Kythira

for solo violin, fixed media, live electronics, and visuals

~ 10’00”

Composed by Ziyan Li

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Program Notes:

Kythira, also transliterated as Cythera, is an island in Greece known as the Isle of the Goddess of Love, Aphrodite. This piece of composition delves into the essence of love, beauty, and romance. It is structured in four movements, each exploring different facets of Aphrodite's divine influence.

The first movement, “Love”, sets the tone for the entire piece with an exploration of the raw, unfiltered emotion that love embodies. The violin expresses the joys and heartaches that come with the deepest of human connections. Through soaring phrases and dynamic contrasts, this movement captures the intensity and purity of love using only four notes, which symbolizes the simplicity of love.

“Beauty”, the second movement, the focus shifts to the aesthetic and sensual qualities that Aphrodite represents. The music becomes more delicate and refined, with graceful, flowing lines that evoke the goddess's renowned physical allure. Subtle nuances and intricate ornamentation reflect the idea that true beauty is both seen and felt.

The third movement, “Romance”, delves into the enchantment and mystery of romantic love. With a blend of tender melodies and playful rhythms, this section captures the flirtatious and enchanting aspects of Aphrodite's domain. The music dances lightly, suggesting the initial sparks of attraction and the blossoming of a deep, romantic bond. The measures of improvisation leaves room for the performer to dance and flow freely, as performers interpret romance differently.

The final movement returns to the theme of “Love”, but with a deeper, more mature perspective. It reflects the enduring and cyclical nature of love, an emotion that evolves and strengthens over time. This movement serves as a culmination of the journey, bringing the piece full circle to a place of profound emotional resonance. The themes from the first movement reappear, now enriched with the experiences and insights gained along the way.

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Performance Notes:

Movement 1
Electronics begin the movement. The violinist starts at 0’05”. Electronics are turned off on the violin’s last note.

Movement 2
Violin begins the movement. Electronics starts after the first phrase (measure 43). Electronics are turned off on the violin’s last note.

Movement 3
Violin begins the movement. Electronics starts after the first phrase (measure 81). Electronics takes cues after each violin improvisation section.

Movement 4
Electronics begin the movement. The violinist starts at 0’05”. Electronics are turned off on the violin’s last note.

