

= Yoko Shimomura =

Yoko Shimomura (山本 裕子 , Shimomura Y?ko , born October 19 , 1967) is a Japanese video game composer and pianist . Shimomura has worked in the video game industry ever since graduating from the Osaka College of Music in 1988 . From then until 1993 , she worked for Capcom , where she composed wholly or in part the scores for 16 games , including Final Fight and Street Fighter II : The World Warrior .

From 1993 until 2002 , Shimomura worked for Square , where she composed for a further eight games . While working for Square , she was best known for her work on the soundtrack for Kingdom Hearts , which was her last game for the company before leaving . Starting with Mario & Luigi : Superstar Saga in 2003 , she began working as an active freelancer .

Her works have gained a great deal of popularity , and have been performed in multiple video game music concerts , including one , Sinfonia Drammatica , that was focused half on her " greatest hits " album , Drammatica : The Very Best of Yoko Shimomura , and half on the music of a previous concert . Music from several of her games have been published as arranged albums , or as piano scores .

= = Biography = =

= = = Early life = = =

Shimomura was born on October 19 , 1967 , in Hy?go Prefecture , Japan . She developed an interest for music at a young age , and started taking piano lessons " at the age of four or five " . She began composing her own music by playing the piano randomly and pretending to compose , eventually coming up with her own pieces , the first of which she claims to still remember how to play . Shimomura attended Osaka College of Music , and graduated as a piano major in 1988 .

Upon graduation , Shimomura intended to become a piano instructor and was extended a job offer to become a piano teacher at a music store , but as she had been an avid gamer for many years she decided to send some samples of her work to various video game companies that were recruiting at the university . Capcom invited her in for an audition and interview , and she was offered a job there . Her family and instructors were dismayed with her change in focus , as video game music was not well respected , and " they had paid [her] tuition for an expensive music school and couldn 't understand why [she] would accept such a job " , but Shimomura accepted the job at Capcom anyway .

= = = Career = = =

While working for Capcom , Shimomura contributed to the soundtracks of over 16 games , including the successful Street Fighter II : The World Warrior , which she composed all but three pieces for . The first soundtrack she worked on at the company was for Samurai Sword in 1988 . Final Fight , in 1989 , was her first work to receive a separate soundtrack album release , on an album of music from several Capcom games . The first soundtrack album to exclusively feature her work came a year later for the soundtrack to Street Fighter II . While she began her tenure at Capcom working on games for video game consoles , by 1990 she had moved to the arcade game division . She was a member of the company 's in @-@ house band Alph Lyla , which played various Capcom game music , including pieces written by Shimomura . She performed live with the group on a few occasions , including playing piano during Alph Lyla 's appearance at the 1992 Game Music Festival .

In 1993 , Shimomura left Capcom to join another game company , Square (now Square Enix) . She stated that the move was done because she was interested in writing " classical @-@ style " music for fantasy role @-@ playing games . While working for Capcom , she was in the arcade department and was unable to transfer to the console department to work on their role @-@ playing

video game series *Breath of Fire* , although she did contribute one track to the first game in the series . Her first project at the company was the score for the role @-@ playing video game *Live A Live* in 1994 . While she was working on the score to *Super Mario RPG* the following year , she was asked to join Noriko Matsueda on the music to the futuristic strategy RPG *Front Mission* . Although she was overworked doing both scores and it was not the genre that she was interested in , she found herself unable to refuse after her first attempt to do so unexpectedly happened in the presence of the president of Square , Tetsuo Mizuno . These games were followed by *Tobal No. 1* , the last score she worked on with another composer for a decade .

Over the next few years , she composed the soundtrack to several games , including *Parasite Eve* and *Legend of Mana* . Of all her compositions , Shimomura considers the soundtrack to *Legend of Mana* the one that best expresses herself and the soundtrack remains Shimomura 's personal favourite . *Parasite Eve* on the PlayStation had the first soundtrack by Shimomura that included a vocal song , as it was the first game she had written for running on a console system that had the sound capability for one . In 2002 she wrote the score for *Kingdom Hearts* , which she has said is the most " special " soundtrack to her , as well as a turning point in her career ; she named the soundtracks to *Street Fighter II* and *Super Mario RPG* as the other two significant points in her life as a composer .

Kingdom Hearts was wildly successful , shipping more than four million copies worldwide ; Shimomura 's music was frequently cited as one of the highlights of the game , and the title track has been ranked as the fourth @-@ best role @-@ playing game title track of all time . The soundtrack has led to two albums of piano arrangements . *Kingdom Hearts* was the last soundtrack that she worked on at Square . After the release of *Kingdom Hearts* in 2002 , Shimomura left Square for maternity leave , and began work as a freelancer in 2003 . She has built on the work she did while at Square ; since leaving she has composed or is composing music for eleven *Kingdom Hearts* games and Nintendo 's *Mario & Luigi* series . She has also worked on many other projects , such as *Heroes of Mana* and various Premium Arrange albums . On February 10 and 11 , 2014 , Shimomura played piano at a retrospective 25th anniversary concert at Tokyo FM Hall . She performed songs from games such as *Kingdom Hearts* , *Live a Live* , and *Street Fighter II* . During the *Beware the Forest 's* Mushrooms performance from *Super Mario RPG* , Shimomura was joined onstage by fellow game composer Yasunori Mitsuda , who played the Irish bouzouki . She is currently working on the scores for *Final Fantasy XV* and *Kingdom Hearts III* .

