J O A N S Z Y M K O

At the Shore of the World

My heart beats her waves at the shore of the world
and writes upon it her signature,
in tears with the words:
"I love thee"

JOAN SZYMKO MUSIC

NOTES from the COMPOSER

The "seed" of this work is a chant I composed while I was a Fellow at *Instituto Sacatar,* an artist residency in Bahia, Brazil (2009). I was there in part to observe music and festivities surrounding the large annual *Festival de Iemanjá* on February 2. I also explored the mythology and music of the African sourced spirituality, *candomblé with* its pantheon of Afro Brazilian gods and goddesses, called *orixás. Yemanjá* (Yoruba spelling) is the *orixá* of "the waters."All life is dependent on water and so *Yemanjá* is also considered the Mother of Life. Two short *condomblé* song texts (one in the original Yoruba language, the other translated into Portuguese) honoring *Yemanjá* are combined with a lovely poem by Bengali poet Rabindranath Tagore that, in this work, serves as the voice of Y*emanjá.* And so this is a love song of sorts between the world (people) and the waters (*Yemanjá*). For some time now, I have been of the belief the human race is coming to a "threshold"— a point of no return, in regards to our relationship to our planet. My hope is that this work will be sung to bring awareness to our dependence on our Mother Earth and on her suffering.

The traditional rhythm, *Ijexá* is an integral part of "At the Shore of the World." It is one of the candomblé rhythms used to accompany songs honoring *Yemanjá*. (*Ijexá* tutorials can be found on YouTube.) Conga type drums are preferred. *Lé* and *Rumpi* are drums used in *candomblé.* A high *(quinto)* and medium *(conga)* conga styled drums are the best approximation. It is important that the drummers play what's in the score. Once the patterns start, they don't vary. (Although there are important stops and dynamics to observe.) In selecting an agogo (2-tone Brazilian bell) take care that the pitches of the bell do not clash with tonality the piece. If an agogo bell with compatible pitches is not available, a single cowbell or wood block of indiscriminate pitch can be used (playing both high and low notes). The piece can stand on its own with just the percussion as accompaniment; although piano is definitely preferred when available. A separate percussion score is available.

PERCUSSION KEY
S = slap tone
O = open tone
M = muffled
t = touch with fingertips (ghost notes)

Regarding Ms.61-65: the "sh" of shore should be lengthened— make half the duration of the note preceding the word "shore" an "SH" sound that intensifies an opens to the vowel. (the white noise of the "SH" employed so as to sound like waves crashing on the shore).

—Joan Szymko

TEXT

A wà ààbò a yó Yemanjá (trad. candomblé song text)

*Iemanjá do rio somos seus filhos (*trad. candomblé song text)

My heart beats her waves
at the shore of the world
and writes upon it her
signature in tears with the
words "I love thee." (R. Tagore)

TRANSLATION

A wà ààbò a yó Yemanjá (Yoruba)
Yemanjá, protect us and fill us with contentment

(Portuguese)
Yemanja of the river/waters, we are your children

(About the spelling of the goddess name:
For consistency's sake, I elected to use just the Yoruba spelling and one pronunciation. Yoruba is the African language of *candomblé*)

PRONUNCIATION

A wà ààbò a yó	ah wàh àh boh ah yoh - "à" is brighter as in"ask" - no dipthong on "oh"
Yemanjá	yay-mã-zhah - ã (nasalized) - "zh" as in"azure"
Iemanjá	*yay-mã-zhah (as before)*
do rio	*doo -HEE- ooh*
somos seus	*SOH-mohs SAY-oos*
filhos	*FEE-leeyoos*

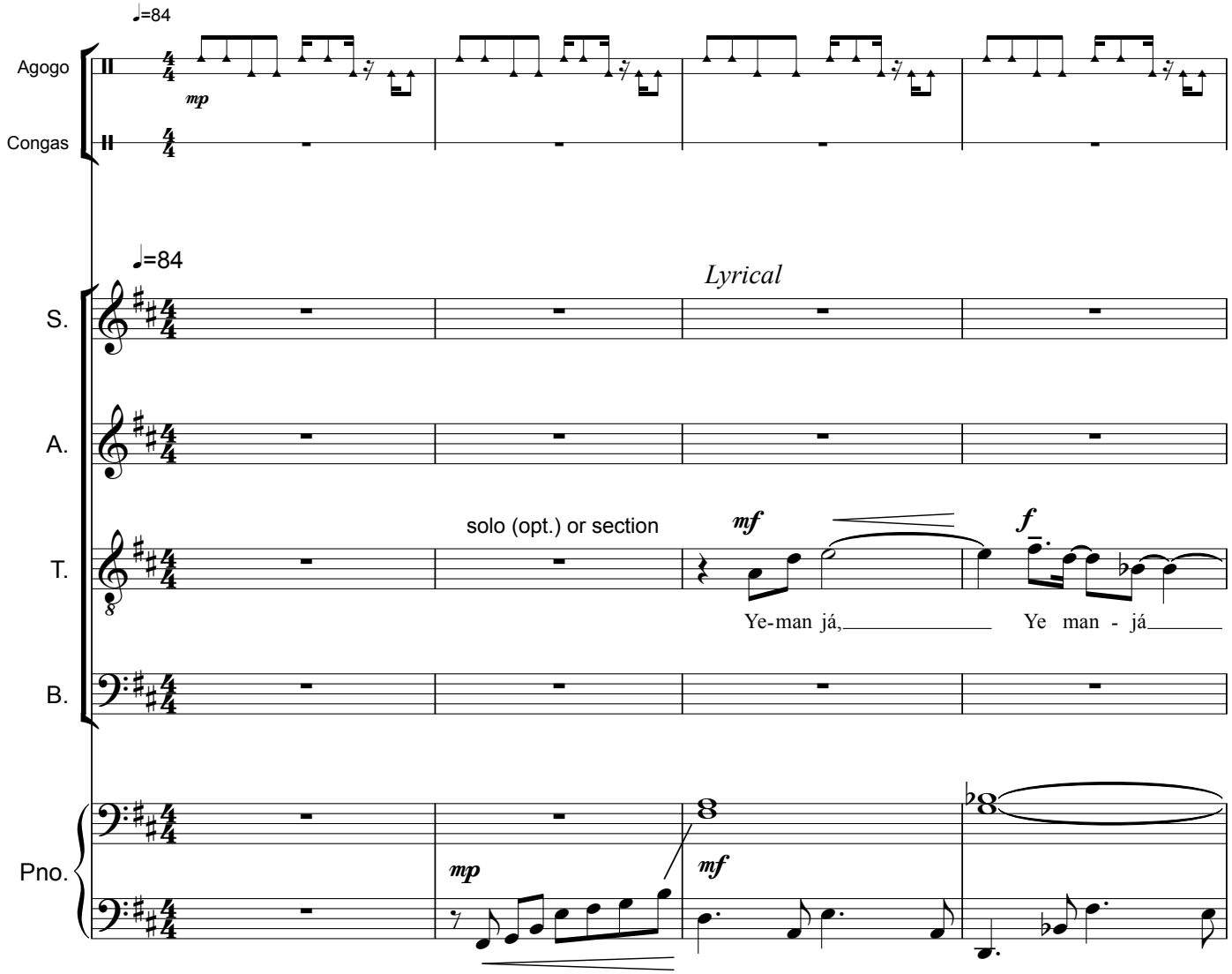
For information about the composer
see: www.joanszymko.com

Commissioned by Dr. Phillip Stockton and the Mississippi University for Women Chamber Singers
in memory of Leslie Farrell Threadgill.

