= Phantasmagoria (video game) =

Phantasmagoria is an interactive movie point @-@ and @-@ click adventure game released by Sierra On @-@ Line and designed by Roberta Williams for MS @-@ DOS and Microsoft Windows . Released on August 24 , 1995 , it tells the story of Adrienne (Victoria Morsell) , a writer who moves into a remote mansion and finds herself terrorized by supernatural forces . Made at the peak of popularity for interactive movie games , it featured live @-@ action actors and footage , both during cinematic scenes and within the three @-@ dimensional rendered environments of the game itself . Phantasmagoria was noted at the time of its release for its graphic gore , violence , and sexual content .
Williams had long planned to design a horror game , but waited eight years for software technology to improve before doing so . Based on Williams ' 550 @-@ page script , about four times the length of an average Hollywood screenplay , more than 200 people were involved in the making of Phantasmagoria , which took more than two years to develop and four months to film . Though originally budgeted for US $ 800 @,@ 000 , the game ultimately cost $ 4 @.@ 5 million to develop , and it was filmed in a $ 1 @.@ 5 million studio Sierra built specifically for the game .
Directed by Peter Maris , the game featured a cast of 25 actors , with all filming taking place in front of a blue screen . While most games at the time featured 80 to 100 backgrounds , Phantasmagoria included more than 1 @,@ 000 . A professional Hollywood special effects house worked on the game , and the musical score included a neo @-@ Gregorian chant performed by a 135 @-@ voice choir . Sierra strongly promoted the game , but stressed it was intended for adult audiences . The company willingly submitted it to a ratings system , and included a password @-@ protected censoring option within the game to tone down the graphic content .
Released on seven discs after multiple delays , Phantasmagoria was a financial success , grossing $ 12 million in its opening weekend and becoming one of the best @-@ selling games of 1995 . It received positive to mixed reviews , earning praise for its graphics and suspenseful tone , but received criticism for its slow pacing and easy puzzles . The game drew controversy , particularly due to a rape scene . CompUSA and other retailers declined to carry it , religious organizations and politicians condemned it , and it was banned altogether in Australia . A sequel , Phantasmagoria : A Puzzle of Flesh , was released in 1996 , although Williams was not involved and it has no storyline connection to the original game .

= = Gameplay = =

Phantasmagoria is an interactive movie point @-@ and @-@ click adventure game which features live @-@ action actors and footage , both during cinematic scenes between the gameplay and within the three @-@ dimensional rendered environments of the game itself . The game was made when interactive movie games were at the peak of their popularity , with the release of such popular computer games as Wing Commander III and Under a Killing Moon . A single @-@ player game , the player controls protagonist Adrienne Delaney , who is always on the screen . The player can click certain areas of the screen to control her movements or make her explore specific places and objects . The camera angles or rooms change depending on where the player moves Adrienne . The game includes only four mouse commands : look (which changes to " talk to " when selecting a person) , pick up item , use item , and walk . The mouse cursor is always an arrow , which is different from most earlier Sierra On @-@ Line games in which the cursor could be changed into different functions (like walk , hand , and eye) by clicking the right mouse button . The cursor turns red when it passes over an action where the user can click to perform an action . Once the action has been completed , the cursor will not turn red again . Objects in the game can be picked up by clicking on them or interacting with them in a film sequence , after which the item automatically goes into the inventory . If an object is small enough that it can be easily missed , a pulsing glow occasionally surrounds it to draw attention to it .
The user interface features on a screen surrounded by a stone border , with buttons and eight inventory slots along the bottom . Adrienne can only hold eight items at once , and each black slot

contains an image of the item , which the user can click on to retrieve or use within the game . In the middle of the inventory slots is a " P " button that brings up an options screen , allowing the player to save or restore games , change the game screen to full- or half @-@ size , control the volume , or switch between a censored and uncensored version of the game , which determines how much graphic content is shown . A chapter gauge on this screen conveys how much progress remains in a given chapter . A fast @-@ forward button , located above the options button , allows the user to skip past cinematic scenes . On the left side of the interface is a red skull button , which the user can click to receive hints . On the right side is a red button with a pictured of a closed eye , which the user can click @-@ and @-@ drag an inventory item onto to open the eye and look at an item . This leads to a close @-@ up photo of the item , which can be turned in multiple directions .

Game designer Roberta Williams , co @-@ founder of Sierra On @-@ Line , deliberately made the Phantasmagoria gameplay and interface simple , unobtrusive , and intuitive so it would be more accessible and less frustrating for casual gamers . The game is focused more around the story and the frightening atmosphere , rather than on a difficult gaming experience , and therefore the puzzles are relatively easy , logical , and straightforward .

= = Plot = =

Successful mystery novelist Adrienne Delaney (Victoria Morsell) and her photographer husband Don Gordon (David Homb) have just purchased a remote mansion off the coast of a small New England island previously owned by a famous 19th @-@ century magician , Zoltan " Carno " Carnovasch (Robert Miano) , who had five wives who all died mysteriously . Hoping to find an inspiration for her next novel , Adrienne begins having nightmares immediately upon moving into her new home , but is comforted by the loving and supportive Don . Adrienne explores the estate , making mysterious discoveries like strange music , warnings written on her computer , and ominous messages from a fortune @-@ teller automaton . Unbeknownst to the happy couple , Carno had practiced black magic when he previously lived in the mansion and summoned an evil demon , which possessed him and caused him to murder his wives .

