

## **RQ Patreon – INEX Music Chat**

### **Content Warnings**

- Spoilers for all of Inexplicables
- Mentions of: canon-typical traumatic childhoods

### **[Show Theme - Intro]**

#### **KATIE**

Hello everybody and welcome to the second of our music chats which is going to be on Inexplicables. I'm Katie, she/her. and I'm the patreon show runner and I'm joined today by

#### **SAM**

Hi, I'm Sam Jones. I'm a resident composer at Rusty Quill. He/him and yeah I worked on the music for Inexplicables.

#### **MADDY**

Hi, I'm Maddy Searle. She/her. I was the director on Inexplicables and yeah, very excited to be here.

#### **KATIE**

Great. I wanted to talk about how you approached the whole process of writing the music, because by this time we had more of an established workflow about how to create the music for a Rusty Quill series and so you

were coming into this with that knowledge behind you. So how did you decide you were going to approach creating the music that was going to be used in this series. And that's to both of you really.

### **MADDY**

I think from my perspective it was about mainly the main theme and the outro as kind of emblematic of the whole show and also for the main body of the episodes finding suites which are specific to each of the main characters so that they could be used as kind of transitional, and then there was one piece of music which we did which was bespoke scoring for the final scene but for the rest of it, it was just kind of suites of music that could be used anywhere but were tailored to the specific characters.

### **SAM**

Yeah exactly. I mean you said it Katie, that in the last chat with Alex we were kind of learning how best to communicate and by this we had a pretty fixed way of doing things and yeah, and so...so it started with a conversation with me and you, didn't it, Maddy, where we were deciding what you needed and I think that was a very simple conversation in a lot of ways. It was...it was what do you need from me and as Maddy said we decided that the best approach was going to be, as opposed to scoring, so as opposed to me getting final cuts of everything and spotting it, deciding where music goes and all of this to have more of a toolkit approach where the key people and themes are represented musically through, we decided kind of three-minute suites approximately. So I'd write those and then give you the toolkit to edit to the final voice recordings. And so we just basically sat down and I think we talked a bit about this with Alex that we figured out that the best questions to ask are to do with

energy and tone and those were really helpful conversations initially and I think we sort of decided on that straight away and from that I think I then asked you to give me a little outline of each character that we decided to do themes for. And yeah, it kind of started from there really. It was always, from the outset, it was this is what you're gonna get. You're gonna get these suites that you can break up and edit however you want. So yeah, it was quite different in a lot of ways from some of the other podcasts I've done but yeah, that's where it started I think.

**KATIE**

Yeah so what exactly was the tone and the energy that you got asked for? Let's focus for now just on the main theme because as Maddy said that encapsulates everything which is within the series really.

**SAM**

Yeah. No easy feat.

**(laughing)**

**KATIE**

What did you have 40 seconds or something?

**SAM**

Well it was...so what we decided for this, correct me if you remember differently Maddy, but there was gonna be an Inexplicables suite which I would then make a main titles out of. So I knew I had three minutes to get a palate

going and then it was a bit easier to think of it that way to get the actual main titles down to that. But that's really what that comes from is just the Inexplicables suite which was designed to...I mean I don't want to use the term "branding" but essentially that's what you've got to do in these suites, is a form of sonic branding. You've just got to distil the tone of it. The word that lingers in the mind that you told me Maddy was kind of grungy. Or maybe I came up with that word and you agreed. I can't remember but there's a grungy element to it. Do you remember that?

### **MADDY**

Yeah. I think it was definitely in that realm of dark and industrial and yeah that kind of realm because it's...there's definitely comedic elements but it's like a dark comedy and there's all sorts of kind of gothic monster creatures in it so yeah, leaning into the kind of gothic element of it was fun to do but with a sort of modern twist to it because it's in this very ordinary northern town.

### **SAM**

That's exactly what I remember as well is trying to get a bit of use of stereotypes in there of the kind of fantasy, creepy, supernatural genre I suppose, getting elements of that in there but also marrying this with this grungy, northern, gritty sound as well which was a really clear description of what the tone needed to be. So that was very helpful.

**(laughing)**

**KATIE**

Well for what it's worth I heard both those things in the music and I think that's what gave it the unique quality that it had. For me the choices of instrument - and you used a drone a lot. You used a perfect fifth a lot

**(piano playing the musical interval of a perfect 5th)**

With some solo instrument playing around it. That happens quite a lot and the instrumentation also suggested to me the ancient. Both those things suggested to me something which has been going on for a long time by looking back to ancient things. I want to ask what instrument it was? Was there a dulcimer or something in there or some kind of...

**SAM**

Oh probably.

**KATIE**

And plus a lot of organic percussion.

**SAM**

Yeah. There's almost certainly dulcimers dotted around.

**(dulcimer music playing)**

And like you say drones.

**(bass sustained drone plays)**

There's a lot of use of fourth and fifth intervals which are, historically speaking, used more predominantly earlier or rather the smaller intervals are used less.

