

= Mischief Makers =

Mischief Makers is a 1997 side @-@ scrolling platform video game developed by Treasure and published by Enix and Nintendo for the Nintendo 64 . The player assumes the role of Marina , a robotic maid who journeys to rescue her creator from the emperor of Planet Clancer . The gameplay revolves around grabbing , shaking , and throwing objects . There are five worlds and 52 levels , and the game is displayed in " 2 1 ? 2D " .

The game was the first 2D side @-@ scrolling game for the Nintendo 64 , and Treasure 's first release for a Nintendo console . The company began Mischief Makers 's development in mid @-@ 1995 with little knowledge of the console 's features . The 12 @-@ person team wanted to make a novel gameplay mechanic , and implementing the resultant " catching " technique became their most difficult task . The game appeared at the 1997 Electronic Entertainment Expo and was first released in Japan on June 27 , 1997 , and later in the United States , the United Kingdom , and Australia .

The game received " mixed or average reviews " , according to video game review score aggregator Metacritic . Critics praised Mischief Makers 's inventiveness , personality , and boss fights , but criticized its brevity , low difficulty , low replay value , sound , and harsh introductory learning curve . Retrospective reviewers disagreed with the originally poor reception , and multiple reviewers noted Marina 's signature " Shake , shake ! " sound bite as a highlight . Video game journalists cited Mischief Makers as ripe for reissue either through the Nintendo eShop or in a sequel or franchise reboot . In 2009 , GamesRadar called it " possibly the most underrated and widely ignored game on the N64 " .

= = Gameplay = =

Mischief Makers is the first single @-@ player 2D side @-@ scrolling platform game on the Nintendo 64 console . Its gameplay combines platform game mechanics with aspects from the action and puzzle genres . The characters and backgrounds are modeled in pre @-@ rendered 3D similar to Donkey Kong Country 's " Advanced Computer Modeling " . This style , with 3D backgrounds behind 2D gameplay , is known as " 2 1 ? 2D " . Compared to previous Treasure run and gun games , Mischief Makers 's gameplay is more exploratory in nature .

The player @-@ character , a robotic maid named Marina , journeys to save her kidnapped creator . The story takes place on Planet Clancer , a world on the cusp of civil war due to the actions of its Emperor and his Imperial forces . The Emperor brainwashes Clancers to kidnap the visiting robotics genius Professor Theo . Theo 's creation , the player @-@ character Ultra @-@ InterGalactic @-@ Cybot G Marina Liteyears , pursues the professor and grabs , throws , and shakes the obstacles in her way , such as enemies , floating " Clanball " platforms , warp stars , and missiles . Indeed , almost all game objects can be grabbed , which lends towards the shake @-@ based combat system . Marina can shake " grabbed " objects to throw them as projectiles or to find loot . Objects sometimes change functions when shaken , such as items that become homing missiles and guns with multi @-@ directional shots . Some drop red , blue , and green gems , which restore player health . The health gauge in the corner of the screen shows the amount of damage Marina can take . The player can store up to two additional stock lives . Yellow gems hidden in each level extend the final cutscene 's length . Marina can run , jump , and boost (via jetpack) in the eight cardinal and ordinal directions . She can also slide , hover , and roll .

The game has five worlds with roughly twelve levels apiece . Some levels are action @-@ only while others include puzzles . The player 's goal is to reach a warp star at each level 's end . En route , Marina shakes enemies , breaks blocks , uses weapons , and rides " bikes " and objects along wire path mazes . Each world has both final and mid @-@ level bosses . The levels and boss fights use scaling and screen rotation special effects to vary the gameplay .

Almost all things on Planet Clancer ? including people , buildings , and pets ? either wear or are inscribed with identical " sad " faces with " red , glowing eyes " . A Clancer named Teran substitutes for Marina in several brief areas and uses non @-@ shake mechanics like punching , kicking , and

double jumping . A character named Calina , a petulant Clancer who imitates Marina , recurs throughout the game as a comedic device .

= = Development = =

Treasure began to develop Mischief Makers in mid 1995 . At the time , they knew little about the Nintendo 64 's final technical specifications , graphics implementation , and development kit , but were nevertheless interested in the console and its improved " pixel quality " . Historically , Treasure developed games exclusively for Sega consoles , which made Mischief Makers their first release for a Nintendo console . Bringing Mischief Makers to the Nintendo 64 was a hardware @-@ based decision : the Nintendo 64 's cartridges were more expensive than CD @-@ ROMs , but they loaded data instantly and were thus more conducive for action games such as Mischief Makers . However , Treasure CEO Masato Maegawa said that development for the Nintendo 64 had a harsher learning curve than even the Sega Saturn . Other than the special attention required to build a single boss in 3D , the team did not use features specific to the Nintendo 64 hardware .

