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 3

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) 3

The Vision of Life

C. Hubert H. Parry

1

Moderato

22

1–22

Hn 1

mf

cresc.

28

p cresc.

2

33

3

38

3

43

3

48

rit.

p

mf dim. pp

2

51–52

sostenuto

3

53–55

4

pp

57

pp

5

60–64

f

ff

5

67

f

6 Lento

4

69–72

3

74–76

5

77–81

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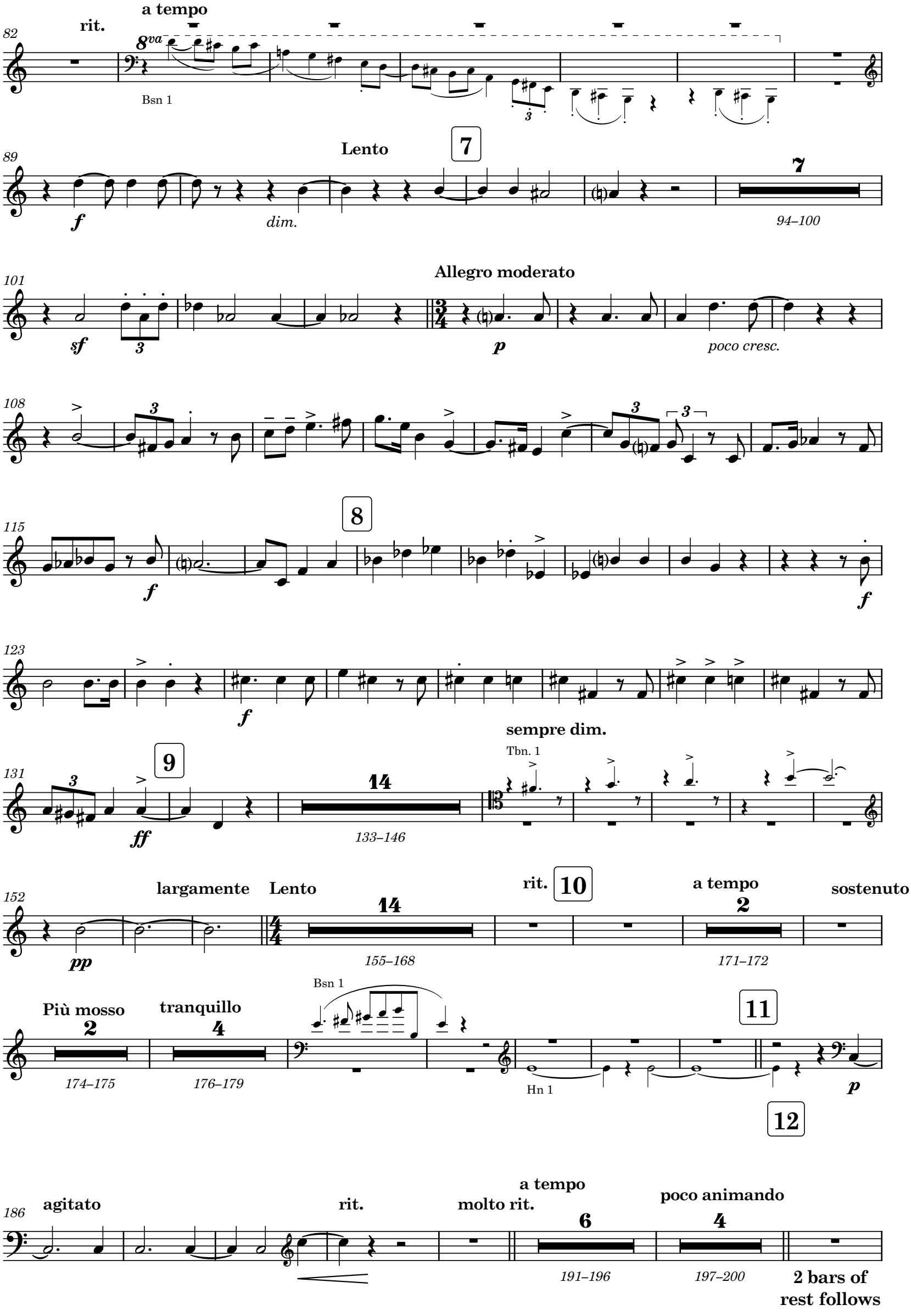

82
rit.
a tempo
8va
Bsn 1
89
Lento
7
f
dim.
7
94–100
101
Allegro moderato
sf
3
p
poco cresc.
108
3
3
3
115
8
f
f
123
f
131
9
3
ff
14
133–146
sempre dim.
Tbn. 1
152
largamente
Lento
14
pp
155–168
rit.
10
a tempo
2
171–172
sostenuto
Più mosso
2
174–175
tranquillo
4
176–179
Bsn 1
Hn 1
11
p
12
186
agitato
rit.
molto rit.
a tempo
6
191–196
poco animando
4
197–200
2 bars of
rest follows

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

Hn 1

mf

210 **Allegro** **animato**

217

13

5

222–226

228

235

14

mf cresc.