**(demonstration of music moving in perfect 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> intervals)**

So yeah that's why that's a thing. Yeah in terms of those building blocks it's really quite simple. Certainly in the Inexplicables theme it's this pattern of pair of notes that are staying fourth and fifths but there's still a certain chromaticism in there.

**(some of INEX theme plays)**

But yeah anyway in terms of instruments, so yeah, there's a mix of these kind of, I guess, medieval instruments dulcimers, I think there's a hurdy-gurdy drone going on in there.

**(demonstration of hurdy gurdy)**

But then there's also a lot of guitars, as in electric guitars as well as older ones and so in the main theme the electric cello as well which is a favourite of mine.

**KATIE**

Right! I was gonna ask, is that a cello with a lot of saturation or have...yeah ok.

**SAM**

Yeah so I wish I could've got a real player but it's a very good soundful of an electric cello where you can change, much like a guitar, you can change the distortion and various parameters to make it sound really gritty. So yeah, that's the thing that enters when it really lands in the main theme.

**(electric cello musical fill is played)**

And I really wanted to use that because it is a versatile instrument but for this it just felt right to have that kind of grungy, electronic thing but it still be in the viol family, have that kind of old technique to it. So yeah, I think that one worked well.

**KATIE**

I mean the nice thing about doing fantasy is it doesn't...if you've got samples that aren't perfect you can work with them because you can say, ok I'm not gonna try and make it sound like a real cello now. I'm just going to try and make it do something else.

**SAM**

Yeah

**KATIE**

You know, let's see what we can get out of this thing.

**SAM**

Absolutely

**(laughing)**

Yeah.

**KATIE**

I was wondering if this might actually be a good time to listen the Inexplicables suite since so much derives from there and if you want me to pause it so you can talk about anything, wave at me or screech wildly or something because the listeners we can hear what Sam is talking about.

**(Opening of INEX suite plays)**

So that is the actual perfect fifth. It's like a G5 chord isn't it?

**SAM**

Yeah it sounds like it.

**KATIE**

Yeah that seems to crop up quite a lot in all of the music for this

**(music introduces the rhythmic 4th and 5<sup>th</sup> intervals)**

So that's like the characteristic riff of a series really isn't it.

**SAM**

Yeah the parts individually are moving crunchily but they're staying kind of fourths and fifths apart so it has a kind of antiquity about it.

**KATIE**

Totally, yeah. Instant medieval vibes.

**(music continues)**

**SAM**

To give that industrial percussive sound it's basically what I'm...

**KATIE**

We've got that for RQG as well. Is that a thing for you?

**SAM**

A little bit, yeah. I mean it was appropriate for this one as well. The term industrial was definitely thrown around and there's an excuse to use that metallic stuff.

**KATIE**

Yeah is that because of the northern sitting?

**SAM**

I guess so. Maybe Maddy can answer that better than me but as soon as you said industrial, I just had those kinds of sounds, percussive, metallic stuff and it did make sense.

**MADDY**

Yeah. I think it was definitely the northern setting and the grim modernity of it that inspired that tone that came out in the music.

**KATIE**

Let's go on

**(music continues, builds)**

**MADDY**

As an eternal goth I always like it when the heavy electric guitar comes in.

**KATIE**

Yeah, yeah.

**(guitar continues)**

**KATIE**

But I like how it marries really well with the chimes and things.

**SAM**

Yeah I think I got away with that if I'm honest. I knew I wanted electric guitars in there and the transition in there that's the electric cello with loads of distortion on it but, yeah before that it's all got that kind of gothic sound. I remember being fearful that the high pitch percussion would sound a bit twee against the grungy stuff but actually it just about holds together I think. That's the one thing I knew I needed to record was guitars. I got the guys next door to me who's a great guitarist. He played some grungy guitars.

**KATIE**

The guitars sound absolutely great. Let's finish it now we've started it.

**(music continues through the grungy section to a quiet ending with harp and sustained sounds)**

Ethereal there huh?

**SAM**

Yeah

**MADDY**

Yeah. More for the kind of melancholy scenes where people are in touch with being an Inexplicable and this kind of stuff.

**SAM**

Yeah going back to it being a toolkit you needed to cater for all scenarios. I can't remember if it was this suite Maddy or another one actually where you requested a more melancholic arrangement to be part of. It might've been Harold's suite actually. It needed to be able to cover the appropriate theme but in the right tone.

**KATIE**

Yeah I don't think our audience would've actually heard before the entire suite in one go like that. So they might not have heard how it is actually the same material but used transmogrified. Is that the right word? Mutated?

**(laughing)**

**SAM**

It makes it sound very smart so I like that.

**KATIE**

So yeah, this is what you do. You take the same material and you give it that cohesion and then you just work it in different ways to meet every possible need.

**SAM**

Exactly, it's not...I've not really thought about these suites as entire pieces of music. They really are toolkits of a theme. It's not quite the same as library music but it essentially is. It's keeping the thematic content pretty

straightforward or rather accessible because over development is where you end up with a problem in this kind of thing. So yeah it is repetitive when you listen through it but it's all about having the different elements to be used throughout the series whenever needed and this last section is exactly that, to cater for the more perhaps serious or melancholic, like you said, moments or just more sensitive moments I guess.

