

= Little Busters ! =

Little Busters ! (????????? ! , Ritoru Basut?zu !) is a Japanese visual novel developed by Key . It was released on July 27 , 2007 for Windows PCs and is rated for all ages . Little Busters ! is Key 's sixth game , along with other titles such as Kanon , Air , and Clannad . An adult version of the game titled Little Busters ! Ecstasy was released on July 25 , 2008 for Windows , unlike Kanon and Air , which were first released with adult content and then had later versions with such content removed . Ecstasy was later ported to the PlayStation 2 , PlayStation Portable , PlayStation Vita , and PlayStation 3 . The story follows the life of Riki Naoe , a high school student who has been a member of a group of friends named the Little Busters since childhood . Riki brings multiple girls at his school into the Little Busters to have enough people to play a baseball game .

The gameplay in Little Busters ! follows a branching plot line which offers pre @-@ determined scenarios with courses of interaction , and focuses on the appeal of the six female main characters by the player character , which increases to nine in Ecstasy . There are additional minigames added into the gameplay , such as battle sequences that resemble fighting games or baseball batting practice , which serve to give the characters experience , obtain accessories to use during battle , and improve their statistics . Both Little Busters ! and Ecstasy ranked as the best @-@ selling PC game sold in Japan for the time of their release , and Ecstasy would go on to sell over 100 @,@ 000 units . Key went on to produce an adult spin @-@ off called Kud Wafter in June 2010 , which expanded on the scenario of Kudryavka Noumi , one of the heroines from Little Busters ! and Ecstasy .

There have been 13 manga adaptations based on Little Busters ! and Ecstasy published by ASCII Media Works , Kadokawa Shoten and Ichijinsha . Comic anthologies , light novels and art books were also published , as were several music albums . There have been two Internet radio shows hosted by the voice actors of Rin and Kyouzuke Natsume and Kudryavka Noumi . A 26 @-@ episode anime television series adaptation , produced by J.C.Staff and directed by Yoshiaki Yamakawa , aired between October 2012 and April 2013 , and an additional original video animation (OVA) episode was released in August 2013 . A 13 @-@ episode second season produced by the same staff titled Little Busters ! Refrain aired between October and December 2013 . An eight @-@ episode OVA series titled Little Busters ! EX was released between January and July 2014 .

= = Gameplay = =

Little Busters ! is a romance visual novel in which the player assumes the role of Riki Naoe . Much of its gameplay is spent on reading the story 's narrative and dialogue . The text in the game is accompanied by character sprites , which represent who Riki is talking to , over background art . Throughout the game , the player encounters CG artwork at certain points in the story , which take the place of the background art and character sprites . When the game is completed at least once , a gallery of the viewed CGs and played background music becomes available on the game 's title screen . Little Busters ! follows a branching plot line with multiple endings , and depending on the decisions that the player makes during the game , the plot will progress in a specific direction .

There are seven main plot lines that the player will have the chance to experience . Throughout gameplay , the player is given multiple options to choose from , and text progression pauses at these points until a choice is made . To view all plot lines in their entirety , the player will have to replay the game multiple times and choose different choices to further the plot to an alternate direction . When first playing the game , the scenarios for all six heroines are available . Once a scenario for any one heroine is completed , that scenario will be unavailable in the next play through because the last choice that will ultimately lead to that heroine 's scenario becomes unavailable for players to choose . After the completion of these six routes , the final scenario called Refrain is made available , which serves to bring everything to a definite conclusion and answers questions brought up throughout the normal gameplay . Completing Refrain makes available all the heroine 's scenarios that were previously made inaccessible during gameplay so that the player can revisit the scenarios again , along with some extra decision points that were previously unavailable .

Throughout gameplay , the player encounters various minigames , which range from simple to more complex . The first type of minigame encountered is a battle sequence that resembles a fighting game , but no interaction from the player is required to fight . These recurring battle sequences represent when the members of the Little Busters get into physical fights with either each other or with others . Each member of the fight has a set of statistics attributed to them (which includes strength , stamina , agility , reflex , concentration , judgment , and luck) along with a life bar to keep track of how many hit points a fighter has left . The maximum number of hit points is determined by the given fighter 's stamina rating . Weapons may be used along with any accessories the fighter has in their possession , and these items may be exchanged with other characters . Another recurring minigame involves the player being able to play baseball batting practice with members of the Little Busters . The player , as Riki , controls his position and when to swing the bat .

The Little Busters will also participate in missions to accomplish some goal , and a mission will either be completed or failed depending on the choices of the player . These missions are connected with the battle sequences and batting practice in that they serve to give the characters experience , obtain accessories to use during fights , and improve their statistics . However , these missions do not affect the main plot in any way ? the player even has the choice to turn off most of the minigames so that the player may focus on the main plot , including the battle sequences and batting practice . The first time that the game is played , Rin 's statistics are weak compared to other characters . However , when the player completes several heroine 's routes , Rin 's and Riki 's statistics will start out higher than before when the player starts a new game , allowing Rin and Riki to stand a better chance against opponents with higher statistics . The statistics of the Little Busters members are shown in a ranking system from highest to lowest in overall statistics .

Despite Little Busters ! having a rating for all ages , there is an ample amount of CG artwork featuring the female characters in risqué situations , though never to the point to be considered sexual in nature . This is in stark contrast to Key 's previous titles Clannad and Planetarian : The Reverie of a Little Planet that also have ratings for all ages , but those titles contain no such risqué situations or even any fan service .

In Little Busters ! Ecstasy , adult elements were added to the gameplay in the form of sexual CGs depicting Riki and a given heroine having sex . Ecstasy extends the story for the scenarios of the heroines in Little Busters ! , as well as increasing the number of heroine routes from six to nine . These three heroine routes include scenarios for Kanata Futaki and Sasami Sasasegawa ? two supporting characters from Little Busters ! ? and a new heroine named Saya Tokido who is only featured in Ecstasy . The first time the game is played , these three heroine routes are unavailable to the player until after the Refrain scenario is completed , though the player is given the option make them immediately available . Ecstasy has several minor additions and changes to the minigames as well , including the addition of weapons available for use in the battle sequences . Also , Ecstasy features the addition of two recurring minigames related to Saya : a shooting game with pistols and navigating a labyrinth .

