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

VIOLIN I

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

Violin I

The Vision of Life

C. Hubert H. Parry

Moderato

1

21

1–21

Vc.

pizz.

26

mf *cresc.*

cresc.

cresc.

31

2

f

35

39

marcato

cresc.

3

42

45

rit.

49

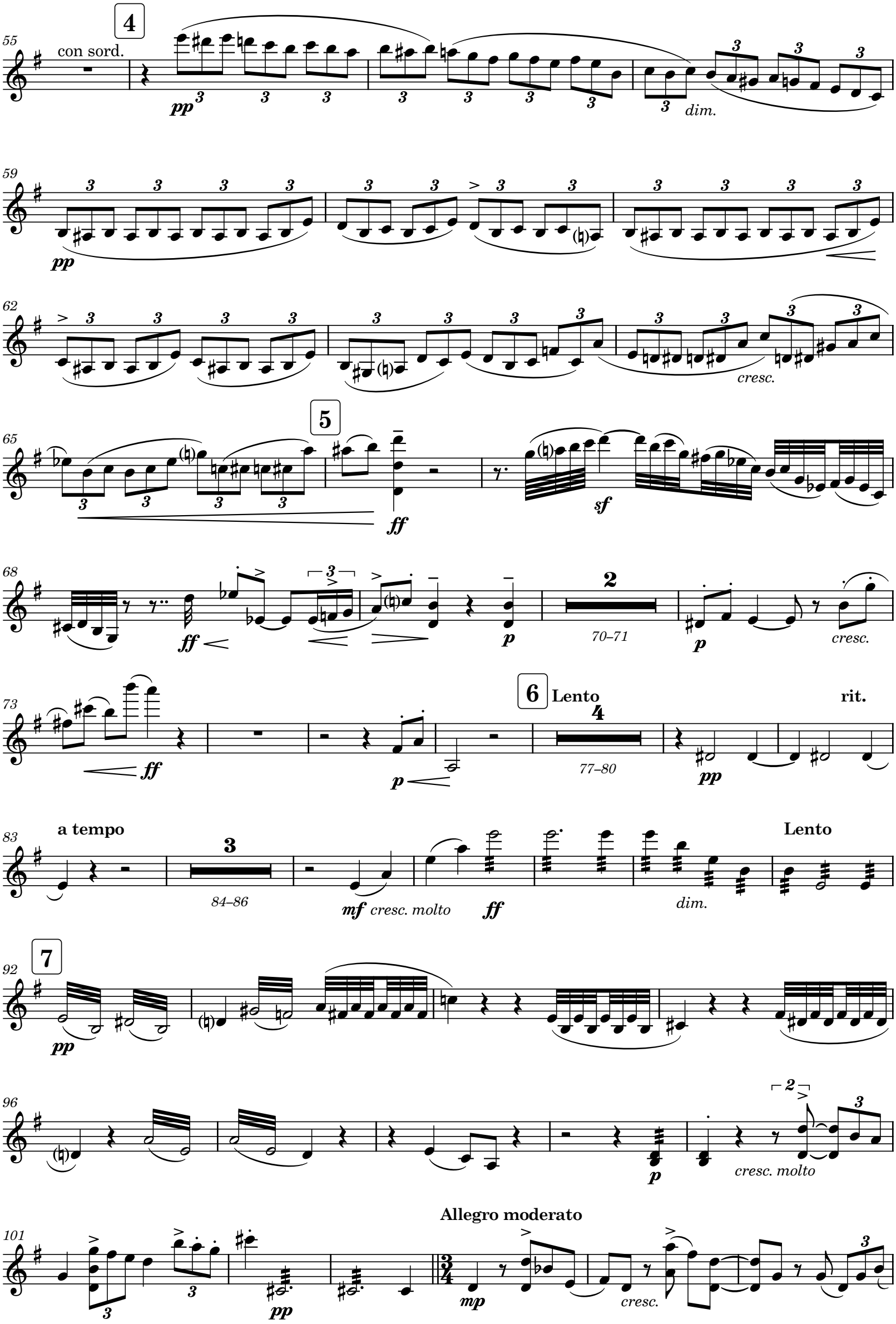
sf

pizz.

p

sostenuto

arco


4
con sord.
pp
dim.
pp
cresc.
5
ff
sf
ff
p
2
70–71
p
cresc.
ff
p
6
Lento
4
77–80
pp
rit.
a tempo
3
84–86
mf cresc. molto
ff
dim.
Lento
7
pp
p
cresc. molto
Allegro moderato
pp
mp
cresc.

