

SOUNDTEST

THE UGM EXPANSION PASS

11:2020



FINAL FANTASY VII

remaking a soundtrack

featuring **Nobuo Uematsu**

\$4.99

a remake 23 years later

***The new journey in
Midgar and beyond awaits.***

Read a discussion about how the composers
remake a soundtrack imbedded in the
treasured memories of the original.

spotlight



Koji Kondo

event



**Undertale 5th Anniversary
Concert**



MARVEL

SPIDER-MAN

MILES MORALES



Letter from the Editor

Dear Reader,

Expressing love for music is a passion that should be shared. In the memories and experiences of avid videogamers, some remember the music. Moments and memories are wrapped beautifully by the music, letting it come alive with a dimension of expression that cooperates with the visuals. Ever since my experience in high school band and music composition, I've wanted to talk about and promote video game music. Video game culture is already misunderstood in the public view, so I wanted to create a space where the niche topic of gaming music can be shared; give attention and appreciate the work that goes into video game soundtracks as well as acknowledge the fan communities that create and participate together. Soundtest will be that space. I hope the magazine is able to summon up memories and share good music to check out on your own time!

See you next issue!

Tristan Sabado

Tristan Sabado

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Loading the Expansion Pass Content...



FINAL FANTASY VII

REMAKING A SOUNDTRACK

by Square Enix's Sound Team

Music plays a big role in Final Fantasy VII Remake just as it did in the original game.

Fortunately, it features an immensely talented team of composers, including Masashi Hamauzu and Mitsuto Suzuki, who have developed a soundtrack that will surprise and delight both fans, both old and new.

Nobuo Uematsu

the composer of the original Final Fantasy VII

Whichever game you pick from the FINAL FANTASY series, they all have many powerful memories for me. However, if you limit things to just the music, then you could say that VII left the biggest impression on me in the sense that it represents the point at which I was able to start challenging the boundaries and being more experimental.

I think that perhaps it was the perfect time to take on these new challenges, what with changing platforms after the previous game, FINAL FANTASY VI, and with the expressive power of the hardware increasing dramatically.

However, looking back in hindsight, I think that it was not simply a case of the hardware evolving, but that the changing times also demanded a revolution in game music. That was the moment when video games, a medium that started out as a plaything for children, were making the transformation into a form of entertainment that adults could enjoy too. But even though things were changing around us, we had no idea what to do or which direction we should be heading in.

This time round I was given the honour of writing "Hollow" that plays during the game, and this track is also in a style that has never been seen in FINAL FANTASY before. To me, it is very much a continuation of my experimental challenges in the field of music.



FINAL FANTASY. Soundtracks Available Now

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amazon music

PlayStation Music

ANIUTA

AWA

LINE MUSIC

SMART USEN

bilibili

INTERVIEW

Sector 1

Sector 4

Sector 5

Main Theme

Hollow

composed by
Nobuo Uematsu

DIRECTOR FOREWORD

Yoshinori Kitase

In terms of the evolution of music in FINAL FANTASY VII REMAKE, when I started work on the project I put together a video showing the whole progression of events in the game from the opening through to the end, including all the battle scenes. When I did that, new music for REMAKE had not been written yet, so I took tracks from the original game's soundtrack and put them over the scenes in the video. Putting this track on this scene, this one in that battle etc. I made this video showing the overall image I had for the game. It also outlined my ideas for the direction of the music as well. And I worked with that for a while, but our Co-Director Mr. Toriyama, who is overseeing the staging and dramatic direction, re-thought our overall approach to the music. We decided that using a traditional approach to the music would feel dated for modern players. So, it is based on my original video as a starting point, but the decision to change to a style where the music dynamically shifts to seamlessly fit with the action and direction of the story was made by our Co-Director, Mr. Toriyama.

SPEAKERS

Keiji Kawamori ◆ Music Supervisor
Mitsuto Suzuki ◆ Composer
Masashi Hamauzu ◆ Composer
Makoto Ise ◆ Sound Director

Mitsuto Suzuki

I made multiple arrangements of many of the iconic FINAL FANTASY VII music tracks. Some of them are very faithful to the originals, and there are other arrangements that only sound reminiscent in passing. But if you pay too much attention to the originals then it is quite difficult to try and make something even better. For that reason, I try to be as natural as possible, and approach them as if I were writing a completely new piece.