= = Plot = =

= = = Setting and themes = = =

The main part of the story takes place at a high school in Japan . There is a " secret of this world " that Kyouzuke speaks of ; Kengo and Masato are also aware of this . The characters live in either the male or female dormitories on the school grounds which are across from each other . Beside the dorms is the main school building where classes take place , which also houses the cafeteria on the ground floor . The school is four stories and the roof is normally restricted from access . Beyond the main school building is the large schoolyard , with the pool area adjacent to the yard . On the other side of the field is the baseball field , with the gymnasium and tennis court beyond it , which are closer to the main school building .

Childhood and adolescence are two important themes in Little Busters ! . The opening video of the

visual novel starts with two lines written in English : " What ' Adolescence ' do you have ? " and " Do you remember ' Childhood ' ? " . Riki Naoe , the male protagonist , has four childhood friends whom he grew up together with through adolescence and still hangs out with when the story begins . Thus , friendship is another theme presented in the form of Riki 's relationships with his friends in high school , and is thought to be irreplaceable . The opening video of the original visual novel contains a third line written in English , " The irreplaceable one existed there , " though another line was added into the opening video of Little Busters ! Ecstasy : " This will remind you that you have to recollect ' Adolescence ' . "

= = = Main characters = = =

The player assumes the role of Riki Naoe , the protagonist of Little Busters ! . He is seen as weak due to his girlish appearance and physical build but is very straightforward and has more common sense than most of his friends . He is a member of a group of friends called the Little Busters , which originally consisted of four members , but expanded to five with Riki during his childhood . The leader of the Little Busters is Kyouzuke Natsume , who is the eldest member . He often comes up with absurd ideas , but almost always follows up with a reasonable explanation along with it .

Kyouzuke 's younger sister is Rin Natsume , the main heroine of Little Busters ! , and is initially the only female member of the Little Busters . She does not communicate well with others due to her poor social skills and can be seen as inarticulate . Due to this , she is shy , and is usually seen alone . Rin loves cats and at school takes care of several strays . Riki 's roommate and fellow member of the Little Busters is Masato Inohara who loves to work out and improve his muscle mass . He has a particular fondness for Riki , which he is more than willing to express out aloud . Masato 's rival and fellow member of the Little Busters is Kengo Miyazawa who is skilled in the art of kendo and seemingly has a cynical personality , but his passion for the Little Busters is unmatched by any of the other members .

In Little Busters ! , Riki meets five other girls attending his high school who later become members of the Little Busters , in addition to three more girls in Ecstasy ; all eight are heroines in the game . The first is Komari Kamikita , a childish girl who takes great interest in fairy @-@ tales , picture books , candy , and clothing with many layers of frills . She is very clumsy , though athletic , and will often not think before she acts . Haruka Saigusa is a schoolmate of Riki 's from a different class , but always finds time to hang around in Riki 's classroom . She incites uproars for her own personal enjoyment , which causes her twin sister , the public morals chairman Kanata Futaki , to chase after her . Kanata generally acts cold towards her sister , though gets annoyed when Riki gets close to Haruka . Kudryavka Noumi , known as " Kud " (?? , Kudo) for short , is a girl who is one quarter Japanese , and three @-@ quarters Russian . Despite having a poor handle on the English language , she was able to skip a year in school due to credits obtained through studying abroad , making her the youngest member of the Little Busters . Kudryavka appears in Key 's eighth game , Kud Wafter , as the main heroine .

Yuiko Kurugaya is Riki 's classmate who has a self @-@ sufficient personality , and is sometimes seen carrying a replica of a katana called Muramasa . She is seen as an older sister to everyone despite being the same age of almost the entire cast , and is fond of things or people she considers to be cute . Mio Nishizono is a calm girl who is very diligent . Due to having weak health , she is always seen with a parasol when outside . She enjoys reading , especially when the story contains boys love elements , and her room is filled with books . Sasami Sasasegawa is the captain of the girl 's softball team and is Rin 's rival ; while Rin loves cats , Sasami is a devoted dog lover . Saya Tokido , who only appeared in Ecstasy , is a popular girl at Riki 's school , though she is known to be ditzzy . At night , she wanders around the school to protect a " treasure " from those she calls the " darkness executives " (?????? , yami no shikk?bu) , and even has to fight them for it .

= = = Story = = =

Little Busters ! ' story revolves around the main protagonist Riki Naoe , a young male high school

student . When Riki was a child , his parents died , leaving him hopeless and depressed . He was saved by a group ? three boys and a girl , all his age ? who referred to themselves as the Little Busters , a group dedicated to fighting evil and preserving justice . The leader of the group was Kyouzuke Natsume who had a younger sister named Rin . The other two members were Masato Inohara and Kengo Miyazawa , who were friends despite being rivals . They took Riki out and played together with him during his time of need , making him the fifth Little Busters member . In time , Riki enjoyed playing with them , and his grief over his parents gradually faded away . When the story begins , Riki and his friends are seemingly in their second year of high school , except for Kyouzuke who is in his third year . They still hang out together , and enjoy their school life .

The story opens on Sunday May 13 , 2007 , and the next day at school , Kyouzuke decides that the Little Busters are going to play a baseball game , except they do not have enough members to have a complete team . Kyouzuke gives Riki and Rin the task of going around school to find more members to join , preferably girls so as not to leave Rin the lone girl . Riki finds five girls his age willing to help him out : Komari Kamikita , Haruka Saigusa , Kudryavka Noumi , Yuiko Kurugaya , and Mio Nishizono ; three other girls Riki meets are Kanata Futaki , Sasami Sasasegawa , and Saya Tokido . Throughout the game , Riki hangs out with these girls and learns more about them .

