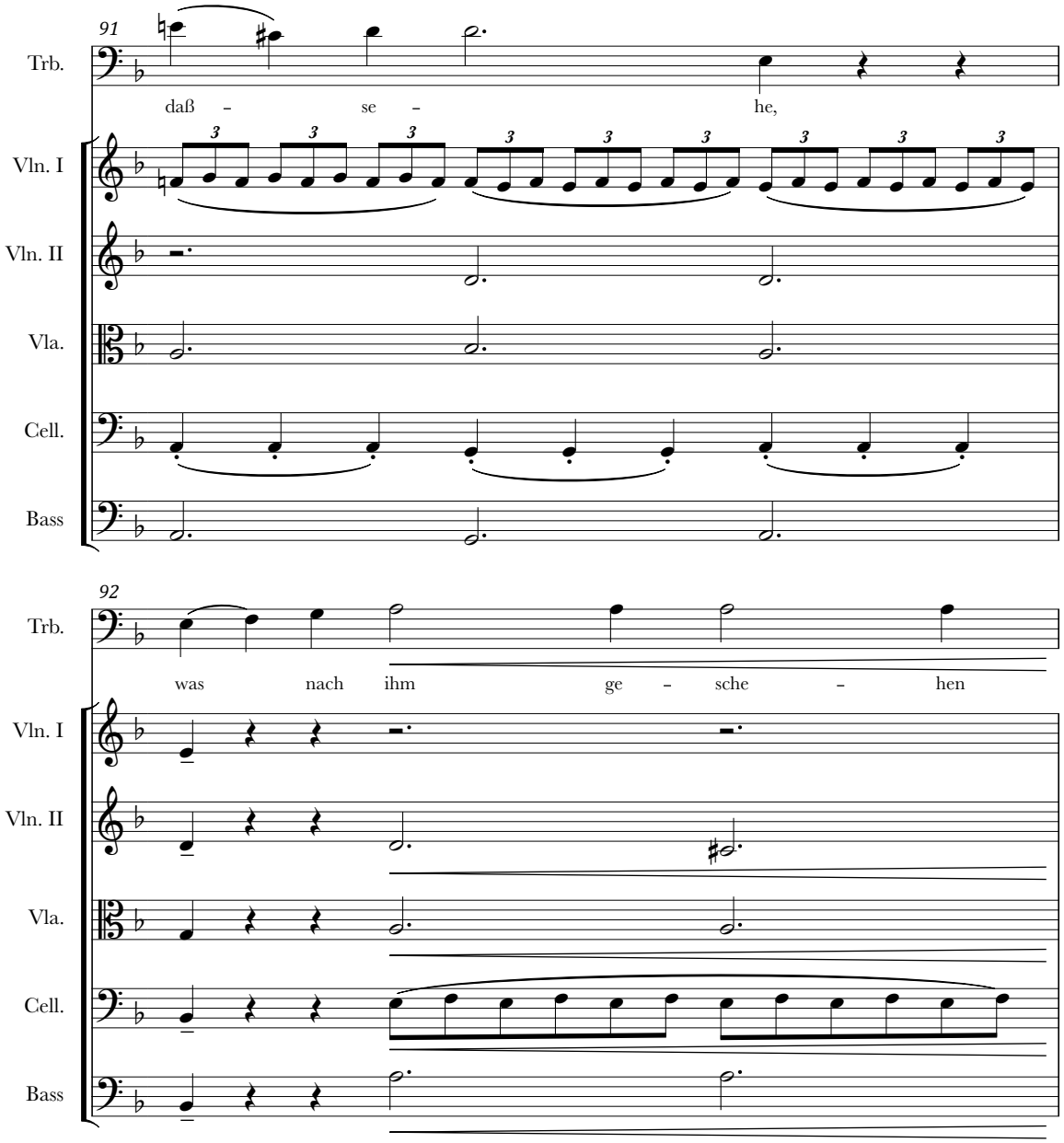

76
77
78
Andante
Trb.
p
Da- rum - sa - he ich, daß nichts bes - sers ist, denn daß der
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Cell.
Bass
sotto voce
79
80
81
rit.
Mensch fröh - lich sei in sei - ner Ar - beit; denn das ist sein

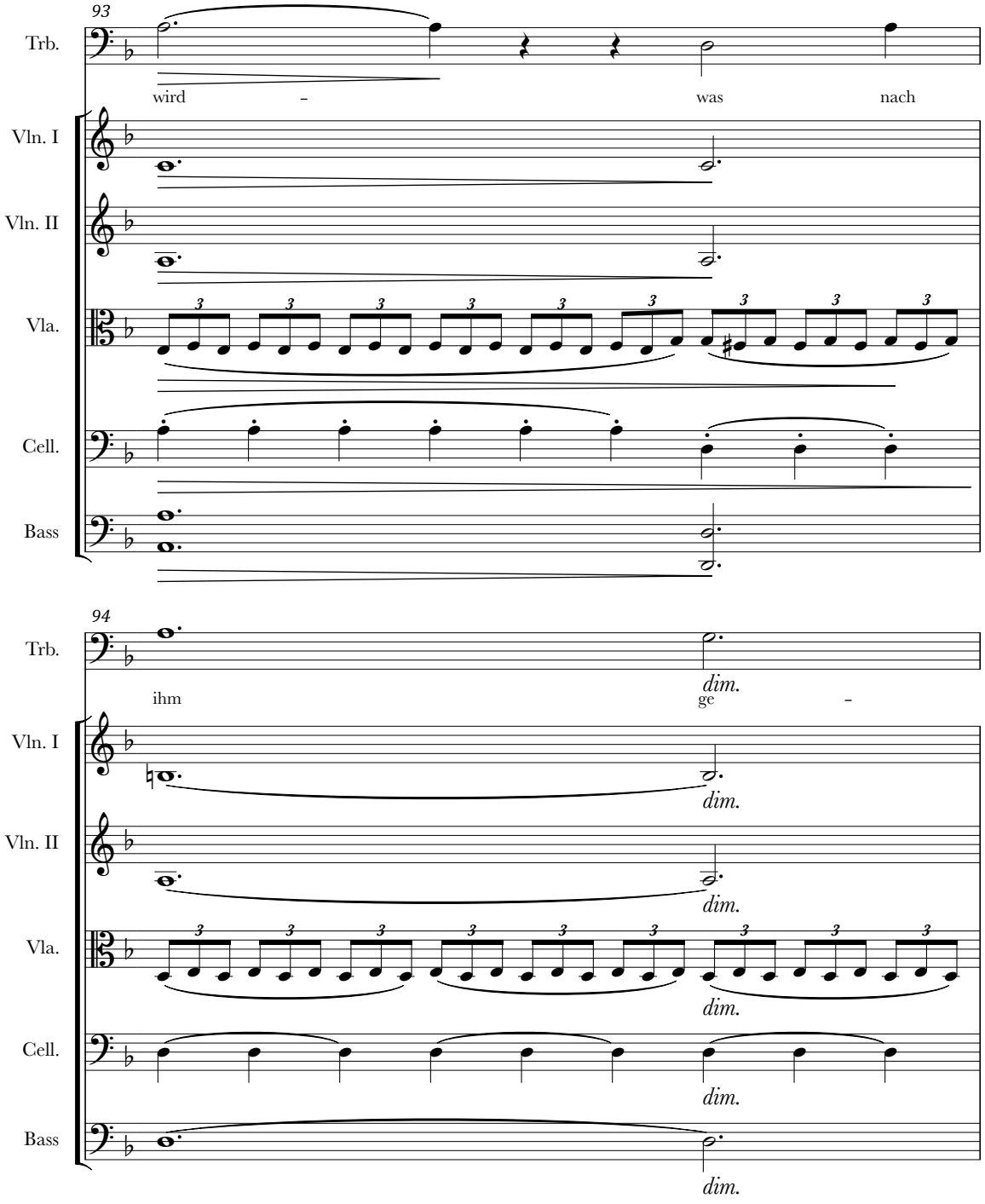
1. Ecclesiastes III: 19-22



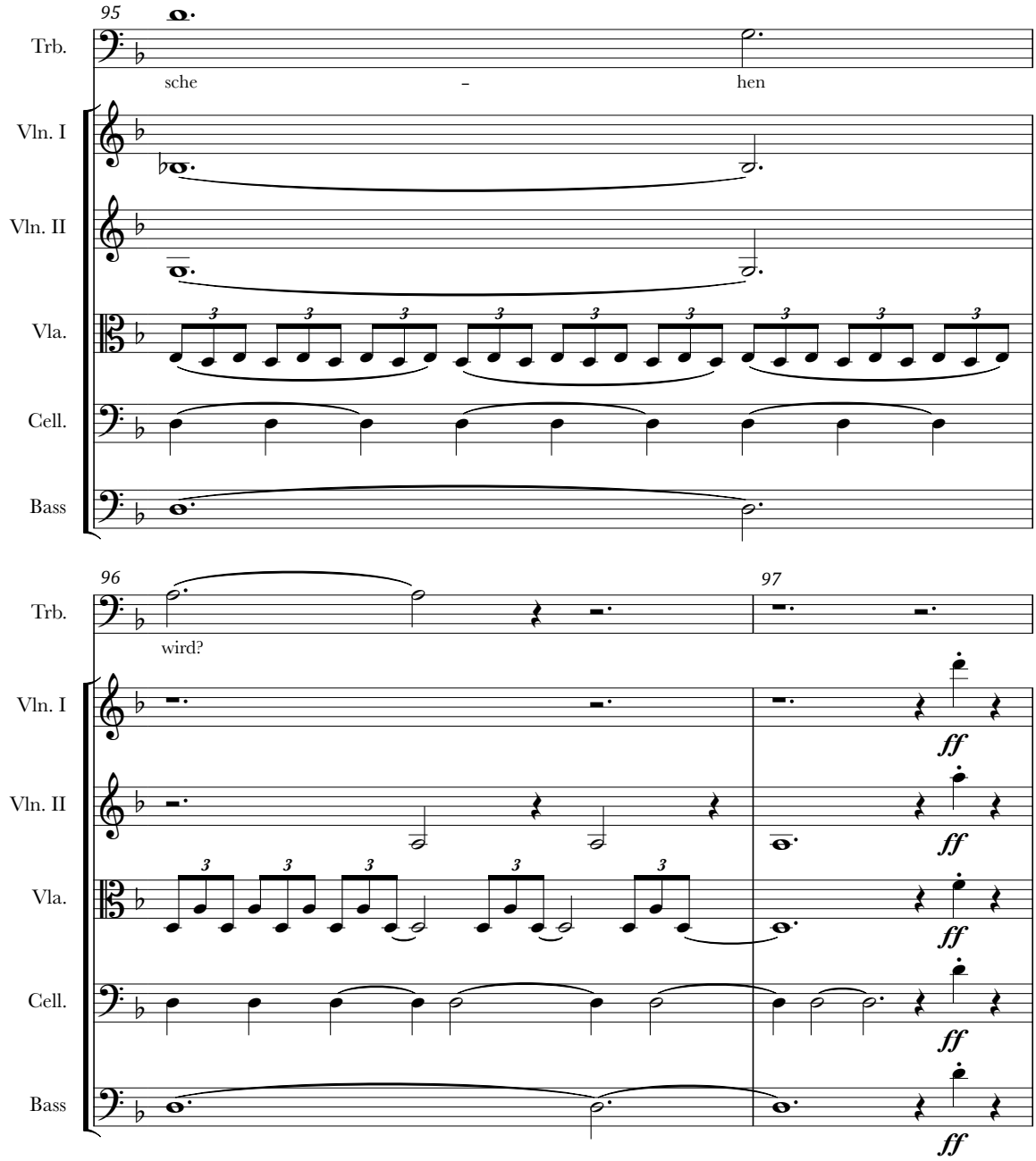

88
89
Trb.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Cell.
Bass
f
Denn wer will – ihn
sf
90
da – hin brin – gen,

1. Ecclesiastes III: 19-22

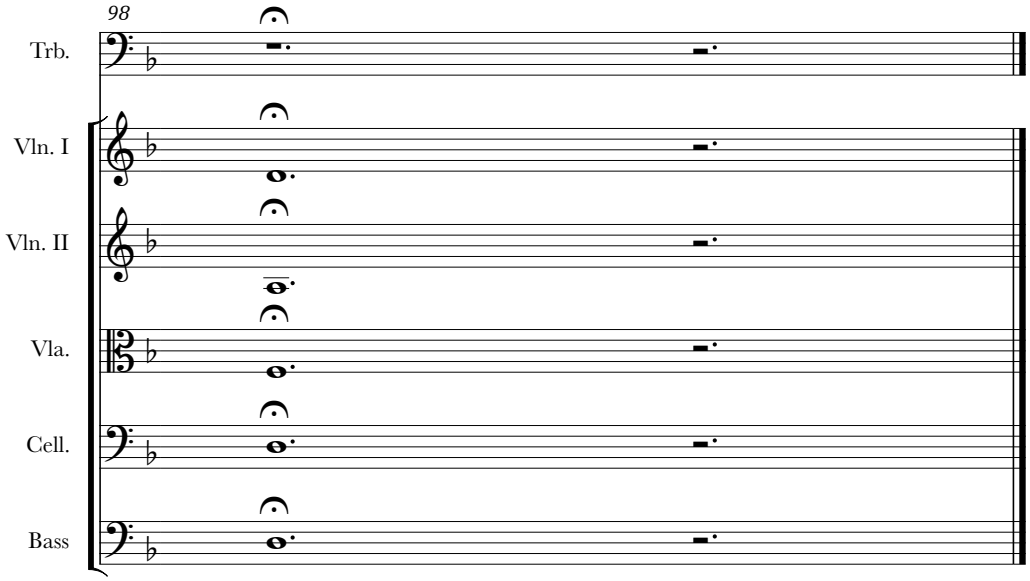



93
Trb.
wird – was nach
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Cell.
Bass
94
Trb.
ihm ge –
dim.
Vln. I
dim.
Vln. II
dim.
Vla.
dim.
Cell.
dim.
Bass
dim.

