

= Myst (series) =

Myst is a franchise centered on a series of adventure video games . The first game in the series , Myst , was released in 1993 by brothers Rand and Robyn Miller and their video game company Cyan , Inc . Riven , the sequel to Myst , was released in 1997 , and was followed by three more direct sequels : Myst III : Exile in 2001 , Myst IV : Revelation in 2004 , and Myst V : End of Ages in 2005 . A spinoff featuring a multiplayer component , Uru : Ages Beyond Myst , was released in 2003 and followed by two expansion packs .

Myst 's story concerns an explorer named Atrus who has the ability to write books which serve as links to other worlds , known as Ages . This practice of creating linking books was developed by an ancient civilization known as the D 'ni , whose society crumbled after being ravaged by disease . The player takes the role of an unnamed person referred to as the Stranger and assists Atrus by traveling to other Ages and solving puzzles . Over the course of the series Atrus writes a new Age for the D 'ni survivors to live on , and players of the games set the course the civilization will follow .

The brothers developed Myst after producing award @-@ winning games for children . Drawing on childhood stories , the brothers spent months designing the Ages players would investigate . The name Myst came from Jules Verne 's novel The Mysterious Island . After Riven was released , Robyn left Cyan to pursue other projects and Cyan began developing Uru ; developers Presto Studios and Ubisoft created Exile and Revelation before Cyan returned to complete the series with End of Ages . Myst and its sequels were critical and commercial successes , selling more than twelve million copies ; the games drove sales of personal computers and CD @-@ ROM drives , as well as attracting casual gamers with its nonviolent gameplay . The video games ' success has led to three published novels in addition to soundtracks , a comic series , television and movie pitches .

= = Story = =

Myst 's story begins with the arrival of a people known as the D 'ni on Earth , more than 10 @,@ 000 years ago . The D 'ni / d??ni? / are an ancient race who used a special skill to create books which serve as portals to the worlds they describe , known as Ages . The D 'ni build a great city and thriving civilization in underground caverns . A young geologist from the surface , Anna , stumbled upon the D 'ni civilization . Learning the D 'ni language , Anna becomes known as Ti 'ana and marries a D 'ni named Atrus ; the couple have a son named Gehn . Soon after , D 'ni is ravaged by a plague created by a man named A 'Gaeris . Atrus sacrifices himself to save his wife and child , killing A 'Gaeris while Ti 'ana and Gehn escape to the surface as the D 'ni civilization falls .

Ti 'ana raises Gehn until he runs away as a teenager , learning the D 'ni Art of writing linking books . Ti 'ana also cares for Gehn 's son , Atrus , until Gehn arrives to teach Atrus the Art . Atrus realizes that his father is reckless and power @-@ hungry , and with the help of Ti 'ana and a young woman , Catherine , Atrus traps Gehn on his Age of Riven with no linking books . Atrus and Catherine marry and have two children , Sirrus and Achenar . The brothers grow greedy and after plundering their father 's Ages they trap Catherine on Riven . When Atrus returns to investigate , the brothers strand him in a D 'ni cavern before they themselves are trapped by special " prison " books . Through the help of a Stranger , Atrus is freed and sends his benefactor to Riven to retrieve Catherine from the clutches of Gehn . Sirrus and Achenar are punished for their crimes by being imprisoned in separate Ages until they reform .

Atrus writes a new Age called Releeshahn for the D 'ni survivors to rebuild their civilization as he and Catherine settle back on Earth , raising a daughter named Yeesha . As Atrus prepares to take the Stranger to Releeshahn , a mysterious man named Saavedro appears and steals the Releeshahn Descriptive Book . The Stranger follows Saavedro through several Ages (which were used to train Sirrus and Achenar in the art of writing Ages) , before finally recovering the book . Ten years later , Atrus asks for the Stranger 's help in determining if his sons have repented after their lengthy imprisonment ; the Stranger saves Yeesha from Sirrus ' machinations , but Sirrus and a repentant Achenar are killed . D 'ni is not fully restored until the creatures the D 'ni enslaved , known as the Bahro , are freed .

= = Games = =

= = Development = =

Myst was originally conceptualized by brothers Rand and Robyn Miller . The Millers had created fictional worlds and stories as young children , influenced by the works of authors such as J. R. R. Tolkien , Robert A. Heinlein , and Isaac Asimov . They formed a video game company together called Cyan , Inc . ; their first game , called The Manhole , won the Software Publishers Association award in 1988 for best use of the digital medium . Cyan produced other games , aimed at children ; the Millers eventually decided their next project would be made for adults .

