Audio Design Document

The music of a fictional world needs to feel as though it has its own history. For this we can draw on folk-like elements in our own world which are great for capturing a ‘human’ feel, and evoke a sense of being deeply rooted in its own rich history & culture.

The hierarchical society, built into a rising cliffside provides opportunities to deepen our image of the culture. The music will reflect this. Orchestral music is often associated with prestige and elitist culture in our own world, so we can play on this; affording this representation to the more prosperous population, and keeping the poorer societies grounded in cheaper instrumentation and timbre.

What I really like about this Cliffside Community is that although it is arranged according to wealth vertically, they all share the mountain, so I believe musical elements should be shared and borrowed from one another - they’re not so different from one another at the core.

To keep a sense of continuity in this world across varied instrumentation we can have our cake and eat it too by taking inspiration from our own world. There has been a pattern of Classical Composers being inspired by the folk-music of their time and childhood (composers such as Bartok, Grieg, Prokofiev, Sibelius, Dvoraka and Copeland all using folk-themes as basis for their orchestrations and melodic foundation.)

As our world is introduced within a mining society I believe we can take such inspiration from famously mining cultures such as Polish, Western Russian, Scandinavian and much of Eastern-Europe. The key will be in creating our own believable culture, which sounds as though it has grown over many generations.

Themes and melodies can be established in their folkier-barer bones form in the poorer locales, and expanded upon with lusher orchestrations in more affluent communities. For our heroes their instrument of choice can serve to suggest as to their background and upbringing. E.g a character who attempts to appear underprivileged, but plays a sophisticated instrument might allude to a chip on their shoulder? A deceit of upbringing?

Music

* Eastern European Folk-inspired elements and melodic themes across population.
* Themes reused and adapted to reflect the affluence of current area.
* Ambient Loops in wider areas (only dynamic in so far as adding/subtracting elements between areas.)
* I will record live instruments as much as possible - especially when composing for the less prosperous areas.
* Any “synthetic” sounds can then function as something which suggests “magic,” as they will stand out as something strange and ‘other’ in the world.
* Will be implemented along with all other audio via Wwise.
* Battle-music will be composed modularly - with a foundational loop as a constant and ‘moves’ being represented as short musical sections which all work atop the foundation and in any order. (Vertical Sequencing.)
* More powerful sequences will be longer sections (bar-length.)
* Themes will be basic at early levels, but become more developed and embellished at later stages.
* All music will be 4/4 to begin with as it is the most simple for players to count and lends itself to very familiar cadence.
* Each playable module will have multiple versions which reflect each available character and their instrument.

Sound Design

* General ambience will be subtle, so as to give players a rest from what is a very audio-centric game.
* Diegetic sounds will be routed through appropriate Buses which reflect the space they are heard within.
* ‘Magical’ Sounds will be synthetic.
* ‘Natural’ Sounds will be recorded.
* Sounds must serve to enrich the world, giving it more believability, rather than purely regurgitate all tropes of the JRPG genre. E.g finding creative alternatives to typical UI noises.

Initial Steps

* Identify required sounds & music required for the project.
* Update the Audio Asset List spreadsheet.
* Discuss how all interactions, soundtracks and sound effects will be triggered, and what they will look like; inform the sound.
* What will the first aspect of the game to be made be? Ensure that you have a strong frame of reference for each musical piece and sound effect. (Do not compose blindly.)
* Generate multiple, short themes which would work atop a simplistic foundational piece.
* Character design will inform the instrumentation & timbre of the music. Gather general information on these characters.