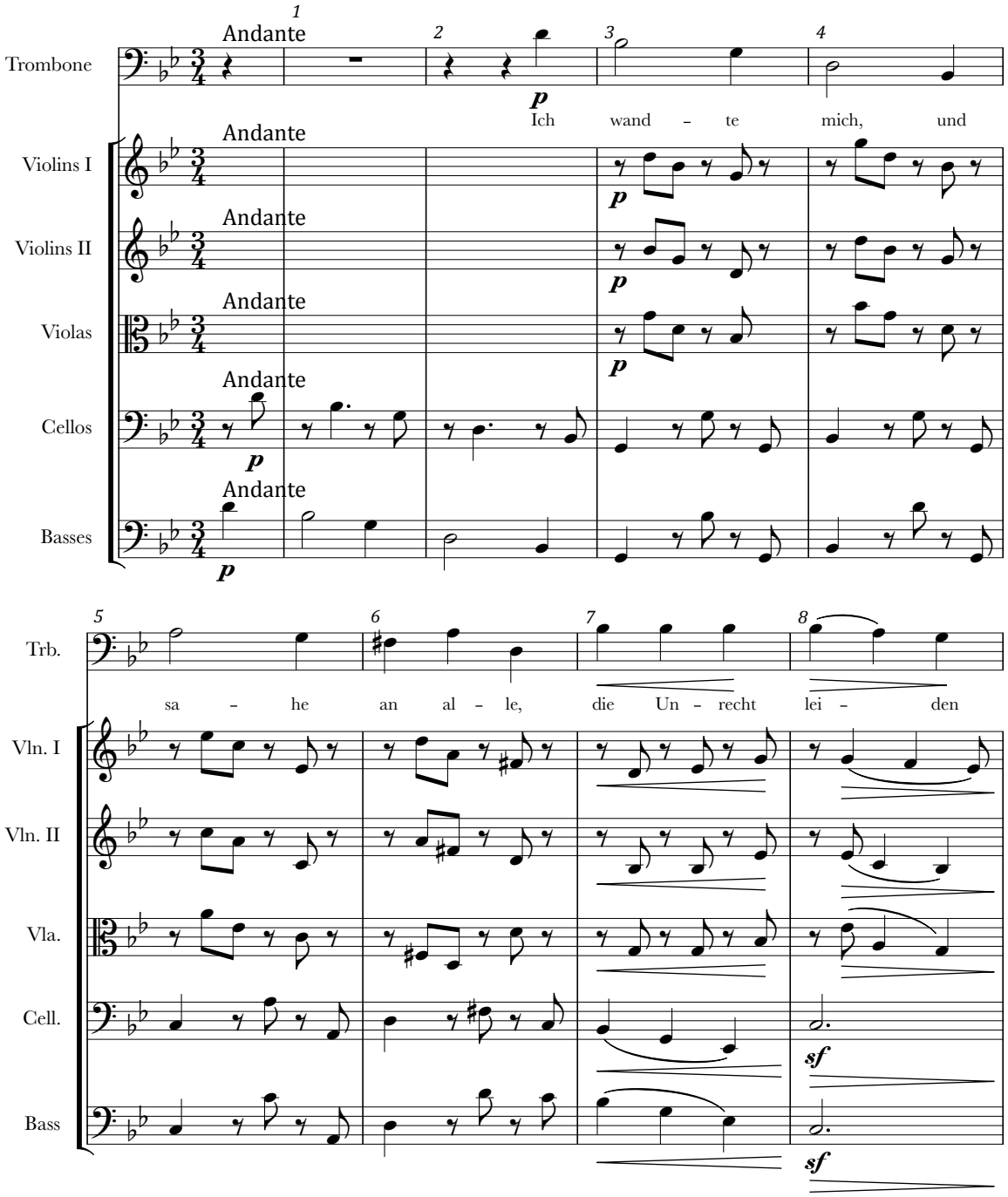
1. Ecclesiastes III: 19-22



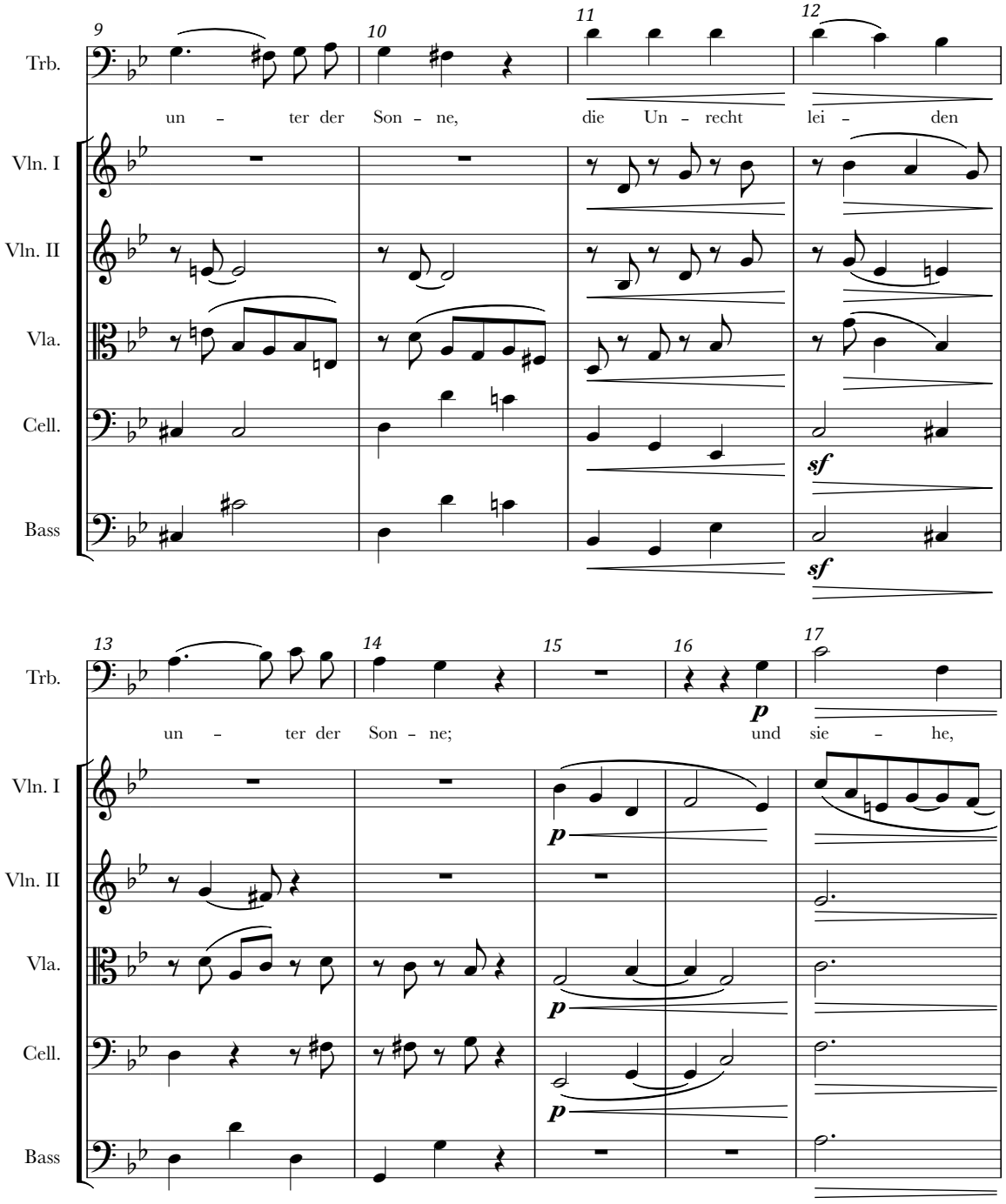
1. Ecclesiastes III: 19-22

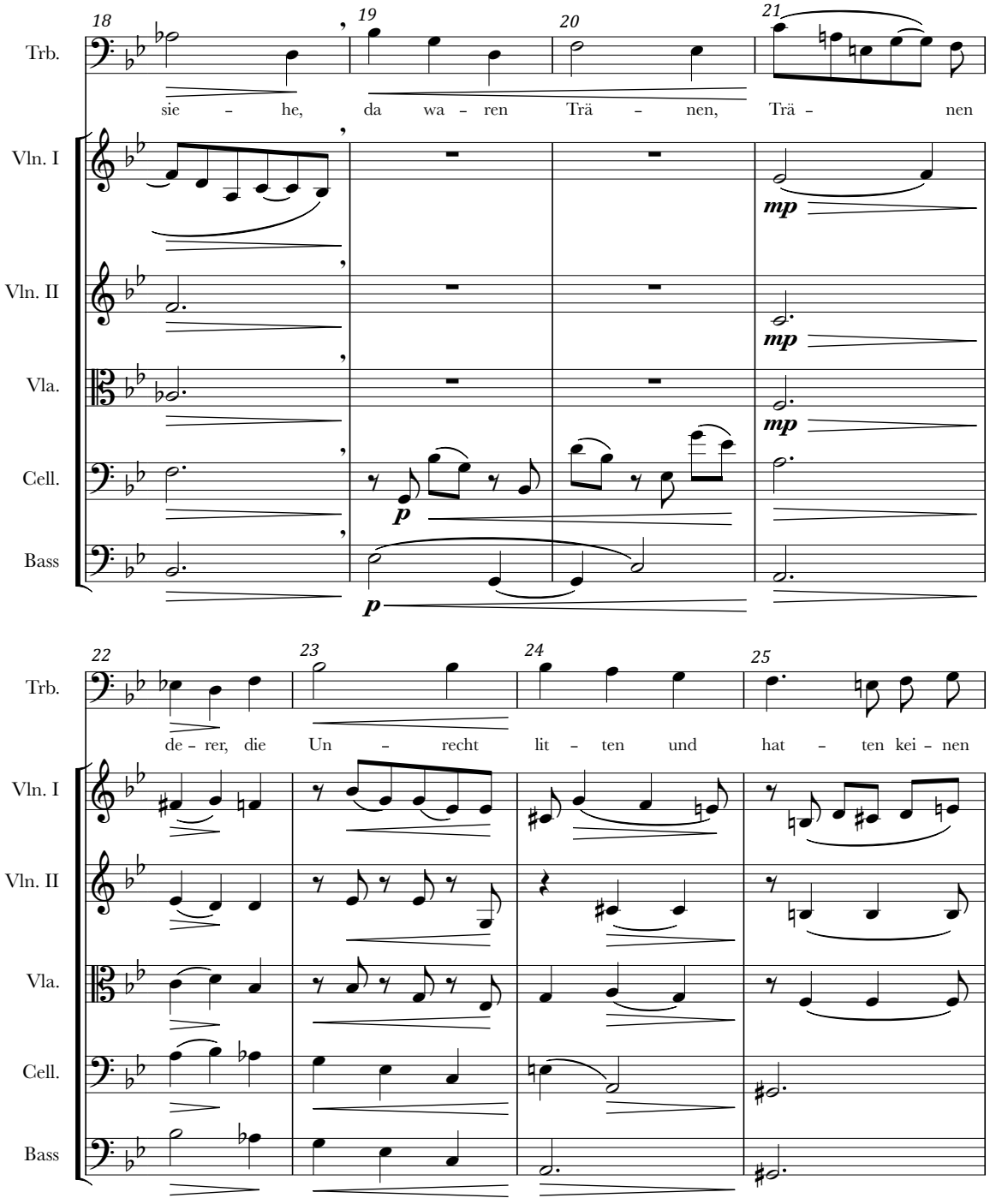


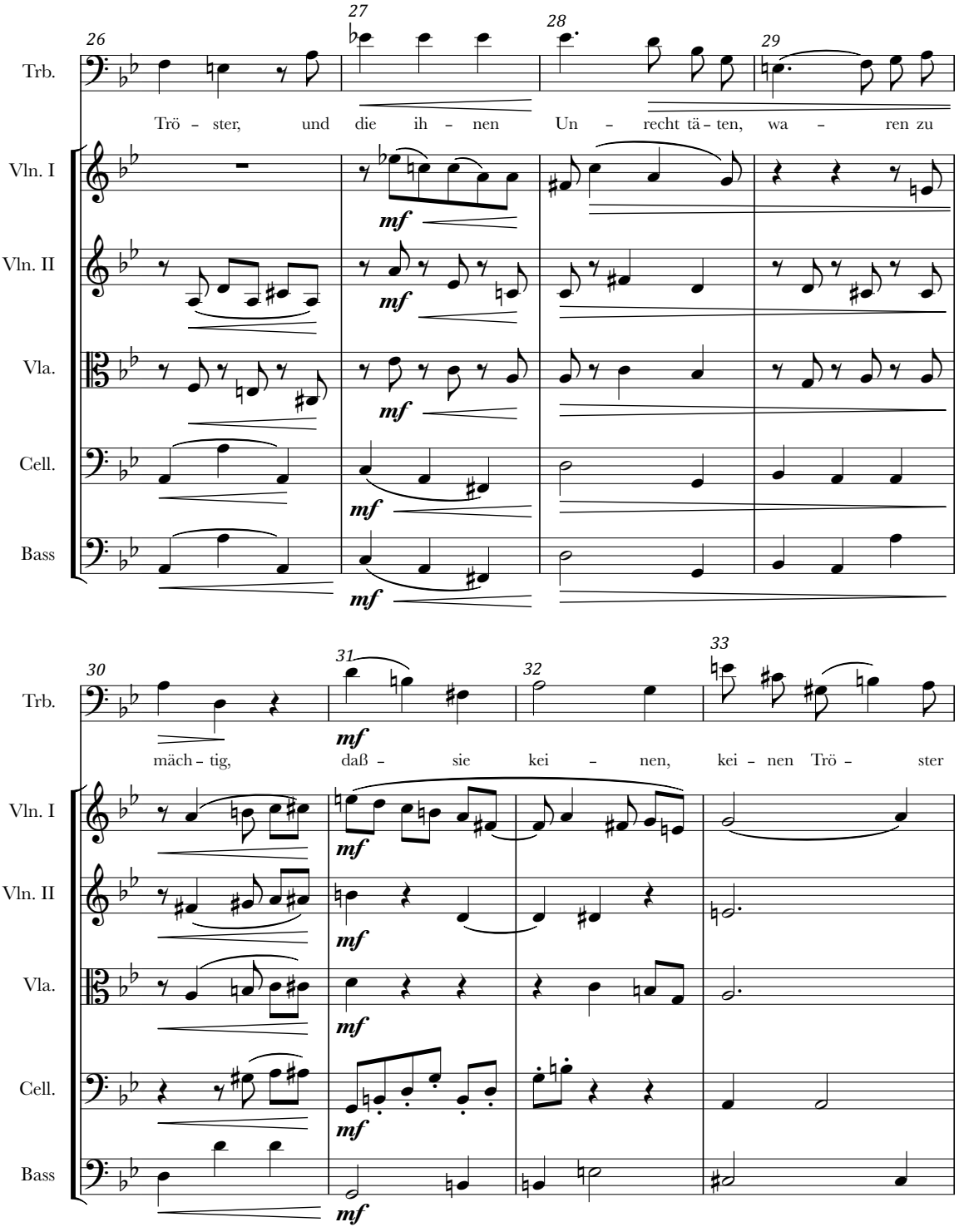
2. Ecclesiastes IV: 1-3



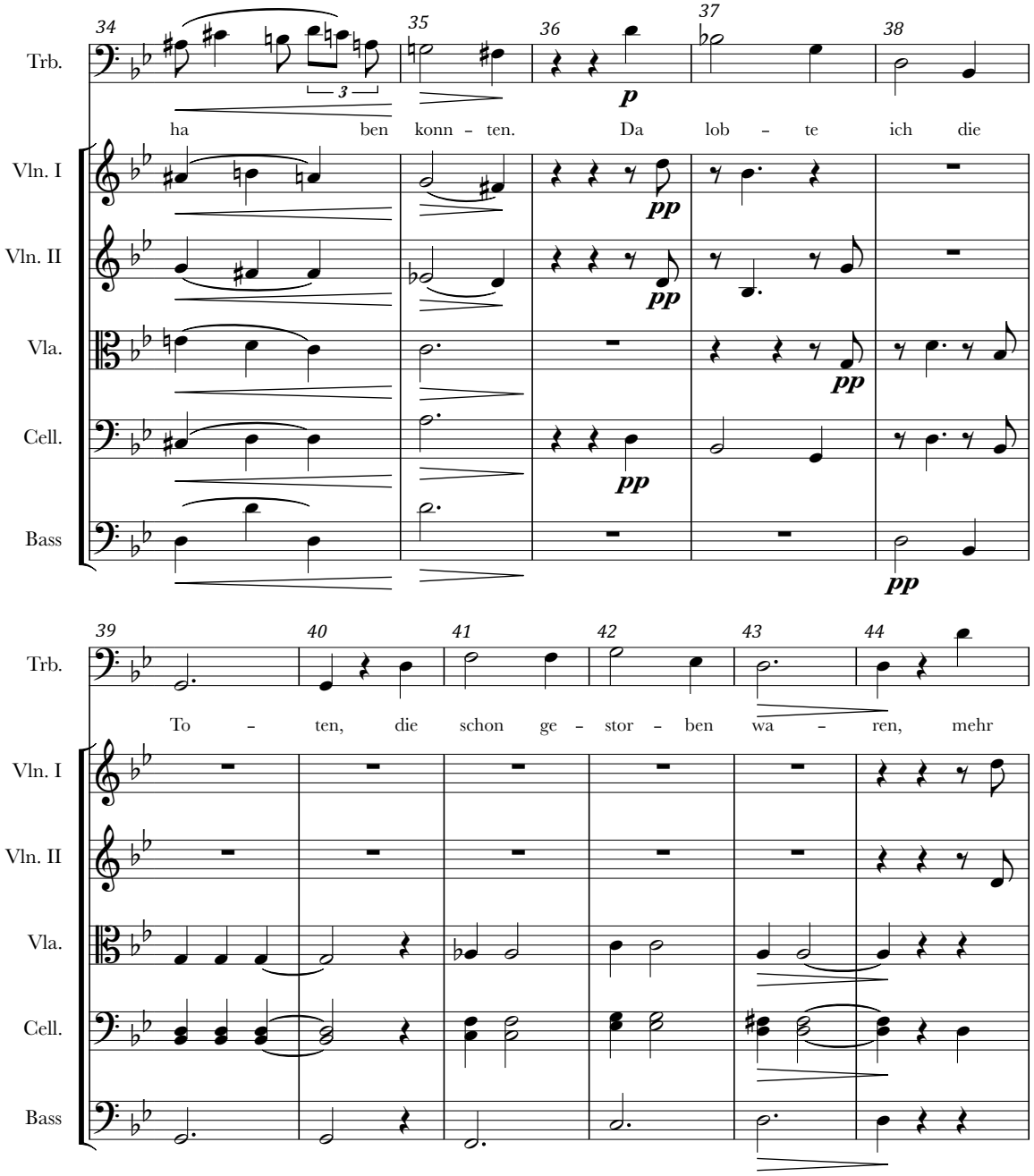
2. Ecclesiastes IV: 1-3



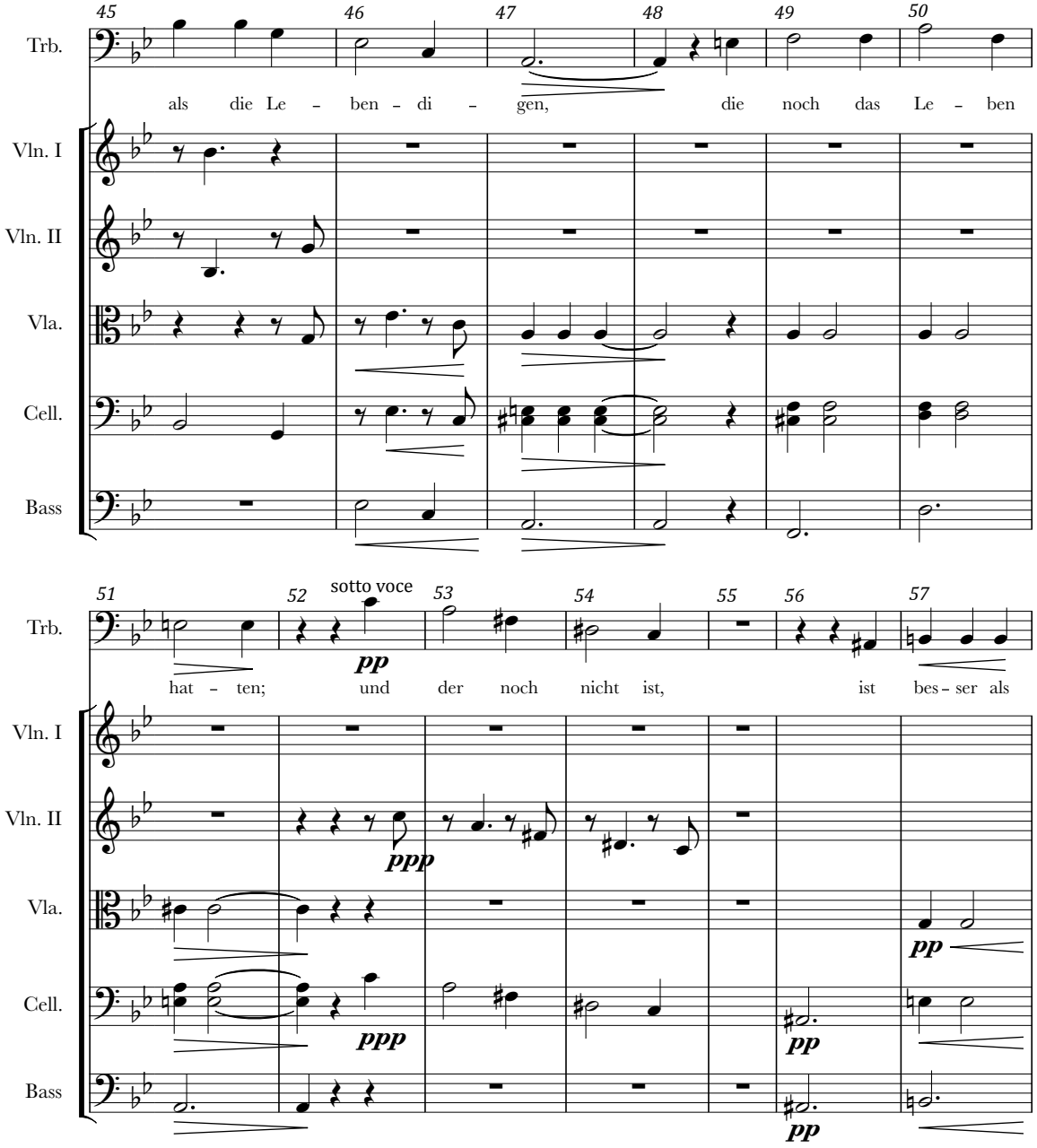

18
19
20
21
Trb.
sie – he, da wa – ren Trä – nen, Trä – nen
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Cell.
Bass
mp
p
22
23
24
25
de – rer, die Un – recht lit – ten und hat – ten kei – nen

