CLAUDIO MONTEVERDI

LAMENTO DELLA NINFA

PAROLE DEL SIGNOR
O T T A V I O R I N U C C I N I

V E N E T I A, MDCXXXVIII.

Introduction

Published in the Eight Book of Madrigals -*the Madrigali Gverrieri, et Amorosi*- in 1638, Claudio Monteverdi's *Lamento della Ninfa* ("*Non havea Febo ancora*"), the Nymph's Lament, is another one of those unique compositions by Monteverdi, most likely inspired by his *Seconda Prattica* ideas. Despite being part of a Madrigal Book, this work, like the *Combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda* and the *Ballo delle Ingrate* -both also part of the Eight Book, isn't really a madrigal. Other composers before Monteverdi had set the same words to music: Antonio Brunelli (1614), Girolamo Kapsberger (1633) and Giovanni Battista Piazza (1633)[1], and they too had abandoned the traditional madrigal model for this work (setting it for one or two voices). Yet their approach was still very traditional. Claudio Monteverdi must have wanted something different.

Monteverdi divided the text in three parts, creating a triptych with the nymph's lament in the middle and a choir of *pastori* or shepherds on either side. The three *pastori* introduce and conclude the sad story of the nymph, who, abandoned by her lover (he has run off to another woman, who, admits the nymph, is perhaps more beautiful, but also less faithful), laments her fate. However, the *pastori* also take part in the lament, commenting (and lamenting) the scene that takes place before their -and our- eyes. The first part, a sort of prologue, is in C major, the middle part, the lament, is in the relative A minor, while the final part, the prologue returns to C major again; a simple structure, with great effect at the emotional level.

The *Lamento della Ninfa* must have had a special (theoretical/musicological?) meaning to Monteverdi: just like the *Ballo delle Ingrate* and the *Combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda*, and unlike the nineteen other works in the Eight Book, the *Lamento* gets a (short) introduction by Monteverdi, stipulating the expected performance practice:

> Modo di **rappresentare** il presento canto. Le tre parti, che cantano fuori del pianto della Ninfa, si sono cosi separamente poste, perche si cantano **al tempo della mano** ; le altre tre parti che vanno commiserando in debole voce la Ninfa, si sono poste in partitura, accio seguitano il pianto di essa, qual va cantato **a tempo dell'affetto del animo**, e non a quello de la mano. [all stresses are mine]

[1] Tim Carter, *Monteverdi's Musical Theater*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002.

Especially interesting to note is that the *pastori* were expected to sing at a regular beat (*al tempo della mano*), while the nymph has to sing according the her emotions (*al tempo dell'affetto del animo*), instructions which have a direct effect on the emotional impact of the piece and which strengthen the relationship between effect and affect, between music and text.

Composed anywhere between 1614 (the year around which Ottavio Rinuccini must have written the text) and 1638 (the year of the publication), the *Lamento della Ninfa* contains a musical device popular at the time: the central lament is constructed around a descending tetrachord, an ostinato (passacaille) rhythm often linked with sadness. Monteverdi's extremely sensitive setting would inspire many composers to imitate him (to create either a serious lament, or a parody).

Above all, however, Claudio Monteverdi's *Lamento della Ninfa*, is a musical tragedy, taking place at the smallest human level, against the background of the descending tetrachord, the wheel of time that never stops turning[2]. The scene of the desperate nymph almost goes unnoticed, but even the smallest human emotion is enough for Monteverdi to create an amazing work of art.

[2] Roger Tellart, *Claudio Monteverdi*. Paris: Fayard, 1997: 453.

Modo di rappresentare il presento canto. Le tre parti, che cantano fuori del pianto della Ninfa, si sono cosi separamente poste, perche si cantano al tempo della mano ; le altre tre parti che vanno commiserando in debole voce la Ninfa, si sono poste in partitura, accio seguitano il pianto di essa, qual va cantato a tempo dell'affetto del animo, e non a quello de la mano.

[1.] [Tenor, Tenor, Bass]

Phoebus had de dag nog niet naar de wereld gebracht, toen een meisje uit haar huis kwam Op haar bleke gezicht stond de pijn te lezen, and keer op keer zuchtte ze diep vanuit haar hart. De bloemen betredend dwaalde ze op en neer, haar verloren liefdes met deze woorden beklagend.	Non havea Febo ancora Recato al mondo il dí, Ch'una donzella fuora Del proprio albergo uscí. Sul pallidetto volto Scorgeasi il suo dolor, Spesso gli venia sciolto Un gran sospir dal cor. Sí calpestando fiori Errava hor qua, hor là, I suoi perduti amori Cosí piangendo va.	Phoebus had not yet brought The day to the world, When a maiden so angry Came out of her house. On her pale face Her pain could be read, And every so often A heavy sigh came from her heart. Stepping on flowers, She wandered from here to there, Bewailing her lost love With these words.

[2.] [Soprano + TTB]

Liefde *(zei ze)* Amor *(de hemel aanschouwend,* *stond ze bewegingloos)* Amor, waar, waar is de eed die de verrader mij zwoer? *(Ongelukkige)* Laat mijn geliefde wederkeren naar wat hij ooit was, zo niet, dood me, zodat ik mezelf niet langer kan kwellen *(Ongelukkige, ah, niet langer, nee,* *kan ze zoveel kilte verdragen)*	Amor *(Dicea)* Amor *(il ciel mirando,* *il piè fermo,)* Amor Dove, dov'è la fè Ch'el traditor giurò? *(Miserella)* Fa che ritorni il mio Amor com'ei pur fu, O tu m'ancidi, ch'io Non mi tormenti più. *(Miserella, ah più, no,* *Tanto gel soffrir non può.)*	Love *(She said)* Love *(gazing at the sky,* *Standing still)* Love Where is the troth that the traitor vowed? *(Unhappy one)* Make him return to my Love, as he once was, Or else kill me, so I Can no longer torment myself. *(The poor girl, ah no more, no,* *can she suffer so much ice.)*

Ik wil niet langer dat hij ademt, tenzij hij ver weg is, zodat hij me niet langer kan kwellen met zijn woorden.	Non vo' più ch'ei sospiri se lontan da me, No, no che i martiri Più non dirammi affè.	I no longer want him to breathe, unless far from me so that he can no longer say the things that torture me
(Ah, ongelukkige, ah, niet langer, nee, nee)	*(Ah miserella, ah più, no, no)*	*(Ah, the poor girl, ah no more, no, no)*
Dat ik me voor hem vernietig, vervult hem met ijdelheid, maar als ik hem ontvlucht, dan weer smeekt hij me.	Perché di lui mi struggo, Tutt'orgoglioso sta, Che sí, che sí se'l fuggo Ancor mi pregherà?	Because I destroy myself for him, so full of pride as he is; but if I flee from him, again he entraits me.
(Ongelukkige, ah, niet langer, nee, kan ze zoveel kilte verdragen)	*(Miserella, ah più, no, Tanto gel soffrir non può.)*	*(The poor girl, ah no more, no, can she suffer so much ice)*
Een mooier gezicht dan het mijne heeft zij, maar de Amor heeft in haar hart niet zulke trouw geplant.	Se ciglio ha più sereno Colei, che'l mio non è, Già non rinchiude in seno Amor sí bella fè.	A more serene eybrow has she than mine, but love has not planted in his breast so fair a faith.
(Ongelukkige, ah, niet langer, nee, kan ze zoveel kilte verdragen)	*(Miserella, ah più, no, Tanto gel soffrir non può.)*	*(The poor girl, ah no more, no, can she suffer so much ice)*
Nooit zal hij even zoete kussen ontvangen van die mond, noch zo zacht. Ach wees stil, wees stil, hoe goed weet hij het.	Ne mai sí dolci baci Da quella bocca havrai, Ne più soavi, ah taci, Taci, che troppo il sai.	Not ever such sweet kisses will he have from that mouth, not softer, a quiet, quiet, he knows it only too well.
(Ongelukkige)	*(Miserella)*	*(The poor girl)*

[3.] [TTB]

En zo, met verscheurende klachten stijgt de stem tot aan de hemel: het is zo dat in de hart van geliefden, Amor, vuur en ijs mengt.	Sí tra sdegnosi pianti Spargea le voci al ciel; Cosí ne' cori amanti Mesce amor fiamma, e gel.	Thus with indignant complaints, the voice rose up to the sky; thus, in loving hearts, love mingles flame and ice.

MADRIGALI
GVERRIERI, ET AMOROSI

Con alcuni opuscoli in genere rappresentatiuo, che saranno per breui Episodij frà i canti senza gesto.

LIBRO OTTAVO
DI CLAVDIO MONTEVERDE
Maestro di Capella della Serenissima Republica di Venetia.

DEDICATI
Alla Sacra Cesarea Maestà
DELL'IMPERATOR
FERDINANDO III

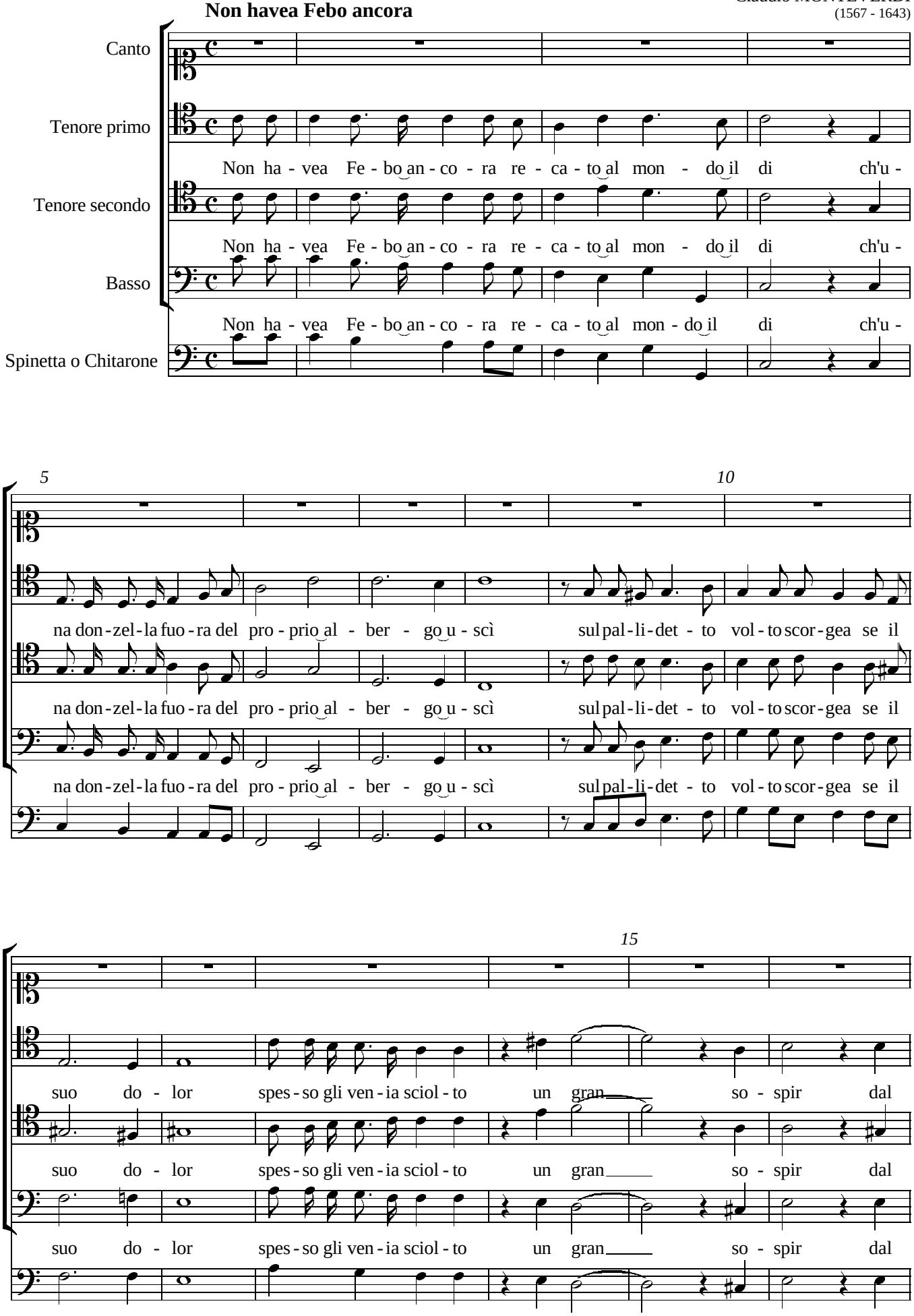
CON PRIVILEGIO

IN VENETIA
Appresso Alessandro Vincenti M DC XXXVIII

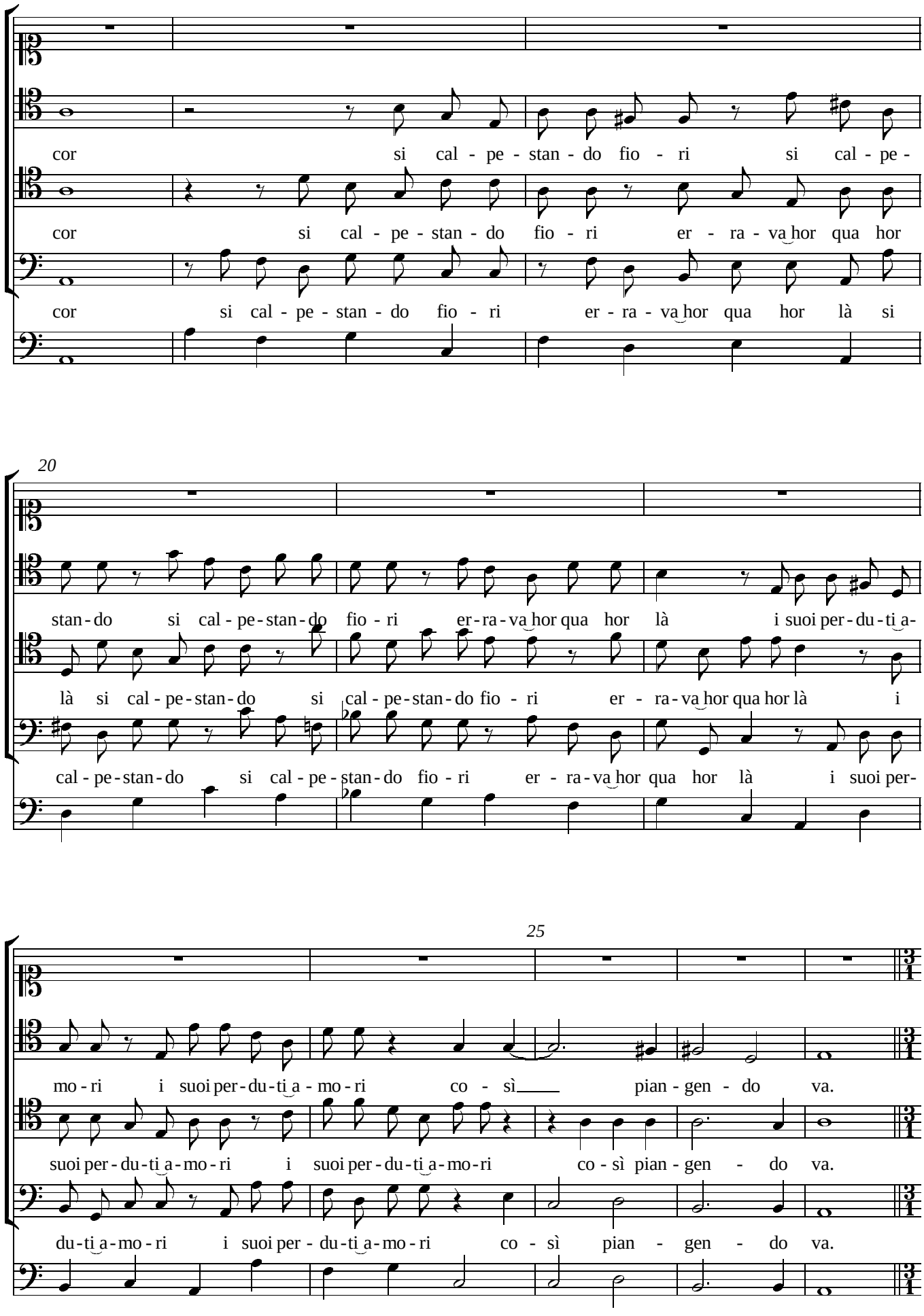
LAMENTO DELLA NINFA

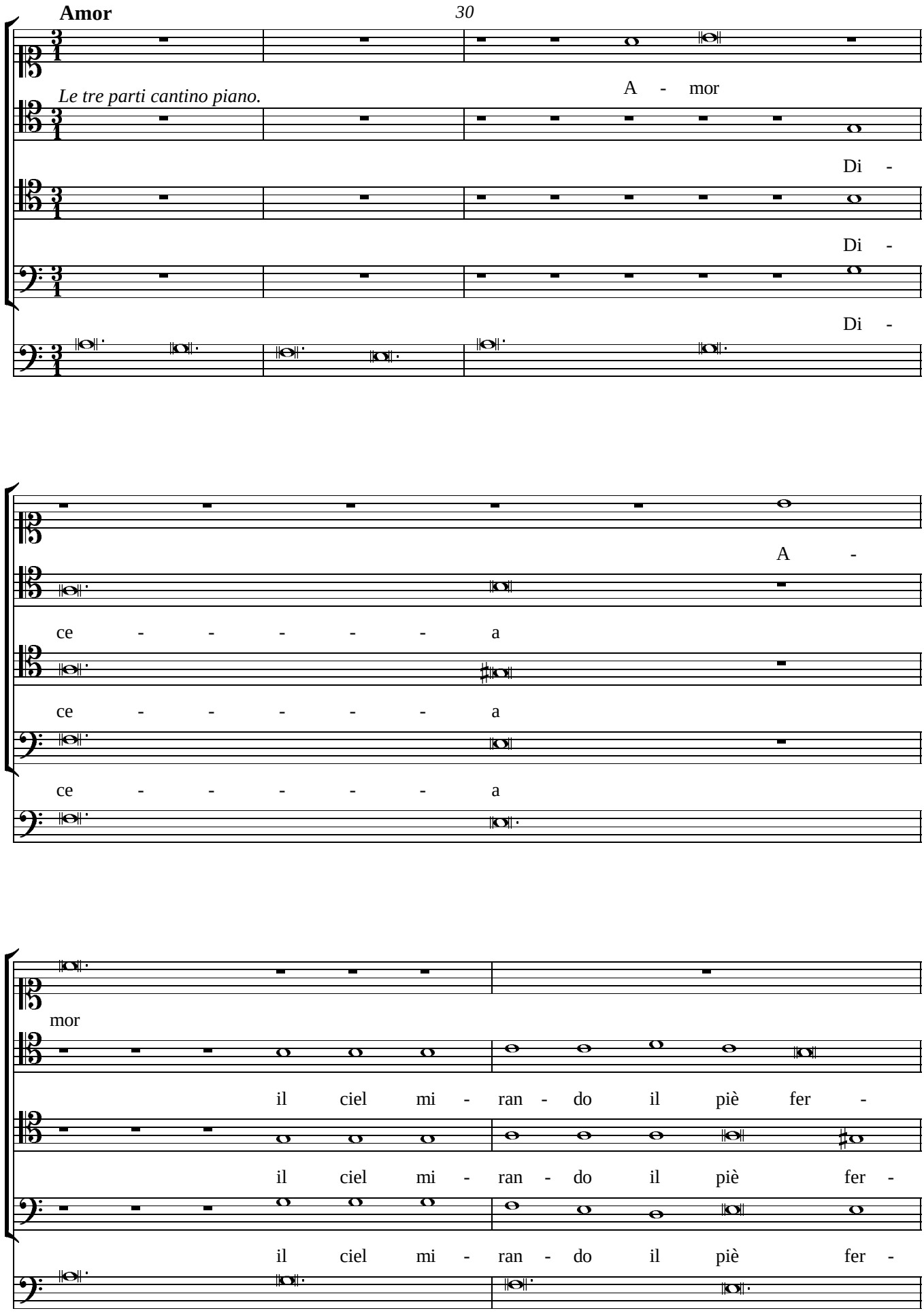
Claudio MONTEVERDI
(1567 - 1643)

