VIDEO GAMES & MUSIC

THE MUSIC IN WHICH YOU ARE THE HERO

Musée de la musique-Philharmonie de Paris
In Paris from : April 2026 to November 2026
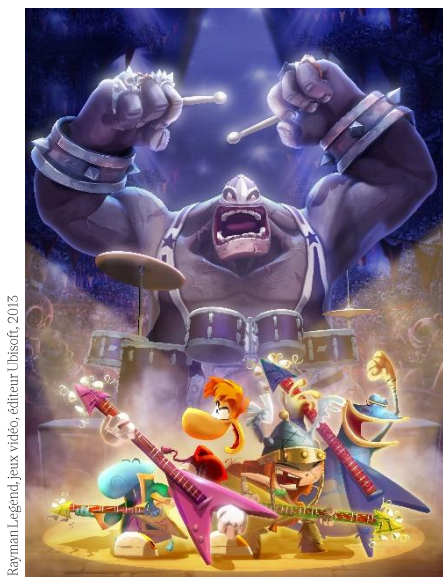
PHILHARMONIE DE PARIS
MUSÉE DE LA MUSIQUE

PROJECT PRESENTATION

GENERAL CONCEPT

In 2026, the Philharmonie de Paris, one of Europe's leading music institutions, will be showcasing **the sound and visual culture of video games in a major immersive exhibition** spanning 800m2. The "Video Games & Music" exhibition will explore the evolution and impact of video game music (VGM), from the early sound chips of arcade games to orchestral scores recorded at Abbey Road. The exhibition will highlight how game music blends influences from pop, jazz, and opera, evolving with technological advances like sound spatialization and sampling. Visitors will engage **with interactive installations and thematic displays**, uncovering how video game music creates nostalgia, shapes cultural memory, and bridges gaming with cinematic and musical artistry.

Rayman Legend, jeux vidéo, éditeur Ubisoft, 2013

KEY TOURING INFORMATION

- **Presentation in Paris:**
  From April 2, 2026 to November 8, 2026

- **Touring Availability :** from January 2027

- **Surface:** 800sqm (ajustable)

- **Publication** : Catalogue published in French
  Translation and re-edition can be discussed

- **Partners :**

EXHIBITION TEAM

Curator
Jean Zeid

Curator
Fanny Rebillard

Curator, columnist and radio host, Jean Zeid has curated successful exhibitions about video games in the past. He is the author of several books on video games.

Fanny Rebillard, journalist, author, and musicologist, is a researcher at the University of Liège, working on video game music heritage.

Exhibition design : Achille Rachine / Studio la Sagna et Racine

Graphic design : Élise Gay & Kévin Donnot Atelier E+K

Video-mapping Artist : Mounir Ayache

Project manager : Julie Bénet

AV Project design : Matthias Abherve

Production manager : Charlotte Giraud

KEY CONCEPTS

THE EXHIBITION BIAS

The exhibition explores video games through music and sound, positioning them as powerful cultural artifacts beyond mere entertainment. By **focusing on sound and music**, it offers a sensory and universally accessible entry point into the world of gaming, one that invites curiosity, emotion, and critical reflection. **This exhibition embraces collective memory**, showing how the sounds and melodies of video games are deeply embedded in our shared emotional landscapes, resonating far beyond the screen. It unfolds as an **open-world map**, mirroring the exploratory nature of games themselves and welcoming all audiences to navigate it in their own way. Above all, the exhibition offers **a playful immersion**, where music, sound, and gameplay converge in a dynamic environment that celebrates the creative and cultural significance of video games.

HIGHLIGHTS

29
playable
videogames

4
Collective
installations

150
Physical items
(objects, archives
and artworks)

4
Video-mapping
immersive
Biomes

KEY FEATURES

▶ **AN IMMERSIVE EXHIBITION**

Designed like a game, the exhibition allows visitors to step directly into the world of video games and experience their sounds and music as if inside a game itself. Its **open-world philosophy and immersive scenography** invite a deep, engaging exploration of video game music.

▶ **AN EXHIBITION OPEN TO ALL**

The exhibition is designed for a broad audience. Players and non-players of all ages can explore the rich history of video game music through installations, curated content, and interactive exhibits. **Hidden surprises and layered experiences** ensure that every visitor can engage with the exhibition at their own level.

