A JOURNAL OF THE SOCIETY FOR MUSIC THEORY

MTO 26.3 Examples: Kielian-Gilbert, Experiencing Chen Yi's Music

(Note: audio, video, and other interactive examples are only available online)
https://mtosmt.org/issues/mto.20.26.3/mto.20.26.3.kielian_gilbert.html

Example 1. Chen Yi, brief biographical outline (adapted from Chen 2002)

1953. b. Guangzhou, Guangdong, China
1966. Cultural Revolution (father, older sister taken away)
1968–1970. Age 15, compulsory labor in China.
1970–1978. Age 17, concertmistress & composer, Beijing Opera Troupe Orchestra; research in Chinese musical instruments
1978–1986. MA, 1986, Beijing Central Conservatory, 1st woman to receive MA in composition [Chairman Mao's rule ends 1976.]
1986–1993. DMA, Columbia University, study with Chou Wen Chung and Mario Davidovsky
1993–1998. Composer residency, San Francisco (1993–1996); Peabody (1996–1998); University of Missouri-Kansas City Conservatory of Music (1998)

Example 2. Chen Yi, selected works, 2001–2004

2001. *Ning for Pipa, Violin and Cello*
2001. *Burning* for String Quartet
2002. *Tu* ("to kill") for large orchestra (for symphonic band, 2003)
2003. "Tradition and Creation," *Current Musicology* 67–68: 59–72
2004. *Happy Rain on a Spring Night* for flute, clarinet, violin, cello, and piano