Non havea Febo ancora

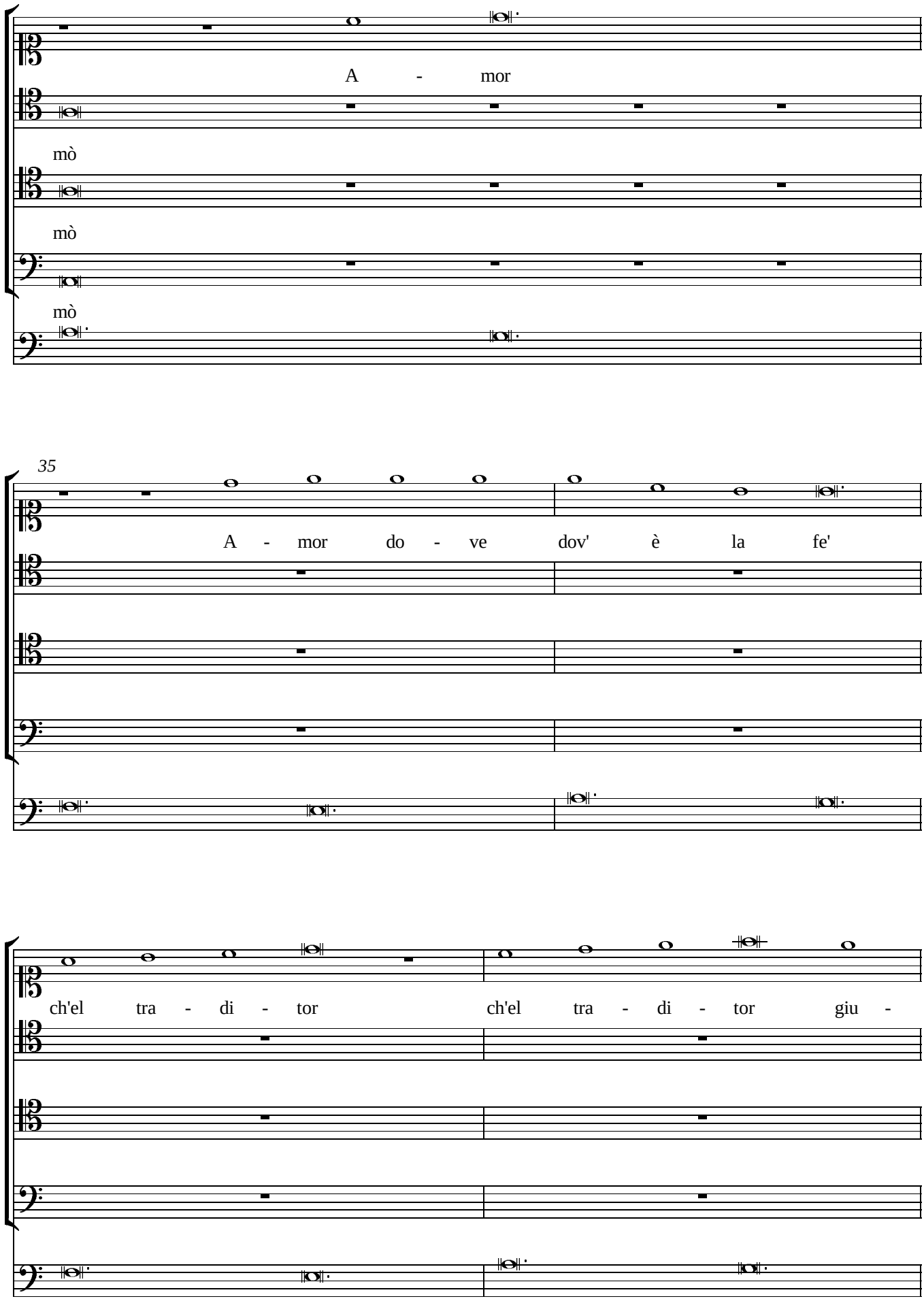


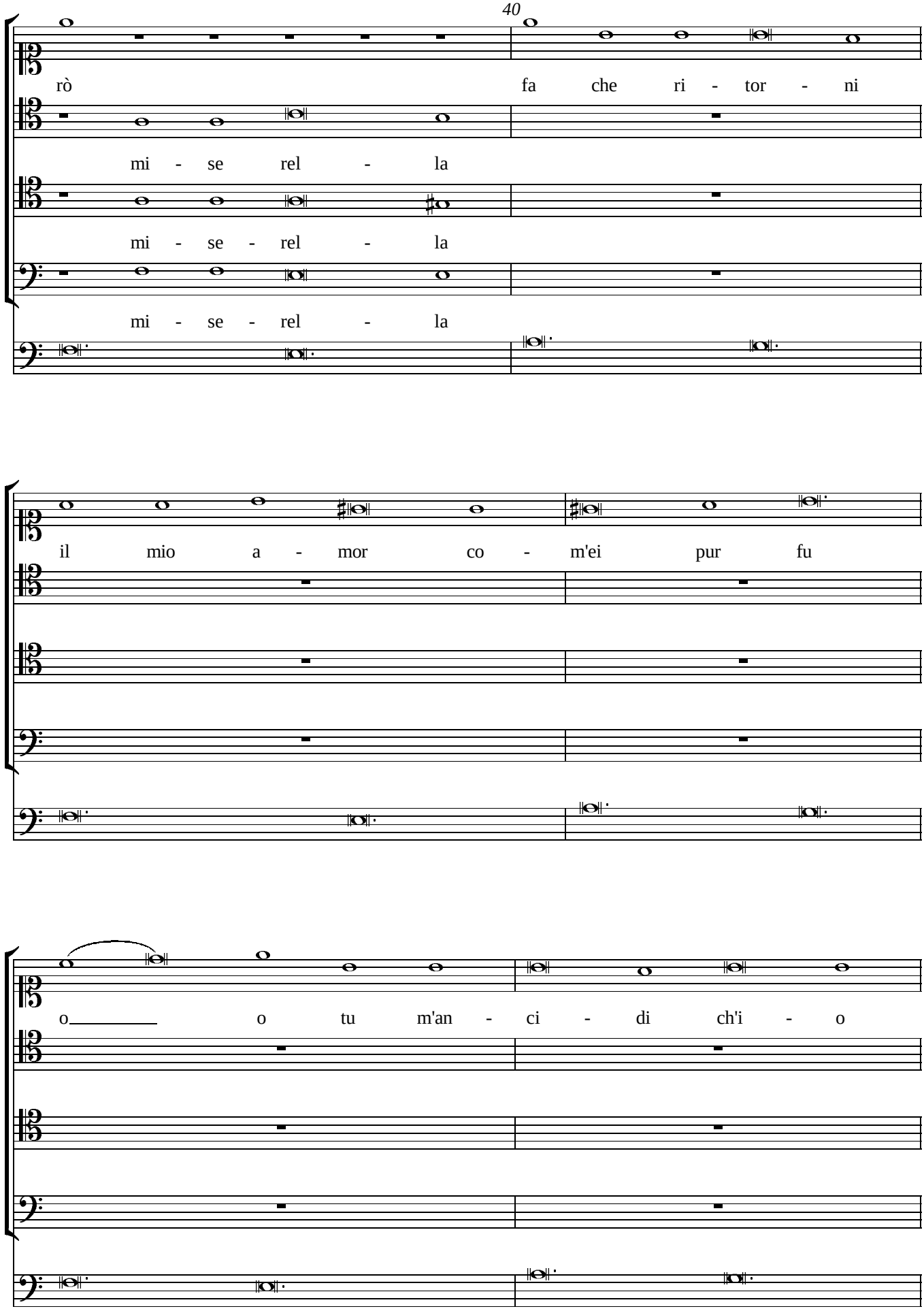
Lamento della ninfa

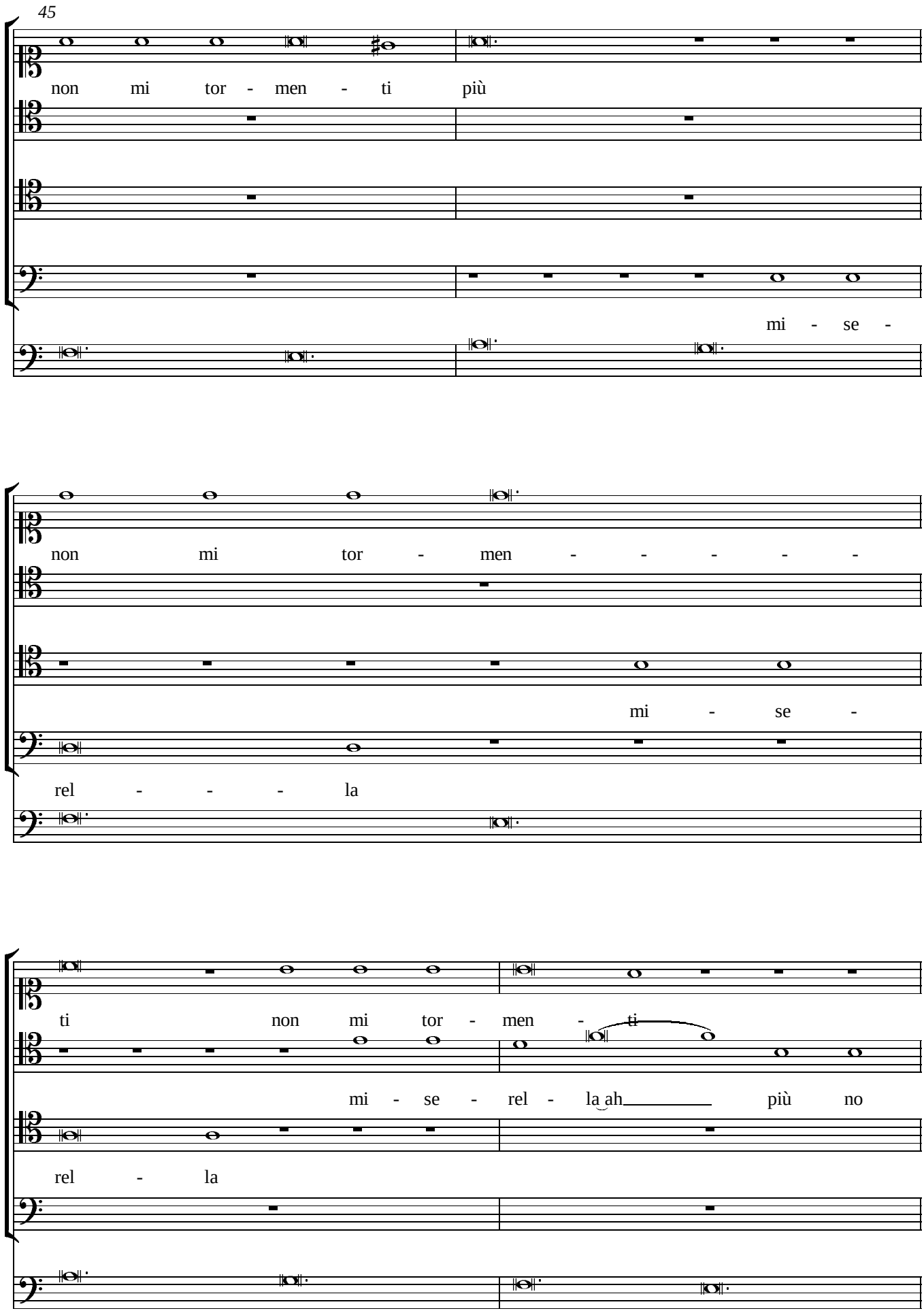


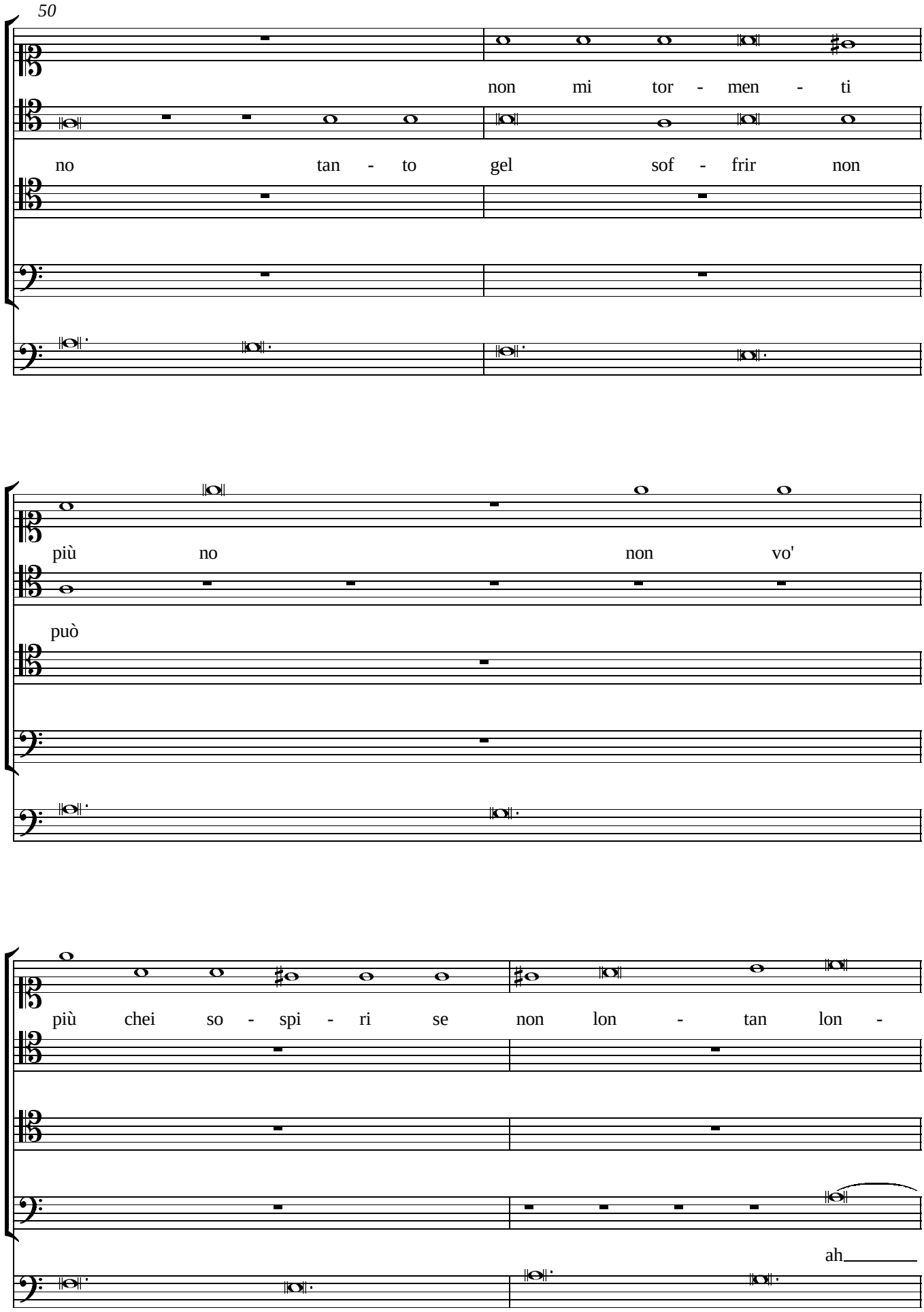

Amor
30
Le tre parti cantino piano.
A - mor
Di -
Di -
Di -
A -
ce - - - - - a
ce - - - - - a
ce - - - - - a
mor
il ciel mi - ran - do il piè fer -
il ciel mi - ran - do il piè fer -
il ciel mi - ran - do il piè fer -

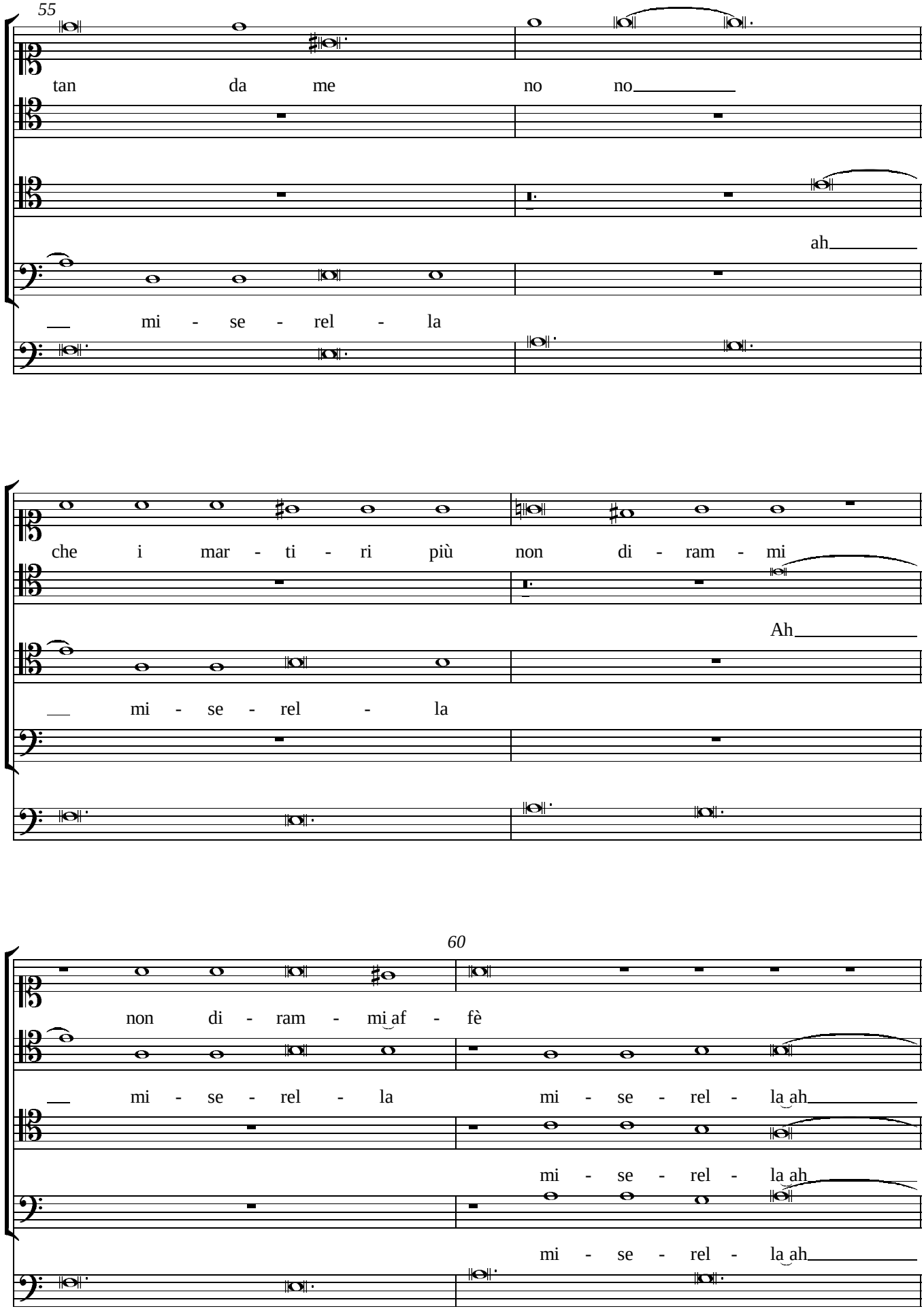
Lamento della ninfa

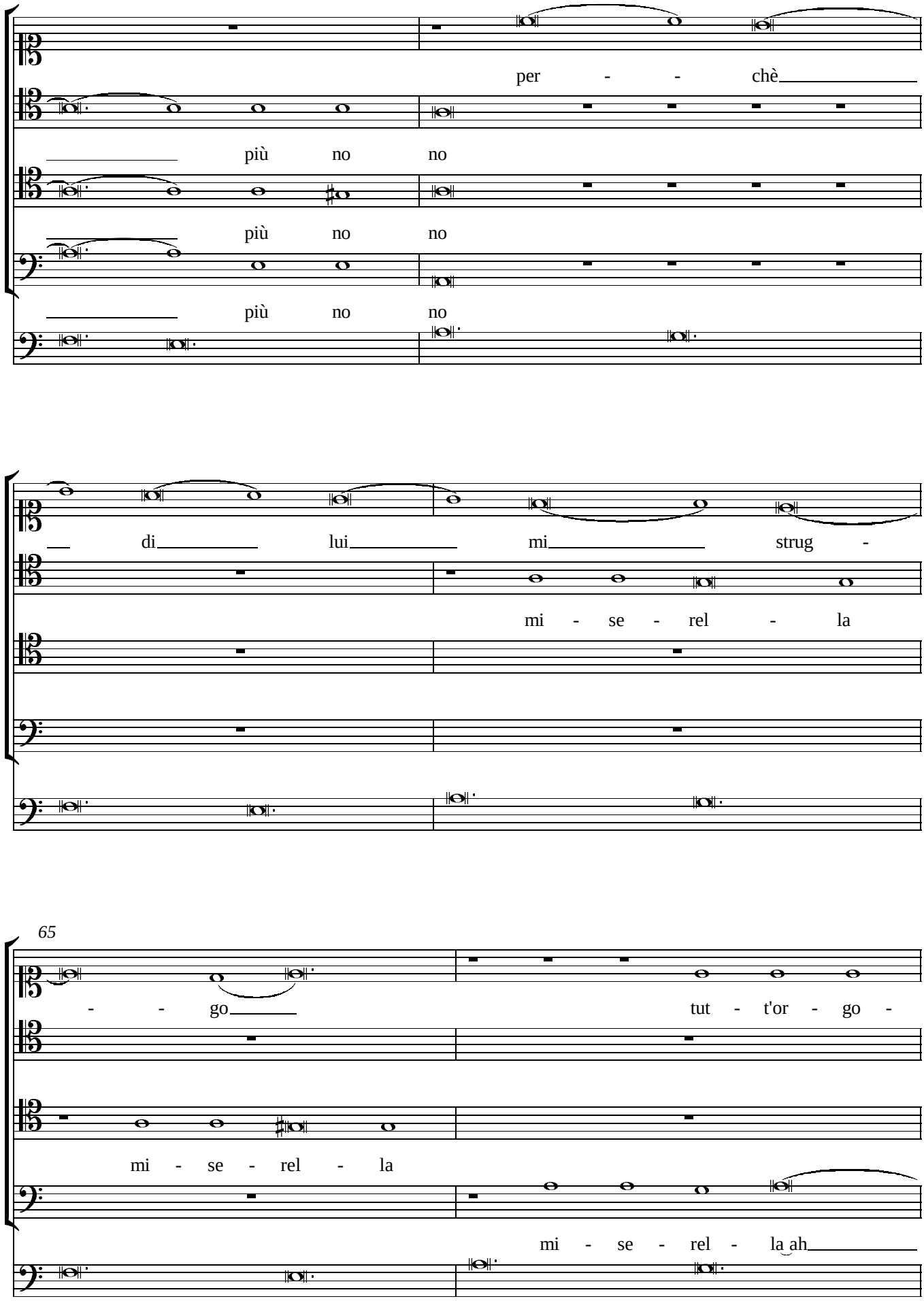



40
rò
fa che ri - tor - ni
mi - se rel - la
mi - se - rel - la
mi - se - rel - la
il mio a - mor co - m'ei pur fu
o
o tu m'an - ci - di ch'i - o