▶ **AN INTERACTIVE EXPERIENCE**

With numerous play stations and collective installations, visitors are invited to **engage hands-on with the musical and sonic dimensions of video game music**.
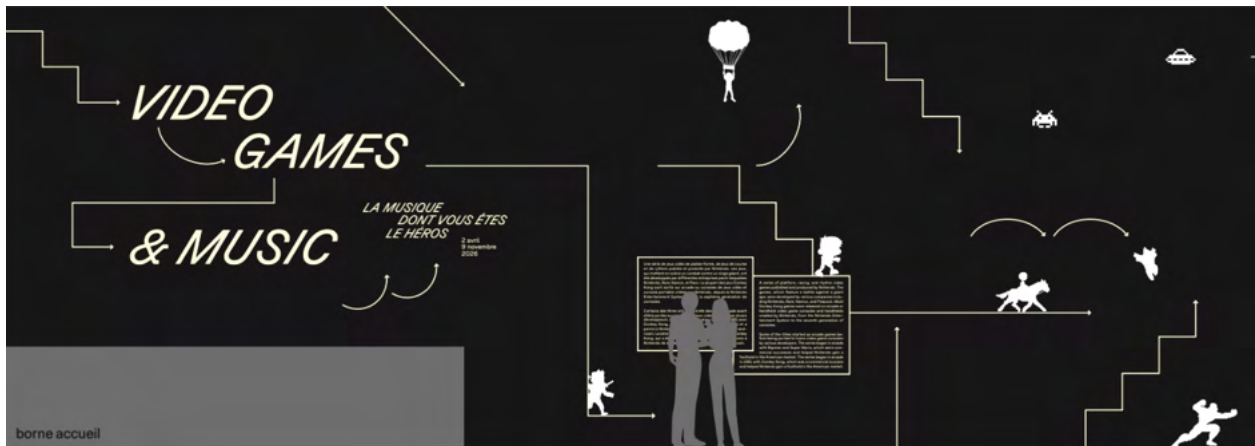
▶ **A MULTIDISCIPLINARY EXPLORATION**

Beyond its immersive and interactive qualities, the exhibition presents video game music through multiple lenses : technological, historical, artistic and sensorial. It gives voice to the hidden narratives of game sound, showcases technological artifacts, and highlights the interplay between video games and visual arts.

DESIGN PRINCIPLES

DESIGN PROJECT

The scenography designed by Studio la Sagna et Racine is conceived as an open-world map, allowing visitors to be immersed in the universe of video games. The space encourages **free exploration across several thematic sections**. The overall environment is animated by **4 immersive custom-designed biomes**, produced through large-scale video mapping by visual artist Mounir Ayache. A central tunnel, inspired by game design, serves as both a spatial distributor and an experiential feature. This tunnel connects the different areas while evoking the sensorial depth of specific gaming environments. The design aims to dissolve disciplinary boundaries, treating the exhibition itself as **a playable, explorable world.**

3D AXONOMETRY

Graphic Design studies for the entrance wall, screenprinting on black wall and video-mapping for characters

EXHIBITION CIRCUIT

1 - Living Memory

2 - Melodies Underground

3 - Diving into the Code

4 - Grand Projection:
A Portrait of VGM

5 - VGM's Conquest of the World

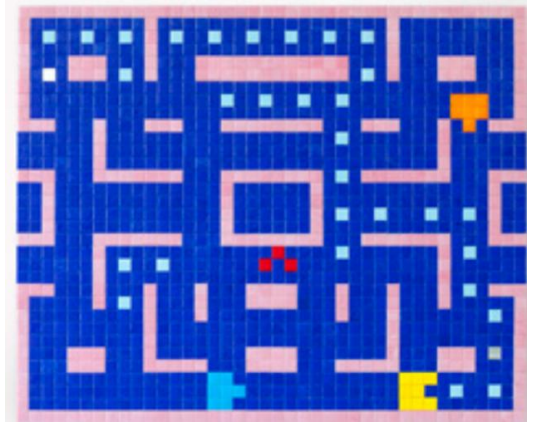6 - Just Dance

7 - Rhythm in the Pixel

8 - VGM Speeds Up

CONCEPT & CONTENT

1 – LIVING MEMORY

This introductory section explores the impact of video game music through the simple act of listening. **From silence to the beeps of early consoles** to today's orchestral scores, these sounds reflect both technological eras and **collective memory**. More than background, music is inseparable from the gaming experience, carrying the emotions of millions of players.

• **Highlight** : Interactive Music Light Show

Invader, Pac Man, 2016

Victor Alonso, série Los Ultimos Game Center

2 – MELODIES UNDERGROUND

This section immerses visitors in the **vibrant world of the arcade**. Surrounded by flashing lights and layered soundscapes, they experience how early electronic tones and jingles shaped both gameplay and the **bustling atmosphere of these gaming halls**. The space recreates the sensory overload that made arcades a global phenomenon.

• **Highlight** : Playable arcade stations

3 – DIVING INTO THE CODE

This section dives into **code as a creative tool**, where algorithms and early programming languages became instruments for composing sound. From **generative improvisations and clever workarounds** on limited consoles to the rise of chiptune aesthetics, artists transformed technical constraints into new musical forms. These experiments not only shaped iconic game soundtracks but also inspired lasting creative communities such as the demoscene.

• **Highlights** : musical instruments, tech artefacts and artworks

Orgue mécanique FrançoisGoéry Dumont, Musée de la Musique, XIXe s.

