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

COR ANGLAIS

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

IN THE UNITED STATES

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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	David Fielding - dhcfielding@charter.net

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 . . . . Th e 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. Th is 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

Cor Anglais

The Vision of Life

C. Hubert H. Parry

Moderato

18

1–18

Vc.
arco

1

p

24

2

7

27–33

dim.

mf *cresc.*

35

cresc.

f

39

3

45

rit.

4

49–52

sostenuto

4

3

53–55

5

10

56–65

Fl. 1

8va

Ob. 1

3

70

6 Lento

p dim. pp

78

rit. a tempo

pp

84

91

Lento

7

6

92–97

p

3

101–103

Allegro moderato

4

104–107

mf

113

3

8

119

f

f

127

3

9

14

133–146

sempre dim.

6

147–152

largamente

Lento

14

155–168

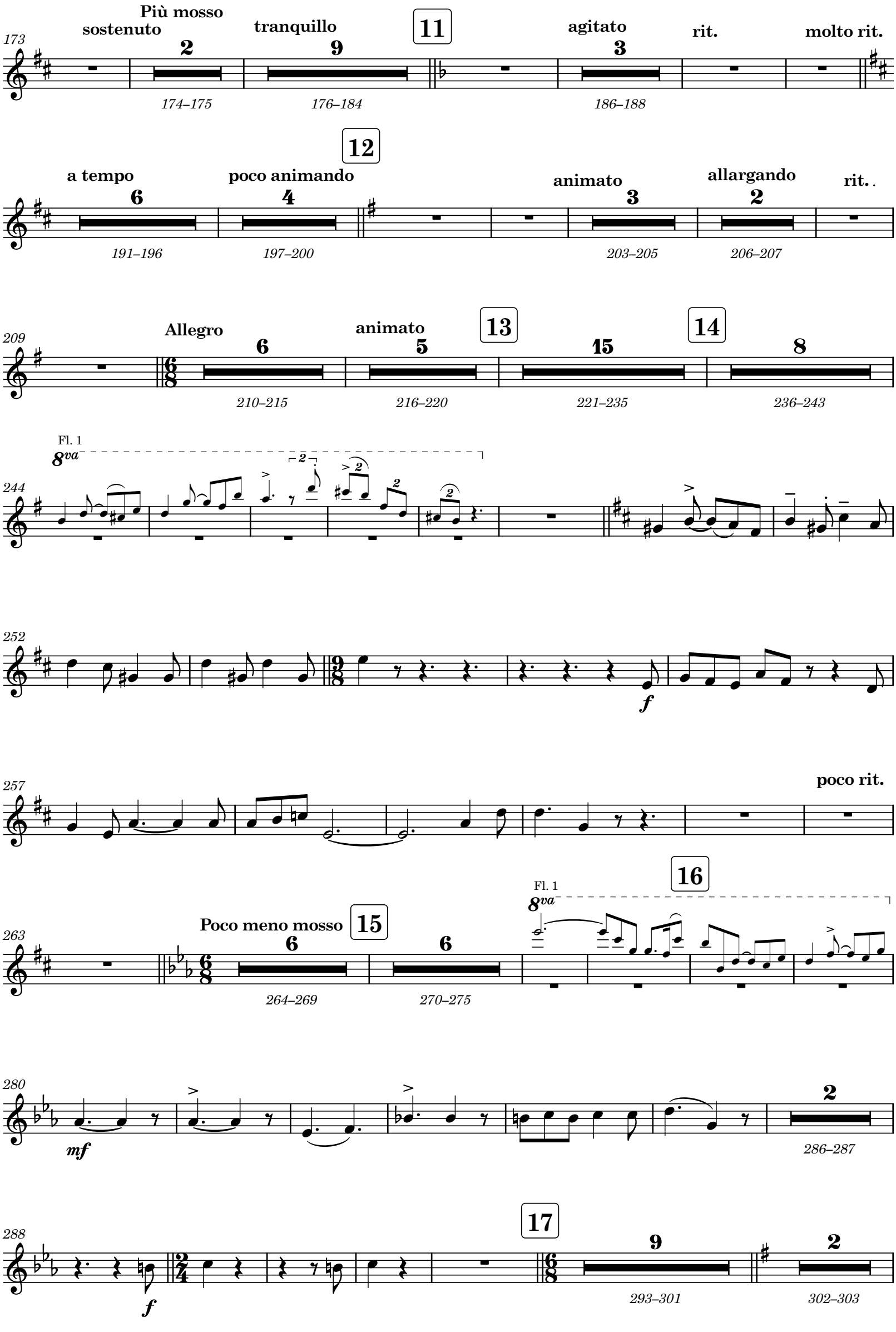
rit.

