

RPG RPG Revolution

NEW
STYLE!

Swiftly Blue Magazine

Paradise Blue

FULL REVIEW, SCREENSHOTS & MORE
EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW: OCEANS DREAM



Also inside this issue

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ONE NIGHT
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...AND LOADS MORE!

Issue
#3

November 2009

RPG RPG Revolution
Swiftly Blue Magazine

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Issue # 3 - November 09

Editorial

Wow! October has been a crazy first month for us here in the RRR magazine team. We've been working like crazy to get this first issue out to you guys and here it is, issue number 3. I'd personally like to thank the whole team for working so hard in this first month and hope that we've started as we meant to go on; the future looks bright from where I'm standing!

Check out all of the content and if there's anything you think it missing feel free to message any member of the RRR Magazine Team and let us know what you think, we're dying to know. Keep an eye out over the next few months as the RRR Magazine team have been working in overdrive this month coming up for new ideas just for you guys and we'll be unleashing them over the next few months, so watch out.

To wrap this first editorial out, I'd like to once again say thank you to every member of the team and I hope you enjoy reading their personal introductions and find them all as entertaining as I did.

See you next month!

Jamopc

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Meet the Brand New Team!

Issue #3 sees a brand new team taking on Swiftly Blue and you can find out a little about the whole team and get to know us all a little.

Editor **Jamopc** Assistant **Freedom** Publisher **Darkechoes**

I'm Jamopc but people in the real world call me James so take your pick! I'm a 20 year old Advertising and Marketing student from England and it's amazing to be part of the Swiftly Blue team. Hopefully we'll do a great job and make all of you proud.

I'm just an easy going person who has a lot of long-term goals which I can see are very hard to attain. One thing I wish to have in the world is simple...peace.

Let's see...

I'm just a fun loving guy who enjoys games, music and anime. I'm a college freshman in the U.S. studying Computer Science and I dream of going to Japan one day...

Graphics
Kikojui

Hello all, Kikojui here a 24 year old Designer by trade with a Degree in games design and a Masters Degree in digital art.

I'm a pretty active member of the RRR community and really came here for my love of the RPG maker engines. I'm currently working on something big and can't wait to get it into a position for other members to test.

As for RRR related things, I worked as the lead designer on the last magazine and also created the banner that you can see by scrolling up a little. I like to think of myself as a very friendly member who will offer advice wherever needed, and just wished I had more friends my age or closer to me to discuss RPG maker. Anyway, I've babbled on enough and hope that this new UNITED front of the RRR magazine delivers you the quality and standard that this site deserves.

Researcher
Oko

I'm Oko. My first hobby is writing, my second is playing the guitar and my third and fourth are watching anime. There isn't much to tell about me and there isn't much to know about me if you don't know me already. And if you do, you may just know too much...

Graphics
Flyingweaselman

Heya! I'm FlyingWeaselMan. For one thing I like to create graphic designs in my free time. I think it is generally a fun thing to do. I am a major fan of anything that comes from Square-Enix and I love to watch anime. In fact when I get bored enough I look up random anime on the internet. I never seem to get around to finishing an anime series though.

Researcher
Fearoftheunknown

I'm a reader who has read more than 500 books. In my off time I enjoy reading, watching TV and going outside. Other times, I'm on the computer. My real name is Dylan, and I'm a bit of an Otaku. I read manga a lot and watch anime all the time. I'm 16, going on 17, and I love cake.

This is about it. I'm also an aspiring writer who hopes to write a book someday.

Researcher
Michael

I love to work with other members in this community, I also like to watch anime and play sports. I spend a lot of time on the computer, but thanks to school it takes me away so I can still enjoy the real world. Anyway, I'm looking forward to working with everyone and I'm sure they are too.



Paradise Blue

Official Feature Review

November's feature review is from Dark Gaia, on the Project of the Month 'Paradise Blue' from Ocean's Dream created with RPG Maker 2003.

There are tons of RPG Maker games out there that attempt to mimic the J-RPGs we all know and love from our childhoods. Many RPG Maker users toil for weeks to create their own Final Fantasy or Breath Of Fire inspired adventures, trying so much to emulate the style and charm of these beloved games. Paradise Blue, the new game by Ocean, is yet another of these games, but the difference is that this game emulates the old school style of those NES/SNES era games fantastically, providing a nostalgic experience for die hard RPG fans, but also presenting itself as a fun, original game in it's own right.

