

# **KASTLEVANIA: COMPOSITION ANALYSIS**

A Capstone Project

Presented in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Music in Music Technology

Southern Utah University

by

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## Introduction

As part of the *Kastlevania* capstone project, this written analysis details each of the new compositions as related to their musical attributes, relationship to their respective in-game placement, as well as the theme and aesthetic of the game.

## Kastlevania: Track List

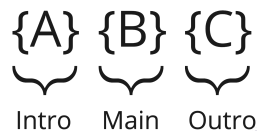
**At Your Own Peril | Start/Entry Gate**

Key: **D**

<https://kielenki.ng/atyourownperil>

Tempo: **150 BPM**

### Diagram:



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There is no other way to begin a dangerous adventure than to walk right up to the gate and kick it in! Like many other fright-filled locations in this world, you enter Dracula's domain at your own peril. However, one has to consider, anyone willing to walk right up to the immortal one's front door knows precisely what they're doing and is quite intentional about their actions. The intent here was not to stray too far from the original composition's energy. It sets the stage and gives the hero the indication that they are about to receive exactly what they bargained for.

## Motivația Eroului | Level 1/Phantom Bat

Key: **A**

<https://kielenki.ng/motivatiaeroului>

Tempo: **115 BPM**

### Diagram:



Motivația Eroului (loosely translated from Romanian as “The Hero’s Motivation”) as a title directly matches the theme I intended to portray in the opening level. Like its original counterpart, the opening level’s music highlights the bravery of the hero who has taken on the task no one else dared. With a fresh outlook, unyielding determination, and not an injury to speak of, the one chosen to conquer this threat is full of energy with the confidence to take on an army!

## Serpent’s Doorstep | Level 2/Queen Medusa

Key: **Cm**

<https://kielenki.ng/serpentsdoorstep>

Tempo: **110 BPM**

### Diagram:



The transition to the second level of the castle is accompanied by a sense that things are just as serious as feared — if not moreso. Paired with this foray into the domain of Queen Medusa is a groove that gives life to the sound of snakes slithering in

your path. It's time to get moving and this track leads you in, gives you a chance to take a deep breath, adjust your weapons (and your guts), and then sets you free to get down to business.

**Self Preservation** | Level 3/Mummy Men

Key: **C#m**

<https://kielenki.ng/selfpreservation>

Tempo: **112 BPM**

**Diagram:**

{AABC} {AABC} {AABC} {AABC} {AABC}

Main Section (looped x 5)

miro

---

The third level of the game allows the uneasy feeling of, “perhaps I’ve made a mistake” to set in as the player ventures more deeply into the castle. An overtone of anxiousness hovers over this musical theme and partners with the open-air portion of the castle which also suggests a foulness to the air our hero breathes in. This track also attempts to embody the blue-green visual atmosphere of the level, acting as a sort of audible color. Things are not “right,” but it’s too late to turn back now!

**Challenge the Depths** | Level 4/Frankenstein & Igor

Key: **Cm**

<https://kielenki.ng/challengethedepths>

Tempo: **115 BPM**



castle, you pass through cold stone corridors passing prison-like cells and mechanical contraptions that power this odd structure. You know the end is close, but the anticipation is bringing nothing but more stress! If you top that off with the knowledge that the Grim Reaper is waiting for you at the end, you better be ready for action!

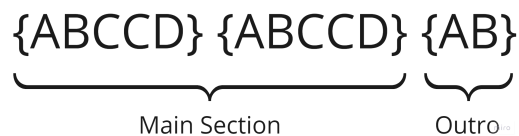
**The Victim's Hall** | Level 6-1/Dracula pt. I

Key: **Cm**

<https://kielenki.ng/victimshall>

Tempo: **120 BPM**

**Diagram:**



Our hero has arrived at the moment of truth. It's not time to take on the dreaded Dracula, but wait... The hero encounters more oddities as the king of the vampires would surely not allow just anyone to venture this far into his domain. This theme drives home the feeling of the heart trying desperately to beat its way out of the chest of the challenger. With the potential for being struck down at any moment, there's no time to relax or catch one's breath. This is it!

**Of Blood and Capes** | Level 6-2/Dracula pt. II

Key: **Em**

<https://kielenki.ng/bloodandcapes>

Tempo: **125 BPM**



**Diagram:**



It has all come down to this moment. All the blood, sweat, and tears have led us to the coffin of the Prince of Darkness himself. With no further ado, the evil one rises to meet the hero on his grounds. No further passage will be allowed as the head of the house of Dracula has now appeared to take matters into his own hands. Can one bypass the adrenaline rush, the drop in the pit of the stomach, or the sweaty palms holding the weapon of choice to defeat this singular foe? This theme speaks directly for the evil and its intention to dominate all in its path. If the threat was taken lightly prior to now, it is taken lightly no longer.

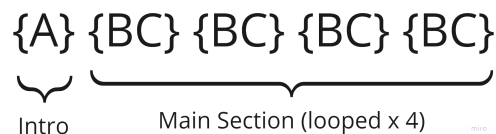
**Riddle of Demise** | Level 6-3/Dracula pt. III

Key: **D**

<https://kielenki.ng/riddleofdemise>

Tempo: **140 BPM**

**Diagram:**



Victory! Finally the fight has — not so fast! Just when we thought it was over, the cruel one reveals the beast within! Bringing his pure self to the fight will surely end in our hero's demise, yes? Can this final form be survived? Is there enough left to give?

This theme gives life to the unexpected revelation that threatens to render all of the effort to get here for naught. Perseverance must triumph — but for which side?

**Tainted Will | Boss Fight**

Key: **Gm**

<https://kielenki.ng/taintedwill>

Tempo: **125 BPM**

**Diagram:**



Main Section (looped x 8)

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The original boss fight theme, Poison Mind, is a compositional masterpiece. One would be hard pressed to find a more memorable, effective, and infinitely loopable theme in gaming, save the ubiquitous Super Mario Bros. theme. To that point, the aim with Tainted Will was to embody the spirit of the original, as duplication would be nearly impossible. One of the additional goals was to highlight the urgent nature of reaching the end of a level and ramping up the dexterity and skill needed to defeat a creature more formidable than anything encountered in this section of the castle. There's a slight panic in this composition which is mirrored by the internal workings of our hero's mind.

## Death's Respite | Boss Victory I

Key: **Cm**

<https://kielenki.ng/deathsrespite>

Tempo: **115 BPM**

Diagram:

{A}

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This theme is a quick sprint away from the momentary threat of death our hero has just escaped. Breathe easy...for now. New challenges, and creatures, await you.

## Star's Breath | Boss Victory II

Key: **Dm**

<https://kielenki.ng/starsbreath>

Tempo: **150 BPM**

Diagram:

{A}

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This theme is the momentary realization that the Morning Star has lived up to its destiny and has not failed you on your quest to vanquish the worst this world has to offer. Your trust in this weapon has been well placed and you stand triumphant as a result.

**Diagram:**

{A}{B}{C}{D}{E}

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This song is the closing theme once Dracula and his castle are destroyed. I attempted to retain the overall feeling of the original theme, but I also wanted something that embodied a little more pain. The title is specific to that feeling. I hoped to elicit feelings of relief that the danger has passed, coupled with a stark realization of the damage that has been caused. Although there are many that will celebrate Dracula's demise, those same individuals have friends and family to mourn. A victory has been claimed, but not without a heavy cost.

**Conclusion: The Complete Collection**

The full collection of compositions are available for download at the author's project showcase page at: <https://kielenki.ng/kastlevania>.