



# 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

VIOLONCELLO

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*

Jonathan Frank, Ass’t. Librarian - jonathan.frank@rcm.ac.uk

*Manuscript Transcription & Score Preparation*

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### Reference Material and Software

*Notation Software:* Dorico Version 5.1.21.2225 (1-16-2025)

*Audio Software:* Note Performer 4

*Graphic Software:* Affinity Photo 2

*Document Software:* Affinity Publisher 2

*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

Violoncello

# The Vision of Life

C. Hubert H. Parry

Moderato

pizz.  
*p* *cresc.* *mf* *f*

7 *p* *p* *pp* *p* arco  
2 7  
8-9 12-18

20 *dim.* *f* *p* *p* pizz.  
1

25 *cresc.* *cresc.* arco  
3 3 3 3 3 3 3

30 *cresc.* marcato *V.S.*  
3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3

34 2

*p* *sempre cresc.*

39

*p* *cresc.* *marcato*

43 3

*p*

48 *rit.* *p* *sf* *p* **2** *sostenuto* *p*

*p* *sf* *p* **2** *sostenuto* *p*

56 4 *pp* *divisi* *unis. con sordini* *pp* *divisi*

*pp* *divisi* *unis. con sordini* *pp* *divisi*

60

63

66 5 *ff* *f* *sf* *p*

*ff* *f* *sf* *p*

71 6 *Lento* *pizz.* *p* *pp*

*p* *Lento* *pizz.* *p* *pp*

78 *arco* *rit.* *a tempo* *pizz.*

84

89 *arco* *Lento* **7** *pizz.*

93

98 *cresc. molto* *pizz.* *p*

103 *arco* *Allegro moderato* *mp*

107 *mf*

111

115

118 **8** *pizz.* **3**

125 *ff*

131 **9** *ff* *f* *mf* *p*

pizz. arco

138 *f*

145 *p* sempre dim.

152 *p* *dim.*

largamente Lento pizz.

159 *p*

arco 3 160-162

167 *p* *pp*

rit. **10** a tempo sostenuto

174 *p*

Più mosso tranquillo espressivo

181 *p* **11** *agitato*

187 *p* *pp*

rit. molto rit. a tempo

194 **poco animando** 12

202 **animato** **allargando** **rit..**

209 **Allegro**

215 **animato** 13

223

231 14

239

245 **V.S.**

250 *cresc. molto*

256 *cresc.*

260 *poco rit.*

264 *Poco meno mosso*

270 **15**

278 **16** *mf*

284

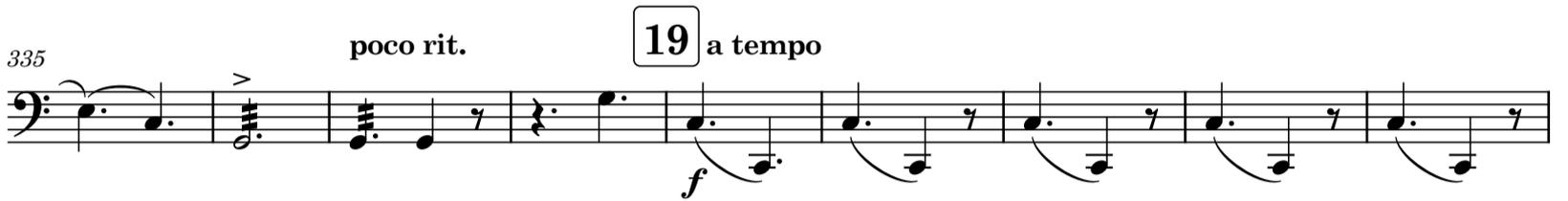
292 **17** *mf*

301 *cresc. molto*

309 **18** *f*

316  Musical notation for measures 316-321. Measure 316 starts with a bass clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The music features a melodic line with slurs and accents. Measure 320 contains a fermata over a whole note, with the number '2' written above it. Measure 321 continues the melodic line. Dynamics include *f* and *ff*.

