

## Czech Rail (2007) by Dan Senn

**Czech Rail** is a handmade work written to accompany moving images or dancer and is derived from a piece composed by Dan Senn using one of his sculptural instruments. The sounds heard are real. They are not synthesized and while various compositional systems are used throughout, such as a permutational scheme used to distribute sound in time, it is a piece manually constructed from the bottom up.

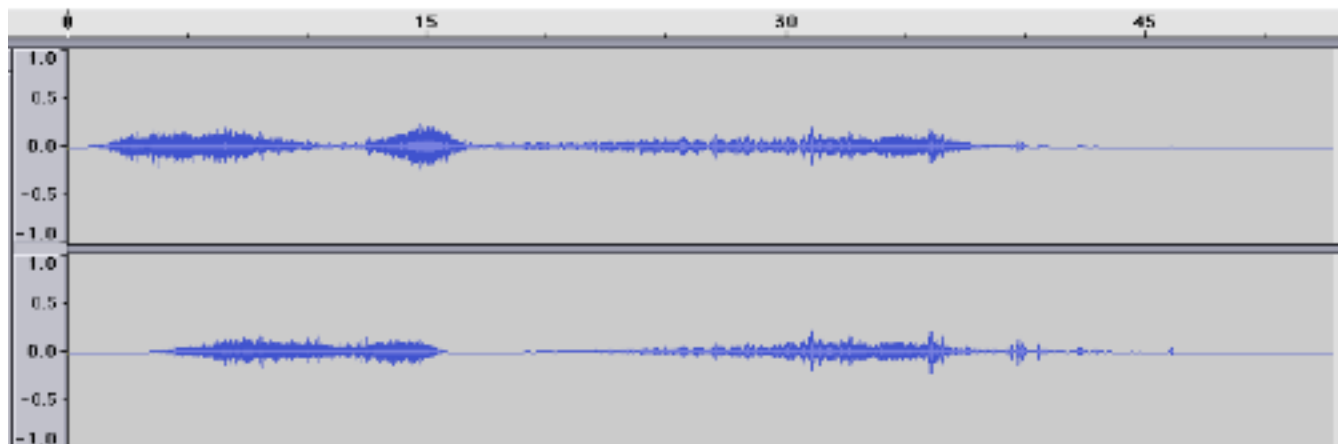


The title for this work is a "retrofitted metaphor." While playing and recording the sound, I never directly considered meaning as my instruments are sculptural (made also for observation), inherently awkward and difficult to control, and while performing I was doing my best just to "hang on" and produce sounds and gestures I considered interesting and beautiful. Nothing else. As an artist interested in self change, the awkward and opaque nature of these instruments restrains and lifts me from habit. Once a piece is recorded, however, I am naturally displaced and at some distance see and hear the sounds in a new context. Having ridden many trains in the Czech Republic and throughout Europe over the last 20 years, the inescapable imagery that emerged was that of trains passing through a Prague rail yard, of sounds heard in different locations on the sometimes rickety trains, and of scenes viewed from the train windows. As I edited the piece over a 2 month period, fluttering-stem-by-stem, these images came so swiftly, strongly and continuously, that I was never able to leave the Czech milieu except to briefly relocate to a rolling Polish train here and a speeding German train there. At times, too, the work has a "rale" (rattling lungs) sound to it and because there is no doppler effect present, as the trains move throughout the stereo field, I briefly considered a titled using the homophonic alternative. But I was uncomfortable with the pejorative of "rale" and settled back on the obvious. Moreover, because the instrument performed for this work, my Too Flutter (1992), generates sounds using cascading metal "moths" (washers with paper wings attached), which spin along the edges of curved threaded rods, the sounds are in fact "rail sounds," that is, the sound of metal turning on a metal track.

