

Issue 10



August 2021

Hi there and welcome to Issue number ten of Shoot You Sir! We have our usual mixture of reviews, articles and news. Just a reminder to any of our readers, that we would be very happy to see any articles or reviews from you. Whether you are a newbie or a hardened veteran of the the shoot-em-up world, we would be genuinely interested in your views. Yes, we love spouting our own views and impressions but really love the idea of our readers having more of an input. Don't be shy, we'll do the layouts, we just need your written words. Just email them in and it'll make our day.

SHOOTER NEWS

Toaplan to release 'Toaplan Arcade Garage' on PSN and Switch in October, in Japan. This means you will be able to get hold of these games with free to create, Japanese user/ sign ins, if you have not done so already for the latest STG releases.

T.A.G. consists of 'Tiger-Heli' and the sequel Kyukyoku Tiger-Heli (previously known as Twin Cobra in the EU and US. If you have not guessed already,



these games feature you playing as a Helicopter - or Chopper. They are vertically scrolling shooters, in the traditional retro mould. Oh I forgot to mention: This is an M2 Shock Triggers endeavour, so expect the usual: sharper / clearer definition, save states, and a whole host of little extra goodies they through in with their M2 Gadget.

Recent M2 releases have had physical releases, but we are yet to see if this is something that will get a limited edition run of games or just be digital only. Being that M2 are involved, it will be worth picking up. It is a 2D retro game however, so you will need to keep this in mind, as physical releases from Japan for SHMUPS tend to be fairly expensive when they do come out. Look out for this one!

Star Hunter DX is a game currently on Steam but will be making its way to Switch on 05/08//2021. It is a horizontal scrolling bullet hell game, with cyber aesthetics. It's 2D 90's goodness, with a slightly modern brush stroke. From the trailer and footage online, you can see that this game looks like a lot of fun. Background environments remind one of the old 80's and 90's films, when they tried to show digital online worlds - very green, red and basic. This allows for a lot more action to take place without the added distraction of lots of background - this may be a pro or a con depending on your taste. The bullet patterns look very cool and colourful, with quick cut scenes, well designed sprites, and a useful HUD. Worth a look.





This was one of those indie games, that was developed for otherwise, dead consoles. Those two late but great machines, the Sega Dreamcast and SNK's mighty Neo Geo. But this review is from the PS4 port. From German developers NG-Dev, this game starts with some very glamorous and colourful stills, of the game's logos and main characters. Those 3 main characters are a blue robo man, a green, superhero style guy and a pink, busty girl.



before, in the stills. And as the full intro rolls on, you can see that this is very much an old school, 16-bit style, vertical shoot-em-up, with pixelated, 2D sprites. Going into the game, you get to choose from four modes, Novice, Original, Maniac and Omake. And these aren't just four difficulty levels. Each mode has a different pilot/jet, that is specific to it. They all play differently and both Maniac and Omake modes drop the tokens for points, seen in the first two modes, in favour of combo hit scoring system. So straight away, you

Press X and you get the game's menu, that offers Game Start, Controls, Sound and Screen. Controls lets you assign buttons to the game's three main attacks, Front Shot, Rear Shot and Strike Shield. Sound just lets you adjust the volume level on SFX and Music. Screen lets you adjust the screen, anything right up to full screen and you can also adjust scan-lines and wall-papers.

So, fully adjusted to taste, let's start this baby up. The game intro rolls and to be honest, the graphics are a lot lower definition than seen



can see there is some variety and hopefully longevity here. So finally into Stage One and I am surprised to see the backgrounds have a 3D CGI kind of look, whereas the sprites are very old school and 2D. But your hero jet moves really quickly and there is soon a lot to avoid, with that speed. With your main, forward shot, you can either fast tap or hold down the relevant button. One will be a spread shot, the other, more concentrated. It differs from one pilot/jet to another. When you hold down that fire button though, it slows your jet a little. Also, in Novice and Original, when you destroy foes and release medals for points, if you carry on firing, they stay still and await collection. But if you stop firing, they are drawn to you.

