

*Jesus in the Shade of the Bodhi Tree:*  
**A Recording Studio Composition**  
**From Conception to Realization**

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May 2019

## Introduction

During my undergraduate studies in Composition at University of the Pacific I served as a recording studio engineer in the school's Owen Hall Recording Studio. As an engineer I recorded and produced a number of projects ranging from so-called "new music" to popular style songs. My composition *Jesus in the Shade of the Bodhi Tree* is the culmination of my recording experience coupled with my experience as a composer. In this paper I will discuss the piece's development from an aesthetic concept to a fully realized studio piece.

## Aesthetic and Theoretical Framework

The initial idea for the piece arose from a radical minimalist concept: I wanted to write a piece which was comprised of only a single pitch. The inspiration for this approach was the result of the influence of the American composer La Monte Young. Young was the first composer to explore the musical possibilities of extreme sustenance of limited pitch sets. Early examples of this approach in Young's music include the 1958 *Trio for Strings* and the 1960 *Composition no. 7. Composition no. 7* was a strong influence on the piece in particular as it is entirely comprised of the interval of a perfect fifth (B below middle C to F-sharp above middle C) "to be held for a long time." Because there are no instructions as to what instrument or instruments are to sustain the interval there are unlimited possibilities for timbral combinations. I found Young's approach in this case quite daring and wanted to attempt something similar in a studio environment where I could have tight control over what timbres were chosen.

Another somewhat contrasting influence came from the first movement of the Hungarian composer György Ligeti's *Musica Ricercata*. *Musica Ricercata*'s first movement is comprised of only a single pitch until the last four measures. Unlike Young's piece however, Ligeti's is written for solo piano, an instrument with limited possibilities for sustaining pitches for extended durations. Therefore, Ligeti uses a variety of articulations, dynamics and registers to craft a compelling listening experience. By taking inspiration from Ligeti, a wider variety of envelopes and articulations opened up to me;

Ligeti proved that I could write a piece with only a single pitch without the need to have it constantly sustained. *Jesus in the Shade of the Bodhi Tree* is then a synthesis of the approach of Young in *Composition no. 7* with the approach of Ligeti in the first movement of *Musica Ricercata*.

Once I had developed the aesthetic of the piece I had to make some practical decisions about its creation. First, I had to choose a pitch for the piece. I knew I would be creating the piece at a conservatory of music where I would have ready access to skilled performers of orchestral instruments. Therefore, I wanted to chose a pitch which would be comfortable across the range of instrumental families. Furthermore, I knew that I would use piano in the piece and I wanted to chose a pitch that would produce rich overtone content in the instrument's low register without taking on to much of a rumbling quality. Due to all of these considerations I settled on the pitch E-flat.

### **Preparation**

Before beginning the tracking for the piece I needed to create a tuning drone to serve as a pitch reference for the performers. I used the program Max/MSP to create a drone with 3 octaves of a triangle wave oscillator sustaining the pitch E-flat, which lasted a duration of approximately ten minutes. I also decided on four basic envelopes that would be recorded by all of the instruments: a long crescendo followed by a decrescendo, a long decrescendo followed by a crescendo, a short sforzando, and a forte-piano followed by a rapid crescendo.

### **Tracking**

All tracking was done in Protools in the Owen Hall Recording Studio except for the percussion which was recorded during a remote session in Pacific's Instrumental Rehearsal Hall (IRH) using Max/MSP. The sample rate was set to 44.1 kilo-hertz and the bit depth to 16. Except for the piano, all instruments recorded in the Owen Hall Recording Studio were captured using a Shure KSM 44 large diaphragm condenser microphone set to the omni-directional pick-up pattern. The piano tracks were captured in the Owen Hall Recording Studio using two Neumann KK 133 small diaphragm microphones with KMA omni-directional capsules.