107

112

116

8

119

dim.

122

cresc. molto

126

9

131

ff

138

p

cresc.

145

sempre dim.

5

147–151

largamente

155

Lento

con sordini

p

V.S.

161
ff
6
163–168
rit. 10
senza sordini
a tempo
pp
173
sostenuto
pp
Più mosso
tranquillo
177
p
182
11
p
agitato
p
187
rit.
dim.
190
molto rit.
pp
a tempo
Solo
dolce
194
p
Solo
poco animando
198
cresc.
12
201
tutti
p
animato
204
cresc.
allargando
f
sf
rit.

209

Allegro

mf *cresc.*

214

animato

13

221

227

231

14

238

sf

244

2 2 2

V.S.

250
p
cresc. molto
255
cresc.
ff
260
poco rit.
264
Poco meno mosso
15
270
3
274
3
16
280
mf
cresc.
286
ff
293
17
mf
301
cresc.

18

308

f

315

f *cresc.*

322

ff

331

poco rit.

19 a tempo

f

340

347

cresc. *dim.*

5

354–358

359

f

20

f

dim. e rit.

7

368–374

Moderato

Vc.

2

379–380

B. Solo

Ye may not rest, O

383

wan - der - ers,

Time will not

pizz.

p

Lentissimo

392

con sordini

arco

pp

Più mosso

senza sordini

7

399–405

Meno mosso

3

406–408

409 **a tempo, moderato**

Vc.

mf cresc

416 **Allegro**

f

420 **21**

cresc.

424

428

431

434

437 **22**

441

445 **23**

ff

animando

450

454

allargando

458

460

464

24

Con fuoco

467

471

475

25

479

484

Lento

Meno mosso

rit.

Lento

3

6

489–491

492–497

498
pizz.
mf cresc.
f
Slower
f
4
502–505

506
rit.
con sordini
Lento teneramente
arco
p
cresc.

511
f
cresc.
f
dim.

515
26
3
pp
3
p
3
senza sordini

2
520–521
mf cresc.
f
rit.
4
526–529
molto rit.

27 Lento
531
Vc.
espress.
p
cresc.

28 animato
537
2
539–540
p
pp

543
cresc. molto

548
poco agitato
mf cresc.

29
553
Colla voce
2
554–555
p
rit.
molto rit.
a tempo, tranquillo
pp

560

dim.

565

rit. **Lento maestoso**

mf *cresc.*

569

30

573

cresc. molto

576

578

31 **allargando**

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

V.S.

582
Tranquillo
p
poco cresc.
589
poco rit.
32
a tempo
p
596
603
3
3
3
608
33
3
3
613
f
34
allargando
620
ff
mf cresc. molto
628
rit.
a tempo
ff
3
3
3
dim.
3
3
3
634
pp
Lento
4
636–639
p
4
643–646
35
647
dim. e rit.
a tempo
con sordini
Vc.
tutti

655
allargando
rit.
a tempo
36
p
p
p
662
poco agitato
p
cresc.
cresc.
cresc.
668
37
cresc.
p molto cresc.
dim.
dim.
674
a tempo
pp
676–679
animando
Vla
684
mf cresc.
691
animando
38
698
ff
702
ff
706
Più mosso, allegro feroce
ff
V.S.

