

An Archive of the musical compositions by Herb Bielawa

Composition: **Drone on D** – flute, clarinet, violin, viola, and cello

*Discussion – Relax – Driving*

Date: 2015

Duration:

Recording: by

Program Note:

*Drone on D* is an abstract composition having no program. It is in one long movement with three major sections. The problem I set for myself was to compose a work placing essentially freely tonal writing on top of a D drone. It was necessary to choose D because it encompasses the playable range of all the instruments. With the note D sounding throughout, there is, obviously, a strong tonal center on D. It surely could cause agonizing boredom. That is why other musical activity is needed to give interest; and it is atonal. Both entities are always present—tonal AND atonal. The instruments all take turns droning. The opening section is a series of short fragments that give interest and meaning over the drone. The middle section is a series of choral-like excerpts of two or more chords each with short interludes containing the drone. In each excerpt the first chord is always purely major, but as they progress they become increasingly dissonant. The last section is swift and rhythmic where fragments of the drone weave into the scurry of atonal sixteenth notes. *Drone on D* was commissioned in 2015 by Ear Play.