

# Song of the Weekend

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

Entry: 20210116 – Lesson 1

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This week's "Song of the Weekend" is Lesson 1, parts of which were used in the 3D Realms/Gearbox Software game "Duke Nukem Forever."

Lesson 1 was written at the Apogee/3D Realms studio, but it was not written with any game in mind. It was an exercise in writing dance music and in using some of the more powerful aspects of two of the synthesizers in my arsenal, the Kurzweil K2500RS and the Kawai K5000R (my own personal rackmount synth, which I use to this day). It was also a test of the MIDI control boxes we had, a Peavey PC1600X and a Kawai K5000 Macro Control Box (MCB) (also my personal hardware). These boxes allowed me to make rapid changes to parameters to settings on the synthesizers, such as the filter cutoffs, resonance, harmonics, volume, and so on.

I could not release the entire song to the general public because I used vocal samples that were not in the public domain (I do not remember where these samples came from). That is also why the song is not posted to my own YouTube account, by the way. Someone else has taken a large chance and has posted it to their own account. I hope nothing happens to them. ^\_^

Musical Analysis:

Doing a musical analysis on Lesson 1 is going to be difficult at best, since a) I have lost the source material, and b) I have forgotten much of what I did in the first place. What follows is an attempt to "reverse engineer" the song.

Lesson 1 opens up with an 8-bar intro that's simple enough: the bass drum plays on every quarter note, while a synth bass plays a pattern on top of it, making up a four-measure-long loop. As the line progresses, the filter on the synth bass opens up, letting more and more of the high frequencies in until it's wide open just before the last measure of the intro. At that point, a vocal sample triggers, saying, "Your first sample lesson" in a calm, British voice (the source of the title of the song). In the last measure of the intro, a snare drum joins in and plays a rapid pattern, leading into the main part of the song.

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The main section begins with the same 4-bar loop from the intro, but this time with the filter clamped down to let in very little high frequency material. A two-voice synth plays an octave or two over the top of this for 64 bars: one voice drones on the root note, while the other moves in a melodic fashion. Both are sent through a highpass filter which gives the lines a waspy, “wah-wah” effect. Finally, in the last half of the phrase, voices speak three muffled non sequiturs in the background at random intervals.

A 16-bar bridge follows, beginning with 4-bars of random spiky synth notes centered around the V of the scale in an upper octave. A 4-bar legato chord progression follows, using the synth from the first phrase. The chords drop out as a second bass synth joins in for the next 4 bars, with highly random high-pass filtering applied to the second bass. This continues for 4 more bars as the first 4 bars of the bridge (the spiky synth notes) repeat and merge with the bass.

The main section now repeats for 32 bars, but with an “eee eee” sounding synth playing a syncopated rhythm on top. The “eee eee” synth begins playing out of the right channel for 4 bars, then switches to the left channel for 4 bars. This repeats to the end of the phrase. All the while, the underlying main section does a slow crescendo up to a fortissimo at the end of the phrase.

This time, an 8-bar break follows. One of the bass synths plays heavy downbeats on beats 1 and 2, while the other plays the syncopated rhythm that the “eee eee” synth was playing, but only using the root note and the flatted-VII note of the scale. The percussion kicks into overdrive at this point as well. Three vocal samples are featured: a male speaking, “In our age of advanced technology ...”, a woman saying, “You’re new here, aren’t you?”, and a computerized voice saying, “I’m in control.”

The climax builds up through the next 48 bars. It begins with one bass on the downbeat of 1 and 2 plus the “eee eee” synth doubled by the other bass, playing over a percussion line that now includes a cuica. The basses and “eee eee” synth continue for the entire phrase, with the bass lines slowly building over time. Sixteen bars into the phrase, the synth from the beginning of the piece comes in quietly and then swirls and builds for the next 16 bars, adding a middle octave as it goes. Toward the end of these 16 bars, a female voice shouts a warble above the din.

The final build starts with huge drum hits joining the bass on the downbeats of all 4 counts of the remaining measures. The beats grow wilder and wilder until the climax is reached. Then, suddenly, everything drops out and the piece loops back to the beginning.

And that, as they say, is that. Phew! Lesson 1 is a complex piece, folks. I hope you’ll take the time to go to the following link and take a listen. Thank you for reading, and thank you for voting for your “Song of the Weekend!”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Eh7cTPjgmKQ>