



A Modern Take on Historical Fiction: Music for *Call of Duty: WWII*

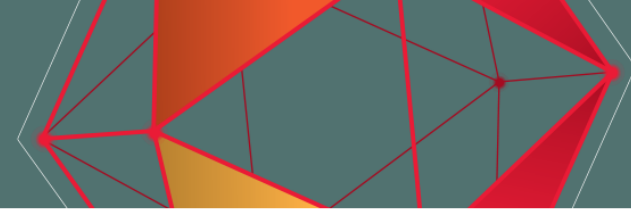
Wilbert Roget, II
Composer, RogetMusic LLC



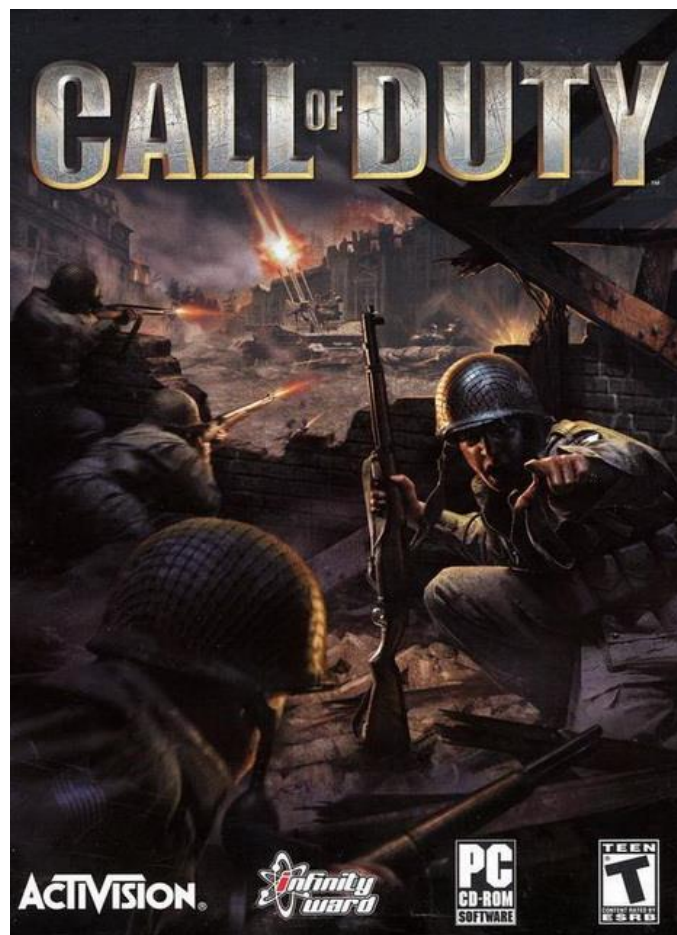
Content Warning:

In-Game graphic violence/insinuation,
depictions of war





INTRODUCTION – Franchise History

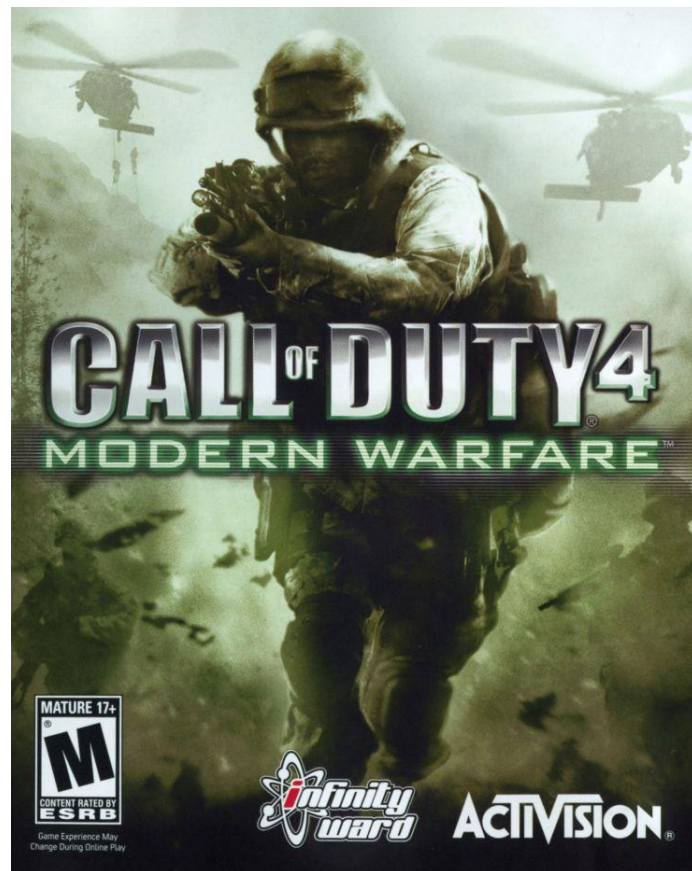


- *Call of Duty, 2003*





INTRODUCTION – Franchise History

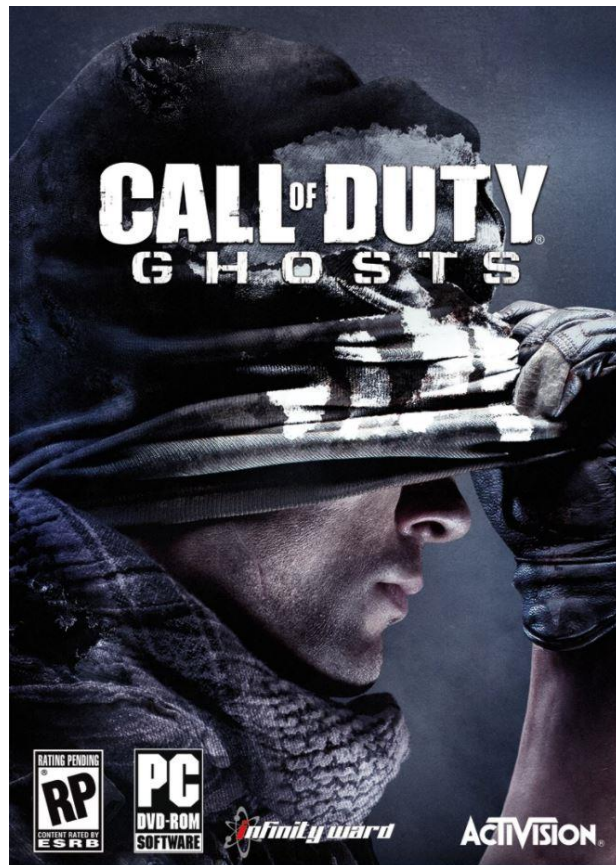


- *Call of Duty: Modern Warfare, 2007*





INTRODUCTION – Franchise History



- *Call of Duty: Ghosts, Advanced Warfare, Black Ops III, Infinite Warfare (2013-2016)*