713

721 **39**

728

734 **40**

741 **Vivacissimo**

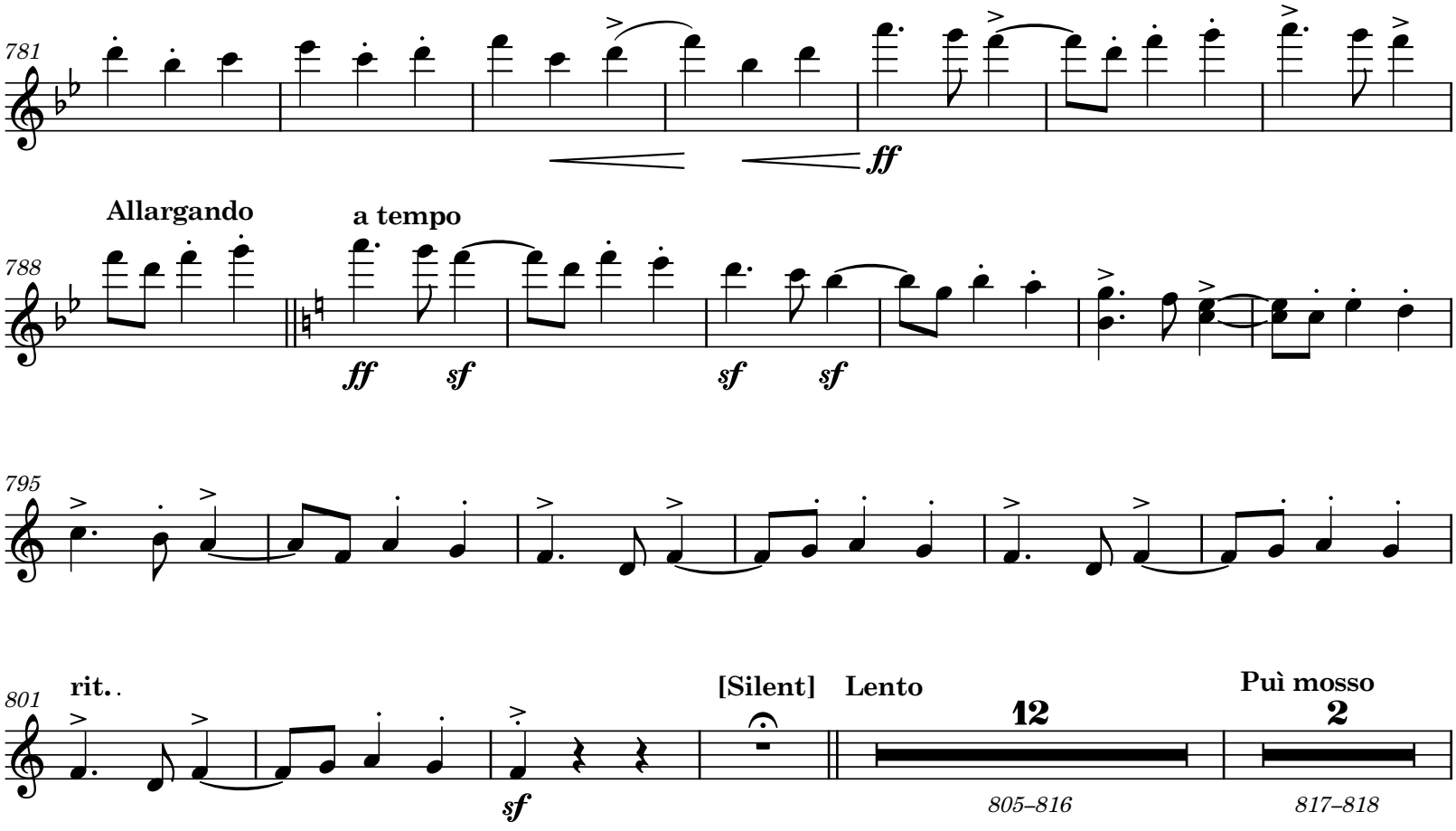
747

755 **allargando....** **a tempo**

762

768

774 **41**


781
ff
Allargando
a tempo
788
ff
sf
sf
sf
795
rit.
801
sf
[Silent]
Lento
12
805–816
Puì mosso
2
817–818

B. Solo

819

animando

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

42

829

agitato

animando

pp

cresc.

