

Music and Context of Kazumi Totaka's Song and its Variations

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Joint Conference of the AMS-Southwest Chapter & SEM-Southern Plains Chapter

Spring 2014

The University of Texas at Austin

Poster Abstract

Video game music has received more and more scholarly attention over the past decade (Collins 2008a, 2008b, Garrelts 2003, Vercher 2007), but many topics, such as specific composers or pieces, have yet to be explored. Kazumi Totaka, while being a renowned composer inside Nintendo, is little known to the public and has not received scholarly attention. Although Totaka's music is well-known to anyone playing Nintendo games, not much is known about him. It should come at no surprise then that his hidden 19-note melody, dubbed "Totaka's Song", is equally insufficiently recognized. "Totaka's Song" is an 'Easter Egg' that is hidden in video games and sounds only at specific places in a game after a waiting period or after a particular action the gamer has to complete. Most of the occurrences of Totaka's Song are generally known, and one can find YouTube videos of these occurrences, but the song has not been analyzed, nor have its variations been compared in the contexts of the games. This poster will present a transcription of Totaka's Song (original) and an analysis, considering the original 8-bit video game music technology. Furthermore, transcriptions of several variations used in Nintendo games will be presented and their differences discussed in the context of the games and their changing technology. Finally, some of the speculated appearances of "Totaka's Song" will be analyzed. A catalog of Totaka's Song will be presented that reflects the changing of music and technology over time.