Intermezzi

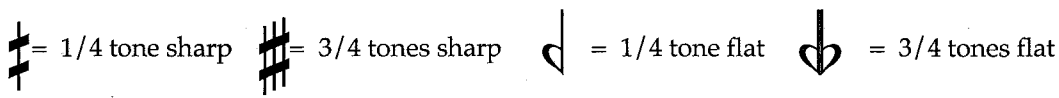
for 8 voices

Ruben Sverre Gjertsen 2004

Commissioned by Ginnungagap
Duration: 15' 30"
The voices may be separately amplified.

Notes for performance:

Microtones



Microtones to produce beatings or modified octaves:
↑ = slightly sharp
↓ = slightly flat

If nescessary; each singer can use a portable cdplayer with prerecorded microtones (repeat on each track) to find pitches. Track numbers may then be written into the score.

Modes of toneproduction

= normal voice

= 1/2 breath, 1/2 voice

= pitched breath

= whisper

= spoken, relative pitches.

= "head tone", may be used in the whole register. In deep register simulated by .

 = fluctuation between head tone and normal sound.

 = half-lunged multiphonic, or granular texture. May be pitched (distorted chord) or unfocused (noise).

 = indrawn air (may be used on most other sonorities).

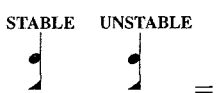
ŝ =water-effect, inhaled air stream with water along sides of tongue (inhaled "ŝ").

 = lung-flutt. (other types of flutter are only described phonetically). Performed lightly and carefully to avoid harming the voice (ossia: "ʁ") ! Dynamics are relative, usually sounding p/mp.

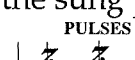
 = unpitched roar, exaggerated airstream, halfvoiced.

Percussion clefs ( or no clef) are used before parts with undefined pitches. Must not to be confused with multiphonics.

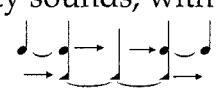
Subharmonics



= split voice. Stable or unstable as an irregular noise or distortion. Sounds, when stable, about an octave lower than the sung pitch.



= low frequency sounds, with relative pitch. When deepest only a few pulses per second (easiest with indrawn air).

Transitions are possible: 

Vibrato

The general standard is non vibrato (NV). Vibrato is used as an ornamentation, preferrably in exaggerated forms (too slow, too fast).
Some approximate suggestions for vibrato speeds:

Oscil lento = 0,5 - 1 vibratocycles per second , range about one quartertone.
Vibrato lento = similar, slightly faster.
Poco vibr. = almost a normal vibrato.
Vibrato estremo = as fast as possible , range between a major second and a third.
Vibrato grottesco / Vibrato grande = range between a third and a fifth around the given center pitch, very rapidly.
Vibrato irregolare = irregular speed and range.

Amplitude vibrato

amp. vibr. = natural oscillation (almost like laugh, and similar to vibrato used in performance of Monteverdi). Written below staffs.
amp. vibr. estremo = exaggerated amplitude vibrato making the sound unstable and, when possible, giving a rapid trill between head tone and normal sound.

= rapid, irregular, unstable dynamic fluctuations within the written range.

Signs above staffs

= hand held before mouth.
= hand moves rapidly in front of and away from mouth.
= hand megaphone.
= the same, closed with hands.
= rapid alternation.

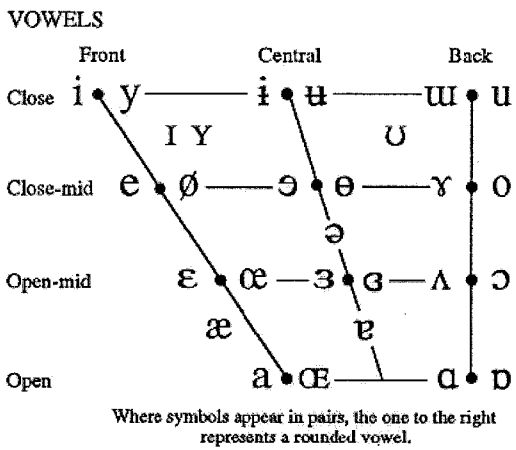
Phonetic symbols

(the international phonetic alphabet, with exceptions marked *)

Vowels

ɑ	= f<u>a</u>ther	(Norw. "a")
ɒ	= h<u>o</u>t (rounded "a")	
e	= t<u>e</u>lephone	(Norw. "e")
ə	= (Ger.) bitt<u>e</u>	
i	= f<u>ee</u>d	(Norw. "i")
u	= (Ger.) d<u>u</u>	(Norw. "o")
ʉ	= between "u" and "y"	(Norw. "u")
y	= (Ger.) füllen	(Norw. "y")
ɛ̃	= (Fr.) f<u>i</u>n	
æ	= c<u>a</u>t	(Norw. "æ")
ʌ	= c<u>u</u>t	
ø	= (Ger.) schön (Fr.) bl<u>eu</u>	(Norw. "ø")
* o	= b<u>o</u>ring	(Norw. "å")

Chart from the International Phonetic Association:



Consonants

b = but
ç = (Ger.) ich (Norw. "kj")
d = desk
ð = then
f = feet
g = go
ɢ = between "g" and " l" at the back of the throat (full throat click when time, otherwise closer to "g")
h = hair
j = yet
k = cat
*q = "k" at back of the mouth
l = (Ger.) lied
ʟ = thick "l"

m = mother
n = name
ɲ = (Eng. / Fr.) cognac
N = (Eng. /Norw.) "ng"
p = lap (no breath sound)
ɻ = rabbit
r = rolled "r" of Spanish, Italian, Russian
ʀ = (Fr.) arracher (drøvel-r)
ʁ = (Fr.) peur (skarre-r)
x = (Ger.) ach (Spanish) Juan
s = send
ŝ = (see water-effect)
ʃ = shoe (Norw. "skj")
ʒ = (Fr.) journal
t = aunt
v = avoid
w = well
z = zebra
’ = ejective, exaggerated consonant (p’ t’ k’ s’)

Combinations

$\overset{y}{3}$---------' = both performed simultanously.

$\overset{\rightarrow o \rightarrow \tilde{\varepsilon} \rightarrow e}{m}$---------' = lower performed continously, upper is transition.

The symbols are propotionally placed. In a word ending on consonant, the consonant will sound through most of the note, unless placed separately or at the end of the note.

Overtones

For phonetic transitions, emphasize and listen to overtones rather than language sounds, like a throat singer, finding a progression of transition sounds giving a clear rise or fall of overtones.

Example; m----------▸ i may be performed; NASAL m u o ɒ ɑ æ e ʉ y i i / 3 3 y

The most clear overtones are often between several normal pronounciations. Therefore, phonetic combinations are often written in the score.

For lower overtones, the mouth is given exaggerated room of resonance, sounds are placed more towards the back of the mouth; like lips of 'o', back of mouth coloured by 'ɒ'.

At 'ɑ', a smooth transition is to suddenly move it far back in the mouth and up the nose, making it similar to a nasal 'æ'.

For higher, more piercing overtones, the room of resonance is narrower, but still performed more rounded, towards the back of the mouth, and nasal, than in language pronounciation.

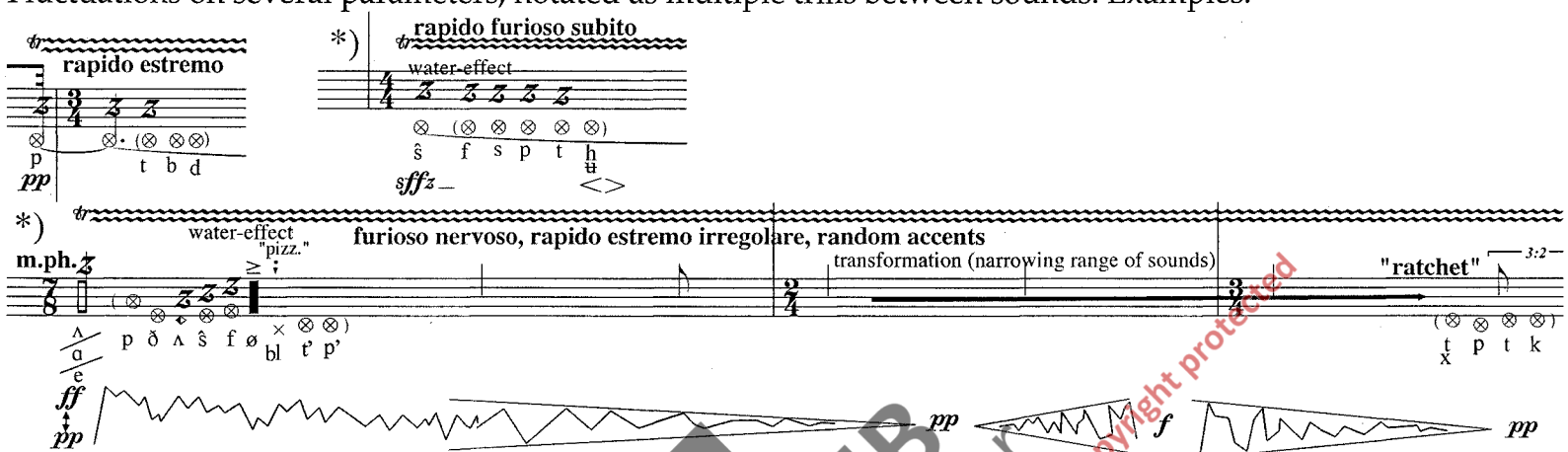
Phonetic transitions in the score always mean smooth timbral transitions, but when the word NASAL is added, even more effort should be made to damp or swallow the fundamental. To simplify the reading, all means of emphasizing overtones are called NASAL. This is used only for single phrases or notes.

NASAL ↘ NORM ↗ NASAL = transition between extremely emphasized overtones and more balanced timbres.

Formants for different phonems are in fixed ranges, different for female and male voices. The actual overtone, or main formant achieved therefore depend on register. In some cases pitches of overtones are written.

Multiplexes

Fluctuations on several parameters, notated as multiple trills between sounds. Examples:



Exact content may be hard to control. Practise the written succetions at low speed and let this inspire the improvisation as accurately as possible.

Techniques distorting tone or intonation

Several techniques or transitions between sonorities will make the pitch or tone quality unstable. This is intended and should not be resisted. Examples:

Extreme and sudden dynamic changes (pp<ff>pp------<ff); the pitch should be kept as stable as possible, while the extreme contrast is the most important. Dynamics are not absolute, but depend on the used technique.

Normal sound to head-tone /normal sound to breath; the result can be strange vibratos and jumps in register.

High, nasal headtones with heavy amplitudevibrato will emphasize the break in the voice, sounding almost like a double trill. Amplitude vibrato on multiphonics give outbursts of normal voice.

Normal sound to multiphonics; will make the pitch gradually or suddenly more unstable, since the multiphonic itself is unstable. Phonems will change dynamics and density of multiphonics.

In these cases, the notation gives the actions to perform, not precise sounding results.

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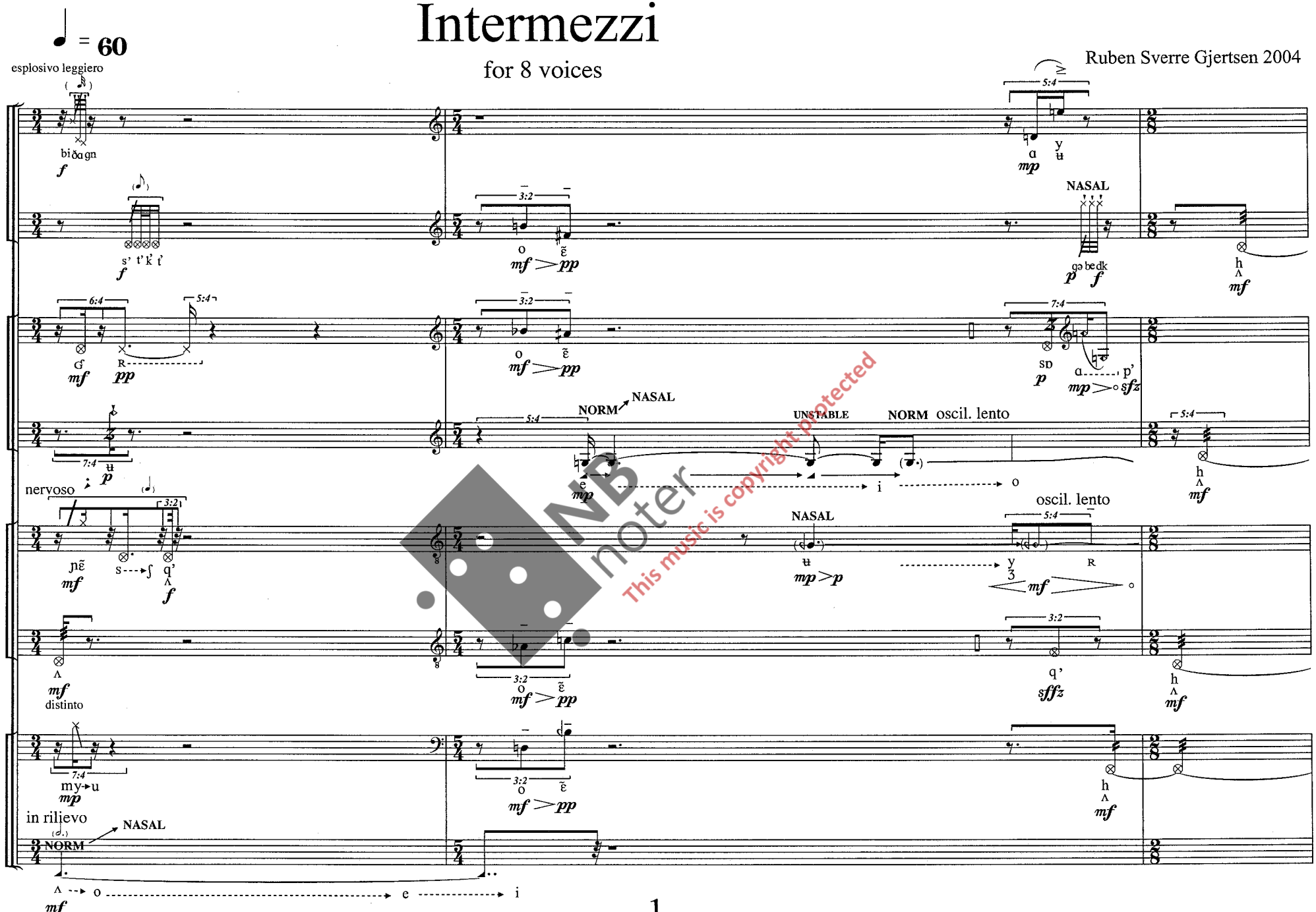
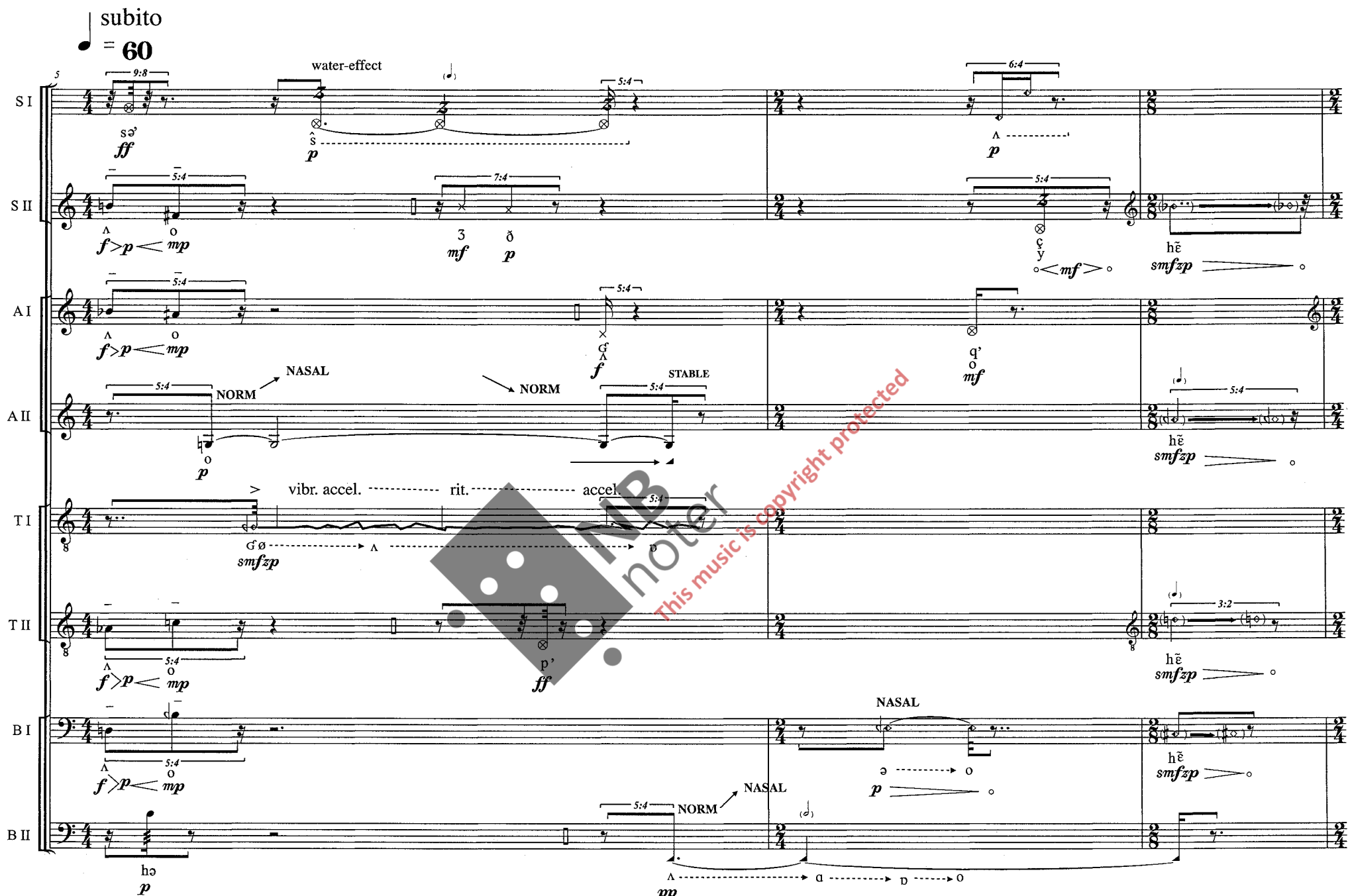
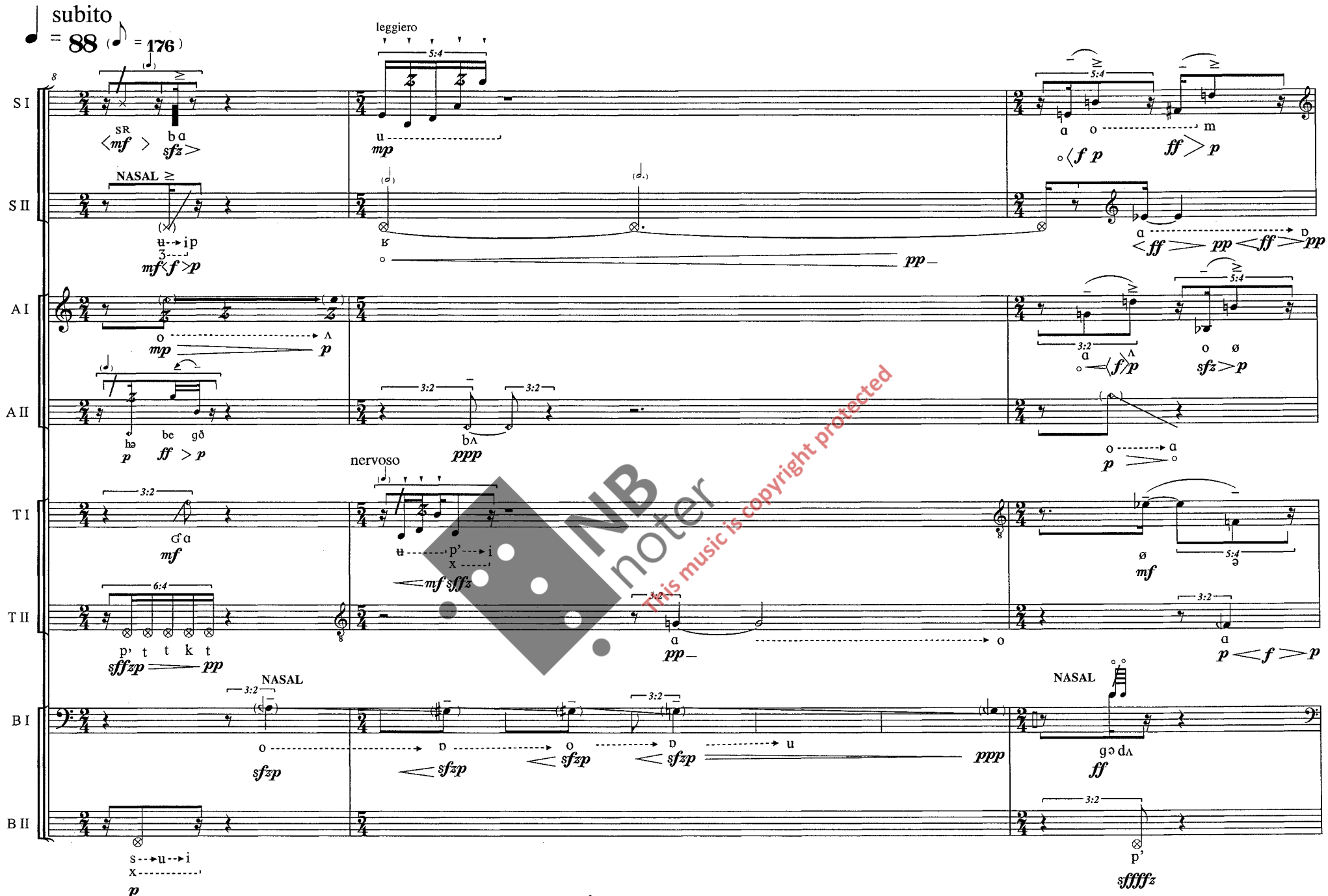
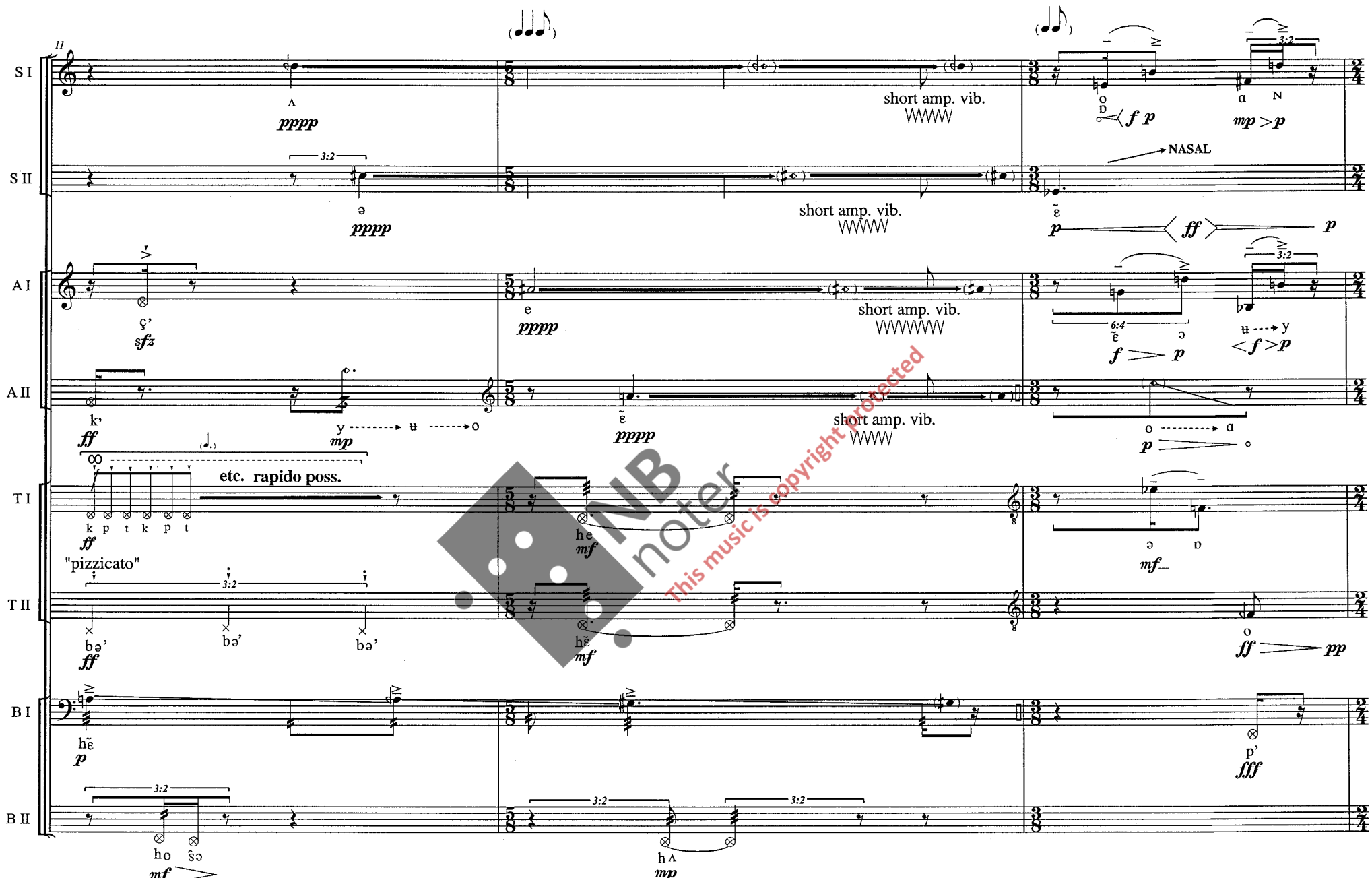
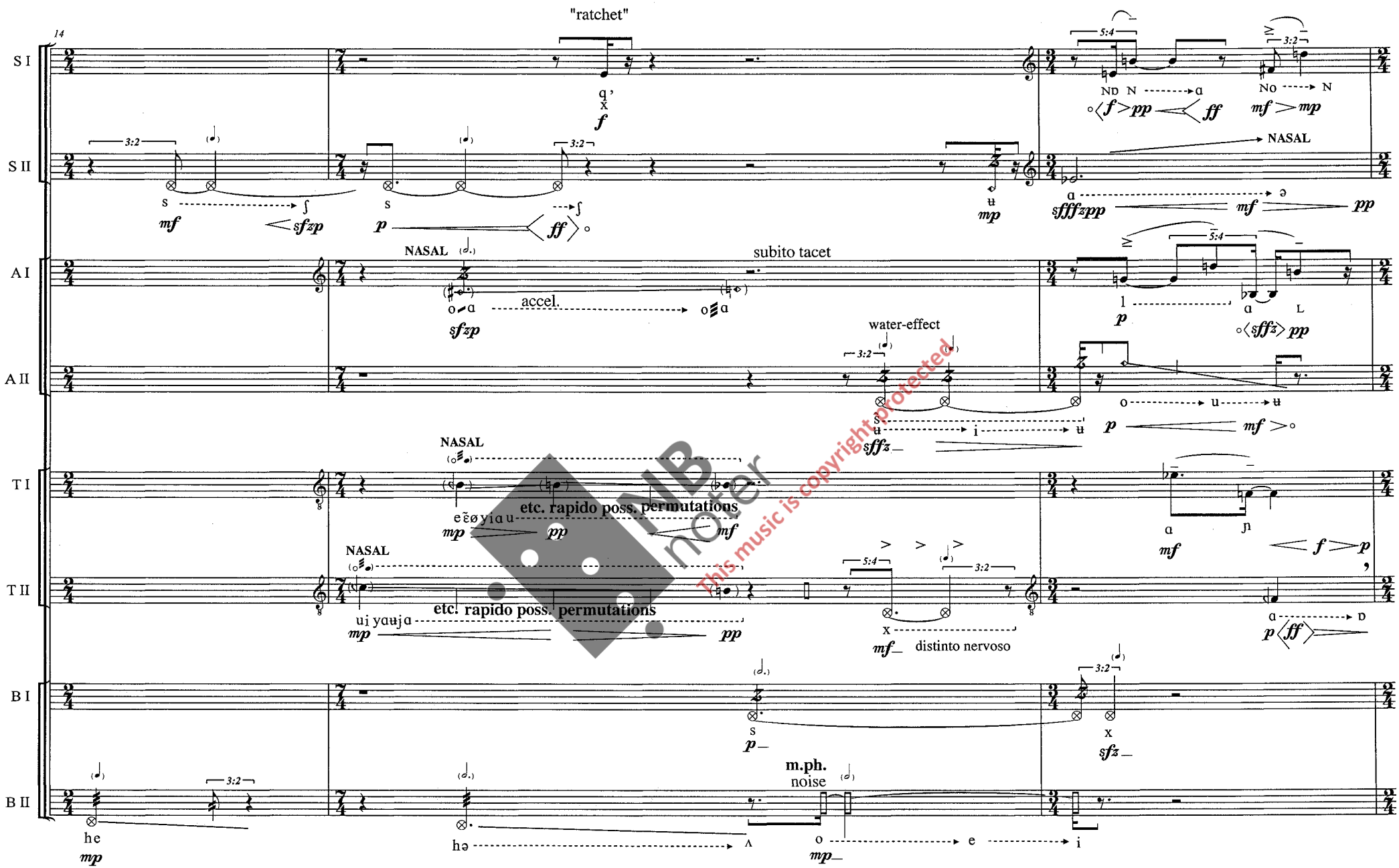
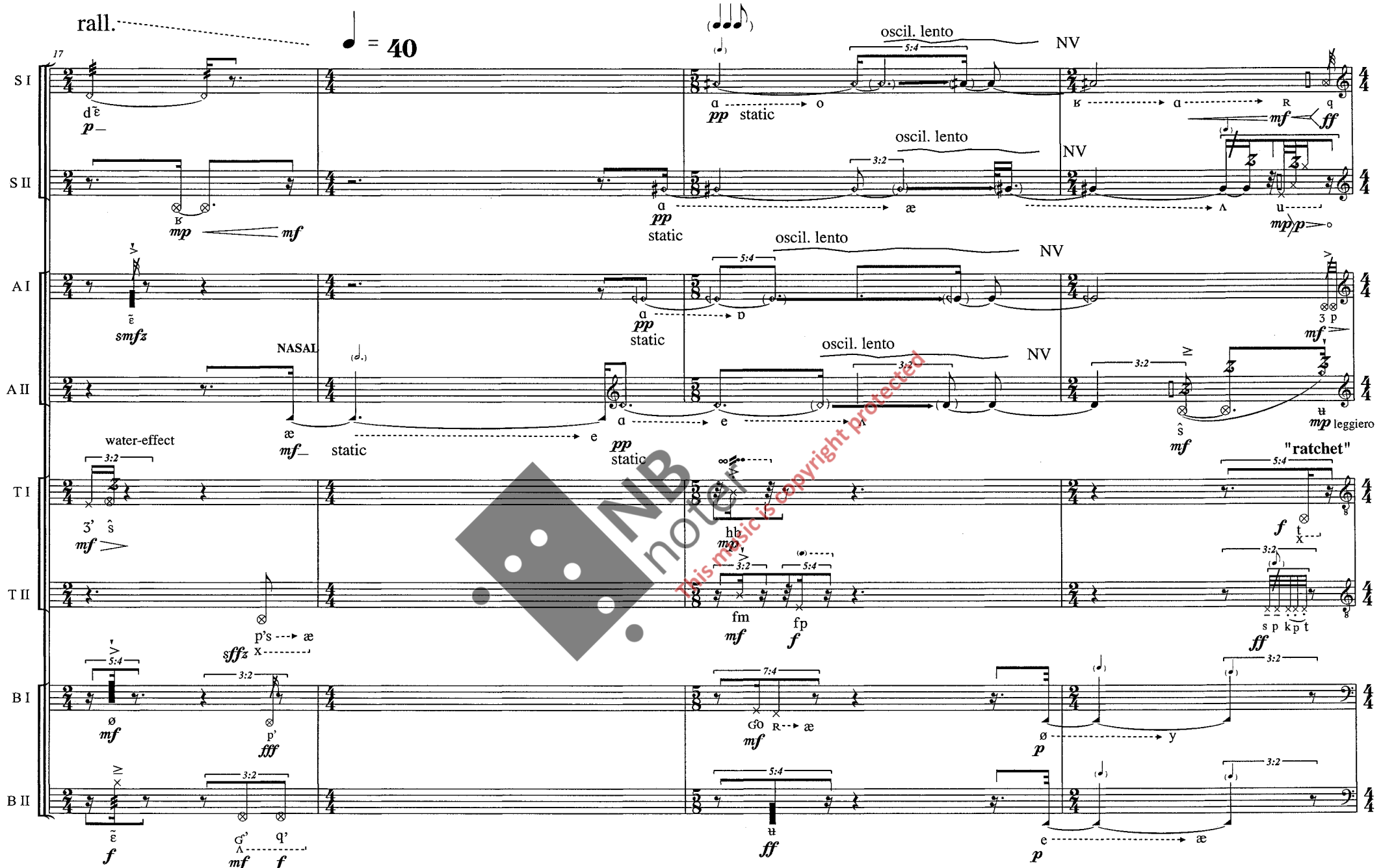









14
"ratchet"
S I
S II
A I
A II
T I
T II
B I
B II
NASAL
subito tacet
accel.
water-effect
etc. rapido poss. permutations
etc. rapido poss. permutations
distinto nervoso
m.ph.
noise
This music is copyright protected.


