Lou Lan Sea

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Synopsis

Joanna Zhang / Jingcheng shaw / Zixuan Zeng / Jack Lau

Lou Lan Sea

A Jack Lau film

"Lou Lan Sea" is a Mockcumentary that based on audio and archive images. And it is also a fiction story that with a ture historical event and location. the story is preseted in the format of a sound recording of a archaeologist from the 1960s. It recorded the Inspection process of the Lop Nur area and a serise of "paranromal phenomenon".

Inspiration & Brain stormig & Creating process

At the beginning I planed to make a suspense short film for the project, it is my goal to make suspense films in the future,
 so why not try to make a short one for the project. I had a few ideas in my mind, for example, I want it to base on a
real histrical event, I want it to has a surreal atmopsphere, and some key words comes up in my mind: documentary, puzzle,
riddle, etc.
And I am always interested in the Cthulhu meth，which is a series fiction written by a American writer named H.P.Lovecraft.
Cthulhu style became a tag，It has influenced a lot of works in different area, such as scary films. The philosophy of Cthulhu
works is you never let the audience see the "devil" directly, for the audience the "devil" should be always hiddend and
unknown. It is all about creating a atmosphere, using side description to hint the audience, "The stronggest fear is fear
of the unkown."–H.P.Lovecraft.
so my job is to work on the "unknown."

The Mist (2007)
A Clthulu style film

At the Mountains
of Madness (1931)
A novel by H.P.Lovecraft

"The last of us" (2014) is video game that won the outstanding Achievement in Animation and Outstanding Achievement in Story at the
24th Annual D.I.C.E Award. I've played it afew years ago, in the DLC of this game "The last of us: Left behind", the player needs to collect
a series of letters、notes and some other objects that left by a sacrificed troop before the player, by gathering
 information、following their trace and doing this puzzle you can find out the turth of what happened to them,
at the end it brings out a very touching story. And this hidden story sublimate the theme perfectly.

The process of collecting information in the game gives me the idea of making a audio–archive based film, by giving the information indirectly. It should give a big space for the adience to think, let the audience play with their imagination. It should has a open ending and the turth of the story should be hidden, the adience need to figure it out by doing this puzzle, and there will be interferences to mislead about the turth.
I had also find some weirdcore mockcumtaries, a fake TV channel called "Local 58", and "The Mandela Catalogue".

https://youtu.be/C8d12w6pMos
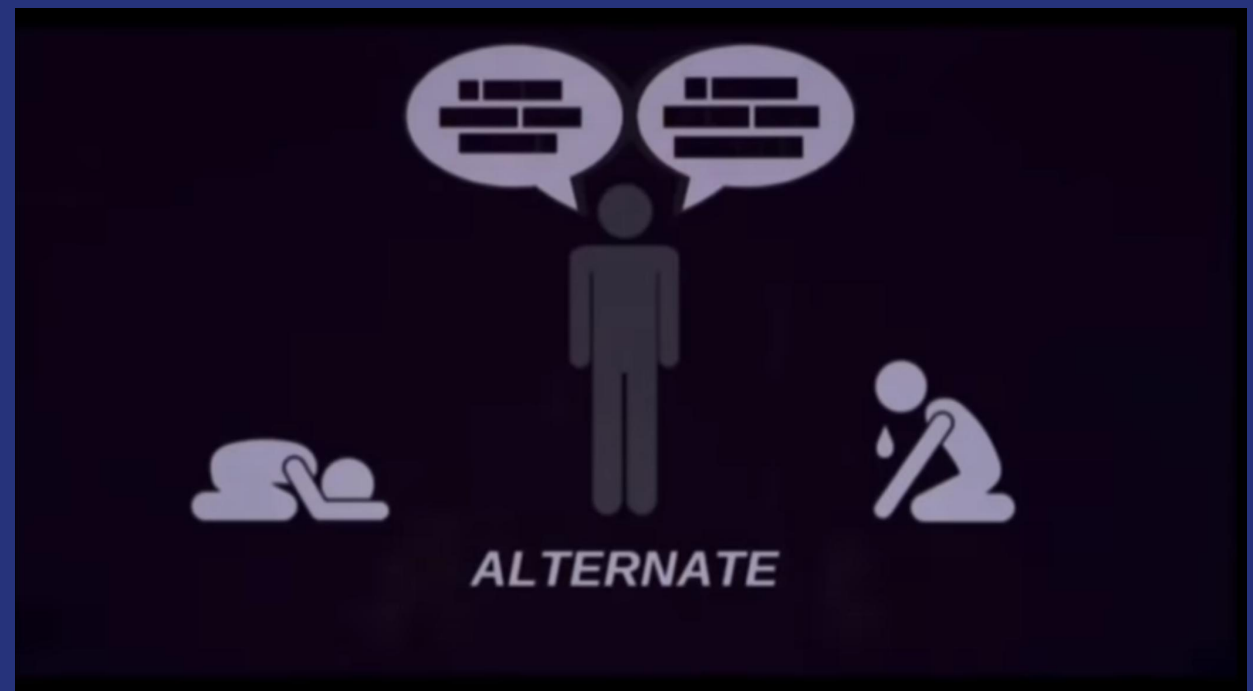
https://youtu.be/–S5Qo84D_NA

