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

DOUBLE BASS

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.

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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

Double Bass

The Vision of Life

C. Hubert H. Parry

Moderato

p *cresc.* *mf* *f*

7

p 2 *8–9* *p* *pp* 7 *12–18* *p*

20

dim. *f* 1 *p* pizz. *cresc.*

26

arco

cresc. *cresc.*

31

marcato 2 *cresc.*

35

40

3

45

rit.

p *sf* *p* 2 *51–52*

53 **sostenuto** **4**

60

66 **5**

71 **6** **Lento** pizz.

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

84

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

93

98 *cresc. molto* pizz.

103 arco **Allegro moderato**

107

111

115

8

119

3

122–124

126

9

2

132–133

134

142

sempre dim.

149

largamente

pizz.

155

Lento

3

160–162

163 arco p 3 pizz. p

169 rit. 10 a tempo sostenuto Più mosso tranquillo arco pp

178 p

185 11 agitato rit. molto rit. a tempo 6

191–196

poco animando 2

197–198

Vln I 8va

12 animato tutti

203 allargando sf rit...

209 Allegro mf cresc. 2 2 animato f

214–215 216–217

220 13

228 14 f

237

246

sf

cresc. molto

254

cresc.

259

poco rit.

263

Poco meno mosso

268

15

276

mf

16

282

289

mf

17

298

305

cresc. molto

V.S.

311 **18**

f

319

2

320–321

ff

329

poco rit.

338 **19** **a tempo**

f cresc.

dim.

mf *p*

346

cresc.

f

355

362 **20**

dim. e rit.

