



Dynamic Ambient Horror Soundscape

Video Game Asset Pack

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Executive Summary:

SoundSak will be a games audio development company that will be creating audio asset packs for games, starting with a **dynamic** horror ambience asset pack for game developers to use for various games in the horror genre.

SoundSak aims to produce an asset pack that is available on the Unity asset store that can be easily implemented into any game development project. The main distinction of this asset pack is the dynamic aspect to it. This means that the asset pack isn't just a drag and drop soundscape that is the same for every customer/user; instead, it provides the user with a variety of prebuilt sounds and effects that they can change using the game engine's UI. The asset pack also takes advantage of the software FMOD which has various features such as randomising which sound is played – reinforcing the dynamic aspect of the asset pack.

Business of the company:



Business summary and history:

The company primarily focuses on developing dynamic audio asset packs for game development. With 'Dynamic Ambient Horror Soundscape' being the first launched asset pack for the company there is a lot to learn about customer needs and what goes into an effective dynamic horror soundscape which will improve throughout and post development of the product.

Current situation of the company:

The company will be founded in 2021/22, to coincide with the initial release of it's first asset pack on the Unity Asset store. Once the asset pack is released, user feedback and engaging with the community will be crucial in deciding on any future features/updates the asset pack requires – which will lead to a greater knowledge for any future asset packs, into what makes an effective dynamic soundscape.

Goals and Objectives:

The primary objective is to produce a highly specialised product that can be used for a variety of projects while sounding unique in each one. This will require a large range of sounds that can be controlled in various ways – ensuring that the number of combinations of audio is as large as possible, while keeping the quality at a consistent high standard.

A key objective in the development of the asset, is integrating FMOD and Unity in a way that is easily understood and controlled by the user, minimising the setup time as much as possible so the product is essentially drag-and-drop, then experiment with the sliders to achieve the desired soundscape.

Product Description:

The 'Dynamic Ambient Horror Soundscape' asset pack is heavily focussed on the keyword of **dynamic** – 'a force that stimulates change or progress within a system'. The product that will be developed is the 'system' of various audio setups within FMOD and the user will be the 'force that stimulates change'.

Audio can facilitate dissociation and transportation from the physical into the virtual world, but also decrease immersion if designed inappropriately. Dynamically adapting music can further increase this immersion. (Rogers, 2017)

Users will be able to control various aspects of the ambience using in-engine sliders / dials to do various things to the audio such as: controlling the volume, speed, pitch, EQ effects that simulate hearing the sounds from inside or outside by cutting out certain frequencies and more. The more controls the user has with the audio, the more they can change the overall soundscape to fit their needs.

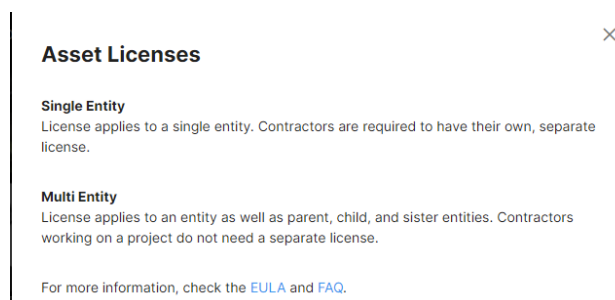
Market:

Target market profile:

This asset pack will be primarily targeted at game developers within the horror genre who are looking for an ambient soundscape for their game that they can control easily and intuitively. The asset is aimed at developers that want to save time and money searching for various sounds as they will all be included within this one pack – developers looking for convenience without compromise of quality.

Rules of purchase:

The asset pack is initially intended to be sold on the Unity Asset Store under an asset license. The options are as follows:



(Asset Store Terms of Service and EULA - Unity, 2020)

With the 'Multi Entry' being around 3x the price of the 'Single Entity'.

Distribution:

At launch, the asset pack will be published to the Unity Asset Store, with aspirations to then expand and publish to other game engine asset stores such as the Unreal Marketplace. However, the expansion to other asset stores will be based on the feedback and demand of the initial release as the implementation for that specific game engine would require more development time and only feasible if the unity release is a success.

Competition:

The asset has both direct and indirect competitors which it will need to compete with in the sector of audio asset packs on the Unity Asset Store that it aims to publish to.

