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ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF IN-SITU RAMAN ANALYSIS FOR PLASMA DEPOSITED DIAMOND

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ABSTRACT

Progress towards the development of in-situ Raman capabilities for plasma deposited diamond films is described. The shift and broadening of the first order Raman-active phonon mode in natural and synthetic diamond is analyzed at temperatures within the range commonly employed in vapor phase diamond deposition ($>1000\text{K}$). At these temperatures, we have found that the anti-Stokes component to the Raman signature can be detected and employed as an alternative diagnostic. We describe preliminary results in which in-situ Raman is employed to monitor the temperature of a heated natural diamond substrate exposed to both molecular and atomic hydrogen. We find that variations in molecular hydrogen fraction in the reactant gas mixture can lead to substantial variation in substrate temperature. Following exposure to atomic hydrogen, the Raman line center is found to be shifted to lower energy (at ambient temperatures). The shift is in part attributed to the presence of interstitial hydrogen.

INTRODUCTION

Raman scattering has become a standard method of characterizing low pressure plasma deposited diamond films [1-4]. The scattering features in the vicinity of both the Raman active first-order phonon mode in diamond at approximately 1332 cm^{-1} [5-7] and graphite at approximately 1580 cm^{-1} [8] have provided the basis for interpreting the composite nature of synthetic diamond films [9]. Raman scattering is traditionally employed ex-situ, quite often with micro-positioning and focusing, and large solid angle detection [10]. Micro-Raman, as it is commonly called, is necessary in part to compensate for the relatively low scattering efficiencies (typically $10^{-6} - 10^{-7}$ [11]) of most crystals. Although micro-Raman is capable of probing spatial features with micron-size resolution, the more conventional macro-Raman analysis, with a relatively large laser spot size and a generally smaller collection solid angle gives a better indication of the "average" composition of the film.

In this paper, we discuss our progress at employing macro-Raman analysis as an in-situ diagnostic for plasma deposited diamond. This research is motivated by the need for reliable in-situ diagnostics for both deposited film and the gas phase, which will permit direct real-time correlation between deposit morphology and possible gas phase precursors. Real-time monitoring of both deposit structure and of species recognized as important precursors (i.e., CH_3 [12], C_2H_2 [13] and H [14-16]) together with detailed modelling of the complete deposition process are key elements of "intelligent processing" systems, soon to be designed for the efficient and optimum synthesis of diamond films.

A number of interrelated problems are encountered when attempting to employ Raman scattering in-situ. First, the Raman scattering behavior of diamond at elevated temperatures ($>500\text{K}$) is poorly understood. Quantum mechanical theories [17,18] predict the shift and broadening of the first-order Raman spectrum to increase with increasing temperature. These theories are at best qualitatively consistent with the general observations made in natural diamond by Nayar [19] and Krishnan [20] in the temperature range between 85K and 976K. Until now, there was no available data on the broadening above 976K, which is in the vicinity of the lower limit where plasma and hot-filament deposition of diamond is routinely performed. Indeed, these previous measurements [19,20] were plagued by poor signal to noise and signal to background interference at higher temperatures, the latter due to thermal radiation from the diamond itself.

EXPERIMENTAL FACILITIES

Two separate reactor chambers were employed for the results described in this paper. In the first chamber, natural diamond is positioned onto an electrically heated molybdenum foil. The samples are excited by either a cw argon-ion laser (chopped at approximately 2 kHz) or a pulsed diode-pumped Nd:YLF laser (Spectra Physics Model 7200) at approximately 45° from the substrate normal. The scattered light (unanalyzed for its polarization) is collected along a direction normal to the surface and imaged onto the entrance slit of a 1 m grating monochromator. Bandpass and blocking filters are employed at the exit slits of the monochromator to minimize stray light. A Hamamatsu model R2801 photomultiplier tube mounted in a Peltier-cooled housing is used as the detector and is operated in a photon counting mode. Signals are analyzed by a Stanford Research Systems Model SR400 photon counter.

The second reaction chamber was originally constructed to study diamond growth in diffuse arc discharges. Natural diamond is mounted onto a resistively heated silicon wafer. A diffuse arc is formed between a hot, hollow, molybdenum cathode and the silicon wafer (which acts as the anode). Typical current - voltage discharge operating conditions are 3 A and 150 V at pressures of approximately 10 torr. The operating gas mixture in this reactor for experiments described below is either all argon or mixtures of argon and hydrogen, each of which are mass flow controlled. The incident laser is directed onto the sample at an angle of approximately 45° from the surface normal. The scattered light (unanalyzed for its polarization) is collected at an angle of approximately 90° to the incident light path. The remaining part of the optical processing is essentially the same as that for the first chamber. At sufficiently high temperatures (>1150K), the diamond temperature is estimated from the temperature of the resistively heated support filaments as measured with a disappearing filament pyrometer. The temperatures are estimated to be accurate to ± 50 K.

