

SAVONAROLA

A Grand Opera
In a Prologue and Three Acts

WRITTEN BY

Gilbert À Beckett

MUSIC COMPOSED BY

Charles Villiers Stanford

PROLOGUE

Full Score

COVER IMAGE

7

"Vanity" by Frank Cowper, 1907

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Unearthing from the Past - Preserving for the Future [™]

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.

Matthew W. Mehaffey
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SOURCE INFORMATION

Full Score (Original) Full Score (Online Scan) Vocal Score Libretto

Royal College of Music Library, London (GB-Lcm): MS 4160 https://archive.org/details/RCM-MS-4160 Röder of Leipzig - Limited Private Printing (1883) Boosey & Co. (1882)

REFERENCE MATERIAL AND SOFTWARE

Notation Software: Dorico Pro Version 5.1.40.2138 Audio Software: NotePerformer 4

Graphic Software: Adobe Photoshop CS5 Document Software: Affinity Publisher 1.10.5.1342

Music Notation Reference: Behind Bars by Elaine Gould, Faber Music © 2011



Sir Charles Villiers Stanford (30 September 1852 – 29 March 1924) was an Anglo-Irish composer, music teacher, and conductor of the late Romantic era. Born to a well-off and highly musical family in Dublin, Stanford was educated at the University of Cambridge before studying music in Leipzig and Berlin. He was instrumental in raising the status of the Cambridge University Musical Society, attracting international stars to perform with it.

While still an undergraduate, Stanford was appointed organist of Trinity College, Cambridge. In 1882, aged 29, he was one of the founding professors of the Royal College of Music, where he taught composition for the rest of his life. From 1887 he was also Professor of Music at Cambridge. As a teacher, Stanford was sceptical about modernism, and based his instruction chiefly on classical principles as exemplified in the music of Brahms. Among his pupils were rising composers whose fame went on to surpass his own, such as Gustav Holst and Ralph Vaughan Williams. As a conductor, Stanford held posts with the Bach Choir and the Leeds Triennial Music Festival.

Stanford composed a substantial number of concert works, including seven symphonies, but his best-remembered pieces are his choral works for church performance, chiefly composed in the Anglican tradition. He was a dedicated composer of opera, but none of his nine completed operas has endured in the general repertory. Some critics regarded

Stanford, together with Hubert Parry and Alexander Mackenzie, as responsible for a renaissance in music from the British Isles. However, after his conspicuous success as a composer in the last two decades of the 19th century, his music was eclipsed in the 20th century by that of Edward Elgar as well as former pupils.

The First World War had a severe effect on Stanford. He was frightened by air raids, and had to move from London to Windsor to avoid them. Many of his former pupils were casualties of the fighting, including Arthur Bliss, wounded, Ivor Gurney, gassed, and George Butterworth, killed. The annual RCM operatic production, which Stanford had supervised and conducted every year since 1885, had to be cancelled. His income declined, as the fall in student numbers at the college reduced the demand for his services. After a serious disagreement at the end of 1916, his relationship with Parry deteriorated to the point of hostility. Stanford's magnanimity, however, came to the fore when Parry died two years later and Stanford successfully lobbied for him to be buried in St Paul's Cathedral.

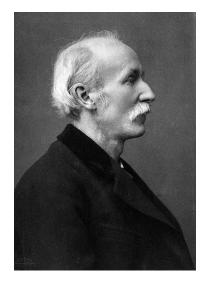
In September 1922, Stanford completed the sixth Irish Rhapsody, his final work. Two weeks later he celebrated his 70th birthday; thereafter his health declined. On 17 March 1924 he suffered a stroke and on 29 March he died at his home in London, survived by his wife and children. He was cremated at Golders Green Crematorium on 2 April and his ashes were buried in Westminster Abbey the following day. The orchestra of the Royal College of Music, conducted by Boult, played music by Stanford, ending the service with a funeral march that he had written for Tennyson's *Becket* in 1893. The grave is in the north choir aisle of the Abbey, near the graves of Henry Purcell, John Blow and William Sterndale Bennett. The Times said, "the conjunction of the music of Stanford with that of his great predecessors showed how thoroughly as composer he belonged to their line".

Stanford composed about 200 works, including seven symphonies, about 40 choral works, nine operas, 11 concertos and 28 chamber works, as well as songs, piano pieces, incidental music, and organ works. He suppressed most of his earliest compositions; the earliest of works that he chose to include in his catalogue date from 1875.

Throughout his career as a composer, Stanford's technical mastery was rarely in doubt. The composer Edgar Bainton said of him, "Whatever opinions may be held upon Stanford's music, and they are many and various, it is, I think, always recognised that he was a master of means. Everything he turned his hand to always 'comes off." On the day of Stanford's death, one former pupil, Gustav Holst, said to another, Herbert Howells, "The one man who could get any one of us out of a technical mess is now gone from us."

After Stanford's death, most of his music was quickly forgotten, with the exception of his works for church performances. His *Stabat Mater* and *Requiem* held their place in the choral repertoire, the latter championed by Sir Thomas Beecham. Stanford's two sets of sea songs and the partsong *The Blue Bird* were still performed from time to time, but even his most popular opera, *Shamus O'Brien* came to seem old fashioned with its "stage-Irish" vocabulary. However, in his 2002 study of Stanford, Jeremy Dibble writes that the music, increasingly available on disc if not in live performance, still has the power to surprise. In Dibble's view, the frequent charge that Stanford is "Brahms and water" was disproved once the symphonies, concertos, much of the chamber music and many of the songs became available for reappraisal when recorded for compact disc.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_Villiers_Stanford



Gilbert Arthur à Beckett (April 7, 1837 – October 15, 1891) was an English writer.

Beckett was born at Portland House Hammersmith, on 7 April 1837, the eldest son of the civil servant and humorist Gilbert Abbott à Beckett and the composer Mary Anne à Beckett, daughter of Joseph Glossop, clerk of the cheque to the hon. corps of gentlemen-at-arms. His brother was Arthur William à Beckett. He graduated from Christ Church, Oxford, as a Westminster scholar in 1860. He was entered at Lincoln's Inn on 15 October 1857, but gave his attention chiefly to drama, producing *Diamonds and Hearts* at the Haymarket Theatre in 1867; this was followed by other light comedies. His adaptation of a French operetta by Émile Jonas called *The Two Harlequins* opened the new Gaiety Theatre, London in 1868, together with his distant cousin, W. S. Gilbert's *Robert the Devil* and another piece.

Beckett's pieces include numerous burlesques and pantomimes, the libretti of *Savonarola* (Hamburg, 1884) and *The Canterbury Pilgrims* (Drury Lane, 1884) for the music of Dr. C. V. Stanford. With the composer Alfred Cellier, Beckett wrote the operetta *Two Foster Brothers* (St. George's Hall, 1877).

In 1879, he had been asked by Tom Taylor, the editor of Punch, to follow the example of his younger brother Arthur, and become a regular member of the staff of Punch. Three years later he was 'appointed to the Table. The Punch dinners

were his greatest pleasure, and he attended them with regularity, although the paralysis of the legs, the result of falling down the stairway of Gower Street station, rendered his locomotion, and especially the mounting of Mr. Punch's staircase, a matter of painful exertion. To Punch he contributed both prose and verse; he wrote, in greater part, the admirable parody of a boy's sensational shocker (March 1882), and he developed Jerrold's idea of humorous bogus advertisements under the heading 'How we advertise now.' The idea of one of Sir John Tenniel's best cartoons for Punch, entitled 'Dropping the Pilot,' illustrative of Bismarck's resignation in 1889, was due to him.

Apart from his work on 'Punch,' he wrote songs and music for the German Reeds' entertainment, while in 1873 and 1874 he was collaborator in two dramatic productions which evoked a considerable amount of public attention.

In the following year, he furnished the 'legend' to Herman Merivale's tragedy *The White Pilgrim*, first given at the Court in February 1874. At the close of his life he furnished the lyrics and most of the book for the operetta *La Cigale*, which at the time of his death was nearing its four hundredth performance at the Lyric Theatre. In 1889, he suffered a great shock from the death by drowning of his only son, and he died in London on 15 October 1891.

THE LIFE OF GIROLAMO SAVONAROLA

by Robert Wilde

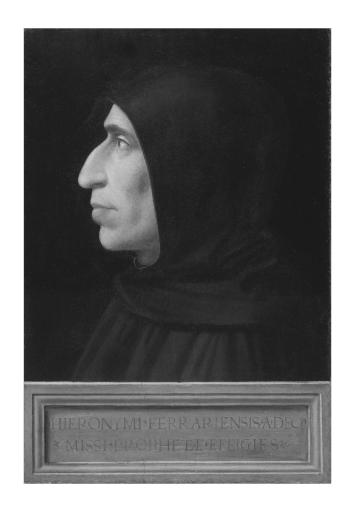
Wilde, Robert. "Biography of Girolamo Savonarola." ThoughtCo, Oct. 2, 2021, thoughtco.com/girolamo-savonarola-1452-1498-1221250.

Girolamo Savonarola was an Italian friar, preacher and religious reformer of the late fifteenth century. Thanks to his struggle against what he considered a corruption of Catholicism infesting Florence, and his refusal to bow to a Borgia Pope he considered much the same, he was executed, but not after ruling Florence in a remarkable four years of Republican and moral reform.

EARLY YEARS

Savonarola was born in Ferrara on September 21st, 1452. His grandfather – a mildly famous moralist and trusted physician - educated him, and the boy studied medicine. However, in 1475 he entered the Dominican Friars in Bologna and began to teach and study scripture. Why exactly we don't know, but a rejection over love and a spiritual depression are popular theories; his family objected. He took up a position in Florence – home of the Renaissance - in 1482. At this stage he wasn't a successful speaker – he asked the guidance of famed humanist and rhetorician Garzon, but was rudely rejected – and remained bitterly disaffected at the world, even the Dominicans, but soon developed what would make him famous: prophecy. The people of Florence had turned away from his vocal shortcomings until he bought an apocalyptic, prophetic heart to his sermons.

In 1487 he returned to Bologna for assessment, failed to be selected for academic life, perhaps after disagreeing with his tutor, and from after that, he toured until Lorenzo de Medici secured his return to Florence. Lorenzo was turning to philosophy and theology to stave off a darkening mood, illness, and loss of loved ones, and he wanted a famed preacher to balance the hostile views of the Pope to Florence. Lorenzo was advised by the theologian and preacher Pico, who had met Savonarola and wanted to learn from him.



SAVONAROLA BECOMES THE VOICE OF FLORENCE

In 1491 Girolamo Savonarola became Prior of the Dominican House of S. Marco in Florence (set up by Cosimo de Medici and reliant on family money). His speech-making had developed, and thanks to a powerful charisma, a good way with words, and a very effective grasp of how to manipulate his audience, Savonarola became very popular very quickly. He was a reformer, a man who saw many things wrong with both Florence and the church, and he spelled this out in his sermons, calling for reform, attacking humanism, renaissance paganism, 'bad' rulers like the Medici; those who watched were often deeply moved.

Savonarola didn't stop at just pointing out what he considered faults: he was the latest in a line of Florentine would be prophets, and he claimed Florence would fall to soldiers and their rulers were it not better led. His sermons on the apocalypse were hugely popular. The exact relation of Savonarola and Florence – whether its history affected his character more or less than his demagoguery affected the citizens – has been much debated, and the situation was more nuanced than just a man of words whipping people up: Savonarola had been deeply critical of Florence's Medici rulers, but Lorenzo de Medici may have still called for Savonarola as the former was dying; the latter was there, but might have gone of his own accord. Savonarola was drawing huge crowds, and attendance at other preachers was falling.

SAVONAROLA BECOMES MASTER OF FLORENCE

Lorenzo de Medici died two years before he, and his fellow rulers in Italy, faced a major threat: a French invasion which seemed on the verge of great conquests. Instead of Lorenzo, Florence had Piero de Medici, but he failed to react well enough (or even competently) to keep power; suddenly Florence had a gap at the top of its government. And at this very moment, Savonarola's prophecies seemed to be coming true: he and the Florentine people felt he had been right, as a French army threatened a slaughter, and he accepted the citizen's request to head a delegation to negotiate with France.

Suddenly he had become a leading rebel, and when he helped a Florentine agreement with France that saw a peaceful occupation and the army left, he was a hero. While Savonarola never held any office himself beyond that of his religious career, from 1494 to 1498 he was the de facto ruler of Florence: again and again, the city responded to what Savonarola preached, including creating a new government structure. Savonarola now offered more than the apocalypse, preaching hope and success for those who listened and reformed, but that if Florence faltered things would get dire.

Savonarola did not waste this power. He began a reform designed to make Florence more Republican, rewriting the constitution with places like Venice in the forefront of his mind. But Savonarola also saw a chance to reform the morals of Florence, and he preached against all manner of vices, from drinking, gambling, to types of sex and singing he didn't like. He encouraged 'Burning of the Vanities', where items deemed inappropriate to a Christian republic were destroyed on mighty pyres, such as lewd artworks. The works of the humanists fell victim to this – although not in as great quantities as later remembered - not because Savonarola was against books or scholarship, but because of their influences from the 'pagan' past. Ultimately, Savonarola wanted Florence to become a true city of god, the heart of the church and Italy. He organized Florence's children into a new unit that would report and fight against vice; some locals complained that Florence was in the grip of children. Savonarola insisted that Italy would be scourged, the papacy would be rebuilt, and the weapon would be France, and he kept allied to the French king when pragmatism suggested a turn to the Pope and the Holy League.

THE FALL OF SAVONAROLA

Savonarola's rule was divisive, and an opposition formed because Savonarola's increasingly extreme position only increased people's alienation. Savonarola was attacked by more than enemies within Florence: Pope Alexander VI, perhaps better known as Rodrigo Borgia, had been trying to unite Italy against the French, and excommunicated Savonarola for continuing to support the French and not obeying him; meanwhile, France made peace, abandoning Florence and leaving Savonarola embarrassed.

Alexander had tried to trap Savonarola in 1495, inviting him to Rome for a personal audience, but Savonarola had quickly realized and refused. Letters and orders flowed back and forth between Savonarola and the Pope, the former always refusing to bow. The Pope may have even offered to make Savonarola a Cardinal if he'd fall into line. After the excommunication, the Pope said the only way to lift it was for Savonarola to submit and Florence to join his sponsored League. Finally, Savonarola's supporters grew too thin, the electorate too against him, the excommunication too much, an interdict in Florence threatened, and another faction got into power. The trigger point was a proposed trial by fire proposed by a rival preacher which, while Savonarola's supporters technically won (rain stopped the fire), it had introduced enough doubt for his enemies to arrest him and his supporters to torture him, condemn him, and then publically hang and burn him in Florenco's Piazza della Signoria.

MR. STANFORD'S "SAVONAROLA"

J.A. Fuller-Maitland

The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular, Vol. 25, No. 495 (May 1, 1884), pp. 270-272

The question of how best to turn history to account on the operatic stage is one that has vexed the souls of many a librettist and composer before now, and it does not seem probable that any ultimate solution will easily be arrived at. If on the one hand, historical accuracy be strictly adhered to, and nothing allowed into the text but what is established by the most unimpeachable documentary evidence, the result is apt to be terribly dull and ineffective, for the lives even of the greatest men do not obligingly arrange themselves into a convenient number of acts for stage purposes. On the other hand, if the facts of history be modified to suit the exigencies of the drama the public and the critics will often complain that their firmest historical convictions have been grossly outraged and will therefore have nothing to say to the production. Some composers, as for instance Wagner in "Rienzi," and Berlioz in "Benvenuto Cellini," have eluded the difficulty by screening themselves behind an historical novel, in which the modifications necessary for effect have been already successfully made.

In Mr. Stanford's new opera the librettist, Mr. Gilbert À Beckett, has had recourse to no such subterfuge as this but has faced the difficulty for himself, and solved it in the best possible way, by surrounding the central figure with characters of his own invention, one of which at least is developed from a hint in Villari's life of the great Dominican.

Clarice, the daughter of a rich merchant of Ferrara, is beloved by *Savonarola*, a young student; she has been betrothed, against her will, to a Florentine nobleman named *Rucello*. She has appointed a last meeting with her lover on the evening of her betrothal, and at the opening of the PROLOGUE he waits outside the gate of her house. He knows that his love is returned, but not that *Clarice* has been affianced to another. She comes, but only to bid him farewell. They are interrupted by *Rucello*, who taunts *Savonarola* with his lowly origin, and roughly orders *Clarice* to return to the house. *Savonarola* denounces him, and they are about to fight when a company of Dominican monks cross the stage singing as they go. The combatants put up their swords, and after the procession has passed, *Clarice* is drawn within the gates, but not before she has sworn to *Savonarola* that she will never marry Rucello. The student, left alone outside the gates, struggles once more against his fate, and tries to force an entrance, but as he does so the distant chant of the Dominicans breaks upon his ear and he determines to join them and ernbrace a religious life.

