Ellen Ruth Harrison

Her Cowboy Boots

ELLEN RUTH HARRISON

HER COWBOY BOOTS

for mezzo-soprano and piano

Text from "Thirteen Ways of Looking at Cowboy Boots"
(Hat tipped to Wallace Stevens)
by Ellen Austin-Li
from Firefly, published by
Finishing Line Press in May 2019

Her Cowboy Boots was composed in November 2019 for the Cincinnati songSLAM, a collaboration between Cincinnati Song Initiative and Sparks & Wiry Cries. My heartfelt thanks go to Ellen Austin-Li for giving me permission to set her poem and to Ellen Graham and Matthew Umphreys, the wonderful performers who are part of my songSLAM team.

Duration: circa 3.5 minutes

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I.
Among the crowd of footwear
standing in her closet,
she chooses the androgynous black cowboy boots.

II.
She was of two minds,
like her stylish yet functional
leather cowboy boots.

IV.
A woman and a pair of shoes
are one.
A woman and her pair of cowboy boots
are at least two.

V.
She doesn't know which she prefers,
the seductress in high-heeled boots,
or the shit-kicking, tough-talking cowgirl
ruling in her cowboy boots,
or both.

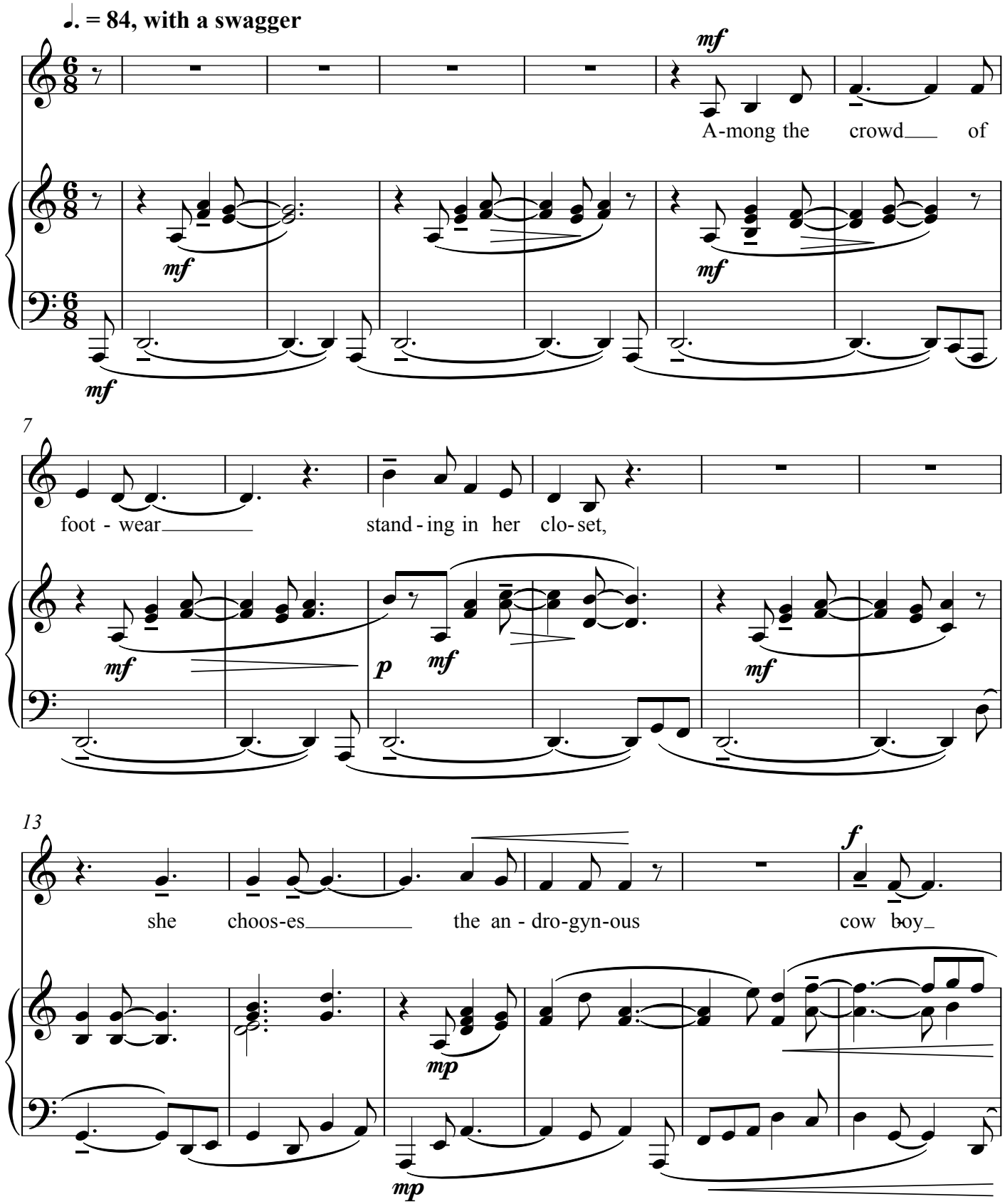
VII.
O Cowboys of the Wild West,
could you have imagined over a hundred years hence
a gentlewoman wearing your boots, prancing around, shopping,
dancing, loving in the boots you rode brokeback saddle in?

