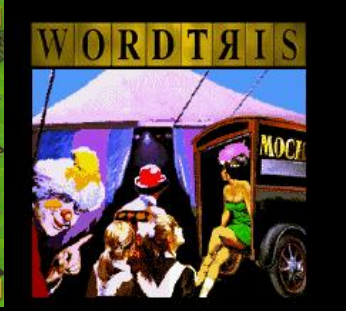
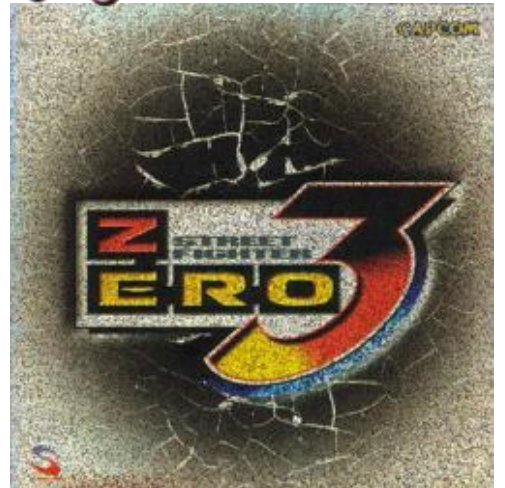
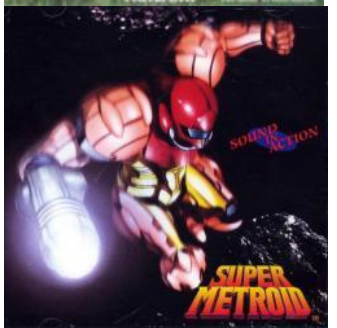


GAMING INSURRECTION

FOR GAMERS BY GAMERS



Video game music



GI gives you the scoop on its favorite tracks and what should be in your music collection

from the editor



Lyndsey Hicks
editor-in-chief

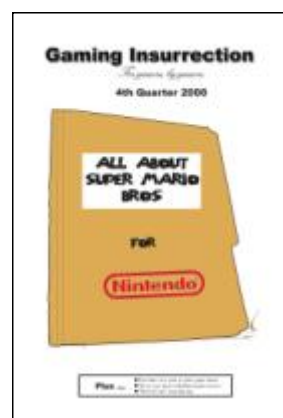
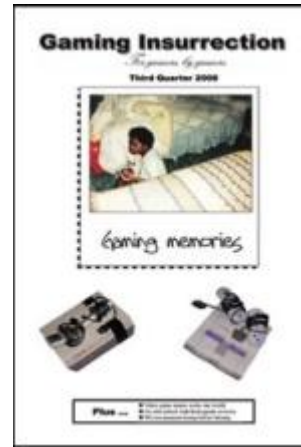
Video game music isn't just something you listen to whenever you crank up your favorite games. It's something that permeates every part of your life. Much like there are music aficionados who buy every Bruce Springsteen album or concert tickets whenever he's in town, there are fans of gaming music that buy soundtracks when they are released and attend shows such as the Tokyo Philharmonic playing game music or Play! or Videogames Live. Enjoy gaming music wherever you can. Don't let music snobs tell you otherwise.

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Video game music was covered in the following issues:



WHERE TO GO FOR YOUR MUSIC

If you want to purchase music or free downloads are your thing (provided that you own the original), there are several options.

PURCHASING MUSIC

If buying music, there are several reputable places to choose from.

Amazon.com — The online giant usually deals in rare and imported videogames as well as soundtracks.

PlayAsia.com and YesAsia.com — Both deal in all things Eastern so it's a safe bet there will be videogame soundtracks available. Both sites are good to deal with and

have a variety of game soundtracks.

Video game music world (www.vgmworld.com) — A safe, reliable place to purchase a variety of import titles since the closure of gamemusic.com.

DOWNLOADING MUSIC

If you want free music and have the games on cartridge or disc, feel free to check out these sites:

Galbadia Hotel (<http://ffshrine.gh.org>): Galbadia Hotel has to be one of the best, if not the best, source of video game

music ever. There are plenty of tracks from obscure games and a lot of the Japan-only releases. If you can't find a particular soundtrack on the main site, try your luck in the forums by doing a search. Also, you can get help with music capturing-related and emulated music player issues. Try the links on the right side of the main page (under the category of emulated music) and you can find different music categorized by systems and games. As a member of Galbadia Hotel, we recommend registering for the main site and for the forums.

SNESmusic (<http://snesmusic.org>): If you're looking for music from the Super

Nintendo era, come here. It's easy to get started with downloading and saving. Support the site because their efforts are good. They also host their own player for SNES files on the site.