In Paradise Blue, you control a group of four mute, unnamed mercenaries (reminiscent of Final Fantasy's Light Warriors) who are hired to help a royal knighthood try to re-establish political order in the kingdom and solve all sorts of other nasty problems.



Your team is made up of 4 mercenaries, who's class and development are up to you.

There is a plot to Paradise Blue, but much like in the classic games it tries to emulate, this plot isn't really important. Sure enough, there are twists, turns, villains and crises to behold, but generally it serves as a backdrop for all the questing and fighting your characters are running around doing. Your characters don't talk in cutscenes, nor do they have any relevance to the story; they are simply following the orders of others much more embroiled in a story of political turmoil than they are.

This creates a great retro style storyline, where your actions and behaviours are not limited by the personality and goals of your characters

+	Gem Token	* Complete! *	Location:
	Get the Gem Token from Amelia		Crystal Cave
+	Meeting	* Complete! *	Location:
	Meet the Lord of Marsall in his Palace		Marsall Palace
+	Hunting	* In progress *	Location:
	Defeat a SeaGriffin for the bounty		Marsall
+	Amulet	* Complete! *	Location:
	Find the missing Amulet		Marsall
+	Watch	* In progress *	Location:
	Find the Diary in Justino Watch		Marsall / Park Justino
Quest Log			
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Paradise Blue does not revolve around its plot, but instead the development of the characters and the tried and true method of questing and fighting.

Much like games such as Final Fantasy V, Paradise Blue places a lot of emphasis on making your otherwise one dimensional characters into your own creations. You get to pick their names, assign them classes, level up their skills, equip them with whatever you wish and choose which auto abilities they use. Paradise Blue uses a class system very similar to Final Fantasy V; your assigned class levels up by gaining ability points and as it levels up, you learn more skills and equippable auto abilities such as auto regen and the like. Don't like the direction your class is taking? Simply open the class menu and re-assign it, choosing from all the classes you've unlocked thus far. Any auto abilities you've mastered get to be carried over to your new class, making it highly possible to specialize your characters by creating an Assassin who uses Black Magic or something similar.

It's good that Paradise Blue allows you so much freedom of expression in the definition of your playing style, as the many quests and battles in the game are varied, challenging and can be completed in many different ways.



Character's not great in battle? Then use the class menu (left) to reassign their class!



Paradise Blue's title screen is warm and inviting yet full of nostalgia, Ocean's use of pixellated graphics works well here as it takes the player back to the days of NES/SNES RPG's such as the early Final Fantasy's.

The enemies you fight are very varied and can be challenging if you do not know which techniques to use against them, so building a party of many varied and experienced classes is a must, as you'll want to have many different strategies to use. Meanwhile, the dungeons you visit are well crafted, being fun to explore, challenging to solve and never too long that they are tedious. There's even some class specific advantages in dungeon exploration; thieves can see hidden routes that otherwise could not be accessed, and there are other little gimmicks that will make the quests play slightly different for each party combination. Overall, however, the difficulty of the game resembles a retro RPG such as FFV; if you're keeping up to scratch with levels and experience, you'll blast through relatively easy, however fall behind or fail to learn just the right skills and you'll pretty much be doomed to fall to every boss you encounter.

Visually and soundly, Paradise Blue is a very charming game too. The graphics used in the game are designed to achieve and emulate the look of a NES era game, and are comprised of rips and edits from commercial games of this era, and some custom graphics which match the look of these games surprisingly well. The mapping is beautiful, and the characters are colorful, and this game looks great considering the quality of the graphics being used. It doesn't stop at the mapping however, as even the windowskins, menus, skill/item names and fonts are designed to look like they are out of a retro game. If you are playing the game in windowed mode, you'll swear that you're playing it on an emulator. Furthermore, this reviewer didn't find any graphical inconsistencies or tile errors while playing through; a top notch effort on the graphical presentation of the game. Also, the sound tracks used in the game are completely custom (and very well made) lending an air of originality to a game that otherwise borrows heavily from the RPGs of yesteryear. People didn't play retro RPGs for their sounds, but you will appreciate the effort that's gone into Paradise Blue on the audio front.

In conclusion, Paradise Blue is an RPG Maker rarity; it "rips off" it's own inspirations so well, that it achieves such a quality of gameplay and presentation that it raises itself immediately to their level. If you have a love for old style role playing games and don't mind experiencing a few elements very similar to games you might have played before...

I strongly recommend you play this game.