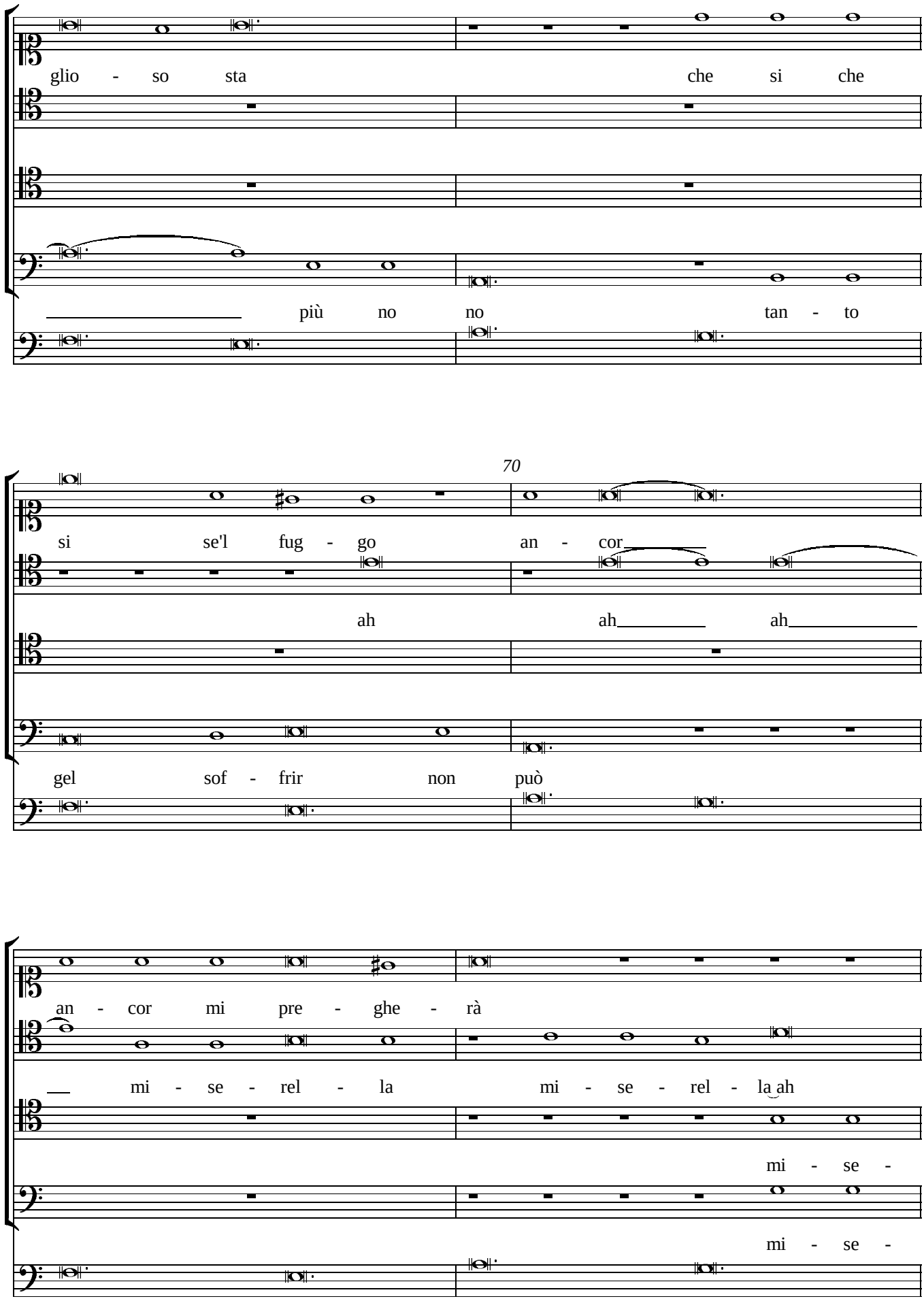

45
non mi tor - men - ti più
mi - se -
non mi tor - men - - - - -
mi - se -
rel - - - la
ti non mi tor - men - ti
mi - se - rel - la ah
più no
rel - la

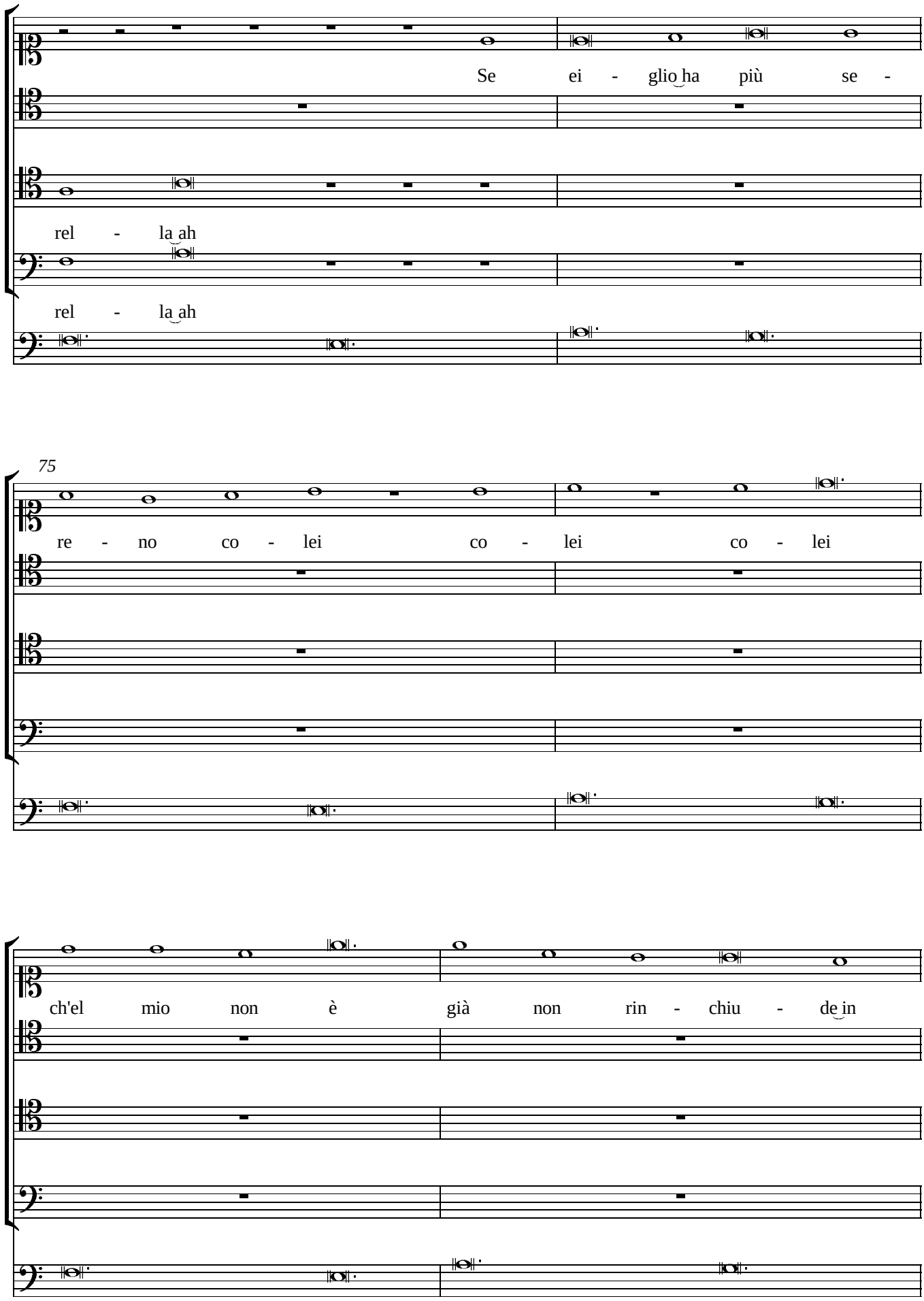

50
non mi tor - men - ti
no tan - to gel sof - frir non
più no non vo'
può
più chei so - spi - ri se non lon - tan lon -
ah


55
tan da me no no
ah
mi - se - rel - la
che i mar - ti - ri più non di - ram - mi
Ah
mi - se - rel - la
60
non di - ram - mi af - fè
mi - se - rel - la
mi - se - rel - la ah
mi - se - rel - la ah
mi - se - rel - la ah


per - - chè
più no no
più no no
più no no
di lui mi strug -
mi - se - rel - la
65
- - go
tut - t'or - go -
mi - se - rel - la
mi - se - rel - la ah

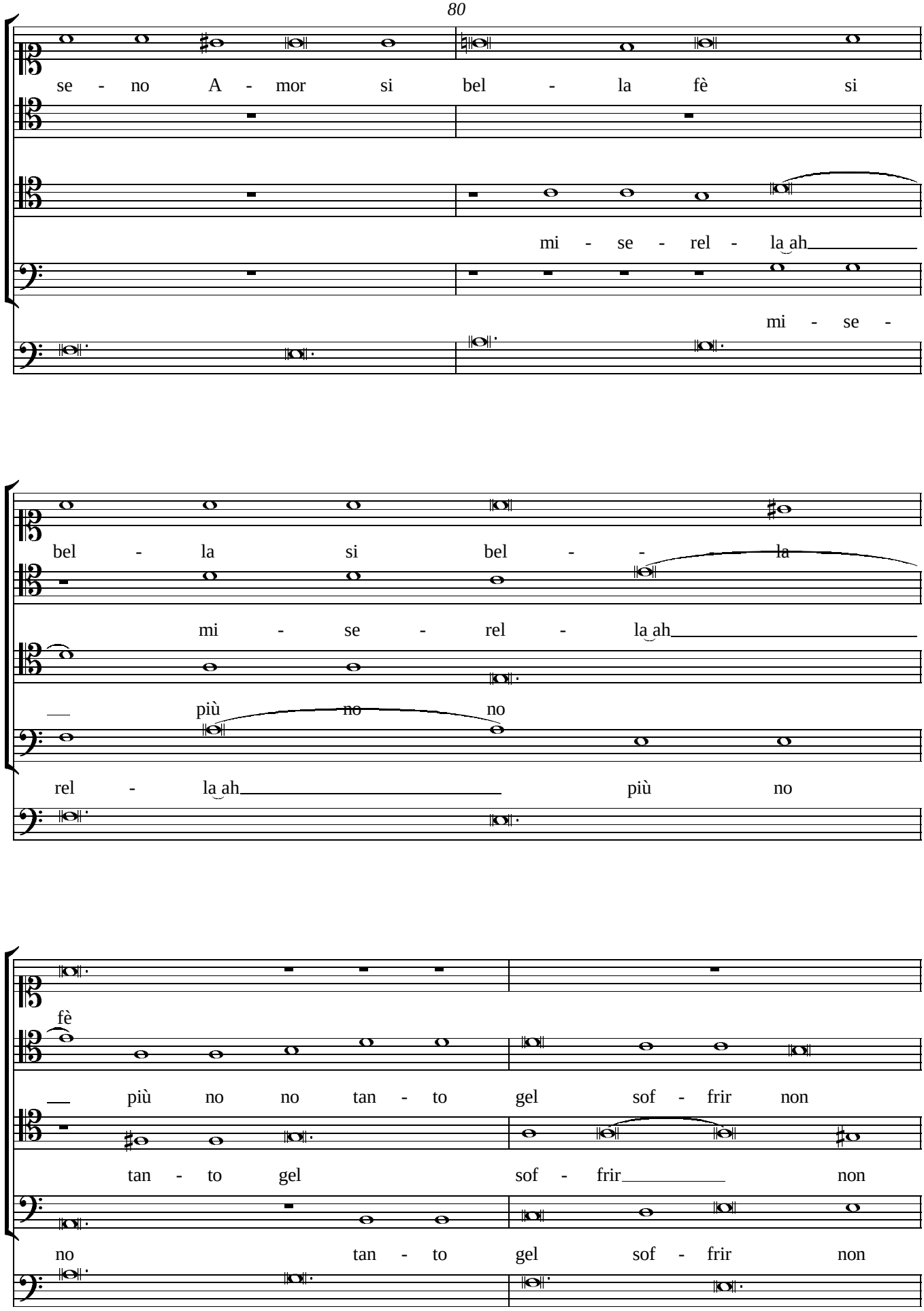
Lamento della ninfa




Se ei - glio ha più se -
rel - la ah
rel - la ah
75
re - no co - lei co - lei co - lei
ch'el mio non è già non rin - chiu - de in

Lamento della ninfa

80



85

ne mai si dol - ci ba - ci

può

può

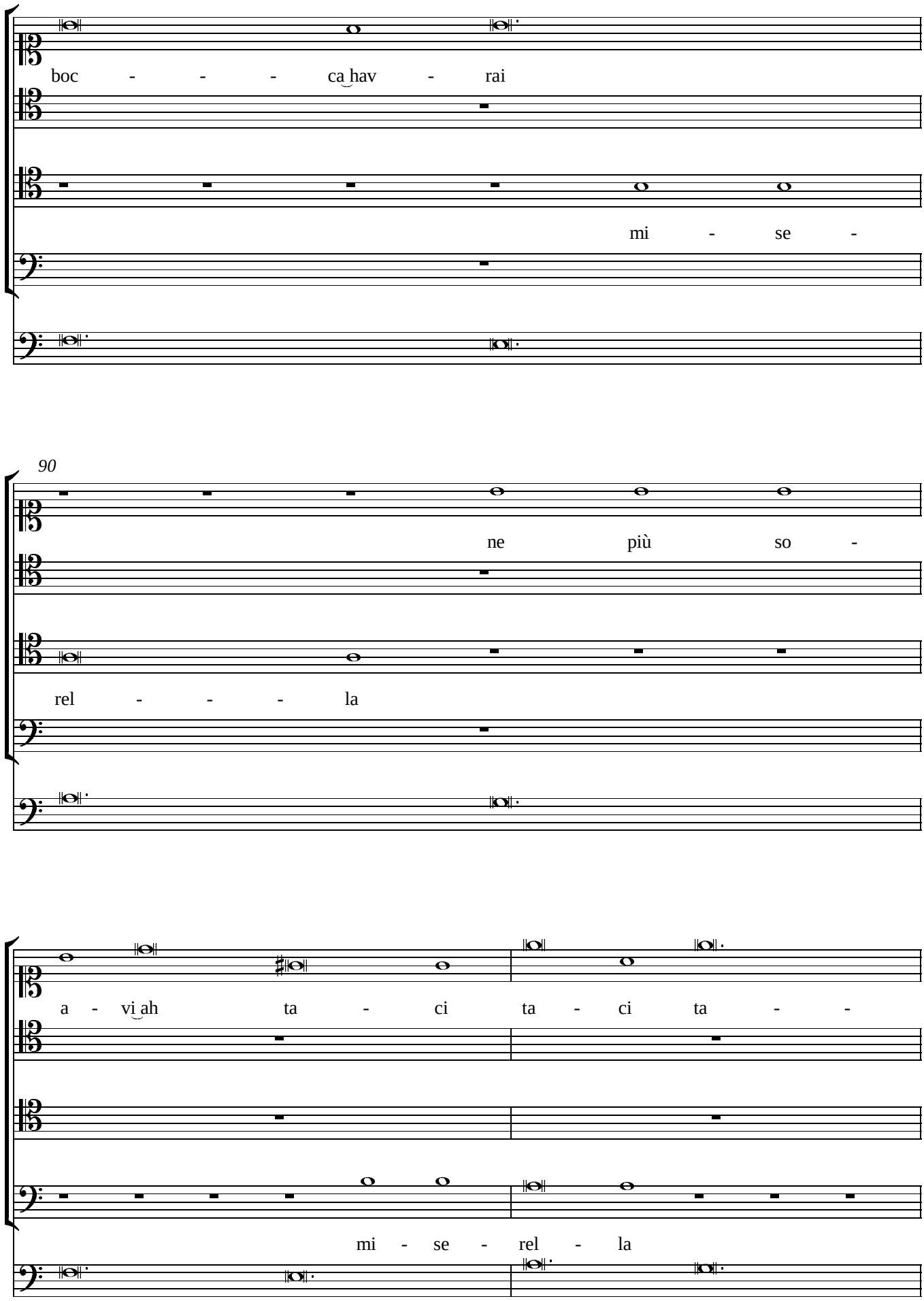
può

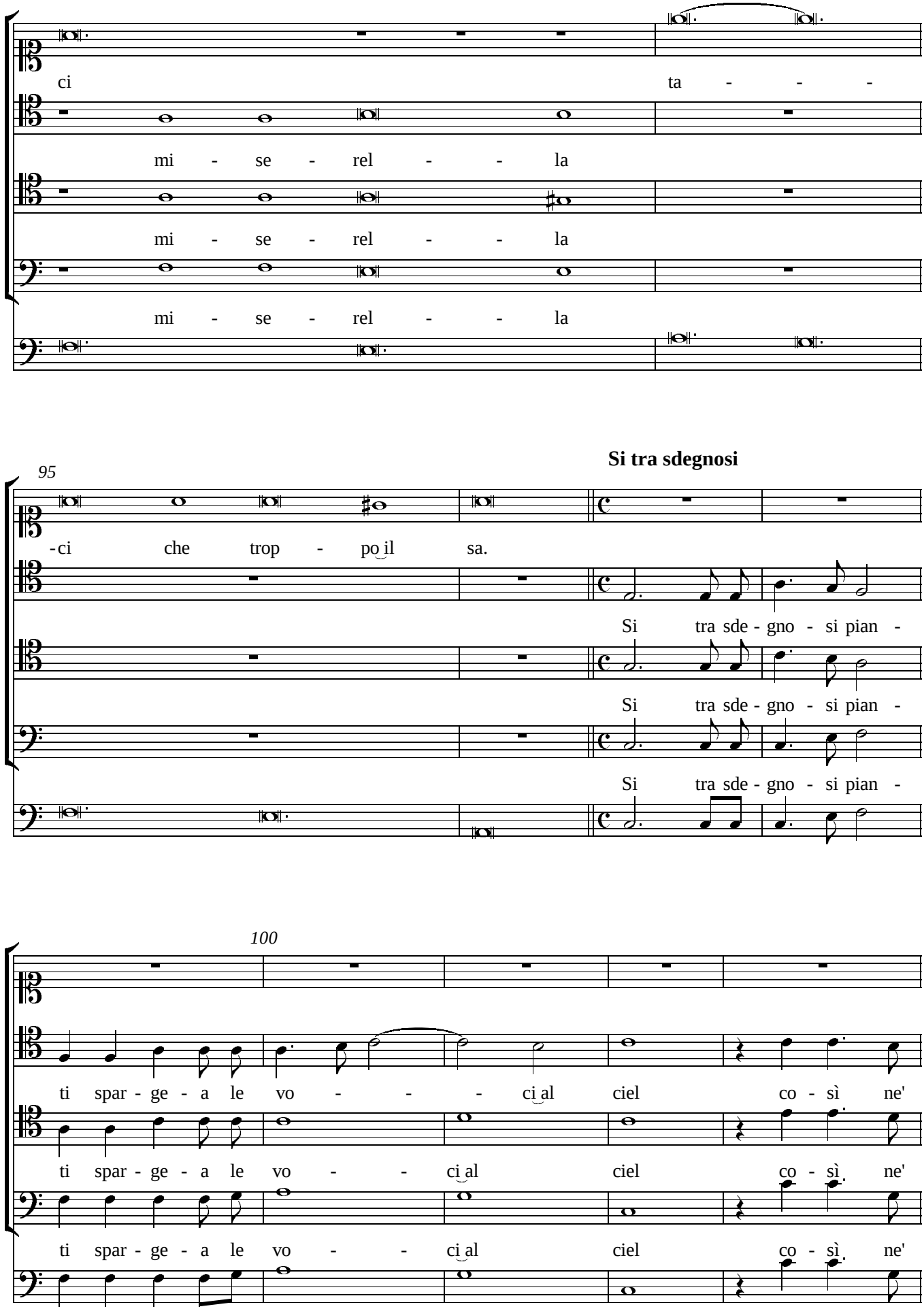
mai mai mai mai

mi - se -

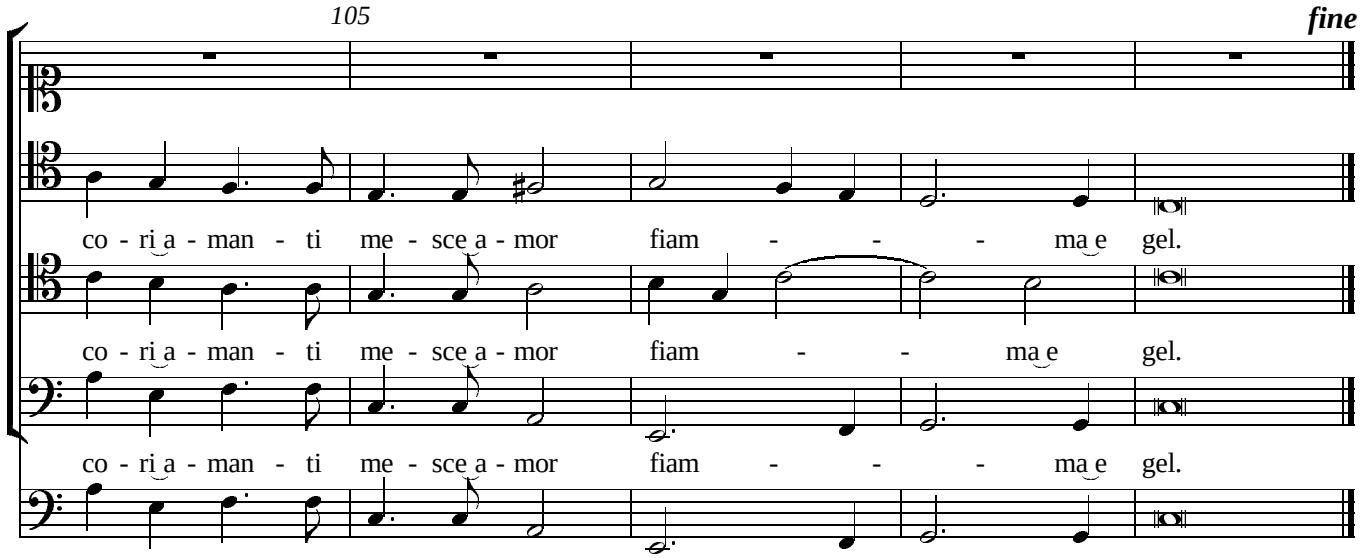
da quel - la

rel - - - la


boc - - - ca hav - rai
mi - se -
90
ne più so -
rel - - - la
a - vi ah ta - ci ta - ci ta - -
mi - se - rel - la


ci
ta - - -
mi - se - rel - - la
mi - se - rel - - la
mi - se - rel - - la
95
Si tra sdegnosi
-ci che trop - po il sa.
Si tra sde - gno - si pian -
Si tra sde - gno - si pian -
Si tra sde - gno - si pian -
100
ti spar - ge - a le vo - - - ci al ciel co - sì ne'
ti spar - ge - a le vo - - ci al ciel co - sì ne'
ti spar - ge - a le vo - - ci al ciel co - sì ne'