IX.
When the cowboy boots are put away,
the imprint of their power remains
on her choices.

Her Cowboy Boots

Ellen Austin-Li

Ellen Ruth Harrison



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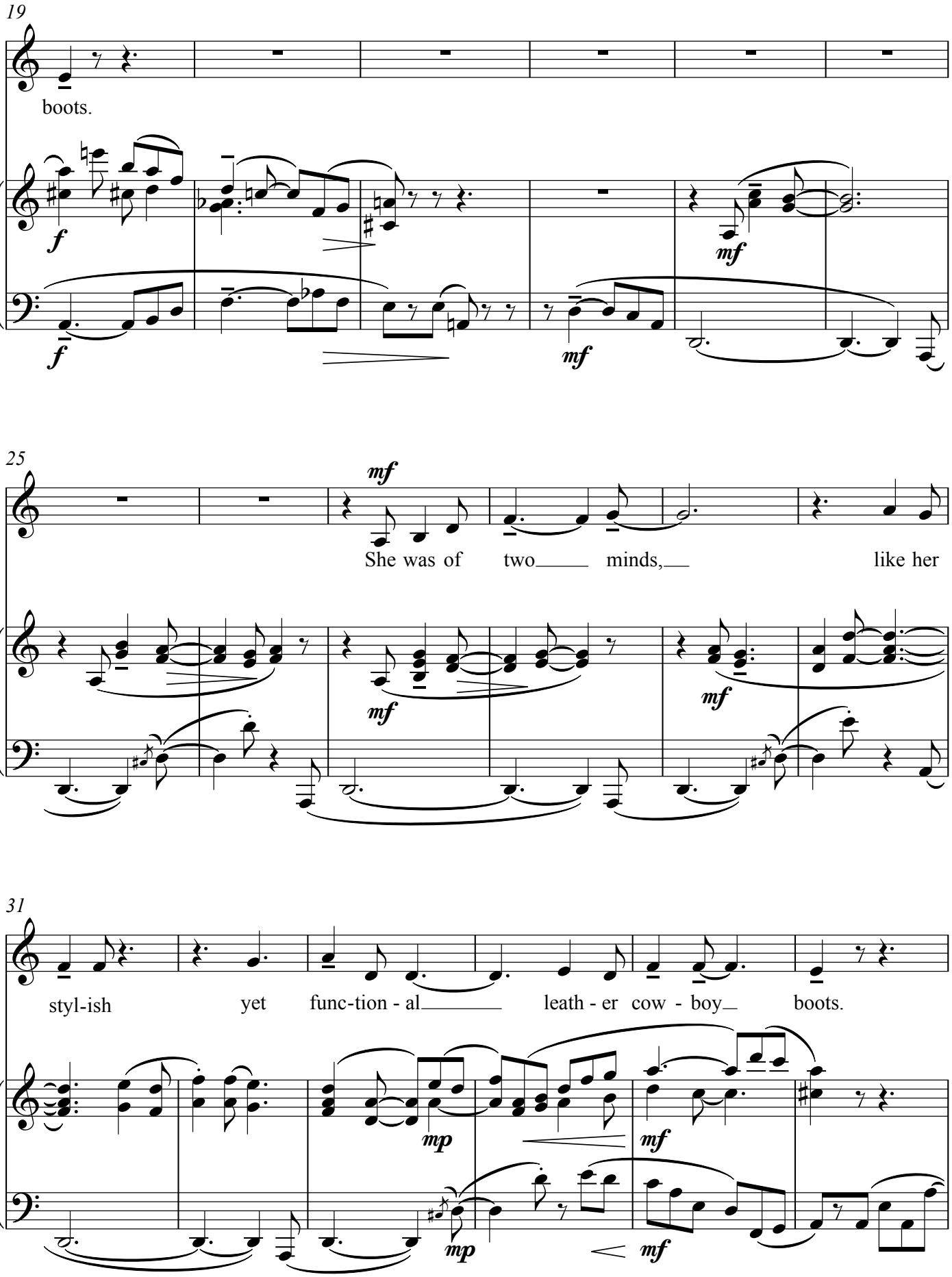
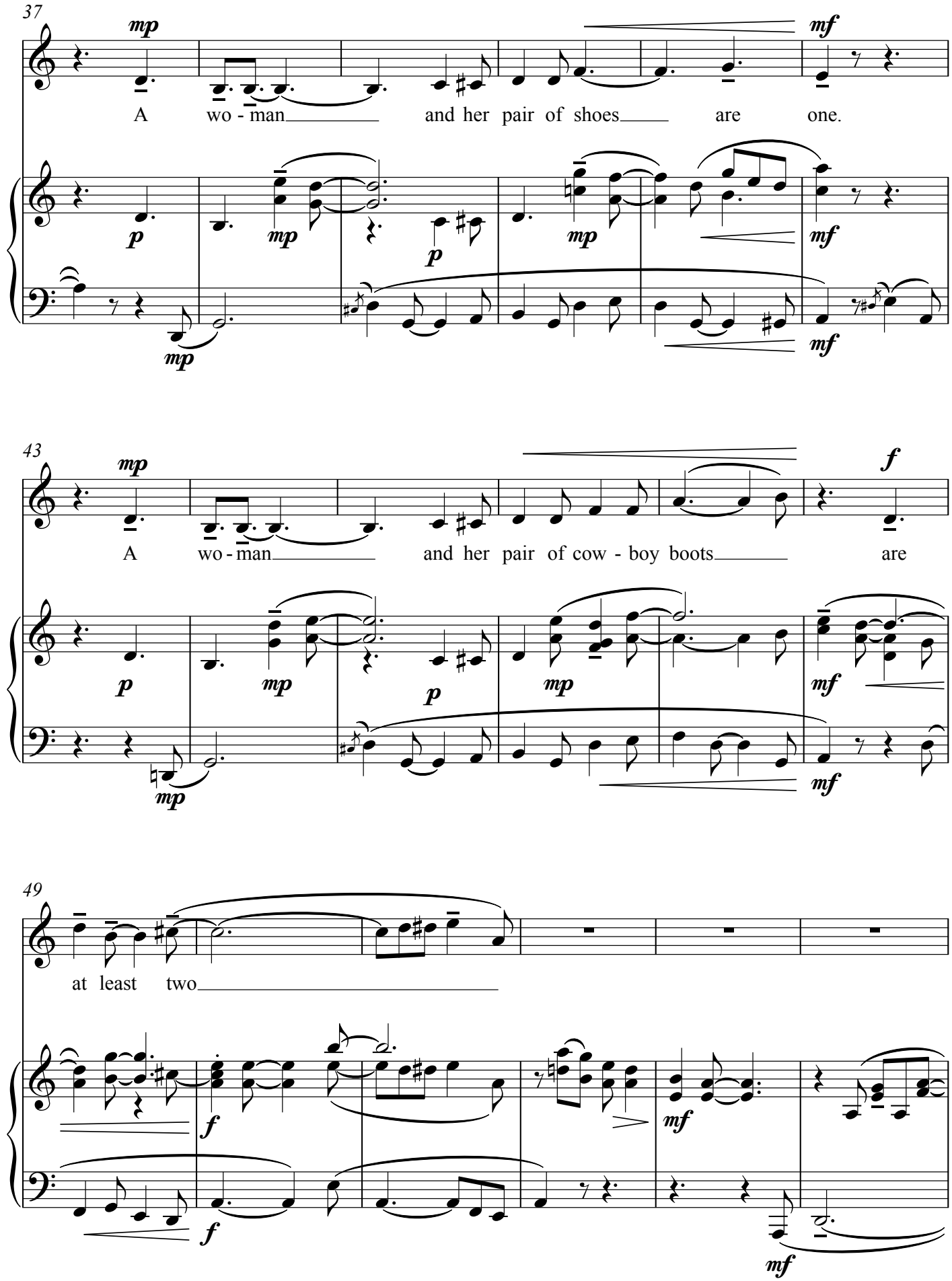
