Scintillator

for solo high voice (soprano or tenor)

Alex Eddington (2008)

{text by randomly generated email spam}

Notes by the composer, June 2008

The text is not mine – nor anyone's; it was delivered as a spam email, with the subject heading "Scintillator". Spammers use software that strings together sentence fragments of online Public Domain texts, as a way of getting past email spam filters. This software is sort of like an computerized John Cage, strolling on an e-beach, picking up seashells without any interest in order or context. And sometimes, the result is striking.

My approach as a composer was first to make my own guesses as to what text-strings come from the same material (bhishma, bahlika, vena etc. made it clear that this is the case), and where the material changes. I treated some words as pivots between sources, whereas other changes are instantaneous. Then worked instinctively, treating each text fragment with full compositional seriousness, only consciously connecting my musical material when I had decided that two texts shared an origin. The shifts between material are frequently as though a radio station has been suddenly switched – although this is a radio that only plays solo vocal music (perhaps with imagined accompaniments).

My setting contains some humour, certainly, but ultimately *Scintillator* is a mystical piece. The text is the voice of The Internet: sublimely random, beautifully infinite. The singer is a medium for all music, and this is what she channels in these few minutes.

Scintillator is dedicated to soprano Kristin Mueller-Heaslip, who gave the premiere on her tour concert as winner of the 2008 Eckhardt-Gramatté competition...
and who also received the spam email.

Perusal score - do not copy
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Text by randomly-generated email spam

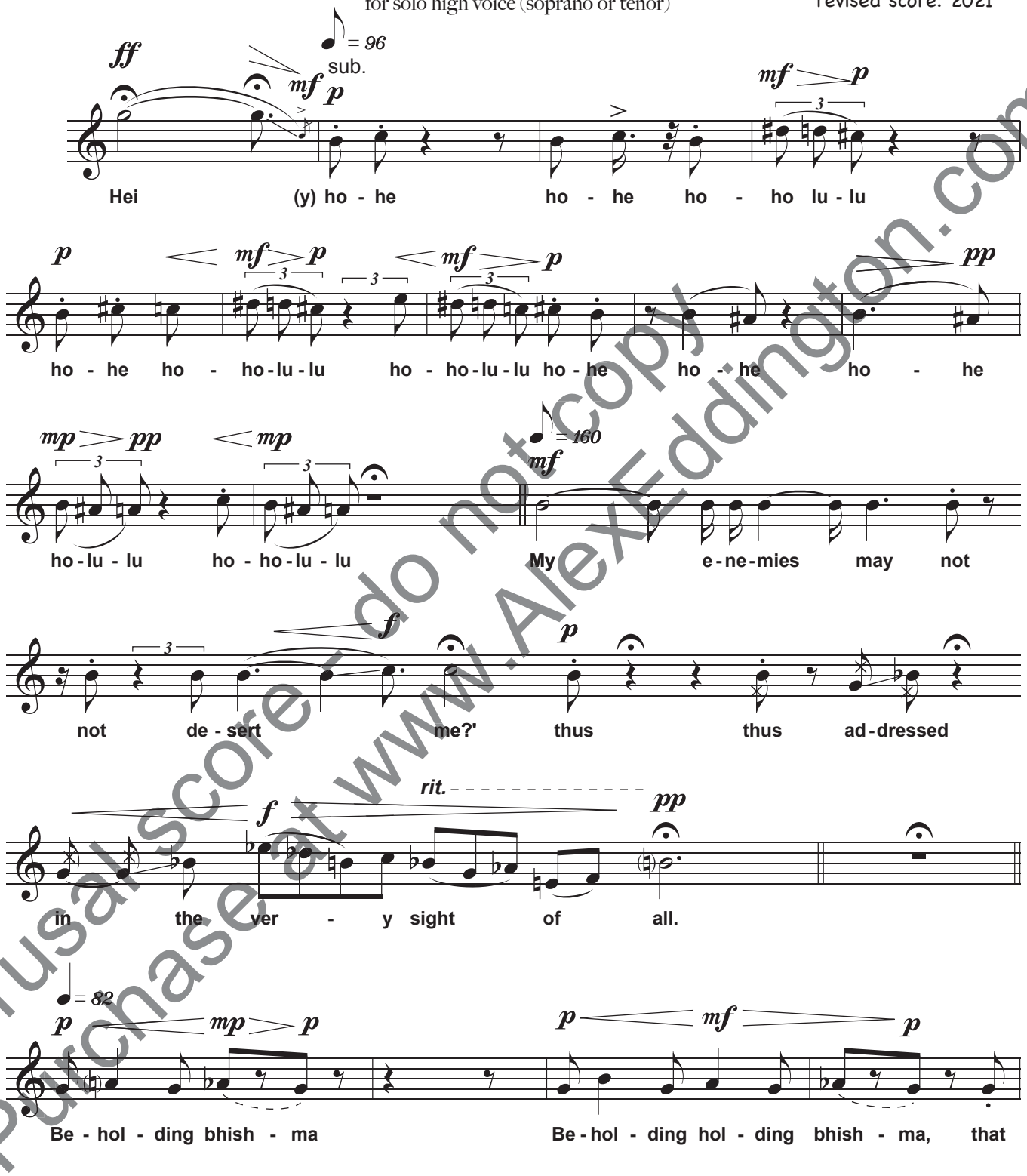
(automatically collected from Public Domain sources on the internet and joined together without human authorship)

