



THE VISION OF LIFE

A Symphonic Poem

Words and Music

by

C. Hubert H. Parry

Composed for the Cardiff Musical Festival - September 26, 1907

Revised for 1914 Norwich Festival which was cancelled due to start of World War I

VIOLA

Cover Image: "Spirit of the Summit" by Frederic Leighton, 1894



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ENGLISH HERITAGE MUSIC SERIES

The “renaissance” in English music is generally agreed to have started in the late Victorian period, beginning roughly in 1880. Public demand for major works in support of the annual choral festivals held throughout England at that time was considerable which led to the creation of many large scale works for orchestra with soloists and chorus.

Although a number of those works were engraved, printed and are regularly performed today, performance scores for a considerable number of compositions, both large-scale and more intimate works, are not available. These works were either never engraved or were engraved and printed but are no longer available in the publishers’ catalogues. While the existence of these works is documented in biographies of the composers, the ability to study and, most importantly, to perform these compositions is not possible.

Changes in the International copyright laws, coupled with changing musical tastes, played a pivotal role in creating this void. As a result, music publishers lost the ability to generate revenue from the sale/rental of such music. In 1964, holograph and copyist scores from both Novello and from publishers it represented were offered to the British Library and the Royal College of Music Library (see The RCM Novello Library – The Musical Times, Feb. 1983 by Jeremy Dibble).

These autograph full score manuscripts along with copies of engraved vocal scores, widely available through various online library sources, are now the only resources available for studying and performing these works.

The English Heritage Music Series has been created to ensure that these compositions are preserved, are accessible for scholarly research and, most importantly, are available for performance by future generations. Its mission is to:

- Source non-engraved/out-of-print English composer compositions that are in the U.S. public domain
- Preserve these compositions through the preparation of performance scores using notation software
- Provide open Internet access to the scores to facilitate study, performance and sharing of performance material (program notes, audio, reviews, etc.)

In preparing the English Heritage Music Series editions, every effort has been made to adhere strictly to the notation contained in the manuscripts. Because of the passage of time and its effect on the condition of the manuscript, the absence of clear information often times by the composer in notating divided instruments, and with emendations in the composer and other hands resulting from use of the manuscript in performance, there were numerous circumstances which required interpretation and decisions for notes, accidentals, dynamics, articulations and tempi. Should questions arise in the use of these editions, the composers’ autograph manuscripts and the Novello vocal scores should be consulted for clarification.

Matthew W. Mehaffey

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Source Information

Autograph Manuscript:

Royal College of Music Library MS 4213

Vocal Score:

Novello Original Octavo Edition No. 12565

Royal College of Music Library

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Music Notation Reference: Behind Bars by Elaine Gould, Faber Music © 2011

BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON PARRY AND “THE VISION OF LIFE”

Sir Edward Elgar (May 18, 1909)

“I hope you are well and that you are writing. I am so delighted we are to have *Job* in Hereford Cathedral. Your Cardiff ‘Vision’ was, I conclude, too strong for the Church, but I hope we may have it soon. It’s really strong bracing stuff, and, like your Odes, some of us love it and love you for giving us these things.”

Hubert Parry: His Life and Works by Charles L. Graves, Macmillan and Co., Ltd. © 1926, Vol. II, p. 66

“During the first half of this year (1914) he gave much time to the revision of the score of his Vision of Life with a view to its performance at Norwich—an expectation frustrated by the War.”

Hubert Parry: His Life and Works by Charles L. Graves, Macmillan and Co., Ltd. © 1926, Vol. II, pp. 157-158

“Hubert Parry’s ethical idealism was animated by a truly Christian spirit. The great aim of his later years was to impress on all people the need of enlarging their sphere of Religion; to consecrate his art to the service of humanity. ‘Religion,’ he wrote in one of his notebooks, ‘includes Art as well as definite devotional exercises,’ and again: ‘Art is a form of devotion. Everything that endeavours to beautify and make lovable the surroundings and the ideas of man is part of devotional religion. It is devotion to the beautiful aspect of things—the things which minister to spiritual well-being, to truth.’

