THE VERGE OF UNDERSTANDING :
PLAYING WITTGENSTEIN

FOR 2 ACCORDEONS

Bjørn Bolstad Skjelbred - 2011

This music is copyright protected

This work was inspired by the philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein's theory of communication and the limits of human written and spoken language. I am intrigued by the immensely complex problems in communication between humans, and the limitations of language that in many ways prevents us from really understanding each other. Today, where understanding between countries, cultures and religions is crucial for the world's survival, the art of communication is especially important. Wittgenstein said that the only language that could express something about the topics where language is limited, is the language of music.

About the music: During the first movement, Accordionist #1 and Accordionist #2 sit at opposite ends of the stage, not facing each other. Each performs a separate part, with little similarity between them, as if they speak different languages. In the second movement, there are five additional music stands on the stage. Two of these stands contain musical material which is related in some way to the material performed by the first accordionist in the first movement, and the next two stands contain material related to the music performed by Accordionist #2 in the first movement. During the second movement, the two accordionists move around to different stands, playing the music on the chosen stand. In this way, Accordionist #1 plays material related to music originally performed by Accordionist #2 and vice versa. In a sense, the performers are attempting to communicate with one another, by trying to understand the other players musical language. The fifth music stand, located in the center of the stage, faces the audience. The music on this stand is performed by a single performer with no accompaniment. It functions as a musical reprieve during the middle of the second movement, and represents the only music in the piece where one of the players are forced to listen without playing.

During the third movement, the accordionists sit at the same seats as in the first movement. However, their seating is reversed (In the third movement, Accordionist #1 sits at the seat which was occupied by Accordionist #2 in the first movement.) The musical material for each accordionist in the third movement is a mosaic composed of material from both accordion parts from the first movement. This demonstrates an attempt of a coming together or understanding which forms between the two performers, even if the final result is that they leave the stage as solitaries.

Bjørn Bolstad Skjelbred - 2012

NB noter
This music is copyright protected

PLAYING INSTRUCTIONS:

Part 1 – The 2 players are seated at opposite corners of the stage, not facing each other.

Part 2 – Each part has a separate seating, with (only) part 2E facing the audience, placed in the middle of the stage. Imagine a lounge room, where different people sit and talk at different locations in the room and also moves between the different locations, but you can´t fully grasp what they are saying. Except for part 2 E, which makes the others stop talking. Choose for example a setup like this:

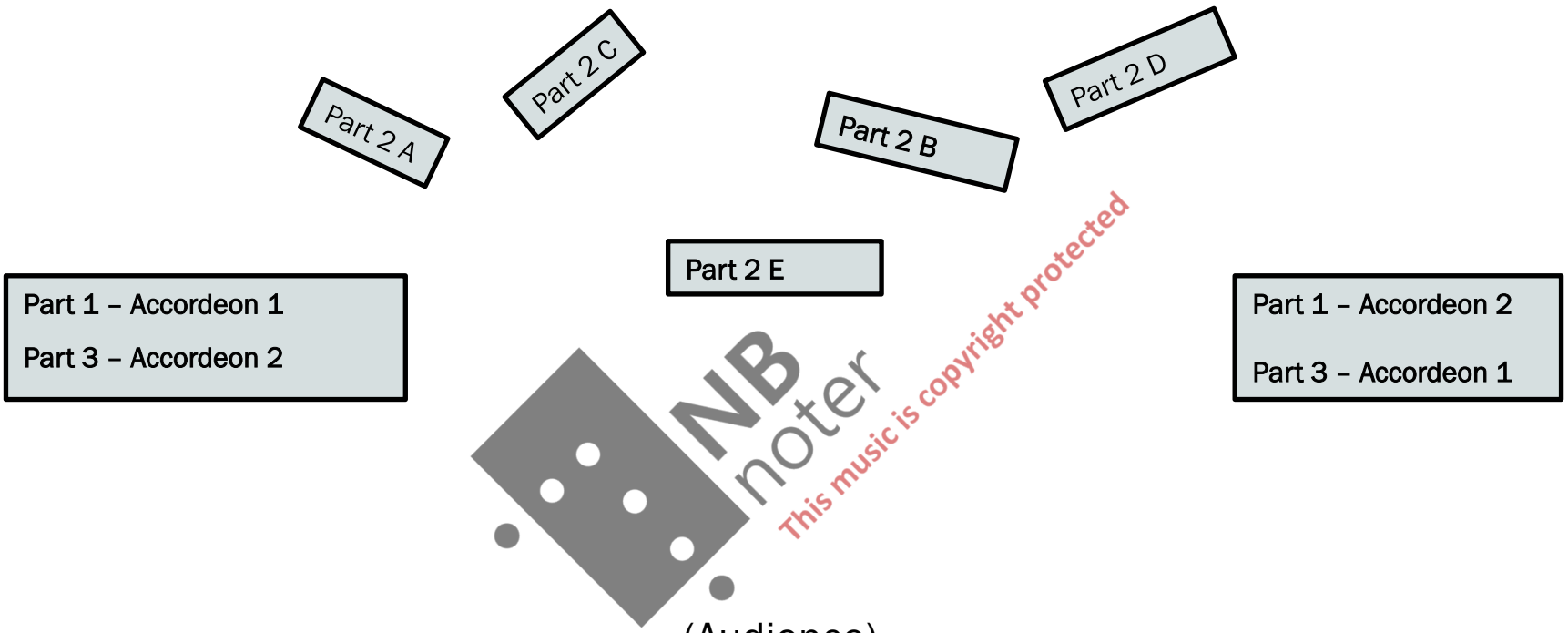
Each player plays 1-3 of the parts A1, B, C, D, simultanously and individual (overlapping each other), then one player plays first half of part E. When the other player hears part 2E: make a fade-out and listen to the one playing 2E. When 2E is finished, each player plays 1-2 of the parts A2, B, C, D, and at some point, the other player starts to play the second half of part 2E. As before: the first player makes a fade-out and listens to part 2E. Then both continue to Part 3.

It´s possible to make a shorter version of Part 2 : Each player plays 2-3 of the parts A1/2, B, C, D, simultanously and individual (overlapping each other), then one player plays part E. When the other player hears part 2E: finish the current part, then listen to the one playing 2E. When 2E is finished, both players continues to Part 3.

Part 3 – The 2 players are seated at opposite corners of the stage, but opposite corners as in Part 1, facing each other at the beginning. After the part is finished, the players walks out of the stage in silence.

NB noter
This music is copyright protected

SEATING SUGGESTION:



NB noter
This music is copyright protected

"The Verge of Understanding: Playing Wittgenstein" for two accordeons, is written on a joint commission from NorAm Duo : Rocco Anthony Jerry & Anthony Grieco (US), and Toeac Duo : Renée Bekkers & Pieternel Berkers (NL), with funds from the Norwegian Composers' Fund. It was premiered by Toeac Duo in Holland November 2011, US premiere by Rocco Anthony Jerry in March 2012.

DURATA : Full version – approx. 20 minutes.

