

THE GAMER SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

at the University of Maryland



Spring 2024 Concert

Dekelboun Concert Hall
Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center

Sunday May 12th, 2024
2PM & 7PM

Francesco Berrett, Conductor
Robert Morris, Conductor
umd.gamersymphony.org

About the Gamer Symphony Orchestra

In Fall 2005, student violist Michelle Eng sought to create an orchestral group that played the music of video games. With a half-dozen others who shared a love of video game music, she founded the Gamer Symphony Orchestra to achieve that dream. By the ensemble's first public performance in Spring 2006, its size had quadrupled.

Today, the Gamer Symphony Orchestra provides a musical and social outlet to 130+ members. It is the world's first college-level ensemble to draw its repertoire exclusively from the soundtracks of video games. The ensemble is entirely student-run, which includes conducting and musical arranging.

In addition to the often sold-out semesterly concerts at the University of Maryland campus, the GSO has performed in a number of special concerts throughout the years. In February 2011, the GSO's arrangement of "Korobeiniki" from Tetris was performed in collaboration with Video Games Live and the National Philharmonic to two sold-out houses at the Strathmore in Bethesda, MD. In May 2012 and 2015, as a part of the Art of Video Games Exhibit, the GSO performed at the American Art Museum in Washington, D.C. in the central atrium. Most recently, in March 2018, the GSO performed on the Millennium Stage of the Kennedy Center in a concert titled "From Bits to Brass: A Symphonic Adventure Through Video Game Music," as a part of the Kennedy Center's "Direct Current" event. The concert was played to a packed house, and served as a celebration of musical masterpieces across the video game repertoire for gamers, musicians, and enthusiasts alike.

Aside from its concerts, the GSO also holds the charity gaming tournament "Gaming 4 Life" twice a year. All proceeds from this multi-hour long video game tournament and social event benefit the Children's National Medical Center in Washington, D.C.

