

# CHARACTERISATION USING LEITMOTIFS IN FINAL FANTASY IX

Pinja Niemenrinne

Pro Gradu Thesis

University of Turku

School of History, Culture and Arts Studies

Musicology

April 2021

The originality of this thesis has been checked in accordance with the University  
Turku quality assurance system using the Turnitin OriginalityCheck service.

UNIVERSITY OF TURKU

School of History, Culture and Arts Studies

Faculty of Humanities

NIEMENRINNE PINJA: Characterisation using leitmotifs in Final Fantasy IX

Master's thesis, 62 p.

Musicology

April 2021

The purpose of this study is to investigate how characterisation is done using leitmotifs in the Japanese role-playing game, *Final Fantasy IX* (2000). The term role-playing game is used to refer to console role-playing games in this study. The subject is approached by analytical play and audiovisual analysis.

In *Final Fantasy IX*, characterisation using musical character themes, or leitmotifs plays a fairly important role. Each one of the eight playable characters has their own designated character theme, which builds the basis for each character's persona. The leitmotifs are then located from other pieces of music and using these leitmotifs, the characters are then tied to certain events, places, or other characters during the game. These events, places, or character relations then reveal how the eight playable characters develop through the game, and how the story is told using music.

What was discovered, was how important leitmotifs are, not only in characterisation, but also in character development, and storytelling. It is important to highlight the role and importance of music, not only as a passive element playing in the background but as an active element, telling a story and describing characters and their connections and relationships.

Keywords: video game music, leitmotif, audiovisual analysis, final fantasy, role-playing game

TURUN YLIOPISTO

Historian, kulttuurin ja taiteiden tutkimuksen laitos

Humanistinen tiedekunta

NIEMENRINNE PINJA: Characterisation using leitmotifs in Final Fantasy IX

Pro Gradu -tutkielma, 62 s.

Musiikkitiede

Huhtikuu 2021

Tutkielman tarkoitus on selvittää, miten hahmojen kuvausta tehdään johtoiheiden avulla japanilaisessa roolipelissä, Final Fantasy IX:ssä (2000). Roolipeli-termillä viitataan tässä tutkielmassa ensisijaisesti konsoliroolipeihin. Aihetta lähestytään analyttisellä pelaamisella ja audiovisuaalisella analyysillä.

Final Fantasy IX:ssä hahmojen kuvaamisella musiikillisten teemojen, tai johtoiheiden avulla on tärkeä merkitys. Jokaisella kahdeksasta pelattavasta hahmosta on oma hahmoteemansa, jonka pohjalle rakentuu jokaisen hahmon persoona. Nämä johtoiheet sitten etsitään muista kappaleista ja niitä avuksi käyttäen hahmot yhdistetään tiettyihin tapahtumiin, paikkoihin ja jopa toisiin hahmoihin pelin aikana. Nämä tapahtumat, paikat, tai hahmojen väliset suhteet sitten osoittavat miten, kahdeksan pelattavaa hahmoa kehittyvät pelin aikana ja kuinka tarinaa kerrotaan musiikin avulla.

Tutkimuksessa selvisi, kuinka tärkeä osa peliä johtoiheet ovat, eivät pelkästään hahmojen kuvauksessa, mutta myös hahmojen kehityksen kuvaamisessa ja tarinankerronnassa. On tärkeää korostaa musiikin roolia ja merkitystä, ei vain passiivisena elementtinä taustalla, mutta aktiivisena elementtinä, joka kertoo tarinaa ja kuvailee hahmoja, kyseisten hahmojen liitoksia ja suhteita.

Asiasanat: videopelimusiikki, leitmotif, audiovisuaalinen analyysi, final fantasy, roolipeli

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 History of Role-Playing Games	1
1.2 Music in Video Games	2
1.3 Final Fantasy IX	3
2. RESEARCH QUESTION	6
2.1 Methods	6
2.2 Material	7
3. LEITMOTIF	8
3.1 Zidane	9
3.2 Garnet	14
3.3 Vivi	24
3.4 Steiner	30
3.5 Freya	37
3.6 Quina	44
3.7 Eiko	52
3.8 Amarant	55
4. CONCLUSIONS	58
SOURCES AND REFERENCES	60

# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 History of Role-Playing Games

What is a classic role-playing game? Role-playing games, or RPGs, are games where the player controls one or more characters in a defined, very often fantasy or sci-fi-themed, world. The story is usually an important aspect of games like these, and there tends to be an element of character development or growth in the way of gaining levels, skills, or just better weaponry. The term RPG does not mean a singular form of games, but it is actually used for several different forms of games, ranging from tabletop RPGs to live RPGs to console RPGs (Deterling & Zagal 2018: 19). The focus of this study is a console RPG *Final Fantasy IX* (2000), abbreviated FFIIX from now on. In order to see how FFIIX fits the description of a classic RPG, a brief history of the characteristics of console RPGs is examined. The first RPGs for video game consoles came out in the early 1980s, but the genre started to come into its own in the mid-1980s when several influential titles, including *The Legend of Zelda* (1986), *Dragon Quest* (1986), and *Final Fantasy* (1987). All of the aforementioned ended up becoming the foundation for highly successful game series still published today. In the 1990s, console RPGs started to dominate the market, even to the extent that they started to get ported to computers, usually successfully, and console RPGs of the 1990s usually also had to appeal to a larger demographic than their computer counterparts (Barton 2007: 12).

Some of the defining features of classic RPGs include a well-established world in which the story of the game takes place, exploration of the said world, completion of various quests, and a complex and character-driven story. Exploration is usually an important aspect of the experience of playing an RPG, which is why several classic RPGs feature an overworld map, which can then be explored by the player. The overworld map is also the means of getting to different destinations, seeing what the world of the game is like, and advancing the story.

A traditional RPG usually features a story in which the world is under a threat of some kind and the player, who is controlling the main character, or several characters sets out on a quest to save the world from the aforementioned threat, which can be anything and range from evil mega-corporations and empires to supernatural monsters or even literal gods. Often traditional RPGs feature more than one evil for the player to defeat, and usually, the threat introduced to the player at the beginning of the game does not end up being the biggest evil, and the real main antagonist is revealed at a later time. Before getting to face off against the threat the world is facing, the player needs to travel through the world, complete several quests, some mandatory and some optional, which reveal more of the story and the characters, their pasts, and motivations.

## **1.2 Music in Video Games**

Music is present on multiple different levels in video games. For example, music can play a part in the narrative or it can be a part of the game's reality (Collins, 147: 2008). Sound in all kinds of media, video games included, can be either diegetic, or non-diegetic, diegetic being any kind of sounds that exist within the reality of the story and non-diegetic are sounds that do not exist in the story, for example, the soundtrack. Regardless of whether the music is diegetic, or non-diegetic, the mood of the music will be experienced associated with diegetic events (Gorbman, 1980: 198) Music plays an important part in traditional RPGs, both as a means of creating suitable atmospheres to different scenes and describing characters and places. For example, music playing in the background during battles is usually fairly fast in tempo, with a pounding beat, these features both describe the battle situation and help bring the player to the correct mindset for battle. According to Daniel Levitin, faster music increases the production of adrenaline and gets your heart beat faster (Speaking of Psychology: Music and your health, 2014). This is of course fitting to battle music, as it should serve to prepare the player to fight. On the other hand, the music playing in the background when visiting a calm and quiet town tends to be soft, melodious, and slower in tempo, which has the opposite effect to fast and pounding battle music. These characteristics help the player relax and enjoy the story

and scenery unfolding before them. Music has a systematic, even if small effect on both behavioural and emotional reactions (Kämpfe, Renkewitz & Sedlmeier, 2011: 11), so the music playing in the background has a meaning, even if the players themselves might not notice it. As a matter of fact, sounds can for example increase the feeling of presence (McMahan, 2003: 72). While quite often players can ignore the music playing in the background, it plays an important part regarding both characterisation and also storytelling. Especially in classic RPGs when there was no voice acting, music played a larger role in this regard. Instead of just playing in the background, largely unnoticed, the music acted as a storytelling element, describing the events, places, and characters. There is no voice acting, so characterisation is done largely by musical themes and in-game dialogue. FFIIX is the first game since FFVI to include specific leitmotifs for all playable characters, with several variations of them being used through the game, making the return of these determined character themes another allusion to older games of the series. The game itself is sort of a tribute to older games in the series, so it is only suiting that this feature also makes a return in this title.

### **1.3 Final Fantasy IX**

FFIX is a Japanese RPG released in 2000 by Square Co. and is the last of the mainline Final Fantasy games to be released for Sony's PlayStation. FF IX marked the series' return to its medieval fantasy roots after the modern and science fiction-themed predecessors Final Fantasy VII and Final Fantasy VIII, abbreviated FFVII and FFVIII. Both FFVII and FFVIII were released with much hype, while FFIIX was released more quietly. Released at the end of the PlayStation era, it was never as successful as the two previous instalments or the next mainline game Final Fantasy X, the first of the mainline games to be released for Sony's PlayStation 2. Despite not being as successful as its predecessors, FFIIX received positive reviews and is for example still the Final Fantasy game with the highest score of any Final Fantasy game on Metacritic with a score of 94/100 (Metacritic). The producer of the game, and at the time of its release, the president of Square USA, Hironobu Sakaguchi



(1962-) said FFIIX is closest to what a Final Fantasy game should be, he also said that FFIIX is a reflection of the previous games in the series (Sakaguchi, 2000).

The story of FFIIX is set on a planet called Gaia and near the end of the game also on its sister planet Terra. Gaia is a medieval, traditional fantasy world, whereas Terra is more otherworldly. On the surface, the world of the game seems bright, colourful, and happy, but beneath the surface, there are much darker and gloomier tones as well. As mentioned earlier, Sakaguchi said FFIIX is a reflection of previous Final Fantasy games, and because of that, the game has several allusions and references to earlier games of the series. The allusions and references range from visual clues to references to characters and events from earlier instalments, to game mechanics and music.

The music for FFIIX was composed by Nobuo Uematsu (1959-). The original soundtrack for the game ended up being the last Final Fantasy soundtrack exclusively composed by him, as the soundtrack for the next mainline game, FFX, was composed by three composers all in all. *Final Fantasy IX: Original Soundtrack* was released in 2000 by DigiCube, a subsidiary of Square, and contains 110 songs. There is another soundtrack release for the game too, *Final Fantasy IX: Original Soundtrack PLUS*, released a bit later, featuring 42 additional tracks of music, mostly from the cinematic cutscenes of the game, and also pieces not used in the game. The original soundtrack has 4 CDs and a length of almost five hours, while the original soundtrack plus has the length of roughly one hour, making the complete length of the music from the game over six hours long. At the time of its release, this was the longest soundtrack of any Final Fantasy game. The music on the soundtrack ranges from traditional medieval-sounding pieces like the main theme “The Place I’ll Return to Someday” to electronic battle music like “Battle 1” and whimsical pieces like “Faerie Battle”. As mentioned earlier, the game’s soundtrack also has several references to music from earlier Final Fantasy games. It could therefore be said that this game, and its soundtrack tie together all the older games, so in a way, this instalment could be considered a tribute of sorts. While standing on its own as a

game, FFX also honours the older, and especially in the west, less known instalments of the series.

