

= Music of Lightning Returns : Final Fantasy XIII =

The music for the 2013 action role @-@ playing game Lightning Returns : Final Fantasy XIII , developed and published by Square Enix , was composed by Masashi Hamauzu , Naoshi Mizuta , and Mitsuto Suzuki . Hamauzu was the leader composer for XIII and XIII @-@ 2 , and Mizuta and Suzuki previously composed music for XIII @-@ 2 . Musicians who had previously worked with the composers on XIII @-@ 2 and The 3rd Birthday worked on the project in Japan , while the main soundtrack was performed and recorded in Boston by the Video Game Orchestra , conducted by Shota Nakama . Along with including more percussion and ethnic elements , the soundtrack used " Blinded by Light " , the main theme for main character Lightning , as a leitmotif . Unlike the previous XIII games , the soundtrack did not include a theme song , as the composers felt it would detract from the emotional impact of the ending .

Three albums have been released : the promotional Lightning Returns : Final Fantasy XIII Pre Soundtrack in July 2013 , the Lightning Returns : Final Fantasy XIII Original Soundtrack in November 2013 , and Lightning Returns : Final Fantasy XIII Soundtrack Plus in March 2014 . The music has received a mostly positive response from reviewers . The main soundtrack , despite some tracks being critiqued , was generally praised as a good selection of music and a fitting conclusion to the music of the Final Fantasy XIII series . It was also praised by reviewers of the game as a whole . The Soundtrack Plus album was reviewed less favorably . Both commercial albums sold well enough to be placed on the Oricon charts , with the Original Soundtrack reaching # 29 and remaining on the charts for four weeks .

= = Concept and creation = =

The music of Lightning Returns was composed by Masashi Hamauzu , who composed the music for Final Fantasy XIII , Naoshi Mizuta and Mitsuto Suzuki , who co @-@ composed the music for Final Fantasy XIII @-@ 2 with Hamauzu . Japanese band Language was also contracted by Suzuki to help with recording and remixing . Several of the musicians in Japan had worked with the composers before on XIII @-@ 2 and The 3rd Birthday . Recording took place at the Mixer 's Lab recording studios in Tokyo . The Video Game Orchestra , founded by Shota Nakama , was contracted by Hamauzu to perform , record and mix the orchestral music at their studio on Boston . According to Hamauzu , they were his first and only choice for recording the score . Nakama received the final score in April 2013 , and Hamauzu was regularly at the studios to help with the recording process . Nakama was told by Hamauzu that he was allowed to do as he wished unless he did something " really wacky " , with Hamauzu relying on Nakama and mostly interacting and working on their tracks if he disliked some aspect of them . The orchestra worked on nearly all of Hamauzu 's music , including the opening and ending themes .

The score was created with far more percussion than previous entries in the series , and featured " Blinded by Light " , a recurring theme in the XIII games related to the series ' central character Lightning , as a leitmotif . The theme was meant to emphasize the focus on Lightning , with several tracks relating directly to her . Unspecified ethnic musical elements were also incorporated . Each composer worked on one of the four game 's key locations . Due to the game 's day @-@ night cycle , different music was composed for morning , afternoon , evening and nighttime . The thirteen @-@ minute @-@ long final boss theme was meant to reference the title 's numeral . Hamauzu wrote " Crimson Blitz " , the first piece of the score and one of the game 's battle themes , while on tour in Switzerland . Unlike the previous two games , Lightning Returns did not feature a theme song as it was felt that this would diminish the emotional impact of the ending . Instead , the composers created a purely orchestral piece . The final theme , " Epilogue " , was co @-@ composed by Hamauzu and Nakama . It was based on the concept of the XIII games coming to an end , and so was intended to convey the themes and atmosphere of the soundtrack . Nakama created multiple versions of the piece and sent them to Hamauzu , who performed alterations and made the final choice . The game also featured multiple musical Easter eggs , including tunes from previous entries in the franchise .

