

Final Fantasy VIII Original Soundtrack Guide

by DarkLordOfTheSith

Updated to v1.3 on Oct 17, 2003

This walkthrough was originally written for Final Fantasy VIII on the PSX, but the walkthrough is still applicable to the PC version of the game.

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TITLE: Original Soundtrack Guide

GAME: Final Fantasy VIII

PLATFORM: Playstation

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VERSION: 1.3

DATE: 8/5/2003

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I: Revision History: -

- Version 1.0 (6/2/2003) - Original version of full soundtrack review written.
- Version 1.1 (6/27/2003) - I made several minor alterations to the full original soundtrack review following an indepth proof read.
- Version 1.2 (7/22/2003) - I compiled lyrics for Eyes on Me and Liberi Fatali both in Japanese and English.
- Version 1.3 (7/30/2003) - I made minor lyrics changes following cross-referencing with other lyrics sources.
- Version 1.4 (8/9/2003) - Compiled information into a full soundtrack guide adding information regarding arranged soundtracks and piano collections.
- Future updates - I hope to add more information regarding "FITHOS LUSEC WECOS VINOSEC" album and the Final Fantasy VIII Piano Collections including full reviews.

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II: Contents: -

This FAQ has been split into the following sections: -

- I. Revision history.
- II. Contents.
- III. Introduction/About me.
- IV. Original Soundtrack Track List.
- V. Full Original Soundtrack review.
- VI. "FITHOS LUSEC WECOS VINOSEC" track list.
- VII. Piano Collections track list.
- VIII. "Liberi Fatali" lyrics.
- IX. "Eyes on Me" lyrics.
- X. Composer/Arranger/Singer Information
- XI. Credits.
- XII. Contact/ Copyright Information

And now we move on into the main content of this FAQ....
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III: Introduction/About Me: -

Hi! This guide is entirely dedicated to the work of Nobuo Uematsu the composer of the Final Fantasy VIII original soundtrack as well as the work of the arranger Shiro Hamaguchi whom is responsible for the piano collection and orchestral arrangements I will write about in this site. In this FAQ I hope to analyse and credit their amazing achievements with these soundtracks as well as provide more general information about the soundtracks, including song lyrics.

Anyway a little about me and the history of this guide - ever since I played Final Fantasy VIII I have literally been obsessed with its music. It amazed me to see just what Uematsu can create with his music, and I found myself deeply touched and moved by this soundtrack. As a result I have become a Square music fanatic - I have bought most Final Fantasy original soundtracks and arranged albums whilst I also enjoy playing Squaresoft's music with the piano and from time to time the clarinet and saxophone when I can find the sheet music for it! Eventually, I joined the Squaresoft music site, squaresound.com which has been an enjoyable experience, particularly considering I could talk to fellow Square music fanatics there.

After making an indepth Final Fantasy VIII review, and compiling lyrics together I decided that I had the ideal information for a guide therefore I decided to see if gamefaqs would want my information. I noticed that this site lacked an indepth soundtrack guide whilst other Final Fantasy games had one, which eventually brought me into doing this guide. I hope it contains a lot of information to you, particularly the full review, which I tried to analyse musically rather than entirely subjectively subjectively!

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IV: Original Soundtrack Track List: -

Composed/Arranged by: Nobuo Uematsu
Discs: 4 Discs
Tracks: 74 Tracks
Released On: March 10, 1999 (Domestic)
Published by: DigiCube SquareSounds (Domestic)

Disc 1 Track list: -

- 01 - Liberi Fatali
- 02 - Balamb Garden
- 03 - Blue Fields
- 04 - Don't Be Afraid
- 05 - The Winner
- 06 - Find Your Way
- 07 - SeeD
- 08 - The Landing
- 09 - Starting Up
- 10 - Force Your Way
- 11 - The Loser

- 12 - Never Look Back
- 13 - Dead End
- 14 - Breezy
- 15 - Shuffle or Boogie
- 16 - Waltz for the Moon
- 17 - Tell Me
- 18 - Fear
- 19 - The Man with the Machine Gun
- 20 - Julia
- 21 - Roses and Wine
- 22 - Junction
- 23 - Timber Owls

Disc 2 Track list: -

- 01 - My Mind
- 02 - The Mission
- 03 - Martial Law
- 04 - Cactus Jack (Galbadian Anthem)
- 05 - Only a Plank Between One and Perdition
- 06 - Succession of Witches
- 07 - Galbadia Garden
- 08 - Unrest
- 09 - Under Her Control
- 10 - The Stage is Set
- 11 - A Sacrifice
- 12 - Fithos Luces Wecos Vinosec
- 13 - Intruders
- 14 - Premonition
- 15 - Wounded
- 16 - Fragments of Memories
- 17 - Jailed
- 18 - Rivals
- 19 - Ami

Disc 3 Track List: -

- 01 - The Spy
- 02 - Retaliation
- 03 - Movin'
- 04 - Blue Sky
- 05 - Drifting
- 06 - Heresy
- 07 - Fisherman's Horizon
- 08 - Odeka de Chocobo (Chocobo's Outing)
- 09 - Where I Belong
- 10 - The Oath
- 11 - Slide Show Part 1
- 12 - Slide Show Part 2
- 13 - Love Grows
- 14 - The Salt Flats
- 15 - Trust Me
- 16 - Silence and Motion
- 17 - Dance with the Balamb-Fish

- 18 - Tears for the Moon
- 19 - Residents
- 20 - Eyes on Me (Sung by Faye Wong)

Disc 4 Track List: -

- 01 - Mods de Chocobo (Featuring N's Telecaster)
- 02 - Ride On
- 03 - Truth
- 04 - Lunatic Pandora
- 05 - Compression of Time
- 06 - The Castle
- 07 - The Legendary Beast
- 08 - Maybe I'm a Lion
- 09 - The Extreme
- 10 - The Successor
- 11 - Ending Theme
- 12 - Overture

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V: Original Soundtrack Track List: -

Here is the track list for the full Original Soundtrack in English. Note that due to reflection on how the soundtrack corresponds with the game it contains some spoilers how I have intended to keep this rather minor so this guide doesn't spoil anything for those who have yet to play the game.

Full original soundtrack review: -

Overview: -

Uematsu provides a stunning soundtrack with this epic masterpiece that in my eyes could possibly be the greatest soundtrack of all time! Generally, Uematsu's tracks are well developed, very memorable and they are often extremely emotional. This soundtrack has the ability to capture every emotion expressed to its finest definition. Overall the use of the tracks within the game suits, and often compliments the context they are played, which is essential for using music as a tool for communication. I felt this soundtrack is a spectacular addition to the soundtracks of the series - it is certainly a huge improvement to the under-developed Final Fantasy VII soundtrack, and for me more recent Final Fantasy soundtracks did not improve upon this work of genius! As well as this, it is also a major compliment to the game Final Fantasy VIII itself considering in many ways it is quite flawed as a game.

We see a lot of important themes emphasised throughout the soundtrack, which are obviously reflected throughout the game. Like most Final Fantasies the themes of love, hate, war and fate are reflected effectively throughout the OST and add a lot of impact. However, unique to Final Fantasy VIII is the theme of sorcery, which takes an extremely prominent role in the soundtrack. This opens its way to a lot of mysterious tracks often accompanied by vocal chants, which are quite powerful in this soundtrack. This idea is reincarnated through many tracks and I felt this added a unique, darker and slightly paranormal element to the OST. As well as this there is a significant military element to the soundtrack, which is based on the military school our heroes go to! This element adds a rather striking feel to the soundtrack and adds a lot of power to the soundtrack however this element eventually fades as it does with the story.

Originality is quite a debated issue regarding this soundtrack - many of the tracks are clearly reminiscent of previous final fantasies, particularly Final Fantasy VI, as you will see. Although some references are coincidental or used as homage to other Final Fantasies, to some extent it shows the series is showing signs of age. Also a lot of the tracks in the game are based largely upon more core tracks within the Final Fantasy VIII soundtrack however to some extent this is Uematsu doing what he is best at - creating memorable themes emphasised throughout the soundtrack to reflect mood. Personally, however I feel originality is quite strong overall - we see many unforgettable tracks throughout the tracks emphasising the impact of the soundtrack as a whole. We also see Uematsu exploring other areas of music such as minimalism and "techno" elements, which have been left relatively unexplored in older soundtracks of the series.

