

Nanaka lore introduction and Phantom of the Opera references in costume

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As a huge Phantom of the Opera fan who also wrote [lore for another reference in another game](#) before, I am obligated to write lore for Project Neural Cloud's reference too, which manifests in Nanaka's costume. And her backstory has some parallels to Phantom of the Opera too.

Nanaka may be a typical sparkly idol on the outside, but the reality is that she is far from that.

Introduction to Nanaka lore

I've translated some of Nanaka's lore from Chinese to English so that you can know her better before I introduce the musical references.



Nanaka's Weibo introduction

//:_Nanaka

There is a rumour in the popular idol group “NotREAL?”: Every morning at 4am, there are strange sounds in the practice room. The unbelieving manager opened the door curiously.

He saw Nanaka dancing on the red carpet, with a face that looked a little tired.

Strange sounds at 4am already have creepy vibes. Almost sounds like some kind of ghostly apparition. Sure, an idol's life is tough, but why mention it like this?

Nanaka's files and Story 5 extract:

Nanaka's original custom-made body was damaged during her idol debut. Her neursoul was uploaded to a commercial body. She did her debut in there and she has been in there since then. She keeps asking herself whether her fans like her current appearance, which isn't her original body, or who she really is on the inside.

Due to this situation, she has a lot of doubts and insecurities about herself and her popularity as an idol. But she will still do her best anyway.

Story 5 extract:

I often 'dream' of a 'Nanaka' who looks identical to myself standing on stage to welcome everyone's flowers and applause. I can only cower in the shadows, unable to make a sound. Do they like the ordinary shell, or the neursoul called 'Nanaka' in its heart?

I was always very afraid... So, I can only let everyone's eyes gather on me, and can only always work hard. I want to throw my appearance aside and let everyone see into my inner heart. This is one of the reasons for joining Project Neural Cloud.

...Just that I never thought that this kind of thing would happen. After so long, maybe I might be replaced by a doll with the same shell? Or, maybe the name of 'Nanaka' will be swallowed by the tides of time.

This introduces the idea of two Nanakas: The neursoul inside and the foreign body on the outside. The real and the fake one. And confirms the fact that outside the pretty and sparkly facade, Nanaka is actually very sad inside.

Costume description:

Nanaka <Phantom of Music>

"If I put love into my song, can it stay with my singing for a long time? Then, please embrace me, angel of music!"

Besides the title of Phantom of Music (likely a rewrite of Angel of Music), the costume description has 'Then, please embrace me, angel of music!' [Angel of Music](#) is one of the tracks in Phantom of the Opera. The other references will be introduced later.



pORAFree, Nanaka's artist (who also drew Persicaria, Gin, Sol and many other dolls) also drew this art on her Weibo: <https://weibo.com/5177056934/KFjK19JEL>



If you look closely, Substitute is written on the right. As if the new body is a replacement for the original Nanaka. It has similar energy to this still from the Phantom of the Opera musical.



In conclusion, Nanaka's lore is rather dark with something like an identity crisis. Furthermore, the plot of a singer who is controlled is very much the plot of Phantom of the Opera, that I will elaborate in the next section.

Introduction to Phantom of the Opera



The Phantom of the Opera is a musical with music by Andrew Lloyd Webber (who co-wrote the libretto alongside Richard Stilgoe) and lyrics by Charles Hart. It is based on the 1910 eponymous French novel by Gaston Leroux.

The plot revolves around a beautiful soprano, Christine Daaé, who becomes the obsession of a mysterious, masked musical genius living in the subterranean labyrinth beneath the Paris Opéra House.

The musical opened in London's West End in 1986 and on Broadway in 1988. It won the 1986 Olivier Award and the 1988 Tony Award for Best Musical, and Michael Crawford (in the title role) won the Olivier and Tony Awards for Best Actor in a Musical. It is currently the longest running show in Broadway history, and celebrated its 10,000th Broadway performance on 11 February 2012, the first production ever to do so.

Anyway, it's like the most popular musical ever, so of course MICA would make a reference to it.

I highly recommend the musical, or otherwise the movie is a decent adaptation.

