[Marsh Churches (with reverb and delay)](#)   **Click here to listen**

The extant portfolio version of *Marsh Churches* is left as valid.

This is an additional alternative version. A logical progression of life events and thinking arriving at this version is described in bullet points:

- **Dissidence, dissonance and distortion**

  The initial approach to evoking Zaha Hadid (ZH) in music was to mimic her revolutionary thoughts, her anti-establishment life, her, for some, wayward architecture, in a free manner as her technique allowed, electronically, where time and other parameters, such as extraneous and *ad hoc* noises, could be freely expressed. Additionally, there could be free rein allowed to express dissidence, going against rules of music making, like going against rules of architecture, reducing electronic editing to even out bumps and clicks, dissonance and distortion, all representing ZH.

- **The pandemic and recording**

  As a quartet piece it seemed imperative to obtain a live recording by a real quartet of players. In discussion with an online recording studio, Musiversal, formed largely during the pandemic, a feasible solution seemed to be to record each part individually then mix all together as if in a coherent group. This was partly successful with individual recordings of the two violin parts, by Damian Bolotin. Due to the difficulty of matching the self-mixed two violin parts to the underlying midi and click track, coupled with the in-built difficulty of the score with frequent time signature and tempo changes, the recording of the viola and cello parts, both to be performed by a cellist, became near impossible within the constraints of timed sessions in half hourly blocks. This became abandoned as a solution. However, the two violin parts remained. It was then considered that perhaps the professional services and studio facilities could be used to perform some sort of mastering embellishment, even in some form of collaboration, with a mixing engineer, in the same way and with the same egalitarian non-autocratic and autonomy empowering attitude as with the Free Range Orchestra with whom other recordings have been successfully made. Again with time slot constraints and mismatch between software of Reaper consolidated stems forwarded and the studio's use of Pro Tools and Logic, this attempt at a solution became abandoned. A possible other choice was to ask a whole quartet, Brookspeare, via Musiversal to perform and record the piece. This incorporated delay due to other commitments, consideration of the piece and how much this would cost. Again the difficulty of the written piece seemed a consideration. At the time of writing an enquiry has been sent to the Maggini quartet who have performed at Canterbury Christ Church University; the violist has tutored and performed two

previous pieces composed during a masters course. This may be prohibitively expensive and or not be the sort of music in which they are interested. Without being negatively biased a realistic answer expected is in the negative.

- **Mixing and Mastering with Reaper**

In the meantime, a self-mastering and mixing attempt building on the previous attempt to align the recorded violin 1 and 2 parts and a subsequent lacklustre attempt at subverting this, in a modern emulation of ZH, with some electronic sounds generated in SuperCollider (v3.11.1 as before in *Space Machine*), was reattempted.

An influence was Kenny Gioia a Reaper expert who in his tutorial on loops, number 7 in the series described how to create feedback loops in delays with reverb. Building upon a series of seminars based around feedback at the conference of WinterSound 2020 at Canterbury Christ Church University (Impett and Wright, 2020; Gover, 2020) in which I took part, where hysteresis and unexpected happenings from initial conditions indicating no such possibility, taken then as randomness and which falls within the 'hidden' of the thesis theory of everything, Kenny Gioia's methodology was loosely followed.

At the same time using the consolidated stems that had been created for Musiversal and randomly selecting a few to activate, leaving out a major part, the attempted effect was played and found pleasing. This falls under some self-rules evolved during the course of this research:

1. To leave as fresh anything attempted without sullying with over contrived manipulation.

2. A stochastic approach of trial and error, almost blind attempts and then applying rule 1 to leave alone as soon as possible.

Another evolved wish was for a distributed interesting and 'spacey' sound between two speakers, particularly via headphones. The effect achieved seemed like playing in a 'spacey' church setting with reverberation and echo; a pleasing aesthetic bringing some depth and richness to evocation of the lovely Marsh churches, which by parallel argumentation has been allied with ZH. Applying rule 1 above to the violin recordings the wav files received of the actual recordings during which I was present virtually, were left in their raw state. No autotuning type adjustment was made. This way a realistic and emotional feel was imparted. The violinist took the tempo and lyricality literally to heart with meticulous, rerecording over certain passages until he felt happy that he had done justice to the score. This contrasts with the mechanical underlay and the engendered electronic element. It is felt like ripping one's heart open and exposing it for all to see and hear as a beating organ, as raw as life itself. For all ZH's filibustering personality and theoreticality I feel quite sure the main driver for her was emotion: where weird is held in this thesis to be associated with ZH, this adds another layer of weirdness: cool abstraction together with raw emotionality.

The electronic destabilising sound introduced in the last attempt at retrieving

the piece as recorded and mixed to date electronically seemed mellower; the delay and reverb just seemed to blend into the mix more seamlessly, slightly OTT (over the top) but then we are dealing with ZH. When the electronic tone ceased, the violins seemed heightened by contrast, with romantic sentimentality as against harsh monotonous electronic noise. The harshness of life sometimes on building sites and as experienced by ZH from time to time, such as with the abortive *Cardiff Opera House* and the prettiness of ZH's inner world view and as latterly found, her rather pop oriented mellifluous choice in music.

All this, especially the electronic sound, perhaps sounding metallic or electrical even, was realised to echo the noises in the first two portfolio pieces, *ZH the Life* and *Space Machine*, partly redolent of building worker noises on sites and many other associations with ZH, architectural and thought objects, for instance.

This then seemed to bring a coherence to the portfolio, returning to thematic material used from the outset.

The overall result is of several layers, in a ZH tropey manner, midi sound underneath, live recording on top, messed around with, going against the grain sometimes, alignment-wise, time-wise, with the electronic element firstly forming the monotone noise, then forming free sounding improvisation as used in both the first two electronic pieces. This is also ZH's deconstruction.

Where after the deliberate use of extreme sounds and distortion in the first two pieces, subsequently moderated to generally avoid clipping, this piece was a compromise of editing, whilst still permitting a raw feel to come through and a return to allowance of some clipping. These clipping moments are envisaged as space twisting and contorting as René Thom's folds, cusps and other spatial involutions (Jacobson, 2020; Roopnarine, 2008) very much the terrain of ZH. This works as ZH translation.

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