In spite of the majority of the themes being extremely effective, there are a few tracks that didn't make such a great impression upon me. Although usually this soundtrack is greatly inspired, I feel that Uematsu needs to develop some of his tracks more to create maximum impact. Sadly despite generally being a varied soundtrack I felt in some points the soundtrack could be repetitive often due to reincarnating themes or under-developing certain tracks. Fortunately, however these occurrences are rare and it is largely the opposite of an uninspired or intolerable soundtrack as hopefully the track-by-track reviews will show.

Disc 1 Track-by-Track reviews: -

1.1. Liberi Fatali: -

Wow what a way to start a soundtrack as well as game! This track immediately conveys the ultimate power of Uematsu and the soundtrack as a whole. I would go as far to say that this track is possibly my favourite work of game music of all time - it is truly magnificent! This is a fully orchestrated track with a full Latin choir projected through it, which was actually created by sampling pre-recorded orchestral and choir tracks as opposed to synthesising it, which obviously adds to the realism. The sheer power and persistence of this track is engrossing, and I feel this is the ideal accompaniment for creating an impacting opening FMV sequence in the game. There are clearly close parallels between "Liberi Fatali" and "One Winged Angel" from FFVII as shown by their similar styles however I felt this track catered for a wider audience and has more importance, thematically.

By translating the Latin title of this theme we are able to see a main theme of the game - the children of fate. The FMV in which it is used provides a look ahead as to what the protagonists of the game will eventually face and this provides an idea of the destiny that lies in front of you as a gamer! As well as this we hear the chromatic "Fithos Luces Wecos Vinosec" chant, which is an anagram of love and succession of witches (sorcery) as themes. These are very important within the game and it is essential that Uematsu introduces this early for the impact of the game and its music. This chant as well as the orchestral that backs it is the basis of much of the later themes of the soundtrack however this incarnations are not "laziness" considering the subtlety of certain references - it is clear that Uematsu actually intends to emphasise these themes to add mystery and impact with the game. (10/10)

1.2. Balamb Garden: -

Although this took a while for me to appreciate I think this is certainly a very beautiful addition to the soundtrack. The wind orchestration, in particular is very calming and there is a distinct tranquillity effectively portrayed here. This provides the ideal setting for the school-like institution it is played in. I have been told this is very much the atmosphere in Japanese schools and I can certainly imagine this. It creates a very friendly, happy atmosphere, which later darkens in the soundtrack like it does in the game. The orchestrated version of this is particularly effective however this simpler version is still very touching. (10/10)

1.3. Blue Fields: -

Sadly this is one of the weakest additions to this soundtrack and I found it extremely disappointing. "Blue Fields" is used as the world map theme of Final Fantasy VIII but sadly it is too dull and inappropriate for this context. The bass ostinato is too repetitive whilst the melody fails to evoke any real feeling. In spite of fair instrumentation, it is simply too monotonous, meaning it feels quite empty in places. It is sadly nothing compared to the Final Fantasy VII "Main Theme", as well as the Final Fantasy IX "Over the Hills" themes, which are both used for the context of an over-world theme. Fortunately the orchestrated "Fithos Luces Wecos Vinosec" album and the Piano Collections did exactly what was needed by changing the texture and developing more to hugely improve this originally weak track. (5/10)

1.4. Don't Be Afraid: -

This is the main battle theme for the game, and it is reasonably satisfying - it is certainly one of the more effective normal battle themes in the Final Fantasy series. It is quite similar to the styles of the Final Fantasy VII and IX battle themes but loses the opening bass riff, which is to some extent a welcome change as it gives a little more originality to it. There is a sense of energy and adrenaline created with the catchy tune and upbeat rhythms but I think a little more energy needs to be pumped through it for maximum effectiveness. It also has a sense of danger and is quite threatening in places - this is certainly appropriate for a battle theme, and I felt was lacking in many of the series' predecessors. Although far from a masterpiece, Uematsu's efforts are generally well fulfilled in this theme - it is both memorable and appropriate in context. Its effect is not lost with continuous battling, either!
(8/10)

1.5. The Winner: -

Ahh yes the victory fanfare returns again as a trademark of Final Fantasy. After the fanfare there is quite an upbeat, almost tropical melody, which adds a bit of life that is required for this theme. It's quite a catchy, memorable theme that gives the victory fanfare a new lease of life! (7/10)

1.6. Find Your Way: -

This is quite a mysterious track, which creates a creepy atmosphere in the game when used. I feel that this track is greeted with reasonable success but sadly it remains largely underdeveloped. It is based largely upon a simple arpeggio sequence that gets quite repetitive at times. This means it isn't very memorable and lacks the impact of some of the other tracks on this soundtrack. This sounds immensely better in the piano collections album in which it really fulfils its potential due to developing it more. (7/10)

1.7. SeeD: -

This is a very militaristic track, which reiterates the importance of a military influence in this original soundtrack like I mentioned early. The track has a rigid formality and sense of importance to it - it therefore suits the context it is played, such as giving missions appropriately. The use of instrumentation is quite appropriate - the drum rolls followed by wind fanfares provides power and a sense of military influence. However the main thing this track is lacking is variation - the drum-roll is consistent throughout whilst the wind and brass do not add much variation, either. It would certainly sound grander and more powerful if orchestrated as I feel the synthesised sound loses the real power really required in a military track. (7/10)

1.8. The Landing: -

Like SeeD this is a very powerful, military styled track that is also full of energy and power. The introduction is grand and impacting whilst the core of this theme is very much like a battle theme - it has very catchy syncopated rhythms and memorable melodies accompanied by a fast, upbeat tempo. It also re-introduces an important orchestral melody from "Liberi Fatali", which is used with great subtlety throughout the soundtrack to create this sense of fate and sorcery. Overall this track is certainly very memorable and is used in context with the game perfectly - Uematsu's efforts are fulfilled and it is a worthy addition to the game and original sound track. (10/10)

1.9. Starting Up: -

There is a distinct industrial style to this track, which is appropriate considering it is used to represent a huge communication tower being activated within the game during an FMV sequence. The instrumentation is fantastic here whilst the creation of quite an agitated style is equally as appropriate. This track gradually builds up to a climax, like a communication tower obviously would, which is perfect for the context it is used. As well as its intended functional role, it introduces a more modern style to Final Fantasy, introducing to the next generation, perhaps. Although it is far from one of the leading tracks in the games I feel it's certain very effective in context with the game. (9/10)

1.10. Force Your Way: -

This is the main boss battle music to Final Fantasy VIII and I felt this was certainly no letdown. As expected this music has a very upbeat creating a very energetic - it uses a racing tempo, syncopated rhythms, ascending and descending arpeggio patterns, as well as lots of accentuation. This generally creates a lot of movement and there is a pulsating feel to it. The very electronic, synthesised instrumentation also adds to this effect creating quite a modern techno feel that helps to keep Final Fantasy in the modern world. In spite of the feeling of adrenaline created it lacks the sense of danger, which the angrier boss-battles in Final Fantasy IX and X are effectively able to create. Despite these limitations, however I generally feel this was quite a successful track that doesn't lose its impact unlike more modern boss battle tracks in the series. (8.5/10)

1.11. The Loser: -

This is the game-over music for the game, which is both sad and touching. The introduction is full of sorrow with a beautiful melody created by the strings. This then transitions into a version of the familiar "Prelude" theme, which is another trademark of Final Fantasy that takes a relatively absent role in the Final Fantasy VIII soundtrack with the exception of this theme. I find this interpretation quite touching due to the element of sadness and despair captured by the vocals and minor chord sequences in the prelude. I feel this is a more sensitive game over theme compared to others in the Final Fantasy series - although not a prominent track as such, it deserves a lot of musical recognition. (10/10)

1.12. Never Look Back: -

This track is ideal music to represent a tense change - it succeeds in this context effectively with the use ascending sequences that create a sense of an impending danger, as well as a fast, energetic tempo. The very electronic instrumentation that helps to creates movement but also keeps Final Fantasy up with modern day developments. I never really found this was the most inspired track in the game, however due to the lack of memorable themes introduced. This means that I often see it as quite dull when it is played. (7/10)

1.13. Dead End: -

This is used as background music to a spectacular FMV sequence in the in which our protagonist has to escape his impending doom. I feel this FMV music accompanies it perfectly by creating a sense of climax to it. It adopts a similar style to "Never Look Back" but there is more sense of danger and uncertainty to it. However, like many of the tracks used to accompany FMVs in the game, it isn't very memorable partially due to both its lack of use in the game, and lack of prominent themes. (7.5/10)