242

f

250

f

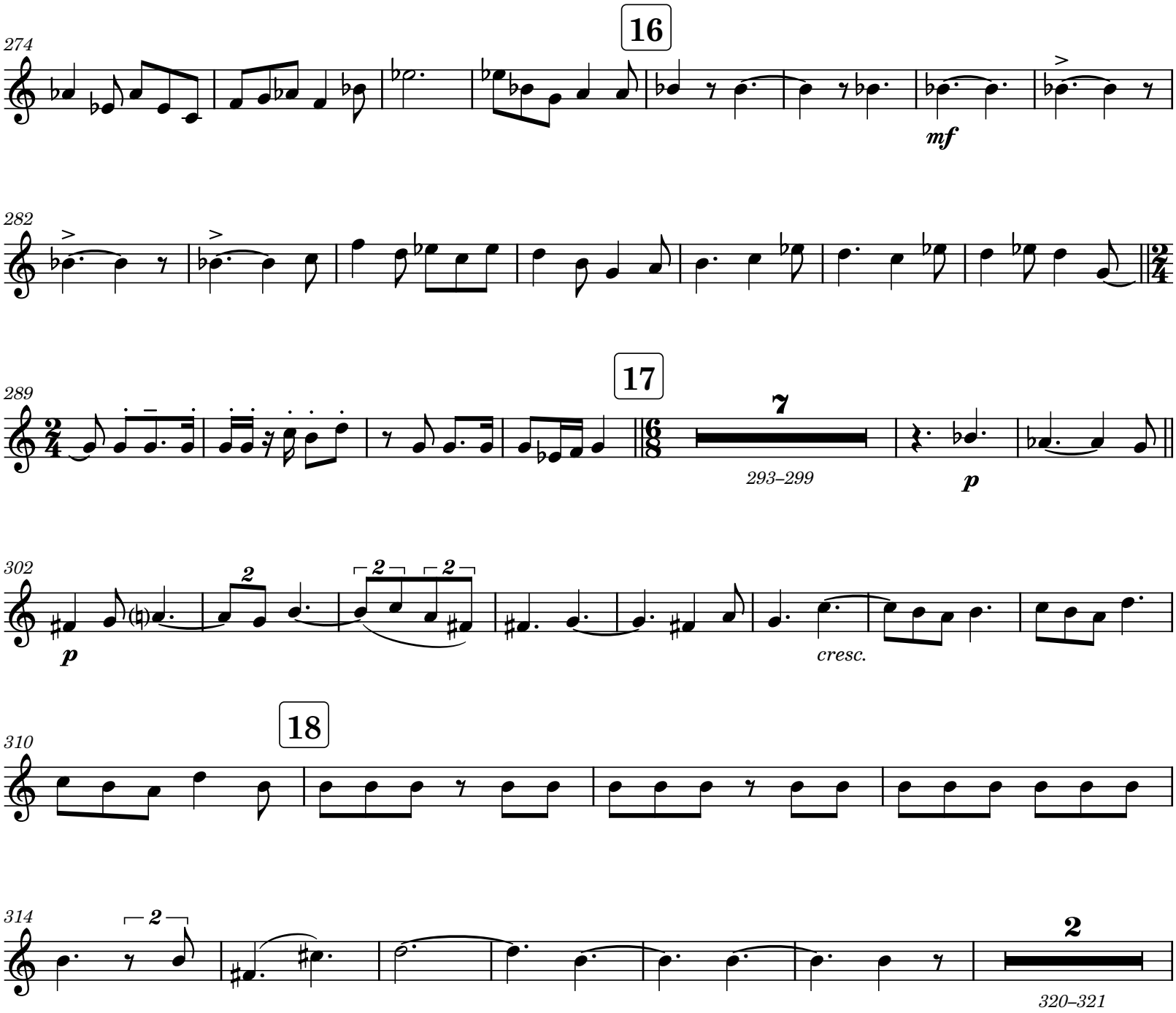
256

cresc.

261 **poco rit.** **Poco meno mosso**

267

15


274
16
mf
282
289
17
7
293–299
p
302
2
2
2
p
cresc.
310
18
314
2
2
320–321

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322

2

331

poco rit.

19

a tempo

340

349

358

20

367

dim. e rit.