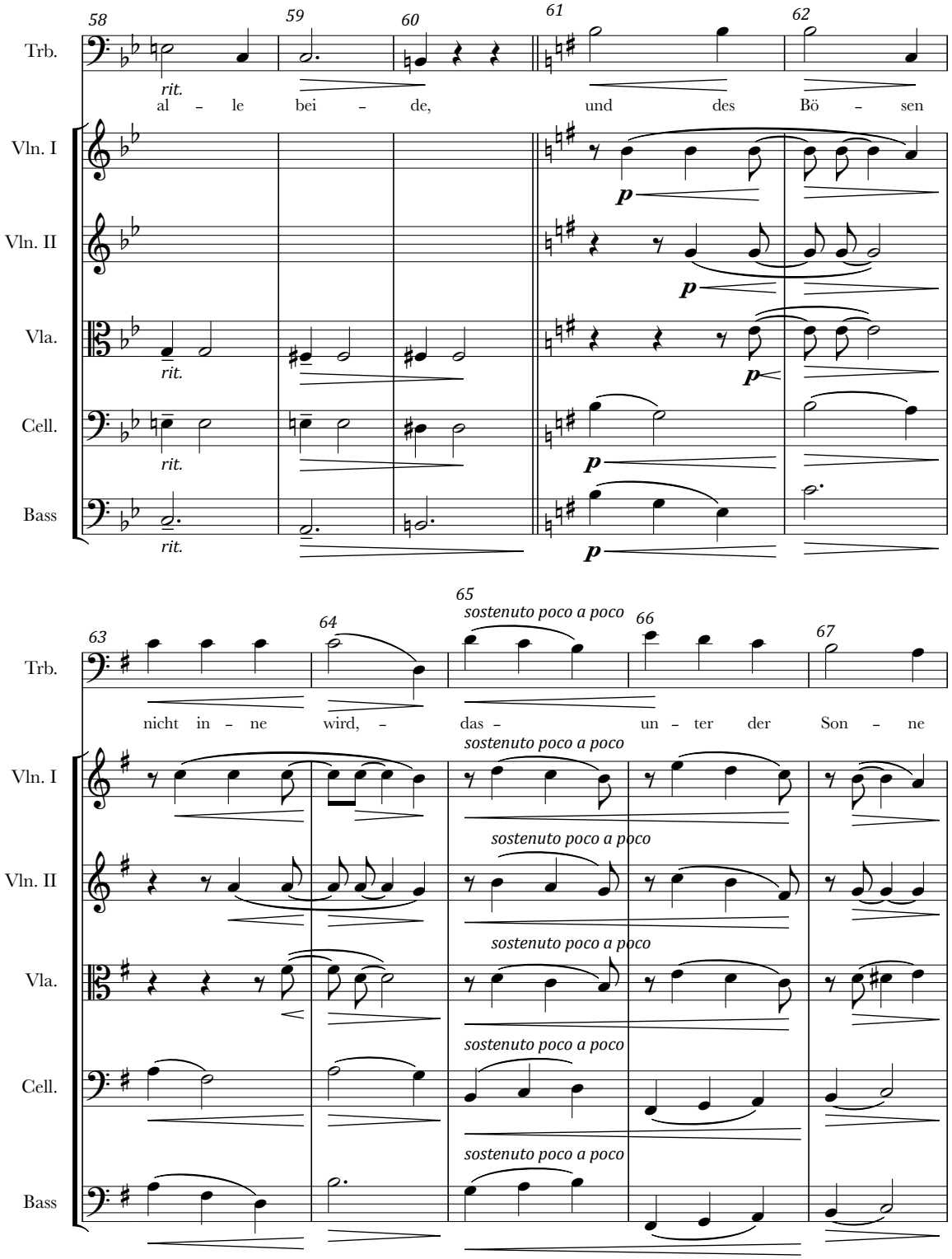

26
27
28
29
Trb.
Trö - ster, und die ih - nen Un - recht tä - ten, wa - ren zu
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Cell.
Bass
mf
30
31
32
33
mäch - tig, daß - sie kei - nen, kei - nen Trö - ster

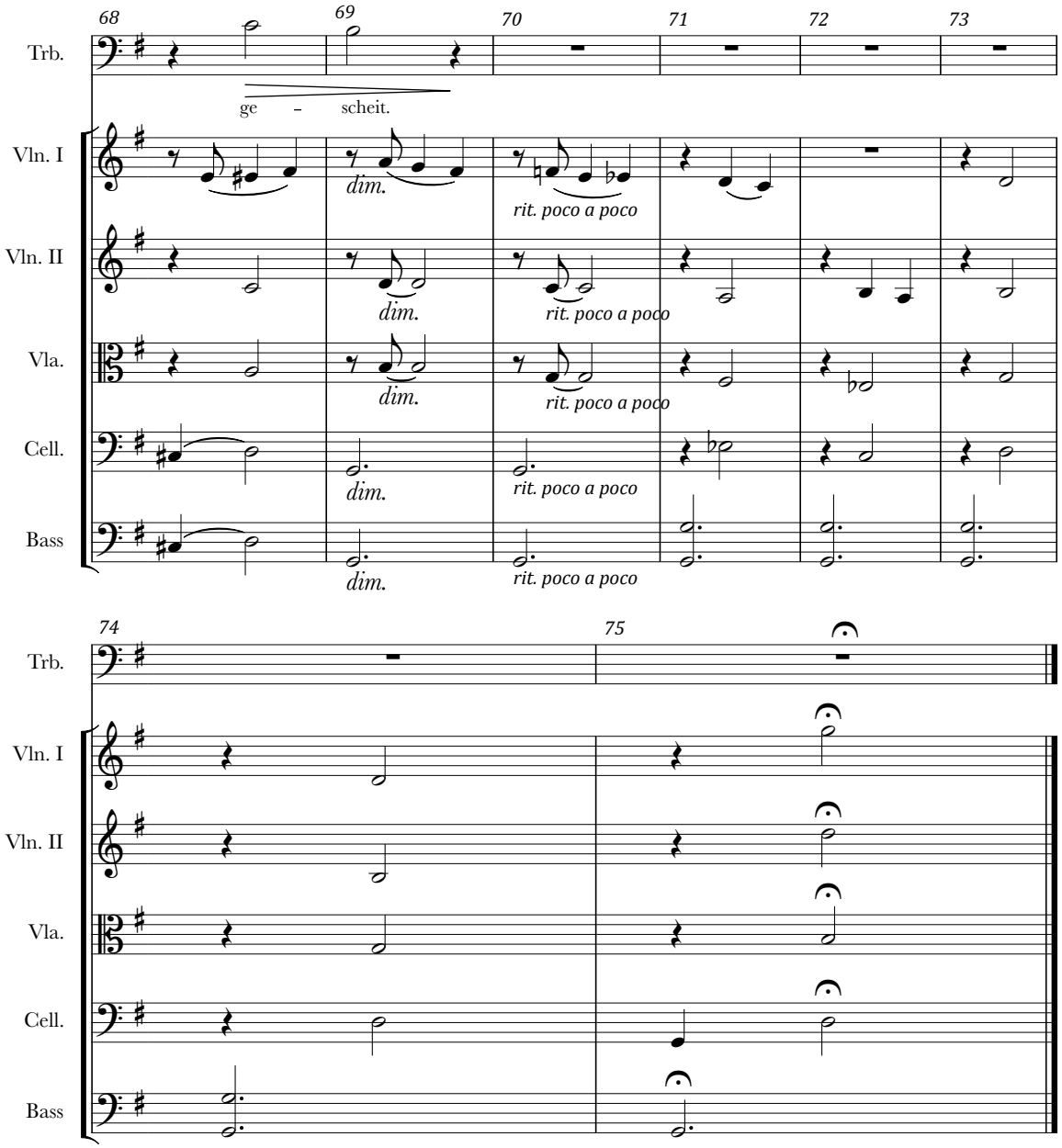
2. Ecclesiastes IV: 1-3



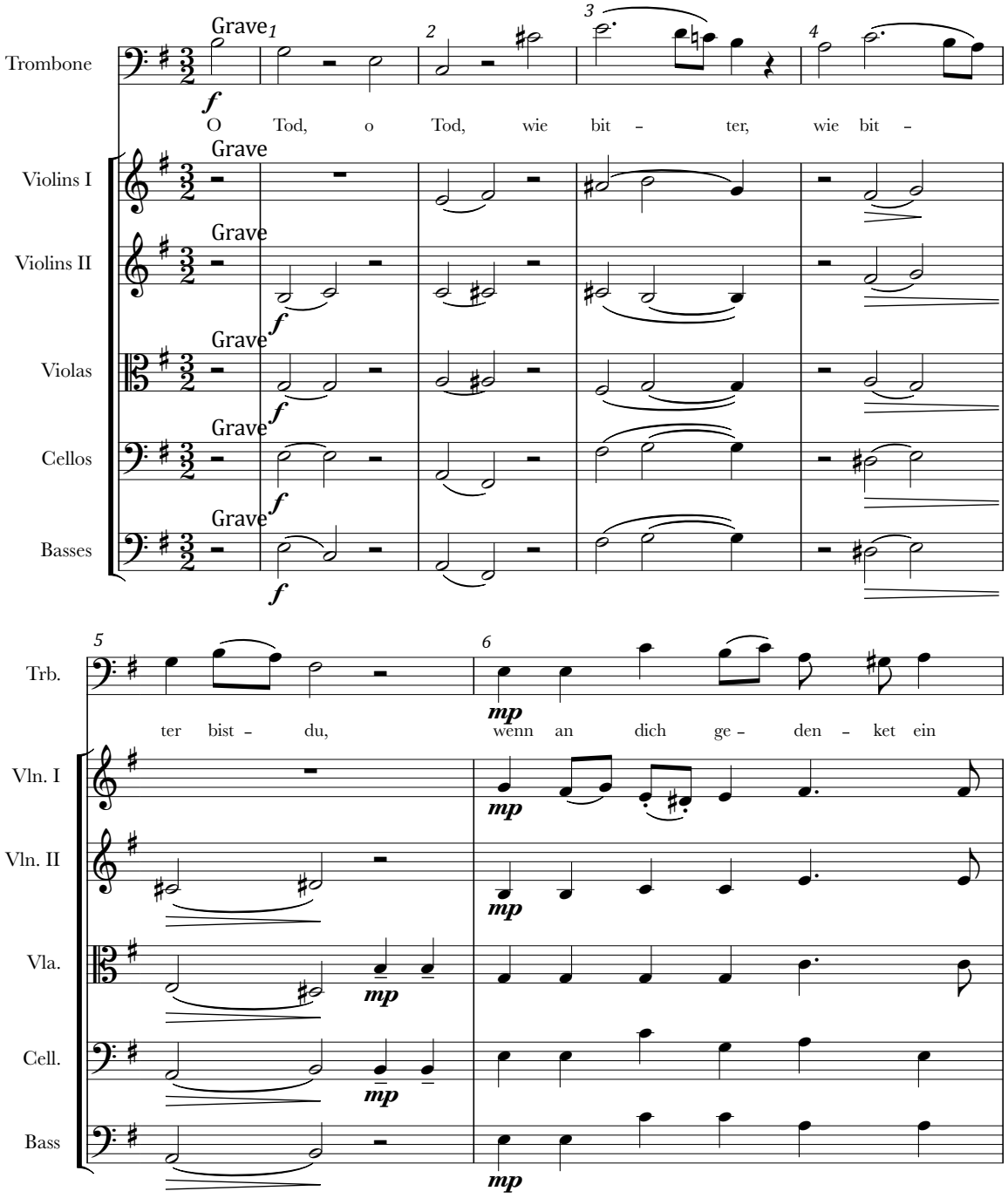
2. Ecclesiastes IV: 1-3



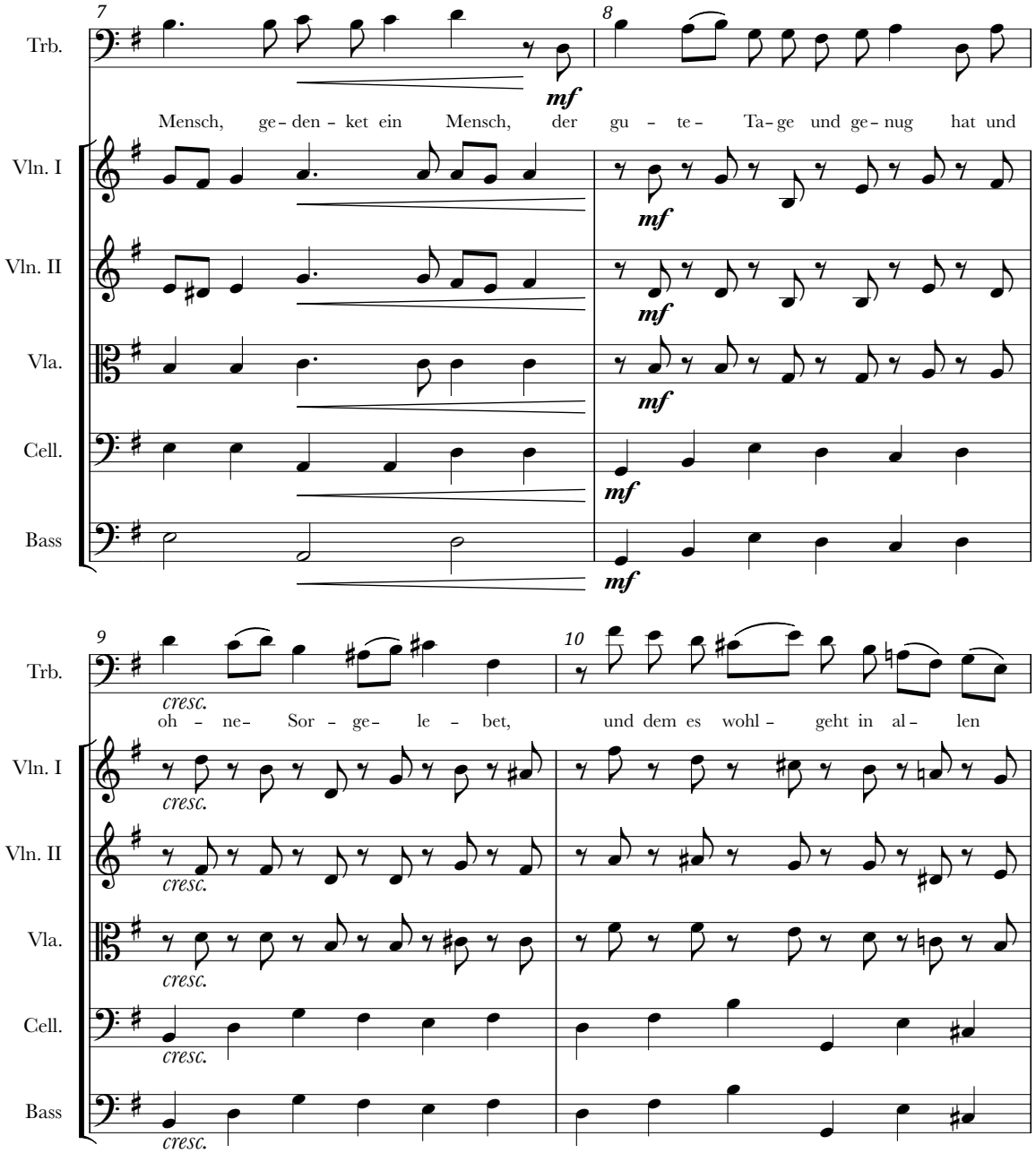

58
59
60
61
62
Trb.
rit.
al – le bei – de, und des Bö – sen
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Cell.
Bass
p
63
64
65
66
67
sostenuto poco a poco
nicht in – ne wird, – das – un – ter der Son – ne


68
69
70
71
72
73
Trb.
ge - scheit.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Cell.
Bass
dim.
rit. poco a poco
74
75
Trb.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Cell.
Bass