At the Shore of the World

Traditional *Candomblé* song texts
for Orixá, Yemanjá (source: Bahia, Brazil)
and Rabindranth Tagore (1861-1941)

Joan Szymko



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No. 29 from "Stray Birds"(1916) by Rabindranath Tagore (P.D.)
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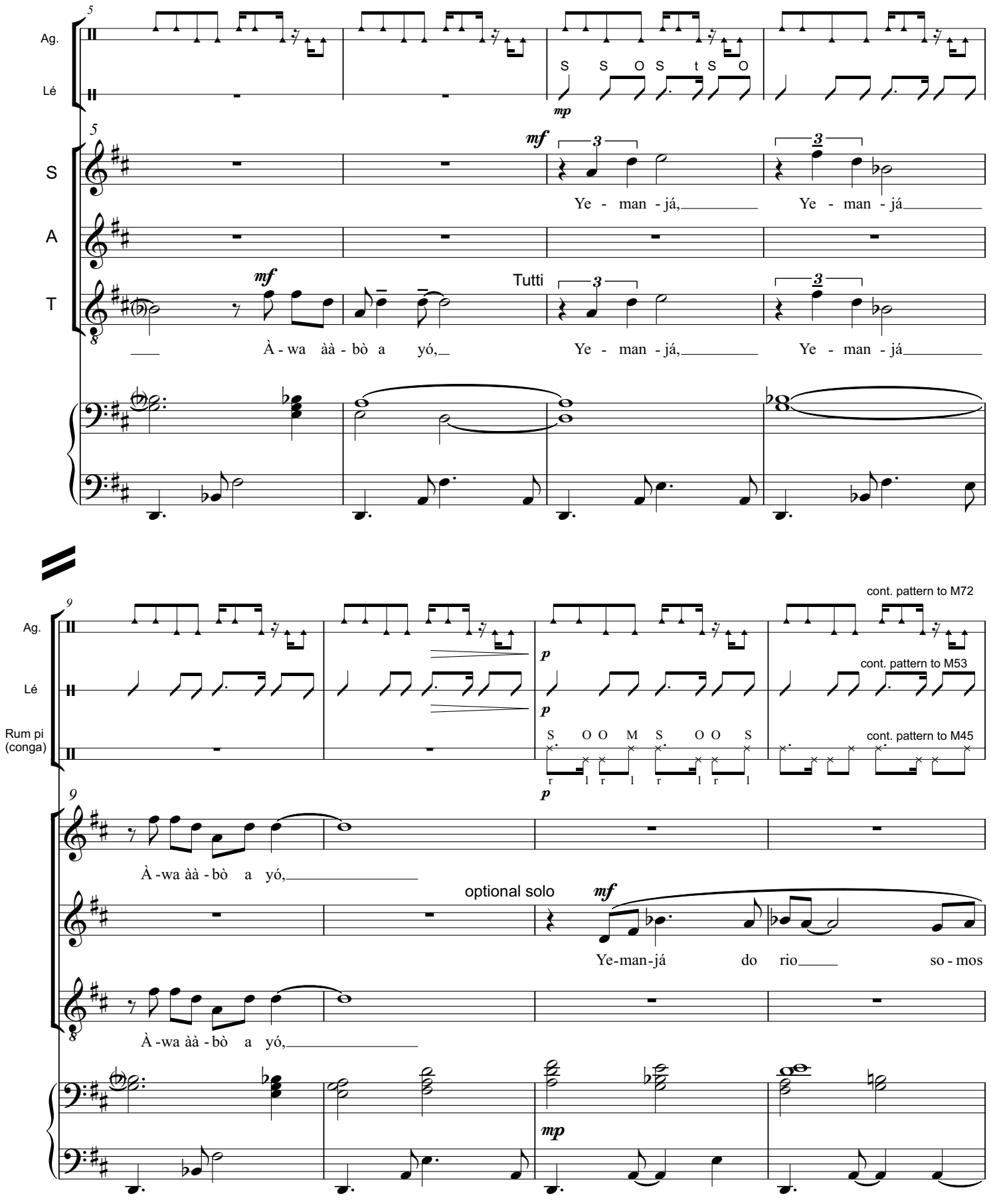