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REVIEW CONTINUED

The Shield Strike button, gives you a shield that will see off any damage but it only lasts for a few seconds and it's only available, a very few times. As said, your Fast Striker Jet really moves rapidly, whizzing about at a tremendous rate. And you'll see, that like in many others in this genre, you often seem to be able to get through a huge shower of firepower by moving quickly. Now I know only a small part of your hero jet is actually vulnerable to hits but I sometimes think that you get away with murder, as long as you

keep shifting. And this seems to be the case with Fast Striker. OK you will be very grateful for that at times but I'd prefer a more accurate way of doing things. As with many other shmups, the more times you play this game, the more extra credits you get, to complete it.

I am normally a big fan of these old school, 2D graphics, even when blended with more 3D like backgrounds. But the lack of definition in Fast Striker really kind of ruins things, to my eyes. I guess they thought it would be more authentic to



keep them low-res, even on the PS4. But there really is no wow factor at all. The SFX are varied and clear but lack oomph! Again, lessening the impact of this shooter. The music is very much in the 80s dance music style. Like something Vince Clarke from Erasure may have produced. It's OK but nowt special really.

This six stage game does however control and play well. Things move quickly, so get used to it. Your firepower is effective and fun. The enemy's firepower comes at you in imaginative ways.



Maybe nothing new but it is well done and gives an enjoyable challenge. Like many other games, the mid and end, large enemy ships are pretty challenging but there's plenty of cannon fodder to blow away, too. In a nutshell, after the impressive visual start, this game just looks a bit cheap and cheerful. It's an indie game and looks it. But if that doesn't bother you, there is a decent shooter here.



SCORES

Graphics: 12

Sound: 13

Control: 17

Fun: 15

Lastability: 16

OVERALL: 73%



Originally released in arcades, in 1996, Battle Garegga later found it's console home on the Sega Saturn. Ahhhh, the Saturn - fond memories! In 2016 Battle Garegga was ported by M2's Shot Triggers Team, the wonderful people that also ported ESP.Ra.De and Ketsui to modern consoles. B.G. is a lot different to a Cave game however, and that is not necessarily a bad thing. So what do I mean by this? Well, Cave type games tend to route out a lot of their bullet hell patterns where you have to take them on a particular way and requires you to get skilful at it quickly without dying. That is not to say Cave games are all the same but rather that this is a positive attribute, you can see across their games. Battle Garegga allows you to take on the game slightly differently each time, without punishing you for taking a more obscure route through or around the bullets. But don't get me wrong, this is a very challenging game at higher difficulties but offers something quite different to those beloved Cave cannon of games.

Graphically, the game is somewhat more basic looking compared to a contemporary, such as DoDonPachi.



In fact, it is a lot closer aesthetically to Aero Fighters 2 on Neo Geo. It has a 1940s type look early on and then this evolves into a more space fighting/ futuristic looking game, the further you go on, with more colour found throughout. The graphics work well with the theme of the game but sometimes there are small brown bullets that move across a grey spaceship background, that take you by surprise. It's things like this that sometimes make you feel cheated, however if you keep your eye on the middle of the screen, these are a lot easier to avoid. Sprites look decent enough, and there is a lot of different designs to be found from the different enemies. You get a choice of 4 planes/ ships, but what is really cool is that you can unlock further characters hidden in the game, thanks to the M2 Shock Triggers menu system. If you press the right side of the touch pad on the PS4 or PS5 controller, you bring up the pause menu. From here select 'Option Settings'. From there, go into 'Other Settings', and turn the first English option currently showing "off" and change it to 'on'. You will now access four other characters from the sorcer striker series, including a dragon. Yes, a dragon! I find that this opens the game up more, and adds a bit more colour and depth. I personally did not do this until later on, giving the game some lastability.