Keiji Kawamori

For example, we have Aerith's Theme. In the original there was only one version of this track. But there are lots of different scenes where this theme is used in FINAL FANTASY VII REMAKE. Some of them are fun scenes, some are sad scenes and others are more every-day, and the musical arrangement changes with the scene at the time.

Masashi Hamauzu

I had played FINAL FANTASY VII in the past, so I knew the feel of the universe. Mr. Uematsu also recommended me for this project. I felt that the best way to honor that recommendation, was to make music as it comes to me, rather than trying to copy what Mr. Uematsu did, or worrying too much about being like the original FINAL FANTASY VII music. So, I was pretty free in how I approached making the music for this game.

Words aren't the only way to tell someone how you feel.

Tifa Lockhart
(Final Fantasy VII 1997)

Keiji Kawamori

In the original, the music that went with the graphics used an internally generated sound source. Ultimately, we had a limit to what we could get across with the music, due to the restrictions of the hardware. For REMAKE there is a massive advancement in the hardware capability, the expressiveness of the graphics and the cutscenes is greatly improved and we raised the level of the music to fit with that. We have used new arrangements and completely new themes for the new scenes in the game but the music from the original was brilliant, so there was quite a bit of pressure when adding any new music. Especially with the fact we now had dialogue in these scenes. What we took most care on when re-arranging the music from the original FINAL FANTASY VII was the melody. These were melodies that players would have heard tens or hundreds of times when playing the original. So we respected those original melodies while also enhancing them with a more modern sound, arrangement and the modern technology. But the enhanced visual storytelling power made it important to do everything right. Although the biggest thing was perhaps that we now had dialogue in these scenes. These let us show so much more that we were unable to do fully in the original version. So I set out to make new music that matched the scenes better, while always trying to respect the originals. We had Mr. Uematsu write a single track for us to use as the theme song. I think that Mr. Uematsu cannot be separated from the music of FINAL FANTASY VII. We were overjoyed that he wrote that main theme for us. The visuals for the scene where his theme is used matches the music really well. You can expect great things and I think people will enjoy seeing it a lot.

◆ THE MUSIC

Keiji Kawamori

We received instructions about the kind of music they wanted and what kind of arrangement to have. And this allowed us to talk about what kind of music we wanted to pair with the visuals in advance. So even if they were using the same battle music, there would be fight scenes which needed a stronger feeling of tension and those where it would be slightly less tense. Rather than just do them all with the same exact track, we have expressed those changing levels of anxiety and tension through the music as well, by switching between multiple different arrangements.

Mitsuto Suzuki

In recent years it seems that interactive music is becoming more popular, wherever around the world you look. Where the music dynamically changes to match the action. FINAL FANTASY VII REMAKE has incorporated this style of music too. You might have a certain scene that needs three different versions of the track. The tempo and the composition would be the same for all of them, as would the melody, when it comes in. But they would all have different arrangements. All three are playing in parallel and cross fading between the different versions, switching freely between them. It's like... hmm... like a really top class DJ performance! Getting it to all flow smoothly.

Masashi Hamauzu

By having the music shift seamlessly, to reflect the developments in the current scene, the emotional high points can have suitable music for them, and when it calls for the mood to suddenly get quieter, then you can make that a natural and non-jarring shift, to match the player's actions and the visuals. I did many different arrangements of the same music pieces.

Enemy Encounter!
Let the Battles Begin!

THE ORIGINAL
BATTLE THEME

Mitsuto Suzuki

It is one of the interesting things for the creative side, to see how players react to our music. But it is only when everything feels totally natural, and players don't notice anything off that we have succeeded. If they do feel that something is not right then that probably means it did not go very well. So that would probably be like a bad DJ's set! Sorry for the metaphor!

