

Ian Stephens (b.1974)

Clarinet Concerto

2019

25'

2 flutes	solo clarinet in B \flat
2 oboes	
2 clarinets in B \flat	first violins
2 bassoons	second violins
	violas
2 horns in F	cellos
2 trumpets in B \flat	double basses
timpani (and snare sticks)	

1. MCMXCVIII: freely – quick – measured – quick – cadenza – quick – expansive
 2. MM: monumental
 3. MMIII/MMV: sprightly
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The Clarinet Concerto is dedicated to my wife, Mandy Burvill. Over the years I've listened to her performing concertos by Mozart, Weber, Debussy, Nielsen, Finzi, Copland and Magnus Lindberg, each performance an exercise in commitment and vitality, but with a surpassing sense of serenity and beauty in the slow movements. I've long wanted to write a concerto for her, but until now the opportunity hasn't arisen. In 2018 the stars became aligned: Tom Seligman, principal conductor of Kensington Chamber Orchestra and a great friend, suggested bringing the idea to life. Funding was put in place – for which huge thanks to all those involved – and I wrote the piece intensively between November 2018 and February 2019.

The concerto contains strong elements of autobiography, explored through three chronologically-themed movements.

The first, *MCMXCVIII*, focusses on our meeting in 1998. I've used Mandy's date of birth in coded form as the basis of the main theme, which first appears in the free solo clarinet introduction. This theme sparks a series of twelve chords that fan out from a three-note closely spaced chord (D-F-G) to a widely spaced rapturous eight-note chord. This series recurs throughout the movement, but is first heard in the section near the opening that hints at big band. Then the solo takes the lead in a jazz-inflected section – further exploring the main theme – before a far more lyrical and expansive central section. Towards the close, after reworking and combining earlier material, a short cadenza builds towards the movement's climax, which is crowned by a coded form of the year 1998, sung out by trumpets and horns.

The second movement, *MM*, is inspired by our wedding in 2000. Most of the material is derived from a short choral piece, 'A Declaration', that I wrote for

the occasion, and which has languished in a box in the loft ever since – here it is resurrected, recast in instrumental form and presented mosaic-style over the course of the movement, intertwined with fragments of a little song I wrote for us to sing in our early years together.

The third movement, *MMIII/MMV*, is about the arrival of our daughters Maisie in 2003 and Lily in 2005. Their years of birth, in coded form, are the basis of the jaunty main theme; this functions as a loose rondo theme, alternating with contrasting material. At the movement's two climactic moments, our daughters' initials in coded form are sung by *espressivo* high strings in unison. There are also allusions to a song I made up and used to sing to them when they were tiny. Punctuating the movement are pairs of miniature brass chorales – these derive from the harmonies of the first movement, but this time allied to our daughters' theme. Each time the chorales appear they are more richly and outlandishly harmonised. The concerto ends with an orchestral crescendo culminating in a garish glissando on the solo clarinet.

The Clarinet Concerto, aptly, was finished on Valentine's Day, 2019.

It was commissioned by Kensington Chamber Orchestra with funding from the Nicholas Berwin Charitable Trust and Damian Edwards.

The first performance was given by Mandy Burvill and Kensington Chamber Orchestra, conducted by Tom Seligman, on Saturday 11 May 2019 in St Peter's, Notting Hill, London.

Programme note © Ian Stephens

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Clarinet Concerto

for Mandy Burvill, with love

commissioned by Kensington Chamber Orchestra
with funding from the Nicholas Berwin Charitable Trust and Damian Edwards

Conductor's Score

transposing instruments
at written pitch in score

1. MCMXCVIII

Ian Stephens

Freely, spacious

Flute 1 2
Oboe 1 2
Clarinet in B \flat 1 2
Bassoon 1 2
Horn in F 1 2
Trumpet in B \flat 1 2
Timpani (score)
Solo Clarinet in B \flat
Violin 1
Violin 2
Viola
Violoncello
Double Bass

Quick $\text{♩} = 116$

A

Fl 1 2
Ob 1 2
Cl 1 2
Bsn 1 2
Hn 1 2
Tpt 1 2
Timp
Solo Cl
Vln 1
Vln 2
Vla
Vc
Db

B

Fl 1 2
Ob 1 2
Cl 1 2
Bsn 1 2
Hn 1 2
Tpt 1 2
Timp
Solo Cl
Vln 1
Vln 2
Vla
Vc
Db

p *mf*
p *mf*
p *f* *mp*
p *f* *mp*
p *f*
pp *pp* *div.* *unis.* *div.*
p *p* *mp* *p* *f* *p* *mf*
p *p* *mp* *p* *f* *p* *mf*
p *p* *mp* *p* *f* *p* *mf*
p *p* *mp* *p* *f* *p* *mf*
p *p* *mp* *p* *f* *p* *mf*
mf *pizz.* *mf*

