

The Rose

for viola et piano

Sean Clarke

2017

Composed for violist and vocalist Margaret Carey, based on her poem *Rose Petals*:

Rose blossoms slowly flowering into full beauty,
Their fragrance piercing through the midday heat,
Distracting the mind from mundane drudgery,
Each bud opens, embracing its distinct beauty.

Rose petals pirouetting softly down in the wind,
Seducing the senses with their brilliant colors,
Velvety softness and elasticity in independence,
Innate uniqueness, despite fragility, fully realized.

If you fall, alone in the sun, you will wither and fade,
But if you land in the water, you will remain fresh,
Buoyantly traversing and navigating churning seas,
Will you leave to explore, or will you stay with me?

As with any text setting, the composer's reading of a poem both molds the music and distorts the poem itself. My personal interpretation of the poem is firmly imprinted on the music, an interpretation that is only one of many possible readings. The voice enters at key points, offering fragments of the opening and closing lines of the poem, altering the course of the piece as a whole.

As I worked, I also became increasingly influenced by a second outside force: the *Andantino* of Schubert's *Piano Sonata* in A major D.959. This movement echoes through the piece. Not only do two distorted quotations appear at important formal moments, but more abstract aspects of the music are alluded to: the central section builds to a disproportionately violent climax; sharp *fortissimo* chords interrupt the gradual denouement; semi-tones pervade several sections; rolled chords appear throughout, usually as slow, drawn-out arpeggios; and the ending is an obsessive, repetitive dirge in the lowest registers of both instruments.

Instrumentation

Viola / Voice
Piano

Duration

ca. 12'

The Rose

Sean Clarke
Text: Margaret Carey

Dolce - Largo

♩ = ca. 36 (♩ = ca. 72)

Brutal - Poco piu mosso

♩ = ca. 44 (♩ = ca. 88)

Viola

Sung: *pp* *p* *poco rit.* *pp*

Rose blo- ssoms

Piano

pp *p* *ff* *fff* *f* *ff*

8va

8va

8vb

Red.

4

Viola: *mf* *mp* *pp* *poco rit.*

fff *ff* *mf* *mp* *p*

Red.

Fragile, delicate, elegant - Poco meno mosso

8 ♩ = ca. 40 (♩ = ca. 80)

pp *p* *pp*

5:4

Red.

* Red.

Poco meno mosso

♩ = ca. 36 (♩ = ca. 72)

12

pp *p* *pp* *p*

mp *p* *pp* *p*

* $\mathcal{R}d.$ * $\mathcal{R}d.$

Poco piu mosso

poco rit. ♩ = ca. 40 (♩ = ca. 80)

16

pp *mp* *p* *mf* *mp*

mp *p* *mf*

* $\mathcal{R}d.$

20

p *f* *mp* *p*

f *ff* *mp* *p* *pp*

* $\mathcal{R}d.$ * $\mathcal{R}d.$

Bleak, desolate - Meno mosso

♩ = ca. 32 (♩ = ca. 64)

Piu mosso

♩ = ca. 40 (♩ = ca. 80)

23 *sul tasto*

ppp *pp* *p* *ppp*

una corda ppp *pp* *p* *p* *pp*

27 *Dolce*

Sung: pp *mf* *mp* *mf sub. p* *pp*

Slow- ly flow'r- ing in- to full beau- ty

pp *mp* *mf* *p*

Red. * *Red.* * * *Red.* *

Turbulent, brutal - Poco piu mosso

32 ♩ = ca. 42 (♩ = ca. 84)

Viola:

pp *ff* *p* *ff* *sfz* *sfz* *fff* *f* *mf* *p*

Red. * *Red.* * *Red.* * *Red.* *

Sub Red. * *Red.* *

Delicate, elegant - A tempo

36 *poco rit.* ----- ♩ = ca. 42 (♩ = ca. 84)

ppp *pp* *p*

mp *p* *pp*

5 * *Ad.* *

40 *poco rit.* ----- *a tempo*

pp *pp* *p* *pp* *p* *mp* *p* *pp*

p *mp* *p* *mp* *mf* *pp* *p*

Ad. 5 * *Ad.* 3 * *Ad.* 5 * *Ad.* 3 * *Ad.*

44

p *pp* *p* *mp* *p* *mp* *mf*

mp *mf*

5 * *Ad.* 5 * *Ad.* 3 6 *

Bleak, desolate, foreboding
Poco meno mosso

♩ = ca. 40 (♩ = ca. 80)

47

mp *f* *pp* *pp*

poco rit.

f *mf* *pp*

trem. between notes

♯Ed.

50

p *mp*

Bring out moving line

54

mf *sfz* *sfz*

Turbulent - Poco piu mosso

♩ = ca. 44 (♪ = ca. 88)

poco accel. -----

58

f *ff* *sfz* *ff* *f* *ff* *mf*

ff *sfz* *f*

* *Red.* * *Red.*

62

ff *mf* *f* *ff* *f* *ff*

ff *sfz* *f* *ff*

* *Red.* * *Red.*

Appassionato - Piu mosso

♩ = ca. 52 (♪ = ca. 104)

66

f *mp* *mf* *f* *mp*

fff *mp* *mf* *ff* *mp*

* *Red.* *

69

mf ff mf f ff f ff

mf ff mf f fff f

Red. Red. Red.

Con fuoco - Poco piu mosso

72 ♩ = ca. 56 (♩ = ca. 112)

ff fff

ff sfz sfz fff

Red. Red.

Brutal - Meno mosso

74 poco rit. ♩ = ca. 44 (♩ = ca. 88)

fff ffff fff

sfz ffff sfz fff sfz

Red. Red. Red.