

GAMING INSURRECTION

FOR GAMERS, BY GAMERS

YEAR 17

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ISSUE 53



EAST ASIA VOL. 6



GI explores
Asian entertainment

from the editor

Summer is here and in full force. The weather's heating up, and we're taking advantage of it by traveling when it's nice and staying inside to keep cool when it gets unbearable.

While we're indoors, we've concluded that there's so much culture around us and so much to soak up and enjoy that it's hard to narrow where to start. And so it begins anew, gentle reader, that we've returned to an old favorite here at Gaming Insurrection: The East Asian issue. In our sixth iteration, we're doing what we love and have done over the past 12 years: highlight the best of the best in Asian entertainment. We love a little bit of everything from China, Japan and South Korea. Whether it's the food, the music or the drama shows, we've come to love a lot of

things over the years, and we're sharing our discoveries and the things we find cool in our GI roundup.

This issue, we've added to the menagerie of content an updated food location map, television shows and web shows that we love and more artists that we've picked up since the last volume. We hope that through this issue, in a time where diversity and culture are being disregarded, you'll find something new and exciting outside of your comfort zone just as we have.

Enjoy the issue!



Lyndsey Beatty, editor-in-chief



LYNDSEY BEATTY
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

LYNDSEY BEATTY is co-founder and editor-in-chief of GI. She enjoys binge watching TV with her husband, editing as part of the Uppercut Editions team and playing various retro video games. Lyndsey resides in Columbia, S.C., and is an senior accounting auditor for the state of South Carolina.

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GI REVIEW POLICY

Scale is from 1 to 5 as follows:

1 — **Broken.** Absolutely do not play this game. A broken mess from start to finish. Game is unplayable and irredeemable in all areas.

2 — **Substandard.** The game isn't for everyone. Some mechanics work; others need work. Overall design is questionable in some areas.

3 — **Average and meets expectations.** Mechanics work and it's a decent package overall. It's playable, and you'll come back to the game.

4 — **Above average.** Exceeds expectations. Overall, a great game worth keeping in a gamer's library. Presentation and mechanics all work as expected and add to or enhance the gaming experience.

5 — **Masterpiece.** Everyone should play this title at least once to experience what it has to offer.



BRANDON BEATTY
EDITOR-AT-LARGE

BRANDON BEATTY is editor-at-large for GI. Brandon writes reviews when the mood strikes him, produces the quarterly Otaku Corner column for The Strip and spends a significant amount of time watching new and old anime alike with his wife. Brandon resides in Columbia, S.C., and is a security specialist for the state of South Carolina.

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Super Mario RPG soundtrack caps great experience with top 5 SNES adventure

Super Mario RPG: Legend of the Seven Stars is one of our favorite role-playing games ever made. We're massive Mario fans and this Super Nintendo masterpiece slid in at a time when we were ready to try a new genre. Nearly 30 years after its initial release and recent remake for the Nintendo Switch (yes, we own it, too), we're still learning new things about the game and humming along to the fantastic soundtrack. These are our favorite tracks.

The Starlight's Flower: The dreamy theme of Star Hill uses bells as a large part of its melody, and they are beautiful. The backing organ is also a nice touch. This sets the stage for the masterpiece sequel theme of Shooting Star Summit in Paper Mario.

Welcome to Booster Tower/And My Name is Booster: Booster is one of the weirder characters in the game and that's saying a lot with other characters such as Bowser, Mallow and Geno running around. His home base, the self-titled Booster Tower, has a nice vibe when you walk in the door. It's a lounge theme with a nice soothing melody and reminds me of 1960s vacation lounges.

Once you get inside and start fighting Booster's minions, the newer track introducing Booster immediately grabs your attention. It's very 1950s reminiscent and has a swing vibe. It's bouncy and jazzy, and it's energetic.

Barrel Volcano: The hottest area in the game is also a fire house track with some snare and steel drum melodies that are an absolute bop. The percussion beat is nice as well.

Beware the Forest's Monsters: Forest Maze's theme is a nice rollicking track that gives adventure vibes. The synth is like something you'd hear in the Legend of Zelda's dungeons and that's not a bad comparison by any stretch.

Conversation with Culex: Culex is an optional hidden boss in the game and looks like a summon from Final Fantasy V,



also made by Square Enix. Culex's track is a take on the legendary Prelude theme that has appeared in every mainline Final Fantasy game and many spinoffs. It's beautiful and majestic as it should be because it originated from the mind of the maestro Nobuo Uematsu.

Fight Against Culex: The fight against Culex is the toughest in the game and the backing track makes it feel much like a Final Fantasy V or VI battle instead of a Mario RPG battle. It's harried and frantic, which is the atmosphere of most of the later boss battles in those games.

Fight Against an Armed Boss: This intermediate boss fight track is a nice way of informing you that you're fighting someone a little higher up the food chain. It has a nice bounce to it, but it sounds ominous and yet Mario-like.

Fight Against Monster: The normal regular battle theme is fun. It's got a nice feeling to it and it's light and optimistic. I hope you like it because you will hear it often.

Fight Against Smithy/Fight Against Smithy, Who Likes



Transforming: Smithy, as a final boss, isn't that hard. However, the themes for his two-part battle are pure bops. They're dancehall-themed and make an impression with some references to baroque pop. These are two of the best on the soundtrack. They go hard.

Going Shopping in Seaside Town: This swing beat masterpiece is fun. It has a retro vibe to it alongside a clearly nautical melody. The harmonica synth is playful and clean, and it will have you whistling it and tapping your toe.

Happy Parade, Delightful Parade: The ending credits theme is excellent. It's got a lot of baroque pop to it and makes callbacks to nearly every area visited in the game and the introduction cinema. It's a nice way to revisit your journey while wrapping things up.

Rose Town: The place where you first meet Geno is a nice retro-themed track. It's in the same vein of Going Shopping in Seaside Town and has a cute flute melody soloing throughout.

C 加
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EAST ASIA VOLUME 6

BY GAMING INSURRECTION

We love culture. And we've been sharing the love now for 12 years through the East Asia issue.

We're on our sixth iteration of this lovefest, and it's never been better. We've found more shows to watch, more delicious places to eat in our hometown, more games to play and more anime to devour.

This time around, we're highlighting the fun things we listen to in our spare time, the movies we've fallen in love with, and the dramas we've started and finished with stoic aplomb or razzed when they made dumb character decisions.

This is the best of the best and the things we find cool from the other side of the world.



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Pop'n Music Jam&Fizz
Konami, 2024

Pop'n Music has always been that weird bemani series that looks cool and cute, but you never try because it's not close physically and buying a controller is hard nowadays. The long-running series is in its 27th year — the same amount of time as its sister series DanceDance Revolution — and it shows no signs of slowing down. Jam&Fizz introduced quite a few Konami Originals and new songs and only removed six from the play roster. There's never a wrong time to get into a niche side of bemani and Jam&Fizz is cute overload and a welcome invitation.



Gundam Breaker IV
Bandai Namco, 2024

If you're a fan of Gundam like me and want to collect multiple kits but don't have space, Gundam Breaker IV lets you choose a kit from your favorite Gundam series, put it together and let it compete against other mobile suit models to see who's best of the best. With numerous choices of mobile suits and customization, the Gundam Breaker series is the perfect match for novice fans or die-hard collectors without having to worry about space to display their work.



Arcana Heart 3: Love Max!!!! Team Arcana, 2014

This arcana fighting game is very much like Guilty Gear X and BlazBlue, which also were published by Arc System Works. Gorgeous and stylish, Love Max is a fighter that uses characters who fight using elements of tarot cards. An organization called the Drexler Institute worked behind the scenes and later came to power after a dimensional distortion known as the Great Kanto Incident devastated Japan. The playable roster has different motives in the investigation behind the incident and works to either help save the country or sink it. If you have the slightest bit of interest in the Guilty Gear or BlazBlue series, this may appeal to your senses.



Garou: Mark of the Wolves SNK, 1999

Garou: Mark of the Wolves, later released for the Dreamcast as Fatal Fury: Mark of the Wolves, continues the legacy that Fatal Fury stalwart Terry Bogard began in the King of Fighters Tournaments. The pair hunt for answers about the legacy of the Howard name after Terry killed Geese at the end of Real Bout Fatal Fury. The classic fighter features 13 new characters except for the returning Terry, marking the debut of Rock, and introduces several concepts such as Tactical Offensive Position (later seen in Capcom vs. SNK as an S-Groove mechanic) and Just Defend (also later seen in Capcom vs. SNK 2 as an K-Groove mechanic). It's the start of something good as the recently released City of the Wolves carries on the excellent legacy. See our full review later in this issue.



GAMES

Nioh 2 **Team Ninja, 2020**

Based on the groundbreaking game developed by Team Ninja, Nioh 2 follows Hidechiyo, a human/yokai hybrid who embarks on a journey to find answers to his ability to fight various demons roaming medieval Japan. Aided by traveling companions, Hidechiyo's journey takes place during various historical events while he faces numerous yokai who are determined to plunge Japan into eternal darkness.



Judgment **Sega, 2018**

Set in Sega's Like a Dragon (formerly known as Yakuza) universe, this game is part action, part mystery. Former lawyer turned private eye Takayuki Yagami, who is investigating various murder cases, finds himself in a conspiracy involving a previous client in the city of Kamurocho. Leaning on a new protagonist in Yagami, Judgment forges its own path as a part of Yakuza but not exactly the same game.



ANIME

Dragon Ball Z

As anime began its second return to American TV, anime aficionados would be ridiculed if DBZ was not included. First broadcast in 1996, Goku and company would rock Saturday mornings fighting various villains, gaining new strengths, while protecting the legendary Dragon Balls and Earth. Today, DBZ continues through various spinoffs including DBZ Kai, Dragon Ball Super and its current arc, Dragon Ball Daima through various streaming services.



Sailor Moon

Sailor Moon focuses on 14-year-old Usagi Tsukino, a naïve Japanese school girl who is destined to save humanity from the forces of evil. Usagi and her fellow soldiers are aligned with the planets of the Milky Way solar system and the Moon Kingdom, in which they resided during their previous life. Throughout the manga and the anime adaptation, Usagi learns of her previous life and the downfall of the Moon Kingdom and her destiny as the Eternal Guardian and future Neo-Queen Serenity of the 30th century. Chances are if you're reading this description, you already know what has happened in the series because everyone who has ever watched anime either knows what Sailor Moon is or has watched the series in syndication in America or one of its many adaptations. It's that beloved and popular, and for good reason: It's Sailor Moon.





ANIME

Sword Art Online

As Japanese role-playing games gained popularity worldwide, it was only a matter of time that they would become anime series. Based on a series of light novels, this series follows Kazuto “Kirito” Kirigaya and Asuna Yuuki as they and other MMORPG gamers are trapped in a literal life or death game that could only be defeated by completing all 100 levels of the game.



Jujutsu Kaisen

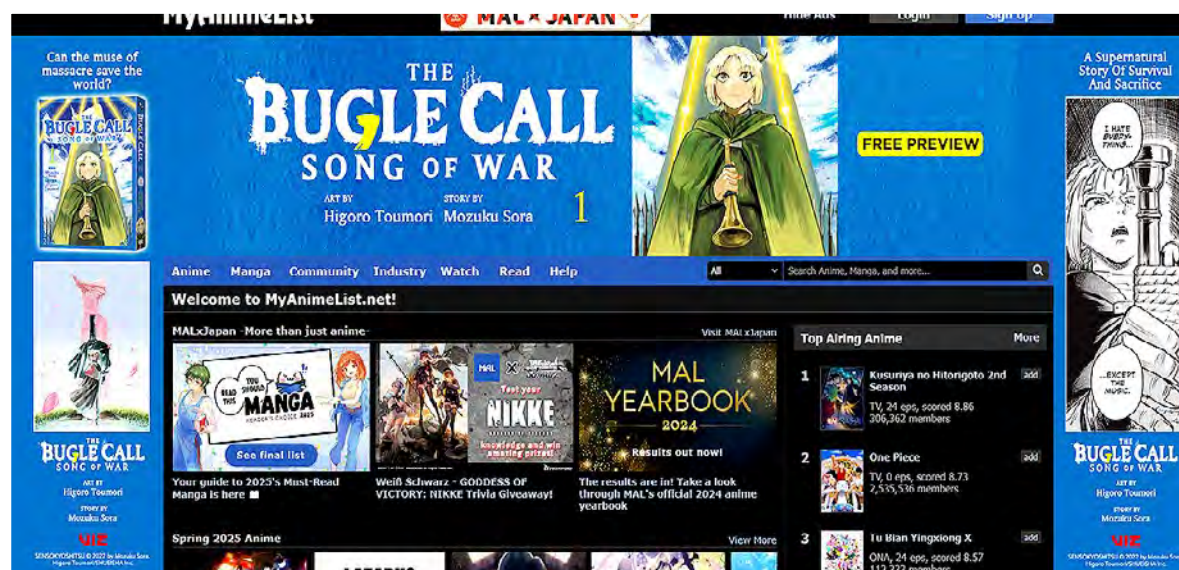
Jujutsu Kaisen works on the premise that supernatural elements exist as well as Cursed energy, which normal humans cannot control or use. Highschooler Yuji Itadori swallows a finger of ancient sorcerer Sukuna, which allows Sukuna to possess him. He is then taken to Jujutsu High to learn to control his newfound powers. It's action-packed with a large cast of creative characters and beautiful art.



