

= Chrono Trigger : Crimson Echoes =

Chrono Trigger : Crimson Echoes is a fangame developed by the international team Kajar Laboratories as a ROM hack of Square 's role @-@ playing video game Chrono Trigger for the Super Nintendo Entertainment System . It was conceived as an unofficial installment in the Chrono series , set between the events of Chrono Trigger and its sequel Chrono Cross .

The game , as a ROM hack , runs on the Chrono Trigger game engine and has gameplay similar to the original . It is based five years after the events of Chrono Trigger and features all the playable characters from the original game , who come together across different time periods to fight an enemy attempting to change the past . The plot includes elements from both official games . Crimson Echoes concludes by setting up several plot points that were used in Chrono Cross .

The project was in development from 2004 ? 09 , with 98 % of the game completed . The game reportedly totaled around 35 hours of play time , and had ten alternate endings . A few weeks prior to the expected released date , Square Enix sent the developers a cease @-@ and @-@ desist letter for knowingly violating Square Enix 's intellectual property , which led to the cancellation of the project . This cancellation was widely reported in the gaming press , who were largely sympathetic to the project . Despite its cancellation , versions of the game ranging from an alpha to a release candidate have since been leaked onto the internet and can be played through to the end .

= = Gameplay = =

As Crimson Echoes runs on the Chrono Trigger game engine , the gameplay is similar to that of the original title . Players and enemies may use physical or magical attacks to wound targets during battle , and players may use items to heal or protect themselves . Each character and enemy has a certain number of hit points that are reduced by successful attacks and can be restored through potions and spells . When a playable character loses all hit points , he or she faints . It also uses the Active Time Battle 2 @.@ 0 system from the first game . The game features new maps , graphics and sprites . New minigames were designed to reward players with items and equipment , including a " Coliseum " battle mode based on that of Final Fantasy VII and a casino featuring luck @-@ based games .

= = Characters = =

Crimson Echoes features all the playable characters of the original game , and is set five years after the events of Chrono Trigger . Crono and Marle are junior regents of the Kingdom of Guardia ; Lucca continues her scientific endeavors . The three struggle to ease tensions with Porre , which has modernized its military and seeks to end Guardia 's economic hegemony . Frog lives in 605 A.D. , restored to his human form , though this was not implemented before the cease and desist letter . Magus searches for Schala in the still @-@ frozen 11 @,@ 995 B.C. , and feuds with Dalton , obsessed with finding artifacts from the lost Kingdom of Zeal . Ayla dwells in 64 @,@ 999 @,@ 995 B.C. , and has given birth to her tribe 's successor . Robo assists the Guru of Time Belthasar , who has established a clandestine temporal research facility named Chronopolis in 2305 A.D. Belthasar claims it will be a guardian of time to ensure a threat such as Lavos will never arise . He nonetheless harbors darker wishes to leave a grand legacy in history , and is almost recklessly pragmatic . He fixes the Epoch during the story 's course , which returns as the Neo @-@ Epoch (akin to its design in Chrono Cross) .

The main villain of Crimson Echoes is King Zeal , revived by Lavos through the Frozen Flame . Confused and saddened by the loss of his kingdom , he is easily manipulated by Lavos , who uses him to attempt revenge on Crono and his friends . He later learns of his deception , and seeks to dominate Lavos and recreate his kingdom through unmatched temporal power . While under Lavos 's influence , he recruits Dalton and Kasmir to his cause . Kasmir is an illusionist who served under Magus in the Mystic War . King Zeal gives him the Masamune , and he assumes leadership of the Mystics after 600 A.D. Other foes come from the Reptite timeline , an alternate universe temporarily

brought into existence by King Zeal 's meddling . They number the Dragon God ? a Reptite artificial intelligence created in an alternate timeline ? and the Xamoltan time travelers , who were used by King Zeal and survive into the restored human world . The party also visit 1 A.D. , the era of the founding of Guardia . There , they meet Cedric the Executor , the ruthless first King of Guardia , as well as Antaeus , the ancestor of Porre .