Much of the success of the series' music can be credited to Uematsu, who single-handedly wrote the music for the first nine instalments. The popularity of Uematsu's music is high, with concerts featuring his compositions selling out worldwide. The first time his music was played by a symphony orchestra outside of Japan was in Leipzig back in 2003 (The Concerts). Uematsu is also the first game music composer to have his compositions featured in the Classic FM Hall of Fame, first appearing on the list back in 2012 (Classic FM). As far as influences go, Uematsu has stated that he has plenty of them and that he enjoys several different types of music, but pop and rock music from the 1970s and the music of Tchaikovsky are his favourites (Uematsu, 2006). Due to his fondness for several different genres of music, Uematsu's music is versatile, a characteristic that is noticeable in his compositions for the *Final Fantasy* series, FFX included. A large number of different styles, genres, and instrumentation choices give each game both a strong sense of originality, but also familiarity, as Uematsu's style is recognisable, and there are certain themes that are present in almost every *Final Fantasy* game, such as "Prelude", "Victory Fanfare", and "Final Fantasy Main Theme".

As Tim Summers notes (2016: 170) about the music in FFVII, Uematsu's motifs are distinct, and easily remembered by the players. Winifred Phillips (2014, 60) talks about the same thing, and calls Uematsu's work on FFVII iconic and also notes that highlighting story elements with leitmotifs is used frequently in the *Final Fantasy* series as a whole. The same thing could be said about the musical themes in FFX, the characters' leitmotifs are clearly distinct and also recognisable even when appearing in different pieces. Summers also mentions (2016: 170) that repetition works as a unifying element through the entire FFVII and also connects characters and locations. Again, this is something that happens in FFX, too, although perhaps to a slightly larger scale, due to the larger number of leitmotifs and other pieces of music featuring them.

## 2. RESEARCH QUESTION

How are the characters described using leitmotifs? That is the primary question of this study. Other questions include, how are the characters tied to specific locations, events, or other characters through the means of these leitmotifs and how is character development described using leitmotifs. Due to the main interest being characterisation and character development, and also to keep the amount of music featured in this study manageable, a decision was made to only include the leitmotifs, and other pieces featuring them, of the eight primary playable characters. The game does feature clear leitmotifs, which can also be found in other pieces, of two more characters, including that of the main antagonist of the game, but those could not be included in this study. Making a choice like this means 20 pieces of music are examined closer, while the rest of the soundtrack is left out.

### 2.1 Methods

Analytical play and audiovisual analysis are the basic methods of this study. According to Tim Summers playing the game and listening can formulate an understanding of the basic relationship between the game and sound. On the other hand, while playing repeatedly, noticing the places and conditions of changes in music becomes possible. (Summers, 2016: 35–36.) Summers also mentions that there are several ways to analyse the material of the game, including e.g. form analysis, performance, and harmonic analysis. The ones that are utilised for this study are mapping of thematic development and motivic relationships, which means the study of formulation and connections between themes, and hermeneutic approach, in which the player actively tries to look for meaning in the game music. (Summers, 2016: 39–44.) The connections between themes are an important point of focus, as it helps in tying together the various versions of the leitmotifs featured in this study.

## 2.2 Material

Two important sources were in use to conduct this study, the first was the game itself, and the second was the soundtrack of the game. The analysis was done by first and foremost playing the game itself, FFIIX. Tim Summers states (2016: 35) that multiple plays are required to examine the different possibilities of play. To ensure that all necessary information could be discovered, the game was played 3 times, accounting for approximately 200 hours of gameplay. The game was played on the original PlayStation for the sake of as authentic an experience as possible. Due to the fact that 20 years have passed since the last playthrough of this game, the first playthrough conducted for this study was to simply get reacquainted with the game, its plot, world, and characters. The second playthrough took the longest to complete, because this was when most of the notes on the character themes, the different pieces of music they appeared in, and when and where in the game they could be heard were taken. Notes were also taken on possible important events, locations, and character relations related to these pieces. The third playthrough was done mostly to ensure that nothing had slipped notice, and to make sure the correct pieces of music had been connected to the correct events or locations.

Like mentioned before, the soundtrack, *Final Fantasy IX Original Soundtrack* (2000) was the second important source for this study. The soundtrack itself proved to be invaluable due to a couple of reasons. First of all, the soundtrack held the knowledge of what the leitmotifs, or character themes, of different characters, sounded like, so clear melodies, rhythms, and harmonies could be connected to the playable characters of the game. Second, by listening through the soundtrack carefully, it was possible to identify other pieces of music that featured material from the character themes. With this knowledge tying together different characters to specific events, locations, or even other characters while playing the game became easier. The soundtrack was also the source used for sheet music transcriptions. The translated song names are taken from Spotify, as the original names are in Japanese.

### 3. LEITMOTIF

Leitmotif, German leitmotiv, is a term mostly associated with Richard Wagner (1813-1883) and his operas, although Wagner was certainly not the only composer to use it. As a matter of fact, even Claudio Monteverdi (1567-1643) used a technique similar to leitmotif in his opera *L'Orfeo* in 1607. In cinema, the leitmotif is one of the most common composing techniques. The basic definition of leitmotif is a short and recurring musical phrase that is associated with a particular person, place, or idea (Kennedy, 1987). It is important that the leitmotif has a clear, distinct melody, rhythm, or harmony so that it can remain recognisable even when there is variation. The main purpose of the leitmotif is to associate certain melodic, harmonic, or rhythmic characteristics to a specific character, place, or event in a way that is recognisable, even if there are changes in the music. Alterations to the music can give information on the character's state of mind or bring more meaning to something that is not the screen. (Prendergast, 1992: 231–232.) It is also possible to connect one leitmotif to another if there is a need for it (Sadie, 1991: 137). A clear and easily recognisable leitmotif will help the audience, in this case, the player to form connections with the help of music while playing the game. When the player connects a certain musical theme to a particular character, they can connect the character to a certain place or an event, or get a glimpse of the character's inner thoughts and feelings without even realising it. The alterations in the leitmotifs can also help the player understand how the characters develop through the course of the game.

The following chapters are split by character. Each chapter features the leitmotif of the character in question and the various variants that can be found in the game.

### 3.1. Zidane

Zidane is the primary protagonist of the game. He is a genome, a humanoid race created to host the souls of his home planet Terra. Due to the events before the game Terra has ended up inside of Gaia, which is the planet most of the game takes place in. Zidane has no recollection of his past, and because of that suffers from insecurity and occasional loneliness. Despite this, he is generally cheerful and bright, and always ready to help others. He is a stark contrast to the primary protagonists of the two previous games: Cloud and Squall (from FFVII and FFVIII respectively), who are sullen and brooding. Zidane is a thief, and coincidentally very similar to the only other playable male thief in the series, Locke from FFVI. At this point, it would be worth mentioning, that thief in Zidane's case refers mostly to his character class, a system dating back to the very first games of the series, and brought back to FFIIX, a game marking the return to the series' origins. The quote assigned to Zidane is "You don't need a reason to help people." This outlines Zidane's character, the helpful hero, who wishes to do good. While this is indeed his character on the surface, there is also more hiding beneath.

Zidane's leitmotif is called "Zidane's Theme". This character theme consists of two clearly different themes, or leitmotifs, which will be referred to as Zidane's Theme A and Zidane's Theme B. "Zidane's Theme" is like Zidane himself: cheerful, happy, and full of energy, march-like in style, it has a steady drum in the beginning. It is in D major, historically a key used for big choruses and triumphant marches (Steblin, 1983: 124), for example, "Hallelujah" from G. F. Händel's *Messiah*, A. Vivaldi's *Gloria* or the final movement of L. van Beethoven's Ninth Symphony *An die Freude*.

Theme A can be heard at the beginning of "Zidane's Theme". As mentioned earlier, the music is happy and energetic. A steady beat of quarter notes can be heard throughout the whole theme. The first part, Zidane's Theme A (see Figure 1) shows the positive aspect of Zidane's character, he is the hero of the story, thus the heroic D

major suits him well, and he is indeed very energetic and positive. Despite being the main character of the game, “Zidane's Theme” can, surprisingly, only be heard twice during the game, both times near the end of disc one. What is interesting is that both times it can be heard, are situations when Zidane takes control of what is happening and helps the party move on to the next destination. These situations are also where Zidane shows he is indeed a thief, as the theme plays for the first time when he steals an airship so that the party can get to their destination. The second time it plays when he steers the stolen airship, so in a way, this could be called the first airship theme of the game, and as such, it bears a resemblance to the airship themes of the old games of the series. The steady, energetic beat of the theme suits these aforementioned situations well.

Zidane's Theme B (see Figure 2) is slower, more lyrical, and also a bit melancholy. The steady beat and the bright D major are still present here, so this mellowness is not that apparent. The reason why more attention is drawn to this particular part of the theme is the simple fact that it can be heard in another song of the game. This song, freely translated “Unrequited Love” uses this melody from “Zidane's Theme”. “Unrequited Love” is slower than “Zidane's Theme” and lacks the steady beat; instead, a continuous string of eight notes can be heard through the piece. The instrumentation consists only of strings, occasional flute, and a harpsichord accompaniment, giving this soft and ballad-like piece a beautiful and calm feeling. This variation lacks the double octaves present in “Zidane's Theme” and begins from F#4. The missing upper register gives this piece a melancholy feeling, as it lacks the brightness present in “Zidane's Theme” (see Figure 3). This piece plays during a scene when Zidane tells Garnet, another key character, about his insecurities and how he has no recollection of his past. It can be assumed, that Zidane's Theme B portrays Zidane's uncertain, sad side, which he keeps hidden beneath the cheerful surface. “Unrequited Love” also becomes location music near the end of the game, when it begins playing in Alexandria, Garnet's home, and one of the key locations in the game. In a way, this slow and gentle piece also ties him to Garnet, who also becomes his love interest during the course of the game.

The two themes found in Zidane’s leitmotif describe the two different sides of Zidane himself. He is mostly cheerful, positive, and always ready to help others: That is what Zidane’s Theme A found in his leitmotif represents. As Zidane’s cheeriness is the first thing on the surface, it is only appropriate that this part of his theme also comes first. Zidane’s Theme B on the other hand, mellow and more lyrical, comes later in “Zidane’s Theme”, just like Zidane’s own insecurity is hidden deep beneath the cheery surface. Even when this theme plays in “Zidane’s Theme”, it is hidden beneath the steady beat and bright D major key. Zidane’s Theme B is heard better only later in the game when he finally allows himself to talk about his insecurities and accepts them as a part of himself.