7

Moderato

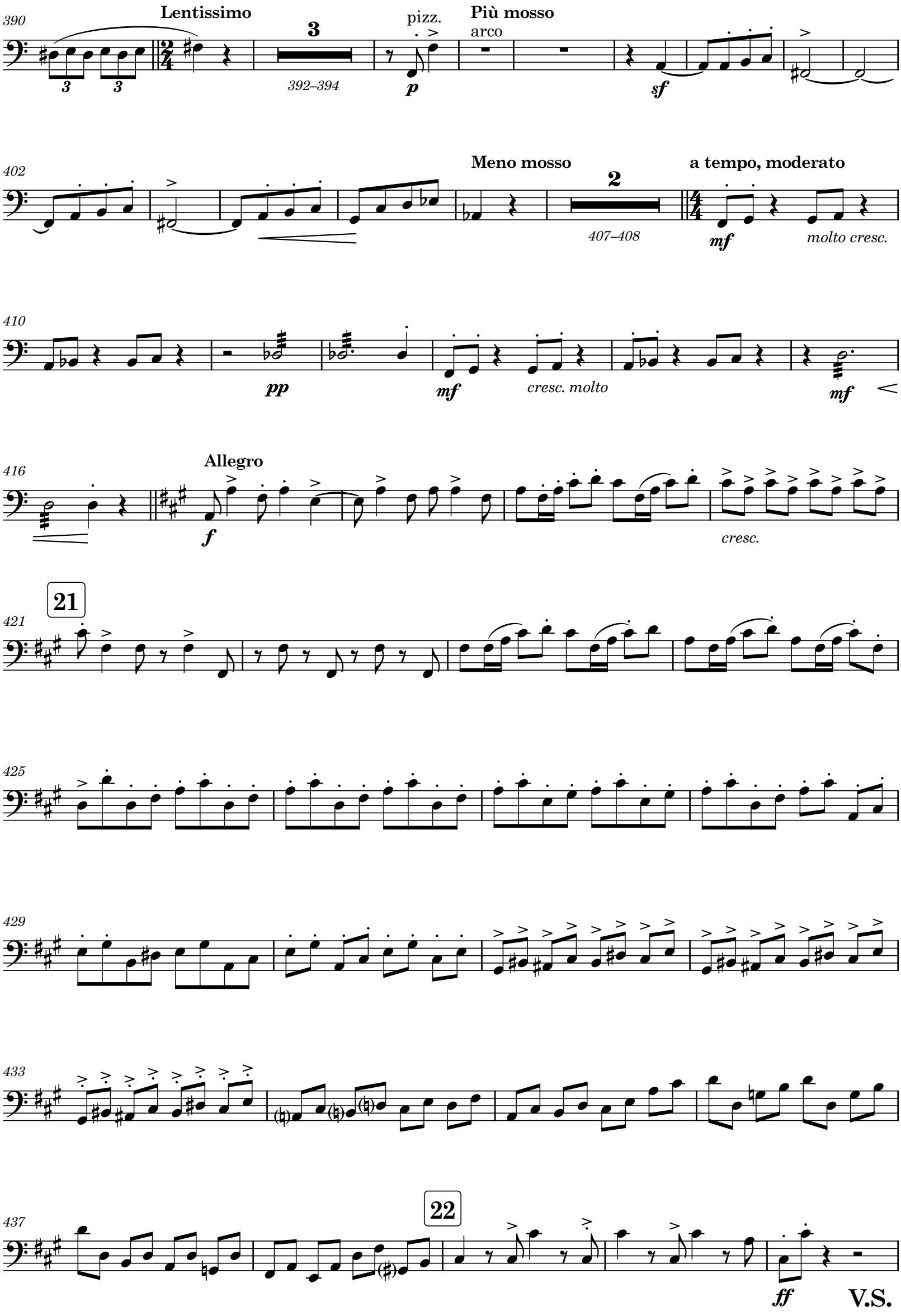
368–374

Vc. 8va

376

pp

381


390
Lentissimo
3
392–394
pizz.
p
Più mosso
arco
sf
402
Meno mosso
2
407–408
a tempo, moderato
mf
molto cresc.
410
pp
mf
cresc. molto
mf
416
Allegro
f
cresc.
21
421
425
429
433
437
22
ff
V.S.

442

447 **23**

animando

452

allargando

mf *cresc.*

456

461

466 **24** **Con fuoco**

4

469–472

475 **25**

sf ***f***

482

Lento **Meno mosso** **rit.**

sf

490

Lento

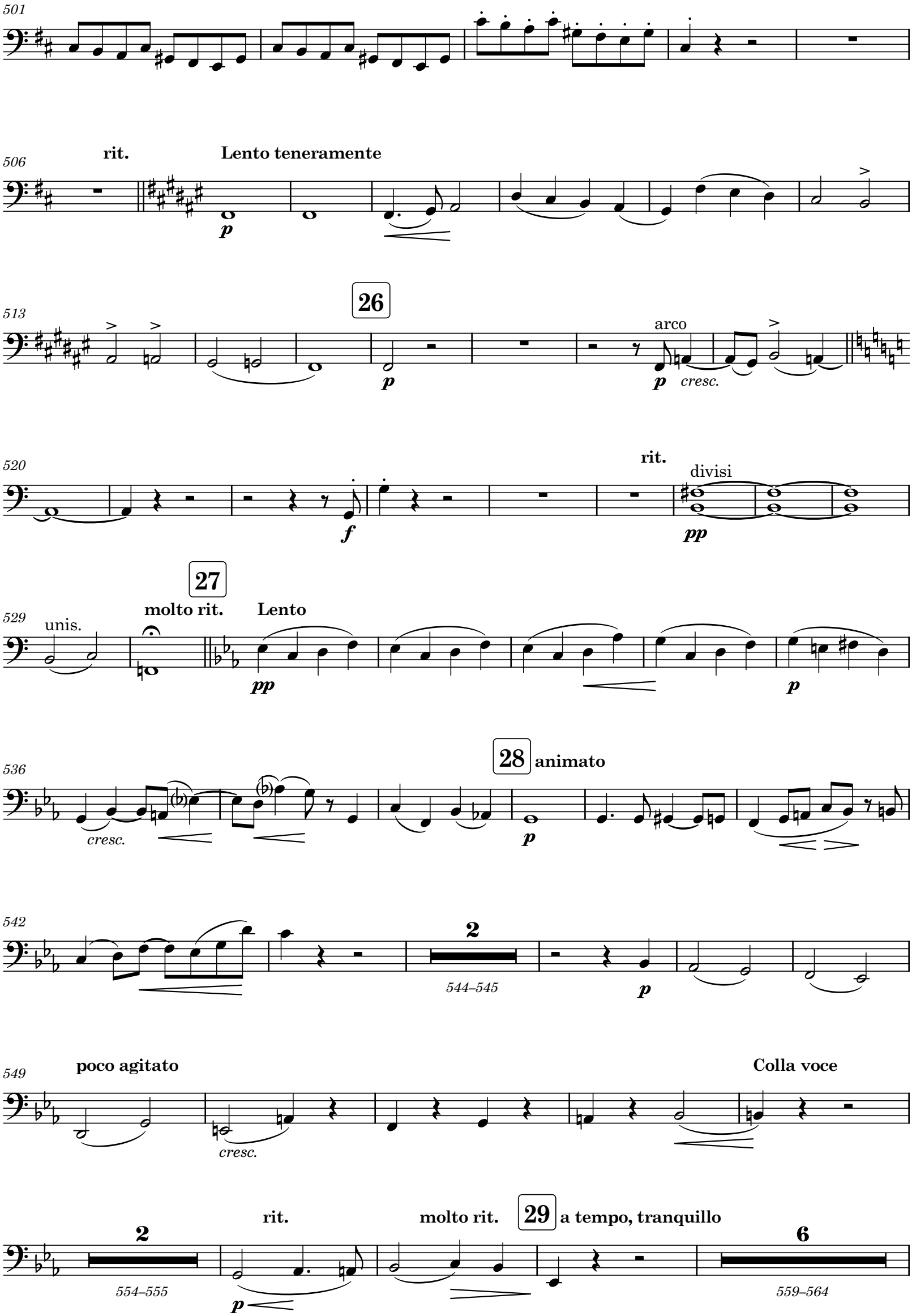
pizz.