Example 3a. Chen Yi, *Ning for Pipa, Violin and Cello*, mm. 1–29

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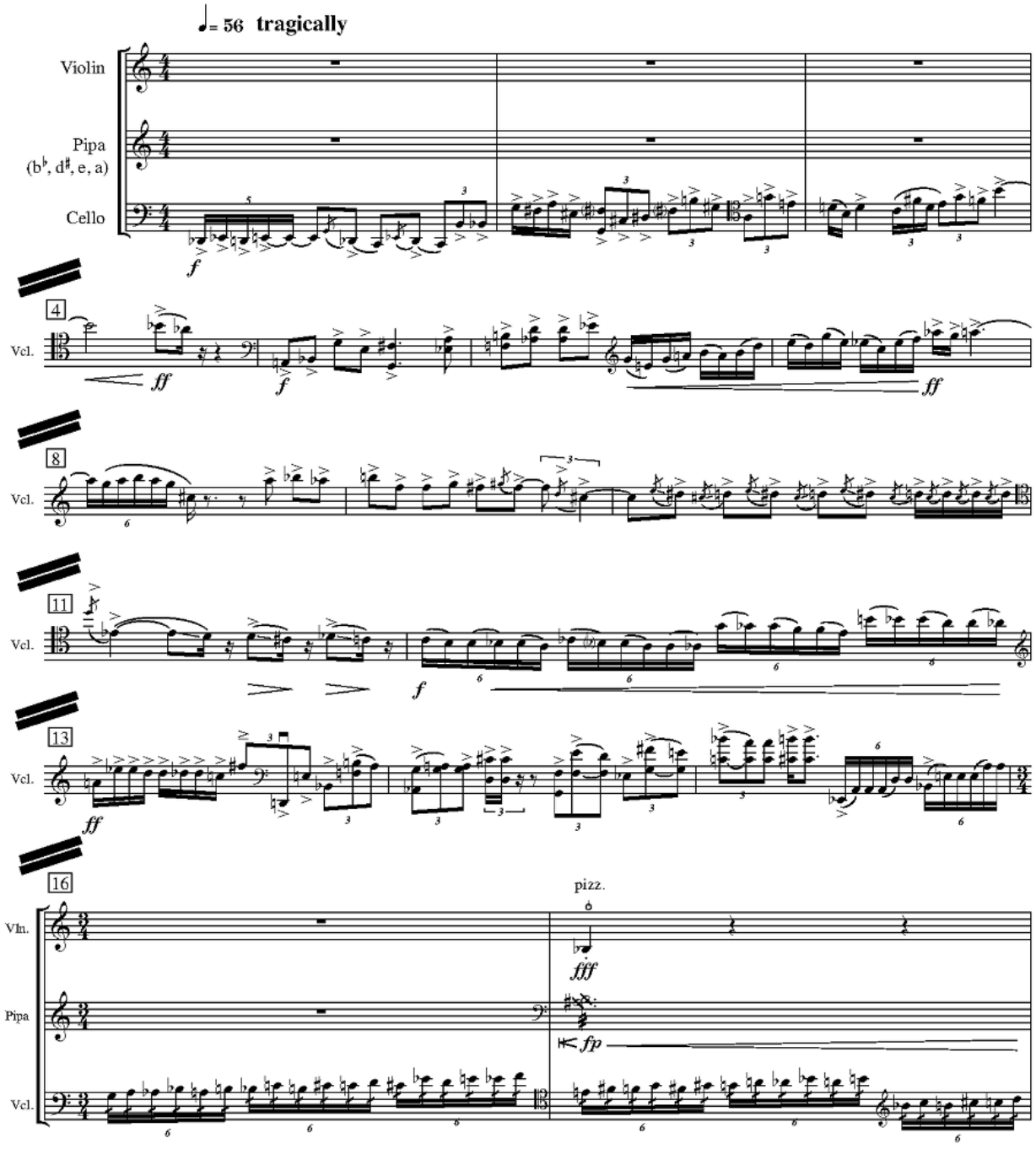
