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 2

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) 2

The Vision of Life

C. Hubert H. Parry

Moderato

6

1–6

stopped

pp

dim.

11

11–21

1

22

open

open

p

cresc.

cresc.

29

p *cresc.*

2

34

3

39

3

45

rit.

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

sostenuto

4

50

2

51–52

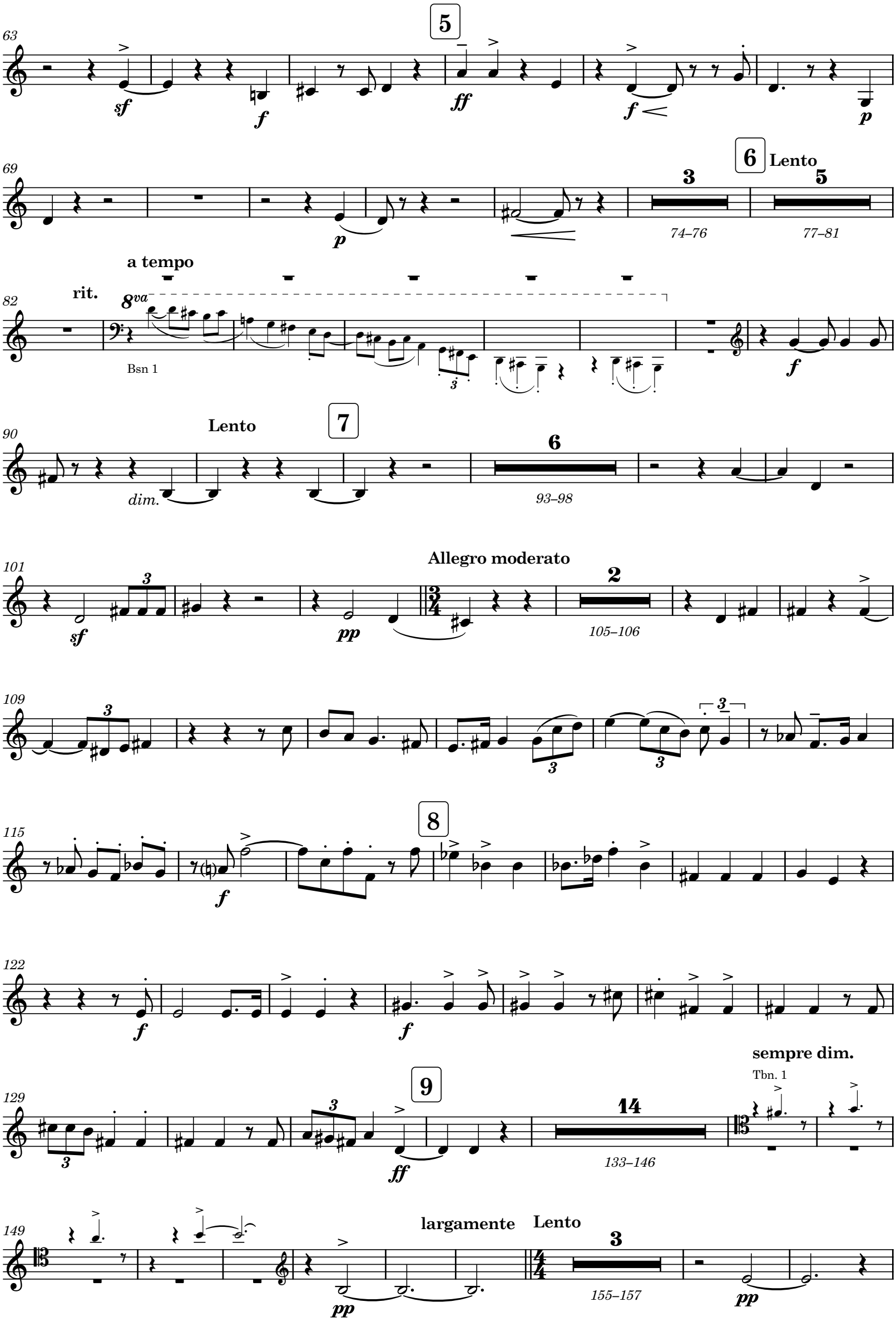
3

53–55

pp

4

59–62


5
6
Lento
3
5
74–76
77–81
a tempo
rit.
8va
Bsn 1
Lento
7
6
dim.
93–98
Allegro moderato
2
105–106
8
9
14
133–146
sempre dim.
Tbn. 1
largamente
Lento
3
155–157

7

160–166

rit.

10

a tempo

p

pp

173

sostenuto Più mosso

tranquillo

6

179–184

p

pp

11

agitato

3

186–188

rit.

molto rit.

a tempo

6

191–196

poco animando

3

197–199

p

12

201

animato

allargando

mf

208

rit. .

