

COSMIC SHARK PARTY

Kareshi collection vol. 1

by Daniel Brown

January-March 2015

1. Deja Vu

Iron Maiden is an example of the kind of music that influenced the composers of the Mega Man game series, which is given “rock” style stage themes due to the series’ Japanese title “Rockman.” I treated this song as I do most of my game covers – understand the original lines and textures, then arrange it as close as I can while keeping it playable. This song works well as a piano etude for the right hand.

2. Monster Party Ballad

The music to the password screen in the NES game Monster Party is based on a harmonic progression which lends itself well to a piano ballad. The original game tune opens the ballad, then there are three verses with my own melodies. Writing lyrics which follow the plot of the game was a device to create an interesting vocal melody, and was a good compositional exercise. Along the way are references to the music from stages 3 and 5.

||: G D/F# Em G/D C G/B Am D :||

Once upon a time, not long ago, there was a boy called Mark.
He was walking home from baseball one day when he looked up into the sky.
There was a star, it was bright and beautiful, which suddenly began to fall.
It landed right in front of the boy. It was no star, it was a monster!

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The monster said, “My name is Bert, and I need your help.
My home planet has been invaded, will you help me fight them?”
Mark said, “I don’t know what I can do. I don’t have anything to fight with!”
Bert said, “That baseball bat will do just fine. Now take my hand and let’s fly away!”

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Bert and Mark flew to space, then they arrived at the monster planet.
They beat the bad ones and saved the world! Then, Mark woke up in his bed.
Perhaps it was all a dream. There’s no such thing as monsters anyway-
But when he went outside, Bert was standing there. He looked at Mark and said, “Let’s go again!”

3. Ninja Gaiden

This is a cover of a medley by the Minibosses and was made in tribute.

4. Rygar

At Magfest M3, this game was requested (repeatedly) by the crowd of the Minibosses concert. The band obliged. Afterwards, I made a new short medley of songs from the game.

5. Friday the 13th

The cabin theme is the only full-length music track in this game. So it is very easy to cover the entire soundtrack around it. I had to learn a new piano technique to play it properly – constantly alternating between loud and soft every note of the right hand part, creating a real-time echo effect. So far I have not seen this technique used in any other piano piece.

6. Jaws

A game distributed by the same company as Friday the 13th, but one with more music. Only the title and final confrontation music use material from the film soundtracks, the rest is all new music. There were, after all, no scenes of bombing jellyfish from an airplane in the movies. This is a game I’ve enjoyed to play since renting it from the drugstore in elementary school. Later in life, I set a fastest-completion time in 2006 which was included in Guinness World Records – Gamer’s Edition for 2009.

7. Super Mario Bros 2

The main theme to Super Mario Bros 2 was one of the first things I wanted to arrange when I started doing videogame covers. So with some piano ability, an awful tape recorder, and a Geocities page, I recorded this in 2004 and was encouraged by the members of theshizz.org to do more. Thanks guys!

8, 9, 10. Metroid

Brinstar's theme was another of the very first game music I arranged for piano. The rest of the soundtrack followed after I recorded Mother Brain, Escape, and Ending for the Dwelling of Duels monthly music competition. This new recording of the whole set features a short break into Wizards & Warriors during Kraid, led off by a transcription of a Minibosses guitar solo. Perhaps more interesting is the new Ending Theme, which features both a straightforward transcription as well as an extended, denser, and more virtuosic version which I arranged for a projected set of highly technical etudes based on game themes. I tried to imagine a piano solo grand enough to be worth a stage at a videogame music festival.

11, 12, 13. Moonlight Sonata

There are no new words to introduce the music to Beethoven's Moonlight Sonata. Perhaps you've heard just the first movement, in which case you're in for some surprising turns of mood in the other parts. I put off learning the third movement for many years because I believed it was above my ability level, however it was a fellow videogame speedrunner that suggested I learn it because he had done so and had a good time with it. Thanks tiki!

14. Lumberjack Variations

Presented as an encore is something completely different. Around 1998 I wrote a set of variations on Monty Python's "The Lumberjack Song" with no real understanding of music theory, but which resulted in a coherent, cohesive whole that's just perhaps short on interesting harmonic changes. I never wrote this down, but 16 years later I found it on a tape I had recorded back then. This recording is an unmodified transcription from that old tape. It begins with a pretentious A minor introduction from Paganini's 5th violin caprice, followed by a theme and seven variations. There are some difficult passages that show healthy ambition in 16-year-old me.

The album is dedicated to all the supporters of my piano journey since 1997. Additionally, the individual tracks are dedicated to the following:

Deja Vu – Philippe L.

Monster Party Ballad – Andrew F. and Vivianne D.

Ninja Gaiden – theshizz.org

Rygar – Magfest M3

Friday the 13th – Michael A.

Jaws – John D.

Super Mario Bros 2 – Chris K.

Metroid – Grant H.

Moonlight Sonata – Daniel J. and Sattik G.

Lumberjack Variations – Teenage Kareshi

Piano – Kawai CA-65

Cover artwork by Vivianne Ducharme

Special thanks as always to Audun Sørli

Original composers:

Deja Vu – Dave Murray, Steve Harris

Monster Party – Masaki Hashimoto

Ninja Gaiden – Keiji Yamagishi

Rygar – Michiharu Hasuya

Friday the 13th – Hirohiko Takayama

Jaws – Shinichi Sakamoto

Super Mario Bros 2 – Koji Kondo

Metroid – Hirokazu Tanaka

Wizards & Warriors – David Wise

Minibosses guitar solo – Aaron Burke

Moonlight Sonata – Ludwig van Beethoven

The Lumberjack Song – Terry Jones, Michael Palin, Fred Tomlinson

All piano arrangements by Daniel Brown (Kareshi) except of course Moonlight Sonata.