

REVIEWS OF WARREN BURT: THE ANIMATION OF LISTS AND THE ARCHYTAN TRANSPOSITIONS  
XI 130 that appeared in print and on the net in the order in which I received  
them. Copied verbatim from websites and emails. All spelling, grammar, etc. as  
is.

1:

[http://www.infratunes.com/chronique-album\\_22341\\_Warren%20Burt\\_The%20Animatio](http://www.infratunes.com/chronique-album_22341_Warren%20Burt_The%20Animatio)

Sous l'oeil engageant du producteur Al Margolis, Catherine Schieve et Warren  
Burt dressent en deux temps une oeuvre mystérieuse, manifeste érudit tout autant  
qu'exposé de relaxation sur le qui-vive.

Passé derrière un lamellophone dernier cri, le duo fait d'une lecture neuve de  
traités et de modes le prétexte à l'élaboration d'une musique abstraite, qui  
doit beaucoup à la préparation des instruments et compte, pour ce qui est de son  
exécution, pas mal sur le hasard. Toujours délicats, les coups portés sur  
lamelles décident d'oscillations incertaines, de réverbérations aptes à  
accueillir les courses d'harmoniques, et mettent en avant quelques tonalités  
rassurantes.

Formellement assez proches du For Bunita Marcus de Morton Feldman, les deux  
parties dévoilées ici refusent comme elle la progression évidente, déclinant la  
moindre annonce de crescendo, pour multiplier, malignes, les amorces de  
perturbations avec lesquelles l'exécution devra faire ici ou là. La mesure,  
partout, et la décision juste.

Ouvrant à la découverte de tonalités alternatives, les deux compositions de  
Burt prouvent qu'il est possible de concilier la recherche du compositeur versé  
dans la théorie et l'écoute contemplative de l'auditeur détaché de tout désir de  
complexité. Qui se rencontrent ici dans un champ apaisant d'attentions  
métalliques déposées.

Chroniqué par Grisli

\*\*\*\*\*

Babel Fish web translation

Under the engaging eye of producer Al Margolis, Catherine Schieve and Warren  
Burt draw up in two times a mysterious work, expresses scholar very as much as  
exposed relieving on the alert.

Passed behind a lamellophone last cry, the made duet of a new reading of  
treaties and modes the pretext with the development of an abstracted music,  
which must much with the preparation of the instruments and account, as regards  
its execution, not badly on the chance. Always delicate, the blows related to  
plates decide dubious oscillations, reverberations ready to accomodate the races  
of harmonics, and propose some reassuring tonalities.

Formally rather close to For Bunita Marcus de Morton Feldman, the two parts  
revealed here refuse like it it obvious progression, declining the least  
advertisement of crescendo, to multiply, malignant, the starters of disturbances  
with which the execution will have to make here or there. Measurement,  
everywhere, and the decision right.

Working with discovered alternative tonalities, the two compositions of Burt  
prove that it is possible to reconcile the research of the type-setter poured in

the theory and the contemplative listening of the detached listener of any desire of complexity. Who meet here in an alleviating field of metal attentions deposited.

\*\*\*\*\*

**2:**

Warren Burt is receiving airplay on my program, JazzFlight.  
One listener reported that her plants are growing faster.  
Thanks,  
Rob

Rob Hoff  
WQLN-FM  
Erie, PA 16546

\*\*\*\*\*

**3:**

Single minded and presented at its own pace, this is the music of tuning forks. Yes, those little U-shaped forks that come in varying sizes, usually tuned to one of the notes in an octave. In this case, each octave has been expanded to between 19 and 53 micro-tonal pitches, making a unique harmonic palette. It's the interaction of these pitches that defines Warren Burt's music, tonal environments of consonance and dissonance, mostly slow cycling to the benefit of the long decay of each fork's being struck, with occasional moments of slippery activity. Each piece was recorded in three passes for reasons of multitracking. The two CDs are each the presentation of two larger works, "The Animation of Lists" and "And the Archytan Transpositions," each based upon the other. They were originally requested in 2002 by Phill Niblock who wanted a non-electronic tonal work.

Burt, who created the custom set of aluminum tuning forks used on these recordings, cites his goals in these compositions as an explanation of complex just intonations, long scale permutational structures, and a piece which can exist in multiple versions varying on pitch and rhythm transpositions. The choices of pitches were determined by process, an elaborate algorithm to produce a slowly changing series of randomly combining harmonic worlds. The results are clearly in the minimal school. The environments are full, lush in their own way, but also static and on reflection feel like programmed music. There is a sameness to the results, which fits the intent of the composer, but that makes the two CDs seemingly interchangeable. That's not a criticism, because this music is all about aural environment, and at that it's extremely functional and remarkably gentle in both consonant and dissonant progressions. There is a hint of the "new age" to this release, but the environments are absorbing without being intrusive, a good auditory accomplishment.