Thus it came about, as Mrs. Ponsonby writes, that ‘when he spoke of some remarkable human being or act, or of Bach, or the sea, or architecture, or the country, one felt that to him the sphere of Religion was indeed without bounds. The beliefs which informs the message that he endeavoured to give to the world in his later works, and especially in *The Vision of Life*, is best defined in his own words, quoted by Miss Daymond in the memorial number of the Royal College Magazine:

There is, as it were, a limitless, unflagging, living series of variations on a great subject—and that subject is the progress towards the highest good of the race . . . The highest optimism is the belief that as man has already succeeded in controlling his destiny, and the resources of the little corner of the world with which he is concerned, by slow degrees better and better, so he will go on doing it in the future. There is no hope of a comfortable easy-going Utopia, but a reality of constant effort towards the development of the consciousness that the guarantee of Life is the fruitful expenditure of energy.

Hubert Parry: His Life and Works by Charles L. Graves, Macmillan and Co., Ltd. © 1926, Vol. II, p. 224

“The Vision of Life, brought out in 1907 and revised in 1914, is notable as an exposition of his philosophy of life, as an expansion of the gospel of brotherhood and love . . . it also commands admiration by its dignity and felicity of phrase and the skill with which rhymed passages are introduced to lend emphasis to a scheme of free verse. Traces are not wanting in vocabulary of the influence exerted by his familiarity with the Bible, and in the metre and use of alliteration with the old chronicles and Sagas and the libretti of Wagner. But, as it has been said of his music, so may it be repeated of this his most ambitious poem, that there is scarcely a passage that is not plainly and unmistakably Parry.”

Hamilton Harty

“I have a personal theory—probably all wrong—that Parry was too broad and great a man to be a really first-rate genius as a musician. After all, to be a universally interested man, as he was, is better than to be a more or less narrow musician, and I can’t think of any great composer whose absorption in his art did not make him a little deaf and blind to the rest of the world and its problems.”

Other Sources

C. Hubert H. Parry—His Life and Music by Jeremy Dibble, Oxford University Press, © 1992, pp. 420-423

An Imperishable Heritage: British Choral Music from Parry to Dyson by Stephen Town, Ashgate Publishing Company, ©2012, pp. 1-36

Parry before Jerusalem—Studies of His Life and Music by Bernard Benoliel, Ashgate Publishing Company, © 1997

Viola

The Vision of Life

C. Hubert H. Parry

Moderato

9 con sord.

1-9

cresc. mf

14 f f cresc. ff

18 p

22 1 f p

26 cresc. cresc.

30 cresc.

V.S.

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34 2

mf *sempre cresc.*

39

mf *marcato*

44 3

mf *rit.* *pizz.* *sf*

50

pp *espress. arco* *con sord.* *divisi*

53 4

pp *sostenuto* *sempre dim.* *unis.*

57

pp *dim.*

60

pp

63 5

pp *cresc.*

67

ff *ff* *p*

71

ff *cresc.* *ff*

V.S.

75 6 Lento

82 rit... a tempo senza sordini

88 Lento 7

94

98

102 Allegro moderato

108

115 8

122

126

132 **9**

Musical staff 132-138. Key signature: one sharp (F#). Time signature: 3/4. The staff contains a series of eighth and sixteenth notes with slurs and ties. A dynamic marking *p* is present at the end of the staff.

139

Musical staff 139-145. Continuation of the previous staff. A dynamic marking *cresc.* is present.

146

sempre dim.

Musical staff 146-152. Continuation of the previous staff. A dynamic marking *p* is present.

153

largamente *Lento*

Musical staff 153-159. Time signature change to 4/4. Features a triplet of eighth notes and a half note. A dynamic marking *p* is present.

160

Musical staff 160-163. Features a series of triplets of eighth notes. Dynamic markings include *f*, *ff*, and *p*.

164

Musical staff 164-166. Continuation of the triplet eighth notes. A dynamic marking *dim.* is present.

167

divisi rit.

10

senza sordini

Musical staff 167-170. Continuation of the triplet eighth notes. A dynamic marking *p* is present. The staff ends with a double bar line and the instruction *V.S.*

223



230



237



244



V.S.

