

Oscar van Dillen



DRONE
SCAPE 4

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Dronescape 4

Dronescape 4 is the fourth in a series of albums, containing new, digitally created, compositions by Oscar van Dillen. The works on this album were composed October 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 *Drones* 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 4

Similar to the other Dronescape releases, this album too can be considered to be an **Electronic symphony**, the 4th by Oscar van Dillen. Even though not its official overall title, this work was conceived as a **Requiem for a Planet**. The attentive audience can hardly have missed our world has some serious problems to solve?

There are three parts, with a total duration of 1 hour 18 minutes 41 seconds:

1. Deliquescence (duration 29 minutes 5 seconds)
2. Cauterization (duration 12 minutes 30 seconds)
3. Contrition (duration 37 minutes 6 seconds)

Deliquescence uses an evolving complex drone, in part consisting of *frozen sound*. This remarkable possibility of cutting-edge technology permits the freezing of sound. As we know, moving visuals can be frozen as an image, but when pausing moving audio, a sound recording, there should be *silence*. Modern techniques however, using

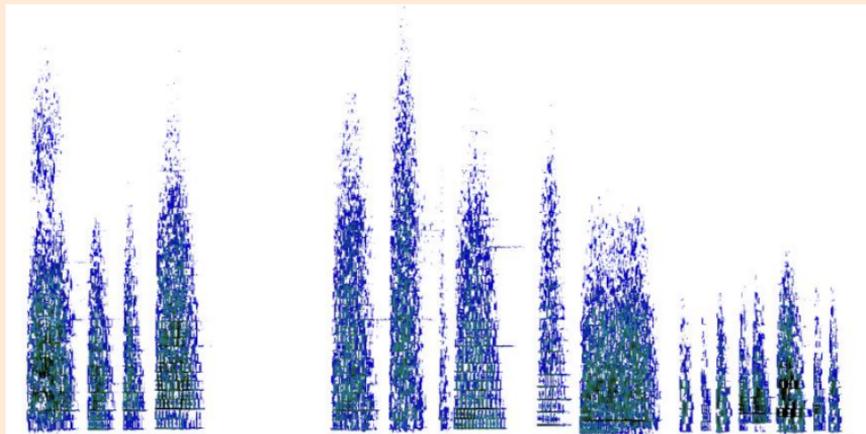
artificially intelligently behaving algorithms, now allow for this freezing of sound, without pausing into silence. In such drones, we can perceive a sense of *all possibilities present*, a sense of music as it appears to a composer when prehearing a composition before its creation: outside of time, timeless music; all audio, everything happening simultaneously instead of sequentially.

More clear than in the earlier Dronescape albums, melody here is used almost from the beginning. It is a floating and hesitating melody, coming in short hovering phrases of a few tones, alternated with long *colored silences*, ever beginning, never truly ending. All sounds are placed in a microtonal field, which recalls but does not use equal tempered tuning in a strict sense. A similar yet more developed melody, but in a much lower register, features in the third part of this work. The later melody in the third part developed into the direction of more simplicity, as opposed to the classical approach of developing complexity, ultimately based on the by now global ideology of *progress*.

Cauterization populates the frequencies normally present in music as ambience and the highest overtones and leaves an almost complete silence at the normal register of octaves used in musical notation. This creates an *inverted sound space*, a temporary partial deafness, which leaves a powerful auditive “after-image” behind for the careful observer. Its twelve and a half minutes make very intense hearing and may be experienced as of similar *subjective duration* as the other two parts, which are each nevertheless roughly three times longer as measured by a clock.

Contrition uses selected musical and sound elements from both the preceding parts, but develops them further, in its almost classical approach to form. Classical in a sense, but also opposite, because, as mentioned before, here it is *simplicity* that evolves gradually, opposing the traditional philosophical interpretation of *progress*. Melody, which is present here as it is in the first part, has moved to such a low register that its sound evokes imaginary animal sounds, entering a terra incognita: *here be dragons?*

The concluding final drone, a frozen sound, practically lasting forever on the composer's digital production system, is given form and a finite duration, yet it still encompasses all heard sounds in one, at the same time, and outside of time, void of further development. This is the closest one may come to actually listening inside a composer's inner hearing perhaps?



spectral view of the very low melodic complex tones

The source of the sounds one hears on this album is the very recently developed chaotic oscillator synthesizer *Generate* by *Newfangled Audio*, a very complex instrument, at times difficult to control precisely, at other times, in many simultaneous complex instances, threatening to overload the computer, and behaving unpredictably. Some of the unexpected side effects of the complex sound synthesis have been preserved in the end result. A small palette of carefully self-built just manageable sounds (patches) has been used in all three compositions. The complex sound sometimes resembles “real instruments” such as cello, trombone and (contra)bassoon, or bass clarinet, but this is an illusion, as can be heard when it moves through various registers: these are all purely synthetic sounds.

The synthesized basic sounds have been modulated and filtered in a selected number of ways to produce a coherent palette range, resulting in an immediately recognizable sound signature of the work as a whole.

Dronescapes

More Dronescapes will be released on OIJ Records when completed. 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

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