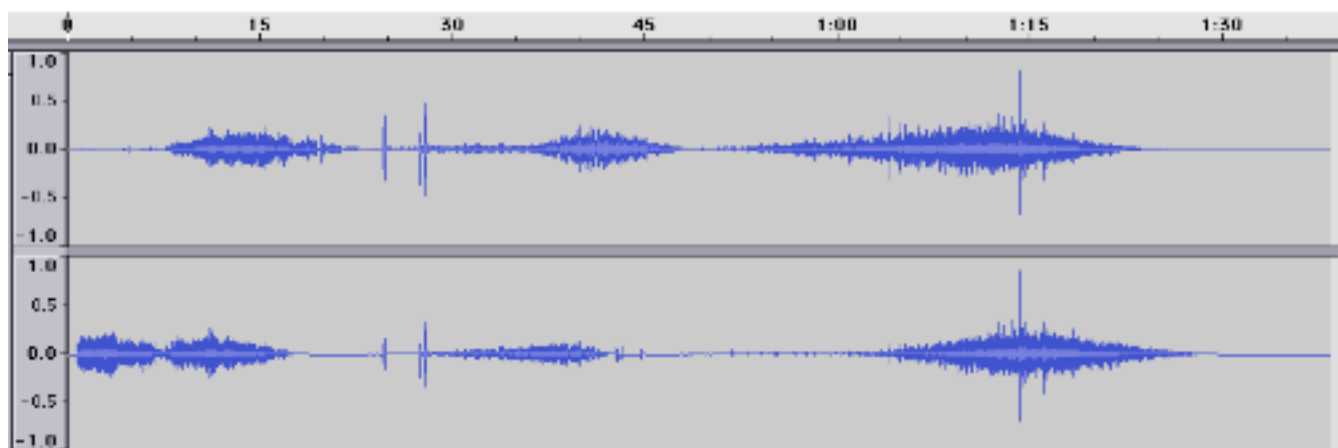
The piece is in 15 sections, with the original composition for the Too Flutter composed in February of 2007 in 18 sections. The present sectional breakdown arose out of divisions observed once the editing was complete. The order of the sections was altered slightly to assist interest.

Czech Rail was recorded and edited at a resolution higher than commercial CDs, at 48k and 24 bits, and is available for performance at this fidelity. High resolution MP3 files are provided, but due to the complexity of the sound, a full spectrum piece, these fall far short of the sound intended for performance. The work may be altered to the extent that sections are elided, silences shortened or lengthen between sections, sections re-ordered, deleted or repeated. Theatrical sounds may be also added here and there, such as laughter or babble, to enhance the live action. The work should be played back with the best amplification and, if possible, in the round with stereo coming from the back as well as the front of the audience area. Care should be taken to handle the low frequencies effectively.

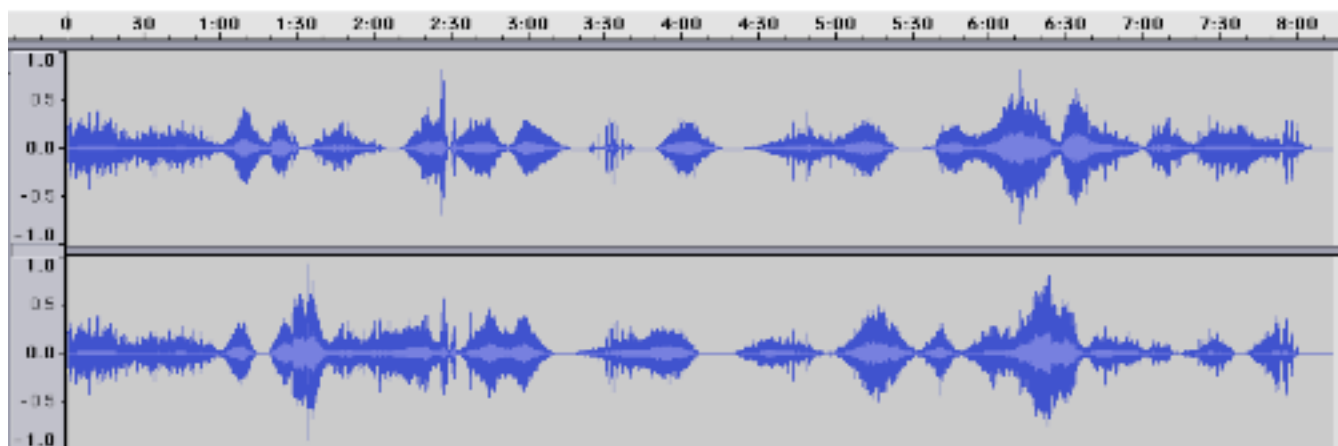
Section 1 - Introduction: 52"



