Song of the Weekend

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

Entry: 20220416 – Whomp

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

Whomp gets, or rather inherits, its title, from a previous version of the song. The version of Whomp that was selected as "Song of the Weekend," i.e., the version in the game, was not the first version of Whomp. That honor belongs to a version that has been featured in this group before as a "beta" version. Said "beta" did not pass what I like to call "The George Filter," which means that project director and 3D Realms co-owner George Broussard would not sign off on it until *substantial* changes were made. And by substantial, I mean an almost total gutting and rewriting of the song. Only the "whomping" rhythm in the tympani and the toms remained from the original, hence the name of the piece.

Whomp utilized multiple 3D Realms EMIDI tricks in the MIDI file. It contained alternate voicings for several of the MIDI channels (two alternate voicings for MIDI channel 2), and an alternate loop point at measure 6 (using CC 116/117). Be sure to compensate for this should you try and play the final version of the released MIDI file.

The song is played in the key of A minor and moves along at 106 beats per minute. As far as General MIDI patches are concerned, Whomp is scored for the following instruments: Bowed Glass, Syn.Strings2, Slow Strings, Syn.Strings1 (two channels), Harp, Tympani, and Standard 1 drum set on percussion channel 10 (using only the Low Tom2 patch).

Musical Analysis:

Whomp begins with an intro which will only be played once. Said intro consists of the Tympani and the Low Tom2 patch playing a quarter note-16th note-dotted 8th note pattern on an A at the top of the bass clef, beginning on the downbeat of every measure, from 2 through 49 (taking into account the EMIDI "initbeat" blank measure one at the very beginning of the song). They then repeat the pattern from measure 74 through 81 before dropping down to a D for measures 82 through 93, then they jump back up to the A for measures 94 through 97, at which point the song loops. (Note: this is the "whomp" pattern after which the song is named.)

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The melody/harmony begins in measure 6 (the start of the loop), in the Bowed Glass (labeled "High Strings" in the track list in the song) and the Slow Strings. They play a i-iv-VI-V progression, stretched out over 16 bars, with the Syn.Strings2 joining in during the last 4 bars.

The next 16 bar chord progression, divided up into 4 bar chunks, goes as follows: i-iv-vii°-I, with a *ritardando* from measure 36-37, after which point it modulates to the key of D minor for 8 bars. It then spends the next 4 bars modulating back to A minor, which occurs at measure 50.

A change in instrumentation takes place at measure 50. The two Syn.Strings1 and the Harp take over, with the Harp playing a sort of "noodling" figure from 4 measures before measure 50 until measure 93. The Syn.Strings1 lead the following chord progression from measure 50 onward: i-iv-II-V, covering the next 16 measures until measure 66. From measure 66 on, they play the following progression: i-iv-vii°-i, then another modulation to D minor at measure 82 for 24 measures until the loop, at which the piece remodulates back to A minor.

This has been more of a true study in music theory than have any of my previous musical analyses. I hope it hasn't been boring. In exchange, allow me to leave you with a link to a YouTube version of the song. Thank you for reading, and thank you for voting for your "Song of the Weekend!"

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XprOe2sMmzY