

Gaming Insurrection

For gamers by gamers

Third Quarter 2008

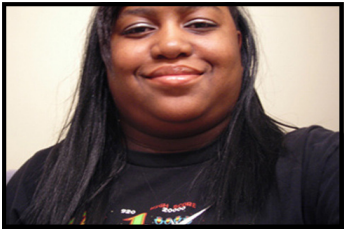


Gaming memories



Plus ...

- Video game music rocks our world
- Go old-school with Retrograde reviews
- Wii recommend trying before buying



CRY OF WAR

LYNDESEY M. MOSLEY

Some of our fondest memories belong to the gaming industry

Video games have been a part of my life for as long as I can remember. My earliest memory of video games is from age 3, when I would stand next to arcade machines much to tall for me in the Land of Oz at Dentsville Mall. My older brother, Tony, was supposed to be babysitting while my mom went shopping at Four Seasons. After I cried enough, he would pick me up and hold me so I could see the screen of what was probably “Centipede.” I may not have been able to grasp what was going on but I got games in my system and they’re still there.

Tony originally gave me my start. Using the NES as a babysitting tool, he laid the foundation for me to start playing. Once I got good enough to play by myself, I started challenging him. To me, he was an insurmountable goal with faster hand and eye coordination and advanced intellect. I could never really beat him head on, but I realized that if I practiced hard I could one day maybe catch up to him.

Now that we’re older – he’s 37 and I am 27 – I think I could probably take him. There are other things more pressing in our lives but someday I’d like to think that we could sit down together and play a friendly game as adult siblings. If it wasn’t for him, I don’t think I would be a gamer. I know I was a pain as a little sister but I always think back on and appreciate the time that my brother spent with me, even if it was through just games. I miss it even after all these years.

I spent a lot of time as a teenager playing video games. What I learned through games, I applied to my schoolwork and helped myself get ahead. I also made friends through games. Video games were also an excellent time waster. The greatest thing Nintendo ever did was let Gunpei Yokoi create and mass market the GameBoy.

I don’t know what my life would have been like without video games; I simply can’t imagine that. There have been times where I have been so frustrated with the industry that I’ve contemplated giving games up. I even considered just how relevant I am in the industry after 20-plus years. What’s always kept me coming back is taking the time to remember my gaming roots – where I’ve come from as a gamer and where I’m going.

My gaming memories I plan to pass to my children. It is my hope that they will learn something from mom’s journey with games and in the process discover a hobby that means a lot. I feel it’s my duty as a gamer with as much experience that I have to give back to the industry that gave to me.

Lyndsey M. Mosley is editor of Gaming Insurrection. She can be reached by e-mail at gaminginsurrection@hotmail.com.

This quarter *Gaming Insurrection* looks at what it means to have gaming memories. Our video game past shapes our gaming future.

We also look at this quarter’s music honorees: “Ninja Gaiden,” “Vampire” and “Final Fantasy V.”

New features? We got them! See our calendars to find out what games are coming out in the next three months.

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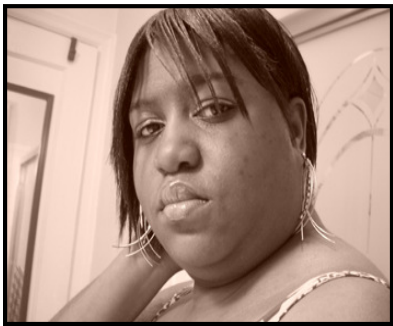


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Who are we?



Lyndsey Mosley, an avid video gamer and journalist, is editor of *Gaming Insurrection*. To make everything possible for the little newsletter that could, Mosley wears quite a few hats in the process: Copy editor, writer, designer, web designer and photographer. In her spare time, she can be found blogging and watching a few TV shows. Mosley, copy desk chief of the *Sumter (S.C.) Item*, resides in Columbia with family.

Who is Jamie Mosley? For some, he is an all-knowing encyclopedia of ’80s hit cartoon “Transformers;” to others he is husband. For GI, J. Mo. - as he prefers to be called - is a contributor of a quarterly Dungeons and Dragons-based column. Though he is a newcomer to the world of journalism, Mosley is no stranger to video games: He can trace his roots back to the NES-era “Metroid.” Let’s put it this way: If you can remember beating Metroid and various passwords for it, you are one old dude. J. Mo. resides with his wife in Columbia, S.C.



