

Oscar van Dillen

DRONE
SCAPE 7

Jñāna - Rigpa

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Dronescape 7

Dronescape 7: Jñāna – Rigpa is the ninth in a series of albums, containing contemporary Digital Symphonies by Oscar van Dillen. The work on this album was composed, created, and recorded February 2022.

Music and cover art were created by Oscar van Dillen.

Similar to the earlier Dronescape releases, this work can be considered to be an **Electronic or Digital Symphony**.

This one-part work is called **Jñāna - Rigpa**.

Tracks

1. Jñāna - Rigpa

duration 1:59:59

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.

Jñāna - Rigpa

The work Jñāna - Rigpa is exploring the boundaries of autonomous drone composition, both in the sense of its duration (it has the longest single-track duration streaming platforms allow today), as in the sense of its minimalism of musical and technical means used. While creating an atmosphere of almost trance and meditation, it also serves as a means, a tool, for deep and inner reflection. Reflection on one's own hearing is intended explicitly here: *a music that serves to listen to one's own hearing.*

The central tone D-flat, is used throughout, flanked by lower neighbouring tones C natural/C-flat, and upper neighbour E double flat, in this way harmonically imitating the basic 3-tone patterns variants used in the chanting of the Veda's, as well as referring to the basic minimum of music's tonal materials: a clear central sound or tone, with melodic and harmonic space both above and below it.

The composed form knows both stasis and development: constant and subtle changes occur, all are progressing extremely slowly within the widely projected sound field.

Listening with care will begin to reveal more details within the developing sound; there is a certain freedom to choose which elements to focus on, with the result of the listening experience being clearly modulated by the way of listening itself. Reports of what is perceived will differ between listeners for this very reason: one hears what one chooses to hear or to ignore. This is an intended freedom of appreciation; the composition serves as a landscape or soundscape through which the ear can wander about in a personal manner. The listener becomes guide as well as the guided, is both Virgil and Dante, both Enkidu and Gilgamesh, at the same time. The work functions as a mirror for both the listener and the listening itself alike.

The title of the work refers to Indian Hindu Jñāna, and the Tibetan Buddhist Rigpa, traditions, studying enlightenment, or self-realization. This is not identical to the European concept of Enlightenment however, because here is the personal discovery and individual recognition of the final ground on which everything we know and perceive is based: consciousness in selfless self-awareness it might be called. This consciousness, filled to the brim with emptiness is what is reflected in the music of Jñāna - Rigpa.

Traditionally this approach is known to be more familiar in Asia than in Europe. The usual terms “East” and “West” are blatantly wrong and politically divisive, as they are not denoting geographical areas, but directions instead. In a world where such basic realizations are not embedded in daily language use, confusions naturally abound, wrong views are maintained, and faulty conclusions are drawn.

Having been trained in North Indian Classical music, van Dillen was also initiated in the Jñāna Yoga tradition by Sri Parabrahmadatta Maharaj, pupil of Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj. At the time, in 1978, the composer was 20 years old, and he planned to travel to India to visit Nisargadatta whose teachings and writings he studied, when he had a vivid and lucid dream. In this dream, he was in India, searching for the famous guru, and needing directions countless times, always accompanied in silence by his best friend at his side, fellow traveller and fellow seeker of knowledge. Together they walked and walked and it was the dreamer that asked for directions time and again. Literally every Indian person who was asked for directions on the street “Do you know the way to Sri Nisargadatta?” replied “Ah, Maharaj!”, and everyone knew him and knew

part of the way. But the way was long and complicated, directions needed to be asked countless times, and most of the dream consisted of this quest. In the end however, the Maharaj' house was found, it was a white house with red writing on its outer wall, and when one entered, a narrow stair had to be climbed at the end of a corridor. With his head reaching above the first floor, the dreamer saw Nisargadatta, and immediately recognized him as his silent companion and best friend all along, fully awaking suddenly, remembering the complete dream instantly, and recognizing it as special, unique, and thinking of the beautiful similarity to the biblical story in Luke 24.

The dream was a clear message that the teacher looked for was already inside and present, no flight plans were needed. But moreover, on recounting this dream to his guru, van Dillen was shown photographs of the house which exactly corresponded to the dream. The dream contradicted the visual idea the composer had, based on a photograph he once saw of a Krishnamurti lecture: with windows open, a room on the ground floor. His dream on the contrary showed the place as it truly is when one travels there by plane, including the details of the house.

A similar awakening within the dream of awareness is the very subject matter of Jñāna and Rigpa, the respective traditions from Hindu India and Buddhist Tibet.



Jñāna - Rigpa can be performed live, as its basic setup is very simple and clear, its slow formal development clearly outlined. The sound is created by a modular setup using three virtual ARP2500 1004P multiple waves oscillators, one ARP2500 1016 dual noise/random voltage generator, and four ARP2500 1006 filtamp modules. These modules are modulated by nine sloth LFO's (extremely low frequency

oscillators), which also cross-modulate each other as well as the final 4 channel mixer's pan and volume controls. In the image, there is a redundant noise generator which was not needed and wasn't used in the end. The ending of the composition contains a surprise, which occurred during the recording and was an unexpected gift, so was preserved in the end result: when all filters' amplifier gain knobs had been turned to zero, silence ensued. But after a short while, and with a gentle crescendo, the sound came back up again to the surprise of the composer. As it turned out, in this way typical stops and silences added an unexpected bonus to the piece. It is a beautiful calm ending, in a way very similar to how van Dillen's first String Quartet concludes, and to how his recent orchestra work Disintegration is constructed: with many stops to silence and then still continuing. One is never sure when it ends, just like life itself. The remarkable fact however that this happened unintentionally this time, but completely in tune and accordance with his compositional practices, is a remarkable consequence of his thoroughly composed process of composition, which leaves room for chance.

DronesCAPES

So far, the following DronesCAPES have been released:

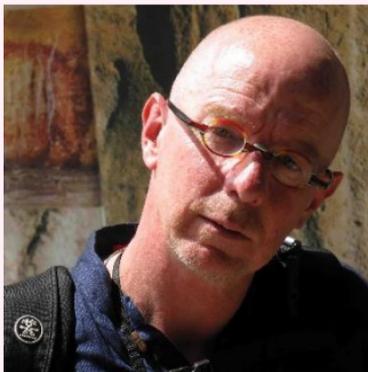
1. Genesis
2. Genomes – Emanations
3. Infinity
4. Requiem for a Planet
5. Myrmecology
6. Oneirology (series of collaborations)
7. Jñāna - Rigpa

New DronesCAPES are in the making, you can follow Oscar van Dillen and Donemus Records publications by their websites but also e.g., on Twitter.

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 visual artist. A generalist rather than a specialist, next to his music studies in Indian classical music, Jazz, European medieval and renaissance music, and contemporary composition and music theory, he also studied architecture and mathematics. He was a founding member of the Rotterdam School of Composers, having written its manifesto in 1997. His works span a wide variety of styles and genres, encompassing full score compositions for classical musicians ranging from solo pieces to full orchestras, style-specific scores for ensembles of jazz and world music musicians, as well as electronic works, and electro-acoustic compositions. In a more advisory role, he has been part of cultural advisory boards and competition juries, as well as on the board of Wikimedia International, having founded the Wikimedia organizations in the Netherlands as chairman.



He teaches music theory, music history, composition, and improvisation at Codarts Rotterdam Conservatory.

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

www.donemus.nl

Photo Oscar van Dillen by Elise van Rosmalen

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music is sound and silence



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