BRUEGEL SKETCHES

a set of six miniatures for bass clarinet and accordion

Paul David Thomas

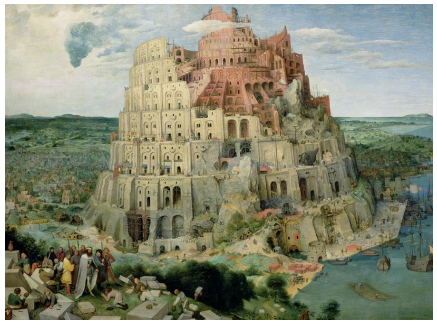
PERFORMANCE NOTES

Composed in collaboration with Rachel Yoder

Each miniature is inspired by a different painting by the Flemish Renaissance painter Pieter Bruegel the Elder. The score varies between traditional notation and graphic score depending on the desired effect of each miniature. Improvisation plays an important role in miniatures 2, 4, 5 and requires the performers to listen and interact with each other in a variety of ways. The performance duration of the entire set is approximately nine minutes.

Premiered April 24, 2014 at Dallas Baptist University by bass clarinetist Rachel Yoder and the composer on accordion

TABLE OF CONTENTS



1. TOWER OF BABEL

2. THE BEEKEEPERS AND THE BIRDNESTER

3. THE BLIND LEADING THE BLIND

4. WINTER LANDSCAPE WITH SKATERS AND BIRD TRAP

