

Issue 15

SHOOT YOU SIR!



A FANZINE FOR SHOOT-EM-UP PLAYERS

**January
2022**

Hi there folks and welcome to issue 15 of Shoot You Sir! And to those of you who celebrate such things, Happy New Year! So it is 2022 and let's hope it is another great year for fans of the shoot-em-up. Talking of great years, in this issue, we take a retrospective look at the shmup highlights, throughout 2021. We take another look at a Real Blast From The Past and of course, we have a Review. We hope you enjoy yourselves and as always, Happy Gaming.

SHOOTER NEWS

Astrocity Mini V:

Great news for fans of retro classics being remastered, the Astrocity Mini V stand alone console will be coming out as a limited release in Japan, in Summer 2022. It will feature 1945, Zaxxon, Gunbird, Raiden, Batsugun, and a whole host of beautiful arcade counterparts. The trailer online showcases every single game, so feel free to go and check it out. This appeals to me, as a number of STG's on that list are silly expensive on their original consoles. Hopefully we might get some single digital releases for Switch or on PS4/5, but for now this is just a fools hope. Oh, I forgot to mention - it is from Sega.



GUNVEIN

Gunvein -

A new SHMUP from NG Dev - who brought us Razion EX. Gunvein was announced via Twitter in late December, and is a vertically scrolling SHMUP in the bullet hell trend of games. The game itself looks a lot like Ghost Blade HD, which was heavily influenced by the DoDonPachi series.

The trailer that has been released shows the game with modern crisp graphics in a spacey themed environment. You have a choice of 3 pilots, and appear to have fire, bomb, and dare I say a more focused attack? it's the greatest hits vertical shooter controls, and there is nothing wrong with that unless you are sick of generic TATE shooters; in which case.....unlucky. It appears to take up just over a third of the screen, so here is hoping for some zoom and stretching options. However overall the game looks right up our street, and we always welcome games that attempt more than the standard run of the mill 32 bits at SYS!.



SHOOT YOU SIR!

Shoot-em-up Highlights

2021



So 2021 in general was another strange, dark year in the history of humanity, and for a lot of people merely a step sideways from the dark days of 2020, and 'The before times' when things were much merrier. However, as we all know dear reader, every cloud comes with a SHMUP shaped silver lining. A lining that in the case of 2021, tells a rather different story. This particular article is here to highlight a lot of the positives we have seen arrive during that calendar year. Strap yourselves in – but not too tight after all that New Year & Christmas food- and let's see if you can spot any of your favourites!

Firstly, let's start with format. We won't be scoring the games in this article per se, but you will get a short overview of why each game stands out. Secondly, Games will be split up into order of release date. I feel this is a good way to aid digestion, and gives you an overall of how the year broke down in terms of releases, as well as how it built up nicely to the end of the year.

1944 The Loop Master - released 17/02/2021

Finding its way to PSN (and Switch) via the Capcom Arcade Stadium release, The Loop Master is a brilliant example of how a simple arcade shooter can be fun and entertaining, whilst managing to keep both a one or two player experience enjoyable and very playable. A vertical shooter, T.L.M.



delivers a good solid experience and is a good gateway into SHUMPS. It's not bullet hell, but the controls are simple, and the challenge is not overwhelming to newbies. This is a game Graham & I played on the Sunarugaming youtube channel (go check it out). This game is worth picking up on the Capcom Arcade Stadium on its own merit- and who knows? you might just find some other games you enjoy on there.

Mushihimesma HD- Released 05/06/2021

For regular readers, you will know that Mushihimesama is one of my favourite SHMUPS of all time. The game is Green, well presented, with tight and fairly challenging gameplay. The fact that this game is now available on Switch as an HD remaster - all the better. This was a silent drop into the store and temporarily disappeared from the EU store for a time, but is thankfully back with full effect.



Although ESP.Ra.De was the first Cave SHMUP released on the Switch, Mushi represents the start of what would become a meaty presence by the legendary STG devs on the console. One of the best vertical Bullet-Hell games out there, this is certainly one that should be in everyone's collection.

Risk System - Released 15/07/2021

One of the most unique STG's available, Risk System is a very good looking, modern game, with a tricky mechanic to get your head around: The Risk System. This relies on timing and building up attacks, and also relies largely on memory. Once you do get your head around it, beating a level and boss gives you a real thrill.



2021 SHMUP HIGHLIGHTS continued

It has an auto-fire function that fires when you are in line with an enemy, but you can turn this function off so you can control your fire a bit more. This entry is not for everyone, but it is a good modern take on an STG, being a difficult but fun experience.



