'The Hierophant'
Sound Design Document

Contents

1.0 Audio Overview

The overall style of the audio in 'The Hierophant' will complement the atmosphere of the game and emulate the feel of a gritty, ominous 1970s city. This will highlight the environment and the player's tarot reading abilities with a variety of themes: such as mystery, death, and brood. This includes sub-feels (different methods to approach the same feeling of mystery such as; brood, drive, and determination) and multiple audio approaches (music, SFX, and dialogue).

1.1 Music

The entirety of the music will be created electronically through midi and sample sequencing and mixed & mastered by the designated audio team. The music will be heavily inspired by the 70s soundscapes and archetypes and will include OST driving heavily from noir-style jazz and RnB. Examples of inspirations from other game soundtracks as well as other examples of music have been highlighted in Section 4.0 and Section 5.1 to help get a better idea of the musical direction.

1.2 Sounds (SFX)

The SFX of the game will be done in such a way to present Tarot Cards as the most important aspect of the sound design. This is because the majority of the sounds that are in the forefront of the mix will be card SFX, whether it's mechanical or ambient/soundscape card sounds. SFX found online (royalty free), sound libraries synthesized through Midi instruments and recorded foley will be suitable for use in the game. These sounds are to be used for environmental purposes, to help with interface design to make menu navigation satisfying and to complement actions the player makes throughout their gameplay experience. This will be achieved by producing SFX that accurately mirrors the action on screen - as well as giving a form of positive affirmation.

1.3 Voice Over/Dialogue

The audio dialogue will be represented by WAV audio files from several different actors and actresses. Voice actors may be drawn from a variety of different sources including Brock University students, and members of the production

team. The voiced dialogue will be used to add to the overall immersion and quality to the auditory experience, and as such the voiceovers themselves need to be of sufficient quality, both in terms of recording and delivery. The dialogue will be delivered throughout all major and minor characters through Unity's dialogue system - and the V/O will be mixed and mastered with proper vocal EQ and compression techniques before implementation.

1.4 Misc.

Assets used indirectly with the game (likely promo material) fall into this category.

2.0 Technical Requirements

The soundtrack for this game will be composed using Logic Pro X and FL Studio. Other software(s) will be used by sound team members to create samples or soundscapes to assist the Audio Lead, this software(s) includes GarageBand, Adobe Audition. Logic Pro X will be used for editing and the final mixdown. There will be other assets recorded using dedicated hardware specific to music composition. External hardware includes a midi keyboard, electronic drum set, and Scarlett 2i2 audio interface. Audio will be mixed on Mackie MR624 studio monitors and referenced on Mackie Cr3 monitors.

3.0 Defining the audio content

3.1 Feel and Emotion

The main feel of this game will encourage mystery and problem solving, used in emotive contexts. There can be some pieces that don't follow this rule on a strict protocol. Music will play a big part in this, as the music will help encourage certain moods we're aiming for. These moods can be found in Section 1.0

3.2 Integration

The audio is meant to serve as a complement to the overall feel of the game. The audio should never convey a feeling that the gameplay and/or graphics are not simultaneously conveying. The audio should never feel like it's taking the front seat role in importance - but more of a complement to the visuals and actions

being shown on screen. It should be able to *gel* with the gameplay as opposed to standing out too much on their own. A proper mix down of assets will help this area of thought. To ensure the SFX and music are mixed and implemented properly, we will be running through multiple QA sessions and gathering feedback from both internally, and externally - and will make changes according to the feedback given.

3.3 Music/SFX

The main portion of the game where music and SFX will be used will be in the Tarot Reading sections (where the gameplay will be concentrated as well). Music will be used to complement the feel of the game/gameplay, and SFX will be present to enhance the experience, while both will be used to heighten immersion. Non-gameplay focused sections such as; main menu, credits, etc are expected to use music as well as interface sound effects.

3.4 Transitions

Audio soundscapes are going to be changed in the Dialogue System sequencer. This will include a change of musical soundscapes and pieces. They will shift depending on the narrative aspect of the game.

4.0 Audio Inspiration

4.1 SFX & Dialogue

1) Doki Doki Literature Club

Doki Doki Literature Club is a visual novel that uses music to fill in space during a dialogue sequence. The Hierophant will have voiced dialogue for the main recurring characters. These dialogue/voice-over pieces will be at the forefront of the mix, similar to the emotive expressions that are present in the Doki Doki Literature Club.

