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

VIOLA

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

Viola

The Vision of Life

C. Hubert H. Parry

Moderato

9

1–9

con sord.

cresc.

mf

14

f

f cresc.

ff

18

p

22

1

f

p

26

cresc.

cresc.

30

cresc.

V.S.

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34 **2**

sempre cresc.

39

marcato

44 **3**

rit.

pizz.

sf

50

con sord.

arco

espress.

pp

divisi

53

sostenuto

4

unis.

pp

sempre dim.

57

dim.

pp

60

63

5

cresc.

67

ff

ff

p

p

71

cresc.

ff

V.S.

75

6 **Lento**

p *p*

82

rit... **a tempo**

senza sordini

pp *mf* *cresc. molto*

88

Lento **7**

f *dim.* *pp*

94

98

cresc. molto

102

Allegro moderato

pp *mp*

108

mf

115

divisi unis. 8

122

126

ff

132 **9**

p

139

cresc.

146

sempre dim.

p

153

largamente **Lento**

160

f *ff* *p*

164

dim.

167

p

divisi **rit.** **10** senza sordini

V.S.

171 **a tempo** **sostenuto** **Più mosso** unis. *tr*

pp

176 **tranquillo**

p *p*

182 **11** **agitato** *espressivo*

p

187 **rit.** **molto rit.**

cresc. *pp*

191 **a tempo** Solo

p

195 **poco animando**

pp

199 **12** tutti **animato**

cresc. *mf*

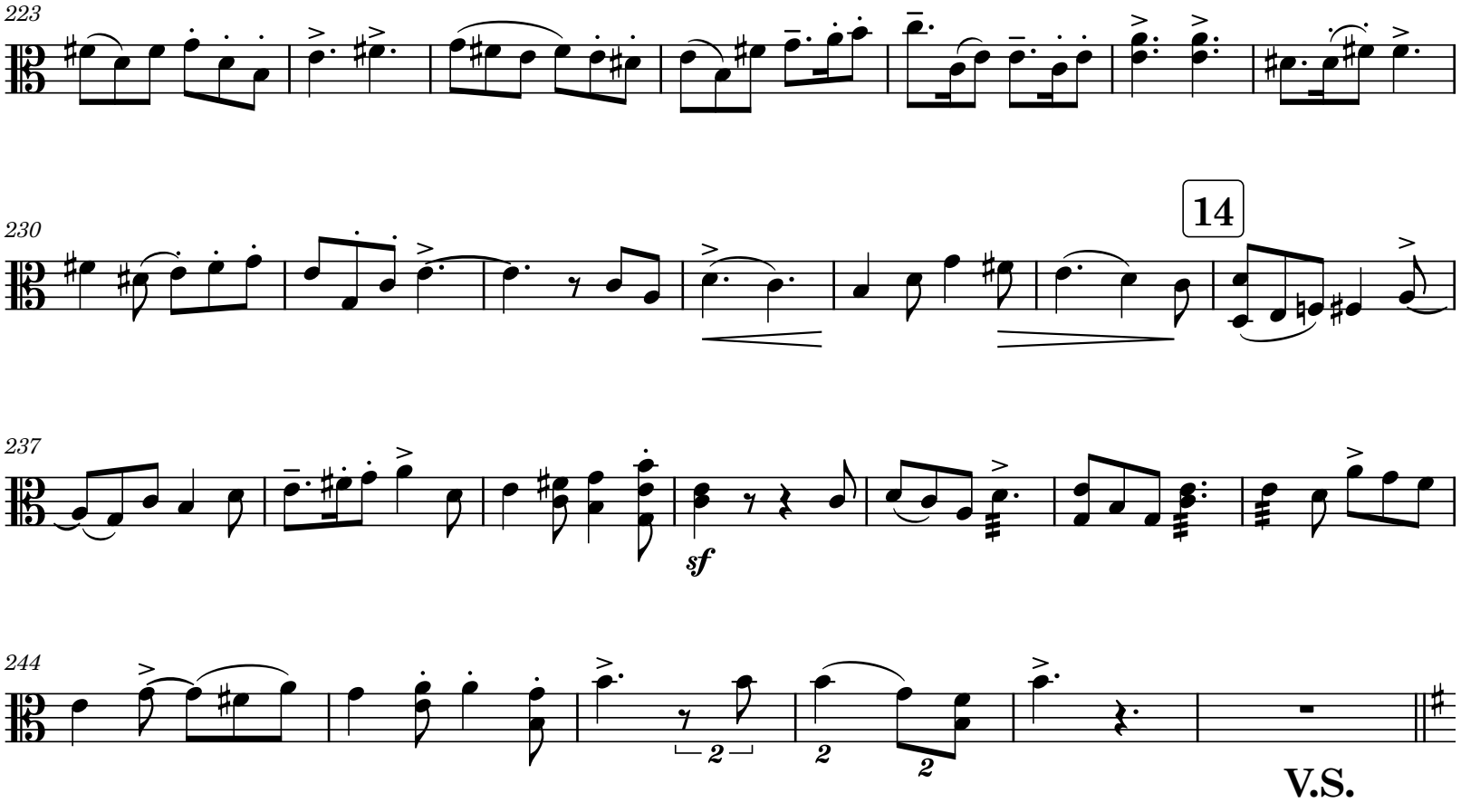
203 **allargando** **rit.**

crese.

209 **Allegro**

mf *cresc.*

215 **animato** **13**


223
230
14
237
sf
244
2
2
2
V.S.

250

p

cresc. molto

256

ff

261

poco rit.

Poco meno mosso

266

15

272

16

279

mf

cresc.

285

ff

293

17

mf

301

cresc.

308

18

f

315

cresc.

322

331

poco rit.

19 **a tempo**

340

346

cresc.

dim.

352

mf

cresc.

20

359

Solo

f

mf

f

368

dim. e rit.

dim.

375

Moderato

dim.