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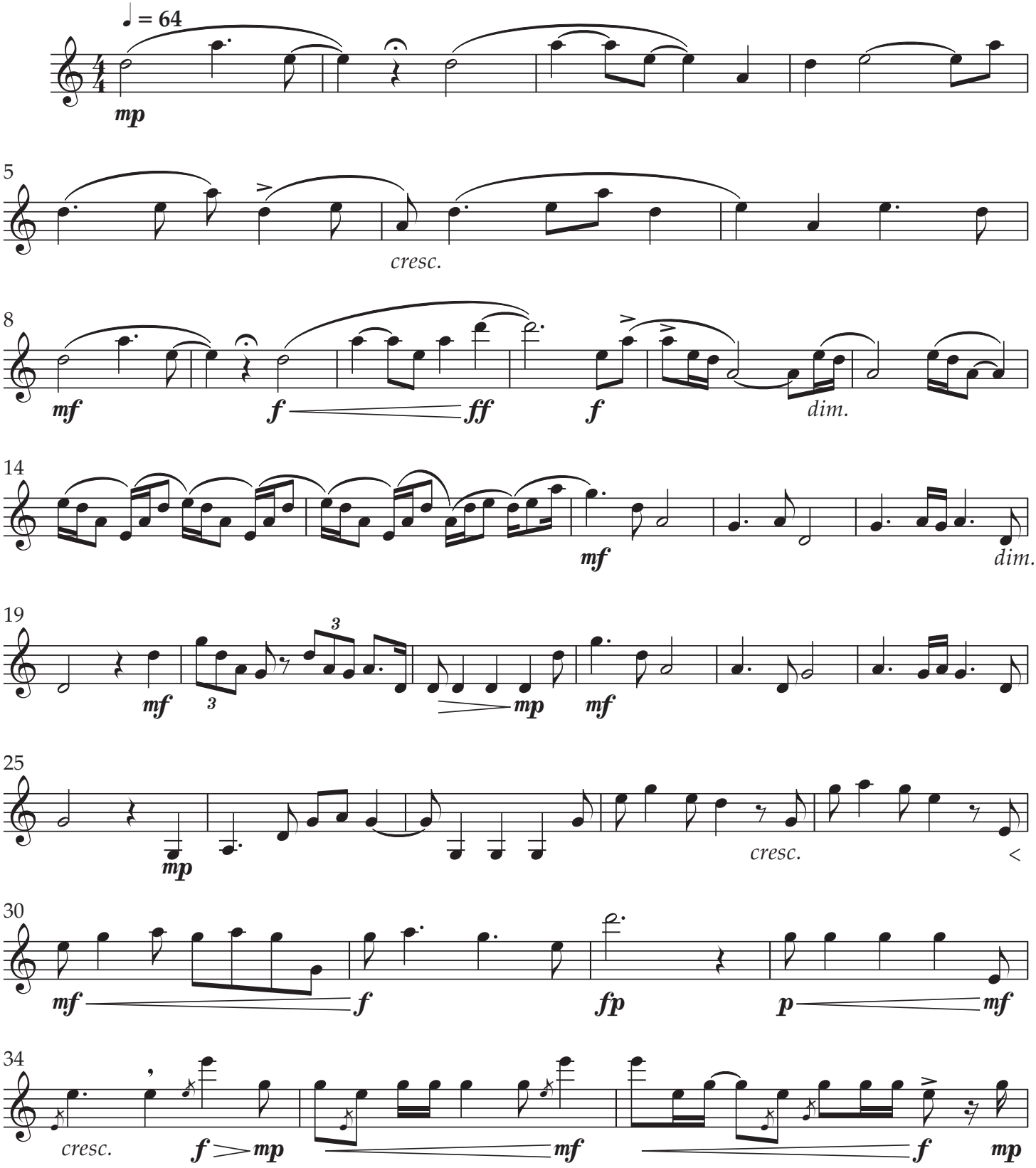
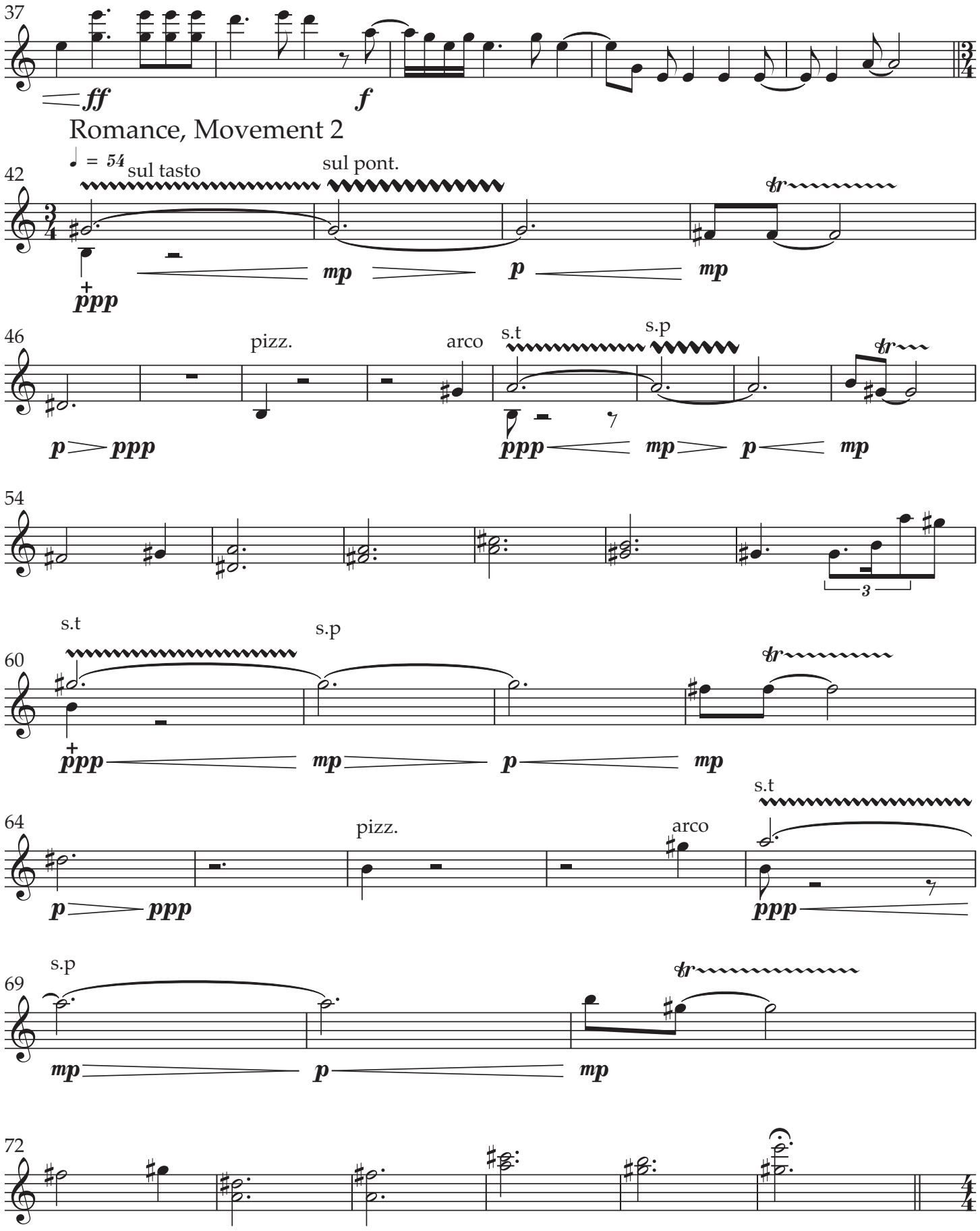
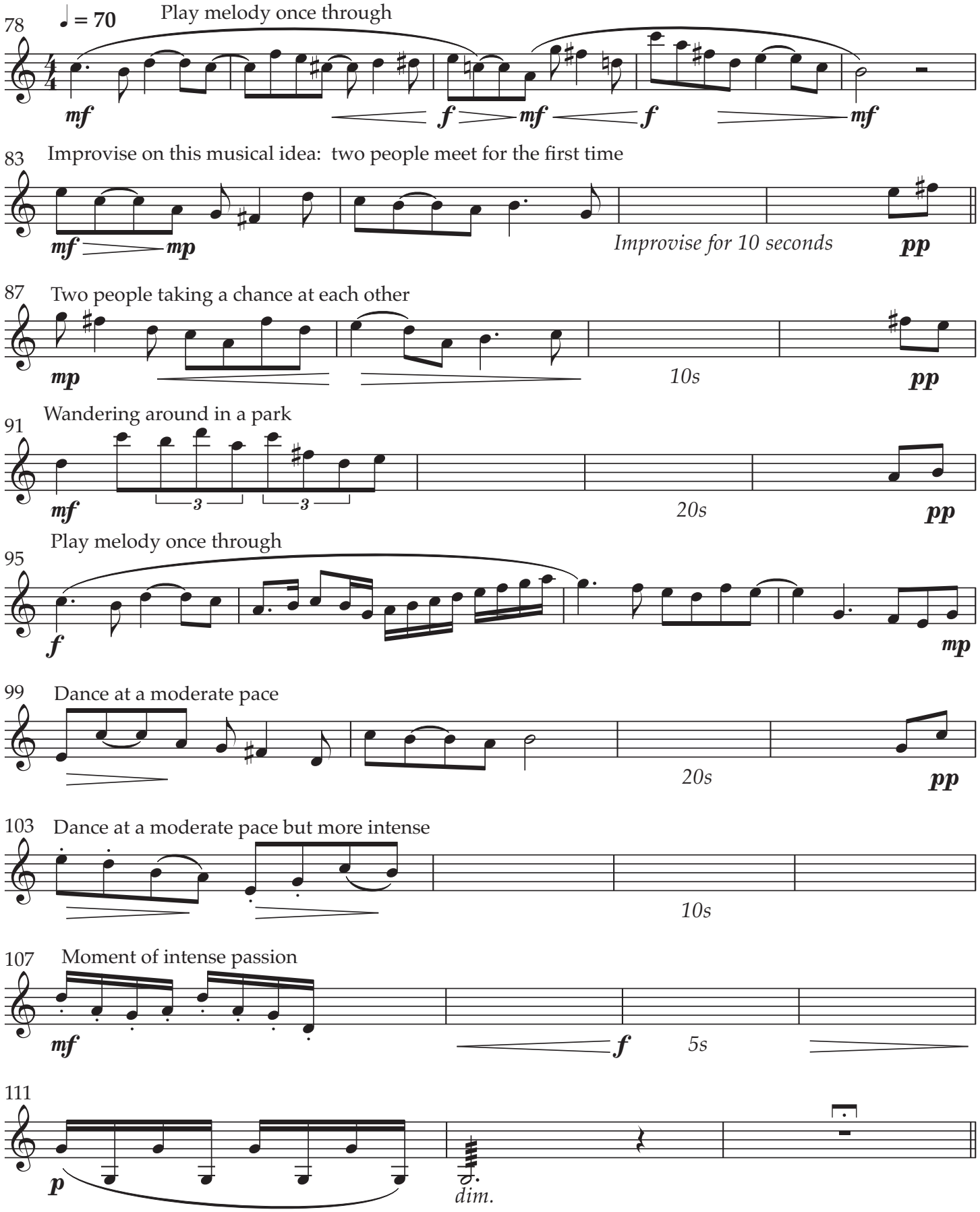
