

**Issue 21**

**SHOOT YOU SIR!**

**July 2022**

**A FANZINE FOR SHOOT-EM-UP PLAYERS**

Hi there and welcome to Issue 21 of Shoot You Sir! This issue is dominated by an article/reviews concerning one of the genres earliest arcade games, Space Invaders. OK it may not be considered a shoot-em-up in the traditional sense but the original and it's many offshoots and sequels cover a number of decades and shooting progressions. So I heartily recommend you give it a read.

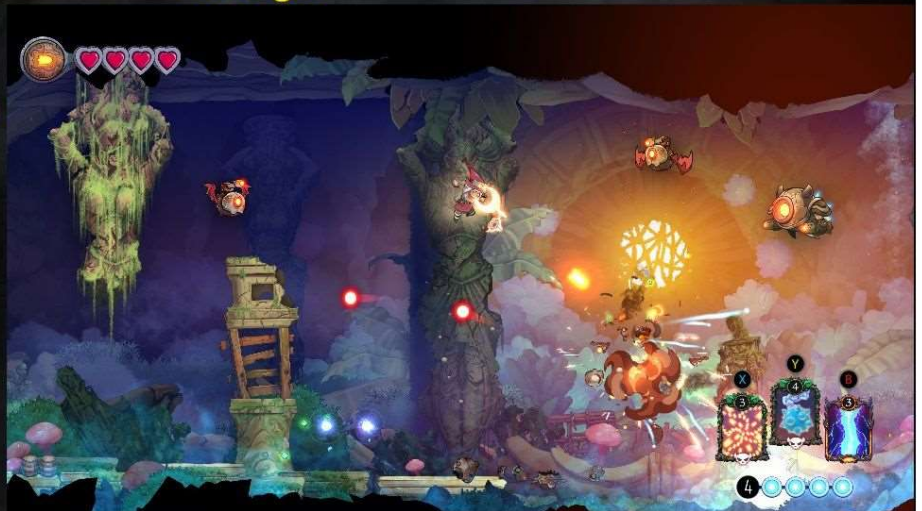
Happy gaming.

### SHOOTER NEWS



Coming to consoles at some point this year, Knight Witch has been described by some as a 'Metroidvania shoot em up'. To me, from everything I have seen in the trailer, it seems more like 2D Nights (Saturn) mechanics with bullet patterns in a platform environment. From the sounds of that mashup alone it should not work, but actually it looks like it plays well from the footage.

The graphics are modern and lush and you have to solve little mini puzzles whilst moving from area to area, flying/gliding around dodging bullets and destroying enemies. There's enough 2D RPG elements involved in the menu/systems that shows why it would be referred to as a Met'Vania with SHMUP mechanics. The music in the trailer is blending folk



with a heavier rock element and it works really well with the visuals. The game was developed by the team that did plants vs zombies, moonlighter, and RiME. So they have experience with 2D games. I am looking forward to this one, as it is always fun to try something different. The question is, will SNK release a new Metal Slug game around the same time? We have heard the rumours, but a new entry from such as strong franchise will see any similar platform shooting games disappear into obscurity. Will Knight Witch be a strong enough game to withstand this if it happens?



A sneaky addition to the Switch Store, **Hell Pages** is a 2D horizontal scrolling Shoot Em Up we didn't ask for, but boy do I want it! In this game, the player controls a demon called Bael, as you shoot and weave through bullets in 10 levels of gothic, hellish design and fight massive demon bosses at the end of the stages.



I have to say I'm looking forward to this one. We get a lot of aircraft shooters coming out, so this will keep the seat warm for Valfaris: Mecha Theron.