The percussion tracks recorded in the IRH were captured with a Shure SM 57 dynamic microphone. Interestingly, the percussion tracks do not sound remarkably different despite the fact that they were recorded with a cardioid pattern microphone while the other tracks were recorded with omni-directional microphones. This is likely due to the fact that the IRH is a much larger room than the Owen Hall Recording Studio which gives the impression of a larger space even with a cardioid pattern microphone. Had an omni-directional microphone been used in the IRH it would have made the percussion tracks sound out of place; using a cardioid pattern microphone in this instance is what made the tracks fit with the sound of the material recorded in the studio.

The procedure for tracking the material recorded in the Owen Studio was always the same. First the microphone would be set up, along with a hear-back monitoring system with a pair of isolation headphones for the performer. There were no written materials; I used the talk-back system to tell the performers what I wanted them to do. I would always begin with the four main envelopes which I listed in the preparation section of this essay. I would then direct the performers to play a series of techniques that were more specific to their individual instruments. After I had exhausted all of the techniques I could think of I would ask the performer if they would like to attempt any other effects: generally they wouldn't have any suggestions. During these sessions I was very careful to create new playlists with labels that would allow me to easily find the material I was looking for during the mixing stage. For each technique I would label the playlist with the instrument name and the effect being performed. I recorded each instrumentalist for approximately one hour.

The IRH percussion session was not quite as organized. This is because the recording was done using Max/MSP which did not allow for the rapid creation of new playlists like Protools. Instead I made one recording around one hour in duration which contained all of the recorded materials on the percussion instruments used. I then took the WAV file generated by Max and imported it into Protools to separate out the materials recorded on each instrument into individual tracks. These tracks were then imported into my master Protools tracking file.

## **Index of Recorded Instrumental Techniques**

In this section I will list the techniques used on each instrument and the name of the player who performed them. The instruments are listed in the order in which they appear in the final mixing session. This order is essentially traditional score order. The techniques are listed alphabetically. Note that many of these effects were recorded in multiple octaves.

### **1) Flute – Andrew Lu**

- a) Bisbigliando
- b) Crescendo-decrescendo
- c) Decrescendo-crescendo
- d) Flutter Tongue
- e) Forte-piano crescendo
- f) Harmonic Sweep
- g) Improvisational Solo
- h) Key Click
- i) Noise
- j) Oscillation of Pitch
- k) Sforzando Staccato
- l) Singing while Playing
- m) Tongue Ram
- n) Variable Vibrato

### **2) Oboe – Alelih Galvadore**

- a) Crescendo-decrescendo
- b) Decrescendo-crescendo
- c) Forte-piano Crescendo
- d) Noise
- e) Sforzando

### **3) Clarinet – Scott Pastor**

- a) Barrel Ram
- b) Bisbigliando
- c) Crescendo-Decrescendo
- d) Decrescendo-Crescendo
- e) Forte-piano Crescendo
- f) Glissando
- h) Key Click
- i) Multiphonic
- j) Noise
- k) Oscillation of Pitch
- l) Sforzando

### **4) Bass Clarinet – Arturo Garcia**

- a) Barrel Ram
- b) Bisbigliando

- c) Crescendo-decrescendo
- d) Distortion
- e) Forte-piano Crescendo
- f) Glissando
- g) Key Click
- h) Oscillation of Pitch
- i) Sforzando
- j) Variable Vibrato

**5) Tenor Saxophone – Mitchell Beck**

- a) Bisbigliando
- b) Crescendo-decrescendo
- c) Decrescendo-crescendo
- d) Forte-piano Crescendo
- e) Glissando
- f) Key Click
- g) Multiphonic
- h) Oscillation of Pitch
- i) Sforzando
- j) Slap Tongue
- k) Variable Vibrato

**6) Bassoon – Sam Berris**

- a) Barrel Ram
- b) Bisbigliando
- c) Crescendo-Decrescendo
- d) Decrescendo-Crescendo
- e) Growl
- f) Multiphonic
- g) Noise
- h) Oscillation of Pitch
- i) Reed Thump
- j) Sforzando