### **KATIE**

In actual fact in almost all media that's how it works. I know you've worked in TV, Sam, and although TV episodes may be scored I know what composers do is they work up a suite before they begin a series so they've got something to dip into so they can get those...the turnaround met by just pulling in the material they need and working it to fit what's going on. Is that correct?

### **SAM**

Yeah I mean it depends on the time they get to develop the ideas and where they are in a TV series. Certainly for film it's what's done and famously...well somewhat famously by Hans Zimmer, I mean he's...the way he works is he writes these enormous suites and that's often what he releases afterwards, is these 15/20 minute suites working very much in a rain of thought way he'll just write an idea, stop it, write another idea and then eventually they'll become this suite of music that is often then either adapted by him and his team or by a music editor to a scene. It's a pretty creative scoring process because ordinary scoring would be very much scene specific and that kind of thing but yeah absolutely it's the done thing. It's almost like testing a thematic idea as well. Is you're seeing if it's got legs, if it can be developed. And this one, you know, the development less so but certainly the adaptability of it was a tested

a little bit and the content is kept quite simple to avoid losing that accessibility but it shows that it can be used in different ways.

### **KATIE**

It's interesting. I remember Alex saying in our previous chat that he prefers for the composer not to have heard any of the early cuts of the material because I think the way you put it was new ideas can come because composers will tend to latch onto whatever they told and maybe there be less originality, I think it Alex's view if the composer already knows the sound of the series. Also, I guess it gives the director more control as well over the ideas that are going in and so what you're saying kind of reminded me a little bit of that is this idea of you can take any scene and put some music on it or do something but if you develop something independently and then test it on various bits of material then possibly that's more likely to be something which can withstand the usage.

### **SAM**

Yeah it's like throwing spaghetti. Sometimes it just sticks and sometimes it's surprising what works and what doesn't but in terms of the idea of Leitmotif and themes being specific you need to be able to have that toolkit for that specific idea so that it's applicable to any kind of scenario. For instance the character suites you need to be able to use their theme in any situation that they're in so this is why it needs to be a whole suite of different things going on. I guess the Inexplicables suite less so because it's a slightly more, not generic, but it's less sort of tonally specific to one thing. It's more just the overall tone of the show and I think we needed to cover slightly fewer bases maybe on this one but...

**KATIE**

Because it's short form, yeah. I would like to discuss character arcs in a little while but before I go on does somebody want to define Leitmotif for those people who aren't into that sort of thing.

**SAM**

Sure. I can do that. It's essentially this idea that a musical motif represents anything. In music circles it's very heavily associated with opera and that's where it's kind of fed into film. Yeah it's the idea that a composer's written, think of any film melody, well that was written representing something very specific and then that is then reused and aids the narrative by association. So let's say Superman, John Williams [singing theme tune] he uses that every time Superman rips his shirt open and you associate it with that as you watch the film, with his suit underneath you understand

**(laughing)**

You associate it with that. I mean maybe that's a bad example but the idea is that the strength of the narrative is kind of enforced through music by having this association of a motif and so that's all it means really, is the idea that you reuse ideas through a narrative to strengthen it basically.

**KATIE**

I'm tempted to test that in reverse on the listeners. Ok. So I'm going to say...I want to know what music comes into your head when I say Darth Vader walking onto a ship

**(laughing)**

**SAM**

Well Maddy do you want to have a go at this one?

**MADDY**

Well I know exactly what the music is but I hesitate to sing it. It's just the [Star Wars 'Imperial March' tune].

**SAM**

Yeah

**MADDY**

Yeah. Imperial march.

**SAM**

It's always preceded by the [humming tune] music. Is that the Death Star theme or something? I can't remember. I just saw a really detailed, super nerdy breakdown of all the Star Wars Leitmotifs as well, not two days ago and it's brilliant. If you watch the original Star Wars films and you hear that [humming tune] every time it goes back to the imperial stuff and then it's

usually succeeded by Darth Vader walking, like you say, or the emperor or something. This is a great example. You immediately associate that with Darth Vader.

### **KATIE**

Yeah, well it can take a while to sink in and going back to what you were saying about repetition Sam, I think sometimes when you're creating a thing and you've heard it so many times you can forget how many repetitions are necessary for that marriage to become sort of properly acknowledged in the minds of the people who are consuming the thing. It took me up to about episode five to start to associate Inexplicables with [humming tune] and the cold, vocal music with Cressida and all this stuff so it's a bit embarrassing really!

### **SAM**

Well it's a tricky one. I mean this is why it needs to be super simple as because it needs to be easily absorbed. It needs to be, I'm thinking of the word porous, I don't know if that sounds pretentious now but you know what I mean, it needs to just be absorbable very easily into whoever's listening. Again John Williams talks about it a lot. He spends as much time developing nugget of the melody as he does the whole score because it's so important to get the Leitmotif. The motif that's used empirical and really easily absorbed by the audience and then they're much more able to associate later on.

