Homage to James Tenney Double Bass and Pure Wave Oscillator (Written for Roy Wiseman)
Author(s): Alvin Lucier
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A Tribute to James Tenney

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DIRECTIONS

Two pure-wave oscillators are routed through a mixer with pan pots to amplifiers and a pair of loudspeakers positioned on either side of the stage. The bassist stands equidistant between them.

During the performance the oscillators are tuned successively to five pairs of whole tones: C (523.3)–D (587.3); C (261.6)–D (293.7); C (130.8)–D (146.8); C (65.4)–D (73.4); C (32.7)–D (36.7). Against each pair, the bassist plays a series of sustained tones, tuning some of them microtonally, in steps of one-third of a semitone (33 cents). As he or she does so, audible beats are produced at speeds determined by the distances between the instrumental and electronically generated tones. The farther apart, the faster the beating. At unison, no beating occurs. Furthermore, under certain conditions the beats may be heard to spin in elliptical patterns through space, from the higher sound source to the lower.

DOUBLE BASS

The number preceding each tone refers to the number of cents the pitch is raised or lowered. A minus sign (–) = a lowered tuning; a plus sign (+) = a raised one. 0 = unison.

OSCILLATORS

The oscillators are faded in and out for each pair of tunings. The letters preceding each pair give their stereo placement. Starting with the first pair, the upper and lower tones are panned to the left and right loudspeakers, respectively. For each successive tuning, the stereo is reversed.
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