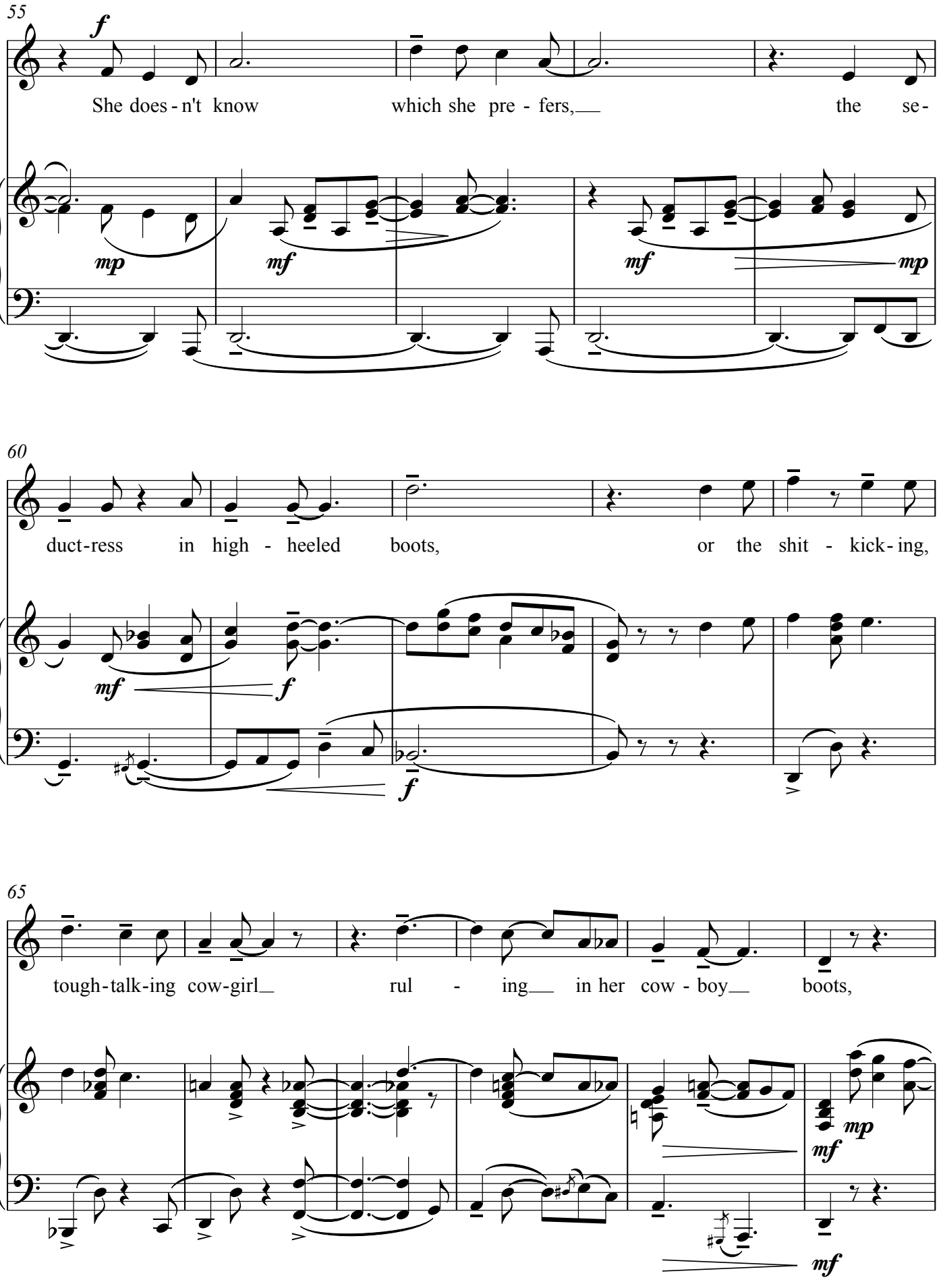
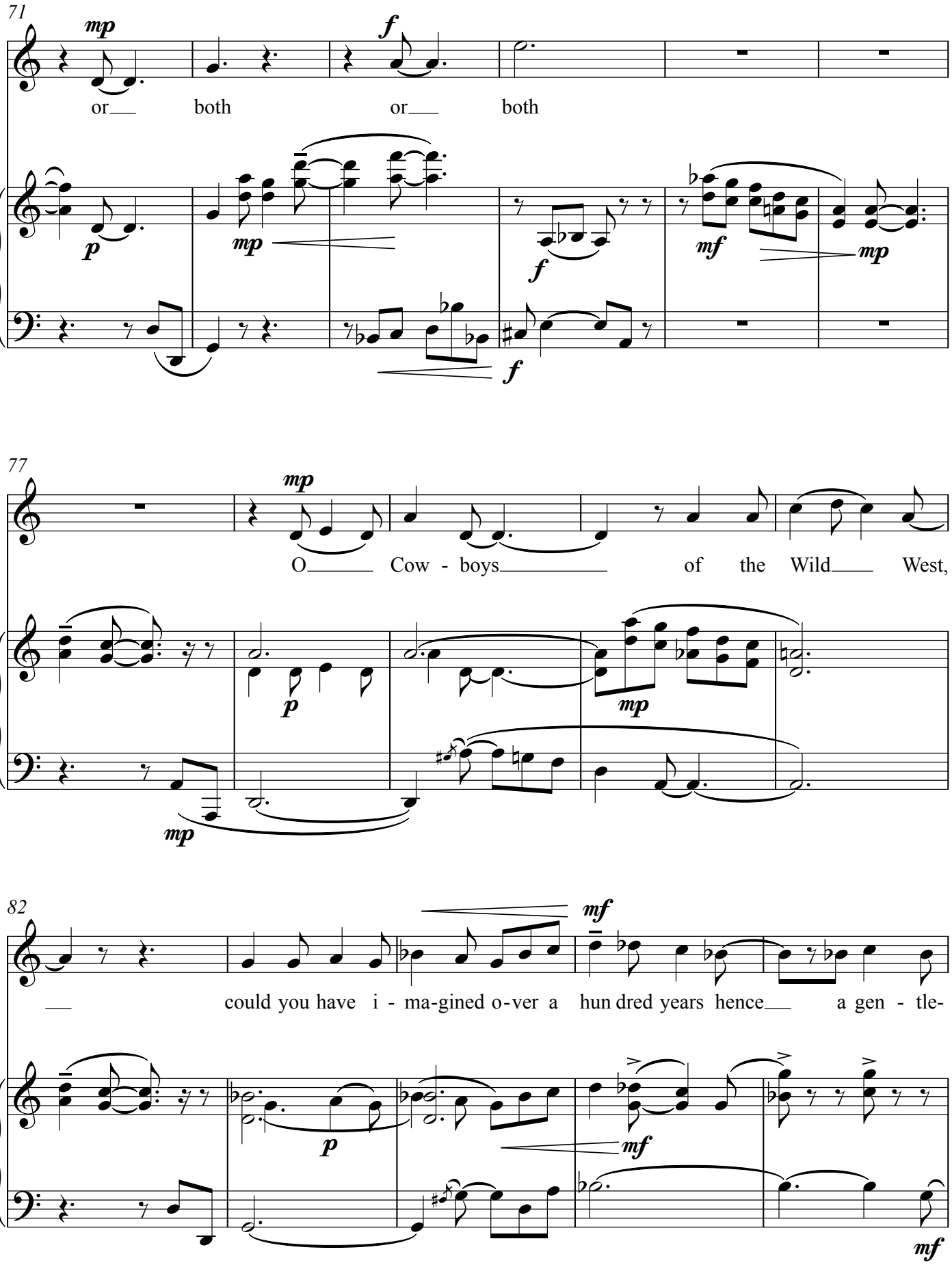