(Figure 1. Zidane’s Theme A in Zidane’s Theme)



The image displays a musical score for 'Zidane's Theme B in Zidane's Theme'. The score is arranged in three systems, each containing four staves. The top staff of each system is the piano part, and the bottom three staves are the guitar part. The music is in the key of D major (one sharp) and common time (C). The piano part begins with a melodic line in the first system, followed by a more rhythmic accompaniment in the second system. The guitar part provides a steady accompaniment with chords and a rhythmic pattern. The score concludes with a final cadence in the third system.

(Figure 2. Zidane's Theme B in Zidane's Theme)



(Figure 3. Zidane's Theme B in Unrequited Love)

### 3.2. Garnet

Garnet, and later in the game known as Dagger, is the secondary protagonist of the game. She is also the main character Zidane's love interest. She is a summoner, summoners being human-like creatures with the ability to summon powerful monsters, Eidolons. Again, as was the case with black mages, FFX has made summoners a species instead of a character class. In addition to being a summoner, Garnet is also a white mage, a character class devoted to healing magic. She is the princess of Alexandria, one of the central locations in the game, and the daughter of the secondary antagonist of the game, queen Brahne. At the beginning of the game, she is insecure and largely dependent on others, making her sort of a 'damsel in distress'-type of character. She also constantly blames herself for things she has no control over and tends to be horrified by the darker aspects of the world. During the course of the game, she changes a lot and becomes much more confident and willing to use her powers to defend her kingdom. She has originally no recollection of her past, a similarity shared with the primary protagonist Zidane, and her learning of her origins and powers causes her to grow as a character. The quote assigned to Garnet is "Someday I will be queen, but I will always be myself." This shows both her devotion to her kingdom and her duties, but it also shows her willingness to remain herself, no matter what may happen.

The leitmotif for Garnet is called "Garnet's Theme". This musical theme consists of two distinct themes, which will be referred to as Garnet's Theme A and Garnet's Theme B. "Garnet's Theme" describes Garnet as a character, it is soft and calm, almost ballad-like. The instrumentation of the piece consists of woodwinds and bells, giving it a soft and bright sound. The time signature is 3/4, giving the piece a waltz-like feeling, especially after Garnet's Theme A begins. "Garnet's Theme", like Zidane's is in D major, perhaps to highlight her connection to Zidane. "Garnet's Theme" begins with woodwinds playing an eight-note pattern. This pattern remains largely unchanged throughout entire the musical piece. The woodwinds are then joined by a soft, yet steady drumbeat and bells playing Theme A (see Figure 4). As Summers notes, while talking about Tifa, the secondary protagonist and also the

primary protagonist's love interest from FFVII, this type of music, soft flute, with arpeggio background, is quite stereotypically musically feminine (Summers 2016: 64). While "Garnet's Theme" is not an exact match to this, it shares similarities in sound and style.

Garnet's Theme B (see Figure 5) is very similar to Theme A in terms of style, it is soft and calm, still ballad-like and the waltz-like rhythm is present in it too. The biggest difference, aside from the melody, is the temporary shift to E minor key. The change is brief, but it still affects the mood of the piece, giving it a touch more melancholy than Theme A.

"Garnet's Theme" is heard twice during the game. The first time this theme is heard is at the beginning of disc two during a flashback with a minor character called Doctor Tot. This is when the player first learns about the summoners and magical gemstones containing eidolons, powerful summonable creatures. This could be seen as a reference to FFVI where the summonable monsters, or Espers, were also turned into magical stones, there called Magicites. The second time "Garnet's Theme" is heard at the beginning of disc three when Garnet prepares for her coronation. So, the first time is linked to Garnet's origins and past, while the second time is linked to her future as the queen of Alexandria. It could be said that this theme ties together both her past and her future.

Interestingly, the first time both Garnet's Theme A and Garnet's Theme B are heard is not during the aforementioned scenes. The first time Garnet's Theme A is heard is at the beginning of the game when Garnet and Zidane meet for the first time. The piece that plays during this scene is called 'Eye to Eye. The piece is slow and mellow, fitting to an almost romantic feeling in this scene where the two main characters meet for the very first time. This piece is played on strings, with the flute playing Garnet's Theme A (see Figure 6). Due to the nature of this piece and the event it is played in, it could be considered the theme of Garnet's and Zidane's love, which is probably what the player assumes at this point. Garnet's character theme

has not been heard yet, nothing is connecting this music exclusively to her. In addition to that, stylistically this piece of music is quite similar to other love-themed pieces from earlier Final Fantasy games, for example “Theme of Love” from FFIV and “Roses and Wine” from FFVIII.

The first time the player can hear Garnet’s Theme B is also near the beginning of the game when the player enters the world map for the first time. The overworld music of FFX, freely translated as “Over the Hill”, features both themes and is the first time the player hears both Garnet’s themes together without even realizing the connection to her (see Figure 7). “Over the Hill” has a more modern sound than “Garnet’s Theme”. The key signature is G major instead of D major in “Garnet’s Theme”. According to Pauer (1877: 23), G major is used to describe sincerity, meditation, simple grace, and brightness. All of these characteristics match not only “Over the Hill”, but also Garnet herself, which makes G major a fitting key signature for this piece of music. “Over the Hill” is actually very similar to “Garnet’s Theme”, the harmony and the melody are virtually unchanged from “Garnet’s Theme” and thus it is easily recognisable. The biggest differences are the instrumentation, different key, and the background music giving this variant a slightly livelier feel. The piece is played on a synthesizer and as a result, this variant sounds very different from other pieces featuring “Garnet’s Theme”. The tempo is almost the same as the tempo in “Garnet’s Theme”, but due to the backing rhythm from the synthesizer, this particular piece actually sounds faster and more energetic. This energetic sound is very fitting for an overworld theme, as it plays when the player is going on an adventure, looking for new locations, and progressing in the story. The instrumentation is very light, featuring only synthesized sounds and the tempo is walking paced. It does not demand too much attention but instead plays in the background while the player is looking for the next place to go to. At the same time, the player is given both Garnet’s themes, although the connection to her will be found out much later in the game. It could be argued that both the usage of Garnet’s theme groups in an overworld theme and the forward-moving feel of the piece also describes Garnet’s journey to find out who she really is and her growth as a central character.

The fourth piece featuring “Garnet’s Theme” is a piece called “South Gate”. This music plays when the party visits a location called South Gate near the end of disc one. This is the third time the player hears Garnet’s themes, again without realizing the music’s connection to her. This time, both Garnet’s themes act as location music for South Gate. The tempo of this piece is a bit slower than “Garnet’s Theme” and “Over the Hill”, which is fitting because this part of the game is slow-paced and calm, it exists to progress the story further and to give the player a small break after a stressful and battle filled section taking place before this. As a matter of fact, the player is only controlling Garnet and Steiner at this point in the game, so it is fitting that this location and portion of the game feature Garnet’s musical themes. This part shows Garnet taking control of her own life and becoming more independent, instead of following the lead of other, stronger, characters. So, it could be argued that this slow and calm piece featuring her musical motifs is used to describe her character development. The slightly hectic feeling that was present in “Over the Hill” is gone, replaced by calmness. This is also what she herself is like, calmer, more collected, and slightly less scared of the journey she is taking. She has also gained more confidence as she realizes how far she has come on her own, without the help from Zidane who was guiding her in the beginning. Steiner’s comment “You never needed him to begin with”, also shows how her true strength and determination were always there, she just needed to find them.

The instrumentation of “South Gate” features only organ, and together with the calmer tempo, this variant sounds somewhat medieval, which fits both the style of the game itself and the location this music plays in. This medieval-sounding style can especially be heard in the small intro that plays before Garnet’s theme A comes in. This is arguably the calmest and most relaxing version of both Garnet’s themes. Again, as was the case with “Over the Hill” the melody and harmony of both Garnet’s musical themes remains largely unchanged. The key signature is now F major, a key signature used to describe calmness and peace (Pauer 1877: 25). This is fitting to both the calm music, but also the calm atmosphere of the events happening in the game when the music is heard. (see Figure 8)

The final piece of music featuring Garnet's themes can be found during the end credits, when probably the best-known song from the game, "Melodies of Life" plays. "Melodies of Life" is considered the main theme of Final Fantasy IX, performed by Emiko Shiratori both in Japanese and English, the piece became popular especially overseas. Similar to "Eyes on Me" in FFVIII, "Melodies of Life" itself has musical themes that are scattered all over the game. "Melodies of Life" is in E major and has a structure intro-A-A-B-C-D-A-B-C-C-outro. The A parts feature Garnet's Theme A and B parts feature Garnet's Theme B. C is an original theme group that is specifically made for "Melodies of Life" and can also be found in various musical pieces in the game, while D is an instrumental interlude.

"Melodies of Life" is a pop-ballad, the theme of Zidane's and Garnet's love. The lyrics of the piece describe the relationship between the two characters and memories, a central point of the game itself. So, it could be said that this song is a description of Garnet's journey and her character development, tying together both her past, present, and future. While this song is mostly about Garnet and Zidane and their relationship, the song also refers to Garnet's past. The phrase 'A voice from the past, joining yours and mine / adding up the layers of harmony' is a reference to the song Garnet's mother used to sing to her when she was very young. This is a nod to the lost memories she worked so hard to recover. The melody playing in this part can also be found in a musical piece called "A Song of Memories" that plays a few times in the game when Garnet is thinking about her past and her lost memories. It could be argued that the musical theme in part C of "Melodies of Life" is Garnet's Theme C, as it is heavily linked to her and her memories. This is true, as this theme group also heavily describes Garnet and is used in music linked to her, but as it is not a part of "Garnet's Theme", this theme group has not been included among Garnet's musical theme groups. Instead, this theme could be considered the theme of her mother who was the source of this melody from Garnet's past.

In conclusion, Garnet's musical themes can be found in five pieces, all describing her and her journey to finding her lost memories, realizing who she is, and her growth as

a person. “Garnet’s Theme” is soft and mellow, linked to both her past and future and describes her personality. “Eye to Eye” is the only variant featuring only Garnet’s Theme A. It is the piece marking the beginning of the relationship between Zidane and Garnet, slow, soft, and strongly resembling love themes from older games from the series. “Over the Hill” is the liveliest variant of the four, faster in pace and more modern in style. Being the overworld music, this is the piece that shows the player how important Garnet is to the story, even without the player realizing it at the beginning of the game. This is the music used for adventure and travel, paralleling Garnet looking for her lost memories and roots. The third piece featuring her musical themes “South Gate” is the calmest, most sparsely instrumented version of the four variants. Playing during a scene when she takes control of her own life, the calm mood of the music describes her calmness and determination during a moment when she becomes independent for the first time. The fifth variant, “Melodies of Life” is by far the best-known song from the game. Soothing and calm, with lyrics telling the story of her and Zidane’s love and also referencing her past, this ties together her journey from the beginning of the game to the end. A thought that comes to mind from the pieces featuring Garnet’s musical themes is her importance to the story. Her music can be found in pivotal pieces in the game, both the overworld theme and also the end credits, which highlights her importance and presence in the game. Could Garnet, instead of Zidane be considered the main character of FFIIX after all?