rall.
♩ = 40
17
S I
S II
A I
A II
T I
T II
B I
B II
oscil. lento
NV
static
NASAL
water-effect
"ratchet"
leggiero
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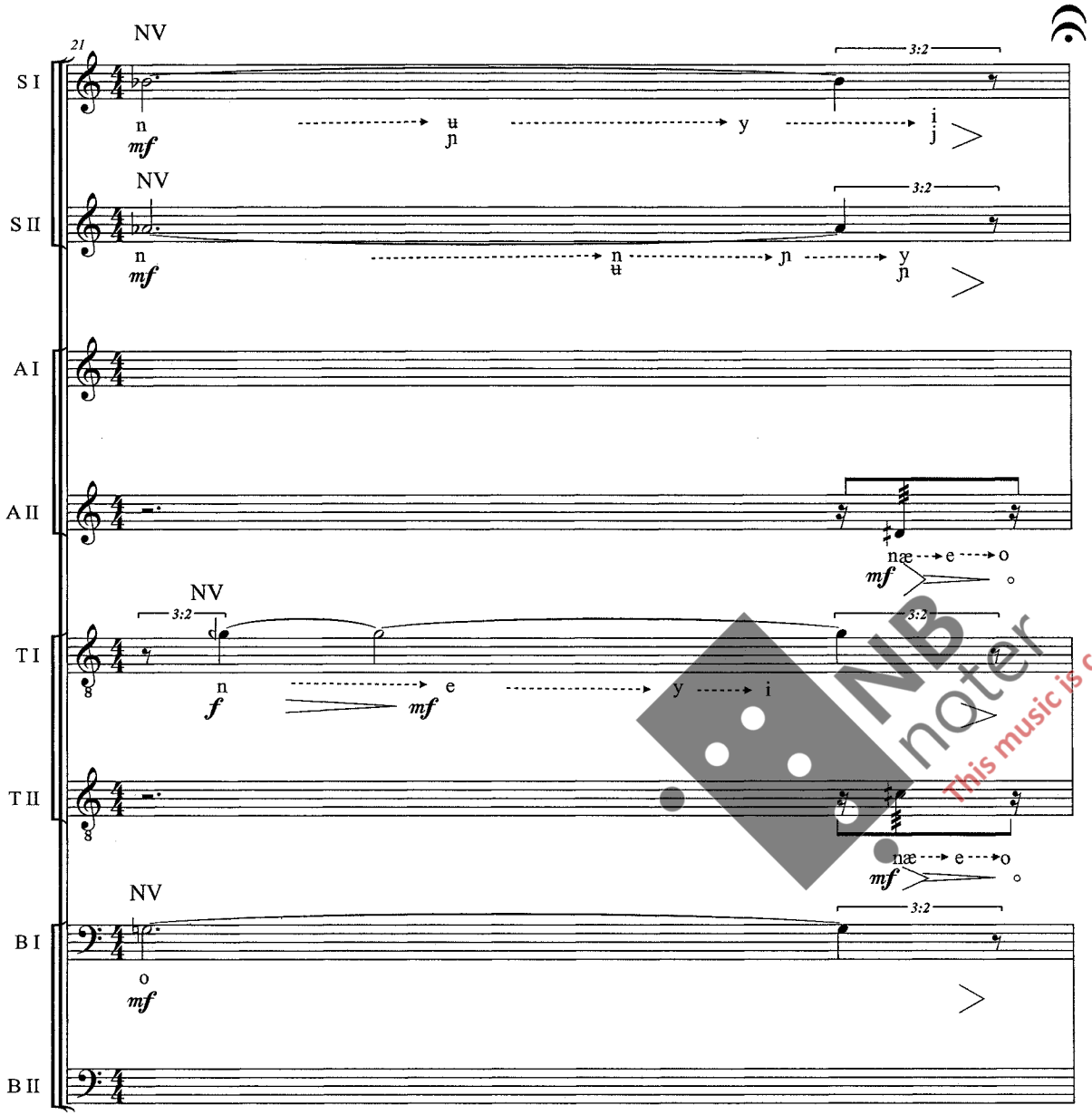
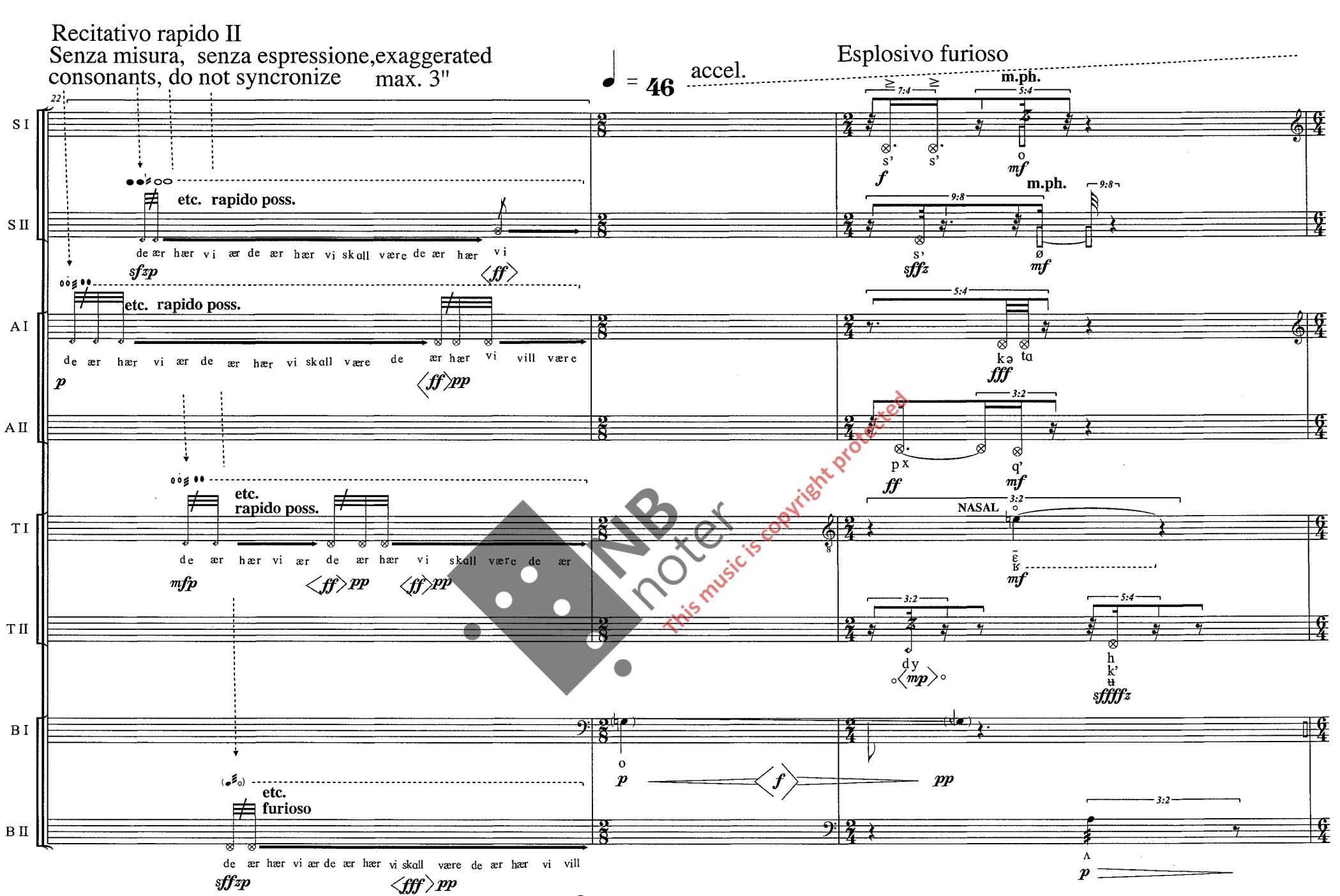
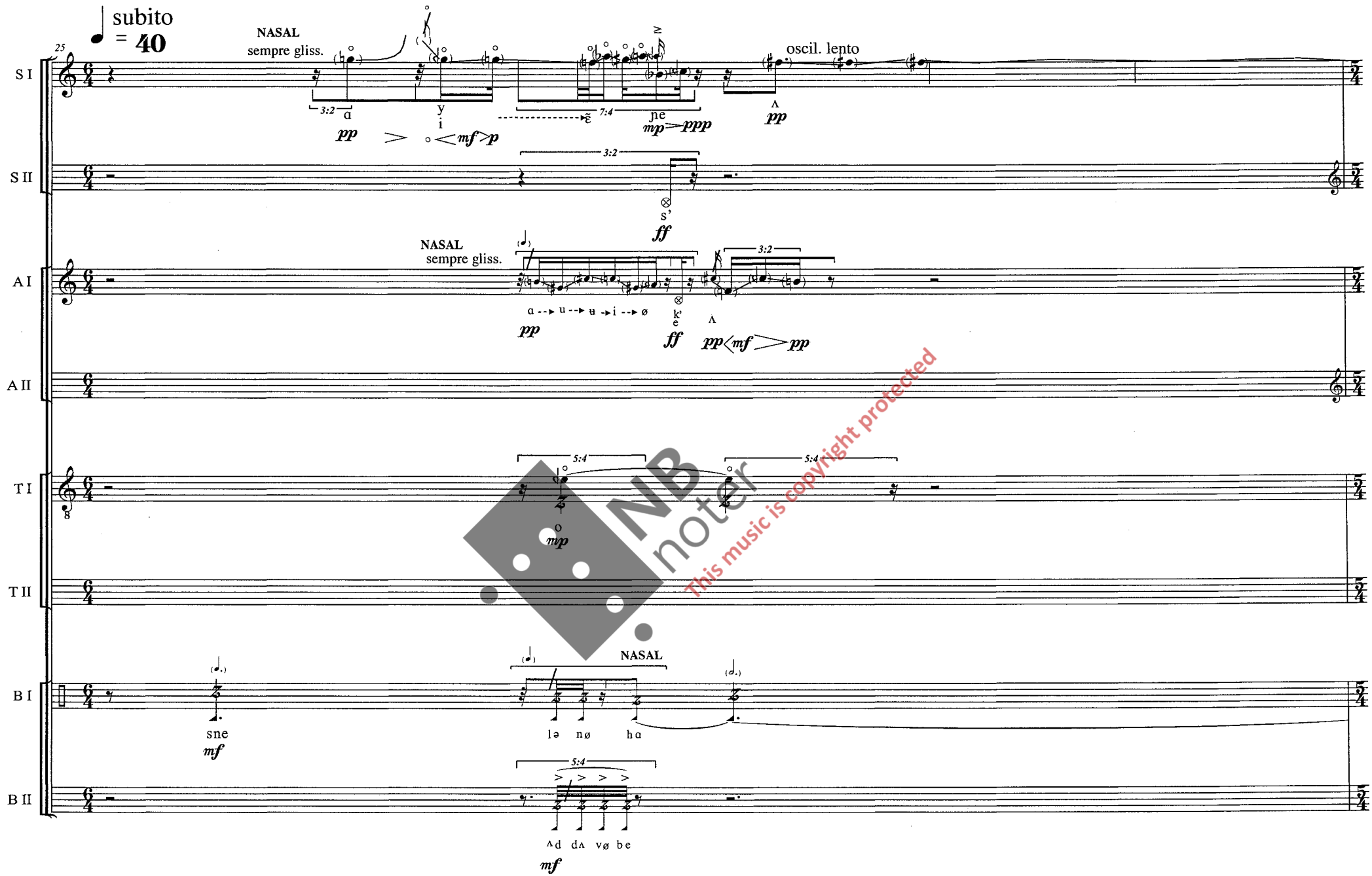
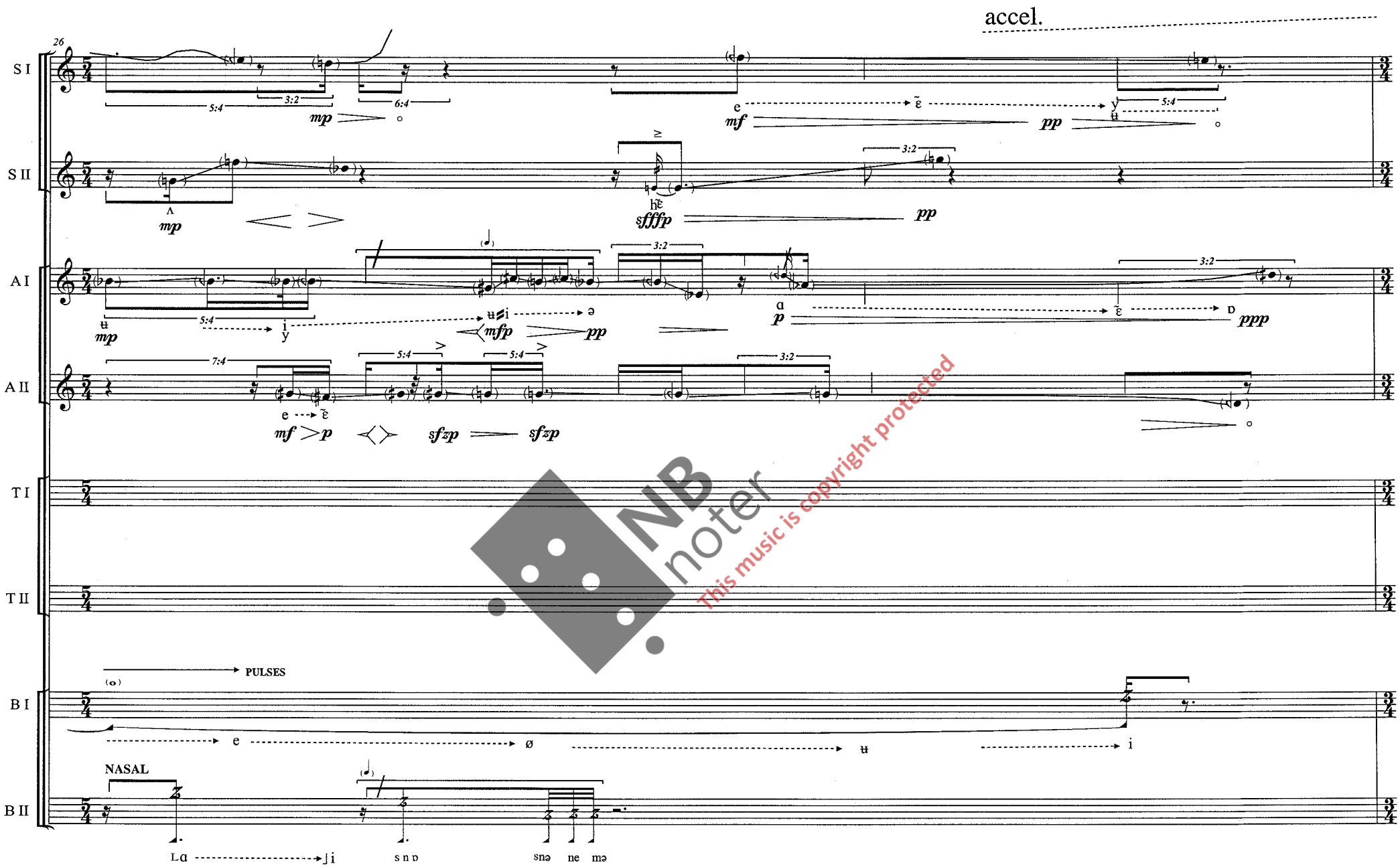
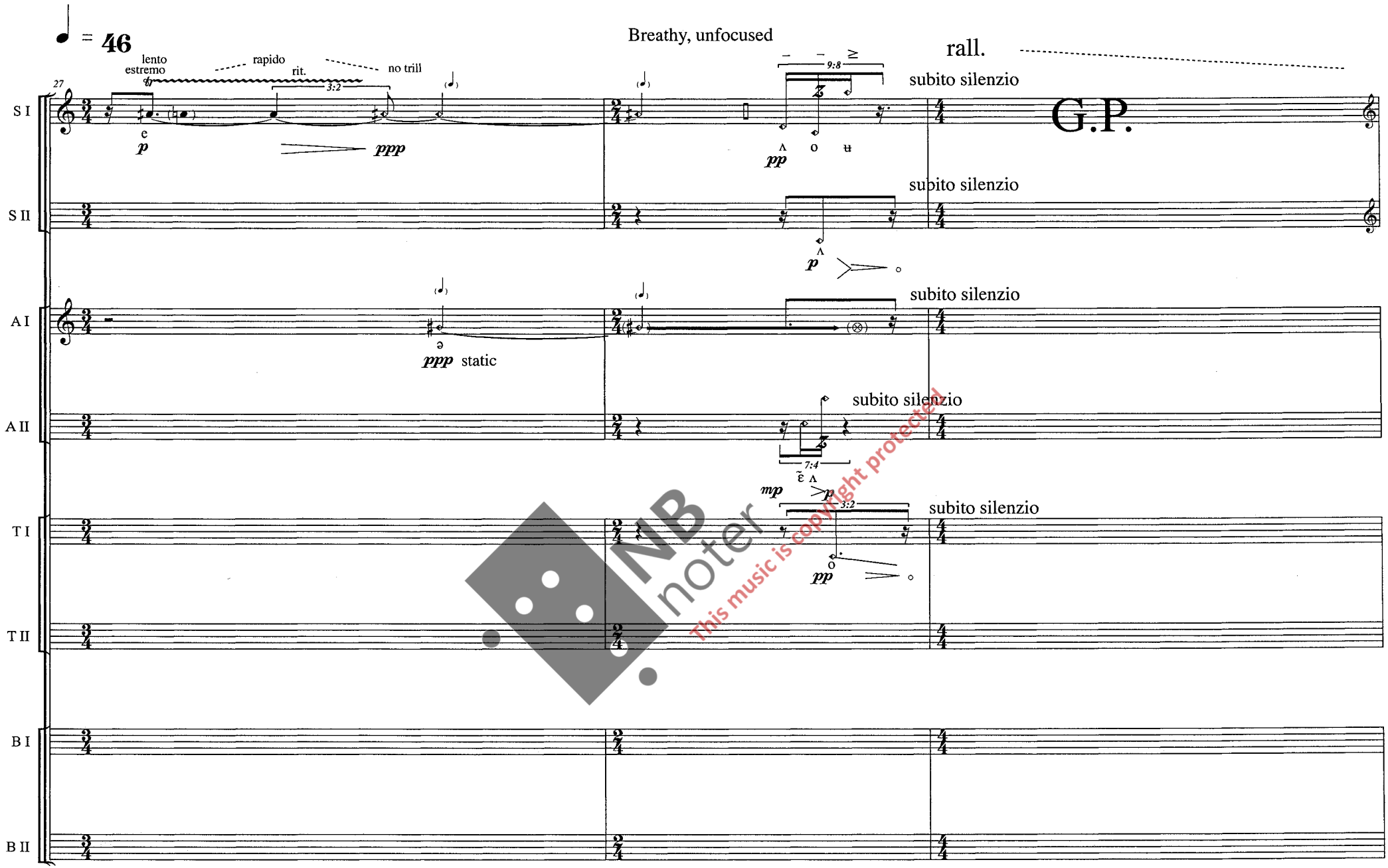
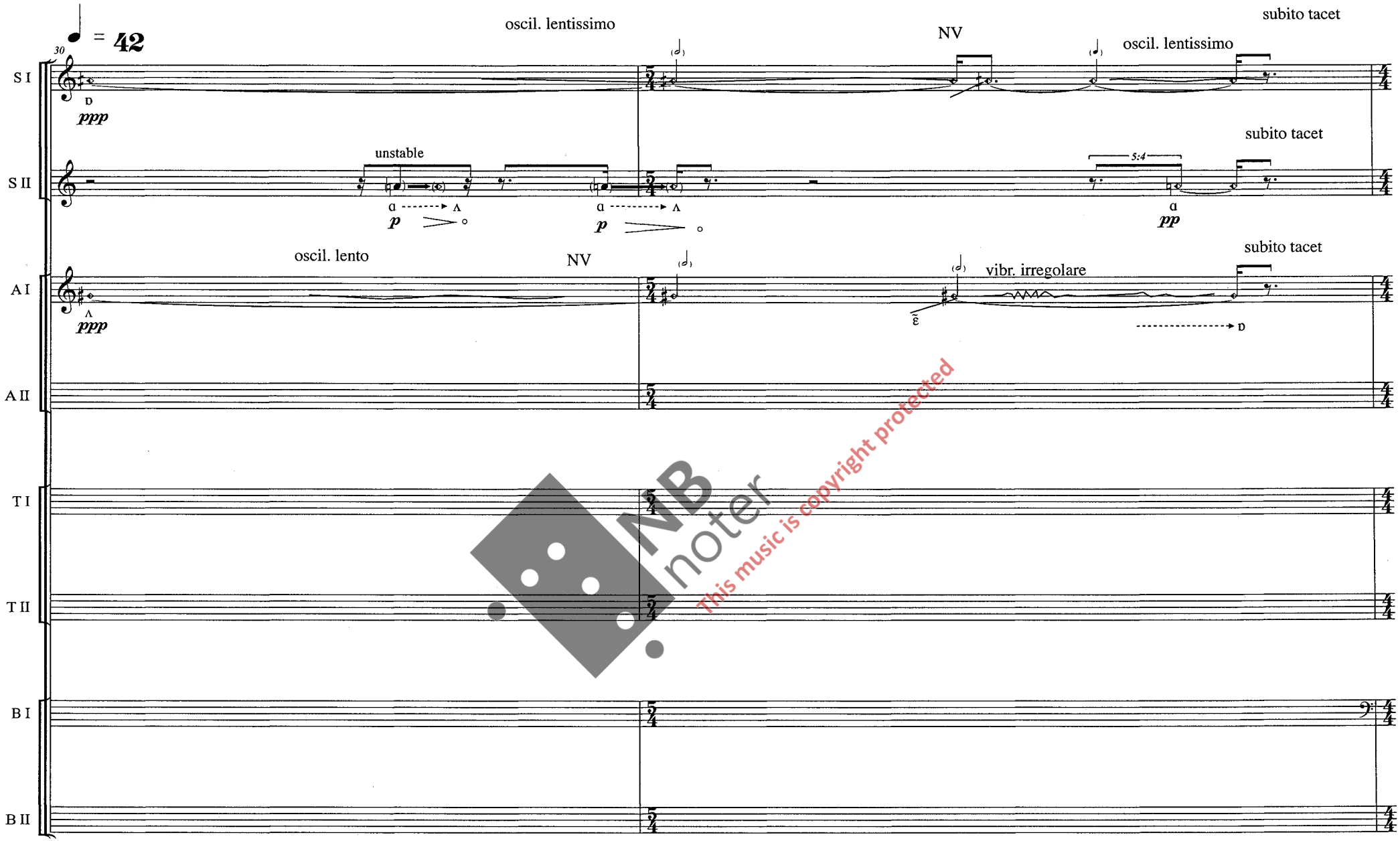