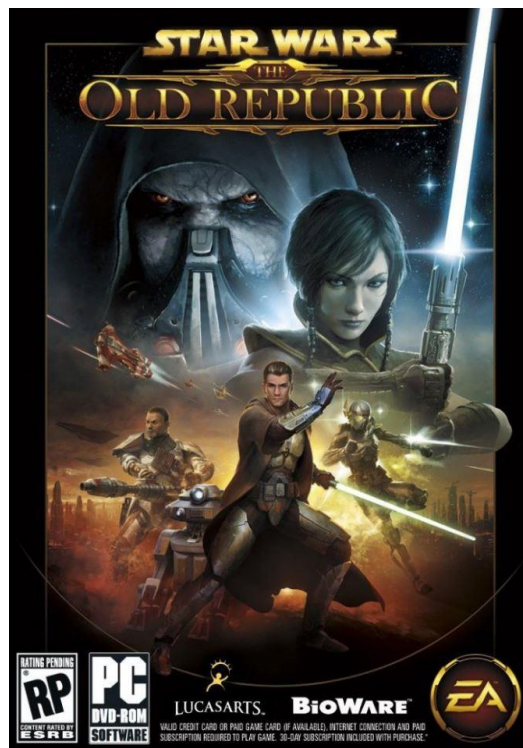
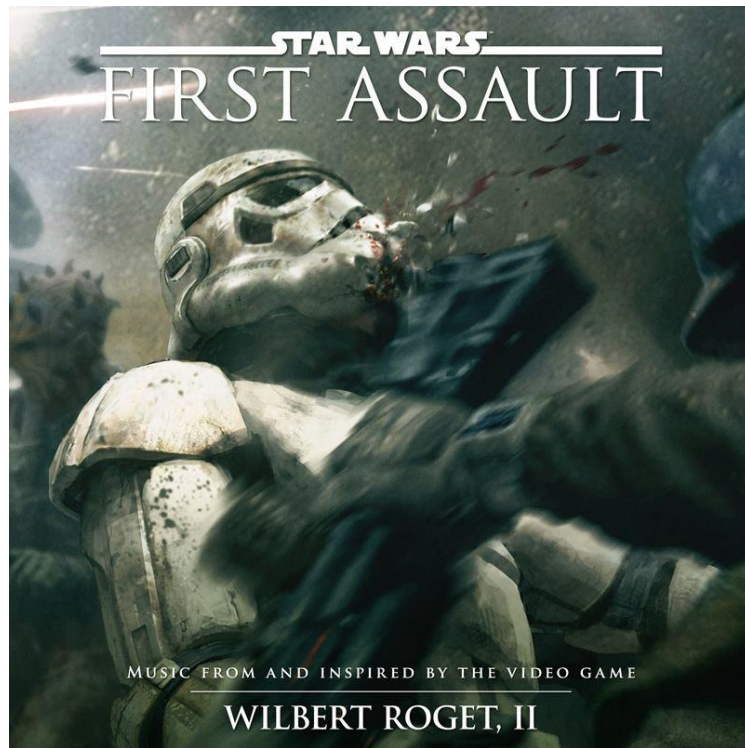
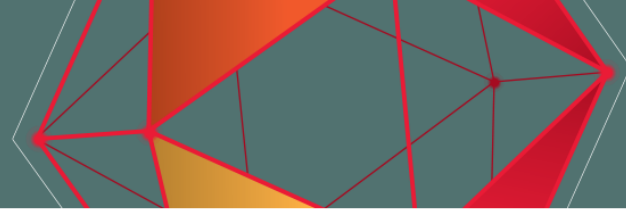


CALL^{OF}DUTY.
WWII

THE *Call of Duty* WWII PROBLEM:

- Too modern for traditional orchestra
- Synths inappropriate for WWII setting
- Epic hybrid sound inappropriate for character-driven storyline







OVERVIEW – Music Direction Pillars

- WWII setting
- Modern presentation
- Relatable, human vibe





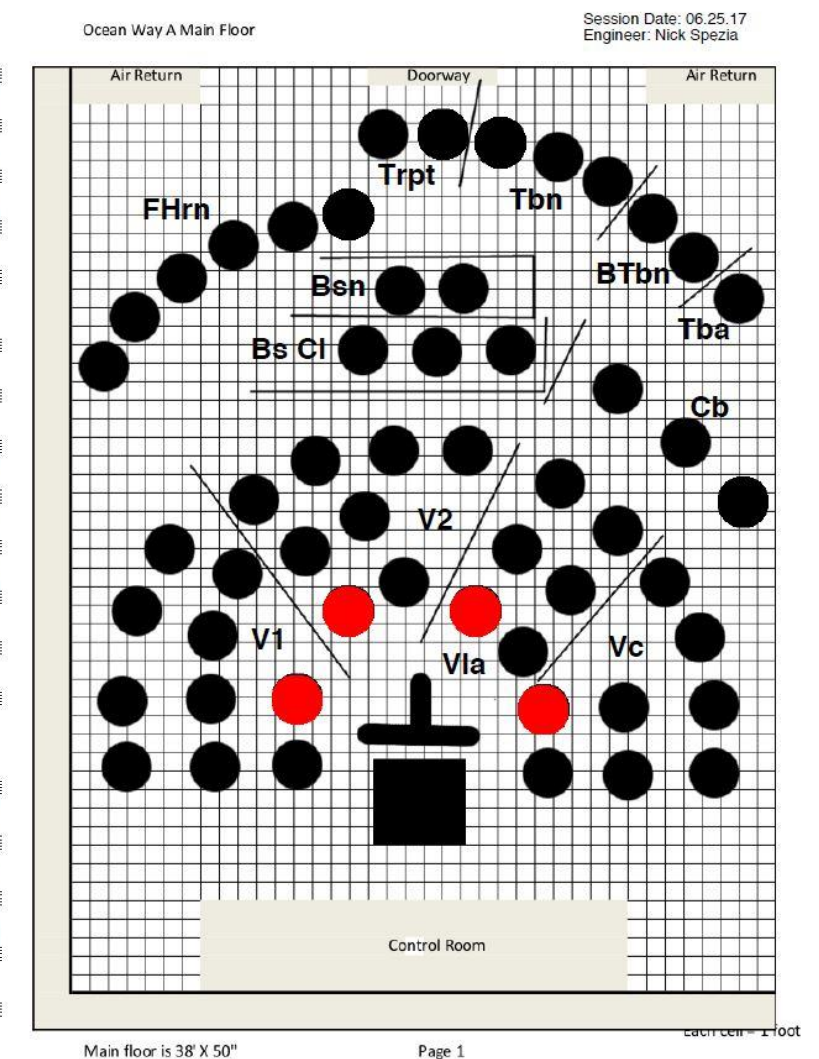
PART 1/4 – WWII Setting, Traditionalism

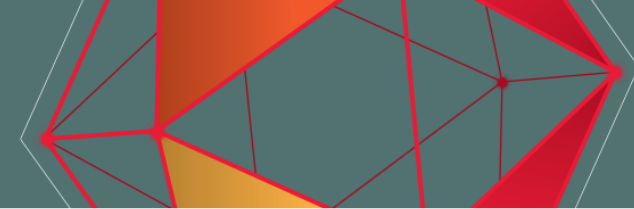
Orchestration: Ocean Way Studios, Nashville

- 3 Bass Clarinets (dbl. Contrabass Clarinet)
- 2 Bassoons (dbl. Contrabassoon)
- 6 Horns in F
- 2 Trumpets
- 3 Tenor Trombones
- 2 Bass Trombones
- Tuba
- 35 Strings (10, 8, 6, 8, 3)

* “Striping” by choice, not necessity

The image shows a musical score for three sections: WINDS, BRASS, and STRINGS. The WINDS section includes Bass Clarinet 1, Bassoon, and Horns 1-4. The BRASS section includes Trumpets, Trombones (Tenor, Bass), and Tuba. The STRINGS section includes Violins (I, II), Viola, Cello, and String Bass. The score is written for a 4/4 time signature with a tempo of 129. The WINDS and BRASS sections have a 4/4 time signature, while the STRINGS section has a 4/4 time signature. The score is written for a 4/4 time signature with a tempo of 129.





