Canon for Flute

by Larry Polansky

for flute and multitrack flute
for Ann LaBerge

Introduction
Canon for Flute, from a set of pieces that began with Psaltery
(1978-9), is based on the harmonic idea of a continual
modulation between three harmonic series, related to each
other as 1:5:3. Others in this set include: Cello (1979, for
cello and multitrack celli), Glass (1979, for The Glass
Orchestra), Choir (1978), Flutes (1978, for flute choir), and
Horn (1990, for horn and live computer). Canon for Flute
was premiered by Ann LaBerge in a workshop perfor-
amance at the University of Illinois in 1979.

Performance Notes
All of the arpeggios are played fairly evenly. Each measure
is repeated several times. The piece is 17 minutes long. The
middle sections (measures 17–68), in general, repeat fewer
times than the beginning and ending 17 measure sections.
The tempo, number of repeats of each measure, and
dynamics are left mostly to the player. The piece starts out
softly, builds up over the first 17 measures, remains fairly
constant until about measure 68, and then slows down
slightly and gets softer to the end.

Record up to eight tracks of tape, each track consisting of
one complete performance of the score. Avoid exact
synchrony between the various tracks or between the tape
and the live performance. Each flute should move at its own
pace.

Intonation and Notation
All of the pitches are from the harmonic series on C, E, or
G, and the pitches E and G are related to C as 5:4 and 3:2.
In other words, the pitches are the partials of C, numbers
1–17, 85–102, and 51–68, lowered by octaves to be within
the flute's range. The intonations of these partials are used
in the performance. In the score, these intonations are given
in cents deviations from 12-tone equal tempered tuning.
For example, the first pitch, C, is +0, since it is the funda-
mental, but the Bb in measure 13 is indicated as -31, since
as the seventh harmonic (or octave equivalent) it is 31 cents
flat of its tempered neighbor. Where a pitch is about 50
cents away from its nearest tempered pitch, an up- or
down-arrow is affixed to the accidental, as a mnemonic aid

Intonation of the three harmonic series (in relation to C 1/1)
to the flutist, indicating that the correct intonation is about a quarter-tone away from the notated pitch. This notation is used for the 11th and 13th partials of C and G, and the 11th, 7th and 14th partials of E.

The use of conventional (equal-tempered) musical notation is for convenience only. Play the piece in the Just Intonation given in the chart below. Roman numerals with arabic subscripts indicate which pitch is entering, leaving, or being replaced in a given measure. For example, $I_{11}$ means that the 11th partial of C is entering in that measure; $III_{11}/V_{13}$ means that the 11th partial of G is replacing the 13th partial of E; and $-i5$ means that the fifth partial of C has dropped out in that measure. Accents over white notes indicate which pitch is entering the composite arpeggio—those pitches should be emphasized. Once a new pitch enters, it remains in the arpeggio until it is replaced. Most of the piece consists of mixtures of the harmonic series of the three fundamentals. 1/1