7

368–374

Moderato

6

375–380

Bsn 1

387

Cl. 1

Lentissimo

Più mosso

2

397–398

mf

Meno mosso

2

407–408

409 **a tempo, moderato**

mf cresc. *p* *mf cresc.*

415 **Allegro**

420 **21**

425 *ff*

430

435 **22** *sf* *sf*

440 *sf* *sf* *sf* *sf* *sf*

446 **23** **animando** *sf* *sf* *sf* *sf* *sf* *sf*

452 **allargando** *f*

457 *sf* *sf* *sf*

463

24 **Con fuoco**

469

sf

474

25

480

2

482–483

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

3

489–491

26

B. Cl. 8ba

Lento

8

492–499

Slower

6

500–505

rit. **Lento teneramente**

7

507–513

Hn 1

517

2

520–521

rit.

sf > *p*

mf < *f*

27

molto rit. **Lento**

4

526–529

28 **animato**

8

531–538

5

539–543

Hn 1

547

poco agitato

pp

552

Colla voce

rit. **molto rit.**

f

6 bars of rest follows

29 **a tempo, tranquillo** **rit.** **Lento maestoso**

6

558–563

p

569

30

f

575

31 **allargando**

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

581

Tranquillo

p *pp*

5

587–591

32

poco rit. **a tempo**

592

pp *pp*

601

5

602–606

33

mf *mf*

34

3

613–615

cresc.

f

allargando

624

cresc.

rit. **a tempo**

dim.

35

632

Lento

2

633–634

12

635–646

dim. e rit. **a tempo**

7

648–654

allargando

657

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

2

660–661

poco agitato

4

663–666

Hn 1

669
37
mf
f
2
673–674
a tempo
5
675–679
animando
9
680–688
689
Hn 1
animando
38
sf
699
marcato
706
Più mosso, allegro feroce
714
sf
sf
39
sf
722
sf
731–736
40
6
ff
744
Vivacissimo
8
747–754
allargando
4
755–758
a tempo
f
763
ff
2
774
41
f
2
781–782

783
Allargando a tempo
792
3
798–800
rit.
sf
802
[Silent] Lento
12
805–816
Puì mosso
8
817–824
animando
4
825–828
42
agitato
B. Cl. 8ba
830
animando
839
Allegro
Hn 1
43
Allegro
848
856
863
animato
rit.
Moderato
ff
870
mf
sempre cresc.
rit.
880
a tempo animato
44
allargando
8
885–892
agitato
Hn 1

895
animando
2
f
901–902
ff
904
poco allargando Allegro
poco rit.
rit.
45
Agitato dolente
7
mf
sf
910–916
poco animando
3
917–919
molto rit.
2
920–921
Lento
4
922–925
B. Solo
Yields_ to the spi - rit of love___ and of truth,
928
Più lento
Moderato
Moderato con anima
16
Dim - ly the cer - tain - ties wake in the hearts____ of men.
p
933–948
46
3
949–951
rit.
a tempo
largamente
9
954–962
rit.
2
964–965
a tempo
47
allargando
2
967–968
a tempo
6
969–974
rit
a tempo - tranquillo
10
977–986
poco rit.
Hn 1
a tempo - tranquillo
990
48
Bsn 1
pp
p
999
49
9
1002–1010
mf
cresc.
mf cresc.
1013
poco animando
50
2
f
1019–1020

1021

mf

1032

Solenne

f

mf

cresc.

1039

allargando

rit...

51 **Tempo giusto**

cresc.

1044

f

mf

cresc.

1052

rit.

allargando

sf

1059

52

meno mosso

Allegro **poco agitato**

4 3 2 3

1062–1065 *1066–1068* *1069–1070* *1071–1073*

meno mosso **poco animando** **rit.** **Lento**

4 5 3 2

1074–1077 *1078–1082* *1083–1085* *1087–1088*

B. Tbn.

1092

53 **più mosso**

Allegro agitato agitato accelerando

pp

f

4 3

1097–1100 *1101–1103*

1104

54

Più lento (colla voce) a tempo

rit.

Andante

rit.

55 **a tempo - tranquillo**

4 7 6 5

1105–1108 *1110–1116* *1118–1123* *1124–1128*

56

allargando.... **animando**

Bsn 1

animando

2 3

1129–1130 *1131–1133*

1139
allargando 57 a tempo
3
mf cresc.
1141–1143
58 Moderato tranquillo
1148
2
1150–1151
pp
8
1155–1162
B. Tbn.
1163
poco rit.
a tempo
dolce
p
p
59
1170
2
allargando
poco cresc.
1172–1173
1178
Poco meno mosso
f
Tranquillo
1184
p
8
1189–1196

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

cresc.