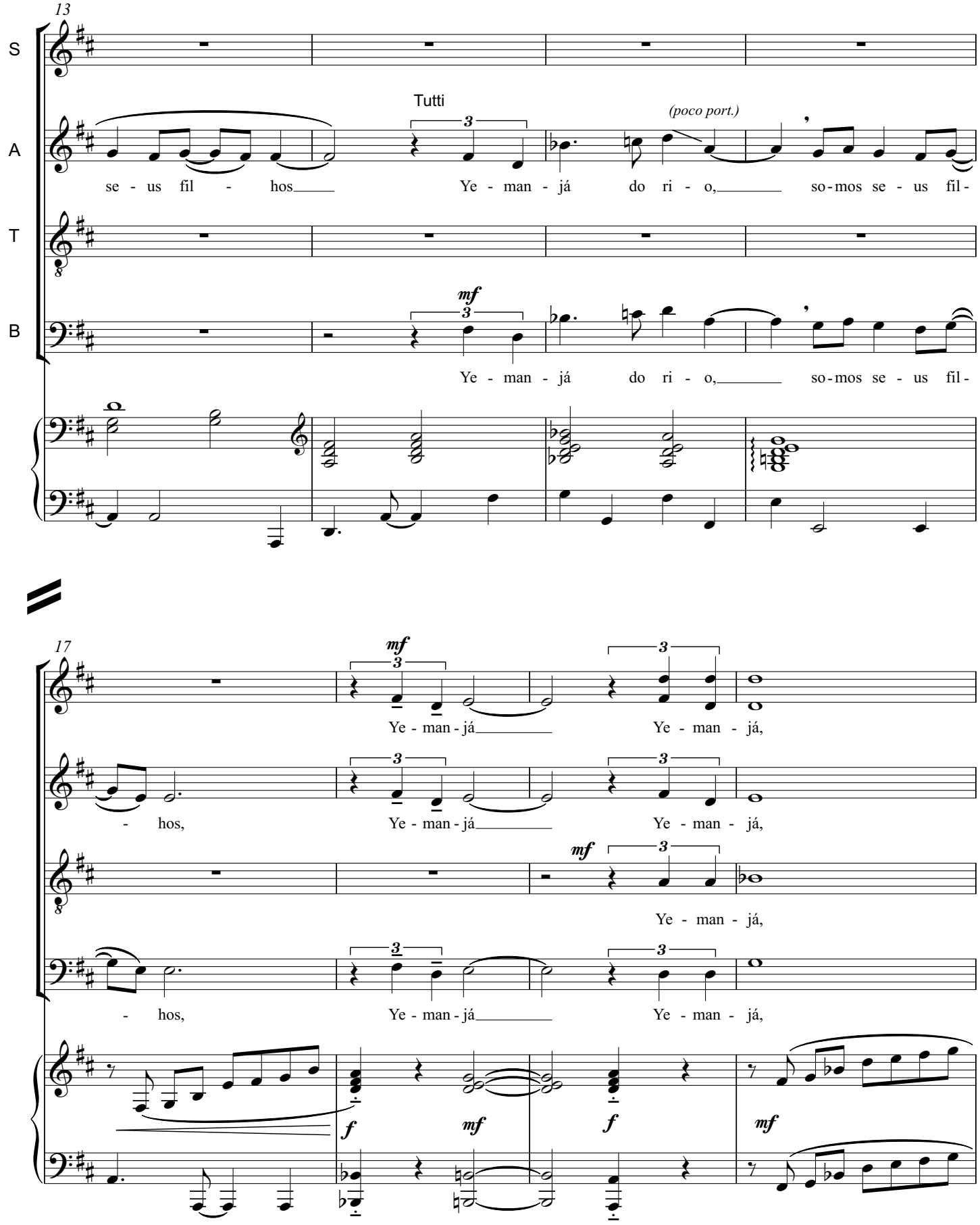
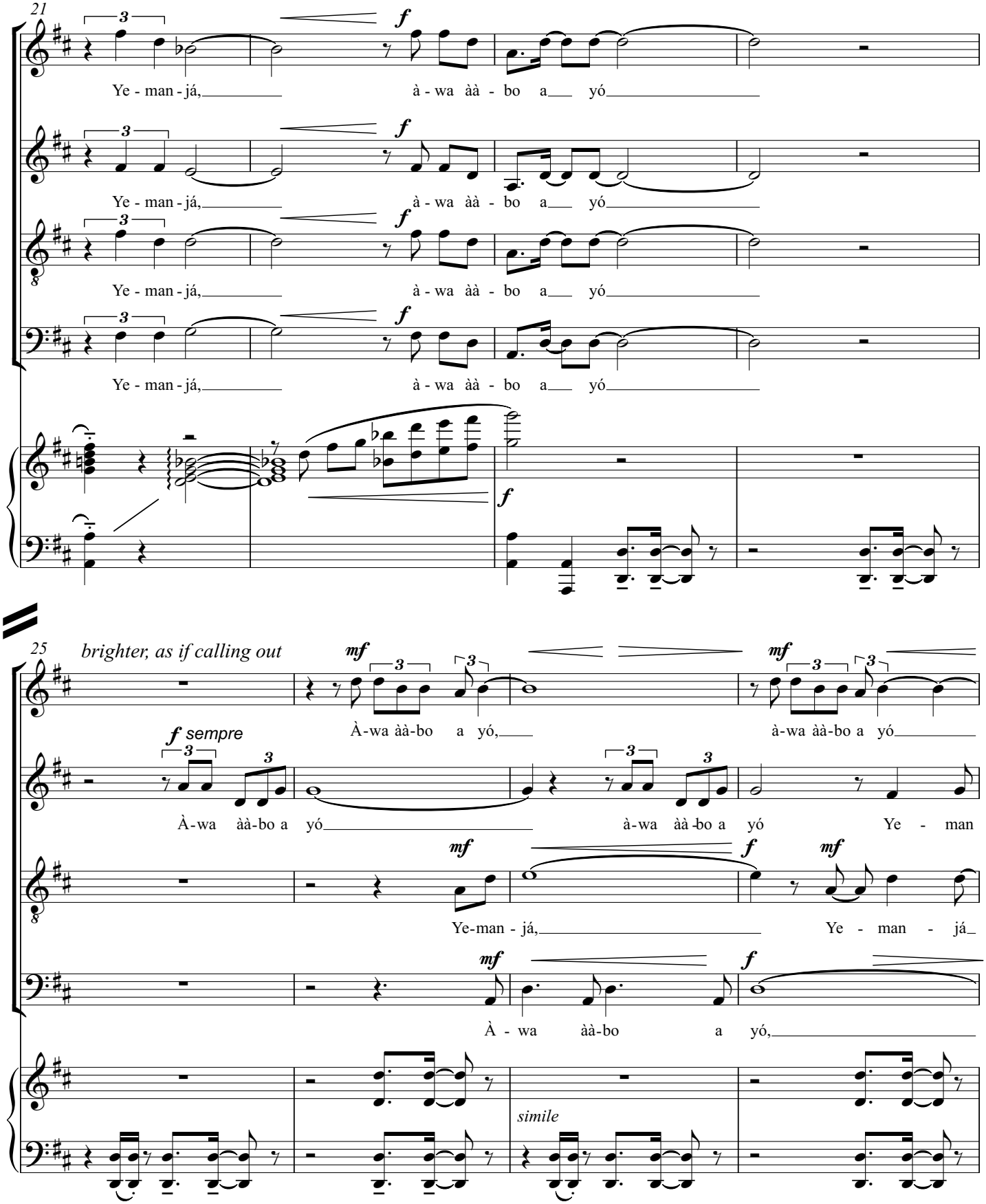
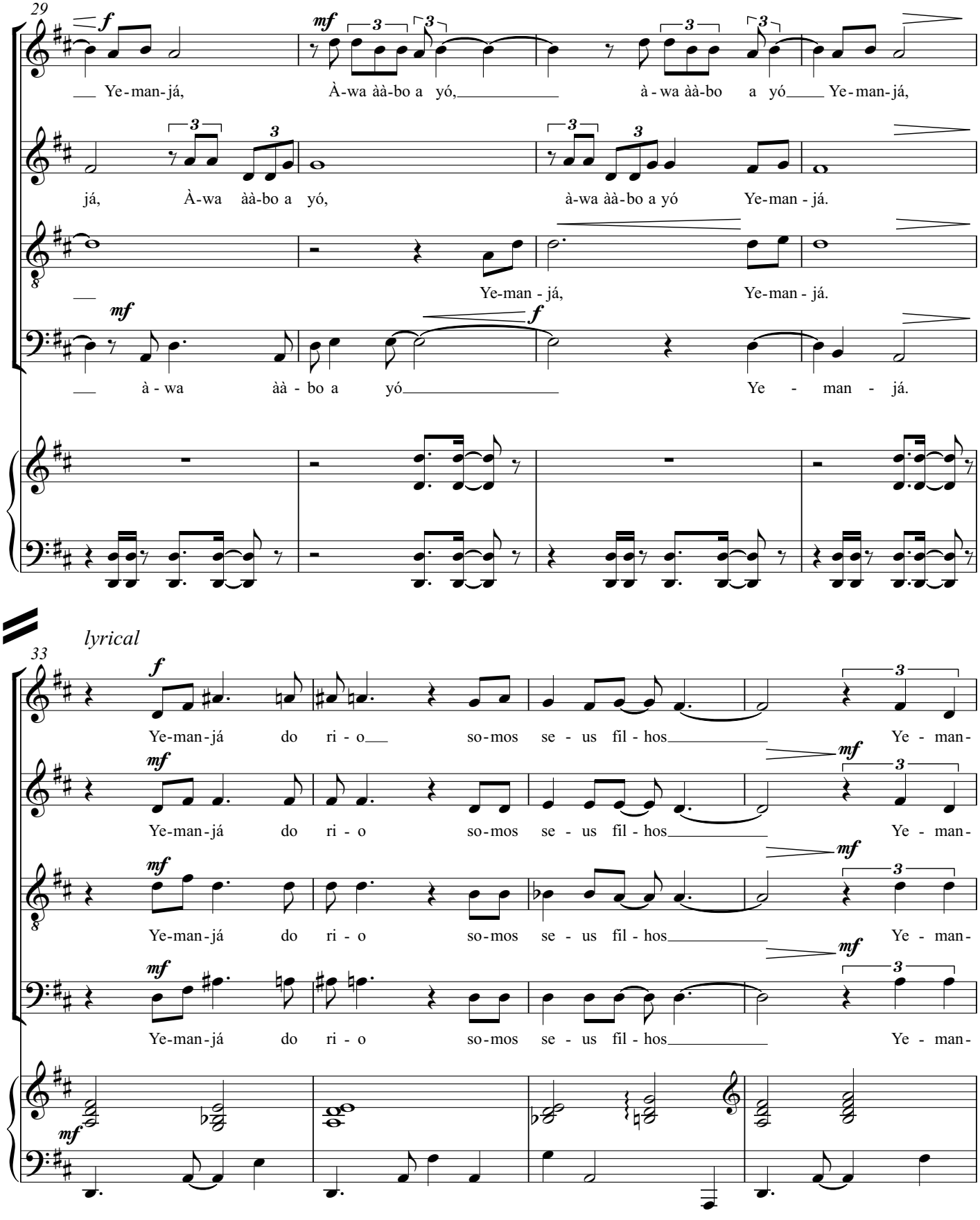
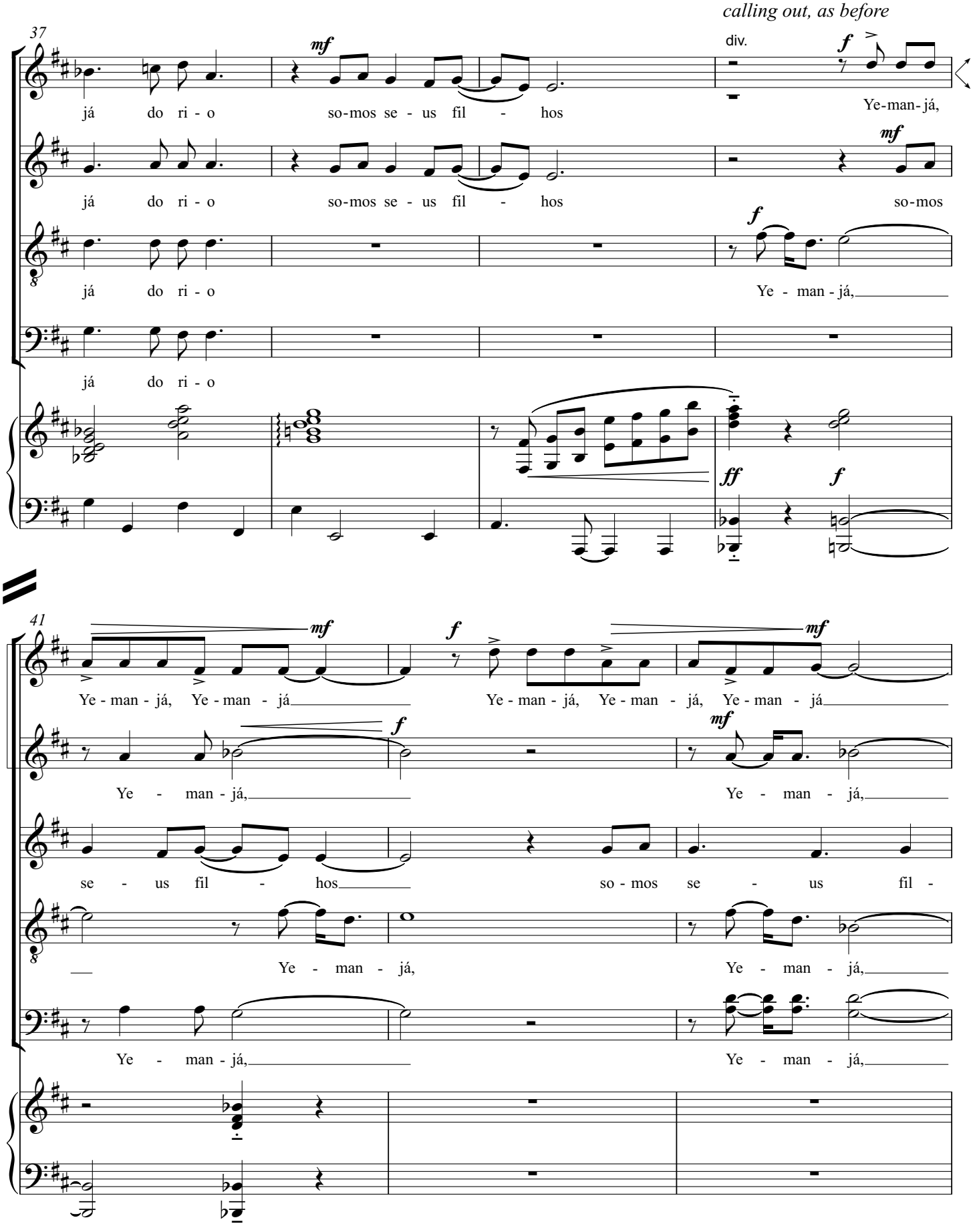
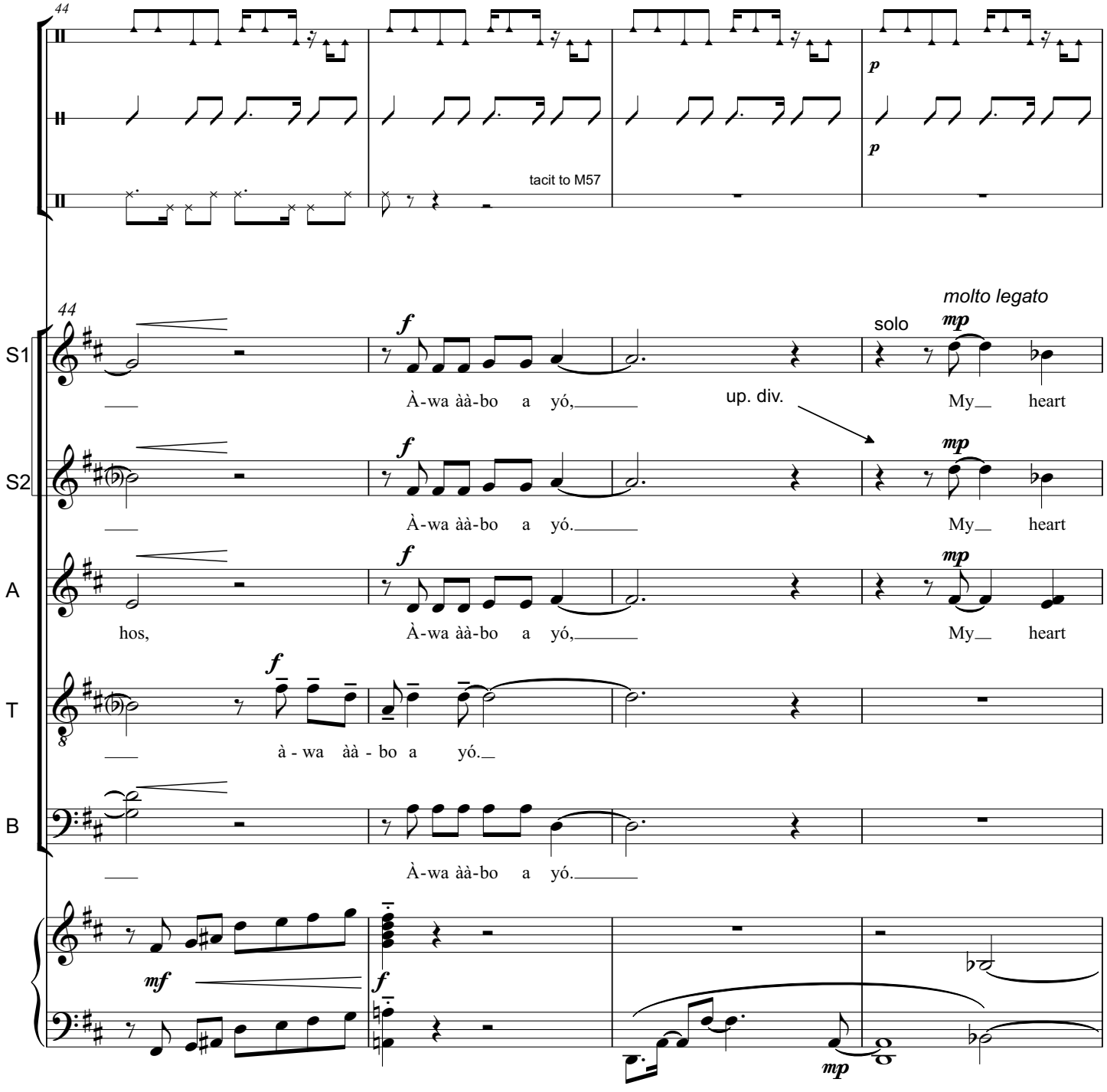

