

= Final Fantasy VIII =

Final Fantasy VIII ( ??????????VIII , Fainaru Fantaj? Eito ) is a 1999 role @-@ playing video game developed and published by Square ( now Square Enix ) . It is the eighth major installment in the Final Fantasy series . The game was the series ' second 3D installment and the first to consistently use realistically proportioned characters , and introduced a new magic system to the Final Fantasy franchise which removed magic point @-@ based spell @-@ casting . Set on an unnamed fantasy world with science fiction elements , the game follows the story of a group of young mercenaries , led by Squall Leonhart , who are part of an organization named SeeD . Initially traveling to different countries to stop the sorceress Edea , their goal changes to stop a sorceress from the future named Ultimecia from compressing time .

The development of Final Fantasy VIII began in 1997 , during the English localization process of Final Fantasy VII . It was produced by Shinji Hashimoto , and directed by Yoshinori Kitase . The music was scored by regular series composer Nobuo Uematsu , and in a series first a vocal piece was written as the game 's theme , " Eyes on Me " , performed by Faye Wong . The game was positively received by critics , who praised the originality and scope of the game . It was voted the 22nd @-@ best game of all time in 2006 by readers of the Japanese magazine Famitsu . The game was a commercial success ; 13 weeks after its release , Final Fantasy VIII had earned more than US \$ 50 million in sales , making it the fastest @-@ selling Final Fantasy title of all time until Final Fantasy XIII , a multi @-@ platform release . The game shipped 8 @.@ 15 million copies worldwide by March 31 , 2003 . Originally for the PlayStation , it was later ported to Windows @-@ based personal computers and became available on PlayStation Network as a PSone Classics title in 2009 . As of December 2013 , it has sold over 8 @.@ 5 million copies worldwide .

= = Gameplay = =

Like previous games in the Final Fantasy series , Final Fantasy VIII consists of three main modes of play : the world map , field map , and battle screen . Like previous titles , players navigate a single character across a small scale rendering of the game world between various towns and dungeons , which is rendered in 3D like Final Fantasy VII . Along with getting around traditionally by foot , by Chocobo , and by airship , Final Fantasy VIII also allows players to travel by car , by train , and via a Mobile Garden . Players must make progress in the game 's story to obtain the airship and Mobile Garden , while chocobos can be acquired from special forests on the world map . Cars , which are similar to chocobos in that they can avoid fights , must be rented from cities that offer them and characters must carry reserve fuel with them to prevent them running out , while trains can be only be used by boarding at stations in settlements or on the world map , and paying a fee for the ride . On the field map , players navigate controllable 3D characters around one or more 2D pre @-@ rendered backgrounds , which represent environmental locations such as towns or forests . The battle screen is a 3D model of a location such as a street or room , where turn @-@ based fights between playable characters and CPU @-@ controlled enemies take place when triggered on either the world map or field map .

While common features from previous titles remain , such as the menu @-@ driven interfaces , other elements received extensive changes or were removed , with Final Fantasy VIII including brand new features that are exclusive to it . One such new feature is the Junction system , which relinquishes the need for the typical weapon and armor systems used in previous titles in place of a system that allows for extensive optimization of a character 's stats and abilities . Another new feature is the inclusion of a collectible card @-@ based minigame called " Triple Triad " .

= = = Junction System & Magic = = =

Final Fantasy VIII uses a unique battle system known as the " Junction System " , which acts as a substitute for armour and accessories used in previous titles , allowing a player to enhance the characters ' statistics and determine what Commands a character will use in battles . The system is

based upon the game 's version of the classic summon @-@ able monsters of the Final Fantasy series , referred to in @-@ game as " Guardian Forces " ( or " GFs " ) , wherein assigning at least one GF onto a character via " junctioning " allows for enhancements of stats through magic spells , the allocation of different Character / Party abilities , and the ability to use Battle Commands beyond the default of " Attack " ; all GFs can allow a character to use various different Commands , with the most common being " Magic " , " GF " ( to summon the junctioned GF in battle ) , " Item " and " Draw " ( to draw magic spells from a draw point or an enemy ) . While whatever GF ( s ) are junctioned to a character , determines what stats can be enhanced and what commands and abilities can be set , what kind of enhancement is made to each stat available depends on what magic spells are junctioned to it , that the character has acquired . Whereas in previous titles , characters bought or acquired spells on their journeys and used magic points to cast them , characters in Final Fantasy VIII acquire spells by drawing and stocking them from either Draw Points in the game 's environments or from enemies , or refining them from items ; spells drawn from enemies can be cast , rather than stocked . Each character can stock magic into a quantified inventory , but are limited to carrying around 32 distinct spells , and 100 of each spell .