PART 1/4 – WWII Setting, Traditionalism

Melody: Leitmotifs!

- Allies
- Axis
- Winter combat motif
- Urban combat motif
- The French Resistance
- “The Call of Duty”

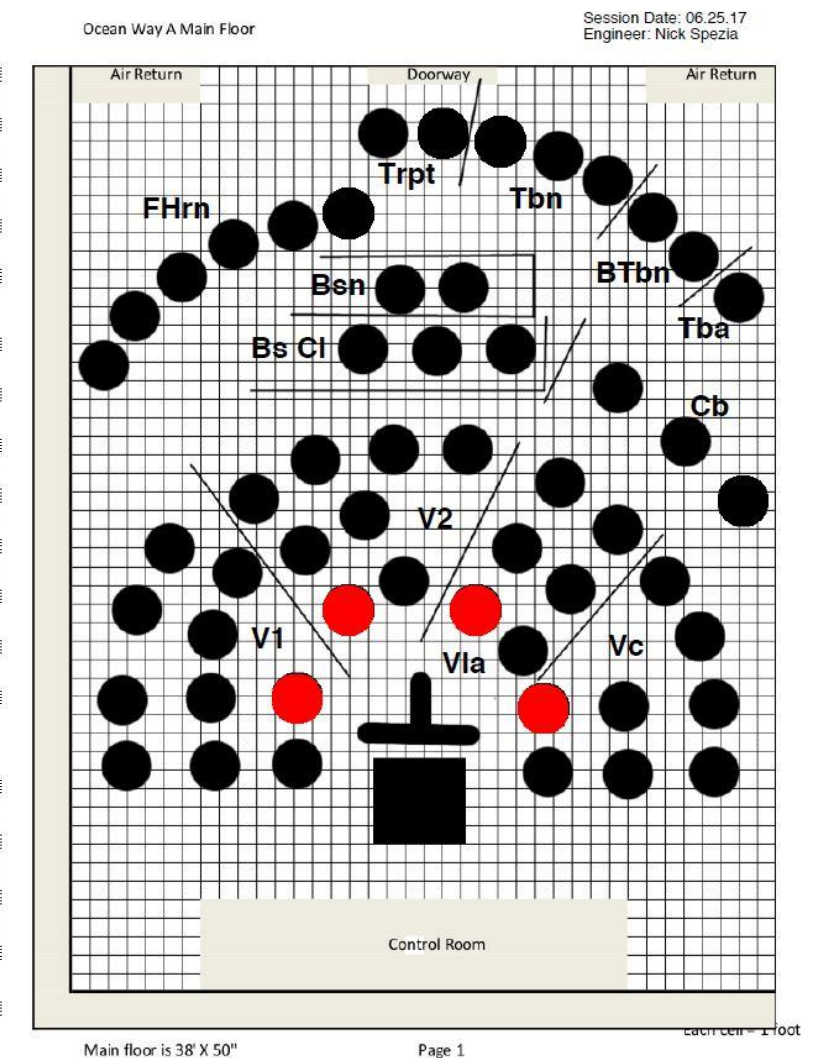
WINDS

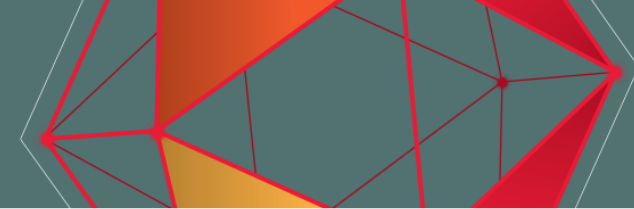
BRASS

STINGS

Tempo: ♩ = 129

Measures 1-8 are shown with fingerings (4, 5, 7) and dynamics (f, sf, f).





