

= Halo 3 Original Soundtrack =

The Halo 3 Original Soundtrack is the official soundtrack to Bungie 's first @-@ person shooter video game Halo 3 . Most of the original music was composed by Martin O 'Donnell and Michael Salvatori , but also includes a bonus track , " LvUrFR3NZ " , which was the winning entry in a contest held before the soundtrack 's release . The 2 @-@ CD set was released on November 20 , 2007 .

For the next game in the Halo trilogy , O 'Donnell added new themes as well as bringing back and expanding old ones , some of which had never been recorded with a full orchestra before . The score made extensive use of the piano , an instrument which O 'Donnell used frequently for composition but that had not been featured in previous Halo music . In addition to scoring the game , the music was used for promotional advertisements and trailers preceding Halo 3 's release . The game 's score and its soundtrack were generally well received . The soundtrack reached the Billboard 200 chart , and also broke the top twenty best @-@ selling soundtracks and independent albums listings . The score was nominated for X @-@ Play 's " Best of 2007 " awards , under best original soundtrack .

= = Background = =

The score for Halo 3 gave O 'Donnell and Salvatori a chance to rework and revise existing themes heard in the games , as well as create new ones . Halo : Combat Evolved featured more strings , while the soundtrack to Halo 2 featured conventional video game music staples such as guitars by Steve Vai ; in an interview , O 'Donnell noted that " to be honest , when I got to the end of Halo 2 I thought to myself : ' that was probably enough guitar . ' " He intentionally made the score to the final game a shift back to the orchestral roots of the series , stating " I took an orthodox , almost formal approach to the trilogy . " O 'Donnell acknowledged that some games and movies used entirely different music with each sequel , but such an approach wasn 't an option with Halo 3 , the third installment of a trilogy : " The Master Chief is still green , Cortana is still blue , and so you 're going to hear the monks and the cellos . "

O 'Donnell began by writing out the reworked themes and music he wanted to hear in the game , without knowing where he would eventually use the sounds . He approaches composition from the piano , and described his process as looking for something that " makes me go ' oh , that 's a good feeling ' " . O 'Donnell 's approach to writing music for games is to put in the audio at the last minute of development , so that his music meshes with the game play in the best possible way ; he still had not added the score when Halo 3 was demoed at Electronic Entertainment Expo 2007 , less than three months away from the game 's debut .

Unlike previous soundtracks , where much of the music had been synthesized on computer , the soundtrack for Halo 3 was recorded using a 60 @-@ piece orchestra , along with a 24 voice chorus . The music was recorded by the Northwest Sinfonia at Studio X in Seattle , Washington . Interviewed by some of Bungie 's staff for the Bungie Podcast , O 'Donnell noted that there was more " techno " and " tribal " sounds than on previous soundtracks . O 'Donnell also tried to avoid outside musical influences , as he believes that " Bungie should be creating culture , not being influenced by it . "

Scoring for a video game , O 'Donnell noted , is different from a film in that a good score sounds like it is narrating what the player does on screen ; Halo 3 uses an audio engine which allows music cues to naturally start , stop , and transition in response to game triggers . Working from his office at Bungie , dubbed the " Ivory Tower " , O 'Donnell worked with mission designers to set points in the game that trigger segments of music . Instead of pieces with a set duration , songs in the game have multiple variations that can be looped and arranged to fill the time it takes the player to travel from point A to point B. Since the interactive mixing of sounds in Halo 3 depends of what occurs in the game , O 'Donnell instead " froze " the music into set suites and transitions for the CD , so that a listener playing the soundtrack through would hear a musical representation of the game . The tracks are presented , similarly to the previous soundtrack for Halo 2 , in a suite form . The suites

are named after the nine Campaign missions and unlike Volume Two , are broken into separate tracks .

= = Promotion = =

Martin O 'Donnell confirmed Halo 3 's soundtrack would see a commercial release in a Bungie podcast . O 'Donnell also stressed that the soundtrack would not be released at or near the release date of the game on September 25 , 2007 . The soundtrack was officially announced on October 17 , 2007 .