The story 's main part takes place in what seems to be a normal high school , but in fact all took place in the school term previous to Little Busters ! , and Riki and Rin are reliving it in an artificial world created by the other members of the Little Busters . They , and the other main characters , were involved in a bus accident during a field trip , and only the two of them will survive . Kyouzuke and the others created the artificial world to make them strong enough to deal with what will happen when they awaken in the real world . This was caused by a ripple effect based on all of their desires to save Riki and Rin . The world loops , but though they forget what happens , Riki and Rin do grow stronger , and Kyouzuke hopes that they will eventually be strong enough to leave the world . They do manage to survive and get away from the crash site before Riki collapses because he has narcolepsy . Riki vows to fight against his narcoleptic condition , which was the reason why he was only able to save Rin and merely get away from the explosion before collapsing .

Rejecting this turn of events , Rin travels back into the artificial world again (this time created by Riki and Rin) and helps Riki overcome his weakness . Afterwards , the two of them go back to waking up at the crash site . This time , Riki and Rin work together to save everyone at the crash scene . Kyouzuke , who sneaked onto the bus (as a third year he was not allowed to go) , managed to block the leak hole on the gas tank to delay the explosion , despite his injuries being far greater than anyone else . Everyone in the bus recovers from their injuries , although Kyouzuke 's recovery takes longer due to extensive injuries . Finally , after Kyouzuke returns , he rents a minibus , and the members of the Little Busters set out for a trip to the ocean .

= = Development = =

For the first time in Key 's history , two artists were given the position of art director for the visual novel : Itaru Hinoue and Na @-@ Ga . Hinoue has been Key 's signature art director since Key 's first game Kanon , and Na @-@ Ga has been with Key since the production of Air working as one of the computer graphics artists to render background art used in Key 's games . Due to having two art directors , character design was split between the two , though Na @-@ Ga is responsible for the character design of the majority of the cast . Of the six heroines in the story , three were designed by each artist ; Komari , Haruka , and Yuiko were designed by Hinoue while Rin , Kudryavka , and Mio were done by Na @-@ Ga .

For work on the scenario , Jun Maeda contributed along with composing some of the game 's music . Further writers include Leo Kashida who had worked on Tomoyo After : It 's a Wonderful Life , and two new scenario writers to Key ? Y?to Tonokawa , and Chika Shirokiri . Maeda wrote the scenarios for Rin and the entire male cast ; Kashida wrote the scenario for Mio ; Tonokawa wrote the scenarios for Komari and Yuiko ; finally , Shirokiri wrote the scenarios for Haruka and Kudryavka . In an interview of Maeda and Tonokawa in the August 2007 issue of Push ! ! , it was reported that the story of Little Busters ! is twice as long as Air 's , but only half as long as Clannad 's . However , this

does not take into account the minigames in Little Busters ! which serve to lengthen the game . The music in the game , not counting Maeda 's , was composed by Key 's signature composers Shinji Orito and Magome Togoshi , in addition to Manack and members of PMMK . Togoshi left Key in October 2006 before the visual novel went on sale .

Three or four months before the release of Little Busters ! , it was decided that an adult version of the game would be developed titled Little Busters ! Ecstasy (???????? ! ?????? , Ritoru Basut?zu Ekusutash?) , or Little Busters @-@ EX for short . Na @-@ Ga designed the heroine Saya Tokido and Maeda wrote her scenario . Tonokawa wrote Sasami Sasasegawa 's scenario , and Shirokiri wrote Kanata Futaki 's story . Lines from the original game were rewritten as well for Ecstasy , and the total number of lines with spoken dialogue comes to 43 @,@ 347 lines . The total word count in Ecstasy exceeds that of Clannad by about 4 @,@ 000 words , making it Key 's longest work , and carries so much data that Ecstasy was released on two DVDs instead of one for the original release .

= = = Marketing = = =

An art exhibition of Little Busters ! was held in Osaka , Japan between May 3 and May 4 , 2007 , and in Tokyo , Japan between May 24 and May 25 , 2007 . A large amount of the character and background art featured in the game was showcased , along with original art used to promote the character artwork , and other production sketches drawn when the game was still in development . Flowcharts outlining the story for the game were on display , along with the flowcharts for Clannad . Also at the exhibition was a life @-@ size mannequin of Rin Natsume with a baseball glove in one hand , though instead of a baseball , a cat was in the glove . This mannequin was later put onto the Japanese Yahoo ! Auction website in late September 2007 and sold for 764 @,@ 000 yen , a far cry from the original wish of selling the figure for 5 @,@ 000 @,@ 000 yen .

Little Busters ! was the first Key title to receive coverage in an entire issue of Dengeki G 's Festival ! , a special edition version of Dengeki G 's Magazine which is published in irregular intervals each year by ASCII Media Works ; the issue in question was the ninth , published on June 30 , 2007 . Along with a full 80 pages of information on Little Busters ! , the magazine came bundled with a double @-@ sided hug pillowcase , a small cell phone cleaner which could also attach to a cell phone , and a B5 size jigsaw puzzle . ASCII Media Works published the third volume of another special edition version of Dengeki G 's Magazine named Dengeki G 's Festival ! Deluxe on June 30 , 2008 which had a focus on Little Busters ! Ecstasy . Along with again containing about eighty pages of information pertaining to the visual novel , the magazine also comes bundled with an ergonomic mousepad , a jigsaw puzzle , and a deck of playing cards . The third volume of another magazine in the Festival ! line , Dengeki G 's Festival ! Comic , was sold on July 26 , 2008 with Rin and Dorj on the cover , and the magazine came bundled with a hug pillowcase , a notepad , and a B2 size poster .

= = = Release history = = =

On June 1 , 2007 , a free game demo of Little Busters ! became available for download at Key 's official website . In the demo , the player is introduced to the characters of the Little Busters group in the game through a short visual novel sequence . The demo does not give the player the chance to interact with the scene presented , making the demo a short kinetic novel . The game was released in Japan as a limited edition version on July 27 , 2007 as a DVD playable on Windows PCs ; the regular edition was released on September 28 , 2007 . The limited edition contained an arrange album of some of the music featured in the game , and a 128 @-@ page visual guide book titled Natsume Kyouusuke F?rai Ki (???????) . The book contained information and images on characters , background CGs , the art exhibition , images of the heroines published in various Japanese anime and gaming magazines , a question and answer section , information on the creators of the game , and lyrics of a couple of songs featured in the game .