The image displays a musical score for 'Garnet's Theme A in Garnet's Theme'. It consists of three systems of piano accompaniment, each with three staves: a treble staff, a middle staff, and a bass staff. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/4. The first system begins with a whole rest in the treble staff, followed by a melodic line in the middle staff and a bass line in the bass staff. The second system features a melodic line in the treble staff with a slur over the first two notes, and a rhythmic accompaniment in the middle staff. The third system continues the melodic and accompanimental patterns. The fourth system shows a melodic line in the treble staff with a slur over the last two notes, and a rhythmic accompaniment in the middle staff. The fifth system concludes the piece with a melodic line in the treble staff and a rhythmic accompaniment in the middle staff.

(Figure 4. Garnet's Theme A in Garnet's Theme)

The image displays a musical score for 'Garnet's Theme B in Garnet's Theme'. It consists of three systems of piano accompaniment, each with three staves: a treble staff, a middle staff, and a bass staff. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/4. The first system shows a treble staff with a melodic line of quarter notes, a middle staff with a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth-note chords, and a bass staff with a simple bass line of quarter notes. The second system continues this pattern, with the treble staff featuring a melodic line that includes a sharp sign on the second measure. The third system concludes the piece with a final melodic phrase in the treble staff and a final chord in the middle and bass staves.

(Figure 5. Garnet's Theme B in Garnet's Theme)

The image displays a musical score for 'Garnet's Theme A' in 4/4 time. The score is organized into two systems. The first system consists of four staves: a single treble clef staff at the top containing a melodic line, and three staves below it (treble, treble, and bass clefs) providing accompaniment. The second system also consists of four staves, with the top staff continuing the melody and the three lower staves providing accompaniment. The music is written in a key with one flat (B-flat major or D minor) and a 4/4 time signature. The melody in the first staff of the first system begins with a quarter rest, followed by a sequence of eighth and quarter notes. The accompaniment in the lower staves features a steady rhythm of quarter and eighth notes.

(Figure 6. Garnet's Theme A in Eye to Eye)

This musical score is for 'Garnet's Theme A in Over the Hill'. It is written in 3/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The score consists of four systems, each with three staves: a vocal line (treble clef) and two piano accompaniment lines (treble and bass clefs). The melody in the vocal line is simple and melodic, while the piano accompaniment features a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes with slurs. The piece concludes with a double bar line.

(Figure 7. Garnet's Theme A in Over the Hill)

This musical score is for 'Garnet's Theme A in South Gate'. It is written in 3/4 time with a key signature of one flat (Bb). The score consists of two systems, each with two staves: a vocal line (treble clef) and a piano accompaniment line (treble clef). The melody in the vocal line is more complex and includes some chromaticism. The piano accompaniment features a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes with slurs. The piece concludes with a double bar line.

(Figure 8. Garnet's Theme A in South Gate)

### 3.3. Vivi

Vivi is a small black mage, and one of the central characters of the game, black mage being a magic-user specialized in destructive magic. FFX is different from the earlier instalments, as it has black mages as a specific species instead of a character class/job. As is the case with Zidane, Vivi's character class also comes from the very first Final Fantasy games. The appearance of these aforementioned black mages in FFX, Vivi included, is similar to the old designs from the first games: blue robes/coats, pointed hats, black faces, and big yellow eyes. Vivi is the second character the player gets to play as, near the very beginning of the game. At first, he is clumsy, for example constantly tripping over his own feet and falling down, extremely innocent, gullible, and insecure. He stumbles over his speech and is afraid to use his powers. While he indeed appears like this in the beginning, he goes through a major character development during the game. Vivi's quote is "How do you prove that you exist...? Maybe we don't exist...". This quote shows an important part of Vivi's character: he suffers from an existential crisis, a trait that becomes increasingly obvious during the course of the game.

Vivi's leitmotif is called "Vivi's Theme". This leitmotif, as was the case with Zidane, consists of two different themes, so they will be referred to as Vivi's Theme A and Vivi's Theme B. "Vivi's Theme" could be described as humorous, perhaps somewhat whimsical, or even cute and playful. The theme is presented by woodwinds and pizzicato strings with several percussion instruments, for example, triangle, güiro, etc in the background. The selection, and the playing style of the instruments, help in giving this piece a playful sound. This theme Despite the humorous nature of the piece, mostly created by the melody, instrumentation, sharp staccatos, and bouncy rhythm, it is in G minor. According to Pauer (1877: 24), G minor represents sometimes sadness, sometimes quiet joy, and even grace with a touch of melancholy. Notable examples of works in G minor include for example "Dido's Lament" from H. Purcell's Dido and Aeneas, C. Saint-Saëns' Danse Macabre, and most of G. Verdi's Messa da Requiem. G minor is also occasionally used to describe tragedy and death (Price, 1984: 23), all of which are present in

Vivi's story. "Vivi's Theme" later on modulates to A major, a key used to describe genuine happiness and sincerity of emotion (Pauer, 1877: 24), these are traits that are also an important part of Vivi's character.

Theme A (see Figure 9) is a theme variant that can be heard at the beginning of "Vivi's Theme". As stated before, this musical motive is playful and comical. It captures the bright, colourful, and seemingly harmless atmosphere the game has at its beginning. Everything is well, and the player is controlling an adorable little character. This theme describes the harmless, childlike appearance, and behaviour of Vivi. He is essentially only a child, having been created only some months before the beginning of the game. In "Vivi's Theme" a syncopated rhythm can be heard in the background through Theme A, bringing an element of surprise to this playful little piece, and giving it a rather curious feel. According to Pauer (1877: 32), syncopated rhythm can bring liveliness, charm, and originality to music.

Vivi's Theme B (see Figure 10) is in A major, modulating to D major for a short while, before returning to A. The syncopated rhythm is absent, replaced by a steady, yet humorous, staccato eight-note beat. Because of this playful background music, the absence of syncopation is not easily noticeable. Otherwise, this theme is fairly similar to the first theme, the biggest differences being the major key, and a slightly different melody and rhythm.

Both of these themes describe Vivi as a character: Innocent, playful, and curious. Yet despite these positive qualities, there is a sad G minor present at the beginning of his theme. This sadness becomes more obvious later in the game, and other pieces featuring his leitmotif.

Vivi's Theme A can be heard next around the middle of disc one. The song featuring an arranged version of Vivi's Theme A is called "Fleeting Life" (see Figure 11). This piece is slower than "Vivi's Theme" and also lacks its playful nature. Instead, it is solemn and sad, almost hopeless. There is not a trace of the syncopated rhythm or plucked background instruments, instead, it is played on woodwinds in a slower tempo. The style and the instrumentation give this piece a medieval feel, suiting the game's overall style. This theme is in A minor, later repeated in E minor. This piece plays during a scene where Vivi meets other black mages for the first time. The sad

nature of the piece reflects Vivi's feelings when he tries to communicate with them but gets no response whatsoever, so this could be described as empathetic music (Chion 8, 1994). He is sad and disappointed when, after all his tries, they do not even appear to see him or acknowledge his presence, they simply continue doing their duties. These black mages are creatures like him, making it a logical choice to use a musical motif from "Vivi's Theme", they are similar to Vivi, but also different: while Vivi is a sentient being, these black mages are not, at least not at this point of the game. The name of the piece, "Fleeting Life" also gives a hint of the nature of the black mages, Vivi included. As the black mages are created creatures, machines of sorts, they have a limited lifespan. At this point of the game Vivi does not know this, but coming to learn of it, he has a hard time understanding the concept of death. In a way, this piece is also a requiem of sorts, as all the black mages seen while this music is playing, die soon after, in an event that makes Vivi question his own existence and purpose in life. The second time this piece is heard is much later in the game, in disc 3, when Zidane and Vivi witness two black mages care for a new-born chocobo. The black mages cry due to the happiness they feel over having hatched the chocobo, which gives the player a glimpse of the nature of the black mages, despite being machines, they too have feelings. This event also has Vivi realise that he, and the rest of the black mages can't be mere puppets, because they can feel various emotions. So, it could be said that this is the piece describing Vivi's journey to understanding the true nature of both himself, and the black mages, not only as emotionless machines, but sentient beings, like humans.

The third time leitmotifs used to describe Vivi are heard is during disc 2. This time both of his themes are heard in a piece called "Black Mage Village". With this piece, Vivi's music now once again becomes location music, the first time "Vivi's Theme" being both as a character theme and a location theme for Alexandria at the beginning of the game. This variant of his musical themes is fast, and in stark contrast to the two previous ones, sports electric instruments, and a disco-like beat. This location theme, representing the place where the now sentient black mages have chosen to live in has a lot in common with "Mystic Mysidia", a musical piece playing in a likewise mage-inhabited town of Mysidia in FFIV. This musical similarity is one of

the many found in the soundtrack of FFXIX, with many of the pieces containing material from the old FF-games, from FFI to FFIV.

“Black Mage Village” starts with a fast, steady beat, soon joined by Vivi’s Theme B. This variant of “Vivi’s Theme” modulates constantly, making the piece feel restless, as it never stays in one key for a long time. The first part of Vivi’s Theme B is in A major, followed by a ten bar long steady beat, which leads to the second part of Vivi’s Theme B, now in A minor. The first part of the theme is repeated in D minor, while the second part is again in A minor. The piece finally ends in E minor, where Vivi’s Theme A variant is played. This theme is the liveliest, and also the fastest of the three pieces featuring “Vivi’s Theme”, with a faster tempo and steady beat that seems to push the music forward. In a way, there is a hectic feeling in this music as well, like there is not enough time to let the music run slower. The electronic instruments and the disco-like beat are a fascinating choice for the piece because the game itself is in a pseudo-medieval environment, and this village is not an exception. One could argue that the more modern approach suits this village fairly well, since the black mages are machines, and they are also a rather new invention in their world, seeing as Vivi, who is the oldest of them, is under a year old himself. So, perhaps the mages could represent technology and the future. This is the place where Vivi finally learns about the limited time he probably has left, as he is told that black mages in general have a lifespan of one year. He is being comforted by one of the black mages, who tells him that since he is a prototype, he might last longer.

In conclusion, each of the three themes represents Vivi and his development as a character. First “Vivi’s Theme”, his character theme, describes his basic characteristics: his curious, playful nature, and innocence, with a hint of sadness due to the minor key. Next is “Fleeting Life” during which he comes to contact with other black mages, and soon after begins questioning himself and his existence. This is the piece that gives the first hint about the limited time the black mages have to live. It is also the theme of his understanding the nature of both himself, and the rest of the black mages. The final piece is “Black Mage Village”, which plays in the village inhabited by the black mages, now learning how to live normal lives. This is a



lively piece, albeit a bit restless, and more modern than the other variants. It is also in this location where Vivi is forced to start accepting his fate, his soon approaching death.