The brothers spent months designing the Ages comprising the game , which were influenced by earlier whimsical " worlds " Cyan had made for children 's games . The game 's name , as well as the overall solitary and mysterious atmosphere of the island , was inspired by the book The Mysterious Island by Jules Verne . Robyn 's unfinished novel , Dunnyhut , influenced aspects of Myst 's story , which was developed bit by bit as the brothers conceptualized the various worlds . As development progressed , the Millers realized that they would need to have even more story and history than would be revealed in the game itself . Realizing that fans would enjoy getting a deeper look at the story not in the games , the Millers produced a rough draft of what would become a novel , Myst : The Book of Atrus .

After the enormous response to Myst , work quickly began on the next Myst game . Cyan moved from their cramped garage to a new office and hired additional programmers , designers , and artists . The game was to ship in late 1996 , but the release was pushed back a year . Development costs were between \$ 5 and \$ 10 million , many times Myst 's budget . After the release of Riven , Robyn Miller left the company to pursue other projects , while Rand stayed behind to work on a Myst franchise .

While Rand Miller stated Cyan would not make another sequel to Myst , Mattel (then the owner of the Myst franchise) offered the task of developing a sequel to several video game companies who created detailed story proposals and technology demonstrations . Presto Studios , makers of the Journeyman Project adventure games , was hired to develop Myst III . Presto spent millions developing the game and used the studio 's entire staff to complete the project , which took two and a half years to develop . Soon after Myst III : Exile was released , Presto was shut down , and Exile publisher Ubisoft developed the sequel , Myst IV : Revelation , internally . Meanwhile , Cyan produced the spinoff title Uru : Ages Beyond Myst , which included an aborted multiplayer component allowing players to cooperatively solve puzzles .

Cyan returned to produce what was billed as the final game in the series , discarding live action sequences embedded in prerendered graphics for a world rendered in realtime . The actors ' faces were turned into textures and mapped onto digital characters , with the actor 's actions synchronized by motion capture . Shortly before release , Cyan closed down development , although this did not impact the release of the game ; the company was able to rehire its employees a few weeks later , and continued to work on non @-@ Myst projects and an attempted resurrection of Uru 's multiplayer component , Myst Online . Servers paid for by donation were set up in 2010 , and the game went open @-@ source in 2011 .

Among the detailed elements of the Myst universe Cyan created was the language and culture of the D 'ni . The civilization 's numbers and writing first appeared in Riven , and were important to solving some of the game 's puzzles . The D 'ni language was the language presented in various games and novels of the Myst franchise , created by Richard A. Watson . Several online D 'ni dictionaries have been developed as part of the ongoing fan @-@ based culture associated with the game .

= = Music = =

The music for each game in the Myst series has fallen to various composers . Originally , the Millers believed that any music or sound besides ambient noise would distract the player from the game and ruin the sense of reality ; Myst , therefore , was to have no music at all . A sound test eventually persuaded the developers that music heightened the sense of immersion rather than lessening it , and as such Robyn Miller composed 40 minutes of synthesized music for the game . He would also produce the music for Riven , which featured leitmotifs for each of the main characters . Virgin Records bought the rights to the music and produced the soundtracks , which were released in 1998 .

For Myst III : Exile and Myst IV : Revelation , composer Jack Wall created the music , developing a more active musical style different from Miller 's ambient themes . Wall looked at the increasing complexity of games as an opportunity to give players a soundtrack with as much force as a movie score , and tried to create a distinctive sound that was still recognizable as Myst music . In Revelation , Wall adapted the themes for the recurring characters of Myst , and collaborated with Peter Gabriel , who provided a song to the game as well as voicework .

The music for Uru : Ages Beyond Myst and Myst V : End of Ages was composed by Tim Larkin , who had gotten involved in the series doing sound design for Riven . Larkin stepped away from his background as a jazz composer and musician to create music with less structure and without a definite beginning and end . Larkin created different music depending on the location , giving each setting and Age a distinctive tone . For End of Ages , Larkin was unable to afford a full orchestra to perform his score , so he combined individual instrumentation with an array of synthesizers .

