

Song of the Weekend

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

Entry: 20210213 – Preparation D

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

I had quite a bit of fun in the wordplay for Preparation D. As you can guess, it's a take on the popular hemorrhoid product, "Preparation H," but with a D for "Duke" substituted for the H. It's also a suggestion that any enemies are going to need a supply of Preparation D when Duke gets through with them in the level in question, for reasons that I shouldn't have to explain. I'll just use one word: "Ouch."

Preparation D was paired off with E4L2, "Duke-Burger" within the game. I know of no specific reason for the pairing.

Musical Analysis:

Preparation D starts out using the Ab Phrygian Mode (Ab-Bbb-Cb-Db-Eb-Fb-Gb-Ab), the third mode of the Fb Major scale. Trust me, I didn't know I was using it at the time. I just thought I'd hit a cool sound. The time signature is 4/4 and the tempo is 120 bpm. It was written using a Roland SC-88.

The song begins with a solo octave eighth note hit on Ab using a distorted guitar. A measure later, the same guitar plays a pair of octave Ab eighth notes on the first beat, the second eighth note harder than the first. It will then have the wonderful job of repeating this Ab eighth note pair until measure 57.

Meanwhile, way back at measure 4, the drums start up while a "charang" guitar plays the only real melody of the piece – a staccato figure that runs eight measures long. Halfway through the line, an "echo drops" voice joins in and plays the second part of the melody in unison with the charang guitar. When the melody is finished, a "glass" patch plays and holds an Ab for eight measures. A Gb joins in four measures along, followed two measures later by a Db.

(con't)

At measure 21, the charang/echo drops melody line comes back in for eight measures, while the glass patch continues to play. This time, however, they're joined by a slap bass guitar, who plays along with the distorted guitar. The glass line becomes a bit more complex at measure 29, and the bass does a little "show off" move in measure 32 (which will come back later).

Everyone but the drums and the distorted guitar drops out at measure 37. They stay that way until the fourth beat of measure 40, when the bass guitar plays a pick-up figure leading into an eight bar solo. It's joined halfway through by the glass patch, playing softly on a Gb first, then a Db as well. At measure 49, the bass guitar transitions smoothly back to following the distorted guitar while the glass plays whole note chords for the next eight measures, each one more complex than the next.

An abrupt key change happens at measure 57 (wake up, distorted guitar player!). Everything is transposed up three half-steps, so that the root note becomes a B instead of an Ab. The Phrygian Mode is still in effect, however. As for the song, everything from the first pass through the melody gets repeated, as does the glass patch part eight measures beyond the melody.

At measure 73, yet another abrupt key change takes place. This time, everything transposes up one half step so that C becomes the new root, with Phrygian Mode still in effect. Again, the song repeats as in the above paragraph, building tension as the pitches rise.

Finally, at measure 89, the key changes back to the original Ab Phrygian Mode, and the melody and glass patch follow-on repeat one more time. This is followed by four measures of just distorted guitar and drums, as the song sets up for the loop.

And I thought this was a simple song! Phew. Never underestimate the mind of a madman. Now, please allow me to link you to a YouTube post of Preparation D. Thank you for reading, and thank you once again for voting for your "Song of the Weekend!"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6fEmbaiC7SQ>