5
Ag.
Lé
S S O S t S O
mp
5
S
A
T
mf
3
Ye - man - já,
Ye - man - já
mf
Tutti
À - wa àà - bò a yó,
Ye - man - já,
Ye - man - já
9
cont. pattern to M72
Ag.
p
cont. pattern to M53
Lé
p
Rum pi (conga)
S O O M S O O S
cont. pattern to M45
r l r l r l r l
p
9
À - wa àà - bò a yó,
optional solo
mf
Ye-man-já do rio so - mos
À - wa àà - bò a yó,
mp

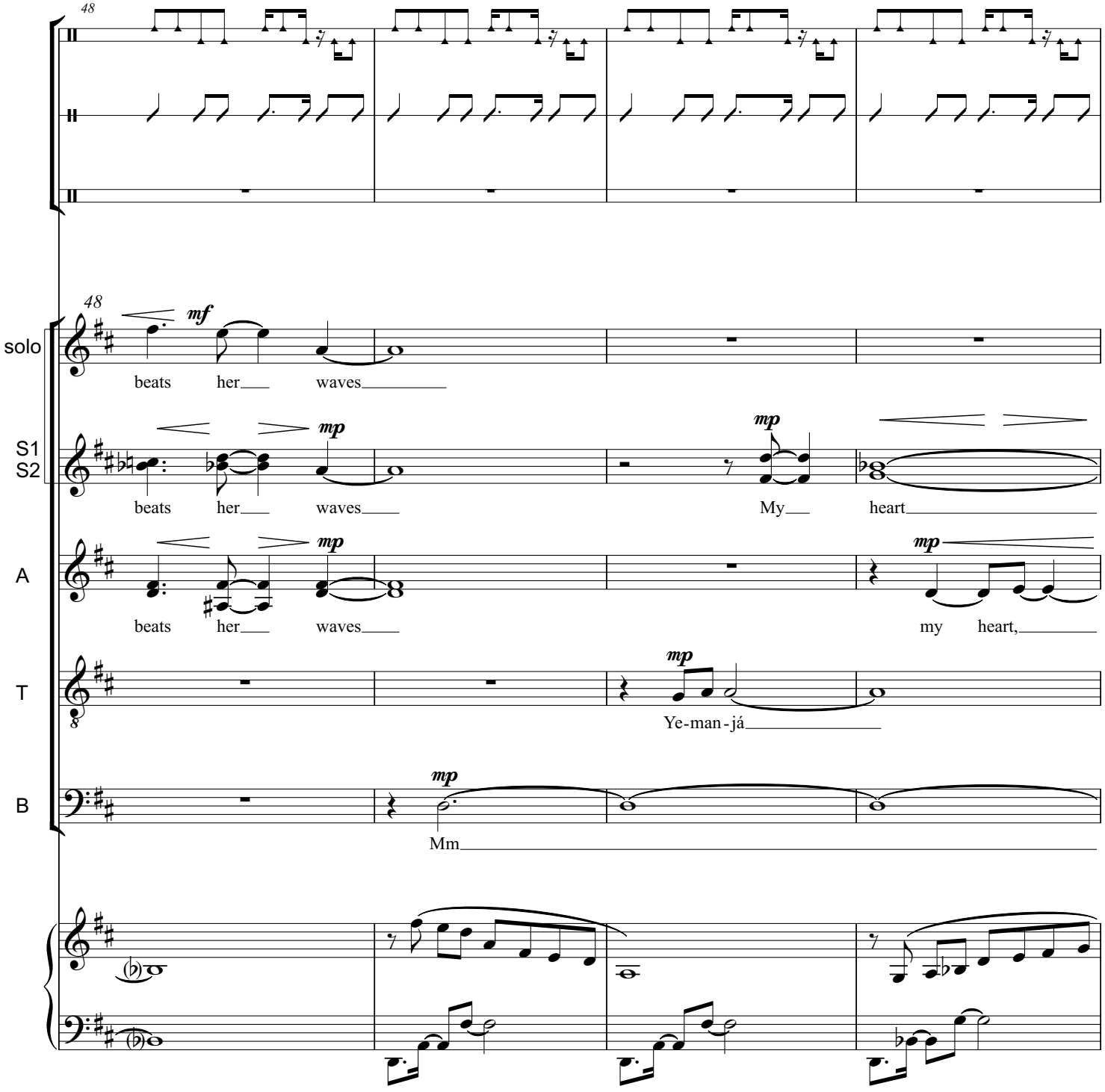

13
S
A
T
B
Tutti
(poco port.)
se - us fil - hos
Ye - man - já do ri - o,
so - mos se - us fil -
Ye - man - já do ri - o,
so - mos se - us fil -
17
Ye - man - já
Ye - man - já,
- hos,
Ye - man - já
Ye - man - já,
Ye - man - já,
- hos,
Ye - man - já
Ye - man - já,

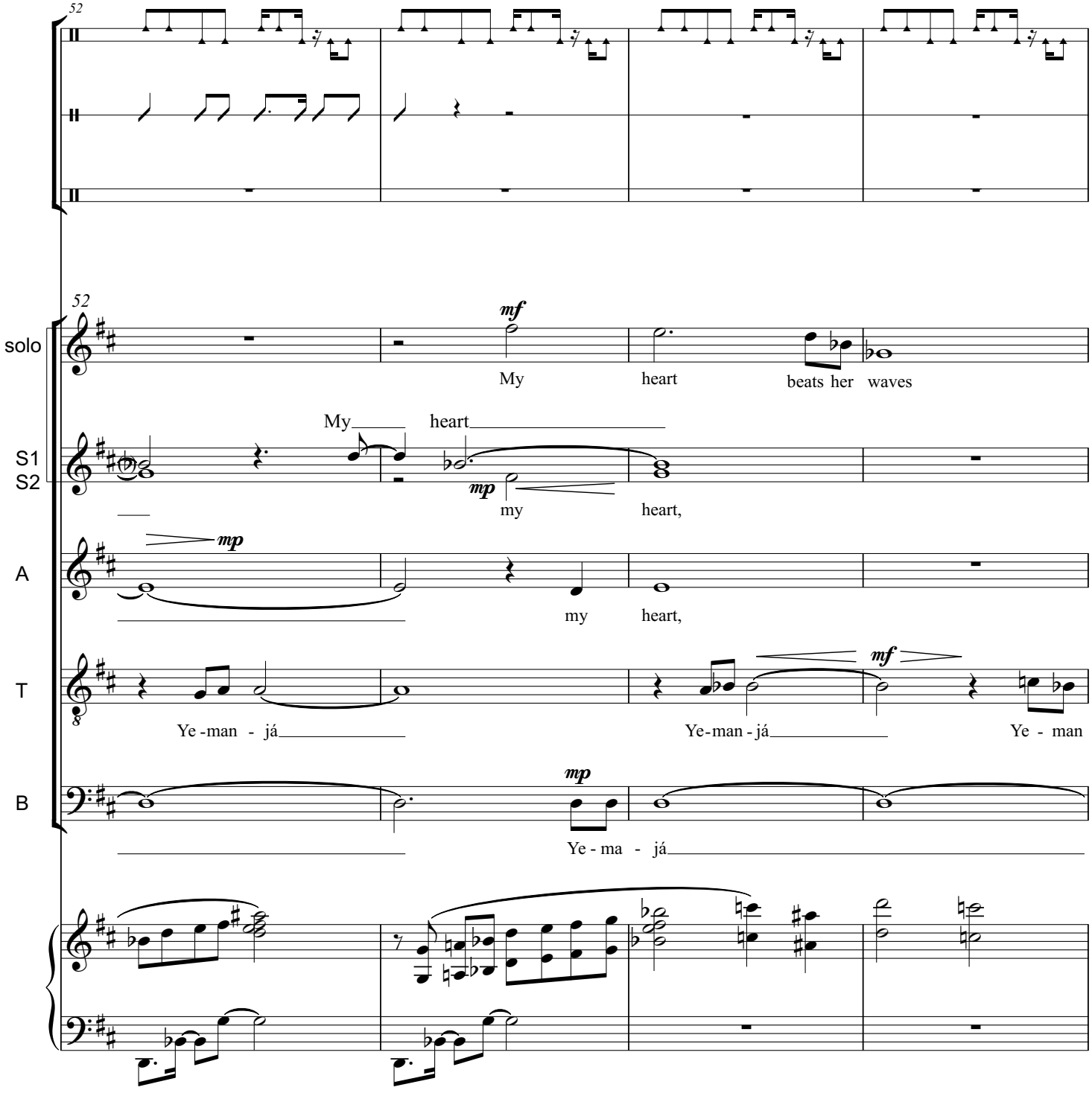

21
Ye - man - já, à - wa àà - bo a yó
25
brighter, as if calling out
À-wa àà-bo a yó, à-wa àà-bo a yó
f sempre
À-wa àà-bo a yó à-wa àà-bo a yó Ye - man
Ye-man - já, Ye - man - já
À - wa àà-bo a yó,
simile

