

TILTON GALLERY PRESENTS
ALVIN LUCIER: *MUSIC FOR PURE WAVES, BASS DRUMS AND ACOUSTIC PENDULUMS*
FEBRUARY 20 – MARCH 9, 2013
RECEPTION: TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 6–8 PM



Alvin Lucier, *Music for Pure Waves, Bass Drums and Acoustic Pendulums*, 1980.
Photography Bill Jacobson (Jack Tilton Gallery, NY, 1984)

Tilton Gallery is very pleased to present *Music for Pure Waves, Bass Drums and Acoustic Pendulums*, a sound installation by the pre-eminent musician, composer and sound artist Alvin Lucier. This is the seventh time Lucier has shown work at Tilton and his second solo exhibition with the gallery. A reception for the artist will take place on Tuesday, February 19th from 6 to 8 pm.

Alvin Lucier is a pioneer of sound art and a composer of experimental music whose performance pieces and sound installations explore the boundaries, or lack thereof, of acoustic phenomena and auditory perception. Lucier is part of the generation of avant-garde musicians of the 1960s and 1970s that included John Cage and David Tudor (whose work he first saw performed in Italy in 1960 when there on a Fulbright Scholarship and with whom he subsequently worked), Philip Glass, Steve Reich, La Monte Young and many others whose approach to making music included the experimental use of electronic technology, often devised by the artist himself, random chance and just about anything – from a piece of scotch tape being pulled, a piece of paper being rattled, to brain waves and the acoustic phenomena created within different types of chambers.

Particularly influenced by John Cage's chance operations employed to achieve a non-subjective music and David Tudor's radical configurations of found electronic devices, Lucier's own ground-breaking contributions to the creation of this new musical form are in his investigation of interference waves and of how sound changes when it bounces off of or interacts with objects or the walls of a specific chamber. Inspired both by scientific experiments and by what happens in nature, like a rainstorm, or thunder, Lucier explores the variations, repetitions, similarities, continuations and undulations of sound in different situations. He places these occurrences in an artistic context, transforming neutral sound sources into expressive music and sound pieces. This transformation is, as he's written, "...perhaps closer in spirit to alchemy, whose purpose was to turn base metals into pure gold."

What distinguishes Lucier as a musician and sound artist from many of his colleagues is that his pieces have a tangible sculptural quality and can exist independently after performances. His influence on younger generations of musicians extends to artists as divergent in practice as the late Butch Morris and the contemporary artist Christian Marclay.

Music for Pure Waves, Bass Drums and Acoustic Pendulums (1980) has been exhibited countless times, including at Tilton Gallery in 1984. In this piece, a constantly ascending sine wave flows through loudspeakers hidden behind four bass drums. As it does so, Ping-Pong balls, suspended in front of the drumheads, are caused to bounce away from the heads in unpredictable ways, in greater or lesser excursions, depending on the force of the resonances or the resonant characteristics of each drum. The balls' ensuing return bounce on the drum skins generates a rich, audible percussive music.

Alvin Lucier was educated at Yale and Brandeis University, where he taught from 1962 to 1970 and conducted the Brandeis Chamber Chorus. In 1966 he began a collaboration with composers Robert Ashley, David Behrman and Gordon Mumma to form the Sonic Arts Union, a live electronic music ensemble devoted to the performance of each other's works. From 1968 to 2011 he was John Spencer Camp Professor of Music at Wesleyan University where he has influenced many younger artists and intellectuals. His works have included sound installations, works for solo instruments, chamber ensembles and orchestra. Lucier was awarded the Lifetime Achievement Award by the Society for Electro-Acoustic Music in the United States and in November 2011 Wesleyan University celebrated his retirement with a three-day festival of his works. Lucier performs, lectures and exhibits extensively throughout the United States, Europe and Asia.

The Tilton Gallery is located at 8 East 76th Street, between Madison and Fifth Avenues. Gallery hours are Tuesday through Saturday 10 – 6 and Monday by appointment. For more information, please visit our Web site at www.jacktiltongallery.com or call 212-737-2221.