So far the PROLOGUE, after which twenty-three years are supposed to elapse. In the meantime, *Clarice* has been married to a certain *Strozzi*, and has died leaving a daughter, closely resembling herself, named *Francesca*. Of this daughter *Rucello* has obtained the guardianship, for *Strozzi* is also dead. She has been brought up in Florence, learning from her guardian to hate the very name of *Savonarola*, who by this time has, by his unbounded influence and strength of character, risen to a position of supremacy in the city. *Rucello* is at the head of a set of partisans of the Medici, who desire to overthrow the power of the priest and to bring in their own princes as rulers.

At the beinning of ACT I. they meet opposite *Rucello's* house in the Piazza della Signoria, he having promised to produce an emissary who shall be instrumental in delivering up Florence to the Medici. This messenger is *Francesca*, who now enters and declares her hatred of *Savonarola*, and her longing to see Florence delivered from his sway. While waiting for her message, she is met by *Sebastiano*, a member of the secular order of the Pianoni, founded by *Savonarola*; he loves her, but in vain, for her heart is given to the cause wherein lies, as she has been taught, the only hope for Florence. He tries to dissuade her from her error, and to show her the treachery which it involves; but she is not to be turned from her purpose. When she is gone the ceremony of the "Burning of Vanities," so graphically described in "Romola," takes place, the Piagnoni boys collecting from the rich Florentines jewels and other spoils "for the holy fire." The partisans of the Medici deride the donors, and a tumult arises, which is immediately quelled at the appearance of *Savonarola*, the people falling at his feet as he advances, clad in the white robe and black hood of the order, and bearing in his hand a skull. Peace is restored, but is soon broken again by the discovery of *Francesca's* treachery. She is brought in, and confesses with pride that she is of the Medicean faction. *Savonarola* orders her to prison, but *Rucello* steps in and tells him whose daughter she is, showing him a miniature of *Clarice*. Savonarola wavers, and orders her to be freed. Upon this *Rucello* reviles him to the crowd, calling him

One who sells
The honour of the state to feed and fan
The puling passion of a love-sick boy.

Savonarola regains his self-possession, and gives Rucello the lie, by confirming his first order of condemnation, and as Francesca is led off, the curtain falls.

ACT II. passes in the monastery of San Marco. The Medicean faction has gained strength, and is endangering the ecclesiastical power in the city. The monks are praying to their founder, St. Dominic, for aid. *Sebastislno* and the chiefs of the Piagnoni come to defend the convent and all go into the chapel, except *Sebastiano*, who stands as sentinel outside. To his surprise, *Francesca* demands admission. She has been set free by *Rucello*, and in her imprisonment her feelings towards *Savonarola* have completely changed, and she is now come to warn him and his monks of the approach of the Medici. Shortly afterwards they come and sack the convent, defeating its defenders and killing *Sebastiano*. *Savonarola* is imprisoned, tried, convicted and sentenced to execution.

ACT III. is occupied with the final scenes of *Savonarola's* life. In the prison *Francesca* comes to crave his forgiveness. He blesses her, and as he does so the memory of years gone by returns, and in *Clarice's* child his old sorrow is expiated. The guards enter to take him to execution and curtains close in the first scene while a funeral march is played. The second scene is in the Piazza, where *Rucello* is exulting in the accomplishment of his revenge. As *Savonarola* comes, followed by the crowd who kneel for his blessing, *Rucello* confronts him in triumph, and scoffs at him. He remains perfectly calm, but *Francesca* and the crowd pour curses upon *Rucello's* head. The procession moves on, leaving *Francesca* alone on the stage watching the preparations for the execution. As the ruddy glow of the distant fire lights up the stage, she utters strains of rapturous exaltation as though seeing an angelic vision, and at last sinks lifeless to the ground.

The music inspired by this fine libretto is in all respects worthy of it. It is throughout lofty in emotion, conceived on the highest lines, intellectually as well as musically, and admirably sustained in every portion. It is not too much to say that in breadth of conception and richness of imagination, as well as in intrinsic musical beauty, it far excels all Mr. Stanford's formerworks. His method of operatic treatment is as original as the music itself. He uses "leading motives "freely, but by no means too lavishly. Some of the recurring phrases savour rather of musical allusion than of the "Leitmotiv" proper. Thus the orchestral opening of the PROLOGUE is used again almost note for note to introduce ACTS II. and III., which treat, like the PROLOGUE, of *Savonarola's* sufferings. A phrase of great breadth and beauty which first occurs in G major as an accompaniment to the expression of the young student's hopes of victory in love, is used again in a slightly modified form where supremacy of his influence is to be expressed, and again when he is taken prisoner, exulting in view of the martyr's triumphant death. The other musical motives may be left to explain themselves. The use of the Dominican Chant, the melody of which is taken from a collection of church music dating from about 1300, is very fine indeed representing as it does the religious element in the drama. Of set pieces there are few or none in the opera, but nothing is farther from the composer's style than the "endless recitative" affected by some young musicians in fancied imitation of Wagner. Though there are no separable numbers, unless we count the prayer of the Dominicans and the funeral march as such, yet the music is divided into movements which are scarcely less clear in form thanthose of a sonata.

Among the most beautiful and striking portions of the score we may mention the duet and final tenor solo in the PROLOGUE, *Francesca's* song and the scene of the "Burning of Vanities" in ACT I., the Dominican Hymn and the duet between *Francesca* and *Sebastiano* in ACT II., and in ACT III. the duet in the prison, the funeral march and final soprano solo, in which the music first heard at the close of the PROLOGUE recurs with the best possible effect, and by which the whole work is brought to a solemn and most affecting conclusion.

ANGELUS AD VIRGINEM

Stanford chose the Latin hymn Angelus ad virginem for use throughout his opera.

He was likely alerted to the tune when *The Musical Times* published an article in the February 1, 1882 edition:

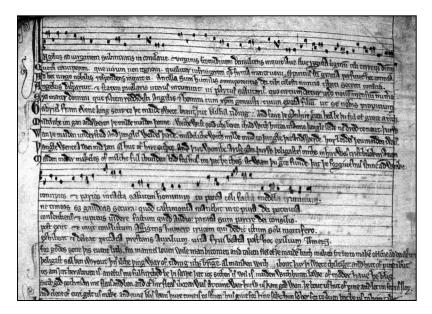
The readers of Chaucer's "Canterbury Tales" will well remember his descripton of the poor Oxford scholar, Nicolas, and of his lodging, where -

... al above ther lay a gay sawtrye (Psaltery)
On which he made, a nightès, melodye
So swetèley, that al the chamber range;
And Angelus ad Virginem he sang.
And, after that, he sang *The Kingès* note:
Full often blissedd was his mery throte.

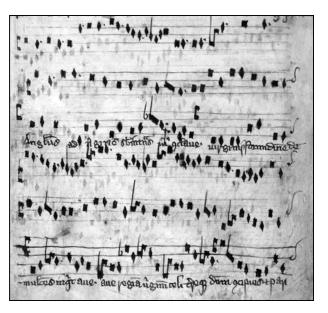
The "Angelus ad Virginem" was one of the Anglo-Latin Hymns of the Annunciation, a copy of which has been recently found, with an English version underneath it, of a date about a hundred years before the "Canterbury Tales" were written. Chaucer died in 1400, and the date of the manuscript is from 1250 to 1260. It was unknown to Sir John Hawkins because, when he was writing his "History of Music," the manuscript was in the library of the Royal Society. It came from Norfolk, and was bequeathed to the Royal Society by one of the Norfolk branch of the Howards, together with many manuscripts and books on different branches of science. About the commencement of the present century such of those manuscripts as were found to be useless in a library devoted to science were transferred by the Royal Society to the British Museum, and this manuscript was then classed witht eh Arundel Collection and numbered 248.

In his 2024 biography "Charles Villiers Stanford: Man and Musician", author Jeremy Dibble describes:

"The distinctive character of the hymn and the source's association with the home of his early musical training afforded an irresistible combination for Stanford, and the material was eminently appropriate for the dramatic appearances throughout the opera of the Dominican friars."

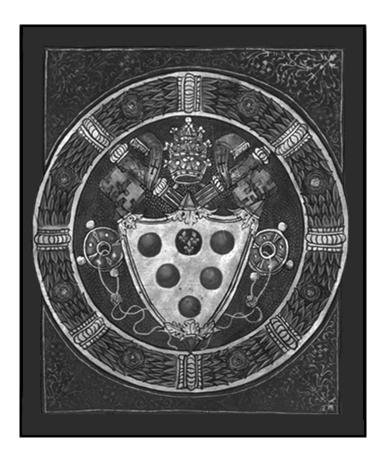


Angelus ad virginem in the Arundel 248 Manuscript



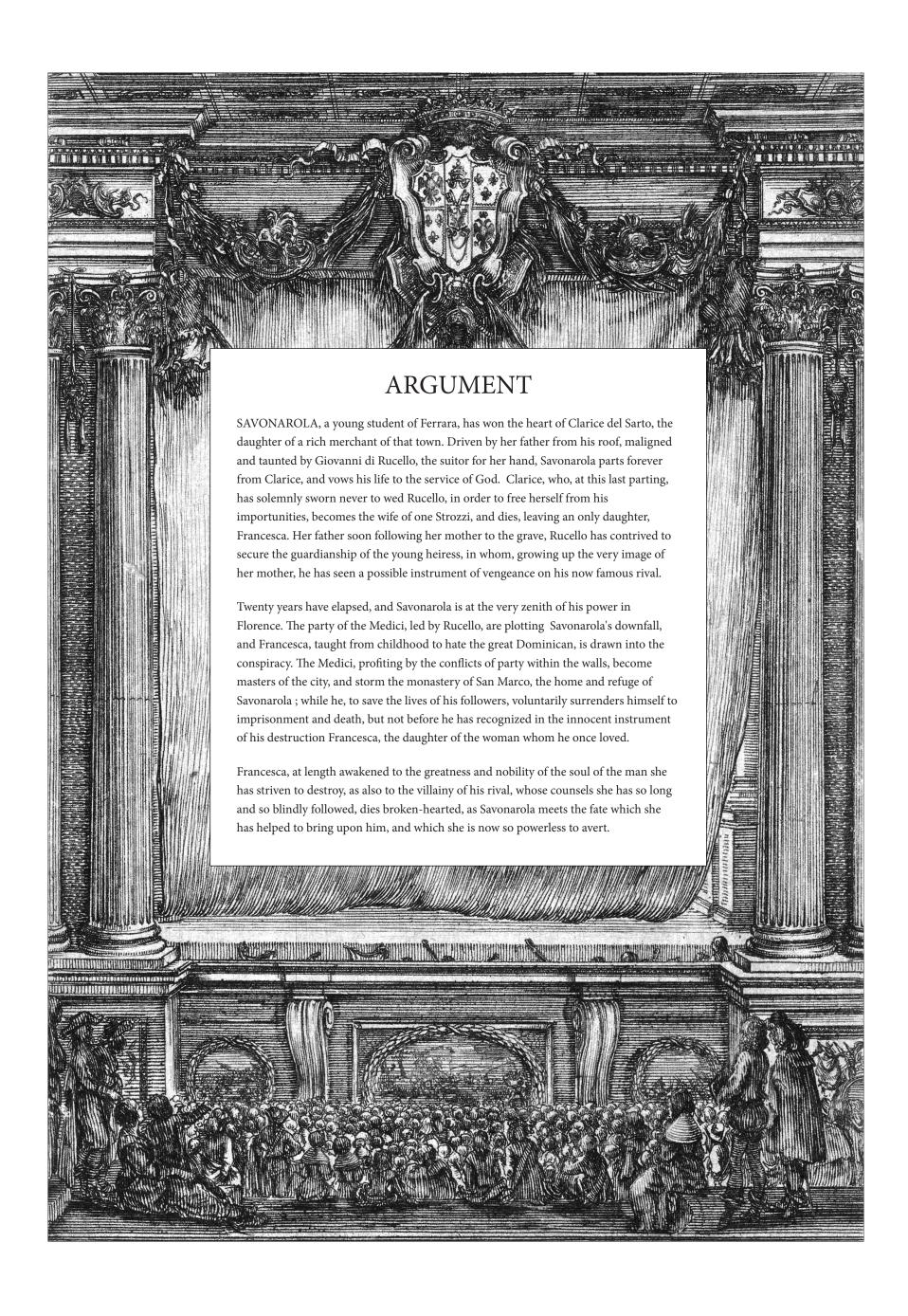
St. Patrick's Cathedral (Dublin) Troper version of Angelus ad virginem

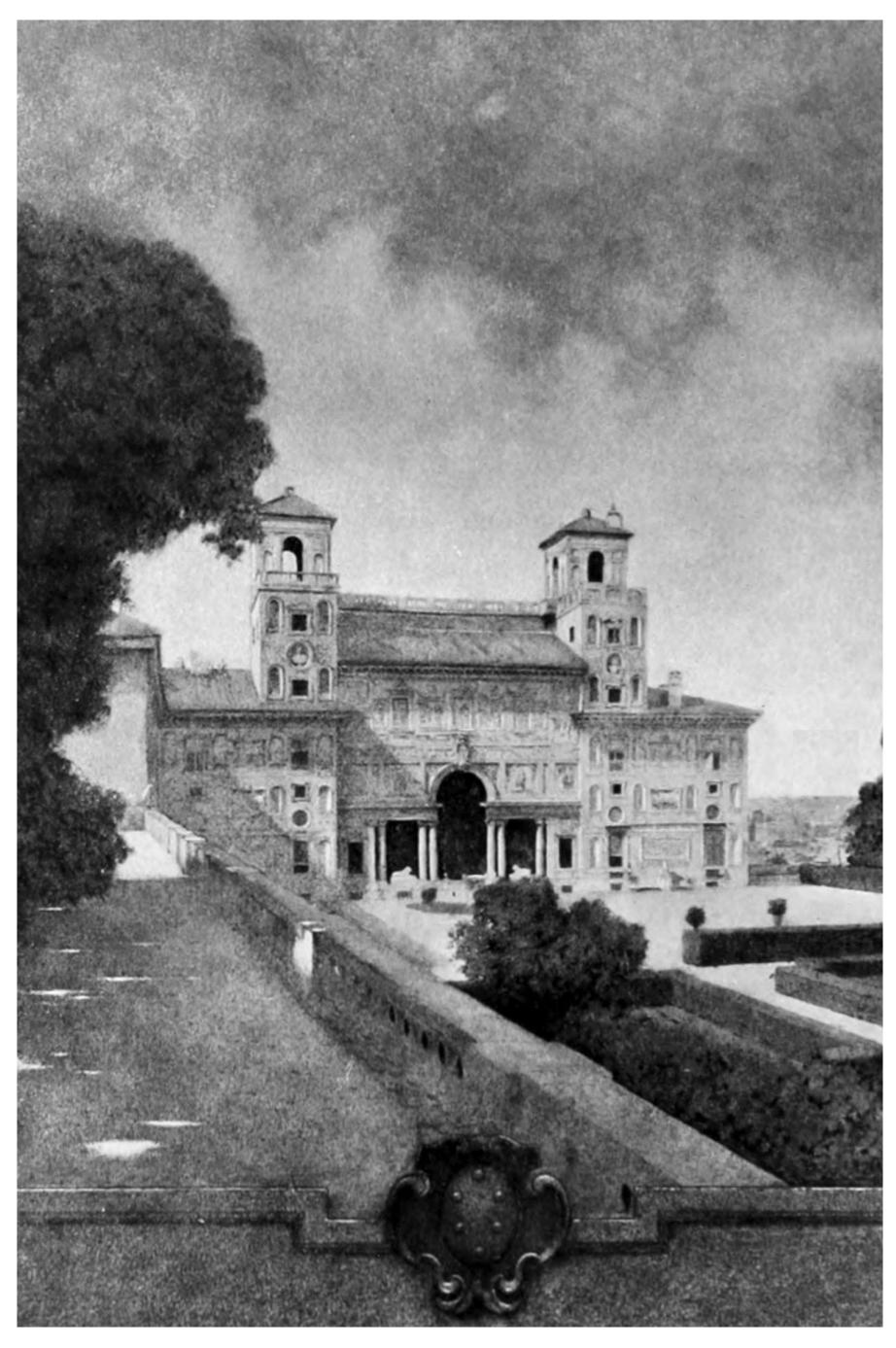




To the building up of the following story about the central figure of the great Dominican whose name gives the title to this opera, it need scarcely be pointed out that recorded history has supplied merely the rough material, the form and finish of the whole being left, as in a work of this kind it is legitimate they should be, to such handling by fancy as the varied exigencies of this special and peculiar form of dramatic treatment inevitably demand.