Lamento della ninfa



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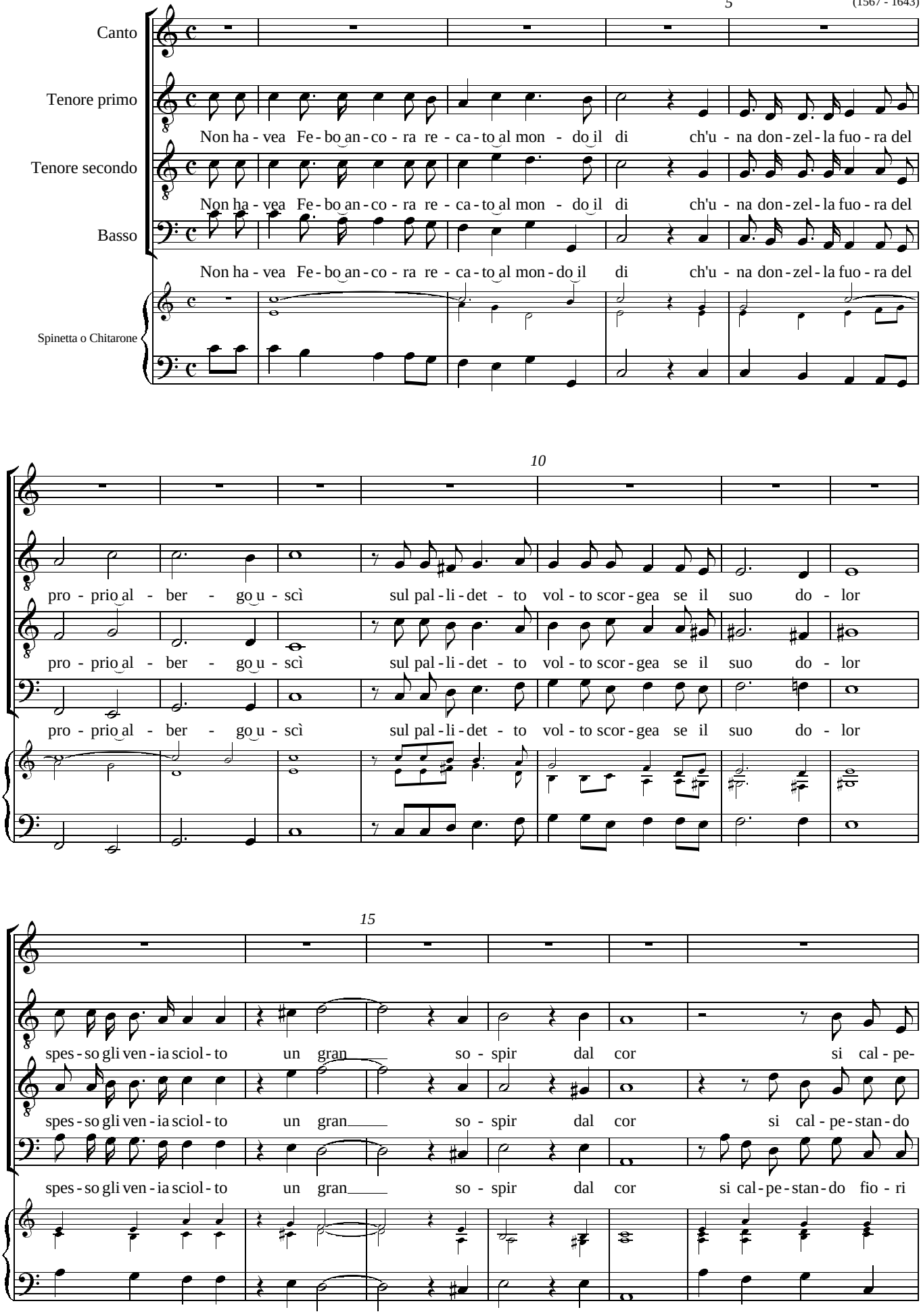
For Timothy

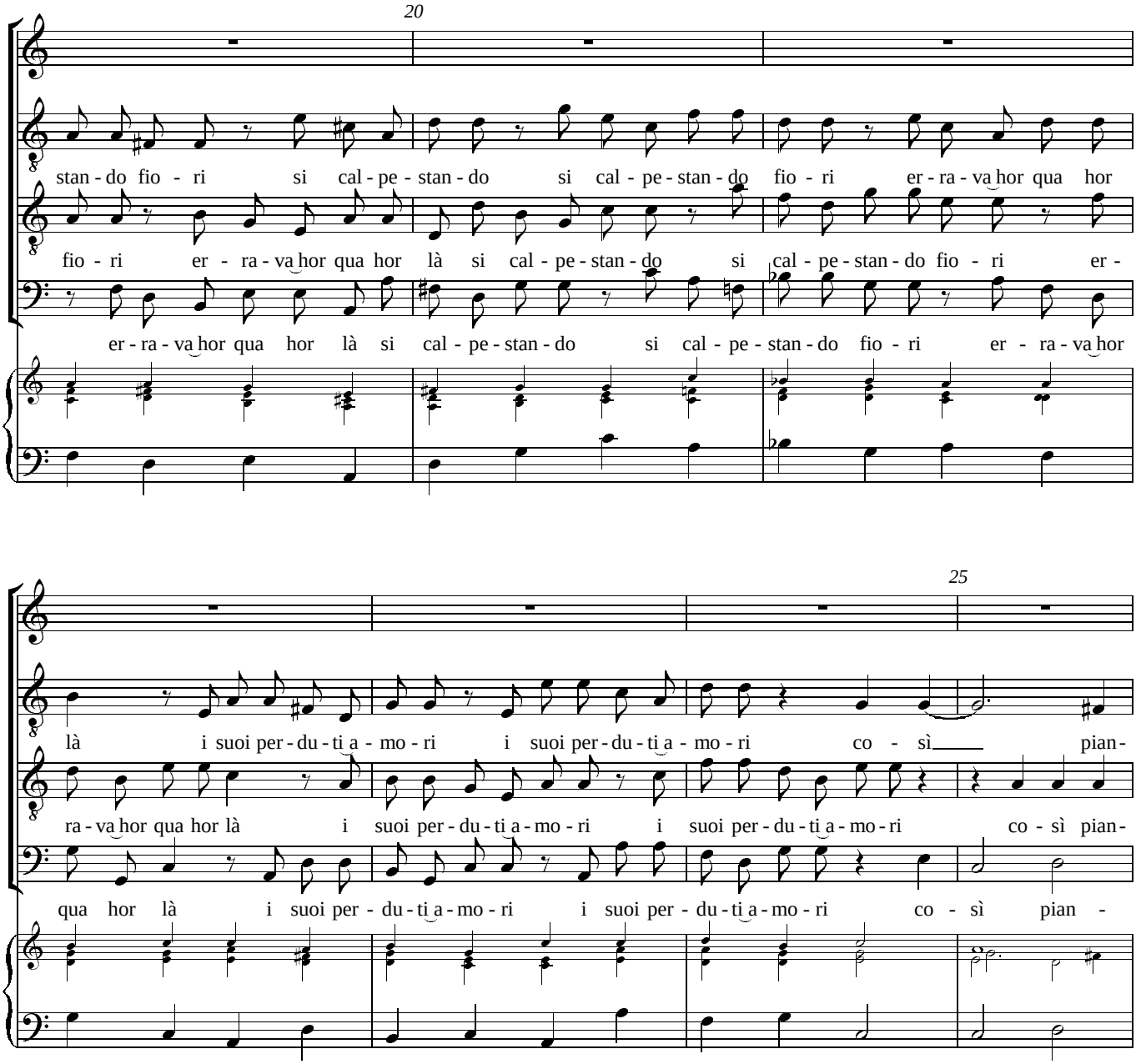
LAMENTO DELLA NINFA

Claudio MONTEVERDI
(1567 - 1643)

