

Streets of Rage Game Review (Sega Genesis)

Streets of Rage began as a combat game first released on the Sega Mega Drive in the early 90s. To be exact it first debuted in 1991. The game begins with two different players that you can choose from. The game is centered around punks and characters of varying street style sub-cultures beating each other up. The game itself was designed with brightly coloured 3D pixel graphics and, written with an awesome 80s trance chip-tune soundtrack for its time.

It was released for the mega drive in August 1991 in Japan, with the US release the following month and PAL release the month after that. Game Gear and Master System ports were created and released at the end of 1992 for the former, and in January 93 for the latter. Since then it has appeared in multiple collections, over various platforms as a classic game. (David Hogan - Game Review: hoganreviews.co.uk)



Graphic Design

Compared to today, the games' graphics are much slower and a lot more pixelated and so are perhaps not as popular as their other contemporary counterparts. The characters within the game all had a very modern funky approach towards their dress sense or style, some wearing stockings and one piece body suits, cool and interesting hairstyles, hats, waistcoats and even thigh-high high heel boots. You could say that their style gave them street cred. The style of the characters in the game are perhaps quite current of the era in which the game was released, being the early 90s where the previous glamorous and very decadent decade had come to a close. *This of course being in relation to the Gregorian calendar of which is a Christian measurement of the time we as humans have spent on Earth since his resurrection.*

The game was very popular not only because of its characters and their cool and individual style, but also because the player is able to interact with their surroundings in actual gameplay, making the game feel that much more real. Knives, glass bottles and other various weapons are just some of the objects you are able to use when navigating each level and combatting different enemies on approach. Whip-wielding ladies, wrestlers and fire-breathing men are just to name a few of the characters that you may encounter, some of them being bosses that you have to fight in order to move further through the game.

The design being very cutting edge of its time, in its classic 16-bit style, allowed players to immerse themselves in a world of colour, with previous titles on other consoles such as GameBoy or Virtual Boy being in black and white. A great selection of colours to light up your TV screens in the comfort of your

own sitting room, office or bedroom, will have been something of a talking point or even ornamental feature within your home.

The game was designed using an 8-bit and 16-bit engine, for video games, specifically refers to the processors used in the console. The number references the size of the words of data used by each processor. The 8-bit generation of consoles (starting with Nintendo's Famicom, also called Nintendo Entertainment System) used 8-bit processors; the 16-bit generation (starting with NEC/Hudson's PC Engine, also called TurboGrafx-16) used a 16-bit graphics processor. This affects the quality and variety in the graphics and the music by affecting how much data can be used at once. (gaming.stackexchange.com)

In computer architecture, 16-bit integers, memory addresses, or other data units are those that are 16 bits (2 octets) wide. Also, 16-bit central processing unit (CPU) and arithmetic logic unit (ALU) architectures are those that are based on registers, address buses, or data buses of that size. 16-bit microcomputers are microcomputers that use 16-bit microprocessors. (unknown writer - Wiki)

Plot/Story:

A crime syndicate ran by businessman Mr. X has taken over the city, and even parts of the police force. Disgusted, Axel Stone, Adam Hunter and Blaze Fielding leave the force and decide to take matters into their own hands and take out Mr. X's syndicate one by one, by themselves. Thanks to Mr. X having the only gun in his entire syndicate, it goes well, and Mr. X is taken down... For now... (David Hogan - Game Review: hoganreviews.co.uk)

The Game was written by developer's Sega AM7, Ancient, Lizardcube, Guard Crush Games and Dotemu and is centered on the efforts of several ex-police vigilantes trying to rid the fictional American metropolis of Wood Oak City of a crime syndicate that has corrupted its local government. (unknown writer - wikipedia)



Gameplay

The 16-Bit cartridge game has a very edgy feel to its design throughout. If I could summarise the vibe of the game as a player, I would say the game brings an energy to its players that is exciting, imaginative and a story that is fuelled with adrenaline. This classic side-scrolling style beat-'em-up arcade game is definitely not only one to remember, but one that can be enjoyed multiple times over and over again. Now that 'Street of Rage' has been released on the Wii virtual console and also features on classic sega

games via the Nintendo online shop, meaning you can download the game directly on to your PC. With four characters to choose from, Max, Axel, Blaze and Skate and each with a relevant part to play in each others lives, throughout the game as the plot unfolds. Upon completion of the game with each character you are rewarded with a cut scene that tells a unique story about each of the players.

