

Song of the Weekend

By Lee Jackson

From the Lee Jackson Audio Community Discussion Group

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

Entry: 20190706 – 233.778 Celsius

This week's "Song of the Weekend" is 233.778 Celsius, from the 3D Realms hit, "Duke Nukem 3D."

233.778 Celsius was used in the "Fahrenheit" level of the original three episodes of the game. It's rare in that it's one of the songs that was specifically paired up with the level in those first three episodes (all of the songs in the fourth episode (the Atomic Edition) were specifically paired). It may not seem so at first look, until you translate the title from Celsius to Fahrenheit--233.778 Celsius is 451 Fahrenheit, which is a take on the Ray Bradbury book by the same (almost) name, after which the level was named. (You'll find fire trucks with "451" on them in the level, if memory serves.)

I took my inspiration for the track from Bernard Herrmann's beautiful score to the original 1966 Fahrenheit 451 film. As the story goes, one of the artists or level designers--can't remember who--loaned me a copy of the soundtrack. I listened and immersed myself in it, and attempted a couple of string themes a la Herrmann's style. None of those attempts worked. In the end, I chose another direction: I used one of the chord progressions from one of the songs (again, can't remember which), sped it up, and wrote a more frantic work over the top of it, complete with percussion.

233.778 Celsius makes the ultimate use of the EMIDI system spec'd by me and programmed by developer extraordinaire Jim Dosé. I've found a YouTube example that has recorded the entire looping extract for your listening pleasure (link at the end of this article). One of the reasons for the heavy reliance on EMIDI was the ever-present George Filter. You see, I'd written a siren effect into the song to go along with the fire trucks in the level. George didn't want it going through the whole level, although he agreed it was a cool effect. I promised him that I could make it so that he'd only hear it a couple of times. After that, the siren would be replaced with a harp arpeggio for the remainder of the level. He agreed on the compromise. Listen to the entire song in the link and you'll hear the transition.

There are other subtle EMIDI tweaks in the song. I hope you'll enjoy them. With that, I give you this week's link, to 233.778 Celsius. Thank you for reading!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NkkH8pVWyBY>