**KATIE**

If it gives an idea of the level of simplicity and catchiness that is necessary. I remember when I was at uni, a guy who studies this sort of thing, Peter Franklin, described it as being a bit like an advertising jingle because you need to wake the audience up and say oh this thing's happening. This brand is happening now.

**SAM**

Exactly. It's branding. That's exactly it. You're distilling the idea of something down musically as far as you can and this is something Hans Zimmer is very good at, is he just really distils it right down to its simplest form and that's when it's a successful Leitmotif I think.

**KATIE**

Let's finish this music. We never got to the end and I'm feeling really guilty about it.

**(laughing)**

**(music playing)**

Is that a Celeste?

**SAM**

Yes I think it's Celeste.

**KATIE**

Yes, a bit more mellow.

**(music playing)**

Lovely.

**MADDY**

And yeah when you were talking about Leitmotifs as well it reminded me of a YouTube channel that I really enjoy called Sideways that goes really in depth into, particularly musicals and film scores, yeah, the person who makes the videos just has a very animated method of presentation which really is fun to listen to.

**SAM**

Another amazing example of Leitmotif is Hamilton. If anyone know Hamilton the use of motifs in that is extensive and very clever. So yeah, for those that might know that one, definitely listen to it again and you'll notice all of these threads going through the whole production.

**KATIE**

Although that way nerdy madness lies. Gotta warn you.

**SAM**

For sure.

**KATIE**

So next question. What was your process of feedback and revisions like? I'm particularly interested in how much Sam was influencing the eventual result of the music suite that you got and how much it was determined by Maddy's vision.

**MADDY**

I think from my perspective whenever I got a first draft I was extremely happy and there was so much stuff in there that I really enjoyed and I think it was just about finding the gaps where we hadn't quite found a tone or a mood that I knew I would need in the show and just like, yeah, if we have more of this particular mood then that would be really helpful for me because I know where the series is going and I know where this character's going to be so I think that was the main thing for me but yeah.

**KATIE**

That makes sense. Because you were editing it also and I'll come back to that but that must be actually very helpful. You know exactly what the usage is going to be, probably more than a director would.

**MADDY**

Yeah, yeah.

**SAM**

I agree. I mean it was very, very helpful to have that. There was a lot of immediacy in that way in that you knew what you wanted and it was very easy

to work that way. But at the same time for me because my background is scoring it is a bit of a wrench at the same time to be there's some pieces of music and take them and not...not really knowing...although I did, as Maddy mentioned earlier I think, we decided quite early on that I would have the opportunity to do it for the final scene because we thought that would be a nice thing to do, make it a bit more personal. But yeah, that was really nice actually to take these themes that I'd thrown back to you and then actually work with them in a way that I'm more used to was really nice. It's nice to write suites but there's a tactility, I suppose, to getting the final cut and working with it and yeah, so it was bit of a wrench personally. Just because I'm so used to scoring but no it was so nice in that feedback process because it seemed very simple. Alex would say I'm a second take Sally which is true with him. I definitely get it wrong the first time.

**KATIE**

The guy is quite exacting, let's be honest!

**(laughing)**

**SAM**

Yeah but he can be frank with me. I've known him long enough. But I think with this one it seemed to go fairly smoothly. Maddy would you agree with that?

**MADDY**

Yeah, absolutely. Yeah from my perspective definitely and there was something I was gonna mention earlier but I forgot. When I was looking at both the kind of music that Tom Critch, the writer had suggested for the kind of palate and also just extrapolating from that the kind of music that I was listening to for inspiration it was very much like the key piece of music that I found was A Forest by The Cure and because I'm a massive Cure fan I've got a poster over on my wall over there, so it was very much selfishly if it was a bit like The Cure that would be nice.

**SAM**

I remember that now. I'm a bit funny with references in the sense that I'm quite stubborn when I'm told something and I feel like I know what that means. And then if I get a reference and it's not what I thought it was I get very upset with myself and I don't know what to do. But this one I seem to remember you sending a few references and then being really helpful and listening through those first but at the end of the day when it comes to the writing part there's compromises all over the place anyway so it's really just getting a hint of the flavour of those references and it still having its own identity.

**KATIE**

Personally speaking, I find lots of references a lot more useful than a handful because it can then start to be a dot painting. No one reference is going to give you exactly what it is that the director is looking for in that music and it can be quite hard to extract exactly what it is about that particular track which

is appealing because there can be many qualities in music which somebody's latching on to which you are not latching on to but if you get sort of 10 or 15 references you can start to sit back and let your eyes go a bit fuzzy and find the picture that's emerging from all of them together.

**SAM**

Exactly. Well it's a bit like speaking to, I guess if you're...well no, this is a bad example. I was gonna say if you're getting feedback from five people and then if you get feedback from 15 people, I dunno. It's like...it's getting the wood from the trees a little bit. You can start to filter the more meaningful elements I guess.