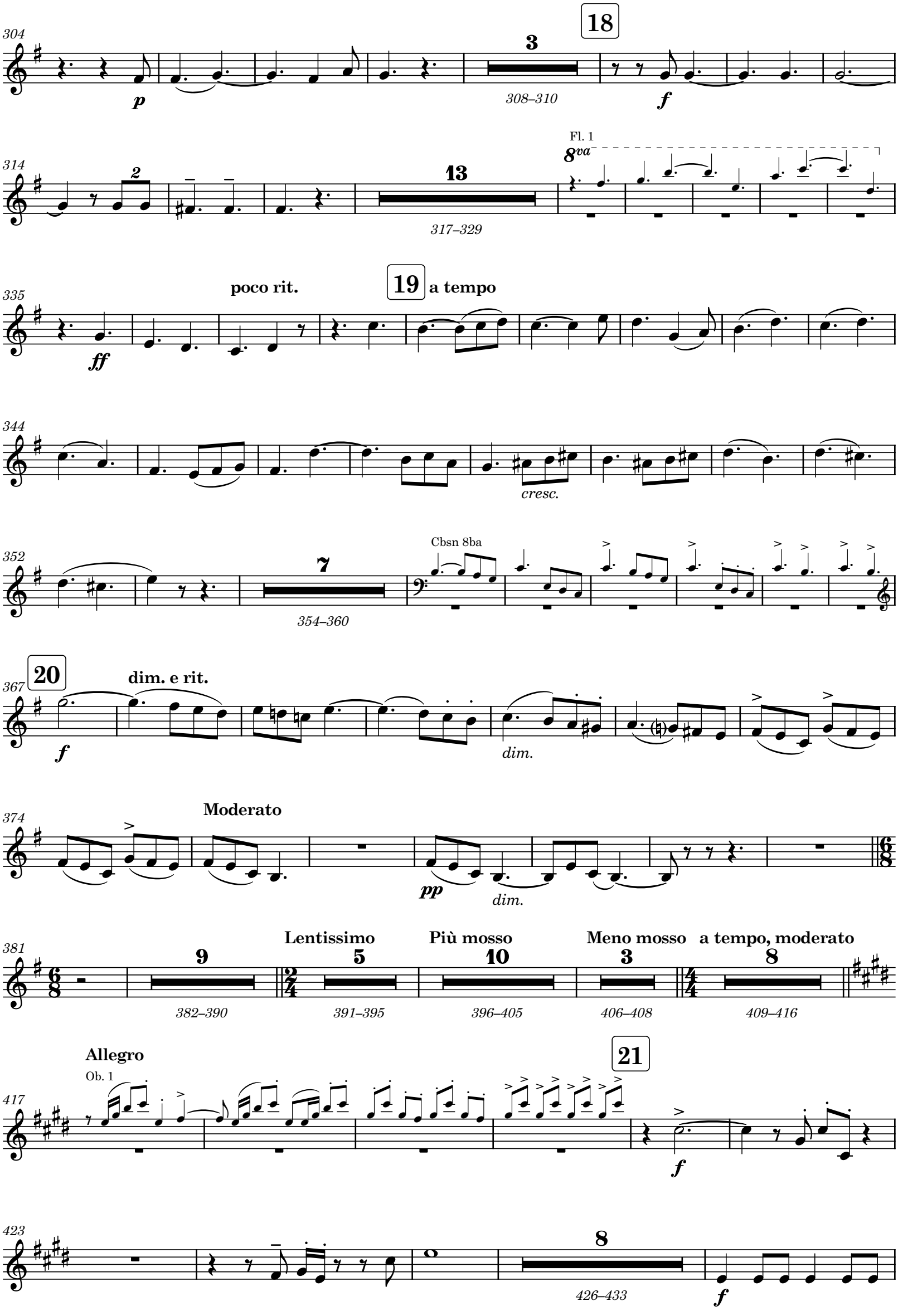
10

a tempo

2

171–172


173
Più mosso
sostenuto
2
174–175
tranquillo
9
176–184
11
agitato
3
186–188
rit.
molto rit.
12
a tempo
6
191–196
poco animando
4
197–200
animato
3
203–205
allargando
2
206–207
rit.
209
Allegro
6
210–215
animato
5
216–220
13
15
221–235
14
8
236–243
Fl. 1
8va
244
252
f
257
poco rit.
263
Poco meno mosso
15
6
264–269
6
270–275
16
Fl. 1
8va
280
mf
2
286–287
288
f
17
9
293–301
2
302–303


304
18
3
p
308–310
f
314
2
13
Fl. 1
8va
317–329
335
poco rit.
19
a tempo
ff
344
cresc.
352
7
Cbsn 8ba
354–360
367
20
dim. e rit.
f
dim.
374
Moderato
pp
dim.
381
9
Lentissimo
5
Più mosso
10
Meno mosso
3
a tempo, moderato
8
382–390
391–395
396–405
406–408
409–416
417
Allegro
Ob. 1
21
f
423
8
426–433
f

435

22

440

446

23

animando

f

452

allargando

mf cresc.

ff

458

f

ff

464

24 Con fuoco

6

469–474

475

ff

25

480

2

482–483

Lento

Meno mosso

espress.

p

488

rit.

dim.

pp

Lento

8

492–499

Slower

6

500–505

rit.

Lento teneramente

9

507–515

26

4

516–519

Fl. 1
8va
2
520–521
Ob. 1
p
3
3
rit.
pp
27
molto rit.
3
527–529
Lento
8
531–538
28
animato
5
539–543
Hn 1
547
poco agitato
Hn 3
pp
poco cresc.
29
a tempo, tranquillo
Colla voce
3
553–555
rit.
molto rit.
7
558–564
rit.
Lento maestoso
4
566–569
Ob. 1
30
571
3
3
3
3
Ob. 2
mf
f
31
allargando