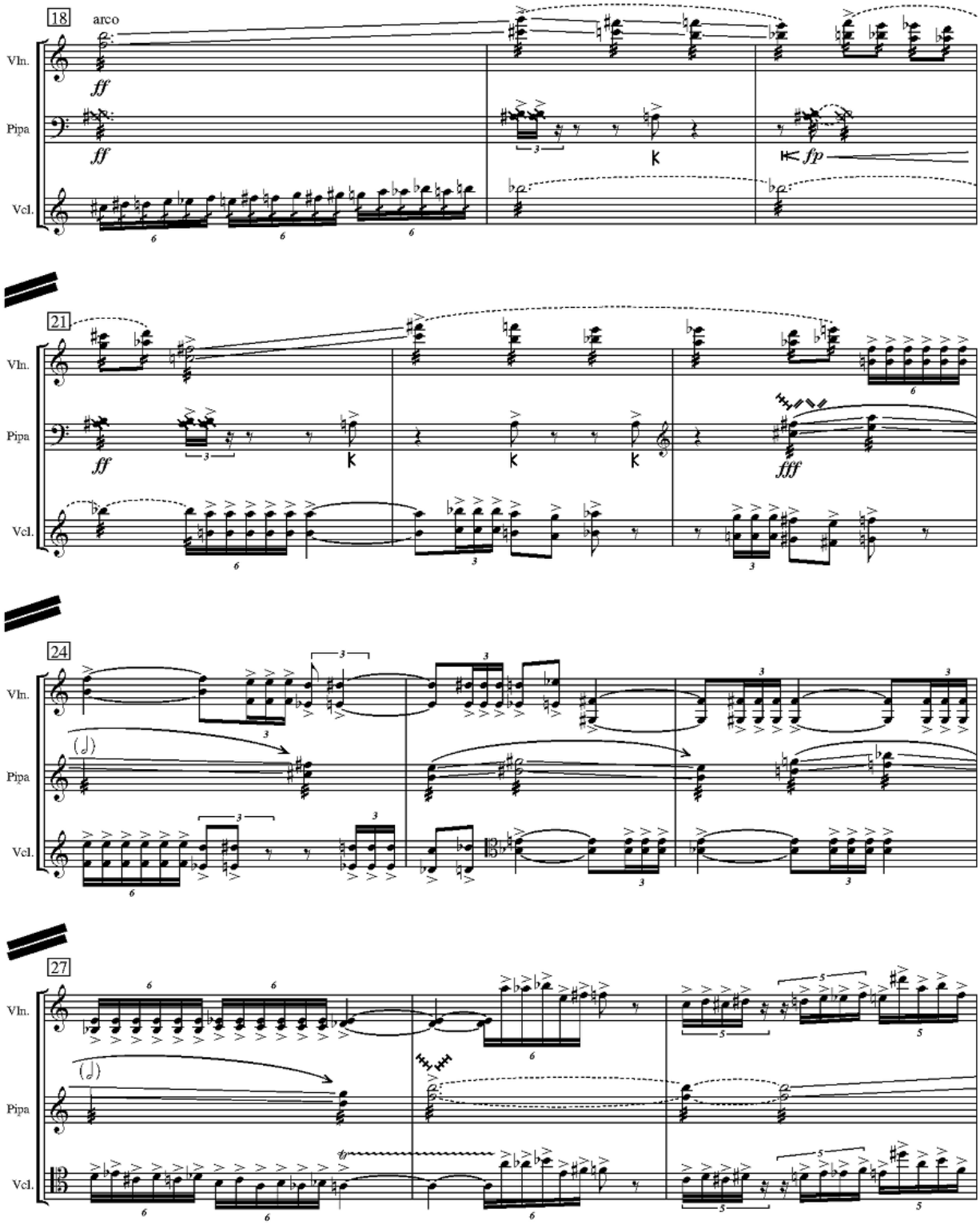
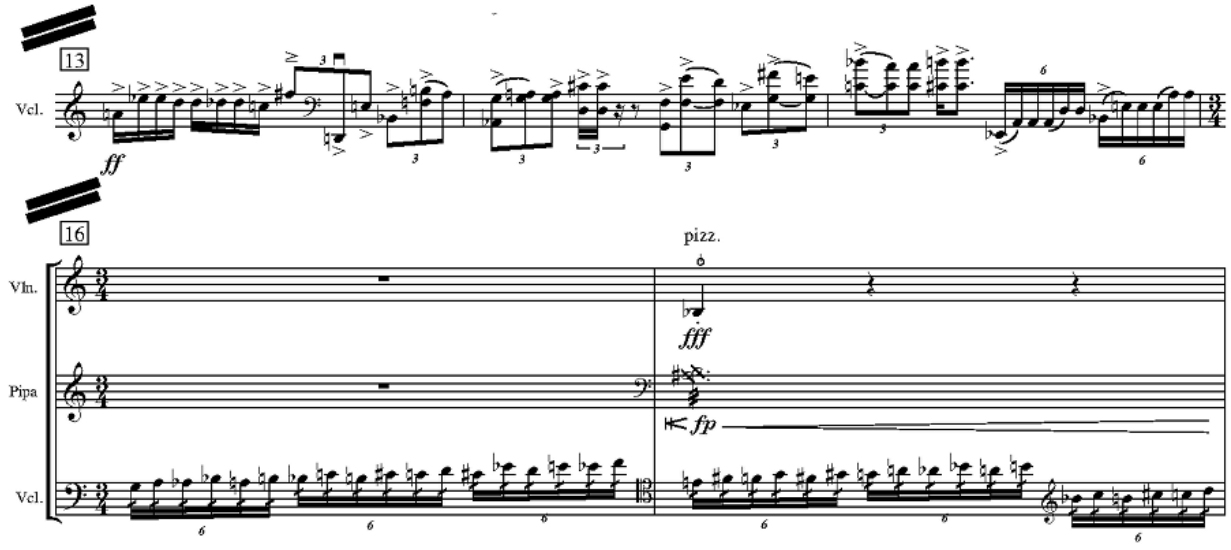
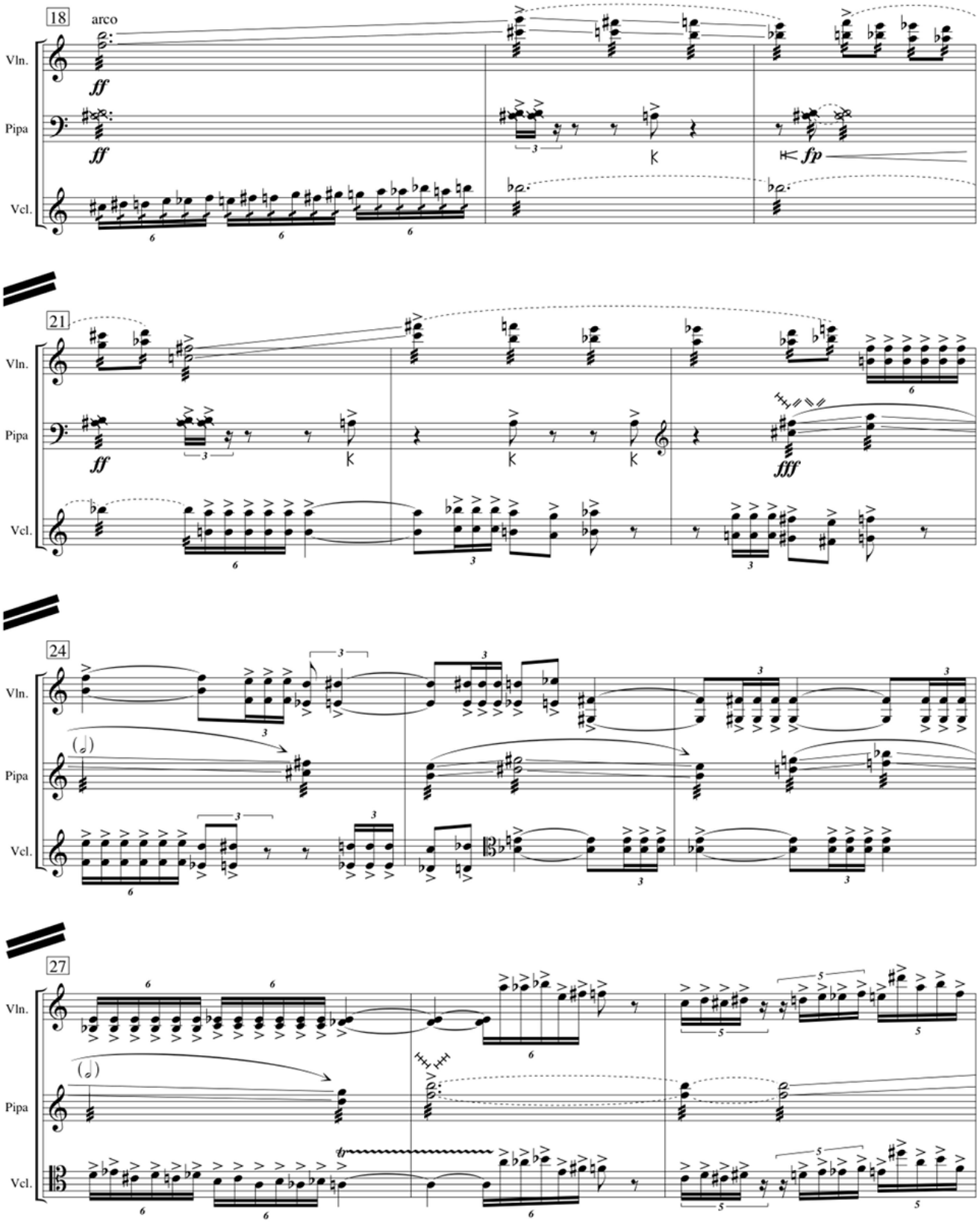
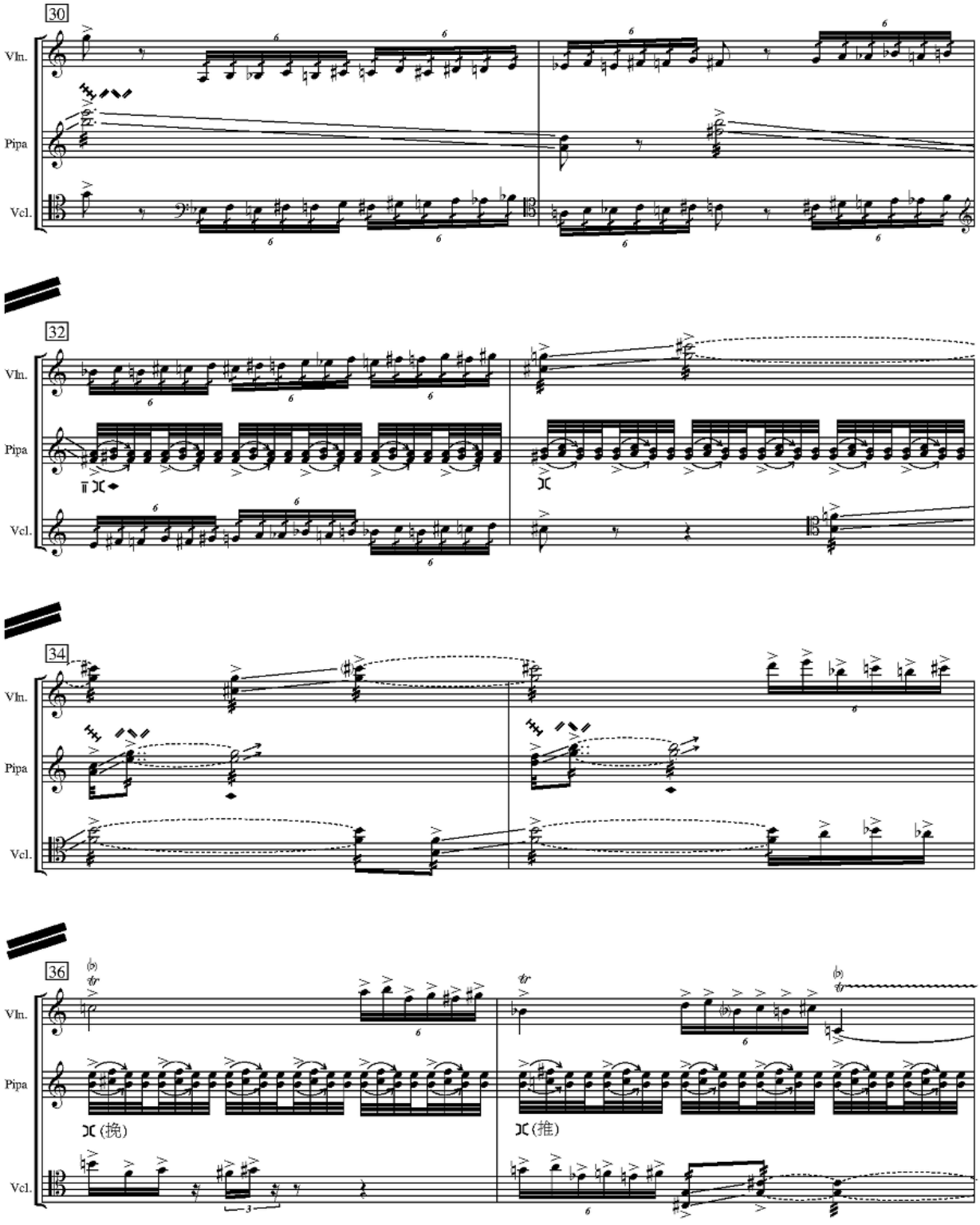