THE EXPANDED SOUNDTRACK

8 DISKS
151 TRACKS

New Arrangements Obtained

- ◆ Let the Battles Begin!—Ex-Soldier
- ◆ Let the Battles Begin!—Break Through
- ◆ Let the Battles Begin!—The Hideout

The Original Soundtrack

4 Disks ◆ 85 Tracks

◆ THE SOUNDS

Makoto Ise

Our sound team has created an original sound management system called MASTS. This system was enhanced from the ground up for FINAL FANTASY VII REMAKE. It was drastically improved and enhanced for the project. In challenging ourselves to do that, we created a system where we could use AI to automatically generate all the sounds for the character movement. This is based on things like the angle of their bone structure and the speed they are moving etc. and through that generate natural sounds from a bank of pre-set sound data. This system is used for all characters in the game, as well as many of the enemies and bosses, it links all the in-game and cutscenes to automatically play the sound effects throughout. That has been a lot of hard work for us. There is also the simple fact that the overall number of sounds we need to make is so large. And unlike the original game, there are lots of things that move using physics simulations. The characters can also move closer and further away from the camera, so we have to make the sounds able to change dynamically in real-time to reflect that. And then, on top of that, we had the sounds of people movements in the cutscenes. We recorded every one of those. There are also movement sounds needed in the in-game scenes, where a lot of objects move under physics simulation. So we recorded the sounds for those too. And for various other places as well, such as the sounds for the NPCs etc.

HOLDING ONTO NOSTALGIA

Masashi Hamauzu

I think that people who played the original will be able to enjoy discovering a depth that they didn't know existed behind the story. For people who are playing the game for the first time, it has been made as if it were a completely new game. I approached it that way myself. So, I think it's a game that can be enjoyed by all groups.

NEW GAME
Continue?
Remake?

 **PS5**

PlayStation®5



UNDERTALE

5th Anniversary Concert



BY DANIEL
ALVAREZ



This moment of
celebration fills you
with **determination**.

**This year, Undertale reached
its fifth anniversary.**

To celebrate, Famitsu gave Undertale the cover, and a special section in the magazine's most recent issue. In addition, fans were treated to a free online concert.



A Collab to Share
love and not LOVE.



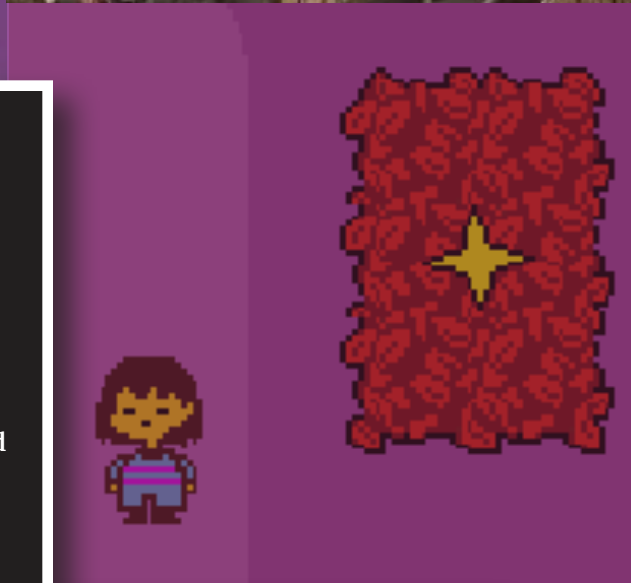
Fangamer and 8-4 are proud to
present a very special 5th anniversary
online concert broadcast of the
music of UNDERTALE

Arranged and performed by MUSIC Engine, filmed in May 2019
in Tokyo, Japan and remastered with new content for this
digital stream.



The Game & The Emotions

On September 15, 2015, a little game called Undertale released on PC. Its creator, Toby Fox, did not anticipate how massive it would become. Spawning fan art, plushies, and fan games, Undertale continues to remain part of video game pop culture five years after its release. Currently, fans are waiting for the rest of Deltarune, the (kind of) followup to the critically acclaimed Undertale. Recently, Fox offered an update on Deltarune's progress.