Phantom of the Opera references

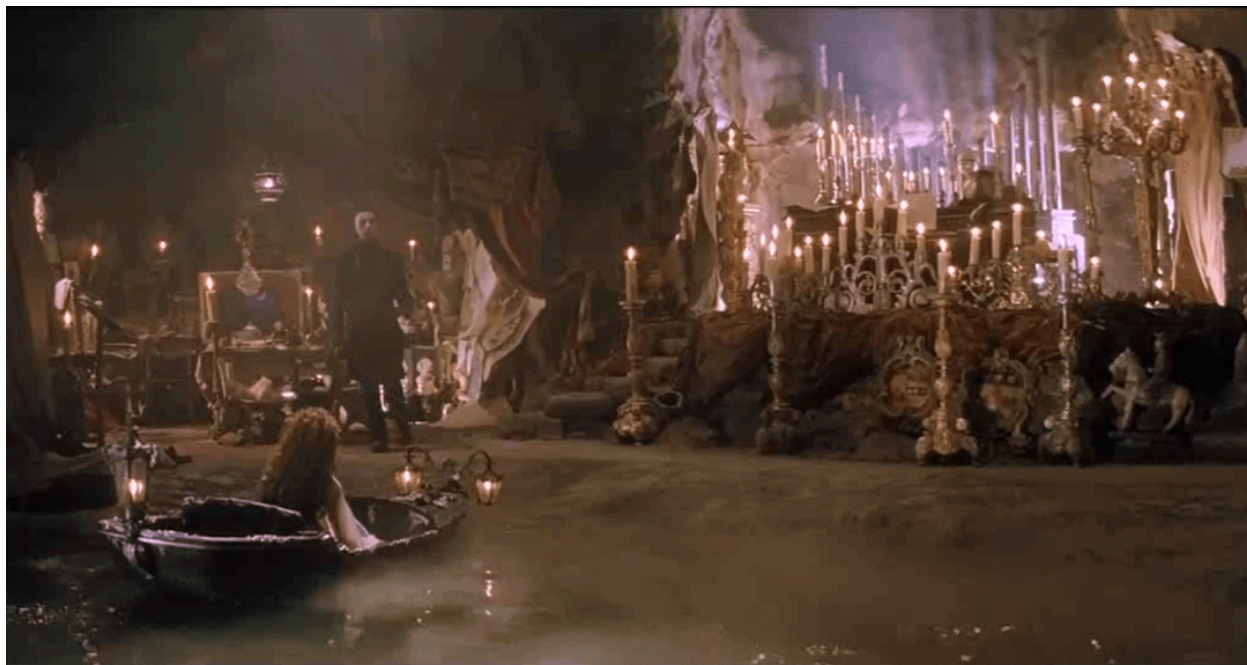
Phantom figure behind Nanaka



The hat and the cloak looks just like Phantom from Phantom of the Opera

Underground lair





The underground lair is where the Phantom resides. The background of the costume resembles the Phantom's lair

Boat





In Phantom of the Opera, the Phantom rows Christine to his lair in a boat. The design of the boat is similar in structure and the cushions.

Also, note that the Phantom steers the boat, never Christine. Remember this for the Nanaka character analysis later.

Candles

Nanaka holds a staff with candles and is surrounded with candles. This is just like the aesthetic of Phantom of the Opera. You can scroll up to see the comparison again.

Some lyrics analysis

[Phantom of the Opera musical video](#)

In sleep he sang to me
In dreams he came
That voice that calls to me and speaks my name
And do I dream again for now I find
The Phantom of the Opera is there Inside my mind

This is very much like Nanaka's dreams in Story 5 where she dreams of the other Nanaka.

Christine: I am the mask you wear
Phantom: It's me they hear

Nanaka's body is literally a fake mask for her.

Your (Phantom)/My (Christine) spirit and my (Phantom) /your (Christine) voice in one combined

Nanaka's body is singing, but it is the neursoul's spirit. A strange duet indeed.

Sing, my Angel of Music
Sing, my Angel
Sing for me
Sing, my Angel! Sing for me!

The Angel of Music is Christine. And then Nanaka needs that false body to sing for her, even if she dislikes her predicament.

Then, please embrace me, angel of music!

Remember this sentence in the costume introduction? She might really be seeing the false body as the 'angel of music'

You alone can make my song take flight -
help me make the music of the night ...

And then these lyrics from Music of the Night are applicable. Nanaka can only sing with this false body, to let her song take flight.

Theorycrafting and character analysis

It is interesting to note that it is Nanaka's halo that is the Phantom. Note that she does not have her usual halo when the Phantom appears. Rather, in the animations, the halo transforms into the Phantom.





The more I think about Nanaka, the neursoul inside is actually the Phantom to the false new body as Christine. Nanaka is unable to be on the stage as her true self. Only this false new body can appear on the stage to get the applause where Nanaka can only influence it.

Which is really what the Phantom wanted to do. Only Christine can sing the songs he writes. The only way he can go on stage. Phantom cannot appear on stage because he is disfigured. This is like how Nanaka's original body had problems, causing the transfer of neursoul.

In the animation, the boat only stabilises when the Phantom appears. This means that the body is nothing without Nanaka's neursoul, which controls it. But this body is not Nanaka. The Phantom is steering the boat, not Nanaka. Parallel to how it is Nanaka's neursoul that is in control of this body even if it is not her on the outside.

Recall the story 5 extract. Nanaka says she is in the shadows. Shadows is associated with phantom. This implies that Nanaka's neursoul is the halo while her appearance is the false new body.

The Weibo introduction also sort of paints Nanaka like a ghost, making strange noises at 4am.

So although Nanaka may seem to be Christine on the outside due to their similarities as white wearing singers, she is also the Phantom. She is not the one that people look at on the stage. She can only influence the one on the stage and in the light.

The opposite may apply too with the neursoul as Christine. Nanaka will also feel that she is controlled and haunted by the fact that her body is not hers. And her current popularity is due to her current body. Like how the Phantom is haunting Christine.

I am also inclined to think that Cyber Media is likely behind Nanaka's predicament. With the new doll Kuro being related to the faction, her letter mentioning Nanaka and how Nanaka's animation show a new possible Cyber Media related sector, there should be more plot for her and I am even more excited after this costume.

First time writing lore for the GFL series, so hope that you like it. And thanks MICA for making a reference to my most favourite musical!