= Project Sylpheed =

Project Sylpheed (?????? ?????? , Purojiekuto Shiruf) , also known as Project Sylpheed : Arc of Deception in North America , is a space simulation game for the Xbox 360 console . It was developed by SETA and published by Square Enix and Microsoft . The game is acknowledged as the spiritual successor to the Silpheed video game series , which comprised 3D rail shooters : players pilot a starfighter , shooting incoming enemies on a vertically scrolling third @-@ person playing field . Project Sylpheed uses full 3D computer graphics and allows the player to instead pilot his or her spacecraft in any direction .

Project Sylpheed 's plot is set in a fictional 27th century where an interstellar human empire is about to erupt in a civil war . The game pits the protagonist and his spacecraft , configured with a variety of weapons and augmentations , against masses of small enemy fighters and large capital warships. he game is interjected at various points with cutscenes that reveal the story . Critical opinions on Project Sylpheed were mixed ; reviews varied from considering it an exciting cinematic shooter to calling it a clichéd and complicated simulator . Microsoft considered the game a commercial success , branding it one of Xbox 360 's Platinum Collection .

= = Gameplay = =

In Project Sylpheed , players take on the role of a rookie pilot and fly the Delta Saber starfighter in a campaign that comprises 16 missions . Typical mission objectives are to destroy specific enemy targets and to protect allied ships . There are also optional secondary goals , such as completing certain tasks within a time limit or without taking damage . Completing the primary objectives within a time limit successfully completes a mission ; failure to do so ends the game . If the player fails a mission several times in a row , the game offers an option to skip to the next stage .

Players control the Delta Saber from a view as if they were in the cockpit , or a slight distance away from and outside the craft . The controller 's thumbstick are used to fly the starfighter in any direction . By pressing the maneuver button and pushing the thumbstick in a direction , the player makes his or her fighter perform aileron rolls and 180 @-@ degrees turns (half @-@ loops) . Various button combinations control the Delta Saber 's speed , allowing the craft to boost to great speeds with afterburners , coast on inertia without power , or match speed with a target . Certain maneuvers require the expenditure of shield energy , which protects starships from damage ; an unshielded vessel under attack suffers damage to its armor . A ship is destroyed when its armor is depleted .

On starting a new campaign , the player receives a small selection of missiles , guns , beams , and bombs to mount on his or her ship . By accomplishing certain goals in the game , the player obtains advanced weaponry ? possessing greater damage , range , and targeting abilities ? for his or her spacecraft . He or she can also purchase more powerful equipment with the points gained by completing missions . These points are determined by factors such as the number of enemies destroyed , the time the mission is completed in , and the number of secondary objectives completed . Aside from functioning as a form of currency to purchase equipment , the points act as a score of the players ' performance .

After completing a campaign , the player can replay it in a New Game Plus mode , restarting the new campaign with weapons and equipment gathered in the previous run . Besides the campaign , Project Sylpheed offers six standalone missions that are downloaded over Xbox Live . These missions , with goals such as killing as many enemies as possible within a time limit , provide online leaderboards for players to compare their scores against each other .

= = Plot = =

Project Sylpheed 's setting , exposited through flashback sequences during the game , is a fictional 27th century in which human civilization has expanded beyond Earth for 500 years , colonizing several worlds and forming the Terra Central Government (TCG) . Seated on Earth , the government uses military force to suppress colonial uprisings . The ADAN Alliance , formed by

colonists of four star @-@ systems , initially engaged in politics to seek independence for their worlds . The central government 's responded by destroying the terraforming facilities of an alliance planet , Acheron , killing many colonists and turning the world inhospitable . ADAN does not believe TCG 's cover @-@ up of its involvement in the planet 's devastation and launches a war on what they see as a tyrant government .

= = = Characters = = =

 Reviewers noted that Project Sylpheed 's character designs were very similar to those in Square Enix 's Final Fantasy line of games : sporting hair of various colors , generously endowed females and androgynous men make up the cast . Exhibiting many outbursts of emotions , the characters are heavily modeled after personalities commonly found in typical Japanese animation (anime) . Characters are given voice in the animated cutscenes that exposits the game 's story , and in the missions , they radio the player character with vocal comments and updates .
 The player assumes the role of Katana Faraway , a young talented pilot in the Terra Central Armed Forces (TCAF) . Faraway possesses a strong sense of loyalty to his friends and affiliation . As the game progresses , he gradually falls in love with Ellen Bernstein , a close friend and fellow pilot . Pitted against them are the forces of ADAN . The most prominent among them is Margras Mason , who is modeled after the typical anime antagonist . A close friend of Faraway and Bernstein , Mason was evicted from Earth as tensions escalated between TCG and ADAN . During his return to his homeworld (Acheron) , he witnesses its devastation by the TCAF . He joins ADAN to exact vengeance on the TCAF . Commanding ADAN is Doris Egan , daughter of a prominent anti @-@ government activist who was killed in the attack on Acheron . Like Mason , she is also pursuing vengeance , but with an extremist attitude .