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FROM THE DUNGEON

BY JAMES T. MOSLEY

DMs need to fix problems before D&D gaming begins

It has been my experience that a lot of problems can occur before a gaming session can begin. The mood of a single player can create a ripple effect through out the whole group. Possible reasons include that maybe it’s DM hasn’t properly planned for the upcoming encounters. In this issue, we will discuss ways to create a healthier session before the game starts.

What is a healthier gaming session? I don’t mean bring fresh fruits and salads for the group. A healthy gaming session is one where problems outside of game play are kept to a minimum. There is nothing to distract anyone involved in the session, the group is focused and eager to start and all characters that will be played have been completed. These are a few things that can make a gaming session more enjoyable.

A few problems that may arise in a gaming session before the game begins are quite simple to fix. At the first gaming session, a character for each player must be created. This can be frustrating to some players, but a lot of players enjoy creating a character as much as playing the character in game. This may sound weird, but these players are trying to plot their character’s path to the unknown. They create background stories for their characters, and they will even try to plan a goal for them. Normally, this creative character creation is not a problem.

However, it can create problems for the group that just wants to hurry up and play. They want their characters created with the most effective abilities, and this type of player wants action. They want more time hacking and slashing and less time plotting and planning. If they have a character’s goal in mind, it is usually to acquire more wealth. They may want to just find something stronger to defeat.

Most DMs just have the players that take their time planning during character creation either show up to the session earlier, or they allow them to create it at home. The players that just want action usually just plan their character creation around doing the most damage possible. Some DMs actually create several playable characters for the group if they do not feel like creating one. This seems to solve the character creation problems.

Another common problem seems to be the players’ attitude at the beginning of a gaming session. If players’ moods are foul because of events that took place in a recent session, then to maintain a healthy gaming session, it must be discussed before the game begins. I can’t think of anything worse than entering an encounter and a player recognizing that the rest of the group is not helping him or her because of past events. The player may feel as if their services are no longer required. This can stop gaming sessions cold. To prevent an argument breaking out, the DM should talk to the player in question about the group’s concerns before the gaming session. This could lead to a mutual understanding between the player and create a healthy gaming session.

Next issue, we will further discuss problems cropping up and how to fix them for the benefit of all involved.

-- The Sage Mo

Jamie Mosley is a contributing columnist to Gaming Insurrection. He can be reached by e-mail at gaminginsurrection@hotmail.com.

