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# Maestro Mario: How Nintendo Transformed Videogame Music Into An Art



## Synopsis

"Pa-dum-pum-pa-dum-pum - PUM!" Super Mario Bros. for the NES contains some of the most recognizable tunes in popular culture, and yet it's safe to say that only a handful of people have thought beyond the music's entertaining surface. After all, what could possibly be art-worthy about an early Mario score? Or any early game sound for that matter? In search of answers to these questions, Andrew Schartmann takes us on a journey from the primitive "pongs" of arcade machines to the complex musical fabrics woven by composers of the NES era. Where does that distinctly Nintendo-flavored sound come from? What sets NES music apart from its predecessors? And how has that iconic '80s videogame sound "invaded" popular culture?

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

My disappointment in this book may be partially my own fault. I'm always interested in learning more about Nintendo Entertainment System music for some specific reasons that I'll explain in a bit. The small sample I read before buying seemed to confirm that the author of this book was interested in the same things. That turned out not to be the case, and I suppose the cover and summary do a decent job of describing exactly what you're going to get. So while I was pretty let down and my rating reflects that, I'm ready to acknowledge that not everyone will feel the same way. What I can say pretty objectively is that Mr. Schartmann needs to work on his writing style. When I pay \$6 for an e-book that provides a couple hours' reading, I expect a certain level of polish. Instead I felt like I was reading a paper I wrote as a college freshman. It flows like the output of a formula. It's as if Schartmann feels every paragraph needs a summary sentence and every conclusion has to be

introduced with the question it's about to answer. A great deal of the quotations don't really tell us anything interesting, and the text before and after them seems to be there mostly to support the quotes, rather than the other way around. In places Schartmann walks us down a few rabbit trails that relate somewhat to video game music as a whole but not the narrower purpose of his book. I suppose it's that narrower purpose itself that disappointed me the most. Schartmann is a student of music theory, and it is when he provides that type of analysis that he is at his most readable. So why does that content account for such a tiny percentage of the material? The unique thing about NES music is the way that, at most, 5 sound channels were utilized to create music that is its own ultimate expression of itself.

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