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

HORN 1

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

Horn (F) 1

The Vision of Life

C. Hubert H. Parry

Moderato

6

1–6

stopped

pp

dim.

11

11–21

22

1

open

p

cresc.

cresc.

29

p *cresc.*

2

35

40

3

46

rit.

p ***mf*** *dim.* ***pp***

2

51–52

sostenuto

3

53–55

4

pp

4

59–62

63

5

sf *mf* *cresc.* *f* *ff* *f*

68

p *p*

3

74–76

a tempo

6 Lento

5

77–81

rit.

8va

Bsn 1

3

89

Lento

7

f *dim.*

2

93–94

p

96

sf

3

102

Allegro moderato

pp

2

105–106

110

3

3

3

116

8

f *f*

123

f

3

sempre dim.

130

9

ff

14

133–146

Tbn. 1

150

largamente Lento

pp

pp

159

7

160–166

rit.

10

a tempo

p

pp

172

sostenuto Più mosso

tranquillo

2

p

pp

179–180

181

11

agitato

3

rit.

molto rit.

a tempo

6

p

186–188

191–196

poco animando

3

12

animato

197–199

Hn 2

mf

206

allargando

rit....

Allegro

mf

cresc.

212

animato

4

217–220

13

221

f

229

14

236

mf cresc.

243

f

p

cresc.

251

f

257

cresc.

poco rit.

263

Poco meno mosso

269

15

276

16

sf *sf* *mf*

284

291

17

299

307

18

cresc.

315

324

333

poco rit.

19 a tempo

f

342

351

360

20

dim. e rit.

7

368–374

Moderato

Bsn 1

375–380

Lentissimo

392–394

Più mosso

397–398

mf

Meno mosso

407–408

a tempo, moderato

mf cresc.

p

mf cresc.

Allegro

21

ff

22

sf

23

sf

448
animando
sf sf sf sf f
454
allargando
460
sf sf sf
24
466
Con fuoco
sf
471
25
477
Lento
2
482–483
485
Meno mosso rit.
Lento
p
494
Tpt 1
Slower
3
502–504
505
rit. Lento teneramente
p pp pp
511
26
cresc.
2
516–517

518

rit.

sf > p

mf < f

27

molto rit. Lento

4

526–529

pp

pp

537

28 animato

5

539–543

mf

2

547–548

poco agitato

2

549–550

mf

Colla voce

f

p

rit. molto rit.

29 a tempo, tranquillo

7

558–564

rit.

Lento maestoso

p

570

30

f

576

31 allargando

ff

sf

sf <

f

sf

p

sf

p

pp

582

32

Tranquillo

poco rit. a tempo

9

583–591

pp

597

3

598–600

p

607

33

mf

616 **34** **allargando**

cresc. *f*

625 **rit.** **a tempo**

cresc. *dim.* **2** *633–634*

Lento **4**

635–638

Cl. 1

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

pp ***pp***

654 **allargando** **rit.** **a tempo** **36**

p

662 **poco agitato**

pp *cresc.* ***mf*** ***mf*** *cresc.*

668 **37** **2**

673–674

a tempo
5
675–679
animando
Tbn. 1
f
cresc.
686
cresc.
mf
animando
38
695
marcato
sf
703
Più mosso, allegro feroce
711
sf
719
sf
sf
39
728
6
731–736
40
ff
741
Vivacissimo
8
747–754
allargando
4
755–758
759
a tempo
f
ff
2
771
41
f

2
781–782
Allargando a tempo
791
800
rit.
sf
[Silent]
Lento
12
805–816
Puì mosso
8
817–824
animando
4
825–828
42
agitato
B. Cl. 8ba
animando
836
Allegro
f
845
43
Allegro
853
860
animato
rit.
V.S.

867 **Moderato** **sempre cresc.**

ff *mf*

874 **rit.** **a tempo animato**

sf

44

884 **allargando** **agitato**

8

885–892

f *mf*

animando

2

898–899

sf

poco allargando

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

sf *p*

912 **poco animando**

918 **molto rit.** **Lento** **Più lento**

6

922–927

929 **Moderato** **Moderato con anima**

p

937

pp *cresc.*

46

946 **rit.** **a tempo**

954 **largamente** **rit.** **a tempo**

6

957–962

mf

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

976 **a tempo - tranquillo**

p

3

984–986

987 **poco rit.** **48** **a tempo - tranquillo**

mf ***p***

6

990–995

pp

1000 **49**

mf *cresc.*

2

1006–1007

1009 **poco animando**

p

3

1013–1015

f

1017 **50**

2

1022–1023

1024

f

1034

p

Solenne

mf

cresc.

allargando

1040

rit.

cresc.

51 **Tempo giusto**

cresc.

1046

f

mf

cresc.