250 *p* *cresc. molto*

256 *ff*

261 *poco rit.* *Poco meno mosso*

266 **15**

272 **16**

279 *mf* *cresc.*

285 *ff*

293 **17** *mf*

301 *cresc.*

308 **18** *f*

315 *cresc.* *tr.*

322 *tr.*

331 *poco rit.* **19** *a tempo*

340

346 *cresc.* *dim.*

352 *mf* *cresc.* **20**

359 *f* *mf* *f* *Solo*

368 *dim. e rit.* *dim.*

375 *Moderato* *tutti* *con sordini* *dim.* *pp*

381 *V.S.*

387 *pizz.* *Lentissimo* *arco*
p *pp*

Più mosso *senza sordini* *Meno mosso*
2 *Vc.*
 396-397

409 *a tempo, moderato* *divisi* **2**
 413-414 *mf cresc.*

417 *Allegro* **21**
f *cresc.*

422

426

430

434

22
 438

442 *ff*

447 23 animando

452

455 allargando

458

461

465 24 Con fuoco

468 *ff*

471 *ff*

476 25 *ff*

481 *ff* Lento Meno mosso V.S.

487 pizz. rit. arco Lento pizz. mf

494 cresc. mf cresc. pizz.

499 Slower f f 3 503-505

506 rit. con sordini Lento teneramente cresc. 3

511 f divisi 26

517 unis. 3 pizz. senza sordini 2 520-521 divisi mf cresc. f

523 rit. 4 molto rit. Lento 27 Vc.

534 p cresc. p

539 28 animato

544 cresc. molto

549 poco agitato

cresc.

553 Colla voce rit. molto rit.

pp

558 **29** a tempo, tranquillo

pp

dim.

563 rit. Lento maestoso

mf

568 **30**

tr

573 *cresc. molto*

tr

577 **31** allargando

ff

sf *p* *sf* *p* V.S.

582 **Tranquillo**

p

32

589 **poco rit. a tempo**

p

596

600

605

33

609

614

mf **allargando**

34

621

mf **cresc. molto**

628

ff **rit. a tempo** *dim.*

634 **Lento**

ppp **5** **4**
636-640 *mf* 643-646

35

647 *dim. e rit.* **a tempo** *con sordini*

Vc. tutti

36

655 **allargando** *rit.* **a tempo**

p *p* *p*

662 **poco agitato**

> p *cresc.* *cresc.* *cresc.*

37

668 *p molto cresc.* *dim.* **3**

p molto cresc. *dim.* **3**

673 **a tempo** **4**

pp **4**
676-679

680 **animando**

p *cresc.* *cresc.*

687 **animando**

695 **38**

sf

703 **Più mosso, allegro feroce**

ff

710

718 **39**

726 *sf*

sf

734 **40**

sf

741 **Vivacissimo**

sf

748 **allargando.**

sf

756 *a tempo*

764

770 41

777

783 *f* *Allargando* *a tempo* *ff* *sf*

790 *sf*

798 *rit.* *[Silent]* *Lento* **12** *sf* 805-816

Puì mosso
2
 817-818
 B. Solo
 animando
 The path - way lost, Men cry to one an - oth - er in the dark, This way, and that way.

42 **agitato**
 827
 divisi
 animando unis.
 pp

837
Allegro
 f

844
43 **Allegro**

852
 ff

862
 animato
 rit.
 Moderato
 cresc. molto
 sf sf

870
 sempre cresc.
 5
 rit.
 a tempo
 sf sf f ff

881 animato
44
 allargando.....

5 **agitato**
 888-892
 animando

Sur - feit and des - pair are min - gled in the cup the vic - tor drains.
 S. Solo

899
2
 poco allargando
 mf f 901-902 f

906 Allegro poco rit. rit. **45** Agitato dolente

mf *sf* *p* *f* *p*

913 poco animando

f *p* *f*

918 molto rit. Lento **6**

mf *sf*

922-927

928 **Più lento** **Moderato** **Moderato con anima**

mf *cresc.*

935

943 **46**

cresc.

950 **rit.** **a tempo** **largamente**

958 **rit.** **a tempo**

f

967 **allargando** **47** **a tempo**

cresc.