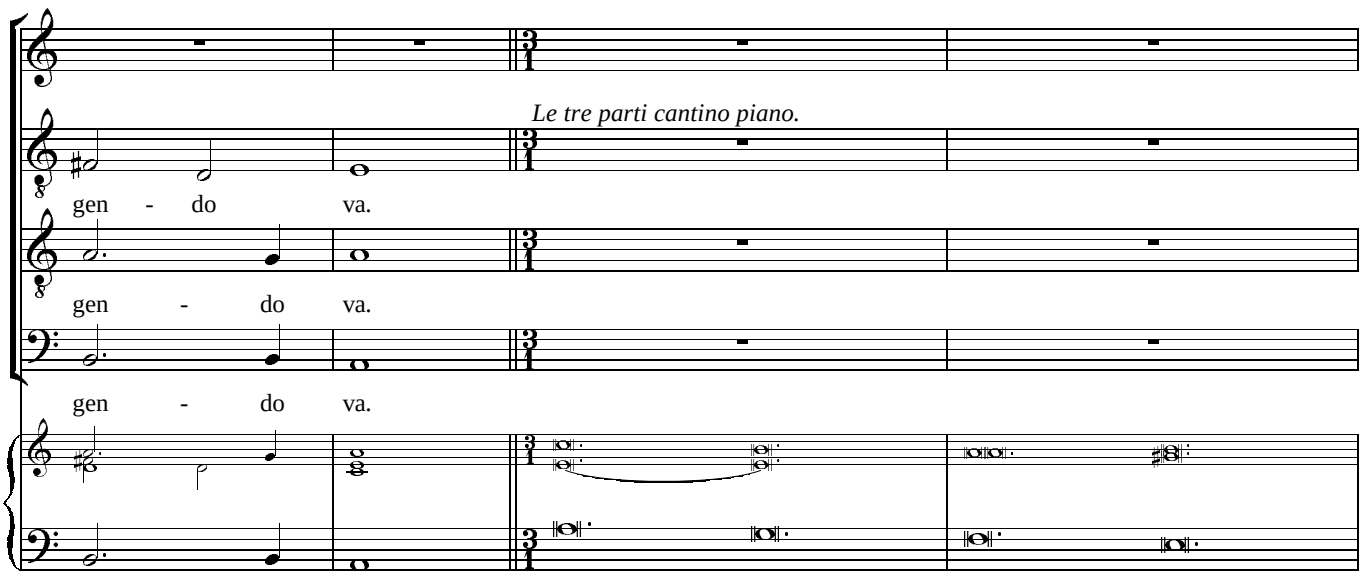
Non havea Febo ancora

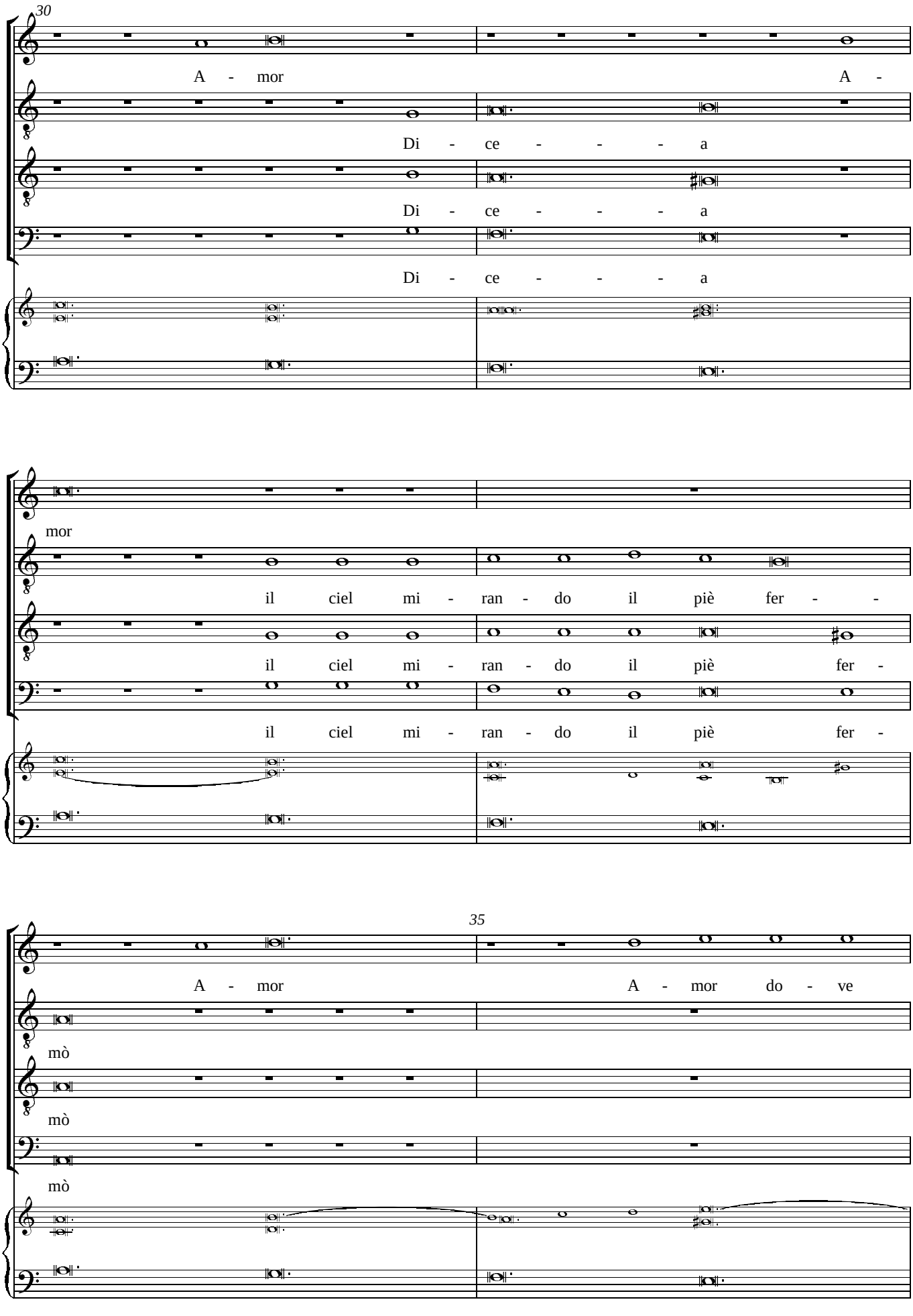


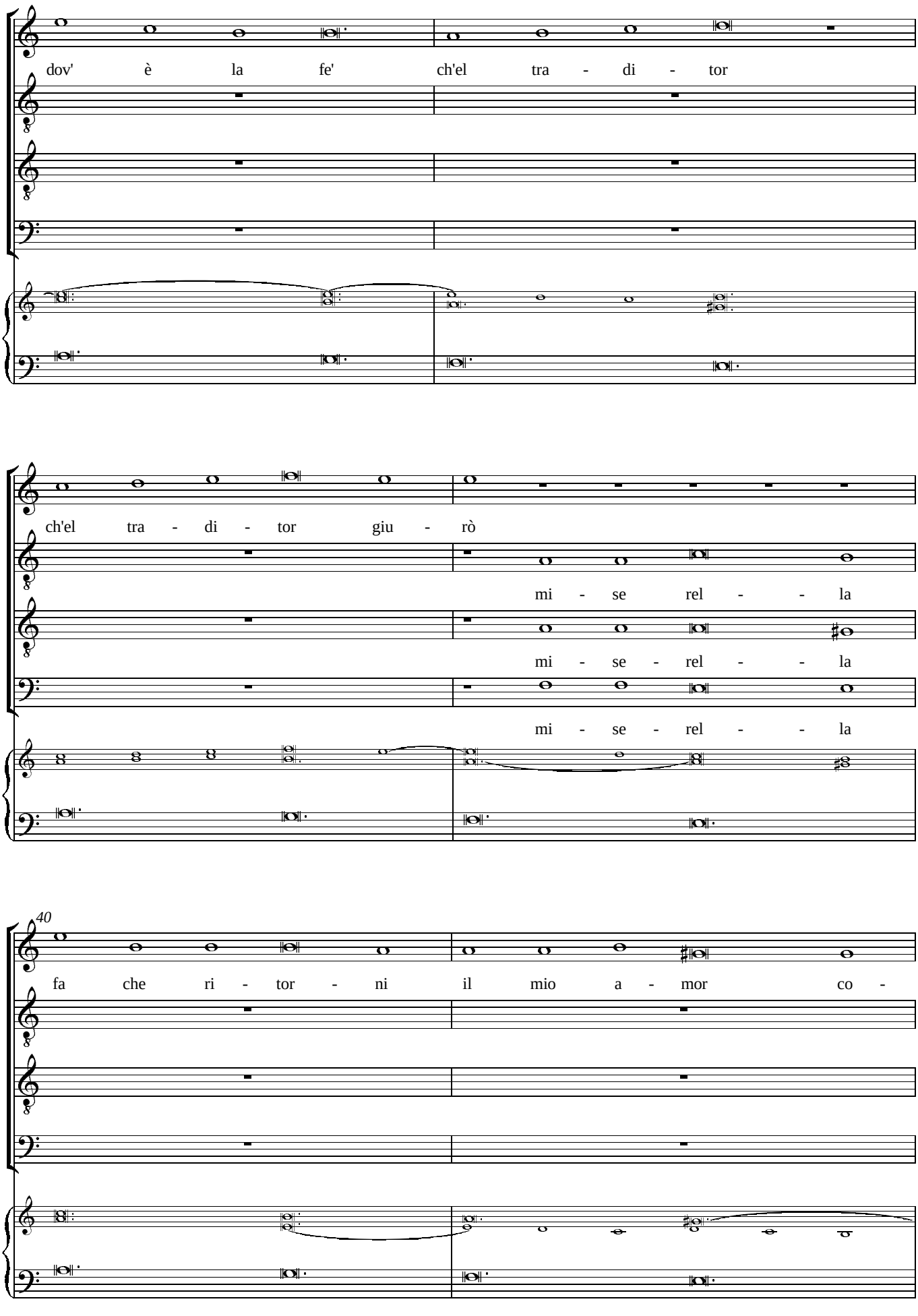
Lamento della ninfa

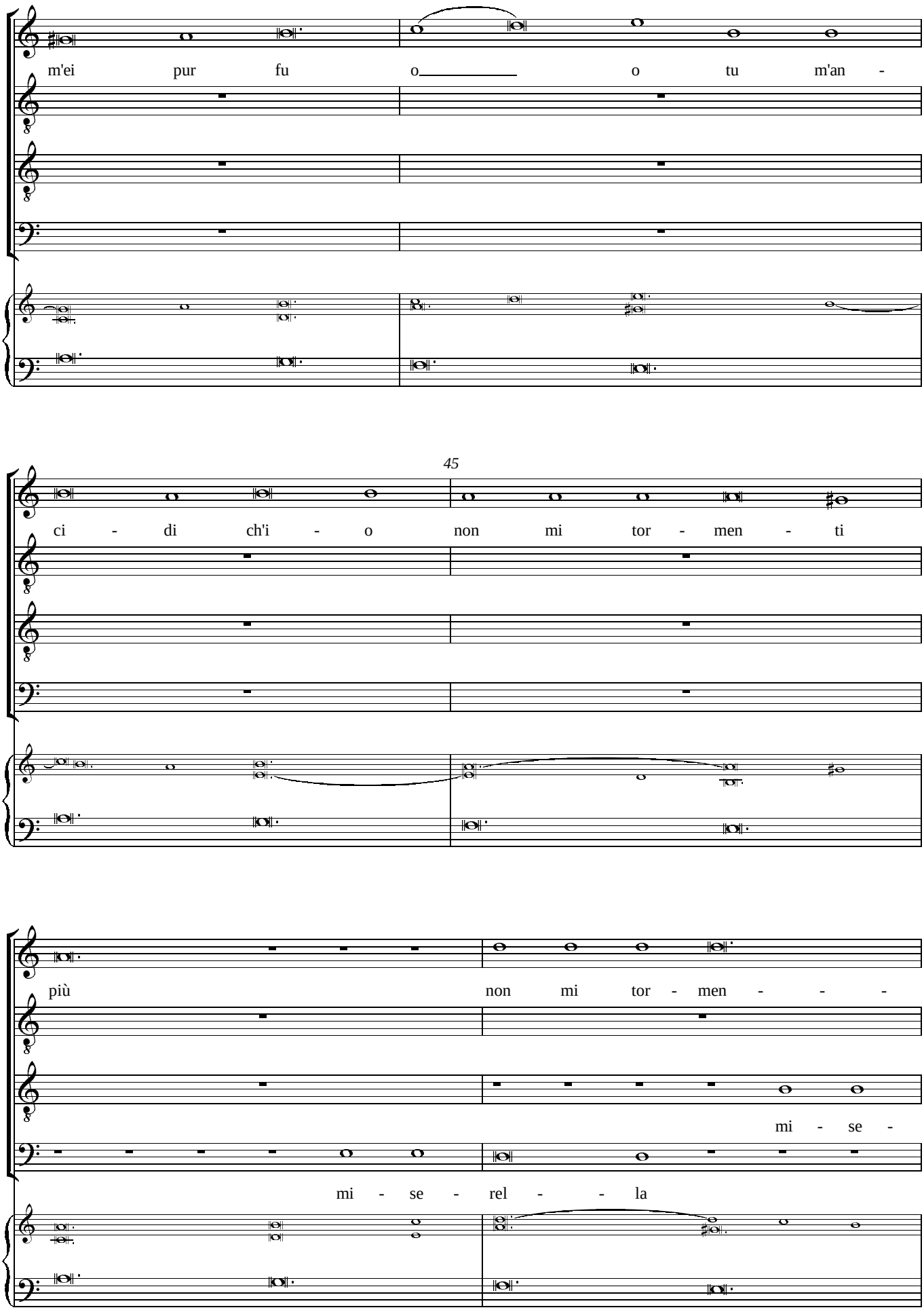


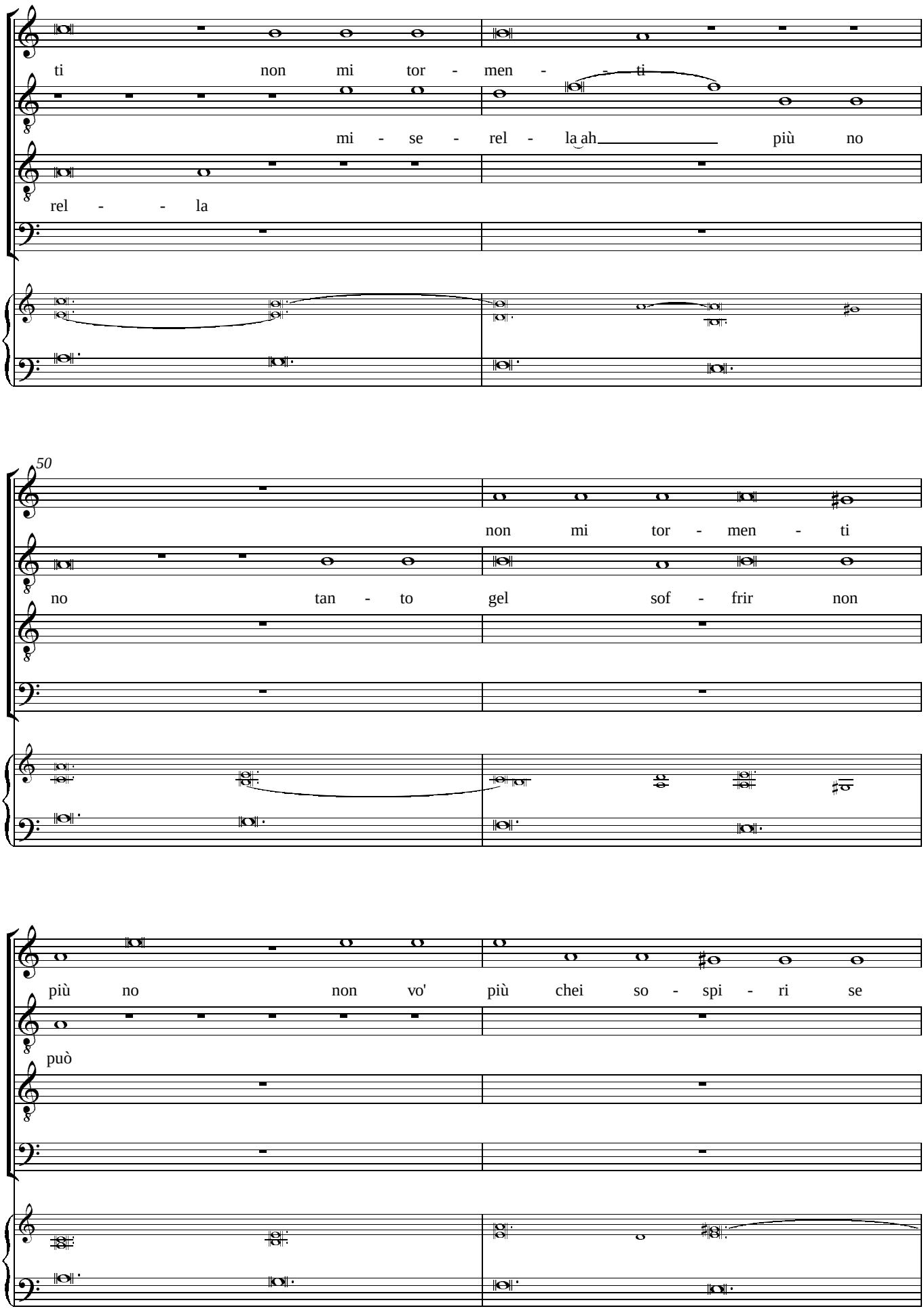
Amor ~ LAMENTO DELLA NINFA



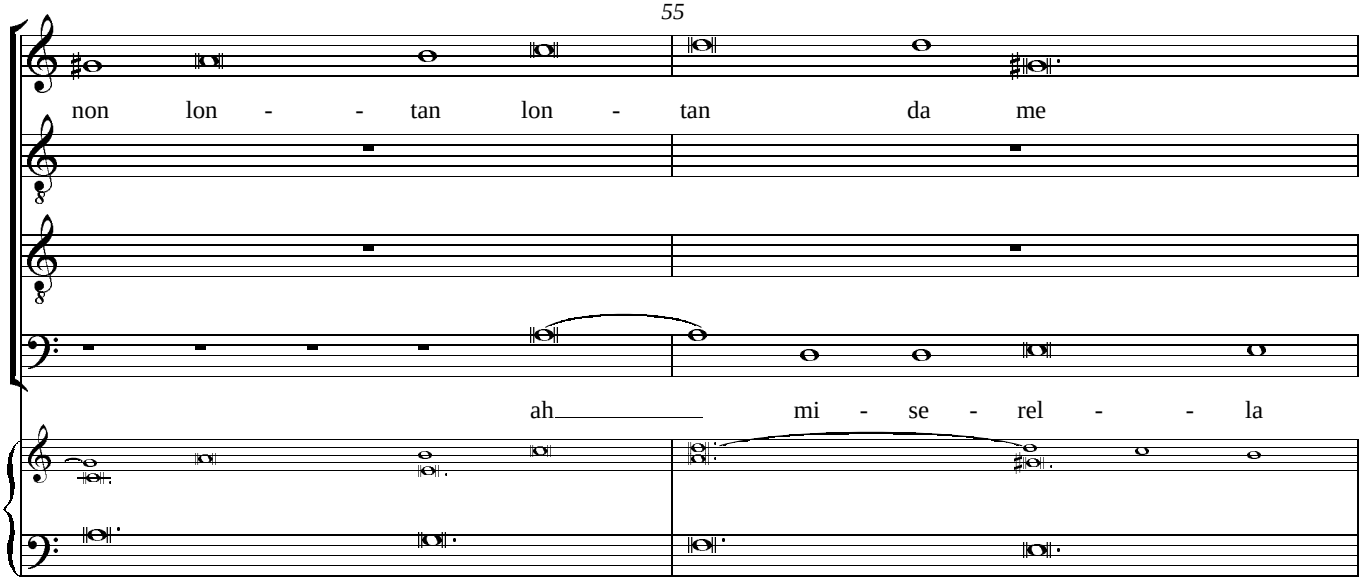

30
A - mor
A -
Di - ce - - - a
Di - ce - - - a
Di - ce - - - a
mor
il ciel mi - ran - do il piè fer - -
il ciel mi - ran - do il piè fer -
il ciel mi - ran - do il piè fer -
35
A - mor
A - mor do - ve
mò
mò
mò

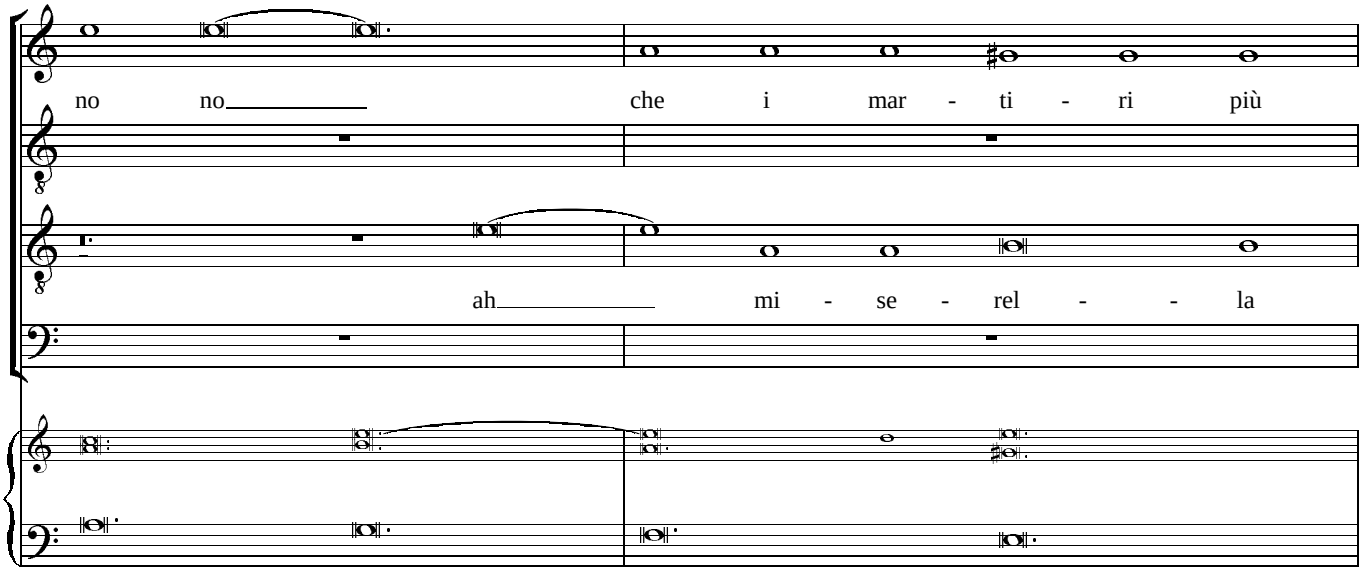

dov' è la fe' ch'el tra - di - tor
ch'el tra - di - tor giu - rò
mi - se rel - - la
mi - se - rel - - la
mi - se - rel - - la
40
fa che ri - tor - ni il mio a - mor co -

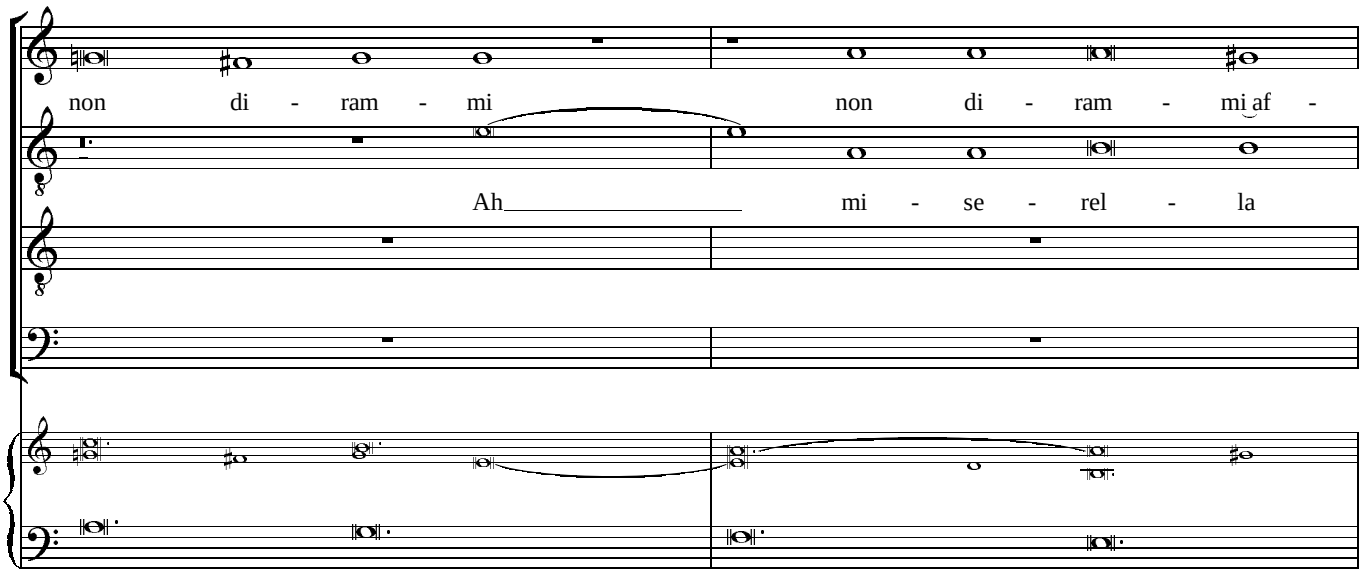

m'ei pur fu o o tu m'an -
45
ci - di ch'i - o non mi tor - men - ti
più non mi tor - men - - -
mi - se -
mi - se - rel - - la

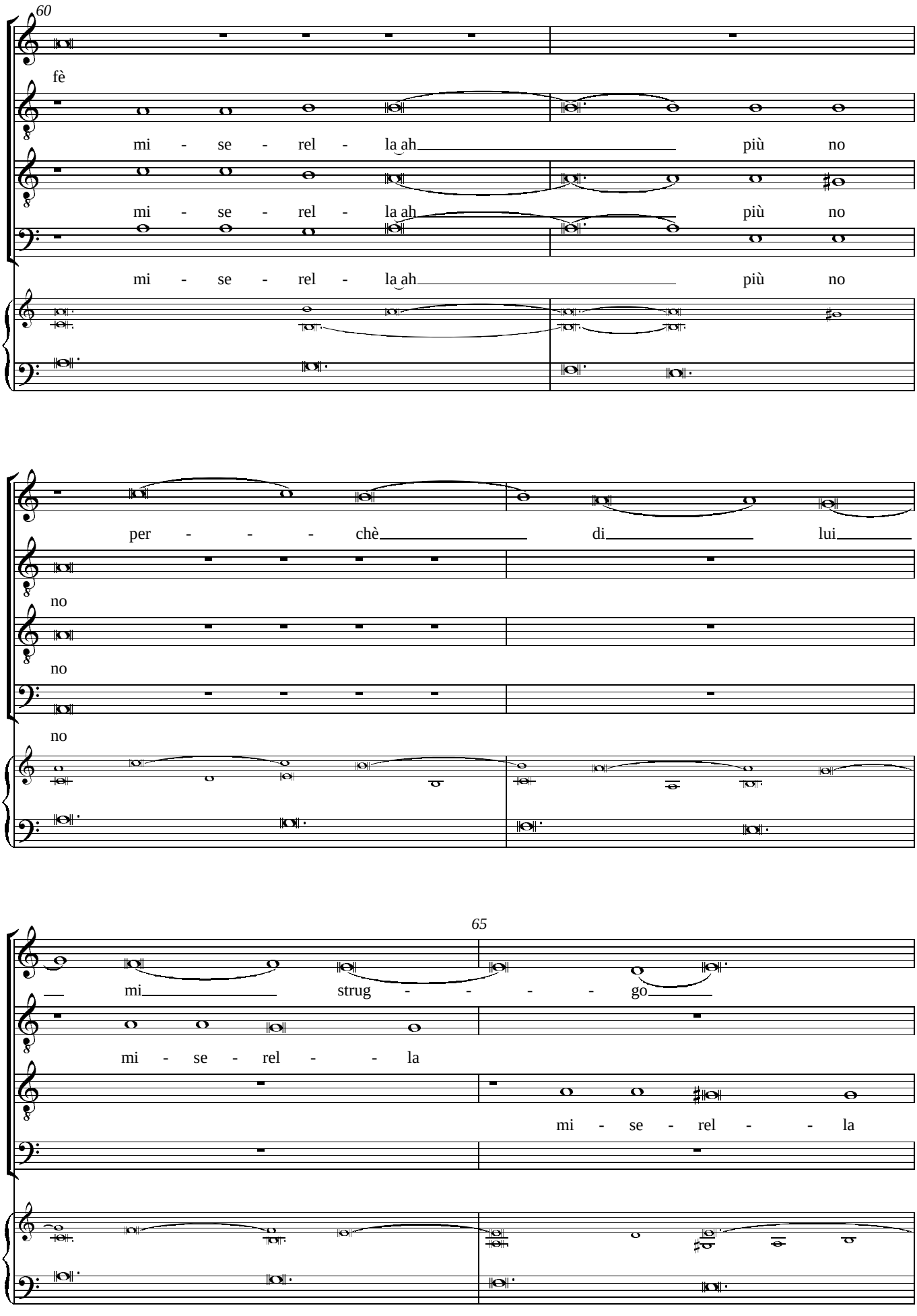

ti non mi tor - men - ti
mi - se - rel - la ah più no
rel - - la
50
non mi tor - men - ti
no tan - to gel sof - frir non
più no non vo' più chei so - spi - ri se
può