= = Plot = =

The game begins as Crono , Marle , and Lucca attend a political meeting between the Kingdom of Guardia and Porre . An assassin attacks ; the party pursues him to the Denadoro Mts . , where Lucca 's prototype Time Egg backfires and sends them to the future . They find Belthasar there , who has established a research facility called Chronopolis . He warns of a new threat to the timeline , and sends the party to the Ocean Palace ruins of 11 @, @ 995 B.C. to investigate . They find Magus , still searching for Schala and feuding with Dalton . They confront a mysterious villain who resurrects Schala and robs the early Masamune , still embedded in the husk of the Mammon Machine . Its theft changes history , causing the Mystics ' war in the Middle Ages to drag on another 50 years , led by the illusionist Kasmir . The party retrieve Frog (named Glenn in Crimson Echoes) from 605 A.D. and meet with Belthasar .

He explains the mysterious villain was King Zeal , somehow alive and in possession of the Frozen Flame , a shard of Lavos with incredible powers . Melchior takes up residence in Chronopolis to aid the fight against him . The party goes to 64 @, @ 999 @, @ 995 B.C. to find the Dragon 's Tooth , an enchanted totem that will assist Chronopolis . King Zeal confronts them at the old Lavos impact crater , scattering them through time and unleashing the " Atash Kedah " , a destructive spell that changes history . Marle awakens in 1 A.D. to discover Reptites have survived the long ice age , and war with humanity for control of the planet . Lucca and Robo arrive in 2305 A.D. , awaking in the midst of a futuristic Reptite civilization . They ally with rebellious , sentient robots and venture to Dinopolis , the equivalent of Chronopolis in this timeline . They destroy the Vision Serpent , an artificial intelligence created to administrate the world . Crono , Magus , and Glenn awaken in 1005 A.D. , and assault the earlier Dinopolis , where Reptite time travelers from 2305 A.D. have come to conduct research on the past . The party use the temporal technology in place to return to 64 @, @ 999 @, @ 995 B.C. and stop the Atash Kedah spell , restoring the human timeline .

Marle awakens in 1 A.D. once more , this time witnessing her ancestor , Cedric Guardia , brutally unify the world with the Frozen Flame . A ubiquitous agent from Chronopolis ? code @-@ named 12 ? brings her back to the future . The party learn that the Reptite time travelers ? named Cakulha , Coyopa , and Yaluk ? survived the human world 's restoration , and had been manipulated by King Zeal . The party fix the Mystic War by retrieving the Masamune from Kasmir and putting it back in antiquity . In 1005 A.D. , new diplomatic talks are about to begin . Porre instead launches an assault , backed by King Zeal and Dalton , placed in Porre 's high command by the king . King Guardia dies in the attack . The party venture to 11 @, @ 995 B.C. once more with Schala , intent on striking the Frozen Flame in antiquity to lure out King Zeal . This unleashes wild energies , and the party must overcome individual mental assaults by the Flame . King Zeal retreats , and the energies cause Schala to fall into the Darkness Beyond Time , a temporal netherworld . Unsuccessful , the party seek out Gaspar tens of millions of years in the past (known as the Dreamtime) , where he 's gone to witness the birth of the planet 's consciousness . King Zeal attacks them there ; Crono falls near the rifts of the forming planet and is partly infused with its natal awareness . The party learn that King Zeal 's ultimate goal is to resurrect the Kingdom of Zeal in 11 @, @ 995 B.C.

The party return to antiquity and defeat Dalton . King Zeal nears the fruition of his plan , but Melchior and Belthasar enter the time period to dissuade him . King Zeal leaves the Sun Stone , the trigger for the revival of Zeal , with a follower and walks to the North Cape . He reveals that Lavos survived defeat in Chrono Trigger and clung to life in the Darkness Beyond Time . He used the Frozen Flame to revive King Zeal , manipulating him to take revenge on the heroes . He is now merging with Schala , as he has done with all the other " Arbiters " who have used the Frozen Flame throughout history . Lavos calls King Zeal , intending to merge with him as well and evolve to

