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(54) **APPARATUSES AND METHODS FOR PROVIDING OFFSET COMPENSATION FOR OPERATIONAL AMPLIFIER**

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(52) **U.S. Cl.** **330/9; 330/253**

(58) **Field of Classification Search** **330/9; 327/124, 554**

See application file for complete search history.

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(57)

ABSTRACT

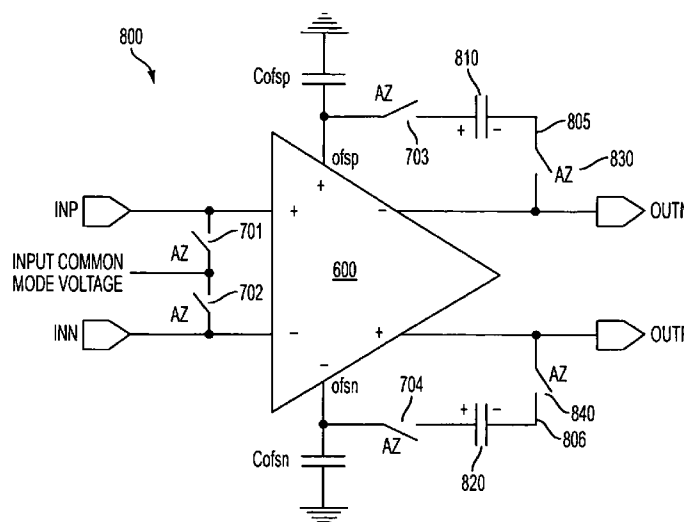
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Apparatuses and methods for providing offset compensation include a primary amplifier which includes a first output, a second output, a first load input, and a second load input, a first feedback loop connected to the primary amplifier and which includes a first switch located between the first output of the primary amplifier and the first load input, and a first sampling capacitor coupled to the first switch between the first switch and the first load input and a second feedback loop connected to the primary amplifier and which includes a second switch located between the second output of the primary amplifier and the second load input, and a second sampling capacitor coupled to the second switch between the second switch and the second load input.

19 Claims, 12 Drawing Sheets



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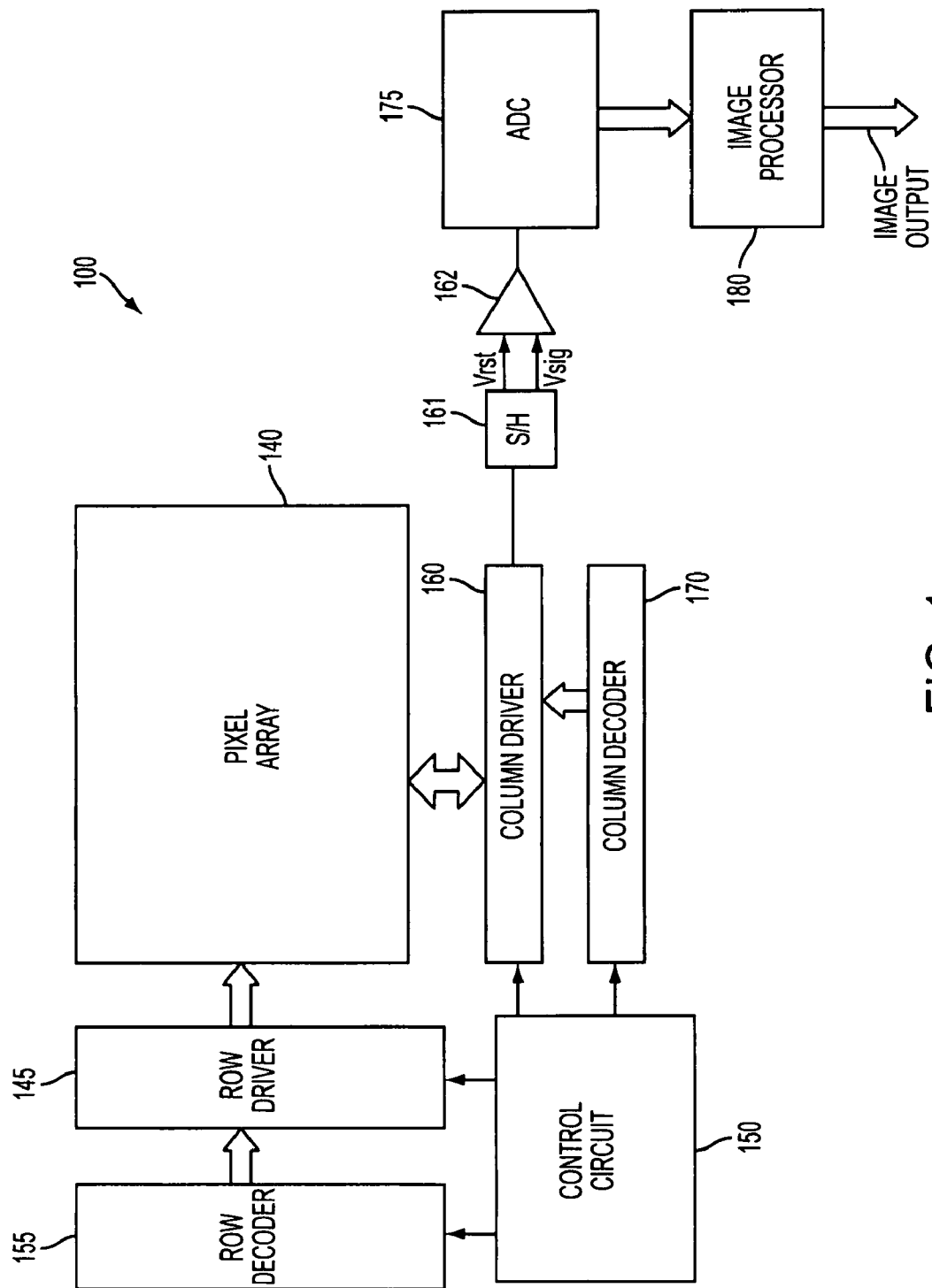


