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Cruel and Usual

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Cruel and Usual (2011)**For string quartet and four bass amplifiers.**

Cat Hope

Cruel and Usual is a work inspired by an article by the Al Jazeera news service that discusses the use of solitary confinement in US prisons as incarceration rates explode in the USA. In some cases, prisoners have remained in solitary for over 38 years, or may even be children, and the reasons for going in there are not always clear or legitimate. This kind of confinement is known as 'no touch torture'.

Drone, glissandi and the trembling bass are features of this work, where the string players are sampled at certain small moments of the piece, and 'translated' into much lower ranges instantaneously, which fade out, grow, and distort as indicated on the score.

The score is presented on an iPad app designed by the composer, which puts the score in motion, like a movie. The piece comes with a MaxMSP for the sampling/playback, or the performers may design their own to realise the score.

The score in motion can be seen here:

<http://youtu.be/CtNccMuPg4w>

A demonstration of the score player app can be seen here:

<http://decibel.waapamusic.com/research/decibel-at-tedx-perth/>