

O viridissima virga

Rebecka Sofia Ahvenniemi

2011 (ed. 2012 and 2022)



For two female voices

Text: Hildegard von Bingen

Composed for Emanuel Vigeland mausoleum in Oslo.

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O viridissima virga was composed for, and world premiered in, Emanuel Vigeland Mausoleum in Oslo in 2011. The venue is a dark room with paintings on the walls, candles, and most notably, a reverb of more than 15 seconds. This work has also been performed at several other venues, creating a similar timbral space with the use of electronics.

One may hear impressions of Hildegard von Bingen's music. While using a sacral text, the work focusses on the embodiment of vocal expressions. It explores transitions between singing, breathing, and whispering. The voice could be said to *brake out of* the text, rather than merely being a tool to mediate it.

The performance

The performance resembles a sacral mass. The singers walk to a table and pick up a "new score" on three occasions throughout the composition. Thus, copies of the pages are needed, to divide the work in different portions.

However, the work can also be presented as a straightforward concert performance without this dramaturgical element. In this case the instructions of picking up sections of the score do not need to be taken into consideration, and the empty bars with fermatas can be crossed out.

The concert space and electronics

The work is composed specifically for a room with a reverb of at least 15 seconds, but a similar reverb or echo can be created with electronics. Depending on the size of the room, a stereo source may work. The microphones ought to capture whispering and airy, vocal sounds, with a clear and crispy quality.

Instructions


The performers may fully enjoy the articulations, gestures and subtle nuances of the text, and take ownership of it. The text is meant to sound embodied, and the focus is on the attitude of the articulations. Most instructions are found in the score.

Capital letters put emphasis on certain voiced sounds. The apostrophe emphasizes the letter further, so it sounds like being "spitted out", or as slightly separate from the rest of the word.



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A 

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Text: Hildegard von Bingen

Voice 1 *dreamy p* whispering *ord. non vibr.*
V'enn - T'o - S'o Q'ue ven

Voice 2 *dreamy mp* whispering *ord. non vibr.* whisp. *mf*
Q'ue in ven - to - so Q'ue

mf *p*
Q'ue Q'ue Q'ue Q'ue to - so

p *mf* *gliss.* *p*
Q'ue Q'ue ven Q'ue Q'ue V'en T'o - so S'o ss -

accents from the diaphragm
mf *p*
ss - so - lis S S S S'o ss

accents from the diaphragm
p *mp* *mf*
S'o - lis S'o ss ss - S'o S S S

Musical score for measures 6-7. Measure 6 features a treble clef with a triplet of notes marked 'S' and a piano staff with notes 'S', 'S', 'S', 'so', and 'ss'. Measure 7 features a treble clef with notes 'S' and 'ss', a piano staff with a wavy line, and notes 'S' and 'ss'. Dynamics include *ppp* and *tender*.

Musical score for measures 7-8. Measure 7 features a treble clef with notes 'S' and 'ss', a piano staff with a wavy line, and notes 'S' and 'ss'. Measure 8 features a treble clef with notes 'S' and 'ss', a piano staff with a wavy line, and notes 'S' and 'ss'. Dynamics include *ppp*, *tender*, and *p*.

Musical score for measures 9-10. Measure 9 features a treble clef with notes 'S'o', 'ss - S'o', 'ss - S'o', and 'ss - ss', a piano staff with a wavy line, and notes 'S', 'S', 'S', 'S', 'S'. Measure 10 features a treble clef with notes 'S'o', 'ss - S'o', 'ss - S'o', and 'ss - ss', a piano staff with a wavy line, and notes 'S', 'S', 'S', 'S', 'S'. Dynamics include *insisting* and *p*.

1. Slightly varying the overtones of "s".

10

joyful
fp

S S S S S - ss C'a-lor

p *joyful*
fp *fp* *fp*

S'o ss - S'o ss - S'o ss C'a-lor C'a-lor C'a-lor

11

fp *fp*

C'a-lor ss S S - ss S S C'a-lor

p

C'a-lor C'a-lor C'a-lor C'a-lor

12

mf *p* *intense*
pp

C'a-lor C'a-lor C'a-lor Q' ee Q' ee Q'

p *fp* *intense*
pp

Q'ue C'a-lor Q'ue_ Q' Q' Q' Q'