**OFFICIAL
VERDICT 08/10**

Interview with... Ocean's Blue!

This month Holder caught up with Project of the Month winner Ocean's Blue to find out a little about him, his winning project and his other developments.

Holder - "First of all and I know I'm not the first to say this but congratulations on the release of Paradise Blue, has it been the kind of response you expected?"

Ocean - "It was actually an interesting response as I had anticipated some more criticism or negative feedback than what I actually got. I got Project of the Month or featured in some places, and although there weren't a whole amount of posts like some other topics got, I have to say I'm happy with the responses."

Holder - "Do you feel that you personally could have been happier with the final result if you had spent more time on it? What sort of things was it you felt would have got the negative feedback and or criticism?"

Ocean - "Well it's a given with most things that if you put more time into it, you'll be happier with the result. I think that I would have expected more 'Oh a Final Fantasy fan game' or such responses, but they were of the useful variety, and pointing out the areas that were actually flawed, such as story and some bugs I missed.

But also, there comes a time where you should move on and work on new things. Paradise Blue's development was actually pretty long and I had new game ideas I wanted to work on."

Holder - "You gave yourself a deadline date for the release. Was this always the plan to do that or did you decide this later on in development that it was needed to give you that little bit extra push to get it done and move on?"

Ocean - "It was a much later plan. During most of Paradise Blue's development, I was also working on multiple pixel projects for people, my job, university, so I didn't have the time to do it. When it was near the end though, I had more time. Setting the deadline for me really helped get things done too.

If you say "I'll do one quest a day", it really helps get actual work done."

Holder - "Coming close to the date, was it just cleaning things up or was there anything that you had to miss out of the game?"

Ocean - "Actually, there were some plans that I decided to cut out, or change completely for the sake of getting it done. I tried not to make it seem lazy but yeah there were a lot of cuts and new plans even near the end.

For example, I had a restaurant in the game, where I would have the characters sit down and just talk, but I ended up not using it as I didn't have an idea of what I'd have them say there. So the map exists in the game but it can't be accessed by the player."

Holder - "Interesting, people may try to find a way in there now. What did you find to be the hardest part of creating Paradise Blue?"

Ocean - "The battle system; the default battle system had constantly restricted my ideas, so I had to remove class and spell ideas because I couldn't implement it.

It took a while to finish it but I wanted to get that done before I moved on with the maps/quests in the game.

So I remember why I stopped using the default battle system in RM2k3.

That and I didn't have too much experience working with it. My friend Mirage Verius has made a lot of interesting battle systems using the default system but I myself have really only worked with it a little bit in one project"

Holder - "Similar question but not the easiest, what would you say the most enjoyable part of creating this game was for you?"

Ocean - "Hmmm, I'd say making some of the silly little items or objects around the world. I had fun just thinking of what they would have and I thought it would make the world seem more alive and interactive by having it.

Also, I'd have to say Amelia's character was my favourite character to write for. One of the few main characters I've made where I can think of all the evil things for someone to say and yet get away with it.

My friends had some silly suggestions which I added to the game. They made me laugh and I couldn't resist, like the mushrooms in the swamplands."

Holder – “On that note, including various members across the communities was a great feature, how do you think it affected the response to the final release or even the development?”

Ocean – “I tried to make it so that it didn't seem like so much of an in-joke that people would feel left out. I don't know if I succeeded or not, but I think it at least made the NPC's a lot more interesting than what I would have done if I had done them myself. Some were really happy to see their character in the game. Some people did comment and say they found some the NPC responses amusing, so I'll have to thank the people who contributed for that. It also gave me new ideas on what to do for some quests as well.”

Holder – “Going back to what you were saying earlier, do you find working with others, helping them on their own ideas benefits your own work?”

Ocean – “Yeah, I learn a lot from the different experiments and people have ideas that you wouldn't think of yourself. I'm not much of a team game maker but having friends around that you can talk concepts about or show them work and see if they have any feedback helps a lot. Working on Paradise Blue really got me making cleaner pixel art, which does transfer to the other pixel projects I had been working at the time.”

Holder – “So a constant flow of constructive feedback is the way to advance your skills?”

Ocean – “It does help. Experimenting with different styles and seeing other people's works helps advance your skills too.”

Holder – “Do you consider yourself an inspiration for others to do their own custom graphics for their projects after seeing the result and responses you receive?”