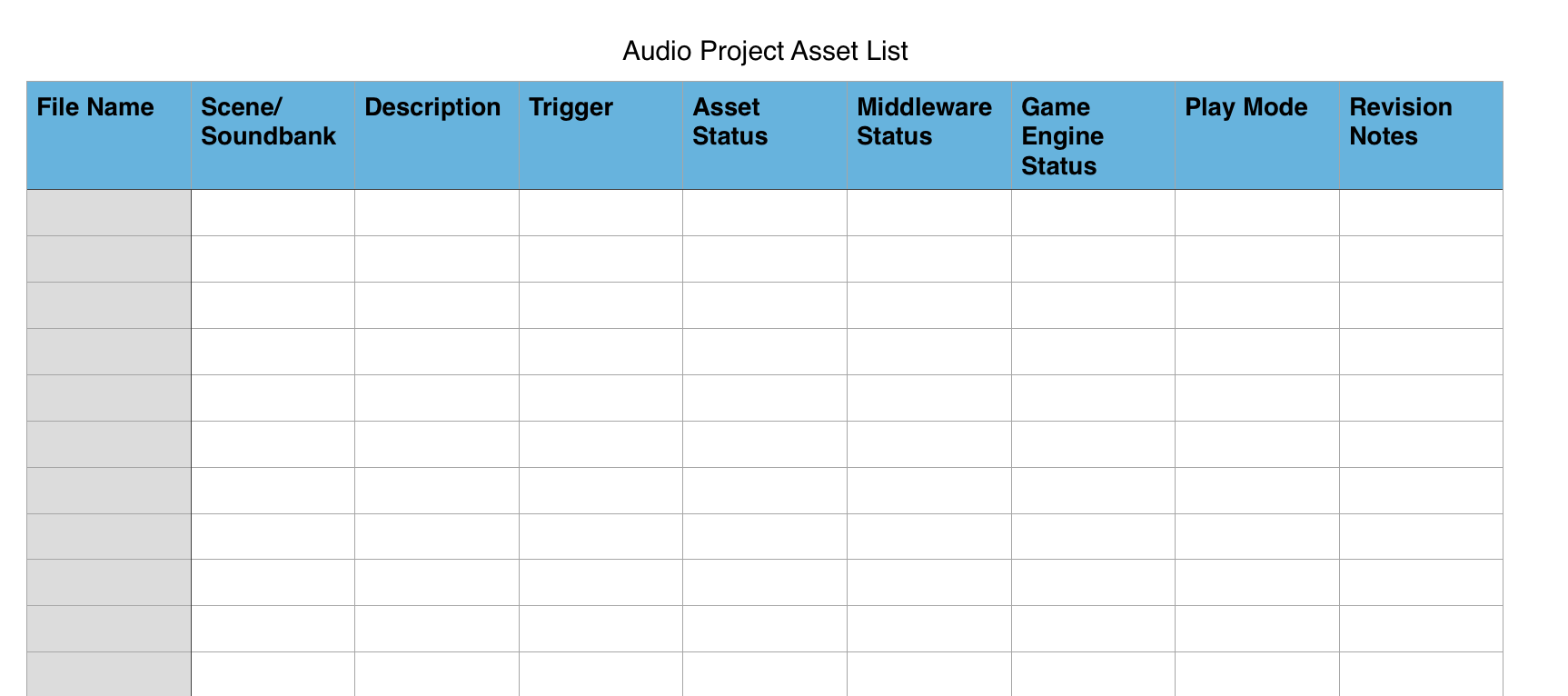
Initial Summary

Either ‘Moves’ controls are informed by the music I compose OR the music I compose is informed by the control order dictated.

Some visual reference would be very helpful, to ensure that what I make is appropriate.

What will the first steps be for the rest of the team, so I can coordinate? E.g what is required first and is of the utmost importance? Highest priority. (Likely the battles themselves)

Information Required Within Audio Asset List:



Michael’s Notes:

Combat music is #1 priority – Combat flow is: Intro section – Planning section (loops) – enemy section (this will encompass 8 or 12 bars) – player section (6-8 bars, repeated 2-3 times) – repeat planning loop until enemy is defeated – victory/defeat section – END

Current PC instruments: shamisen, cornet, panpipes

Around 8 musical phrases of 1-2 bars, instruments may share these or contain their own specialized phrases if applicable.

For the town music, clay is an essential part of their economy, so maybe integrate some sort of clay instrument? The only one I can think of is an ocarina, but any wind instrument might suffice. If you take particular inspiration from a specific Eastern European composer, let me know and we might name the town after them!