<http://www.squidsear.com/cgi-bin/news/newsView.cgi?newsID=496>

Paul Zampino

-----

4:

FROM VITAL WEEKLY - No 525 Week 19 (Dutch New Music Web Magazine)

Frans de Waard

WARREN BURT - THE ANIMATION OF LISTS/AND THE ARCHYTAN TRANSPOSITIONS (2CD by XI Records)

If I'm correct Gyorgi Ligeti composed a symphony for, I believe, 100 tuning forks and Christiana Kubisch for several, and here is Warren Burt delivering a double CD with eight pieces for tuning forks. Burt studied in New York but moved to Australia in 1975 where he lectures and composes, mainly in the area of interactive technology and microtonality. Many of his works dealt with voices, but here we have tuning forks. On one disc we find 'The Animation Of Lists' and on the other 'And The Archytan Transpositions'. Each of the pieces is around sixteen minutes long, and there is indeed a difference between both discs. The first work is more calm and relaxing, and in the second piece, there are more notes played and seems a bit more complex. I tried reading the technical notes by Burt himself in the booklet, but I got carried away by the music to such an extent that I ignored the notes altogether. This is highly minimal music with slow to no changes, just moving slowly forward. Peaceful, late night music, to be played with just a small light on, preferable at a low volume. Then it will unfold it's true beauty. Simply a gorgeous CD. (FdW)

Address: <http://www.xirecords.org>

\*\*\*\*\*

5:

It was a pleasure to receive your new album from Al recently. It is a wonderful and gorgeous effort. Not only technically dazzling but it just sounds damn good. Each note is like a runway for my mind to take off from. It seems to be a refining of what you achieved on "Harmonic Colour Fields" which I had played on my radio show sometime ago. Al has been a pal for almost 20 years now and is very generous with his releases.

I only wish my show was longer so I did not have to excerpt such extended pieces but I try to get as much stuff on as possible. I'd certainly like to hear the work you mentioned, it sounds intriguing. I'm looking at the web site now. I'll come back to this because it looks like some other interesting stuff too.

Here's the address:  
Don Campau/No Pigeonholes  
PO Box 9162  
Santa Rosa CA 95405  
USA

\*\*\*\*\*

6:

Warren Burt is american composer, living in Australia more than 30 years. His musical career started when analog synthesizers were just conceived for large-scale expansion, so he was initially inspired by its aesthetics of configuring the instruments before (and along) play them. The same thing is about this album, completed in 2005. It was all done with tuning forks, consisting of eight

long pieces, each of them lasts about 16 minutes and very similar to each other. Tuning forks were specially designed and arranged for live performance, the source recordings were improved with computer software, but remained in strong cohesion with recording atmosphere. The idea was explained by Phill Niblock whose intention was opposition of acoustic timbres to electronic sounds. In the means of musical expression, there is no real links with melody or rhythm, but just the intonation. It's very quiet, relaxing and contemplating tapestry of tones, resembling the feeling you can draw out of the eastern curiosity shop, pottering between bells and rattles, touching them incidentally and wondering the sound of silence. Unlike the computer aided microtonal variations, you'll fall into the different kind of experience: face to face with eternity, fragility, unique combination of caducity and subdued strength. Highly therapeutic music, the two hours long performance.

from <http://iem.nigilist.ru/en/getreview.html?id=3773> (russian "independent electronic music" website)

\*\*\*\*\*

7:

Dear Friends of XI Records:

I HAVE RECIVED YOUR MUSIC ( 1 cd's of WARRENT BURT ). Thank you very much.

I' M VERY, VERY HAPPY!!!!

I will include it in session of " Sonidos del Mundo " the next days, and program " Ritmos en Jazz ".

Your music is very important for my mind, my spirit, my body...my life...

Again, I'm very happy.