**7) French Horn – Braydon Ross**

- a) Bisbigliando
- b) Crescendo-decrescendo
- c) Decrescendo-crescendo
- d) Flutter Tongue
- e) Forte-piano Crescendo
- f) Low Pedal
- g) Muted
- h) Oscillation of Pitch
- i) Rips
- j) Sforzando
- k) Snare Drum Resonance
- l) Stopped

**8) Trumpet – Thomas Hubel (Open, Straight Mute, Cup Mute and Harmon)**

- a) Bisbigliando
- b) Crescendo-decrescendo
- c) Decrescendo-crescendo
- d) Feathered Durations
- e) Flutter Tongue
- f) Forte-piano Crescendo
- g) Glissando
- h) Improvisational Solo
- i) Mouthpiece Buzzing
- j) Oscillation of Pitch
- k) Plunger
- l) Rips
- m) Sforzando
- n) Tongue Ram

**9) Trombone – Felix Contreras Diaz**

- a) Crescendo-decrescendo
- b) Decrescendo-crescendo
- c) Flutter Tongue
- d) Forte-piano Crescendo
- e) Mouthpiece Buzzing
- f) Multiphonic
- g) Oscillation of Pitch
- h) Rips
- i) Sforzando
- j) Tongue Ram

**10) Tuba – Robert Huntington**

- a) Bass Drum Resonance
- b) Crescendo-decrescendo
- c) Cymbal in Bell
- d) Decrescendo-crescendo
- e) Flutter Tongue
- f) Forte-piano Crescendo
- g) Marcato Accent
- h) Mouthpiece Buzzing
- i) Multiphonic
- j) Noise
- k) Oscillation of Pitch
- l) Rips
- m) Sforzando-decrescendo
- n) Singing without Buzz
- o) Staccato
- p) Tongue Ram
- q) Wah-wah
- r) Tambourine in Bell

**11) Voice – Kevin Swenson**

- a) Chanting Jesu

- b) Chanting Namanda
- c) Chanting Shiva
- d) Oscillation of Pitch
- e) Noise
- f) Whistle

**12) Piano – Kevin Swenson**

- a) Coin Scraped Across String
- b) Cornet to Affect Resonance
- c) Cymbal on Strings
- d) Harmonics
- e) Malleted
- f) Octaves
- g) Plucked
- h) Plucked Glissando
- i) Resonance
- j) Tambourine on Strings
- k) Tremolo

**13) Glockenspiel – Tyler Golding**

- a) Bowed
- b) Malleted with Decay
- c) Malleted Staccato
- d) Rolled

**14) Crotale – Tyler Golding**

- a) Bowed
- b) Malleted with Decay

**15) Marimba – Tyler Golding**

- a) Bowed
- b) Malleted with Decay
- c) Malleted Staccato
- d) Rolled

**16) Vibraphone – Tyler Golding (With Motor On and Motor Off)**

- a) Bowed
- b) Malleted with Decay
- c) Malleted Staccato
- d) Pitch Bend
- e) Rolled

**17) Xylophone – Tyler Golding**

- a) Malleted with Decay
- b) Malleted Staccato
- c) Rolled

**18) Timpani – Tyler Golding**

- a) Rolled
- b) Rolled with Cymbal on Drum Head
- c) Struck with Decay
- d) Struck Staccato

**19 Violin – Micah Vogel**

- a) Bridge Hits
- b) Col Legno
- c) Crescendo-decrescendo
- d) Decrescendo-crescendo
- e) Forte-piano Crescendo (with and without tremolo)
- f) Gratte (Distortion)
- g) Harmonic Bisbigliando
- h) Harmonic Sweep
- i) Improvisational Solo
- j) Knocks
- k) Oscillation of Pitch
- l) Pizzicato
- m) Ricochet Bowing
- n) Sforzando (with and without tremolo)
- o) Sul Tasto to Sul Ponticello
- p) Tremolo
- q) Variable Vibrato