Little Busters ! Ecstasy was released as a limited edition version on July 25 , 2008 as two DVDs

playable only on a Windows PC ; the regular edition followed on September 26 , 2008 . The limited edition came bundled with a remix album of music featured in the game , and a 22 @-@ minute length CD containing a special broadcast of the Little Busters ! Internet radio show . An updated version , 1 @.@ 01 , for the limited edition of Ecstasy was released by Key for free on their website on September 22 , 2008 ; the regular edition of Ecstasy contains this update . An all ages version of Ecstasy for Windows was released by Key on July 31 , 2009 in a box set containing five other Key visual novels called Key 10th Memorial Box .

Prototype released a PlayStation 2 (PS2) port of Ecstasy titled Little Busters ! Converted Edition on December 24 , 2009 , which removed the adult elements of the game . The PS2 version was available to try at Key 10th Memorial Fes , an event held in commemoration of Key 's ten @-@ year anniversary between February 28 and March 1 , 2009 . A PlayStation Portable (PSP) version of Little Busters ! Converted Edition , also by Prototype , was released on November 25 , 2010 . The Windows and PS2 versions had voice acting for only the major characters , but the PSP version contained full voice acting for all of the characters other than Riki . Prototype also released a version of Little Busters ! Converted Edition ported to the PlayStation Vita (PS Vita) on March 22 , 2012 . Along with also having full voice acting , the PS Vita version contains 1.4x larger CGs than the Windows edition , and the limited edition came bundled with a drama CD . Prototype released a PlayStation 3 (PS3) version of Converted Edition with the additional content included in the previous consumer ports on March 20 , 2013 . An added feature in the PS3 version is a 3D rendering of the minigame in Saya 's route where the player must navigate a labyrinth . A downloadable version of the PS3 release via the PlayStation Store was released by Prototype on May 29 , 2013 .

Key released an all ages version of Ecstasy titled Little Busters ! Perfect Edition (????????? ?) on November 30 , 2012 for Windows . The Perfect Edition contains the additional content featured in the consumer ports , and came bundled with additional merchandise including : an expanded reprint of Natsume Kyouosuke F?rai Ki , a CD containing a special recording of the Internet radio show Little Busters ! R , Microsoft Gadgets , wallpapers , a Rin Natsume @-@ themed system sounds package for Windows which uses dialogue of Tomoe Tamiyasu ? the voice of Rin , and nine promotional cards from the trading card games Weiß Schwarz , Chaos TCG and Megami Engage . Little Busters ! will be released in English .

= = Adaptations = =

= = = Books and publications = = =

A series of 12 short stories were serialized in the Japanese bish?jo magazine Dengeki G 's Magazine , published by ASCII Media Works . The stories , under the collective title Official Episode Collection , were published in two batches : the first six stories were published between the March 2006 and August 2006 issues , while the second batch of six were serialized between the October 2006 and March 2007 issues . In each of the two batches , one of the six stories centered on one of the six heroines , and featured illustrations by Itaru Hinoue and Na @-@ Ga . The stories were written by the respective scenario writer for each girl : Jun Maeda wrote Rin 's , Leo Kashida wrote Mio 's , Y?to Tonokawa wrote Komari 's and Yuiko 's , and Chika Shirokiri wrote Haruka 's and Kudryavka 's stories . Key released five volumes of another series of official short stories , written by the original scenario staff and titled Little Busters ! SS , on iOS and Android devices between November 1 , 2012 and March 7 , 2013 .

A single @-@ volume light novel anthology was released by Ichijinsha on January 25 , 2008 under their DMC Novel imprint titled Little Busters ! Novel Anthology . The anthology was written by six authors , and illustrated by six artists . Four volumes of a short story compilation series by several authors titled Little Busters ! SSS were published by Harvest between April and November 2008 . Harvest published a novel by Tasuku Saika titled Little Busters ! Saigusa Haruka no Jikenbo (????????? ?) , Little Busters ! Haruka Saigusa 's Trouble Record Book) in September

2008 . Ten volumes of another short story compilation series by several authors called Little Busters ! Ecstasy SSS were published by Harvest between January 2009 and October 2010 . Five volumes of an adult novel series titled Little Busters ! Ecstasy H & H written by several authors were published by Harvest between February and June 2009 . Harvest published a novel by Osamu Murata titled Little Busters ! Ecstasy : Bokura no Gakuensai Sens? (????????? ! ?????? ????????? , Little Busters ! Ecstasy : Our School Festival War) in March 2009 .

Two volumes of a short story anthology compilation series written by Shin 'ichir? Kodama , Ken 'ichi Itoi , and Kach? titled LittBus . (???? ? , Ritobasu .) were released between May and July 2009 . Paradigm published a light novel anthology character series in three volumes titled Little Busters ! Ecstasy Anthology between February and June 2010 . Harvest published a light novel anthology character series in three volumes titled Little Busters ! Ecstasy Character Anthology between June and December 2010 . Harvest published an illustrated short story anthology titled Little Busters ! Ecstasy 4 @-@ Page Short Story Collection in October 2010 . Paradigm published two volumes of a light novel collection between December 2010 and April 2011 . Paradigm published a light novel based on Kudryavka , written by Masayuki Ogura and illustrated by Ayumu Sh?ji , on September 28 , 2012 . Paradigm also published a light novel under their VA Bunko imprint , written by Mariko Shimizu and illustrated by Zen , on October 30 , 2013 .