Star Hunter DX – Released 05/08/2021

From smaller developer 1CC games, this game came out with space-punk appeal and we are grateful for it. With a cool, short story for a background, and a decent, small roster of characters (and 2 unlockable), this game delivers a fair challenge. This game has a really interesting time mechanic, that will take a short amount of time to get used to,

but it also makes the game stand out from the others on this list. 1CC games are a developer that are worth keeping your eye on, as they have some cool ideas and are influenced by some of the greats.

ESPgaluda II HD released: 09/09/2021

Another CAVE classic, Espgaluda II originally released on the Xbox 360, but found its way to the Switch in early September. This game features beautiful graphics, a bullet hell ride (hashtag In flames), and a number of different modes to sink your teeth into. There is a more in depth



review of this game upcoming, within Shoot You Sir!, but needless to say you cannot really go wrong with this game. For me, although it is one of the prettiest CAVE games, it is probably bottom of my personal list for CAVE games on Switch, but it's still miles ahead of a lot of the competition.

Razion Ex (digital release)– Released: 16/09/2021

The game was originally developed for the NeoGeo and it made its first appearance on current gen via hard copy, to a rather controversial release. Despite this, Razion Ex still remains one of the best games available on the Switch. You can now buy it digitally on all stores: Winning, A horizontal



sidescroller, REX is a fun challenge inspired by some of the trickier and prettier Neo Geo STGs, albeit not as challenging and pretty as they are. Graphically it does a decent enough job, however, it is not one of the best looking games on this list. In terms of gameplay it is right up there, with some more old fashioned style mechanics, it certainly was an eye-opener when it was announced that it would be a digital release this year. Ultimately, I think this pleased anyone who was afraid to be ripped off by scalpers, buying up the limited edition physical copies.

Guardian Force – Released: 30/09/2021

GF originally came out on the Sega Saturn in 1998, and 2021's port to current gen was welcomed with opened arms. With interesting 'tank-esque' mechanics, this game plays quite differently to other games from this time period. To quote Graham's review from issue 14 of Shoot you Sir, 'you never get past that slightly detached feel', but then later adds: this is down to approaching the genre a little differently, and is worth being in gamers collection. I agree 100%.



2021 Shmup Highlights continued

M2's Tiger Heli - Released: 28/10/2021

Now this game stands out for some less positive reasons. Firstly though, the positive: It's a Toaplan game featuring the M2 gadget. Now that is out of the way, let me point out that this game scrolls quite slowly, when you die you go back much further than you would like, and there is not much pay off for getting over the large difficult spike in the game. Don't get me wrong, I love a challenge, but there definitely needs to be a decent pay off at the end. Out of all the wonderful M2 goodies out there, this is bottom of the pile and the largest disappointment to date. It is also a surprise as it is a Toaplan game. Perhaps too many hours in a dark room alone playing SHMUPS has raised my expectations, or perhaps it is the fact that M2 have been a shining beacon of greatness during the last couple of years? M2, please step it up for the next release!



Space Moth - Released: 18/11/2021

This is another great game from the devs that brought you Star Hunter DX, 1CC Games. It's a pretty game with pastel and neon colours, focusing around a buggy theme. The controls are almost identical to MushiHimesama & DodonPachi. This game may have gone under the radar, a little bit, as it is a bit like a B-Movie version of a cave game: MushiHimesama most specifically. It also came out in the middle of the CAVE launches, which may not have helped. However, this game is worthy of its place on the list, and is well put together. Simple, old fashioned, with good looking visuals, Space Moth delivers exactly what it says on the tin.



DoDonPachi Resurrection - Released: 25/11/2021

DDP on the Switch? Take my money right now. Announced much earlier in the year, DDPR was one of the later releases in the year, with its quality port over to the Switch. That's right another CAVE game on Switch - In fact, the Switch is officially the best SHMUP console of current gen (don't @ me!). Without getting carried away, DDPR is one of the stronger games from the DDP series, and a most welcome HD addition. In this game, expect fantastic graphics, tightly honed controls, and quite the challenge. This game represents one of the larger releases of the year in regards to CAVE, leading up to the next entry. If this game wasn't in your digital stocking at Christmas, I would presume you had already bought it.



Death Smiles 1&2 DX - Released: 16/12/2021

One of the best STG's available and Graham's favourite shmup, DS1 (as well as DS2) are now available on current gen consoles. Noticed the recurring theme with each CAVE entry? It kind of led to this, at the end of the year. Bustling with all sorts of modes and extras and with DS2 being Christmas themed, it was a good time of the year for this to be released. Full of options like screen zooming and different game modes, you are able to fine-tune the game. If you do not know by now, both DS games are side scrolling with a different button used to fire for either left or right. There are a decent roster of characters to each game. Both games have a cool story attached to them. A really top shmup duo.