**Bullet Soul & Bullet Soul Infinite** are releasing on the Nintendo Switch on the 22nd of September! You can order physical copies via Play Asia site or buy the game digitally for instant play. The Bullet Soul games, Graham has mentioned a few times in our talks and podcasts on the Sunarugaming channel on youtube. They vertical bullet hell games with



**Akio Watanabe** (representative work: Bakemonogatari, L no Kiseki, Missing Blue, When They Cry Go) is in charge of character design. **Ito Kenji** (representative work: "Romancing Saga" series) is in charge of B.G.M. An amazing collection of creators, for example, **Kouta Takahashi** (representative work: "Ridge Racer" series), will participate. Featuring all-new music for the Switch! The "Ver 2022 Arrangement" by **RESONATOR** and **Noriyuki Kamikura** (representative work: Muramasa-The Demon Blade, Under the Knife 2 ) will be set on the Nintendo Switch™ version.

# HELL PAGES



The game originally came out on PC, but is out on the Switch on 15/07/2022. Visually the graphics are cool, with environments looking lush and detailed. As you scroll along, you come across all manner of hell creatures, as well as bats, floating heads, wraiths, and the like. The trailer shows some very cool looking bosses, and you can purchase items from a demon woman that can help you during level traversal.



crisp anime-type visuals, and some cool mechanics. The question is, who sold their soul to get these ported to the Switch? These ports to Switch contain a couple of extras not seen in the previous ports of the games. Operate 4 characters with unique aircraft and fight an intense battle in order to preserve the peace of the galaxy. Both beginners and hard-core gamers alike, will enjoy this game's well-balanced systems.





Starting with a flaming building, you get a potted history of what has lead up to the start of this shooter. A mix of history and fiction. Vasara is a game set in medieval Japan, with it's own manic but fun, individual style. It comes with giant, flying robots and many futuristically styled mechs and jets. It was Developed by Visco, a company known for producing unspectacular but enjoyable games. Vasara though, is definitely their Magnum Opus. As the game demo runs, you'll see that this is a TATE screen, vertical shmup, with good, old fashioned, hand-drawn style, 2D visuals and manic, anime style SFX.

Into the game and you'll see that Despite being set in the 17th century, Vasara has a ton of huge, sword wielding robots, skull tanks, demon headed flying battleships and other fururistic hardware. There are 3 playable characters, each having a different weapon and hover bike.

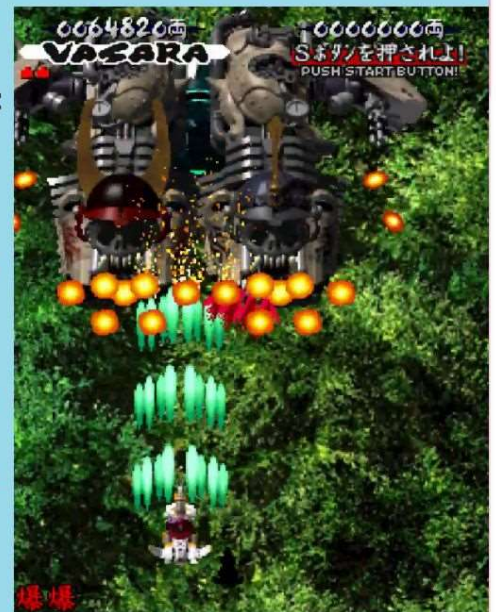


The game controls conventionally. With a rapid-fire button, which you hold to continuously fire. A single-fire button that you can hold and charge for a melee attack, a bomb button and a special Vasara attack.

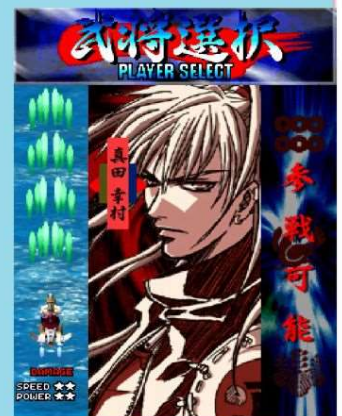
Once your Vasara meter is full, the next time you do a charged shot, you will instead unleash a destructive "Vasara", usually with hero sprite shouting out "Vasara!" out loud.

