

27.9.91

Phill N: block

fährt so 11 am zurück, 3.11.91

3 Karten vorher

Kommt am Mittwoch

4 Lautsprecher Boxen
möglichst 2 Verstärker

DAT Records alle, vielleicht noch
ein Cassettendeck!

Filmrollen von 40' Länge, even-
tuell $2 \times 40' = 80' = 1 \text{ hr } 20'$

PHILL NIBLOCK

224 Centre Street New York 10013

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Phill Niblock is an intermedia artist using music, film, photography, video and computers. He was born in Indiana in 1933. Since the mid-60's he has been making music and intermedia performances at: The Museum of Modern Art; The Whitney Museum; Wadsworth Atheneum; the Kitchen; the Paris Autumn Festival; Palais des Beaux Arts, Brussels; Institute of Contemporary Art, London; Akademie der Kunst, Berlin; Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts at Harvard; World Music Institute at Merkin Hall; and on radio in the U.S., West Germany, France, and Belgium. He has had grants from the Guggenheim Foundation, the New York State Council on the Arts, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Creative Artists Public Service Program, the City University of New York Research Foundation and the Foundation for the contemporary Performance Arts. He is Director of the Experimental Intermedia Foundation in New York. He has been director since 1985; an artist/member since 1968. He is the producer of Music and Intermedia presentations at EIF since 1973 (about 700 performances). He is Professor of Video and Film Production and Photography, Department of Performing and Creative Arts at the College of Staten Island, the City University of New York, 1971 to present.

Phill Niblock's intermedia work addresses technical and aesthetic issues in four artistic disciplines that combine at various levels and diverge at others. His multi-layered installations and performances present simultaneous events in film and music, slides and video. In **Performance** the music and film or slide works and video are presented together in two possible ways: 1. An *installation* of several hours duration on one or more days. The music pieces are played consecutively, with several hours of work before repetition. Multiple images are shown simultaneously. 2. In a *performance*, several simultaneous works of music and film, or slides works and video pieces are presented, in one to three hours.

One to three film images are projected simultaneously. Each image is three to four meters wide. The films are 16mm and color. The music is produced from stereo or quad tapes, with four or more speakers in the corners of the space. The slide images are also four meters wide, and use a dissolve control for superimpositions. The video pieces are played individually or with several simultaneously, using large video monitors.

The **music** explores the texture of sound resulting from multiple tones in very dense tunings performed in long durations. The combination of static surface textures and extremely active harmonic movement generates a highly original music that has influenced a generation of composers. The pieces are created on tape from unprocessed recordings of precisely tuned long tones played on traditional instruments. In performance, live musicians may play, wandering through the audience changing the sound texture through reinforcement of or interference with the existing tunings.

Niblock's **films** are about movement, particularly the movement of people working. Filmed in non-urban environments in many countries (China, Brazil, Portugal, Lesotho, Puerto Rico, Hong Kong, the Arctic, Mexico, Hungary, the Adirondacks, Peru), the films look at everyday work, frequently agrarian or marine labor. These films are recognized internationally for their mastery of long takes utilizing clear, simple techniques that result in high resolution and extended tonal ranges. Movement is treated abstractly without reference to anthropological or sociological meaning. As in the music, a surface slowness is countered by an active, varied texture of rhythm and form of body motion within the frame, the ultimate subject matter of Niblock's films.

In **video**, Niblock turns to quite different concerns. Using the intimacy and superior audio capabilities of video (compared with 16mm film), he has created a series of video portraits. The subjects are shown in unrelenting close-range shots while they talk about childhood. These often surprising and revealing videos present a new form of portraiture that explores aspects of biography in conjunction with the captured visual image.

The **slide work** in his presentations are principally high contrast black and white. Each slide is designed and photographed to be superimposed with other slides in a texture of constantly shifting tonal relationships. The subject matter of the slides is chosen for formal rather than representative considerations while unusual film stocks and development techniques are employed to augment formal issues.

Excerpts from reviews:

"Phill Niblock's music and films are concerned with detail and simplicity . . . dense, imposing sound mass . . . Sum and difference tones pile up until they sound like an orchestra of strings or an immense chorus of voices . . . one listens first to one level of detail, then to another, only gradually learning to hear everything at once." Robert Palmer, New York Times

"[Music] consisting of sustained, closely juxtaposed notes knitted together in slowly but sometimes suddenly shifting texture . . . tense, tight beats, lazily cyclic curves and floating colorational shifts induced by clashing overtone patterns." John Rockwell, New York Times

"Waves of sound roll over the audience . . . the piece began to swell in emotional intensity, but it was not overtly dramatic; the intensity of this piece was in its didactic nature . . . As if putting your ear to a seashell, you listen and hear the roar of the familiar." Charles McCurdy, Philadelphia Inquirer

"One can say that he works with loud sustained tones, that he piles them together in multi-track versions, that the tones are produced originally on conventional wind and stringed instruments, that they are purposely out of tune, and that the resulting frequencies beat wildly against one another . . . rhythmically active these sustained pieces are, due to the many beats or pulsations which come about as the 'out-of-tune' notes jar against one another." Tom Johnson, Village Voice

"The music has a steady kinetic push that makes you feel like you're riding on some slow vehicle taking you directly into the details of the picture." Wendy Perron, New York Native