577
ff
3
580–582
Tranquillo
9
583–591
poco rit.
32
a tempo
15
593–607
33
9
608–616
34
2
617–618
allargando
Fl. 1
8va
623
mf
2
626–627
rit.
a tempo
6
629–634
Lento
12
635–646
35
dim. e rit.
a tempo
647
7
648–654
allargando
rit.
a tempo
36
2
660–661
poco agitato
4
663–666
37
4
667–670
4
671–674
a tempo
5
675–679

animando
9
680–688
2
689–690
animando
4
691–694
38
8
695–702
Fl. 1
8va
704
(8)
Più mosso, allegro feroce
f
712
39
6
715–720
f
725
40
7
730–736
ff
739
Vivacissimo
9
746–754
allargando
4
755–758
a tempo
ff
ff
769
2
41
11
777–787
788
Allargando
a tempo
f
796
rit.
ff
[Silent]
Lento
12
805–816
Puì mosso
8
817–824
animando
4
825–828
42
agitato
4
829–832
animando
6
833–838

Allegro

Allegro

Tpt 1

43

8

839–846

f

854

f

861

animato

rit. .

Moderato

4/4

868

ff

sempre cresc.

2

873–874

875

ff

rit.

a tempo

animato

f

882

44

allargando

8

885–892

agitato

4

894–897

animando

7

898–904

905

45

Allegro

poco allargando

poco rit.

2

907–908

rit.

Agitato dolente

7

910–916

poco animando

3

917–919

molto rit.

2

9/8

Lento

6

922–927

Più lento

Moderato

3

930–932

Moderato con anima

46

16

933–948

3

949–951

952

rit.

a tempo

largamente

9

954–962

rit.

2

964–965

a tempo

allargando

2

967–968

47

a tempo

6

969–974

rit

a tempo - tranquillo

11

977–987

poco rit.

