Writing Interactive Music for Video Games: A Composer's Guide (Game Design)

By Michael Sweet

Writing Interactive Music for Video Games: A Composer's Guide (Game Design) By Michael Sweet

"This book is a must read for newcomers and experienced composers wanting to learn more about the art of video game composition."
—Chuck Doud, Director of Music, Sony Computer Entertainment Worldwide Studios

All You Need to Know to Create Great Video Game Music

Written by the developer of Berklee School of Music's pioneering game scoring program, this guide covers everything professional composers and music students need to know about composing interactive music for video games, and contains exclusive tools for interactive scoring—tools that were previously available only at Berklee.

Drawing on twenty years of professional experience in the game industry, Michael Sweet helps you master the unique language of music storytelling in games. Next, he walks you through the entire music composition process, from initial conceptualization and creative direction through implementation.

Inside, you'll find dozens of examples that illustrate adaptive compositional techniques, from small downloadable games to multimillion dollar console titles. In addition, this guide covers the business side of video game composition, sharing crucial advice about contracts, pricing, sales, and marketing.

Coverage includes

- Overcoming the unique challenges of writing for games
- Composing music that can adapt in real time to player actions
- Developing thematic ideas
- Using audio middleware to create advanced interactive scores
- Working effectively with game development teams
- Understanding the life of a video game composer
- Managing contracts, rights, estimating, and negotiation
- Finding work

The companion website contains software tools to help you master interactive music concepts explored in this book, with additional resources and links to learn more about scoring for games. See Appendix A for details.

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Editorial Review

Review

"Behind every great game experience is an interactive score that defines the emotional through-line of a game. *Writing Interactive Music for Video Games* will show you how to create such a score, from basic concepts to sophisticated techniques. It is filled with advice from some of the greatest video game composers working today, and written with the clarity and insight that comes from experience."
–Tracy Fullerton, Director, USC Game Innovation Lab

"Michael Sweet's book provides a much-needed text that walks a composer through all of the critical considerations when first starting to work in the video game industry. Not simply a 'how-to' but a 'why-to' that dives deep into the aesthetics and best practices of writing an interactive score. Through his years of work in the industry and years of teaching, he is able to bring together a comprehensive discussion on composing interactive scores. Professor Sweet brings together the nuts and bolts, the business, and pertinent historical moments–all while setting composers' expectations for working in the industry. There is no better book to be found if you are a composer looking to understand writing for games."
–Jeanine Cowen, Vice President for Curriculum and Program Innovation, Academic Affairs, Berklee College of Music

"Michael Sweet demonstrates a formidable depth and breadth of knowledge related to adaptive music. He adroitly covers both the creative and technical components critical to being successful in this field. This book is a must-read for newcomers and experienced composers wanting to learn more about the art of video game composition."
–Chuck Doud, Director of Music, Sony Computer Entertainment Worldwide Studios

"Clear, complete, concise, and filled with vital information. This is a must-read for any composer serious about scoring for games. If you want to know what makes game music unique, look no further; this book will take you to the next level!"
–Steve Horowitz, Composer

"The processes and techniques for composing for games has typically been a black art of strange terms and byzantine processes. *Writing Interactive Music for Video Games* uncovers the issues you have to deal with when composing music for games and presents them in an easy-to-understand way, from the creative and technical issues to making bids and dealing with contracts. An excellent resource for both the professional and aspiring composer, this book should be on the shelf of anyone interested in writing music for games."
–Brian Schmidt, Executive Director, GameSoundCon, and President, Game Audio Network Guild

"Michael Sweet has written a thorough and comprehensive guide for any composer or audio professional wishing to understand the technical and creative aspects of scoring video games. Students and professionals at all levels will find this book valuable and well worth reading."
–Garry Schyman, Composer, Bioshock series, Middle-earth: Shadow of Mordor, Dante's Inferno, and Xcom: The Bureau Declassified; and Adjunct Professor, USC's SMPTV Program

About the Author
Michael Sweet leads development of the game scoring curriculum at Berklee College of Music. Over two

decades, he has been audio director on more than one hundred video games including the Xbox 360 logo and award-winning video games from Cartoon Network, Sesame Workshop, Shockwave, RealArcade, Lego, and Microsoft. He has won the Independent Games Festival's Best Audio Award and the BDA Promax Gold Award for Best Sound Design, and has been nominated for four Game Audio Network Guild (GANG) awards.

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Randall James:

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