"Nur" in Uyghur means lake, Lop Nur is a lake in Xinjiang, northwest China. most of it is cover by desert.
It has lots of tales and stories, connected to a lot of secret peojects of the goverment back in the 20 century.
The first atomic boom of China is created and tested here.

About writing the story

First I had a idea about making a WWII story, a classified sound recording about a secrate mission, and unknown weapon.

But after doing some resarch, these words caught my attention--- "the Loulan kingdom" and "Lop Nur lake"

Loulan was an ancient kingdom based around an important oasis city along the Silk Road already known in the 2nd century BCE on the northeastern edge of the Lop Desert. The term Loulan is the Chinese transcription of the native name Krorän and is used to refer to the city near Lop Nur as well as the kingdom.(wikipedia)

And then I decide to write a story about Loulan instead of WWII, use Loulan and Lop Nur as the background, because Loulan has a mysterious atmosphere itself, which is perfect for the film.
so I made a rushes of the film, using Hans Zimmer's score at the end to establish the tone of the film, I didn't have time to make any muisc for film at that time, but I know this is the tone I want for the film.

Reseaches and studies of Loulan and Lop Nur:

https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S001282521100167X

http://ivpp.cas.cn/cbw/rlxxb/xbwzxz/201206/P020120607385704443791.pdf

http://www.cqvip.com/qk/90059x/1998b12/12496783.html

https://www.nature.com/articles/srep43102

https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0959683611405234

Script writing & Theme

I did alot of rearches of Lop Nur,

 Loulan and the atomic boom

experiment named

"596 project".

