Unravelling Music

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PRESENTS

HALLOWEEN HORROR 3000

Unravelling Music

Welcome to the Unravelling Music Halloween Special: "Halloween Horror 3000"

Who said that ear training couldn't be fun? Enjoy learning while listening to great music on your iPod.

The Unravelling Music series is designed to help you learn, wherever you are – just by listening to music. Spend a little time getting to know the track using the extra clips and track notes provided, and then simply listen to the track to reinforce what you've learned.

For this Halloween special, the audio examples will help train your ears to hear the **types of sound effect**, **instruments and melodies** you need to give your compositions a special spooky or futuristic feeling – or simple to appreciate it more in the music you listen to.

Now you can train your ears to hear more in music whether you are at the office, in your room at home, working out, or at the local Halloween party on October 31st... Ear Training has never been so much fun!

Audio Index

There are 6 audio tracks which make up this Halloween special. The main music track and 5 example clips:

Basic musical terms

If you haven't studied much music before - no problem! But you may find some of the terms used in the track notes are unfamiliar. Here are a few explanations to help you get started:

> ➢ **Synthesizer:**
>
> *An electronic instrument which can create a variety of sounds.*

> ➢ **MIDI:**
>
> *The standard technology for controlling and combining digital instruments such as synthesizers.*

> ➢ **Audio Effect:**
>
> *A way of artificially altering sound to achieve a certain effect.*

> ➢ **Distortion:**
>
> *An audio effect which reduces the audio quality, making a 'crunchy' or 'dirty' sound.*

➢ Timbre:

> *The unique characteristic sound of an instrument.*

➢ Polyphony:

> *Multiple notes or instruments playing at once.*

Note: When you see a time marker like **[01:23]** that means you should listen from 1 minute and 23 seconds in the track.

General Notes

For Composers

Don't be afraid to explore your composition software's options to create original sounds that represent the sounds in your musical mind. Using your ear training skills you can make artistic choices in your music, from changing the pitch of an instrument to adding a flanger effect or to adding a sine wave to the equation.

What if you are used to using presets and loops? Simply train your ears by starting with a dry track, no effects. Open up the instrument interface and listen to the instrument several times.

What is this sound missing? Does it need to be higher in pitch, could use a different envelope, or maybe need a little bit of shape or filtering? Alter the pitch to make the sound higher or lower, change the attack or decay of your envelope to change the overall shape, or add a resonant filter.

Every time you make a change, listen with your ears carefully. Do you hear the effect that you wanted? When you are happy with it, save the instrument settings with a descriptive heading, then continue to tweak the track.

The first few times that you use your trained aural skills to mix your audio track may take a while. Once you have mastered what effects you enjoy most and have developed your signature sounds, you will be able to mix great music quickly with originality.

For Listeners

You don't need to be a musical maestro to benefit from the kind of ear training HH3K teaches. You'll already be hearing the outcome of all the choices discussed here, and it's simply a matter of learning to be conscious of them, and recognise them in music.

By studying the choices made by a track's composer, you open up your musical awareness and will be able to enjoy and understand music more.

You needn't stop there though! Nowadays music technology means that even somebody with no musical training or composition experience can start experimenting with music creation.

Try downloading the audio editor Audacity and applying some audio effect filters to your favourite songs. If you have a copy of Apple's GarageBand, you've already got everything you need to start experimenting with loops, synthesizers, and audio effects.

Use the articles and tutorials on EasyEarTraining.com to continue exploring the world of music and sound:

- **Audio Effects**

- **Timbre**

- **"Listen Close" series**

Track Notes

Halloween Horror 3000 (HH3K) demonstrates how particular kinds of sound effect, synthesizer instrument and melodies can give music a particular style, such as horror or futuristic sci-fi.

Creating a zany science fiction retro feel in music involves more than hiring a handful of cyborgs to control a Nord Modulator! A composer using the right synthesizers, Halloween sound effects, and melodic material can make music sound straight out of the next millennium and spook even the Borg...

Spacey Halloween Sounds

Halloween sound effects can enhance any sci-fi track. For the ear training track HH3K a combination of freaky sounds helps give it the right feeling, including creepy female whispers (created through [EW Symphonic Choirs](#)), alien murmurs from [Logic](#), and a 'scream' audio sample.

You can make your own horrific Halloween effects easily with a good set of vocal chords and a mic, or explore your synth banks for some hidden sound gems. Instead of placing them randomly through the track, use the science fiction sounds for the intro, ending, and transitions in the track. In Halloween Horror 3000, UFO 'takeoff' sound effects are used in the music introduction but freaky whispers are saved for ambience later on:

Ex. 1: [1:07] Space Whispers

Listen to how these indistinct whispers are used in the track to create the right atmosphere. If you have difficulty isolating them, use the example track to listen to the whispers by themselves, and then see if you can dissect the main track by ear at 1:07.