Junctioning magic to a stat to enhance it , improves a character and makes them more effective in battles ; improving Strength , for example , increases the amount of damage done to an enemy , while improving speed , charges a character 's ATB gauge more quickly . How much of an enhancement is made depends on the spell junctioned to a stat , for example , junctioning Fire to Strength garners a better improvement than Cure . Players can also perform Elemental Junctions , which can enhance a character 's physical attack with an element type while improving their defences to element types , even nullifying or absorbing elemental damage , as well as performing Status Junctions , which can allow a character to inflict a status ailment on enemies or defend against such ailments being inflicted on them . Such junctions rely on a % value , to determine how effective it is ; players can only junction one elemental and status ailment spell to attack , but up to four for defence . Players can either manually assign spells , or have them automatically assigned depending on the type of allocation - Attack will ensure a character makes strong physical attacks , Magic will ensure they inflict stronger magical damage , and Defence ensures they boost the Hit Points more .

= = = Guardian Forces = = =

The most common use of summoned creatures was always to summon one to perform a single devastating attack during battle and / or action , so expanding their use by providing them additional roles in Final Fantasy VIII was a significant departure for the Final Fantasy series . In the game , a GF serves as not only a powerful ally for the character / party in battles , but also as a potent support asset in and out of battles ; in addition to their role in the Junction System , GFs can also earn EXP to increase their levels to improve them when summoned in battles , and can acquire AP to help them learn additional abilities to those they know ; by default , a GF acquired either from the field or drawn from certain fights , will usually already have a number of abilities learned and be set at a level close to the active party 's average level . Abilities that a GF can use to further assist the player during the game , are divided into five categories - Junction Abilities , Commands Abilities , Character / Party Abilities , GF Abilities & Menu Abilities . Learning new Junctions provides more stats that can be enhanced by magic spells , learning new Commands provide additional battle commands for a character to use , while learning Character / Party abilities provide additional abilities for use during battles and the game 's environments . Learning GF abilities provide enhancements to their HP and to their attack power if they do damaging attacks . Learning Menu abilities provides the means for players to refine items and card into new items or magic spells , along with other useful benefits . A GF can learn a new ability by acquiring AP from battles , though the amount needed varies depending on the ability itself , or can be taught one through an item acquired by players during the game , even if they cannot learn it themselves with AP . All GFs have a limit on the amount of abilities they can learn - upon reaching this limit , they cannot learn a new one without forgetting one they currently know .

GFs work differently to summon @-@ able monsters when used in battles ; not only must a character have a GF junctioned to them to use it , but they must also have the " GF " command assigned as well in order to summon them . In battle , when a GF is summoned by a character , the character 's name , HP , and ATB gauge is replaced by the GF 's name , HP and Summon Gauge , until it is summoned and performs its attack / action . Until the Summon Gauge is emptied completely , the GF takes the place of the character and receives any damage directed to them ; if the GF loses all their HP before the gauge is empty , it is KO 'ed and cannot be summoned until revived .

= = = Weapons & Limit breaks = = =

Whereas players had to often buy new weapons to replace existing ones for better damage and other improvements in previous titles , each major character in Final Fantasy VIII carries a unique weapon which cannot be replaced , but can be upgraded to a stronger version , affecting its appearance , power , and the % value of landing a hit . In order to upgrade a weapon , players must visit a " Junk Shop " ( the game 's equivalent of the traditional weapon shop ) in any of the world 's towns and cities , and not only pay a small fee , but also provide the necessary materials for it which are detailed within a series of in @-@ game weapon magazines . These materials are acquired from either enemies in battle or refining items .