**20) Viola – Krista Swenson**

- a) Bridge Hits
- b) Col Legno
- c) Crescendo-decrescendo
- d) Decrescendo-crescendo
- e) Forte-piano Crescendo (with and without tremolo)
- f) Gratte (Distortion)
- g) Harmonic Bisbigliando
- h) Harmonic Pizzicato
- i) Harmonic Sweep
- j) Knocks
- k) Oscillation of Pitch
- l) Pizzicato
- m) Subharmonic
- n) Sul Tasto to Sul Ponticello
- o) Variable Vibrato

**21) Cello – Malcolm King**

- a) Bridge Hits
- b) Col Legno
- c) Crescendo-decrescendo
- d) Decrescendo-crescendo
- e) Gratte (Distortion)

- f) Harmonic Bisbigliando
- g) Harmonic Pizzicato
- h) Harmonic Sweep
- I) Knocks
- j) Oscillation of Pitch
- k) Pizzicato
- l) Subharmonic
- m) Sul Ponticello Forte-piano Crescendo (with and without tremolo)
- n) Sul Ponticello Sforzando-decrescendo (with and without tremolo)
- o) Sul Tasto to Sul Ponticello
- p) Variable Vibrato

## **22) Contrabass – Antonio Sarzi**

- a) Bridge Hits
- b) Col Legno
- c) Crescendo-decrescendo
- d) Decrescendo-crescendo
- e) Gratte (Distortion)
- f) Harmonic Bisbigliando
- g) Harmonic Sweep
- h) Knock
- i) Oscillated Pitch
- j) Octaves
- k) Pizzicato
- l) Sul Ponticello (with and without tremolo)
- m) Sul Tasto to Sul Ponticello
- n) Tremolo

## **Crafting the Piece**

After approximately a month and a half of recording I began the process of turning the project into an actual composition. Because the tracks within the Protools session were layered in the order in which they were recorded, I decided to organize them into score order. Organizing the tracks in this way made it easier to navigate between tracks and simplified the process of sequencing the materials. Similarly, it allowed me to quickly visualize the placement of instruments in the same orchestral family in the stereo field. Before even beginning the sequencing process I placed individual instruments in a manner similar to the way an orchestral ensemble would be distributed on a stage. I also made a “master playlist” for each instrument for the final version.

With the performances of my colleagues, I had captured a large amount of rich musical material. However, the materials had been captured in isolation – every playlist contained multiple passes of the same technique. In this way the final pre-mix Protools session amounted to more of a sample library than a prototype of a composition. The quantity of the recorded materials necessitated the formation of a general form before beginning to sequence the piece. Below I will detail the general pre-compositional form. It should be noted, however, that I did not sit down and plan out the entire piece before sequencing. Rather, I began by conceiving of the introduction and A section and then began to conceptualize subsequent sections; I was only ever two steps ahead conceptually of where I was in the mix. It is my opinion that the organic nature of the composition stems from allowing the form to grow out of the material itself in this manner instead of forcing the piece into a preconceived package.

Initially, I decided that I wanted the piece to start with noise based effects like key clicks, tongue rams in the winds and brass, and knocks in the strings called (**Intro**). These effects were recorded so that they only had the "ghost" of the pitch E-flat and using them at the beginning would give the piece a sense of mystery and curiosity for the listener. This section would serve as an introduction before the first statement of sustained material with the crescendo-decrescendo envelope, interrupted occasionally by bursts of noise based sounds (**Section A**). The crescendo-decrescendo section would then transition (**T1**) into material that explored pitch bend and bisbigliando effects to establish more tension and activity (**Section B**). Another transition (**T2**) would lead to a rhythmically driving section where timbres would rapidly shift in a dance-like klangfarbenmelodie (**Section C**). The dance would then collapse into a final section which used effects that were a combination of noise and sustained tones (**Section D**). A brief section of reversed envelope speaking captured during tracking and instrumental effects closes the piece (**Coda**).