RESULTS

High Temperature Raman Scattering Properties of Diamond

Figure 1 shows typical Stokes and anti-Stokes Raman signals from natural type IIa diamond (2 mm \times 2 mm \times 250 μ m, (100) polished face) at temperatures of 1370K and 1450K respectively. The diamond is heated as described above, in a low pressure argon atmosphere. These spectra were taken using the 526.2 nm output of the frequency doubled Nd:YLF laser. No significant heating by the pulsed laser is observed when the diamond sample is unheated. When employing the pulsed laser, shifts are estimated to be accurate to within 3 cm^{-1} , a limitation imposed by the mechanical jitter in the grating turret mount. When employing the 457.9 nm output from the argon-ion laser as an excitation source, an argon-ion emission line at 488.0 nm appears near the location of the Raman peak in diamond. This emission line provides an accurate calibration for the position of the line center frequency. In this case, the lineshifts are estimated to be accurate to within 0.6 cm^{-1} .

A number of experiments aimed at measuring the temperature dependence of the Raman line broadening were performed at lower temperatures (400K-1000K) with a spectral resolution of 0.8 cm^{-1} (HWHM). The temperatures were estimated from the data of Krishnan [20]. The results are displayed in Figure 2a along with the broadening measurements of Krishnan. Reasonable agreement between our results and that of Krishnan [20], is observed. Both our results and the results of Krishnan as displayed in Figure 2a are corrected for instrument broadening.

At higher temperatures, reasonably accurate temperatures can be determined by optical pyrometry. The Raman shifts were measured over the range of 1150K to 1460K. These shifts are compared to those measured at lower temperatures by Nayar [19] and Krishnan [20] in Figure 2b. Two observations can be made from this figure. First, the discrepancy in the data of Nayar and Krishnan is significant above 500K, as was originally pointed out by Krishnan

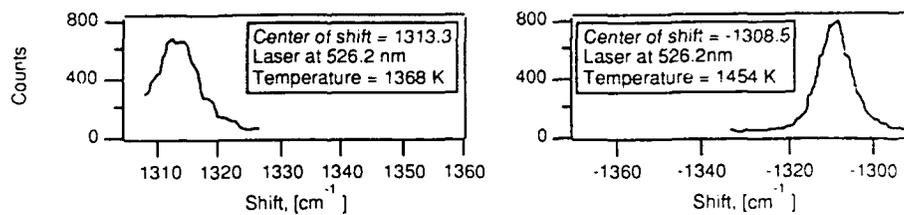


Figure 1. Representative Stokes and Anti-Stokes Raman Spectra

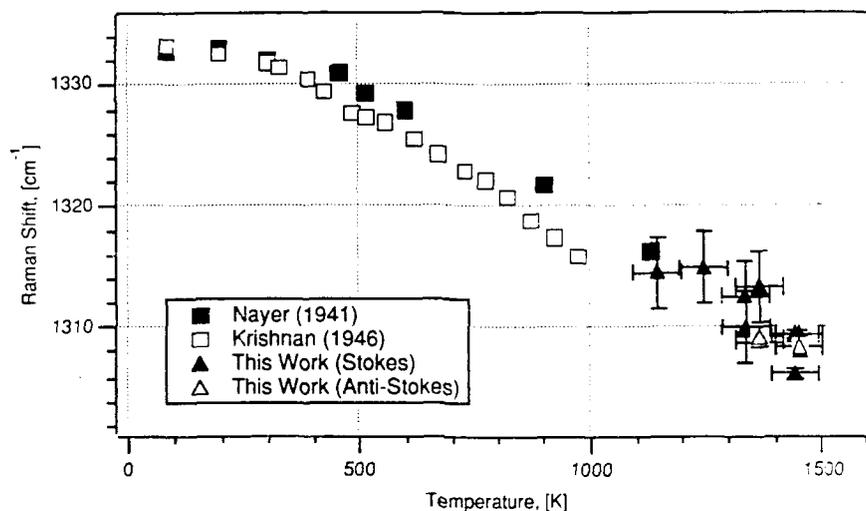


Figure 2. Comparison of Data of Nayar, Krishnan, and This Work

[20]. Secondly, our data at temperatures above 1150 K best fit the extrapolated curve of Nayar [19], although no account of experimental uncertainties are given in that earlier work.