The incident, however, on which the PROLOGUE is constructed, and which gives the key-note to the subsequent action of the play, has the authority of more than one eminent biographer. It may be further added that though, while bringing Savonarola on to the scene, the political rather than the religious aspect of the struggle in which he was engaged has been purposely emphasized, yet a due regard has been paid to the necessity of reproducing with definite distinctness the striking features of his character, and of preserving, in the ideal situations in which he is placed, a faithful portrait of him as he appeared in the zenith of his power, when living and moving in the streets of Florence.





VILLA MEDICI Maxfield Parrish 1905

CHARACTERS IN THE PROLOGUE

THE PROLOGUE TAKES PLACE IN FERRARA - A.D. 1475

Clarice Pupil of Savonarola Soprano

> Savonarola A student Tenor

Giovanni di Rucello A Florentine noble Baritone

LIBRETTO

by Gilbert À Beckett PROLOGUE

SCENE 1

The Scene represents the exterior of the garden and grounds attached to the palace of a rich merchant of the city of Ferrara, towards the middle of the fifteenth century.

A lofty wall pierced in the centre with a double wrought-iron gate divides the foreground from the ornamental shrubbery beyond. To the right, rising above the wall, is discerned a portion of the mansion itself, with casements brilliantly illuminated as for a fête. The moon at its fullest and brightest hangs in the tranquil heavens above. The dark foliage of the poplar and cypress forms a frame-work to the picture of which the striking feature is the contrast between the fairy-like beauty of the moonlit grounds within, and the gloom of the deserted road that bounds them.

As the curtain rises, the strains of the following distant chorus break the silence.

CHORUS

Wake, land of light and laughter,
Wake with the music of mirth!
Wake! There is no hereafter,—
Life and love are of earth.
Wake! For passion and power,
Wake with the dawn of light.
Fairer are fruit and flower
Culled in the night.
Wake! For joy and sorrow
Fade as a passing breath;
Wake! For to-night,
Is the child of light;
To-morrow,
The child of death!

As the chorus seems momentarily to grow fainter on the mid0night air, SAVONAROLA enters. He approaches the gate as if looking for some one he is expecting to meet; when, reaching it and halting, he gazes into the grounds, from which it bars him. Then listening as the chorus once more grows louder, and breaks the stillness of the night, he slowly comes down.

SAVONAROLA

"The child of death—to-morrow!" Nay, to-night,
The wan pale mother, cypress-crowned and still,
Bears her hushed burthen from the world. To-night
Dies my last hope! To-night! And yet the morn,
That heralded with sunlight, and with song

Of heavenward mounting bird this day of death,
Saw me—a king—my foot upon the throne
Of ecstasy, the golden crown of life
Within my grasp. Saw me with head erect,
And fearless tread, pass yonder gates, and crave,
All loving and beloved, the peerless prize,
The one fair jewel that it holds!
(He advances to the gate).
O love!
Divine Clarice, beneath whose gaze

Divine Clarice, beneath whose gaze The earth to me grew wondrous fair; Whose voice made music in the air, Whose smile was sunlight through our days. When 'neath the shadows, past the streams, You answered, while in rhapsody I taught; your voice a melody, That floated ever through my dreams:-Till thou, sweet angel, chaste and holy, With pure and tender fires, Didst wake to wild desires, And from their winter sleep didst loosen slowly. The pent-up springs that frozen Chill to my heart lay lost: when free With silver song, in rapture onward To the everlasting sea They sped, flow'ry meads forsaking, Knowing no resting-place but thee— My own, my chosen!

The refrain of the chorus is again heard, and SAVONAROLA, listening, comes down: when the hour of midnight is chimed on a distant clock, he starts, and turns towards the gate.

Midnight! And she will soon be here,
Ah! when from yonder halls this morn,
Her purse proud sire bade me depart,
And drove me forth with kindling scorn,
And branded me as one base born,
Forsooth, that I had won her heart!
Came her soft whisper to mine ear,
"To-night hard by the western gate."
(He listens—then nears the gate.)
Hark!' tis her step-she draweth near,
My peerless queen, my own, I wait,
Come, come, my love. Ah! thou art here!

Advancing to the gates, he rapidly opens them, retreating astep. CLARICE hurriedly enters from the grounds, looking back as if pursued. On seeing SAVONAROLA, she rushes to his arms: he embraces her.

SCENE 2

CLARICE

Ah! Thou art here!

SAVONAROLA

Clarice! But speak,

There's terror in thine eyes. Thy cheek

Pales! Ha! Thy father!

(With a gesture of menace in the direction of the palace.

She tenderly restrains him)

CLARICE

Nay, not so!

That he hath wronged thee, heed it not!

That he hath severed

This our love,

Ah, heed it not! Above,

In yonder silent heaven

'Twill blossom fairer!

SAVONAROLA

But below,

We live, we love! Our earth-born lot Is wondrous fair.

CLARICE

Ah me! In vain

For us the sweetest flowers blow

In flood of sunlight wafted hither!

As we stretch hands to them they wither,

Their beauty we no longer know.

We love them—

Then we let them go.

SAVONAROLA (tenderly)

Clarice! Clarice!

CLARICE (With passion)

O my belovéd

We must part.

Ah, hold me closer

Next thine heart—

Close-closer still-

Upon the air

There comes a chill

As of some icy breath

Blown from a land

All desolate in death.

(She gazes up to heaven.)

The night is fair,

So fair, my love!

For thou art near me,

Living, loving, yet.

Our stars are sinking,

But they have not set.

Will not all time one little moment spare,

Ere the deep shadows fall,

And strikes the hour of agony supreme.

(Appealingly)

O Heaven, that taketh all!

O Heaven, that holdeth all,

Oh by some holy spell,

In rapture chaste,

Grant we shall taste, Ere deep shadows fall,

Their utter sweetness,

In this last farewell.

SAVONAROLA

Farewell! Clarice; Oh, it cannot be That fate, like death, shall sever— That riven, and rent asunder,

Our lives shall part. That the world's wide sea

With its whirl of storm and thunder,

Shall flow in cruel and cold and deep;

That love that sung and soared so high,

Shall be smitten and swept without a cry

From its heavenward flight: —

O'er land and main

Shall woo again

The blood-red sunrise never,

But fall with the night

In a soundless sleep,

And sink from sight, —

And be hushed for ever and ever!

Clarice! Wide worlds may sever

Our parted lives: but about my crest, I bear a sweet white flower,

With a strength divine.

For thy love is mine,

For ever and ever!

CLARICE

For thy love is mine, for ever and ever! Aye for ever and ever!

(She falls into his arms. At the moment he plants a kiss upon her forehead, RUCELLO appears suddenly on the threshold of the iron gates. On perceiving SAVONAROLA and CLARICE, he halts as one who has found the object of his search. They turn at his step, and on recognizing him, fall back a pace or two)

SCENE 3

RUCELLO

So, so, with him? So thus the fair Clarice, My lady chaste, sought by her father's guests, With a vile lackey, 'neath the amorous moon, Upholds the honour of his house!

(SAVONAROLA, stung by his words, makes a hasty movement as if to fling himself upon him)

CLARICE

(Placing herself in his path, with a beseeching gesture of restraint) Ah! No!

Heed not his speech!

SAVONAROLA

Thy sweet and sacred name Shall such as he pollute?

(He passes her and faces RUCELLO) Black-throated villain!

Thou liest!

RUCELLO

Ha!

(Half drawing his rapier, then with change of tone)

But no! The nameless cur

That yelps at us, we let it pass.

Pass thou!

Fair damozel, thine escort waits.

Thou knows't not?

Thy sire's command, proud beauty, and the will Of him to whom thy sire has charged they care.

Thy humble—and affianced slave.

(Sternly)

My lady, —

(He again points to the gate)

I'll follow thee.

SAVONAROLA

(To CLARICE)

Affianced!

CLARICE

Affianced! I know naught!
They barter for my body—but my
O my beloved, is thine!

SAVONAROLA

(To RUCELLO)
Affianced! Thou!
Thou darest not say it.

RUCELLO

Ay, and more. For I Bid thee, thou varlet, know thy place!

SAVONAROLA

Un-say those words.

CLARICE

Thou art

A courtly knight.

RUCELLO

Didst thou

Not take thy wage like any liv'ried slave— Hired for thy sophistry? And hast thou not Proved traitor to thy trust! Come, end o' this! Out of my path!

SAVONAROLA

That thy all leprous hand May touch her purity!

(They both assume an attitude of meance. CLARICE again rushes between them)

CLARICE

(To SAVONAROLA)

Nay—let him be!

(To RUCELLO)

Know this, that on his soul is honour set
Like to a gleaming star—whose holy light
Shall lead me ever onward through the gloom
Of all my dark'ning life.
(She approaches SAVONAROLA)

SAVONAROLA

Beloved Clarice!

(They come down a few steps together)

RUCELLO

Thou tarriest still? Pratest of honour? List,
Shall he who guards the king's one fairest flower,
Then breaks the stem, —

Tears from the queen defenceless in her bower

Her diadem—

He who all trusted by the city sleeping,

Opens the gate,

And with her strength and safety in his keeping, Betrays the state—

Shall he who takes warm welcome sweetly smiling,

Then stabs his friend;

Who recks not—honour, truth, and trust defiling,

To gain one end.

Shall he whom all men scorn—then stamp from sight,

Thy passion fire ?

(He advances to her.)

Pollute thy name no more : shame not the night!

In to thy sire!

(He comes down to her, and seizing her wrist, places himself Between her and SAVONAROLA)

SAVONAROLA

(His hand on the hilt of his rapier)
Ha! Thou wouldst? Unhand her!

RUCELLO

(Drawing his rapier)
By the saints!
I'll spit thee as a dog.
(He makes a pass at him)

SAVONAROLA

(Draws to defend himself)
Coward! To draw,
And wound her gentle eyes!
(They face each other)
Then take thy fate!

CLARICE

(Rushing between them)
Ha!
(To RUCELLO)
I'll go with thee!
(Appealing to SAVONAROLA)
Oh, cease!
In the name of Heaven!

RUCELLO

(Passing before her, and again facing SAVONAROLA)

Heav'n look to it! I'll look to thee!

En garde!

SAVONAROLA

Thou mockest Heaven! Then, Heaven, speak!

They are about to encounter when, as SAVONAROLA utters the last word, a chant is heard without; and as both pause at the sound, a company of Dominican monks cross the scene. As they pass with solemn pace chanting their hymn, RUCELLO and SAVONAROLA doff their caps, and slowly put up their rapiers. CLARICE kneels.

HYMN OF DOMINICAN MONKS

Angelus ad Virginem
Subintrans in conclave
Virignis formidinem
Demulcens inquit Ave!
Ave Regina Virginum
Cœli terræque Dominum
Concipies intacta
Salutem hominum
Tu porta cœli facta
Medela criminum.

As the procession passes from sight the chant dies away. RUCELLO falls back a step, and stands by the gates, waiting for CLARICE, whom he motions towards them. She has risen from her knees, and advances to SAVONAROLA, who has turned, and is following the retreating procession with his gaze as one transfixed.

CLARICE

Farewell! My love, farewell!

SAVONAROLA

(Recalled to himself by the sound of her voice)

Clarice! Thou goest?

CLARICE

Ay, love! And this my prayer—
That thou wilt hence! Thou wilt—for me!
They seek thy life. Thou'lt go! Ah swear—
Thou'lt this for me!

SAVONAROLA

Clarice! For thee—So be it, I will hence.

CLARICE

Thou wilt!

My love, heaven with thee!

RUCELLO

(coming down)

Heav'n, or Hell;

But tarry not.

(He points to the gates)

In, wilt thou?

SAVONAROLA

Hold!

Clarice! Thou'lt swear to Heav'n, though chained A wedded captive, He, thy sire, No, not by threat, nor steel, nor fire, Shall see thy soul and body stained,

In slavery to him!

CLARICE

I swear

By highest Heav'n!

RUCELLO

(Advancing)

Ha!So!

SAVONAROLA

Clarice!

Ah, now mine own! Farewell!

CLARICE

(Stretching her hands towards him)

Farewell!

My love! Farewell!

(She tears herself away, and hurries through the gates. As she Vanishes, SAVONAROLA is by a natural impulse about to follow her. RUCELLO bars his path)

RUCELLO

(Drawing his rapier)

Thine oath! 'Tis so;

Thy world ends here. She bade thee go;

She, thy sweet cagèd bird.

(The gates close with a clang)

Go, revel in thy liberty!

SCENE 4

(He disappears. SAVONAROLA, who has drawn back a step, stung by his taunt, puts his hand on the hilt of his rapier as if he would pursue him)

SAVONAROLA

The venom-tonguèd coward!

(He restrains himself, putting back his rapier)

Nay!

His is no victory!

Yet, what is mine? No laurel crown

Shall deck my brow. The forces of my life

Are put to flight.

On blood-red field the sun goes down,

And o'er the wrack of ended strife

Chill comes the night.

The moon has waned, and the faint blush of coming dawn begins to illuminate the scene. He turns towards the east.

The scene brightens a little.

And why,

When all things quicken

With life, and move,

Should I be stricken,

And creep away, As the golden day

Is awake with love?

What of the night—With its dream of wrong,

Past all forgiving !—

Am I not living-

My right hand strong? With love hard by,

In the burst of the May-time,

The dawn of the day-time,

What-turn and fly!

(He draws his rapier.)

No! Turret and tower, Nor passion, nor power,

Shall hold my flower!

My oath 'twas a lie!

(He is about to force the gates, when once again the refrain of the Dominican hymn falls on his ear. As the strain ceases, he bows his head. He comes down.)

> What power is this! What wondrous light Is breaking o'er my soul! Far off, the last great goal In flood of heaven-sent sunrise, bright, Clears to my vision! Peace! Peace, peace, the everlasting peace of God Awaits me! Yea, Amen! I'll tread The holy path thy feet have trod!

(He turns for the last time towards the palace.)

Dost hear me! O my fair earth-flower, For thee I go! I go, Clarice, -To hold and have my soul all pure, To brave the struggle, to endure, Till blest, before that highest throne, We meet wide heaven our own, Eternity our dower!

(The first ray of sunrise now lightens the scene. Angelic music fills the air. SAVONAROLA advances as one transfigured.)

Farewell, thou world! Behold me free! Ay, free!

My God! My soul I give to Thee.

(He shivers his sword across his knee, and flings it away.)