NB noter
This music is copyright protected

- THE VERGE OF UNDERSTANDING -

PLAYING WITTGENSTEIN

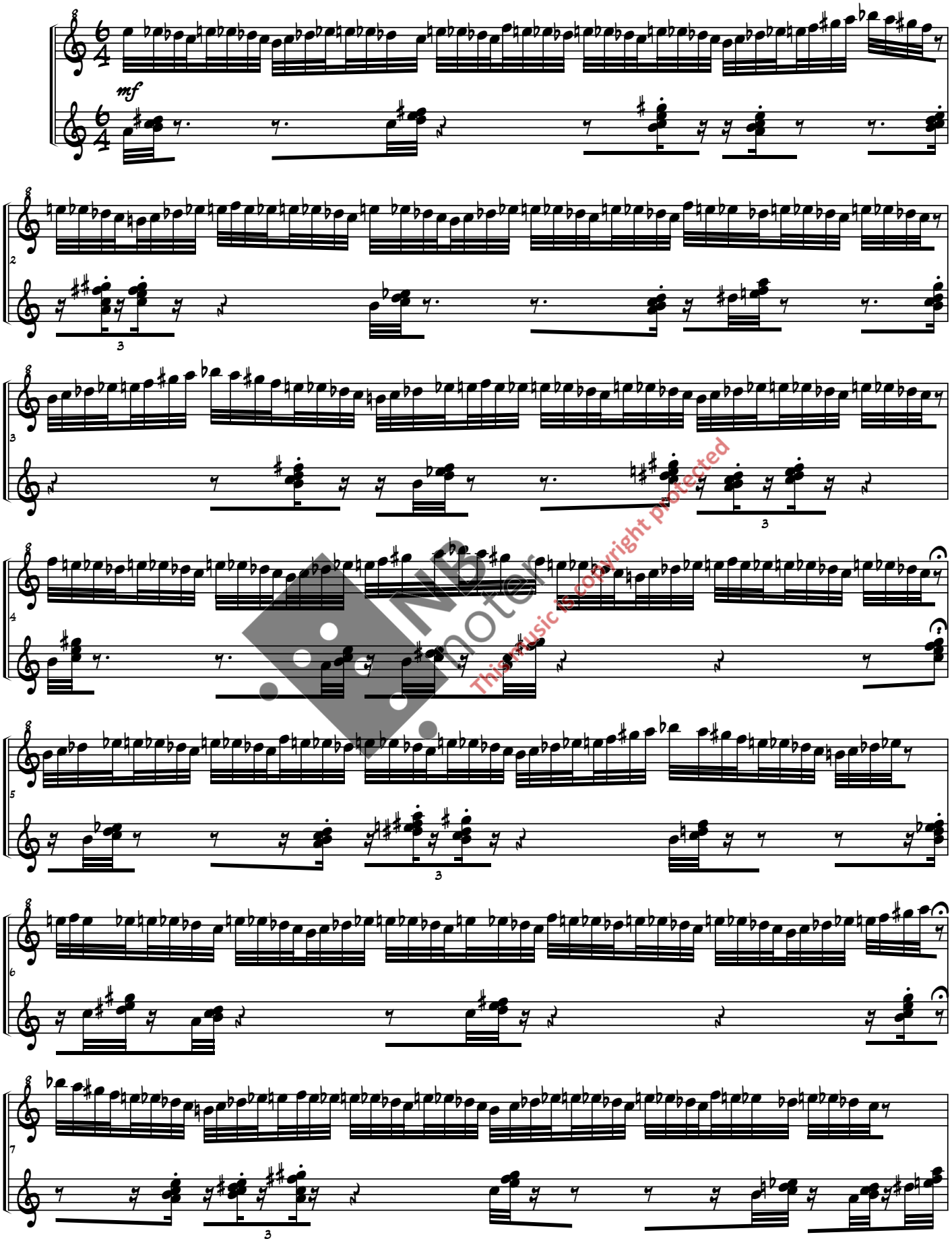
ACCORDION 1

Individual Tempoes

PART 1

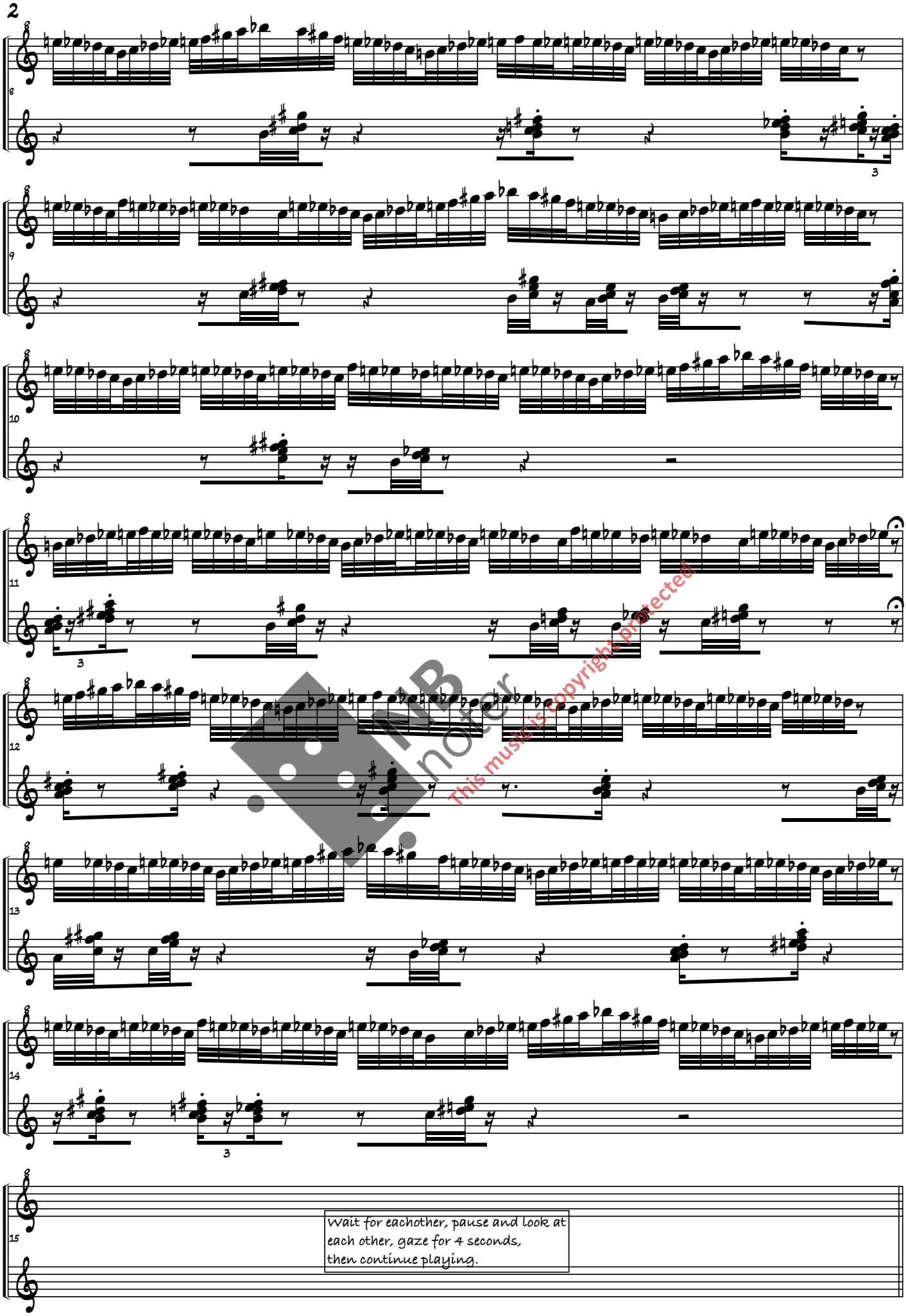
Bjørn Bolstad Skjelbred- 2011

♩= 68

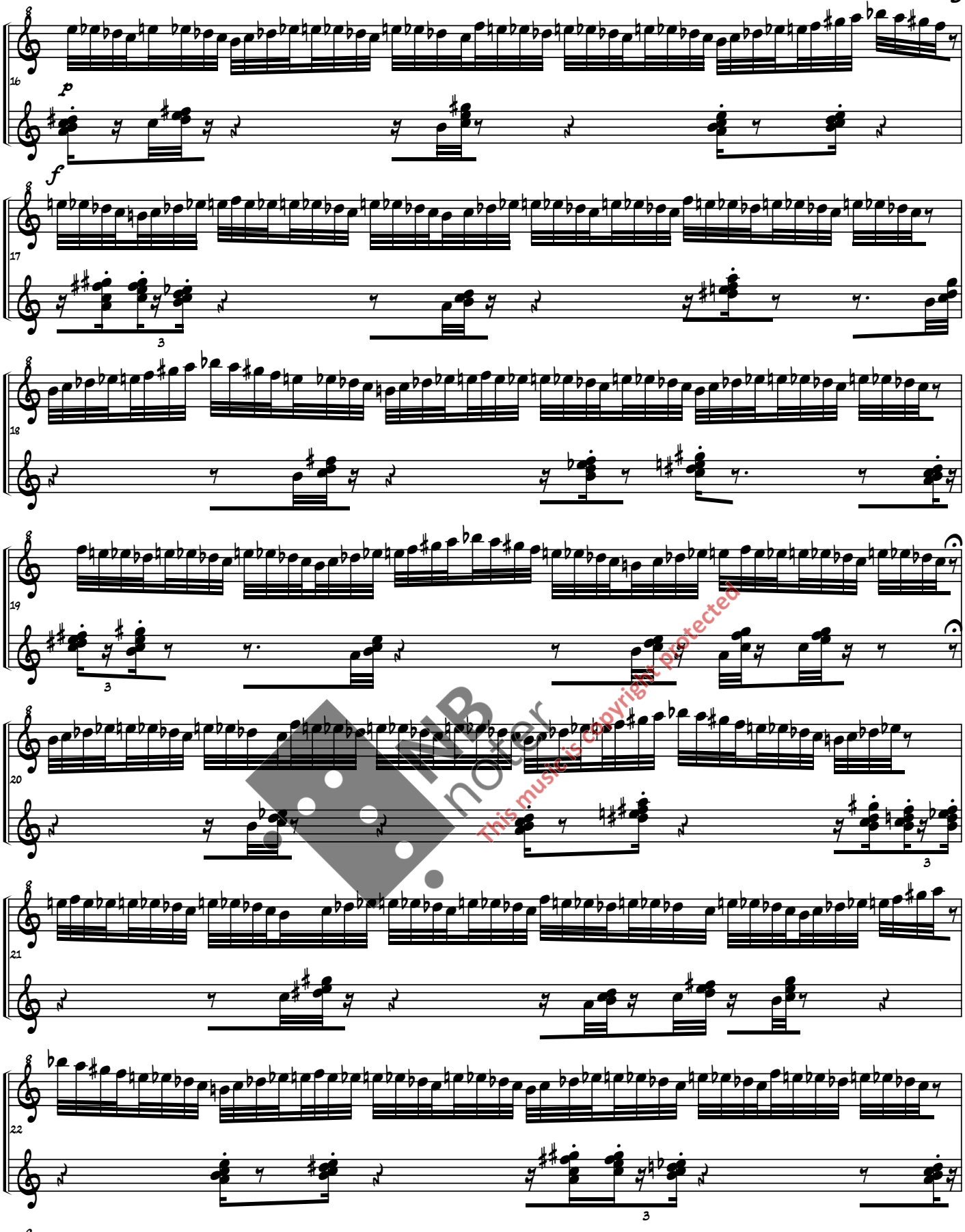


This music is copyright protected

©BBS11



This music is copyright protected



This music is copyright protected

- THE VERGE OF UNDERSTANDING -

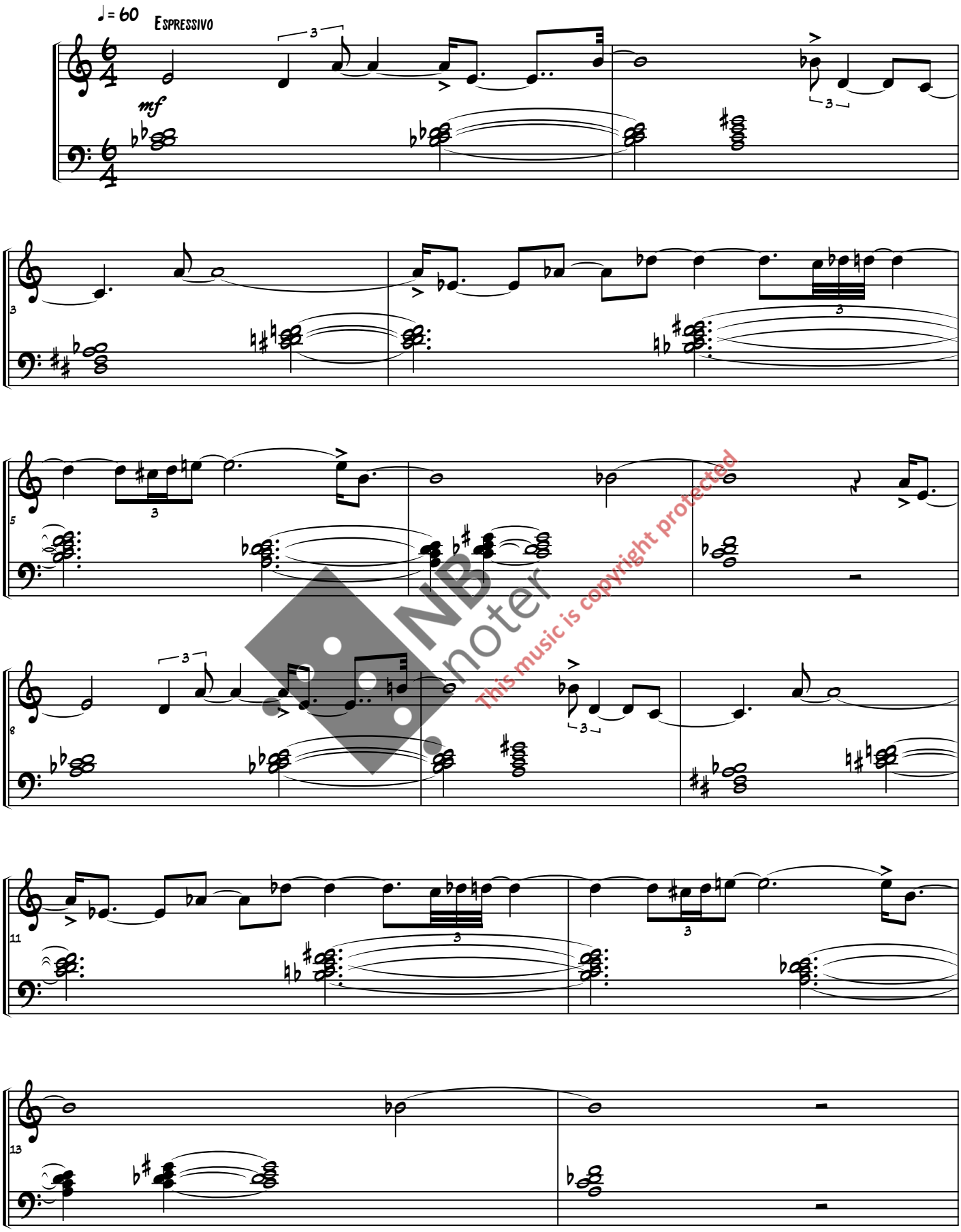
PLAYING WITTGENSTEIN

ACCORDEON 2

Individual Tempoes

