## LISTENING TO THE ARTS

by

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# A THESIS

Presented to the School of Music and Dance and the Division of Graduate Studies of the University of Oregon in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Music

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### THESIS APPROVAL PAGE

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Title: Listening to the Arts

This thesis has been accepted and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Music degree in the School of Music and Dance by:

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Original approval signatures are on file with the University of Oregon Division of Graduate Studies.

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### THESIS ABSTRACT

Rongrong Chen Master of Music School of Music and Dance June 2023 Title: Listening to the Arts

My thesis piece "Listening to the Arts" is a twenty-minute long composition for chamber orchestra that consists of four movements. Each movement is inspired by an artwork from a different artist, namely Antonio Canova's "Psyche Revived by Cupid's Kiss," Alexander Calder's "Double Gong," Alphonse Mucha's "The Seasons," and Claude Monet's "Water Lilies - The Clouds."

In this composition, I aim to explore the intersection between music and visual arts by creating an auditory interpretation of each artwork's particular character and style. Each movement adopts a distinct musical style to convey the unique emotional and aesthetic qualities of each artwork. I seek to showcase the potentials of the interdisciplinary arts and how they can inspire and enrich one another. Overall, "Listening to the Arts" is a demonstration of my creativity and proficiency in music composition, and my appreciation for visual arts.

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Instrumentation

Flute, doubling Alto Flute Oboe, doubling English Horn Bb Clarinet, doubling Bass Clarinet Bassoon

C Trumpet (and mute) Horn (and mute) Trombone (and mute)

Percussion 1: Vibraphone (4 medium mallets), Xylophone (2 hard mallets) Percussion 2: Bo Cymbals, Hi-Hat, Triangle (small)

