

## = Halo 2 Original Soundtrack =

The Halo 2 Original Soundtrack is the soundtrack for Bungie 's 2004 video game Halo 2 . The soundtrack was released as two separate volumes , released almost two years apart . Volume 1 , released at the same time as Halo 2 on November 9 , 2004 , contains arranged instrumental pieces written by Martin O 'Donnell and his partner Michael Salvatori , as well as " inspired by " tracks from bands Incubus , Hoobastank and Breaking Benjamin . Volume 2 was released on April 25 , 2006 and contains all the game music arranged in a suite form .

O 'Donnell , who had previously composed the music for Bungie games such as Myth and Halo : Combat Evolved , sought to develop the " Halo sound " of the previous game as well as introduce new sounds and influences to the music . The music was based on what was happening in the game , rather than using leitmotifs or theme repetitively . The music was recorded in pieces with a fifty @-@ piece orchestra at Studio X in Seattle , Washington . To mark its release both Microsoft and Sumthing Else Music Works planned an aggressive marketing campaign .

Upon release , the music of Halo 2 was well received . Critics were split on the merits of Volume 1 , with some publications enjoying the bonus offerings while others felt the first volume lacked cohesion . Volume 2 was declared the " real " soundtrack to Halo 2 . Upon release both soundtracks became commercial successes , with more than 100 @,@ 000 copies sold . The soundtracks ' success was pointed to as a sign of increasing legitimacy of video game music in the entertainment industry . Halo 's music has since been played in concert settings , including Play ! A Video Game Symphony and Video Games Live .

## = = Background = =

In the summer of 2004 , Halo 2 composer Martin O 'Donnell and album producer Nile Rodgers decided it would be a good idea to present Halo 2 's music in two distinct volumes . The first volume would contain the game 's themes that were finished and mixed as well as " inspired @-@ by " offerings from other artists . The first volume was released alongside the video game as Volume 1 on November 9 of the same year . As the soundtrack was finished before all the in @-@ game music was completed , none of the tracks written by O 'Donnell appear in Halo 2 in the same arrangement . The bands featured in Volume 1 , including Breaking Benjamin and Incubus , were enthusiastic about adding music to the soundtrack . Incubus was tapped to produce a suite of music which appears scattered throughout the soundtrack as four movements . Incubus guitarist Mike Einziger said that " Halo is the only video game that ever inspired us to write a whole suite [ of music ] . "

The first pieces of music O 'Donnell wrote for Halo 2 were promotional in nature ; O 'Donnell scored the cinematic announcement trailer for Halo 2 on August 2 , 2002 , and followed up with interactive music for the Electronic Entertainment Expo 2003 Halo 2 demo . O 'Donnell confirmed that the chanting monks of Halo : Combat Evolved 's choral theme , along with additional guitars by Steve Vai , would return in Halo 2 . O 'Donnell noted that the new setting of Africa prompted him to look at " Afro @-@ Cuban " influences , but most of this type of music did not make it to the final product . Rather than write for locations or use leitmotifs for all the different characters in what O 'Donnell called a " Peter and the Wolf approach to music " , O 'Donnell wrote " sad music for sad moments , scary music to score the scary bits and so forth . " Recurring themes developed more by accident than planning . Recording of orchestrated music was completed over several sessions with the Northwest Sifonia orchestra at Studio X in Seattle , Washington .

Nile Rodgers produced both volumes of the soundtrack , in addition to writing and performing the track " Never Surrender " in collaboration with songwriter / remixer Nataraj . Rodgers himself is a video game player , noting in an interview that " 30 % to 40 % of the [ recording ] budget was spent in downtime playing video games . Since all that money was going to that part of the recording session , I decided to figure out what was so compelling about it , and I got hooked [ by the game ] . "

Due to legal issues , the second Halo 2 soundtrack containing the entire finished score , Volume 2 ,

was not released until more than a year after the soundtrack had been mixed and mastered . The volume 's music is formatted in a ' suite ' structure that corresponds with the chapters within the game , or order to create a " music representation " of the video game . O 'Donnell stated that this presentation of the music as a concept album was natural because the overall story and atmosphere of Halo 2 directly influenced the sound to begin with .

= = Promotion = =

The first volume of the Halo 2 Original Soundtrack was specifically timed to coincide with the launch of the video game , to cash in on the " Halo effect " ; players would go to buy the game and get the soundtrack and other merchandise by association . The first several million copies of the game sold all contained promotional inserts for the soundtrack . The soundtrack was seen as an integral part of the marketing and merchandise push Microsoft planned for Halo 2 . The soundtrack 's publisher , Sumthing Distribution , also planned and executed an aggressive marketing campaign , including special music listening stations and side @-@ by @-@ side soundtrack and game placement at participating retailers . The " Halo Theme MJOLNIR Mix " , the first track on Volume 1 , was released on November 22 , 2007 as a free track for Guitar Hero III : Legends of Rock on the Xbox 360 .

= = Reception = =

Upon release , the reaction to Halo 2 's score was generally positive . Reception for the two soundtrack releases , however , varied . Volume 1 's inclusion of other artists in addition to original music received both praise and criticism . Mike Brennan Soundtrack.net 's review claimed that the inclusion of Hoobastank and Breaking Benjamin as well as Incubus made the soundtrack " more harsh " sounding but overall lacked cohesion . On the other hand , G4 TV found the four @-@ part Odyssey by Incubus comprised " a progressive rock / fusion jam the likes of which haven 't been recorded since the 1970s . "

Nuketown.com declared that Volume 2 was the soundtrack that fans had been waiting for ; other publications agreed , saying that it " feels like the real soundtrack to Halo 2 " . IGN found the soundtrack ultimately enjoyable , but felt that the more traditional orchestration that appeared in Halo 2 clashed with the ambient and electronic sounds that had appeared before , making the album " divided " .

Overall , the Halo 2 soundtracks sold well . Volume 1 sold more than 100 @,@ 000 copies , and peaked at the number 162 position of the Billboard 200 , the first video game soundtrack to ever enter the chart . This compares favorably to typical movie soundtracks , which generally sell no more than 10 @,@ 000 copies . The Halo 2 Original Soundtrack 's success was pointed to as a sign of increasing legitimacy of video game music in the entertainment industry , which had graduated from " simple beeps " to complex melodies with big budgets .

= = Track listings = =

= = = Volume 1 = = =

= = = Volume 2 = = =

All music composed by Martin O 'Donnell , Michael Salvatori .

= = Personnel = =

All information is taken from the CD credits .

Martin O'Donnell ( ASCAP ) ? composer  
Michael Salvatori ( ASCAP ) ? composer  
Simon James ? concert master / contractor  
Christian Knapp ? Northwest Sinfonia conductor  
Marcie O'Donnell ? choir conductor  
Nile Rodgers ? producer  
Nile Rodgers , Michael Ostin - music co @-@ supervisors  
Lorraine McLees - album art director