(Figure 9. Vivi's Theme A in Vivi's Theme)



(Figure 10. Vivi's Theme B in Vivi's Theme)



(Figure 11. Vivi's Theme A in Fleeting Life)



(Figure 12. Vivi's Theme B in reversed order with various modulations in Black Mage Village)

### 3.4. Steiner

Steiner is one of the characters met at the beginning of the game. He is a knight of Alexandria, assigned to protect the princess, Garnet. Steiner's character class is knight, again an allusion to older Final Fantasy games. In addition to the traditional knight class, Steiner also exhibits abilities from a couple of other older character classes, like paladin, dark knight, and mystic knight, although the mystic knight abilities are usable only with Vivi in the active party. Steiner could therefore be considered a combination of several old knight-classes from older games in the series.

In the beginning, he has narrow-minded views of other people, he is pompous and strongly driven by these views and his emotions. He is respectful towards those he respects, but the people he has no respect for, tend to earn his scorn and strong dislike. He could easily be called the comic relief among the playable characters. His appearance alone is somewhat comical, he is stocky of build and he wears armour, which causes his field movement in the game to be accompanied by a continuous, comical clanking sound, even earning him the nickname 'Rusty' from the game's main character, Zidane. His appearance combined with his personality causes him to become the target of jokes and mischief fairly often. While in the beginning appearing to be nothing more than foil to the protagonist, he undergoes huge character development later in the game.

Steiner's leitmotif is called "Steiner's Theme". "Steiner's Theme" consists of two distinct key characteristics: one of them is the steady half note beat in the background, and the other is the melody. Both of these features are equally important in his characterisation, as will be explained more later. It should also be noted that the beat in the background sounds very similar to the beginning of Sergei Prokofiev's piece called *Dance of the Knights*. These musical materials can be heard in two pieces of music, the first one being his character theme, named "Steiner's Theme". "Steiner's Theme" is in C minor, the minor key giving this piece a slightly solemn

feel despite the comical sound of the piece itself, and the events it plays in (see Figure 13).

“Steiner’s Theme” is slow, heavy in beat, and instrumentation. The piece starts with a trombone playing half notes, accompanied by keys playing backbeat chords with drums playing two sixteenth notes at the end of every second bar. Soon the melody, played by a clarinet comes in. When the piece progresses further, more instruments, including various percussions, e.g. güiro and tambourine, strings, and more brass instruments are added in. The heavy and slow beat gives an impression of a character that is not terribly bright treading heavily around, like a bull in a china shop. Truth be told, this is actually exactly what is happening when the player is first introduced both to this piece of music, and Steiner himself. When this music plays, one of the first things the player sees Steiner do is him trying to motivate his very poorly motivated and half-dressed knights into searching for princess Garnet. To make Steiner seem even more ridiculous, his running style looks clumsy, he is constantly shaking his fist at others when he gets aggravated by something or someone, and he has a tendency to jump in place when he is frustrated, not only causing a lot of ruckus due to his ever-clanking armour but also making him seem like he is constantly throwing a temper tantrum like a little child. So basically, the first image the player is given of this character is that of a complete buffoon. And all the while this music is playing in the background, highlighting his incompetence and loud and pompous persona. The player has plenty of time to listen to this piece of music, as it plays through the whole scene of him running around the Alexandria castle, yelling at his incompetent knights, and failing miserably at his mission.

This theme is heard two times in the game, with the second time being in disc 2. He is in Alexandria castle and he has been captured with Marcus, a thief from Tantalus, a traveling theatre troupe Zidane is also a member of. They are then locked in a large cage the player must swing back and forth until it crashes. Here Steiner is forced to work together with someone he strongly despises, a thief, and on top of that a friend of Zidane’s. After getting out, they try to escape the castle, and while Marcus manages to get out, Steiner is staying behind in order to help Garnet. It is then that

Zidane, Vivi, and Freya arrive, and Steiner's worldview shatters. He now comes face to face with the realisation that the queen he has been loyally serving intends to kill Garnet, and is forced to accept the reality of what is happening. It is worth noting, that when this scene starts, his character theme stops playing.

Taking a closer look at "Steiner's Theme", the slowness of the music could be considered a reference to the fact that he is one of the last characters to understand the events unfolding around him. He holds onto his beliefs and opinions relentlessly, refusing to believe what everybody around him is telling him. He is constantly lagging behind the other team members, and while he definitely lags behind them physically, he also does that mentally. The continuous beat in the background could be seen referring to his stubbornness, as he keeps on holding onto his views and voicing them out loud, even if nobody else is willing to listen. Just like the continuous and never-ending trombone beat in the background, he just keeps on talking and thinking everything in the world should work according to his ideals and worldview, not stopping for a moment to think things through. The changes in the melody could on the other hand be a reference to his various stages of aggravation. The melody becomes more convoluted through the piece, adding more instruments and volume and with that becoming somewhat difficult to even listen to. This is like Steiner's behaviour: he starts off slow and gradually becomes more and more aggravated when things do not go the way he wants. These moments usually end up with him shaking his fists or jumping up and down, or yelling at others like was mentioned earlier. Just like the melody getting messier and harder to listen to, so does Steiner's behaviour become quite intolerable and frustrating, making others ignore him completely. The more noise he makes, the less others are inclined to listen to him, just like the overly loud and messy melody.

The second piece of music to feature Steiner's leitmotif is "Steiner's Delusion" (see Figure 14). This piece features both the beat in the background and the melody. This version is slightly faster than "Steiner's Theme" and lighter in sound. The beat is now played by pizzicato strings instead of trombone and piano, while the melody is played by harmonica and flute that are taking turns and the occasional brass

instrument. The piece is in C minor, just like “Steiner’s Theme” but transposes to E flat minor after the melody has been heard once, with the rising melody and harmony giving this piece a feel of urgency. The piece then transposes to A major and then G major, while various woodwinds take turns in playing comedic melodic material. This music is somewhat more comedic and playful than “Steiner’s Theme”. First of all, this piece lacks the heavy trombone beat and claustrophobic feeling in the melody, which makes this version sound far lighter. There is no more bull in a China shop, but instead, this sounds like somebody is trying to sneak around unnoticed. Combined with Steiner’s mannerisms and the continuous clanking, this creates a hilarious effect. As mentioned earlier, the transposition gives the piece a slight feeling of urgency, which fits the scenes this music plays in, as well as Steiner himself. He is desperately trying to get information and growing more frustrated all the time. The comedic effect of the plucked instruments also fits the scenes perfectly as the events this piece is featured in take an amusing turn, due to Steiner’s behaviour. This piece of music plays in disc 1 during an Active Time Event abbreviated ATE, featuring Steiner, when the party is in a village called Dali, trying to find a way to the next key location in the game, Lindblum. During this event, named “Queen Brahne’s Steiner”, Steiner is trying to get information from the locals in Dali. The music is heard twice, first when he is trying to get information from a barmaid, who has no idea who he is even after he proudly introduces himself. The second time this music is heard is very soon after the first event when Steiner is trying to get information from another character, named Morris, in the village. Again, Steiner showcases his pompous persona and incompetence when Morris refuses to immediately tell him what he wants. Steiner’s stubbornness is evident as he quickly grows frustrated and begins fumbling with his words. First, he threatens Morris and when the threat does not bring the desirable reaction, he literally yells “Tell meeeeeee!”, making him seem like a child. When Morris still refuses to give him the answers he wants, he exclaims he is only trying to do what is right. Morris then questions his worldview by asking who decides what’s right and Steiner automatically reacts by telling him everybody knows right from wrong. Morris then mocks Steiner for being so green and finally reveals the information Steiner has been after. Why this scene is so important to Steiner’s characterisation is because of the way this event showcases Steiner’s persona. The moment things do not go his way, he gets all flustered, starts to spout nonsense, and stubbornly expects everybody else

to conform to his views. Morris mocking Steiner is a hint of his character growth that will happen later on in the game because he will later come to realise that all he has believed to be right is actually far from it, and starts to question his beliefs and actions.

Steiner's leitmotif can be found in only two pieces, "Steiner's Theme" which is heard twice, and "Steiner's Delusion" which is also heard twice. Both are slow, with "Steiner's Theme" being slower and heavier, and both also have a comedic effect, with "Steiner's Delusion" being the lighter and touch more amusing to listen to, as are the scenes it plays in. Both pieces describe Steiner as a character, his personality, and his actions. And more importantly, these pieces describe his characterisation during the first half of the game. Neither one of these themes is heard again after his worldview shatters upon learning that Queen Brahne intends to kill Garnet. This speaks of his development as a character, he no longer is the overly stubborn, pompous, and strongly believing only in his own views person he was at the beginning of the game. Instead, he has started to look at things from a new perspective, and with these musical themes no longer heard, the bumbling idiot of a character is no more.

The image displays a musical score for 'Steiner's Theme' in E-flat major, 4/4 time. The score is arranged for piano and cello. It consists of three systems of music. The first system shows the piano part with a melodic line in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand, featuring several triplet markings. The second system continues the piano part with more complex triplet patterns and a cello part with block chords. The third system concludes the piece with a final melodic flourish in the piano and a sustained chord in the cello.

(Figure 13. Steiner's Theme)



The image displays a musical score for 'Steiner's Theme in Steiner's Delusion'. The score is written in a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat) and a common time signature (C). It consists of multiple systems of staves. The first system includes a grand staff with two treble clefs and one bass clef. The second system also features a grand staff with two treble clefs and one bass clef. The third system includes a grand staff with two treble clefs and one bass clef. The fourth system includes a grand staff with two treble clefs and one bass clef. The score contains various musical notations, including chords, triplets, and melodic lines. The key signature is indicated by two flats in the key signature area of each staff. The time signature is common time (C). The score is presented in a clear, black-and-white format.

(Figure 14. Steiner's Theme in Steiner's Delusion)

### 3.5. Freya

Freya is a Burmecian dragon knight that is met near the beginning of the game. Like all Burmecians, she is an anthropomorphic rat, making her one of the non-humanoid playable characters in the game. Freya's appearance is similar to red mages from older Final Fantasy games in the series, she wears the traditional red jacket and hat and also light armour typical to red mages, while her skills and weaponry on the other hand come from another character class, the dragoon. She is therefore referring to two iconic character classes from previous games of the series.

Despite being a dragon knight and used to battle, Freya's personality is kind and caring, a trait that is especially evident when she is speaking to children, like Vivi and Eiko. She also possesses a sense of humour, as she is often seen joking with Zidane. She is also a very tragic character, having spent five years searching for her lost love, Sir Fratley. This tragedy is also referenced in her introduction slide: "To be forgotten is worse than death". Her introduction slide gives a hint of the events happening to her in the game.