The Curtain falls slowly

END OF THE PROLOGUE

CONTENTS

Prologue

	PAGE
Scene 1	17
Scene 2	58
Scene 3	91
Scene 4	130

Instrumentation

On Stage	Behind the Scenes
On stage	Delinia the seemes

Flute (2) Piccolo
Oboe (2) Oboe (2)
Cor Anglais Clarinet (2)

Clarinet (2)

Bassoon (2) Horn (4)

Trumpet (2)

Horn (4) Bass Trombone

Trumpet (2)

Trombone (3) Cymbal Tuba Triangle

Timpani

Harp

Violin I Violin II Viola Violoncello Double Bass

Approximate Performance Time

PROLOGUE - 32 minutes

PREMIERE PERFORMANCES

GERMANY
April 18, 1884
Stadt-Theatre, Hamburg
Josef Sucher conductor

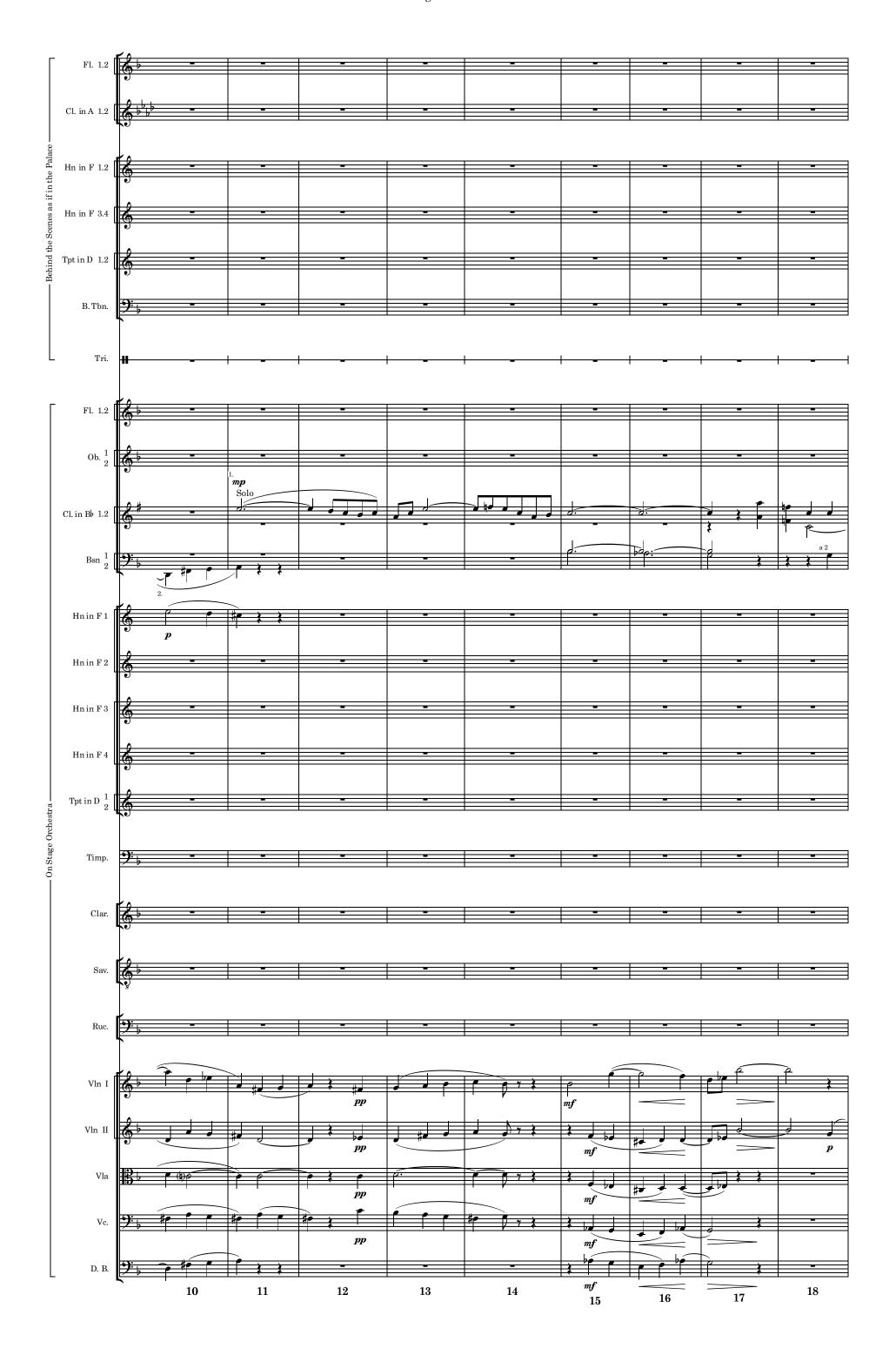
GREAT BRITAIN
July 9, 1884
Covent Garden, London
Hans Richter conductor

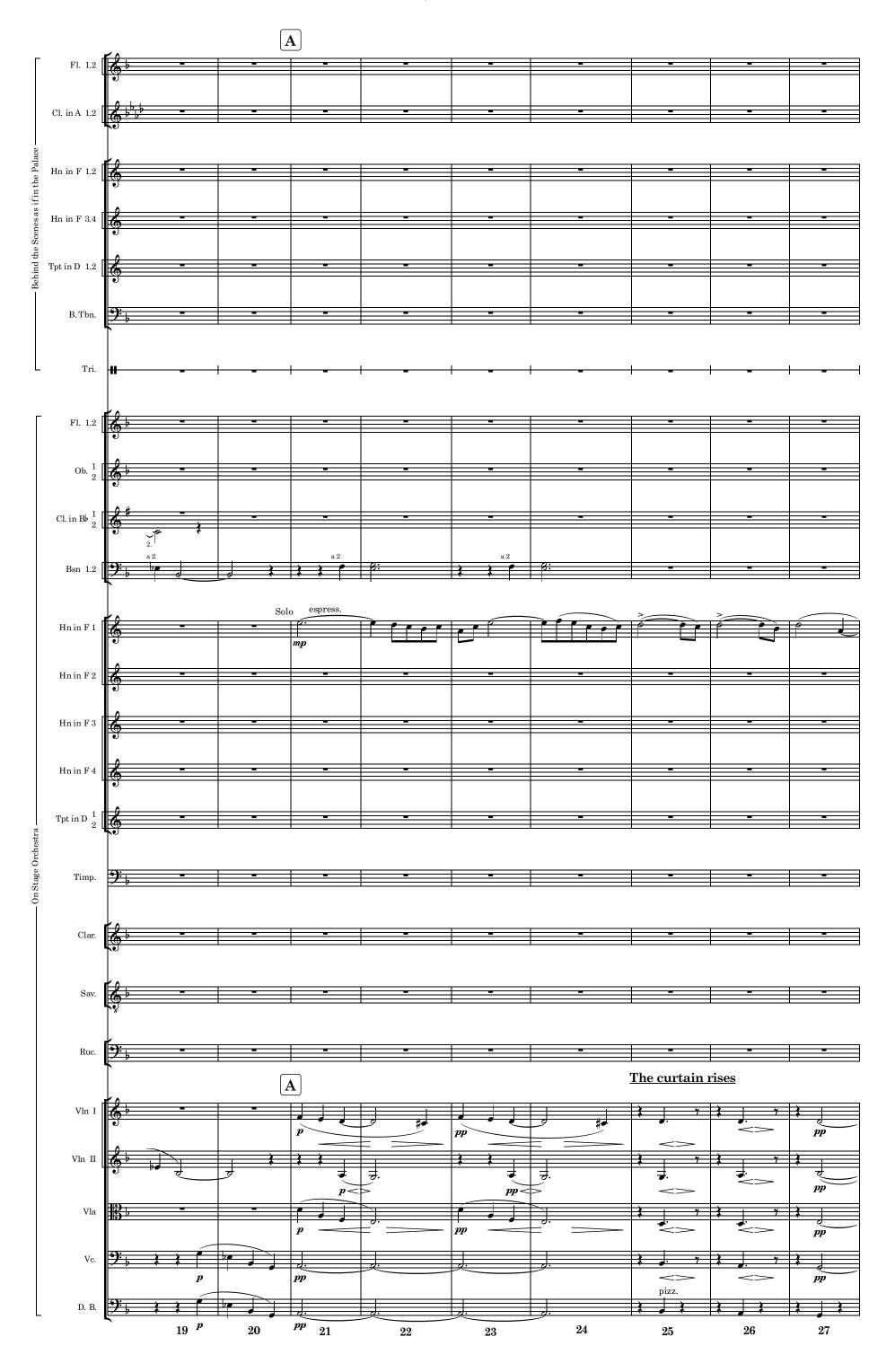
PROLOGUE

Gilbert À Beckett Charles Villiers Stanford

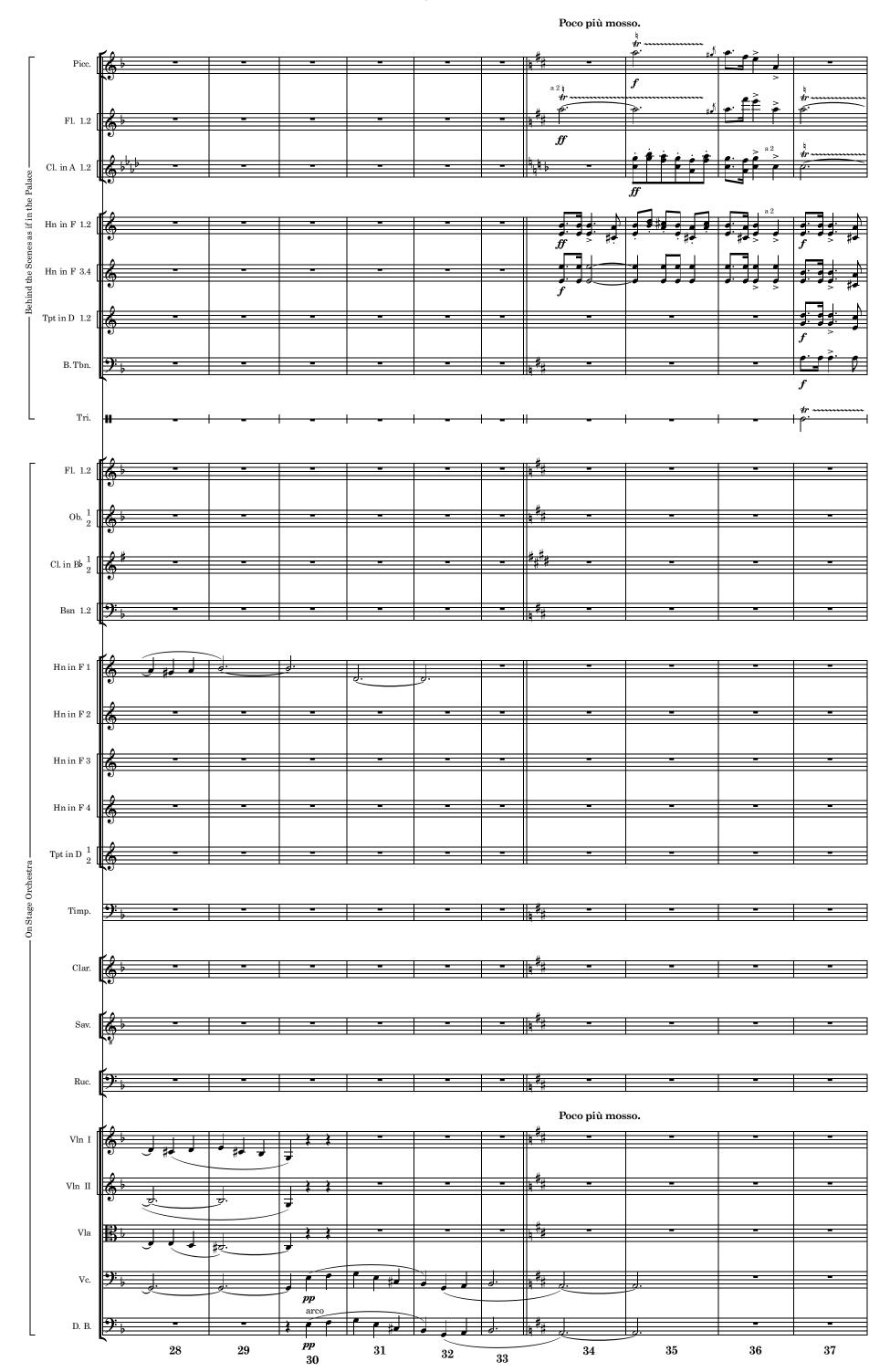
Scene 1







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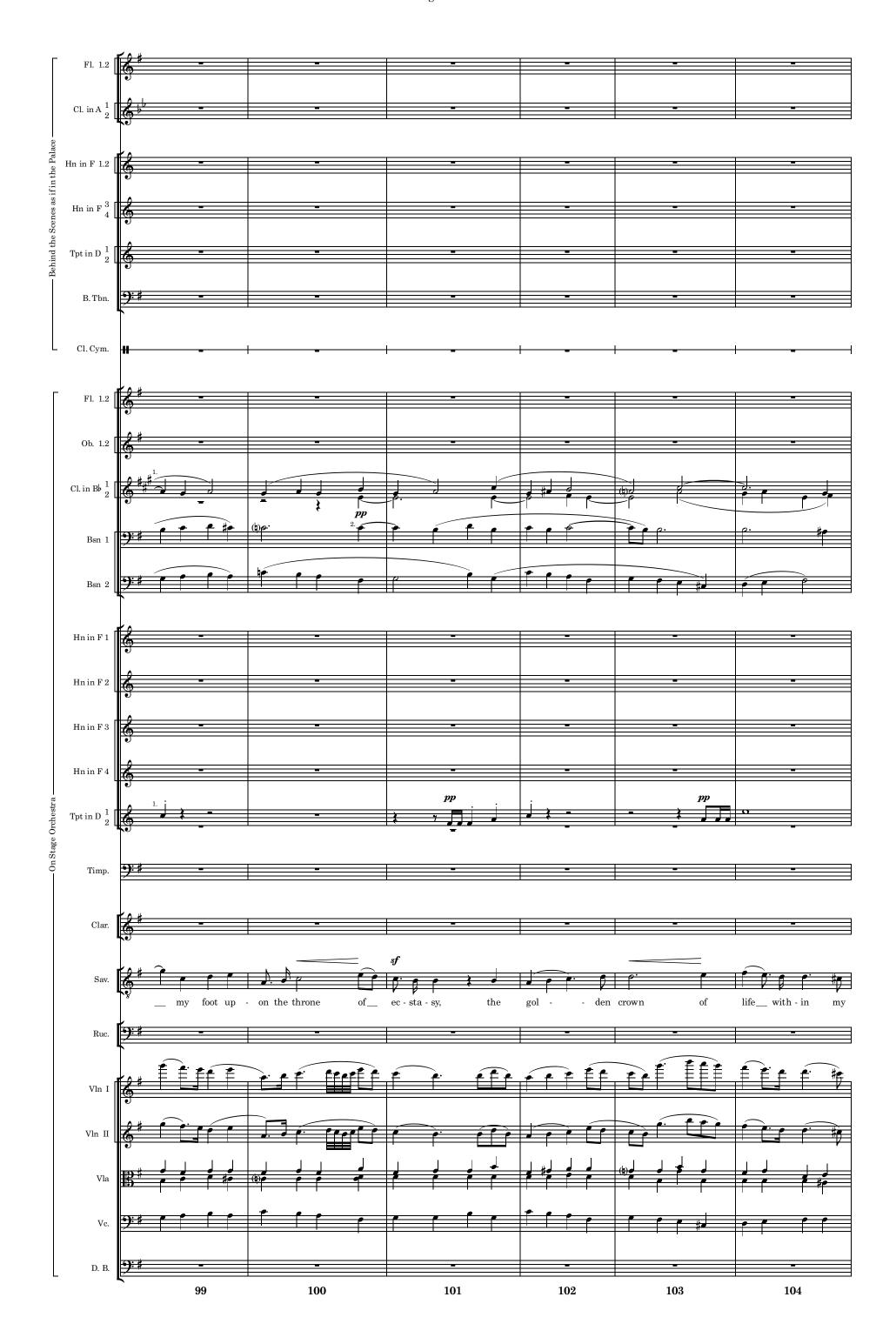




















