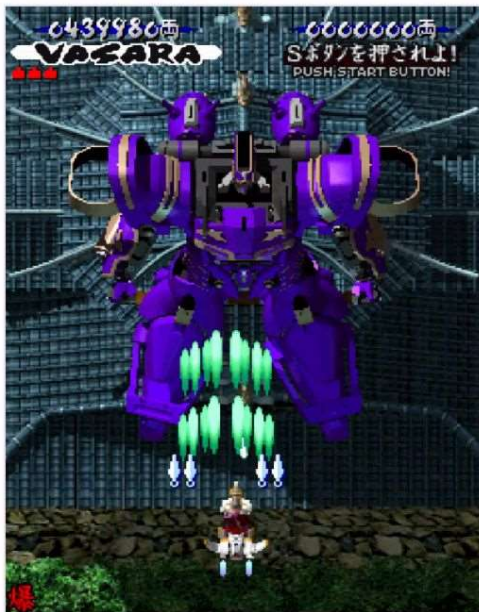
The sprites in Vasara are not destroyed upon collision. Crashing into enemies is a valid technique, although it will result in your hero sprite getting knocked back a bit.

And watch out for bosses trying to knock you into enemy fire. Like in other shooters, you often need to get in close to your enemies, to use your charge shot effectively. There are plenty of power-ups, which make the game a lot more fun. This is a proper arcade shooter, with things starting gently but soon hotting up. Not a bullet hell game, there is still plenty of firepower to avoid and



patterns to be aware of. Although any experienced shooter fan, will be familiar with this game's play, pretty quickly. It kind of reminds me of CAVE's ESP Rade. Although not quite as good as that game, Vasara is still very enjoyable and challenging, with a good scoring system. Better scoring is achieved with the "Prestige Kill System". Destroy enemies with your melee attack and they'll drop a blood-soaked flag with their name on it.





Do not pick this up, as that flag stays on screen for a few seconds, giving you time to destroy another large enemy. The bloody flags multiply your combo and you get a multiplier on how many points earned, based on how many flags showed up. Bombs do not count for this though. Vasaras do count as melee attacks, making them the best way to get big points and other multipliers.



Another way to get points is grazing, which is where a bullet passes through your sprite, but not your much smaller "hit box". Although risky, Visco were nice enough to show you each character's hit box on the player select screen, making grazing fairly easy in this game. The graphics are very well coloured, with plenty of detailing. The definition though is not as sharp as some other games, in this genre. But it is still a pleasure to watch. It is all very traditional, in both the shoot-em-up and historical Japan styles. The music also follows these traditional styles and may not be the most inspiring tunes, but do suit the game's overall style. Overall then, a good shooter, with plenty of challenge and style, well put together and fun for the shmup fanatic.



# SCORES



**Graphics:16 Sound:15 Control:17  
Fun:17 Lastability:17 OVERALL: 82%**

Blasts From The Past



Game Reviews By Slyelessar

At some point it was inevitable that one of either Graham or myself would get around to reviewing one of the Space Invaders games. To paraphrase The Rise & Fall Of Reginald Perrin: 'We wouldn't be where we are today without Space Invaders'. It is however an almost non-game to review in regard to the SHMUP genre, or at least so I thought. I have been keeping an eye on the **Space Invaders Invincible Collection** digitally on Switch for months but its hefty price tag kept me at bay. It recently went on sale via the Nintendo e-store for just shy of twenty-two British Pounds, and I thought to myself 'why the Valfaris not?'. At this early stage of the article I would like to point out that this will be small individual reviews of each of the titles included in this game package and will be very much in the vein of my **Aleste** collection or **DoDonPachi** series reviews found in earlier S.Y.S.! issues.