973 **rit.** **a tempo - tranquillo**

dim. *p*

979

cresc. *f*

985 **48** **a tempo - tranquillo**

pp

991

995

Musical staff for measures 995-998. The staff contains a series of eighth-note patterns, each spanning two measures and connected by a slur. The dynamics are marked *p*.

999

Musical staff for measures 999-1002. The staff contains a series of eighth-note patterns, each spanning two measures and connected by a slur. A circled number **49** is placed above the staff in the fourth measure.

1003

Musical staff for measures 1003-1008. The staff contains a series of eighth-note patterns, each spanning two measures and connected by a slur. The notes are: G4, A4, B4, C5, D5, E5, F5, G5, A5, B5, C6, D6, E6, F6, G6, A6, B6, C7.

1009

Musical staff for measures 1009-1013. The staff contains a series of eighth-note patterns, each spanning two measures and connected by a slur. The dynamics are marked *poco animando*.

1014

Musical staff for measures 1014-1022. The staff contains a series of eighth-note patterns, each spanning two measures and connected by a slur. A circled number **50** is placed above the staff in the fourth measure.

1023

Musical staff for measures 1023-1028. The staff contains a series of eighth-note patterns, each spanning two measures and connected by a slur.

1029

Musical staff for measures 1029-1032. The staff contains a series of eighth-note patterns, each spanning two measures and connected by a slur. The dynamics are marked *f*.

1033

Musical staff for measures 1033-1036. The staff contains a series of eighth-note patterns, each spanning two measures and connected by a slur. The dynamics are marked *mf* *cresc.* and the tempo is marked *Solenne*. The staff ends with the instruction *V.S.*

1038 *allargando* *rit.* **51** *Tempo giusto*

cresc. *f* *p*

1043 *divisi*

ff

1049 *cresc.* *ff* *rit.*

1056 *allargando* **52** *meno mosso*

ff

1063 *dim.* **2** *Allegro divisi*

dim. *pp*

1070 *poco agitato*

p

1073 *f* *p*

1077 *meno mosso* *poco animando*

p *pp* *cresc. mf* *cresc. sf*

1085 rit. Lento **53** più mosso

1087-1093 *ff*

1097 **Allegro agitato** *divisi* *p* **agitato accelerando** *a2*

1102 **Più lento (colla voce)** **54** *a tempo* *f* *p*

1107 *pp* *rit. divisi* *Andante*

1112 *a2* *rit.* **55** *a tempo - tranquillo* *p*

1119

1123

1127 *allargando*

1131 *animando* *p* *cresc.* **56**

1136 *animando* *cresc.*

1140 *allargando* *f* **57** *a tempg*

1145

1150

Musical staff 1150: Bass clef, key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The staff contains a series of eighth notes, mostly beamed in pairs or groups of three, with a dynamic marking of *mf* and the instruction *sempre dim.*

58 Moderato tranquillo

1155

Musical staff 1155: Bass clef, key signature of three sharps. The staff begins with a dynamic marking of *p*. It features a sequence of eighth notes, many of which are grouped into triplets, indicated by a '3' above the notes.

1159

Musical staff 1159: Bass clef, key signature of three sharps. This staff continues the triplet pattern of the previous staff, with eighth notes beamed in groups of three.

1162

Musical staff 1162: Bass clef, key signature of three sharps. The staff shows a transition in tempo, with markings for *poco rit.* and *a tempo*. It contains eighth notes, some in triplets, and a double bar line.

1167 dolce

Musical staff 1167: Bass clef, key signature of three sharps. The staff is marked *dolce* and features eighth notes, some in triplets, with a dynamic accent (>) over a note.

1172

Musical staff 1172: Bass clef, key signature of three sharps. The staff contains eighth notes, some in triplets, and a dynamic marking of *f*. A box containing the number **59** is positioned above the staff.

1176

Musical staff 1176: Bass clef, key signature of three sharps. The staff is marked *allargando* and *Poco meno mosso*. It features eighth notes, some in triplets, and a dynamic marking of *f*.

