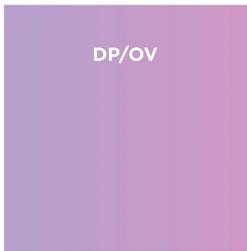


## Brainwashed - Duane Pitre, "Omniscient Voices"

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On his first solo album since 2015, Duane Pitre takes figures/motifs from a "justly tuned" piano and uses his Max/MSP-based generative network to convert them into data which is then sent to two polyphonic microtonal synthesizers which have patches he designed. There is also some controlled improvisation interacting with the piano-reactive electronics. That may be clear to many readers, but it is impressively baffling to me. No matter, I often enjoy the benefits of things I don't fully understand: hydroelectric power, photography, bees making honey, and sound "living in the grooves" of vinyl records, to name but four. So it is with this lovely series of degenerative musical feedback loops. They also have a consistently pleasing sound and invite inner contemplation and a sense of interconnectedness.

### [Important](#)

The key to why *Omniscient Voices* pleases the ear may be "just tuning." This is an important part of the debate about how music should be played and composed, along with the concept of the harmonic series. "Just" tuned music is associated with composers such as Harry Partch and Terry Riley, with calmness, introspection, slowness, and tranquility. It stands in sharp contrast to the compromised "equal temperament" tuning which has been accused of ruining harmony and causing Western culture to be deaf to the resulting action-oriented, bland, buzzing, colorless, over-caffeinated, out-of-tune happiness-fixated din. I think there's something in that. Meanwhile, lovers of Pitre's 2012 album *Feel Free* may experience *OV* as less of a long form work, but the harmonic variety does not result in any dilution of intensity or loss of "naturalness." The pieces are clearly connected and there is no fragmented concession to post-modern aesthetics. The track titles suggest excavations of creativity and learning from the past. I am interested to know why track 4 is called "The Rope Behind The Bee" but it may not matter too much. There is no wrong way to approach this recording. By all means listen while trying to grasp the notion that in tuning theory  $5/12 = 5/6 = 5/3 = 10/3 = 20/3$ , but the album is going to sound fine either way.

[samples available here](#)