1.14. Breezy: -

Although this lacks the immediate impact of tracks like "Liberi Fatali" I feel this track is truly beautiful once time is taken to appreciate it. The track aims to convey a fresh, seaside feel and Uematsu succeeds and captures this perfectly with his introduction of a light guitar

melody that is calm and refreshing. This communication is to sheer perfection - Uematsu has almost illustrated Balamb town itself with this interpretation. It is to his credit that such a simple track based around simple motifs can actually create this communication - it is elegance in simplicity to its finest! (10/10)

1.15. Shuffle or Boogie: -

This track is very reminiscent of tracks like "Slam Shuffle" and "Johnny C. Bad" from the Final Fantasy VI Original Soundtrack yet maintains its own original style, as well. In the game it is used when you play the "Triple Triad" card game and it certainly creates the appropriate shuffle style required for this. However after repeated times of playing cards this track sadly loses its edge and simply gets annoying! Although it isn't a weak track as such, it isn't very memorable or exciting, either - I felt its Final Fantasy VI ancestors had that extra touch of memorability. (7.5/10)

1.16. Waltz for the Moon: -

I really love this one! This is a fantastic, proud waltz that accompanies a stunning FMV sequence that is a true work of cinematography! This track is a majestic, proud waltz that is distinct of the romantic period, which till now Uematsu hasn't thoroughly explored. Uematsu combines very dainty, light, gushing melodies with a prouder, military formality that demands a degree of respect! This is a well-developed track defined by two equally memorable and effective sections. It has the ability to bring a smile to my face whenever I hear it, which is always good! It has some distinct similarities to "Dance with the Balamb Fish" played later in the game but I feel "Waltz for the Moon" is the more effective of the two. (10/10)

1.17. Tell Me: -

Although this is only used once in the game it is certainly a very successful track that really shows the true beauty of Uematsu's work. It is a sensitive theme related to unrequited love - there is a combination of beauty and sadness with gushing melodies as well as distinct sense of hopelessness. It is a very reflective theme relating to openness, which the protagonist in Final Fantasy VIII, Squall lacks. This track introduces the "Ami" theme, which is a superb theme manifested throughout the soundtrack as a symbol of friendship, love, dedication and memories. (9.5/10)

1.18. Fear: -

This is certainly a very weak track in the game, unfortunately and doesn't credit the game compared to other tracks. Although it is quite well developed and structured it lacks any memorable themes but more importantly doesn't create the atmosphere of fear, at all unlike clearly intended. This track seems empty, perhaps a little agitated but it doesn't evoke any feelings of being frightened or threatened whatsoever. (4.5/10)

1.19. The Man with the Machine Gun: -

Could this be the greatest battle theme, ever? Many think it is, and I certainly agree! This is a true masterpiece, which combines a

distinct "techno" style with a certain dance-like movement! It possesses very catchy melodies, an exciting upbeat rhythm that creates a very lively, vivacious style that is ideal as a battle theme. Unlike "Don't be Afraid" it is much more memorable and captivating to listen to with this and is a really enjoyable - it is a very quirky theme that doesn't lose its effect after replaying it unlike other battle themes in the series. I certainly think it would have benefited the game if used as the main battle theme in the game as opposed to "Don't be Afraid". The orchestrated version of this theme from the "Fithos Luces Wecos Vinosec" album is quite a contrast to the techno version but is also very appealing and I would recommend it. (10/10)

1.20. Julia: -

A wonderful piano solo that is a worthy addition to the soundtrack particularly if you are a piano fanatic like I am! This piano solo is performed beautifully and with great sensitivity that creates a distinct feel of love and romance. This sets the foundations for the main love themes in the game such as "Love Grows" and "Eyes on Me" later in the soundtrack and is heavily recapitulated and developed for this purpose. It would, however benefit being extended like it has been in later variations for variation. (9/10)

1.21. Roses and Wine: -

A very simple but beautiful track used once again used to represent a sense of love and devotion. Although it would certainly benefit from more development and possibly orchestration there is a certain beauty in simplicity as this theme effectively shows. The sweet melody over the plucked strings is very soothing and touching to the heart and I really enjoyed this sensitive track - it is simply a shame Uematsu didn't fulfil the full potential this track could have had. (8/10)

1.22. Junction: -

This has very distinct similarities to "Find Your Way" as a mysterious track based on a simple motif that changes in chord sequence. Sadly, however any real effect is lost with this track considering it is so repetitive and under-developed. This is certainly a very weak track and it is far from inspired. (4/10)

1.23. Timber Owls: -

This track is certainly worthy of recognition despite often being overlooked. This is quite a cheeky, chirpy piece that is used to convey a lighter part of the game. It has a distinct, sneaky feel with certain zaniness, too! The use of instrumentation is certainly interesting but quite effective for creating this quirky style - pizzicato strings, a tuba and percussion such as clocks and a triangle are all used throughout this piece. These light tracks are generally quite rare in Final Fantasy VIII, which is quite dark game in general however this addition is quite reminiscent of pieces like "Gogo" and "Umaro" in the earlier Final Fantasy VI soundtrack. There is a huge abundance of them in its successor, Final Fantasy IX, also. I found this piece quite enjoyable and it is effective in the context it is played, but sadly it is greatly over-shadowed some of the more memorable tracks in the game. (8.5/10)

Disc 2 Track-by-Track reviews: -

2.1. My Mind: -

This is quite a touching piece that is reflective and quite dreamy in style, which I have always seen as an image of the character of Rinoa. It also incorporates an instrumental form of "Eyes of Me" within this track to convey the theme of love that is present throughout the game. It is certainly a very sweet and charming piece, which I enjoyed however it is over-shadowed by the much more memorable and impacting love themes such as "Love Grows" and "Eyes on Me". (8/10)

2.2. My Mission: -

This is used for the train mission in the game and is quite appropriate due to a distinct sense of movement and to some, extent danger created. However it sadly it leaves no real long-term impact as quite a forgettable, and repetitive piece - I wouldn't say it really added anything to the game as well as the soundtrack. More variation and more memorable melodies are required to make this rather limited track a success it deserves to be. (6.5/10)

2.3. Martial Law: -

This is another fairly mediocre piece - to its credit it is developed and structured reasonably well, and it is used in its context with some success as a picture Timber - it seems to represent a reasonably industrial city that is hindered by Galbadian control. However, sadly I felt this piece lacked any real long-term effect due to the poor melodic lines that seem rather uninspired, at least for me. Also, I felt this track wasn't as evocative as it could have been in spite of some sense of threat. I personally much preferred "Martial Law" in the Final Fantasy VI soundtrack, which seems much more musically refined and memorable. (6/10)

2.4. Cactus Jack (Galbadian Anthem): -

This is used as the Galbadian National Anthem within the game and it certainly captures the grand, military style required. This is quite a convincing track that is very suitable as a national anthem. The development of this track is successful and the use instrumentation is quite appropriate. Obviously as quite a brief track it isn't hugely memorable but Uematsu has certainly succeeded, musically. (9/10)

2.5. Only a Plank Between One and Perdition: -

This is quite similar to "Never Look Back" as one of the main action themes in the game - it is intended to be quite threatening and energetic however like "Never Look Back" it is met with limited success. I didn't really find any

feelings evoked by listening to this track due to the monotony and lack of memorable themes - it lacks that flair that causes real excitement and instead just appears uninspired, and rather dull. Uematsu's efforts to develop this theme are clear and to some extent successful but sadly more are needed to avoid it seeming instantly forgettable. And what's that name all about?!

