

The Complete Guide to Commercially Released Dreamcast Indie Games



The fact that we're still blathering on about the Dreamcast some 20 odd years after the console's demise is testament to two things - the fact that we're sad little people still holding on to a mere glimmer of nostalgia about our youth as we rapidly approach middle age, and also the fact that the community will just not let this console die. We obviously don't talk about the first of those points much (we don't want to remind ourselves that we're becoming less and less culturally literate with every rotation of this damn rock around the sun), but we do talk about how "alive" the system is all the time. Probably too much, to be honest, as many people like to put the Dreamcast firmly in the "past" folder in their brain, preferring to remember what it was like when it was new and current. This is completely understandable, to view the console solely through a sense of nostalgia especially now that we have so many ways of experiencing the console's library which don't rely on having shelves full of games (or spindles full of CD-Rs). We're in that stage of the console's post-life cycle that has many people who left their video gaming behind when they were young dipping into the console once more, stirring up their memories of happier times, and no doubt probably quite confused as to why some of us never left the machine in the past and have continued to be fascinated by Sega's last great home endeavour to this very day.

Whilst the nostalgia is to be expected, it is the vitality of the current Dreamcast scene which keeps us writing about it. In between the tired posts of social media influencers asking people if they remember Sonic Adventure or Crazy Taxi, there has been an incredibly active scene covering every element of the Dreamcast for years. We have new hardware and controllers, games with online modes re-activated, more translations of Japanese games than I can actually keep track of, books, magazines, an entire series of arcade titles ported (<https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/search/label/Atomiswave>) to the console, and a strong homebrew community that is creating some astonishing things. And it's that last point that allows me to pivot, finally, towards the point of this article. Alongside homebrew ports of classic titles (as I write this, the recent demo of the Metal Gear Solid 2 port (<https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2023/11/a-metal-gear-solid-2-sons-of-liberty.html>), is literally mind blowing) and fun little projects, we've now had 20 years of "proper" retail-released indie titles for the Dreamcast. My aim here is to document all of these in one article. I do love a long article...

I love Dreamcast indie titles. While they are not officially licensed by Sega, there is something very special about receiving a physical version of a game to be played on a console a quarter of a century old. The quality of the Dreamcast indie scene varies, which is to be expected, but even when a game is a bit crappy, I still have a certain sense of respect that it has been released on the console at all. Of course, I am a big weirdo, and will pick up anything you slap a "Dreamcast" label on, but for those who

want to be a bit more selective with their hard-earned cash when expanding their Dreamcast library, a subjective view is always useful. In this article I hope to do just that - as well as take a look back at the various versions of the games that were released, where you can pick them up today, and any other interesting things that I can cram in before losing all excitement about writing this already massive article. This will also be constantly updated (hello, future people!) with my views on any new indie release, which will hopefully allow it to be a one-stop-shop for anyone interested in the broad DC indie scene - this will of course sit alongside our regular indie reviews from the entire DCJY team (I can also recommend Laurence's superb roundup of the indie scene in [this article \(https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2022/02/the-dreamcast-commercial-indie-scene.html\)](https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2022/02/the-dreamcast-commercial-indie-scene.html), if you want a slightly different perspective). It's also worth checking out our [directory of indie developers and publishers \(https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/p/dreamcast-indie-games-publisher.html\)](https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/p/dreamcast-indie-games-publisher.html), where you'll find direct links to all those involved in the indie scene.

Now, I need to add some context and "rules" here. The scope of this article will not include every single homebrew port or project - the first rule of the article is that it had to have been **released physically and could be purchased by anyone**. Of course, you can pick up a copy of any of the homebrew ports with nice printed inlays on Etsy - so that's when the second rule comes in: **the physical release must have been officially sanctioned by the developer or rights holder**. Finally, **only full releases will count** - so no demos, hacks or mods will be included, although total conversion mods that became standalone games in their own right do count. For the context of this article, only the games that meet the criteria I've just established will be called "indie releases". Will I probably end up breaking these rules to include something that I probably shouldn't? You betcha. Welcome to the wonderful world of "Mike doesn't stick to his own rules".

Enough of my nonsense (well, enough of this opening bit of nonsense, there's a lot more nonsense that lies ahead, I'm afraid!) - on with the article!

4x4 Jam



Publisher: JoshProd/PixelHeart

Developer: Invictus Games

Year of Release: 2017

In Summary: The Dreamcast's first 3D indie title delivers a fun off-road racing experience which didn't quite usher in a brave new world, but is well worth a play - even though the lack of multiplayer is disappointing.



Review:

Originally appearing on iOS as a smartphone game, Hungarian developers Invictus Games ported 4x4 Jam to the PSP as one of the PSP mini titles, where it received some degree of critical success. Its appearance on the Dreamcast as part of JoshProd's second round of releases was unexpected, but significant. It became the first 3D indie title to be released commercially for the Dreamcast, and the first proper 3D racing title for the console since its early-2000s demise. It does often feel very much a product of its original platform, with a simple, arcade racing feel, but it has good depth and variety for the Dreamcast faithful to enjoy. The core gameplay here is the career mode which sees a series of events competed throughout the eight environments on offer, which covers all of the different racing variety the game brings to the table. Normal races and off-road races are pretty self-explanatory, whilst collector mode showcases more of the game's open environments. The highlight is the Jam mode - in these events, the game's Motocross Madness influence can be seen as you race across the stages, aiming for randomly indicated gates to gain points for being the first vehicle across the line, with an aim of stringing together a series of these victories to gain more points. It's great fun, and shows the game at its best. There are a variety of vehicles available, each with different handling characteristics, and there are several camera options, including a full interior view which was as impressive on release as it is now. The vehicles drive well, if a little loose at times, but the game remains fun and enjoyable throughout your time with it. There are a couple of issues; the lack of any multiplayer is a shame, and the poor AI on anything other than hardest difficulty reduces some of its accessibility. There's also some graphical draw-in which can be quite distracting, but it's never a game breaker. When the game was first released, I was impressed, thinking it would be the start of a new generation of indie titles. Some six years on, it remains part of quite a selective group of indie releases that have taken on that third dimension, and playing it again, it's really quite impressive.



Versions available and where to buy: Both the PAL version (in a PAL case) and the US/Japanese version can be purchased on the PixelHeart website [here \(PAL\)](https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/4x4-jam-dreamcast-pal/). (<https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/4x4-jam-dreamcast-pal/>), [here \(Japanese\)](https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/4x4-jam-dreamcast-jpn/). (<https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/4x4-jam-dreamcast-jpn/>), or [here \(US\)](https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/4x4-jam-dreamcast-us/). (<https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/4x4-jam-dreamcast-us/>). As will be a recurring comment throughout this article, JoshProd/PixelHeart releases usually follow a pattern of a solo PAL release in a PAL case and a combined US/Japanese style

release which has a reversible cover which features each of these orange-swirled NTSC packaging styles. As with all indie releases though, any version is playable on any console - the "PAL", "US" or "Japanese" identifications are solely used to differentiate packaging styles. You can also pick up the US cover version at [Video Games New York](https://videogamesnewyork.com/4x4-jam-us/) (<https://videogamesnewyork.com/4x4-jam-us/>). (aka VGNYSOFT).

Other links: My original and far more in-depth review of the game can be found [here](https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2017/08/review-4x4-jam.html) (<https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2017/08/review-4x4-jam.html>).

Alice Dreams Tournament



Publisher: Alice Team (later re-released by WAVE Game Studios)

Developer: Alice Team

Year of Release: 2017

In Summary: Influenced heavily by Bomberman, Alice Dreams Tournament brings so much variety and fun elements to the table that it can legitimately stand alongside its inspiration and is a treat for any Dreamcast indie fan. Best enjoyed with friends.



Review:

After a long development process, Alice Dreams Tournament finally saw release on the Dreamcast in early 2017 with a successful Kickstarter campaign completed. Sprouting from a mid-00s platforming adventure project titled "Alice Dreams", Tournament started off as Bomberman inspired mini-game included with that title before morphing into a fully-fledged concept in its own right titled "Dynamite Dreams" - which would soon be retitled with the "tournament" moniker. You'd be wrong to dismiss this as either a clone or a mere mini-game though. The gameplay may be familiar to anyone versed in Hudson's classic (which let's be honest, is no bad thing; it's a classic for a reason) but the sheer amount of options available is almost overwhelming. There are tons of stages, lots of game modes, and plenty of settings to tinker with. The stages are incredibly diverse, including night mode options which fully darken the arenas allowing play on the VMU screen, which is an inspired design

choice. Game modes range from single-player experiences like the traditional "battle" mode, to more intriguing ideas such as "Assault" or "Bodyguard" each adding something slightly different. Like its inspiration, the game is best experienced with friends and is a great excuse to connect four controllers to your console, and with the mass of arenas and options there is lots to get your teeth stuck into. The controls can feel a little "sticky" at times and some modes can be confusing, but these are only minor issues when compared to all the positives (which includes both graphics and audio, both of which are of a high-quality). It remains a Dreamcast exclusive and despite a recent re-release, it still doesn't get the love and respect it deserves.

The collectors editions include a second disc containing both the final demo release of the original Alice Dreams and a pixel-art inspired, retro gaming themed, slimmed down version of Tournament itself. The latter especially is absolutely excellent.

It's also worth noting that this is one of three titles released in the Dreamcast indie scene that owes its existence, to a degree, to Lewis Carroll's Alice in Wonderland. Whilst the finished product contained sparse references to the classic nonsense tale, its origins as part of the Alice Dreams project were more clearly influenced. As husband to someone who has an entire room dedicated to Alice in Wonderland, I am obliged to bring this point up.



Versions available and where to buy: The game was originally released in standard and limited versions. The standard release had both US or Japanese style versions (as always, this makes no difference as to what console can play it, just a stylistic choice) and contained the main disc only. The limited collectors versions saw both a US and Japanese style double case version, which includes the extra disc chock-full of extras, and a PAL case release which does the same. All three of these versions shared the same slipcase. WAVE Game Studios then re-released the title with all three regional styles (although it seems VGNYSOFT may have helped with the publishing of this in the US). This doesn't come with the extra disc of goodies.

The originals are available at some online retailers or good old eBay, but the re-releases are available at [WAVE here \(https://www.wavegamestudios.com/shop/alice-dreams-tournament\)](https://www.wavegamestudios.com/shop/alice-dreams-tournament) in both European and Japanese styles, and the US style version is available at [VGNYSOFT \(https://www.vgnyssoft.com/product-page/alice-dreams-tournament\)](https://www.vgnyssoft.com/product-page/alice-dreams-tournament). As of December 2023, WAVE are currently offering the game at just £9.99, which is an absolute steal, but even its standard release price of £19.99 is well worth it.

Other links: Tom reviewed this for the Junkyard upon release, which can be [found here \(https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2017/04/review-alice-dreams-tournament.html\)](https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2017/04/review-alice-dreams-tournament.html). Fun fact - Tom happened to visit my house when I first received the game, and we had great fun with it. On the same day we recorded [an episode on the DreamPod \(https://thedreamcastjunkyard.buzzsprout.com/42610/498550-the-dreamcast-junkyard-dreampod-episode-49\)](https://thedreamcastjunkyard.buzzsprout.com/42610/498550-the-dreamcast-junkyard-dreampod-episode-49) with now-editor of PC Gamer Rob Jones in the middle of Bristol and got interrupted by a train. I am full of fun stories, me.

You can also check the game's [website \(https://alicedreams.com/tournament/?lang=en\)](https://alicedreams.com/tournament/?lang=en) (which is still live) for more information about it.

Alice's Mom's Rescue



Publisher: Hucast (original), JoshProd/PixelHeart (re-release)

Developer: Orion

Year of Release: 2015

In Summary: A simple and whimsical idea which brings something a bit different to the Dreamcast indie scene. Colourful platforming action coupled with basic puzzle elements makes for an enjoyable title - but it doesn't push the system and is a tad overpriced.



Review:

Alice's Mom's Rescue is the first of one-man French developer Orion's titles to hit the Dreamcast (he would go on to publish many more). Marking a change from the shooter-heavy DC indie scene at the time, Alice's Mom's Rescue is an old-school 2D platformer that isn't afraid of ramping up the difficulty as the levels progress. Gameplay involves negotiating stages and enemies whilst solving some simple puzzle mechanics, as well as a fair bit of key grabbing. Whilst its simplicity is undeniable, the core mechanics work well and frustration is kept in check with unlimited lives. An Alice in Wonderland theme runs throughout the game, giving it a cute, whimsical look, and allows for little touches taken from Lewis Carroll's classic to set it apart from other similar titles (although truth be told, this style of game is somewhat rare in the DC indie scene). There are plenty of levels to make your way through, and a fair amount of variety evident in the artistic direction taken, whilst that all important "one more play" feeling sets in early thanks to the pick-up-and-play style. As with many of Orion's titles, this one is available on smartphones and tablets for peanuts, and some questions will no doubt be asked about whether such a simple mobile-orientated experience can really justify a full price Dreamcast release. Certainly, the game does nothing in terms of pushing the system's capabilities, but it can just about be forgiven

due to its fun play mechanics and polished feel overcoming any perceived technical shortcomings. The original price was a bit on the heavy side, which is a little harder to defend. Don't expect Shenmue, obviously.

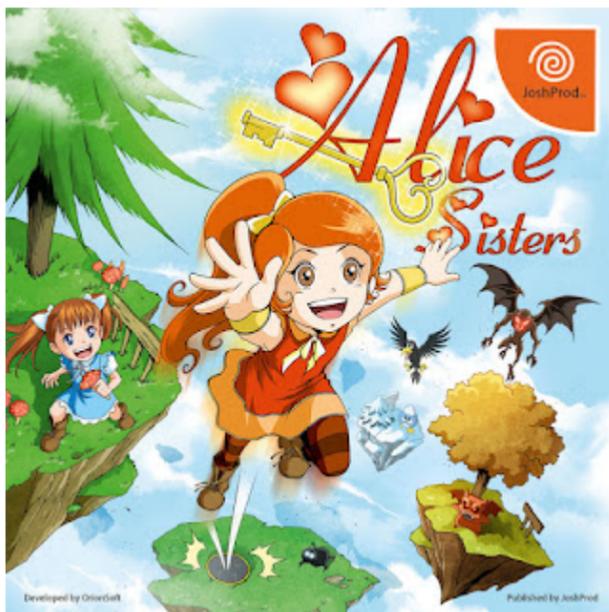


Versions available and where to buy: Originally released by once high-profile indie publisher Hucast, it saw both a standard release in a jewel case and a limited version in a DVD case which came with an extra soundtrack CD. A few years later, JoshProd re-released the game following their usual publishing format - a PAL case version and a US/Japanese style version which has a reversible manual/cover. This JoshProd release is meant to be version 1.5, but there's little notable differences between versions. You can pick up both from the PixelHeart website (PAL version [here](https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/alices-moms-rescue-dreamcast-pal/) (<https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/alices-moms-rescue-dreamcast-pal/>), US/Japanese version [here](https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/alices-moms-rescue-dreamcast-us/) (<https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/alices-moms-rescue-dreamcast-us/>), and [here](https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/alices-moms-rescue-dreamcast-jpn/) (<https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/alices-moms-rescue-dreamcast-jpn/>)). It's also available from VGNYsoft (<https://www.vgnysoft.com/product-page/alice-s-mom-s-rescue-sega-dreamcast>).

You can also download the game from its [itch.io](https://orionsoft.itch.io/alicemomrescue) (<https://orionsoft.itch.io/alicemomrescue>) page for a much lower price. If you are now in the world of a GDEMU-only Dreamcast, this is the best option to go for.

Other links: We never actually reviewed this one on the Junkyard. Dunno why, it probably sits in the 1,000 drafts that we've started and not finished when "real life" stuff got in the way. Not really sure what I should put here in its place though. How about the [original Alice in Wonderland in all its glory](https://www.gutenberg.org/files/11/11-h/11-h.htm), (<https://www.gutenberg.org/files/11/11-h/11-h.htm>) thanks to the Project Gutenberg library?

Alice Sisters



Publisher: JoshProd/PixelHeart

Developer: Orion

Year of Release: 2021

In Summary: This sequel to Alice's Mom's Rescue ups the ante by adding in two-player dynamics whilst retaining the original's whimsical and cute aesthetics. A fun, if somewhat simple, affair from an under rated developer.



Review:

The sequel to 2015's Alice's Mom's Rescue, Alice Sisters continues its predecessor's puzzle-led 2D platforming whilst also adding a second sister to the mix, allowing for two-player puzzling that opens up the game dynamics significantly. Alice retains the ability to shrink in size that she exhibited in the first game whilst big sister is able to throw balls at enemies and obstacles. In two-player mode the dynamic works well whilst retaining the simple approach, and you can switch between characters in single-player mode to face the same challenges, so there's nothing here hidden behind a two-player only wall. The levels on offer are as colourful and bright as before (with an impressive 28 on offer this time out), and there is a twee soundtrack playing throughout the game which stays just on the right side of listenable. The puzzles themselves are relatively straightforward (use the right character to access the right sections, flick switches, find keys, etc.) but as the game progresses there is an element of challenge to stretch the more seasoned gamer, and some equally tricky platforming sections. As with Alice's first outing from Orion, the game doesn't push the console's capabilities, which no doubt will result in the same negative comments from some sectors of the community, but if you can overlook the simple premise and retro aesthetics this is a well-developed and fun title from an underrated developer that fans of the original will enjoy. Much like its predecessor though, the full price of its physical release is a little high.



Versions available and where to buy: The game followed JoshProd's standard releasing format - a PAL case version ([available here](https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/alice-sisters-dreamcast-pal/) (<https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/alice-sisters-dreamcast-pal/>)) and a US/Japanese release that can be ordered separately but is in fact the same version with a reversible manual/cover - that can be found [here](https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/alice-sisters-dreamcast-us/) (US) (<https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/alice-sisters-dreamcast-us/>) and [here](https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/alice-sisters-dreamcast-jpn/) (Japanese) (<https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/alice-sisters-dreamcast-jpn/>). As always, these versions differ only in artistic design, as any version can be played on any console.

Also available at [VGNYsoft](https://www.vgnysoft.com/product-page/alice-sisters-sega-dreamcast). (<https://www.vgnysoft.com/product-page/alice-sisters-sega-dreamcast>).

Other links: We never reviewed this one on the Junkyard either (call ourselves a Dreamcast site? Pah. We're so shit), but this is a good opportunity to point you in the direction of [Tom's interview with developer Orion](https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2016/08/developer-interview-orion.html) (<https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2016/08/developer-interview-orion.html>).

You can also find the PC version of the game at its [itch.io](https://orionsoft.itch.io/alice-sisters) (<https://orionsoft.itch.io/alice-sisters>) page, and check out Orion's own [website](https://www.orionsoft.games/) (<https://www.orionsoft.games/>) for all of their releases.

Andro Dunos



Publisher: JoshProd/PixelHeart

Developer: Visco

Year of Release: 2023

In Summary: A rather generic and uninspired horizontal shooter that isn't able to compete with the best indie shooters, but does nothing particularly wrong and at least delivers a passable playing experience.



Review:

JoshProd's purchase of the back catalogue of Japanese developer Visco has led to some very interesting Dreamcast releases but it took until 2023 for us to see perhaps their most well-known title make the transition to the console, the colourful horizontal shooter Andro Dunos. Piloting the Yellow Cherry (or Red Fox if you're the second player in co-op mode), your task is to take on an alien invasion which threatens the future of mankind. It's not a very original plot, and truth be told, the word "generic" can be used to describe various aspects of the game. It's very much your traditional late-80s shooter, with rather uninspired stage settings and enemy craft - both of which look like those seen in countless other titles, a weapon system that will be familiar to

anyone who has spent anytime playing through the Gradius franchise, and a difficulty level that often feels needlessly difficult - testament to the arcade roots of the title (seeing an arcade release shortly before a home version for the Neo Geo AES). It's also pretty bare-bones in terms of extras or presentation; not surprising when considering the game is playing through the Neo4All emulator, but a bit disappointing when compared to some other JoshProd releases. That all being said, however, there is a certain retro charm held within this title. The visuals are bright and vibrant and the soundtrack is decent, although not as good as some of the indie-developed titles for the console. The co-op mode is welcome and whilst the game may be generic, it doesn't do anything badly either, being a rather competent if uninspired take on the horizontal shooter genre. It also performs significantly better than some previous JoshProd releases which were also played through emulation, although there are still the occasional moments of slowdown. Not at the top tier of Dreamcast indie shooters, but worth a play.



Versions available and where to buy: Both the PAL case version (<https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/andro-dunos-dreamcast-pal/>) and the standard US (<https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/andro-dunos-dreamcast-us/>)/Japanese (<https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/andro-dunos-dreamcast-jpn/>). reversible manual/cover version are available to purchase via the PixelHeart web store. All of these are playable on any console version.

There are cardboard case versions of the game doing the rounds on the usual sites – these are not the official JoshProd release but instead are "homemade" versions which use the ROM and emulator, and have been around for some years.

Other links: Tom was on hand to review this one, you can check out [his thoughts here](https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2023/01/review-andro-dunos.html) (<https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2023/01/review-andro-dunos.html>).

Andro Dunos 2



Publisher: JoshProd/PixelHeart

Developer: Picorinne Soft

Year of Release: 2023

In Summary: Vibrant and fun horizontal shooter that compares favourably to its modern generation compatriots. Well-designed from both a mechanical and aesthetic point of view, with an outstanding soundtrack to complement it.



Review:

Whilst the port of the original Andro Dunos was mildly disappointing, the port of its sequel from modern day platforms to the DC deserves some serious attention. Developed by Japanese indie Picorinne Soft (also responsible for Battle Crust), this is a colourful, energetic horizontal shooter which once more takes a hefty dose of inspiration from the Gradius series. You have a multitude of weapons to rotate between, each of which is quickly powered-up as you dispatch the waves of enemy craft via generous numbers of weapon and upgrade drops. Before long you have an imposing arsenal at your disposal as you make your way through the game's well-designed and interesting stages, and can upgrade between levels as well. Whilst the gameplay is not going to win awards for originality, it does what it sets out to achieve – re-visiting the era of the original with its stages and enemy craft, as well as some very impressive bosses. Controls are smooth and responsive throughout and there is plenty of variation in the artistic direction taken to keep you interested, whilst from a game mechanics point of view, the game is solid throughout. The visuals are attractive and detailed, and there is a great, thumping soundtrack from Allister Brimble which instantly earns a place as one of the best indie scores on the Dreamcast. The range of difficulty levels allows those who aren't hardened shooter fans to make decent progress, whilst also challenging those grizzled veterans. The game saw release across several modern day consoles, and compared to these there are a few technical issues; namely that it's not quite as smooth, the visuals are more pixelated with some missing details and there is an initially long load time (so long I genuinely thought the Dreamcast had crashed). However, after playing the Switch version of the game first and enjoying it immensely, I found this port to be rather impressive, all things considered.



Versions available and where to buy: There are both standard and limited versions of the game available. The standard version has both PAL case ([here](https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/andro-dunos-2-dreamcast-pal/) (<https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/andro-dunos-2-dreamcast-pal/>)) and US/Japanese reversible manual versions ([here](https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/andro-dunos-2-dreamcast-us/) (<https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/andro-dunos-2-dreamcast-us/>)) and [here](https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/andro-dunos-2-dreamcast-jpn/) (<https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/andro-dunos-2-dreamcast-jpn/>)) following JoshProd's standard publishing pattern. The limited edition is called "Space songs edition", which comes with the excellent soundtrack on a separate disc. There are both PAL versions ([here](https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/andro-dunos-2-space-) (<https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/andro-dunos-2-space->

[songs-edition-dreamcast-pal/](#)) and US/Japanese style versions ([here](#) (<https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/andro-dunos-2-space-songs-edition-dreamcast-us/>), and [here](#) (<https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/andro-dunos-2-space-songs-edition-dreamcast-jpn/>)) of this edition available.

Other links: Laurence delivered an excellent review of the game for the Junkyard, which you can read [here](https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2023/07/review-andro-dunos-ii.html) (<https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2023/07/review-andro-dunos-ii.html>).

You can see also how the game's modern gen versions hold up on [Metacritic](#) (<https://www.metacritic.com/game/andro-dunos-2/>). Spoiler alert: it's doing pretty well!

Another World



Publisher: JoshProd/PixelHeart

Developer: Eric Chahi, The Digital Lounge

Year of Release: 2018

In Summary: A legitimate gaming classic gets a Dreamcast release. Whilst the technology employed may be old and the game's insistence on trial-and-error gameplay sometimes frustrating, this is still an artistic, cinematic experience.

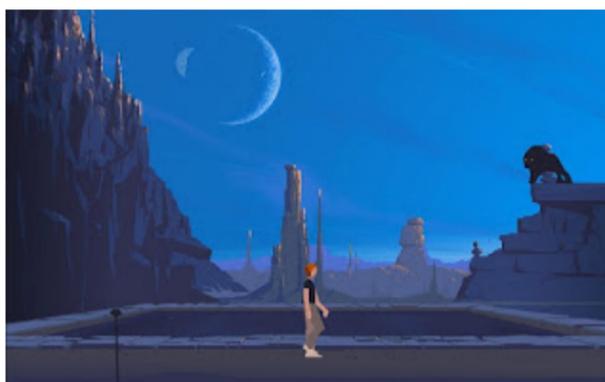


Review:

JoshProd's emergence as a major player in the Dreamcast indie scene heralded a new age, not least due to the promise of classic titles receiving official Dreamcast ports. Following on from the excellent Flashback, it seemed only fitting that we received a port of its spiritual predecessor, the excellent Another World. Best described as a "cinematic" platform adventure, you take on the role of particle physicist Lester, who, after an experiment goes wrong, finds himself literally, in another world. What follows is an adventure with minimal dialogue, alien creatures, strange set pieces and a lot of instant deaths. *A lot*. That may not sound like fun but it's part of the nature of the game - being sent back to the last checkpoint each time to learn from your mistake and progress the story. There are a number of puzzles, story twists and set pieces to

keep you entertained, and the deliberate minimalism of the game keeps it a fresher experience than its contemporaries. Another World is a gaming classic, and it's great to see it on the Dreamcast – even retaining features that modern generation platforms received with the "20th anniversary" reworking, such as a high resolution mode (which can be changed during the game), difficulty levels and higher quality sound. The rotoscoped animation was amazing at the time of its original release, and whilst it may not pack quite the same punch now, it's still a superbly fluid visual affair. The trial-and-error gameplay will not be to everyone's taste, but there is no denying the importance of the game and its success in making you feel like you're experiencing something "otherworldly".

Another World probably holds the record for most platforms a game released on the Dreamcast was also available on. At least, if you don't count stuff like Tetris, Bust-a-Move etc. I did spend a grand total of zero seconds double-checking if this fact was correct though, so send your complaints to the usual address if I'm wrong. The game received releases on the Amiga, Atari ST, 3DO, Apple IIGS, Jaguar, Mac, DOS, GBA, Mega-CD, Mega Drive, SNES, Mobile, Windows, PlayStation 3, PlayStation 4, iOS, Linux, 3DS, PlayStation Vita, Wii U, Xbox One, Nintendo Switch and most probably others that I've missed.

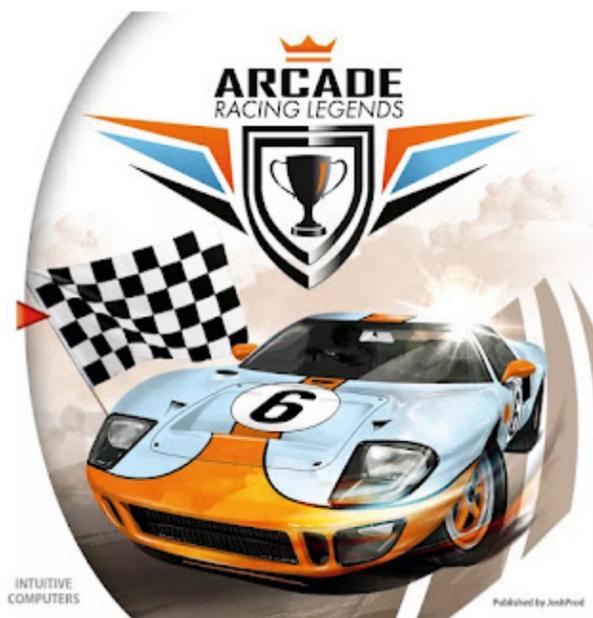


Versions available and where to buy: JoshProd released the game in its standard publishing format, so there's a PAL case version ([available here](https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/another-world-20th-anniversary-dreamcast-pal/) (<https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/another-world-20th-anniversary-dreamcast-pal/>)) and a US/Japanese style reversible manual/cover version, which can be purchased as either a US (<https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/another-world-20th-anniversary-dreamcast-us/>) or Japanese (<https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/another-world-20th-anniversary-dreamcast-jpn/>) version. All are still available on the PixelHeart website at time of writing, although the numbers available are becoming ever lower. The Japanese-styled cover is also rather superb.

Other links: We've not reviewed Another World on the Junkyard before, so instead I'm just going to stick a [link here](https://www.gog.com/en/game/another_world_20th_anniversary_edition) (https://www.gog.com/en/game/another_world_20th_anniversary_edition) for the 20th Anniversary edition of the game on GOG. Mainly just because I can.

You can also check out the [article](http://www.hardcoregaming101.net/another-world-out-of-this-world/) (<http://www.hardcoregaming101.net/another-world-out-of-this-world/>) on Hardcore Gaming 101 for the game.

Arcade Racing Legends



Publisher: JoshProd/PixelHeart

Developer: Intuitive Computers, JoshProd

Year of Release: 2020

In Summary: This 3D racing title takes inspiration from Sega's prodigious past, but sadly doesn't fulfil its own lofty ambitions. Too simplistic with poor AI and not enough variety.



Review:

This successfully Kickstarted title from JoshProd promised much. The plan was to deliver a new fully 3D racing title, soaked in Sega arcade pedigree nostalgia. In part, this plan was fulfilled. The variety of cars on offer draw from various Sega games and wider cultural references (everything from a very crazy-like taxi to an Ecto-1 inspired creation), whilst the tracks offer a nice selection of suitably exotic locales. Driving around these locations is a relatively enjoyable experience with a handling model that tries its best to feel like the games that inspired it. Additionally the soundtrack, like so many of the Dreamcast indie releases, is of a good quality and an enjoyable listen. All of these points are impressive for a DC indie release.

Sadly though, the game stumbles hard in many other areas. The AI performance is poor, with set paths for opponents who deviate little from the racing line. These rival cars string out early on, leaving each race feeling uninspired and rather dull. There are a few game modes available but the main career mode is just far too simplistic in its design to hold much interest. Additionally, all cars handle the same despite their size, there's a broken split-screen mode and a few graphical glitches (in the bonnet view, especially). Ultimately, it leaves it as a game which never manages to match its somewhat lofty ambitions, and despite some enjoyment from the simple racing on offer is generally a pretty unremarkable release.



Versions available and where to buy: The standard release of the game is available on the PixelHeart website in both PAL case (<https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/arcade-racing-legends-dreamcast-pal/>) and reversible US (<https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/arcade-racing-legends-dreamcast-us/>)/Japanese (<https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/arcade-racing-legends-dreamcast-jpn/>). flavours. The US/Japanese style release has JoshProd's usual format of reversible manual/cover but purchasable in either regional style so that those who want to keep it sealed can have their regional choice. This same format applies to the "Road Trip" version which includes a soundtrack CD - PAL (<https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/arcade-racing-legends-road-trip-dreamcast-pal/>), US (<https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/arcade-racing-legends-road-trip-dreamcast-us/>) and Japanese (<https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/arcade-racing-legends-road-trip-edition-dreamcast-jpn/>). Some of these versions (especially the PAL case releases) are seemingly running low in stock according to PixelHeart's own data.

