

THE KITCHEN

CENTER FOR
VIDEO, MUSIC,
DANCE AND
PERFORMANCE

November 14, 1981

Arnold Dreyblatt

THE ORCHESTRA OF EXCITED STRINGS presents "NODAL EXCITATION"
with:

ARNOLD DREYBLATT and MICHAEL HAUENSTEIN
Bass Viols with Excited Strings

PETER PHILLIPS
Midget Upright Princess Pianoforte

KRAIG MASON HILL
Portable Pipe Organ and 10-String Bass

GREG LEWIS
Hurdy Gurdy

BOB BIELECKI
Sound

"Proposition IX: To explain why an open string when sounded makes many sounds at once.

Proposition XV: To determine whether it is possible to touch the strings of an instrument or their keys so fast the ear cannot discern whether the sound is composed of different sounds, or if it is unique and continuous."

- Marin Mersenne, 1637

In Nodal Excitation we excite the oscillations of a string. The continuous rhythmic pulse of the bows striking the nodes of the strings on the basses initiates the resonant texture of a fundamental tone and its natural harmonics. The "scaled" instruments reinforce and sustain tonal areas within this texture. We select from the harmonic series "families of pitches" which are mathematically and tonally related. The "scaled" instruments (organ, piano, and hurdy gurdy) sound these groups of frequencies together with the fundamental tone of which they are a part. The different sections of Nodal Excitation explore the production and isolation of harmonics on the strings of the basses, and the formation of specific harmonic regions related to the third, fifth, seventh, and eleventh overtones. In the largest sense, the music always functions inside the complex of the Fundamental Tone (1). Nodal Excitation is really all about One.

More detailed information follows.

In my short solo performance of Nodal Excitation for solo bass in 1979 in N.Y.C., I first began experimenting with creating a music through isolating and exciting the nodes of a vibrating string. From the program notes of that concert: "The integrity of a fundamental vibration is maintained for each string; all movement of pitch occurs in the overtone structure. A shorter speaking length is never created through 'stopping' and 'fretting' techniques. Harmonic (partial) vibrations are occasionally isolated." The current performance had its beginning in this concept and performance technique.

Timbre or Tone Colour may be understood as being dependent on the greater or lesser presence of the various overtones. Whereas in my solo piece for double bass all pitches were derived as they fall in the harmonic series generated by one string, it seemed interesting to me to transpose the pertinent pitches of this series and to arrange them in a kind of scale which might be utilized to reinforce a particular vibrational mode in a complex sound. Here, scale and timbre would become interde-

A custom loudspeaker system was designed and assembled for use by The Orchestra of Excited Strings by David Wolf of Wolf Sound.

THE MUSICIANS

PETER PHILLIPS is a noted composer, music teacher and author and was a member of the original ensemble.

MICHAEL HAUENSTEIN is a neon light designer, plays a number of instruments and has performed with a Chinese Music ensemble. He was also a member of the original ensemble and has performed with the Orchestra ever since.

KRAIG MASON HILL joined the group last spring, is proficient in oboe and keyboards, and studies art and music at Wesleyan University.

GREG LEWIS, who joined the Orchestra this fall, teaches physics and studies music at Wesleyan University.

Thanks to the following:

The members of the orchestra, past, present and future, Bob Bielecki, Phil Niblock, John Westcoate and John Hupalo, Dan Kingman, Bob Labaree and Peter Gillespie on Bass #3, Allene and Harold Westover, Peter and Michael for traveling to rehearsals, Yoshiko Chuma, David Wolf and Sara Fowle, Edve Weisler, The Alice DiSimone Restaurant in Brooklyn, Shirley, The Vasulkas, Ann Dallas, etc.

Please be patient while we tune up.

- Arnold Dreyblatt 1981.

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The Kitchen Center for Video and Music

press release

Arnold Dreyblatt

THE ORCHESTRA OF EXCITED STRINGS PRESENTS, "NODAL EXCITATION (#4)"

November 14, 1981 8:30pm

\$5.00/\$2.50 members/TDF

Reservations: 925-3615

On November 14, The Kitchen will feature composer Arnold Dreyblatt and his Orchestra of Excited Strings performing from the latest version of the continually-evolving work, "Nodal Excitation".

Mr. Dreyblatt's musical concepts have led him to develop a set of new and unique instruments, performance techniques, and a system of tuning. These three elements are combined in "Nodal Excitation" to produce a music that is rhythmically and texturally rich and which represents an exploration of the tonal potential inherent in the natural overtone series.

The instrumentation includes three string basses which have been modified to produce a single fundamental tone and its natural overtones. New for this performance is a bass with ten strings. Also included in the ensemble is a rebuilt pianoforte, a specially-constructed portable pipe organ and a hurdy-gurdy, all of which produce a twenty-tone scale compressed from the first eleven overtones and their multiples up to the 121st harmonic. For "Nodal Excitation", Dreyblatt developed a technique of "hammering harmonics" with a bow, which supplies the unchanging fundamental tone along with simultaneous ringing overtones whose resonant texture the other instruments support and sustain.

Dreyblatt's method is to select from the harmonic series "families of pitches", tonally and musically related, which are sounded together with the fundamental tone of which they are a part. The piece is divided into sections within which these different "families" are considered from different points of view and are heard in varying acoustic contexts.

ARNOLD DREYBLATT was born in New York City in 1953. He began working in video and electronic music in the early seventies, culminating in graduate work at the Center for Media Study in Buffalo, where he worked extensively with The Vasulkas and pursued interests in sound synthesis. Dreyblatt returned to New York City in 1975 and, after a show of his videotapes at Anthology Film Archives, began study with a number of composers, including La Monte Young and various non-western musicians. In 1979, he began giving solo performances of "Nodal Excitation" for unaccompanied altered string bass in and around NYC. Soon after he received a CAPS fellowship in music composition. In early 1980 he founded a performing ensemble, The Orchestra of Excited Strings, which has performed in NYC at the Experimental Intermedia Foundation, the downtown Whitney Museum, Roulette, at Media Study in Buffalo and at Wesleyan University in Middletown, where he is currently in residence.

Included in this season's ensemble are noted composer and teacher PETER PHILLIPS, MICHAEL HAUENSTEIN (both members of the original ensemble), KRAIG MASON HILL, GREG LEWIS, and, on audio, honorary "sound associate" BOB BIELECKI.

484 Broome Street between West Broadway and Wooster, New York City