Cheers,

Gustavo Bustamante Mesa (Spain)

\*\*\*\*\*

8:

Phosphor Magazine

c/o Paul Bijlsma

Banschstrasse 71

10247 Berlin

+49 30 44356459

<http://www.xs4all.nl/~phosphor>

Warren Burt: The animation lists and the archytan transpositions 2CD  
The American composer Warren Burt has attended two universities, before moving to Australia. He has written two books about music and currently works on another one on microtonality for the beginner.  
This double-CD involves microtonality as well. Warren Burt investigates the sound of tuning forks. The music is of a beautiful clearance, putting the listener in a state of calmness and relaxation. Just go with the flow, enjoy the minimality of the music. For some, this might be difficult, they will find the music too repetitive and therefore boring. With simple means Warren Burt accomplishes a lot, that ist two almost identical albums, featuring nice background music.

\*\*\*\*\*

9:

From Stephen Boyle - WRTC Radio, Pittsburgh, PA.

Thank you very much for your recordings, and for doing what you do--pure gorgeousness abounds! Looking forward to broadcasting more beauty and pure sound!

\*\*\*\*\*

10:

Paris Transatlantic Magazine, July 2006 - Massimo Ricci

Warren Burt

THE ANIMATION OF LISTS AND THE ARCHYTAN TRANSMISSIONS

Experimental Intermedia

There's something of a contrast between the diverse career moves of Warren Burt and the extreme purity of the music he creates for self-built just intonation tuning forks. After university, Burt moved from the United States to Australia to pursue an interest in interactive electronics and microtonality, exploring connections between other disciplines along the way. He has contributed greatly to the development of microtonality both through his writings on the subject and, more concretely, by helping to reconstruct Percy Grainger's Electric Eye Tone Tool, a light-controlled synthesizer originally developed in 1961. Burt's previous outing, Harmonic Colour Fields (Pogus) was a fine example of his research in such areas.

This double album is a perfect introduction to Burt's world of chance-determined resonance. Commissioned by Phill Niblock in 2002, The Animation of Lists and the Archytan Transmissions was played in its entirety by the composer and Catherine Schieve on hand-held or mounted sets of aluminium forks whose bass and treble range varies depending on their size. They're hit with different beaters, and peculiar resonators (plastic sewer pipes of varying length) are used for the bass ones. The "limpid clouds" Burt generates by superimposing pitches (with the aid of a computer and multitracking) represent a shift from "wrong" listening habits and saccharine-drenched temperamental boredom to a sudden repulisti of the ears. These strangely familiar flows of beating frequencies are seemingly unobtrusive, yet impose their presence with gentle yet firm authority. It's like removing a cardboard box from the head to finally enjoy a true spatialization of sound. Rhythm, the movement of the forks through the space and phrasing are essential for the correct functioning of what William Duckworth defines as "sonic colors that momentarily hover here and there". Random sequences can sound fully notated, microtonal rainbows can be conjured forth from a mere handful of notes. Such infinitesimal differences in pitch are the key to unlock the brain from its tacit acceptance of (equal temperament's) rules, rules that do not necessarily fit its predisposition - are you ready to unlock yours?-MR

\*\*\*\*\*

11:

Modern classical electronics

Warren Burt is a modern composer based in Australia. There are two of his pieces for tuning forks on his album for XI (XI130, [www.xirecords.com](http://www.xirecords.com) - a label whose wonderful double albums of modernism have been one of the many pleasures of this job). Disk 1 is The Animation of Lists, while And The Archytan Transpositions fills disk 2, and the two together form the title of the album. As with much XI this is conceptual at base: the tuning forks are some just-intonation ones designed by Burt and built for him by the CSIRO - and look more like a large xylophone arrangement with resonators, and hand-held ones. They are struck with various mallets to create different timbres. The score designates a range of forks to be played in particular time periods, but leaves decisions to the players. For this album the piece was played three times and the recording combined (a strategy used on Michael Nyman's album for obscure). The result is just over an hour of almost random aleatoric music, with pitches combining to form pulsing resonances or weaving complexities - ambient that has an abstract appeal. The second side takes the same recording and electronically shifts the pitches (hence the transposition) to give the work a different feel - subtle but effective. This is an album that you need to immerse yourself into and let it take you. Quite different is his Poems of Rewi Alley (sonic gallery, [home.vicnet.net.au/~aaf/sonic.htm](http://home.vicnet.net.au/~aaf/sonic.htm). Alley was a New Zealander born in 1897 who went to China in 1927 out of curiosity, and stayed for 60 years. His poems are prose pieces describing imagistic and polemic responses to china - the polemic particularly in response to the Vietnam war (Defoliants, Profit plus poison, What legal, what not, for example). John Britton reads the poems beautifully and Burt orchestrates an accompaniment using a program called AudioMulch that creates chords and ringing from the voice, providing a spectral shadow of the speech. It often sounds like a Chinese percussion, but the mood (through dissonances) darkens with Alley's. I am not a great one for the spoken word, but this album combines intrinsically interesting and often beautiful text with a timeless soundworld that intrigues. It may be harder to track down, but worth it for those interested.

