

= Music of Nier =

Nier is an action role @-@ playing video game developed by Cavia and published by Square Enix in 2010 . The music of Nier was composed by Keiichi Okabe with members of his studio , Monaca , Kakeru Ishihama and Keigo Hoashi , and Takafumi Nishimura of Cavia . The soundtrack has inspired the release of four official albums by Square Enix ? an official soundtrack album and three albums of arrangements ? along with two mini @-@ albums included as pre @-@ order bonuses for the Japanese versions of the game and two licensed EPs of jazz arrangements .

The original soundtrack was highly praised ; reviewers noted it as one of the best video game soundtracks of the year , praising the originality of the compositions and the beauty of Emi Evans ' vocal work . The first arranged album , while also warmly received , was perceived by critics to be weaker than the original and not long enough to stand up to the expectations created by the success of the original . The first three albums sold well enough to be recorded on the Japanese Oricon music charts , reaching number 24 for the original soundtrack , 59 for the first arranged album , and position number 77 for the second .

= = Development = =

The soundtrack to Nier was composed by a collaboration of the studio Monaca , consisting of Keiichi Okabe , Kakeru Ishihama , and Keigo Hoashi , along with Takafumi Nishimura from Cavia , the game 's developer . Okabe served as the lead composer and as the director for the project as a whole . Okabe was brought onto the project when the concept for the game was first being devised , and worked intermittently on the soundtrack for the next three years until its release . The music for the game was generally composed entirely separate from the development of the game . Often , elements of the game were modified to match the music , rather than the other way around . Some tracks were used in ways that the composers did not envision , such as " Grandma " , which was expected to be used in the prologue of the game but was instead chosen as a boss battle theme . The music was designed for different motifs to appear in various arrangements throughout the soundtrack , and also to convey a sense of sadness even during the " thrilling " tracks . Okabe was allowed a great deal of freedom regarding what the music was to sound like ; game director Taro Yoko 's main request was that he use a lot of vocal works .

The vocals and lyrics were provided by vocalist Emi Evans (Emiko Rebecca Evans) , a singer from England living in Tokyo . She is the singer for the band freesscape , and had previously worked on video game projects such as the Etrian Odyssey arrange albums . The Monaca team had met her when considering her for a prior project , and Okabe wanted to work with her on Nier . She was approached a few months after the initial meeting in Autumn 2008 to be the vocalist for the soundtrack . In addition to singing , Evans was asked to write her own lyrics in futuristic languages . The composers gave her preliminary version of songs and the style they wished the language to be in , such as Scottish Gaelic or French , and she invented the words . Evans wrote songs in versions of Scottish Gaelic , Portuguese , Spanish , Italian , French , English and Japanese , and wrote " Song of the Ancients " in an entirely fictional language . She wrote that song by listening to songs in as many languages as possible and jumbling them up together . For the other languages , she tried to imagine what they would sound like after 1000 years of drifting .

Okabe did not want to use traditional lyrics , as he felt they would clash with the design of the world in the game , and wanted to use a variety of languages to represent the open nature of the game 's world . He also did not want easily recognizable lyrics to be sung in the background while the characters were speaking , and for any noticeable words to instead evoke emotions in the player . Evans only knew English , Japanese , and French when she began the project ; she listened to the other languages on YouTube to learn the rhythms and sounds of the languages and then mixed and changed them . Okabe largely allowed Evans to decide how to integrate the lyrics with the early forms of the songs , and as he usually did not know where the songs would be used in the game gave her only light direction as to the emotional tone for the songs . The composers often would modify the songs in later revisions to follow how Evans had sung for that song .