Freya's leitmotif is called "Freya's Theme". It features a soft, slow, and somber melody and a faster beat in the background. Both the beat and the melody could be considered her musical themes, with one being Freya's Theme A and the other Freya's Theme B. As the beat in the background is featured more often than the accompanying melody, the beat will be referred to as Freya's Theme A and the melody itself Freya's Theme B. The beat in the background is played on a harpsichord and the accompanying melody on a woodwind instrument. As noted earlier when talking about Garnet's character theme, Tim Summers (2016: 24) mentioned that an arpeggio background and a flute playing the melody are considered traditionally feminine qualities in music. Freya's leitmotif, unlike Garnet's, actually fits this description perfectly. So, it could be said that Freya's leitmotif is a description of her feminine side, hiding beneath the exterior of the strong dragon knight. This piece, as well as the two other pieces featuring Freya's

leitmotif are very similar to the “Opening” of *Glassworks* by Philip Glass. The beat, or Freya’s Theme A is in fact almost identical, both in rhythm and chord progression. The piece is in D minor, which is a sad and melancholy key (Pauer 1877: 24) and very fitting to a tragic character like Freya (see Figure 15).

Freya’s leitmotif can be heard in three musical pieces. The first piece to feature her leitmotif is her character theme “Freya’s Theme”, This piece of music features both Freya’s Theme A and Freya’s Theme B. This music plays when the player visits a place called Gizamaluke’s Grotto on disc one. So, “Freya’s Theme” theme is not only her character theme but also location music. The location is only visited once when the player has to go through it to reach Burmecia, which is Freya’s home. When entering the location, the first thing the party sees is corpses of Burmecian soldiers, stationed there to protect the grotto. There the party finds one survivor who urges them to go to Burmecia, as the black mages, who attacked the grotto have advanced there. Story-wise this location is not actually that important save for the introduction of Freya’s musical themes, the party merely passes through the grotto to reach a more important location. This leads to the question as to why Freya’s musical themes were introduced here. Was it only to show her connection to the place, as the entity the place is devoted to, Gizamaluke, is revered by the Burmecians? Was it a reference to her missing love, seeing as the clues the player is given in the game hint at Gizamaluke’s grotto, and also Gizamaluke itself, being involved in unions? Or perhaps just to give the player a glimpse of the musical material linked to Burmecia, the next key location in the game?

The next time the player hears one of Freya’s musical themes is in fact in Burmecia where the piece called “Kingdom of Burmecia” plays, again making a musical theme related to Freya location music (See Figure 16). This piece of music features only the backing beat, or Freya’s Theme A, with the melody being completely absent. The piece also only features synthesized male and female voices and no instruments whatsoever. The tempo is also slower than in “Freya’s Theme”, giving this piece a very somber, almost uneasy, feeling. “Kingdom of Burmecia” is in F# minor. The music is also accompanied by the sound of rain, as it is raining in Burmecia when the

player enters the kingdom. The events in this location are tragic, as is Freya's character. The player is once again seeing a location littered with corpses of Burmecians, with black mages patrolling around the city, ready to kill all who cross their paths. This location is very important story-wise because this is the place where the player meets the real main villain, Kuja, for the first time.

The third, and last piece to feature Freya's leitmotif is a piece called "Unforgettable Silhouette" (see Figure 17). This music plays twice in the game. The first time it is heard during a flashback of Freya talking with Sir Fratley in Burmecia. The second time it is heard is when Freya is reunited with him after five years. So, in a way, this could also be considered Fratley's theme as it clearly references to him and only plays during scenes involving him. It could also be considered the theme of Freya's and Fratley's relationship. This piece of music features both the backing beat, now played on the piano instead of a harpsichord and the melody, which is still played by woodwinds. The beat in the background is slightly different this time, as instead of the steady eight-note beat present in "Freya's Theme" and "Kingdom of Burmecia", "Unforgettable Silhouette" has an eight-note-sixteenth-note-eight-note pattern in the beat instead, making this piece slightly more frantic in comparison. In comparison to "Freya's Theme" this piece puts a bigger emphasis on the beat in the background as the slow melody appears less often, making it sound more like an echo of sorts. This version of Freya's themes is slower than her character theme, but still faster than the theme of Burmecia. This piece of music is in E minor, a key used to describe grief and mournfulness (Pauer 1877:24). This is suitable for the piece, as it plays during an event filled with death and grief, not only to Freya herself, but to her companions, and her fellow Burmecians as well.

When the player first hears this piece, it can be easily missed as it does play in Burmecia, where the location music sounds very similar. The flashback that it is heard in, has Freya and Fratley talking about how he must leave Burmecia in order to become stronger. He also reassures Freya that she will be fine and how her strength will help carry her through any hardship on her way. The second time this music plays is in Cleyra, another location inhabited by Burmecians, during an attack by

black mages. Sir Fratley saves the group from an attack by three black mages and is subsequently reunited with Freya. To Freya's horror, he can't remember her. She is struck by grief, seeing the person she has been looking for, only to find out he suffers from amnesia and has no recollection of her. This event references to the quote assigned to her, "to be forgotten is worse than death", as she is now forgotten, a fate she would have never wanted for herself.

In conclusion all of Freya's themes refer either to her, her homeland of Burmecia, or her love, Fratley, and her relationship with her. It could be argued that the slow and solemn melody is an actual reference to Freya herself, while the backing beat is a reference to her homeland Burmecia, and through that both to herself, but also Fratley, which could explain the slightly altered beat in one of the pieces. The somewhat more frantic sound of "Unforgettable Silhouette" could therefore refer to both Freya's horror of not being remembered and Fratley, who is suffering from amnesia and struggles to form memories in his mind. This could also explain why the melody or Freya's Theme B is playing a smaller part in this piece, it is like an echo of a memory. Freya's sad and tragic characterisation is present in all three pieces of music. Every piece is in minor, despite the somewhat lively tempo in Freya's character theme, the somber and slow melody is still present and in "Kingdom of Burmecia" even the relatively fast-paced background beat is slowed down considerably to give way to a solemn feeling. All of her themes also play during tragic events, so it could be argued that all these themes are empathetic music (Chion 1994:8). "Freya's Theme" plays in Gizamaluke's Grotto, a location where the player finds several dead Burmecians and also finds out that the creature inhabiting the location, Gizamaluke, has gone insane and is forced to battle it, eventually killing a being the Burmecians have revered for a long time. "Kingdom of Burmecia" plays in Burmecia, where the player again is greeted with a sight of dead Burmecians with more killing being underway. "Unforgettable Silhouette" first plays during a flashback where Fratley leaves Freya and again when they are reunited and Freya discovers he can't remember her. The name of this piece refers to Fratley, a face Freya can't forget. Her hopes of a joyful reunion with her love are crushed because tragically she ends up being a forgettable face to him.

What is curious is that every theme related to Freya hints only at the tragedies in her life, while there is nothing referring to the other side of her character, the strong dragon knight who is not afraid to fight for those she wishes to protect. The question is, why? Or is this to hint that despite all the sadness in her life, her strength lies beneath the surface? An interesting point is also that none of these themes are heard after disc 2, hinting that Freya has decided to move on from the tragic events that have happened. Perhaps this hints at her growth as a character, the tragedies have happened and now she is moving onward, stronger, and also more determined to stop the evil threatening her world.

The image displays a musical score for Freya's theme, consisting of four systems of music. Each system includes a vocal line (treble clef) and a piano accompaniment (grand staff). The key signature is one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 8/8. The score begins with a four-measure rest for the vocal line, followed by a melodic entry in measure 5. The piano accompaniment features a steady eighth-note pattern in the bass and chords in the treble. Measure numbers 6, 11, and 17 are indicated at the start of their respective systems. The piece concludes with a double bar line at the end of measure 17.

(Figure 15. Freya's Theme)



(Figure 16. Freya's Theme A in Kingdom of Burmecia)

The image displays a musical score for a piece titled "Unforgettable Silhouette". The score is written in 6/8 time and consists of a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 6/8. The score is divided into systems, with measure numbers 6, 11, 17, 23, and 29 indicated at the beginning of each system. The piano accompaniment features a steady eighth-note pattern in the right hand and a simple bass line in the left hand. The vocal line is melodic and expressive, with some phrases spanning across bar lines.

(Figure 17 Unforgettable Silhouette)



### 3.6. Quina

Quina is one of the playable characters on FFIIX, and also the only character that can be recruited at any point in the game after certain events have passed. Quina is a member of the Qu tribe, a strange humanoid species with round torsos and very long tongues that they let hang out of their mouths. Quina, like all Qu, is genderless and is referred to s/he in the game, although the game mechanics treat Quina as male, e.g. Quina can not wear equipment meant exclusively for female characters. Quina plays the part of the traditional blue mage, learning skills from the monsters the player defeats during the game. Unlike the blue mages from older games, who learn the enemy skills by getting hit with the aforementioned attacks, Quina learns these skills is by eating the weakened monsters. The reason for this method of absorbing skills is ingrained in Quina's, and every Qu's character. They are gourmants, specialized in finding and eating new foods. As a result, they eat almost everything they can get their hands on, a fact that is brought up several times when having Quina as a party member.

Quina is the strange character of the party, mostly designed to be the comic relief. S/he speaks broken English, constantly acts in a way that is confusing to those around him/her, and does illogical things. Quina is extremely curious, having almost a childlike sense of wonder about everything in the world, e.g. when visiting a new place, s/he is quick to find local wildlife to taste. Quina is not bothered by setbacks, finds joy in everything, and treats the journey s/he takes a part in as a learning opportunity. These qualities actually make Quina a fairly likeable character, the excitement and happiness s/he experiences bring joy to the darker moments of the game. The first time Quina is met is actually at the beginning of the game when the player is controlling Steiner who is looking for princess Garnet. Quina is in the kitchen of Alexandria castle, overseeing the preparation of the foods for the banquet. At this point, the player has no idea who this character is, so Quina's presence tends to go unnoticed by most. The next time Quina is met is in Lindblum, during the Festival of the Hunt. Quina takes part in the contest but again is not introduced properly. It is only after the party leaves Lindblum, that the opportunity to find out

who Quina really is comes forth. At this point of the game, the player has the opportunity to visit a place called Qu's Marsh that is near Lindblum on the way to Burmecia. If not recruited at this point, Quina will be then recruited at any point when the player visits any of the four Qu's Marshes around the world.