In addition to a unique weapon , each character also has a unique special attack , or " Limit Break " , which operate in a similar manner to the Desperation Attacks of Final Fantasy VI . Unlike in Final Fantasy VII , where a character had to receive sufficient damage to trigger a limit , Limit Breaks are triggered when a character 's health is low or the character is under the influence of the spell Aura , can be prevented from triggering if the player is under certain status afflictions , and is merely an option besides attack when available . For one character , Rinoa , most of her Limit Breaks activate randomly under certain conditions and are not triggered by low health or Aura .

Final Fantasy VIII is the first game in the series to introduce interactive elements to complement some characters Limit Break animations . These interactive elements range from selecting a target and making simple button presses , to well @-@ timed button inputs or performing button combos , with successful application resulting in more damage being done . For other characters , even temporary additions , their Limit Breaks either require simple activation or making choice of what to use . For the main characters , their Limit Breaks are influenced or improved in certain ways - Squall learns a new finishing move by upgrading his weapon ; Quistis learns new abilities by using certain items acquired ; Irvine needs ammo to use his , but can use different types ; Zell and Rinoa learn new moves from certain in @-@ game magazines , though the latter must have her dog learn it while being part of the active party .

= = = Experience Points System & Level @-@ Scaling = = =

Final Fantasy VIII uses a levelling @-@ up system quite that is quite different from the traditional one used in previous games in the series . While the system has similarities to those in previous games , in which characters are awarded EXP after battling and defeating enemies , who are predominantly encountered randomly , and which contribute to the continued strengthening and level @-@ gaining of the characters , the system used in the games has major differences . Whereas gaining new levels required ever @-@ increasing amounts of EXP to achieve ( e.g. , getting to level 2 might require 200 experience points , level 3 might require 400 , etc . ) , in Final Fantasy VIII a level is earned after accumulating 1000 EXP , while improvements to stats through level @-@ gain is minimal at best , emphasizing the need to rely on the game 's Junction System instead for better stats . The amount of EXP earned in a battle is the same for each character , except the one who inflicts the final blow that wins it ; that character receives a small bonus to the EXP that they earned . Furthermore , Bosses do not give any EXP , but do give significant amounts of AP .

Just as the characters level up and become stronger , so too do the enemies around the game

world . Most enemies are scaled up in level to the average level of the active party , making them tougher in battles , which is in direct contrast to previous titles in the Final Fantasy series , in fact most RPGs , where enemies from previously visited locations in the game are often weak and easily defeated . However , some enemies do not receive level @-@ scaling , and as such remain at static levels ; some can be at weaker levels , others at higher , stronger levels . Enemies at higher levels become capable of inflicting and withstanding significantly more damage , may have additional special attacks , and will often carry either additional or new levels of magic spells on them .

= = Story = =

= = = Setting and characters = = =

Most of Final Fantasy VIII is set on an unnamed fantasy world with one moon . The game primarily consists of modern elements , but does contain some futuristic elements . The planet contains five major landmasses , with Esthar , the largest , covering most of the eastern portion of the map . Galbadia , the second @-@ largest continent , lies to the west , and contains many of the game 's locations . The northernmost landmass is Trabia , an Arctic region . Positioned roughly in the middle of the world map lies Balamb , the smallest continent , the island on which the game begins . The remaining landmass is small and mostly desolate , riddled with rough , rocky terrain caused by the impact of a " Lunar Cry " , an event where monsters from the moon fall to the planet . The southernmost landmass includes an archipelago of broken sections of land that have drifted apart . Islands and marine structures flesh out the rest of the game world , and a handful of off @-@ world locations round out the game 's playable areas .

The six primary protagonists of Final Fantasy VIII are : Squall Leonhart , a loner who keeps his focus on his duty to avoid vulnerability ; Rinoa Heartilly , an outspoken and passionate young woman who follows her heart in all situations ; Quistis Trepe , an instructor with a serious , patient attitude ; Zell Dincht , a martial artist with a passion for hot dogs ; Selphie Tilmitt , a cheerful girl who loves trains and pilots the airship Ragnarok ; and Irvine Kinneas , a marksman and consummate ladies ' man . Temporarily playable characters include Laguna Loire , Kiros Seagill , and Ward Zabac , who appear in " flashback " sequences , and antagonists Seifer Almasy and Edea Kramer .

