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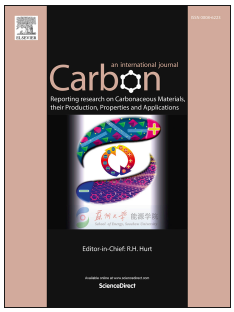

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Tailoring stress in pyrolytic carbon for fabrication of nanomechanical string resonators

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Abstract

In order to achieve high resonance frequencies and quality factors of pyrolytic carbon MEMS string resonators the resonator material needs to have a large tensile stress. In this study, the influence of pyrolysis temperature, dwell time and ramping rate on the residual stress in thin pyrolytic carbon films is investigated with the bending plate method. The results show that the pyrolysis temperature is the most important parameter for tailoring the residual stress, with a transition from tensile stress at temperature below 800°C to compressive stress at temperatures above 800°C. Two kinds of photoresist: positive (AZ5214E) and negative (SU-8) and different pyrolysis conditions are used to fabricate pyrolytic carbon string resonators at variable pyrolysis conditions. The best performance is obtained for devices with a length of 400 µm fabricated at a pyrolysis temperature of 700°C, ramping rate of 30°C/min and 10 minutes dwell time corresponding to the conditions for maximum tensile stress in pyrolytic carbon thin films. The optimized pyrolytic carbon string resonators had resonant frequencies above 300 kHz and quality factors *(Q)* in the order of 10^4, which is suitable for their application as nanomechanical sensors.