MYANIMELIST.NET

My Anime List, better known as MAL, has been around for a long time. We joined in 2012 and 2024, respectively, but we've been using it for longer than that. MAL is an excellent anime tracking tool. If it's a show that has ever aired, it's probably on MAL. While we mainly use it to catalogue our extensive watch and finished show lists, we also use it for anime and manga recommendations and connections to current anime we're watching. There are also other cool sections like the discussion forums and MAL x Japan, where you can buy merchandise.

Website: www.myanimelist.net





ANIME

Soul Eater

Soul Eater delves into the machinations of Maka Albarn and Soul Eater, a demon-hunting duo who strive to collect enough evil human souls to transform Soul into a Death Scythe. Death Scythes are the only weapons fit for use by Shinigami, the headmaster of their school, the Death Weapon Meister Academy. While it primarily follows Maka and Soul's journey, there are two other teams that work toward the same goal (Tsubaki and Black Star and Death the Kid and sisters Liz and Patty Thompson) and they become friends while improving their skills along the way. The story and characters are awesome, and Gaming Insurrection has personally cosplayed as Maka and Soul while meeting other series cosplayers in the years since the series was released. It's fun and unique though be warned: There are significant changes between the anime and manga that may be jarring.



Samurai Pizza Cats

What do you get when you mix medieval/futuristic Little Tokyo, anthropomorphic animals, samurai and pizza delivery? Samurai Pizza Cats. This series has Speedy Ceviche, Polle Esther and Guido Anchovy fighting the attempts of the corrupt prime minister, Seymour "The Big" Cheese, while making sure their pizza business stays afloat.





MOVIES

Oldboy **Show East, 2003**

Based on the 1996 manga of the same name, this 2003 South Korea film follows Oh Dae-su, a businessman arrested for public drunkenness who is placed in a sealed hotel room for 15 years. When Dae-su learns that his wife was murdered, he begins a search for the mastermind behind his trauma, a man named Evergreen. Dae-su begins his search for Evergreen to claim vengeance while uncovering a horrible family secret.



2046 **20th Century Fox, 2004**

Legendary director Wong Kar-wai created a third film, 2046, as the final follow up to his two previous films, 1990's Days of Being Wild and 2000's In the Mood for Love. These films follow protagonist Chow Mo-wan, played by Tony Leung Chiu-wai, and his quest for fulfillment and lust in 1960s Hong Kong. The film is composed of four arcs and is not linear but features an all-star cast led by the iconic Leung (Lust, Caution, Cyclo, and Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings), Ziyi Zhang (Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon, Hero, and Memoirs of a Geisha), Gong Li (Curse of the Golden Flower and Memoirs of a Geisha), Faye Wong (Cantonese and J-pop music) and Maggie Cheung (In the Mood for Love, Hero and Clean). Beautiful visuals and stunning cinematography surround an engrossing story.





MOVIES

47 Ronin **Universal Pictures, 2013**

A historical fantasy adaptation of the tale of the 47 rōnin, the 2013 film stars Keanu Reeves as a half-English, half-Japanese samurai who, along with 46 other samurai, become rōnin and work to avenge the death of their master. While it received critical drubbing, it was a fun film that stars several of GI's favorite actors: Reeves; Cary-Hiroyuki Tagawa; and, Tadanobu Asano and Hiroyuki Sanada, both of whom appear in 2021's *Mortal Kombat* reboot and forthcoming sequel *Mortal Kombat II*, and *Shogun*, which appears in our list of favorite shows. The special effects are interesting, we love a good tale of samurai intrigue, and our favorites lead an action-packed fight.



Man with the Iron Fists **Universal Pictures, 2012**

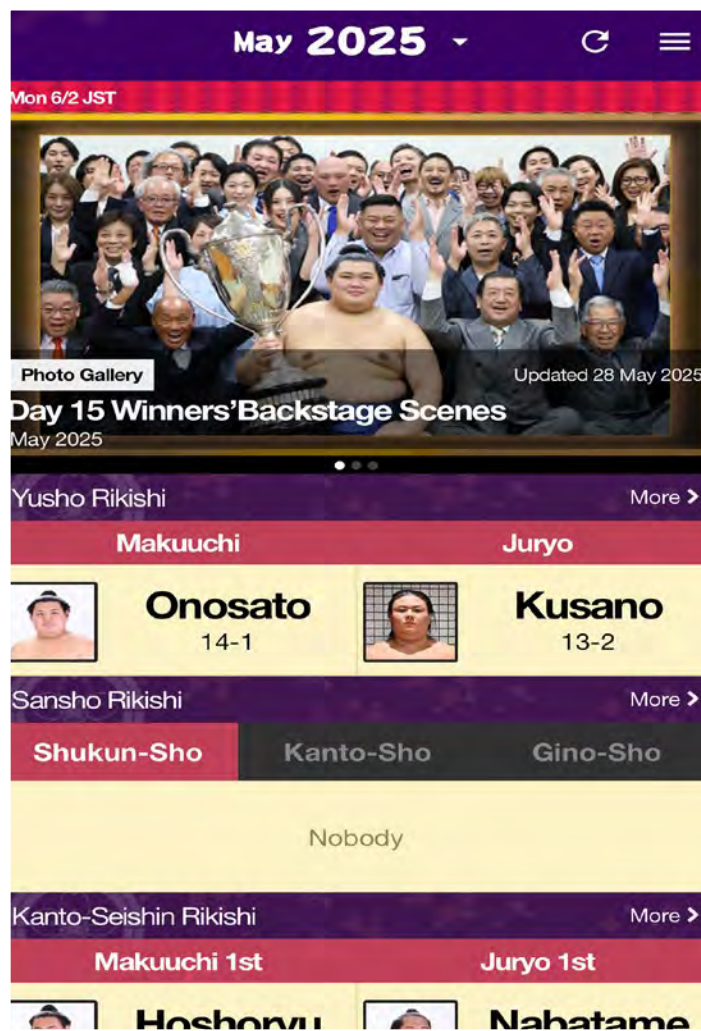
The story of the blacksmith with metal forearms is a promising one. The RZA, of the Wu-Tang Clan, plays the Blacksmith, who is looking to make a payment to secure his lover, Pink Blossom, and leave the village. However, he gets drawn into conflict among the clans of Jungle Village who are after a large shipment of gold. The Blacksmith is attacked and loses his forearms after coming to the aid of Zen-Yi, son of the leader of the Lion clan. Coming from the mind of RZA and Eli Roth, *Man with the Iron Fists* is fun and a nice homage to martial arts films of the past. The soundtrack is a nice addition also. It's a good watch for date night if you're into martial arts films and want something stylish.



MOVIES

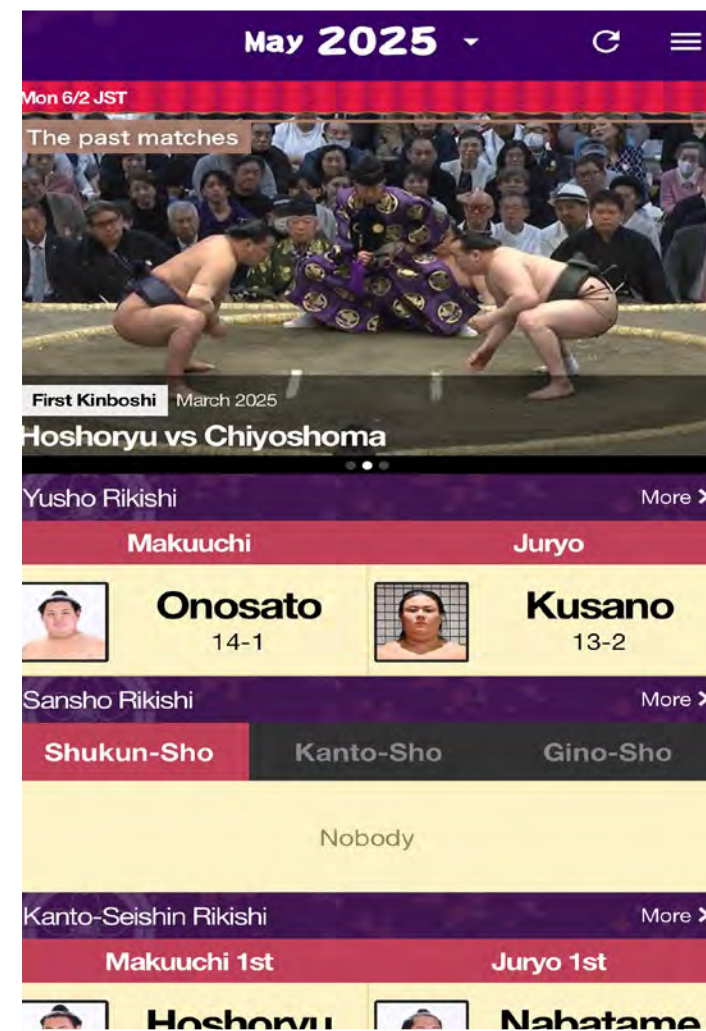
Bodyguards and Assassins We Distributions, 2009

Bodyguards and Assassins is a historical film that focuses on Dr. Sun Yat-Sen's visit to Hong Kong to discuss revolutionary plans to overthrow the Qing government in 1905. Like-minded revolutionaries vow to protect Yat-Sen and serve as bodyguards and decoys to throw Qing agents off his trail as he meets with other revolutionaries. It has a few big names in the cast, chiefly Donny Yen, who plays a pivotal role as one of the later participants, Shen Chongyang. It has good setup, action and serves as a history lesson about the early struggle of revolutionary China.



GRAND SUMO APP

If you're into Sumo, the official sport of Japan, you probably want some way to watch it. For on the go, enter the Grand Sumo app, an official app from the Japan Sumo Association. It's a nicely designed English-language app that allows you to watch current and past bouts. You can also track rikishi and their rankings. For free, you can watch a match a day and with a patron subscription, you can watch unlimited matches. A warning, though: The match results are spoiled before you view the match, and there isn't much of the ceremonial and ritual parts of matches shown. If you care about that, you may want to forego the app and alternatively visit the NHK official site (website: <https://www.nhk.jp/p/ts/Z8WRRJ9K96/blog/bl/p781bLebx4/>) and translate it to English to view matches.





MUSIC

Cold Rain

This Nagoya band is in a unique category that separates them from other J-rock bands; they compose and perform their songs in English. This trait has so far been working well for them gaining popularity in Japan and also selling out major music festivals worldwide. The band has also contributed songs for Fire Force, Bastard!! and Ninja Kamui.



Ayumi Hamasaki

Ayumi Hamasaki is known as the Empress of Pop for a reason. She has sold more than 50 million units and is the best-selling solo artist in Japanese history. Hamasaki began her career in 1993 in modeling and acting and released her debut single in 1998. From there, she has released 18 studio albums with the latest coming in 2023, Remember you. Hamasaki is known for multiple genres, with a lot of J-pop hits. One of her more popular songs, Dearest, was featured as the third ending theme of anime Inuyasha.



MUSIC

Fear, and Loathing in Las Vegas

Formed in 2008, this Kobe-based electronicore/dance metal band has made a significant impact on the J-rock genre. Their music has been used in various media such as Pro Evolution Soccer 12, Gundam Extreme Vs. Maxi Boost and Japanese wrestling promoter DragonGate Wrestling. They have also contributed to various anime series such as Parasyte – the maxim -, Sengoku Basara, Hunter x Hunter and Baki the Grappler.



Johnny Daigo

Rockabilly retro rocker “Johnny” Daigo Yamashita is the progenitor of the self-described Samurai Rock ‘N’ Roll. Blending Japanese rock with rockabilly style, Johnny Daigo first arrived on the scene in 2011 with Jeana For Young. He formed his band Johnny Pandora and worked in composing, modeling and acting. Johnny frequently can be found on Instagram twisting with the Yokohama Twisting Club or traveling around the world — including the United States to play at Viva Las Vegas, a yearly rockabilly appreciation festival held in April.



Girls Generation

The eight-piece ensemble has been in the K-pop scene since 2007. They are one of the most successful groups, selling more than 5.7 million units and more than 30 million digital singles. They took a five-year hiatus in 2017, reuniting in 2022 for their 15-year reunion. The eight members have also formed subgroups — TTS, composed of members Taeyeon, Tiffany, and Seohyun; and, Girls' Generation-Oh!GG, composed of members Sunny, Taeyeon, Yoona, Yuri and Hyoyeon.



Man With a Mission

Known for their eye-catching wolf masks and musically inspired by Jimmy Hendrix, the five-member band based out of Tokyo has taken the world by storm. Man With a Mission has appeared in various anime series such as Vinland Saga, Seven Deadly Sins and Mobile Suit Gundam: Iron Blood Orphans. MWAM has also collaborated with Patrick Stump of Fall Out Boy.

