

Tokyo game show 1997

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SPECIAL FEATURE



Virus-Hudson/Sega



Goeman-Konami



Silhouette Mirage-Treasure



Go Go Soccer-Tecmo



Samurai Shodown RPG-SNK



Spring brings a breath of fresh air and the promise of new games from your favorite game companies. There's no better place to kick off the season than the Tokyo Game Show, which is sponsored by the Computer

Entertainment Software Association and held at the Tokyo Big Site. The event is a showcase for companies such as Sega, Sony and third parties (Nintendo has their own show in Japan) who want to let the press and the general public check out what will be available in the coming months.

Sony: It seems Japanese gamers have warmed up to Crash Bandicoot, who was in attendance, but still peddling his last effort and still quiet on the sequel (at least at the show, but check the rest of the mag for more info). Drawing the most attention at their booth was the game based on the hot anime movie and comic series, Ghost in the Shell. The game story follows more closely to the comic (which is making fans jump for joy) while the action looks to be mainly a shooter with the player taking control of a tank-like vehicle and exploring vast areas. The other game garnering excitement was the action RPG Alundra which is made by (mostly) the same team who worked on LandStalker for the Genesis. The action looks intense and the puzzles promise to baffle gamers for hours on end.

Sega: A large screen with a playable 3-D Sonic greeted visitors at the Sega booth which

CESA PRESENTS



1997
SPRING

TOKYO GAME SHOW

Hundreds of new games including surprises from Sony and Sega

Multiracing Championship-Imagineer



SF Collection-Capcom



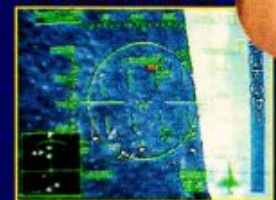
Dungeons & Dragons-Capcom



Breath of Fire 3-Capcom



Ace Combat 2-Namco



made many take a hard second look. Unfortunately, that second look proved a bit disappointing since Sonic Jam is a compilation disc of the four Sonic adventures that came out for the Sega Genesis. The 3-D play in question comes from a Level Select sort of area as opposed to some bonus round reward. Last Bronx is the latest arcade-to-Saturn port from the AM3 division responsible for the outstanding Sega Rally translation. The street punk weapon-based brawler is looking great and is slated for

release later this year. Azel Panzer Dragoon RPG is the next chapter in the "boy and his large flying lizard series" and as the title implies, is an RPG. The game looks great and has action sequences in addition to traditional menu battles. Other notable games were Sky Target which is an indirect chapter of the Afterburner series of jet fighter games and the greatly anticipated military sim sequel, Iron Storm 2. Sega did hint about their next big game which was referred to as "Project Sonic," and is slated to appear at the E³

show in Atlanta to go up against Crash Bandicoot 2.

Konami: Goeman for the N64 was the biggest game available for play on the floor, but they did show lots of new footage of Metal Gear Solid for the PlayStation. The big surprise was the first look at the 64-bit version of the classic saga of vampires and the Belmont family, Castlevania 64 is still fairly early, but what was shown looked promising. Other notable games were the arcade driving game Midnight Run for the PlayStation



King of Fighters '96-SNK



Thunderforce V-Technosoft



Runabout-Climax



Croc-Argonaut



Fighter's Impact-Taito

and the Salamander Deluxe Pack which is a compilation shooter.

Square: The main action was happening around the Final Fantasy Tactics area which got rather crowded as it was next to the Saga Frontier area which had their own mass of people. There was a competition to promote the release of Tobal 2 with Bun Bun Maru (a top-ranked Japanese fighting champion) on hand to show off his skill and the game. The mystery game Square uncovered was Front Mission Alternative. This is the third in a very popular simulation/ action series on the Super Famicom which never saw the light of day here.

Capcom: As far as third-party software developers are concerned, none had as many hot software titles as Capcom. Topping the list is none other than the sequel to last year's megahit, Resident Evil 2. It will no doubt be one of the hottest titles when it gets released. Not to leave Saturn owners out, the first Resident Evil will be out for the Saturn with a couple of planned



Front Mission Alternative-Square

perks like extra costumes. Marvel Super Heroes which has been on-again/off-again for months is on again. Breath of Fire 3 which was scrapped and reworked for the PlayStation is almost ready and the latest in the mega-series, Mega Man X4, is being regarded as the best-looking version on console systems yet. Street Fighter Collection is a collector's pack which has Super SFII, Super SFII Turbo and an unnamed game exclusive to the collection. Dungeons & Dragons Collection is like the SF compilation except with the D&D arcade titles.

their port of the arcade fighter Dead or Alive was given a quick sneak preview.

Taito: The biggest game for them was Fighter's Impact which is their entry into the crowded 3-D fighting game market for the PS.

Virgin: They pulled out a huge coup by taking a funky license like Gamera and making a cool shooter that paid homage to Panzer Dragoon.