Harp

Violin I Violin II Viola Violincello Contrabass

# Listening to the Arts

# I. The Winged Love





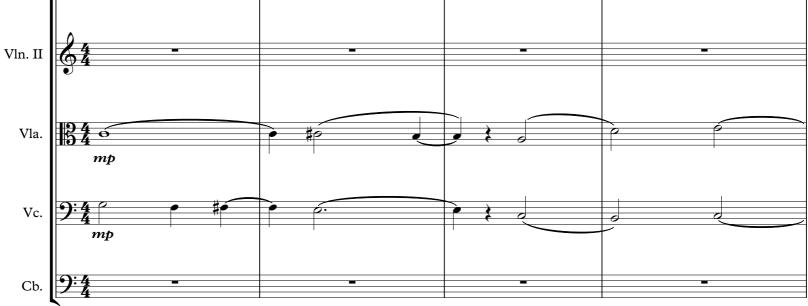






















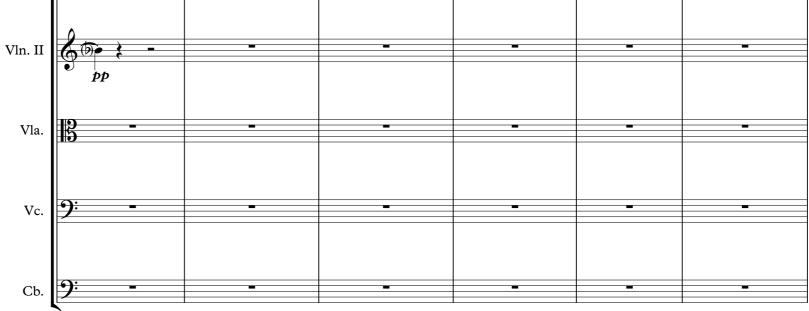










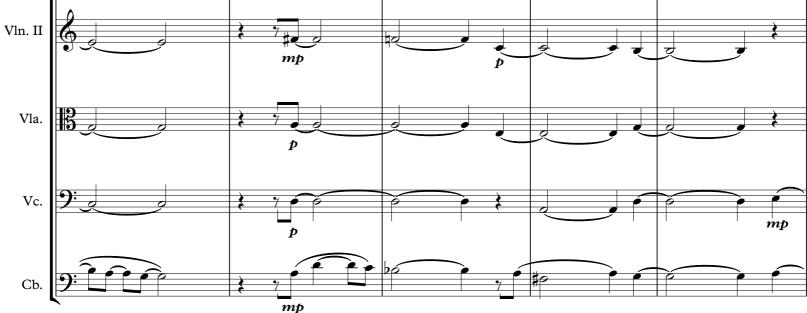










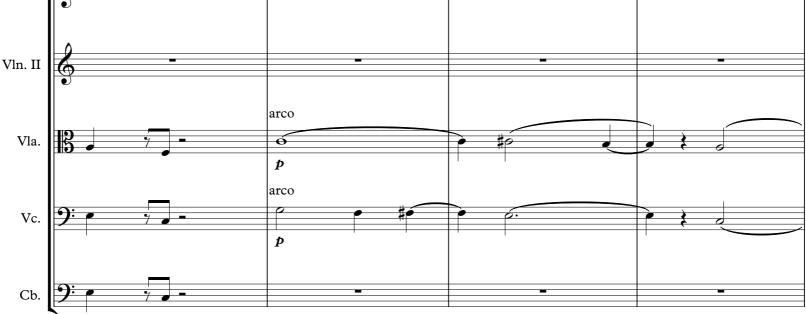




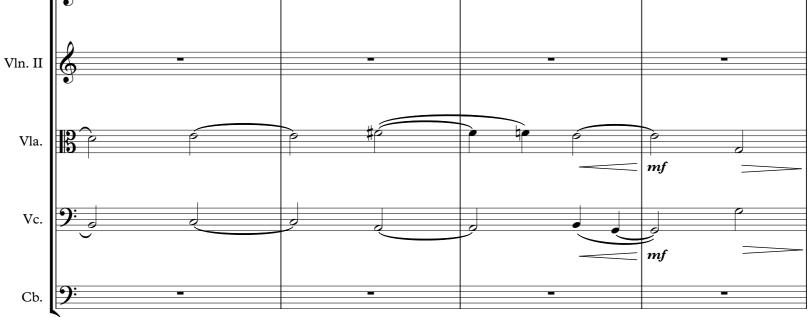


















# II. Double Bo





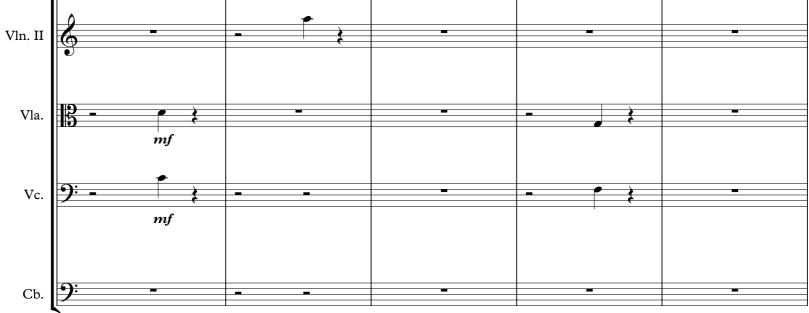
























































## **III.** The Horae













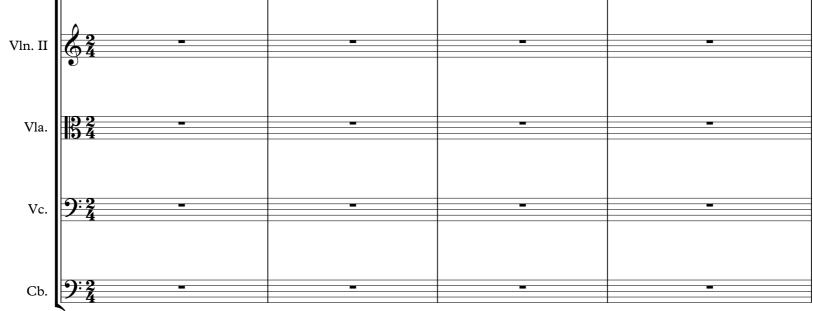










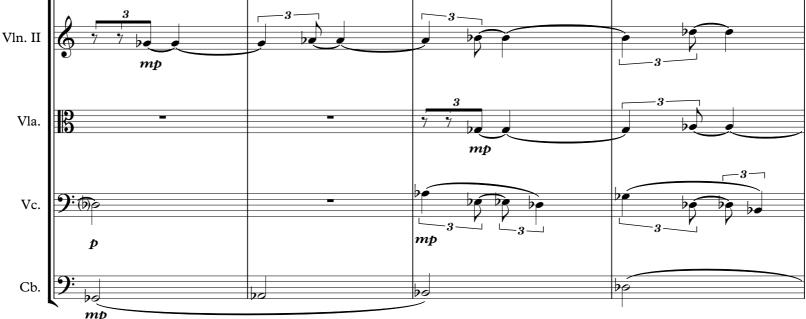










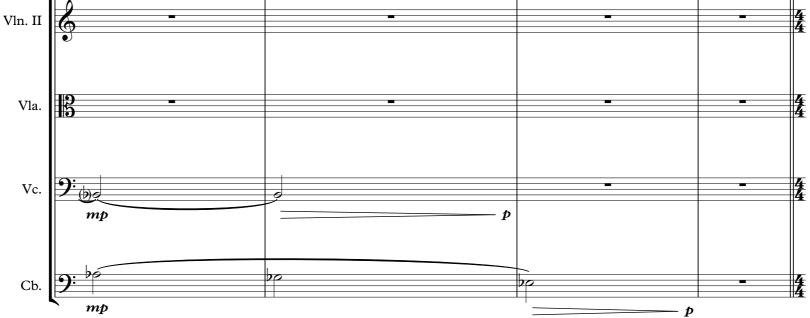


















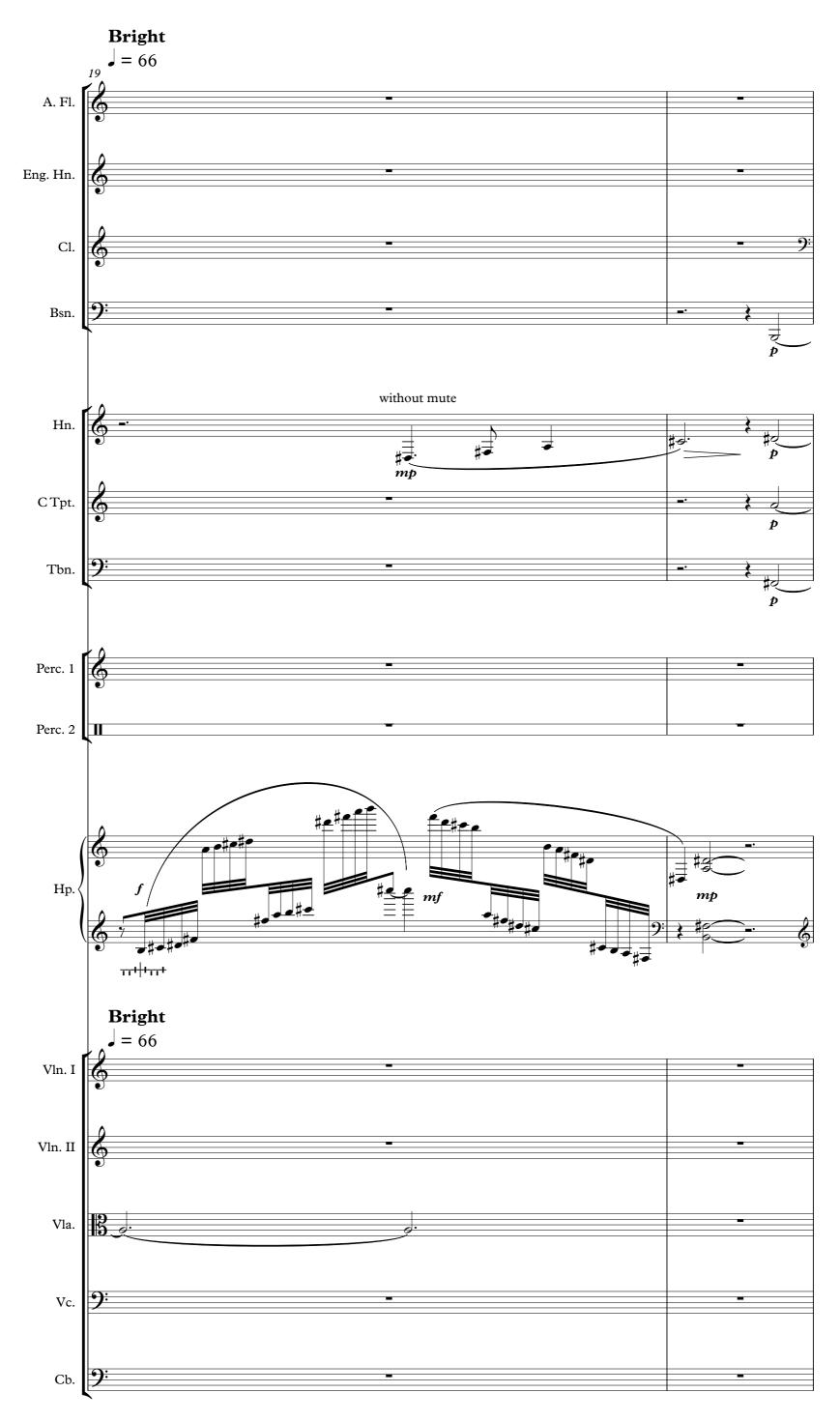














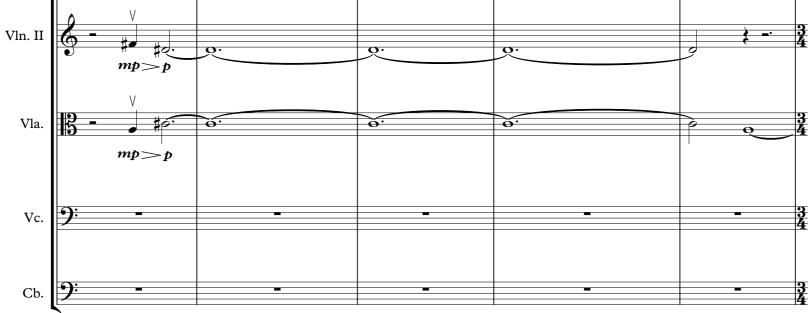




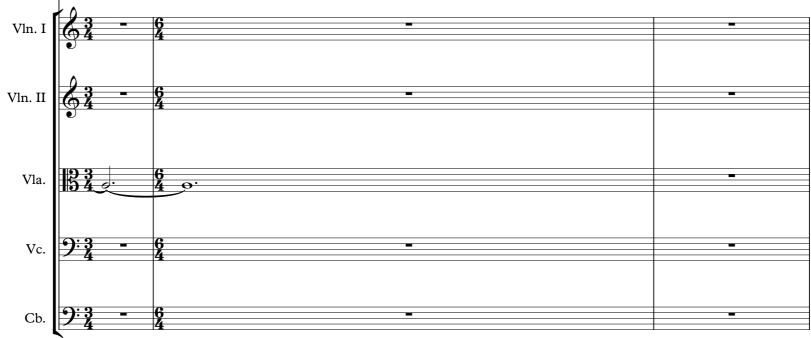












**Tranquil** J = 52







## APPENDIX A

## PERFORMANCE NOTES

Harp:

When chords are not specified to roll, play all chord tones at the same time.

Notes with staccato symbols means to stop the strings completely at the following rest.

Percussion:

Bo: Notes with a "+" symbol means closed, no ring. Muffle at rests.