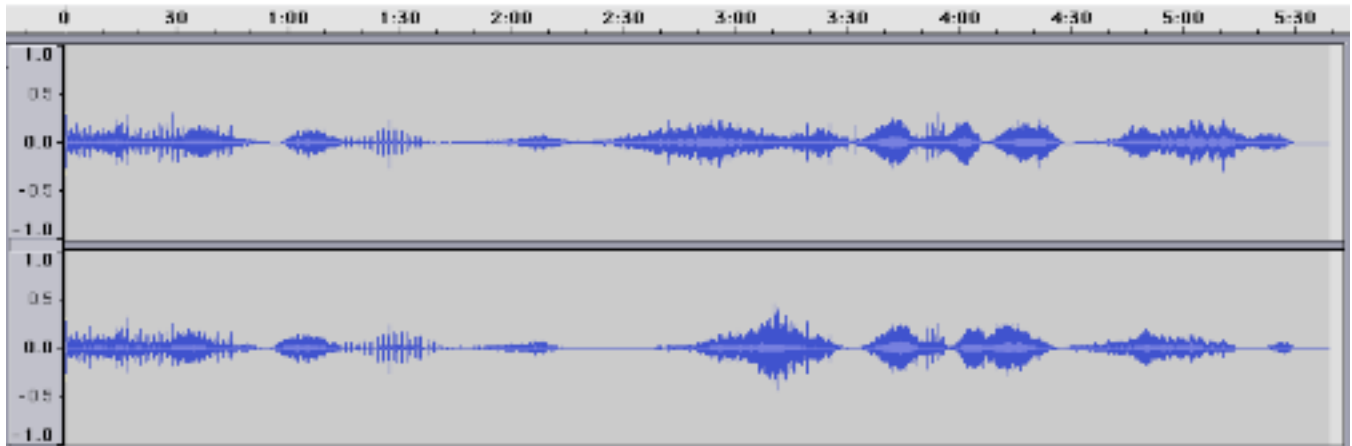
Section 2: 1'38"



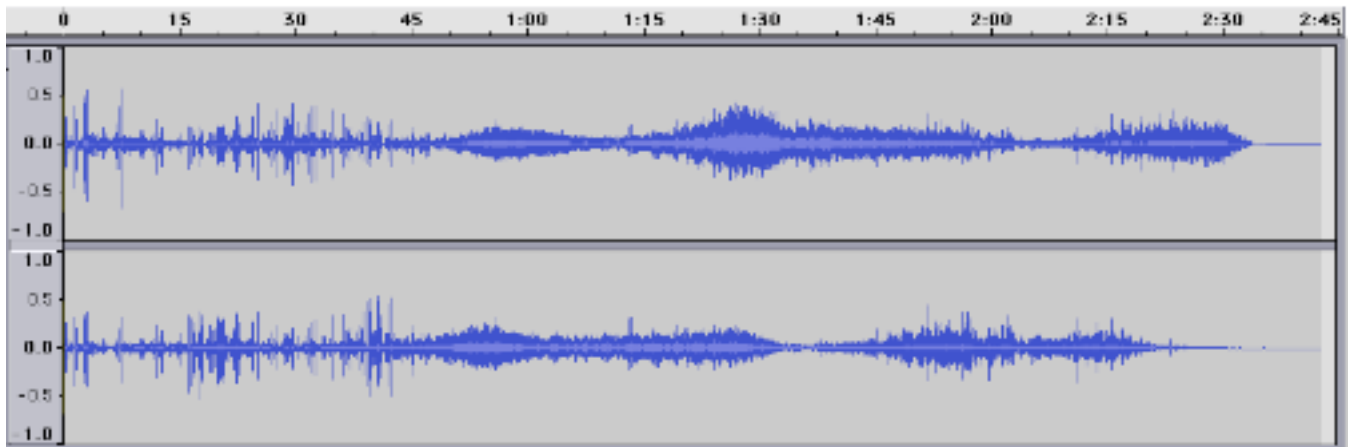
Section 3: 8'13"