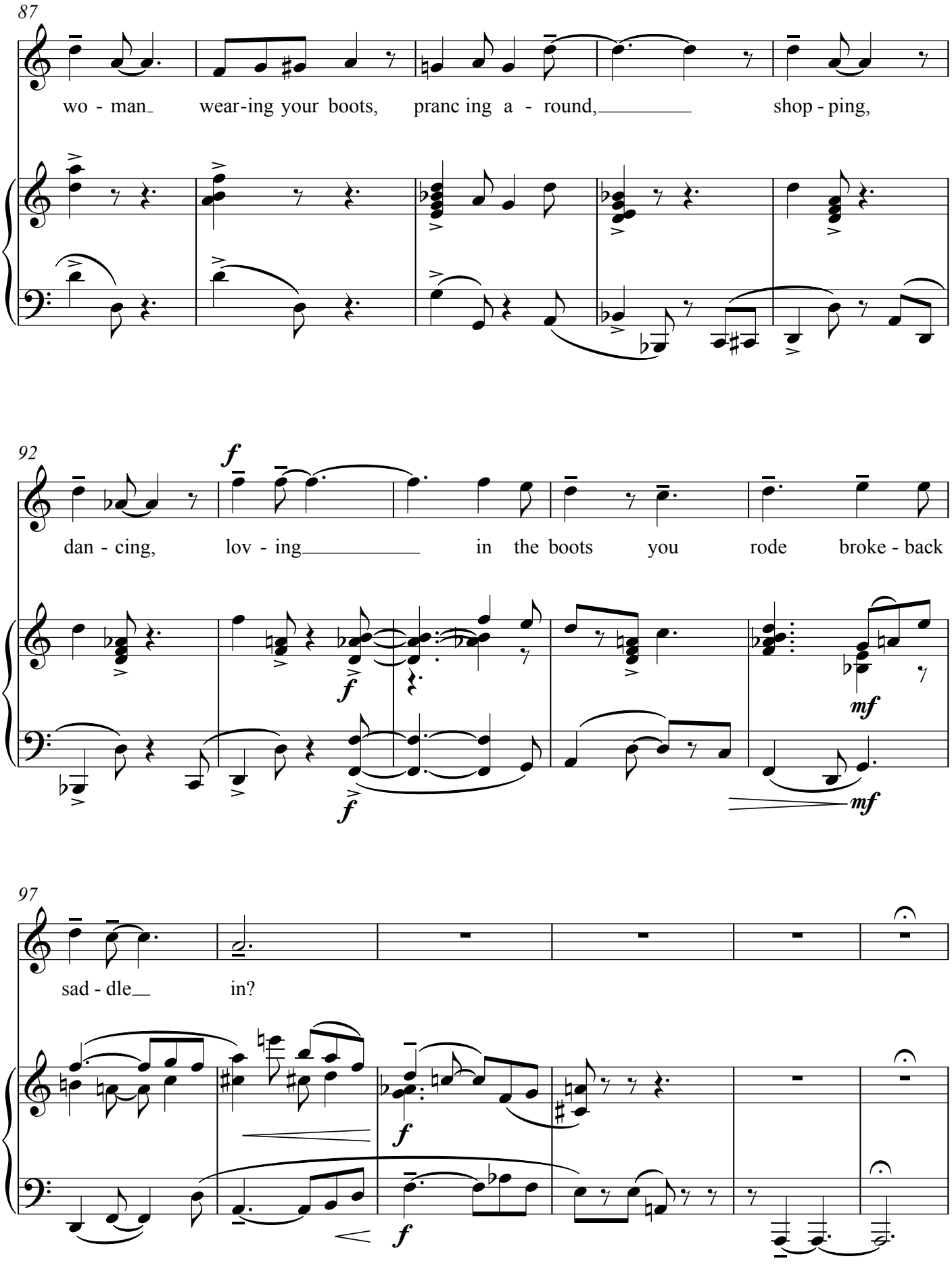
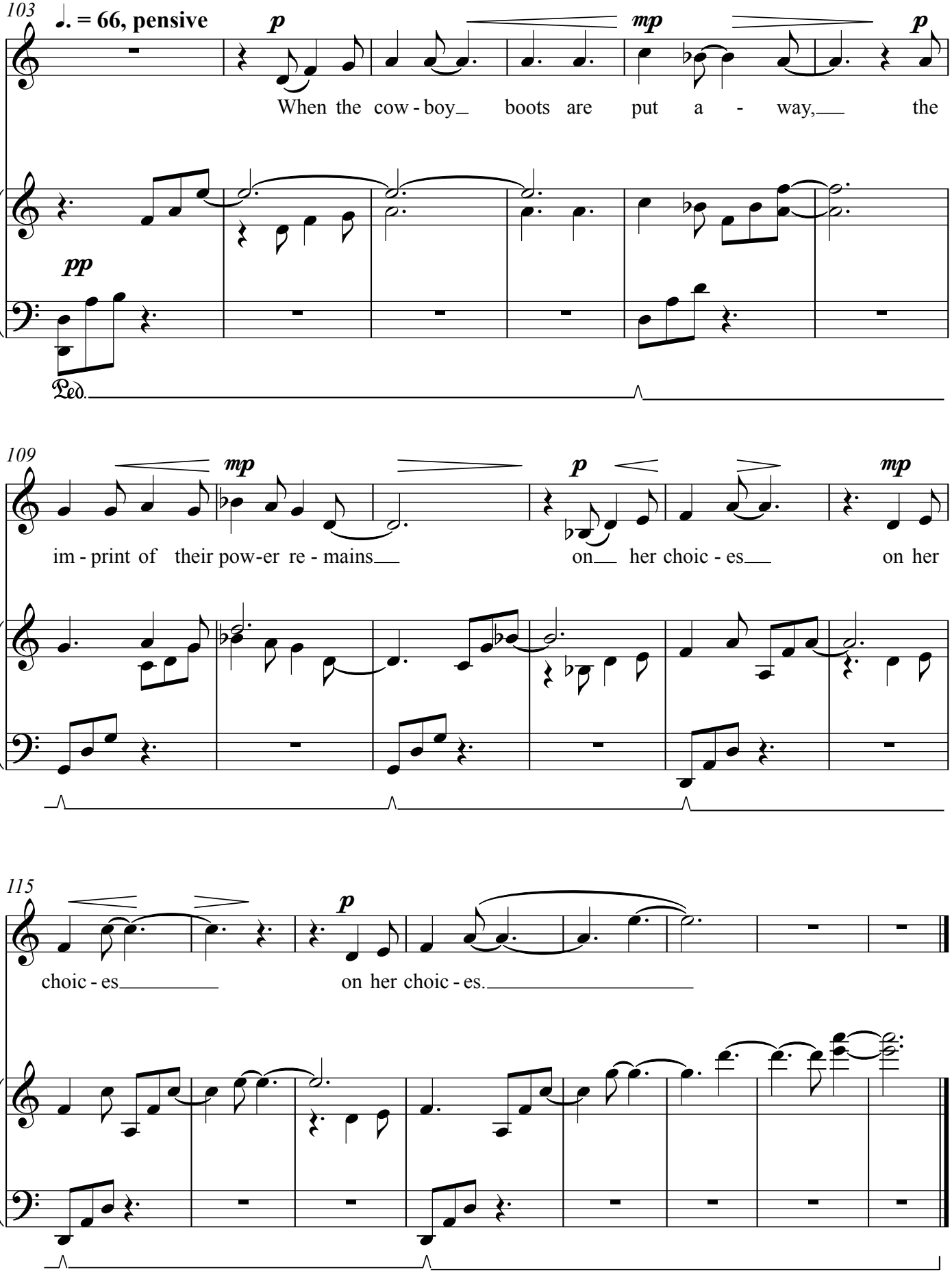