## APPENDIX B

## PROGRAM NOTES

"Listening to the Arts" is a twenty-minute long composition for chamber orchestra that consists of four movements. Each movement is inspired by an artwork which the composer feels deeply drawn to, and each movement adopts a distinct musical style to convey the unique emotional and aesthetic qualities of each artwork.

The first movement, "The Winged Love," is inspired by "Psyche Revived by Cupid's Kiss," a sculpture made by Italian artist Antonio Canova in the late 1700s. The sculpture is regarded as a Neoclassical style masterpiece, showing Cupid's love and tenderness toward Psyche. To capture such emotion, this first movement adopts a slow tempo and a diatonic sound, focusing on the melody lines played by bassoon and oboe that constantly reach for each other, with bassoon representing Psyche from the earth and oboe representing Cupid from the sky.

The second movement, "Double Bo," is inspired by Alexander Calder's sculpture "Double Gong," made in metal and paint in 1953. The sculpture is able to shift form with air currents. The movement is designed to be scattered, playful, random, chaotic, everchanging, flowing and undulating. There is no particular tonality, just like how the sculpture has no fixed shape. Bo cymbals, a traditional Chinese percussion instrument, are used to represent the small "gongs" in the sculpture.

The third movement, "The Horae," is inspired by Alphonse Mucha's 1896 color lithography series "The Seasons." In "The Seasons," Mucha uses nature, wildlife and women as subtle metaphors for life, death and rebirth. This movement contains four musical sections each corresponding to a portion of the artwork, representing the blossoming spring, the idle summer, the bountiful autumn, and the frozen winter, using a different pentatonic scale in each section. The composer intentionally avoids using any introduction, transition, or ending materials, while keeping all four sections the same duration, in order to mimic the structure of the painting.

The fourth movement, "Cloud Lilies," is inspired by Claude Monet's "Water Lilies - The Clouds," a painting from his famous "Water Lilies" series around 1920. This movement features fluid chordal texture with planing, harp glissandos, and mirroring melodies between woodwind pairs and string pairs, inspired by this impressionistic masterpiece portraying the reflection of clouds in the water alongside the water lilies.