The score to the game was used extensively for marketing purposes , even before the release of the game . The first piece heard was entitled " Finish the Fight " , and was used in the announcement trailer for Halo 3 at Electronic Entertainment Expo 2006 . This piece was accented with O 'Donnell 's well @-@ known Halo theme , which now included a trumpet fanfare and heavy brass section ; O 'Donnell stated " I want the viewer to have a feeling of anticipation and wonder for the first fifty seconds or so , up until Master Chief is revealed and they realize that it 's Cortana trying to tell them something . " The track opens with a piano section written by Matt Daspit , uncharacteristic for the series at that point ; O 'Donnell suspected " no [other announcement at E3] would start with a piano " , thus grabbing attention . O 'Donnell designed the opening to lull the listener into a sense of suspense , then wonder ; " I want them to feel pride and longing the moment Master Chief walks out of the smoke . " he said . " I want them to be left with that , ' I can hardly wait to play this game ' feeling " . Another reworked theme from Halo was used as the background music for the Halo 3 E3 2007 trailer ; O 'Donnell later offered this track for free online .

In addition to the music composed by O 'Donnell and Salvatori , the announcement of the Halo 3 Soundtrack was followed with a call for entries to all artists or bands to submit their own original sound to be included on the final CD . The submissions were judged by O 'Donnell , producer Nile Rodgers , and other artists including Steve Vai . Rodgers stated that more than 21 @,@ 000 songs were entered , and at least 30 % were " amazing " ; the winner was Greg Haupt and his band Princeton , whose song " LvUrFR3NZ " appears as the final track on the second disc .

= = Reception = =

Reception to the soundtrack was positive . Scorenotes.com gave the soundtrack high marks , praising the presentation as well as the piano motif introduced ; the reviewer judged that the soundtrack for the third game surpassed those of the previous titles . UGO Networks praised the reworked main theme , stating that the video game " would not have been the same " without O 'Donnell 's score . Game Informer 's Brendan Vore concurred , saying that " there 's nothing like hearing Halo 's signature ' da @-@ da @-@ da @-@ duuum ' as you rush into a squad of Brutes . " Conversely , IGN found the piano theme was perennially overplayed , and felt that the soundtrack " begins with a bit of a bang and then eventually sputters out " . The Halo 3 Soundtrack reached a peak position of # 18 on Billboard 's Top Soundtracks list , # 20 on Top Independent Albums , and the bottom position on the Billboard 200 on December 15 , 2007 . The soundtrack had an impact outside of the gaming world ; fueled by interest in Halo 's chants , Universal Music aggressively promoted a chant @-@ based album , Chant : Music for the Soul , that sold 55 @,@ 000 copies in its first two weeks .

Halo 3 's music has been featured at several concerts , including Play ! A Video Game Symphony . O 'Donnell also specially arranged the Halo music for a performance of Video Games Live , and appeared at a London performance . Video Games Live has incorporated the music from Halo 3 into many of its performances , including the opening to the London Games Festival , and the 2008 Game Developer 's Conference in San Francisco . Arrangements featuring music from Halo 3 appears on the album releases Video Games Live , Vol . 1 and Video Games Live , Level 2 .

= = = Awards = = =

The audio and sound for Halo 3 were nominated for numerous awards , including the 2007 Spike TV Video Game Awards " Best Original Score " . Both the sound and score of Halo 3 were also nominated as finalists in the 6th Annual Game Audio Network Guild Awards , and X @-@ Play 's " Best of 2007 " Awards in the " Best Original Soundtrack " category .

= = Track listing = =

= = Personnel = =

All information is taken from the CD credits .

Martin O 'Donnell (ASCAP) ? composer

Michael Salvatori (ASCAP) ? composer

C Paul Johnson (ASCAP) ? addition composition on tracks " To Kill a Demon " , " This Is Our Land " , " Keep What you Steal " , and " Greatest Journey "

Simon James ? concert master / contractor

David Sabee ? Northwest Sinfonia conductor

Joe Crnko ? choir conductor

Stan LePard ? additional orchestration

Nile Rodgers ? producer

Matt Daspit - pianist