

*for the Triptych Trio*

Yfat Soul Zisso

# Violet to Vita

for soprano, cello and piano

Programme notes:

Written for the Triptych Trio during the winter of 2015-16,  
this piece sets some of the love letters written by Violet Trefusis to Vita Sackville-West between 1910 and 1921.

The ill-fated love affair between the two women,  
first documented in 'Portrait of a Marriage' by Vita's son Nigel Nicholson,  
ended in 1921 with the forced return of the two women to their respective husbands and families.

From their childhood friendship through the dramatic years of 1918-1921  
when the lovers made a series of escapes to live out a life of Bohemian freedom  
together abroad, they wrote to each other constantly.

Violet's husband destroyed Vita's letters from this daring period, but Violet's letters were preserved.

It is my hope that this song cycle (with more movements to come), will help immortalise this amazing love story,  
one that did not stand a chance at the time.

Y.S.Z.

I. 8 July 1919 -

Gr. Hotel Eskualduna, Hendaye (Basses-Pyrenees)

Men Tiliche,

I hardly slept at all last night.

I thought of you....

I am alternately miserable, heartbroken, cynical

O mercy, the things I want to write!

You remember the caresses....

It seems I have never wanted you as I do now -

When I think of your mouth....

When I think of... other things,

all the blood rushes to my head,

and I can almost imagine....

II. September 1919 - Claridge's Hotel

O Mitya, you are wonderful -

My lips are still burning from your kisses!

I talk to you of misery and jealousy, and spite and malice,

and you seem to take it all in,

and you talk to me in turn with a face of stone,

a 'bang' of granite -

then suddenly -

You kiss me furiously, passionately, possessively, jubilantly!

You are beautiful, splendid: full of fire and youth, creative, not human!?? NO!

(How I adore you)....

III. 15 August 1919 - In the Train

My Mitya, you are being taken away from me already in the motor.

The sense of our closeness begins to diminish.

I simply can't begin to tell you what I suffer..

I want to be able to put my head on your shoulder and sob my heart out.

Even here in the train I can scarcely keep back my tears.

My Darling, my darling, how endlessly this horror seems to repeat itself.

...Oh! To think that instead of being with me tomorrow you will be with someone else.

As you love me, Mitya, keep your promises -

keep them to the letter -

tell him about me....

Duration: c. 6 mins

Text taken from  
'Violet to Vita, The Letters of Violet Trefusis  
to Vita Sackville-West 1910-21'  
ed. Mitchell A. Leaska and John Phillips  
Published by Penguin Books

for the Triptych Trio

# Violet to Vita

## I. 8 July 1919 - 'Men Tiliche'

Violet Trefusis

for Soprano, Cello and Piano

Yfat Soul Zisso

♩ = 80 with freedom

Quasi recit. *p* \* *mp*

Soprano

Men ti-liche, I hard-ly slept at all last night. I thought of you..

Violoncello

*p* *mp* *mf*

Piano

♩ = 80 with freedom

7

Sop. *f* *mf* *mp* *p* *mp* <

Men ti-liche, I hard-ly slept at all last night. I thought of you... O mer-cy, O

Vc. *p* <

Pno. *mf* *p* <

\* = rubato, controlled by the singer

12 *mf* *p* *mp* *mf*

Sop. mer - cy, the things I want to write! I am al-ter-nate-ly mise-ra ble, heart-bro ken,

Vc. *mp*

Pno. *mf* *p* *mf*

17 *p* *mf* *mp* *p*

Sop. cy - ni-cal, Men ti-liche, You re-mem-ber the ca - res- ses... ca - res- ses...

Vc. *mf* *mp* *mf*

Pno. *p* *mf* *f* *mf* *mp*

24 *mp* *f* *ff*

Sop. It seems I've ne-ver wan-ted you as I do now. When I think of your mouth...

Vc. *f*

Pno. *f* *tr* *tr*

8<sup>va</sup> 8<sup>vb</sup>

29

Sop. *mf* *mp*

When I think of... o-ther things, all the blood ru-shes to my head, and

Vc. *ff*

Pno. *ff* *mf*

(8)

33

Sop. *f* *mf* *ppp*

I can al-most i - ma-gine nnn

Vc. *f* *mf* *ppp*

Pno. *mp* *ppp*

for the Triptych Trio

# Violet to Vita

Violet Trefusis

## II. September 1919 - 'O Mitya'

Yfat Soul Zisso

for Soprano, Cello and Piano

**Lively, Passionate** ♩ = 112

Musical score for the first system, featuring Soprano, Violoncello, and Piano parts. The key signature is three flats (B-flat major/D-flat minor) and the time signature is 4/4. The tempo is marked "Lively, Passionate" with a quarter note equal to 112 beats per minute. The Soprano part begins with a rest followed by the lyrics "O Mit - ya," with a dynamic marking of *f*. The Violoncello part starts with a rest, then plays a melodic line with dynamics *mf*, *f*, and *mf*. The Piano part features a complex accompaniment with dynamics *f*, *mp*, *f*, and *mf*.

Musical score for the second system, featuring Soprano, Violoncello, and Piano parts. The Soprano part begins with a measure rest (marked with a 4) and then continues with the lyrics "you are won - der - ful, my lips are still bur - ning from your kis - ses! You kiss me" with a dynamic marking of *mf*. The Violoncello part continues with a melodic line, starting with a dynamic marking of *f*. The Piano part continues with its accompaniment, featuring dynamics *f* and *mf*.

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# Violet to Vita

## III. 15 August 1919 - 'My Mitya'

Violet Trefusis

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for Soprano, Cello and Piano

♩. = 92

Soprano

*f*  
My

Violoncello

♩. = 92

*f*  
*mf*

**A**

5 Sop.

Mit - - ya,

you are being ta - ken a - way from

Vc.

*mf* **A**

Pno.

9 Sop.

— me al - rea - dy in the mo - tor.

Vc.

Pno.

13 *mf*

Sop.   
The sense of our close-ness be-gins to di - mi-nish.

Vc.   
*mp*

Pno. 


17 **B**  $\text{♩} = \text{♩}$  *f* *> mf* *pained*

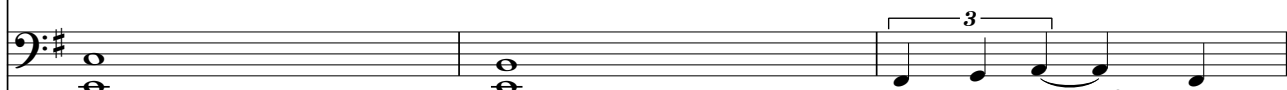
Sop.   
I simp - ly can't be - gin to tell you what I suf- fer... My

Vc.   
*mf* *mp*

Pno. 

21 *mp* *f*

Sop.   
dar - ling, My dar - ing, how end - less - ly this hor - ror

Vc.   
*mf* *mp*

Pno. 