Treasure 's founders had come from Konami , where they worked on Nintendo Entertainment System games such as Castlevania and Contra . They found their development environment restrictive and left to try riskier concepts and to singularly focus on making " great games " . In the three years between Treasure 's founding and Mischief Makers 's development , the company released highly regarded games such as Gunstar Heroes ? known as " one of the definitive 16 @-@ bit action games " ? and Dynamite Headdy . An average of 12 people worked on Mischief Makers , with up to 15 at times . Though the team was different in composition from that of previous Treasure titles , it included the lead programmer and character designer from Gunstar Heroes . Treasure 's CEO said that the company liked to expand into new genres , though they primarily work in genres where the staff had experience . The company sought to depart from the Gunstar Heroes shoot ' em up design , and chose to build Mischief Makers around an original " catching " gameplay mechanic , which became the hardest aspect to implement . While foreign (non @-@ Japanese) aesthetics were popular with other Japanese developers , Treasure 's CEO felt the company 's games did not look " particularly foreign " and could appeal to Japanese audiences .

The game was Treasure 's first to be published by Enix . The publisher sought out Treasure for their reputation in the action game genre , and had approached Treasure several times before the Nintendo 64 project surfaced . Upon choosing to make the game for the Nintendo 64 , Treasure thought it would be a " good idea " to work with Enix . And similar to how Treasure ended its historic loyalty to the Sega Genesis by developing Mischief Makers for Nintendo , Enix had just recently ended its historic loyalty to Nintendo by signing Dragon Quest VII of their Dragon Quest franchise to Sony . Neither Square or Enix built a " special relationship " with Nintendo specific for Mischief Makers 's release , though Nintendo later served as the game 's publisher for Western markets . When their English localization of the Japanese game finished ahead of schedule , the North American release date was advanced two weeks accordingly .

Mischief Makers was demonstrated at the 1997 Electronic Entertainment Expo and later released in Japan on June 27 , 1997 , the United States on October 1 , and the United Kingdom and Australia on January 15 , 1998 . Its Japanese title is Yuke @-@ Yuke Trouble Makers , or Go @-@ Go Trouble Makers . Near the time of the game 's Japanese launch , Treasure announced that they would continue to develop for the Nintendo 64 with the Japan @-@ only Bakuretsu Muteki Bangaioh , which was released in September and later introduced to North America as Bangai @-@ O.

= = Reception = =

Mischief Makers received " mixed or average reviews " , according to video game review score aggregator Metacritic , and a " Gold Hall of Fame " score of 32 / 40 from Japanese magazine Famitsu . Critics praised the game 's inventiveness , personality , " variety " , and boss fights , and criticized its brevity , low difficulty , low replay value , sound , and harsh introductory learning curve . Retrospective reviewers disagreed with the game 's originally poor reception , and multiple

reviewers noted Marina 's signature " Shake , shake ! " sound bite as a highlight . Electronic Gaming Monthly awarded the game their silver award .

IGN 's Matt Casamassina said that the game compensated for its average graphics with excellent level design and gameplay challenges . He added that the game 's puzzles require thought , unlike those in other action / platform games , and that the game 's objectives were not clear until after the first few levels . Casamassina praised the game 's transparency effects , anti @-@ aliasing , mipmapping , and scaling rotations . IGN described anticipation for the game as " tremendous " , particularly among the game 's market of " younger gamers and 2D fans " . Nintendo Power thought that the game was the best side @-@ scroller since Super Mario World . Next Generation wrote that " only diehard 2D platform fans " would be interested and did not feel that the game lived up to standards set by Mario 64 . In contrast , GameFan said that Mischief Makers did for 2D what Mario 64 did for 3D , and suggested that Sega should be influenced by the game . GamesRadar retrospectively called Mischief Makers " pure , unadulterated awesome " and " 2D brilliance " . The website summarized the game to be about " grabbing sad @-@ faced aliens , shaking them until gems come out , and then hurling them at other sad @-@ faced aliens . " Zachary Miller of Nintendo World Report asserted the game may be the console 's most bizarre and surreal , but Gamasutra 's John Harris said that the game 's premise is " only strange to people who have never heard of anime " . GameFan described the game as " obviously deeply Japanese " , where " old school gameplay and 64 @-@ bit visuals finally meet " .