What's really good is the section for composers where a wealth of information can be gained about the names behind the music of Nintendo's sophomore system.

Metroid Database (www.metroid-database.com) — The Metroid Database is the place to go for all things Metroid. If it's music you're looking for, come here for music specifically from the Metroid games.

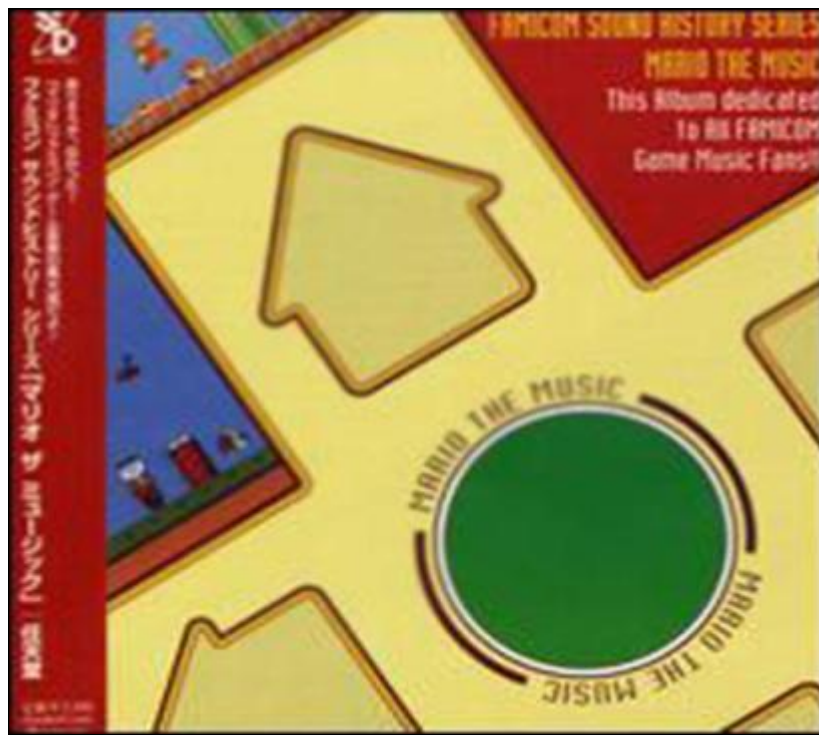
Super Mario Bros. series

“Super Mario Bros.” hit the scene in 1985 on the NES and never looked back. Koji Kondo, responsible for the majority of the music in the series as well as the main theme, created a masterpiece that despite its simplicity has stood the test of time for more than 20 years.

Who doesn't know the main theme to Mario? If you don't, check out this CD, which was released in Japan only. Titled “Famicom Sound History Series — Mario the Music,” it contains every song (43 tracks in all) from every Mario game produced for the Famicom and NES. If it's a Mario game, chances are the music will be memorable and superb. The Mario series continued this tradition with the leap to the SNES, N64 and GameCube. Composer Kenji Yamamoto created songs for the series' later entries.

Series top three

1. “Super Mario Bros. theme” – “Super Mario Bros.”
2. “Giant Land” – “Super Mario Bros. 3”
3. “Castle background” – “Super Mario World”



The Legend of Zelda series

“The Legend of Zelda” series has always inspired adventure. Excellent themes have always been a part of the series, and as always, Koji Kondo's use of simplistic themes and approach shows. The “Legend of Zelda” series also was given the history approach with “Nintendo Sound History Series : Zelda the Music.” The disc was produced only in Japan and includes 70 songs spanning eight games throughout Nintendo's history.

Series top three

1. “Saria's Song” – “The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time”
2. “Theme of Legend of Zelda” — “The Legend of Zelda”
3. “Song of Storms” — “The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time”