(5/10)

2.6. Succession of Witches: -

This theme is intended to represent the dark sorcery and witchery present in the game and this is quite successful. "Succession of Witches" is quite similar to "Liberi Fatali", "A Sacrifice" and "Fithos Lucos Wecos Vinosec" however perhaps this melody is over-used within the soundtrack considering the huge similarity each of these tracks. In spite of this it is I feel this is still a very musically refined work that is a good representation of dark sorcery - it uses the "Fithos Lucos Wecos Vinosec" chant as well instrumental chromatic chord sequences to create this distinct atmosphere. A darker, more sombre side is also emphasised with the minor chords and slow tempo.. This very distinct atmosphere is very effective within the game and sends a chill down your spine whenever you hear it! (9/10)

2.7. Galbadia Garden: -

The introduction to this piece is very grand and military-like - it is certainly has a lot of potential however there is a huge anti-climax as the rest of the track seemed quite empty and rather repetitive. There is a clear sense of mystery and uncertainty defined in the rest of the track that creates a certain sense of anxiety. More contrast is needed to develop this theme and avoid the total monotony currently emphasised, which is a major letdown compared to the grand introduction to this track. (6.5/10)

2.8. Unrest: -

This is quite an agitated, uneasy track as the name implies - there is a sense of mystery, and uncertainty as to the future created by this depressing track. The atmosphere is very dark and cold whenever this is played, and it evokes feelings of worry and anxiety when played. However sadly the tedium of this track means it seems rather featureless and bland, which removes the dramatic effect that could have potentially been conveyed. (7/10)

2.9. Under Her Control: -

In spite of good efforts to develop this track I felt it was in general rather unsuccessful. I've always thought of this as a picture of nightlife in a rather modern city and I feel this image is appropriate considering what the city it is played in, Deling City represents. There is a distinct jazz-like style interpreted in this piece however I felt it was rather ineffective compared to Final Fantasy VI competitors such as "Johnny C. Bad", and later "Sleepless City Treno" in the Final Fantasy IX soundtrack. Its main problem is that it is simply very unmemorable to sustain any real long-term impact. Although certainly not a bad track as such, it didn't really benefit the soundtrack greatly. (6.5/10)

2.10. The Stage is Set - I have to say that I absolutely love this track! It fortunately it improves the otherwise relatively weak disc-2 CD! "The Stage is

Set" is a very exciting, military march with a very catchy, unforgettable theme to it. It has very quirky, upbeat melody to it, which is exciting and very fun to listen to. The use of a military band as instrumentation is also very appropriate and makes this march powerful and grand like it should be. It would have really benefited from being pre-recorded and fully orchestrated, which would really convey the ultimate power this march possesses. I really enjoy listening to this and it seems a shame it is so under-used within the game. (10/10)

2.11. A Sacrifice: -

This is a purely instrumental rendition of the themes "Succession of Witches" and "Fithos Luces Wecos Vinosec", which is prominently used throughout the soundtrack. I feel this is possibly over-use within the soundtrack considering how similar it is to other tracks however this means the "Sorceress' Theme" as a whole is unforgettable! Like the other tracks, it carries a very mysterious style through using the chromatic sequences used in "Succession of Witches" and other orchestrated themes derived from "Liberi Fatali". It is used to represent dark sorcery in the form of a ritual sacrifice, which obviously makes it quite a chilling, and frightening track. I generally enjoyed this track but I preferred its variations due to the sheer power to those "Fithos Luces Wecos Vinosec" vocal chants! (8/10)

2.12. Fithos Luces Wecos Vinosec: -

This is used as the sorceress' parade music and captures the darkness and mystery well by mixing the "Fithos Luces Wecos Vinosec" chanting with more intimidating, cheeky instrumental sections. I felt this track was developed well by Uematsu and it really benefited the soundtrack. This, like "Liberi Fatali" is a pre-recorded track similar to film music. This is quite a step forward in Final Fantasy music considering that soundtracks before this were entirely computer generated, synthesised sound. This clearly adds more realism to the soundtrack but sadly most tracks are still synthesised. It is important to consider the thematic meaning of "Fithos Luces Wecos Vinosec" considering it is chanted throughout several other tracks. It is actually an anagram of 'Succession of Witches' (sorcery) and 'Love', which are clearly two prominent themes within the game as well as the soundtrack. It is very interesting to see the extent this theme, like "Liberi Fatali" is manifested with great subtlety to show emphasise these important themes within the game. (10/10)

2.13. Intruders: -

This is a fairly successful track but it isn't anything special compared to some of the others in this soundtrack. The character conveyed by this track is very distinct and effective - there is a very sneaky style created by the pizzicato strings as well as unusual percussive instruments. The melodic lines and syncopated rhythms add this edge to, which is quite suitable for the context it is played in. However like many of the soundtrack's tracks I felt the main problem was sheer repetitiveness - this often dampens the tracks and turns them quite dull - it would certainly benefit from being developed by introducing a contrasting second section. (7/10)

2.14. Premonition: -

This is used for the special sorceress boss battles in the game. Consequently this means that Uematsu has combined a prominent sense of sorcery with a

threatening, and energetic battle theme - many of the orchestral melodies used to represent sorcery in "Liberi Fatali", "Fithos Luces Wecos Vinosec" and similar tracks are successfully blended together with energetic, vivacious battle music! This track has a proud grandeur to it but is also quite threatening and intimidating in character - I felt this character was sadly absent in "Force Your Way". This theme is ideal for representing suitable, dramatic climaxes in the game - it is a very memorable, meaningful theme that adds a lot of impact when you hear it. (10/10)

2.15. Wounded: -

This is used for FMV music to represent an anti-climax to the game in which our protagonist, Squall is wounded. Once again the chromatic chord sequences used within "Fithos Luces Wecos Vinosec" acquire a leading role in representing the sorcery present. There is a sense of sadness and hopelessness also created by the atmospheric bells, which are sustained beautifully against the agitated chords. However like most FMV music in this soundtrack the main thing this theme lacks is length - this means due to it being so brief it lacks any real remembrance despite being reasonably musically accomplished. (8/10)

2.16. Fragments of Memories: -

This is a nice, sweet theme geared towards nostalgic childhood memories. A certain fragile innocence is interpreted with theme, which is a perfect interpretation of fond childhood memories represented when played! The youth and naiveté expressed in this touching theme brings a smile to my face whenever I hear it! "Fragments of Memories" is an enlightening and deep contrast to some of the darker tracks provided in the Final Fantasy VIII - it is used to show how once times were simply good but this has died with experience, which has turned everything dark and sour. Personally, however I found that the "Ami" theme and its incarnations provide more of a deeper insight into this childhood innocence as quite a similar sounding track. The more developed, and orchestrated version of "Fragments of Memories" in the "Fithos Lusec Wecos Vinosec" album is particularly touching and I would certainly recommend purchasing it. (9/10)

2.17. Jailed: -

This track is sadly quite a substandard track that had very little impact on me. I would describe this track as one with a lot of unrealised potential - there is a distinct feeling of hopelessness and entrapment portrayed but sadly this isn't developed fully meaning it fails to communicate an accurate and evocative picture of the jail this theme is played in. It's the constant repetition that makes this piece particularly unappealing - it loses any effect after about a minute of playing it. Instead it turns into an annoying monotony that fails to stimulate any real emotion. This is certainly one of the worst tracks in the soundtrack and it fails to compliment the game or the OST. (4/10)

2.18. Rivals: -

This track is what I would describe as an undesirable mix between "Jailed" and "Unrest" - like the other two tracks, its success is very limited. This track is intended to represent the harsh jealousy and rivalry between Squall and Seifer in the story but this is quite ineffective. We can see

that there is a distinct coldness and hatred between the pair but it hardly conveys how their relationship has reached a breaking point resulting in cruel torture. The drama is missing in this track - it lacks the shocking impact it should have and instead just seems tedious and annoying. Once again it is an example of unfulfilled potential - this track could have been so much more (3.5/10)

2.19. Ami: -

"Ami" is quite a heart-rending theme manifested throughout the soundtrack with songs such as "Where I Belong" and "Tell Me", which are also very effective. "Ami" and its embodiments are used as themes to represent companionship, devotion, love, and reflection. It has a very sweet and touching melody that is very reflective and calming - it is perfect for the context played within the game. I've always felt quite moved by this seemingly very happy track that underneath has darker depth. This theme is developed well by using a variety of memorable, and emotionally moving that emphasises the true glory of this piece. I think this theme is quite a highlight in the soundtrack and is certainly a very enjoyable, unforgettable track - it will always evoke a lot of happiness and sense of nostalgia within me for many years to come! (10/10)

Disc 3 Track-by-Track reviews: -

3.1. The Spy: - Sadly this piece follows the echoes the rather dull style portrayed in "Rivals" as well as "Jailed" - this piece remains equally unappealing and underdeveloped. To some extent the sense of mood is quite lacking - it doesn't really feel like you're a spy - a sneakier, more playful feeling needs to be brought out to convey this. However the tedium is once again the main problem - this theme uses a rather repetitive ground bass that is accompanied by an equally boring tune. I've never really seen any inspiration within this track - it fails to credit this generally very effective soundtrack, unfortunately. (5/10)

3.2. Retaliation: -

This is quite a brief track that accompanies an FMV sequence within the game - it lacks impact within the game and soundtrack due to it being reasonably brief despite suiting the context it is played quite effectively. However musically this is quite a fulfilled track that has lovely melodies as well as a very distinct sense of movement. This theme is developed more with the much more audible and exciting "Movin" theme. (7/10)

