

= Music of the Final Fantasy VII series =

Final Fantasy VII is a role @-@ playing video game developed by Square / Squaresoft (now Square Enix) and published by Sony Computer Entertainment as the seventh installment in the Final Fantasy series . Released in 1997 , the game sparked the release of a collection of media centered on the game entitled the Compilation of Final Fantasy VII . The discography of the Final Fantasy VII series includes not only the albums based on the soundtrack to the original game , but also the music albums released for the titles in the collection . The first album produced was Final Fantasy VII Original Soundtrack , a compilation of all the music in the game . It was released as a soundtrack album on four CDs by DigiCube in 1997 . A selection of tracks from the album was released in the single @-@ disc Reunion Tracks by DigiCube the same year . Piano Collections Final Fantasy VII , an album featuring piano arrangements of pieces from the soundtrack , was released in 2003 by DigiCube , and Square Enix began reprinting all three albums in 2004 . To date , these are the only released albums based on the original game 's soundtrack , and were solely composed by regular series composer Nobuo Uematsu ; his role for the majority of subsequent albums has been filled by Masashi Hamauzu and Takeharu Ishimoto .

The Compilation of Final Fantasy VII began eight years after the release of Final Fantasy VII with the release of the animated film sequel Advent Children in 2005 . The soundtracks for each of the titles in the collection are included in an album , starting with the album release of the soundtrack to Advent Children that year . The following year , Nippon Crown released a soundtrack album to correspond with the video game Dirge of Cerberus , while Square Enix launched a download @-@ only collection of music from the multiplayer mode of the game , which was only released in Japan . After the launch of the game Crisis Core in 2007 , Warner Music Japan produced the title 's soundtrack . The latest album in the collection , Before Crisis : Final Fantasy VII & Last Order : Final Fantasy VII Original Soundtrack , was released by Square Enix the same year as a combined soundtrack album for the game Before Crisis and the animated movie Last Order .

The original music received highly positive reviews from critics , who found many of the tunes to be memorable and noted the emotional intensity of several of the tracks . The reception for the other albums has been mixed , with reactions ranging from enthusiastic praise to disappointment . Several pieces from the soundtrack , particularly " One @-@ Winged Angel " and " Aeris ' Theme " , remain popular and have been performed numerous times in orchestral concert series such as Dear Friends : Music from Final Fantasy and Tour de Japon : Music from Final Fantasy . Music from the Original Soundtrack has been included in arranged albums and compilations by Square as well as outside groups .

= = Creation and development = =

Nobuo Uematsu composed the music of Final Fantasy VII in less than one year , although he had taken two years to create the soundtrack for the previous title , Final Fantasy VI . Final Fantasy VII was the first game in the series to be developed for the PlayStation , and while the media capabilities of the console allowed for CD quality music , Uematsu opted instead to use MIDI sounds . This decision has been credited as giving the soundtrack " a very distinctive mood and feel " , forming a strong association for listeners between the game and its soundtrack . Uematsu has stated , however , that the move into the " PlayStation era " , which allowed video game composers to use sounds recorded in the studio rather than from synthesizers , had " definitely been the biggest change " to video game music . The first piece that Uematsu composed for the game was the opening theme ; game director Yoshinori Kitase showed him the opening cinematic to the game and asked him to begin the project there . The track was well received in the company , which gave Uematsu " a sense that it was going to be a really good project " . He later stated in the liner notes for the soundtrack album that the music for Final Fantasy VII was his " greatest harvest " to date .

Final Fantasy VII was the first game in the series to include a track with digitized vocals , " One @-@ Winged Angel " . The track has been called Uematsu 's " most recognizable contribution " to the music of the Final Fantasy series , though the composer did not expect it to gain such popularity

. The piece , described as " a fanfare to impending doom " , is said to not " follow any normal genre rules " and has been termed " possibly the most innovative idea in the series ' musical history . " The lyrics of " One @-@ Winged Angel " , a Latin choral track that plays at the climax of the game , were taken from the medieval poetry on which Carl Orff based his Carmina Burana , specifically " Estuans Interius " , " O Fortuna " , " Veni , Veni , Venias " and " Ave Formosissima " . Uematsu has stated that the intro of " One @-@ Winged Angel " is based on Jimi Hendrix 's " Purple Haze " , and that the piece revolves around the image of Sephiroth and despite the chorus and orchestra , he still thinks of it as a " rock piece " . He has said that " One @-@ Winged Angel " is his favorite tune from the soundtrack , as well as his favorite battle theme from any Final Fantasy game . There was a plan to use a " famous vocalist " for the ending theme as a " theme song " for the game , but the idea was dropped due to time constraints and thematic concerns . Uematsu has said that the soundtrack has a feel of " realism " , which prevented him from using " exorbitant , crazy music " .