#### Space Invaders B/W & Colour (1978)

My earliest memory of playing Space Invaders was on the old Amstrad PC my dad had in the early 90's. I recall the ominous movement of the alien sprites moving sideways across the screen and then dropping down a line as they head towards your ship. Exciting. A real fear of being destroyed and having to save humanity had never been so high (If you exclude all the cats from Biker Mice from Mars at the time). To my young mind all the sprites were obviously creatures from a different planet descending like a swarm of hornets, and the players ship was the last defence the universe had to stop the blighters! I also remember with a smile on my face the poor

strategy of 'if I hide under these shields and shoot up through them, I wont get shot', utilised constantly by my childish mind. You could perhaps get away with this strategy for the first level, but this pigeon step approach to defence before offense won't cut it later on. Replaying the game as an adult, I can see why this game was so popular, and why everyone should attempt to play it at some point, as just like Tetris or Pac-Man, it is an artifact of gaming history. For the day, the idea and maths behind the mechanics are solid, and the concept of the game very obvious from the game demo before you load credits in. By today's standard, the game is a little slow and sluggish and although it does speed up as you play through, the first few levels are difficult to push through time and time again.



## REVIEWS CONTINUED

This collection does a good job of allowing you to load the games with credits, so you get an arcade-like experience with it. You can however, load a large number of coins in – it's not like there's anyone watching you trying to beat the high score... or is there. If you do not know by now, the player controls a ship at the bottom of the screen, which can only move left to right, and fire up the screen. The enemy sprites, as mentioned above, move sideways across the screen and move down a line when they reach the edge of the screen/ play area. You have to deplete the entire force on screen to pass to the next level and if they enemy sprites reach you, it is game over. Just in front of you, between the player controlled ship and ever moving titular Space Invaders, are destructible shields, which you can use to hide behind or shoot from behind. These get destroyed over time, but can be a useful defensive tool when playing. The more stages you beat, the faster the oncoming force becomes. Although basic, the game does still provide a bit of fun, and one of the 'oh go on then' feelings you get when you see the game sitting there. Like Tetris or Pac-Man, you can either keep going until you lose or break the game or what is more likely, you will give it a casual play until you lose your first credit or two. I certainly recall this being fun, and people did used to talk about Space Invaders a fair amount when I was younger. Today people talk about it less, but it is still relevant, and there are still people out there that want to experience it. If you do want to experience it and dip your toe in, it does make sense objectively to do it from the original. It is always difficult to score a retro classic like this. I have decided to lump in the original B&W with the colour version (My memories are of the B&W version), but I think it shows itself as a snapshot in time that is readily approachable today.

Graphics:12 Sound:12 Control:16 Fun:17 Lastability:20 OVERALL: 77%

### Space Invaders Part II (1979)

It's funny to think of something like Space Invaders having a direct sequel, as at first glance it feels like 'surely it is just more of the same'. Although I do not have any childhood memories of playing S.I.P.2, as I did with the original, I thought I would give it a decent play through next to the original port in this collection, to see how the compare. This game introduces a couple of new mechanics, such as enemies splitting in two, and reinforcements showing up when you had just spent ages clearing a load of enemies off the screen. The game is much more colourful than the original, and offers bright yellows and purples. It is basically the natural progression of the series after the original game. This was the first Japanese game protected by copyright, therefore cementing itself in gaming history. It was also the first Japanese game where players could save their names on the scoreboard. Ultimately, you can thank Space Invaders for all the high score droppers on social media. You are welcome Dace (Shmuptopia) ;-)

Graphics: 12 Sound:11 Control:17 Fun:17 Lastability:17  
OVERALL: 73%



## REVIEWS CONTINUED

### Lunar Rescue (1979)

Made using the same circuit as Space Invaders, Lunar Rescue puts an interesting spin on things. The setting is still in space but the twist is that you control a little lunar pod and have to navigate it down the screen avoiding space ships. You have to land it on a landing pad, of which there are several, all designated different score points. Once you have navigated safely and the ship is at a stand still, a person will run over and grab hold of the bottom of your pod. The game then sets you off up the screen, back towards the ship your pod dropped from and you have to avoid the other ships on the way. The cool thing about the way back up is that you get a weapon to fire. You get a few shots, then have to wait for it to recharge, whilst dodging fire from your enemies. Dropping down, you can press the button to fire thrusters to slow your descent. If you crash into anything at any point, it makes a loud noise. The sound effects are just as dated as Space Invaders and the pod makes an annoying beeping noise. Overall it's a cool little game, and gives you something different, within this collection of games. Oh and did I mention, you can rotate the screen? Technically you can do that with all the games on this list, except for the two from 2018!