"His music has long consisted of a blend of live instrumentalists, taped instrumentalists and electronics that color and extend the live sounds. He prefers sustained tones that he knits together into seamless bands of sound, and pitches so close that they set up pulsing acoustic beats as they rub together. The aural effect is minimal to the max, but it isn't simplistic. The tones vibrate and glow, the densely packed texture shifting hues like a sonic aurora borealis. But aural effect is not all Mr. Niblock is after. He is also a filmmaker of a very particular sort, creating self-effacing silent sequences of third-world workers going about their tasks." John Rockwell, N Y Times

"Phill Niblock's collaboration with dancer/choreographer Muna Tseng extended Niblock's concerns with storytelling and posed questions about technology and labor. While a video-monitor played back Tseng telling stories from her childhood, her hands danced on a closed circuit projected video image. Niblock's high contrast, nearly abstract slide images, and 16mm footage of Chinese peasant farmers at work were counterpoint to Tseng's "finger dance" and storytelling. The sheer duration of their performance altered the reading of Niblock's film: what might have been mistaken for exquisite National Geographic travelog footage was transformed into an exhaustive record of manual labor. Labor-intensive peasant life lost any trace of charm as men and women thatched roofs by hand, irrigated canals with only buckets, planted garlic clove by clove, rolled and cut noodles, picked soybeans pod by pod, washed laundry at a river's edge and laid bricks one by one. Niblock's duration aesthetic became something of an endurance test with an interesting result: the difficulty of simply watching such exhaustive physical labor forestalled any fantasy of agrarian paradise. Since there is no going back to the colonial fantasy of Edenic peasant life, Niblock imitates a question: what technologies are appropriate? What kinds of compromises must be made between industrial (and not post-industrial) technologies for humans to maintain any sense of global ecology? Niblock and Tseng's collaboration pointed toward critically important questions, however indirectly these questions were posed." Micki McGee, High Performance Magazine

"Last weekend Het Apollohuis presented two concerts that had one thing in common: the evocation of secondary music by having tones run over each other in layers with minimal intermediate distance. The interaction between these sound-waves calls up tones, chords and rhythms that are not actually played. Melodies and clusters generated thus, change with the shifting of the real tones and according to the place where you are in the room. They hover in the air, seem to materialize for a moment, and then dissolve again - like veils of mist, or phantoms. The work of composer, photographer and film-maker Phill Niblock from New York consists of tapes with such music, to which live played tones are added. He intensifies the "phantasmal" effects by playing the tapes at high volume, by installing the speakers in such a way that the waves can bounce about freely, and by having the musician - in this presentation trombonist James Fulkerson - walking around the room. Of late, Niblock has extended his sonic possibilities by changing from acoustic instruments to synthesizers as basic material for his tapes. The new timbres (yielding again others in combination) have added exceptional riches and depth to his music. Niblock's films and videos play an important role in his presentations. They feature people at work in non-industrialized communities. As a rule their faces are kept out of sight. The labor is done by hand and consists of perpetually repeated movements. There is often a connection with water: fishermen repairing their boats and nets, or cleaning their catch; farmers planting and harvesting rice in paddyfields. Niblock simultaneously showed a video from Sumatra and a film about a Japanese fish market. Images and sound ran wonderfully parallel; not because one was cut to fit as accompaniment to the other, but through analogies on a deeper level. Both presented movement within a slowly changing framework. Both transcended the personal and the particular, thus gaining general significance." Rene Van Peer, Eindhovens Dagblad, Holland

"Mr. Niblock has carved out a valuable place for himself in recent years on the lower Manhattan avant-garde scene. There's his loft itself, which he has made into an important place for experimental composers to display their wares in pleasant, unpressured surroundings. And then there's his own work. Mr. Niblock is best known as a composer, but he is also a film-maker, and usually he likes to display both facets of his art together. The films are silent studies of peasant labor, shot in places like Mexico, Peru, Baffin Island and South Africa, with the camera focused mostly on the labor itself—hands, backs and plows—rather than the laborers. In conjunction with this, Mr. Niblock plays his music, but no one piece is ever meant for a particular film. The music is, on its simplest level, tape-recordings of live instruments, sometimes with a live musician playing along. But it's actually considerably more complicated than that. Mr. Niblock takes one or more instrumentalists and records certain notes with them, tuned exactly by electronic means. He then takes those notes and begins to edit, in the manner of a film-maker. He cuts out breath pauses from wind instruments, juxtaposes closely related notes to produce accoustical beats, and creates vast, humming, throbbing frescoes of sound. The results lack almost entirely the busy linear sequence of incident that makes up most music, classical or popular. But Mr. Niblock's ideas are so clearly focused, his evolution within his own terms so steady, and the technical finish of both music and film so loving that his work becomes overtly compelling." John Rockwell, The New York Times

WORKS --

FILM PROJECTS:

The following titles are from the series "the movement of people working" and are in more or less chronological order, beginning in 1973:

Japan, parts one and two; *China 88*, parts one, two and three; *China 87*, part one and two; *China 86*, part three; *Hungary*, part one and two; *Brasil 84*, part one and two; *Brasil 83*, part one and two; *Portugal*; *Lesotho*; *South Africa*; *Hong Kong*; *Arctic*; *James Bay*; *Four Libras*; *Tres Familias (Essex, La Purificacion, and Alpatlahua; Trabajando Una and Dos; Sur Una and Dos.*

This title is from a previous series, looking at elements of nature: *Ten Hundred Inch Radii*.