Ocean – “Other than my blog having pixel tutorials, I don't really go out of my way to tell people to make custom graphics. I would like more people to try though. I have seen some people actually try it out because of my earlier tutorials though. which I think is nice. With custom graphics, you just basically have to remember to take that into account when you're working on your project, and not just think of it after you've made 3000 NPC's and 5040 different dungeons and tiles in your game.”

Holder – “What would the one main piece of advice you could give someone wanting to do something similar to what you've been able to achieve?”

Ocean – “Just simply working on things and not giving up easily. I wouldn't be spriting like I am now if I didn't try it. I wouldn't be making the games as I liked to if I didn't have a bunch of previous projects made before. Even if you don't release a project, you can learn from it. I like to tell people that their first games aren't going to be as good as they want their ideas to be, so to use it more for experimenting and learning the project rather than making it your epic 60+ hour long masterpiece.”

Holder – “And finally, you've already got yourself working on another project. What can we expect from you in the near future?”

Ocean – “I have 2 projects going on right now; Azure Ocean I am waiting for a battle system script, so in the mean time I'm working on a shorter project called Azulea. I intend that to be a one month project, so maybe it might be complete by the time the magazine comes out, we'll see. I keep updates on my blog at dev.oceansdream.net on what work I've done, and if there are any releases.”

Holder – “Before we go, is there anything exclusive you can disclose for the members and readers at R3?”

Ocean – “Haha, probably not. I'm usually pretty open about what I work on and have done, so if anything it would either be in my blog or I would have said something elsewhere about what I do.”

Holder - “Would you like to take a moment to make something up?
Only joking, it's been great Oceans thank you very much for your time; it's been very informative and extremely interesting.”

Ocean - “Haha, no problem.”

That wraps up the first interview of many. Check out next month when we interview the next winner of Project of the Month.

If you have a question you'd like posed to our POTM Winner, then e-mail the team at RRRMagteam@gmx.com

LEGIONWOOD™

TALE OF THE TWO SWORDS

Official Review

Resident reviewer TaFresh takes a look at Dark Gaia's RPG Maker VX JRPG project - Legionwood: Tale Of The Two Swords.

Whether you're active here (RRR) or not, you should know about the game maker machine Dark Gaia. This truly versatile maker has made games in the horror genre and the RPG genre. His 2nd RRR RPG release, Legionwood, shows he's no pushover developer.

Legionwood allows you to take the role of Lann, an orphaned teen with his sister Liara, who want to see the festival held yearly at the capital. However, it's a struggle from there, since he has to go through a plain and a cave just to get there. From there, they go to the king's speech, but are late and with the guard being annoying, go to the captain. They meet a guard captain and a foreign noble named Ark, who they have to work together with to go through a dungeon, where they meet an assassin Mercus, who frames them of killing the king. They escape to Hawkshire, and from there, plan to take down Mercus.



An attractive title screen is only the first treat in this great game.

But now let's get to the bad side. Legionwood has a certain feel. A feel that wouldn't be so welcome to non JRPG players. The side view system is good, but doesn't get you as engaged without the ATB. The formula for most of the game is going through hell in a dungeon right by

town, just to get something in exchange. For example, the Guard captain you meet makes you go inside the water system below to stop it from backing up (which gets kind of annoying with the monsters). And later on when you need transport to Hawkshire, you have to go to the ruins right beside the town. Also, the beginning starts off kind of difficult until at least level 3 or 4. Also, in a forest dungeon you go through, the fog there is inconsistent, since there are no tall trees, and the light's kind of bright there as well.

All in all, Legionwood will keep you playing if you are a JRPG fan or able to stomach one. While you may completely miss the stat system, the battles may not keep you as engaged as other RPG's, the story will keep you somewhat moving.

Concept: 2 teenaged youths are falsely accused of assassinating a king, and seek out the real killer.

Graphics: Kaduki and RTP Jump on the characters, as well as a combo with Mack and RTP.

Playability: Although the battles are amusing, the frequent "to have me do this for you, you must take care of this problem in BLANK dungeon.

Entertainment: The game has its perks, but the encounter rate kind of gets annoying at times. And aside from that, the story, like I am doing, repeats itself.

Replayability: Moderately High



The battle system is simple yet effective.

Legionwood features the side view Battle System by Kylock and Mr.Bubble, as well as a stat distribute system (which I completely forgot about). Legionwood also contains a small number of side quests, as well as custom monster sprites (which I think is ripped from RPG Maker Advanced). The story takes a JRPG element, so most of you JRPG lovers will love the quirkiness of the game.



