

# **Video Soundtrack Development**

## **THE OTHERS**

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## Abstract

The aim of this coursework is to add sound to a film excerpt previously provided. The film excerpt chosen was “THE OTHERS”.

This report covers a description of the Cubase features I used in developing the soundtrack including technical details.

The soundtrack on this video clip it was individually written by me and the software used in this project was Steinberg Cubase SX 3.1.1 and third party VST instruments that will be further referenced in the project.

## Introduction

“THE OTHERS” is a chilling tale of psychological terror that begs the question of who to trust, what to fear and what to believe... When three new servants arrive to replace the ones that inexplicably disappeared, surprisingly supernatural events begin to unfold. Grace's daughter reveals she has been communicating with unexplained apparitions. In order to discover the truth, Grace must abandon all of her fears and beliefs and enter the otherworldly heart of the supernatural (Synopsis from cinema.com).

The way that I build this soundtrack reflects that supernatural atmosphere using sounds and melodies that reveal that supernatural feel. The foundation of this soundtrack is the used of 4 pads from the beginning to the end using chords, melodies and octave build-up techniques, as well as an interaction (build up) between the sounds, to generate the background music of the soundtrack. I also created orchestral arrangements to build the sense of movement and to recreate different moods and feels.

Regarding the project setup, this project as a frame rate of 24 fps (frames per second, the same as the movie), for perfect synchronisation of the music with the video, using a sample rate of 48 KHz with a 24 Bit record format.

I divided the project into sections using markers in order to facilitate the synchronisation of the music with the picture. Follow the marker names with this paper and not the marker numbers.

**Marker – Intro**

The score starts with a simple note with the patch “Tension Strands” from the virtual instrument Atmosphere. Then I had a simple melody that recreates that supernatural feel with another atmosphere using another atmospheric patch “Moonlit Night”.

**Marker – Piano**

The function of this piano melody is just to create an even scarier feel at that specific scene of the movie. For the piano sound, I used a “Bosendorfer 10 Level II” patch from the virtual instrument Synthogy Ivory. The sound has a delay effect to give it more space in the mix and to help emphasise the scary feel. The delay used is a free plug-in from Kjaerhus Audio “Classic Delay”. I send it pre-fader and the settings of the delay are:

- Delay Type: Analogue
- Feedback: 50%
- Quality: 70%
- Low cut: 140 Hz
- Hi cut: 20 KHz
- 100% wet

**Marker - Pad03**

This marker uses a different Pad patch “Premonition” from the virtual instrument Atmosphere, a roll off timpani and a cymbal to mark attention to the next scene.

The roll timpani comes from patch of the IK Multimedia Orchestra & Choir Workstation Philharminik Miroslav.

For the cymbals I used the virtual instrument EZ drummer – Drum Kit from Hell, with a 21” Sabian HH Medium Crash.

**Marker – Door**

It starts with a timpani roll and trilling violins to create some tension to the scene. The trilling violins sound is a preset from the Eastwest Symphonic Orchestra – Silver Edition and it is build using harmonic and octave build up technique.

To create a smooth transition between scenes the “Moonlit Night” pad continuous playing, the “Premonition” pad fades out and it starts again the “Tension Strands” pad sound.

**Marker – Start Run**

This scene starts with the trilling violins creating a huge tension with the help of the 3 pad sounds: “Moonlit Night” (fading out), “Tension Strands” and “Premonition” (fading in).

Then, there is an orchestral arrangement to give rhythm and movement to the scene. At this marker exists a tempo change from 120 bpm to 160 bpm going back to the 120 bpm at the marker “Temp change”.

In this part of the arrangement the orchestra consists of trombones, tuba, timpani and French horns. The cymbals play twice just to mark the rhythm.

**Marker – End Run**

At this marker the pads “Moonlit Night” and “Premonition” fade out and it starts a linear tempo change from 160 back to 120 bpm (Marker - “Tempo change”).

**Marker – Gun Shot**

In this scene the mother tries to protect the children and on the original film it has a dialogue so I bring down the dynamics of the soundtrack keeping just the ambient pads and consequently keeping the creepy feeling as well.

**Marker – Orchestra Unison**

This scene is the second time this short video clip requires movement as she runs to the house. Here I used orchestra unison with wind (trombone, French horns, tuba, trumpet, bassoon and clarinet) and percussion (timpani and cymbals) instruments contrasting the movement of the piece with strings instruments (cellos, violins and violas).

**Marker – Suspense**

In this part of the movie I tried that the music helps to provoke suspense to the scene. I did that using an appropriate melody and the orchestra instruments French horns, tuba, trumpets and clarinets. Meanwhile fades in the “Moonlit Night” pad that helps to emphasise the suspense.

**Marker – Harp Melody**

In this part of the soundtrack I tried to mix different feelings. The harp melody starts on top of the previous orchestra instruments to transmit the sense of maternity but scared at the same time (mother tries to calm down her children but the three are terrified) with the help of the pads “Moonlit Night”, “Tension Strands” and “Gaué Claud String”. In the middle of this section the harp melody stops and is replaced by string chords (cellos, violins and violas) and by different melody lines from a tuba, trumpets and clarinets. It finishes with the harp melody coming again until the end of the soundtrack and video clip.

**Mixing and Mastering**

Regarding mixing techniques, I used a delay on the piano, no reverb because the samples and the virtual instruments had reverb already. Little equalisation using the Cubase EQ and mainly the mix was made with faders volume, automation (see automation in Cubase project) and panning.

In relation to mastering, I just used the limiter from Cubase VSTDynamics with a soft clip and auto gain at the master output.

Overall, I think the soundtrack reflects the feeling and the mood of the video clip.

## Appendix

### Virtual Instruments and patches used on this project:

#### → **IK Multimedia Philharmonik Miroslav**

- 11 violins
- 23 violins
- 23 violins fast bow
- Bassoon
- Cello espressivo
- Cello Tremolo
- Clarinet A
- Clarinet B
- French horn LP
- French horn FF01
- French horn FF02
- Timpani
- Timpani roll
- Trombone FF LP
- Trombones
- Trumpets LP
- Tuba LP
- Tuba Staccato
- Violas
- Violas LP
- Harp

→ **Eastwest Symphonic Orchestra – Silver Edition**

Trilling Violins

→ **EZ Drummer**

Cymbals: 21” Sabian HH Medium Crash

22” Sabian Ed Thigpen Crystal Bell Ride

→ **Synthogy Ivory**

Piano – Bosendorfer 10 Level II

→ **Spectrasonics Atmosphere**

Moonlit Night

Tension Strands

Premonition

Gaue Claud String