



Viriditas

Sibil•la Ensemble

trptk

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Kristia Michael voice, gothic harp

Andrew Hopper voice, vielle, cittern, rebec

Marguerite Maire recorder

Jeremy Bass medieval lute

Ivan Gianakis percussion

Sanne van Gend hurdy-gurdy

Hildegard von Bingen

1 O virtus Sapientiae 4:24

Cantigas de Santa Maria

2 Gran poder a de mantar 2:44

3 Rosa das Rosas 4:27

Anonymous

4 El Misteri d'Elx: O Arbre Sanct 7:05

5	Percussion improvisation	3:01
	Hildegard von Bingen	
6	O nobilissima viriditas	5:22
	Traditional	
7	Song of Klidonas	4:17
8	Parakalo tin Panayia	4:13
9	Recorder improvisation	4:07
	Moniot d'Arras	
10	Ce fut en mai	4:09
	Hildegard von Bingen	
11	Karitas habundat	08:16

Total playing time 52:11



About the album

Sibil•la Ensemble draws inspiration from the Sibyls, the female prophetesses who have captivated the human imagination from ancient pagan times to the medieval era and Renaissance. Sibyls were revered across cultures for their divine insights and prophecies. They were seen as conduits between the mortal realm and the divine, shaping the spiritual beliefs of Western civilizations throughout history.

The mystical concept of *Viriditas* originates from the theological writings of the German Benedictine abbess, composer, philosopher, mystic, and polymath Hildegard von Bingen, 'Sibyl of the Rhine'. Hildegard was known for her ability to commune with the divine and derive insights from nature. In Hildegard's philosophy, *Viriditas* symbolises the vibrant, life-giving energy that permeates the natural world and the essence of greenness and flora. This divine force, both physical and spiritual, was believed to be experienced in moments of ecstatic connection, where the boundaries between humanity and nature blur.

These 12th and 13th-century chants and secular songs from Germany, Spain, France and Cyprus are centred around the concept of *Viriditas*. Each one is a tribute to the generative power of nature that the Sibyls embodied, celebrating its rhythms, cycles, and eternal harmony.

Hildegard von Bingen

O virtus Sapientiae

*O virtus Sapientiae,
que circuiens circuisti,
comprehendendo omnia
in una via que habet vitam,
Tres alas habens,
quarum una in altum volat
et altera de terra sudat
et tertia undique volat.
Laus tibi sit, sicut te decet,
O Sapientia.*

*O power of Wisdom,
whirling you encircle,
comprehending everything
in one path possessed of life,
Three wings you have,
of which one soars into heights,
and the other sweeps the earth,
and the third flies all around.
Praise be to you, as is your due,
O Wisdom.*

In Hildegard von Bingen's writings, the female allegory of Sapientia, also known as Wisdom or Sophia, represents the divine wisdom, knowledge, and understanding. Sapientia plays a central role in Hildegard's theological and mystical thought and embodies the divine intelligence and mysteries that pervade the universe and the creation. She is the principal through which God communicates with humanity.

This interconnectedness is a central idea in Hildegard's philosophy. The symbols of *Sapientia* and *Viriditas* emphasise the inseparable connection between humanity, nature, and the divine. Nature becomes a profound source of wisdom and the manifestation of the divine's continuous creativity and nurturing presence in the world. Through the figure of Sapientia, Hildegard conveys the idea that divine wisdom is not a distant concept but a living, breathing presence that permeates every aspect of creation.

Cantigas de Santa Maria Gran poder á de mantar

*Gran poder á de mandar o mar e
todo-los ventos
a Madre daquel que fez todo-los
quatr' elementos*

*Great power to command the sea and
all the winds
to the Mother of the One who created
all the four elements.*

Cantigas de Santa Maria is a collection of 420 poems with musical notation dedicated to the Virgin Mary. The songs were composed during the reign of Alfonso X el Sabio, King of Castile-León (r. 1252-1284), who proclaimed himself as Virgin's Troubadour.

Mother goddess figures are essential in various ancient cultures, religions, and mythologies, personifying the forces of nature, representing reproduction and life. In medieval Christian theology, the Virgin Mary assumed a comparable role, incorporating qualities from pagan goddesses. She emerged as humanity's advocate, protector and muse, wielding power over both Heaven and Earth, performing wonders.

The supernatural conception of Jesus Christ echoes the pagan notion of the union between Heaven and Earth. This union finds its parallel in Greek mythology, where the divine god of Heaven, Ouranos, impregnates Gaia, the goddess of Earth. This sacred marriage (*ιερός γάμος*), signifies the union of the Holy Spirit with the Virgin Mary, and mirrors the divine and human union in Christianity.

