

= SaGa Frontier =

SaGa Frontier (サガ フロントニア , SaGa Furontia) is a role @-@ playing video game developed by Square for the PlayStation and released in Japan on July 11 , 1997 . The game was later published by Sony Computer Entertainment (SCEA) in North America on March 25 , 1998 . It is the seventh game in the SaGa series and the first to be released on the PlayStation .

SaGa Frontier was developed by the then @-@ Square Production Team 2 (referred to as 2nd Division in the game) with Akitoshi Kawazu as director and producer , Koichi Ishii as planning chief , Kenji Ito as composer , and Tomomi Kobayashi as illustrator . Square Production Team 2 included Kyoji Koizumi , Miwa Shoda , Kazuko Shibuya , and Minoru Akao among others . The musical score for SaGa Frontier was composed and arranged by Kenji Ito , who provided music for many previous entries in the SaGa franchise . When development began , the game 's title was intended to be Romancing SaGa 4 . The focus shifted from the traditional SaGa style and began to focus on several different character on their own journeys . Nine stories were crafted , but two of them were dropped for being too comedic .

The plot of SaGa Frontier takes place in a science fantasy universe called " The Regions " , a group of worlds with varying degrees of culture , unique races , technology , and magic . The game allows the player to follow the exploits of one of seven protagonists , each with his or her own storyline and goal . The game 's " Free Scenario System " offers a large amount of non @-@ linear gameplay , allowing the player to freely travel between many of the Regions , interact with other characters , and take part in turn @-@ based combat . SaGa Frontier enjoyed commercial success , having sold over one million copies . The game was generally well received in Japan and has been re @-@ released under a few best @-@ seller labels , as well as the PlayStation Store . However , it received largely mixed and average reviews in North America , mostly due to its ambitious Free Scenario System .

= = Gameplay = =

The basic concept of SaGa Frontier is based on its Free Scenario System , in which one can play as any of seven different protagonists , all of whom exist in the same setting : a solar system known as The Regions , a group of planets , each with its own culture , game @-@ level of technology , and form of magic . The game is considered non @-@ linear , in that from the beginning many of the characters are free to go almost anywhere and interact with almost anyone . Travel through most of the Regions is easy due to inter @-@ regional ships traveling regularly between them . The player controls the protagonist on the field screen , a set of interconnecting pre @-@ rendered backgrounds , and is able to speak with a slew of other characters in order to gather information , recruit party members , and initiate quests . Each character has his or her own storyline and a main quest to fulfill , but there are also several optional quests that any of the characters can participate in . Some of the main characters even encounter each other during their quests . The storyline of each character also changes depending on who is chosen , what is said in conversation , what events have already occurred , and who the protagonist has in his or her party , a concept first introduced in Romancing SaGa 2 .

Combat in SaGa Frontier pits players against groups of enemies encountered on the field screen . The battle screen depicts 2D @-@ animated sprites amidst a 3D @-@ rotating background . Battles are turn @-@ based , in which the player chooses his or her actions and allow them , along those of the enemies , to play out . A variety of weapons , special skills , and magic spells are at the player 's disposal . Most skills are learned mid @-@ battle , while many spells are purchased in the game 's shops . If certain conditions are met within the battle , party members on either side can create combination attacks for added damage . Winning battles will increase player character statistics such as hit points (HP) , life points (LP) , strength , and quickness . Outside of combat , players can equip and unequip (or " seal ") weapons , armor , skills , spells , and items . First introduced in the Game Boy incarnations of the SaGa series , the game contains different races that exist within the Regions : the Humans , the Mystics , the Half @-@ Mystics (half Human and half Mystic) ,

Monsters , and the Mecs (robots) .

The player is encouraged to complete each of the seven scenarios one after the other . For added incentive , beating a character 's game and saving its completion to the system data adds some bonuses . After beating one character 's game , essentially every character in the following game starts off stronger and with better gear than before , and may depend on how many battles players fought in their previous quest that they saved on the system data . Fulfilling all seven main quests allows the player access to the " 2nd Division " room , in which the player can fight all final bosses and talk to the game 's programmers .

= = Plot = =

At the outset , the player can choose any one of seven main characters to play as , each with their own storyline :

Asellus , formerly a human girl , was run over by a carriage and given a blood transfusion by the Mystic Lord Orlouge . Chosen as the Charm Lord 's heir , she is despised by human and mystic alike due to her status as the only half @-@ Mystic in existence . She escapes Orlouge 's castle with the help of the Princess White Rose . Asellus and White Rose remain on the run from Orlouge 's many servants , but after White Rose sacrifices herself to save Asellus 's life and freedom , Asellus decides to return and defeat Orlouge , to end the struggle once and for all . Depending on the actions the player does , there are three endings , in which she end live on as a human , half Mystic , or complete Mystic .

Blue is a young mage fresh out of magic school . His quest is to collect the " Gift " for as many magics as possible . After that he is destined to fight his twin Rouge who has gained the opposite magics . Whichever brother survives obtains the other 's magic and receives the sacred " Life " magic . It is revealed they were created artificially to produce the only wizard who could master all magical powers , even the conflicting pairs , and the duel is a mere formality to establish the dominant persona . Afterwards , Blue / Rouge descends into Hell to fight the demons who attacked his home .

Emelia is a blonde ex @-@ con and secret agent formerly working as a model . Her story began when her fiancé Ren was murdered by a mysterious villain known as the " Joker " . Wrongfully accused of the crime , she was sentenced to imprisonment in Despair , where she met Annie and Liza . With their help , they complete a competition the warden created to receive a full pardon for their crimes . After their escape , Emelia was recruited by the two to join the secret organization Gradius , which was also hunting for the " Joker " .