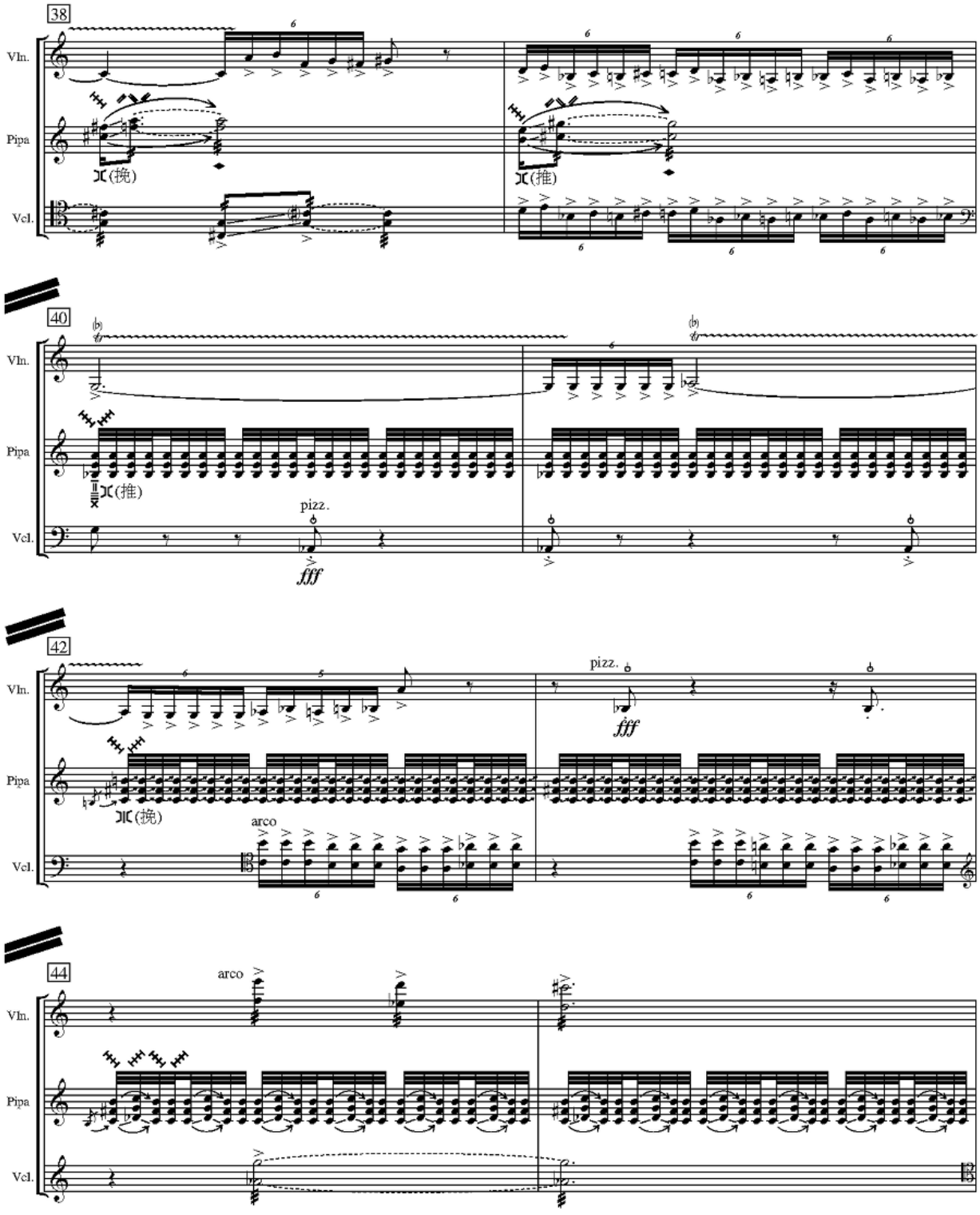

18
arco
Vln.
Pipa
Vcl.
ff
ff
fp
21
Vln.
Pipa
Vcl.
ff
fff
24
Vln.
Pipa
Vcl.
27
Vln.
Pipa
Vcl.