&notes - Jeremy Keens

\*\*\*\*\*

**12:**

from The Wire, August 2006 - Review by Tom Perchard

Warren Burt  
The Animation of Lists And The Archytan Transpositions  
XI 2xCD

Though Warren Burt's composing career spans 30 years, his music isn't widely known in either his native US or in Europe. After completing studies in New York and California, in 1975 Burt moved to Melbourne to teach at La Trobe University. He still lives in Australia, and is committed to composition, exploring various techniques but concentrating on electroacoustic and microtonal musics.

The Animation of Lists and the Archytan Transpositions was requested for XI by Phill Niblock, who asked that Burt provide an electronic piece that used as its sound source Just Intonation tuning forks Burt had constructed himself. Burt's kit of bass and treble forks is tuned to a 19-note scale derived from Ptolemy's second century treatise on harmonics, and while the first part of this two CD work, The Animation of Lists, is presented as recorded - live, and then with two

overdubs - part two, And The Archytan Transpositions, electronically pitchshifts those overdubs variously up and down, artificially creating a 53 note octave for Burt's tuning forks.

Burt writes that the score consists of a series of time frames that prescribe the sequence of forks to be struck while leaving rhythm and phrasing indeterminate. Though the vaunted colour richness of microtonality isn't best demonstrated by this instrument - which in practice sounds like a beefed-up music box - that's not really the point here.

The soundworld that Burt and co-performer Catherine Schieve create calls for submersive listening, so that moments of melody and harmonic resolution emerge from what is a luminous tonal palette. The transposition of overdubs in And The Archytan Transpositions shifts rhythm as well as pitch, and this heightened activity combines with intensely detailed harmonics to give the music a woozy feel, as minutely differentiated pitches ring, phase, and rub against each other.

\*\*\*\*\*

**13:**

<http://www.thewholenote.com/wholenote/index.html>  
"Toronto's Music - Classic and New"

Burt - The Animation of Lists;  
The Archytan Transportations  
Warren Burt  
XI Records XI 130 CD

Microtonal minimalism is Warren Burt's calling card. Spread over the length of two CDs, his latest opus is a moving tribute to the sound of tuning forks composed in 2002 at the request of Phill Niblock. According to Burt, The Animation of Lists utilizes "self-built just-intonation tuning forks, multi-tracked and computer transposed [...] exploring ideas of complex just intonations, long scale permutation structures, and [...] pitch and rhythm transpositions of pre-recorded materials." The forks are made of aluminium and there are two kinds - treble and bass. Each piece is around 16 minutes long and each has a slow, nearly painful development. The fork is struck and you're able to hear reverb long afterwards, as it overlaps into the next strike. This goes on for another fifteen minutes or so, at which point, the next piece starts, sounding oddly similar to the last one, but with a slight shift in pitch. It's a dream-inducing structure that travels across clouded mystery lands of never-never, where sleep comes easy. Burt is a serious composer of course and the music is serious with a capital S.

The second composition, And the Archytan Transpositions, uses heavy transpositions of the tuning. This is the way Burt got other pitches he couldn't produce with the forks themselves. A heavy-handed algorithm was written to control the series of pitches. In fact, just as haunting as the previous piece, this one develops in a slow paced environment surrounded by a ton of reverb coming from the forks and a delicately disappearing sound.

It's interesting to listen to the two CDs side by side just to hear the multitude of similarities and variances you're bound to discover. Haunting and serious mind-altering music from one of the reigning kings of microtonal sounds.

Tom Sekowski

\*\*\*\*\*

14:

from Synaesthesia Updater - [www.synrecords.com](http://www.synrecords.com)

Loads of new releases listed below. As always you can email ([mail@synrecords.com](mailto:mail@synrecords.com)) / call (03) 96633551 to reserve or order through our web page ([www.synrecords.com](http://www.synrecords.com)). Some highlights include the new Synaesthesia label release - a split LP by the legendary french electronic musician BERNARD PARMEGIANI (exclusive material, first vinyl release for over 20 years) and local electronic practitioner PHILIP SAMARTZIS who comes up trumps with one of his finest works (we are biased, sure, but this is solid gold audio freak). Also listed is a super limited vinyl lp by SONIC YOUTH (under the moniker Melbourne Direct - 800 copies only!). The first widely available release by Finland's queen of fragile disorientating broken music KUUPUU. A bunch of new ECLIPSE titles. **Loads of fine releases by local artists including re-stocks of WARREN BURTS exceptional 2CD of works for tuning forks (we sold out of this before we could even list last time).**