Shogun (2024 series)

Year Released: Hulu, 2024

Starring: Hiroyuki Sanada, Tadanobu Asano, Anna Sawai, Cosmo Jarvis

This 2024 adaptation of the classic 1975 novel is a masterpiece. Running for 10 episodes, Shōgun takes the 1980 miniseries and modernizes it. Cosmo Jarvis stars as John Blackthorne, who becomes stranded in Japan in the late 1500s and learns to survive as the prisoner/consultant of Lord Torinaga, played by tour de force Hiroyuki Sanada who also executive produces. He encounters and becomes the consort of Lady Mariko, the delectable Anna Sawai, and the pawn of Yabushige, played perfectly by the wonderful Tadanobu Asano. Shōgun features quite a few familiar favorite faces and is a fun romp through Japanese history as a nod to navigator William Adams' travels and dealings with the Tokugawa shogunate. We're eagerly anticipating the announced second and third seasons.



The Heirs/The Inheritors

Year Released: Netflix, 2013

Starring: Lee Min-ho, Park Shin-hye, Kim Woo-bin and Kim Ji-won

The Heirs has some issues but it's kind of fun, trashy and striking with in-your-face visuals that still kind of hold up 12 years later. Lee Min-ho leads an all-star cast as Kim Tan, an illegitimate chaebol heir who strives to get his brother Kim Won to love him and find something worth living for. By chance, Kim Tan meets Cha Eun-sang (Park Shin-hye) and figures out they are improbably in each other's orbit without having realized it for years. Their journey and struggle to become a couple is a long winding one, but you'll stay for the intrigue and the fashion and probably the secondary lead in Choi Young-do (Kim Woo-bin), who manages to take a one-dimensional villain and shine him into a diamond. Be on the lookout for Kim Ji-won who stars here as heiress Yoo Rachel and later shines in Queen of Tears.

House of Ninjas**Year released:** Netflix, 2024**Starring:** Kento Kaku, Yôsuke Eguchi, Tae Kimura

This Netflix series tells the story of the Tawaras, a typical family living in modern-day Japan with a twist: They are a family of ninjas who are descendants of legendary ninja and samurai Hattori Hanzō. Six years ago, the eldest child was killed on a rescue mission, forcing the family to leave their lives as ninjas. However, a new crisis arises, forcing the Tawaras back to the secretive life they left behind.

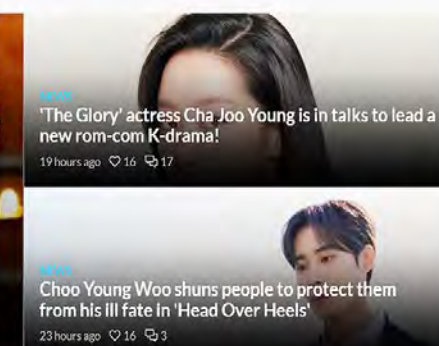
**My Name****Year released:** Netflix, 2021**Starring:** Han So-hee, Park Hee-soon, Kim Sang-ho

This 2021 South Korean crime thriller grew on me as a fan of crime/political series from the land of the morning calm. When her father is murdered in front of her, Yoon Ji-Woo seeks help from her father's friend Choi-Mu Jin, the head of South Korea's biggest drug ring. Joining Mu Jin's group sets Ji-Woo on an explosive trail of revenge involving the police, Mu Jin's group and another drug gang to find the truth, no matter the cost.

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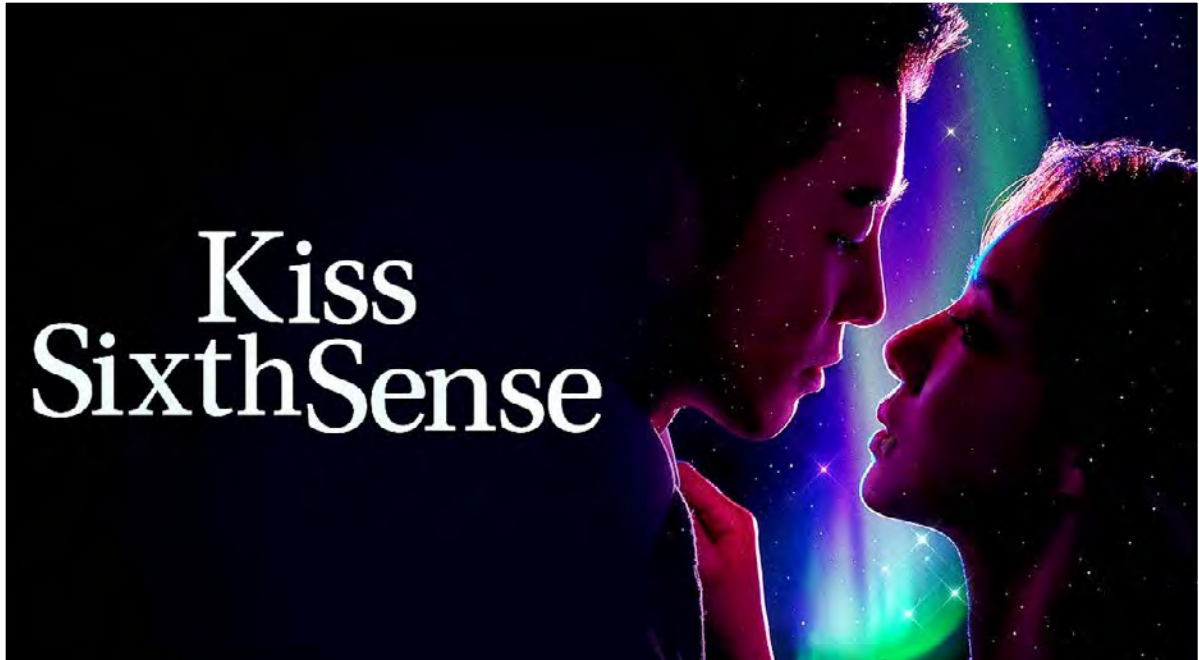
**MYDRAMALIST.COM**

My Drama List, like its anime counterpart, is a tracking site for Korean, Chinese and Japanese drama shows. It's a great way to keep track of dramas and movies, much like MAL is for anime. Even better, each show or movie in the database has a section detailing where to watch it and if you need a subscription. Adding the recommendations feature much like MAL, My Drama List is a handy resource and highly recommended.

Website: www.mydramalist.com

Kiss Sixth Sense**Year Released:** Hulu/Disney +, 2022**Starring:** Yoon Kye-sang, Seo Ji-hye, and Kim Ji-seok

Kiss Sixth Sense is an interesting K-drama. It's a supernatural fantasy centered on female lead character Hong Ye-sool (Seo Ji-hye), an advertising copywriter who can see the future of a person once her lips touch any part of their person. She works for Cha Min-hoo (Yoon Kye-sang), a strict and demanding boss who strictly stays on her every move at work. By chance, Ye-sool accidentally kisses Cha Min-hoo and glimpses a future where they are a couple. How the two who seemingly don't get along actually become a couple is the draw here, and it's an interesting premise how Ye-sool received her powers. The leads are likable, the secondary leads are fun (and familiar — we've seen and enjoyed Hwang Bo-ra in *What's Wrong with Secretary Kim*), and the love triangle that develops adds a level of intrigue to the proceedings. Be forewarned: Fantasy, the intro theme by Suran, is an absolute banger.



Kiss Sixth Sense

**Queen of Tears****Year Released:** Netflix, 2024**Starring:** Kim Soo-hyun, Kim Ji-won, Park Sung-hoon, Kwak Dong-yeon, and Lee Joo-bin

What starts off as kind of unlikable in the beginning had GI in tears by the end credits of the final episode in *Queen of Tears*. *Queen of Tears* puts a chaebol family on display and shows the inner workings and what happens when people forget what it's like to be a family. Female lead Hong Hae-in (Kim Ji-won) is a chaebol heiress of Queens Group and her husband Baek Hyun-woo (Kim Soo-hyun) is a lawyer with Queens Group. When we first meet them, it seems they have it all but underneath the surface they can't stand each other. A lifetime of tragedies has befallen Hae-in's family and she's the latest as she receives bad news that Hyun-woo takes as an opportunity to plan his escape. But it doesn't go exactly according to plan, as life never does. *Queen of Tears* takes a minute to get going but once you peel back the layers of subterfuge and manipulation that takes place over the course of 30 years and suspend some disbelief, you come away with a strong drama that hooks you until the very end.



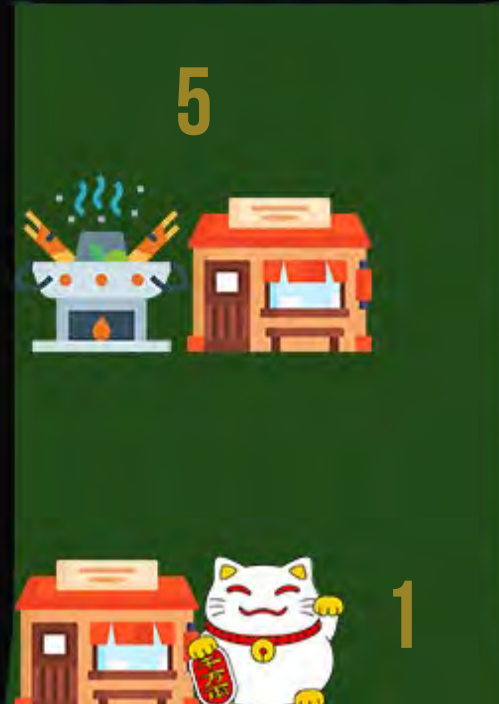
FOOD

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By Gaming Insurrection staff

Gaming Insurrection loves to eat. That should be obvious by how much we talk about food. This is especially so with the East Asian issue where we detail our favorite dishes and places to eat. This map is an updated reference guide to all our favorite places to get a bite in our hometown. Whether it's bibimbap, General Tso's chicken or shrimp fried rice, we love to take and give recommendations on the best places to find Asian-inspired cuisine.



- 1 Menkoi Ramen House**
Cuisine: Japanese
Location(s): Vista — 1004 Gervais St.; Sandhills — 493-1 Town Center Place
Website: <https://www.menkoi-ramenhouse.com/>
- 2 K-Pot**
Cuisine: Korean
Location(s): Harbison — 280 Harbison Blvd., Unit Q; Sandhills — 480-2 Town
- 3 Sato Japanese Steakhouse**
Cuisine: Japanese
Location: 1999 N. Beltline Blvd.
Website: <https://www.sato-osteakhouse.net>
- 4 Mai Thai Cuisine**
Cuisine: Thai

Location: 2249 Sunset Blvd., West Columbia, SC
Website: <https://www.facebook.com/p/Mai-Thai-Cuisine-100057102084889/>

5 Basil Thai Restaurant
Cuisine: Thai
Location: 702 Cross Hill Road, Suite 300A
Website: <https://www.eatatbasil.com>

6 MOA Korean BBQ & Bar
Cuisine: Korean
Location: 1333 Main St., Suite 170
Website: <https://www.mokoreanbbq.com>

7 China Wok II
Cuisine: American Chinese
Location: 3981 Platt Springs Road, West Columbia, SC
Website: <https://china-wok2new.kwickmenu.com>

8 King Wah
Cuisine: American Chinese
Location: 2720 C Decker Blvd.
Website: <https://www.kingwahsc.com>

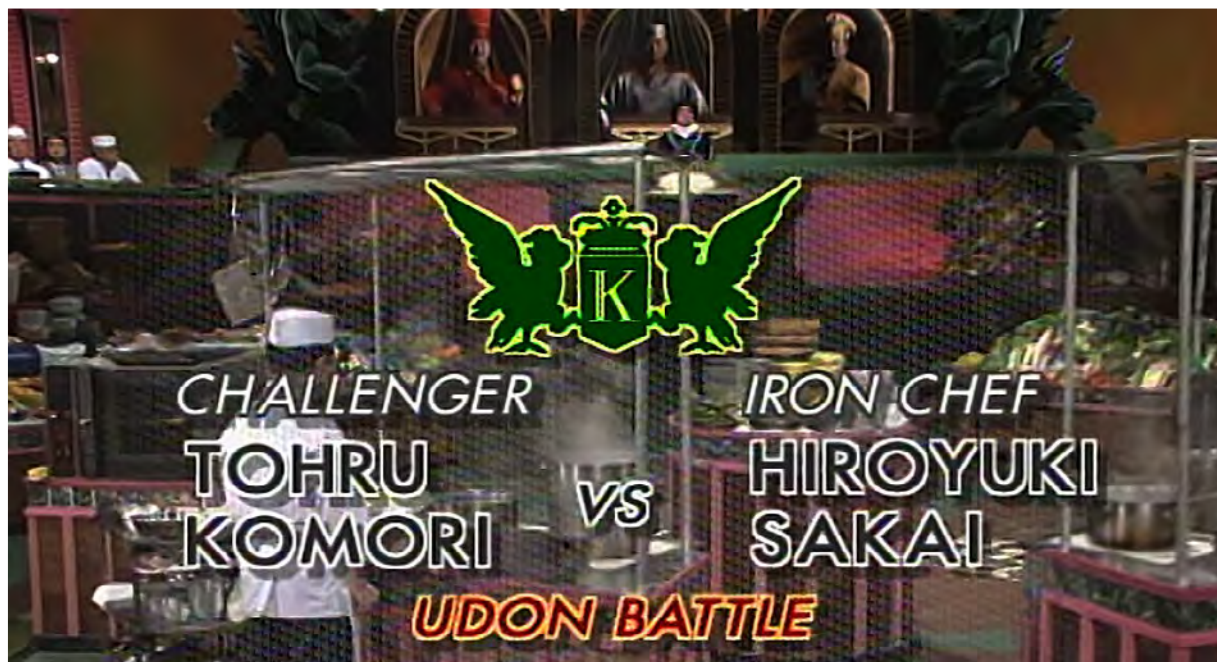
9 Sun Ming
Cuisine: American Chinese
Location: 7509 St. Andrews Road, Irmo, SC
Website: <https://www.sunmingsc.com>



FOOD

FAVORITE IRON CHEF EPISODES

All z cuisine! Iron Chef Japan is obviously a favorite around these parts (Editor's note: See Issue 39). We frequently watch the kitchen battle epic and its various episodes on YouTube and streaming services despite the show ending in 1999. These are our favorite episodes of the series.