Example 3b. Chen Yi, *Ning*, mm. 13–45

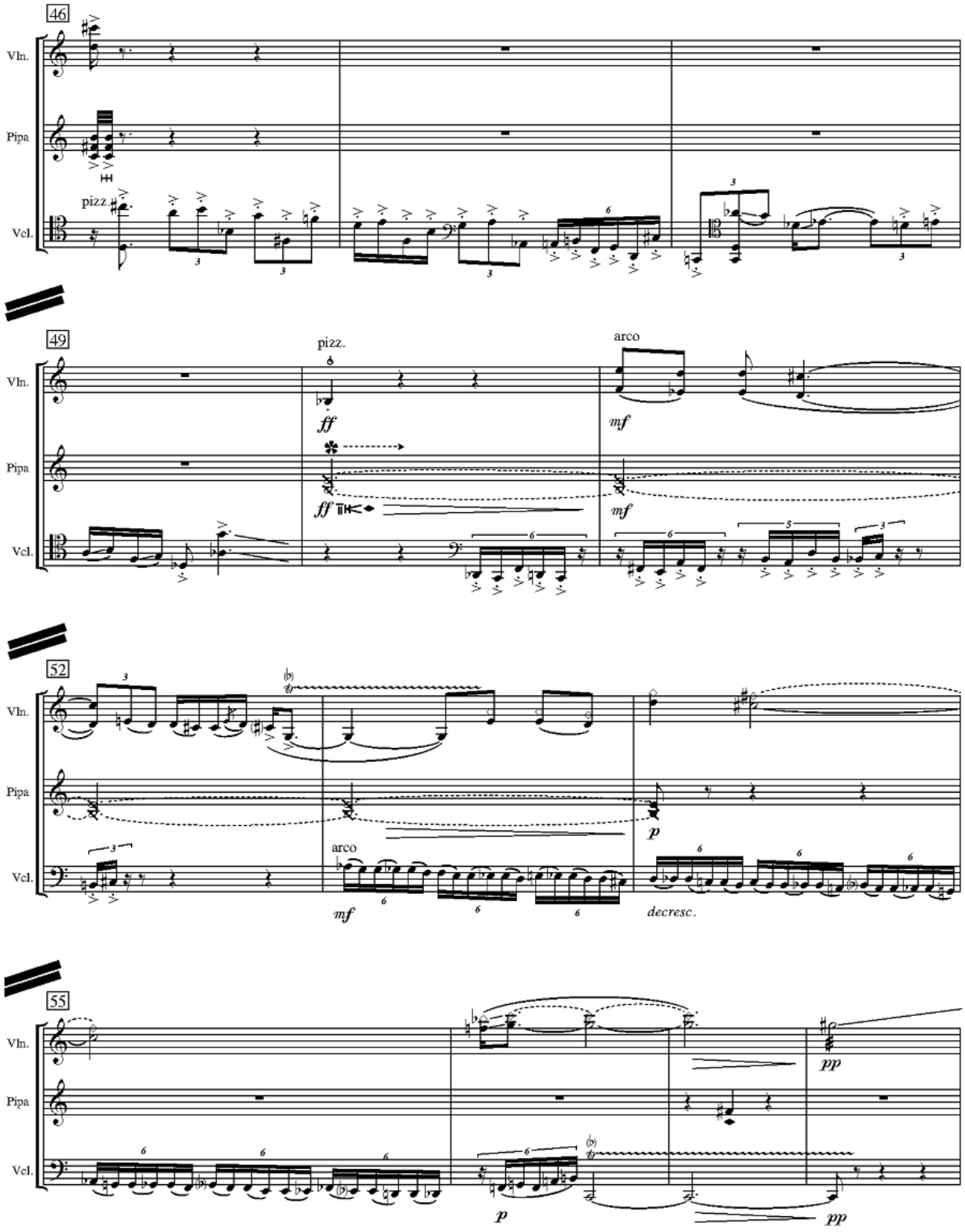



18
arco
Vln.
Pipa
Vcl.
ff
fp
21
fff
24
27


30
Vln.
Pipa
Vcl.
32
Vln.
Pipa
Vcl.
34
Vln.
Pipa
Vcl.
36
Vln.
Pipa
Vcl.
(挽)
(推)


38
Vln.
Pipa
Vcl.
(挽)
(推)
40
pizz.
fff
42
arco
44

Example 3c. Chen Yi, *Ning*, mm. 46–71



Example 4. Chen Yi, *Ning*: emergent processes and strands of memory

1. **mm. 1–15/16**, cello **"narrative 1,"** mm. 1–4, 5–8; 8–11+ 13–15 (lament with sighing pattern," ending with sigh 2, F#4–E4–Bb4–A4–B4 = trace of "Mo Li Hua" fragment?)

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2. **mm. 15/16–45/46.**

   mm. 15/16–21, cello **"narrative 1"** intensified, ascent to high Bb5 (m. 19), with pipa (*Jiao*) & violin interjections (mm. 17 & 18); mm. 21–33, "beating patterns" (sigh 2) begin in cello (mm. 21ff.), antiphonal exchange of sigh 2 between cello and violin mm. 24–25; pipa slides/pitch bends intensify, mm. 23–24, 25–27, 28–31, 33–45/46;
   mm. 33–34, violin & cello, antiphonal slides; m. 35, in heterophony (sigh 2) mm. 35–39 and 42–43; beating patterns resume in cello mm. 42–43, while
   mm. 33–45/46, pipa beating patterns intensify

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3. **mm. 46–87/88** ["Mo Li Hua" tune first in fragments, then more expansive]
   mm. 46–49, cello **"narrative 2"** (invocation, traces of #1, sigh 2 & "Mo Li Hua"?)
   mm. 50–55, "Mo Li Hua" fragments in cello m. 50 & sigh 2 pattern in violin, 51–55
   mm. 56–69, "Mo Li Hua" (cello) and sigh 2 patterns (violin) more expansive and antiphonal, m. 50ff. & 60/63ff. pipa *Lun*; m. 68ff., beating pattern in cello returns
   mm. 72–74ff., pipa cadenza & antiphonal return of sigh 2 pattern in violin and cello, m. 75ff. and in heterophony, m. 81ff.

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4. **mm. 88/89–108/09**
   pipa, **"narrative 3"** with lament

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5. **mm. 109/10–148** ["Mo Li Hua" tune first expansive, then in fragments]
   mm. 109/10, "Mo Li Hua" tune in cello, fragments in violin & pipa, mm. 110–132;
   mm. 133–48, fragments of "Mo Li Hua" tune offset between violin and cello; as pipa presents chromatic scalar fragments concluding on D6 at mm. 146–151 (five-finger tremolo, *Wu Zhi Lun*)

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6. **mm. 149–167**, 8ve doublings, cello & violin, transformations of "sigh 2" motive, combined with fragments of "Mo Li Hua" tune in diminution
7. **mm. 168–183/84**, **"Mo Li Hua"** tune in diatonic transformation (cf. mm. 132ff).

