

Warren Burt:  
in memoriam Harold Budd  
December 2020 (55 mins duration)

I first met Hal Budd in the early 70s. I was a graduate student at the University of California, San Diego, he was a faculty member at California Institute of the Arts, Los Angeles. There was a lot of traffic between the two schools, and I met Hal on a number of occasions. He introduced me to the music of Colin McPhee, which was a very important discovery for me, and I remember really liking his early electronic pieces, *The Oak of the Golden Dream* and *Coeur d'Orr*. In 1975, I moved to Australia, and although I rarely saw him again, I followed his music closely. His *Obscure Record* of the late 70s with *Madrigals of the Rose Angel* was a favorite, and his collaboration with Brian Eno, *The Pearl*, was one of my "all-time favorites."

I was saddened to hear of his death, and I was working on a review of the UVI Synth Anthology 3 sample library at the time. I was using tunings derived from Lou Harrison's *Garland of Pentatonic Scales* as part of the test-driving of the sample library, and it occurred to me to use a number of those scales to make a piece, as a memorial to Hal, that just sat there in its beauty. It seemed logical to use the scales collected by Lou, who had insisted on the importance of a composer using materials they found simply beautiful, a lesson that he passed on to both Hal and myself, among others. The exact timbre I used to make the piece was derived from an old Ensoniq ESQ-M. I remembered my father having an ESQ1, the keyboard version of that synth, and I had enjoyed playing with that synthesizer and its timbres in the 80s. Revisiting them now was a pleasure.

The block-like nature of the structure of the piece, one pentatonic scale at a time, gradually building an almost five octave structure, only to fade away revealing the basic voicing of the next pentatonic, was made possible by the structure of the Korg nanoKEY keyboard. The phasing and chorusing of the basic waveforms produce further animation in the sustaining sounds. As I listen back to the piece, it strikes me that I've rarely heard a piece of mine in which the sound is heard with such physicality. The sound seems simultaneously solid and unchanging, while also being liquid and fluid in its evolving nature. In any case, it seems to me to be an example of something Hal valued very much in his own work – a sensuousness and beauty of timbre, which often became the primary focus for the work's perception.

The score for the piece is appended here. Looking at the score shows how the work is assembled in real-time, note-by-note, tuning by tuning. This may seem to be at odds with the seeming unchanging (or continually changing) nature of the sound of the piece. While working on the piece, though, it seemed the best way to easily produce the piece was with a score which would remind me of all the button presses, key plays, and tuning changes that were needed to make the piece. It was recorded in one take, on Christmas evening in 2020, as a memorial to a very sweet and gentle man, a colleague whose work I valued highly. Dec 27, 2020 -WB

In Memoriam Harold Budd – Warren Burt – December 2020

UVI Falcon sampler with UVI Synth Anthology 3 loaded in. Controlled by Korg nanoKEY Studio.  
 In Plogue Bidule. Bidule Patch: DroneESQ1Harrison01.bidule

Set oct to 0  
 Sust to ON  
 Tuning set to HarrisonP01

Tuning Set  
 to next scale in sequence  
 Set Oct to 0

Set Oct to +2      Set Oct to -2



Every 2:00 in:  
 Hold these five notes down

Sustain OFF  
 Sustain ON, then release 5 notes  
 Set Oct to +2      Set Oct to -2

Tuning Set to next  
 Set Oct to 0  
 Repeat till End  
 Sustain OFF



Tunings in Order:

- |                                     |  |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| HarrisonP01: 1/1 9/8 5/4 3/2 5/3    | HarrisonP29: 1/1 5/4 45/32 3/2 15/8  |
| HarrisonP02: 1/1 6/5 4/3 3/2 9/5    | HarrisonP30: 1/1 9/8 7/6 3/2 63/40   |
| HarrisonP03: 1/1 9/8 6/5 3/2 8/5    | HarrisonP32: 1/1 11/10 6/5 3/2 14/9  |
| HarrisonP04: 1/1 5/4 4/3 3/2 15/8   | HarrisonP33: 1/1 9/8 75/64 3/2 25/16   |
| HarrisonP08: 1/1 5/4 21/16 3/2 13/8 | HarrisonP35: 1/1 11/10 6/5 3/2 9/5   |
| HarrisonP09: 1/1 7/6 4/3 3/2 7/4    | HarrisonP37: 1/1 6/5 9/7 3/2 8/5   |
| HarrisonP10: 1/1 8/7 9/7 3/2 12/7   | HarrisonP40: 1/1 15/14 5/4 3/2 8/5   |
| HarrisonP12: 1/1 9/8 4/3 3/2 7/4    | HarrisonP42: 1/1 6/5 7/5 3/2 8/5   |
| HarrisonP17: 1/1 9/8 5/4 3/2 12/7   | HarrisonP44: 1/1 12/11 6/5 3/2 13/8  |
| HarrisonP20: 1/1 8/7 4/3 8/5 16/9   | HarrisonP45: 1/1 9/8 5/4 3/2 13/8  |
| HarrisonP23: 1/1 12/11 6/5 3/2 8/5  | HarrisonP47: 1/1 6/5 7/5 8/5 9/5 (WB addition)                               |
| HarrisonP24: 1/1 5/4 4/3 3/2 15/8   | HarrisonP48: 1/1 10/9 5/4 10/7 5/3 (WB addition)                             |
| HarrisonP26: 1/1 16/15 4/3 3/2 15/8 | HarrisonS03: 1/1 21/20 6/5 4/3 3/2 63/40 9/5                                 |
| HarrisonP28: 1/1 28/27 4/3 3/2 14/9 | (this last on a white key cluster, F4-G3, with a G2-C2-F1 chord in the bass) |

The tunings are set so that the pentatonic pitches are mapped to the “black keys” of the keyboard. The final scale maps the seven diatonic pitches to the “white keys.”