N° 1123B

Eve Beglarian

It Happens Like This

for violin, viola, and actor

commissioned by Mary Sharp Cronson and Works and Process, Inc.

EVBVD MUSIC
PO Box 1677
Old Chelsea Station
New York, NY 10011
www.evbvd.com

IT HAPPENS LIKE THIS

by James Tate

I was outside St. Cecelia's Rectory
smoking a cigarette when a goat appeared beside me.
It was mostly black and white, with a little reddish
brown here and there. When I started to walk away,
it followed. I was amused and delighted, but wondered
what the laws were on this kind of thing. There's
a leash law for dogs, but what about goats? People
smiled at me and admired the goat. "It's not my goat,"
I explained. "It's the town's goat. I'm just taking
my turn caring for it." "I didn't know we had a goat,"
one of them said. "I wonder when my turn is." "Soon,"
I said. "Be patient. Your time is coming." The goat
stayed by my side. It stopped when I stopped. It looked
up at me and I stared into its eyes. I felt he knew
everything essential about me. We walked on. A police-
man on his beat looked us over. "That's a mighty
fine goat you got there," he said, stopping to admire.
"It's the town's goat," I said. "His family goes back
three-hundred years with us," I said, "from the beginning."
The officer leaned forward to touch him, then stopped
and looked up at me. "Mind if I pat him?" he asked.
"Touching this goat will change your life," I said.
"It's your decision." He thought real hard for a minute,
and then stood up and said, "What's his name?" "He's
called the Prince of Peace," I said. "God! This town
is like a fairy tale. Everywhere you turn there's mystery
and wonder. And I'm just a child playing cops and robbers
forever. Please forgive me if I cry." "We forgive you,
Officer," I said. "And we understand why you, more than
anybody, should never touch the Prince." The goat and
I walked on. It was getting dark and we were beginning
to wonder where we would spend the night.

From Lost River by James Tate, published by Sarabande Books, Inc.
Copyright © 2003 by James Tate. Reprinted by permission of Sarabande Books and the author. All rights reserved.

To the musicians:

The basis for the violin and viola parts is a traditional Persian *chaharmezrab* melody and dance rhythm. I am happy to supply you with a recording of this *chaharmezrab* performed on setar to help you get some ideas about how to play the piece. You want to feel it in one; it could as easily be notated in 6/8 as 3/4. The two musicians sing the vocal part while playing: please feel free to sing in whatever octave is most comfortable for you. It should feel decorative and fanciful, but natural and unforced.

To the actor:

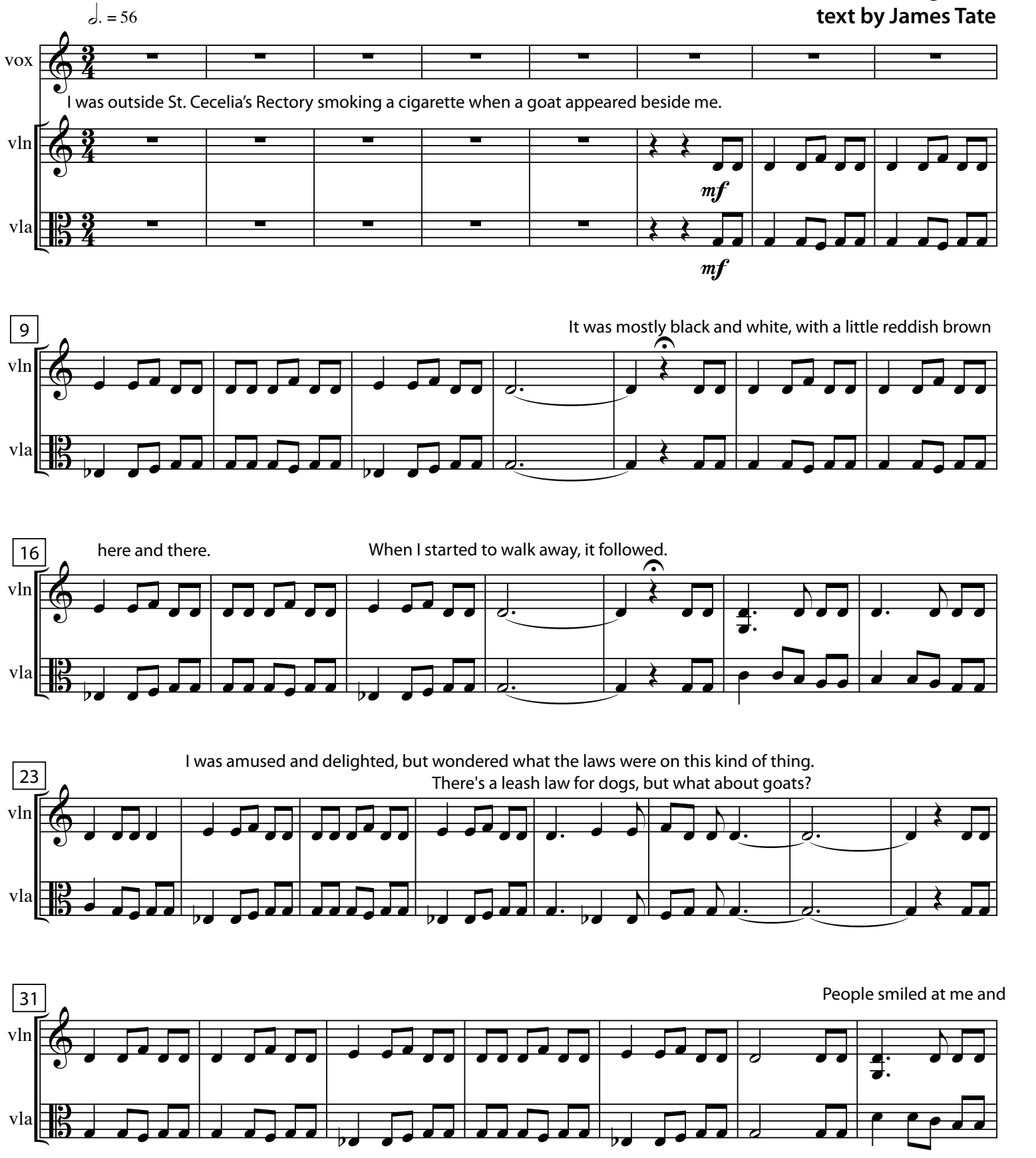
The text is lined up in the score to roughly indicate cues with the string lines. Within these guidelines, you can pace your reading very freely. As you rehearse with the players, you will be able to work out the important cues together to give you maximum freedom while still interacting most effectively.

PROGRAM NOTE

It Happens Like This sets the recitation of a poem by James Tate against an adaptation of a traditional Persian *chaharmezrab* melody and dance rhythm. Perhaps the cyclical embroiderings of the chaharmezrab echo the successive embroiderings of the narrator's tale of the goat. *It Happens Like This* was commissioned by Mary Sharp Cronson and Works and Process, Inc. for a celebration of James Tate at the Guggenheim Museum. Many thanks to Mary Rowell for her ideas and advice for this duo version. The piece was written while in residence at the Civitella Ranieri and is dedicated with affection to Diego Mencaroni, who once loved a goat.

It Happens Like This

Eve Beglarian
text by James Tate



© 2006, 2010 EVBVD Music [ASCAP]

38

and admired the goat. "It's not my goat," I explained. "It's the town's goat. I'm just taking my turn caring for it."

vln

vla

45

"I didn't know we had a goat," one of them said. "I wonder when my turn is."

vln

vla

52

"Soon," I said. "Be patient. Your time is coming."

vln

vla

59

The goat stayed by my side. It stopped when I stopped. It looked up at me and I stared into its eyes.