Gaming memories

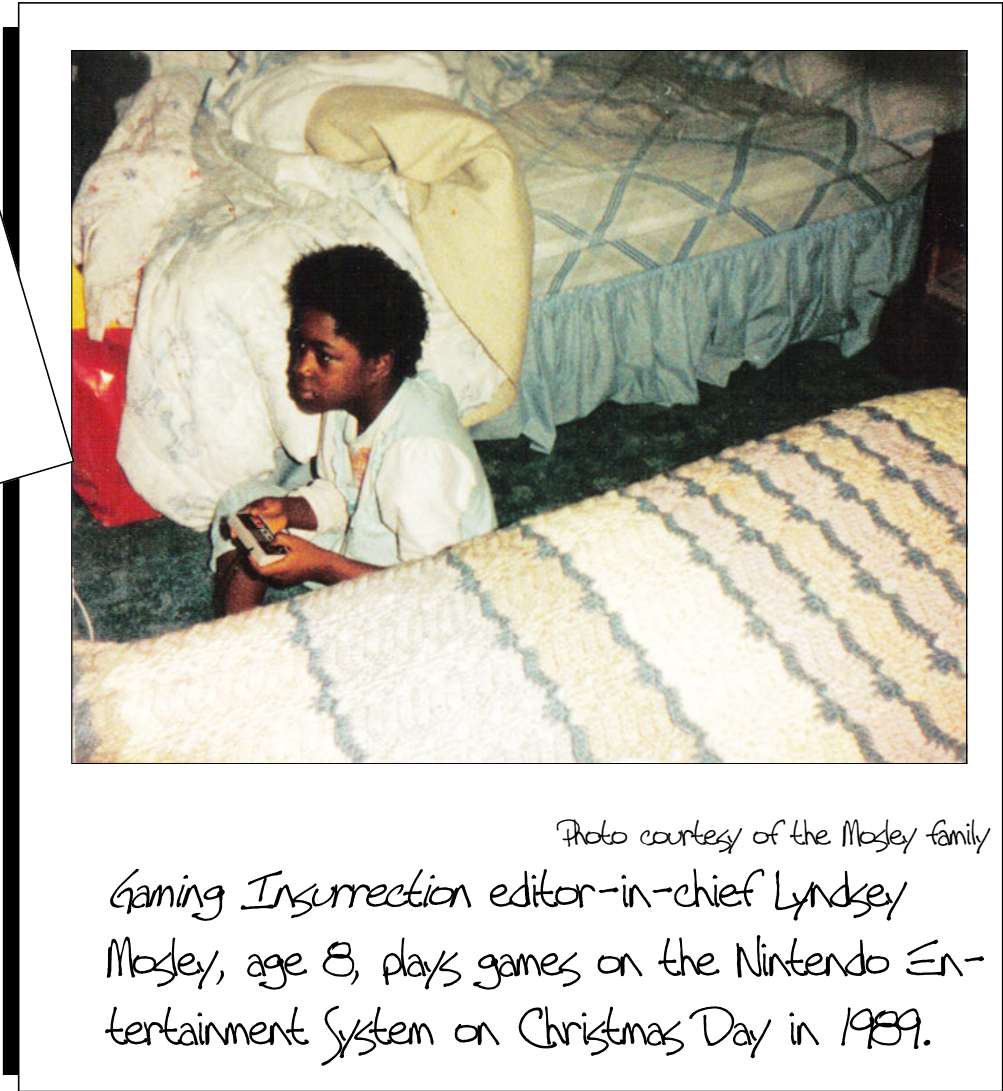


Photo courtesy of the Mosley family
Gaming Insurrection editor-in-chief Lyndsey Mosley, age 8, plays games on the Nintendo Entertainment System on Christmas Day in 1989.



BY **LYNDSEY M. MOSLEY**
GAMING INSURRECTION

The time: 1988. I was 7 the first time I played a video game, which was “Super Mario Bros.” on the NES. I didn’t yet own a Nintendo, but I received one for Christmas that year, courtesy of my older brother, Tony.

By the time we got a NES, I had already played several games such as “Castlevania” and “Galaga.” The first game that we owned was “Wrestlemania.” Tony left home in April 1990 to join the Marine Corps and left the system for me since the other Marines had systems in their barracks. When he returned home in June 1990 after basic training, he brought with him “Super Contra” and “Ninja Gaiden.”

These were two games that the soldiers played the most.

Gaming memories for me are widespread. After getting the two games, we made more efforts to broaden our gaming



This is my original Super Nintendo. It was a Christmas gift in 1992. I was in the sixth-grade when I got it. My first game for the system was “Super Mario World.”

horizons. I can clearly remember sitting at home in my room throughout my childhood playing various games that I had to rent from stores such as Pharmoor and Blockbuster because we couldn’t necessarily afford \$60 games.

My first real memory of playing a game that I specifically picked out for

myself was “Super Mario Bros. 3”; I received it as a birthday gift in 1991 for my 10th birthday. “Super Mario Bros. 3” was huge and was the game that everyone wanted to play.

Blockbuster didn’t have copies when I went to rent it, so I picked up “Super Mario Bros. 2” (USA) instead. It wasn’t a bad game, actually.

Adventures in console gaming and arcade origins

I finally rented Mario 3, and I thought it was one of the best games I’d ever played. It was just phenomenally designed and what it brought to the Mario lore was unbelievable. The new suits and lands (and the existence of



This is the house that I grew up in. It has been in our family for more than 20 years. It’s where many of my gaming memories developed and also serves as the offices of “Gaming Insurrection.”

SECOND IN A SERIES

Video game music

Editor's note: This is the second of a five-part series examining the art of videogame music.