Direct competitors:

The direct competitors for this asset will be existing **dynamic horror** audio asset packs on the Unity Asset Store. On the Unity Asset Store there seems to be only one asset pack that offers the dynamic controllability that this product intends to offer. (Dynamic Horror Ambience, 2021). On the store page for this asset, you can see a list of all the implemented sounds and try out a preview of the asset – this provides a useful insight into which features need to be added to compete with this product and what can be improved/added in my own asset pack. This asset pack is priced at \$19.99 and currently has 4 reviews in total (all 5 stars) and 80 users have added it to their favourite list.

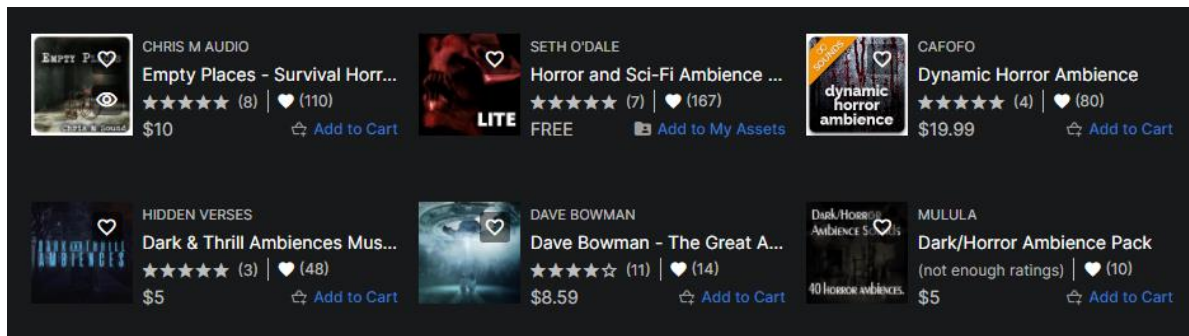
Indirect competitors:

The indirect competitors for this asset will be general horror ambience audio asset packs on the Unity Asset Store. Package content wise, these asset packs are usually a collection of audio files that the user must manually set up the implementation and are linear tracks that can't be changed. Due to the linear nature of these asset packs, they are limited in terms of use and market as you wouldn't want the exact soundscape as another game, or to be stuck with certain sounds that don't fit what you are creating as a game developer.

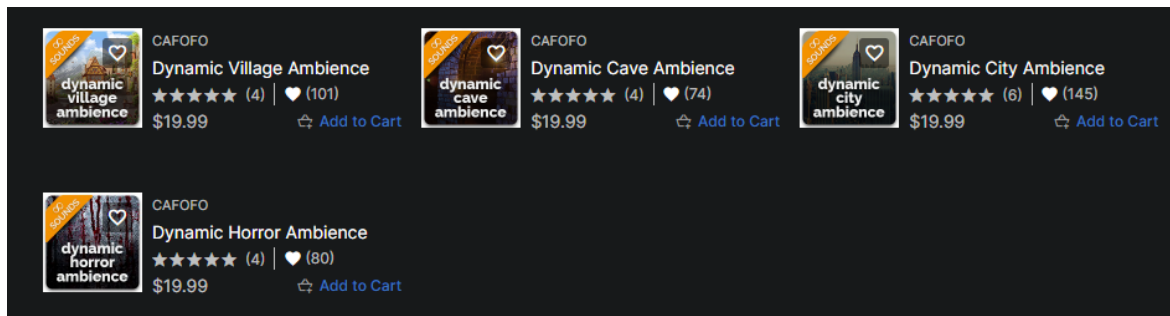
The screenshot shows search results for 'horror ambience' on the Unity Asset Store. The top result is 'Empty Places - Survival Horror Ambience' by Chris M Audio, priced at €8.93. Below it are several other asset packs, including 'Dynamic Horror Ambience' (€17.86), 'Horror Ambiences - ambien...' (€7.14), 'Horror Sounds and Ambie...' (€17.86), 'Scary Horror Ambience Pack' (€17.87), 'Free Horror Ambience' (FREE), 'Dystopia - Ambience & Drone' (€17.87), 'Dark/Horror Ambience Pack' (€4.47), 'Suspense Ambience' (€36.62), 'Horror Ambience Loops Vol.1' (€8.93), 'Abstract Ambiences - Const...' (€34.84), 'Space Horrors | Ambience #...' (€4.46), and 'Horror and Sci-Fi Ambience ...' (€4.46). The right sidebar shows filters for 'All Categories' (Audio selected), 'Pricing' (€0 to €36), and 'Unity Versions'.