326  Musical notation for measures 326-334. The music continues with a melodic line in the bass clef, featuring slurs and accents.

335 *poco rit.* 19 *a tempo*  Musical notation for measures 335-343. Measure 335 begins with a bass clef and a key signature of one sharp. The music is marked *poco rit.* and *a tempo*. Dynamics include *f*.

344  Musical notation for measures 344-352. The music continues with a melodic line in the bass clef. Dynamics include *f cresc.* and *dim.*

353  Musical notation for measures 353-360. The music continues with a melodic line in the bass clef. Dynamics include *mf*, *p*, *cresc.*, and *f*.

361 20 *dim. e rit.* **4**  Musical notation for measures 361-371. Measure 361 begins with a bass clef and a key signature of one sharp. The music is marked *dim. e rit.* and **4**. A fermata is placed over measure 371, with the number '4' written above it. The page number '368-371' is printed at the bottom right.

372 con sordini **2** Moderato

373-374 *p* *pp*

380

*p*

387 **Lentissimo** Solo pizz. *p*

*p* *p*

396 **Più mosso** arco *sf*

*sf*

**Meno mosso** a tempo, moderato **2**

407-408 *mf* molto cresc. *pp* *mf* cresc. molto

414 **Allegro** *mf* *f*

*mf* *f*

419 **21** *cresc.*

*cresc.*

423

427

431

*p*

435



439

22



444

23



449

**animando**



453

**allargando**



*mf cresc.*

457



462

24

**Con fuoco**



V.S.

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467

472

476

25

480

486

Meno mosso

rit.

arco

p

Lento

pizz.

mf

493

498

Slower

f

f

502

rit.

V.S.

507 **Lento teneramente**  
divisi

*p* *cresc.* *f*

513 **26**

*p* *f* *pizz.* *arco* *p cresc.*

519 **27**

*f* *rit.*

526 **27**

*pp* *molto rit.* *Lento* *pp*

534

*p* *cresc.* *f*

**28** animato  
divisi

539 **28**

*p* *unis.*

544 **28**

*p* *poco agitato* *cresc.*

551 **28**

*Colla voce* *rit.* *molto rit.* *p*

558 **29** a tempo, tranquillo

*dim.* *rit.*

566 **29**

*mf* *Lento maestoso*

570 30

*cresc. molto*

574

578 31 allargando

*ff sf p sf p* V.S.

583 **Tranquillo**

583 *p*

592 *poco rit.* **32** *a tempo*

597 *pp*

601

606 **33** *p*

613 **34** *allargando*

621 *f cresc.*

627 *rit.* *a tempo* *ff*

634 *Lento* *p* *Solo*

639

644 *dim. e rit.* **35** a tempo

650 *tutti* *cresc.* *Solo* *mp*

656 *allargando* *rit.* *a tempo* *tutti* **36** *p* *cresc.*

662 *poco agitato* *cresc.*

667 **37** *molto cresc.* *dim.*

672 *a tempo* *animando* *pp* *dim.*

681 *animando* *cresc.* *cresc.* *cresc. sempre*

693 **38** *sf* *sf* *sf*

702 *Più mosso, allegro feroce*

710



795 *rit.*

*sf*

804 [Silent] Lento **12** *Puì mosso* **2** B. Solo

805-816 817-818 The path - way lost, Men cry to one an - oth - er in the dark,

824 *animando* **42** Solo *agitato*

This way, and that way, *cresc.*

832 *tutti animando*

*cresc.*

838 *Allegro*

*f sf sf*

845 **43** *Allegro*

*sf sf ff*

854 *animato*

864 *rit.....* *Moderato*

*f sf*

869 *sempre cresc.* **5**

*sf sf sf* 873-877

44

878 rit. a tempo animato allargando.