1180

Musical staff 1180: Bass clef, key signature of three sharps. The staff contains eighth notes, some in triplets, and a dynamic marking of *f*. It ends with a double bar line and a final triplet of eighth notes.

1185-1187

Tranquillo

1188-1190

Pass - ing on life from one to an - o - ther Seek - ing to solve it, Seek - ing to S. 1

1195

poco rit. Allegro - animando

know it, Seek - ing to make it of worth_ to each

1201

cresc. sempre

60

1208

allaargando

1213

a tempo

1218

61

1224

1230

62

1237

Musical notation for measures 1237-1243. The staff is in bass clef with a key signature of one flat. It features several chords and a triplet of eighth notes in measure 1241.

1244

63

agitato, vivace

cresc. molto

Musical notation for measures 1244-1250. Measure 1244 starts with a triplet of eighth notes. Measure 1245 has a fortissimo (*ff*) dynamic. The tempo is *agitato, vivace* and the dynamics include *cresc. molto*. Measure 1250 ends with a half note chord.

1251

lunga

Lento tranquillo

molto rit.

64

espress.

Musical notation for measures 1251-1256. Measure 1251 is a whole note chord. Measures 1252-1254 are marked with a '3' and a bar line. Measures 1255-1256 are marked with a '2' and a bar line. The key signature changes to two flats and the time signature to 4/4. The dynamics include *p* and *dim.*. The tempo is *Lento tranquillo* and *molto rit.*.

1259

Musical notation for measures 1259-1262. The staff is in bass clef with a key signature of two flats. It features several triplet eighth notes and a *p* dynamic.

1263

Musical notation for measures 1263-1267. The staff is in bass clef with a key signature of two flats. It features several triplet eighth notes and a *mf* dynamic.

1268

poco rit.

a tempo

Musical notation for measures 1268-1272. The staff is in bass clef with a key signature of two flats. It features several triplet eighth notes and a *p* dynamic.

1273

65

Musical notation for measures 1273-1278. The staff is in bass clef with a key signature of two flats. It features several triplet eighth notes and a *p* dynamic. The piece ends with *V.S.*

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1278

rit. 66 poco animando

1283

poco rit. Poco animando, espressivo

1287

67

1291

animando

1295

68

1299

69

1304

1308

70

1312

mf

1318 71 animato

cresc.

1324 animando

1329 sempre cresc. ed animando

1333 72

12/8

1336

1339

1342

1345 73

1349

1353

Musical notation for measures 1353-1356. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and the time signature is 6/4. The music consists of a continuous eighth-note pattern with triplets indicated by a '3' below the notes.

1357

Musical notation for measures 1357-1361. The key signature is three sharps and the time signature is 6/4. Measure 1357 starts with a half note. Measures 1358-1360 feature a melodic line with a 'rit.' (ritardando) marking above. Measure 1361 begins with a new time signature of 4/4 and a 'mf' (mezzo-forte) dynamic marking below.

1362

Musical notation for measures 1362-1365. The key signature is three sharps and the time signature is 4/4. The music features a melodic line with various phrasing slurs.

1366

Musical notation for measures 1366-1369. The key signature is three sharps and the time signature is 4/4. A 'cresc.' (crescendo) marking is placed below the first measure. The music consists of a melodic line with phrasing slurs.

1370

Musical notation for measures 1370-1373. The key signature is three sharps and the time signature is 4/4. The music features a melodic line with phrasing slurs.

1374

Musical notation for measures 1374-1377. The key signature is three sharps and the time signature is 4/4. A 'poco rit.....' (poco ritardando) marking is placed above the first measure. The music features a melodic line with phrasing slurs. A 'p' (piano) dynamic marking is placed below the final measure.

1378

Musical notation for measures 1378-1380. The key signature is three sharps and the time signature is 4/4. The music features a melodic line with triplets indicated by a '3' above the notes. A 'rit.' (ritardando) marking is placed above the final measure.

1381

Musical notation for measures 1381-1384. The key signature is three sharps and the time signature is 4/4. The music features a melodic line with phrasing slurs. A 'a tempo' marking is placed above the first measure, and a 'rit.' (ritardando) marking is placed above the final measure. The piece concludes with a double bar line and a fermata over the final note.



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