837

Allegro

f

43

844

Allegro

852

859

animato

rit.

cresc. molto

866

Moderato

sf sf sf sf

sempre cresc.

5

873–877

rit.

f

ff

a tempo

animato

44

884

allargando

8

885–892

agitato

Sur - feit and des - pair are min - gled in the

S. Solo

897

animando

mf

f

cup the vic - tor drains.

f

903
poco allargando
Allegro
poco rit.
45
mf
908
rit.
Agitato dolente
p
f
p
f
poco animando
914
p
f
p molto cresc.
molto rit.
920
dim.
Lento
6
922–927
Più lento
930
Moderato
mf
p
Moderato con anima
936
944
cresc.
46
952
rit.
a tempo
largamente
957
cresc.
rit.
964
f
a tempo
allargando
V.S.

47

a tempo

969

cresc.

rit

a tempo - tranquillo

975

dim.

p

981

cresc.

f

poco rit.

48

a tempo - tranquillo

987

dim.

pp

992

996

p

49

1000

1004

pp

1008

poco animando

1012

1016

50

1020

1024

1028

1032

f

1034

Solenne

mf

cresc.

rit.

1037

allargando

cresc.

V.S.

51 **Tempo giusto**

1041

f

cresc.

1047

ff

cresc.

1053

rit.

allargando

ff *f* *ff*

52

meno mosso

1059

1065

dim.

Allegro

poco agitato

2 2 2

1067–1068 *1069–1070* *1071–1072*

1073

3

f cresc. *f* *p*

dim.

1076

meno mosso

p *pp*

53 **più mosso**

1083

poco animando

rit. **Lento**

7

cresc. *cresc.* *mf*

1087–1093 *ff*

1095

Allegro agitato

4

1097–1100

agitato accelerando

mf cresc.

54

1103

Più lento (colla voce)

a tempo

4

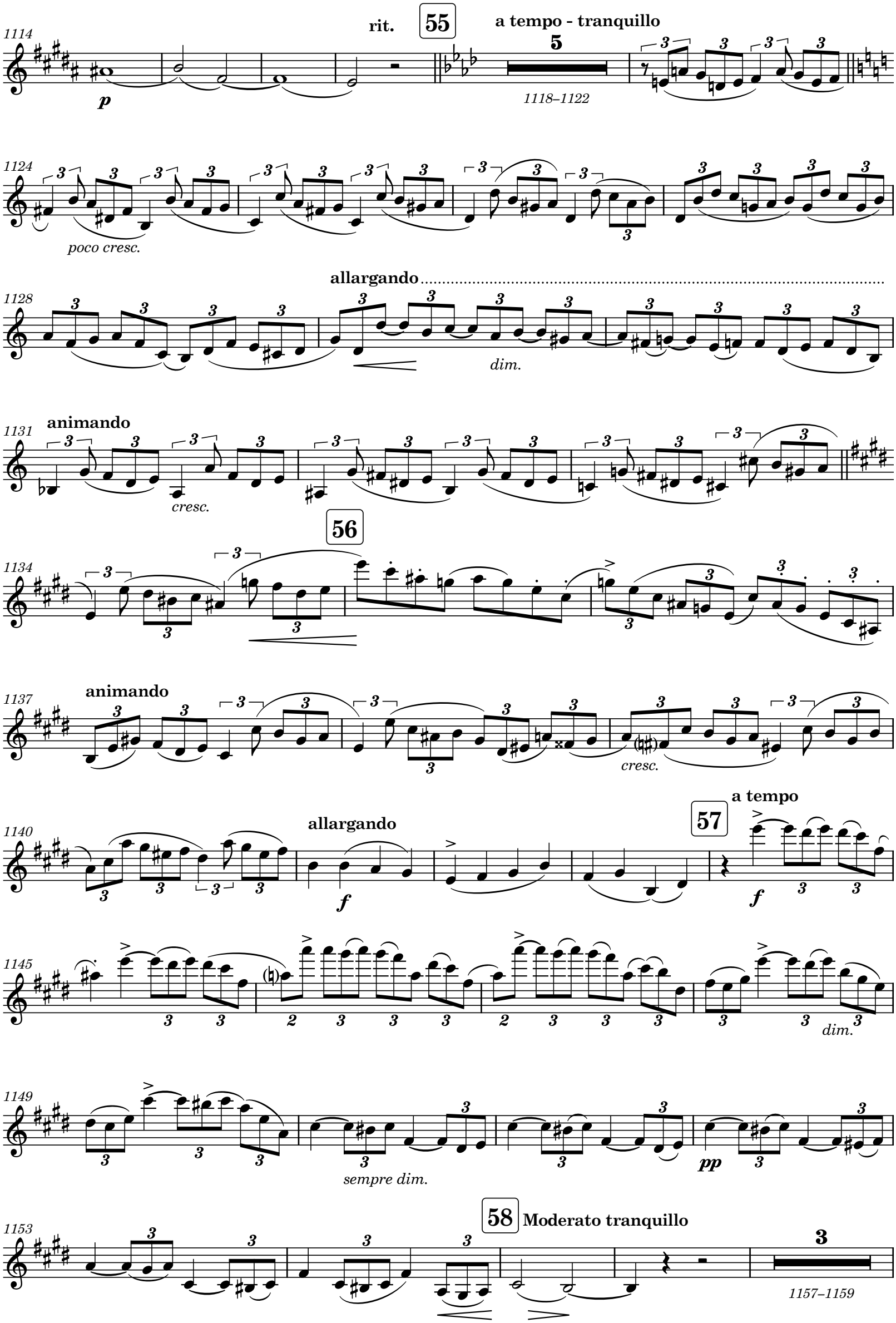
rit.