mf *cresc.*

496

Slower

f ***f***


501
506
rit.
Lento teneramente
p
513
26
p
arco
p
cresc.
520
f
rit.
divisi
pp
27
529
unis.
molto rit.
Lento
pp
p
536
cresc.
28
animato
p
542
2
544–545
p
549
poco agitato
cresc.
Colla voce
2
554–555
rit.
p
molto rit.
29
a tempo, tranquillo
6
559–564

565 rit. Lento maestoso

p *mf*

570 30

cresc. molto

574

578 31 allargando Tranquillo

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

585 32 poco rit. a tempo

594

pp

602 33

p

611 34 allargando

622 rit. a tempo

ff

633 35 Lento dim. e rit. a tempo

11

pp

636–646

Vc. 8va

650

tutti

Solo

allargando

658

rit.

a tempo

tutti

36

poco agitato

cresc.

664

cresc.

molto cresc.

669

37

dim.

a tempo

676

animando

dim.

cresc.

cresc.

688

animando

38

cresc. sempre

698

707

Più mosso, allegro feroce

712

V.S.

718

39

726

sf

sf

734

40

3

sf

739–741

744

Vivacissimo

752

allargando....

a tempo

760

768

776

41

784

Allargando **a tempo**

794

rit.

803
[Silent] Lento
12
805–816
Puì mosso
8
817–824
animando
4
825–828
42
agitato
Solo
Vc. 8va
831
animando
pizz.
arco
cresc.
839
Allegro
43
Allegro
846
857
animato
865
rit.
Moderato
872
sempre cresc.
5
873–877
rit.
a tempo
animato
884
44
allargando.....
agitato
dim.
894
animando
cresc. molto
poco allargando
Allegro
poco rit.
2
901–902
907–908

45

909 rit. Agitato dolente poco animando

p cresc. f cresc.

918 molto rit. Lento

p

926 Più lento Moderato

pp p

933 Moderato con anima

941

poco cresc.

46

949 rit. a tempo largamente

f

957

cresc.

962 rit. a tempo allargando

f

47 a tempo

968 rit a tempo - tranquillo

4 2

971–974 977–978

S. 1 8va

Heark - en O

980 poco rit.

broth - ers To the mu - sic of the

f

2

986–987

989

48 **a tempo - tranquillo**

997

p

1002

49

1011

poco animando

50

cresc.

cresc.

1023

1032

mf

cresc.

1038

allargando **rit.**

51 **Tempo giusto**

mf

f

1044

ff

cresc.