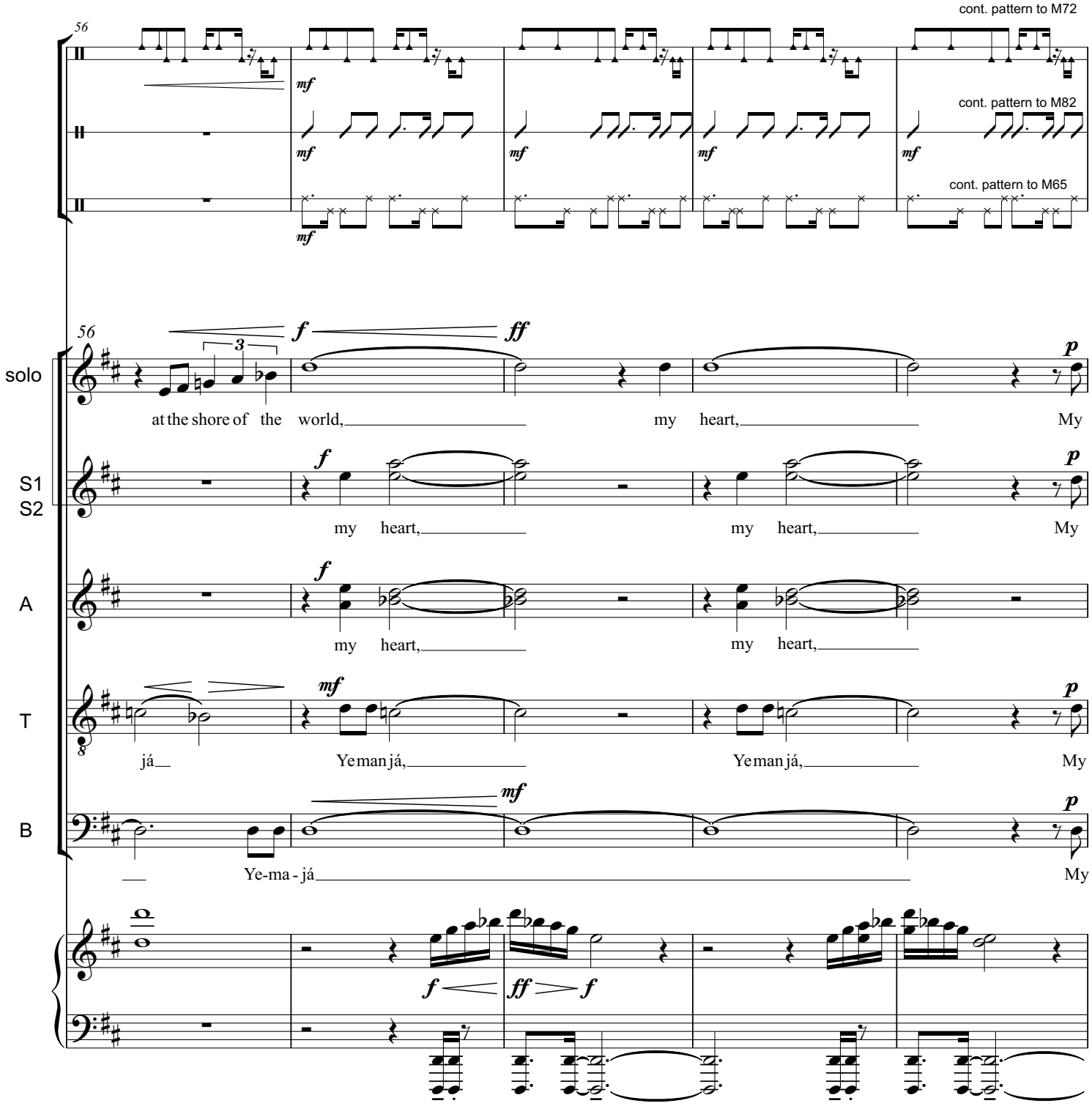

29
Ye-man-já, À-wa àà-bo a yó, à-wa àà-bo a yó Ye-man-já,
já, À-wa àà-bo a yó, à-wa àà-bo a yó Ye-man-já.
Ye-man-já, Ye-man-já.
à-wa àà-bo a yó Ye-man-já.
lyrical
33
Ye-man-já do ri-o so-mos se-us fil-hos Ye-man-
Ye-man-já do ri-o so-mos se-us fil-hos Ye-man-
Ye-man-já do ri-o so-mos se-us fil-hos Ye-man-
Ye-man-já do ri-o so-mos se-us fil-hos Ye-man-