In - Situ Analysis of Heated Natural Diamond Exposed to Molecular Hydrogen

It is well known that plasma and filament enhanced diamond synthesis displays a sensitivity to the partial pressure of molecular hydrogen in the reactant gas mixture. This result is interpreted in terms of the important role atomic hydrogen, produced by plasma or filament activation, plays in the stabilization of diamond growth surfaces [15]. Variation in the reactant gas feed composition alone can change for example, the discharge characteristics and, as we will demonstrate here, the substrate temperature.

The heated natural diamond sample was exposed for approximately 45 minutes to unactivated argon. Within 8 minutes from the time of initial heating, the diamond sample stabilized to a temperature of 900K as estimated from the measured shift of the Stokes component in the Raman spectrum (Figure 3). The argon flow rate was set at 53 sccm and the pressure in the chamber was 9.2 torr. Raman spectra were taken at approximately 15 minute intervals. After the 45 minute exposure to argon, the argon was replaced by unactivated molecular hydrogen (194 sccm, 9.6 torr). The substrate temperature was found to fall and stabilize immediately at approximately 350K, as is evident from the sudden shift in the Raman peak to approximately 1330.5 cm^{-1} . This fall is attributed to the increased thermal conductivity of the gas stream. This is verified by the fact that no significant change was observed when the flow rates were reduced to 51 sccm, indicating that we are in a "creeping flow" regime as

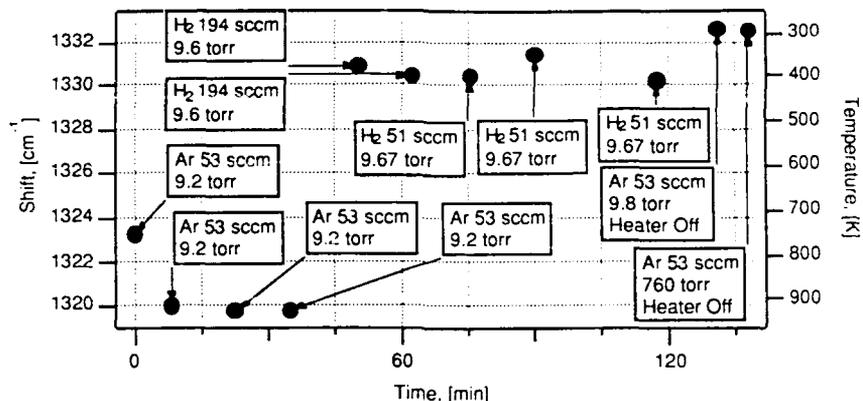


Figure 3. Heated Natural Diamond in Cold Argon or Hydrogen Flow

a result of the relatively low Reynolds number.

These observations have significant ramifications in process control of diamond film morphology. They imply that changes in the reactant gas mixture cannot be implemented without corrections to the substrate heating process. Any theoretical model used to describe the deposition process should in addition contain the appropriate energy equation with proper heat flux boundary conditions, if in practice, the surface temperature is not an independently controlled parameter.

In - Situ Analysis of Heated Natural Diamond Exposed to Plasma Activated Gases

In-situ Raman analysis was performed on natural diamond during exposure to plasma activated argon and hydrogen mixtures within the diffuse arc discharge. For the results described here, the diamond was heated by the plasma itself. The intensity modulated argon ion laser at 514.5 nm was used as an excitation source. Checks were performed so as to ensure that the argon-ion laser did not significantly contribute to the heating of the diamond sample.

In the absence of a discharge (argon only, 10 torr, 75 sccm), the Raman spectrum displays the characteristic unshifted peak centered at approximately 1332 cm^{-1} (Figure 4a). A Raman scan is taken approximately 1/2 hour following the initiation of a diffuse arc. This spectrum is displayed in Figure 4b. Notice that the overall scattering intensity, signal-to-noise, and signal to background ratios have decreased as a result of plasma heating and fluorescence interference. The temperature is estimated to be approximately 800K. The decrease in the scattering efficiency is attributed to a decrease in the average number of phonons occupying the lowest vibrational state. The increase in the background interference is attributed to plasma fluorescence. This is graphically displayed in Figure 5, where the results of the Raman scan without intensity modulating the laser source is shown as the upper trace. As one can see, there is significant structure due to as yet unassigned plasma emission in the vicinity of the diamond peak. It is fortuitous that one of the sharper features does not directly overlap the diamond feature in this example. Gated detection (lower trace) conveniently extracts the signal that is attributed to Raman scattering from the diamond sample.

