Game Sound

An Introduction to the History, Theory, and Practice of Video Game Music and Sound Design

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Preface

When I first began writing about video game audio in 2002, it seemed somehow necessary to preface each article with a series of facts and figures about the importance of the game industry in terms of economic value, demographics, and cultural impact. It is a testament to the ubiquity of video games today that in such a short time it has become unnecessary to quote such statistics to legitimize or validate a study such as this. After all, major newspapers are reporting on the popularity of Nintendo's Wii in retirement homes, Hollywood has been appropriating heavily from games (rather than the other way around), and many of us are pretending to check our email on our cell phone in a meeting when we are really playing *Lumines*.

Attention to game audio among the general populace is also increasing. The efforts of industry groups such as the Interactive Audio Special Interest Group (IAsig), Project Bar-B-Q, and the Game Audio Network Guild (GANG) have in recent years been advancing the technology and tools, along with the rights and recognition, of composers, sound designers, voice actors, and audio programmers. As public recognition rises, academia is slowly following: new courses in game audio are beginning to appear in universities and colleges (such as those at the University of Southern California and the Vancouver Film School), and new journals—such as *Music and the Moving Image* published by University of Illinois Press, and *Music, Sound and the Moving Image* published by the University of Liverpool—are expanding the focus beyond film and television.

In some ways, this book began when my Uncle Tom bought me one of the early forms of *Pong* games some time around 1980, and thus infected me with a love for video games. I began thinking about game audio more seriously when I was completing my Ph.D. in music, and began my research the day after my dissertation had been submitted. The research for the book continued during my time as postdoctoral research fellow at Carleton University in Ottawa, funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, under the supervision of Paul Théberge, who provided encouragement and insight. It was finished in my current position as Canada Research Chair at the Canadian Centre of Arts and Technology at the University of Waterloo, where I enjoy support from the Government of Canada, the Canadian Foundation for Innovation, and the Ontario Ministry of Economic Development and Trade.

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