

In truth, most of the battles in 《NieR: Automata》 are “motor challenges”. The “cognitive challenges” are fewer in comparison and most of the requests/tasks from other characters are accompanied by location music, such as finding “lost girl” for Big Sister machine in Machine Village (<17. *Pascal*>, gameplay 3), bringing the Child machine to the Mother machine at City Ruins (<2. *City Ruins*>, gameplay 5) and to fulfil the request of “family squabble” (gameplay 4). Nonetheless, it’s still essential to have combat music whose composition is moderately looser than the speedy and tense music of motor challenges. The other senses can only come in when there is a moment of rest during listening. Take <34. *Alien Manifestation*> as an example, this is the first piece of music that plays when players go through Menu and enter the game. As an opening title, the music should help players quickly grasp the story setting and what they should do. Therefore, in the first 7 minutes of the beginning, only the **INTRO-1, BRIDGE, VERSE B’ and ENDING** (i.e, the sections’ background in light blue at Table 4) of the tune play while the protagonist 2B fights against different types of battles in different spaces. For example, flying the unit and shooting above the ocean, shoot ‘em ups in the tunnel, and using sword for the short attack after she fell into the Abandoned Factory (gameplay 1–Prologue). That is quite a lot of information for players to comprehend in the first 7 minutes of the game, so the accompanied combat music should be as simple as possible, but still able to keep the mood on edge. That’s the first timing this tune shows up—without chorus, only the rhythm and soft melody with the electronic sounds.

The second timing is after 2B has the first rendezvous with 9S just after she’s finished fighting against a giant enemy (accompanied by <31. *Song of the Ancients-Atonement*>). Then, the same part of <34. *Alien Manifestation*> accompanies 2B’s exploring and her continuous fighting with endless enemies coming from the factory’s outside, stairwell, to inside (gameplay 1–Prologue, 9:14–20:54). But this time, it is with a stronger melody (**VERSE B’**) and random choruses—only when 2B enters one specific room inside the factory, will the **VERSE A-2** show up. Except that, there is no chorus during these long and non-stop battles, which is a necessary setup, because it’s very important for players to understand the relationship between 2B and 9S from the beginning. So, the comparatively loose composition not only creates room for the

weapons sound effects during the battles, but also allows the players to focus on their brief conversations in order to grasp protagonists' personality quickly. At this moment, 9S still politely called 2B "ma'am" and 2B always responds "emotions are prohibited" to any of 9S' question or say, excitement. The same part of music also plays in the gameplay 9 (17:00-22:07), the beginning of route B, when 9S and 2B "first meet" each other.

The third timing is when 2B first calls 9S by his nickname "Ninze" during their battles inside the castle of the Forest Kingdom (gameplay 5 of route A and gameplay 13 of route B). This is a considerably big move in their relationship. 9S had at this point previously tried to encourage 2B to call him by his nickname "Nines" at the Amusement Park (gameplay 3 & 11), but he was refused by 2B. Here, <34. Alien Manifestation> plays in full track and loops for around 10 minutes (gameplay 5, 41:11-51:19), following the composition order from **INTRO**→**VERSE A (A-1 to A-3)**→**VERSE B**→**BRIDGE** to **VERSE B'**. Given that the players have listened to the no-chorus version (i.e., section ❶→❷→❸) many times, it is reasonable to play the chorus parts (i.e., section ❹ to ❺) to strengthen the combat vibe through variations and more importantly, to enhance the emotional progression.

Finally, the last timing of playing <34. Alien Manifestation> is when 9S finds the TOP SECRET of the YoHRa project, which is also the climax of the game, right before the ending C, at gameplay 19 (35:23-45:32). It's worth noting that this 10-minute loop has a distinguished implementation to other tunes. The scene takes place inside the Resource Unit where 9S must hack into all the blocking devices and get the information. So, the first 8 minutes is all about hacking which has music distorted by the Tone Filter to match the 2D screen of hacking. However, the loop goes like this : **INTRO**→**VERSE A**→**VERSE B**, then repeats back to the chorus parts: **VERSE A**→**VERSE B**, without distorting any melody or chorus. Only the ambience, **Layer 1** of the tune, has been processed by Tone Filter. So, the players still hear some 8-bit sound in the background at the same time as the clean melody and original chorus during the hacking. This is the only part in the whole gameplay where it is implemented like this (see Appendix #5).