Hudson: They had a booth for their hot collaboration game with Sega called Virus. It mixes CG graphics with animation-style characters designed by the talented Madhouse studio.

Imagineer: Multiracing Championship was making the rounds and looked hopeful to make it Stateside. They also had a soccer game that had nice animation, but lacked graphical punch.

Rounding out the other standouts were Croc (action) which looked like an N64 game on the PS, Silhouette Mirage (adventure) from Treasure, Grandia (RPG) from Game Arts, Gvector (a fantastic-looking shooter) from T.G.S. and Thunderforce V (shooter) from Technosoft which are all for the Saturn. It was a show filled with games, but there are still a ton of third- and fourth-quarter games to be announced.

Gvector-T.G.S.



Cool Boarders 2-Uep Systems



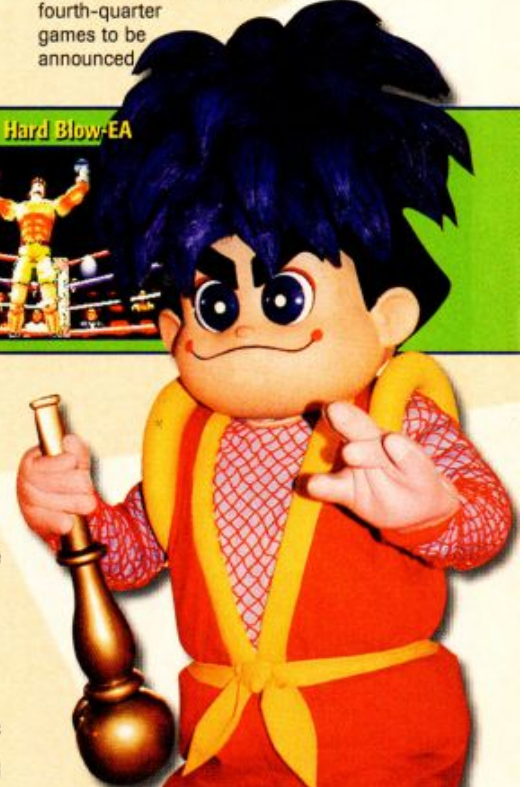
Hard Blow-EA



Namco: Ace Combat 2 and Time Crisis near even closer to completion while the debut of Gun Bullet (known as cult favorite Point Blank here) delighted fans. Gun Bullet is a light-hearted shooting game with often wacky and offbeat things to shoot at. The sequel to their huge 16-Bit, 40-Meg RPG looks right at home on the PlayStation. Tales of Destiny has the same basic play as its predecessor with the obvious enhancements in color and special effects.

SNK: Arcade ports of the popular King of Fighters '96 appeared on both the Saturn and PlayStation. Samurai RPG seemed to be coming along nicely and there was a few minutes of new footage for Samurai Shodown 64 which is looking very impressive.

Tecmo: Tecmo Go Go Soccer looked great and



Time Crisis-Namco



Point Blank-Namco



Tales of Destiny-Namco



Salamander Deluxe Pack-Konami



Midnight Run-Konami



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SONIC JAM SEGA



Ever since the mediocre Sonic Blast title (mediocre for the Saturn, but great on the Genesis), loyal Sega buffs have been yearning for the "Blue" to really be back. Well, it's going to be just a little longer, but at least Sonic Jam will tide you over until "Project Sonic" unveils itself.

Sonic Jam is a compilation disc packing in the first four Sonics including Sonic and Knuckles. You'll also be able to play with the features you got from putting the Sonic 2 and 3 cartridges into the Sonic and Knuckles cart! The cool 3-D gameplay you see here in



these screens is apparently from a Level/ Game Select starting point similar in style to the Namco classic discs. This playable stage, full of rivers, spring jumps and lots of floating platforms, was great and showed that the



Saturn still has some surprises left in it. The camera angles move much in the same way as Mario and

the action is controllable with the Sega analog thumb pad. So take a look at what this level has to



offer, because this is what the next Sonic title for Saturn (not Sonic Extreme) will most likely look like come its projected release in September. Till then, it's only up to Sonic Jam to keep our hedgehog appetites healthy!



LAST BRONX SEGA



Sega has been hurtin' for a fighting game that would appeal to fans in America who aren't as thrilled with the Virtua Fighter style of play. Last Bronx could be the game that makes these people take notice with weapon-based combat that is probably the most brutal to date. The brutality doesn't stem from excessive blood or any cheap



gimmicks, but rather the same Virtua Fighter realism applied to a nunchuka smacking you in the side of the head.



On the graphics side, you'll notice that it approaches the high-resolution quality seen previously in the Saturn port of Virtua Fighter 2, but sacrificed in Fighting Vipers and Fighters Megamix. Those games favored



light-sourcing and shading over resolution. AM3 is the Sega division behind this brawler and their track record of Saturn ports (Sega Rally, Virtual On) which really points out that Last Bronx is going to be one fantastic fighter.