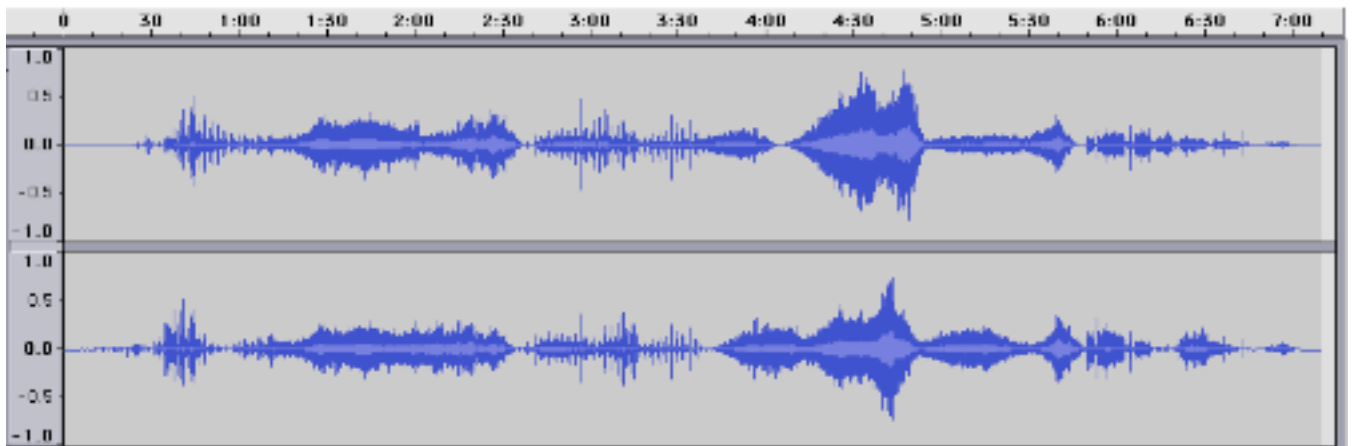
Section 4: 5'39"



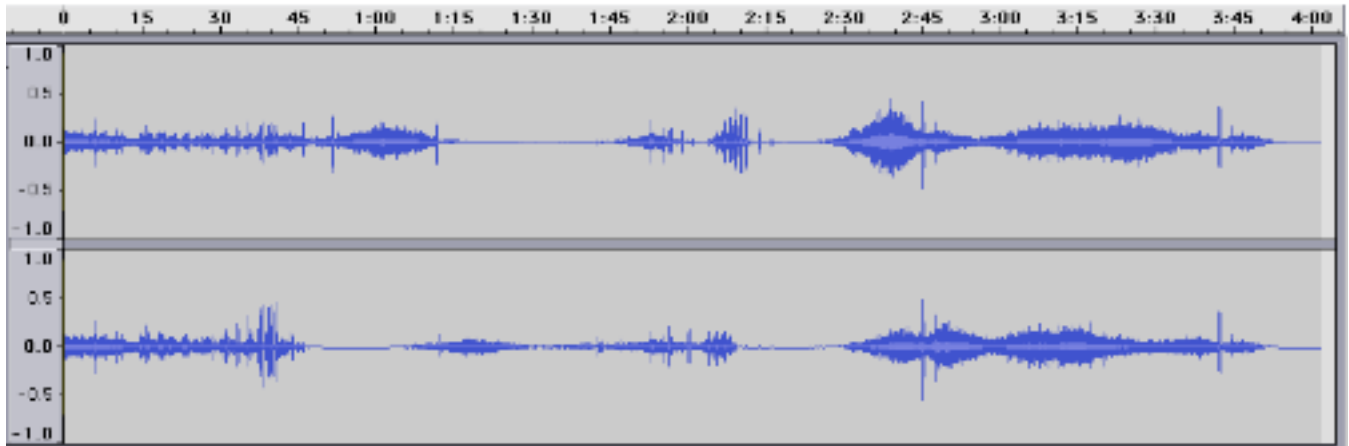
Section 5: 2'42"