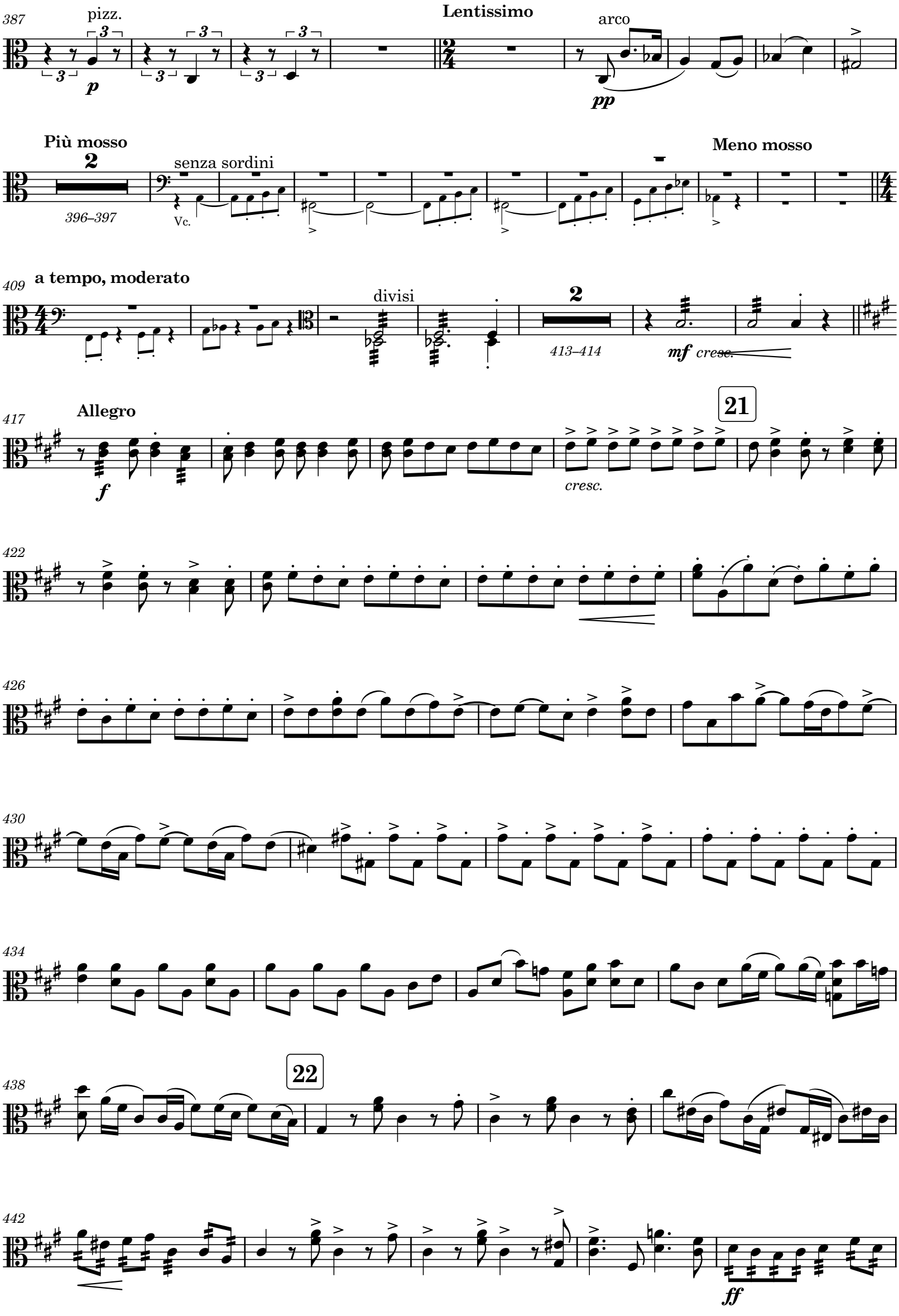
pp

tutti

con sordini

381

V.S.


387
pizz.
p
Lentissimo
arco
pp
Più mosso
2
396–397
senza sordini
Vc.
Meno mosso
409
a tempo, moderato
divisi
2
413–414
mf cresc.
417
Allegro
f
21
cresc.
422
426
430
434
438
22
442
ff

447 **23** **animando**

452

455 **allargando**

458

461

465 **24** **Con fuoco**

468 *ff*

471 *ff*

476 **25** *ff*

481 **Lento** **Meno mosso** *ff*

V.S.

487 pizz. **rit.** arco **Lento** pizz.

494 *cresc.* pizz. *cresc.*

499 **Slower** **3** *503–505*

506 **rit.** con sordini **Lento teneramente** *cresc.*

511 **26** divisi

517 unis. pizz. senza sordini **2** *520–521* divisi

27

523 **rit.** **4** *526–529* **molto rit.** **Lento** Vc.

534 *cresc.*

28 **animato**

539

544 *cresc. molto*

549 **poco agitato**

cresc.

553 **Colla voce** **rit.** **molto rit.**

pp *p*

558 **29** **a tempo, tranquillo**

pp *dim.*

563 **rit.** **Lento maestoso**

mf

568 **30**

573

cresc. molto

577 **31** **allargando**

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

V.S.

582

Tranquillo

p

32

589

poco rit. **a tempo**

p

596

600

605

33

609

614

34

allargando

621

mf *cresc. molto*

628

rit. **a tempo**

ff

dim.