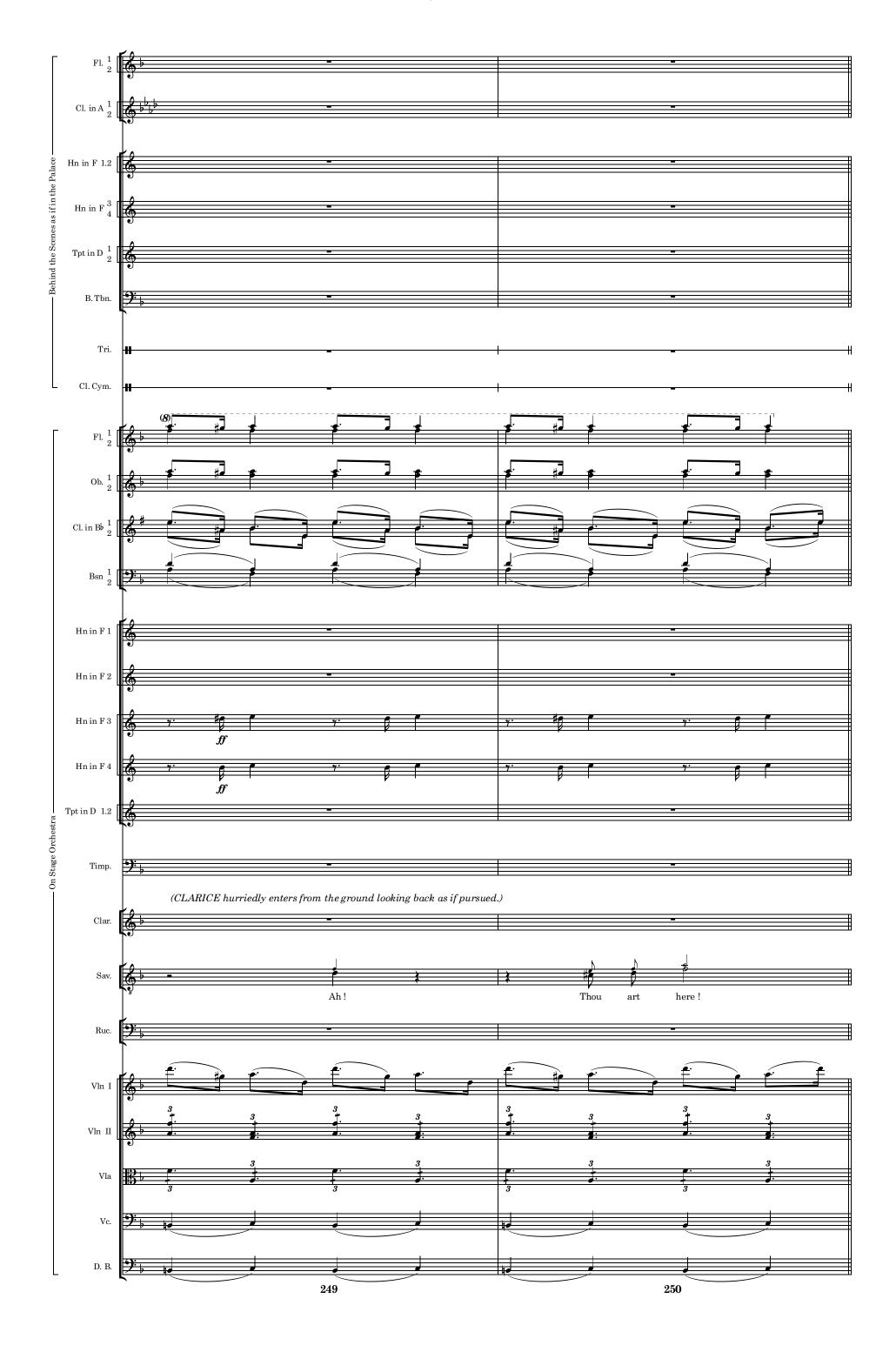












Prologue - Scene 2

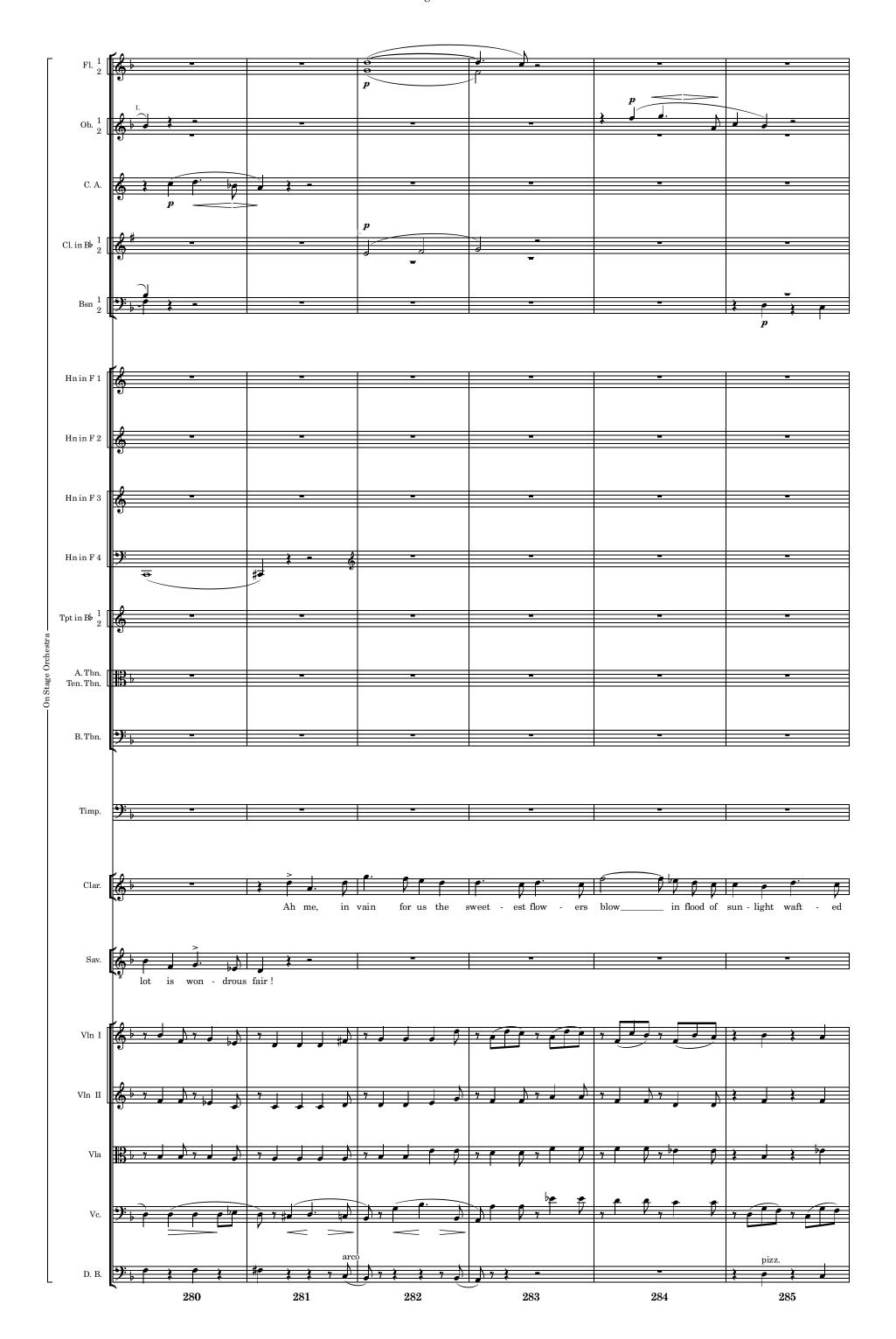








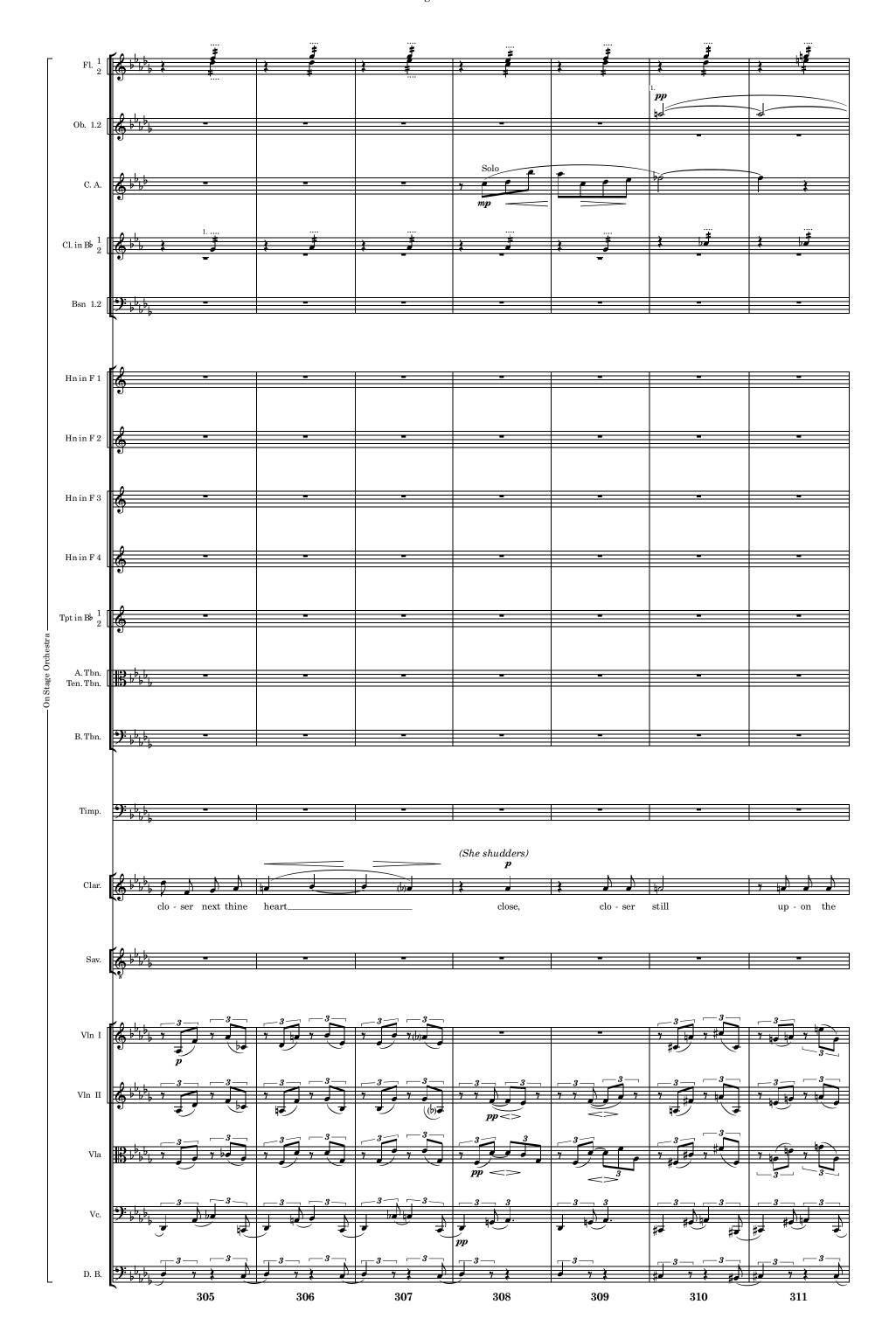




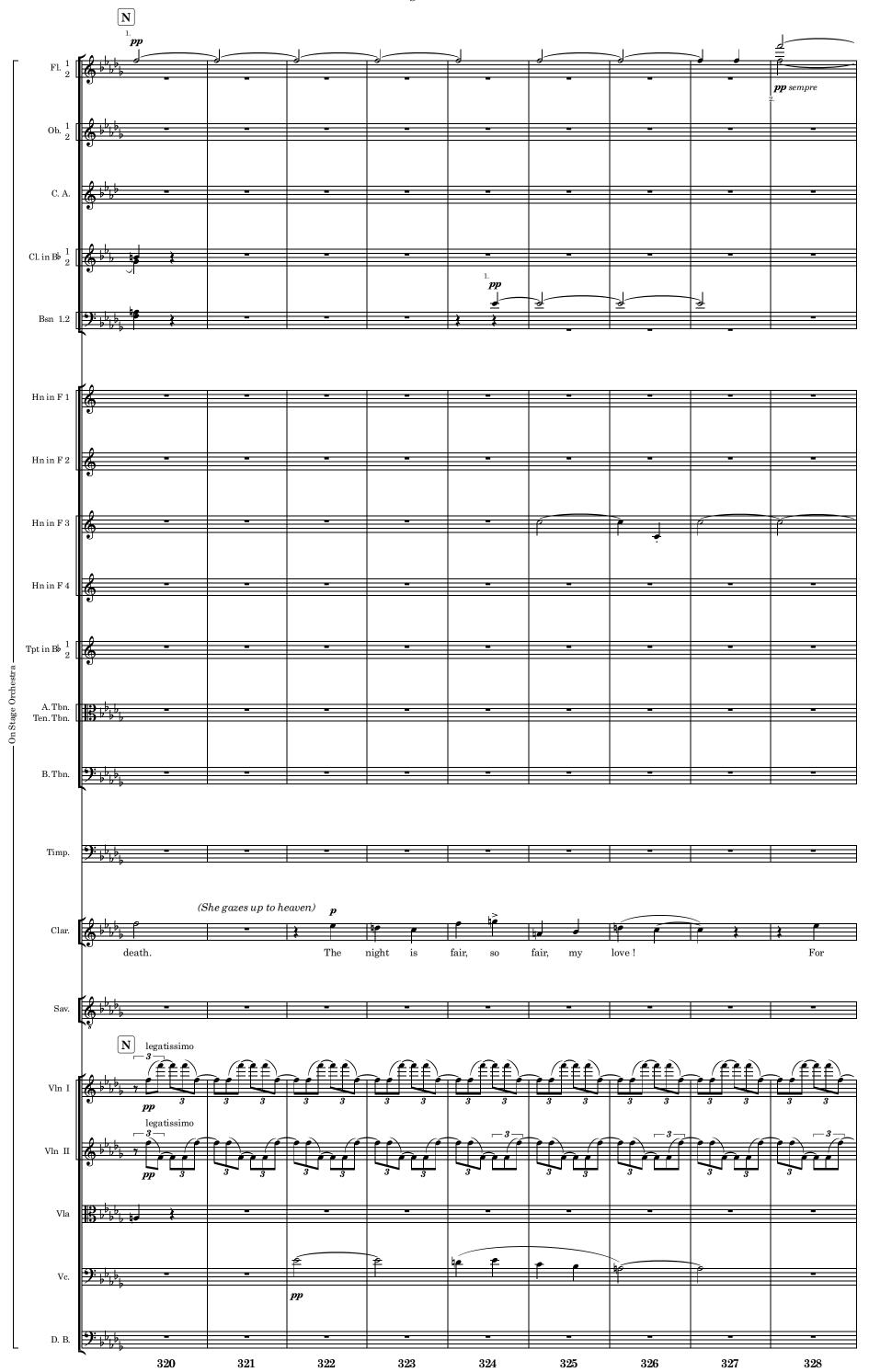












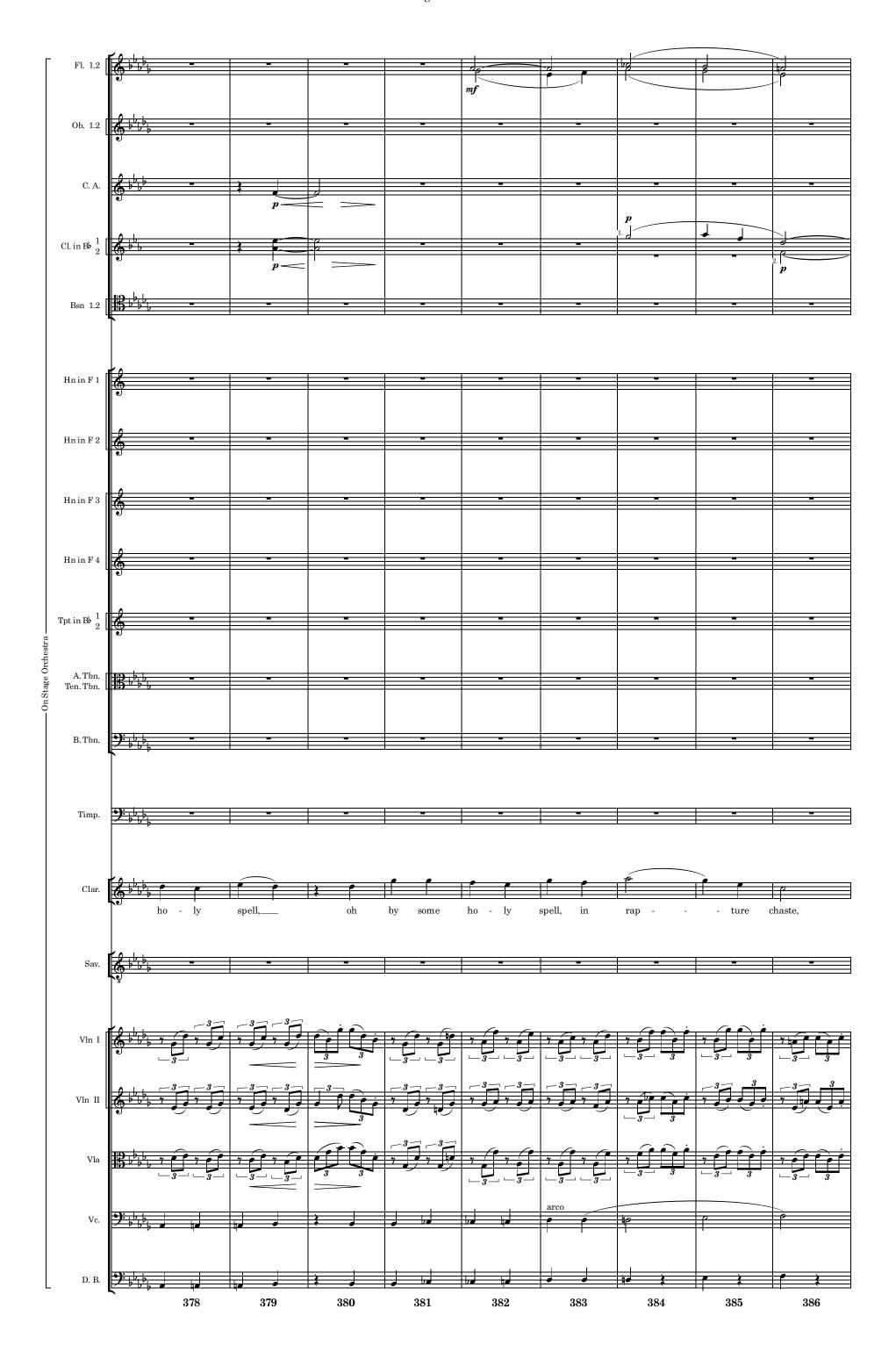


