Song of the Weekend

By Lee Jackson

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

Entry: 20210619 – RoboCreeping

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

RoboCreeping was begun as a test project in early May of 1995. A fragment of just over one minute in length exists in my "ReallyEarlyVersions" subdirectory. I didn't work on it again until August of that year, and then not again until March of 1996, after I'd been made Music and Sound Director at 3D Realms.

There is no wordplay in the title of the song. In fact, I don't know why I chose this title for the song. It really doesn't match anything beyond the beginning couple of measures. Every once in a while I strike out, and this is an example of one of those times, I guess.

Musical Analysis:

RoboCreeping is written in the key of C minor and runs at 60 beats per minute in 4/4 time. Although the key is C minor, the song doesn't rely so much on chords as it does on open intervals. For example, the opening statement with the French Horns starts with a C-G-C cluster of whole notes, then goes to a whole note cluster built on Gb-Db-Gb, a tri-tone away. This pattern of C-G-C to Gb-Db-Gb whole notes alternates for the entire piece and is the backbone upon which everything else is built.

The only exceptions to the above come at the beginning and the end loop point of the song. At these points, the only thing playing is a part of the string section in the low register, playing a figure that centers around a C-Bb-C-Db pattern. This goes on for a couple of measures until a tympani announces the first whole note cluster, played by the tuba and French Horns. A melody of sorts is embedded in the French Horn line, consisting of suspended notes of the clusters. This goes on for 8 measures.

The next 8 measures consist of the same French Horn line, reinforced with a bass synth. An Echo Drops patch plays staccato notes in a high register above it.

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After the above, the French Horns are replaced by a choir patch playing the same notes for another 8 measures, with a couple of differences (there is an inversion of a cluster, for example). This leads into a whole note that is held for eight counts (two measures) during a decrescendo. The decrescendo fades into the end loop point mentioned earlier.

RoboCreeping is a short song, coming in at only 2 minutes 25 seconds. It apparently packs a punch in a small package, however, since it's one of the songs that I've noticed people tending to remember from the soundtrack.

With that, please allow me to leave you with a link to a YouTube video of the song. Thank you for reading, and thank you for voting for your "Song of the Weekend!"

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SrDJIrwf29k