Allegro

6

210–215

animato

Tpt 1

13

222

f

7

229–235

14

3

236–238

mf

245

f

p

cresc.

253

f

cresc.

259

poco rit.

Poco meno mosso

265

15

272

16

sf

279

sf

mf

287

17

295

p

303

2

2

2

cresc.

18

311

320

329

poco rit.

19 **a tempo**

338

f

347

3

356–358

20

Bsn 1

367

dim. e rit.

7

368–374

Moderato

6

375–380

387

Lentissimo

3

392–394

Più mosso

2

397–398

mf

Meno mosso

2

407–408

409 **a tempo, moderato**

mf cresc. *p* *mf cresc.*

415 **Allegro**

420 **21**

424

ff

429

433

437 **22**

sf *sf* *sf* *sf*

443 **23**

sf *sf* *sf* *sf* *sf*

449 **animando**

sf *sf* *sf* *f*

454 **allargando**

460

sf *sf* *sf*

24

Con fuoco

466

sf

471

25

477

482–483

484

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

p

493

Tpt 1

Slower

rit. **Lento teneramente**

502–504

p *pp* *pp*

511

cresc.

26

516–517

sf > *p*

520

mf < *f*

rit.

526–529

27
molto rit. Lento
530
pp
pp
28 animato
538
8
539–546
Hn 3
poco agitato
mf
29
a tempo, tranquillo
Colla voce
rit.
molto rit.
rit.
552
2
6
f
554–555
558–563
Hn 3
Lento maestoso
566
30
p
572
f
ff
sf
sf <
31
allargando
578
f
sf
p
sf
p
pp
Tranquillo
9
583–591
32
poco rit. a tempo
592
3
pp
598–600
p
602
33
mf
610
34
cresc.
allargando
619
f
cresc.
rit.