FIG. 1
PRIOR ART

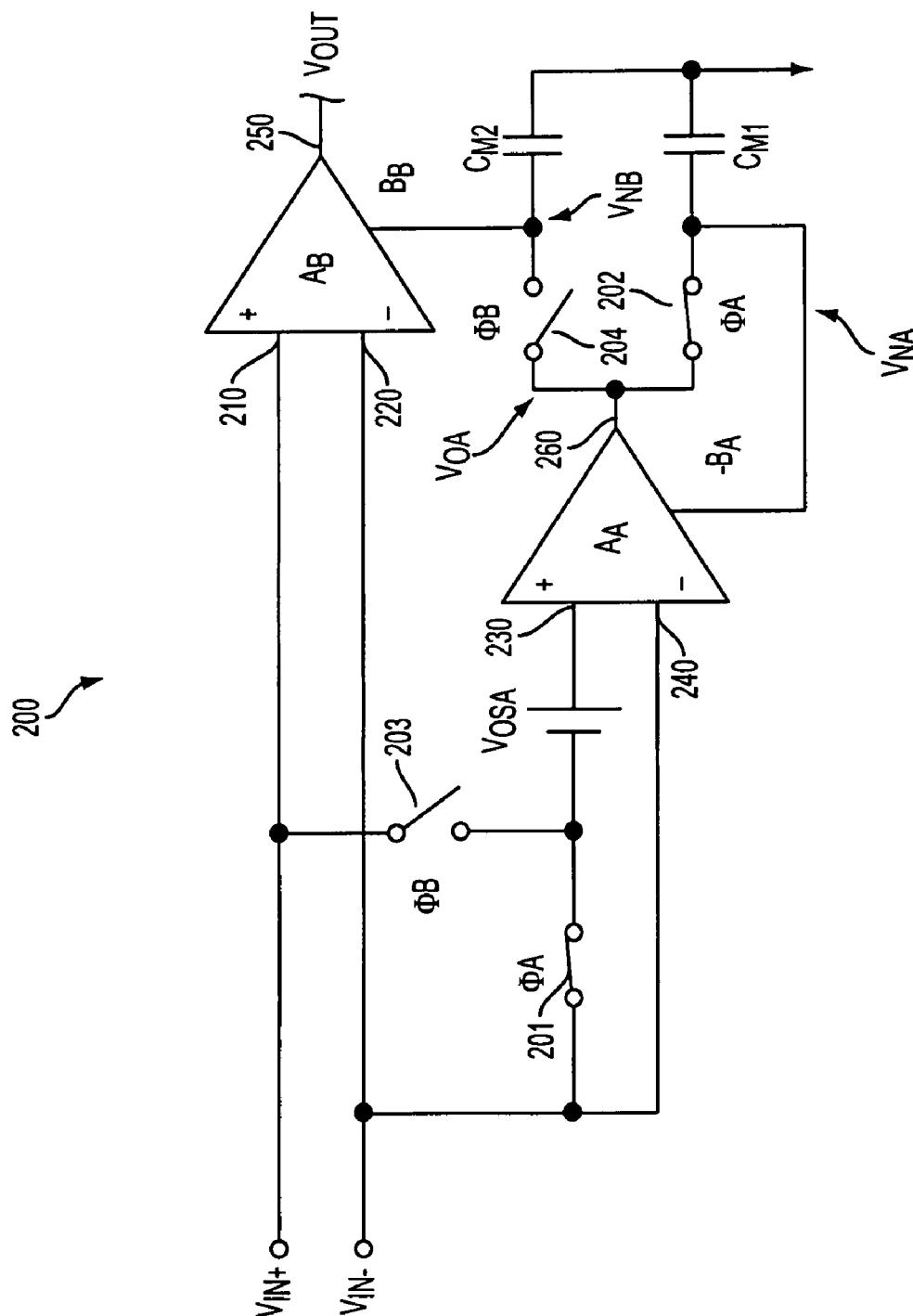


FIG. 2
PRIOR ART

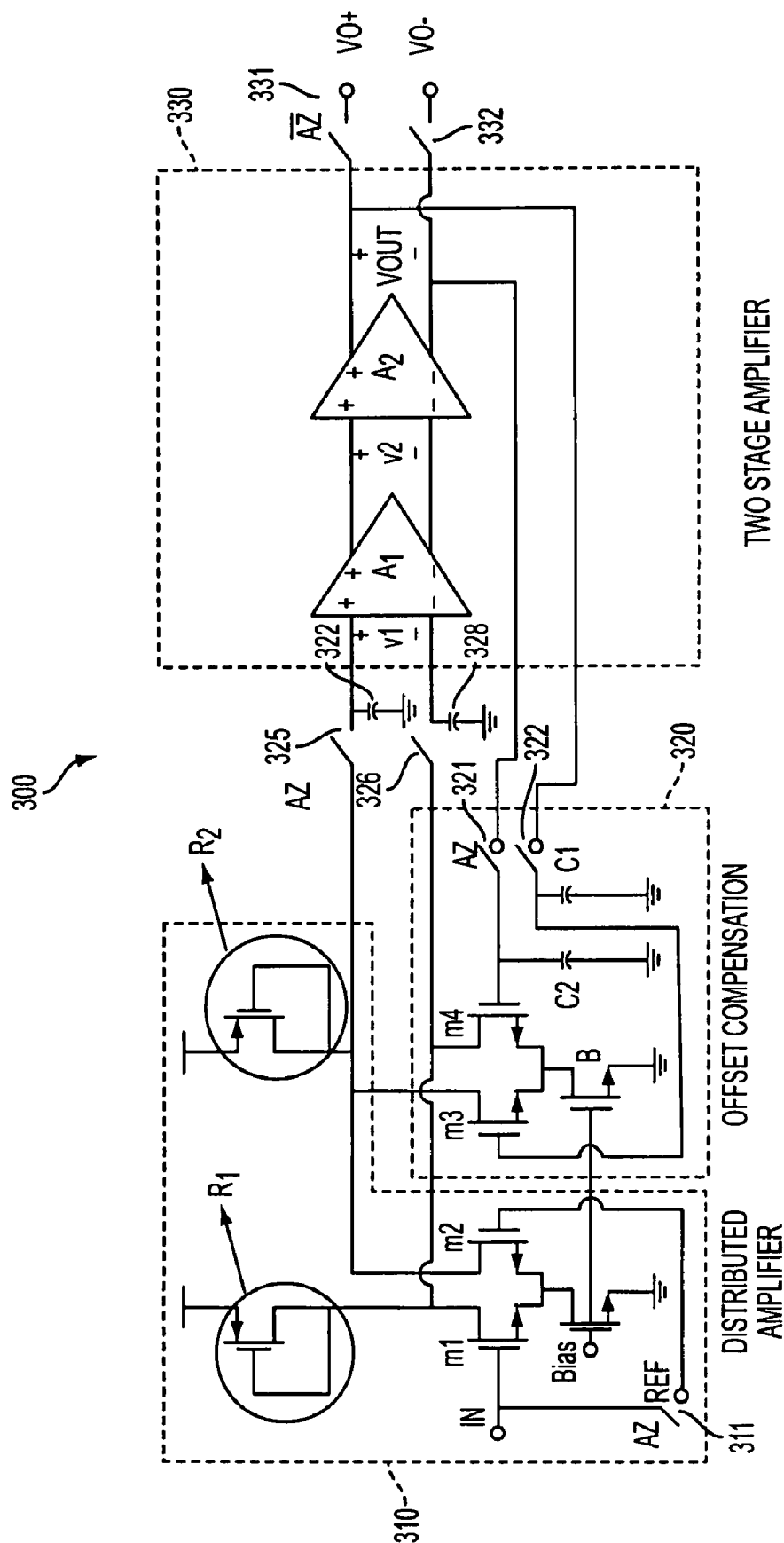


FIG. 3
PRIOR ART

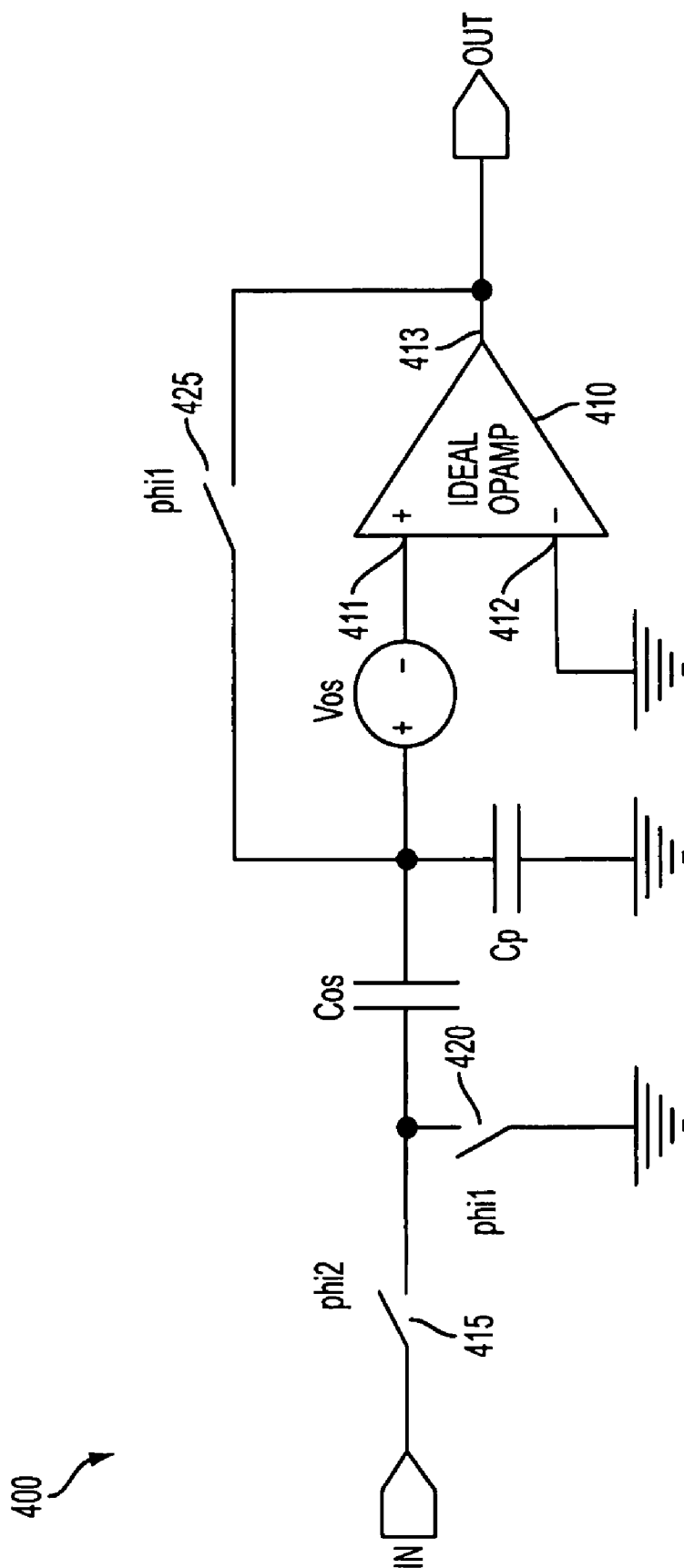


FIG. 4
PRIOR ART

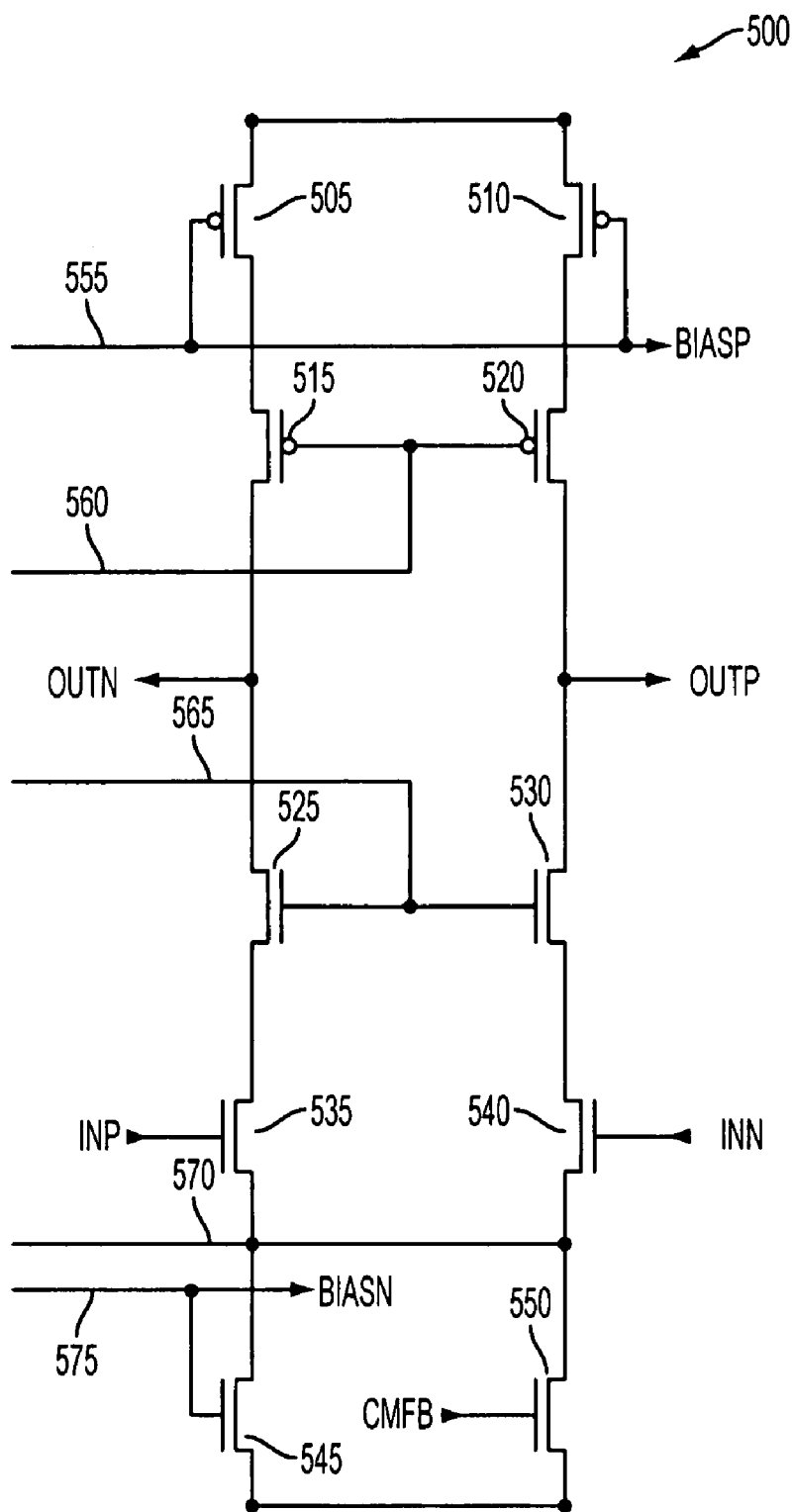


FIG. 5
PRIOR ART

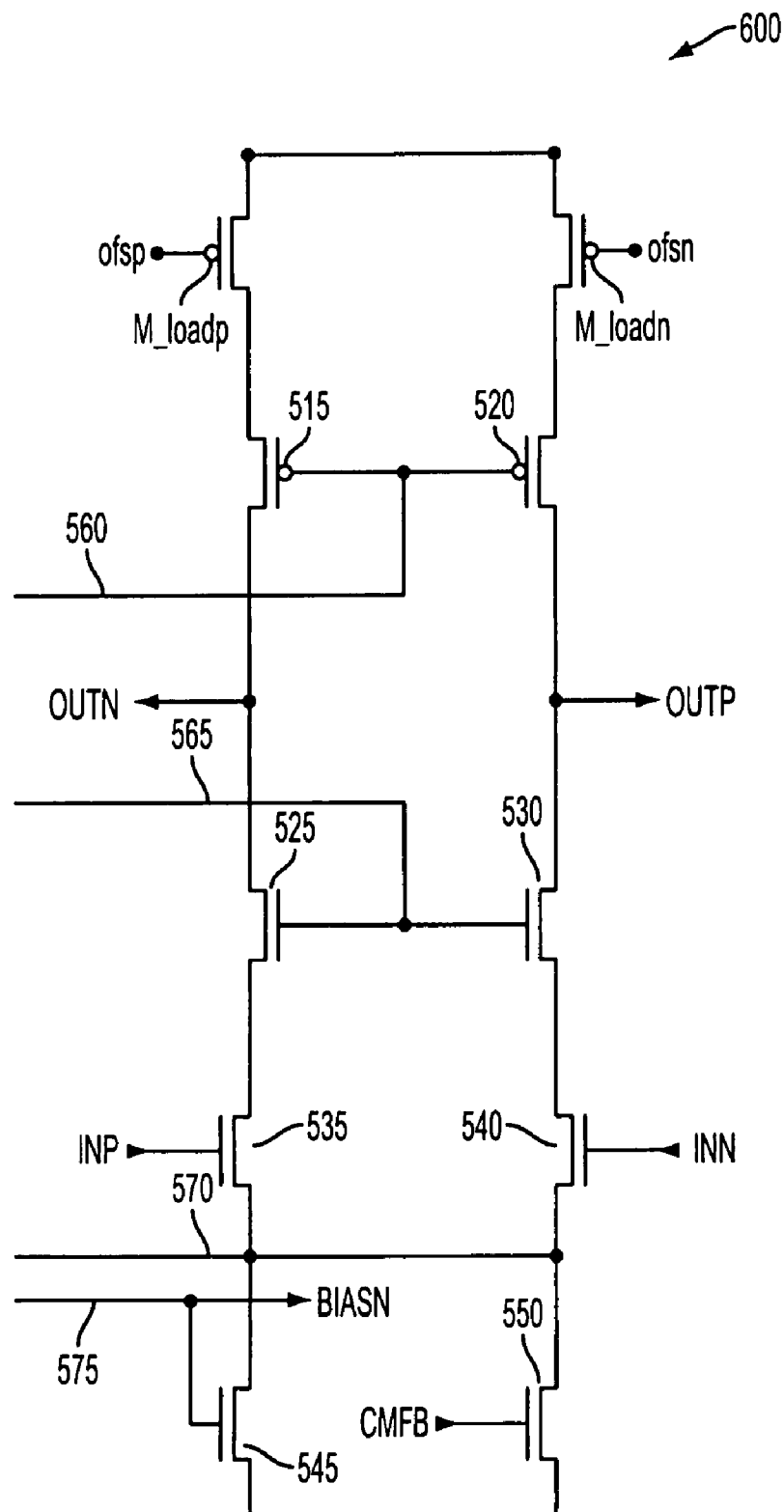


FIG. 6

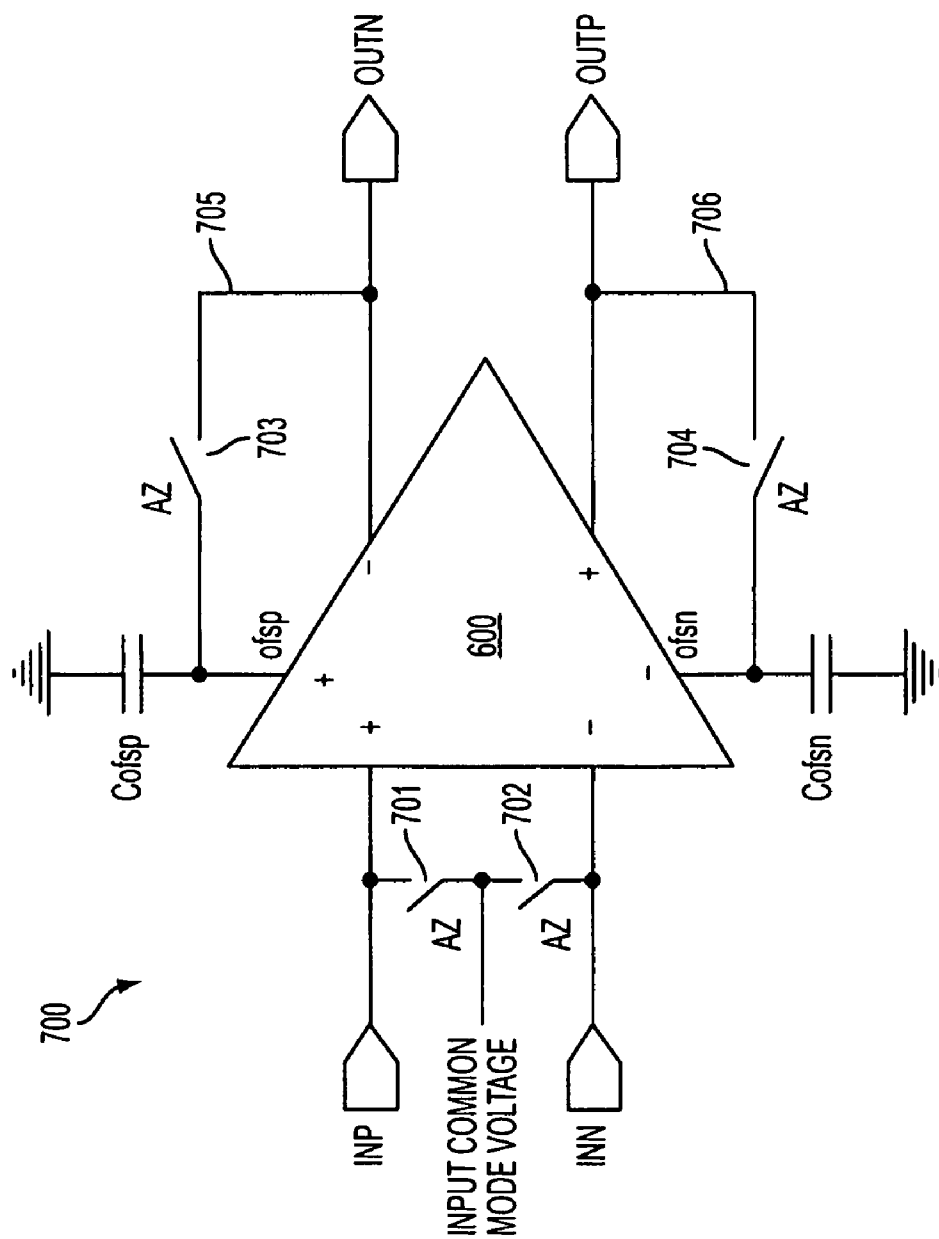


FIG. 7

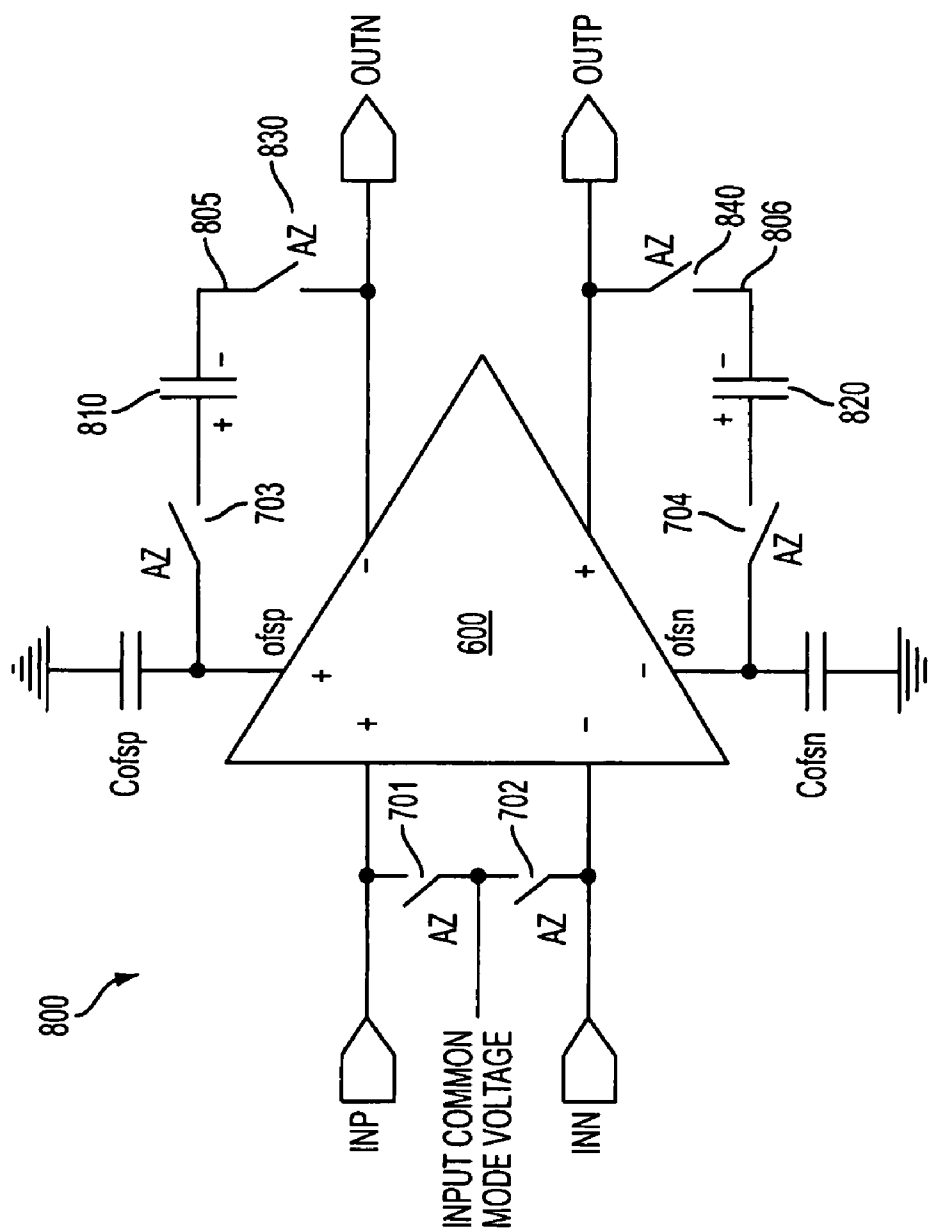


FIG. 8

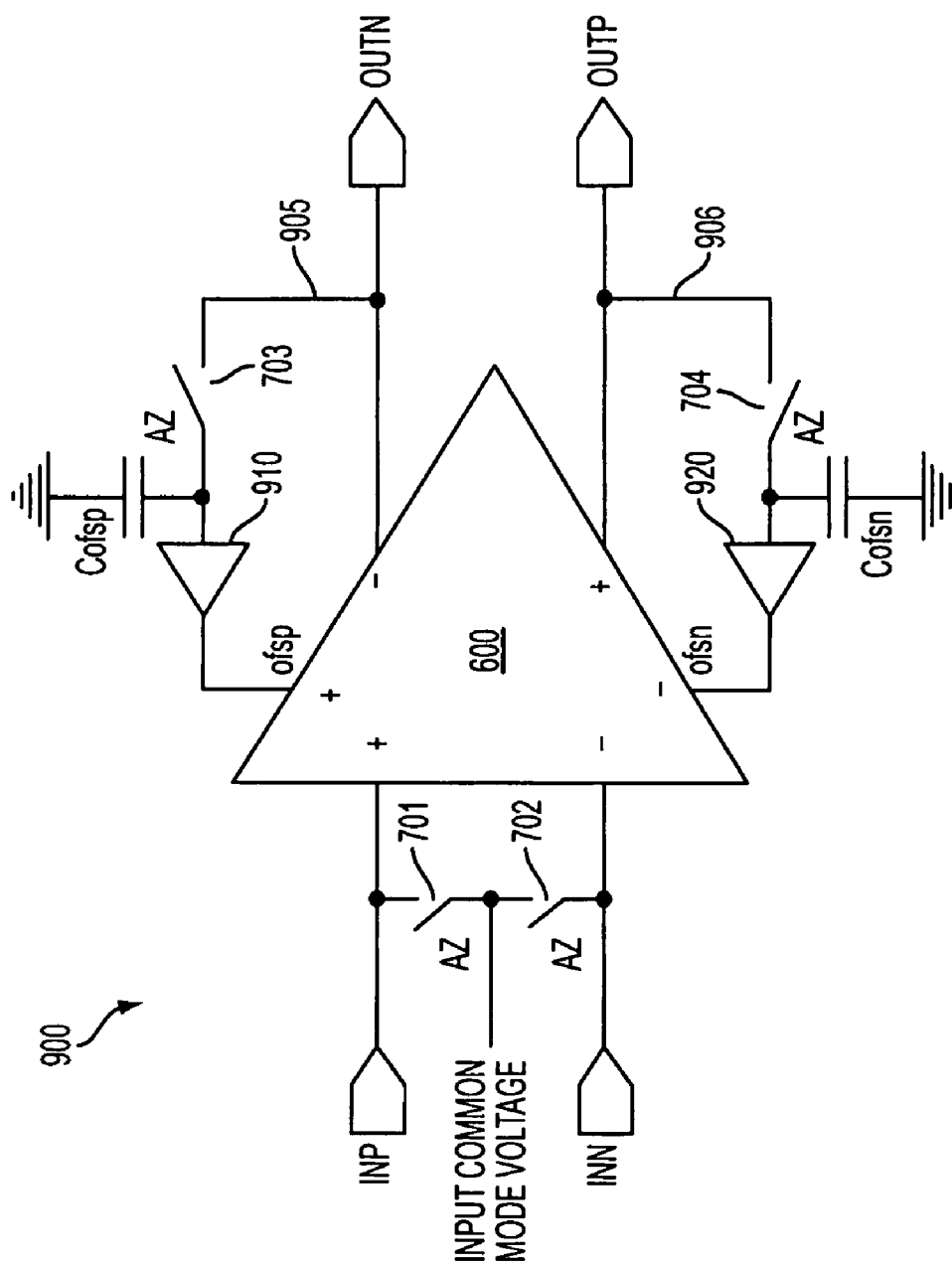


FIG. 9

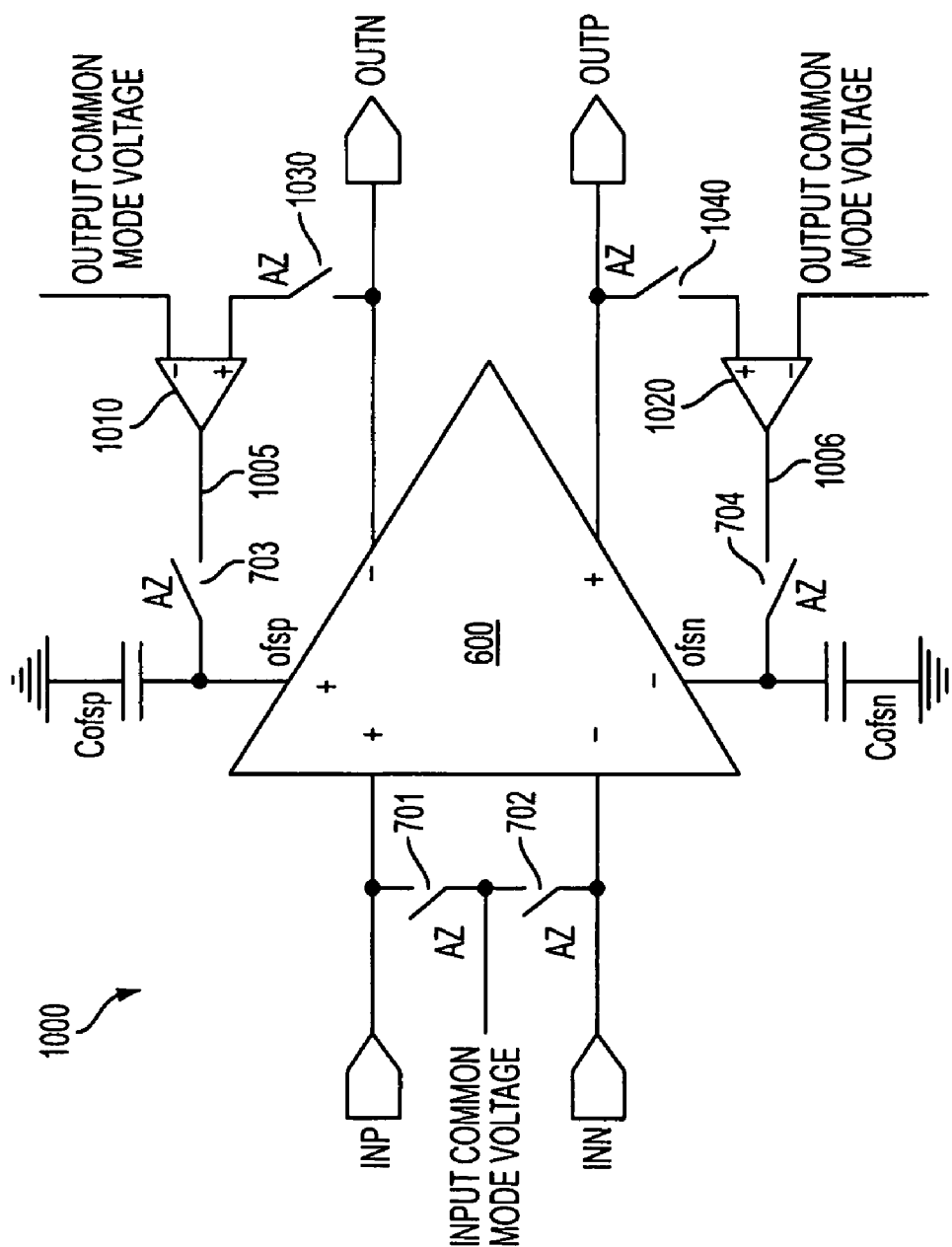


FIG. 10

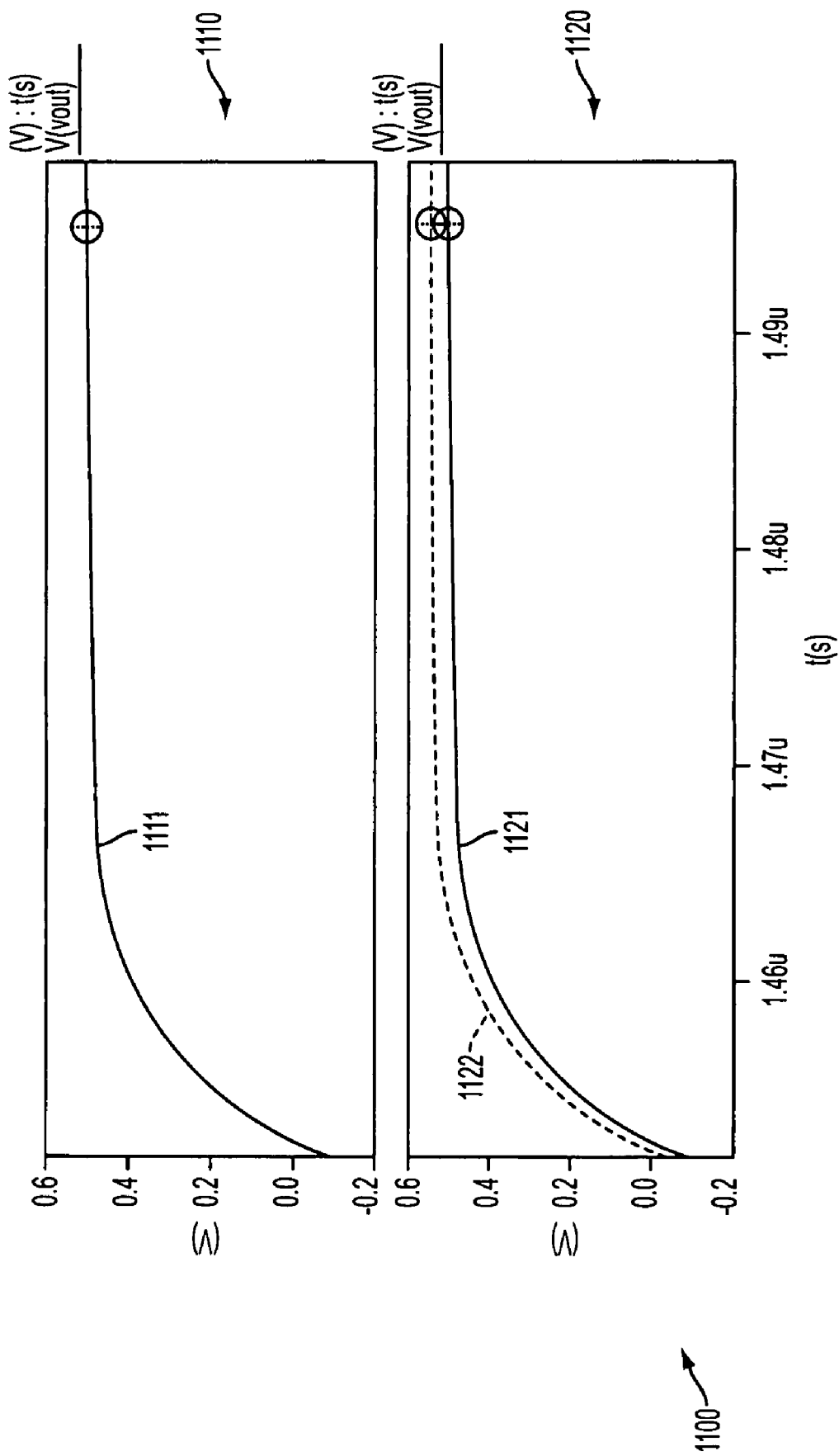


FIG. 11

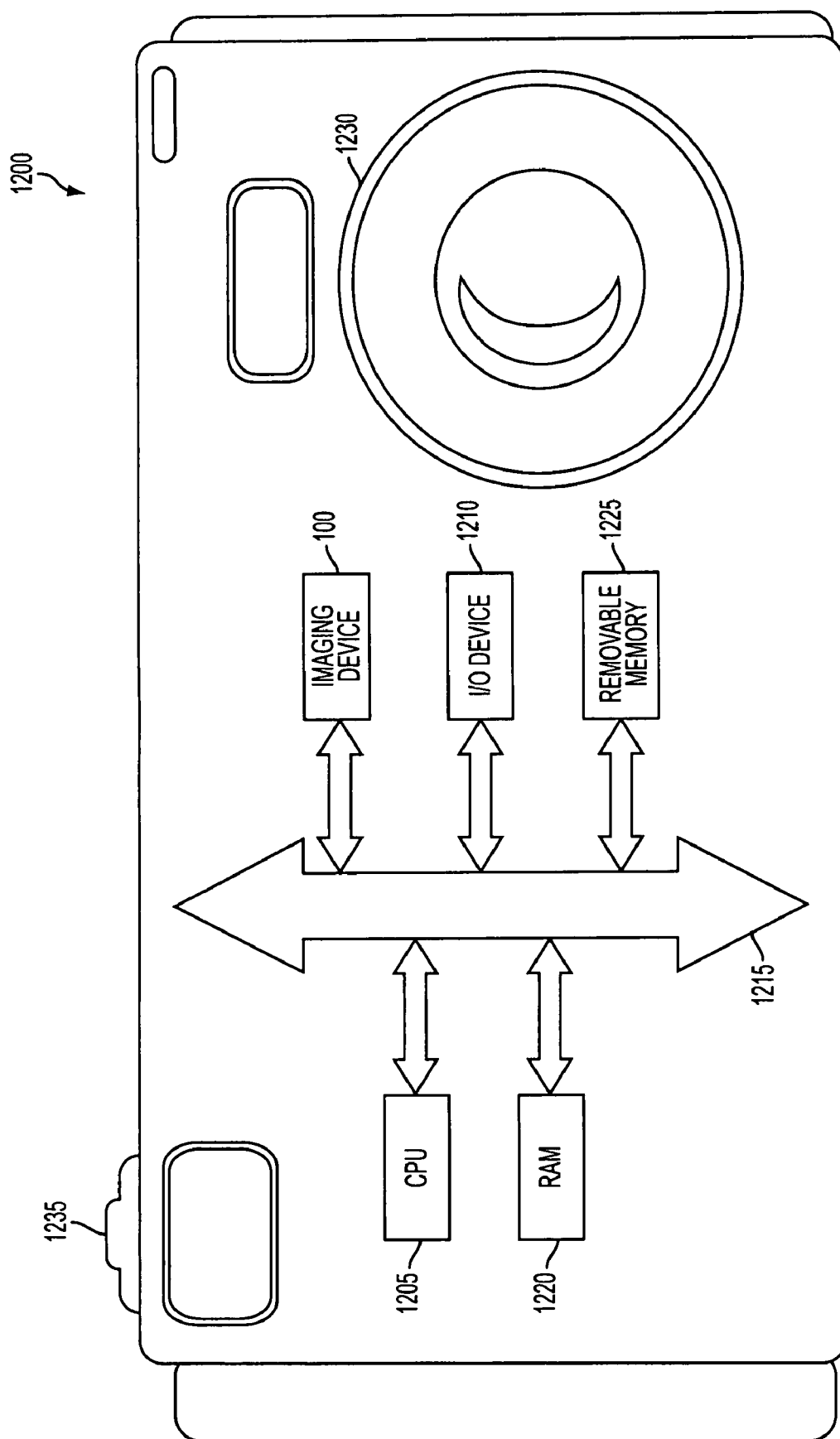


FIG. 12

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APPARATUSES AND METHODS FOR PROVIDING OFFSET COMPENSATION FOR OPERATIONAL AMPLIFIER

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

Disclosed embodiments relate generally to the field of providing offset compensation for an operational amplifier to minimize the offset voltage in the readout chain of an imaging device.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

FIG. 1 illustrates an imaging device **100** having a CMOS pixel array **140**. Row lines of the array **140** are selectively activated by a row driver **145** in response to row address decoder **155**. A column driver **160** and column address decoder **170** are also included in the imaging device **100**. The imaging device **100** is operated by the timing and control circuit **150**, which controls the address decoders **155**, **170**. The control circuit **150** also controls the row and column driver circuitry **145**, **160**.

The following devices form the readout chain of the imaging sensor **100**. A sample and hold circuit **161** associated with the column driver **160** samples and holds a pixel reset signal V_{rst} and a pixel image signal V_{sig} for each selected pixel of the array **140**. A differential signal ($V_{rst} - V_{sig}$) is produced by a differential amplifier **162** for each pixel and is digitized by analog-to-digital converter **175** (ADC). The analog-to-digital converter **175** supplies the digitized pixel signals to an image processor **180**, which forms and may output a digital image.