= = Albums = =

= = = Original Soundtrack = = =

Final Fantasy VII Original Soundtrack is a soundtrack album containing musical tracks from the game , composed by Nobuo Uematsu and produced by Uematsu and Minoru Akao . It was originally released on February 10 , 1997 through DigiCube and later reissued directly by Square Enix on May 10 , 2004 . The soundtrack spans 85 tracks over four discs and has a combined duration of 4 : 39 : 53 . A limited edition was produced along with the original album , containing illustrated liner notes with several pictures of Uematsu 's workspace and personal effects , various cutscenes and in @-@ game screen shots from the game , and a discography .

The soundtrack covers a wide variety of musical genres , including rock , techno , orchestral , and choral , although the soundtrack as a whole is primarily orchestral . While many of the tracks were intended as background music , reviewers noted the emotional intensity of several tracks , especially " Aerith 's Theme " , which plays during a moment described as " the most shocking moment in video games , " and has been described as the most memorable track from the album . The theme has become popular among fans , and has inspired various arrangements . Other notable tracks include " Main Theme of Final Fantasy VII " . Themes from this track play during several other tunes from the soundtrack , such as " Words Drowned by Fireworks " , to tie the soundtrack together . An analysis of " Main Theme of Final Fantasy VII " was written by Video Game Music Academy in 2014 .

The regular edition of the album reached # 3 on the Japan Oricon charts , while the limited edition reached # 19 . Overall , the album sold 148 @ , @ 000 copies as of January 2010 . The album was well received by critics . Ben Schweitzer of RPGFan claimed that " for the most part , it 's a diamond " , with his primary complaint being the quality of the MIDI sound . He found the tracks to be " beautiful " and said that " One @-@ Winged Angel " was " possibly the most innovative idea in the series ' musical history " . Patrick Gann of RPGFan concurred and found all of the soundtrack 's tunes to be " memorable " and the Original Soundtrack to be " very worth the purchase " . Philip of Square Enix Music Online , however , disliked the sound quality of the soundtrack and saw several tracks as " trivial " , though he did note that Uematsu " has a flair for strong , memorable " pieces . In 2006 , IGN ranked the album as the best Final Fantasy soundtrack to date and cited the " gripping " character themes and " One @-@ Winged Angel " in particular as contributing factors . They also named " One @-@ Winged Angel " as the best piece of music from the entire Final Fantasy series .

The original CDs for both releases were only published in Japan and include only Japanese track names . The English track names were later published on iTunes .

Track listing

= = = = Reunion Tracks = = = =

Final Fantasy VII Reunion Tracks is a single CD disc album that comprises a selection of tracks from Final Fantasy VII Original Soundtrack . It was initially released through DigiCube on October 22 , 1997 and later reissued by Square Enix on February 23 , 2005 . While the record was never published outside Japan , the music is available in the North American iTunes Store . All of the pieces are the same as on the Original Soundtrack except for " Main Theme of Final Fantasy VII " , " One CD Winged Angel " , and " Aerith 's Theme " , which were re CD recorded with an orchestra and choir . Some versions of the album also contain a hidden pregap track , which can be accessed by rewinding from the start of the album . This track is an instrumental version of " One CD Winged Angel " without the choir . The new arrangements were created by Shir? Hamaguchi . The album spans 1 : 12 : 24 over 19 tracks .

Final Fantasy VII Reunion Tracks reached # 20 on the Japan Oricon charts . It received mixed reviews . Gann liked the newly orchestrated tracks , calling them " incredibly well CD done orchestrations " , and said that " depending on how willing you are to spend money " they made the album worth purchasing on their own , although he felt the other tracks offered nothing new to owners of the original soundtrack . Chris of Square Enix Music Online , however , felt that while the orchestrated tracks were well CD done , the selection of the other tracks was poor and that the album as a whole was " a lousy purchase for most who enjoyed Final Fantasy VII 's score " .

