

James Weeks

Hyetophony (Rain-sounding)

For any voices and instruments (minimum 6)

2025

Duration: open (at least 10 minutes)

The piece can be performed on any suitable surfaces, including instruments (for example, the bodies of string instruments, keys of woodwind instruments, paper, plastic lids or the heads of drums). Suitable surfaces are ones which make a satisfyingly rain-like sound when tapped.

Participants should be close enough to be able to hear each other's very soft sounds.

Perform with eyes closed.

There are two materials, *Rain-tapping* and *Rain melody and echoes*:

1) Rain-tapping

Each player performs independently.

With both hands, tap gently at a comfortable speed and soft dynamic on your chosen surface. Avoid audible repetitive rhythms and create a smooth (*legato*), intricate texture.

Listen in closely to the delicate sounds made by the fingertips on the surface.

Vary the speed and intensity of the tapping ad lib. The rain can be very sparse or very heavy, or anything in between, at any moment. Listen to the overall sound of the group and add in whatever you feel is right. Avoid drawing attention to yourself or playing louder than other performers; enjoy being part of the overall texture. This texture can rise and fall organically; do not plan high or low-points, but let them happen if they do.

Stop and listen whenever you want, for as long as you want.

Change to a different surface from time to time; each hand could also be on different surfaces.

Move between fingertips and fingernails (a sharper, louder sound) ad lib.

2) Rain melody and echoes

Rain melody:

After the halfway-point in the performance, **one player or singer** performs the following melody (at the notated octave):



1 note to a breath, or 2 slow bows (8-12 secs), with similar-length pauses between each note.

Echoes:

Other performers may, from time to time, echo a note they have heard from earlier in the melody at any octave. This can be the most recent or current note or any other previous one.

Each performer should only perform a maximum of four echoes, spacing them out so they only happen from time to time. They can continue after the Melody has ended.

The echoes should be very soft, as soft as the main melody or softer, one note to a breath (8-12 secs), and can either be performed:

- Hummed (under the breath)
- Whistled (breathy, indistinct) at any octave
- Played on a soft instrument (string, clarinet, flute, guitar or harp *tremolando*, etc.), at pitch, or in a higher octave as a natural harmonic

Tuning is flexible.

The tapping should continue through the Melody and Echo section.

Order of performance:

The piece begins out of a short period of silence, no less than 15 seconds, performers entering independently with Rain-tapping at any point, with eyes closed.

After the halfway point in the planned performance duration, the Rain melody is played, followed by Echoes as above.

The piece ends at some point after the end of the Melody, gradually fading out the Rain-tapping and any final Echoes. Take your time to end.