Also available at VGNysoft (<https://www.vgnysoft.com/product-page/arcade-racing-legends-sega-dreamcast>) in both standard and Road Trip versions (<https://www.vgnysoft.com/product-page/arcade-racing-legends-road-trip-edition-sega-dreamcast>).

Other links: I reviewed the game for the Junkyard upon release, which you can read here (<https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2020/12/review-arcade-racing-legends.html>).

Armed Seven



Publisher: JoshProd/PixelHeart

Developer: Astro Port

Year of Release: 2019

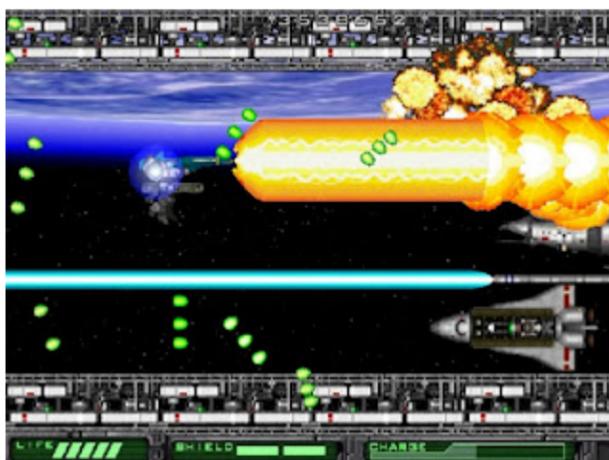
In Summary: Retro-styled horizontal shooter which is presented in two separate visual modes. Customisable loadouts and an interesting scoring system elevate it slightly from being too generic, leaving a fun and accessible addition to the Dreamcast

shooter library.



Review:

JoshProd's continued support of the Dreamcast in the dying years of the 2010s saw many excellent games come to the console, and their output was praised as bringing something new to the indie library other than just "yet more shooters". However, alongside a re-release of Dux 1.5 and Sturmwind, they also brought some new experiences to the shooter library as well – Armed Seven being one of them. Originally released over a decade ago on PC by well-regarded and prodigious Japanese indie developer Astro Port (many of their other games would subsequently see ports to the Dreamcast), this is an old-school-flavoured horizontal shooter with big robots, lots of enemies and plenty of action. There are only seven stages in total, but it makes up for this in some interesting ways. First of all, it's a score-chaser – this is meant to be replayed over and over, encouraging players to sneak some extra points from the quite complex scoring system. The four difficulty settings prolong its life (with the easy mode very accessible for newbies), but most importantly you have a customisable weapon loadout. Whether it's spread shots, homing missiles or giant laser beams, there is something here to suit everyone's tastes, and allows for some fun combinations. The game plays as you'd expect – it's very much a traditional shooter rather than an all out bullet-hell, but there is plenty of variety in enemy design, good-looking (and tough) bosses, and a shield/life bar dynamic that keeps you on your toes. Your mech also shoots off-centre, in a similar manner to games such as Under Defeat, allowing for more aggressive or defensive play. The game has two visual styles– one titled "Armed Seven", which is the same as the earlier PC release, and "Armed 7", which changes the graphics a bit for a bolder, more colourful look. Both modes look okay, with a retro-chic style that definitely doesn't push the machine but runs smoothly, and the audio is decent. Overall, Armed Seven can't reach the heights of the shoot 'em up big boys on the DC – it ultimately doesn't do anything we haven't seen before – and some may question a full-priced port of a game available for a tenth of the price on Steam, but it's a fun and playable shooter nonetheless.



Versions available and where to buy: The standard version of the game comes in two flavours - the PAL case version (<https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/armed-seven-dreamcast-pal-2/>)(limited to 2,000 copies) and the US (<https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/armed-seven-dreamcast-us/>)/Japanese (<https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/armed-seven-dreamcast-jpn/>). version which

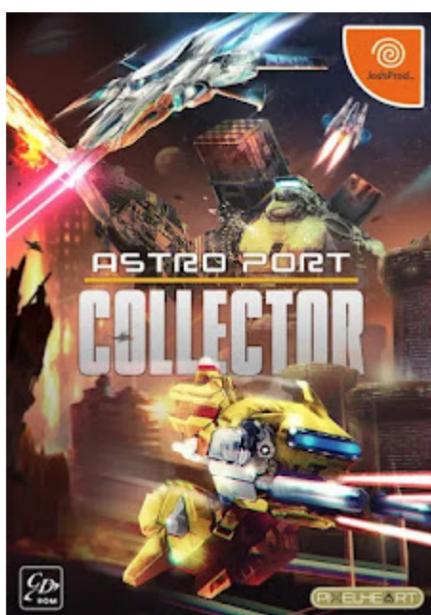
has a reversible cover/manual and can be purchased with either cover visible for those who want to keep their games sealed. These are available on the PixelHeart website, alongside the limited edition PAL style version, which is in a PAL case with a silver cover and an extra soundtrack CD. This is limited to 500 copies and [available here \(https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/armed-seven-limited-ost-edition-dreamcast-pal/\)](https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/armed-seven-limited-ost-edition-dreamcast-pal/).

Also available at VGNYsoft (<https://www.vgnysoft.com/product-page/armed-seven-sega-dreamcast>).

Other links: Whilst we've never reviewed the game on the Junkyard before, Scott did cover the game's announcement, alongside the other JoshProd titles released at the same time. You can read this [here \(https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2019/02/breaking-news-five-new-dreamcast-games.html\)](https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2019/02/breaking-news-five-new-dreamcast-games.html).

You can also purchase the PC version of the game on [Steam \(https://store.steampowered.com/app/349690/ARMED_SEVEN/\)](https://store.steampowered.com/app/349690/ARMED_SEVEN/). Like all Astro Port games, it's a fair bit cheaper this way.

Astro Port Collector



Publisher: JoshProd/PixelHeart

Developer: Astro Port

Year of Release: 2022

In Summary: A collection of four Astro Port shooters which sees the only release of both Gigantic Army and Zengeki Warp. Spanning several variations of the shooter genre, there's plenty of good ideas on offer and enough firepower and carnage available to satisfy fans. Quality varies slightly between the included titles and the high price point is disappointing, but with some unique experiences on offer this set delivers some enjoyable gaming.



Review:

JoshProd's 2022 wave of releases didn't get as much attention as their earlier games, in part due to a now crowded indie scene, but their continuing partnership with Japanese indie shooting developer Astro Port produced some of their very best releases. This four game collection (which was slightly highly priced at 100 euros) includes two titles that received standalone releases; the enjoyable but somewhat average **Wolflame** and **Satazius Next**, both of which have their own releases covered elsewhere in this article. The real attraction of this set is in the two titles whose only DC outing to date was part of this collection.

First we have **Gigantic Army**, a game first released on PC nearly a decade earlier, and which has subsequently received an upgraded Nintendo Switch port. A side-scrolling mech action-platformer, in the vein of classics such as *Cybernator*, you control the GMR-34 Saladin in a ferocious battle against the Ramulon army. Unapologetically retro in design, the game allows you to choose from a small selection of weapons before dropping you straight into the action, facing off with a huge number of mechanical enemies. The gameplay won't win awards for originality, but it plays surprisingly smoothly, with some good animation and plenty of screen-filling bosses that manage to impress. A needlessly tight time limit and the same grainy visuals that other Astro Port titles exhibit on the console are a tad disappointing, but it ends up being a rather enjoyable title.

The other game unique to this collection is **Zangeki Warp**. What looks on the surface like a traditional 2D horizontal shooter actually turns out to be an almost puzzle-orientated game, where the main gimmick is being able to "warp" (pausing time and drawing a line to another part of the stage to reappear at), slashing through enemies in a rather pleasing way in the process. Aside from this gimmick, it's pretty much a standard genre entry, but the warp ability really does give the game an added dimension, making you think in ways traditional shooters don't. It's also punishingly difficult, even on the easier modes, and is another example of that slightly grainy, dark Astro Port look (which I do admit to having a bit of a soft spot for). Both *Zangeki Warp* and *Gigantic Army* would be notable solo releases, and paired with two other decent games, this collection does pack a punch. It is a shame two very decent titles are stuck behind what is effectively a quite expensive paywall, and one which has also dampened the amount of attention either of those games have received in the community, but as it is, and with some very nice-looking packaging, it's a good addition for fans of shooters or the indie scene.



Versions available and where to buy: Available to purchase direct from the [PixelHeart webstore](https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/astro-port-collector-dreamcast/) here (<https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/astro-port-collector-dreamcast/>), at time of writing there was still nearly half of the 2,000 print run available to purchase for a slightly high €99.99. If you're in the States, [VGNyssoft](https://www.vgnyssoft.com/product-page/astro-port-collector-dreamcast) (<https://www.vgnyssoft.com/product-page/astro-port-collector-dreamcast>) may be a cheaper option to buy from.

Other links: Whilst we've never reviewed the collection before on the blog, I did cover it as part of an upcoming indie games article back in 2021. You can read the [article here](https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2021/04/upcoming-dreamcast-indie-releases-2021.html) (<https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2021/04/upcoming-dreamcast-indie-releases-2021.html>) - it also covers numerous other released and unreleased indie games.

If you want to delve even deeper into the Astro Port catalogue you can purchase the Astro Saga bundle on Steam which contains all the games in the Dreamcast collection, plus a couple of others that had DC releases and some that haven't (yet).

You can purchase that [here](#)

(https://store.steampowered.com/bundle/12969/The_ASTRO_SAGA_Complete_Bundle/).

Bang² Busters



Publisher: JoshProd/PixelHeart

Developer: Visco

Year of Release: 2018

In Summary: Cute and colourful arcade platformer with a fun gameplay mechanic, but without much else to make it stand out.



Review:

JoshProd followed up their earlier ports of Visco titles (Breakers, Ganryu) with this release of arcade platformer Bang Bang Busters (which is saddled with the slightly awkward "Bang² Busters" moniker here). The original was set to have been a mid-'90s release for the Neo Geo, but only actually saw the light of day in 2010 with a Neo Geo CD release shortly thereafter. As with other Visco titles, it's a bright and colourful experience with an arcade gameplay sensibility. Similar in form to classics such as Bubble Bobble or Snow Bros., it involves one or two players controlling Lazy and Refia on the planet Palua as they encounter a variety of enemies (usually comparable to a level's theme, so there are snowmen and Santa Claus in the snow levels, Cleopatra-like figures in the mildly Egyptian-themed levels etc.) which they have to shoot to "inflate". Once inflated, the enemies can either be dispatched themselves or used to dispatch other enemies in a variety of ways – primarily by swinging the inflated assailant around and launching it at others. It's a fun little mechanic but there isn't much more to the game than that. There are seven worlds with a series of levels in each which gives some variety to proceedings. The cute cartoon-like graphics are charming and

the chirpy sound is nice enough but a bit forgettable. Its Neo Geo roots are clear – even down to the easy, normal, hard or MVS difficulty settings, which smacks slightly of a rush job on the part of JoshProd who don't try and hide the fact this is running through an emulator. To be fair, the game generally runs quite well, better at least than many similar Visco ports, save for the occasional bit of slowdown. For those who like this sort of cute arcade platformer, there is probably just enough here to make it worthwhile, but as a full-price indie release in 2018, it felt dated and without the added nostalgia that previous ports inevitably had.



Versions available and where to buy: Two versions of the game are available - the PAL case release ([here \(https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/bang%20b2-busters-dreamcast-pal/\)](https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/bang%20b2-busters-dreamcast-pal/)) and the US/Japanese reversible manual/cover version ([here \(https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/bang-2-busters-dreamcast-us/\)](https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/bang-2-busters-dreamcast-us/) and [here \(https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/bang-2-busters-dreamcast-jpn/\)](https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/bang-2-busters-dreamcast-jpn/)). As always, all versions of the game play on any system.

Also available at VGNYsoft (<https://www.vgnysoft.com/product-page/bang-busters-dreamcast-sega-dreamcast>).

Other links: We've not covered the game on the yard before (we have missed a lot of indie releases haven't we?), so [here's a link \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3DncxpUdQEQ&ab_channel=WorldofLongplays\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3DncxpUdQEQ&ab_channel=WorldofLongplays) to a gameplay video on YouTube from World of Longplays.

Battle Crust

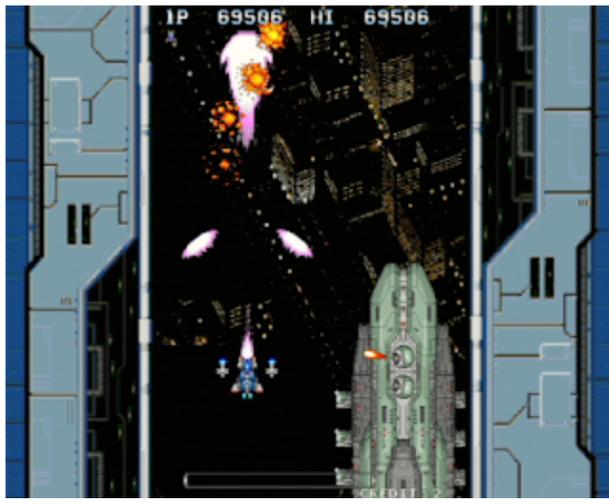


Publisher: JoshProd/PixelHeart

Developer: Picorinne Soft

Year of Release: 2018

In Summary: A throwback to '90s vertical shooters, Battle Crust is a short but enjoyable experience that doesn't innovate much but plays very much like the games it is inspired by. Also has an outstanding soundtrack.



Review:

Battle Crust is another addition to the Dreamcast's shoot 'em up library and was in fact the first Japanese-developed indie shooter to see a release on the console. Published by JoshProd, Battle Crust appeared on PC in 2016 and is very much a nostalgic throwback to 16-bit vertical shooters. It wouldn't look out of place as part of the PC Engine's stellar shooter library and that is most certainly a good thing. Those familiar with vertical shooters of old will know what to expect – plenty of enemy craft coming at you with a barrage of bullets (although this never reaches anything close to bullet-hell like projectile madness), screen-sized end of level bosses and a rather punishing difficulty level. You have a standard shot which can be upgraded, and are also equipped with one of three charge shots, which can be used defensively when held, or unleashed in a powerful attack. It's a familiar concept, and is well executed. You can swap between screen modes at the touch of a button, including TATE mode, and the game appears to run well for the most part. It's a short game at only six levels, and the bosses are a little underwhelming, particularly for their lack of challenge compared to the rest of the stages, leaving them somewhat anti-climatic, but other than that the game does the job. Some may find it a little uninspired and generic, and the fact that it doesn't save high scores is a rather large oversight, but it's a solid addition to the library.

Special mention must be made of the soundtrack, composed by Hyakutaro Tsukumo (responsible for several Technosoft shooter soundtracks in the '90s) which is just fantastic and easily sits near the top of the indie soundtracks for the Dreamcast, which is no easy task.



Versions available and where to buy: Battle Crust's release followed JoshProd's standard approach of a PAL case version ([available here](https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/battle-crust-dreamcast-pal/) (<https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/battle-crust-dreamcast-pal/>)) and a US/Japanese reversible cover version, available to buy with either style displayed ([here](https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/battle-crust-dreamcast-us/) (<https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/battle-crust-dreamcast-us/>) and [here](https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/battle-crust-dreamcast-jpn/) (<https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/battle-crust-dreamcast-jpn/>)). Additionally, random purchasers of the PAL case version were in for a chance of receiving the "limited edition" instead. This has a metallic silver cover and an additional soundtrack

CD. This version would be made available to purchase on its own in early 2023 (and is still available (<https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/battle-crust-limited-ost-edition-dreamcast-pal/>)) on the PixelHeart store at time of writing).

Other links: [Tom reviewed the game](#)

(<https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2018/09/review-battle-crust.html>) upon its original release, and as always with Tom's reviews it's worth a read.

Big2Small



Publisher: RetroRoomGames

Developer: MDSteele

Year of Release: 2023

In Summary: Charmingly cute and somewhat challenging puzzle title. Does not push the hardware at all and is a little pricey for what it is, but there is a fun little game here.



Review:

This delightfully charming little puzzle game from RetroRoomGames doesn't push the Dreamcast hardware in any way whatsoever, but it's hard not to take a liking to it. Don't let the simple Game Boy visuals and child-friendly concept fool you though – there is a devilish puzzle title here. You must guide Ellie the Elephant, Gisele the Goat and Melanie the Mouse through each single-screen puzzle to their preferred food item. Soon you'll realise this is much more tricky than it sounds, and involves ensuring you don't move them to a position where they become unable to reach their goal. As the levels progress, numerous new concepts are added to turn a simple premise into a more complex and taxing affair. Visuals and audio are of course not top-tier, this did after all receive a Game Boy port which is near identical, and puzzle games will always divide gamers, but with the glorious full-colour manual and a genuinely charming style, this is a cute little game that many may have missed, not helped by what it is a rather expensive price point.



Versions available and where to buy: Big2Small is available for £25 on the RetroRoomGames site [here](https://theretroroomgames.com/products/big2small-presales) (<https://theretroroomgames.com/products/big2small-presales>). There are options available to purchase "PAL" or "US" versions, however this appears to be a hangover from other systems options (those that require different carts for different regions) as there is only the one version for DC and no regional lockouts.

Other links: We've not really featured the game on the Junkyard before, other than some mentions on Podcast episodes and news articles. [Here's one](https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2022/08/dreamcast-news-round-up-august-2022.html) (<https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2022/08/dreamcast-news-round-up-august-2022.html>) from Laurence which mentions the game (always good to go back to some news articles to see what the state of the DC scene was at a particular time).

You can check out what other projects developer MDSteele have been involved with [here](https://mdsteele.games/) (<https://mdsteele.games/>).

Breakers



Publisher: JoshProd/PixelHeart

Developer: Visco

Year of Release: 2017

In Summary: Decent port of a mid-'90s 2D fighter which was heavily inspired by Street Fighter II. Tech issues including slowdown will turn off the more hardcore genre fans, but for most, Breakers delivers a decent game with some nostalgia for what is arguably the golden era of the 2D fighter.



Review:

Breakers is a port of a semi-obscure Visco 2D fighter from the mid-'90s, which saw an appearance on the Neo Geo and Neo Geo CD, officially licensed and approved by the original creators. Breakers' later port to the Dreamcast heralded the first indie one-on-one fighter release, and the start of JoshProd's journey of resurrecting old licenses for new ports to the console, a move which significantly changed the landscape of the indie scene. The game itself is a heavily Street Fighter II inspired 2D fighter, with characters that closely resemble the types typical of other nineties fighters, and boasts some nice pixel art and solid gameplay mechanics. As the game uses the Neo Geo emulator prevalent in the DC homebrew scene, it does have the occasional moment of slowdown and is not as smooth as the original Neo Geo release, which for some fighting fans could be a real turn off, messing with the core gameplay mechanics and timings which are so important for the most hardcore of fighting fans. For more casual fighting game fans, and those wanting a decent mid-'90s 2D fighter to add to their collection, Breakers is still playable and worthy of some playtime.



Versions available and where to buy: The PixelHeart store still has all versions of the game available, of which there are two. The PAL case release ([here](https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/breakers-dreamcast-pal/) (<https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/breakers-dreamcast-pal/>)) and the reversible US/Japanese version (available [here](https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/breakers-dreamcast-us/) (<https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/breakers-dreamcast-us/>), and [here](https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/breakers-dreamcast-jpn/) (<https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/breakers-dreamcast-jpn/>)). Interestingly, the site lists the game as "Breaker's" however the original name and every other mention of the game goes for Breakers instead.

Also available at [VGNYsoft](https://www.vgnysoft.com/product-page/breakers-sega-dreamcast) (<https://www.vgnysoft.com/product-page/breakers-sega-dreamcast>).

Other links: The Junkyard featured an incredibly in-depth three person review and analysis which can be [read here](https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2017/03/review-emulation-analysis-breakers.html) (<https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2017/03/review-emulation-analysis-breakers.html>). Tom, Rob and Ross all had mixed views on the release, and the article is definitely worth a read if you want more information compared to my short look at the game.

Captain Tomaday



Publisher: JoshProd/PixelHeart

Developer: Visco

Year of Release: 2019

In Summary: A silly, colourful shooter with some wacky ideas, an artistic design and a unique gameplay concept. A fun, decent game, but let down by emulation issues and some pervasive slowdown.



Review:

Captain Tomaday is a bit of a strange one. Another of JoshProd's delves into the Visco back catalogue, the game sees you take control of the titular character, an anthropomorphic flying tomato (or his female counterpart), through a series of vertically scrolling levels, facing off against a bunch of weird enemies. Taking obvious inspiration from TwinBee and Parodius in the "cute 'em up" subgenre, you'll face jack-o'-lanterns, flying babies, demonic eggs, squids, turtles, robots, turnips, eggplants... it's all a bit silly, but colourful and nicely drawn. Power ups are also key – you can juggle these (another nod to its inspiration), and there are 17 different ones which will transform you into various forms. Just like the enemies, these power ups are a bit bizarre – giant form, cloned form, potted plant, giant baby, monkey. It's pretty cool to have these - each one plays slightly differently, and it's a change of pace from the more serious space shooter type settings. In standard form, the way you attack is also a bit different – two attack buttons control a fist each, and you can power up one fist by using the other one repeatedly. Again, this is a bit different to other shoot 'em ups, but it works pretty well. It adds to the quirkiness and fun of the title, something that shines throughout the game's five stages, helped by the colourful sprites and backgrounds. Sadly, there are some issues. The stages feel overly long and there is a noticeable amount of screen tearing which is really off-putting. It's also clear that this is an emulated version of the Neo Geo title – there wasn't really much of an attempt to hide this, which is disappointing from a presentational point of view, but also results in some pretty bad slowdown. If you're looking for a less-than-serious shooter that does things a bit differently, it's still a worthwhile title to grab, but the performance issues really do get in the way.



Versions available and where to buy: If you're reading through this article in order you will no doubt be bored of me saying what comes next - the game follows JoshProd's standard release format of a PAL case release ([here](https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/captain-tomaday-dreamcast-pal-3/) (<https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/captain-tomaday-dreamcast-pal-3/>)) and a US (<https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/captain-tomaday-dreamcast-jpn/>)/ Japanese (<https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/captain-tomaday-dreamcast-us/>), reversible cover version which can be purchased with either cover on display whilst sealed.

Also available at VGNYsoft (<https://www.vgnysoft.com/product-page/captain-tomaday-sega-dreamcast>).

Other links: We never reviewed the game upon release, but [here is a link](http://www.hardcoregaming101.net/captain-tomaday/) (<http://www.hardcoregaming101.net/captain-tomaday/>) to an article on the always excellent Hardcore Gaming 101.

Cool Herders



Publisher: GOAT Store

Developer: HarmlessLion

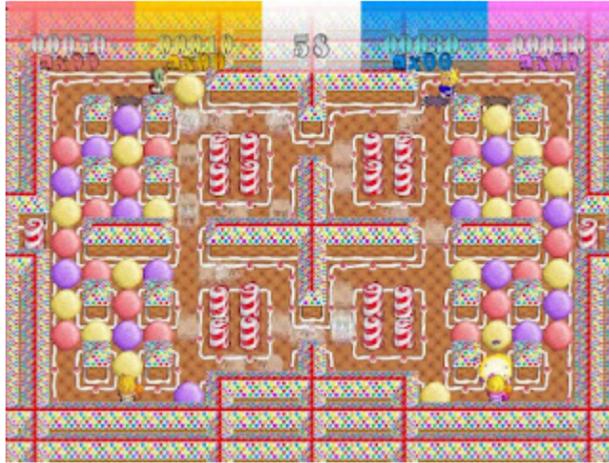
Year of Release: 2005

In Summary: A sheep herding multiplayer release which is a fun little title, if somewhat on the simple side. One of the earliest of the indie games for the system, being released nearly 20 years ago at time of writing.



Review:

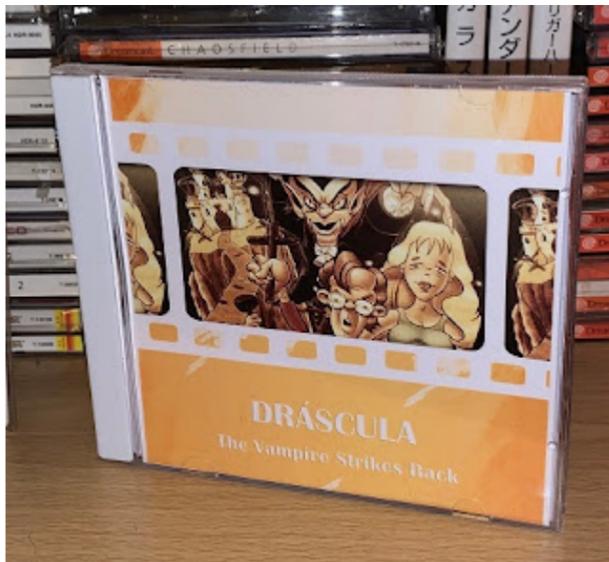
Originally brought to the attention of gamers for its inclusion on the infamous E3 2001 DC Tonic disc (an unlicensed disc of independent demos that impressed highly), the full release of Cool Herders is one of the Goat Store releases of the mid-noughties that helped keep the Dreamcast alive in the West. A sheep herding multiplayer game with obvious Bomberman influences, the game sees you running over various sheep to "herd" them, whilst stunning both the sheep and opponents with your magical shepherd staff, with winners determined by various scoring factors as well as number of sheep herded. There's also a story mode, which allows for some single-player fun as well. It's a polished indie release, with pleasant, colourful graphics and decent music. It can get tough in single-player pretty quickly, and the game is far more enjoyable generally when played against other humans. Basic, but fun.



Versions available and where to buy: There was only the one standard version of the game released and this can be picked up from various retro stores (including [The Bit Station](https://thebitstationgames.com/product/cool-herders/) (<https://thebitstationgames.com/product/cool-herders/>)). It usually retails for around \$15 or the equivalent in your local currency.

Other links: Another one we never covered when released, check the [game's entry](https://indiedreams.fandom.com/wiki/Cool_Herders) (https://indiedreams.fandom.com/wiki/Cool_Herders) on the Indie Dreams wiki for more information.

Dráscula: The Vampire Strikes Back



Publisher: Erbe Software

Developer: Alcachofa Soft

Year of Release: 2021

In Summary: Whilst the game itself is a decent, comedic '90s adventure game, this release is an insultingly low-quality version using ScummVM which runs terribly. One of the low points of the Dreamcast indie library.



Review:

Dráscula, a '90s Spanish point-and-click adventure from Alcachofa Soft, flew under the radar of many Dreamcast collectors when Erbe Software launched a low-target Kickstarter back in 2020. A bare-bones campaign, and a lack of much information in English, didn't help matters. To be honest, I'd written it off as an indie release we'd never see. Already available via the ScummVM genre emulator (and for free, as the original developers allowed it to be distributed as such), the game itself is not an awful example of the genre: a cheesy, somewhat dated comedic tale of campy comedic horror, somewhere between Young Frankenstein and Rocky Horror Picture Show. Nice pixel artwork, multi-language audio, and an interface familiar to anyone who has experienced a late 20th century point-and-clicker were also solid points in its favour. Unfortunately, you'll not know it from this release. Running via ScummVM (with no attempt to hide it, booting into an ugly selection screen), it's crippled with audio issues, freezing, and crashes galore. The packaging is of a very low quality with an inkjet printed cover (which looks awful) and a low quality CD-R. It's nearly impossible to make any meaningful progress due to the issues, and for a game which cost 35 euros on release, you'd expect better. Insultingly low quality throughout, this release doesn't do justice to the game and is a low point in DC indie releases.



Versions available and where to buy: It doesn't look like there is any way of purchasing this release after the completion of the Kickstarter. For once this cannot be considered a bad thing. If you do want to seek a copy out, your only options would be eBay or Dreamcast/retro gaming forums. I wouldn't bother though, honestly.

The game was available in both DVD and CD cases, but the number of each is unknown.

Other links: I [reviewed this](https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2021/03/new-dreamcast-indie-release-review.html) (https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2021/03/new-dreamcast-indie-release-review.html) back when it was released (thanks to Chris Nunn for lending me his copy) and was just as angry about it then as I am now!

You can download the PC version of the game as its freeware. [ScummVM](https://www.scummvm.org/games/) (https://www.scummvm.org/games/) is the best place for this, and whilst you're there, you can get some of those other classic adventures working on your Dreamcast!

Dreamcastnoid



Publisher: Play/Matra

Developer: Alfonso Martinez

Year of Release: 2017

In Summary: Simple Arkanoid clone with a ton of Dreamcast scene references, released on a mini-CD. The game itself is pretty rough, but that's only part of the fun with this release.



Review:

Originally an entry into the DCJAM contest in 2016, Dreamcastnoid is a notable release for various reasons. An unashamed Arkanoid clone, the game mischievously plays on the common enemy of the Dreamcast community, the PlayStation 2 (also known as "the Dreamcast stand (https://www.reddit.com/r/ps2/comments/axju5y/hows_your_dreamcast_stand_is_doing_i_recently/)"), and allows you to control a paddle in the form of a VMU in your attempt to destroy the enemy. Don't expect anything approaching a "proper" release as this is very proudly Homebrew with a capital H, complete with slightly shaky graphics and audio, and more than a few nods to the scene at large. There are lots of "secrets" and Easter eggs (all listed in the manual, oddly), but it's not exactly a triple-A title for the indie library. Solely as a game it's impossible to recommend though.

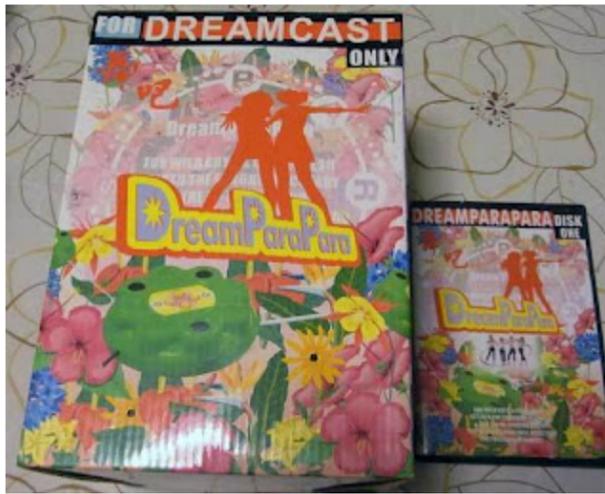
The other notable aspect of the release is the format – the very first (and as of yet, only) commercially released indie title on mini-CD.

Versions available and where to buy: It doesn't look like you can get this from the original source or any online retailer currently, so if you want to pick this up you're going to need to keep an eye on eBay or the usual forums. Worth noting it is free to download too.

Other links: Tom covered this release a couple of times on the Junkyard, and you can check both of these articles out [here](https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2017/01/arkanoid-clone-dreamcastnoid-available.html) (<https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2017/01/arkanoid-clone-dreamcastnoid-available.html>) and [here](https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2017/10/dreamcastnoid-gets-mini-cd-retail.html) (<https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2017/10/dreamcastnoid-gets-mini-cd-retail.html>).

You can also download the game for free from the [itch.io \(https://alfons-ryo.itch.io/dreamcastnoid\)](https://alfons-ryo.itch.io/dreamcastnoid) page here.

DreamParaPara



Publisher: Unknown (bootleg)

Developer: Konami (original version)

Year of Release: Unknown, presumed to be 2000

In Summary: Chinese bootleg of Konami's Para Para series which is nevertheless rather impressive, especially when considering it comes with a bespoke controller.