C

Fl 1 2
Ob 1 2
Cl 1 2
Bsn 1 2
Hn 1 2
Tpt 1 2
Timp
Solo Cl
Vln 1
Vln 2
Vla
Vc
Db

f *mf* *ff* *mf* *mp*
f *mf* *ff* *mf* *mp*
f *mf* *ff* *mf* *mp*
f *mf* *ff* *mf* *mp*
f *mf* *ff* *mf* *mp*
open *a2* *mf* *f* *mf* *f* *ff* *mf* *mp*
mf *mf* *ff* *mf* *mp*
pp *pp* *mf* *ff* *mf*
f *mf* *ff* *mf*
f *mf* *ff* *mf*
div. *mf* *ff* *mf*
div. *mf* *ff* *mf*
f *mf* *ff* *mf*
f *mf* *ff* *mf*

33 **D**

Fl 1 2 *f* *mf* *p* *mf* *mp* *f*

Ob 1 2 *f* *mf* *p* *mf* *mp* *f*

Cl 1 2 *f* *mf* *p* *mf* *mp* *f*

Bsn 1 2 *f* *mf* *p* *mf* *mp*

Hn 1 2 *f* *mf* *f* *mf* *p* *mf* *mp* *f*

Tpt 1 2 *mf* *f* *mf* *p* *mf* *mp* *f*

Timp. *to Timp.*

Solo Cl *pp* *p* *mf*

Vln 1 *f* *p* *mf* *mp* *f*

Vln 2 *f* *p* *mf* *mp* *f*

Vla *unis.* *f* *p* *mf* *mp* *f*

Vc *unis.* *f* *p* *mf* *mp* *f*

Db *f* *p* *mf* *mp*

41 **E**

Fl 1 2 *mf* *ff* *p* *mf*

Ob 1 2 *mf* *ff* *p* *mp* *p* *f* *mf*

Cl 1 2 *mf* *ff* *p* *mp* *p* *f* *mf*

Bsn 1 2 *f* *mf* *ff* *p* *mp* *p* *f* *mf*

Hn 1 2 *mf* *ff* *p* *mf* *p*

Tpt 1 2 *mf* *ff* *p* *mf*

Timp. *f*

Solo Cl *ff* *p*

Vln 1 *mf* *ff* *p*

Vln 2 *mf* *ff* *p*

Vla *mf* *ff* *p* *unis.* *p*

Vc *mf* *ff* *p* *unis.* *p*

Db *f* *mf* *ff*

91 **K**

Fl 1 2 *ff* *pp* *ppp* *pp*

Ob 1 2 *ff* *pp* *ppp* *pp*

Cl 1 2 *ff* *pp* *ppp* *pp*

Bsn 1 2 *ff* *pp* *ppp* *pp*

Hn 1 2 *ff* *ppp*

Tpt 1 2 *ff* *ppp*

Timp. *ff* take *pp* Snare sticks (together) *p*

Solo Cl *ff* *pp* *p* *mp*

Vln 1 *ff* *pp* *ppp* *pp*

Vln 2 *ff* *pp* *ppp* *pp*

Vla *ff* *pp* *ppp* *pp*

Vc *ff* *pp* *ppp* *pp*

Db *ff* *ppp*

7

99 **L** **M**

Measured ♩ = 80 (Straight ♩)

Fl 1 2 *mf* *ff* *p* *pp* 1. *a2* *mp*

Ob 1 2 *mf* *ff* *p* *p* *p* *mp*

Cl 1 2 *mf* *ff* *p* *pp* *p* *mp* *mf*

Bsn 1 2 *mf* *ff* *p* *p* *p* *mp*

Hn 1 2 *ff* *p* *pp* *p* *mf*

Tpt 1 2 *ff* *pp* *p* *mf*

Timp. *pp* *pp* *p* *mf*

Solo Cl *pp* *p* 5 *mp* *poco f* *div.*

Vln 1 *mf* *ff* *pp* *p* *div.* *p*

Vln 2 *mf* *ff* *pp* *p* *div.*

Vla *mf* *ff* *pp* *p* *div.*

Vc *mf* *ff* *pp* *p* *div.*

Db *mf* *ff* *pp* *p*