\*\*\*\*\*

15:

<http://www.soundstage.com/music/reviews/rev856.htm>

Warren Burt -The Animation of Lists and The Archytan Transpositions  
XI Records XI 130  
Released: 2006  
Format: CD

by Mike Silverton  
[mikes@soundstage.com](mailto:mikes@soundstage.com)

Musical Performance	****1/2
Recording Quality	****1/2
Overall Enjoyment	****1/2

The eight tracks of this two-disc set trace their lineage to a peculiarly easy-going, American turn on classical music's avant-garde. Lou Harrison, Terry Riley, Morton Feldman, John Cage, George Crumb, et al. would be right at home in Warren Burt's ravishing sound-world. Why "ravishing"? If we expand the definition of music to include any purposeful organization of sound, envision leisurely clouds of purest sound-color going nowhere in particular. This music dwells in an abstract present, announcing neither beginning nor end. If you had to assign a genre, "ambient" might suffice if it were understood that a keen and purposeful musical intelligence plays a large part. "Downtown" probably says it better. (In present-day classical jargon, "downtown" means "simple" and "uptown" "complex.")

The compositions consist in their entirety of struck aluminum bars similar to tuning forks, milled to microtonal scales. The fascination is twofold: the beauty of the initial attacks and the richly textured complexities of their interactions and decays. By way of computer manipulation, Burt sidesteps the need to machine additional bars in order to achieve yet more detailed microtonal clusters. You would never guess the computer's part had you not read the excellent notes by the composer and by postminimal pioneer William Duckworth.

The wonderfully detailed, up-close sound comes across as strictly acoustic: the thinking audiophile's ideal demo. Head music to be sure, best experienced in a dimly lit room with a few fingers of your favorite firewater in hand.

\*\*\*\*\*

**16:**

from NicoleW@whitefield.org.uk

Hello Warren. My name is Nicole Whitelaw and I am a special needs teacher in the UK. My husband (Richard Whitelaw) works for Sonic Arts Network, and knew of your music. He recommended Animation of Lists to me to play to my profoundly autistic class during relaxation time. I am writing to let you know just how effective this piece is in terms of allowing these children the opportunity to focus on sounds and relax. They all really enjoyed it, and it is the most engaged they have ever been with a particular piece of music. I just wanted to let you know about this, as it may not be an avenue you have thought about before, and also to thank you for giving my children a fantastic listening experience,

Nicole Whitelaw

\*\*\*\*\*

**17:**

from Tobias Fischer

<http://www.tokafi.com/newsitems/cd-feature-warren-burt-the-animation-of-lists-and-the-archytan-transpositions/view>

CD Feature/ Warren Burt: "The Animation of Lists/ And the Archytan Transpositions"

Subjective and emotional metaphors for what is in its heart a "complex sonic object".

In stark contrast to the world of pop, pleasure has been conspicuously absent from the contemporary music scene and the avantgarde. For one, cerebral concepts have been decidedly more succesful in gaining government grants. And secondly, irony has taken the place of humour, again feeding the brain rather than the body. Warren Burt has never felt these two to be contradictions, just as much as he has always held the believe that a meticulous plan can serve as an ideal basis for chance-based compositions. And on "The Animation of Lists and the Archytan Transpositions", he has managed to conceive, compose, conduct and complete music which caters to both

No wonder then, that how he has managed to achieve this is quite a lot harder to understand (and requires a considerable amount of knowledge about tunings and acoustical physics) than it is to appreciate the result. It figures that four of Burt's colleagues have kindly donated highly personal and - yes! - enjoyable introductions to the pieces on this double disc treasure, and that all of them have reverted to providing subjective and emotional metaphors for what is in its heart a "complex sonic object" (as its creator justly calls it). The term "clouds of sound" is dropped