**KATIE**

Yes. One opinion can be one opinion but 15 people who all allude to one thing is...

**SAM**

Yeah I guess you start to see the common ground is what I'm getting at. You start to appreciate, have a list of priorities. This is what everyone is...all of these are agreeing on and yeah, I see what you mean. Absolutely.

**KATIE**

Would you like to move on to the character suites themselves. We've talked about the Inexplicables suite really which we went into by starting on the theme. Who do you want to start with?

**SAM**

Go on Maddy. You choose one

**MADDY**

Why don't we go for Meredith just because she's a big hitter.

**KATIE**

Yeah, ok that's the hardest one I think. I think she's the most complex

**MADDY**

Yeah. it was a difficult one because she's a very complex character in that she's got a lot of different elements to her but I think yeah, I think Sam definitely got all of them in the suite and it was very nice to be able to cherry pick a little moment where it's really abrasive and scratchy from just when she's being really horrible to someone and then have the really tender moment when she's actually managed to be vulnerable and all this kind of thing. So that was fun to work with.

**KATIE**

So would it help to listen to the whole track to remind yourselves or are you going to be able to talk about the specific moods that you requested for Meredith off the top of your head?

**SAM**

Cripes. Maybe we have to play it.

**(Meredith's suite plays in full)**

**KATIE**

Love it. I find this to be the most harmonically interesting or the most harmonically developed of the themes.

**SAM**

I mean for sure. This one definitely had to represent the widest arc I suppose. I mean it had to say the most, certainly more than the other characters. Sort of say the most, I'm not sure if dramatic's the right word but there's a bit more serious human emotion to deal with in this I think. Potentially interesting backstory to this is that this is the only one that, for some reason, I decided to leave this one until last. Don't know why. All the others I wrote in the comfort of my studio. This one I went home for Christmas just when the lockdown happened and I was stuck at home, writing on what I ironically call my mobile rig but it's basically not my proper set up, half my samples and so I was between a bit of a rock and a hard place writing this one. So somehow squeezed it out. But anyway I remember this one quite vividly because of that. I was in my childhood bedroom writing on a tiny little keyboard and it was quite funny but it felt like harder work in that way. It was, in many ways, the most serious suite to do but yeah, that's certainly the harmonic interest just absolutely deliberate because it had to say more. It had to have more tools in the toolbelt covered I guess.

**KATIE**

Yeah I think...first of all I would be really interested to know if being at home in your childhood bedroom in this strange time affected how that music was written. Particularly because as I think you've kind of alluded to Meredith is complex. She's probably, if anybody, is the POV character. So I was wondering how both of you respond to those thoughts.

**MADDY**

Well it was just really interesting hearing Sam say that because a very big part of the first episode and the general themes of the show is she comes back to her childhood home and has to confront what's changed and that kind of thing so that's a really interesting life parallel that just gets plopped in there.

**KATIE**

Yeah, the interesting part of that is it happens so early on in the series. We don't actually understand the significance of that for her until after it's happened.

**MADDY**

Yeah you don't really get the backstory until a lot later of why it's meaningful.

**KATIE**

Yeah and it's relevant to Harold's story as well. And actually it's a question which I wanted to ask, which we can delve into now if you like, is about how much the music knows about these characters because the three characters who get arcs which is Meredith, Harold and Cressida which get music, we have

an unpeeling and we find out more and more about them over the six episodes and they have quite significant discoveries of who they are and then who they become and I'm always fascinated by how much the music knows about the characters at any point because there are two possibilities to me and there are in between possibilities. One is that the music already knows everything and for the attentive listener you can get clues about where the character is heading or what's in their subconscious that perhaps even they haven't recognised yet. Or the music can be more with the character and only understanding what the character is understanding so go along on the journey with the character and with the audience. I was wondering which of those two approaches or was there some kind of halfway house that you two had in mind here.

### **SAM**

Well I think in terms of how the music's used, that's definitely a question for Maddy. In terms of what I knew writing it, which I think is a slightly different thing, it's somewhere in between I would say. I mean I had access to everything and knew what was going on but for me, it was much more...it wasn't so much narrative specific from my approach anyway which is, again, unlike what I would normally do, which is precisely that. It's second by second specific. This was much more about tone and just getting the elements there for Maddy to be able to successfully place. I mean for Meredith in particular I knew there was more ups and downs and a lot more ground to cover and so that's why it needed these drops, these perhaps more aggressive sections and at the same time have that melody that you can latch on to. I think it's possibly fair to say that the melody in this is slightly more drawn out as well, certainly compared to the Inexplicables theme. There's a little bit more length

to it which directly as a result of the complexity, I guess, of her story maybe. But in terms of just the sections that needed to be in the suite there are more stings, I suppose, as well that are useful and there's very different tones that hopefully helped to tell the story. Maybe Maddy can talk more on how those were used.