Sound-wise the game is limited by the technology of the time but that does not stop the game from having a decent soundtrack. A lot of atmospheric synth sounds and driving, digital drum sounds throughout. The sound effects are great, and help keep you focused and enjoying the game. It's not a game I would personally buy a soundtrack of but then I don't generally buy soundtracks anyway.

At first I was unsure, coming out of DoDonPachi and rolling Gunner, it took a short while for me to get used to the controls of the game. The players ship(s) are responsive and agile and speed at which

the bullets fire out of your ship is rather satisfying.



Review cont.....

You have the solid, basic, control scheme: Shoot & bomb. Each ship has a slightly different bullet output and bomb combination and one of them even has a flame thrower bomb attack! Weaving around the enemy becomes second nature, as even with the analog stick, you are able to glide in and out of patterns and up and down the screen very well. The M2 gadget also allows a lot of control over how the game looks and plays but more about that later.

After playing the game a few times, I realise why this game is so popular: It's a lot of fun. There's a challenge but it is also welcoming to newcomers on easier modes. Fear not, harder modes will test your abilities to their limits. Normal feels just right in terms of balance and that is important, as some games can be fairly brutal on normal and others fairly lame on hard. The further you play the game, the more power-ups you pick up and you get extra drones, that do different things depending on which ship you chose - a nice add-age. Did I mention this game has a line graph for ranking? I didn't but you can't go wrong with a line graph in a SHMUP. The PS4 version also comes with trophies and there is something about one of these pinging off, when you are totally owning the storm of bullets being thrown at you, from all sides.

This is one SHMUP that is likely to be around for as long as there are consoles to port it on. The challenge and fun alone have seen this game been brought forward from the arcade, to 90's consoles, and now modern consoles thanks to M2's Shot Triggers team. M2 have added a lot more to the game than the previous ports had going for them: save states, screen rotation, different borders and the M2 gadget that allows you to add or remove all sorts of information. There's a lot of replay value here and you can even unlock 4 extra characters, which are quite different to the ships your start with. I would love M2 Shot Triggers Team to start porting more SHMUPs to the Switch and PS4/5, as they are doing a fantastic job bringing these to a new generation of SHMUP players.

SCORES

Graphics: 14 Sound: 15 Control: 18
Fun: 19 Lastability: 19 OVERALL: 85%



FOCUS ON A DEVELOPER

VISCO GAMES

Visco are a software company based in Japan. Founded in 1982 by Tetsuo Akiyama, they later became corporate on the 8th of August 1983. They developed games for the arcades and home consoles, including the NES, the Nintendo 64 and the Neo Geo. Some of their games were developed under the Taito umbrella and so you may think a

few of their shooters were actually by Taito. Visco also teamed up with Seta and Sammy in developing the arcade power board, SSV (Sammy, Seta and Visco). Also from 2008, Visco began manufacturing slot machines for casinos, mostly in the South-East Asian regions. They produced games in a variety of genres and in my mind had a reputation for developing fun, if not ground breaking, games. They developed 8 shoot-em-ups in all and most of them are worth checking out.



Asuka & Asuka appeared in 1988 and was a 2-player, vertically scrolling shooter in which each stage represents a certain time zone. For its time, it was a good looking game and a decent player. It had a nice feature, where when you defeated the end of level boss, you got the chance to beef up your score by defeating non-firing, although they could collide into you, enemies, in a sort of, bonus stage.



Ashura Blaster, from 1990, was also a 2P, vertical shmup. Another decent looking game with a military flavour. You pilot helicopters in this game and can choose from 4 bomb types, Ashura Bomb, Ashura Flash, Fire Wave and Satellite Beam, at the beginning of each stage.

1992 saw 2 shooters from Visco. On the mighty Neo Geo came **Andro Dunos**, a cutesy, horizontal shooter, with some decent gameplay (reviewed in Issue 7 of Shoot You Sir!). The other was **Galmedes**, a return to the 2P vertical shooter



style. Again with some nice visuals and playable game mechanics, it was no classic but a good blast. It featured a space theme and a hold down the fire button, for a power shot option.

