

Limb (2019)

: a new composition for Solo Viola & Orchestra

by Jenny Jackson

News flash: I finished it!

Wanting to compose a new piece to add to the viola repertoire is one thing... Like most of the bigger compositional challenges I've tackled to date, the idea of doing it was much more exciting than the very hard work of making it happen. I had the noble idea of exhibiting the viola in all its glory, to educate the audience in what a fabulous instrument the viola is (it is!) capable of creating solo magic as much as the next instrument, and to capitalise on all its unique qualities...

However, as the piece developed, a narrative evolved and I went with it. The title implies a different interpretation of the role of soloist; seen here as an 'extra limb', or as a player which is set apart from the main orchestra but still connected to it. In the piece, rather than enjoying this separation and glory of the limelight, the soloist strives to be integrated fully into the orchestra. The solo part begins strong, bold and intense (playing all my favourite notes!) - with a clear sense of drive and purpose - but gradually becomes more and more absorbed into the orchestral texture until it is impossible to separate them. The climax comes with the marking 'Monstrous, triumphant' when the soloist (and everyone else) is completely drowned out by heavy brass and crashing cymbals (wahey!). The final section is weary, dark and gloomy, however, exposing the solo viola part again - pathetic, weak and fragile: an unsuccessful attempt at permanent integration. The reluctant soloist...

Limb is a nine-minute through-composed piece and will precede a collaborative performance of Beethoven's *Symphony No 9* in the finale concert of Sheffield's Classical Weekend 2019 festival on Sunday 10th March. I hope Beethoven would approve: I have certainly not gone in lightly...

It is an honour to be programmed in the closing concert and I am excited to think that a piece which features the viola, as well as being a new work by a female composer (me!), is being given this exposure which will, undoubtedly, reach a wide audience. I hope you can come! (and have a look at the rest of the festival programme too: something for everyone! - details below).

Jenny Jackson

The Classical Weekend 2019 festival (8 - 10 March) will present a huge variety of performances and workshops across the city and offers opportunities to explore, experience and enjoy live music-making by amateur and professional musicians.

The festival has three themes:

1. **Women in Music:** Celebrating International Women's Day on Friday 8 March.
2. **Future Makers:** Celebrating talented young musicians in Sheffield.
3. **Beyond Borders:** Celebrating the fusion of classical music with other art forms and different world cultures.

Festival finale concert details:

Ode to Joy!

Sunday 10th March

8pm

Sheffield Cathedral

[Hallam Sinfonia](#)

- *Limb** for Solo Viola & Orchestra (2019) - Jenny Jackson (*world premiere*)
- *Symphony No. 9* - Beethoven

a collaborative performance – with Hallam Choral Society, Opera on Location and Singers from the City

Conductor: Natalia Luis-Bassa

Soloist: Maria Do Vale Antunes

Tickets:

£5 (over 18s)

FREE (under 18s)

[Buy tickets](#)

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