Review:

An interesting one, this: a Chinese bootleg which rips video directly from the Konami Para Para series, recreating it, with bespoke controller, for the Dreamcast. A quick glance at the packaging will show that this certainly is produced at a rather lower quality level, with mangled English phrases dotted over the DVD-size case. Information on its origins are scarce, but it's safe to assume that the game came with the bootleg Para Para controller as standard (or as standard as these dodgy releases can be) – but that's not a complete loss, as the quality of the peripheral isn't actually all that bad. As for the game itself, those familiar with the official Konami releases will know what to expect. It's all about dancing with the arms and following the instructions on screen which indicate which of the five sensors your limbs should be above. Digitised routines from dancers appear on screen and you dance your way along to some Eurodance tracks that are relentlessly chirpy. It all works well, and you'd be hard-pressed to find someone who would actually guess that this isn't an official release (packaging issues aside). It won't appeal to all, but for those who get their kicks out of the Dance Dance titles, it's worth tracking down – and for everyone else, the quirkiness and rareness marks it as worth seeking out.

Should this be included in this article of commercially released indie games? Almost certainly not, but as it's notable for its bespoke controller as well as the game itself - and because I like the thing more than I should - I've included it anyway.



Versions available and where to buy: You'll have to keep a keen eye open on eBay or private sales posts to pick this one up.

Other links: We've never really covered the game on the Junkyard before, other than some of us flexing that we had it like the sad, lonely men that we are. So [here is a video \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ww3P6vEka9o&ab_channel=OldSchoolCesspool\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ww3P6vEka9o&ab_channel=OldSchoolCesspool) from Youtube user Old School Cesspool instead.

Driving Strikers



Publisher: WAVE Game Studios

Developer: Reality Jump

Year of Release: 2023

In Summary: The first online Dreamcast indie game, Driving Strikers takes inspiration from Rocket League to deliver a very enjoyable game of vehicular football. Best played with some friends (locally or online), it takes a little time to master the controls, but is an exciting first step in a new era for the indie scene.



Review:

Over two decades after the Dreamcast's official commercial life ended (at least in Europe and North America), and after 70+ indie releases, Driving Strikers finally brought a new, online multiplayer experience to the console. Taking an obvious inspiration from Rocket League, the game allows two teams of two cars to play each other in a game of vehicular football. Like the sport itself, the aim is pretty simple – score more goals than your opponents. To help you in that pursuit, you drive, jump and boost your way around each arena, frantically trying to either pass the ball to your teammate, push it in the direction of your opponent's goal, or get in the way of your rivals as they do the same. There are eight teams available to choose from, all with suitably late nineties-era names, and half a dozen arenas, although a couple of these need to be unlocked. From a single-player perspective, there's a league mode to play your way through which is enjoyable and useful in allowing you to learn the game's controls and developing tactics, but it's in the multiplayer that the game shines. Whether online or with some friends locally, it's easily the most enjoyable way to experience the often anarchic action, and any issues with the game are somehow easier to forgive in these circumstances. Certainly the controls can take some time to master although these are vastly improved over those present in the game's early demos, and in your first few games played against the sometimes uneven AI, don't be surprised to see the ball sailing past you and your teammate's cars and into your goal. Persevere however, and it soon becomes more intuitive, allowing you to make stylish and risky manoeuvres in pursuit of victory. The action does sometimes feel like it's too ground-based compared to something like Rocket League, but that's possibly a result of the fixed FIFA style perspective. A bit more aerial action would have made the game even more chaotic and exciting. The cars are varied, but all control the same, and the arenas themselves are a nice, varied mix, although the action only ever takes place on the same size pitch within these venues. The single-player modes are somewhat lacking, something that a sequel will hopefully one day remedy, and there are a couple of bugs present (including the occasional complete loss of control input for me), but these are forgivable when the core multiplayer experience is so good. A milestone of an indie release, Driving Strikers does what it set out to do whilst delivering a fun playing experience and lays the groundwork, hopefully, for what is yet to come.



I of course also have to point out that, yes, that is a Dreamcast Junkyard logo in the game. We're everywhere, we are. Luke and Dave never went with our idea of having our faces lining the sides of each pitch though, sadly.

Versions available and where to buy: WAVE Game Studios released Driving Strikers in the style of all three main regions the Dreamcast was released in. So you have a PAL/Euro style release, US style and Japanese style all of which are available to buy [here \(https://www.wavegamestudios.com/shop/driving-strikers\)](https://www.wavegamestudios.com/shop/driving-strikers). As with any indie release, these are all region free.

WAVE are also soon to release (at time of writing) a limited edition version of the game with an added soundtrack. This will see US and Japanese style releases in jewel cases, and a PAL version in a nice shiny PAL case. All of these can be pre-ordered from [this link \(https://www.wavegamestudios.com/shop/driving-strikers-le\)](https://www.wavegamestudios.com/shop/driving-strikers-le).



WAVE also offers a couple of other options for the game. Those who are solely bound to GDEMU or other such devices can purchase the digital version [here](https://www.wavegamestudios.com/shop/driving-strikers-digital) (<https://www.wavegamestudios.com/shop/driving-strikers-digital>), and for those who want to upgrade their standard copy and have an empty PAL case lying around can purchase the PAL upgrade kit [here](https://www.wavegamestudios.com/shop/driving-strikers-pal-upgrade-kit) (<https://www.wavegamestudios.com/shop/driving-strikers-pal-upgrade-kit>), which basically provides you with the physical inlays to fit the case.

Other links: We've been covering this on the Junkyard since it was first announced - Lozz delivered another excellent review which can be [read here](https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2023/08/driving-strikers-review-first-new.html) (<https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2023/08/driving-strikers-review-first-new.html>), whilst James interviewed one half of the development team - Luke Benstead - [here](https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2022/10/driving-strikers-its-online-interview.html) (<https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2022/10/driving-strikers-its-online-interview.html>).

Dux

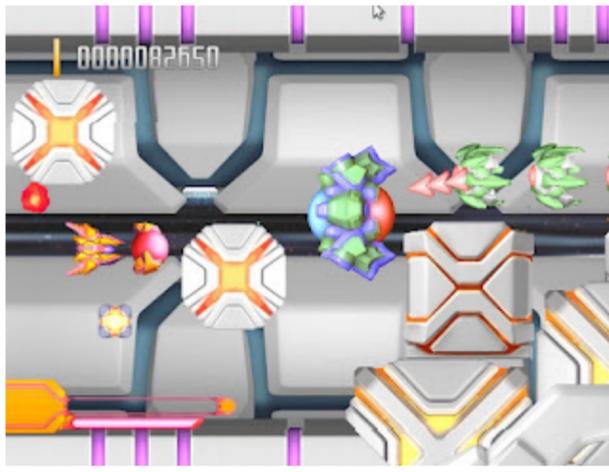


Publisher: Hucast

Developer: Hucast/KonTechs

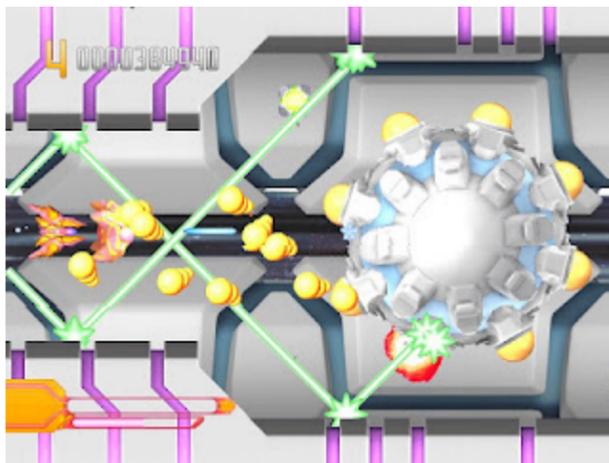
Year of Release: 2009

In Summary: Hucast's first foray into the Dreamcast indie world delivers a nice looking horizontal shooter that has decent mechanics under the hood. A high difficulty and some annoying bugs do spoil this initial effort however - which would mostly be rectified with subsequent update releases.



Review:

The initial Dreamcast offering of the once prolific indie publisher and developer Hucast was this title, Dux. Taking a horizontal shooter approach, it is highly stylised and puts a lot of emphasis on the bullet soaking mechanic. Indeed, approach this as a straight-ahead shooter and you're more than likely going to be suffering frustration, as the game throws dozens of colourful enemies and bullets in your direction. The art style is nice, even more so as you progress, but the high resolution visuals can look a little clinical. The game is somewhat unbalanced, and a re-spawned craft is woefully underpowered, leading to more frustration – not helped by some disappointing bugs and high difficulty. It's still a nice looking indie release, but not at the top end of the DC's shoot 'em up arsenal. Hucast would release an updated 1.5 version, as well as a reimagined Redux version of the game, both of which are slightly better than this original.



Versions available and where to buy: Two versions of the game exist: a standard edition which comes in a DVD case and a limited edition of 500 which comes with an extra soundtrack CD, also in a DVD case. This limited edition is individually numbered. Your only real option to purchase either of these nowadays is to keep your eye on eBay or private sales.

Other links: A quick search of the Junkyard will show we've covered Dux and its various iterations several times on the Junkyard - [here](https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2009/06/dux-is-shipping-out.html) (<https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2009/06/dux-is-shipping-out.html>), for example, is Aaron announcing the game's shipping.

Dux 1.5



Publisher: Hucast (re-released by JoshProd/PixelHeart)

Developer: Hucast / KonTechs

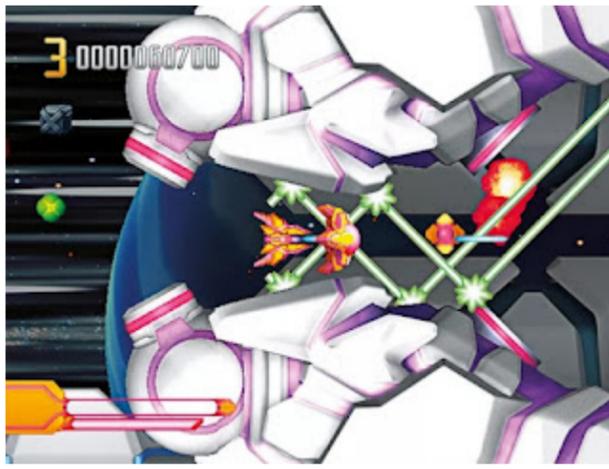
Year of Release: 2013

In Summary: A reworked version of Dux that manages to address much of the criticism of the first release and is an altogether more accessible title. It's still tough, and the balance isn't at the level of more distinguished shooters, but it's a decent game.



Review:

Hucast deserve credit for listening to criticism of their initial release of Dux, as four years later they released this reworked version. There's nothing hugely different here, but what has been achieved is the ironing out of the bugs, the revamping of some poor design choices (dying now respawns you where you died, and your craft is more weapon heavy earlier on) and the further centralisation of bullet soaking within the gameplay. All these improvements are welcome, and if you're looking for the best version of Dux to play, this is the one, but the game still suffers from some flaws – it's still too hectic at times, with your craft an all too large target for enemy fire, and the difficulty is still probably too high for those who are not experts at shooters. On the positive side, progress is easier compared to Dux, allowing more players to see the later stages (where they'll still probably be annihilated by the high difficult levels, but still). Hucast set out to improve the original and they've done that, but Dux 1.5 – whilst enjoyable – is still not at the higher tiers.



Versions available and where to buy: Okay, so there are a few versions of this one available, so strap yourself in. First there was a standard release in a pink DVD case. Alongside this there was a limited edition of 500 copies which came with a soundtrack CD and different artwork.

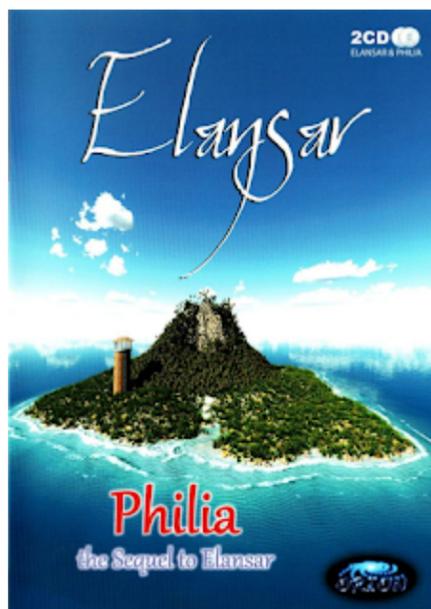
There was also a collectors edition, which contained both Dux 1.5 and Dux 1.1 (a slightly updated version of the original release which is exclusive to this edition) as well as the soundtracks for Dux 1.5 and the original Dux. Limited to 300 copies, this was released in a double jewel case.

There was also a standard release of the game in a jewel case, released after the original release of the game, and a "special edition" which is the most limited of all the releases (just 199), sports new artwork, and came packaged with the game disc and soundtracks to both the original game and 1.5. Both of these versions, and indeed all of the versions listed, are pretty much available now only on eBay, some retro stores and private sales.

But there is more. JoshProd also re-released the game in their usual format, so there's a PAL case version ([here \(https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/dux-1-5-dreamcast-pal/\)](https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/dux-1-5-dreamcast-pal/)) and the reversible manual Japanese (<https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/dux-1-5-dreamcast-jpn/>)/US (<https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/dux-1-5-dreamcast-us/>). style versions all available on the PixelHeart store. Every version of Dux 1.5 is of course region free.

Other links: Whilst there are several articles about Dux 1.5 and its predecessor on the 'Yard, [here's an interview](https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2015/06/developer-interview-hucast-games-rene.html) (<https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2015/06/developer-interview-hucast-games-rene.html>) that Tom conducted with Hucast's Rene Hellwig instead. It's well worth a read.

Elansar & Philia



Publisher: Hucast, Orion

Developer: Orion

Year of Release: 2015

In Summary: A solid collection of two Myst-like adventure games. Whilst they both fall into the same traps that other examples of the genre are prone too, this is a rather unique release in the Dreamcast indie library which will appeal to the more cerebral gamer.



Review:

Orion became somewhat prolific in 2015/2016, as the French developer released no less than four retail Dreamcast titles to the public, spanning several genres from 2D platformer to puzzle, to RPG and this, a point-and-click adventure very much inspired by Myst. Originally released on the Jaguar CD as two separate titles, the pair were bundled together in a single package for Dreamcast. Elansar takes a static screen approach, whilst the technology in Philia is a bit more advanced and uses 360-degree views. Both use the standard find item/use item approach to progress with a healthy smattering of puzzles thrown in (especially in Philia). These are of a decent quality, and the graphics bring back memories of the mid-'90s – both games could easily pass for examples of the sometimes maligned genre in its "glory days". The plot and writing in both are decent and it is nice to have another type of game emerging from the indie scene. It's not without its problems, with some obtuse puzzles and too many instances of retracing your steps to find well hidden objects, but that's not unusual for any game of this genre. Elansar is a bit more basic than Philia but feels more like an adventure, whilst Philia focuses on puzzles a lot more. The graphics aren't going to set the world alight, but the audio on both games is good. The package is worth a pick up for those who want something a bit different from their Dreamcast gaming.

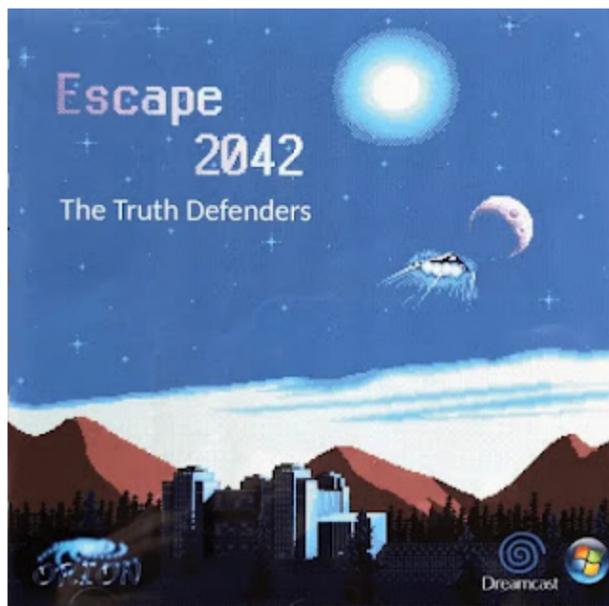


Versions available and where to buy: Just the one version of this game is available, on two discs in one DVD case. You can still purchase directly from Orion via their [website here \(https://www.orionsoft.games/retroshop/el_ph_dc.htm\)](https://www.orionsoft.games/retroshop/el_ph_dc.htm).

Other links: Tom talked about the imminent arrival of [these games here \(https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2014/11/atari-jaguar-indie-titles-coming-to.html\)](https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2014/11/atari-jaguar-indie-titles-coming-to.html).

There are loads of links to the various console ports of Elansar & Philia [on Orion's website \(https://www.orionsoft.games/\)](https://www.orionsoft.games/), and I'd definitely recommend taking a look!

Escape 2042: The Truth Defenders

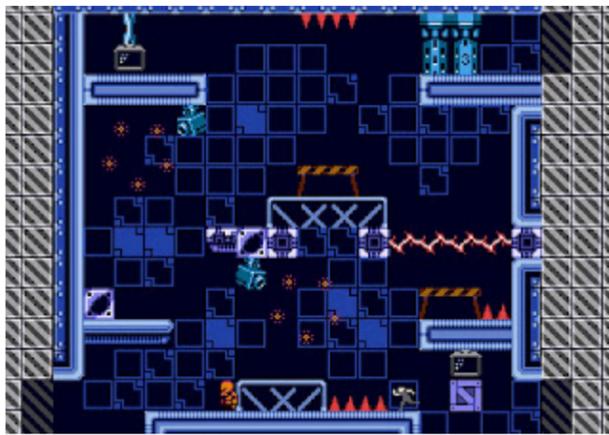


Publisher: Orion

Developer: Orion

Year of Release: 2017

In Summary: Accomplished 80s-inspired dystopian platformer that oozes atmosphere and neat design choices. Some nice mini-games break up the action and whilst the game doesn't push the hardware, its style and solid action make it a worthy addition to the library.



Review:

Orion's one-man mission to give the Dreamcast indie scene as many genres as humanly possible continued with *Escape 2042*, a title that takes inspiration both in gameplay and aesthetics from the 8-bit world of the 80s. Set in a dystopian future, the game is somewhat of a homage to titles such as *Impossible Mission* and features unforgiving platform action with puzzle elements as well as a couple of mini-games (including a great "reverse-shmup"). What elevates the game is its dark, moody atmosphere which perfectly fits in with the 80s dystopian view of an Orwellian future, with a great soundtrack and some spot-on pixel art. There is plenty of challenge on offer, in the way that old 8-bit platformers always had (although it's fair to say this may put some off, as at times it is a rather unforgiving game), and there is a fair amount of (thankfully) instant respawning as you attempt to navigate your way through the levels. Later on, the game changes setting and colour palette from the blues and blacks that set the earlier scenes, but it never moves away from being a nostalgic and well-programmed nod to a gaming era now gone. The variety on offer is rather nice – again a nod back to classic titles that broke up their platforming with the odd dip into other genres – and the game is the most well rounded and "complete" of all the titles Orion published on the DC.

It doesn't push the console, and if you don't have nostalgic feelings about a time when cold war paranoia and less-than-positive views of the world's future were rife, you may not get quite as much enjoyment out of the game as those that do, but it is a well-crafted, enjoyable platformer and yet another example of what a talented bloke Orion really is.



Versions available and where to buy: There's only one version of the game available, but it's a bit tricky to source nowadays other than through private sales or eBay. Here's hoping for a re-release! You can, however, download the digital version of the game for a small sum from the game's [itch.io](https://orionsoft.itch.io/escape2042) (<https://orionsoft.itch.io/escape2042>) page, which I'd thoroughly recommend!

Other links: Tom delivered an article upon the game's Kickstarter announcement which can be [read here](https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2017/01/escape-2042-truth-defenders-hit.html) (<https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2017/01/escape-2042-truth-defenders-hit.html>). I was genuinely confused when searching the 'Yard as to why my review of the game wasn't showing up. Fun fact: I've written a total 23 indie reviews that I thought I'd published but actually just sat in my draft folder. I have failed myself, the Junkyard fans, Tom, Lewis, Captain Kirk, little baby Jesus and my lord and master Lucifer. For this I apologise, but at least I'm making up for it now!

The Escapee



Publisher: JoshProd/PixelHeart

Developer: Invictus Games

Year of Release: 2018

In Summary: A cinematic, dystopian experience in adventuring akin to games like Flashback and Another World. It relies somewhat on trial and error, but positively drips in its minimalist, stark atmosphere.



Review:

Dystopian futures were pretty popular in '90s gaming. Alongside the big name PC titles like Syndicate and Blade Runner, numerous games portrayed a bleak take on mankind's progression – especially, it seems, on the Amiga, a platform where this title developed by Invictus Games (who would also go on to develop the first 3D Dreamcast indie game 4x4 Jam) originally saw a release in 1997 under the name "OnEscapee". Two decades later, JoshProd allowed Dreamcast owners to enjoy this dark, but solid, title. Inspired by a couple of other late DC ports from JoshProd, namely Flashback and Another World, the game features detailed artwork, a cinematic experience, stark audio and fluid "rotoscoped" characters. It starts off with an excellent intro sequence which is ambiguous but sets the tone perfectly. Playing as Daniel White, you're abducted by alien creatures before crash landing and having to make your way through a series of seven hostile levels in a strange, otherworldly environment. Gameplay is very reminiscent of the Delphine games previously mentioned – 2D side-on adventuring with plenty of puzzles, instant death hazards and cinematic moments. The artistry on display is excellent, with a bleak, desolate dystopian look, and the audio enhances the unearthly feel of the title. There's an added hint system which helps with the trial-and-error mechanics of the original. The minimalism and atmosphere make for an intriguing, and welcome, addition to the library.



Versions available and where to buy: The game followed JoshProd's usual approach to publishing with a PAL case version and a US/Japanese version with a reversible cover. The PixelHeart store currently has the latter of these (with either the US cover (<https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/the-escapee-dreamcast-us/>) or the Japanese cover (<https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/the-escapee-dreamcast-jpn/>), on display for the sealed game collector), but is out of stock of the PAL version.

Also available at VGNYSOFT (<https://www.vgnysoft.com/product-page/the-escapee-sega-dreamcast>).

Other links: Friend of the Junkyard Adam Koralik took a look at the game (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oL5Csj1wm5w&ab_channel=AdamKoralik) when it was released on his YouTube channel. Adam is obviously someone you need to follow if you have any interest in the Dreamcast indie scene.

Fade to Black



Publisher: JoshProd/PixelHeart

Developer: Delphine

Year of Release: 2018

In Summary: A universally praised 3D innovator when first release in 1995, time hasn't been altogether kind to Fade to Black. It has some aged visuals and gameplay mechanics, but this is still a classic gaming experience and a welcome addition to the Dreamcast.



Review:

As the sequel to Flashback, Fade to Black continues the story of Conrad Hart and his fight against the Morphs – but this time, there's an added "third dimension". A big deal when originally released (back in 1995), the game eschews most of the platform-based gameplay of the original and instead opts for a more action-orientated adventure with a greater emphasis on a weapon-based experience. Third-person action titles in a full 3D environment were still very much in their infancy when the game was originally released, and seeing the polygonal characters and enemies navigating their surroundings was, at the time, a major leap forward from the 2D platforming of old. The plot is decent if unspectacular B-grade sci-fi, and there are plenty of tricky, semi-puzzle elements to negotiate as you make your way out of your initial imprisonment. It also feels far closer to being a proper, "official" Dreamcast release than its predecessor – after all, this was only released three years before the console itself. That does however also draw attention to one of the game's major negatives. 3D gaming progressed at an incredibly rapid rate in the 1990s, and Fade to Black feels somewhat archaic, with the sharp polygons, clumsy interface and stiff, over-complicated controls. It is an issue that classic 2D games don't suffer from but these early attempts at the 3D environments we now take for granted have inarguably aged far worse. There's no denying that it is still a good game – a great game at the time, in fact – but the awkward controls, blocky visuals and somewhat overused themes do make it hard to fully enjoy now. Still – it's great to see 3D indie titles, and legitimate classic experiences, released for the Dreamcast!



Versions available and where to buy: Fade to Black received JoshProd's usual publishing deal - a PAL case version ([here \(https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/fade-to-black-dreamcast-pal/\)](https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/fade-to-black-dreamcast-pal/)) and a reversible US ([\(https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/fade-to-black-dreamcast-us/\)](https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/fade-to-black-dreamcast-us/))/Japanese ([\(https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/fade-to-black-dreamcast-jpn/\)](https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/fade-to-black-dreamcast-jpn/)) version that can be purchased with either on display. Other retro sites also have the game in stock ([VGNY \(https://videogamesnewyork.com/fade-to-black-sega-dreamcast/\)](https://videogamesnewyork.com/fade-to-black-sega-dreamcast/)) especially for those in the States).

Other links: Tom took a look back at the Flashback series (which of course is now playable on the Dreamcast) [in this article \(https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2022/06/retrospective-flashback-series-on.html\)](https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2022/06/retrospective-flashback-series-on.html) which, as with everything Tom ever writes, is well worth a read.

Fast Striker



Publisher: NG:DEV.TEAM

Developer: NG:DEV.TEAM

Year of Release: 2010

In Summary: Good-looking and technically competent vertical shooter from NG:DEV.TEAM. The game's four difficulty settings make for slightly different experiences which keeps things fresh. One of the better examples of a pure indie shooter.



Review:

Flying the flag for the homebrew scene, NG:DEV.TEAM followed up their well-received Last Hope with another Neo Geo port, this time with an updated version of Fast Striker. Eschewing the horizontal approach of their first release, Fast Striker is a vertical shooter which owes a lot to the 16-bit era of the genre. It never quite pushes the Dreamcast hardware, but the mixture of detailed (if slightly dull), mainly grey backgrounds, with an orgy of colourful sprites and no hint of slowdown, is enticing nevertheless. There are four difficulty settings available and unusually each offers a slightly different game. The easy mode, for instance, is a pretty much straight-ahead shooter, whilst bump it up to "extreme" or the ridiculously hard "omake" mode and the subtleties of the game's mechanics become clear. Chaining is important throughout, whilst on harder difficulty levels grinding makes an appearance, and the game's use of a shield system gives a degree of tactical play. Sharp controls and tough but fair bullet patterns mean death in Fast Striker is usually avoidable with skill. It doesn't redefine the genre or deliver anything particularly inventive, but it remains an engaging addition to the Dreamcast – a good-looking and technically competent shooting title.

NG:DEV.TEAM also managed to release really professional-looking physical releases, with some attractive artwork on display.



Versions available and where to buy: Two versions of the game were released originally, both in DVD cases. These were the standard edition and the limited edition, the latter of which coming with a soundtrack CD and different artwork. Both of these are slightly pricey now and will probably have to be sourced from eBay or private sales.

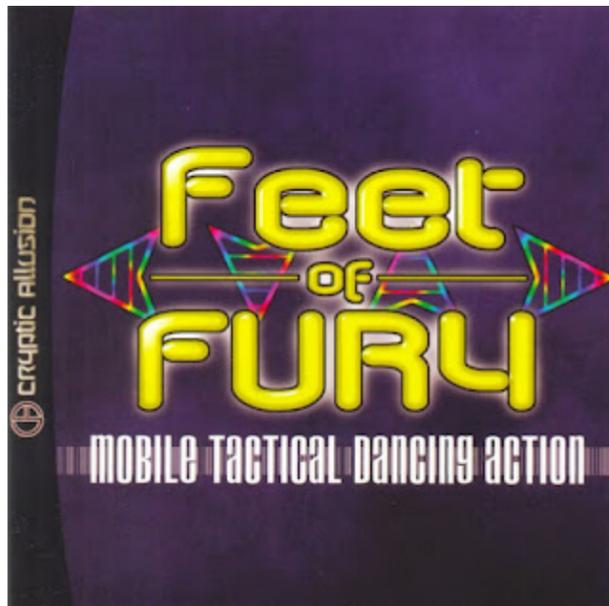
In April 2016, NG:DEV.TEAM released a new version of the game alongside two of their other games. This was in a jewel case and limited to 333 copies. This too will probably have to be purchased privately or on eBay, although a few are still floating around at retro shops.

Other links: Aaron did an unboxing and quick look at the limited edition version of the game when it was released, which can be seen [here](https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2010/12/dcgy-insideout-fast-striker-limited.html) (<https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2010/12/dcgy-insideout-fast-striker-limited.html>).

The game's [website](http://www.faststriker.com/) (<http://www.faststriker.com/>) is also still live with a little bit more information about the game.

Fast Striker is one of the games featured in friend of the Junkyard Retro Faith's excellent look at the Dreamcast indie shooter scene, which is well worth a read and is available here (<https://retrofaith.net/2021/01/13/indie-shmups-dreamcast/>).

Feet of Fury



Publisher: GOAT Store

Developer: Cryptic Allusion

Year of Release: 2003

In Summary: One of the earliest Dreamcast indie releases, Feet of Fury is a dance mat compatible title (playable with a standard controller) with some interesting features. High quality and with a professional feel, this would help usher in an exciting indie scene and remains a quality experience.



Review:

The Goat Store's independent releases of Dreamcast games in the years after the console's official demise helped greatly in keeping interest alive in Sega's machine, and the first of these releases, Feet of Fury, is arguably one of the best. Capitalising on the always popular craze for dancing titles, it features several dance-friendly tunes and plenty of modes to enjoy them. There's the item battle mode - the core of the game - in which a split-screen dance off against the AI or a human opponent is the attraction; practice mode allows you to perfect your moves and a "Typing of the Fury" mode, which is sort of a mash up between The Typing of the Dead and Dance Dance Revolution. The music is okay – there are no big name artists here but they're suitably danceable and the gameplay is simple and fun, and even without the dance mat, the controller is an acceptable substitute. There is even the ability to make your own swap CDs to bring other music into the game. There are a couple of technical hiccups (some game freezes and crashes), but these are few and far between. High quality and with a professional look, Feet of Fury remains one of the best indie Dreamcast releases.



Versions available and where to buy: Your best bet with this one is online sites, private sales and eBay, although [The Bit Station \(https://thebitstationgames.com/\)](https://thebitstationgames.com/) do appear to have some copies left in stock. There was only one version of the game released though, which make things slightly easier from a collecting point of view.

Other links: Jennifer took a look at the history of Independent Dreamcast Development, which includes Feet of Fury, and can be [read here \(https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2018/08/history-of-independent-dreamcast.html\)](https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2018/08/history-of-independent-dreamcast.html).

Finding Teddy

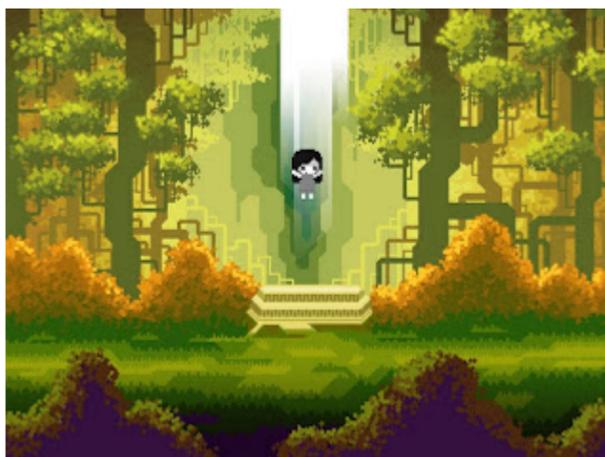


Publisher: JoshProd/PixelHeart

Developer: Storybird

Year of Release: 2019

In Summary: An entrancing Burtonesque adventure with a fabulous, fantastical feel and gorgeous visuals. It's somewhat sedate, which may turn some off, but this is a bit of a hidden gem within the Dreamcast's indie library.