vln

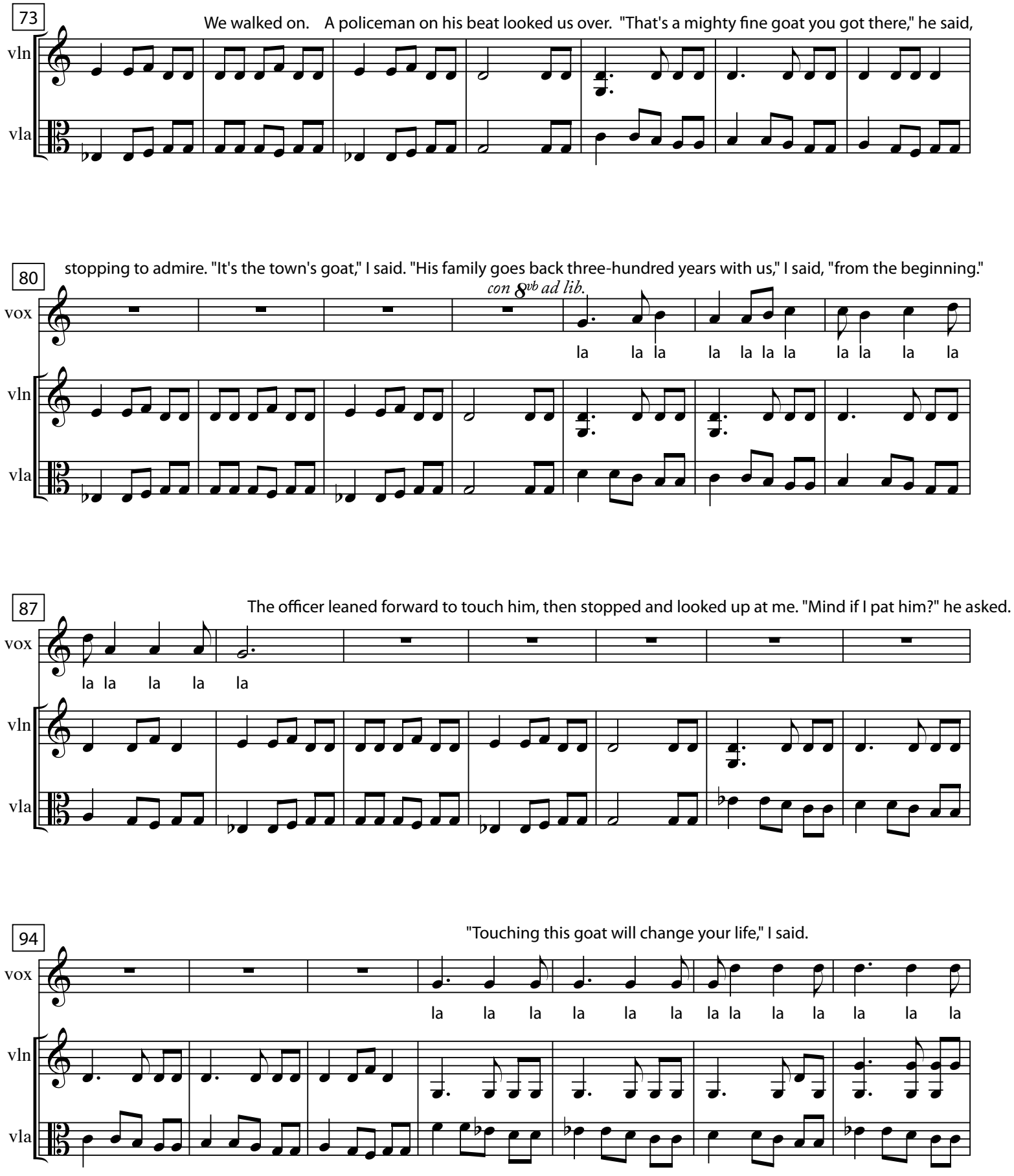
vla

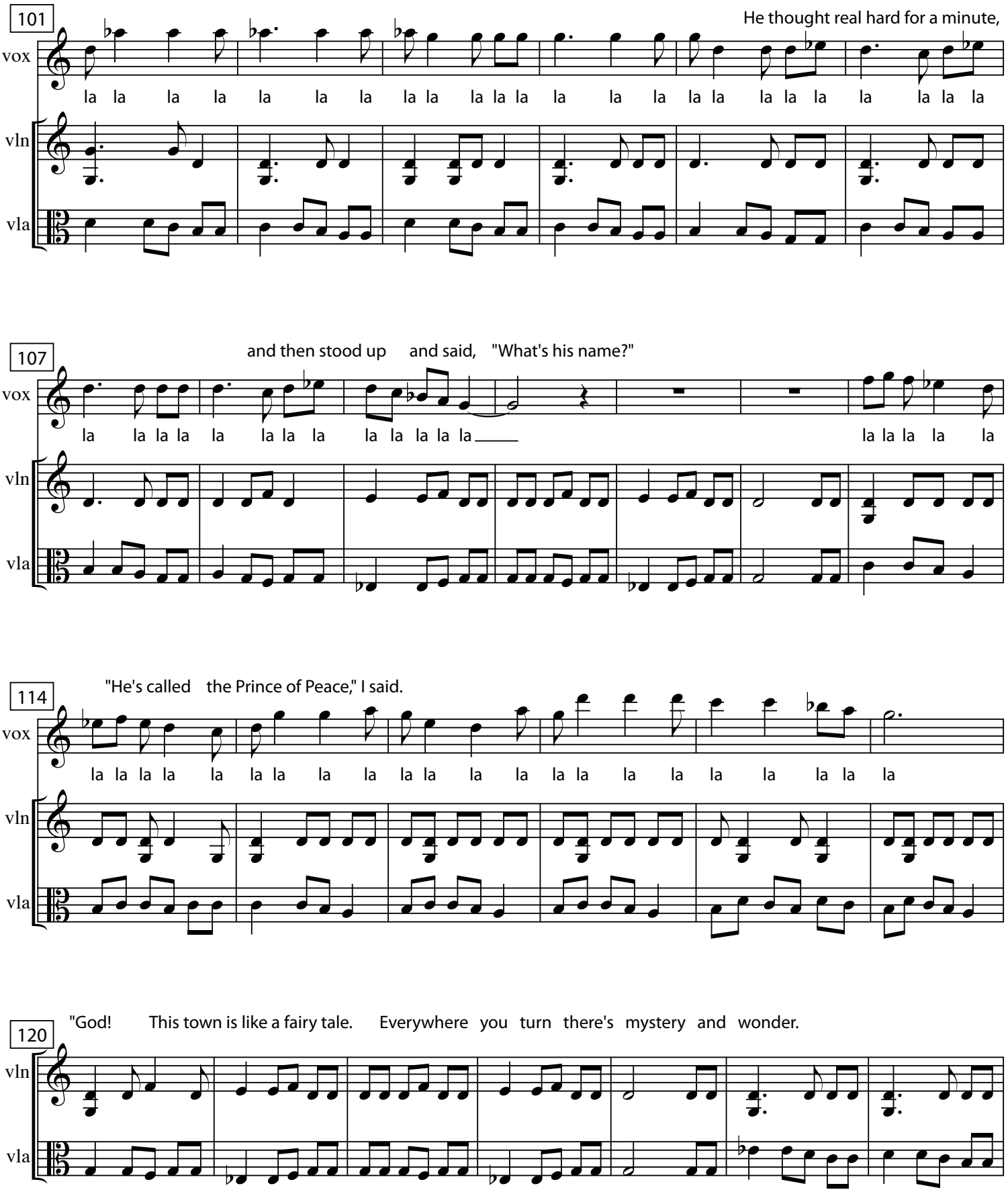
66

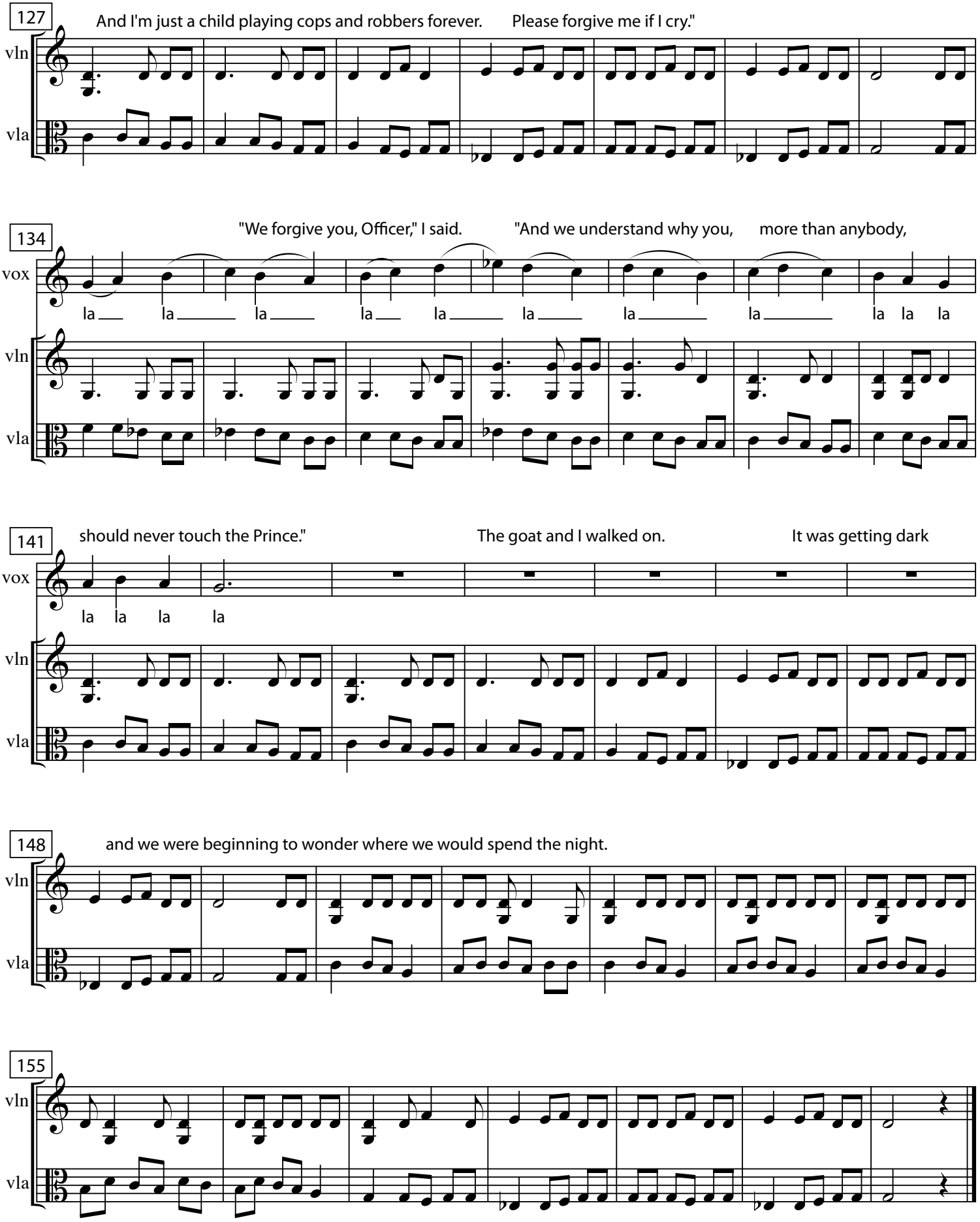
I felt he knew everything essential about me.

vln

vla


73
We walked on. A policeman on his beat looked us over. "That's a mighty fine goat you got there," he said,
vln
vla
80
stopping to admire. "It's the town's goat," I said. "His family goes back three-hundred years with us," I said, "from the beginning."
con 8vb ad lib.
vox
la la la la la la la la la la la
vln
vla
87
The officer leaned forward to touch him, then stopped and looked up at me. "Mind if I pat him?" he asked.
vox
la la la la la
vln
vla
94
"Touching this goat will change your life," I said.
vox
la la la la la la la la la la la la
vln
vla


101
He thought real hard for a minute,
vox
la la la la la la la la la la la la la la la la la la la la la la
vln
vla
107
and then stood up and said, "What's his name?"
vox
la la la la la la la la la la la la la la la la la la la la
vln
vla
114
"He's called the Prince of Peace," I said.
vox
la la la la la la la la la la la la la la la la la la la la la la
vln
vla
120
"God! This town is like a fairy tale. Everywhere you turn there's mystery and wonder.
vln
vla


127
And I'm just a child playing cops and robbers forever. Please forgive me if I cry."
vln
vla
134
"We forgive you, Officer," I said. "And we understand why you, more than anybody,
vox
la la la la la la la la la la la la
vln
vla
141
should never touch the Prince." The goat and I walked on. It was getting dark
vox
la la la la
vln
vla
148
and we were beginning to wonder where we would spend the night.
vln
vla
155
vln
vla