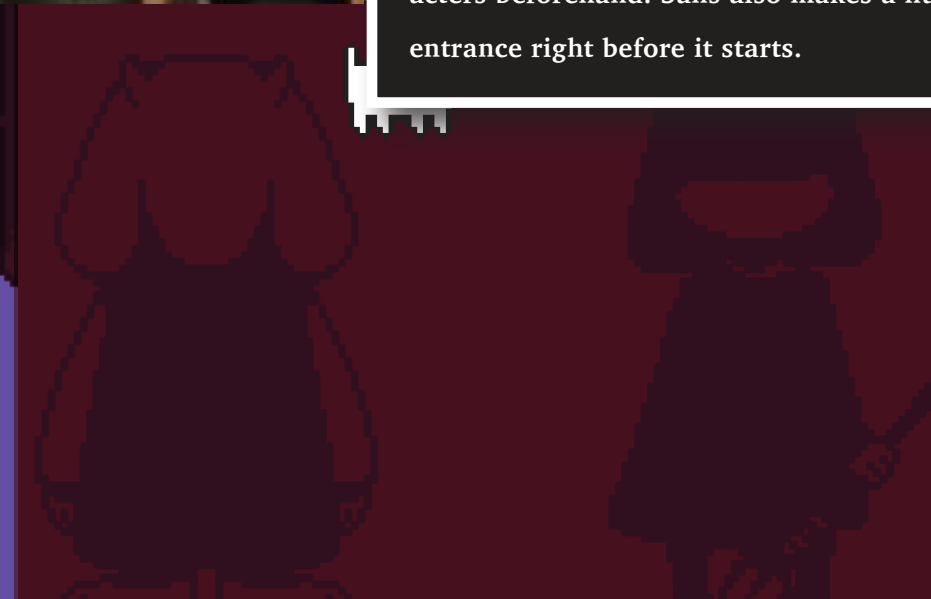
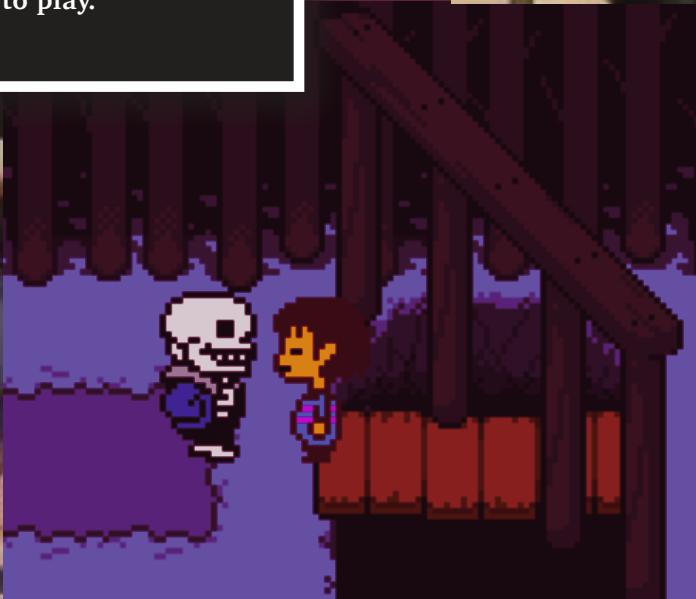


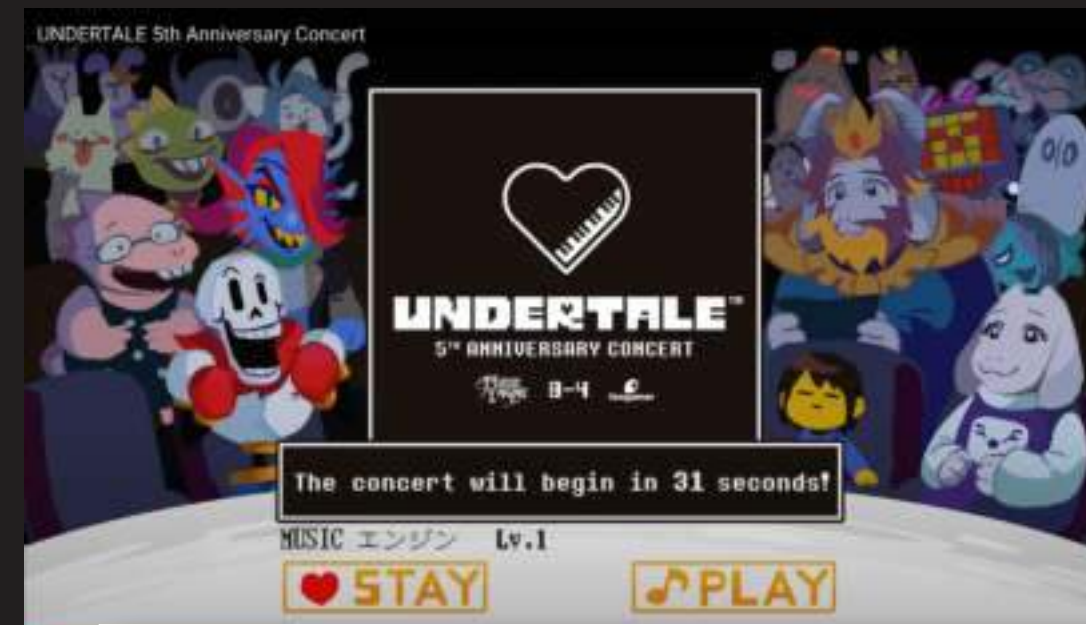
One can see the emotional impact Undertale has had on individuals. Undertale—its characters, story and music—means a lot to many people around the world. The fact such a small scale game received a professional concert speaks to Undertale's continuing legacy. 50 years from now, fans will still feel filled with determination as Hopes and Dreams begins to play.