= = = Plot = = =

When the game begins , Squall and Seifer duel in a training session outside the Balamb Garden military academy , scarring each other in the process . Meanwhile , Galbadia invades the Dollet Dukedom , forcing Dollet to hire assistance from the Balamb Garden branch of " SeeD " , Garden 's elite mercenary force . SeeD uses the mission as a final exam for its cadets ; with the help of his instructor , Quistis , Squall passes the mission 's prerequisite and is grouped with Seifer and Zell . Seifer disobeys orders and abandons his team , forcing Selphie to accompany Squall and Zell for the duration of the mission . After the mission , SeeD halts the Galbadian advance ; Squall , Zell , and Selphie graduate to SeeD status , while Seifer is disciplined for his disobedience . During the graduation party , Squall meets Rinoa , whose personality is apparently the opposite of his . When assigned with Zell and Selphie to help Rinoa 's resistance faction in Galbadian @-@ occupied Timber , Squall learns that a sorceress named Edea is behind Galbadia 's recent hostilities . Under orders from Balamb and Galbadia Gardens , Squall and his comrades ? joined by Rinoa , Quistis , and Irvine ? attempt to assassinate Edea . However , the sorceress thwarts the attempt , stabbing Squall in the shoulder with an ice shard , and the party is detained . During the attempt , Squall 's party also learns that Seifer has left Garden to become Edea 's second @-@ in @-@ command .

After the team escapes along with a conscious Squall , Edea launches a missile attack on Trabia Garden . Fearing that Balamb Garden is the next target of Edea 's plan , the team splits into two units . Squall 's group returns to Balamb to warn of the attack , but must first stop an internal Garden conflict incited by NORG , SeeD 's financier . Selphie 's team travels to the Missile Base to stop the

launch , but fails . Squall inadvertently activates Balamb Garden 's " mobile fortress " form , allowing the facility to evade the missiles ; however , unable to control the Garden , it collides with the docks at Fishermans ' Horizon . While local technicians repair the Garden , the Galbadian Army invade in search of a girl named Ellone , who had been staying at Balamb Garden until recently . Ellone eventually escapes to Esthar , the world 's technological superpower . During Squall 's meeting with Ellone , he learns that she had been " sending " him and his allies into flashbacks set 17 years in the past in a vain effort to alter the present . The scenes center on Laguna and his two friends , Kiros and Ward . During the flashbacks , Laguna changes from a Galbadian soldier to the defender of a country village , then moves from being the leader of a resistance movement against Sorceress Adel to the President of Esthar .

Meanwhile , Squall confronts his personal anxieties fueled by ongoing developments , such as Headmaster Cid appointing him as SeeD 's new leader , and his increasing attraction to Rinoa . While investigating Trabia Garden 's wreckage , Squall and his comrades learn that they , along with Seifer and Ellone , were all raised ( except for Rinoa ) in an orphanage run by Edea ; after eventual separation , they later developed amnesia due to their use of Guardian Forces . It is also revealed that Cid and Edea had established Garden and SeeD primarily to defeat corrupt sorceresses . After these revelations , the forces of Balamb Garden and the Galbadian Army , led by Squall and Seifer respectively , engage in battle above the orphanage . After Balamb defeats Galbadia , the player learns that Edea is merely an unwilling tool for " Ultimecia " , a powerful sorceress from the future who wishes to compress time into a single moment ; it is for this reason she has sought Ellone . Edea loses a decisive battle against the SeeD , forcing Ultimecia to transfer her powers to Rinoa ; Edea survives , but Rinoa enters a coma . Squall becomes obsessed with waking her and goes to Esthar to find Ellone , as he believes that she can help save Rinoa .

