

Alex Stephenson

# O CLARISSIMA

(2015)

for viola and piano

First performed by Waibun Chan, viola, and Dylan Perez, piano  
Silk Street Music Hall, Guildhall School of Music & Drama, London, United Kingdom  
May 18, 2015

DURATION: 8 minutes

#### PERFORMANCE NOTES

##### **Viola**

e.s.t. = extreme sul tasto

s.t. = sul tasto

s.p. = sul ponticello

#### TO CONTACT THE COMPOSER

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#### PROGRAM NOTE

Much of the source material for this slow, contemplative work comes from the haunting plainchant melody *O Magne Pater* by Hildegard von Bingen (1098-1179). Fragments of Hildegard's music – which I have freely isolated, developed, and embellished – form the basis of rhapsodic yet delicate lines heard initially on the viola and later traded between the two instruments. The title is borrowed from another of Hildegard's works, which is referenced here not through quotation but rather metaphorically, in the form of bright piano harmonies and stratospheric viola writing only glimpsed as the piece nears its conclusion.

# O Clarissima

Alex Stephenson  
(b. 1990)

## Verse I

Adagio (♩=38)

(Hildegard von Bingen, *O Magne Pater*)

Viola

Piano

*pp* *p* *p* *pp* *ppp* *p*

*ppp* sempre

Ed.

5

Vla.

Pno.

*pp* *ppp* *p* *sub.* *pp*

*gliss.* *s.t.* *gliss.* *3* *3*

8

Vla.

Pno.

*mp* più espr. *3* *3* *pp* *3*

ord. (ord.) → s.t.

2

ord. → s.t.

11

Vla.

*p* *pp* *poco rfz* *sim.* *sim.* *ord.* *mp*

Pno.

14

Vla.

*f ancora più espr.* *p* *pp*

Pno.

17

Vla.

*p* *pp* *ppp* *s.t.*

Pno.

19

Vla. *p* *mp* *p* *pp molto sost.*

Pno.

### Interlude I

Più moderato (♩=54)

22

Vla. *p* *ppp* *pp* *ppp* e.s.t.

Pno. *pp*

25

Vla. flaut. *pp sub.* *pochiss.* *p sub.* ord. jété (ad lib. sempre) *mp*

Pno. *pp* *f* 8va

31

Vla.

*ppp* *mf* *ppp* *ppp*

*s.p.* *tr* *(s.p.)* *e.s.t.*

Pno.

*tr* *5* *5*

**Tempo I (♩=38)**

34 (e.s.t.) flaut. ord., jété s.t.

Vla. *ppp* *pp sub.* *p sub.* *p* *gliss.*

Pno. *pp* *ppp*

38

Vla. *gliss.* *pp* *ppp* *pppp* *e.s.t., non vib.* *3* *s.t., vib. norm.* *p sub.* *pp*

Pno. *ppp*

41

Vla. *ord.* *p* *pp* *ppp* *(ord.)* *s.p.* *s.t.* *tr* *tr* *ppp* *(niente poss.)* *pochiss.* *sim.*

Pno. *pp* *mp*

44

Vla. *tr* *sim.* *(s.t.)* *ord.* *mp sub.* *pp* *p*

Pno. *p* *pp* *pp* *(eco)*

# Interlude II

6

Tempo II: pale, lamentoso (♩=54)

Both instruments very soft and shadowy

e.s.t.

non vib. until b. 65

s.p.

47

Vla.

*ppp*

*ppp* sempre

3

3

Pno.

*p*

*ppp*

*ppp* sempre

49

Vla.

(niente poss.)

*ppp*

e.s.t.

(e.s.t.) →

3

3

Pno.

*ppp*

*ppp*

53

Vla.

s.p.

*ppp*

e.s.t.

3

3

Pno.

*ppp*

*ppp*

57

Vla. *tr* *(espr.)* *tr*

Pno.

### Verse III

Tempo I (♩=38)

60

Vla. flaut. ord., jété

*pp* *pochiss.* *p sub.*

Pno. *p* 3

64

Vla. vib. norm. *ppp* *p* 3

Pno. *mp* *p* *pp* 3

67

Vla. *p espr.* (ord.) → s.p.,

Pno. *ppp*

69 ord. (ord.) → s.p. ord.

Vla. *p* *p sub.* *pochiss.*

Pno. *p* *pp* *ppp*

72

Vla. *mf* *f*

Pno. *mp warm* *mf*

75

Vla. *p* *mp* *p*

Pno. *mp* *p* *pp* *ppp*

poco string. allarg.

78

Vla. *mf* sub., *appass.* *f* *mf* *f*

Pno. *p* *mf* *p* *mf*

a tempo

80

Vla. *ff* *mf* *p* molto delicato

Pno. *f* *mf* *p* *pp*

Coda

Tempo II (♩=54)

sul II  
e.s.t.

10

84

Vla.

Ppp

Ppp

p

Pno.

p

pp

87

Vla.

Ppp

p

Pno.

f

mf

pp

ppp

pp

gradual release

Ped.

91

Vla.

ord.

ppp

Pno.

f

mf

pp

(sim.)

Ped.

(sim.)

Vla. e.s.t., punta d'arco *long*

*pppp*

3

Pno. *ppp* *p* *ppp* *long*

3

Ped.