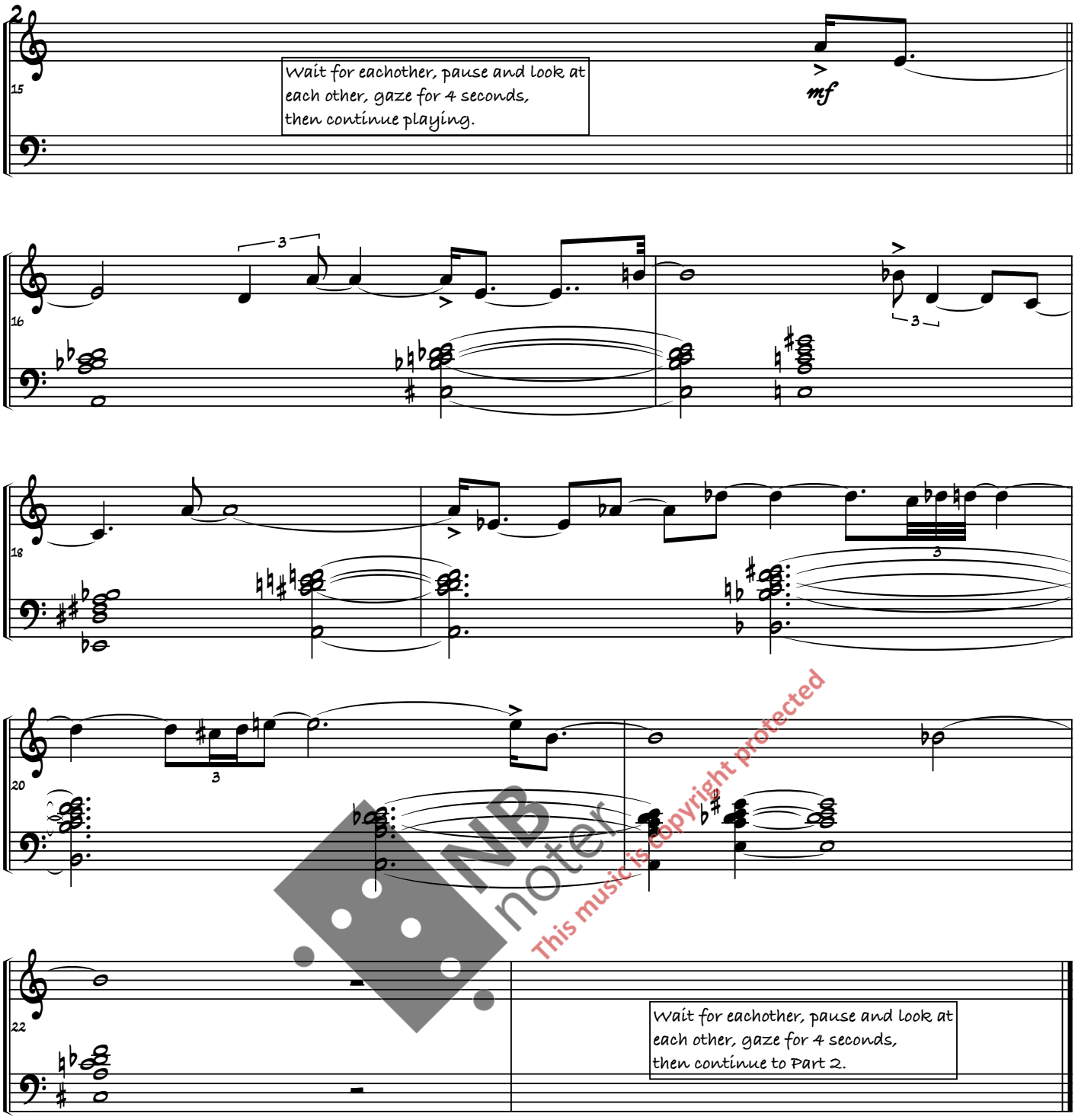
Bjørn Bolstad Skjelbred- 2011

PART 1



NB noter
This music is copyright protected

©BBS11



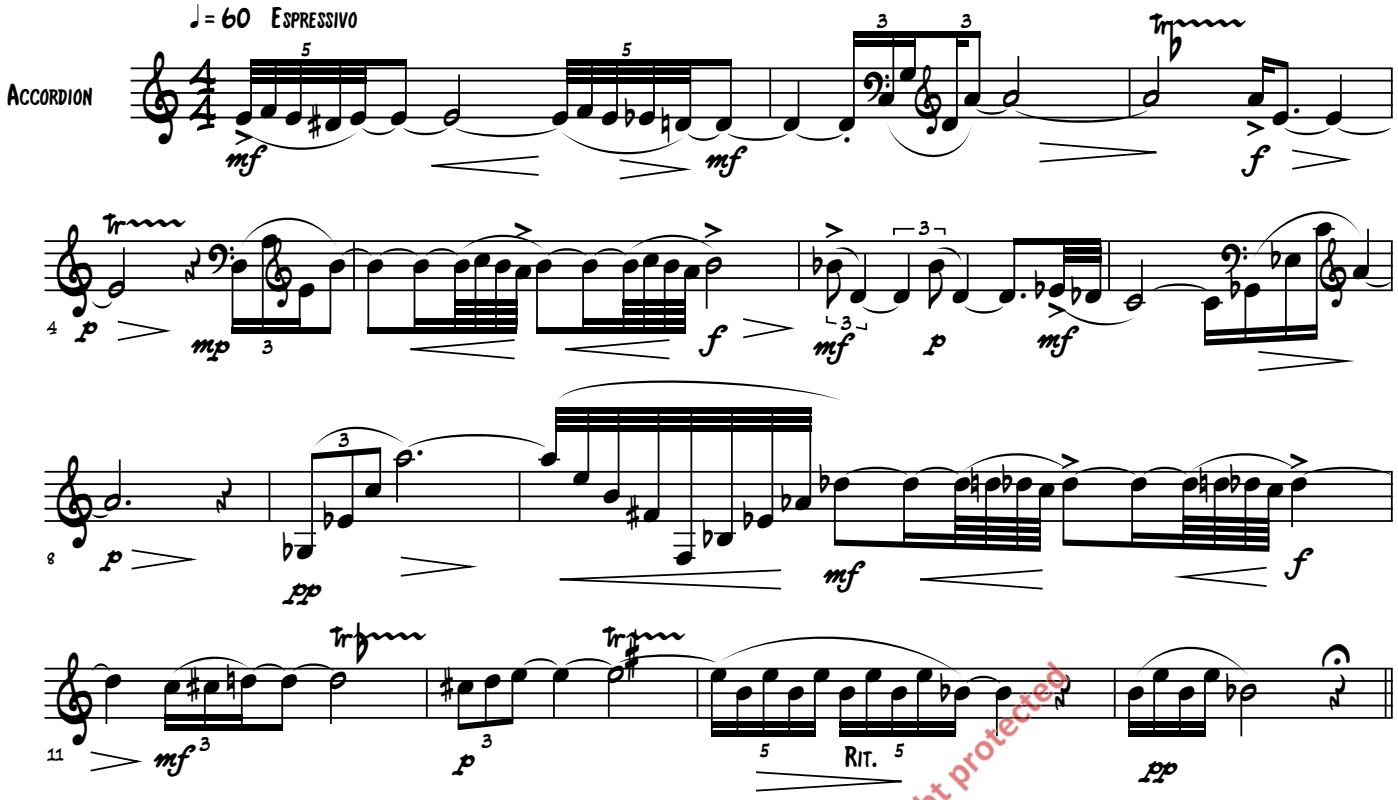
This music is copyright protected

- The Verge of Understanding -

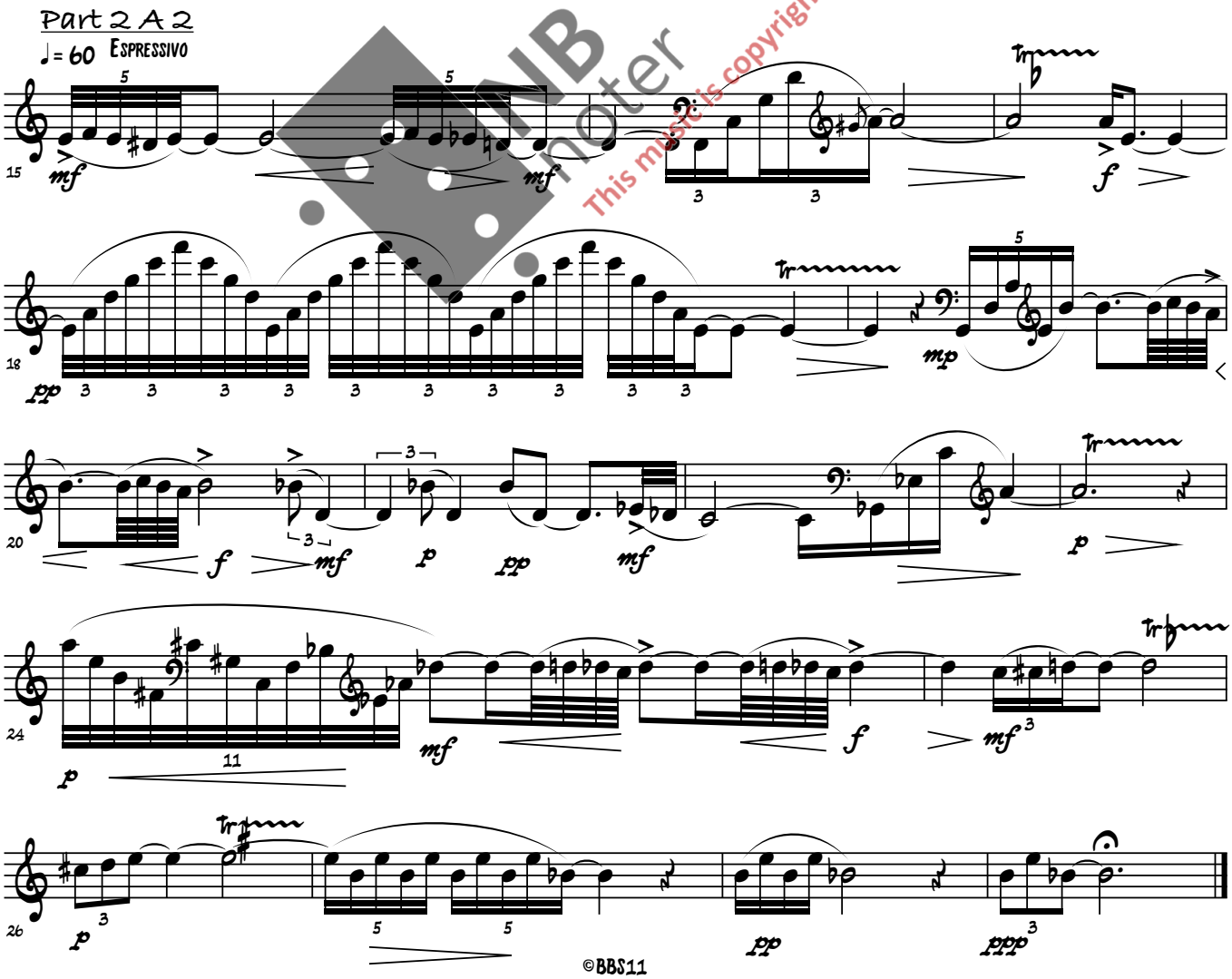
Playing Wittgenstein

Part 2 A 1

Bjørn Bolstad Skjelbred - 2011



Part 2 A 2



This music is copyright protected

©BBS11

Part 2 B

- The Verge of Understanding -

Playing Wittgenstein

Bjørn Bolstad Skjelbred - 2011

♩= 68

Accordion

p

Acc.

mp

Acc.

