

= Xenogears Original Soundtrack =

The Xenogears Original Soundtrack is the official soundtrack to Square 's role @-@ playing video game Xenogears . It was composed by Yasunori Mitsuda and contains 44 tracks , including a Bulgarian choral song and two pieces performed by the Irish singer Joanne Hogg . Though the game was released in both Japan and North America , the album was published in Japan exclusively as a 2 @-@ CD set on March 1 , 1998 .

The soundtrack was composed with strong traditional and Irish music influences , while the lyrics for the vocal tracks were written by the game 's director Tetsuya Takahashi and its scenario writer Masato Kato . The soundtrack reached # 55 in Japan and was generally well received by critics , though some disagreed on whether the album can be fully appreciated by non @-@ players .

Two arranged versions of the soundtrack , Creid (1998) and Myth : The Xenogears Orchestral Album (2011) , were also released by Mitsuda . The composer , along with Joanne Hogg , reprised their roles for the soundtrack to Xenogears 's spiritual prequel Xenosaga Episode I : Der Wille zur Macht in 2002 . Tribute albums were also produced by fans .

= = Creation = =

= = = Context = = =

Xenogears entered development in 1996 and was released in 1998 . The game 's soundtrack was Yasunori Mitsuda 's first major solo work , as his previous soundtracks were collaborations with other composers with the exception of the score to Radical Dreamers : Nusumenai H?seki , which never saw an album release . Mitsuda worked closely with Masato Kato , the event planner and script writer of Xenogears , to compose the score . Mitsuda considered it hard at times to maintain his motivation throughout the whole two @-@ year period , especially since he had to wait for the end to see the most dramatic tracks implemented . The game 's director Tetsuya Takahashi did not initially think " music was all that important " compared to graphics , but eventually acknowledged its importance when he realized it could strongly enhance the expressivity of the images . Takahashi explained that without Mitsuda 's music , he would not have been able to achieve his goals for the project .

The development team wanted to have a Western singer contribute to the score . Mitsuda initially had difficulties finding an artist that matched his vision , but eventually chose Joanne Hogg from the Celtic band Iona after stumbling upon their album The Book of Kells in a CD store and listening to the song " Chi @-@ Rho " . Hogg was enthusiastic in contributing as it was her first video game @-@ related recording . She did not play the game for the project , however . Irish music was not well known in Japan at the time , but Mitsuda felt that a " Celtic boom " was about to hit the country . His prediction would later turn true with the popularity of the American film Titanic and the Irish stepdancing show Riverdance .

" Stars of Tears " , one of the songs included on the soundtrack album , did not appear in the final version of the game . It was originally intended to play in a cut scene at the start of the game along with the main staff credits . The scene , however , was removed for pacing issues , as it would have made the combined opening movie and introduction scenes last roughly ten minutes . Another song on the soundtrack , " Small Two of Pieces ~ Screeching Shards ~ " , was the first ending theme with sung lyrics to ever appear in a game developed by Square .

= = = Composition and writing = = =

The score contains 41 instrumental tracks , in addition to a choral track and two songs . According to Mitsuda , the music of Xenogears belongs to the traditional music genre . Though he first described it as stemming from " a world of [his] own imagining " rather than any specific country , he has also claimed a strong Irish or Celtic music influence . Mitsuda felt that composing for the

game was very difficult due to the unfamiliarity of most Japanese with foreign traditions , but expressed his wish for listeners of the soundtrack to open up to music from all over the world . His musical approach was to insert Celtic influences into " easy @-@ to @-@ listen @-@ to " pop tracks , rather than making either " dense " Celtic music or simple background music . Other influences on the soundtrack include Arabic music on the desert town theme " Dazil , Town of Scorching Sands " , and religious music , in keeping with the game 's storyline . Mitsuda explained that he wanted music that " felt religious , but from a different angle " .

The opening movie of the game was produced before the corresponding track " Dark Dawn " was , and Mitsuda had to rearrange his composition after realizing some parts were out of synch with the frames by about a minute and a half . The choral track , titled " The Beginning and the End " , was performed by a 41 @-@ voice choir named The Great Voices of Bulgaria and features lyrics written by Tetsuya Takahashi . His lyrics were translated from Japanese to English then to Bulgarian for the recording . Joanne Hogg sang in English on " Stars of Tears " and " Small Two of Pieces ~ Screeching Shards ~ " . The latter took Mitsuda " an awfully long amount of time " just to compose the demo version . Masato Kato wrote the original lyrics for the two songs , and Hogg arranged them so that they would fit the melodies better and sound more Celtic . As with most of his previous soundtracks , Mitsuda composed a musical box arrangement of one of the main themes ; in Xenogears ' case , the track " Distant Promise " is the musical box version of " Small Two of Pieces " .

