



# INTRODUCTION

*It's all about the ones and zeroes.<sup>1</sup>*

Most video game programs start at address zero and increment up.<sup>2</sup> So it is with this textbook on music scoring for video games. While most books begin with Chapter 1, this book begins with Chapter 0. Why Chapter 0? Because Chapter 0 designates a point of origin rather than a first step on a subsequent ladder of learning. Chapter 0 is, in effect, ground zero for this topic. It offers no first principles of scoring. It enumerates no specific techniques or strategies. Rather, the purpose of Chapter 0 is to establish a perspective, a vantage point. It offers the reader a subjectively focused lens through which the remainder of the book may be best understood.

This is indicative of the didactic strategy employed throughout the text. Early chapters will establish a foundation of universal principles. Later chapters will teach specific methodologies and techniques based on those principles.

Aspiring video game composers who digest the underlying principles and philosophical framework in the early part of the text will find greater success in learning the applied techniques given later in the text. Such a grounded approach is calculated to give diligent readers a much needed competitive edge. Music scoring for games is a crowded profession. Thousands of hopefuls wash out. Thus, understanding the *why* of music scoring will more fully empower the educated composer to make superior selections of *what* and *how* when opportunity knocks. Getting those decisions right will make all the difference.

Given the importance of getting those decisions right, how can a student, professional or professor feel confident that this book will steer aspirants in the right direction? A word about the author's qualifications will be reassuring. Many textbook authors are brilliant academics but have limited experience applying their methods in the professional world. By contrast, this textbook is authored by a composer/educator who has personally researched, invented, tested, observed,

absorbed, refined and applied these concepts in a dizzying array of commercial video game scores since 1996, from shoestring-budget indies to high-stakes blockbusters. Readers may be familiar with some of these scores: *DOTA 2*, *Lord of the Rings Online*, *James Cameron's Avatar*, *Monopoly Streets*, *Heroes of Might and Magic*, *Dungeons & Dragons Online*, *Champions Online*, *Littlest Pet Shop*, *Peter Jackson's King Kong*, *Disney's Ghosts of Mistwood*, *Dinosaurs 3D*, *Earth and Beyond*, *Marvel: Ultimate Alliance*, *War of the Ring*, *Left Behind*, *Unreal II*, *X-Men: The Official Game*, *Quest for Glory V* and many more.

Thus, the principles and practices offered here have been tested and proven, not only in the classroom, but in the furnace of crunch-time game development and the marketplace of competitive commerce. The depth, diversity and useful application of theory and practice brought to bear in this book is second to none in the world.

The bulk of this educational material is presented generally and objectively throughout the text. However, most chapters also contain focused excerpts from the author's own music scoring experiences. These first-person accounts appear in sidebar segments under the caption **Peek Behind the Curtain**. Such personal windows into the trenches of game scoring are among the book's most unique and valuable features.

Having said that, no single individual possesses all the answers. That is why dozens of outside specialists have also offered their insights exclusively for this textbook. These distinguished experts, many of them the author's personal friends, are featured in special chapter subdivisions labeled **Guest Lecture**. These guest lecture segments add rich layers of clarifying detail, specific application and color commentary to the principles and practices discussed.

Applied learning assignments and exercises follow handy summaries at the end of each chapter, offering students and teachers opportunities to test and put into practice each principle and technique taught in the body of the text. To assist with analysis and scoring assignments, copyright-free and cleared external resources are available at the book's online resource center. Links are included in the text of the book.

Any reader who makes a vigorous study and application of these materials will put themselves in an aggressive position to succeed as a professional video game composer. To all those who so embark, the author and publisher wish a prosperous journey and the very best of success!

## REFERENCES

1. Richard Gregory. Digital Marketing Agency website: <http://richardgregory.co.uk/tag/gaming/>.
2. Craig Alexander. Email exchange with author. January 30, 2014.

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