

Siri Livingston

*if I stepped into my body I would break /
into blossom*

for viola and piano

2023

FULL SCORE

First performance details Dominic Stokes (viola) and Abigail Chen (piano)

Milton Court Concert Hall, London, UK. 22nd March 2023

Duration 6 minutes

Instrumentation

Viola (scordatura lowest string to A2)

Piano

Score is in C

Notation

,

Breath-marks. Separates phrases and suggests places for a breath or just an intentional brief pause to prepare to place the next gesture.

circular bowing

The technique of moving the bow in a circular motion across the strings, bringing out the sounding pitches faintly as well as uncontrolled timbral effects.

lento – accel. – rit. Used with circular bowing. Varying the speed of the circular motions, changing the sound quality.



Note-names to help to identify extremely low bass notes on the piano, where 8vba lines were not desirable for notational and musical reasons.

ped. _____ Pedal markings. The pedal **remains down continuously through the entirety of the first and third movements.**

Performance instructions

The work is completely unmetred, containing stopwatch markings *only as a reference point to be used in the rehearsal process*. The aim is for the poetic directions written by the composer and the character of musical gestures to be realised into a performance through a process of getting to know the piece very well, making decisions as an interdependent duo, and testing one's musical intuitions, hopefully as a stimulating process also involving input from the composer.

Programme note

In this new composition by Siri Livingston, the piano is a powerful and massive entity, its first resonant, pedal-laden chord calling the delicate timbre of the viola into being. The viola must then explore and come into some form of relationship with its creator.

if I stepped into my body I would break / into blossom

for James Wright

SIRI LIVINGSTON

I. embodying

X slow and spacious

30"

1'

you are tentative, and vulnerable. your only being is the sounds you are making, and even the quietest tones feel enormous. everything is so carefully done it hurts.

with this chord you have made the world. sound, fury, colour, light.
let it ring and ring as long as it wants to.

gentler now. you are still working, but also enjoying your own power.

1'30

circular bowing
lento. → accel. → rit.

2'

these fourths are a relief. you realise they were always
your goal, and you forget your shyness. sounds are larger, warmer.

you feel allowed to make sound and you are overjoyed.
savour the rich warmth of two tones together; let every variation in tone, bow, and rhythm be a delight.

low notes steady; try to surprise us with the
placement of the high bell-like chords.

the slightest flicker of sunlight through closed eyelids
a bell perceived in sleep.

the bell-song is getting closer, the splashes of yellow sun warmer. in the inky dark blue it flashes at the very edges of your vision.
you know everything that will ever and could ever be — yet savour the song all the same.

2'

2'30

4 circular bowing
lento → accel. → rit. , ord.

vla. *p* *mf* *ppp* *mf* *f* *ff* *pp* *f* *ff* *fff*

pno. *mp* *pp* light and quick *mf* *p* *mf* *mp* *mf* *p* *mf* *p*

(ped.)

II. breaking

2'30

rough and energetic

3'

5 almost overpressure ord.

vla. *f* fast, saw-like *fff* *p* *ff* *mf* *mf* *f* *ff* *mf* *gliss.* *smooth, like a siren*

cello-spirit

there were freedoms and powers you were unaware of.
you indulge them, tearing yourself away from the one who made you.

III. blossom

4' glassy and light

7 *sul tasto* → *molto sul tasto* → *ord.*

vla. *f* *pp* *mf* *pp* *mf* *pp* *mf* *pp*

near the frog

forgive me. I am so sorry.

pno. *pppp* *p* *mp*

very light touch; quick, soft, warm

ped. all is forgiven. all is forgiven.

5'

8 *ord, sul A*

vla. *p* *soft but very resonant and warm*

you begin again the forever-song, the light through dancing glass

pno. (ped.)

9

vla.

mp *pp* *mp* *pp*

pno.

poco acc.

(ped.)

Measure 9: Viola (Vla.) has a half note G#4, a half note A#4, and a half note B4, all slurred together. Dynamics: *mp*. Piano (Pno.) has a half note G#3, a half note A3, a half note B3, and a half note C4, all slurred together. Dynamics: *pp*. Measure 10: Viola (Vla.) has a half note G#4, a half note A#4, and a half note B4, all slurred together. Dynamics: *mp*. Piano (Pno.) has a half note G#3, a half note A3, a half note B3, and a half note C4, all slurred together. Dynamics: *pp*. The piano part also includes a 'poco acc.' marking and a 'ped.' marking.

6'

10

vla.

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

pno.

pp

(ped.)

molto rit. repeat ad lib.

Measure 10: Viola (Vla.) has a half note G#4, a half note A#4, and a half note B4, all slurred together. Dynamics: *mp*. Piano (Pno.) has a half note G#3, a half note A3, a half note B3, and a half note C4, all slurred together. Dynamics: *pp*. Measure 11: Viola (Vla.) has a half note G#4, a half note A#4, and a half note B4, all slurred together. Dynamics: *pp*. Piano (Pno.) has a half note G#3, a half note A3, a half note B3, and a half note C4, all slurred together. Dynamics: *pp*. The piano part also includes a 'molto rit. repeat ad lib.' marking and a 'ped.' marking.