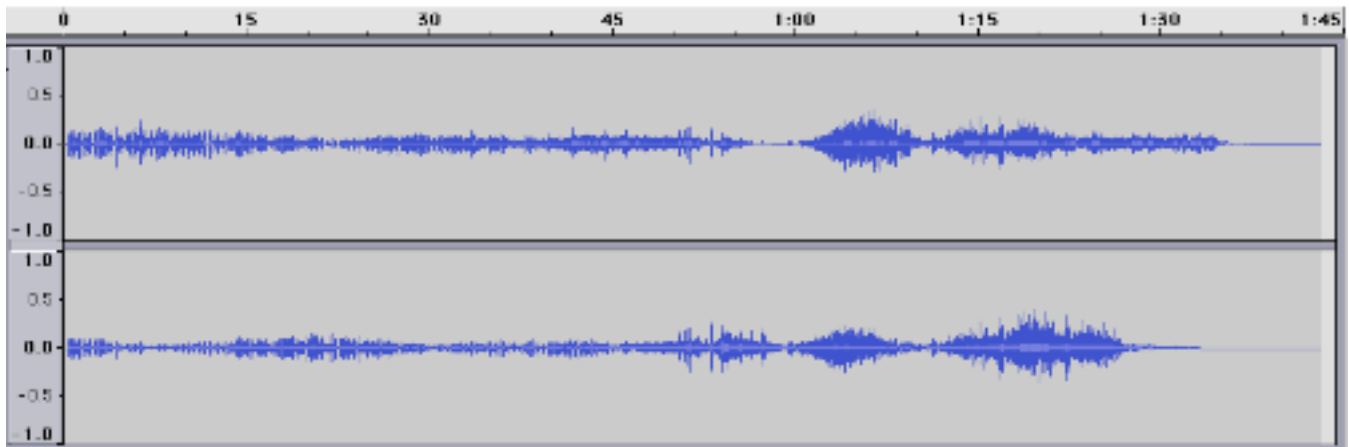
Section 6: 7'09"



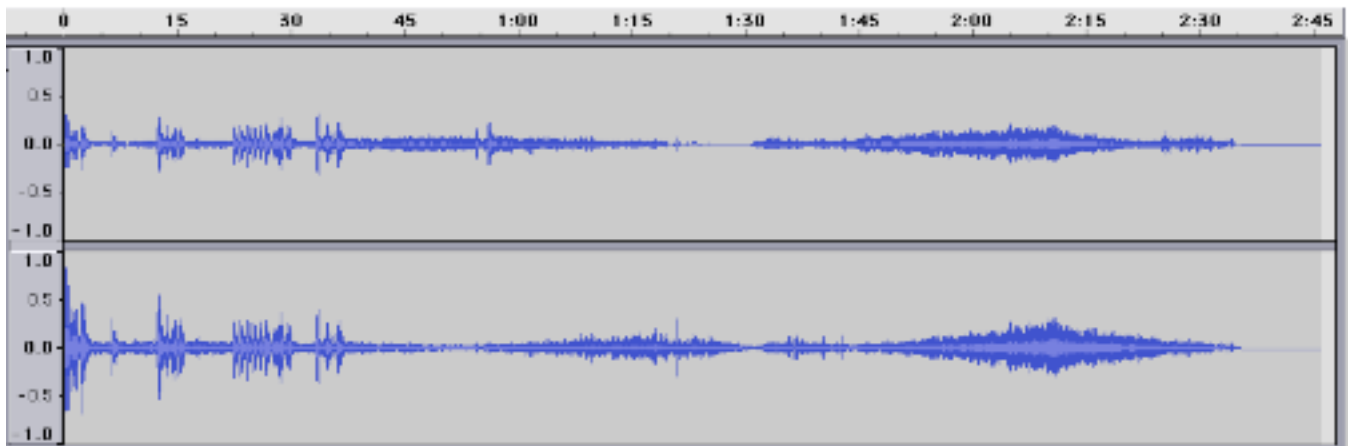
Section 7: 4'01"



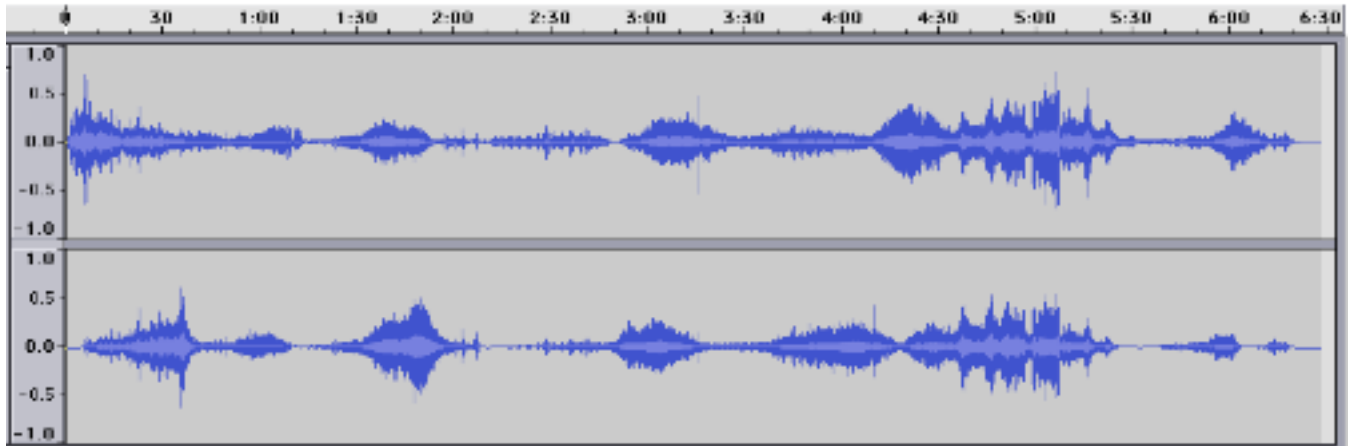
Section 8: 1'43"



