

Oscar van Dillen  
Fie Schouten

DRONE  
SCAPE 6.5

Oneirology 6

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# Dronescape 6.5

**Dronescape 6.5** is the seventeenth in a series of albums, containing new Digital Symphonies by Oscar van Dillen. The work and text of this album were collaboratively created, composed, and recorded January 2024-November 2024.

Music created by Oscar van Dillen and Fie Schouten; cover art of this album created by Oscar van Dillen.

Similar to the earlier Dronescape releases, this work can be considered to be an **Electronic or Digital Symphony**. This three-part collaborative work is called **Oneirology 6**.

Dronescape 6.5 is the sixth in a subseries, a shared dreaming space in which Schouten's ideas are presented developing alongside van Dillen's original Oneirology 1.

## Musicians

Oscar van Dillen	Composition, electronics, sound engineering, and production
Fie Schouten	Composition, contrabass clarinet, bass clarinet, A-clarinet, voice

## Tracks

1. Section 1 – Bb contrabass clarinet	17:14
2. Section 2 – Bb bass clarinet	22:08
3. Section 3 – A clarinet	13:48
Total duration:	53:10

## 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.

## Oneirology series

In our current times of SARS-Covid pandemic, art in general, more specifically exhibitions, concerts and music performances and other events where an audience can meet creative artists, have in general been cancelled and made practically impossible in most places, mostly by government regulations that have so far proven to be as ineffective against the virus as they have been effective at disconnecting people. *Divide et rege* in action?

In our days, the world seems to be coming apart, coming apart again, we may be tempted to think, as humanity seems to have dealt with this before in the past. Indeed, there have been many past ages in which prophets of a kind have proclaimed the end of the world, with solutions offered within the context of their beliefs, mostly irrational solutions to irrational problems. Apocalyptic visions have thus helped establish many a tyrant in history. People that do not distinguish between belief and knowledge are tempted to believe that the current crises modern

Science describes are no different from similar historical situations. There are vital differences however, among which the rational nature of the problem descriptions. Most importantly, this time we can objectively observe the crises in progress: today we are facing real and planetary existential threats, not just to ourselves, but to most life.

To name three of these existential threats:

1. *Human Waste* (do we recall the plastics we see everywhere outdoors, are we aware that part of it is making us sterile in the next decades to come, which means possibly no more babies can be conceived and no more will be born?),
2. *Planetary Climate Change* (have we noticed the weather patterns change everywhere, and lack or overabundance of rainfalls in places, as well as some rivers ceasing to flow and others starting to regularly overflow, beginning to make large areas uninhabitable in the foreseeable future, are we aware that safe access to clean sweet water is fundamentally needed for all life, have we noticed

the unusual heat and cold waves accompanying the changing patterns of precipitation?),

3. *Artificial Intelligence* (merely the next technology it seems, but what is it used for -and it certainly is used globally already- how does it affect every aspect of daily life, not just human, and most importantly: who will decide on how to regulate its use, whom will we elect to defend us from the existential threats, which politicians, often said to be notoriously analphabetic where websites, online multinationals, automated systems, digital technologies and computers in general are concerned, who will have the courage to act upon what is fact, science, knowledge?).

Such huge existential threats, getting worse every day, seem to generally not get the attention they need and deserve, sometimes to the point of facing censorship or litigation. Small beginnings need to be made and long-term nurtured, starting with reconnecting real people, not just online aliases, in a rational and realistic context.



The composer decided with this work to create such a *small beginning*, a common space to listen and dream together. To create, within the scope of his expertise, a dedicated work of music: a dark dreaming space, inviting other professionals to dream together, to dream music together, closely collaborating in a Covid-proof manner, remotely connecting in a joint effort, creating fresh beginnings for what can become a musical alphabet for Babel\*, connecting and working together with specialists from various musical traditions.

In thus connecting, people enlarge their world yet make it come closer and seem smaller, more comprehensible, at a stroke. This is the major benefit of modern technology, without which the creation of this album would have been near impossible. You too are invited to connect, and listen or dream along, to face and escape reality and its daily nightmares, to imagine freely what to do, what to add, what to create: to imagine in the spirit of John Lennon.

\* See also the Babel Alphabet paintings by Oscar van Dillen (1993)

## **Making of Oneirology 6**

Oneirology was recorded on a single day at Codarts Rotterdam; the mixing was finalized in collaboration.