1053

rit.

ff

sf

allargando

52

1060

meno mosso

dim.

p

1068

Allegro

poco agitato

2

1071–1072

mf

p

2

1076–1077

meno mosso

5

1078–1082

poco animando

mf

rit.

Lento

53 **più mosso**

1089

2

1090–1091

pp

f

Allegro agitato

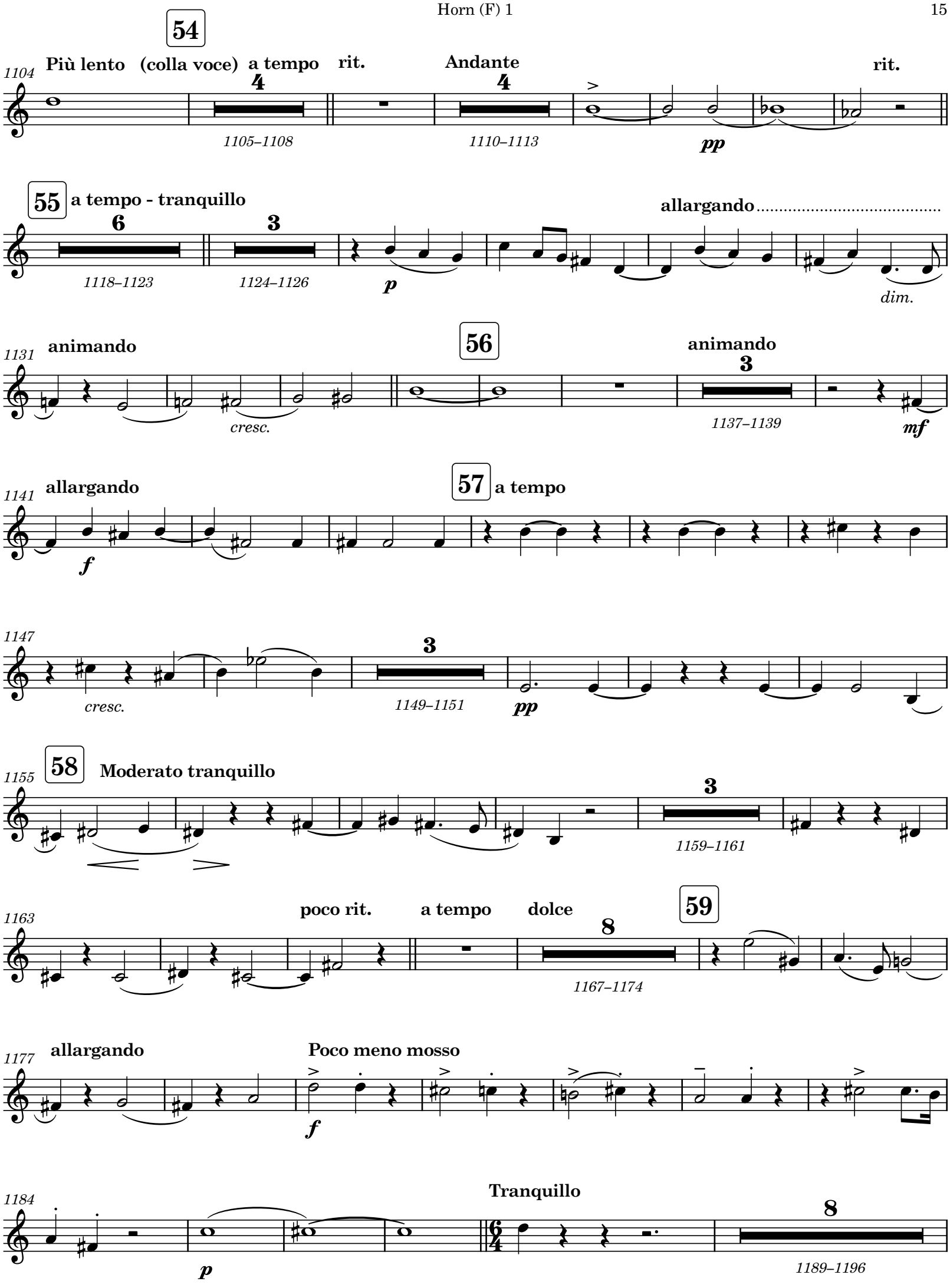
p

1098

agitato accelerando

cresc.

pp


54
1104
Più lento
(colla voce)
a tempo
rit.
Andante
rit.
4
4
1105–1108
1110–1113
pp
55
a tempo - tranquillo
allargando
6
3
1118–1123
1124–1126
p
dim.
1131
animando
56
animando
3
cresc.
1137–1139
mf
1141
allargando
57
a tempo
f
1147
3
cresc.
1149–1151
pp
1155
58
Moderato tranquillo
3
1159–1161
1163
poco rit.
a tempo
dolce
59
8
1167–1174
1177
allargando
Poco meno mosso
f
1184
Tranquillo
8
p
1189–1196