The following six titles are 16mm sound films, made in the late 1960's, which also have been transferred to video: *Morning*; *Magic Sun*; *Dog Track*; *Annie*; *Max*; *Raoul*.

MUSIC COMPOSITIONS:

A Trombone Piece, James Fulkerson, trombone; *Winterbloom Too*, and *Fall and Winterbloom*, Eberhard Blum, bass flute; *Twelve Tones*, Don Deak, bass; *P K*, Petr Kotik, alto flute; *S L S*, Susan Stenger, flute; *PK AND SLS*; Stenger and Kotik, flutes; *261.63, + and -*, the Creative Associates of SUNY Buffalo and the Bowery Ensemble; *Cello & Bassoon*, David Gibson, cello and Arthur Stidfole, bassoon; *Second 2 Octaves & a Fifth*, Joseph Celli, oboe; *First Performance*, Joseph Celli, English horn; *Held Tones*, Barbara Held, flute; *Unmentionable Piece for Trombone and Sousaphone*, George Lewis, trombone and sousaphone; *E for Gibson*, David Gibson, cello; . . . *Every Tune*, Daniel Goode, clarinet; *A Third Trombone*, Jon English, trombone; *Not Untitled, Knot Untied - Old*, Relache Ensemble; *B Poore*, Melvin Poore, tuba; *Earpiece*, Arthur Stidfole, bassoon; *Summing I, II, III and IV*, David Gibson, cello; *New Newband Work*, New Band Ensemble; *3 to 7 - 196*, David Gibson, cello; *According to Guy, versions I, II and III (aka Aversion I, II and III)*, Guy Klucevsek, accordion; *Weld Tuned and Early Winter*, for electronic instruments controlled by computer.

VIDEO PROJECTS:

The following titles are from the series of people relating anecdotes from their childhood, and are each about twenty minutes in length:

Yvonne Grant; *Veronica Sweetie Campbell*; *Hsien-Jen Chang, of Taiwan, parts one and two*; *Hubert Hohn*; *Frank Owen*; *Xu Xiao Xiang*; *Xu Xiaodong*; *Clarence Barlow*; *Dagmar Apel*; *Muna Tseng*; *Earl Niblock Recounts*.

This piece, in three twenty minute parts, was the genesis of the anecdotes from childhood series:

Audiobiography - Leora B Alden, Earl Niblock, Linda Montano reads PN's Palms.

These titles are primarily of verbal material:

Charlie Morrow Chants, parts one and two; *Dagmar Apel on Bodies*; *Ellen Band on PN's Chart*; *Erica Hunt reads from "Evidence"*; *Charlie Morrow Mouth Harps*.

This piece is a music video, made in collaboration with Arthur Russell:

Terrace of Unintelligibility, Music by Arthur Russell, Video by PN.

PHOTOGRAPHIC SLIDE WORKS: Slide Pieces are of two types, those using primarily high contrast black and white slides, and those with Kodachrome color slides. Of the first type, the pieces are numbered one through ten, and each piece is designed to last approximately one hour. Of the second type, there are slides from China and Japan, and part of a continuing project of photographs taken through the windows of cars, boats, trains, and busses (about 1500 slides).

MUSIC RECORDINGS:

nothin to look at, just a record; two pieces for trombone with Jon English and James Fulkerson, trombone; India Navigation Records IN 3026 (LP)

Niblock for Celli, Celli Plays Niblock; with Joseph Celli, oboe and English horn; India Navigation Records In 3027 (LP)

Four Full Flutes, four pieces for flute, with Susan Stenger, Petr Kotik, and Eberhard Blum, flutes; XI 101 (CD)

AWARDS AND GRANTS, SELECTED DETAILS SINCE 1980:

1990 Foundation for the Contemporary Performance Arts: for Music Performance 1989 New York State Council on the Arts: for Music Performance and for Intermedia Installation; CUNY Research Foundation: for Film Production 1988 New York State Council on the Arts: for Music Performance and from the Individual Artists Program for Video Production; National Endowment for the Arts Interarts Program: for an Intermedia/ Interdisciplinary Project 1987 New York State Council on the Arts: Music Performance; New York Foundation for the Arts: for Interdisciplinary Project; Massachusetts Council on the Arts: for Commissioned Intermedia Work and Installation at the Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts at Harvard University 1986 New York State Council on the Arts: for Music Performance 1985 National Endowment for the Arts Interarts Program: Intermedia Project; CUNY Research Foundation: for Film Production 1984 National Endowment for the Arts: for a Film Project; New York State Council on the Arts: Music Performance and Film Project; CUNY Research Foundation: for Film Production 1983 National Endowment for the Arts: for Music; New York State Council on the Arts: for Music Performance 1982 New York State Council on the Arts: Music Performance and Film Project; National Endowment for the Arts Music Program: for Music Composition 1981 New York State Council on the Arts: for Music Performance
PREVIOUS GRANTS AND AWARDS: Guggenheim Fellowship; National Endowment for the Arts in Film, Music; New York State Council on the Arts in Music, Film; CAPS Fellowships.