Now, the official Undertale YouTube channel has uploaded the entire Undertale 5th Anniversary Concert.

The concert was originally conducted by MUSIC Engine on May 6, 2019, in Tokyo. It has been "remastered with new content" for the stream. It was streamed on September 15 for Undertale's fifth anniversary, but is now available to watch for those who missed it. You can view the concert stream below. The concert begins after the 45 mark, although there is some nice artwork and fun dialogue from Undertale's characters beforehand. Sans also makes a humorous entrance right before it starts.





What are you waiting for?
GO! It's **FREE!** You like
FREE things right?



Simply put, the concert is impressive whether you have played the game or not.

One can pick any of the music and be amazed by how well it's brought to life. The "Snowy" theme begins perfectly with the piano before transitioning to the soft violin, and "Finale" is a high energy jaunt befitting of the climax. And, as expected, seeing "Megalovania" conducted in unison is surreal. The large rounds of applause are certainly earned.



Who is Koji Kondo?

by Tristan Sabado



A Legacy of Dedication

Koji Kondo, a man dedicated to video gaming. Whether you know him or not, you've probably gotten his music in your head from if you are somewhat familiar with video games.

Starting on the NES and SNES

First Steps to Nintendo

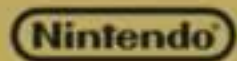
Born on Aug 13, 1961 in Nagoya Aichi, Japan. As a kid of the age of 5, Koji Kondo entered the music world playing the electone organ. Growing up to be a teenager in a clever band, he played jazz and rock. Inspired by cinema scores and soundtracks, he continued to dedicate himself to music. During his senior year at the Osaka University of Arts, Nintendo, which was still young at the time, sent out recruitment messages to the school for potential composers and sound programmers. Kondo successfully applied by 1984. For his first year working at Nintendo, he took his experiences working on games like Golf, Devil World, and the renown Punch-Out, to learn to get a feeling for the type of music he'll do and what would be expected for sound programming.

The Birth of Beloved Franchises

Kondo's work truly garnered attention with 1985's Super Mario Bros. The soundtrack that he composed holds up today as iconic pieces that make up a lot of what the Mario franchise is today. When composing, Kondo's goal is to make music that fits the settings of Nintendo's fun bright worlds which people never get tired of.

Next in line is 1986's The Legend of Zelda, where he composed four full pieces including the adventurous overworld theme many know and love. With these two huge games added to his discography, his reputation rose significantly as did his position, moving up to being Nintendo's main composer.

Looking further at the Mario series, he's done work on Doki Doki Panic localized and Super Mario Bros 2, Super Mario Bros 3, and Super Mario World. Being open to any and all music, Kondo loved to experiment and combine instruments and music styles; all the while, pushing the limits of what Nintendo's hardware could do regarding sound capabilities.



