

## The Ending Themes of Rhythm Games

Since the genre's inception, ending themes have played an important role towards forging an identity for rhythm games.

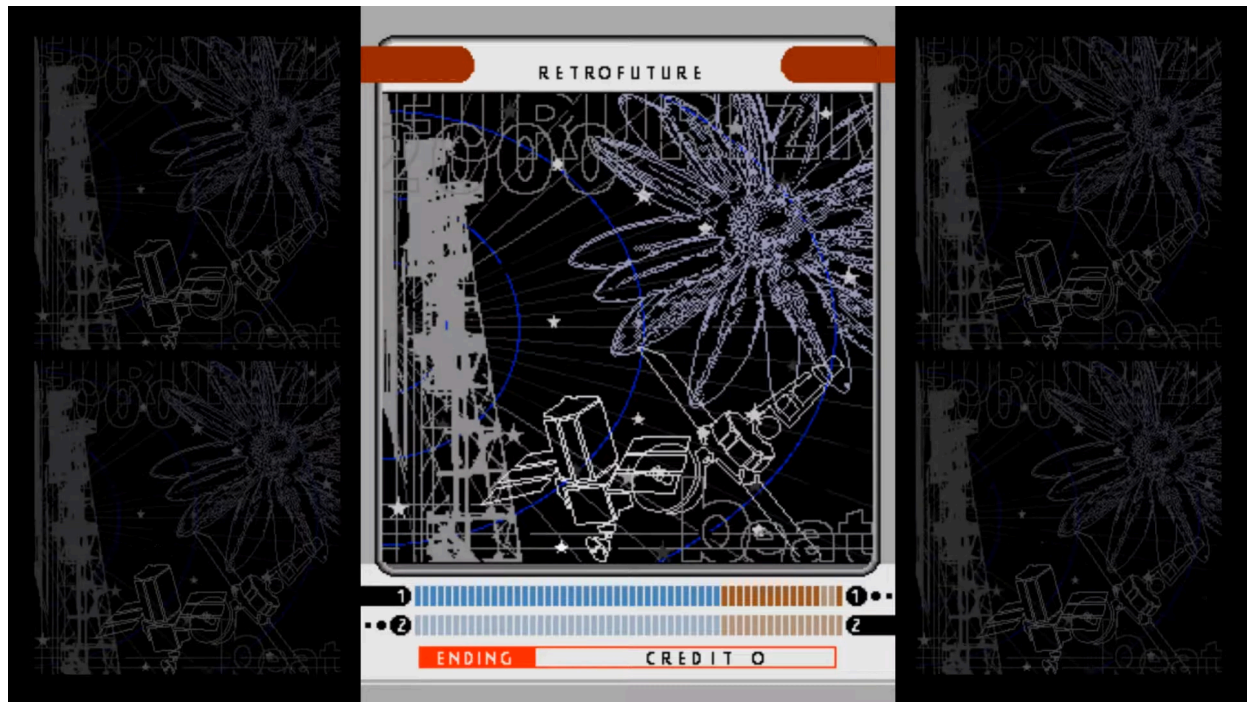
Unlike many other games, where the most you'll get with an ending theme is some sort of playable minigame, many rhythm game endings are fully integrated into the core experience. They don't always have that explicit distinction of being an "ending theme" within a game's song select, but you soon recognise it as part of the wider core experience that a title offers you.



*to love beatmania, is to be changed by beatmania*

It's hard to deny that beatmania pioneered the trend of playable ending themes, including them within a new track roster. Probably one of the first well-known examples here is *love's theme of beatmania*, though it technically falls into the second category of ending themes instead having playable remixes. Having been the ending theme for much of beatmania's early period, itself a watershed time for the genre, it's very fitting (and well deserved) that it would eventually become part of the series roster in CORE REMIX.

While the next named ending theme, *RETROFUTURE*, isn't nearly as significant, it cements this concept into the genre's tradition, using this opportunity to showcase new game titles as vehicles for a tighter-knit visual appeal. It's a befitting image change to display the freeform nature of otoge as a medium during this period, where no design choice is out of bounds. The future is here, and it can be retro.



*mmm, the sweet sights of Y2K*

There's a clear distinction with ending themes as 5-key starts to experiment with its identity in later years, whether through the use of licensed tracks for the spin-off games, like *I LOVE YOU* in *THE SOUND OF TOKYO*, or through introducing BEMANI mainstays like DES-ROW through *Lying on the bench* in 6thMIX. Using themes to diversify new motifs in this way gives end credits a certain significance beyond paying respects to the teams behind these games, as it shows a certain evolution within the genre that can't be conveyed solely through aesthetic sense.