= = Legacy = =

After composing soundtracks to over 45 different games , Shimomura has become one of the biggest names in video game music composition , and has been described as " the most famous female video game music composer in the world " . In March 2008 , Shimomura 's best works compilation album *Drammatica : The Very Best of Yoko Shimomura* was released containing her compositions from *Kingdom Hearts* and other games in a full orchestrated score . It includes music from *Final Fantasy XV* , *Live A Live* , *Kingdom Hearts* , *Front Mission* , *Legend of Mana* , and *Heroes of Mana* ; Shimomura has stated that she chose music that was popular among fans and well @-@ suited for orchestration , but had never been performed by an orchestra . In a 2008 interview with *Music4Games* regarding the project , Shimomura commented that with the sheet music generated for the project , she would be interested in pursuing a live performance of *Drammatica* for fans if the opportunity arose . On March 19 , 2009 that wish was realized when it was announced that Arnie Roth would conduct the Royal Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra at the concert *Sinfonia Drammatica* in the Stockholm Concert Hall , which would combine music from the album with performances of Chris Hülsbeck 's *Symphonic Shades* concert . The concert took place on August 4 , 2009 . On March 27 , 2007 , Shimomura released her first non @-@ video game album , *Murmur* , an album of vocal songs sung by Chata .

Shimomura 's music for *Kingdom Hearts* made up one fourth of the music of the *Symphonic Fantasies* concerts in September 2009 , which were produced by the creators of the *Symphonic Game Music Concert* series and conducted by Arnie Roth . *Legend of Mana* 's title theme was also

performed by the Australian Eminence Symphony Orchestra for its classical gaming music concert A Night in Fantasia 2007 .

Music from the original soundtrack of Legend of Mana was arranged for the piano and published by DOREMI Music Publishing . Two compilation books of music from the series have also been published as Seiken Densetsu Best Collection Piano Solo Sheet Music first and second editions , with the second including Shimomura 's tracks from Legend of Mana . All songs in each book have been rewritten by Asako Niwa as beginning to intermediate level piano solos , though they are meant to sound as much like the originals as possible . Additionally , piano sheet music from Kingdom Hearts and Kingdom Hearts II has been published as music books by Yamaha Music Media .

Shimomura 's first dedicated concert performance outside Japan was held at the Salle Cortot in Paris on November 7 , 2015 . Later that month , on November 28 , she performed at the El Plaza Condesa in Mexico City .

= = Musical style and influences = =

Shimomura lists Ludwig van Beethoven , Frédéric Chopin , and Maurice Ravel as some of her influences on her personal website . She has also stated that she has enjoyed " lounge @-@ style jazz " for a long time . Despite these influences and her classical training , the diverse musical styles that she has used throughout her career and sometimes in the same soundtrack include " rock , electronica , oriental , ambient , industrial , pop , symphonic , operatic , chiptune , and more " . She draws inspiration for her songs from things in her life that move her emotionally , which she describes as " a beautiful picture , scenery , tasting something delicious , scents that bring back memories , happy and sad things ... Anything that moves my emotion gives me inspiration " . Shimomura has also stated that she comes up with most of her songs when she is doing something that is " not part of [her] daily routine , like traveling . " Although her influences are mostly classical , she has said that in her opinion her " style has changed dramatically over the years , though the passion for music stays the same . " Shimomura has said that she believes that an important part of " the creative process behind music " is to " convey a subtle message , something that comes from your imagination and sticks with the listener , without being overly specific about what it means " , rather than only writing simple themes with obvious messages . Her favorite track that she has ever composed is " Dearly Beloved " from Kingdom Hearts .

= = Works = =

= = = Video games = = =

Composition

Arrangement

F @-@ 1 Dream (PC Engine) (1989) ? original music by Manami Matsumae

Buster Bros. (PC Engine) (1991) ? original music by Tamayo Kawamoto

Super Smash Bros. Brawl (2008) ? arranged " Tetris : Type A " , " Gritzy Desert " , and " King Dedede 's Theme "

Little King 's Story (2009) ? arranged Maurice Ravel 's Boléro .

Super Smash Bros. for Nintendo 3DS and Wii U (2014) ? arranged " Magician / Eight Melodies " , " Try , Try Again " , " Route 10 " , and " Ryu Stage "

= = = Other = = =

G.S.M. 1500 series ~ Sweet Home (1989) ? arranged two tracks

Captain Commando -G.S.M. Capcom 5- (1992) ? with Alph Lyla

Game Music Festival ~ Super Live ' 92 ~ (1992) ? with Alph Lyla

Street Fighter II Collector 's Box (1993) ? with Alph Lyla
Parasite Eve Remixes (1998) ? with many others
Phantasy Star Online Episode I & II Premium Arrange (2004) ? with many others
Dark Chronicle Premium Arrange (2004) ? with many others
Dan Doh !! (2004)
Best Student Council (2005)
Rogue Galaxy Premium Arrange (2006) ? with many others
Murmur (2007) ? original album with lyrics and vocals by Chata
Drammatica : The Very Best of Yoko Shimomura (2008)
Mushihimesama Double Arrange Album (2009)
GeOnDan Rare Tracks Ver . 2 @. @ 0 (2010) ? with many others
GeOnDan Super Rare Trax : The LAND of RISING SUN (2011) ? with many others
GO ! GO ! Buriki Daioh !! (2012)
X 'mas Collections II (2013) ? with many others
memória ! ~ The Very Best of Yoko Shimomura (2014)
Game Music Prayer II (2014) ? with many others