1205 **60** **allaargando**

f

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

f *sf*

1221

3

1229 **62**

sf

1237

sf

1244 **63** **agitato, vivace** **cresc. molto** **lunga**

sf *sf*

1252 **Lento tranquillo** **molto rit.** **64**

pp

5

1258–1262

1264 **poco rit.** **a tempo**

2

p *1265–1266* *mf* *cresc.*

1270 **65**

2

1274–1275

1276

rit. **66** poco animando

p *p*

67

poco rit. Poco animando, espressivo

1284

3

1285–1287

mf

1293 animando

68

f *f*

1300

69

1307

70

mf

1314

mf *cresc.*

71

1321 animato animando

f

1328 sempre cresc. ed animando

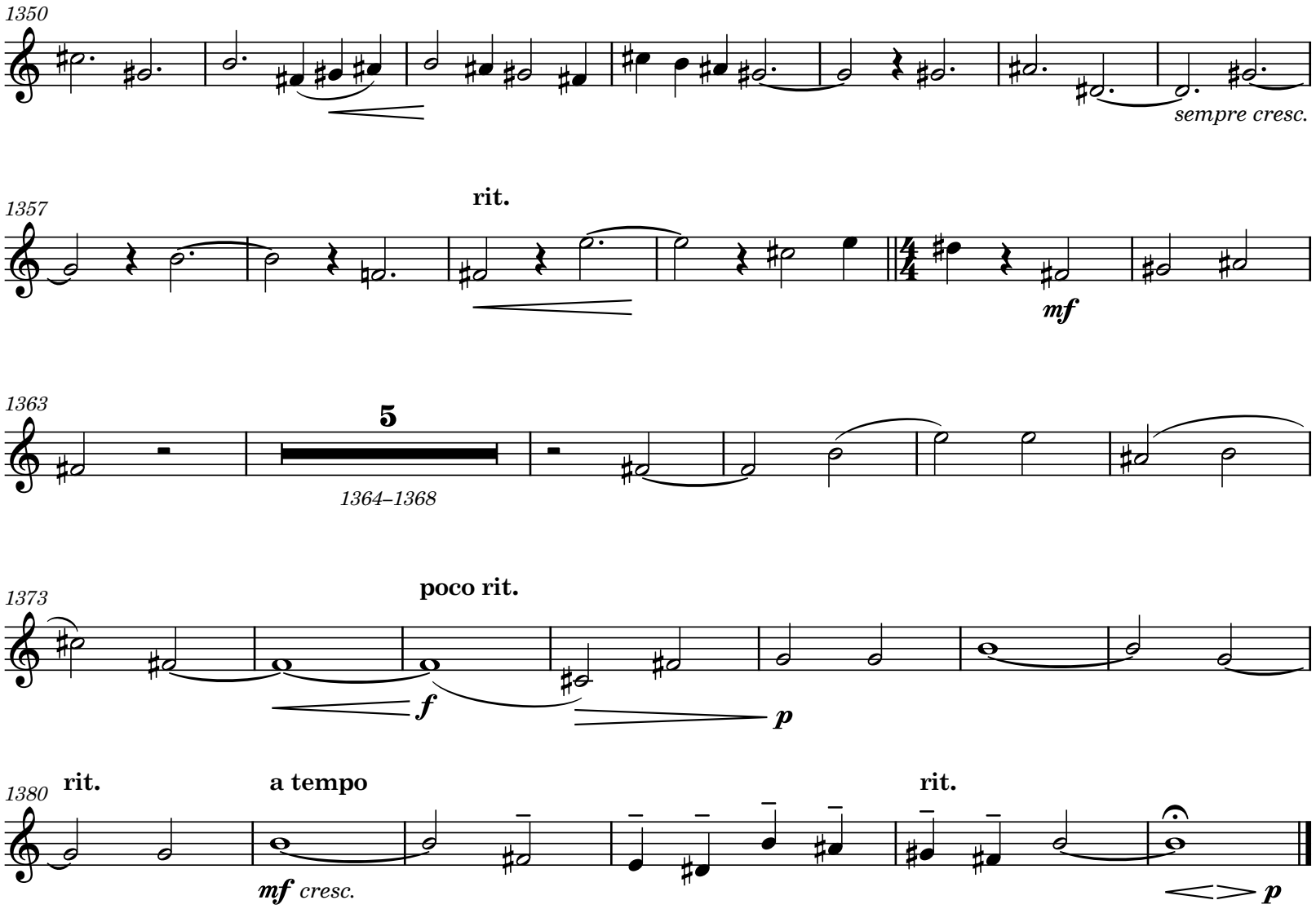
1334

72

f

1342

73


1350
sempre cresc.
1357
rit.
mf
1363
5
1364–1368
1373
poco rit.
f
p
1380
rit.
a tempo
rit.
mf cresc.
p

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Catalog Number
1.16/03