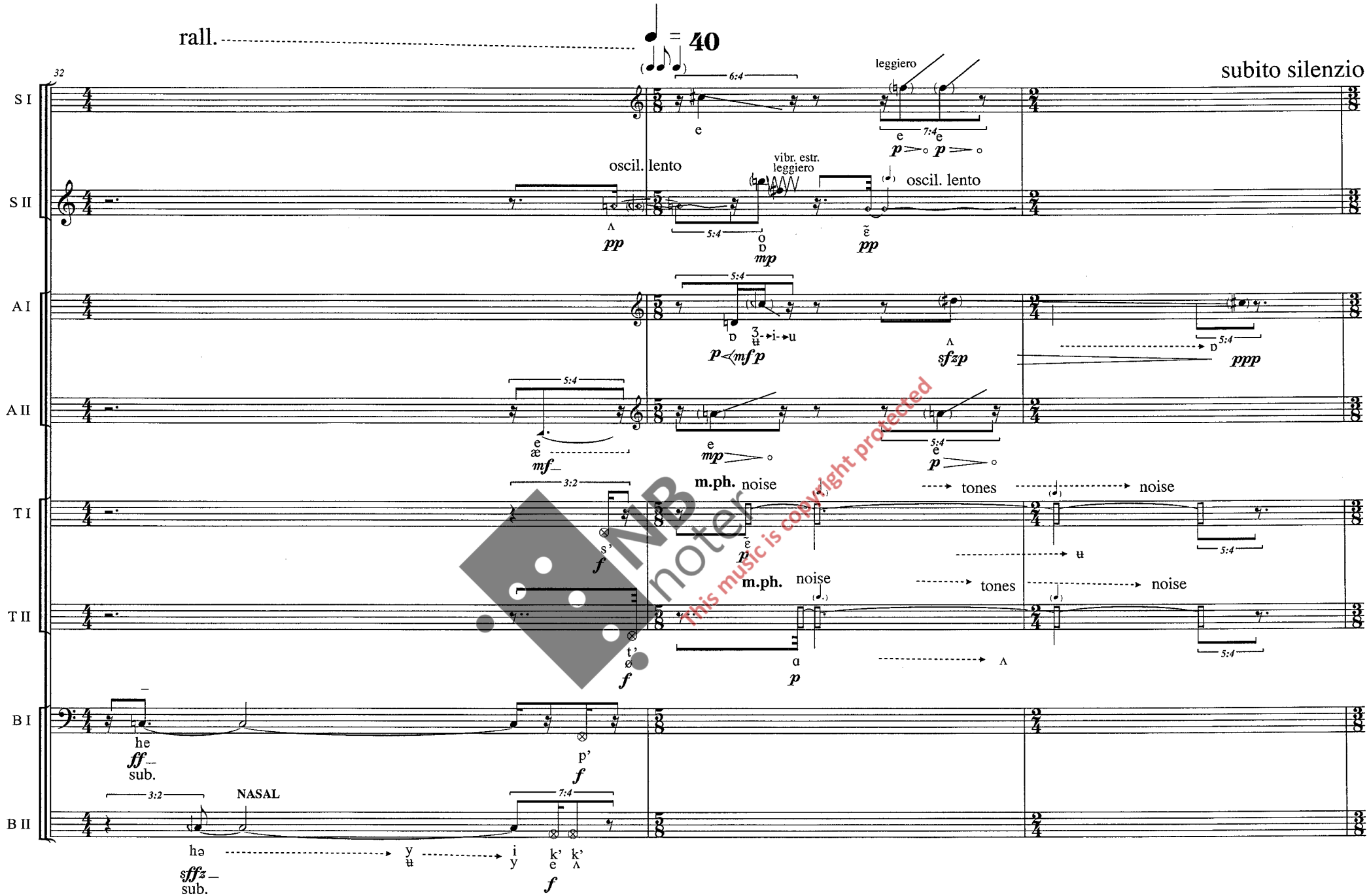


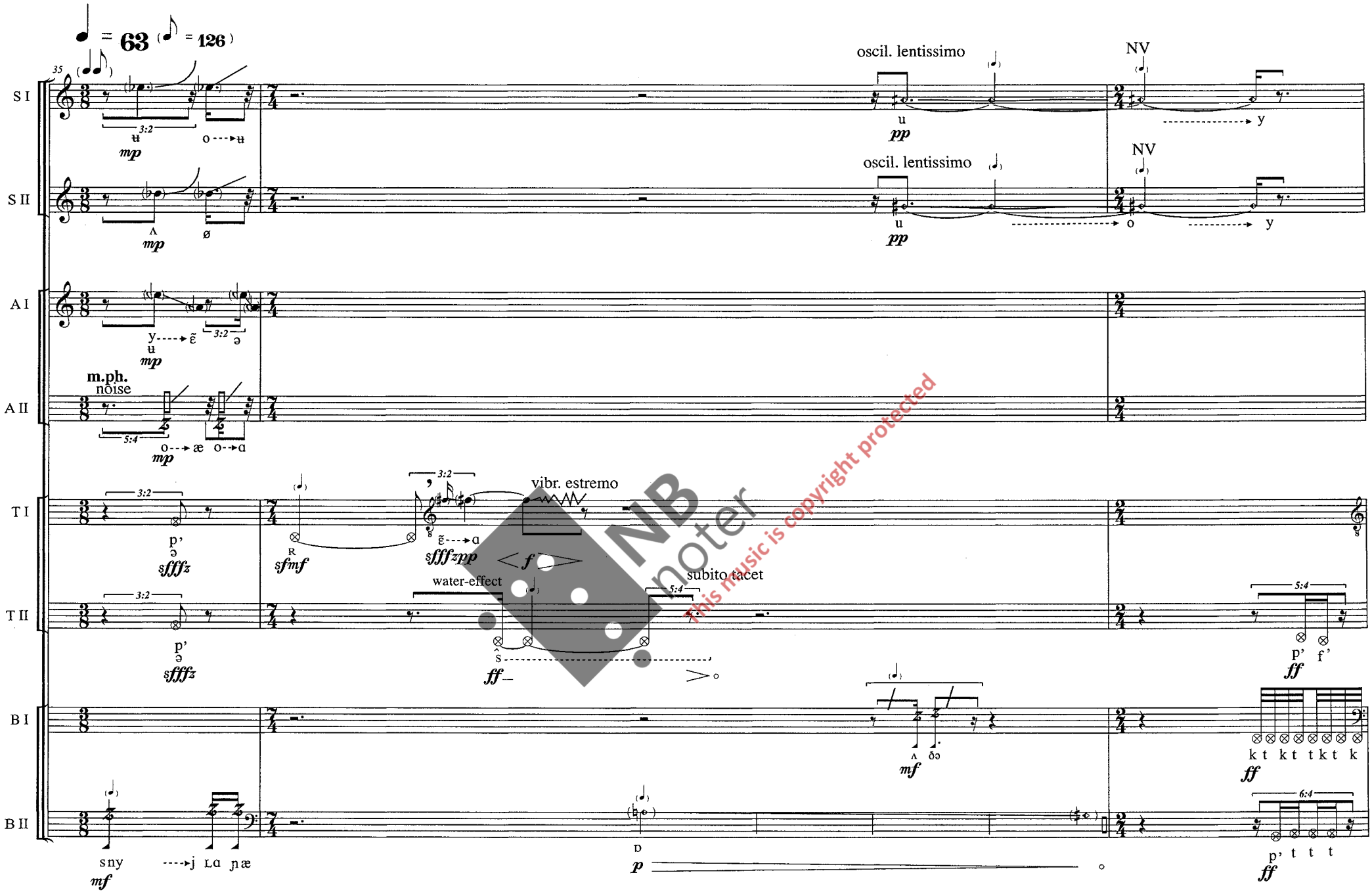


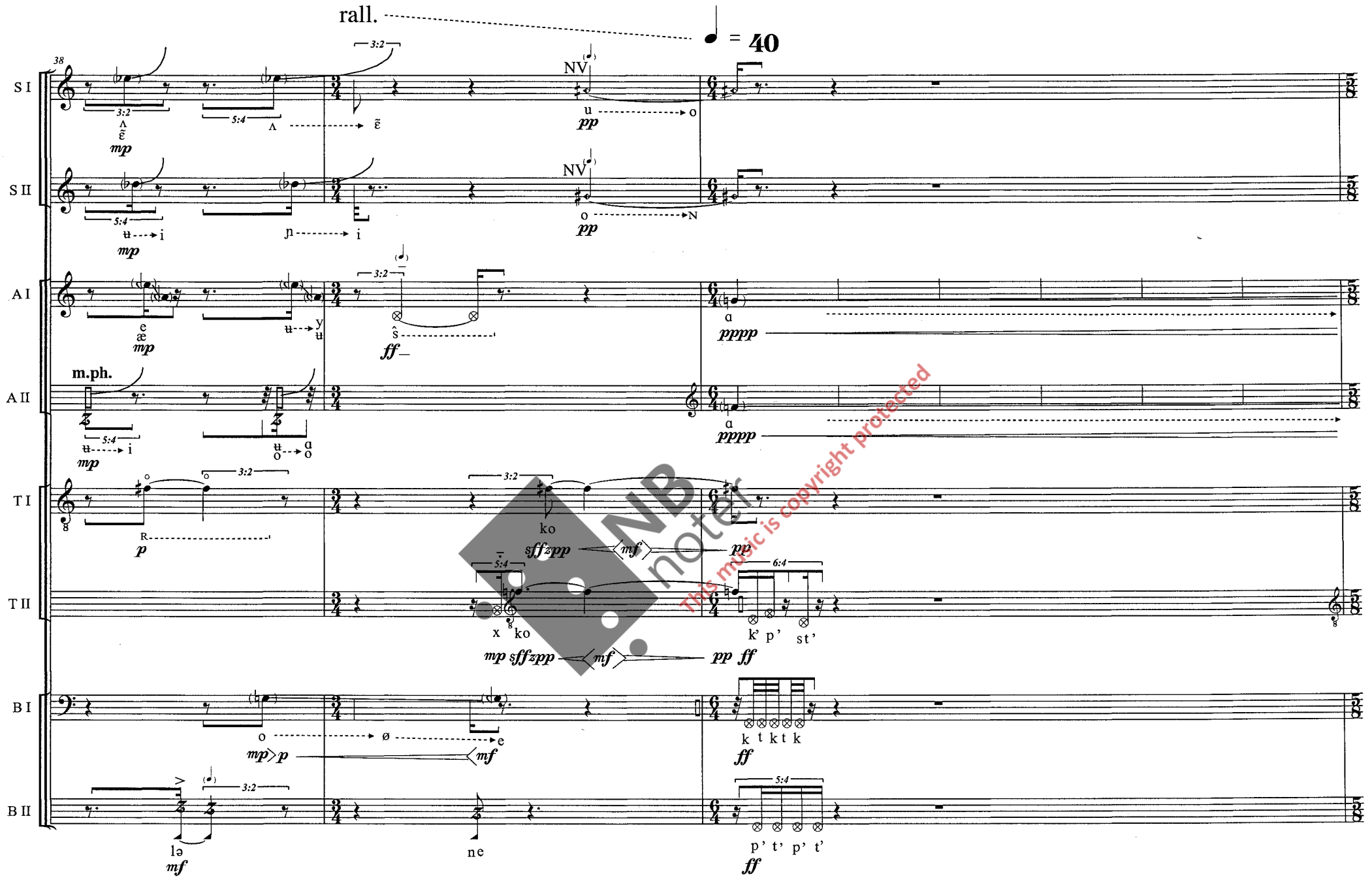


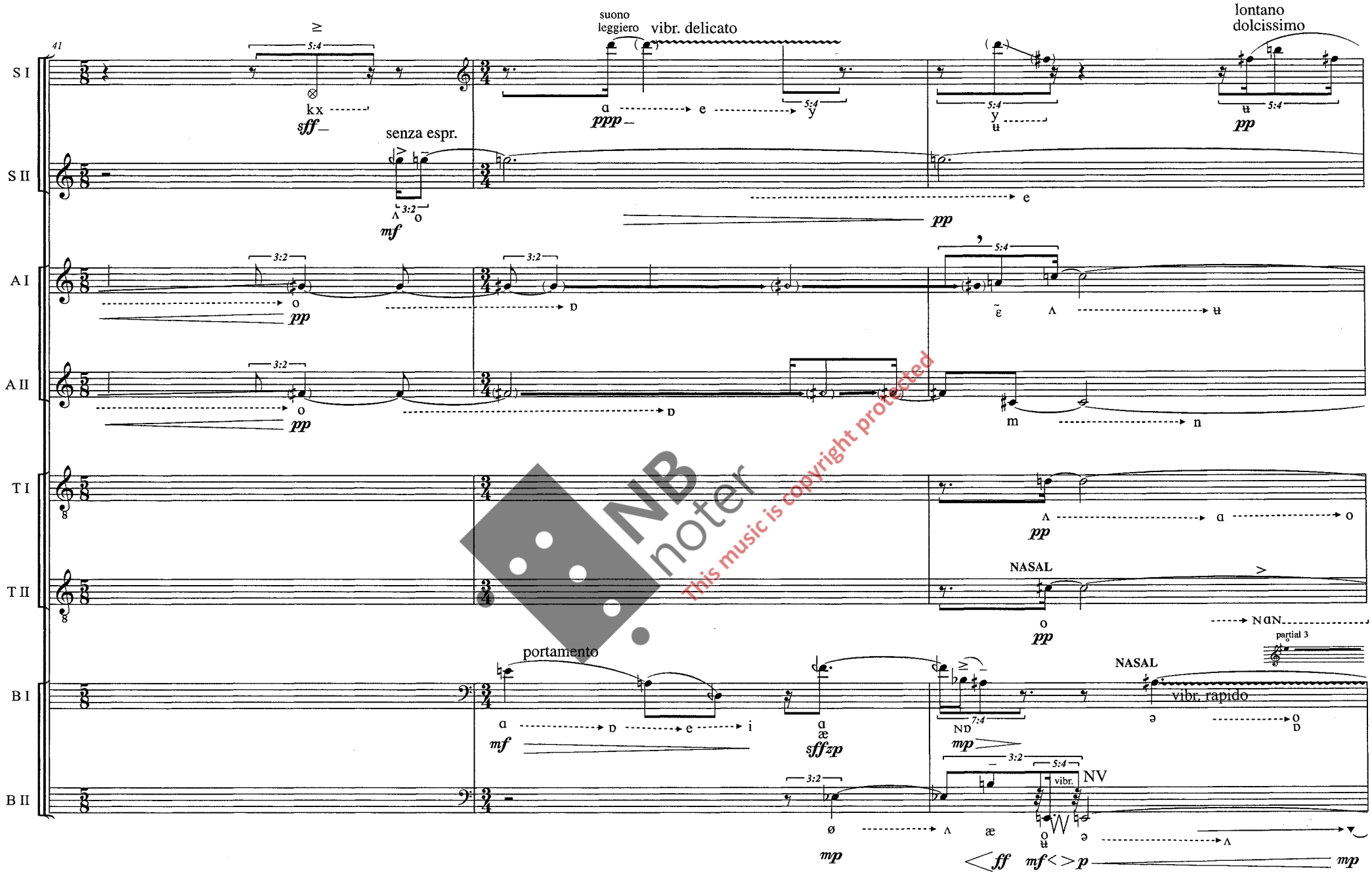


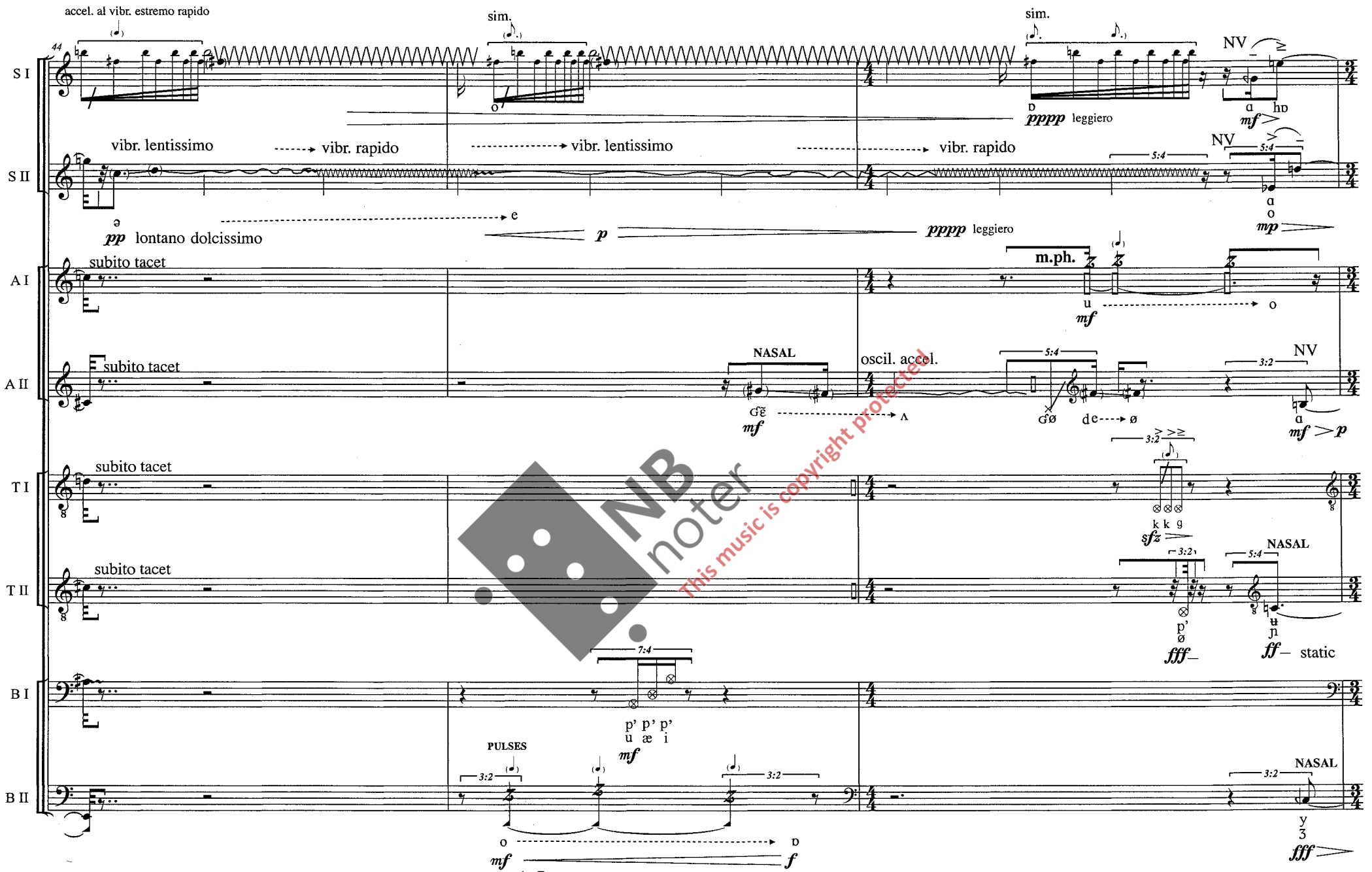


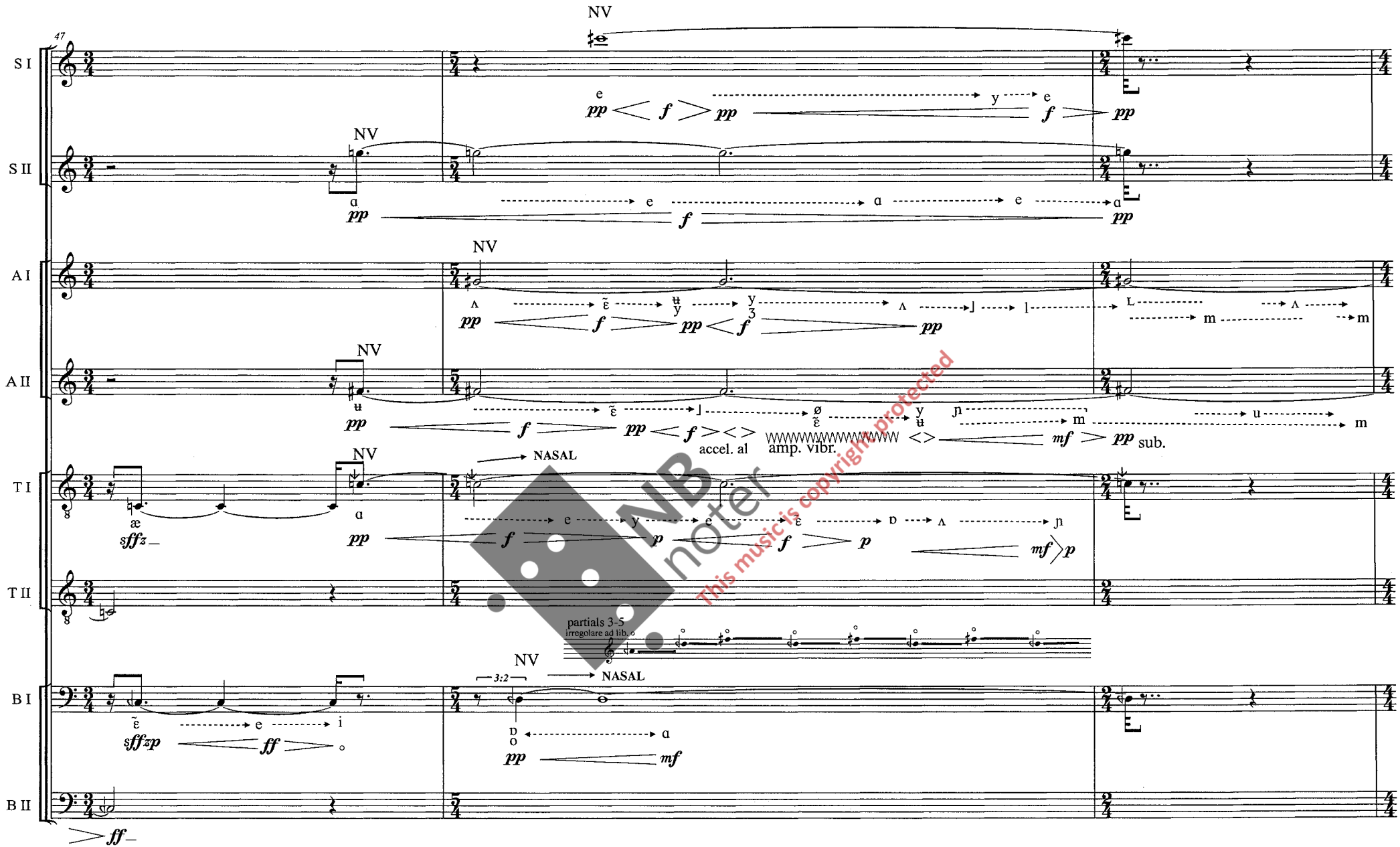


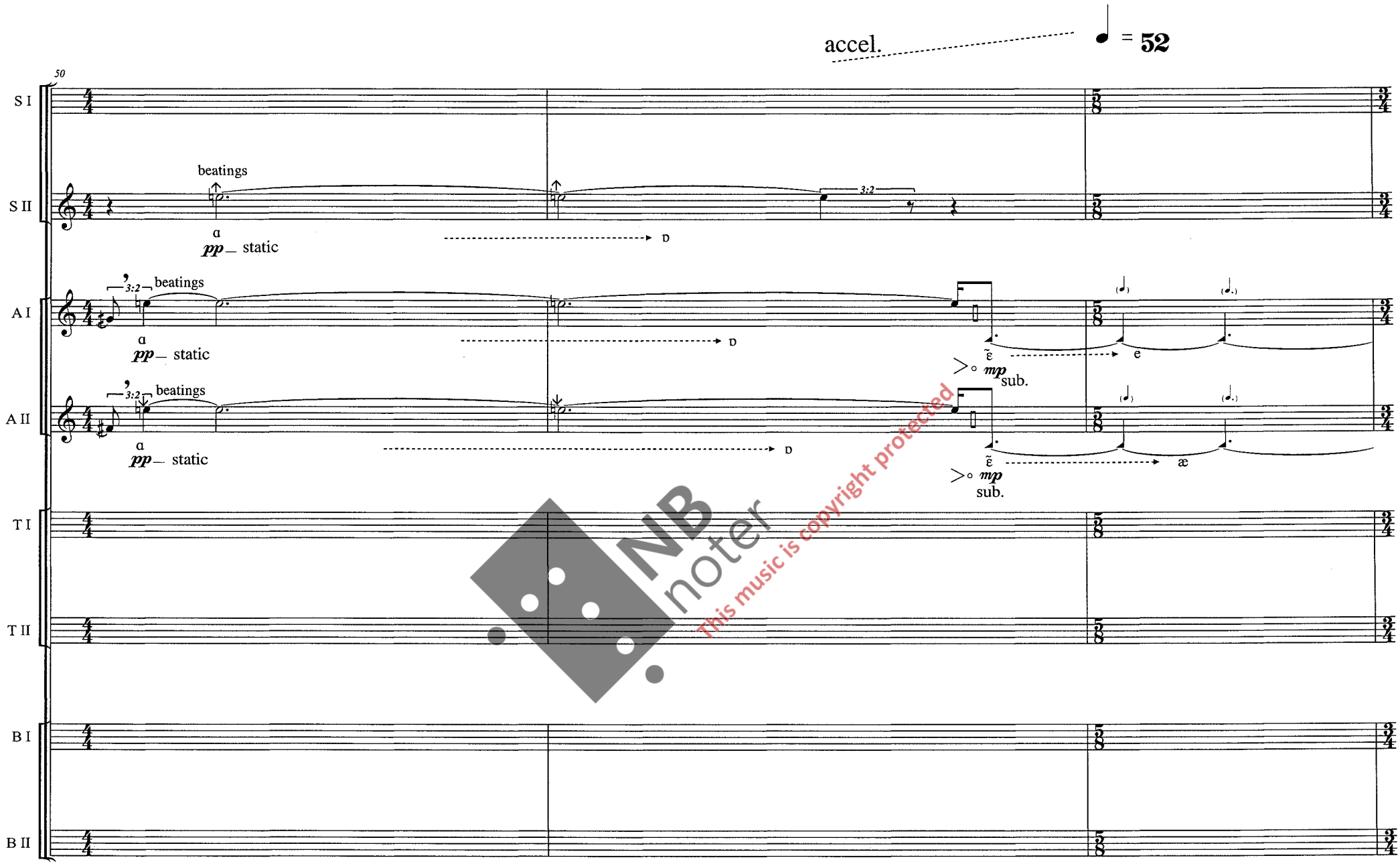


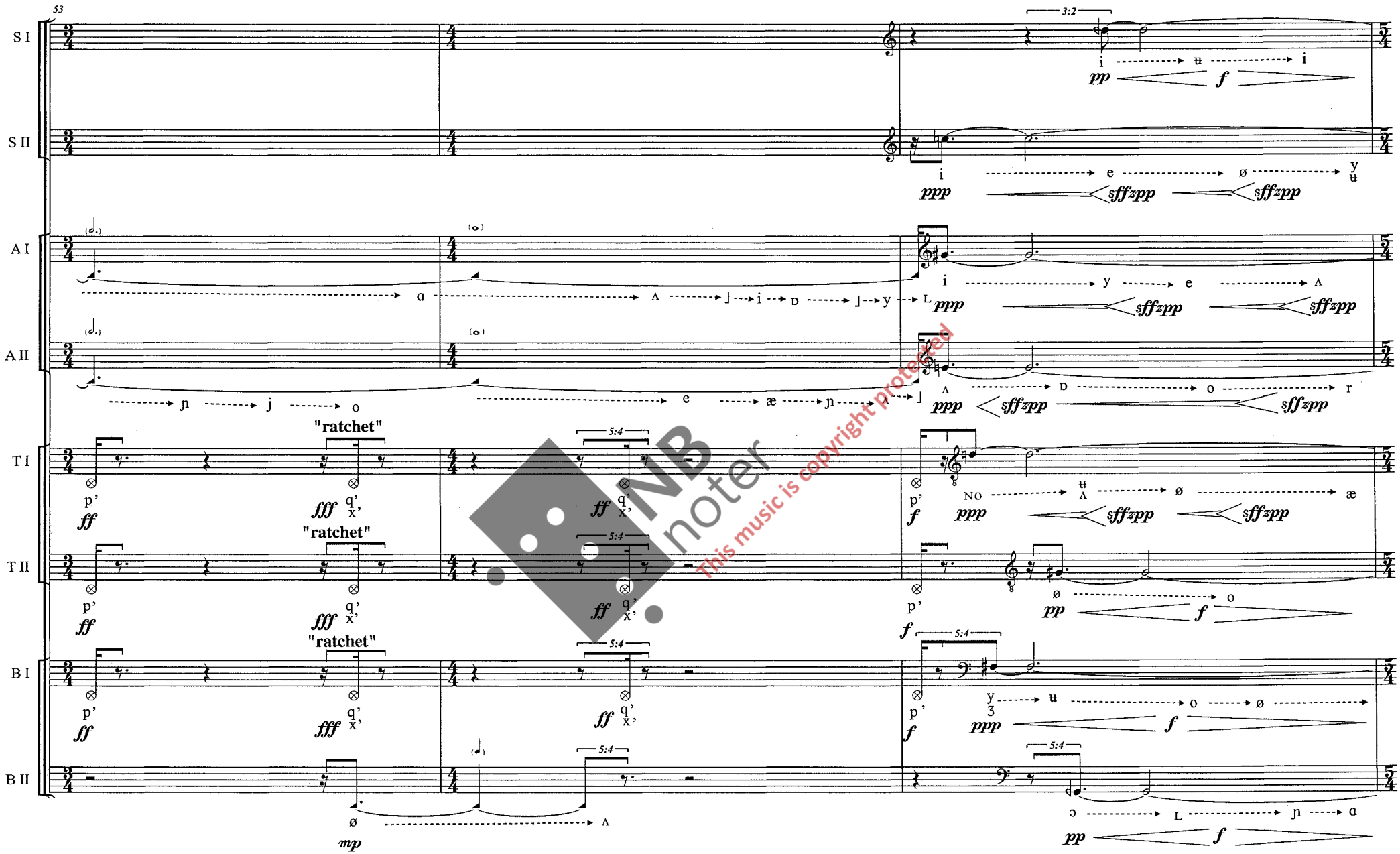


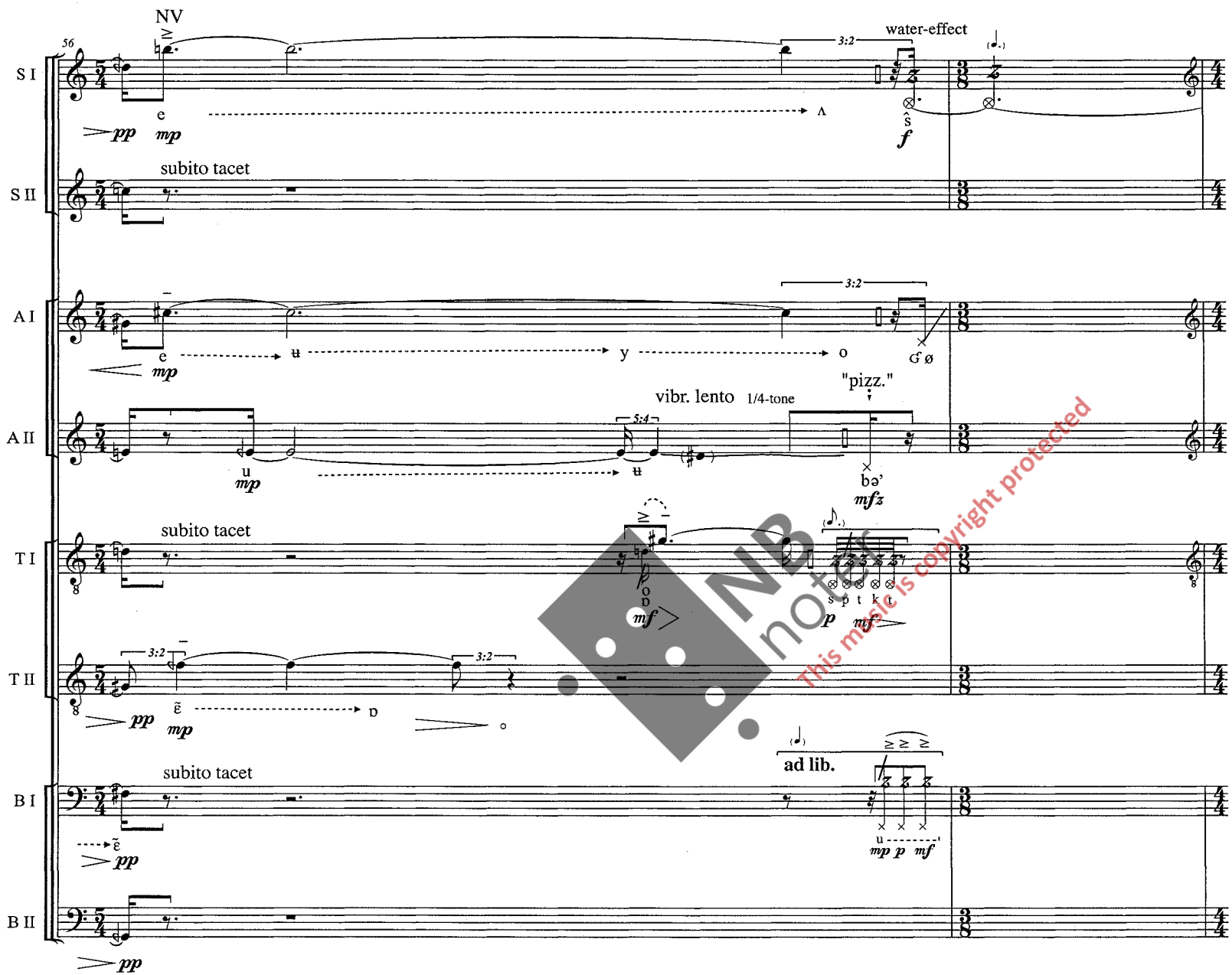


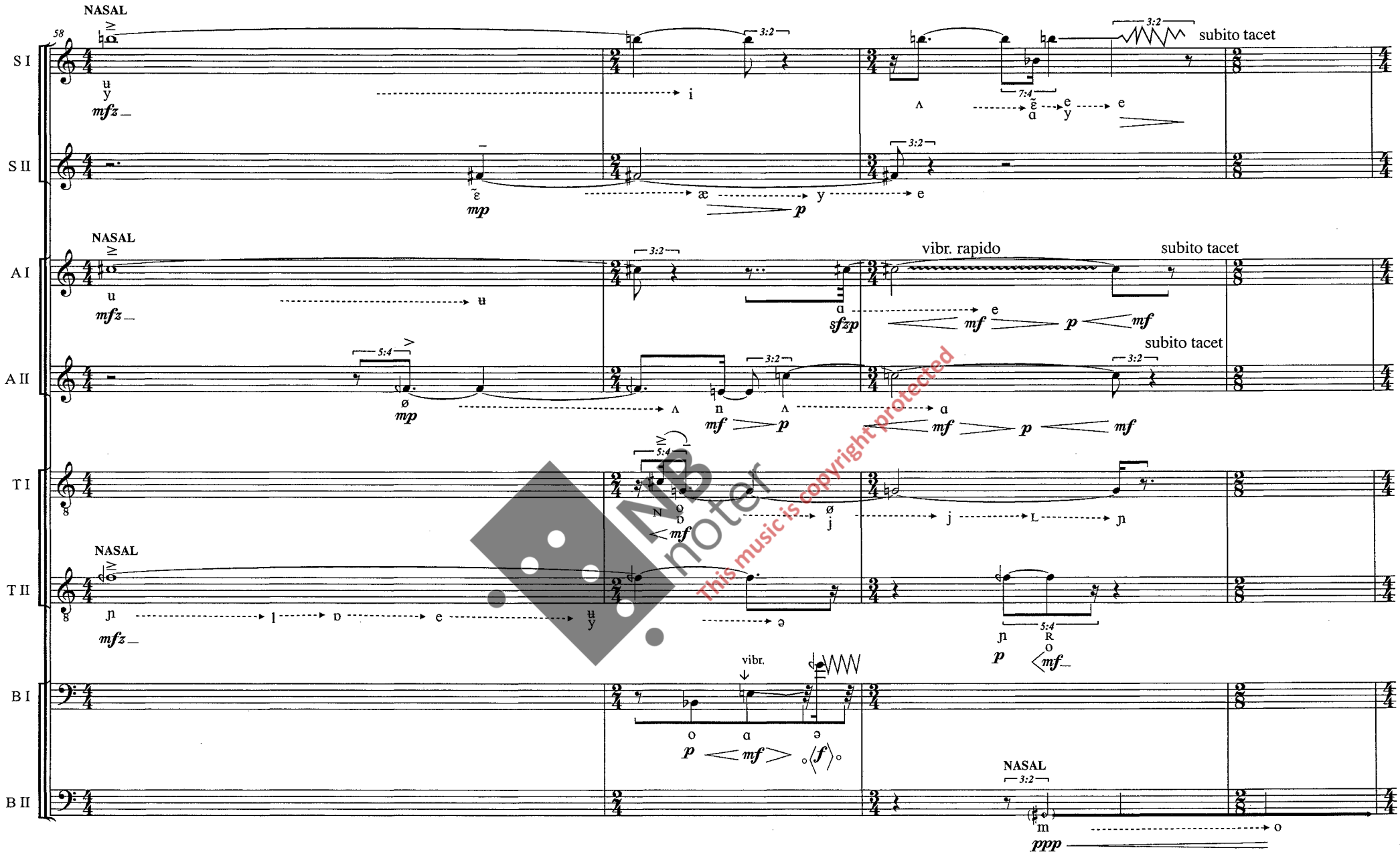


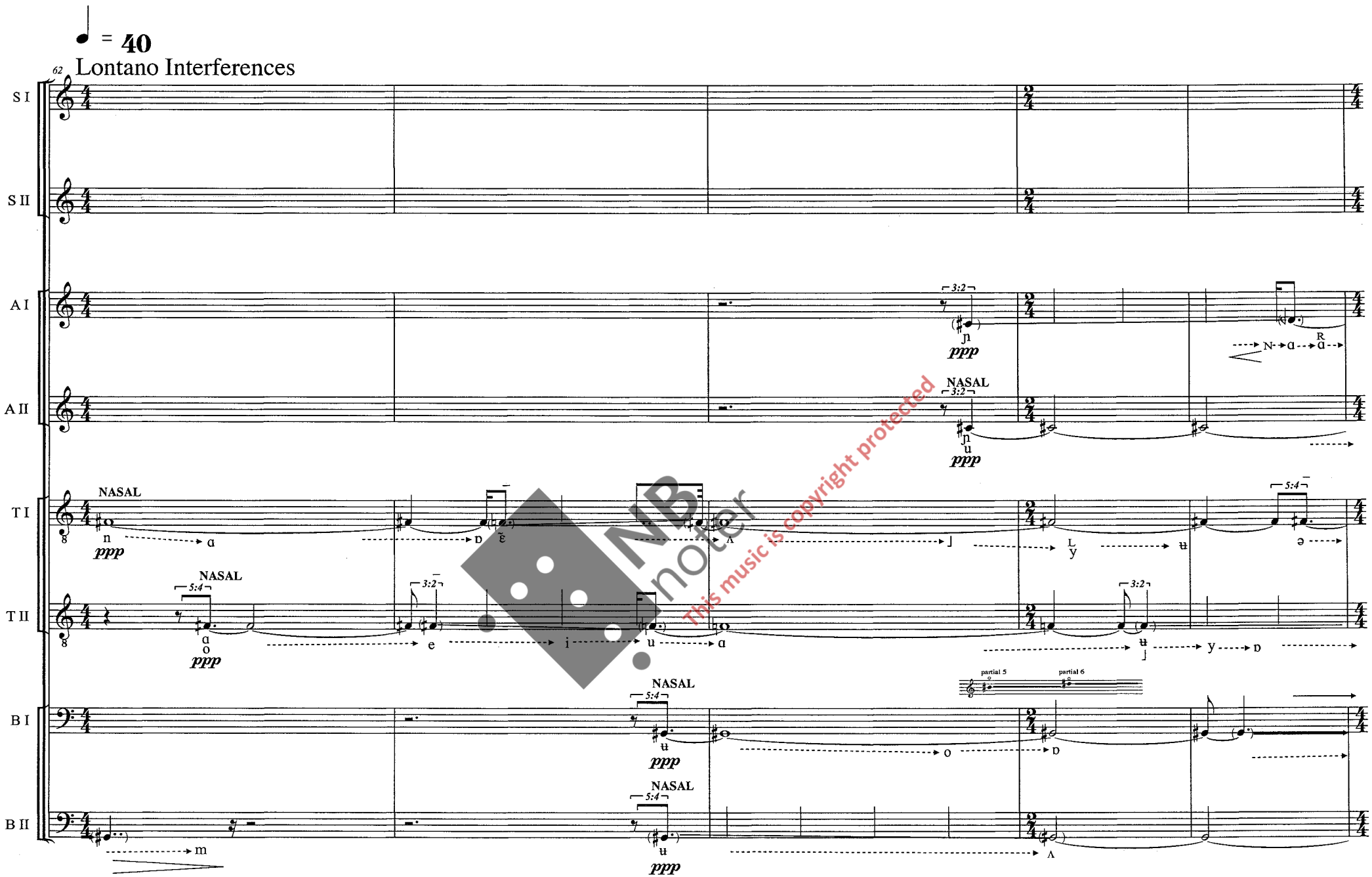