3.3. Movin': -

This theme holds close parallels with "The Stage is Set" as quite a military-styled march with a very upbeat, powerful feel to it. This theme has a certain sense of importance and significance created by the very strong instrumentation - this is very appropriate considering how crucial the mission is when this theme is played. Like its name implies, there is a strong sense of movement and energy created by this very lively, and to some extent uncertain piece, which also benefits the context it is played. It is

particularly interesting to see how this theme is structured - the theme is clearly very well developed and combines its own very unique, memorable themes with parts of "Retaliation", which adds movement. There is also the subtle influence of the chord sequences from "Fithos Lusec Wecos Vinosec" used showing the influence of sorcery - this perfectly reiterates my point as to how Uematsu effectively manifests such references to create a distinct, and recognisable mood. Overall I felt this certainly very enjoyable piece that is well developed and composed by Uematsu - it creates a lot of feeling and is also extremely catchy! (10/10)

3.4. Blue Sky: -

This is another theme that is used in conjunction with an FMV sequence to represent the boundless blue sea and fresh blue sky. It is quite a refreshing theme that creates a very strong atmosphere - the theme is very much a breath of fresh air like it is intended to be! I found this quite an enjoyable theme and it is musically very effective, however considering it's so brief it lacks any real long term impact. This theme shares quite close parallels to the introduction to the airship theme, "Ride On", which uses similar melodies and a similar style to create this refreshing feel later in the soundtrack. (8/10)

3.5. Drifting: -

This is quite a slow, depressing theme with a sense of hopelessness - the atmosphere created is quite powerful here, and I feel it is used in the game to paint a fair picture of the very dreamy, and desperate character of Ellone. The main problem with this theme, however is it is extremely repetitive - it repeats every few bars and has hardly any variation to it. This sadly means that the track is generally quite dull in spite of the potential it could have. As a result it adds a certain blandness and tedium whenever it is played. (5.5/10)

3.6. Heresy: -

This is quite an evil sounding theme - it is very tense, miserable and dark throughout. It is used suitably within the context to create an atmospheric showdown by combining a sense of a dark funeral march with a more threatening sense of action. Although far from the highlight of the soundtrack I feel this is quite an effective and original theme that can still make me shiver when I hear it, even now! (8/10)

3.7. Fisherman's Horizon: -

Although it lacks immediate impact compared to some themes in the soundtrack, after taking time to appreciate it, this track seems much more appealing - much like in "Breezy" and "Balamb Garden" Uematsu has painted a perfect illustration of a complex scene. It is used to represent a full picture of the very calm, peaceful town of Fisherman's Horizon - Uematsu conveys the simplistic life in this town well by creating a very tranquil and touching theme. It is well-structured piece with a distinctive essence of both beauty and character to it. This theme sounds particularly beautiful in the orchestrated album "Fithos Lusec Wecos Vinosec" and piano collections album. These albums add the realism and sensitivity that to some extent is inhibited by synthesised sound. (10/10)

3.8. Odeka De Chocobo: -

This is yet another variation to the trademark chocobo theme, which in this case seems to have sadly lost all originality to it. This theme tries to convey a very sweet, innocent picture of the baby chocobo or chicobo however the interpretation is more annoying than amusing! "Mods de Chocobo", the other chocobo theme in this soundtrack has got much more originality and flair to it. (7/10)

3.9. Where I Belong: -

This is quite a sweet theme that is a variation to the "Ami" theme in its most prominent form. This theme captures a certain innocence seen in the happy-go-lucky character of Selphie, which the theme partially represents. However there is also a deeper sense of sadness and loss to this theme that can almost bring a tear to your eye when you hear it! This theme is dedicated to devotion, reflection and friendship and like the other "Ami" themes Uematsu captures this truly beautifully. This is a very touching theme that I find very meaningful and significant - it is a great asset to the soundtrack. (10/10)

3.10. The Oath: -

This is a striking and very memorable theme that is touching and very atmospheric. I interpret this theme as a deep incite into the protagonist, Squall's personality - it represents his lion-like proud and power, as well as a more sensitive side dedicated to devotion, and love. The use of instrumentation in this theme sounds quite fantastic although the fully orchestrated "Fithos Lusec Wecos Vinosec" version has more power to it due to the increased realism. The only criticism with this track is that the melody is repeated to many times - this means that it gradually becomes less beautiful and memorable, losing its flair as a theme! (9.5/10)

3.11. Slide Show Part 1: -

This has a little reminiscence of the Final Fantasy VI soundtrack in tracks such as "Slam Shuffle" and "Spinach Rag" but this is more readily emphasised in "Slide Show Part 2". This track captures some of the jazz-style needed here with quite a sneaky feeling being portrayed however sadly this is rather limited - this is another of the less inspired and less memorable themes that needs a lot more development. It would also benefit from less of the background noise from the film rolling, which is annoying rather than communicative! "Slide Show Part 2" is certainly a much more accomplished theme although neither really rival the stunning themes in the Final Fantasy VI soundtrack (6/10)

3.12. Slide Show Part 2: -

This has very distinct qualities to "Spinach Rag" in Final Fantasy VI with its fast ragtime style theme - this does however show the series is showing some signs of age due to the lack of originality.. This theme has quite a catchy melody to it, and it is full of life with its bouncy ragtime feel. However it lacks the full enjoyment of its ancestors due to simply how brief it is - this is potential lost once again! However it is certainly a fair addition to the soundtrack and a major improvement on "Slide Show Part 1".

It is well composed but it just lacked that substance that would take it that one step further! (8/10)

3.13. Love Grows: -

This is the instrumental form of "Eyes on Me", which is also a variation of the piano solo "Julia". "Love Grows" is quite a poignant theme dedicated to the developing romance between the characters, Squall and Rinoa in Final Fantasy VIII. It is a song about dedication and love with certain sadness too - it captures Squall's undying love and sense of devotion to Rinoa in its finest essence. I found this theme quite memorable and certainly as effective than the vocal theme, "Eyes on Me", which it is based upon. I think it really demonstrates the true power and evocativeness of Nobuo Uematsu and this soundtrack, overall. (10/10)

3.14. The Salt Flats: -

This is a well refined and extremely atmospheric theme that is perfect for the context it is played in. This track is used as background music when passing through an icy, harsh salt desert and this atmosphere is captured perfectly particularly through using effective instrumentation. Uematsu also uses quite an unusual, partially minimalist style that creates this distinct atmosphere. Its use in the game is what really makes the salt desert a particularly chilling. Clearly despite not being the most melodically pleasing piece in the soundtrack Uematsu deserves a lot of credit for how he has created this ambience. (10/10)

3.15. Trust Me: -

This is probably the least effective variation of the "Ami" theme in the soundtrack - the "Ami" theme is generally very effective however it feels rather overused and lacks originality in this track. Like "Fragments of Memories" this track possesses a very sweet sense of innocence and youth to it - this is quite representative considering it is used for the purpose of a dream sequence in the game. Some parts of this track are quite soothing and provide a strong sense of trust, love and devotion. Sadly, however the rather annoying and repetitive harmony line used throughout the track spoils the track - this takes away a lot of the stirring emotion provided in the beautiful melody. (7.5/10)

3.16. Silence and Motion: -

This is a very contemporary development in music that shows Uematsu and the Final Fantasy series is still in touch with modern times. This track sees Uematsu create a minimalist masterpiece that is a perfect representation of the futuristic metropolis, Esthar. This minimalist style has not been explored fully in Final Fantasy before and is certainly very original - fortunately this interpretation is quite fitting in the game, and is simply amazing. By using the contrast between silence and motion Uematsu is able to create the ambience present in this huge, lively city. The minimalism is also combined with rather tuneful melodies, which means the track is still quite bearable and very memorable. There is a distinct feeling of awe also created within this track, which is appropriate in this rather stunning city. Although far from the most musical track in the soundtrack, the way Uematsu has created such a perfect image using contemporary devices is worth deep consideration. It is certainly the most experimental piece created in Final Fantasy history

but fortunately Uematsu has turned this into an epic masterpiece! (10/10)

3.17. Dance with the Balamb Fish: -

A close comparison is often drawn between "Dance with the Balamb Fish" and "Waltz for the Moon" considering they are both dances with a similar, rather grand style. This is fair however it has resulted common misinterpretation that "Dance with the Balamb Fish" is a waltz when in fact it is in 4/4 time, whilst waltzes are actually in 3/4 time! "Dance with the Balamb Fish" is certainly an excellent song that is a worthy addition to the soundtrack - it has quite a grand, official feeling to it along with very memorable melodies. This is certainly very well developed and is certainly ideal as a dance. Subjectively, I would say I prefer "Waltz for the Moon" as a dance however both have their credits and are outstanding additions to the soundtrack. (9.5/10)

