

# The Emotional Puppeteer:

Uncovering the musical strings that tie our hearts to games

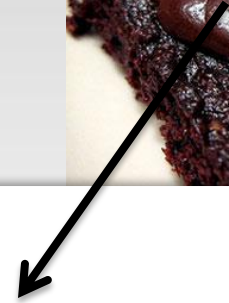
Marty O'Donnell, Audio Director & Composer

Brandi House, User Researcher



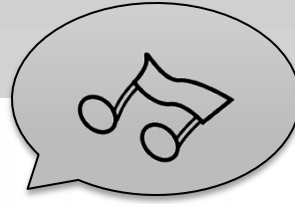
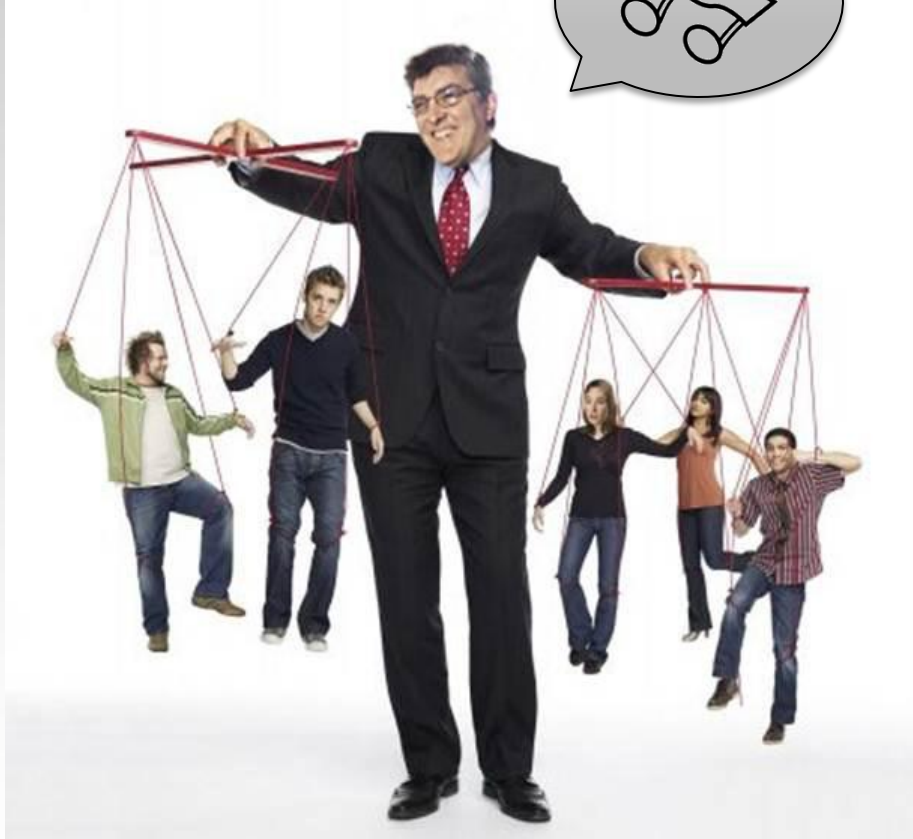


Game  
Development



Exciting  
Mysterious  
Heroic  
Aggressive  
Stealthy  
Powerful  
Triumphant  
Hopeful  
Serene  
Primal  
Foreboding





But...



... what about protecting my golden goose?



- People are... complicated
- Arm yourself for battle
- And, if all else fails...





So! Let's talk about feelings.



As you listen, think of how this piece makes you feel...



## Music Selections:

<b><i>Lento</i></b> – Alien 3	Elliot Goldenthal
<b><i>Film 1</i></b> – 16MM	Jorane
<b><i>Gracie's Recapture</i></b> – Long Walk Home, Rabbit Proof Fence	Peter Gabriel
<b><i>Leave No Man</i></b> and <b><i>Chant</i></b> – Black Hawk Down	Hans Zimmer
<b><i>Down in the Lab</i></b> – Underworld	Renholder
<b><i>Hyper Sleep</i></b> – Alien	Jerry Goldsmith
<b><i>Spacey, Pulsey</i></b> , and other clips – Halo: Reach	O'Donnell/Salvatori



- Listen to this piece, and think of any scene, story or image that comes to mind. What do you see happening here?



