and there will come soft rains

Desmond Clarke

and there will come soft rains is a work of indeterminate length, form and instrumentation. There are four possible performance configurations detailed in this score:

(A) An original realisation from first principles. The work in its most basic form exists as a set of instructions forming an improvisational scheme for any number of musicians.

(B) A realisation of the form-scheme used for the premiere recording. The choices of form and development allowed in A are fixed, and the performer(s) realise this architecture through directed improvisation.

(C) A realisation of the form, instrumentation and technical set-up used for the aforementioned recording. As B, but using the same instrumental and technological forces as the recording (clarinet in A and electronics) and with specific, notated material upon which to improvise.

(D) A work for improvising clarinet and fixed media derived from the recording. A graphic time-space realisation of the tape part is provided alongside suggestions and examples of material that the clarinettist may choose to adopt or ignore.

A performance of this work should be subtitled with the relevant letter, for example *and there will come soft rains (B)*.

The notated material used in versions C and D was developed in collaboration with clarinettist Will Ozard.

A:

Improvisational Scheme

A musical space should be defined, for example a set of techniques, or a relationship between the players. One or more parameters, for example dynamic, density, or a physical parameter of an instrumental technique, should then be slowly and continuously increased or decreased until the textural space cannot be sustained. At this point the texture should undergo a transformation into a new space, taking one or more of the subsidiary parameters of the previous material as the new region of development. During this process the musician(s) may improvise freely in all other parameters, as long as the recognisability of the musical space and process remain intact. These spaces and processes may be decided in advance or spontaneously improvised, though if this is the case care must be taken that the new relationship is swiftly and clearly defined: to achieve it performers could take turns in choosing a parameter to modulate, once it becomes clear what the process is, the other musicians can join in reinforcement.

B:

Realisation for open instrumentation with defined form

This version comprises three separate musical spaces, as defined in A. The only parameter that is modulated is overall dynamic intensity, primarily achieved by varying densities of material.

1: Sparse, pontillistic texture. Isolated sounds and groups of sounds. High noise content.

- Increase dynamic intensity through the thickening of the texture, increase the dynamic of individual sound-events.

- Once the texture has reached a point of continuous sound, allow sound-events to join into longer, continuous gestures, and use these to induce a climactic transition in which density and dynamic drop rapidly to reveal the beginning of region 2.

2: Drone based, melodic texture. A pedal note as a fundamental. Melodies constructed from the overtone series of the pedal. The noise component of region 1 has been recontextualised as ornamentation of the melodic figures.

- Increase dynamic intensity through the incremental addition of more harmonics over the drone and the addition of multiple poly- or heterophonic melodic lines, increasing in compass, dynamic and timbral intensity.

- Once the texture has reached a point where the relationships between the drones and the melodies begin to break down, that is to say the distinctions between texture, melody, harmony and timbre start to become meaningless, induce a second climactic event, again dropping density and dynamic to a relatively low level to reveal region 3.

3: Vertical, melodic texture. Melodic fragments from the end of region 2 now define a vertical, harmonic space. These fragments are arranged into passages of varying length and lyricism. Drone textures related to region two occasionally and briefly surface, serving to thicken and accentuate the harmonic space rather than to define it.

- Decrease the number of melodic events, but not the internal density of these events.

- Once the interval between events is so large that the overwhelming feature of the texture is silence, the work ends.

C:

Realisation for clarinet in A, electronic musician and computer

This version follows the form-scheme detailed in B.

The electronic musician should be able to generate or trigger a range of complex, highly controlled sounds. Specific regions of material are described below. The computer should be set up to record chunks of audio from the clarinettist of various lengths and play them back in a pseudo-random distribution, with density and volume directly correlated with the physical motions of the clarinettist. This could be done through either video tracking or with an accelerometer. It may be necessary to calibrate the motion tracking very precisely on the hands of the clarinettist, or to capture broader more expressive gestures, depending on how much the individual performer moves, voluntarily or involuntarily, during periods of very active playing. It is important that the electronic musician has the ability to empty the buffer of clarinet samples at the moments of transition between regions.

A Pure Data (pd) patch for the computer part is available, along with detailed instructions, at **desmondclarke.co.uk/softrains**.

The melodic examples given for the clarinet are guides - they may be realised precisely, used as the basis for improvisational development, or disregarded entirely.

> **Region 1:**
>
> **Clarinet:** Techniques used: tongue clicks, breath sounds, slap tongue, occasional staccatissomo pitches.
>
> **Electronic Musician:** Sound-regions employed: clicks, pops, short bursts of noise and other pontillistic sounds. A small amount of reverberation may be used to emphasise specific figurations.
>
> Be sure to empty the computer's sample buffer at the moment of transition, so that new samples are gathered from the new region.
>
> **The two musicians should respond to each other's playing in the creation of aggregate groups of events, building from isolated sounds to a continuous texture.**
>
> **Region 2:**
>
> **Clarinet:** Construct melodies focussed around the overtones of a fundamental of A=110. Begin with individual pitches emerging from the electronic drones, developing these from melodic fragments (ex. 1 and 2) into longer lines (ex. 3 and 4), finally employing distortion of pitch and timbre (ex. 5 and 6), continuing this process until the individual line becomes inaudible within a complex texture.

