

Computer and Video Game Music



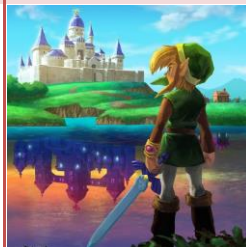
Early Computer and Video Game Music



Early video game music consisted primarily of **SOUND EFFECTS** (an artificially created or enhanced sound used to emphasize certain actions within computer and video games), **CHIPTUNES** or **8-BIT MUSIC** (a style of electronic music which used simple melodies made for programmable sound generator (PSG) sound chips in

vintage computers, consoles and arcade machines) and early sound **SYNTHESISER** technology (an electronic musical instrument that generates audio signals that may be converted to sound). **SAMPLING** (the technique of digitally encoding music or sound and reusing it as part of a composition or recording) began in the 1980's allowing sound to be played during the game, making it more realistic and less "synthetic-sounding".

How Computer and Video Game Music is used within a Game



Music within a computer or video game is often used for **CUES** (knowing when a significant event was about to occur).

Video game music is often heard over a game's title screen (called the **GROUND THEME**), options menu and bonus content as well as during the entire gameplay. Music can be used to **INCREASE TENSION AND SUSPENSE** e.g. during battles and chases, when the player must make a decision within the game (a **DECISION MOTIF**) and can change, depending on a player's actions or situation

e.g. indicating missing actions or "pick-ups".

Musical Features of Computer and Video Game Music

JUMPING BASS LINE

Where the bass line often moves by **LEAP (DISJUNCT MOVEMENT)** leaving 'gaps' between notes



STACCATO

ARTICULATION

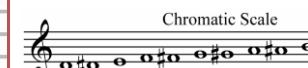
Performing each note sharply and detached from the others.

Shown by a dot.



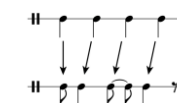
CHROMATIC MOVEMENT

Melodies and bass lines that ascend or descend by semitones.



SYNCOPIATION

Accenting the weaker beats of the bar to give an "offbeat" "jumpy feel to the music."



How Computer and Video Game Music is Produced



Fully-orchestrated **SOUNDTRACKS** (video game music scores) are now popular – technology is used in their creation but less in their performance. The composer uses **MUSIC TECHNOLOGY** to create the score, it is then played by an **ORCHESTRA** and then digitally converted and integrated into the game. Video game **SOUNDTRACKS** have become popular and are now commercially sold and performed in concert with some radio stations featuring entire shows dedicated to video game music.

Character Themes in Computer and Video Game Music



Characters within a video game can also have their own **CHARACTER THEMES** or **CHARACTER MOTIFS** – like **LEITMOTIFS** within Film Music. These can be manipulated, altered and changed – adapting the elements of music – **ORCHESTRATION** (the act of arranging a piece of music for an orchestra and assigning parts to the different musical instruments), **TIMBRE, SONORITY, TEXTURE, PITCH, TEMPO, DYNAMICS** – depending on the character's situation or different places they travel to within the game.

Famous Computer and Video Game Music Composers and their Soundtracks



Koji Kondo

Super Mario Bros. (1985)
The Legend of Zelda (1986)



Michael Giacchino

The Lost World: Jurassic Park (1997)
Medal of Honour (1999)
Call of Duty (2003)



Mieko Ishikawa

Dragon Slayer (1993)



Martin O'Donnell and Michael Salvatori

Halo (2002)



Daniel Rosenfield

Minecraft (2011)



Rom Di Prisco

Fortnite (2017)