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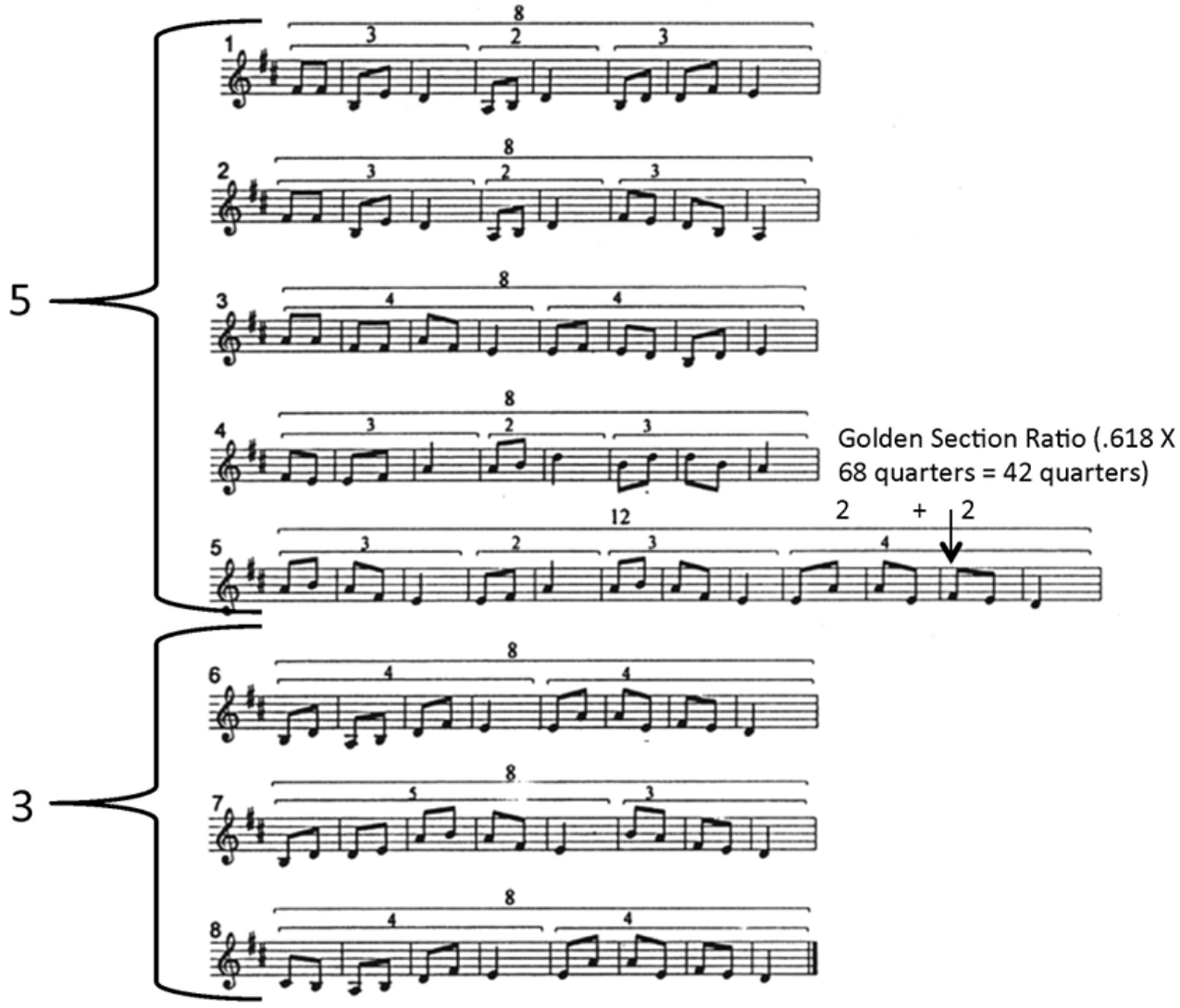
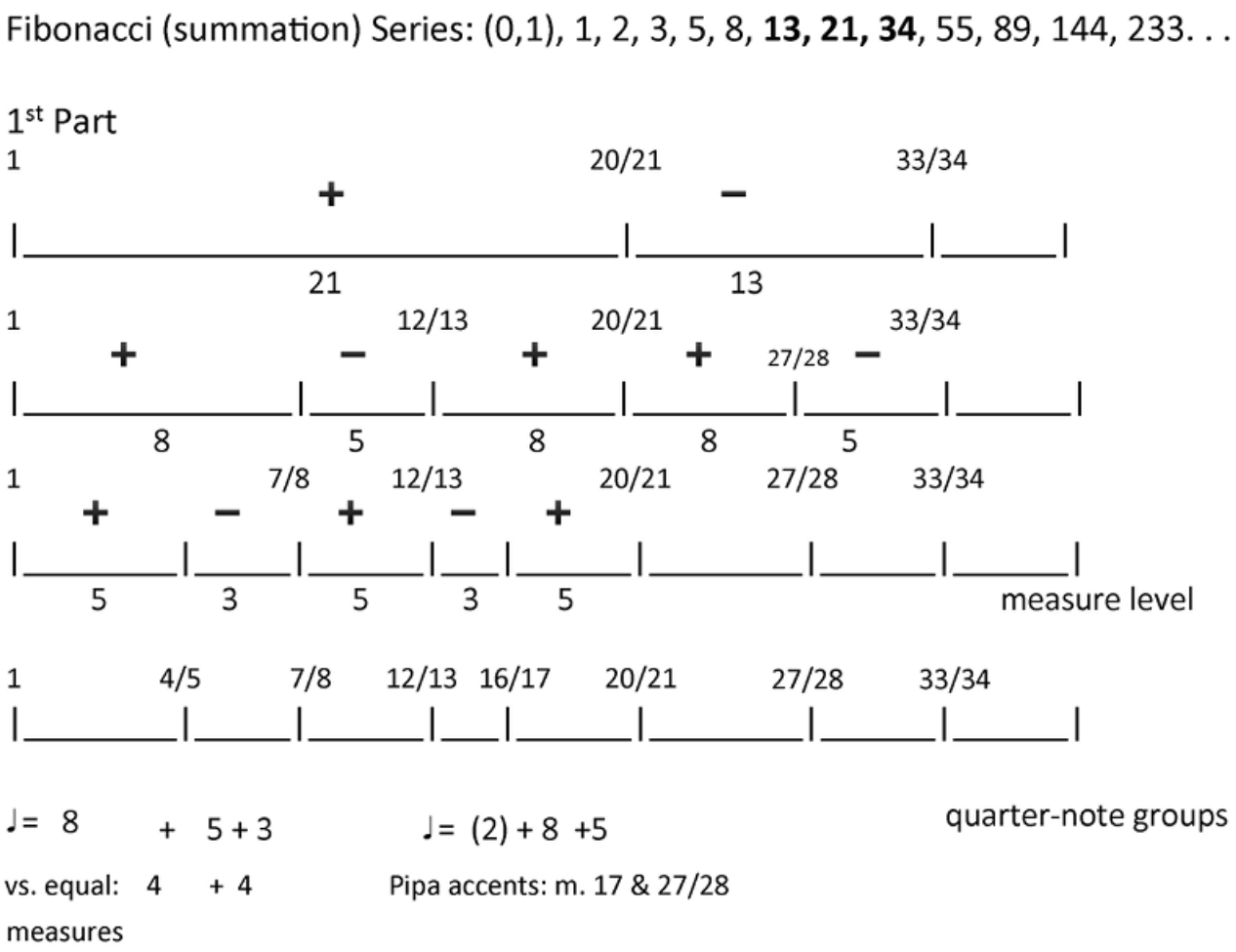
8. **mm. 185–205**
   mm. 185–193, double forte "memory motive" intrudes
   mm. 193–196, pipa, "narrative close"
   mm. 200–205, double forte, fragments of narrative 1 return, "Mo Li Hua" fragment inverted

9. **mm. 206–231 (closing section)**
   mm. 206–231, pentatonic fragments of tune, each paired with pipa in T4 transpositions

Example 5. Chen Yi (2002, Figure 7), the Chinese folk tune "Baban" [Ba (8), ban (beat, phrase)], annotated



Example 6. Chen Yi, *Ning*, mm. 1–46: durational spans, attention, and memory



Example 7. Chen Yi, "Mo Li Hua" from *A Set of Chinese Folk Songs*, Vol. 2, no. 6. Text translation of mm. 1–14.

