



Koji Kondo's Super Mario Bros. Soundtrack (33 1/3)

By Andrew Schartmann



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Koji Kondo's *Super Mario Bros.* (1985) score redefined video game music. With under three minutes of music, Kondo put to rest an era of bleeps and bleeps-the sterile products of a lab environment-replacing it with one in which game sounds constituted a legitimate form of artistic expression. Andrew Schartmann takes us through the various external factors (e.g., the video game crash of 1983, Nintendo's marketing tactics) that coalesced into a ripe environment in which Kondo's musical experiments could thrive. He then delves into the music itself, searching for reasons why our hearts still dance to the “primitive” 8-bit tunes of a bygone era.

What musical features are responsible for Kondo's distinct “Mario sound”? How do the different themes underscore the vastness of Princess Peach's Mushroom Kingdom? And in what ways do the game's sound effects resonate with our physical experience of the world? These and other questions are explored within, through the lens of Kondo's compositional philosophy-one that would influence an entire generation of video game composers. As Kondo himself stated, “we [at Nintendo] were trying to do something that had never been done before.” In this book, Schartmann shows his readers how Kondo and his team not just succeeded, but heralded in a new era of video games.



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- Rank: #260490 in Books
- Published on: 2015-05-21
- Released on: 2015-05-21
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 167.13" h x .38" w x 4.86" l, .35 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 168 pages

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Editorial Review

Review

"Koji Kondo's *Super Mario Bros. Soundtrack* gave me a greater appreciation of something that appears to be so simple on the surface." ?Pure Geekery

"Andrew Schartmann's extensive, thoughtful treatise on Japanese composer Koji Kondo and his work on the soundtrack to the original *Super Mario Bros* game is probably the most unusual entry in the 33 1/3 music chapbook series ... As Schartmann demonstrates, Kondo's work on this seminal game – and the legacy of industry influence that followed – is much more than the primitive bleeps and bloops we all remember ..." ?Critics at Large

"Andrew Schartmann does both the spirit of the series and video game history proud with his investigation into the iconic music from Koji Kondo. Matching a fanboy's sensibilities with serious scholarship, Schartmann provides the reader with an engaging discussion of Kondo's themes and ideas, both in terms of stylistic flair and compositional acumen ... Of equal importance are his excellent research skills, as he collects worthwhile source material and pairs them [with] compelling quotes from Kondo and other luminaries at Nintendo to make his case for this soundtrack's inclusion in the 33-1/3 series. The result is a superb blend of professional musicology and video game nerdery." ?Dryvetime.tumblr.com

"Koji Kondo's *Super Mario Bros. Soundtrack* comes in at 120 pages, not counting the notes and preface, which appears well on par with other books in the 33 ? series. It's a book that takes itself seriously, as it should, and soundly proves the case that video game composition is worthy of discussion among keepers of music as a craft. If you have an appreciation for game music, this is worth buying. Even if you don't get a few parts, they're only likely to make you admire the work and design that go into composing all the more." ?Tim Latshaw, NintendoLife

"The most compelling aspects of Schartmann's book involve the widening circumference of Kondo's imagination, the possibilities he saw in this new world of electronic composition. The move to home consoles had freed video gaming from the initial, "hailing" approach to sound...It's Schartmann's sense of conviction, the hyperbole that occasionally frames his dive into composition and structure, that gives the book its charm." ?Hua Shu, The New Yorker

"There's something ballsy about including a videogame soundtrack in the 33 1/3 series since it's not a traditional album per se, though Andrew Schartmann makes a compelling case for Koji Kondo's score for *Super Mario Bros.*" ?Ruby Hornet, Hubert Vigilla

About the Author

Andrew Schartmann holds degrees in music from McGill and Yale University. He is the author of *Maestro Mario* and the assistant editor of *DSCH Journal*.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Tracy McCulloch:

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Sarah Farmer:

In this era globalization it is important to someone to find information. The information will make someone to understand the condition of the world. The healthiness of the world makes the information much easier to share. You can find a lot of sources to get information example: internet, classifieds, book, and soon. You can view that now, a lot of publisher that print many kinds of book. Often the book that recommended for your requirements is Koji Kondo's Super Mario Bros. Soundtrack (33 1/3) this reserve consist a lot of the information in the condition of this world now. This specific book was represented how do the world has grown up. The language styles that writer make usage of to explain it is easy to understand. Typically the writer made some research when he makes this book. That is why this book suitable all of you.

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