A selected list of installations and performances, since 1980

MUSEUM AND GALLERY INSTALLATIONS: 1990 Installation of Music, Film, Video, Slides at 55 Mercer Gallery, NY; Central Michigan Univ Gallery, Mt. Pleasant, Mich; Sub-Tropics Music Festival, Miami, Fla 1989 Show of Photographs, Het Apollohuis, Eindhoven, Holland; Palais des Beaux Arts, Brussels 1988 Installation of Music, Film, Video, Slides at the Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA 1987 Burchfield Arts Center, Buffalo, N Y 1986 New Music America, at Diverse Works Gallery, Houston, Texas; Hallwalls, Buffalo, N Y 1984 Santa Barbara Contemporary Arts Forum, Santa Barbara, Cal 1982 Institute of Contemporary Arts, London

PERFORMANCES: 1991 Merkin Concert Hall, Sponsored by the World Music Institute and Thomas Buckner, N Y ; Ecole de Architecture, La Villette, Paris; Het Apollohuis, Eindhoven, Holland; Angle Intermedia at Dia Art Foundation, NY 1990 Experimental Intermedia Foundation, N Y 1989 Kunstmuseum Bern, sponsored by Swiss Radio, Bern, Switzerland; New Music America, N Y; Dia Art Foundation, N Y; Exp Intermedia, N Y 1988 New Music America, Miami, Fla; Exp Intermedia, N Y 1987 Snug Harbor Cultural Center, N Y; Hallwalls, Buffalo, N Y; Tin Pan Alley, NY; SUNY Purchase, Purchase, N Y; Rutgers University (Music Dept and Mason Gross School of the Arts), New Brunswick, N J; Paula Cooper Gallery (SEM Ensemble), N Y; Ball State University (Computer Arts Lab), Muncie, Ind; LA Film Forum, Los Angeles, Ca 1986 Snug Harbor Cultural Center, N Y; Exp Intermedia, N Y; Greenwich House Music School, N Y; Politechniki Univ, Warsaw, Poland 1985 Painted Bride Art Center, Philadelphia; Exp Intermedia, N Y; New Langton Arts, San Francisco; Soundwork, Seattle; Het Apollohuis, Eindhoven, Holland; Logos Music Center, Ghent, Belgium; Music Conservatory, Krakow, Poland; Group 180, Budapest, Hungary; G E R M, Paris 1984 New Music America, Hartford, Conn; St Mark's Church, N Y; Exp Intermedia, N Y 1983 Millenium Film Workshop, N Y; Whitney Museum/Philip Morris (SEM Ensemble), N Y; Bowery Ensemble at Cooper Union, N Y; Darcheu Performance Festival, Sherbrook, Canada; Alternative Museum, N Y 1983 Stedelijk Museum (Sponsored by VPRO Radio), Amsterdam, Holland; Het Apollohuis, Eindhoven, Holland; Kroller-Muller Museum, Holland; Hessischer Rundfunk, Frankfurt, Germany; Fundacao Calouste Gulbenkian, Lisboa, Portugal 1982 University of Texas at Austin, Tex; Film in the Cities, St Paul, Mn; Ind Composers Alliance, Los Angeles, Ca; Real Art Ways, Hartford, Conn; Roulette Intermedium, N Y 1981 Whitney Museum at Federal Hall, N Y; Woodland Pattern Bookstore, Milwaukee, Wisc; California Institute for the Arts, Valencia, Ca; Cinemateque, San Francisco

REVIEWS AND ARTICLES: 1991 New York Times, review of Merkin Hall concert, by John Rockwell, Jan 20, 91. 1990 High Performance Magazine, Micki Mc Gee, "New Technologies: Perils and Pleasures"; Option Magazine, Neil Strauss with Alan Licht, "Minimalism". 1989 "The Voice of New Music," Tom Johnson, published by Het Apollohuis, Eindhoven, Holland: many reprinted reviews from the Village Voice from 1972 to 1982. New York Times, John Rockwell; Village Voice, Kyle Gann 1984 Musical America, Joan La Barbara. 1982 New York Times, Robert Palmer, "Modern Twists on the Ancient Drone"; Classical Music (London), Keith Potter, "Exploring the Minimal Extreme". 1981 EMAS Newsletter (Electroacoustic Music Assoc. of Great Britain), Trevor Wishart

Statement by Phill Niblock: In the mid 1960's, I was riding a two stroke, Yamaha motorcycle up a long mountain slope in the Carolinas, stuck behind a diesel engined truck. Both of our throttles were very open, overcoming the force of gravity. Soon, the revolutions of our respective engines came to a nearly harmonic coincidence. But not quite. The strong physical presence of the beats resulting from the two engines running at slightly different frequencies put me in such a trance that I nearly rode off the side of the mountain.

JAMES FULKERSON

Dorpstraat 68, 1454 AN Watergang, Holland 31 2902 1957

Mr. Fulkerson was born in Streator, Illinois (USA) in 1945 and received his musical training at the University of Illinois and Illinois Wesleyan University. His major compositional studies have been with Salvatore Martirano, Kenneth Gaburo, Ben Johnston and Herbert Brün. Principal trombone studies were with Carmine Caruso and John Silber, additional studies with Donald Reinhardt, Robert Gray, Donald Miller, Edward Kleinhammer, and Ernst Giehl.