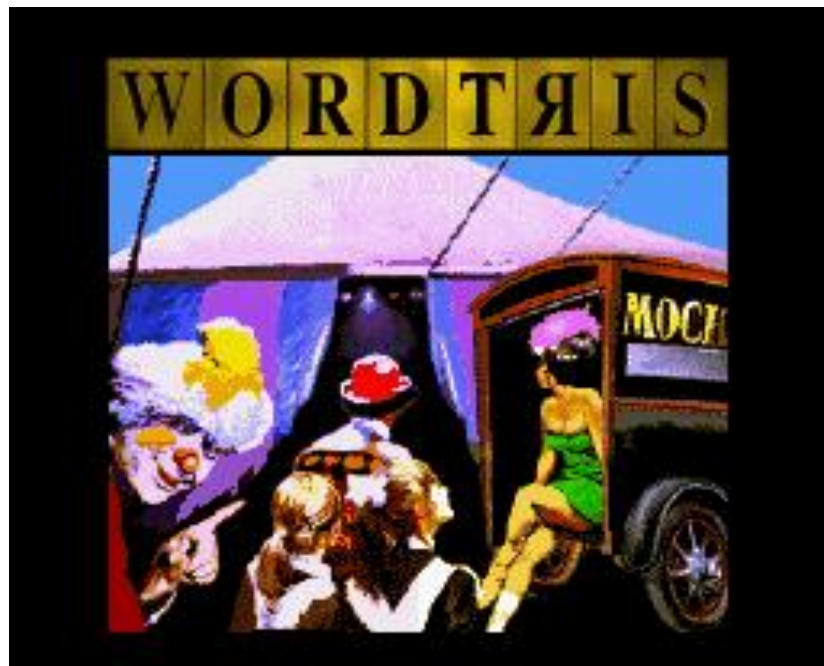


Wordtris

Created in 1993, “Wordtris” is a puzzle game in the vein of “Scrabble” where you make words for points with random letters. The music fits the carnival scenes in the background perfectly and is quite memorable. There are 10 stages, and each stage has a strong theme.

Game top three

1. Stage J
2. Stage A
3. Stage B



Metroid (series)

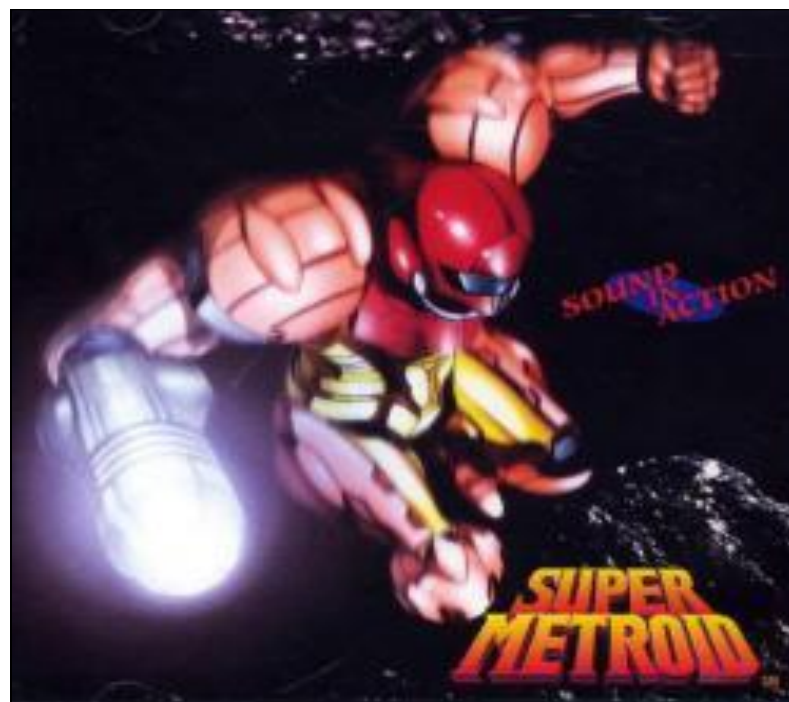
If there were ever an adventure game that required deep, thought-provoking music, “Metroid” is it. Hip Tanaka's intense melodies provided the backdrop for one of the most challenging exploration games ever made on the NES. “Super Metroid” and its follow-ups on the GameCube and Wii have followed in the original game's footsteps.

One of the best Metroid soundtracks created is “Super Metroid:

Sound in Action.” If you've ever played through “Super Metroid,” you'd find that the music is the most appropriate in this game.

Series top three

1. “Kraid's theme” — “Metroid”
2. “Red Swampy Soil Area – Brinstar” — “Super Metroid”
3. “Title” — “Metroid”



Ninja Gaiden (NES)

The NES version of “Ninja Gaiden” was released in 1989 and is one of my favorites, musically. The music isn’t your typical Eastern fare, and it’s got a snazzy uptempo beat that inspires you to keep moving. Combine the music with the environment and gameplay mechanics and you have a recipe for success. The music is what set the tone for the ninja run-and-gun themes.

Where “Ninja Gaiden” shines musically is especially in the first game. The music has a definite “1980s urban” vibe to it; you can just imagine ninja Ryu Hayabusa pounding the pavement of ’80s New York City fighting the minions of the evil Jaqio.

Game top three

1. “Heroism – The Approaching Evil”
2. “Assault – Stealthy Devil”
3. “Ambush – Pursuit of a Nightmare”



Final Fantasy V

The music of the Final Fantasy series has always captivated us at Gaming Insurrection. We may not have been fans of the series, but the series’ music has always drawn us in. For GI, “Final Fantasy V” was made playable because of the music alone. Only later did the job system and the story mean anything. Nobuo Uematsu, main composer for FFI-FFXI, translated the game into soaring tones that exceed what happens on screen. This is Uematsu’s best. And we can’t forget the easily recognizable “Victory Fanfare.” It just wouldn’t be Final Fantasy without it.