= = Original soundtrack = =

The soundtrack to Nier is largely composed of melancholy acoustic pieces which heavily feature vocals by Emi Evans . Of the 43 tracks included in the released soundtrack album , only 9 do not have any vocal component to them ; these are the four versions each of " Dispossession " and " Yonah " , as well as " Dance of the Evanescent " . With the exception of " Ashes of Dreams " , the lyrics are not intended to mean anything ; for that song , Evans was given a list of Japanese words to use , which she then translated for the English , French , and Scottish Gaelic versions of the song . The song and its variants were the last to be recorded , and Evans convinced the composers that one song in the soundtrack should have recognizable lyrics rather than futuristic English as they originally planned . Evans found " Ashes " to be the most difficult song to write on the soundtrack , as she had difficulty writing lyrics that met the composers ' criteria of despair and lack of hope .

" Hills of Radiant Wind " is one of the few upbeat songs on the largely dark soundtrack ; for that piece Evans sang in a version of Portuguese in a style meant to sound like a spirit floating on the wind . For " Grandma " , she sang in a French style , trying to " put in as much anguish and melancholy " as possible ; she created the song in a single recording , and it is " one of the most memorable songs " that she has sung . " The Wretched Automatons " is sung in a variant of English and was recorded prior to the addition of the mechanical sounds that run throughout the track , while " Kainé " is in a version of Gaelic .

Square Enix released a soundtrack album of music from the game , titled NieR Gestalt & Replicant Original Soundtrack , on April 21 , 2010 . The two @-@ disc , 2 : 30 : 09 @-@ long album has the catalog numbers of SQEX @-@ 10189 / 90 . As preorder bonuses for NieR Gestalt and NieR Replicant , the two versions of the game released in Japan , two mini @-@ albums , NieR Gestalt Mini Album and NieR Replicant Mini Album , were included . Each one contains five tracks from the full soundtrack album ; Gestalt corresponds with tracks 1 and 4 from disc 1 , 8 and 13 from disc 2 , and an electronic version of " Kainé " titled " Kainé / Rain of Light " , while Replicant encompasses track 3 from disc 2 , tracks 2 and 7 from disc 1 , track 1 from disc 2 , and a medley of several tracks . Gestalt is 18 : 11 long , and Replicant 17 : 11 . A book of sheet music of piano arrangements of tracks from the game by Okabe was published by KMP on April 22 , 2011 . The book , NieR Gestalt & Replicant Official Score Book , contains 25 arrangements in 112 pages . Guitar arrangements of " Song of the Ancients / Devola " and " Yonah / Strings Ver . " by Yuji Sekiguchi were included in the Square Enix Official Best Collection guitar solo sheet music book , published by KMP in May 2011 .

The soundtrack album reached number 24 on the Japanese Oricon music charts , and remained on the charts for 11 weeks . It was well received by critics ; Patrick Gann of RPGFan called the album " an insanely good soundtrack " and noted it as his candidate for video game soundtrack of the year , as well as " one of the best game soundtracks ever " . He applauded that the music was both " meticulously @-@ crafted " and " accessible to the untrained ear " . Don Kotowski of Square Enix Music Online praised the " captivating vocal work " and " exquisite " composition . He also noted that each track retained a sense of individuality even when it reused themes from other tracks . He was less complimentary towards the mini albums , which he regarded as good introductions to the soundtrack as a whole but not worth purchasing on their own . Jayson Napolitano of Original Sound Version also praised the album , saying that it was " hands down one of the best soundtracks Square Enix has published over the years " . Calling it " captivating " and " otherworldly " , he applauded the album 's originality and Evans ' vocals . Original Sound Version later named the soundtrack as the best video game soundtrack of 2010 , and Square Enix Music Online awarded it the best Japanese video game soundtrack of the year .

Track list

= = Arrange tracks = =

An album of arranged music was published by Square Enix on December 8 , 2010 . The album , NieR Gestalt & Replicant 15 Nightmares & Arrange Tracks , contains 11 tracks across a length of 54

: 43 , and has a catalog number of SQEX @-@ 10212 . The arrangements were done by composers Okabe , Ishihama , and Hoashi , as well as by " oriori " , Ryuichi Takada , and Hidekazu Tanaka . The first five arrangements , in a techno style , were included in the Nier DLC , while the remaining tracks are piano , instrumental , chiptune , and a cappella versions of tracks from the game . In the liner notes for the album , Okabe said that the DLC tracks were meant to be " more war @-@ like " versions of the originals , while the second half of the album was intended to " maintain the image and worldview of the original music " .