48

a tempo - tranquillo

12

990–1001

49
11
1002–1012
poco animando
Bsn 1 >
3
1013–1015
50
mf cresc.
1021
2
1022–1023
1031
mf
Solenne
mf cresc.
1038
allargando
rit.
51 Tempo giusto
5
1042–1046
Fl. 1
8va
rit.
6
1047–1052
allargando
f
52
1060
meno mosso
4
1062–1065
3
1066–1068
Allegro
2
1069–1070
poco agitato
3
1071–1073
4
1074–1077
meno mosso
Ob. 1
Solo
espress.
1078
poco animando
1086
rit.
Lento
7
1087–1093
53 più mosso
2
1094–1095
mf
Allegro agitato
4
1097–1100
54
a tempo
agitato accelerando
3
1101–1103
Più lento (colla voce)
4
1105–1108
rit.
Andante
7
1110–1116
1117
rit.
55
a tempo - tranquillo
6
1118–1123
5
1124–1128
allargando.....
2
1129–1130
animando
3
1131–1133

56 57 58

1134 2 animando 4 allargando 3 a tempo 11 Moderato tranquillo 10

1135–1136 1137–1140 1141–1143 1144–1154 1155–1164

1165 poco rit. a tempo dolce

Hn 3

59

1173 allargando Poco meno mosso

f

1180 Tranquillo 3 8

f

1185–1187 1188–1195

1196 poco rit. Allegro - animando cresc. sempre

S. 1

Seek - ing to make it of worth to each

p cresc.

60

1202

f

1209 allaargando a tempo

f *ff*

61

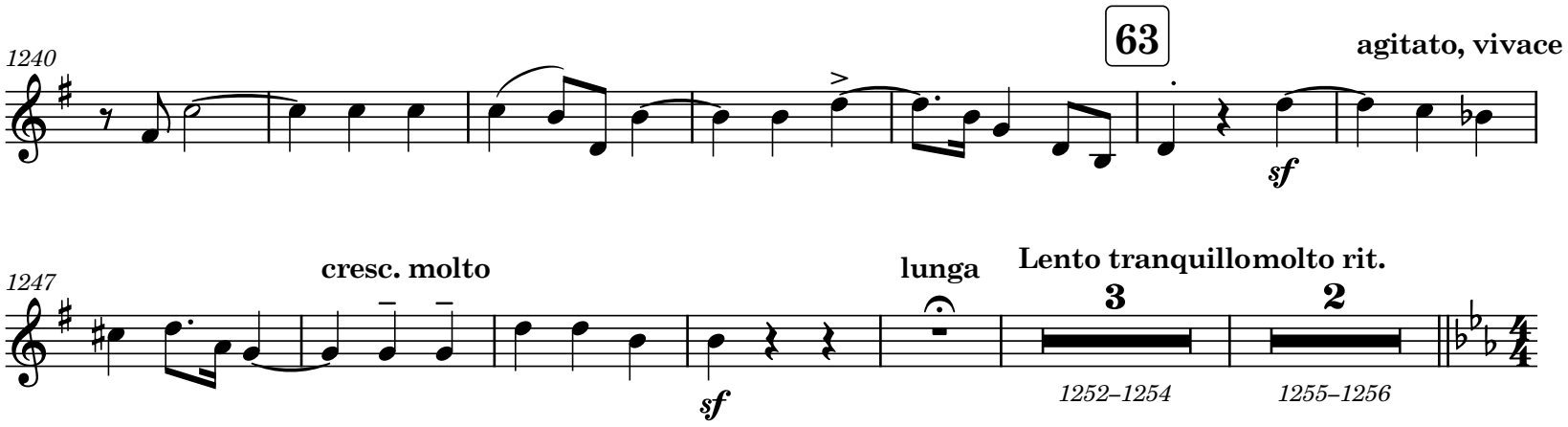
1216

1223

mf *cresc.*

62

1232


1240
63
agitato, vivace
sf
1247
cresc. molto
sf
lunga
Lento tranquillomolto rit.
3
2
1252–1254
1255–1256

64

3

Cl. 1

1257–1259

1266

poco rit. a tempo

65

p mf mf

1274

rit. 66 poco animando

2

1278–1279

p p

1282

poco rit. Poco animando, espressivo

mf cresc. f

67

1289

animando

68 69

1296

f

70

1304

1311

f

71

1317

cresc.

1323

animato

animando

f

f

1330

sempre cresc. ed animando

72

cresc.

1336

3 3 3

1342–1343

2

73

3

f

1349

1355

rit.

3

1361

6

1362–1367

mf

dim. *p*

1373

poco rit.

dim.

p

1380

rit.

a tempo

rit.

mf

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