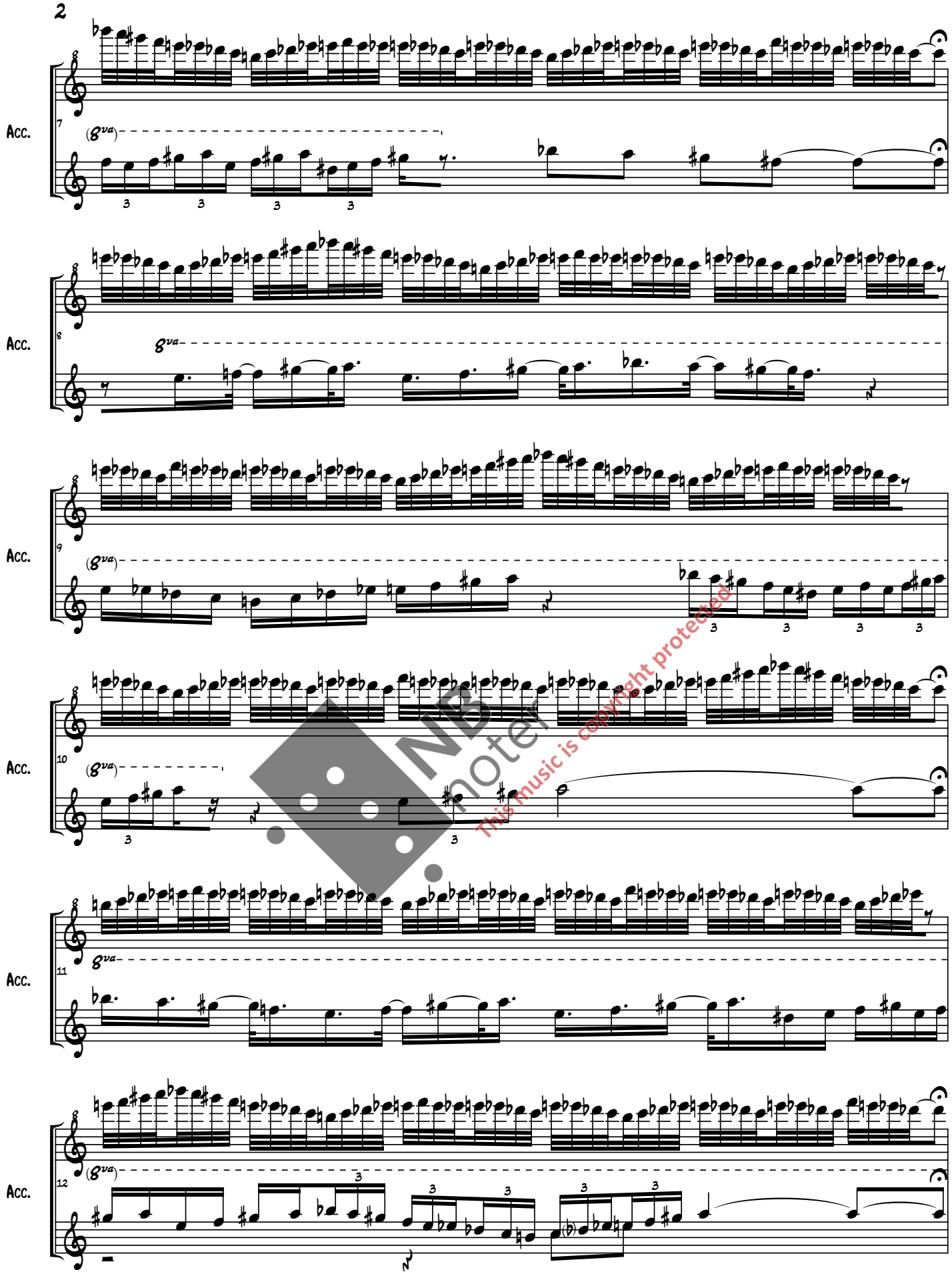
Acc.

Acc.

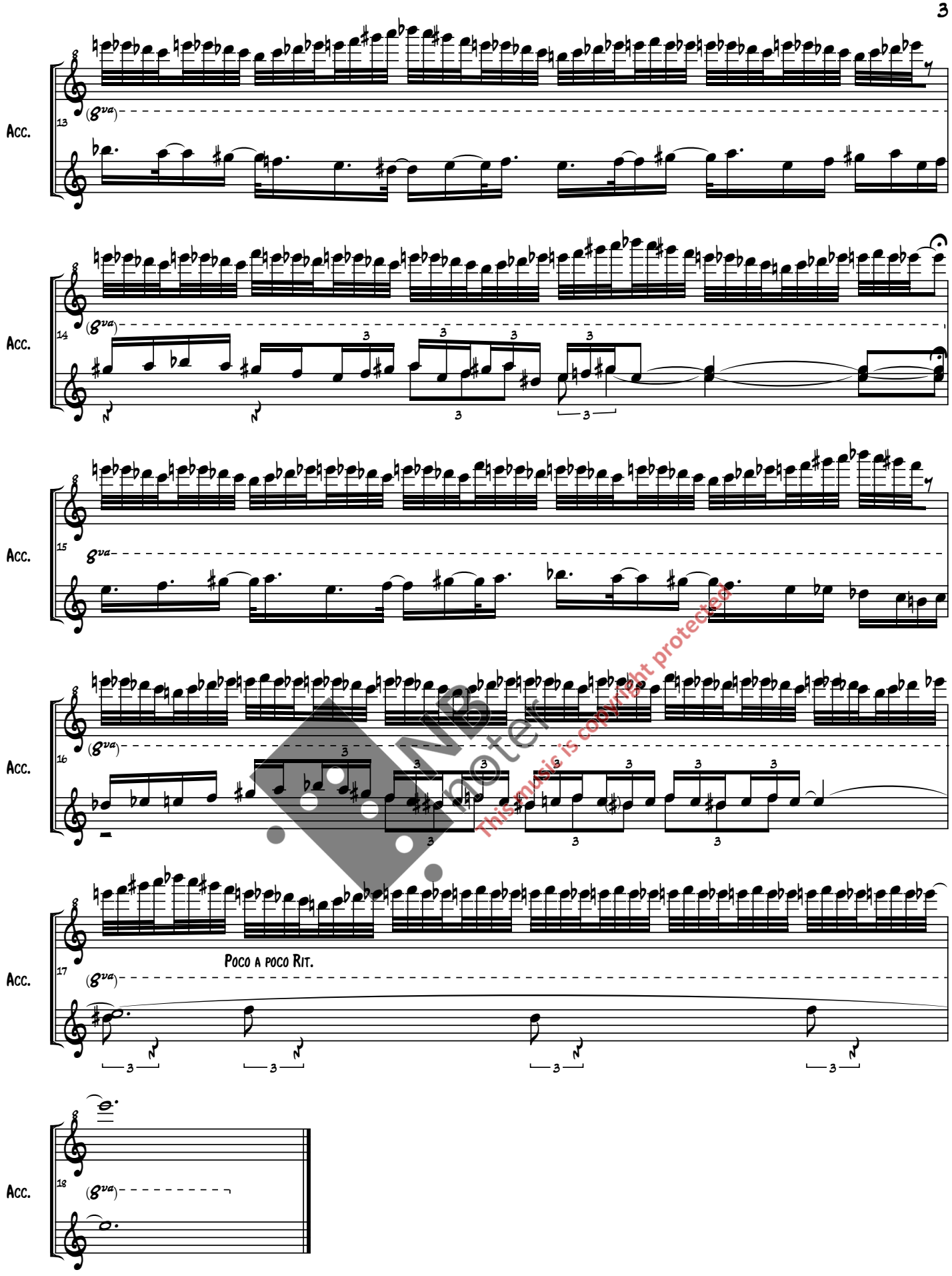
Acc.

