

VIDEO GAME MUSIC ANALYSIS

- For Educational Use Only -

Save Them!

from Final Fantasy VI

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$\text{♩} = 170$

Trumpets

Trombones

Cymbal

Snare

Timpani

Violins I

Violins I

Violas

Cellos

Rhythmic motif is re-used throughout track to maintain continuity amidst chaotic transitions

"Interlocking" rhythm like this avoids aural clutter and makes the track more intelligible and interesting.

A

G

C7

I

\flat VII

C7 comes out of nowhere to "resolve" to F+ in the coming measures.

A Mixolydian

C Mixolydian

I'll include these small, boxed labels to indicate the tonal center being implied ----->

6

Tpts.

Tbns.

Cym.

Sn.

Timp.

Vlms. I

Vlms. II

Vlas.

Vcs.

Melody sequenced up *and* handed off to a diff. timbre = more contrast, more interest

Contrary motion is used to varying degrees to balance the feel of the transition out and avoid a sense of finality.

Speeding up harmonic rhythm to make transition feel more rushed and dramatic

A F C# A G A^b

Root mvt. follows F+ triad, which leads well into G Lydian (C# is the #4)

Transition G Lydian A^b Lydian

11

The silence in the rhythm section here is a necessary ingredient in making the upcoming measures "hit". Contrast (and its effectiveness) is not just created with noise, but with counter-balancing silence.

G7^{b5} G^b7^{b5} F7^{b5} E7^{b5}

Alternating Whole Tone Scales

These two measures are composed to scramble the listener's brain and wash out any sense of tonality to prepare for yet *another* upcoming transition. The whole tone scale is a fantastic device for this purpose, given its ambiguous nature.

13

Tpts.

Tbns.

Cym.

Sn.

Timp.

Vlns. I

Vlns. II

Vlas.

Vcs.

?

Whole Tone Scale

A^{add2}

I

G

$bVII$

Whole Tone Scale

A lydian

A^{add2}

A

I

A Mixolydian

A Lydian

These transition measures utilize the whole tone scale again as an alternative to common practice methods. The scale works as ambiguous "glue" that allows a chromatic progression upwards without it sounding detrimentally jarring.

17

Tpts.

Tbns.

Cym.

Sn.

Timp.

Vlins. I

Vlins. II

Vlas.

Vcs.

The texture is thinned out to allow the melody to breathe. Very important to avoid tiring the listener out!

A nice, flowing melodic phrase gives the listener welcome respite from the flurry of transitory sequencing that's come before. Balancing the two (sequential, patterned transitions and lyrical melodic sections) is how Uematsu keeps this track fresh on every loop.

D

I

E

II

D Lydian

20

Tpts.

Tbns.

Cym.

Sn.

Timp.

Vlms. I

Vlms. II

Vlas.

Vcs.

*F*maj⁷

I⁷

F Lydian

24

Direct quotation of the game's main theme. This increases the player's *emotional investment* in what's going on, as this theme has come to represent the hopes and lives of the protagonists. This track plays alongside exciting but dangerous action. Usage of leitmotif in this way is one of many ways this track (and the soundtrack as a whole) achieves more artistry than just being some neat music that's fun to listen to.

Am

i

A Minor

Em7

v

28

Tpts.

Tbns.

Cym.

Sn.

Timp.

Vlms. I

Vlms. II

Vlas.

Vcs.

3+3+2 cross rhythm is reinforced by multiple parts so it juxtaposes against the melody. Creates rhythmic tension for dramatic purposes, but the 3+3+2 also has a "rushing" effect that propels the music onward.

#3 of the Phrygian Dominant scale

bII of the Phrygian Dominant scale

F F#° G G#° A Gm A

Chromatic

I bVII I

A Phrygian Dominant

Chromatically rising harmonic sequence starts from the bVI of A Minor and leads seamlessly to the tonic chord, *but...*

...we're not in A minor anymore, but A Phrygian Dominant! Chosen to support a particularly adventurous melody and harmony. This also has the function of preparing the loop point, as the key center is the same as the beginning of the track, and the tonic chord is the same. In short: a **parallel modulation** with a similar tonic chord at the loop point works well.

34

Tpts.

Tbns.

Cym.

Sn.

Timp.

Vlms. I

Vlms. II

Vlas.

Vcs.

Gm

A

bvii

I