Kieran Gibb

The Killer Element

Task 1: Pre-production

In teams we have been asked to provide music for an audio-visual event called `The Killer Element'. We have been allowed to choose any genre of music but it needs to be based around an element of our choice (air, earth, fire, water). We will be doing this on Cubase SX.

Our element: Air

Roles

In my group of three I had Tina and Dan Firman. Dan's role was to do the clean intro guitars and bass and also the midi drums. He was also in charge of recording. Tina was with us for two weeks but then stopped turning up to the class. She never really did much to the track apart from setting up our file in Cubase. My role was to play the heavy guitar parts, the guitar solo, bass lines, midi parts and the main writer of the song. Dan and myself decided together about FXs. Mixing and arrangement of the track.

Responsibilities

Dan and myself both made it our main responsibility to save after each critical part, for instance after a good take or when we felt necessary. Dan also had to make sure drums were in perfect time and quintized and make sure all parts linked well and were edited properly. I was the main songwriter and was responsible for guitars being in tune and for making sure we kept to our plan and that the equipment and save folder was set-up properly and put away properly.

Plan

Dan and myself decided to write a metal track which we would relate to air by having wind effects building up, chimes in places and heavy riffs to try to create an atmosphere of a really windy day. We decided I would

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write the main structure for the heavy guitars, some bass lines, midi and a guitar solo. Dan would do the clean guitars, some bass and drums. The rest of the mixing, choice of FXs and CQ was done between both of us.

Equipment

We used guitars, bass and guitar FXs which we decided on easily because we both have similar backgrounds in music. We also used the Casio keyboard for sound FXs (wind and chimes). Other equipment we used were cables and di boxes, which you need phantom power to use.

Task 2: Setting up and using the equipment

When we set up Cubase SX we chose the default setting, which means you open to an empty screen. We made a midi track for the drums and marker track so that we could mark where the chorus, verse, etc. would be. We did this by right clicking and picking them out of the list. Next Dan made a drum beat by using the CS10X keyboard, which you set up by assigning the keyboard to channel 10 and 1k needs to be set to CS10x. When ready to record you can turn the metronome on, then just press the * button. We wanted to drop in/out, so we selected this on the transport bar, where you also select the metronome. Also we switched enable on so that we could record. To set up our audio equipment and recordings we had to set up an audio track, which is done the same way as the midi and marker tracks. To get the sound into Cubase you need a direct injection box (DI), which will boost the signal and will make it a balanced signal. We used this for guitar and bass. You also need to turn the phantom power on the mixer. We used some guitar and bass FXs whilst recording (metal zone-distortion, V-amp, different amp and cab settings) which we linked between the guitar and DI box. We also used some Cubase FXs (Flanger, reverb, delay) by choosing the FXs panel and assigning FXs.

Task 3: Mixing and post-production

- Set volumes in Cubase
- Panned in Cubase
- Added a few FXs (reverb, snare, s/guitar)
- Slight E.Q
- Import WAV file into sound forge
- Remove DC effects

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- Added slight E.Q.
- Normalise loudness by 20db
- Added fade out to end of song

Once post-production was finished we used Roxio easy CD creator to burn the CD.

Task 4

27.1:

Before using midi computer systems you must make sure the computer is switched on at the mains. You must also check the auxiliary mixer is switched on. Once you have done this you can turn the computer on by pressing the power button. When the computer has loaded up then you can load Cubase SX by either clicking the icon on the tool bar or by clicking the start button and finding on the panel. When Cubase is loaded you can choose which type of seeing you want. We chose a default setting, then we set our first midi channel by right clicking and selecting a midi track and then started recording.

27.2:

The skills I used in this project were: midi, mixing, setting FXs and audio. I also used plugging the equipment together and assigning the audio equipment to Aux-2 so that allowed me to record. Also I recorded some midi by assigning the in to the CS10X keyboards and playing the wind effects and chimes. I set some FXs on the guitar, bass and drums. This was done by selecting the FXs panel (which each individual track has) and choosing the FXs we wanted. We also did some basic mixing using the channel mixer in Cubase. This is really easy to use because it is just like a mixing desk and does the panning via the individual track information columns to the left of the screen.

27.3:

The editing tools we used were in Cubase and we did not go to in depth, we just used it for copying sections of the song and cutting slight bits from the end of recordings to get a good change over.

27.4:

To store and retrieve work it is just like most programs, you can just go ctrl-S or go through the file menu. We usually stored our work in our own folder which is stored in the Year 1 folder in the D-drive. To retrieve

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you just have to go: D-drive – Y1 students – Kieran Gibb – Air project – then select the highest version number.

45.1:

In our air track we did not do any studio or location recording but the skills required in a studio are that you must be aware at all times so as not to make a stupid mistake. You must be able to use the patch bay and bass routining so that you can dial up effects and record into the DAT player. Also you must know which mics to use for what: vox-large diaphragm condenser mic; air-dynamic or small condenser. Bass – large condenser or dynamic. Drums – dynamic mics.

When out on location recording you must have a piece of kit you can record onto like a mini-disk player. If I was to do this I would probably use a dynamic mic like the Shire SM57 with a muffle guard on to try and stop background noise.

45.2:

For this assessment we had to create music for an audio-visual entertainment event entitled 'The killer element'. This had to be a three minute piece of work which we worked on in groups of three. This music can be diverse and of a varied style. It needs to be based on an element - our element being air. We did our work in Cubase SX using guitars, basses, midi devices and sound FXs to try to create our element in the metal style. We used Cubase to do some panning and used E.Q. to turn our file into a WAV file and imported into sound forge to do some other adjustments before we recorded it to CD. The CD was given to the media students to create a video to go with a 'killer' theme!

45.3:

To manage the production part Dan and myself shared all the recordings. Dan did the clean guitars and the bass line which went with it and the drums and editing. I did the distorted guitars, bass lines, the FXs which went on the guitars and planned what we would do each week. I also managed the midi parts.

45.4:

In the post production stage we set all the volumes of the instruments, did the panning, added some complimentary guitar FXs – then cut down to three minutes – and added slight EQ in Cubase. Then we turned the file into a WAV file, imported it to sound forge. We removed the DC offsets,

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added a bit more EQ to the highs. Next we normalized loudness by 20 db, then added a fade out to the end. Finally we recorded onto a CD using Roxio easy CD creator to burn to CD.