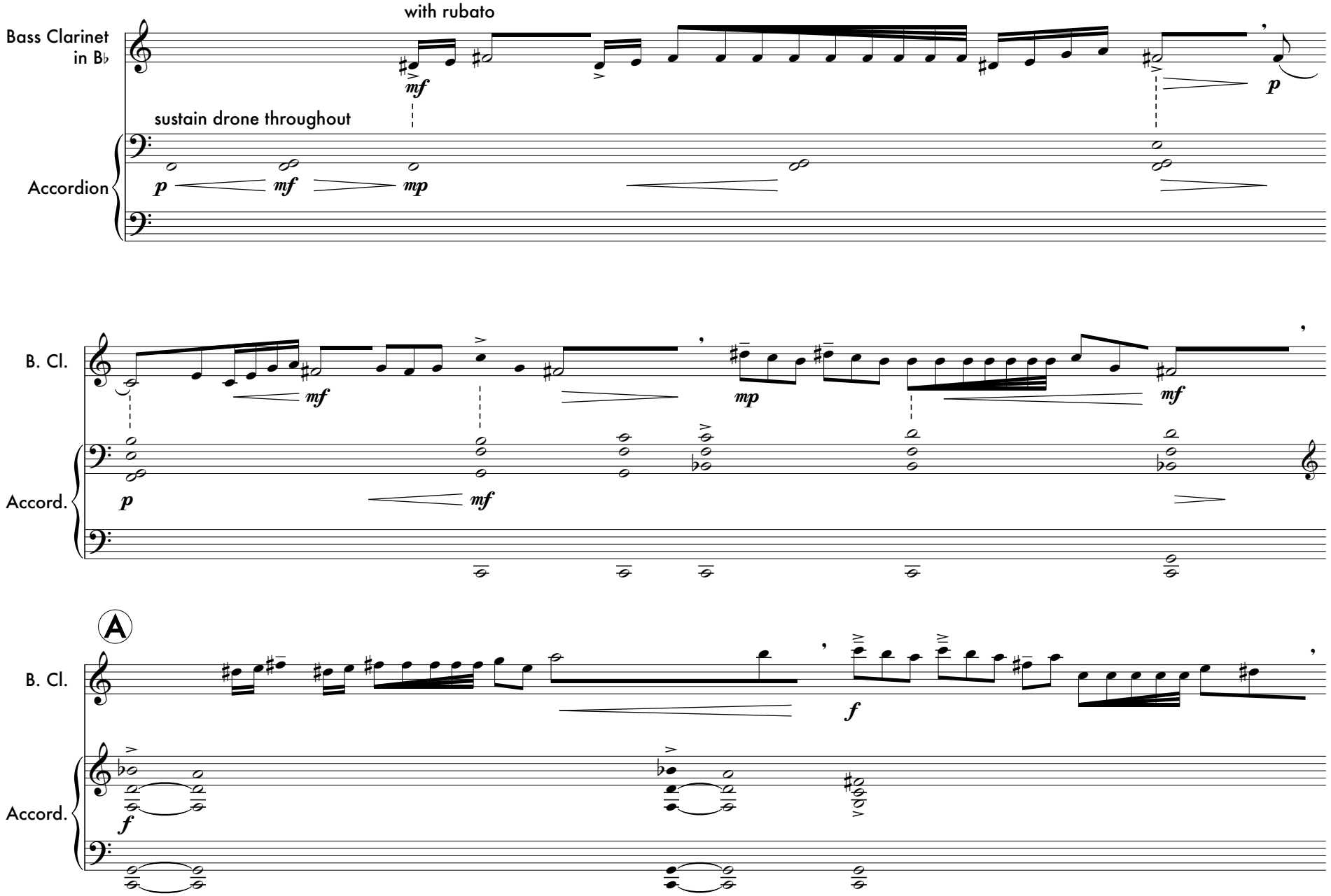
5. BIG FISH EAT LITTLE FISH

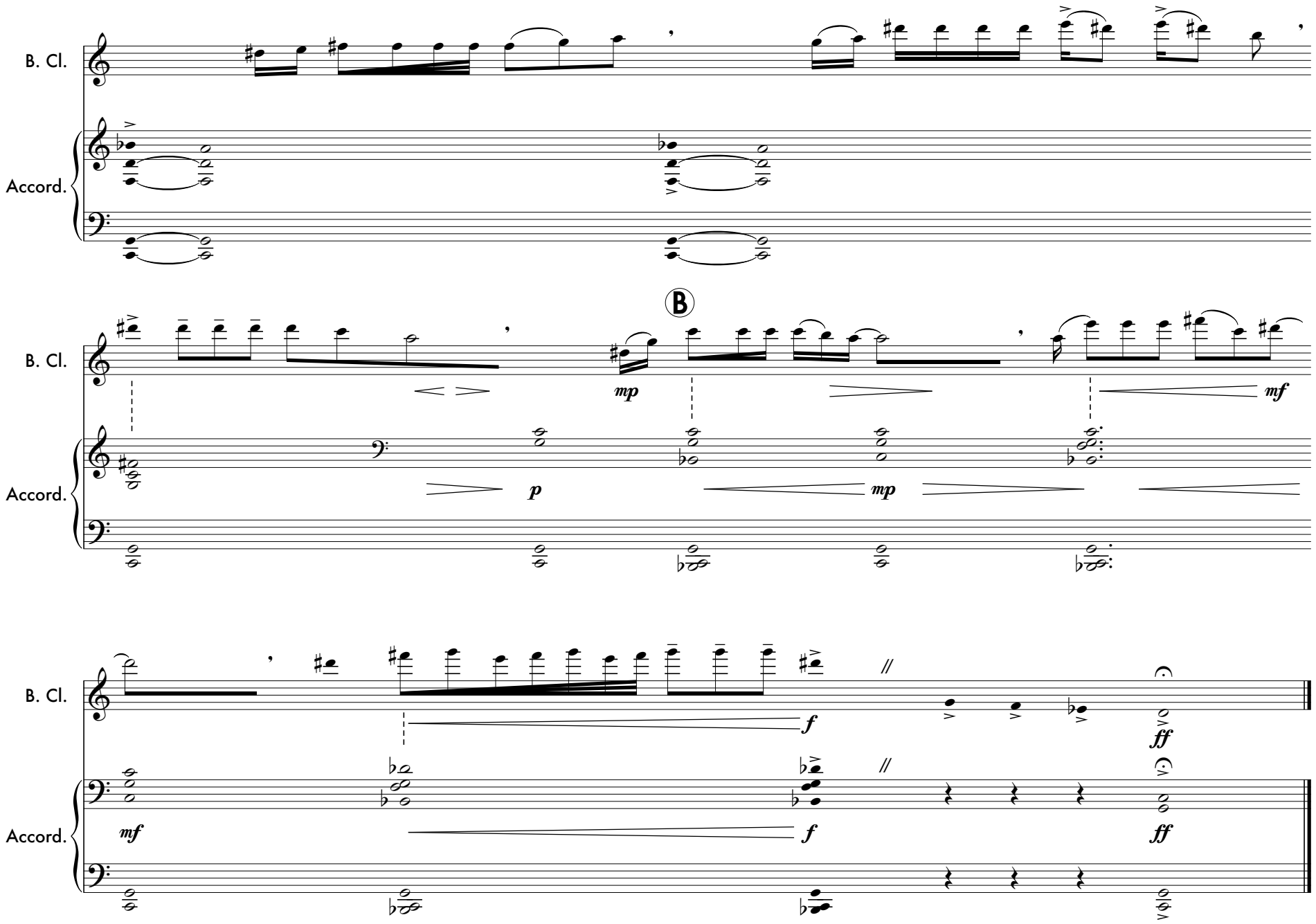
6. THE WEDDING DANCE

BRUEGEL SKETCHES

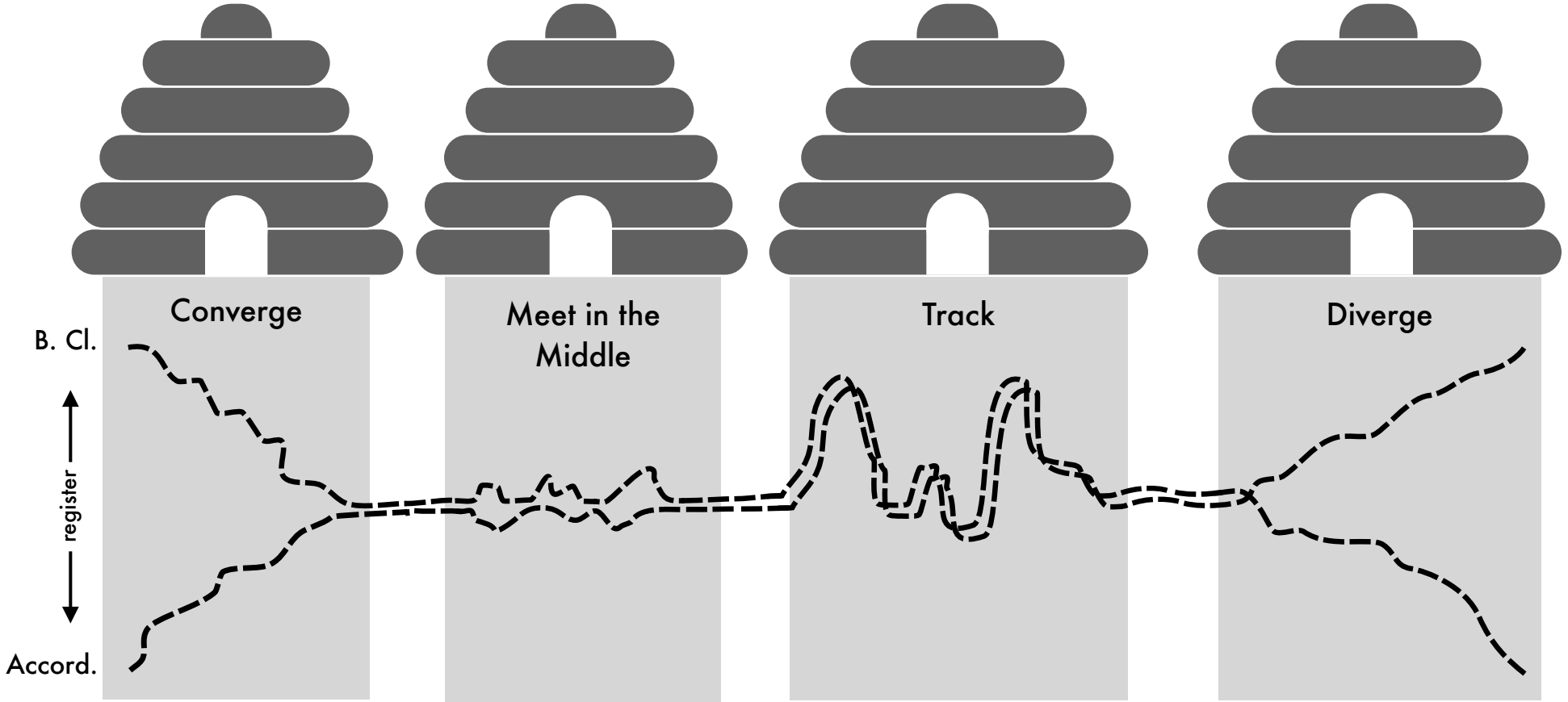
1. TOWER OF BABEL

Paul David Thomas




B. Cl.
Accord.
B
mp
mf
p
mp
B. Cl.
Accord.
f
ff
mf
f
ff
B. Cl.
Accord.

2. THE BEEKEEPERS AND THE BIRDNESTER



Both performers converge towards target pitch(s) from opposing registers. Dynamic level should be fortissimo.