For KMH

Scintillator

for solo high voice (soprano or tenor)

Alex Eddington (2008)
revised score: 2021



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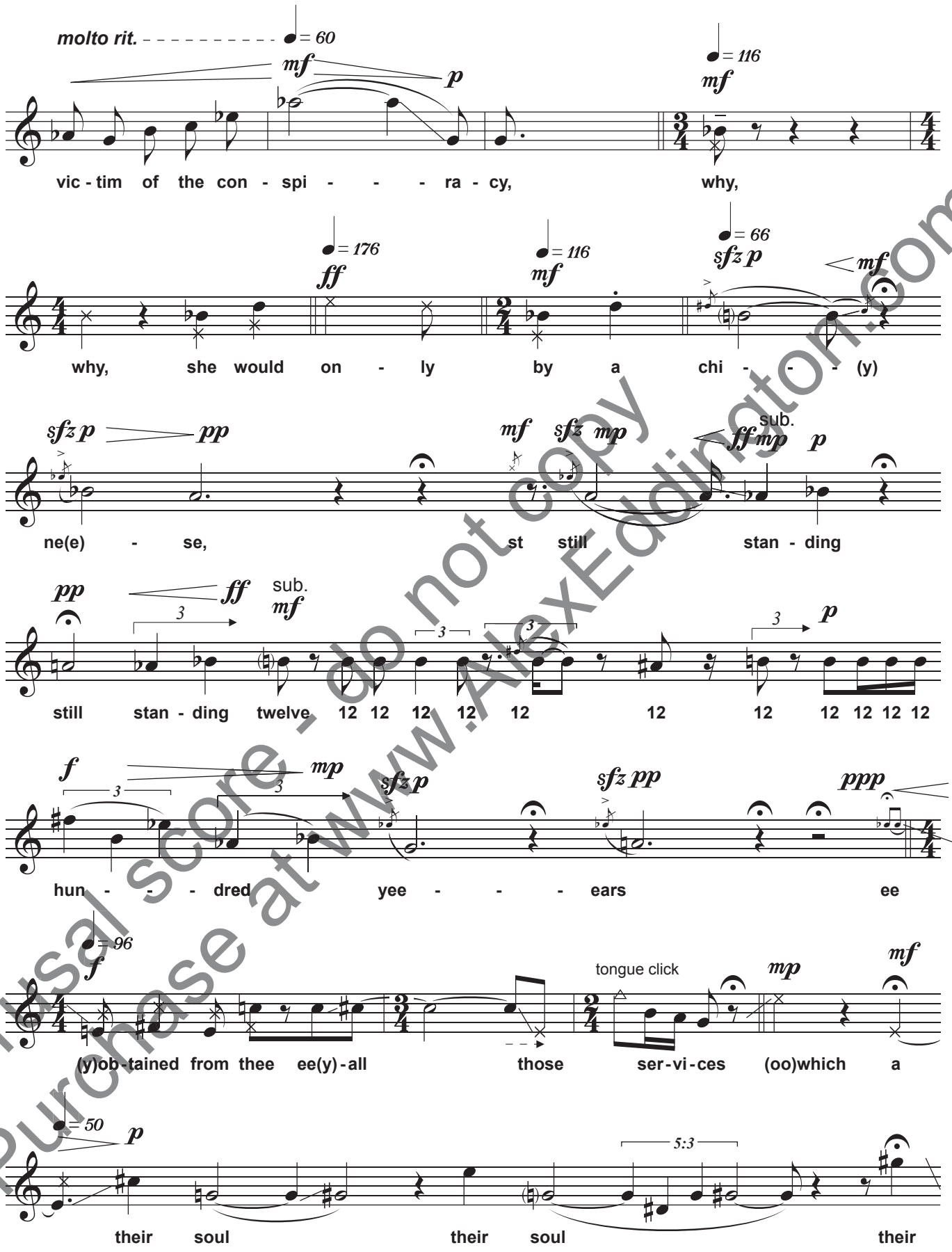