Cantigas de Santa Maria

Rosa das Rosas

*Rósa das rósas e Fror das frores,
Dona das donas, Sennor das sennores.*

*Rósa de beldad' e de parecer
e Fror d' alegría e de prazer
Dona en mui pãdosa seer
Sennor en toller coitas e doores*

*Rósa das rósas e Fror das frores,
Dona das donas, Sennor das sennores.*

*Esta dona que tenno por Sennor
e de que quero seer trobador
se éu per ren pôss' haver séu amor
dou ao démo os outros amores.*

*Rósa das rósas e Fror das frores,
Dona das donas, Sennor das sennores.*

*Rose of roses and Flower of flowers
Woman of women, Lady of ladies.*

*Rose of beauty and great standing
And Flower of joy and pleasure,
Lady of most holy manner,
Lady who relieves all pain and cares.*

*Rose of roses, flower of flowers,
Woman of women, Lady of Ladies.*

*This woman I hold as my Lady,
and I want to be her troubadour
If I can possibly win her love
I will throw all other loves to the devil.*

*Rose of roses, flower of flowers,
Woman of women, Lady of Ladies.*

The rose's exquisite appearance has made it a symbol of beauty and elegance, love and passion. According to Saint Ambrose, the rose once grew in Paradise without thorns and only after the fall of humanity developed them, in order to remind humans of their sin and loss of innocence. Despite this, its fragrance and beauty remained, an evocation of Paradise's splendour. The rose was also associated with the Virgin Venus in Greek antiquity, and later became a symbol of erotic mysteries and pleasures in troubadours' poetry.

In medieval literature and art, the Virgin Mary appears as the *Dona Angelicata*, the angelic lady with the ultimate physical and spiritual beauty, the “Mystical Rose” or the “Rose without Thorns”. These poetic references emphasise her innocence, the absence of original sin, her virtues and divine grace, and place her figure as a model of the most beautiful and chaste woman.

El Misteri d’Elx O Arbre Sanct

*O Arbre Sanct, Digne de Honor,
car sobre tots ets lo millor.
En tu volgué sang escampar
Aquell qui lo món volgué salvar.*

*O Holy Tree, Worthy of Honour,
as you are the most precious of all,
on you He wanted to bathe with blood,
the One who wanted to save the
world.*

The Mystery of the Elche is a medieval liturgical drama about the death and Assumption of the Virgin Mary, and it is still performed in the town of Elche, Spain, every 14th and 15th of August.

The tree is one of the most significant and widespread symbols and it often represents spiritual and intellectual growth, strength, rebirth, and the connection between the Earth and Heavens. The concept of the Tree of Life can already be found in ancient Mesopotamian, Egyptian, Persian, Christian and Judaic traditions, as well as in Norse and Celtic mythology. It is the source of eternal life, divine knowledge and healing powers, with its roots deep into the earth and its branches

extended to the heavens.

In this Mystery play, and very often in Christian writings and iconography, the tree that Mary refers to is the Cross, the human-made instrument of Christ's death. The tree becomes a symbol of Christ's greatest sacrifice and Resurrection, his victory over human mortality. In the old legend, the tree of the Cross had sprung from the Tree of Life in the Garden of Eden, which was meant to preserve life.

Hildegard von Bingen

O nobilissima viriditas

*O nobilissima viriditas
que radicas in sole
et que in candida serenitate luces
in rota quam nulla terrena excellentia
comprehendit:*

*Tu circumdata es amplexibus
divinorum ministeriorum.*

*Tu rubes ut aurora et ardes ut solis
flamma.*

*O most noble viridity,
you who are rooted in the sun,
and who in candid serenity shine
within a wheel which no earthly
excellence comprehends:*

*You are encircled by the embraces of
divine ministries.*

*You blush like the dawn and burn like
the flame of the sun.*

Medieval theorists and philosophers studied and observed nature as an integral aspect of God's universe and at the same time as a subject in itself. The "natural mysticism" of the early Middle Ages reveals the existence of holistic worldviews

that humans experienced and sensed as a unified reality. They were examining nature for themselves, interacting with it as a channel to the spiritual dimension.

Hildegard's theological teachings illuminate the significance of Viriditas as a medium to her understanding of the divine. Viriditas is portrayed as the eternal life force, akin to a wheel in perpetual motion, interweaving the earthly elements. According to Hildegard, Adam and Eve were animated by the very breath of Viriditas, the Virgin is referred to as "*viridissima virga*", and the saints embody the "*viriditas digiti Dei*" – the vitality present in the very fingers of God.