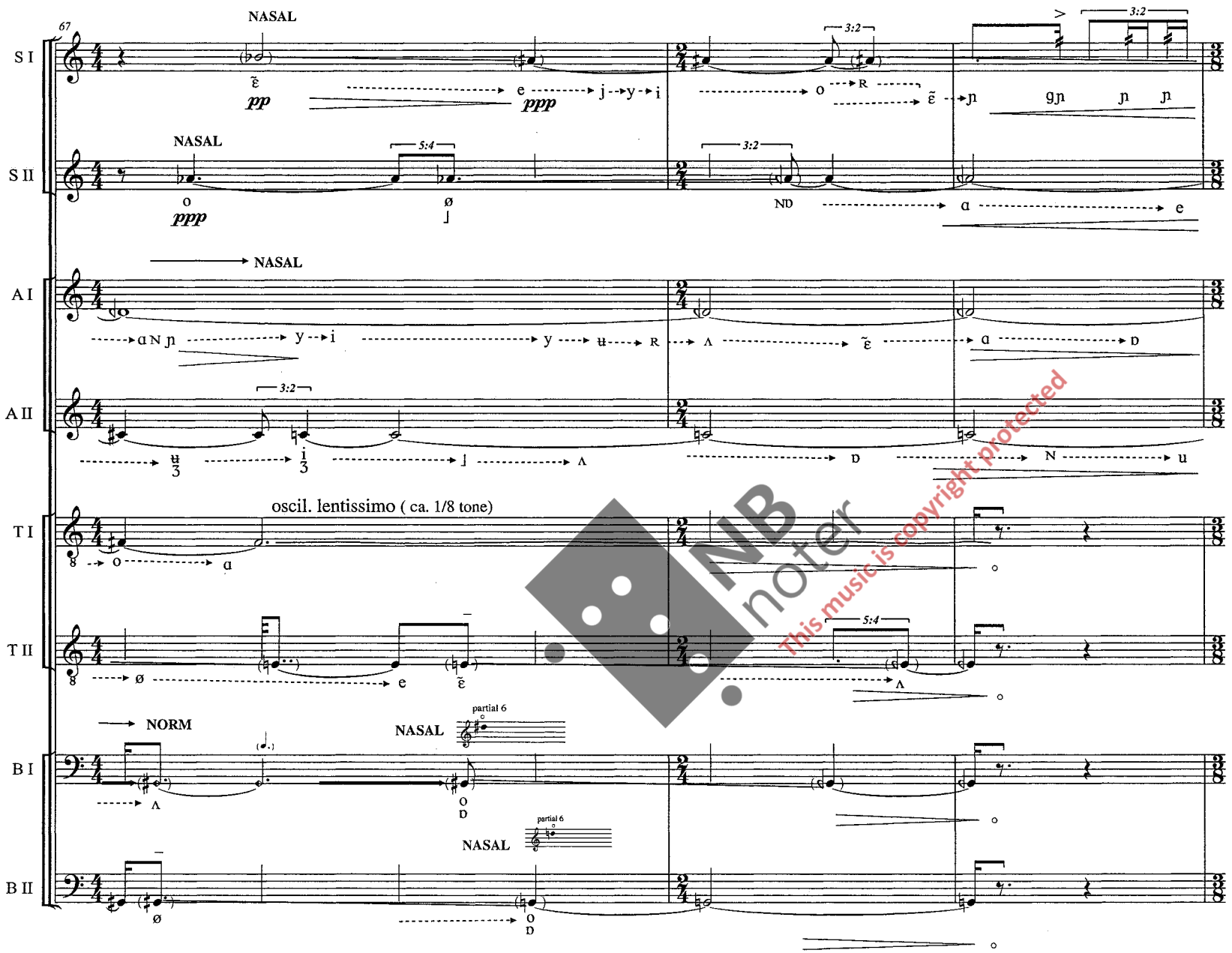


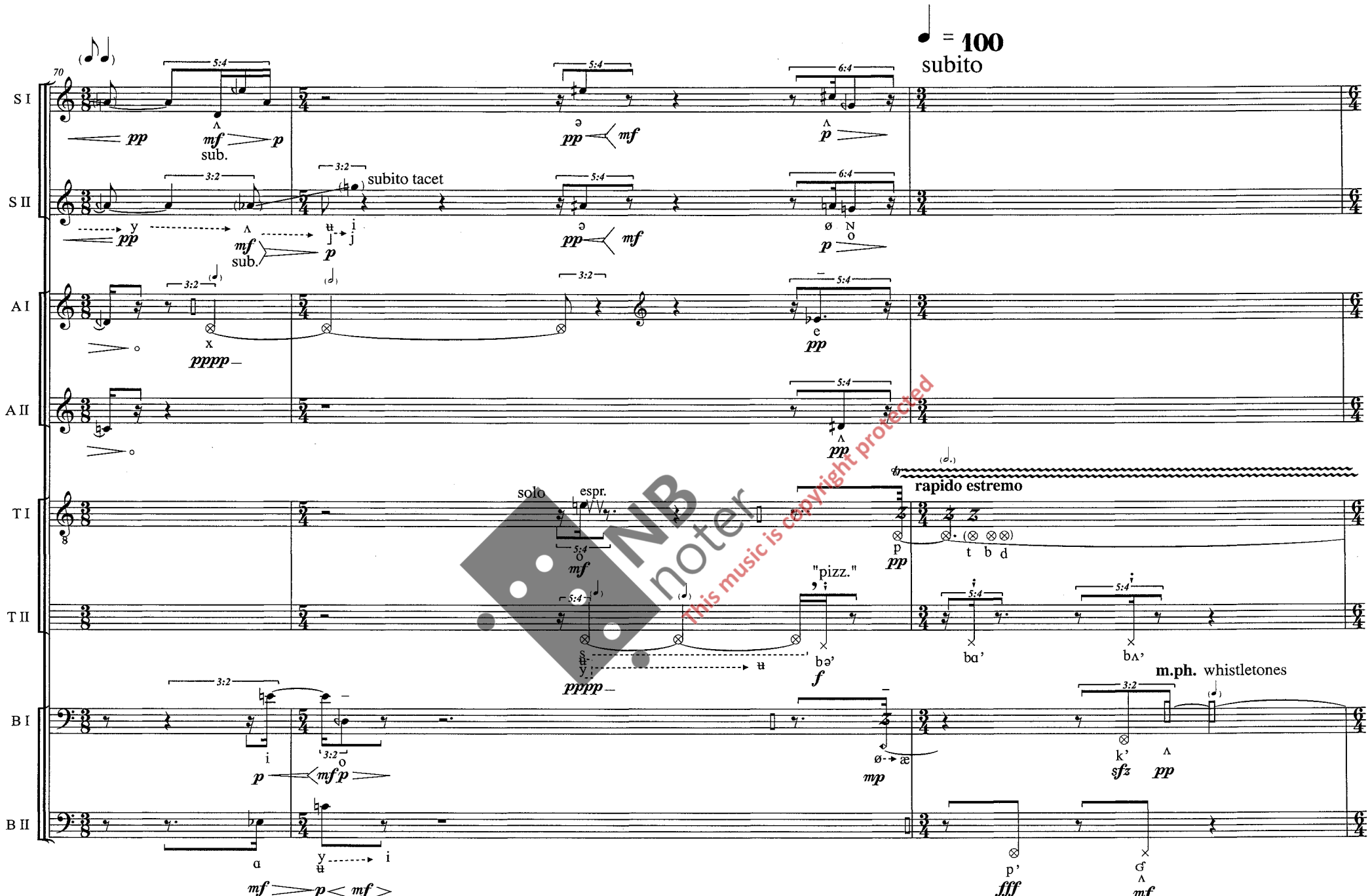


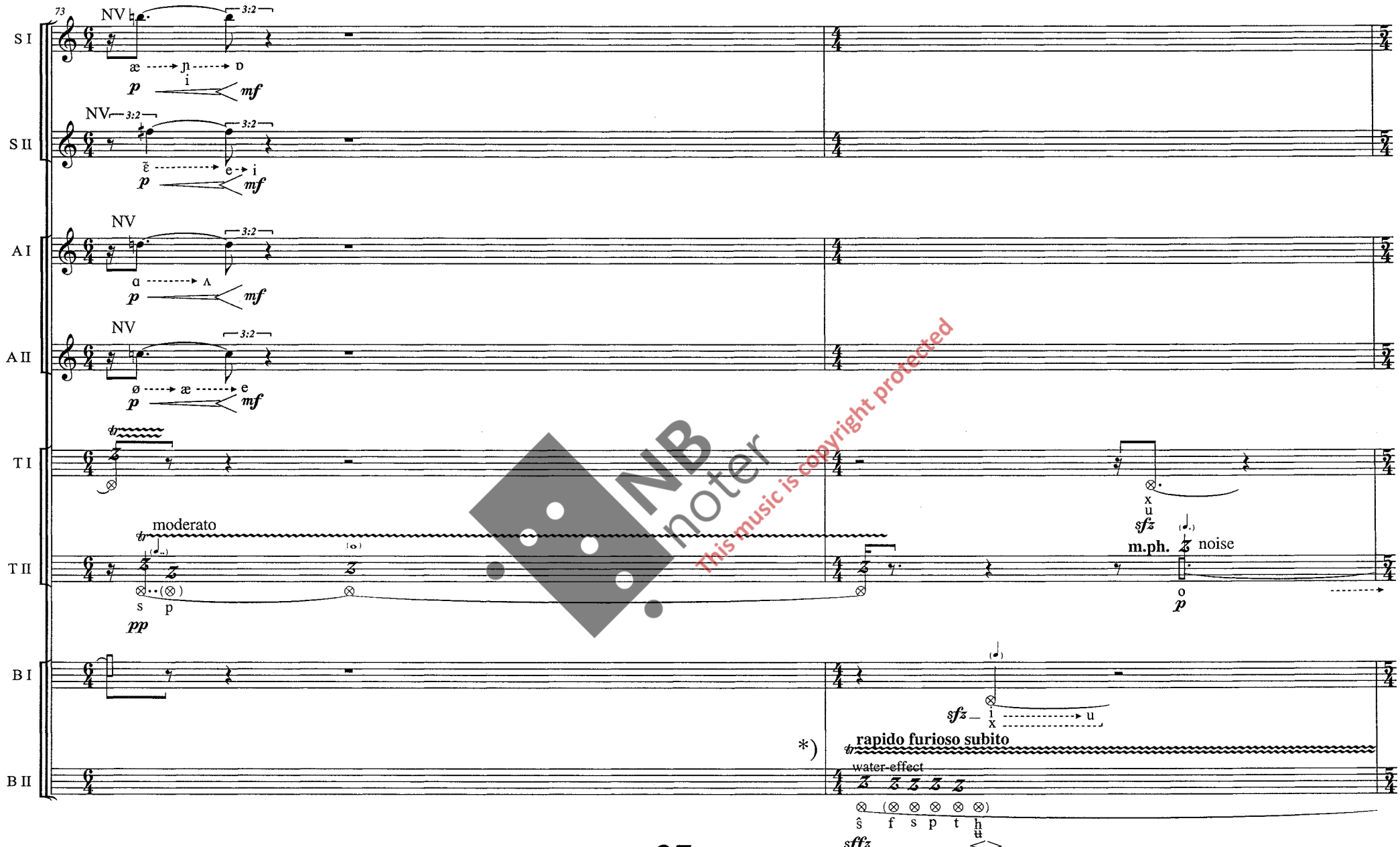




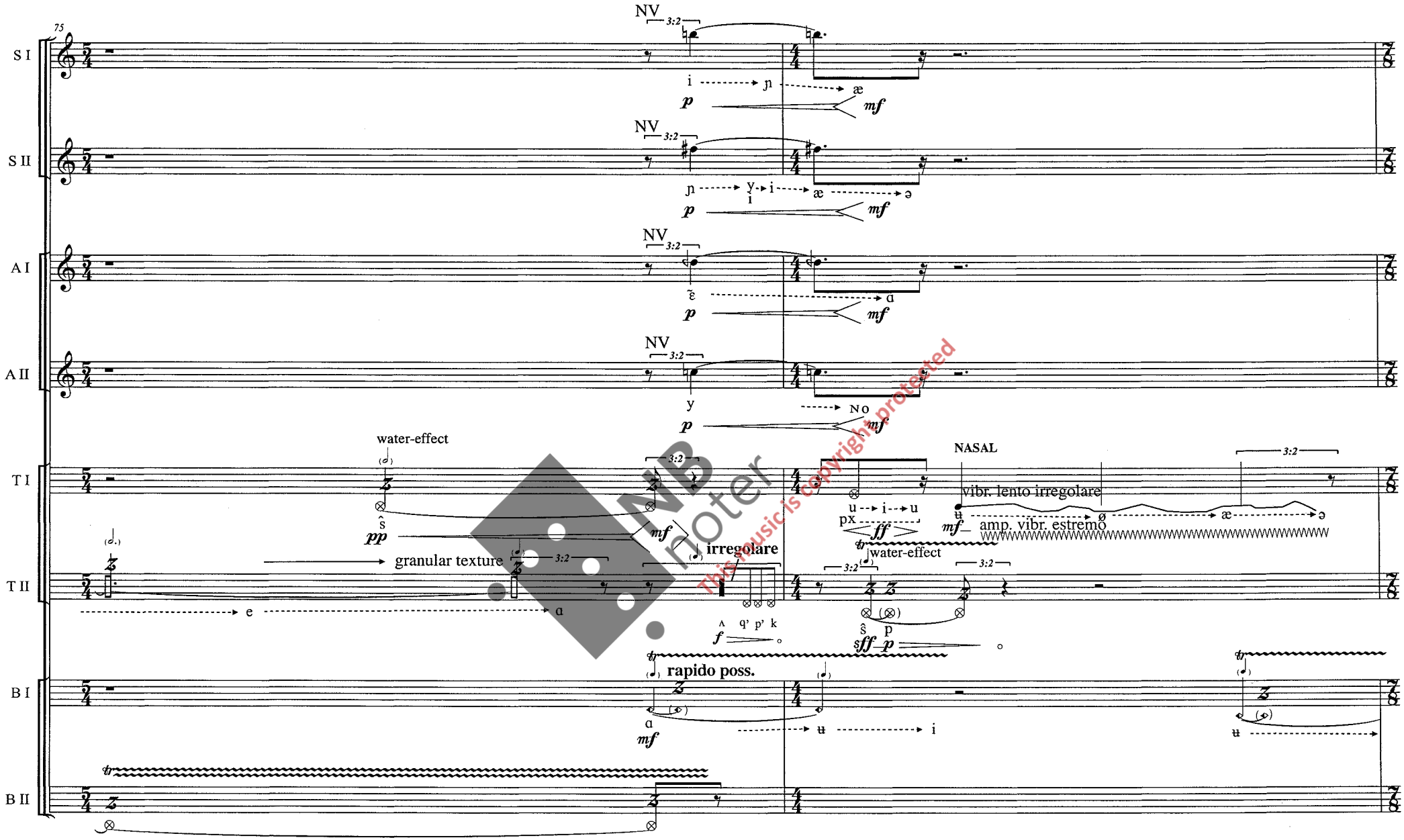


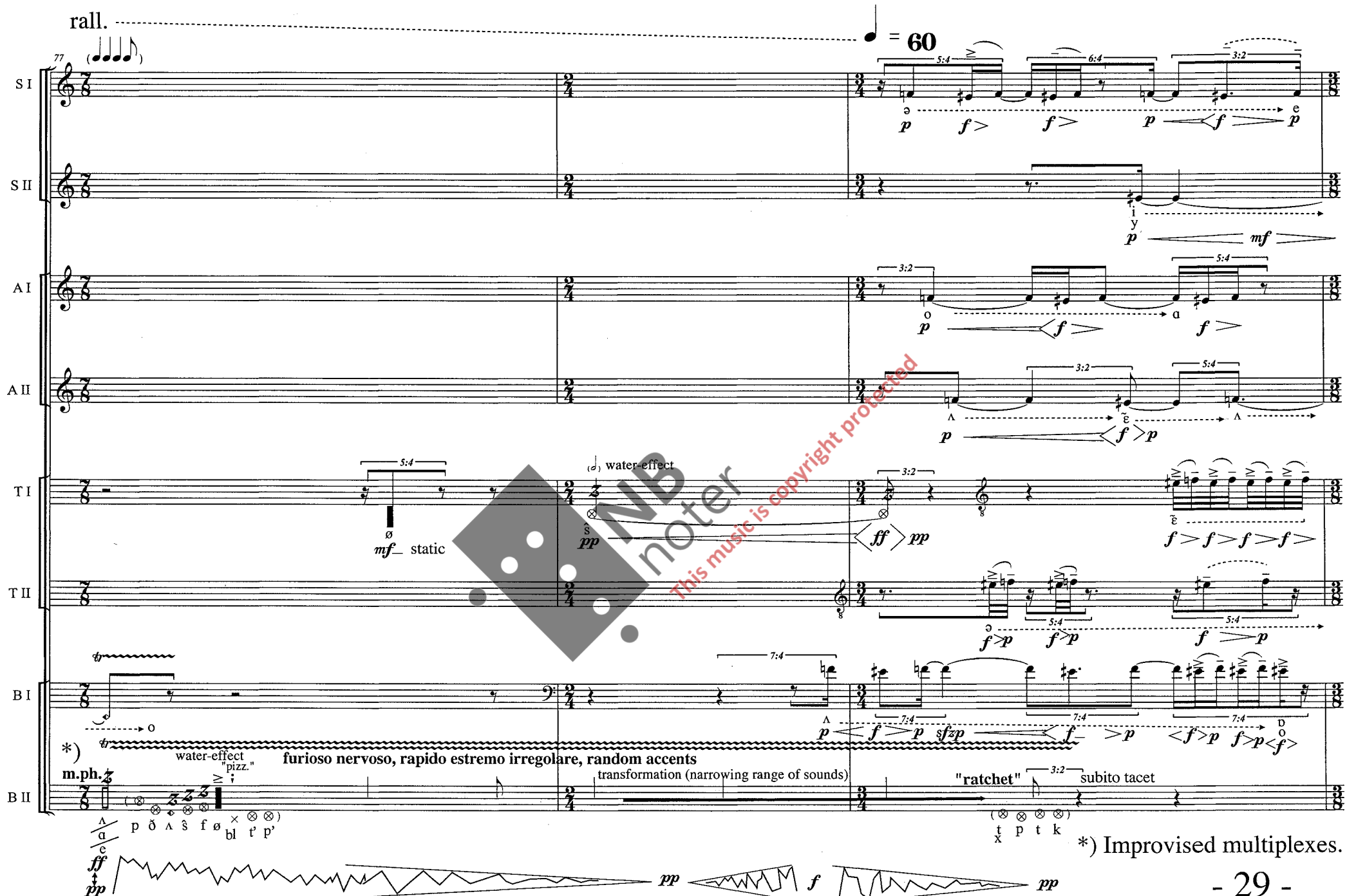


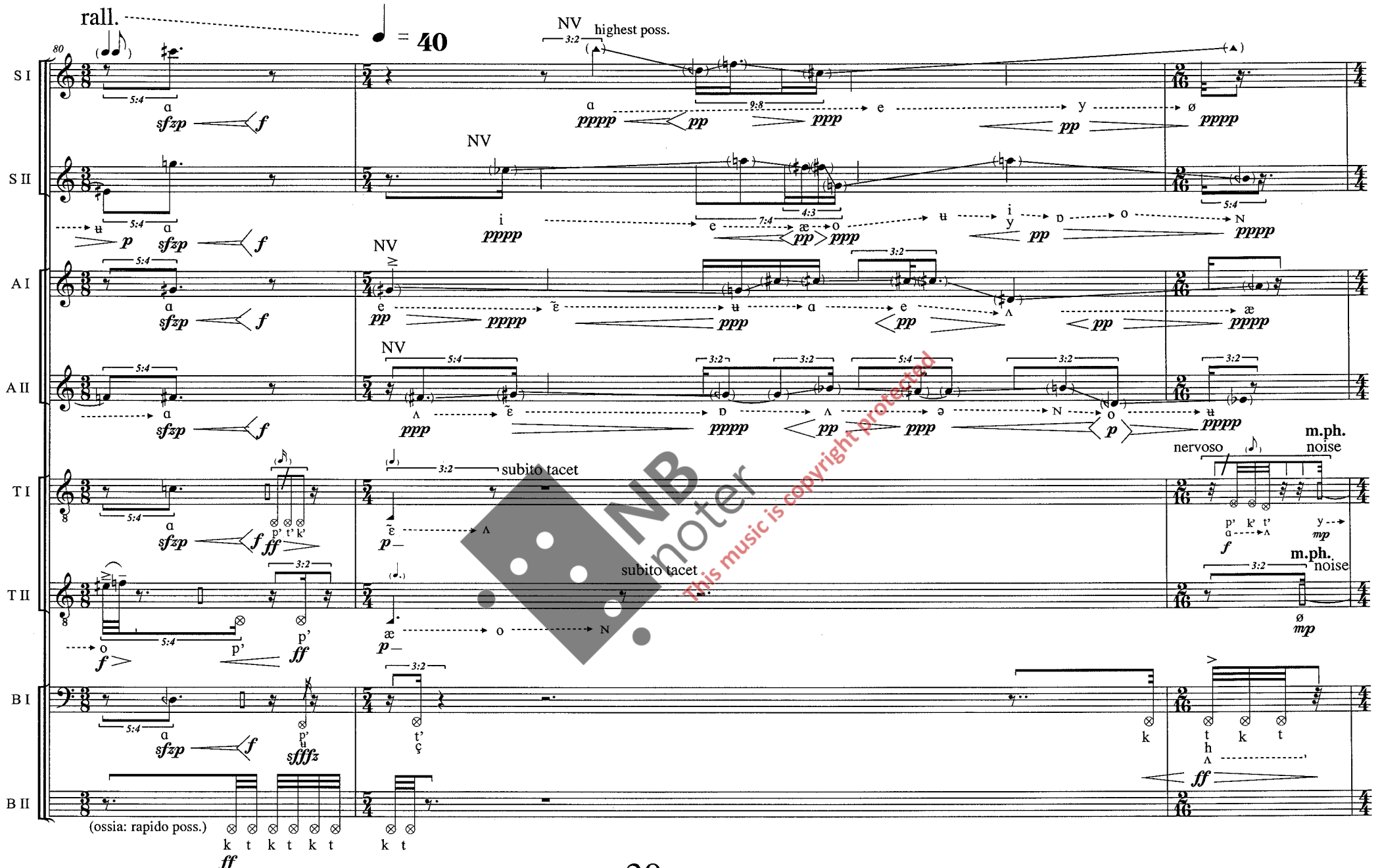


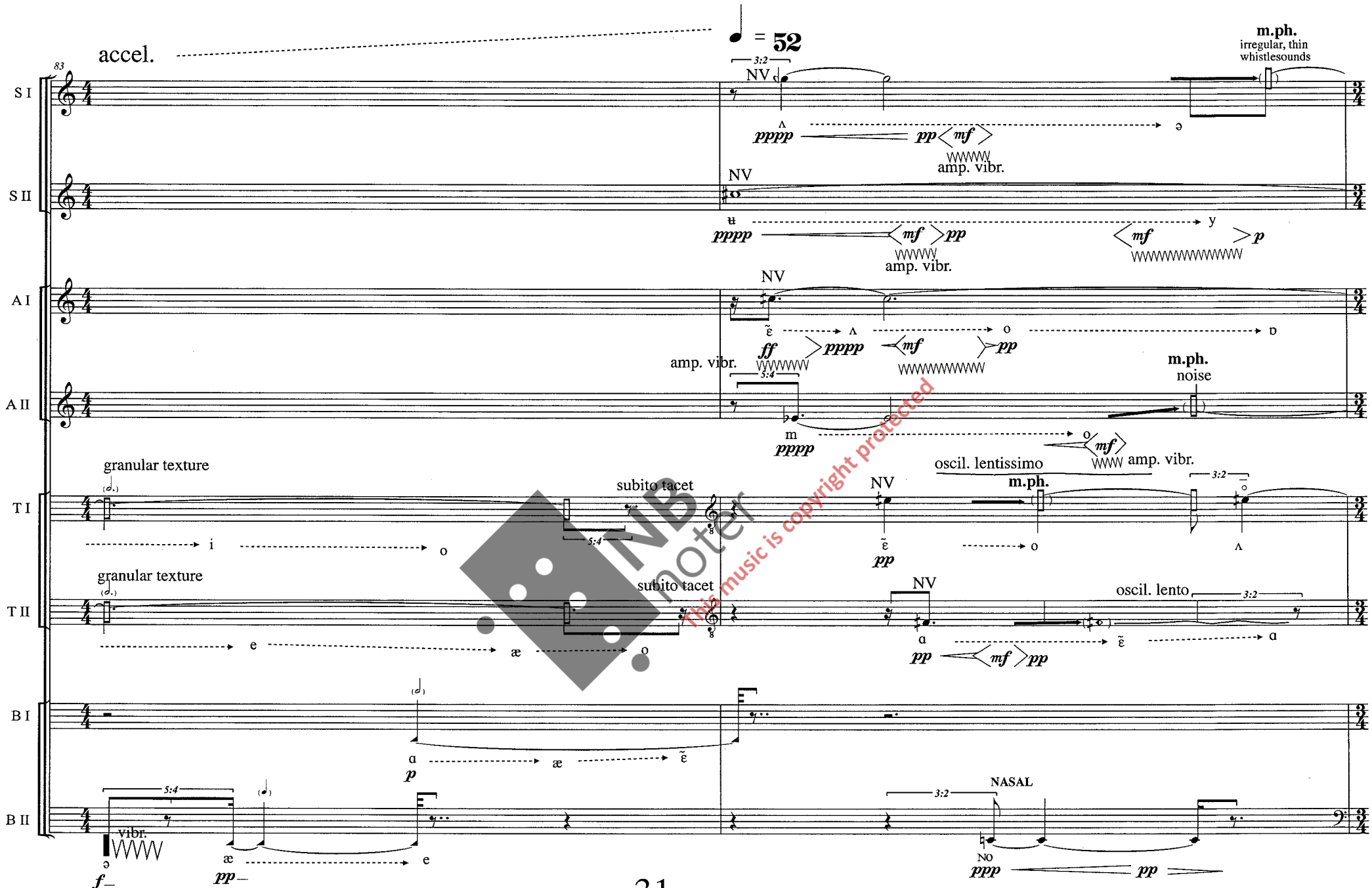


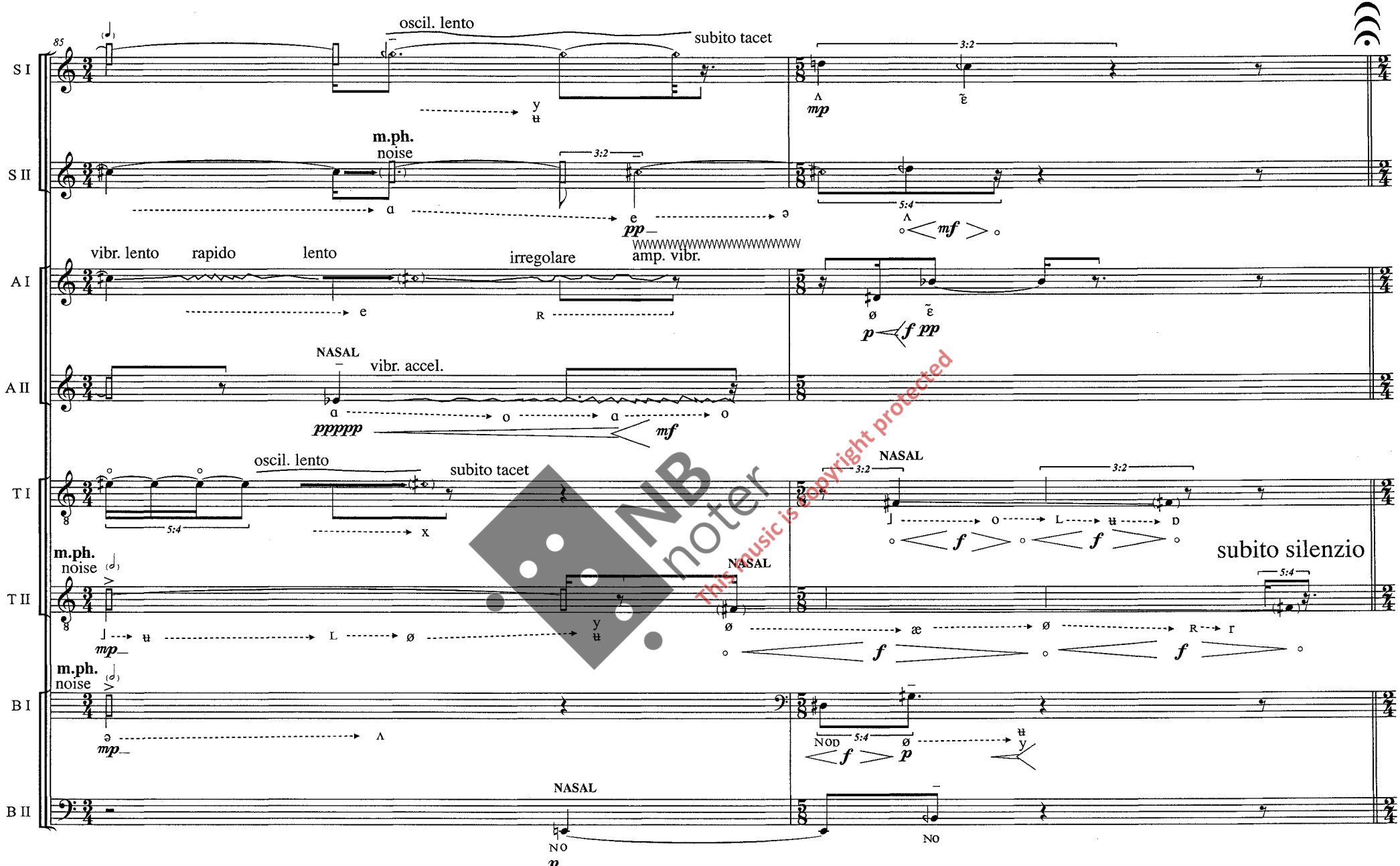
*) Improvised mulitiplex with suggested content.
Rapid fluctuations on several parameters.