=== Piano Collections ===

Piano Collections Final Fantasy VII is an album featuring piano arrangements of selected Final Fantasy VII pieces composed by Nobuo Uematsu , arranged by Shir? Hamaguchi , and performed by Seiji Honda . The album was released through DigiCube on December 3 , 2003 and later reissued by Square Enix on May 10 , 2004 . It covers a duration of 47 : 37 over 13 tracks . The album includes light CD hearted tracks as well as slower , more emotional pieces , covering a variety of genres such as marches , new CD age themes , and jazz . Unlike previous and subsequent Final Fantasy piano albums , Piano Collections Final Fantasy VII was produced many years after the release of the original game . As three of the tracks from this album were reused in the soundtrack to Final Fantasy VII Advent Children , it has been speculated that the album was produced with the intention to provide tunes for Advent Children .

Piano Collections Final Fantasy VII reached # 228 on the Japan Oricon charts and was well received by reviewers , with Gann raving that the pieces were fun to listen to , the performer was " amazing " , the choice of tracks was " excellent " , and the album as a whole was a " spectacular CD " . Sophia of Soundtrack Central concurred and stated that the album was " quite fulfilling to listen to " and that it surpassed her expectations .

=== Advent Children ===

Final Fantasy VII Advent Children is the 2005 CGI film sequel to the original game , and the beginning of the Compilation of Final Fantasy VII . Its soundtrack album , Final Fantasy VII Advent Children Original Soundtrack , was released on September 28 , 2005 , containing new material created specifically for the movie , as well as arrangements of tunes from the Final Fantasy VII soundtrack . Both the original tracks and the arrangements cover a variety of musical styles , including orchestral , choral , classical piano , and rock music ; Variety noted that the styles vary between " sparse piano noodlings , pop metal thrashings and cloying power ballads " . The tracks were composed by Nobuo Uematsu , Keiji Kawamori , Kenichiro Fukui , and Tsuyoshi Sekito , and arranged by Fukui , Sekito , Kawamori , Shir? Hamaguchi , and Kazuhiko Toyama . The song " Calling " from 1989 by former Boøwy vocalist Kyosuke Himuro was used in the film 's credits . Some of the piano tracks are longer than what was included in the movie . The album spans 26 tracks on two discs , covers a duration of 1 : 21 : 41 . In addition to the regular release , a limited edition was produced with a foil slipcover . The album reached position # 15 on the Japanese Oricon music charts , and stayed on the charts for 10 weeks .

A mini CD album titled Final Fantasy VII Advent Children Complete Mini Album was released on

April 10 , 2009 to coincide with the release of the Final Fantasy VII Advent Children Complete version of the movie . The new release of the movie included a new ending theme , " Safe and Sound " , Kyosuke Himuro and My Chemical Romance singer Gerard Way , and replaced " Water " with a new song , " Anxious Heart " . The mini @-@ album was five tracks and 29 : 17 long . The included tracks on the album were new versions of " The Chase of Highway " , " Those Who Fight Further " , " Sign " , " Advent : One @-@ Winged Angel " , and " On the Way to a Smile " , a piece from the Final Fantasy VII @-@ based anime On the Way to a Smile . A larger album , Final Fantasy VII Advent Children Complete : Reunion Tracks , was released with 21 tracks on September 16 , 2009 . This album contains the tracks from the mini @-@ album , as well as several pieces that were lengthened for the Complete film version but not rearranged . Reunion Tracks appeared on the Oricon charts for a single week at position # 108 .

Final Fantasy VII Advent Children Original Soundtrack was well received by critics . Gann said that Final Fantasy fans have " no excuse " not to buy the album and noted that his only disappointments were that three of the tracks were the same as on the Piano Collections album , and that as a film score , some of the shifts in the pieces make less sense outside of the context of the visuals . Chris Carle of IGN called it a " jagged but beautiful blend of opera , metal and electronica " , and a " richly @-@ layered , complex and utterly listenable soundtrack " while praising the variety of musical styles used and the quality of the pieces . In contrast to Gann , he felt that " divorced from the film , the score is still amazingly listenable " .