Viriditas encapsulates the transformative power of nature, comprising divine medicines capable of invoking both physical and spiritual healing.

Traditional of Cyprus Song of Klidonas

*Τζιαι μπαίννει ο Μας,
τζιαι βκαίννει ο Μας,
τζιαι μπαίννει ο Πρωτογιούννης,
τζι' ο Μας με τα τραντάφυλλα,
τζι' ο Γιούννης με τα μήλα,
Άουστος με τα χλιά νερά, με τα κριά
σταφύλλια.*

*And May enters,
and May leaves,
and the first day of June comes,
and May with the roses,
and June with the apples,
August with the warm waters, with the
cool grapes.*

Ανοιξέτε τον κλήδονα
να μπουσιν τα κοράσσια,
Να τραουδήσουν για τον Μα,
να δούν το ριζικόν τους.
Το ριζικόν μου ίντα' νι;
"Σταυρός τζιαι δακτυλίδιν."

*Open the pitcher of Klidonas
to let the girls in,
to sing of May,
to see their fate.
"What will my fate be?"
"A cross or a ring"*

Klidonas (*κλήδονας*) is a pagan ritual of ancient Greece and Cyprus that was suppressed during the Christian era but remained as a custom in medieval times. It is related to divinatory art and etymologically explained as an oracle, a foretelling phrase or whisper. Ancient Cyprus was dotted with sanctuaries dedicated to oracles, where the priestesses would enter in a state of trance, allowing spirits or gods to speak through them. These messages were considered divine wisdom, guiding everything from personal matters to significant political decisions.

The context of the song is about the unique ritual of Klidonas that took place every beginning of May, between the unmarried girls. In villages across Cyprus, the girls would gather in a spring and put the "unspeakable water" (*αμίλητο νερό*) and flowers in a pitcher and leave it under the stars for three nights. The use of this water represented the girls' commitment to silence throughout the process, even when provoked by boys. On the third day, they would add personal objects and sing this song. A young woman would randomly pick an object from the pitcher, foretelling its owner's fate, with symbols like 'cross' signifying death and 'ring' representing happiness and marriage. The water, associated with the underworld, invoked the dead to determine each girl's destiny.

Byzantine secular song of Cyprus Parakalo tin Panayia

*Παρακαλώ την Παναγιάν
τζιαι προσσυνώ την Πόλιν,
Να μου χαρίσει τα κλειθικά
να μπω μες το περβόλι.*

*Να κόψω μήλα κότσινα,
να πκιω νερόν δροσάτον,
Να γύρω να ποτζιομηθώ
σε μια μηλιάν που κάτω.*

*Να πέφτουν τ' άνθη πάνω μου,
τα μήλα στην ποθκιάν μου,
τζιαι τα γρουσά τριαντάφυλλα
τριγύρω στα μαλλιά μου.*

*I implore the Virgin Mary,
and worship Constantinople,
To grant me the keys
To enter the garden.*

*To pick red apples,
To drink dewy water,
To rest and sleep
Underneath an apple tree.*

*Let the blossoms fall upon me,
The apples in my lap,
And the golden roses
Around my hair.*

The island of Cyprus, a crucible of diverse influences in ancient and medieval times, united the Eastern Mediterranean with the Western world, creating a cultural tapestry woven with threads of ancient wisdom, Byzantine tradition, and medieval mysticism. The resonance of the ancient dialect of Cyprus remains vibrant even today and its roots date back to around 1400 BC, a time when Greeks established colonies on the island.

The dreaming Mediterranean scenery of the Cypriot orchards recalls the Garden of Eden where everything blooms, and at the same time the medieval concept of *Hortus Conclusus* (enclosed garden) where the innocence of Mary was protected. The apples are known to be the fruits of the Tree of Life and the golden roses

appear already from the 11th century as the gift to the ones who give the greatest services to God. They also symbolise the Risen Christ who opened the doors to eternal Spring.