2023–24 GSO Officers

President Stephanie Do

Vice President Jayden Andrews

Treasurer Matthew Doyle

Secretary William Wegand

Music Director Oscar Krug

Orchestra Manager Braidon Saelens

Social Director Eva Ginns

Officers-At-Large Saima Ahmad
Emma Brown

Conductors Francesco Berrett
Robert Morris

Choral Directors Neel Sanghvi
Aidan Wilbur

PR Directors Blaise Ryan
Meilin Yuan

Fundraising Director Daniel Xing

Tech Director Michele Imamura

Webmasters Jay Rana
Christine Zhou

Orchestra Members

**Section Leader **Concertmaster*

Violin I

Ethan Chou
Stephanie Do
Florian Grader-Beck
Minsi Hu
Michele Imamura

Gyuseok Kang
Katriel Kasayan
Rafa Mondal

Garrett Peters

Isaac Thomas
Cynthia Xi**

Esther Yu

Kevin Zhang
Joshua Zhu

Violin II

Poushali Banerjee
Sam Cassetta

Justin Chen

Edith Corey
Cai Diggs

Jena Ialongo
Ian Jackson

Kieran Khan

Sanna Moore

Isabelle Park

Abigail Shirima

Alex Shrestha

Caroline Tanner *

Alan Whitman

Viola

Harshitha Balijepalli

Elizabeth Barski

Emma Brown

Erika Falco

Taegon Hibbitts

Kexin Liu

Leya Luo

Michael Maroney

Emma Roldan

Olivia Rosen *

Jenna Wollney

Cello

Saima Ahmad

Serena Alamina

Alexander Barker

Sarah Blaufuss

Grace Cong

Lauren Rabe

Jay Rana*

Benji Shin

Alexandro Wong

Hannah Yan

Bass

Jonathan Alonzo

Patrick Torre

Guitar

Shiham Siddiqui

Electric Bass

Adam Martinson *

Flute/Piccolo

Chaitanya Garg

Jeffrey Luo *

Charu Mehta

Jason Tang

Cecilia Vu

Christine Zhou

Oboe

Zander Barrow *

Jess Huang

Oscar Krug

Clarinet

Matthew Doyle*

Seyong Park

Amy Sheehan

Michael Wang

Meilin Yuan

Alto Saxophone

Maegan Blake

Nicole Cifuentes

Noah Goldberg

Blaise Ryan

Zack Smith *

Davis Xu

Tenor Saxophone

Dimitrios Angelakos

Rhea Jajodia

Peter Kozlov

Baritone Saxophone

Braidon Saelens *

Bass Clarinet

Daniel Xing

Regina Yuengling*

Bassoon

Will Duis*

Jacob Keeley

Trumpet

Beau Carter

Silas Rager*

Landon Stone

French Horn

Aboli Dahiwadkar

Suerken Matsuyama

Liam Moran

Sunil Pateel

Sara Riso*

Arthur You

Trombone

Nicholas Curtis

Quinlan Ngo

Michael Shanny

Euphonium

Christopher Assiryani*

Carlos Chen

Tuba

Ryan Owens

Percussion

Anish Bhupalam

Colin Eng

Hayden Miller

Christian Pascual

Wren Poreba*

Steven Zhang

Piano

Sean Cheng

Claire Huang

Chorus Members

**Section Leader **Choral Director*

Soprano	Alto	Tenor	Bass
Ana Kaibni	Ciara Donegan	Matthew Evanusa	Jayden Andrews *
Erin Lea *	Mikayla Durr *	Miles Goyal	Paolo Atienza
Theresa Menna	Eva Ginns	Emily Hao	Michael Brown
Archita Naik	Marsh Hessler	Max Howard	Ryan Goldsmith
Audrey Wiswakarma	Halimah Kargbo	Neel Sanghvi**	Alex Miller
Amy Zhong	Katya Kiryutin	Logan Swaisgood *	Varun Somashekar
	Sarah Pierce	Aidan Wilbur**	Aaron Stephen
	Valerie Yen		William Wegand

Emeritus Members

Michelle Eng —Founder President, 2005–2007	Greg Cox Conductor, 2006–2009	Peter Fontana Conductor, 2010–2011
Rob Garner President, 2008–2011	Chris Apple Music Director, 2007–2010	Kira Levitzky Conductor, 2009–2013
Alexander Ryan President, 2011–2013	Kyle Jamolin Choral Director, 2012–2014	Kevin Mok Conductor, 2013–2015
Joel Guttman President, 2013–2014	Jasmine Marcelo Vice President, 2013–2015	Jesse Halpern Treasurer, 2015–2016
Jonathan Hansford Choral Director, 2015–2017	Marin Chin Music Director, 2016–2017	Austin Hope Webmaster, 2015–2018
Suzie DeMeritte Treasurer, 2016–2018	Michael Mitchell Conductor, 2016–2018	Leanne Cetorelli Conductor, 2015–2018
Alex Yu President, 2017–2018	Erin Estes Webmaster, 2018–2019	Bethany Riege Secretary, 2018–2019
Hojin Yoon President, 2019–2020	Sami Louguit Member, 2018–2020	Samuel Harley Conductor, 2018–2020
Matthew Evanusa Conductor, 2018–2020	Nicole Benner Social Director, 2018–2020	Austin Starnes Treasurer, 2018–2020
Nicolas DeGraba Music Director, 2018–2020	Ciara Donegan Music Director, 2021–2022	Rachel Wattanarungsikajorn Conductor, 2020–2022
Quinn Dang President, 2020–2022		

Super Mario Bros.

Main Theme

Super Mario Bros.

Koji Kondo

Arr. Francesco Barrett

Ft. Zander Barrow (Oboe), Seyong

Park (Clarinet)

For many people booting up their Nintendo Entertainment System for the first time in 1985, they were greeted with this cheerful, now-iconic theme. First appearing in Level 1-1 of the original *Super*

Mario Bros., this piece has become synonymous with the term video gaming. In the years since its premiere, it has become arguably the most legendary and influential piece of music in all of video gaming, and has entered into the canon of contemporary music. This Bossa nova-tinged arrangement puts a unique spin on the classic piece, fitting it into an orchestral context while still capturing the charm of the original. Please enjoy the “Super Mario Bros. Main Theme”!