Upon completion of his studies, Mr. Fulkerson became resident as a composer-performer at the Center for the Creative and Performing Arts in Buffalo (New York). He has served periods as composer-in-residence with the New York State CAPS programme, the DAAD (Berlin), the Victorian College of the Arts (Melbourne, Australia) and the Dartington College of the Arts (Totnes, England). He has taught composition at Dartington College of the Arts and the University of Nottingham where he has also been Director of the Computer and Electronic Music Studios.

He has composed widely for various media especially experimental film and dance. His music has been performed throughout the world and is recorded on Folkways, Irida, and Move Records. He is published by Edition Modern (München), Seesaw Music (New York), and Donemus (Amsterdam).

He has collaborated with the choreographers Mary Fulkerson, Richard Alston, Jaap Flier, Rosemary Butcher, and others. Having lived in the UK for 17 years, he recently moved to Holland, joining his wife Mary Fulkerson who is artistic director of the Centre for New Dance Development in Arnhem. He recently completed D1, D2, 3D, a collaboration with choreographer Rosemary Butcher and architect John Lyall for the Glasgow celebrations as the 1990 European City of Culture.

In August 1990, James Fulkerson and Richard Alston were the artistic directors of the Gulbenkian International Summer School for Composers and Choreographers held at Bretton Hall in the UK.

REVIEWS

DagensNyheter (Stockholm,Sweden)

"James Fulkerson's music has been created as an integral part of the dialogue. It is characterised by economy and a control of style. Everything appears to have grown from a few simple scales, taken from the primeval morning of notes and eventually enriched electronically to a far-reaching and abysmal world of harmonies. The brass instruments become part of the performance's inner landscape. Within one quivering interval they convey the gloomy unbroken line of the horizon. Track Follows is a satisfying wholeness."

Nordsee Zeitung

I would single out (among the premieres presented by Hans Peter Haller of South West German Radio) "Fields and Traces" by the American composer-trombonist James Fulkerson. His acoustic groundwork is stated through the plucking of piano strings; the trombone mediates thoughtfully, surrounded by an uncommonly musical structured sound-world. There are choric and orchestral passages in which the material seems to become immaterial and spiritualised.

Los Angeles Times

James Fulkerson played his trombone with understated, unassuming mastery. Alone or against the complex pre-recorded tracks, he lucidly articulated the thematic premise of his compositions and made the process a fascinating ritual of discovery.

Buffalo Evening News

For Norma by James Fulkerson was a beauty, a wild melange with soprano, laughter, sensual ecstasy, tears and derision.

Salzburg Festival

...Fulkerson was able to fascinate every moment. His sound poems were limited to minimal movements and repetition, very small differences in the instrument as played by him and its electronic counterpart were able to transform the monotony to exciting tonal variety...

Buffalo Evening News

... and then to Buffalo- based composer James Fulkerson, just getting to work here and an accomplished wit. Mobiles and Loops was his thing for four percussion and tape: imagine Ravel's Bolero taken as a plot by a Marquis de Sade with a sense of humour, and you're close.

A big speaker gave out an endless drone beat, something like a mastadon with the heavens.

The players elaborate on tuned metal, hides, keyboards, cowbells, rocks, cymbals, wood blocks, toy tommy guns, sleigh bells, and a pile of chain that looked like a Kodiak bear's leash. I could forgive them anything but reading it from a score. It drove some to laughter, some to exasperation, and some out of the door. Well, it was damnably clever, beautifully worked out even to a small relieving melodic theme which rose here and there only to perish in a welter of redundancy.

Copenhagen

"Especially weighty, I found Fulkerson's 'Co-Ordinative Systems No.7' one part of a full-length piece for varying sets of musicians. This emphasises a listening interaction amongst players. The product in this case was tight, refined, and highly differentiated in continuity, almost unreal in pianissimo sounds... a convincing piece.

MAJOR WORKS

The following are amongst the more than 170 works which Fulkerson has composed:

Orchestral

Concerto for amplified Cello (1978); Stations, Regions, and Clouds II and IV (1978-79); Concerto (...fierce and coming from far away)(1981); Symphony (1980/1);... to see a thing clearly.(1972); ,for we don't see anything clearly (1972); Music for Brass Instruments,IV (1978);

Choral:

He was silent for a space (1978);

Chamber music:

String Quartet #3 (1982); String Quartet #4 (1990); Paganini (1984); Sonata (A) (1982); Sonata (B) (1982); Co-Ordinative Systems nos. 1-12 (1971-80); Guitar Concerto (1972); Put Your Foot Down, Charlie (1982); For Morty (1987); Memoirs of... (1979); Music for Brass Instruments, I-VI (1975- 79); Elective Affinities,II (1982)

Solo:

Suite for Solo Cello (amplified) (1978/79); Suite for Solo Violin (1983); For Morty Feldman,II (1991); Patterns I-XII (1971-80); From Eric Dolphy (1979); Elective Affinities III (1987), Traces And Movements (1989); Antiphonies and Streams,II (1979); The Archaeology of Silence (1991)

Live Electronics / Tape with Instruments:

Force Fields and Spaces (1980/1); Fields and Traces (1979); Elective Affinities,III (1988); Elective Affinities I (1980); D1,D2,3D (1990/1), Stationary Fields...Moving Fields (1979); Antiphonies and Streams (1978); Consistency of Air (1990)

About the artists:

PHILL NIBLOCK didn't go to music school, doesn't like pianos in his place, is not political, doesn't like to collaborate, and is otherwise a generous, open-minded composer who favors loud sound. He enjoys hearing his music in large spaces. "I did something once in the chapel of the Sorbonne, about two hundred feet long with one hundred foot high ceilings and we had some big speakers—the most natural reverb." Niblock's music comes from an internal idea involving sensuality and the engagement of the music with the physicality of the performance space. His native individualism is present in the creation of music specifically intended to be perceived by and reacted to quite differently by each listener.

Niblock is also an intermedia artist using film, video and photography.

The film in this concert is from a series of films looking at the movement of people working in many countries of the world. He has toured Europe, the United States, Canada, China, Indonesia, and Japan and is Director of the Experimental Intermedia Foundation and a Professor at the College of Staten Island, CUNY.

BARBARA HELD, hailed by *Village Voice* critic Kyle Gann as one of "new music's most valued performers," is known for her espousal of new music and varied performance situations. She has collaborated with visual artists, dancers and composers such as Robert Ashley and Nils Vigeland in extending the repertoire of her instrument and was a founding member of the Bowers Ensemble. Recent projects include a performance at the Biennale di Venezia FLUXUS show, a recital at the Varado Electronic Music Festival in Cuba and a CD to be released this year on Lovely Music.

The Interpretations series is made possible, in part, with public funds made available by the National Endowment for the Arts and the New York State Council on the Arts. Additional funding is provided by the Foundation for the Needs of Others.

Since its formation in the spring of 1985, **SOLDIER STRING QUARTET** has been fusing and confusing the notions of chamber and popular music. Much of its repertoire is written by David Soldier and incorporates polyrhythms and syncopations derived from funk and serial techniques and frequently includes a rock drum set. The SSQ is also an important advocate for contemporary music, having introduced over 50 new works by composers such as Elliott Sharp, Iannis Xenakis and Joanne Brackeen. Its members have studied with members of the Budapest Juilliard and Composer's string quartets and have broad backgrounds in other styles of music. Currently available albums by the quartet include *Sequence Girls* (Rit Records), featuring compositions by Soldier, and *Hammer, Anvil, Stirrup* (SST), featuring compositions written for SSQ by Elliott Sharp.

TOM HAMILTON has maintained careers simultaneously in audio design and music, and currently is mixing works for Robert Ashley, including his new opera *Improvement (Don Leaves Linda)* for Nonesuch Records and *Superior Seven* for Barbara Held. He was the Sound and Music Director for Inner-vision Productions for nine years.

REED HAYS works with music using computers and electronic instruments. He has collaborated in sound/musical projects with composer Charlie Morrow, choreographer Elizabeth Streib and performance artist Alison Knowles.

Upcoming concerts of WMI Interpretations series:

| | |
|---------------------|----------|
| Joseph Kubera | Feb. 21 |
| Thomas Buckner | March 14 |
| "Blue" Gene Tyranny | April 11 |
| Alvin Lucier | April 15 |
| Barbara Held | May 16 |

MERKIN Concert Hall

at Abraham Goodman House 129 West 67th Street, New York, N.Y. 10023

Thursday, January 17, 1991 at 8:00 P.M.

World Music Institute and Thomas Buckner
present

Interpretations:

Phill Niblock; Soldier String Quartet;

Laura Seaton, David Soldier, violins; Ron Lawrence, viola; Mary Wooten, cello

Barbara Held, *alto flute*;

Tom Hamilton & Reed Hays, *sound and MIDI engineers*

MUSIC AND INTERMEDIA WORKS

"Another String Quartet" or "Working Title"

for String Quartet and Tape

THE SOLDIER STRING QUARTET

Intermission

"Early Winter"

for computer controlled electronic instruments and musicians

BARBARA HELD, *alto flute*; THE SOLDIER STRING QUARTET;

EBERHARD BLUM, *bass flute* (on tape)

Film: "Japan" or "Working Title"

Incidental Video from Sumatra

A statement by Phill Niblock:

In the mid-1960's, I was riding a two stroke Yamaha motorcycle up a long mountain slope in the Carolinas, stuck behind a diesel engine truck. Both of our throats were very open, overcoming the force of gravity. Soon, the revolutions of our respective engines came to a nearly harmonic coincidence. But not quite. The strong physical presence of the beats resulting from the two engines running at slightly different frequencies put me in such a trance that I nearly rode off the side of the mountain. Obviously, the moral is: don't mess around with this new music.

Phill Niblock thanks Tom Hamilton and Reed Hays for their extensive work on this project; the Experimental Intermedia Foundation and its staff—Stella Varveris, Lona Foote, Mary Jane Leach—for facilities and assistance; the Foundation for the Contemporary Performance Arts for support; the India Navigation Record Company and Robert Cummins for recording facilities.

The photographing or sound recording of any performance or the possession of any device for such photographing or sound recording inside this theater, without the written permission of the management, is prohibited by law.