The road to the Loulan Kingdom:
https://arxiv.org/pdf/1210.5702.pdf

The Beauty of Loulan:
https://mummipedia.fandom.com/wiki/Beauty_of_Loul
an

The Pengjiamu mystery:
https://explorersweb.com/exploration-mysteries-the-
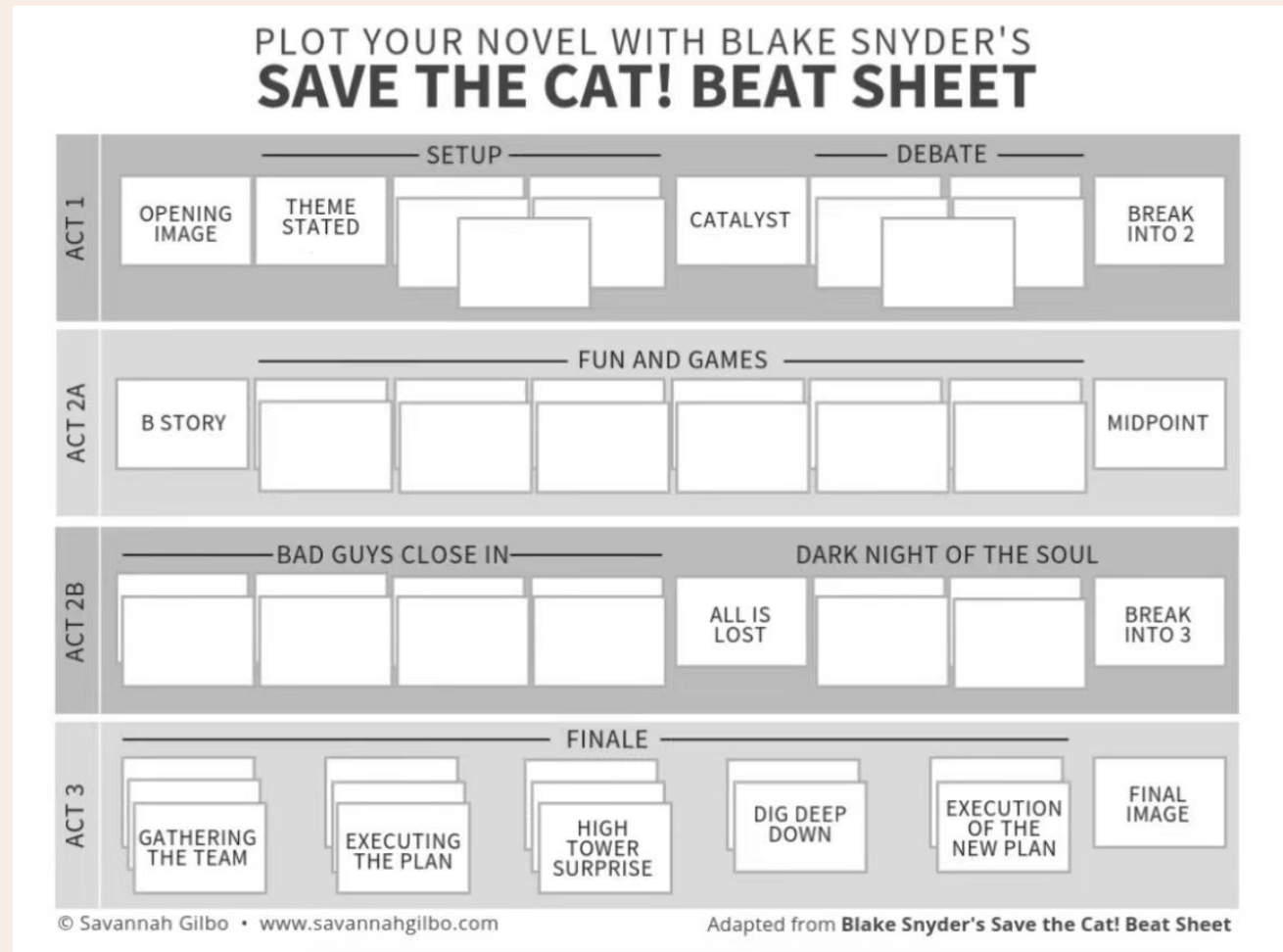chiricahua-apaches-of-the-sierra-madre/

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T8U9cip-If8

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OB8eeVd7R_M

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OB8eeVd7R_M

By reading a lot of articles and watching alots of Cthulhu style works, I had construct a suspense in my brain, I wrote the structure of the story and compare it to the Blake Snyder's beat sheet, and then make some small changes to make it fits this sheet as possible.

PLOT YOUR NOVEL WITH BLAKE SNYDER'S
SAVE THE CAT! BEAT SHEET

ACT 1

SETUP — DEBATE

| OPENING IMAGE | THEME STATED | | | CATALYST | | | BREAK INTO 2 |

ACT 2A

FUN AND GAMES

| B STORY | | | | | | | MIDPOINT |

ACT 2B

BAD GUYS CLOSE IN — DARK NIGHT OF THE SOUL

| | | | | ALL IS LOST | | | BREAK INTO 3 |

ACT 3

FINALE

| GATHERING THE TEAM | EXECUTING THE PLAN | HIGH TOWER SURPRISE | DIG DEEP DOWN | EXECUTION OF THE NEW PLAN | FINAL IMAGE |

© Savannah Gilbo • www.savannahgilbo.com   Adapted from **Blake Snyder's Save the Cat! Beat Sheet**

But it is not enough, it is only a typical suspense story, but in a new format. I want my film to convey a deeper and more meaningful theme. I always want to explore the theme of **"The smallness and greatness of individuals under times and society."** The theme should be about smallness and greatness, love and fear, individual and society, sacrifice and courage.

So the film is divided into two chapters, the first one is called "Lou Lan"，and the second one is "Sea". The first one is a recording from 1963, and the second one is from 2008. Therefore, I set up 3 level of themes in the story.

Level 1:

For the protagonist of the story，He don't know anything about the 596 project at Lop Nur，and so dose the audience，and all the paranormal phenomenon He sees could be just his illusions after suffering form the ARS（acute radiation syndrome），which explains the symptoms after he back to the camp.

I used the Anti-Climax narrtive in the story, at the 3/2 of the story, when everthing getting close to the climax, the progaonist finally sees the "Loulan Kingdom" in the middle of the desert, after a long time of building up, when the audience is waiting to see it, there is no "final shut down", instead, the journey of the protagonist stopped, and still reamains a mystery. Anti-Climax is also used in some suspense films such as *"Zodiac"*(2007)、*"No Country for Old Man"*(2007) and *"Memories of Murder"*(2003).