Hirokazu Hamamura of Famitsu commended Mischief Makers 's gameplay , which balanced its poor character design . Other Famitsu reviewers admired Treasure 's signature robot designs and were puzzled by the company 's choice to use buttons instead of the 3D analog stick . Nintendo Life 's Jamie O 'Neill praised the game 's characters and disliked the controls . He compared the Calina character to the role of Shadow Mario in Super Mario Sunshine . O 'Neill wrote that the intricate controls were " the antithesis of a friendly , approachable , and intuitive platformer " because the game used every button on the controller (including the directional pad) , though he felt that players who persevered through the difficult controls would find them " inventive and unique " . He added that the complex controls allowed for experimentation that led to new and fun gameplay , and though the throwing enemies mechanic seemed to follow from Gunstar Heroes , the Clanball platforming was unintuitive . John Harris of Gamasutra wrote that the game borrowed other elements from Gunstar Heroes , as the games were similar in protagonists , collectible gems , and bosses . As the game took time to learn and understand , O 'Neill left the reader to decide whether the game was " ultimately convoluted or bordering on sophistication and genius " .

Nintendo Life 's O 'Neill thought the five world bosses were among Treasure 's best (in particular , the transforming " Cerberus Alpha " boss) , but found the mid @-@ level bosses uninteresting . Peter Bartholow of GameSpot and Electronic Gaming Monthly 's reviewers felt similarly . Sushi @-@ X of Electronic Gaming Monthly added that the technique of looking for a boss 's weak spot was similar to Metroid . Famitsu reviewers praised how the game encouraged players to experiment with the basic " grab , throw , and shake " gameplay . They also appreciated the cadence of Mischief Makers 's short levels . O 'Neill (Nintendo Life) thought the game had great variety in gameplay mechanics (from maze puzzles to outrunning lava) , graphics (from bosses that scale back the screen to levels with screen rotation) , and audio (from upbeat quirk to scary) , and added that he was surprised to hear critics speak against the " unique , varied , and dramatic " sound . Scott McCall of AllGame too appreciated the sound , from the voice to the " almost indescribable " music . Gamasutra 's John Harris noted its " tremendous variety " in gameplay ? from a Track & Field remake to outrunning a missile barrage ? as rare for 2D platformers , and commented that " it is obvious that Treasure poured their hearts into this game . "

Peter Bartholow of GameSpot summarized Mischief Makers as " a good game that will leave players wanting more " . He liked the bosses , which made the player use all available skills , but felt they were short @-@ lived and easily solved in the context of a short game with tutorials as one fifth of its levels . He did not consider the ending extension a suitable reward for returning to the levels , and predicted that most players would not finish the game more than once . Game Informer echoed Bartholow 's comments about the game 's brevity , and named the game 's seven @-@ event

olympics as a highlight . Sushi @-@ X of Electronic Gaming Monthly wrote that the game felt incomplete and lamented that " a decent player can finish the game in under three hours " , though Next Generation said the game was " certainly long enough " . The game 's frequent reuse of a small selection of tiles , objects , sound effects , soundtracks , and bland backgrounds (compared to the " impressive " boss battle animations and effects) led GameSpot 's Bartholow to suggest that Mischief Makers was limited by its cartridge space . He concluded that the " decent " game would be " truly excellent ... on another medium " . Zachary Miller of Nintendo World Report reported that the graphics did not age well into 2010 . Electronic Gaming Monthly wrote that the game is " definitely a sleeper hit " . As Hardcore Gamer 's Ryan Cartmel put it , the game went " largely unnoticed " .

= = = Legacy = = =

Video game journalists from outlets such as GamesRadar and Nintendo World Report cited Mischief Makers as ripe for reissue either through the Nintendo eShop or in a sequel or franchise reboot . Retro Gamer placed the " masterpiece of mayhem " 80th on their list of " essential " Nintendo 64 games for its " unbridled quality " . In 2009 , GamesRadar called it " possibly the most underrated and widely ignored game on the N64 " . The website wrote that Mischief Makers was received poorly because players wanted 3D instead of 2D gameplay from Nintendo 64 games . Gamasutra 's John Harris added that those who gave it a " bum rap " missed a " surprisingly clever " game . UGO remembered the game as innovative , though imperfect , and asked to see Marina reinterpreted and resurrected in a new game .