Pricing:

The range of horror ambience asset packs on the Unity Asset Store is \$0-40, with only 5 assets being reviewed by users as seen below:



From taking which asset packs are reviewed into account, the indirect competitors (non-dynamic) should be priced around \$5-10, however the direct competitor is priced at a higher \$19.99 – most likely as a dynamic horror ambience is more desirable, but also an untapped market within audio asset packs.



The publisher ‘CAFOFO’ of the ‘Dynamic Horror Ambience’ has done 4 total asset packs altogether that are all have customer reviews equating to 5 stars, >74 favourites and are all priced at the same amount of \$19.99.

Customers generally look at 3 things:

1. Reviews: Customers want to know what they are buying is trustworthy and well received by other customers. As this is the companies first release, the product won't have any ratings to begin with. As shown in this study, *'The probability of a purchase that is stronger when there are many reviews and weaker when there are few.'* (Maslowska, Malthouse and Viswanathan, 2017)

Table 6
Summary of hypotheses.

Hypothesis	Result
H1: Valence has a positive effect on the probability of a purchase that is stronger when there are many reviews and weaker when there are few.	Supported
H2a and b: Valence and volume have a positive effect on the probability of a purchase that is stronger when prospective customers are exposed to reviews than when they are not exposed to reviews.	Supported
H3a and b: Valence and volume have a positive effect on the probability of a purchase that is stronger for higher-priced products within a category than for less expensive ones.	Supported
H4: The effect of valence on purchase probability increases with the number of reviews, and this effect grows even stronger when customers read reviews and the product's price is relatively high.	Supported

This means the asset pack will have to increase the probability of a purchase though the other factors.

2. Content: To figure out what price this asset should be valued at compared to its direct competitor and to compete with it, the asset will need to have either more content or more dynamic with larger range of customisation options.

3. Price: If two products seem similar at first glance, the customer may lean towards the cheaper product to save money. If the content is of a similar level or more than its competitor then the value for money is greatly increased – thus making this asset the better purchase.

Taking these three points into account, this asset is aimed to be **released at \$14.99** which will undercut the competitor until it generates more reviews, and the company is more trusted by the customers. Once this happens then the company can investigate increasing the price to a similar level of \$19.99 later down the line.

Marketing Strategy Brief:

Positioning:

The Dynamic Ambient Horror Soundscape holds a unique position within the audio asset packs on the Unity Asset Store as focusing on the dynamic aspect gives the user more control and an infinite number of possibilities for creating different soundscapes – a feature which only one other asset has implemented currently. By providing the user with more options per sound (such as inside/outside) the product will offer much customisation than its competitor and should prove to be a profitable solution within the market gap.

Sales strategy and tactics:

Heavily focusing on the dynamic aspect of this asset pack will help it stand out within the marketplace. Creating a video demo showcasing how easy to use the asset will be and how customisable the overall sound will be is key to promote this asset within the whole game audio market. As there is a large gap in the market for dynamic ambient audio, the video demo should surprise game developers who haven't seen it before – making them more enticed to purchasing it over the many indirect competitors.

Web presence:

As the company grows, a website would provide as a useful 'hub' to various product pages and other points of contact/social media.

Social media:

SoundSak intends to create various social media accounts to help promote its products within the independent game development community. By being an active member within the community the company accounts will start to build a name for itself and connect with other members within it.

Reddit: There are a variety of subreddits where you can show off your work such as r/UnityAssets or r/indiegames . Promoting the asset on these pages may help generate some interest but also will increase the chance of people discovering it when searching reddit or the web.

Discord: A place for a wide range of communities and an easy way to connect directly to people to build more personal connections. There are many open servers for game development where you can showcase projects / find feedback – one example is the <https://discord.com/invite/reddit-gamedev> server where the community of the r/gamedev subreddit connect and are free to promote their work.

Twitter: 'A powerful tool for indie developers, whether you want to market your game, or generate a following as a solo developer or studio.' (A Beginner's Guide to Twitter as an Indie Game Developer, 2018) 'The indie dev Twitter community is huge, and if you want to get in touch with the indie scene, this is a great place to start.' As the company is starting from the ground up, Twitter will be a key part of promoting the asset.

