



From Minsk to London

How to make a live orchestra production in Europe happen

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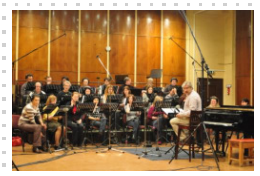
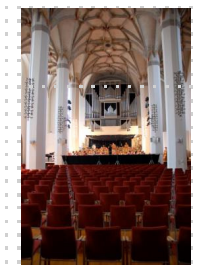
GAME DEVELOPERS CONFERENCE

SAN FRANCISCO, CA
MARCH 5-9, 2012
EXPO DATES: MARCH 7-9

2012

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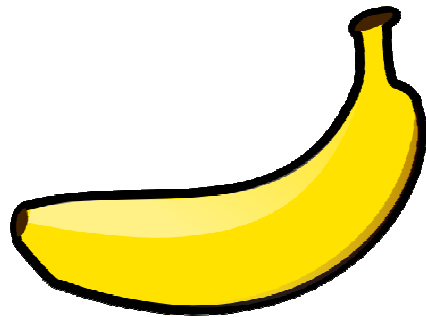
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Why live orchestra?



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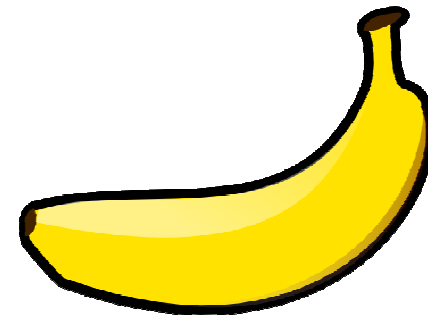
*So why would you want to have an orchestral soundtrack
done with virtual mockups?*

Top Gains:

- Quality
- Emotion
- Marketing story
- Bang for the Buck



VS.



Top Risks:

- Music style
 - Some music styles, even if heavily filled with orchestral elements are not suited for live orchestra recordings (e.g. trailer music).

[DEMO 01 VIRTUAL](#) vs. [DEMO 01 LIVE](#) vs. totally virtual: [DEMO 02 VIRTUAL](#)

- Composer's awareness of own strengths and weaknesses
- Timeline
- Choosing the right setup
 - Composer as a conductor or producer?
 - Engineers work as producers?

Why Europe?

- There are lots of options in lots of countries, in a territory smaller than the US.
- Easier to meet copyright and license needs (Union issues, copyright issues, etc).
- Lower prices
- More variety in orchestra “styles” – if you know the spots, you can always find a perfect match.
- Legal security (as opposed to Russia – Belarus is right on the edge)

The best places to go:

- London (UK)
- Prague (Czech Republic)
- Budapest (Hungary)
- Frankfurt Oder (Germany) & Halle & several other state owned German orchestras
- Riga (Latvia)
- Minsk (Belarus)

City: London **SCORE:** 10 / 10
Country: UK
Ensemble: London Symphonic Orchestra

Pro's	Con's
Quality	Price (2 - 3 times more expensive)
Capability of absolute perfection	Union rules (max 8 min / hour, etc.)
No language barrier	Booking restrictions
Highly experienced	Limited availability
Incredible Sightreading	

Price for 2 days, 4 x 4h sessions, 70 players, recording & post pro, approx. 100 min.

Ensemble & Conductor:	120.000,00 €
Engineering & Studio:	30.000,00 €
Total:	150.000,00 €
Average price per min. / final music:	1.500,00 €



City: Prague **SCORE: 9 / 10**

Country: Czech Republic

Ensemble: FILM Harmonic Orchestra

Pro's

Con's

Timing / rhythmical skills	Price for big ensembles (70+)
Flexibility	No guarantee to get a good recording hall
No legal / rights issues at all	Need to get the right players
Service attitude	
Highly experienced	

Price for 2 days, 4 x 4h sessions, 70 players, recording & post pro, approx. 70 min.

Ensemble & Conductor:	36.000,00 €
Engineering & Studio:	24.000,00 €
Total:	60.000,00 €
Average price per min. / final music:	850,00 €



City: Budapest **SCORE:** 8 / 10

Country: Hungary

Ensemble: Budapest Symphonic Orchestra

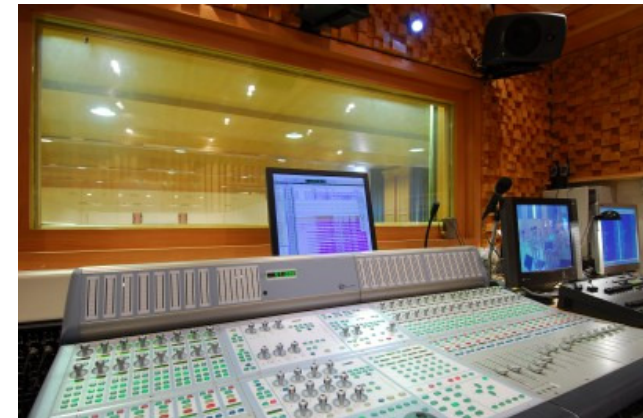
Pro's

Con's

Timing / rhythmical skills	Price for big ensembles (70+)
Flexibility	No guarantee to get a good recording hall
No legal / rights issues at all	Mixed players ensemble
Service attitude	Not easy to book without agency
Young & rough sound	

Price for 2 days, 4 x 4h sessions, 70 players, recording & post pro, approx. 70 min.

