

BACCHAE

This piece is the last section of a track from the Gargoyle album. Edwin Webb's poem *Among the Ruins* projects various aspects of Greek classical culture. First, a speaker reflects on the coming to life of ancient sculpture. A transition leads to the second and third parts of the work to recreate something of the essential spirit of Euripides's *Bacchae*. According to this legend, the women of Thebes were called by the god Dionysus to celebrate his mysteries. Men were strictly excluded from the festival and male intruders were torn limb from limb by the frenzied women. A polyphonic and dissonant piece for bouzouki gives a modern perspective on those events.

Among the Ruins

*Veined in marble, laurelled and bird-strewn,
these are immortalies' memorials,
broken, worn; and this is the temple of
oracular heaven's once all-seeing pantheon.*

*Sculptor-tricked, see how the gods' gouged eyes
face the sun. And in the warm Aegean dawn
feel the numbed skin of stone begin to thaw.*

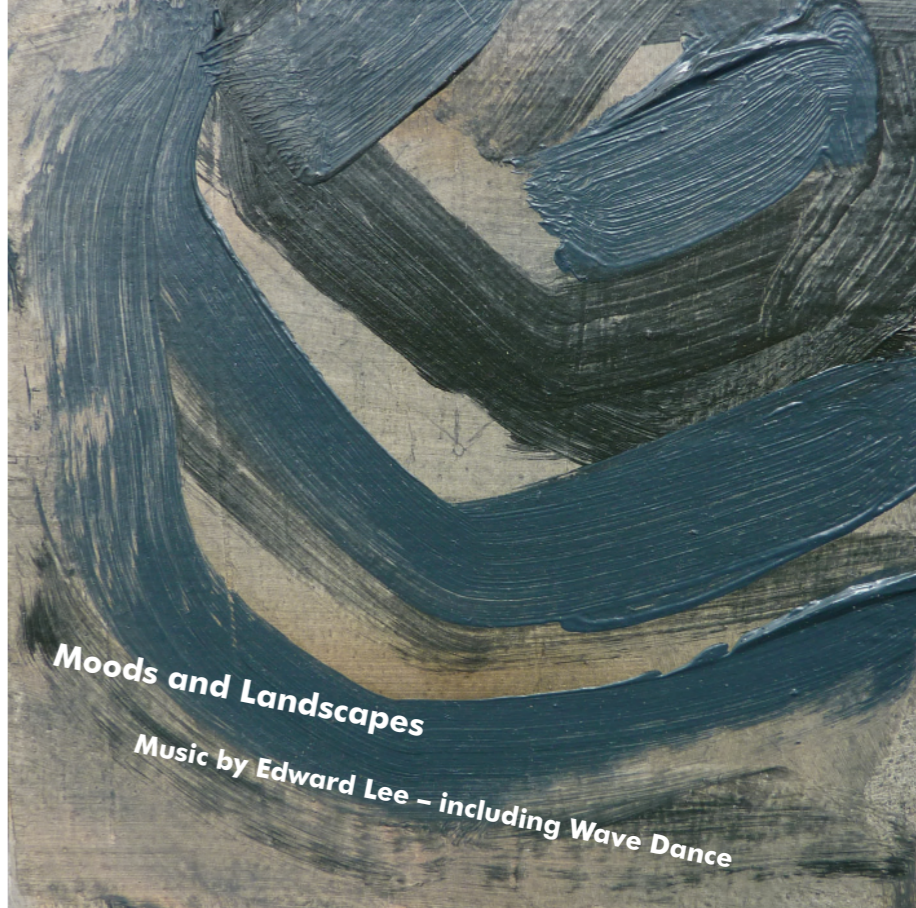
Indra's Dance

The *Dance the Path* exhibition opened with a preview evening at which dancer Indra Djimjadi created an interpretation of *Wave Dance*. Twenty minutes would be a daunting task for even the greatest to dance solo, so I created a more concise version which would still give Indra a chance to explore the very wide range of dance options which the music suggests. The sequence of moods remains the same.

Running times:

Wave Dance	20.45
Northern Coastline	8.24
Two hours before the end of the world	5.40
Among the Ruins	7.32
Indra's Dance	9.30

Grateful acknowledgement is given for the use of the poems *Among the Ruins* and *Northern Coastline* by Edwin Webb (edwinwebb@talktalk.net), paintings by Moira Jarvis (www.moirajarvis.co.uk) and the recording *Shamanic Journey Rhythms* (Michael Drake at www.shamanicdrumming.com)



Moods and Landscapes

Music by Edward Lee – including Wave Dance

This album contains five pieces whose broad aim can be summed up in the words of Moira Jarvis with whom I collaborated to produce *Wave Dance: The Wave Dance* moves us through contrasting moods. I have explored some parallels and differences between these and the variety of moods which are found in the natural world.