Zack Smith

Checker Knights

Kirby Air Ride

Akira Miyagawa

Arr. Michael Maroney

Kirby Air Ride (2003) for the Nintendo Gamecube is a fast-paced and uniquely fun racing game among other Nintendo titles, memorable for both its challenging gameplay and for its beloved music.

Its eighth course, known as “Checker Knights”, is an especially difficult race track. With many enemies and hazards about, this theme accompanies a strange checkerboard-like environment. To

match this disorienting landscape, the march-like music that accompanies this level is wild and boisterous - and stands out as one of the only recordings of a live orchestra among the game’s synth and MIDI soundtrack. Although originating from a Japan-exclusive episode of the anime series “Kirby Right Back at Ya!”, composed by Akira Miyagawa, this piece has become more well known from its inclusion in the *Kirby* and *Smash Brothers* series, cementing its place in the minds of many gamers alike.



Emma Brown

Sound of the Wind

Final Fantasy: Crystal Chronicles

Kumi Tanioka, Hidenori Iwasaki

Arr. Theresa Menna

Ft. Mikayla Durr (Vocal), Archita Naik (Vocal)

Final Fantasy: Crystal Chronicles is a spinoff adventure from the iconic *Final Fantasy* series, originally released on GameCube in 2003. The character of this game is in stark contrast to the core series. Players find themselves navigating a rustic, medieval, almost fairytale-like setting. Composer Kumi Tanioka was inspired by this world to create a unique folk-style soundtrack, utilizing an abundance of nonwestern percussion and Renaissance-period instruments like lutes, recorders, and krumphorns.

In *Final Fantasy: Crystal Chronicles*, the world is covered in a poisonous miasma. To keep this miasma at bay, every settlement relies on a large magical crystal which must be purified with myrrh each passing year. However, the journey to obtain this precious resource is long and arduous—myrrh trees are rare, and the paths to them are laden with monsters. Still, the survival of your home depends on it. “Sound of the Wind” can be heard during the game’s intro over scenes of your caravan coming together to set off on their annual quest. In essence, the song is a call-to-adventure. The lyrics evoke a sense of wonder about the world, as well as a joyful anticipation of adventure—one that is tempered with a sense of trepidation regarding the perils to come.

Aria Math

Minecraft

C418

Arr. Jacob Keeley

Ft. Maegan Blake (Alto Saxophone), Will Duis (Bassoon), Sara Riso (French Horn)

“Aria Math” is one of the most beloved songs from the iconic soundtrack to *Minecraft*. The track’s instantly recognizable handpan motif can be heard in the game when the player is in creative mode, with the song serving as a serene sonic backdrop to the freedom of the open world. Whether you’re building a massive city, testing out a new iron farm, or just burning down a forest for fun, you can float away

listening to the sublime ambiance created by the sweeping strings and reverberant synth melodies. This orchestral adaptation scales up the soundscapes of the original track, while maintaining its unintrusive placidity.



Christine Zhou

Bloons Bloons Bloons

Bloons TD 5

Tim Haywood

Arr. Zack Smith, Braidon Saelens

Ft. Amy Sheehan (Clarinet), Michael Shanny (Trombone)

Bloons Tower Defense is a series that hardly needs introduction. Since its conception in 2007 when tower defense games were all the rage, *BTD* has been a smash (or pop, rather?) hit. From school computer labs, to parents' iPads, to DSiWare, we've been lining poorly planned traffic infrastructure with monkeys just itching to pop onslaughts balloons (called bloons) for just short of two decades. Taking inspiration from classic big band charts such as *Sing Sing Sing* that alternate between bright



Zack Smith

flashy big band statements and mysterious tom-tom percussion breaks, “Bloons Bloons Bloons” presents a symphonic jazz take on the iconic theme of the fifth installment in the franchise with similarly nostalgic motifs from the fourth and sixth. With no shortage of tomfoolery and monkey business, please enjoy “Bloons Bloons Bloons”.