become the Dream Devourer (as seen in Chrono Trigger DS) . The party convince Zeal 's followers not to activate the Sun Stone , and pursue Zeal to the Darkness Beyond Time . King Zeal confronts them once more , revealing his will is stronger than that of Lavos ; he 'll merge , but become the dominant personality within the Dream Devourer and create a new Zeal using its vast power . The party defeat him and return to Chronopolis . They notice the planet 's Gates are closing again , and depart to their homes , promising to stay in touch . Belthasar meanwhile reveals he has the Frozen Flame , which activates and informs him that Lavos is still alive and will become the Time Devourer , the enemy of Chrono Cross . It challenges Belthasar to a grand game , and he begins drawing up plans for Project Kid . The game closes with King Zeal , shown to be alive and imprisoned by Magus in 11 @, @ 995 B.C. , who forces him to teach advanced temporal magic .

= = Development = =

The Crimson Echoes project was launched by ZeaLitY in 2004 . The development team , dubbed Kajar Laboratories , primarily consisted of members of the Chrono fansite Chrono Compendium . The team was led by a game director , Agent 12 , and two co @-@ directors , ZeaLitY and Chrono ' 99 . To create a story that was compatible with Chrono Trigger and Chrono Cross , the team took full advantage of the Chrono Compendium 's encyclopedia and the fandom 's knowledge and analysis of the series .

The game took the form of a ROM hack of the Super Nintendo Entertainment System version of Chrono Trigger . It was coded using Chrono Trigger ROM editing software , and was meant to be played on a Super Nintendo Entertainment System emulator . The finished game was intended to be released as a patch file in the IPS (International Patching System) format , so as to avoid illegal distribution of a full Chrono Trigger ROM .

The project lasted four and a half years , with a planned release date of May 31 , 2009 . However , Square Enix sent ZeaLitY and Agent 12 a cease @-@ and @-@ desist letter on May 8 , 2009 for trademark and copyright infringement , ordering that the team stop development and cancel all ROM hacking activities , including translation and distribution of all their other projects that were in progress or already released . The letter noted that ZeaLitY and Agent 12 risked being sued for " up to \$ 150 @, @ 000 per work " in damages . At the time of the cancellation , the game was " around 98 % complete " ; it allegedly featured 23 story chapters adding up to roughly 35 hours of gameplay and ten alternate endings .

= = Internet circulation = =

Shortly after the project received the cease and desist letter , an alpha version of the patch was leaked on the internet . ZeaLitY expressed his disapproval and embarrassment on the Crimson Echoes website , noting that the alpha version was extremely buggy and lacked many of the improvements made in the beta version . In January 2011 , a more complete beta version was leaked which could be played from beginning to end , believed to be the final build of the project prior to cancellation .

= = Reaction = =

Kajar Laboratories complied with the cease @-@ and @-@ desist letter and all traces of Crimson Echoes were removed from the Chrono Compendium . CNET senior associate editor Eric Franklin noted that it was " sad to see four and a half years of work go spinning down the drain , " stating : " I feel for the fans who were anticipating this . " 1UP.com called the project " ambitious , " noting that " This wasn 't just some fly @-@ by @-@ night hack . " Earnest Cavalli , from Wired , stated : " I fully understand Square Enix 's desire to protect its properties , but that doesn 't make this any less depressing . The game looked quite good (if obviously derivative) . " The project 's cancellation was also reported by gaming journalists in the Netherlands , France , and Japan . In February 2010 , GamesRadar included the game in an article about the " 10 fan games that shouldn 't be ceased or

desisted " .

Keith Stuart , from The Guardian , pointed out the contrast between Square Enix 's policy and that of companies like Valve , which officially adopted the Half @-@ Life fan mods Counter @-@ Strike and Day of Defeat , and Vivendi Universal Games , which granted a licence to the King 's Quest fan game The Silver Lining . He noted that since Crimson Echoes was a ROM hack , it was in a " trickier area of copy protection law " than those other projects , but felt that its release would have had next to no commercial impact since the game was to be distributed as an IPS patch rather than a ROM image . Finally , he noted that an official port of the fangame to the Nintendo DS or WiiWare would have had more " marketing benefits " for Square Enix .