Here is a mock-up tweet promoting the asset pack on launch day. (Tweet Generator | Tweetgen, n.d.)

PR/Media:

The company also plans to use other forms of media, mainly YouTube, to increase its digital presence/discoverability. Once the Unity Asset Store page is created, the video will also be showcased on there. YouTube will be key in creating returning customers if the company goes onto creating more assets aimed at the same target audience. It is also useful for acquiring feedback, opinions and engaging with a community using the comment section.

There are many YouTube channels with a large community that showcase various Unity assets. Trying to get promoted on one of these videos would be of great benefit for driving new users and interest towards the asset – even if they don't purchase the product, they could add it to their 'favourite' list within the Unity Asset Store, which helps the product stand out against the rest.

Unity Thumbnail:

Thumbnail for the Unity Asset Store. Background was digitally painted in photoshop and has various elements representing the various ambience. The text has an infinity sign in the middle to further communicate the sounds are dynamic and have a wide range of combinations. A version with a red blood splatter foreground was created to reinforce the horror aspect of the asset pack.



Keywords:

Dynamic, Horror, Ambience, Soundscape, FMOD, Unity, Audio, Customisable, Creepy, Spooky, Scary, Sounds.



Future:

This asset can be easily updated and added to with new sounds based on customer feedback and reviews. Another feature that could be developed is a way to save values set in Unity as presets, with some default presets for the user to try and see what the asset pack is capable of.

If successful, the company will look into developing similar asset packs for different genres as the dynamic audio market is very open ended at its current state.

