Music Event Essay #2

The production quality of the piece of music was okay quality, the venue was of medium size, nothing fancy, but the performers were well dressed and looked presentable. The quality of music, sounded very full. The players were playing “The Greatest Video Game Music” originally played at the London Philharmonic. There was about 20-25 players, some playing violins, one person on the piano, and other instruments like woodwind and percussion.

The talent that the performers brought shows a lot of practice and skill. I attended a musical event that performed sound tracks to various popular video games, in a orchestral sound. Many of the songs from the list of music are composed for an orchestra. The video games producers do this to allow for much more immersion and emotion during gameplay from the player. If it is an intense battle sequence, then the music will be fast pace and broad and strong sounds would be played. If the player accomplished something, a cheerful and celebratory music would play to make the play feel even better. An example of this is, is in Legend of Zelda, when the player makes it to the magical sword. An ominous music plays as the player sees the sword and the music ramps up when they walk towards it. When the pick up the sword, a cheerful jingle is played that rises in crescendo.
The reason why I chose to listen to video game music is because I have always loved video games, and the music instills such a strong feeling of emotion for me. Each piece of music was intended to give the player an exact feeling and sense of atmosphere. Like Marko Ahtisaari and Ketki Karanam said in their article about music and emotions, “Music has the power to stimulate strong emotions within us... music has been reported to evoke the full range of human emotion”\(^1\), this means that music can be used to stimulate emotional parts of the brain to immerse the player. Soundtracks are important because they are meant to compliment the story of the game and progress the story, which, as a result, makes the game a lot more immersive and fun. It feels like you’re really there in the video game world that is being played.

I will be talking about my favorite songs and then ones that stood out the most, because there were so many played. The first song is from the Legend of Zelda called Suite. It starts with a sweeping intro, into a cheerful melody that goes higher in pitch over time. The music ramps up and builds into a very open, almost cinematic sound and then keeps going. The music slows down after a little bit and sounds very calm and peaceful and majestic, and then into the final build up, similar to the first build up.

The next song is the Super Mario Bro’s Theme song, but was played in swing time. The music starts off very cheery with brass instruments loudly and then into a soft melody that is so recognizable. The music gets a little louder and it sounds as if you’re

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strolling along a cheery path. The music sounds kind of similar throughout, very cheery and joyful until it rises up and changes to a very nice and flowing melody with the violins. The music sounds like it would accompany dancing along with it, sounding very peaceful. But not long after a very low brassy sound comes in and changes the entire tone. The melody ramps up fast and then slow down, representing a boss type battle. Then the music jumps back to the original sound, very cheery with the recognizable melody to finish it off.

The next piece of music is vastly different from the latter, coming from the Grand Theft Auto series. The music starts off with a pizzicato sound that is low and feels like it’s prancing. Then a low brass comes in and leads to a dissonant high-pitched sound is quickly played by the violin. This leads into a very groovy violin melody with percussion instruments. The music has a lot of style and attitude to it and ramps up in volume and adds more instruments. Then the melody simplifies and goes back to the original sound.

After that, the next piece of music that stood out most to me was by far the Tetris theme song, which has a very Russian sounding theme. The Tetris theme song was actually “an old Russian ballad called Korobeiniki”, which was originally performed by Red Army Choir, based off an old poem, according to Matthew Gurreiri. The music starts out with percussion instrument playing a beat and other instrument joining in as the music ramps up and builds. Cymbals crash and xylophone sounding notes are played as it

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keeps building, until finally it stops dramatically, and the very distinguishable Tetris melody plays on the piano. It sounds very cheery and happy, almost like a dance song. The music then leads into a less energetic and calmer feeling, until the melody returns, but with a different high-pitched instrument. The music keeps going until it starts to slow down and the piano notes are longer and slower tempo. The melody returns but with woodwinds this time instead of the piano, and is also accompanied by other instruments. The music almost sounds sadder in this part due to the slower tempo and instrument change. The music ramps up for one last time, with the violin playing faster to accent the tempo.

The next piece of music comes from the video game Bioshock, which is about a dystopian society under the sea filled with drug addicts and all sorts of crazy, dark, creepy monsters. The music starts very abruptly and conflict sounds like its happening from the very beginning. This leads to a very dissonant and scary sound coming from what sounds like the violin played very rapidly. Then it all stops and a very wide and open atmosphere is played which leads to a very soft and beautiful and almost sad like melody by the violin. At the end of the song, the dissonant violin plays again and fades away. More sounds are played very abruptly, as if it was intended to startle the player/audience and then the music ends.

One of the last songs to play came from the Fallout series, which is about post-apocalyptic wastelands that the player has to traverse and go through the story. It starts off with a loud low sounding percussion sound into a fast fade away. This repeats as
more elements are introduced as creates a more full sound. It ramps up quickly and leads to a very brassy and rustic instrument playing an overlaying melody. The melody and the music overall sounds very open and deserted, like a wasteland. This gives the player an immersive feeling. The music is slow tempo but has a lot of emphasis and color to it. At little bit later on, the music starts to syncopate and sound like its prancing on prey. A conflict sounds like its going on, but in a very wide and open space.