Game top three

1. “Town Theme”
2. “Spread Your Great Wings”
3. “Prelude”



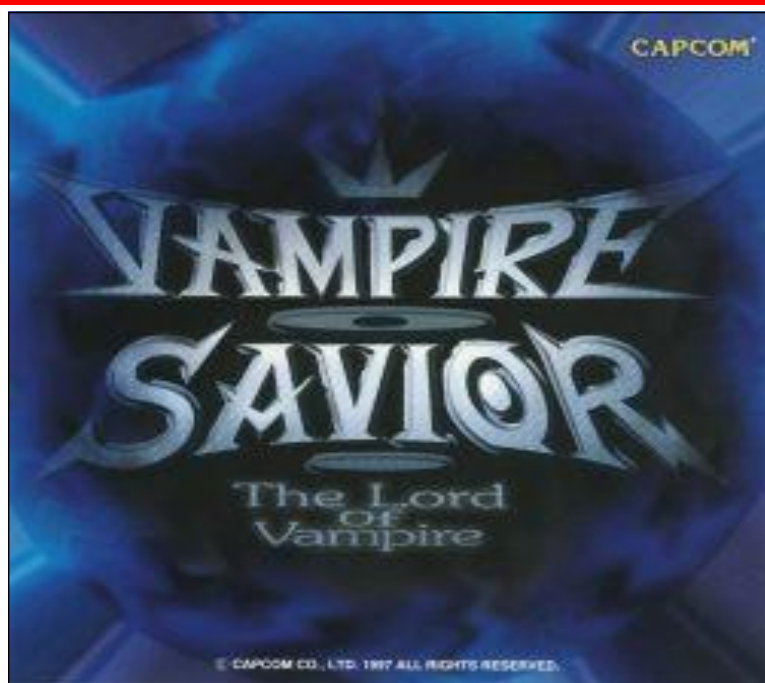
Vampire/Darkstalkers (series)

Capcom usually makes good soundtracks for its fighting game series, and Vampire is no different. Under the name “Darkstalkers” in America, Vampire has managed to make dark-sounding tracks jump out with melodic and haunting overtones. The individual themes for each character have carried over from different games in the series, but certain themes, such as Donovan’s, receive a remix of sorts. It’s all very chic and jazzy for the fighting game set.

The soundtracks are mostly out of print these days but you can find them easily at Galbadia Hotel under either name.

Series top three

1. “Revenger’s Roost (Hidden)” — “Vampire Chronicles”
2. “Staff Roll” — “Vampire Savior”
3. “Fetus of God” with “Jedah’s Intro” — “Vampire Savior”



Katamari Damacy

Every so often a video game soundtrack surprises us at GI. “Katamari Damacy” is that soundtrack. Katamari manages to fuse different genres through an eclectic mix of sound that moves easily from J-Pop to Bossa Nova to ’80s B-Boy steel mix. What we like about “Katamari Damacy’s” track list is that it isn’t afraid to take chances. It gambles and it works. For a game that is as unique as “Katamari Damacy,” the soundtrack is equally as quirky.

Game top three

1. “Katamari Stars”
2. “Que Sera Sera”
3. “Angel’s Flavor Present”



Digital age hasn't left games behind

BY LYNDSEY M. MOSLEY
GAMING INSURRECTION

Sometimes, no matter how hard you try, you can't find game music on CD that you're desperately searching for.

However, there are some solutions. There are different types of emulated music.

Among the most popular are:

SPC – Super Famicom/Super Nintendo format

NSF – Nintendo Entertainment System/Famicom format

GSF – GameBoy Advance format

GYM – Sega Genesis and 32X format

USF – Nintendo 64 format

There are several ways to play emulated music but so far the most reliable way to play the music is through Winamp with its various plug-ins.

Plug-ins can be downloaded from a lot of places, but the safest (and non-virus encoded) players are found on the Winamp site.

Getting the music to play is as easy as making sure you have the correct plug-in installed and collected.

Mystical Ninja Starring Goemon

The Mystical Ninja series originally began on the Super Nintendo. While there was great potential there, the series really shined with the second U.S. release: Mystical Ninja Starring Goemon on the Nintendo 64. It had an engaging story full of wackiness and its best feature: Gorgeous time period-relevant music. Someone at Konami must have really loved doing their work with this game because the sound is the star. Most of the tracks are good at setting the mood for the level, with the boss battles in particular making their mark early in the game. Even the hilariously cheesy "Gorgeous My Stage" is appropriate at the end of the game because it matches the absurdity of the Peach Mountain Shoguns' elaborate plans for Japan. If you're a fan of Eastern music, especially music from this epoch of Japanese history, definitely check this game out.

