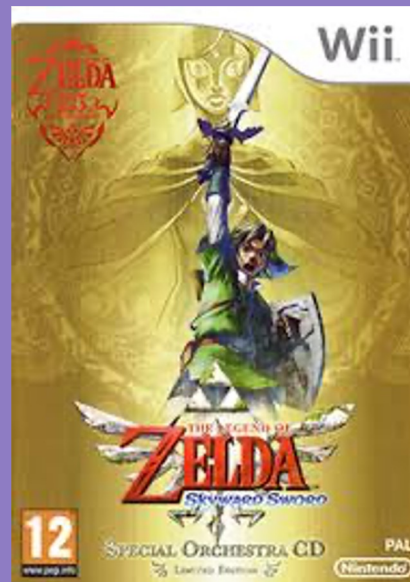


# How Video Game Music Supports the Story



**!Spoiler warning!**



A person is shown in profile, wearing a VR headset and large headphones. They are sitting at a desk with a glowing keyboard and a game controller. The background is a blurred, colorful scene, possibly a virtual environment or a city at night. The text "What is Digital experience?" is overlaid on the top left of the image.

# What is Digital experience?

- Sensory input and experience from a game or other media
  - Visual
  - Auditory
  - Haptic
- Gives you a connection to the game
- Main points
  - Input and control devices, and interactivity
  - Branching narratives
  - Sensory immersion
  - Music and sound effects

## Sound effects

- Ground the action on screen with mirroring sounds; make the world alive
  - Breathing, footsteps, lights, fans, fire crackling, etc
- Stirring sound effects
  - Establish environment
  - Enforces the information the player already knows
  - “Without this small auditory detail [the office fan], the gameplay experience wouldn’t be anywhere near the same.” (Ashley)



# Haptic feedback



- An addition/reinforcement of sound
  - Vibration
  - Pulse
  - Sound effect
- Emphasizes actions and patterns seen in the game

# Subtle Sound effects

- **Audial Clues**
  - Sound effects that give you more information
  - Use these to make inferences about story or environment
    - Frog's death
- **Absence/Intensity of sound**
  - Volume and/or velocity of sound
  - Louder, more forceful sounds tend to be more intense
  - Absence of sound can be calming or stressful
- **Manipulate the Player's emotions**
  - Horror games play on fears of absence of information or fear of the unknown
- **Comments**
  - "During select events, such as being chased, the mid-level visual quality and the audio cues came together to intensify the experience in spectacular fashion" (Cody)

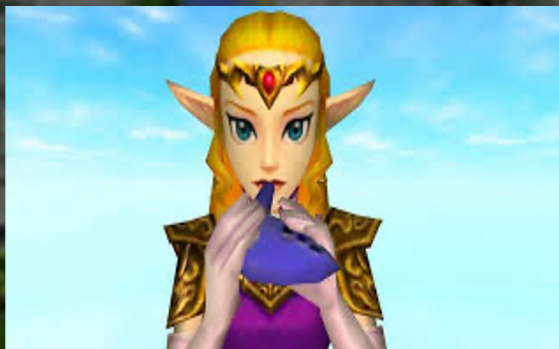


# Narrative Dissonance



- A situation where the action on screen doesn't match up with the audio or dialogue
- Can be used to make the narrative more complex or ruin it completely
  - Funny Story in 'The Witch's House'
  - Can you think of any moment like this in another game or movie?

# Why is music important/what does music do?



- Music is context, for scenes and characters
- Different instruments, tempos, arrangements, and intensities affect how you feel, and can add another layer to a story
- Tells the story in a different way
  - Subconsciously ties elements of a story together

# Background Music

- Sets the scene, acts as a part of narration
- Can be calm and soft, or tense and fast to reflect what's happening in the story
- Diegesis
  - Where does the music originate from?
  - Diegetic-The music originates from a source within the story, and the characters can hear it
    - The Music box
  - Non-diegetic-The music originates from the score or outside the story to add ambiance, and the characters can't hear it
    - The Witch's House chase music



# Music Characterization

- Music as characterization
  - Music tells us about characters and the world they live in
- Instrumentation
  - Brass is heavy; strong, heroic, or evil
  - Winds and strings are light; comfort, magic, sometimes frantic intensity
- Placement
  - Where a song is played and when
  - Does the song show up in multiple places? Why?
- Example
  - Saria's Song and Lost woods
  - Same song
  - Saria is inextricably tied to the woods, her home, even more so when she becomes sage of the forest