Review:

This humble point-and-click adventure is a genre which has seen a resurgence in recent years, and Storybird first released this charming, Burtonesque pixel art-style example back in 2013. Thanks to JoshProd, its arrival on the Dreamcast six years later was welcomed. Stylistically, the pixel artwork is gorgeous, and is matched with a minimalist approach to gameplay. You play the part of a young girl, the game opening with a strange creature emerging from her wardrobe and stealing her teddy. She embarks on a journey to retrieve her beloved stuffed friend, through a fantastical landscape full of odd looking creatures. The dark, Alice in Wonderland theming seems to be a frequent destination for French developers, and aesthetically, this nails it. Pixels are beautifully arranged on screen to depict lighting effects, odd landscapes and the weird inhabitants of the world. You control by clicking on routes off that lead off the current screen or on objects to pick them up. Sometimes the routes can be obtuse – but hints will appear after a few seconds. Similarly the object-based puzzles can be rather unintuitive, but this adds to the game's minimalist, fantasy-like experience. Animation is superb and instant deaths lead to instant resurrection, thus reducing frustration. It won't be to everyone's tastes as it certainly is rather sedate, but the mix of great pixel art, entrancing sound and unique style for the Dreamcast mean that Finding Teddy is, yet again, an indie hit from JoshProd.



Versions available and where to buy: Whilst the game received the same two release format as other JoshProd releases, the PAL version is currently out of stock on the PixelHeart website. Your best bet for this one is other retro shops online. The US (<https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/finding-teddy-dreamcast-us/>)/ Japanese (<https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/finding-teddy-dreamcast-jpn/>). reversible manual version is available from PixelHeart or via VGNY (<https://videogamesnewyork.com/finding-teddy-sega-dreamcast/>).

Other links: We didn't review this one upon release either. Yes, I thought I had and am now mortified that I didn't upload it. Oh dear. Anyway, whilst we are a bit shit in putting reviews out for stuff, it's well worth checking out SEGA-SKY's gameplay sample on YouTube (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iu-VRHPqTlo&ab_channel=SEGA-SKY).

Flashback



Publisher: JoshProd/PixelHeart

Developer: Delphine

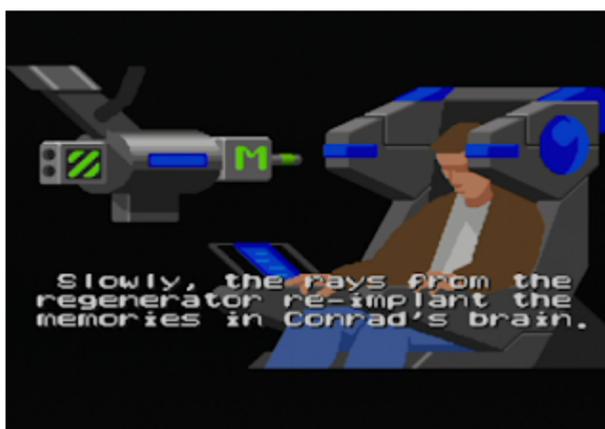
Year of Release: 2017

In Summary: A feature-packed release of a legitimate classic of early-'90s platforming. Whilst its cerebral nature and slow pace may put off some, this is a fantastic and atmospheric science fiction romp which rightly deserves all of its plaudits.



Review:

Originally released in 1992, Flashback was a visually stunning 16-bit release that boasted animation that wowed gamers, and was graced with a mature, science fiction themed story. A pseudo-sequel to Another World, Flashback has seen releases on numerous platforms, and thanks to JoshProd, an official port graces the Dreamcast too. You play Conrad B. Hart, a scientist turned wanted man after he discovers a sinister plot by a race of shape-shifting aliens determined to conquer Earth. After escaping and a brief pursuit, as depicted in the intro, you're stranded on an alien planet. The gameplay is cerebral 2D platforming – puzzles, gun fights, lots of alien technology, and a fairly large array of controls to get your head round. The rotoscoped animation is still impressive and few games of the era managed to envelop you in a world like Flashback did. This Dreamcast version is an amalgamation of other releases, featuring graphical filters, both the CD-ROM and original cutscenes, the full 16-bit version (via Mega Drive/Genesis emulator), a choice between new or original music and on-the-fly saving – the last of which is most welcome. Flashback is a classic platform game and can be held up as one of the very finest examples of early-'90s gaming, and this version with all of its extras is one of the most impressive indie releases. It is, however, a game where the cerebral nature, backtracking and sometimes slow pace may put some off just like it did back upon its original release.



Versions available and where to buy: There are two versions of the game - the PAL case (<https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/flashback-dreamcast-pal/>). release and JoshProd's usual reversible manual Japanese/US style release which is available in either style whilst sealed - US here (<https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/flashback-dreamcast-us/>), Japanese here (<https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/flashback-dreamcast-jpn/>).

This version is also available at VGNYsoft (<https://www.vgnysoft.com/product-page/flashback-quest-for-identity-sega-dreamcast>).

There are a few disc versions from before the JoshProd release floating around. None of these are official and are usually home made versions which also lack most of the extras included here. Whilst it's a little pricey, it's always best to support the actual indie publishers so that we get even more great games in future.

Other links: We reviewed this one! Back in 2017, Tom reviewed this one very positively, which can be found [here](https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2017/08/review-flashback.html) (<https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2017/08/review-flashback.html>). Following on from that, in 2022, he also wrote a retrospective on the entire series' ports to the Dreamcast, which can be read [here](https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2022/06/retrospective-flashback-series-on.html) (<https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2022/06/retrospective-flashback-series-on.html>).

There's also an excellent article on the game on [Hardcore Gaming 101](http://www.hardcoregaming101.net/flashback-the-quest-for-identity/) (<http://www.hardcoregaming101.net/flashback-the-quest-for-identity/>).

Flea!



Publisher: Lowtek Games (later re-released as a special edition by WAVE Game Studios)

Developer: Lowtek Games

Year of Release: 2020

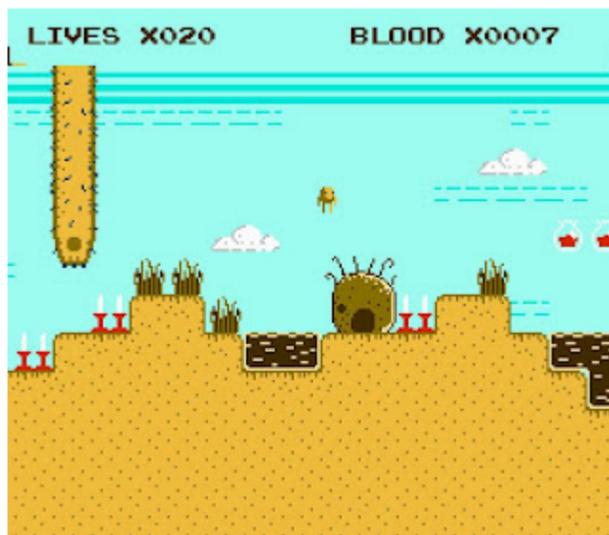
In Summary: Charming 8-bit platformer with plenty of personality. Flea! isn't a technical powerhouse for the Dreamcast, but is highly enjoyable, very playable and has an iconic main character.



Review:

Released without much fanfare during the very odd year of 2020, this bouncy little 2D platformer came as a bit of a surprise to many in the Dreamcast community. Initially a successful Kickstarter for a NES release, developer Lowtek Games (vehicle for the immensely talented Allistair Low) brought this charming little 8-bit title to the

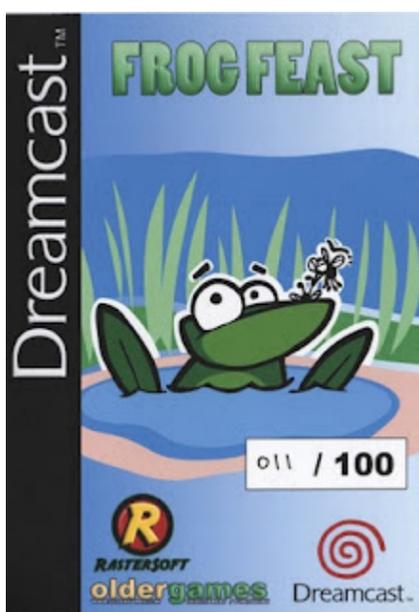
Dreamcast. You play as Henry the intrepid flea, on a hunt to collect blood from the game's 80 levels, blood that is being hoarded by the greedy King and is desperately needed by the Refu-fleas. Blood can be converted to extra lives – and soon you'll rack up a substantial number of these. They'll be needed, for Flea takes its design cues from classic platformers. Your little friend continually jumps and the aim is to navigate around each level's obstacles without being stabbed by a syringe or hopping into an enemy. Death can come frequently but you instantly respawn, leading the game to a risk-reward strategy of obstacle passing and dwindling lives. The game does change it up occasionally for some auto-scrolling levels which makes for a nice break. It's not a system pusher technically, as it's still an NES game both mechanically and visually, but the simplicity is part of its charm. Henry himself should be recognised as an indie scene icon and the game should be praised for putting so much charm and joy into its otherwise humble concept.



Versions available and where to buy: The original release of the game was available on Lowtek Games' Etsy page, and was limited to just 200 copies, but since appears to have sold out. In 2022, WAVE Game Studios re-released the game as a "Special Edition (<https://www.wavegamestudios.com/shop/flea>)" on a pressed disc with added soundtrack CD and a longer, full-colour manual. It is the definitive version of the game.

Other links: I reviewed this one for the Junkyard when it released, and you can check that out [here](https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2020/11/flea-brand-new-release-for-dreamcast.html) (<https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2020/11/flea-brand-new-release-for-dreamcast.html>). I basically just copied most of the review for this entry mind, like the lazy scumbag I am, so don't go rushing off to read it or anything.

Frog Feast



Publisher: OlderGames

Developer: Rastersoft

Year of Release: 2007

In Summary: A cheap, early indie release, this is a simple "Frogs ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frogs_\(video_game\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frogs_(video_game)))" clone with poor quality control in both its software and packaging. One of the rarest Dreamcast indie releases, though.



Review:

Possibly the rarest commercial Dreamcast release out there, Frog Feast is a rough and ready title that, despite reportedly being limited to 100 copies (as indicated by the numbering system on its cover), no one is quite sure how many are actually out there in the wild. The game was released on numerous platforms by its creator Charles Doty (Rastersoft), and is a homage to an old Sega/Gremlin arcade title "Frogs", a title of which saw many clones on other systems, including Frogs and Flies on the Atari 2600. It's not a great game; with ultra simple gameplay that has you jumping between lily pads trying to catch flies, and graphics and sound that are barely improved from other console versions.

Due to the rather amateur nature of the game's production (seemingly copied onto CD-R on demand), the quality isn't high, with several copies suffering from glitches, and individual numbered copies appearing to also be repeated in some instances. It's probable that far fewer than 100 copies are out there (although some sources do state 200 copies, others estimate as low as 20). None of this affects the collectible nature of the game, which, for those who collect for the console, is quite high. How many reproduced copies are out there is also unknown, adding another layer of confusion over the game's release. A "genuine" copy, if possible to confirm authenticity, would very likely be at the very upper end of indie Dreamcast gaming prices.



Versions available and where to buy: You'll have to resort to private sales or eBay to pick this one up, and expect to probably pay a premium for it too. It's definitely not worth it.

Other links: You can check out some more information about the game, and its various ports, over on [Wikipedia \(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frog_Feast\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frog_Feast).

Fruit'Y



Publisher: DragonBox Shop / Retroguru

Developer: Retroguru

Year of Release: 2015

In Summary: Cheap and cheerful little matching puzzle title that was released at a sweet price point. Not a technical powerhouse, but the simple premise and challenging progression combine to make a fun game.



Review:

Coming a little out of the blue when announced, this release comes from Retroguru (a talented collective of coders, responsible for download-only Dreamcast games such as Xump that deserve some attention) and DragonBox Shop, and whilst it had a limited print run, it was sold at an incredibly good price (just a few euros!).

Sporting a nice retro pixel look and an excellent soundtrack, Fruit'Y plays like the old Amiga title Gem'X, and displays two screens full of fruit on screen, with the goal being to change the left-hand side to match the right-hand side's layout. You do this by selecting fruit which then change corresponding to which you selected (directly selecting a fruit changes it two steps up the sequence of fruit changes, whilst the fruit above and below and to the left and right change one step). It's a simple concept but can get trickier as you progress through the game's 120 levels, although there are a few helpful options to get through the trickiest stages. The retro look, simple mechanics and superb value all add up to a fun little game to play. It doesn't push the hardware in the slightest, but it is hard not to like it.



Versions available and where to buy: It looks like the original release (which came in a DVD case) is pretty much sold out everywhere now, but you can still download the game for free from the [Retroguru website \(https://www.retroguru.com/fruity/\)](https://www.retroguru.com/fruity/), along with versions for various other platforms.

Other links: Mr Tom Charnock reviewed this one for the Junkyard, which you can [read here \(https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2015/10/review-fruity.html\)](https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2015/10/review-fruity.html).

The game's entry on the [Retroguru page \(https://www.retroguru.com/fruity/\)](https://www.retroguru.com/fruity/) is well worth checking out for lots more information about the game.

FX Unit Yuki



Publisher: JoshProd/PixelHeart

Developer: SaruPro

Year of Release: 2019

In Summary: A platforming homage and semi-parody of the '90s gaming scene, FX Unit Yuki has charming visuals, a decent soundtrack and plenty of love for the games that inspired it. It's not a system stretcher technically, but the Segagaga-like feel elevates it above any shortcomings.



Review:

Conceived originally as a PC Engine/TurboGrafx-16 title, and successfully funded via Kickstarter, FX Unit Yuki (which was known for some time as "The Henshin Engine") pays homage to the legendary console from NEC through a variety of gameplay styles and knowing nods to other titles. The plot, told through some pre-game and between-level static screens, follows young Yuki Shirakawa as she embarks on her dream career in the games industry, starting off as a beta tester for the Jipang Electronics Corporation, creators of the "FX Engine". This is when she happens across a secret prototype technology, which allows her to neurologically connect to the games to test them out, turning her into the eponymous FX Unit Yuki, but this tech is coveted by the nefarious "SG Corporation", who want to take over the market with their "Ultra Drive". It's down to Yuki to explore the games and clear them of corrupted data.

With various references - although tongue in cheek - to the PC Engine, NEC, Sega, etc., the tone of the game takes on an almost Segagaga-like semi-parody, and this continues through the levels. Eight in all, each is modelled loosely after retro titles. Cotton, Castlevania and Bonk fans, amongst others, will instantly recognise the stages, although all except the Cotton-style shooter level play in a similar manner to each other. Graphically, it is very much how you'd expect an indie PC Engine title to look - and therefore, not exactly pushing the Dreamcast. The on-the-fly ability to use the screen filter is cool, and the story screens look good; the entire game has a charming anime feel to it. It sounds cool too, with a nice soundtrack which fits the concept. The gameplay itself is okay but is a little rough. There is a "game maker" feel about the title, which is not necessarily bad, but can be a bit off-putting. The basic gameplay - jumping, shooting - works okay but can't match the classic titles it takes inspiration from. Don't expect the Castlevania-style stage to play much like that series, for instance - but rather, as an acceptable platformer from the era. There are some upgrades to your character as you progress and the shooter-style stages are a cool change of pace. It's very difficult to not like FX Unit Yuki, especially with the charming, well-written story elements and overall retro homage that it possesses, but it's less impressive as a Dreamcast title than it is on either the PC Engine or Mega Drive.



Versions available and where to buy: JoshProd released the game in their standard format, with a PAL case (<https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/fx-unit-yuki-the-henshin-engine-dreamcast-pal/>), version and the reversible US (<https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/fx-unit-yuki-the-henshin-engine-dreamcast-us/>)/Japanese (<https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/fx-unit-yuki-the-henshin-engine-dreamcast-jpn/>) cover style. Also available at VGNYsoft (<https://www.vgnysoft.com/product-page/fx-unit-yuki-the-henshin-engine-sega-dreamcast>).

Additionally, the developer's webstore has a version available which appears to have different artwork, although still published by JoshProd. You can still purchase this version (cheaper for those of you in North America) here (<https://www.sarumaru.com/product/fx-unit-yuki-for-the-sega-dreamcast>).

Other links: Scott covered the game's announcement trailer [here](https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2015/10/review-fruity.html) (<https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2015/10/review-fruity.html>).

The game also has its own [website](https://www.fxunityuki.com/) (<https://www.fxunityuki.com/>), which has loads of information.

Ganryu



Publisher: JoshProd/PixelHeart

Developer: Visco

Year of Release: 2017

In Summary: A competent port from a technical standpoint, Ganryu unfortunately just wasn't a very good game to begin with. Poor AI and constantly spawning enemies soon leads the game down a path of tedious repetition.



Review:

Another Neo Geo game from Visco ported by JoshProd, Ganryu is a side-scrolling hack-and-slash title which received a competent port to the Dreamcast technically, but as a game isn't all that great. Inspired by the legendary figure of Miyamoto Musashi, this Shinobi-like title puts you in historical Japan, and challenges you to make your way through five levels, all while having to fend off a seemingly never ending supply of rather generic-looking enemy ninjas. The gameplay is uninspired; a basic side-on affair which looked outdated upon its original release in the late-'90s, and as the enemies constantly spawn around you whilst progressing through the stages, it is not long before tedium sets in. The constantly spawning enemies above you are especially tedious. There are some cheap deaths from poor enemy appearances or blind drops, as well as some downright dumb AI where, rather than being stealthy, highly skilled assassins, your enemies tend to walk off platforms to their instant doom. It doesn't help that the game is unimpressive graphically, looking more like an early 16-bit title than something that should have been on a powerhouse like the Neo Geo, a system with numerous titles that surely deserved this re-release attention before Ganryu. We

are lacking in this sort of title on the Dreamcast and the game is not impossible to enjoy for short periods if you can forgive the many flaws, but playing it for any extended time just leaves a rather sour taste in the mouth.



Versions available and where to buy: Both a PAL case (<https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/ganryu-dreamcast-pal/>) version and JoshProd's standard US (<https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/ganryu-dreamcast-us/>)/ Japanese (<https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/ganryu-dreamcast-jpn/>) reversible manual version were released and are all still available on PixelHeart, although numbers do seem to be running a little low.

Also available from VGNYSOFT (<https://www.vgnyssoft.com/product-page/ganryu-sega-dreamcast>).

Other links: We reviewed (and sorta savaged it, if we're honest) this one back upon release. You can check out Rob's review here (https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2017/09/review-ganryu_7.html).

Ghost Blade



Publisher: Hucast (re-released by JoshProd/PixelHeart)

Developer: Hucast

Year of Release: 2015

In Summary: Good-looking shooter with solid mechanics, Ghost Blade is competent enough for more uncritical gamers, but its rather generic nature and relatively low difficulty level will put off the hardcore shooter fans.



Review:

Ghost Blade, a shooter from Hucast, elicited a somewhat mixed response upon release, with players who just wanted to shoot things with pretty graphics on their Dreamcast enjoying the experience, whilst more expectant gamers had some issues with some of the gaming mechanics employed. On a simple level, it's a fun shooter for the uncritical – the graphics are good looking and do their job, the mechanics are solid enough and the game isn't as unforgiving as other entries in the genre, making it a more accessible experience. Delve a little deeper, though, and there are some issues. There is some distracting slowdown which is unfortunate and the difficulty level could be considered to be somewhat on the easy side, which, whilst a blessing for the casual gamer, is a potential turn off for the more seasoned shooting fans. There is also nothing particularly original or exciting in the game, which is a shame. For those just wanting another shooter to add to the library, it will do the job. For those wanting a Sturmwind-like indie game revelation, they may want to look elsewhere.



Versions available and where to buy: There were no less than six versions of the game released. Two regular editions were available, one in a jewel case and one in a DVD case. If you want to get hold of either of these, you'd have to source them on eBay, private sales or in retro shops.

The limited edition is also in a DVD case with an extra soundtrack and different artwork. This will also have to be sourced online (or possibly from a brick-and-mortar retro store).



The collectors edition is limited to just 600, and includes a soundtrack, manual, art book, stickers and an exclusive title screen. It comes in a larger box with unique artwork. This one will only be available now from the same sources as the regular and limited editions, and is a bit costlier than the other original versions.

JoshProd would also re-release the game in their usual format - with a PAL case version and the US/Japanese reversible manual version. The PAL case version is out of stock at the PixelHeart website, but the US/Japan version is available with both styles on display [here \(https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/the-ghost-blade-dreamcast-us/\)](https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/the-ghost-blade-dreamcast-us/) and [here \(https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/the-ghost-blade-dreamcast-jpn/\)](https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/the-ghost-blade-dreamcast-jpn/). This is also available from [VGNysoft \(https://www.vgnysoft.com/product-page/ghost-blade-sega-dreamcast\)](https://www.vgnysoft.com/product-page/ghost-blade-sega-dreamcast).

Other links: The Junkyard reviewed this game twice (and yet we can't even provide a single review for dozens of other indie games. God, we're pathetic) - Tom did a [novice review \(https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2015/09/review-ghost-blade-novice-review.html\)](https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2015/09/review-ghost-blade-novice-review.html) from the point of view of a non-hardcore shooting fan, and Rob wrote one for those [more familiar \(https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2015/09/review-ghost-blade-standard-review.html\)](https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2015/09/review-ghost-blade-standard-review.html) with the genre.

Ghoul Grind: Night of the Necromancer



Publisher: Woog Worx

Developer: Woog Worx

Year of Release: 2021

In Summary: Simple in concept and challenging but fair in difficulty, this 8-bit auto-scrolling platformer is chock full of Halloween style and atmosphere. It's no technical powerhouse but has plenty of heart.



Review:

Ghoul Grind: Night of the Necromancer is a 2D, 8-bit auto-scrolling platformer with a distinctly Halloween theme. The plot (played out through a short intro and in the game's lovely full-colour manual) sees Nox and Veronica, boyfriend and girlfriend, tasked with saving the townsfolk of Saint Crypton from their own best friend Vladimir, who is raising the dead, bringing ghouls, ghosts and goblins out onto the streets, forests and crypts of the town. The game has a charming feel to it with a suitably ghoulish 8-bit soundtrack and a colour palette full of oranges, browns and blacks, to give it an autumnal look. Gameplay is pretty straightforward – your characters auto-run through the levels, with your control being limited to one button to jump, and one to fire your weapon. You can change between the two characters on the fly throughout, and need to do so to get past certain sections, but there is little in the way of complexity here. The levels have all manner of suitably Halloween-themed enemies, as well as tricky jumps and platforming elements, and on your first attempt at each stage, chances are you will die, and die a fair bit. When you do, it's straight back to the beginning where you attempt to traverse again, your knowledge of what is to come aiding your progress. It's fair to say that the game can certainly be challenging, but the instant restarts lower any sense of frustration. That really is just about all there is to the game though. It's a decidedly simple premise, although well executed, with a great style but it's not something which was made with the Dreamcast in mind (although, kudos to Woog Worx for replacing the NES controllers for Dreamcast controllers in the background of the training levels), or a game which will thrill those that want indie games to push the envelope of what we've come to expect on the console.

Originally, the game only came as one of the perks of backing the Kickstarter campaign, bundled with the NES release, but after fulfilment of that campaign, the developers did make the Dreamcast version available as a standalone purchase.



Versions available and where to buy: The developer's own website doesn't seem to currently be online, so the best option to pick a copy of this up is to visit the fine guys at [The Bit Station](https://thebitstationgames.com/product/ghoul_grind/) (https://thebitstationgames.com/product/ghoul_grind/), who have some in stock currently.

You can also purchase and download the digital version of the game from the [itch.io](https://woogworx.itch.io/ghoul-grind-night-of-the-necromancer) (<https://woogworx.itch.io/ghoul-grind-night-of-the-necromancer>) page.

Other links: I reviewed this one quite enthusiastically and you can read that [here](https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2022/01/new-dreamcast-release-review-ghoul.html) (<https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2022/01/new-dreamcast-release-review-ghoul.html>). I've obviously just copied that review to make this entry again, as I do have a life outside of the Junkyard ("no you don't" - Lewis) so there's no real need to read that really. Sorry.

You can also check out the game's original Kickstarter [campaign here](https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/1640415401/ghoul-grind-night-of-the-necromancer) (<https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/1640415401/ghoul-grind-night-of-the-necromancer>).

Gunlord



Publisher: NG:DEV.TEAM

Developer: NG:DEV.TEAM

Year of Release: 2012

In Summary: A classy run n' gunner in the traditions of the best '90s Euro-style shooters. Superb aesthetic design is coupled with excellent level design and an exhilarating soundtrack.



Review:

Another high-quality release from indie powerhouse NG:DEV.TEAM, this Neo Geo port does a hell of a lot right. A run n' gunner with more than a passing inspiration from the Turrican series, Gunlord revels in frantic action, massive weapons and a high difficulty level. The 2D artwork is unashamedly and gloriously retro in style, with finely detailed surroundings and enemies all composed in lovely pixels. The soundtrack is suitably exciting, and is an excellent selection of high-quality music that these Euro indie titles are renowned for. Running through the levels is not an easy task with enemies, projectiles and tricky platforming sections abound. Whilst this difficulty level is no doubt welcomed by those who want a challenge with their gaming, it will be a bit off-putting for the less hardcore, as making progress can be a tough task. Of course, repeated plays will help players become accustomed to the game's nuances, and this does give it some added depth. The level design itself is also cause enough for

repeated plays; varied throughout, they're masterfully put together with superb artwork. It would be churlish to dismiss any game based on its difficulty, especially one so carefully constructed to appeal to the nostalgic 16-bit memories of gamers, and fans of retro blasting action will appreciate what often feels like a love letter to '90s Euro-style shooters, put together with class.

The high-quality artwork carries over into the packaging for even the standard version of the game, with a beautiful full-colour booklet, and is another sign of the love lavished on the title by the developers.



Versions available and where to buy: There are four versions of Gunlord. The regular edition and the limited edition both came in DVD cases with different artwork, with the limited edition including an additional soundtrack CD.

There was also the "Dragon Box", which contains both the regular and limited editions of the game, plus some additional extras.

Finally in April 2016, NG:DEV.TEAM released a jewel case version, limited to 333 copies, alongside two other re-releases (Last Hope Pink Bullets and Fast Striker).

Your best bet to get a hold of any of these releases will be private sales, eBay or retro stores.

Other links: Aaron did another unboxing and first impressions video and an article when the Gunlord limited edition released, and you can check that out [here](https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2012/06/dcgy-insideout-gunlord-limited-edition.html) (<https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2012/06/dcgy-insideout-gunlord-limited-edition.html>).

Hermes



Publisher: Retroguru/DragonBox Shop (re-released version published by VGNYsoft)

Developer: Retroguru

Year of Release: 2017

In Summary: A charming run-and-jump platformer with an amazing chiptune soundtrack that is chock full of toilet humour. Hermes is a fun little game but not one which stretches the hardware.



Review:

The second commercially released title for the Dreamcast from Retroguru sees the international crew deliver a run-and-jump platformer with oodles of retro charm, toilet humour and a superb soundtrack. The game itself isn't the most sophisticated of releases, but the simple platforming is made somewhat harder by a continually decreasing hunger "energy" bar which can be refilled by eating the abundant doughnuts littering the levels – but not too much, as greed has a price, and that price is... soiling yourself. A trip to one of the toilets spread around the stages will relieve the over-indulgence and keep you playing, and no, I'm not making any of this up. The gameplay is simple and fun, with plenty of challenge as it progresses. The retro 8/16-bit graphics are great and the soundtrack, in all of its Amiga chiptune glory, is fantastic. Hermes won't win awards for technical expertise, but it's a fun little title. The original release came with a full-colour comic book which sort of doubles as a manual. The game disc itself can be used as an audio CD.



Versions available and where to buy: The original release of the game was via the DragonBox Shop and came with an awesome comic book - you can still pick that up from the shop [here](https://dragonbox.de/en/games-for-sega-dreamcast/hermes-dreamcast-incl-comic.html) (<https://dragonbox.de/en/games-for-sega-dreamcast/hermes-dreamcast-incl-comic.html>).

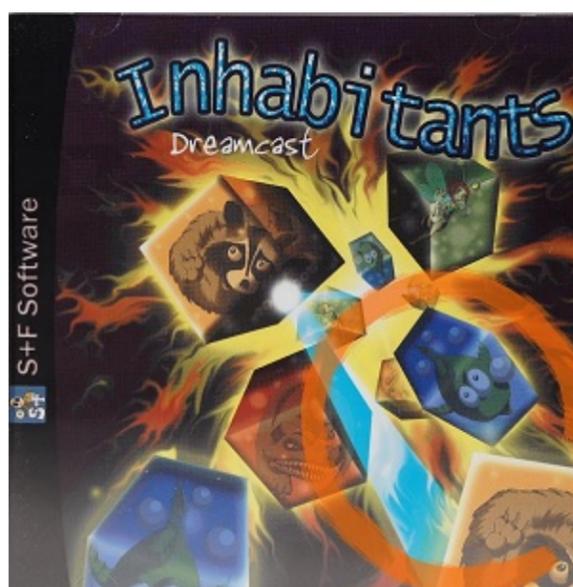
VGNY re-released the game with a US packaging style (available [here](https://videogamesnewyork.com/hermes-sega-dreamcast/) (<https://videogamesnewyork.com/hermes-sega-dreamcast/>)) as well as a limited edition larger box release which included a Hermes branded VMU. This is a little pricey but is still available [here](https://videogamesnewyork.com/hermes-special-edition-sega-dreamcast/) (<https://videogamesnewyork.com/hermes-special-edition-sega-dreamcast/>).



Other links: It was me on review duty for this one (which you can [check out here](https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2017/08/review-hermes.html) (<https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2017/08/review-hermes.html>)) and Lewis did a piece when the limited edition (with VMU) version was released as well, which you can find [here](https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2022/10/lets-take-look-at-hermes-limited.html) (<https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2022/10/lets-take-look-at-hermes-limited.html>).

You can also check out the game's page on [Retroguru](https://www.retroguru.com/hermes/) (<https://www.retroguru.com/hermes/>) for loads of info about the game and its other ports.

Inhabitants



Publisher: GOAT Store

Developer: S + F Software

Year of Release: 2005

In Summary: A solid tile-matching puzzler which can soon become quite challenging. As an early indie release it's a little on the basic side but it's still an enjoyable game.



Review:

On first impressions, this looks like a simple tile-matching puzzler, but there's a little more under the surface. Inhabitants tasks players to find combinations of matching tiles to a maximum of five to maximise combo and chain scores, and to ultimately reach each level's target score, which increases stage by stage to more challenging

totals. It all starts off quite easy, but soon the challenge ramps up and what started as an all too basic puzzler becomes, like all great puzzle games, an addictive quest to improve on your last attempt. There is a competitive mode where up to four players can compete, which adds some depth to proceedings, and there's a fair amount of unlockable content as well to keep you playing. There are different tiles and backgrounds, but it's not pushing the Dreamcast at any point, and as with all tile-matching puzzlers, ultimately, there isn't much in the way of variety. A good, solid little puzzle title though.



Versions available and where to buy: The Bit Station

(<https://thebitstationgames.com/product/inhabitants/>). still has some copies of the game in stock, but the game is also readily available on eBay. There was only the single version of the game released.

Other links: For some more information, you can check out the entry for Inhabitants on the Indie Dreams wiki [here](https://indiedreams.fandom.com/wiki/Inhabitants) (<https://indiedreams.fandom.com/wiki/Inhabitants>).