*"... Firing has long since ceased, and a surviving soldier looks left and right, taking in the awful sights in the late afternoon sun. Stretcher bearers lift wounded and maimed comrades off the sloping grasses in slow-motion, while medics tilt waterskins across their lips. Their uniforms are streaked with dirt, blood, and grass.*

*After a few moments, the soldier sees his brother, still alive and standing, and they give each other a knowing look -- happy they are both alive and unhurt, but recognizing this is no time for celebration."*





- Choose up to 3 words that best describe the feelings evoked while listening to this music:



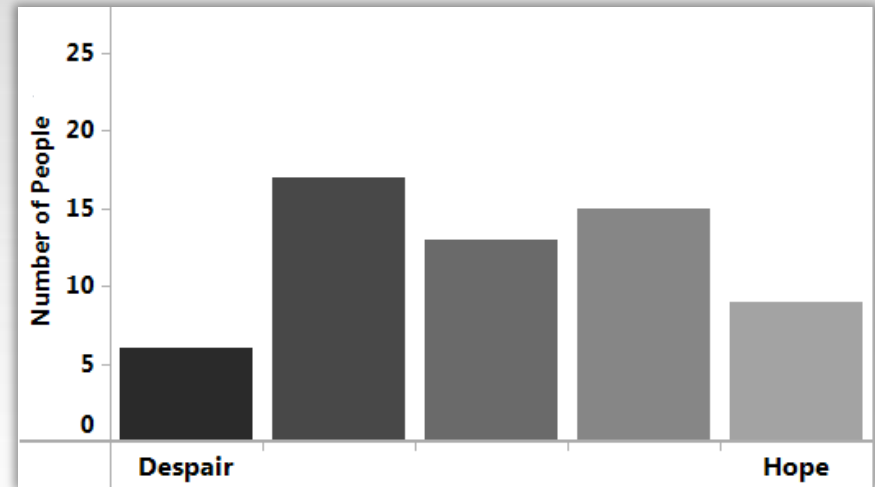
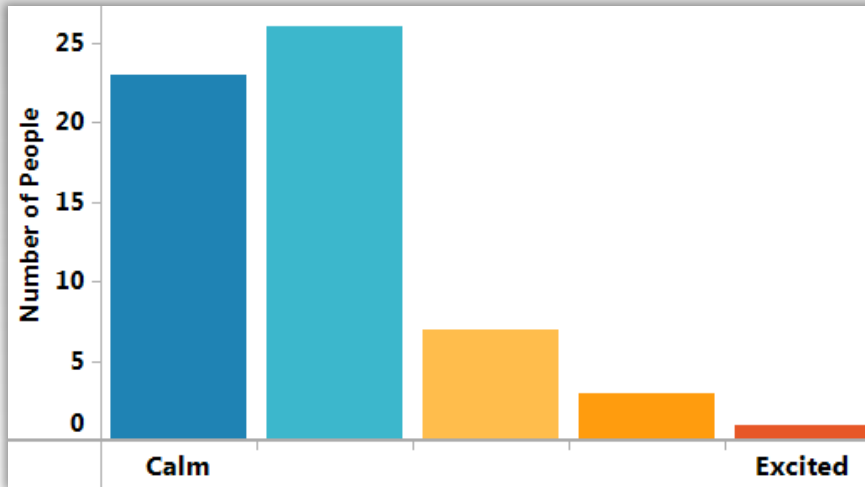
- |              |              |
|--------------|--------------|
| - Aggressive | - Ancient    |
| - Creepy     | - Evocative  |
| - Exciting   | - Foreboding |
| - Glorious   | - Heroic     |
| - Hopeful    | - Joyful     |
| - Moving     | - Mysterious |
| - Powerful   | - Primal     |
| - Reflective | - Sad        |
| - Serene     | - Stealthy   |
| - Tense      | - Triumphant |



Emotional Fingerprint



- Rate your emotional state at the end of this piece of music:



- Planned Vertical Synchronicity... it's baack!