634

Lento

ppp

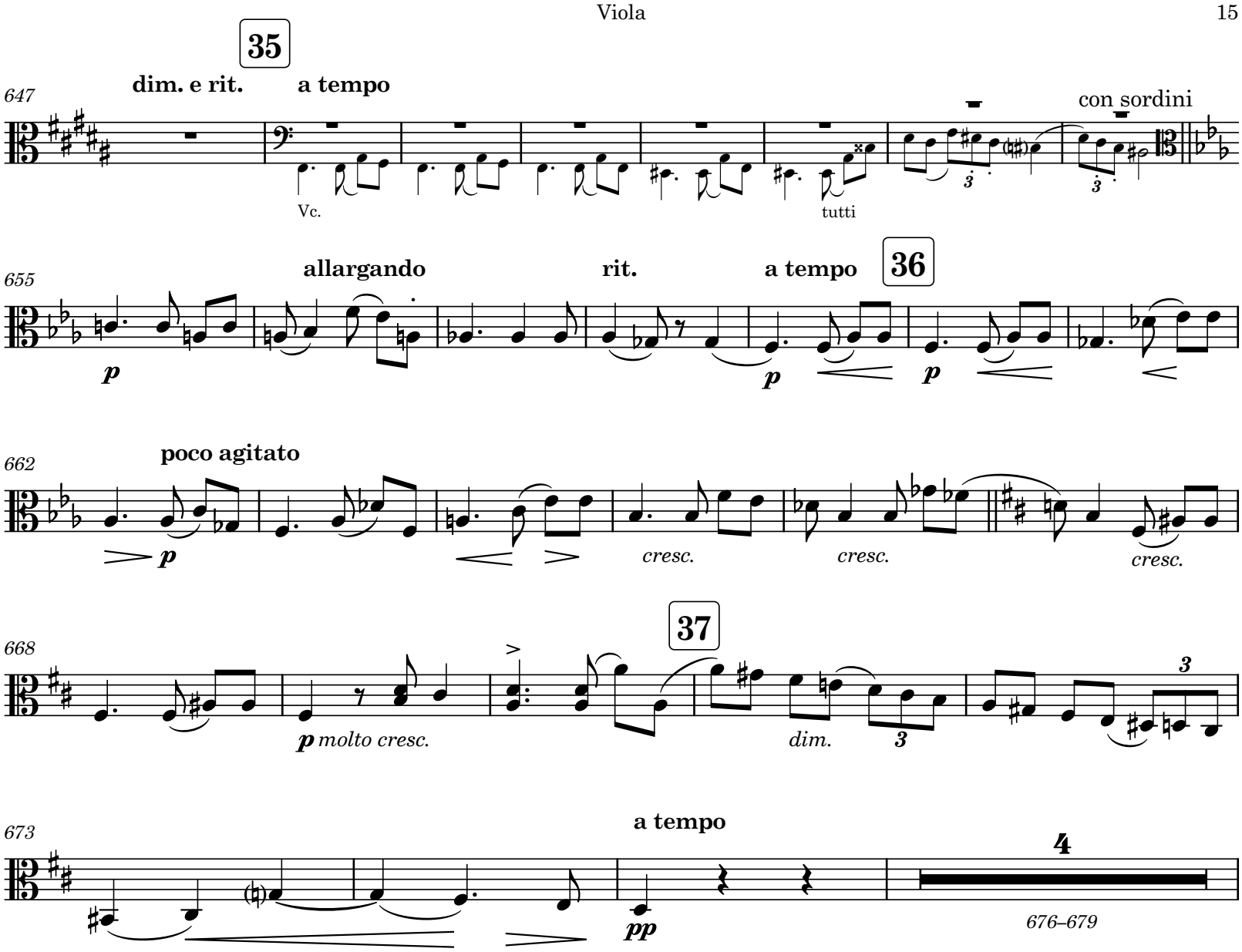
5

636–640

mf

4

643–646


35
dim. e rit.
a tempo
con sordini
Vc.
tutti
allargando
rit.
a tempo
36
poco agitato
cresc.
cresc.
cresc.
37
p molto cresc.
dim.
a tempo
4
676–679

680

animando

p *cresc.* *cresc.*

687

animando

38

695

sf

703

Più mosso, allegro feroce

ff

710

39

718

726

sf

40

734

sf

741

Vivacissimo

sf

748

allargando.