3.18. Tears for the Moon: -

This is another of those rather unmemorable used for the purpose of accompanying an FMV sequence. Like similar tracks this lacks any real substance or impact mainly due to it being so brief. However despite this it is quite musically satisfying and adds effect in the FMV sequence it is used in. However I find it doesn't really add anything to the soundtrack, unfortunately. (7/10)

3.19. Residents: -

This is another very experimental but atmospheric track much like "Silence and Motion" and to some extent "The Salt Flats". There is quite a dissonant and industrial feel portrayed in this track, which creates the ideal ambience required for a futuristic spaceship. Like "Silence and Motion" it deserves special attention and respect to see just how Uematsu created this unusual but effective style. It is also interesting Uematsu's subtle, often unnoticed embedment of the arpeggiated chromatic sequence from "Fithos Lusec Wecos Vinosec" that creates a distinct atmosphere of sorcery. I felt it certainly suited its context and is a very creative theme that is quite a benefit to the soundtrack, especially if you like very experimental music! (9/10)

3.20. Eyes on Me (Sung by Faye Wong): -

This is the main vocal track to Final Fantasy VIII that is similar to the "Love Grows" and "Julia" theme. This interpretation shows the blossoming love between Squall and Rinoa that seems, sadly destined to end. This interpretation is very effective - Asian singer Faye Wong's soothing voice is beautiful and she sings the lyrics with great sensitivity and in good English. This is also backed nicely by appropriate orchestration, which adds substance to this theme. This theme is full of the feeling of romance that has been developed throughout the soundtrack. However, there is also a sad sense of hopelessness dedicated to it considering their love is destined to end. Musically I felt this theme is developed well with its memorable and rather engrossing melody. However there are some problems with the lyrics - although usually effective there is poor translation in places from the Japanese version, which spoils its overall effectiveness. This song also shows the mastery available in pre-recorded sound- this allows these stunning vocal tracks to be possible and is certainly a step up from

the poorly synthesised vocals in "Aria di Mezzo Caraterre" in Final Fantasy VI! (9.5/10)

Disc 4 Track-by-Track Reviews: -

4.1. Mods de Chocobo (Featuring N's Telecaster): -

Once again the chocobo theme is able to revive itself in an original and enjoyable form - this time it adopts a light beach rock style to it. This unique style is certainly very effective and represents Final Fantasy entering a more modern era. It shows that Uematsu can still develop catchy, original tracks despite the chocobo in spite of the chocobo theme being used so many times already! This is certainly much better than the rather unsuccessful "Odeka de Chocobo" and one of the best chocobo themes in the game's series!

(9.5/10)

4.2. Ride On: -

This is the very highly acclaimed airship (well spaceship) theme for Final Fantasy VIII. This is certainly a real highlight to the soundtrack and is certainly an enjoyable, and very catchy theme! It is quite a breath of fresh air and always brings a smile to my face! It's an exciting, uplifting piece that is energetic and representative of an airship. This is definitely one of the more memorable and effective airship themes in the series - like "Mods de Chocobo" this shows that Uematsu can still create original themes despite the concept of airship themes seeming rather exhausted! (10/10)

4.3. Truth: -

This is not one of the most popular tracks in the soundtrack - it seems rather exhausted considering it is simply based on the already rather over-used "Fithos Lucas Wecos Vinosec" theme. It lacks any real excitement to it and seems rather dull and uninspired despite having some potential. To me it seems rather unmemorable and I feel it doesn't benefit the soundtrack whatsoever.

(4/10)

4.4. Lunatic Pandora: -

This track reflects its rather weird name effectively - like "Silence and Motion" and "Residents" this is an extremely experimental, unusual theme that you either love or hate. This track is certainly very atmospheric and representative of the mighty giant light pillar structure the Lunatic Pandora is within the game - it combines a mighty industrial feel with a more shocking dissonance that combines to create a very distinctive ambience. This track is not exactly musical but it deserves a certain respect for its rather interesting and inspired creation! (9.5/10)

4.5. Compression of Time: -

This rather repetitive and uninspired track is sadly only met with fairly medium success. There is quite a distinctive, futuristic atmosphere to it that represents time compression quite effectively however the main problem is that this track is simply too repetitive meaning it often seems rather bland and meaningless. This is quite a mediocre theme, which although far from bad I felt it adds very little to the soundtrack. (5/10)

4.6. The Castle: -

I really enjoyed this very unusual and experimental theme that is a perfect representation of the huge, gothic castle in which it is played. This theme combines very baroque style devices together with more modern styles, which has created a rather strange but effective combination as you can hear. This track is certainly well developed - it starts with a very contrapuntal introduction that then transitions into a much more shocking and grand harmonic texture that is dark and frightening! There is also another section dedicated to a playful, joking melody that is also very chilling and intimidating. It is composed to musical perfection and the dark, threatening atmosphere created is ideal for the context it is used in. This, like much of disc 3 and 4 in the soundtrack represents a more contemporary, experimental style developing with Uematsu - this opens its way for much more inspired and original themes that benefit the soundtrack, greatly. (10/10)

4.7. The Legendary Beast: -

This is one of the final boss themes and this is certainly my favourite out of the three themes used. This theme has a great sense of agitation and tension, which really adds to the sense of anger to this track. The repeated phrases and strong beat mean it often seems very persistent and determined as a theme in quite a military sense - this and the great sense of movement is the perfect atmosphere for the ultimate showdown! Although perhaps not as instantly impacting as "Maybe I'm a Lion" I felt this theme has more subtle depth to it that requires time to appreciate. I've always felt this track has been quite under-rated in the past but I feel it certainly deserves a lot more credit considering how well developed and atmospheric it is. (10/10)

4.8. Maybe I'm A Lion": -

This is another very effective final boss theme that has a very memorable and immediately impacting theme to it. This theme is developed using a series of very catchy, quirky melodies that are you can't get out of your head due to their impact. As well as this there is a strong, climatic atmosphere created within this theme - the strong, rhythmic beat to this theme provides a sense of determination whilst generally the theme is very upbeat and energetic. I thoroughly enjoyed this track and felt it is certainly very effective as a final boss theme but it far from rivals other boss battle themes such as "One Winged Angel" or "Dancing Mad" in earlier soundtracks, which really are masterpieces. (9/10)

4.9. The Extreme: -

This is the very final boss theme, which although quite a worthy addition to the soundtrack is a letdown compared to competitors from earlier Final Fantasies. This fails to even rival the boss themes of "One Winged Angel" in

Final Fantasy VII as well as "Dancing Mad" in Final Fantasy VI - these themes have a much more effective and memorable impact compared to "The Extreme", which seemed to lack substance and a sense of climax. However "The Extreme" is certainly quite a worthy track in its own right - it's particularly interesting to see how Uematsu effectively develops this theme. The track begins as a very slow, atmospheric track that has a distinct feeling of importance as well as sorcery to it. This however greatly builds up into a hugely energetic peak to the track, which is full of energy and adrenaline. This rather shocking transition really provides the vivacious anger expected in a boss theme. Therefore this is certainly a worthy track but considering how high it's competition is a real masterpiece was required for this to be a memorable success. (8/10)

4.10. The Successor: -

This track is used at the end of the game that is intended to represent the end of sorcery and time compression rather than provide the definite sense of conclusion like the "Ending Theme" does. This track shares close parallels with other themes of sorcery such as "A Sacrifice" and "Succession of Witches" however it is able to maintain its own very expressive, and original style to it as well, which felt rather lacking in the theme, "Truth". The use of these sorcery themes even at the end of the soundtrack shows just how prominent sorcery is in both the game and its influence upon the soundtrack. However I found this track also has quite a softness and sense of sensitivity to it, which is generally absent in sorcery themes - this provided quite an uplifting variation that shows this theme as a sign of hope rather than sorrow. Overall, this is a well-composed track that is ideal in context with the game. The reasonably similar "Piano Collections" version of this theme is also quite appealing and effective, which I would recommend if you enjoyed this theme. (8.5/10)