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6. Jasmine Flower (Mo Li Hua) (Jiangsu Folk Song, sung in Jiangsu dialect) 茉莉花

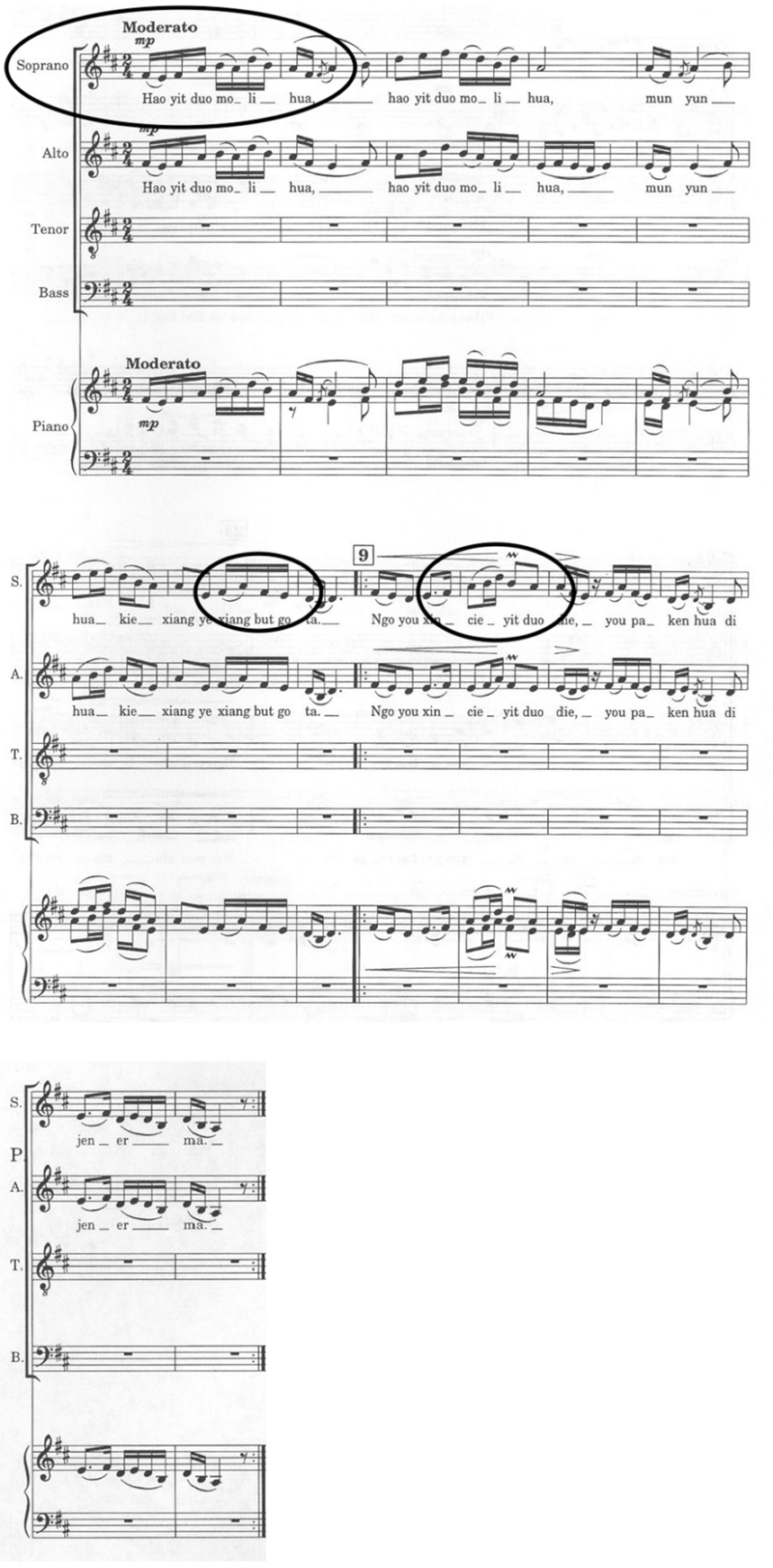
Jasmine flower, such a beautiful flower, her sweet scent covers all others in the garden.
I want to pluck her for myself, but I'm afraid of the garden's keeper.
Jasmine flower, such a beautiful flower, she is as white as snow when she is blooming.
I want to pluck her for myself, but I'm afraid of gossips around.
Jasmine flower, such a beautiful flower, her looks can eclipse all others in the garden.
I want to pluck her for myself, but I'm afraid that she won't bud next year.