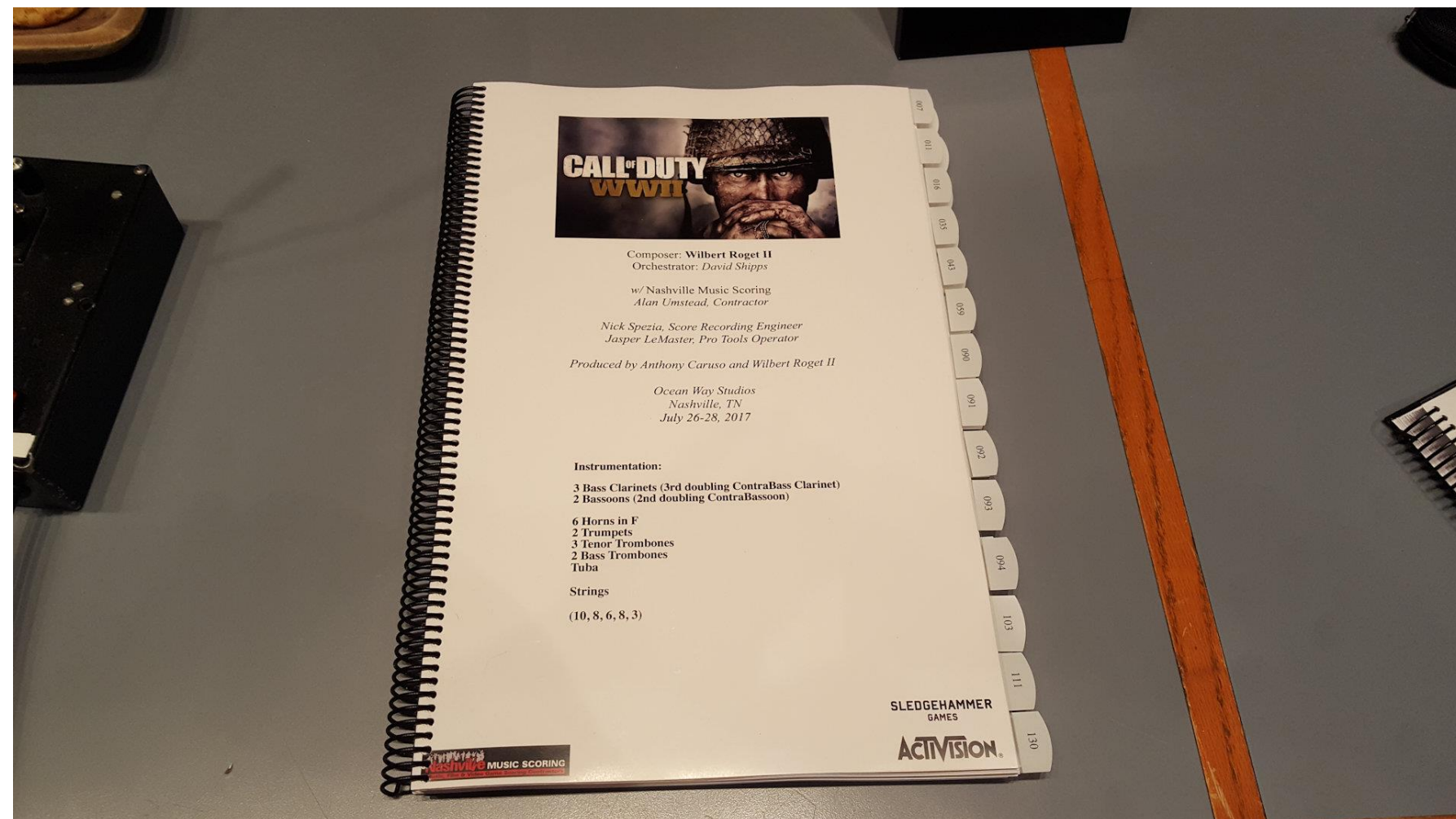
PART 1/4 – WWII Setting, Traditionalism

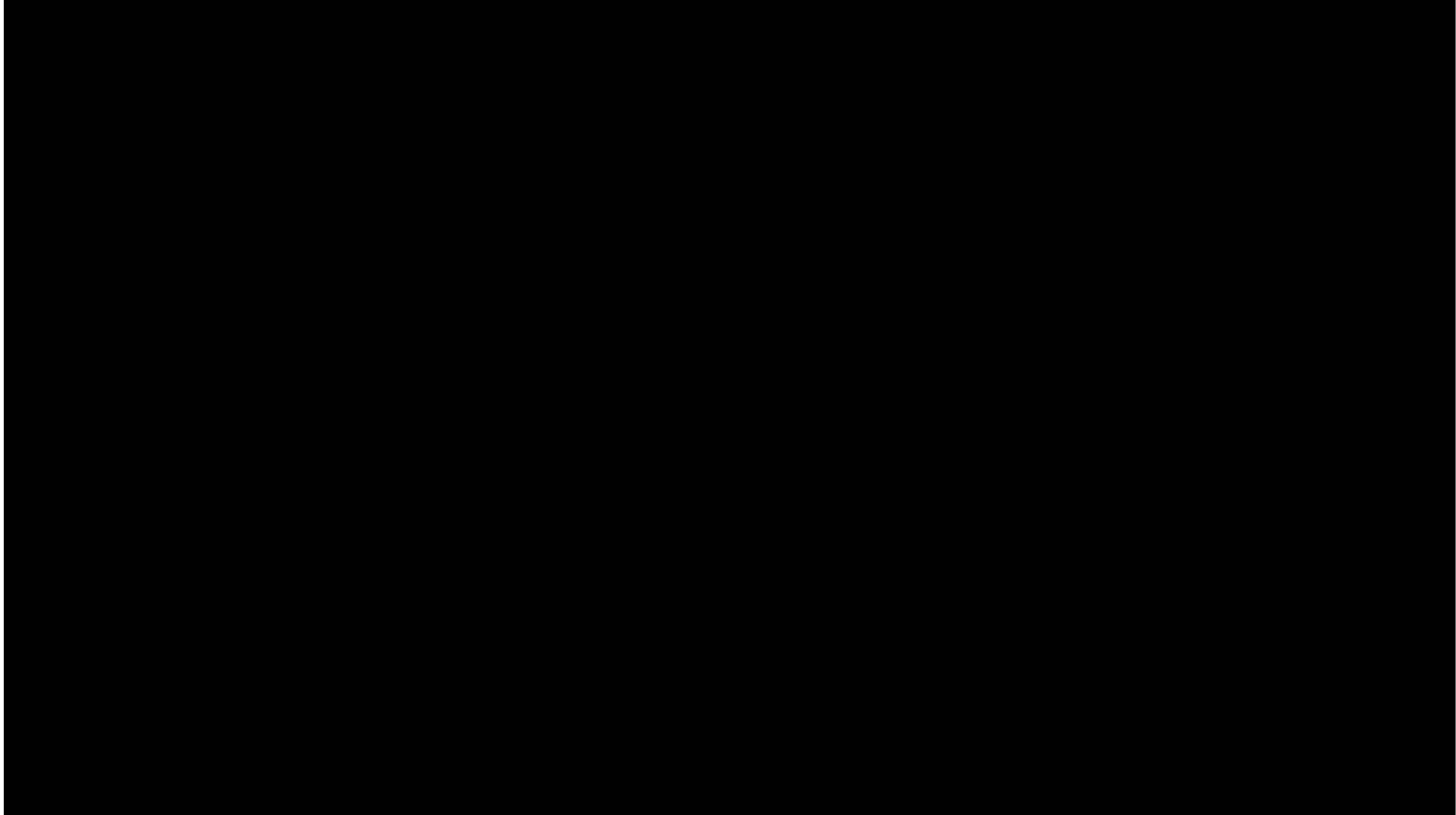
Sonic Restraint

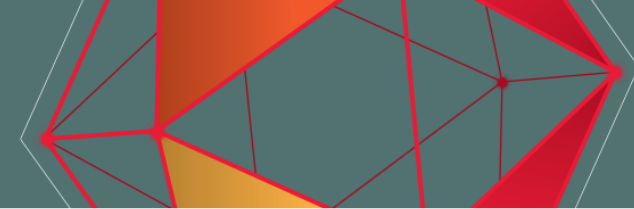
- No “big drums”, trailer percussion
- No overt modern synth / synth perc
- No mallets, high winds, overt high brass

Instead....

- ...string quartet!
- Solo cello!