Wave Dance

The *Wave Dance*, which is now an international experience, was created by the American dancer Gabrielle Roth. One website describes its nature and aims as follows:

The five rhythms, when danced in sequence, are known as a "Wave." Many students practice the discipline in weekly classes, during which a typical "Wave" can take 45–90 minutes to dance, spending 10–20 minutes in each of the 5 rhythms in sequence. It has been described by some as a mixture of a Friday Night Dance Club a Saturday Morning Aerobics class and a Sunday Morning Gospel Service. Elements from the following (varied) list can most likely be experienced or witnessed at any given class: traditional dance, ballet, pop, Latin, aerobics, yoga, tai chi, reiki, meditation, shamantic chanting...

In May 2010 South London Women Artists, of whom Moira is one, made their annual contribution to the Dulwich Festival, and as a result of the interest of one of their members in the *Wave Dance*, they decided to make their unifying theme "Dancing the Path". I felt the project to be both interesting and exciting, as I have often found the visual arts a valuable and indeed inspiring stimulus to composition. The most significant example of this was my piece *Open Spaces*, which became the title track of an album of that name in 1971. Much more recently and relevantly, the picture *Early Spring* by Moira Jarvis, resulted in my piece *Two Hours before the End of the World*, which is also to be released on the album *Bonny Street* during 2012.

Open Spaces was created for a sculpture exhibition, so SLWA invited me to produce a piece which would be played while people went round this exhibition. We decided that about 20 minutes was an appropriate cycle for this music.

There was no obligation on me to follow the format of the *Wave Dance*, but the titles of its phases were immediately suggestive of musical ideas and structures: *Flowing, Staccato, Chaos, Lyrical, Stillness*.

At the same time I found the eclectic nature of the *Wave Dance* sessions was also highly appealing to me, as I have always been fascinated by the points at which musical styles and cultures fuse or offer the opportunity to do so. (As just one example, *Chaos* is underpinned by a shamanic bull roarer and rattle). Thus *Flowing* is based on the "systems music" of composers such as Terry Riley, Steve Reich and Philip Glass; *Staccato* takes its inspiration from street dance and electronic dance music; *Chaos* draws on some of the options offered by electronic music composers from Pierre Schaeffer onwards, *Lyrical* takes me back to my own longstanding interest in Brazilian music, and *Stillness* nods vaguely towards aspects of the work of Benjamin Britten.

I would stress that the aim was not to recreate genres but to produce a freestanding composition which would both act as part of the experience of viewing the exhibition, and could be listened to independently. The aim in the latter case was (like the exhibition and the *Wave Dance*), not to create themes and a development of them, but to lead the listener through an experience, building and falling like a wave, in which the significance of the auditory elements gradually emerges, to arrive at its resolution at the end of the *Lyrical* section.

NORTHERN COASTLINE

This piece comes from the album *Gargoyle*, a project in words and music, created in 1984 and to be re-released on the Elm Village website later this year.

In *Northern Coastline* the music creates a seascape. This is the music you will find here. In the original setting of the poem by Edwin Webb the voice weaves in and out; selecting, from the natural setting, incidents and images familiar to all. Finally there is recalled a strange perception of childhood, the effect of which is to recast time remembered. The opening of the poem is as follows:

*From walls that fall to foam
Dawn scattered seagulls, aimed
Them into raucous skies
The evening gathers when
They target surely home:*

*To rock scoured by wind and rain
They cling, draped on each broken ledge
In pools of shifting white;
Below, on a shelving beach,
The hurl of seas now beats.*

TWO HOURS BEFORE THE END OF THE WORLD

This is a reworking of a piece written many years ago, but which still relates in style to aspects of *Wave Dance*. Despite the gap between its composition and the production by Moira of her paintings *Winter* and *Early Spring*, it was immediately recalled to mind by my response to those paintings, which I find to be sombre and elegiac in emotion. The following lines convey some of the images I had in mind in making the reworking:

*Two hours before the end of the world
The last starving wolf stalks a hare
as the thawing islets of snow begin to freeze again
A blackbird calls for its lost mate
while starlings swoop and swirl under the vanishing sun
Maggots swarm, devouring a dog's carcass as though there is to tomorrow
(which is as it will be)
Air thins, light fades
as the cherry blossom unsuspecting prepares for the millionth time to open its buds
A galley drives hard to the harbour it will never reach
While demons hurtle through space to reclaim their realm
as the world begins its final unending night*