14 *ppp* $\overbrace{\quad}^3$ *joyful* *p* *mf* *p*

Q' Q' C'a-lor C'a-lor C'a-lor C'a-lor C'a - lor

ppp *joyful* *p* *mf* *ppp*

Q' C'a-lor C'a-lor C'a-lor C'a-lor C'a-lor C'a-lor C'a-lor C'a-lor

B

16

Walking to the table and picking up a "new score" *pp*

Q'ue

p *pp*

Q' Q[kch:] - q[k] Q'ue___

19 *pppp* *mp*

vnnn___ V'e -

pppp *mp*

e venn - T'o - so ven - nn

21

tender *ppp*

nn - T'o- so nn vnn

tender pp *mp*

nn V'en

23

pp *very intense p* *f* *pp*

nn nn - to - S'o V'en - nn Ve - en - T'o -

very intense mp

nn Vnn

25

f *dreamy p*

S'o S'o - liss V'enn - T'o - S'o

dreamy p

T'o - S'o - o Que V'enn-n

6 27 *cantabile* *ppp*

Q'ue-e in Fl'a - bro nnn_____

cantabile *mf* *gliss.* *pppp*


ven - to - so ven - to - so venn_____ nn - to_

C 2. *tender* *pp*

29 Walking to the table and picking up a "new score"

C[tsh]_____ ae[e:] - li Cae -

Walking to the table and picking up a "new score"



32 *pp* *p* *f*

li C[tsh]_____ Cae - li Cae_ C[tsh] C[tsh]

3. *decisive* *p*

T'i-bi T[tss] - i - bi

2. Caeli is pronounced [tsh:li]. Staying on the sound "sh", opening up gradually towards "e".
3. T': A spitting sound on "t".

34 *pp* *ppp*

C[tsh] C[tsh] C[tsh] Cae - li

ppp *p*

ti - bi ti - bi t t t t

D

Walking to the table and picking up a "new score" *classical* *legato, cantabile*

36 *p* *mp*

sit ti Vi - ri - di - T'a - a -

classical *legato, cantabile* *p* *mf*

ti i - bi Ve - en - T'o - so

38 *p* *p* *mp*

te vi - ri - di - T'a - - T'e

ven - - T'o

39 *mf* *p* *f* airy voice *distant* *p*

ple - na Ven - T'o-S'o vir -

distant *p* *mp*

so ri - diss - si - ma Vi - ri - di - ta - te vi - ri -

41 *p*

- ga vir - ga vir - ga Vir - ga

mp *f* *mp*

dis - si - ma vir - ga vi - r

43 *ppp* *increasingly intense* *p* *f*

vv - Vir - ga Vir - ga

ppp *increasingly intense* *f* *p*

vv vv vv - Vi - rga Vi - rga su - a

46 *mf* Vir - ga Vi - r Vir - ga Vir - ga vv - vi - r

viss

mf Vi *p* Vi - ri - di - T'a -

48 *mf* Vir - ga *gloriously cantabile* *f* S'u - a - vis vir go

- te *gloriously cantabile* *f* S'u - a - vis vir go

E 50 *f* FL'o - ru - is - ti FL'o - ru - it flo - os

air → ord. *p* FL'o - ru - it' *p* FL'o - ru - it

52 *very intense*
mf

Q'uod tu_____ FL'o - ru -

ppp
gliss.

FL'o - - - ss

53 *molto legato*
p

is - ti fl'o - - -

very intense
sfz

FL'o - ru - it FL'o - - - os Flo -

54 *f* *p* *dreamy*

- ss Q'uod Q'uod_____ Q'[kch:] - uod Q'uod tu_____

dreamy
pp

ss quod_____ Q'[kch:]

56 *mp*

FL'o - ru - is - ti FL'o - ru - i - ss - ti

uod quod Q'[kch:]- uod

58 *pp* *gliss.*

mm FL'o - ru - it

flo - ru - is - ss - T' Q'uod

60 *mf* *urgent* *f*

Q'uod tu flo - ru - is - ti Q'uod tu FL'o - ru -

tempo rubato,
molto espressivo

61

-it Q[kch:]uod tu FL'o - ru - is - T'

FL'o s

63

F

insisting
pp

Q'uod tu FL'o ru - is - ti

tender
a tempo
p

FL'oo - ru - iT' fff - flo os FFL - oo

♩=110 a tempo

65

f *p* *very intense*
f

Q'uod tu - u FLo-o - ru - u - is - ss. T' FL'o -

SSS FLo SS

67 *dreamy*
p

s S S S ss - - ss - - ss

S S S Su - a - vis - ss

69 *pp*

Su - a - vis o - ss flo S S S ss -

f *p* *gliss* *pp* *"echoing quietly"*

flo - ss FL'o o - s

71

ss o - s ss S S

S S S S ss S ss - so ss