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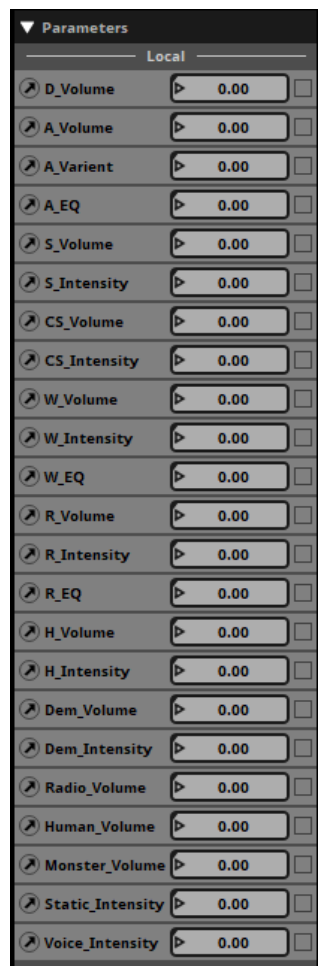
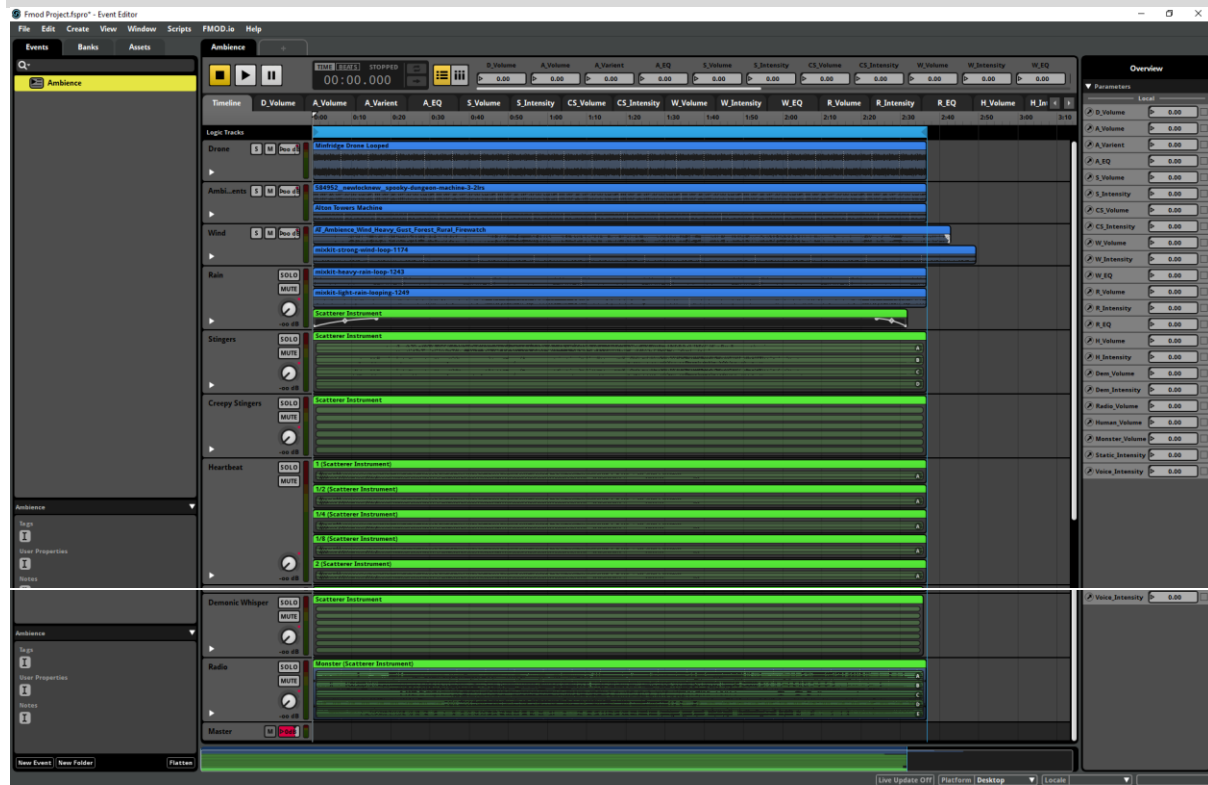
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