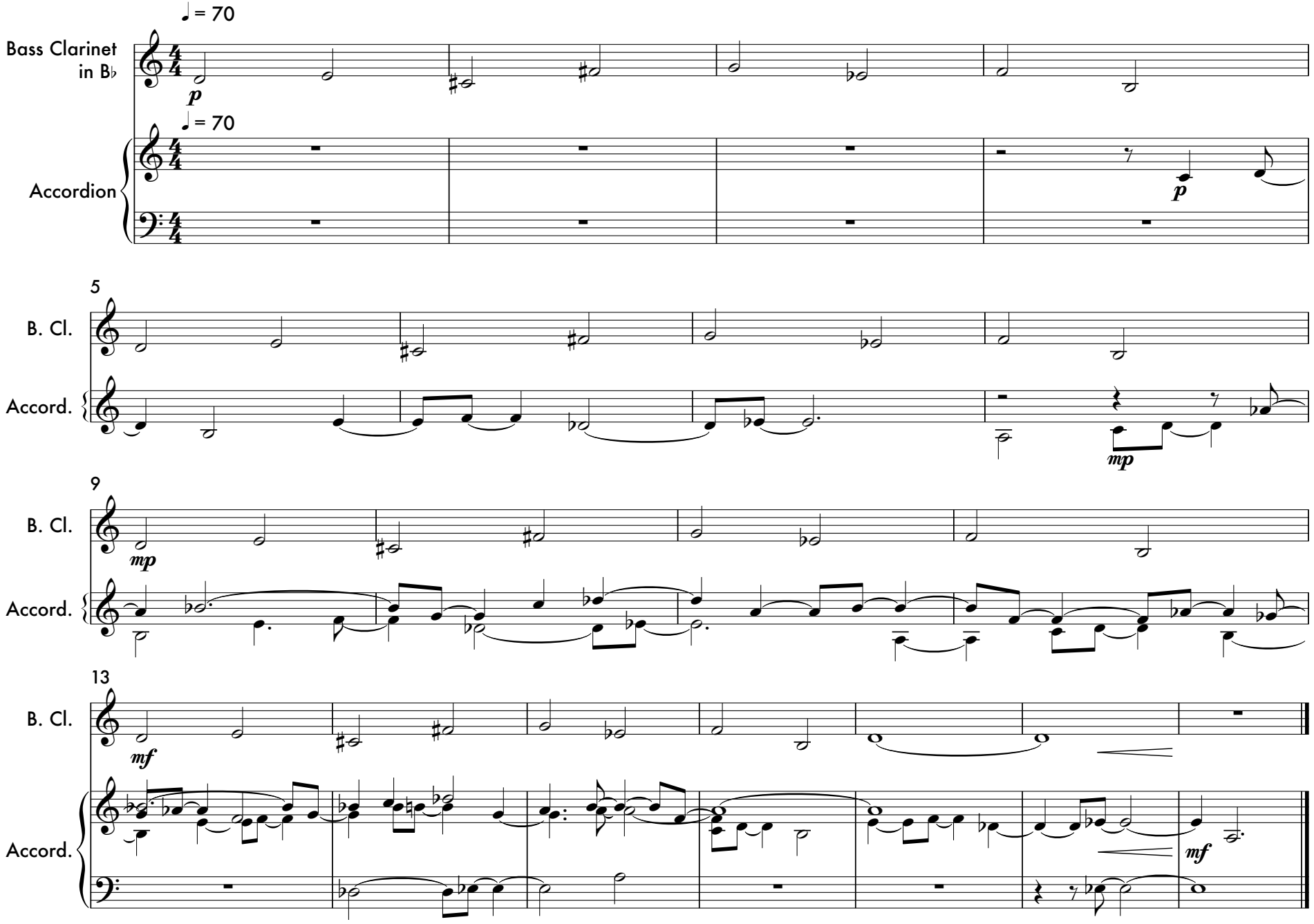
Once performers have arrived at target, each performer makes independent, short, and temporary excursions from target pitch(s).

One performer sets-off on an extended excursion from target and second performer tracks/ follows as closely as possible.

Once both performers have returned to target, they begin moving in opposite directions. Dynamic level should diminish to niente as performers diverge.

Performers are to trill (half-step and/or whole-step) for entire duration of the miniature. Dashed line conveys general direction of gestures and is not intended to be followed precisely. This miniature should last less than one minute.

3. THE BLIND LEADING THE BLIND



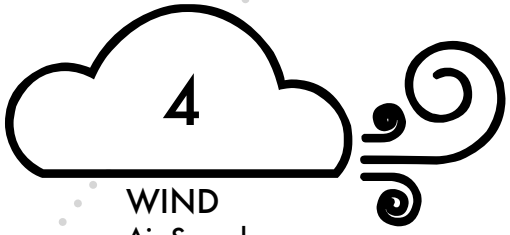
4. WINTER LANDSCAPE WITH SKATERS AND BIRD TRAP

WIND
Air Sounds
(b. cl. and accord.)

Overall texture should remain sparse and evocative of a cold, wintery day. Piece moves numerically from #1 to #5. This miniature should last approximately 2′.

FLAPPING WINGS
Key Clicks (b. cl.)
Bellow Flaps (accord.)