Episode: Season 7, Episode 12
Original air date: April 2, 1999
Theme ingredient: Chinese Cabbage
Challenger: Cui Yufen
Iron Chef: Chen
Outcome: Challenger wins

Episode: Season 6, Episode 10
Original air date: April 4, 1998
Theme ingredient: Rice
Challenger: Masuyoshi Kimura
Iron Chef: Morimoto
Outcome: Iron Chef wins

Episode: Season 7, Episode 13
Original air date: April 9, 1999
Theme ingredient: Udon
Challenger: Tohru Komori
Iron Chef: Sakai
Outcome: Challenger wins

Episode: Season 2, Episode 16
Original air date: April 29, 1994
Theme ingredient: Truffle
Challenger: Dr. Yukio Hattori
Iron Chef: Michiba
Outcome: Iron Chef wins

Episode: Season 6, Episode 19
Original air date: June 5, 1998
Theme ingredient: Mishima Beef
Challenger: Kumiko Kobayashi
Iron Chef: Sakai
Outcome: Iron Chef wins

Episode: Season 6, Episode 43
Original air date: November 27, 1998
Theme ingredient: Porcini
Challenger: Marco Molinari
Iron Chef: Morimoto
Outcome: Challenger wins



IRMO CHERRY BLOSSOM FESTIVAL

The annual Irmo Cherry Blossom Festival was held at 10 a.m. on March 22, 2025, in Irmo, S.C. The festival, hosted by the Town of Irmo, featured cherry blossom viewing, Asian cuisine food trucks, a Japanese import car show, cosplay contest, professional taiko drumming and performances and vendors selling wares throughout the park.

Gaming Insurrection has attended the festival for several years and always comes away with treats and goodies. In 2025, we were fortunate enough to purchase our first kimonos, jewelry and other home décor items.

The festival will be held 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., on March 21, 2026, in the Town of Irmo Park with no rain date scheduled. For more information on the festival, visit https://www.townofirmosc.com/business_detail_T8_R53.php.

IF YOU GO

The Irmo Cherry Blossom Festival
Website: https://www.townofirmosc.com/business_detail_T8_R53.php
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/TheIrmoCherryBlossomFestival>
Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/irmocherryblossom/>
Email: IrmoCherryBlossom@mail.com

TECH GEEKS



LOGITECH POP ICON MOUSE AND KEYBOARD COMBO

The Logitech Pop ICON Mouse and Keyboard combo is nice, and we got it in the purple and gray color option.

They are Bluetooth, so it takes up less space for our smaller laptop where USB slots are at a premium. Getting the keyboard and mouse connected is slightly a pain, and you don't necessarily need the Logitech software included, though it can help with sup-

port. The keyboard feels nice to type with though it is small. It also could stand to have the 10-key pad attached also, but the included programmable keys are a nice bonus.

The mouse is quite possibly the quietest mouse we've ever used. It makes absolutely no noise when clicked and feels smooth to move around. We also purchased an optional carrying case from Amazon for about \$28 to make

transport easier. Purchase the combo at an office supply store instead of directly from Logitech. You'll save yourself about \$30, which is always the best option.

Price: Keyboard and mouse set: \$103.98 (Logitech directly), \$69.99 (Staples)

Aenllosi Hard Carrying Case Compatible with Logitech Pop ICON Combo: \$27.99 (Amazon)

GAME OF THE ISSUE

STREET FIGHTER 6

The latest entry in the long-running legendary fighting game franchise is nearly perfect with new mechanics and familiar faces, **PAGE 24**

STREET FIGHTER™

INSIDE



Yakuza 6: Song of Life

The last installment of Yakuza focusing on the Dragon of Dojima is an open world epic that gets a lot of things right.



Garou: Mark of the Wolves

The beautiful SNK fighter had a lot to prove when it first appeared on the Dreamcast, and Garou set a lot of standards.



Dance Dance Revolution Extreme (JP)

Our favorite mix of DDR finally gets the review treatment. Read on to find out why it's the golden age of bemani.



Developer: Capcom, **Release:** 2023

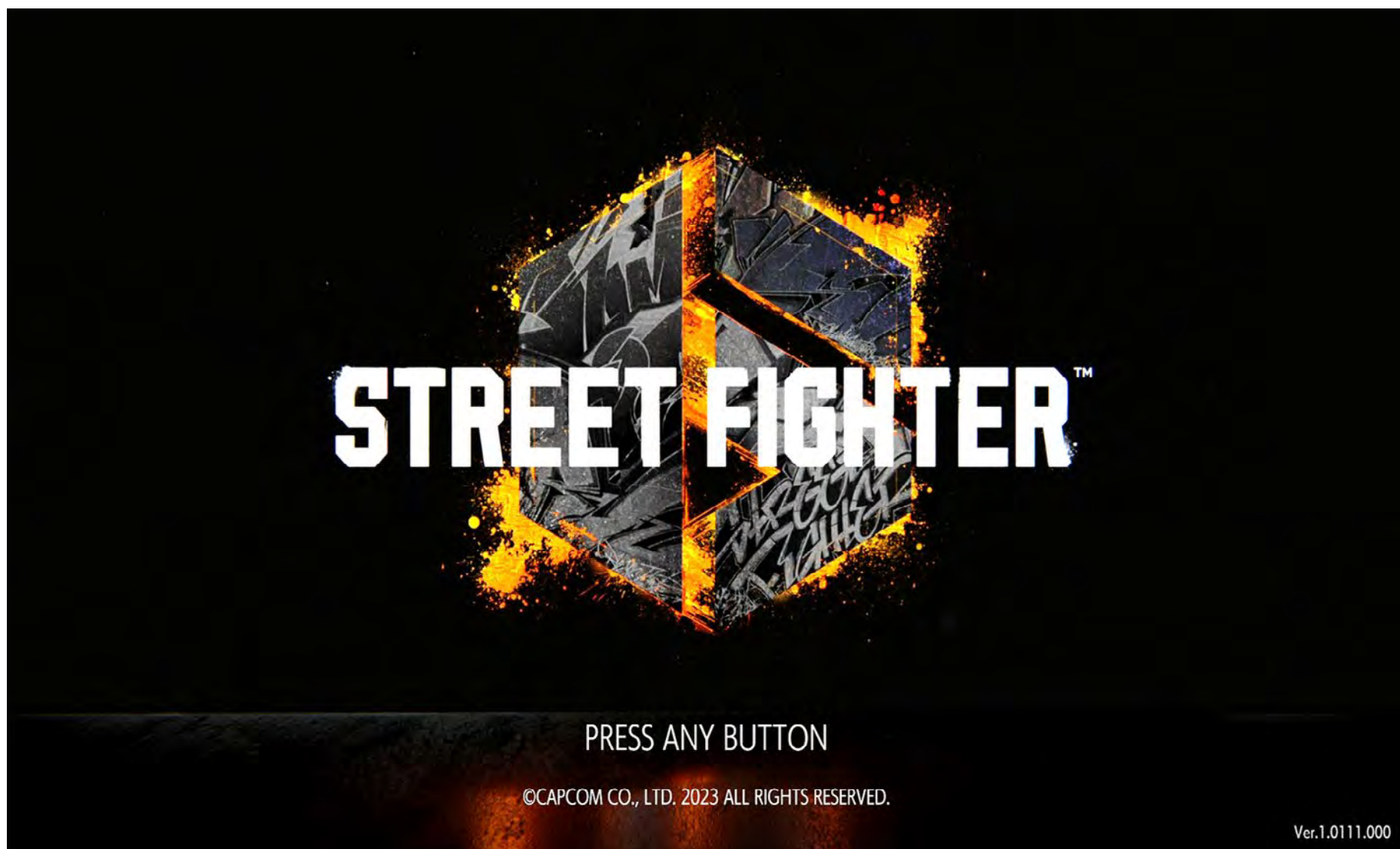
Perfect Street Fighter

We love to say that this isn't your old man's whatever whenever something has changed. As cliché as this is — and make no mistake this is cliché — Capcom's newest entry in the old man fighting game that is Street Fighter isn't your daddy's Street Fighter. It isn't even your brother's Street Fighter, where he used to let you beat him up in versus mode and hit you with Flash Kicks to magically come back and win. No, this is the young man and casual's Street Fighter. This is a new era of fighting designed to get everyone involved whether they've executed a Hadoken or not.

Street Fighter 6 came out with a fresh coat of paint, new mechanics but something different under the hood. It plays like Street Fighter V, but without the V-Trigger mechanics. Now, it's back to the basics and Drive Gauge, a new mechanic that can turn the tide of a battle quickly. The Drive Gauge rewards offense and creativity in combos while discouraging defensive turtling. This plays into the larger, established Street Fighter repertoire of super arts and parries. It's nice for a veteran because it's something new and good for newbies to the world of Street Fighter because it's not super complicated to learn.

Something else new that benefits everyone is the introduction of three types of control schemes: Classic, Modern and Dynamic. Classic plays much like the old Street Fighter of yore with a six-button layout (Jab, Strong, Fierce, Short, Forward, Roundhouse), Modern has a simplified four-button layout (think Marvel vs. Capcom 2) and Dynamic is an offline only slant where the CPU chooses the most appropriate button presses for moves. It's a strong, smart decision designed to open the door for more players to get involved in your long-running series that seems overwhelming and daunting at first.

Another smart decision included is the tutorial and variety of modes. SF6 does its darndest to have something for everyone,

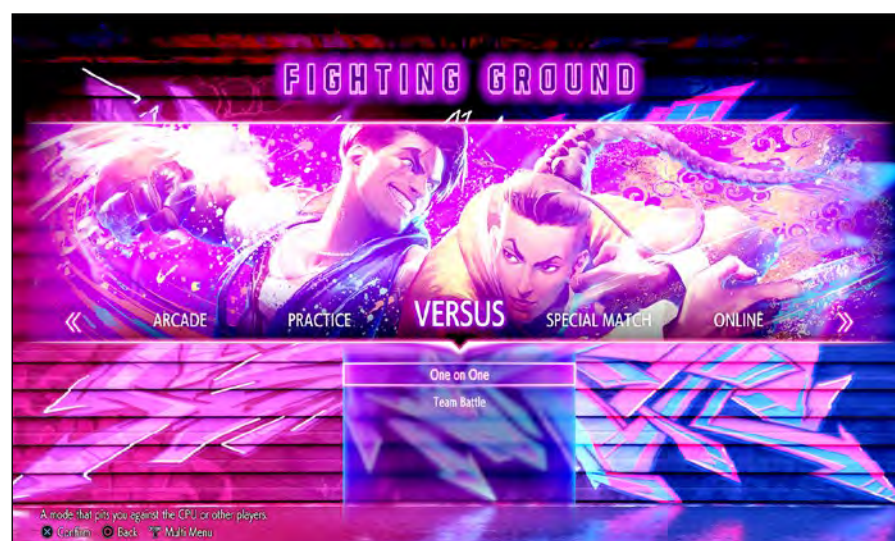


By
Lyndsey Beatty

**SCORE:
5 OUT 5**

and it's immediately seen in the modes available at the start. Fight Hub, a returning and revamped World Tour Mode and a robust training mode make this a massive buy and win for the fighting game connoisseur. Fight Hub is where you'll probably spend most of your time; it's where match-making takes place as well as emulated older versions of Street Fighter live.

However, I tend to live in World Tour Mode. As a devoted fan of the original mode (Editor's note: See Issue 52 for our coverage of the popular mode from Street Fighter Alpha 3), as soon as it was an-



nounced I knew I was a day one purchase. And with more than two years of wheeling and dealing with my created character, I can enthusiastically say I love it. I enjoy running around the fleshed-out Metro City (of Final Fight fame) with my lookalike fighter. I love that they took the concept born of Alpha 3 and gave it a soul and personality after so many years, and I love that it's easy to get into and plays as well as it does.

The beauty of this new chapter of Street Fighter also lies in the character and environment designs. Street Fighter has always looked nice and SF6 is no different. The stage design is gorgeous, and the character models look nice. Even the weird creations that can come out of World Tour Mode have a

nice look to them. We spent time at GI going through some of the characters and just marveling over how far Street Fighter has come with character design because it's evident in this game just in the character select screen. The newbies in Marisa, Manon, Kimberly, Lily and JP are fun and cool, and the older stalwarts like Ryu, Ken and Dhalsim look fantastic. The soundtrack, while lacking in some areas, does have some toe tappers. Though I'm not a fan of Juri, I love her theme and Luke's has grown on me. I'm almost certain there will be more additions to my liking as more seasons are released and revisions are made.