During her exploration of the grounds , Adrienne finds a secret chapel hidden behind a bricked off fireplace . After opening a locked box atop an altar , Adrienne unknowingly releases Carno 's demon , which promptly possesses Don . Don starts acting menacing and aggressively toward Adrienne , becoming progressively worse as time passes , culminating in a controversial scene in which he rapes Adrienne . Eventually , Adrienne meets Harriet Hockaday (V. Joy Lee) , a superstitious vagrant , and her strong but dim @-@ witted son , Cyrus (Steven W. Bailey) , who are secretly living in a barn on the estate . After Adrienne agrees to let them stay , they volunteer to them to help around the mansion . When a technician named Mike (Carl Neimic) visits the mansion to install the phone , Don screams at him in a jealous rage , warning him to stay away from his wife , much to Adrienne 's horror . Later , unbeknownst to Adrienne , Don bludgeons Mike to death .

While the local townspeople believe all Carno 's wives died of natural causes or accidentally , Adrienne learns through a series of visions that he murdered them in grotesque distortions of their personalities . Hortencia (Christine Armond) , who avoided Zoltan 's abuse by secluding herself in her greenhouse , is stabbed with gardening tools and suffocated with mulch . Victoria (Holley Chant) , an alcoholic , is killed when Zoltan impales her eye with a wine bottle during an argument . An overly talkative third wife , Leonora (Dana Moody) , has her mouth gagged and her neck contorted in a torture device . Finally , the food @-@ loving Regina (Wanda Smith) is force @-@ fed animal entrails through a funnel until she chokes to death . Harriet performs a séance for Adrienne , revealing in the form of a green ectoplasm the spirit of Carno before he had been possessed . He reveals that the previously contained evil spirit has been released , and urges Adrienne to trap it once again .

Adrienne visits the nearly 110 @-@ year @-@ old Malcolm Wyrmshadow (Douglas Seale) , who had been Carno 's apprentice as a young boy . Malcolm reveals that Carno met his demise after his last wife , Marie (Traci Clauson) discovered he was a murderer . Marie conspired with her lover , Gaston (Jeff Rector) , to kill Carno by sabotaging the equipment for his most infamous and

dangerous escapology trick , in which Carno dons a burning hood and escapes from bonds on a throne equipped with an overhead pendulous axe . The sabotage leaves Carno horribly burned and disfigured , but he survives and viciously attacks Marie and Gaston . After killing Marie by beheading her with the same pendulous throne , Carno is killed by Gaston just before he succumbs to his own wounds . Malcolm tells Adrienne about a ritual that can eradicate the demon .

 Meanwhile , Harriet , fearing for her safety , decides to leave with Cyrus as Don becomes more abusive and erratic . The next day , Adrienne is attacked by Don , who is now completely insane and dressed like Carno . Adrienne scars Don 's face with acid from his darkroom and then flees , discovering the corpses of Mike , Harriet and Cyrus hidden throughout the mansion . Don captures Adrienne and straps her into the pendulous throne , but she distracts him long enough to free herself from the throne and trigger the pendulum , which impales and kills Don . His death unleashes the demon , a giant and murderous monster that pursues Adrienne through the mansion . She escapes long enough to perform a ritual that traps the demon once again . The game ends with Adrienne walking out of the mansion in a state of near @-@ catatonia with a seemingly thousand yard stare .

= = Development = =

= = = Writing = = =

 Phantasmagoria was a radically different game for Williams , who was best known for designing the family @-@ friendly King 's Quest fantasy adventure game series . Williams said she did not want to get " typecast " to a particular genre and wanted to " stretch my creative muscle , " adding : " I felt I had more to offer than fairy stories . I wanted to explore games with a lot of substance and deep emotions . " Although Phantasmagoria was her first horror game , Williams had previously created suspenseful murder and crimes stories in her earlier mystery games , Mystery House and the Laura Bow series . Williams was a fan of the horror genre , although she did not watch many horror films as a child due to a traumatic experience watching Horrors of the Black Museum (1959) at age four . She began watching them again as a teen , and particularly enjoyed such films as Halloween (1978) , and movies based on Stephen King novels , like Carrie and The Shining (1980) . Williams cited the works of King and Edgar Allan Poe as inspirations behind Phantasmagoria . She felt the horror genre had not yet been properly explored in computer games yet , and that most attempts were just " a lot of hack and slash (where) the whole point seems to be to kill everyone and blow them away " .

 Williams had wanted to do a make a horror game for eight years prior to Phantasmagoria , and had started to design a few , but none came to fruition . She felt the computer game industry and software technology had not yet reached the point where an effective and frightening computer game could be made . As a result , she decided to wait until CD @-@ ROMs were faster and could handle real actors , which she believed was crucial for a horror game because she felt the player had to be able to empathize with the character to fear for them . Williams had been considering several horror story ideas for years before making the game . In one , the heroine answers a magician 's advertisement for an assistant and gets the job , but the magician turns out to be insane . Another was set in the past , with the female protagonist getting involved in the supernatural life of a magician character . That idea evolved into a woman being married to a man who is drawn to a bizarre house that previously belonged to illusionists and is haunted by ghosts . The final story as it appears in the game is in a contemporary setting , but combines elements common in modern fiction with those of 19th century literature and classic horror films of the 1950s .

 Phantasmagoria was the first Sierra On @-@ Line game script to be written like a film screenplay . Williams was working on King 's Quest VII simultaneously as she was writing the Phantasmagoria script . Williams found it stressful working on two major games at once and said she had " some difficulty keeping both games in my head " , but felt each received her undivided attention during the most crucial times in their respective developments . Even during the writing stage , Williams was

under pressure to ensure Phantasmagoria was a commercial success for Sierra . She also faced concerns from her husband Ken Williams , the company president and co @-@ founder of Sierra , who wanted the company to focus more on lower @-@ cost , combat @-@ oriented animated games , and was also concerned about the level of violence in the Phantasmagoria . Williams said she knew the rape scene in particular would be controversial , but she felt it was essential to the plot because it was a turning point that made Adrienne realize something was deeply wrong with Don . She felt the rest of the story " would make no sense " without the scene , but also knew there was a chance it would be cut from the game before production ended .