2021 Shmup Highlights continued

Cotton Rock'n'Roll – Released: 23/12/2021

Probably the last real STG release at the end of the year, C.R.N.R. is the follow up to the brilliantly made, Cotton Reboot. At least, in the sense that it is a modern game and not a re-master. I feel it is quite literally a modern type SHMUP. Show casing both English

subtitles and Japanese dub, the game has a story mode dotted throughout the game (skippable). You are given a map where you are allowed to choose which order to complete the levels in – rather like Death Smiles. Each level is different with brilliant backgrounds, and action that goes across and into the screen, as you scroll to the right. As the name suggests, it is fairly fast paced for the most part, with some interesting boss designs and bullet mechanics. You get a whole host of characters to choose from, including the 4 you get in Cotton Reboot. This game looks and plays with a more Anime based style than Cotton Reboot, but is rather pricey. Packed with lots of extras, the game is a great end to a brilliant year of SHMUPS. Want a modern shooter with roots in tradition? Look no further. Hastag here be witches.



So that was 2021's SHMUP highlights in a nutshell, and I have to say it ended up being rather triumphant towards the end, with the better releases coming out later in the year. With so many CAVE releases to the current generation consoles, it really is a checkmate move, if ever I saw one. And here's hoping for more! Please do write to us and let us know what some of your favourites were. Find us on [twitter](#), or feel free to comment on one of our podcast videos.



A Real Blast From The Past



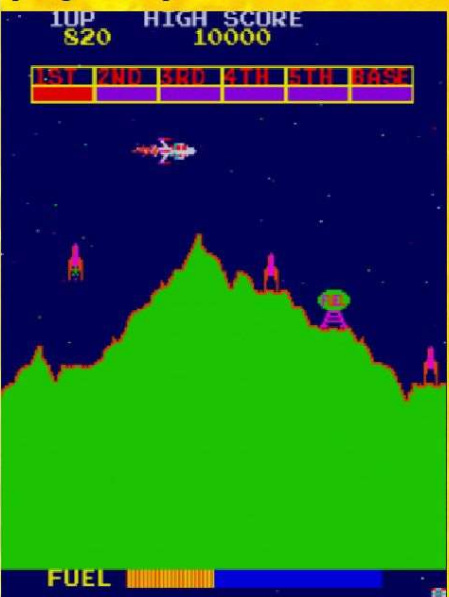
I remember, back in the day, playing Scramble on an arcade machine, at our local pub, with my friend Andy (Sly's dad). It was one of those games you really had to concentrate on. Although it had the usual hand controlled buttons and joystick, it was like my whole body seemed to be involved and at the end of a session, I'd feel quite weary.

It was a horizontal scroller, released for the arcades in 1981 and developed by Konami. In hindsight, I can see that it really was the beginning of a genre and Konami's first international success. In fact it is rumoured that the 1985 release, Gradius, was originally meant to be a follow up to Scramble.



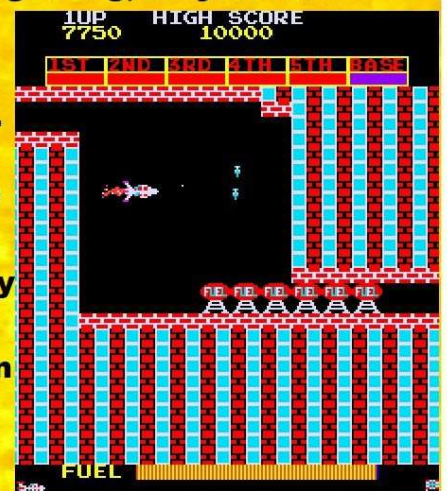
You control a futuristic jet, guiding it through a scrolling terrain, where the terrain is as deadly as all of the enemies you face. You have separate buttons for forward fire and dropping bombs and you also have to keep your jet fuelled up by destroying fuel tanks, as you go along. The game has 6 sections, with differing terrain and obstacles. There's no gap between sections, as the game scrolls into the new terrain. Points are awarded for just staying alive, killing enemies and blowing up fuel tanks. The final section, has a "base" to destroy. When this has been achieved, a mission complete flag comes up at the bottom right of the screen. The game then re-runs from the beginning, only a little harder.

The Scoring particulars are: For every second your jet is in play - 10 points. Rockets destroyed on the ground - 50 points.