Game top three

1. Heartbreak Corlin (Ghost Toys Castle boss)/Festival Temple boss
2. Road to Yamato
3. Kabuking (Musical Castle) parts 1 and 2



Dance Dance Revolution (series)

DDR is one of the few series that tries to combine many genres and achieves success. Where the games succeed is the fact there is something for everyone. Most of the games feature slow love ballads, happy hardcore, speed rave, techno, house or ethnic songs, just to name a few. Konami and Naoki are all over the place with the musical direction, but it pays off.

Even when mixes repeat songs, they tend to be fan favorites. And to answer the question that was infamously asked in Max.(period), I need Konami originals because licenses generally suck. Most players love Konami originals because they are what makes DDR unique.

Series top 10

1. Paranoia Survivor Max
2. Trip Machine Climax
3. Paranoia Hades
4. Fascination Maxx (Eternal Love Mix)
5. Cartoon Heroes
6. Healing Vision ~Angelic Mix~
7. Paranoia Respect
8. Paranoia Eternal
9. Paranoia Rebirth
10. Max. (period)



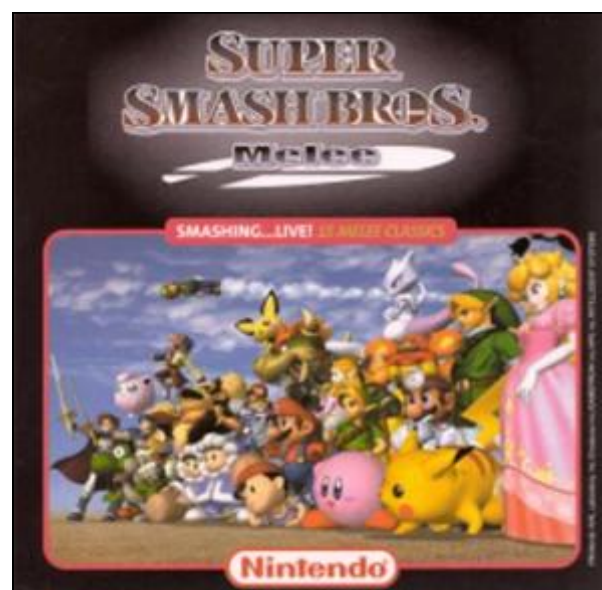
Super Smash Bros. (series)

What I love about the Smash Bros. series is its unabashed love for all things Nintendo. The series reaches way back into its past to lift up the games that made Nintendo the juggernaut that it is today.

With that in mind, the recreated versions of some of the classics actually sound better than the originals. For instance, even though I love the original version of Brinstar Depths (used for the stage and background of the same name in Smash), I like the remade updated version better. The Smash version invokes the horror of journeying to face Kraid in his lair on a strange world by the name of Zebes. Smash, however, does use original versions from time to time and they actually sound good, however 8-bit they may be. I received a musical education through the Smash games on what should be playing during my epic battles as Samus against the horde of friendly challengers that include my husband's Ganondorf. It's this education that makes me long to play games of yesteryear or try something new in games such as "Metal Gear Solid 4."

Series top 10

1. 75m – Donkey Kong (remix) — Super Smash Bros. Brawl version
2. "Battle at the Base" – Metal Gear Solid 4: Guns of the Patriots — Super Smash Bros. Brawl version
3. "Brinstar Depths" – Metroid — Super Smash Bros. Melee version
4. "Saria's Song" – The Legend of Zelda — Super Smash Bros. Melee
5. "Underworld" – Kid Icarus — Super Smash Bros. Brawl version
6. "All-Star mode" — Super Smash Bros. Brawl version
7. "Final Destination" — Super Smash Bros. Brawl version
8. "Character Select" — Super Smash Bros.
9. "Golden Hammer – Item" — Super Smash Bros. Brawl version
10. "Hyrule Castle stage" — Super Smash Bros.



Mortal Kombat (series)

When MK first came out, I was a youngster just reaching middle school. I had just learned a little something about arcade etiquette and I was receiving a fine education on gaming music through weekend game renting exploits. I played a little of the first game, but I really hit my stride with MKII in 1993. By the time, MK3 came out in 1995, I was well versed in gaming music lore, knew my composers pretty well and had discerning tastes in music.

What I knew of longtime MK composer Dan Forden's work was enough to fill a page or two in a multi-volume encyclopedia set, but I knew I loved it. Ever since the first game came home, I have loved Forden's choices. With a few rare missteps in the series, Forden has kept his end of the bargain by making the music shine.