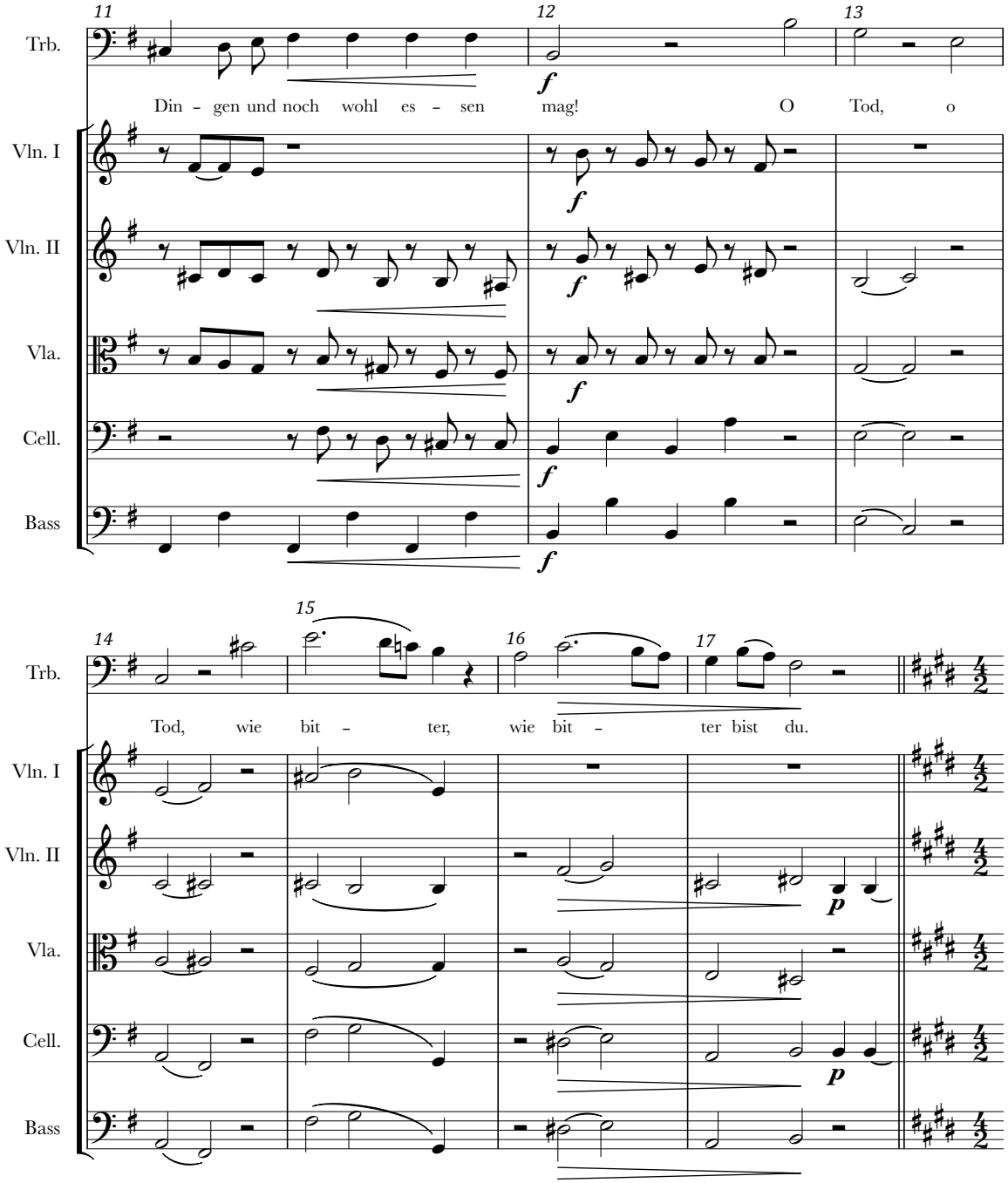
3. Ecclesiasticus XLI: 1-2



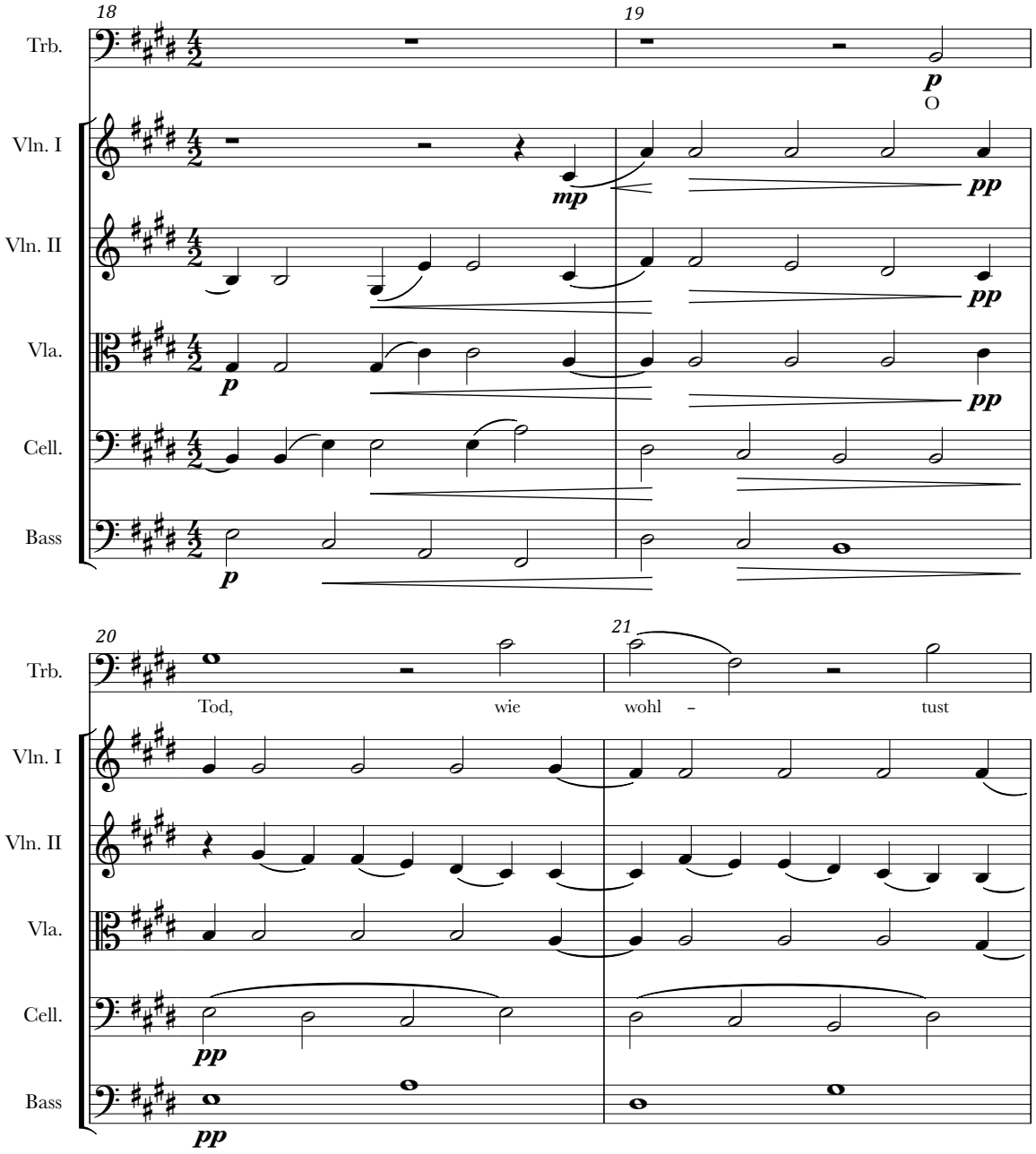
3. Ecclesiasticus XLI: 1-2



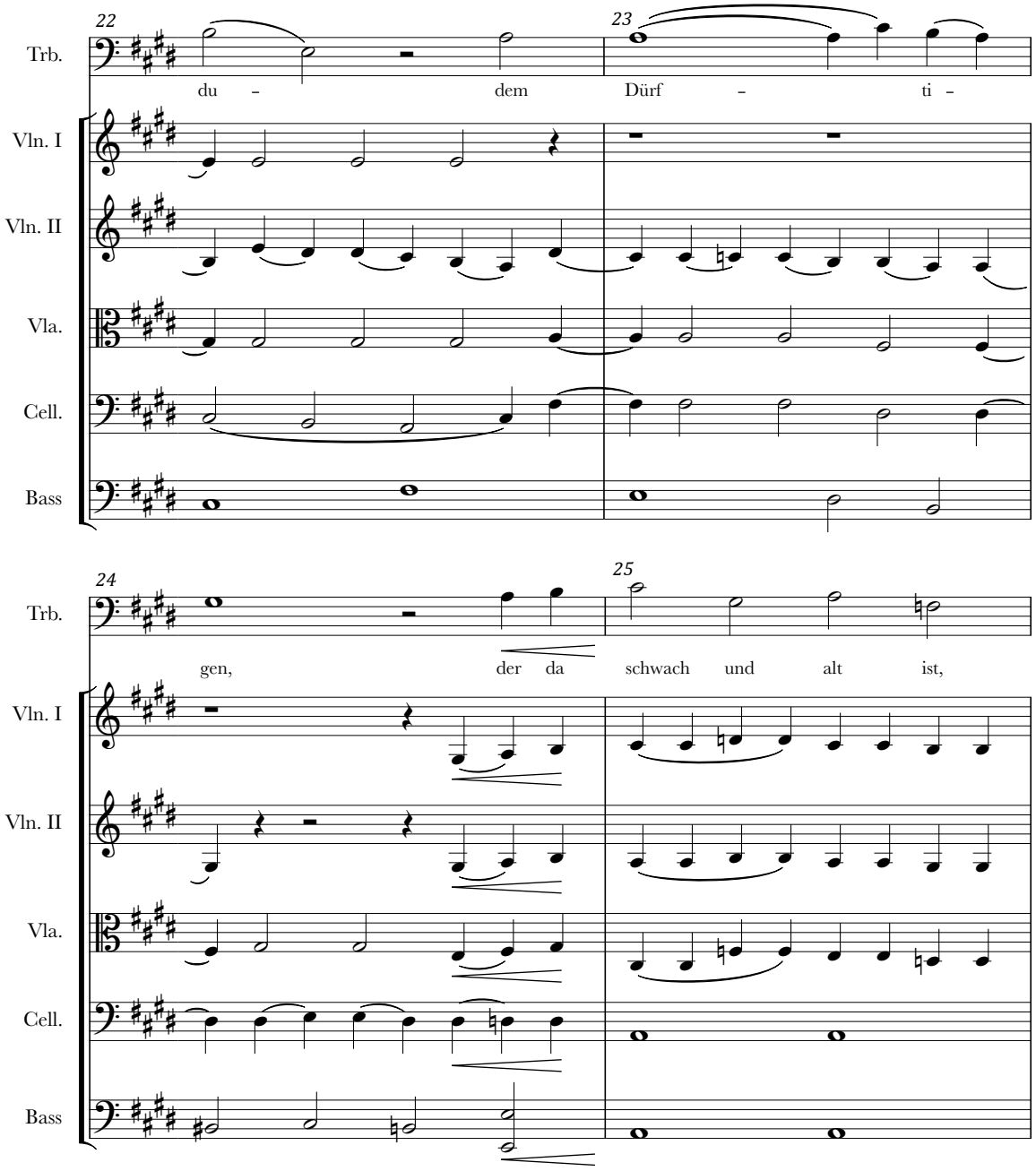
3. Ecclesiasticus XLI: 1-2

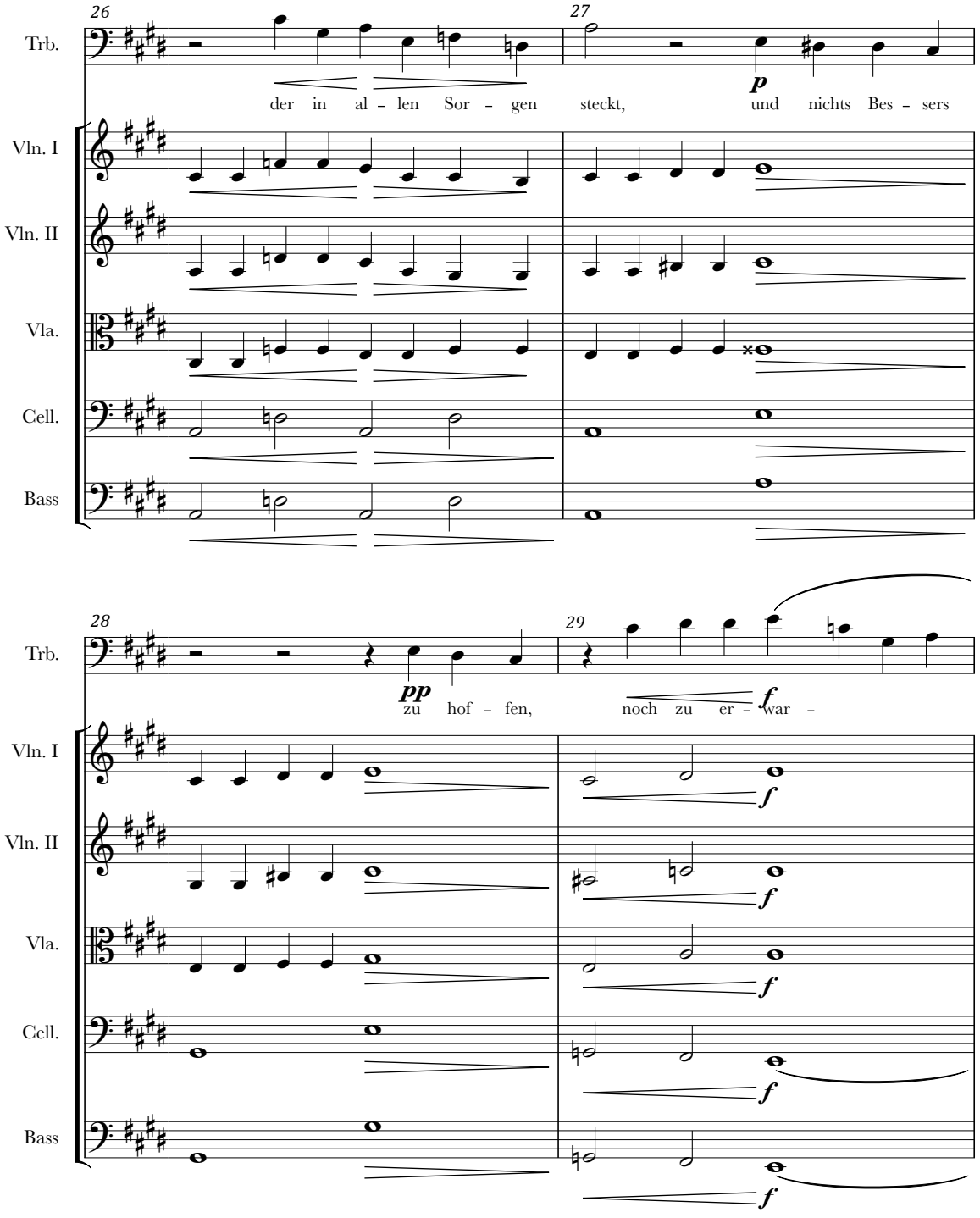


3. Ecclesiasticus XLI: 1-2

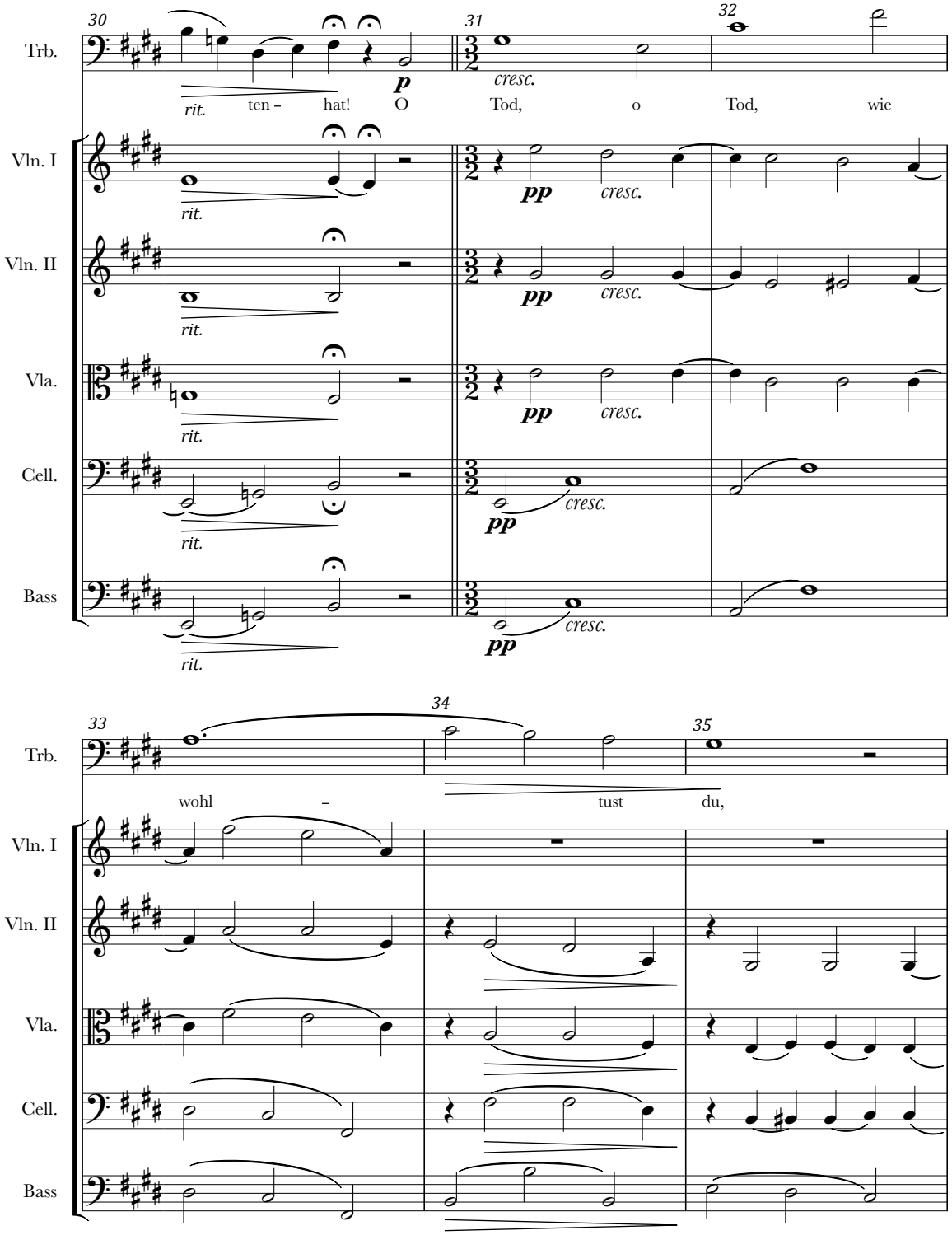


3. Ecclesiasticus XLI: 1-2

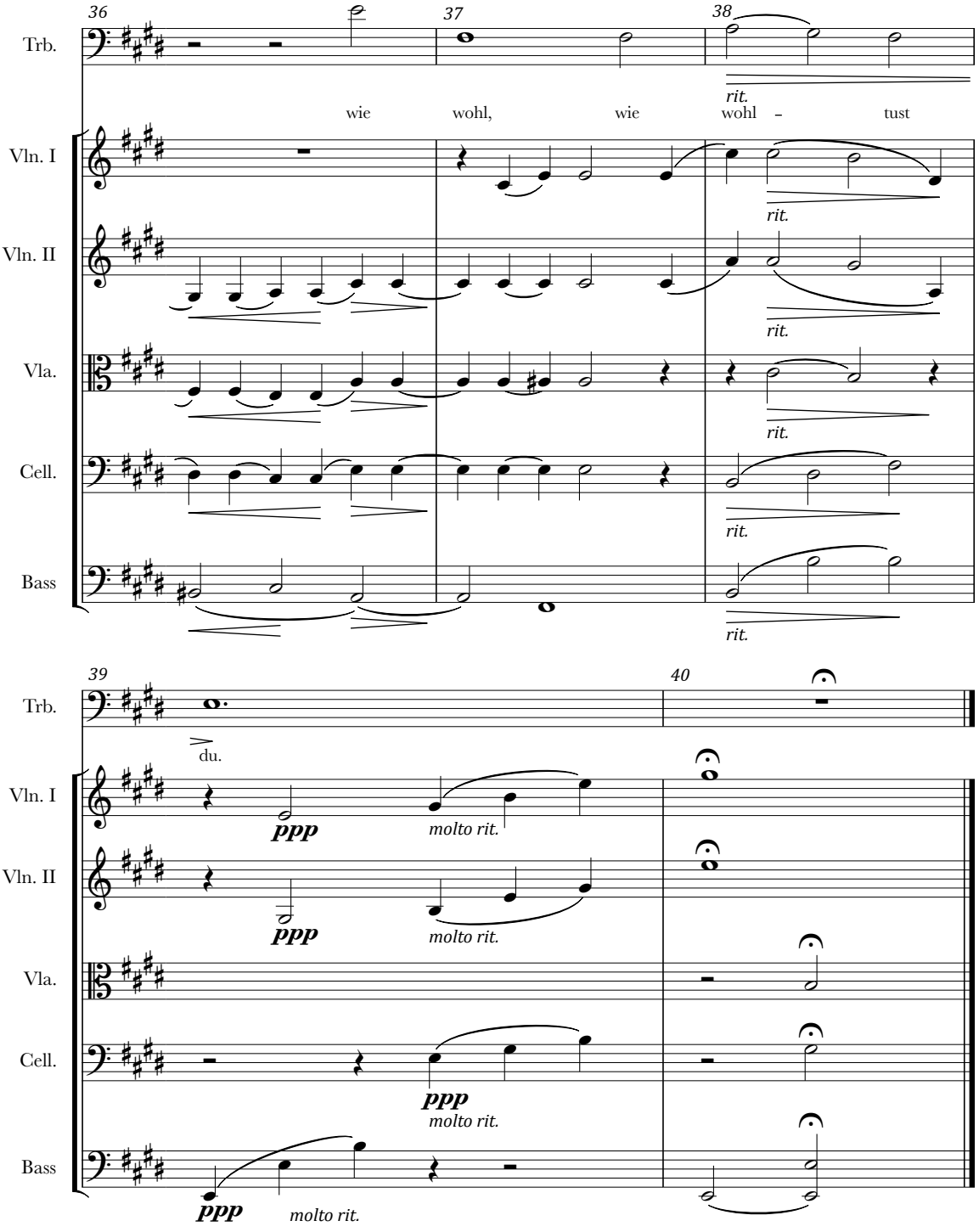


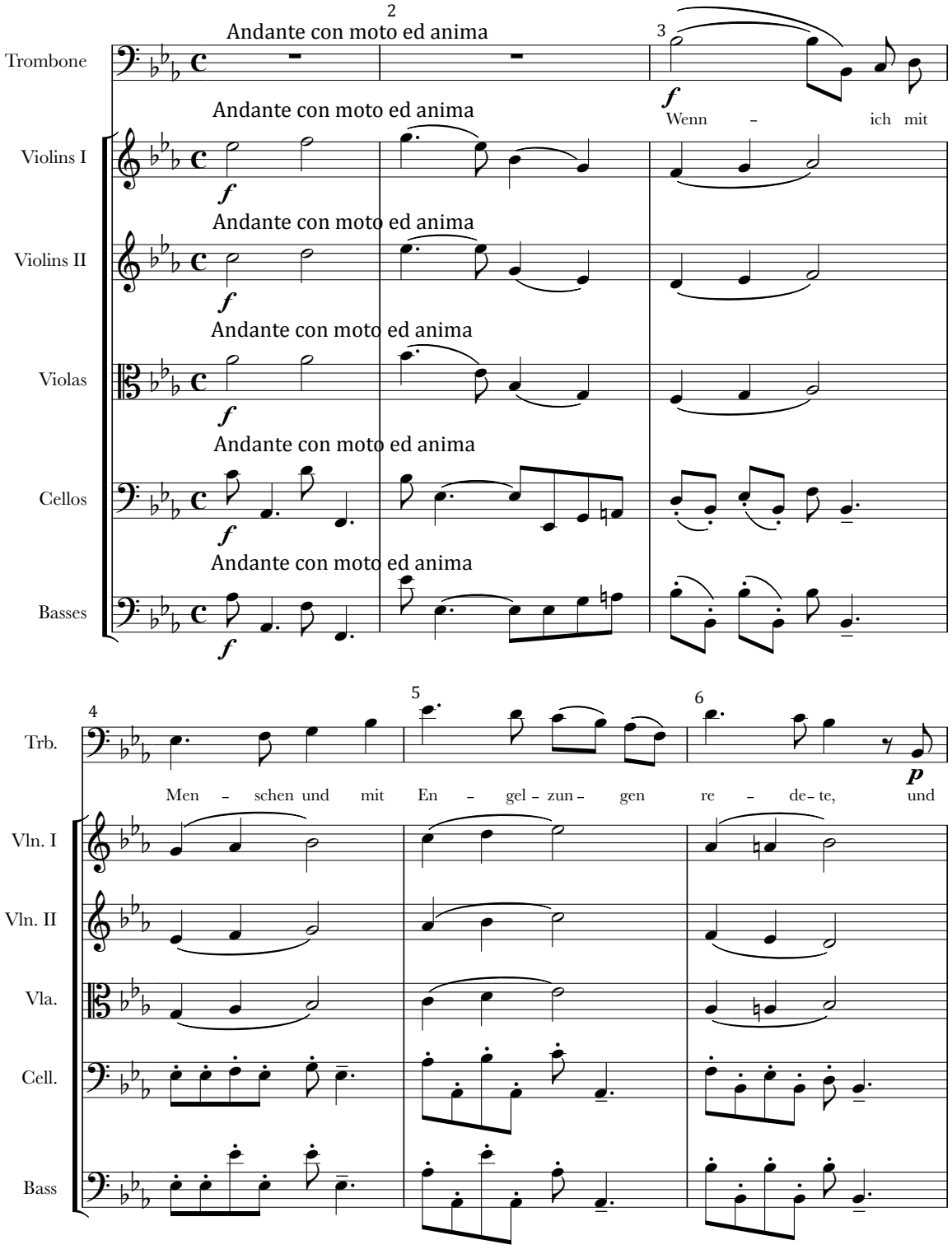

26
27
Trb.
p
der in al - len Sor - gen steckt, und nichts Bes - sers
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Cell.
Bass
28
29
Trb.
pp
zu hof - fen,
noch zu er - war -
f
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Cell.
Bass