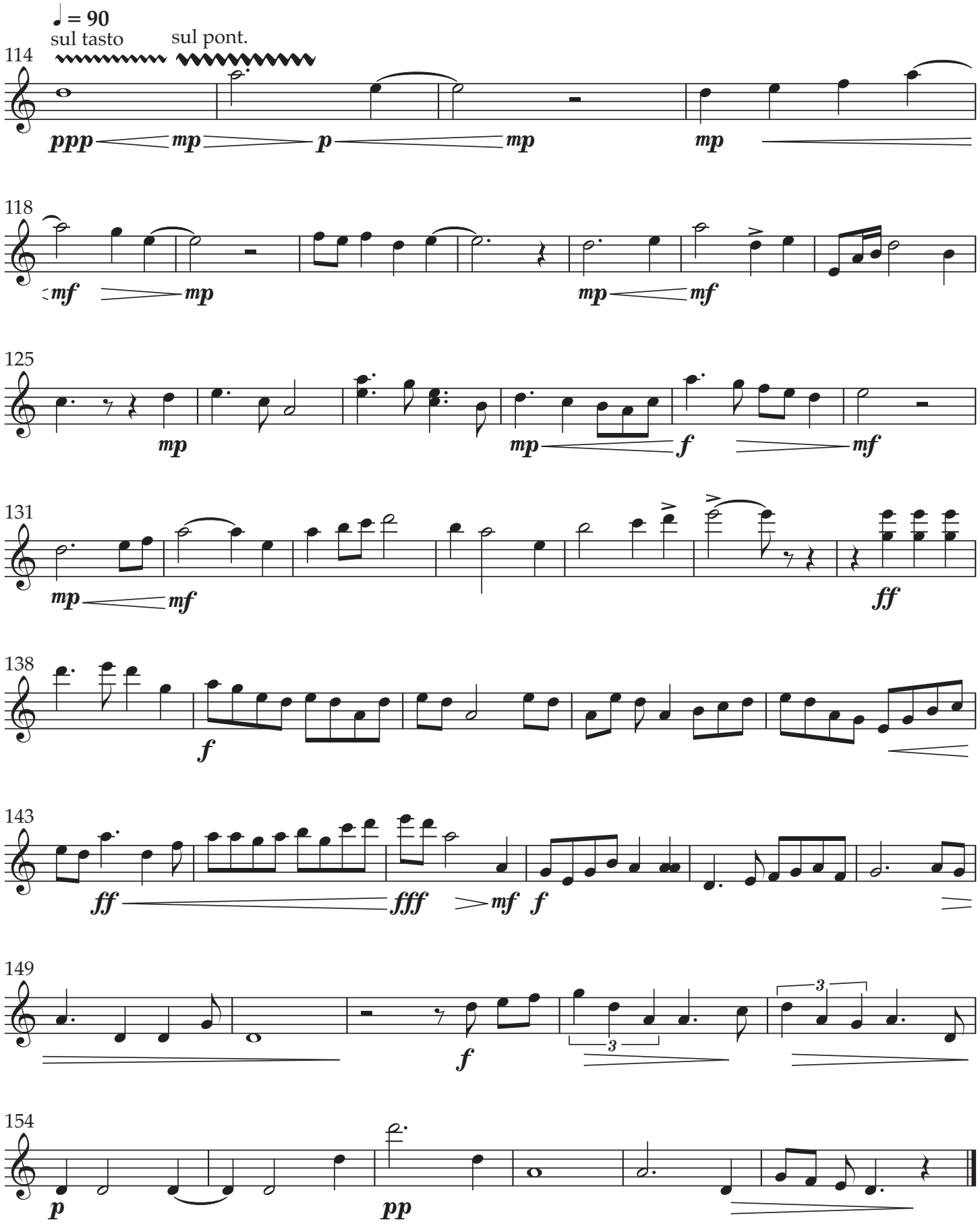
Love I, Movement 1

Ziyan Li




37
ff
f
Romance, Movement 2
♩ = 54
42
sul tasto
sul pont.
tr
mp
p
mp
ppp
46
pizz.
arco
s.t
s.p
tr
p
ppp
ppp
mp
p
mp
54
3
60
s.t
s.p
tr
ppp
mp
p
mp
64
pizz.
arco
s.t
p
ppp
ppp
69
s.p
tr
mp
p
mp
72

Beauty, Movement 3



Love II, Movement 4