While Rinoa is being treated on Esthar 's space station , Ultimecia uses her to free Sorceress Adel from her orbital prison . Ultimecia then orders Seifer to activate the Lunatic Pandora facility , inciting a rain of creatures from the moon that sends Adel 's containment device to the planet . Having selected Adel as her next host , Ultimecia abandons Rinoa in outer space . Squall rescues her , and they return to the planet on a derelict starship . Upon their landing , delegates from Esthar isolate Rinoa for fear of her sorceress abilities , forcing Squall to rescue her . They are met by the President of Esthar who reveals himself to be Laguna and apologizes for the incident and announces Dr. Odine 's plan to let Ultimecia possess Rinoa , have Ellone send Rinoa ( and thus Ultimecia as well ) to the past and then retrieve only Rinoa back to the present , enabling Ultimecia to achieve Time Compression , as it would allow Squall 's group to confront Ultimecia in her time . To do this , Squall 's team infiltrates Lunatic Pandora , defeats Seifer and Adel , and has Rinoa inherit Adel 's sorceress powers . Time Compression is thus initiated ; Squall and his allies travel to Ultimecia 's era and defeat her .

With Ultimecia defeated , the universe begins returning to normal ; however , Squall is nearly lost in the flow of time as he witnesses the origins of the game 's story , ghostly , sporadic apparitions of Rinoa , and a faceless portrait of himself . When a dying Ultimecia travels back in time to pass her powers to Edea , Squall informs Edea of the concepts of Garden and SeeD that she will create . Afterward , he is able to properly recollect his memories and thus return to the present with Rinoa 's help . The end cinematic depicts the events after Squall 's return to the present . Seifer , no longer a Garden member , is once again reunited with Raijin and Fujin ; Laguna visits Raine 's grave ( and remembers his proposal to her ) along with Ellone , Ward , and Kiros ; and a celebration takes place in the Garden , with Squall and Rinoa sharing a kiss under the moonlight .

= = Development = =

Development of Final Fantasy VIII began in 1997 , during the English @-@ language translation of Final Fantasy VII . As with much of the production of Final Fantasy VII , series creator and veteran Hironobu Sakaguchi served as the executive producer , working primarily on the development of Final Fantasy : The Spirits Within and leaving direction of Final Fantasy VIII to Yoshinori Kitase . Shinji Hashimoto was assigned to be the producer in Sakaguchi 's place , while the game and battle

system were designed by Kitase and Hiroyuki Ito , respectively . The card game Triple Triad was conceived and implemented by programmer Kentarow Yasui . The concept was derived from trading cards which is a popular hobby in some parts of Japan . Triple Triad was meant to keep the player 's interest during long stretches without cutscenes . Originally , it was simply about collecting cards but Yasui considered this too disconnected from the main game and " begged " for the inclusion of an ability to transform cards into items . The game 's total development costs approximately ¥ 3 billion , with a crew of about 180 people , many of whom had previously worked on VII .

= = = Visual design = = =

From the beginning , Kitase knew he wanted a thematic combination of fantasy and realism . To this end , he aimed to include a cast of characters who appeared to be ordinary people . Character designer and battle visual director Tetsuya Nomura and art director Yusuke Naora strove to achieve this impression through the inclusion of realistically proportioned characters ? a departure from the super deformed designs used in the previous title . Additionally , Naora attempted to enhance the realism of the world through predominantly bright lighting effects with shadows distributed as appropriate . Other measures taken included implementing rental cars for travel in @-@ game , and the use of motion capture technology to give the game 's characters lifelike movements in the game 's full motion video sequences . The FMV sequences were created by a team of roughly 35 people , with the total cinematic run @-@ time being estimated at over an hour , approximately 20 minutes longer than the FMV sequences in VII .

In an interview with Famitsu , Naora described that the game was generally designed to be a " bright , fresh Final Fantasy . " The designers felt a need to invert the atmosphere of previous games in the series , which had feelings of " light emerging from darkness " . This decision was easy for the developers to make , because most of them had worked on Final Fantasy VII and felt that a new direction was acceptable . The world designs were also developed with the knowledge that most of the staff were now used to computer graphics , which was not the case with Final Fantasy VII . The developers also noted that with Final Fantasy VIII , they attempted to " mix future , real life and fantasy . " As part of a theme desired by Kitase to give the game a foreign atmosphere , various designs were given to its locations using the style of internationally familiar places , while also maintaining a fantasy atmosphere . Inspiration ranged from ancient Egyptian and Greek architecture , to the city of Paris , France , to an idealized futuristic European society . Flags were also given to some factions , their designs based on the group 's history and culture .