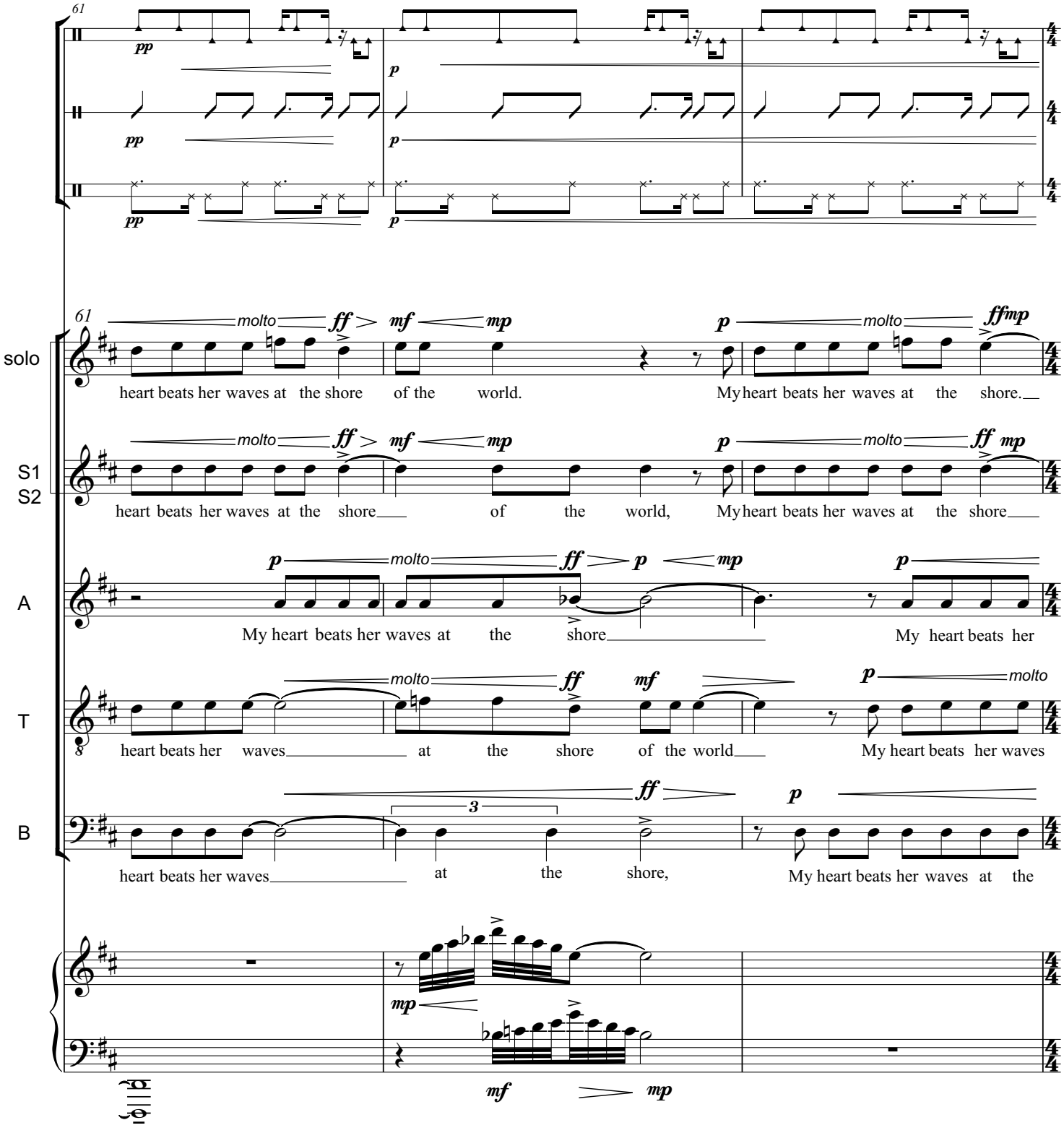

calling out, as before
37
S
A
T
B
já do ri - o so-mos se - us fil - hos
div.
Ye-man-já,
so-mos
Ye - man - já,
41
S1
S2
Ye - man - já, Ye - man - já
se - us fil - hos
so - mos se - us fil -

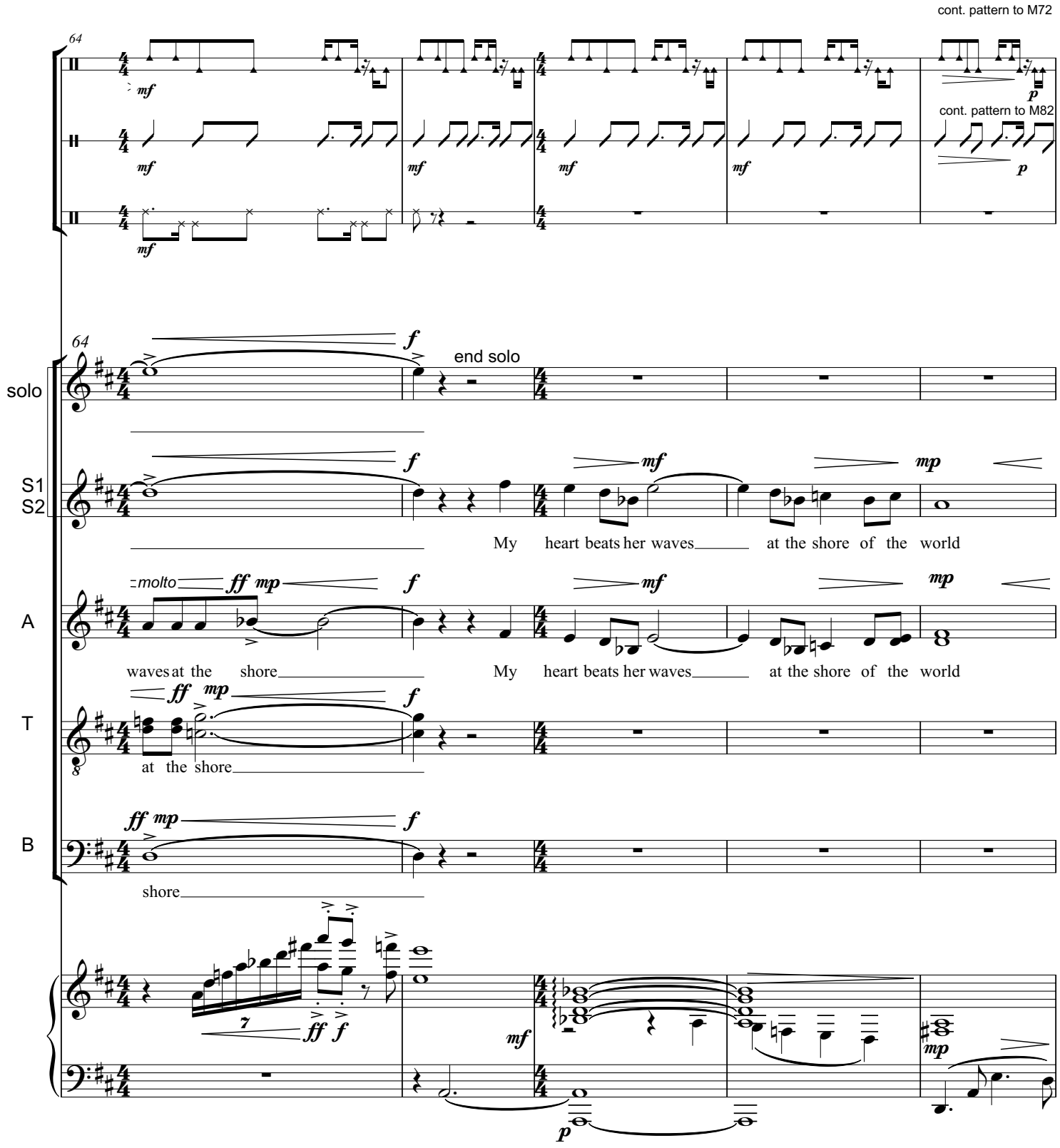

44
tacit to M57
p
p
44
molto legato
solo
mp
S1
f
À-wa àà-bo a yó,
up. div.
My heart
S2
f
mp
À-wa àà-bo a yó.
My heart
A
f
mp
hos,
À-wa àà-bo a yó,
My heart
T
f
à - wa àà - bo a yó.
B
À-wa àà-bo a yó.
mf
f
mp