Figure 6a shows the Raman spectrum for conditions equal to that in Figure 4b, 1/2 hour later into the same experimental run. The two scans are essentially equal, suggesting that the conditions are stable and that the diamond sample is unaltered as a result of further argon plasma exposure. Finally, a Raman scan was taken following the addition of hydrogen (200 sccm H_2 , 75 sccm Ar, 10 torr) into the gas stream (see Figure 6b). The discharge power was increased substantially in order to sustain the predominantly hydrogen discharge. This

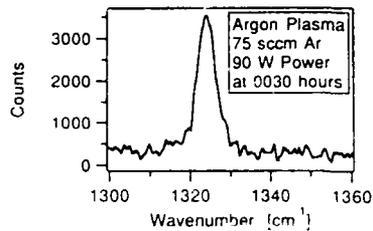
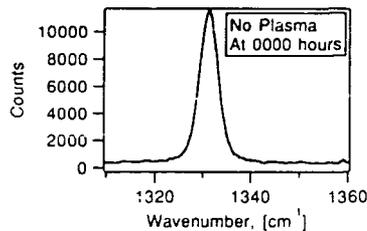


Figure 4a. Raman Line with No Plasma Figure 4b. Raman Line with Plasma

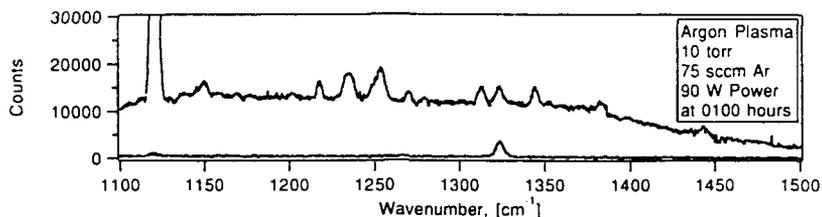


Figure 5. Background Interference (Upper Trace) and Raman Signal (Lower Trace)

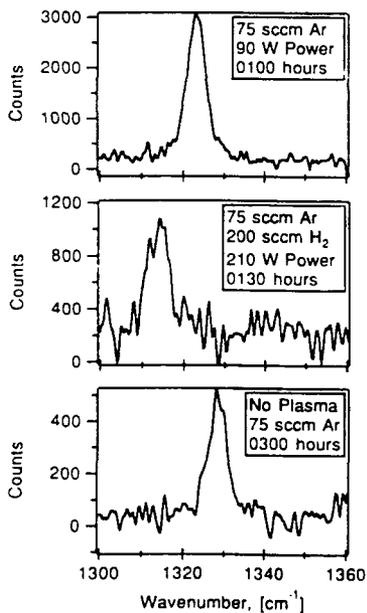


Figure 6a, 6b, 6c. In-Situ Raman Signal under three Conditions

resulted in an increased heating of the diamond sample raising its temperature to approximately 1200K. The signal to noise drops in part as a result of a substantial increase in the plasma emission in the vicinity of the Stokes component. Following approximately one hour exposure to atomic hydrogen, a Raman scan was taken with the discharge off (Figure 6c). This scan is substantially different than the first scan (Figure 4a) prior to plasma exposure. Inspection of the diamond sample after its removal from the chamber indicated a slight discoloration, which could account for the reduced scattering intensity. The slight residual shift in the Raman peak to lower energy suggests that there is a residual strain in the diamond sample which may in part be due to interstitial hydrogen. We are in the process of repeating these experiments so as to develop a better understanding of these observations.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The development of in-situ Raman analysis for plasma and filament deposited diamond films is discussed. Preliminary results of Raman spectra from natural diamond samples at elevated temperatures suggest that although the Raman signal associated with the principal first-order phonon mode is significantly broadened, the measured broadening is sub-

stantially less than that predicted on the basis of an extrapolation of the data of Krishnan [20]. In addition, we have shown that when the scattering efficiency of the Stokes component decreases as a result of increasing temperature, or when the component suffers from fluorescence interference, the anti-Stokes signal can be an alternative diagnostic.

The location of the line center in either the Stokes or anti-Stokes component can be an accurate temperature calibrant. We have found that when the diamond substrate is independently heated by a fixed source of power (i.e., foil heater), altering the gas phase composition can have a pronounced effect on the heat transfer from the substrate to the gas stream, thereby substantially changing the substrate temperature. Process control will require a correction to the heater supply so as to compensate for this effect.

Finally, we have shown that interfering plasma emission can be overcome by employing gated photon counting strategies in conjunction with modulated cw or pulsed excitation. Although this results in an increase in the Raman scan durations, satisfactory Raman spectra from natural diamond samples exposed to intense diffuse arc discharges can be obtained well within 10 minutes. Dramatic improvements can be made with increased pulsed laser energies. Future experiments will focus on studying in-situ, the polarization anisotropy of the Raman scattered light from epitaxially grown diamond on diamond and cubic boron-nitride substrates.

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