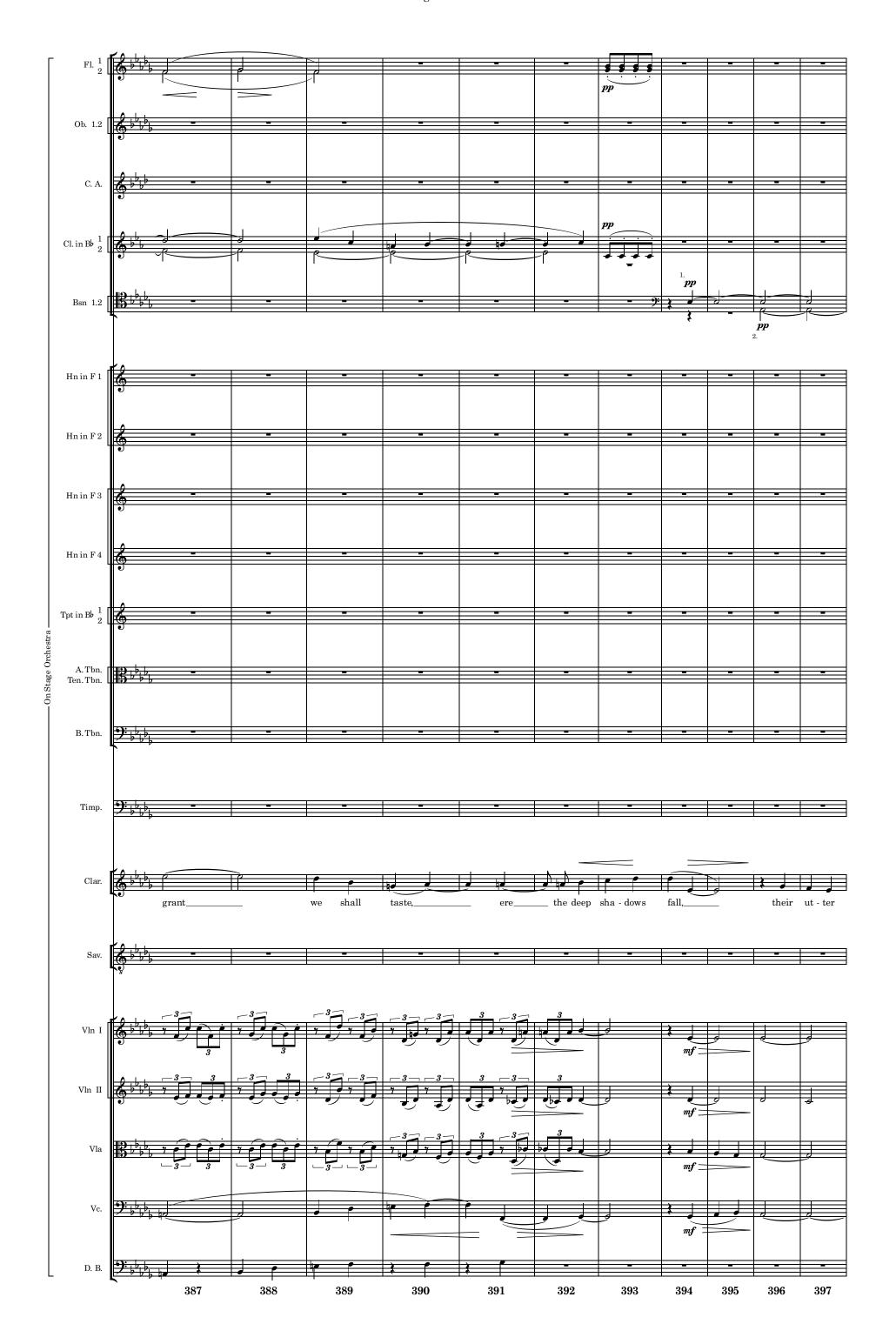


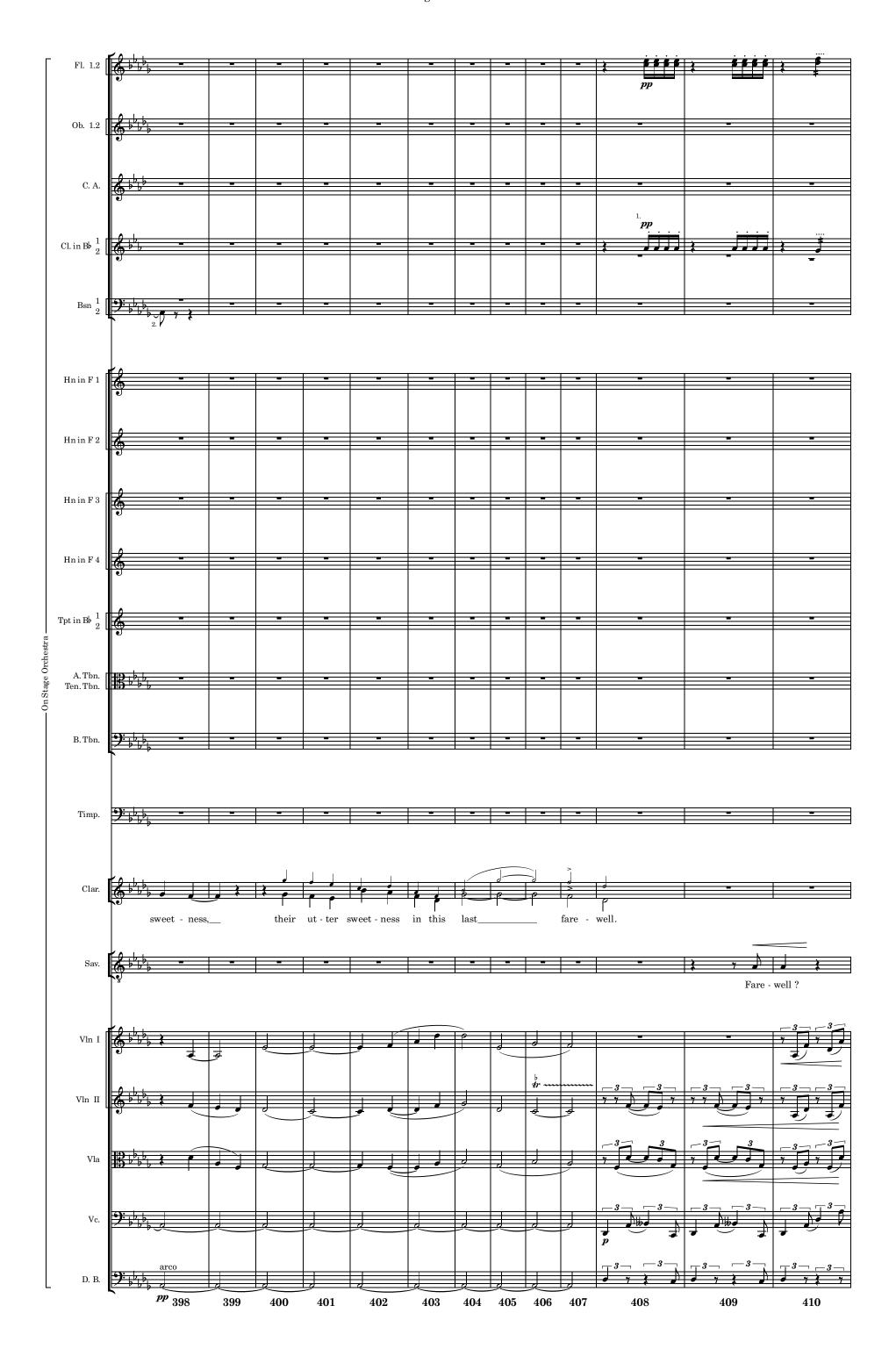


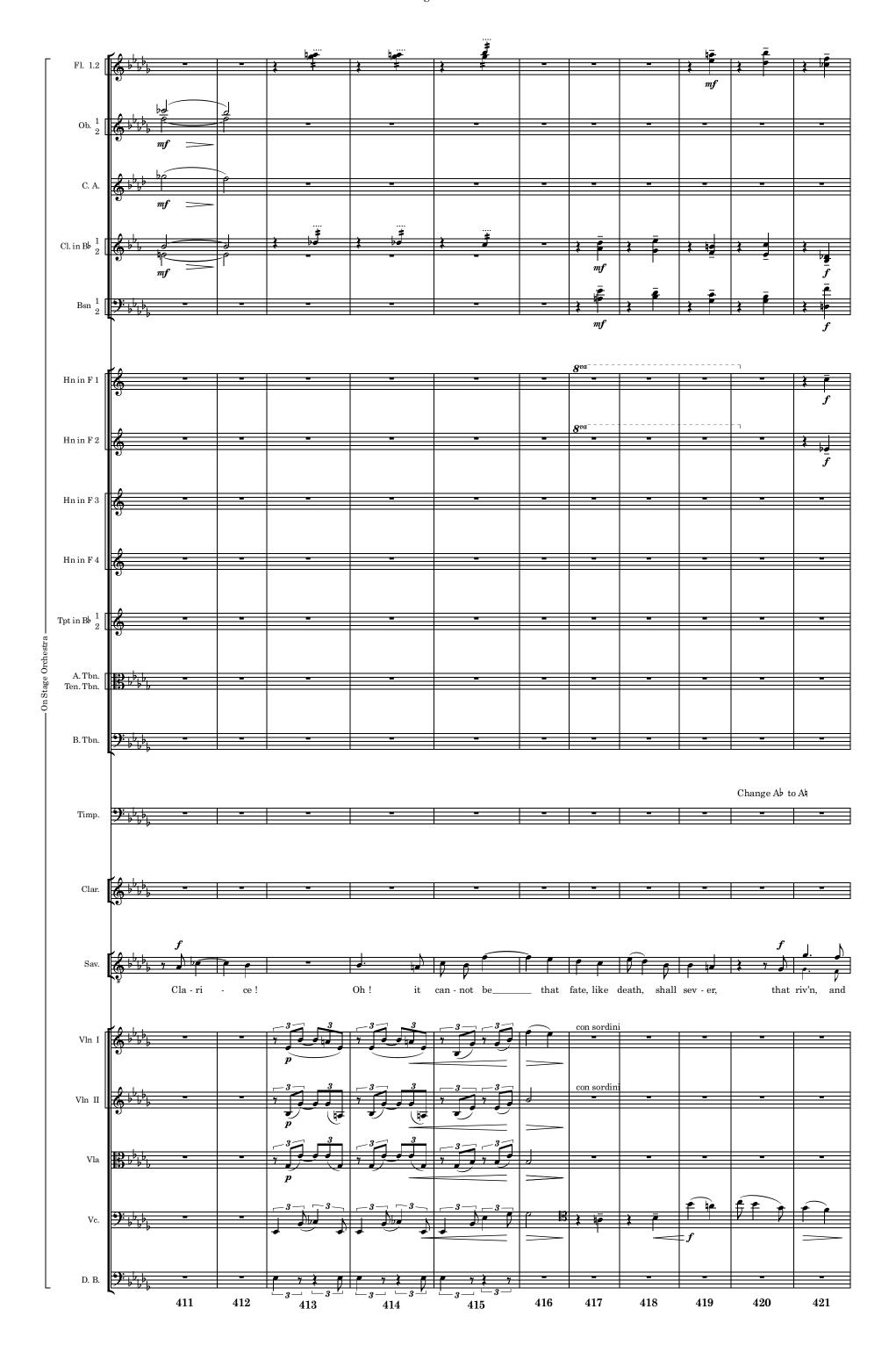


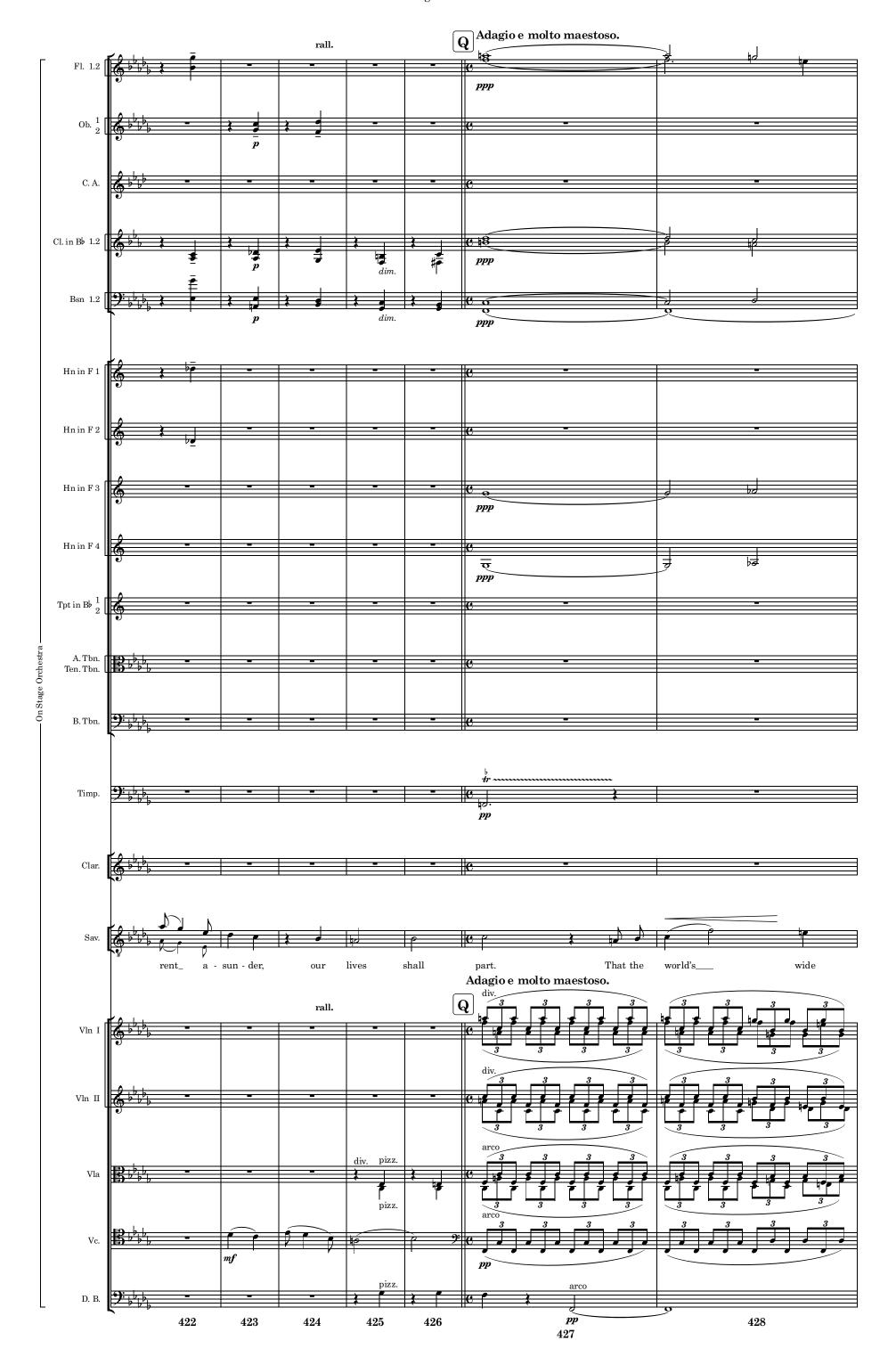




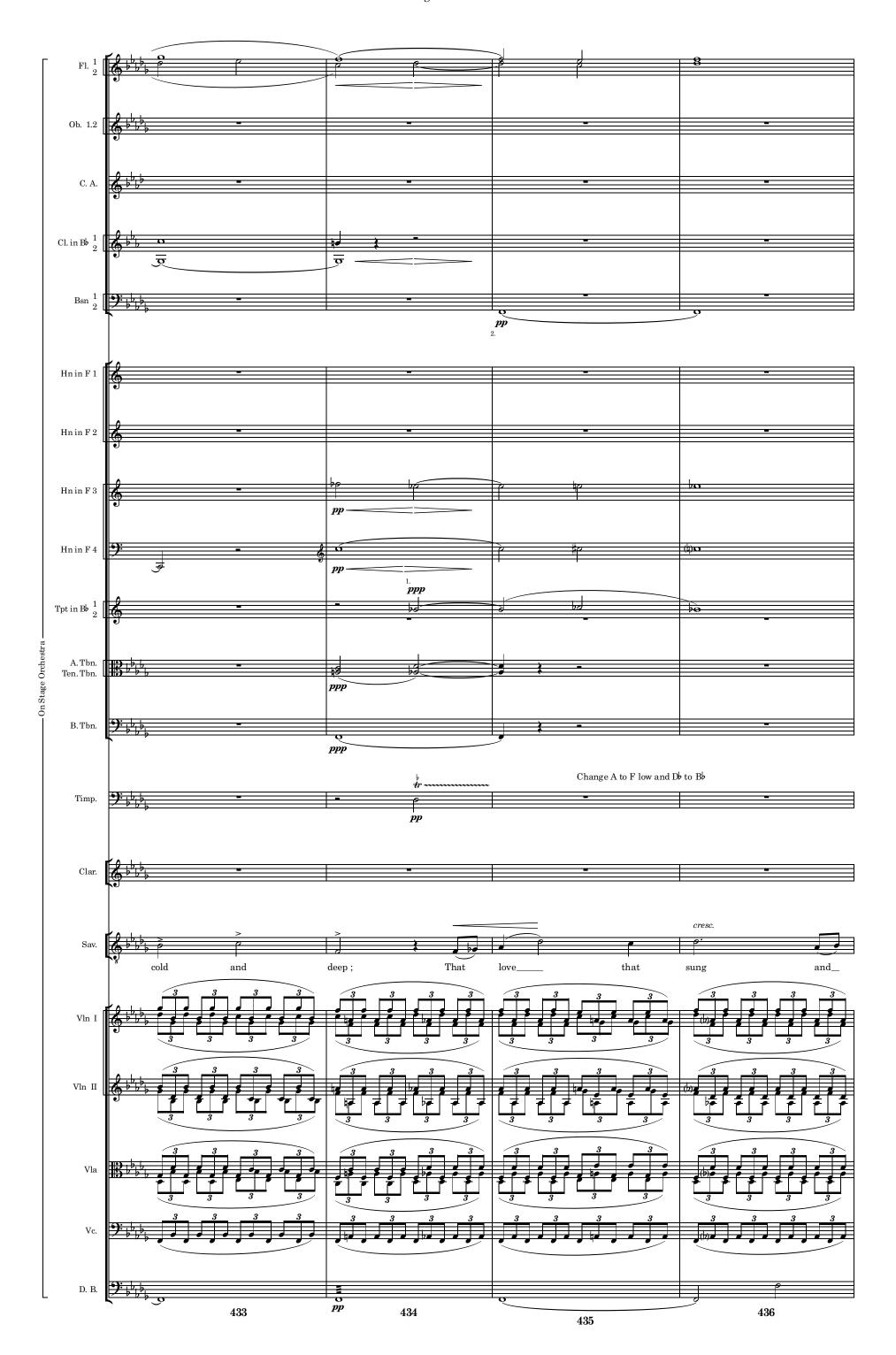


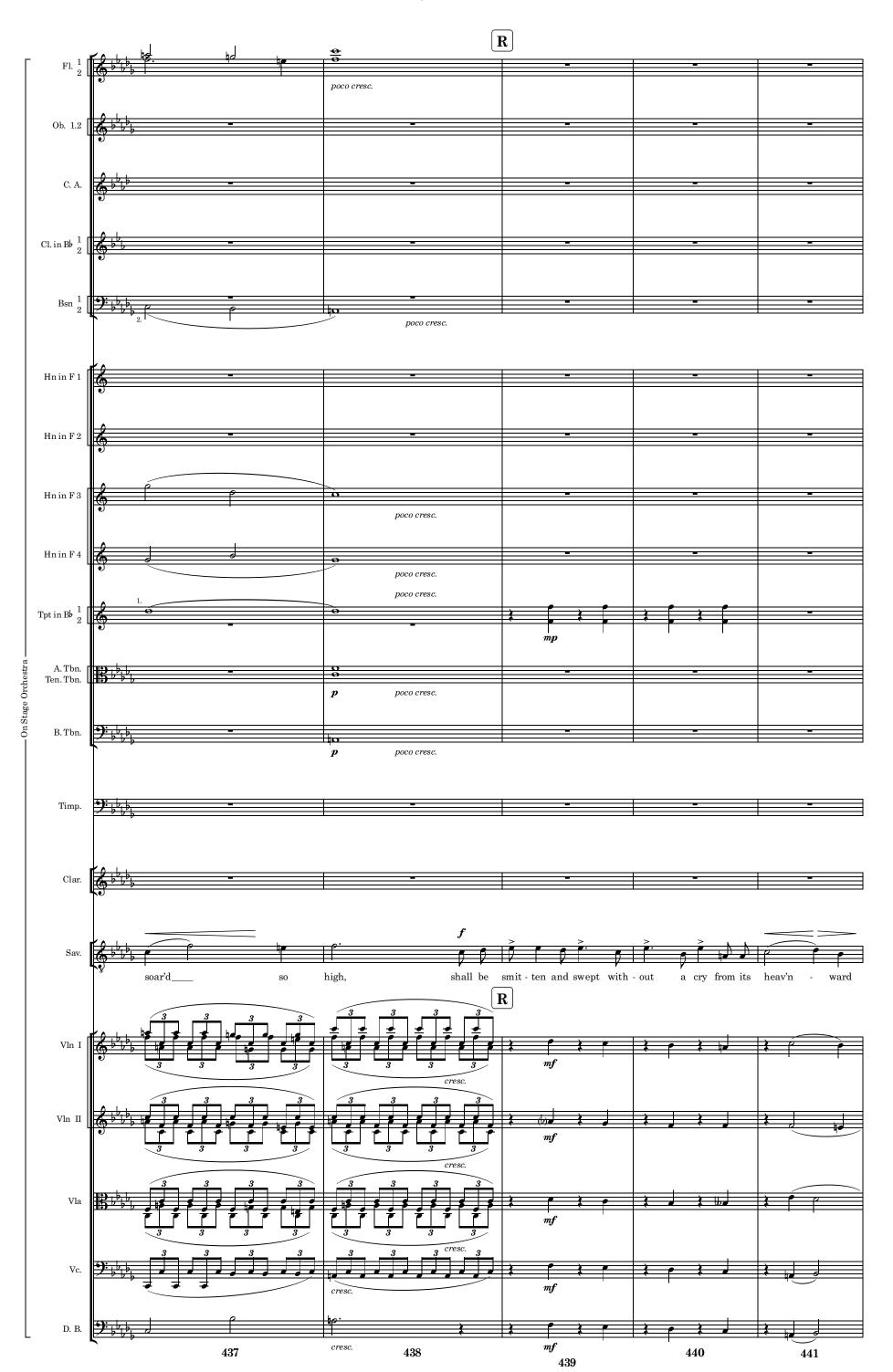