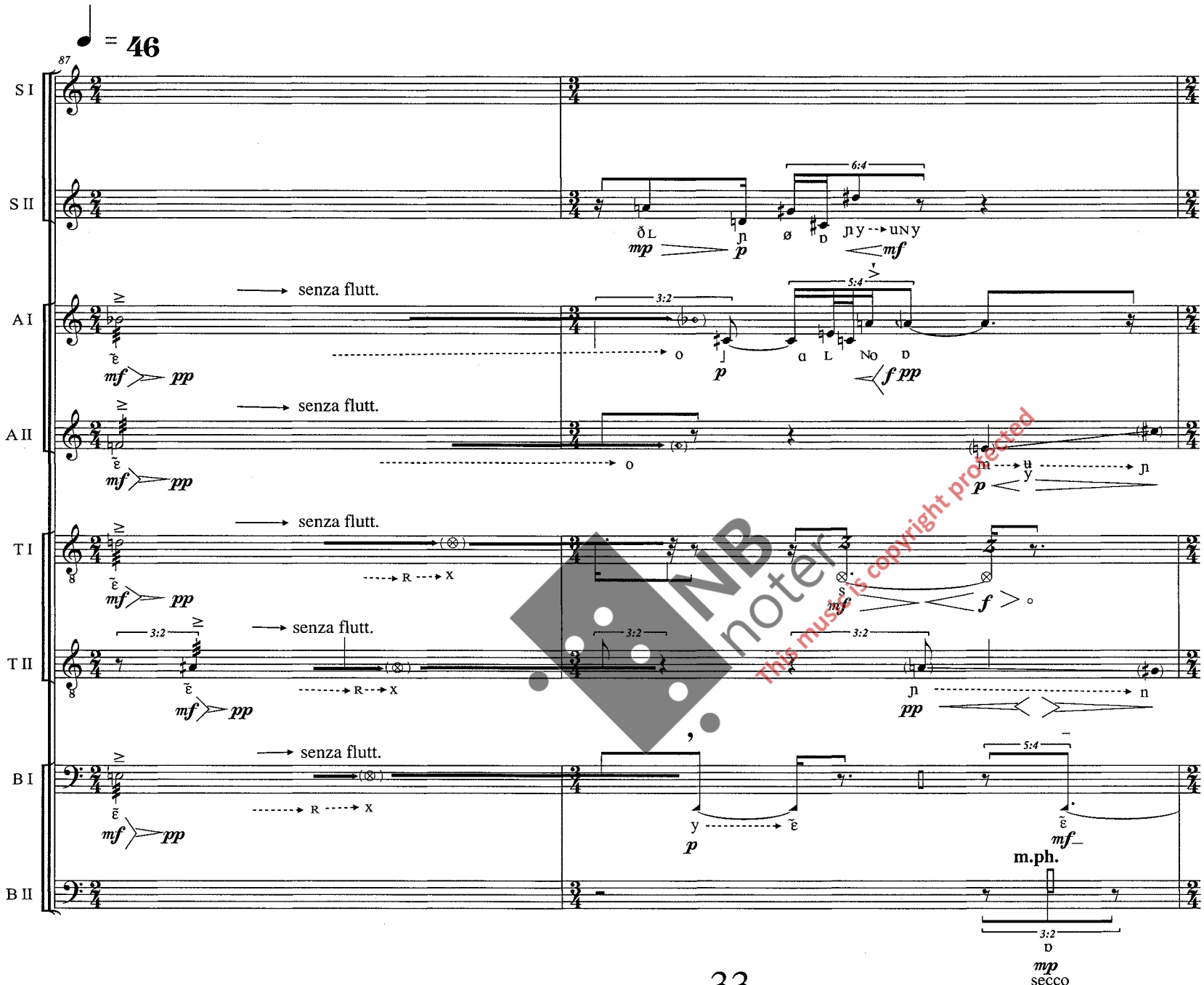


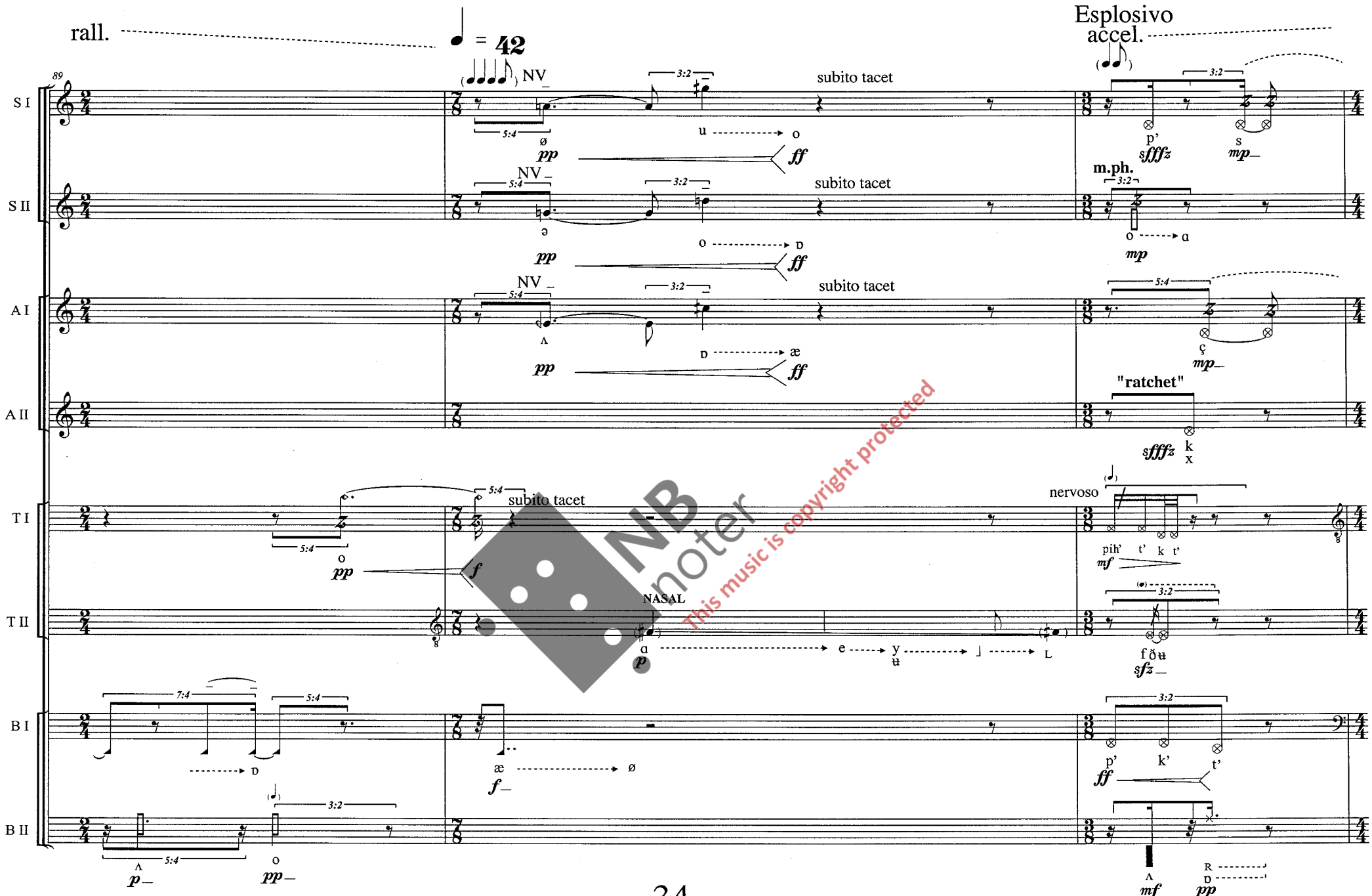


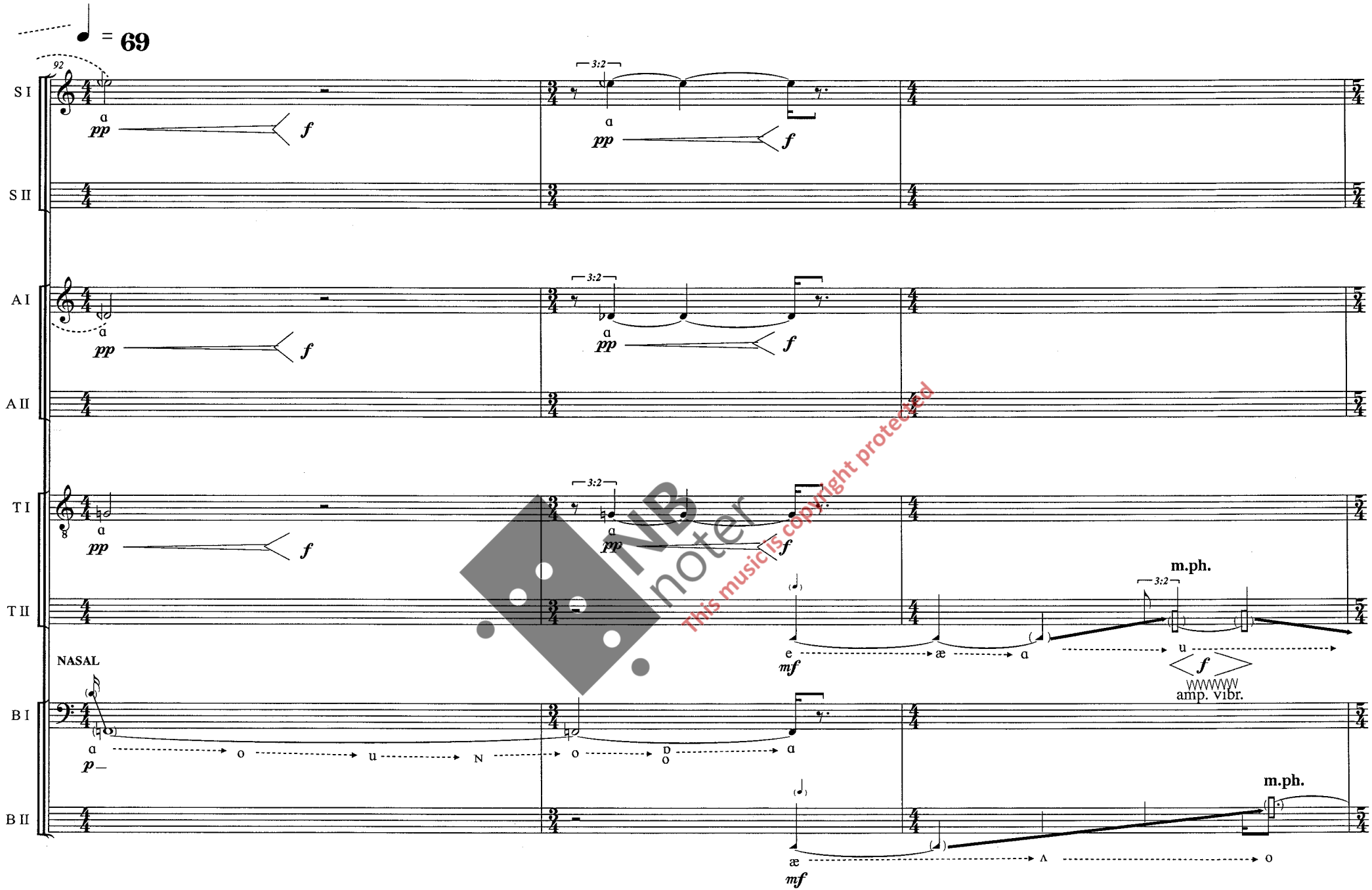


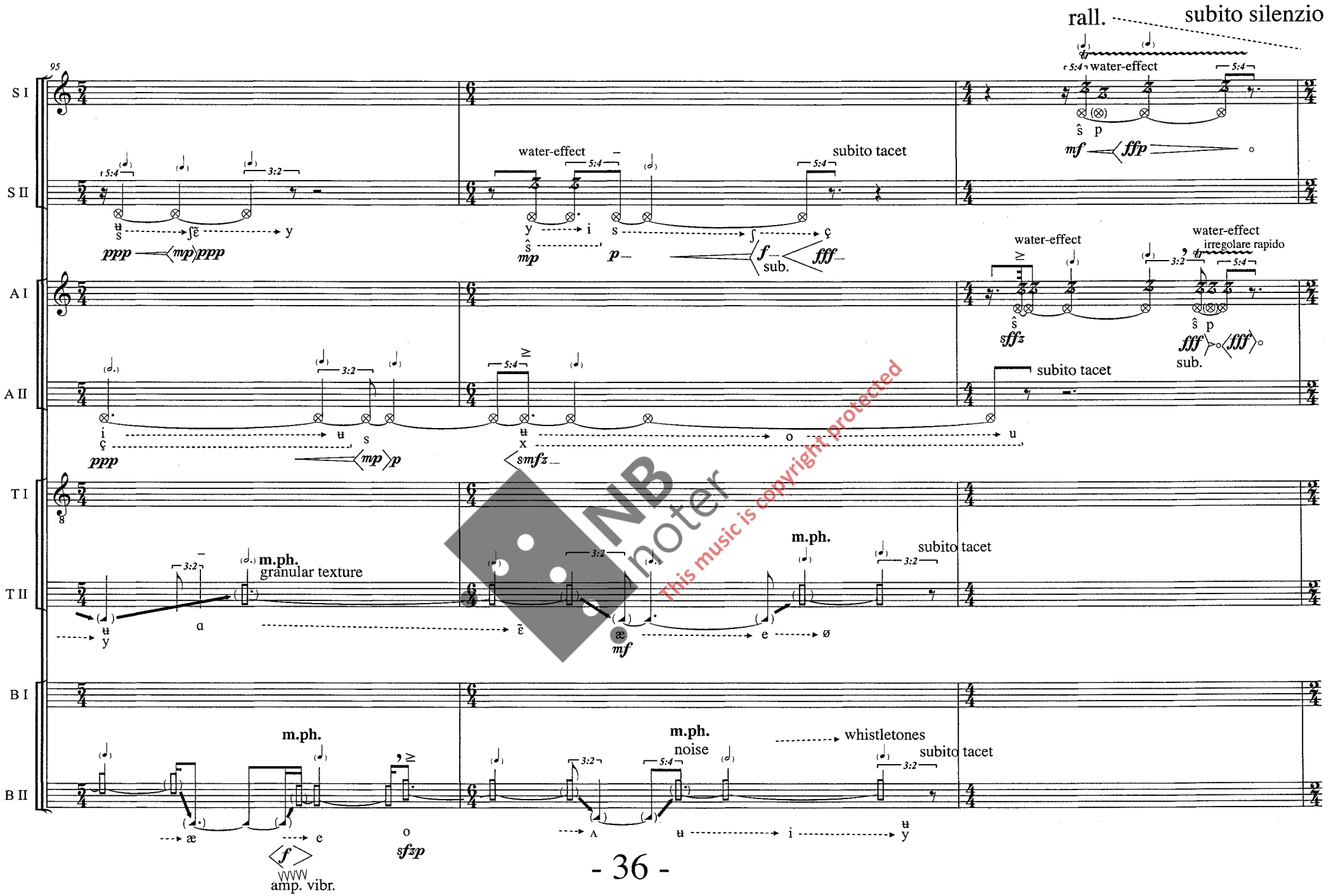


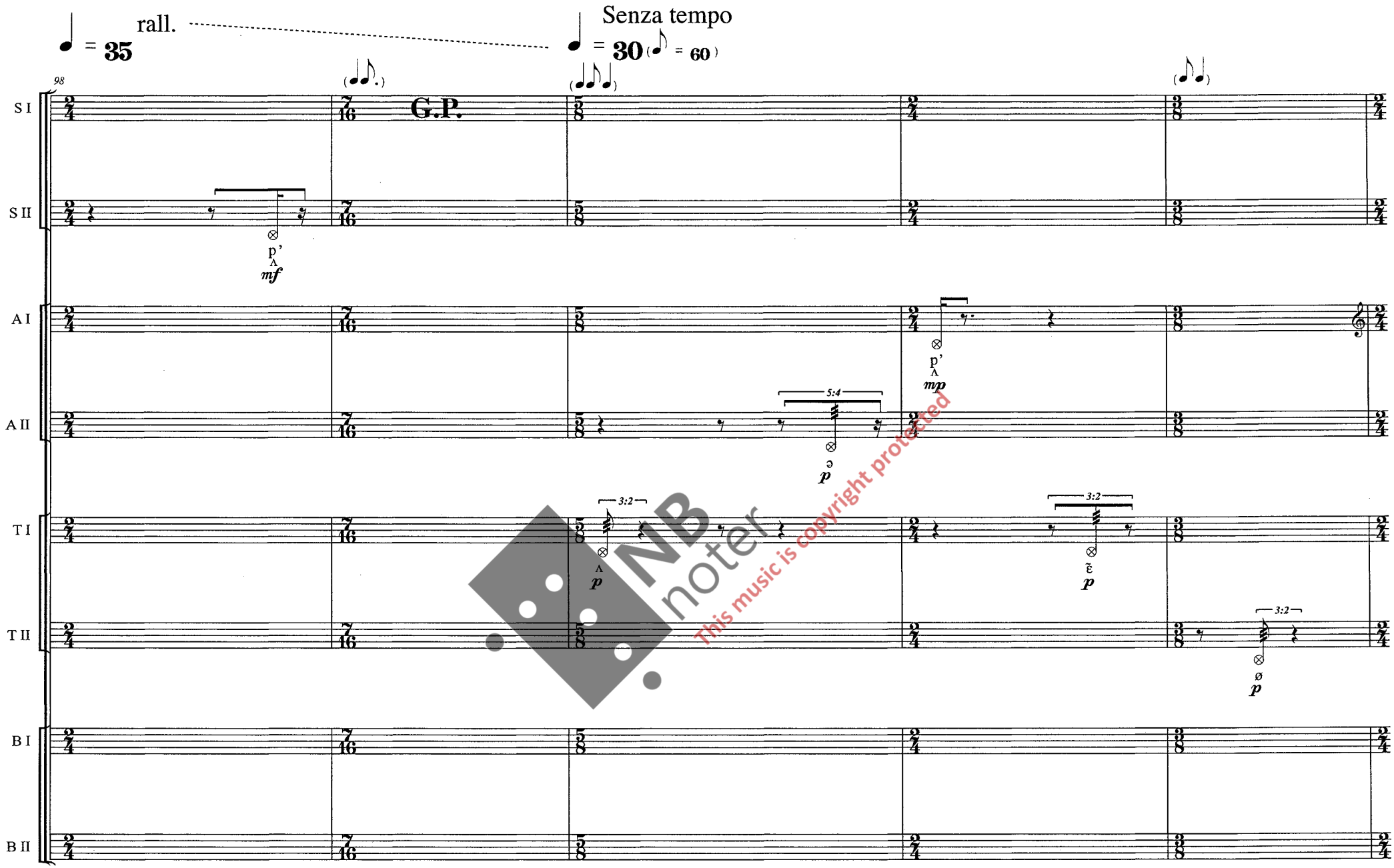


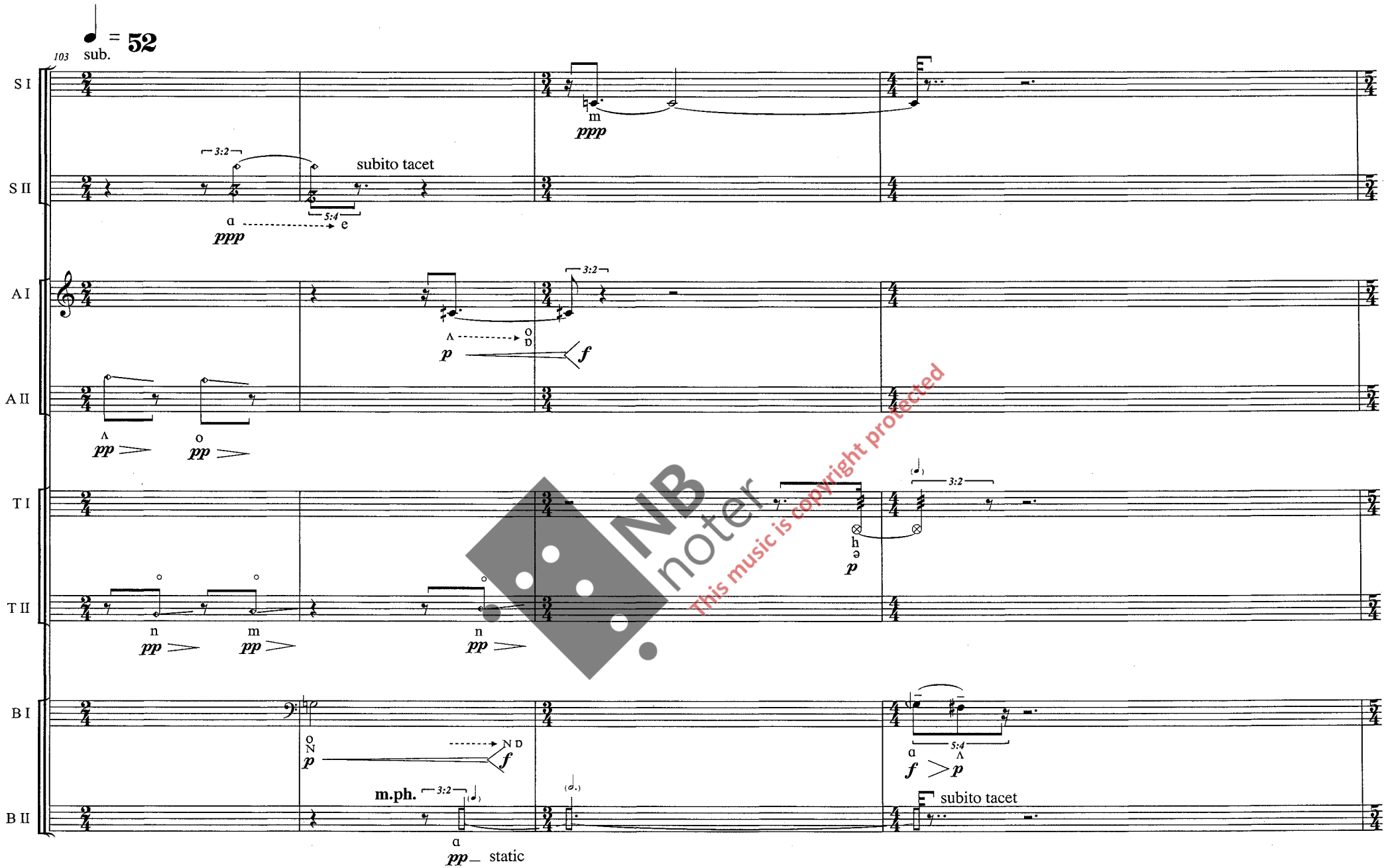


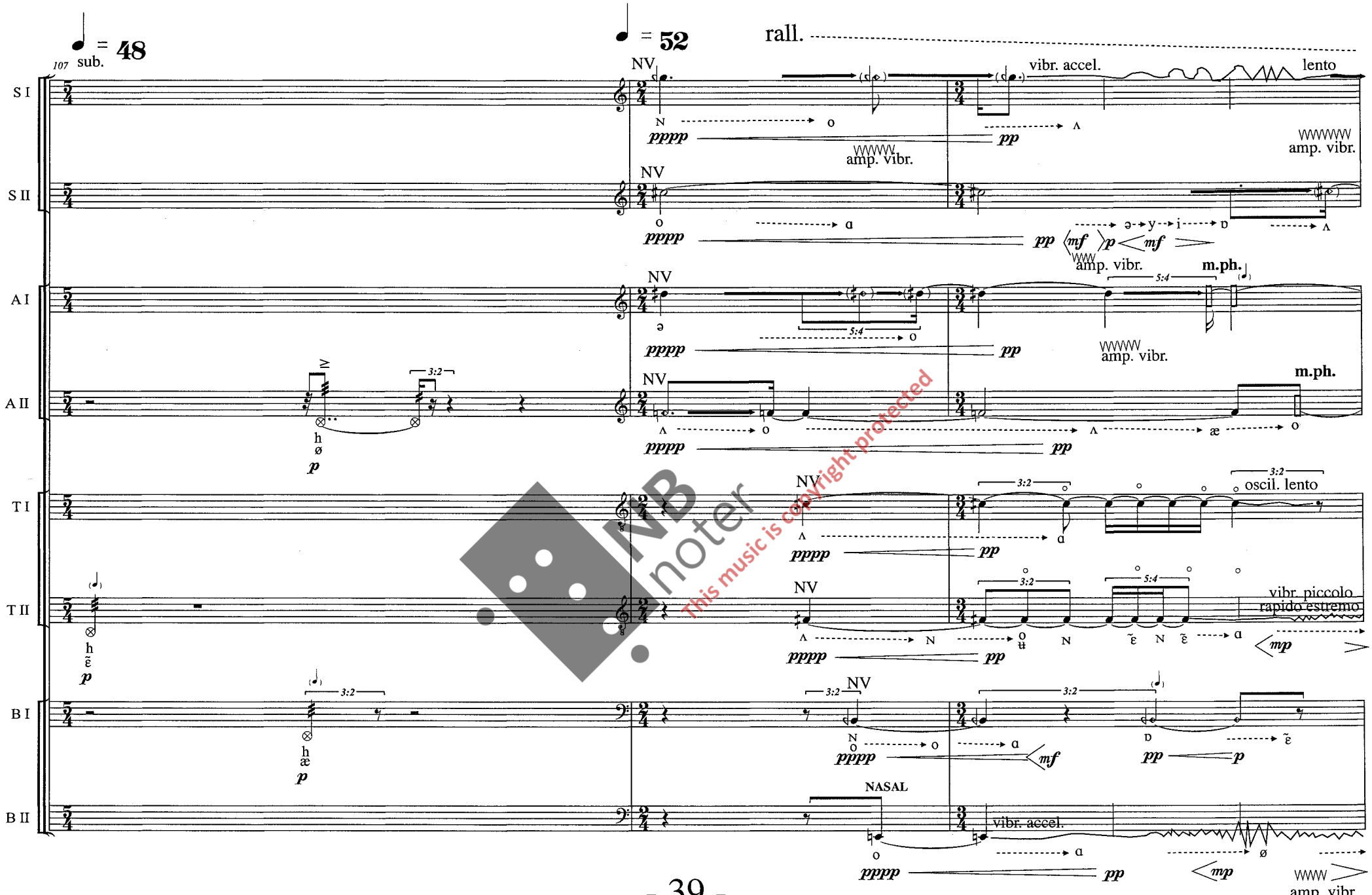


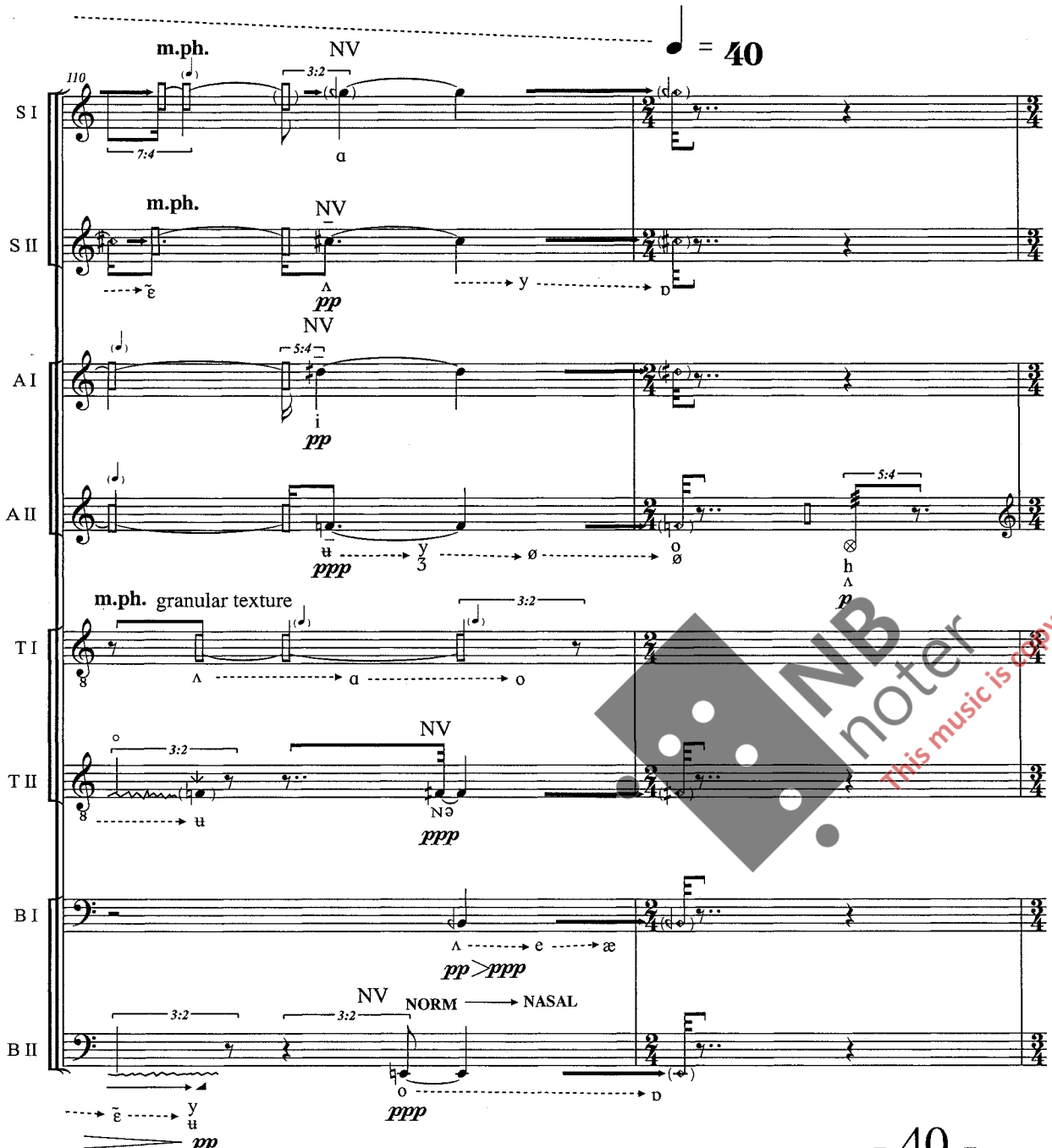


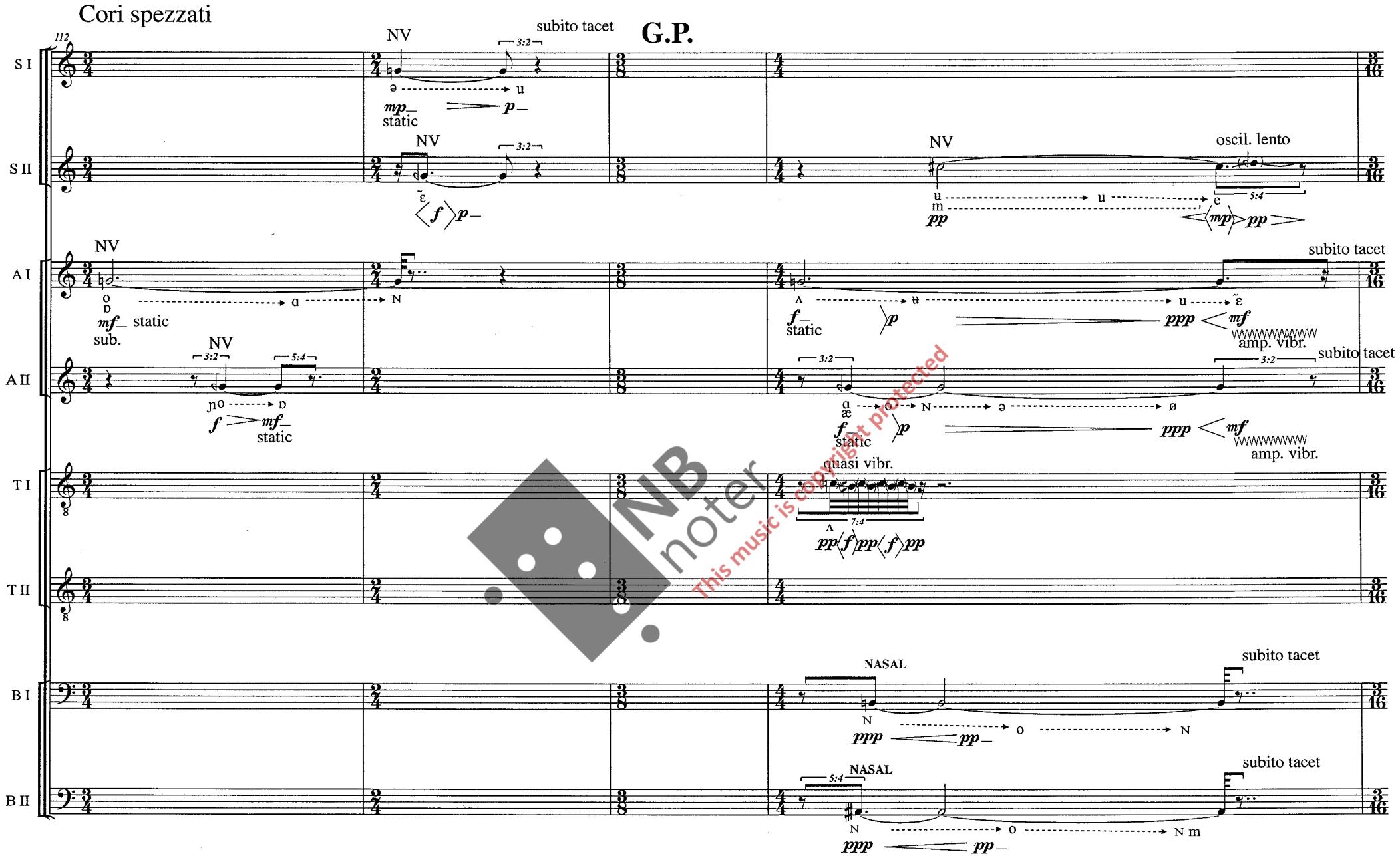


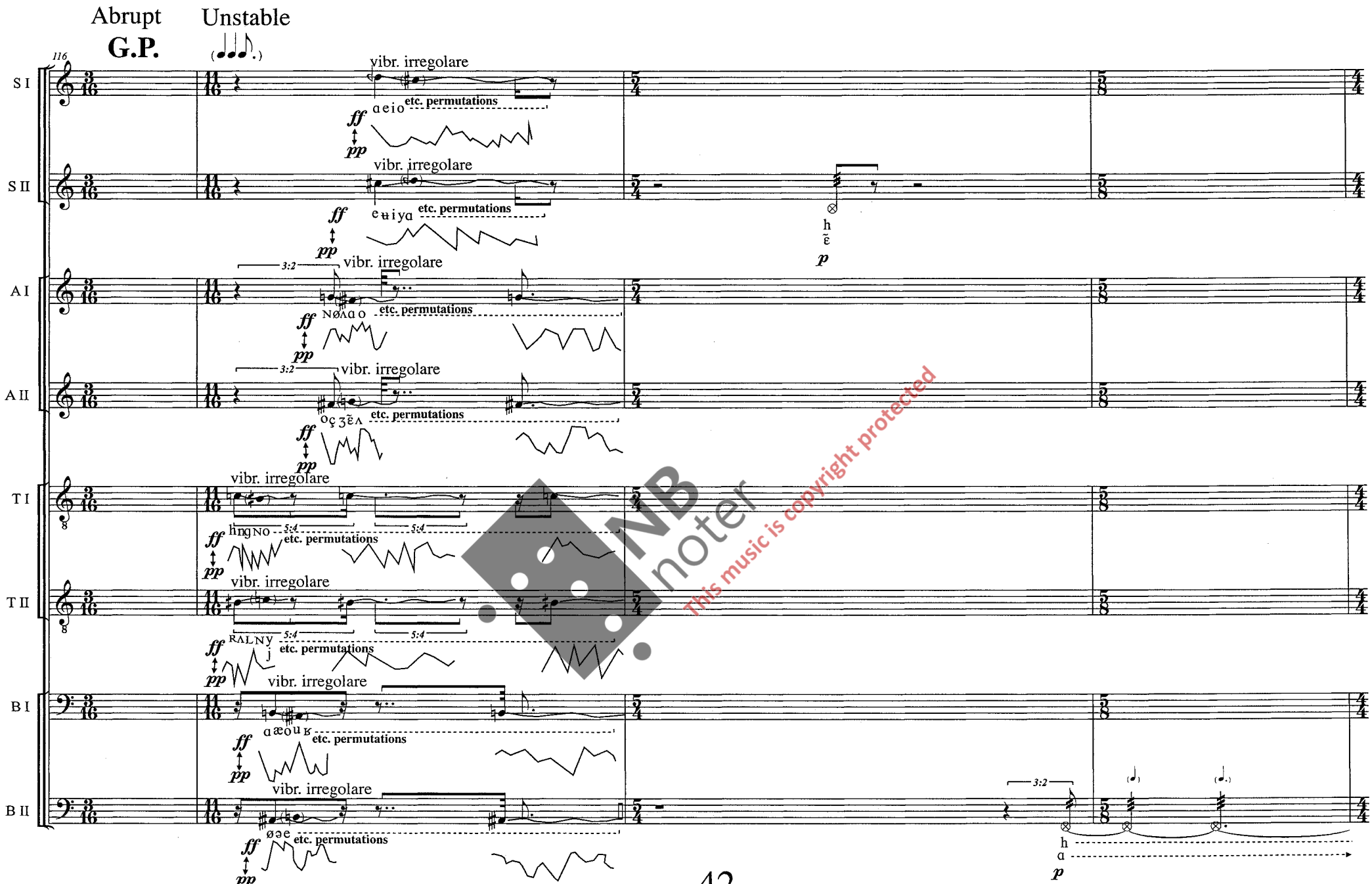


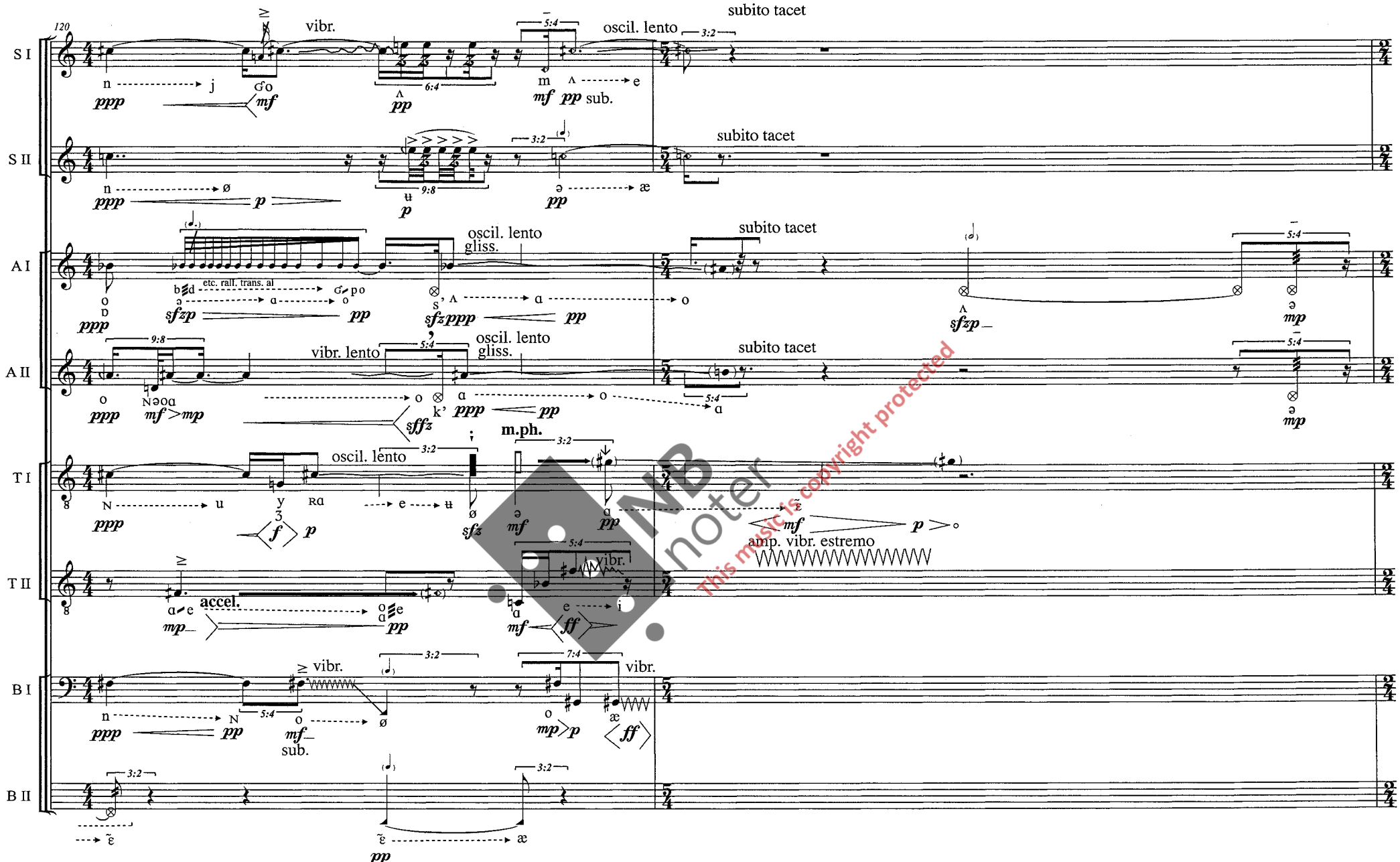






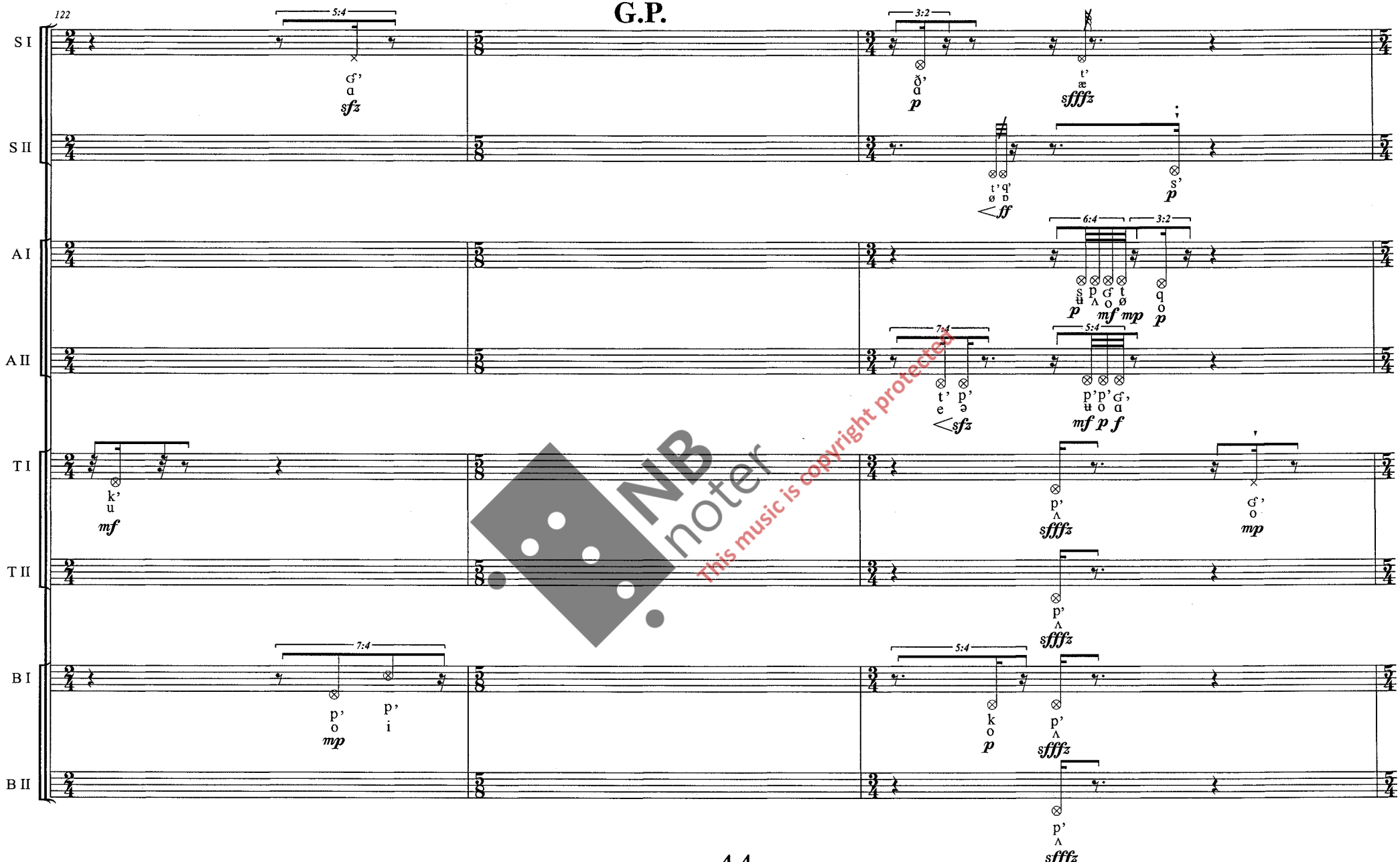


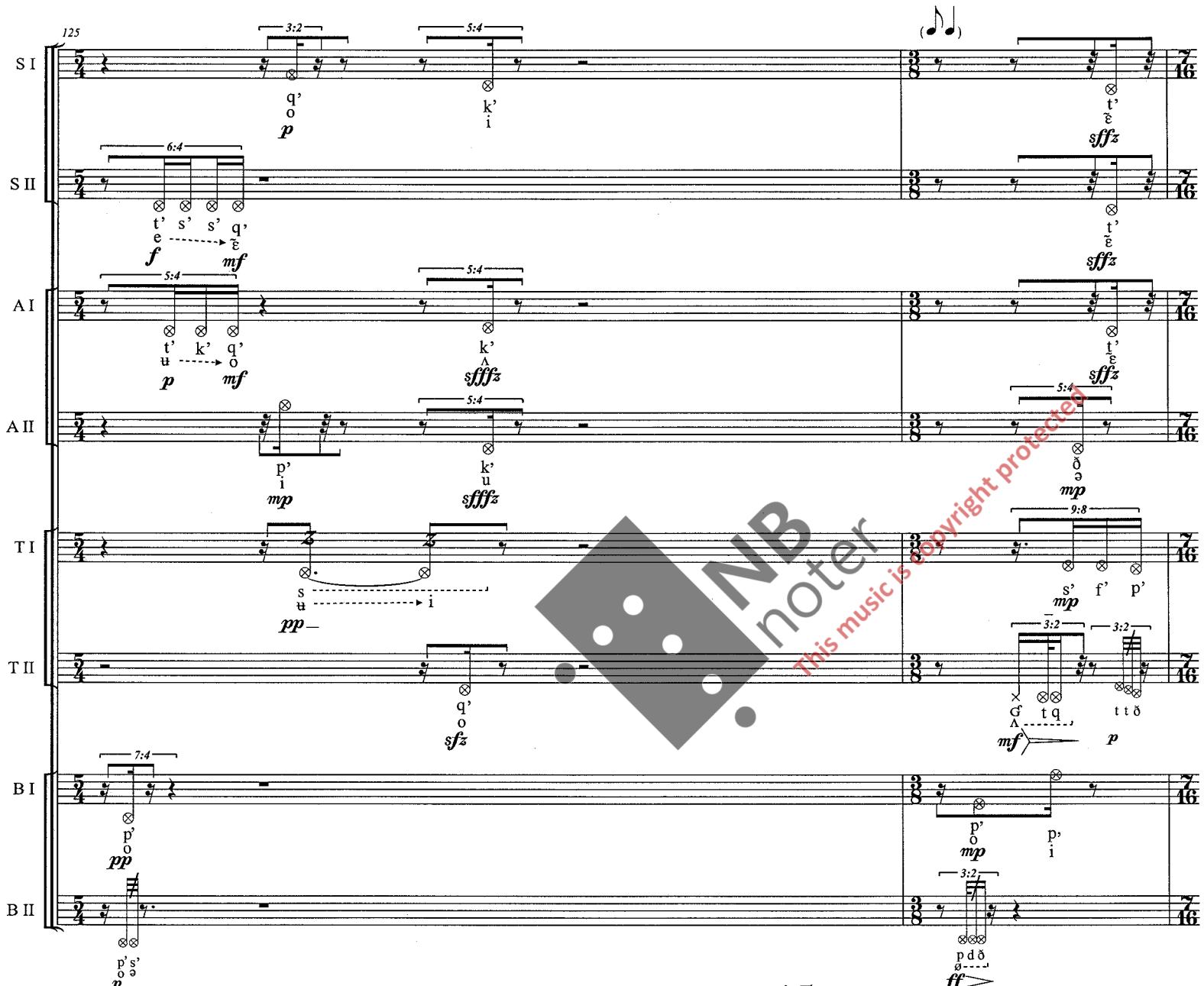


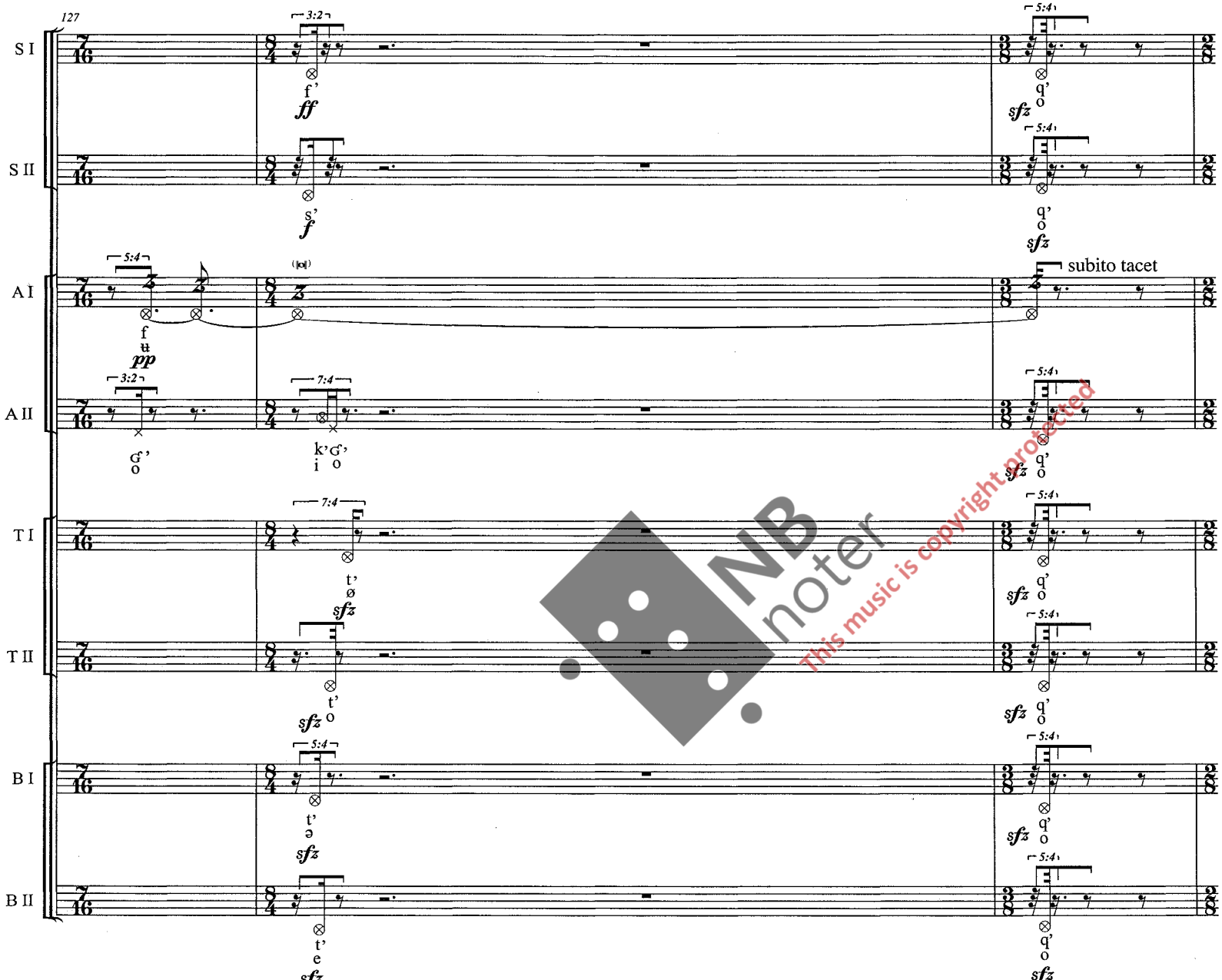


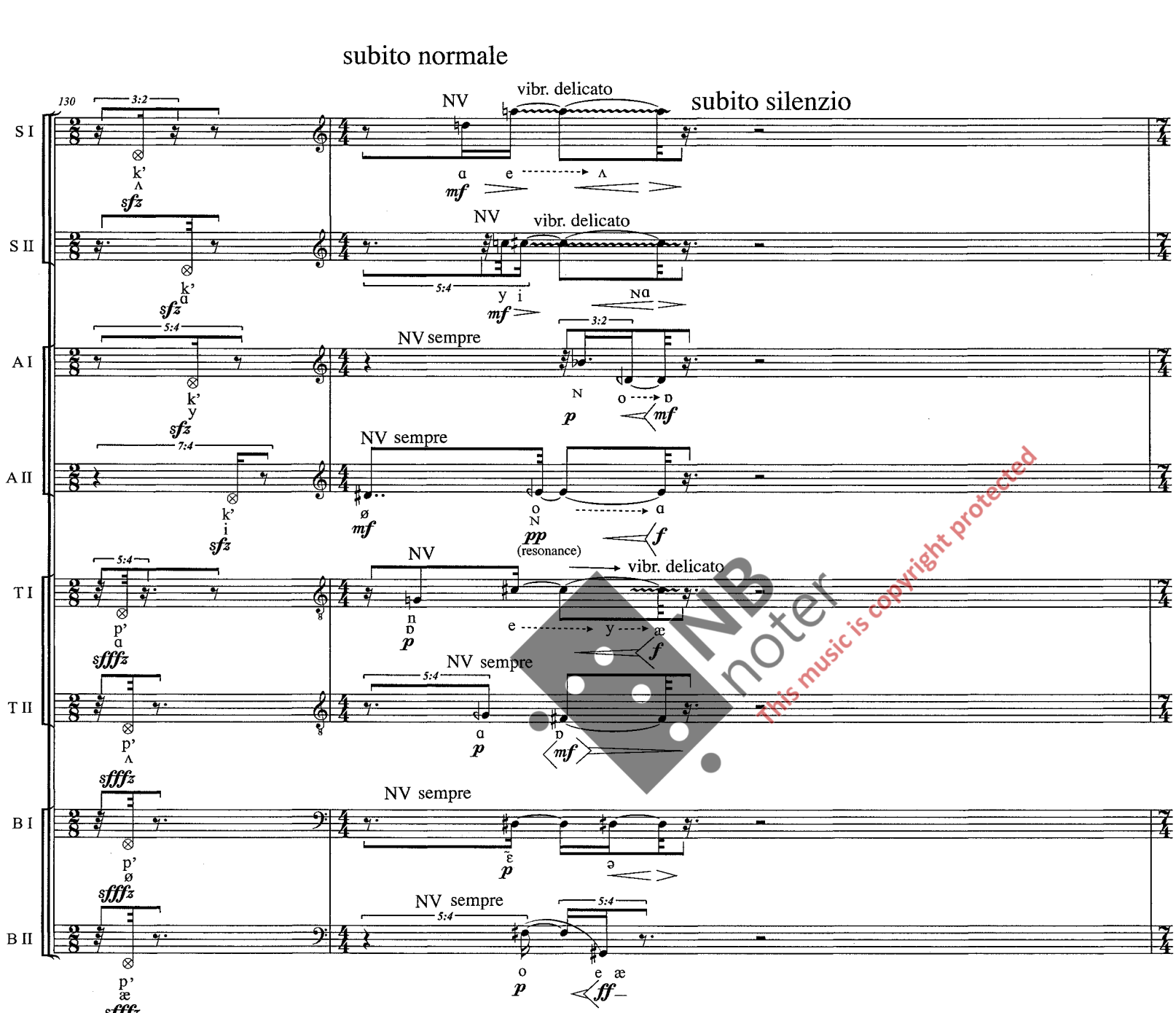
Cori spezzati secco

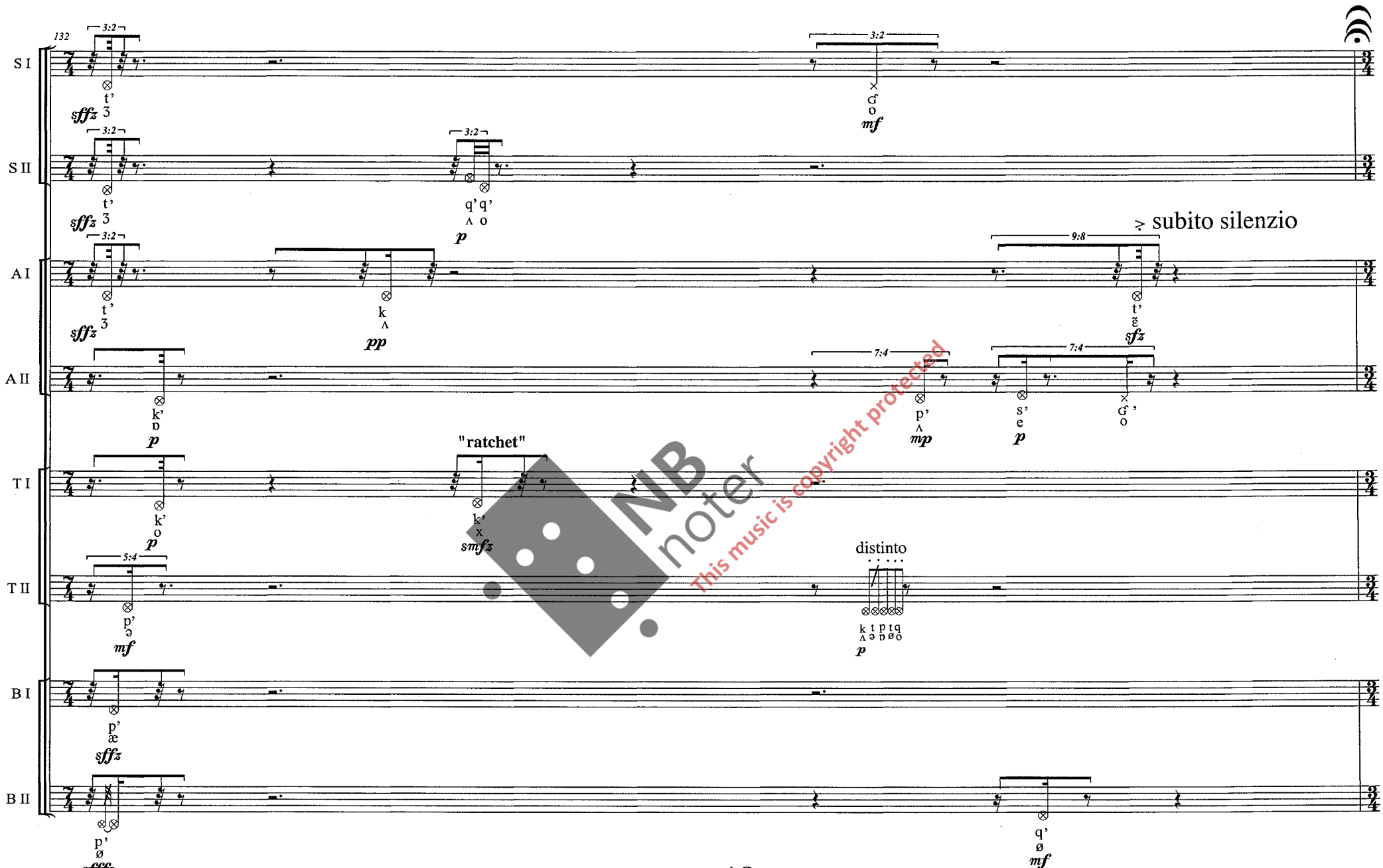
G.P.