BY LYNDSEY M. MOSLEY
GAMING INSURRECTION

Game music was and still is in the minds of many gamers. A game's soundtrack can make or break the play experience. If the music doesn't work, chances are the game doesn't work, either.

What can game music offer you? It immerses the gamer in the surroundings. Suddenly, with the Super Mario theme playing, you are in the Mushroom Kingdom fighting Bowser's minions. With the Legend of Zelda theme you are on your way to different dungeons in Hyrule attempting to defeat Ganon for Princess Zelda's hand. Take a trip down memory lane with our five-part series on one of the gaming industry's venerable pieces – veritable music to your ears.

"NINJA GAIDEN"

The NES version of "Ninja Gaiden" was released in 1989 and is one of my favorites, musically. The music isn't your typical Eastern fare, and it's got a snazzy up-tempo beat that inspires you to keep moving. Combine the music with the environment and gameplay mechanics and you have a recipe for success. The music is what set the tone for the ninja run-and-gun themes.

Where "Ninja Gaiden" shines musically is especially in the first game. The music has a definite "1980s urban" vibe to it; you can just imagine ninja Ryu Hayabusa pounding the pavement of '80s New York City fighting the minions of the evil Jaoqio.

Game top three

- "Heroism – The Approaching Evil"
- "Assault – Stealthy Devil"
- "Ambush – Pursuit of a Nightmare"



PHOTO COURTESY OF NINJA GAIDEN AT CLASSICGAMING.COM

"FINAL FANTASY V"

The music of the Final Fantasy series has always captivated us at *Gaming Insurrection*. We may not have been fans of the series, but the game's music has always drawn us in. For GI, "Final Fantasy V" was made playable because of the music alone. Only later did the job system and the story mean anything. Nobuo Uematsu, main composer for FFI-FFXI, translated the game into soaring tones that exceed what happens on screen. This is Uematsu's best. And we can't forget the easily recognizable "Victory Fanfare." It just wouldn't be Final Fantasy without it.

Game top three

- "Town Theme"
- "Spread Your Great Wings"
- "Prelude"



PHOTO COURTESY OF AMAZON.COM

Please see Video game music, page 6

20 years of gaming a lifetime of memories

FROM PAGE 3

World 9) was such a defining factor for me as a player. Because I was going to daycare afterschool at the time, I got to interact with other children my age and Mario 3 was a frequent conversation topic. I learned a lot about the history of Mario from 2:30 – 5:30 p.m. even though I was supposed to be doing homework.

I began to branch out of home consoles, and I managed to rediscover arcades. I first got started in the arcades in 1992 with “Super Smash TV,” “X-Men” and “Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: The Arcade Game.” I loved the multiplayer games although I would play them by myself. It was fun to play as some of my favorite comic book heroes (I’m a huge fan of Marvel’s supergroup and Mirage’s shelled four-some). I happened to discover that the arcade in what was known then as Columbia Mall had these games, so I started going on the weekends. Aladdin’s Castle became my second home.

Trying something new

Aladdin’s Castle was a local favorite among gamers because it had the latest games and the games worked. It developed a huge following and to this day there are fond memories of the place for me. It was here that I learned proper “arcade etiquette” and gained my first taste of true sportsmanship. If you played video games and wanted to be seen, Aladdin’s Castle was the place to be on the weekends. That’s not to say there weren’t other arcades in Columbia then; there were several scattered around the city. However, I frequented Aladdin’s Castle because it was the closest, and for me, it seemed to have the best competition.

Aladdin’s Castle had a good variety of games, and I always wanted to try something new. After working on “Super Smash TV” for a while, I started looking for more challenges in the arcade. I found it shortly after my 11th birthday: “Mortal Kombat.”

“Mortal Kombat” was the most gory and crazy-looking game that anyone had ever seen. If you played video games, you either had played it or you at least had heard of it. The first game was banned in the United States, which I did not know until I met my husband (I found a rare stand-up cabinet during a midnight trip to an underground arcade in New York City in December 2004).

My mom had no problem with me playing MK because, as she explained to me much later when I became an adult: “You know right from wrong. You aren’t stupid and you realized that people couldn’t do those things without going to jail or being executed.”