## Oneirology 6

Fie Schouten: "My contribution to *Oneirology 6* is entirely improvised. However, this was not a spontaneous or unprepared process. I thoroughly explored the concept of oneirology and engaged deeply with the electronic soundscape created and composed by Oscar. Although I play six different clarinets, I prefer to limit myself to three within a single work or concert performance. The choice to begin with the contrabass clarinet, followed by the bass clarinet, and finally the A clarinet was guided by the emotions evoked while listening to the electronic composition.

The piece begins in a dark, somber tone, which is accentuated by the contrabass clarinet. The bass clarinet, with its powerful, virtuosic qualities and expansive range, takes center stage in the second and longest section of the



performance. Finally, the A clarinet, offering a rounder and softer timbre than the more commonly known B-flat clarinet, concludes the work. At this stage, the dream world becomes gentle and fluid, allowing the listener to find a sense of calm; a space where the dreamer can descend back into a deep, peaceful sleep.

As intermezzi, I softly address the audience, starting with a definition of oneirology as a way to anchor the listener in the conceptual "world" of the performance. This is followed by a series of terms associated with the concept, presented in multiple languages as free associations or a kind of word web. The electronics serve as both a comforting blanket and, at times, a veil of mist surrounding the instrument, which might perhaps be imagined as a lone wanderer, navigating this dreamscape."



## **Dronescape series**

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)
  - a. 6.0 solo version Oscar van Dillen
  - b. 6.1 version with Kudsı Erguner
  - c. 6.2 version with Henri Tournier
  - d. 6.3 version with Pier Sante Falconi
  - e. 6.4 version with Leo Vervelde
  - f. 6.5 version with Fie Schouten
7. Jñāna – Rigpa
8. The four Pillars of Reason
9. Matters of Life or Death
10. Anthropocene
11. Concerning Whale Languages
12. The Unbearable Formlessness of Chaos

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

## Fie Schouten

Fie Schouten is a renowned Dutch clarinetist based in Amsterdam, specialized in contemporary music, both composed and improvised, with a particular focus on low clarinets. She has a prolific career as a soloist and frequently performs with her ensembles, collaborating with musicians and artists from other disciplines.

Schouten is the artistic director of the *Basklarinet Festijn*, a recurrent bass clarinet festival that started in 2014. She is curator of the chamber music series for contemporary music *Nieuwe Noten Amsterdam* since 2016. She has produced CDs released under various labels, including Attacca, Trytone, Karnatic Lab Records, Kairos, and Relative Pitch Records. In 2019, she was honored with the 1st Nieuw Geneco Fair Practice Composition Commission Award for her significant impact on the Dutch music scene and her commitment to fair practice.

Since 2013, Schouten is Professor of Bass Clarinet and contemporary music at the Prince Claus Conservatoire in Groningen. She has also been a guest professor at several international universities, including those in Austria, Estonia, Israel, and the USA.



See also: [www.fieschouten.nl](http://www.fieschouten.nl) and [www.bassclarinet.nl](http://www.bassclarinet.nl)



## Oscar van Dillen

Oscar Ignatius Joannes van Dillen (s-Hertogenbosch 1958), is a prolific composer and visual artist. A polyglot and an erudite world citizen, he is 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 studied a wide variety of musical traditions with many renowned teachers. His music education having started at the age of 7, he professionally studied North-Indian classical music, western jazz and improvisation, European medieval and renaissance music, contemporary vocal, instrumental and electronic composing, music theory, specializing in world music, as well as architecture, and finally also mathematics. As a visual artist he is autodidact, growing up in an artistic milieu and being surrounded by many artists during his lifetime.

A founding member of the Rotterdam School of composers and the author of its manifesto, he is employed as professor of music at the Codarts University of the Arts Rotterdam since 1997, teaching composition, arranging, world music composition, improvisation, ensemble, music history and music theory at the Rotterdam Conservatoire in all music departments.

He is a member of Nieuw Geneco, BIM, and the Dutch-Flemish Society for Music Theory. As of 2020 his scores are published by Donemus, of which he is a board member since 2022.

Oscar van Dillen's personal website: [oscarvandillen.com](http://oscarvandillen.com)  
Fie Schouten's personal websites: [fieschouten.nl](http://fieschouten.nl) - [bassclarinet.nl](http://bassclarinet.nl)

**Photo credits:**

Photo Fie Schouten by Geert Vandepoele

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Additional photos by Oscar van Dillen, Fie Schouten, and Mark Vondenhoff

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