The script about 550 pages long when completed , about four times the size of an average Hollywood screenplay . The script included another 100 pages of storyboards , representing a total of 800 scenes . In preparation for writing it , Williams spent six months watching horror films and reading horror novels , as well as books about how to write horror novels and screenplays . She also asked people she knew socially to tell her scary stories so she could identify the elements of fear . Williams immersed herself so deeply into the genre that she began having nightmares and had to scale back her reading . Williams also spent about six months researching historical aspects of the story before the writing process . Williams had a history of using female protagonists in her games , like the Laura Bow series and some of the King 's Quest games . She said having a female lead in Phantasmagoria was not a ploy to attract female gamers , but rather felt like the correct choice for the game . Williams said her own personality was a partial inspiration for the protagonist Adrienne , although it was not purposeful : " I think it just kind of naturally worked out that way . "

Andy Hoyos , the game 's art director and a horror aficionado , participated in brainstorming sessions and discussions with Williams during the writing stage . He conceived the ideas for most of the death scenes , and tried to make each one different and original with what he called " fresh approaches to murder " . Williams wanted to include more scenes with Adrienne and Don as a happy , normal couple , so that Don 's transformation to evil would be more impactful . However , she was unable to do so to maintain the correct pacing for the gameplay . Williams wrote Phantasmagoria with the mass market in mind , targeting casual gamers as well as die @-@ hard computer game fans . To that end , she wrote the game in short chapters to break the game into smaller , easier @-@ to @-@ play sections . Her targeted demographic for the game was ages 16 and older . Williams chose the title " Phantasmagoria " after reading the word in a reference book about the history of magic and magicians . The term refers to a 17th @-@ century theatrical horror show in which " spirits of the dead " were revealed in a darkened theater by use of a modified magic lantern .

= = = Design = = =

Andy Hoyos was the art director for Phantasmagoria , and Kim White , Brandee Prugh and Brian Judy were among the computer artists . It was the first computer game Prugh worked on . Mark Hood , a veteran Sierra programmer , and Mark Seibert served as Phantasmagoria project managers . Seibert called managing the project " much more of a technical and managerial problem @-@ solving job than I ever envisioned " . Unlike previous Sierra games , it also involved managing a great deal of outside resources , such as keeping the studio and outside art contractors on schedule . The game 's three @-@ dimensional graphics were among the first rendered on Silicon Graphics software . In creating the look of the game , Hoyos drew particular inspiration from the films of Tim Burton , and he particularly tried to emulate the lighting , sets and " imaginative edge " of Batman (1989) . The films Alien (1979) and Hellraiser (1987) were additional influences . Phantasmagoria was designed using the 3 @-@ D software package Alias . Hoyos started by designing the rooms , then created the furniture , and added textures and lighting . Once complete , the computer rendered a final image of each room , which became the backgrounds for the game . While most computer games at the time had between 80 and 100 background pictures , Phantasmagoria had more than 1 @,@ 000 .

The game developers realized early during development that the game could not be completed entirely in @-@ house due to the large scope of the project , and required working with Hollywood

agencies , actors and special effects houses , among others . This added further complexity to the game 's development and design . Gerald B. Wolfe , the game 's director of photography , spoke to the artists about how to set up the camera angles during filming to best accommodate the design of the rooms . Mannequins created in the computer substituted as stand @-@ ins for the actors to help Wolfe position the shots . Most of the artists had never created computer @-@ generated backgrounds for video @-@ captured characters , and found it to be a challenging process . Seibert said bridging the gap between Hollywood and the software world was difficult at first , but after about four weeks of shooting , the two sides had " come to a common language and had a greater understanding of the process " . Hoyos said the biggest difficulty in designing the look of the game was creating a definitive scale for the environment , and ensuring the objects and environment would eventually be compatible with human characters and maintain realism .

Once the filming was completed , more than 20 two @-@ hour Beta SP video tapes of footage that had to be edited down to fit the actions of the game . The programming included editing the original video footage , and mixing the rendered images of doors , drawers , chairs and other objects into the footage frame @-@ by @-@ frame , which was necessary for more than 100 scenes . The game required more polishing and fine @-@ tuning than most games of its time due to the large number of video components , and the programmers had to determine the desired frame rate , data transfer rate and desired resolution of the video elements . Another challenge for the game was CD resource management . Since many of the scenes in the game could be repeated in multiple chapters , some pieces of the code were written onto several different CDs to reduce the number of times the player had to swap discs , an unusual practice for computer games at the time . The programmers attempted to minimize the number of times a disc had to be swapped in the middle of a chapter . The final game was on seven discs , a large amount for a computer game , and more than the four or five discs originally expected during one point in the development .