AZEL PANZER DRAGOON RPG SEGA



It's pretty much a no-brainer that Sega would have another installment of its popular Panzer Dragoon series ready, but imagine the surprise when they revealed that it was an RPG! Alright, we at EGM knew the



details and saw early screen shots prior to the show, but when we actually saw the game live, it made us salivate like the dogs we are.

There are elements of the game that are similar to the action we're used to, but there are menu-based battles that reveal its role-playing side. The extent of the action side of Azel Panzer Dragoon RPG has yet to be revealed and there is word that there will be shooting sequences at certain intervals of the game to keep a sense of continuity to this update.

You'll be able to walk around towns which are realtime 3-D rendered structures. The exploration elements as far as landscapes are yet to be released. Sega states that there will be a cast of at least 20 different characters with the lead character being a 15-year-old boy. The best part for Panzer fans is that the story of the characters and especially the world will be fleshed out in greater detail.



CASTLEVANIA 64 KONAMI



While we're waiting for Dracula's appearance on the PlayStation later this summer, Konami is preparing the venerable series for Nintendo's 64-Bit system.

Castlevania 64 is still in very early stages and is tentatively scheduled to be ready by year's end. As you can see by the pictures, the characters and objects are all made from polygons. There are light-sourcing effects, but it remains to be seen how detailed the characters are. To achieve a vast, viewable landscape, Konami may sacrifice some details



or they may cover things up a bit with fog effects and draw the game with a higher amount of detail. Whichever they choose, the recent PlayStation version proved that Konami has not forgotten how to do a good Castlevania game while pessimists will insist they won't be able to transfer the spirit of the series into the 3-D realm.



METAL GEAR SOLID KONAMI



Many here at EGM have longed for a follow-up to the classic NES games that seemed like they would be forgotten in the sands of time (Bionic Commando from Capcom is still MIA). Luckily for us, Konami has brought back the original mind behind Metal Gear and allowed him to realize his true vision of the game.

The way the game was intended to be was



one of an espionage theme in which avoiding detection came before killing. The adventure-style mechanics should still remain mostly intact with the addition of full 3-D environments that are drawn in realtime instead of prerendered backgrounds.

It seems Konami is going to make a serious run at getting back their previous reputation of being one of the elite software makers in the field.



YUKE YUKE TROUBLEMAKERS ENIX

The award for most hyperkinetic action game of the show could easily go to Yuke Yuke Troublemakers. Enix thought so much of the game that it was the only game in their entire booth showcased (either that or they really didn't have any other software titles).



The game is developed by Treasure and it shows in the gameplay and cute character design. The game is

basically a 2-D multidirectional scrolling action fest that features 3-D backgrounds. As evidenced by their McDonald's game (Genesis) a while back, Treasure has the ability to make any game play great regardless of looks. Yuke Yuke Troublemakers should see the light of day in the States and seems destined to become an underground hit in much the same way all Treasure games (Gunstar Heroes and Guardian Heroes) do.



GAMERA 2000-VIRGIN

One of the greatest surprises of the show was found in the Virgin booth of all places. Gamera 2000 puts you in control of a jet and at other times on the back of a speeder bike-type of vehicle. The premise is that you fly around with Gamera and help him (or in some cases have him help you) shoot down the bad guys.

The most interesting thing is the way you move around your gun sight—it is very



similar to that of Panzer Dragoon. Of course the graphics ain't too shabby either, and the early version we



played was plenty hard. There are lots of lighting effects and explosions that light up the screen. It still remains to be seen whether the Gamera name will entice gamers to give the overgrown turtle a try.



GHOST IN THE SHELL-SONY JAPAN



Ghost in the Shell has garnered quite a following through the Manga by Masume Shirow and next gained a wider audience with the nationwide release of the full-length



animated movie at theaters and then on video last year. Now, Sony of Japan is set to unleash its game based on this fan favorite, which will follow the comic story lines instead of the movie



(which seemed like it was based on a single issue of the series). The tank shooting action is fast and with the correct adventure elements, could shape into a solid title.

REV LIMIT-SETA



Games aren't exactly plentiful on the Nintendo 64, so when one looks as promising as Rev Limit, we follow it very closely. The game features unique car and road details



and moves along at a smooth frame rate. The control is very good and car mechanics seem solid. It is definitely miles ahead of Cruis'n USA in terms of control and play mechanics. The



Japanese release is set for late spring, so we'll have a copy very soon in order to give you a complete blowout on all the final details. This is something you won't want to miss!

WILD CHOPPERS-SETA



In the same booth as Rev Limit, Wild Choppers is the air-based shooting game from Seta. The graphics seem to be improving from early pictures we have seen, but the



gameplay was not as refined as it needed to be at this point.

However, those seem to be problems that Seta is capable of fixing with enough play testing.



The little graphical touches did stand out, though, and explosions and other dramatic flares looked to be on par with what the system has proved to be capable of.