This music is copyright protected

©BBS11



NB noter
This music is copyright protected



This music is copyright protected

- The Verge of Understanding -

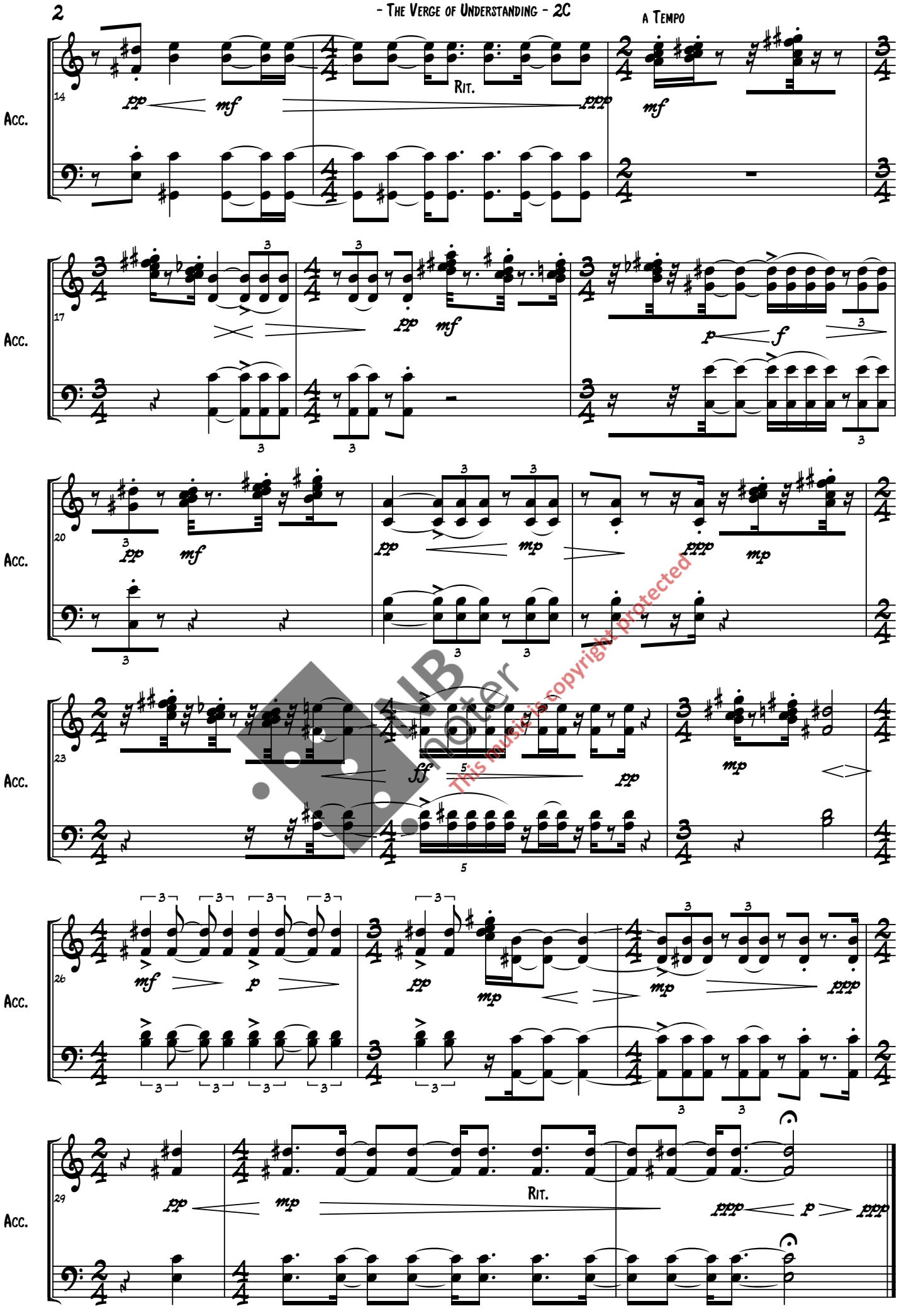
Part 2C

Playing Wittgenstein

Bjørn Bolstad Skjelbred - 2011

NB noter
This music is copyright protected

©BBS-11



This music is copyright protected

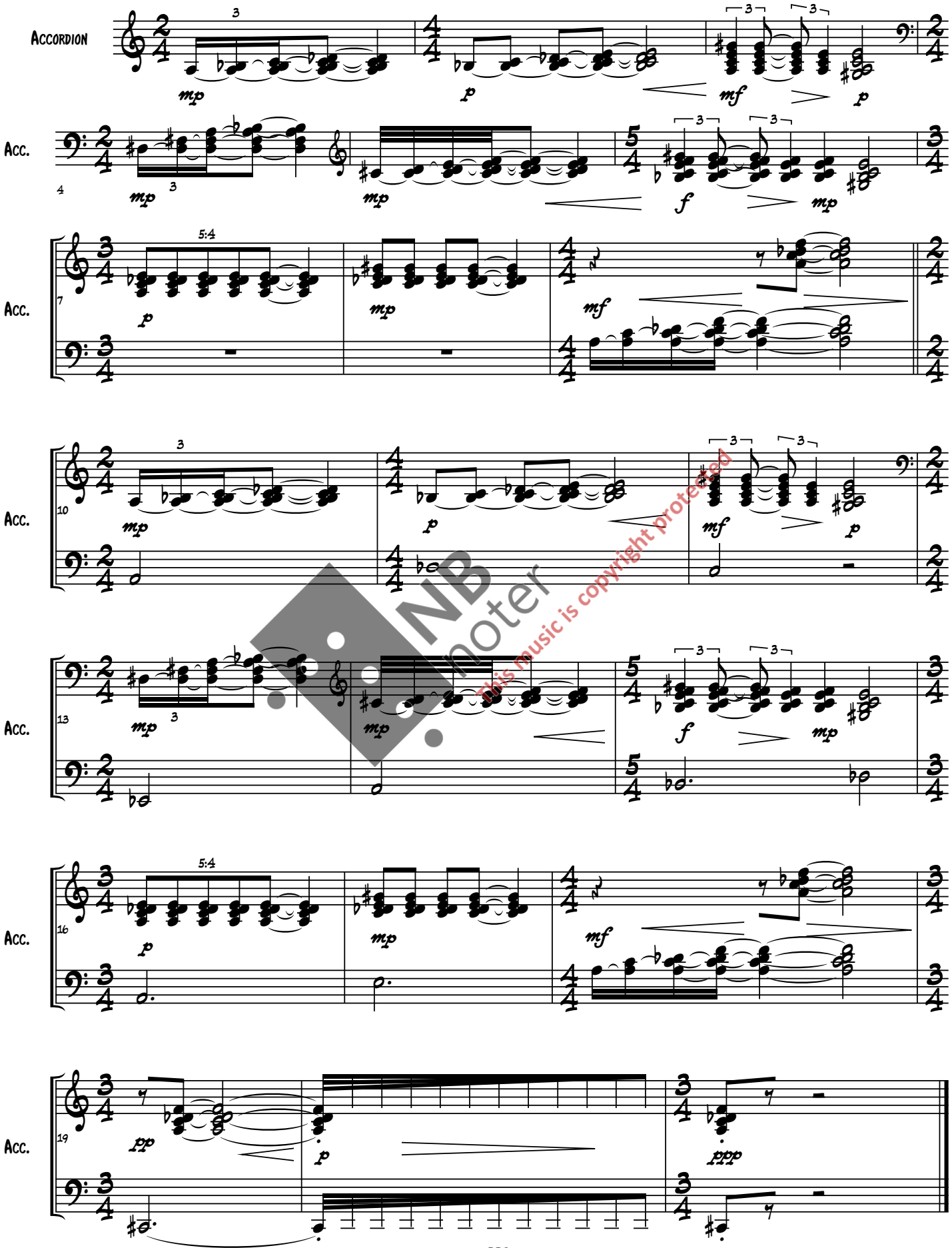
- The Verge of Understanding -