Bad Apple

Touhou Gensokyo - Lotus Land Story

ZUN

Arr. Kunio Matsuzaki for JAGMO

Edited by Alex Barker and Stephanie Do

Ft. Alex Barker, Stephanie Do, Michele Imamura, Michael Maroney

“Bad Apple!!” is a captivating song from the *Touhou Project*, a popular bullet hell game series. The original track was composed by ZUN, who is also the sole developer, designer, and script writer for all mainline *Touhou* games. Like just about everything related to *Touhou*, “Bad Apple!!” has been remixed countless times, most famously by Alstroemeria Records with vocals by nomico and accompanied by the infamous shadow-art music video that has since become an internet meme. With its eerie yet catchy tune, the song has become an iconic part of *Touhou’s* musical legacy, enchanting fans worldwide. This arrangement by JAGMO features a string quartet highlighting the intensity of the original *Lotus Land Story* version.

Battle (Field)

The Legend of Zelda: Breath of the Wild

Manaka Kataoka

Arr. Colin Eng

Ft. Oscar Krug (English Horn), Jeffrey Luo (Flute)

Embark on a heroic adventure as we unveil the exhilarating “Battle (Field)” theme from *The Legend of Zelda: Breath of the Wild*! Immerse yourself in the pulse-pounding rhythms and epic orchestrations that underscore the battles in Hyrule’s vast landscapes. This arrangement propels you straight into the heart of action, echoing the courage and determination of the legendary hero, Link. Then dive into the interlude, experiencing a frozen moment in time as the music mirrors the freezing effect when Link skillfully aims his bow, showcasing the frozen in time battlefield. As the battle theme ends, the orchestra builds until the enemy is inevitably slain!

The Voyage

Europa Universalis IV

Andreas Waldtoft

Original score with SATB arr. Nicholas DeGraba

Ft. Cynthia Xi (Violin)

Europa Universalis IV is among the most popular and highest regarded grand strategy games, and many people, including those within our orchestra, have played it for many years now. This piece, “The Voyage,” is the main theme of the game, and its grand sense of scale reflects the game itself, with everything that can be done and all the places that can be conquered. This arrangement of “The Voyage” is graciously provided by original composer Andreas Waldtoft at Paradox Interactive and modified to fit our orchestra, with a choir arrangement by Nicholas DeGraba.

This piece is such an incredible part of the grand atmosphere of *Europa Universalis IV*, and just as its players have enjoyed this piece from the first time they opened the game, we hope you will enjoy it too.

Azhdaha Mvmt. 3: Rage Beneath the Mountains

Genshin Impact

Yu-Peng Chen@HOYO-MiX

Orchestrated and Arranged by Jiade He, Dimeng Yuan

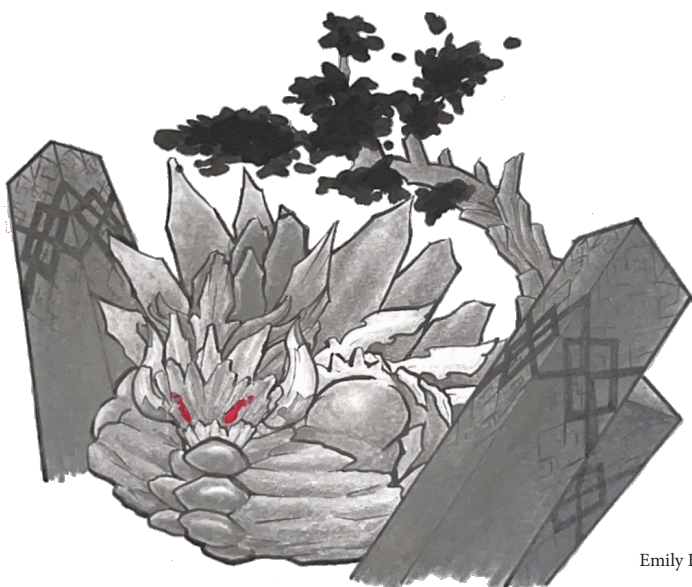
Lyrics by Yu Sun

Adapted for GSO by DanimalCrossing, anserin

Ft. Stephanie Do (Electric Violin), Jeffrey Luo (Dizi), Shiham Siddiqui (Electric Guitar), Christine Zhou (Koto)

