

Checklist

- ☒ Questions for Application Form
 - ☒ Abstract
 - ☒ Justification
- ☒ CV

Questions for Application Form

In 250 words or less, describe your manuscript's intended purpose. You may use this space to offer a general description of your project or an outline of your argument as it may appear in your abstract or introduction.

Chris Sawyer's *Transport Tycoon* (1994) was a critical success for the business management genre of games, and perhaps is only relegated to comparative obscurity due to the meteoric rise of his *Rollercoaster Tycoon* which was to follow (1999). Whilst not the first game in this vein, its success single-handedly cemented a new subgenre of management game, the transport management sim, which has maintained a passionate community of players and developers, with new releases like *OpenTTD* (2004) and *Transport Fever 2* (2019) continuing to pioneer the concept.

With such a tight-knit community emerging around these games, a similarly close group of composers have formed to contribute to the soundtracks. John Broomhall and Allistair Brimble contributed the lion's share to *Transport Tycoon* and *Locomotion* (2004), with Brimble also composing for *Train Fever* (2014) and *Transport Fever* (2016), joined by Admiral James T. (aka. David Langhard). Langhard would compose solo for *Transport Fever 2*. Similarly close composer communities can be found in *Simutrans* (1999).

This paper will argue that the small size of these composer communities, combined with a profound sense of nostalgia for *Transport Tycoon* and, more broadly, its aesthetic has created the environment to crystallise a very distinct sonic identity. It will show a direct compositional lineage across these games, and highlight their soundtracks' shared genetic makeup. It will use the transport management sub-genre as a case study in how genres develop an identity through their soundtrack, and the role of nostalgia, parody, in that process.

In 250 words or less, describe how your field of study stands to benefit from your research.

Ludomusicology is a burgeoning field that often tries to position itself in relation to both traditional musical multimedia works, and also in its role within digital audiovisual works. Work by Tim Summers, Stephanie Lind, and Mark Sweeney have explored encounters between games and other musical forms, and musical identities with their themes in relation to how those themes are handled in other audiovisual media.

Now games are reaching an age where multiple generations of game designers and composers have had the chance to establish their creative identity, they raise the question of how those identities have influenced each other, and what inspiration composers have taken from their forebears in the creation of their soundtracks.

This research poses that, since composers often stay within similar game genres across their creative output, these factors lay the foundation for musical identities to crystallise around the ludic genres that a succession of composers work within. It will argue that this is especially true within niche genres, where tight-knit creative communities form, and indie development environments — where frequently only a handful of composers will have influence, often (e.g. Toby Fox, Eric Barone) the game designers/developers themselves.

In this way, the research aims to examine patterns that are distinct to the field of videogame music, whilst drawing upon observations from older multimedia art traditions to understand how sonic identities establish themselves, and how those identities inform the evolution of a genre's soundworlds.

Curriculum Vitæ

Curriculum Vitæ

Christopher Hill MA BA(Oxon) FNCM FLCM FVCM LTCL DipABRSM FGMS

Education

Secondary

- Loughborough Grammar School
- Repton School
- Trent College (A levels: A*A*AB)

Higher

- University of Oxford, BA Music
- University of Birmingham, MA Music (Open Pathway with Performance)
- University of Birmingham, PhD Candidate in Music Performance Practice

Other

- Royal College of Music Junior Department

- Royal Northern College of Music Junior Department
- Was an Aldeburgh Young Musician

Qualifications

- MA Music Performance
- BA_{oxon} Music
- FLCM performance diploma in flute
- FNCM performance diploma in flute
- LTCL performance diplomas in classical and jazz flute
- DipABRSM performance diploma in flute
- ATCL performance diploma in classical saxophone (alto and soprano)
- Grade 8 (ABRSM) in voice (tenor)
- Grade 8 (Rockschool) in drum kit
- Gold Arts Award

Conference Activity

Ludo2022, Royal Holloway, University of London

MYTHOLOGICAL NARRATIVE AND AESTHETIC IN THE MUSIC OF HADES

Darren Korb's soundtrack for Supergiant Games' *Hades* was nominated by both BAFTA and The Game Awards for best music/soundtrack awards. From listening to the music in isolation it would be simple to see why in and of its pure musical conception and execution, but what this paper argues is that the true power behind Korb's work lies in its interactivity with the game's mythological setting and narrative, explored in three facets:

Firstly, the role of instrumentation and compositional technique will be examined, exploring how Korb uses a combination of soundworlds: traditional instruments from around the Aegean, and modern soundworlds of rock and sci-fi, to support the artistic direction of Hades as a game set simultaneously in ancient mythology whilst remaining strangely out of time.

Secondly, how the specific example of Orpheus — perhaps mythology's most famous bard — and Eurydice's story within the game is supported by their songs, and their synthesis into a duet between the two characters; how they act as a narrative foil to the player character through their songs, and how their musical place within the game interacts with the various tellings of their myth.

Finally, there will be a discussion of the use of wider soundtrack to support the gameplay loop and the theme attempting (and often failing) to ascend out of Hades. Primarily this will involve an examination of the use of the "No Escape" leitmotif, and how its melody, instrumentation, and implementation in-game enforces a sense of

hopelessness and futility in the escape effort, simultaneously challenging the player to defiantly succeed in their mission.

Editorial

JSMG Guest Editor

Currently co-editing an edition of the *Journal of Sound and Music in Games* on the music of Supergiant Games' *Hades* alongside Stephanie Lind, Demetrius Shahmehri, and Silvia Mantilla-Wright. [Call for papers](#) is currently out.

Relevant Information

Application Deadline	1st December
Award Announcements	13th Decemeber