Intrepid Izzy



Publisher: Senile Team, WAVE Game Studios

Developer: Senile Team

Year of Release: 2021

In Summary: A visually glorious and expertly designed 2D platformer, Intrepid Izzy revels in its aesthetics whilst delivering a thoroughly engrossing adventure at the same time. Incredibly polished, this is one of the very best indie games on the Dreamcast.



Review:

Senile Team's Intrepid Izzy may have taken a few years to finally come to the Dreamcast (a console with an indie landscape that already had several high-quality releases), but boy was it worth it. A polished, beautiful looking 2D platforming adventure with metroidvania elements, it is an absolute joy to behold, but not just aesthetically. The levels are non-linear, promoting exploration and adventure, and the inclusion of various costumes for our heroine to find mixes up the core gameplay – straight platforming action this certainly isn't, as finding new costumes grants you new abilities that allow you to explore previously inaccessible areas. When the action needs to be more violent, Senile Team have implemented a beat 'em up-style combo system which works superbly. Few indie releases manage to envelop you in their world, but as soon as you see the streets of Awesometown, your first destination, you're struck by the loving detail of the world, with the developers even going as far as to squeeze in a trio of arcade game-in-games. Visually, Intrepid Izzy is fantastic, with buttery smooth, crisp, hi-res visuals, positively overflowing with vibrant colour and great artistic design, so much so that at times, you have to remind yourself that this is running on the Dreamcast. Don't be put off by the fact that it's a 2D platformer either; this is a fully realised, aesthetically delightful adventure romp that is among the very best of indie releases on the console.



Versions available and where to buy: There are no less than 12 versions of Intrepid Izzy that have been released so far, although I may very well have missed a version here or there!

First off, we have the standard release of the game, published by WAVE Game Studios, which came in three styles, all matching the respective regional design seen in officially released Dreamcast games. The European and Japanese (<https://www.wavegamestudios.com/shop/intrepid-izzy>) style versions are available at the WAVE store, whilst the US style (<https://videogamesnewyork.com/intrepid-izzy-sega-dreamcast-usa/>) release is available at VGN. The versions available on WAVE also come with a digital version of the game, which is a welcome addition.

WAVE then released a "Special Edition" of the game, which has an additional soundtrack CD and also comes with the additional digital version. Available in all 3 regional art styles here (<https://www.wavegamestudios.com/shop/intrepid-izzy-special-edition>).

There were also two runs of the game in PAL cases - 50 from the Kickstarter campaign, and 25 limited edition ones with the soundtrack CD included. These are now sold out.

WAVE also released a collectors edition of Izzy. This came with figures, an art book and the soundtrack in a larger box. Technically, there are three versions of this, one for each regional style, however, only the included game differs between them. These are also out of stock, so now only available through eBay/private sales.

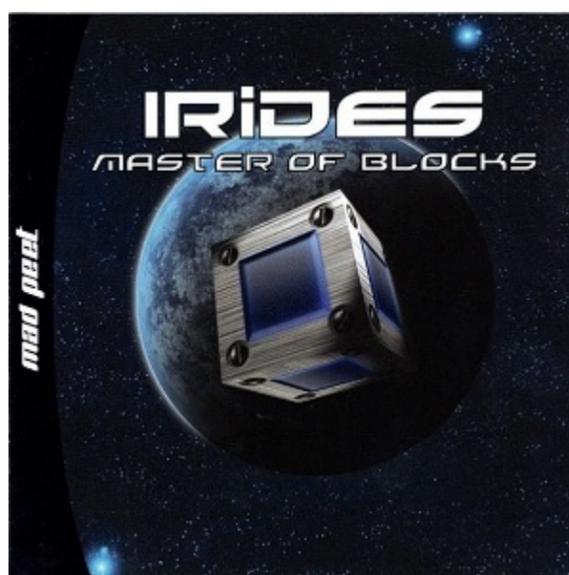


And then finally we have an edition sold on the DragonBox shop, which appears to have been published direct from Senile Team. This is still available [here](https://dragonbox.de/en/games-for-sega-dreamcast/intrepid-izzy-dreamcast.html) (<https://dragonbox.de/en/games-for-sega-dreamcast/intrepid-izzy-dreamcast.html>).

(You can also buy the game digitally from [WAVE](https://www.wavegamestudios.com/shop/intrepid-izzy-digital) (<https://www.wavegamestudios.com/shop/intrepid-izzy-digital>).)

Other links: We've covered Izzy from concept to release, but it's Lewis' review (which you can read [here](https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2021/08/review-intrepid-izzy.html) (<https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2021/08/review-intrepid-izzy.html>)) that really sums up our views of the game.

Irides: Master of Blocks

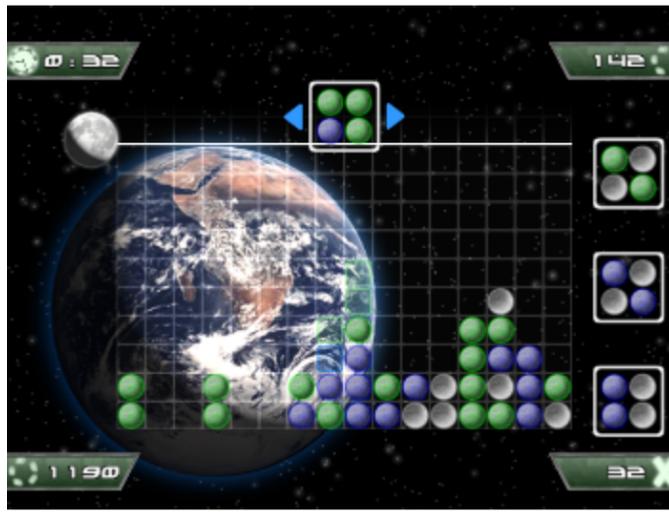


Publisher: GOAT Store

Developer: Madpeet

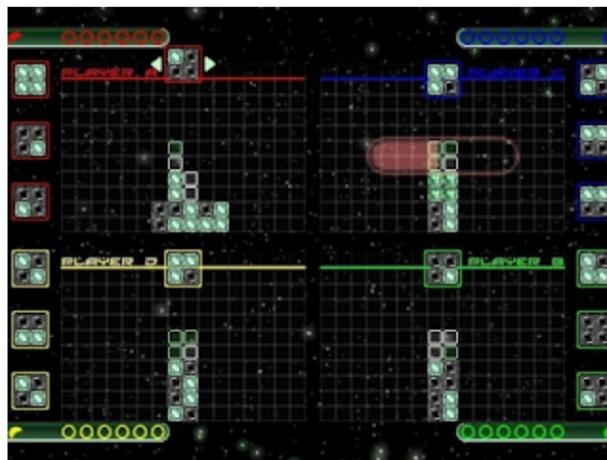
Year of Release: 2009

In Summary: Addictive puzzle title, originating from a homebrew port of Lumines. A polished design and solid puzzle mechanics are coupled with plenty of extras. One of the stand out early indie releases for the Dreamcast.



Review:

Along with Cool Herders and Inhabitants, Irides: Master of Blocks was part of a triumvirate of puzzle titles from US publisher GOAT Store, and stands out as the best of the bunch. Originating as a homebrew port of Lumines, Irides is a block falling puzzler that has all the qualities needed to stand side by side with some of the great examples of its type. Blocks of 2x2 in dimension fall down onto the screen and your job is to create 2x2 combinations (or larger) of the same colour blocks to meet a required score or total cleared block target per stage. At the most simple level, it's enjoyable, but throw in some extra blocks which have varying effects on proceedings, along with both co-op and competitive modes and several tweakable options, and you have a puzzle game which keeps giving. The extras, especially the competitive multiplayer modes, are welcome, but the fact the game gets the basics right is the key to the appeal. There are several different types of background graphics and blocks, as well as the option for an "endless" mode to a stage, and even the music is of a decent level. Irides won't push the console, but its addictive puzzling qualities are a welcome addition.



Versions available and where to buy: The standard version of Irides is readily available from online retro stores and eBay (for instance, at The Bit Station [here](https://thebitstationgames.com/product/irides-master-of-blocks/) (<https://thebitstationgames.com/product/irides-master-of-blocks/>)). There was also a limited edition of the game which had 144 copies - this came with a numbered coin, expanded manual, mini-poster and slightly different artwork. Private sales and eBay are your best bets for that one.

Other links: Aaron [covered](https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2009/09/goat-store-announces-irides-another.html) (<https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2009/09/goat-store-announces-irides-another.html>) the release announcement for Irides way back when. *14 years ago*. Where did the time go?

James & Watch - Arm



Publisher: Lancaster Media

Developer: Lancaster Media

Year of Release: 2015

In Summary: Extremely simple Game & Watch clone, but with a fun backstory to its creation. Really only one for the Dreamcast curio collector.



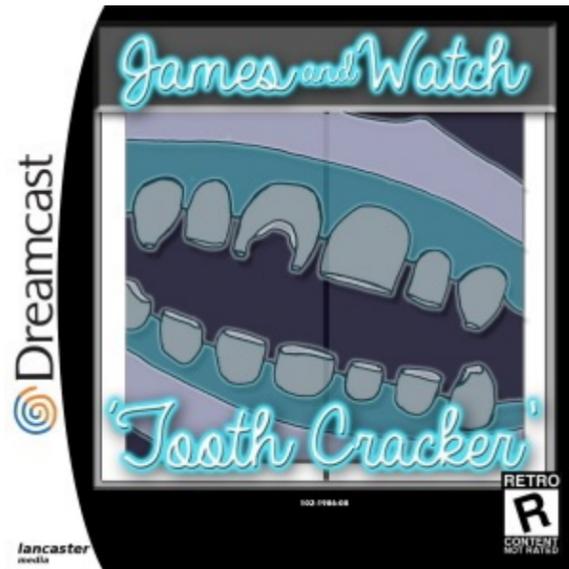
Review:

The work of one man, it is tales of childhood misadventures and a love for the classic Game & Watches of a bygone age that are behind the makings of this game. More specifically, inspiration is taken from a story told on an episode of the excellent [Retro Gaming Roundup](https://www.retrogamingroundup.com/) (https://www.retrogamingroundup.com/) podcast, involving the three James brothers and their ill-conceived younger selves popping down to the local football field. Throwing one of them in the air, the other two soon got bored and let their hapless brother fall, breaking his arm. Four decades on, it served as inspiration for this indie release, somewhat reminiscent of the classic G&W "Ball". There is only one game, presented as a full screen handheld, and control is limited to influencing the falling boy towards one of his brothers without doing harm to himself. To be honest, there isn't exactly a lot of gameplay here (much like Game & Watch titles themselves), but there is still something quite charming about a '70s childhood memory being turned into a classic handheld-style game. Any new indie release is a welcome addition to the Dreamcast's library, but this is one for collectors only, really.

Versions available and where to buy: The game had a standard release and a limited edition of 69 copies (nice) which also came with a mug, which is lovely. Both appear to still be available on [Retro Gaming Roundup's store](https://www.retrogamingroundup.com/store/) (https://www.retrogamingroundup.com/store/).

Other links: Tom was on review duties for Arm, [check that out here](https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2015/05/james-watch-arm.html) (https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2015/05/james-watch-arm.html). He even got a special Junkyard version of the game!

James & Watch - Tooth Cracker

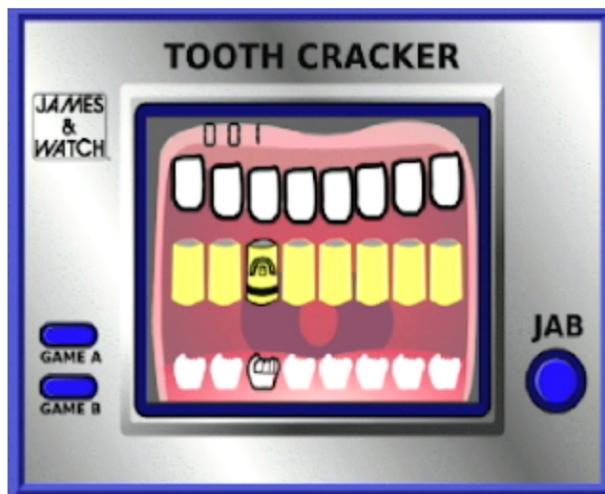


Publisher: Lancaster Media

Developer: Lancaster Media

Year of Release: 2016

In Summary: Another simple Game & Watch-inspired indie release which is as simple as they come, but has a charming backstory. Another one for the curio or completist Dreamcast collector.



Review:

The Retrogaming Roundup boys and Random_Dave returned, following up the limb-breaking "Arm" with the second of the James and Watch titles, Tooth Cracker. As with the first, there is a little story on the case explaining the origins of the game, this time it being an all too familiar tale for many of us involving late night drinking, wild flying elbows and broken teeth. The RGR guys definitely seemed to have a thing for telling tales of life in modern Britain through the medium of the Dreamcast – we fully expected to see "queue waiting" or "pub closing time last orders rush" after this release, but alas, it was not to be. Tooth Cracker is built in the same engine as Arm so don't expect anything vastly different, as you attempt to line up the hand on screen to the randomly moving beer can to smash away at the teeth. It still looks and feels like a G&W title, and is as simple as you'd imagine, but again, it's quite charming. There are two modes this time, but there isn't a vast difference between them. Just as with the first James & Watch title, this is hardly Shenmue levels of gameplay, and it pales in comparison to even some of the simpler indie retail releases out there – but this is more about having a fun little independent release to add to your collection.

Versions available and where to buy: There was only one version of the game released and it can be purchased on [Retro Gaming Roundup's store](https://www.retrogamingroundup.com/store/) (<https://www.retrogamingroundup.com/store/>). There also appears to be an option available to bundle it together with Tooth Cracker, and even the mug.

Other links: Tom took a quick look at this one upon release, [check it out](https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2016/03/a-quick-look-at-james-watch-tooth.html) (<https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2016/03/a-quick-look-at-james-watch-tooth.html>)!

Last Hope



Publisher: RedSpotGames / NG:DEV.TEAM

Developer: NG:DEV.TEAM

Year of Release: 2007

In Summary: An early headline grabbing indie release, NG:DEV.TEAM's first horizontal shooter has the looks but struggles to appeal with an all-too-high difficulty. This release would soon be eclipsed by a revamped "Pink Bullets" edition.



Review:

German developers NG:DEV.TEAM were one of the most important supporters of the post-life Dreamcast indie scene, and it all started with this one. As with their other games, this Neo Geo port revels in being both old school in its looks and play and having a difficulty level lying somewhere between insane and stupidly insane. Last Hope is a horizontal shooter, and in the best tradition of the genre, you acquire power ups to turn your little ship into an all out craft of carnage. A 360-degree rotating orb can be picked up to soak up enemy projectiles, whilst weapons will soon be powerful enough to home in on enemies, and the game fulfils that primal desire to blow the hell out of everything on screen. The artwork throughout is of a high quality, and the stages, of which there are six, vary from Geiger-inspired space ports to aquatic landscapes and volcanic backgrounds. The only problem with any of this is that for most gamers, seeing anything other than the first stage, even on the easiest setting, will be nigh on impossible. The various levels of scrolling scenery are often confusing to navigate, leading to too many instances of getting stuck on environmental elements, whilst enemy bullets will often be hard to see in the all-too-often hectic surroundings and too fast to avoid even if you can see them. Checkpoints help with

the frustration a little, but they are too spaced out. To the developer's credit they realised all this, hence the improved "Pink Bullets" release a couple of years later, but it does relegate this release to one only collectors will want to pick up.

Versions available and where to buy: Last Hope was released in two versions, both of which were styled the same as a standard Japanese release and share the same artwork. The standard release is in a single jewel case, whilst the limited is in a double with second soundtrack CD and a numbered spine.

Both of these versions will now have to be sourced from private sales/eBay/retro stores.

Other links: Another one that we never got to review, you can check out some more information on Last Hope on its Wikipedia page [here](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Last_Hope_(video_game)) ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Last_Hope_\(video_game\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Last_Hope_(video_game))).

Last Hope: Pink Bullets Edition



Publisher: NG:DEV.TEAM

Developer: NG:DEV.TEAM

Year of Release: 2009

In Summary: Improved version of Last Hope which addresses both visibility and difficulty issues that the original had. Excellent visuals and a fairer game make for a solid release.



Review:

This is an improved release of the original Last Hope, and kudos to the developers for listening to feedback and making some much-needed fixes. Your ship is more powerful than before, and the "Pink Bullets" of the title refer to the improved visibility of enemy projectiles. It makes for a fairer game, and this time players may actually see the later stages and the excellent aesthetics they contain. The game is still tough, but for most players this is an improvement.



Versions available and where to buy: There were three versions of the game released, although one of these is only really a variant. The first release of the game was in a pink DVD case. There was also a version released in a black DVD case - this is the variant release. They're otherwise identical.

In April 2016, NG:DEV.TEAM released a jewel case version limited to 333 copies, alongside two of their other games.

Now out of stock on the developer's own store, you're going to need to peruse the usual destinations online for this one.

Other links: Caleb covered the [release announcement](https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2009/06/last-resort-pink-bullets.html) (<https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2009/06/last-resort-pink-bullets.html>) of this one back in 2009.

The game's [website](http://www.lasthope.ngdevteam.com/) (<http://www.lasthope.ngdevteam.com/>) is also still available.

Leona's Tricky Adventures



Publisher: KTX

Developer: KTX

Year of Release: 2016

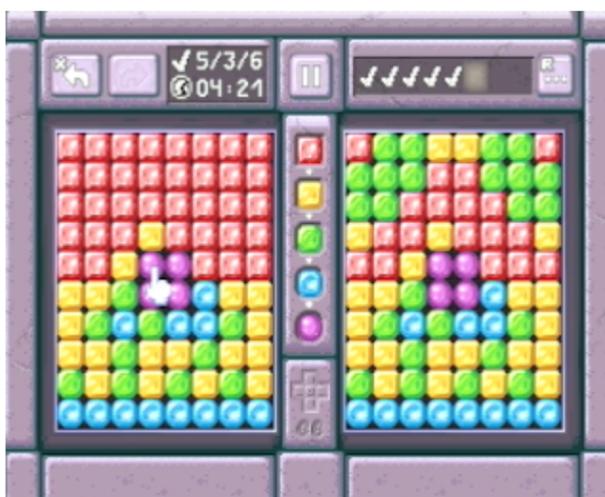
In Summary: A puzzle-adventure game which has decent enough colour-changing block puzzle elements but really shines in the simple but effective adventuring sections which utilise an overworld map. As a complete package it is one of the best

indie releases on the system.



Review:

Spanish developers KTX had previous experience helping out Hucast with the development of Redux before launching a Kickstarter for this puzzle-adventure title, so it was a bit surprising that said community funding attempt failed. It was even more surprising when the title was released anyway, albeit a couple of years later in 2016 – this was a far more pleasant surprise, as any fan of classic puzzlers will find the game to be an enjoyable experience. The puzzle element itself is another take on the classic "Gem'X" game, and is very similar to another Dreamcast indie release, Fruit'Y. You have two screens of blocks and the aim is to change those on one side to match the other. You do this by selecting one to change with your cursor; the central point of this cursor changes the colour of the block two steps down the colour-change ladder, whilst the adjoining blocks change one colour down. You have a certain number of steps to match the screens and whilst it all starts off quite easily, it soon begins to tax the brain a little more. The puzzle element alone is okay but it's the adventure sections here that make the game stand out. Taking the form of a restricted-path overworld, you move across the map unlocking new puzzles and progressing through the story. Its not Grandia II level adventuring, but it is an enjoyable enough trip through the world and when mixed with the puzzles, makes for a pleasant experience. Graphics are retro in style (or "2D" as they used to be called before everything had to be labelled "retro") and the music is excellent, which just adds to the game's appeal. It never got the attention it deserved upon release, but Leona is one of the better indie releases for the console even today.

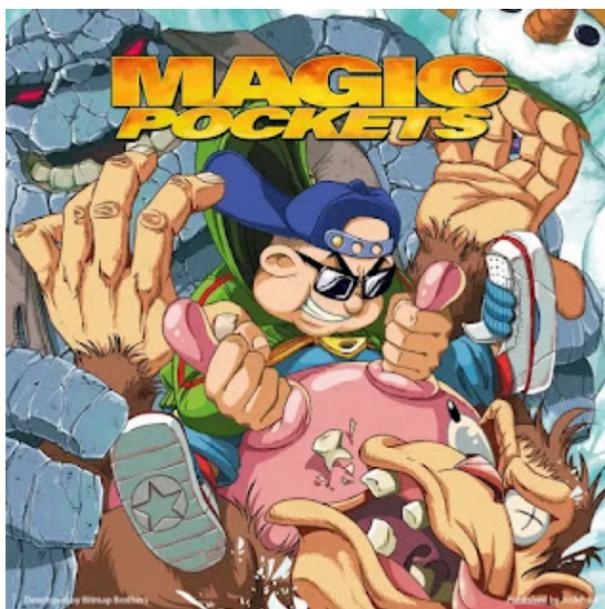


Versions available and where to buy: It looks as though the developer's website is no longer up, so to purchase this one you may have to hunt round. When I checked though, the usual retro shops online were out of stock.

Other links: Once again, it's our very own Northern powerhouse Tom on review duties for Leona, and [his review \(https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2016/05/review-leonas-tricky-adventures.html\)](https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2016/05/review-leonas-tricky-adventures.html) is a particularly good one!

Scott also interviewed developers KTX which is well worth a read [here](https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2016/02/developer-interview-ktx-software.html) (<https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2016/02/developer-interview-ktx-software.html>).

Magic Pockets



Publisher: JoshProd/PixelHeart

Developer: Bitmap Brothers

Year of Release: 2019

In Summary: A slightly odd but rather unique '90s platformer from legendary British developers Bitmap Brothers. Chunky visuals and some interesting design choices help to make the game a decent release.



Review:

First released in 1991, and used as a phone-in-and-play game on kids TV in the UK, Magic Pockets is a 2D platformer with some neat ideas. Developed by the legendary Bitmap Brothers, you play as the Bitmap Kid, who has magic trousers with bottomless pockets. Unfortunately, he keeps losing his toys down them and whilst trying to fish them out he... pulls out a black hole, jumps into it, and finds himself in Pocketland. There are 16 levels to traverse, where you'll need to dispatch an assortment of enemies with various weapons that you pull from your pockets. These attacks can be charged, so there are various effects and gimmicks that you have to master to progress. It's also notable for a series of "set pieces" like the bike of the first set of stages. Visually, it's a '90s affair, with chunky characters and a dark colour palette. The music's good, as with all Bitmap titles, so aesthetically the game is decent if a little archaic. There is the option of using the Y button for a screen filter, but you'll want to stick to the pixel look. It's an alright game, although not a classic, and it can occasionally feel a little stiff, but there is plenty to do, levels become more interesting as the game progresses, and there is enough variety to keep you playing. Not one of the Brothers' best, but charming enough, and we can all live in hope that this is merely the first of many ports of the legendary developers' title to the Dreamcast.



Versions available and where to buy: There are a total of three releases of Magic Pockets. Following JoshProd's usual publishing format there is both a PAL case (<https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/magic-pockets-dreamcast-pal/>) version and a reversible US (<https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/magic-pockets-dreamcast-us/>)/Japanese (<https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/magic-pockets-dreamcast-jpn/>) manual version (available in both US and Japanese options - this is the same game but with the designated art style on display when sealed). This is also available at VGNYSOFT (<https://www.vgnyssoft.com/product-page/magic-pockets-sega-dreamcast>).

There is also a limited edition release which comes in a PAL case with an additional soundtrack CD. This has a silver cover, and can be purchased from PixelHeart (<https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/magic-pockets-limited-ost-edition-dreamcast-pal/>).

Other links: We never reviewed this one before, so I wonder what to do in terms of link... I know, I'll link (https://www.gog.com/en/game/the_chaos_engine) to the PC version of Bitmap Brothers classic The Chaos Engine on GOG!

Maqiupai



Publisher: GOAT Store

Developer: JMD

Year of Release: 2005

In Summary: A simple mahjong solitaire game which was one of the earliest indie releases on the platform. It's no masterpiece, but it is nevertheless a perfectly pleasant gaming experience.



Review:

This is an arcade-style mahjong title where the aim is to remove tiles in a puzzle format. Rather than a full-blown version of the traditional game, the game takes inspiration from mahjong solitaire (or Shanghai). There are two modes: the main challenge mode, which has increasingly tougher puzzles, whilst the time attack mode allows you to best your own times. It has simple presentation with basic graphics (although with varying tile-sets), and pleasant Eastern-sounding music, but puzzle titles have never been audio-visual masterpieces. It can be tough in the later stages where the use of the power tile (allowing you to remove one of the unmatched tiles and its partner) becomes necessary, but it's a pleasant enough way to spend an afternoon and can be quite engrossing.

Maqiupai was one of the earlier indie releases handled by GOAT store, and originated in the Dream On Contest (https://indiedreams.fandom.com/wiki/Dream_On_Contest), which aimed to bring more titles to the system. Cool Herders and Alice Dreams Tournament can both trace their origins back to the contest as well.



Versions available and where to buy: There are still some copies of the game floating around on various online stores (and at the same low price as the other GOAT store releases) like here at The Bit Station (<https://thebitstationgames.com/product/maqiupai/>).

There was only the one version of the game released. Surely it's time for a re-release of the GOAT store releases on one disc, right?

Other links: In the absence of a review, here's a link (<https://indiedreams.fandom.com/wiki/Maqiupai>) to the game's entry on the Indie Dreams wiki.

Mawthorne



Publisher: CrazyGroupTrio

Developer: CrazyGroupTrio

Year of Release: 2022

In Summary: An ambitious concept for an 8-bit Metroidvania, the end result on the Dreamcast is a slightly disappointing and often quite empty world to explore. The initial impression isn't great, but it does improve a bit as you progress.



Review:

A 2D Metroidvania which, like other recent Dreamcast releases, uses the NESmaker software. Mawthorne was a successful Kickstarter campaign for both its intended NES physical release, and this Dreamcast port. The developer (which consists of a single individual, Zach Abernathy) had some lofty ideas, including a well-developed storyline (a last ditch effort by the Ozahk people to help them survive following a series of disasters), an open world consisting of nine areas with an array of bosses to overcome, character upgrades and NPCs to interact with. To some degree, the goal is fulfilled – the game successfully realises its Metroidvania ambitions within its 8-bit limitations with some neat animation and a nice soundtrack, coupled with a large world to explore. Unfortunately, the world is often empty and the initial weedy attack power of your character makes the opening period of the game rather tedious. It does get better the further you progress, but the first impression isn't great – and this is only made worse by the technical limitations. Unspectacular and slightly disappointing.



Versions available and where to buy: It doesn't appear that anyone is currently stocking the game (of which there was only the one version) for sale, which presumably means the Dreamcast physical version was only available to those who backed the Kickstarter. You can purchase the digital version of the game [here](https://crazygrouptrio.itch.io/mawthorne-nes) (<https://crazygrouptrio.itch.io/mawthorne-nes>) though.

Other links: You can check out the game on its itch.io page [here](https://crazygrouptrio.itch.io/mawthorne-nes) (<https://crazygrouptrio.itch.io/mawthorne-nes>). Whilst I was a bit disappointed with the final version of the game, I can only encourage you to back the developers so that we can continue to receive indie releases on the console.

You can also check out the Kickstarter campaign for the game [here](https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/crazygrouptrio/mawthorne-nes-game/description) (<https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/crazygrouptrio/mawthorne-nes-game/description>).

Neo XYX



Publisher: NG:DEV.TEAM

Developer: NG:DEV.TEAM

Year of Release: 2014

In Summary: A decent vertical shooter that inexplicably defaults to a horizontal perspective. Technically competent with good visuals, it unfortunately suffers from altogether being just a bit too average.



Review:

NEO XYX doesn't do itself any favours. A search of the internet reveals several people saying the same thing I'm about to – I very nearly dismissed NEO XYX earlier than I should have due to an inexplicable default horizontal screen orientation. Not very clever for a game which is very much a vertical shooter! Once you set the screen to the far more sane vertical mode (or if your TV is on its side, the full screen vertical arcade mode), things become far more entertaining. NEO XYX is a 16-bit-styled shooter with colourful sprites and lots of on-screen activity. Enemies have that organic-industrial Gigeresque '90s shoot 'em up look to them, and there are some pretty impressive half-screen enemies. The gameplay doesn't offer anything original but it ticks shooter fanatic boxes, with chaining central to the game's scoring system, tough but beatable bullet patterns, and a teeny weeny hit box that enables some death-defying weaving through the amassed enemy horde. The aesthetic nod to the '90s means that it doesn't appear to be pushing the hardware a great deal and whilst enemy craft are quite varied, the bosses are largely unimpressive. The soundtrack is another example of that Euro-techno style, but it is a bit underwhelming. This defines the game. The fast-paced weaving gameplay is enjoyable, but there is often a distinct feeling of "meh" throughout, lacking the depth of Fast Striker or the quality of Sturmwind, relegating it to only occasional plays. Hardcore genre fans will no doubt appreciate another example for the console, and the core game here is decent enough, but yet again this is an unlicensed Dreamcast release that won't convert the masses to the shooter cause.



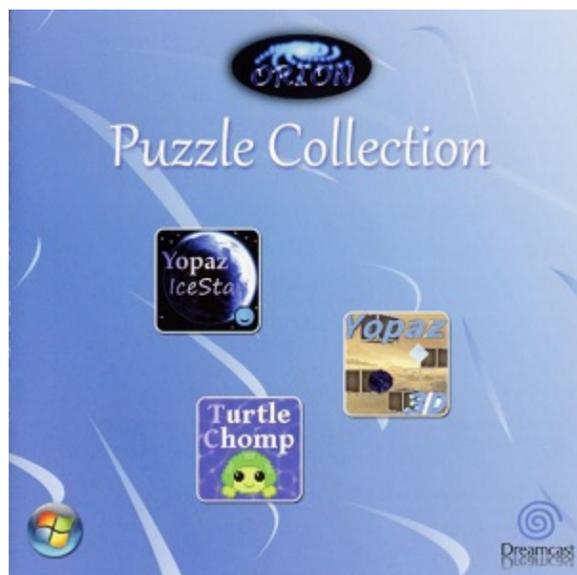
Versions available and where to buy: There were three versions of the game released, all showcasing the often incredible artwork NG:DEV.TEAM used for their games. The regular and limited editions come in DVD cases, with the limited having an additional soundtrack CD. The artwork for these two editions is different. The third version is the "Collectors edition", which basically contains both the regular and limited cases in a slipcase. 300 of these were available with a t-shirt included as a pre-order bonus.

Unfortunately, NG:DEV.TEAM don't have any of their Dreamcast games for sale anymore, so your choices for picking up this one will be limited to online or retro shops.

Other links: [Here's \(https://www.mobygames.com/game/149236/neo-xyx/\)](https://www.mobygames.com/game/149236/neo-xyx/) a link to the game's MobyGames entry, which contains links to reviews and other useful info about the game.

Neo XYX's [website \(https://neoxyx.ngdevteam.com/\)](https://neoxyx.ngdevteam.com/) is still online as well, which has loads of additional info.

