

Song of the Weekend

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

Entry: 20211225 – Calypso Facto

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

Calypso Facto is a play on the Latin term *ipso facto*, which according to Google means "by that very fact or act." The play on words comes in with the style of the song, where the Caribbean steel drums are used for the melody for most of the time, creating a sort of "Calypso" tune (but heavily modified).

Somehow, somewhere, someone managed to sneak in a misspelling of the song's name into a description of the tracks. To this day, I'll see people thinking that the song's title is Calypso Factor for that very reason. That's not the song's name. It's Facto, not Factor.

Calypso Facto runs at 120 beats per minute in the key of C sharp minor. It strays from the key in some ways, but not by far. It is scored for General MIDI instruments as follows: Steel Drums (high and low), Synth Bass 2, Slow Strings, Marimba, Vibraphone, French Horn, and various percussion on MIDI channel 10.

Musical Analysis:

Calypso Facto begins with Synth Bass 2 playing an ostinato pattern from the get-go, setting up a very low D#-C# repeating eighth note pattern which will continue throughout the entire song. The pattern is a bit deceptive, since it begins on D#, while the song itself is in C# minor. This misleads the ear into briefly believing that the song is in D# (or Eb, the enharmonic equivalent).

The high Steel Drum comes in with the melody in C# minor at measure 9, establishing the key of the song. Slow Strings join in with a held note above the melody at measure 15. This fades out at measure 24. At measure 25, the low Steel Drum takes over the melody briefly through measure 28. The high Steel Drum counters the low Steel Drum melody beginning at measure 29. They play together through measure 32.

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The Marimba punctuates the tune at measure 33 with a pair of chord clusters. This is answered by what can best be described as a "yo ho" call from the French Horns in the following measure. Another Marimba cluster follows, to be answered by yet another call from the French Horns. The Marimba plays one more cluster, which is answered this time by a jazzy solo in the high Steel drum at measure 37. This runs through measure 40, after which the main melody in the Steel Drum repeats, this time accompanied by the Slow Strings, through measure 49.

The Slow Strings play sustained notes in a transition segment beginning at measure 50, with the high Steel Drum recapping the last fragments of its melody from measure 57 to measure 60. The Slow Strings continue on to measure 62, after which the Vibraphone takes over with a jazzy bit of its own. This is accompanied by the Marimba later on, answering the Vibraphone melody like the high Steel Drum countered the low Steel Drum did back in measure 29.

In measure 71, the Marimba and the French Horns repeat the same cluster-call sequence from earlier. This is followed by a sequence identical to the one played by the high Steel Drum, but this time played by the Vibraphone. The high Steel Drum then takes over at measure 79, playing the same recap theme as before in measure 41, until the theme runs out and the setup for the loop is complete.

One historical note: Calypso Facto originally ended on the last half beat of measure 86, quite by accident. It just landed that way. I had to force myself to change the ending so that it led into a loop. That's how good the original ending sounded. Sorry, though - I don't have a MIDI file with the original ending lying around anywhere.

With that said, 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=WuRj--Nt0Uo>