

Drones Against Drones: Metadata 2012-2013 Performance Notes
Jeff Tobias - March 2014

This piece is a pure drone with a fundamental tone of C. It's a cellular/modular piece where the performer can choose to move between the cells (named A, B, C, etc) at will.

As I've noted in the score, it's best to stick to cell A. The piece should always have a strong sense of a fundamental tone. If you feel like it's becoming sound soup, do your part and head back to the fundamental (the pitch C, not to be confused w/ cell C).

When we start the piece, the main percussionist will do a four count and then everyone's in. Not too hard an accent/attack: just in.

From there, entrances and decays of notes should be gradual. Not a huge crescendo/decrescendo, but subtle. "Subtle" is a big word here.

Since there may be a lot of us, individual volume control is a must. Use this as a guideline: look at a performer who is across the stage from you. Can you hear them? If not, try to temper your volume.

It's fine to take breaks. Try to stagger that w/ the people around you. If the person next to you has dropped out for a moment, stay in for a while.

The main percussionist will be playing a series of rather aggressive percussive gestures. She is the only thing that's meant to really stick out. The group can move in dynamic motion together (never going too far above a mp, or a conservative mf), but the drummer's part is the focus. Once she stops playing, gradually decrescendo until you are out. (There will be several pauses in the percussionist's part. Wait for her to indicate that she is completely done by putting down or folding her sticks.)

Vocalists, use any vowel shape that you want. I like "Ah" to start. Acoustic instrumentalists, use extended techniques or other means of varying your texture at your discretion - always with taste and subtlety. I Trust You. (Don't make me regret it.) Electronics guys - do electronics! Just kidding - perform drones in C or G any way you wish, using effects and filters to vary the timbre. You can go into the board or bring your own amp.

As far as timbre/texture goes: clean is fine. Harsh is also OK, in moderation. While this is a pure drone piece, it can have shape. Use your ears and play together.

The political aspect of the piece is key to understanding how to perform it.

This is a protest song. It's also a lament. It's an attempt to raise awareness of the ongoing drone attacks on nations including Yemen, Pakistan, Somalia, and

Afghanistan by the CIA.

The percussion chart being played by the main percussionist is a representation of the 174 drone attacks that occurred in those areas between 2012 and 2013. They have been randomized so as to create an abstraction of these events, not a direct reflection.

The main percussionist's part is a signifier of anger. Our parts are signifiers of grief. Use this as a guideline for the piece. We're holding these notes to meditate on these human concerns, and to facilitate the same reaction in the audience.