The first MK wasn’t that big of a deal for me to play, actually. I remember the hype surrounding it and its release on home consoles. However, the game that really drew me into the series was MK2 in 1993. MK2 was my jumping-off point for my “arcade experience.” Once Aladdin’s Castle got the game, the crowds at the arcade tripled or, in the case of Saturday afternoons in its heyday, quadrupled. Aladdin’s Castle was so crowded because of MK2 that the arcade operators had to install monitors on top of the machines so that people in the back could see the action. It was that crazy.



PHOTOS BY LYNDSY M. MOSLEY GAMING INSURRECTION

My backyard in Columbia — the perfect place to build go-karts from “Super Mario Kart.”



My original video game systems from July 2006. From left, top row, are PlayStation One, Dreamcast, PlayStation 2, Genesis and Saturn. From left, bottom row, are the NES, SNES, Nintendo 64, GameCube, GameBoy Advance, GameBoy Advance SP and Nintendo DS.

Rudimentary gaming lessons

When I began playing MK2, I had no concept of using a joystick to perform fighting game motions. I hadn’t really played Street Fighter II so I didn’t have reference point to say “Oh, this plays like throwing a hadoken.” My teacher was a guy named Ken.

Ken was the guru of Aladdin’s Castle. If it was a fighting game, Ken played it. He mastered it. Ken schooled you until you knew better. I was intimidated by the game but Ken took me under his wing one night and showed me the basics. I will always be grateful to him for taking the time to help a young gamer.

He didn’t have to do that, and it’s because of that, that I developed a love for fighting games.

Because of MK2, I spent more money and more time playing at Aladdin’s Castle than anything else. However, my home wasn’t to be permanent. Aladdin’s Castle was eventually bought by Namco and closed Dec. 31, 1997. I shed a tear or two for my beloved second home.

It was a long time before I felt that I could go to another arcade, and by then, arcades in the United States began to really fall into decline.

Not your average female gamer

As a female gamer I was encouraged from an early age to play whatever I wanted to play – whether it was fighting games, which really didn’t come around until “Street Fighter II” in early 1991 – or things such as “Legend of Zelda.” It wasn’t defined to me that I couldn’t play those things simply because I was a girl. It wasn’t until I got to the arcades with “Mortal Kombat II in 1993” that I heard “Oh my God, you’re a girl; you can’t play video games.” I received the most encouragement from my mom.

Video games, in my household, were seen as children’s toys and a waste of time. There was a select time that I could play my games in my room because I shared it with an older cousin. Once I moved my games into my mother’s bedroom, I was allowed to play pretty much whenever I wanted, which definitely helped improve my skills. Before that, though, I was encouraged by my brother simply because it was a babysitting tool; he is 10 years older than me and, of course, didn’t really have time for his baby sister. He encouraged me to play as much as I could so that he could have some peace and quiet. Now that I’m older, I understand his reasoning (I was a rather bois-

terous – and I use that term loosely – child), but I still credit him with getting me going. If it were not for him, I would never have gotten started. I love you, bro.

Behind good gamers are good moms

My mom was the main person who always encouraged my video game habits without fail; she never once told me that I couldn’t play video games because they were a waste of time or were only for boys. It was something that was encouraged because it kept me off the streets and in her line of sight so I’d stay out of trouble. It also developed hand and eye coordination.

Video games were important to me, but they were also a hobby. They were something that I devoted time and money to, but they didn’t take precedence over my grades in school or relationships. I spent more time playing videogames because I didn’t like going outside much. It was either too hot or too cold and there was no one to play with on my block until I was 10 or 11. If I went outside at all it was probably to develop projects such as go-karts so I could ride around my neighborhood like in “Super Mario Kart” (I played a lot of “Mario Kart” if you couldn’t tell).

As I got older I spent a lot more money on video games and they were fairly important in my life. Whomever I chose for a mate would play, and I always said my children would be encouraged as well. I met my husband in 2004 while running a “Dance Dance Revolution” tournament because he was the manager of the arcade where the competition was being held. After going on two dates and discovering we had a mutual love for all things retro and video games in general, we decided to get married. Our fourth wedding anniversary will pass this year. My husband also writes for *Gaming Insurrection*, and it was partially because of him and the two of us moving back to my hometown that I decided to do a partial write up of my gaming memories.

