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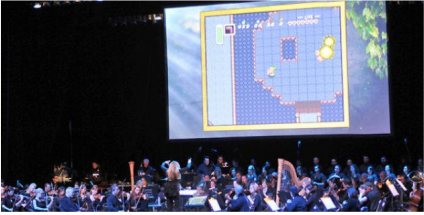
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'The Legend of Zelda Symphony of the Goddesses': Videogame Music Goes From 8-Bit Chip to 66-Piece Orchestra

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Huffington Post Canada



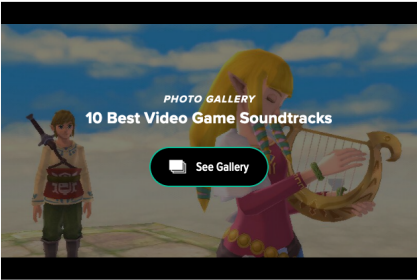
Anyone who has played video games in the last three decades has at some point likely taken a trip to *Hyrule* – the land ruled by gaming's beloved and oft-kidnapped princess *Zelda* – throughout the franchise's 20-odd iterations. While players may have been thoroughly engaged in the action, the epic musical soundtrack has always been an added bonus to the experience. So in order to celebrate the series' 25th anniversary in 2011, a symphonic score was released to accompany latest title, *The Legend of Zelda: Skyward Sword*.

The disc received such a positive reception that after a small production at E3 2011, it unlocked the gates for a potential touring show, *The Symphony of the Goddesses*.

Jeron Moore, *The Symphony of the Goddesses* creative producer, has worked on *Prey*, *Warhammer: Mark of Chaos*, and the controversial *Duke Nukem Forever* games. He pushed Nintendo to do the symphony.

"We brought the idea to Nintendo, who had already been working on something, but the idea was sort of foggy to them," says Moore. "They hadn't quite fleshed it out and so they put us on their team with the 25th Anniversary symphony, and they were very into our ideas, with little negative feedback."

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Working with Chad Seiter, the symphony's music director, as his partner, they took on the task of deciding what to include and how to convert segments of the archaic 8-bit *Zelda* themes from the original NES system written by *Koji Kondo* into properly symphonic music, a considerable challenge considering the minimalist nature of those old themes.

"The tough thing was that the original *Zelda* was written for an orchestra" said Seiter. "So to re-adapt it was sometimes difficult, but the greater thing is that you have these melodies that have withstood the test of time, so it wasn't too hard to put it into this setting. I've been playing *Zelda* all my life so it's been in the making for 25 years."

Along with other adaptations, Seiter made the decision to add a bit of a cowboy color with a string-theme to accompany the many scenes of Link traveling across the desert on his trusty steed, Epona.

Thankfully, the gaming industry has seen a considerable boost in musical sophistication, and later *Zelda* episodes that the symphony pulled from *A Link To The Past*(SNES), *The Wind Waker* (GameCube), *The Ocarina of Time* (N64), *The Twilight Princess* (Wii) and *Majora's Mask* (Wii) have had more work involved on an orchestral level.

The Legend of Zelda Symphony of the Goddesses': Videogame Music Goes From 8-Bit Chip to 66-Piece Orchestra
The symphony is also accompanied by a video component that has had fans cheering in their opera booths as Link accomplishes memorable tasks like slaying the evil Ganon, or recovering pieces of the sacred Triforce all in sequential series that are in line with the game's generation-spanning storyline. But for the production's Irish conductor, Eimar Noone, who's own resume includes in-studio orchestration for Triple-A titles like Blizzard's *StarCraft 2*, the real win has been converting gaming fans to symphony fans.

"Video gaming has produced a whole new musical genre that I see as very important to the orchestra in terms of generating a new audiences," says Noone. "It's a gateway into this whole other world. Game composers didn't just mushroom up out of nowhere, they are right there in music history at the end of a very long line, and its really inspiring."

When asked what special *Zelda*-ish traits she is bringing to her production, Noone says, "I think she brings more to me than I bring to her, but it makes me feel good because she's the princess and Link is the warrior, so (as a conductor) it feels good to be a bit of both."

The Symphony of the Goddesses is currently touring North America until December 14, 2012, and has been selling out consistently. So get your ticket fast if you're looking for an exclusive trip down Hyrule's elfin memory lane.

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