An enormous dragon as ancient as the mountains themselves. In an age that has all but faded from memory, he stood shoulder to shoulder with one who ruled over a harbor of stone. But in the end, the two came into conflict, and the dragon was banished to a dark place deep underground. Over the long years of his imprisonment, his power has slowly dissipated.

Inspired by Persian mythology, Azhdaha is a rotund toad-like elemental earth dragon and humanity's former best friend. After going insane from the passage of time and strip mining, he caused a minor ruckus in the peaceful nation of Liyue and was sealed back underground, BITTER and BETRAYED. This suite consists of three movements detailing his rise and fall in Liyue's history. The first, "Through the Eyes of a Dragon", is a narrated retelling of Azhdaha's creation by the CEO of GEO, Rex Lapis. The next two movements, "Ode to Azhdaha" and "Rage Beneath the Mountains", tell of Azhdaha's pain as he erodes with time, even while trying to destroy the world he once protected.



Emily Hao

The third movement being performed today is notable for its diverse orchestration and classical Chinese lyrics; it was originally scored for a symphony orchestra, full choir, rock band, and traditional Chinese instruments. Today, we have the unique honor of featuring both solo dizi and koto in our ensemble. The lyrics are written in the poetic style of an ancient Chinese poem, drawing inspiration from works such as the *Verses of Chu*. Translated lyrics are provided below.

Lyrics

(Long ago) In the field of stars, expelling the dark shadows
(Now) Lost in the mountains and wilderness, with no way to go
Show yourself! / O deep, cold palace, the place of my sins
Since you left, this country has fallen into a terrible state / Already long lost and forgotten, as for my home
Hatred, sorrow, and grief accumulate day after day / (Fate) Lonely and wandering, trapped in such a harsh place
Panicking and not knowing where to go, I embark on the treacherous journey ahead / What can I do!
It's time to return!
The steep rocks and mountains withstood the test of time
Thousands of rivers rush rapidly, seemingly swallowing the sky
(But even if) Mountains fall and the earth tremors
How can the evil (which caused all this) be eradicated?
(Fate) Lonely and wandering, trapped in such a harsh place
There is no way out of this miserable generation
The mountains are precipitous and lush, hiding the path that diverged (between you and me)
Recounting how I had lost my way and wandered away from you, engulfed by the shadow of a mountain ridge



Intermission!

Christine Zhou

Gusty Garden Galaxy

Super Mario Galaxy

Koji Kondo, Mahito Yokota

Arr. Shota Nakama of VGO

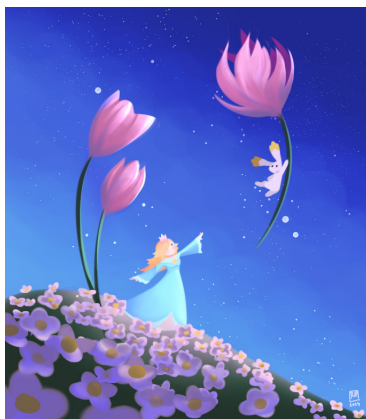
Adapted for UMGSO by Rob Garner

Updated by Robert Morris and Oscar Krug

Ft. Beau Carter (Flugelhorn), Sunil Pateel

(French Horn)

Bowser has captured Princess Peach (again). Mario must travel through the stars to rescue her and stop Bowser's plan to conquer the universe. "Gusty Garden Galaxy" captures the whimsical, airy feel of Mario's cosmic adventures. The score for this piece was graciously provided to the GSO by the Video Game Orchestra (VGO) founded at Boston's Berklee College of Music in 2008.