The arranged album reached number 59 on the Oricon music charts , a position it held for a week . It was warmly received by reviewers , if less so than the first album ; Patrick Gann critiqued the album as not being as good as the original , though he noted that " you can still be awesome and rank second to that album " . He concluded that the arrangements were all of good quality , but that listeners would not be " blown away by it " . Don Kotowski found it to be an " accomplished arrange album " , but inferior to the original as he felt that it was shorter than it should have been and that the final two tracks were weaker than the rest of the arrangements . Jayson Napolitano also felt that the album should have been longer ; he thought that most listeners would skip the DLC tracks in favor of the acoustic arrangements , and that six tracks was not enough to carry the album given the expectations created by the quality of the original soundtrack .

= = Echo = =

On September 14 , 2011 Square Enix published a third Nier album , titled NieR Tribute Album -echo- . Each of the 12 tracks on the album is a remix of a Nier piece , each by a different artist . The resulting eclectic mix of styles is primarily electronic , but also includes a multiple @-@ piano arrangement of " Grandma " and a klezmer rendition of " Shadowlord 's Castle " . The album has a duration of 1 : 00 : 46 , and has the catalog number SQEX @-@ 10247 .

The album reached number 77 on the Oricon music charts , a position it held for a week . It was positively reviewed by Jayson Napolitano of Original Sound Version , who described himself as " impressed " with it . He preferred this album to the arranged album , though he felt that a few of the tracks had difficulty distinguishing themselves above the high quality of the original pieces .

= = Piano = =

On March 21 , 2012 Square Enix published a fourth Nier album , titled Piano Collections Nier Gestalt & Replicant . Each of the 11 tracks on the album is a piano arrangement of a Nier piece . The tracks were arranged and played by several different artists , namely Keigo Hoashi , Kumi Tanioka , Masato Kouda , Ryuichi Takada , and Yuri Misumi . Each arranger performed their own pieces , with the exception of Kouda , whose arrangement was played by Tanioka . The album has a duration of 45 : 42 , and has the catalog number SQEX @-@ 10303 .

The album was positively reviewed by Jayson Napolitano of Original Sound Version , who said that while " nothing on this album came as particularly surprising " , that he enjoyed the arrangements and performances . He preferred the tracks on this album to the piano arrangements on the 15 Nightmares album .

= = Jazz = =

Music from Nier has been arranged into two jazz EPs . The albums , titled NieR Gestalt & Replicant : Jazz Arrange Version and Jazz Arrange Version Vol . 2 , contain six tracks each from the soundtrack licensed by Joypad Records . The tracks are arranged and performed by Sean Schafianski , and were released digitally on August 8 , 2013 , and May 16 , 2014 . The EPs have durations of 26 : 48 and 25 : 33 . The music is split between instrumental and vocal pieces , and covers multiple different styles of jazz music .

The first EP was positively reviewed by Brad Hayes @-@ Raugh of RPGFan , who " greatly enjoyed the direction this album takes " , though he did note that some of the pieces did not quite

meet his high expectations . He concluded that " the tracks give a fresh spin on some great pieces of video game music and keep the spirit of Nier alive and well . "

Track list

= = Music video = =

On July 15 , 2015 , an officially licensed arrangement of " Song of the Ancients " from Nier , along with a music video , were released by OverClocked Records . It was made available to stream or purchase . The song , a vocal performance with vibraphone and percussion , was the first officially licensed video game music single by the record label , an offshoot of the OverClocked ReMix video game music remix community . The single was sung by Jillian Aversa , who features in the accompanying music video , with percussion by Doug Perry . The song was performed by the duo prior to release at Video Games Live concerts , and was filmed at National Harbor , Maryland by the sculpture The Awakening in January 2015 during MAGFest , an annual game music convention .