After another 4 years, Visco put out **Storm Blade** in 1996. Another vertically scrolling, military themed shooter, where you can use bombs and even super bombs. It's a shame this never got a console release, as it's one I'd like to have in my collection.

Another Neo Geo release, came in the shape of **Captain Tomaday** in 1999. A vertical, flying punch up, with a slightly whimsical, comic book look to it.

Visco's last 2 shooters came in 2000 and 2001, in the form of **Vasara** and **Vasara 2**. These vertical shooters, made it onto the PS4. With a theme based around historic and contemporary Japan, Vasara 1 and 2 may not be classics but are nevertheless, very decent shooters, with strong themes, graphics and solid gameplay. The first Vasara game is reviewed in Issue 8 of Shoot You Sir!

No Top 10s here but most are worth checking out and some worth keeping.

Game Review

By Graham Pike

XBOX 360

Live Arcade



Omega Five was released on the 9th of January 2008. It only came out as a download. As the title screen comes up, with the game's logo and space themed background, you get a good impression. The main menu has single and multi player options. There are also 'net based leader boards and achievements. Take a look at the control layout and you'll see that this is a twin-stick shooter, with the two directional controls doing the movement and firing for you, with some short range melee style attacks, too. The shoulder buttons are used to activate special attacks. These are the Dimensional Field, which gives you invincibility, for a limited duration and Ultimate Burst, which is a screen wide bomb.

You start the game with two playable characters. Ruby, a sexily clad woman and Tempest, a muscular, four armed alien/humanoid. If you complete the game with Ruby, you get R.A.D., who is a speedier version of Ruby. Complete it with Tempest and you get Sensei, an ancient samurai, riding a flying sled and his fighting dog, Rikmaru. Starting up, you see that this game has 3D style, CGI graphics. Into the first stage and



visuals are actually quite sharp and good looking. The game scrolls fairly slowly, from left to right but there are a vast array of enemy types and they come at you from all directions, so those twin stick controls and 360 degree arc of fire, is really needed to make progress. There is also terrain to negotiate and you'll soon notice that the play area, up and down, is larger than the screen at times, so there is a lot to get to grips with here.

There are no options to adjust difficulty here, so take it as it comes. Even with the nifty, twin stick controls and special attacks, this game is quite tough in places, even on the first stage. Of the 2 characters you get to start with, I'd say Ruby is the easiest to use, as her range attacks are full length. Tempest's are more powerful but only stretch about half the width of the screen.



GAME REVIEW CONTINUED.....



The 3D style graphics are actually very well done, with enemies not only coming from all around you but also moving in from the far background. This not only adds to the fun but actually looks really cool. The music in Omega Five was composed by Hiroyuki Iwatsuki, it's very sci-fi sounding, with lots of wobbly synthesizer sounds and retro beats.

It's actually pretty good, going with the gameworld and graphics, very nicely indeed, providing lots of atmosphere and drama.

I really like the controls and although this is by no means a traditional shmup, it does require many of the same skills, of positional awareness, dodging, strategic firepower etc etc. It is a fairly difficult game but you can quite easily find your way into its style and make your way further



and further into it. And even if Omega Five wouldn't make it into one of my Top Games lists, it really is different and challenging enough to warrant tracking it down to give it a go. If you add the tasty graphics and sound-track, it does become quite a little gem. OK it is a short game, with little variety in its backdrops but it's style and fun kinda make up for that. It's huge sprites, novel controls and hectic gameplay, all add up to make it a worthy shooter.

SCORES

Graphics: 18

Sound: 18

Control: 18

Fun: 16

Lastability: 14

OVERALL: 84%



NATSUME[®]

Serious Fun[®]



HUDSON GROUP
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ZED BLADE™

TIME
30

Game Review
By Slyelessar

It's that time again, another Neo Geo game, this time reviewed by myself rather than Graham. Zed Blade was released on 13th September 1994, developed by NMK and published by SNK. The game has been ported from Neo Geo to modern consoles by Hamster - available digitally on PSN, Switch store, and the Xbox store. Another horizontal scrolling shooter, the game is set in a futuristic setting, with the majority of stages taking place in space, and some levels taking place on several planets in the Solar System.