The lighting effect is attractive at first, but starts to get annoying after a while.



The Swiftly Blue QUIZ

Do you think you're smarter in the video game department than everyone around you? Are you the know-it-all that corrects everyone else on facts and figures? Do you want to prove to everyone that you are a real bonafide genius?

THEN DO IT!

Just answer our 10 questions as best you can and send the answers to RRRMagteam@gmx.com with your RRR Username by the 20th November, the highest scoring members will receive a prize that will prove how smart they really are.

- 1) When was the first RPG Maker (RPG Maker 95) released by ASCII?
- 2) Name all 7 characters in Final Fantasy X
- 3) Who produced Indie Game Maker?
- 4) Who released Indie Game Maker?
- 5) When was Indie Game Maker released?
- 6) Who was responsible for the first English translation of the Japanese RPG Maker 2000?
- 7) Name central villain in the Squaresoft (now SquareEnix) game Vagrant Story
- 8) What language is RPG Maker XP script written in?
- 9) Who was the creator of the project One Night & Legionwood?
- 10) BONUS QUESTION: In RPG Maker VX, what dimensions would it be to import a Tileset?

Terra Chimera: Soulfire Official Review

Game making machine Dark Gaia brings you a review of BastarTeg6's RPG Maker VX Project : Terra Chimera: Soulfire

It was with the intention to help somebody that this reviewer downloaded and played through the demo version of Terra Chimera by BashtarTeg6 and the purpose of this review, I'll state it now, is not to hurt or offend the game creator, but rather to provide a deep insight into the problems that were found within and subsequently help the game to become a better one.

Firstly, Terra Chimera seems to have been thought out to a fair degree and has some modicum of effort put into it's story, setting, characters, and even some of it's systems, but there are many aspects of the game so badly executed that most except for the most diehard indie RPG fans may find it hard to keep on playing and not download a much more worthy VX game. There are good ideas in this game, but unfortunately they fail in their practical execution and what remains is a clichéd, very hackneyed job at an RPG Maker game.

Terra Chimera starts off well. A well done and grand intro (yet not too over the top) greets the player and eases them into the game, and into the life of Almos, the game's main character, who long ago has lost his memory and now whiles away his days accompanying the crusader Steven upon whatever quests he sees fit to solve. However, the game soon takes a turn for the worse, as after this mystifying and engaging intro, you are called upon a quest without explanation and soon find yourself walking around a dungeon type area (yes, a few minutes in) without any idea where you are or what you are doing, or even which place is your destination. The game does provide a tutorial before you set out, but it explains only how to control your character.



Wandering aimlessly around a dungeon can get tiring

The menu operations and battle systems remain unexplained, which could turn off some RPG newbies as they are not only expected to use the menu to equip weapons and armour, but fight numerous (and quite challenging) battles within the first five minutes of the game as they wander around aimlessly without even a clue as to where they're going or even who exactly they are or what country they're in. Some may enjoy the "solve it yourself" attitude this game has, but others expecting a linear RPG with some direction and story will be severely disappointed, and may be confused as to what they are meant to be doing.

Of course, it soon becomes apparent to the player that aside from the cryptic intro scenes and what is posted on the game's presentation thread, Terra Chimera really has no back-story. As I explained earlier, you just suddenly "wake up" and are catapulted headfirst into a quest without knowing anything about where you are and why you're there, or even how to control the game. The game soon becomes a but better story-wise, and you begin to see via cutscenes a little bit about yourself, the other characters, and the world, but these aspects never really seem to be part of the game; they seem to just be there to give a reason for your character's endless wandering around and questing. This reviewer struggled to get to the end of the demo because the game was not engaging at all.

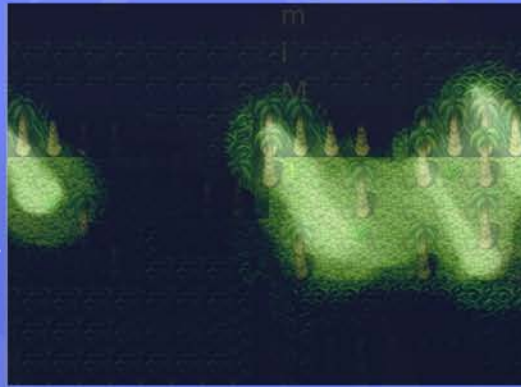


All positive aspects in a project can be cast aside by la lack of back-story

There was not a driving plot element (except for maybe the main character's amnesia, but the need to know anything behind that is never really delved into and the concept is only touched upon a few times) making one go onward, rather, it was just to finish the demo and provide this review, or else the hope that soon the story would begin, that this was all just one long intro, that served as the motivation.