886 *p* *dim.* *pp* *agitato divisi*

895 *animando* *cresc. molto* *ff* *f* 901-902

45

905 *Allegro poco allargando* *poco rit.* *rit.* *Agitato dolente* *p* *cresc.* *f*

912 *cresc.*

916 *poco animando*

920 *molto rit.* *Lento* *p* *pp*

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

935

943 46

*poco cresc.*

951 *rit.* *a tempo largamente*

*f* *cresc.*

959 *rit.*

964 *a tempo* *allargando* 47 *a tempo*

*f* *4*

972 *rit.* *a tempo - tranquillo*

*dim.* *4* 979-982

983 *poco rit.*  
*f* *mf* *cresc.* *dim.*

**48** a tempo - tranquillo

990

994

998

**49**

1002

1006

*poco animando*

1010 *cresc.*

1014 *cresc.*

**50**

1018

1023

1029

divisi

divisi

1034

Solenne

cresc.

unis.

1039

allargando rit.

51

Tempo giusto

mf

f

1043

1046

1051

cresc.

rit.

allargando

1059

52

meno mosso

dim.

1065

pizz.

Allegro divisi poco agitato

1069 *pp*

1072 *f* *p*

1076 *pp* *cresc.*

meno mosso poco animando

1084 rit. Lento 3

*cresc. f* *pp* *sf*

1087-1089

53

1094 *sf* *mf* *molto cresc.* *f*

più mosso Allegro agitato agitato accelerando

4

1097-1100

1104 Più lento (colla voce) 54 a tempo rit. divisi

*p* *pp* *p*

1110 Andante rit.

1118 55 a tempo - tranquillo

(b) a2

1124 allargando..... animando

*cresc.* *f* *cresc.*

1132 56 *divisi* **animando**

1139 *a2* **allargando** 57 **a tempo** *cresc.*

1146 *dim.*

1151 58 **Moderato tranquillo** *pp*

1158 *cresc.* **poco rit.**

1166 **a tempo dolce**

1172 59 *p cresc.*

1177 **allargando** **Poco meno mosso** *f*

1182 *f* *p* **pizz.** **V.S.**

1188 **Tranquillo**

1188 **Tranquillo**

*p*

1191

1194

1197 **poco rit.** **Allegro - animando** **cresc. sempre**

*p* *arco* *p* *molto cresc.*

1203

60

1210 **allaargando** **a tempo**

*f* *cresc.* *ff*

1215

61

1221

1228

62

*sf*



Poco animando, espressivo

1285 *divisi* *a2* *divisi* *a2* **67** *p* *cresc.*

1290 *p cresc.* *cresc.* **animando**

1297 **68**

1302 *mf cresc.* **69** *marcato*

1307 *mf* **70** *mf*

1313 *divisi*

1319 *a2* **71** *cresc.* *animato*

1324 *90* **71** *animando*

1329 *sempre cresc. ed animando*

72

1335

Musical notation for measures 1335-1340. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The time signature is 3/4. The notation includes slurs and accents over the notes.

73

1341

Musical notation for measures 1341-1346. The key signature is three sharps. The notation includes slurs and accents.

1347

Musical notation for measures 1347-1352. The key signature is three sharps. The notation includes slurs and accents.

1353

Musical notation for measures 1353-1359. The key signature is three sharps. The notation includes slurs, accents, and triplets. The word "rit." is written above the final measure.

1360

Musical notation for measures 1360-1366. The key signature is three sharps. The time signature changes to 4/4 at measure 1361. The notation includes slurs, triplets, and dynamic markings "mf" and "cresc.".

1367

Musical notation for measures 1367-1374. The key signature is three sharps. The notation includes slurs and accents.

1375

Musical notation for measures 1375-1381. The key signature is three sharps. The notation includes slurs, accents, and dynamic markings "poco rit.", "rit.", and "a tempo".

1382

Musical notation for measures 1382-1387. The key signature is three sharps. The notation includes slurs, accents, and dynamic markings "rit.". The piece ends with a double bar line and a diamond-shaped symbol.



# ENGLISH HERITAGE

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