= = = Recording = = =

The instrumental tracks of the score were programmed with the PlayStation sound module in Tokyo , Japan , while " The Beginning and the End " was recorded live in Sofia , Bulgaria . Hogg 's songs were recorded in two days in Dublin , Ireland in 1996 ; they featured the Riverdance musician Davy Spillane on low whistle . When Titanic premiered in November 1997 , Mitsuda noticed coincidental similarities between the film 's ending song , Celine Dion 's " My Heart Will Go On " , and the Irish @-@ themed music he was composing for Xenogears . He felt irritated and devoted himself to complete the soundtrack 's recording before Titanic came out .

As with some of his previous soundtracks , Mitsuda would stay in the Japanese studio for long amounts of time and regularly fall asleep from overwork , while some melodies would first come to him in his dreams , such as that of " Ties of Sea and Flames " . The composer collapsed during the soundtrack mastering process due to exhaustion , and had to be taken to the hospital by ambulance . The score involved in total nearly a hundred people . At one point , the music staff considered adding sound effects and voice narrations into the soundtrack album , but the idea was scrapped in favour of normal renditions of the game 's music .

= = Reception = =

The album reached # 55 on the Japan Oricon charts . Soundtrack Central felt that Mitsuda " created a masterpiece in Xenogears " , while RPGFan thought it was " most certainly his greatest achievement " . On the other hand , one reviewer on Square Enix Music Online (unrelated to Square Enix) felt it did not represent Mitsuda 's best album , saying that " what was an amazing soundtrack in its day ... has [not] stood the test of time very well . " Reviewers disagreed whether the album could only be enjoyed by Xenogears players , or if it could be appreciated by a wider audience .

Several reviewers noted the diversity of styles present in the score . Soundtrack Central thought it was a " superb mix of epic adventure and traditional themes " , while Square Enix Music Online appreciated the melding of futuristic , ethnic and religious themes , feeling that the recurring chanting sound effects made everything sound coherent . Critics also noticed similarities between some melodies and Mitsuda 's previous work Chrono Trigger , though reviewers felt that those of Xenogears were more " widely based " and had a distinctive Celtic sound . The reviewers also praised the sound system used for the instrumental tracks as being up to the highest standard for

the PlayStation console .

The emotional tracks were considered the strongest part of the score , and were praised for their ability to musically reflect the various locales and characters seen in the game . The opening track " Dark Dawn " was similarly lauded for showcasing all the influences of the soundtrack in a single composition . The battle themes were described as a weaker area and were called either effective or repetitive , with Square Enix Music Online noting that " Mitsuda has never been very good at composing interesting battle tracks " . The final boss theme " The One Who Bares Fangs at God " received the most diverse comments , ranging from praises to criticism , due to its reliance on synth choral sound effects rather than a clear melody . The ending song " Small Two of Pieces " was received positively and , as Mitsuda predicted , compared to " My Heart Will Go On " .

= = Legacy = =

While in Ireland , Mitsuda also worked with Spillane and Maire Breatnach , another musician from Riverdance , to record an arranged album of Xenogears . Titled Creid and released in April 1998 , the arranged album features 10 instrumental and vocal tracks from the soundtrack arranged in a more dominant Celtic style . " Stars of Tears " and " Small Two of Pieces " appear on the album as " Two Wings " and " Möbius " respectively , and are sung in Japanese by Tetsuko " Techie " Honma . A second arranged album , titled Myth : The Xenogears Orchestral Album , was released on February 23 , 2011 . The original soundtrack versions of " Stars of Tears " and " Small Two of Pieces " were featured on the 2001 compilation Square Vocal Collection , and again in 2009 on the compilation Colours of Light . The Xenogears soundtrack remains one of Mitsuda 's favourite projects , and one of the works that he continues to feel a " special connection " to .

In 2002 , Mitsuda composed the score to Monolith Soft 's Xenosaga Episode I : Der Wille zur Macht , the spiritual prequel to Xenogears , also directed by Tetsuya Takahashi . Joanne Hogg returned to sing the soundtrack 's vocal themes , while the instrumental tracks were performed by the London Philharmonic Orchestra . Monolith Soft did not ask Mitsuda and Hogg to reprise their roles for Episode II and Episode III , however .

A tribute album titled Xenogears Light : An Arranged Album , was published in limited quantities by the fan group OneUp Studios in 2005 . The album features 20 tracks arranged from the Xenogears score and performed with acoustic instruments , such as piano , flute , guitar and violin . Another , unofficial album of remixes titled Humans + Gears was produced as a digital album by OverClocked Remix on October 19 , 2009 consisting of 33 tracks on two " discs " .

= = Track listing = =

= = = Disc one = = =

= = = Disc two = = =

= = Personnel = =

All information is taken from the Xenogears ending credits and the independent site Square Enix Music Online .

= = Release history = =