Respond continually to the material of both the electronic musician and the computer, actively duetting with the electronic musician's noise-based figurations.

Increase the physical activity of your playing throughout the section to induce a gradually increasing occurrence of sample playback from the computer to augment the melodic development.

Electronic Musician: Construct a drone texture comprising the fundamental and overtones of A=110. The texture should be active, in that the surface should be continually in flux in terms of balance between different pitches, but the harmonic content should remain static throughout. The texture should begin with a limited number of overtones (not necessarily including the fundamental), adding more as the ensemble texture develops.

Employ individual sounds based upon those used in region 1, but developed into longer, more complex figurations, possibly employing pitched material but always within the context of a noise event. Employ these sounds melodically as a duet with, and context to the unfolding clarinet melodies.

At the point of maximum possible density, when the melodic line of the clarinet has all-but disintegrated into a noise texture, induce a transition into the third region using the

noise-texture to overwhelm the drones, which should then itself disintegrate to reveal the material of region 3.

Region 3:

Clarinet: The hyper-melodic material at the close of region 2 should be recontextualised as defining a vertical, harmonic space. Individual melodic events should be lyrical and self-contained, though networks of these events should form broader musical paragraphs. Free melodic development is encouraged, and careful control of the movement-based triggering of samples is essential. Defined sub-regions of specific melodic material are a possibility, but the overall trend of the region should be towards dispersion of events, separated by increasing intervals of silence.

The final few melodic events should be primarily sample-based, triggered by silent movements. Stillness and silence should be obviously linked, and the work should end with a long silence, optionally with a final, very quiet event at the close, performed while as still as possible so as to minimise triggering of samples.

Electronic Musician: Take a secondary role. Use material related to the drones from region 2 (possibly time-stretched clarinet samples) to accentuate the density contour of the clarinet material. Sparse, occasionally soloistic. Cease playing when the clarinet begins introducing longer silences.
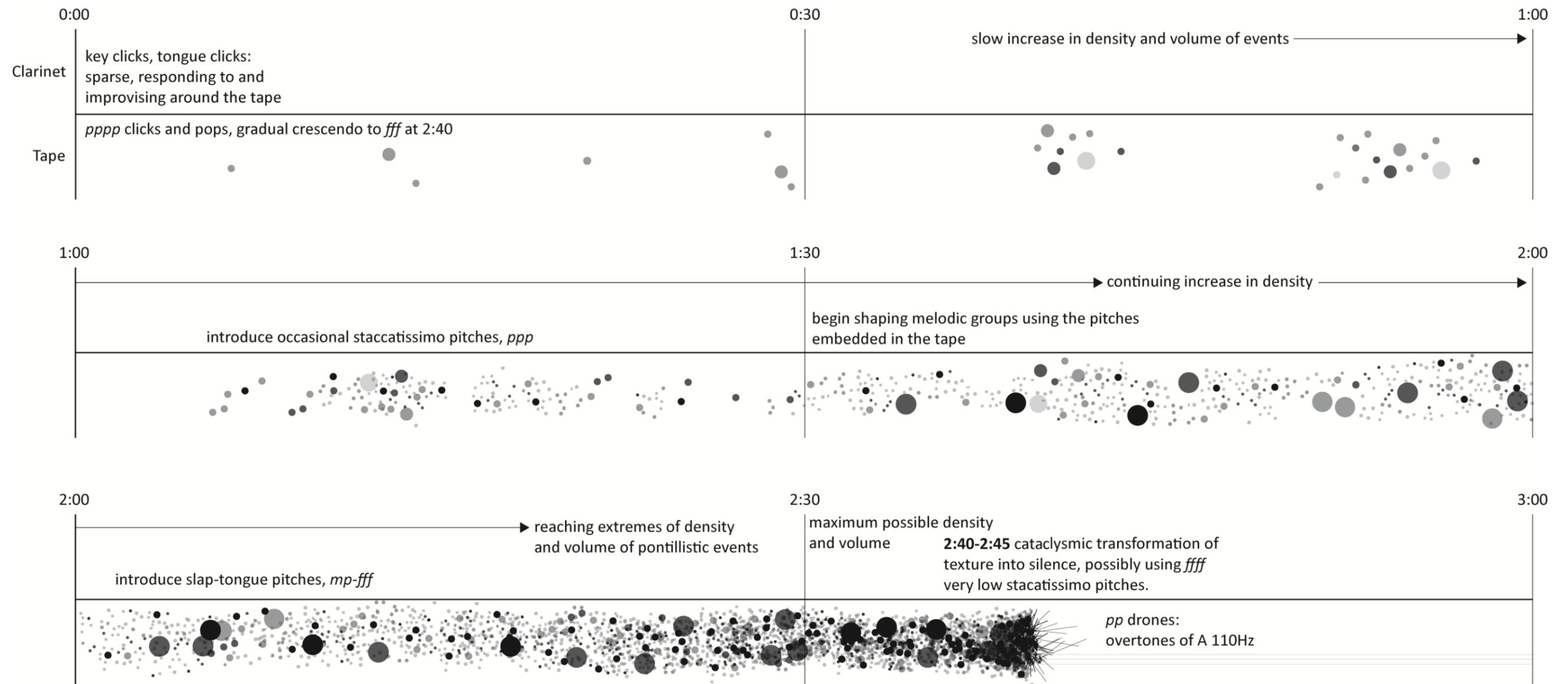
D:

Realisation for improvising clarinet in A and fixed media

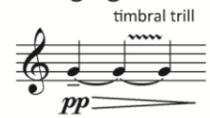The tape part for this realisation is available at **desmondclarke.co.uk/softrains**.

This score is envisioned not as performance material but as a tool for a clarinettist wishing to construct a realisation of the work. The written and notated instructions for the player should be seen as non-prescriptive source material: the performer is strongly encouraged to formulate as much original material as possible in response to both the notation and the tape itself, and to acquaint themselves with the three other, much freer, incarnations of this work. It is essential however to bear in mind that the clarinet samples included in the tape are derived from material closely related to the given examples, and so any major disparities between the performed and recorded parts must be dealt with carefully and creatively.

<u>**This score is transposed in A.**</u>

0:00   0:30   1:00

slow increase in density and volume of events

Clarinet — key clicks, tongue clicks: sparse, responding to and improvising around the tape

Tape — *pppp* clicks and pops, gradual crescendo to *fff* at 2:40

1:00   1:30   2:00

continuing increase in density

introduce occasional staccatissimo pitches, *ppp*

begin shaping melodic groups using the pitches embedded in the tape

2:00   2:30   3:00

reaching extremes of density and volume of pontillistic events

maximum possible density and volume

2:40-2:45 cataclysmic transformation of texture into silence, possibly using *ffff* very low stacatissimo pitches.

introduce slap-tongue pitches, *mp-fff*

pp drones: overtones of A 110Hz

3:00   **3:30**   **4:00**

pitches emerging from drones: (to achieve bitone, change   becoming melodies:
                                                 fingering to high C but do
timbral trill   not re-articulate)

pp   *pp*   *p* ——— *mp* ——————————— *pp*

very slow increase in thickness of drone texture   noise events and clarinet samples
                                                                        begin to augment drones

4:00   **4:30**   **5:00**

trils, microtonal deviations from drone pitches: begin to expand registers using higher
                                                                        overtones, becoming more microtonal:

pp   *p* ——— *mf* ——————————— *pp*

5:00   **5:30**   **6:00**

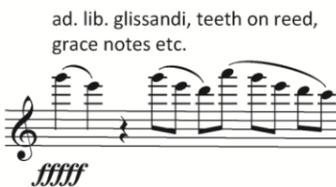   noise events now relatively constant, clarinet samples begin to dominate texture,
                                                                        density continues to increase

6:00   **6:30**   **7:00**

transpose melodies and melodic cells into wider and wider registers   increasing distortion of sound: ad. lib. glissandi, teeth on reed,
                                                                                                            grace notes etc.

                                                                                                            fffff

7:00

distorted sound now coming to dominate texture:
(multiphonics, teeth on reed etc.)

fff

7:30

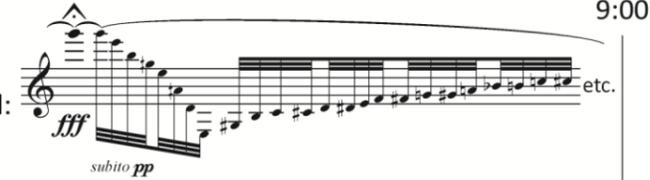density and rate of change of events approaching maximum possible values

8:00

sustain maximum

8:30

focus on G (sounding E) as texture collapses into new
state at **8:50-8:55** - move instantly to *p* scalic material:

fff

subito **pp**

etc.

9:00

9:30

develop scalic material, while engendering a slowly fragmenting, dispersing texture,
responding to, and anticipating events in the tape part.

harmonic drones surrounded by distant clarinet lines:

10:00

11:00

10:00

10:30

11:00 11:30 12:00

scalic passages becoming individual fragments,
decreasing in density following the clarinet samples

12:00 12:30

individual, very quiet, tenuto pitches - fading to silence