Ensemble & Conductor:	32.500,00 €
Engineering & Studio:	21.500,00 €
Total:	54.000,00 €
Average price per min. / final music:	770,00 €



City: Frankfurt / Oder **SCORE:** 8 / 10

Country: Germany

Ensemble: Brandenburgisches Staatsorchester

[REVERB!!](#)

Pro's

Con's

Best price for big ensemble setup	Slower with click track recordings
Beautiful "classical" sound	Limited availability
Only little legal / rights issues	Not easy to book without agency
Great recording hall	
Fixed ensemble	
MANY OPTIONS „GERMAN SITUATION“	

Price for 2 days, 4 x 3h sessions, 70 players, recording & post pro, approx. 50 min.

Ensemble & Conductor:	19.500,00 €
Engineering & Studio:	12.500,00 €
Total:	32.000,00 €
Average price per min. / final music:	640,00 €



City: Riga **SCORE:** 6 / 10
Country: Latvia
Ensemble: Latvian National Symphony Orchestra

Pro's	Con's
Timing / rhythmical skills	Small studios - 40 players max.
Flexibility	Quality of instruments
Great for Section Recordings	
No legal / rights issues	

Price for 4 days, 4 x 4h sessions, 70 players, recording & post pro, approx. 60 min.

Ensemble & Conductor:	30.000,00 €
Engineering & Studio:	15.000,00 €
Total:	45.000,00 €
Average price per min. / final music:	750,00 €



City: Minsk **SCORE:** 5 / 10

Country: Belarus

Ensemble: Belarus Philharmonic Orchestra

Pro's

Con's

Periodical "Group Buy Sessions"	Slow with click track recordings
Decent "classical" sound	Timing / rhythmical skills
Only little legal / rights issues	Political system in Belarus
Good recording hall	Quality of instruments
Best Price	Brass players have weaknesses

Price for 2 days, 4 x 3h sessions, 70 players, recording & post pro, approx. 50 min.

Ensemble & Conductor:	20.000,00 €
Engineering & Studio:	10.000,00 €
Total:	30.000,00 €
Average price per min. / final music:	550,00 €



“Open Sessions” – orchestra group buy

Best rates are only possible for longer recordings (2 days is usually best) but a lot of people need only a few minutes of music recorded:

- Composers demos
- Marketing videos & mainthemes
- Mobile games with little music in total
- Test run to check out the best setup before doing a big recording

This can be solved by organizing 2 day sessions with many different clients, giving anyone the chance to buy in to the recording.

Currently there are periodical “Open Sessions” going on with three different orchestras:

- Minsk / Belarus
- Frankfurt / Germany
- Halle / Germany

Team & Setup:

- Orchestrator & Copyist
- Orchestra Manager
- Recording Hall
- Conductor
- Engineers
- Orchestra
- Post Production

AGENCY vs. SITE BOOKING vs. INDIVIDUAL SETUP ??

Never go with Site Booking unless you are recording with the LSO:

"You don't want someone selling you an orchestra, you want someone selling you the best result."

Smart Recording

how to make the most of your recording time:

- Recording of excerpts / leitmotifs
[DEMO 01](#) recorded "THEME SNIPPET"
[DEMO 02](#) – situation 1 [DEMO 03](#) – situation 2
- Orchestra and choir in different tracks to always have "live feeling"
[DEMO 01](#) live orchestra, virtual choir
[DEMO 02](#) virtual orchestra, live choir
- Recording of basic tracks for variations
[DEMO 01](#) recorded basic layer
[DEMO 02](#) variation based on same recording

Testimonial Slides

Star Wars KINECT– Microsoft / LucasArts. Composer: Gordy Haab

100 minutes of music recorded with the London Symphonic Orchestra at Abbey Road.

Major Strengths:

- Perfect sightreading
- Musicality as an ensemble
- Phrasing and balance
- Attitude towards the production

Major Weaknesses:

- NONE

Score: 9.5 / 10 (only because I want to have some room left for growth)

„The only bad experience was that it ended. I consider this project to be the greatest musical accomplishment in my career. It was a lifelong goal to work on StarWars, with the LSO and record at Abbey Road“

End of Nations – Trion World / Petroglyph. Composer: Frank Klepacki45 minutes recorded in Frankfurt / Germany

Major Strengths:

- Natural reverb of the hall.
- Play very well together as a whole

Major Weaknesses:

- Modern rhythms seem challenging
- Don't like to play a lot of triple forte

Score: 9/10 (10 if they had played more forte)

45 minutes recorded in Prague / Czech Republic

Major Strengths:

- Rhythmical skills of the strings section

Major Weaknesses:

- Missing tightness of the brass section

Score: 8/10

„Overall it was a great experience. The team running the session knew how to communicate and interact with the orchestra to get it done and keep the spirits up. Engineers were quick to make adjustments, it all worked like a well oiled machine.”

Various Themes for PopCap Games. Composer: Stan LePard

10 minutes of music recorded during an Open Session in Minsk / Belarus

Major Strengths:

- Musicality
- Intonation
- Balance

Major Weaknesses:

- Brass sound (sound of instruments)

Score: 10 / 10 (no problems)

„It was no hassle at all and I was very pleased with the results.“

Kinectimals – Microsoft / Frontier Studios. Composer: Peter McConnell

60 minutes recorded in Halle / Germany

Major Strength:

- Extreme precision in rhythm

Major Weakness:

- Pitch problems with playing to A 440Hz

Score: 7/10 because of pitch problems. After we sorted that out it was a 9.5 for the next project.

60 minutes recorded in Prague / Czech Republic

Major Strengths:

- Rich full romantic sound
- Brass is great

Major Weaknesses:

- Not always super tight.

Score: 9/10

„Very positive! The conductor is first rate and the production team provides an excellent interface between me and the orchestra. It was great to have an engineer doing also the work of a producer + having the orchestrator beside me made me very relaxed on any score issues.