

Oscar van Dillen

DRONE
SCAPE 1

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Dronescape 1

Dronescape 1 is the first in a series of albums, containing new, digitally created, compositions by Oscar van Dillen. The works on this album were composed June-July 2020.

All works and cover art of this album were created by Oscar van Dillen.

Dronescape

The title *Dronescape* suggests the contraction of the terms *Drone* and *Soundscape*, inferring a music which might at first sight be mistaken for ambient only. But not at a hearing: there is mostly a friendly and pleasant surface character to most compositions, but careful listening will reveal less obvious details and sounds, sometimes surprising, at other times perhaps disturbing.

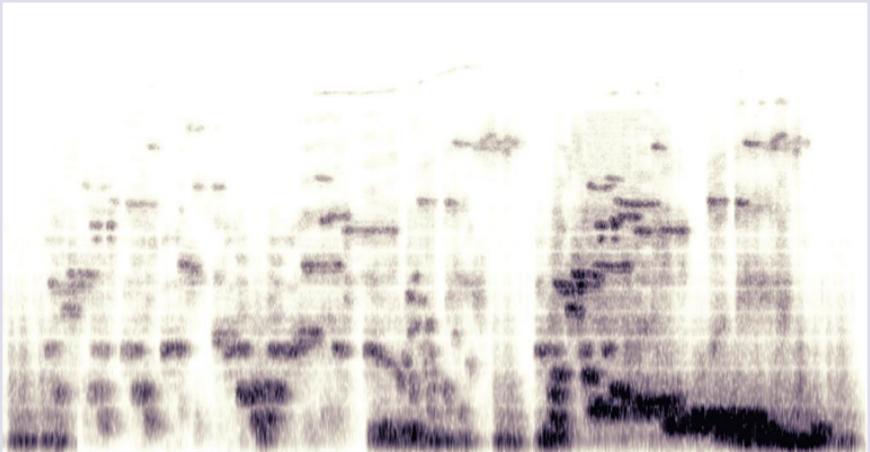
In music, a *drone* (or *bourdon*) is understood to be a continuous sound, interval or chord, usually an accompaniment to a modal structure (melodic music based on a particular scale). Special instruments exist, dedicated to playing the drone only, such as the *tanpura* and the *swar peti* from India. Instruments are found all over the world that include drones within the melodic instruments themselves, such as the *taraf* strings on many Asian string instruments, but also the drone pipes next to the *chanter* in bagpipes, or the hurdy gurdy, and its predecessor the *organistrum* with their drone strings. Aboriginal didgeridoo music can be considered to consist purely of a rhythmized drone. Traditionally, drones with their sustained pitches are used as a harmonic support to the melodic music performed. In the Dronescape by van Dillen the music itself has become rhythmized drone and soundscape at the same time, foregoing the traditional compositional hierarchies of theme and accompaniment, by using the following musical elements, in order of prominence: 1. sound 2. harmony 3. rhythm 4. melody. This non-prominence of melody stresses the absence of a traditional theme and accompaniment-oriented music, instead the work moves towards a more inclusive

approach. This does not mean there are no developing linear structures, but rather that in a way the album can perhaps be regarded as being semipermeable to outside additions, whether coincidental and random (such as happening when listening outdoor or with windows opened), or improvised, or composed, or even as a large *minus one recording*, open to be supplemented by the listener, whether in imagined or performed future additional music.

Dronescape 1

In the Dronescares presented on this album, the concept of a *drone* is taken a step further to result in a lively evolving new music, spanning a very broad spectrum of sounds and styles, including world music, all evolving in a lively and wide stereo field. Each of the compositions is loosely set to a single tone, gradually spanning the full chromatic scale in the course of the 12 pieces. Starting on D with short and dreamlike piece titled *Reminiscence* featuring a recognizable continuous drone, perhaps evoking *Cro Magnon* cave rituals, followed by the more

abstract rhythmical transformed contemporary kicks of *Pulsation* on E-flat, invoking the association with heart beats (as *Rhizomes* evokes the sounds of breathing, although sometimes sounding rather like traveling through a network of *wormholes*), layered in various tempi, creating an almost biological polyrhythm for the duration of 4 minutes and 33 seconds as a tribute to John Cage. Here, although there is a perceptible more or less single pitch, a continuous harmonic drone is circumvented, and what can be called a rhythmical drone is heard. This also happens in *Time*, where extremely slowly accelerating and decelerating clocks against a background of a *pink noise counterpoint* transcend the limits of what can be called perceivable tempo. All consecutive pieces follow a pattern of transposition, as every next one is tuned to a semitone up, from the initial D all the way up to C-sharp with *Singularity*, which was created and composed from a single spectrally composed *droplet of noise* with the latest digital technologies.



spectral "score" of Rhizomes, evoking the sounds of breathing on several time scales

Any collection of character pieces on all tones may remind one of works such as J.S. Bach's Well-tempered Clavier, but the major-minor tonal system has been abandoned here, as have the 20th century developments of serialism and pitch class structuring. Indeed a fuller chromatic material has been used throughout, yet pitch often yields to (more or less) pitched abstract sounds, that have nevertheless been carefully tuned by the composer.

In a number of occasions microtonal detunings have been used, and several pieces are deliberately pushing the relevance and impact of pitch to the background, allowing for a freer expression in *sounds* to take to the foreground. Several pieces do include clearly pitched material, using sampled musical instruments next to sounding objects, in a way inferring a new kind of *musique concrète*. This music as a whole is about *structures of pure sound and silence in time*. When listening, the single tones the compositions are set to are however not always as obvious as the titles suggest.