629 **a tempo**

dim. ***p***

Lento

4

635–638

Cl. 1

35

642

dim. e rit. **a tempo**

pp ***pp***

651

allargando

658 **rit.** **a tempo** **36**

p **poco agitato**

pp *cresc.*

665

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

37

670

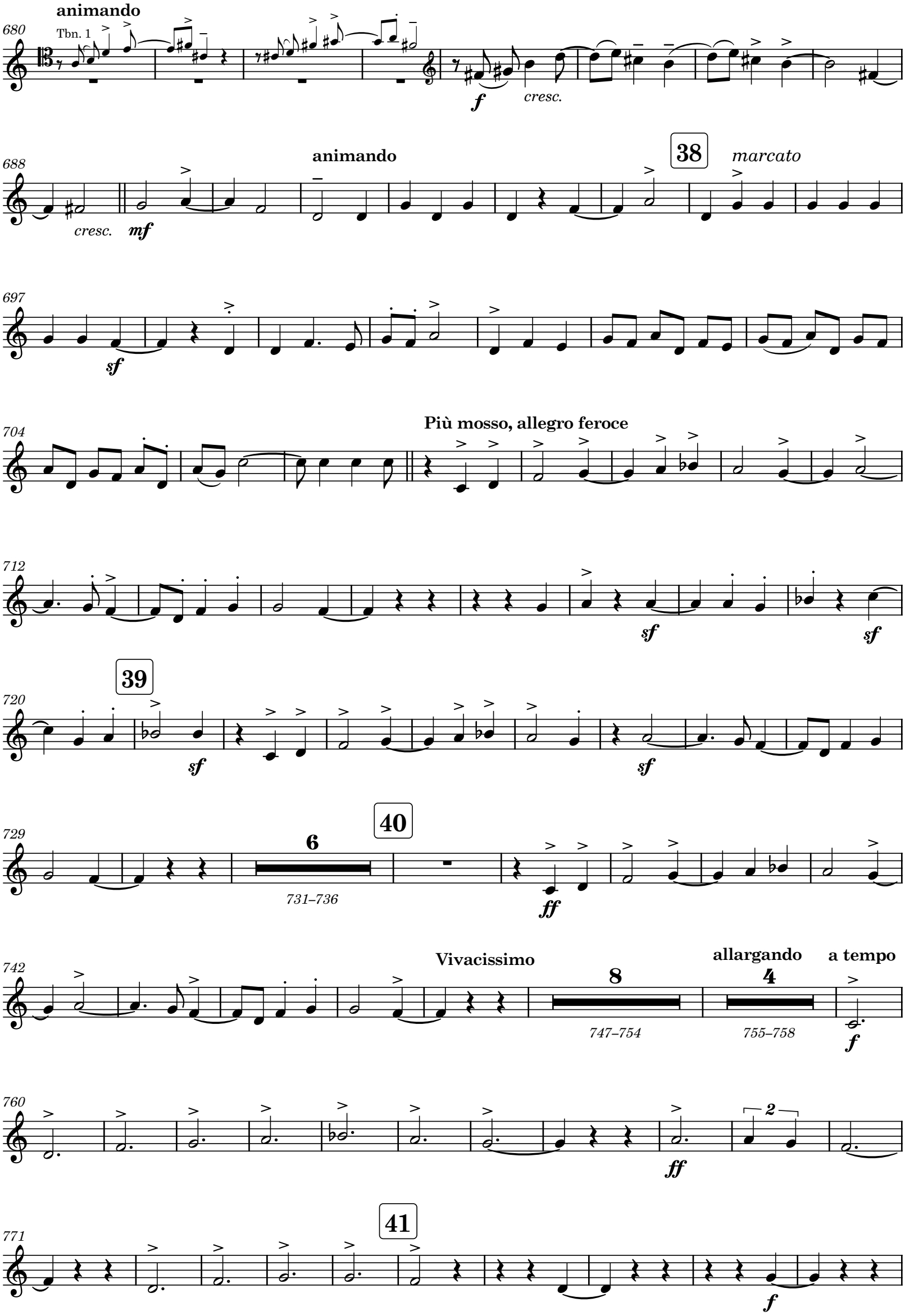
2

673–674

a tempo

5

675–679


animando
Tbn. 1
680
f
cresc.
688
cresc.
mf
animando
38
marcato
697
sf
704
Più mosso, allegro feroce
712
sf
sf
39
720
sf
sf
729
6
731–736
40
ff
742
Vivacissimo
8
747–754
allargando
4
755–758
a tempo
f
760
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

43

Allegro

844

852

860

animato

rit.

867

Moderato

ff

sempre cresc.

mf

874

rit.

a tempo animato

sf

44

884

allargando

8

885–892

agitato

f

mf

animando

2

898–899

sf

poco allargando

906

Allegro

poco rit.

rit.

45

Agitato dolente

p

912

poco animando

918

molto rit.

Lento

6

922–927

Più lento

929

Moderato

p

Moderato con anima

937

pp

cresc.

946

46

rit.

a tempo largamente

955

rit.

6

957–962

mf

a tempo

allargando

968

47

a tempo

rit

977 **a tempo - tranquillo** **poco rit.**

p 6 *982–987*

48 **a tempo - tranquillo**

4 *990–993* Hn 3 *pp* *mf cresc.*

49

1002 2 *1006–1007* *p*

1012 **poco animando** 3 *1013–1015* *f* **50**

2 *1022–1023* *f*

1032 *f* *p* *mf* **Solenne**

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

1043 *cresc.* *f*

1048 *mf* *cresc.* *ff*

1055 **rit.** *sf* **allargando** **52** **meno mosso**

1062 *dim.* *p* **Allegro**

1070 poco agitato 2 1071–1072 mf p pp

meno mosso 5 1078–1082 poco animando mf rit. Lento

1089 2 1090–1091 pp 53 più mosso f Allegro agitato 4 1097–1100

54 agitato accelerando 2 1101–1102 pp Più lento (colla voce) a tempo 4 1105–1108 rit. Andante 4 1110–1113

1115 pp rit. 55 a tempo - tranquillo 6 1118–1123 3 1124–1126 p

1129 allargando dim. cresc. 56 2 1135–1136

animando 3 1137–1139 mf allargando f 57 a tempo

1146 cresc. 6 1149–1154 58 Moderato tranquillo

1158

1165 poco rit. a tempo dolce 8 1167–1174 59 2 1175–1176 allargando Poco meno mosso f

1180

p

Tranquillo

1188

8

1189–1196

poco rit.

Allegro - animando

cresc. sempre

p

60

1202

cresc.

f

1209

allaargando

a tempo

f

61

1217

sf

3

62

1224

1232

sf sf sf

63

1239

agitato, vivace

sf

64

1247

cresc. molto

cresc.

lunga

Lento tranquillo

molto rit.

3

2

1252–1254

1255–1256

pp

1258

p

2

1264–1265

1266

poco rit. **a tempo**

mf *cresc.*

65

1273

p *p*

1280

rit. **66** **poco animando** **poco rit.** **Poco animando, espressivo**

p dim. *mf*

1288

67 **animando**

1294

68

f

1301

69

1308

70

mf

1315

71

mf *cresc.*

1322

animato **animando**

f

1329

sempre cresc. ed animando

72

1335

f

73

1342

1348

1355

rit.

sempre cresc.

mf

1362

cresc.

1368

1374

poco rit.

f

p

1380

rit.

a tempo

rit.

mf cresc.

p

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