To maintain a foreign atmosphere , the characters of the game were designed to have predominantly European appearances . The first Final Fantasy VIII character created was Squall . Desiring to add a unique angle to Squall 's appearance and emphasize his role as the central character , Nomura gave him a scar across his brow and the bridge of his nose . As there was not yet a detailed history conceived for the character , Nomura left the explanation for Squall 's scar to scenario writer Kazushige Nojima . Squall was given a gunblade , a fictional revolver ? sword hybrid that functions primarily as a sword , with an added damaging vibration feature activated by use of its gun mechanism , similar to a vibroblade . His character design was complemented by a fur lining along the collar of his jacket , incorporated by Nomura as a challenge for the game 's full motion video designers . Additionally , some designs Nomura had previously drawn , but had not yet used in a Final Fantasy game , were incorporated into Final Fantasy VIII . These were the designs of Edea , Fujin and Raijin . The latter two had originally been designed for use in Final Fantasy VII , but with the inclusion of the Turks characters in that game , it was felt that Fujin and Raijin were unnecessary . Nomura had designed Edea before the development of Final Fantasy VII , based on the style of Yoshitaka Amano . For the Guardian Forces , Nomura felt they should be unique beings , without clothes or other human @-@ like concepts . This was problematic , as he did not want them to " become the actual monsters " , so he took great care in their design . Leviathan was the first GF , created as a test and included in a game demo . After it received a positive reaction from players , Nomura decided to create the remaining sequences in a similar fashion .

### === Story development ===

The plot of Final Fantasy VIII was conceived by Kitase , with the stories for the characters provided by Nomura and the actual scenario written by Nojima . During the game 's pre @-@ production , Nomura suggested the game be given a " school days " feel . Nojima already had a story in mind in which the main characters were the same age ; their ideas meshed , taking form as the " Garden " military academies . Nojima planned that the two playable parties featured in the game ( Squall 's present day group and Laguna 's group from the past ) would be highly contrasted with one another . This idea was conveyed through the age and experience of Laguna 's group , versus the youth and naïveté of Squall 's group . Nojima has expressed that the dynamic of players ' relationships with the protagonist is important to him . Both Final Fantasy VII and Final Fantasy VIII feature reserved , quiet protagonists in the form of Cloud Strife and Squall . With Final Fantasy VIII , however , Nojima worked to give players actual insight into what the character was thinking ; a direct contrast with his handling of Final Fantasy VII , which encouraged the player to speculate .

### === Other media ===

In March 1999 , one month after the game 's release , Final Fantasy VIII Ultimania was published , a book that features an in @-@ depth guide to Final Fantasy VIII and interviews with the developers . An origami book was released in November 1999 . On September 22 , 1999 , a CD @-@ ROM titled Final Fantasy VIII Desktop Accessories was released . It contains desktop icons , computer wallpapers , screensavers , and an e @-@ mail application . It additionally features a stand @-@ alone edition of the Triple Triad minigame , which allowed players to compete against one another via a local area network .

Also in 1999 , the ballroom dance scene of Final Fantasy VIII was featured as a technical demo for the PlayStation 2 . In 2000 , a PC version was released for Windows . This port featured smoother graphics , enhanced audio , and the inclusion of Chocobo World , a minigame starring Boko , a Chocobo featured in one of the side @-@ quests in Final Fantasy VIII . For most North American and European players , the PC version of the game was the only means of playing Chocobo World , as the game was originally designed to be played via the PocketStation , a handheld console never released outside Japan . In 2009 , Final Fantasy VIII was added to the PlayStation Store on the PlayStation Network .

On December 18 , 2012 , the game was re @-@ released as part of the Final Fantasy 25th Anniversary Ultimate Box Japanese package . A remastered PC version was announced May 17 , 2013 , and was released on Steam December 5 , 2013 .

