

Ritual Melodies was made with the assistance of Jan Vandenheede at IRCAM. All the sounds are computer generated by the programmes CHANT and FORMES. First, models of exotic instruments and voices were built with CHANT. Then a system of interpolation between pairs of models was developed so one type of synthesis could be changed into another, using FORMES, a LISP-type hierarchical program. Next, melodies were composed in an intricately interlocking chain, each based on the harmonic series and using rapid or slow interpolations between two 'instruments' or 'voices'. Using the melodies and the timbres and hybrids the piece was put together, with the addition of 'stretching' techniques and transposition systems.

To work sometimes with pure synthesis is a valuable insight into the mysterious relationship between beauty and number, musical expression and precise quantification of every aspect of the sound (nothing is left to chance). The more that expressive, emotional, aesthetic or spiritual music is precisely detailed, the more conscious that area becomes. This does not eliminate mystery, merely opens up a larger area of it surrounding what has now been consciously understood. In such a way new worlds can be discovered.

Jonathan Harvey