### **MADDY**

Yeah. Listening back it was calling to mind very specific moments in the series for me that I associated each bit with. Like at the start it was very much her being in her childhood home and not really knowing how to deal with it and the more aggressive strings are when she's doing something like quite funny but also very inappropriate and that's kind of the feeling I got from that. There are also some themes in there that I found very useful as kind of, just sort of bridging music for when I needed to introduce quite a big scene with a lot of characters and I didn't quite know...it wasn't really appropriate to have a single character's theme there and so there was a couple of moments where I was just like those particular little bits were helpful just to kind of bridge a gap and provide a really nice introduction to a whole new scene. Yeah towards the end it's much more late stage Meredith where she's learned to empathise with people a bit more and learned to listen and not just yell at people.

Interestingly in terms of the music knowing something about the character that the audience doesn't, in terms of Cressida's theme I remember discussing with Sam that Cressida is – spoilers – a banshee and Sam telling me about the reverse scream he put in and also the use of vocals in there. So the music knows that she's a banshee long before the audience does.

**KATIE**

I never made that connection actually. It makes perfect sense. You alluded to editing the transitions, am I right in thinking that most of the time the musical transitions were looking forward to the next place the story was going rather than reflecting back on what we just heard.

**MADDY**

I think most of the time they were reflecting back because it would be quite jarring to have a sad scene and going into a happy scene and then for it to suddenly be really happy. It had to very much follow on from the feeling of the previous scene and I always tried to, if it was like a Harold centric scene or a Meredith centric scene use one of their themes for the transition and I also tried to, as much as possible, use different sections of the suite throughout the episode so that there was no repetition and because there was plenty of choice and yeah, in general there were little bits that I came back to because they just fitted so well but I tried not to just repeat everything all the time and as the episodes go on there are more situations and more opportunities to use the Inexplicables theme as more werewolf-y stuff happened and stuff like that. So yeah.

**SAM**

One thing you mentioned there, the appropriateness of happy and sad usages and one thing that I try to do...because I hate writing happy music or sad music. Generally there's an undercurrent of something else, however subtle, and hopefully you can hear that in Meredith's in particular because I think we did discuss that, that there needs to be this...there's always an underlying

surge of there's something going on in her character where you're not quite sure what the reaction's going to be and you need to always be alluding to a difficult past and I think that's important to do and so that was one of my...what I saw as my key goal in this suite was to try and it always be a bit bitter sweet.

**KATIE**

Yeah that does come through definitely. Interesting, this may be me going off on a flight of analytical fancy but there's a section in the middle where you're using a lot of percussive hits, all throughout the stereo field. It's a bit like one of those paintings which are like a mosaic I suppose.

**SAM**

Pointillism

**KATIE**

Pointillism. I was going to say pointillism but I didn't want to get it wrong.

**(laughing)**

She starts off so avoidant, not very successfully avoidant really if we're being honest but she's attempting avoidance and it's like her mind is full of all these dangerous things that she has to navigate around all the time to preserve her avoidant lifestyle and that's what it made me think of. So I'm going to go for saying this is a subconscious thing that you did because I want it to be true.

**(laughing)**

**SAM**

It certainly wasn't conscious but it's very similar again to the chat we had with Alex. There's just so much that goes on that you're not realising when you're doing it in writing music I think and I think this is me not taking credit for that but basically that will have speed in a little bit. There's getting that instability across, getting that thoughtfulness in the character across. Hopefully that's what you're hearing.

**KATIE**

Do you want to go on to Cressida or Harold?

**SAM**

Sure

**MADDY**

Yeah why don't we go on to Cressida since we've mentioned it a little bit.

**KATIE**

Mm, yeah, ok. Let's get super cold.

**MADDY**

So spooky

**(Cressida's suite plays in full)**

**SAM**

Yeah the one big thing I knew from the off is – spoilers – she’s a banshee and it honestly I actually really wrestled with that. I mean not for too long but I wrestled with the idea of using vocals because I thought is that really too on the nose and found, just had an idea that using something that everyone knows is vocals but is so twisted that it just might get away with it. So that’s basically what I did. So that really long scream is literally that, it’s a scream that’s been elongated and I think it just about masks the fact that it’s not so obvious but then everything else has got this...apart from the perhaps plucky instruments in the middle, have that vocal or breathy quality that I wanted to get in. So there’s low flute and actual voice. Just incidentally as well because I did the Meredith suite last, one thing I knew is I couldn’t use vocals in the Meredith suite even though that was actually my first instinct. I think when we talked about Meredith there was talk of mother issues and things like that and my first thought was a female voice but resisted it because I didn’t want there to be any crossover. I wanted there to be this is Cressida and have a very specific vocal identity without being like, oh she’s a banshee. So hopefully that worked. I think in terms of the development of the suite, this one is far less than Meredith is. It’s just kind of spooky and dark and you’re just really unsure of this character. That, I think, was what we talked about.

**MADDY**

Yeah

**KATIE**

It's super static isn't it which matches the performance you got as well which is that kind of quiet, measured, always in control, slightly cold performance is really reflected in the music.

**MADDY**

Yeah. It was so good.

**KATIE**

How about you Maddy? How did you respond to these cues when you heard them?

