

Song of the Weekend

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(<https://www.facebook.com/groups/ljackaudiodiscgroup>)

Entry: 20190413 – I Choose The Stairs

This week's "Song of the Weekend" is I Choose the Stairs, from the Apogee Software classic, "Rise of the Triad."

I Choose the Stairs is unique in a couple of ways: how it got its name, and how it got its sound. Let's start with the latter. This is one of the few songs I have ever put out where I have recorded myself performing part of the song, specifically the bass line. I usually "mouse in" every note for every song I do via the piano roll view in whatever version of Cakewalk I happen to be using (in this case, I believe it was Cakewalk for Windows version 2.0 or 3.0). However, I couldn't get the lively bass sound I wanted with moused-in notes this time around, so I scrapped the bass line and played it in myself. I think I played in a couple of instances of it and then copy/pasted it for part of the song, then played in other instances when it changed. So, a rare song, indeed.

The way it got its name actually relates to how some of the other songs in the game got their names (more on that in future installments of SOTW). The source is a series of answering machine recordings done by Tom Hall and John Romero (correct me if I'm wrong here) for id Software back in their early days. Most of them featured Tom interviewing a "big, red, hairy guy" with his voice pitched down like a certain dark evil demon. Most of them ended with Tom getting thrown down the stairs. There was one message, however, where the demon was putting together a task force, and he told Tom, "You're going on the task force or down the ****ing stairs." Tom replied, "I choose the stairs, dumbass!"

Hence the name. Minus the dumbass.

There is also another part of the song that Tom Hall and I believed at the time was unique to video game music: a drum feature. Right after a big brass buildup, the bottom drops out and nothing but the hi-hats, tambourine, and bass drum. The tom-toms pick up from there and begin a melody of their own, joined eventually by the snare. The drums get more complicated until they kick up a cloud of dust at the end, leading back to the full ensemble's return.

So, with that, please enjoy I Choose the Stairs, and look for the following message with the link to the id Software answering machine message by the same name!

Song: <https://youtu.be/fzu8NoVCdbQ>

Answering machine message ("Demonic Task Force"):

<https://rome.ro/news/2015/12/13/gametales-id-answering-machine>

