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**Impact and Storytelling — The Music of Call of Duty: Black Ops 6
*Composer Jack Wall and team heighten an immersive gaming experience with Orchestral Tools sample libraries***

**LOS ANGELES, CA, March 18, 2025 — For more than twenty years, the Call of Duty [COD] series has been a major trendsetter in the video game industry due to its increasingly cinematic presentations of the first-person shooter experience. COD: Black Ops — a sub-series within the franchise that explores the dark underbelly of covert operations — has included some of the series’ most adventurous entries and by extension, some of its most compellingly immersive gaming experiences. A key component of these experiences is the work of Jack Wall, a veteran games composer who since COD: Black Ops 2 has given each title in the series its own uniquely brooding musical identity. For COD: Black Ops 6, the latest installment of the series set during Operation: Desert Storm, Wall and his co-composers turned to an evocative blend of tense orchestral themes and period-appropriate electronic and rock music to propel players headfirst into the game’s narrative. In their efforts to create the right blend of musical elements, Wall and his team frequently made use of** [**Orchestral Tools**](http://www.orchestraltools.com/) **sample libraries for the right sounds, feel, and inspiration.**

**We’ve always been in the shadows**Like all entries in the COD: Black Ops series, the music of COD: Black Ops 6 operates from a core compositional mantra established by Wall back when he joined the series in 2011. Although each entry has its own feel and sound palette, all of them center on providing a very specific kind of experience for the player. “It’s all about impact in these games because they are often pretty intense and don’t pull punches about the danger and drama in what’s going on,” Wall explains. “From the beginning, the two guiding principles about the music have been that it needs to be melodically and texturally dark, and it needs to make the player feel cool while playing. Combined, those two principles help to elevate the experience of immersion and investment in the narrative and the playing experience.”

“That extends to every piece of music we compose for the games — from the title screens, to the in-game menus, to the cinematic, to the actual gameplay. All of this music is written with those thoughts in mind and how we can create a cohesiveness to that experience in how it all comes together both melodically and sonically.”

Wall and his composing partners Jim Lordeman and Shaun Chen were responsible for a large amount of music given the ambitious scope of COD: Black Ops 6. Although he says that the art of composing game music is not dissimilar to that of film, the sheer amount of music and creative iteration required for a production of this size is a good deal larger than the average Hollywood movie. “In addition to the main themes and motifs, you’re scoring so many little moments in the game that are dependent on how the player interacts,” he says. “Depending on how the game branches and the options available, you can have multiple cues that need to loop for indefinite periods of time and have the flexibility and creativity to keep those cues fresh, interesting, and cohesive. Having a good team to bounce ideas off of is invaluable.”

“It’s a highly collaborative medium even though we often work independently at first,” adds Lordeman. “Once Jack had the main themes worked out he gave them to Shaun and myself to iterate on and explore based on the levels we were assigned to score. As the process moved forward, we were able to inject our own creativity into the process while still having a cohesive approach as a team.”

“What’s cool about the Black Ops series is we give each installment its own musical identity in terms of themes and sounds. With Black Ops 6 taking place in the early 1990s, that gave us the opportunity to bring dark electronica music and heavy rock into our sound palette for something really unique and gritty.”

**Putting the pieces together**When it came to the sonic elements of the score, Wall and his team employed a mix of live recorded orchestral instruments, electronic sound sources, and electric guitar, bass, and drums — including contributions from Canadian alt-rock duo ROMES and bass player Juan Garcia-Herreros. Sample libraries played a major role in the process for adding texture and ambiance, as well as ‘twisted’ variations on the core sounds. “For the more traditional elements, The Berlin String series was a major part of my compositional templates for Black Ops 6,” says Chen. “The legato engine in SINE player was perfect for those long, realistic transitions between notes and the playability of the spiccato were used a lot in action scenes.”

“Tom Holkenborg Brass and Percussion were also big for me in terms of sound design and creating some of the signature elements of the score,” he continues. “In addition to the core sounds available in those libraries, we also would re-amp them and run them through distortion effects to get them closer to synths. That gave us these heightened sonic elements that could be used for more ‘hyped’ moments that required a less realistic approach.”

“The textural libraries like Orchestral Tools’ Time series and Drones have their own amazing sound that is quite inspiring and adds a lot when layered behind live instrumentation,” adds Wall. “It’s very interesting how much mixing we find ourselves doing in this line of work — we’re always looking to achieve sonic parity between so many different elements for the sake of a cohesive soundscape. In the end it’s about taking all of the elements together and choosing the combination that delivers the most impact in the end.”

**No higher duty**When asked about larger trends in the gaming industry towards more ambitious production standards, Wall is quick to point out that regardless of its final form, the role that music plays in gaming has not changed incredibly in the past forty years or so. “Music really is half of the experience for the player, and no matter how big or small that experience is, it has to sound good and play well,” he explains. “We’re fortunate that we have an audience that is as equally passionate for the musical side of it as they are the games themselves.”

“We really feel a duty to constantly push ourselves into new places we haven’t been before as composers for each project.”

“The video game community thrives on novelty and new approaches — a trend that Jack’s work has actively contributed to in the industry,” adds Lordeman. “That encouragement to innovate keeps this work creative and fun for us, as well as push us to develop new sounds and techniques for heightening that immersive experience for gamers.”

Looking to the future, Wall and his colleagues see a potentially limitless creative playground of sonic possibility that is already attracting a new generation of composers and sound designers looking to make their mark on a constantly evolving medium. “I had some very formative musical experiences playing these games when I was growing up and having the opportunity to compose for them really brought me back to that,” says Chen. “It’s a really interesting musical medium, and I think it offers a lot of possibilities for the human experience that go beyond what people may be used to from traditional listening experiences or watching films and TV.”

“It’s a constantly evolving musical frontier and the interest in learning game composition has grown exponentially in the last decade,” Wall adds. “It’s quite fascinating and seeing the tools and sounds utilized for it evolve alongside that has kept it very interesting for us.”

“It’s a very exciting industry to work in,” he concludes. “We’re proud of what we’ve been able to create for these games, and grateful for all of the tools — including the OT Libraries we utilized on this project — we’re able to use in that process.”

For more information about Orchestral Tools, please visit: <http://www.orchestraltools.com>

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**About Orchestral Tools**

Orchestral Tools is a forward-thinking sample library development team with offices in Berlin and Freiburg, Germany. Originally founded in 2005 by Hendrik Schwarzer, the company creates premium-quality sampled instruments that encompass both the traditional orchestra as well as modern sound design, with influences from classic film scores, contemporary orchestral music, post-punk, field recordings, and musique concréte. In addition to creating flagship libraries that have become industry standards such as the Berlin Series and Metropolis Ark collections, Orchestral Tools has also worked alongside industry luminaries such as Benjamin Wallfisch, Harry Gregson-Williams, Bleeding Fingers, Richard Harvey, and Alexander Hacke to expand and challenge the definition of ‘the orchestra’.