

= Music of Xenosaga =

The Xenosaga (?????) series is a series of science fiction role @-@ playing video games developed by Monolith Soft and published by Namco Bandai on the PlayStation 2 . The series began with the 2002 release of Episode I : Der Wille zur Macht , which was followed in 2004 by Episode II : Jenseits von Gut und Böse and in 2006 by Episode III : Also sprach Zarathustra . The music of Xenosaga includes the soundtracks to all three chapters , as well as the music for its spin @-@ off media . These include Xenosaga Freaks , a set of minigames set between the first two chapters , Xenosaga I & II , a Nintendo DS remake of the first two chapters , and Xenosaga : The Animation , an anime series covering the events of the first game . Episode I was composed by Yasunori Mitsuda , Episode II was split between Yuki Kajiura and Shinji Hosoe , and Episode III was composed by Kajiura alone . Xenosaga Freaks reused some of the music of Episode I by Mitsuda while also including new work by Satoru Kousaki and Hiroshi Ohkubo , while Xenosaga I & II and Xenosaga : The Animation used new pieces composed by Kousuke Yamashita .

Episode I sparked the release of two versions of its soundtrack album as well as a single , Episode II received two soundtrack albums , and Episode III received one . Xenosaga Freaks and Xenosaga : The Animation each also sparked the release of a soundtrack album . In addition to the albums , Episode I saw the release of a book of orchestral sheet music as well as a book of piano sheet music ; Episode II had only a book of piano sheet music . Music from the series has been played multiple times in concerts , especially that of the first two games .

= = Main series = =

= = = Episode I = = =

The first episode in the series was Xenosaga Episode I : Der Wille zur Macht , released in 2002 . Designed as a spiritual successor to Xenogears , the game was worked on by much of the same staff , including the composer Yasunori Mitsuda . For the game , Mitsuda composed a score that is mostly orchestral in nature , using the London Philharmonic Orchestra for several tracks . Other pieces include vocal tracks by the Metro Voices choir , piano solos by Yasuharu Nakanishi , and performances by the Gen Ittetsu Strings . The game 's theme songs , " Pain " and " Kokoro " , were sung by Celtic singer Joanne Hogg of the band Iona , with whom Mitsuda had previously worked for the soundtrack to Xenogears . The vocal songs throughout the soundtrack range from choral to opera to a capella , while the tone of the soundtrack overall has been described as being " serious , sometimes dark , heavy and even haunting at times " . At one point in the development process , Mitsuda planned to use a separate person to orchestrate his compositions after an early piece proved unworkable and had to be scrapped , causing him to lose confidence in his own ability . After working for several months , however , he regained his confidence and decided to work as his own orchestrator , a decision which he feels improved him as a composer .

The first release of the soundtrack as an album was the Xenosaga Original Soundtrack , released by DigiCube on March 6 , 2002 . The two @-@ disc album includes every piece from the game 's soundtrack , with a total length of 1 : 58 : 42 across its 45 tracks . Two years later , on May 19 , 2004 , Mitsuda released another version of the soundtrack through his Sleigh Bells label titled Xenosaga Episode I. This version features two new tracks ? " World to be Born " and " Pain ~ piano version ~ " ? as well as re @-@ recordings of some of the tracks . The playlist order was also changed between the two versions , with Episode I grouping the tracks by style , rather than in rough chronological order within the game like the original album . Mitsuda explained in the liner notes for the album that he felt that separating the two styles presented a different impression of the music that allowed the listener to greater appreciate the atmosphere of the pieces . In addition to the two albums , a single , " Kokoro " , was released for the game 's theme songs . Published by DigiCube , the disc includes " Pain " and " Kokoro " from the original soundtrack as well as a piano rendition of Kokoro and instrumental versions of both songs . The album has a total length of 23 : 55

, and was released on February 6 , 2002 .

The Original Soundtrack album reached # 38 on the Japan Oricon charts and was well received by reviewers . IGN termed it one of Mitsuda 's best soundtracks to date , calling it " near genius with nearly every passing track " . They especially praised the wide range of emotions present in the soundtrack . GameSpy agreed in their review of the game , saying that " the music is rich , full , varied , and underscores the cinemas and battle sequences excellently " . RPGFan , in their review of the Xenosaga Original Soundtrack album , said that the album works well as a stand @-@ alone album apart from the game , and that it has few , if any , bland or mediocre tracks . They repeated their praise for the soundtrack in their review of Xenosaga Episode I , though they felt that the two new tracks were not very impressive additions . " Kokoro " reached # 61 and received praise as well , for its emotional intensity and lyrics .