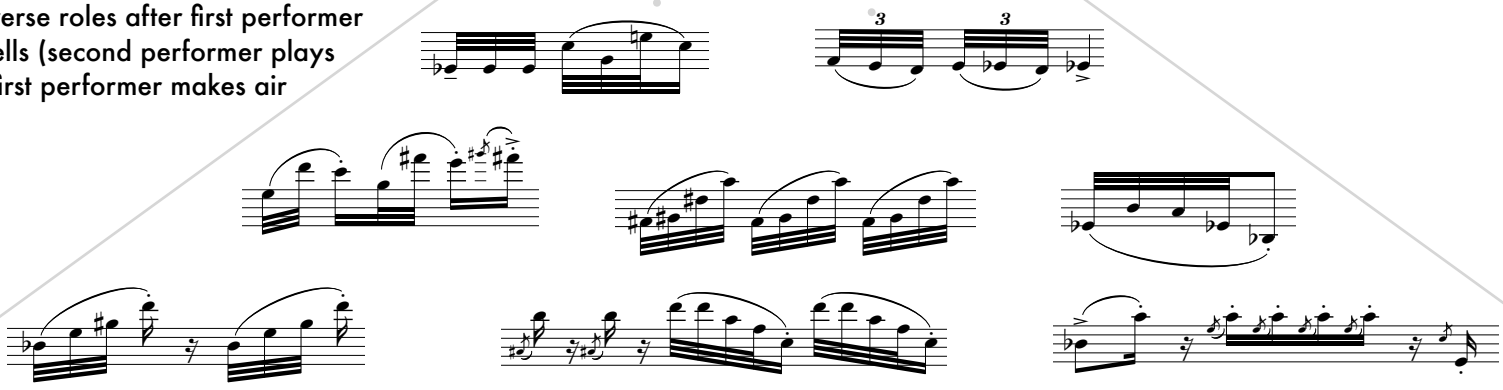
FLAPPING WINGS
Key Clicks (b. cl.)
Bellow Flaps (accord.)



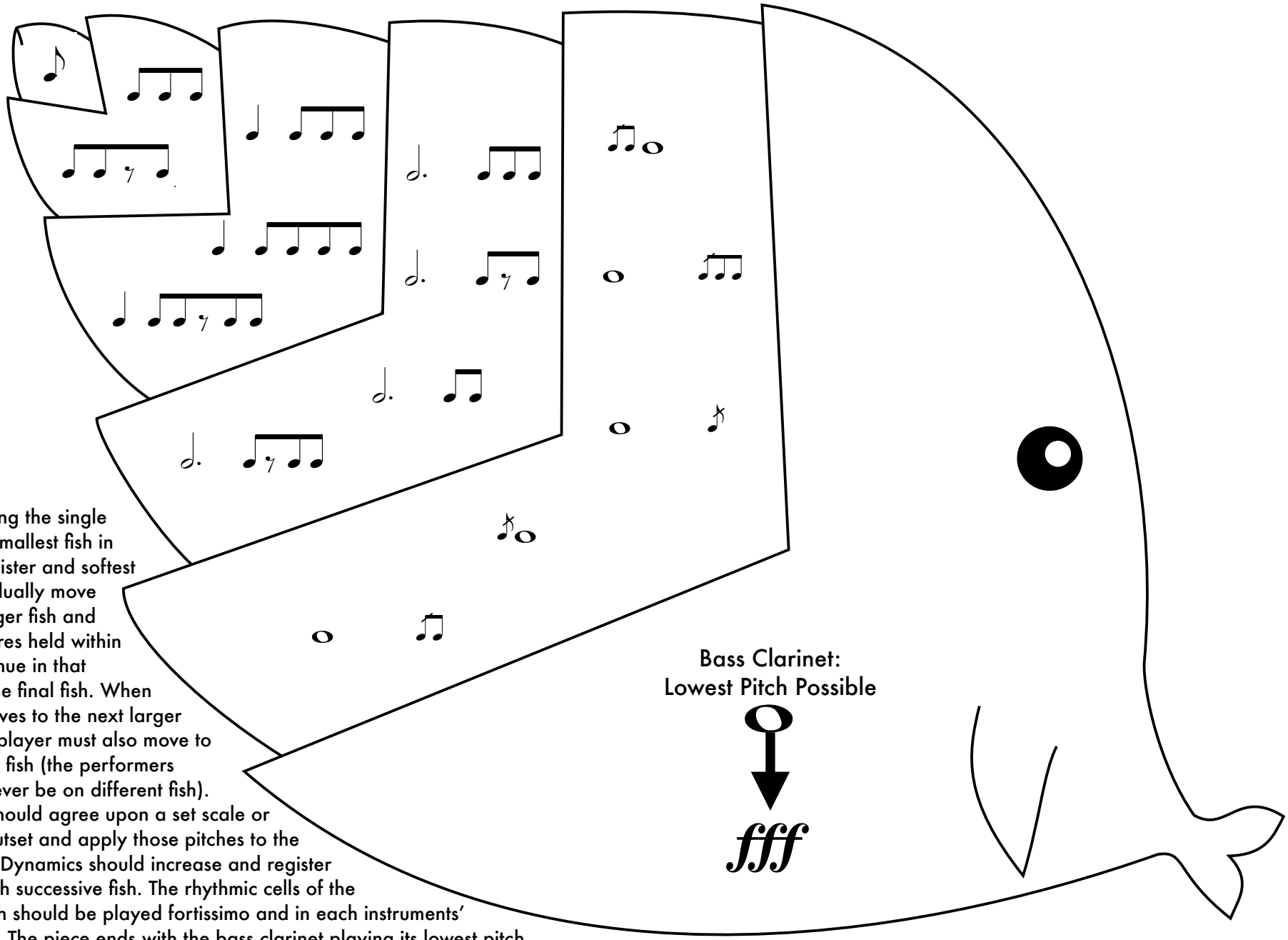
WIND
Air Sounds
(b. cl. and accord.)