**MADDY**

Yeah it was absolutely ideal for my purposes because there's so many scenes where Cressida does something super shady that just kind of trails off in this spooky way and you're just like, ah yes. Perfect. Yeah that, I just love characters who are so polite and ostensibly lovely but have that undercurrent of coldness and horribleness and just being able to have a really beautiful haunting melody that is...but is also just terrifying. Yeah, that worked really well for me.

**SAM**

Just to add to that I think one thing I did know from the off as well is...well I'm reading my cue sheet at the moment and you told me there's a transformation into Bond style villain. I'm not sure how specific that is but one thing I wanted to get was a section that had a certain weight to it and villainy about it and so

it stays measured all the way through but that last section was really just to give it a bit of heat because it's been so measured and drawn out before that and that's where those stabs come in at the end even though it's really like heavy. That's what that section was giving I guess.

**KATIE**

In my notes, it says sting in the tale.

**SAM**

Exactly, yeah.

**MADDY**

I'm trying to remember exactly where I managed to use some of the stings but I can't remember so I need to go back and listen through and just be like yeah there it is because there's definitely a moment where I was like aha this is where I get to use this.

**KATIE**

The interesting thing is if you're not connecting it with character it does bring in a whole other level of emotion because it's quite different from the other cues I would say. Would you agree?

**MADDY**

Yeah

**SAM**

Yeah for sure. The one thing I tried to do is just have something that married them together and it's probably the electric cello honestly because there's just a very subtle bit of electric-y stuff in this one but it had to be more organic than that. Yeah, as I say, vocal oriented. But yeah, this one definitely stood out as well.

**KATIE**

Did you want to add anything to that Maddy before we leave Cressida and move on to Harold finally?

**MADDY**

No. I think I'm happy.

**KATIE**

Do we want to listen again? He's a bit shorter isn't he, Harold?

**SAM**

Yeah

**MADDY**

Both musically and in statue presumably

**(laughing)**

**KATIE**

I think of him as short too. Is he described as short at some point or is it just we all get that head canon because of his personality?

**(Harold's suite plays in full)**

That character really hates himself, right?

**(laughing)**

**MADDY**

Yeah

**KATIE**

Ok. I thought at some point when I was listening to Inexplicables, did the music have a bit of a 'northern' sound but I think it was probably Harold's music that actually inspired that thought. Possibly it reminded me of some score to some film set in the north at some point but certainly that wistful quality was possibly what I was picking up on there. So talk to me about how you approached this character and how to define him in music

**SAM**

If you want depressingly northern music, come to me! I'll sort you right out. Yeah, so again, Maddy correct me if you remember differently but the first thing I thought when you described this character to me was beige.

**MADDY**

That, yeah.

**SAM**

I tried to get musical beige going and there has to be...yeah exactly, whimsy. That's what I tried to get. I had to get this mundane, going through the motions sound. Tired, bored and then this middle section ended up kind of Adams Family like. This Eastern European solo violin kind of sound in a way. I don't really know why. I guess it was just a...it was the only sort of style that could take almost this lethargic solo. It's kind of what it is and there's a more spirited, a more energetic section which we needed as well but overall it needed that, bittersweet's the wrong word, but a darkness to it as well as this...meh sound. So yeah that's kind what I was going for there.

**MADDY**

Yeah I think Harold has this interesting thing of being quite a comedic character but also terrible. So yeah I think it really got across, there's moments of whimsy and lightness and hilarity but yeah there's always an undercurrent of yeah this guy's not great. Just listening to the more upbeat section that you were talking about it gave me a circus feeling and he's a very performative person and he's always trying to put on a show and appear more powerful and more in control than he is and I think that works well for him as a character.

**SAM**

I think just, there's a kind of wheeziness to it and it only made me think of it because I did a short film years ago that asked for a similar...well not similar to

this character but it wanted it to sound like a northern bleak seaside sound. And all I could think to do was to get a kind of wheeziness. That one used kind of melodicas and stuff to get this...when you said circus, it just made me think of that, that there's a sad funfair kind of thing and is actually quite a northern...in my mind that's a northern thing. It's like depressing, grey. You go to Cleethorpes for a funfair.

**(laughing)**

I don't know why but that's maybe what you're hearing. If that is what you're hearing then I get why that might sound northern.

**KATIE**

Yeah. Also there's a kind of nostalgic feel to it somewhere.

**SAM**

Yeah. Exactly.

**KATIE**

I don't know where I get that from but that's just an impression. And that whistling sound is that theremin or something?

**SAM**

No it's actually...I believe it's a sample on Eric Whittaker's choir library where it's a form of multi phonic where they're humming but whistling at the same

time. So it's actually a double tone and it's a really cool affect but it just happens to be on that library

**KATIE**

That is really cool

**SAM**

Yeah

**KATIE**

I wanna talk about the chords for a minute. There's obviously one central very repetitive chord sequence. **[Katie plays chord sequence]** It's kind of ponderous and wistful. It goes around and around. It attempts to move away but it never...unlike Meredith it doesn't really get anywhere. It could be that I'm reading into that because I know what the character's like but I just thought I'd throw that out there as an observation and see if you had any comments on it essentially.

