

# EDITORIAL

I've been thinking about this and the last time I slept well was probably early 2014. What I mean by sleeping well is a prolonged period of time where one sticks to their usual routine, does things that are expected of them, and maintains a level of productivity that is acceptable to themselves. So, early 2014 was the last time I didn't have a board exam looming, a commute that had to take traffic into account, or a job/extra curricular activity that demanded extra attention. Not to mention, that was a time when the bulk of my socialising didn't occur on social media. Literally all of those things have changed since then, and as a result I have to make do with 4-5 hours of sleep on weekdays. I end up sleeping 10-12 hours on weekends, of course, but I'm certain that this cycle isn't sustainable. Yet, that's how most people I know handle their sleep so I guess this is how it's going to be for the foreseeable future. Unless...

- Azmin Azran, Sub-editor, SHOUT



## PLAYWATCH

### GAME MUSIC REVIEW

# The Magic of Adaptive Music in Video Games



#### ARAF MOMEN AKA

Background music has long been a staple in video games. From the shorter and more cheerful version of Korobeiniki being played in the classic *Tetris*, to the sombre boss music in games like *Dark Souls*—appropriate music gives the game an emotion that the player should be feeling. Keep in mind, we are writing about games that are not primarily music-based.

Often, the game music reflects to bring an emotion to either where the player is, or what the player is doing. Games like *Dark Souls* and *Hollow Knight* usually indicate where the player is, while exciting and high-octane games like *Doom* (2016), *Deus Ex*, etc. usually reflect what you are doing.

Nowadays, layering of music into multiple chunks of every track within the game gives a feeling of progression that have us, the players of video games, begging for more. To give a fine example for this, look into *Doom* (2016)'s single-player campaign and its tracks.

When you're exploring the map for secrets, or just looking around without getting into fights, slow and ominous music continues to keep playing the entire time. When you get into a fight, the music starts with the least exciting layer of the music. The more spawned demons you kill and the closer you get to clearing a particular spot (while more powerful demons spawn), the music crescendos

into the more exciting layers of the designated track.

Not only that, you will also notice that the music comes into a dramatic pause when you glory kill a demon, or chainsaw it. The music packs a punch for the player as you continue ripping and tearing through hordes of enemies. And Mick Gordon certainly knew the intensity he would have to deliver the punch to the players.

The music in the game *World of Tanks* is an example that adapts by reflecting on where you are, despite being a high-octane game. Andrius Klimka and his ensemble have made a brilliant collection of tracks for every map in the game—one for the intro of the map, and another for the in-battle music of that very map. And it pays well. The tracks blend really nicely with the atmosphere in each of the map; the music feels native to the map it belongs to. Also, it is understood that the in-battle music really sets the tension you would want in the last few moments of every match you play.

Music sets moods for players in the easiest and effective ways possible, and adaptive music sways the player the most. Ignore it, the people will ignore you. Embrace it, and the people will love you.

*Aka is a tiny bleep on the world's radar, and he finds peace in knowing it. Ruin his peace by poking him at akaaraf@hotmail.com*