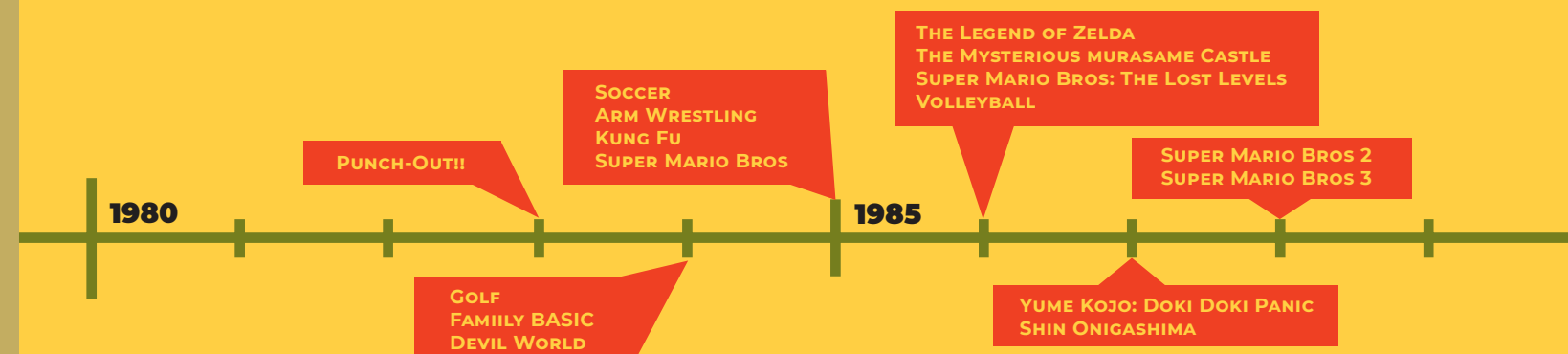
GAME & WATCH

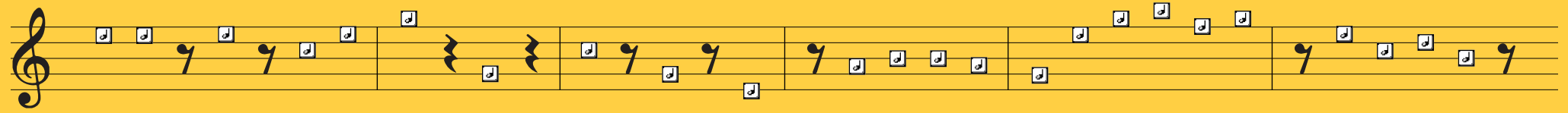
SUPER MARIO BROS.™



Limited Production

Available November 13

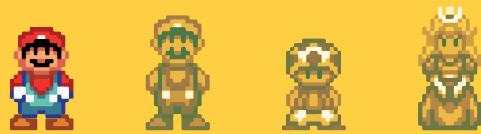




A SNES Up in Quality

Being very busy, Kondo was unable to work on any Zelda titles until 1991's *The Legend of Zelda: A Link to the Past*. Many more iconic Zelda tunes came out of this soundtrack he composed such as Hyrule Castle, Karkiriko Village, the Zelda Theme and the Ganondorf Theme, among others. *A Link to the Past* brought this legend closer to a bigger legend; Shigeru Miyamoto. Miyamoto helped to visually inspire Kondo for his compositions that are tightly bound to their settings. Miyamoto would go further and give feedback after the compositions were complete. This type of interaction helped Kondo make Miyamoto's visions a reality.

The next few games he worked on were *Pilot Wings*, *SimCity*, and 1993's *Starfox*. His contributions weren't as recognized but just as important for their step up in the quality of SFX at the time. This is also the first sign of Kondo's transition to more of a supervising role. If you're as dedicated as Koji Kondo, you would know that the only direction for one's own skills is to go up; to evolve. And so *Super Mario World 2: Yoshi's Island* is a step in the right direction for Kondo's composition skills. As he has done before, his works have demonstrated how well they embody the world of Yoshi's Island and its various locations. At this point, his methods have become routine.