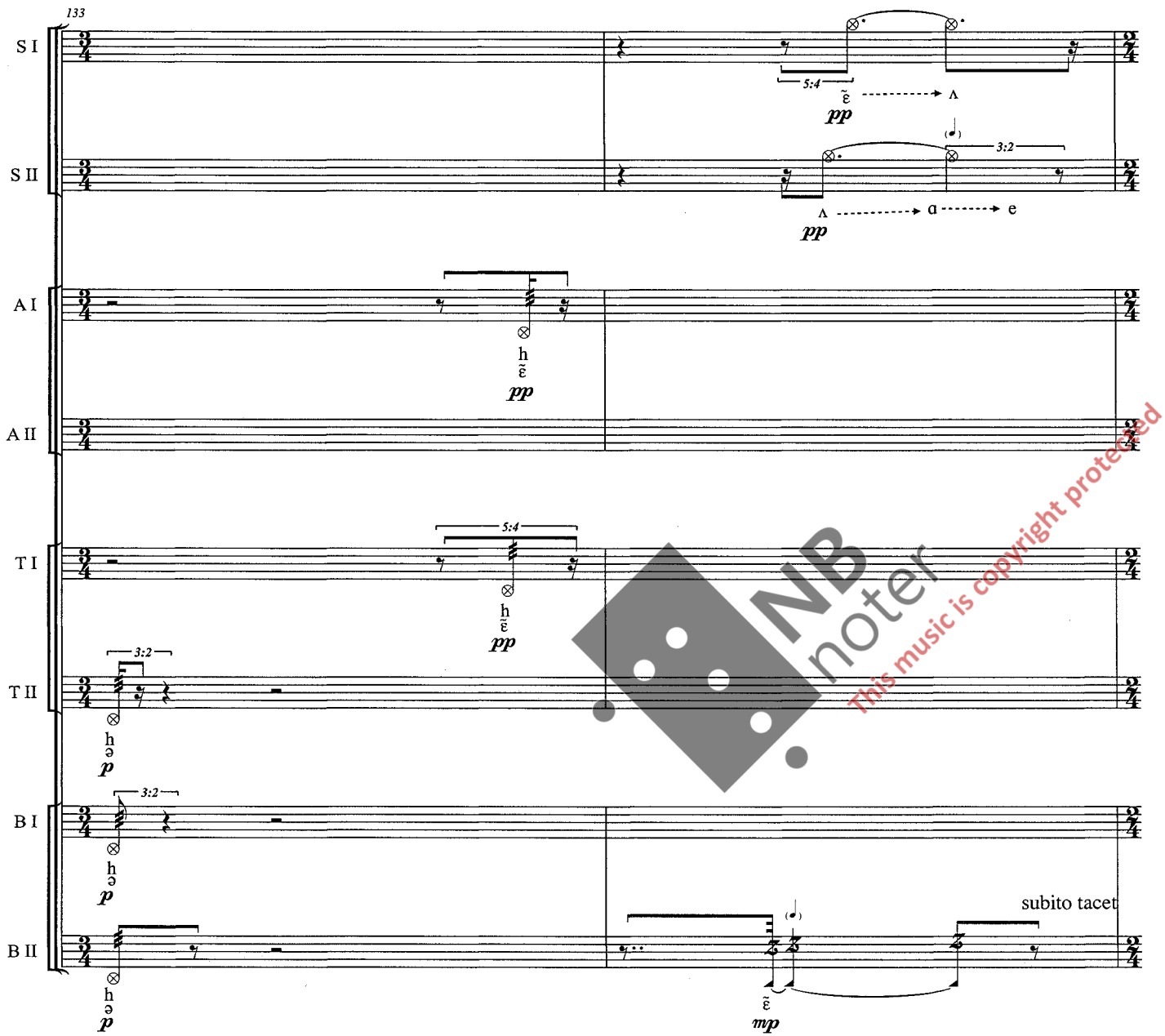


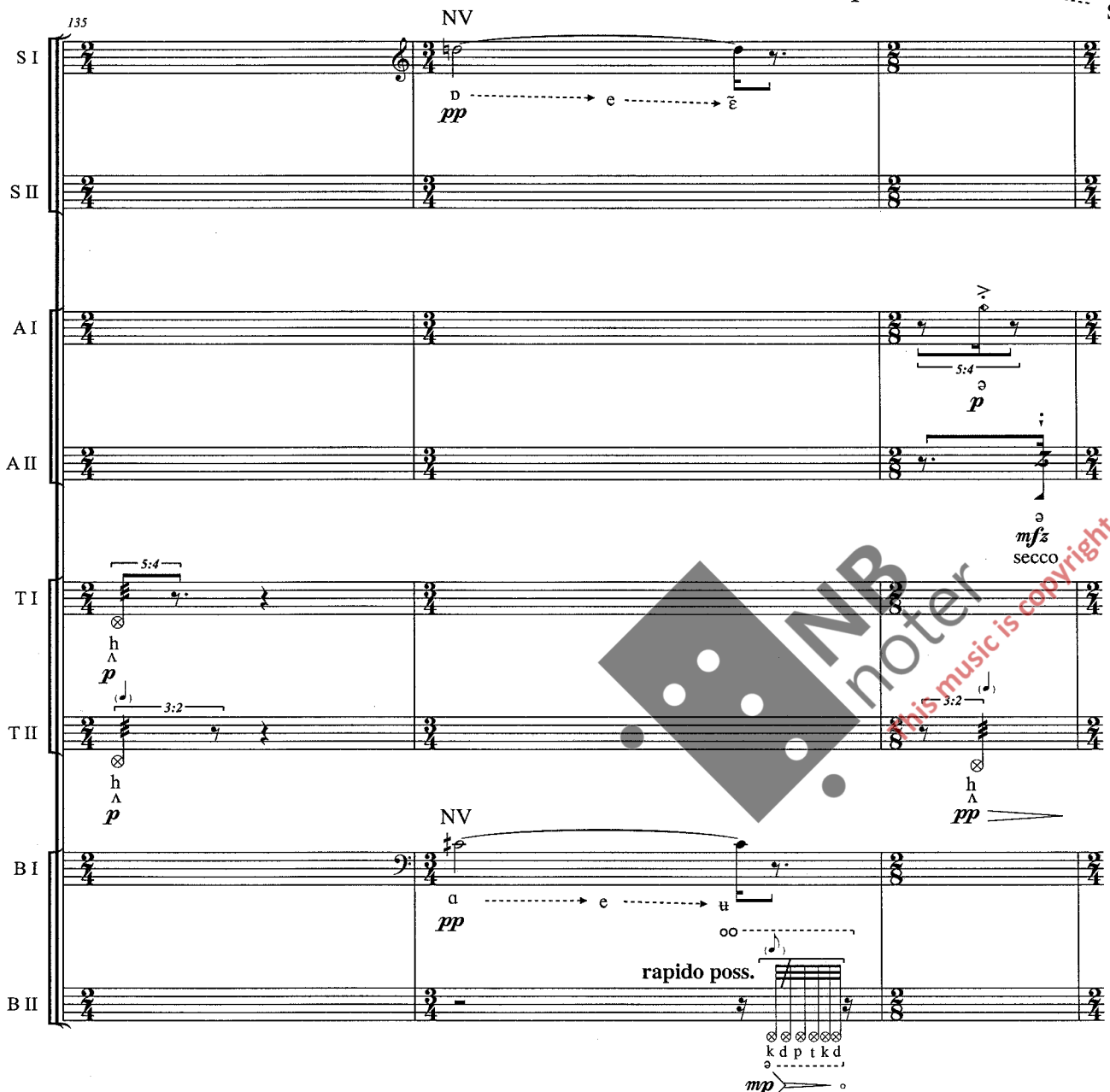


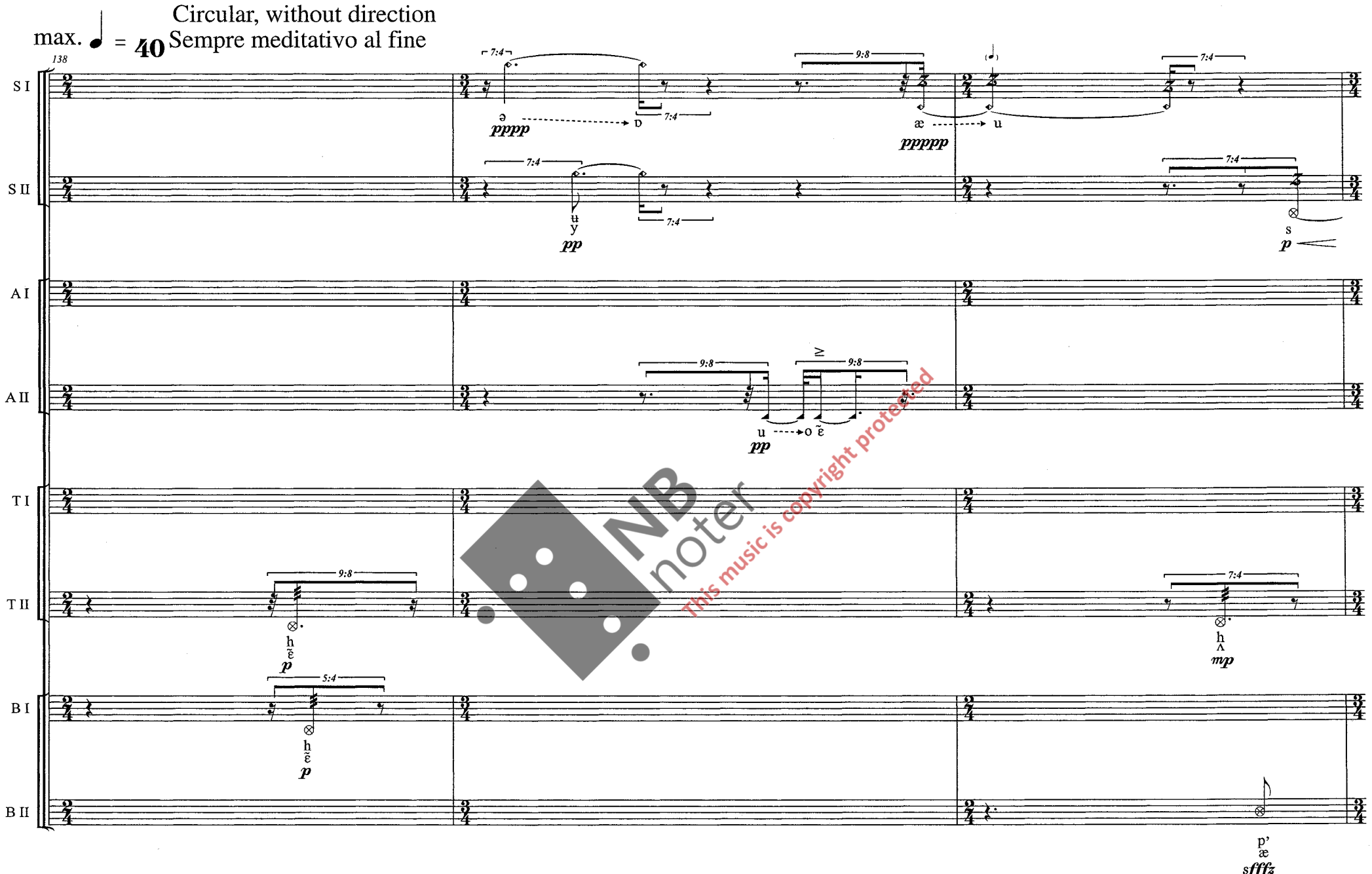


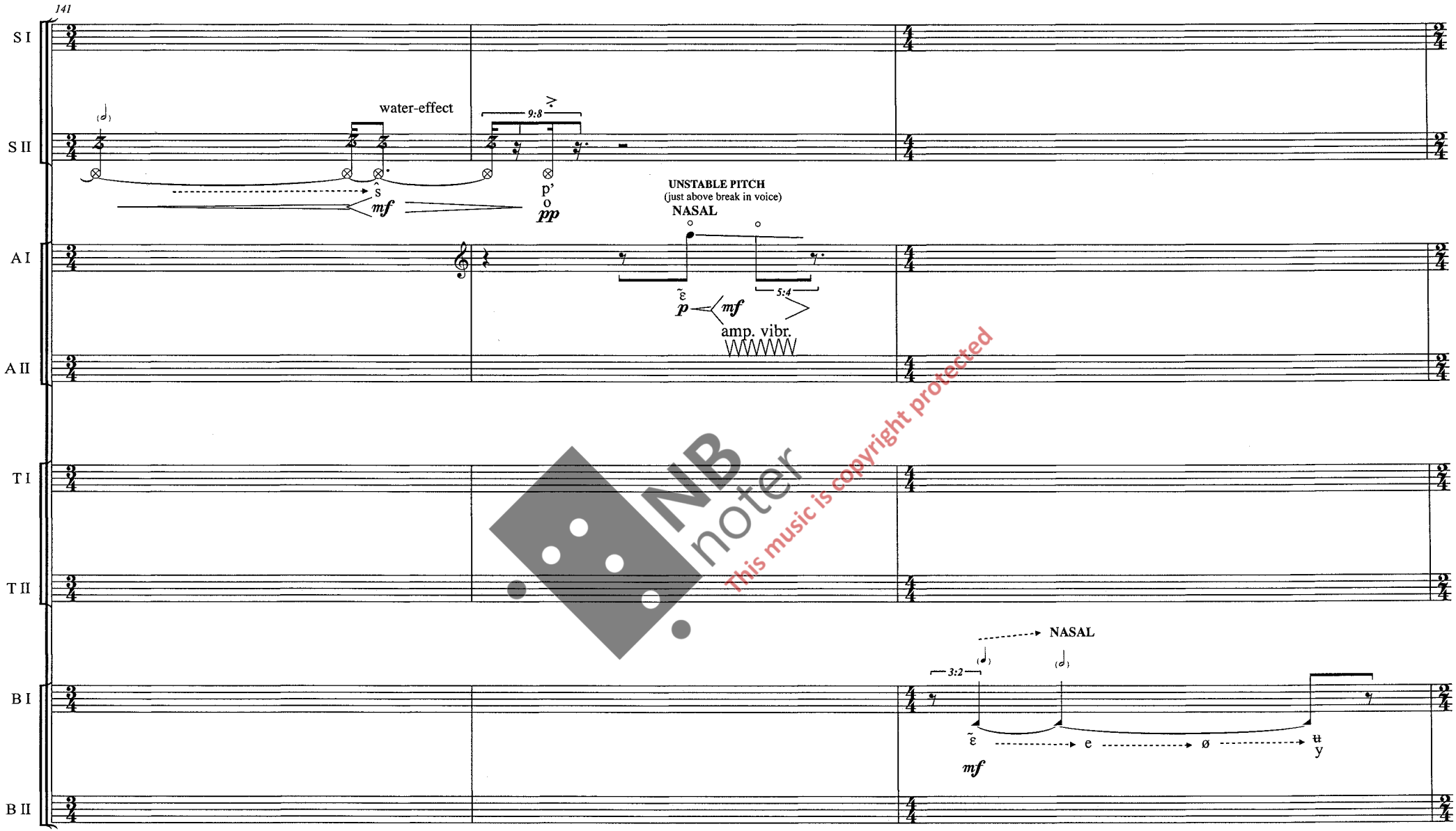


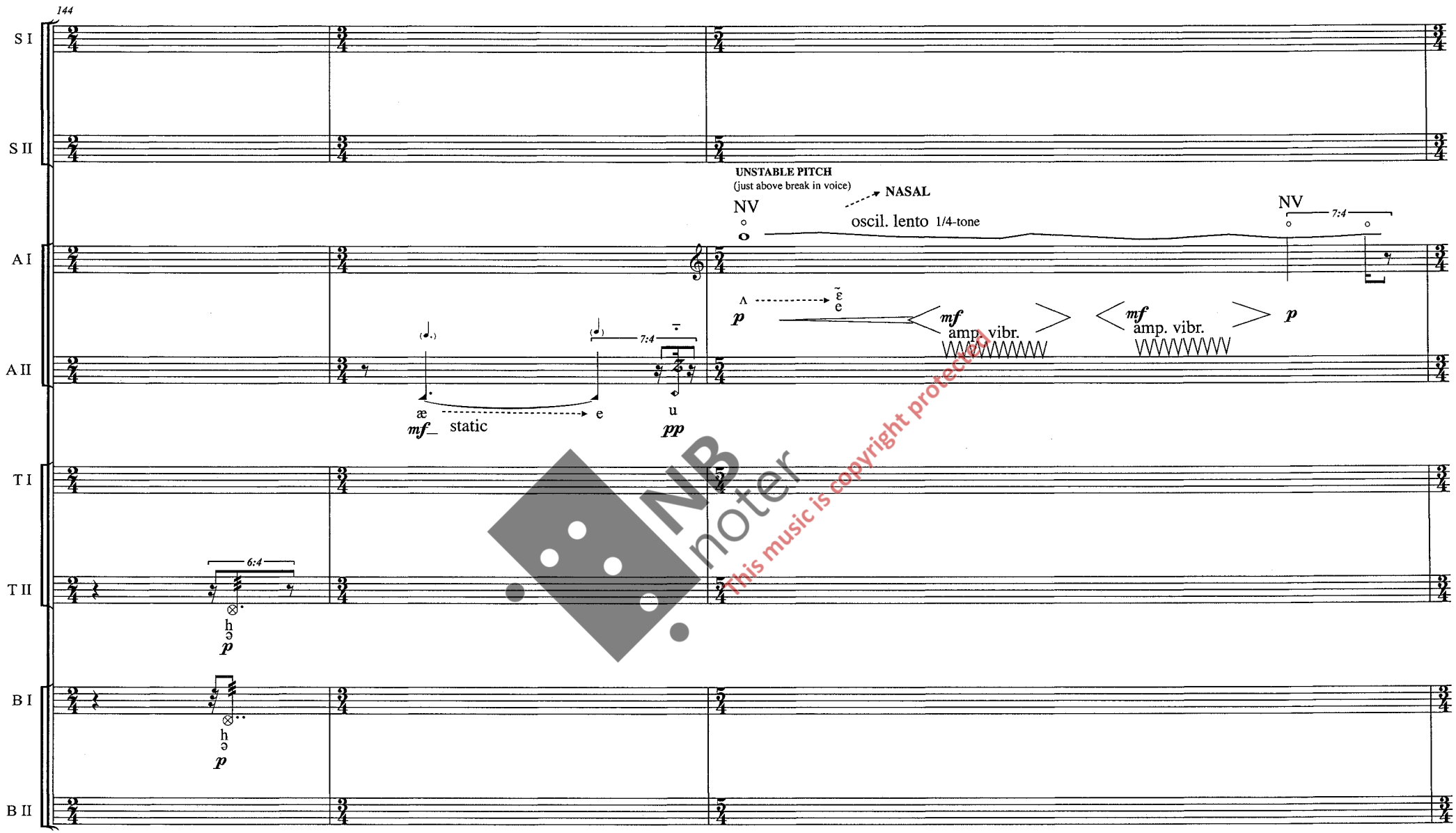


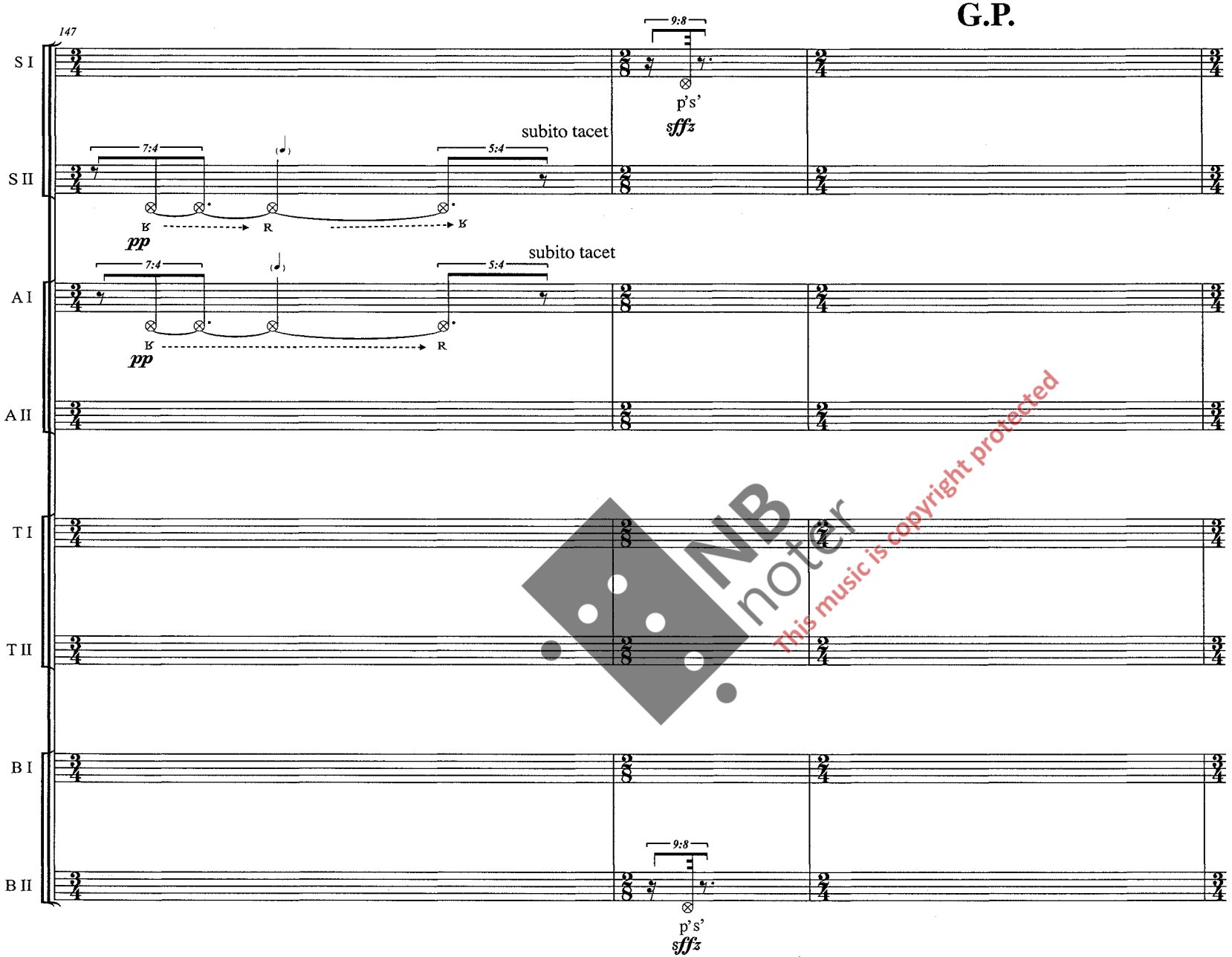


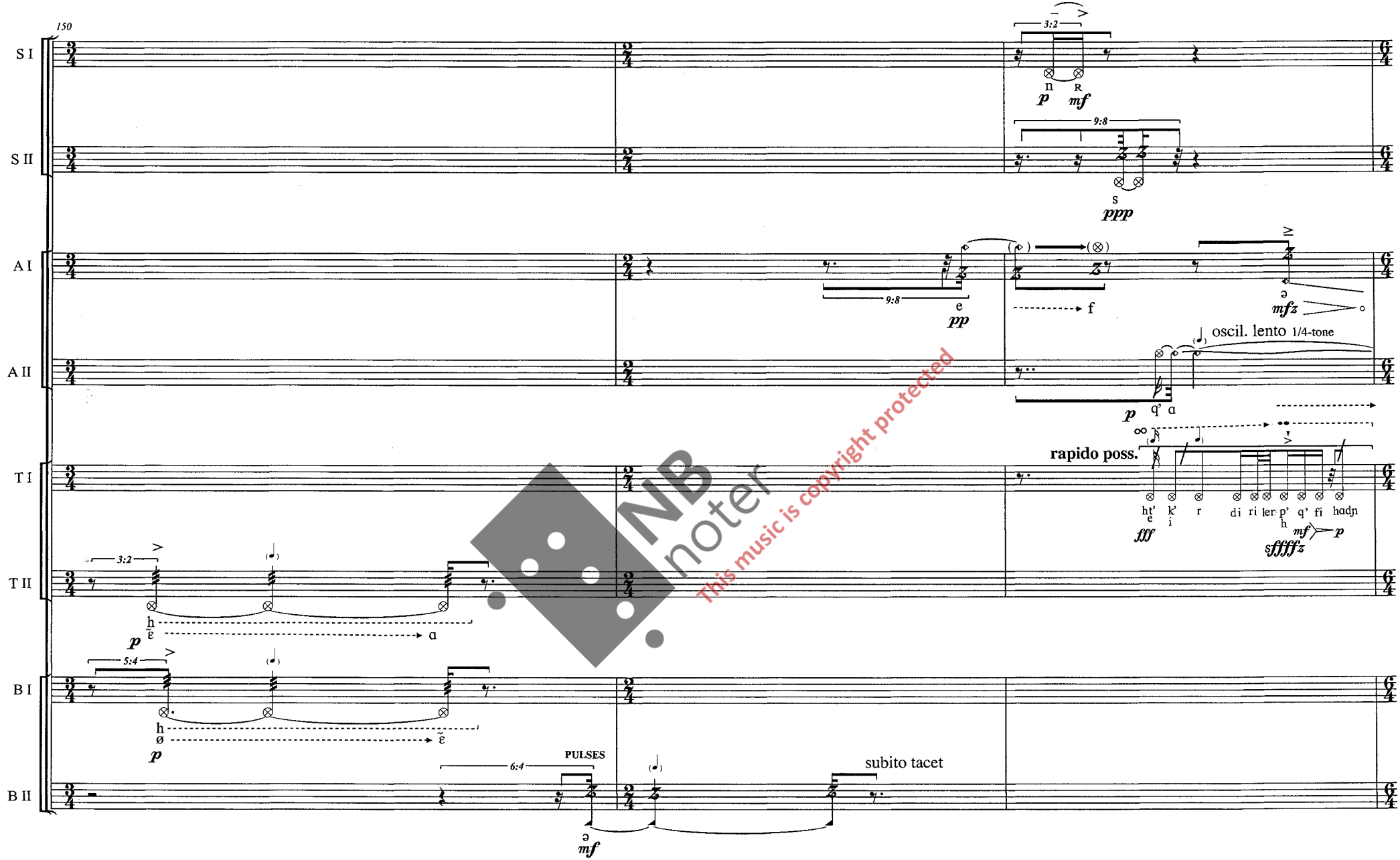


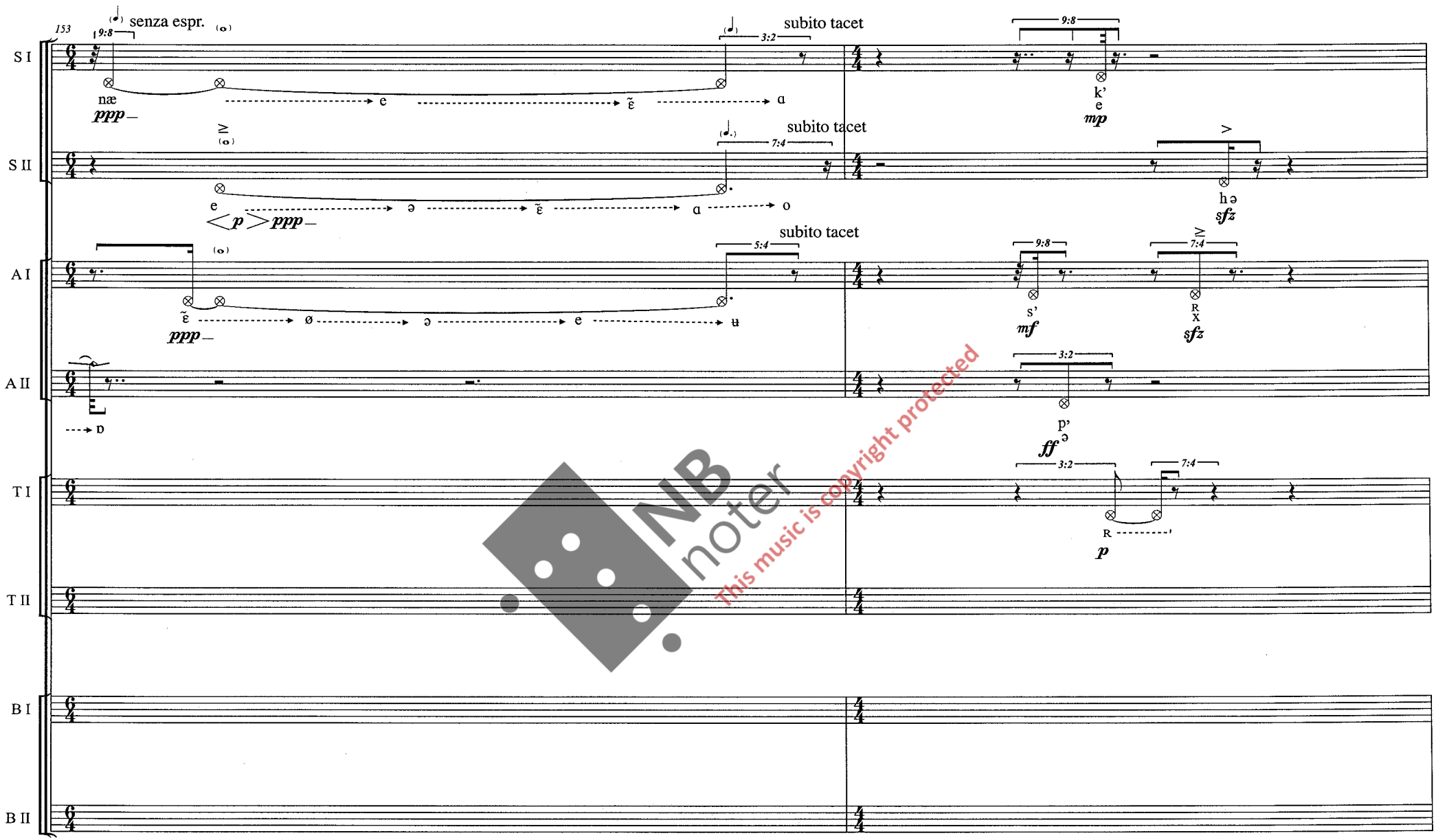


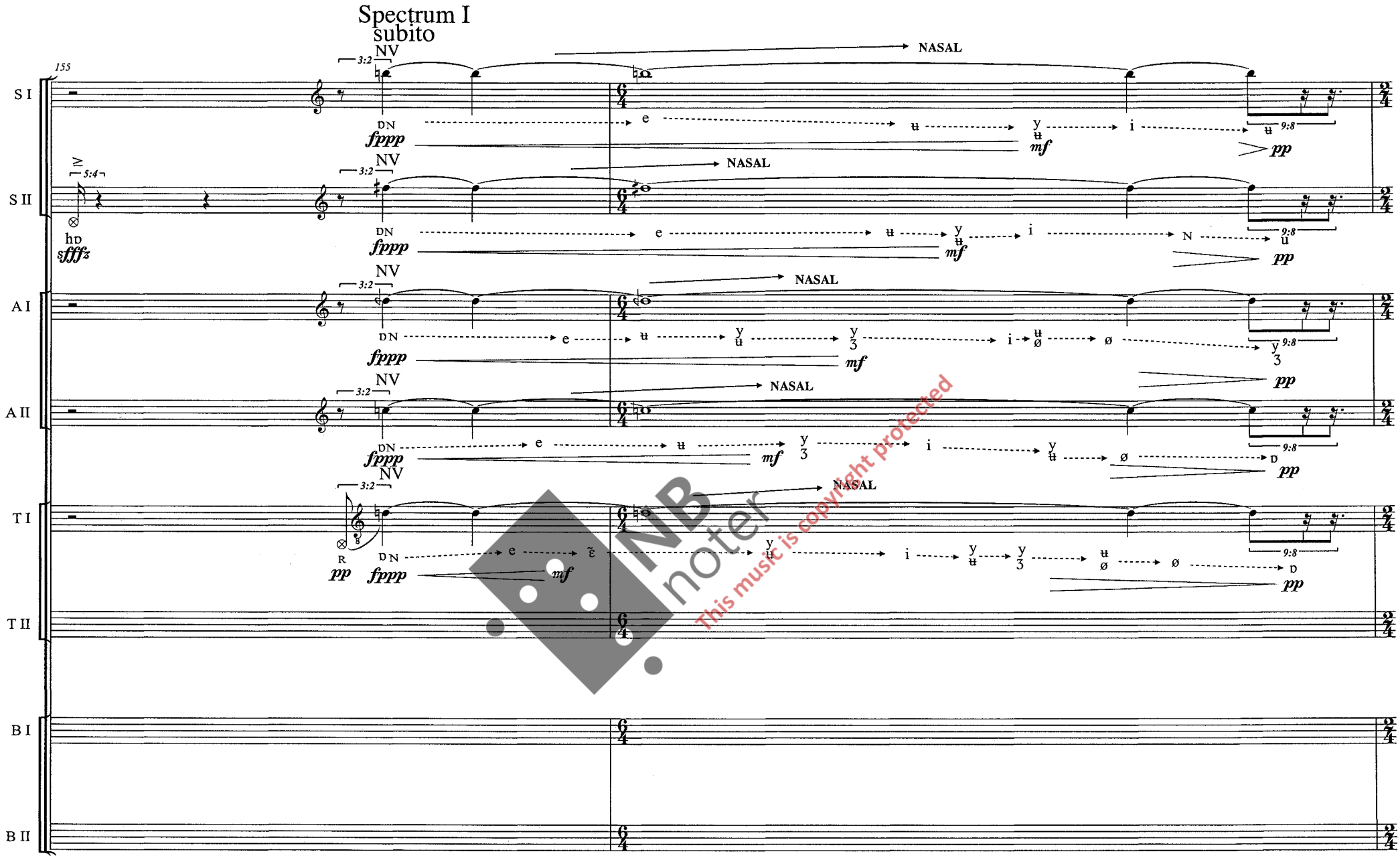


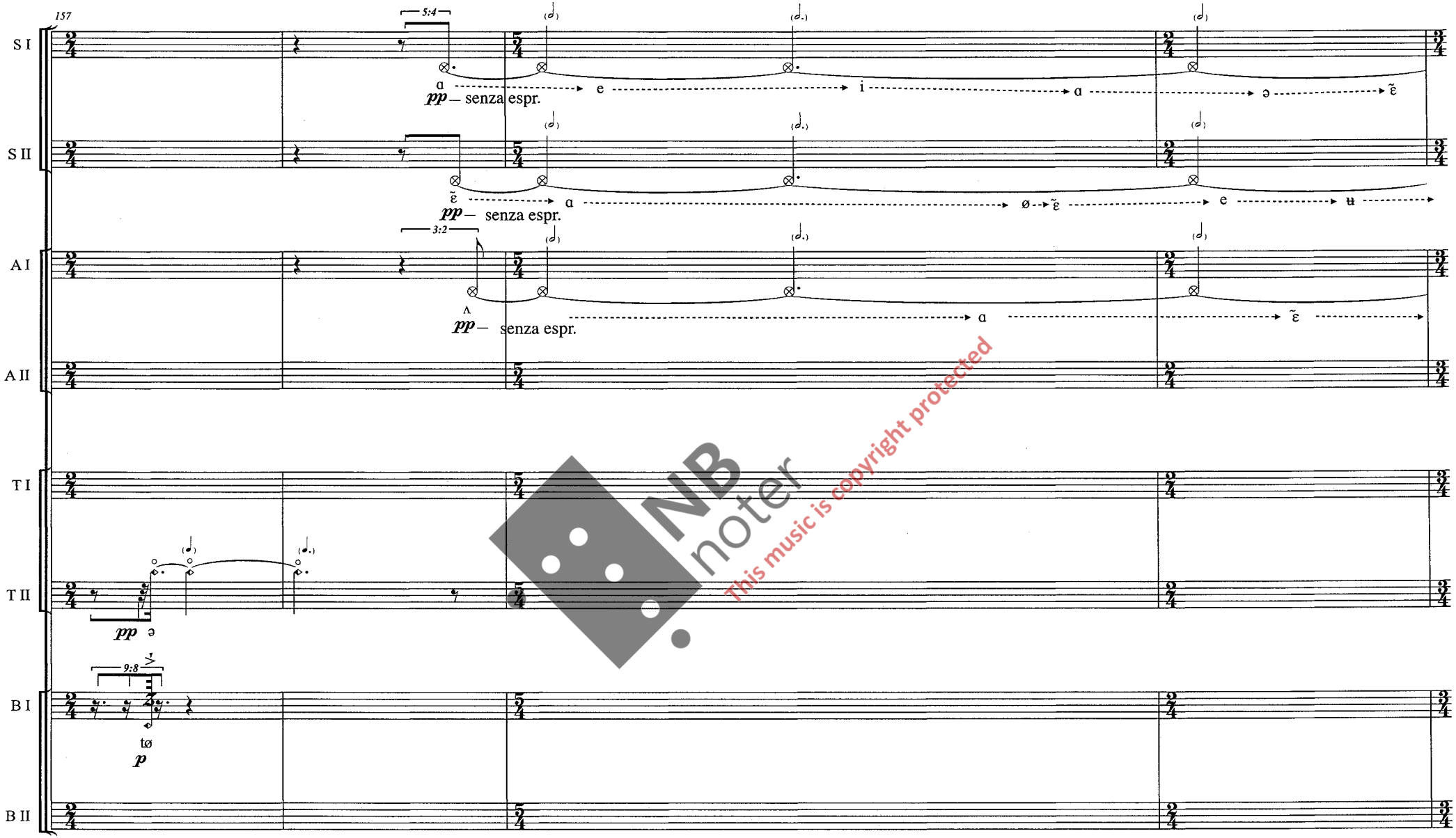


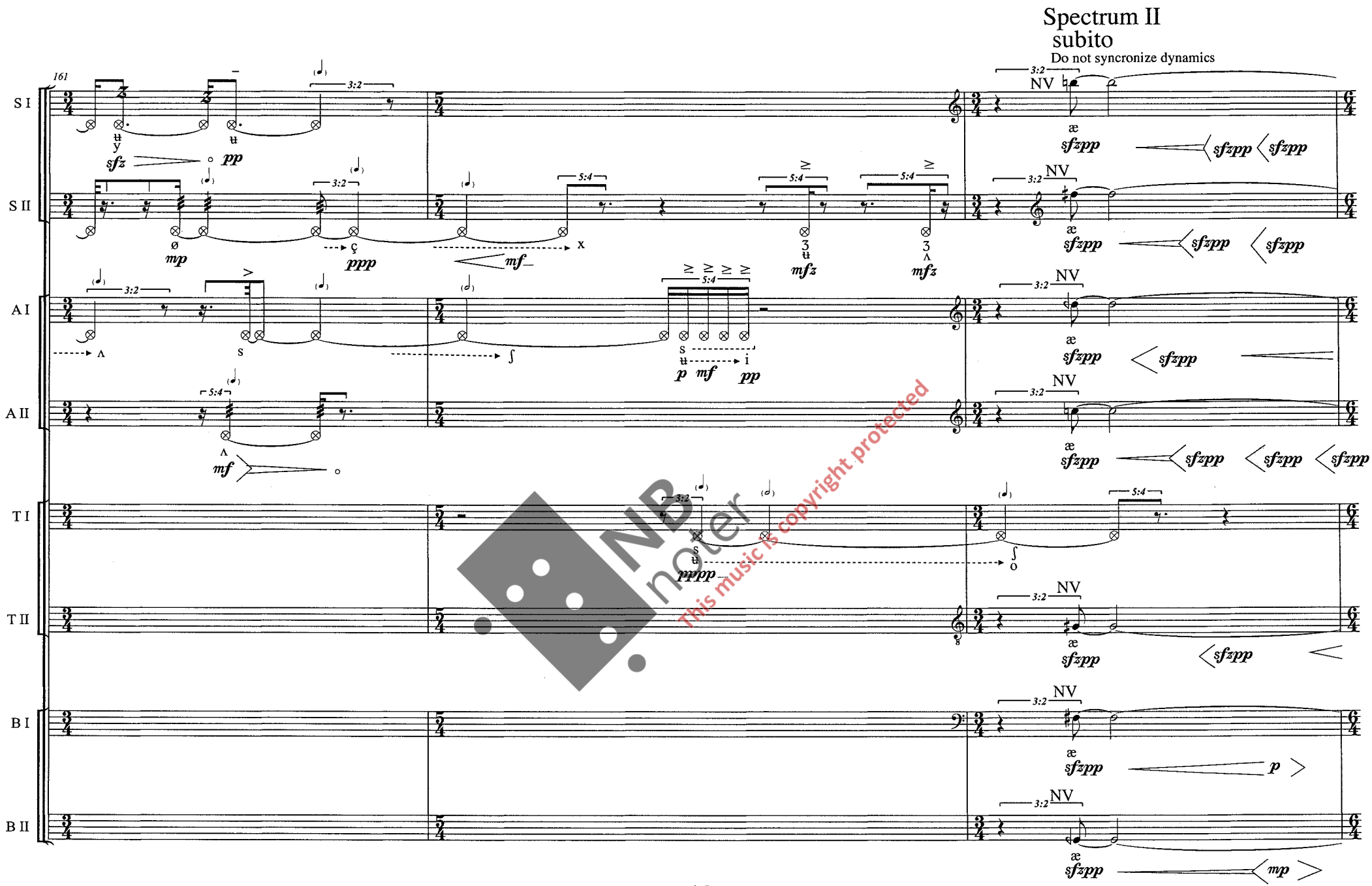