3
BIRDSONGS

One performer plays birdsong cells (in any order, octave, or clef) while other performer makes air sounds. Reverse roles after first performer plays 4-6 cells (second performer plays cells while first performer makes air sounds).



5. BIG FISH EAT LITTLE FISH

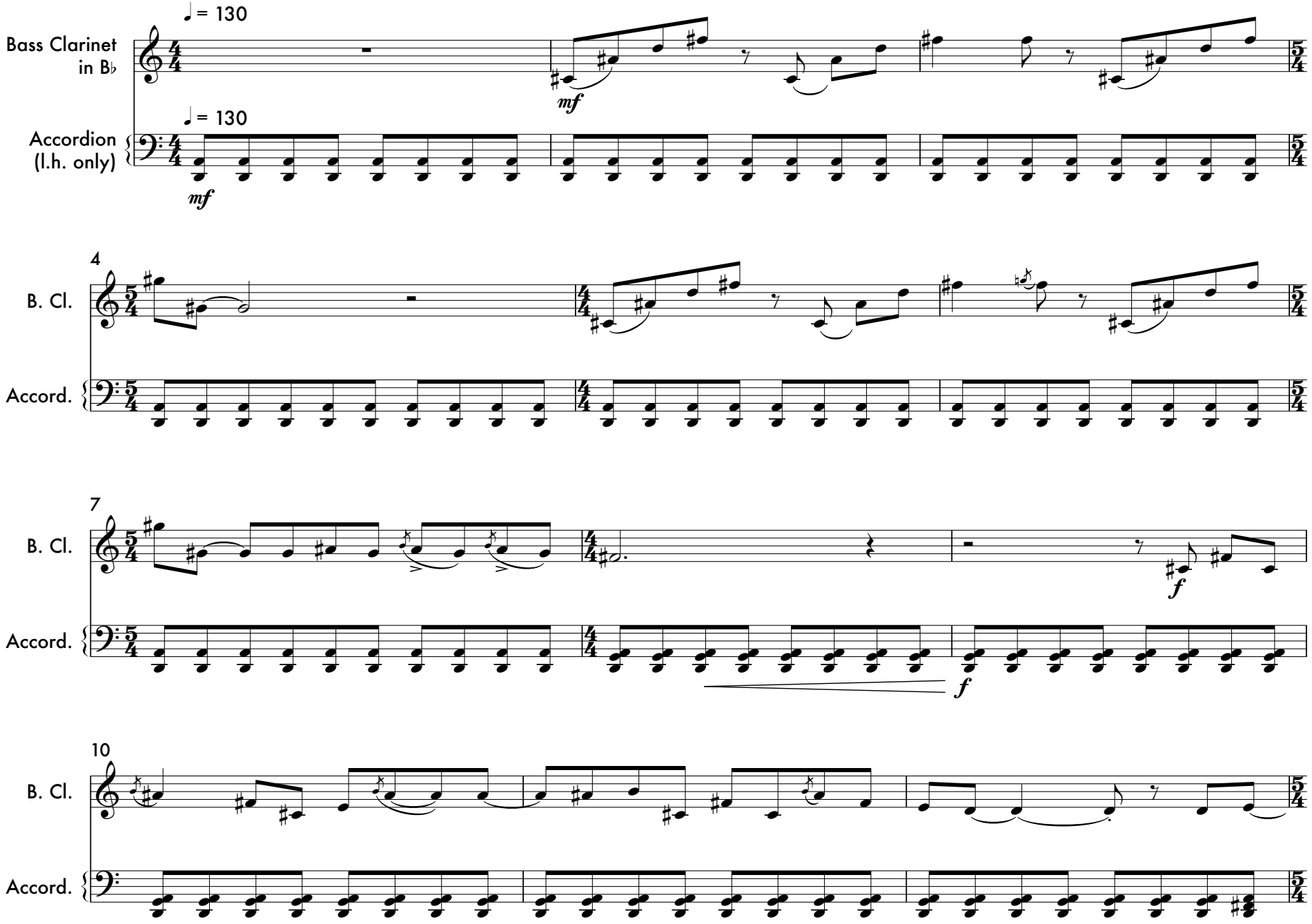


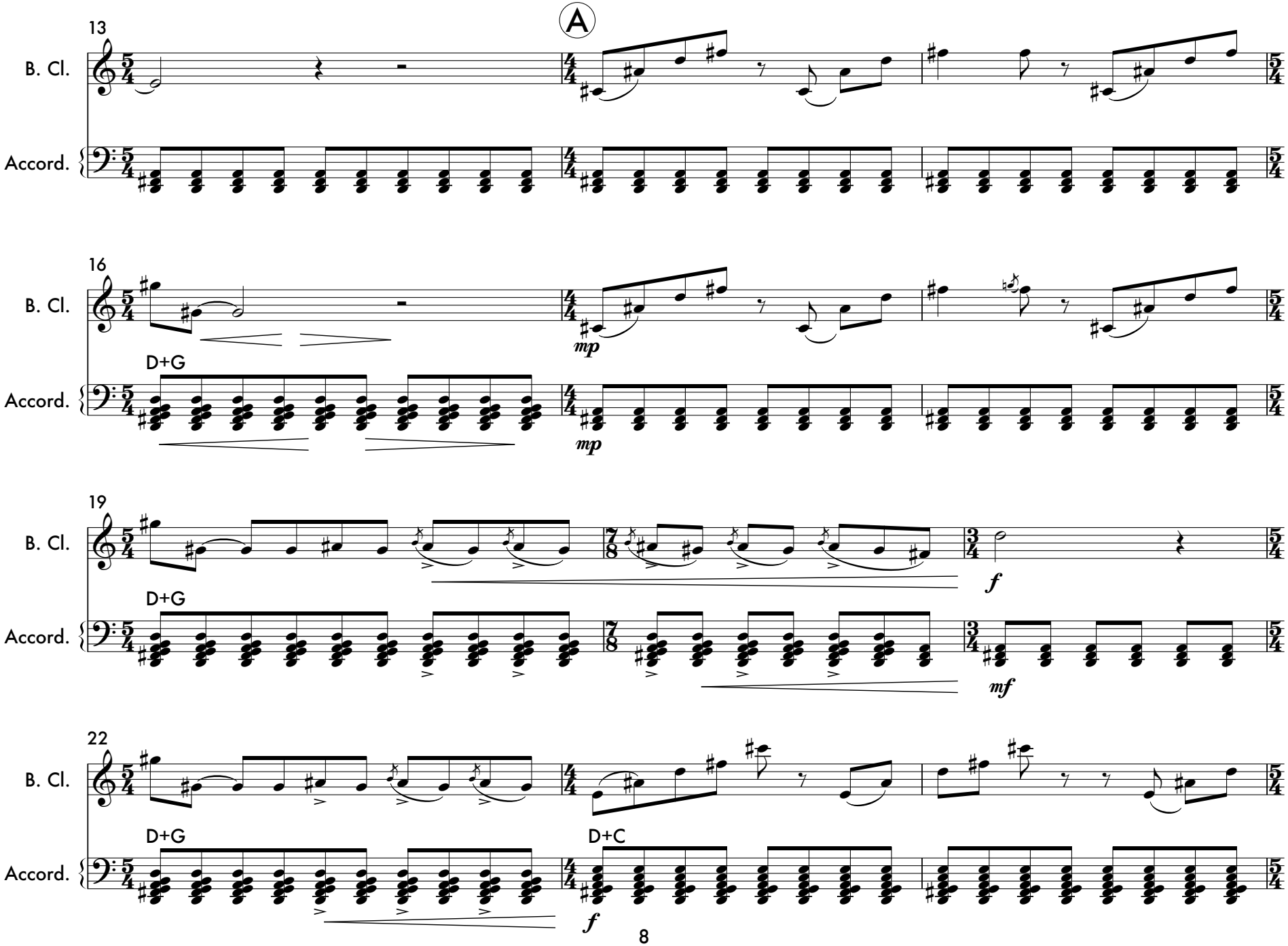
Begin by playing the single rhythm in the smallest fish in the highest register and softest dynamic. Gradually move to the next larger fish and rhythmic gestures held within said fish; continue in that manner until the final fish. When one player moves to the next larger fish, the other player must also move to the next larger fish (the performers should rarely ever be on different fish). Both players should agree upon a set scale or mode at the outset and apply those pitches to the rhythmic cells. Dynamics should increase and register lower with each successive fish. The rhythmic cells of the penultimate fish should be played fortissimo and in each instruments' lowest register. The piece ends with the bass clarinet playing its lowest pitch (eating all other fish). This miniature should last approximately 1'25".