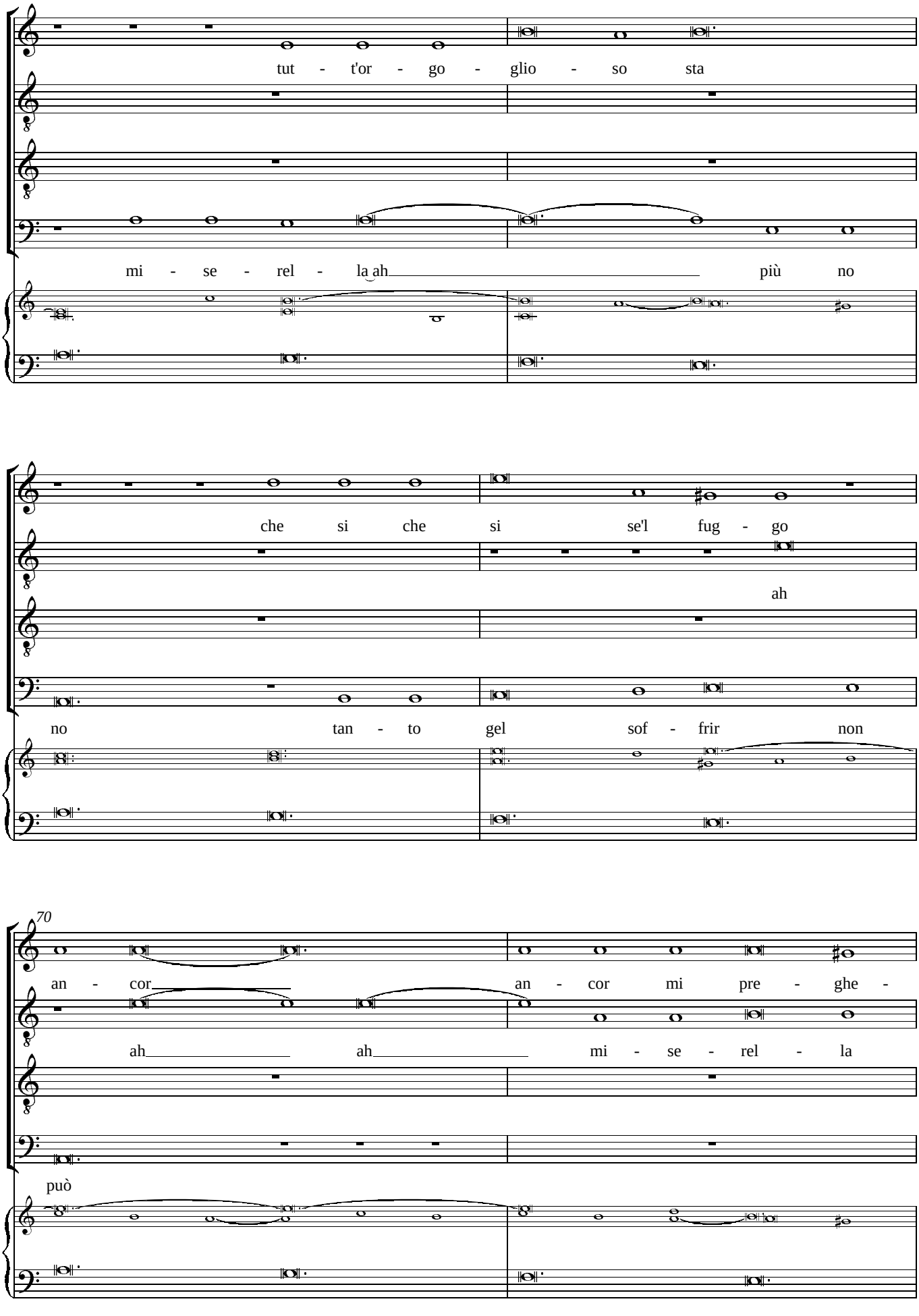
55

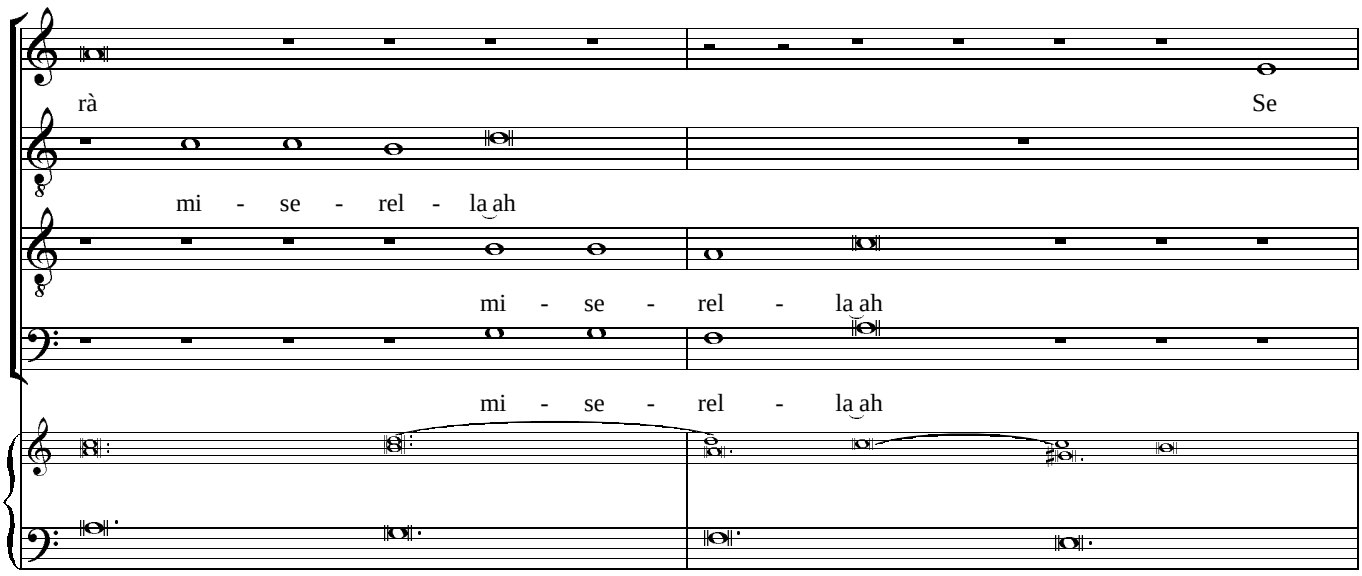

non lon - - tan lon - tan da me
ah mi - se - rel - - la

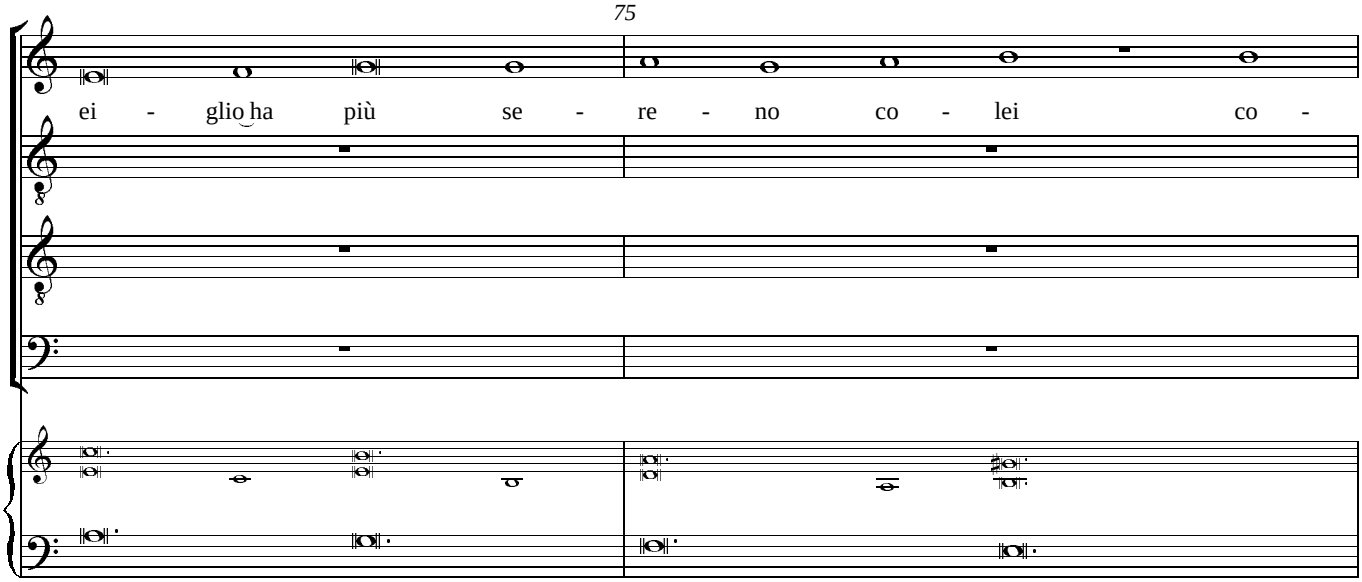

no no che i mar - ti - ri più
ah mi - se - rel - - la


non di - ram - mi non di - ram - mi af -
Ah mi - se - rel - la


60
fè
mi - se - rel - la ah
più no
mi - se - rel - la ah
più no
mi - se - rel - la ah
più no
per - - - chè
di
lui
no
no
no
65
mi
strug - - - - go
mi - se - rel - - la
mi - se - rel - - la


tut - t'or - go - glio - so sta
mi - se - rel - la ah più no
che si che si se'l fug - go
ah
no tan - to gel sof - frir non
70
an - cor an - cor mi pre - ghe -
ah ah mi - se - rel - la
può


rà
Se
mi - se - rel - la ah
mi - se - rel - la ah
mi - se - rel - la ah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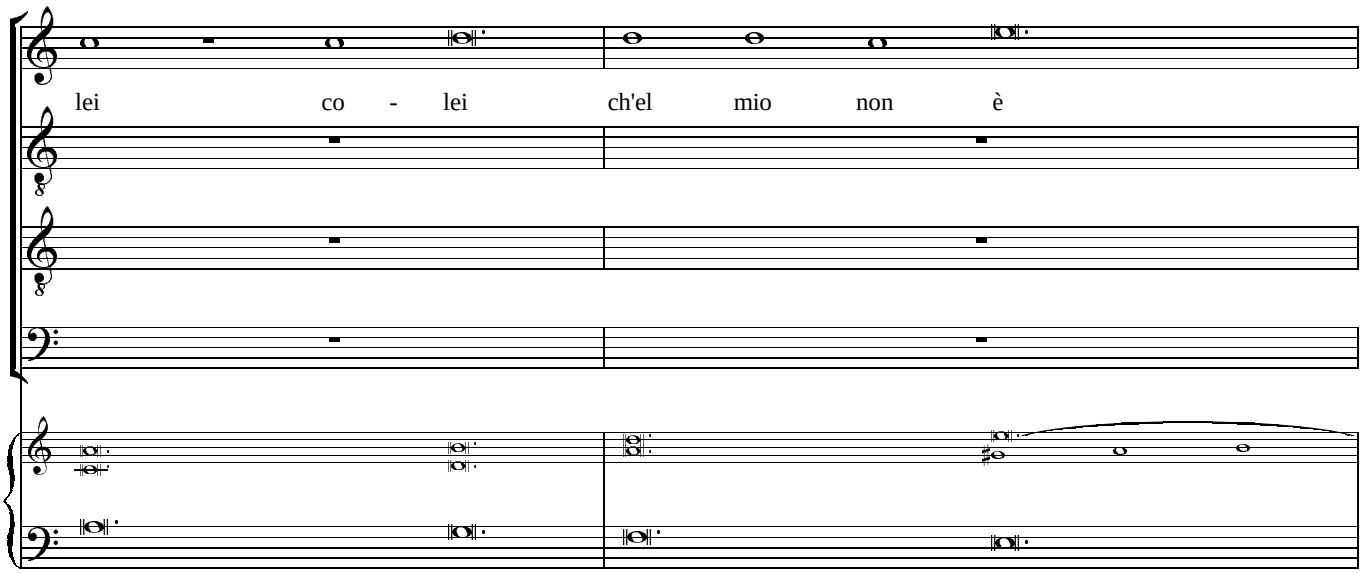
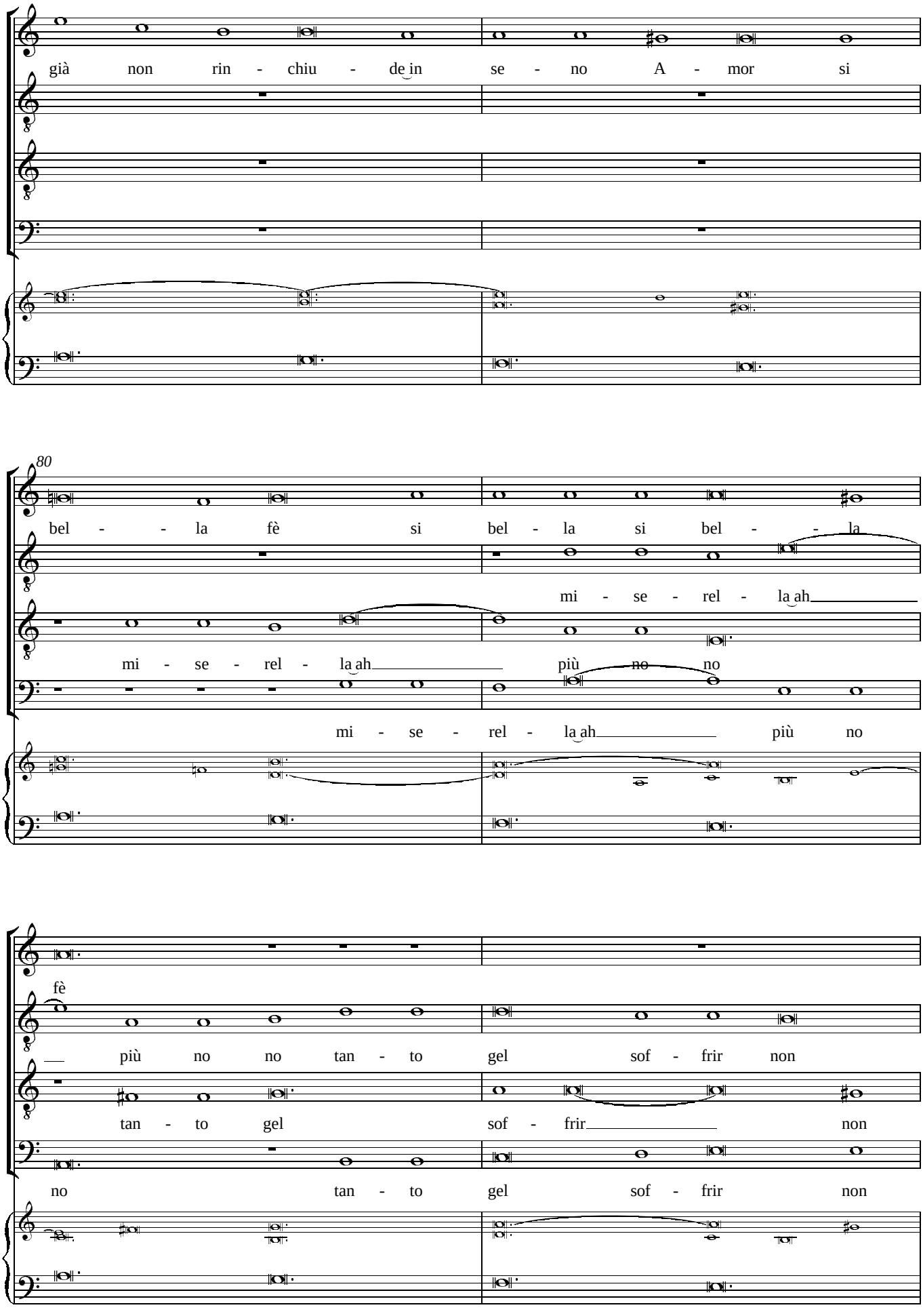
ei - glio ha più se - re - no co - lei co -


lei co - lei ch'el mio non è


già non rin - chiu - de in se - no A - mor si
80
bel - - la fè si bel - la si bel - - la
mi - se - rel - la ah
mi - se - rel - la ah più no no
mi - se - rel - la ah più no
fè
più no no tan - to gel sof - frir non
tan - to gel sof - frir non
no tan - to gel sof - frir non

Lamento della ninfa

85

ne mai si dol - ci ba - ci mai mai

può

può

può

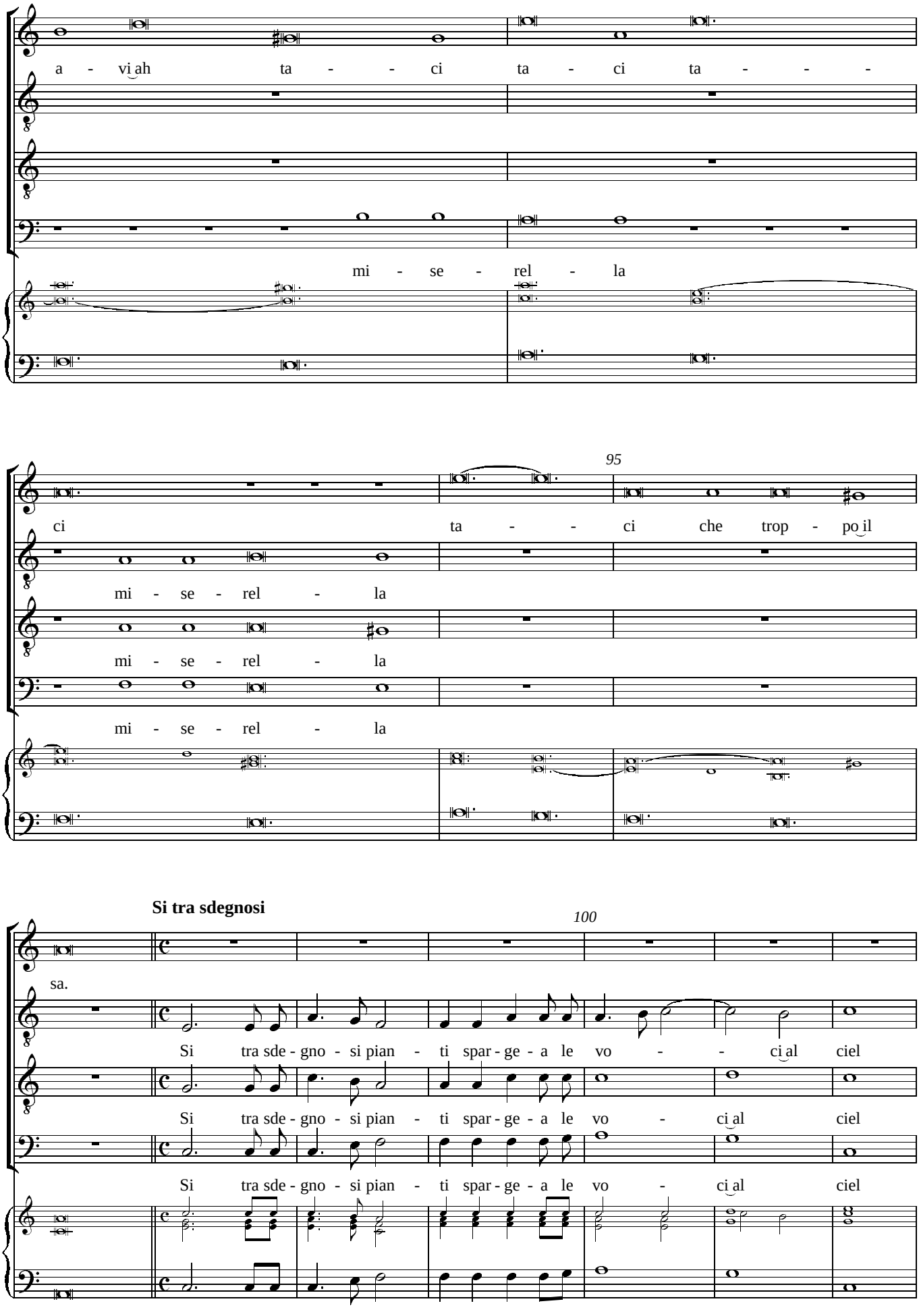
mai mai da quel - la

mi - se - rel - - la

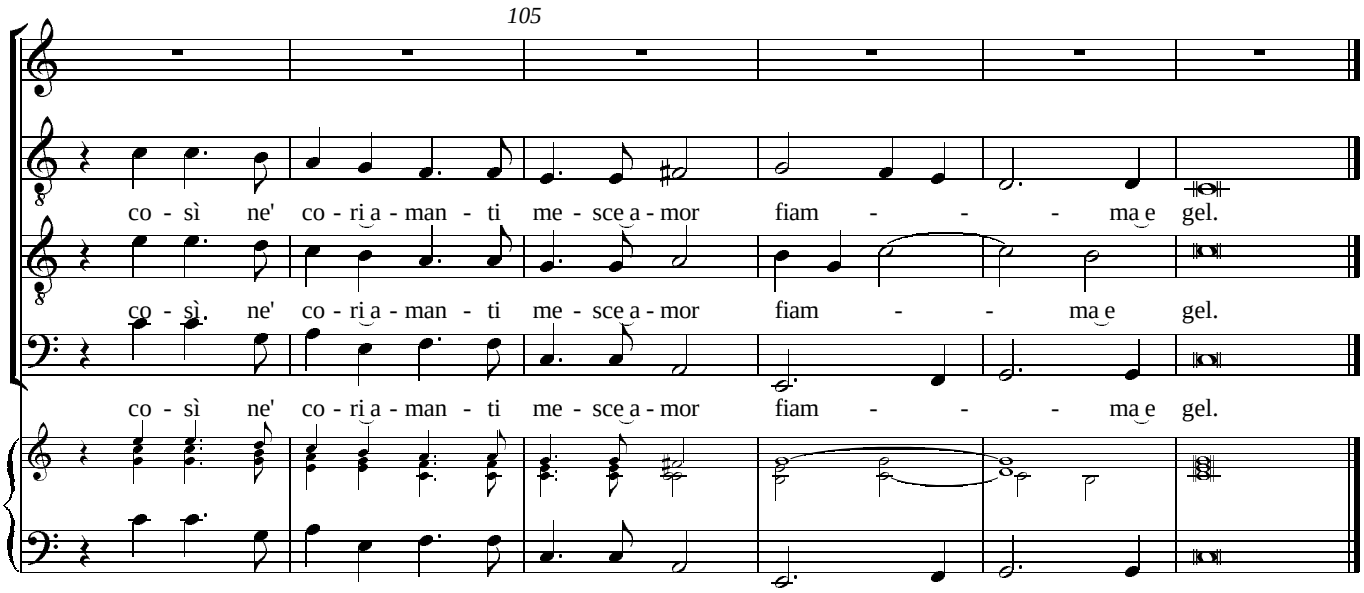
90

boc - ca hav - rai ne più so -

mi - se - rel - - la


a - vi ah ta - - ci ta - ci ta - - -
mi - se - rel - la
95
ci ta - - ci che trop - po il
mi - se - rel - la
mi - se - rel - la
mi - se - rel - la
Si tra sdegnosi
100
sa.
Si tra sde - gno - si pian - ti spar - ge - a le vo - - ci al ciel
Si tra sde - gno - si pian - ti spar - ge - a le vo - ci al ciel
Si tra sde - gno - si pian - ti spar - ge - a le vo - ci al ciel

Lamento della ninfa



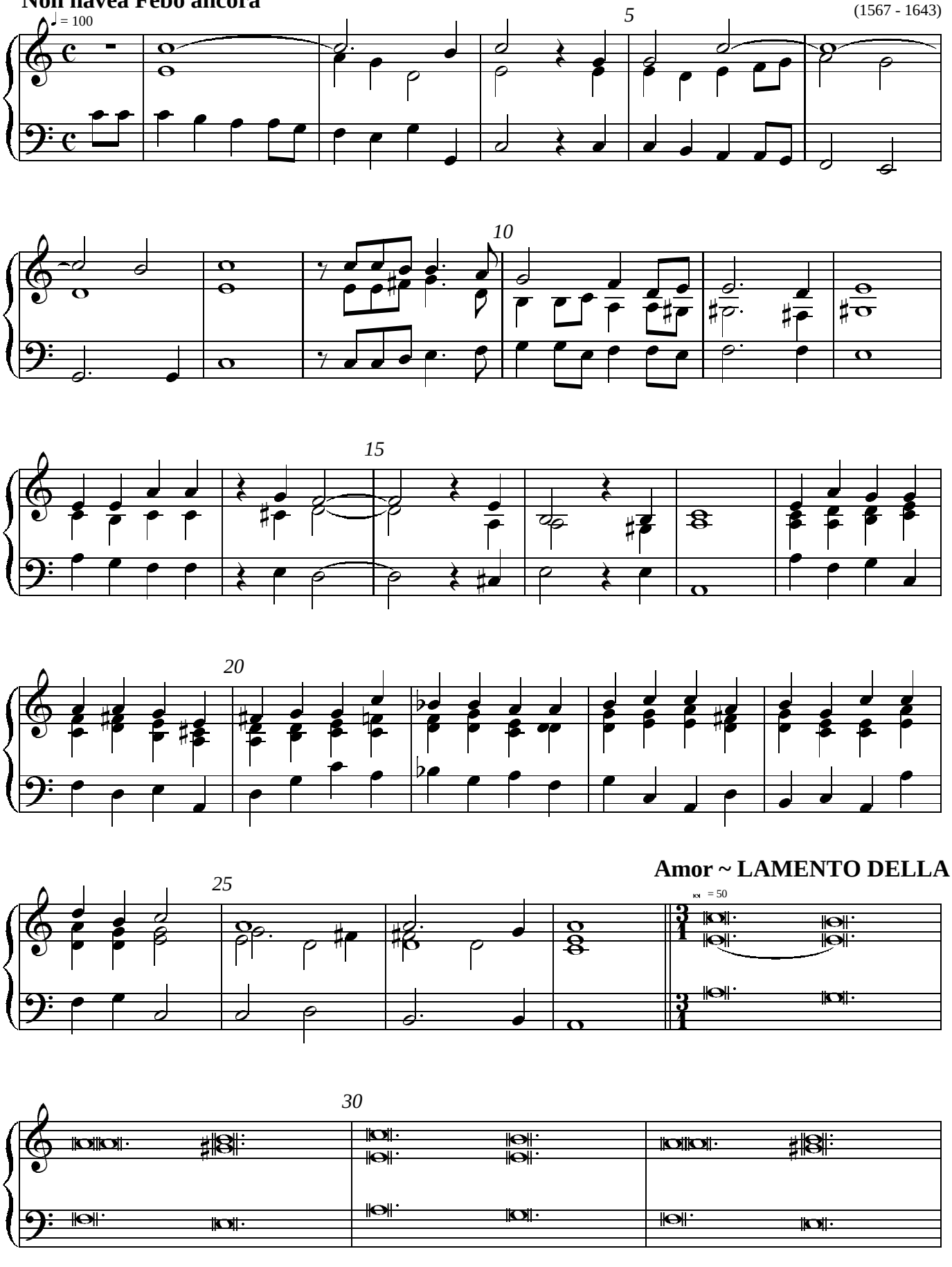
Steven Langley Guy, 18th December, 2004.
smguy@ihug.com.au