Moniot d'Arras Ce fut en mai

*Ce fut en mai
au douz tens gai
que la saisons est bele,
main me levai, joer m'alai
lez une fontenele.
En un vergier clos d' aiglentier
Oï une viele;
La vi dancier un chevalier
et une damoisele.*

*Cors orent gent
Et avenant
Et molt très bien dançoient;
En acolant et en baisant
Molt biau se deduisoient.
Au chief du tor, en un destor,
doi et doi s'en aloient;
Le jeu d'amor desus la flor
a lor plaisir faisoient.*

*It happened in May,
when the heavens are joyful,
when the season is beautiful,
I rose, went to play
near a little fountain.
In an orchard enclosed by wild roses,
I heard a fiddle;
There I saw a knight
and a damsel dancing.*

*They had graceful bodies
And they were charming,
And they danced very well;
In embracing and kissing
They took great delight.
At the top of the hill, in a secluded
place, they went, two by two;
The game of love upon the flowers
they enjoyed at their pleasure.*

*Tot belement et doucement
chascuns d'aus me ravoie.
Et dient tant
que Dieus briement
m'envoie de celi joie
Por qui je sent paine et torment:
Et je lor en rendoie
merci molt grant
et en plorant a Dé les comandoie.*

*All blissfully and sweetly,
each of them welcomed me.
And they prayed
that God will soon
send me joy from heaven,
where I feel pain and torment;
And I in return
thanked them with great gratitude
and, in tears, I commended them to
God.*

The troubadour-origin genre of pastourelle, widely cultivated by 13th-century trouvères - the ancient lyric poets of Northern France — marks a shift in erotic focus from the courtly *Dame* to the shepherdess. The noble lady is supplanted by a country woman, who is representing a more natural, unrestrained and innate sensuality.

The trouvère Moniot d'Arras (c. 1190-1239), the 'Little Monk of Arras' and one of the last trouvères, associates the beauty of the spring and May with the state of joy, pleasure and eroticism that the couple experiences. Meanwhile, the poet-knight, envious of their happiness, laments his unrequited love and seeks solace in their compassion.

Hildegard von Bingen Karitas Habundat

*Karitas habundat in omnia,
de imis excellentissima super sidera*

*atque amantissima in omnia,
quia summo regi osculum pacis dedit.*

*Love abounds in all,
from the depths exalted and excelling over
every star,
and most beloved of all,
for to the highest King she gave the kiss of
peace.*

The allegories in Hildegard's visions — *Karitas*, *Sapientia*, and *Viriditas* — personify and connect the energies of Divine Love, Wisdom, and Nature inherent in every form of life. The wisdom derived from observing and sensing nature transforms the perception of reality, fundamentally reshaping the way humans engage with and experience life.



























trptk

In the heart of what we do lies a simple truth: music should be felt as much as heard. Our label is founded on the idea that the purest form of listening replicates the magic of a live performance. It's not about grandeur; it's about authenticity, about capturing the essence of the moment when music comes alive.

With each recording, we try to craft an auditory journey, where the walls of your listening space dissolve to reveal the vaulted grandeur of a concert hall, the sacred quiet of a church, or the intimate warmth of a studio. Our role is that of a careful curator — we blend into the background, allowing the artists and the space to speak through the music.

We choose artists who resonate with this philosophy: musicians who inspire us not just with their talent, but with their drive to push boundaries whilst maintaining a heartfelt connection to their audience. It's this balance that guides our collaborations and helps us fulfill our pledge to bring forth recordings that honour the integrity of high fidelity sound, and the essence of musical storytelling.

At TRPTK, we quietly step back and let artistry take the spotlight. We're here to capture rather than enhance, and to deliver not just the sound, but the very soul of the music to you.

Brendan Heinst

founder & senior recording and mastering engineer

Equipment used on this recording

Microphones

Josephson C617 with Microtech Gefell MK221 capsules *main mics*

DPA 4006A *height mics*

DPA 4015A *recorder*

Ehrlund EHR-M *vielle/cittern/rebec, lute, percussion, hurdy-gurdy*

Sonodore MPM-91 *voice*

Microphone preamplifiers

Grace Design m801mk2

AD/DA conversion (11.2MHz 1bit)

Merging Technologies Hapi mkII

Merging Technologies Anubis

Grimm Audio CC2 *master clock*

Monitoring

Grimm Audio LS1be *main loudspeakers*

Grimm Audio SB1 *subwoofers*

KEF LS50 Meta *height loudspeakers*

Hegel C55 *amplifier*

Cabling

Purecable Optimus Link *microphone cables*

Purecable Optimus Power *power cables*

Grimm Audio TPR XLR *microphone cables*

Grimm Audio TPR8 *breakout cables*

Tuning

Pura Power Supplies the Dodo *linear power supply*

Pura Power Supplies the Sauroпода *line conditioner*

Pura Power Supplies the Nautilus *power distributor*

Computer Audio Design GC3 *ground conditioner*

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Credits

Recording & mastering engineer **Brendon Heinst**

Editor **Kristia Michael**

Cover photography & artwork **Brendon Heinst**

Liner notes **Kristia Michael**

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