Michelle Frey - Audio Lead/Sound design and implementation

2) Can you describe your role in the development of Full Auto?

LOL - well, the design of all things that make sound in the game, working with outside contractors, liaising with all team members for particular audio needs - from physics requests to Level Design.

3) What's your favorite part about working on Full Auto?

I love the challenge of working on the whole thing. The adaptive does stand out though. The pleasure of working with two wonderful and talented composers (John Roome and Rom Di Prisco) was an honour. It was great Sega was willing to try it out. I've wanted to do adaptive music in a game (particularly a racing game) for quite some time now. And it's always a pleasure working with Danetracks (Bryan Watkins, James Penny) and John Fasal recording the cars down in LA. I've worked with them before in the past and they're the best. Foremost is working on a great team. The dynamics of a great working environment really reflects on the out of a game i think i.e ya! this game really is fun to play because of the people and energy behind it. I would also like to put in a plug for my co-worker and audio coder Andrew Clark he's been great.

4) From your perspective, what elements truly make Full Auto a next-gen title?

Being able to travel through 4D space. Adaptive music for a full on combat racing game. Plus, the way our proprietary physics engine works it really gives the audio so much plasticity and flexibility - it also makes for some interesting challenges ;-)

5) How will Full Auto change gamers' perspective on the racing genre?

Full Auto is in it's own category that has yet to be defined i think. It's not a sim, it's something quite different and fun. There is a huge fun factor in this game. I think the demographic could be quite large and appeal to many different players. Maybe instead of changing a genre it will go towards creating something new.

6) Where do you think the racing genre is heading?

No idea. Well, except since we showed at E3 i've noticed certain titles trying out the physical world destruction thing...interesting. i know where i would like the racing genre to go, but that is top secret right now ;-). Perhaps it entails a bit of a paradigm shift in thinking about racing.

7) If we were looking at a giant screenshot of Full Auto, what would you point out first? What's your favorite feature or element, if you could only pick one? Of what are you most proud?

Ack! it's hard to choose. But I love the jumps - those big exhilarating jumps where you fly so high in order to crash through a beautiful neon sign then land on an opposing racer, or when an AI flies over top of you. Now that is cool.

Department-specific questions:

AUDIO

-What are the challenges and benefits involved with implementing an adaptive score within Full Auto?

Working with John and Rom has been a highlight. I feel very fortunate to have been connected with them. We didn't have much time. Doing mixed downs for adaptive game play is an arduous process. Rom is amazing at it. We had to think fast and make design decisions on the fly. What we have accomplished so far is a great start. And it paves the way for more complex adaptive design down the road. Though i think we often overlook the beauty of simplicity. Also working with an unfinished platform has presented us with more that the usual set of challenges.

-There is so much sound in Full Auto, how do you compensate for so many opportunities for audio and the fact that 100s of objects can be active in any one scene?

Our physics engine really works in Audio's favour. It makes our sfx really work adaptively. Though it initially presented some interesting challenges. It's been a bit of puzzle and adventure figuring all this out and we can take it much further i think.

-As you've created sound effects for Full Auto, can you think of any memorable or bizarre source material that might interest our readers?

Tons! LOL.....ok. We were able to record 10 cars. There are 21 cars in the game. Each car is composed individually. It's amazing what one can pull out of a hat to try to make a car engine. It was a huge hurdle to jump over and tons of late night hair pulling and anxiety. Let's say that many of the cars have non car engine sound 'elements' in them. Every racing game does the car physics differently. Audio has to adapt to this and also try to influence the process. It is a

fun challenge to develop a new engine model. Call me a masochist. What's even better is learning where to take it for the next game.

3) What's your favorite part about working on Full Auto?
What excites me most about the Full Auto is the freedom we have to create a truly fresh game.
Every aspect of the is brand new: the engine, the game mechanic, the franchise, the platform, the team. We are free from legacy code and legacy assumptions. Our publisher, Sega, has been this game's biggest fan since day one. This freedom gives us the luxury of fresh thinking for every part of Full Auto.4) From your perspective, what elements truly make Full Auto a next-gen title?
I like to talk about Full Auto's "accessible depth". Some racing games are accessible, but wear thin quickly. Others are deep but require too much investment from players.
The tools you are given in Full Auto are familiar. You already know how to drive like stink and win races. You've used guns in shooters and you know what you want to do with them. Creating wildly different outcomes with these familiar tools is a powerful experience. Bringing the power of accessible depth to a mass audience is next-gen to me. 5) How will Full Auto change gamers' perspective on the racing genre?
I think Full Auto is an eye-opener for both hardcore and casual racing fans alike. This is because it delivers a road rage fantasy like no other game has delivered yet. While sitting in rush hour traffic, who doesn't imagine what it'd be like to send someone into a ditch or to tear a hole into a building to take a shortcut? We have the sense of speed and hero physics that gamers expect, but then we deliver the fantasy doing just about everything you could only imagine up until now.

William Ho, Lead Game Designer
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