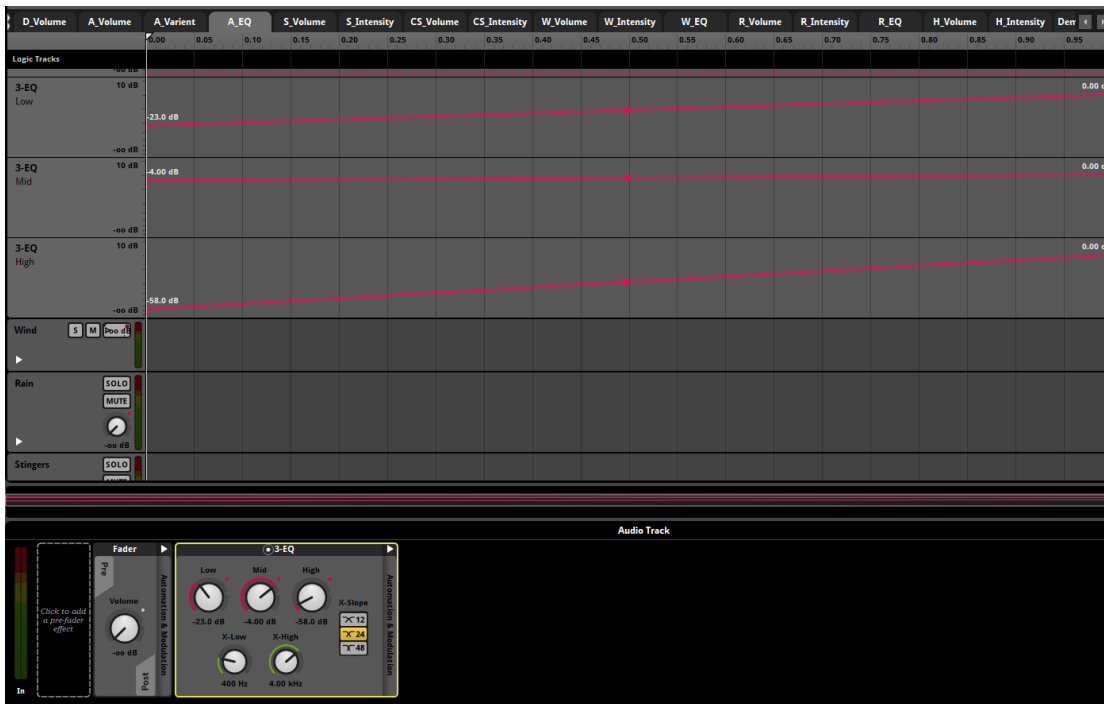
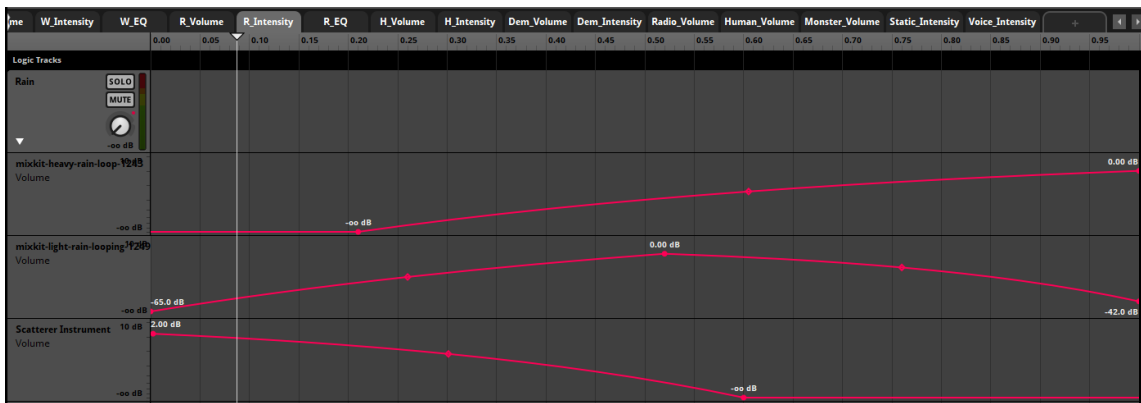
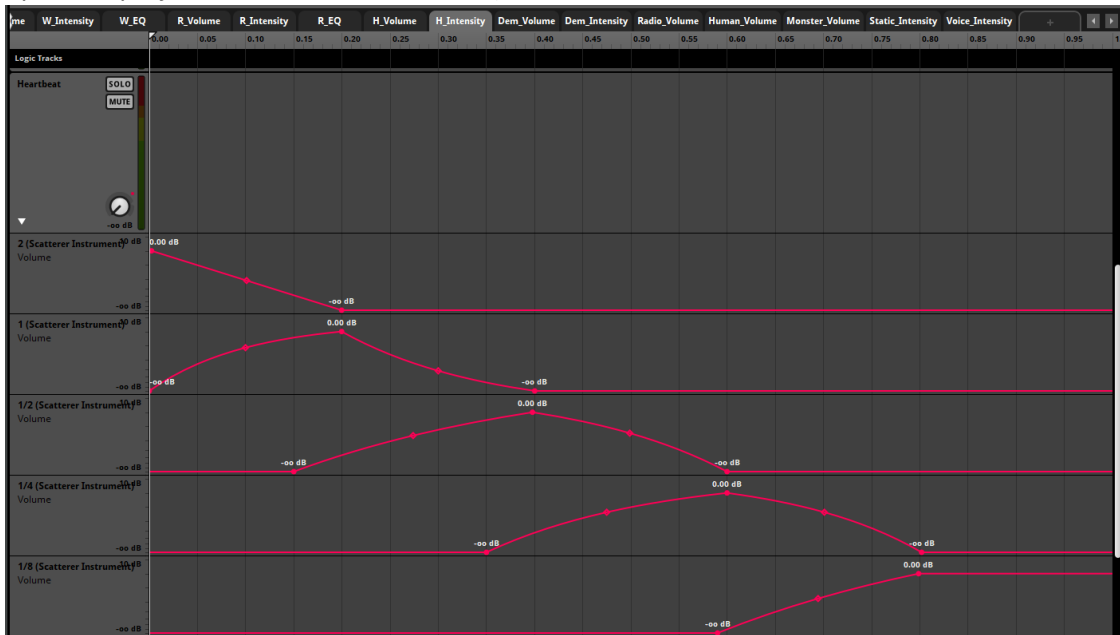
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Appendix:



Screenshots of all the audio tracks and the list of parameters that control various automations of various effects in each track.

A few examples on what the parameter tabs do to achieve each effect (only a few examples shown – open the project in FMOD to see the rest).



```
1 using System.Collections;
2 using System.Collections.Generic;
3 using UnityEngine;
4
5 public class DynamicAudioController : MonoBehaviour
6 {
7     private FMOD.Studio.EventInstance instance;
8     public FMODUnity.EventReference fmodEvent;
9
10    [Header("Drone")]
11    [SerializeField] [Range(0f, 1f)] private float D_Volume;
12
13    [Header("Ambience Varients")]
14    [SerializeField] [Range(0f, 1f)] private float A_Volume;
15    [SerializeField] [Range(0f, 1f)] private float A_Variant;
16    [SerializeField] [Range(0f, 1f)] private float A_Inside_Outside;
17
18    [Header("Wind")]
19    [SerializeField] [Range(0f, 1f)] private float W_Volume;
20    [SerializeField] [Range(0f, 1f)] private float W_Intensity;
21    [SerializeField] [Range(0f, 1f)] private float W_Inside_Outside;
22
23    [Header("Rain")]
24    [SerializeField] [Range(0f, 1f)] private float R_Volume;
25    [SerializeField] [Range(0f, 1f)] private float R_Intensity;
26    [SerializeField] [Range(0f, 1f)] private float R_Inside_Outside;
27
28    [Header("Radio Static")]
29    [SerializeField] [Range(0f, 1f)] private float R_Master_Volume;
30    [SerializeField] [Range(0f, 1f)] private float R_Human_Volume;
31    [SerializeField] [Range(0f, 1f)] private float R_Monster_Volume;
32    [SerializeField] [Range(0f, 1f)] private float R_Static_Intensity;
33    [SerializeField] [Range(0f, 1f)] private float R_Voice_Intensity;
34
35    [Header("Stingers")]
36    [SerializeField] [Range(0f, 1f)] private float S_Volume;
37    [SerializeField] [Range(0f, 1f)] private float S_Intensity;
38
39    [Header("Creepy Stingers")]
40    [SerializeField] [Range(0f, 1f)] private float CS_Volume;
41    [SerializeField] [Range(0f, 1f)] private float CS_Intensity;
42
43    [Header("Heartbeat")]
44    [SerializeField] [Range(0f, 1f)] private float H_Volume;
45    [SerializeField] [Range(0f, 1f)] private float H_Intensity;
46
47    [Header("Demonic Whispers")]
48    [SerializeField] [Range(0f, 1f)] private float Dem_Volume;
49    [SerializeField] [Range(0f, 1f)] private float Dem_Intensity;
50
```



```
51 void Start()
52 {
53     instance = FMODUnity.RuntimeManager.CreateInstance(fmodEvent);
54     instance.start();
55 }
56
57 void Update()
58 {
59     // Drone
60     instance.setParameterByName("D_Volume", D_Volume);
61
62     // Ambience Varients
63     instance.setParameterByName("A_Volume", A_Volume);
64     instance.setParameterByName("A_Variant", A_Variant);
65     instance.setParameterByName("A_EQ", A_Inside_Outside);
66
67     // Wind
68     instance.setParameterByName("W_Volume", W_Volume);
69     instance.setParameterByName("W_Intensity", W_Intensity);
70     instance.setParameterByName("W_EQ", W_Inside_Outside);
71
72     // Rain
73     instance.setParameterByName("R_Volume", R_Volume);
74     instance.setParameterByName("R_Intensity", R_Intensity);
75     instance.setParameterByName("R_EQ", R_Inside_Outside);
76
77     // Radio Static
78     instance.setParameterByName("Radio_Volume", R_Master_Volume);
79     instance.setParameterByName("Human_Volume", R_Human_Volume);
80     instance.setParameterByName("Monster_Volume", R_Monster_Volume);
81     instance.setParameterByName("Static_Intensity", R_Static_Intensity);
82     instance.setParameterByName("Voice_Intensity", R_Voice_Intensity);
83
84     // Stingers
85     instance.setParameterByName("S_Volume", S_Volume);
86     instance.setParameterByName("S_Intensity", S_Intensity);
87
88     // Creepy Stingers
89     instance.setParameterByName("CS_Volume", CS_Volume);
90     instance.setParameterByName("CS_Intensity", CS_Intensity);
91
92     // Heartbeat
93     instance.setParameterByName("H_Volume", H_Volume);
94     instance.setParameterByName("H_Intensity", H_Intensity);
95
96     // Demonic Whispers
97     instance.setParameterByName("Dem_Volume", Dem_Volume);
98     instance.setParameterByName("Dem_Intensity", Dem_Intensity);
99 }
100 }
```