Playing Wittgenstein

Bjørn Bolstad Skjelbred - 2011

Part 2D

♩ = 60



NB noter
This music is copyright protected

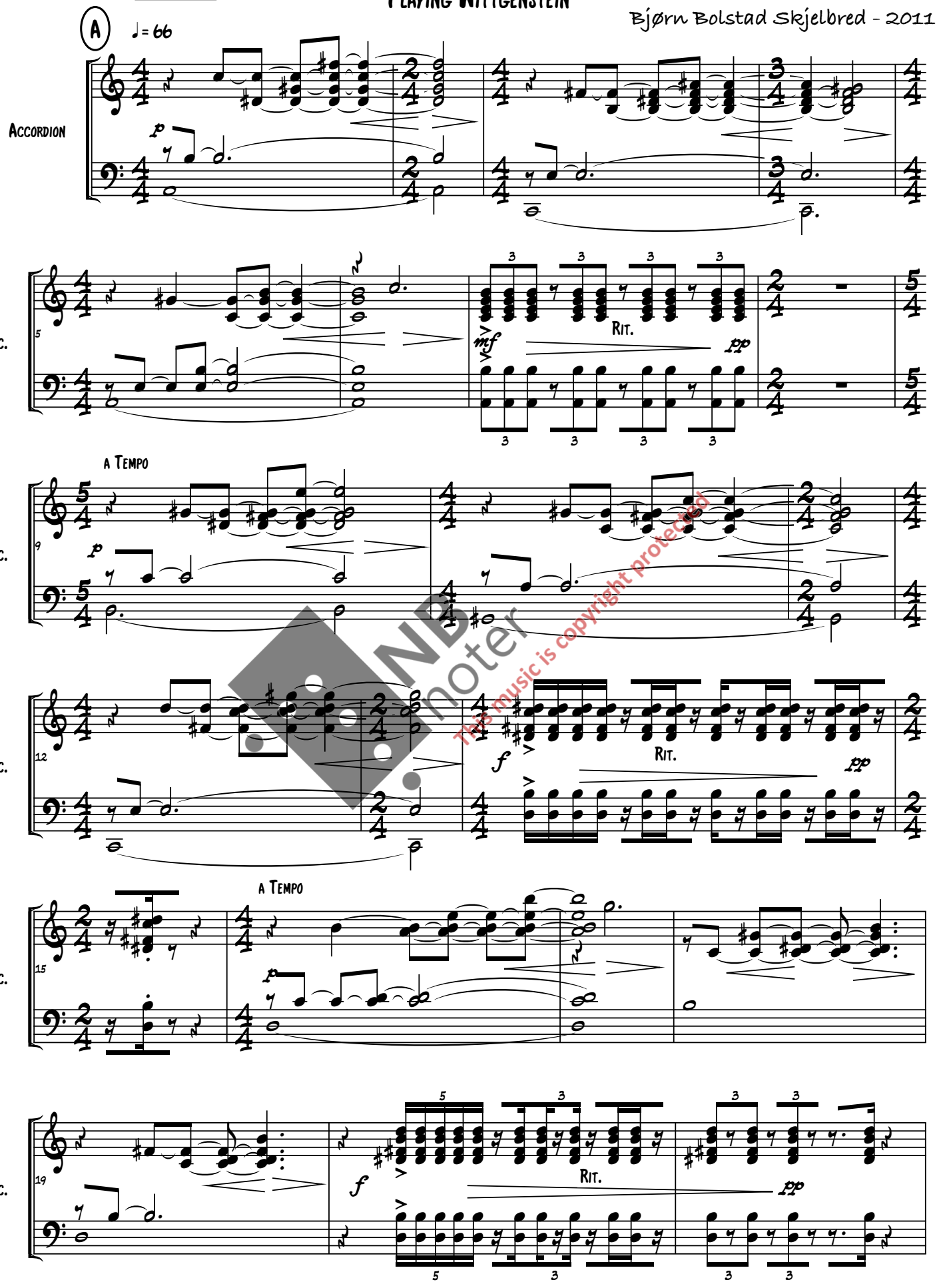
©BBS11

- The Verge of Understanding -

Playing Wittgenstein

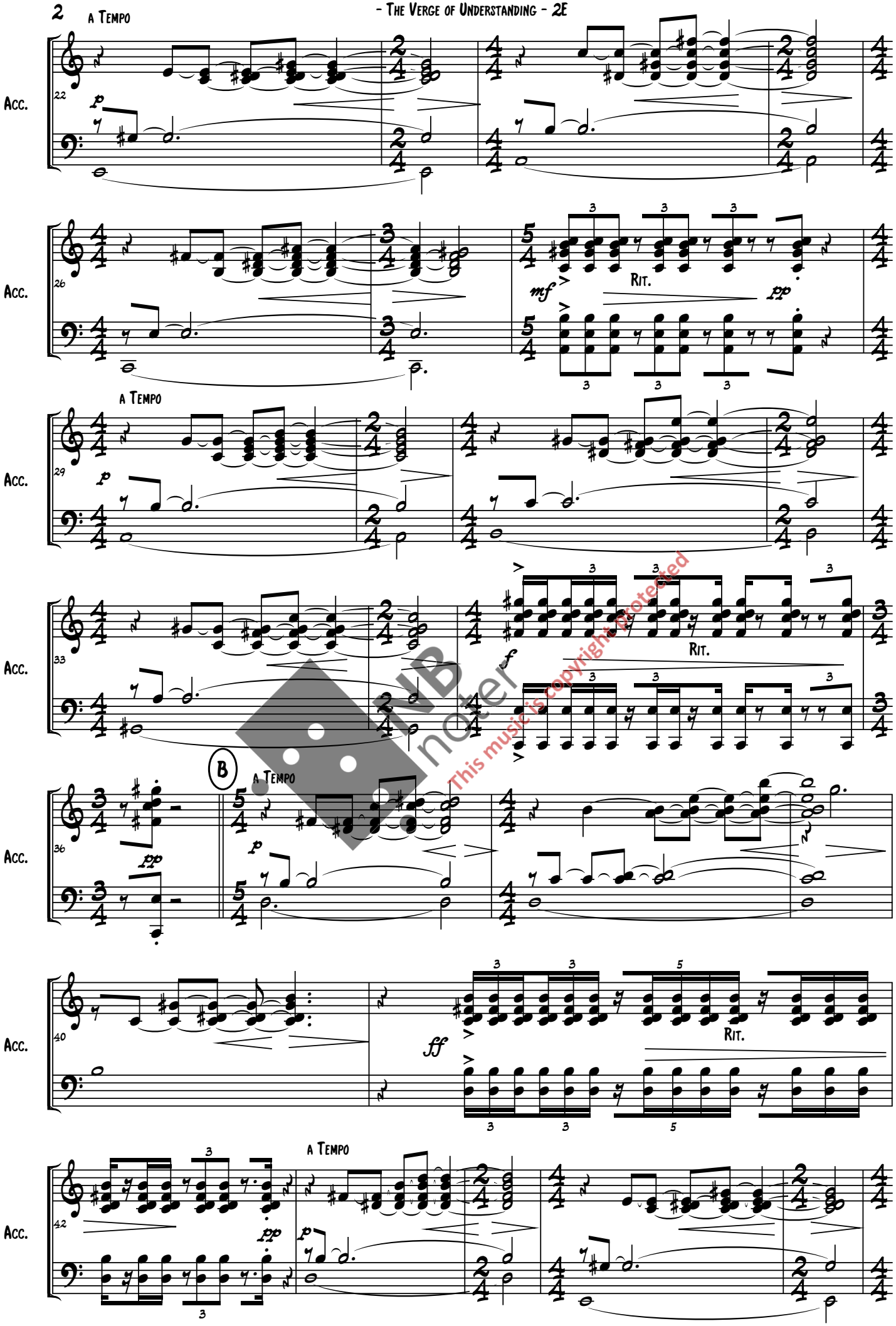
Part 2E

Bjørn Bolstad Skjelbred - 2011

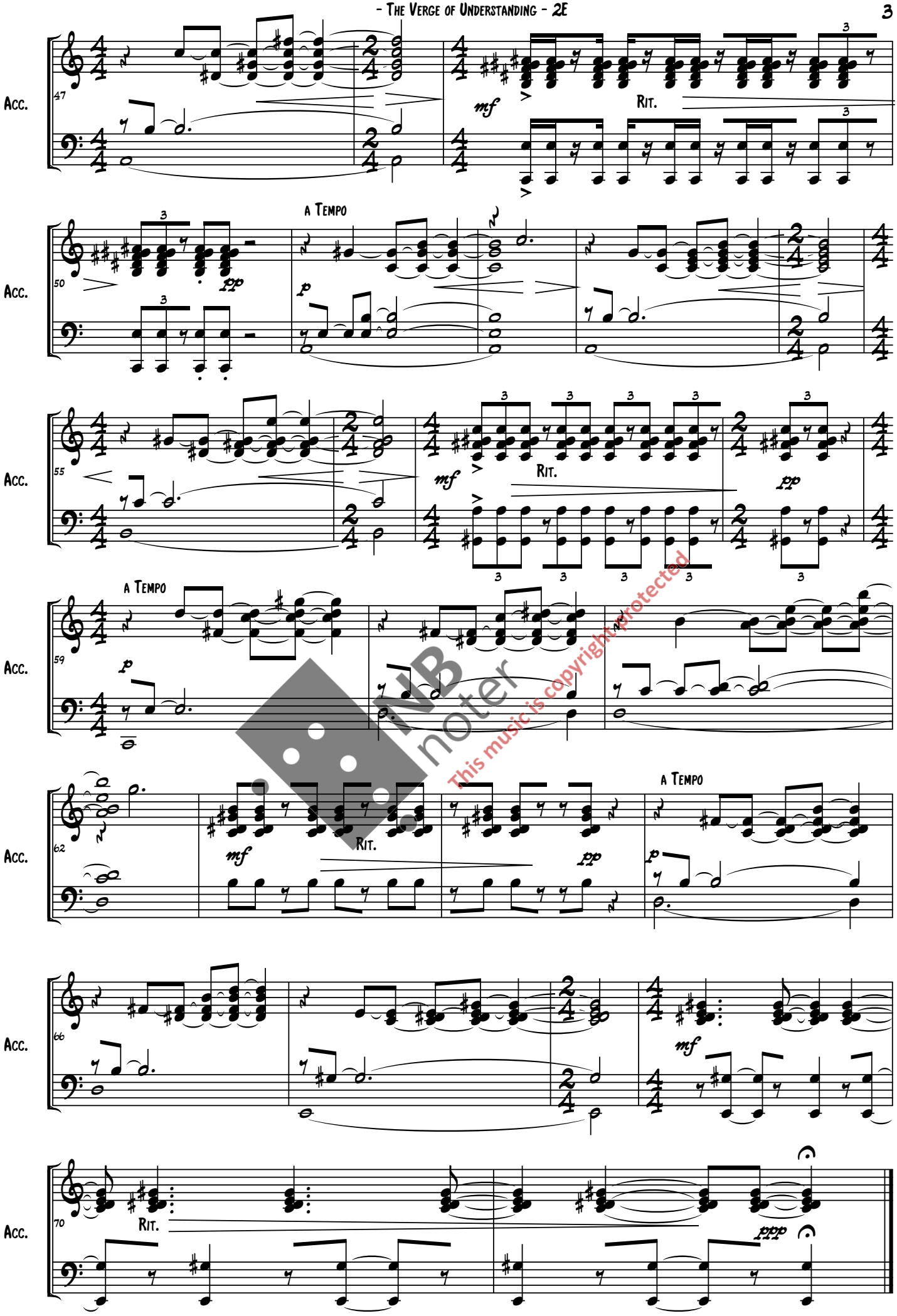


This music is copyright protected

©BBS11



