BACHANAL for piano (1990)

Around about 1980 I had an idea for a structure derived from binary numbers in which the odd bits were made negative; the numbers 0, 1, 2, 3... were transformed in this way into 0, -1, +2, +1... a form reminiscent of the notes B-A-C-H. Furthermore, the first four groups of four numbers had the same shape on a larger scale, this phenomenon appearing on even larger scales ad infinitum. At the time, I related the idea to Tom Johnson, who had a certain affinity with such forms.
The idea of accelerating this sequence so that the various levels would reveal themselves as such appealed to me, but I did not consider the idea sufficient to form a piece of music. However, on realizing Tenney's Spectral Canon for Conlon Nancarrow in 1990, I was greatly struck by the similarities of approach between the two concepts and decided to realize my odd-negative binary numbers after all. The result is a 48-second piece termed Bachanal for Jim Tenney and Tom Johnson.