

Cacophony

Genre: Adventure/Puzzle

High Concept: Cacophony is an unorthodox adventure/puzzle game that requires the player to mix, match, bend, and distort musical pieces in order to solve puzzles.

Premise: As the story begins, a dark scene reveals an evil composer unlocking an evil symphony deep within the Earth, unleashing its corrupting force upon the world. The player, an aspiring musical prodigy, is asked by his head college conductor to embark on a journey to uncover the origin of this great musical tragedy, and perhaps learn some of the ancient secrets he has been looking for.

Gameplay is a combination of exploration, puzzle solving, and innovative combat that looks similar to free-world RPG battles. Players go through dungeons, fighting enemies with their equipped instruments and using the power of music to defeat them. In addition, they must solve puzzles that require knowledge of music and the ability to think outside the box.

Goal: The goal of Cacophony is to restore world order by fixing tainted symphonies and unveiling the origin of the evil that has come over the world.

How It Works:

Overworld: The player progresses through the campaign through “missions”, in which they travel to key regions based on intelligence obtained by his conductor. In this format the player can explore settled areas and find out information necessary to get closer to finding the evil.

Dungeons: In this format the player must delve deep into dungeons and other dangerous areas to solve the mysteries that will allow them to progress. The combat is simplistic yet innovative, requiring the player to make up musical pieces on command to defeat enemies. Given the large variety of these enemies, the player must combine innovation with extensive knowledge of these adversaries in order to defeat them.

Expositions: In music, an exposition is the initial presentation of the material contained within a musical piece. In Cacophony, expositions are the backbone of the puzzles that the player must solve. In this section, a corrupted musical piece is played and the player must return it its original status. The player uses a multitude of abilities to change aspects of the musical piece, which requires a basic knowledge of music. For instance, the player can do any of the following things to change the musical piece: Change the tempo of certain parts, change the pitch of certain parts, mix and match certain parts from within the song OR using stray pieces found in the player’s travels, stretch/shrink/bend sustains or certain parts, among other abilities that can only be unlocked by defeating bosses or solving side puzzles. This is the extensive and innovative feature that will separate this game from other mundane adventure/puzzle games.

Success & Failure Conditions: Conditions for success are met when the player completes a composure, in which the music matches its original status and the player progresses in the campaign. Precise conditions for failure are less exact, and the sense of failure often comes when a player is attempting to solve the composure, but becomes stuck or puzzled.

Carrot Says:

Title: Cacophony

Written by: Armageddon

Week 1

High Concept: The High Concept for Cacophony is done well enough to get the basic point across and it uses some good ‘action words’ to help sell the idea and get people excited about it.

Critique: “Aspiring musical prodigy” sounds funny to me, like it’s a person who aspires to be a prodigy, nothing wrong with it, just thought it was funny.

Concept is very close to beatmatching, not beatmatching in the traditional sense of real-time music play, but beatmatching over the whole of the piece like some sort of non-linear sound editor. The goal being to match a distorted piece of music to its ‘clean’ form almost sounds like a different form of beatmatching. Isn’t necessarily bad; the twist just specified against beatmatching as seen in games like Guitar Hero and DDR.

I really like the idea of “making up musical pieces on command to defeat enemies”, but outside of calling it an innovative mechanic, it wasn’t explored anymore. Considering this mechanic is at the core of what could make this game fun, I would want to see more detail put into this instead of any of the run-of-the-mill content. The author started to do this by devoting more space to the Expositions section, but didn’t mention the so-called innovative combat at all, which is the part I’d want to hear about the most since it is what is going to separate this title from the rest.

The way it is currently described; the process of changing the music sounds clunky and slow and not at all fun. If the game is supposed to be more of a slow paced and methodical game, then this style could work well, but it seems like the pace would have constant fluctuations that would cripple the experience. I think it would greatly help the treatment if it is explicitly stated somewhere what the pace of the overall experience is expected to be.

Presentation is done well; there are a few little errors here and there, but nothing serious. It was easy to read and flowed well overall. I would recommend placing the author’s

name and date into the header or footer of the document though, as it is when I got it, there was no proof of ownership at all in the doc. I went ahead and added those elements to the document before publishing it on the internet.

Overall I really like the idea, but I feel that it needs a bit more attention to really pull it all together; the music elements specifically weren't very tightly integrated into the core gameplay and felt more or less tacked on. I could very easily see this mechanic used for a single puzzle in a *Myst* game, describing the desired pace could help dispel any expectations the reader may have, which could prevent this thinking from happening.

Fun: B
Presentation: A-
Originality: C+

Kaiser Says:

Title: Cacophony

Author: Armageddon

Week # 1

High Concept:

Critique: After reading through the treatment once, I quickly noticed the word “innovative” thrown around a lot. Innovation is definitely a good thing, but it feels like, to me, that you're using the word a bit too much to expose the concept of innovation artificially, rather than show the innovation through the design itself. It doesn't instantly destroy any interest I have in the game, but I think it would be better to let the design show the innovation, rather than remind us of it frequently.

As for the game itself, it is interesting. To me, it seems like the game has a lot of elements from a traditional RPG, and the combat sounds interesting. What is outlined is good, but I would have liked a little more information on it. Using music to defeat your foes is a nice feature, but to what extent is it used? It sounds like you'd be using pre-made songs to fight your foes and to help your allies, but it would be nice to know more about it.

The concept of exposition is where this treatment really shines, though. This seems like it will present difficult challenges to the player, and, as you said, will require some knowledge about music. I like all of the features outlined, and they all present some unique challenges to keep the game interesting.

The difficulty in designing these challenges would be to make sure that the puzzles don't get *too* tough. Yes, difficulty is a good thing, but combining each and every one of these

ideas into a single challenge might be a bit too much. That's not to say the game should keep the difficulty down to a completely simple level, but finding a good balance would be difficult. That's not a bad thing, though. It would be ideal to present the song that you're recreating in its correct form at a completely different location, but requiring the player to memorize it, rather than allow them to listen to it while trying to fix the version from the challenge.

Overall, I like this idea, but I'd recommend for the future to minimize the references of innovation, instead replacing it with some more information on the game. The primary concept is great, but I would like to know a bit more about the other parts of the game, as well.

Fun: A-

Presentation: B

Originality: B+