Quina's leitmotif is called "Quina's Theme" (see Figure 18). It is a fast-paced piece with a steady tribal-sounding drum beat in the background. The piece is heavily synthesized, featuring a hectic-sounding backing melody and synthesized vocals playing the main melodic theme. The interesting part is, that the player is not introduced to this piece of music when properly meeting Quina for the first time. This particular piece only plays when playing a frog catching game while visiting a Qu's Marsh. When entering one of these locations, Quina steps up and asks if s/he can catch some frogs. If told yes, the mini-game will then begin. The other times this theme plays is later in the game, when Quina, who has been separated from the rest of the party, washes up in Lindblum and is referred to as "a strange thing" by the city guards who find him/her. When Quina wakes up, the aforementioned guards dash away in fear. This leads to Quina simply proclaiming how hungry s/he is, referring to Quina's favourite activity, eating. This music plays again very soon when the aforementioned event continues. This time Quina meets a street vendor selling pickles and promptly eats one without paying for it. This leads to Zidane paying the vendor, as Quina simply does not understand what s/he did wrong. The last time this theme is heard is during an optional side quest. This scene takes place in Quan's Dwelling and once again refers to Quina's love for food. S/he is the sole party member to see the entire cave filled with food while nobody else can. This is soon revealed to be the result of Quina's travels and development as a character. Because Quina has experienced so much, s/he can create realistic illusions using his/her imagination. So, in addition to the frog catching game, this music plays in comical and almost awkward situations involving Quina, as s/he always seems to end up in strange situations, requiring to be saved by the others. The strangeness of the music fits these situations Quina keeps on ending up in, always the weird one, always ending up in awkward situations without even realising it.

The first time the player is presented musical material from “Quina’s Theme” is actually when first visiting a location called Qu’s Marsh. The piece playing in the background when visiting one of the locations is “Qu’s Marsh” (see Figure 19). Depending on the decisions the player makes, this could be near the beginning of the game, or far later on. This music is also the theme the player is presented to when meeting Quina properly for the first time. This theme is a lot slower than “Quina’s Theme”, but the instrumentation is fairly similar. The heavy beat in the background is still present, although now playing the same rhythm as the melody. The synthesized vocals are still playing the melody, but this time the now slowed-down synthesizer melody that was in the background in “Quina’s Theme” takes turns with the vocal melody, creating a duet of sorts. This theme plays every time the player visits one of the Qu’s Marshes, which could be seen as a hint, that it is the theme for the Qu in general, not only Quina, or it could be hinting at Quina’s connection to the tribe, as s/he is one of them. The calmer tempo of this piece could be a reference to the other two Qu introduced in the game, Quale and Quan, who is already dead by the time the game is taking place. The other two Qu are calmer than Quina, not so quick to recklessly dive into adventures or act without thinking. That is why this piece could be calmer than “Quina’s Theme”, as it ties Quina to the other Qu by using theme material from his/her character theme, while at the same time having a calmer tempo.

The third piece of music using material from Quina’s leitmotif is called “Before the Altar” (see Figure 20). This piece of music is by far the slowest version to feature musical material linked to Quina. This time, the synthesized sounds are gone, replaced by some very Japanese sounds, including kakegoe, which are shouts used in traditional Japanese music and kabuki, and various traditional drums, including taiko, ôtsuzumi, and kotsuzumi, which are all used in traditional Noh and kabuki performances. In addition to these characteristics, there is also a high-pitched pedal point playing through the piece. The melody is played at a lower pitch than in the other two pieces featuring Quina’s musical material. This style of music is very different from the other pieces featured in the game, giving it a sense of otherness. It sounds foreign, again fitting the character of Quina, as s/he is always the odd one out in the party. Overall, the style of this piece of music makes it sound like it belongs in

a traditional kabuki performance. This piece plays during an event in the village of Conde Petie, a place inhabited by dwarves on outer continent. To get to Iifa Tree, a key location in the game, the party must get access to a mountain path. The problem is that the dwarves will not let people who are not married pass through the path. This problem is solved by Zidane and Garnet going through the wedding ceremony, which causes some amusing scenes, e.g. Zidane thinking he is “such a stud” and attempting to kiss Garnet and ending up falling flat on his face when Garnet calmly walks away from him. As to why Quina’s leitmotif is used in a scene like this, aside from the strangeness of the situation itself, is because there is an optional scene explaining the connection. During an optional ATE, the player is given the choice of marrying Vivi and Quina, so they too can pass through the mountain path. This scene is optional, as these two can join Zidane and Garnet through other means too. This scene, which is quite comical in an awkward fashion, could be seen as a play on Quina’s dubious gender. It is stated in the game, that the ceremony is between a man and a woman, and when Vivi and Quina get married, it is hinted that the dwarves consider him/her a woman.

Quina’s leitmotif is found in three pieces, “Quina’s Theme”, “Qu’s Marsh”, and “Before the Altar”. The first piece, “Quina’s Theme” is the fastest, most hectic, and also the most overwhelming, describing Quina’s confused and curious personality, and also his/her way of acting before thinking. The piece melts together the fast beat in the background, synthesized and fast backing melody, and the main melody. The result is slightly chaotic, leaving the player confused, much like Quina him/herself. The second piece, “Qu’s Marsh” is clearly slower, and the two melodies have been separated so that they almost sound like a duet. This piece could be seen as the theme of not only Quina, but also the other Qu. This way one of the melodies, probably the main melody, would represent Quina, while the synthesized melody would represent the Qu. The third piece, “Before the Altar” is the slowest of the three variants. This time the style is clearly different from the other two, as the synthesized sounds of the first two variants are replaced by various traditional Japanese instruments. This time only the main melody and the backing beat are present, while the melody that was playing in the background in the previous two pieces is missing. This strengthens the

argument, that this melody is indeed used to describe Quina, as this plays in an event involving him/her while the other Qu are in no way connected to it.

The image displays a musical score for 'Quina's Theme' in 3/4 time. The score is arranged in three systems, each containing three staves: a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) and a bassoon staff (bass clef). The piano part is characterized by a steady eighth-note accompaniment in the bass line. The bassoon part features a melodic line with eighth-note patterns and occasional sixteenth-note runs. The score includes repeat signs and a double bar line with repeat dots, indicating a first ending. The key signature is one flat (B-flat major or D minor), and the time signature is 3/4.

(Figure 18. Quina's Theme)

The musical score for "Qu's Marsh" is presented in four systems. Each system consists of three staves: a single treble staff for the vocal line, a grand staff (treble and bass) for piano accompaniment, and a separate bass staff for a bass line. The key signature is B-flat major (two flats), and the time signature is common time (C). The music features a steady bass line of eighth notes, a vocal melody with various rhythmic values, and piano accompaniment with chords and melodic lines. The piece concludes with a double bar line.

(Figure 19. Qu's Marsh)

The image displays a musical score for a piece titled "Before the Altar". The score is arranged in three systems, each consisting of three staves. The top staff of each system is in the treble clef, and the two bottom staves are in the bass clef. The key signature is B-flat major (two flats), and the time signature is common time (C). The music features a melodic line in the treble clef, often with long, sweeping phrases, and a bass line in the bass clef with a steady, rhythmic accompaniment. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, beams, and slurs, indicating a complex and expressive composition.

(Figure 20. Before the Altar)



### 3.7. Eiko

Eiko is one of the last characters to join the party. She is a young girl that is first met near the end of disc 2. Eiko, like Garnet, is a summoner. Together they are the last two surviving summoners left, with the rest having been exterminated several years before the start of the game. Unlike Garnet, Eiko has a horn in the middle of her forehead, a nod to the traditional summoner character class from older Final Fantasy titles where summoners wore headbands with horns attached to them. Again, like Garnet, Eiko fills the roles of both a traditional summoner, but also that of a white mage. While skill-wise Garnet is more of a summoner and less of a white mage, the roles are reversed in Eiko's case, as she is definitely more of a white mage than a summoner.

Eiko's personality is one of the loudest and most energetic among the playable characters in the game, she is also strongly opinionated, sometimes even to the point of being rude towards others, most notably Vivi. She is clingy especially towards Zidane, seeing Garnet as her rival. This behaviour is later revealed to be the result of her being afraid to be left alone. As a matter of fact, her loneliness is also present in the quote assigned to her "I don't wanna be alone anymore...". When she is first met, she is caught stealing and trying to escape her pursuers.

Eiko's leitmotif is called "Eiko's Theme" and it is a curious case, as it shares the chord progression with Garnet's Theme A, so harmony-wise this theme is very similar to the first half of 'Garnet's Theme'. So, it could be argued that this piece is in fact another variant of Garnet's leitmotif. The thing setting this piece apart from other pieces featuring Garnet's leitmotif is the fact that instead of a melodic leitmotif being used, this piece features a harmonic leitmotif instead. This piece is first heard on disc two when the player meets Eiko for the first time. The theme can also be heard during various scenes involving Eiko. Usually, these instances are quite comedic in tone, involving her behaving in a childish or otherwise foolish fashion, or getting in trouble. "Eiko's Theme" is in G major and it is a tiny bit faster than "Garnet's

Theme”. It features plucked instruments, woodwinds, and percussions. The time signature seems to be alla breve, but due to the rhythmic elements ends up sounding far more like 6/8. The rhythm is lively and gives energy to the otherwise mellow piece (see Figure 21).

This liveliness in the music fits Eiko’s persona well. She is energetic, never afraid to speak her mind. Although the piece is indeed cheerful, there is a touch of mellowness due to this piece’s chord progression being derived from the soft and mellow “Garnet’s Theme”. The player is reminded of a softer piece when this music is heard, an effect that is made more prominent when the music is played by a very light-sounding guitar, with no deeper or heavier sounds being present. This fits Eiko’s characterisation as well because, despite her outwardly cheerful, opinionated, and strong persona, she is deeply lonely and scared. Having been living in an abandoned summoner village almost her entire life, she wants nothing more than to have company and also to see the world.

“Eiko’s Theme” is important not only to Eiko’s characterisation, but Garnet’s as well. As mentioned earlier, they are both summoners, but due to events in the past, Eiko is aware of her heritage, while Garnet is not. Nevertheless, they are both from the same village and of the same species, although this is not evident at first. These two characters are connected, which becomes more evident as the game progresses further. This is why it is suitable that they also share material from their respective musical themes. It could be said that this piece of music is also the first hint the player gets about Garnet’s true identity and past, because of the shared musical material. Due to the shared element being the chord progression, it can be easily missed if not paying close attention. The connection between Garnet and Eiko and also Eiko’s desire of not being alone anymore come together in her musical theme, because in the end, she was never alone, to begin with, as there was another surviving summoner all the time.

The image displays a musical score for "Eiko's Theme" in G major (one sharp) and 3/4 time. The score is arranged in five systems, each containing a piano (p) part and a guitar (g) part. The piano part is written in a treble clef, and the guitar part is in a bass clef. The key signature is G major, and the time signature is common time (C). The score begins with a piano introduction consisting of three measures of whole rests. The main melody for the piano part is characterized by eighth-note triplets, often beamed together with slurs. The guitar part provides a steady accompaniment with quarter notes and chords. The first system shows the piano part starting with a triplet of eighth notes (G4, A4, B4) and the guitar part with a quarter note G2. The second system continues the melodic development with similar triplet patterns. The third system features a double bar line, followed by a guitar chord progression (G2, B2, D3) and a piano triplet. The fourth system includes a key signature change to G minor (two sharps) and a common time signature change (C), with the piano part continuing its triplet-based melody. The fifth system concludes the piece with a final piano triplet and a guitar chord.