= = = Casting = = =

Twenty @-@ five professional actors were cast in Phantasmagoria . Roberta Williams watched the audition tapes of all the roles , and was involved with Mark Seibert in picking the actors . The only actor that Siebert chose without Williams ' input was Victoria Morsell as the protagonist , Adrienne Delaney . Williams had watched other audition tapes for the part and did not find the right choice . While she was on vacation , Seibert watched Morsell 's audition and immediately selected her for the part . Williams was initially concerned that she was not involved in the decision , but later came to agree that Morsell was the correct choice . Morsell mostly had television experience , but had also previously worked in film and theater roles . She had to work 10 to 12 hours a day , six days a week , for three months to capture all her character 's actions and movements . Morsell said appreciated that her character was intelligent and not a typical horror film heroine , saying : " She doesn 't do incredibly stupid things . You don 't see her screaming in her underwear . The character isn 't about decoration . She 's a very real person . " David Homb portrayed Adrienne 's husband , Don Gordon . He had previously worked in television , theater , and had leading roles in 17 films , but this marked his first time playing an antagonist . Homb compared acting in Phantasmagoria to working in an entirely new medium , and called it " one of the best experiences I 've ever had in the entire entertainment business " . Morsell and Homb , who were an onscreen couple , started dating in real life after filming . Robert Miano was cast as the villain Zoltan " Carno " Carnovasch . He had previously appeared in several films , including Serpico (1973) and Death Wish (1974) , as well as films by Phantasmagoria director Peter Maris . Unlike Homb , Miano primarily played antagonists throughout his career ; he estimated " 90 percent of the time , I play the bad guy . "

The comic relief roles of Harriet and Cyrus were played by V. Joy Lee and Steven W. Bailey , respectively . Lee had mostly done theater work the in Atlanta and Seattle areas , along with appearing in some industrial films and an episode of Northern Exposure . Bailey had been an actor in Seattle for about three years , doing mostly stage work , as well as some commercials , television episodes , independent films , and industrial films for the United States Navy . Bailey 's character had to taunt the cat with a stick several times in the game . An animal lover , Bailey objected to

doing so at first , and only agreed after the animal handlers assure him it would not bother the cats . Malcolm was portrayed by veteran actor Douglas Seale , who had previously appeared in Amadeus (1984) and performed voice work , including the role of the Sultan in the animated film Aladdin (1992) . Stella Stevens , a stage actress who also appeared in such films as The Nutty Professor (1963) with Jerry Lewis , played the antiques store owner Lou Ann , while Geoff Pryser played Bob the realtor , and Carl Neimic played phone technician Mike . Traci Clauson portrayed Marie , Carno 's fifth and final wife . She had previously worked mostly in television , including shows like Baywatch , Evening Shade and Married ... with Children . Harv the storekeeper was played by Hoke Howell , a film , television and theater actor who trained at the American Academy of Dramatic Arts in New York City , having appeared in films like Another 48 Hours (1990) and Far and Away (1992) , as well as shows like The Wonder Years and Remington Steele .

= = = Filming = = =

Phantasmagoria was Sierra 's first game to use live actors integrated with computer @-@ generated backgrounds . About 600 scenes were filmed for the game , with the average scene taking about an hour to shoot , while others were significantly longer or shorter . The total filming took about four months , 12 hours a day , shooting six days a week . More than 200 people were ultimately involved in the making of the game . A total of $ 800 @,@ 000 was originally budgeted for Phantasmagoria , but it ended up costing $ 4 @.@ 5 million . The budget issues caused some friction between Roberta and Ken Williams . It was the first game made in a new filming studio built by Sierra in Oakhurst , California , the same location as Sierra 's headquarters . It cost $ 1 @.@ 5 million to build , and was overseen by studio manager Bill Crow , who said , " Phantasmagoria essentially started with the design and creation of the studio " . Sierra also developed computerized tools specifically to manage the shooting process , including software to digitize the video into the computer . Some of the software was built as the game was being made and needs for new tools were being identified .

Sierra wanted the game to have Hollywood @-@ quality film sequences , so they sought a director with experience in the film industry . They hired Peter Maris , whose previous experience consisted mainly of action and drama films , although some of his earlier films were graphic horror movies . Maris and Roberta Williams collaborated a great deal from the beginning of the process , with Maris explaining what he wanted in each scene from a filmmaker 's perspective , and Williams explaining her desires from a game designer 's perspective . Maris set up the camera angles and worked with the actors , using three motion @-@ controlled cameras during the shooting . All filming was done entirely in front of a blue screen , and the digitized information was later loaded into the Silicon Graphics computers , which synchronize the relative motion of computer @-@ generated , three @-@ dimensional background art . Next , the live action and the backgrounds were composited using advanced techniques controlled by an UltiMatte system . The computer imaging components made Phantasmagoria a very different experience for Maris than his usual film industry work . Crow served as a production coordinator during filming , helping facilitate what happened on stage . He also directed the scenes that involved stunts or other special effects that required the coordination of animated sequences with live action . Cindy Jordan worked as the makeup artist .

The average filming day began at 6 a.m. with setting up the studio , with actors coming in at 7 a.m. or 7 : 30 a.m. for make @-@ up calls . An hour @-@ long pre @-@ production meeting would detail what would be shot that day to ensure all necessary backgrounds and props were ready . Shooting would begin around 8 a.m. and conclude at 6 p.m. or 7 p.m. Williams had no experience working with actors and feared it would be difficult due to " huge Hollywood egos " , but she instead found the actors to be professional and hardworking . Due to the nature of filming for a computer game , certain short performances had to be filmed over and over separately , like Adrienne simply crossing a room . The blue screen meant actors had to watch their positions very closely , as they had no actual sets or props to interact with . Many of the actors , including Morsell , Lee and Bailey , had never done any blue screen acting before , and Miano had only done it once . Morsell in particular said she found it challenging because it was so physically constrictive . Such items as tables , chairs

, doors or stairs that the actors appear to interact with are in fact constructed objects painted blue to match the blue screen , and were occasionally challenging for the actors to work with . During one scene , David Homb accidentally stood in such a way that his arm appeared to be going through the living room wall .