While there is so much to like here, I do have some nitpicks to address. First, while I'm a fan of

seeing familiar faces, there are so many returning folks that don't need to be here. We are in a post-Street Fighter III: 3rd Strike land in-game story-wise, so why are we still dealing with M. Bison/Super Dead Dictator™? Capcom said he really was dead after the in-game events of Street Fighter V, so having him as DLC is unnecessary. Likewise, I don't need to know what Akuma is up to. I want more of the 3rd Strike characters back and I want the mystery of G, my favorite Street Fighter character, solved.

Also, Capcom better not give us a million paid revisions, either. They better roll out updates as free upgrades and act like they've learned their lesson during the past 34 years of Street Fighter II agency. I say this because I can see the writing on the wall, and I don't want to have to pay for the next upgrade of the mainline series.

I love Street Fighter 6. I love seeing the plot payoff of older games (i.e. Li-Fen, the young girl in the intro of 3rd Strike, is here and older, which helps tie down when the game takes place), and I love to see the continuity of Street Fighter and other Capcom games coming together. I really enjoy playing SF6, it's teaching this old dog new tricks and I find myself fully invested in the future of the granddaddy of fighting games more than ever.



Developer: Sega, Release: 2016

Yakuza's swan song

Ah, Kiryu Kazuma. Sega's legendary former mobster turned hero is a living video game legend. Every time he defeats a heinous colleague from his past, he wants to go back to his honest life of taking care of his family of orphans. Sadly, no matter how much the Dragon of Dojima desires peace, new enemies arise with grand delusions of power to rule Japan in public and its underworld of crime. As always, Kiryu saves the day at significant risk to his physical and mental health. This time, those threats hit home with even greater secrets and risks that could unleash possible civil war in the criminal underworld (Again? Yes, again) in Yakuza 6: The Song of Life.

Taking place after the events in Yakuza 5, Yakuza 6 has our hero doing three years in prison. Various crime groups such as the Saio Triad and the Jingweon Mafia have taken advantage of the Tojo Clan's vulnerability. When Kiryu is released, he finds out that his ward Haruka Sawamura, who was a rising pop idol, suddenly retired and moved to Onomichi city in Hiroshima where she has an infant son, Haruto. Kiryu then discovers that Haruka is in a coma at a Kamurocho hospital after a hit-and-run accident. With these explosive elements plus a mysterious secret in Onomichi that could cause a raging gang war through the country, Kiryu once again sets out to stop those who bring harm to his city and his family.

The control in previous Yakuza games that won me over remains and is improved thanks to the rebuilt Dragon game engine. When



SCORE:
4 OUT 5

not in fighting mode, Kamurocho has been given a refreshed, crisp view. I appreciate the detail in Kiryu's fighting scenes; he can use weapons to do massive damage and look nice while doing so. Another new feature is item storage. While stats must be increased to be able to carry more items, Kiryu can now use his smartphone to hold various food and health items and level up whenever he gains experience points. I especially liked the idea that Kiryu can obtain certain drinks from vending machines, including beer, which will increase his fighting power. I also love the clan battles feature where Kiryu can form a group to take down various characters in a time limit and win cash and experience for his fighters. And I also enjoyed the Club Sega section where I could play arcade games like Hang-On and Virtua Fighter.

The music is excellent and varied, making me feel that I'm watching a Yakuza movie than playing the game. If the game's

excellent detail to vital areas of gameplay was not enough to sell me on it, I was stoked to find that Kazuchika Okuda of New Japan Pro Wrestling and acclaimed actor/comedian Beat Takashi made appearance as main villains in the game.

However, as much as I love the game, there are some negatives in Yakuza 6 that didn't make me stop playing entirely but gave me some pause. During the fighting scenes where Kiryu gets ahold of an enemy's weapon, he dispatches them in true Yakuza fashion, violent and, at times, gory and disturbing. It was a bit much for me and seemed kind of unnecessary.

Another thing that bothers me is the rampant and obvious Sony product placement. It takes away from the game a little bit because it's distracting and is also unnecessary. I know I'm playing the game with a Sony product; I don't need it shoved in my face constantly that this was originally a Sony exclusive game.

Finally, there is a side quest that Kiryu can't turn down. It's not really a side quest but the game tries to present it as though it is. That's annoying. If you want me to do the quest, just mark it as mandatory and move on.

Yakuza 6: The Song of Life is a magnum opus to Kiryu Kazuma, but it also marks an evolution point for the series. Although Kiryu is no longer the primary protagonist, he has been in new Yakuza games such as Like a Dragon. For now, Kiryu and company can take a well-deserved break with this chapter in the life of the Dragon of Dojima.

(餓狼) GAROU 狼 MARK OF THE WOLVES

PRESS START BUTTON

Developer: SNK Playmore, Release: 1999

An indelible mark

SNK is still around doing things in this modern fighting game landscape. Their latest release, Garou: City of the Wolves, is a certified banger and is getting a lot of play in the critic sphere because the original is so beloved. And that's one of the best things Mark of the Wolves managed to do: Leave a good legacy and stay relevant 25 years later.

Mark of the Wolves does a lot of things with the Fatal Fury name for the sake of progress. Taking place 10 years after the death of crime lord Geese Howard during the King of Fighters Tournament as depicted in Real Bout Fatal Fury, Mark introduces a new cast with Terry Bogard returning to the fray to lead the charge. Terry takes the young Rock Howard, Geese's scion, under his wing to fight for South Town and justice in general. But the specter of Geese haunts them. And there is a new villain in the mix, Kain, to take Geese's place and up the stakes. The plot is interesting and engaging. Getting used to a whole new cast minus Terry takes a minute and learning their background and motivation is fun.

The character designs are cool, as they are in most SNK games. The sprites look great and are large and



By
Lyndsey Beatty

SCORE:
4 OUT 5

detailed. The backgrounds, while colorful, aren't nearly as detailed, though there are a lot of animations going on that make them lively. Overall, the look isn't too different than what you'd expect from an SNK arcade game, but the Dreamcast does give it a little boost.

The soundtrack is a little generic, which is surprising because I was expecting some nice tracks. I'm spoiled by the often-maligned SvC Chaos, which had a great soundtrack despite the surround-

ing mess, because it was released in the same era by SNK. However, despite the generic undertones, the soundtrack doesn't deter the surrounding overall product.

And the surrounding product, gameplay-wise, is fine. New mechanics, like the Tactical Offense Position and Just Defend, are welcome new pieces in the series' repertoire. Just Defend, which is like Street Fighter III's parry mechanic, has hung around and made appearances in other games such as Capcom vs. SNK 2's K-Groove so I'd say it's a good addition 25 years later. And with the new mechanics, the game plays well, too. If I could pick it up and play it with little exposure to SNK's style of fighting and do well, it's safe to say that Mark has a good feel. That feel is present in the varied modes, with Survival as the most fun out of all offered.

Mark is a great fighting game and still holds up well. It has the attraction of early 2000s fighting game finesse, and it serves as a good introduction to the world of SNK if you're not well-versed in the series. A well-rounded fighting game with strong mechanics and good environment are the marks of a future legend.



But here they do not exist.



Developer: Konami, Release: 2003

Golden Age of DDR

I'm not ashamed to say I have a favorite Dance Dance Revolution mix. For anyone who knows me, they know it's the Japanese home version of DDR Extreme. While it's the mix I played the least in the arcades, by the time it came home and I got a copy of it, it quickly grabbed the top spot in my heart.

There is a golden age of DDR and Extreme is the pinnacle. Hitting the sweet spot as the last game of the golden age, JP Extreme is a solid home port with the necessary arcade songs and a fantastic mix of console old and new songs. All the pertinent Extreme songs are on the roster: 1998, A, Across the Nightmare, DDR, Sakura, Paranoia Survivor & Survivor Max, The Legend of Max and V. Unlike the American port of Extreme, it's as if someone played the arcade version and thought an accurate port was the right thing to do.

The home version plays exactly like the arcade version and, if you're savvy enough, you can find a way to enable Marvelous timing, arcade timing windows and the Boost and Wave mods found in the arcade version only. Generally, the Japanese versions of DDR are spot on, and this port — even without the additions — is still faithful.

The home version features all the usual features that you've come to expect: Diet Mode, Edit Mode, Lesson Mode and Training Mode. One of the best things about the mix, however, comes in the options. If you have save data from Party Collection, you can unlock all the songs in Extreme, and if you need to, you can unlock all the songs in DDR Max and Max 2. That saves time and gets you to the meat and potatoes of what you came here to do: play awesome DDR songs.

And the roster is awesome. There is nary a repeat in sight that drags the mix down (ahem, we're looking at you AM-3P and



your various remixes). The quality of songs is high, and a lot of the Konami originals added here are welcome additions and crossovers from Beatmania IIDX. Of note is Max.(period), which was new as of Extreme JP's home release. Max.(period) is one of the new Boss Songs and is a great addition. Boss Songs in this mix are indeed all the Boss Songs from the arcade version, which lends credibility to the mix and its authenticity. There isn't much wrong with

SCORE:
4.5 OUT 5

this mix. The unlock system, if you don't have support data from Party Collection, is kind of aggravating but it's not so terrible that the mix isn't worth your time. It's time consuming but it only means playing more DDR. If you're going to play a home

version and don't have Stepmania, take the time to import DDR Extreme JP. Extreme JP is the closest port of Extreme to the arcade short of Stepmania and well worth the money to track down a copy, a PlayStation 2 and swap discs.

A great roster, solid mechanics and peak DDR in its golden age form makes it a must-buy if you're at all into dance games and Bemani. DDR Extreme JP was a good final step in the series.



By
Lyndsey Beatty

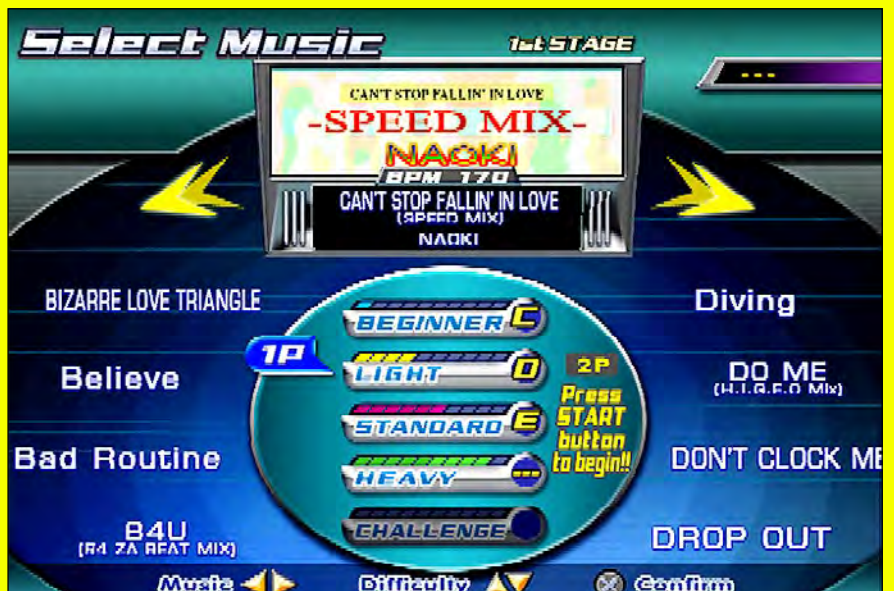
DDR EXTREME JP VERSUS DDR EXTREME NA

The DDR Extreme versions released in Japan and America are wildly different. DDR Extreme JP is the closest port of the arcade version that you're going to get unless you have Stepmania and fine tune your installation to match that arcade version.

The American version, released in 2004, is not an accurate port. It features different graphics that replace the well-known song wheel and Groove Radar featured in DDR Max and Max 2 and a song roster that did not resemble the arcade version with a lot of licensed songs and

few Konami originals and Bemani crossovers that were introduced in the arcade version. Also, the combo and grading systems are different: A combo break automatically results in a max A grade, Extra Stage requires clearing an 8-footer on Heavy instead of AA grade on any song's Heavy difficulty, and Encore Extra Stage/One More Extra Stage was removed.

To correct the missteps of Extreme NA, Extreme 2 was released in 2005 for the PlayStation 2 with a slightly more accurate song roster to match the arcade version of



Welcome to RETRO GAME CORNER

GAME FOOD MENU

By Lyndsey Beatty | Gaming Insurrection

We love food here at GI. We're not super picky about the things we eat, and we're down to try anything once. We'd love to visit some of these restaurants in our favorite games, if not to grab a meal but to also take in the action as well.



Game: Street Fighter III: 3rd Strike
Name: Chinese Restaurant
Location: Hong Kong
Character: Chun-Li



Game: Pocket Fighter/Super Gem Fighter Mini Mix
Name: Gen's Restaurant
Location: Chinatown, Japan
Character: Gen



Game: Mystical Ninja
Starring: Goemon
Name: Restaurant
Location: Japan (alternate history)
Character: Goemon



Game: Fatal Fury/Capcom vs. SNK
Name: Pao Pao Café
Location: South Town
Character: King



Game: Street Fighter III: 2nd Impact
Name: Hong Kong Restaurant
Location: Hong Kong
Character: Yun

SONG SPOTLIGHT

By Lyndsey Beatty



Don't forget to download our DDR glossary of terms!