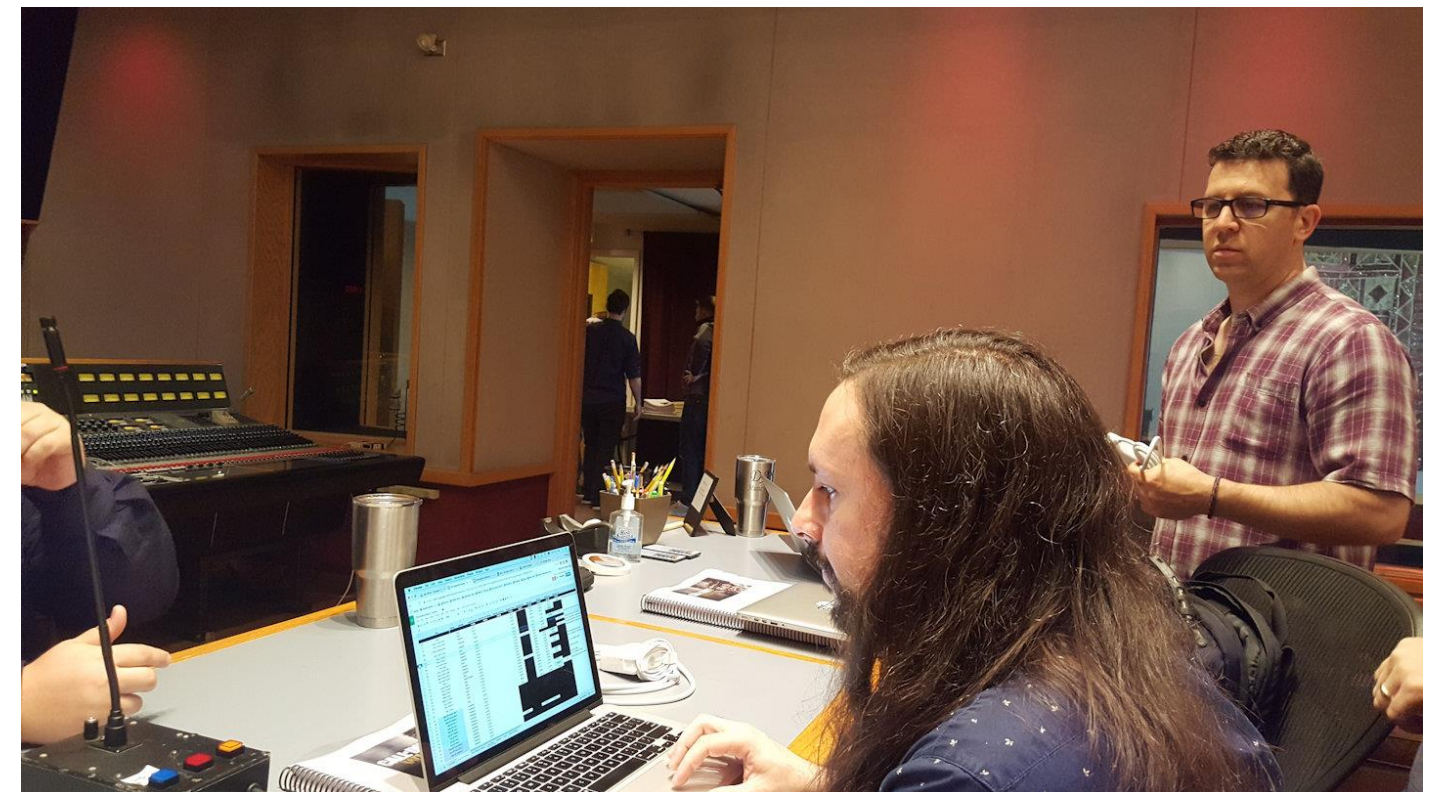






PART 2/4 – Modern Production

- Sony Interactive Entertainment music team; “Remote Control” style production





PART 2/4 – Modern Production

- “Suites”, not specific in-game cues
 - *Nonlooping, 2.5-3min*
 - *Included stingers, endings*
 - *Varied intensity within; melodies, builds*
- 120min score → ~450mins content!

Title	Intensity	Tempo	Length		Nashville June	Nashville July	Quartet Time	Direction
			Assigned	Delivered				
			1:58:23	2:06:54	1:01:52	1:01:20	0:17:25	
010 Urban Tension Suite	Suspense	99	0:03:00	0:02:57	0:02:57		0:00:42	Refer to marignn_capture_033017.mp4, the sniping section. Cue should keep medium level tension, have some moments but not trying to like punctuate every gunshot. Not for stealth, definitely for dangerous situation, but maybe not a situation where you're under direct heavy fire. - More music showcase
011 Winter Combat Suite 1	Action	114	0:03:00	0:03:16		0:03:10	0:01:22	refer to bulge_capture_040517.mp4 and taken_capture_040517. Keeping with our established feel for combat and action, try and capture some of the bleakness and cold, use the environment as inspiration.
012 Winter Tension Suite 1	Suspense	87	0:03:00	0:03:23	0:03:23		0:00:58	refer to bulge_capture_040517.mp4 and taken_capture_040517. Keeping with our established feel for combat and action, try and capture some of the bleakness and cold, use the environment as inspiration.
013 Home Suite	Underscore	87	0:02:00	0:02:00	0:02:00			What does home sound like? refer to farm_capture_040517.mp4 and beginning part of hurtgen_capture_040517 with the piano.
014 Allied Faction Suite 2	Multiplayer	78	0:03:00	0:02:51	0:02:51			Same approach as Hub 1, just explore new moods. Dulcimer in low register could be cool.
015 Axis Faction Suite 2	Multiplayer	69	0:03:00	0:03:10	0:03:10		0:01:33	Same approach as Hub 1, just explore new moods and areas.
016 Allied MP Round Start 2	Multiplayer	Axis Round Start: 90	0:00:15	0:00:20		0:00:20		Darker, grittier, more violent set
017 Axis MP Round Start 2	Multiplayer	96	0:00:15	0:00:29		0:00:29		Darker, grittier, more violent set
018 Allied MP Halftime 1	Multiplayer	90	0:00:15	0:00:23		0:00:23		
019 Allied MP Win 1	Multiplayer	87	0:00:15	0:00:27		0:00:27		
020 Allied MP Loss 1	Multiplayer	84	0:00:15	0:00:20		0:00:20		
021 Allied MP Draw 1	Multiplayer	90	0:00:15	0:00:25		0:00:25		
022 Axis MP Halftime 1	Multiplayer	90	0:00:15	0:00:20		0:00:20		
023 Axis MP Win 1	Multiplayer	90	0:00:15	0:00:22		0:00:22		
025 Axis MP Loss 1	Multiplayer	90	0:00:15	0:00:20		0:00:20		Need a more definitive Loss sound for Axis Set 1
026 Axis MP Draw 1	Multiplayer	90	0:00:15	0:00:18		0:00:18		
027 Allied MP Halftime 2	Multiplayer	126	0:00:15	0:00:18		0:00:18		Darker, grittier, more violent set
028 Allied MP Win 2	Multiplayer	126	0:00:15	0:00:25		0:00:25		Darker, grittier, more violent set
029 Allied MP Loss 2	Multiplayer	81	0:00:15	0:00:31		0:00:31		Darker, grittier, more violent set
030 Allied MP Draw 2	Multiplayer	84	0:00:15	0:00:21		0:00:21		Darker, grittier, more violent set
031 Axis MP Halftime 2	Multiplayer	96	0:00:15	0:00:18		0:00:18		Darker, grittier, more violent set
032 Axis MP Win 2	Multiplayer	96	0:00:15	0:00:23		0:00:23		Darker, grittier, more violent set
033 Axis MP Loss 2	Multiplayer	96	0:00:15	0:00:21		0:00:21		Darker, grittier, more violent set
034 Axis MP Draw 2	Multiplayer	96	0:00:15	0:00:22		0:00:22		Darker, grittier, more violent set
035 Action 3	Action	129/ 105 (From bar 8)	0:03:00	0:02:45		0:02:45	0:01:18	Another one like Action 2. Rock Those Themes. Spaces and changes. Keep it fresh and exciting. - This suite should have material that can work as underscore for 2 different types of briefing, bigger more cinematic ones, and shorter in-mission briefs. See hurtgen_capture_040517.mp4 at 2:25 for one of the "bigger" briefings. See hurtgen_capture_040517.mp4 at 15:25 for a smaller, "in mission" briefing. Ideally there is a lot of vertical editing fodder to cut down simpler versions to work with both types. - Should be simple, not too intrusive, thematic but not in your face. In it's full vertical form, it may sound like too much, but will likely be edited down almost every time. - Should have a bit of motion to it, not like ambient but also not action, some kind of motoring is good, prepare for action... - Always will be under dialogue. - in the war bin brass would come in and give a very detached, out of touch speech. "You've been freezing, starving, now you
036 Mission Briefing Suite 1	Underscore	63	0:03:00	0:03:23	0:03:28			





PART 2/4 – Modern Production

- Stemmed delivery!
 - Editing freedom
 - Mix freedom/guide
 - New cues/cinematics from stem elements