= = = Story = = =

 Project Sylpheed 's plot has the style and substance of typical anime , depicting characters as the focal points of events rather than individual pawns in the grand scheme of things . Told through an hour 's worth of animated cutscenes , the story starts in the Lebendorf star system where Faraway 's squadron is ambushed by ADAN forces . Losing a pilot , the squadron fights its way out , along with its mother ship ? the Acropolis . The attacking force is later revealed to be part of a larger invasion fleet . After defending the planet from the invaders and cruise missiles , Lebendorf is evacuated and the TCAF retreats from the system . As Faraway and his team retreat , the fleeing civilians are attacked by ADAN forces , this time led by Margras Mason . Though having the opportunity to kill Faraway , Mason spares him on account of their friendship , though warns him to leave the military or be killed on their next encounter . Acropolis withdraws to the planet Hargenteen where the TCAF is massing against ADAN 's onslaught .
 After repairs , the carrier joins a task force on a mission , attacking deep into the enemy 's territory to draw away part of ADAN 's fleet . The task force commander , however , fell for an ambush . Panicking , he orders a retreat , abandoning the Acropolis , which was investigating nearby Acheron . While defending the carrier , Faraway shoots down Mason 's fighter . Landing where Mason crashed , Faraway engages him in a fistfight and learns the story behind Acheron 's devastation . After Mason 's rescue by ADAN , Faraway returns to Acropolis . The mothership retreats to Hargateen and rejoins its defenders , holding off several waves of ADAN attacks . However , Egan arrives with her superweapon , the Promethus Driver , and destroys most of the TCAF defenders and several ADAN ships with a single shot that also devastates the planet 's surface . Too few to mount an effective assault against ADAN , the remaining TCAF ships , including Acropolis , retreat to Earth . Bent on revenge , Egan announces Earth as ADAN 's next target despite Mason 's heavy disapproval .
 Scouting ahead of ADAN 's main force , Mason 's squadron is challenged and destroyed by Faraway 's fighters . Mason is captured and Faraway persuades him to defect ; the TCAF learns the weakness of the Promethus Driver from Mason . In the final battle , Mason flies alongside Faraway ,

destroying many of ADAN 's ships and sacrificing himself to clear a way for his friend to reach the Promethus Driver 's firing mechanism . Faraway destroys the mechanism , causing the superweapon to implode and form a gravity well . His ship fails to escape the well 's pull and loses power ; however , Mason 's spirit appears and restarts the Delta Saber , helping Faraway to escape . The post @-@ credits scene shows Faraway and Bernstein , as they stand together on a revitalized Acheron .

= = Development = =

 Project Sylpheed was first announced by Square Enix to be in development on April 5 , 2006 . The video games publisher proclaimed at an Xbox 360 conference in Tokyo , Japan , that the game was the company 's first exclusive title for the Microsoft game console . This was part of Enix 's strategy to diversify its market , spreading its interests among the Xbox 360 , PlayStation 3 , and Wii . Initially titled Project Sylph , the game was renamed Project Sylpheed for a more obvious connection with its predecessor , Silpheed . The original game , first released in 1986 , was a rail shooter rendered with 2D computer graphics ; dodging and shooting at incoming enemies , the player 's starship moved around a playing field that scrolled vertically . Enix also credited Game Arts , the company that had created Silpheed , as the developers of Project Sylpheed .
 Game Arts 's presence on the project , however , was more of a supervisory role . Project Sylpheed was conceived and developed by SETA 's Ikusabune team , which comprised former Game Arts employees who had worked on the Silpheed series . The team intended to use the latest technology at the time to produce a sequel to Silpheed . The new game would allow player characters to move anywhere in a three @-@ dimensional playing arena , instead of restricting them to fixed paths as in standard rail shooters . Computer graphics studio , Anima , was brought in to develop the game 's story and characters , creating the animated cut scenes that are interspersed among the missions . The product of this collaboration was showcased at Tokyo Game Show 2006 ; journalists had fun with the space shooter , commenting that its controls and learning curve were simpler than those of space flight simulators .
 Project Sylpheed was first released in Japan on September 28 , 2006 ; Square Enix published the game with only Japanese text and audio . Microsoft Game Studios handled the releases for Europe and North America , localizing Project Sylpheed for the English @-@ speaking market . Voice actors of the Western anime industry were brought in ; Vic Mignogna ? whose credits included Fullmetal Alchemist and The Super Dimension Fortress Macross ? voiced Faraway , and Kari Wahlgren ? who voiced characters in Blood + and Final Fantasy XII ? provided Bernstein 's voice . A demo of the game , providing a single mission and a small selection of the weapons in the retail version , was available for downloading over Xbox Live on June 14 , 2007 , and the game went on sale outside Japan two weeks later . On July 25 , the game 's downloadable content was made available for free on Xbox Live .