The output of an imaging device **100** is very sensitive to operational amplifier ("opamp") offset voltage. The offset voltage is the voltage required across the input terminals of the operational amplifier to drive the output voltage to zero. In an ideal operation amplifier, there would be no offset voltage required. However, offset voltage is required in real-world operational amplifiers because of internal imperfections. Some industry techniques have been developed to reduce the offset voltage together with noise (which has similar characteristics as offset voltage at low frequencies). These techniques, described below, include chopper stabilization, auto-zero, and correlated double sampling (CDS). In the chopper stabilization technique, the input signal is modulated with a high frequency carrier before amplification and is then demodulated after amplification to obtain an amplified version of the input signal. The offset voltage is modulated only once in the path and is filtered out with a subsequent low-pass filter. The main drawbacks of chopper stabilization are that it is bandwidth limited to half of the chopper frequency to avoid signal aliasing, and that it requires filtering to remove the large ripple voltages generated by chopping.

FIG. 2 is a schematic diagram of a conventional auto-zero amplifier **200**. Amplifier **200** includes a primary amplifier A_B , an auxiliary amplifier A_A , two auto-zero phase switches **201**, **202**, controlled by an auto-zero phase signal Φ_A , for use during an auto-zero phase, and two amplification phase switches **203**, **204**, controlled by an amplification phase signal Φ_B , for use during an amplification phase. Amplifier **200** further includes biasing capacitors V_{OSA} , C_{M1} , C_{M2} . The primary amplifier A_B includes a non-inverting input **210**, an inverting input **220**, an offset nulling port B_B , and an output **250**. The auxiliary amplifier A_A includes a non-inverting input **230**, an inverting input **240**, an offset nulling port $-B_A$, and an output **260**.