4.11. Ending Theme: -

This is one of the best themes in the whole soundtrack that remains only rivalled by "Liberi Fatali". The "Ending Theme" provides a very suitable and grand conclusion to the game and this epic soundtrack and like typical ending themes, this theme effectively binds a medley of memorable tracks together to convey mood and a sense of conclusion. As typical with these melodies we see a lot of the themes from the Final Fantasy VIII soundtrack emphasised as well as the more classic themes that are very popular in earlier Final Fantasy soundtracks. This medley starts an original theme that is not experienced in the rest of the soundtrack. This is really a scene setter - it provides a sense of mystery, confusion and sadness to it, which is an atmospheric introduction to the "Ending Theme". However as a false glimmer of hope appears we see this transition into a beautifully fully orchestrated version of "Eyes on Me" - this captures the tragic tale of love between Squall and Rinoa beautifully. I felt this expanded on the original version of "Eyes on Me" due to the increased orchestration that was very sensitive and meaningful in places - this really brought out the beauty in Faye Wong's lyrics.. Like ending themes before this we hear the classic trademark "Final Fantasy" theme. This theme provides quite a grand, powerful feeling to this "Ending Theme" and is certainly a very touching epilogue. As the credits roll in the game we are then complimented with a fully orchestrated version of part of the sorceress' theme from "Fithos Lusec Wecos Vinosec" and similar tracks - this has much more grandeur to it than the synthesised versions of this theme. This is very much a last breath to this theme that finally dies away to a version of the very familiar "Prelude" theme. This is particularly welcome as a classic trademark considering this popular theme only makes once other brief

appearance in the soundtrack with "The Loser". The sensitive, heart-rending melodies projected over this are also very emotional and certainly an effective addition. This "Ending Theme" is probably the best in the series and it is certainly a true masterpiece. This theme really shows the true power of Uematsu as a composer. Amazingly, this theme is over thirteen minutes long, which alone is a very considerable achievement however the fact it remains evocative and engrossing throughout is even more impressive. This is an amazing accomplishment that provides a great conclusion to a great soundtrack. (10+/10)

4.12. Overture: -

Its positioning in the soundtrack after the mighty "Ending Theme" means this seems rather anti-climatic and inappropriate as a conclusion. This is used within the game ironically as an introductory overture and this is the context it is much more suited as it lacks the might required as an encore to the original soundtrack. In spite of these minor weaknesses, however the "Overture" is certainly a very well accomplished track - it provides a very military feel to the game and is accompanied by very memorable melodies. Although perhaps to some extent overlooked in the soundtrack this theme is very much a worthy, and enjoyable exhibition that provides a great atmosphere to start the game. (9/10)

Summary: -

As you can see overall this soundtrack is a truly stunning work of genius from Nobuo Uematsu! His contributions to this soundtrack are truly stunning and he is what makes this soundtrack such a highlight to the Final Fantasy series. To me this soundtrack seems quite a peak compared to others, and certainly a major improvement upon the rather weak Final Fantasy VII soundtrack. This is described in close parallel with the marvellous Final Fantasy VI and IX. Whilst each has their credits, I found that the Final Fantasy VIII original soundtrack had the most individual impact on me as you can see from this review. It is certainly my favourite original soundtrack of all time, and many other people also hold it in such high esteem.

As the individual track reviews generally show, we can see that Uematsu is highly inspired throughout his work and creates a huge amount of very memorable and atmospheric themes that are capable of evoking almost any emotion possible. The sheer ability to make one smile, or perhaps the power to make one cry really demonstrates the true power of real music, which this is. As well as this Uematsu has kept ahead in the modern era through experimenting with modern recording methods such as pre-recording, which is used commonly for film scores. Uematsu has also progressed by experimenting with a variety of original styles that generally have acquired very fulfilled results. This means the series continues to progress and impress as well as attract a more modern audience. I felt however more of this progression was needed in a soundtrack that largely seems to regress due to its fair share of homage to earlier soundtracks. The letdown of this soundtrack is that there are certain emotionless or repetitive tracks that really spoil the overall very high quality. However these tracks are expected in any vast album such as this and it is a clear improvement to the Final Fantasy VII, IX and X original soundtracks.

This soundtrack has been enlightening to review and is also very appealing to listen to. This really is a masterpiece of an album that shows the Final Fantasy series at an all time high. This really is a must by that I would recommend to everyone that I can ensure will provide a huge sense of enjoyment and satisfaction within you.

Overall Score (not an average) - 97%

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VI: FITHOS LUSEC WECOS VINOSEC Track List: -

This album is the arranged soundtrack for Final Fantasy VIII, which contains orchestrated versions of some of the best tracks from the original. This was arranged by Shiro Hamaguchi, Squaresoft's arranger.

Composed by: Nobuo Uematsu
Arranged by: Shiro Hamaguchi
Discs: 1 Disc
Tracks: 13 Orchestrated Tracks
Released On: November 19, 1999
Published by: DigiCube

Disc 1 Track list: -

- 01 - Liberi Fatali
- 02 - Blue Fields
- 03 - Don't Be Afraid
- 04 - Balamb Garden - Ami
- 05 - Fisherman's Horizon
- 06 - Fithos Lusec Wecos Vinosec
- 07 - Eyes on Me
- 08 - The Man with the Machine Gun
- 09 - Dance with the Balamb-Fish
- 10 - Love Grows
- 11 - The Oath
- 12 - Ending Theme
- 13 - Fragments of Memories

A full indepth review will hopefully be available in the next update

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VII: Piano Collections Track List: -

The Final Fantasy VIII Piano Collections is an arranged album by Shiro Hamaguchi dedicated to piano versions of some of the finest themes in the Original Soundtrack. There is also available sheet music to buy to accompany this.

Composed by: Nobuo Uematsu
Arranged by: Shiro Hamaguchi
Performed by: Shinko Ogata
Discs: 1 Disc
Tracks: 13 Piano Solo Tracks
Released On: January 21, 2000
Published by: DigiCube

Disc 1 Track list: -

- 01 - Blue Fields
- 02 - Eyes on Me
- 03 - Fisherman's Horizon
- 04 - Succession of Witches
- 05 - Ami
- 06 - Shuffle or Boogie
- 07 - Find Your Way
- 08 - The Oath
- 09 - Silence and Motion
- 10 - The Castle
- 11 - The Successor
- 12 - Ending Theme
- 13 - Slide Show Part 2

A full indepth review will hopefully be available in the next update

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VIII: Liberi Fatali Lyrics: -

Here is the lyrics section for this FAQ dedicated to the two vocal songs in the original soundtrack. The first is Liberi Fatali, the opening theme, which is sung by a full Latin choir.

Liberi Fatali lyrics (Latin Original Version): -

Fithos Lusec Wecos Vinosec
Fithos Lusec Wecos Vinosec
Fithos Lusec Wecos Vinosec
Excitate vos e somno, liberi mei
Cunae sunt non
Excitate vos e somno, liberi fatali
Somnus est non.

Surgite
Inventite
Veni hortum veritatis
Horti verna veritatis

Ardente veritate
Urite mala mundi
Ardente veritate
Incendite tenebras mundi

Valete, liberi
Diebus fatalibus

Fithos Lusec Wecos Vinosec
Fithos Lusec Wecos Vinosec
Fithos Lusec Wecos Vinosec
Fithos Lusec Wecos Vinosec

Note that Fithos Lusec Wecos Vinosec is an anagram of succession of witches and love - these are two main themes in the game.

Liberi Fatali - Fated Children Lyrics (English Translation): -

Fithos Lusec Wecos Vinosec
Fithos Lusec Wecos Vinosec
Fithos Lusec Wecos Vinosec
Wake from your sleep, my children
Your childhood years are gone
Wake from your sleep, Children of Fate
Your rest is gone

Arise
Search
Come to the true garden
The garden of spring's truth

With fiery truth,
Burn the evils of this world.
With fiery truth,
Light the darkness of the world.

Farewell, children
From the day of fate.

Fithos Lusec Wecos Vinosec
Fithos Lusec Wecos Vinosec
Fithos Lusec Wecos Vinosec
Fithos Lusec Wecos Vinosec

Note that Fithos Lusec Wecos Vinosec is an anagram of succession of witches and love - these are two main themes in the game.

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IX: Eyes on Me Lyrics: -

Here are the second set of lyrics dedicated to the vocal song "Eyes on Me", which is essentially the love song in the game. This is sung in the Original Soundtrack by Faye Wong.