Level 2:
The journey ends in a unexpected way, and then cut to the next secne, not giving the audicence what they was expeceting to see, but this is not enough, because I need to take the theme to the next level, by diverting the attention from the plot to the protagonist himself. At the end of Chapter one, We get to know about the relationship between the protagonist and Lanxiu, and the sandness and loneness and confusion of him.

Level 3:
In Chapter 2: Sea, I took the theme to the final level, which is "the individuals under times".

And at the end of the film I use a scene of a little girl reciting a paragraph of "*The Old Man and the Sea*" to imply the theme of the story：

"*He looked across the sea and knew how alone he was now. But he could see the prisms in the deep dark water and the line stretching ahead and the strange undulation of the calm. The clouds were building up now for the trade wind and he looked ahead and saw a flight of wild ducks etching themselves against the sky over the water, then blurring, then etching again and he knew no man was ever alone on the sea.*"

I want to thank Zixuan Zeng for doing alot of discussion with me, Which is also the voice of the "investigator 596"She gave me advices from different point of view, She is also a animation student.(homepage: https://b23.tv/z2NZAgK)
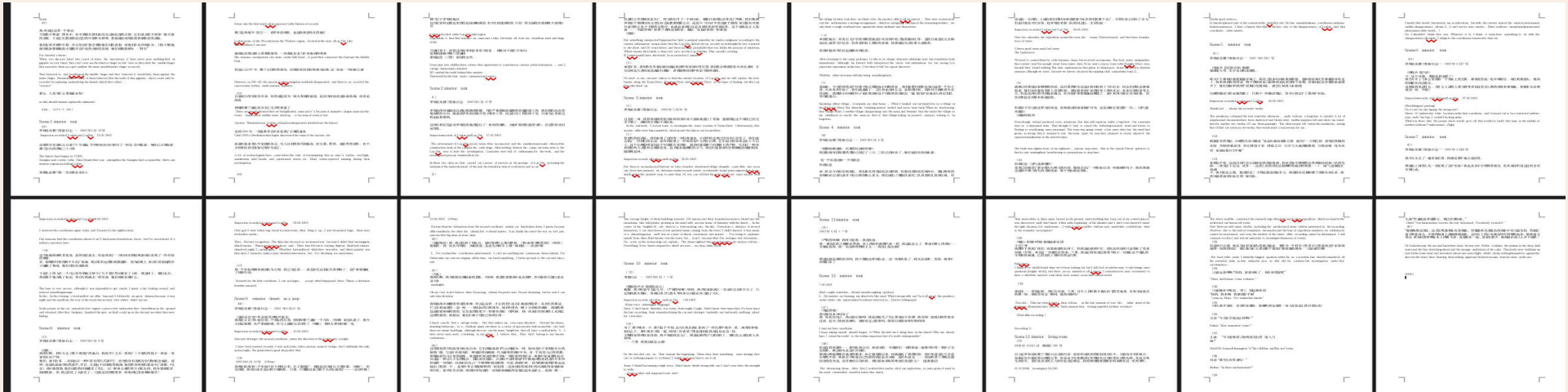
final script:
16 pages
8000–8200 words
Chinese lines and English subtitles