= = Lightning Returns : Final Fantasy XIII Original Soundtrack = =

The main soundtrack album , Lightning Returns : Final Fantasy XIII Original Soundtrack , was released on four compact discs on November 21 , 2013 . It was released by Square Enix under the catalog number SQEX @-@ 10392 ~ 5 , and the album features seventy @-@ four tracks spanning 5 : 07 : 27 . The first disc is devoted to the opening section and the city of Luxerion ; the second disc deals with the Dead Dunes and Wildlands ; the third covers the city of Yusnaan and important themes leading up to the game 's conclusion ; the fourth disc covers the final section of the game . Three tracks from the album , " Crimson Blitz " , " The Savior " , and " Lightning Returns " , were digitally released as singles on iTunes . Further samples from the track were released on a disc of Square Enix music sold as a promotion at Tokyo Game Show 2013 . Tracks from Lightning Returns , along with XIII and XIII @-@ 2 , were also included on a special disc released with the Japan @-@ exclusive " Lightning Ultimate box " , a package containing all three XIII games . The soundtrack album reached # 29 on the Oricon charts and remained on the charts for four weeks .

Reviews of the album have been positive . Derek Heemsbergen of RPGFan praised the consistency of the soundtrack both when compared to XIII @-@ 2 and the variety of locations . He said that the recurring motifs in the soundtrack " work to great effect " , noting how the tracks related to Lightning helped explore her personality . His highest praise went to the final disc due to " its sheer emotional intensity " . Despite the general praise , some tracks , such as " Marimba de Chocobo " , came in for minor critiques . Christopher Huynh of Video Game Music Online was also positive , noting the high production values of the album . He also generally praised the themes used both in battle and for the various locations , though he felt that the Dead Dunes tracks were the weakest on the album . His reaction to the new and rearranged characters ' themes were more mixed , with him praising " Snow 's Theme " while calling " Fang 's Theme " a " very odd and jarring failure " . The final disc also received high praise , with Huynn saying that it " succeeds at closing out the series on an emotional high " .

Reviewers of the game also noted and praised the soundtrack , despite giving more mixed opinions on other aspects of the game . Jeremy Parish , writing for USGamer , called the music " phenomenal from start to finish " . Destructoid 's Dale North called the music " fantastic , and even more varied than the previous Final Fantasy XIII games " . Bradley Hale of Hardcore Gamer was also positive , saying that the music " does an effective job at blending old jams with new ones , with the arrangements of already known songs being interesting , and new tunes coming off as far more inspiring and emotion @-@ filled than those found in XIII @-@ 2 . "

Tracklist

= = Lightning Returns : Final Fantasy XIII Original Soundtrack Plus = =

A bonus album , Lightning Returns : Final Fantasy XIII Soundtrack Plus , was released on March 26 , 2014 . The album features remixes of tracks from the main album or tracks present in the game that were not released on the album . The remixes were done by Mizuta , Suzuki , Kengo Tokusashi , Wollny Andreas , Hiroshi Kaneko . Released under the catalog number SQEX @-@ 10430 , the album features 25 tracks with a total running time of 1 : 13 : 31 . The album reached # 211 on the Oricon charts , remaining there for one week .

RPGFan 's Neal Chandran was mostly negative regarding the album . He called the majority of tracks " just plain boring " , while he felt that the more exiting tunes " lack punch " . Some pieces such as " Captive Saint " he called " superficially pretty , but that 's really it " , while the remixes of music pieces by Uematsu he called " brief , but awful " . Huynh shared many points of criticism with Chandran , finding multiple tracks boring as they were just slight variations on tracks from the main soundtrack album , though some tracks such as " Dying World " and the piano version of " Serah 's Theme " were praised .

= = Lightning Returns : Final Fantasy XIII Pre Soundtrack = =

A promotional album , Lightning Returns : Final Fantasy XIII Pre Soundtrack , was released on July 13 , 2013 . It contains six tracks from the game , three of which did not yet have an official title . The other three were the tracks that had then received a digital release . The album was available at a special Square Enix event at United States of Odaiba 2013 as a limited promotion for Lightning Returns .