

How did you create the sound environment?

In *In Memoriam*, the sound is tackled in two very different ways: it's electronic for the Phoenix's universe, and orchestral for Jack Lorski's films.

For the Phoenix's universe, the player needs to have a sense of constant tension – the killer's in total control of everything and toys with the player, thumbing his nose at him. The sound effects and music merge into a predominantly electronic style, reflecting the Phoenix's familiarity with new technology. There's often a metallic feel about it, emphasizing the coldness of his world and the sense of anxiety the player's supposed to feel. At other times, it's more organic, with the sound of heartbeats or breathing, and some screens make you feel like you're inside the Phoenix's head. Then again, it might be Gothic – with choirs and church bells – conveying the killer's fondness for ancient history and esotericism.

The game's level themes – Water, Earth, Air and Fire – determined the colors and materials we used, and the mood fluctuates between music and ambient sound.

The music accompanying the films is completely distinct from the game. The films are breaths of fresh air that help you escape from the killer's oppressive universe. They were put together in a very cinematic spirit, totally unlike the sound-effects based world of the game.

All the music was written directly for the images, cinematic by cinematic, in the chronological order of the game. First the themes were written on the piano, then arranged on computer in a fairly intimate orchestral spirit. Everything was played on the keyboard. There isn't a single sampled orchestra phrase in the whole game, only original work. We had to carry out a lot of research into different timbres to conjure up each country where the action takes place, while sustaining a coherent style throughout the quest.

When the different pieces of music were written, they were mixed on a ProTools system to be able to work on spatial and sound effects. I should mention that some of the music used to touch up the cinematics comes from the game screens, to make the whole thing more consistent.

Is there a theme for the Phoenix himself?

Yes, there's a somewhat obsessive leitmotiv that comes back whenever he speaks to the player. In other respects, his universe – unlike that of the people in the film sequences – is made up of a blend of voices, fax noises and metallic textures. It's instantly identifiable the second you hear it. This acoustic melting-pot creates a harrowing sound environment which plunges the player right into the thick of things.

What does the sound environment contribute to this game?

The aim was to create a strong set of themes, while steering clear of facile flights of violins or tearful piano music.

The sound design, and the music, are very conspicuous in *In Memoriam*. Eric Viennot's highly aware of the sound media. He managed to pass on his passion for the project, while leaving us tremendous scope for creative freedom.

A final word?

Well, to conclude, the sound environment – that is, sound design and music – creates an unusual climate around *In Memoriam*, and it's a very important factor in immersing the player in the world of this eerie adventure.