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As shown in FIG. 2, during the auto-zero phase, the auxiliary amplifier A_A is configured in unity gain feedback (i.e., the output tracks the input without amplification) between the output port **260** and the offset nulling port $-B_A$, while inputs of the auxiliary amplifier A_A are shorted by closing the auto-zero phase switches **201**, **202** and opening the amplification phase switches **203**, **204**. The biasing condition of the nulling port $-B_A$ is sampled in the auto-zero phase and held throughout the subsequent amplification phase, when the amplification phase switches **203**, **204** are closed and the auto-zero phase switches **201**, **202** are open. This results in an almost offset voltage-free auxiliary amplifier A_A in the amplification phase.

In the amplification phase, the signal path V_{OA} has significantly more gain (primary amplifier A_B gain times auxiliary amplifier A_A gain) than the offset path V_{NA} (primary amplifier A_B gain). Thus, the equivalent input offset voltage of the amplifier **200** is greatly reduced by the gain ratio of the two paths V_{OA} , V_{NA} . Drawbacks of this conventional design are that it requires two amplifiers A_A , A_B and it often has a larger layout area than other amplifier designs.

FIG. 3 is a schematic diagram of a conventional amplifier **300** with offset compensation for auto-zeroing. Amplifier **300** includes a distributed amplifier **310**, an offset compensation block **320**, and a two-stage amplifier **330**. The distributed amplifier includes first and second transistors $m1$, $m2$, first and second resistance circuits R_1 , R_2 , a first