Once the form was loosely set the piece became a project of orchestration using the Protools environment. Techniques like unison and octave doubling and fusion between instrumental families

were used to create realistic ensemble textures throughout the piece. Short instances of heterophonic texture were created by displacing duplications of the same sample by short time periods as in **Section B** and section **T2**. In this way Protools became an orchestration tool, allowing for quick and easy experimentation with different instrumental combinations and densities.

In choosing samples from my various playlists I generally used only one pass of any given technique. This means that the variety heard in the final composition is primarily a result of orchestration and not a result of using different passes of the same effect. I would choose the sample that had the best overall performance in terms of pitch, articulation and dynamic. I was rather conservative with the chosen samples in the piece. For example, I had all of the strings recorded a harmonic bisbigliando but the violin sample was performed the best. I therefore chose to only use the violin take of the effect because its quality would be the most impactful. This effect is heard in section **T2** where duplications of it are placed on the, Viola, Cello and Bass tracks in addition to the Violin track itself.

In select circumstances the time-expansion trim tool was used to stretch or shrink a sample to fit with the envelope of another. This technique was used very sparsely and only for the addition or subtraction of very short values because the time-expansion trim tool will cause degradation of the audio materials if it is over-used. The careful usage of this technique allowed me to make samples sound like they were performed together with the same envelope even though they were recorded separately and had slight differences of duration. This technique was mainly used in the sustained note doublings in **Section A**.

**Section C** stands out from the other materials in the piece in that it is the only section with a clear metric structure. For most of the piece I used “slip mode” in Protools to freely place samples in the sequence. In contrast, I composed **Section C** using the grid mode. I programmed a meter change from the default 4/4 to 7/8 and changed the tempo to 78 BPM. By setting the grid to show 8<sup>th</sup> notes at my chosen tempo I was able to construct a rhythmically driving 7/8 feel. Using grid mode allowed me

to create a precise metric groove that captures the listeners attention due its stark contrast to all of the music that surrounds it.

The final consideration for the creation of the piece was the use of post-production processing. I chose to use only the Native Instruments RC-24 reverb plug-in to create a space for the piece. Slight differences in reverb settings were used to create the impression that instrumental families that are usually farther back in a concert hall like brass and percussion were deeper back in the space. Similarly less depth was used in the settings for the strings and woodwinds to give the impression that they were closer to the listener. No other processing was used including pitch correction. While there is clearly beating in the piece which results from imperfections of tuning in the samples this became a musical device that is integral to the piece.

### **Formal Analysis**

Here I will provide a brief, chronological analysis of the piece section by section. I will detail the instruments and effects used as well as rough time stamps for the sections' beginning and ending points.

#### **Intro (0':0" - 1':05")**

- *Key Clicks*: Flute, Clarinet, Bass Clarinet, Tenor Saxophone
- *Tongue Rams*: Flute, Trumpet (Harmon Mute), Trombone and Tuba
- *Barrel Rams*: Clarinet
- *Reed Thumps*: Bassoon

Materials heard in isolation separated by periods of silence. Gradually effects occur in more rapid succession culminating with a unison attack in Clarinet, Tenor Saxophone, Bassoon, and Tuba, marking the beginning of **Section A**.

#### **Section A (1':05" - 2':50")**

- *Bowed percussion*: Marimba, Vibraphone
- *Malleted Percussion*: Vibraphone, Crotales, Glockenspiel
- *Crescendo-decrescendo*: Bass Clarinet, Clarinet Cello, Contrabass
- *Knocks*: Violin, Viola, Cello, Bass
- *Tongue Rams*: Trombone, Tuba
- *Reed Thumps*: Bassoon
- *Barrel Rams*: Clarinet
- *Chanting Namanda*: Voice

Bowed percussion marks entrance of sustained crescendo-decrescendo tones over which the voice chants. Malleted percussion marks the entrance of the voice. Knocks, tongue and barrel rams, and reed thumps interrupt the pitched material in a manner reminiscent of the intro. This separates the sustained pitched material into distinct statements.