Once you get past the first level, which is very basic looking, the game opens up a lot more. A lot of the space and different planet stages, look decent enough for a game of this era and the little 'next stage' screens in between the stages makes the game feel like it has a little bit more depth than it actually has. But it is a nice touch. Enemies come at you from both left and right of the screen, with later stages making you really weave around assaults from both sides.

Sprites are big, which I want and expect



but the running robot man thing in particular stands out, firing round homing bullets backwards. Even the Mars stage blobs injected more fun into the game for me, although they are very simple looking, it added some intensity due to the fact they follow you around and home in. The stand out stage for me in terms of visuals is the 'Asteroid' stage. The challenge spikes here as well and is one of the highlights of the game.

The music in the game reminds me of generic 90's based tracks, but it really does suit the game. The Mars stage soundtrack sounds like it was a demo for Mortal Kombat's theme tune, which makes the stage stand out for me more than the music on the other stages. It does add to the game, and the sound



from a Neo Geo game, with the actual designs going for a big and round look for a lot of the enemies. This does lead to the game not looking quite as crisp and cool as Blazing Star or Prehistoric Isle 2, but does separate it from the more plain looking games like Strikers 1945 Plus and to some extent, Aero fighters. Some of the sprite designs are odd and unique, but nothing overly memorable, and I think this is partly down to the aesthetic style chosen, rather than enemies dazzling you with really cool visuals. A lot of the boss designs are very





effects are decent enough and passable. In terms of mobility, all three 'craft move well, around the screen, which may sound like non-thing, but there's a reason I bring it up in most reviews, and this is because some SHMUPs - especially much older arcade ported ones- can feel flappy and unresponsive. In this regard, Zed Blade manages to show the arcade pedigree from which it stems: the Neo Geo. Fire and bomb are you main attacks, with the ability to choose the combination of attacks being a big bonus.

Despite being fairly simple, the game is rather fun to play. Some of the bosses in the game are very cool and have some interesting designs. The blobs attacking not only made me giggle, but I also may have shat myself once or twice, darting around the screen, avoiding the Kami-kaze attacks. The fact you can select your pilot (speed), and the type of front, back, and missile attack goes a long way for me. Things like this in games, make me appreciate the fact the devs provide some customisation, even though in this instance, it is once again, basic.

It's the little things like this, that elevate the game ever-so-slightly. If you removed this and the little 'next stage' screens, the game loses the glue that gives it that extra something that raises it above a game that just fades into stage from black without anything in between, or games where you only get one character or aircraft without the ability to make changes to it. I also believe the fact that the controls and manoeuvrability are tight, keep this game from slipping down points in terms of enjoyability.

Another thing I like about the game, is the imaginative concept for the stages. The surface of Jupiter? Yes please. Mars? Not original, but I love me a bit of Mars. Yggdrasil? Get in! Where Zed Blade starts and where it ends up goes to show that if your SHMUP doesn't have a great looking first stage to draw you in, people will likely remember you for being fairly average, especially when they boot the game up again after a long time of not playing it. This is probably one of the biggest mistakes made by the Devs, as if you started in the second or third stage, going into better looking and more detailed space related stages, the game would likely hold more salt with a lot of people. Something else that plays into the hands of Zed Blade, is the fact it was released on Neo Geo. Although all consoles have their duds, the Neo Geo has a lot less than other consoles. I honestly feel that Zed Blade falls in that 'Good' or 'Alright' category of games. It does the important things right, and although it does not go out of its way to be special, it doesn't do a lot wrong. It is a solid game and I could happily continue to play this game a lot. The Hamster port of this game on my switch still gets play, and hasn't been relegated to being 'archived', like a lot of lesser games have been.



SCORES

Graphics: 14 Sound: 12 Control: 16

Fun: 15 Lastability: 16

OVERALL: 73%

