Shadow Hills Manor - Sound Design Notes

Volkan Erden

Creative Approach

My main goal was to craft soundscapes filled with high tension, with a wide dynamic range, rich frequency spectrum, and spatialization. My focus was on enhancing the eerie atmosphere of the manor while complementing the visual storytelling. Additionally, I aimed to differentiate the feel of horror and puzzle elements, aligning with the game's content.

Sound Materials

I recorded a variety of foley sounds using metal and wood objects to capture creaks, knocks, rattles, drags, scrapes, and drops. For certain whooshes, I used towels and cloth, and I recorded a singing bowl for risers. My own voice was recorded and manipulated to create the haunting whisperings and the final monster sound. In addition to recorded foley, I synthesized sounds like crickets, raven caws, the fire burst and electric sounds. Supernatural elements like spectral tones, glitches, subs and whispering wind were also synthesized using granular and additive synthesis to complement the organic foley recordings. Several whooshes and pads were also synthesized and layered. Distinct room tones were designed for each room to subtly support the environment shifts.

Processing

The sounds were processed using tools such as EQ, compression, pitch/frequency shifting, saturation, reverb, and delay. I cleaned up audio to eliminate hums and unwanted noises, and used stretching, reversing, and granulating to achieve the desired results. Automations, including reverb, volume, pitch, and panning, were extensively utilized to create dynamic movement, ensuring the sound design remained lively, in motion, and synchronized with the visuals. Exaggerated and unrealistic reverb was occasionally applied to key elements to emphasize specific moments and enhance the atmosphere.

Mastering

The final mix was mastered to ensure clarity and balance, cohesively tying together subtle elements with impactful and intense sounds. The final is exported at 24bit/48kHz.