PART 2/4 – Modern Production

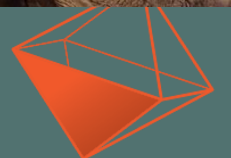
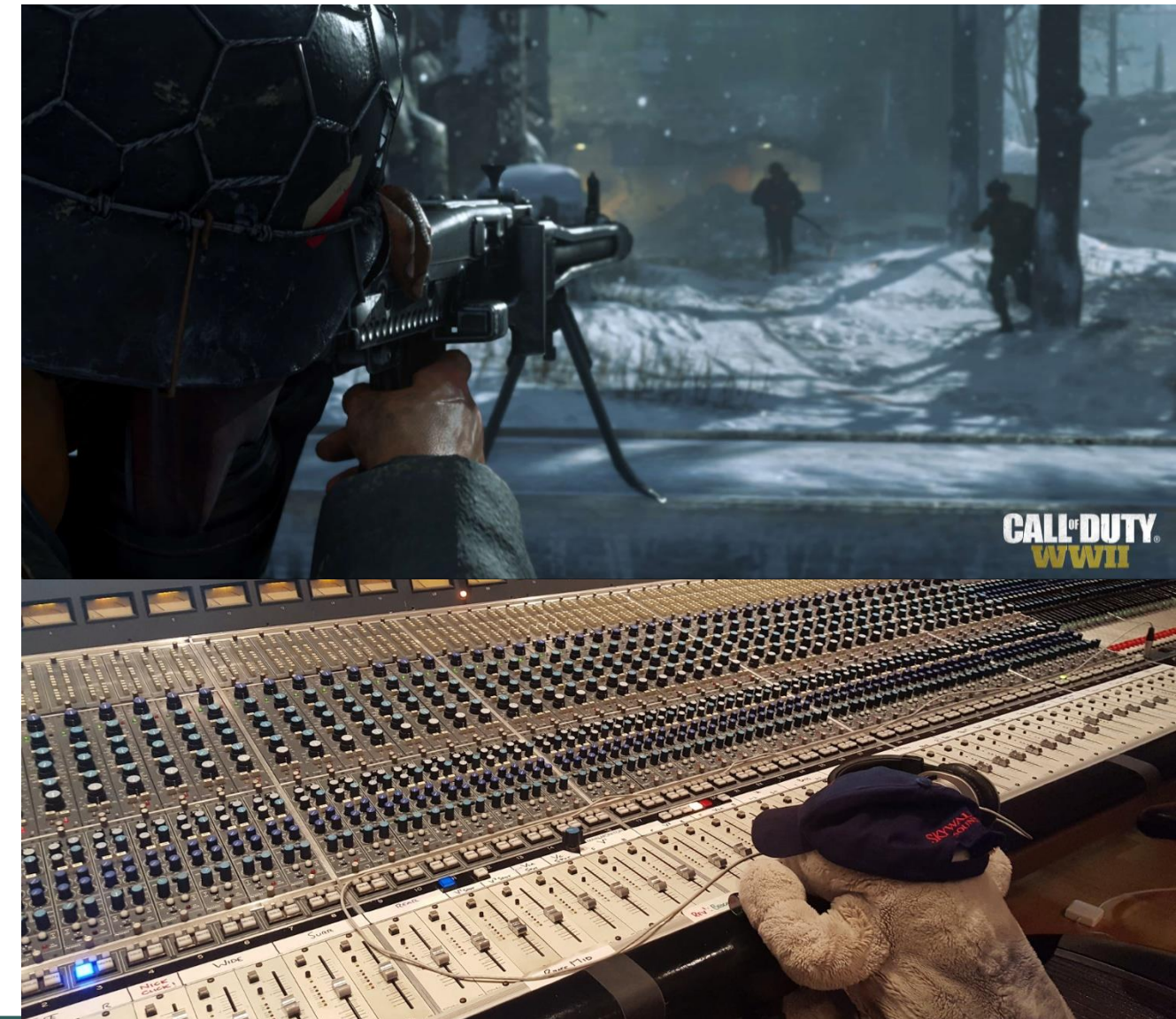
- Aggressively “striped” recordings!





PART 2/4 – Modern Production

- Early focus on in-game mix:
 - No high winds/brass, mallets, or snare drums
 - Trumpets only for doubling horns (“instrumental EQ”)
 - Expanded low winds/brass, “synth tuba”
 - Test compositions against footage!!





PART 2/4 – Modern Production

- Signature sounds:

“Memory of War” echo-horns



Handwritten musical score for horns and trombone. The top section is titled "HORNS" and "990B - HORN CALLS". It includes the instruction: "★ Play cells randomly at any tempo. Continue for 30 sec. ★". The notation shows a horn line with various notes and rests, including a "Tutti" marking. Below the notation, it says "(all the horns begin immediately after hearing horn 1)". The bottom section is titled "TENOR TROMBONE" and "990C - TROMBONE AIR RAID". It includes the instruction: "(Continuous slow ramp)". The notation shows a trombone line with a continuous slow ramp. A legend on the right side of the page lists: ① Ten. 1, ② Tutti, ③ Ten. 1 flutter, ④ Tutti flutter.





