

Video game soundtracks: Worth a second listen?

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I can't imagine a world without music in some shape or form.

I'm listening to some music as I write this blog and it's something that just causes the creative juices in my mind to flow but what's that got to do with video games, I can hear someone ask?

Well, quite a lot, actually.

The next time you fire up your favourite modern game, zone out the gunfire, explosions and other ambient sound effects and listen carefully: Is there a stirring orchestral score in the background playing as you ride a horse through a desert landscape? Is there deep foreboding soundtrack as you creep through the bowels of an alien spaceship, unsure what lies ahead?

That'll be the game soundtrack designed to create atmosphere and emotion.

Sadly, though, many gamers overlook video game soundtracks, but good game music deserves a second look – or second listen, if you will.

If you're a video game soundtrack aficionado, you'll already know about Video Games Live, the long-running series of concerts around the world that showcase soundtracks from some of the world's most popular video games. From Halo to Donkey Kong to Metal Gear Solid, the Video Games Live show puts the focus on a part of gaming that is often underestimated.

To me, if a video game soundtrack is doing its job right, it will create all sorts of emotions as you're playing and will immerse you more into the experience. These days, video game soundtracks are huge affairs, too, with world-renowned composers writing the score and often world-class orchestras tasked with bringing to life the musical score.

One of my most favoured soundtracks is from the game Deus Ex Human Revolution, particularly a track called Icarus. You'll find the full Human Revolution soundtrack by Mark McCann [here](#). (In fact, do a search in YouTube for video game soundtracks and you'll get a huge list of options).

In my mind, McCann's work on Human Revolution is nothing short of mind-blowing. Every time I listen to it I'm transported into the futuristic cyberpunk world created by Eidos Montreal – which means that McCann has succeeded in creating a soundscape that immerses the player. Each piece fits perfectly into the scene that has been created.

Other sound tracks that have impressed, too: the Halo series with its instantly recognisable Gregorian chanting at the beginning, Bioware's Mass Effect 3, The Last of Us, Journey and Red Dead Redemption (if you've heard the music that plays when the game's lead character James Marsden crosses over into Mexico you'll know how powerful a soundtrack it is).

For me, a great video game soundtrack is just as important as a compelling narrative and great gameplay but how about you? Are you a gamer that pays close attention to a game's soundtrack, letting it draw you in and immerse you, or are you a gamer who goes to the menu and turns the music slider all the way down?

While we're at it, if you're a fan of game soundtracks, what is your most favoured? Post it in the comment section below.

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