

signals, such as *Super Mario Bros* (1985) [...] [while] games that principally require cognitive skills, on the other hand, these tend to feature music with a more relaxed mood and more subtle sound design, making the experience more reflective and allowing the player to **concentrate on strategic planning**'.²³³ These cognitive challenges include strategic thinking and logical problem solving in a puzzle game. He mentioned the 3D artillery tactical game *Worm 4 Mayhem* (Team17, 2005) as an example, where the player can fire the weapon only once or twice in order to win. And it is accompanied by 'rather timid, almost ambient music, which supports concentration on thinking and determining the most successful weapon'.²³⁴ Therefore, the music for cognitive challenges usually has a relatively slow tempo that matches the human heart beat—60 to 80 beat per minute—in order to create a smooth and serene atmosphere where players calm down and stimulate reflections.

According to an investigation by Rona, 'a slow build tempo can add tension and energy to a scene in which something is gradually becoming more significant, such as danger'.²³⁵ As presented in Figure 29, the andante speed of <**34. Alien Manifestation**> (bpm 72) enables players to reasonably slow down their pace and start to pay attention to the environment with hidden threats. The first 8 bars of INTRO where there are very few elements in the music—rhythm in percussion and only one chord in electronic timbre, especially suggests that something is going to happen and players should stay alert. Although Figure 29 doesn't illustrate the full score, the dominant chord D7 of G-major scale doesn't show up. Instead, the **dominant chord B7**, suspended chord **B7sus4**, diatonic chord **Bm**, and the tonic chord **Em** of E-minor scale and its variations (e.g., Em7, Em add9, E) always occupy the beginning and the ending of a section. Hence, the tonality of this tune should be considered the same as <**10. Grandma—Destruction**>—they are both written in E-minor scale.

²³³ Huiberts, *op. cit.*, p.71 *The emphasis is the original text.

²³⁴ Huiberts, *op. cit.*, p.69

²³⁵ *Loc. cit.*

Alien Manifestation

NieR: Automata

Keiichi Okabe, Keigo Hoashi

INTRO Rhythm (percussion) at 2 octave below + Electronic chord at R.H → Trouble is brewing.

♩ = 72 E (omit 3)

mp (Crescendo at 2nd time)

4

Chorus comes in as melody.

E(omit 3)

D/E

7

C/E

Bm/E

Em add9

10

D add9/E

C/E

Bm/E

13

VERSE A-1 Rhythm remains + Theme1 in staccato at R.H + No chorus (melody)

Em7

Am/E

mf *pp*

Figure 29. Score analysis of <34. Alien Manifestation>

(The coloured notes are added by this study)

15 **Em7** **Am/E** **Em7**

18 **Am/E** **Em7** **Am/E**

VERSE A-2 Rhythm remains + Theme1 in staccato at L.H (2 octave below) + Chorus (melody)

21 **Em7(9)** **D add9/E** **C add9/E**

24 **Em7(9)** **Em7(9)** **D add9/E**

27 **C add9/E** **Em add9** **Asus4** **Gsus4** **Csus4** **Em7(9,11)**

VERSE A-3
Em7(9,11)
f Rhythm remains + Chorus (melody) + Theme2 in staccato at R.H (one octave above)

Figure 29. Score analysis of <34. Alien Manifestation>

30

32

35

38

Em7 (9,11)

Am7(13)/E

Em7 (9,11)

CM7(13)

GM7/B

Am7 (9,11)

Am7 (9,11)

F add9

F add9

F m6 /A b

VERSE B-1

VERSE B-2

Rhythm (bell-like) remains soft + No theme (staccato) + Focus on Melody (chorus) in quarter note.

(Crescendo at 2nd time)

mp

Pitched rhythm follows harmony.

[omitted here]

Table 4 provides the outline of the structure of <34. Alien Manifestation>. By and large, the foremost rhythm begins at INTRO and plays through the end. There are few elements in INTRO, except the distinctive electronic sound at right hands, which helps build up a sense of impending doom. This sound actually reoccurs in later sections, both

in VERSE A and in VERSE B (circled in blue), suggesting that the enemy hasn't been defeated yet—there's still trouble looming on the horizon.

Next, compared to the high-speed and busy composition of <10. *Grandma–Destruction*> (bpm 148), the strong beats of staccato only show up in VERSE A to emphasise the themes (circled in orange and purple) in <34. *Alien Manifestation*> (bpm72). Meanwhile, VERSE B accentuates the expression of melody without the aid of staccato but with remaining rhythm which has changed from percussions to the bell-like sounds in soft volume.

Thirdly, Okabe elaborated how he had adopted this “all-vocal policy” from director Yoko: the chorus (human voice) appears as melody every 8 bars in general, then the melody goes by itself without chorus around 8 bars for example INTRO-1 to VERSE A-3, and VERSE B-1 to BRIDGE, with the intension of adding variations for the long battle.

Section	Rhythm	Staccato	Melody (with/out chorus)
① INTRO-1 (bar 1-8)	percussion at 2 octaves below	X	electronic chord at R.H. (X)
② INTRO-2 (bar 9-16)	at 1 octaves below	X	O (chorus=melody)
③ VERSE A-1	remains	Theme 1 in Staccato at R.H.	X
④ VERSE A-2	remains	Theme 1 in Staccato at L.H. (2 octave below)	O (chorus=melody)
⑤ VERSE A-3	remains	Theme 2 in Staccato at R.H. (1 octave above)	O (chorus=melody)
⑥ VERSE B-1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Bell-like sounds keep rhythm in soft volume. ▪ Pitched rhythm follows harmony. 	X	Focus on Melody (O) in quarter note
⑦ VERSE B-2		X	Focus on Melody (X)
⑧ VERSE B-3		X	Focus on Melody (O)
⑨ BRIDGE	A-1 + A-3	No chorus	
⑩ VERSE B'	B'-1 + B-2 + B-3		
ENDING	A-1 + one extra bar ends in chord Em (the tonic) as a prolonged whole note.		

Table 4. Composition structure of <34. *Alien Manifestation*>