I have been a gamer for 20 years and this is my story.

WHERE TO GO FOR YOUR MUSIC

If you want to purchase music or free downloads are your thing (provided that you own the original game), there are several options.

Purchasing music

If buying music, there are several reputable places to choose from.

Amazon.com - The online giant usually deals in rare and imported videogames as well as soundtracks.

GameMusic.com – Although, quite a few soundtracks are out of stock at times, the shop is easy to buy and from and reliable. They also have sheet music for musicians.

PlayAsia.com and

YesAsia.com – Both deal in all thing Eastern so it's a safe bet there will be videogame soundtracks available. Both sites are good to deal with and a variety of game soundtracks.

Downloading music

If you want free music and have the games on cartridge or disc, feel free to check out these sites:

Galbadia Hotel

(gh.ffshrine.org/) - Galbadia Hotel is THE place to go for videogame soundtracks. There are so many games to choose from in the MP3 section that you'd be hard-pressed not to find what you're looking for. New soundtracks are added daily, and import soundtracks are available. Did we mention that you can also get emulated music as well as commercials for several games? Best part of it all: It's all free. You can also register for their forums, which contain many threads on music that may not be on the main site. See our pullout on how to download songs.

Metroid Database

(www.classicgaming.com/mdb) – The Metroid Database is the place to go for all things Metroid. If it's music you're looking for, come here for music specifically from the Metroid games.

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"VAMPIRE"

Capcom usually makes good soundtracks for its fighting game series, and Vampire is no different. Under the name "Darkstalkers" in America, Vampire has managed to make dark-sounding tracks jump out with melodic and haunting overtones. The individual themes for each character have carried over from different games in the series, but certain themes, such as Donovan's, receive a remix of sorts. It's all very chic and jazzy for the fighting game set.

The soundtracks are mostly out of print these days but you can find them easily at Galbadia Hotel under either name.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF GAMESMUSIC.COM AND AMAZON.COM



Series top three

- "Revenger's Roost (Hidden)" – "Vampire Chronicles"
- "Staff Roll" – "Vampire Savior"
- "Fetus of God" with "Jedah's Intro" – "Vampire Savior"

HONORABLE MENTION

"KATAMARI DAMACY"

Every so often a video game soundtrack surprises us at GI. "Katamari Damacy" is that soundtrack. Katamari manages to fuse different genres through an eclectic mix of sound that moves easily from J-Pop to Bossa Nova to '80s B-Boy steel mix.

What we like about "Katamari Damacy's" track list is that it isn't afraid to take chances. It gambles and it works. For a game that is as unique as "Katamari Damacy," the soundtrack is equally as quirky.

Game top three

- "Katamari Stars"
- "Que Sera Sera"
- "Angel's Flavor Present"



PHOTO COURTESY OF GAMESMUSIC.COM

Digital age of music hasn't left video games behind

BY LYNDSLEY M. MOSLEY
GAMING INSURRECTION

Sometimes, no matter how hard you try, you can't find game music on CD that you're desperately searching for. However, there are some solutions.

There are different types of emulated music. Among the most popular are:

- SPC – Super Famicom/Super Nintendo format
- NSF – Nintendo Entertainment System/Famicom format
- GSF – GameBoy Advance format
- GYM – Sega Genesis and 32X format

USF – Nintendo 64 format

There are several ways to play emulated music but so far the most reliable way to play the music is through Winamp with its various plug-ins. Plug-ins can be downloaded from a lot of places, but the safest (and non-virus encoded) players are found on the Winamp site (and conveniently on our Web site under utilities).

Getting the music to play is as easy as making sure you have the correct plug-in installed and collected.

Where to go for music

Galbadia Hotel (<http://ffshrine.gh.org>): Galbadia Hotel has to

be one of the best, if not the best, source of video game music ever.

There are plenty of tracks from obscure games and a lot of the Japan-only releases. If you can't find a particular soundtrack on the main site, try your luck in the forums by doing a search.

Also, you can get help with music-capturing related and emulated music player issues.

Try the links on the right side of the main page (under the category of emulated music) and you can find different music categorized by systems and games.

As a member of Galbadia Hotel, we recommend registering for the main site and for the forums.