Lute is a carefree bard whose mother kicked him out of the house until Lute found a decent job . He stumbles face @-@ first into a plot involving Trinity general Mondo and resistance leader Captain Hamilton , and the legacy of Lute 's deceased father , who was betrayed and killed by Mondo .

Red is a teenage boy whose family is destroyed by the criminal syndicate called Black X. After being rescued from the same fate by the masked superhero named Alkarl , he is granted the identity of the superhero Alkaiser . After destroying several Black X bases and their main stronghold , Red stands at his father 's grave , and Alkarl appears to take Red 's powers away , making him a normal man again . It turns out that Alkarl was Red 's father 's friend , Hawk , and Red will not be able to live a " normal " life for long .

Riki (Known as Coon in the Japanese release) is a Lummo , a fox @-@ like creature , and one of the last remaining inhabitants of the mysterious world , Margmel . Determined to save his homeworld , he seeks the Rings of Margmel . In his search , he starts out in Scrap , where he finds the researcher Mei @-@ ling . Riki 's quest takes him around the regions to gather the Rings until he comes face to face with Virgil , a Mystic Lord . Following the battle , Riki returns home to attempt to restore Margmel .

T260G is an ancient Mec , a model constructed from junk parts , awakened in modern times . Originally part of a combat ship with a secret mission against the RB3 (Region Buster 3) , it lost its memory when it crashed into Junk . With help of Leonard , a human who transferred his memories into a Mec , and Gen , a master swordsman , it recovers its memory and finishes the job .

== Development ==

SaGa Frontier was developed by the then @-@ Square Production Team 2 (referred to as 2nd Division in the game) with Akitoshi Kawazu as director and producer , Koichi Ishii as planning chief , Kenji Ito as composer , and Tomomi Kobayashi as illustrator . Square Production Team 2 included Kyoji Koizumi , Miwa Shoda , Kazuko Shibuya , and Minoru Akao among others . The musical score for SaGa Frontier was composed and arranged by Kenji Ito , who provided music for many previous entries in the SaGa franchise .

Originally , the title of this game was " Romancing SaGa 4 " during early development . In that stage of development , two more heroes ' quests were also being planned , in addition to the existing seven lead characters . One of them was Fuse , the IRPO agent who may be enlisted as a playable character in the actual release . In his quest , Fuse was supposed to be able to take part in other characters ' scenarios , and the ultimate goal of his quest might be determined by what the player did in the course of gameplay . The " ninth " protagonist was to be the daughter of a channellers family who is engaging in a controversy as to who of them shall inherit the property of their former patriarch . This scenario seems to be dropped during the early development because of being too comedic .

Due to time constraints , some plot points of Asellus story were removed . During those events , Asellus was supposed to visit Dr. Nusakan 's clinic , Bio Research Lab , Lambda Base , and Furdo 's Workshop so that she would find her true identity so that she would decide to live as a human being or as a mystic . These quests were also intended to affect her scenario 's ending .

== Release ==

Due to its popularity in Japan , the game has been re @-@ released a number of times at a budget price : in 2000 as part of the Square Millennium Collection , in 2002 as part of the PSone Books best @-@ seller range , and again in 2004 as a part of Square Enix 's Ultimate Hits line . Most recently in 2008 , the game was released on the PlayStation Store in Japan .

== Soundtracks ==

SaGa Frontier Original Sound Track comprises 75 tracks spanning three compact discs . It was released in Japan on April 21 , 1999 by DigiCube and was later reprinted by Square Enix on February 1 , 2006 . On disc 3 of the soundtrack , there is a hidden track , in the pregap , which can only be heard when rewinding the CD from the beginning ; this was originally supposed to be Riki 's theme . There also are alternate titles for those pieces of music which can be seen in the songlist in the in @-@ game " 2nd Division " . It? states that he wanted to create an arranged album for the game as well , although one has yet to be released .

== Merchandise ==

Two guidebooks for SaGa Frontier have been published in Japan by ASCII : The Essence of SaGa Frontier and The Complete of SaGa Frontier . Another companion book titled SaGa Frontier How To Walk In Regions was published by Kodansha . BradyGames released its own Saga Frontier : Official Strategy Guide in North America in 1998 . When the game was re @-@ issued in Japan in 2000 as part of the Square Millennium Collection , it included a collectible teacup set and a tee @-@ shirt depicting the character Blue .

== Reception ==

SaGa Frontier received mostly mixed or average reviews in North America . The game currently holds a 73 % on GameRankings . Although many publications disagreed on positive aspects of the

game , much criticism arose from its Free Scenario System . GameSpot called the game a " solid , if not exactly stellar , RPG that 'll certainly keep you busy for a while ? or at least until you tire of its occasional lack of focus " . The website found the combat refreshing and many of its pre-rendered visuals to be well done , but had many negative comments , specifically concerning the game 's nonlinear nature and unfocused scenarios . IGN proclaimed SaGa Frontier to be " the only bruised apple in Square 's current collection of role playing games " , similarly stating that the game 's Free Scenario System can become confusing and easily cause the player to become lost . However , it labelled the story and sprite-based graphics its strong points . Game Informer notably found that the plot of SaGa Frontier is more of an outline than a descriptive formula as seen in other Square titles such as Final Fantasy VII and Chrono Trigger : the publication also criticized the game 's graphics , but praised its length and gameplay . Staff reviewers at RPGFan and RPGamer agreeably noted the game 's battle system to be its highlight ; both websites mention that discovering combinations attacks to be " fun " and " exciting " .

Saga Frontier sold over 1 .05 million copies in Japan by the end of 1997 , which had not appreciably increased by 2008 . It was the 5th top-selling game in Japan in 1997 and is currently the 15th top-selling PlayStation game for the region . In 2000 , SaGa Frontier was voted the 18th best PlayStation game of all time by the editors of Famitsu magazine .