

Call of Duty: Modern Warfare (2019) Sound and Music Analysis

Introduction

The video game Call of Duty: Modern Warfare (2019) is a first-person shooter created by Infinity Ward and released by Activision. The sixteenth iteration of the Call of Duty franchise, which reimagines the Modern Warfare sub-franchise, provides a highly engaging and emotionally charged gaming encounter. On October 25, 2019, the game was available for PlayStation 4, Xbox One, and Windows platforms. It garnered players' attention due to its immersive gameplay, lifelike graphics, and captivating storyline.

Infinity Ward, Inc. boasts an impressive track record within the gaming industry, having developed the popular game Call of Duty: Modern Warfare (2019). The developers in question have been tasked with creating the inaugural Call of Duty title and seven additional iterations within the Call of Duty franchise. Their proficiency in crafting captivating and inventive gameplay encounters is evident throughout their work. The Special Ops mode of the game also encompasses collaborative gameplay missions that extend the narrative from the campaign, presenting players with novel and stimulating obstacles.

The musical composition of Call of Duty: Modern Warfare (2019) is a result of a collective endeavor. Stephen Barton, a British composer renowned for his contributions to film scores, particularly those composed by Harry Gregson-Williams, was responsible for the majority of the musical compositions featured in the game. Furthermore, the primary motif of the video game was crafted by Harry Gregson-Williams, thereby contributing a distinctive element to the overall auditory encounter. Sarah Schachner, the composer of the official soundtrack for Call of Duty: Modern Warfare (2019), has prior experience in composing the soundtrack for Call of Duty: Infinite Warfare and has also made contributions to the score of Call of Duty: Modern Warfare 3.

Menu Music

The auditory elements of the menu, including sound design and music, in Call of Duty: Modern Warfare (2019) are highly interactive and immersive, as they serve a crucial role in the overall gameplay experience. The auditory elements incorporated in the game menu are thoughtfully crafted to sustain the player's attention and augment the overall quality of the user interface. The auditory components, including sound effects and music, enhance the visual aspects of the menu, resulting in an all-encompassing ambiance from the outset.

The auditory elements in the main menu or submenus of the game accentuate the game's overall aesthetic. The auditory elements of the menu, including the sound design and music, exhibit a raw and forceful quality that reflects the overall mood and environment of the game. The

aforementioned statement establishes a foundation for the dynamic and authentic gameplay experience enthusiasts can anticipate from Call of Duty: Modern Warfare (2019).

The menu music prominently showcases a fusion of electronic and orchestral instrumentation. The musical composition enhances the player's arousal level, amplifying the expectation and enthusiasm for the forthcoming gameplay. The amalgamation of electronic and orchestral timbres generates a vibrant and vigorous auditory terrain that corresponds to the rapid tempo of the game.

The acoustic accompaniment featured in the menu of Call of Duty: Modern Warfare (2019) undergoes alterations for a multitude of rationales, such as the advent of seasonal festivities or software upgrades. The alterations implemented in the game serve to maintain its novelty and enable players to encounter novel musical motifs and atmospheres while navigating through the menus. The dynamic nature of the menu music contributes to a heightened sense of immersion and engagement within the gaming experience.

The sound effects utilized in the menu have been carefully designed to align with the game's overarching aesthetic. Stylized and captivating visual elements enrich the menus, augment user engagement and foster a harmonious audiovisual encounter. The sound effects not only fulfill a utilitarian role in enabling the navigation of menus, but they also enhance the game's overall immersion and verisimilitude.

A salient auditory feature in the menu layout is the sound produced upon selecting a menu item. The visual or auditory stimulus is precise and conspicuous, promptly capturing the player's focus and delivering unambiguous responses to their maneuvers. Implementing this distinctive sound design approach guarantees that users can efficiently and instinctively navigate the menu interface, augmenting the overall user experience.

Asset List

"Call of Duty: Modern Warfare" - Main menu gameplay footage

Main menu music track: "Call of Duty: Modern Warfare Main Theme" by Sarah Schachner

Menu sound effects: button click, menu navigation, radio chatter

Visual assets: main menu background, menu options, submenus

AV Reference Material

Gamemusic. (2019). Sarah Schachner the composing process for CoD | Gamemusic.