= = Reception = =

 The 1980s was a period of fast growth for the video game industry . The shooter genre was enjoyed by gamers , who loved its fast paced action and high score boards that allowed them to compete with each other . Influential shooters , such as R @-@ Type and Radiant Silvergun , revolutionized the genre by introducing new elements to the gameplay . Although not as innovative , Silpheed won critical acclaim and attracted a following by allowing players to customize their ships ' weapons . The popularity of shooters began to wane in the 1990s as gamers turned their attention to video games that featured the latest technology ? 3D computer graphics . Members of the industry believed the genre was about to fade into obscurity or already in the throes of its demise . Project Sylpheed 's announcement gave them pause and led them to wonder if the new game would rejuvenate the genre . Project Sylpheed lets players fly starfighters and dogfight many enemies in the vastness of space ; however , G4tv 's reviewer , David Francis Smith , said that the game 's designers had " no idea how to create structured , intelligible action in such a big area . " Several of

his colleagues agreed , finding the game flawed in the design of its missions . They were disappointed that most missions , in the words of Xbox World 's Michael Gapper , tasked them to " fly , shoot , rearm , [and] shoot more " endlessly . Reviewers were also irked that they were not informed about the secondary objectives in a mission ; the goals were only revealed after the reviewers had completed them unawares . Further frustration arose from the fact that certain time limits were only displayed on nearing expiration . Other reviewers had no qualms with these flaws , stating that the intense dogfights more than compensate such shortcomings ; Game Informer 's Andrew Reiner wrote that the " rewarding quick @-@ trigger combat and thrill of overcoming the worst of odds makes Project Sylpheed a memorable play for gamers who daydream of galaxies far , far away . "

In Project Sylpheed , starfighters and missiles leave colorful contrails in their wake as they move through the void of space , and explode into fireballs when destroyed . The graphics impressed several critics ; in his article for Play magazine , Dave Halverson called the game " by far the prettiest free @-@ roaming shooter ever created " . Other reviewers felt the effects were not outstanding ; IGN 's Erik Brudvig said the explosions looked like " bloody snot " . Finding the maelstrom of color contrails distracting , Justin Hoeger wrote in his article for The Sacramento Bee that he was dogfighting " garish , neon @-@ colored contrails " instead of enemy fighters , a sentiment shared by several others . Will Freeman of Videogamer.com , however , appreciated the contrails for filling the emptiness of space with " tangled webs of gently shimmering blue and red " and found them useful as " a way of tracking [his] enemies " .

Certain reviewers had negative experiences with the game caused by other factors . They had difficulty picking out enemies , which were small or fleeting targets because of their distance or speed , among a " haze of microscopic heads @-@ up labels . " Chris Dahlen of The A. V. Club criticized the game for forcing the player to constantly focus on the instruments to locate targets , thus breaking the illusion of dogfighting in a spacefighter . Other reviewers had a hard time with the game 's controls , finding them too complex ; however , those who mastered the controls could perform deft maneuvers with their starfighters . Another disappointment for reviewers was Project Sylpheed 's failure to provide a game mode that they and their friends could play together online .

The weaving of a storyline with its missions made Project Sylpheed unique ; shooters rarely did so . TeamXbox 's Andy Eddy called the story " absolutely the best part of the game " , and several of his colleagues agreed . The focus on relationships made it more complex and easier to relate to than those found in other shooters , and Halverson praised the game for lacing a " mission @-@ based space opera " with " real emotion " . Again , differing opinions are not uncommon ; Hardcore Gamer 's Thomas Wilde was disappointed to find the game akin to an exaggerated science @-@ fiction soap opera . Others found the story clichéd and uninteresting , especially for those who have watched plenty of " Japanese video game drama " . According to Dahlen , it is a " story of warring fleets of strippers and Muppet @-@ boys determined to wipe each other out of the galaxy . " Gapper wished that the story 's cutscenes stop interrupting his enjoyment of shooting the enemies .

Overall , critical reactions of the game were varied ; its features did not have universal appeal . Wilde argued that only rabid fans of the themes incorporated in Project Sylpheed would be interested in the game . His colleague , Geson Hatchett , felt the game would have been better as a rail shooter with 3D graphics . The general sentiment among reviewers was that Project Sylpheed could not spark a revival of interest in a long @-@ dying genre regardless of whatever qualities it may have . Despite receiving such reactions , Project Sylpheed sold enough copies (as judged by Microsoft) in Japan within the first nine months of its release to become part of Xbox 360 's Platinum Collection on November 1 , 2007 .