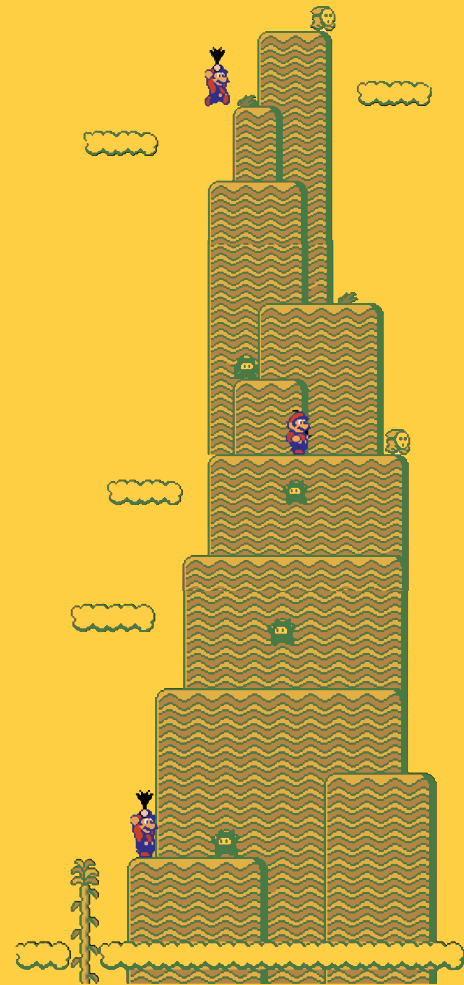
PLEASE SELECT
PLAYER

A Jump to 3D

With Mario Taking the Lead

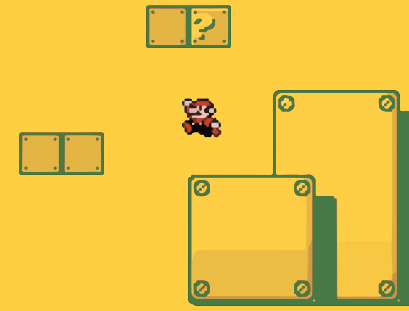
With the release of the Nintendo 64 in 1996, Mario had made the jump from 2D to 3D with *Super Mario 64* as a launch title. To facilitate such a huge game, Kondo composed a very diverse and experimental soundtrack. Look at *Bomb-omb Battlefield*'s jazzy electronic melody with brass accompaniment, *Dire Dire Docks* with its slow calming synths, *Lethal Lava Land* with its Indian strings and percussion, *Big Boo's Balcony* with its daunting low vocals, the percussion heavy underground Mario theme serving as this game's underground theme, and *Bowser's theme* that makes use of an organ in a heavy metal piece.

Following close behind is 1997's *Starfox 64*, which Kondo co-composed with Hajime Wakai. Even though Kondo's contributions were very little, he gained further experience with orchestral works similar to that of Hollywood sci-fi scores.



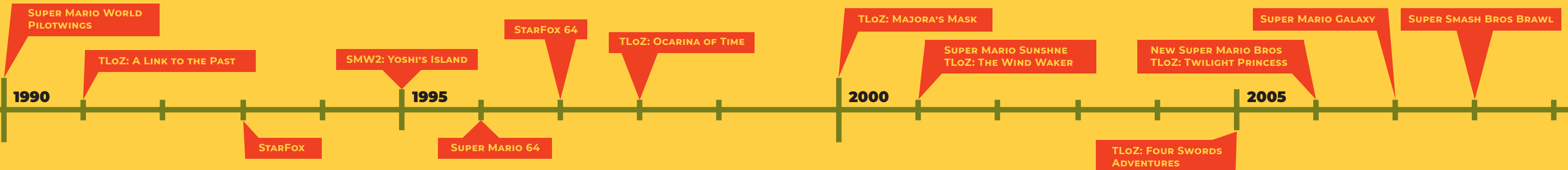
Now it is Link's Turn

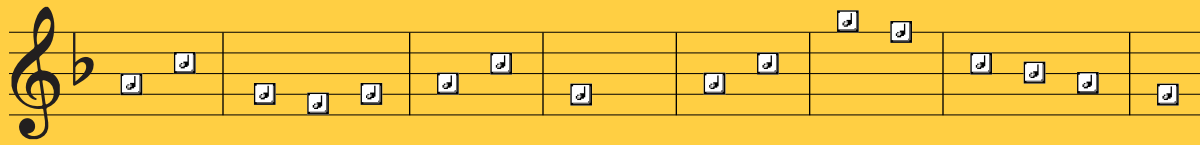
As previously mentioned, Mario made the jump to 3D in 1996. Now it's Link's turn to be thrust into the 3D world with 1998's *The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time*. As was *Super Mario 64*, *Ocarina of Time* was a monumental milestone, which Kondo catered to. Taking what he had learned from his older works, he has created a soundtrack that helped redefine the Zelda franchise. This game was also the first one where Kondo has effectively implemented the use of adaptive music. This was done by segmenting a piece of music in order to apply or remove chord progressions as the situation needed. Following *Ocarina of Time*'s success, Nintendo proceeded to make a sequel. The sequel is *The Legend of Zelda: Majora's Mask*. As a darker entry in the series, Kondo took a more Asian and "foreign" inspired direction for his new compositions. This helped accentuate the horror aspects of the setting and story. Of course, there are still songs in the same vein as *Ocarina of Time* as this is a sequel but like the story, the music original to *Majora's Mask* stands strong on its own. Kondo's influence grows and as a supervisor, he makes sure that his ideas about video game music are preserved by his sound team; to make music that is memorable, diverse, and adaptable.



