



Final Symphony II

MUSIC FROM FINAL FANTASY® V, VIII, IX AND XIII

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Resident
Orchestra

LSO

London Symphony Orchestra

SATURDAY · 12 SEPTEMBER 2015
7:00 PM
BARBICAN CENTRE, LONDON



MUSIC COMPOSED BY
NOBUO UEMATSU
MASASHI HAMAUZU

LONDON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
ECKEHARD STIER, CONDUCTOR
ROMAN SIMOVIC, LEADER
SLAVA SIDORENKO, PIANO

ARRANGEMENT:
JONNE VALTONEN, ROGER WANAMO,
MASASHI HAMAUZU

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FINAL FANTASY XIII Utopia in the Sky

Jonne Valtonen's orchestration and partial arrangement of the FINAL FANTASY XIII (2009) score is based on an original arrangement by composer Masashi Hamauzu. Hamauzu remarks that "there were no orchestral versions of FINAL FANTASY XIII tracks that I was really satisfied with and I wanted to create a symphonic arrangement that would be truly ground-breaking. Jonne Valtonen is a highly talented arranger who helped me complete this version. I think we are able to reach a perfected version of the music." Valtonen adds, "Hamauzu's jazzy and impressionistic style already gave the music its gentle softness to which I added my own small imprint."

Hamauzu decided to create an easily understood drama with the most popular songs from the game. The first three songs in this arrangement are *Prelude*, *Vanille's Theme* and *Nautilus*, all of which are centered on the protagonist Vanille and express a truly beautiful and deep world. Masashi Hamauzu hopes that with these orchestral versions people will pay more attention to the themes: "this is an

important thematic element that becomes subconsciously imprinted on the player throughout this long game."

The second half of the arrangement features the dramatic battle refrains of *Fang's Theme*, *Blinded by Light* and *Serah's Promise*. Hamauzu explains that he chose *Fang's Theme* for the audience to have fun with as it contains both heavy action and also lightness. *Blinded by Light* and *Serah's Promise* are both based on previously incomplete arrangements by Hamauzu.

FINAL FANTASY IX For the People of Gaia

In FINAL FANTASY IX (2000) Brahne, the Queen of Alexandria, has begun using powerful magical weapons to terrorise neighbouring kingdoms. Zidane, a skilled thief, teams with the young mage Vivi and the beautiful Princess Garnet to save the world from the queen's evil schemes. But a far more sinister adversary awaits in the nefarious sorcerer Kuja; who is he and why has he been supplying Brahne with her magical weapons?

This concerto for piano and orchestra is Roger Wanamo's third FINAL FANTASY-related piano orchestration. "At first it felt hard. I wanted to avoid making this too similar to my previous concertos, as I don't like repeating myself. However, the music in FINAL FANTASY IX is very different to that of previous games, so I had plenty of new material to work with." When he began to familiarize himself with the source material, the inspiration came very quickly: "I only got about five minutes into the game, to the streets of Alexandria. I listened to the music for a few minutes and then I went to the piano to play around with the melody. I realized that this Prokofiev-esque theme was just perfect for piano and orchestra – and this was, of course, *Vivi's Theme*."

While the concerto is in one, single movement, the elements of a traditional four movement concerto are all featured. "After the inspiration I had from *Vivi's Theme*, it soon became clear to me that the whole arrangement would have a strong focus on character motifs." The opening of the piece focuses on *Zidane's Theme*, which is very classical in character. The playful *Vivi's Theme* functions as a scherzo and it is followed

by the slow movement that focuses on Princess Garnet. The final part represents the battle refrains and the signature tune of Kuja. "I chose to do a darker representation of him. If you listen, he is represented in earlier parts of the piece as a shadow in the background." In the final encounter, *Kuja's Theme* becomes entwined with both the battle themes and fragments of the heroes' melodies.

FINAL FANTASY VIII

Mono no aware

The story of FINAL FANTASY VIII (1999) follows Squall, a member of an elite combat team known as SeeD that become engaged in a power struggle with menacing adversaries. The key question for Squall and his friends is who to trust. This title includes many intriguing characters such as the free-spirited Rinoa, the sorceress Edea, and Squall's arch-rival, Seifer.

One of the major themes in FINAL FANTASY VIII is the conflict between childhood and adulthood; nostalgia for the past and fear of an uncertain future. Mono no aware, a Japanese term for the awareness of impermanence and also the title of this arrangement, reflects these dimensions of the game: in effect, a gentle sadness of the passing of things being the reality of life. "It felt like there was more melancholy in this game compared to other FINAL FANTASY games I've played. This is a feeling I carried in to the arrangement, which features lots of slow and contemplative parts," Roger Wanamo explains.

Key to this arrangement are songs that share the same melody, but are presented in very different ways, such as *Tell Me* with *Ami* and *Eyes on Me* with *Waltz for the Moon*. Wanamo continues, "This is a brilliant showcase of Uematsu's skill in creating unity within the soundtrack by deriving very distinct pieces from the same melodic material. The piece of music that kept ringing in my head after playing the game was *Tell Me/Ami*, which also features in SeeD's home base, Balamb Garden. A perfect example of how repetition strengthens the memory." The arrangement doesn't follow the game's storyline slavishly, but the ending follows a similar pattern. "The ending is calm, with the character themes fading away, leaving it open to interpretations: what exactly happens to the protagonists? It is the same as in the game itself."