twice, William Duckworth describes the music as being "slow, unhurried" and "free of acoustic distraction" and Andrew McLennan simply dubs it "dazzling". For Warren, who was asked to write the score by Phil Niblock back in 2002, the goal was merely to provide "contemplation and enjoyment". To this end, he further deepened his profound love for the sound of tuning forks. Almost twenty years ago, he had already been active in this field, using a subsidy from the Australian Council of Arts to have a large set of treble and bass forks built especially for him, using them as tools for a composition. Mounted into a frame and treated to two different kinds of beaters, this "Forkophone" (designed by musical sculptor Anne Norman) provided a highly organic and yet unique source of microtonal perspectives. This very instrument now reappear on "The Animation of Lists", but to expand the push of possible pitches, computer transpositions were used in post-production. The score itself was divided into a series of blocks, within which the performing duo is instructed to play all assigned forks within a certain time frame. Afterwards, Burt divided the material into two greater pieces - one in which the music remained untransposed (disc 1) and one in which different transpositions were used (disc 2). Remarkably, despite both being quite lengthy (standing at over an hour each), they have a light flow, which allows the listener to follow the patterns or drift off into his own musings at his (or her) own will. There are two layers of perception at work here and they can both be enjoyed separately or individually: The direct impacts of the beaters on the metal, which create tiny melodic fragments and sequences of notes. And then there are the waves of reverb, which trail the tones like a tail follows its comet. Never rubbing against each other unpleasantly, they form plentiful constellations, like icicles on a window in winter. Underneath the tent of a dominant sustain, smaller ones mingle and mix, before fading again and making way for new forms. It is a cycle of birth, death and rebirth, which feels warm and soothing.

You don't need an academic education to enjoy this album and it will work just as fine while peeling onions for dinner as it will for concentrated listening. In effect, "The Animation of Lists" is an invitation to spend some time within its space, to explore its structure and to revel in its beauty, without demanding anything or forcing its will on you. Burt is definitely not joking when he refers to it as a "bathing in sound". We would even like to go one step further: It may be a strange observation for an album of contemporary or avantgarde music, but this is a feel-good record.

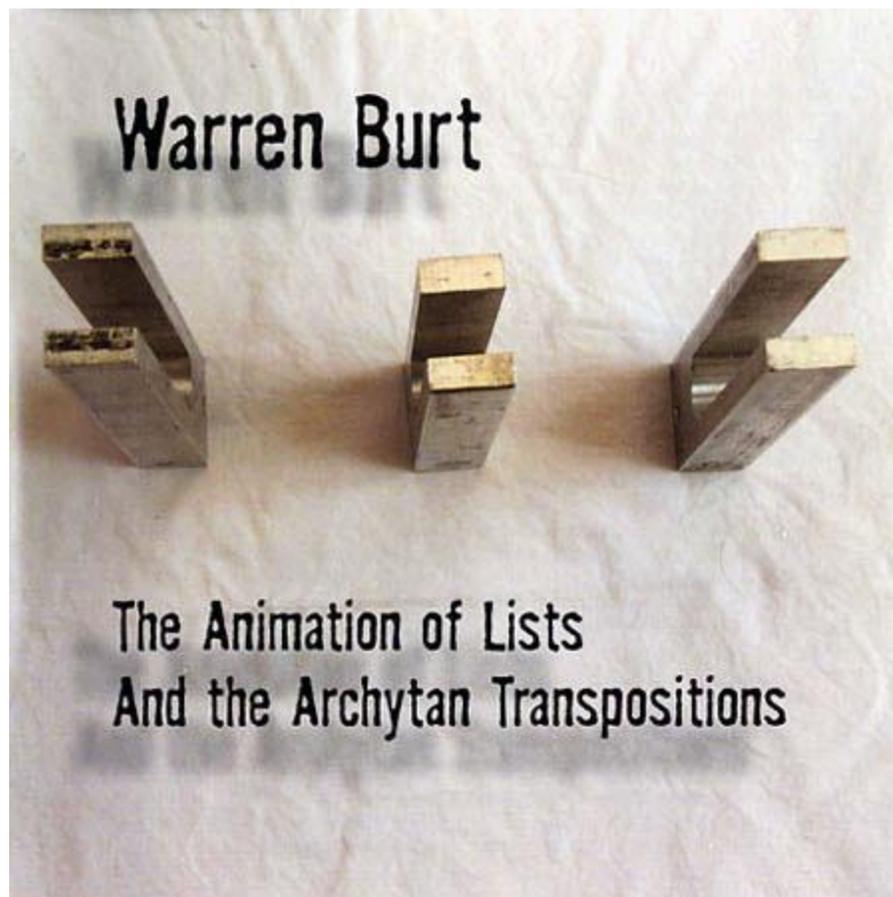
By Tobias Fischer

Homepage: Warren Burt

Homepage: XI Records

## Warren Burt:

### The Animation of Lists And the Archytan Transpositions



---

Warren Burt – **The Animation of Lists / And the Archytan Transpositions**  
Warren Burt [tuning forks]

