

More on Natural Harmonics

The harmonic series is produced by continually subdividing the string. A vibrating open string contains all the notes of the series. Using the musical building blocks, the treatment here is in tune with nature and the 21st century at the same time. *What is Music* are going to the fundamentals with the aim of expressing emotions that connect with today.

Robert Evans plays crwth, lyre, fiddle, tambura, and sings on track 4.
L Scott Baker plays double bass, electric upright bass (with Roland pedal), and percussion.

here's a few peer comments....

"The Liquid Metal Dreaming CD is a MARVEL, the presentation too, spot on. Thanks for that. Cor blimey". *Robert Wyatt*

"I very much enjoyed the pieces which concern themselves with Pythagorean tunings and the overtone series. The notes about the great tradition of metal smelting and working in this country are a reminder of how much we have lost, or are on the point of losing in the destructive cause of phony "globalisation". *Evan Parker*

"Beautifully pure and elemental. The unusual combinations of instruments and vocal sounds create a restricted tonal palette but deliver variety through a series of deeply rich sonorities. The feel is timeless - and yet the performances are the antithesis of lazy. At times this CD achieves the impossible opposites of restless searching, and transcendent contemplation. This is music you will want to listen to again and again". *John Hardy*

"Epic Soundscape, a Purcellian sound world, with textural echoes of Bill Evans trio June '61..... and images of medieval landscapes". *Gareth Hall*

Recommended if you like:

The Dharma at Big Sur - John Adams
Music of Terry Riley
Music Of The Spheres - Mike Oldfield
Lento - Howard Skempton
Star Clusters, Nebulae, Places in Devon - David Bedford



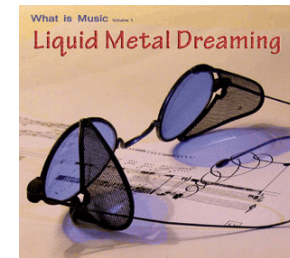
Musicnow Press Release

What is Music

Volume 1

Liquid Metal Dreaming

(Release April 2008)



The music is based entirely on open strings and natural harmonics, ethereal, familiar, sometimes challenging.

By limiting the sound production to the overtone series *What is Music* produce a stream of organic music.

A different listening experience

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What is Music begging a question... an appropriate name for a group basing itself on the physics of music. '*What is Music*' was conceived following much playing, experimenting and lots of discussion, especially on Sunday mornings at the local farmers market, sitting in the sun drinking tea, opposite the Millennium Stadium next to old man River Taff in Cardiff. The tea is very good!

Laurie Scott Baker and Robert Evans found a common link in the very fundamentals of music, the harmonic series and Pythagorean scales. This stemmed from Baker's long term interest in just intonation and his work to develop new ways of playing the double bass as a means of expressing his opposition to the wars being carried out in our name. He describes his playing as an attempt to tame the overtone series on the double bass without destroying its wild qualities. While Evans' long interest and experience of early Welsh Music had led him to explore the building blocks of ancient Greek music. They began playing together aiming to use open strings and natural harmonics and to see how far they could take this. This is a work "in development".

The crwth itself offers special acoustic phenomena (*Pressure/Release*), as it is specially designed to produce stacks of harmonics with octave pairs, together with combinational tones, like an organ. It is a paradox that Baker uses an orchestral instrument with some of the lowest notes to produce very high notes. Evans' 6 string lyre (*Pythagorean Ground*), is tuned to a Pythagorean scale while Baker is playing a six note scale in the harmonic series, both players sticking to the fundamental nature of their scales. Some notes are exactly the same giving perfect tuning while others are 'out' giving micro-tonal differences. Only the notes G,A,B,C#,D,E make this track.

The pieces were developed during improvisation sessions and gradually 'structured'. After a few local gigs a recording was organised in St Catherine's church, Cardiff, summer 2007 and this CD is the result.

www.whatismusic.co.uk

Musicians

Laurie Scott Baker has played jazz, free improvisation and been involved in experimental music since he was a teenager. He was a pioneer of live electronics and graphic scores back in the 60s. The cover shows a page from his 'Keyboard & Extra Materials' 1967. He played at the legendary 'Little Theatre Club' etc, a member of the Scratch Orchestra and Peoples' Liberation Music with Cornelius Cardew.

As a jobbing musician he has performed in West End shows such as Hair, the Rocky Horror show, played bass with Alex Harvey, recorded with Robert Wyatt, Manfred Mann, & many others. He wrote the music for the award winning animations UBU and Lautrec and did a stint at the BBC as a dubbing mixer.
www.composer.co.uk/composers/baker.html

Robert Evans has worked as an archaeological illustrator, museum conservator and maker of musical instruments. He is an influential Welsh fiddle player and teacher and his research and experimental work on the Robert ap Huw manuscript has been pivotal.

Evans is responsible for the revival of the crwth as a usable instrument and for teaching a new generation of musicians to play it. With Mary-Anne Roberts, he has produced the first modern setting, of medieval Welsh poetry to medieval string music and has released the CDs 'Bragod' and 'Kaingk'. He has contributed articles on the crwth and harp to the New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians.
www.bragod.com

What's in a Name

Laurie and Bob toyed with the idea of calling the group 'the fundamentalists' but decided that this might be misinterpreted in some quarters ... 'What is Music' is also the name of a Festival of Improvised Experimental music in Sydney organised by guitarist Oren Ambarchi and Robbie Avenaim and also the name of a radio Series by Tilson Thomas, so all very current.