As 5-key closes off, ending themes carry an ephemeral sensation for the five short years of a definitive generation. beatmania the FINAL contains *one seek*, which encompasses the finality typically expected of credits songs. Using the Gradius "powerup select" sound alongside very 2000-era synth work makes the track age fairly poorly, but when used in tandem with the ominous marching accompanying the second half, it sinks in that 5-key is finally being laid to rest. Many find it foreboding, but it's an appropriate end to the original beatmania series that laid the foundations for rhythm games today.

In a similar fashion, the ending theme of beatmania III is equally fitting at wrapping up loose ends. *mnemoniq* touches upon elements of previous endings with its melodic percussion and purposeful use of snares, maintaining that jazz sensation with a hint of the prominent electronic sound design that would later define beatmania IIDX. The title may serve as a clue towards its importance, serving as a reminder, or memorial, for the legacy that beatmania paved the way for.



*a mnemoniq for the trailblazer*

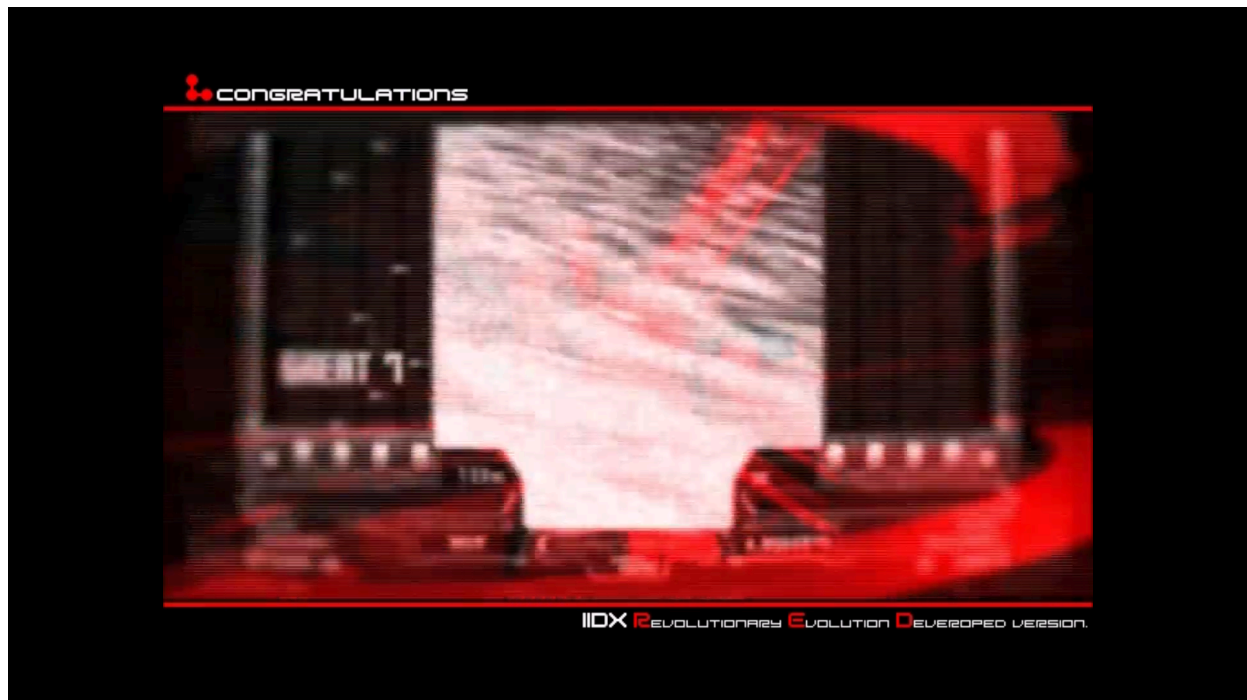
IIDX continued featuring playable ending themes, this time with a renewed consistency behind their inclusion. Between 3rd style and Resort Anthem, many titles featured their endings as part of the series' track list, either in the game it debuted in, or in the following installment. Many iconic IIDX tracks are purposed as ending themes, like *Tangerine Stream*, *Tomorrow Perfume*, and *THANK YOU FOR PLAYING*, but there's a few exceptions to this rule. Some ending themes are remixes of existing tracks, like 10th style's *xenon -unplugged-*, a remix of *xenon* from IIDX 8th style adjusted to suit the finale of the series' "entry period," but occasionally there'll be a playable ending that doesn't fit any definition.