SNESmusic (<http://snesmusic.org>):

If you're looking for music from the Super Nintendo era, come here. It's easy to get started with downloading and saving. Support the site because their efforts are good.

They also host their own player for SNES files on the site. What's really good is the section for composers where a wealth of information can be gained about the names behind the music of Nintendo's sophomore system.

SMB remains inspiration in gaming design, experience

BY LYNDSEY M. MOSLEY
[GAMING INSURRECTION](#)

I was 7 years old the first time I discovered “Super Mario Bros.” I went to a house of neighborhood children and they let me play for the first time. I remember it as if it were yesterday: I realized I had to make Mario jump, and I did with little success. I died on the first Goomba on stage 1-1. Thus began my long love affair with Mario and princess who’s in another castle.

What “Super Mario Bros.” did for the industry was more than revolutionary. It provided the start for many people who would have never picked up a controller otherwise. It brought to the table so much more than a catchy main theme and an iconic plumber who at one time was more well known than Mickey Mouse. It brought simplicity and a template for everything that should be done in your hop-and-bop adventure.

Where creator Shigeru Miyamoto succeeded the most is the idea that anyone can pick up this game, play it and complete it.

The hallmark of his design, and especially prevalent here, is that as the game progresses so does the challenge. No level in the game is so hard that you cannot finish it. It may be tricky and take a couple of tries to understand, but nothing is so hard or frustrating that you stop playing. What



LYNDSEY M. MOSLEY GAMING INSURRECTION

SMB represents to me is that nothing is impossible.

Koji Kondo. You may not know the name, but you know the tunes. His contributions to SMB were and still are masterpieces. The themes are short and

repetitive; however, you know the music when you hear it. The main theme to SMB has to be one of the greatest songs ever written. No, it doesn’t have a swelling crescendo or complex parts. What it does have is a beat that makes

you tap your foot and want to play the game. It’s simple yet complex – exactly what SMB is.

There’s a reason why SMB is frequently cited as one of the best games ever made: It is.

Chrono’s adventure triggers re-examination 13 years later

BY LYNDSEY M. MOSLEY
[GAMING INSURRECTION](#)

Square Enix’s “Chrono Trigger” was released in 1995 on the Super Nintendo to great fanfare. This was Square’s next masterpiece that wasn’t named Final Fantasy. Although the music and gameplay mechanics mirror FF, this isn’t your father’s RPG. With designs and artwork from Dragonball creator Akira Toriyama, Chrono Trigger managed to stand apart from its RPG brother and make a name for itself.

Gameplay-wise, there’s a lot here for Square to work with. Yes, you have the standard spells, magic and character development. However, the ability to combine spells with different characters adds a little something more to the game. The ability to time travel also adds to the experience. Time travel is the meat and potatoes of this game. Without it, you’re probably playing an FF clone.

Musically, Nobou Uematsu shines here. There are several tracks that call



forth his work with Final Fantasy, but nothing sounds like he just ripped off his own work. Melodies work well here and provide a certain ambience to the story. The music is appropriately tender and pushing at the right moments.

When “Chrono Trigger” was first released I didn’t like it. There was nothing really to draw me in and I couldn’t fathom playing a game that even remotely resembled Final Fantasy. However, as a more mature

gamer, my tastes improved as I got older and I decided to give “Chrono Trigger” another try. With my second

attempt 13 years later, I found a good game that mirrors its brethren but doesn’t try to be something it’s not.

PHOTOS BY LYNDSEY M. MOSLEY GAMING INSURRECTION

what we're playing

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Try before you buy 'Mario Kart Wii'



PHOTOS COURTESY OF NINTENDO.COM

Mario and company race to the finish on the Mario Circuit in "Mario Kart Wii."

Despite solid additions to series, newest entry falls into bad habits

BY LYNDSLEY M. MOSLEY
[GAMING INSURRECTION](#)

A long time ago (1992) in a galaxy far, far away, we learned to play "Super Mario Kart" on the Super Nintendo. Sixteen years later, "Mario Kart Wii" is ready.

This time around, Nintendo has ditched the double karting in favor of a single rider. In going back to its roots, the series raised the number of AI competitors to 12 in grand prix and introduces new karters such as babies Peach and Daisy.