2) Hand of Fate

Hand of Fate is a video game released in 2015 for the PS4, XB1, and PC. The soundscapes are very brood and ambient, which can help provoke meaningful choices. The card sound effects are the main driving point. There are a variety of card SFX, and there is a satisfying feeling when interacting with the interfaces and hearing the cards. The game also features voice-over - which is a very strong point to players, as most players would not want to read the text boxes.

4.2 Music

1) Fable II

Fable II is an action RPG developed by Lionhead Studios set in the fictional land of Albion, where magic, creatures, and monsters are a reality. The sweeping soundtrack in Fable II has always been a big aspect of the game, and one particular instance is the track titled "Gypsy Camp". This track utilizes strings, small bongo-like drums, and tambourines to create an atmosphere that is light, friendly, and mystical. Gypsy Camp's sound, in particular, inspires the soundscapes we will be creating for the downtime portion of the game.

2) Doki Doki Literature Club

See section **4.1 SFX & Dialogue** for explanation.

5.0 Audio Design Direction

5.1 Music Direction

This section will briefly explain the style of music, production values, mood range and atmosphere in the project. The musical style will vary on the scene that is being presented to the player. There will be both different moods and atmospheres and that will reflect on the soundtrack that is playing. The musical inspiration of The Hierophant draws mainly from Grim Fandango and Sam & Max Save the World. The overall tone of the music provides a film-noir scene

Mr. Frustration Man by Peter McConnell | Grim Fandango

This song uses very soft percussion and a single horn solo to simulate an easy-going atmosphere. This song inspires the tone for the cutscenes with Lana and Celestine in the case file examination scenes. The music is quite enough to encourage focus for an accurate examination, yet still has the overall film-noir feel.

High Roller by Peter McConnell | Grim Fandango

This song inspires the tone of the interrogations in our game. The drums and the bass line keep the pace at a slow hop while the improvised horn solo is at the forefront. This adds a sense of randomness and character to the song. This sense of randomness and character is what we want to achieve with each suspect.

Trouble With Carla by Peter McConnell | Grim Fandango

This song is more upbeat and playful. The way it adds in the small musical details on top of the main melody creates a silly and light feeling. This song particularly inspires the comical moments in the cutscenes.

Dr. M's Island by Peter McConnell | Sly Cooper 3

This song inspires the tone of the matching portion of the game. The former half of the song influences the quiet and deliberate backdrop that is necessary for crucial moments in the game such as this.

Main Title & Credits by Peter McConnell | Sly Cooper 3

This song inspires the title theme for the main title and credits. The full band layered with small percussion detail and small instrumental ditties create a big musical presence that would be good to establish in the main menu and credit scenes.

Production of Assets:

Production of assets will be completed entirely in a personal workstation environment, either using only a computer of a computer with the use of equipment (such as a Midi keyboard, V-Drums or similar peripherals). All of the voice acting and voice recording will be conducted in a dedicated whisper booth space provided by Brock University. All music pieces will be approved by the team at large and tested in-game before implementation. Production will be handled by the Sound Team as a whole, with other domain's team members acting as a revision system. Revisions will be made, executed, then iterated.

5.2 SFX Direction

The use of SFX in this game provides the atmosphere of the game. The use of sound effects falls into three categories: 1. Environmental, 2. Action-based, and 3. Interface. Environmental sound effects occur regardless of player input during gameplay and are used to heighten immersion and create a believable world. Action-based sound effects are used when the player makes an action during gameplay, and are used to convey what the player is doing. Interface sound effects are used to make navigating menus and other interface-based tasks more easy and fluid. They're implemented to add polish to the game. SFX quality should be indistinguishable from other sounds (music or other sound effects) and flow well with the game as opposed to contrasting.