Gamemusic | *Listen to Games*. <https://gamemusic.net/sarah-schachner-describes-the-composing-process-for-cod-modern-warfare/>

Matt Butler. (2019, November 8). *Call of Duty: Modern Warfare: Main Menu and Multiplayer UI* [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xkQRqydu8lk>

Modern Warfare Main Theme. (2019, October 18). Spotify.

<https://open.spotify.com/track/256bY4IL8bSL8RIfm6omEZ>

Cutscene Underscore

Cutscenes are a pivotal component in the progression of the narrative and the establishment of a highly realistic and immersive environment within *Call of Duty: Modern Warfare* (2019). Cutscenes initiate missions, disclose pivotal plot elements, and furnish a framework for the player's endeavors. They manifest at diverse junctures throughout the game, encompassing pre and post-missions, inter-location transitions, and critical moments in the narrative arc.

A cinematic and remarkably realistic approach characterizes the cutscenes' visual style in *Modern Warfare* (2019). The employment of cutting-edge graphics technology and motion capture techniques by the developers facilitated the production of character animations that are highly realistic and environments that are intricately detailed. The visual elements are distinguished by their high-definition textures, complex facial expressions, and dynamic camera movements, augmenting the overall immersive experience and engendering a perception of authenticity.

The musical implementation within the cutscenes of *Modern Warfare* (2019) is diverse, fulfilling various roles in augmenting the overall cinematic encounter. The musical compositions utilized in the cutscenes fulfill various functions related to emotional, psychological, physical, and intellectual referencing. Incorporating emotional elements in gameplay has been observed to elicit a potent impact on players, enhancing the scenes' intensity and fostering a more profound connection with the narrative.

The auditory elements employed in the interstitial sequences frequently exhibit a harmonious reflection of the affective and conceptual motifs depicted in the visual medium. Music in the film heightens the emotional impact of various cinematic elements, such as creating a sense of tension during suspenseful moments, amplifying the impact of dramatic reveals, and evoking a sense of urgency during action sequences. Furthermore, incorporating music in the game's narrative augments its psychological and intellectual dimensions by supplementing the development of characters and accentuating the ethical quandaries and ambiguous moral territories explored.

The focal point of examination pertains to a crucial juncture within the game, whereby the leading character, Sergeant Kyle Garrick, undertakes an operation to penetrate a terrorist

sanctuary in the fictitious metropolis of Urzikstan. The hideout has transformed from a hospital to a facility currently utilized by a well-known terrorist who follows the moniker "The Butcher". This individual is currently holding a group of non-combatant hostages. The aforementioned sequence occurs within the context of the "Clean House" mission and is characterized by a heightened sense of intensity and emotional tension.

In the depicted sequence, the user assumes the role of Sergeant Garrick, who commands a group of specialized military personnel through the dimly lit and confined passageways of the medical facility, neutralizing adversaries and liberating captives. The depicted scene underscores the morally equivocal character of Warfare, whereby individuals are compelled to make rapid judgments regarding the sparing or neutralization of potential adversaries, frequently resulting in unforeseen outcomes.

The auditory elements in this scene intensify the dramatic and suspenseful atmosphere, augmenting the player's affective engagement with the unfolding events on the screen. The musical composition, known as "The underscore", blends orchestral components with electronic textures, resulting in a foreboding and somber ambiance. The incorporation of pulsating rhythms and low-frequency tones contributes to the perception of imminent peril and exigency.

The musical composition incorporates prominent instruments, such as low-pitched strings that evoke a feeling of apprehension, alongside percussion instruments like taikos and timpani that emphasize the action and augment the fervor of the battle scenes. The musical texture exhibits high density and busyness, indicative of tumultuous and consequential circumstances.

Modern Warfare (2019) video game features recurrent musical motifs associated with particular characters, temporal periods, or locations. The game incorporates a primary musical motif frequently utilized in pivotal junctures, such as the introductory segment and during significant narrative advancements. The overarching themes of conflict and moral ambiguity are represented in this musical theme, distinguished by a fusion of orchestral and electronic components.