Morsell found it challenging to film a scene near the end of the game , in which Adrienne is pleading with Don while getting strapped into the chair with a guillotine overhead . Several different versions of the scene had to be filmed , and Morsell said it was difficult for her to work up the genuine emotion she needed take after take . The torture devices featured in the game were scale models made by local craftsmen . During one scene , the mansion roof starts to collapse , causing beams and chunks of debris to fall around the actors . To achieve this , the crew built lightweight beams out of hollow cardboard , which had to fall in the correct sequence . They normally had two grips on set , but needed six for this scene , and Wolfe used friends who were visiting from out of town to help throw the props from ladders , boxes and scaffolding . In another scene , Adrienne crawls along a water pipe that breaks . To film the scene without damaging equipment , the crew built a giant plastic box with a plastic tray underneath for the shoot . Three hoses ran through the pipe so water would spray in multiple directions . At one point in the film , Carno lies in the hospital bed after having just survived a fire , his face wrapped in bandages with blood leaking through . During filming , Miano spontaneously sat up and started singing Al Jolson songs , making the crew laugh hysterically .

The chase scene at the end of the game , in which Don pursues Adrienne throughout the entire mansion , took a full week to film . Homb wore a prosthesis on his face to simulate wounds from Adrienne pouring acid on him . Only one prosthesis was available , and it was in such bad shape by the end of filming that Williams said " we were essentially holding it in place with the proverbial wire and bailing wax " . Several scenes in Phantasmagoria involved animals , including a Doberman Pinscher , two cats , a beagle and several rats . Sierra commissioned Dave Macmillian and other Hollywood animal handlers from the company Worldwide Movie Animals to handle the animals . Two cats were required to portray Adrienne 's pet Spaz because the cats were temperamental and each would have moments when they would not perform . The Doberman Pinscher simply barked behind a fence during his scene , and was trained to bark on command using different hand signals . The scene with the rats simply involved them running along a wall in a basement , which they were trained with to do using food . Some objects were borrowed by a museum operated by the Fresno Flats Historical Society and used as props in the game . The society was thanked in the credits as a result . Ultimately , all of the scenes filmed for Phantasmagoria were used in the final game . While some were edited for length and pacing , none were cut altogether .

Despite a storyline running over a course of seven days , Adrienne wears the same wardrobe throughout the entire game : an orange shirt and black pants . Williams said this is because many of Adrienne 's actions throughout the game can be repeated by the player over and over , making it difficult to change her wardrobe without it becoming " a nightmare of shooting " . The only solutions she saw were to allow less decision @-@ making by the player , or to keep the flexibility intact but not allow any costume changes . Williams said she decided the latter option was ultimately better for the game . An orange shirt was chosen for the character because it was the best color to shoot against the blue screen . None of the characters wear blue , purple , gray or any shade of green similar to the blue screen for that same reason .

= = = Effects = = =

For Phantasmagoria 's special effects , Sierra sought the professional effects house The Character Shop , headed by senior creature maker Rick Lazzarini . He said the game reminded him of working on one of his earliest movies , the slasher film The Slumber Party Massacre (1982) . The core special effects team for the game consisted of Lazzarini , Michael Esbin and Bill Zahn . Lazzarini said making Phantasmagoria was much more cooperative and faster process than in the film industry . Due to the tight filming schedule , most effects had to be done in one shot with no cuts , so there was less margin for error . They created the effects for all the death scenes in the game ,

which included creating assorted body prosthesis , burn makeup and what Lazzarini called " gallons of fake blood " , which was made of sugar , water and dye .

Adrienne 's head is split open by a swinging pendulum blade in one death scene , an effect that took several hours to set up . A fake head was created from a model cast of actress Victoria Morsell 's head , with pumps installed to pump fake blood into it , and strings attached to either side so it could be pulled apart . The crew only had one head model , so they had to keep putting it back together and reuse it over and over for each take . After filming was completed , the crew put the head back together and took a picture of Morsell with it . Morsell had to have her face covered in plaster when the model of her head was created , and she experienced some anxieties during the process , saying it felt " like being buried alive " . Robert Miano had similar feelings of anxiety when a model of his body was created , which was used in the game for a scene when Carno is set on fire . Miano had to sit on a chair for hours as the crew put plaster all of his body and face , during which he had to breathe through straws in his nostrils .

One scene involved a burning head , which was created by taking a cast of the actor 's face , head and body with a plaster , then placing soft rubber over the cast to simulate human flesh . It was also treated so it did not release black smoke like a rubber tire when it burned . For burn effects placed on the body after the fire , the crew made a sculpture of the wounds , then mounted them onto rubber appliances , which were glued to the actor . For Harriet 's death scene , in which she is scalped and her brain is visible , makeup artist Cindy Jordan put a cap over actress V. Joy Lee 's head and covered it with mortician 's wax to make it look bumpy . Another special effect involved a spirit that appears in the form of ectoplasm during a séance . It was created from cellulose , water and green food coloring . It proved difficult to make , and several attempts were made before the right consistency was achieved . To create the appearance of it coming out of actress V. Joy Lee 's mouth , an eight @-@ foot long hose was attached to the side of her face . Project manager Mark Seibert had to suck the fake ectoplasm through the hose to get it in , then during filming he spit it out . It took several shots before the take was successful , and it looked so funny during filming that the crew kept laughing during takes .

= = = Music = = =

Sierra composers Mark Seibert and Jay User created the musical score for Phantasmagoria , with Neal Grandstaf providing additional music . Most of the music is a mixture of real instruments with synthesized and sampled sounds , and unlike previous Sierra games , the score was recorded live , rather than created in the computer . Themes for the music ranged from rock and roll to opera . The composers observed the game and various scenes to prepare their score , trying to create an ambiance and identify spots to build the tension with music , creating stingers as needed . For cinematic scenes , they watched tape of them after the scenes were shot and composed the music afterward . This was a new process for Sierra and the computer game industry in general , but the same concept regularly followed in the film industry .