5.3 Voice Direction

Voice Direction will be handled by the sound and narrative lead. During character auditions, the sound and narrative lead will speak to the VA in the booth and give them recognizable examples and points of direction to fulfill the kind of attitude and delivery we want certain characters to have.
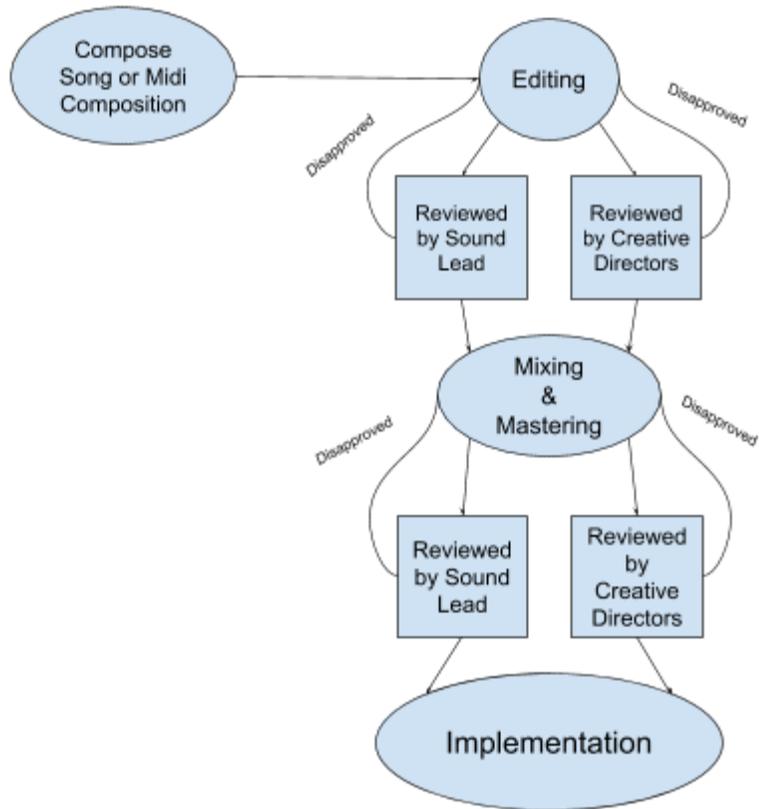
An example of this would be a rookie detective named Keith. Keith is in his young 20's and he is an individual who isn't as serious about his job as his counterpart Lana. Keith's voice and attitude can be compared to that of a stereotypical skateboarder, or Californian surfer.
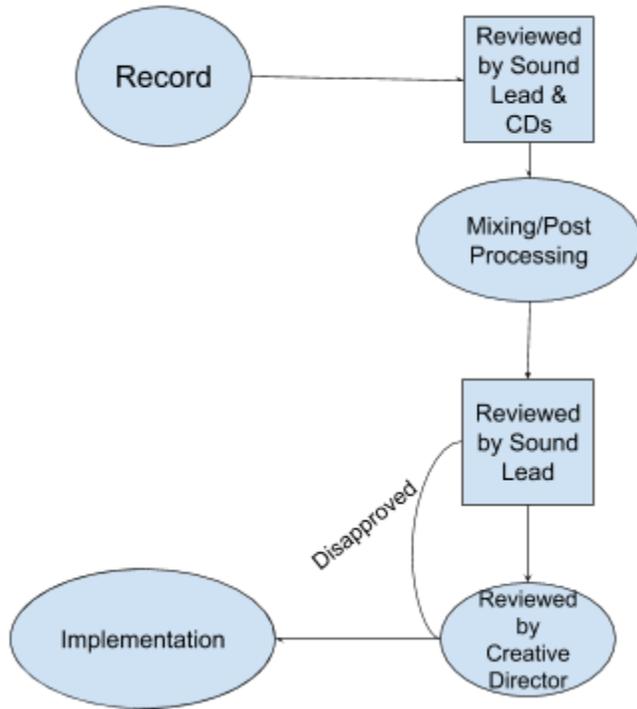
6.0 Themes