I always got the sense that I was witnessing this ancient tournament at play while fighting with my favorite characters (Sub-Zero, Scorpion, Kitana, Sindel, Kabal, Mileena). In a game where it's all about kill or be killed, you rarely notice the music. However, I noticed MK right off the bat with its throwback to mystical times. What Forden could do with a Yamaha sound board is amazing, especially once you consider that he moved up to the DCS sound system with the second game.

While the surrounding game play may have needed some polishing through different updates, Forden's musical masterpieces kept the surroundings grounded and gamers coming back for more.



Series top seven

1. "Armory" – MK2
2. "The Bridge" – MK3
3. "Battle with Shinook" – MK Mythologies: Sub-Zero
4. "Continue" – MK1
5. "The Bank" – MK3
6. "Goro's Lair" – MK4
7. "Battle with Earth God" — MK Mythologies

Sonic the Hedgehog (series)

Admittedly, the Sonic games from the Genesis era were not on my must-play titles list when they were fresh and new. However, I did like the music. I was a Mario girl but I did appreciate the music of Sonic when I got the chance to play a Genesis at my dad's house. While I wasn't a big fan of the gameplay, there was something about the Green Hill Zone's music that stuck with me. It's quite jolly and uplifting tunes with a little bit of funk thrown in for good measure. The first two games' soundtracks seem to capture the spirit of what it means to be Sonic.

Series top three

1. "Green Hill Zone" — Sonic the Hedgehog
2. "Special Zone" — Sonic the Hedgehog 1 & 2
3. "Emerald Hill Zone" — Sonic the Hedgehog 2



Street Fighter II

As a young lad, I was more into "Mortal Kombat" than "Street Fighter." However, that didn't mean that I didn't play the series. The older I got, the more I recognized that I needed to be more well-rounded and diverse in my fighting game selections. Thus, I took on SFII. The tunes for the World Warriors are immediately recognizable. What I love about them is that the music embodies the characters. When I see E. Honda I immediately can call to mind his theme from SFII, and I think of going to a relaxing Japanese spa (Note: It also doesn't hurt that his background is one of my favorites, aesthetically speaking). Each theme represents a different section of the world (Ryu and E. Honda notwithstanding), and I feel like when my World Warrior gets on a plane for the next fight, I'm going along for the ride.

Series top three

1. E. Honda theme
2. Vega (American) theme
3. Sagat theme



Street Fighter Alpha 3

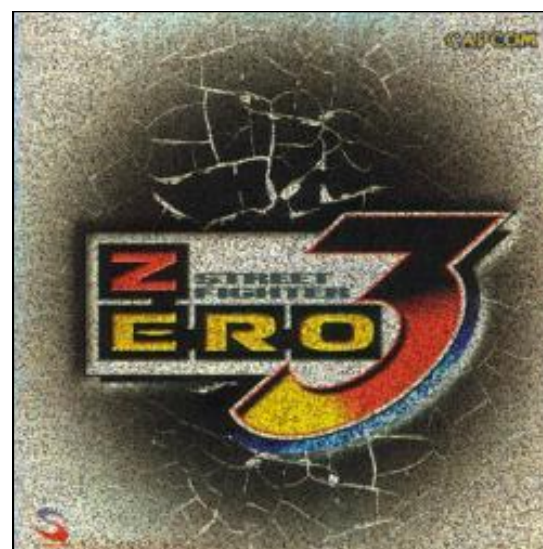
I started playing "Street Fighter Alpha 3" when I was 19 years old. Granted, the game had been out for three years at that point but I had just learned about its brilliance as a fighter. The gameplay originally drew me in, but as time went on, I learned to appreciate the quality of the music. Capcom spares no expense with this soundtrack. There are a lot of similar-sounding themes but what works here is that it fits the game. It brings to mind the '80s pop and synth-wave scene — which is basically when the

game is set. There's a certain industrial-ness to most of the tracks, which isn't bad at all.

I can usually listen to the soundtrack and get pumped for a fight, which is exactly what the soundtrack intends to do.

Game top three

1. "Shining One" — Sagat's theme
2. "High-Tech" — Juli & Juni theme
3. "Nobody Blink" — Opening theme



Castlevania

Ah ... "Castlevania." When I think back on good game music, the whip-cracking of Simon Belmont usually jumps to the forefront of my mind. Very few games immediately make me think of the '80s and good game music, and "Castlevania" is one of them. Haunting. Melodic. Fast beats. I can go on about this music but what's most important is the fact that it captured the spirit of monster-hunting and staking vampires so well that there are cover bands who specialize in the game's music (We aren't joking ... look it up on YouTube).