Review/Music

Avant-Garde Group Flirts With an Uptown Ambiance

By JOHN ROCKWELL

For two decades, through fashions thick and thin, Phill Niblock has been a fixture of the downtown Manhattan avant-garde music scene. On Thursday night, as the second event in a series presented by the World Music Institute and the baritone Thomas Buckner, Mr. Niblock moved his operation uptown to the Merkin Concert Hall, with a considerable change of atmosphere and format.

Mr. Niblock has been a downtown fixture both for his music and films and for his role as avuncular host for other composers. At his Center Street loft, which is the musical branch of an organization called the Experimental Intermedia Foundation, Mr. Niblock has presented his own work and that of many others in an unusual ambiance: a rambling loft space with comfortable if ratty chairs and couches, casual timetables and a friendly, relaxed atmosphere.

At his loft, Mr. Niblock's own concerts have droned on (literally) for eight hours. At Merkin Hall, the concert began shortly after 8 P.M. and ended at 10 on the nose. The audience sat in the ordered rows of a typical midtown concert hall and otherwise observed the quaint rituals of an establishment event.

But Mr. Niblock didn't let any of that alter his way of doing business. His music has long consisted of a blend of live instrumentalists, taped instrumentalists and electronics that color and extend the live sounds. He prefers sustained tones that he knits together into seamless bands of sound, and pitches so close that they

set up pulsing acoustic beats as they rub together. The aural effect is minimal to the max, but it isn't simplistic. The tones vibrate and glow, the densely packed texture shifting hues like a sonic aurora borealis.

But aural effect is not all Mr. Niblock is after. He is also a film maker of a very particular sort, creating self-effacing silent sequences of third-world workers going about their tasks. On Thursday, that meant a monitor in the lobby showing daily activities in Sumatra and, after the intermission, two large screens behind the stage full of Japanese fishermen.

The first piece, "Another String Quartet" or "Working Title," was for sound alone, and offered a half hour of the Soldier String Quartet amplified and augmented electronically. "Early Winter" after the break began with unaccompanied film, then had film and music together and ended with sound alone, in the dark.

For this piece, the Soldier players — Laura Seaton, David Soldier, Ron Lawrence and Mary Wooten — sat dispersed on the sides of the stage and on the floor in front of it, while Barbara Held wandered the aisles with her alto flute and Eberhard Blum played bass flute on tape.

The bulk of the audience seemed to be Mr. Niblock's friends and admirers who had followed him uptown. Those listeners expecting a conventional concert must have been disappointed. For the sympathetic, the occasion transformed what had previously been an ambient, environmental experience into one that invited — and profited from — more formal concentration.



Edited by Vince Aletti

Choices

An Opinionated Survey of the Week's Events

Phill Niblock: The deadpan immobility of Niblock's microtones, overlaid with exotic but faceless films (of Japan in this case) and videos (of Sumatra), has a Satie-esque impudence. 'Bout time he went uptown. January 17 at 8, Merkin Concert Hall, 129 West 67th Street. 362-8719. (Gann)

New Technologies: Perils and Pleasures

MICKI MCGEE

New electronic technologies—like toys under a Christmas tree—seduce and delight. From pocket calculators to pacemakers, they promise us improved health, longer lives, time and money saved from quotidian concerns, enhanced entertainment value and even the possibility of a democratized media. While many welcome these innovations with ingenuous glee, others remain skeptical—all too aware of how disappointing day-old Christmas presents can be.

Between this dichotomy of naive enthusiasts and stubborn skeptics are numerous artists who've begun exploring new technologies, while remaining well aware that technology can't substitute for ideas or vision. The pleasures and problems of a technologically sophisticated art practice were exemplified in the recent Large Screen Computer and Video Image Projection series presented by the Experimental Intermedia Foundation.

Founded in 1968 by a group of musicians, filmmakers and dancers including Trisha Brown, Elaine Summers, Phil Corner and Phill Niblock, the Experimental Intermedia Foundation has continued to provide an unpretentious space in a downtown Manhattan loft for intermedia experiments.

Recently, EIF acquired a new Sony 1041 Video Projector. Like all new products, the projector promises us something new: in this case, the projector claims to free the video image from the confines of TV screen and allow video, like film, to be projected in a darkened room. Sony's new product delivers with an astonishingly clear, sharp and defined projected image. Several artists experimented with the projector in E.I.F.'s performance series last March.

Among the most successful of these experiments was Don Ritter's collaboration with musi-



Don Ritter *Ducks Against Glass*, 1989

cians George Lewis, Richard Teitlebaum and Wadada Leo Smith. Ritter, who came to New York by way of Toronto and MIT's Center for Advanced Media Studies and Media Lab, devised a software system for his Amiga computers that reads the tones and intervals produced by any musical instrument and then calls up specific video frames, sequences and effects. Put simply, a keyboard, a trombone, or any instrument connected by a MIDI cable to the computer can control the instantaneous recall of any stored video frame. While this sound/light extravaganza may sound like a sophisticated version of '60s light shows, Ritter's images, coupled with tremendous trombone and trumpet performances from Lewis and Smith, resulted in a captivating, acoustically-controlled animation. Daliesque digitized computer animation of Medusan arms squirming from eye sockets suggested a nightmarish vision of bio-technology out of control. Ritter's grotesque animated imagery suggested that technology may often fail in the service of human needs. Paradoxically, his event offered an example of the pleasures of hi-tech innovation.