1053

rit. **allargando**

52 **meno mosso**

1062

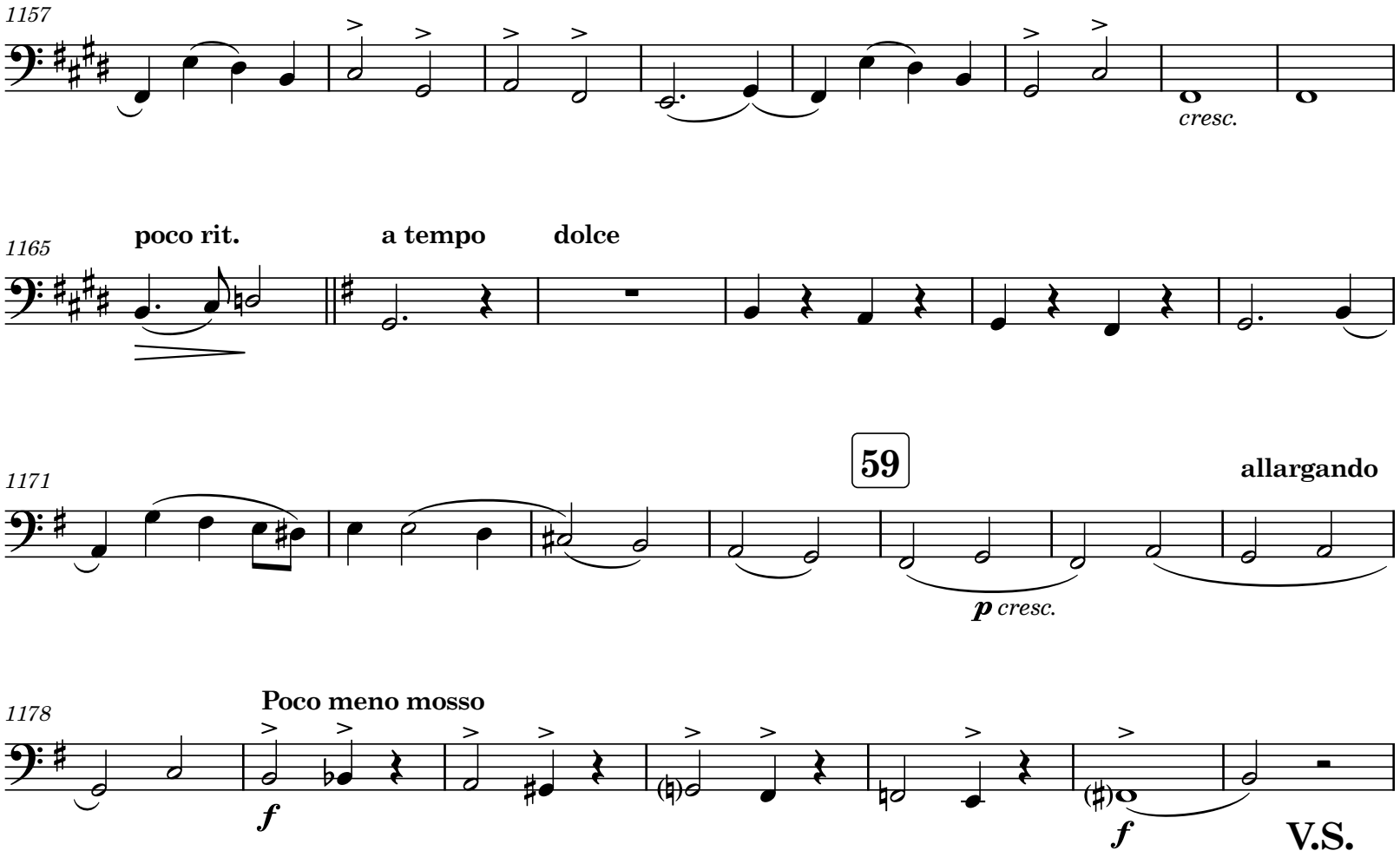
pizz.

Allegro

2

1069–1070

poco agitato
3
1071–1073
f
p
meno mosso
pp
poco animando
2
1081–1082
cresc.
cresc.
f
rit.
Lento
3
1087–1089
pp
1092
53
più mosso
sf
sff
Allegro agitato
4
1097–1100
agitato accelerando
2
1101–1102
f
1104
Più lento (colla voce)
54
a tempo
p
pp
rit.
Andante
4
1110–1113
1114
rit.
55
a tempo - tranquillo
4
1119–1122
1124
f
allargando
animando
cresc.
1133
56
animando
1141
allargando
f
57
a tempo
cresc.
1148
dim.
sempre dim.
pp
58
Moderato tranquillo


1157
cresc.
1165
poco rit.
a tempo
dolce
1171
59
allargando
p cresc.
1178
Poco meno mosso
f
f
V.S.

1185 pizz. **Tranquillo**

1190

1193

1196 **poco rit.** arco **Allegro - animando**

1201 **cresc. sempre** **60**

1208 **allaargando** **a tempo**

1215 **61**

1221

1228 **62**

1234

3

sf *sf* *sf* *sf*

1241

63

agitato, vivace

cresc. molto

sf *sf* *sf*

1250

lunga

Lento tranquillo

3

molto rit.

64

1252–1254

pp *p*

1261

1267

poco rit. **a tempo**

1273

65

2

cresc. *cresc.* *1278–1279*

1280 **rit.** **66** **poco animando** **poco rit.**

mf *cresc.*

1285 **Poco animando, espressivo** **67** **animando**

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

1294 **68**

69

1302 *marcato*

mf *cresc.*

1308 **70**

mf *mf*

1314

71 **animato**

1320

cresc.

1327 **animando** **sempre cresc. ed animando**

72

1334

73

1340

1346

1352

1358

rit.

mf

1365

cresc.

1372

poco rit.

1379

rit.

a tempo

rit.

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