The subject of analysis pertains to the "Clean House" mission's cutscene, which lasts two minutes. The aforementioned scene exemplifies the art of dramaturgy and interpretation as the composer executes, resulting in an intensified state of tension and emotional involvement.

Spotting Notes

0:00-0:30: The sequence commences with a gradual and progressive musical accompaniment characterized by prolonged string notes and understated electronic tonalities. The musical score establishes a foreboding atmosphere, priming the player for the impending peril.

0:30-1:15: Upon breaching the initial room, the special forces team experiences a shift in musical accompaniment, as the soundtrack adopts a rapid tempo and incorporates dynamic percussion, forceful string arrangements, and electronic components. The tempo and intricate composition of

the music amplify the high-energy and action-packed quality of the combat, while the dynamic beats contribute to the feeling of immediacy.

1:15-2:00: At a pivotal juncture, wherein the player is faced with either sparing or eliminating a perceived threat, the musical score adopts a minimalistic and suspenseful quality. The utilization of underscore in this context is characterized by the isolation of individual string notes and the incorporation of atmospheric sound design. This artistic choice effectively conveys the gravity and moral significance of the decision being portrayed.

The composer's rendition of the scene aptly encapsulates the affective and cognitive dimensions of the gaming encounter. The auditory component of the game serves to intensify the dramatic effect, sustain the player's involvement, and fortify the game's core motifs of ethical equivocation and the strict veracity of armed conflict.

(Notes: Time stamps are from the start of the mission, not start of the AV Reference)

AV References

Tomographic. (2021, August 16). *Clean House - The Most Realistic Mission in Call of Duty EVER! [4K UHD]* [Video]. YouTube.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TUu2Si_6b7c

Gameplay Music

The game showcases a gameplay style characterized by high speed and intensity, focusing on realism and tactical decision-making. The level "Piccadilly" is characterized by a unique musical accompaniment and is set amid a terrorist attack in the central region of London within the game. This particular game level highlights the urban warfare component, where players must navigate through densely populated streets and participate in combat at close range.

The musical score implemented in the "Piccadilly" stage serves a variety of purposes in order to augment the overall gameplay encounter. Establishing an atmosphere of chaos and urgency reflects the imminent danger and the imperative for rapid cognitive processing. The dynamic and rapid tempo of the music complements the gameplay mechanics, intensifying the player's physiological response and cognitive concentration during combat scenarios. The amalgamation of orchestral and electronic components engenders a perception of exigency and peril, submerging participants in a situation characterized by elevated risks.

The efficacy of the musical score in the "Piccadilly" stage is praiseworthy, as perceived by a gaming enthusiast. The auditory elements of the game mechanics are complemented by the music, which provides cues and heightens the overall experience's immersive quality. The work

effectively captures the ambiance and affective states linked with urban warfare, engendering an intensified sense of apprehension and exhilaration.

At certain levels, the music exhibits a more fixed quality rather than being responsive to the gameplay. The decision to make this choice could have been motivated by the desire to uphold uniformity and guarantee that the music's distinct ambiance and character correspond with the storyline and visual configuration of the particular level. Maintaining a consistent musical score fosters a sense of cohesiveness and immersion, reinforcing the situation's high-stakes nature.

The musical composition employed in the "Piccadilly" stage amalgamates orchestral and electronic components. Incorporating percussion instruments, including taikos and snares, contributes to a propulsive rhythm that intensifies the feeling of haste and momentum. The strings, specifically the lower-pitched ones, enhance the somber and profound ambiance, introducing an additional stratum of apprehension and ominousness.

The "Piccadilly" stage distinguishes itself from other game levels or areas under its metropolitan milieu and the unique obstacles it poses. In contrast to the expansive battlegrounds or enclosed indoor settings in alternative stages, "Piccadilly" offers players an immersive experience within a densely populated urban landscape, introducing an aspect of unpredictability and disorder. The music effectively portrays the contrast by integrating urban soundscapes and elements, such as distant sirens or people fleeing, amplifying the sense of realism.