One example is the ending of IIDX RED, which initially wasn't made playable in its current form. It received a remix in HAPPY SKY titled *CaptivAte~浄化~* (jouka) that technically fit in the same category as *xenon -unplugged-*, but it felt very much like a rework by DJ YOSHITAKA, rather than a true remix. However, IIDX RED's ending

received a more faithful remix by Ryu☆, made playable in BISTROVER to celebrate IIDX RED's 16th anniversary. This marks the only time where an ending song is made playable twice in the same series, as ending songs typically weren't removed from games by this point in the genre's lifespan.

IIDX still has ending themes in some form, usually corresponding to the final unlock of a respective version, but they don't come attached with a credits roll or any other features that denote them as such anymore.

Of course, beatmania wasn't the only game to feature playable ending songs. Though the trend is much scarcer than rhythm game intros, it still crops up in other games from time to time.



*WAKE UP I'M NOT DONE TALKING ABOUT IIDX RED YET*

pop'n music has experimented with this concept a few times, coincidentally during the same period where it experimented with... well, a lot of things. *Soshite sekai wa ongaku ni michita* is the ending theme of pop'n fantasia, preceding a number of significant changes to the series that aren't particularly relevant to this video. The song's "video" makes reference to every prior title through its massive character roster, a trait often reserved for anniversary-themed releases, but it's possible that this song was meant to be a send-off for the "old" aesthetic of pop'n before Lapistoria.



In the same vein as beatmania THE FINAL, maimai also took a crack at playable ending themes to send off the original series. *Believe the Rainbow* pays respect to every title preceding maimai FiNALE in some way, while also serving as a stealth nod to the last 5-key appearance of vocalist Sanae Shintani in *Fellows*. Despite modern ending tracks not featuring credits rolls in some way, they maintain that commemoration for aspects of a series often overlooked by players of the otoge genre.



*believe in the washing machine*

Following this, オンゲキ bright memory features... well, *Memories of O.N.G.E.K.I.* as its end credits theme, being a medley of the franchise's system BGM. Y'all know I've started becoming kind of a sucker for オンゲキ as a whole, and this kind of approach towards playable ED themes is a nice twist on the convention. Also the little group huddle two-thirds of the way through the song is a cute touch, maybe I should start playing this game.

Ending themes aren't as prevalent in rhythm games as openings are, but they're still an often underappreciated aspect of the genre that shows up once in a while. Dev teams wrapping up a whole game cycle with this much love and care is something that you start to take for granted a lot more nowadays, especially with how games often try and file off as many names as possible to save space on credits.

As always, I wanna hear which rhythm game endings stand out to you in the comments. Do they add to your experience of a game version concluding, or do you wish games did more with them? Lemme know down below.

## **Video Sources & BGM Credits**

Unless mentioned, all sources are in order of appearance

### **BGM**

Love's Theme of beatmania - Lovemints Unlimited Orchestra [beatmania -REMIXES-]

love's theme of beatmania - LOVEMINTS UNLIMITED ORCHESTRA (YUKIHIRO FUKUTOMI) [beatmania CORE REMIX Original Soundtrack]

RETROFUTURE - DJ SIMON [beatmania ClubMIX]

monotone - DAYSBLUE [beatmania 7thMIX]

one seek (ending) - positive MA feat. akino [beatmania THE FINAL ORIGINAL SOUNDTRACK]

mnemoniq - youhei shimizu [beatmania III]

xenon -unplugged- -2020 Re:build- - Mr.T (Tomoyuki Uchida) [IIDX 10th style ending]

IIDX RED Ending (Ryu☆Remix) - DJ YOSHITAKA remixed by Ryu☆ [beatmania IIDX 28 BISTROVER ORIGINAL SOUNDTRACK]

そして世界は音楽に満ちた (Soshite sekai wa ongaku ni michita) - wac + seiya [pop'n music 20 fantasia original soundtrack]

Believe the Rainbow - Shoichiro Hirata feat.Sana [maimai FiNALE]

Memories of O.N.G.E.K.I. - SEGA SOUND STAFF arranged by Kanon Oguni [ONGEKI Sound Collection 07 『Memories of O.N.G.E.K.I.』]

THANK YOU FOR PLAYING - SUPER STAR MITSURU [beatmania IIDX 16 EMPRESS ORIGINAL SOUNDTRACK]