This music is copyright protected



NB noter
This music is copyright protected

Accordion 1

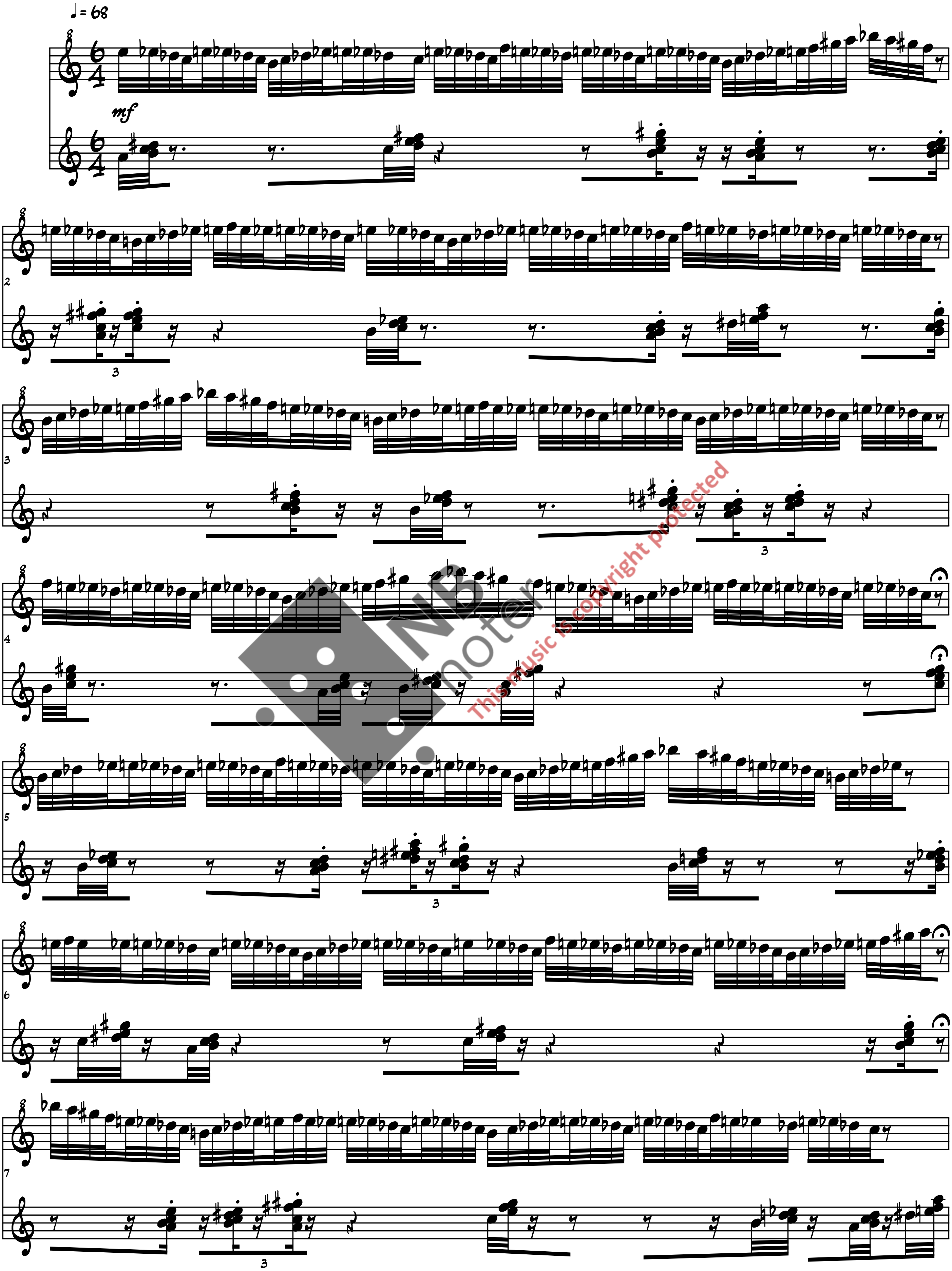
- The Verge of Understanding -

Playing Wittgenstein

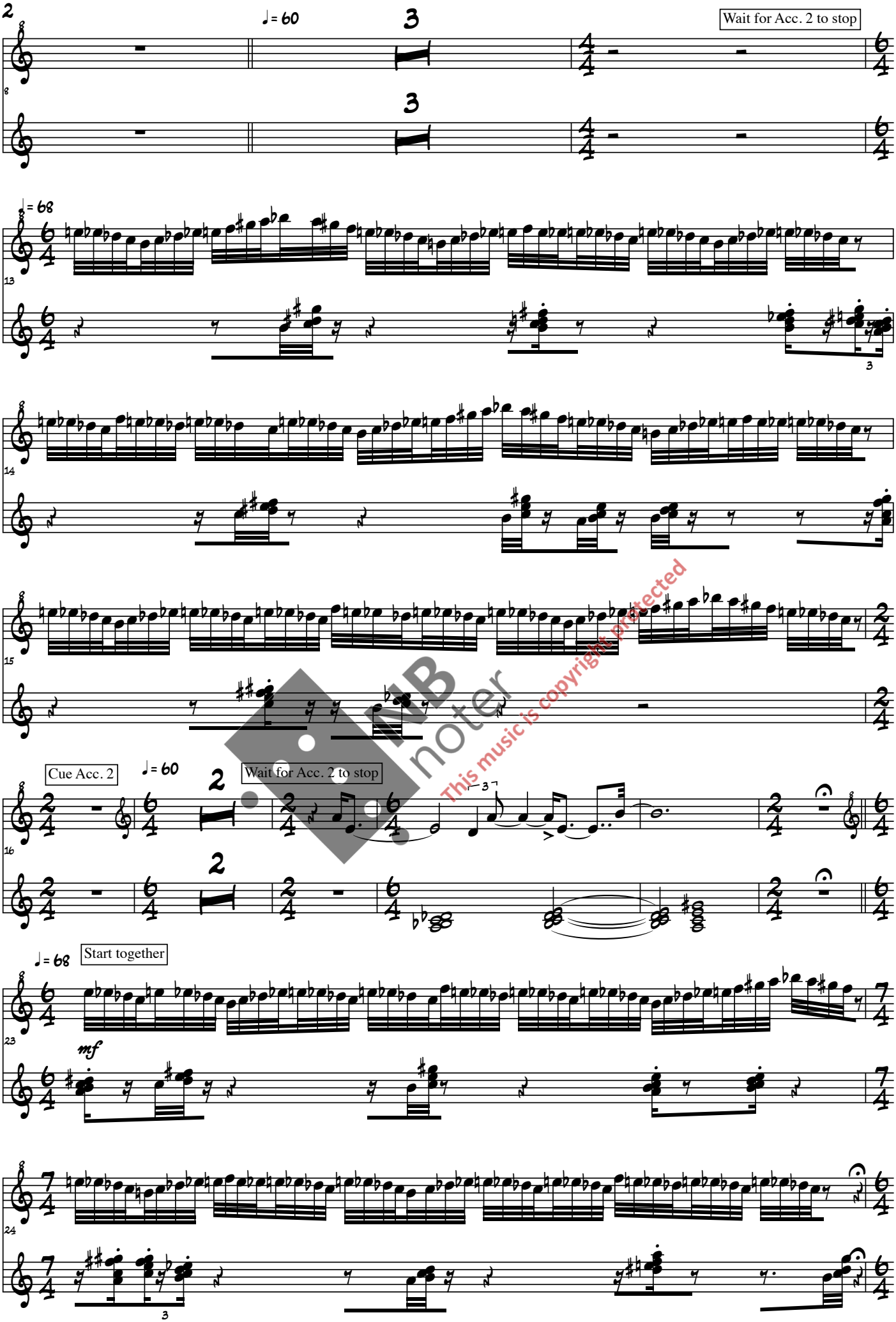
PART 3

Bjørn Bolstad Skjelbred- 2011

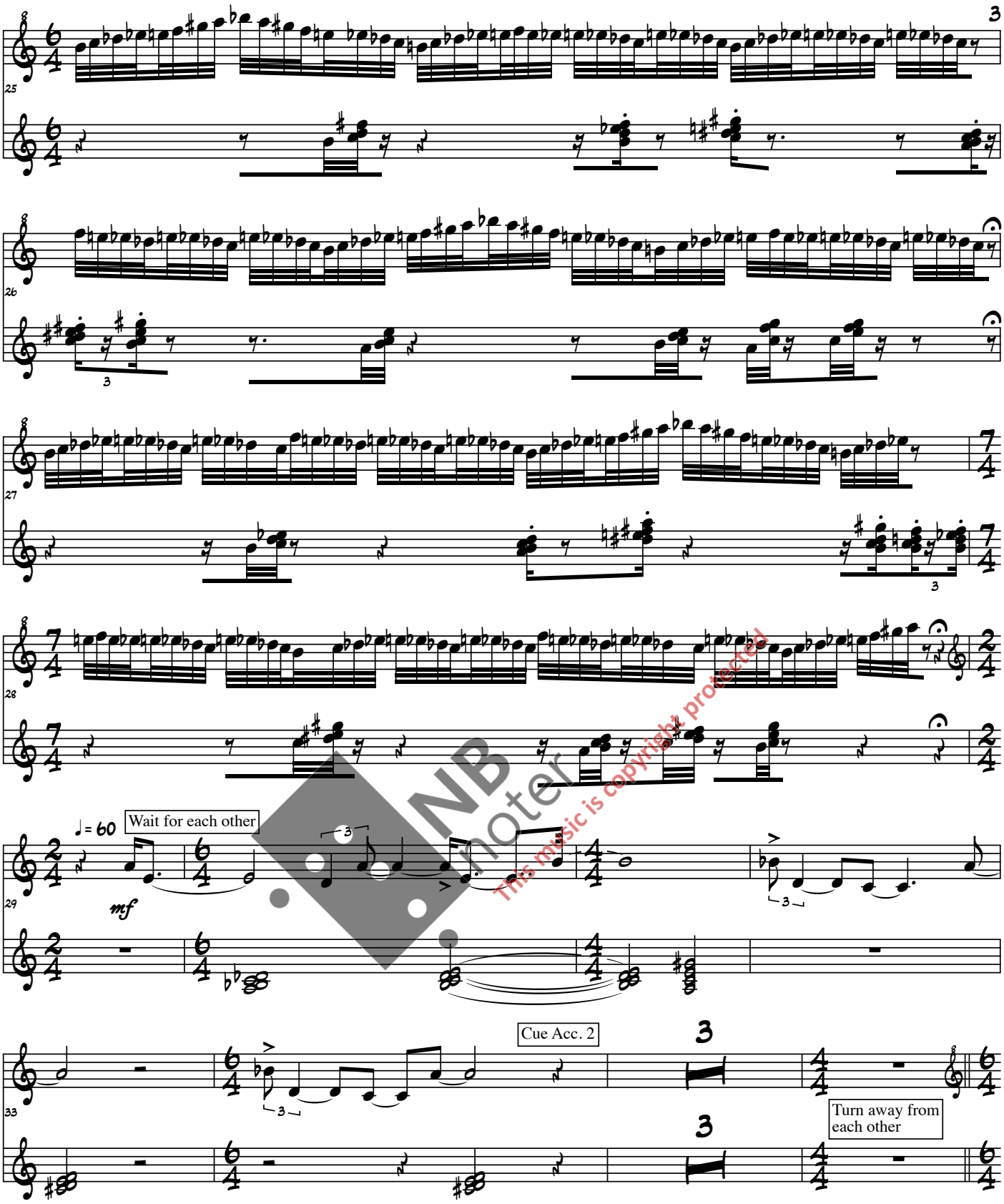
Individual Tempoes



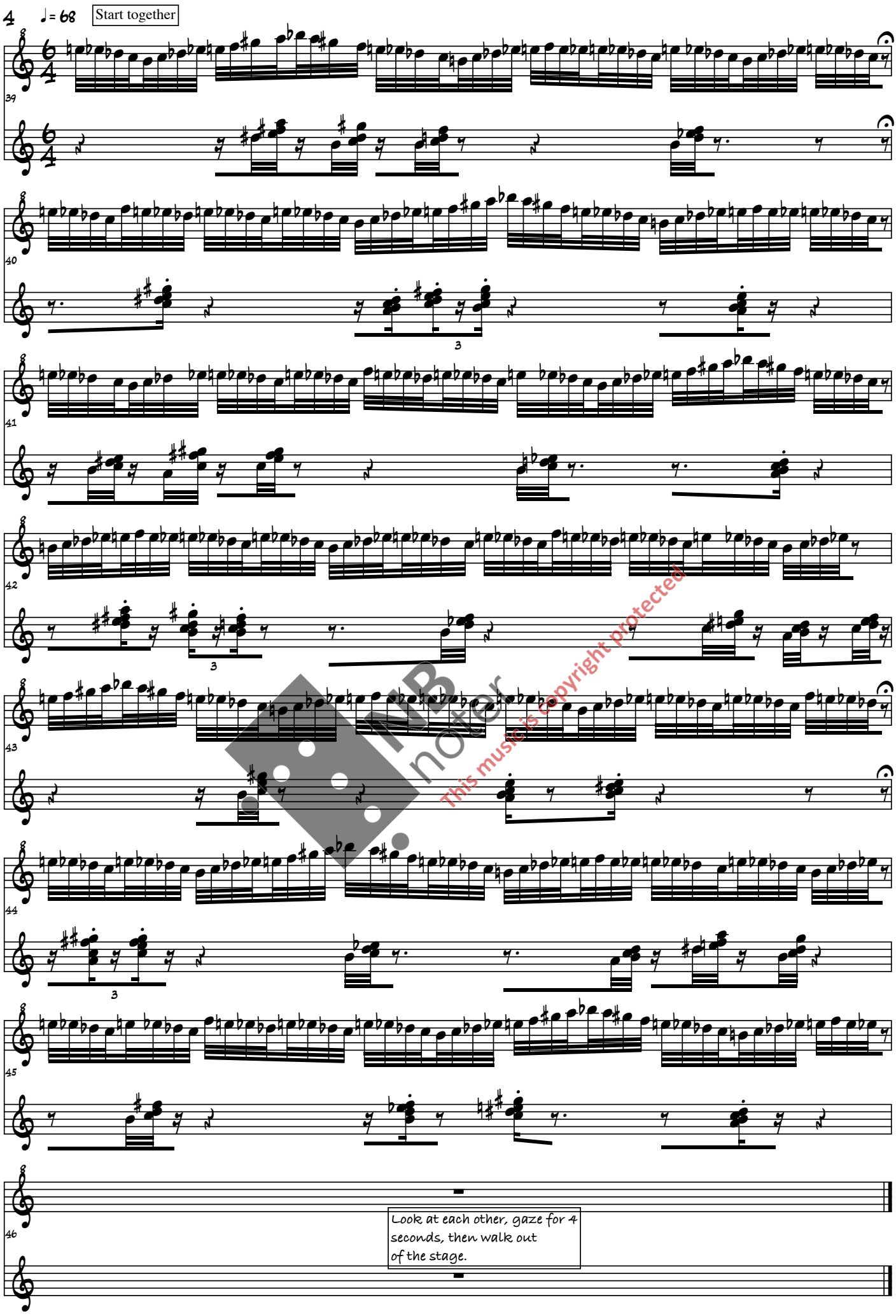
NB noter
This music is copyright protected