- Reminiscence – Dronescape on D
(duration 3 minutes 30 seconds)
- Pulsation – Dronescape on E flat
(duration 4 minutes 33 seconds)
- Iridescence – Dronescape on E
(duration 8 minutes 41 seconds)
- Desolation – Dronescape on F
(duration 4 minutes 20 seconds)
- Space – Dronescape on F sharp
(duration 3 minutes 30 seconds)
- Time – Dronescape on G
(duration 6 minutes 57 seconds)
- Solitude – Dronescape on A flat
(duration 6 minutes 23 seconds)
- Interval – Dronescape on A
(duration 4 minutes 13 seconds)
- Disintegration – Dronescape on B flat
(duration 4 minutes 44 seconds)
- Valedictions – Dronescape on B
(duration 3 minutes 33 seconds)
- Rhizomes – Dronescape on C
(duration 11 minutes 5 seconds)
- Singularity – Dronescape on C sharp
(duration 6 minutes 36 seconds)

One can see and hear subsets emerging from the total collection: for example *Pulsation*, *Time*, and *Valedictions* are placed equally spaced over the cycle of works, and all three works concern time structures and emerging rhythms by using more or less concrete sounds. Next to a variety of contemporary sampling and sound creation techniques, the album further includes the use of digitally recreated vintage electronic hardware such as i.e. the *EMS Synthi VCS3 (Desolation)* and the *Fairlight CMI (Space)*.

The collection of shorter Dronescares presented on this album present a variety of atmospheres, as well as of compositional and contemporary digital techniques. The traditional terms *electric music*, *electronic music*, *tape music* etcetera do not apply here, hence the suggestion to speak of *digital music*. Scores are available of the two orchestral pieces included: *Interval* (this is the second piece with the exact duration of 4 minutes and 33 seconds) and *Disintegration* (4 minutes 44 seconds), so these two works can be performed live and non digitally as well.

Dronescape 2

A second album **Dronescape 2** is being released at the same time by OIJ Records, containing 2 much longer works, exploring further a world of Dronescares.

A word of warning: after careful listening, the world around you may not sound the same any longer.

Oscar van Dillen

Oscar Ignatius Joannes van Dillen

('s-Hertogenbosch 1958) is composer and performer of music, professor of music at Codarts University for the Arts in Rotterdam, as well as visual artist. A polyglot and an erudite world citizen, he is also one of the pioneers from the early years of Wikipedia, having been founding president of Wikimedia

Nederland and serving as a trustee of the Wikimedia Foundation. Van Dillen has studied a wide variety of musical traditions with many renowned teachers. His music education having started at the age of 7, and performing both classical and rock music in his youth, van Dillen first studied North-Indian classical music (sitar, tabla, vocal) with Jamaluddin Bhartiya at the Tritantri School in Amsterdam and bansuri with Gurbachan Singh Sachdev at the Bansuri School of Music in Berkeley, California. Next, he studied classical and jazz flute at the Sweelinck Conservatory in Amsterdam. He took composition lessons from Misha Mengelberg. As a flutist, he was taught by Lens Derogée and Dieks Visser, and followed masterclasses from Pierre-Yves Artaud, Geoffrey Gilbert and Barthold Kuijken.



After his following postgraduate studies of medieval and Renaissance music with Paul Van Nevel in Leuven (Belgium), he studied classical and contemporary composition with, among others, Dick Raaymakers, Diderik Wagenaar and Gilius van Bergeijk at the Koninklijk Conservatory in The Hague, with Klaas de Vries, Peter-Jan Wagemans and René Uijlenhoet at the Rotterdam Conservatory and with Manfred Trojahn at the Robert Schumann College in Düsseldorf, where he also received lessons in conducting from Lutz Herbig. As a composer he furthermore followed masterclasses from, among others, Isang Yun, George Crumb, Jan van Vlijmen, Marek Stachowski, Zbigniew Bojarski and Gerard Brophy.

A founding member of the Rotterdam School of composers and the author of its manifesto, he currently works as professor of music at the Codarts University of the Arts Rotterdam since 1997, teaching composing, arranging, world music composition, music history and music theory in the Jazz-, the Pop-, the World music, the Classical music and the Music Education Academies of Codarts.

Oscar van Dillen is the inventor of *original world music composition*, combining strictly composed with improvised classical and folk traditions, and their techniques and mentalities for creating music: a new and contemporary form of art music.

He is also founder, composer and artistic director of the Olduvai Ensemble for which he especially creates original world music compositions.

Van Dillen is a member of Nieuw Geneco and the Dutch-Flemish Society for Music Theory. As of 2020 his scores are published by Donemus. He collaborates with Donemus in publishing his recordings on OIJ Records.

Next to his fulltime work as composer, musician and pedagogue, van Dillen is also a visual artist. As composer, he has been a regular member of various juries, among which the yearly composition prize juries, in the Val Tidone Festival Competitions, since 2013.

Oscar van Dillen's personal website can be found at www.oscarvandillen.com

OIJRECORDS can be found at www.oij-records.com

Donemus and Donemus Records can be found at donemus.nl

OIJ RECORDS

music is sound and silence



The word "DONEMUS" is rendered in a large, white, stylized font. Each letter is partially obscured by a vertical white line that passes through it. The letters are: D, O, N, E, I, M, U, S. The lines are positioned at the center of each letter.

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