The opening theme of the game features a neo @-@ Gregorian chant , which was performed in studio by a 135 @-@ voice choir . Much of the underscore music that plays when the player is exploring the game , rather than during cinematic scenes , is based upon that opening scene . The composers made use of silence in many scenes , to build up tension for moments of a " pounce " effect , creating the effect with music that something is catching the listener . They deliberately saved the most intense music for the final chapter of Phantasmagoria , when the game becomes the most intense . During some chase scenes , drums and low strings are used in the score to simulate a heartbeat , which grows louder and louder during more dangerous moments .

= = Release = =

Phantasmagoria took more than two years develop . Sierra officials said it took so long because it was so different than anything that had been done before , in both the Hollywood or computer game industries , and the new challenges led to complexities . Roberta Williams said : " It took a full year

just to get people to understand what I wanted to do . " The game experienced multiple delays before it was ultimately released . It was originally announced the game would be in stores by late 1993 or early 1994 , with Sierra announcing it would be released no later than the fall of 1994 . The game was previewed at the Consumer Electronics Show in Chicago in June 1994 , where it was announced the release date has been pushed back to October 1994 and that the game would be made available on two discs , rather than the seven discs it eventually became . The shipping date was later changed again to Christmas 1994 , and then February 1995 , before Sierra announced it would be delayed yet again as the company continued to refine the technology of live @-@ action video . It was announced the game would be ready in June 1995 , but when Sierra organized road shows that month to market 18 of its new games , Phantasmagoria was not among them because it was not ready yet .

The release date was changed once more to August 3 , before it was finally released in stores on August 24 , 1995 , the same day that Microsoft 's operating system Windows 95 was released . Phantasmagoria was released first for Windows 95 , Windows 3 @.@ 1 and MS @-@ DOS , then for Macintosh computers in November 1995 . Sierra released a hint book at the same time as the game . Phantasmagoria was also ported to Sega Saturn and released on eight discs exclusively in Japan , where it was fully translated and dubbed into Japanese , and released in August 1997 by the Outrigger Corporation under the name Phantasm . In response to all the delays , Vince Broady , executive editor of the monthly publication Multimedia World , said Sierra may have been attempting to avoid mistakes from its release the previous year of Outpost , for which the company release a large amount of advertisements and reviews , but then over @-@ promoted and released before it was finished . Sierra spokeswoman Kathy Gillmore admitted that mistakes were made in marketing Outpost and Sierra had tried to fix them . The minimum system requirements were an IBM compatible 486 @-@ 25 , 8 megabytes of RAM , 5 megabytes hard disk space , SVGA (256 colors) and a 2x CD @-@ ROM . It supported Sound Blaster @-@ compatible sound cards , and for MS @-@ DOS the game worked with a megahertz chip . It sold for as much as $ 80 in some stores , but typically sold for $ 69 @.@ 95 upon its first release .

Phantasmagoria was heavily advertised by Sierra in advance of its release , and the company touted it as its biggest game to date . It was Sierra 's first computer game targeted to an adult audience , and one of the first horror games from any company written specifically for adults . There was no legislated rating system for computer games in the United States in place , although one was being debated before the U.S. Senate at the time . But Sierra was among several major software companies who voluntarily supported the ratings system designed by the Entertainment Software Rating Board , which rated games so adults could make decisions about software purchases . Phantasmagoria was the first game to get an " M " rating for " mature " audiences , meaning intended for audiences 17 or older , and as a result it carried a content warning on the box that said " contains adult subject matter " . The game box prominently displayed this rating , as well as a warning on the back panel that the game contains adult subject matter inappropriate for children . It also encouraged parents to review the material before providing it to children and asked retailers not to sell it to minors . Phantasmagoria also received mature ratings in Germany and the United Kingdom .

The game itself includes a filter that players can activate with a password so that violent or sexually explicit content is censored . When the filter is in place , the screen blurs during the most violent sections , so the player can hear the action but cannot see it . Sierra officials believed it was the first CD @-@ ROM adventure game that self @-@ censored itself upon command . Sierra producer Mark Seibert said : " There are some pretty gruesome things , and we 're concerned about how that is going to impact parents who want to buy a good game with a good story line . " But Gene Emery of The Providence Journal said the censoring option was " unlikely to stop any computer @-@ literate 10 @-@ year @-@ old " and by scrambling portions of the videos that might be considered offensive , " the censorship option actually makes the explicit scenes seem even worse than they really are " .

In October 1997 , the first chapter of Phantasmagoria was included in the Roberta Williams Anthology , a limited @-@ edition collection of 15 games created by Williams over 18 years .

Phantasmagoria was made available for digital download on the website GOG.com starting in February 2010 for $ 9 @.@ 99 .

= = Reception = =

= = = Sales = = =

Phantasmagoria quickly became the best @-@ selling game in the United States , and was Sierra 's best @-@ selling computer game to date . It grossed $ 12 million and sold 300 @,@ 000 units during its first weekend of release , and debuted at fourth in PC Data 's August 1995 list of top @-@ selling computer games for MS @-@ DOS and Windows , based on a survey of 21 national retail chains . It followed MechWarrior 2 , Microsoft Flight Simulator and Myst . By September it had reached number one on the list among computer games , and was ranked third in best @-@ selling overall computer software , following Windows 95 and Microsoft Plus ! InterAction , a magazine published by Sierra On @-@ Line , wrote : " Never before has a new product jumped to number one on the charts so quickly . " By the end of December It remained at number three among overall software , and number one among computer games , and by January it was estimated as many as 500 @,@ 000 copies had been sold .
Despite coming out in August , Phantasmagoria finished 1995 as the ninth best @-@ selling game of the year , according to an analysis by PC Data of sales by 42 retail chains . In January 1996 , Phantasmagoria was the fourth @-@ best seller among MS @-@ DOS and Windows games , behind Microsoft Flight Simulator , Myst and Command & Conquer , and it was number six among all computer software . By February 10 it was number five among MS @-@ DOS and Windows games , and by February 24 it was number 10 . It received a boost in June 1996 , possibly due to the pending release of its sequel Phantasmagoria : A Puzzle of Flesh , and jumped back up to seventh among best @-@ selling computer software programs , according to Computer Life magazine . One year after Phantasmagoria was released , it still remained in the best @-@ seller charts , and more than 1 million copies were sold , a high number for the time . It was Sierra 's first game to sell 1 million copies .