**SAM**

No I think that's a deliberate thing. I think I knew enough about the character when I started from Maddy's notes that there's a definite kind of cyclical feeling about this guy. This kind of mundane side to him that as I've got in my notes, stuffy professional. Yeah I think it's definitely a conscious decision to not deviate from that tonal centre too far.

**KATIE**

Could we go as far even as implying there's some kind of oedipal force in the music. Like the umbilical cords are pulling him back again or...

**SAM**

Oh maybe. I mean I think that's definitely approaching thesis level analysis of...that might be a bit retrospective on my part to say that but I mean maybe unconsciously there's a bit of mothering that the music's doing to this guy. He's a little bit hopeless is kind of how I was approaching it and so yeah, it's certainly not overcomplicated and that's a very deliberate thing is to avoid his character seeming too...I don't want to say too complex but there has to be contrast between the characters as well and I think keeping him fairly too measured...like Cressida is very deliberate and measured and paced whereas Harold is...there's a bit more resilience in there I music. Yeah, I know what you're hearing and maybe that's a happy outcome. But yeah definitely keep it centred, keep it beige.

**(laughing)**

**KATIE**

You talked about having scored the last scene which I didn't know happened. So I'd like you to talk about why you made that decision to do it that way, both of you, and what you were trying to achieve with that scoring?

**MADDY**

Yeah I think I remember that it's a very unlike most of the rest of the show, it's a very hopeful triumphant scene and I think I kind of knew that it would be good to have some music underscoring it rather than just kind of transitioning into it and it just being plain dialogue because I wanted to kind of bring it to a nice kind of crescendo narratively rather than musically and I thought that the music would help me do that and thought it would be nice to get happier versions of the themes that we'd already heard and bring...it's bringing all these different characters together into one place. It's bringing all these different themes together into one place and yeah, just kind of give us resolution both in terms of the story and in terms of the music.

**SAM**

Yeah exactly. I think we landed on that decision after a bit of discussion didn't we because you knew what you wanted for that scene but I think after we talked about it being...the material that you would have is music editable but actually it required a bit more in terms of transitions maybe because like you said the busyness of all the characters being there. It's much easier...much more natural, it feels more organic if you're able to sort those transitions out and that, you know, they say is what scoring is about, is effective transitions between musical edits and so that's what I wanted to do and I think maybe suggested the idea that it be more scored than edited as it were. And I think it's better for it honestly. I think it's a really nice thing to be able to join those ideas together in a more fluid way.

**KATIE**

Yeah there's a certain impetus to it I think which you may not have been able to achieve editing in whatever material there already was.

**SAM**

And it's also nice from a development point. I was able to change things a little bit with a bit of hindsight and sort of say well there's a finality here where we can really develop the ideas a bit more. It's always a nice thing to do.

**KATIE**

I was going to ask you Maddy how did the way the music ended up being affect your production choices because you edited the whole thing, pretty much, solo. I think you got a tiny bit of help from Annie at one point but otherwise it was all you. Did you find the music gave you opportunities that perhaps you might not have had, if you'd not had the bespoke music.

**MADDY**

Yeah I think it definitely...I really enjoyed trying to find exactly the right bit of music that would link both the character and the mood of the preceding scene onto the next. Yeah and I think there were certain moments like the stings in Cressida's suite and the aggressive strings in Meredith's where I just knew, oh these definitely have a place and they're going to really enhance the storytelling more than you could with just straight cut to new scene and yeah it was...that was my first time properly editing with music as well so I was kind of jumping in at the deep end but yeah I had excellent stuff to work with so it was...it was very enjoyable and yeah, I just basically had to do so much longer

fades than I expected. Just such long fades to make it sound natural. Yeah I kept on getting feedback of like maybe make the fades a bit longer but looking at it visually and in my door, it was like but it's already so long but yeah, you just have to do it so much longer than you expect.

**KATIE**

I just finished editing an audio drama series, doing the music editing, selecting the cues and editing them in. I've never done that before. I learned quite a lot about what it's like to work with music...library music from the other end and how hard you have to manipulate to get something which if you just had a composer scoring it in would really be quite straightforward.

**SAM**

Well this is the slight apprehension maybe that I was alluding to. The composer that scores wants to score because they want that control and so it is a tricky thing but hypothetically had I been scoring this we're talking about hours of music or potentially and that's a lot and there's just budgetary and then practically not possible. Yeah. That would be amazing. Wow!

**KATIE**

Ok. Have we got any final comments before we close up?

**SAM**

No. Thank you very much Katie.

**MADDY**

I'm all good. Yeah

**SAM**

Thanks Maddy

**MADDY**

Thank you so much.

**KATIE**

Interesting as ever. Hope you all get Tim along at some point to do Stellar Firma. Alright, bye.

**MADDY**

Goodbye

**[Outro – part of the quieter section of Meredith's theme]**

**MADDY**

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