Rockets destroyed in the air - 80 points. Destroying UFO ships - 100 points. Blowing up Fuel tanks - 150 points, Blowing away Mystery targets - either 100, 200, or 300 points. For finishing off the mission end Base - 800 points.

The parts I found hardest, were when you had to negotiate tunnel like terrain. Not crashing was hard, let alone taking on enemies. I don't remember any music in the game but the sound effects were kind of one up from Space Invaders. Basic sounds but fun, at the time. Scramble was definitely a milestone in my gaming/Shmup life.



DEZATOPIA

Options

Graphics

Border
Scale Mode

0
Stretch

BGM Volume
SE Volume

Audio

79
55

Apply Changes
Reset to Default

GAME REVIEW
By Slyelessar

Nintendo Switch

Dezatopia released in 2020, developed by HEY, and published by Hanaji. It may have gone a bit under the radar for most people, but appears to be fairly well regarded with critics and some SHMUP players.

But how does the game actually look and play?

Let's start with graphics, as I am a creature of habit. Dezatopia is a 2D scroller, with old fashioned pixel-styled graphics.

It looks like it could have been released on Megadrive or one of its peers, although it does have more saturated colours. At first glance, the game doesn't look like much at all. But to be very frank, what the game lacks in visual spectacle, it makes up for in fun gameplay - more on this later.

Environments are basic looking, but can offer a lot more than meets the eye. For example, the water stage has water that rises, and your shots/bullets change when you fire underwater. This means you have to adapt your play style on the go, as you are attacked from various sides. Environmental things like this can be a lot of fun, without it feeling like you are going through a corridor or compartment like some shooters like to do.



Enemy sprites have much more imaginative looks to them compared to your aircraft, with a wide range creatures, plants, and other interesting 'things'. It helps to keep play interesting, but due to the pixel-art design, animations are basic. Ultimately, the game does well in the enemy department.

One really cool thing about the game, is that it delivers 40

different music tracks. It is very rare that a game of this price range has such a vast range of tracks available. However, in the case of Dezatopia, it really is a matter of quantity over quality. Don't get me wrong, there are a few really great tracks, but none provide anything you haven't heard before and you certainly won't catch most people wanting to play the soundtrack separately from the game. It certainly adds a dimension to the game, that helps increase the immersion of the player, but it does not reach the sonic heights of any of the CAVE catalogue. But then again, nobody would expect it to, so let's be happy we get 40 tracks instead of 4, as that would be extremely monotonous. The sound effects are OK, with the game providing a mix of bland and good sounds.



Review continued.....

powerfull. Left = big sweep shop ending in a continual of timed explosions.

All of these weapons can be upgraded as you progress, and the game does this whilst keeping you in the action. A shop appears as you are playing, with the play just having to move into the box of the item they want. Whether its health, different attack power up, etc., you are able to continue playing without going to a shop or workshop in the menu screen, which is pretty cool.

I have to say, surely just moving into a power up or shield etc., would have done in its place. An example of the game trying to throw something different in for the sake of it. All of the attacks and directional attacks take a while to get used to, but it feels great when you get the timing right and clear a screen of enemies from all sides. When you first start up a new game, once you tap an attack button, it will auto fire without you needing to touch a button again. For me this is really annoying, although I can see why someone could use this to their advantage whilst playing. I was more than happy when I found out you can turn this function off with the trigger button. Once turned off, it plays much more like a traditional horizontal SHMUP where you are firing out of different sides of the controlled sprite or character.

At the bottom left of the screen, is a little meter that shows the strength of each weapons shot, which re-charges when not in use. In fact, the bottom of the screen shows you if your attacks are fixed or free, which route you are on, score, money, time,