Just to give readers an idea of how much I love the music of "Castlevania": I was 8 years old and this was the days before digital distribution and CD ripping. I played through the first couple of stages and heard the Mummy Bros. stage music (that was about as far I could make it). For the next 10 years, I remembered the tune I'd heard so that I could maybe one day record it. When technology caught up where I could put it on a PC or buy the soundtrack, I did. I never knew the stage's name until I bought the soundtrack and found it was called "Wicked Child." We love the progress of technology. And, by the way, anyone who doesn't get goosebumps when they hear "Poison Mind" - the most iconic boss battle music ever - there is something wrong with them.

Game top three

1. "Wicked Child" — Mummy Bros. stage
2. "Poison Mind" — Boss battle
3. "Vampire Killer" — First stage



Addams Family: Pugsley's Scavenger Hunt

OK, if you're a fan of "The Addams Family" like I am, then chances are you played the games, watched the original show with John Astor as Gomez or loved Raul Julia's take in the movies. "Pugsley's Scavenger Hunt" is based off the cartoon that came after the success of the two movies featuring the late Mr. Julia. It's a fun romp through the strange world of the Addams Family and it's also one of the best-scored SNES games I've ever played. The hall where you begin your quest has a theme that befits the regal splendor of the Addams mansion. I especially love the changing of tone throughout the piece; that was a nice touch. As you move through the game looking for artifacts that Pugsley's diabolical sister Wednesday has hidden, you visit different areas of the house. I won't describe them but know that when you go in the kitchen-fridge section, the music is so appropriate that you will feel cold (it's also taken almost note-for-note from the first Addams Family game). Great game, great music.

Game top three

1. "Attic"
2. "Fridge"
3. "Great Hall"



Ridge Racer Type 4

Right out of the gate, Ridge Racer Type 4 lets you know you're in for a ride. With its fast, hypnotic beats, it imparts the knowledge that you are going fast and you will enjoy it. You are racing for something more than just a title. You are racing in style and grace with a modern age. This isn't your daddy's Pole Position.

What I love about the Type 4 soundtrack is its modernized spin. It's very clean and is not above lounge music with a quiet type of force.

This is the soundtrack you have in the car when you're driving on the highway on a clear day to pick up your friends. Or the soundtrack you play when you're driving at night on the highway that has lots of lights in a metropolis. Those are literally the thoughts I have when I play this soundtrack ... in my car on the highway. It makes you drive a little faster, and it has accounted for some of my speeding tickets.

Game top five

1. Motor Species
2. Lucid Rhythms
3. Move Me
4. Naked Glow
5. Urban Fragments



Tekken Tag Tournament

Namco went back to the studio on the home version of Tekken Tag for the PlayStation 2, and it came out with a winner. Much like the Type 4 soundtrack, Namco found a way to make music that defines a game almost by itself.

The home and arcade versions of Tag resemble each other greatly. If you've played either version long enough you can tell the difference in the tracks.

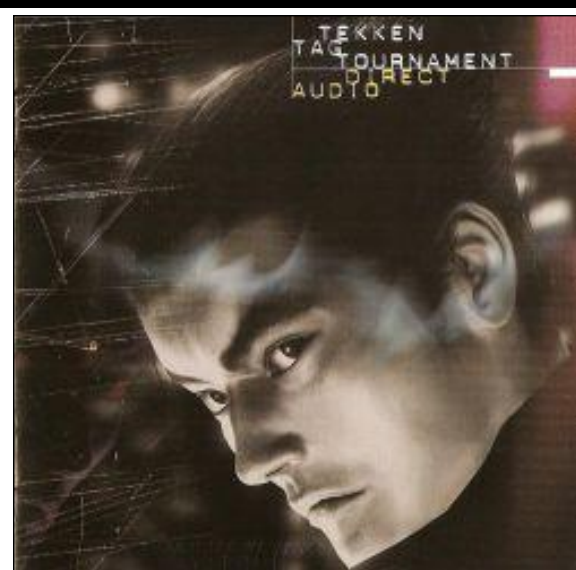
However, critically I prefer the home version more so. The home version's audio stands out easily and the tunes sound much more refined. Going back in the studio to re-record tracks gave the soundtrack a big boost. The

beats are cleaner and flow a little better. Buy this soundtrack, download it, do whatever you have to do to get it. It's that good.

And yeah, I am really good at Tekken Bowl, enough that I hear that music for a Strike often.