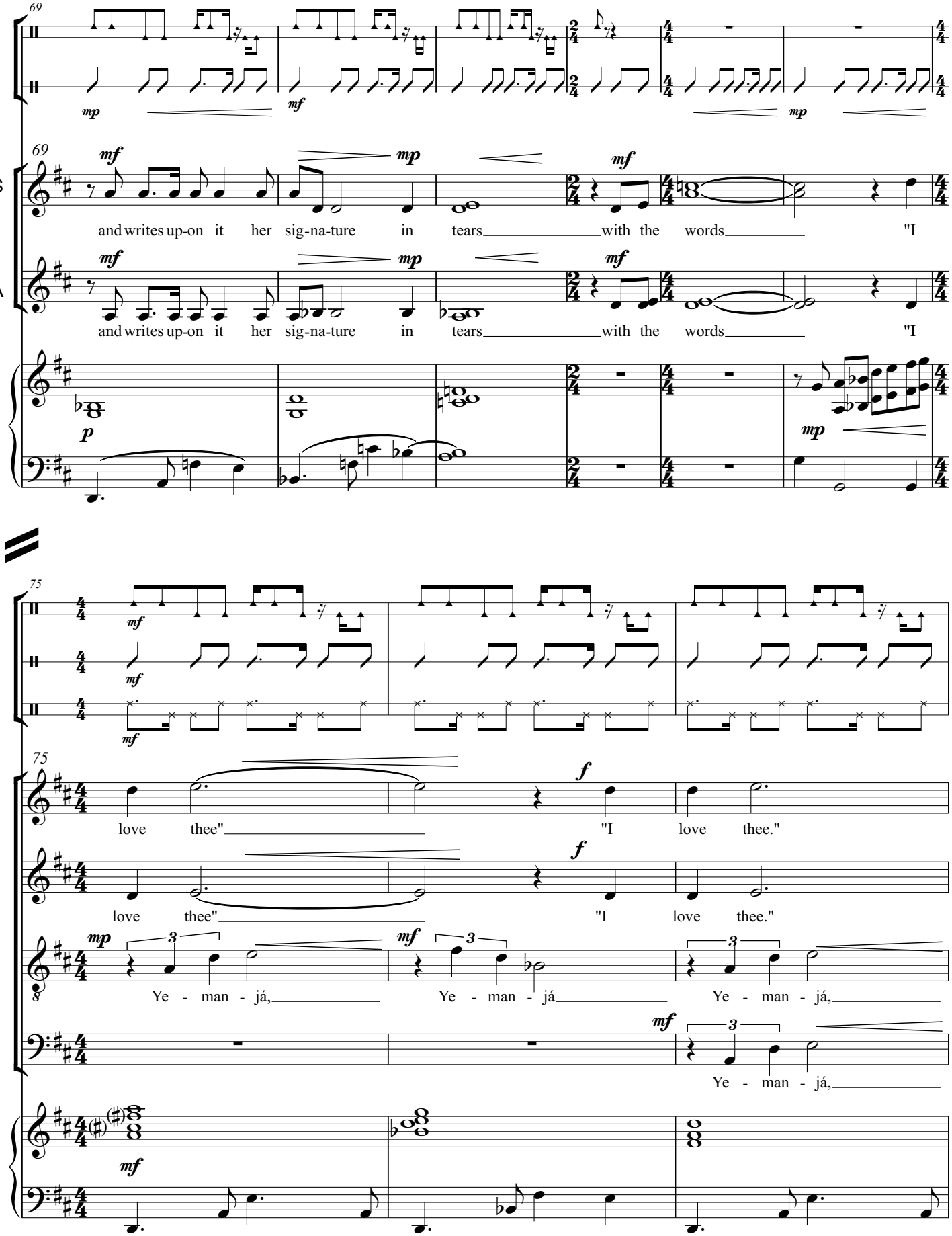

48
48
mf
solo
beats her waves
S1
S2
mp
beats her waves
mp
My heart
A
mp
beats her waves
mp
my heart,
T
mp
Ye-man-já
B
mp
Mm

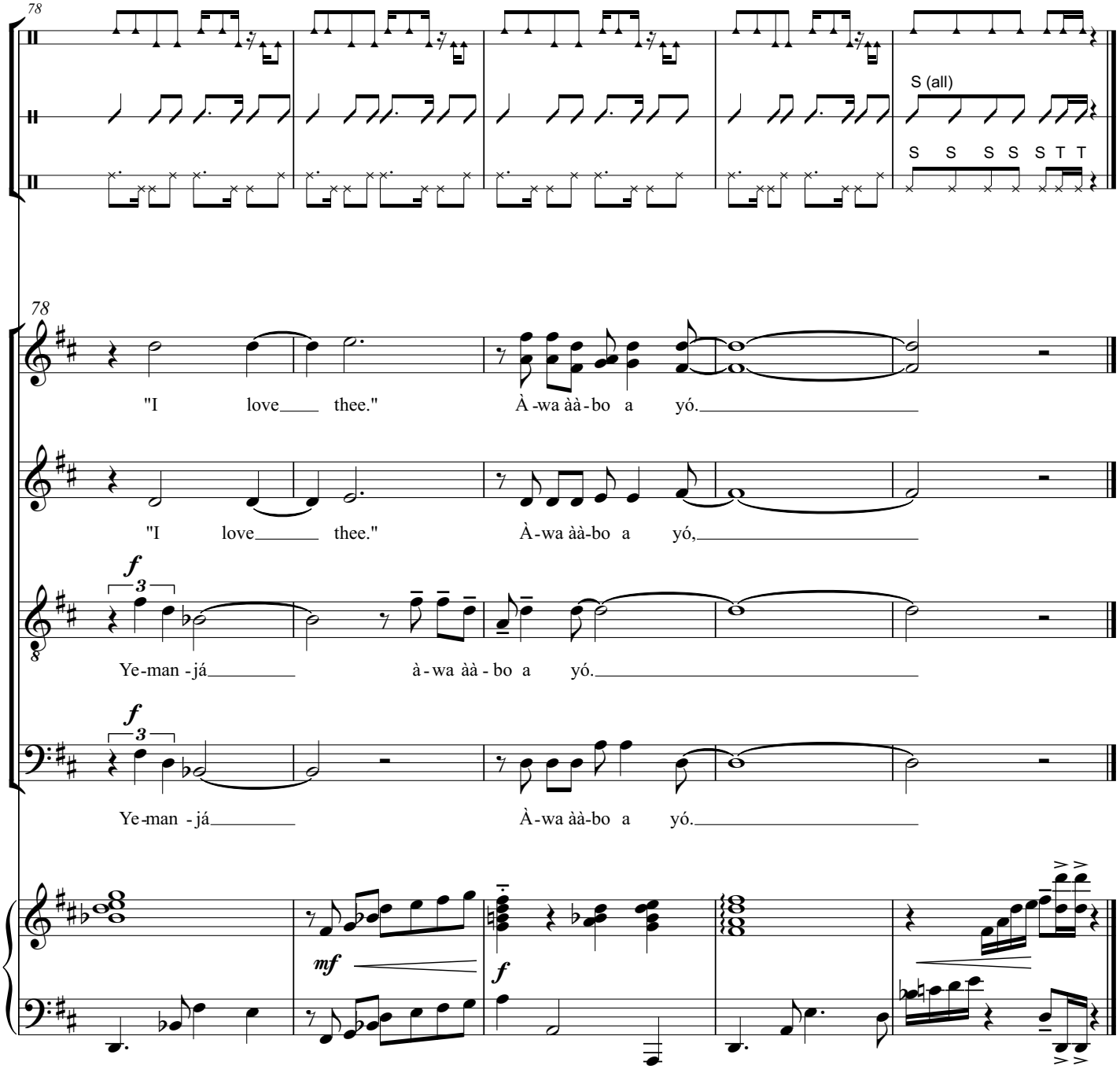

52
52
solo
S1
S2
A
T
B
mf
My
heart
beats her
waves
My
heart
mp
my
heart,
mp
my
heart,
mf
Ye - man - já
Ye - man - já
Ye - man
mp
Ye - ma - já


cont. pattern to M72
cont. pattern to M82
cont. pattern to M65
56
solo
S1
S2
A
T
B
at the shore of the world, my heart, My
my heart, my heart, My
my heart, my heart,
já Yemanjá, Yemanjá, My
Ye-ma - já My


61
pp
p
61
molto
ff
mf
mp
p
molto
ffmp
solo
heart beats her waves at the shore of the world. My heart beats her waves at the shore.
S1
S2
molto
ff
mf
mp
p
molto
ff mp
heart beats her waves at the shore of the world, My heart beats her waves at the shore
A
p
molto
ff
p
mp
p
My heart beats her waves at the shore My heart beats her
T
molto
ff
mf
p
molto
heart beats her waves at the shore of the world My heart beats her waves
B
ff
3
p
heart beats her waves at the shore, My heart beats her waves at the
mp
mf
mp


cont. pattern to M72
cont. pattern to M82
64
solo
end solo
S1
S2
My heart beats her waves at the shore of the world
molto
A
waves at the shore
My heart beats her waves at the shore of the world
T
at the shore
B
shore


69
mp
mf
mp
69
S
A
mf
mp
mf
and writes up-on it her sig-na-ture in tears with the words "I
and writes up-on it her sig-na-ture in tears with the words "I
p
mp
75
mf
mf
mf
75
f
love thee" "I love thee."
love thee" "I love thee."
mp
mf
3
8
Ye - man - já, Ye - man - já, Ye - man - já,
mf
3
Ye - man - já,
mf


78
S (all)
S S S S S T T
78
"I love thee." À-wa àà-bo a yó.
"I love thee." À-wa àà-bo a yó,
f
3
Ye-man-já à-wa àà-bo a yó.
f
3
Ye-man-já À-wa àà-bo a yó.
mf
f