

Chasing the Silence was commissioned by the H2 Saxophone Quartet and premiered at the 15th World Saxophone Congress in Thailand in 2009. The piece begins with a quiet “D” which acts like gravity or a magnet. The quartet slowly struggles to move away from the oppressive pedal, only to be pulled back into the abyss. Although the initial attempts result in dissonant sonorities, the quartet slowly wrestles to find more peaceful resting places. While the piece begins hesitantly, it becomes more assured as the members of the quartet expand further away from the pedal. After the opening reaches its most confident moment, the “D” dissolves, and the music struggles without the drone’s stability bringing the first section to a close.

The second section undertakes the same process as the first, except the quartet attempts to destroy the “D” in more aggressive ways. They hammer it into submission by repeating the note over and over again while using percussive slap tongues. The dissonant sounds of the opening section are now more assertive and begin to exert their influence, finally tearing the music away from the “D” and leaving the piece in a frantic state. The music begins to be reigned in by a new pitch center, “C,” as the piece returns to a variation of the methodical opening material. The fourth and final section pits the slow and more lyrical character of the first and third sections against the violent second section.