NB noter
This music is copyright protected



This music is copyright protected



This music is copyright protected
MB noter

- THE VERGE OF UNDERSTANDING -

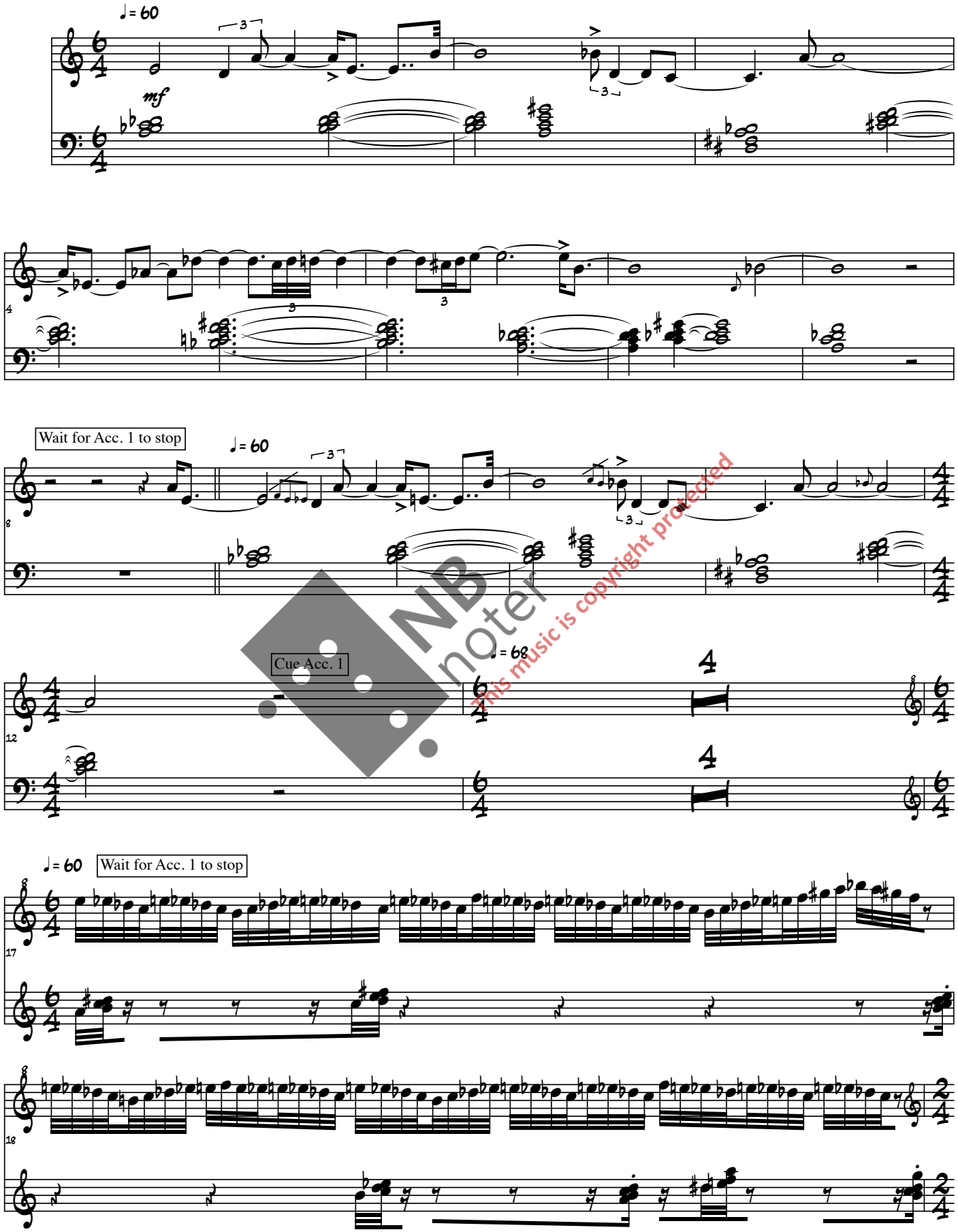
PLAYING WITTGENSTEIN

PART 3

ACCORDION 2

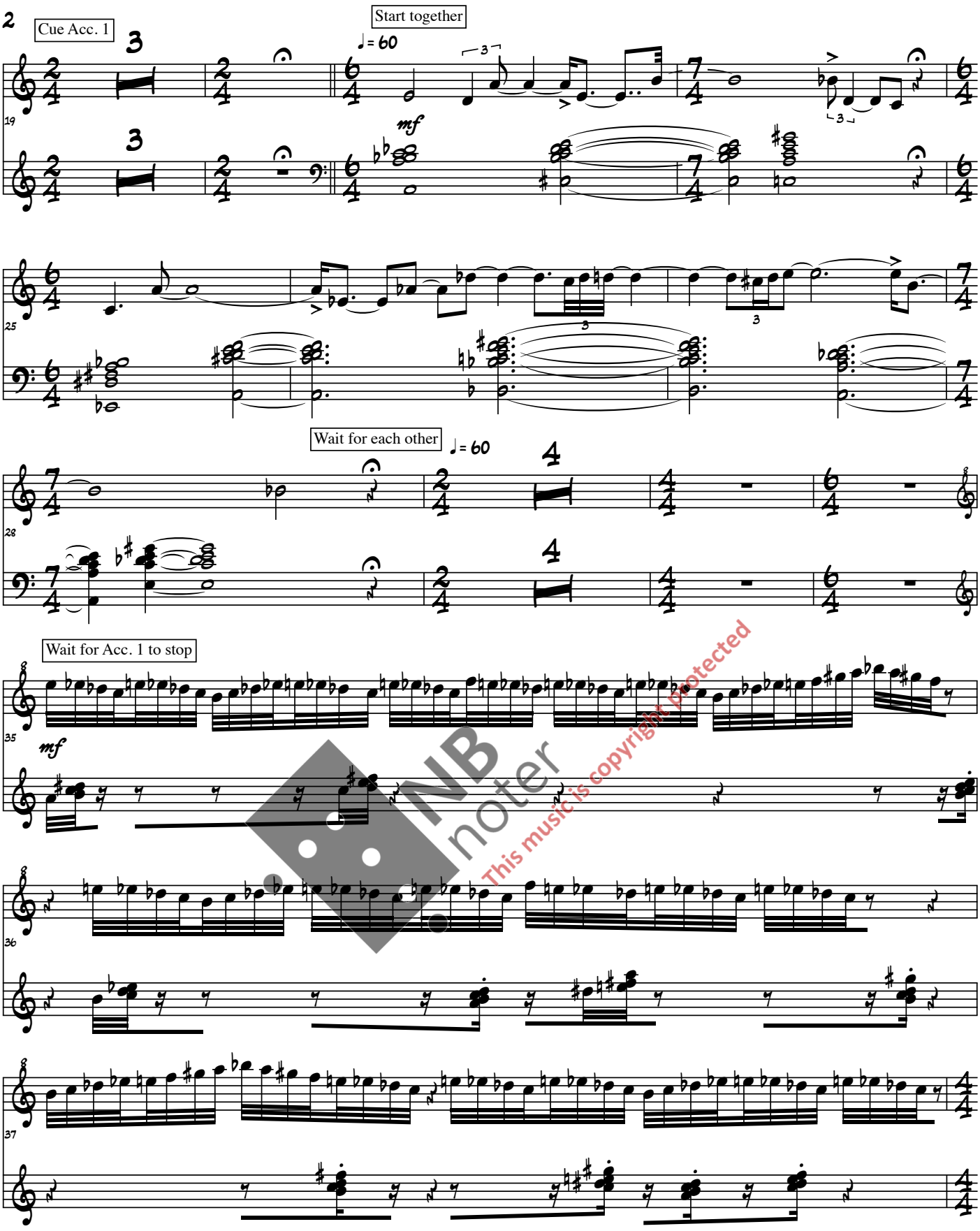
Bjørn Bolstad Skjelbred- 2011

Individual Tempoes

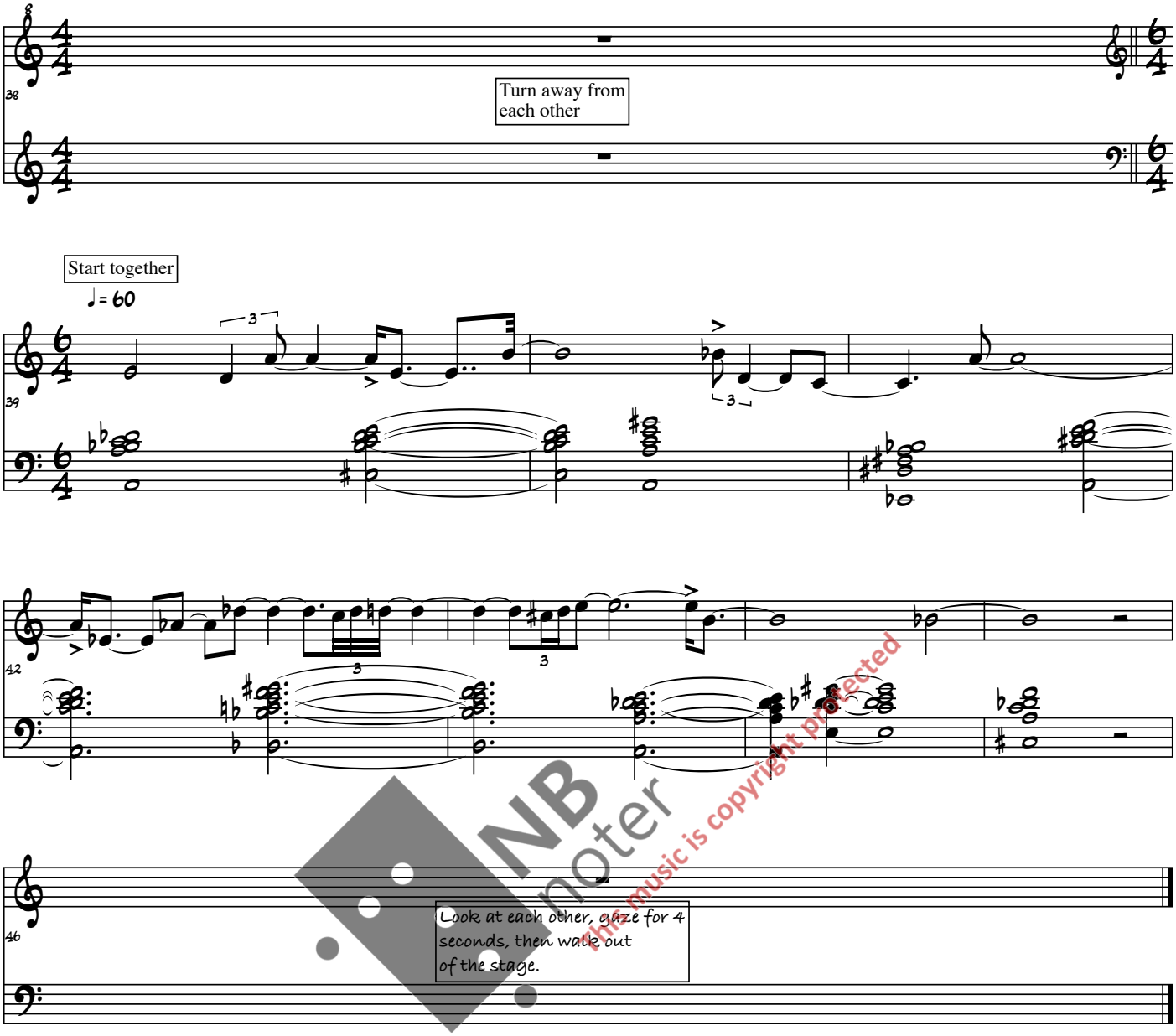


NB noter
This music is copyright protected

©BBS11



NB noter
This music is copyright protected



NB noter
this music is copyright protected