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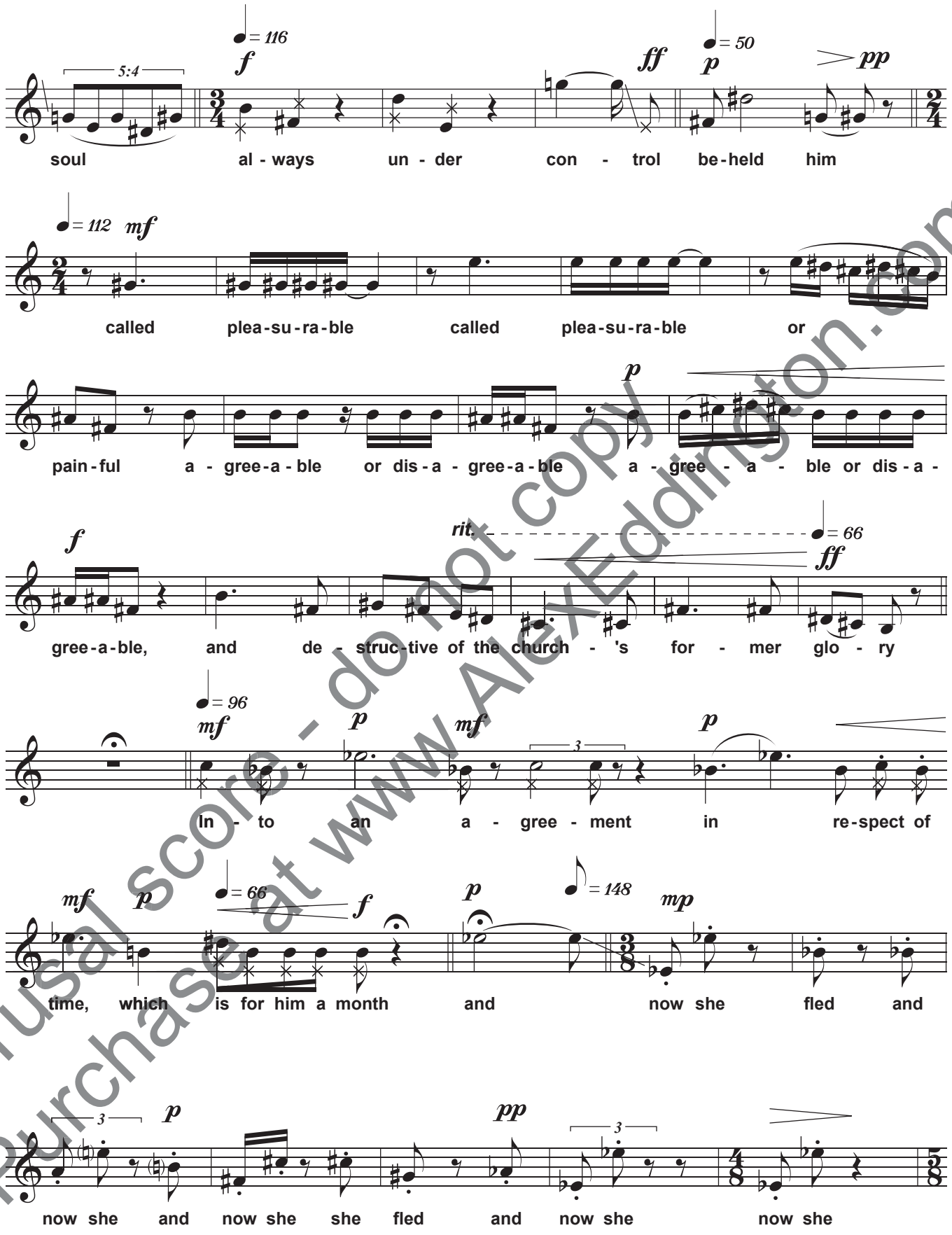