Original soundtrack track list

Episode I track list

= = = Episode II = = =

The second episode of the series , Xenosaga Episode II : Jenseits von Gut und Böse , was released in 2004 . Mitsuda did not return to compose the soundtrack ; instead , Yuki Kajiura and Shinji Hosoe were brought into the project . Kajiura had previously composed for a few video games as well as numerous anime soundtracks . Her style for the game 's soundtrack , for which she composed only the numerous cinematic scenes , has been described as " a fusion of electronica and techno with either an orchestra or ethnic instruments , " as well as including vocals in places where many composers would have left an instrumental section . Hosoe composed the music for the playable portions of the game , and feels that that the sound quality and balance of the soundtrack is poor . This feeling is based primarily on the fact that he " slashed the orchestral sound while creating the music " so that the music played using the PlayStation 2 's sound chip would match the music played off of the CD . He had predicted that there would be a fan outcry against " changing composers on a series like Xenosaga " , and suspects that his music from the game will never be released on an album ; to date the released albums for the game include only Kajiura 's work . Kajiura and Hosoe did not collaborate on any of the tracks in Episode II ; according to Kajiura they never even met during the production .

Episode II 's soundtrack was first released as an album on July 7 , 2004 as Xenosaga II : Jenseits Von Gut und Böse Movie Scene Soundtrack by Victor Entertainment . Including only Kajiura 's work , the album spans two discs and 40 tracks and has a duration of 1 : 52 : 26 . Another soundtrack album for the game , Xenosaga Episode II : Jenseits von Gut und Böse Soundtrack , was released by Namco and Brady Games as a promotional extra for the Brady Games strategy guide for the game . The 11 @-@ track CD again excluded the work of Hosoe , instead sampling Kajiura 's pieces . Released on February 17 , 2005 , the album has a duration of 30 : 25 . The Movie Scene album reached position # 46 on the Japanese Oricon charts . In the liner notes for Movie Scene Soundtrack , Kajiura claims that she felt that her work for the game was different from her previous pieces , as it was more of a soundtrack , with the individual tunes fitting more closely together . She also said that she found it easier to compose tracks that fit with the worldview that Mitsuda had created for the first game , rather than invent her own . She also notes that she intended tracks 1 ? 4 to be a single , continuous piece , although they were broken up in the game ; she intended tracks 20 and 21 the same way .

IGN , in their review of the game , said that the soundtrack for Episode II was not up to par with that of Episode I . They felt that Hosoe 's tracks were in general too " upbeat and poppy " for the game 's premise , and that while Kajiura 's works were better , they were still weaker than Mitsuda 's . One review from RPGamer agreed with this sentiment , calling the music on the whole " pretty dull and unmemorable " , though another RPGamer review praised the increase in the number of tracks present in the game , giving the listener greater variety . An RPGFan review of the Movie Scene album termed it a " fantastic album " , though one with several weak tracks and an aesthetic that would not appeal to many listeners , especially those who disliked vocal tracks . Their review of the

promotional album gave that album high marks as well , saying that it was an excellent sampler album and , at the time , easy to find due to its inclusion in the game 's strategy guide .

Movie Scene soundtrack track list

= = = Episode III = = =

The third and final episode in the series , Xenosaga Episode III : Also sprach Zarathustra , was released in 2006 . Composed entirely by Kajiura , her style shifted from that of Episode II to be darker , with a larger focus on rhythm and less use of background vocals . The soundtrack has been described as " melancholy " and " piano @-@ driven " . Despite moving from composing only the cinematic tracks in Episode II to composing the whole score for Episode III , Kajiura says that the difficulty of each game 's score was about the same . She primarily drew her inspiration for the music from the game 's artwork and her conception of the world the game was set in .

