

Musical Mayhem

Description

It is rare in your life that you can point to a specific moment, place or item that first introduced you to a topic. More often than not, it results in a vague “I read it in a book” or “from a friend” or something along those lines. But every now and then, there is a singular moment that sticks out in your mind like a Post-It in a textbook “one precise moment that you can point to and say with absolute certainty that it introduced you to a wider world.

For me, it was the wider world of music. And what introduced me was what some may call an unusual medium “video games.

I was never big into music other than what my parents would listen to on the radio whenever we went for a drive, and classical music was always fallen asleep to in the back of the car. I appreciated music, the beat, etc. But I never gave it much mind, except for musical theatre (which long-time readers know that I acted in when I was a child and still love).

Case-in-point: My favourite song when I was a kid?

“La Bamba” by Ritchie Valens!

But that all changed on November 21, 1998 when I was in Grade 9.

A Legend was Born

In 1998, I had just started high school and my mind was slowly being expanded to the wider world around me. And, as luck would have it, two years earlier, my brother and I had bought a Nintendo 64 gaming system and were enjoying it. And in November 1998, what may people “myself included” believe the seminal game of that system (and all-time) released. The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time.

I had never really played any other Legend of Zelda games prior to this one, but the hype and advance reviews in magazines was extremely positive. So, my brother and I reserved the game and got our mom to pick it up while we were in school, so that we could play it that night. And now, over 18 years later, it is still my favourite video game ever.

But what made it so special?

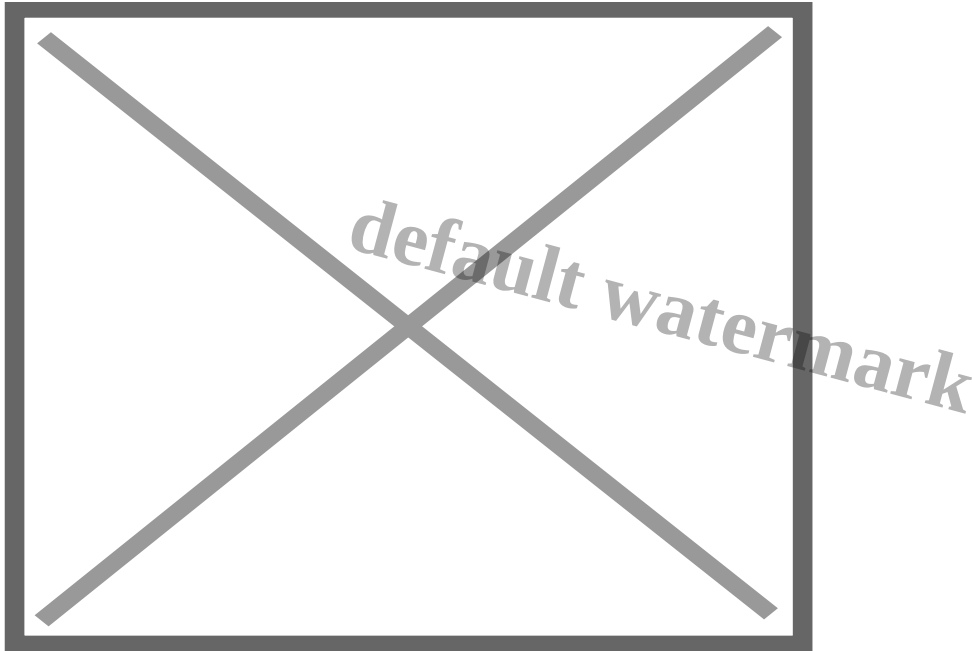
Well, the story was simple but engaging: A forest boy engages on a quest to right some wrongs, and meets a princess who was kidnapped. This boy (Link) rushes to rescue the princess (Zelda) from the bad guy (Ganon), but ends up traveling seven years into the future so that he is strong enough to defeat him.

The graphics were amazing and the characters were memorable (who can forget the movement of King Zora or the dance of the King goron, Darunia, when you play him a certain song?

The Music Makes the Man

I could talk about the gameplay mechanics, the different levels (such as the exceedingly complex water temple), the fun plot twists, or why you simply *must* get the Biggorr Sword as soon as you can, but the real **hook** — pun intended for those who know the game — was the music.

In the game, music plays an extremely important part. Near the beginning of the game, you are given an ocarina by Princess Zelda, which is a handheld wind flute. And throughout the game, probably other than your sword and shield, is your most used item.



Music within this game allows you to win others trust, gain entrance to new areas, change the game world, teleport around the map, and even change time. And all the music is different, and all modeled after different musical styles.

Do you know what a Minuet is? Or how about a Bolero? A Nocturne? A Requiem?

All of these are songs within the game and are works of art. Just sit back, relax, and listen to the audio brilliance.

I would find myself humming the Bolero of Fire in class, or walking home from school and trying to remember all the songs for when I got home. I still remember those songs to this day, and for some, even the inputs on the controller you had to use to play them.

And in so doing, this video game not only brought me hours and hours on enjoyment, but served as an introduction to the world of music, and bolstered my appreciation of classical and international compositions. And what more could you ask?

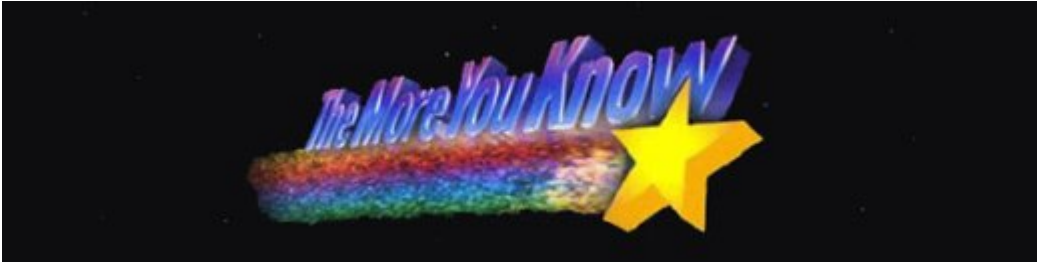
Oh, and in case you were wondering, according to the Oxford Dictionary:

Minuet – A slow, stately ballroom dance for two in triple time, popular especially in the 18th century.

Bolero – A slow, stately ballroom dance for two in triple time, popular especially in the 18th century.

Nocturne – A short composition of a romantic or dreamy character suggestive of night, typically for piano.

Requiem – A Mass for the repose of the souls of the dead.



Category

1. Uncategorized

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