Orion's Puzzle Collection



Publisher: Orion

Developer: Orion

Year of Release: 2016

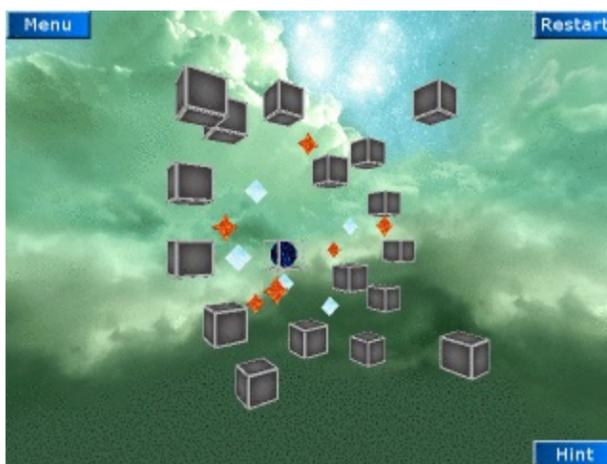
In Summary: A collection of three simple but effective puzzle games from Orion. What they lack in technical prowess or visual splendour is made up for by them being solid and fun gameplay experiences - but don't expect a gaming revelation here.



Review:

The ever-versatile Orion returned with a three-in-one puzzle package that works on Windows systems too. **Yopaz IceStar** sees you control a little smiley face (Yopaz) who has to negotiate a series of screens in the vacuum of space with the goal of collecting stars. The task is made more difficult by only being able to control the direction of travel once before hitting a block. It sets up a series of increasingly difficult levels where one wrong move will make collecting every star impossible. Throw in other obstacles, teleporters, enemies and direction changers, and what starts off as a very simple puzzle game can soon become a challenging little time sink (even including a level editor). **Yopaz 3D** adds a third dimension to the gameplay of IceStar, which makes things even tougher, as does the ever-present threat of seeing yourself disappear out of the play area. It's another decent game, but lacks modes and isn't as

compelling as the first. The final of the trio of games included is **Turtle Chomp**, where you control a turtle and attempt to create lines of fruit and combos. It's a simple-looking game, but the challenges that pop up, of which failure on will hasten a game over, can be frantic to clear. It becomes quite addictive pretty quickly which is always a good sign, but is a tad lacking in content.



All in all, Orion's Puzzle collection slipped under the radar for many, which is a shame, as whilst it may not be much of a looker, the puzzlers included are good, simple fun. Orion is a constantly impressive developer who gets little credit for his contributions to the Dreamcast library, and anyone after a fun little indie title could do far worse. Don't expect a gaming revelation though.

Versions available and where to buy: Orion only released one version of the game, which is still available to order direct from the developer [here](https://www.orionsoft.games/retroshop/ojc_dc.htm) (https://www.orionsoft.games/retroshop/ojc_dc.htm).

Other links: Check out (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VWAQ4H8kpYM&ab_channel=SEGA-SKY) this gameplay video from SEGA-SKY, which does a good job of showcasing the three different games in this collection.

Pier Solar



Publisher: Watermelon

Developer: Watermelon

Year of Release: 2015

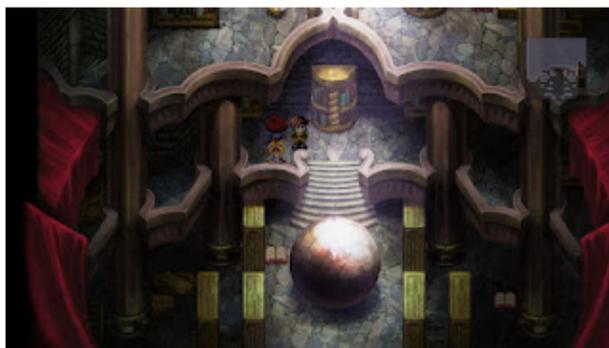
In Summary: An accomplished old-school RPG experience for the Dreamcast, this has a solid story which is well written and has high-quality aesthetic design throughout. Some may find it a little generic in places, but this is nevertheless a highly enjoyable experience.



Review:

Watermelon kept us waiting for the release of Pier Solar but the wait was worth it, and as the inaugural winner of the Junkyard's [2016 Top 10 Dreamcast indie games poll](https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2016/11/top-10-indie-dreamcast-games-2016-as.html) (<https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2016/11/top-10-indie-dreamcast-games-2016-as.html>), it is clear gamers have taken the game to heart. A decent indie RPG was well overdue on the Dreamcast, and this higher definition upgrade of the original Mega Drive release delivers. A digital love letter to old-school RPGs which allows players to revel in some beautiful design with fantastic artwork throughout. The story is strong; criticised by some for being a weak point, I found it to actually be a rather well-written plot with good dialogue, and strong character design. Yes, it is a little predictable, but one man's "generic" is another's "nostalgic". There is a healthy puzzle element, and the adventure itself takes you on a journey through varied locales. The battle system is solid, although this too has become the target of some criticism, but as a non-"hardcore" RPG player, I found it perfectly serviceable. The soundtrack is also quite superb.

Watermelon must also be credited for the work that went into the packaging of these games, whether it be the feature-rich special collectors editions or just the choice between packaging which fits into each of the Dreamcast's three regional designs. Pier Solar won't be everyone's cup of tea, but RPG fans desperate for an adventure are well serviced here.



Versions available and where to buy: The standard version of Pier Solar comes in three varieties, one for each regional style. Each comes in a Watermelon outer plastic case, with a poster and sticker set. Watermelon don't seem to be selling the game anymore, so your best choice to pick a copy up would be Dreamcast forums/groups, eBay or retro stores.

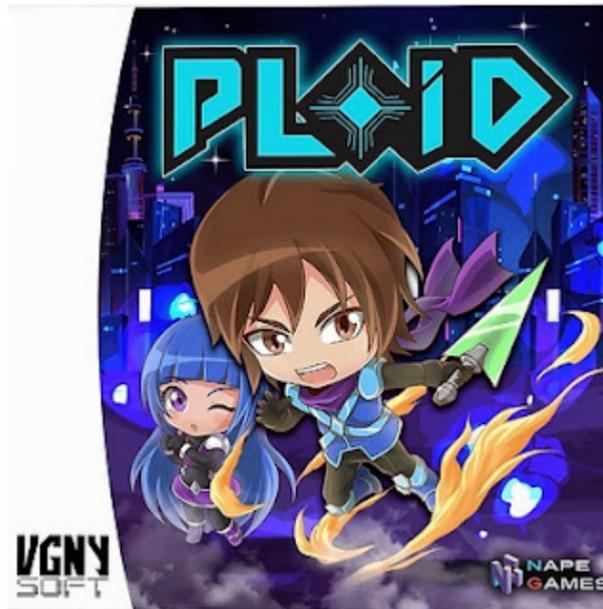
There was also a limited edition which had 999 released, spread over the three regional styles. The only difference between them is the included game (a standard copy) as all come in a large box and includes a mug, figures and a lithograph. The quality of the box is superb, with gold inlay and a highly professional look and feel. Unsurprisingly, this is not on sale anymore and you'll have to pay a premium to pick one of these up online.

Other links: Pier Solar achieved the pinnacle of Dreamcast indie gaming by winning our inaugural and to date, only Top 10 Indie Games poll. You can check that out [here](https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2016/11/top-10-indie-dreamcast-games-2016-as.html) (<https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2016/11/top-10-indie-dreamcast-games-2016-as.html>).

Some high-quality photos of the excellent collectors edition can be found on [this post](https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2015/12/pier-solar-collectors-edition-gallery.html) (<https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2015/12/pier-solar-collectors-edition-gallery.html>) on the blog, courtesy of [Blue Swirl](https://blueswirlblog.blogspot.com/) (<https://blueswirlblog.blogspot.com/>).

You can also read Hardcore Gaming 101's usual in-depth look at the game [here](http://www.hardcoregaming101.net/pier-solar-and-the-great-architects/) (<http://www.hardcoregaming101.net/pier-solar-and-the-great-architects/>) - although this was written before the Dreamcast version was released.

Ploid



Publisher: Nape Games

Developer: Nape Games

Year of Release: 2022

In Summary: A nostalgic trip back to another era of gaming, Ploid is a simple and somewhat underwhelming release which is probably best experienced on its original platform of choice. Top soundtrack though.



Review:

Ploid was initially only available as an additional extra for those who backed the Dreamcast version of Reknun, however sometime between the end of the campaign and release, it was made available for purchase by itself. This is an 8-bit sci-fi platform adventure, which sets it apart from Nape Games' other Dreamcast release (although it seems that the two do exist in the same universe). Taking a hefty inspiration from classic NES games like Mega Man, it sports a muted, '80s-influenced visual style which fits its original choice of platform well. The background story involves PLOIDS, an evolution of the human race which merge technology and DNA. Their planet is invaded by an extra-galactic race and the PLOIDS decide to take action to return the peace, specifically the two characters Alpha and Omega who travel through time to ancient eras to recover sacred stones that give them the power to defeat their foe. You control Omega whilst Alpha serves as the analyser of the recovered stones.



Chunky characters and stages, challenging platforming and often unforgiving enemies and traps await you within the game. Each of the seven stages has its own unique design and look, and comes complete with an array of enemies, which are suitably NES-like. Unfortunately, not everything from the 8-bit era is so fondly remembered, and for good reason. The enemy fire can often be difficult to avoid and with a paltry five hits allowed before you die, death can come rather quickly. Instant death falls are another less-prevalent problem, and whilst the controls are for the most part okay, climbing ladders can lead to some unforeseen drops, which is annoying. Enemy projectiles come at you with some pace which will test the reflexes of those who grew up in the era of punishing '80s platformers, and when you do die, you have to restart the stage over. All that being said, the consensus seems to be that the game is on the easy side – and admittedly, I'm no fan of the genre. Once you get a hang of how to dispatch the game's enemies (usually sending a barrage of fire their way before they can react), progress is rather straightforward and there isn't much excitement to be had. Ploid does feature some bosses, although these aren't very impressive, and the game has three difficulty selections as well as an "Ex-mode" that help bring some variety. The slowdown that is noticeable upon encountering some of the enemies would be forgivable on the NES itself, but looks rather out of place on the Dreamcast.

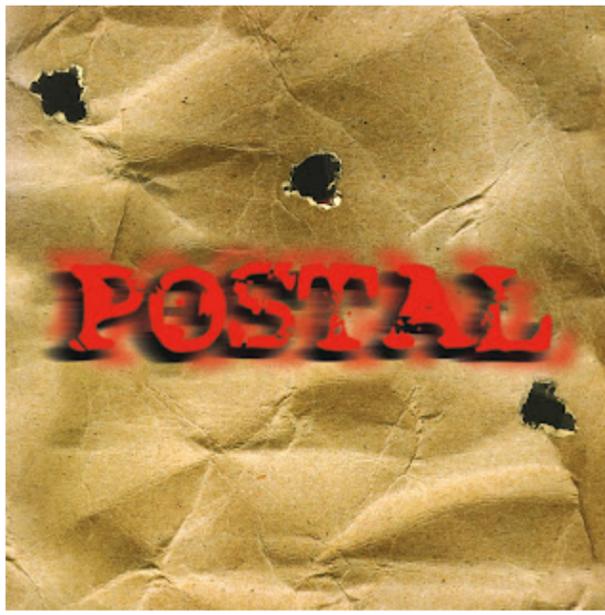
Ploid's real saving grace though is its music, composed by David Ko. Another excellent indie soundtrack, this has some very catchy and cool chiptune tracks.

Versions available and where to buy: Originally the game was only available for backers of Reknum, however it was made available afterwards on the [Nape Games website](https://www.napegames.com/product/ploid-dc/) (<https://www.napegames.com/product/ploid-dc/>), although this version is now out of stock.

VGNYsoft released a new edition of the game with new artwork in 2023 and this is still available [here](https://www.vgnysoft.com/product-page/ploid-sega-dreamcast) (<https://www.vgnysoft.com/product-page/ploid-sega-dreamcast>).

Other links: Our friends over at SEGAbits covered the release of Ploid (and Reknum) and this can be checked out [here](https://segabits.com/blog/2023/09/07/two-new-dreamcast-games-from-nape-games-reknum-souls-adventure-and-ploid-now-available-from-vgny-soft/) (<https://segabits.com/blog/2023/09/07/two-new-dreamcast-games-from-nape-games-reknum-souls-adventure-and-ploid-now-available-from-vgny-soft/>). We don't say it enough, but go and support SEGAbits and all the other Sega community blogs and channels!

Postal



Publisher: WAVE Game Studios

Developer: Running with Scissors (original); Dan Redfield (Dreamcast port)

Year of Release: 2022

In Summary: High-profile indie release of the controversial late-'90s PC shooter. Lovely hand-drawn stages and bucket loads of mostly mindless carnage await you here in this accomplished port, although the game is pretty simple at its core.



Review:

Just when we thought the post-2020 world of indie Dreamcast releases couldn't get any bigger, WAVE Game Studios go and announce an official Dreamcast port of the legendarily controversial PC game Postal, instantly putting the DC indie scene back in the spotlight. To be fair, it wasn't completely unexpected; Running with Scissors, developer of the Postal franchise, [called for someone](https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2016/12/pc-mac-shooter-postal-now-open-source.html) (https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2016/12/pc-mac-shooter-postal-now-open-source.html) to port the game to Dreamcast some years back, and developer Dan Redfield had been frequently updating the community via social media on the progress he was making with just such a project.

The game itself is a rather notorious late-'90s PC release that was met with a great deal of controversy due to its violent nature and subject matter. A (mostly) isometric shooter, you play the role of "Postal Dude", who has finally had enough of modern society and engages in a violent, brutal gun rampage with mass casualties. The game boasts some excellent hand-drawn stages which vary considerably in their settings, a variety of weapons, and plenty of challenge as you attempt to progress against a whole heap of similarly armed "enemies". Mechanically speaking, it's not a revolutionary game, with simple gameplay, uncomplicated controls and limited tactical possibilities. For the most part, you'll just be running around dispatching cops, armed militia and rednecks, taking cover when possible and collecting ammo and health boxes (you can also regenerate health by delivering final shots to wounded characters). It is fun, undeniably, but there isn't much to it and contemporary reviews were not overwhelmingly positive. It was the game's notoriety that overshadowed its

gameplay and the real reason it achieved so much attention. Banned in several countries, it became a scapegoat for those who feared it would warp the minds of the youth. Absolute nonsense, of course. Whilst it's a stretch to claim the game is some avant-garde, satirical take on modern America's fascination with media portrayals of violence, it also isn't the repugnant vacuum of morality that it was claimed to be.



The Dreamcast version of the game, to the credit of Dan Redfield, runs extremely well. All the original levels are included, as are those from two add-on packs, as well as a selection of challenge modes and a co-op campaign which is possibly the best way to experience the unhinged carnage. Even the audio from the original with Postal Dude's rants and descent into further madness, remains intact. Postal presents quite the challenge on harder difficulty levels, and the controls can occasionally be cumbersome (although the ability to use a twin stick controller here is cool), but it's an authentic recreation of the original. It's all very slick and very smooth, and whilst some of the criticisms of the original game remain as valid now as upon release, it's a high-profile and very enjoyable addition to the Dreamcast's indie library.

Versions available and where to buy: WAVE released both a European and Japanese style version (<https://www.wavegamestudios.com/shop/postal>) of the game which are both still available (at time of writing) from the publishers direct. VGNYsoft have the co-published (with WAVE) US-style version of the game available on their website (<https://www.vgnysoft.com/product-page/postal-sega-dreamcast>).

There was also a limited edition of the game in a PAL case (now out of stock) and a US-style release solely from WAVE which had just 25 copies and was sent to reviewers and social media content creators. Neither of these differed in any meaningful way from the standard releases.

Other links: Laurence, our modern day literary maestro, reviewed Postal for the Junkyard and it's an excellent look at the game - check that out here (<https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2022/05/review-postal.html>)!

Redux: Dark Matters



Publisher: Hucast

Developer: Hucast; KTX

Year of Release: 2014

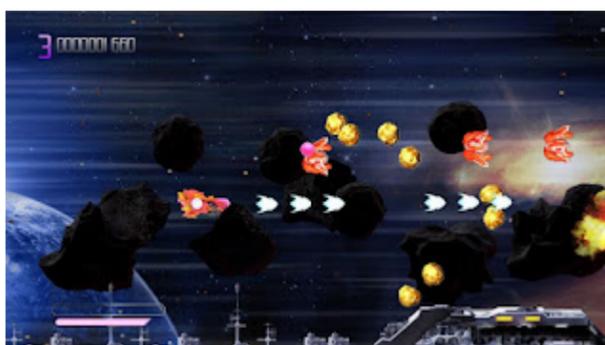
In Summary: A re-working of Dux with a darker sci-fi tone and some tweaks to difficulty and gameplay which makes it the best version of the game. The low-resolution visuals are disappointing though.



Review:

Did we really need yet another re-working of Hucast's 2009 indie release Dux? Probably not, especially seeing as the high-definition graphics promoting this release ended up being decidedly low-res, which was naughty. But criticism of the "creative" use of promotional screenshots aside, Redux does improve on what came before. The darker, more fittingly sci-fi-themed graphics look better despite the resolution drop. A smaller ship makes the gameplay less claustrophobic, and using Dux 1.5's weapon system makes this a more enjoyable experience (and progress is now more achievable, which helps with accessibility). An added veteran mode also helps bulk out the game. It is the best of the Dux releases, but it can't be forgotten that this is just the same game with a new, downgraded resolution look. Hucast didn't do themselves any favours in the Dreamcast scene with how they handled this release, and whilst enjoyable, wasn't it about time we had a sequel rather than another rehash?

After criticism of the first release of Redux, Hucast released a slightly improved "1.1" version. It plays almost identically.



Versions available and where to buy: There have been no fewer than five versions of Redux released. The regular and limited editions of the game came in DVD cases with different artwork, with the limited edition including the addition of a Dux 1.5 disc.

There was also a special edition which came in a steel case. Buyers reported several cases of the case arriving dented, which didn't help the game's reputation.

We then received the "Redux 1.1" versions, the regular of which came in a DVD case, however the "collectors edition" is probably the best single version of any of the Dux games. This was in a double jewel case featuring unique artwork and included both the Redux 1.1 and Dux 1.5 discs, along with the Redux and "remix" soundtracks.

All versions of Redux are a bit tricky to purchase now, as you'll have to rely on seeking them out on eBay, private sales or the odd copy in retro stores.

Other links: You can find out some more information about the game and its production by taking a look at its successful [Kickstarter](https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/redux/redux-dark-matters-a-shmup-for-sega-) (<https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/redux/redux-dark-matters-a-shmup-for-sega->

dreamcast) campaign.

Our friends at SegaDriven did a bumper review (<https://www.segadriven.com/dux-dux-1-5-and-redux-dark-matters-bumper-review/>) of all three versions of Dux/Redux - worth a read!

Reknum Souls Adventure



Publisher: Nape Games

Developer: Nape Games

Year of Release: 2022

In Summary: A rather enjoyable adventure title which takes inspiration from Zelda and Metroid (which I guess makes it a Zetroid? Melda? I dunno) with an expansive world that is fun to explore. It's way too easy and as a NES game ported to the Dreamcast, it isn't that impressive technically, but still a solid game nonetheless.



Review:

This cute retro-style platform-adventure was successfully Kickstarted (<https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/napegame/reknum-fantasy-of-dreams-for-nintendo-switch-and-the-nes>) for a Dreamcast release alongside its NES development (yes, it's another one of those NESmaker titles ported to the Dreamcast), and released to the Dreamcast's indie library in mid-2022 along with its predecessor Ploid. It promised old-school charm and gameplay taking inspiration from classics such as Zelda and Metroid, with an overhead world interspersed with side-on platforming. Nape Games are a rather productive indie development studio, and their original campaign for the game actually featured several different versions – alongside this NES-developed title was "Reknum Fantasy of Dreams" (https://store.steampowered.com/app/1582760/Reknum_Fantasy_of_Dreams/). Whilst this latter game would have been a more impressive port to the console, we instead only received the 8-bit version, which was slightly disappointing.

The plot won't win many awards for originality, featuring a backstory of central character Cheri losing her family in the "Battle of the Holy Realms" and her quest to find the four sacred souls and revive her loved ones in the underworld. It has the same sort of simple charm as the 8-bit adventures it is trying to emulate and does so quite effectively. From a gameplay perspective, it has some pretty strong Zelda vibes. You start from the overhead perspective armed with a sword and make your way through the map, flipping between screens, defeating enemies as you go. It's heavily reminiscent of Nintendo's classic but a curveball is thrown in when entering certain locations which switches things to a more side-on view, with gameplay consisting of various platforming elements, more enemies, and even some very light NPC interaction. This is also where the bosses appear, although these are slightly underwhelming and easy to beat. In fact, that is a criticism that can be levelled at the entire game: progress is remarkably easy, especially when you start finding new weapons. Your default sword is very quickly surpassed and both the boomerang and shuriken that you'll find end up making light work of just about every enemy. This low level of challenge at least allows you to experience the entire game (and I've never been a fan of games that are hard just for the sake of it), but it does make it feel a little routine quite early on.



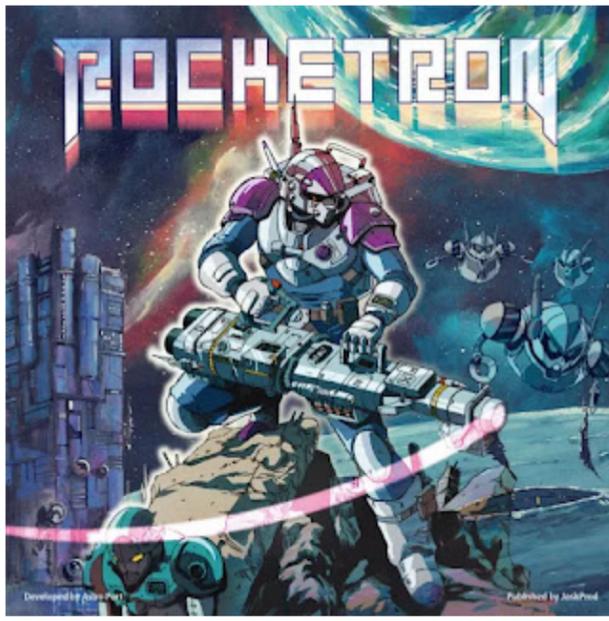
There are a variety of different locations and settings in both the overhead and side-on views, although these are relatively generic, which also applies to the various characters and enemies you will encounter. It's fun to explore the world of Reknum as it is a rather expansive one for a NES title, but its maze-like nature can become a little repetitive. Graphically, the developers have produced a cute, varied game but there are certain sections (namely the desert areas) where the visuals look pretty sub-par. Luckily, the chiptune soundtrack is yet another example of an indie game with a superb music selection, as limited as it is.

Versions available and where to buy: The game's original release was available to backers on Kickstarter and then later via the [Nape Games website](https://www.napegames.com/product/reknum-souls-adventure-dc/) (<https://www.napegames.com/product/reknum-souls-adventure-dc/>), but this is now out of stock.

VGNYsoft re-released the game in 2023 and this is available on their [store](https://www.vgnysoft.com/product-page/reknum-souls-adventure-sega-dreamcast) (<https://www.vgnysoft.com/product-page/reknum-souls-adventure-sega-dreamcast>). Both versions of the game are in single jewel cases.

Other links: The review you just read above is the first we've done of this game on the Junkyard, but you can check out Tom's [look at the next game from Nape Games](https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2023/01/gemaboy-zero-heads-to-dreamcast-in-2023.html) (<https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2023/01/gemaboy-zero-heads-to-dreamcast-in-2023.html>), which, at the time of writing, is still not released.

Rocketron



Publisher: JoshProd/PixelHeart

Developer: Astro Port

Year of Release: 2021

In Summary: A criminally overlooked release from JoshProd that delivers an engrossing and highly enjoyable Metroidvania-style platforming shooter with some highly impressive enemies and excellent gameplay. A real gem of an indie release.



Review:

Rocketron may have been overlooked by many partly due the amount of titles JoshProd released simultaneously that year, but if you haven't yet checked out this Astro Port-developed title, I'd encourage you to do so. Rather than "just another shoot 'em up" from the talented Japanese indie team, this is an old-school platforming shooter in the Metroidvania tradition. Playing as a cyber soldier, your task is to take on the mysterious "Congregation of Gogoh". To do so, you have a variety of weapons and abilities to upgrade as you explore the planet Metnal 28, taking on an array of enemies as you go, from robotic foot soldiers to screen-filling bosses, many of which are very impressive. Those familiar with the genre will know what to expect, with light platforming and puzzle elements, an impressively large world to explore with plenty of variety in its surroundings, and a story which is slowly revealed as you come across fallen comrades. The controls are excellent and the ability to use your rocket pack to fly around the levels is implemented well (and is great fun). Enemies disintegrate into satisfying balls of flame and there are plenty of pick ups and chances to upgrade both stats and weapons. The game is quite satisfying visually, with a mid-'90s Euro shooter feel to its often imposingly large enemies. Like other Astro Port titles, Rocketron has a bit of a "grainy" look to it, but this just adds to the epic sci-fi feel of the game. On harder difficulty settings it can be a somewhat overwhelming challenge, but the inclusion of easier options opens the game up to everyone and is very much welcome. The game can sometimes experience a few performance issues (especially when a lot is going on), and it doesn't reinvent the genre, but Rocketron is a remarkably fun, enjoyable, and engrossing experience, making it one of JoshProd's best releases.



Versions available and where to buy: JoshProd produced this one in their standard format of a PAL case release (<https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/rocketron-dreamcast-pal/>) and US (<https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/rocketron-dreamcast-us/>)/Japanese (<https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/rocketron-dreamcast-jpn/>) reversible manual versions.

Also available at VGNYsoft (<https://www.vgnysoft.com/product-page/rocketron-sega-dreamcast>).

Other links: It is a continual regret that I didn't review the game upon release, as it definitely deserved some attention. I did take a look at it before it was released (along with other games due in 2021) which you can check out here (<https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2021/04/upcoming-dreamcast-indie-releases-2021.html>).

You can also purchase the game on Steam, which is just as good as the version released on the humble Dreamcast.

Rush Rush Rally Racing



Publisher: RedSpotGames

Developer: Senile Team

Year of Release: 2009

In Summary: Highly enjoyable top-down racer which really shines in multiplayer modes. It features great visuals and intricate track design, but is a bit too hard on the challenge front. Would be improved upon by the later "Reloaded" release.



Review:

Senile Team are well regarded within the Dreamcast indie scene, in part due to the development of the much-modded Beats of Rage engine, but also this highly entertaining top-down racer. Those familiar with the classics of the genre will feel at home with Rush Rush Rally Racing. Taking control of one of a variety of racers, there are both single-player and multiplayer modes. For the solo player, the "grand prix" mode takes an arcade approach, with the aim of finishing in the top three to make progress. The difficulty level is high – some of the later tracks can be confusing at first, and there is little room for error, but the intricate design of the tracks and varied surfaces keep things interesting on repeated plays. Multiplayer is where the real fun is, and up to four players can compete in the three modes which take inspiration from classics such as Micro Machines. If you only plan on playing solo, you'll miss out on half of the game's content, which is a shame. The soundtrack is good and there is a feeling of quality to the entire product. Fun yet highly challenging, and best enjoyed with some friends, Rush Rush remains one of the better indie releases on the console – although improved upon with the "Reloaded" release.



Versions available and where to buy: There were three different editions of the game. The standard release came in a single jewel case, whilst the "deluxe" edition comes in a double jewel case with additional soundtrack CD, stickers and a full-colour manual. This shares the same artwork as the standard edition, with the exception of the title being changed to "Rush Rush Rally Racing DX".

There was then an "alternate deluxe" version released which had the same case and extras of the first deluxe version, but had a new night-themed cover (pictured below).



All of these versions are no longer available to purchase but can be found on eBay and through private sales.

Other links: Tom took a [retrospective look](https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2016/08/a-quick-look-at-rush-rush-rally-racing.html) (<https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2016/08/a-quick-look-at-rush-rush-rally-racing.html>) at the game back in 2016 which is a thoroughly good read.

Rush Rush Rally Reloaded



Publisher: Senile Team, JoshProd/PixelHeart, WAVE Game Studios (special edition re-release)

Developer: Senile Team

Year of Release: 2017

In Summary: Reloaded doesn't improve massively on the original release of Rush Rush Rally Racing, but the added single-player modes and some tweaks and small improvements help this to be the definitive version of the game and a great release.



Review:

After the positive response to the release of Rush Rush Rally Racing, Senile Team decided to port their top-down racer over to the Nintendo Wii's WiiWare service with some tweaks and improvements. Fast-forward eight years and the improved version served as the basis for an update on the Dreamcast. It's certainly not just a re-release – there are several important changes, some more obvious than others. The slowdown which occasionally popped up is gone, menus are re-designed, and the graphics slightly improved. The big addition here are the two new single player modes – "time attack" and "challenge". Time attack allows you to get to grips with the tracks (including the multiplayer tracks which were previously unavailable in solo mode), whilst "challenge" is a solo version of the multiplayer "get ahead" mode, and plays much like the multiplayer in Micro Machines – score points by getting so far ahead of your opponents that they drop off the screen. Both modes are great additions and add some welcomed depth. Whilst there probably isn't quite enough here for those who played the original to death (no new multiplayer content for one), the extra solo modes mark this version out as the definitive edition.



Versions available and where to buy: The original release of the game, which was available direct from Senile Team, was in a DVD case. JoshProd also released a version (still available from [PixelHeart \(https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/rush-rush-rally-reloaded-dreamcast-pal/\)](https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/rush-rush-rally-reloaded-dreamcast-pal/)) which came in a PAL case.

WAVE re-released the game as a "special edition", which came with an additional soundtrack CD. This is still available from [WAVE \(https://www.wavegamestudios.com/shop/rush-rush-rally-reloaded\)](https://www.wavegamestudios.com/shop/rush-rush-rally-reloaded).

Other links: In the absence of a review, [here's an interview \(https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2017/06/developer-interview-senile-team.html\)](https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2017/06/developer-interview-senile-team.html) Tom had with Roel from Senile Team.

There's also a neat little [website \(https://www.rushrushrallyracing.com/index.html\)](https://www.rushrushrallyracing.com/index.html) available for the game which includes the online scoreboards.

Satazius Next



Publisher: JoshProd/PixelHeart

Developer: Astro Port

Year of Release: 2021

In Summary: A horizontal shooter in the vein of various Konami genre classics. It has a decent soundtrack and visuals coupled with solid gameplay mechanics, but is let down slightly by being a bit too generic for its own good. Also included in the "Astro Port Collector" collection.



Review:

If you're a fan of the Gradius series, then you'll feel quite at home with Satazius Next, an upgraded version of Satazius (which is also included on this disc), an Astro Port PC title from 2011.

You begin your campaign (which has minimal explanation, not that uncommon for the genre) by selecting your loadout, after which you're thrown straight into the action. It's all fairly standard stuff, especially for fans of Konami shooters, with enemies coming from all directions, environmental hazards to contend with, and some impressively large and well-designed bosses. Your weapons can be powered up throughout the game with more unlocking as you progress, and it's quite the arsenal, with multi-directional bullets, homing missiles and laser beams all present. The visuals are decent, in that Astro Port "doujin" kind of way, as is the soundtrack. Satazius Next plays a respectable homage to the games that inspired it, but it never quite breaks out of being "generic but fairly good". The inclusion of the original Satazius on the disc is nice, but despite Next having redrawn sprites, it is pretty much the same game. A decent indie shoot 'em up.



Versions available and where to buy: JoshProd published a PAL case (<https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/satazius-next-dreamcast-pal/>) version and its standard US (<https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/satazius-next-dreamcast-us/>)/Japanese (<https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/satazius-next-dreamcast-jpn/>), reversible manual version.

Also available at VGNYsoft (<https://www.vgnysoft.com/product-page/satazius-next-sega-dreamcast>).

Other links: The only coverage (<https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2021/04/upcoming-dreamcast-indie-releases-2021.html>) we've really given the game (before this article, at least) was in my look ahead towards the indie releases of 2021. Hell of a line-up that year!