Known in Japan as 'bare knuckle: Furious Iron Fist, Streets of Rage was SEGA's 2nd major success with a side-scrolling, beat-em-up design, Golden Axe being the first. Much like Golden Axe, which was released 2 years earlier, Streets of Rage had for it's time fantastic graphics, excellent controls and engaging backdrops for each level. (Magazine Writer - oldschoolgamer magazine)

You can imagine being a geeky gamer in the early 90s and just the thrill at no longer having to queue up for games at your local arcade, with these side-scrollers now being released on consoles, you can play at home.



It is unclear as to whether you are able to customise the characters in the original games. But more modern remakes it seems, are now featuring a customisable feature where you are able to dress your characters and alter their looks as you enter the battlefield, making sure you are always looking super stylish and kick-ass on screen.

The opening of the game introduces the three main characters, although it is said that there are four main characters to choose from in total. The opening movie details a story of how;

"this city was once a happy, peaceful place... until one day, a powerful secret criminal organisation took over. This vicious syndicate soon had control of the government and even the police force. The city has become a centre of violence and crime where no one is safe. Amid this turmoil, a group of determined young police officers has sworn to clean up the city. Among them are Adam Hunter, Axel

Stone and Blaze Fielding. They are willing to risk anything... even thier lives... on the Streets of Rage."

As a side scroller the game begins with your chosen character strolling through the city. brightly lit are the streets with shop fronts, bars, and diners, with accomanying music playing to keep you entertained while you strike enemies down with kicks and punches throughout the game. Smashing phone boxes and looting goods along the way, it's hard not to see why this game became so popular when it was first released. With the game being so current and contemporary of it's time, a little over 30 years on from it's release, the game looks not only retro in style, but the characters costume speak volumes about what was and still is popular and fashionable at the time of it's release.

Success of the Game

Success of the game 'Streets of Rage,' was huge, being originally released in the States on new years eve 1990 and then in Europe on new years day 1991. Japan saw the release of the title much later on in the year of 1991 being relased in August that year. One of the reasons the game became so succesful was not only because of the cutting edge graphics for it's time, but also because of the music score that was written for the production. The music you can hear playing while you are fighting off random thugs and enemies that are near, is what can only be described as a melodic chip-tune 'early house music' beat. The melodic keys, mixed with the uptempo beat and hi-hat ensemble, make this game a wonderful way to pass the time. Players will be ammused and entertained for hours maybe even days if you are into retro gaming.

The beauty of having a musical score written for a piece of work like this, is that, if the music is written well and the style of the production and the musical score compliment eachother, then the game will undoubtedly become a success. In retrospect, this is perhaps why the game may have been so succesful in it's time, with house music being very popular at the time.

With previous games of it's era perhaps being made with an 8-bit processor, the 16 bit processor would allow for better graphics, making the title a lot more popular among gamers of it's time. Players will be attracted to the title for the art work and technical prowess of the design.

All in all the gameplay reaches up to about 50 minutes all together. As you progress through the game you will pass through a number of different scenes, including; the inside of a boat, more back streets, and a number of offices and dark and intriguing hallways and corridors. At the end of each level your score is processed and displayed on the screen, with the end credits showing a 2D cutscene, photo-graphic montage with staff members who worked on the production featured in a list of titles and names. Each colour-pop graphic image gives a rather interesting insight into what the end or completion of the game entails for the protagonist.

End Movie

I particularly like the composition of images the artists have chosen for the game titles end cutscene or movie, and some of the artists names that were chosen to credited for the artist or staff members contribution to the work itself are quite endeering, eg; 'little sun.'

Although quite basic in comparison to todays graphics, it is hard to imagine how the artists may have taken such a lengthy amount of time to create a work as succesful at this, with the main animation to the game working around a reeling (side-scrolling) image. The image is drawn, to appear continuous in this style which many players can enjoy. Games that are hitting the shelves today are much more complex in comparison and have hundreds or even thousands of people all contributing towards the final production of the title.

With the 'end movie' containing small images depicting the main character's life or world and them 'waving' or saying 'goodbye' to another character in the distance. The policeman is waving back at his friends in the distance tells a story of 'achievement'. The four characters all worked to bring peace back to the land in which they spent mostly fighting their enemies. One of the previous 'scenes' or also depicts the image that the crew members are speaking or discussing something in a large office. The office has huge tall windows that are staggeringly tall in comparison to the characters that reside there. A chair can be seen where whomever works in the office will usually be seated. The imagery and artwork is very endearing in style and considering it's now *retro* design, is quite *cheesey* for the way it was written and also put together.