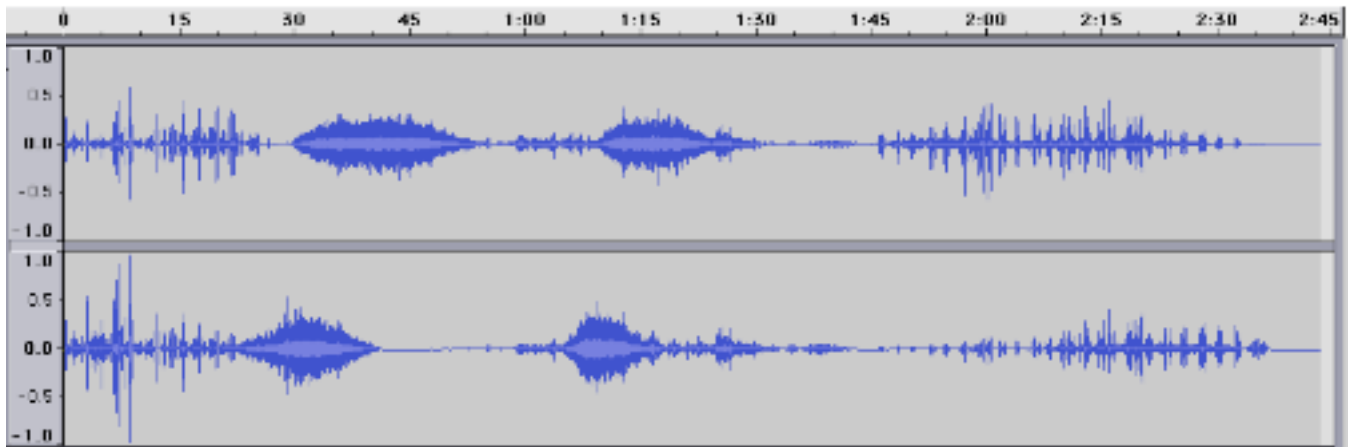
Section 9: 2'45"



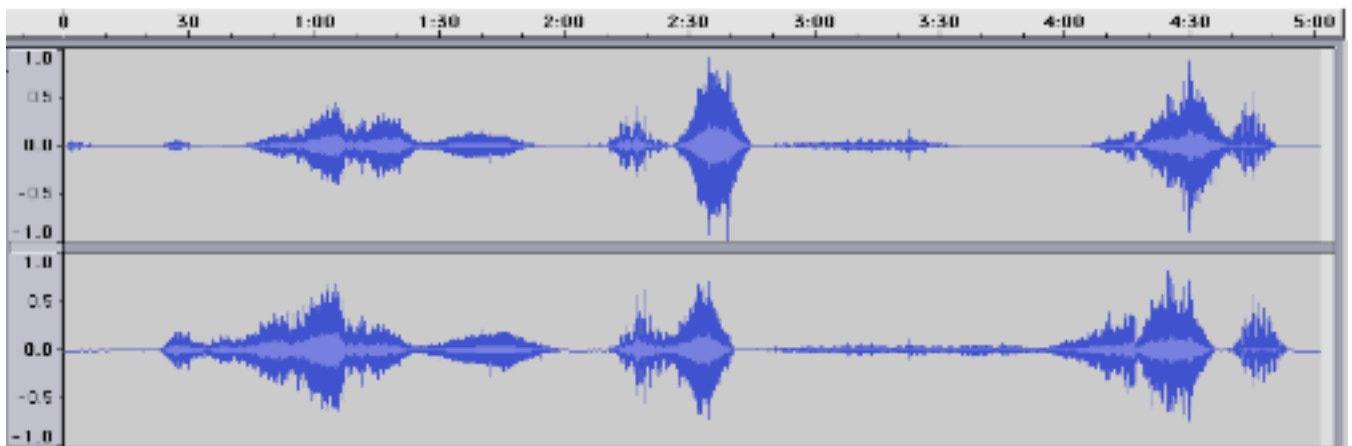
Section 10: 6'28"