AV Reference

AFGuidesHD. (2019, October 28). *Call of Duty Modern Warfare Veteran Walkthrough - Mission 2 - Piccadilly* [Video]. YouTube.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oTmeSFYXNZs>

Music Strings

The utilization of musical strings in *Call of Duty: Modern Warfare* (2019) could be more frequent. The predominant musical score of the game is a fusion of orchestral and electronic components, which synergistically work together to produce a cinematic and immersive gameplay encounter. The rationale behind the lack of notable string sections is attributed to the intended artistic style and the precise affective outcome that the developers and composers sought.

Notably, the incorporation of string instruments accentuates specific musical pieces in the game. In certain situations, such as intense combat sequences or emotionally charged cutscenes, string sections enhance the overall musical composition by providing depth and richness, amplifying these moments' dramatic impact.

Using music stings, such as Win/Lose or in-game stings, is important in emphasizing significant events and actions within the gameplay encounter of Call of Duty: Modern Warfare (2019). The stings refer to brief musical patterns or auditory cues activated in particular instances, such as accomplishing a task, attaining success, or experiencing failure.

The musical cue that typically follows a successful completion of a mission or multiplayer match is often characterized by a positive and victorious tone, enhancing the player's perception of achievement. On the other hand, in instances where players encounter failure or are unable to fulfill specific goals, the musical accompaniment associated with losing typically assumes a more solemn or melancholic tone, eliciting a feeling of disappointment or mirroring the seriousness of the circumstance.

The developer and composer probably deliberately decided to strategically incorporate music stings to promptly provide feedback and strengthen the player's affective reaction to the gameplay. By implementing concise musical motifs and sound effects, the game amplifies the immersive experience and introduces a stratum of dynamic audio cues to accentuate pivotal moments.

The rationale behind the limited employment of musical strings and prioritization of orchestral and electronic components in the soundtrack of Modern Warfare (2019) may have been motivated by the aspiration to establish a unique auditory persona for the game. This decision is consistent with the game's authentic and raw visual style, underscoring the high-stakes and engaging quality of the battle encounters. The developers and composers probably endeavored to achieve equilibrium between musical components that augment the storyline and gameplay while upholding the genuineness and thematic coherence of the game.

Conclusion

In summary, the auditory elements and musical composition of Call of Duty: Modern Warfare (2019) serve a crucial function in augmenting the comprehensive gaming encounter. The auditory landscape is immediately immersive due to the menu music, which combines electronic and orchestral elements to produce a lively and dynamic atmosphere. The variability of the menu music, which is modified to suit various events, maintains a novel and captivating encounter. Throughout the cutscenes, the game's realistic visuals are accompanied by various musical compositions that intensify the emotional resonance and fully engage players in the narrative. In gameplay, the amalgamation of orchestral and electronic elements and the incorporation of percussion instruments generate a dynamic tempo that amplifies the impression of urgency and progression. The auditory elements of the game serve to enhance the immersive nature of the gameplay, eliciting emotions of both anticipation and excitement. Although the utilization of musical strings within the game could be more prevalent, their discerning integration during high-stakes combat sequences or emotionally charged cinematic segments contributes to the profundity and complexity of the overarching musical arrangement.

Furthermore, the deliberate incorporation of musical stings at pivotal moments and actions augments player involvement and affective reaction. The auditory elements, encompassing sound effects, and music, in Call of Duty: Modern Warfare (2019) aptly enhance the game's immersive and affective qualities. The synergistic collaboration between composers Stephen Barton, Harry Gregson-Williams, and Sarah Schachner, in conjunction with the proficient development team at Infinity Ward, has yielded an immersive and enthralling acoustic encounter that effectively complements the game's photorealistic visuals and captivating narrative.

References

AFGuidesHD. (2019, October 28). *Call of Duty Modern Warfare Veteran Walkthrough - Mission 2 - Piccadilly* [Video]. YouTube.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oTmeSFYXNZs>

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<https://www.ign.com/articles/2019/10/24/call-of-duty-modern-warfare-review>

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