Archives & Editing & Dubbing

For non-commercial films, I can use pubuilc domain images, from:
https://archive.org/   www.pexels.com wikmedia commons www.zhihu.com
these images are free to use and edit
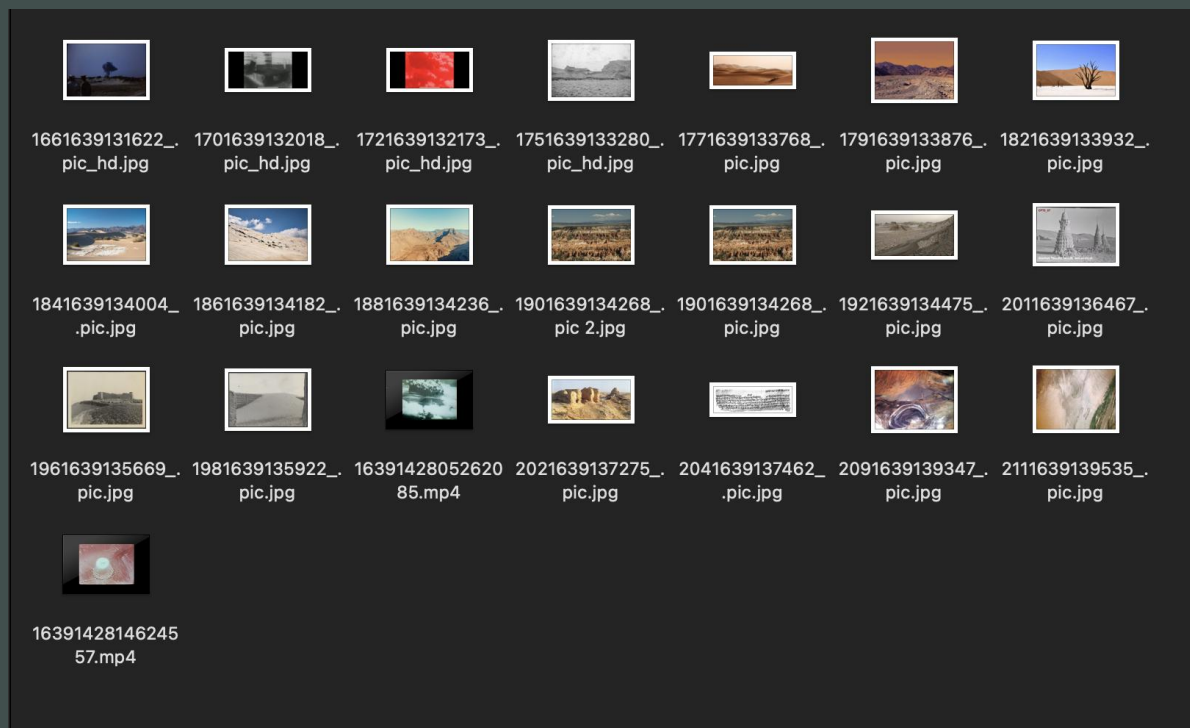
Comes to editing, at the first edition of the film, I just use the orignal images, brcause it's a audio base film, the visual part is relatively weak and boring, so I comes up with an idea, I want to use the images to presents and imply the mental condition of the protagonist, by editing their size and color saturation. at the earlier stage, the images looks normal:

Jack-Lau- bilibili

Jack-Lau- bilibili

As the explore goes deeper and deeper, the images gets bigger as well,and the colour becomes more and more distorted. At the end of chpater 1, the images take up the whole screen. Implying that at this point, the protagonist has lost his sanity, and his soul is distorted.

CAST

The archeologist：Jack Liu/Lau

The investigator 596: Zixuan Zeng

The Father: Jingcheng Shaw

The Daughter: Joanna Zhang

Score & Soundtracks

I always think that the music is one of the most important part of the film, a good score can express the theme of the story and establish the tone of th film, I don't have experience in making music, so I decide to use sampling kits, Which are legal for commercial use.

	Drums - Percussion Loops	
	2021-12-16 23:41	○

	FX - Atmospheres	
	2021-12-16 23:41	○

	FX - One Shots	
	2021-12-16 23:41	○

	Instruments - Bouzouki & Tzouras	
	2021-12-16 23:41	○

	Instruments - Electronic Tampura	
	2021-12-16 23:41	○

	Instruments - Music Loops	
	2021-12-16 23:41	○

	Instruments - Turkish Ney	
	2021-12-16 23:41	○

Black Octopus Sound - Basement
Freaks Presents Kappadokia -
Demo Track.mp3

KAPP_D#m_Atmosphere_01.wav
2021-12-16 23:41 11.3M ○

KAPP_D#m_Atmosphere_02.wav ⭐
2021-12-16 23:46 21.0M ○

KAPP_Dm_Atmosphere_01.wav
2021-12-16 23:41 26.3M ○

KAPP_Dm_Atmosphere_02.wav
2021-12-16 23:41 12.9M ○

KAPP_Dm_Atmosphere_03.wav
2021-12-16 23:41 8.6M ○

KAPP_Em_Atmosphere_01.wav
2021-12-16 23:41 14.3M ○

KAPP_Em_Atmosphere_02.wav
2021-12-16 23:41 11.8M ○

	影视 - Production Master Nemesis	
	2021-11-11 20:00	○

异域风情 - Black Octopus Sound -
Kappadokia by Basement
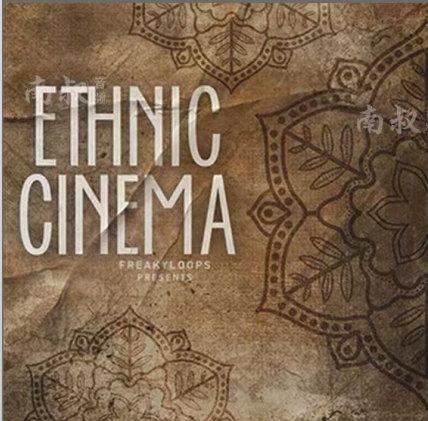Freaks.zip
2021-11-11 19:52 808.8M ○