Game top six

1. "Hwoarang"
2. "School"
3. "Staff Roll"
4. "Strike (Tekken Bowl)"
5. "Unknown"
6. "Character select"

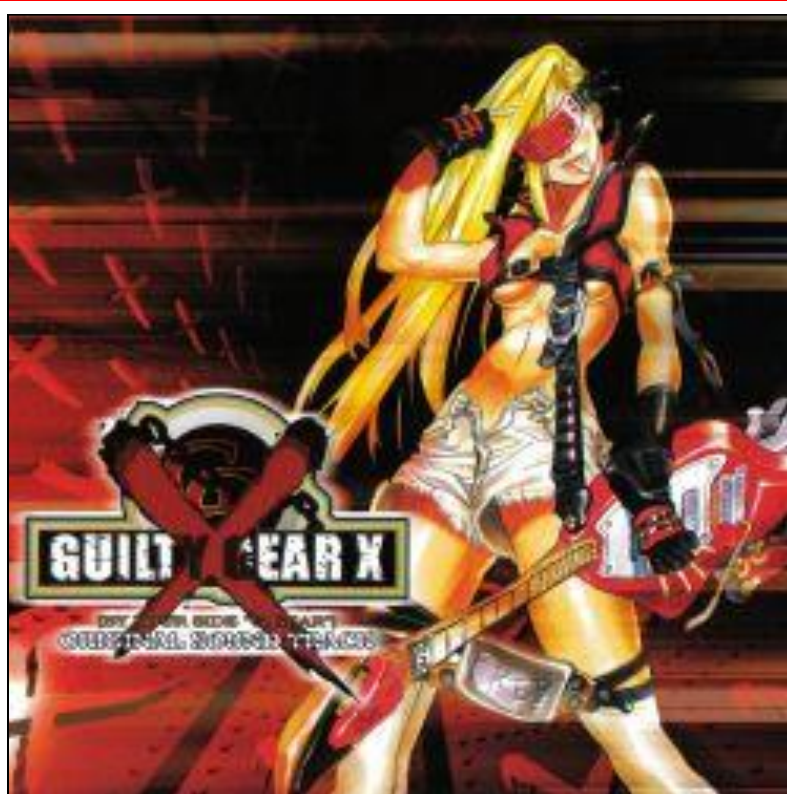


Guilty Gear X

Sammy outdid themselves with Guilty Gear X. I have never been more impressed by a game's music production than I was with GGX. I would have never thought of '80s rock for a fighting game, but lo and behold, it worked with this classic 2D fighter. The music is one of the reasons to play the game, you know, aside from the tight and fast gameplay and gorgeous art. Music makes or breaks a game in my opinion, and this game was made on the hard driving beats and melodies.

Game top five

1. "Blue Water Blue Sky"
2. "Babel Nose"
3. "Momentary Life"
4. "Fuuga"
5. "Feel a Fear"



Kagero: Tecmo's Deception 2

Kagero is a weird game, but a great one that I discovered in April 2000 for PSOne. I fell in love with the oddity and the morbidity of the game almost immediately. A game that requires you set traps to kill people trying to enter your castle? Awesome. With that awesome set up comes an even more awesome soundtrack. Sweeping choral arrangements accompany your missions that sometimes includes killing an entire family (the one mission I refused to kill everyone). The soundtrack has this strange horror feel to it that makes it stick out among the death and destruction your character wreaks. It's chaotic yet melodic and it works in the dungeons of the game. Although, as a joke, we at GI decided that the track "Night of the Hunter (Theme of Yokaru)" belonged in an adult film and not in a horror game. We're just saying.

Game top seven

1. "To Hell/Name Her"
2. "The Seal Which is Undone"
3. "Theme of the King"
4. "Visitor"
5. "Flash of Impulse"
6. "Seal of Blood"
7. "Time of Judgment"



Capcom vs. SNK: Millennium Fight 2000

"Which groove do you like?" asks Capcom vs. SNK, affectionately known as CvS. At GI we like all grooves offered by Capcom's sidekick long-in-waiting brawler. Capcom and SNK (now Playmore) finally duked it out to see whose fighters were the best in 2000. I'm not a fighting game expert by a long shot even though I play them more than any other genre but I can tell you the game is excellent in the presentation category. The music for this entry includes some of the finest from both companies' fighting entries and showcases Capcom's knowledge of beats. Although the soundtrack does not include the retro themes that are present in the game, it's still worth buying. A notable inclusion is the voice collection: Instead of the standard run-of-the-mill character voices, the secret match introductions are used. See if you can identify them all.

Game top nine

1. "Opening/Future Legend"
2. "Ending 1"
3. "Name Entry"
4. "Player 1/Player 2 select"
5. "Staff Roll"
6. "Stage of Geese/Vigor Force"
7. "Stage of Nakoruru/Silent Hill (hidden track)"
8. "Stage of Ryu/Fist Explosion"
9. "Stage of Vega/Sign (M. Bison's stage in American version)"