biasing transistor Bias, an input terminal IN, a reference voltage input REF, and a switch **311** controlled by an auto-zero signal AZ for connecting the input terminal IN to the reference voltage input REF. The offset compensation block **320** includes third and fourth transistors $m3$, $m4$, a second biasing transistor B, two capacitors $C1$, $C2$, and two switches **321**, **322** controlled by the auto-zero signal AZ. Two-stage amplifier **330** includes first and second amplifiers A_1 , A_2 , where the second amplifier A_2 outputs to two switches **331**, **332**, each controlled by an inverse auto-zero signal $\overline{AZ}$. The first amplifier A_1 inputs signals from the distributed amplifier **310** via a pair of capacitors **327**, **328**, each connected to a respective switch **325**, **326**, respectively connected to the first and second transistors $m1$, $m2$. Switches **331**, **332** receive signals from the offset compensation block **320** via switches **321**, **322**.

This configuration implements offset cancellation using the same principle as the auto-zero phase of the auxiliary amplifier A_A presented in FIG. 2. A drawback of this design is that the phase margin of the signal path will be jeopardized due to the additional offset compensation block **320** before the traditional two-stage amplifier **330**. In addition, more noise may be introduced due to additional CMOS elements in the offset compensation block.

Correlated double sampling (CDS) is another approach to reduce the offset voltage and noise. Correlated double sampling typically involves two steps of sampling. The first step samples the offset voltage and stores the sampled offset voltage in a capacitor. The second step samples both the offset voltage and the signal and performs a difference operation with the offset voltage sampled in the first step. The offset voltage is thus ideally cancelled out by correlated double sampling.

