

A Wild Ride to Heaven (1980) Radiophonic – duration 59 minutes

*A Wild Ride to Heaven* was commissioned by the BBC. It was made in the electronic studio at Durham University, and was a collaboration between David Lumsdaine and myself, with Natalie Wheen and Jeremy Birchall.

I described it as ‘an adventure playground for the ear’, in which listeners were invited to use their ears very actively, discovering the elements of musical sound – pitch, rhythm, texture, timbre – in unexpected places or unfamiliar contexts. We made collages using speech from a wide range of sources, and collages using music of all kinds – pop and punk, baroque, romantic, ‘contemporary classical’ and so on. The various episodes or areas in the playground, were linked by a text drawn from the writings of Charles Ives. ‘You won’t get a wild ride to heaven on pretty, little sounds.’

The working tapes, the master and the broadcast copy were all made on a faulty batch of Ampex tape and, as a result, the only digital copies are considerably degraded.