

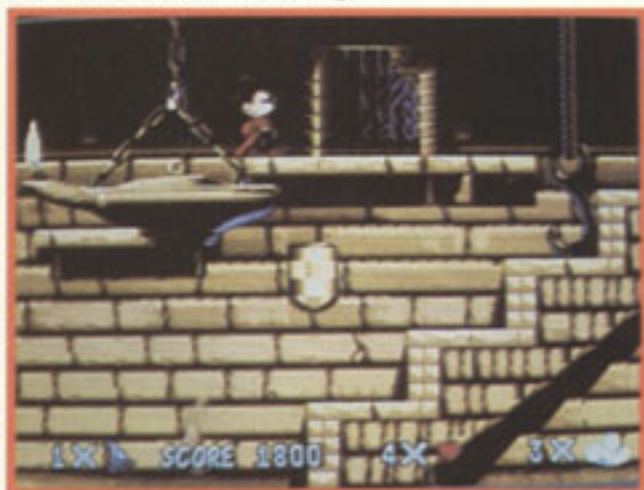


FANTASIA

That mouse is back! Mickey Mouse, the geriatric Disney rodent returns to our Megadrives in a 16-bit translation of the classic Fantasia movie!

Some evil bleeder has gone and pinched the Master Sorcerer's music while his apprentice (aka Mickey Mouse) was asleep. Mickey's obviously a tad worried and faces the wrath of the Master Sorcerer if he doesn't retrieve the lost notes. So, using his special magical powers, Mickey whisks himself off into a dream where he does battle with the likes of possessed magic mushrooms, mobile broomsticks and evil toads intent on sealing the cheese nibbler's doom.

Mickey's task is to scour the levels, finding the missing musical notes and escaping before his energy level is worn down to nothing.



▲ Mickey looks a bit depressed, doesn't he?



▲ Mickey pauses to take in the scenery.



MAGIC MISSILES

Magical books fly around, and the Sorcerer's Apprentice can scoop these up and use their magical powers against the evil sprites that are out to get him. Two types of magical blast are on offer. A small blast only takes up one unit of magical power and dispatches the weedier enemies, whilst a big blast does away with the larger enemies but is a bit more costly on the magical energy meter.

MICKEY'S SKINNY-DIPPING

Fans of the Castle of Illusion will remember that in one stage, Mickey swims through a colossal cup of tea! A similar stage is evident in Fantasia. A whirlpool guarded by a fairy leads the way to an underwater level, where more energy and bonus points are waiting!





COMMENT



To look at, *Fantasia* seems as good as Mickey Mouse, with excellent sprites and gorgeous backdrops. Indeed, after playing it briefly when it was on display at the CES Show in Chicago, I thought it was a real winner. However, after finally getting the chance to play it properly, I quickly discovered its beauty is only skin deep. The gameplay is badly flawed and there

JULIAN

are several highly annoying features that make the action frustrating. For a start, the collision detection is very tight - Mickey loses energy even when it looks like he's cleared a baddie! The magic controls are very sluggish - you press the fire button and there's a horrible pause before Mickey shoots... and if a baddie is close by or moving towards you fast, you just can't avoid being hit. That might be frustrating, but worse still are the completely unavoidable and very sly hazards the programmers have put into the game. Platforms drop, baddies pop up out of nowhere or change direction without warning, things fly on-screen giving you no chance to avoid them... aaagh! I like a challenge, but when you're given absolutely no chance and are forced to memorize and anticipate hazards and traps before they happen, playing becomes a chore. The final straw is that the game is absolutely the same every time you play, with things appearing in the same place at the same time. It's all too linear, with no freedom of movement like the previous Mickey game, and the constant routine of doing exactly the same thing game after game after game doesn't take long to get tedious. It just doesn't have that great feeling of exploration, and certainly doesn't have the variety of the original game. If you're a Mickey Mouse fan and like the look of this, make sure you give the game a very thorough playtesting. It might look as good as the original, but it most certainly doesn't play anything like it, and I think that many Mickey fans will be very, very disappointed. I know I am.



▲ An evil menace lurks just around the corner!

NOTES OF MISERY



▲ Sexy scenery, eh?



The object of each level is to find the hidden notes. But be careful, because if you don't find enough notes by the time you reach the end of the level (and that means battling through three sub-levels) you're sent back to the beginning to start again! This is incredibly annoying - so keep an eye out for those notes and don't miss them. At the end of the level, to show you how close you got, a scale appears at the top of the screen and fills in the notes you collected



▲ Forty winks with the Disney rodent.





REVIEW

SPOT THE SPRITES

As you can see from the screenshots, most of the enemy sprites are taken directly from the classic Disney film! These include the likes of dancing broomsticks, little mushrooms and prehistoric birds. Each level is based on a scene from the film - there's Water World, Earth World, Air World and Fire World.



▲ Mickey's left alone in the castle.



▲ Watch out for that enemy sprite, Mickey!



▲ Magic lamps ahoy!



▲ Alligators take the Mickey.



▲ Just a few screens to the end of the level!

COMMENT



RICH

Well, I came, I saw and I left the MEAN MACHINES games room a gibbering wreck! Although this effort has excellent graphics, the gameplay is incredibly frustrating! I'm talking collision detection that's about as effective as a broken pencil, crippled controls with a sluggish response time and a grotesque lack of decent restart points! The gameplay is just so annoying, I recommend you keep all sharp or pain-inflicting items away from the Megadrive, because after a while you'll be very tempted to make use of them - on either yourself or the cartridge! I cannot stress how wound up Fantasia made me feel after an hour's play - surely games are supposed to relax, or perhaps even entertain? Just forget about Fantasia, for the sake of both your bank balance and your mental health.

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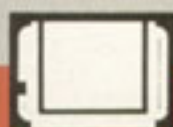
Fantasia

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Game Developed by INFOGAMES™

BY: INFOGAMES

PRICE: £39.99

RELEASE DATE: NOW
GAME DIFFICULTY: MEDIUM
LIVES: 3
CONTINUES: 3
SKILL LEVELS: 3
RESPONSIVENESS: SLUGGISH



PRESENTATION 92%

Excellent backdrops and some great sprites.

GRAPHICS 89%

Brilliant Disney-style presentation screens create a great atmosphere.

SOUND 54%

Annoying tunes that fuel your frustration level immensely.

PLAYABILITY 61%

Arrrrgghhh! Fantasia's many gameplay flaws result in frustration as soon as you start playing!

LASTABILITY 56%

It's tough - but there are so many annoying features that many will be put off before they complete the game.

OVERALL 61%

Lovely graphics let down by totally dreadful playability. Even the biggest Mickey fans might be disappointed.