

Tinnitus

by

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Notes on the Drone part

The singer sets the single pitch of the Drone, to suit their choice of performance.

The Drone should be stable in both pitch and volume, and must never be louder than the singer.

There should be no pulse or rhythm audible from the Drone.

The best performances have used a chamber organ, with a single stop drawn; if there is no organist, the singer has a key wedged before the performance starts, then merely draws the stop to start the sound. The singer should choose which sound they prefer.

Some electronic keyboards can also produce a sustained sound which does not vary in dynamic. The singer should choose which sound they prefer. [Once, for a humorous performance, a keyboard-player came on stage, took time varying the height of the stool and opening the music then with much waving of the hand placed their finger on the solitary note – then the singer appeared; at the end of the performance the player upstaged the singer.]

Other performances have used a bowed bell, a bowed violin or a bowed double bass, but players found sustaining the same dynamic level throughout difficult.

Several performers have used a tape-loop. This old technology added some high hissing which, as long as no pulse could be ascertained, can greatly add to the desired effect. Similarly, the hissing from a carefully-tuned cheap short-wave radio (which is not picking up any radio station) can enhance the drama as long as the drone pitch is easily audible to the audience.