

JUKEBOXES & TRIGGERS :: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR DIRECTORS

What's your name?

David Haughey

What do you do?

I draw. Sometimes from reality, sometimes from unreality.

How did you first hear about the project Jukeboxes & Triggers?

Gawain Morrison said, "hey loser, wanna make a music video?" I said "yes, okay."

What made you choose the piece of music to accompany your film/animation?

If I'm to be really honest about this, and this is possibly the worst reason for doing anything, I seen the title for the track on the demo CD Gawain gave me, and thought, oh, 'Valkyries Dance' that's bound to have something to do with 'Ride of the Valkyries' by Wagner. The same bit of music that repeatedly inspired one Adolf Hitler and was repeatedly used in Nazi propaganda. Then I also remembered one of my favourite illustrators, Arthur Rackham, illustrated Wagner's entire Ring Cycle, this was also a good reason. And Ride of the Valkyries is a great bit of music if you're in the mood to invade. So, then I listened to the adaptation Gawain had made of this, and thankfully it was also a great bit of music to get you in the mood to invade defenceless small countries and massacre the entire population, or to animate some silly pictures to. Either option is good.

Has the idea progressed from the first concept that you had?

Yes, In that at one stage there was more content than I could animate, and now there is fractionally less.

Is there a theme or story lying behind your idea?

It's funny you should ask, there is a narrative of sorts I suppose, in that there is one identifiable character that exists for the duration of the film. This character experiences many things, some ordinary, some extraordinary, that collectively work to pull the narrative in the direction of entropy. Much like the dynamic of the music itself strangely enough. Although in the images there is also the suggestion of a narrative loop, with branches. Like a doughnut with constantly shifting and growing twigs. These twigs and branches my also have doughnuts

that grow from them, which in turn have twigs. Which of course raises the fundamental question, where is the cinnamon sprinkle?

Okay, the narrative centres around a male character of about eight to fourteen, depending what way you interpret the images, this character from the outset subjectively interprets the environments that surround him, the symbols that are used as representations of the boys interpretation are derived in part from the original Ring Cycle devised by Wagner, but also contain elements of a linked mythology that accompanies this bit of music, like branches, or perhaps twigs. To give one example, the reference to the Red D.V.III Fokker is derived from the Nazi propaganda footage that was used to promote the Luftwaffe, and more specifically the D.V.III. The footage dances along to the Valkyries tune. This particular plane was the drug of choice for Manfred Albrecht Freiherr von Richthofen, or 'The Red Baron' as he's more commonly known. But the Fokker has another, more unusual history, or I thought more interesting. In 1928 Amelia Earhart became the first woman to carry out a transatlantic flight. On this first occasion she was accompanied by a team of two Wilmer Stultz and co-pilot/mechanic Louis Gordon and oddly enough they decided to use a Fokker on this occasion. She ended up using a F.VII I think? This flight paved the way for her solo crossing of the Atlantic in 1932, that she made in a *red* Lockheed Vega. However during this flight, due to weather conditions, she had to make a landing in a field to the rear of a farm in Culmore, just outside Derry. Apparently she stopped into the house for doughnuts. So, the underlying theme is doughnuts.

Do you know where the idea came from?

Doughnuts.

Did you think it was an ambitious project before you started?

If I ever thought anything I decided to do was ambitious, I probably wouldn't start. I'm still enough of an idiot to believe that If I can imagine it, then it should be easy enough to carry out.

I'm usually wrong. But the ideas, and inevitably the results keep me deluded enough to push through the monotony that is actually making the thing.

Did you envisage any problems when you started?

No not at all. But they arise anyway. Usually they come from things outside of my control, like humans and time. The production problems that arise from digital animation, or indeed any animation are just technical, and as a result just take a small amount of time and testing construct a solution. Like "how do get this slow aerial zooming shot, and make it look convincing, not real but just convincing." It's not like I have to actually go and ask a cameraman to go up in helicopter, and have the pilot drop the altitude rapidly from 3000 feet to 30 in the space of 8

seconds. So they're not really problems at all. Problems associated with animation are generally confined to other humans, and time. Mostly humans.

What was your favourite part of the project?

Right at the start when I constructed the narrative and seen the entire thing in my head whilst listening to the music. And I'm presuming the bit at the end is going to be a favourite too. All this stuff in between is like water torture.

What was the worst part of the project?

This questionnaire.

For this project have you done things that you hadn't tried before?

I have indeed...

Okay well, I'm combining 2D hand drawn animation and 3D computer animation. The hand drawn side of this work is also being done in the computer, because quite early on I found that it would be way too expensive to use pencil and paper for this project. So I found what I think is the best digital (read cheap) solution to this problem. I had a look at what some of the 'big studios' are doing with digital 2D animation and sort of copied that, except on a much smaller scale of course. The rough animation, or what would be blue line testing is being done in a vector based drawing program, using a graphics tablet of course. And the clean up is being done in a raster or bitmap based 'photo retouching' package. The 3D elements are being constructed for most of the inorganic things, like the car, the plane some of the backgrounds and so on. The 2D and 3D elements are then being brought together in editing program and hey presto! Either the 2D or 3D process is not entirely new to me, however this particular combination is.

Is there anything you would do differently now that you're finished?

Regrets, oh I've had a few, but then again, too few to mention. I did what I had to do, and saw it through without exemption.

I would ask for more money and employ an army of squirrels to do the in-between animation. I'd still write, do the storyboards, and the keyframes, but in-betweens would be Tufty's work. You know they have wee hands almost like humans. And a bag of nut's from Pet's At Home only costs a few pounds. They could work in shifts, and I'd have to cost for taller chairs, but it might work.

Do you have any other projects coming up that we should keep an eye out for?

At any given point I seem to be working on a number of things at once, and I don't enjoy this, but I arrived at this mess and I can't see a way to do things differently at the moment.

Ultimately one thing at a time would be the best option, but I seem to keep coming up with new ways to annoy/entertain myself, and as a result I'm working largely on a backlog of ideas. One thing that I'm doing collaboratively at the moment is a comic/cartoon for a local paper called the Vacuum. The strip is called Beermoth, and it has young vibrant 20 something's with shiny teeth running around Belfast doing magical things. It also has a monster. And beer. And Freemasons. And murder. It's good stuff. I'm making the images and some person I've never actually met called 'Foss' writes it. Worth a look for sure. I'm continuing to put out illustrations for various magazines and papers, and I'm continuing to paint. I'm hoping for some results from the painting later in the year. I'm also continuing to work with sound artist Ciaran Maher, the last bit of work we produced for the Visonic Festival is doing really well, and got jury commended in Queensland recently. I've just written two short narratives for film, one that I think has a remote possibility for funding and the other which is unlikely to be touched by any length of pole. I prefer the latter; I'm thinking I'll turn it into a short comic strip to test the water with it first. So yes many things, many branches, or twigs, sticking out of one doughnut. You can keep an eye on my site, which sorely needs updated, for news and progress on any of the aforementioned stuff, and some unmentionable things too.

<http://www.davidhaughey.com>