好一朵茉莉花，滿園花開香也香不過它。
我有心採一朵戴，又怕看花的人兒罵。

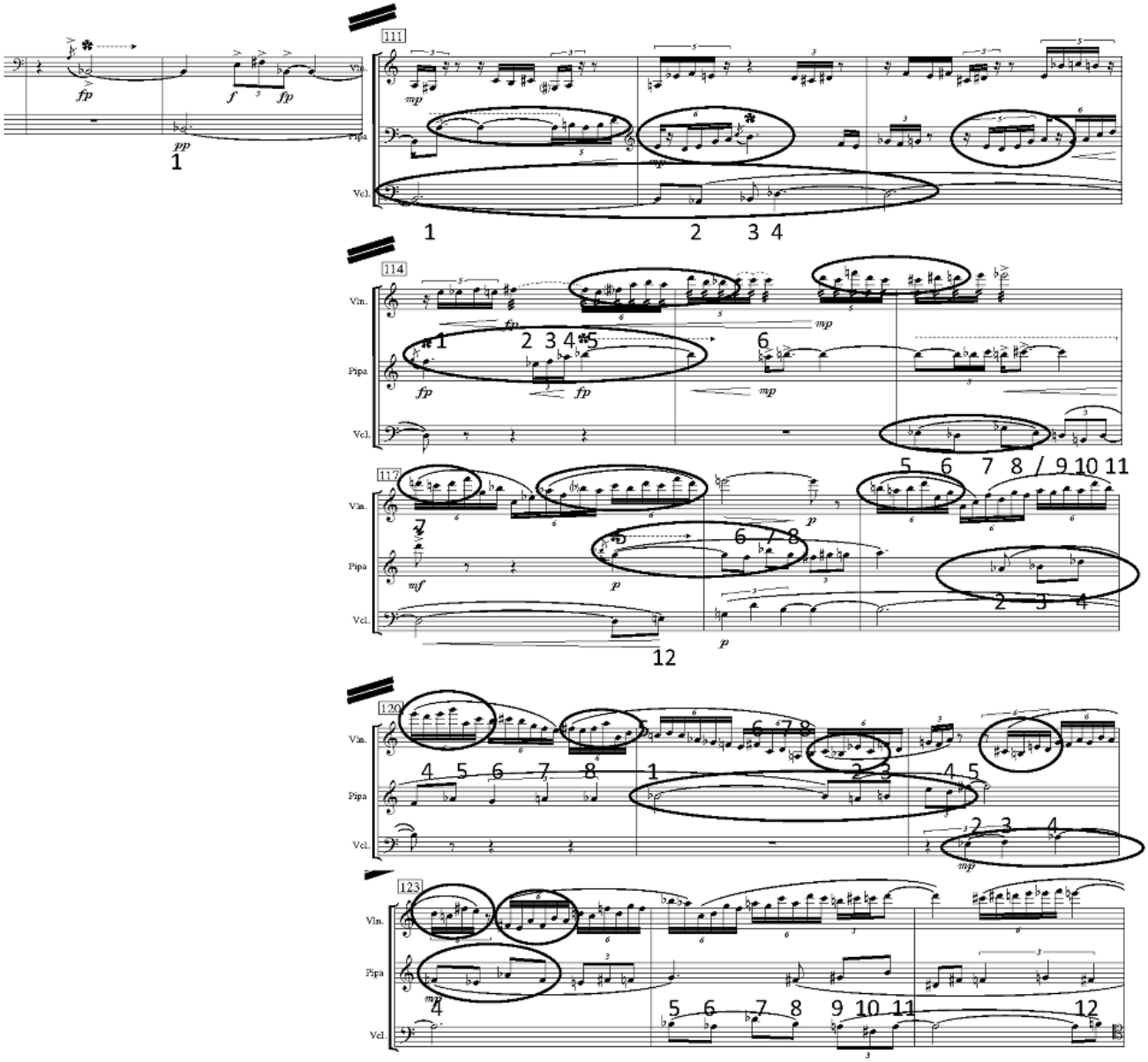
好一朵茉莉花，茉莉花開雪也白不過它。
我有心採一朵戴，又怕旁人笑話。

好一朵茉莉花，滿園花開比也比不過它。
我有心採一朵戴，又怕來年不發芽。

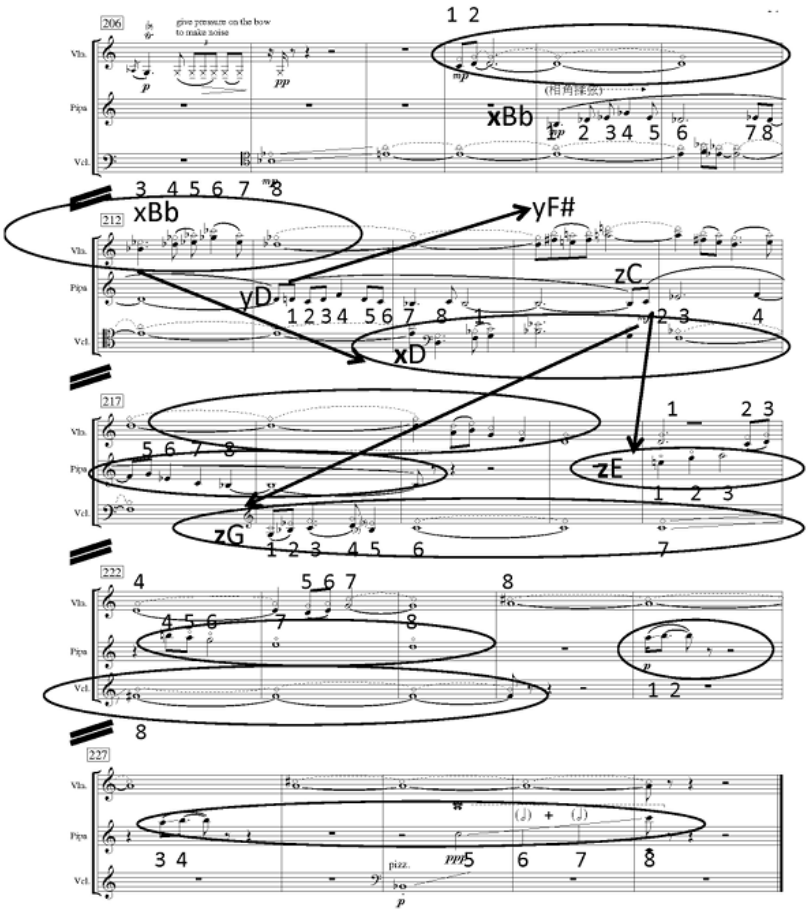
Example 8a. Chen Yi, "Mo Li Hua" from *A Set of Chinese Folk Songs*, Vol. 2, no. 6, mm. 1–14



Example 8b. Chen Yi, "Mo Li Hua" in *Ning for Pipa, Violin and Cello* (2002), mm. 110–125



Example 9. Chen Yi, *Ning*, ending, mm. 206–231. "Eight notes"



(m. 209) (xBb)
Vln: 1 – 2 –3 – 4 – 5 – 6 –7 – 8
xBb: (C–D)-Bb-Db-Eb-Gb-Eb-Db

m. 210 & 212 (xBb)
Pipa: 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7 – 8
xBb: Bb-Db- Eb- Gb-Eb- Db-Eb-Db

m. 214 **(T4x)** (xD)
Cello: 1 –2 – z3 – 4 – 5 – 6 –7 – 8
xD: D– F – G – Bb–G – F–G –(F)

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m. 213 (yD)
Pipa: 1– 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7 – 8
yD : D–C – D – F – D –C –Bb– C –(Bb)

m. 215 **(T4y)** (yF#)
Vln: 1 – 2 –3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7 – 8
yF#: F#– E– F# –A –F# – E– D – E –(D)

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m. 215 (zC) **& 218** (zG)
Pipa: 1– 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7 – 8
zC: (Bb)– C –Eb – F – G –Eb–C – Bb

m. 221 **(T4z)** (zE)
Pipa: 1– 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7 – 8
zE: (D)– E – G – A – B –G – E – D