

## Family

# Concert review: Symphony help breathe life into video games

By **Scott Iwasaki**

Published: **March 29, 2008 12:00 a.m.**

*"VIDEO GAMES LIVE!" Utah Symphony, Abravanel Hall, Friday, additional performance today, 355-2787*

With strobe lights, a big video screen, mirror balls and an electric guitar, it was clear that "Video Games Live!" is not a typical symphony concert.

And to have the Utah Symphony give two acts of video-game music life in a place other than the TV was nothing short of a rush.

By the end of the show, the symphony did exactly what narrator and game composer and "Video Game Live!" co-founder Tommy Tallarico said it would do — "Show how culturally significant video games and video game music is in the world today."

Conducted by video-game-music composer and "Video Game Live!" co-founder Jack Wall, the symphony, aided by the Snow College Choir, took the nearly sold-out audience on a journey from the early days of video gaming to the present.

Kicking off the evening with the "blip-bleep" of "Pong" and ending with a rousing crescendo of "Final Fantasy VII," the concert brought old and young gamers together.

With a symphonic suite, the concert highlighted pioneering games such as "Donkey Kong," "Dragon's Lair," "Tetris," "Frogger" and "Space Invaders," to name a few.

In keeping with the "Space Invaders" theme, Tallarico chose a member from the audience to play a giant screen version of the game while the symphony performed the theme. And in another similar segment, Tallarico picked two other people from the audience to play "Frogger" while the symphony played the music.

Tallarico also got into the act with his guitar during a rousing version of "Halo" music and the show finale "Castlevania."

Although the show as a whole was a study in a multimedia experience, there were a couple of piano solos by Internet pioneer Martin Leung that garnered some of the loudest cheers.

Leung, who is renowned for performing "Final Fantasy" music blindfolded, got his fingers running up the piano keys with a "Final Fantasy" suite. Then, in the second act, he performed, perfectly and blindfolded, a medley from "Super Mario."

Touching moments with the symphony emerged with "Kingdom Hearts" and "Medal of Honor." Both selections didn't feature game-play videos.

"Kingdom Hearts" took snippets of movies from all the Walt Disney characters who appear in the game and projected them on the screen.

"Medal of Honor" brought the harsh realities World War II to the screen with newsreel and vintage footage as the symphony performed the poignant soundtrack.

"Video Games Live!" paid tribute to Utah with "Advent Rising." Tallarico composed the work. but the game was produced and



---

Another favorite was a heartfelt compilation of music culled from "The Legend of Zelda."

With each piece of music, there were cheers of approval. And the musicians had members of the audience guessing what would come next.

Here's hoping the show will become an annual event here in Utah.

E-MAIL: [scott@desnews.com](mailto:scott@desnews.com)

---

## **Scott Iwasaki**

[scott@desnews.com](mailto:scott@desnews.com)

---

---

[Contact](#) [Terms & Privacy](#) [Legal Notices](#)

---

© 2016 Deseret Digital Media. All rights reserved.