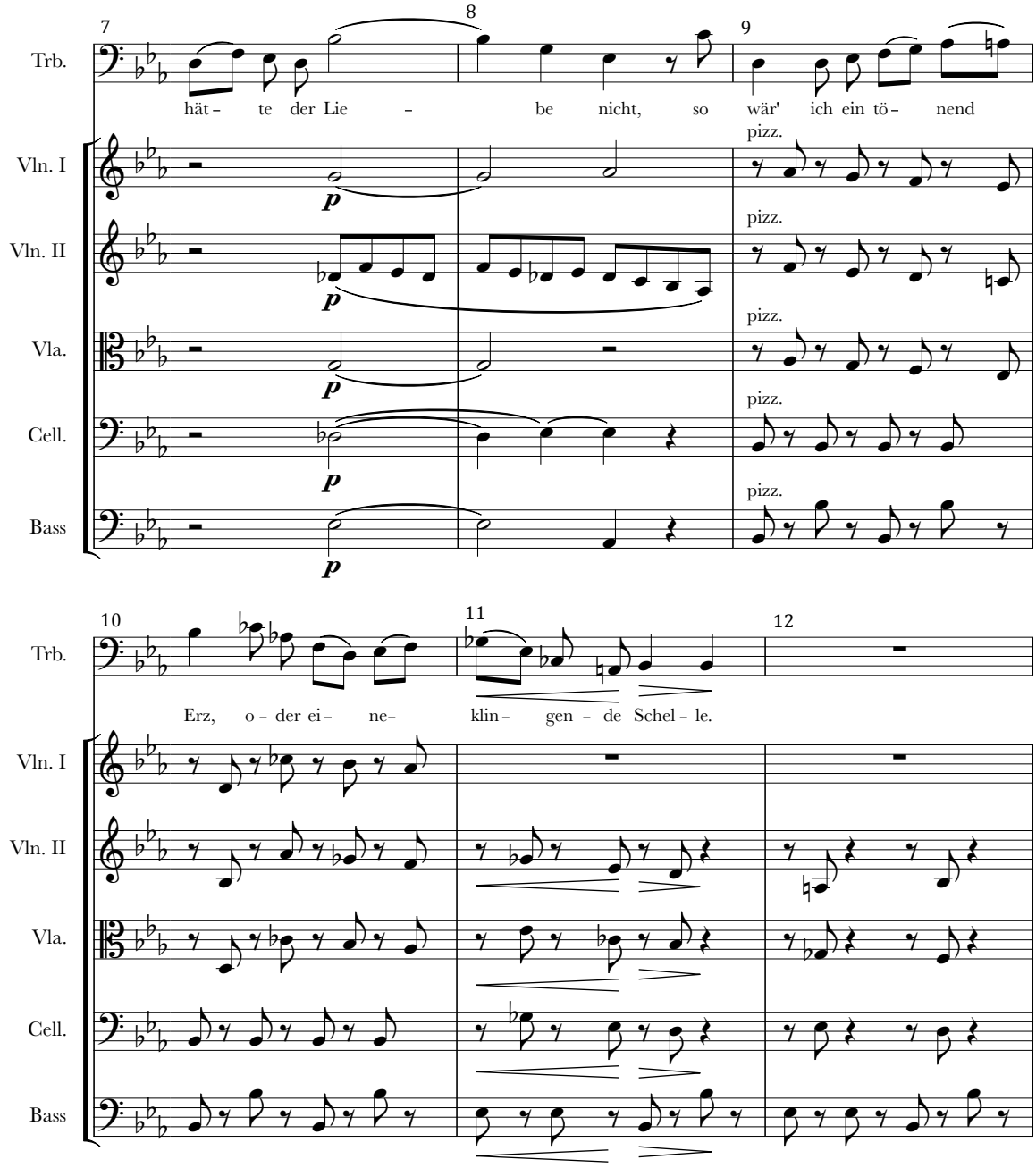
3. Ecclesiasticus XLI: 1-2

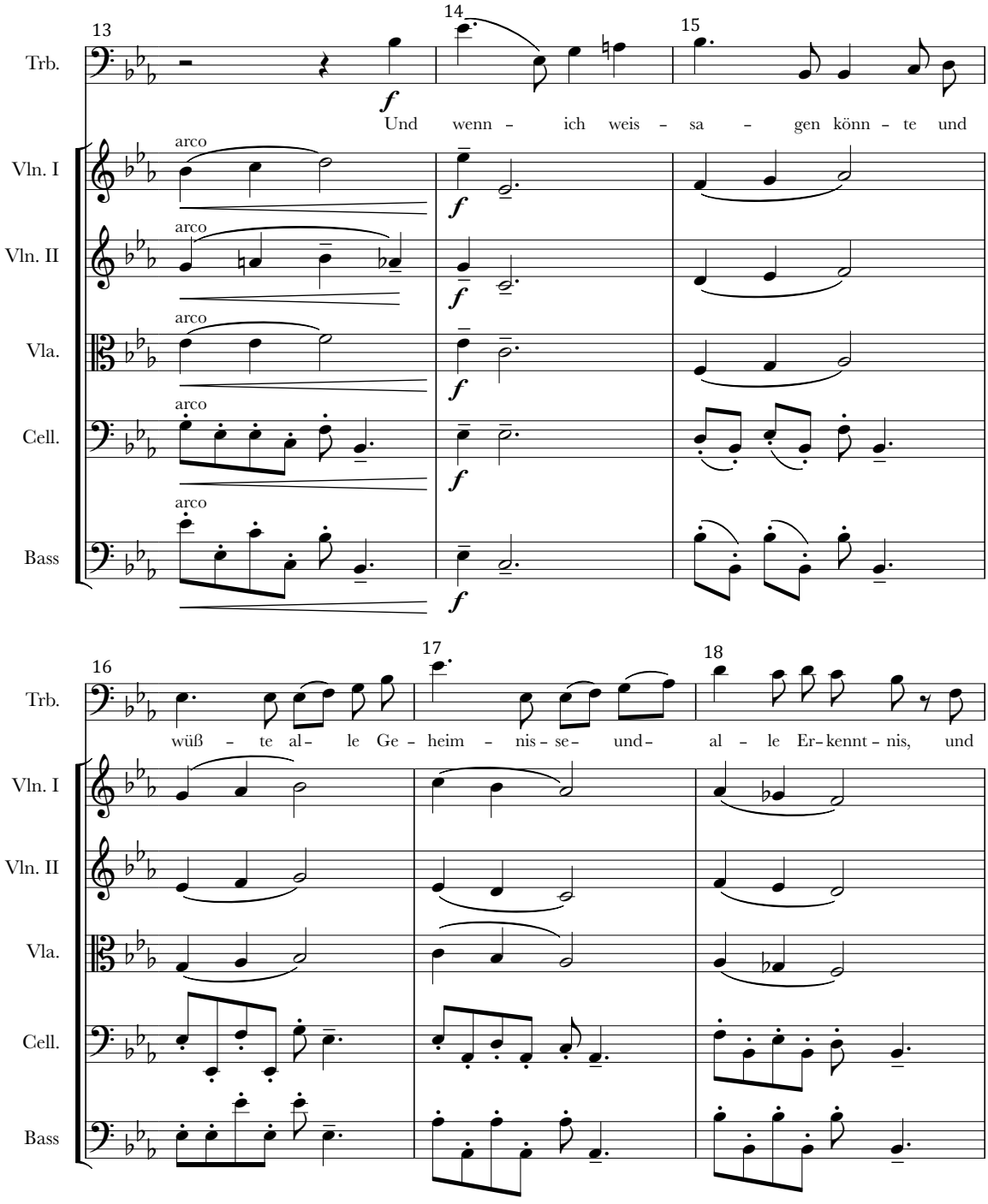


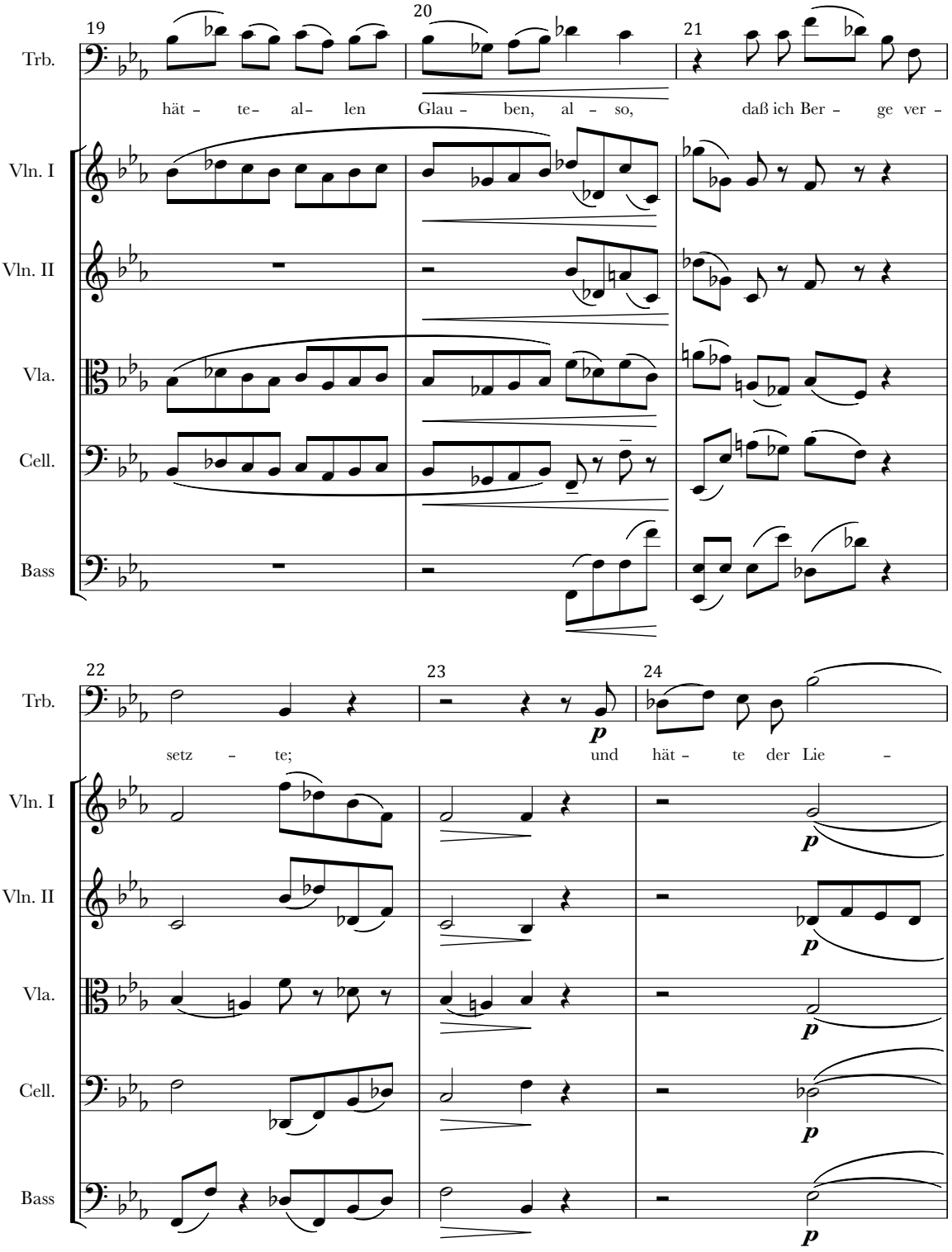
3. Ecclesiasticus XLI: 1-2

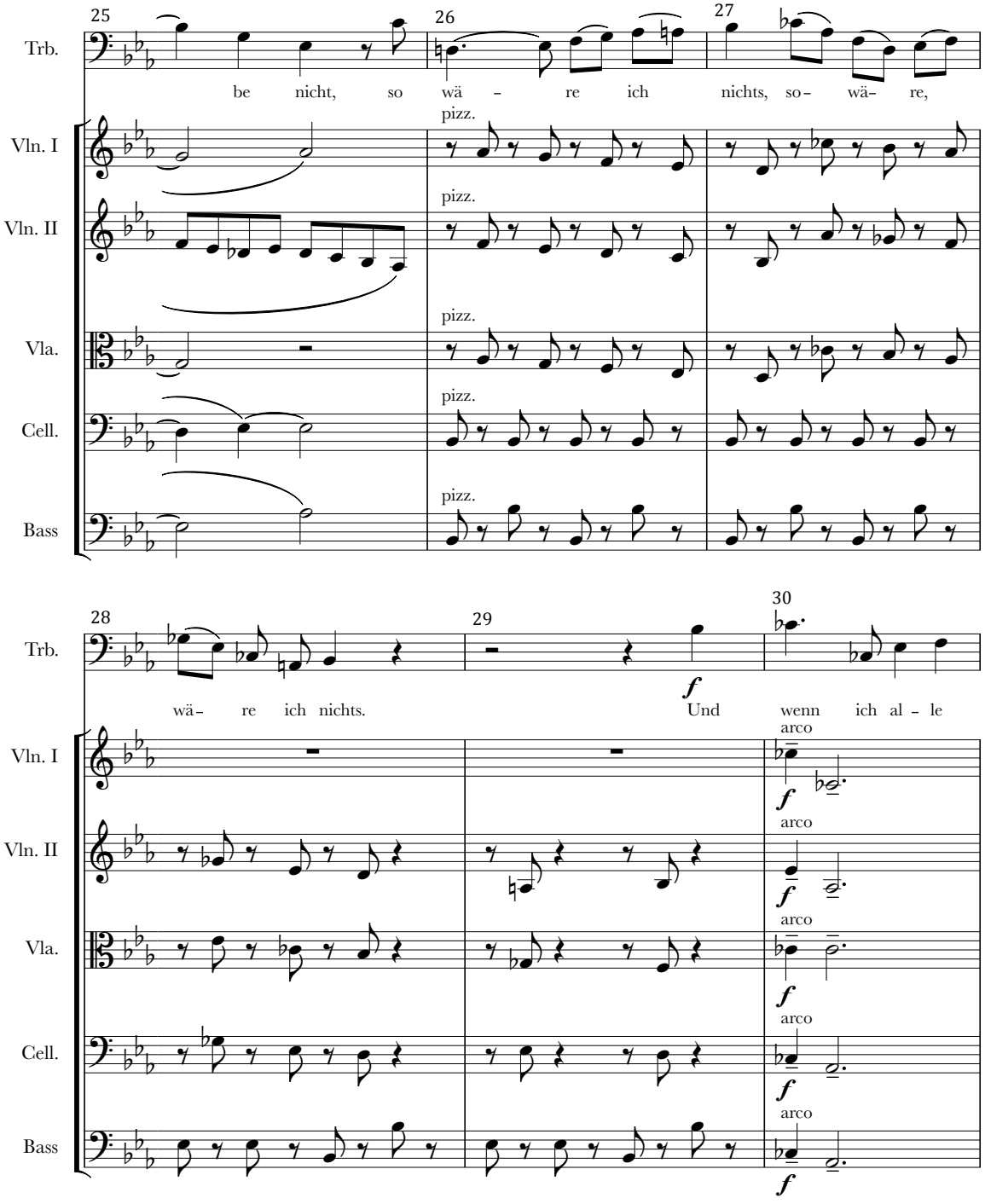


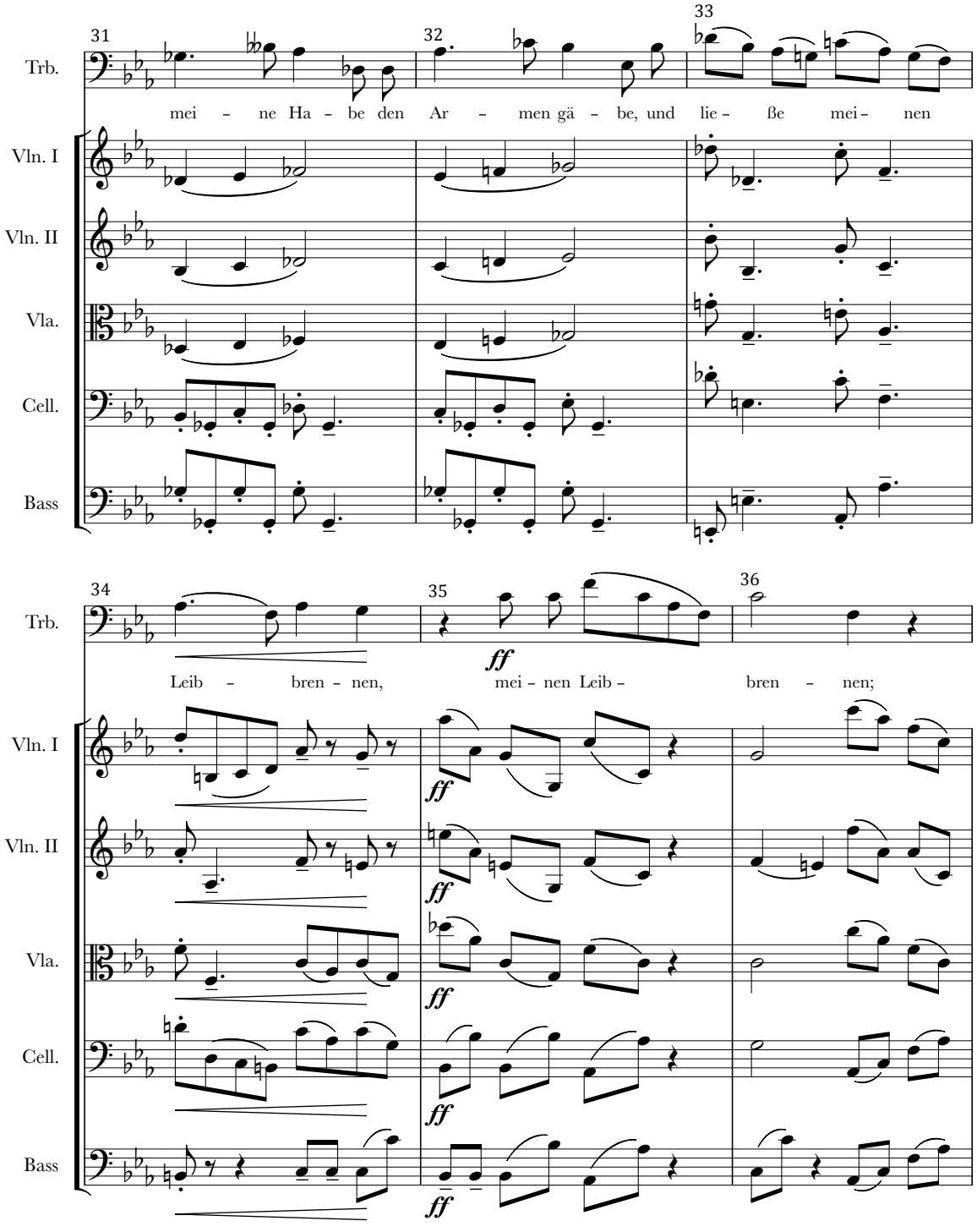

2
3
Andante con moto ed anima
Trombone
Violins I
Violins II
Violas
Cellos
Basses
f
Wenn – ich mit
4
5
6
Trb.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Cell.
Bass
p
Men – schen und mit En – gel – zun – gen re – de – te, und

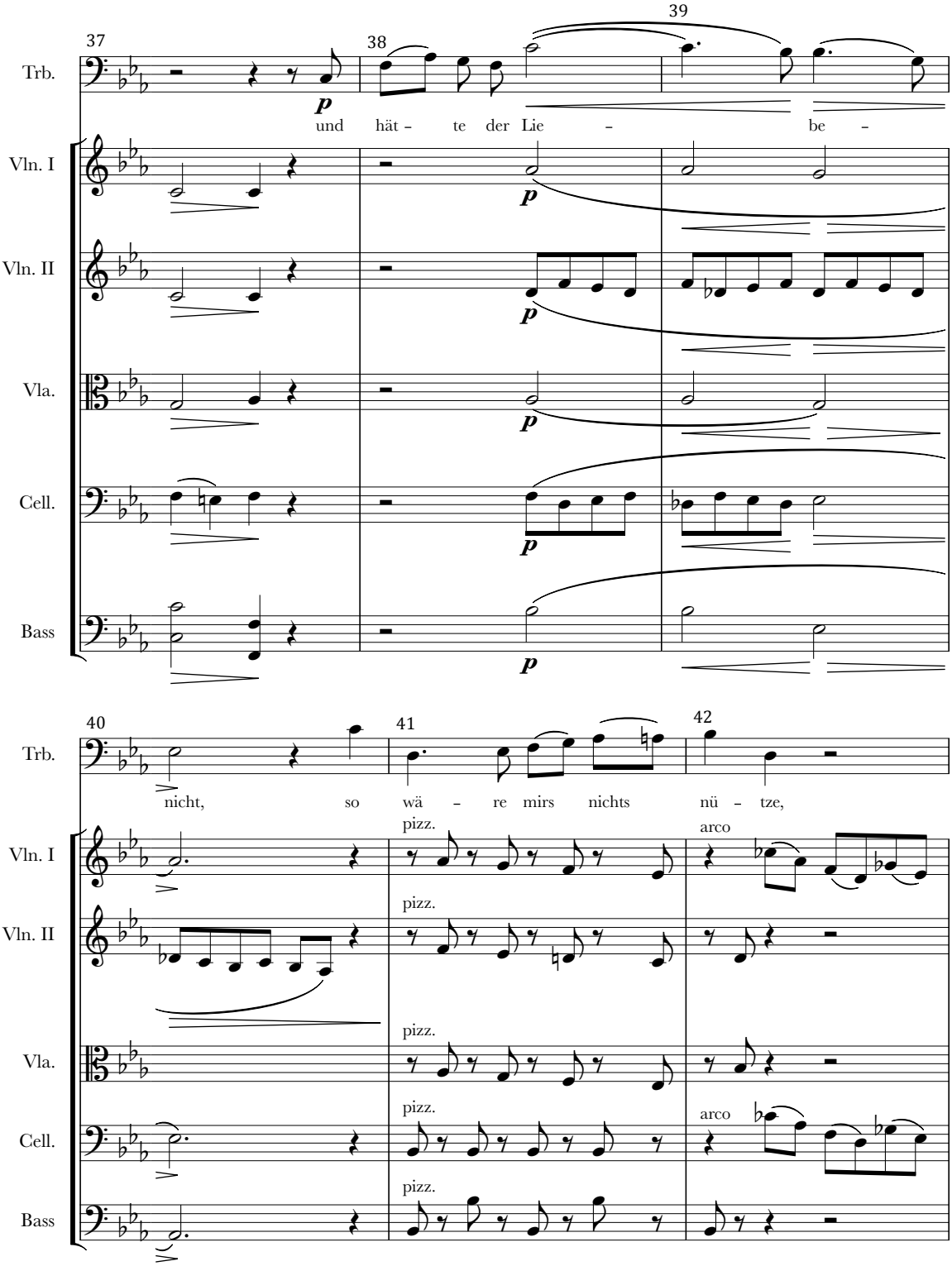