Graphics:12 Sound:11 Control:15 Fun:11

Lastability:11 OVERALL: 60%

### Space Cyclone (1980)

This is the first console port of this game. A large part of that is down to the game being so rare, it allegedly gained legendary status. Especially that means that less copies were made and collectors pinched up any that were left available therefore raising the price in the perceived eye of the used gaming industry. With that said, the game itself is quite fun. It introduces something a bit different again and apparently although it was originally developed on the same circuit board, as Space Invaders, there were 'some games coming out on new circuit boards, so there were a few Space Cyclone cabinets in operation'. I think there may be a poor translation from Japanese here, but I think we can all pick up that there might be a couple of variations



## REVIEWS CONTINUED

out in space avoiding aliens somewhere. Visually the game adds little pixel dots for stars, so you are not just playing against a plain backdrop. This gives the game a little bit of a different atmosphere. I would say the first Space Invaders was fairly atmospherically forbidding in comparison, where as this game has gone for a much brighter look. The players Ship looks much closer to what we consider a generic shooter ship to look like, so it already feels like a step closer than the other titles above. Enemy sprites on screen are less but the game sprites are a bit faster. Some are aliens, some are on asteroids, and you even get flying saucers shooting electric zig zag beams across the screen at you. It's certainly nailed the traditional sci-fi look. Even the sound effects are a step up, with your main shot sounding more like some sort of automatic gun (despite being a single laser shot). There is no music but it still has rather bitty SFX going on. Every now and then you get a rather distorted voice saying 'We're coming! We're coming! We're coming for you!'. I did think about putting some sort of crude sentence after that, but since you already thought of it in your head, I'll leave it be, you filthy animal. If you get shot by the UFO you get another distorted 'Got Ya'. It's a bit different, but it's not 1978's Space invaders...

Graphics:12 Sound:13 Control:15 Fun:15 Lastability:14 OVERALL: 69%



### Majestic Twelve: The Space Invaders Part IV (1990)

AKA: Super Space Invaders '91

Before there was Ocean's Eleven, there was Majestic Twelve. Here is the first title that came out during my lifetime and I don't ever remember anyone mentioning it. Although it is quite possible that I walked back one of the arcade cabinets at the time with either my dad or one of his friends. Most likely the cabinet would have said 'Super Space Invaders '91' on the side. This is the fourth installment of the series. Although this game keeps the same side-to-side mechanic for the players ship, by Jove does this game look almost like a Shmup! You get a tiny cut scene where your ship leaves the hanger. Different backgrounds ranging from space, a city on earth, the colour system, etc. really make this game feel like a step up. The ships the play gets for different missions can change, enemy ships look more and more cyborg and fly in different formations. At the start it is just like a much cooler looking Space invaders, but the formation change of the ships flying in a spinning circle was really cool to behold. It is far more dynamic than I originally anticipated, and there's even a level where you have to rescue cows from alien abduction. You also get a shield meter at the bottom of the screen, meaning you can take more hits. There's also some very basic music in it. Out of all the earlier games, this is the biggest leap in the collection so far. I would suggest playing this original, then skipping to this game, before playing a couple of the others below. You really get to see the series evolve in front of your eyes. **Gra-15 Sound-14 Con-16 Fun-17 Last-15 Overall-77%**