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

p *cresc.* *cresc.*

1205 **60** **allaargando**

f ***f***

1213 **a tempo** **61**

f ***sf***

1221

1229 **62** ***sf***

1237 ***sf*** ***sf***

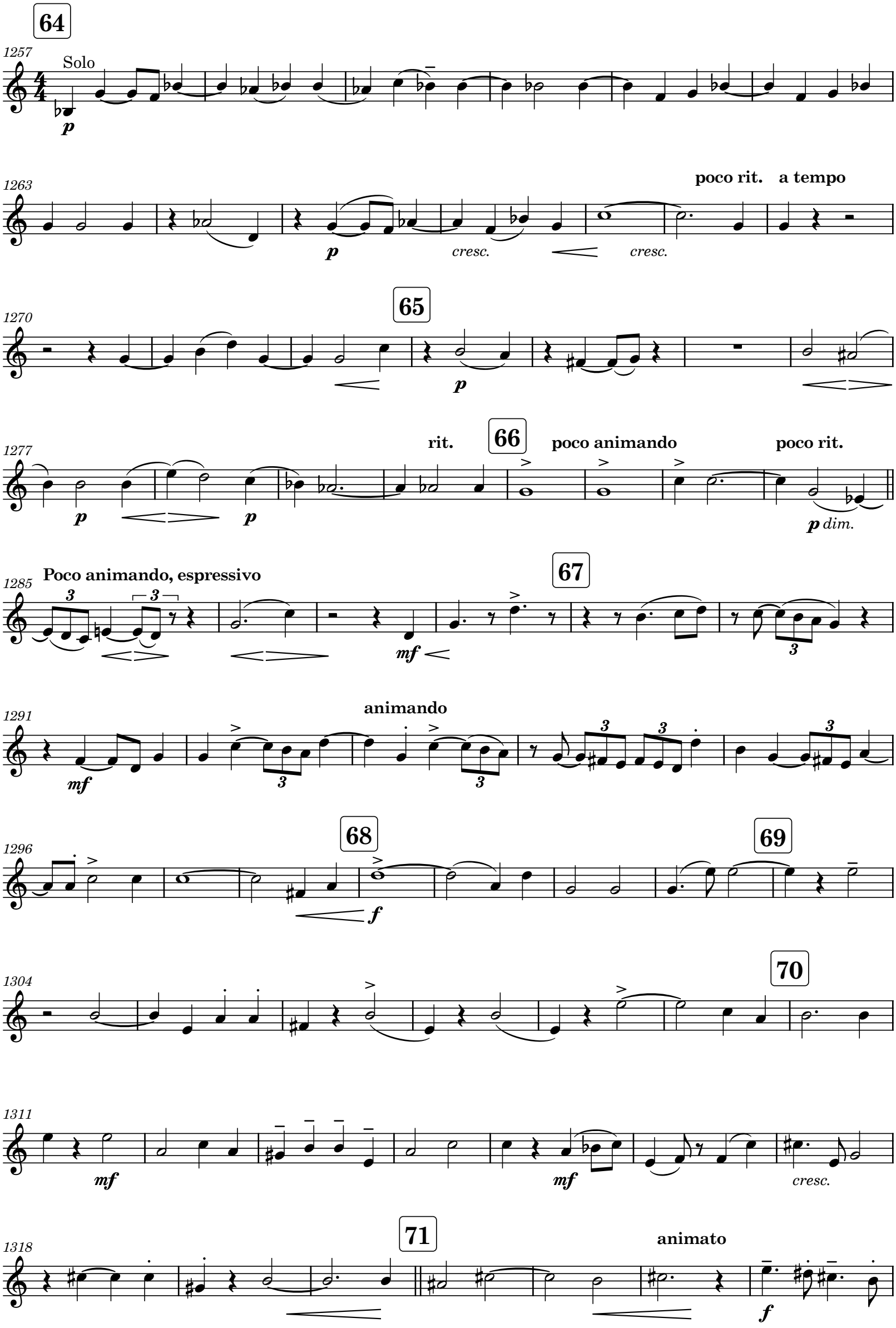
1243 **63** **agitato, vivace**

sf *cresc.*

1248 **cresc. molto** **lunga** **Lento tranquillo** **molto rit.**

3 **2**

1252–1254 *1255–1256*


64
1257
Solo
p
1263
poco rit.
a tempo
p
cresc.
cresc.
1270
65
p
1277
rit.
66
poco animando
poco rit.
p
p
p dim.
1285
Poco animando, espressivo
67
mf
1291
animando
mf
1296
68
69
f
1304
70
1311
mf
mf
cresc.
1318
71
animato
f

1325

animando

sempre cresc. ed animando

1332

72

1339

73

f

1346

1352

sempre cresc.

1359

rit.

mf

1366

cresc.

1374

poco rit.

f

p

1380

rit.

a tempo

rit.

mf cresc.

p

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