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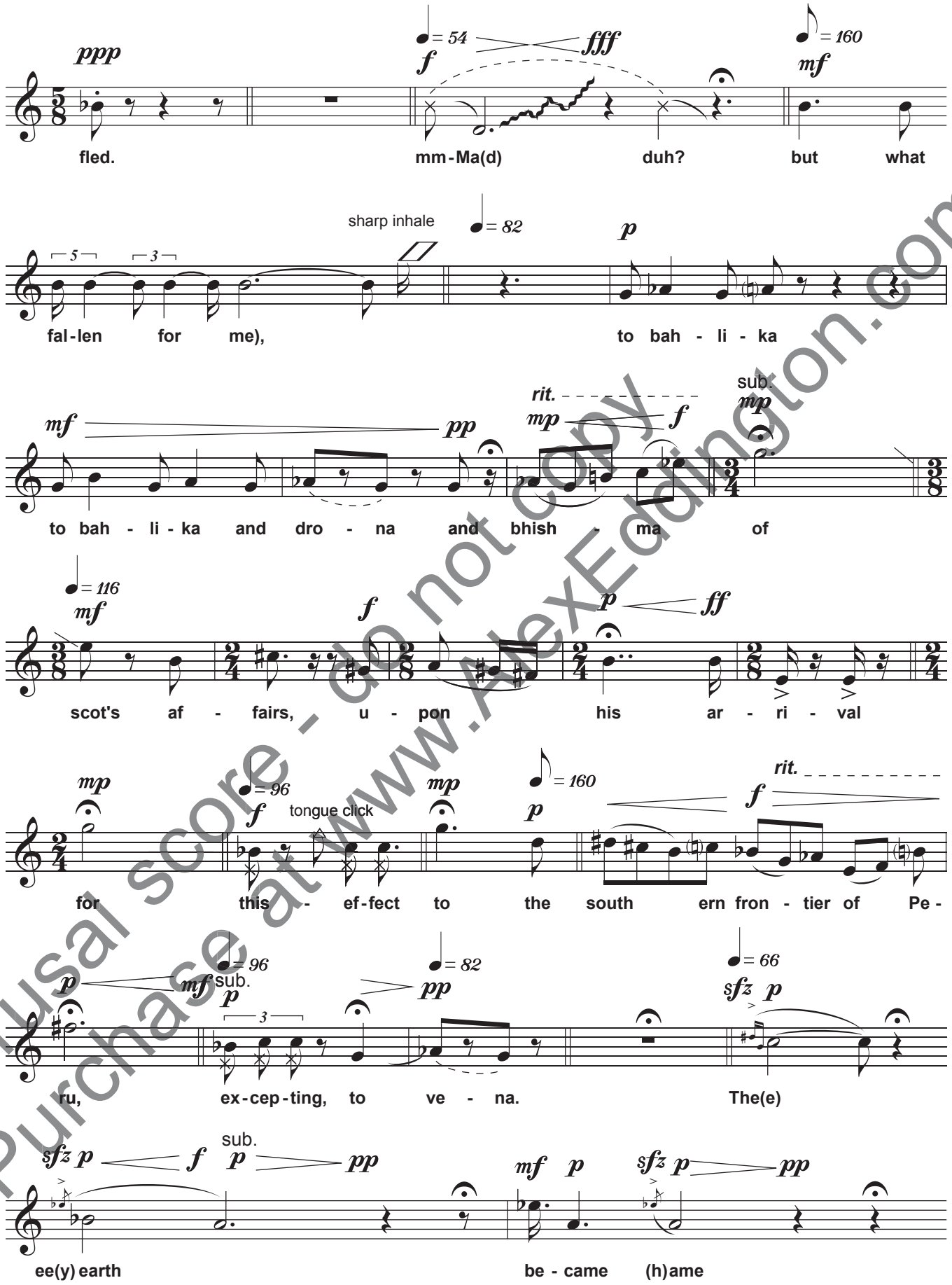