7
8
9
Trb.
hät - te der Lie - be nicht, so wär' ich ein tö - nend
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Cell.
Bass
p
pizz.
10
11
12
Erz, o - der ei - ne- klin - gen - de Schel - le.

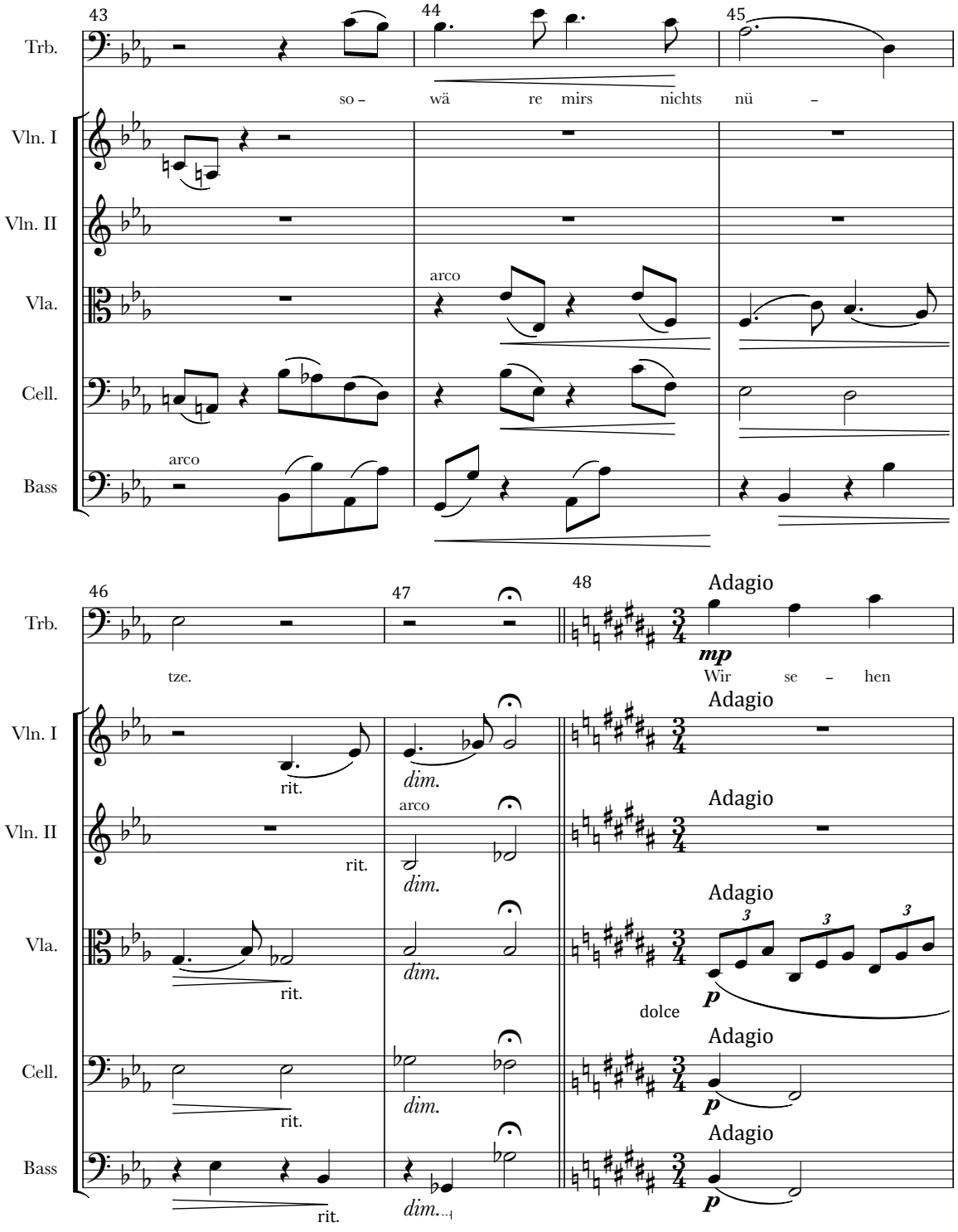

13
14
15
Trb.
f
Und wenn - ich weis - sa - gen könn - te und
Vln. I
arco
Vln. II
arco
Vla.
arco
Cell.
arco
Bass
arco
16
17
18
Trb.
wüß - te al - le Ge - heim - nis - se - und - al - le Er - kennt - nis, und
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Cell.
Bass

