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Culmination Project Fall 2022

ENT 4499

Withered | **Reflection**

My culmination project was me trying something new. I've been making music since 8th grade. I always loved seeing the process of music being made. I will watch youtube videos on producers breaking down the music and listen to the story on how the song came to be. Once in a while I will come across videos on composers like Hans Zimmer and Alan Silvestri. And I will see how they created amazing soundtracks for movies. Seeing those Hans Zimmer videos, I always wanted to try and create cinematic music. And back when this class started back in August, I knew I wanted to do something with music. Since I'm in the music technology track. My first idea for this project was to create a four song EP produced by me. I was thinking of having a local artist I knew rap and sing. Then I scratched that idea and went with film scoring. My idea with the film scoring was that I will pick a film and create a soundtrack to the film. It wasn't till my first meeting with my tech advisor Prof. Nikki D'Agostino where she suggested I do all the sounds. Because just creating a soundtrack was too easy. So we added Foley into the project. Prior to the project I knew what Foley was and how it was made. But I have never done it before. At this point I have the idea set in stone, creating Foley and Music.

Now that I have the idea, I have to pick a film. In the early process I was thinking of picking a silent film. But most of the silent films I found on youtube were old black and white films. I didn't like them, I wanted something modern. So I started searching for short films. I don't know why but most of the films were horror related. I went through about four films before landing on *Withered*. I went with the horror theme because it was around Halloween and I was thinking that horror is easy to produce things for. The reason why I chose to go with *Withered* was because when I saw it I liked the original music and sounds and I was thinking this is easy to do. Now that I have the film. I did a timeline of the film. That played as a checklist of the sounds I needed to create. Once I had that I started recording.

The recording process was easy. I use different objects around my house to create the sounds. I recorded Foley into Adobe Audition. I like the sounds the object produces. The only thing I didn't like was the microphone I have. It's a cheap thirty dollar microphone from Amazon. The sound had a background noise, It didn't give a clean recording. Likely I have a variety of software to clean the sound up. I added a noise gate to try and get clear sound. I also used my iPhone to record. Overall I think the recording process was great and fun. I had to be creative. I was lucky in having the objects because it mimicked the sounds in the film perfectly.

The music process was my favorite part of the project. I was looking forward to creating the music. Given my background in making music, I already knew how I wanted it to sound. I used the original as template / inspiration to create my music. At first I created simple compositions like strings melody or piano chords. To give the scene a mood and to give me an idea on what to add next. Once I had all the Foley done and synched. I went back to those piano chords and added more orchestral feeling. I took a simple approach in writing the music. I didn't want it to be so complex. Most of the music in C Major / A Minor. Most of the music is originally written by me. I used a few samples. The sound design was another new thing for me. I've done sound design but never for a film. It was a fun process in creating sound effects. Most of the sound effects were found online.

This project was fun to make. I enjoyed it because it was something I was interested in. If I went with something else I don't think I would have done so much for it. But I like how the project came out. But things I could've done better is the syncing process. If you saw the film, there are moments where some of the sounds do not match what is going on in the scene. There's moments where the sounds come slightly before or sound like more than what it is. I feel like some parts are not noticeable. Another thing I could've done better is timing in making the project. I have a problem with procrastination. Throughout my life I procrastinate everything. For me, I push things back to the very last minute to do it. So for this project I should have finished it earlier. I say this because the thirty second clip I had to make, I polished that part more than the entire film. My tech advisor gave me a due date to have the film done by the 28th. I didn't have the second half done. There was no reason to have the film not done. I just waited until the very last minute to finish it. And if I had done it earlier in November, I could've polished the entire film like I did with the thirty second clip.

In conclusion, this was a fun start getting into film scoring and sound design. I want to pursue a career in sync licensing. Creating music for movies is a lot of fun. And Foley was fun to do. It's creative. Overall I loved the process in creating this project. I'm thankful for my tech advisor Nikki D'Agostino for guiding me through this project. This was fun. I hope in the future I can work on more films.