

= Music of Kingdom Hearts =

The music of the Kingdom Hearts video game series was composed by Yoko Shimomura with orchestral music arranged by Kaoru Wada . The original soundtracks of the games have been released on three albums and a fourth compilation album . The soundtracks to the Kingdom Hearts games feature several musical pieces from both Disney films and Final Fantasy games , including such pieces as " Mickey Mouse Club March " by Jimmie Dodd , " This Is Halloween " by Danny Elfman , and " One @-@ Winged Angel " by Nobuo Uematsu . They also feature several vocal songs , the most notable being the two main theme songs , " Hikari " and " Passion " . The two themes were written and performed by Japanese American pop star Hikaru Utada . " Hikari " and " Passion " were originally in Japanese , but English versions were also produced , titled " Simple and Clean " and " Sanctuary " , respectively .

Although the majority of the music has been released only in Japan , the first soundtrack was released worldwide and tracks from the Kingdom Hearts series have been featured in Video Games Live at multiple venues . The music has overall been well received and several tracks have received particular praise . The two main themes were well received by both video game and music critics , and did well on Japan 's Oricon Weekly Singles chart .

= = Musical pieces = =

The Kingdom Hearts games feature music that ranges from dark to cheerful to sorrowful . Several musical pieces are included that have either met with a positive reception or were already well known ? mostly from Disney films . Such pieces include " Mickey Mouse Club March " by Jimmie Dodd ; " Winnie The Pooh " by Robert B. Sherman and Richard M. Sherman ; " This Is Halloween " by Danny Elfman ; " He 's a Pirate " by Geoff Zanelli , Klaus Badelt , and Hans Zimmer ; and " Beauty and the Beast " by Howard Ashman and Alan Menken . Other well @-@ known tracks include " Night on Bald Mountain " (rendered " A Night on the Bare Mountain ") by Modest Mussorgsky , and a remixed version of " One @-@ Winged Angel " by Final Fantasy series composer Nobuo Uematsu . Some Disney worlds in Kingdom Hearts feature corresponding music from their related Disney film . Original tracks include the title screen track , " Dearly Beloved " , and the two theme songs , " Simple and Clean " and " Sanctuary " . The soundtracks feature a mix of piano and orchestral pieces . The main themes differ from the other music in that they are pop songs . The series also features several vocal songs ? the most notable being the two theme songs . Kingdom Hearts II includes more vocal songs found specifically in the Atlantica world , which features rhythm @-@ based minigames set in the world of The Little Mermaid . Such vocal songs include " Part of Your World " and " Under the Sea " , both by Alan Menken and Howard Ashman .

= = = " Hikari " and " Simple and Clean " = = =

" Hikari " (? , lit . " light ") is the theme song to the Japanese release of Kingdom Hearts , the first game in the series as well as the Game Boy Advance sequel Kingdom Hearts : Chain of Memories and its remake Re : Chain of Memories , the PlayStation Portable prequel Kingdom Hearts Birth by Sleep , as well as the theme to Kingdom Hearts coded and its DS remake Re : Coded . Its English counterpart , " Simple and Clean " , is the theme song to the English release of the games as well as the Japanese re @-@ release of the first game , Kingdom Hearts Final Mix . Both songs were written and performed by Hikaru Utada . This marked the first time she had produced a song for a video game . Although the two songs share a similar melody and background music , the meaning of the songs ' lyrics differ as " Simple and Clean " is not a literal translation of " Hikari " . The single , " Hikari " , was released in Japan on March 20 , 2002 and proved to be very popular ; it sold over 270 @,@ 000 copies in a week . " Simple And Clean " (full version and PLANITb Remix) is included on Utada 's single release of " COLORS " , which debuted on Japan 's Oricon charts at number one and stayed on the charts for 19 weeks . It was later included as a bonus track on Utada 's 2009 English @-@ language album This Is the One . Both songs have a " PLANITb remix " ,

which are house versions , and " Hikari " has a " Godson Mix " . The different versions are used at various points in the game ; the " Short Edit " version of the PLANITb remix is used for the opening sequence and the full version of the original song is used for the ending sequence .

= = = " Passion " and " Sanctuary " = = =

" Passion " is the theme song for the Japanese release of Kingdom Hearts II , and the Nintendo DS title , Kingdom Hearts 358 / 2 Days . Its English counterpart , " Sanctuary " , is the theme song for the English versions and Kingdom Hearts II ? FINAL MIX . Like the first theme , Hikaru Utada wrote and performed both the Japanese and English versions , and there are two mixes . The " ~ opening version ~ " mix is played during the opening movies , and the " ~ after the battle ~ " version is played after defeating the final boss of the games . " Sanctuary " and " ~ after the battle ~ " were both used in Kingdom Hearts 358 / 2 Days for DS . " Passion " was included in the Kingdom Hearts II Original Soundtrack and a CD single was released on December 14 , 2005 . " Sanctuary " was first previewed on MTV.com in early 2006 . Both the " Opening " and " After the Battle " versions of " Sanctuary " were later released in May 2009 as bonus tracks on Utada 's second American album , This Is the One . The " After the Battle " versions of " Passion " and " Sanctuary " also serve as the ending theme songs for the 3DS game , Kingdom Hearts 3D : Dream Drop Distance .