### **T1 (2':50" - 4':30")**

- *Crescendo-decrescendo*: Clarinet, Bass Clarinet, Tenor Saxophone, French Horn, Trumpet, Tuba,
- *Variable Vibrato*: Flute, Bass Clarinet, Tenor Saxophone, Violin, Viola, Cello, Contrabass
- *Malleted Percussion with Decay*: Vibraphone (Motor on)
- *Bowed Percussion with Decay*: Vibraphone (Motor on)

**T1** overlaps with end of **Section A**. **T1** begins when the voice ends its final Namanda chant. The section is characterized by the overlapping entrances of crescendo-decrescendo sustained tones in different instrumental families giving the effect of a gradual morphing of timbre. The section ends with statements of E-flat on the Vibraphone alone: twice malleted and the third time bowed. After the initial attack the player adjusts the speed of the vibraphone's motor to imitate the variable vibrato of the woodwinds and strings.

### **Section B (4':30" - 6':15")**

- *Sforzando*: Piano
- *Pizzicato*: Violin, Viola, Cello, Contrabass
- *Oscillation of Pitch*: Trombone
- *Singing while Playing*: Flute
- *Bisbigliando*: Flute, Clarinet, Tenor Saxophone, Violin (Harmonic Bisbigliando)

Sforzando notes with long decay in the piano are accented by pizzicati in the strings. These sudden, sharp attacks announce the entrance of the trombone's pitch oscillation duplicated 3-4 times in each statement. Between statements 5 duplications of the flautist singing while playing are heard. Three statements occur, each slightly different in the timing of entrances in the trombone and the number of pizzicato strings accenting the piano sforzando. After the 3<sup>rd</sup> statement of the trombone pitch oscillation bisbigliandi in the woodwinds and violin lead to section **T2**.

### **T2 (6':15" - 6':51")**

- *Plucked Glissando*: Piano
- *Tremolo*: Marimba, Xylophone
- *Malleted Percussion*: Vibraphone, Xylophone, Glockenspiel
- *Flutter Tongue*: Flute, French Horn, Trumpet
- *Slap Tongue*: Tenor Saxophone
- *Tongue Ram*: Flute, Trumpet, Trombone, Tuba
- *Barrel Ram*: Clarinet

Bisbigliandi at the end of **Section B** are interrupted by a plucked glissando in the piano. Effects in the other instruments gradually begin to accumulate leading to the steady 7/8 groove that demarcates **Section C**. The 7/8 groove is hinted at twice at the end of **T2** in the percussion and interrupted by syncopated noise based sounds in the woodwinds before becoming stable.

### **Section C (6':51" - 7':32")**

- *Malleted Percussion*: Marimba, Vibraphone, Xylophone
- *Col Legno*: Viola, Cello, Contrabass
- *Tongue Rams*: Flute, Trumpet, Trombone, Tuba
- *Slap Tongue*: Tenor Saxophone
- *Reed Thumps*: Bassoon
- *Barrel Rams*: Clarinet
- *Col Legno*: Cello, Contrabass
- *Knocks*: Viola
- *Plunger*: Trumpet
- *Sforzando*: Oboe, Trumpet, Trombone, Timpani
- *Tremolo*: Violin
- *Gratte*: Violin
- *Rips*: French Horn, Trombone
- *Rolls*: Timpani

The steady 7/8 groove is set up by the percussion and traded between instrument families before it becomes a stable klangfarbenmelodie. Slap tongues, reed thumps, tongue rams, col legno, and knocks are heard in rapid succession across instrumental families providing a stable metric feel. The col legno in the Contrabass articulates the 1<sup>st</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 6<sup>th</sup> eighth notes of each measure. Other effects are layered over top of the groove to create a sense of momentum that climaxes at the massive sforzandi heard at the end of the section. The last sforzando overlaps directly with **Section D**.