CONCEPT & CONTENT

4 – A PORTRAIT OF VGM

The worlds of video games are countless, and their music just as diverse. In this **large-scale immersive screening**, visitors are surrounded by excerpts that transport them, unveil unexpected aesthetics, and at times rival cinema itself. A celebration for both the eyes and the ears, it showcases how music amplifies the emotions and narratives of gaming.

- **Highlights** : immersive installation & a gallery of commissioned artworks

Exhibition design 3D renderings

5 – VGM'S CONQUEST OF THE WORLD

This section immerses visitors in **the rise of video game music from the late 1980s** to today through exhibits and playable installations From the rhythmic cues of *Super Mario Bros.* to **the distinctive sonic identities of Nintendo and Sega consoles**, from the portable magic of the Game Boy to the evolving music of *Sonic the Hedgehog*, visitors can explore how these sounds shaped gameplay, culture, and collective memory across decades.

- **Highlights** : playable stations, music in the pocket interactives & VGM timeline

6 – JUST DANCE

This section highlights the world of dance video games, with **a special focus on *Just Dance*** (Ubisoft, 2009). Unlike traditional games that mainly engage the hands and ears, these experiences involve the whole body, inviting players to move, dance, and perform. Through motion detection, participants are immersed in vibrant visuals and familiar **music that resonates across generations**. The installation creates a collective and intergenerational space, where families and friends can dance together, either in a spirit of collaboration or friendly competition. By doing so, it celebrates the joy of movement, rhythm, and **shared performance within a playful, interactive environment**.

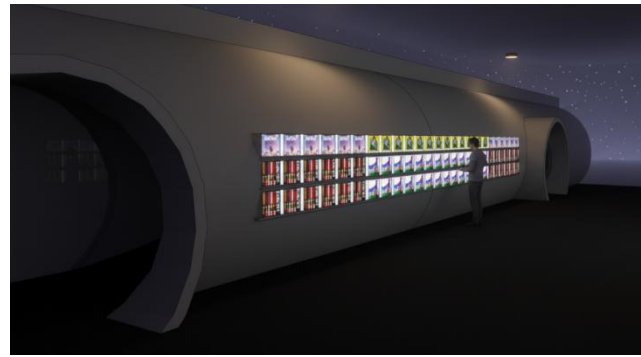- **Highlight** : Collective interactive installation

CONCEPT & CONTENT

7 – RHYTHM IN THE PIXEL

This section explores how **rhythm and music have shaped video game experiences** from the very beginning. Games have long used musical elements to structure levels, enrich their worlds, and invite players into timed performances, from *PaRappa the Rapper* (1996) to *The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time* (1998). Beyond the controller, rhythm games introduced special accessories that put instruments directly into players' hands, letting them mimic musical gestures and play as part of a virtual band. These playful interactions blur the line between performance and creation, as following the rules often gives way to personal interpretation. The installation invites visitors to **discover how pixels and rhythm transform gameplay into an act of musical expression**.

- **Highlights** : multiple playing stations

8 – VGM SPEEDS UP

This section examines the rise of electronic music in video games, made possible by the shift to CD and DVD formats with the launch of the first PlayStation in 1994. Freed from the limitations of early sound chips, studios embraced recorded and mixed tracks to create **richer, more diverse soundscapes**. Electronic music quickly became a defining style, fueling the futuristic speed of *WipeOut* (1995) and the immersive audiovisual rhythm of *REZ* (2001). Since then, it has accompanied a wide range of productions, from the colorful energy of *Geometry Dash* (2013) to the hypnotic visuals of *Tetris Effect* (2018). The installation immerses visitors in this vibrant fusion of sound and image, **where electronic beats drive both play and perception**.

- **Highlight** : the wall of composers

VIEWS FROM SOME OF OUR PREVIOUS EXHIBITIONS

"Hip-Hop 360" December 17, 2021 to July 24, 2022

"Basquiat Soundtracks" April 6 to July 30, 2023

"Disco. I'm coming out" February 14 to August 17, 2025

TOURING CONDITIONS

Hiring fee *: To be discussed*
Availability : From january 2027

The fee of the Philharmonie de Paris includes the following:

- Original concept and content development – designed for a 750sqm – 1000sqm modular space.
  Adaptation to different spatial configurations can be discussed.

- Resale rights (contractual management and payment): for the exhibition curators, scenographers and graphic designers.

- Renegotiation (contractual management and payment of rights) of all the audiovisual / photos rights and artworks loans carried out by the Philharmonie de Paris.*

- Sound and audiovisual supervision by the Philharmonie team, during the production period and then on site when the exhibition is being set up.**

- Supervision of on-site installation and dismantling by the Philharmonie de Paris team, including condition reports on the artworks.**

- The exhibition kit : Artworks, material and packing list, technical files and requirements, graphic design guidelines, set design floorplans and a promotion kit (a set of images free of rights for press and communication).

* This does not include music rights, which have to be dealt by the Venue according to local laws.
** This does not include travel and accommodation expenses of the technical and representative team (travel, hotel and per diem) – to be paid in addition to the fee.

CONTACTS

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