Artist: The Olivia Project
Difficulty: 1/2/5 (DDR 1st Mix), 2/3/5 (DDR CS JP), 1/2/4 (2nd Mix to 4th Mix, DDR CS NA), 1/2/8 (4th Mix Plus S-Maniac charts, later Oni steps)
Chosen difficulty: Heavy
BPM: 126

This remake of Olivia Newton John's hit song is an easy starter song in early DDR and becomes substantially harder with the introduction of S-Maniac/Oni steps. This is a song you learn to step to and get the basics of DDR. The step-charts across all difficulties aren't hard and at most the problem is a lack of speed to spread arrows out. Do yourself a favor and play it post-4th Mix Plus so that you get the benefit of the harder steps and Speed Mods to help make things more readable.

Suggested Speed Mod: x2



Artist: Ken D
Difficulty: 2/4/6 (DDR 4th Mix and 5th Mix), 2/4/5 (DDR Solo)
Chosen difficulty: Heavy
BPM: 138

The 7 Jump is a fun song that takes advantage of jumps to make things interesting. Pay attention to the lyrics because the stepchart follows that more closely than the melody. In any version of the song, the Heavy stepchart is not hard in terms of readability. There will be a lot of jumps and triplets but there is nothing strenuous here. Use it as a good song to learn and practice jumps.

Suggested Speed Mod: x2



Artist: ZZ
Difficulty: 6/9/10 flashing (15 in re-rated charts in DDR X onward)
Chosen difficulty: Heavy
BPM: 83-667

By the point of DDR Extreme, Boss Songs were nothing new. The legend of Max takes the Boss Song concept and runs with it. The Heavy stepchart is one of the hardest in the series and features an overwhelming stepchart full of jumps and triplet runs that are designed to tire you out. By the point of the slowdown/speed up in the middle of the song, you will be tired if you're not using the bar (if playing on your feet; if you're using a controller to play, there will be hand cramps in your future). The song follows the melody throughout because there are few spoken lyrics. Consider this one of the endgames of DDR Extreme and play at your own peril.

Suggested Speed Mod: x1

Sidenotes

Boss Songs revisited
The legend of Max is the latest in Boss Songs in DDR Extreme. Joining Paranoia Survivor, Paranoia Survivor Max and CS addition Max.(period), legend of Max is meant to be a hard song to test your mettle and your DDR comprehension skills. All the Boss Songs at this point were created by Naoki or 2MB through aliases and pushed the then-known foot rating limits.

Max series
Max 300
Origin: DDR Max
Difficulty Rating: 6/8/10
BPM: 300

Maxx Unlimited
Origin: DDR Max 2
Difficulty Rating: 6/8/10
BPM: 300

The legend of Max
Origin: DDR Extreme
Difficulty Rating: 6/9/10 flashing (15 in re-rated charts in

DDR X onward)
BPM: 83-667

Max.(period)
Origin: DDR Extreme CS (JP)
Difficulty Rating: 9/9/10/10 flashing (old charts, 16 - Heavy, 18 in re-rated charts in DDR X onward)
BPM: 180-600

Paranoia series
Paranoia Max ~ Dirty Mix~
Origin: DDR 2nd Mix
Difficulty Rating: 6/8/8
BPM: 190

Paranoia Survivor
Origin: DDR Extreme
Difficulty Rating: 5/8/10
BPM: 135-270

Paranoia Survivor Max
Origin: DDR Extreme
Difficulty Rating: 5/8/8/10 flashing (old charts, 15 Heavy, 16 Oni in re-rated charts in DDR X onward)
BPM: 73-290

UPCOMING SONGS

20 NOVEMBER

JUSTIFY MY LOVE

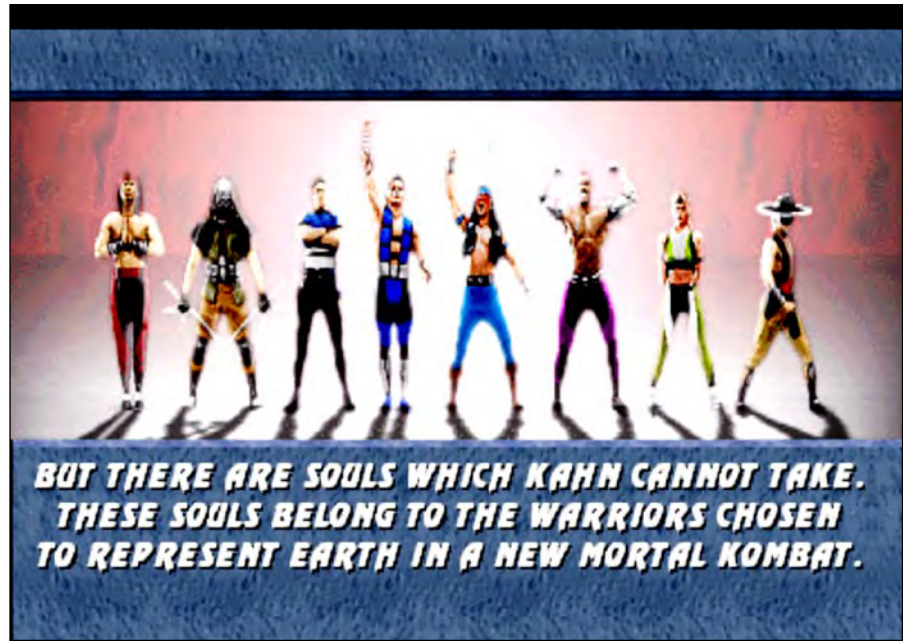
IT'S RAINING MEN (CALMIGHTY MIX)

Mortal Kombat 3



The end of the beginning

Mortal Kombat 3 was released to arcades on April 1, 1995, and home consoles on Oct. 13, 1995. It was the penultimate game of a trilogy focusing on Earthrealm's fight to save itself from the machinations of the tyrant Shao Kahn. This installment starts with Kahn crossing the dimensional barriers to reclaim his resurrected queen Sindel. This allows him to strip the Earth of all souls barring a few chosen warriors (Liu Kang, Kabal, Stryker, Sub-Zero (Kuai Liang), Sonya Blade, Kano, Kung Lao and Jax Briggs). The devastation of Earth and the fight to turn the tide and restore life is the focus of most of the warriors. This plot point was revisited in Mortal Kombat 9 (2011).



Running up the mechanics

Mortal Kombat 3 adds two mechanics: Dial-a-Combos and the Run button. Dial-a-Combos, as they are colloquially known, are preset strings created for each character. They generally range between five and seven hits, up to 42 percent damage. Manual combos do still exist in MK3. The Run button sped up gameplay greatly and, if timed right, could help enhance combos. New in the land of finishing moves are Animalities. After meeting certain conditions, your character can morph into a specific animal and kill your opponent.



Kombat Kodes and you

Kombat Kodes were introduced in MK3 to give some variety to the gameplay. Seen on the versus screen only, the codes could alter gameplay mechanics such as granting unlimited Run meter or cause character to randomly morph into another character. These codes were released through a marketing campaign, in game and the then-newly released Mortal Kombat film.



Secret being

The Ultimate Kombat Kode was a major code that unlocked hidden character Robot Smoke. Robot Smoke's in-game story stated that his appearance in Mortal Kombat II was indeed canon, and between MKII and MK3, he attempted to defect from the Lin Kuei with friend Sub-Zero (Kuai Liang). While Sub-Zero was successful, Smoke was not and was captured and converted into a soulless robotic assassin during the Cyber Initiative. Once Smoke is unlocked with the Ultimate Kombat Kode, he is permanently available for play until an operator's reset.



The future is now

MK3 was updated twice: Ultimate Mortal Kombat 3 in 1995 and Mortal Kombat Trilogy in 1996. These updates added missing characters from the original version such as Scorpion, Kitana, Jade and Reptile, new secret characters in Mileena, Classic Sub-Zero (Bi-Han), Chameleon/Khameleon and the long-rumored Ermac, and added mechanics such as Brutalities and High Punch or High Kick combo starters. UMK3 was released in arcades and for home consoles, while Trilogy was released for home consoles only.

A change of pace

MK3 focuses on modern day Earthrealm, with most environments resembling city locales on Earth. In the original version of the game, the locales were modeled after Chicago, the home of creator then-Midway/NetherRealm Studios. The reboot of the series, Mortal Kombat 9 — which retells the events of the first three games — states that MK3's events happen in New York City.



LYNDSEY BEATTY
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF



Welcome to a small tournament called Mortal Kombat ...

Hello all, I'm a longtime Mortal Kombat enthusiast who dived headlong into the world of MK Mobile in 2018. This new section delves into the intricacies of character card collection, fusions and team creation for towers.

Look for information on the basics to get you started and how to conquer the 100-level Shao Kahn's Tower to help you when you're ready to take on the challenging themed towers.



MK MOBILE STATISTICS

- **Number of cards owned:** 177
- **Total number of cards (as of press time):** 180
- **Percentage owned:** 98.3%

Cards missing (as of press time)

- Klassic Skarlet
- American Treasure Homelander
- Klassic Movie Sonya Blade

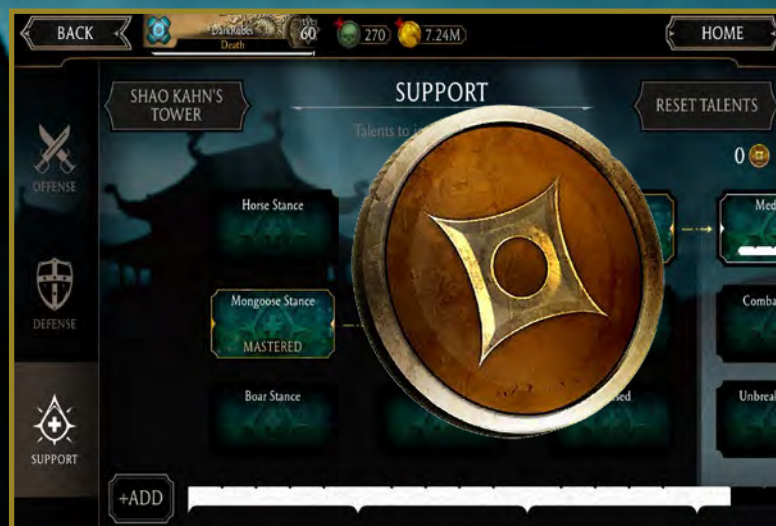


Shao Kahn's Tower

A challenging 100-story tower that rewards Koins, Souls, Spirit Fragments and Talent Tree Points. Sometimes with unique conditions to overcome, the matches will test your strategy skills and ability to form teams suited to the challenge.

Matches are in increments of three before a refresh is needed to continue. We also will approach this Tower as the warmup to the various Normal and Fatal towers that appear to get you prepped for the real thing.

Individual tower match guides, team formation and strategy will be discussed.



Team synergy

The best team is the prepared team. You can't put together a good squad without knowing the ins and outs of the three characters that will compose it.

We aim to understand and explain the different official team categories and other teams that we have used in the different areas of the game.



Kharacter spotlight

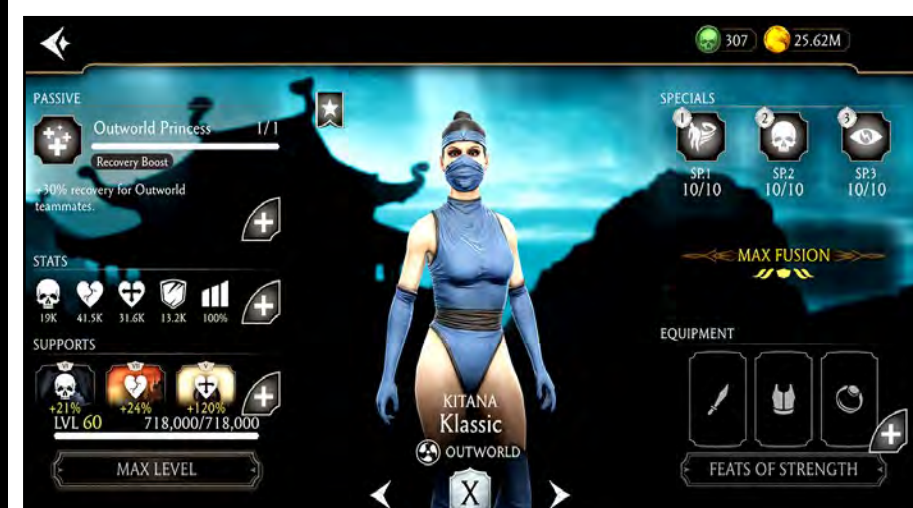
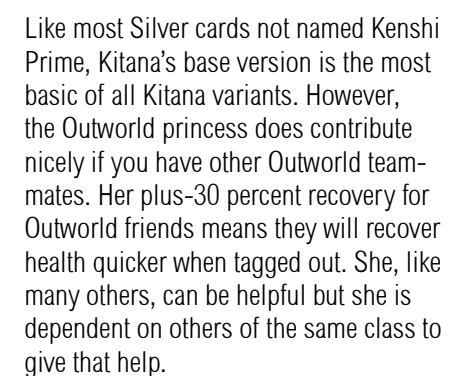
Who you have fighting on your side is important, and character analysis helps you stay victorious in Mortal Kombat Mobile.