FIG. 4 is a schematic diagram of a conventional circuit **400** for implementing correlated double sampling. Circuit **400** includes an ideal operational amplifier **410**, having two inputs **411**, **412** and an output **413**. An offset voltage source V_{os} is connected in series with input **411**. Circuit **400** further includes three switches **415**, **420**, **425**. Switches **420**, **425** are controlled by a first phase signal $\phi1$, and switch **415** is controlled by a second phase signal $\phi2$.

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In a first phase, the first phase signal $\phi 1$ is asserted, closing switches **420** and **425**, and the operational amplifier **410** is configured in unity gain feedback, such that the output tracks the input without amplification. An offset voltage is sampled and stored in an offset capacitor C_{os} . In a second phase, the second phase signal $\phi 2$ is asserted, closing switch **415**, and the voltage stored in offset capacitor C_{os} is used to cancel the offset voltage of the operational amplifier **410**. This implementation has a disadvantage in that the operational amplifier **410** is required to be unity-gain stable, which is usually difficult and unnecessary in certain cases. In addition, due to the input parasitic capacitance of the operational amplifier, the feedback factor is usually degraded undesirably.

FIG. **5** is a circuit diagram of a conventional differential telescopic operational amplifier **500**. Amplifier **500** includes first through tenth transistors **505**, **510**, **515**, **520**, **525**, **530**, **535**, **540**, **545**, **550**. First through fourth transistors **505**, **510**, **515**, **520** are p-type transistors. Fifth through tenth transistors **525**, **530**, **535**, **540**, **545**, **550** are n-type transistors. Transistors **505**, **515**, **525**, **535**, **545** are connected in series, and transistors **510**, **520**, **530**, **540**, **550** are connected in series.