(Figure 21. Eiko's Theme)

### 3.8. Amaranth

Amarant is the last playable character to join the party. He is a large man with red hair and blue skin. Despite his appearance, his species is still listed as human. Skill-wise, Amaranth fills the role of the classic monk from older Final Fantasy games, wielding claws and wearing light armour. His special ability throw also makes him fill the role of the older character class ninja. So, like Garnet, Eiko, and Steiner, he also represents more than one class.

Amarant is by far the most mysterious of the playable characters. His personality is not explored as much as those of the other characters, and he does not seem involved in the events happening around him. His strongest personality trait is his sense of honour, he does not want to be involved with dishonourable people, he proves this trait by turning on his former partner whom he deems to be without honour after her actions. He is also proud, bent on proving his way of living and doing things is right. This is a characteristic he shares somewhat with Steiner. Another characteristic these two characters have in common is a certain sense of naivety, neither one of them seems to be able to comprehend other characters, mostly Zidane, behaving differently than they expect. Amaranth is enigmatic, very rarely offering glimpses of his persona, or opening up to others, thinking he can handle things on his own, without help from anybody else.

Amarant's leitmotif is called "Amarant's Theme". The piece is very sparsely instrumented, slow, and almost futuristic in its soundscape. It is played on the synthesizer, features a steady beat and a hi-hat drum in the background. The melody is very simple, most of the time it only involves long notes with triplets playing small melodic parts here and there. The style of this piece makes it sound mysterious, almost unreachable (see Figure 22). This piece of music is heard a couple of times during scenes involving Amaranth. It is not heard when he is first met, however. He is first seen briefly during a scene on disc 2. During this scene, Queen Brahne orders him and Lani, a bounty hunter, to find Garnet and kill Vivi. At this point, he is

introduced only as the red-headed man and it is made known to the player that he has some history with Zidane and apparently holds a grudge against him. The next time he is seen is later on disc 2, this time the player is given the first glimpses of his personality and also hears his leitmotif for the first time. During this scene, he turns on his now former partner Lani away and calls her a hostage-taking scumbag after she holds Eiko hostage in order to get Garnet. He refuses to work with people he considers having no honour and after forcing Lani to flee he demands Zidane fight him. After the battle, he is confused by losing and then by Zidane not killing him. He does not understand why Zidane is willing to let him go, thinking that he is being tricked. He soon flees, only to return to the party the following day. Again, the player is presented his leitmotif as he walks to the scene. The first thing Amaranth states is the victors live and the defeated die, they are the rules. This again hints at his stubbornness, he believes his way is right and cannot understand someone not obeying those same rules, so once again he is confused by Zidane's actions and him behaving the way he does. This is where his proud personality also shines through when he states he's rather die a warrior than live as a beggar. He is then asked to join the party, which he accepts and vows to understand the reasons behind Zidane's actions. The third and last time this music is heard is on disc 3 when Amaranth meets Freya for the first time. Once again, the music starts to play when he enters the scene. He immediately aggravates Freya to the point she almost engages in a battle with him.

Amaranth is, along with Eiko, the only character whose theme can be found in only one piece of music, his character theme. In a way, this actually fits his enigmatic persona, his music is heard rarely, only in a handful of scenes, all of which describe how he sees the world, how he acts, and how he feels about others. The music is heavily synthesized, only featuring synthesizers and a hi-hat drum. The texture of the piece is also very scarce, almost barren. The constant slow beat and tiny fragments of a melody are everything the player is given, making it feel like there might be more beneath the surface, but nothing else ever comes up. This is a perfect description of Amaranth as a character, he is a complete mystery, only showing very slight hints of how he feels, very rarely opening up to anyone. Both with the character theme and

the character himself, the player is left with questions, what more is there to this character and piece of music?

The image displays a musical score for a piece titled "Amarant's Theme". The score is written for piano and consists of four systems of music. Each system contains a grand staff with a treble clef on the upper staff and a bass clef on the lower staff. The time signature is common time (C). The bass line is characterized by a constant, rhythmic triplet pattern of eighth notes. The treble line features a variety of chords, including triads and dyads, and includes several triplet figures. The piece concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots.

(Figure 22. Amarant's Theme)

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this study was to find out how characterisation is done using leitmotifs, how the characters are described through musical means, how are they tied to certain locations, events, or other characters through their respective themes. The number of pieces of music in this study is 20, with the character themes only making up eight pieces all in all, while 12 are pieces featuring material from the playable characters' leitmotifs. The pieces can be split into different types depending on where and on which types of situations they play in. The types of pieces include character themes themselves, which are used to introduce the characters or describe them. Event music is something that plays during pivotal moments in the game, for example, events when something story-wise important happens or when there is a moment of development for the character whose leitmotif is heard. Location music is something that plays in the background of a specific location. There are moments, when the character theme itself acts as location music in addition to being a character theme, for example, "Vivi's Theme" being the location music for the city of Alexandria at the beginning of the game, or "Freya's Theme" being the location music for Gizamaluke's Grotto.

One of the discoveries in this study was that while a couple of characters, Eiko and Amarant, have their leitmotif featured in only their own character theme, there are other characters that have their leitmotifs appear in several pieces that can be heard many times during the course of the game. The most prominent example of this is Garnet, whose leitmotif is heard the most out of all characters. Her importance to the story is highlighted by the fact, that her leitmotif is heard not only in the overworld theme, which is linked directly to one of a classic RPG's functions, traveling using an overworld map, but also the main theme of the game itself, "Melodies of Life".

The results reveal that leitmotifs play an important role in FFIIX. Not only do they give the player information on each character's personality, but also speak of character development and relationships between characters, events, and places.

Noticing these relationships and character development is usually ignored by players, especially if the player does not have the knowledge of each individual character's leitmotif. When the leitmotifs are known and their different variations found and examined, they play a part of their own in storytelling and characterisation. Without these themes, understanding how a character is tied to a place or an event or realizing how the changes in the music reflect the inner feelings or development of the characters would be far more difficult to understand, or could go completely unnoticed. Also, the nuances of certain character themes not appearing after certain events in the game could be easily ignored, thus resulting in not understanding how even the lack of a certain character theme might tell the story or represent character development.

While the knowledge of how leitmotifs are used in characterisation and storytelling in FFIIX, the understanding of how the rest of those 90 pieces of music on the original soundtrack, not to mention the 40 additional ones, that are not featured in this study also describe the events and characters in the game and how they tell the story in their own way. Including the whole soundtrack would have been impossible due to the sheer amount of music in it, but the role of the pieces that are not analysed here would be interesting to study further.

What could be an interesting step after this, is the comparison of leitmotifs, their role in characterisation and storytelling in other *Final Fantasy* games, especially older ones. The most interesting option would be to compare the usage of leitmotifs in all three PlayStation era *Final Fantasy* titles, from VII to IX, just to see how games made for the same console compare to each other.



## Research material

Game: *Final Fantasy IX*. Squaresoft (2000)

Soundtrack: Uematsu, Nobuo (2000) *Final Fantasy IX: Original Soundtrack*. DigiCube SSCX-10043~6.

Soundtrack: Uematsu, Nobuo (2000) *Final Fantasy IX: Original Soundtrack*.

<<https://open.spotify.com/album/61z0CTrR8zhxdyOoieyMJi>> (accessed 10.4.2021)

Music notation (Figures 1-22) transcribed by the author and based on the soundtrack.

## References

Barton, Matt 2007. "The History of Computer Role-Playing Games Part III: The Platinum and Modern Ages (1994-2004)"

<[https://www.gamasutra.com/view/feature/1571/the\\_history\\_of\\_computer\\_.php](https://www.gamasutra.com/view/feature/1571/the_history_of_computer_.php)> (accessed 2.3.2021).

Chion, Michel 1994. *Audio-Vision: Sound on Screen*. Translated by Claudia Gorbman. New York: Columbia University Press.

Classic FM Hall of Fame 2012.

<<https://web.archive.org/web/20141028101821/http://halloffame2012.classicfm.co.uk/individual/?position=16>> (accessed 1.4.2021)

Collins, Karen 2008. *Game Sound: An Introduction to the History, Theory, and Practice of Video Game Music and Sound Design*. Cambridge: Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Deterding, S. and Zagal, José P 2018. *Role-Playing Game Studies: Transmedia Foundations*. New York: Routledge

Gorbman, Claudia. 1980. Narrative film music. *Yale French Studies*, 183-203.

- Kennedy, Michael 1987. *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Music*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Kämpfe, J., Renkewitz, F. & Sedlmeier, P. 2011. The impact of background music on adult listeners: A meta-analysis. *Psychology of Music* p11 39(4) 424-448.
- Hamilton, Audrey (June 2014) *Speaking of Psychology: Music and your health*. <<https://www.apa.org/research/action/speaking-of-psychology/music-health>> (accessed 14.3.2021)
- McMahan, Allison 2003. Immersion, engagement and presence. *The video game theory reader*, 67-86.
- Metacritic. “Final Fantasy IX reviews” <<https://www.metacritic.com/game/playstation/final-fantasy-ix>> (accessed 12.4.2021)
- Pauer, Ernst 1877. *The Elements of the Beautiful in Music*. London: Novello & Co. Ltd.
- Phillips, Winifred 2014. *A Composer’s Guide to Game Music*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Prendergast, Roy M. 1992. *Film music: A neglected art: a Critical Study of Music in Films*. New York: W. W. Norton.
- Price, Curtis 1984. *Henry Purcell and the London Stage*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Sadie, Stanley ed. 1992. *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera*. London: Macmillan Press Limited.
- Sakaguchi, Hironobu (interview 2000) interviewed by Marc Nix. *Interview with Hironobu Sakaguchi*. (April 2000) <<https://www.ign.com/articles/2000/04/06/interview-with-hironobu-sakaguchi>> (accessed 12.4.2021)
- Steblin, Rita 1983. *A history of key characteristics in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries*. UMI Research Press.
- Summers, Tim 2016. *Understanding Video Game Music*. Cambridge: Cambridge

University Press.

"The Concerts" 2007 VGMConcerts.com.

<<https://web.archive.org/web/20070220214408/http://www.vgmconcerts.com/main.php?section=about&lang=english>> (accessed 2.4.2021)

Uematsu, Nobuo (interview 2006) interviewed by John Olin. *Nobuo Uematsu Interview*. (29.5.2006)

<[https://web.archive.org/web/20080516011105/http://xboxevolved.empire.com/article/Blue\\_Dragon/3449.html](https://web.archive.org/web/20080516011105/http://xboxevolved.empire.com/article/Blue_Dragon/3449.html)> (accessed 5.4.2021)