**Excerpt from recorded conversation between Arnold Dreyblatt and Phil Niblock**
1977

PN: I'm certainly interested in knowing what I'm doing.
AD: Ok, let's disperse with this whole formality, and I'll tell you why I'm interested in your music in the first place.
PN: I'd be really curious myself.
AD: I touched on it at the end of our last talk. I was looking for a model in approaching your music. I should go into my background abit and explain how I became interested in music composition. I had been working with electronic image systems with Woody Vasulka who consistently drew my attention to the dynamics of the waveform as material. I began to understand that this is not a static situation as in other visual media. There is no material which you can hold in your hands. An interplay of signals indicate everthing about the image – the timing of the frame, etc. The only access that you have to the image is by examining and altering these signals which basically fall in the audio range. This process is an analog process of signal or waveform comparison. After a certain point of examining this process, the image became less and less interesting to me so that the dynamics of waveform comparison and pattern became more interesting than the images that they indicated at the output end of the chain. I mean that the image became a mere approximation of the preceding events in time.
PN: Give me an example of image; are you talking abou the stuff where they turn things on their side and you see the…
AD: I'm talking about how TV works, you know, the electron beam is told where to go by these audio waveforms. It's told when and where to scan, and the image is written line by line by these signals which can be looked at on an oscilliscope. That's what I'm talking about, the system itself… …that's just the very basic manipulations which you can do by intercepting these signals and as I examined that relationship more and more carefully, I realized that this process was related to the whole range of electronic media, from radar to sound systems, etc. Then in Buffalo I came across "Selected Writings" by La Monte Young with whom I later studied. At that time I didn't understand the musical content, but I realized at a certain point that when musicians are tunign that they are hearing and comparing frequencies in their head which is obviously something that I was interested in – I mean listening for that-
PN: Listening to the harmonic overtones in order to tune the fundamentals
AD: right. It depends on what they are tuning. On a very simple level, unconsciously or not, a musician tunes a fifth and he learns to recognize an interval in his head. The speed are kind of memorized as a kind of pitch memory you know – back there in the brain some neurons are firing in a pattern which repeats-
PN: It's better than a tuner!
AD: I began to understand that this was music - that this process of signal comparison is a musical activity. This is what a musician does when he tunes -whether it's conscious or unconscious. It's conscious often in people who are interested in tuning systems and scales and so forth. It's unconscious in the majority of musicians who have to learn by hear anyway; and in instrument builders there has been a sort of underground tradition of knowledge about acoustic which is purely empirical... …I feel that music is an unusual medium in that the microcosmic structure is the structure with which musicians work on a daily basis. I mean that while there are certainly long structures in time, the nature of music is such that musicians must deal with the medium on this basic acoustic level of microcosmic time – that is to recognize cycles per second and comparing these fast vibrations in their heads.