Online racing via the Nintendo Wi-Fi connection has come to the forefront, marking the third official attempt at pairing players over the Internet ("Mario Kart DS" and XBand notwithstanding).

The biggest change for the se-

ries is the introduction of motorcycles. While motorcycles offer certain advantages over the usual karts, they also have cons.

The control seems a little wiggly with the bikes, as turbo boosts are slightly hard to do. Other than that gripe, the bikes are a welcome addition. Completing tricks for turbo boosts has also been added, and it's pretty easy. If used strategically, these tricks and the

wheelies that can be performed on bikes significantly change the feel of the game.

Controls also have been changed for the better. For the first time in the series, you have four control options at your disposal via the different controls. So far we've been using the GameCube controller and the Wii mote/Nunchuku combination with great results. The game comes



"After 16 years and six Mario Kart games, Nintendo should know better. Mean and psycho CPU does not equal fun."

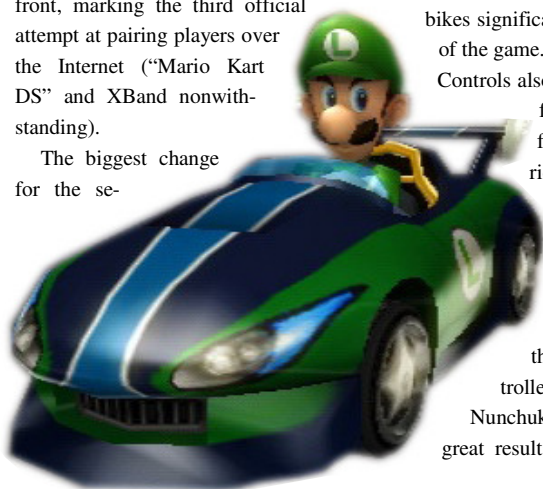
packaged with the new Wii Wheel, but we haven't used it yet so we can't render a proper verdict just yet.

We have a problem, however. I really dislike the new AI. I have, on numerous occasions, been attacked by the CPU and bombarded with weapons while in first place ... and it's just

50CC. It's ludicrous and extremely annoying. This seems like lazy design and a rehash of the previous game, "Mario Kart: Double Dash." After 16 years and six Mario Kart games, Nintendo should know better. Mean and psycho CPU does not equal fun.

With the new additions and ability to race online, "Mario Kart Wii" seems like a sure buy. And it is, if you can wrap your head around the AI.

As a longtime Mario Kart player, I can't say I really appreciate the enhancements, but I can see where Nintendo was trying to go with the series. Definitely try before you buy.



JULY 2008

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4	5 Third Quarter issue launches
6	7 *Unreal Tournament 3 (Xbox 360)	8 *Sid Meier's Civilization Revolution (Xbox 360, PS3, DS)	9	10	11	12
13	14	15 *NCAA Football 09 (all) *Rock Band Track Pack Vol. 1 (Wii)	16	17	18	19
20	21	22 *Final Fantasy IV (DS) *Izuna 2: The Unemployed Ninja Returns (DS) *Order Up! (Wii)	23	24	25	26
27	28	29 *Harvest Moon: Island of Happiness (DS) *Harvest Moon: Tree of Tranquility (Wii) *Soulcalibur IV (PS3, Xbox 360)	30	31		

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Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
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3	4	5 * Brothers in Arms: Road to Hill 30 (Wii)	6	7	8	9
10	11	12 * Madden NFL 09 (all) * N+ (all)	13	14	15	16
17	18	19 * Too Human (Xbox 360)	20	21	22	23
24	25	26 * Saints Row 2 (PS3) * Tiger Woods PGA Tour 09 (all)	27	28	29	30
31 * Mercenaries 2: World in Flames (PS3, Xbox 360)						

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Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3 *FaceBreaker (all)	4	5	6
7	8	9 *Midnight Club: Los Angeles (PS3)	10	11	12	13
14	15	16 *Dragon Quest IV: Chapters of the Chosen (DS) *Star Wars: The Force Unleashed (all) *SOCOM: U.S. Navy Seals Confrontation (PS3) *SOCOM: Confrontation (PS3)	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				