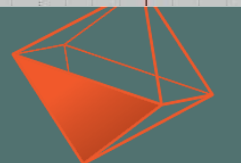
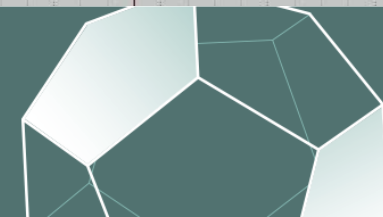
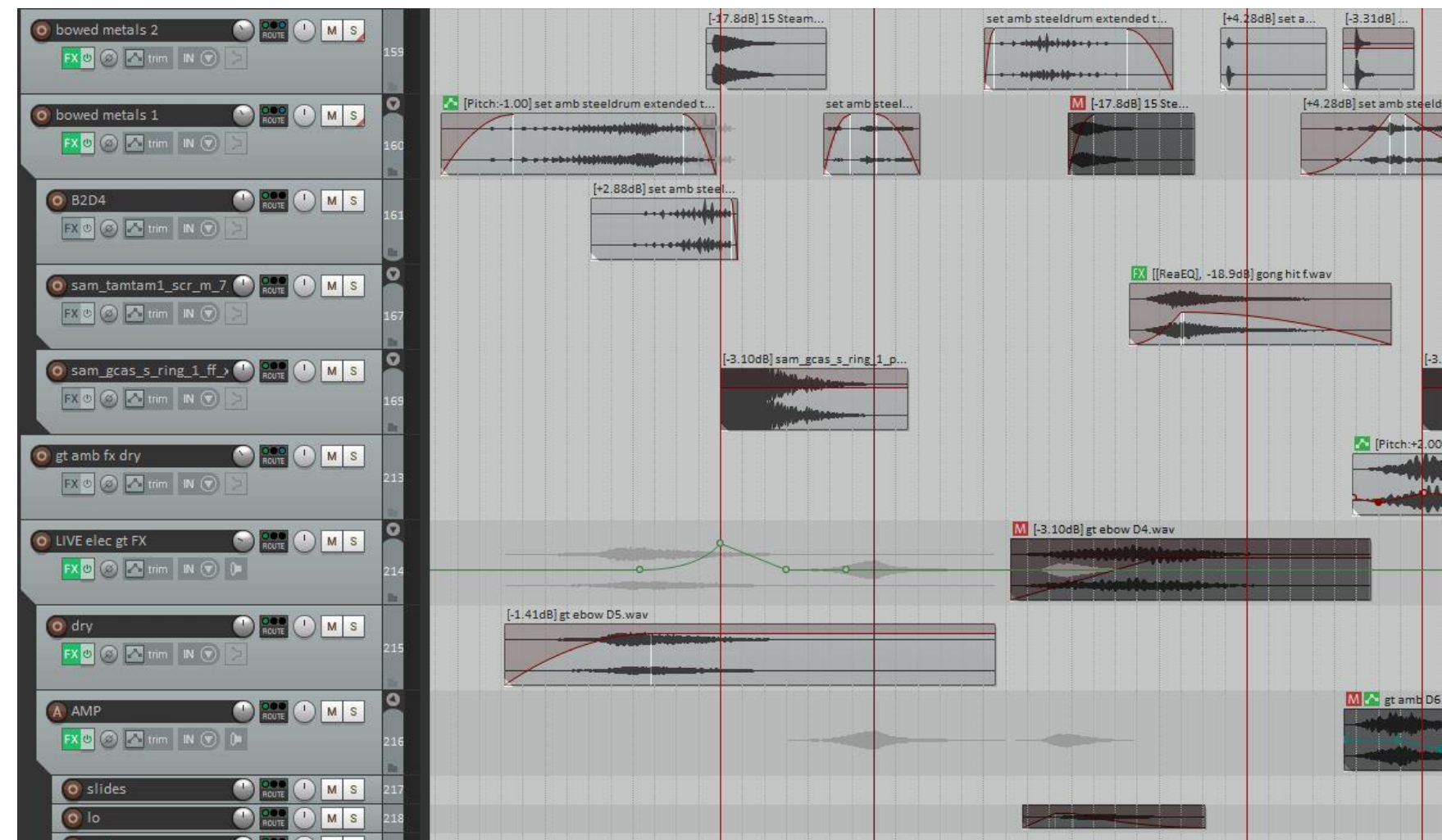
PART 2/4 – Modern Production

- Signature sounds:

“Haze of War” *Musique concrète*



“Haze of War” Air raid sounds





PART 2/4 – Modern Production

- Extended playing techniques
 - Strings “overpressure”
 - Aleatoric orchestral techniques
 - “Incorrect” sound production

STRINGS

OVERDUB

1 player - sul pont.
(start fast, get slower)

2 player - sul pont.
(start fast, get slower)

1 player - sul pont.
(start fast, get slower)

more vib.
Back desk - random bends up 1 quarter tone

28 29 30 31 32





PART 2/4 – Modern Production

- Sample library!!
 - Strings: taps, overpressure, cluster staccato
 - Brass: bell taps, drooping “air raid” clusters, air blowing, sforzando “bwaah” clusters, “echo-horns”

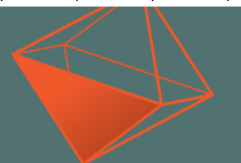
Score for strings and brass instruments, measures 33-63.

Measures 33-47:

- B. Tbn.**: Tap/flick bell of instrument; repeat 7x (measures 38-40), Tap/flick continuously (measures 41-43).
- Vln. 1**: Mid cluster stacc, Cellos only, 6x Repeat, *ff* and *p* (measures 33-37), Tap body of instrument; repeat 7x (measures 38-40), Tap body continuously (measures 41-43).
- Vln. 2**: Mid cluster stacc, Cellos only, 6x Repeat, *ff* and *p* (measures 33-37), Tap body of instrument; repeat 7x (measures 38-40), Tap body continuously (measures 41-43).
- Vc.**: Mid cluster stacc, Cellos only, 6x Repeat, *ff* and *p* (measures 33-37), Tap body of instrument; repeat 7x (measures 38-40), Tap body continuously (measures 41-43).

Measures 48-63:

- Vln. 1**: Continuous col legno battuto throughout entire range (measures 48-53), Scratchbowing (overpressure), violins only (measures 54-63).
- Vln. 2**: Continuous col legno battuto throughout entire range (measures 48-53), Scratchbowing (overpressure), violins only (measures 54-63).
- Vc.**: Continuous col legno battuto throughout entire range (measures 48-53).
- Hn.**: D: Brass wind blowing (measures 54-56), Blow through instrument (no buzz, no pitch, stagger breathing) (measures 57-60), Blow through instrument (no buzz, no pitch, stagger breathing), depressing valves randomly (measures 61-63).





PART 2/4 – Modern Production

- Some *limited* synthesizer, FX processing...





PART 3/4 – The “Human” Aspect

- Personal, character-based storytelling





PART 3/4 – The “Human” Aspect

- Avoid the “epic”!





PART 3/4 – The “Human” Aspect

- Recording and mix





PART 3/4 – The “Human” Aspect

- “Less syllables”





PART 3/4 – The “Human” Aspect

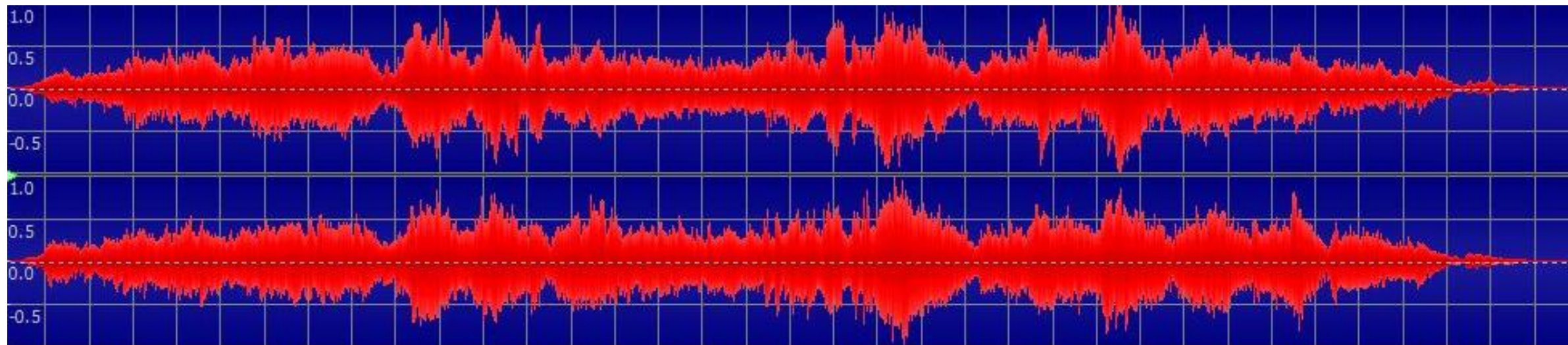
“Scoring in the First Person”





