The Mute

It seems as though my copy of Nardo Forge is cursed. For some reason, whenever I sit down
to use it, I come up with ideas that I just can't pull off. The first level of my co-op
scenario needed far more than the allowance of 64 platforms. Now, midway through my entry
for the Tempus Irae mapmaking contest, it has been brought to my attention that my map
can have no more than 16 liquids. Bummer, I needed exactly 66 to do the level right.

My entry is severely compromised, due to these kinds of limitations. However, I accept it
for what it is, with these obvious problems:

Lack of detail:
Forge demanded that I cut the polygon count roughly in half, and I am fully convinced
that adding one more polygon will cause transparent line errors to run amuck. Indeed, the
Polygon Gods received a generous sacrifice.

Excessively high ceilings:
Although I tried a number of ways to vary the height of the sky, they all yielded obvious
errors with which I could not live. Contradictions in my original plan and the inability
to make slanted floors make this high ceiling a necessity.

No aliens:
I generally include aliens in netmaps, mostly for target practice, but sometimes to add
another element to net play. Unfortunately, the layout of this map is a path-building
nightmare: aliens get very confused.

Inaccurate map display:
Because of the limitation on the number of liquids, some areas that are supposed to have
water do not show up on the map as such. The pillars on the perimeter also look rather
dumb in the map view.

Inappropriate textures:
The textures I chose for this map harmonize rather well, in my opinion. However, some of
them may not be appropriate for their particular settings, like a large brick texture on
a very thin wall. As far as I know, these errors are only noticable when comparing the
visuals to the map display.

Overall, I am very pleased with this map. The final product matches my original sketch
almost exactly. I am also pleased to say that (with one small exception), this map has no
5D space violations, and I verified this with Loren Petrich's ingenious Map Viewer. In
other words, it could be reproduced in a true-3D map editor with almost no overlapping
areas. Some maps use 5D space very effectively, but in most cases it is just sloppy
editing. I prefer to be a stickler about this issue.

I am saddened by the loss of Duality. Next year will see the release of Bungie's Halo,
over which I am certainly pissing my pants. However, I have to admit that I anticipated
the release of Duality more than any other. I imagine that I will always be hopeful that
we will see more of this game, in some form or another. A lack of completely cutting-edge
technology doesn't seem to matter to me. Duality has personality, and that's more
important than anything else. Isn't that what makes Marathon so great?

In any case, this map is inspired by Duality. I haven't seen any screenshots that no one

else has seen, or read anything that no one else has read, but I have been thinking about this game off and on for the past couple of years. During that time, I have accumulated a great number of images in my head with regards to how this game would behave. When the Mp3s were posted on the Duality web site, these images went further. If I was an animator, I would created a trailor (tribute?) for the game, set to the Overture. It is one of the most beautiful pieces of music I've ever heard, anyone else agree?

The map's architecture comes from a vision that I see at five minutes and twelve seconds into the Overture. (   ). Again, my Marathon-ized version is highly compromised, but it still retains some of the imagery I wanted to include.

I built the map while listening to Philip Glass, Don Caballero, and Courtney Evans' music for Duality. I focused on Satyagraha, an immeasurably gorgeous and violent opera, written by Glass with libretto in Sanskrit. It is mindfucking, and quite pretty. The theme focuses on Mahatma Gandhi, and his influence on other historical figures, including Martin Luther King, Jr.

Don Caballero is an all-instrumental band, whose music I am unable to describe. It is also rather harsh, but at the same time, technically superior and exhilarating. Elements of death metal in their music are very appealing to me, but they are certainly not a metal band. In fact, they are much closer to a prog-rock version of Philip Glass, though they are certainly not either of those. Can you tell I'm having trouble here? Just give them a try.

Music usually plays a passive role when I'm working, but for this map it became more significant. Something about the music of each of these artists is so passionate, they tend to rub off on any images accompanying them. Additionally, they seem to go with a theme of voicelessness in Duality, as I see it. The main character is a mute, the polys are enslaved and abused, and the minority has control over the majority, etc. Instrumental music is appropriate for this, and since Glass often treats the voice as just another instrument, his music also sounds voiceless and droning.

Alas, this is not an ass-kissing contest, it is a Marathon Tempus Irae contest. I whole-heartedly thank the Nardo group for organizing this event. I am starting to see the world in convex polygons again, no thanks to you all. And I would like to mention that I am very proud of the fact that never before in my life has Forge crashed so much, as it did during the making of this map. It's been a fun two weeks. (Dammit! Does anyone else out there walk through parking lots, and as they step, they can't help but look down and see how their footsteps are lining up with the painted lines, and imagine how the polygons would be drawn? Grrr, that make me so mad, I can't focus on anything when I'm in parking lots. And it's all Marathon's fault!)

Aren't contests lovely? I am sure great things will come from this, and I plan on coercing my co-workers into a netgame or two, using the new maps. I also love email. If you have comments, please send them to me:

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