

AN UNKNOWN BUILDING

IN FOUR PARTS:

PART ONE

By GRANT GOVER

For Quartet

2 Violins

Viola

Cello

Originally for
then
then

Ligeti Quartet
And as process
Orchestra in the Shape of a Pear

In one movement

Duration

approximately 6 minutes but as long as it takes as long
as it wants to take as long as one wants it to take

Date

13.11.2018

Philosophy~background

Forming part of a PhD in making music out of architecture, this is a photograph taken during the summer 2018 from a cafeteria area outside at the back of the Tate Modern. It is a building with a Wagamama and Carluccio's, but apart from that it is hard to find from Google maps. The aim is to demonstrate that music can be made in at least five ways from architecture. This is an experimental way similar to one introduced during a recent masters at Canterbury Christchurch University (CCCU) where a collage of photographs was used to form a graphic score with score markings made using special pens and players were asked to interpret the space between the images and the indicative notation. Here players are asked to interpret electronic lines superimposed upon a copy of the photograph. I am particularly interested in the relative anonymity of the building, the fact that surroundings form part of the architecture, the reflections mimicking layers, moods and repetition, foreground with structural bars at interesting perspective angles forming bold statements with similar angles reflected in the background, sundry objects, people fencing swings and trees in the middleground, the regularity of windows, vertical glazing members like musical bar lines slightly offset, concrete floors demarcating layers in a different dimension to foreground middleground and background, the play of light and sky.

Player collaboration

Zubin Mehta gave an illustrated talk at CCCU on 29th March 2018 where he made a plea for performers who contribute to scores to be recognised. I agreed at the time and wish to take up his banner. There are difficulties with this to do with authorship, tradition and royalties some of which if followed through could present quite legal and technical challenges. Another difficulty is that players frequently wish for direction and in effect do not want the freedom to make choices, especially during busy rehearsal and playing times, which is understandable.

In this performance I would request that players collaborate and add their own interpretation, as Rink, Cook, Clarke, Ranmarine, Leech-Wilkinson and others found out in the AHRC Research Centre for Musical Performance as Creative Practice (2009-2014 and 2015 report):

<http://www.cmcp.ac.uk>

and the Durham university experiment:

<https://www.dur.ac.uk/music/research/projects>.

Playing instructions

These are given on the following page. It will be seen that parameters of pitch range and overall time are indicated. Other parameters of timbre, method of attack, dynamics, note duration and other parameters are left to players to decide.

This is an experiment that if players 'buy into' should provide an interesting result, with an element of chance both for individual players in the moment and for the

ensemble as a whole. Ideally, players will be able to literally ‘translate’ the building and its accoutrements, the ancillary appendages such as fencing swings and other objects, also a feeling for the materials, the architecture itself.

Playing instructions

Each instrument has an indicative line shown coloured.

From the top:

Cello: — (purple)
1st Violin: — (magenta)
Viola: — (cyan)
2nd Violin: — (yellow)

Pitch: choose arbitrarily a starting point allowing sufficient room to reach the high and low points relatively. The actual range is your choice. Do not worry if your pitch clashes with another’s pitch, but listen to the other players—possibly by half way you will start to synchronise in some way, tempo-wise, harmonically, timbre-wise and so on.

Tempo: do not rush it, but if you feel like making a dash for it, adding a flourish at any point then do so. The tempo should determine itself. If in doubt start at 80 m.m. Roughly follow each path, deviating if wished to follow lines of windows or other path/s of own choosing, trying all the time to describe what you see as an element, member, or material part of the building or its surrounding. Even if you lose your place, cannot distinguish the colour from the background, do not worry, follow your instinct. Try to onomatopoeically describe the sound of glass, sky, tree, tarmac or whatever material you are passing over—even if it does not sound like it, try to think of the material.

Break up your path into segments, being notes, individual notes, joined notes, slurs, with spaces, rests as you feel necessary.

Place the bow in one of six positions as you think at the time best suits the mood:

1. Just by the head stock
2. In the middle of the finger board
3. Near the end of the finger board
4. In normal position
5. Just before the bridge
6. Just behind the bridge

Bowing up and down strokes is totally up to you.

Texture: try to use a range of bow pressures and bowing types, such as *pre-muto*, *flautando*, normal, *legato*, detached, *pizzicato*, bouncing on the strings, but not in an obviously flashy way—simply how you think it is needed at the time. If in doubt just caress the strings with long sensitive bow strokes.

Dynamics. It would be nice to have sudden changes of dynamic from soft to loud and back again and possibly out of phase of one another, always thinking... If in doubt, stick to the quiet silvery sound world.