**Experimental Intermedia Foundation XI Records XI 130**

Durations: CD1: 64:29, CD2: 64:47



---

### CD 1

#### 1. Section 1

[15:59]

#### 2. Section 2

[15:59]

#### 3. Section 3

[15:59]

#### 4. Section 4

[16:32]

### CD 2

#### 1. Section 1

[16:01]

#### 2. Section 2

[16:01]

#### 3. Section 3

[15:55]

#### 4. Section 4

[16:51]

---

**Warren Burt's** music is all about listening. Well, isn't all music, someone will object. No, because lots of music is just about hearing, and sometimes not even that, at least not consciously. Again; **Warren Burt's** music is about listening; listening hard, getting inside the act of listening to the extent that there no longer is any difference between the listener and that

which the listener hears. Like in all very good art, there is an act of identification and recognition in play here, in the finely tuned vibrations of the ether.



### Soaring

photograph: ingvar loco nordin

Most people will undoubtedly regard **Burt** as an Australian by birth, but he does originate in **the Soviet States of America** (as I like to call it after the country renounced democracy in the wake of 9/11, exactly adhering to what the determined pilots and their **Lord in the Mountains** strived for). **Burt** studied at **the University of New York at Albany** and **the University of California at San Diego**, before shifting over to **Australia** in 1975, the year the American aggressors were ousted from **Vietnam** after their almost dreamy **Hieronymus Bosch** act of genocide.

**Warren Burt** took up various occupations within the academic world, at places as disparate (or seemingly disparate) as **NSW Conservatorium**, **Victorian College of the Arts**, **Victorian College of Technology** – and as a freelancer in education and radio, as well as engaging in composing, film making, video artistry and arts administration. The places where **Warren Burt** has been in residence tell something about his variety of engagements and the almost Renaissance character of his spirit: **The Australian Commonwealth Scientific Industrial Research Organization**, **The Los Angeles International Synergy** (an art-science think-tank), **The Broadcast Music Department of ABC Radio**, **The American Composers Forum**, **The Art-Science Laboratory** and many more organizations.

**Burt** began his electronic music and electro-acoustic music and sound art experiments and compositions as early as the 1970s, with a certain tilt towards interactive technology and micro-tonality. Two book by his hand are available: **Writings from a Scarlet Ardvark: 15 Articles on Music and Art** [**Frog Peak Music** 1993] and **Critical Vices: The Myths of**

**Post-Modern Theory** (in collaboration with **Nicholas Zurbrugg**) [**Gordon & Breach** 1999].

**Warren Burt** has also participated on, as well as released his own CDs formerly. This double CD is his latest release, appearing on the experimental and adventurous label **XI: Experimental Intermedia Foundation**. One of his former recordings – **Harmonic Colour Fields** – was released on the likewise adventurous label **Pogus**. One of his more illustrious appearances was made on the celebrated Russian sound poetry release **Homo Sonorous**, achieved by **Dmitry Bulatov** in **Kaliningrad** in 2001. Burt was involved, for nine years, with **The Theatre of the Ordinary** in **Melbourne**, doing improvisations with dancers, actors and musicians. As of now he is writing a book on **Micro-tonality for the Beginner** at the **University of Wollongong**.



**The Tibetan Book of the Dead on Linnea's balcony in Malmoe, Sweden**

photograph: ingvar loco nordin

Back to the music of this double CD. Like I said, this music is about listening not simply hearing, but it's about a way of listening that gradually gets lost in a very focused but after a while almost absentminded way of hearing, that leaves you soaring inside a sound that becomes your life: it's outline, its content, its color and hue, it smell: the smell of light. You have to become, grow, and loose yourself to reappear inside this space station without a shell, this vehicle without propulsion, this sound of un-sound that completely harbors you in bliss and a gentle color-of-the-rainbow poisoning, in a willing submission to, and coalescing with, a marvelous and hypnotic display of vibrations of sound and nuances of light that you never tire off: a place where you want to stay, which has no geographical or temporal definition: that just is...

I can't describe my experience of **Warren Burt's** **The Animation of Lists / And the Archytan Transpositions** any better than that. It has to do with letting go, simply, and letting be, letting grow, in a caring and loving abstinence from any influencing involvement. This music is about resting and watching, about soaring and about weightlessness, about deep, penetrating thought let loose, in a sonorous meditation that may take you as far as **Dalai lama's** voice in his marvelous **Advice on Dying**. Let body rest in **Tellus'** gravitational field, let vibrations of tuning forks liberate mind!