Want to suggest a review for Swiftly Blue?
Simply e-mail us at RRRMagteam@gmx.com

One good thing about the game is that problems aside, the game-play is actually solid, and this is something that may save the game from an untimely death. The maker has obviously spent a long time thinking about the balancing of the game, and that does not go unnoticed. It's impossible to get too overpowered too early, yet one does not need to power-level just to beat a random encounter. Although the player is perhaps exposed to the main RPG elements of the game a little early, they will find them quite well done, with dungeons that are well laid out, and a forgiving advancement system as well as battles that are not simply cases of spamming attack, but on the other hand are fun and quite beatable if you use your head. If the other aspects of the game are fixed, with this solid game-play backing it up, Terra Chimera should become something worth downloading.



Terra Chimera: Soulfire includes some quality mapping with clever use of fogs.

The game unfortunately takes another drive through 'Shoddyville' however with the graphical and audio components of the game. The first thing you will notice is that the game has terrible mapping. The wrong tiles are used for the wrong purposes, the size of the buildings and areas is out of proportion and overall the maps look like random jumbles of tiles trying to look like something else. For example, in one area of the game, one will pass a wooden fence in a field, and the fence is made out of the VX RTP signpost tile. Rather than looking like a fence, it looks like a row of signposts. Also, the mapping doesn't do very well to give you the illusion that you're travelling through a vast area. In the opening grasslands area, the path you can take through the fields is lined with trees, bushes and rocks, all arranged as a wall around the path so that you cannot stray off it. Not only is this a bad way to keep the player confined to one place, but as the area beyond the tree-wall is completely devoid of anything except grass, you get the impression that you're being led along a path purposely designed just for you to use, rather than one of travelling through a lush field and exploring. There are other ways of blocking a player off without doing this, and the maker should research them. One good concept for an RPG is exploration; that concept is not found here.



The sound is (thankfully) not as bad as the mapping, but still isn't of a very high standard (or it is, since video game music by Squaresoft usually is) since it is for the most part comprised of MP3's ripped from games like Chrono Trigger and Final Fantasy. It's a given standard that most RPG maker games you play will be composed of non game music, either completely custom tracks made specially for the game or custom video game music taken from sites such as Newgrounds, using ripped music only sparingly. This game uses it almost exclusively, and it really gives off the feeling that the game is borrowing much more than music from other games and it loses any originality it had. Using RTP music would have been a better choice, as at least it doesn't seem as if the game is trying to be Final Fantasy VII.



Creative mapping, great plot, original ideas can all be ruined by a poor soundtrack

There are many good sites out there with good custom music, so the game doesn't really need to use ripped music, and the creator should patch that up, as a little originality can go a long way to making the game seem a lot better.

In conclusion, this reviewer was very disappointed by the poor effort contained within Terra Chimera: Soulfire. As such, it's hard to recommend it to anyone in it's current state, when there are so many better games such as Prophecy Demon Kingdom or Legionwood or even Arcana or Mokensen out there much more deserving of your time. However, I remain confident that the game does have potential; it just needs to fix up a few things first, for it to



Special Guest Article

By James Loker

'As the graphic limitations for video games start to disappear, and developers become more and more innovative with features and plots it begs the question...why has video game music changed so little?'

We live in an age of technology, every day we come up with some new clever way to make electricity do the things we want it to and I'm interested in how we've made technology more entertaining, especially in the case of video games. Video games have existed since the 1940's with the original 'missile defence' style games made possible using Cathode Ray-Tube technology (their equivalent of High Definition TV or Blu-Ray DVD players) and since their conception in the 1940's they have become more and more mind-boggling, creating worlds that rival the beauty of our own and immersing us in stories that rival some of the great classics. We're currently enjoying the '7th Generation Consoles' such as the Playstation 3, Xbox 360 and the Nintendo Wii and it's a wonder to see how far we've come, from nothing more than lines on a small screen to 2d images running around a colourful Mushroom Kingdom and basic 3D renderings that didn't look realistic, but still wowed us anyway! Now, as I'm writing this in 2009, we're all playing on consoles that can create virtual worlds as large as our own, full of interesting characters and scenarios that keep us on the edge of our seat but there's one thing I've noticed that has changed very little in the many years that developers and artists and graphic designers have been pushing the limits is the music, the sounds that make the graphics seem all the more real and the world seem like a real, believable place instead of billions of pixels.