We're going to look at all available characters, their strengths and weaknesses with rankings for each. We will also spotlight team synergy; who you work with can determine if you're working at all.



KHARACTER SPOTLIGHT

- **MK11 Kabal**
- **Balanced Kenshi**
- **Kitana Prime**



Tier 5: The top echelon of cards. These cards are the best in the game and their special moves and passives have game-breaking potential. They are the cards that you buy packs for and try to build up for Challenge Towers and will potentially make it to the 170 and higher levels of a tower at even a low fusion. They are most diamonds but there are a few gold cards in the mix.



Credit: Murdoink @ Mortal Kombat Warehouse for all background and logo art and renders/www.mortalkombatwarehouse.com



- **Match 43: No conditions**
- **Match 44: Vampirism**
- **Match 45: No conditions**



Conditions: None

This fight isn't that hard, provided you have appropriately leveled folks ready to go. Balanced Kenshi is providing a boost in recovery to his teammates so make sure he doesn't tag out and that you take him out as soon as possible. Demolition and Bojutsu Kung Jin are not threats even though they are Level VI Fusions. Take them out quickly and move on to the next fight.

Team choice: Anyone Gold or Diamond, Fusion V or higher



Conditions: Vampirism

The worst thing you can do in this fight is let Mournful Kitana get Power Drain off. Her Special Attack 1 is one of the most effective in the game, and she does not hesitate to use it. Constantly struggling to keep Power bars is enough of a worry and it is the main problem here.

Team choice: Anyone Gold or Diamond, Fusion V or higher



Conditions: None

Heavy Weapons Jax Briggs is the biggest threat in this match. He can break the team's shields with his Special Attack 2, which spells trouble for your team if you're using someone like Kold War Sonya Blade, who specializes in granting shields. Possessed Kenshi is also a problem because of his passive, which lets him ambush your character on tag-in. Focus on getting through the match as fast as you can so that Jax doesn't have a chance to break shields and Kenshi can't do too much damage in the inevitable ambush.

Team choice: Anyone Gold or Diamond, Fusion V or higher



TEAM SYNERGY

THIS ISSUE:

- Klassic Team analysis

KLASSIC TEAM



Team: Klassic

Members: Klassic Smoke, Noob Saibot, Jade, Kano, Rain, Skarlet, Shang Tsung, Mileena, Liu Kang, Reptile, Sonya Blade, Kitana, Goro, Ermac, Scorpion, Sub-Zero, Jax Briggs, Raiden

Team Synergy (overall): Klassic characters receive a 30 percent damage boost to all unblockable attacks



Smoke – Klassic:
Klassic teammates gain 20 percent resistance to all debuffs.



Liu Kang – Klassic:
Liu Kang and teammates apply Cripple on tag-in.



Jade – Klassic:
Klassic teammates are immune to Snare.



Noob Saibot - Klassic: Klassic Noob and Klassic teammates receive a 30 percent damage boost to all unblockable attacks.



Kano – Klassic:
Team default



Mileena - Klassic:
Female teammates gain health when she defeats an opponent.



Sonya - Klassic:
All Spec Ops on her team ignore enemy toughness.



Kitana - Klassic:
30% recovery for Outworld teammates.



Goro - Klassic:
All characters on Goro's team gain plus-20% attack.



Ermac - Klassic:
Team default



Scorpion - Klassic:
Team default



Skarlet – Klassic:
Teammates get a 20 percent basic attacks unblockable chance boost. For each Klassic teammate, chance rises 10 percent.



Sub-Zero - Klassic:
Team default



Jax - Klassic:
Team default



Raiden - Klassic:
Team default



Reptile - Klassic:
All Outworld characters have 80% critical hit chance against enemies affected by poison and have poison immunity.



Shang Tsung – Klassic:
Shang Tsung's scroll assists Klassic characters on Special Attack 1 with an energy beam that deals 20 percent of Shang Tsung's attack and heals an active teammate for the damage dealt.



Rain – Klassic: Any negative effect applied to a Soaked enemy by a Klassic teammate has 75 percent chance to be applied as a team negative effect. Klassic teammates start with 1 Bar of Power.

ANALYSIS

The Klassic team is varied with quite a few Gold class and Outworld class characters among its ranks. They have the third-greatest number of characters, and the Klassic team's skills are mostly useful outside of the team. Standouts on the team include Klassic Liu Kang, a Diamond class character, and Klassic Shang Tsung, a Gold class character.



Dreadful, miserable blockbuster experience

The summer of 1995 was a mixed bag. It was a great year for *Mortal Kombat*, kind of a good year for *Batman* but a bad year for a few blockbusters that were supposed to knock our socks off. Imagine being a Sylvester Stallone-led vehicle and you bomb at the box office. *Judge Dredd* was a small bomb but a bomb nonetheless, and the game version didn't fare much better, either. Like some of Sly's other films, it should have thrown in the towel because it was no *Rocky*.

Judge Dredd is not an accurate representation of the comic book it originated from. Like most tie-in

games of the era, the story explained in the game is predicated on whether you went to the movies first. In this case, I didn't; I knew of the comic and was somewhat acquainted with the film so when I saw the game I didn't get that excited. I'm so glad I didn't muster the excitement because whew, boy, I got a lesson in justice and mediocrity quickly.

There is nothing about this game that rises above just OK. The character sprites are small and weird, the backgrounds are nondescript, and the colors are just drab and boring. The environments look plain with little thought to jazz them up. I get it, it's a prison



state in a dystopian future and it isn't going to look like *Rainbow Brite*. But, come on, there must be something beyond a boring neutral prison-gray landscape.

And the soundtrack fares just as bad as the graphics. There is not one song, in the introduction or beyond, that makes me want to

listen. I was so turned off by the music, I played it on mute and had just as good an experience as I did with sound on. There was nothing going on audio-wise that made this a worthwhile experience.

And then there's the gameplay. Heaven help you if you didn't get a manual with *Dredd* because there will be navigation issues as well as a ton of "How do I do this?" going on. It took wandering around the second level for 30 minutes before I realized how to arrest folks and where I needed to go to find the last few enemies that are required to be vanquished before unlocking the level exit. *Dredd*'s levels are de-

signed terribly and could have benefited from a map immediately. If *Super Metroid* — yes, I know, a far superior product — can show out with a map feature, *Dredd* could, too. But here we are, ignorant and lost and no longer playing this mediocre mess of a tie-in.

Don't watch this version of *Dredd* and don't play this version of *Dredd*. If you find yourself sitting through this tripe beyond the introduction screen, know that I am, in fact, judging you.

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By Lyndsey Beatty | Gaming Insurrection

We've been traveling around North and South Carolina searching for barcades and arcades for many years. In our travels we've found quite a few close to home and literally at home. While we have and will chronicle these findings more in depth in the future, we're going to restart the Arcadia Journal section in the meantime. Here's what we've found so far.



Transmission Arcade

Super Abari

Radioactive Pinball Arcade

Player1UP Rock Hill

Lost Ark – Arcadia Manor

Address: 1712 Main St., Columbia, SC 29201

Address: 1015 Seigle Ave., Charlotte, NC 28205

Address: 113 Laurens St. Southwest, Suite 103, Aiken, SC 29801

Address: 140 E. Main St., Rock Hill, SC 29730

Address: 1701-A Spring Garden St., Greensboro, NC 27403

Website: <https://www.transmissionarcade.com>
Phone: (803) 667-9140

Website: <https://superabarigamebar.com/>
Phone: (704) 271-1252

Website: <https://radioactivepinballarcade.com>
Phone: (803) 373-1717

Website: www.facebook.com/player1uprh
Phone: (803) 327-6407

Website: www.lostarkvideogames.com/arcadiamanor
Phone: (336) 422-6342

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 Mon – Fri: 5 p.m. – 2 a.m.
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 Saturday: Noon - 2 a.m.

2 a.m.
Note: 21+ establishment. All ages are welcome Saturday and Sunday from noon to 6 p.m.

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 Friday: 3 p.m. – 10 p.m.
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Wednesday: 4 p.m. – midnight
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 Friday: 4 p.m. – 2 a.m.
 Saturday: Noon – 2 a.m.

Closed
 Thursday & Friday: 3 p.m. – midnight
 Saturday: 1 p.m. – midnight
 Sunday: 1 p.m. – 6 p.m.

On tap this issue:

STRIP TALK
 Superman reboot
 not looking great

PROPERTY REVIEW
 Kill Bill Vol. 2 comes
 to rip roaring end

**MARVEL
 HIGHLIGHT**
 Everything you
 wanted to know
 about Wolverine

OTAKU CORNER
 No devil may care
 attitude in the
 great DMC anime

ANIME LOUNGE
 We examine My
 Hero's Season 4

TOP 5
 Marvel characters
 who do entirely
 too much

View this
 content at
www.gaminginsurrection.com/TheStrip

PROPERTY REVIEW

Kill Bill Vol. 2
 Miramax, 2003



PHOTOS COURTESY OF IMDB.COM

A conclusion best served cold

Kill Bill Vol. 2 continues the Bride's rip-roaring tale of revenge, and it's a good ride.

In the second volume, the Bride reveals her name — Beatrix Kiddo — and faces off against the final two members of the Deadly Viper Assassination Squad, Elle Driver and Bud, before finally squaring up against the titular Bill himself.

This is a master class of how to conclude a story that spans multiple volumes, and it's fraught with the tension of how it all is going to end. Will the Bride get the revenge she seeks upon Bill, who shot her in the head four years earlier? Will she find out about her alive and well child? Those questions are answered and, yes, Bill finally makes an appearance and shows us why he's Snake Charmer, but the journey to get there sort of drags. We loved the two fights — Elle Driver vs. Beatrix and Bill vs. Beatrix — but some of the surrounding material could have been cut. Bill's background was important but could have been trimmed as could some of the Pai Mei information. But we digress because ultimately it doesn't kill the vibe of the film.

Particularly, we greatly enjoyed the reveal of Beatrix and Bill's history and how the Masacre of Two Pines unfolded. It was so well-written that we could sort of empathize with Bill's sorrow turned to rage when he realized that Beatrix didn't die in action and was instead heavily pregnant and about to marry

HOW WE GRADE

We score the properties in three categories: Casting (or voice acting in cases of animated), plot and similarities to its source material. Each category receives points out of the maximum of 10 per category and 30 overall. The percentage is the final score.

someone else that may have been the father of the baby she was obviously carrying.

Bill is the villain here, make no mistake, because there was no need for violence. Hurt people hurt people, but there's no excuse for his level of hurt killing innocent people and nearly killing Beatrix. But you can see Bill's level of pain etched in the face of the excellent late David Carradine. And Uma Thurman is fantastic here as Beatrix. The investment in Beatrix's unfinished business carries over from the first volume and grows right to the moment that she tells Bill that it's time to fight. Daryl Hannah as Elle, the unhinged new lover of Bill, and Michael Madsen as Bud, Bill's trifling assassin brother, are also fantastic.

Excellent, tight writing and great acting mark the second volume, and while there could have been a little more editing done, Kill Bill Vol. 2 is a fun conclusion to the

See **KILL BILL VOL. 2**, PAGE 40



Lyndsey Beatty
STRIP TALK

Man of Steel looking fragile in tired reboot

Superman isn't looking, well super. I admit, I'm highly biased. I'm traditionally not a Superman fan. I don't acknowledge anyone in the big screen role except for Christopher Reeve and Henry Cavill, and I don't like this push for reboots every time someone new decides to saddle up at Warner Bros. with a cool new take on the character. So, when the newest version was announced from James Gunn and Peter What's His Name, I immediately soured on it. And then I saw the teaser trailer.

The new guy, David something or another, does not have the look. He doesn't inspire me as a potential Superman/Clark Kent. He doesn't have the presence, and he doesn't strike me as a dude from Krypton that could take on Lex Luthor or Doomsday or Darkseid. Nothing about him screams rallying point.

The visuals don't grab me, either. Metropolis looks bland and run of the mill, even with the puppy Krypto introduced. That tracks, though. I don't expect much from Gunn — Guardians of the Galaxy, as good as it was, was a killer hand that he successfully managed to play three times while Lady Luck stroked the back of his head at the kitty. He was lucky to get away with an engaging cast and folks glomming onto Marvel anything for a minute because otherwise he might have been a Thor: The Dark World footnote.

What it comes down to is, I don't trust the brain trust here. I don't like Superman, but I don't want him to suffer anymore indignities that he doesn't have to suffer. Let him alone or better yet, they should have kept Cavill and wrote for him. He was ready, willing and able and had the fanbase primed with solid appearances. The surrounding material may have been bad, but he carried entire films on his back as Kent so I'm not understanding why he had to go. I will not let this go so long as we're trying to shoehorn someone else into that man's role.