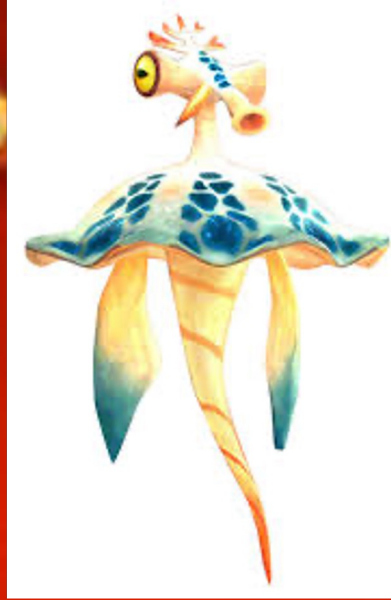
Game Time!



THE LEGEND OF  
**ZELDA**  
Skyward Sword







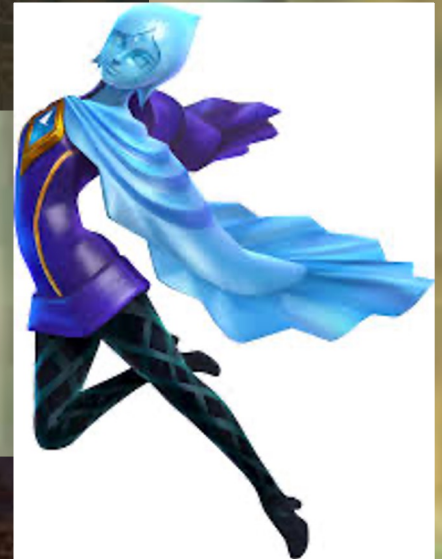






# Motif

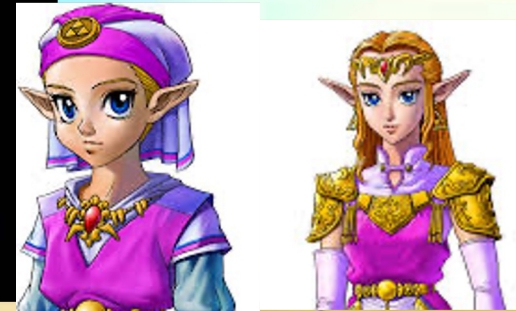
- Motif
  - Musical idea that's repeated throughout a score
  - Purely musical
- Leitmotif
  - Represents a person place or idea
  - Development/change in leitmotif reflects the same in the character
- Fi's motif
  - Repeated across songs related to Fi
    - Follow Fi
    - Fi's Theme
    - Fi's Farewell



# Zelda's Character Development through music

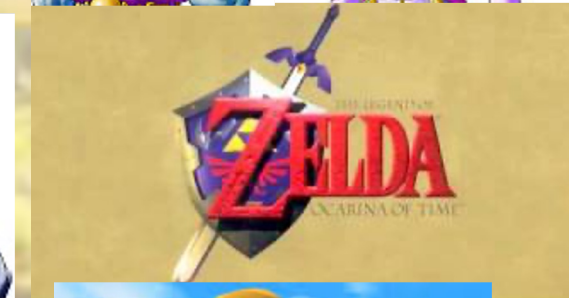
## Zelda's Lullaby

- Zelda's Theme from Ocarina of Time
- Acts as the motif for Zelda
- Melody is Ocarina, Harmony is Harp



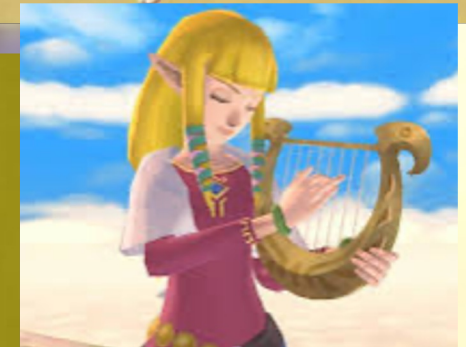
## Sheik's theme

- Sheik's motif
- Melody and Harmony are harp



## Ballad of the Goddess

- Main theme song for Skyward Sword
- Closely associated with Zelda
- First introduced with a harp



# Citations

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