Transistors **505**, **510** have their gates connected to each other and to a first line **555**, which is connected to a first bias output $BIASP$. Transistors **515**, **520** have their gates connected to each other and to a second line **560**, which is connected to biasing circuitry (not shown). Transistors **525**, **530** have their gates connected to each other and to a third line **565**, which is connected to biasing circuitry (not shown). A first signal output $OUTN$ is located between transistors **515**, **525**. A second signal output $OUTP$ is located between transistors **520**, **530**. Transistors **535**, **540** receive first and second signal inputs INP , INN at their respective gates. A third line **570** is connected between transistors **535**, **545**, and between transistors **540**, **550**, and is connected to biasing circuitry (not shown). A fourth line **575** is connected to biasing circuitry (not shown), and to a gate of the ninth transistor **545**, and to a second bias output $BIASN$. A common mode feedback input $CMFB$ is connected to a gate of the tenth transistor **550** for receiving a common mode feedback based on the outputs $OUTP$, $OUTN$. Amplifier **500** has a disadvantage in that the biases of the first and second transistors **505**, **510** are fixed and reliant on each other.

Accordingly, there is a need and desire for a method and apparatus for providing offset compensation for an operational amplifier to minimize the offset voltage in a readout chain of an imaging device.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. **1** illustrates a block diagram of a conventional imaging device.

FIG. **2** is a schematic diagram of a conventional auto-zero amplifier.

FIG. **3** is a schematic diagram of a conventional amplifier with offset compensation for auto-zeroing.

FIG. **4** is a schematic diagram of a conventional circuit for implementing correlated double sampling.

FIG. **5** is a circuit diagram of a conventional differential telescopic operational amplifier.

FIG. **6** is a circuit diagram of a differential telescopic operational amplifier constructed in accordance with an embodiment described herein.

FIG. **7** is a schematic diagram of a circuit for offset cancellation constructed in accordance with an embodiment described herein.

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FIG. **8** is a schematic diagram of a circuit for offset cancellation constructed in accordance with an embodiment described herein.

FIG. **9** is a schematic diagram of a circuit for offset cancellation constructed in accordance with an embodiment described herein.

FIG. **10** is a schematic diagram of a circuit for offset cancellation constructed in accordance with an embodiment described herein.

FIG. **11** is a graph of charts of two simulation test results.

FIG. **12** is an embodiment of a camera system that can be used as an imaging device constructed in accordance with an embodiment described herein.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

In the following detailed description, reference is made to the accompanying drawings, which form a part hereof and show by way of illustration specific embodiments that may be practiced. These embodiments are described in sufficient detail to enable those skilled in the art to practice them, and it is to be understood that other embodiments may be utilized, and that structural, logical, processing, and electrical changes may be made. The progression of processing steps described is an example; however, the sequence of steps is not limited to that set forth herein and may be changed as is known in the art, with the exception of steps necessarily occurring in a certain order.

Accordingly, the following detailed description is not to be taken in a limiting sense, and the described embodiments are defined only by the appended claims.

FIG. **6** is a circuit diagram of a differential telescopic operational amplifier **600** constructed in accordance with an embodiment described herein. The operational amplifier **600** is similar to the operational amplifier **500** of FIG. **5**, except that the first and second transistors **505**, **510** of FIG. **5** are replaced with two load transistors M_{loadp} , M_{loadn} having gates respectively dynamically biased by load lines $ofsp$, $ofsn$, and the FIG. **5** first line **555** and first bias output $BIASP$ of amplifier **500** have been eliminated.

FIG. **7** is a schematic diagram of a circuit **700**, constructed in accordance with an embodiment described herein, for offset cancellation using amplifier **600** and dynamically biasing the operational amplifier **600**. Circuit **700** includes the amplifier **600** of FIG. **6**, and first through fourth switches **701-704** controlled by an auto-zero signal AZ . A method of operating the circuit **700** is described below. Referring to FIGS. **6** and **7**, in an auto-zero phase, the differential outputs $OUTP$, $OUTN$ of the operational amplifier **600** are connected to gates of the two load transistors M_{loadp} , M_{loadn} via the load lines $ofsp$ and $ofsn$, while the inputs INP , INN of the operational amplifier **600** are shorted to the input common mode voltage. Switches **703**, **704** are included in respective feedback loops **705**, **706** which connect the load transistors' inputs $ofsp$, $ofsn$ to the differential outputs $OUTP$, $OUTN$.

Differential offset voltages appearing at the outputs $OUTP$, $OUTN$ of the operational amplifier **600** are sampled in two offset capacitors C_{ofsp} , C_{ofsn} connected to the gates of the two load transistors M_{loadp} , M_{loadn} during the auto-zero phase and are held throughout a subsequent amplifying phase. After the auto-zero phase, the input offset voltages can be expressed as $OUTP/A$ and $OUTN/A$, where A is the DC gain of the operational amplifier **600**. This value is typically very small, thus the operational amplifier **600** can be treated as an almost offset-free (i.e., ideal) operational amplifier. Moreover, low frequency noise is reduced. The auto-zero phase may be repeated to provide dynamic offset cancellation

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because the outputs are re-sampled and the offset similarly canceled as noise or other conditions change over time.

When the operational amplifier **600** is used in an image sensor with an electronic rolling shutter, the auto-zero period can overlap or partially overlap with a row sampling time. This gives a long enough period of time for the auto-zero phase. The auto-zero procedure repeats in every row operation before pixel amplification starts. After the auto-zero procedure is done, the operational amplifier **600** can be used as an almost offset-free operational amplifier to read out the signals stored in columns of the whole row. Meanwhile, row-wise noise can also be reduced due to the reduction of noise from the operational amplifier **600**.

Alternative offset cancellation schemes are shown in FIGS. **8-10**. FIG. **8** is a schematic diagram of a circuit **800** for offset cancellation constructed in accordance with an embodiment described herein. The circuit **800** of FIG. **8** is similar to the circuit **700** of FIG. **7**, except that two pre-charged capacitors **810**, **820** with respective switches **830**, **840** (controlled by the auto-zero signal **AZ**) are inserted in the offset voltage feedback loops **805**, **806** to set the output common mode voltage **OUTP**, **OUTN** to, or close to, a predetermined value. The switches **830**, **840** can be made small to prevent charge leakage of the offset capacitors **Cofp**, **Cofn** since the auto-zero phase may be much longer than a clock period. The pre-charged capacitors **810**, **820** are charged by applying a voltage across their respective terminals.

FIG. **9** is a schematic diagram of a circuit **900** for offset cancellation constructed in accordance with another embodiment described herein. The circuit **900** of FIG. **9** is similar to the circuit **700** of FIG. **7**, except that two buffers **910**, **920** are inserted in the offset voltage feedback loops **905**, **906** and the offset voltage sampling capacitors **Cofsp**, **Cofsn** are placed at the input of the buffers **910**, **920**. The buffers **910**, **920** help prevent the operational amplifier output signals **OUTP**, **OUTN** from disturbing the biasing voltages sampled and held on the offset voltage sampling capacitors **Cofsp**, **Cofsn** for offset cancellation, especially in the case that multiple amplifying phases follow one single auto-zero phase (as when circuit **800** is used in a CMOS imaging sensor).

FIG. **10** is a schematic diagram of a circuit **1000** for offset cancellation constructed in accordance with another embodiment described herein. The circuit **1000** of FIG. **10** is similar to the circuit **700** of FIG. **7**, except that two assistant operational amplifiers **1010**, **1020** each having differential inputs are inserted in the offset voltage feedback loops **1005**, **1006** so that an output common mode voltage can be set to a predetermined value. The assistant operational amplifiers **1010**, **1020** have respective switches **1030**, **1040** (controlled by the auto-zero signal **AZ**) connected to the non-inverting inputs, and each receive the output common mode voltage at an inverting input.

FIG. **11** is a graph **1100** of two charts **1110**, **1120** of two simulation test results. Both charts **1110**, **1120** simulate a 0 V and a 10 mV operational amplifier offset voltage, showing voltage with respect to time. Chart **1110** shows a result of a simulation using the operational amplifier **600** described in FIG. **6** and the circuit **700** described in FIG. **7**. Chart **1120** shows a result of a simulation using the conventional operational amplifier **500** described in FIG. **5**. For the charge amplifier using the operational amplifier **600**, the simulations show almost no difference (<1 uV difference) between the two situations (i.e., with a 0 V or a 10 mV operational amplifier offset voltage), such that only one line **1111** is visible, representing two overlapping lines.

However, for the charge amplifier using the conventional telescopic operational amplifier **500**, a 10 mV operational

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amplifier offset voltage causes about 49.8 mV difference between the two situations (i.e., with a 0 V or a 10 mV operational amplifier offset voltage), where the 0 V offset result is shown the solid line **1121**, and the 10 V offset result is shown the dashed line **1122**. The difference of 49.8 mV, which approximately equals the operational amplifier offset voltage divided by a feedback factor, is the expected result for the conventional amplifier **500**. The simulation results verify the effectiveness of offset voltage cancellation for the amplifier **500**.