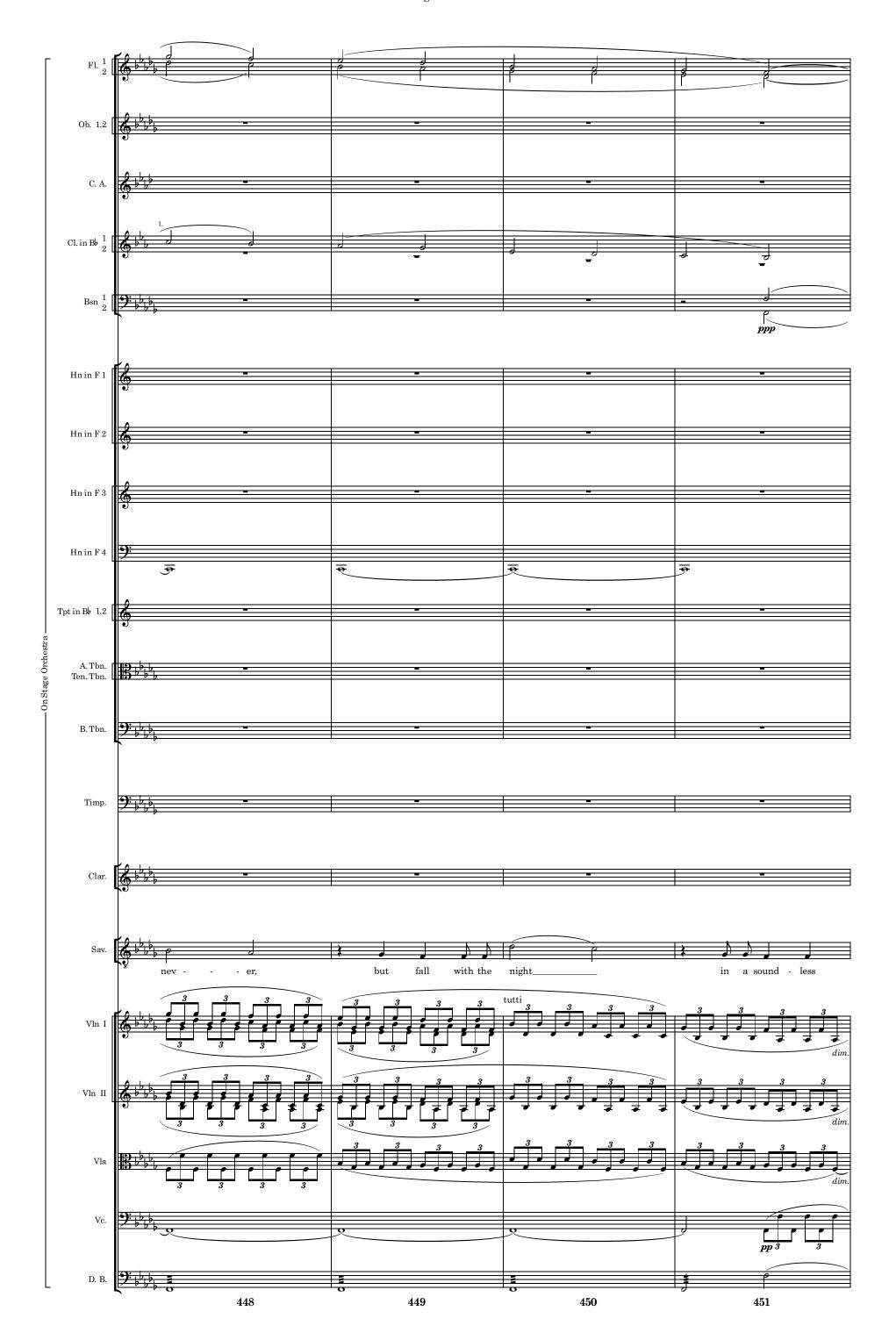
























Prologue - Scene 3





















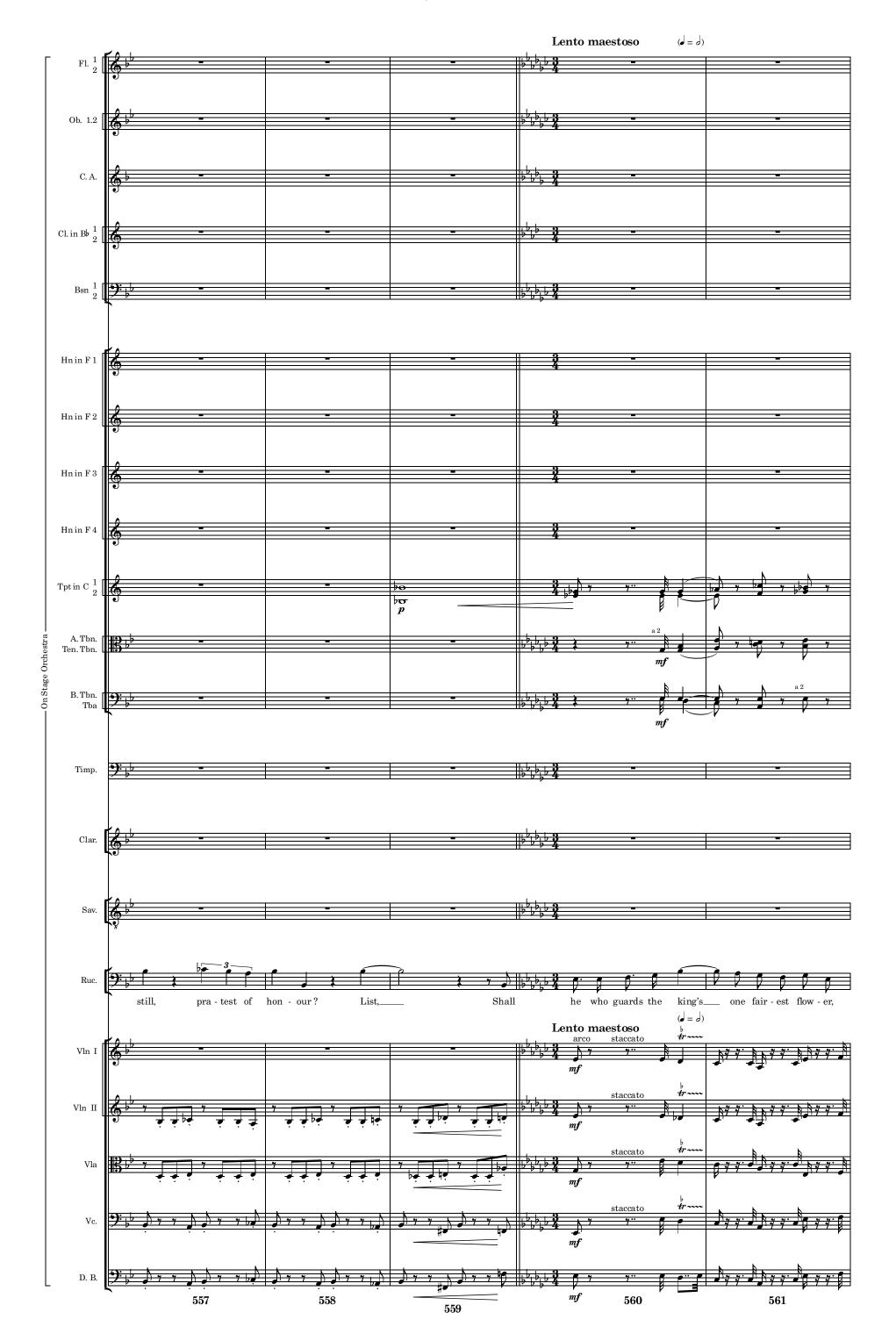




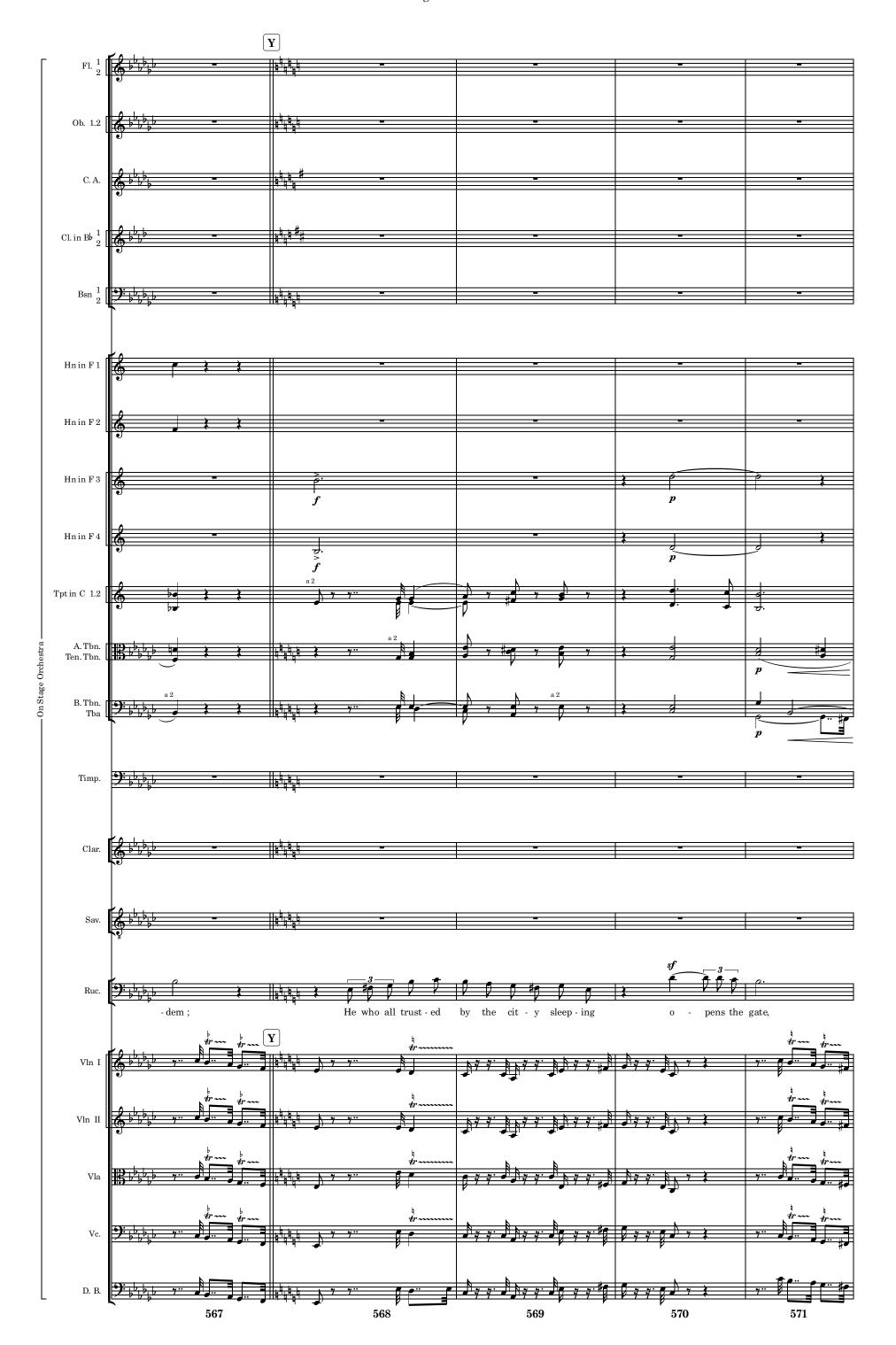






















Prologue - Scene 4











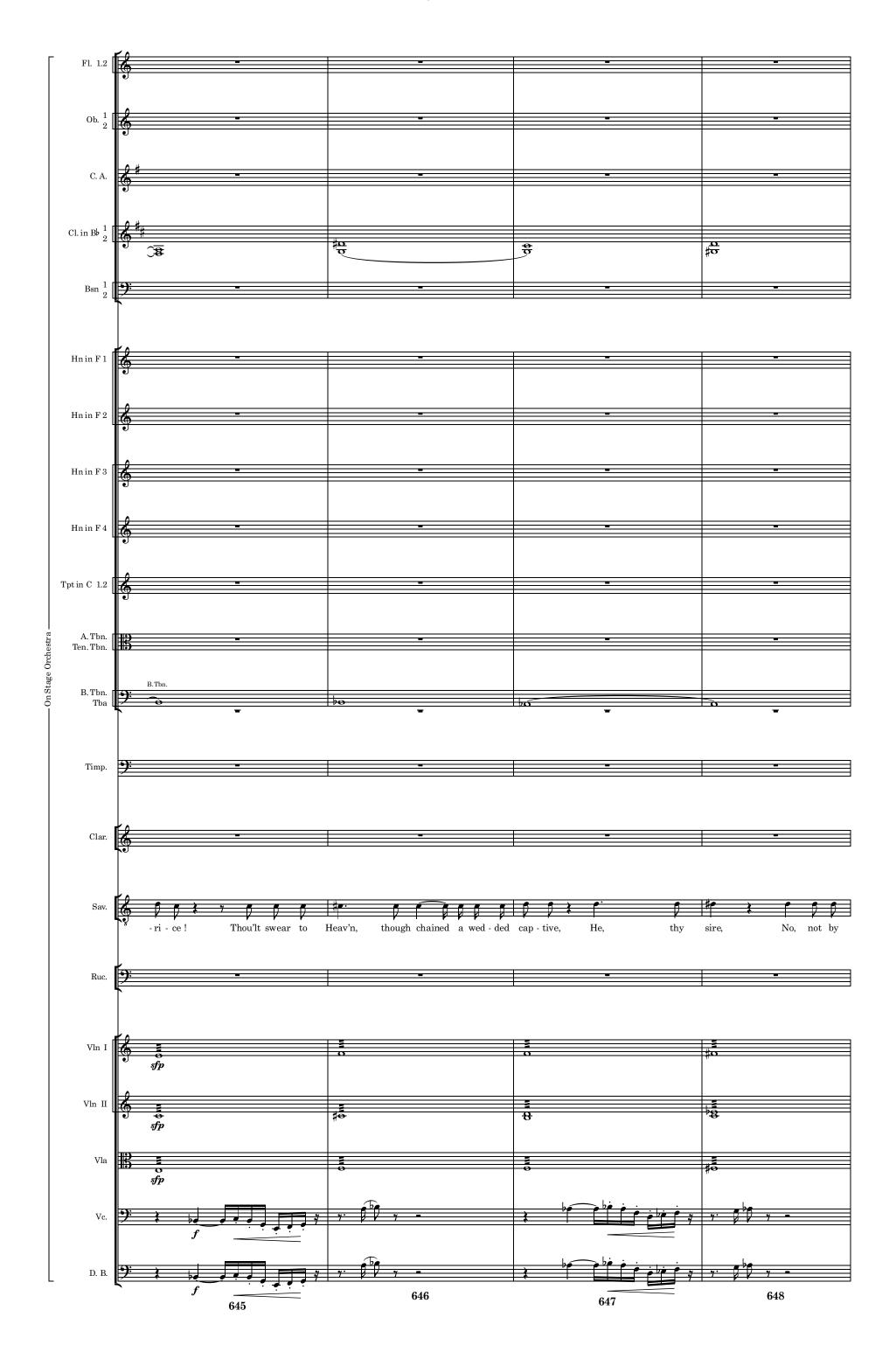