= = Adaptations = =

Rand and Robyn Miller both wanted to develop Myst 's back story into novels . After the success of Myst , publisher Hyperion signed a three @-@ book , US \$ 1 million deal with the brothers . David Wingrove worked from the Miller brothers ' story outlines . The three books , entitled Myst : The Book of Atrus , Myst : The Book of Ti 'ana , and Myst : The Book of D 'ni , were released in 1995 , 1996 , and 1997 , respectively . The books were later packaged together as The Myst Reader . A fourth novel , entitled Myst : The Book of Marrim , is planned .

Cyan partnered with Dark Horse Comics in 1993 to release a limited four @-@ part comic series called Myst : The Book of Black Ships . The series would have focused on Atrus and his young sons , taking place before the events of Myst . The first issue was released on September 3 , 1997 , but further books were canceled after Cyan decided the first issue did not live up to expectations . Another comic , Myst # 0 : Passages , was later released online .

After the Myst series ' success , various proposals for films and television series based on the franchise were planned or rumored . The Sci Fi Channel announced in 2002 that a TV miniseries would be produced based on Myst , to be produced by Mandalay Television Pictures in association with Columbia TriStar Domestic Television and Cyan , but never materialized . According to Rand Miller , none of the various proposals met Cyan 's approval , or were too formulaic or silly . Independent filmmakers Patrick McIntire and Adrian Vanderbosch , themselves Myst fans , took it upon themselves to produce a motion picture based on the story revealed in the Myst novels . In 2006 , the filmmakers sent a DVD proposal to Cyan . The developers gave the filmmakers permission to begin production . The film was set to be based on the novel Myst : The Book of Ti 'ana , but no longer appears to be in production .

In October 2014 , Legendary Entertainment announced that it was developing a television series based on Myst , with the involvement of the Miller brothers and Cyan . Legendary stated that they plan to use transmedia companion pieces for the show , such as new video games .

= = Reception and impact = =

Overall , the Myst series has been commercially and critically successful . Rand and Robyn Miller were expecting Myst to perform as well as previous Cyan titles , making enough money to fund the next project . Instead , Myst sold more than six million units , becoming the top @-@ selling PC

game of all time until The Sims surpassed its sales in 2002 . The first three games in the series have sold more than twelve million copies .

1UP.com writer Jeremy Parish noted that there have been two main opinions of Myst 's slow , puzzle @-@ based gameplay ; " Fans consider Myst an elegant , intelligent game for grown @-@ ups , while detractors call it a soulless stroll through a digital museum , more art than game . " Game industry executives were confused by Myst 's success , not understanding how an " interactive slide show " turned out to be a huge hit . Online magazine writer Russell Pitts of The Escapist called Myst " unlike anything that had come before , weaving video almost seamlessly into a beautifully rendered world , presenting a captivating landscape filled with puzzles and mystery . In a game market dominated by Doom clones and simulators , Myst took us by the hand and showed us the future of gaming . It took almost a decade for anyone to follow its lead . " Critics from Wired and Salon considered the games approaching the level of art , while authors Henry Jenkins and Lev Manovich pointed out the series as exemplifying the promise of new media to create unseen art forms .

The series caused a major trend shift in the adventure game genre . Unlike previous games , Myst attempted to keep players immersed in the world by removing all information not associated with the fictional world itself ? no explanatory text , inventory , or score counters . Myst has also been cited as the reason for the decline of the adventure game genre ; eager to capitalize on Myst 's success , publishers churned out mediocre Myst clones , which flooded the market . By Exile 's release , games like Myst were considered to be an " antiquated " form of gaming by some critics .

Myst 's effects extended to those who played the games and technology . The title was widely credited as one of the first games to appeal not just to hardcore gamers but to casual players and demographics that generally did not play games , such as women . Myst 's lack of conventional game elements ? violence , dying , and failure ? appealed to nongamers and those contemplating buying a computer . The Millers ' decision to develop Myst for the nascent CD @-@ ROM format helped boost interest and adoption of disc drives .

The game inspired a CD parody game entitled Pyst , written by comedian Peter Bergman and featured John Goodman in video scenes . Players traveled across the spoiled island of Myst after millions of players walked over it , with the parody game poking fun at elements of the prototype .

= = Fan conventions = =

The game has spawned annual fan conventions around the world . Mysterium has been held since 2000 , which grew out of the plans of a small group of fans who wanted to meet face to face . Word spread , and eventually approximately 200 people attended the meeting in Spokane , Washington , which was held at the headquarters of Cyan Worlds , developers of the game . Subsequent conventions have been more formally planned , involving presentations and live music . Similar to Mysterium , Mystralia is a gathering for Australia and New Zealand and has been held since 2005 .