Track listing

= = = Dirge of Cerberus = = =

Dirge of Cerberus : Final Fantasy VII was released for the PlayStation 2 in January 2006 , and its soundtrack , Dirge of Cerberus : Final Fantasy VII Original Soundtrack , was released a month later . The tracks were composed by Masashi Hamauzu and orchestrations were provided by Yoshihisa Hirano , making it the first Final Fantasy VII @-@ related soundtrack to not include new material from Nobuo Uematsu . Koji Haishima conducted the Tokyo Philharmonic Orchestra , which performed the music for around half of the album . The soundtrack also contains the songs " Longing " and " Redemption " by Japanese musician and actor Gackt , and was released through the artist 's ex label , Nippon Crown . The album contains a mix of orchestral and rock tracks , with some orchestral performances of slow compositions and marches and both styles of music used for faster @-@ paced " threatening " and " dynamic " tunes . GameSpot describes the music as ranging from " quiet , almost nonexistent ambient tunes to dramatic , orchestrated tracks " . The album was launched on February 15 , 2006 , and spans 53 tracks over two discs , covering a duration of 2 : 14 : 22 . The limited edition of the soundtrack includes a case which is designed to hold the soundtrack , along with the game disc and the limited edition of the " Redemption " single and associated DVD , although these other albums must be purchased separately .

Dirge of Cerberus : Final Fantasy VII Original Soundtrack was given mixed reviews from critics . Gann called it " solid , [...] , but not awe @-@ inspiring " and dismissed the limited edition extras as not worth the purchase . Eduardo of Square Enix Music Online , however , described it as " nearly perfect " and said that he " can , and will , run out of positive adjectives to describe the Dirge of Cerberus Final Fantasy VII Original Soundtrack . It 's a work of genius " . The album reached position # 19 on the Oricon charts .

Track listing

= = = Dirge of Cerberus Multiplayer Mode = = =

The Japanese version of Dirge of Cerberus included a multiplayer mode absent from other releases , which contained music tracks not used in the single @-@ player game . Dirge of Cerberus : Final Fantasy VII Multiplayer Mode Original Sound Collections is a download @-@ only soundtrack album for the multiplayer tracks released through the Japanese iTunes Store and the Square Enix Music Download website on August 22 , 2006 . It spans 1 : 07 : 07 over 27 tracks . The soundtrack

includes all the music from the multiplayer mode and some music from the single @-@ player game which did not appear on the previous soundtrack album , including two tracks composed by Ryo Yamazaki for the North American release of the game .

Eduardo of Square Enix Music Online also appreciated Dirge of Cerberus : Final Fantasy VII Multiplayer Mode Original Sound Collections , saying that it accented the Original Soundtrack well and that " Hamauzu and Yamazaki have delivered strongly and , with a decent mix of electronica , orchestral music , and rock , the entirety of the Dirge of Cerberus musical experience cannot be missed " .

= = = Crisis Core = = =

Crisis Core : Final Fantasy VII Original Soundtrack is the soundtrack of the game Crisis Core : Final Fantasy VII . It was released on October 10 , 2007 by Warner Music Japan and covers 55 tracks over two discs with a total duration of 2 : 20 : 59 . The music was primarily composed by Takeharu Ishimoto , with a few tracks provided by Kazuhiko Toyama . It was Ishimoto 's second major work , after the soundtrack to The World Ends with You ; the only titles he had composed for previously were World Fantasia , a little @-@ known soccer game for which he was a co @-@ composer , and the cell phone game Before Crisis : Final Fantasy VII . The tracks composed by Ishimoto cover a range of moods , from " harsh and in @-@ your @-@ face " to " stunning and lovely " , but were primarily used as ambient background music . The soundtrack also includes a large number of arrangements of tunes from the original Final Fantasy VII score , as well as a theme song entitled " Why " , performed by Ayaka . A variety of musical instruments were used for the soundtrack , including piano and synthesizers , but critics noted that Ishimoto used guitars , both electronic and acoustic , more and better than any previous Final Fantasy soundtrack .