Phill Niblock's collaboration with dancer/choreographer Muna Tseng extended Niblock's concerns with storytelling and posed questions

about technology and labor. While a video-monitor played back Tseng telling stories from her childhood, her hands danced on a closed circuit projected video image. Niblock's high contrast, nearly abstract slide images, and 16mm footage of Chinese peasant farmers at work were counterpoint to Tseng's "finger dance" and storytelling. The sheer duration of their performance altered the reading of Niblock's film: what might have been mistaken for exquisite National Geographic travelog footage was transformed into an exhaustive record of manual labor. Labor-intensive peasant life lost any trace of charm as men and women thatched roofs by hand, irrigated canals with only buckets, planted garlic clove by clove, rolled and cut noodles, picked soybeans pod by pod, washed laundry at a river's edge and laid bricks one by one. Niblock's duration aesthetic became something of an endurance test with an interesting result: the difficulty of simply watching such exhaustive physical labor forestalled any fantasy of agrarian paradise. Since there is no going back to the colonial fantasy of Edenic peasant life, Niblock intimates a question: what technologies are appropriate? What kinds of compromises must be made between industrial (and now postindustri-

all technologies for humans to maintain any sense of global ecology? Niblock and Tseng's collaboration pointed toward critically important questions, however indirectly these questions were posed

Similarly, Anne Tardos' computer graphics and music intimated—but never quite articulated—a set of important concerns. Her computer graphics and sound sequences evidenced a passion for Atari graphics and sound software, and a not yet quite realized vision. Her *Human Geography II* suggested an interest in the bio-morphic, architectural images of spiral staircases were juxtaposed with anatomical drawings of an alimentary canal, a pitchfork suggested the digits of the human hand, images of the brain were perhaps intended to intimate some relationship between computer technology and the brain. But the links remained tenuous as Tardos relied on simple juxtaposition in her images. She might have exploited the real time situation to produce a text soundtrack (rather than electronic music) to articulate her concerns. Interspersed, but seemingly unconnected with her images, was a sound performance by poet Jackson Mac Low and musician friends that relied on low-tech items: the human voice, the flute, the bass and simple amplification. A bonafide collaboration between Tardos and Mac Low (or another sound-text poet) might explore the subtleties of the interface between human and the technological that seems so much a part of Tardos's vision.

When I set out to consider these collaborations I asked myself a question: why organize a series of performances around a new piece of hardware? Why bring together artists simply to experiment with a new technology? What would distinguish this series of events from a trade show demonstration? Now the answer seems clear: out of these experiments arises a set of critical questions about technology, aesthetics and human needs. These collaborations have only begun the work—intimating the questions and occasionally implying answers. Much remains to be done, political and aesthetic. If we are to build a future where technology works in the service of human needs and values rather than at our expense

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STEVE

HIGH PERFORMANCE

A Quarterly Magazine for the New Arts

#48 Winter 1989

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Projection in Atlanta by the Girl Vigilantes

'What's that sound?'
'It must be airplanes!'

'I don't think so. Listen. It changes
a little now and then.'

'I guess it's some kind of machines!'
'No it's music...'

Aus Tom Johnson

'Phill Niblock on 4th Street'

Verein "Stadtgalerie im Sophienhof" e.V.
Gesellschaft für akustische Lebenshilfe

M o v e m e n t

Film und Musik von
Phill Niblock (New York)

mit

James Fulkerson (Amsterdam), Posaune

Am Sonntag, 1. September, 1 Uhr in der Kunsthalle zu Kiel,
zeigt Phill Niblock Videarbeiten

Samstag, 31. August 1991 um 22 Uhr
in der Stadtgalerie im Sophienhof Kiel



Phill Niblock

Foto: Pieter Boersma

GiannoZZo Live Festival 2
1.11. - 3.11.199
im Theater 89 im Jojo Klub

Kunstverein GiannoZZo
Suarezstraße 28
1000 Berlin 19
030/321 77 83

PHILL NIBLOCK/JAMES FULKERSON

vrijdag 5 april 1991
21.00 uur, F 7,50

Phill Niblock (1933, Indiana) is componist, filmer, fotograaf en videokunstenaar. Daarnaast is hij de oprichter (1973) en directeur van Experimental Intermedia Foundation in New York waar hij intermedia kunst presenteert. De composities van Phill Niblock bestaan uit luide, lang aangehouden tonen die in toonhoogte dicht bij elkaar liggen waardoor een dichte structuur van op elkaar inwerkende geluiden ontstaat. Deze klanken zijn opgenomen op geluidssporen over elkaar heen. Het geluidsmateriaal is oorspronkelijk uitgevoerd op conventionele instrumenten. Aan deze tapmuziek wordt bij concerten een nieuwe laag toegevoegd, in dit concert door James Fulkerson die trombone speelt.

Phill Niblock presenteert zijn muziek in dit concert met zijn nieuwste film "Japan" en de video "Sumatra".

Dit concert is tot stand gekomen met financiële steun van de provincie Noord-Brabant, Stichting Nieuwe Muziek Brabant.

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