### **Section D (7':32" - 9'28")**

- *Tambourine in Bell*: Tuba
- *Cymbal on Strings*: Piano
- *Snare Drum as Resonator*: French Horn
- *Cymbal in Bell*: Tuba
- *Malleted String*: Piano
- *Coin Scraped across String*: Piano
- *Chanting Jesu*: Voice
- *Bass Drum as Resonator*: Tuba
- *Malleted Percussion with Decay*: Glockenspiel
- *Tremolo*: Vibraphone

The final sforzando of **Section C** is immediately followed by the Tubist performing with a tambourine in the bell. This is followed by other noise infused pitch effects until the entrance of the chanting of Jesu marked by the striking of the glockenspiel. The chanting makes **Section D** a pseudo-recapitulation of **Section A**. Following the last statement of the chant is a reversed envelope of the malleted piano which overlaps with the **Coda**.

### **Coda (9':28" - 9':34")**

- *Reversed Envelopes*: Laughter from Tuba tracking, Clarinet, Viola, French Horn

The reversed envelope laughter overlaps the malleted piano at the end of **Section D**. The three other reversed envelope sounds overlap the final bursts of laughter, creating a surreal ending to the piece.

## Conclusion

*Jesus in the Shade of the Bodhi Tree* represents the first piece in my repertoire which uses a recording studio as the primary compositional tool. The first session for tracking took place on February 15<sup>th</sup>, 2019 and the mixing stage was completed on April 29<sup>th</sup>, 2019. Two and a half months of work went into the piece and not a single note was written down. In light of the commitment I made to the work I would like to conclude by exploring a couple of questions which linger for me now that the piece is completed.

First: *would the piece have been possible outside of the recording studio?* Theoretically, yes. Except for the reversed envelope sounds every technique heard in the piece is possible to perform in a traditional performance setting. Yet the quality of the finished studio project is far superior to any live performance of a notated version of this piece might receive. Sounds were recorded in a way that provides a presence, clarity and accuracy of tone which would not be captured in a live recording setting. Furthermore, the samples which were chosen were always of the highest quality from all the materials I captured – a choice one does not have in a live setting.

Another question logically follows: *could I have written this piece in a traditional way outside of the recording studio?* Most likely not. This is because the piece was truly an experiment: I would bring in a performer and ask them to play specific techniques right then and there. Sometimes these techniques were challenging for the players and I would have to assure them, “You only have to do it right once.” In traditional notated composition one does not have this luxury but in the studio anything is possible. The studio allowed me to take risks that may have been disastrous in live ensemble writing.

On a similar note, when I initially began sequencing and mixing the piece after tracking was finished I found myself wishing that I had recorded samples with a greater sense of purpose. I wished that I had worked out the form prior to recording and had only recorded what was absolutely needed. After all, most of the captured material is not used at all in the piece and some instruments only play a

single note in the finished product. But looking back on the process I now believe that the volume of material and the lack of a preconceived structure forced me to think in a new way, divorced from the conventions and limitations of notation.

In the past I had a mentor whose slogan was, “My method is no method.” From my perspective *Jesus in the Shade of the Bodhi Tree* is an example of this approach. While there were reliable and tested methods of recording regarding microphone choice and placement, and organization of material inside the Protools software, the piece is more than a mere recording project. It is a creative work. On the creative front, there were no preconceptions. I gave myself one pitch and all else was permitted. The finished composition far surpasses the expectations that I had for variation and transformation in the piece. Here I have attempted to detail the thought, effort and spirit that went into the work. It is my sincerest hope that the reader has gained some insight into the piece and can enjoy it all the more.