Start from the left hand side of the page and work to the right. The overall duration is set at roughly six minutes as per the brief. This would not have to be slavishly followed, so everyone can finish at slightly different times.

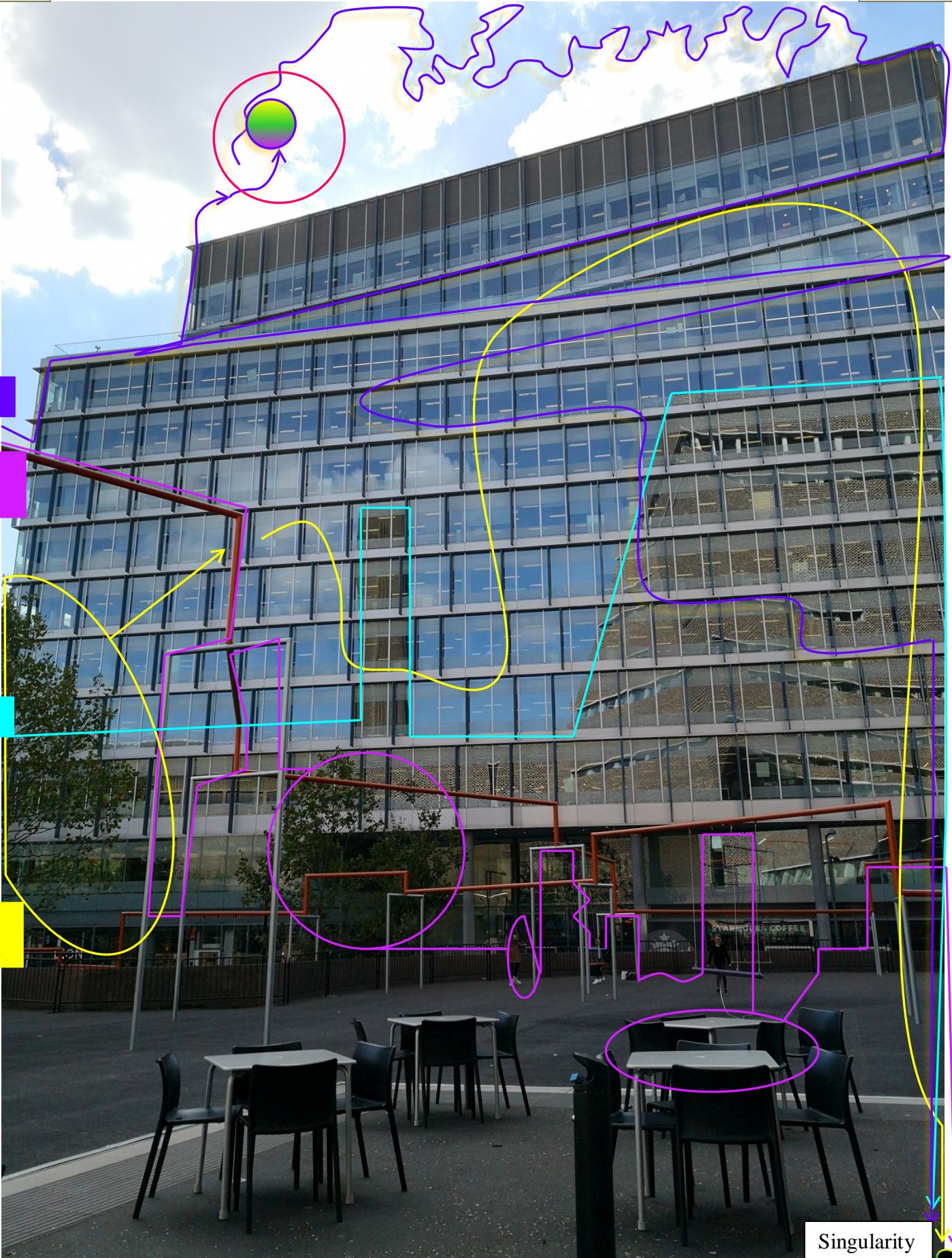
Everybody ends at the bottom right hand side—in a singularity: what this means is up to you. Scientists, mathematicians and cosmologists are not sure what a singularity is—try to make your own mind up what it is—I would think musically it ends with the merest sound or silence—others may think it ends with a bang such as a loud

pizzicato, or anything. If in doubt let it all taper away to nothing and then hold your position for a while before relaxing.

Thank you for having a go—and I hope you enjoy it.

START

FINISH



Cello

Ist Violin

Viola

2nd Violin

Singularity

Pitch

Time

3 minutes approximately