Crisis Core : Final Fantasy VII Original Soundtrack received mixed reviews by critics , with Don of Square Enix Music Online stating that while some of Ishimoto 's and all of Toyama 's arrangements were excellent , the original pieces that made up the bulk of the album offered " very little that is actually worth a listen " . Gann was more lenient , praising Ishimoto for writing " an excellent soundtrack " and being especially happy with the quality of the arrangements of Uematsu 's pieces . Gann did , however , note that because Ishimoto 's original works were more ambient , his arrangements , and by extension Uematsu 's work , far outshone his own new contributions . He also felt that the theme song " Why " was " generic " and " bland " . Sophia Tong of IGN described the album as a " mixed bag " , stating that some of the arrangements and new tracks were " fantastic " while others were " not all that compelling " , and lamented the overuse of a few themes throughout the soundtrack .

Track listing

= = = Before Crisis and Last Order = = =

Before Crisis : Final Fantasy VII & Last Order : Final Fantasy VII Original Soundtrack is the combined soundtrack album of the original video animation Last Order : Final Fantasy VII and the game Before Crisis : Final Fantasy VII . Before Crisis serves as a prequel to Final Fantasy VII while Last Order is a side story to Final Fantasy VII , showing some of the same story elements from Crisis Core and Final Fantasy VII from an alternate viewpoint . The album spans 27 tracks , of which the first 12 are from the game and the remainder are from the animation . The album was released on December 19 , 2007 by Square Enix , and was mainly composed by Ishimoto , with some tunes based on works from Final Fantasy VII by Uematsu . Many of the pieces composed for the two works were used either directly or in an arranged form in Crisis Core . As this soundtrack album was released after the soundtrack to Crisis Core , these pieces were generally not included in the Before Crisis album . The album covers a duration of 63 : 48 .

Before Crisis : Final Fantasy VII & Last Order : Final Fantasy VII Original Soundtrack was poorly received by critics . Gann said that " the whole album is a flop compared to the quality composition of Crisis Core " and that the contents of the album were " the leftovers , B @-@ Sides , and less

@-@ impressive tracks from Ishimoto 's arsenal of FFXIII music " , especially as many tracks were used in the Crisis Core soundtrack and not repeated in this album . Chris (also known as " Dark Cloud ") of Square Enix Music Online agreed , saying that the album " is probably one of the worst I 've heard in a very long time " and recommended it only for listeners who like " loud music without much creativity " .

= = Legacy = =

The Black Mages , a now defunct band led by Nobuo Uematsu that arranged music from the Final Fantasy series into a rock music style , has arranged four pieces from Final Fantasy VII . These are " J @-@ E @-@ N @-@ O @-@ V @-@ A " and " Those Who Fight Further " from The Black Mages , published in 2003 , " Advent One @-@ Winged Angel " from Final Fantasy VII Advent Children Original Soundtrack and " Opening ~ Bombing Mission " from Darkness and Starlight , published in 2008 . Music from Final Fantasy VII has also been used in other games , such as the fighting game Ehrgeiz , and the Kingdom Hearts series .

Uematsu continues to perform certain pieces in the Dear Friends -Music from Final Fantasy- concert series . The music of Final Fantasy VII has also appeared in various official concerts and live albums , such as 20020220 Music from Final Fantasy , a live recording of an orchestra performing music from the series including " Aerith 's Theme " and " One @-@ Winged Angel " . Additionally , several pieces from the game were performed by the New Japan Philharmonic Orchestra in the Tour de Japon : Music from Final Fantasy concert series , and in the Video Games Live international concert series . The Advent Children version of " One @-@ Winged Angel " was performed at the Press Start -Symphony of Games- 2007 concerts in Yokohama and Osaka , Japan , while The Black Mages performed " Those Who Fight Further " at the Extra : Hyper Game Music Event 2007 concert in Tokyo on July 7 , 2007 . Independent but officially licensed releases of Final Fantasy VII music have been composed by such groups as Project Majestic Mix , which focuses on arranging video game music . Selections also appear on Japanese remix albums , called d?jin music , and on English remixing websites , such as OverClocked ReMix . On September 14 , 2007 , the OverClocked ReMix community released an unofficial tribute album titled Voices of the Lifestream , a compilation containing 45 arrangements of Final Fantasy VII music . Aerith 's Theme was voted into Classic FM 's 2012 HOF in 16th place out of 300 compositions .