Shadow Gangs

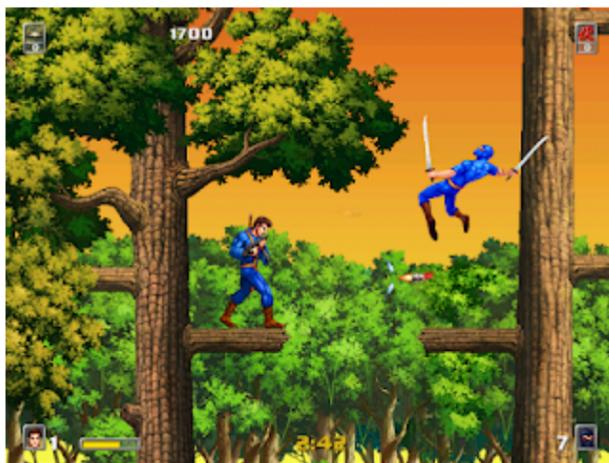


Publisher: WAVE Game Studios

Developer: JKM Corp.

Year of Release: 2022

In Summary: A slick and professional throwback to '90s beat 'em ups, Shadow Gangs has superb aesthetics and compelling gameplay. Accessible for all skill levels, this is a master class in what indie releases can be and sits alongside the very best on the Dreamcast.



Review:

For a while it looked like Shadow Gangs would not come to the Dreamcast. Its first Kickstarter campaign had an unfeasibly high target, but luckily the developers came back after receiving some honest community feedback with a much more achievable goal and funding was successful, and it's a good thing too, as Shadow Gangs is easily one of the very best indie releases we've seen on the console. Taking a healthy level of inspiration from the Shinobi series, this is a side-scrolling 2D beat 'em up / platformer with heavy '90s vibes. JKM Corp should be commended for the game's "new retro" aesthetics, much like another WAVE-published release, Intrepid Izzy. The graphics are high resolution, crisp and colourful, and the soundtrack is superb. You take the role of Master Dan, a member of the Ninja Order, facing down the threat of the Shadow Gangs in a plot which is suitably ludicrous and reminiscent of the wackiness of '90s gaming. Over the next ten or so levels you'll face off against a small army of enemies ranging from gymnastic ninjas and lizard people, to car driving punks and executioners. It's a complete mish-mash of ideas and influences which works superbly. You can gain ninja powers which increases your own arsenal, as well as plenty of shurikens, landmines and more powerful weapons as the levels progress, and you'll definitely need all the help you can get as the game is not an easy one. The levels cover all of the gaming clichés (city streets, bridges, jungles, Japanese temples), which will bring to mind Streets of Rage, Final Fight and the aforementioned Shinobi series, but it all fits together so nicely as a nostalgic trip back 30 years. For those whose reflexes have waned somewhat over the last few decades, Shadow Gangs can be a tough game, but the developer has included an easy mode which allows players of all abilities to see

plenty of the game, as well as a hard mode to cater for those who want an even more hardcore experience. Throw in some first-person single-screen mini bonus stages and achievements, and the package as a whole is a generous one. Slick and professional, the superb aesthetics and compelling gameplay make this one a real challenger in the indie library.



Versions available and where to buy: Shadow Gangs received seven different releases, although there is an argument to say there could be as many as a dozen releases.

As well as the VGNYsoft co-published version for the US market (available [here](https://www.vgnysoft.com/product-page/shadow-gangs-dreamcast) (<https://www.vgnysoft.com/product-page/shadow-gangs-dreamcast>)), there are also the EU and Japanese style releases which share the same cover but have different packaging designs to reflect WAVE's usual blue (Europe) and orange (Japan) approach. These are available [here](https://www.wavegamestudios.com/shop/shadow-gangs) (<https://www.wavegamestudios.com/shop/shadow-gangs>).

There is also the limited PAL case release which shares the same cover as the EU and JPN style releases. There was actually a US-style release produced by WAVE for Kickstarter backers, which has the same basic artwork as the other versions, but with the traditional US-style hallmarks. Neither of these are available to purchase.

Finally, there were both "collectors" and "ultra" editions released, both in a larger black box. The collectors edition included a copy of the game, soundtrack and mini art book, whilst the "ultra" edition had an additional poster and t-shirt. The game included within was a standard copy, so technically there would be one version for each of these for each regional style. Regardless, none of these editions are available to purchase from the publishers anymore so you would have to seek them out on eBay/private sales.

Additionally for all you cats who don't have a disc drive in your Dreamcast anymore, WAVE have a digital version [available for purchase](https://www.wavegamestudios.com/shop/shadow-gangs-digital) (<https://www.wavegamestudios.com/shop/shadow-gangs-digital>).

Other links: It was Laurence on review duties once again for Shadow Gangs, which you can read [here](https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2022/07/review-shadow-gangs.html) (<https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2022/07/review-shadow-gangs.html>).

You can also check out the Steam version [here](https://store.steampowered.com/app/1143430/Shadow_Gangs/) (https://store.steampowered.com/app/1143430/Shadow_Gangs/).

Sturmwind



Publisher: RedSpotGames, Duranik (original release); DragonBox Shop, The Bit Station (re-release); JoshProd/PixelHeart (re-release)

Developer: Duranik

Year of Release: 2013

In Summary: Sturmwind is a beautiful horizontal shoot 'em up space opera. Aesthetically extraordinary, it has finely tuned gameplay with an excellent weapon/upgrade system and is accessible to players of any skill level thanks to an expertly crafted difficulty level and helpful "quality of life" features. It wowed gamers upon release and still sets an incredibly high bar for any indie title that wants to match it.



Review:

The pre-release video footage and early reviews for Duranik's Sturmwind built up some considerable hype for the game, and the final product delivered – and then some. A horizontal shooter, there are 16 expansive, distinct levels on offer, which are all played at a characteristically slower pace than the manic Japanese shooters; therefore, Sturmwind is much more accessible to genre newcomers. It attempts an epic space opera atmosphere and succeeds almost entirely, helped by a superb weapon/power-up/life system that keeps things interesting, challenging and ultimately fair. The three weapons can be upgraded only when being used, and taking a hit loses that weapon. You can recover it, rather than upgrading one of the others, giving a power-up/life symbiosis that works wonderfully, adding an extra dimension to the gameplay; it helps to give the game a sense of progression that many shooters simply don't have. Levels and enemies are varied and the tight controls and balanced gameplay are perfectly matched. Sturmwind is aesthetically quite beautiful too. High-resolution graphics, superb enemy design, awe-inspiring backgrounds (which are some of the best I've seen in any shooter), beautiful bosses, amazing projectile and explosion light shows – the visuals are some of the best ever seen on the console and are comparable to even fully licensed shoot 'em ups, which is an extraordinary achievement.

The soundtrack enhances the space-opera atmosphere with its sweeping score, and is equally as superb as the visuals. Add in support for the SD card reader (which has since been somewhat superseded, but is still a nice addition), a shorter arcade mode, achievements(!), unlockable content, a save progression system and even a FMV intro, and you have an indie release which puts most "official" games to shame. A hugely ambitious release, Sturmwind satisfies on just about every level.



Versions available and where to buy: There have been a total of four separate releases of Sturmwind. The original release was from RedSpotGames. This jewel-case version isn't on sale anymore and so the only source for this would be private sales or eBay.

There have been two re-releases of the game. JoshProd released a PAL case version, whilst The Bit Station and DragonBox Shop released a new jewel-case version (which dropped the RedSpotGames branding). All three of these are seemingly also out of stock - so unfortunately if you're looking to pick up Sturmwind (and you definitely should) you're going to have to source it from online stores/eBay/private sales.

There is a fourth version, the "Windstärke 12" limited edition. Released alongside the original version of the game, this comes in a larger box with some additional goodies (an extra disc, a guide, a model of the ship, and different artwork). There is also a Krakor (one of the game's bosses) plush toy which was available separately on release - it's not part of the limited edition but is nevertheless amazing. Like the other versions of the game, this one is long out of stock.



Other links: Sturmwind is one of the most covered indie releases on the DCJY, and for good reason. Tom took a [look back](https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2017/11/why-sturmwind-is-still-incredible.html) (<https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2017/11/why-sturmwind-is-still-incredible.html>) at the game in 2017 and concluded the game was still incredible. Six years on, it still absolutely holds up, and its placement at 35 in the [2023 edition of our Top 200 Dreamcast Games list](https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/p/the-top-200-dreamcast-games-voted-by.html) (<https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/p/the-top-200-dreamcast-games-voted-by.html>) (also making it the highest-ranked indie title) certainly shows that many agree.

Supercharged Robot Vulkaiser



Publisher: JoshProd/PixelHeart

Developer: Astro Port

Year of Release: 2021

In Summary: Like '70s Japanese anime? Chances are you'll like this then. Supercharged Robot Vulkaiser is unashamedly inspired by the colourful mecha serials of that decade. It's a pretty basic shooter which feels like a doujin game, but it gets by with its sheer wackiness and nostalgic charm.



Review:

Inspired by '70s Japanese anime, Supercharged Robot Vulkaiser is a colourful, nostalgic and rather simple 2D horizontal shooter. The year is 1977 and the Earth faces an invasion from the Gogoh army. Only the giant combat robot Vulkaiser and the VulFighter team stands in their way. In reality, this means having the ability to combine your robotic fighter with each of the four members of the VulFighter team, each granting a supercharged robot combo with varying weapons. Rocket Kaiser gives an onslaught of rockets, Needle Kaiser grants sharp projectile weapons, Thunder Kaiser seemingly harnesses the power of the gods with a lightning-based attack, and Drill Kaiser is just... well, a giant drill. It's all a bit wacky, but cheerfully so, taking massive inspiration from the over-the-top animated antics of 20th century Japanese serials. The action is frenetic, with screens full of enemies – robots, UFOs, giant mecha-wasps; the selection is diverse. The action is pretty much relentless, although it's rather straightforward on earlier levels with your overpowered combo robot clearing

screens effortlessly, and it's about as bog standard a shooter in terms of gameplay as you can get. What elevates the game is its nostalgic style, catchy soundtrack and the bright visuals and varied enemies which capture the spirit of the material the game is inspired by. It's a shame the intro screens are blurry, as are some of the in-game graphics, and it really is a rather mindless affair which feels more like a good fan-made title rather than something worthy of a full retail Dreamcast release. Charming, if simple.



Versions available and where to buy: There are two versions of the game available; the PAL case version ([available here](https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/supercharged-robot-vulkaiser-dreamcast-pal/)) (<https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/supercharged-robot-vulkaiser-dreamcast-pal/>) and the US (<https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/supercharged-robot-vulkaiser-dreamcast-us/>)/Japanese (<https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/supercharged-robot-vulkaiser-dreamcast-jpn/>) version with reversible manual that is available with either style on display.

Also available at [VGNYsoft](https://www.vgnysoft.com/product-page/supercharged-robot-vulkaiser-sega-dreamcast) (<https://www.vgnysoft.com/product-page/supercharged-robot-vulkaiser-sega-dreamcast>).

Other links: No review for this one, but it was one of the games featured when I covered JoshProd's announcement of their fifth wave of releases. You can check that out [here](https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2020/09/joshprod-announce-5th-wave-of-dreamcast.html) (<https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2020/09/joshprod-announce-5th-wave-of-dreamcast.html>).

Tapeworm Disco Puzzle



Publisher: Lowtek Games

Developer: Lowtek Games

Year of Release: 2022

In Summary: A Snake-like puzzle game set in the same universe as Flea!, Tapeworm Disco Puzzle is an excellently realised title with loads of retro charm and bags of character. It doesn't push the system, but is one of the best puzzle games in the indie library.



Review:

The follow up to 2020's Flea!, Tapeworm Disco Puzzle continues the micro-world of its predecessor but this time puts you in the shoes (slime?) of the local tapeworm night club owner. Proprietor of the most happening place in town, you need to keep the tunes going all night for your parasitic patrons as well as unravelling the mystery of why some fleas are acting strangely. Rather than the perpetual jumping mechanic that Flea brought to the table, TDP is a puzzle title played out on grid-like stages, where the goal is to collect musical notes and blood to clear the stage. The puzzle element comes from the restrictions imposed by the length of your tapeworm – leaving many of the necessary pick ups out of reach. You can extend the length by collecting cassette tapes, but there are various other elements introduced throughout the game – wormholes, bouncing fleas, doors controlled via buttons, and enemy critters to name a few. Boss levels take inspiration from Snake, wherein you have to control your ever moving worm and avoid the various obstacles of the stage.

Just like Flea!, Lowtek Games have to be given credit for the amount of character they've managed to fit into the game – a colourful, 8-bit universe full of loveable parasites. It doesn't push the Dreamcast on a technical level but it's a charming title, with a great chiptune soundtrack and a really cool separate co-op mode which, like the rest of the game, is a well-realised concept. Like Flea! before it, this is a port of a NES title and there are some who will believe this has no place on a console like the Dreamcast, but they'd be missing out on an enjoyable indie release. Some stages can be a little too easy, although this is mainly because some are in place to introduce new mechanics throughout the game, but that's about the only criticism that can be levelled here besides the limitations of its source console. A great addition to the Dreamcast indie library.



Versions available and where to buy: You can pick this one up from Lowtek Games' Etsy page [here](https://www.etsy.com/uk/listing/1153752967/tapeworm-disco-puzzle-dreamcast) (<https://www.etsy.com/uk/listing/1153752967/tapeworm-disco-puzzle-dreamcast>). You can also purchase the digital version on [itch.io](https://lowtekgames.itch.io/tapeworm-disco-puzzle) (<https://lowtekgames.itch.io/tapeworm-disco-puzzle>).

It would not be surprising if we saw a wider release of this one via one of the larger indie publishers at some point in the future.

Other links: It was me on review duties for this one, and you can check out my longer form views of the game [here](#)

(<https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2023/05/review-tapeworm-disco-puzzle.html>). Or not, obviously. Honestly, if you're reading this entire article in one go my respect to you as I'm getting hand cramps.

The Textorcist: The Story of Ray Bibbia

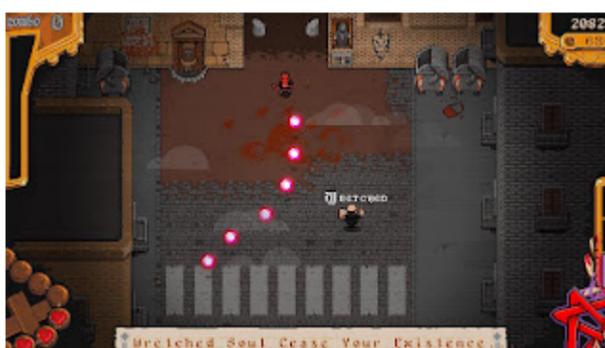


Publisher: Gamefairy/Headup

Developer: Headup

Year of Release: 2021

In Summary: Whilst its initial print run was botched, the "Exorcised" version of this game is legitimately one of the most enjoyable indie releases on the Dreamcast. Think of a Cave shooter crossed with The Typing of the Dead, mixed with a genuine love of classic horror and some excellent aesthetics. Immense fun, although one playthrough will probably be enough to see everything on offer.



Review:

My hopes for The Textorcist were high. When this self-described "bullet hell typing game" was announced – with a 666 copy limited edition to boot (Hail Satan!) – it promised to deliver the sort of horror film-fuelled, retro-aesthetic indie title that would always get me excited. And for the first 15 minutes after inserting the original disc, it absolutely delivered. The game has a tongue-in-cheek story with nods to classic horror, a gameplay style that sees you use your typing skills to deliver exorcisms via Latin prayers all whilst avoiding some rather challenging "bullet" patterns from your enemies (including, as you'd expect, pea-green projectile vomiting from a bed-bound teenager), and an atmospherically designed world. All of that managed to impress me greatly, but sadly, those responsible for porting the game to the Dreamcast failed on one element – actually testing the game. It became clear quite soon after playing that the game was riddled with several instances of game crashes (the first coming after the boss of the third level, around 15 minutes in), and whilst "workarounds" were initially suggested to allow some to make progress, those who did manage to

progress to the later stages (usually by skipping in-game text. Not an ideal solution for a game with an entirely *text-based* story) would all run into a game-ending freeze on stage six with no workaround. After the initial reports of issues with the release, Gamefairy announced that they would send out replacement discs to purchasers of the game. Whilst this took many months to arrive, to their credit, they did deliver on this promise, and the replacement "Exorcised version" discs were shipped out, finally allowing the Dreamcast community to properly experience the game.

This fixed version delivers on much of the game's initial promise. The well-crafted pixel world is designed superbly, with an attractive old-school aesthetic. The story is well written (not always the case with indie titles), chock-full of humour and has lots of knowing references to the classic horror that inspired the game. The gameplay is also highly enjoyable, especially when using a keyboard. Prompts appear on screen to type the letters of the current prayer being recited, and you need to furiously type them whilst avoiding the enemy projectiles which can often overwhelm the screen. It plays really well and successfully delivers on the concept of "if Cave did a Typing of the Dead game". For those without the keyboard to hand, you can use the standard controller, selecting between two letter choices using the triggers, and whilst it's a little more clumsy to use, it does work fairly well. As the game is mostly just a series of boss levels with some light adventuring in between, it doesn't quite manage to hold your attention as long as it could – after one playthrough you will have seen pretty much all the game has to offer. Regardless, its original and enjoyable gameplay and great aesthetics combine to give us another excellent indie release – it's just a shame that they hadn't tested the first release more fully.



Versions available and where to buy: Gamefairy still have both of the versions of the game available on their store. The standard release is in a single jewel case which presumably either comes with the "exorcised version" in the sleeve that early purchasers received, or possibly is placed inside the case instead of the original version. You can buy this version [here \(https://gamefairy.io/product/the-textorcist-dreamcast-standard-print/\)](https://gamefairy.io/product/the-textorcist-dreamcast-standard-print/).

Also still available is the limited edition. With just 666 copies printed, this comes in an outer slipcase and contains a double sized jewel case with extra soundtrack CD. It's a really cool edition and it's a shame (but not surprising) that copies remain on sale. You can pick this one up [here \(https://gamefairy.io/product/textorcist-dreamcast-limited-to-666/\)](https://gamefairy.io/product/textorcist-dreamcast-limited-to-666/).

Be careful in the future if you ever try to grab a copy of this game from eBay or other third-party sales, as you may end up receiving a bugged version - basically, The Textorcist is the new Metropolis Street Racer.

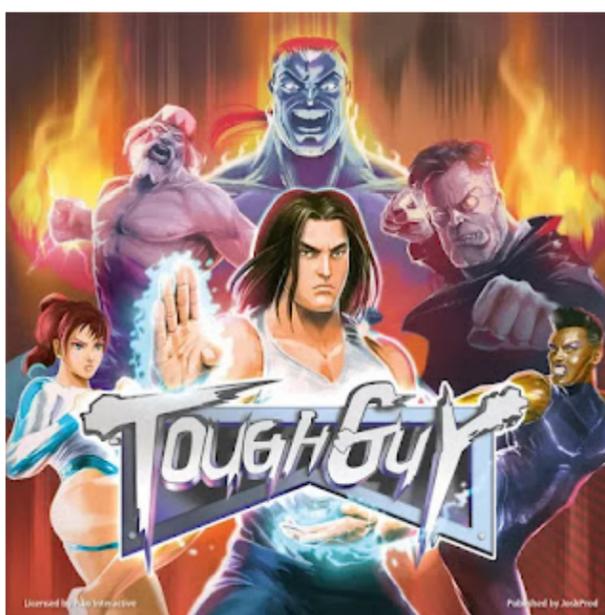
Sadly, GameFairy haven't delved into Dreamcast publishing since the debacle of this release, but I do hope that one day they revisit the Dreamcast as some of their other indie releases (on the Nintendo Switch, etc.) would be great additions to the Dreamcast library.

Other links: I'd written an absolutely scathing review of the original release of the game which still sits in the DCJY drafts folder. I decided to keep it in the drafts as I wanted to give the publishers a chance to redeem themselves rather than just shitting on them, and thankfully they did exactly that, although we did have a little moan about the whole situation on DreamPod 94 while the UK was enduring a heatwave. You can listen to that [here](https://thedreamcastjunkyard.buzzsprout.com/42610/8948780-the-dreamcast-junkyard-dreampod-episode-94-gun-golf-and-melting-dreamcasts-news-round-up) (<https://thedreamcastjunkyard.buzzsprout.com/42610/8948780-the-dreamcast-junkyard-dreampod-episode-94-gun-golf-and-melting-dreamcasts-news-round-up>).

Tom covered the game when it was announced, and that article can be found [here](https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2021/03/demonic-indie-textorcist-hits-dreamcast.html) (<https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2021/03/demonic-indie-textorcist-hits-dreamcast.html>).

You can also purchase the Steam version of the game [here](https://store.steampowered.com/app/940680/The_Textorcist_The_Story_of_Ray_Bibia/) (https://store.steampowered.com/app/940680/The_Textorcist_The_Story_of_Ray_Bibia/). This version has had near-universal praise and is well worth checking out.

Tough Guy



Publisher: JoshProd/Piko Interactive

Developer: Panda Entertainment

Year of Release: 2021

In Summary: A port of a mid-'90s Street Fighter II clone, Tough Guy has a few interesting ideas and an um... *varied*... cast of characters, but sadly some poor performance issues and a lack of quality in the gameplay itself are difficult to overlook.



Review:

You have to be a brave indie publisher to release a 2D fighter for the Dreamcast with its renowned fighting library, and even braver to release a second. JoshProd's release of Visco's Breakers didn't set the world alight and neither will this, their next foray into the genre. Calling it a "new" fighter would be pushing it as Tough Guy was originally

published back in 1995 as a MS-DOS-developed game by Taiwanese developer Panda Entertainment (who developed similar 2D fighters at the height of the Street Fighter craze). It's very much in the mold of Capcom's fighting behemoth but struggles in comparison. The cast of fighters are interesting to say the least, including such characters as a Thai rock musician, a shaolin monk, a Romanian gymnast, and an actual Nazi whose special moves include throwing a blazing swastika; which, admittedly, is a bit weird and is more than a bit iffy to those of us in the West. Tough Guy's gameplay includes the ability to recharge your health, whilst charging also allows for some interesting super moves, but it's otherwise very much your basic Capcom-inspired combo move list. There are a few game modes; standard single bouts, tournaments and versus matches but there is nothing notable enough to elevate it from mediocrity. Most frustratingly of all, the performance of the game is disappointing. Animation is jerky, the gameplay lacks fluidity, and it occasionally doesn't register inputs. The charging mechanic is also little more than a gimmick. Like Breakers before, it's cool to have a new Dreamcast fighter but sadly it's far below the quality of even mid-level games released on the console.



Versions available and where to buy: The release of Tough Guy follows JoshProd's publishing format. There is a PAL case (<https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/tough-guy-dreamcast-pal/>) release and a US (<https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/tough-guy-dreamcast-us/>)/Japanese (<https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/tough-guy-dreamcast-jpn/>) release with reversible cover. As always, every version plays on any console and it's purely a stylistic difference in packaging.

Also available at VGNysoft (<https://www.vgnyssoft.com/product-page/tough-guy-sega-dreamcast>).

Other links: Tough Guy was another game that we neglected to review individually upon release, but you can check out my initial impressions of the game, which formed part of my "Upcoming Dreamcast Indie Releases - 2021 and Beyond" article, here (<https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2021/04/upcoming-dreamcast-indie-releases-2021.html>).

Super Fighter Team, who have released the game in English for Windows along with other Chinese/Taiwanese-developed titles, have a website with info about the game and its roster which you can see here (<https://www.superfighter.com/tough/index.html>).

Völgarr the Viking



Publisher: JoshProd/PixelHeart

Developer: Crazy Viking Studios

Year of Release: 2019

In Summary: Polished side-scrolling action with a Norse mythology theme. Familiar to fans of Ghosts 'n Goblins and Rastan, there's plenty of enemies to face, tricky platforming sections and an absolutely punishing difficulty, befitting the era of gaming it emulates. Looks the part and plays well, but that difficulty... ouch.



Review:

Crazy Viking studios received some very positive press when they released their retro-styled action platformer Völgarr the Viking on modern platforms back in 2013, and thanks to the fine people over at JoshProd, Dreamcast owners can experience it on their preferred platform as well. Best described as a homage to '80s side-scrolling action titles such as Rastan or Ghosts 'n Goblins, it puts you in the role of the titular Norseman, resurrected by Odin to put an end to Fafnir the dragon. What follows is a deliberately challenging game of frequent deaths, abundant enemies and tricky platforming sections. You're armed with a sword and a spear – one for melee action and one for ranged attacks, neither of which are much help in the face of the enemy. You'll face off against a variety of beasts, some from Norse mythology and others that are more generic "bad guys", but all capable of dealing you damage. Taking a note from Capcom's Ghosts 'n Goblins, you can only survive two strikes before being reset to the start of the section; the first just loses you your shield. There are various other bits you can do such as using spears as makeshift platforms, double jumping to out-of-reach sections or descending into caverns, but it's all very much familiar to those who grew up with this genre in the '80s and '90s. Familiar also, will be the excessive difficulty – you will die. *A lot.* But that's part of the game's vision; repeated attempts to master its levels. Whilst vintage-aged gamers may have no issue with this, there are those who will find this approach rather tedious. Visually, it has some lovely pixel art, nice little humorous touches, and plenty of 8-bit gore, although it does run a little bit jerkily at times. This doesn't make the game unplayable, however, and the tight controls keep things just on the right side of "smooth". The levels themselves are a

varied bunch that will illicit more memories of platformers of old but all are well designed and look the part. The soundtrack too is of a high quality, although not quite to the levels of other JoshProd releases.



Versions available and where to buy: Völgarr follows JoshProd's standard publishing pattern - alongside the PAL case release there was a US (<https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/volgarr-the-viking-dreamcast-us/>)/ Japanese (<https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/volgarr-the-viking-dreamcast-jpn/>). style release with a reversible manual. The latter of these is available from PixelHeart with either style on display, however the PAL case version is out of stock.

Strictly speaking, this is the second release of the game – members of a German retro forum self-funded a small quantity of the game, with the developers not seeming to mind, but this isn't included in this complete guide to indie games as it wasn't made available to all.

Other links: As the game was ported to the console some time before the official physical release came out, Tom took a look at this one back in 2015 (<https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2015/09/xbox-one-platformer-volgarr-viking-now.html#more>).

Wind and Water: Puzzle Battles



Publisher: RedSpotGames (original release); DragonBox Shop and Yuan Works (re-release)

Developer: Yuan Works

Year of Release: 2008

In Summary: Accomplished indie puzzle game which feels like a fully-featured release. There is loads to unlock, the puzzle mechanic is addictive (although very difficult at times) and it's aesthetically very nice indeed. A gem of an indie release.



Review:

Costa Rica may not be the first place that springs to mind when talking about origins of awesome Dreamcast indie games, but that's exactly where this one hails from. This quirky little game has the attention to detail of a "proper" release, full of self-referential jokes and charm. The main game takes place on an overhead map with each location being a challenge or battle using the game's puzzle system. This system is a tile-matching one where you create diamonds out of the five coloured pieces, and hopefully combos, chains and a few other high-scoring moves. On its own, this would be a passable endeavour (although at times freakishly difficult), but it's the extra content that impresses most. A full story, arcade and puzzle modes, charming 8-bit style and music, a museum mode(!) with behind the scenes snippets and even mini-games. It's a real package and in terms of simple value for money, perhaps one of the best indie games on the Dreamcast. The puzzle element itself is addictive but it can be frustratingly difficult, especially in the versus battles. This stalls progress (a shame, as unlocking extra content is great fun), and leaves a slight sour taste in an otherwise delicious package. For puzzle fans it's a must.

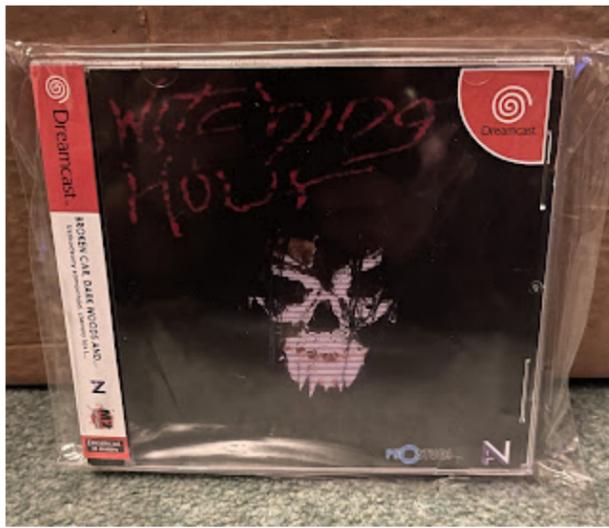


Versions available and where to buy: Wind and Water has received just two releases; the original from RedSpotGames in a jewel case with spine card, and a re-release by Yuan Works and DragonBox Shop which was very similar but had no spine card. The latter of these is still available at [DragonBox Shop \(https://dragonbox.de/en/games-for-sega-dreamcast/wind-and-water-puzzle-battles-dreamcast.html\)](https://dragonbox.de/en/games-for-sega-dreamcast/wind-and-water-puzzle-battles-dreamcast.html), and is so cheap you'd be an absolute fool not to buy a copy!

Other links: Aaron was on hand for an unboxing and first impressions video of the game way back in the year 2008(!) which you can take a look at [here \(https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2008/11/wind-and-water-unpacking-and-first.html\)](https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2008/11/wind-and-water-unpacking-and-first.html).

Tom also [interviewed Yuan Works \(https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2016/07/developer-interview-yuan-works.html\)](https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2016/07/developer-interview-yuan-works.html) in 2016 which gives some insight into the production of the game.

Witching Hour



Publisher: PRO Studio

Developer: M2 Software

Year of Release: 2022

In Summary: A Wolfenstein 3D mod that manages to create an impressively oppressive atmosphere for its horror survival gameplay. It's incredibly simple in concept and we're probably blurring the boundaries of what is and isn't a "commercial indie release" by including it here, but this is a highly successful attempt at minimalist horror.

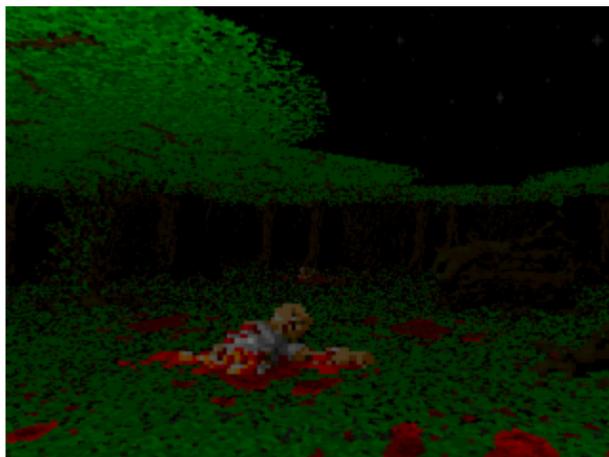


Review:

The Wolfenstein 3D modding community has been active for over three decades at this point, bringing all manner of mods and total conversions to id's seminal first-person shooter. With the original game playable on the Dreamcast due to the work of the community, it's no surprise that some of these fan-made projects have also seen release on the console. Witching Hour, however, can claim to be the first to have a "retail" release – although we're quickly getting into slightly murky waters in terms of what is official and what is not. Published by Polish outfit PRO Studio, and developed by M2 Software, this release qualifies for this guide due to its original developers being involved in the Dreamcast version (originally porting it to the Dreamcast back in 2016), and because it has a few nifty ideas that sets it apart from being *just* a homebrew port.