= = Creation and influence = =

Yoko Shimomura composed the music for the three main Kingdom Hearts games and their remakes . She began composing video game music in 1988 , and joined Square in 1993 , but left in 2002 to work freelance . In creating music , Shimomura gathers inspiration from different things outside of her daily routine , like traveling or when she is emotionally moved . She has a respect for solo and orchestral pieces , such as Piano Sonata No. 7 by Ludwig van Beethoven , Ballade No. 1 by Frédéric Chopin , and La Valse by Maurice Ravel . Shimomura was initially hesitant to handle the music for the first Kingdom Hearts ; the mix of a Square @-@ style story and Disney characters made it hard to imagine what the game would be like , which made it difficult to compose the music . Many of the musical pieces are arrangements of Disney themes , which Shimomura stated she enjoyed arranging . Shimomura felt a great deal of pressure working on such recognizable tunes , and made an effort to maintain the original mood and atmosphere of them while complying with the technical specifications of the PlayStation 2 . For example , the original orchestrated arrangement of the song " This is Halloween " from The Nightmare Before Christmas was impossible to reproduce on the PlayStation 2 's sound system . To keep aspects of it intact , Shimomura used a trial and error method to arrange the piece .

In creating original music , Shimomura wanted to create compositions that would make players feel good while playing to accompany the action aspect of Kingdom Hearts . She played the game and looked over scripts and illustrations for inspiration . After coming up with ideas , she discussed them with director Tetsuya Nomura and the game planners . For the PlayStation 2 re @-@ release of Kingdom Hearts : Chain of Memories , she and her team spent much of their time working on the fight music ; Shimomura wanted the different fight music to reflect different emotions such as happiness and sadness . To handle the large workload for Kingdom Hearts coded , Kingdom Hearts 358 / 2 Days and Kingdom Hearts Birth by Sleep , Shimomura composed the most prominent themes , while the rest was created by other composers . In retrospect , Shimomura has stated that the Kingdom Hearts series combined the scenes and music well , and she felt very honored her music has entered into people 's hearts . She has also commented that she enjoyed working on the project , despite its hardships , and is proud of the work .

The two main theme songs were written and performed by Japanese American artist Hikaru Utada . She wrote two versions for each , one in Japanese and one in English ; the latter is used for international releases of the games . " Hikari " and " Passion " are the Japanese version theme songs for Kingdom Hearts and Kingdom Hearts II respectively , while their English counterparts are called " Simple and Clean " and " Sanctuary " . Utada was the only singer Nomura had in mind for

the first Kingdom Hearts theme song . He considered Utada an iconic young singer whose music could break language and international barriers . Her involvement , along with the first song 's Japanese title , was announced in January 2002 . Utada 's involvement with the sequel was announced in July 2005 . Nomura chose not to have a different singer perform the second theme song because he believed fans associated Utada with Kingdom Hearts . Utada derived her inspiration from the worlds and characters in Kingdom Hearts ; she also received written explanations of the stories from Nomura . Nomura stated that the vocals of the second theme tie in more closely with the game 's story than " Hikari " / " Simple and Clean " did with Kingdom Hearts and Kingdom Hearts : Chain of Memories . Conversely , Nomura commented that Utada 's theme songs influenced several factors in creating the games .

= = Releases = =

Aside from being featured in the Kingdom Hearts video games , the music has been released via a variety of methods . Soundtracks for the first and third game were released shortly after the games ' release . These were followed by a compilation set which featured unreleased tracks from the series , as well as new and rearranged versions of tracks from the re @-@ released versions of the games . The first soundtrack was released in Japan , United States and Europe . All other albums were released only in Japan . Though the two main themes were released as part of the game soundtracks , they were officially released as singles a week prior to the games ' releases . Utada 's 2009 album This Is the One features the theme songs " Simple And Clean " and " Sanctuary " . Tracks from Kingdom Hearts series have also been played by Play ! A Video Game Symphony at various venues in the United States and around the world . Arnie Roth arranged Kingdom Hearts pieces for the Symphonic Fantasies concerts in September 2009 . Music from Kingdom Hearts is included in Yoko Shimomura 's best works compilation album Drammatica .