An art book titled Little Busters ! Perfect Visual Book (????????? ! ????????????????? , Ritoru Basut?zu ! P?fekktto Bijuaru Bukku) was released on December 20 , 2007 . Published by ASCII Media Works , the 206 @-@ page , hard @-@ cover book contains a compilation of the published and promotional art from the visual novel , detailed character profiles and memo sections , and an overview of the visual novel 's plot . Also included are all the CG scenes from the game , concept illustrations , staff interviews , and a short story " ' Our ' Morning " (? ?? ? ?? , ' Bokura ' no Asa) written by Y?to Tonokawa . A short section also includes the sheet music and lyrics of the vocal songs featured in the game . Included with the book were two pencil boards . The statistics of the battle equipment used in the mini @-@ games are listed on one of the boards . Another art book titled Little Busters ! Ecstasy Perfect Visual Book (????????? ! ?????? ????????????????? , Ritoru Basut?zu ! Ekusutash? P?fekktto Bijuaru Bukku) was released on December 19 , 2008 by ASCII Media Works .

= = = Manga = = =

A four @-@ panel comic strip manga , titled Little Busters ! The 4 @-@ koma and illustrated by Y?ya Sasagiri , was serialized between the March 2006 and March 2010 issues of ASCII Media Works ' Dengeki G 's Magazine . Some chapters begin as a normal manga layout and follow with comic strips . An " extra " chapter was published in the ninth volume of Dengeki G 's Festival ! on June 30 , 2007 , and special chapters of the manga have been published in ASCII Media Works 's manga magazine Dengeki G 's Festival ! Comic . Four tank?bon volumes were released between August 27 , 2007 and April 27 , 2010 , published by ASCII Media Works under their Dengeki Comics EX imprint . Sasagiri also illustrates the Little Busters ! EX The 4 @-@ koma four @-@ panel comic strip manga , which began serialization in the June 2010 issue of Dengeki G 's Magazine . The manga ended serialization in the magazine 's May 2014 issue and continued serialization in Dengeki G 's Comic between the June and December 2014 issues . Four volumes for Little Busters ! EX The 4 @-@ koma were released between February 26 , 2011 , and January 27 , 2015 .

A third manga , titled Little Busters ! and illustrated by Nobuyuki Takagi , was serialized in Dengeki G 's Festival ! Comic between November 26 , 2007 and October 25 , 2013 . Six volumes of Takagi 's Little Busters ! manga were released between April 27 , 2009 and December 21 , 2013 . A fourth manga , titled Little Busters ! and illustrated by Mogura Anagura , was serialized between the May 2008 and April 2010 issues of Kadokawa Shoten 's magazine Comp Ace and was referred to as the " official Little Busters ! comic " . Two volumes were released for Anagura 's Little Busters ! manga : the first on September 26 , 2008 , and the second on April 22 , 2010 .

A fifth manga adaptation , titled Little Busters ! Ecstasy : Saya Tokido School Revolution (????????? ! ?????? ?????? -SCHOOL REVOLUTION-) and illustrated by Zen , was serialized in

Dengeki G 's Festival ! Comic between January 26 , 2009 and February 23 , 2010 . A single volume of Saya Tokido School Revolution was released on April 27 , 2010 . Zen also illustrated the Little Busters ! Ecstasy : Sasami Sasasegawa Black Cat Fantasia (????????? ! ?????? ?????? -Black Cat Fantasia-) manga , which was serialized in Dengeki G 's Festival ! Comic between June 26 , 2010 and April 26 , 2011 . A single volume of Sasami Sasasegawa Black Cat Fantasia was released on May 27 , 2011 . Zen later illustrated the Little Busters ! Ecstasy : Kanata Futaki My Minrout (????????? ! EX ????? ? My Minrout ?) manga as well , which was serialized in Dengeki G 's Festival ! Comic between June 23 , 2011 and June 26 , 2012 . A single volume of Kanata Futaki My Minrout was released on August 27 , 2012 . Zen also illustrates the manga Little Busters ! End of Refrain , which began serialization in the November 2012 issue of Dengeki G 's Magazine . The manga ended serialization in the magazine 's May 2014 issue and continued serialization in Dengeki G 's Comic between the June 2014 and January 2015 issues . Four volumes of End of Refrain were released between March 27 , 2013 and January 27 , 2015 .

A ninth manga , titled Little Busters ! Ecstasy : Wonderbit Wandering (????????? ! ?????? ??????? ??????) and illustrated by Juri Misaki , was serialized between the May 2010 and January 2012 issues of Comp Ace . Three volumes of Wonderbit Wandering were released between September 25 , 2010 and December 26 , 2011 . A tenth manga , titled Little Busters ! Kudryavka Noumi (????????? ! ?????????) and illustrated by Kazusa Yoneda , was serialized between the April 2011 and March 2013 issues of Ichijinsha 's Comic Rex . Four volumes for Kudryavka Noumi were released between August 27 , 2011 and March 27 , 2013 . An 11th , four @-@ panel comic strip manga , titled Little Busters ! Band Mission (????????? ! ?????????) and illustrated by Misaki Sakura , began serialization in the August 2011 issue of Ichijinsha 's Manga 4 @-@ koma Palette . A 12th manga , titled Little Busters ! Ecstasy Heartful (????????? ! ?????????????) and illustrated by Itotin , was serialized between the May 2012 and December 2013 issues of ASCII Media Works ' Dengeki Hime . Three volumes of Little Busters ! Ecstasy Heartful were released between October 15 , 2012 and December 15 , 2013 . A 13th manga , titled Little Busters ! and illustrated by Kurohachi , was serialized between the November 2012 and July 2013 issues of Kadokawa Shoten 's Comptiq . Two volumes of Kurohachi 's Little Busters ! manga were released between March 9 and September 26 , 2013 .

There have also been many sets of manga anthologies produced by different companies and drawn by a multitude of different artists . Six volumes of the earliest anthology series , a collection of four @-@ panel comic strips released by Enterbrain under the title Magi @-@ Cu 4 @-@ koma Little Busters ! , were released between September 2007 and July 2008 under their MC Comics imprint . Three volumes of an anthology series released by Ichijinsha under the title Little Busters ! Comic Anthology were released between October 2007 and July 2008 under their DNA Media Comics imprint . Three volumes of an anthology series released by Ohzora under the title Little Busters were released between November 2007 and January 2008 under their Twin Heart Comics imprint . Another anthology was released in a single volume by Harvest on December 20 , 2007 titled Ike ! Ike ! Bokura no Little Busters ! (?? ! ?? ! ????????????? ! , Go ! Go ! Our Little Busters !) . A manga anthology titled Little Busters ! Comic A La Carte (????????? ! ?????????) appeared in Comp Ace .

