

Program Note:

Sideways 1 is the first in a series of pieces I am writing based on a quotation from James Joyce's *Ulysses*:

She poured more tea into her cup, watching it flow sideways.

This first piece employs the notion of flowing sideways in two different ways. Firstly, in the interaction between the two instruments, on cellular as well as a macro-structural level. The former, in the sense that there is a lot of rhythmical interplay between the two musicians. The latter, as the melodic emphasis of the piece gradually flows from long solo clarinet statements in the beginning to the tambourine being dominant towards the end of the piece.

The pitch-material of the work is also directly influenced by Joyce's text; however, I have combined this with a rigorous mathematical approach to composition. Every single note of the piece was derived from a table with seven horizontal and twenty-four vertical cells, each cell containing a microtonal pitch (organised according to a process similar to that which I used to organise the macro-structure of the work). At the beginning, the piece follows the first vertical line of pitches strictly. However, as it progresses, the choice of pitches gradually begin to flow sideways into the other columns. In this way the intervallic scope gradually widens. To further this process I also expanded the register by moving the resulting pitches up or down the octave.

While the structure of the piece is rigorous and strictly defined, the initial musical concept was very light-hearted. After a concert at the Darmstadt festival in 2010, I got talking to a clarinettist about the potential for clarinet/percussion duets. She told me how some percussion instruments complemented the clarinet better than others – the tambourine being decidedly the worst. She also mentioned how the clarinet parts were often much harder than the percussion. This brought to mind an imaginary scenario where the clarinettist would practice endlessly to learn his or her part, while the percussionist would be able to sight-read it straight away – almost mocking the other performer. The concept, combined with a great urge to write for the tambourine, gave me the initial idea for the piece. It combines the terrifically hard with the infuriatingly easy – the very serious with the light hearted. It also matches the jocular and slightly surreal aspect of the text – a clearly defined action followed by a quirkily defined temporal development.