I'm not sure what this David something or

See **MAN OF STEEL**, PAGE 40



Brandon Beatty OTAKU CORNER

In previous issues of GI, I covered various Devil May Cry games and the manga tie-ins to DMC 3. The Netflix adaptation of DMC is Capcom-approved but created by Castlevania director Adi Shankar. It's been on my radar for a minute, and I'm pleased to say the first two episodes live up to the DMC reputation.

Episode 1 starts out in Vatican City where a demonic terrorist known as the White Rabbit and his mercenaries are raiding the Vatican Museums in search of the sword known as Force Edge. It was once held by Sparda, a legendary demon who created a barrier between Earth and Hell. When the White Rabbit acquires Force Edge, he kills the mercenaries and makes a worldwide broadcast about dissolving Sparda's barrier to bring about the apocalypse, allowing demons to rule over humanity.

When word of the attack on Vatican City reaches Washington, the White House obtains the counsel of Dr. Fisher, a demonic expert working with Dark Force Command or DARKCOM, an interdimensional security group funded by affluent individuals led by Vice President William Baines. When Dr. Fisher explains that the White Rabbit is in search of a demon hunter, DARKCOM captures underworld information broker Enzo Ferino who tells DARKCOM agents that the White Rabbit is looking for the demon hunter Dante. During Enzo's interrogation, Barnes and Dr. Fisher believe that Dante holds half of the amulet needed for Force Edge to remove its barrier. Elsewhere, Plasma, a top henchman of the White Rabbit, finds Dante and uses various forms of people and objects including Dante's brother Virgil to take Dante's half of the amulet but is unsuccessful. After the battle, Dante begins to question who would want his amulet and why demons and other unknown players want him.

Episode 2 continues events. DARKCOM agents, ordered by Barnes to supervise multiple teams of hired mercenaries, worked to capture Dante and retrieve his half of the amulet for examination by DARKCOM scientists. During the mission briefing, Mary Arkham, a supervisor to the DARKCOM team overseeing the mercenaries, encounters a demon and eliminates it. After the

Devil's in the details with fantastic DMC adaptation



briefing, Barnes adds Anders, the lone survivor of a previous DARKCOM mission to eliminate White Rabbit, to the team. During the raid on Dante's office, Barnes forces Enzo to lure Dante out, but Dante realizes Enzo's scheme and refuses to give up the amulet. While Dante succeeds in escaping the mercenaries' attack, he faces off against Lady who succeeds in capturing Dante and implants a bomb in his neck but takes Dante's amulet and captures him and Enzo, taking them to DARKCOM headquarters for questioning.

The animation for Devil May Cry isn't developed in the usual anime style. Shankar, while negotiating with Capcom and Netflix for streaming rights, sought out Studio Mir of Seoul to provide animation services for the series. Keeping pace with his take of video game animated series known as "The Bootleg Universe," Shankar and his writing partner Alex Larsen used actual locations such as Vatican City and Washington to bring the level of DMC games action in to attract fans of the series and fans of political action shows. I personally like Shankar and Larsen's take that they wrote an original concept for the series instead of coping various storylines from DMC's games. As a DMC fan, I became fully invested in the anime but had to pace myself from binge watching to avoid being distracted from other ac-

tivities. And as a treat for fans, there are a few Easter Eggs from DMC and other Capcom games such as Captain Commando and Resident Evil.

Capcom had some of its employees involved in production and should be applauded for allowing creative freedom in a long-running series such as this.

The choice of casting for characters was on point with Johnny Yong Bosch taking the role of Dante and Scout Taylor-Compton's performance as Mary. Kari Wahlgren portraying Dante's mother Eva was great, and legendary voice actor Kevin Conroy gave an outstanding performance as Barnes in his final performance. I have respect for Shankar for dedicating the first season to Conroy's memory. Overall, this adaptation from Netflix did an excellent job of bringing a game series like DMC to a new audience without being carbon copied or too short.

Will Dante be able to stop White Rabbit from unleashing hell on Earth? Will DARKCOM uncover the true motives of demons invading the human realm? Who side is Barnes really on? We're keeping it stylish while binge-watching the next episodes.

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Series: My Hero Academia

Episodes: Season 4, Episodes 1-25

Premise: In the fourth season, Izuku Midoriya and Class 1A work to stop the machinations of the Shie Hassaikai, a yakuza group who works to manufacture quirk-destroying drugs. Led by Overhaul, the group of villains hopes to dethrone the League of Villains and Shigaraki while simultaneously taking over Japan. At the center of its quirk destroyer drug is Eri, a little girl whose quirk, Rewind, is being exploited to create the drug.



Is it worth watching?: Yes, if just for seeing Eri and seeing the beginning of Izuku really coming into his own with One for All.

Breakout character: Mr. Compress. Yes, Overhaul is the main villain here, but Mr. Compress is cool, and his quirk is just as cool as he is.

Where it's going?: We're getting into the beginning of the end and there is much more history of One for All to learn. Izuku is learning what makes One for All work and what it means to be a wielder of the powerful quirk.

MARVEL CHARACTER HIGHLIGHT

Name: James “Logan” Howlett

Alias: Wolverine, Logan, Death, Patch, Weapon X

Affiliation: X-Men, West Coast Avengers, Krakoa’s X-Force, New Fantastic Four, Savage Avengers, Jotunheim Strikeforce, X-Force, New Avengers, Secret Defenders, Department H, Flight/Alpha Flight, Department K, S.H.I.E.L.D., Hand, Triad, Knights of Wundagore

Special abilities: Regeneration through healing factor, immunity to poisons, viruses, diseases and drugs, resistance to telepathy and alcohol, decelerated aging, retractable claws, Adamantium-laced skeleton, superhuman acute senses, strength, speed, stamina, durability, reflexes and agility, perception of animal emotions

Background: James “Logan” Howlett was born into a life of privilege and wealth in the late 1800s in Canada. His mutant abilities manifested at the same moment that his biological father, Thomas Logan, killed his adoptive father, John Howlett Sr. Nicknamed Logan after escaping the tragic scene, he wandered around the world, encountering Victor Creed/Sabertooth and becoming his mortal enemy. Later, he was forced into the Weapon X program where he was experimented on and received the Adamantium-laced skeleton that he is famous for. He was then rescued by Department H’s Mac and Heather Hudson and became known as the Wolverine. After working in Canada and for the CIA, he was approached by Professor Charles Xavier to join the X-Men.

Relationships: Itsu, wife (deceased); Akihiro/Daken (son); Erista (son); Laura Kinney/X-23, genetic daughter/clone (deceased); Raze Darkholme (son), many other daughters and sons (all deceased)

First Versus appearance: X-Men: Children of the Atom

Appearances in other media:

Television: Spider-Man and His Amazing Friends, X-Men: Pryde of the X-Men, X-Men: The Animated Series, Spider-Man: The Animated Series, X-Men: Evolution, Robot Chicken, Wolverine and the X-Men, The Super Hero Squad Show, Marvel Anime, Black Panther, The Avengers: Earth’s Mightiest Heroes, Marvel Superheroes: What

the -?!, Ultimate Spider-Man

Animated movies: Hulk and the Agents of S.M.A.S.H., Marvel Disk Wars: The Avengers, X-Men ’97, Hulk vs. Wolverine, LEGO Marvel Super Heroes: Maximum Overload, LEGO Marvel Avengers: Code Red, LEGO Marvel Avengers: Mission Demolition

Film: X-Men, X2: X-Men United, The Wolverine, Logan, X-Men: Wolverine Origins, X-Men: The Last Stand, X-Men: First Class, X-Men: Days of Future Past, Deadpool & Wolverine, X-Men: Apocalypse

Video games: The Uncanny X-Men, X-Men: Madness in Murderworld, X-Men II: The Fall of the Mutants, Wolverine, X-Men (1992 arcade game), The Amazing Spider-Man, Spider-Man and the X-Men in Arcade’s Revenge, X-Men (1993), X-Men (1994), X-Men: Mutant Apocalypse, X-Men: Children of the Atom, X-Men: Gamesmaster’s Legacy, X-Men 2: Clone Wars, Marvel Super Heroes, X-Men vs. Street Fighter, X-Men: Mojo World, Marvel Super Heroes in War of the Gems, Marvel Super Heroes vs. Street Fighter, X-Men: The Ravages of Apocalypse, Marvel vs. Capcom: Clash of Super Heroes, Spider-Man, Marvel vs. Capcom 2: New Age of Heroes, X-Men: Mutant Wars, X-Men: Wolverine’s Rage, X-Men: Mutant Academy 2, X-Men: Reign of Apocalypse, Tony Hawk’s Pro Skater 3, X-Men: Next Dimension, X2: Wolverine’s Revenge, X-Men Legends, X-Men Legends II: Rise of Apocalypse, Ultimate Spider-Man, Marvel Nemesis: Rise of the Imperfects, Marvel: Ultimate Alliance, X-Men: The Official Game, Spider-Man: Web of Shadows, LittleBigPlanet, Marvel: Ultimate Alliance 2, Marvel Super Hero Squad, Spider-Man: Shattered Dimensions, Marvel Super Hero Squad: The Infinity Gauntlet, Marvel vs. Capcom 3: Fate of Two Worlds, Ultimate Marvel vs. Capcom 3, X-Men: Destiny, Marvel Super Hero Squad: Comic Combat, Marvel Super Hero Squad Online, Marvel Avengers Alliance, Marvel Avengers: Battle for Earth, Marvel Heroes, Deadpool, LEGO Marvel Super Heroes, Marvel: Avengers Alliance Tactics, Uncanny X-Men: The Days of Future Past, Marvel Contest of Champions, Marvel: Future Fight, Marvel Puzzle Quest, Fortnite Battle Royale, Marvel Strike Force, Marvel Powers United VR, Marvel Ultimate Alliance 3: The Black Order, Marvel’s Midnight Suns, Marvel Realm of Champions, Marvel Snap, Spider-Man 2 (2023), Marvel Rivals, Marvel’s Wolverine



TOP 5 ON THE STRIP — DOING TOO MUCH EDITION



Lucas Bishop (X-Men)

Don’t get us wrong: We love Bishop. We love him for his tenacity and his love for the X-Men ideology. However, when it came to mutant messiah Hope Summers, he did entirely too much and was absolutely obnoxious. We get it, the baby was the cause of shenanigans in his timeline but the running around trying to kill her at every chance was too much. At least we have the X-Men: The Animated Series version to love on still.



Emma Frost (X-Men)

So much can be said about Emma Frost’s obvious thirst for Cyclops, but when you’re a mutant pick-me the less said about you is probably best. First, Cyclops is not a catch. He’s trash personified for his many misdeeds up to and including abandoning the Goblin Queen. Second, if you chase the not-a-flex Cyclops, you’re trash, too. Girl, know your worth.



Mister Sinister (X-Men)

We can sum up Mister Sinister’s place on this list with one word: Obsession. If he’s not obsessed with immortality, he’s obsessed with genetic manipulation. And let’s be real, that genetic manipulation always involves the Summers-Grey bloodline. We really want Mister Sinister — the real Mister Sinister — to go outside and touch grass.



Victor Von Doom (Fantastic Four)

Anyone who creates clone robots of themselves that all believe they are the real thing has some issues and needs something to do. We love Doom but he does entirely too much when it comes to Reed Richards. And blaming everyone for your failures and a lack of accountability is a sure sign that you have a personality disorder.



Deadpool

Apparently, Deadpool has become a thing in the last few years because of some highly successful films but we’re just not seeing it. The breaking of the fourth wall is too much; when we read comics we want to escape into a fantasy, not be reminded that reality is happening. The Deadpool shtick is old as it is and Ryan Reynolds has run out with it. However, since he gave us Channing Tatum as Gambit, we’ll let some of it slide. But seriously, stop it already.

Healthy respect for other cultures sorely needed now

My love of culture in general should be well known by now. I love my own African heritage mightily, but I also respect others from around the world. One of the places I have always been intrigued with is East Asia.

I wanted to minor in East Asian studies in college my first go around, but I couldn't pull together enough classes to meet the requirements. Some 25 years later, the University of South Carolina has a thriving Center for Asian Studies, and I'm sort of jealous. Progress is progress, I suppose. Instead of pursuing it academically, I decided to attend to my interest in Asian history and culture through my hobbies and random history



Lyndsey Beatty
CRY OF WAR

courses that I could take to fill my degree's history requirements. I was extra prepared for my Modernization of China and Japan class my sophomore year because I'd done a lot of outside reading. I knew more about geisha and Sumo than probably the average

American. I got heavily into K-pop through BoA and started watching a ton of anime, the original Iron Chef and K-dramas because I found them fascinating and fun.

The point is, I love learning something new, and I love learning something outside of myself. I respect others because it's the right thing to do, and because how else would I learn? There is such a large world outside of what I know, and in a time of dumbing down and watering down culture in the United States, I do what I can to celebrate others and remain learned.

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Fanbase: Reboot not necessary

MAN OF STEEL, from PAGE 37

another needs to supe up Supes, but he needs something. I'm not

impressed with what I've seen so far, and what I fear is coming is not going to be engaging enough to change my mind.

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Bride's revenge finally complete in Volume 2

KILL BILL VOL. 2, from PAGE 37

Bride's journey to reclaim all that she lost. The unfinished business is done.

Story: 9

Acting: 10

Directing: 7

Total: 26/30 or 8.7

