Song of the Weekend

By Lee Jackson

From the Lee Jackson Audio Community Discussion Group
(https://www.facebook.com/groups/ljackaudiodiscgroup)

Entry: 20190901 – Chant

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This week's "Song of the Weekend" is Chant, from the Apogee Software cult classic, "Rise of the Triad."

As the title would indicate, Chant was inspired by my own ideal of what a medieval Gregorian chant should sound like. It's not inspired by any specific preexisting piece of music as far as I'm aware: it's as original as I could get it to be.

Chant is built around four main musical motifs. The first one heard is an arpeggiated chord played by a solo electric piano. Once the drum kit performer comes in with a two measure sforzando-piano-crescendo, the second motif comes in: an ostinato bass, played by a bass guitar. This is featured for eight measures, after which a "sweep" synth enters and plays a whole note motif for another eight measures. This leads to the actual melody, played in the strings.

Once the melody gets a pass-through, things start over from the bass's ostinato part while the drummer and the keyboardist keep chugging away. You get another eight bars of sweep, then the fun begins: the melody re-enters, but with an echo-like effect. The middle strings play the melody, followed a measure later by the low strings. This goes on for eight bars, then repeats, with the high strings coming in a measure after the low strings. All three melodic lines collide right in sync with each other after eight bars to lead into the second half of the melody. This time around, though, you get a cadence that sets up the loop back to the beginning.

Chant is one of those, "Where on earth did I get these ideas from?" pieces. I'm sure I've heard other composers use similar techniques, so I probably just applied them to my own melodic lines. I'm really not sure. In any case, I don't recall Tom Hall objecting too much to this composition at any stage during its development. Tom, if you're out there, now's the time to object. ^_^

If there's anything I'm not happy with about the piece, it'd be the drums. This was written before I had a good hand on writing drum parts. I'd yet to fully master the "weak left hand" technique, and I hadn't yet learned now to properly balance MIDI note velocities against the rest of the mix. I feel that I got lucky with the end result, given my skill level at the time. Regardless of that fact, I am happy with the overall result.

With that, please allow me to post a link to a recording of Chant. I hope you will enjoy it!

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2f9Y3lVkSDE