Ambient



*"...that moment of uncertainty, trying to find one's bearings in search of... something."*

Percussive



*"...the massive air-land force rolls off towards the sunset, ready to kick the ass of anything in its way..."*

Combination



*"I'm flying through space, in enemy territory. I think I'm safe, but I can't be sure."*

Ancient  
Foreboding  
Sad  
Powerful  
Reflective  
Mysterious  
Glorious  
Evocative  
Serene  
Moving  
Hopeful  
Creepy

+

Moving  
Tense  
Foreboding  
Exciting  
Glorious  
Stealthy  
Primal  
Heroic  
Powerful  
Aggressive

=

Primal  
Aggressive  
Exciting  
Powerful  
Heroic  
Foreboding  
Tense  
Serene  
Hopeful  
Mysterious  
Reflective  
Triumphant  
Glorious  
Sad  
Stealthy  
Ancient



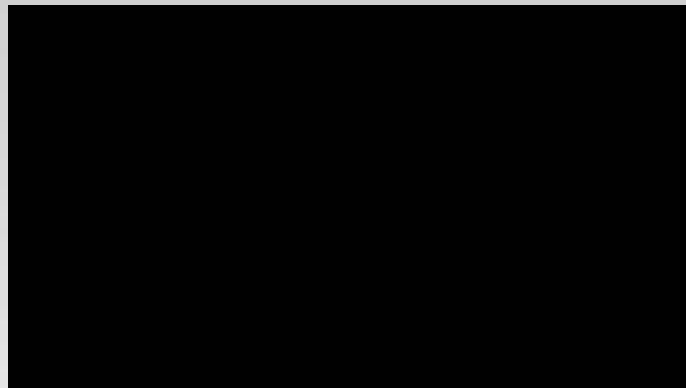
So... what  
does this  
have to do  
with *games*?



50 total  
combinations  
of music with  
videos from  
games



BUNGIE

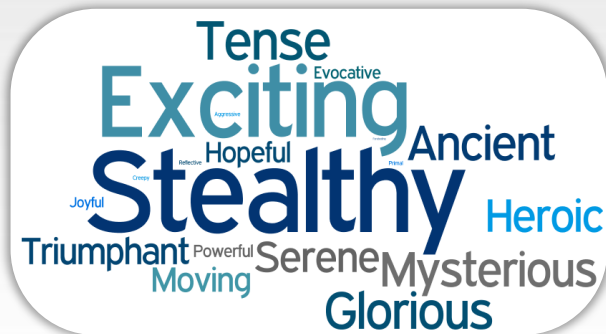


92% of the combinations were correlated with emotions of the music alone

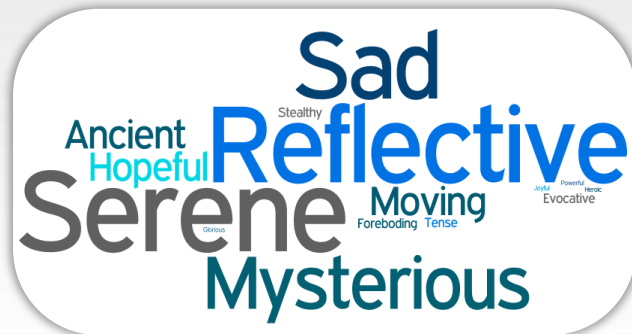
Music 68%

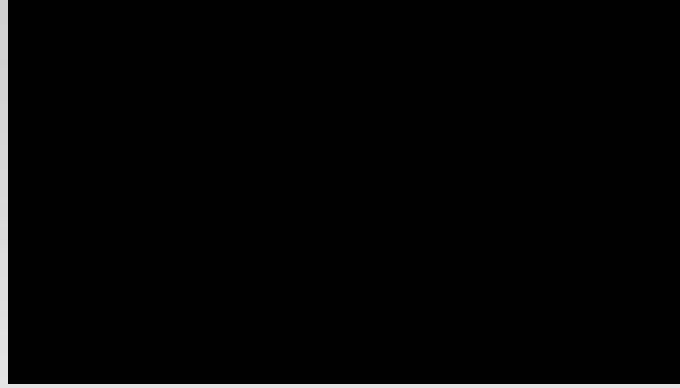


Visuals 2%



Combination





The remaining **8%**  
of the combinations  
were too disastrous  
for human brains  
to accept