The only soundtrack album released for the game was Xenosaga III : Also Sprach Zarathustra Original Sound Best Tracks , an album of selections from the soundtrack rather than all of the tracks . The two @-@ disc album has 40 tracks , and a total length of 1 : 51 : 46 . It was published by Victor Entertainment on July 12 , 2006 . The album reached position # 50 on the Japanese Oricon charts , and stayed on the charts for four weeks . In the liner notes for the album , sound producer Keiichi Nozaki explains that the album would have needed to be six discs long to hold all of the music from the game , so he asked Kajiura to select a sample that would only fill two discs .

In RPGamer 's review of the game , they termed the soundtrack a " stunning success " , saying that Kajiura provided an " emotionally charged soundtrack " that fit the tone of each section of the game and was superior to the soundtrack of Episode II . G4TV called the soundtrack " a respectable contender " and better than Episode II 's soundtrack as well , praising the music 's restraint and usage in accenting the game rather than overpowering it . IGN called it " pretty darned good " , though noted that it was not as good as the score to the first game . RPGFan , in their review of the album , said that while the quality of the overall work was better than that of Episode II 's Movie Scene soundtrack album , the album was very inconsistent between great and poor tracks . They concluded that Kajiura had ultimately not succeeded in being Mitsuda 's successor for the series .

Best Tracks track list

= = Spin @-@ off media = =

The spin @-@ off media of the Xenosaga series to include music are a collection of minigames titled Xenosaga Freaks that explores the backstory of Episode I , a remake of the first two episodes for the Nintendo DS titled Xenosaga I & II , and an anime series titled Xenosaga : The Animation . There are also other media adaptations without music , such as a manga series . Xenosaga Freaks included new work by Satoru Kousaki and Hiroshi Ohkubo , while Xenosaga I & II and Xenosaga : The Animation used new pieces composed by Kousuke Yamashita .

Freaks sparked the release of an album , Xenosaga Freaks Reservation Privilege CD , which includes three vocal tracks sung by the voice actresses for the characters Shion , KOS @-@ MOS , and M.O.M.O. from the game , a fourth vocal track featuring all three of the singers , and a radio @-@ style interview with them . The 31 : 08 long album was released by Namco on April 28 , 2004 . The music , composed by Namco composers Satoru Kousaki and Hiroshi Ohkubo , is described as " silly lighthearted techno @-@ pop " , and very different from the music in the main games of the series . Xenosaga : The Animation also received an album release , titled Xenosaga : The Animation Original Soundtrack ; the 35 @-@ track album was released by Columbia Records on March 23 , 2005 .

= = Legacy = =

Music from the series was performed at the three @-@ show " Passion " concert series held in December 2006 by the Eminence Symphony Orchestra . The concerts included " Pain " from

Episode I and " Sakura " from Episode II . Several tracks from Mitsuda and Kajiura 's other works were also performed . An album , *Passion* , was produced by the orchestra for the concert , and included both of the Xenosaga songs . In the Eminence April 21 , 2007 " A Night in Fantasia 2007 " concert , " Gnosis " , " Zarathustra " , and " World to be Born " from Episode I were played . " Pain " was again performed by a piano quintet from the Eminence Orchestra in their four @-@ show " *Destiny - Reunion* " concert series in July 2007 . Several other non @-@ Xenosaga pieces by Mitsuda and Kajiura were again also performed . In the *Destiny : Dreamer 's Alliance* album released for that concert series and others by the same quintet , " Nephilim " from Episode I , rather than " Pain " , was included .

In addition to concerts , music from the series has been released as sheet music . On January 20 , 2004 , Mitsuda released *Partitura Originale Di Xenosaga Episodio Uno Sheet Music* , a book of orchestral sheet music for tracks from Episode I , through his record label Procyon Studio . The book contains 22 songs , composed and arranged by Mitsuda . In addition to that book , DOREMI Music Publishing published a book of piano sheet music , *Xenosaga Episode I Der Wille zur Macht Piano Solo Sheet Music* . The book contains 21 songs , arranged by Asako Niwa as beginning to intermediate @-@ level piano solos . DOREMI Music Publishing also published a book of piano sheet music for Episode II , *Xenosaga Episode II Jenseits von Gut und Böse Piano Solo Sheet Music* . The book contains 23 tracks , arranged by Asako Niwa as beginning to intermediate @-@ level piano solos . Selections of remixes of music from the series appear on Japanese remix albums , called d?jin , and on English remixing websites such as OverClocked ReMix .