756

a tempo

764

770

41

777

783

Allargando **a tempo**

f ***ff*** ***sf***

790

sf

798

rit. **[Silent] Lento**

12

805–816

Puì mosso

817–818

B. Solo

The path - way lost, Men cry to one an - oth - er in the dark,

animando

This way, and that way,

827

42 agitato

divisi

pp

animando

unis.

837

Allegro

f

844

43 Allegro

852

ff

862

animato

cresc. molto

rit.

Moderato

sf

sf

870

sf

sf

sempre cresc.

873–877

rit.

f

a tempo

ff

881

animato

44

allargando.....

888–892

agitato

animando

Sur - feit and des - pair are min - gled in the cup the vic - tor drains.

S. Solo

899

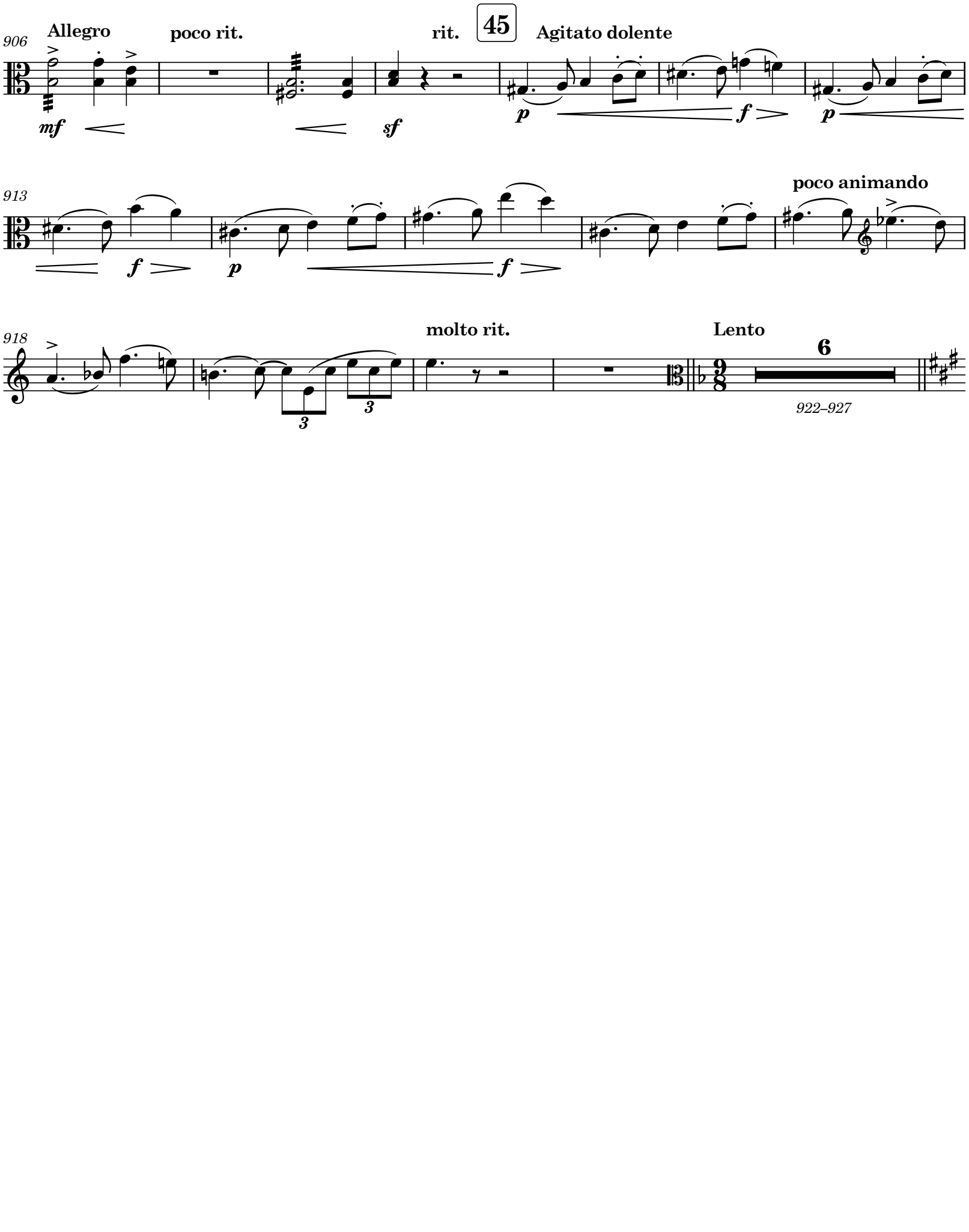
mf

f

901–902

f

poco allargando


906
Allegro
poco rit.
rit.
45
Agitato dolente
mf
sf
p
f
p
913
poco animando
f
p
f
918
molto rit.
Lento
6
922–927

928 **Più lento** **Moderato** **Moderato con anima**

mf *cresc.*

935

943 **46**

cresc.

950 **rit.** **a tempo** **largamente**

958 **rit.** **a tempo**

f

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

cresc.

973 **rit** **a tempo - tranquillo**

divisi

dim. ***p***

979

cresc. ***f***

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

unis.

dim. ***pp***

991

995

p

999

49

1003

1009

poco animando

1014

50

1023

1029

f

1033

Solenne

mf *cresc.*

V.S.

1038

allargando

rit.

51

Tempo giusto

cresc.

f

p

1043

divisi

ff

1049

rit.

cresc.

ff

1056

allargando

52

meno mosso

ff

1063

dim.