Music and general audio are a major part of the technology market and like the fast-moving market that it belongs to; it has seen many innovations in the past decade. We've seen the popular format of music change from Vinyl to Tapes to CD's to MP3 and the way we listen to music has changed dramatically, from the days of only listening to music in the comfort of our own homes to carrying tens of thousands of songs everywhere we go. The industry has changed, for the better and yet why has that changed not been mirrored in Video Games? I'm not talking about the quality of the music and sound effects (which has always been a little hit and miss in the video game world) but the innovation that playability and graphics have seen. Where's the crazy stuff that makes our video games a little bit better to play and so much better to talk about with friends?

The industry's progression is well demonstrated with the Walkman and the Ipod, 2 decades apart in time, and worlds apart in technology.



There are plenty of sides to this argument. Some people may agree that there has been startlingly little change in video game audio since the 90's and the first consoles to have complex music such as the Playstation. Others may think there have been significant changes and many of you just might not care but you should...and I can prove it. Next time you play any video game, turn the sound off and take note of the way the game changes, scary games lose their chilling touch, action games lose their thrill and RPG's lose their emotion. Using this logic, I believe that the audio is the single most important thing towards a video game, it can make the most graphically beautiful game seem unrealistic but can pull you into a completely unconvincing world of crude pixels and colour. In my opinion, it is the make-or-break element of any video game, and it surprises me that none of the major game or console manufacturers have come up with anything really special to take gaming to the next level. The only recent innovation that comes to mind is the Nintendo Wii, that includes a small speaker on the controller to make the noises normally made by the object that it seeks to simulate, such as a tennis racket or golf club in the case of Wii Sports. In my opinion however, I would not consider this an innovation, rather a minor feature.

Perhaps the blame should not be placed on the video games industry, after all they are simply making use of another product to entertain us; so it could be the problem of the people that make the product, the electronics industry. In my personal opinion, the big names in electronics have generally been delivering in the innovation department when it comes to electronics, not only in the hand-held market that I mentioned earlier but with constantly improving sound quality from hi-fi systems, more creative ways to listen to music in your car, wireless speakers to allow a house full of music using just one system...the list goes on and on and on. While video games can only make limited use of these additions, I think both parties (those who make audio equipment and those who do cool things with it) have a responsibility to each other, a symbiotic relationship of sorts.

Whether you place the blame on the people who make the products, the people trusted with utilising these products to entertain us or just the people who don't care about it enough to make the audio a key selling point in video games you can see that the audio aspect of video games is clearly an important one. In my opinion, video games are holding themselves back, limiting their potential success by focusing on gameplay, graphics and features while ignoring innovations in the audio. This however may not be the case for long as my previous logic once again can prove. As video games developers try to make their games more and more realistic they'll soon have to take into account the audio as it is the single most important aspect to creating realism and escapism in a video game. The negative side of course to any new innovations in audio will be increased costs, the next generation of consoles will have new graphics processors, new sound cards and a whole host of features to keep us entertained and I imagine that will come at a price.

One Night

Terror Evolved

Official Review

Nighthawk282 has an in-depth look at Dark Gaia's Psychological Survival Horror project from RPG Maker XP.

Every once in a while, as a reviewer, you come across a game that you absolutely loathe reviewing. This is not because it is bad: bad games are actually more fun to review, because there are more faults to point out, and suggestions to give. The games that are the worst to review are actually the most fun to play, because they are damn near perfect.

One Night fits this bill to a tee. Aside from one or two spelling mistakes, a bit of cut-off in the text, and one spot where, for some reason, the wall tileset allows you to walk on it, there is nothing wrong at all with this game. You play as a character, (the name of whom you choose before the game starts), who, through accident or design, finds themselves in a strange prison compound, completely empty, save for the hoards of creatures wandering aimlessly through the compound. I shouldn't say aimlessly, as they do have a purpose. Their sole purpose is to make your life a living hell.

Using elements from well known survival-horror games like Silent Hill, and the first Resident Evil, (the ones before it became a crazy, action-oriented shooter), One Night leaves your hair standing on end almost from the get-go.