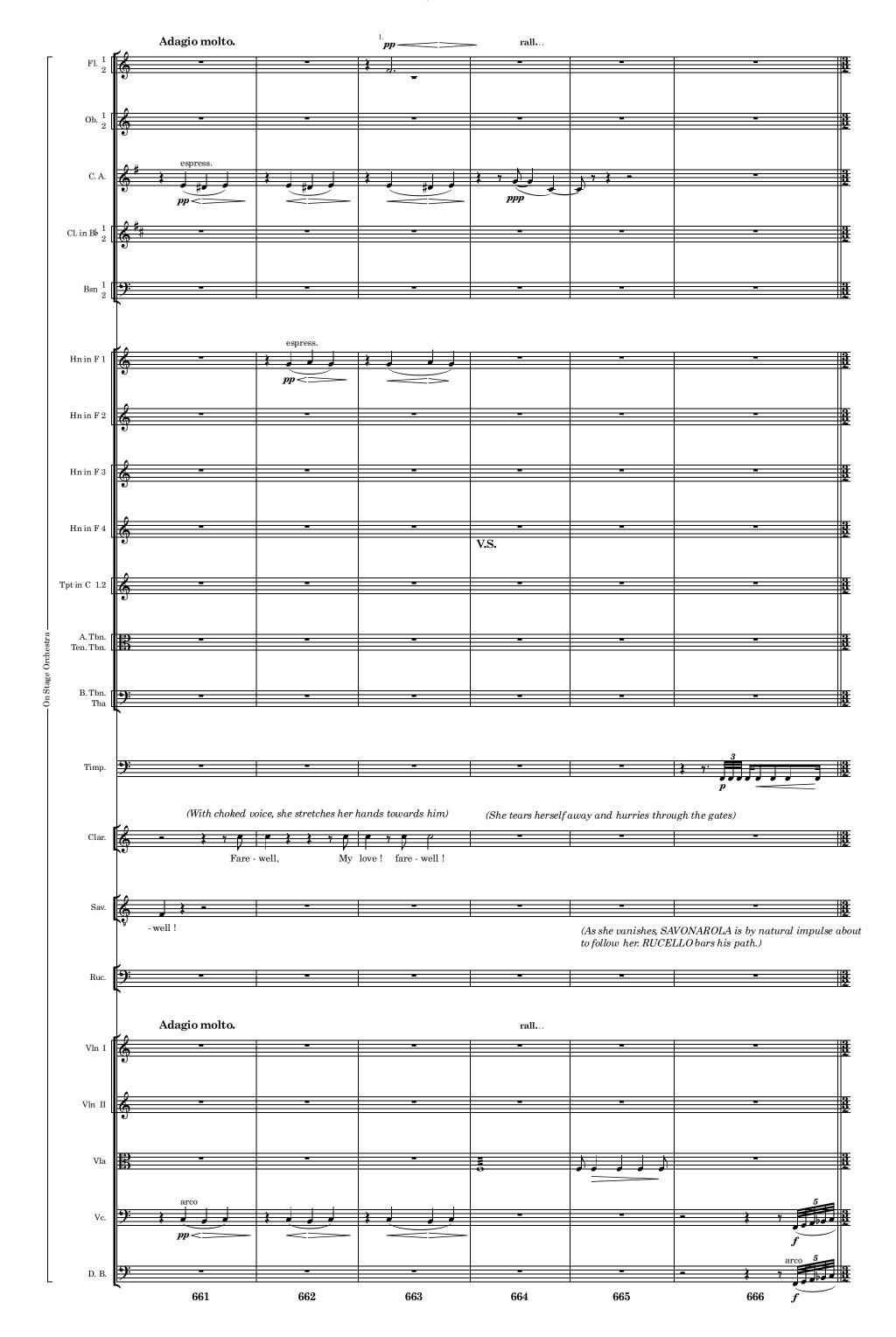










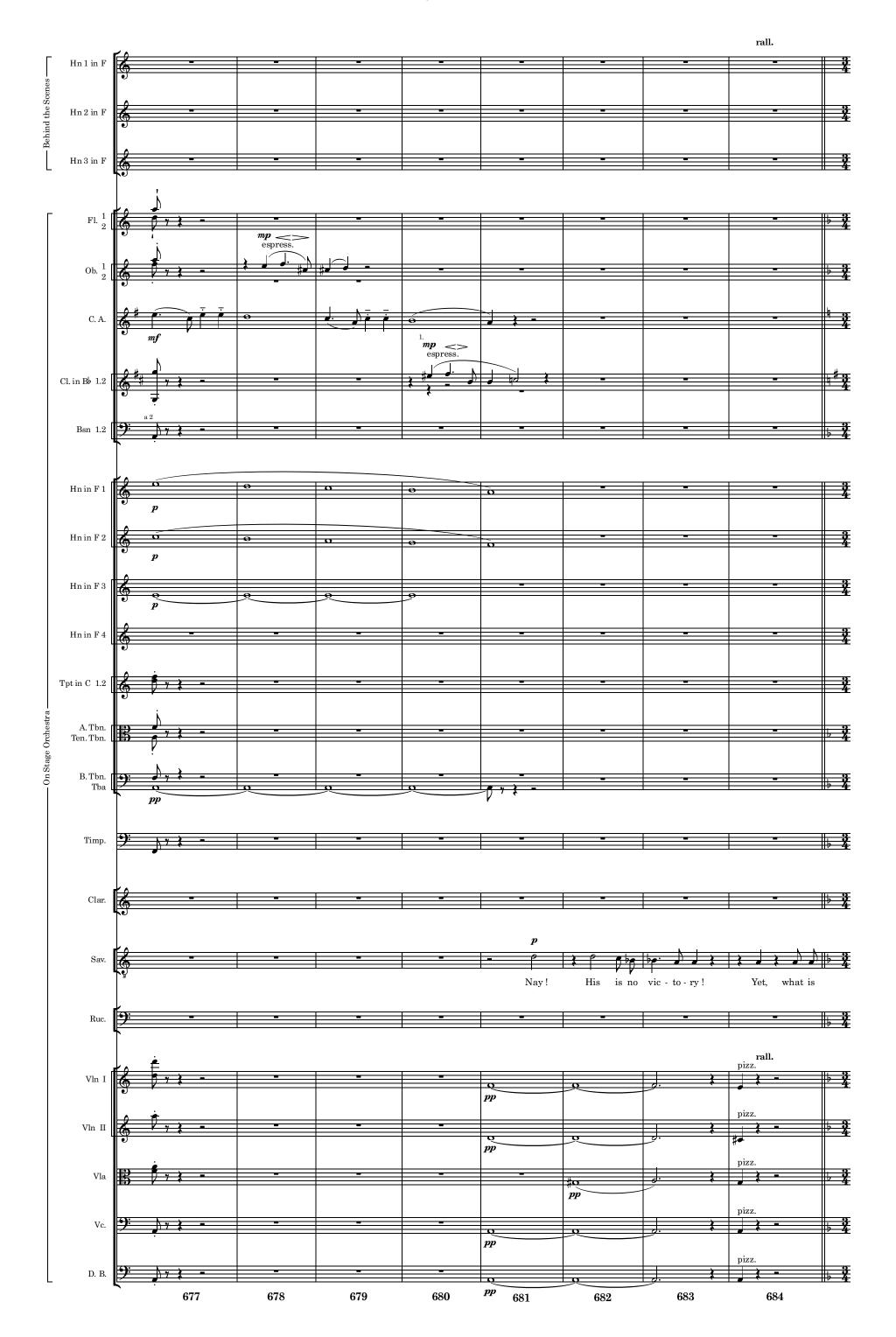






Prologue - Scene 4



































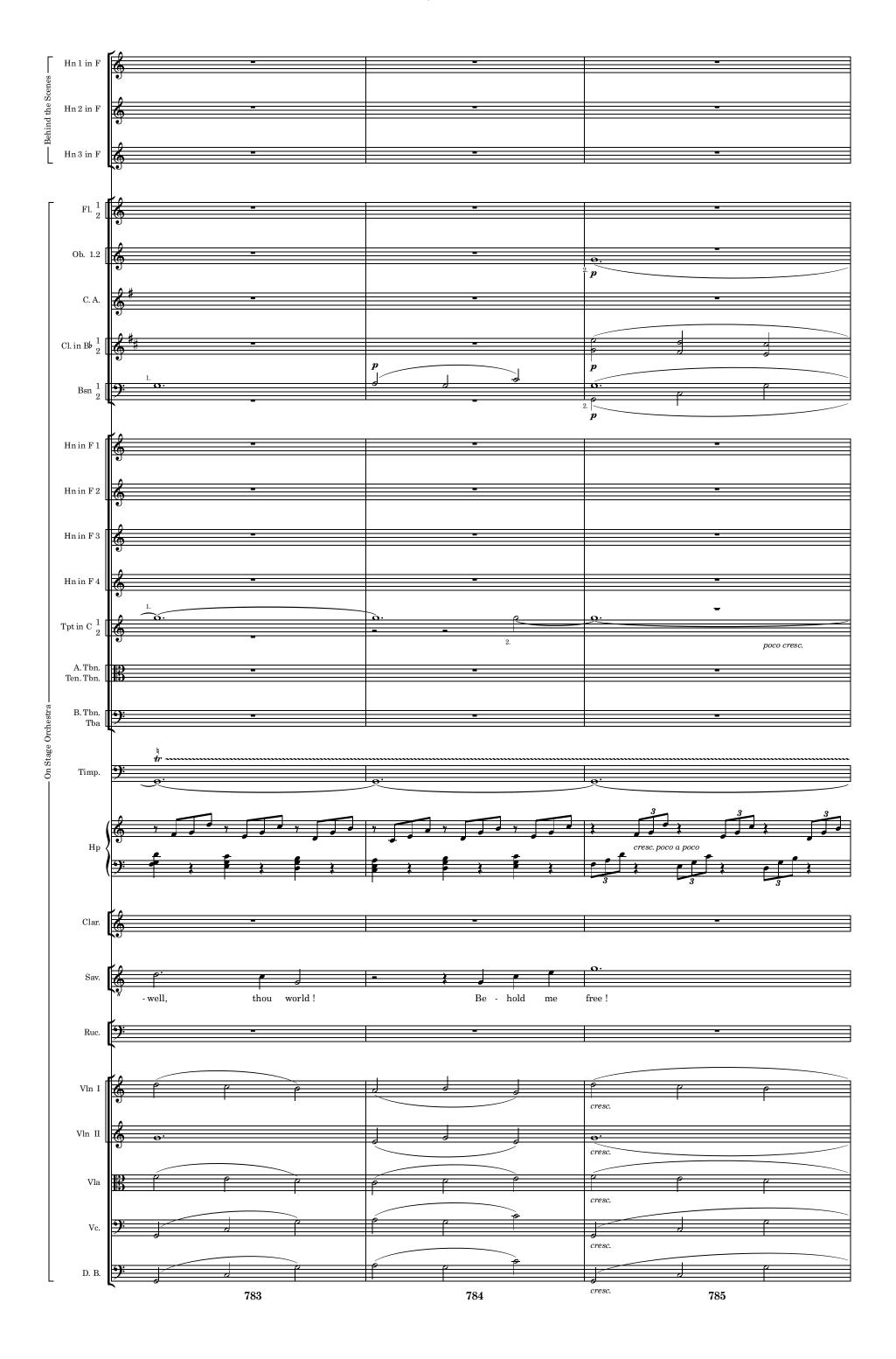






















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