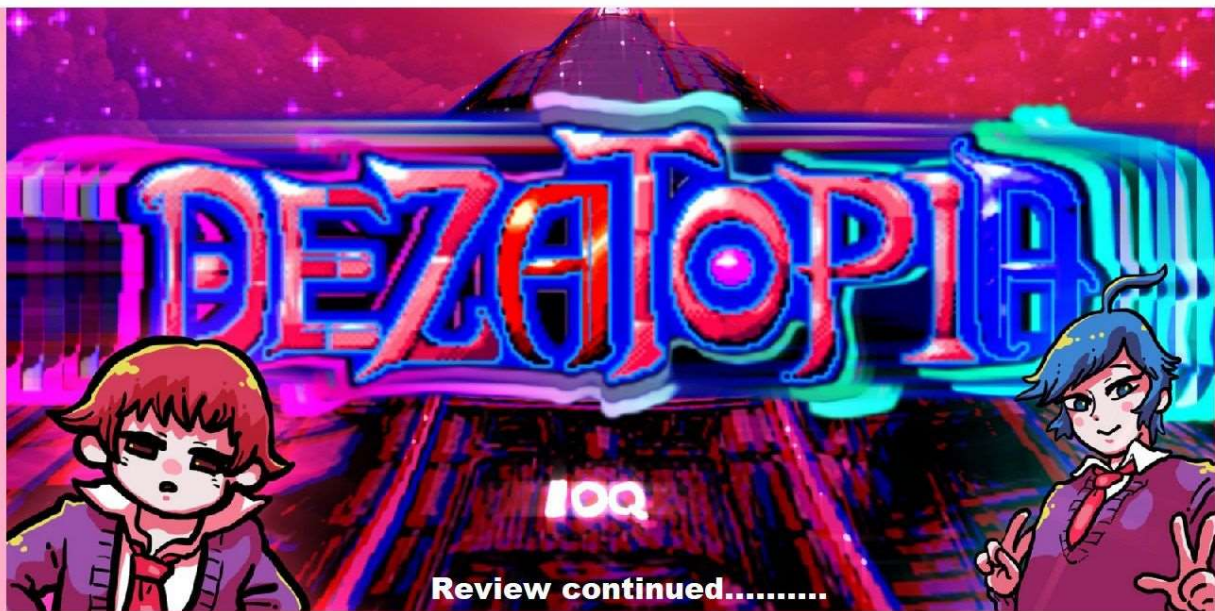


The game has a lot of different mechanics, which you will need to get your head around. Firstly, you have four different main weapons, controlled with the four main buttons (A, B, X, Y), all of which controlling the direction of your shot- left, right, up, and down. Each button is assigned a different type of weapon, for example: Right = straight shot right, can be

powerfull. Left = big sweep shop ending in a continual straight shot left. Up = limp/ sweeping attack to up direction, ending in a weak attack. Down = Bubble bomb drop



of timed explosions. All of these weapons can be upgraded as you progress, and the game does this whilst keeping you in the action. A shop appears as you are playing, with the play just having to move into the box of the item they want. Whether its health, different attack power up, etc., you are able to continue playing without going to a shop or workshop in the menu screen, which is pretty cool. I have to say, surely just moving into a power up or shield etc., would have done in its place. An example of the game trying to throw something different in for the sake of it. All of the attacks and directional attacks take a while to get used to, but it feels great when you get the timing right and clear a screen of enemies from all sides. When you first start up a new game, once you tap an attack button, it will auto fire without you needing to touch a button again. For me this is really annoying, although I can see why someone could use this to their advantage whilst playing. I was more than happy when I found out you can turn this function off with the trigger button. Once turned off, it plays much more like a traditional horizontal SHMUP where you are firing out of different sides of the controlled sprite or character. At the bottom left of the screen, is a little meter that shows the strength of each weapons shot, which re-charges when not in use. In fact, the bottom of the screen shows you if your attacks are fixed or free, which route you are on, score, money, time, and a wealth of other information to distract you from the action. Actually, it's quite tastefully done, and does not feel in the way. The game has an adaptive difficulty meter, which the player is asked to set at the start of the game. Changing the number manually is a bit annoying, as it's a large scrolling number from minus options to 00 and beyond.



Review continued.....

In fact, apparently there's a 1000 difficult ranks. Psykio's 1-10 scale would have been fine here. The game does start to feel like it is doing so much to make itself different, it just feels like it is packed full of unnecessary things. Movement of the players aircraft feels fast and fairly loose, compared to something like Raiden or Blazing Star, being at the tighter end of the movement manoeuvrability scale. It's by no means a floppy mess, but can be frustrating at times.

I have to say, this game is a lot of fun once you get used to all the different mechanics. And this is where the strength of the game lies. The environments move and change, meaning that shots change and the amount of space to manoeuvre in, changes as you play. Being able to adapt to all these situation is quite a rush.



Once you have gotten your skills up to scratch, the game is definitely fun to play. The game offers up a fair amount of everything, whether its music, enemies, and environments, and this does add to the enjoyability. In fact: 40 tracks, 21 bosses, 24 stages, and 21 routes.

The story is there, but it is rather wank.

Underground Creatures and high school students clash against the combination and dominion of two worlds.

As this game is available on several platforms in downloadable format, I can see it having some staying power, and its reputation growing somewhat in the SHMUP community. However, it is a very much in that 'Good game until something better comes along' category. It should be in the conversation of 2D pixel SHMUPs, but it will never be King.

SCORES

Graphics: 13 Sound: 14 Control: 16

Fun: 17 Last: 15 OVERALL: 75%