## Reviews continued

## Space Invaders DX (1994)

This port was taken from the SNES port of the game, and therefore has the cool fatter SNES sprites. It features some really cool things, such as characters ported from older Taito games and a versus competitive mode. This mode is very much like the one from Twinkle Star Sprites on the NeoGeo. It features increasing the number of aliens on your opponents side of the split screen and even swapping aliens. Still a rather new mechanic at the time, the game actually does this well. You also get a larger play screen from the start. Although I did forget to mention that you can do, fit to screen, with any of these, just press start and adjust to taste. You can even add scan lines for anything if you really want to. The game features 3 modes, which you can select after 'winners don't use drugs', screen before the Space Invaders intro - this is so very 90's. The 3 modes are: Space Invaders Mode, Vs Mode, and Parody mode. Space Invaders mode then let's you select what sort of screen you want to play. E.g. upright cabinet, Colour, B&W. Essentially it changes the sprites and background slightly, but it does increase playability. It's still Space Invaders ala S.I.2, but it looks fatter and cooler. I described versus mode above, so I'll skip to the part you are dying to read about: Parody Mode. This mode alone is worth getting the game for. Not only do you get detailed weird backgrounds with some cool pixel art, but both the enemies and player controlled 'ship' become different things. At the start you are a chick firing up at cats, pumpkins, and bats. It's all rather Japanese and very fun. Again, it's still Space Invaders, but it's space invaders on drugs - Don't take drugs & stay in school.

Graphics:16 Sound:12 Control:15 Fun:17 Lastability:15 OVERALL: 75%



## Arkanoid Vs Space Invaders (2016)

This game downloaded when I bought the collection, but boots up as a separate game from the main app. It gives you a TATE introduction when booting up, with Earth in the background, with an Alien peeping over the top. It all looked rather cool. At first, I thought the game was broken or there was an error in downloading, so I re-downloaded it. I then found out, after searching online, that this game is meant to be played TATE, undocked, which was a disappointment. Part of the disappointment lies in the fact that it is a really good looking game and I played through a lot of it and I have to say there's some really cool mechanics to be found in there. Especially as the game is Space Invaders meets Bip Bop or Pong. You move a sprite "Zaus", with your finger and it looks exactly like the little platform you get in the games I just mentioned. You get special attacks like a huge, aimed bow. The music & SFX are brilliant and the game has a lovely polish to it. The main problem is the touch screen gimmick and unfortunately that really hampers it. It should have been ported to work with the D-pad. It is a huge miss on what could have been one of the gems of the collection. It is a really fun game but feels like it belongs on a phone rather than a console. Handheld players will love this but unfortunately, this game is not for me.

Graphics:17 Sound:17 Control:17 Fun:12 Lastability:8 OVERALL: 71%



# SPACE INVADERS EXTREME

Jumping back into the games you can play with a console, on the main games collection you, have **Space Invaders Extreme (2018)**. A modern take on the Space invaders Game and this one does not disappoint. In fact, this is hands down the best game on the collection. This game is horizontal, with the gameplay area taking up most of the screen, and it is fast paced. The arcade mode allows you to quickly select

missions from a couple of different set paths to complete. It's very quick and easy to navigate and you jump straight into a game. I will start with the graphics, because this game is beautiful. Everything is bright and crisp. Sprites are big, with enemies looking like varied aliens from the series and mother ships can take you to a quick bonus section to add power ups or points.

The backgrounds are colourful, but you can turn these off, if you want a black background on which to play. When you destroy enemies they burst into colour and sometimes drop power ups. The power ups are temporary but feel great. I love getting the multi shot or beam and you can chain these dropped power ups to increase your score and destroy scores of enemies. On the right hand side of the play screen are little challenges to get different attacks, such as bomb. It will show you the colour/order of which to destroy enemies if you want to obtain a bomb. I thought this was rather cool, as it gives you a mini challenge whilst taking out enemies in a fast paced environment. On the left of the screen it shows you what mode and state you are in, how many chains you are getting, your shot level, and how many lives you have. At the top of the screen is your current score. The music is also more modern in terms of synth sounds, but it is still fairly basic when compared to most SHMUPS. The attack shot FX is in time with the music though, and that's rather cool. You can hold the button to shoot, which is a handy adage, as this game is faster than the other Space Invaders game, and requires much tapping. You even get 'Warning!' And a boss battle. The bosses change form as you go along. Did I mention this was modern? You still feel like you are playing Space Invaders as you can only move left and right and shoot up, but this really nails home how good a basic game can be. I have been playing this game a lot since I got to it, and it definitely stands up against a fair number of SHMUPS I have previously reviewed for Shoot You Sir. It's bright, it's colourful, its face, it's loud, it's great. This is the main event, the cherry on top, and the most fun all rolled into one. I think what the developers have done is embraced the fact that they are making Space Invaders and not a crazy, bullet hell game and the result is a really well programmed game at the peak of what it can be. It takes the basics of the original game and adds some modern mechanics, speeds it up, gives it a bright slap of paint and delivers a solid performance.