2

1067–1068

Allegro

divisi

pp

1070

poco agitato

1073

f

p

1077

meno mosso

p

pp

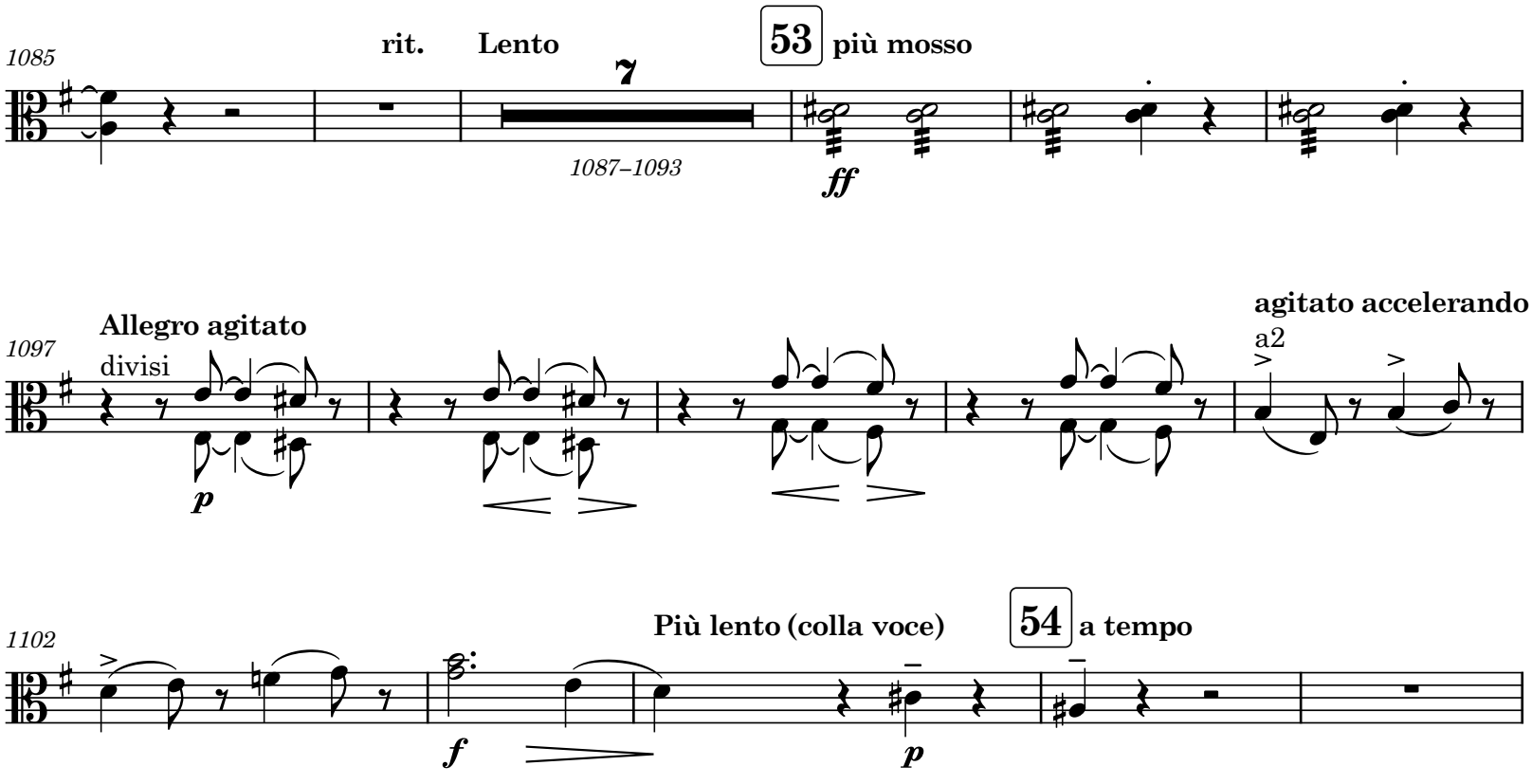
poco animando

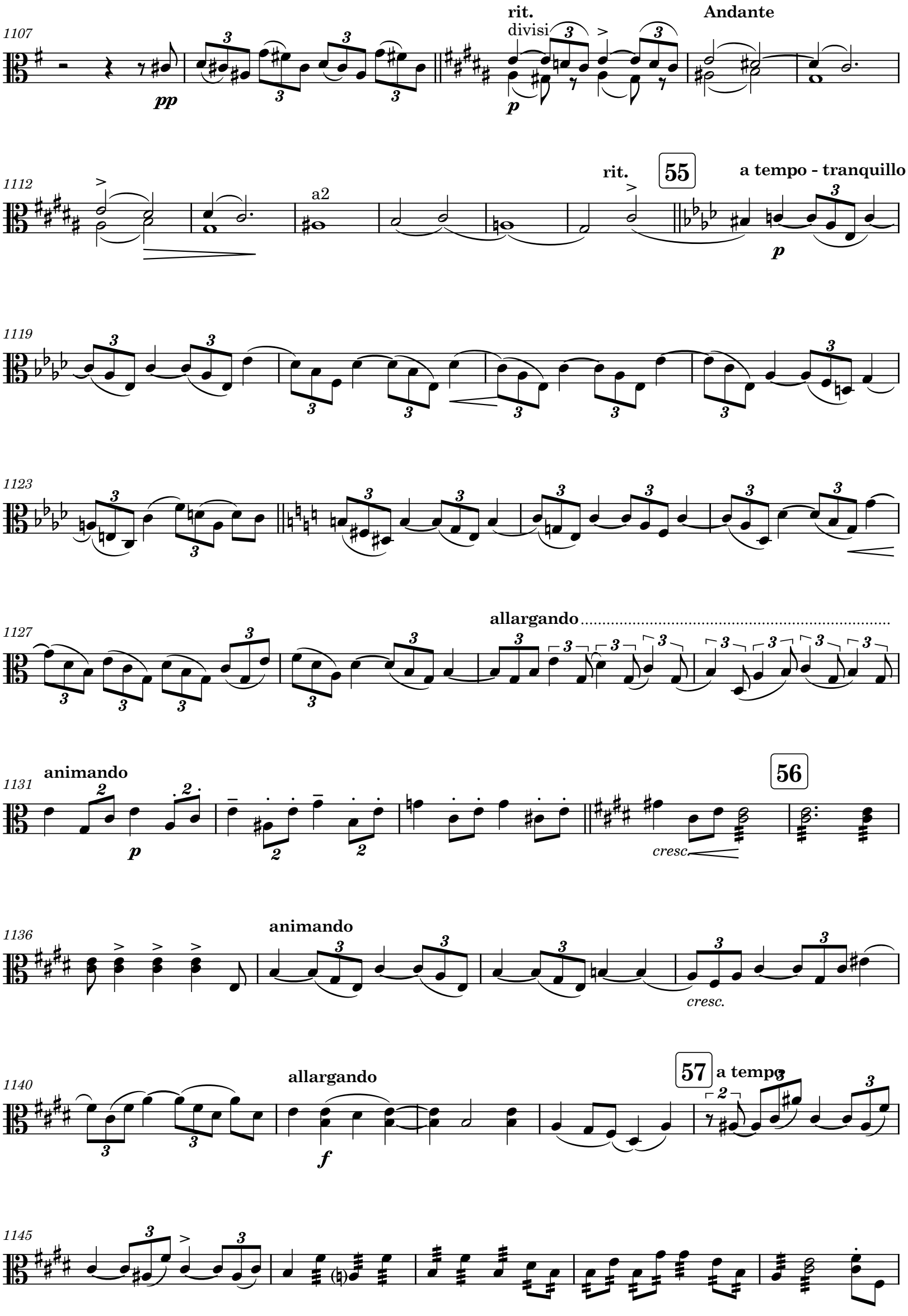
cresc.

