Petals Adrift

Game Design Document

Story Premise

The game starts out with a butterfly flying through a forest, cruising along to the beat of its favorite song. While dancing in a field of flowers, the butterfly, not realizing that flowers are sentient beings, dances a little too hard, causing the flowers' petals to scatter. The butterfly, horrified by the sadness it has caused the flowers, decides to redeem itself by recollecting all the missing petals. Thus begins a journey through the forest, collecting petals just floating in the air, as well as solving puzzles to regain petals that have been claimed by other forest critters. Once the petals have all been collected, it's time to return them to the flowers!

Gameplay

- 2D fast-paced, beat-matching game
- Solve musical puzzles and avoid environmental obstacles
- 15 petals to collect in each level
  - Collect >=12 petals per level to proceed to next level
  - Every 4 petals collected adds music to the background track
  - Bring petals back to flower (near start) to spawn exit portal
- Camera-wrapping levels
  - Leaving one side of the level pops player out on other side
    - Other side appears dark first, but lightens up as player goes through
    - Area left darkens as player moves through lighter area
- No death
  - Relaxing game, with no death
- Checkpoints
  - If player gets stuck, can choose to respawn at closest checkpoint
  - Appear periodically throughout level, particularly before challenging areas

Beat-Matching

- To move, player must enter input on the background music's beat
- Moving environmental elements move on beat
- Animations set to beat, to give illusion of dancing
- UI element helps player find and keep the beat
  - White grid appears around player when the beat hits
  - If player successfully keeps beat for X beats, UI fades to become more subtle
  - When input is received:
    - Valid move, particle effects to celebrate

Playable Character

- Butterfly
  - Up, down, left, right movement
  - Dash
    - Moves two spaces in one beat
    - Hit 5 beats in row to charge dash
    - Missing beat or trying to move into a wall resets dash counter
    - Up, down, left, right movement

Controls (*subject to change based on playtesting)

- PC
  - Movement
    - Arrow Keys (Up, right, down, left)
    - Hold spacebar while hitting arrow key in desired direction
- Mobile
  - Swipe/Touch
    - Movement
      - Player must swipe in direction of desired movement
    - Dash
      - Player must double tap in direction desired
  - Dpad
    - Movement
      - Tap on Dpad
    - Dash
      - Hold on Dpad

Music
- Funky, weird electronic music
- Each level will have its own background music
  - Starts with a base track that sets the beat
  - As players collect petals, more stems are added to the track
- BPM varies from level to level
- Animations set to the beat
  - Illusion of dancing
- Puzzles that involve music are tied into the beat

SFX
- Puzzles
  - All SFX for puzzles are musical in nature
    - Single notes
    - Instruments unique for each type of animal/plant
      - Flutes, clarinets: birds
      - Marimba: turtles
      - Guitar: mushrooms

- Other
  - Minimal SFX
    - Don't want to distract from or clash with music
  - Petal
    - Pleasant sound on collection
  - Chameleon
    - Whoosh sound

Musical Puzzles

- Bird Mushroom Puzzle
  - Bird sings X number of notes
  - Player must pay attention to the sounds and their order
  - Each mushroom corresponds to a note sung by the bird
  - Player must bounce on each mushroom in the correct order
  - Reward: Petal
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- Birds Ascending Puzzle
  - Each bird sings a note when you bump into them
  - Player must bump into birds in ascending note order
  - Reward: Petal
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- Turtle Matching Puzzle
  - Each turtle has the same loop of sounds they play
  - Player bounces on turtle to change the sound
  - Player must make make the turtles' sounds match up
  - Reward: Petal

Other Puzzles & Obstacles

- Chameleon Disappearing
  - Disappears and reappears around level at spawn points
  - Player must get petal from Chameleon while it is visible
  - Reward: Petal

- Frog Control Reversal
  - When player is hit by tongue, input controls are reversed
  - Controls are reversed for 5 moves (not beats, player must move)
  - Reward: None

- Moving platforms
  - Platforms, above and below, moving on beat
  - Some pairs will move in same direction, some opposite
  - Player must navigate through

- ○ Reward: None

- ● Breakable walls
  - ○ Player must dash through to break
  - ○ Reward: None

- ● Disappearing background tiles
  - ○ Player is only allowed to move on tiles once
  - ○ Once player has visited a tile, it disappears, leaving a black square
  - ○ If player moves onto a black square, respawn at checkpoint
  - ○ Reward: None

- ● Water Turbo
  - ○ If player flies through a stream of water, move two spaces per beat
  - ○ Lasts for 3 moves
  - ○ Reward: None

Art Style

The art inspiration for this game comes from Mary Blair, the artist responsible for the concept art of some of Disney's most iconic movies, including Alice and Wonderland. The game will attempt to emulate her use of color and her simple, yet grand way of depicting the environment.

- ● Environment
  - ○ Color blocked
  - ○ Simple shapes
- ● Weird, unsettling characters
  - ○ Detailed, accurate
  - ○ Patterned, inaccurate
- ● Butterfly
  - ○ Color scheme of monarch butterfly, but more shiny gold than orange
- ● Petals
  - ○ White, daisy petals
  - ○ Shiny gold
- ● Day levels
  - ○ Light backgrounds
  - ○ Dark & vibrant gameplay layer
- ● Night levels
  - ○ Dark backgrounds
  - ○ Light, pastel gameplay layer

Risks
- ● Must not lean too close to Crypt of the Necrodancer

- Puzzles are similar to platformer puzzles
  - Must ensure they translate and make sense
- Beat-matching performance
  - Unsure if plugin will perform acceptably on mobile
  - May need to write own beat-matching system
- Mobile Controls
  - Need to do excessive playtesting to determine what works