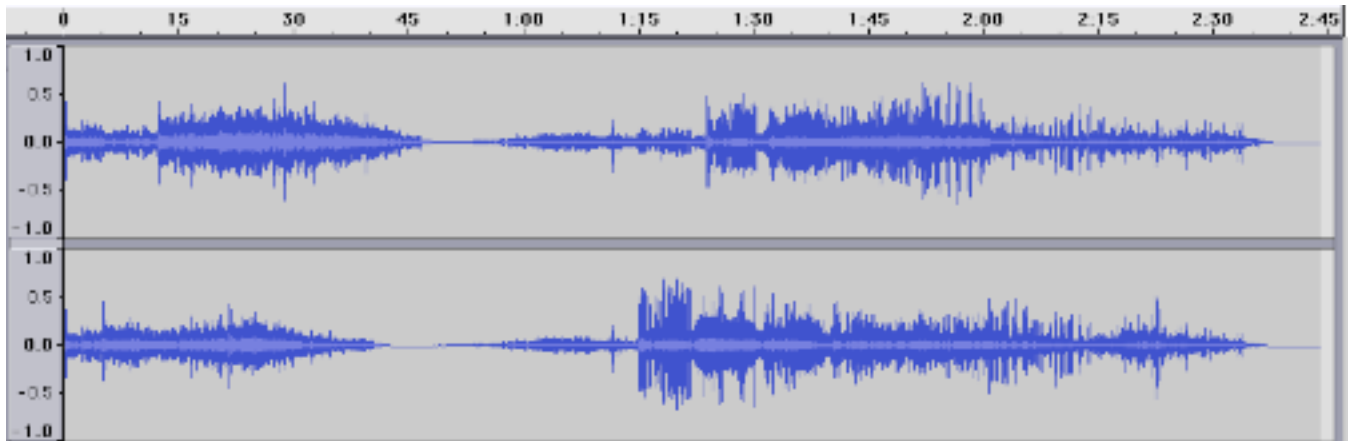
Section 11: 2'43"



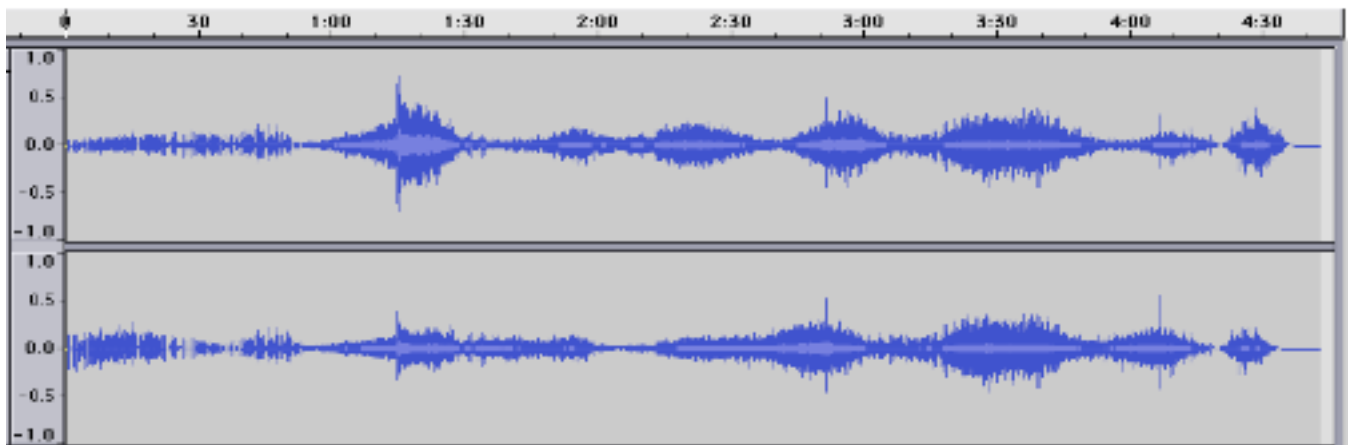
Section 12: 5'01"



Section 13: 2'43"



Section 14: 4'42"



Section 15: 6'03"