Andante

4

f

1105–1108 *1110–1113*


1114
rit.
55
a tempo - tranquillo
5
p
1118–1122
1124
poco cresc.
allargando
1128
dim.
1131
animando
cresc.
56
1134
1137
animando
cresc.
1140
allargando
57
a tempo
f
f
1145
dim.
1149
sempre dim.
pp
1153
58
Moderato tranquillo
3
1157–1159

1160

2

1161–1162

1165

poco rit.

a tempo

dolce

mf

1168

1172

59

espress.

mf

p cresc.

1177

allargando

Poco meno mosso

f

Tranquillo

1184

3

3

1185–1187

1188–1190

Pass - ing on life from one to an - o - ther

S. 1

1193

poco rit.

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

1198

Allegro - animando

p

molto cresc.

cresc. sempre

sf

cresc.

1204

60

1209

allaargando

f

f

cresc.

a tempo

1214

ff

61

1220

ff

f

1226

sf

1231

62

f

1238

63

1244

ff

agitato, vivace

cresc. molto

1250

lunga

Lento tranquillo

molto rit.

64

1252–1254

1255–1256

1257–1259

espress.

mf

1261

p

1265

mf

poco rit.

a tempo

1270

65

p

p

V.S.

1275

p 3 3

3 3 3 3

p

2

1278–1279

rit.

66

1281

poco animando

mf *cresc.*

f *dim.*

poco rit.

1284

sempre dim.

Poco animando, espressivo

espress.

p *cresc.*

p *cresc.*

67

1288

f

mf *cresc.*

f

mf *cresc.*

animando

1293

cresc.

mf *f*

mf *f*

1298

ff

68

f

69

1303

mf

1307

70

1310

mf *cresc.*

mf

1315

mf

molto cresc.

71

1320

cresc.

animato

8va

1325

(8)

animando

loco

1329

sempre cresc. ed animando

f

72

1334

1338

1341

73

1344

V.S.

1348

1352

1355

8va

1359

rit.

(8)

loco

mf

mf

1366

cresc.

1374

poco rit.

p

p

1380

rit.

a tempo

1383

rit.

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