= = = Kingdom Hearts Original Soundtrack = = =

Kingdom Hearts Original Soundtrack is the official soundtrack for the video game Kingdom Hearts . It was first released in Japan on March 27 , 2002 by Toshiba @-@ EMI , and later released in Europe on November 25 , 2002 by Virgin Records and the United States on March 23 , 2003 by Walt Disney Records . The soundtrack is a 2 @-@ CD set which contains most of music in the original version of the game along with two bonus tracks . The music was composed by Yoko Shimomura , with vocals done by Hikaru Utada for " Simple And Clean " and " Hikari " . The orchestral music was arranged by Kaoru Wada and performed by the New Japan Philharmonic Orchestra . Because Kingdom Hearts Final Mix was released after the soundtrack , additional tracks from it were not included .

The soundtrack has met with an overall positive reception . IGN listed the opening track for Kingdom Hearts , " Dearly Beloved " , as number four on their top ten list of RPG title tracks . In their " Best of 2002 " awards , Kingdom Hearts was nominated for the " Best Sound in a PlayStation 2 Game Editor 's Choice Award " and was a runner up for " Best Sound in Game 2002 Reader 's Choice Award " . Allmusic rated the first soundtrack a 3 out of 5 . GameSpy described the soundtrack as " pleasant , melodious , and most of all fitting for the various situations in which it plays " and complimented the English translation of " Simple And Clean " .

Track listing

= = = Kingdom Hearts -Final Mix- Additional Tracks = = =

Kingdom Hearts -Final Mix- Additional Tracks is a separate CD that features new tracks from the re @-@ release of the first game , Kingdom Hearts Final Mix . It was released in Japan on December 26 , 2002 , by Walt Disney Records .

= = = Kingdom Hearts II Original Soundtrack = = =

Kingdom Hearts II Original Soundtrack is the official soundtrack for Kingdom Hearts II video game . The album contains musical tracks from the game , composed and produced by Yoko Shimomura , with the main orchestral tracks arranged by Kaoru Wada and performed by the Tokyo Philharmonic Orchestra . Vocals were performed by Hikaru Utada for the theme song , " Passion " . The soundtrack was released in Japan on January 25 , 2006 .

The soundtrack received positive remarks from critics . G4TV awarded Kingdom Hearts II " Best Soundtrack " at their 2006 G @-@ Phoria awards show . GameSpy complimented the soundtrack but stated it was not as good as the first game 's soundtrack . GameInformer called the musical score " unforgettable " . GameSpot stated the " superb soundtrack " further enhanced the gaming experience and rated the sound a 9 out of 10 .

Track listing

= = = Kingdom Hearts Original Soundtrack Complete = = =

Kingdom Hearts Original Soundtrack Complete is a compilation album of the video game music from the three main games in the series , Kingdom Hearts , Kingdom Hearts : Chain of Memories , and Kingdom Hearts II . The boxset contains music composed and produced by Yoko Shimomura , with the main orchestral tracks arranged by Kaoru Wada . The album also features various unreleased tracks from the series , as well as new and rearranged versions of tracks from the two Final Mix releases and Re : Chain of Memories . The compilation boxset was released in Japan on March 28 , 2007 .

The collection has printed images on each disc and includes a deluxe booklet containing new illustrations designed by director and character designer Tetsuya Nomura and comments from Yoko Shimomura . A special CD carrying case featuring artwork of Sora and Roxas was also released as a bonus . The soundtrack comprises nine discs with 229 tracks in total . Discs one and two contain unaltered tracks from the Kingdom Hearts Original Soundtrack while discs three to six contain lengthier and looped tracks from the Kingdom Hearts II Original Soundtrack . Discs seven and eight contain tracks from Kingdom Hearts Re : Chain of Memories while disc nine contains bonus tracks from Kingdom Hearts Final Mix and Kingdom Hearts II Final Mix .

Track listing

= = = Piano Collections Kingdom Hearts = = =

On May 27 , 2009 , Square Enix released a collection of Kingdom Hearts music arranged for the piano . The tracks are popular pieces chosen by members of Square Enix 's music website . A mini concert was held on April 2 , 2009 in Tokyo to preview the album , attendees of which were drawn from a lottery held on the Square Enix Members website . There , composer Yoko Shimomura described the album as consisting of easy listening piano solo arrangements . Tracks 5 through 8 are a sonata on the various themes of the series .

" The Other Promise " is used for a cutscene of Kingdom Hearts Re : coded in Kingdom Hearts HD 2 @.@ 5 Remix .

