The primary goal of *Clock Tower* was solving puzzles and trying to escape a mansion while evading the primary antagonist of the game, "ScissorMan" many of the audio design fundamentals revolved around creating a stressful situation when the players character was running away from ScissorMan. This included the environment music and atmosphere changes which signaled the arrival of ScissorMan, foley which was dedicated to when the players characters player is being chased by scissorman in a similar soundscape design as featured in *Alone in the Dark*. The idea of the chase would become an important concept for future video games of the horror genre to master
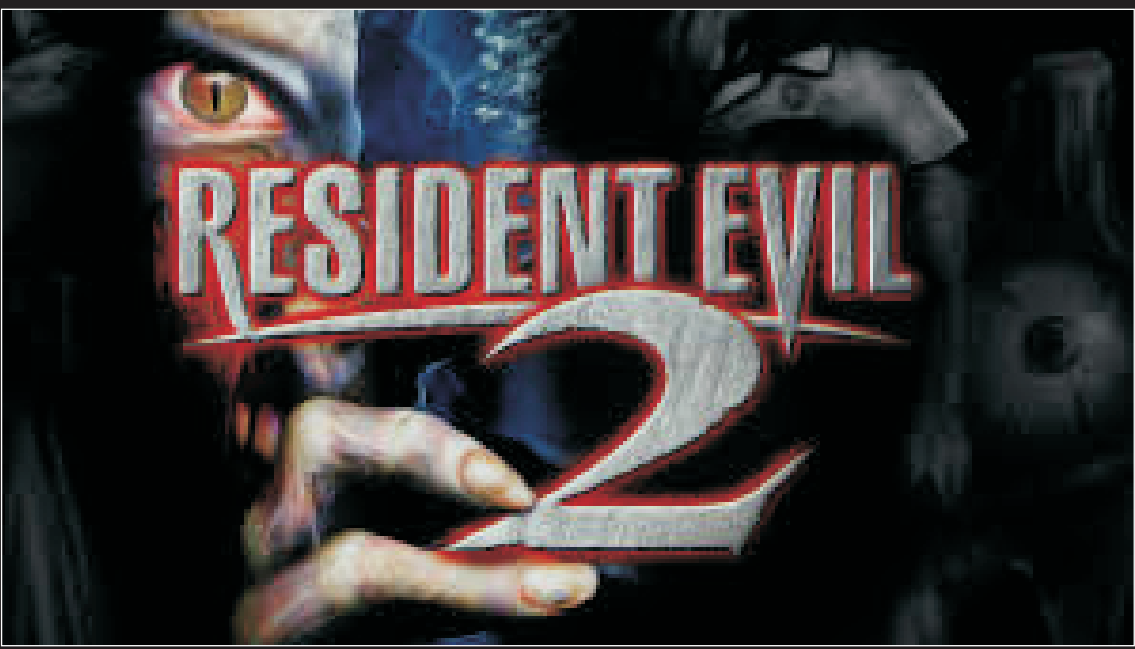
Originally, Resident Evil was designed to be a remake of Sweet Home since both video games were developed by the same gaming developer. The game that was created innovated on the ideas created by Sweet Home and added some of the other concepts that games like Clock Tower and Alone in the Dark had been designed upon such as the chase and fixed camera angles with pre-rendered backdrops. New ideas for the horror genre such as limited resources, storytelling focused on in-game items, multiple endings and horrific imagery helped drive players investment in the game (as well as future games). The emphasis of the game's soundscape was the atmospheric content. The post-apocalyptic landscape of the game was the defining factor in what drove fear and anxiety in players. The character and creature foley painted a hyperreal image despite the limited visual technology for the time. Finally, the use of source disconnected audios was a major factor in defining the overarching environment that the game was built upon. Resident Evil would become the very first Survival Horror game franchise with multiple entries to span many generations all the way to present day. It was also the first video game to market itself as "Survival Horror" which inspired many game studios to seek the same success in their games in the genre. Over the next few years, many "clones" of Resident Evil would appear, but none of them would ever be able to capture the magic and success behind the original Resident Evil.

Silent Hill was published in 1999 and became a huge success with vastly positive reviews and selling over two million copies during its shelf life. The primary focus behind the game was the use of psychological horror, which became the driving force in the game's soundscape. The foggy, dark explorable atmosphere filled with creatures of the unknown set the tone for how future Survival Horror games should structure their atmosphere. Unlike Resident Evil, Silent Hill used full 3D rendered environments with a third person style camera. This allowed the development team to create moments of terror in plain sight to be found by the player to further push into the game. Silent Hill featured a cast of creatures and monsters that were unheard of in gaming which allowed for unique (and terrifying) sound design behind them. Tie that together with a horrific soundtrack and a thrilling narrative, the game would go on to inspire a franchise of material for multiple media formats through present day.

