

Sci-Fi and Exploration, *Metroid Prime 2* Has It All
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If there was ever a video game that I would recommend to anybody interested in sci-fi, space or exploration, without a single doubt and no hesitation, I would direct that person to the game I played as a child, called *Metroid Prime 2: Echoes*.

Metroid Prime 2: Echoes is a game where you play as the relentless bounty hunter, Samus Aran, as she tries to save the dying planet of Aether and its inhabitants. The game was released on the Nintendo GameCube on November 15, 2004, and re-released on the Wii on August 24, 2009, yet it is comparable to games of today's generation. This is helped by the fact that the game is not only a First-Person Shooter (FPS) but of an Action/Adventure genre cleverly named Metroidvania. Some of the reasons I would recommend *MP2* would be because of its beautiful soundtrack, brilliant level design and really well told story.

The story of *MP2* details the ongoing war between two races and a standoff between longtime enemies as the bounty hunter, Samus Aran, is being sent in as well. On one side, the inhabitants of Aether, the Luminoth, are at war with a parasite-like species called the Ing. The story in the game, unlike many others, is not put directly into the face of the player to see. Instead the game makes the player seek this information out via a mechanic called the Scan Visor. This part of the game is completely optional, which is why it's so ingenious. It makes the player seek out and desire this information.

MP2 is a beautifully designed game that helps keep the player engaged and wanting more at every corner of the world. I will be talking about one of the areas in particular, named Torvus Bog. Moving forward with detail in the level design, Torvus Bog is one that comes to mind immediately when talking about the game. To foster the imagination, the area is a marsh jungle with industrial-like machines within. Though as peaceful as it may seem as you take your first steps within Torvus Bog you are immediately reminded how hostile the planet itself is.

The game does a beautiful job of immersing the player and making you know that the grounds you're walking on is a result of an ongoing war, which is demonstrated by the corpses

that lay in every room. The game itself is also complimented with a soundtrack that sounds beautiful, and adds wonderfully to the level design in each area.

The soundtrack that is found within *MP2* is something beyond words that can't be found in any other game. Each song was beautifully tailored to each area's diverse biome, with places like Torvus Bog. In Torvus Bog, as soon as you walk into the first main area, as the entrance cutscene plays, so does the music. The first instrument you hear is a synthesizer slowly ascending a scale, quickly followed by the rest of the instruments. It is such a surreal and ethereal experience when you first get to this place. The instruments and the tempo all compliment each other so beautifully. The music composition only make up a small part of why the music in this game not only holds up to today's standards, yet exceeds them and does so much more.

Understandably, this game isn't as accessible because it's stuck on three different game consoles that no longer have support. Thankfully, it has been said that this trilogy of games is going to be remastered, and the first one has been, meaning that sometime soon it'll be easier to access this game.