Enterbrain released 17 volumes of a collection of four @-@ panel comic strips under the title Magi @-@ Cu 4 @-@ koma Little Busters ! Ecstasy between November 2008 and August 2012 . Four volumes of an anthology titled Little Busters ! Ecstasy Comic Anthology were released by Ichijinsha between November 2008 and August 2011 . Ichijinsha released 10 volumes of the anthology Little Busters ! Ecstasy Ecstatic Anthology between July 2009 and November 2013 . An anthology published by Brain Navi titled Little Busters ! Ecstasy 4 @-@ koma Maximum (????????? ? ?????? 4??MAXIMUM , Ritoru Basut?zu ! Ekusutash? 4 @-@ koma MAXIMUM) was released in December 2008 . Another anthology titled Little Busters ! Ecstasy Comic A La Carte (????????? ? ?????? ?????????) appeared in Comp Ace and a single volume was released in April 2010 . Two volumes of a manga anthology based on the Little Busters ! Ecstasy H & H novel anthologies were released by Harvest in June and August 2010 .

ASCII Media Works released two volumes of an anthology titled Little Busters ! Ecstasy Comic

Anthology between December 2012 and February 2013 . Enterbrain released three volumes of a collection of four @-@ panel comic strips under the title Magi @-@ Cu 4 @-@ koma Little Busters ! Re : play between December 2012 and March 2013 . Ichijinsha published an anthology drawn by Haruka Hano titled Ring Ring Busters ! in January 2013 . Ichijinsha published an anthology titled TV Anime Little Busters ! Comic Anthology in March 2013 . Each of the anthology series are written and drawn by an average of 20 people per volume .

= = = Internet radio shows = = =

An Internet radio show to promote Little Busters ! called Natsume Brothers ! (????????? ! , Natsume Buraz?zu !) had a pre @-@ broadcast on June 9 , 2008 , and started regular broadcasting on June 23 , 2008 . The show was hosted by Tomoe Tamiyasu and Hikaru Midorikawa , who voice Rin and Kyouzuke Natsume from Little Busters ! , for the first 35 broadcasts . Starting with the following broadcast on March 2 , 2009 , the show 's title was changed to Natsume Brothers ! (21) (????????? ! (21) , Natsume Buraz?zu ! (21)) , and a third host was added , Miyako Suzuta , who voices Kudryavka Noumi from Little Busters ! . The show 's final broadcast , episode 170 , was on October 24 , 2011 . The show was streamed online every Monday , and was produced by the Japanese Internet radio station Onsen .

An exclusive 22 @-@ minute broadcast of the show was included with the first press release of Little Busters ! Ecstasy sold on July 25 , 2008 . Four CD compilation volumes containing the 35 episodes of Natsume Brothers ! (including the pre @-@ broadcast) were released between September 24 , 2008 and March 26 , 2009 . Another 15 CD compilation volumes containing most of the 170 episodes of Natsume Brothers ! (21) were released between June 26 , 2009 and February 24 , 2012 ; episodes 64 through 98 of Natsume Brothers ! (21) were not sold in CD compilation volumes . An exclusive broadcast of Natsume Brothers ! (21) was included with the release of the PlayStation 2 version of the game , Little Busters ! Converted Edition , on December 24 , 2009 .

A second Internet radio show to promote the anime adaptation titled Little Busters ! R broadcast 99 episodes between October 5 , 2012 and September 12 , 2014 . Like the previous radio show , it was normally hosted by Tamiyasu , Midorikawa and Suzuta . However , once a month , the show was hosted by Midorikawa and Nobutoshi Canna , who voices Masato Inohara . The show was streamed online every Friday and was produced by Hibiki and Onsen . The 99 episodes were released on 11 compilation volumes between January 30 , 2013 and January 28 , 2015 .

= = = Anime = = =

A 26 @-@ episode anime TV series adaptation , directed by Yoshiaki Yamakawa and produced by J.C.Staff , aired in Japan between October 6 , 2012 and April 6 , 2013 on Tokyo MX . The series was also streamed by Crunchyroll with English subtitles . The screenplay was written by Michiru Shimada , and chief animator Haruko Iizuka based the character design used in the anime on Itaru Hinoue 's and Na @-@ Ga 's original designs . The anime series was released on nine BD / DVD compilation volumes between December 26 , 2012 and August 28 , 2013 by Warner Home Video in limited and regular editions . A BD containing an original video animation (OVA) episode was available for mail order to those who bought all nine limited edition BD / DVD volumes . The anime has been licensed by Sentai Filmworks for release in North America . Section23 Films released the first BD / DVD collection on November 19 , 2013 . Hanabee Entertainment has licensed the series in Australia and New Zealand for a January 2014 release on BD and DVD .

The staff and cast from the anime returned for a 13 @-@ episode second season titled Little Busters ! Refrain , which mainly covers the final scenario in the visual novel . It aired between October 5 and December 28 , 2013 on AT @-@ X. The episodes were released on seven BD / DVD compilation volumes between January 29 and July 30 , 2014 by Warner Home Video in limited and regular editions . Refrain has also been licensed by Sentai Filmworks for release on home video in 2015 . A series of eight OVA episodes titled Little Busters ! EX , based on the Ecstasy version of the game , are included on the BD / DVD releases of Refrain .

For the first season , the opening theme is " Little Busters ! (TV animation ver .) " and the ending theme is " Alicemagic (TV animation ver .) " . Both songs are sung by Rita and are remixes of the theme songs featured in the original visual novel . For Refrain , the opening theme is " Boys be Smile " by Suzuyu and the ending theme is " Kimi to no Nakushi Mono " (?????????) by Ayaka Kitazawa . For Little Busters ! EX , the opening theme is " Little Busters ! EX " by Rita and the ending theme " Mezameta Asa ni wa Kimi ga Tonari ni " (?????????????) by Suzuyu . The rest of the soundtrack for both anime series is sampled from albums released for the visual novels , Little Busters ! Original Soundtrack and Little Busters ! Ecstasy Tracks , and the Little Busters ! Refrain Original Soundtrack .

