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Features

The Making Of The First Symphonic Game Music Concert In Europe

Organizing The Event

The work of organizing the concert began in mid-April, 2003. The first point of business was to contact the publisher of each game to get approval to feature its music. This communication was a major part of my job. There were a number of legal issues that we needed to solve, and trying to convince people to support an event that had never been held outside of Japan was very intense.

There were numerous stumbling blocks. For instance, when informing companies about our idea, we had to locate the person who was actually responsible for giving us the necessary permission to play the music. On the bright side, I think upcoming events similar to ours will benefit from our efforts, because most of the bigger publishers now have somebody designated to answer questions pertaining to this type of event.

Next, we had to contact the composers of the original pieces to talk to them about existing orchestrations and adapt the music to the orchestra we had. Once we got the material, we waited for Andy Brick to review it, and then we discussed any changes with the involved parties. Afterward, the scores were sent to the people responsible for parts extraction in Prague. This is generally how the process went, although I can assure you it didn't always go smoothly.

Another difficulty we ran into was obtaining the scores for some of the games. For a few of the newer titles we wanted to feature, it was surprisingly difficult to track down the original sheet music. In some cases, after deep investigation, we were forced to rebuild, reorchestrate or fix the material within the short time that we had, because the original work had been lost. Needless to say, this put a lot of pressure on Andy Brick. Being the conductor, not only did he have to learn all the scores, he also had to review the works to make sure that it would be possible to perform them in concert. This was an intense task and required all of his concentration, which he gave almost 24 hours a day leading up to the event.

One big job was gathering and editing the text for the concert program. We needed descriptions of every game whose music we intended to play, and that text had to be written and double-checked by the publishers. Thankfully, we had help from Christian Wirsig (author of a German book *The Lexicon of Video Games*) on this aspect of the project.

Rehearsals In Prague

The rehearsals in Prague started on Monday, May 18th. We were allotted two six-hour days in which to practice with the Czech National Symphony Orchestra. Andy Brick and I chose the titles to practice, taking into consideration the difficulty levels of the music so as not to overwork the musicians too quickly. As expected, the musicians were able to perform the scores with relative ease. This was a relief, but it did little to alleviate the stress on our conductor, since he was still checking scores up until the last day before he left from New York. However, because Czech Orchestras are popular among game music recordings, a few of the players in the orchestra were already familiar with several of the scores, which made the rehearsals somewhat easier.

Concert Program	
Title	Composer/Speaker
Opening fanfare	Andy Brick
<i>Headhunter</i> Suite	Richard Jacques
Welcome Address: Werner M. Dornscheidt	President and CEO of Leipziger Messe GmbH
Keynote Speech Andrew P. Mooney	Chairman of Disney Consumer Products Worldwide
<i>Final Fantasy VII</i> Aeris's Theme	Nobuo Uematsu
<i>Outcast</i> Suite	Lennie Moore
Opening address Stanislaw Tillich	Minister Head of Government of the Free State of Saxony
<i>Merregnon Soundtrack - Volume 2</i> Suite	Fabian Del Priore Markus Holler Andy Brick Olof Gustafsson
<i>Shenmue</i> Main Theme	Ryuji Luchi Takenobu Mitsuyoshi
<i>Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell</i> Main Theme	Alexandre Desplat
<i>Quest for Glory V</i> Overture	Chance Thomas
<i>Mafia - The City Of Lost Heaven</i> Main Theme	Vladimir Simunek
<i>Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets</i> Suite	Jeremy Soule
<i>Spellforce - The Order of Dawn</i> Introduction	Pierre Langer Tilman Sillescu
<i>Primal</i> Suite	Andrew Barnabas Paul Arnold
<i>The Legend of Zelda - The Wind Waker</i> The Great Sea	Kenta Nagata
<i>Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six 3: Raven Shield</i> Main Theme	Bill Brown
<i>Apidya</i> Suite	Chris Hülsbeck
<i>Medal of Honor - Rising Sun</i> Suite	Christopher Lennertz
<i>Final Fantasy</i> Final Fantasy	Nobuo Uematsu

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My Resume

Logged in as: [Andy Brick](#)

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12.08.03
- [HP Bazaar Camp USA](#)
Palo Alto, United States
12.09.03
- [IGDA Meeting: San Francisco Chapter](#)
San Francisco, United States
12.10.03
- [Digital Games Summit at the 2004 International CES](#)
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The Concert Day Arrives

Finally, on August 20, 2003, the big day arrived. As scheduled, the orchestra arrived a few hours before the start of the event, as did conductor Andy Brick and the orchestra contractor, Petr Pycha. We had one final rehearsal on site so that we could go through every piece again, ensuring that the audio characteristics were correct (there are significant differences between the acoustics of a recording studio and a concert hall).



The Czech symphony on stage at the concert.

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The event sold out, which was great news.

At seven o'clock, the doors opened and crowds began to fill the auditorium. As I expected, the audience consisted of people of all ages, from teenagers to seniors. I found it interesting that we could offer something to all different ages.

At eight o'clock, the concert began. To start things off, Werner M. Dornscheidt, the President and CEO of Leipziger Messe GmbH, gave a welcome address, followed by an opening speech from Stanislaw Tillich, a government minister. Andy Brick, the Chairman of Disney Consumer Products Worldwide, also spoke.



Andy Brick conducting at the concert.

The musical program consisted of scores from *Final Fantasy*, *Shenmue*, *Primal Splinter Cell*, *Mafia*, *Medal of Honor*, *Headhunter*, and more. When the concert concluded, the audience applauded for ten minutes, which was extremely gratifying.

The event was covered by several major media outlets, including German TV stations, the BBC and the New York Times. In radio interviews with audience members after the event, people admitted that they had never realized the quality of these compositions before and were very interested in learning more about game music.

In an interview, a *Final Fantasy* fan went so far as to state that the concert had been one of the best moments of his life. Generally the responses were fantastic and we couldn't have been more pleased. Many of the featured composers attended the event. Nobuo Uematsu, Christopher Lennertz, Olof Gustafsson, Richard Jacques and Andrew Barnabas were among those who traveled to Germany. A wonderful aspect of the event was that afterwards, all the composers met at a restaurant to talk. Musicians from Germany, England, Sweden, the United States and Japan all sat down and shared their knowledge, experiences and passion for music.

More Concerts To Come

Game music concerts are now attracting the attention of people worldwide. Similar events are in the planning stages, the next being a series of six *Final Fantasy* concerts in towns across Nihon, Japan in 2004. Hopefully the Game Music Symphony will pave the way, now that the concert in Leipzig has proven that there is significant interest in this kind of event outside of Japan. It would be nice to see concerts such like ours become common throughout the world, celebrating this unique and special art.



Composer Nobuo Uematsu looks on as his music from *Final Fantasy* is played.

For Further Information

- More information about the concert: www.leipziger-messe.de/gc/gamesmusic_eng.shtml
- Merregnon project (produced by Thomas Boecker): www.merregnon.com
- Andy Brick's official website (composer and concert conductor): www.andybrick.com
- GC - Games Convention (Europe's leading game fair): www.gamesconvention.de
- 2004 *Final Fantasy* concert series in Japan: www.square-enix.co.jp/entertainment/uematsu/tour/ (in Japanese)
- Music4Games (website focusing on game audio): www.music4games.net

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