Rafa Mondal

Le Vent et Les Enfants des étoiles

Genshin Impact

Yu-Peng Chen@HOYO-MiX

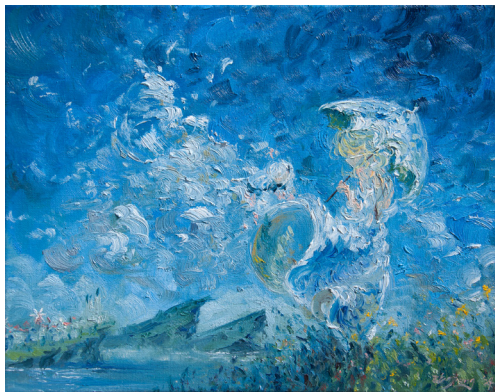
Lyrics by Dab

Arr. DanimalCrossing, Theresa Menna, Matthew Evanusa

Ft. Matthew Doyle (Clarinet), Chaitanya Garg (Flute), Oscar Krug (English Horn),

Jeffrey Luo (Flute), Meilin Yuan (Clarinet)

Traveler, you embark on a glorious adventure in the realm of Teyvat, where you landed after an epic battle with a god. Your sibling vanished, and you venture forth with Paimon your trusted companion - moving from country to country - from Mondstadt, to Liyue, then Sumeru and now Fontaine, as you try to uncover the mysteries of the land you traverse and the gods that inhabit it. Join us as we re-experience two of the inspiring themes that greet you as the doors open - and your journey awaits.



Christine Zhou

ASGORE

Undertale

Toby Fox

Arr. Robert Morris, Christopher Assiryani

Ft. Christopher Assiryani, Beau Carter, Carlos Chen, Nicholas Curtis, Colin Eng, Robert Morris, Quinlan Ngo, Silas Rager, Sara Riso, Michael Shanny

Human...It was nice to meet you. Goodbye ~ Asgore Dreemurr

GSO's (we think) first-ever brass ensemble brings you a performance from the critically-acclaimed *Undertale*. After traversing throughout the underground, where you've battled through thick and thin, and come across dreamscape and nightmarish environments alike, one final challenge awaits you. Asgore Dreemurr, the Monster King of the Underground, wants your SOUL in order to free the monsters--but the only way for you to escape to the surface is to take his first. It's the final battle. Mercy is no longer an option: it's time to fight!

*It seems your journey is finally over

*You're filled with DETERMINATION

The Black Wind Howls

Chrono Trigger

Yatsunori Mitsuda

Arr. Braidon Saelens

Ft. Silas Rager (Trumpet), Landon Stone (Trumpet)

"The Black Wind Howls" aims to tell the story of Magus, a sorcerer prince of an ancient kingdom where magic is abundant. Due to a desperate attempt by his mother to gain immortality from an ancient being known as Lavos, Magus is transported through time and separated from his sister and only friend Schala. His only goal from this point onwards is to travel back to his home and reunite with his sister by any means necessary. Though he succeeds at returning to his own kingdom and time, his failed attempts to change history and save his sister cause the destruction of everything he knows. "The Black Wind Howls" captures the emotions of Magus's tragedy--his pain, determination, hubris, and grief.

Stardew Valley Winter

Stardew Valley

Eric “ConcernedApe” Barone

Arr. Theresa Menna

Ft. Zander Barrow (Oboe), Seyong Park (Clarinet), Jason Tang (Flute)

Ah, *Stardew Valley*: the cozy game to end all cozy games. SV is a farm life simulator released in 2016 that took the gaming world by storm. As a player, you must tend to your modest farm and navigate the relaxing pace of small-town life in the idyllic (and titular) Stardew Valley. The changing seasons greatly shape this journey. Winter, for example, is a time of stillness. There are no crops to grow, and everywhere is covered in a thick blanket of snow, creating a magical winter landscape. “The Wind Can Be Still” is one of the themes players can hear in the background of the game during this season. It captures that subtle spark of magical winter whimsy, layered over a feeling of melancholic, quiet stagnation... Perfect cozy winter vibes!