= = Music = =

The visual novel Little Busters ! has six main theme songs , starting with the opening theme " Little Busters ! " , sung by Rita . There are four different ending themes ; three depend on what heroine 's story is completed , and the last is the game 's final ending theme . The first ending theme for Yuiko 's story is " Song for friends " , which is also used as the first ending theme of the Refrain scenario . The ending theme for Komari and Haruka is " Alicemagic " , which is also used as the second ending theme for Yuiko . The ending theme for Kudryavka and Mio is " Amenochi Hare " (????? , Clear Weather After the Rain) , and the final ending theme is " Little Busters ! (Little Jumper Ver .) " , which is used as the second ending theme of Refrain . One last theme song is an insert song played during Refrain called " Haruka Kanata " (???? , Faraway) . The insert song and each of the ending themes are also sung by Rita . While not a theme song , the ending theme for Rin 's scenario is the background music track " Regret " composed by PMMK . Seven of the main characters from Little Busters ! have background music leitmotifs ? the original six heroines , and Kyousuke Natsume . Rin 's theme is " Ring Ring Ring ! " ; Komari 's theme is " Mah? no Ensemble " (????????? , Magic Ensemble) ; Haruka 's theme is " Sawagashi Otome no Y?sh? " (????????? , Grief of a Noisy Girl) ; Kudryavka 's theme is " Exotic Toybox " (?????? ? ?????? , Ekizochikku Toibokkusu) ; Yuiko 's theme is " Kokoroiro Kis?kyoku " (????? , Heart @-@ colored Capriccio) ; Mio 's theme is " Hikari ni Yosete " (????? , Approaching Light) ; lastly , Kyousuke 's theme is " Boys Don 't Cry " .

Little Busters ! Ecstasy features a remixed version of " Little Busters ! " as the game 's opening theme called " Little Busters ! (Ecstasy Ver .) " . The song is a remixed version of the remix included in the album Rockstar Busters ! . Ecstasy also features remixed versions of the ending themes " Song for friends " and " Alicemagic " . The former is a remix version featuring less lyrics and is renamed to " Song for friends (No Intro Ver .) " , while the latter is the remix included on Rockstar Busters ! , but renamed to " Alicemagic (Rockstar Ver .) " . The remix of " Alicemagic " is used as the ending theme for Kanata 's and Sasami 's stories , and the remix of " Song for friends " is used as a background music track . A new theme song featured in Ecstasy is Saya 's ending theme " Saya 's Song " and is sung by Lia . Saya 's leitmotif is called " Kakeru " (??? , Run) and is a remix version of the song " Hashiru " (?? , Run) on Riya 's 2005 album Love Song released by Key Sounds Label . Kanata 's leitmotif is " Will & Wish " , and Sasami 's theme is " Neko to Garasu to Marui Tsuki " (????????? , Cat , Glass , and the Round Moon) .

A maxi single titled " Little Busters ! " was released in May 2007 . This first single contained " Little Busters ! " , " Haruka Kanata " , and " Alicemagic " in original and instrumental versions . As with Key 's previous works (excluding Planetarian : The Reverie of a Little Planet) , a music album came bundled with the limited edition release of the game ; the album , released on July 27 , 2007 , was called Semicrystalline. and contained arranged versions of 10 tracks of the game 's music . Eight of the tracks were background music while the last two were remix versions of " Little Busters ! " and " Haruka Kanata " . The game 's original soundtrack was first released in August 2007 at Comiket 72 containing three discs with 53 tracks . Of the 53 total tracks , three were left out of the visual novel . The original soundtrack was re @-@ released in Japanese stores on September 28 , 2007 . Two more albums were released at Comiket 73 in December 2007 : another arrange album titled Rockstar Busters ! and an image song single called " Rin no Hisoka na Koi no Uta / Mission :

Love sniper " sung by Tomoe Tamiyasu , the voice actress who voiced Rin in the game .

In February 2008 , a trance remix album of Little Busters ! themes titled OTSU Club Music Compilation Vol.2 was released by OTSU ? a disc jockey unit composed of a number of different remix artists . An EP was released in May 2008 containing original and remix versions of " Little Busters ! " , " Faraway " , and " Alicemagic " ; the remix versions are from the second OTSU Club Music Compilation album . A remix album titled Ontology containing arranged versions of nine tracks from Little Busters ! Ecstasy was released bundled with the limited edition release of that game on July 25 , 2008 . A soundtrack containing the additional music tracks in Ecstasy titled Little Busters ! Ecstasy Tracks was released in August 2008 at Comiket 74 . An image song single called " Saya no Nemureru Requiem / Saya 's Song " sung by Harumi Sakurai , the voice actress who voiced Saya in Little Busters ! Ecstasy , was released in February 2009 as a limited edition , and for general sale in March 2010 . Two more image song singles were released in December 2009 at Comiket 77 : " Raison / Pickles o Oishikusuru Tsukurikata " sung by Keiko Suzuki who voiced Kanata Futaki in Little Busters ! , and " Neko to Garasu to Marui Tsuki / Alicemagic (Aroma Tablet mix) " sung by Tomoe Tamiyasu who voiced Sasami Sasasegawa .