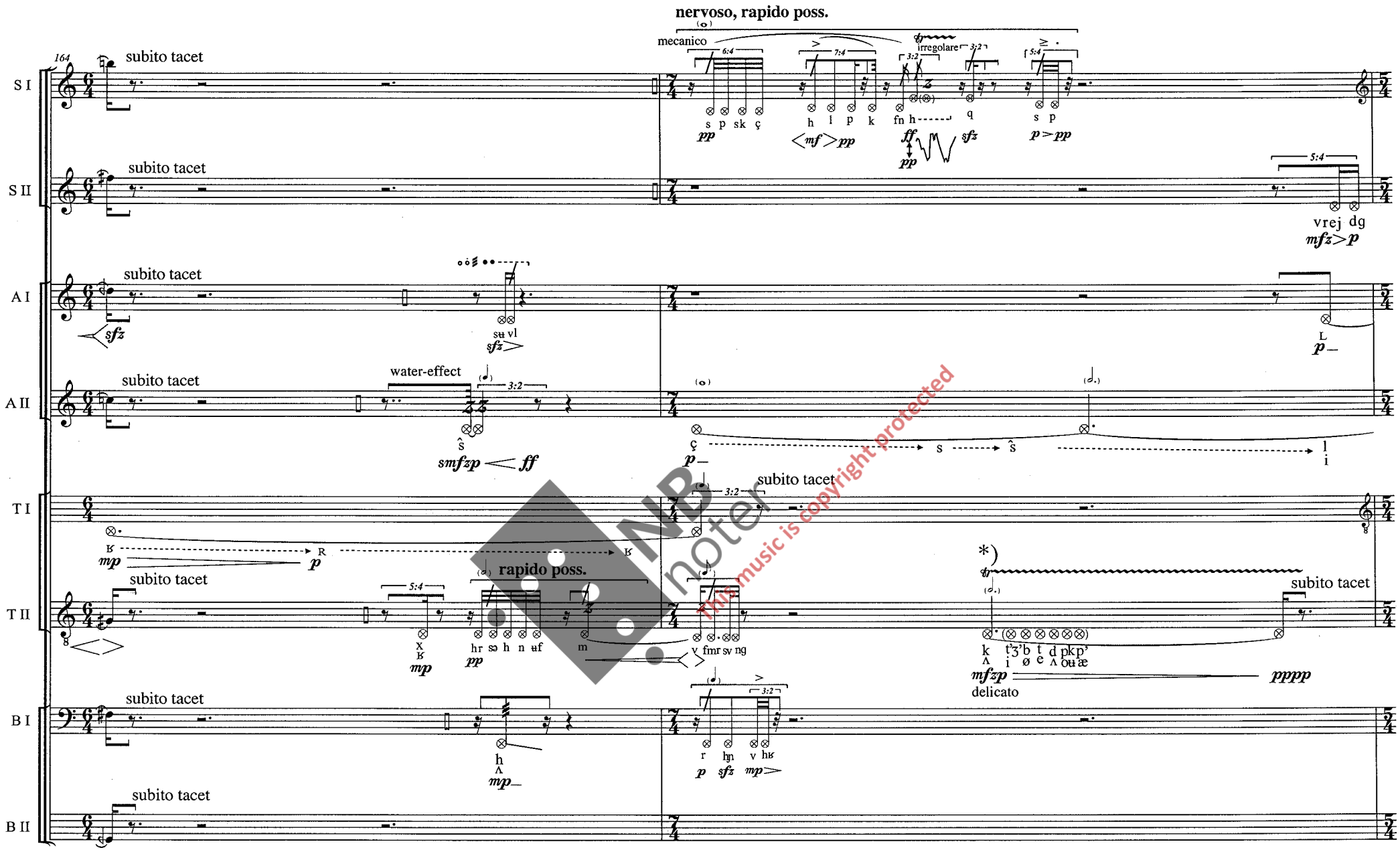




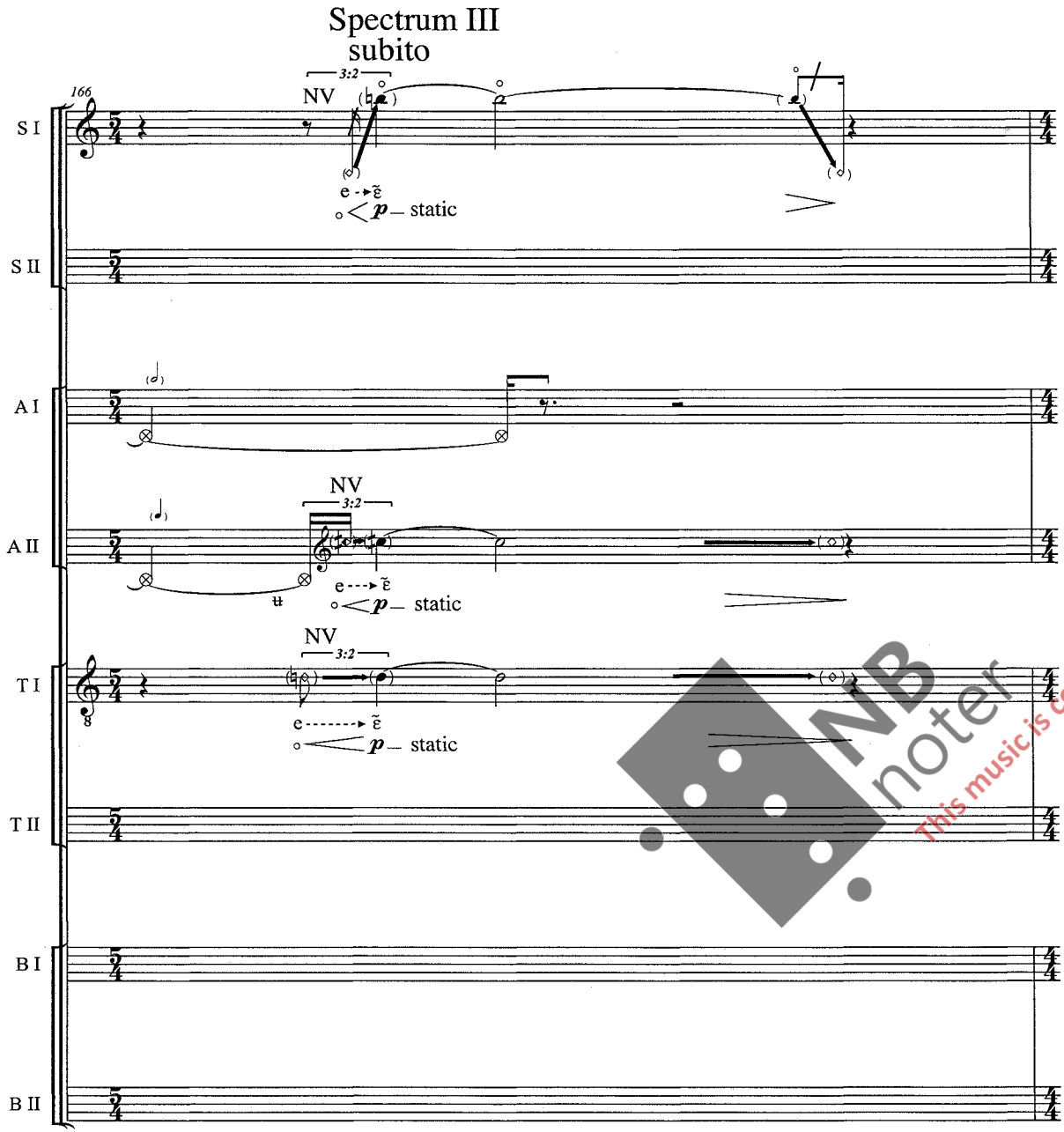






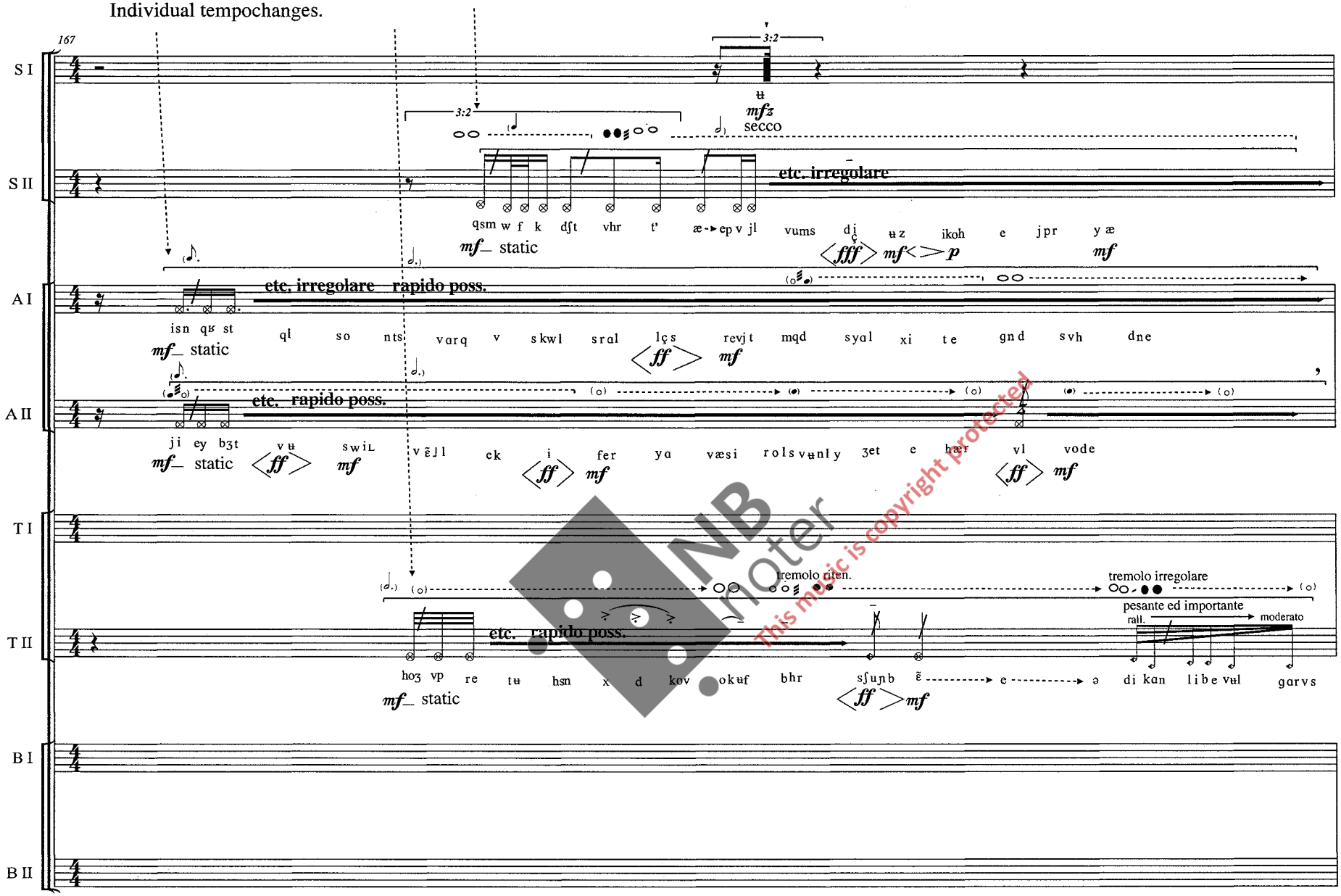


*) Improvised multiplex.



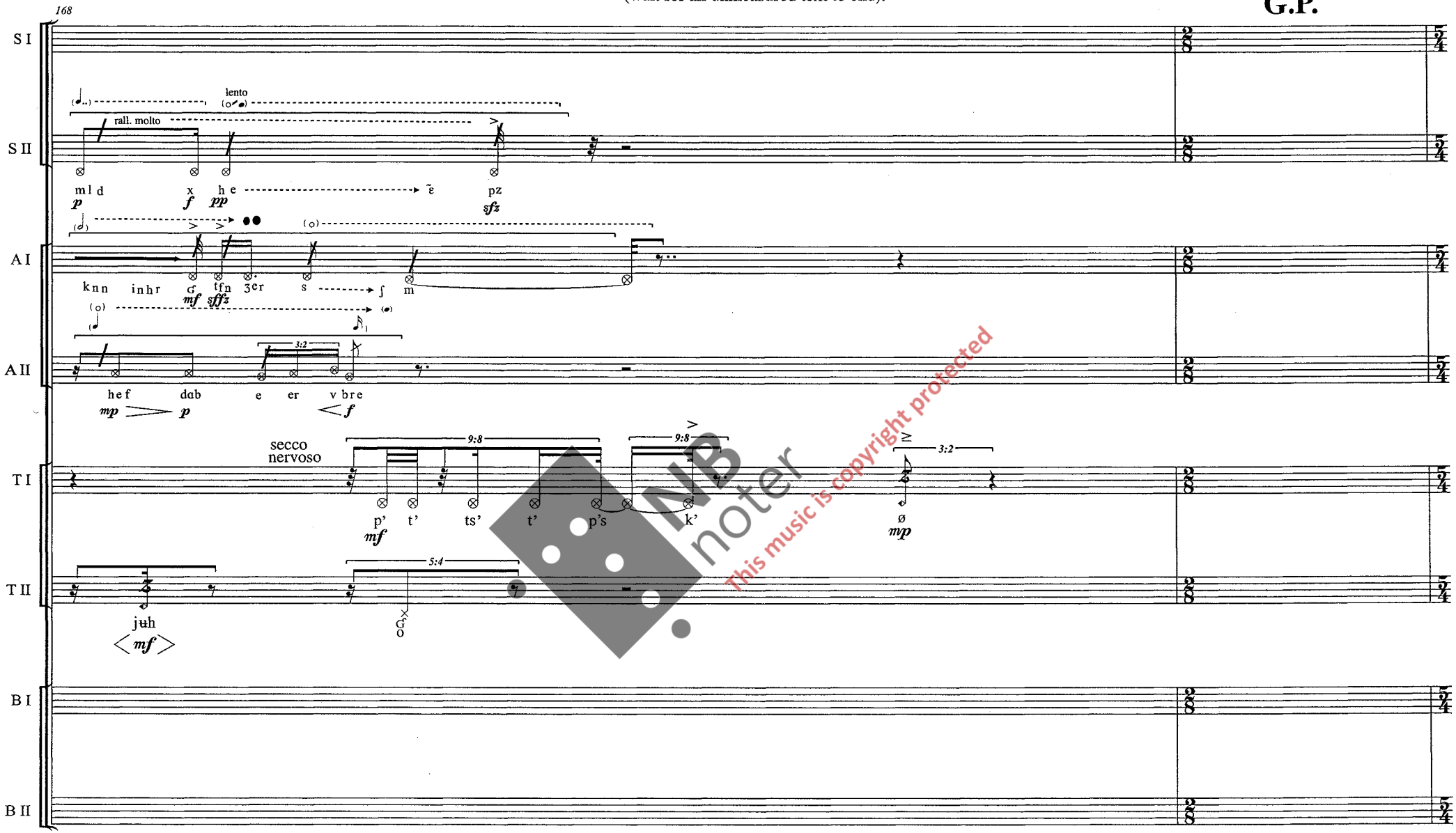
Quasi senza misura, colla parte.

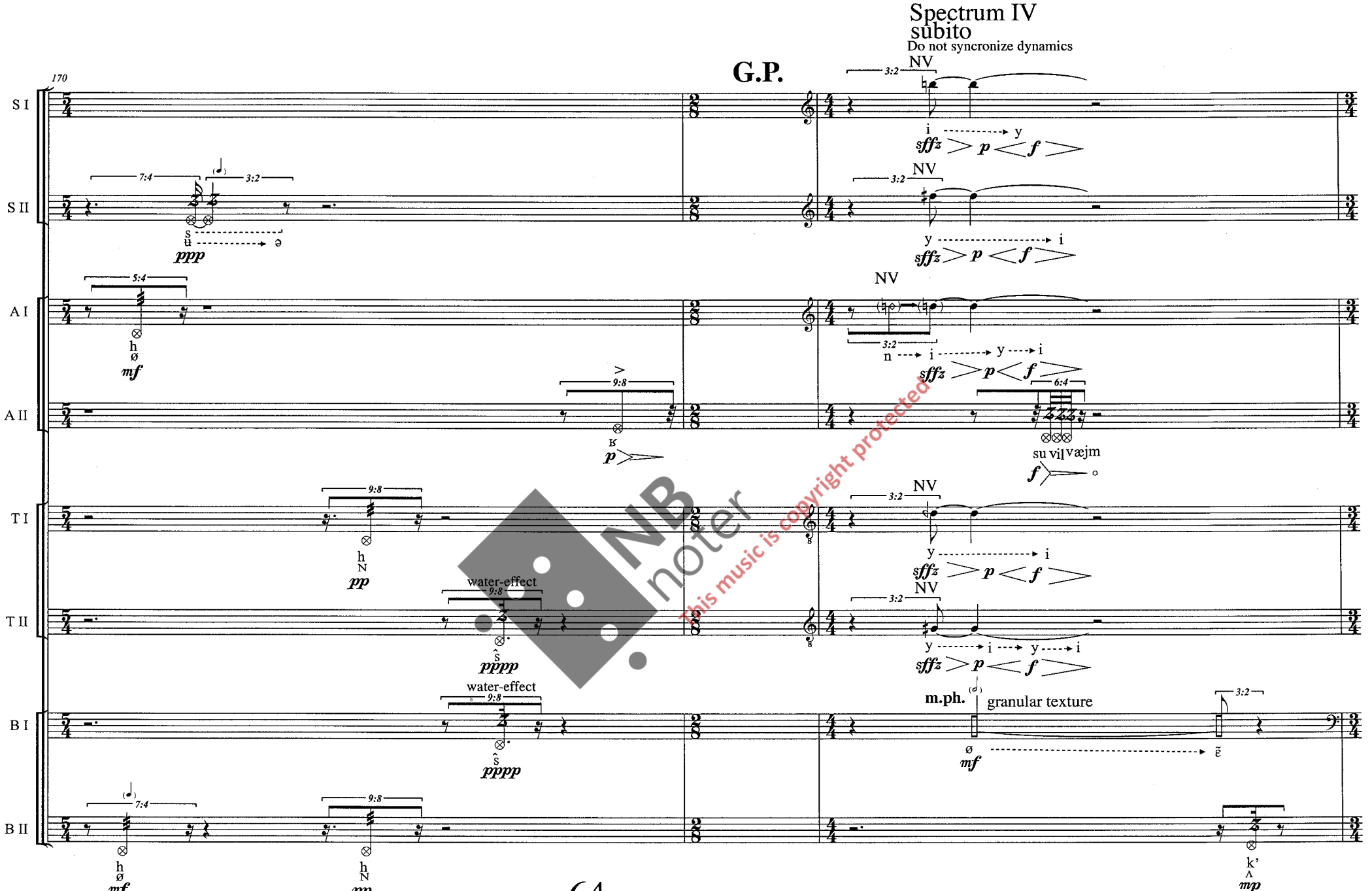
Individual tempochanges.

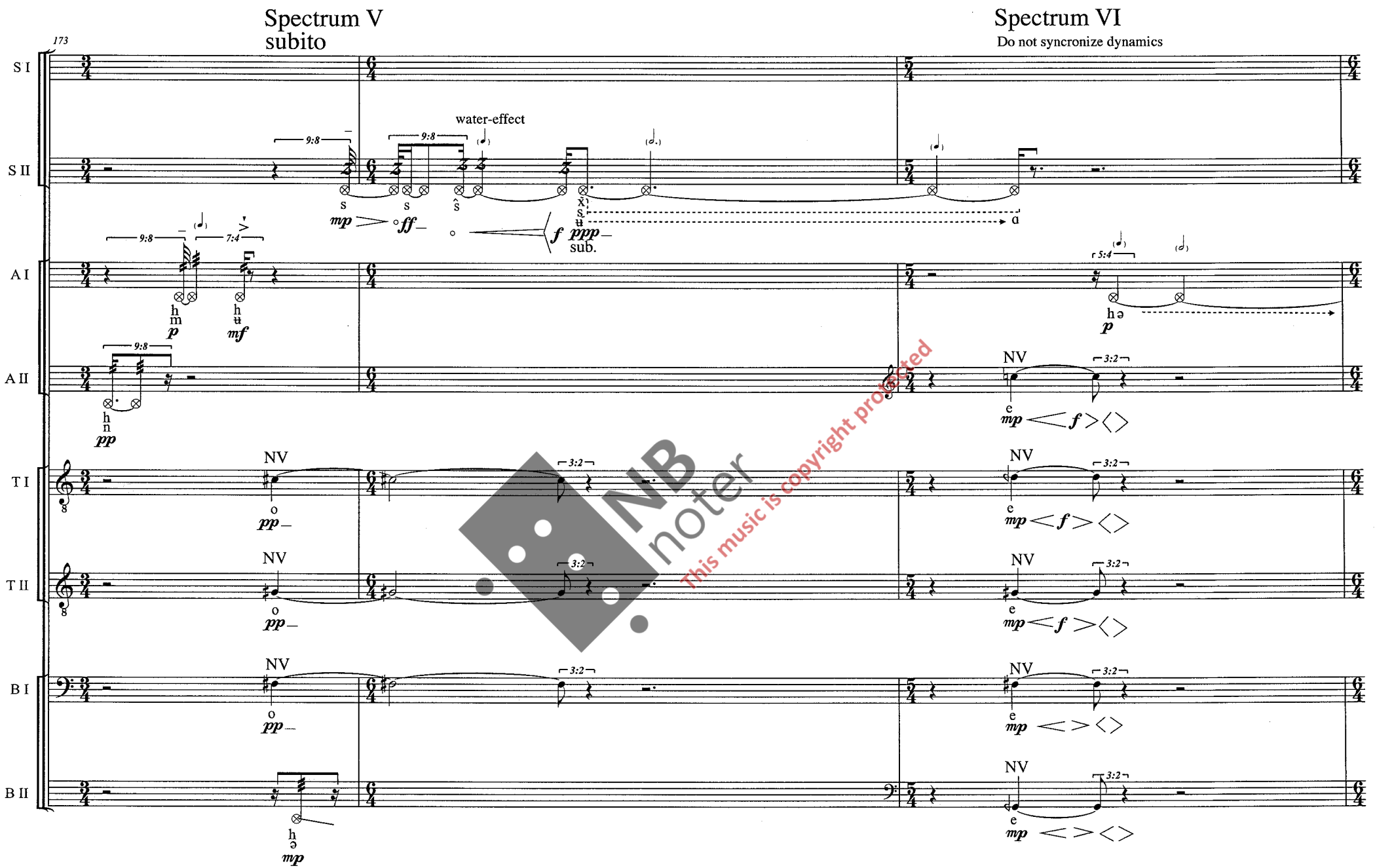


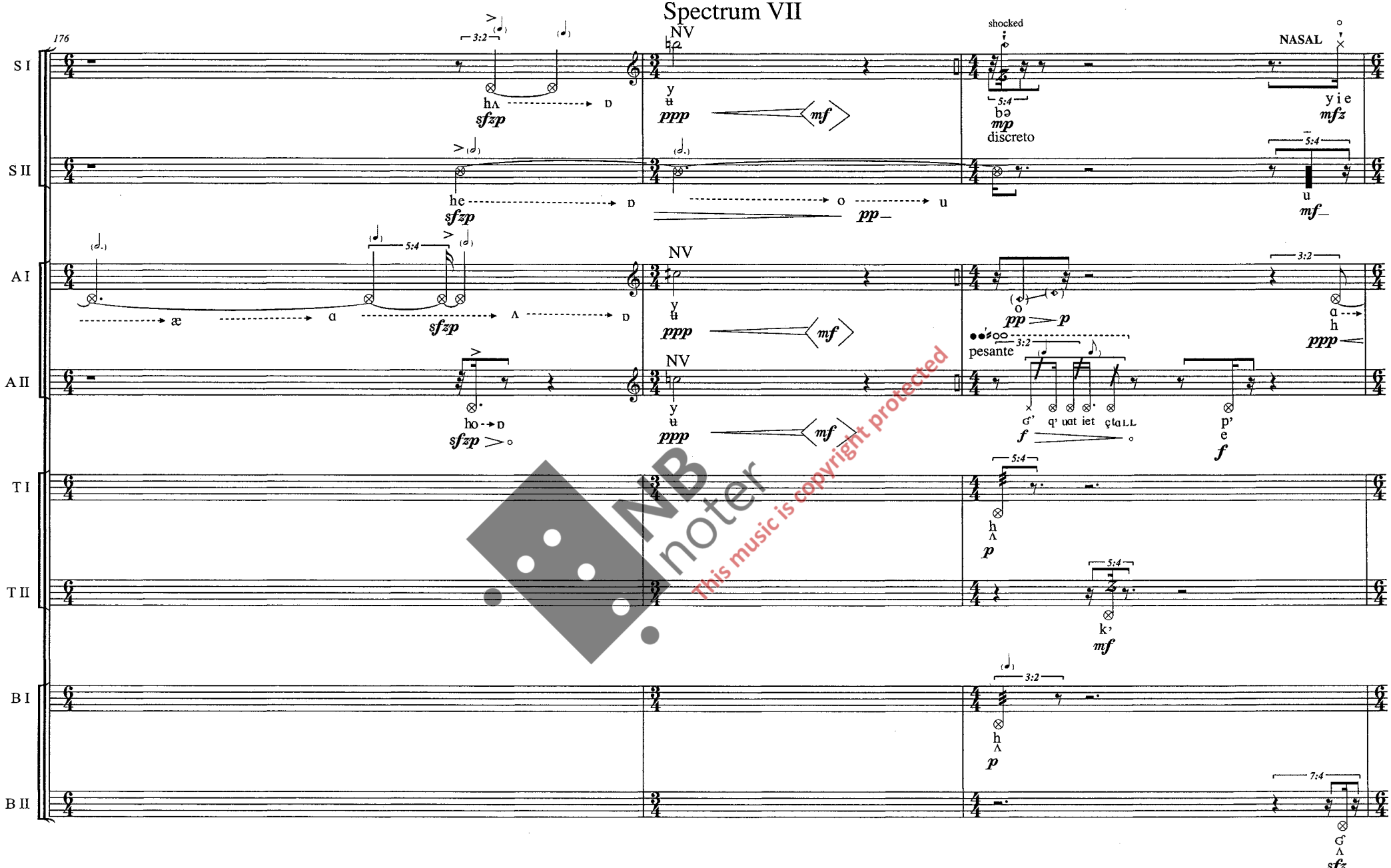
A tempo
(wait for all unmeasured text to end).