Music

**0%**

Hopeful Joyful  
Mysterious Serene  
Tense Reflective  
Exciting  
Glorious Stealthy  
Evocative Foreboding  
Triumphant Ancient  
Moving

Visuals

**65%**

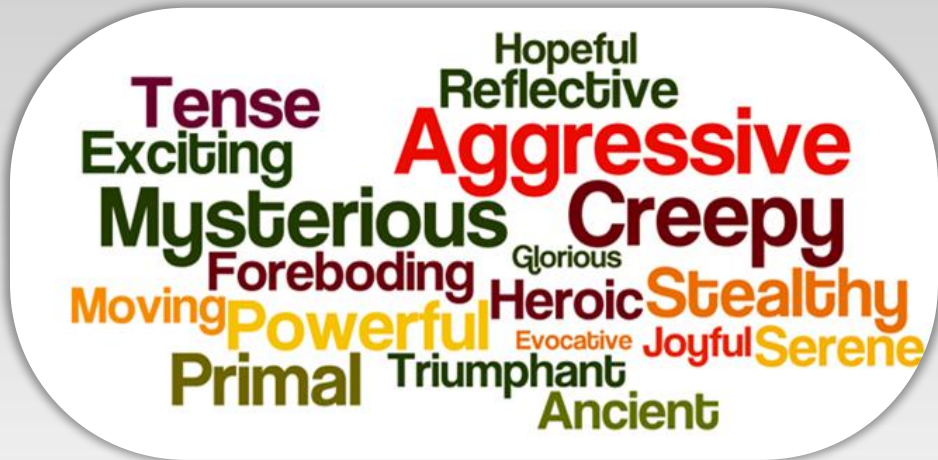
Powerful Triumphant  
Tense Heroic  
Aggressive  
Exciting  
Creepy Primal  
Hopeful

Combination

Heroic  
Serene  
Tense  
Triumphant  
Aggressive  
Mysterious  
Exciting  
Powerful  
Primal  
Creepy  
Sad Foreboding  
Hopeful  
Reflective Moving



## Music Alone



**Music > Visuals:** Foreboding, Hopeful,  
Powerful, Primal, Sad, Serene

**43%\*** avg – explains the overall experience

## Visuals Alone



**Visuals > Music:** Stealthy and Heroic

**33%\*** avg – explains the overall experience





Ambient

42%



Serene  
Reflective  
Ancient  
Mysterious  
Tense  
Stealthy  
Evocative  
Creepy  
Hopful  
Sad  
Foreboding

Music Combo

38%



Stealthy  
Mysterious  
Tense  
Exciting  
Creepy  
Aggressive  
Foreboding  
Moving  
Heroic  
Ancient  
Evocative  
Serene  
Reflective

Final Combo

Exciting  
Stealthy  
Mysterious  
Tense  
Ancient  
Serene  
Foreboding  
Creepy  
Sad  
Hopful  
Moving  
Aggressive  
Triumphant

Percussive

3%



Stealthy  
Tense  
Exciting  
Aggressive  
Powerful  
Mysterious  
Foreboding  
Heroic  
Primal  
Joyful

Visuals

54%

Mysterious  
Tense  
Exciting  
Foreboding  
Serene  
Moving  
Ancient  
Stealthy  
Heroic  
Creepy  
Evocative  
Glorious  
Primal  
Aggressive  
Powerful  
Triumphant  
Hopeful



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- **Man up, and talk about the 'feelings' in your game**
- **Prioritize music crafted for your unique experience**
- **Use research to support your goose**