= = = Piano Collections Kingdom Hearts Field & Battle = = =

Piano Collections Kingdom Hearts Field & Battle is the second compilation album of compositions from the Kingdom Hearts series arranged for solo piano by Sachiko Miyano and Natsumi Kameoka . Unlike the first album , which features mostly character themes and background music , this compilation features themes from battles and worlds . Square Enix announced it at the 2009 Tokyo Game Show , and released it in Japan on January 13 , 2010 .

= = = Kingdom Hearts Birth by Sleep & 358 / 2 Days Original Soundtrack = = =

Kingdom Hearts Birth by Sleep & 358 / 2 Days Original Soundtrack is a three @-@ disc album containing music from the games Kingdom Hearts Birth by Sleep and Kingdom Hearts 358 / 2 Days , as well as Kingdom Hearts Re : coded , composed by Yoko Shimomura . It was released on February 2 , 2011 . Discs one and two contain music from Birth by Sleep , and disc three contains music from 358 / 2 Days (tracks 1 through 13) , Re : coded (tracks 14 through 20) , and Birth by Sleep : Final Mix (tracks 21 through 27) . Tracks from 358 / 2 Days and Re : coded are in pure orchestrated form , and are not digitized as they are in the original game releases .

Track listing

== Kingdom Hearts Dream Drop Distance Original Soundtrack ==

Kingdom Hearts Dream Drop Distance Original Soundtrack is a three @-@ disc album containing music from Kingdom Hearts 3D : Dream Drop Distance , released on April 18 , 2012 . Unlike previous soundtracks , this set features a collaboration between composers Yoko Shimomura , Takeharu Ishimoto , and Tsuyoshi Sekito , containing musical compositions from all three . Among the songs included are tracks from The World Ends with You , originally composed by Ishimoto , who remixed them for Dream Drop Distance . Orchestral arrangements were provided by Kaoru Wada .

Track listing

== Kingdom Hearts 10th Anniversary Fan Selection -Melodies & Memories- ==

Kingdom Hearts 10th Anniversary Fan Selection -Melodies & Memories- is a 2 @-@ CD album made in commemoration of the series ' 10th anniversary . The tracks included in the album were chosen by fans in the series ' official website . It was released in Japan on September 19 , 2012 .

Track listing

== Reception ==

The music of Kingdom Hearts was overall well received . Greg Kasavin of GameSpot felt the background music was appropriate for each setting . However , he complained that the music loops were too short and repetitive . IGN reviewer David Smith was impressed by the production values that went into the music of Kingdom Hearts , namely the use of the New Japan Philharmonic Orchestra and excellent arrangements of pieces such as " Night on Bald Mountain " and " Under the Sea " . He also praised composer Yoko Shimomura 's ability to maintain the atmosphere while keeping a " common thread of character running through the soundtrack " . Daniel Kalabakov of SoundtrackCentral.com called Shimomura 's orchestral composition sophisticated and stated that the score possesses unique qualities . He also stated that though the album is excellent , he considered it one of Shimomura 's weaker albums overall . In reviewing Shimomura 's compilation album Drammatica , SoundtrackCentral.com reviewer Adam Corn considered the Kingdom Hearts tracks one of the highlights of the album . Jim Cordeira of Gaming Age stated the music was one of the best aspects of the first game and the orchestrated soundtrack is better quality than the " midi @-@ sounding " tunes of previous Final Fantasy games . GameSpy 's Benjamin Turner had positive comments about the main theme , but found some worlds ' background music weak . A second GameSpy reviewer , Gerald Villoria , complimented both PlayStation 2 game soundtracks , but stated Kingdom Hearts II 's soundtrack was not as good as the first game 's .

Several tracks garnered extra attention and their own positive reception . " Hikari " debuted at number one on the Oricon Weekly Singles chart in Japan . It stayed at number one for three weeks and stayed on the chart for thirteen weeks . " Hikari " sold more than 270 @, @ 000 copies during its first week on sale , and by August 2002 , it sold over 860 @, @ 000 copies in Japan . In 2008 , Guinness World Records listed it as the best @-@ selling video game theme song in Japan . Kalabakov complimented Utada 's singing and the instrumentation of " Hikari " , but commented that he was not a fan of pop songs . Turner was impressed by the translation of " Hikari " into English ,

and felt Utada 's vocals were a good addition to the opening and ending segments of the game . " Passion " debuted at number four on the Oricon Weekly Singles chart in Japan where it stayed on the chart for nine weeks . G4TV 's Miguel Concepcion was particularly pleased by " Dearly Beloved " , the track that plays during the title screen . IGN echoed the sentiment and listed it as number four in their top ten list of RPG title tracks . They commented that the track lifted the doubts they had about the game 's potential . Kalabakov referred to it as a fitting " fairy tale @-@ style " piece to the game 's setting . He further stated that it was a simple piece that was " not short on emotion " .