## Video sources

XcheTO - [beatmania 3rdMIX] Ending (HD Ver.) -  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LwC3N-9tne8>

RetroArchive - Kirby & The Amazing Mirror - Part 9: DARK MIND Final Bossbattle - No Damage 100 % Walkthrough - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6ZHmsyCr4Qw>

IIDX SILON - Beatmania IIDX 27 HEROIC VERSE sometime SPA -  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CDC62c5UKxM>

XcheTO:

[beatmania 2ndMIX] Ending (HD Ver.) -  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-K\\_BYo2V\\_A8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-K_BYo2V_A8)

[beatmaina (European Edit)] Ending (HD Ver.) -  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xYjceZa6Wms>

5鍵ビーマニPerfect保管庫 - 【Perfect】love's theme of beatmania【beatmania CORE REMIX】 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ilfidSP-H8A>

XcheTO:

beatmania APPEND ClubMIX opening -  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N2nhUYIWnQQ>

[beatmania 7thMIX] Ending (HD Ver.) -  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BwwYJV8j7VU>

[beatmania 6thMIX] Ending (HD Ver.) - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J3yN2mtuvjA>

5鍵ビーマニPerfect保管庫 - Lying on the bench(H)【beatmania 7th mix】【perfect】 -  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S2m0KsbrnnI>

XcheTO:

[beatmania THE SOUND OF TOKYO!] ビートの達人 -  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xC1-weXv1s8>

[beatmania THE FINAL] Title & Demo Loop -

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rFdTi6-rEqA>

[beatmania THE FINAL] Ending (HD Ver.) -

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=53xqILWSKbc>

[beatmania THE FINAL] one seek - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bBNNeo1MD2k>

[beatmania III] Ending (HD Ver.) - [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=80\\_tsUG-zcw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=80_tsUG-zcw)

u\*taka / ゆうたか - 【理論値】mnemoniq(SPA)MAX...!!!!!! -

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=owHpcey8KD0>

hl1auz - IIDX DJ TROOPERS CS - THE LAST STRIKER (DPA) Autoplay -

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xFpKzh\\_6fRc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xFpKzh_6fRc)

くれい - 【歴代+3】Everlasting Resort (SPA) MAX-3 -

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6vhTvY2O3g>

체피CHEPY - [beatmania IIDX 29 CastHour] THANK YOU FOR PLAYING SPL 3038

(MAX-30) 歴代 +3 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SI-d-flWepc>

XcheTO - [beatmania IIDX 10th style (CS)] Ending STAFF ROLL -

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vi\\_MJT5pUU0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vi_MJT5pUU0)

WGC -World Game Circus- チャンネル - beatmania IIDX 11 IIDX RED (稼働日

2004/10/28) - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p5KRweutz8E>

にけちん - CaptivAte〜浄化〜 (A) MAX-6 [beatmania IIDX 29 Cast Hour] -

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R5L22fM2EtI>

NURUNG - [Beatmania IIDX 30 RESIDENT] IIDX RED Ending (Ryu☆Remix) SPA

MAX-21 - [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XU\\_q3tsWetc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XU_q3tsWetc)

KKM\* IIDX - [歴代+14] EROICA 3998(MAX-82) -

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BII3GhnlovQ>

SEIRYU - 【IIDX AC】GO OVER WITH GLARE -ROOTAGE 26- SPA 3973(MAX-27) 歴代

全国TOP+6 - [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_zuO00QsXso](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_zuO00QsXso)



KONAMI公式 - pop'n music ラピストリア -

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TNPpp1G3kkE>

pop'n music Y - [ポップン] エピローグ(EPILOGUE) そして世界は音楽に満ちた EX -

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Anr6-vAyfYk>

ゲキ！チュウマイ公式ちゃんねる - 【maimai】 Believe the Rainbow/Shoichiro Hirata  
feat.Sana 【FiNALE】 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VZ-bruJIAtA>

オンゲキ譜面保管所 - Ending Memories of O.N.G.E.K.I. [オンゲキ] -

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=adGldkj-Cs4>

MLN Rev - [オンゲキ bright MEMORY] Memories of O.N.G.E.K.I. (MASTER) ABFB理論  
値 [外部出力] - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L8dcCILISy4>

XcheTO:

[beatmania IIDX 12 HAPPY SKY (CS)] Ending STAFF ROLL -

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=icQvBQbumeg>

[beatmania IIDX 16 EMPRESS+PREMIUM BEST] Ending STAFF ROLL -

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GuvwiRgMxsE>