

Skull (2022/2023)

for 14 instruments & conductor

Skull was composed in 2023 for large ensemble. It forms the final part of a triptych together with the works *Skin* (2016) and *Scar* (2019). The three compositions can be performed separately or together.

In *Skull* the instrumentation differs greatly from the other works. The central timbral focus lies with the lower range of the wind and brass instruments, and the piano and e-guitar are replaced with an analogue electric Korg BX3 draw-bar organ, chosen for its flexibility and striking sound.

Skull is the longest work at 38 minutes and with it I sought a cohesive formal unity for the triptych. Simultaneously, and in stark contrast to *Skin* and *Scar*, *Skull* pursues a complex web of lyrical polyphony stretching from the very first sound to the final fermata.

Skull partially draws on *Skin* and *Scar*, setting up passing points of reference, and reflecting on timbral fragments, individual gestures and sounds inherent to the earlier works.

These fragments are both diffused and condensed, transformed and mutated, and seek to delve from the outermost surface of the acoustic body to the edge of the innermost, of consciousness - as it were, to to the skeletal essence within.

This quotation from Haruki Murakami's *Hard-boiled Wonderland and the End of the World* elucidates this central image:

"The skull is enveloped in a profound silence that seems nothingness itself.

The silence does not reside on the surface, but is held like smoke within.

It is unfathomable, eternal, a disembodied vision cast upon a point in the void."