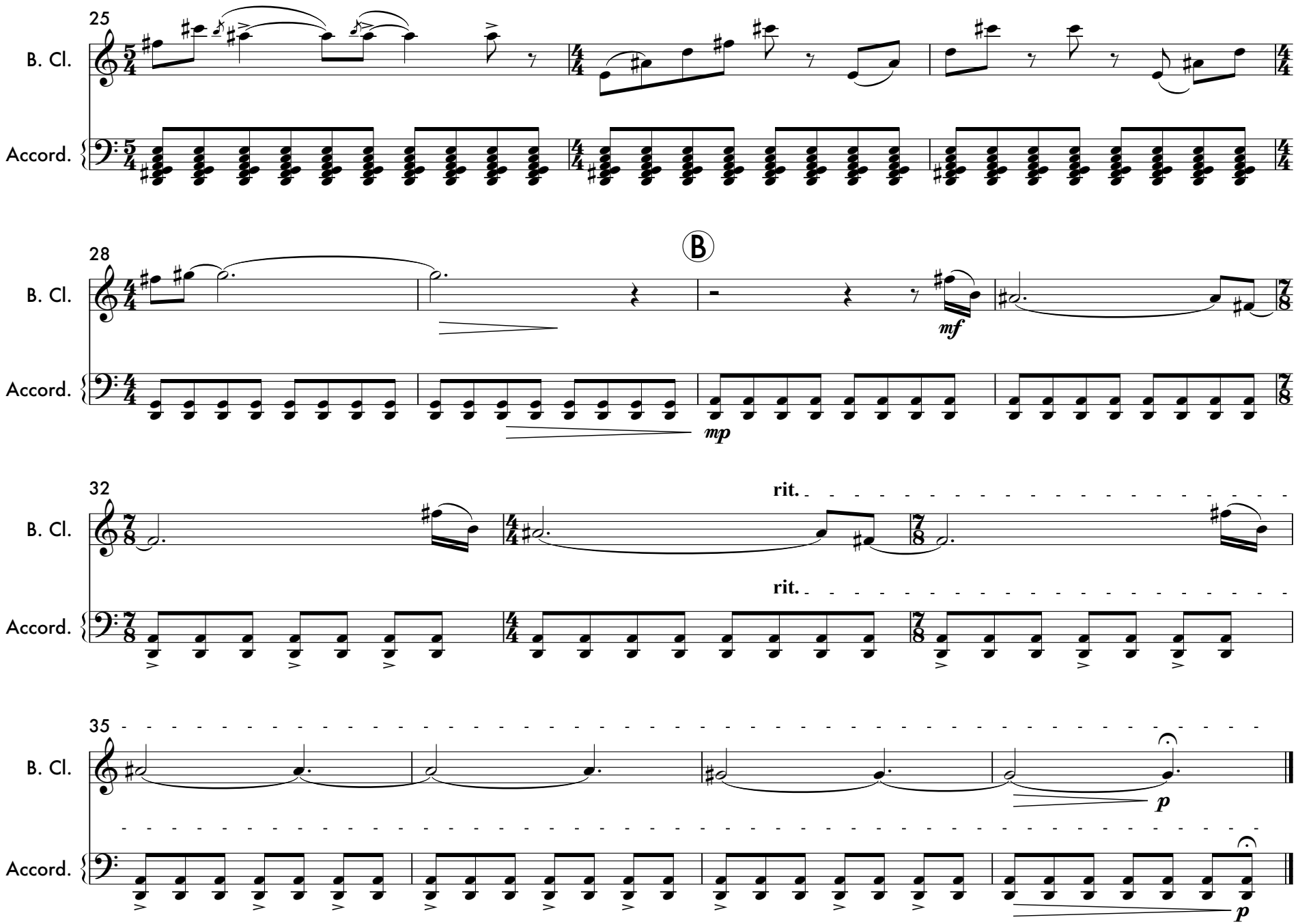
Bass Clarinet:
Lowest Pitch Possible

fff

6. WEDDING DANCE




A
13
B. Cl.
Accord.
16
B. Cl.
D+G
Accord.
mp
mp
19
B. Cl.
D+G
Accord.
f
mf
22
B. Cl.
D+G
D+C
Accord.
f


25
B. Cl.
Accord.
28
B
mf
mp
32
rit.
rit.
35
p
p