### === Music ===

Regular series composer Nobuo Uematsu wrote the soundtrack for Final Fantasy VIII . He tried to base the songs off of the emotional content of when they would be played , asserting that expressing the emotions he desires is more important than improving skills : " I think it will be a shame if we won 't be able to cry as we play our own game " . He could not determine a character 's emotions solely based on the plot , instead using images of appearance and attire ? " It 's important to know when their emotions are at their height , but it usually takes until a month before release for them to finish the ending dialog ... ! " In response to a question by IGN music stating that the music of Final Fantasy VIII was very dark and perhaps influenced by the plot of the game , Uematsu stated " the atmosphere of music varies depending on story line , of course , but it 's also my intention to put various types of music into one game " . The absence of character themes found in the previous two games was due to Uematsu finding those of Final Fantasy VI and Final Fantasy VII ineffective . Uematsu considers it reasonable to have character themes if each character has a " highlight " in the game , but he found Final Fantasy VIII only focused on Squall Leonhart and Rinoa Heartilly as a couple , resulting in the " Eyes on Me " theme .

The original soundtrack was released on four compact discs by DigiCube in Japan on March 10 ,

1999 , and by Square EA in North America as Final Fantasy VIII Music Collection in January 2000 . It was republished worldwide by Square Enix on May 10 , 2004 . An album of orchestral arrangements of selected tracks from the game was released under the title Fithos Lusec Wecos Vinosec Final Fantasy VIII on November 19 , 1999 , by DigiCube , and subsequently published on July 22 , 2004 , by Square Enix . The pieces were arranged and conducted by Shir? Hamaguchi for a live orchestra . A collection of piano arrangements performed by Shinko Ogata was released under the title Piano Collections : Final Fantasy VIII by DigiCube on January 21 , 2000 , and subsequently re @-@ published by Square Enix on July 22 , 2004 .

The score is best known for two songs : " Liberi Fatali " , a Latin choral piece that is played during the introduction to the game , and " Eyes On Me " , a pop song serving as the game 's theme , performed by Chinese singer Faye Wong . Near the end of the production of Final Fantasy VII , the developers suggested to use a singer , but abandoned the idea due to a lack of reasoning based on the game 's theme and storyline . However , Nobuo Uematsu thought a ballad would closely relate to the theme and characters of Final Fantasy VIII . This resulted in the game 's developers sharing " countless " artists , eventually deciding on Wong . Uematsu claims " her voice and mood seem to match my image of the song exactly " , and that her ethnicity " fits the international image of Final Fantasy " . After negotiations were made , " Eyes on Me " was recorded in Hong Kong with an orchestra . The song was released as a CD single in Japan and sold over 400 @,@ 000 copies , setting the record for highest @-@ selling video game music disc ever released in that country at the time . " Liberi Fatali " was played during the 2004 Summer Olympics in Athens during the women 's synchronized swimming event .

The music of Final Fantasy VIII has appeared in various official Final Fantasy concerts . These include 2002 's 20020220 Music from FINAL FANTASY , in which the Tokyo Philharmonic Orchestra played " Liberi Fatali " , " Don 't Be Afraid " , " Love Grows " , and " The Man with the Machine Gun " , the 2004 Tour de Japon series , which featured " The Oath " , the Dear Friends series that began that same year and included " Liberi Fatali " and " Love Grows " , and the 2005 More Friends concert , which included " Maybe I 'm a Lion " . More recent concerts include the Voices ? Music from Final Fantasy 2006 concert showcasing " Liberi Fatali " , " Fisherman 's Horizon " , and " Eyes on Me " and the international Distant Worlds concert tour that continues to date , which includes " Liberi Fatali " , " Fisherman 's Horizon " , " Man with the Machine Gun " , and " Love Grows " . Several of these concerts have produced live albums as well . Music from the game has also been played in non Final Fantasy @-@ specific concerts such as the Play ! A Video Game Symphony world tour from 2006 onwards , for which Nobuo Uematsu composed the opening fanfare that accompanies each performance .

= = Other appearances and cameos = =

Final Fantasy VIII has made a cameo appearance in real @-@ life media . In the 2000 film version of Charlie 's Angels , two young boys are seen playing the game at night , with Squall and Quistis fighting a battle in Balamb Garden 's Training Center , and one of them about to summon the Guardian Force Quezacatl . At this time , the character Dylan ( played by Drew Barrymore ) appears at the patio door to ask for help and clothing after having just escaped an attempt on her life .