FINAL FANTASY V

Library of Ancients

Originally released in 1992, FINAL FANTASY V tells the story of four travellers – a pirate, an old soldier, an adventure hunter, and a young girl – as they embark on a quest to save the world from imminent destruction. Their only hope is to recover the four elemental Crystals that can combat an unstoppable, destructive force known as the Void.

Jonne Valtonen's arrangement starts with *Musica Machina*, a theme first heard to represent an ancient base used by the heroes. This place is a source of transportation for the crew, featuring steamships and other vehicles that require no wind to operate – the wind having disappeared from the world following the destruction of the first elemental Crystal. Valtonen expands on the importance of this theme: "I'm using this as the base for the whole arrangement; the riff from *Musica Machina* is repeated at various stages throughout. It is the point from which the music jumps forward to other locations and battles. It generates the wind for what is to follow. There are fast running scales that are built up in the background on various themes. This approach enables the party to always move onward in my arrangement."

Reina's Theme is presented with the raising wind behind it as she joins the protagonist Bartz and the other heroes. Together they must travel the world to find hidden, legendary weapons before facing X-Death, the villain of the piece, for the final confrontation. Seemingly defeated at first, the fight with X-Death recommences as the music of *Spreading Grand Wings* starts to generate momentum. The arrangement canters through the battle themes before finally reaching the decisive conflict that seals the fate of X-Death. "Things calm down and sorrow seeps in as the party reminisce the dead. The atmosphere soon turns to one of jubilation though, with the group's theme rising amid the grand and festive joy of a world saved from total annihilation." *Musica Machina*, now in major key, closes the arrangement.



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London Symphony Orchestra

The London Symphony Orchestra is London's oldest surviving orchestra and is widely regarded as one of the world's leading orchestras. The LSO performs 120 concerts a year with an enviable family of artists including Valery Gergiev, Sir Simon Rattle, Michael Tilson Thomas, Daniel Harding, Bernard Haitink and André Previn, and has long-standing relationships with some of the leading musicians in the world – Sir John Eliot Gardiner, Anne-Sophie Mutter, Mitsuko Uchida and Maria João Pires amongst others. The Orchestra is self-governing and made up of nearly a hundred talented players who also perform regularly as soloists or in chamber concerts.

The LSO is proud to be Resident Orchestra at the Barbican and our home has enabled us to establish a truly loyal audience and fulfil many artistic aspirations. The LSO also enjoys successful residencies in New York, Paris and Tokyo and our regular tour destinations include China, South Korea, plus many major European cities. Last season also saw the Orchestra's first tour to Australia in 30 years, and an extensive tour of the United States with Michael Tilson Thomas. The LSO is widely acclaimed internationally by audiences and critics alike.

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Eckehard Stier, Conductor

Eckehard Stier is the Music Director and Chief Conductor of the Auckland Philharmonia Orchestra. With his huge repertoire including many different genres, he made a name for himself as an opera conductor. His interpretations of the works of Richard Strauss, Richard Wagner and Dmitri Shostakovich are highly praised by the press and public. Numerous concert engagements have taken him to Australia, Finland, France, Norway, Austria, Poland and Switzerland. In regular guest appearances Eckehard Stier has conducted international orchestras such as the London Symphony Orchestra, the Tokyo Philharmonic Orchestra and the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra.



Slava Sidorenko, Piano

Slava Sidorenko is originally from Ukraine. He won numerous piano competitions and received various prestigious awards and scholarships including the Yamaha Music Foundation of Europe Scholarship. He made his debut in 2009 at the Wigmore Hall, as winner of the Jacques Samuel Piano Competition, (the CD "Live at Wigmore Hall" was released the following year) receiving glowing reviews. Slava Sidorenko has appeared as recital and concerto soloist in the Ukraine, Germany, Italy, France, Netherlands and many parts of the UK. He has performed with orchestras such as Manchester Camerata, City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, and London Symphony Orchestra to name a few.

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PROGRAMME

Jonne Valtonen

In a Roundabout Way

Fanfare

Masashi Hamauzu

FINAL FANTASY XIII

Utopia in the Sky

(Prelude to FINAL FANTASY XIII | Vanille's Theme | Nautilus | Blinded by Light etc.)

Nobuo Uematsu

FINAL FANTASY IX

For the People of Gaia

(Festival of the Hunt | Vivi's Theme | Mourning the Sky | Silver Dragon etc.)

INTERVAL (20 MIN.)

Nobuo Uematsu

FINAL FANTASY VIII

Mono no aware

(The Oath | Don't be Afraid | The Landing | Waltz for the Moon etc.)

Nobuo Uematsu

FINAL FANTASY V

Library of Ancients

(Main Theme of FINAL FANTASY V | Reina's Theme |
Spreading Grand Wings | The Evil Lord X-Death etc.)

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