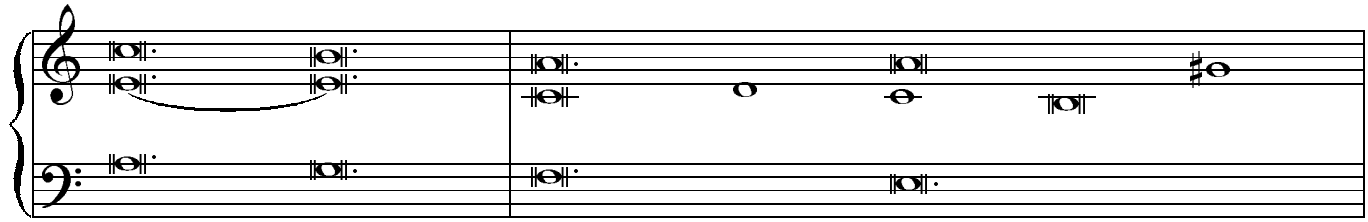
Spinetta o Chitarone

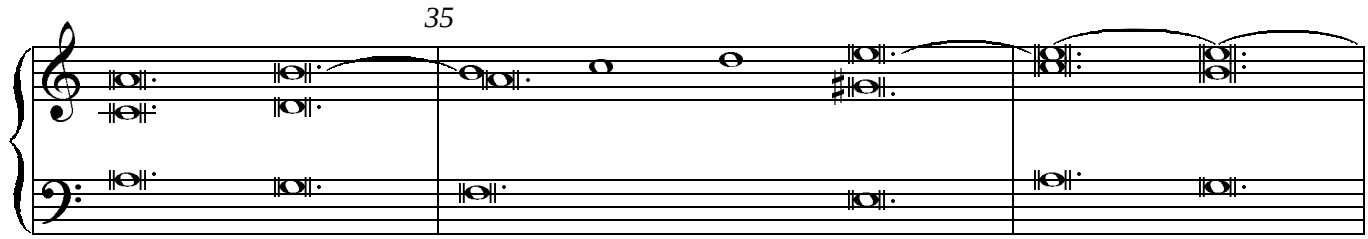
LAMENTO DELLA NINFA

Claudio MONTEVERDI
(1567 - 1643)

Non havea Febo ancora



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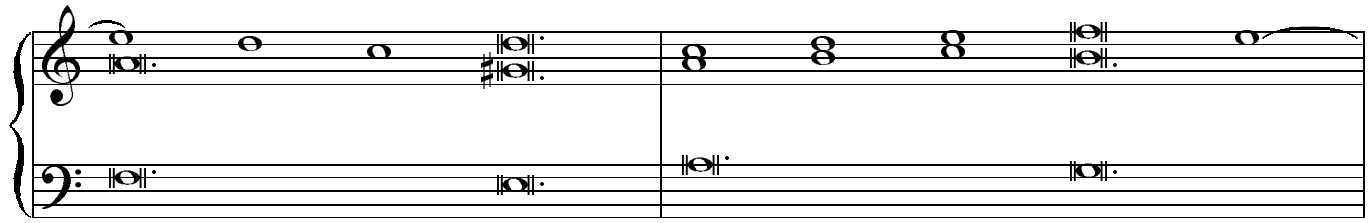

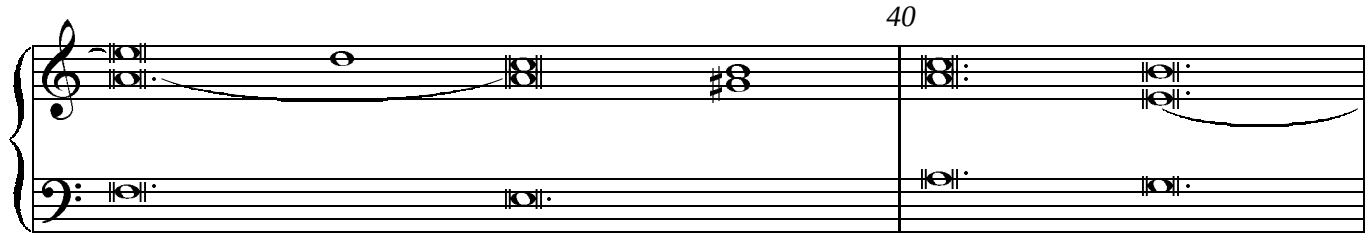
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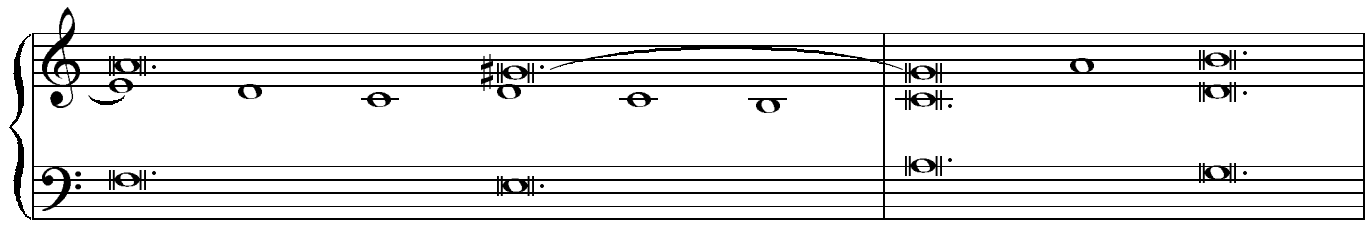

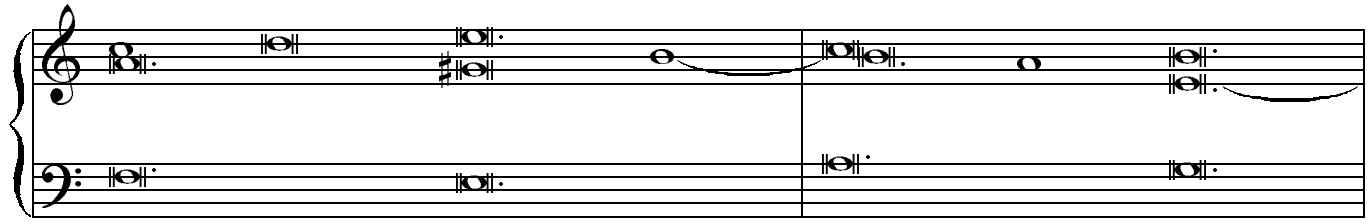

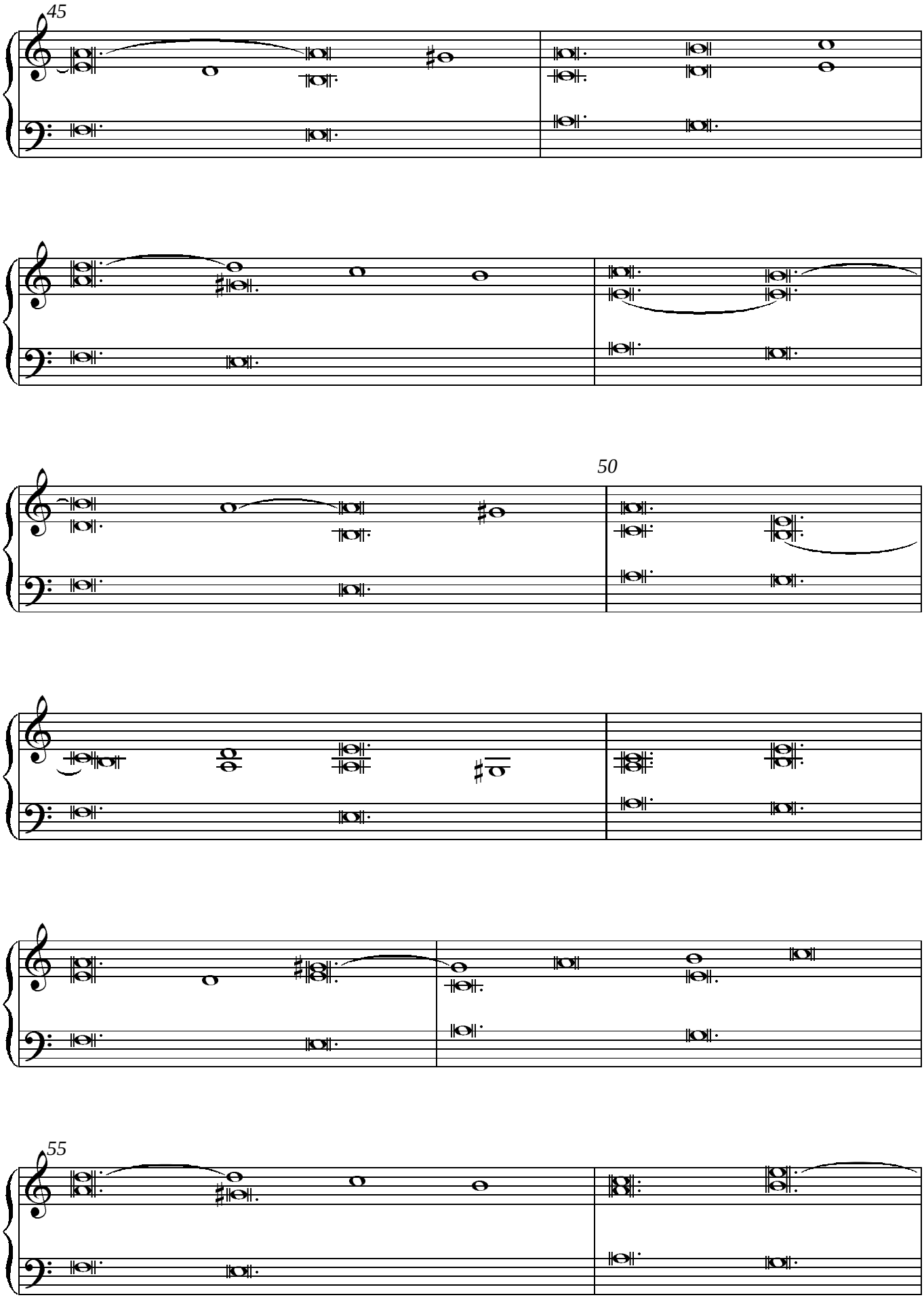
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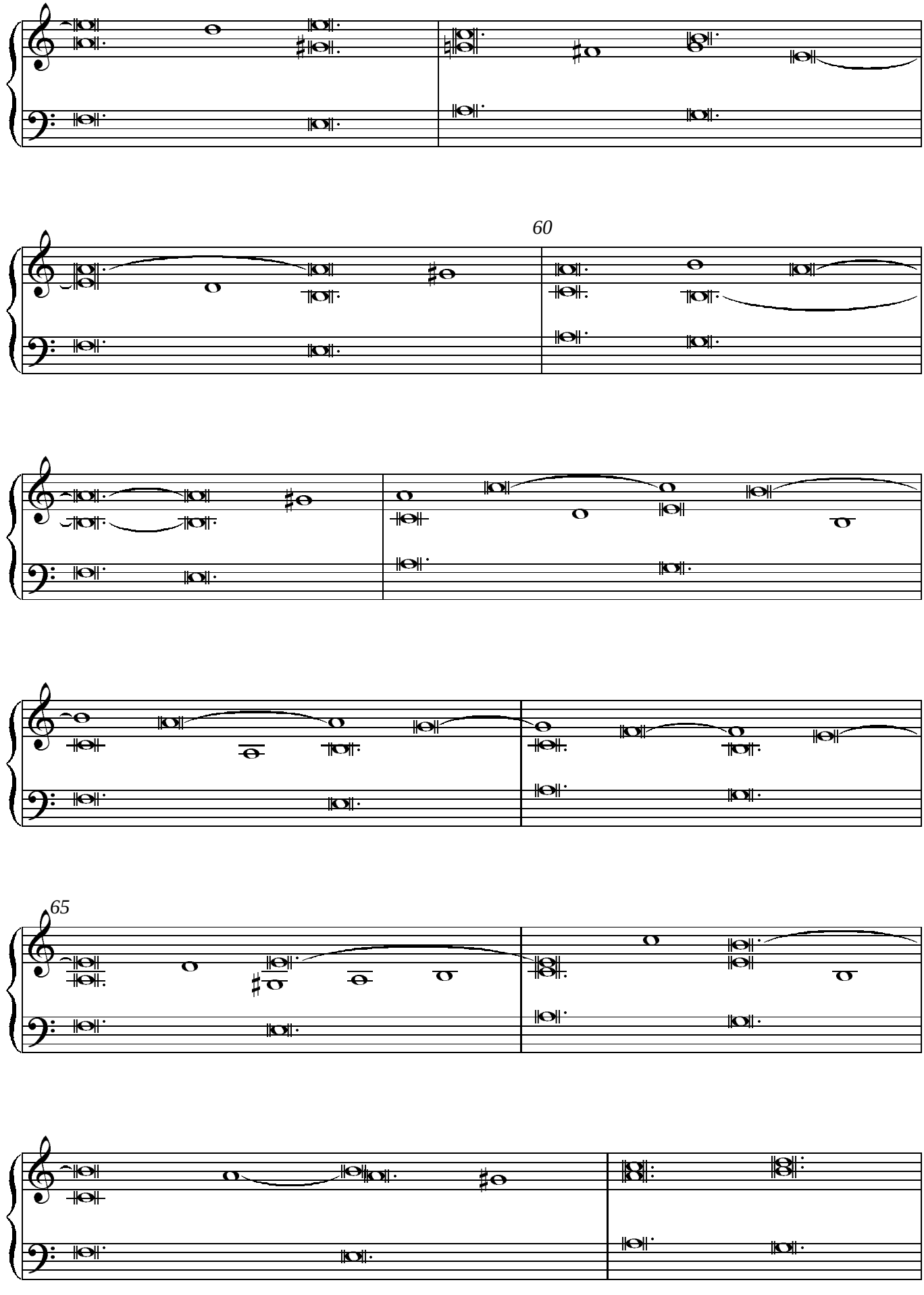
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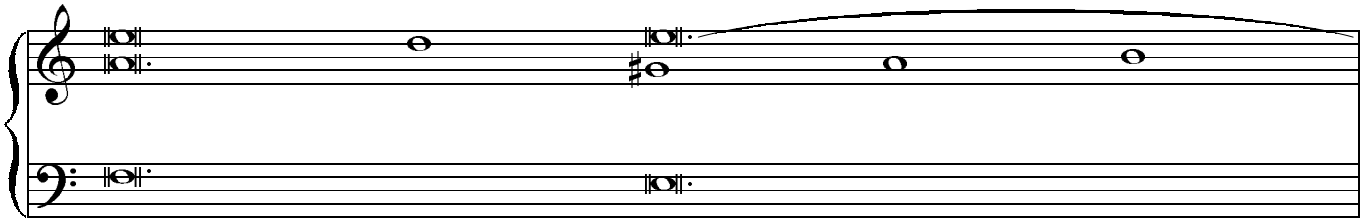

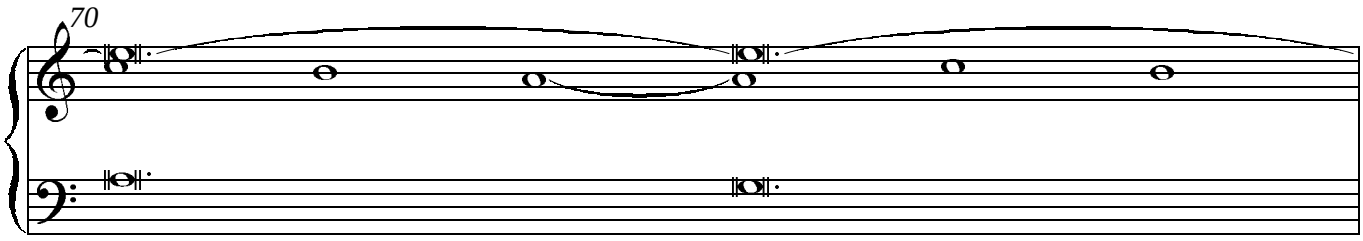
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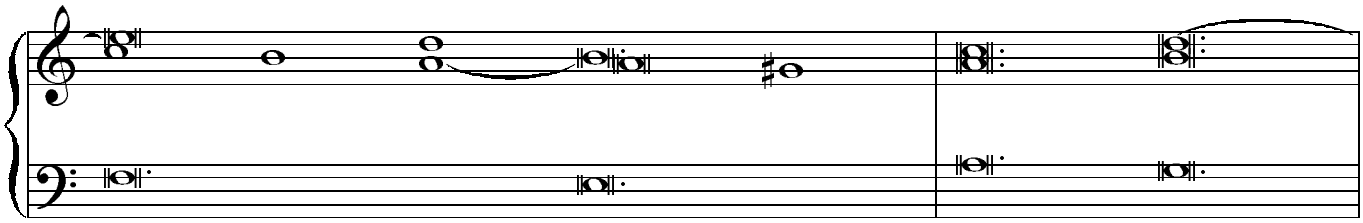

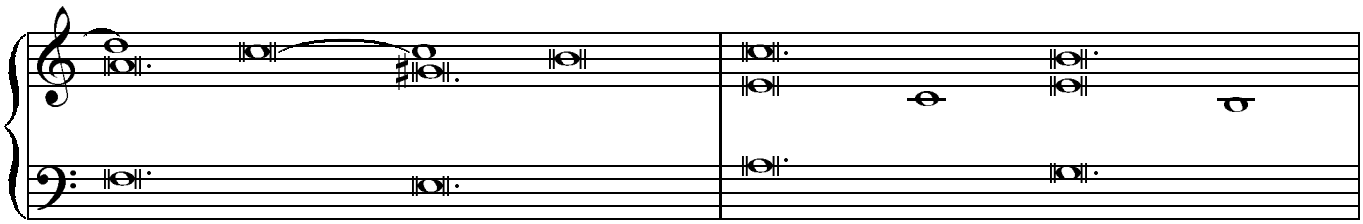

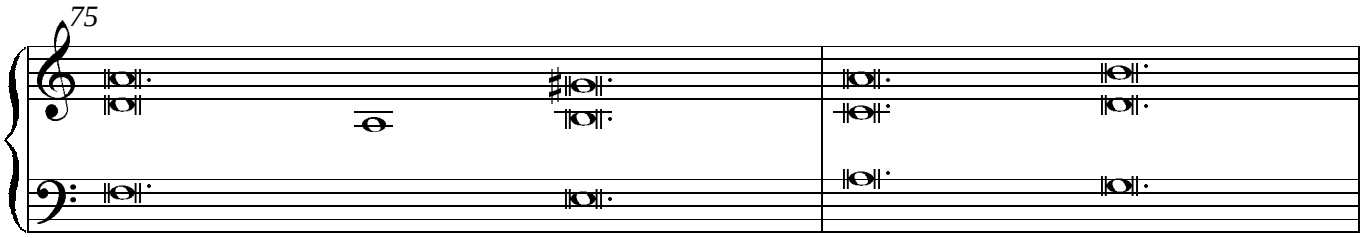
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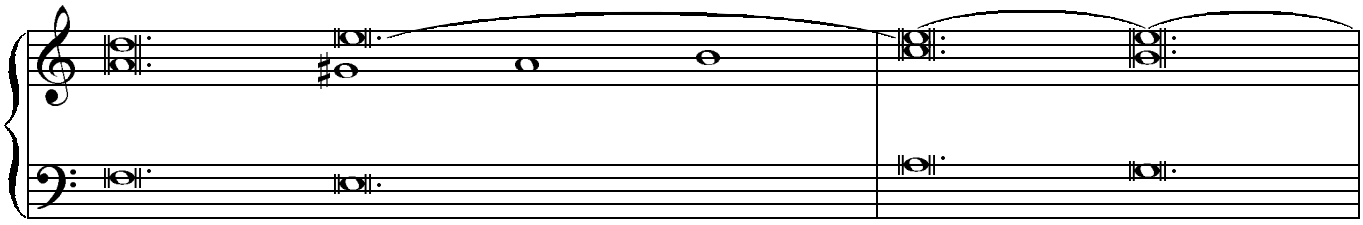