**On the shore at Råå, Skåne, Sweden**

photograph: ingvar loco nordin

But, alas, do not fear, do not worry! It is no big commitment to listen to **Warren Burt!** You may just as well simply play the CDs and enjoy, right off. It may be, though, no matter what you say ahead of time, that you feel invited into some loftier level of consciousness through these sounds!

The promo leaflet that came with the CDs has it:

“There are any number of ways to hear **Warren Burt's** music for tuning forks [...], the most immediate [...] simply to revel in its beauty and enjoy the music as sound”.

Right on! It's really as simple as that, though the music is so sincerely and relentlessly inspiring that it will indeed carry further!

The leaflet also explains some more technical sides, describing the music – which is true – as microtonal music, using pitches smaller than a half-step, exploring the sounds between the

keys of, say, a piano. **Burt** utilizes from 19 to 53 pitches to the octave, instead of the common 12 of Western tradition.

Many contemporary composers have dwelled in intricate tunings, like **Terry Riley** and **La Monte Young**, or **Harry Partch**. Especially **Terry Riley** has reached glistening and glaring beauty through this, in works like **The Harp of New Albion** [for grand piano in just intonation], which was the first work that really opened my ears to these wrangling, soaring, bending and bulging sonorities; new sonic worlds to travel!

One crucial property of **Warren Burt's The Animation of Lists / And the Archytan Transpositions** is the unhurried way in which the music soars, settles and ponders; the way it lifts off like a butterfly in Mexican morning light between Mexican Saguaro cactuses and spirals like eagles over Tibetan mountain passes! The time here – the duration – has a scent and a nuance of timelessness; a property in which the aspect of passing time dissolves in an ever-present, omni-present NOW, which embraces all and liberates all from its embrace.



**Emanuel's & Rebecka's garden, Råå, Skåne, Sweden**

photograph: ingvar loco nordin

I can't help it; **Warren Burt's** music inspires and instills these kinds of thoughts, these kinds of notions. It's with a feeling of undirected gratitude that I accept this sounding experience out of **Warren Burt's** tuning forks. There aren't many moments like this in contemporary music.

**David Dunn** – another wizard of the audios! – has written an interesting essay in the CD booklet, as has **Andrew McLennon**, **William Duckworth** and **Ron Robboy**. The composer himself has written some explanatory words too, in this rich booklet, in a text called Technical

notes.

He says that these works constitute

a recorded composition for my self-built just-intonation tuning forks, multitracked and computer transposed. [...] I was exploring ideas of complex just intonations, long scale permutational structures, and a piece which can exist in multiple versions, the versions created by pitch and rhythm transpositions of pre-recorded materials.

[...] The tuning forks [...] are made of aluminum, and were made by me in 1985. [...] The forks are of two kinds, treble and bass. The treble forks are made of 25 x 40 mm aluminum construction bar, with a 10 mm wide slit down the middle. They are struck with a variety of percussion beaters and may be mounted in a frame, or hand-held. They produce a very pure tone [...] and [...] have a decay, which lasts between 30 seconds and [...] about a minute.

The bass forks are made of 40 x 40 mm aluminum construction bar, and must be mounted in a frame in order to be played. Very soft beaters are used for them, and resonators must be used for them to be heard. The resonators consist of 100 mm plastic sewer pipe cut to the appropriate lengths for each pitch. A frame for the forks, designed by Australian composer and sculptor **Anne Norman**, allows 4 bass forks and 11 treble forks to be played at any one time.

The forks are tuned to a 19-note just intonation scale, derived from modes described in **Claudius Ptolemy**'s 2nd century CE "Harmonics". This scale enables one to have a large variety of just-intonation resources at hand, including ancient Greek enharmonic, chromatic and diatonic versions of various Dorian modes and their inversions.

**Warren Burt** further explains that he wanted to expand this scale for the works on this CD, without making more forks. His solution was to transpose recorded tuning forks slightly in a computer, enabling an added number of pitches that couldn't be achieved by the tuning forks themselves. He says that the interval of transposition that came out the best was "the  $28/27$  Archytas' large 63 cent version of the quarter-tone". Thus **Burt** came up with a 53-note scale, which considerably enhanced his pitch possibilities. Allowing himself this technique, he opened for an enormous variety.

I will not go further into this insider information, though there is much more to read in the booklet, but just sincerely and without any hesitation at all recommend this music for all folks with a passion for sound and sound structures. **Warren Burt**'s **The Animation of Lists / And the Archytan Transpositions** provides great adventure, like a Shaman's ride into the Beyond and back, and the beauty of this music is dazzling!

---



[email home](#)

