
Heartbeat Stars and The Ringing of Tidal Pulsations

Kelly Hambleton^{*1,2}, Andrej Prsa², Don Kurtz¹, James Fuller³, and Susan Thompson⁴

¹School of Computing, Engineering and Physical Sciences, University of Central Lancashire, Preston (UCLAN) – Staff Contact us School of Computing, Engineering Physical Sciences University of Central Lancashire Preston Lancashire PR1 2HE, United Kingdom

²Villanova University – United States

³Division of Geological and Planetary Sciences (CALTECH) – 1200 East California Boulevard Pasadena California 91125, United States

⁴Search for Extra Terrestrial Intelligence Institute (SETI) – United States

Abstract

With the advent of high precision photometry from satellites such as Kepler and CoRoT, a whole new layer of interesting and astounding astronomical objects has been revealed: heartbeat stars are an example of such objects. Heartbeat stars are eccentric ellipsoidal variables that undergo strong tidal interactions at the time of closest approach, when the stars are almost in contact. These interactions induce the deformation of the stars and cause a notable variation in the form of a tidal pulse. A subset of these objects (~20%) show prominent tidally induced pulsations. We now have a fully functional code that models binary star features (using PHOEBE) and stellar pulsations simultaneously, enabling a complete and accurate heartbeat model to be determined. In this talk we show the results of our new code, which uses emcee, a variant of MCMC, to generate a full set of stellar parameters. We further highlight some of the interesting features of a select set of heartbeat stars, including resonant pulsations, frequency modulation and the interplay between tidally induced pulsations and apsidal motion.

*Speaker