Graphics:17 Sound:16 Control:17  
Fun:19 Lastability:17 OVERALL: 86%





# SPACE INVADERS GIGAMAX 4SE

A INSERT COIN B INSERT COIN C INSERT COIN D INSERT COIN

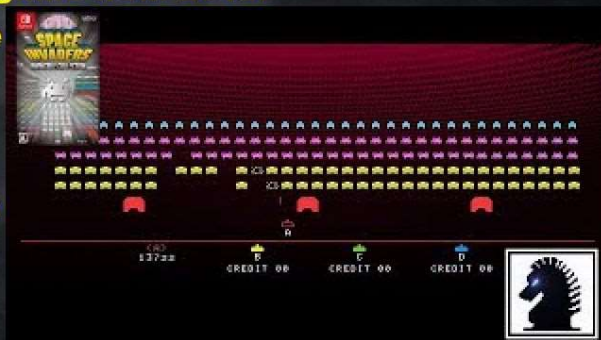
[L] Add Credits [R] Enter [Start] Skip Count [Pause] [ZL] [ZR] Hide Controls

## Space Invaders Gigamax 4 SE (2018)

So this version of Space Invaders was the first one to ever support multiplayer, up to 4 players. That's right, gigamax means the play screen is really wide and huge. The game features a lot of what you have already seen in the other games and mostly draws on classic routes. There are a couple

of new features and mechanics, and the game is a lot brighter and more colourful than anything from the 70's to the 90's, but does not out do Space Invaders Extreme in terms of gameplay. I am not going to lie, this game is not much fun for a single player. In fact it is a chore. This game was specifically made to be enjoyed with friends and I would say at least 3 people need to play to get any fun out of it. It supports up to 4 players on the screen at a time though, which is a cool idea. Player sprites are tiny and lack any flourish or flair, you would expect from a game from 2018.

Enemy sprites are bigger, thankfully and it has one or two interesting takes on large bosses (interesting for Space Invaders that is). The sound track is by Taito's house band Zuntata, which is rather cool. I did not get a chance to play this with friends, but I reckon if you can get a 4 player session on the go, then it would be a lot of fun trying to clear sections as quickly as possible.



To sum it up; If you are playing solo, go for one of the other games, but keep this game in mind for a gathering or party scenario. Can you imagine a huge 4 player arcade cabinet? That would be rather cool to watch.

Graphics:13 Sound:15 Control:18 Fin:11 Lastability:11 OVERALL: 68%

In conclusion, can I state that this collection of games is worth purchasing for current gen consoles? Yes. Do I think it is worth the hefty digital price tag? No. I feel that the answer is somewhere in the middle. As I picked it up on sale digitally, I feel that it is a fair amount for everything that is included. In fact, looking on Amazon, the hard copy is a similar price to what I paid for the digital on sale version- so I would suggest starting there. The best way to look at this is that you are buying the most modern interpretation of Space Invaders you can get your hands on and you also get some of the older games thrown in with it. I know a lot of people are very nostalgic for the series and it is most likely the people that played a Space Invaders game in the past are going to enjoy this collection the most. It is easy for anyone to get into of course, but I think due to the simpler mechanics of how most of the games are developed, you must walk in with the understanding that this is no bullet hell game. In fact, this isn't remotely close to even something like Blazing Star. But it is a homage to a classic, which helped pave the way forward for arcade shooting games that came after. I was surprised by how much I enjoyed playing through this collection, and although not all the games are top notch, some were and one was brilliant.