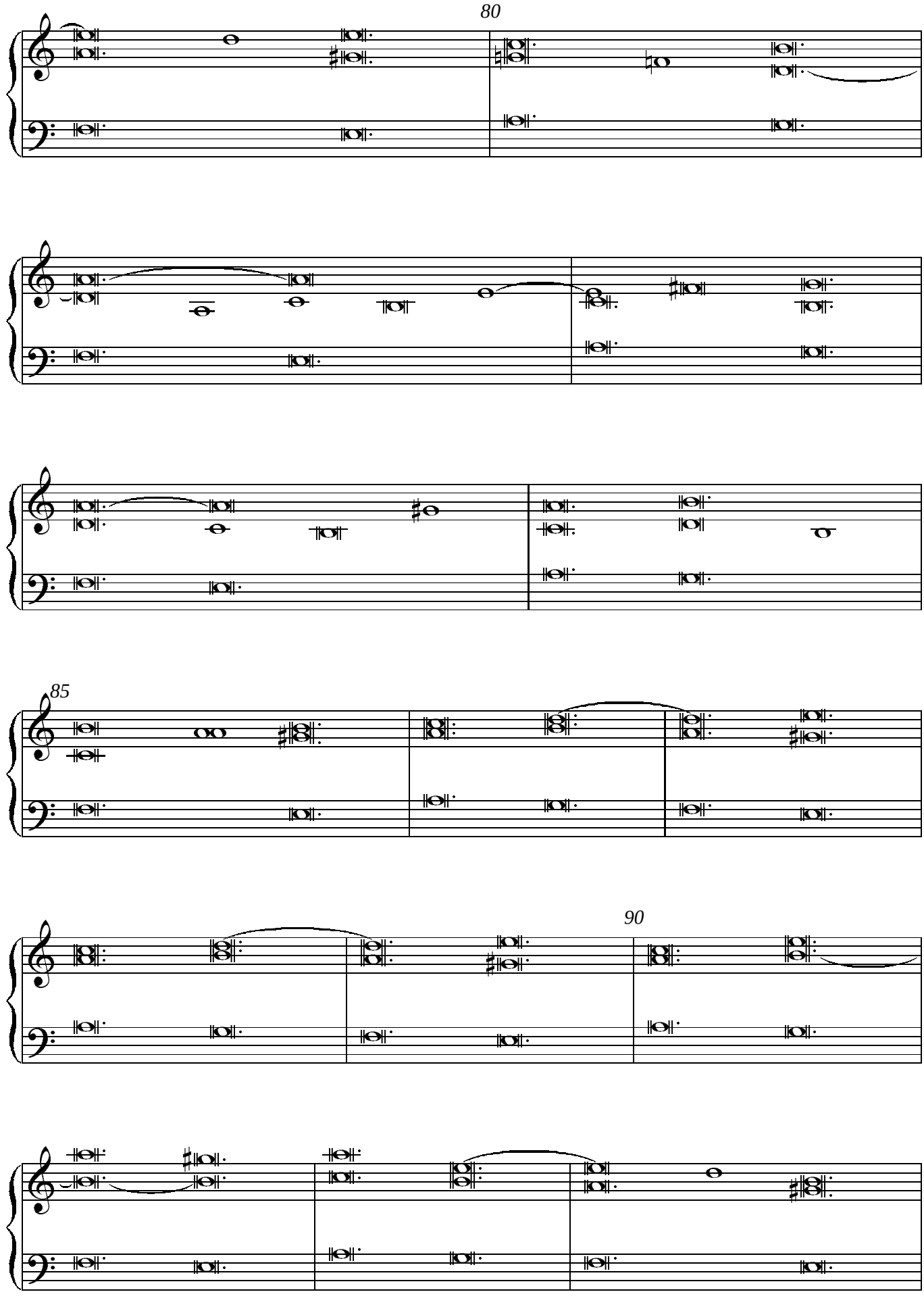
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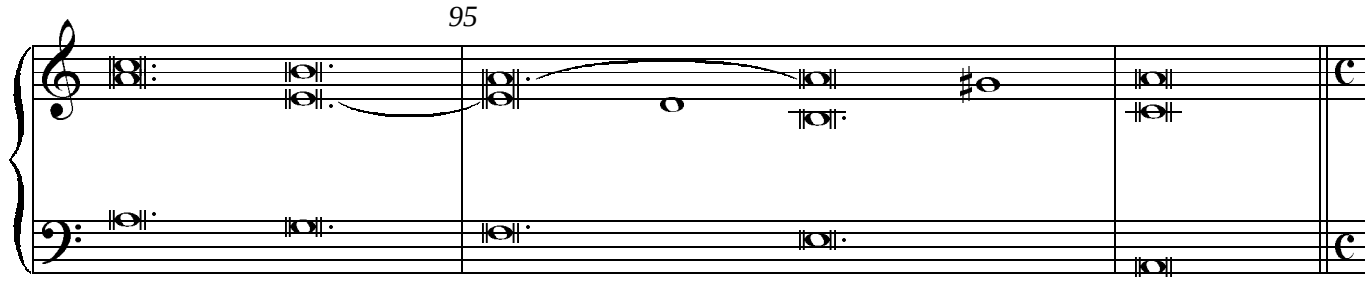
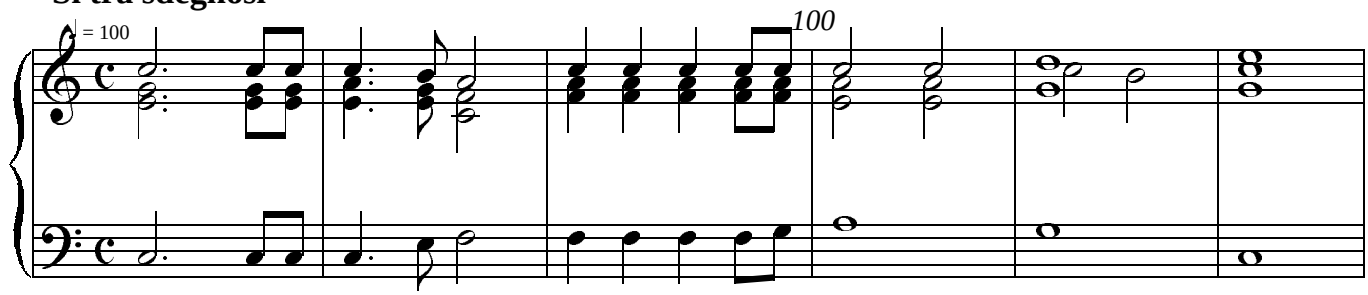
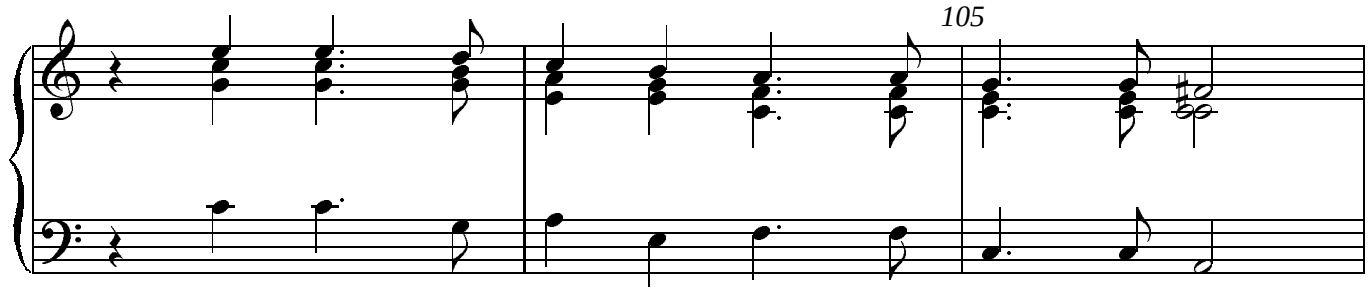
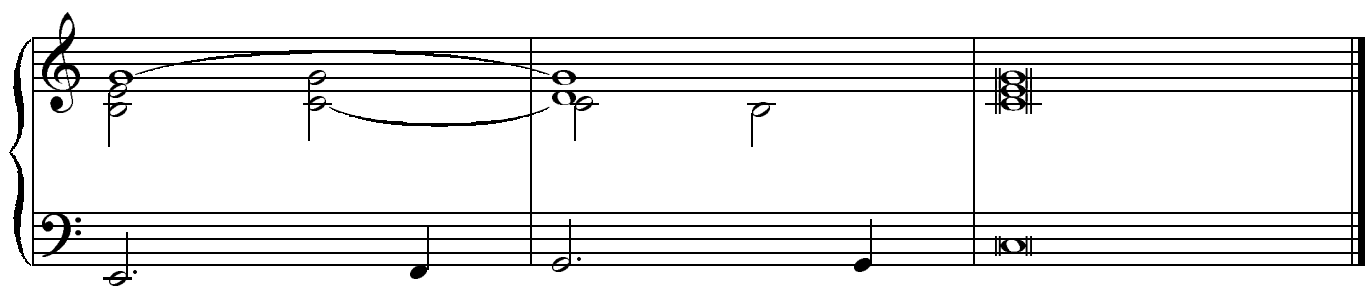


Si tra sdegnosi







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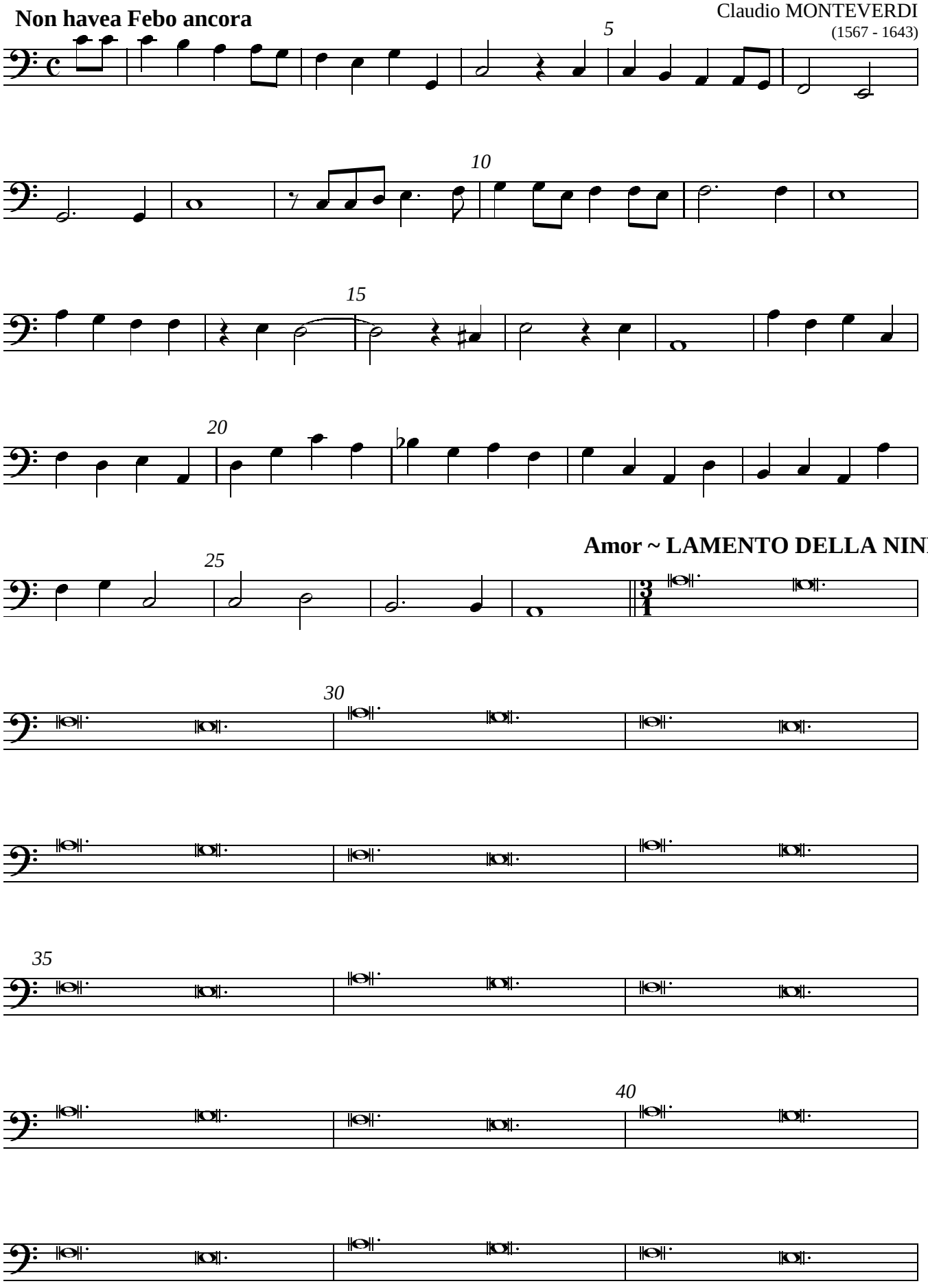
Viola ô Violone

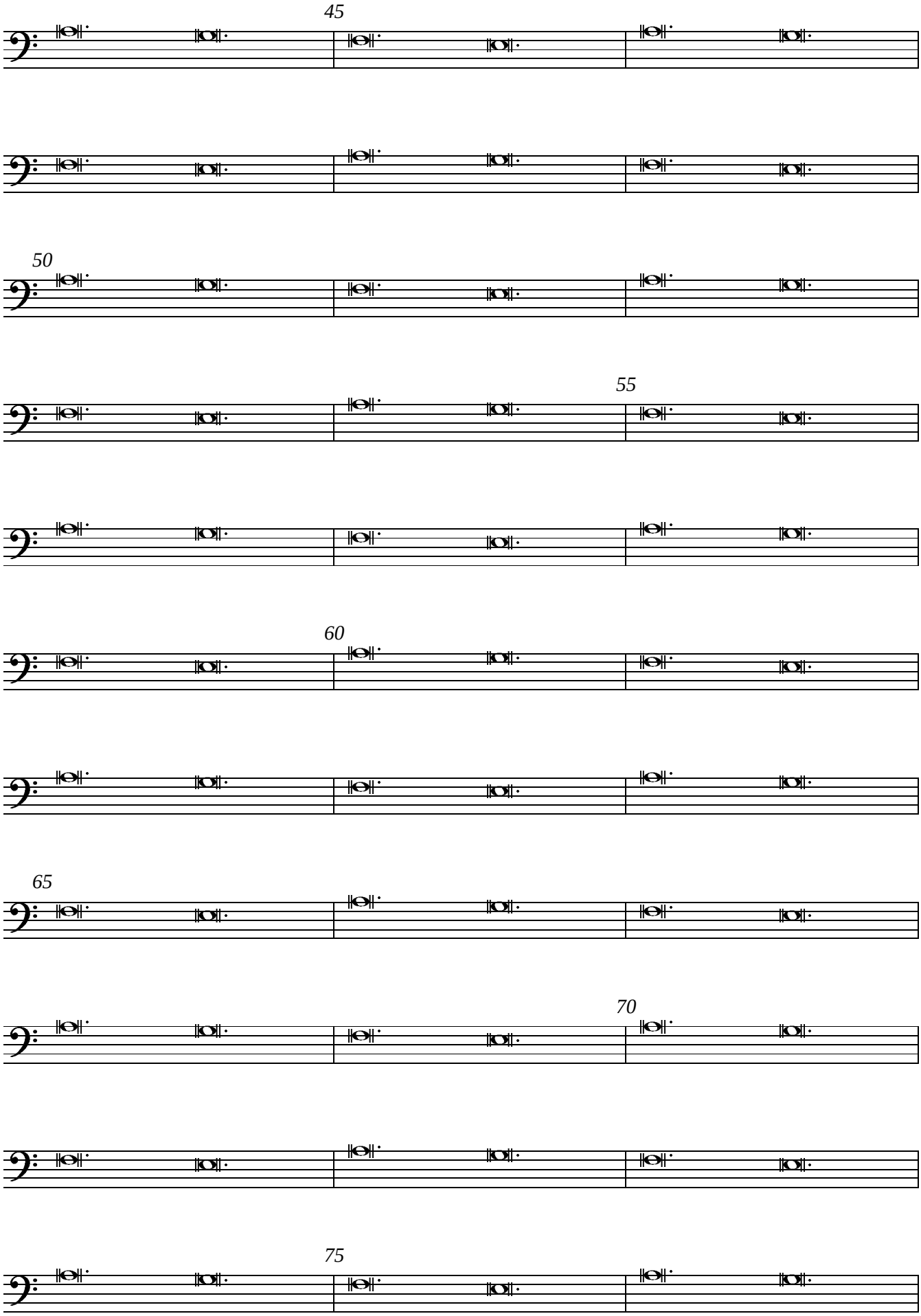
LAMENTO DELLA NINFA

Non havea Febo ancora

Claudio MONTEVERDI
(1567 - 1643)



Amor ~ LAMENTO DELLA NINFA.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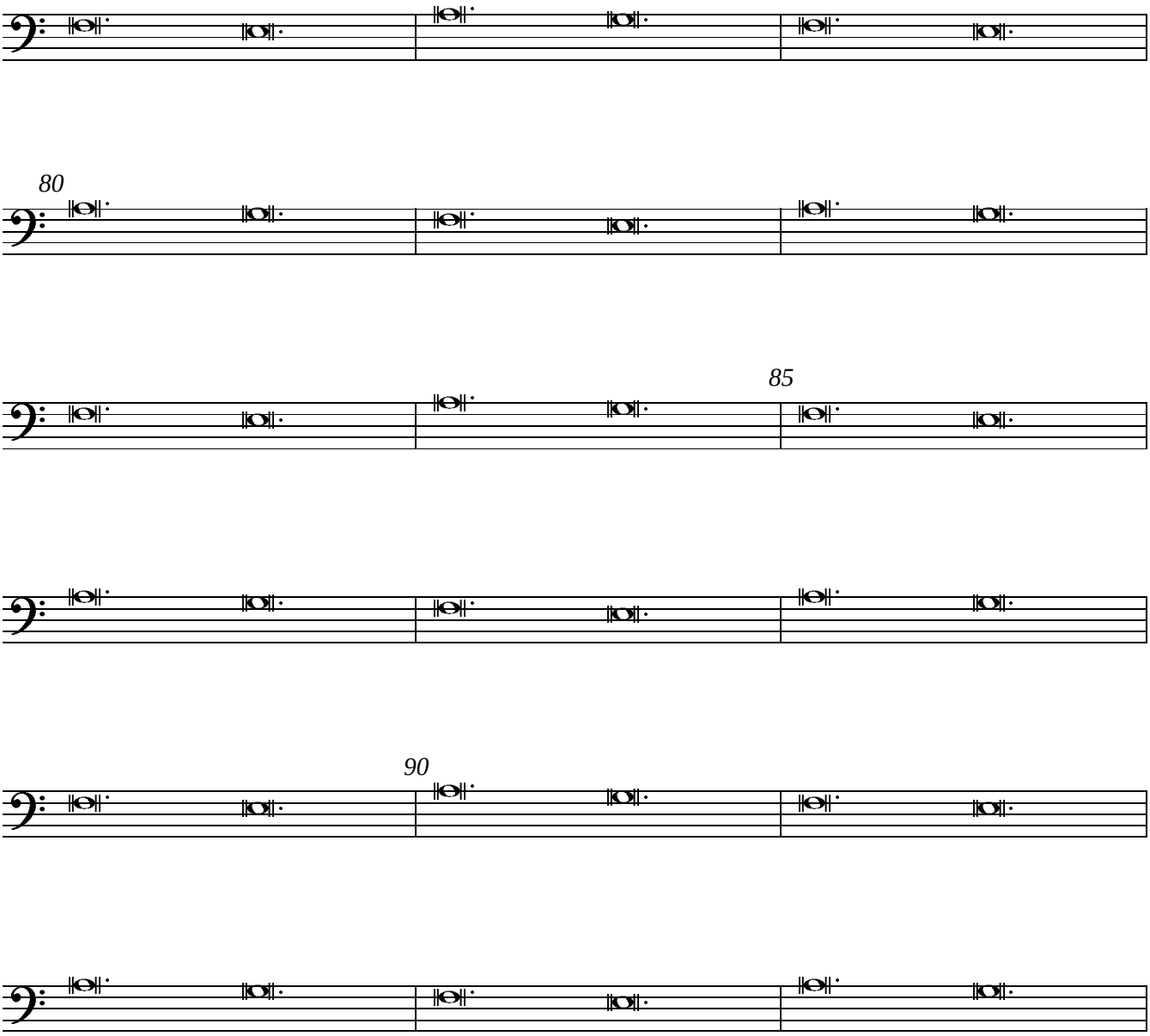
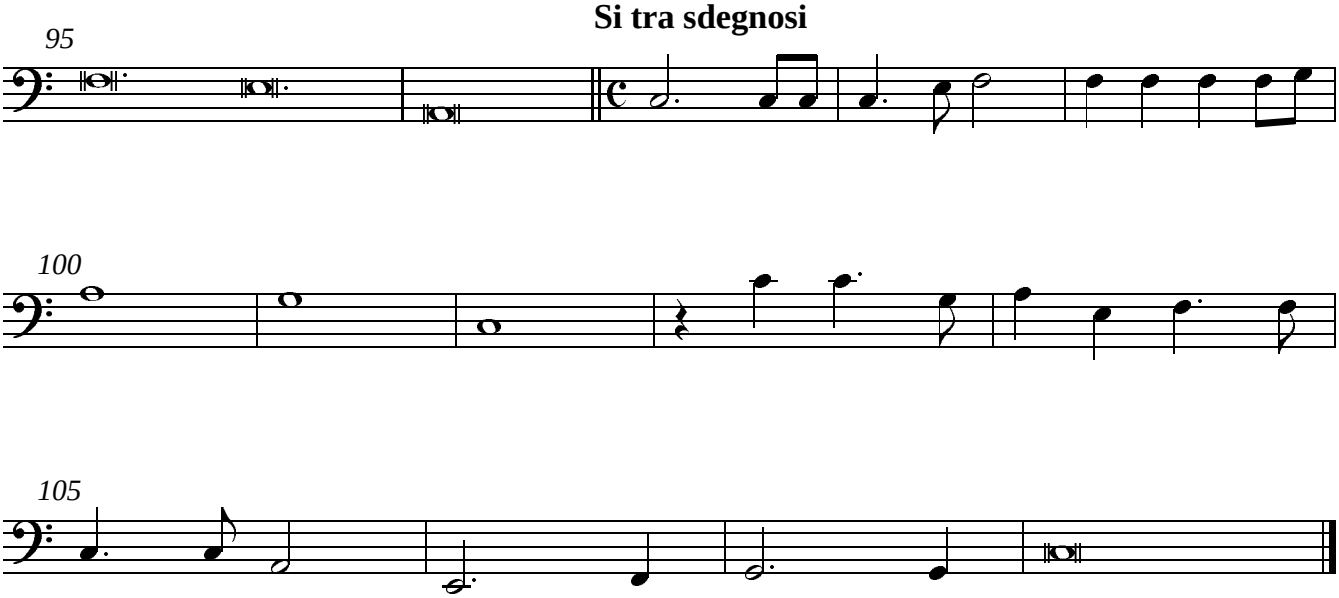


Si tra sdegnosi



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