

SHIORI USUI (born 1981)
***from scratch* for large
ensemble, vocal and
percussion improvisation
and live electronics (2017)**

Recorded:
Old Fruitmarket, Glasgow

*World premiere on 5 May 2017
at Tectonics 2017*

Shiori Usui vocalist and percussion
Owen Green electronics
Ilan Volkov conductor
BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra

“from scratch” is based on my scientific understanding of the causes of atopic eczema, how skin layers are damaged by years of scratching and my experiences of having it for many years. The sound used in this work is all inspired by the sonic quality and action of scratching skin and other musical instruments, the state of mind when I scratch my own skin due to the condition, and the sound inspired by the images of damaged skin.

The use of space in the performance was inspired by my study on skin layers and how the action of scratching destroys them. The work starts from the three percussionists

scratching themselves and they gradually scratch the back of some string players forming the “outer skin layer”. Their actions cut this into pieces both in terms of sound and spatial arrangement, and as the scratching becomes more intensified and repetitive in terms of both sound and action, the “inner layer” of musicians made of wind players begin to break up by scattering themselves in the performance space as well.

Orchestration:
solo voice & percussion (impr.) - 2.2.2.1 - 2.2.1.0 -
3perc - 8.6.4.4.0 - live-electronics

Duration: 8'10"

Address from where to obtain PDF full scores:
https://issuu.com/casaricordi/docs/shiori_usui_from_scratch_wm

Address from where to obtain performance materials:
<https://www.ricordi.com/en-US/ContactUs.aspx>

<https://www.ricordi.com/en-US/Composers/U/Usui-Shiori.aspx>

SHIORI USUI

Originally from Japan, Shiori Usui is a BBC Proms commissioned composer and improviser based in Scotland. The Times newspaper described her as a composer with “entirely individual ears” after the successful premiere of the piece “Liya-pyuwa” for piano quintet at Wigmore Hall, London in 2006.

Shiori has produced works in radical instrumental music, and has worked with motion-capturing sensors and biophysical technology. Many of her compositions are inspired by the sounds of the human body, the deep sea, and many other weird and wonderful organisms living on Earth.

Shiori has been a recipient of numerous awards and fellowships, including Toru Takemitsu Composition Award 2012, Civitella Ranieri Music Fellowship in conjunction with the UNESCO-Aschberg Bursary (2010), BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra/Cove Park composer’s residency (2012), Birmingham Contemporary Music Group/Sound and Music composer-in-residence (2013-2014), Scottish Chamber Orchestra Connect Fellow funded by BBC Performing Arts Fund (2013-2014) for working with children with additional support needs, the three year Ricordi Lab publishing deal from Ricordi Berlin (2016) and Scottish Awards for New Music for large ensemble (2018).

As an improvising musician, Shiori has performed with artists and groups such as Arve Henriksen, Ilan Volkov, Rie Nakajima, Lee Patterson, Cato, Grey Area, BCMG and Collegium Novum Zurich.