FIG. **12** is an embodiment of a camera system **1200**, which can use an imaging device constructed in accordance with an embodiment described herein, such as imaging device **100** (FIG. **1**) using the differential telescopic operational amplifier **600** in place of the differential amplifier **162**. The amplifier **600** may be used in camera system **1200** with any of the circuits **700**, **800**, **900**, **1000** to provide offset cancellation for the amplifier **600**. Camera system **1200**, for example, is a still or video camera system, which generally comprises a lens **1230** for focusing an image on the pixel array **140** (FIG. **1**) when shutter release button **1235** is depressed, a central processing unit (CPU) **1205**, such as a microprocessor for controlling camera operations, that communicates with one or more input/output (I/O) devices **1210** over a bus **1215**. Imaging device **100** also communicates with the CPU **1205** over bus **1215**. The system **1200** also includes random access memory (RAM) **1220**, and can include removable memory **1225**, such as flash memory, which also communicate with CPU **1205** over the bus **1215**. Imaging device **100** may be combined with a processor, such as a CPU, digital signal processor, or microprocessor, with or without memory storage on a single integrated circuit or on a different chip than the processor.

The camera system **1200** is one example of a system having digital circuits that could include image sensor devices. Without being limiting, such a system could instead include a computer system, scanner, machine vision, vehicle navigation, video phone, surveillance system, auto focus system, star tracker system, motion detection system, image stabilization system, and other image acquisition and processing system.

The processes and devices in the above description and drawings illustrate examples of methods and devices of many that could be used and produced to achieve the features, and advantages of embodiments described herein. For example, embodiments include combining amplifier **500** with any of circuits **700**, **800**, **900**, **1000**. In addition, the amplifier **600** is not limited to the specific p-type and n-type transistors shown in FIG. **6**. In addition, embodiments are not limited to using a CMOS imaging device. Thus, the embodiments are not to be seen as limited by the foregoing description of the embodiments, but only limited by the appended claims.

The invention claimed is:

1. A circuit for providing offset cancellation comprising:
a primary amplifier comprising:

- a first output;
- a second output;
- a first load input; and
- a second load input;

a first feedback loop connected to the primary amplifier, the first feedback loop comprising:

- a first switch located between the first output of the primary amplifier and the first load input; and
- a first offset capacitor, a first plate of the first offset capacitor being coupled to the first switch between the

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first switch and the first load input, and a second plate of the first offset capacitor being coupled to ground; and
 a second feedback loop connected to the primary amplifier, the second feedback loop comprising:
 a second switch located between the second output of the primary amplifier and the second load input; and
 a second offset capacitor, a first plate of the second offset capacitor being coupled to the second switch between the second switch and the second load input, and a second plate of the second offset capacitor being coupled to ground.

2. The circuit of claim 1, further comprising:
 a third switch for switchably connecting a first input of the primary amplifier to an input common mode voltage; and
 a fourth switch for switchably connecting a second input of the primary amplifier, the input common mode voltage, and the third switch.

3. The circuit of claim 1, further comprising:
 a first pre-charged capacitor coupled to the first switch;
 a third switch connected to the first pre-charged capacitor and to the first output;
 a second pre-charged capacitor coupled to the second switch; and
 a fourth switch connected to the second pre-charged capacitor and to the second output.

4. The circuit of claim 1, further comprising:
 a first buffer having an input connected to the first offset capacitor and an output connected to the first load input of the primary amplifier; and
 a second buffer having an input connected to the second offset capacitor and an output connected to the second load input of the primary amplifier.

5. The circuit of claim 1, further comprising:
 a first assistant operational amplifier comprising an output coupled to the first switch, a first input coupled to an output common mode voltage, and a second input switchably connected to the first output of the primary amplifier; and
 a second assistant operational amplifier comprising an output coupled to the second switch, a first input coupled to the output common mode voltage, and a second input switchably connected to the second output of the primary amplifier.

6. An imaging device comprising:
 a first amplifier comprising:
 a non-inverting output;
 an inverting output;
 a first load input; and
 a second load input;
 a first feedback loop connected to the first amplifier, the first feedback loop comprising:
 a first switch located between the inverting output of the first amplifier and the first load input; and
 a first offset capacitor, a first plate of the first offset capacitor being coupled to the first switch between the first switch and the first load input; and a second plate of the first offset capacitor being coupled to ground; and
 a second feedback loop connected to the first amplifier, the second feedback loop comprising:
 a second switch located between the inverting output of the first amplifier and the second load input; and
 a second offset capacitor, a first plate of the second offset capacitor being coupled to the second switch between

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the second switch and the second load input, and a second plate of the second offset capacitor being coupled to ground.

7. The imaging device of claim 6, further comprising:
 a third switch for switchably connecting a non-inverting input of the first amplifier to an input common mode voltage; and
 a fourth switch for switchably connecting an inverting input of the first amplifier, the input common mode voltage, and the third switch.

8. The imaging device of claim 6, further comprising:
 a first pre-charged capacitor coupled to the first switch;
 a third switch connected to the first pre-charged capacitor and to the inverting output;
 a second pre-charged capacitor coupled to the second switch; and
 a fourth switch connected to the second pre-charged capacitor and to the non-inverting output.

9. The imaging device of claim 6, further comprising:
 a first buffer having an input connected to the first offset capacitor and an output connected to the first load input of the first amplifier; and
 a second buffer having an input connected to the second offset capacitor and an output connected to the second load input of the first amplifier.

10. The imaging device of claim 6, further comprising:
 a second amplifier comprising an output coupled to the first switch, a first input coupled to an output common mode voltage, and a second input switchably connected to the inverting output of the first amplifier; and
 a third amplifier comprising an output coupled to the second switch, a first input coupled to the output common mode voltage, and a second input switchably connected to the non-inverting output of the first amplifier.

11. A camera system comprising:
 a differential telescopic operational amplifier comprising:
 a first output;
 a second output;
 a first load input; and
 a second load input;
 a first feedback loop connected to the differential telescopic operational amplifier, the first feedback loop comprising:
 a first switch located between the first output of the differential telescopic operational amplifier and the first load input; and
 a first offset capacitor, a first plate of the offset capacitor being coupled to the first switch between the first switch and the first load input, and a second plate of the first offset capacitor being coupled to ground;
 a second feedback loop connected to the differential telescopic operational amplifier, the second feedback loop comprising:
 a second switch located between the second output of the differential telescopic operational amplifier and the second load input; and
 a second offset capacitor, a first plate of the second offset capacitor being coupled to the second switch between the second switch and the second load input, and a second plate of the second offset capacitor being coupled to ground; and
 an input switching circuit for connecting an input common mode voltage to the first and second inputs of the differential telescopic operational amplifier.

12. The camera system of claim 11, wherein the first and second switches are controlled by an auto-zero signal.

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13. The camera system of claim 12, wherein the input switching circuit is controlled by the auto-zero signal.

14. A differential telescopic operational amplifier comprising:

- a first load transistor for receiving a first load at a gate; and
 - a second load transistor for receiving a second load at a gate;
 - a third transistor having a source/drain region coupled to a source/drain region of the first load transistor and a second source/drain region coupled to a first amplifier output; and
 - a fourth transistor having a first source/drain region coupled to a source/drain region of the second load transistor and a second source/drain region coupled to a second amplifier output, the third and fourth transistors each having gates coupled together and connected to a first bias line;
 - a fifth transistor having a first source/drain region coupled to the second source/drain region of the third transistor and the first amplifier output; and
 - a sixth transistor having a first source/drain region coupled to the second source/drain region of the fourth transistor and the second amplifier output, the fifth and sixth transistors each having gates coupled together and connected to a second bias line;
 - a seventh transistor having a first source/drain coupled to a second source/drain region of the fifth transistor, a gate coupled to a first signal input, and a second source/drain region coupled to a third bias line; and
 - an eighth transistor having a first source/drain region coupled to a second source/drain region of the sixth transistor, a gate coupled to a second signal input, and a second source/drain region coupled to the third bias line.
15. The differential telescopic operational amplifier of claim 14, further comprising:
- a ninth transistor having a first source/drain region coupled to the second source/drain region of the seventh transis-

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tor and to the third bias line, and a gate coupled to a fourth bias line and to a first bias output; and
a tenth transistor having a first source/drain region coupled to the second source/drain region of the eighth transistor and to the third bias line, and a gate coupled to a common mode feedback input.

16. A method of providing offset compensation for a differential telescopic operational amplifier, the method comprising:

- connecting first and second differential outputs of a differential telescopic operational amplifier to respective first and second gates of respective first and second load transistors;
- connecting first and second inputs of the operational amplifier to an input common mode voltage;
- forming respective offset voltage feedback loops between the first and second gates of the first and second load transistors and the first and second differential outputs; and
- sampling first and second differential offset voltages at the first and second differential outputs of the operational amplifier in respective first and second offset capacitors, a first plate of the first and second offset capacitors being respectively connected to the gates of the first and second load transistors, and a second plate of the first and second offset capacitors being respectively connected to ground.

17. The method of claim 16, wherein:

the sampling is performed during an auto-zero phase; and the sampled voltages are held during a subsequent amplifying phase.

18. The method of claim 17, further comprising repeating the previous steps to provide dynamic offset cancellation.

19. The method of claim 18, wherein the auto-zero period at least partially overlaps with a row sampling period of an image sensor.

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