Survival Horror games are **most successful** when the implemented **soundscape** is well thought out even if the **visual component** is lacking.

# Survival Horror Sound Design

Author:

Brayden Mathews

John Merchant
Dept. of Recording Industry

The research performed under this project was used to craft "Don't Look Back", a Survival Horror game developed by Brayden Mathews.

Game Plot:
After an apocalyptic event devastates the earth one scientist must collect mystical artifacts to banish the corruption that has taken root.
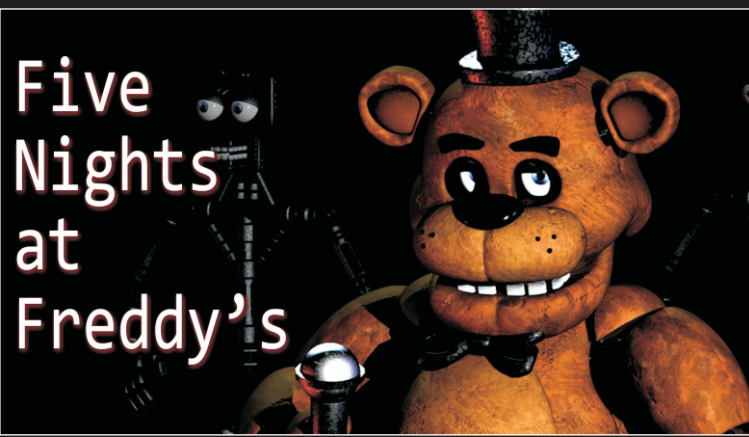
ONE ON ONE ENCOUNTERS TO GENERATE FEAR

FEAR

While there is a wide range of emotions that can be expressed and felt by the human species, developers of Survival Horror use the soundscape to focus in on three primary emotions.

The first two are major emotions which have been mentioned already and are the fear and anxiety but, the final emotion which has not been discussed at length would be the feeling of suspense. The Darwinian perspective of emotions defines fear as "a psychological experience to prepare individuals for the 'freeze, fight or flight' response". Fear is a reaction to a threat which has made itself known, the preparation and decision making for the ensuing conflict. In order to replicate this emotion in the player, developers create threats for the player that they must overcome. In the soundscape, this focuses on louder, source connected audio clips. This puts the threat front and center which makes the player enter the fight or flight mode.

CREATING INTENSE ATMOSPHERES TO MOLD ANXIETY

ANXIETY

Anxiety on the other hand is a completely different emotion even though it is often described as a lower level of fear. "Anxiety is diffuse with a vague sense of apprehension, rather than due to a specific stimulus. Anxiety is often thought to be a future orientated mood a vague discomforting sense that things will go wrong, which can have an adaptive function of enhancing performance at optimal levels." There is a disconnect between a source which causes the un-comfortability and that is the main focus behind anxiety. Lower volume based source disconnected audio clips are used primarily to create anxiety. This often will fall in the background of the environment, not creating a specific threat but rather allowing the player to scare themselves by allowing their own imagination to create the source and the start of the fear. Developers will build anxiety until a threat reveals itself which then converts the player's emotion into fear which unravels as a confrontation and then begins again.

DEVELOPING THE CHASE CREATING ANXIETY AND SUSPENSE

SUSPENSE

When fear and anxiety overlap it manifests itself as the emotion or element of suspense. While there is still research being done on the concept of suspense, it is described in the Paradox of Suspense as "…a Fear emotion coupled with the cognitive state of uncertainty. That is, fear coupled with anxiety…. the experience of uncertainty regarding the outcome of a potentially hostile confrontation." If the threat is put in the mind of the player but the confrontation has yet to ensue, then the anxiety that surrounds it instead manifests itself as suspense since the source of the threat is known. Returning to The Evil Within example, when the player is navigating the area with the chained golem, the golem is constantly growling and screeching in pain since it is contained. The player recognizes that the golem is a potential threat in the future thus creating the emotion of suspense surround the impending conflict with the golem. If the golem is instead unveiled when the player enters his immediate vicinity rather than the surrounding environment, there would be no suspense because the player does not know about the threat of the golem nor were there any indications from audio cues that the golem lies in wait. Developers create suspense by using audio cues to reveal impending threats in the area (or possibly a future area in the game).