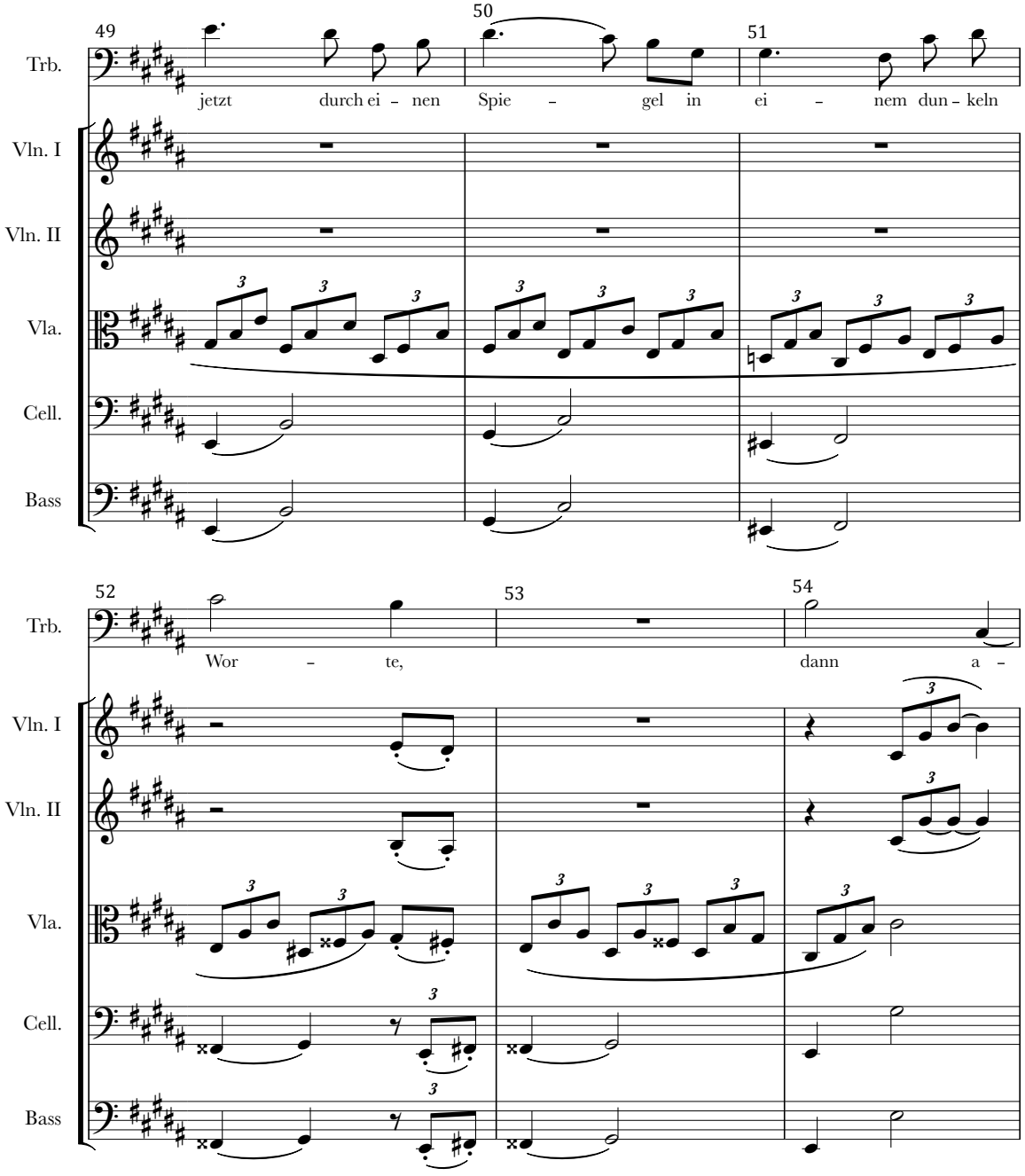

19
20
21
Trb.
hät - te- al- len Glau - ben, al - so, daß ich Ber - ge ver -
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Cell.
Bass
22
23
24
Trb.
setz - te; und hät - te der Lie -
p
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Cell.
Bass

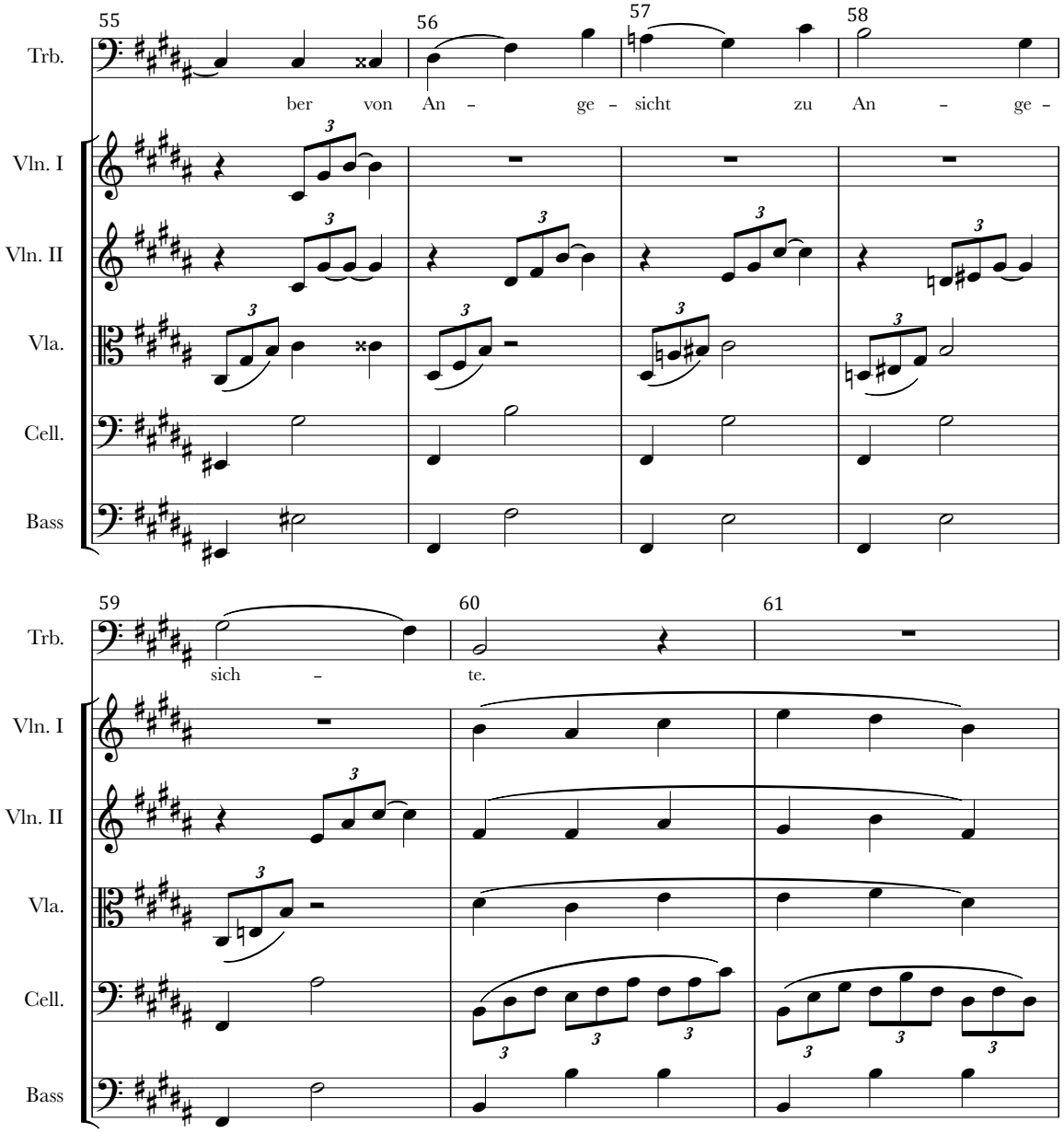

25
26
27
Trb.
be nicht, so wä - re ich nichts, so- wä- re,
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Cell.
Bass
pizz.
28
29
30
wä- re ich nichts.
Und wenn ich al - le
f
arco

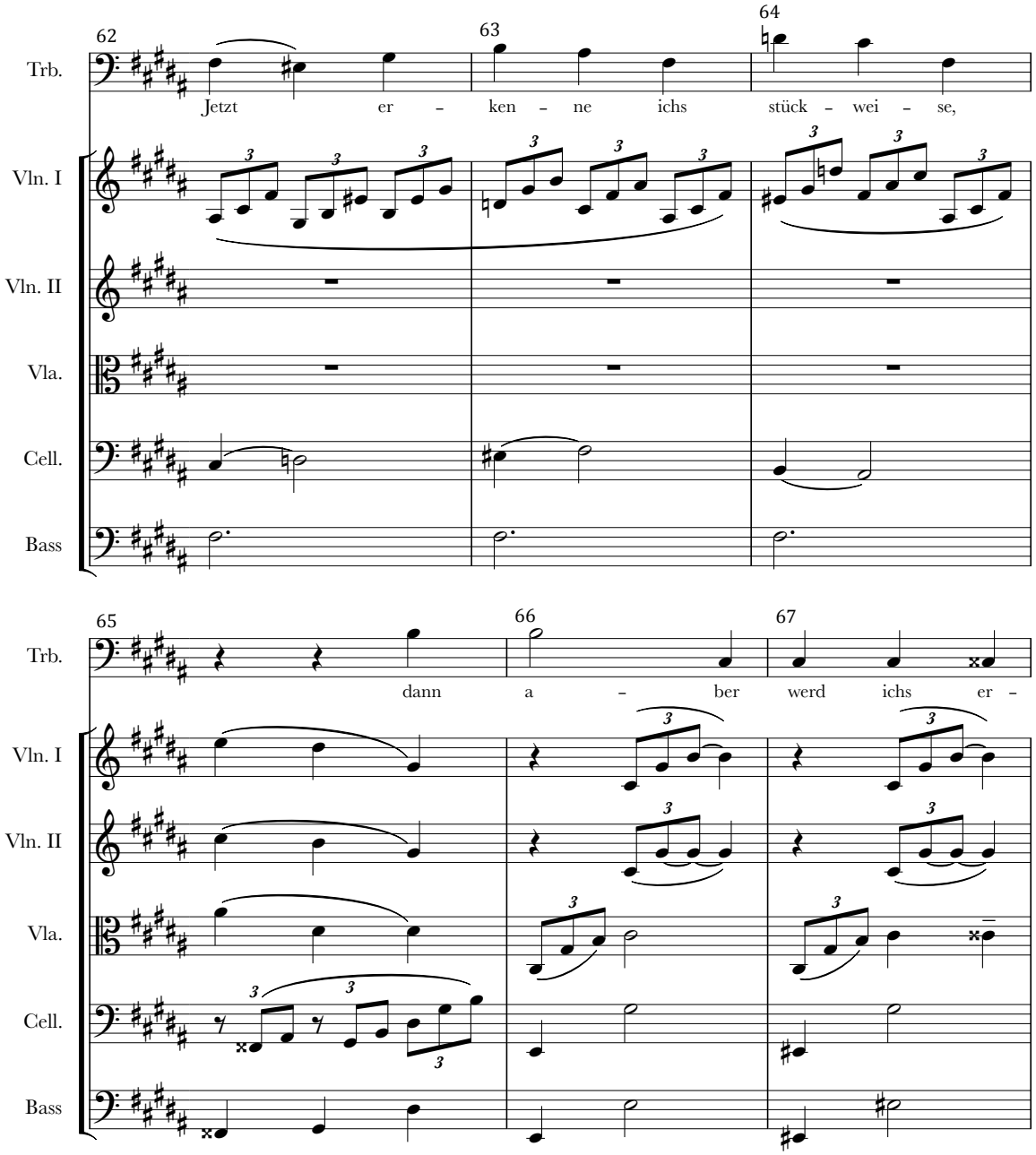

31
32
33
Trb.
mei – ne Ha – be den Ar – men gä – be, und lie – ße mei – nen
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Cell.
Bass
34
35
36
Trb.
Leib – bren – nen,
ff
mei – nen Leib –
bren – nen;
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Cell.
Bass

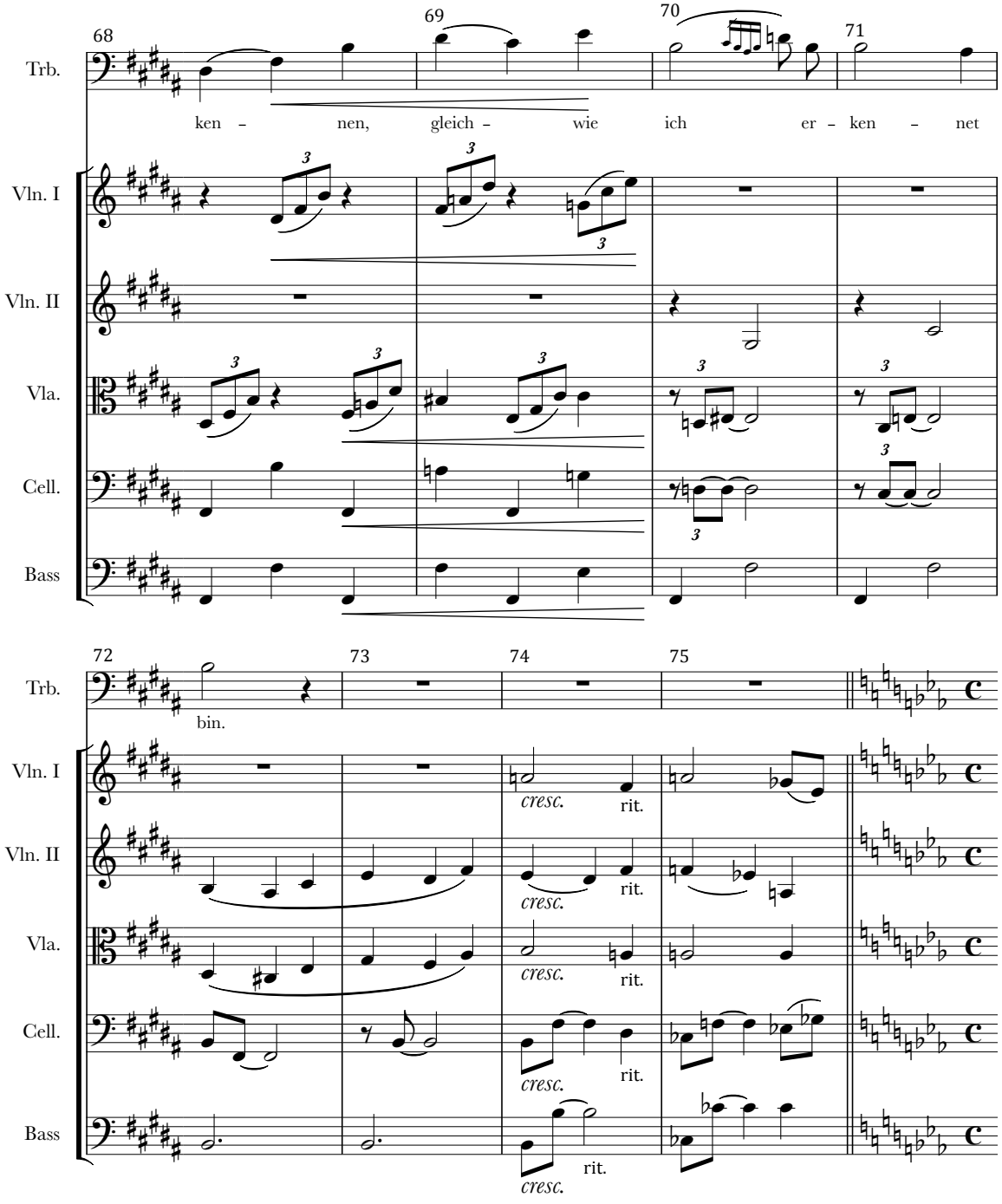

37
38
39
Trb.
p
und hät – te der Lie – be –
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Cell.
Bass
40
41
42
nicht, so wä – re mirs nichts nü – tze,
pizz.
arco


43
44
45
Trb.
so – wä re mirs nichts nü –
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
arco
Cell.
Bass
arco
46
47
48
Adagio
Trb.
tze.
mp
Wir se – hen
Adagio
Vln. I
rit.
dim.
Adagio
Vln. II
arco
rit.
dim.
Adagio
Vla.
rit.
dim.
p
dolce
Adagio
Cell.
rit.
dim.
p
Adagio
Bass
rit.
dim.
p

