

D.J. WOLF

THE LONG MARCH

for four off-the-shelf melodicas

for Taylan Susam

Preparation: Compare all unison pairs among the quartet, determining the beat rates, due to mistuning, in beats per second. Make a numbered list of these pairs in terms of beat rates, from fastest to slowest. Only one pair with a perfect (beat-free) unison should be included on the list, any other such pairs omitted. Using chance operations, a selection of these pairs, the number of which shall vary with the available program time, shall be listed, in the form of a score with four staves, one for each player. In the score, the numerical order of the list shall be maintained although not all items have been selected, so that the tone pairs played in score order will have a gradual decrease in beat rates, until a beat-free final unison.

Performance: The four melodica players should be positioned in four equidistant positions around the audience. The space should be darkened except for small individual music lamps for each player. Each unison pair should be played with the duration of a single long breath, beginning as closely together as possible without an audible or physical signal but expiring individually. Tone attacks should avoid dynamic changes but releases should have a light fade without relaxing the pitch. If a pair of players did not play the previous tone, their new pair of tones should begin as immediately as possible with the expiration of the previous tone pair. If a player plays in two tone pairs (or more) in succession, enough time for a breath should be allotted between tones.

Morro Bay, California

1 February 2009