= = Reception = =

Final Fantasy VIII received critical acclaim . Within two days of its North American release on September 9 , 1999 , Final Fantasy VIII became the top @-@ selling video game in the United States , a position it held for more than three weeks . It was also a bestseller in Japan and the UK . It grossed a total of more than \$ 50 million in the 13 weeks to follow , making it the fastest @-@ selling Final Fantasy title . In Japan , it sold roughly 2 @.@ 5 million units within the first four days of release . More than 6 million units were sold in total by the end of 1999 . As of March 31 , 2003 , the game had shipped 8 @.@ 15 million copies worldwide : 3 @.@ 7 million in Japan and 4 @.@ 45



million abroad . The opening cut scene in Final Fantasy VIII was ranked second on Game Informer 's list of " Top 10 Video Game Openings " , and first by IGN . GameSpy listed it as the 15th best cinematic moment in video games . IGN additionally named the game 's ending the third best of any game for the PlayStation , while UGO.com named it one of the series ' best and most memorable moments . Final Fantasy VIII was voted by readers of Japanese magazine Famitsu as the 22nd best game of all time in 2006 , and named one of the 20 essential Japanese role @-@ playing games by Gamasutra , stating " [ t ] here 's a lot that Final Fantasy VIII does wrong , but there 's even more that it does right " .

Reviews of the gameplay have been mixed . IGN felt that it was the weakest aspect of the game , citing its Guardian Force attack sequences as " incredibly cinematic " but tedious , sentiments echoed by Electronic Gaming Monthly . They also regarded the battle system as intensely complicated , yet refreshingly innovative and something that " RPG fanatics love to obsess over " . Official U.S. PlayStation Magazine claims that the game 's Junction system is a major flaw due to repetitive stocking of spells , while the video game magazine Edge commented that the battle system consists of a " bewildering " number of intricate options and techniques that " most gamers will [ ... ] relish " . GameSpot praised the game 's battle system , commenting that the " possibilities for customization [ with the Junction system ] are immense " .

In general , Final Fantasy VIII has been compared favorably to its predecessors . Though questioning the game 's lack of voice overs for its characters , Game Revolution praised its storyline and ending . For their part , Edge labeled Final Fantasy VIII " a far more accomplished game than FFXVII " . On the other hand , the magazine also felt that the game 's length left its story unable to " offer consistently strong dialogue and sub @-@ plots " . Additionally , it found some of the story 's plot twists " not ... suitably manipulated and prepared " , leaving it " hard not to greet such ... moments with anything but indifference " . Overall , Edge considered Final Fantasy VIII to be " yet another outstanding edition of SquareSoft 's far @-@ from @-@ final fantasies " , summarizing it as " aesthetically astonishing , rarely less than compelling , and near peerless in scope and execution " . Electronic Gaming Monthly offered similar comments , stating that the game 's character development " is the best of any RPG 's " and that " Final Fantasy VIII is the pinnacle of its genre . " UGO.com stated that while no other game in the series had stirred the controversy that Final Fantasy VIII had and that it was flawed , Final Fantasy VIII was a " daring , groundbreaking game [ ... ] decidedly the most original console @-@ style RPG ever created " . In 2002 , IGN named the game the seventh best title for the PlayStation of all time , placing higher on the list than Final Fantasy VII and described as " [ taking ] all of its strong points , and [ making ] them better " .

The PC port received mixed reception . Maximum PC praised the full motion video sequences as " phenomenal " , adding that while the gameplay took getting used to , they enjoyed the teamwork emphasized by it , and that the game 's visual presentation added to its appeal . GameSpy stated that while the game was not a " huge leap forward " from the previous title , its gameplay and visual appeal worked for its benefit , though that on a computer the pre @-@ rendered backgrounds appeared blurry and the controls at time difficult with a keyboard . GameSpot criticized the game for not taking advantage of the capabilities afforded to computers at the time , describing the PlayStation version as both looking and sounding superior , and recommending that the title was " not worth buying period " for the PC . UGO.com also described the port as inferior to its original counterpart , adding that its presentation was in turn detrimental to the reception the game received as a whole . Computer Gaming World praised some of the changes made to the game in light of previous titles and the inclusion of the Triple Triad sub @-@ game , though heavily criticized the port as " lazy " and " disappointing " , stating that it only served to emphasize the original game 's flaws . Despite their complaints however , they named it the twentieth best game of 2000 .