



Steinberg Nuendo 8

Game on for **DAVID KENNEDY** with Wwise link

Nuendo 8 has a few new features that will appeal to everyone in post, but the focus is increasingly on game audio. With Nuendo 6 and Nuendo 7 Steinberg introduced substantial new functionality — like fully integrated R-128 loudness metering and impressive embedded ADR and reconvert tools. Whilst these products were clearly a very good fit for broadcast and film audio post-production, Steinberg chose to preview Nuendo 7 and Nuendo 8 at the Game Developers Conference in San Francisco. To me this says a lot about where they are currently positioning their flagship DAW within the world of 'audio to picture work' as they like to call it.



The headline feature is Game Audio Connect 2, which makes it easier to send audio assets generated within Nuendo to Audiokinetic's game sound engine Wwise, but the initial implementation only offered a simple render and export process. In this new version you can now transfer sections of compositions as whole music segments that preserve the audio, MIDI, cycle and cue markers from Nuendo directly into Wwise. As before, it is very simple to use: make a selection, drag and drop it on the Game Audio Connect window and it then appears in Wwise. The reverse process: opening segments from Wwise in Nuendo,

which one might want to do for MIDI editing, is also possible. It really is a useful and thorough implementation of this tool.

Game audio functions

Another equally simple game audio orientated function is the Rename Events from List function. A game might require tens of thousands of lines of dialogue assets and manually naming that many files would be a little tedious. With a script document containing the required filenames and a track of dialogue clips ordered as per the script, Nuendo 8 can ingest the script and rename the clips which can then be easily exported as appropriately named files.

There are a few new and updated plug-ins bundled with Nuendo 8 and, for game audio in particular, the Sound Randomizer is perhaps of most interest. Intended as an offline processor, it could be deployed to create multiple variations of an over-utilised sound effect. It allows a degree of control, from subtle to drastic, of four parameters that roughly correlate to the amount of random pitch change, attack and envelope settings, tonal colouration and timing.

New features of Nuendo 8 that will appeal to everyone in post include Direct Offline Processing. This allows you to apply multiple plug-ins and processes in a chain on a selected clip or clips. Different effects can be applied



non-destructively without requiring complex automation. But rather than just a basic Channel Strip tool, Nuendo 8 can deploy any available plug-ins or processes without having to bung an unwieldy CPU load's worth of plug-ins on a track. Clips can then be moved about, cut, copied and pasted along with their corresponding effects. As these effects are applied to a clip a new audio file containing the processed audio is created and saved with the project. More sophisticated than a simple track freeze, this allows you to exchange sessions with other systems that may not have all the same plug-ins. An obvious use of this feature for me is noise reduction and audio restoration. Currently I have to destructively render audio out of my DAW to the ubiquitous RX6, process it and then send it back. In my particular line of work this is something I might have to do a hundred times a day, so besides the increased workflow efficiencies of not leaving the DAW, there is also the bonus of non-destructive processing.

Nuendo 8 introduces Project Window Zones. The Lower Zone is designed to aid working on a single screen like a laptop, as it tiles the Project Window with either the MixConsole or Editor. Different areas of the DAW are accessible without leaving the main Project window, and functions are accessed through deeply collapsed menus, tabs and buttons. Incidentally the MixConsole now has its own undo and redo distinct from the main Project undo and redo.

With version 8, Nuendo is finally released from its reliance on QuickTime: Avid DNxHD and DNxHR, MOV, MP4 and AVI join the supported container formats.

For me the Nuendo workflow is still second to none because it is so fantastically customisable in its menus, shortcuts and really useful things like track headers; there is a plug-in manager for hiding the fluff in one's Mercury bundle, the Render In Place, Export options and file naming schemes are great, the Control Room functionality is very thorough ... add to that the R-128 metering, ADR, reconvert and now Direct Offline Processing built-in and it really still is far and away the most pioneering dedicated post-production DAW available. **1**

resolution/VERDICT

- PROS** Game Audio Connect 2
- CONS** New users not working in game audio or post may wonder if this DAW is becoming too specialised.
- EXTRAS** Nuendo 8, for Mac or PC, is £1,633, upgrades from £214 upwards. Avid DNxHD & DNxHR Video Decoder license £25. Cubase music tools are now included as standard.

www.steinberg.net