19
boots.
f
f
mf
mf
25
mf
She was of two minds, like her
mf
mf
31
styl-ish yet func-tion - al leath - er cow - boy boots.
mp
mf
mp
mf


37
mp
mf
A wo - man and her pair of shoes are one.
p
mp
p
mp
mf
mp
mf
43
mp
f
A wo - man and her pair of cow - boy boots are
p
mp
p
mp
mf
mp
mf
49
at least two
f
mf
f
mf


55
f
She does - n't know which she pre - fers, the se -
mp
mf
mf
mp
60
duct-ress in high - heeled boots, or the shit - kick - ing,
mf
f
f
65
tough-talk-ing cow-girl rul - ing in her cow - boy boots,
mp
mf
mf


71
mp
f
or both or both
p
mp
f
mf
mp
f
77
mp
O Cow - boys of the Wild West,
p
mp
mp
82
mf
could you have i - ma-gined o-ver a hun dred years hence a gen - tle-
p
mf
mf


87
wo - man wear-ing your boots, pranc ing a - round, shop - ping,
92
dan - cing, lov - ing in the boots you rode broke - back
97
sad - dle in?


103
♩. = 66, pensive
p
mp
p
When the cow - boy boots are put a - way, the
pp
Ped.
109
mp
p
mp
im - print of their pow-er re - mains on her choic - es on her
115
p
choic - es on her choic - es.