= = = Reviews = = =

Phantasmagoria received generally positive to mixed reviews . The violent content drew a great deal of attention , with Lee S. Isgur of Jefferies & Co . , a global investment bank that followed the computer game industry , wrote , " It 's probably one of the bloodiest games ever . " Vince Broady , executive editor of Multimedia World , said Sierra was smart to try to capture the adult market , which was looking for sophisticated games especially after the popularity of games such as The 7th Guest . Dwight Silverman of the Houston Chronicle declared it the best game of the year , calling it a " masterwork " and " as close as it gets to a film you control " , although he said not everyone would appreciate it due to its violent content . Entertainment Weekly gave it a B + and called it " one of the surest signs yet of computer games approaching the quality level of the movies " . The review said it had some suspenseful and novel twists , but also some " horrific touches (that) seem a bit derivative , such as a Freddy Krueger @-@ like nightmare in which hands pull you through a bed " . Kim McDaniel of The Salt Lake Tribune called it " the most sophisticated computer game to date " and " a weird , wild , horrific ride that will make you jump at every turn , even if you aren 't normally faint @-@ of @-@ heart " . Although McDaniel said it might be easy for experienced gamers , she appreciated that it was more accessible for casual gamers than difficult games like The 7th Guest .
A Billboard magazine review said Phantasmagoria " lives up to the advanced billing " and " aims to unnerve and succeeds gruesomely with bloody special effects interspliced in trusty scare @-@ flick fashion with daubs of flesh and hints of sex " . USA Today writer Joe Wilson gave it three @-@ and @-@ a @-@ half stars and called it well @-@ produced , visually appealing , frighteningly realistic and " a much @-@ needed change from normal fare " , although he said the plot did not start to

become interesting until halfway through . Gene Emery of The Providence Journal said the game was " an impressive work , a sophisticated mix of live action and a rich computer @-@ generated environment , coupled with a musical score that 's spooky without being overwhelming " . He also called the gameplay " elegant in its simplicity " . San Francisco Chronicle writer Laura Evenson called it unpredictable and addictive , comparing it to a good mystery novel . Ric Manning of the Gannett News Service wrote , " The graphics are terrific , but don 't play on a full stomach . " Steve La Rue of U @-@ T San Diego found the game " visually opulent and interesting " and " has dialogue a lot better than I expected , given the trite gothic novel plot " , but also said he had to adjust to the " gradual , contemplative pace " . Jack Warner of The Atlanta Journal @-@ Constitution wrote : " It 's hackneyed , but the art is so good , the acting sufficiently convincing and the atmosphere brooding enough to keep you going " , although he said " precious little happens " in the first few discs .

Computer Gaming World writer Arinn Dembo called the storyline of a couple buying a haunted mansion " a cliché so familiar that it needs no explanation " , but said it still worked in a computer game because the player could directly experience it in that medium , rather than simply watching it in a film . Dembo also praised the game for featuring a female protagonist , though she said Adrienne was too much of an exaggeratedly feminine " girlie @-@ type girl " . Overall , Dembo said the game " achieved a new height of realism and beauty in a computer game " and was " an important technological leap , and represents a step forward for the whole industry " . Another Computer Gaming World review said Phantasamagoria " appears to deliver on its ambitious promises " and that although the puzzles are too simple for experienced gamers , the appeal of the game is exploring a setting that " would have had even the folks in Amityville making tracks " . Harley Jebens of the Austin American @-@ Statesman said some of the acting was " hilariously bad " and the storyline was predictable , but that the game keeps you engaged , the story draws you in and the controls were well executed . Fort Worth Star @-@ Telegram writer Andy Greiser said the game was a beautiful combination of live actors and computer @-@ built backgrounds , but said the action doesn 't start to pick up until the halfway point . In a mixed review , Phil LaRose of The Advocate praised the game for having a female protagonist and excellent special effects , and said it had gone further toward merging the realms of film and game than any other computer game . However , he said the game was too linear , with overly simple puzzles and a plotline with " so many recycled concepts in this game , players will feel like they 've seen it all before " .

Other reviews were more negative . GameSpot writer Jeff Sengstack said the expensive budget and long production history " do not necessarily translate into high quality gaming " . He complimented the graphics and music , but called the game " generally unchallenging , the characters weak , the violence over @-@ the @-@ top , and the script just lame " . Mike Hall of the Albuquerque Journal compared Phantasmagoria to big @-@ budget films with multimillion @-@ dollar budgets and multiple production delays that ultimately failed , like Cleopatra and Waterworld . He said the graphics were beautiful , but the game ended too quickly , the plot was thin and the puzzles were too easy to solve . The Escapist writer Brendan Main said the game fell short of its ambition to change how gamers experienced horror media , and the juxtaposition of real @-@ life actors on settings that were " ordinary , pixilated fare " was " odd and unflattering " . A one @-@ star review in The Video Games Guide , published in 2013 , " now seems little more than a flawed , though ambitious , white elephant " . In a 2014 review , IGN writer Kosta Andreadis said the game 's special effects were still effective , and that Phantasmagoria wisely builds suspense and saves the violent content for the end of the game . But he said it was ultimate " less a bad game than a bad horror film " and said the execution , " although technically interesting , is extremely goofy , full of ludicrous situations , weird plot turns , bizarre dialogue , and dated costume choices " .