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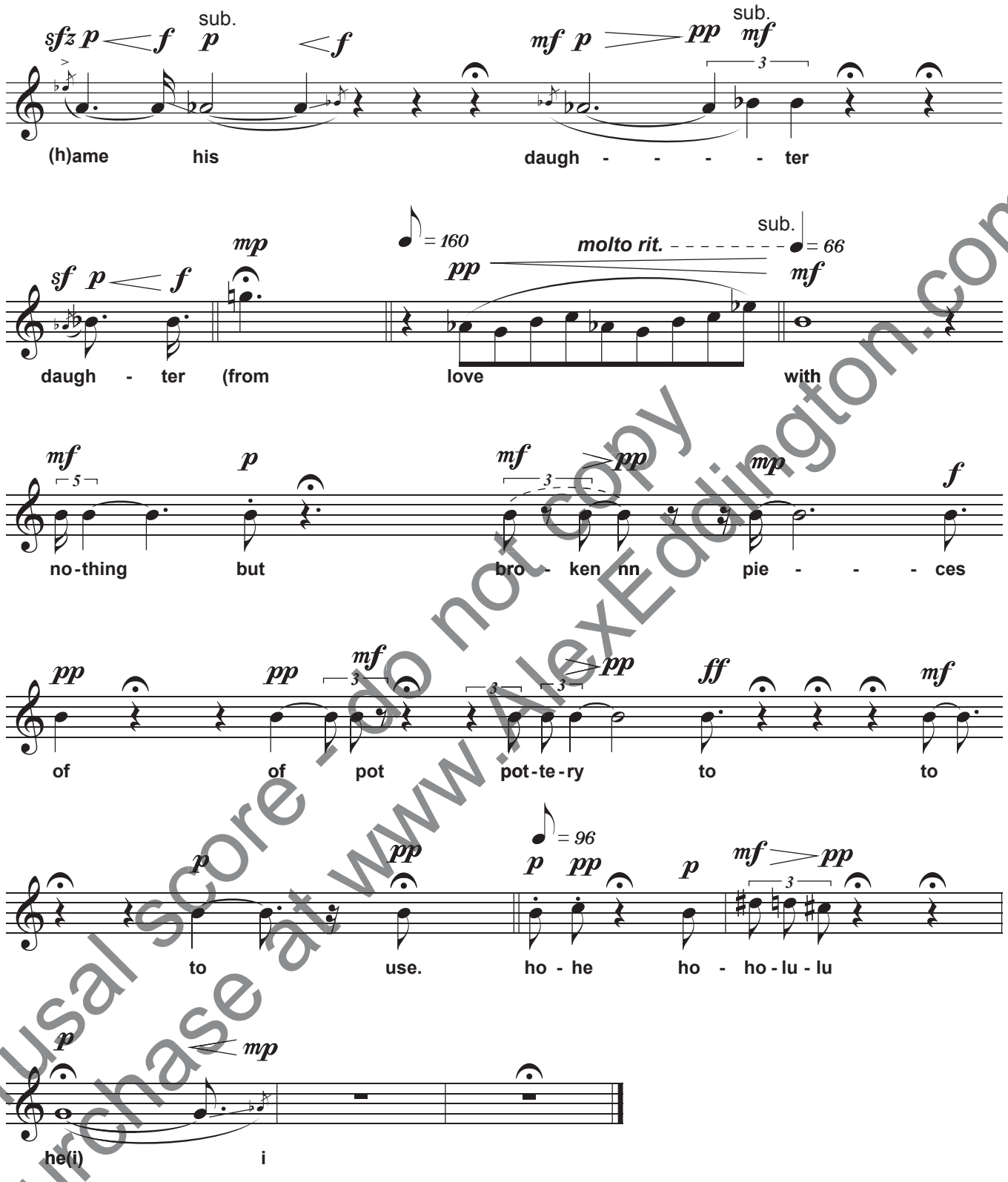

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