Eyes on Me Lyrics (Japanese Original Version): -

Utau toki wa itsumo
Stage de hitorikiri
Kataru toki wa itsumo
Kiite hoshii to negatte ita
Sono tabi ni, anata ga waratte ita you na
Hontou kashira, ki no sei kashira
Anata wa itsumo katasumi ni ita
Chippoke na, kono bar no

Koko de saigo no yoru
Itsumo no kyoku o, mou ichido
Anata to mo saigo no yoru?
Ka mo shirenai shi, chigau ka mo
Nan to naku suki datta
Hazukashisou ni watashi o miru anata no me
Anata wa shitte ita kashira
Watashi mo sou shite ita koto o

Nee, anata wa soko de
Aikawarazu no hyoujou
Kizutsuitari shinai ka no you na
Ochikondari shinai ka no you na
Kou shimashou ka
Gyutto yasashiku anata o tsuneru no
Shikametsura o shitara
Anata ga yume o mite inai tte wakaru

Anata no tokoro e ikasete
Suki na dake soba ni
Un to chikazuku no
Takanaru kodou o kanjiru hodo ni
Sono mama watashi no hanashi o kiite
Odayaka na hitomi ni mitsumerare
Dore dake ureshikatta ka
Anata wa shitte ita kashira
Watashi mo sou shite ita koto o

Nee, watashi ni wakete yo
Amaru hodo ai ga aru nara
Namida o koraete iru nara
Kunou nara, sore de mo ii
Dou shitara wakatte moraeru kashira
I'm more than the dress and the voice
Watashi wa fuku to koe bakari ja nai
Kochira ni te o nobashite kuretara
Yume ja nai tte, anata mo wakaru no ni

Eyes on Me Lyrics (English Version): -

Whenever sang my songs
On the stage, on my own
Whenever said my words
Wishing they would be heard
I saw you smiling at me
Was it real, or just my fantasy?
You'd always be there in the corner
Of this tiny little bar.

My last night here for you
Same old songs, just once more
My last night here with you?
Maybe yes, maybe no
I kind of liked it your way
How you shyly placed your eyes on me
Oh, did you ever know
That I had mine on you?

Darling, so there you are
With that look on your face
As if you're never hurt
As if you're never down
Shall I be the one for you
Who pinches you softly but sure?
If frown is shown, then
I will know that you are no dreamer.

So let me come to you
Close as I wanted to be
Close enough for me
To feel your heart beating fast
And stay there as I whisper
How I loved your peaceful eyes on me
Did you ever know
That I had mine on you?

Darling, so share with me
Your love if you have enough

Your tears if you're holding back
Or pain if that's what it is
How can I let you know
I'm more than the dress and the voice
Just reach me out, then
You will know that you are not dreaming.

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X: Composer/Arranger/Singer Information: -

This section is dedicated to recognising the achievements of three people who made these soundtracks what they are today - Nobuo Uematsu, Shiro Hamaguchi, and finally, the diva Faye Wong.

Composer Information: Nobuo Uematsu: -

It is thanks to Nobuo Uematsu and his great talent and motivation that we are complimented with the Final Fantasy VIII Original Soundtrack and many others in the series. He is followed now by an almost cult status by thousands of dedicated fans, and his description as being the "John Williams" in the videogame music world is certainly a fair one!! Uematsu really is a true musical genius who has really taken game music, and the Final Fantasy series to a new level.

So how exactly did Uematsu become the star he is today? Well it is a long(ish) story. He started playing the piano at the age of 12, and amazingly he is a self-taught pianist, who has never had lessons in his entire life. Since then he has always had high musical aspirations. At first he was desperate to become just like Elton John however as he matured his ambitions changed but always lay in music.

At the University of Kanaguchi Uematsu majored in music and later he joined some small bands as a keyboard player. However it became clear that his love lay elsewhere in composing! After that he became dedicated to composing and was desperate to hit that big break. He sent out demo tapes to companies and eventually he was hired for Radio CM to compose a few songs.

However it was partially by chance that the big break he had aspired for came. He was asked by a friend who worked at Squaresoft if he wanted to compose for their videogames and after this he grew and grew into the legend he is today.

Uematsu now resides in Japan, and is married. He also loves his dog, Pao! In his spare time when he isn't composing he listens to Irish music, and attempts to play the fiddle. He also enjoys watching Japanese pro wrestling and strangely beer drinking and making!

Over the years Uematsu has been responsible for composing many highly acclaimed soundtracks over 50 Squaresoft albums and original soundtracks, which is a remarkable achievement. Thankfully he will continue to compose in the future, and we shall see more of his works in the upcoming Final Fantasy XI and XII soundtracks.

Many thanks to the site www.nobuoematsu.com which largely provided the basis for this information. This site is entirely dedicated to Nobuo Uematsu

therefore if you would like to learn more about the man then I greatly recommend you visit there.

Arranger Information: Shiro Hamaguchi: -

Shiro Hamaguchi is the man we have to thank for arranged albums such as Final Fantasy VIII's FITHOS LUSEC WECOS VINOSEC album as well as the highly commended Final Fantasy VIII Piano Collection. As a talented arranger he works closely with Uematsu by improving his works, as well as arranging tracks from Original Soundtracks to create new, often orchestrated albums.

Although at the moment Hamaguchi is rather unheard of compared to Uematsu, his work is often some of the most commended in the series. He is the arranger responsible for the outstanding orchestrated tracks in the Final Fantasy VII Reunion tracks, and as well as this, he is responsible for the popular Final Fantasy IX Original Soundtrack Plus album. As well as this he has been responsible for both the Final Fantasy VIII and IX piano collections, which are probably the most popular in the series. These are clearly amazing achievements, and it is clear that Hamaguchi is an excellent arranger with a good future ahead of him.

Recently, he has been contributing to Original Soundtracks themselves such as the Final Fantasy XI soundtracks in which he really improved the "Opening Theme", which has since grown into the most popular tracks in the whole soundtrack. In the future we will essentially see Hamaguchi and Uematsu pairing up together to create new Original Soundtracks with lots of inspiration behind him. It is really Hamaguchi that keeps Uematsu's recent works alive!

He is essentially a growing and aspiring arranger who will eventually become known as one of the most popular faces in game music.

Many thanks to the site www.squaremusic.net which is largely the source for this information. If you wish to know more about this arranger or other composers and singers then I recommend you visit here.

Singer Information: Faye Wong: -

Faye Wong is the popular singer that is responsible for singing the vocal track "Eyes on Me" in the Final Fantasy VIII original Soundtrack. She is a popular singer across China and Japan, and thanks to "Eyes on Me" she is also very popular in America and Europe.

Faye Wong is a Chinese singer who was born in Beijing in 1969. She trained at Hong Kong with her parent's inspiration behind her, where she took singer lessons, and started to write albums. Following the success of the first album she sung when she was only 19 Faye Wong went to New York to study further.

In Asia she has had a lot of success as a singer, releasing over 40 albums altogether. As a result she is now the best selling Asian artist, which is a remarkable achievement. She is also a very talented movie star who has starred in many popular Chinese movies when she wasn't singing.

To her, singing "Eyes on Me" was more than a normal project as she say it as an oppurtunity to attract the European, American, and most importantly, the Japanese audience into her work. She saw attracting the Japanese population as essential for her future success, and as a result of "Eyes on Me" she has become a popular figure in Japan, both as a singer and movie star.

Faye Wong's refined voice, dedication to fans, and her beauty have all helped Faye Wong to succeed and become the figure she is today. She was perfect as a singer for "Eyes on Me" and in the future she may return to take the front stage in another Final Fantasy soundtrack.

Many thanks to the site www.squaremusic.net which is largely the source for this information. If you wish to know more about this singer or other composers and singers then I recommend you visit here.

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XI: Credits: -

No guide is complete without the credits so I would like to thank the following people and sites for the way they have helped me to create this guide! Let the credits roll!!!: -

- www.squaresound.com - I have a lot to thank this site for. Not only did it inspire me to love Squaresoft but it also has a lot of helpful information there including MIDIs, reviews, and composer information.
- www.squaremusic.net - This helped me with the track lists to some extent, and the majority of the Shiro Hamaguchi and Faye Wong information, which I compiled from this site.
- www.nobuouematsu.com - Many thanks to Micheal Huang for his biography on Uematsu, which was largely the basis of my information about Nobuo Uematsu.
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- Vinzer Deling and dcpsoguy in the Final Fantasy VIII gameplay message board for providing a lot of inspiration, and helping along the way.
- Myself (Chris Greening) for writing this guide!

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XII: Contact/ Copyright Information: -

If you have any questions or feedback about this guide please feel free to contact me at chris_greening@hotmail.com.

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Thank you for reading this guide - I hope it has helped and interested you!

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