Making One Last Splash

Kondo's last major work was 2002's *Super Mario Sunshine* for the Nintendo Gamecube. This game was a very different beast to that of *Super Mario 64*. Regardless, you can expect Kondo to make his music work. For this soundtrack, Kondo embodied the tropical vacation theme in the music using traditional tropical percussion with light and energetic or slow and relaxing vibes to the compositions. Shinobu Tanaka, a co-composer, handled the cutscene music and ambient themes to compliment the direction that Kondo set.





Working as a Supervisor

Composing "Sparsely"

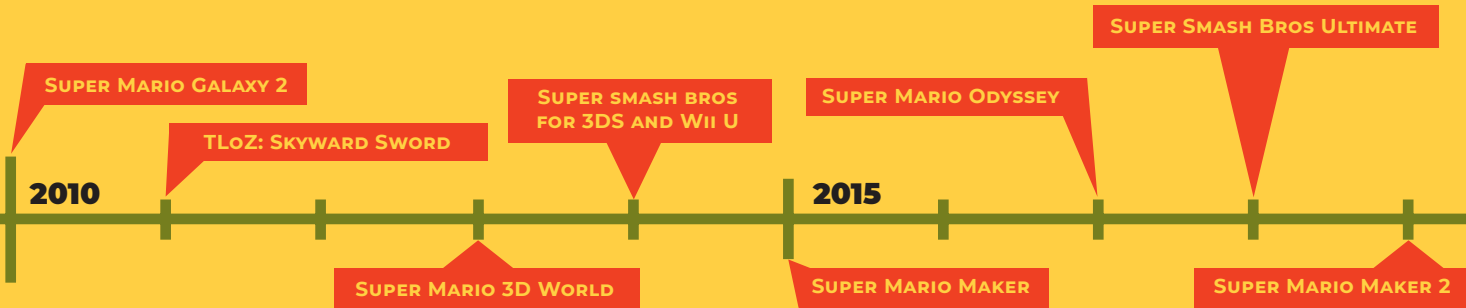
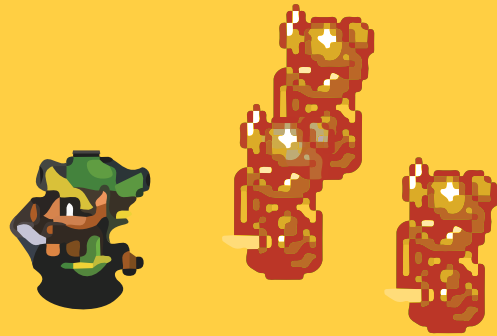
For the next few years, Kondo remained in the supervisor role, composing "sparsely." Of course, sparsely for a dedicated man such as Koji Kondo meant that he regularly contributed to many of Nintendo's franchises. This includes 2006's New Super Mario Bros' Overworld Theme and The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess' Prototype Orchestral Piece #1. There is also 2007's The Legend of Zelda: Skyward Sword's Ballad of the Goddess. All these pieces served as the basis to the rest of the soundtrack of their respective games. Koji Kondo's dedication is something fuelled by ambition. He lives for video games in the form of music. He has lived an age of computerized music, into that of live orchestrations, with open arms for both. He loves the concept of change and variety, which reflects in his music. His efforts behind pushing technical limits had him work on the design of the 3DS so that the music and sound quality can be at its best on a handheld device.

Towards the Future

While he loves making music, he prefers being in the supervisor role, because he could then listen to music that isn't his. He loves arrangements and remixes for the same reason. "You can go onto Youtube and see all kinds of people using all kinds of instruments and orchestrations of these songs. It was not expected, but it makes me very happy." Speaking of remixes, 2015's Super Mario Maker celebrating Mario's 30th anniversary, consists of arrangements and remixes of his own. The game reflects his workflow, working with pieces to make layers that support the experience of the player. Kondo has been in the industry for a long time and has helped shape the childhoods of many people. May he continue his work at Nintendo for years to come, with both familiar and potentially new characters.

"Often it's the music that plays a vital role in being remembered"

Kondo (2009)



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composer spotlight

Koji Kondo



learn about the composer
that accompanied **Mario** for 35 years!

interview

Remaking a Soundtrack
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event

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Concert