

## Bringing London Murders to the Australian Stage: An Evolution of Game Music Collaboration and Performance

To delineate the Victorian London-era setting of Ubisoft's 2015 game *Assassin's Creed Syndicate*, composer Austin Wintory employed a unique chamber ensemble aesthetic inspired by Mendelssohn's chamber writing and Purcel's *Dido and Aeneas* opera.

Complimentary in-game source music taking the form of period hymn and folk songs performed by non-player characters musically brings to life the virtual environment. Sharing a common aesthetic is a series of 'murder ballads', also performed by NPCs, and with lyrical content providing commentary on the player's actions during newly completed campaign missions.

To create these Brothers Grimm-style folks songs Wintory renewed his relationship with Australian musical comedy outfit Tripod, having previously collaborated to create *This Gaming Life*, a live theatre show performed with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra. Diverging from contemporary orchestral performance of video game scores, this work comprised original songs wryly illustrating the 'gamer culture' long espoused by the three Tripod members, and orchestrated by Wintory.

Wintory and Tripod again reunited to perform *This Gaming Life* in 2016 with the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra. This iteration saw the afore-mentioned murder ballads performed in addition to the original show repertoire. Thus, the original and established live performance was reimaged through the incorporation of music created for in-game experiences.

This paper seeks, through the nexus of ludic interpretation and performance analysis, to elucidate this sui generis evolution of game-centered music composition, collaboration, and performance aesthetic.