Instrument Choices

Choosing the right synthesizer instruments can make a track sound straight out of *Forbidden Planet*, *Tron*, or *The Matrix*.

If the track is to suit a science fiction film, instruments should reflect the sounds that you would logically find in the film's fictional environment.

There are no hard rules, but a composer must logically choose the most suitable instruments. They can make or break a track! Pre-recorded "loops" can save a composer time, but composing from scratch using software instruments and live synthesizers can help produce an interesting and high quality track.

Ex. 2: [0:31] Instrument 1

Listen to the bassline underneath the 'laser blasts' in this excerpt. The 'bitty' distortion at the beginning of HH3K has created a certain ambience and this instrument was designed to match it. Listen for how it has a 'messy' sound rather than a neat, polished timbre.

Ex. 3: [0:31] Instrument 2

This is the same bassline as Ex. 2, played using a different instrument. What kind of a track do you think this would be suited to? Do you think it matches the distortion of HH3K well?

Film and Pop Culture references

Creating ambience from scratch using sound effects and instrument choice isn't the only way to achieve a particular feel. Sometimes a composer will choose to reference familiar points of culture, as a way of helping the listener connect with the track.

Ex. 4: [3:11] TV Melody

At the end of HH3K this melodic line appears, inspired by the "X-Files" TV show. For listeners who know the TV theme tune, it will help evoke a feeling of mystery and adventure that is suited to HH3K.

Ex. 5: [1:45] Video Game Melody

HH3K is aiming for a combination of 'spooky', 'futuristic' - and also 'retro', by channeling that classic 80s sci-fi vibe. This melody, inspired by 1980s 8-bit videogame music was created using one of the basic MIDI patches which would have been available then, and applying 8-bit distortion to reduce the sound quality. The melody itself is kept simple, as complex polyphony wasn't always possible back then.

About the composer

Intermedia composer, percussionist, author, and obsessive sci-fi buff, **Sabrina Peña Young** composes mind-numbing electroacoustic works heard in Asia, North America, Australia, and Europe.

Her music has been heard in film festivals, radio, electronic dance clubs, random boom boxes in France, and as not-so-pleasant background music. Her multimedia works have been performed at venues like the Beijing Conservatory, the International Computer Music Conference, Miramax's Project Greenlight, the Athena Festival, the New York International Independent Film Festival, Art Basil Miami, Turkey's Cinema for Peace, and Pulsefield International Exhibition of Sound Art.
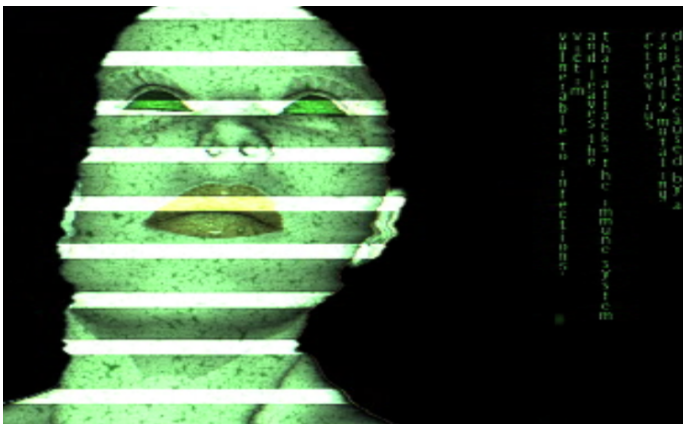
Origins, a riveting album of cinematic soundscapes, pulsating rhythms and enigmatic vocals, was released on CD Baby and iTunes in 2008. Origins includes **World Order #1**, a pounding dance piece about nuclear war and **Looking Glass**, a nightmarish musical poem.

Sabrina is currently producing a futuristic "Virtual Opera" called **Libertaria**, set in the year 2125, which combines experimental electronic music with popular rhythms, creating a fusion of the avant-garde and the familiar.

Visit Sabrina's website for news and information:

http://sabrinapenayoung.blogspot.com/

Want more great music? Buy "Origins" here:

http://www.cdbaby.com/Artist/SabrinaYoung

Contact Sabrina by email:

sabrina@EasyEarTraining.com

Further Training and Support

If you need any help using these tracks to develop your ears come join our discussion forums at:

http://www.EasyEarTraining.com/Forums

You can also find support information and links to further training resources at the **Unravelling Music** series homepage:

http://www.EasyEarTraining.com/UnravellingMusic

Want to continue your training?

The first Unravelling Music album, Introducing Intervals is the best place to start:

- **Learn intervals** - even if you don't know music theory!
- **5 special MP3 tracks** with **22 supporting audio clips** demonstrate the intervals **in real use**.
- **28-page PDF guide** explains everything you need to know. Get started with just a few pages.

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