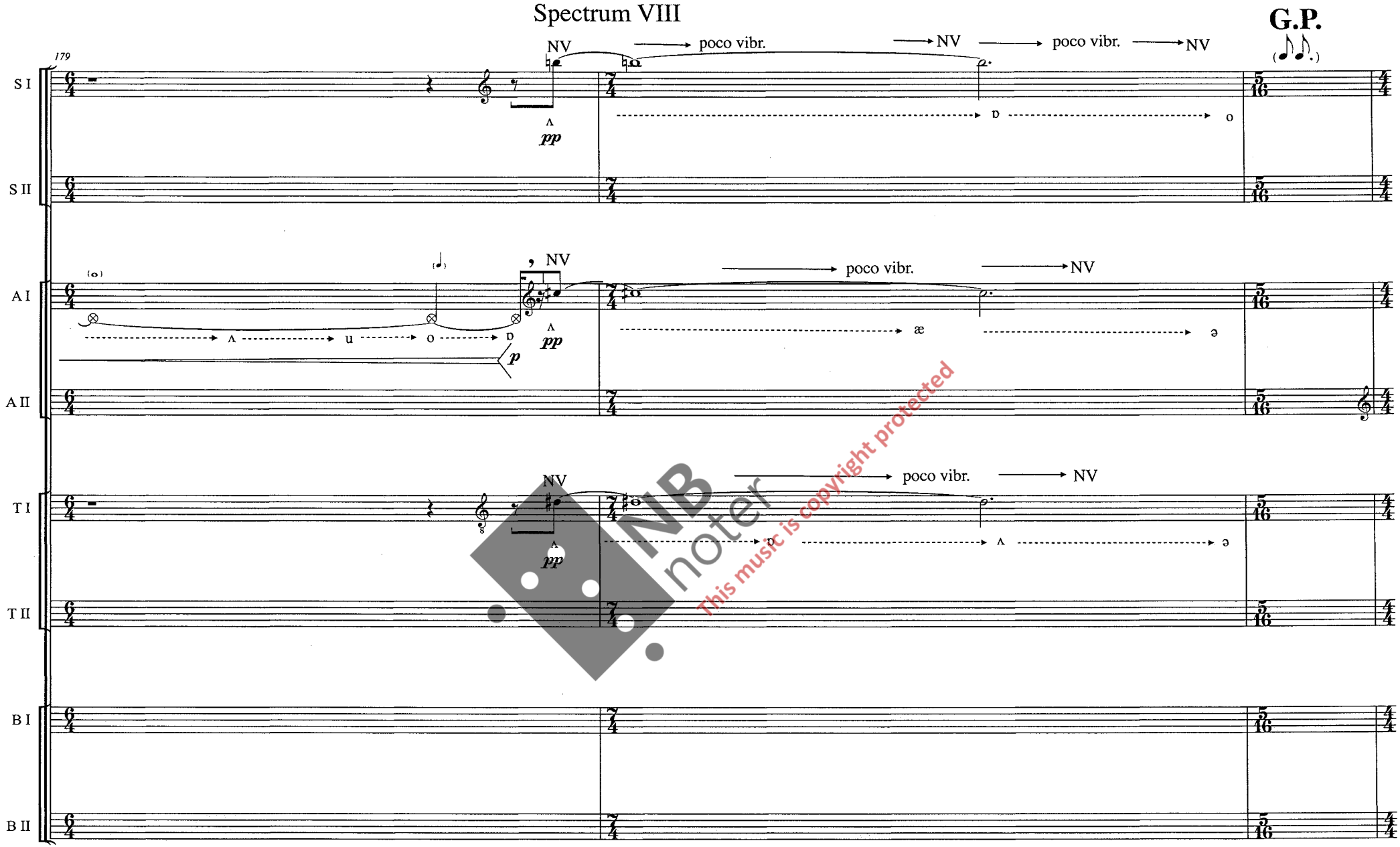
G.P.

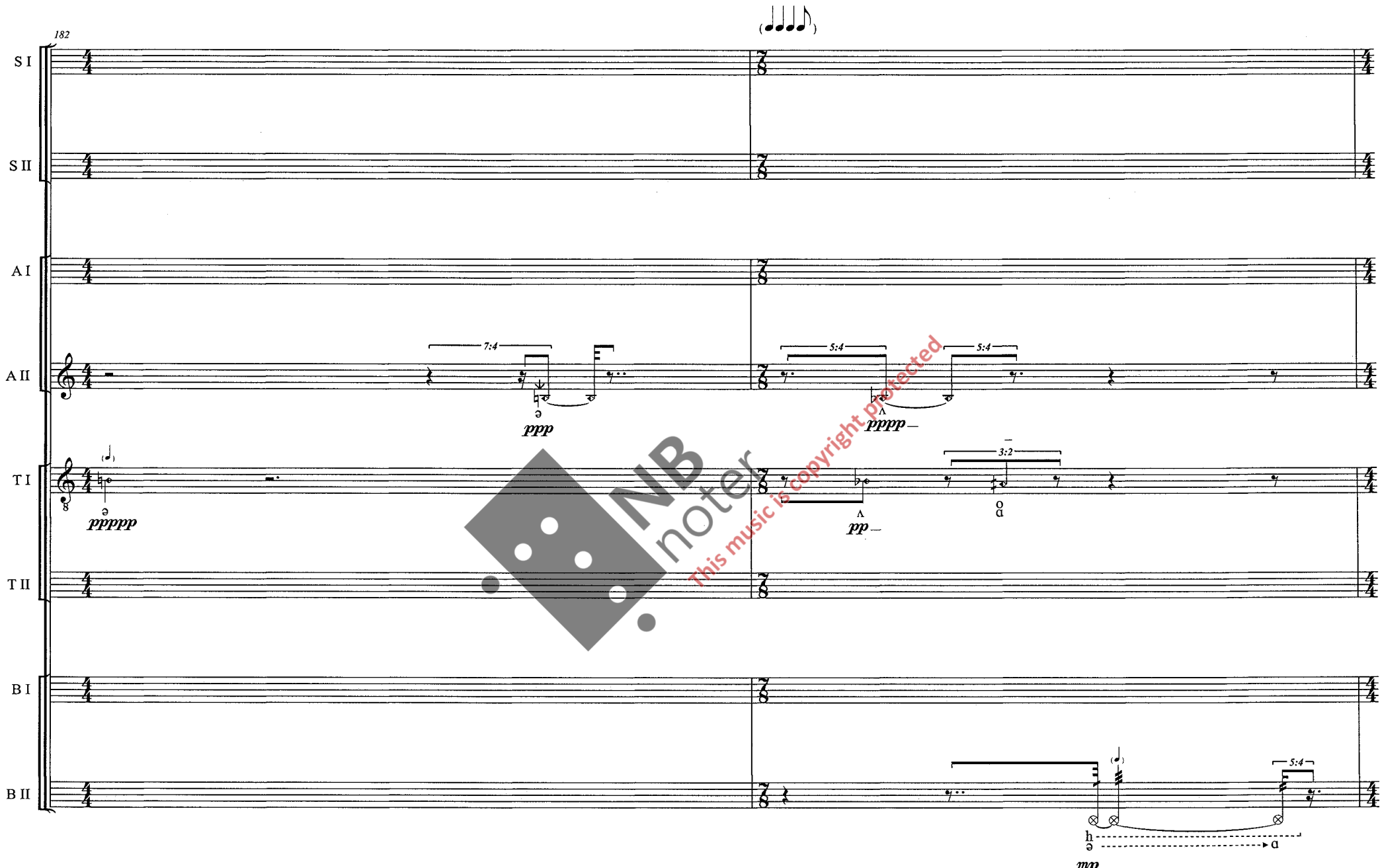


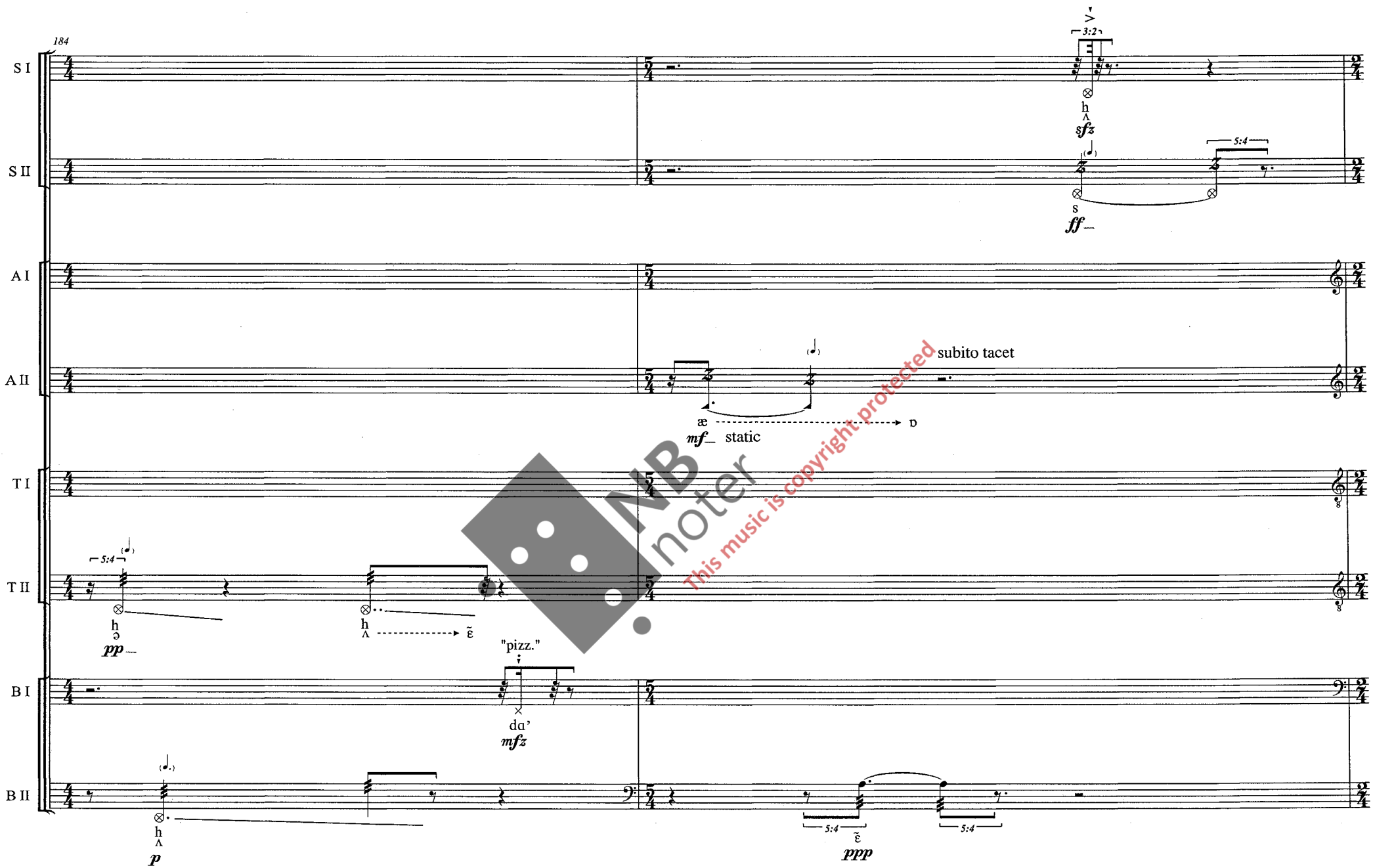






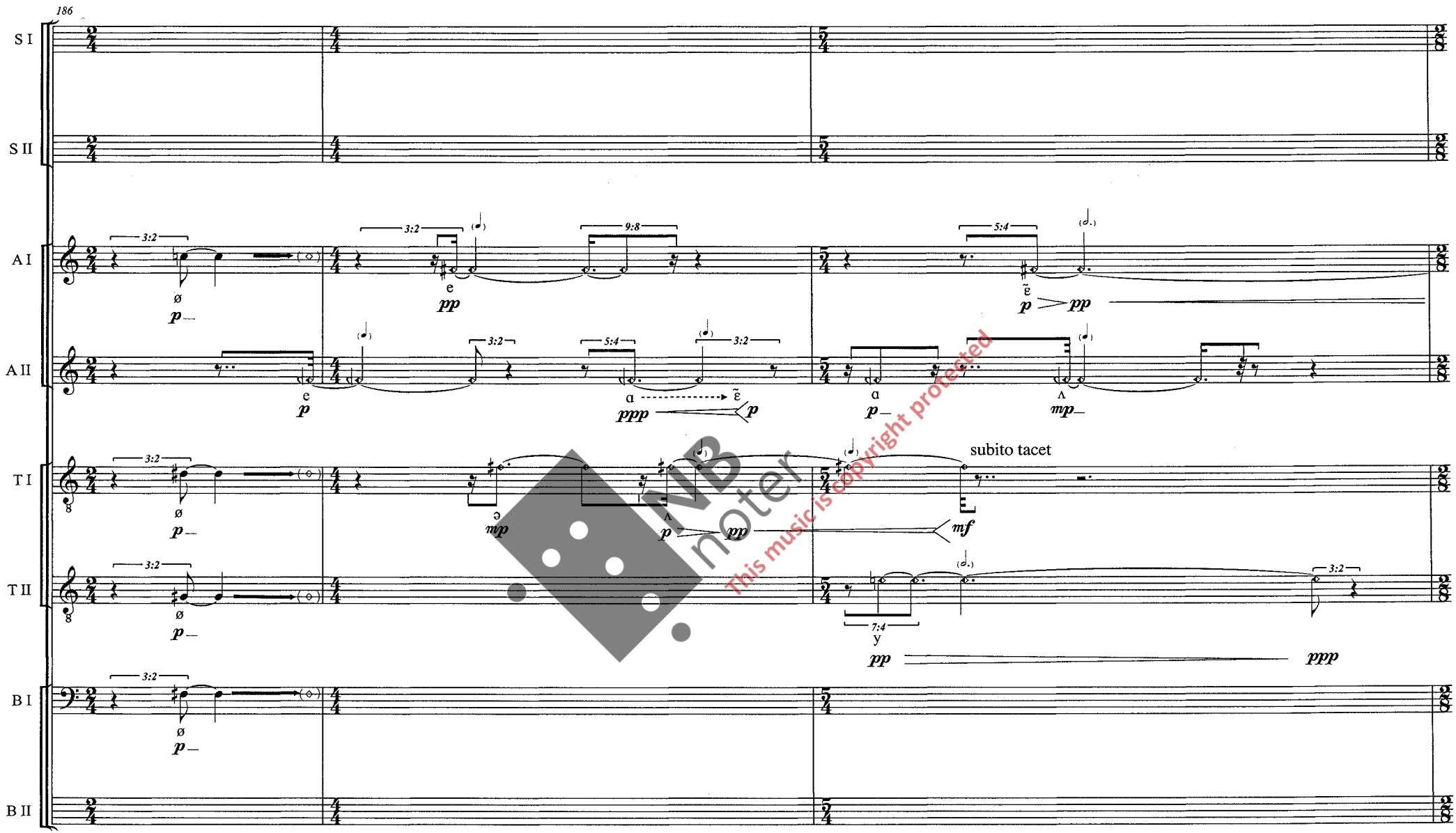


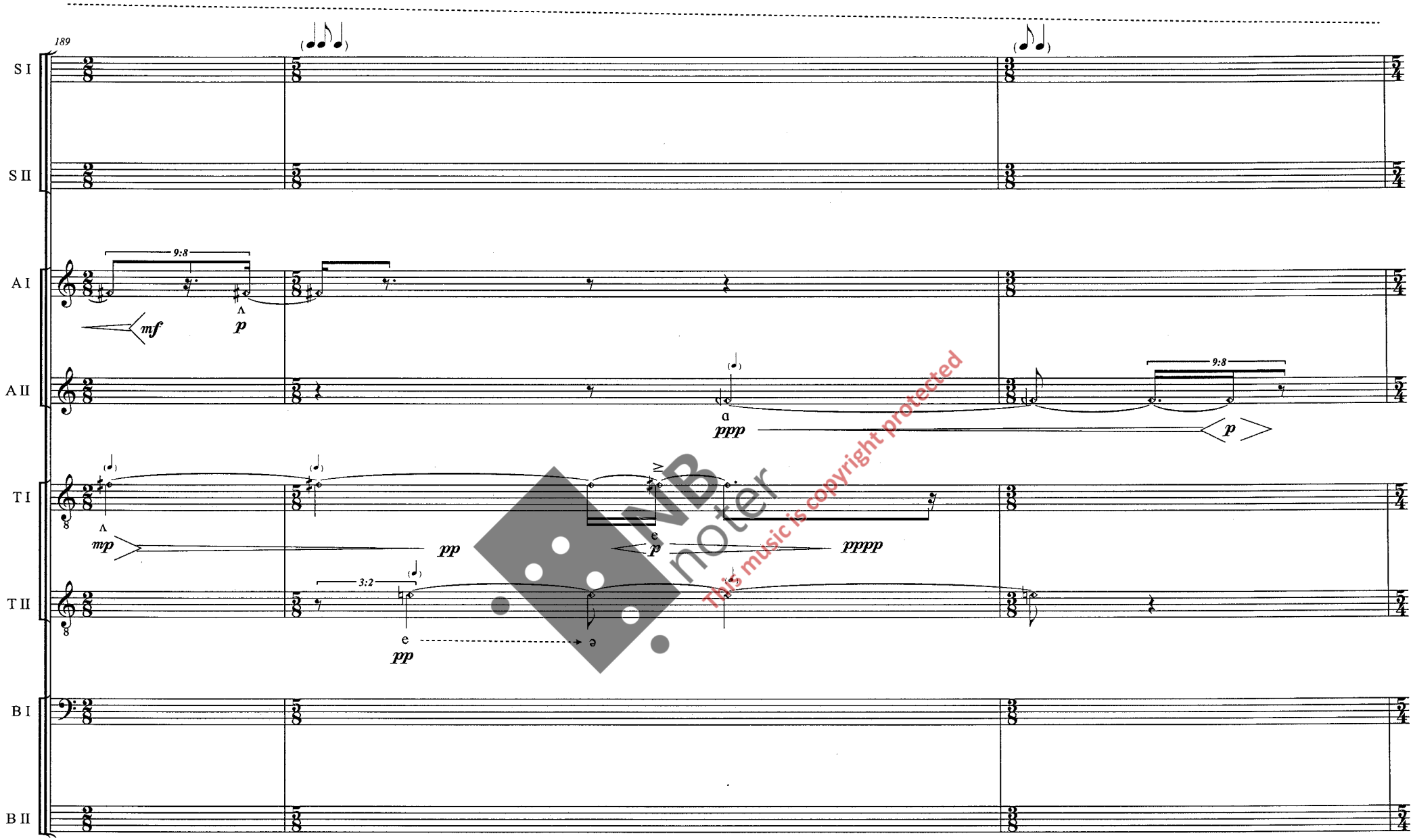


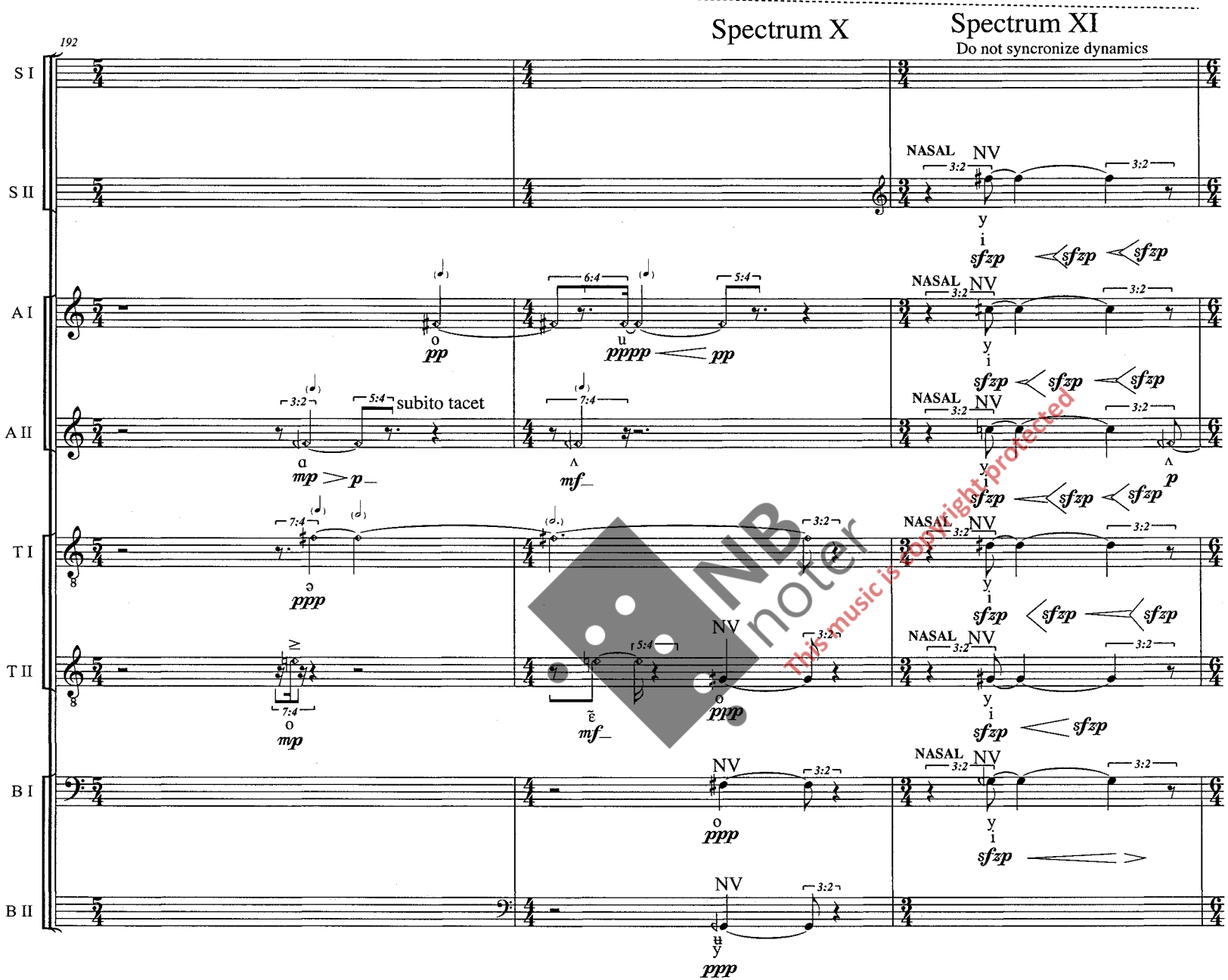


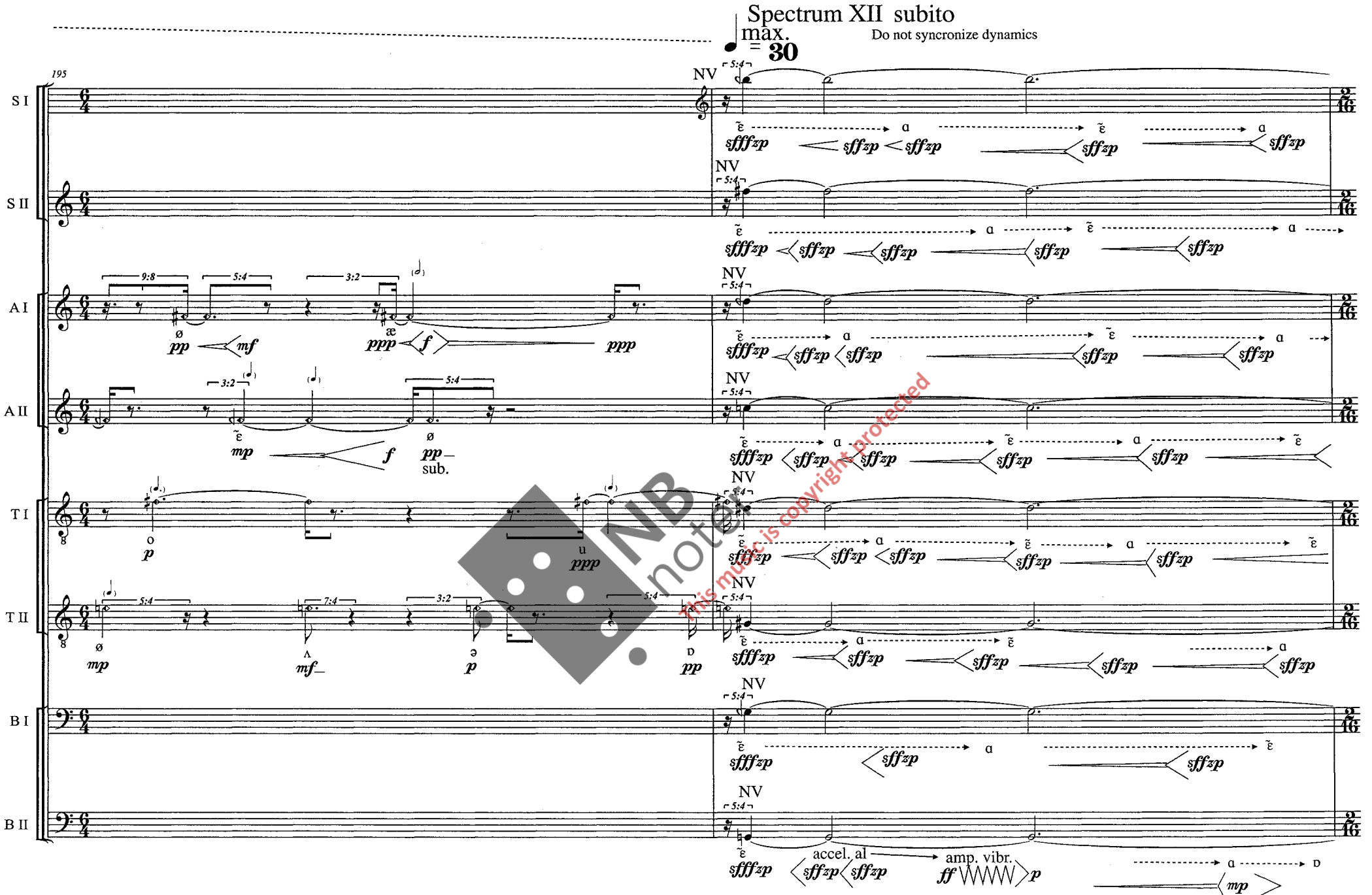
Cori spezzati

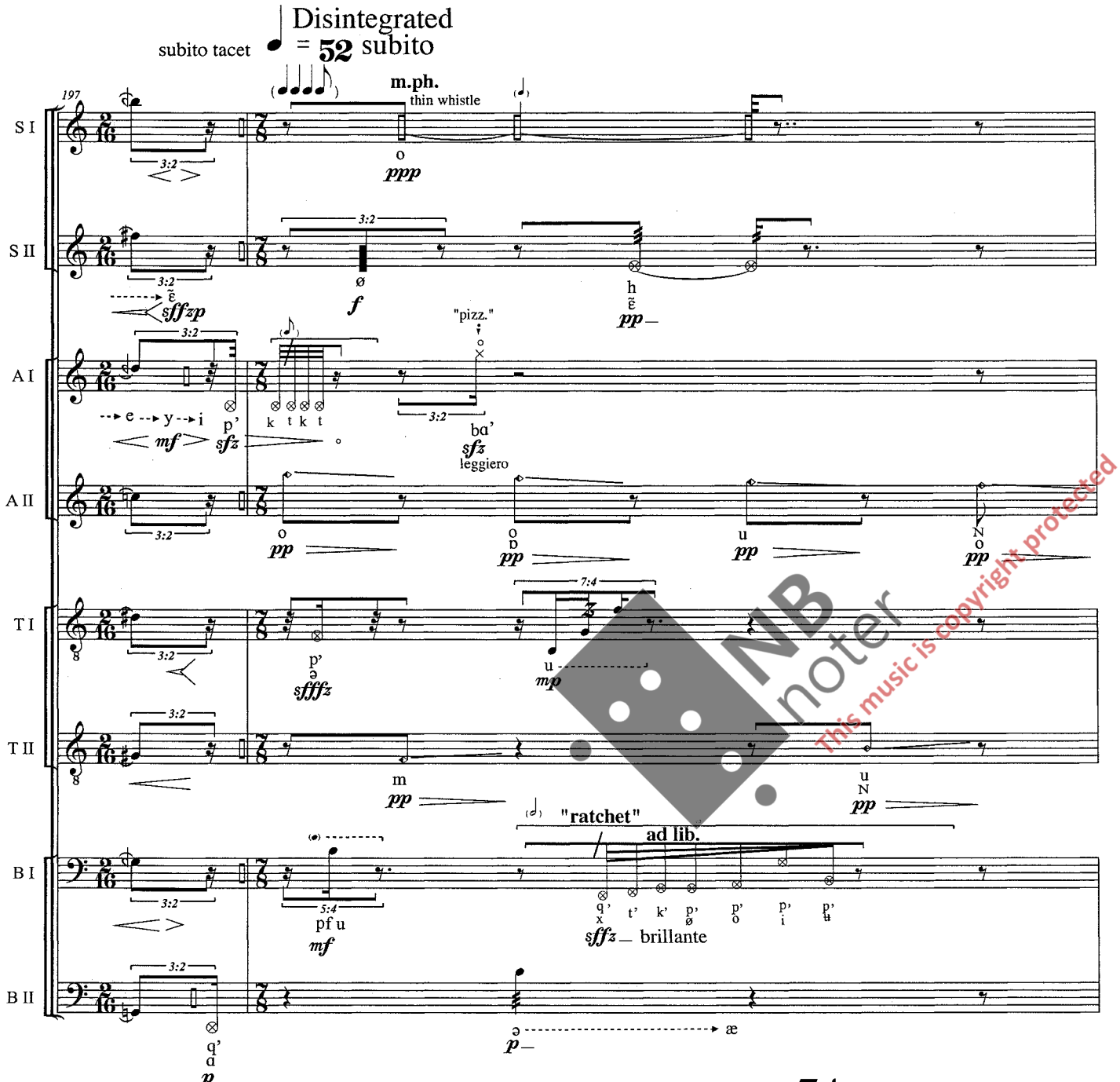
rall.



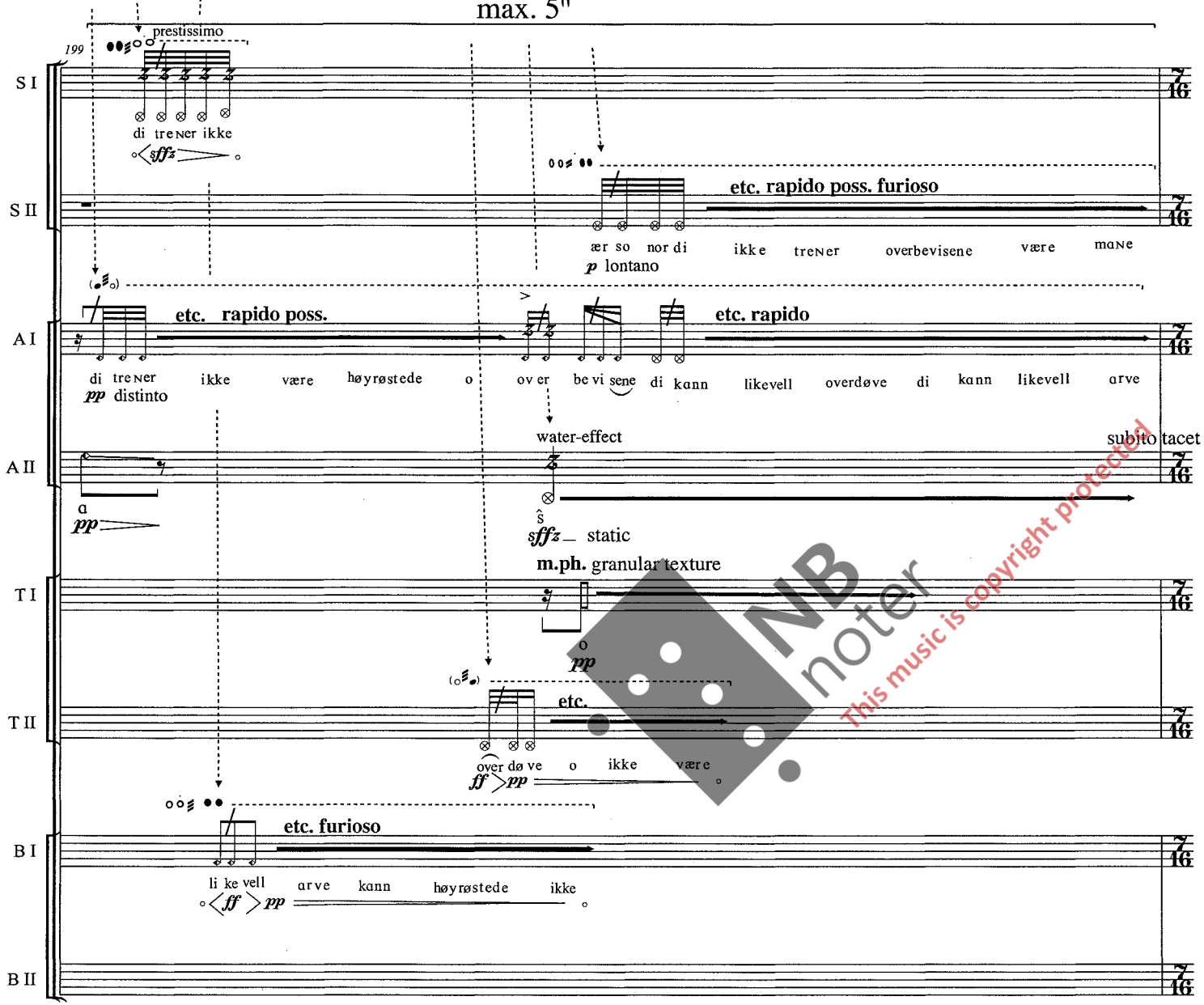


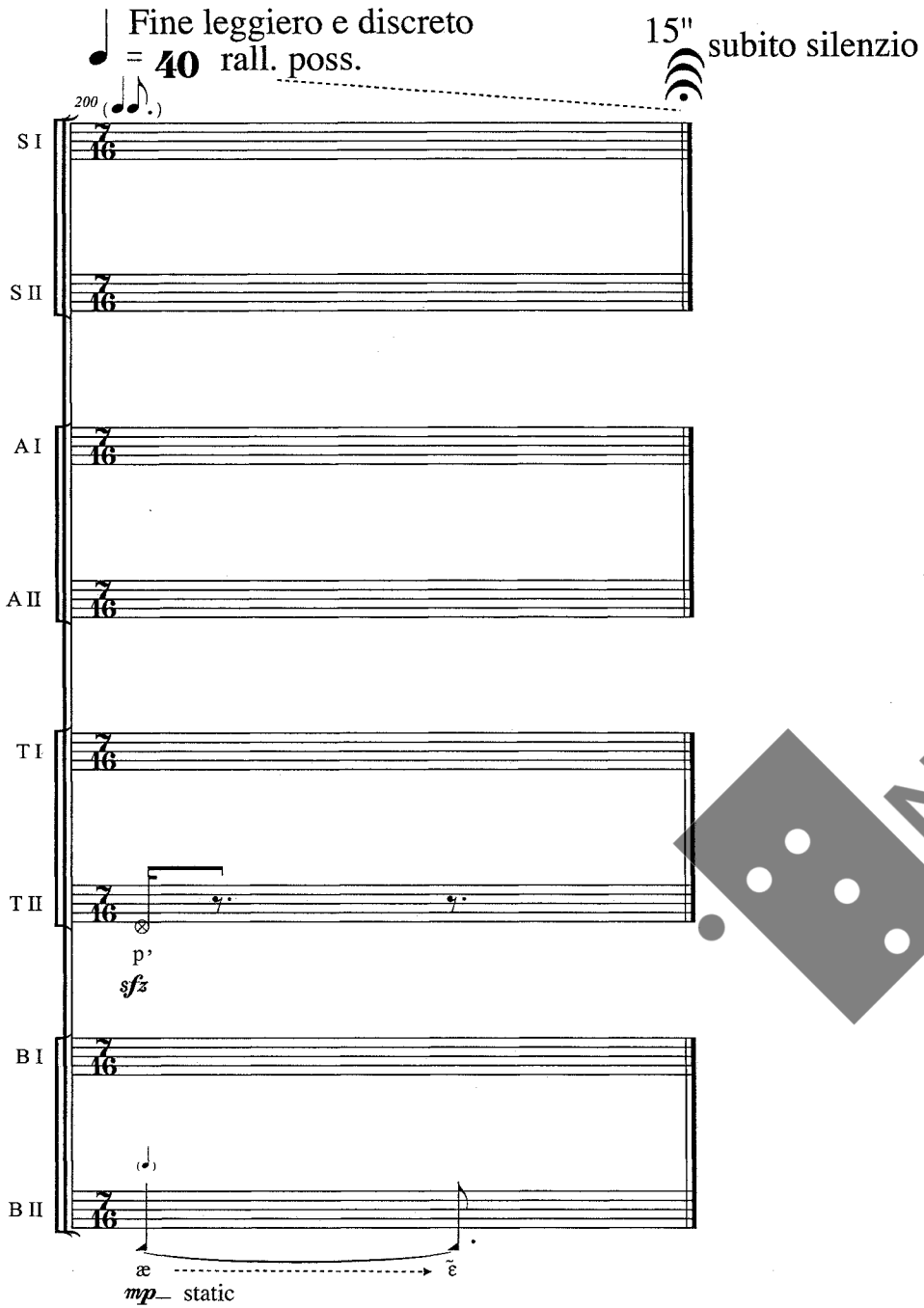






Recitativo rapido III Senza misura, senza espressione, exaggerated consonants, do not syncronize.
max. 5"





Det surkler i hagen. Sneglene
har kommet. Tjukke tunger løsrevet
fra munnene sine.

Jeg plukker sneglene opp
i en bøtte. De protesterer ikke.
Er de så milde

som de gir seg ut for å være?
Jeg kan ikke unngå
Å tråkke på noen.

De trenger ikke være
høyrøstede og overbevisende
når de er så mange,

De kan likevel
overdøve, de kan likevel
arve jorden.

Det er her vi er, det er her vi skal
være, det er her vi vil være, det er
dette vi skal ta med oss inn.

Være her og så forsvinne, være her og så
gli inn. Være her og så forsvinne, hente
oss ut og hente oss inn.

Ingvill Solberg 2003