It's a rather simple affair at its core – your van breaks down in the woods and you need to find various items (keys, tires, gasoline) to get going, whilst avoiding the evil which lurks amidst the trees and is in constant pursuit of you. Whilst based on Wolfenstein, there's no first-person shooter action here, with the sole gameplay being collecting the items needed and avoiding the evil. The game makes great use of the VMU, which can be used as a compass, map and checklist of required items. When you complete the admittedly short goal of the game, a survival mode is unlocked which requires you to rescue your friends. It's not a particularly long game, and the presentation is rather bare bones – but it's in the atmospheric terror that the game shines.

The now-aged engine the game runs on brings a suitably gloomy, retro horror feel to the title, which is enhanced by a minimalist soundtrack which is nevertheless immediately effective; a tense, lo-fi, dungeon synth-style affair, punctuated by screams, shotgun blasts and the hideous sounds of your pursuer. Visually, its green and brown muddy pixels reveal brutal, ripped apart corpses, dead bodies hanging from trees and a well-imagined, if horrifying, creature. It's all quite effective. It never quite feels like a "proper" fully formed game, but instead like some sort of video game equivalent of a lost-footage VHS tape found in the woods.



Versions available and where to buy: Credit to PRO Studio for really going all in on the physical release, too. Whilst the disc isn't pressed, it comes with a poster, cover versions for all three regions, a fake film cell, a Japanese spine card and an awesome full-colour manual in both English and Polish. It just adds to that atmospheric feeling of the title, and is something I wish other indie publishers focused more on. Sadly, it looks as though the game is no longer available - but that does sort of add to the "found footage", "video nasty" horror appeal. Maybe the entire thing was merely a figment of my imagination and the real evil is still yet to emerge, waiting in the shadows. (...no honestly, this did come out).



You can, however, download the game for free (yay!) from [here](https://www.moddb.com/mods/witching-hour/downloads/witching-hour-dreamcast) (<https://www.moddb.com/mods/witching-hour/downloads/witching-hour-dreamcast>) so you too can experience this little horror gem for yourself.

Other links: I went off on a massive tangent when I was on review duties for this one (you can read it [here](https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2023/04/witching-hour-best-indie-horror.html) (<https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2023/04/witching-hour-best-indie-horror.html>)) but if you want to read some horrendous creative horror writing alongside a review which is pretty much the same as what you've just read above, knock yourself out.

Wolflame



Publisher: JoshProd/PixelHeart

Developer: Astro Port

Year of Release: 2021

In Summary: Another port of an Astro Port PC title, this competent vertical shooter doesn't have much in the way of gimmicks, but delivers a solid shooting experience with good controls and a nice soundtrack. Really rather difficult though. Also saw a release as one of the four games on the "Astro Port Collector" release.



Review:

After playing an early build of this release my hopes weren't high, as the technical performance was underwhelming. Thankfully, it seems that JoshProd ironed out most of the tech problems leaving us with a shooter which may not add much to the vertical shooter genre but does a decent job at being an enjoyable release. Those familiar with classics such as Raiden or Twin Cobra will feel right at home. There is little story, no loadouts or ship selection, instead you're just thrown into a world with large numbers of opponents to take down. Levels have a crisper look to them than some of Astro Port's other titles and they're full of tanks, various forms of enemy craft, and large bosses that can be quite impressive. There's not many gameplay gimmicks either – you're armed with a main fire weapon (which can be powered up to three different forms) and a secondary powerful bomb, and that's about it. It plays well, successfully emulating the classic shooter era with good controls and a mostly solid frame rate. It is a challenging game though. Whilst not a bullet hell-style shooter, you will still need super quick reflexes to deal with the fast enemy fire, which, whilst never unfair, can lead to quite a few game overs before you start to get a feel for the game. Nevertheless, Wolflame is a well-designed release, with a good soundtrack, that goes for a classic approach and succeeds – but doesn't add anything particularly fresh to the Dreamcast's substantial shooting lineup.



Versions available and where to buy: If you're utterly insane and have been reading this article all the way through (honestly, respect to you for lasting this long) you'll know what the publishing of this JoshProd release looks like - a [PAL case](https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/wolflame-dreamcast-pal/) (<https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/wolflame-dreamcast-pal/>), release and that very efficient [US](https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/wolflame-dreamcast-us/) (<https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/wolflame-dreamcast-us/>)/[Japanese](https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/wolflame-dreamcast-jpn/) (<https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/wolflame-dreamcast-jpn/>) reversible manual release. Got to hand it to JoshProd - these releases do look damn smart. Also available at [VGNysoft](https://www.vgnysoft.com/product-page/wolflame-sega-dreamcast) (<https://www.vgnysoft.com/product-page/wolflame-sega-dreamcast>).
Other links: Wolflame was another title featured in my preview of [what 2021 would bring us](https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2021/04/upcoming-dreamcast-indie-releases-2021.html) (<https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2021/04/upcoming-dreamcast-indie-releases-2021.html>). Yes, I'm getting as much use out of that article as I possibly can!

Xenocider



Publisher: Retro Sumus (original); WAVE Game Studios, VGNysoft (re-releases)

Developer: Retro Sumus

Year of Release: 2021

In Summary: Xenocider delivers on its promise. A technically proficient 3D indie release with more content than just about any other post-life Dreamcast title and top-level presentation throughout. Retro Sumus have not just given us a great indie title, but they've released something that takes what made the Dreamcast era so great but adds some learnings from 20 years of gaming evolution.



Review:

Xenocider is an example of how Dreamcast indie development should be done. Whilst the game's Kickstarter didn't see completion (<https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2016/06/xenocider-kickstarter-cancelled.html>), Retro Sumus stuck at it, engaged with the community, were open and honest with continual updates, and built up a lot of good will along the way. For Xenocider to finally be in the hands of Dreamcast players feels like a justified victory – even more so when you consider just how good a game it is. A 3D, into-the-screen shooter, inspired no doubt by the likes of classic Sega title Space Harrier, Xenocider puts you into the role of Xara, a cybernetic, cyberpunk destroyer of aliens, as she journeys from planet to planet dispatching an array of colourful and deadly life forms. The game sees forward momentum controlled automatically, leaving you the more important (and fun) job of aiming, along with avoiding oncoming enemies. You can move left or right across the screen into various lanes, a little like a 3D endless runner title, avoiding obstacles, collecting power ups, and all the while frantically trying to deal with the seemingly endless opposition thrown at you. This mix of styles gives the game a unique, and quite modern, feel. Stage and enemy design is strong, with the 3D visuals looking just right for a Dreamcast indie title and there is a huge amount of variety included in the enemy design, from hideous arachnid creatures to menacing yeti monsters, and screen-filling boss battles that are impressive both technically and for sheer ingenuity in design. The game is exciting, with some great music; is tough (sometimes brutally so) but fair, and even has branching paths as you progress through the main mode. It also runs exceedingly well – maintaining 60 frames per second throughout, which is in of itself, some achievement.

And if that was all the game had to offer, I'd be quite content. But Retro Sumus have not just delivered a technically impressive 3D indie title – they've also included an astonishing amount of extras. There are mini-games (including a quite brilliant retro 3D shooter), movie sequences, achievements, unlockable modes and more. The most impressive of these is a full 3D recreation of Space Harrier – an entirely new mode that could easily stand on its own merits in the indie library, and the part of the game I've probably spent most time with. This glorious digital love letter to old-school Sega plays brilliantly, and just shows the versatility within Retro Sumus.



Versions available and where to buy: There have been half a dozen versions of Xenocider released (so far). Retro Sumus released a standard edition in a jewel case alongside a special edition which came in a DVD case with an additional soundtrack CD. Both of these are now sold out on the Retro Sumus store.

The developers also released two highly limited editions - a PAL case release and a steelbook release, both restricted to 50 copies and including the additional soundtrack CD. These too are now long out of stock.

WAVE Game Studios re-released the game in a European style which is still available from their [store](https://www.wavegamestudios.com/shop/xenocider) (<https://www.wavegamestudios.com/shop/xenocider>).

Finally, VGNYsoft published their own version of the game which uses a mix of US and Japanese art styles. This is also still available via their [store](https://www.vgnysoft.com/product-page/xenocider-sega-dreamcast) (<https://www.vgnysoft.com/product-page/xenocider-sega-dreamcast>).

You can also purchase the digital version of the game direct from Retro Sumus in both [standard](https://retrosumus.com/product/xenocider-digital-edition/) (<https://retrosumus.com/product/xenocider-digital-edition/>) and [deluxe](https://retrosumus.com/product/xenocider-deluxe-digital-edition/) (<https://retrosumus.com/product/xenocider-deluxe-digital-edition/>) (which comes with the soundtrack) editions. The emergence of paid-for digital downloads for Dreamcast indie games is probably the most welcome move in the scene in recent years and it's great these are available.

Other links: Xenocider had an exceptional review on the Junkyard from the man, Mr. Tom Charnock, which you can read [here](https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2021/01/review-xenocider.html) (<https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2021/01/review-xenocider.html>). Great review! Great game! Great Scott! (Sorry, I've been writing this for like 60 hours now and am going ever so slightly more insane by the minute).

Also worth checking out Retro Sumus' [website](https://retrosumus.com/) (<https://retrosumus.com/>) for more information.

Xeno Crisis



Publisher: Bitmap Bureau

Developer: Bitmap Bureau

Year of Release: 2020

In Summary: An absolutely epic and highly enjoyable multidirectional shooter romp through an alien infested universe. The action is immensely satisfying, delivering a smooth and exciting experience with gorgeous aesthetics. Xeno Crisis lays a blood-soaked claim to being the best ever indie release for the Dreamcast.



Review:

From Southampton, England-based developers Bitmap Bureau, Xeno Crisis was a successfully Kickstarted title that has seen much praise for all of its numerous releases on modern, and not so modern systems, one of which (rather excitedly) being the Dreamcast. And it's a damn good thing it came to the DC too, as the game is awesome. Taking inspiration from a mix of twin-stick shooters, dystopian sci-fi, and a particular late-'80s/early-'90s aesthetic, Xeno Crisis rolled onto the Dreamcast amidst a shower of expended ammunition and dead alien bodies. The 16-bit artistry of Xeno Crisis is very much of the "British"-style of '90s Amiga developers like Bitmap Brothers, and looks ace, backed up with a great soundtrack. It runs flawlessly as you charge around the various stages, dispatching all manner of alien bastards with an assortment of weapons. As you enter each room it's just you, a dwindling ammo supply, and a horde of off-world nasties to dispatch to their makers. End of level bosses are screen-filling monstrosities, you can upgrade your character's "stats" between levels, and the stages change each time you boot it up, greatly helping the game's longevity. Most importantly of all, though, the game plays like an absolute dream. Best played with the Dreamcast's twin-stick controller, but still awesome without, it's pure enjoyment from start to finish. It can be relentless at times, and the difficulty is not something to be taken lightly, but Xeno Crisis is one of those rare games where the gameplay itself is so damn enjoyable it's hard not to smile every time you play. More than just a worthy addition to the Dreamcast library, Xeno Crisis is a retro-styled package of gaming joy, and a serious contender for the best the indie scene has so far delivered.



Both Tom and myself get a shout out in the game's credits for providing some help with sourcing controllers to be tested on the game. You can also find me as one of the game's many hostages to rescue, although I've never actually found myself! (Honestly, if you do find me, I wouldn't bother. I'd be terrible in such a situation. I'm not great with blood or anything bug-like, so I'd definitely be more of a hindrance - unless, I dunno, you want someone to distract the alien hordes with talk of Black Metal, Star Trek or rally games. And yes, I know, that's an odd mix of interests. I'm a complex guy. I yearn for the episode of Star Trek where the crew beam down to a planet of Black Metal weirdos who engage in some sort of ritualistic, occult, Mad Max rallying through Finnish-like forest landscapes... but I digress, once more.)

Versions available and where to buy: There are three standard releases of Xeno Crisis available, one for each regional art style. These can all be purchased on the [Bitmap Bureau store](https://shop.bitmapbureau.com/collections/sega-dreamcast/products/xeno-crisis-sega-dreamcast-cd) (<https://shop.bitmapbureau.com/collections/sega-dreamcast/products/xeno-crisis-sega-dreamcast-cd>).



Kickstarter backers received a slightly different version which has different artwork for all three regional styles, but is otherwise identical. There's no limited edition or collectors edition - although this is one game I really wish they had released one for!

You can also purchase the digital version of the game on the [Bitmap Bureau store](https://shop.bitmapbureau.com/products/xeno-crisis-sega-mega-drive-genesis-rom-download) (<https://shop.bitmapbureau.com/products/xeno-crisis-sega-mega-drive-genesis-rom-download>) - another example of the newer indie releases having easily accessible digital options.

Other links: It was myself who had the absolute honour of [reviewing](https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2020/06/review-xeno-crisis.html) (<https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2020/06/review-xeno-crisis.html>) Xeno Crisis for the Junkyard and it's one I'm particularly proud of. What a game, though.

You can find a bit more info - including the other platforms the game released on - on the [Bitmap Bureau site](https://bitmapbureau.com/) (<https://bitmapbureau.com/>).

Yeah Yeah Beebiss II



Publisher: WAVE Game Studios & Rigg'd Games

Developer: Rigg'd Games & Mega Cat Studios

Year of Release: 2021

In Summary: A simple single-screen arcade-platformer which purports to be a sequel to a game that probably never existed. Well designed and eminently playable, it's only held back by being a NES port which looks slightly out of place on the Dreamcast.



Review:

A sequel to a game that probably never existed, a popular retro gaming YouTuber and a rapidly up-and-coming Dreamcast indie publisher – a strange mix to be sure, but one which lies behind Yeah Yeah Beebiss II, a quirky little arcade addition to the Dreamcast indie library. Yeah Yeah Beebiss I was a NES title that was listed in an ad for a mail-order service back in the late-'80s, but the existence of which is doubtful. Various theories have been raised about its nature – a copyright trap, an inside joke, a simple translation error and, of course, potentially an actual long lost title. The theory which seems to have gained most traction amongst those attempting to decipher the mystery is that the title is a slightly garbled English translation of the title of the Japanese Famicom release "Rai Rai Kyonshis: Baby Kyonshi no Amida Daibouken" – a game that had you control a young Jiangshi (a Chinese hopping vampire, familiar to fans of the Darkstalkers franchise as the basis of the character Lei-Lei/Hsien-Ko) through various stages. It's this Chinese folklore-inspired setting that is used as the basis for this "sequel", quite nicely bringing the whole saga full circle.

Developed by popular YouTuber John Riggs (<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC8cZ9g1sopNc50D9NqVBbug>) (probably most known as one of the members of the always-likeable Metal Jesus Rocks crew) with the assistance of indie masters Mega Cat Studios, this is the latest in a trend for NES-developed titles seeing a release on the Dreamcast. A single-screen arcade platformer, you're tasked with banishing the evil creatures which inhabit each stage before your time runs out. There are various pick ups, allowing you to freeze the action or add precious seconds onto your time limit which quickly becomes a necessity. Each of the game's ten stages (which are repeated on completion with harder difficulty and palette swaps) feature an arrangement of ladders and platforms which you utilise to reach the enemies; once all of these have been dispatched, it's onto the next stage. Difficulty creeps up gradually but it's the time limit which is your real enemy here. You can play as either Kyonshi Hui or Jiangshi Bo, although there's little to differentiate between them, as they both use a close-quarters attack as their only means of offence. Credit to John Riggs for the cool reference in the character's names to both the "original" game and the type of creatures they are (although it's weird that these names are only mentioned in the documentation, while in the game they're named differently).



Visually, the game does do a decent job at portraying its dark Chinese mythology origins – at least, it does on the NES. As a Dreamcast title, it is unsurprisingly held back by its source platform in this department, but even compared to other NES ports on the console, it appears a little blurry and indistinct. It runs through the NesterDC emulator, which is made clear when you have to go through a small menu screen to get into the game, and it is a little disappointing that this wasn't "cleaned up", so to speak. The game's audio is excellent, with chiptune renditions of several suitably spooky classical numbers, and the two-player mode is a nice addition to the game (although it doesn't add anything to the core gameplay).

Versions available and where to buy: Whilst the game was originally available only on John Riggs' own website (<https://johnriggs.myshopify.com/products/yeah-yeah-beebiss-ii-dreamcast>) and unavailable outside the US, it was shortly after picked up by WAVE Game Studios – thanks in no small part to the European Dreamcast community's calls for such a move. This version is still available (<https://www.wavegamestudios.com/shop/yeah-yeah-beebiss-ii>) and at a budget price.

Other links: We had Tom on review duties for this one, which can read here (<https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2022/05/review-yeah-yeah-beebiss-ii.html>). By the way, Tom is still around. We get asked about that quite frequently. He's not gone missing or anything nefarious, so don't worry.

Zia and the Goddesses of Magic



Publisher: Orion (original); JoshProd/PixelHeart (re-release)

Developer: Orion

Year of Release: 2016

In Summary: A charmingly retro RPG inspired by the 16-bit era of the genre. Whilst it's undeniably a bit simple, it has plenty of heart and is technically competent with references to other Orion games and an excellent soundtrack.



Review:

Orion returned to the Dreamcast in 2016 with this twee but nice little RPG. Whilst it may lack the more polished look of Pier Solar, it has a charming retro look and feel, and plenty of heart. In fact, whilst some may dismiss the game as having an RPG Maker look to it, delve deeper and you start to appreciate its quirks and qualities and can't help but be impressed by Orion's work (which had little pre-release hype, no long delays and no massive pre-order anticipation). You play the role of Zia, a young girl who is discovering the world of magic. She sets out on a quest to rescue the ten goddesses of magic. The story is pretty standard fare but it's well written (if a little naive) and the game plays like a 16-bit RPG should. Most of your time will be spent searching the environments which are a bit generic but nicely designed. Battles operate on a turn-based system and, interestingly, casting magic requires you to input a series of button commands corresponding to the spell you want to use. It works nicely and gives the game a little more character. Other than battles, it's mainly "search for this", "help this person", "fetch this item" gameplay that is typical of the genre. It's a good-sized game world, but some players will find it a struggle as there isn't a massive amount to do. The soundtrack is excellent, and the little references to Orion's other games are a nice touch. Don't expect a Skies of Arcadia beater, but for those wanting an enjoyable diversion for a few days, and the opportunity to support a prolific Dreamcast indie developer, this one is worth a look.



Versions available and where to buy: The original version of the game came in a jewel case and was published direct by Orion. This version no longer seems to be available.

JoshProd released a PAL case version a little later, with new artwork - this one is still available (<https://www.pixelheart.eu/en/produit/zia-the-goddesses-of-magic-dreamcast-pal/>).

You can also purchase the digital version of the game via Orion's [itch.io](https://orionsoft.itch.io/zia-and-the-goddesses-of-magic) (<https://orionsoft.itch.io/zia-and-the-goddesses-of-magic>).

Other links: This one was reviewed by the man, the myth, the monster ("...what?" - Lewis) Tom back upon release, check it out (https://www.thedreamcastjunkyard.co.uk/2016/09/review-zia-and-goddesses-of-magic_27.html)!

Spaceturnip's Top 10 Indie Picks

I'm a massive fan of the Dreamcast indie scene (I did write this article, after all!) and trying to pick just ten games from the scene that I both recommend and enjoy highly was very difficult. The fact that games like Xenocider and Driving Strikers aren't in my top ten is testament to how many great indie games we have on the console, as both are legitimately superb. As is, I've picked a selection with a broad range of genres, with some hidden gems of the library.

Shooters are represented with the very enjoyable Sturmwind and Andro Dunos 2, which for me are both pinnacles of indie shooters so far. Orion, a developer who I have a lot of time for, is represented by the dystopian Escape 2042, whilst Lowtek Games' iconic Flea! is an indie title that surpasses its NES roots. Shadow Gangs and Intrepid Izzy are highly polished titles that look fantastic and bring different gameplay styles to the console compared to the rest of the library. The Textorcist had a horrid launch but is nevertheless both great fun and aesthetically hits the spot for me.

JoshProd have published a lot of average games alongside a number of good ones, but with the Burtonesque Finding Teddy and extremely impressive Rocketron we have two indie titles that deserve far more attention than they have received; both are absolutely superb.

For me though, my absolute favourite indie release has to be Xeno Crisis. Few games on the Dreamcast have impressed me as much as this from a pure playability perspective, coupled with a Bitmap Brothers-inspired feel and excellent aesthetics, it's an extraordinary game.

My Top 10

Andro Dunos 2
Escape 2042
Finding Teddy
Flea!
Intrepid Izzy
Rocketron
Shadow Gangs
Sturmwind
The Textorcist
Xeno Crisis

Other DCJY Staff Picks

It's not just myself at the 'Yard who has an interest in the indie scene. In what I hope will be a regularly updated section of this article, I reached out to the assorted group of ruffians that make up the staff at the Junkyard and asked them for their very favourite indie titles.

Tom Charnock

Xeno Crisis
Leona's Tricky Adventures
Sturmwind
Hermes
Alice Dreams Tournament
Rush Rush Rally Racing
Intrepid Izzy
Xenocider
4x4 Jam

Lewis Cox

Intrepid Izzy (*"the one I loved the most, for sure"*)
Xeno Crisis
Witching Hour
Bang² Busters
Flea!
Tapeworm Disco Puzzle
The Textorcist
Finding Teddy

James Harvey

Driving Strikers
Intrepid Izzy
Xeno Crisis
Xenocider

Laurence Goodchild

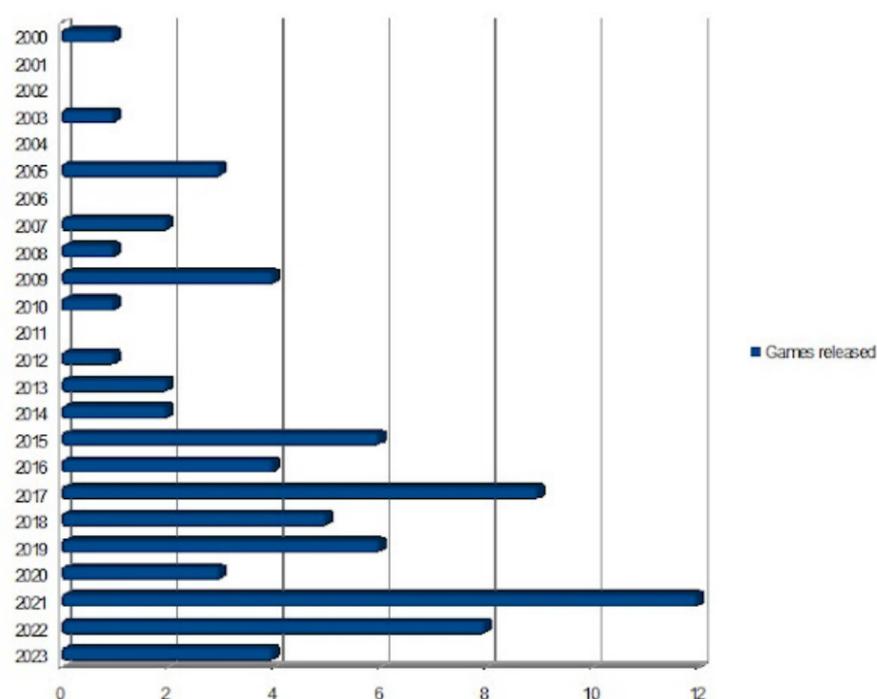
Wind and Water Puzzle Battles
Intrepid Izzy

Xenocider
Rush Rush Rally Reloaded
Postal
Driving Strikers
Xeno Crisis
Fast Striker
Flea!
Cool Herders

Statistics and Figures

I find it physically impossible to do an article for the Junkyard without adding some extra stats that are uninteresting to the vast majority of other people. It's my curse, I'm afraid. *What a horrible article to have a curse.*

We currently have an astonishing **75 games** in this article. 57 of these have been released since the beginning of 2015, which shows just how incredibly active things have been in the Dreamcast indie scene.



We had 12 releases in the noughties - 2000-2009 (an average of 1.2 games a year...)

A further 36 were released in the... I dunno, is it called the "teens"? Anyway, I'm referring to the years from 2010 to 2019. That's three times the amount of the previous decade, and just under 50% of all indie releases (averaging at 3.6 games a year).

We've had 27 released in the twenties already, and we're only a few years in! In terms of per year rate, we're at an astonishing average of 6.75 games a year. If the decade were to continue with this sort of productivity, we would see a total of around 115 indie games by 2030. That's 40 more indie games to look forward to (hypothetically, of course!)

2021 remains the most productive year for indie releases so far, with an astonishing 12 new releases (and that's not even counting re-releases!)

The history of Dreamcast indie releases can be divided into four different periods... in my own head at least. Regardless, it is still a great way to look at the release history of the indie scene and understand what was going on at the time.

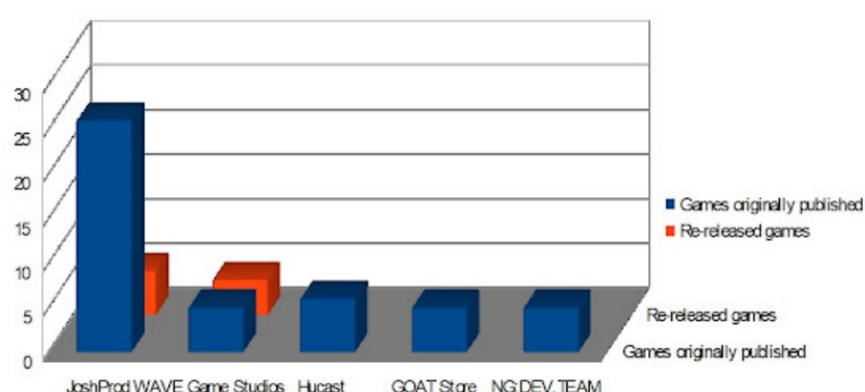
The first period can be called "**Early Indie period**". This stretches from 2000 to 2007 and is identified by a few low-profile releases (mostly from GOAT store). This was mainly a US-based period.

The second period, "**The Shooter period**" stretches from 2007 to 2014 and is called this due to the abundance of European-developed shooters (from NG:DEV.TEAM and Hucast, in particular) that were released. These had more publicity, were generally more impressive than the games from the first period. This is the first golden age of indie releases and was mainly German-based (with both NG:DEV.TEAM and Hucast prominent).

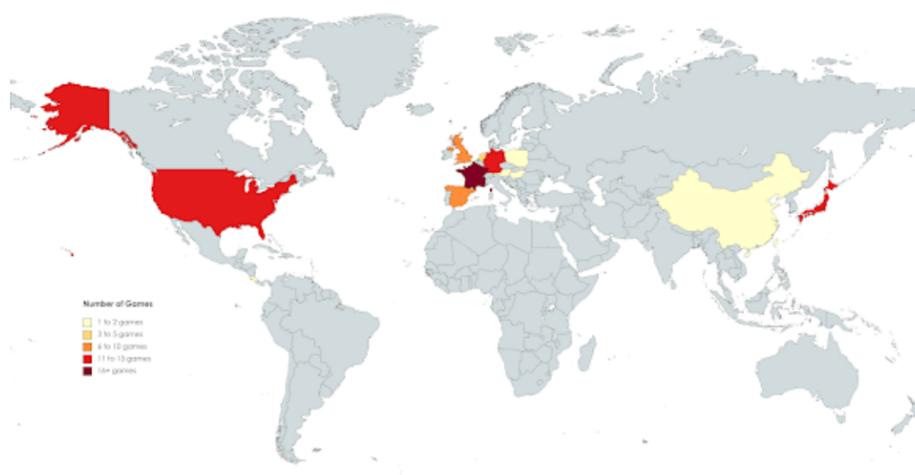
The third period began in 2015 and can be called "**The JoshProd period**". JoshProd totally changed the nature of the indie scene, not only by sheer number of releases, but because of their change in direction to ports. Not every game of this period was released by JoshProd, but they were such an overwhelming presence in the scene that it's only right the period takes their name. This was a very French-based period (which also includes Orion's releases), but with a big Japanese influence from Astro Port and Picorrine Soft.

The fourth and current period began around 2020/2021, and can be called "**The WAVE period**". We saw the emergence of WAVE Game Studios in 2021, who were the first publisher to really mix the scene up since JoshProd first appeared. They're certainly not the only publisher in operation (JoshProd are still very much active) but WAVE have already ushered in the first online indie game in Driving Strikers, a high-profile release in Postal, and a change in the way that the community is engaged with. This period also seems to be more British-based than previous periods, which was kicked off with a non-WAVE release of Xeno Crisis.

There is obviously lots of crossover between these periods, but it does quite nicely divide up what the indie scene was like over the years.

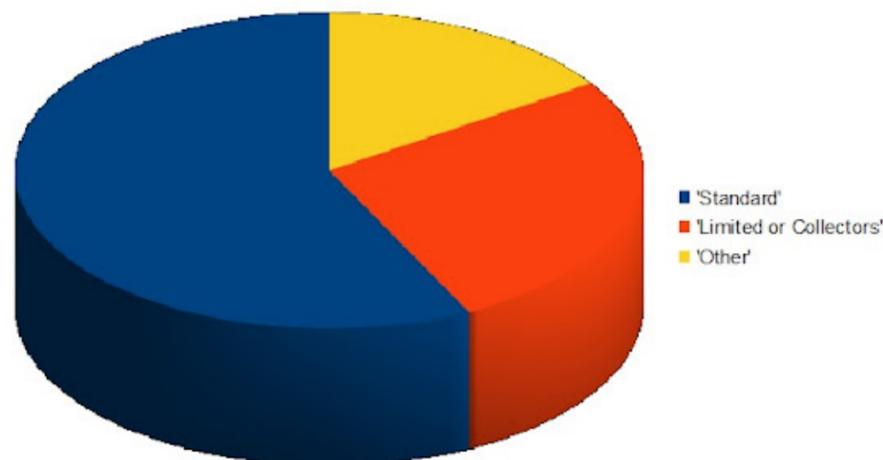


WAVE have established themselves as the current darlings of the indie scene, and rightfully so, as they will easily surpass Hucast's output of brand-new games within a year. It is JoshProd, however, who were responsible for setting the scene on a completely different path since being established.



I also love a map. The above shows the number of indie releases per country (sort of - is a JoshProd game a French or Japanese release? Are games with multinational development teams really able to be classed as being "from" one country? Who knows. It's a pretty map though).

France are currently leading the way here, which is not surprising when you realise both Orion and JoshProd are French. Astro Port's releases have increased Japan's input to the scene, whilst the USA, Britain and Spain are the current locales with most projects on the go. Expect either of these three countries to challenge French dominance in the coming years.



It's not always easy to define what "type" of indie release a certain edition is due to differing ideas from each publisher involved in the scene - however you can divide all releases into three broad categories:

Standard release - these are the original editions of games, without much in the way of extras and the "normal" entry point for obtaining an indie release. The number here is more than the 75 individual games in the article because of various regional art styles (JoshProd for instance, who do two releases of their titles). In total there are **117** of these releases so far.

Limited release - these are the limited or collectors editions of games. These will usually (but not always) be released alongside the standard versions and will have a selection of extras - additional soundtrack CDs, larger boxes, figures, stickers, etc. These versions are also nearly always limited in number to a relatively small amount. These will usually appeal to the collectors side of the indie scene. There are **55** of these releases so far.

Other release - these are versions that aren't strictly *limited* editions (so no real "extras" to appeal to collectors) but tend to be things like re-releases, versions with slightly different content or artwork, or occasionally later-released regional art style variations. There are **32** of these releases so far.

In total then, we have no less than **204 different editions** of Dreamcast indie games. Wowzers!

We also have the emergence of digital versions of the game that can be purchased - something the community has been asking for more and more, what with the rise of ODEs (<https://www.retrorgb.com/dreamcastode.html>). There are **14** games with this option (and an additional deluxe version of Xenocider too). The following games are all available digitally: