



Brian Eno

January 07003: Bell Studies for the Clock of the Long Now (Opal)

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For those familiar with Brian Eno's ambient music, his newest addition to the canon won't come as a shock. Instead, it's more of the soothing, almost-there quietude that made his classics *Music for Airports* or *Thursday Afternoon* such attractive shades of sonic wallpaper.

Nowadays the 55-year-old composer and theorist finds himself into deep gongs and deep thought. To illustrate, *January 07003* is Eno's synthetic-bell accompaniment to a clock designed to operate for 10,000 years. While playing with his calculator one day, ol' brainy Brian noticed there are 3,628,800 days in 10,000 years. Using just a ten-bell peal, he reckoned, a different sequence of bells could sound every day for 10,000 years. So he asked the clock's creator (Danny Hillis, coincidentally the inventor of the world's fastest computer) to construct an algorithm to generate those three million-plus sequences without repeating. Eno then instructed Hillis to ascertain exactly what series of tones would be heard during January 7003. The resulting pieces, sporting utilitarian handles ("Fixed Ratio Harmonic Bells," "Emphasizing Enharmonic Partial," etc.), ring and chime the new year with thoughtful hums and overtones. *January 07003* is merely another fascinating addition to Eno's ever-growing catalog of ambient works, if you're into that sort of "luscious silence," as he calls it. Otherwise, it might just come across as a random collection of church and doorbells, or simply one big, long *donnnnnnnngggggg*.