One Night's dark setting resembles the destroyed Umbrella base in RE2 or the delapidated area around Silent Hill

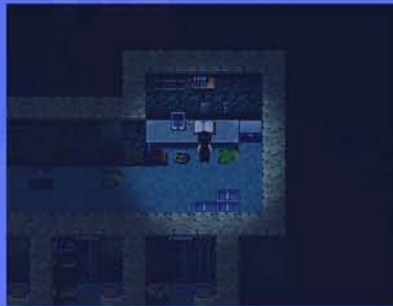
To be honest, I was fairly sceptical going into it. I wasn't sure how well an RPG Maker could handle the intricacies of a survival-horror game. The answer is, quite well, actually. The ambient music puts you slightly off foot from the beginning, and the darkness only adds to it. The way this is executed is quite well, using a system akin to the ones in the dark caves in the Pokémon games, where there is a circle of light around your character, and the rest is dim. Dim, not dark. You can still see what's coming up, but the darkness doesn't allow you to make out much. In this way, it's fully possible for a creature to seemingly pop in out of nowhere and scare the pants off of you.

The mapping is really well done as well, using modern looking areas that are overgrown with grass, broken tiles and debris that really make you feel that it has been a while since anyone really tried to make the place presentable. The random items scattered around give the feel that, whatever happened to the people, they upped and left relatively quickly.

There's also the sound effects, breaking glass being a very prominent one, that lead you to believe that, even aside from the monsters, there's someone else with you. Other times, you're sure it's just one of the monsters looking to scare you when you come too close.

The puzzles and item hunting are also well done, making you think your way around the game, but not past it. You'll never find yourself bored or calm when you're looking for a key you need, or solving a puzzle that comes your way.

There's also a fairly interesting idea thrown in called Safe Rooms. These rooms are just what they sound like: rooms where you won't be attacked by monsters, and where you can save your game. They are, in fact, the only place you can save your game.



The disturbing back-story of One Night is established as it is in other survival horrors, through files...

The defence system is nice as well, in that you collect items like knives and stun guns that stop a creature from damaging you if you bump into it. If you don't have one of these defensive items, you'll get wounded, and it's worth mentioning that the wounds are like baseball: three strikes, you're out.

There is barely anything wrong with this game, and the few things that are wrong with it can be overlooked because of just how excellent the game is. It has to be said that the biggest problem is just how damn short it is. I clocked in at three hours, twenty minutes. But even the shortness can be overlooked, simply because of how much effort clearly went into making this game. There is probably no such thing as a perfect game, but this is damn-well almost one. And, for once, almost counts, not only in horseshoes and hand grenades, but in reviews as well.

SUMMARY

This is an excellent survival horror game that nears commercial quality in every way. It has to be said that if Capcom ever cranked out this little gem, after upping the length of it, and giving it a good makeover as well, they'd make a fair buck on it. Even if survival horror games aren't exactly your forte, (they sure as hell aren't mine), give this one a try. It'll probably leave you surprised, and, if not, maybe you should just stick to RPG's.

OFFICIAL VERDICT 10/10

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Next Month...

December 2009

Issue #4 is guaranteed to be full of great stuff so keep an eye out at the beginning of December for Swiftly Blue Issue #4

OUR TEAM WILL BE BRINGING YOU THE BIGGEST NEWS FROM RPG REVOLUTION AND BEYOND!

MORE GREAT REVIEWS!

RELEASING OUR BRAND NEW COMIC STRIP!

THE RETURN OF TOP TUTORIALS FROM THE BEST GAME CREATORS IN THE BUSINESS.

THE PROJECT OF THE MONTH WINNER GETS THE TREATMENT BY ONE OF OUR GUEST REVIEWERS!

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...AND MUCH MORE!

Dedications & Thank You's

The team would like to thank...

Holder

Without him this would never have been possible, he has been a huge help to our efforts in guiding us and providing us with handy information. As time goes on we'll probably see less and less of him, but...like a ghost he'll always be there and the magazine team is incredibly thankful for that.

Kaz

Just like every other member of this forum, I'd like to thank Kaz, not only for making RRR but also providing the magazine team with lots of information and patience to help us with the first issue and hopefully more in the future. Kaz has been a great help to us and for that...thank you!

Dark Gaia

You've all heard of Dark Gaia, not only an amazing game creator but also a great reviewer, you'll be seeing his team a lot more in the coming months and that's all thanks to him and the help he's offered us recently. For being so generous with his time, we'd all like to say a big thanks!