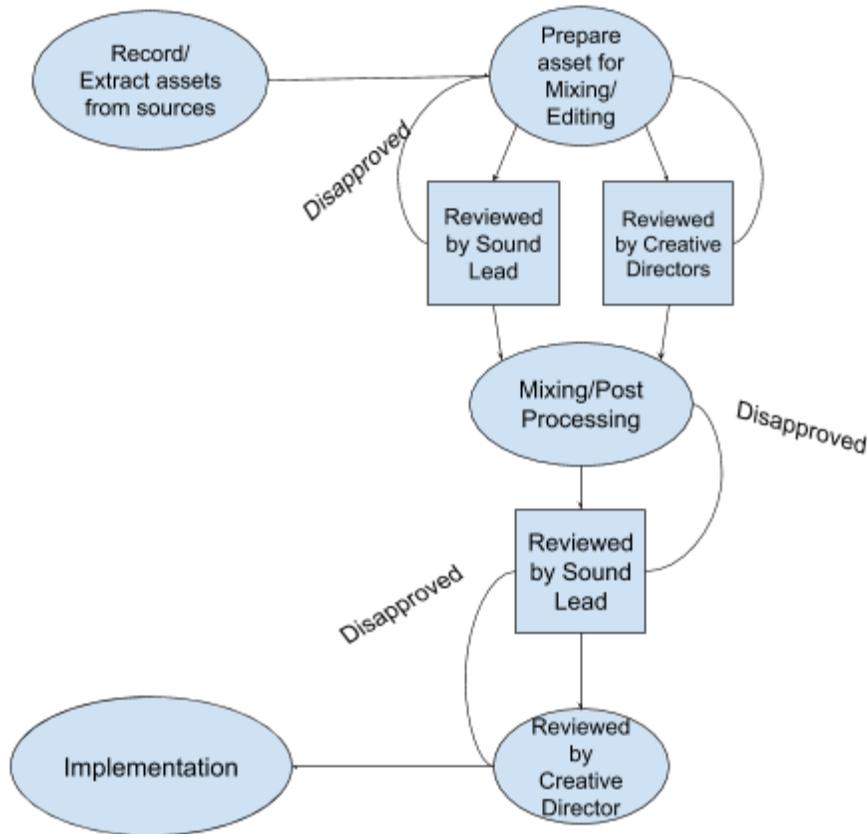Please see attached link to NDD.

7.0 Production Process Pipelines

'The Hierophant' Tarot Game - Data Flow Diagram - Music Composition Implementation

'The Hierophant' Tarot Game - Data Flow Diagram - Dialogue

Record → Reviewed by Sound Lead & CDs

Reviewed by Sound Lead & CDs → Mixing/Post Processing

Mixing/Post Processing → Reviewed by Sound Lead

Reviewed by Sound Lead → Reviewed by Creative Director

Reviewed by Creative Director → Implementation

Disapproved

'The Hierophant' Tarot Game - Data Flow Diagram - Sound Design Implementation

8.0 Implementation Guide

This section outlines and defines the set of audio rules and boundaries that will be followed when creating assets for 'The Hierophant'. The full implementation goes into detail on the specifics of the audio, describing the implementation and development of the sound into the game as a working asset. This section will constantly evolve and serves as a descriptive guide encompassing the entire audio development process. All renders will be a **WAV** file type, rendered to **44.1Khz**. Naming conventions can be found within the TDD.

8.1 Audio Engine(s)

Sound assets will be recorded in DAWs (Digital Audio Workstations) such as Adobe Audition **v13**, Audacity **v2.3.2**, Logic Pro X **v10.2.4**. Assets will be mixed and mastered by the Audio Lead in Logic Pro X.

8.2 Audio Layers

Layers of audio will be fairly tame in terms of the number of things going on at once. At most there will be three layers of tracks going on at once; for example, during the Tarot reading segments, there will be city soundscapes that live in the background, which will be faint, as well as the background soundtrack - these music pieces won't live in front of the audio scape in terms of priority. The primary sounds that will be the most noticeable will be things like the shuffling of cards, interaction with the tarot book, interaction with the corkboard, etc. These small noises will live in the front of the mix, and won't be overbearing to the player, as they will be mixed properly with post-production processing.

9.0 Content Descriptions

9.1 SFX

Sound Effects (SFX) are sound assets that relate to any sort of environmental, or non-diegetic sound piece for the player, to help them feel immersed in the experience. SFX that is being used in The Hierophant will be foleyed, synthesized and collected from sound libraries. Non-diegetic SFX will be synthesized, foleyed or ripped from sound libraries.

9.2 Music

The music of The Hierophant pertains to the original soundtrack (OST) and melodic pieces that will occur in the game. An example of this would be part of the soundtrack when the player is in the tarot room, listening to the radio. Another example of this is the main menu.

9.3 Dialogue

The dialogue of The Hierophant relates to how all of the characters communicate with one another. As well as other mediums of conveying information; such as the radio and TV broadcasts. Currently, all major and minor characters will have a voice-acted dialogue. We will be conducting tests to identify if Celestine should be voiced.

10.0 Audio Assets

Refer to [Asset List](.).