DEEP SILVER
Cursed
Mountain

Ascending the Cursed Mountain

The Hollywood Model in Real Life

Introduction

Hetal Bhuva, Immersive Games
Business Development Director

- Character Art
- Props
- Weapons

Bob Bates, Writer

- Screenplay
- Player and NPC lines
- Backstory items and detailed descriptions

Mountain

Introduction

Harald Riegler, Sproing

CEO

- Game development & integration
- Technology

Hannes Seifert, Deep Silver

Executive Producer

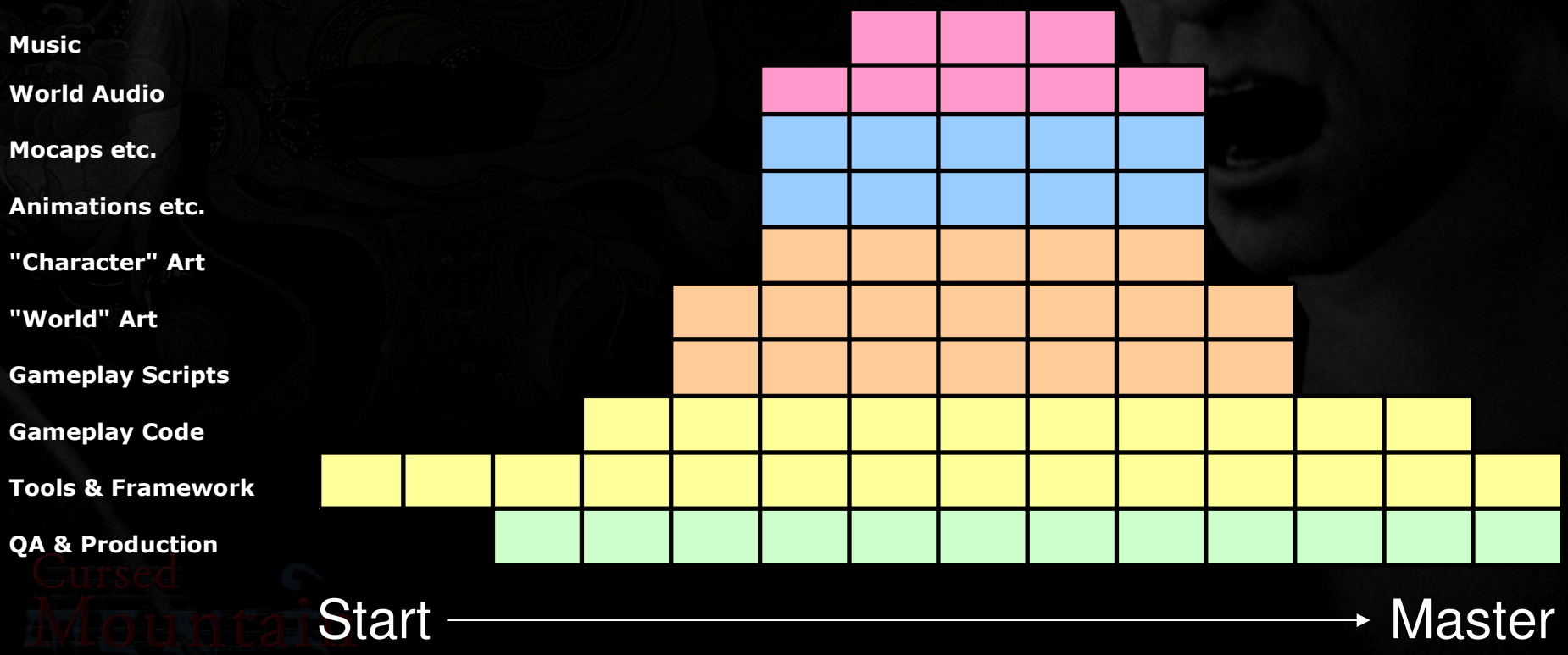
- Project concept & design
- Producing and financing
- Production coordination

Team Distribution

236 people
in 16 companies
in 14 countries
at 17 locations

Why The Madness?