影视 - Production Master
Nemesis.zip
2021-11-11 20:00 2.85G ○

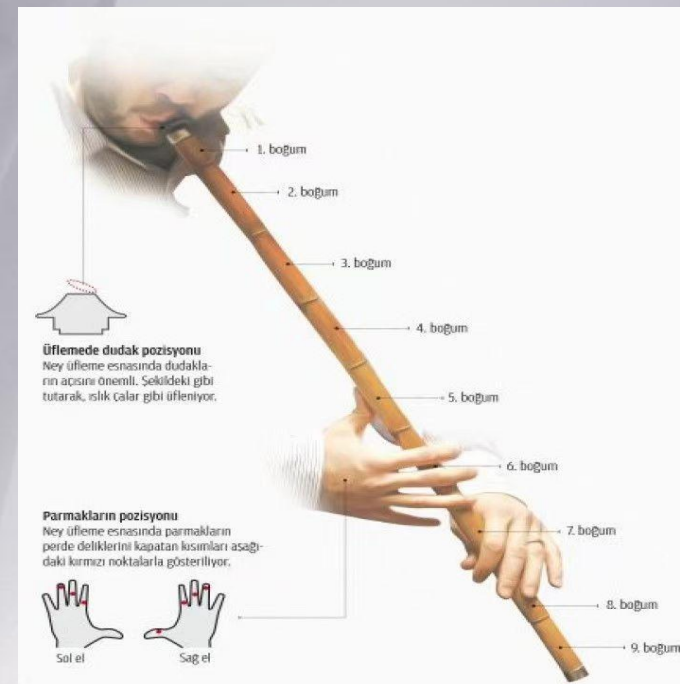Function Loops Vocal Pop 2021.zip
2021-11-11 19:36 263.7M ○

To create a suspense and mysterious atmosphere, I use a 3 audio tracks of orchestra to create the tension at the climax of the film, instead of using images, I made the climax black screen, and let the music do the job, also I use the Turkish Ney to establish the desert style.
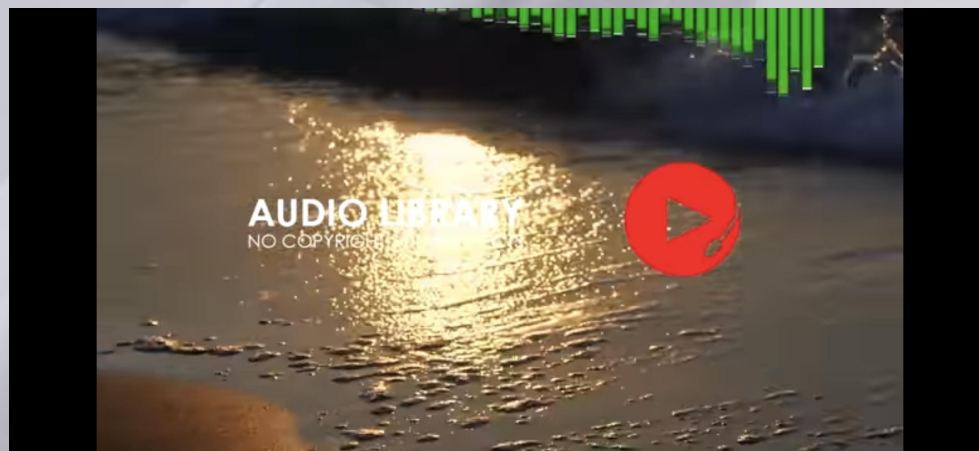

(SoundCloud.com)

(Pinterest.com)

At the first edition of the film, I try too hard on the score, I used tons of tracks together and turns out it sounds very messy and loud, you can't even hear the lines that covered by the music, in the final edition I do it all agaian, and I use the orchestra carefully, try to reach the balance between the sound effects, the lines and the music.

As for the sound effects, I use the sound of waves as the opening and the ending, to correspond to the title of the film, Lou Lan "Sea".
From: Audio Library PH.

Thank you, enjoy the film

https://youtu.be/sgAqKY30RKg