PART 4/4 – Main Theme

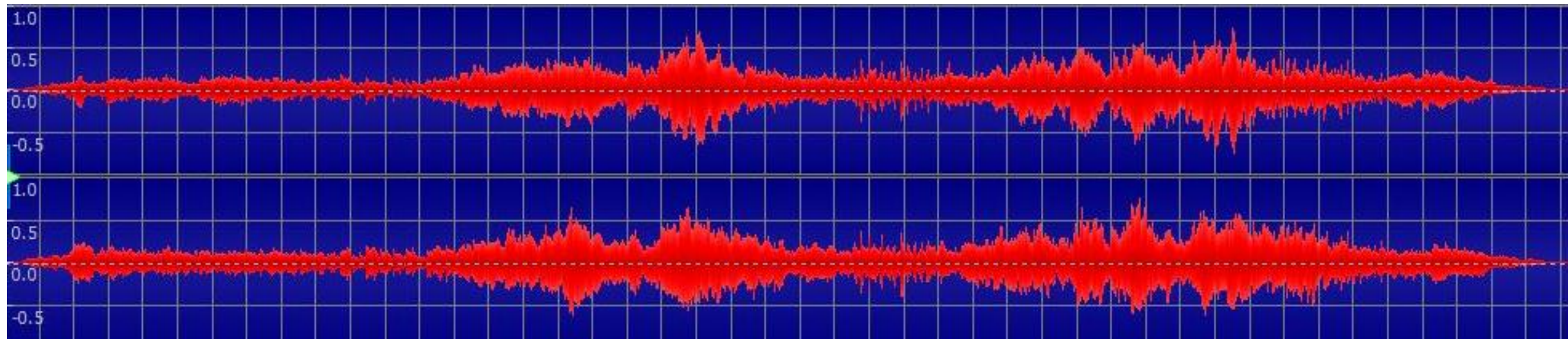
- First attempt: Traditional orchestra + overt synths
 - **NOPE**: Too “period-score”, too “epic”, not gritty enough





PART 4/4 – Main Theme

- Second attempt: Documentary, “mature” sound
 - **NOPE**: Good vibe, but too sedate and unmelodic; too distant

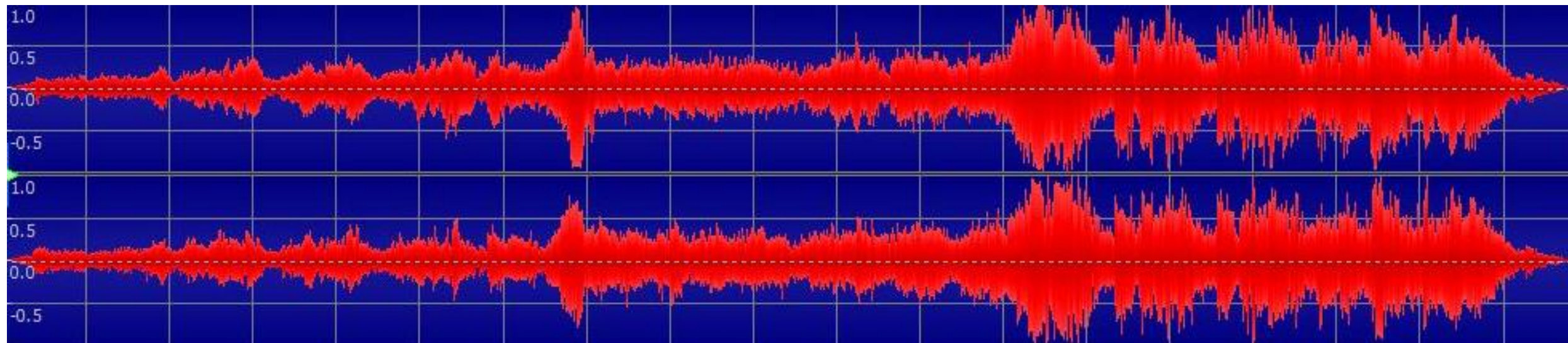




PART 4/4 – Main Theme

- Third attempt:

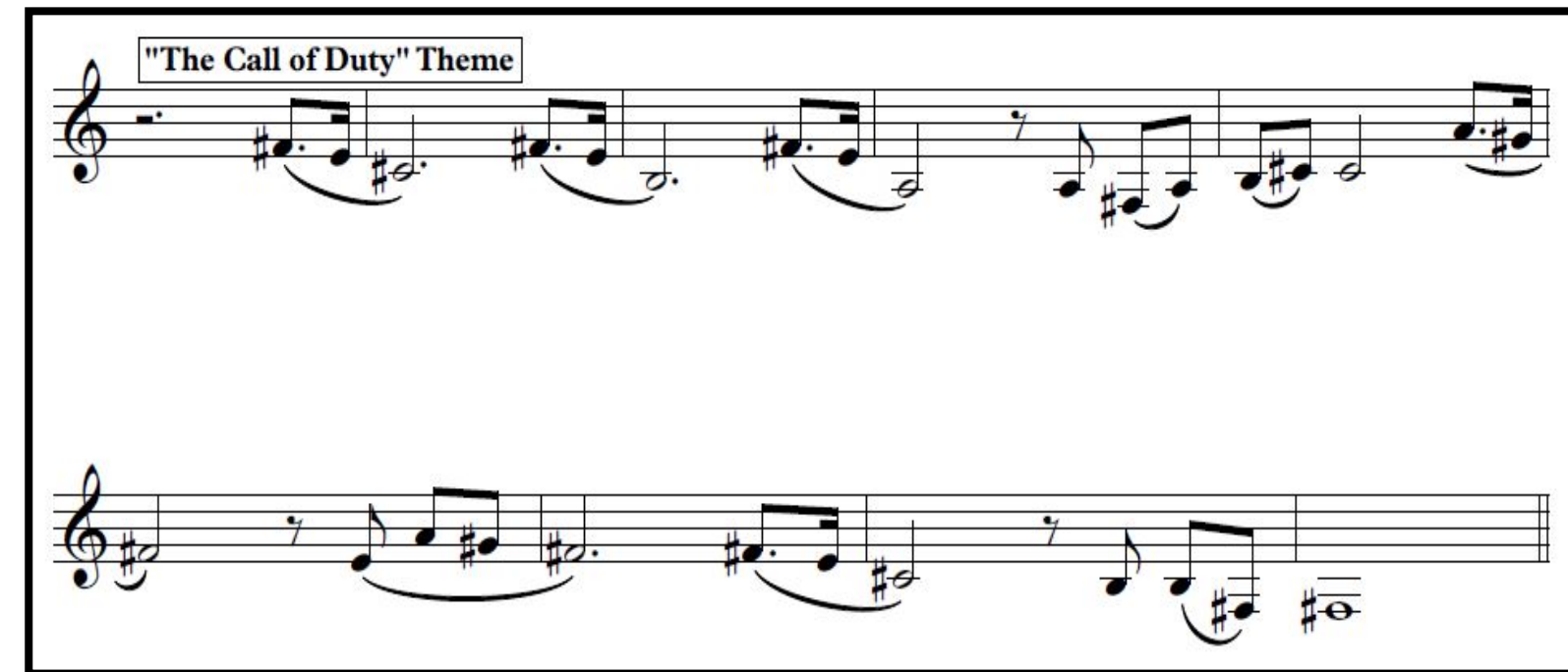
“Forget about all that composer s*!”**





PART 4/4 – Main Theme

- We can work with this!
 - “Less syllables”
 - Avoid epic, but embrace grit
 - Tell a story!





SUMMARY

- Embraced “modern” sound...
- ...via *expanding* on tradition...
- ...and not limiting ourselves to genre expectation





THANK YOU!



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