A hypothetical resource graph for a game's production phase – what you need…



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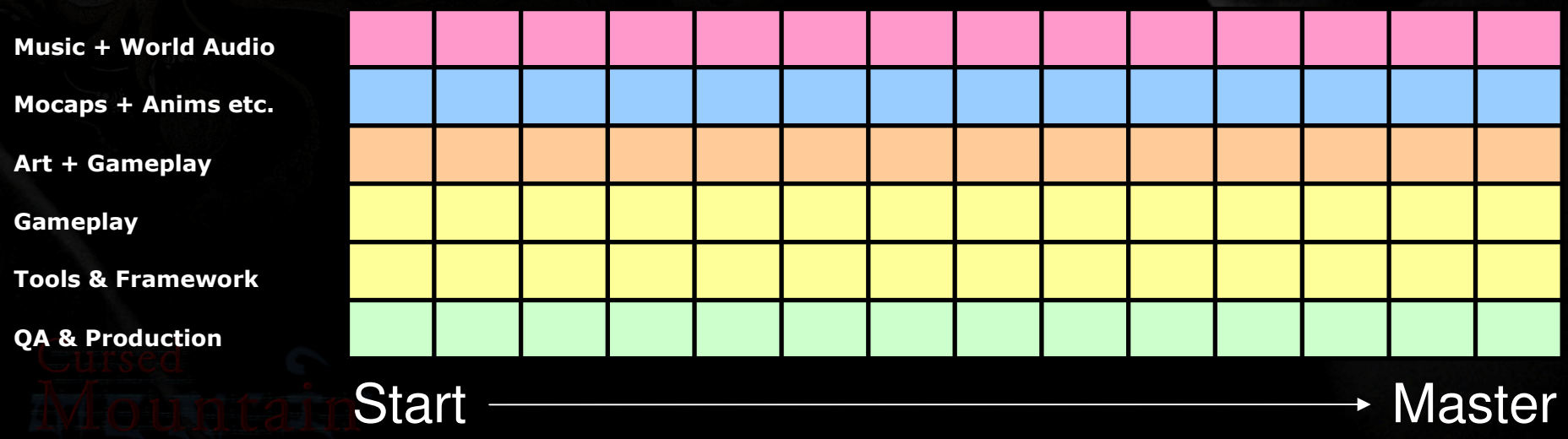
Why The Madness?

…and what you normally get

- Never enough people when you need them
- Always too many people between projects
- Forcing you to run countless projects in parallel or to hire and fire



Frequently Asked Questions

- Does that mean the traditional production model will die out?
- Are development budgets lower when games are produced that way?
- Does this only work with independents or also as part of a bigger group or a major?
- Isn’t outsourcing mainly done in low-wage countries?
- Isn’t game development too “organic” to work in a distributed way?

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What Went Well?

- Using a very short but very clear vision doc aka "Elevator Pitching", giving it to every body and really sticking to it
- Monthly reviewing this statement whether something has changed and needs to be communicated
- Letting partners manage other partners and therefore distributing team management
- Using meeting room and desktop video conferencing for working together over long distances

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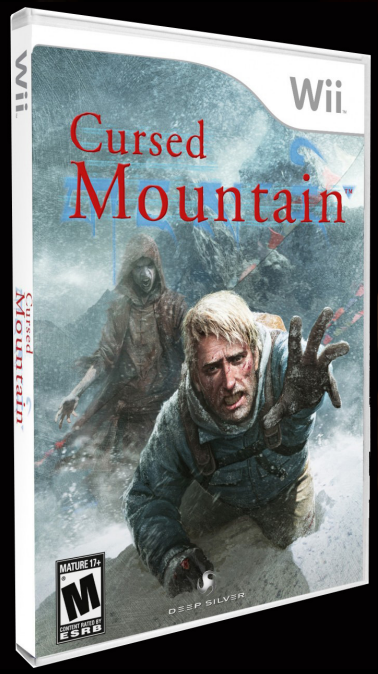
What Went Well?

- Cursed Mountain made it through all ups and downs and ships globally this week



- 10 months of pre-production plus 19 months of development was a pretty good timeframe for a game of that size and a new IP
- We proved that it's possible to produce an innovative and high quality game with distributed development

"An dieser Qualität muss sich Silent Hill: Shattered Memories erst mal messen lassen."

N-ZONE

"The game has all the makings for one of the best horror titles on the Wii. The game really feels like an evolution of the horror genre onto the Wii."

destructiod.com

"The Rockstar stamp can be felt in the game's 'mature' tone, its sharp production and it's pushing of boundaries."

ign.com

August Top 5 Game across all platforms:

"If you are looking for a late summer night scare, Cursed Mountain is the perfect game to get."

National Examiner

What Went Wrong?

- Assuming roles and responsibilities among core partners without defining them clearly enough
- We create emotional products and are passionate about them.
  More people = more emotions. More companies = more cultures = even more emotions.
  Underestimating the amount of emotions that need management
- Not polishing the vertical slice early enough
- Underestimating the drop out risk of suppliers (one went out of business)

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Takeaway Summary

- You cannot overinvest on communicating and maintaining a common vision
- Plan for coordination work on all sides
- Clearly define each other's role and responsibility including where they start and where they end
- Maintain and enforce this definition

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Takeaway Summary

- Let partners manage other partners directly
- React early if a partner slips or drifts into financial difficulities
- As a supplier use a resource and goal driven deal and understand you are a service provider
- As a traditional outsourcing supplier prepare to be more involved in the creative process

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Takeaway Summary

- Define requirements very clearly
- Choose reliable partners
- Involve all your partners as early as possible
- Be flexible with your starting point of production
- Do not expect smaller cultural differences just because some of your partners are locally closer than others

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Thank you for your attention

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