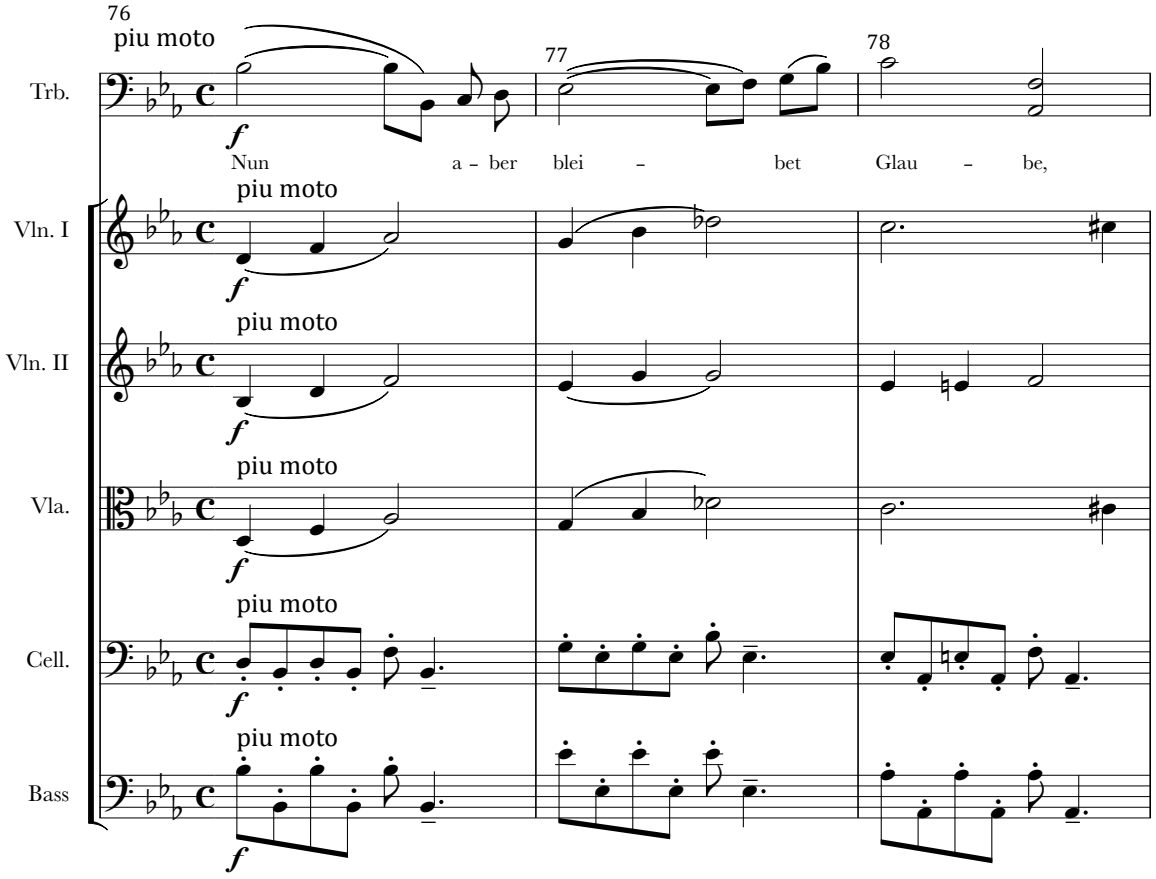

49
50
51
Trb.
jetzt durch ei – nen Spie – gel in ei – nem dun – keln
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Cell.
Bass
52
53
54
Trb.
Wor – te, dann a –
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Cell.
Bass


55
56
57
58
Trb.
ber von An – ge – sicht zu An – ge –
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Cell.
Bass
59
60
61
Trb.
sich – te.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Cell.
Bass

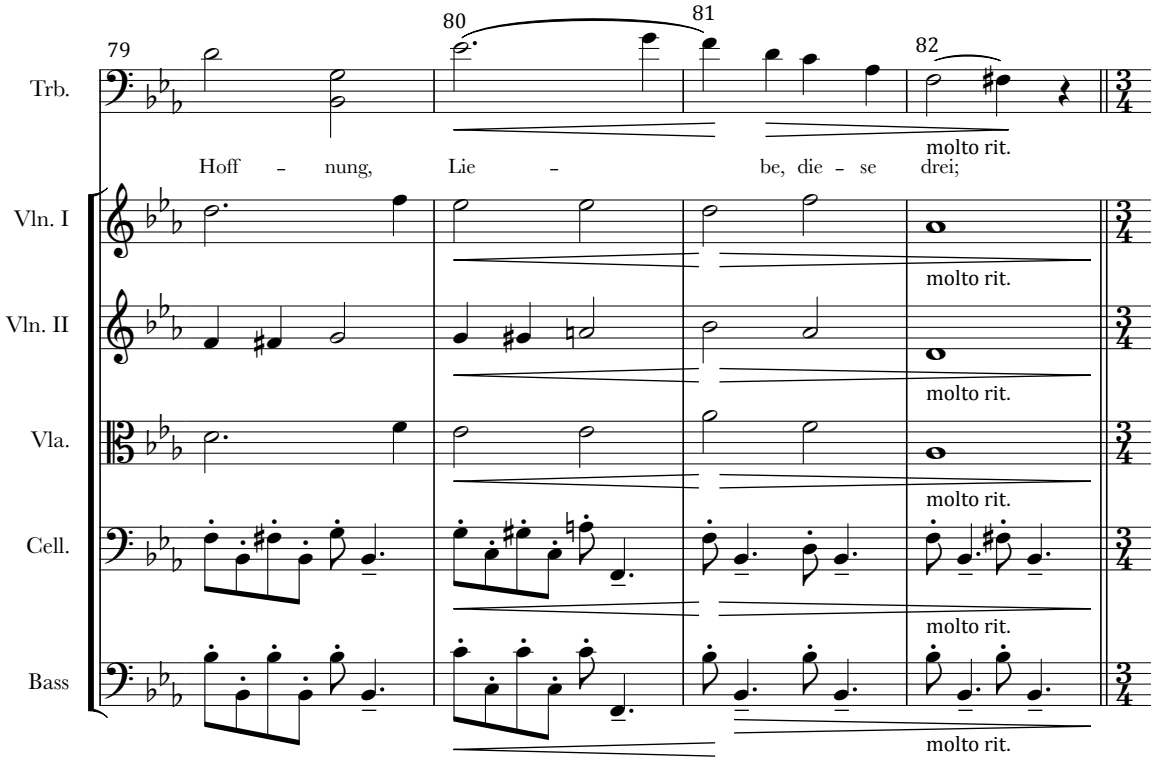

62
63
64
Trb.
Jetzt er – ken – ne ichs stück – wei – se,
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Cell.
Bass
65
66
67
Trb.
dann a – ber werd ichs er –
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Cell.
Bass

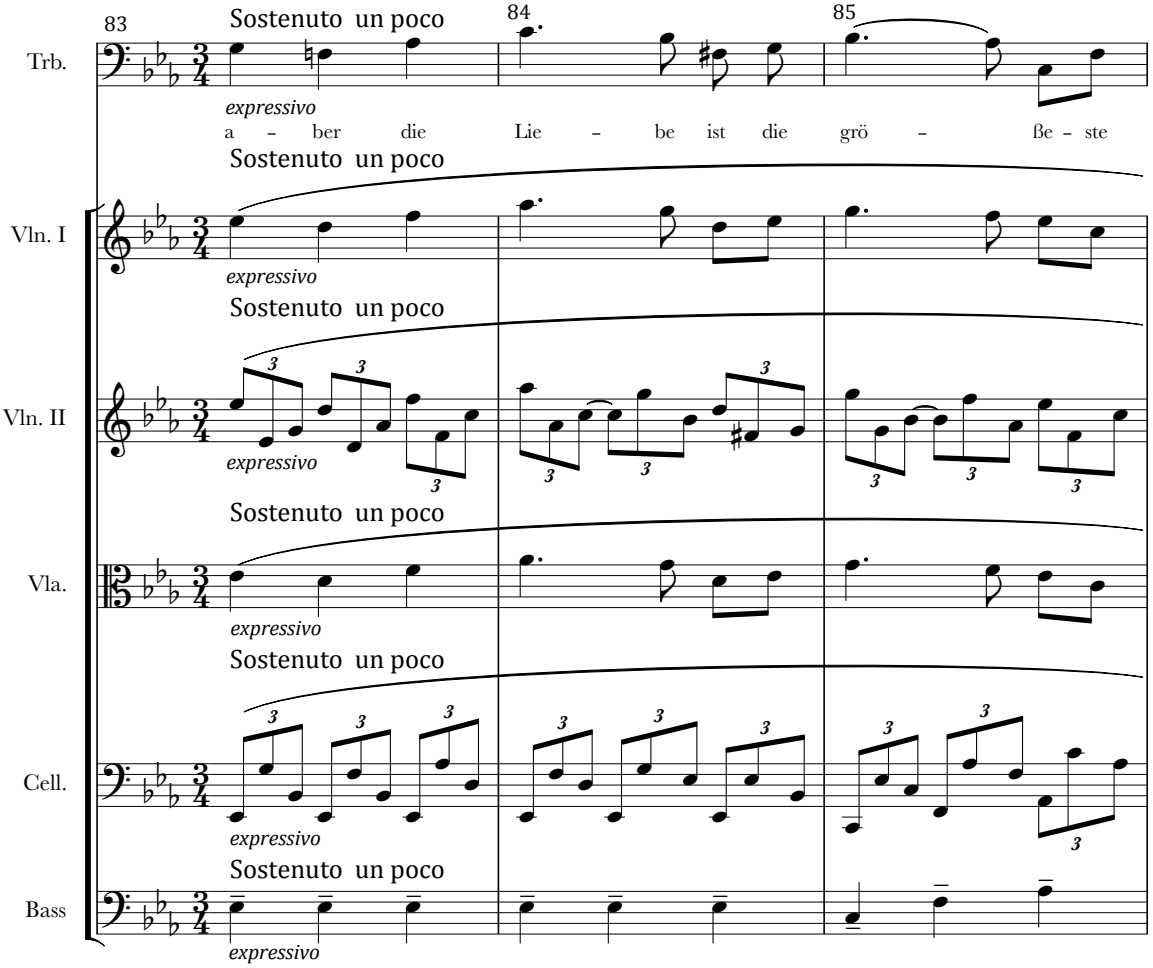

68
69
70
71
Trb.
ken – nen, gleich – wie ich er – ken – net
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Cell.
Bass
72
73
74
75
Trb.
bin.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Cell.
Bass
cresc.
rit.

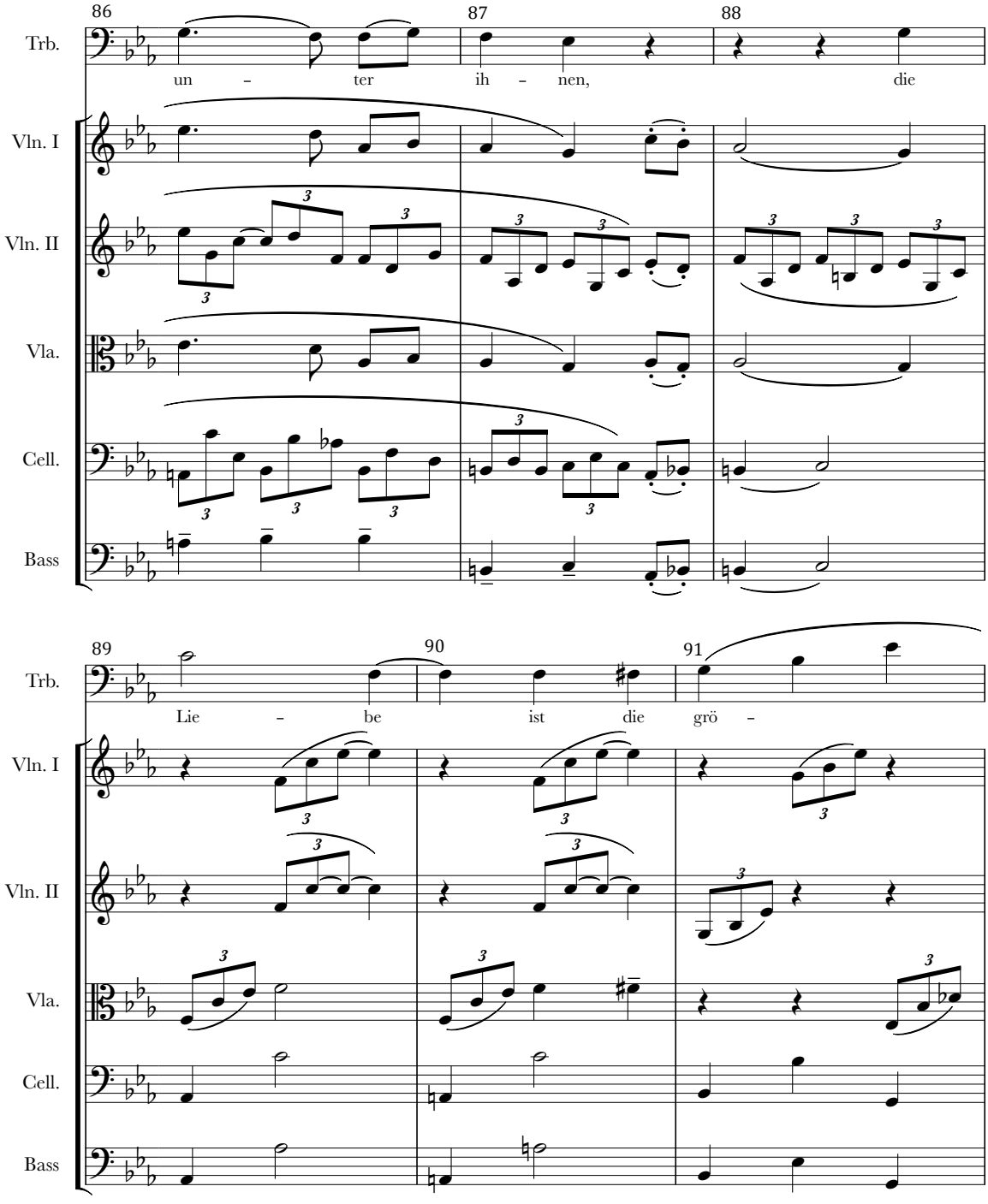
4. I Corinthians XIII: 1-3, 12-13

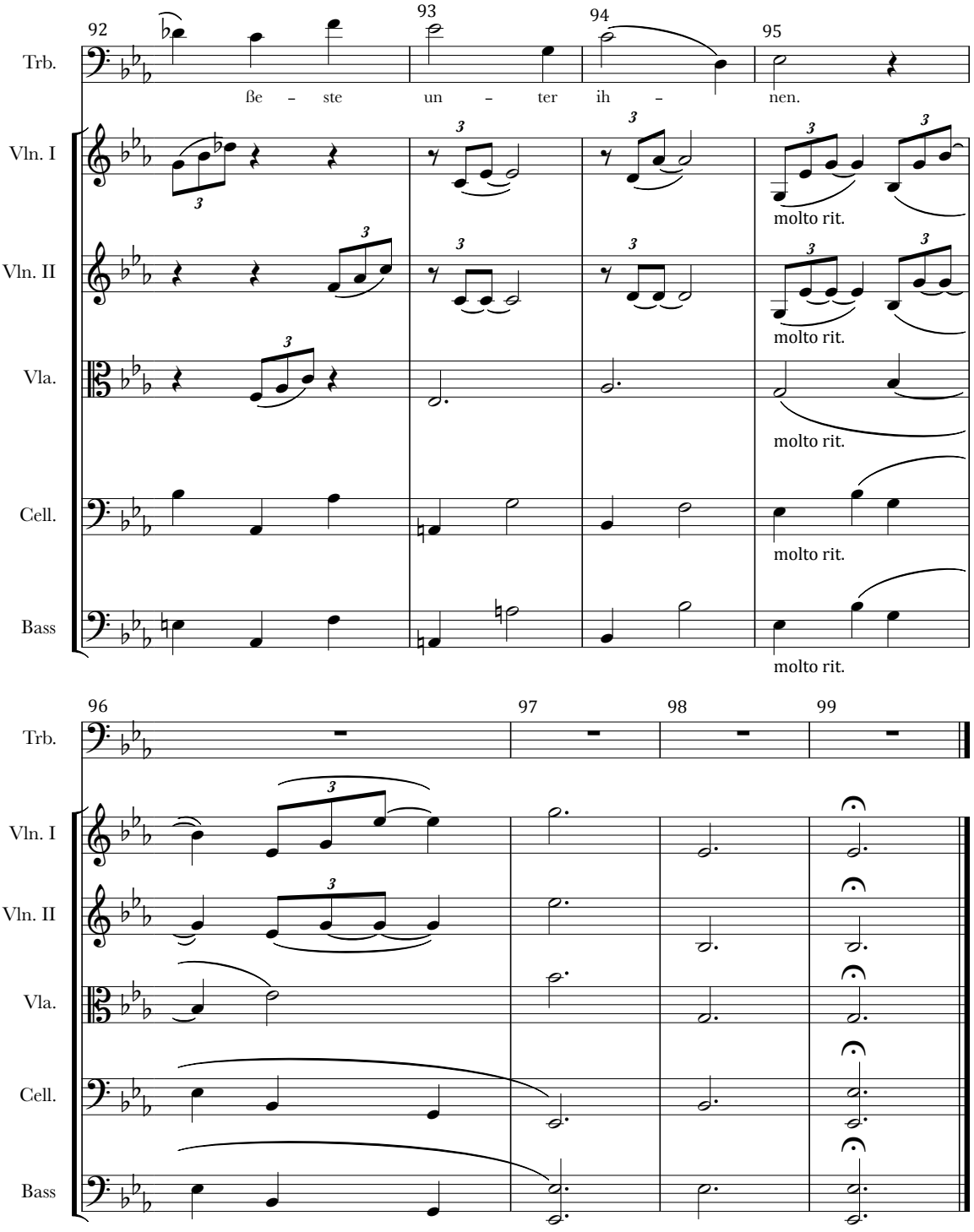


4. I Corinthians XIII: 1-3, 12-13




83
84
85
Trb.
Sostenuto un poco
expressivo
a – ber die Lie – be ist die grö – ße – ste
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Cell.
Bass


86
87
88
Trb.
un – ter ih – nen, die
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Cell.
Bass
89
90
91
Trb.
Lie – be ist die grö –
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Cell.
Bass


92
93
94
95
Trb.
ße – ste un – ter ih – nen.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Cell.
Bass
molto rit.
96
97
98
99

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