STEPHEN BROWN

Pro Audio Reel Reference Guide

This is the reference guide to accompany my pro reel found here:
https://drive.google.com/open?id=1puEMTpsXfs6732xetPW_dJPf-B1kCGWm

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Creature Design – Orcs

(xACT, S2 engine)

The reel opens with my creature design for Orcs for the game Lord of the Rings: War in the North (2011). I actualized this system from concept to implementation and troubleshooting.

There are five different Orc types in LotR: WitN. For each, we used a different voice actor, who interacted with a guide track consisting of various human and animal sounds. An important differentiation in our process was the idea that the vocal talent "react" to the sounds heard—not merely imitate it. This lead to a broader, more unique lexicon for each Orc type.

The footage is me voicing the "Orc Defender" for LotR:WitN.

The special recipe for creating the Orcs' timbre was to vari-speed down (in the Orc Defender's case to 0.577 normal speed) then time compress back up to natural speaking speed. EQ and volume adjustments were utilized to imply motion in the character's exertions.

All of the Orcs' vocals were implemented via animation key-strings.

This video is a runtime capture of LotR: WitN during development, it has certain audio channels muted for clarity (foley, footfalls, etc).

All audio crafted, implemented by me (except "weapon impacts" by Chris Clanin/ Craig Duman).

Creature Design – Ghosts

(Lithtech Tools)

Next up are ghosts I authored for F.E.A.R.2: Project Origin (2009).

The Monolith sound designers (Brian Pamintuan, Lucas Carlyle, myself) all took a stab at voicing some ghosts. It's kinda embarrassing. But I knew I could manipulate them, and "ghostify" them up in my DAW. The video shows the actualization of one of my emotes from start to finish.

This video is a runtime capture of the released version of F.E.A.R.2.

In this video, my contributions are the dozen ghost voices murmuring on top of the ambience. Music by Nate Grigg. Ambient drone and foley by Brian Pamintuan.

Ambience Design – Spooky Winter Night

(Wwise, LithTech)

I really enjoy doing moody ambiences. In this selection, the spotlight is on Burton the Husky. He was my roommate's dog. Although it sounds like it, I didn't torture him, he's just grumpy. I recorded him with my handheld Olympus LS11 (indoors).

The sound design to slot Burton's vocals into the ambience was an amalgam of time stretching combined with effect plugins (Sound Toys) and EQ. What makes these assets great is Burton's crazy vocal performance, I just put that touch on them to make them sound otherworldly.

At runtime, Burton triggers on a random timer (delay with volume, pitch random) with seven variations and is localized to one area of the map. The "winter wind" is Wwise's SoundSeed Air.

This video is a runtime capture of an internal executable. (Reel in stereo, actual implementation in 5.1)

All audio was crafted, implemented by me. Loons, haunted vox groans, and crickets, etc.

Ambience Design – Foreboding Forest

(Wwise, LithTech)

One night in Texas the coyotes started up, and I bolted from a dead sleep to recording in a matter of seconds (Olympus LS11). They soon abated, but for a nearby solo performer, and needless to say, I was very thrilled to witness and record his haunting soliloquy. Can you believe that insane natural reverb!

In processing these audio files, I chose to simply noise cleanse them with Isotope RX, then diced them into assets.

The aim in implementation was attempting to get as accurate to real life as possible.

Regarding system implementation: A pack of coyotes could erupt in one soundevent, or a soloist could be triggered in another. The pack/solo could cry indefinitely, or be scripted off and on.

This video is a runtime capture of an internal executable. (Reel in stereo, actual implementation in 5.1)

All audio was crafted, implemented me. River, waterfall, bridge, fires, trees, critters, wind...etc.

Engine Design – BatPod

(Wwise, LithTech)

The BatPod's engine systems have a futuristic aesthetic by design. The BatPod has seven different turbines (sourced by servos) which pitch up and volume change at different rates as the vehicle increases in speed.

In this video I'm sweeping the value of RTPC (real-time parameter control) variable "gp_speed" from low to high, and back.

This video is a FRAPS capture of one of my Wwise sessions.

All audio in this video is by me.

Engine Design – Tumbler

(Wwise, LithTech)

We (Engineer Terry Jones and myself) parsed out the vehicle system into categories: Engine, Turbine, Boost, Road noise, Tires, Suspension, Wind, Whooshbys, and Physics collisions.

The engine source was a collection of vehicle sounds from our Midway Austin vehicle recording session in 2008. The turbine was a series of servos all pitching up at various rates. The boost was originally an asset in F.E.A.R.2 (which I made) and re-purposed here. The oversized tumbler tires and road noise I sourced with Brian Pamintuan using a Sennheiser shotgun mic. Suspension was authored using various metal source. Both wind and whooshbys were Soundseed Air. And physics collisions sound effects were created per world prop.

This video is a runtime capture of an internal executable, and no audio has been manipulated in post editing. All systems listed above are being driven systemically via RTPCs.

All audio heard is from me. (Engineering props to Terry Jones.)

Foley Design – Snowy Footfalls

(xACT, S2 Engine)

Even though this isn't the most "compelling" footage I could roll on my reel, I feel like I'd like to include it. It stands out in my mind as a great example of why I love being a sound designer.

In our game (LotR: WitN) we needed snowy footfalls. Being near Seattle... going up to the mountains to field record wasn't out of the question, but I had already done extensive performance-based, location-based footfall recordings... I preferred to try something new.

So, I took the Monolith purchase card and bought "nice sounding" groceries from the QFC across the street (yes, I was squeezing and critically listening in the aisles) then I recorded source in the vocal booth using my hands to manipulate each ingredient.

Here are the ingredients: cornflour, coffee filters (pressing down, compacting the filters on each other), potato starch, rock salt, rice, couscous, raw noodles, Styrofoam, (sorry coffee beans...you sucked)

Implementation was very straightforward with random containers of walk, run, and sprint triggered via animations and switching with material tagging.

This video is a runtime capture of LotR: WitN during development.

All audio (ambience, foley, etc) was authored and implemented by me.

Foley Design – Complete Footfall Set

(Fmod, Unreal 3)

This is a video of running through a custom world to test my footfalls (thanks to Adam Kay for building the test level). I recorded all the footfalls with intern John Gutierrez on location. We sourced and implemented with a "heel-toe" method to save memory.

My complete set includes "Walk, Run, Sprint, Scuff, Pivot, Land, and Bodyroll" on "Asphalt, Carpet, Concrete, Dirt, Gravel, Linoleum, Metal Grate, Snow, Tile, and Wood".

This video is a runtime capture of an internal executable.

All the audio in video was recorded and implemented by me.

Spell Design – Various Guardians

(Wwise, LithTech)

Lastly, I present a sampling of some of the "spell" sounds I did for Guardians of Middle Earth (2012).

I thought it important keep a similar perspective among Guardians, but cultivate variety among individuals. To that end, I used different source for each character, yet each character's set of spells are constructed from the same aggregate parts.

I also took into special consideration the transient design for each spell in an attempt to avoid a cacophonous mess when many spells are triggered at once.

The video is compilation of runtime captures of various Guardians' spells from GoME. Of course, I had to end the reel with Gandalf. :)

All of the audio in this video was authored and implemented by me.