Our Hope

Xenoblade Chronicles 2

Yasunori Mitsuda

Lyrics by Premvanti Patel

Arr. Neel Sanghvi

In a world with life floating along a vast sea of clouds and great titans swirling around a glittering, towering tree, legends whisper of those with the power to shape their own destinies. Some used their talents to form thriving communities and ecosystems, while others sought retribution or simply enjoyed their days in isolation. Yet there were two souls, the embodiments of spirit and reason, that would drive the future. An aegis of shadow, worshipped as divine, malevolent to any who did not believe and yet, constantly seeking meaning. And an aegis of light, one with such overwhelming divine power, sealed away by trauma at its use, constantly seeking forgiveness.

In a world with life fluttering along an endless sea of clouds and dying titans drifting around a looming, uncaring tree, the battle of burning hope and crushing stagnation envelopes all with and without power. With lyrics representing the sacred remnants of a once-powerful civilization deep beneath the clouds, we intone loving praises of those heroes who overcame despair to ensure the world's salvation.

They are our hope.

Elite Four Medley

Pokémon Diamond & Pearl

Go Ichinose, Junichi Masuda

Arr. Colin Eng

Ft. Dimitrios Angelakos (Tenor Saxophone), Jeffrey Luo (Flute), Blaise Ryan (Alto Saxophone), Michael Wang (Clarinet)

Prepare yourself for the ultimate Pokémon showdown: facing the Elite Four of the Sinnoh region! Feel the tension rise as the “Elite Four Encounter Theme” starts the medley, setting the stage for the formidable challenge of battling the Elite Four trainers. It is then immediately followed by the “Elite Four Battle Theme”, featuring adrenaline-pumping rhythms that accompany the fierce Pokémon skirmish. The orchestra becomes a battlefield itself, each melody fighting within the ensemble to be present. The “Elite Four Victory Theme” brings the medley to a triumphant close heralding the hard-fought victory over the Elite Four!

God Shattering Star

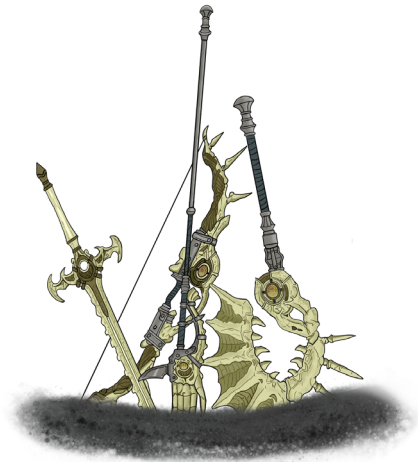
Fire Emblem: Three Houses

Takeru Kanazaki

Arr. Jayden Andrews

Ft. Sean Cheng (Piano), Audrey Wiswakarma (Soprano)

Embark on an emotional journey through Fódlan’s tragic tale with “God Shattering Star”, an intense final boss theme from *Fire Emblem: Three Houses*. In this game you, the protagonist, must do everything in your power to unite a war-torn continent on the brink of destruction. Your journey to dispel the flames of war lead to one final encounter, where you must fight a powerful foe that you never saw coming. You ready your weapon, side by side with the friends that you have made along the way, ready to save the world from an untimely demise. “God Shattering Star” captures the energy, invigoration, and tension of this epic battle, and is sure to keep the audience at the edge of their seats.



Logan Swaisgood

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Hiroshi Amano

Prof. Derek Richardson

Dr. Laura Schnitker

Prof. Marybeth Shea

Prof. Yuriko Gandolfo

Jwoyal Ranjit

DanimalCrossing

Amy Poremba

Tricia Ting

Sean Cheng

and...

YOU!