A remix album titled DeeJay Busters ! , featuring tracks from Little Busters ! , Ecstasy and Kud Wafter , was released in May 2011 . A single sung by Rita was released in October 2012 for the first anime series titled " Little Busters ! / Alicemagic " , which contains the anime 's opening and ending themes in original , short , and instrumental versions . A piano arrange album titled Ripresa , which also features tracks from Little Busters ! , Ecstasy and Kud Wafter , was released in April 2013 . A single sung by Suzuyu was released in October 2013 for the Little Busters ! Refrain anime series titled " Boys be Smile / Mezameta Asa ni wa Kimi ga Tonari ni " , which contains the anime 's opening theme . A single sung by Ayaka Kitazawa was released in November 2013 for the Refrain anime series titled " Kimi to no Nakushi Mono / Namidairo no Tsubasa " , which contains the anime 's ending theme . A soundtrack containing tracks featured in the Refrain anime titled Little Busters ! Refrain Original Soundtrack was released in December 2013 at Comiket 85 . A compilation album titled Little Busters ! Perfect Vocal Collection mainly containing previously released vocal tracks for the visual novels and anime adaptations was released in April 2014 . Each of the albums released were on Key 's record label Key Sounds Label .

= = Reception = =

= = = Critical reception = = =

Getchu.com hosts a yearly voting poll called the " Getchu.com Bish?jo Game Ranking " where game users vote online for the best games of the previous year in several different categories . For the 2007 ranking , the categories were : overall , scenario , theme songs , background music , visuals , gameplay system , and heroines . In February 2008 , users cast votes for more than 470 different titles released in 2007 , and among the rankings , Little Busters ! ranked first in all categories aside from visuals (placing third) , and gameplay system (placing second) . Rin ranked as the number one most popular heroine , while Kudryavka ranked fourth , and Komari ranked 13th . For the 2008 ranking , the categories were : overall , scenario , gameplay system , graphics , opening theme video , vocal theme songs , background music , individual characters , individual voices , and game title naming .

In early 2009 , users of Getchu.com cast votes for more than 400 different titles released in 2008 , and among the rankings , Little Busters ! Ecstasy ranked second overall , second in scenario , third in gameplay system , twelfth in graphics , fifth in opening theme video , third in vocal theme songs , second in background music , fifth (Saya Tokido) and tenth (Kudryavka Noumi) for individual characters , first (Kazane 's role as Saya Tokido) and sixth (Tomoe Tamiyasu 's role as Rin Natsume) for individual voices , and second for game title naming . The PS Vita port in 2012 was reviewed by the Japanese video game magazine Famitsu , which gave it an overall score of 30 / 40 (out of the four individual review scores of 8 , 8 , 7 , and 7) .

In a review of the first six episodes of the anime adaptation , Carl Kimlinger of Anime News Network gave Little Busters ! a C rating overall , criticizing its overuse of the " same gags over and over again , with predictably diminishing returns . " He praised the " guy @-@ to @-@ girl ratio " compared to other series made by Key , but notes that Riki is a " bland main character . " Kimlinger panned J.C.Staff 's " unexciting professionalism " and for " animation that is only good enough to avoid looking cheap . "

= = = Sales = = =

From June to July 2007 , the limited edition of Little Busters ! ranked second in national PC game pre @-@ orders in Japan . The limited edition version of Little Busters ! ranked first in terms of national sales of PC games in Japan in July 2007 . The game (which includes the regular edition) ranked consecutively seven more times achieving sales rankings of 14th , 25th twice in a row , 37th , 39th twice in a row , and 41st between the months of August 2007 and February 2008 . According to public sales information published at Gamasutra , taken from the Japanese Amazon website , Little Busters ! was the number one top seller between July 26 , 2007 and August 17 , 2007 for Japanese PC game sales . The game dropped to third highest the following week taken from August 24 , 2007 . Little Busters ! was the highest selling game for the month of July 2007 on Getchu.com , and dropped to twelfth in the ranking the following month . Regardless of the drop in ratings earlier in the year , Little Busters ! ended up as the most widely sold game of 2007 on Getchu.com.

From May to July 2008 , Little Busters ! Ecstasy ranked first in national PC game pre @-@ orders in Japan . The limited edition version of Little Busters ! Ecstasy ranked first in terms of national sales of PC games in Japan in July 2008 . Ecstasy sold quickly in Akihabara on its first day of sales , and by the end of the first day about half the stores were already sold out of the game . By the next day , the majority of stores in Akihabara were sold out of Ecstasy . Only four days after Ecstasy 's initial release , Key reported that many stores were already sold out of the game as well . Three months after Ecstasy 's initial release , Key reported that the game had already sold over 100 @,@ 000 units . Little Busters ! Perfect Edition ranked at 18th in terms of national sales of PC games in Japan in November 2012 .

The nine anime Blu @-@ ray Disc (BD) compilation volumes for the anime 's first season ranked in the top ten on Japan 's Oricon weekly BD sales chart . The first three volumes sold over 8 @,@ 000 units each in their first week of sales . For Little Busters ! Refrain , the seven BD volumes ranked in the top ten on Japan 's Oricon weekly BD sales chart .

= = = Legacy = = =

A cover version of " Little Busters ! " appeared in the sequel of Front Wing 's visual novel Time Leap titled Time Leap Paradise released on July 24 , 2009 . Rin and Kudryavka were featured as characters in Illusion 's Characolle ! 3D animation program series . The program 's third entry , Characolle ! Key , was released on March 4 , 2011 , and included the characters ' models and scenery assets based on the locals in Little Busters ! as part of the package .

After the success of Little Busters ! and Ecstasy , an adult spin @-@ off titled Kud Wafter was developed by Key and released on June 25 , 2010 . Set directly after the events of Little Busters ! , the story follows Riki and Kudryavka as they start to see more of each other in a romantic relationship at the onset of summer vacation . A mobile app game for iOS and Android titled Little Busters ! Card Mission , produced through VisualArt 's and distributed via Mobage , was released on April 24 , 2013 . The player collects cards of varying rarity featuring Little Busters ! characters , obtained through completing various minigame missions , to form a team . The player then trains his or her team to improve their statistics and eventually challenge others who play the game . Paradigm published the first volume of an art book series for the game titled Little Busters ! Card Mission ArtWorks on April 29 , 2014 . A Blu @-@ ray Disc game , produced by VisualArt 's and titled Nishizono Mio Misshitsu Satsujin Jiken ? (?????????? ? , Mio Nishizono 's Locked @-@ Room Murder Case ?) , was released on the first BD / DVD compilation volume for the Little Busters !

Refrain anime series on January 29 , 2014 .