mf

cresc.

sf


1085
rit.
Lento
7
53
più mosso
1087–1093
ff
1097
Allegro agitato
divisi
p
agitato accelerando
a2
1102
Più lento (colla voce)
54
a tempo
f
p


1107
pp
rit.
divisi
p
Andante
1112
a2
rit.
55
a tempo - tranquillo
p
1119
1123
1127
allargando
1131
animando
p
56
cresc.
1136
animando
cresc.
1140
allargando
f
57
a tempo
1145

1150

mf *sempre dim.*

58 **Moderato tranquillo**

1155

p

1159

1162

poco rit. **a tempo**

1167

dolce

1172

59

1176

allargando **Poco meno mosso**

f

1180

3

1185–1187

Tranquillo

3

1188–1190

Pass - ing on life from one to an - o - ther Seek - ing to solve it, Seek - ing to

S. 1

1195

know it, Seek - ing to make it of worth to each

poco rit.

Allegro - animando

p *cresc.*

1201

cresc. sempre

60

1208

allaargando

f *f* *cresc.*

1213

a tempo

ff

1218

61

ff

1224

1230

62

1237

1244

63

agitato, vivace

cresc. molto

ff

1251

lunga

Lento tranquillo

molto rit.

64

espress.

1252–1254

1255–1256

p

dim.

1259

p

1263

mf

1268

poco rit.

a tempo

p

1273

65

p

p

V.S.

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1278

66

rit. **poco animando**

p *mf*

1283

poco rit. **Poco animando, espressivo**

f *dim.* *p*

1287

67

p cresc. *mf cresc.*

1291

animando

mf cresc. *cresc.*

1295

1299

68 **69**

f *mf*

1304

1308

70

mf cresc.

1312

mf

V.S.

1318

71

animato

cresc.

1324

animando

1329

sempre cresc. ed animando

1333

72

1336

1339

1342

1345

73

1349

1353

1357

rit.

mf

1362

1366

cresc.

1370

1374

poco rit.

p

1378

rit.

rit.

1381

a tempo

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