= = = Awards = = =

Phantasmagoria the Golden Triad Award from Computer Game Review , and an Editor 's Choice Award from PC Gamer . It was nominated for Best Adventure / Role @-@ Playing Software in the annual Excellence in Software Awards competition , known in the gaming industry as " The Codies "

, which are among the most prestigious honors in software development . Additionally , it was named Best Adventure Game of the Year by Games Magazine , Game of the Month by Windows Magazine , and was one of three nominees for PC / Computing 's Game of the Year .

= = = Controversy = = =

Before Phantasmagoria was released , CompUSA , the nation 's largest discount computer retailer , notified Sierra it would not stock the game . The company did not comment on specific reasons for their decision except for a written statement from chief operating officer Hal Compton : " Software comes out all the time . Some we buy , some we don 't . This one we chose not to . " Analysts believed CompUSA objected to the realistic violence in the game . Lee S. Isgur of Jefferies & Co. said CompUSA 's decision probably would not harm overall sales of the game , and that it could in fact help it generate publicity . Likewise , Vincent Turzo of Jefferies & Co. said , " When you say you 're not going to carry something , of course the consumers rush to the stores to see what it 's all about . " Roberta Williams said of CompUSA 's announcement : " I 'm disappointed that they decided to make a stand with my product . " Some smaller retailers also decided not to stock Phantasmagoria , but others like Walmart continued to carry it .

In addition to the graphic gore and violence , the rape scene in Phantasmagoria drew particular attention and objections from the game 's critics . One major newspaper claimed Phantasmagoria " makes a game of sexual violence " . Multiple parents ' groups , religious organizations community action committees and special interest groups called for a boycott , and sent letters to the Sierra offices in droves voicing objections to the game . Phantasmagoria was banned from most retailers in Australia by decree of the government 's Office of Film and Literature Classification . The Roberta Williams Anthology collection was also banned in Australia because it featured a one @-@ chapter preview of the game . The governments of two other countries also banned Phantasmagoria . The game was spotlighted in U.S. Senate hearings debating regulation of content in the computer software industry. and there was talk that it could re @-@ ignite the debate in Congress over whether to impose federally mandated ratings on computer software that stores would be required to enforce .

Sierra found that Williams tended to garner extremely favorable press , even as Phantasmagoria got negative press , so the company began having her direct the game in person . In response to the backlash , Williams said she believed computer games were subject to harsher standards than films and television , which she said often have more violent content than Phantasmagoria , in part because computer games are often regarded as children 's entertainment rather than for adults . Williams said Phantasmagoria was less excessively violent than games like Doom and Mortal Kombat , and that unlike those games , the Phantasmagoria is " the good guy ... not going around shooting up people " . Sierra spokeswoman Rebecca Buxton and Dennis Cloutier , the company 's vice president of sales , both expressed surprised at the reaction to the game because Sierra made strong efforts to warn viewers about the adult content in its marketing , box warnings and censoring options . Cloutier said the company was essentially " censoring ourselves " . Steven L. Kent of The Seattle Times said there were more violent games than Phantasmagoria , but that most video game violence appears in computer animations , and thus can be more easily overlooked than in a live @-@ action game , which elicits a stronger emotional response .

In April 1998 , three years after the game was released , the Kentucky Teachers Retirement System came under criticism for owning 435 @,@ 000 shares worth $ 9 million in Cendant , which by this point had purchased Sierra On @-@ Line , due to the violence in the Phantasmagoria and other Sierra games . Kentucky Sen. Mitch McConnell ; Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee ; Iowa Gov. Terry Branstad ; and Lamar Alexander , former governor of Tennessee ; all asked the system to sell its stock . McConnell was particularly critical of the rape scene . They suggested a link existed between recent student slayings in West Paducah , Kentucky , and Jonesboro , Arkansas , and the " increasingly violent world many American children enter when they sit down in front of a computer screen " . Pat Miller , executive secretary of the Kentucky Teachers Retirement System , said the system wasn 't aware of Phantasmagoria or Sierra 's products , and that it invested in Cendant

because it 's part of an index fund of the 500 best stocks in the country . Miller added that , if the retirement system finds a problem with Sierra On @-@ Line , it would ask Cendant to cease ownership in the company , and that the system would divest its stock if it refused . Miller said : " We 're not going to continue to invest in some company that does something that will be detrimental to our children . We know that our membership would not want us to do that . " The same letter was also sent to heads of teachers ' retirement systems in California , Ohio and Texas .

= = Legacy = =

The commercial success of Phantasmagoria had an immediate positive financial impact on Sierra On @-@ Line . Even before its release , the company 's stock rose in July 1995 , up $ 3 @.@ 875 to $ 30 @.@ 875 , which Vince Turzo of Jeffries & Co attributed in part due to anticipation of Phantasmagoria . Sierra 's stock continued to rise after it was released . The company closed on the NASDAQ stock market at $ 43 @.@ 25 on September 8 , 1995 , translating to a 73 percent gain in less than three months , which Turzo again attributed partially to Phantasmagoria 's success . For the quarter ending September 30 , 1995 , Sierra posted a profit of $ 3 @.@ 26 million , compared to a loss of $ 850 @,@ 000 in 1994 . This improvement exceeded expectations in analysts ' forecasts , and was thanks largely to Phantasmagoria sales .

Williams returned to work on the King 's Quest series after Phantasmagoria was completed . While happy with the game , she said she did not expect to make another horror game again , saying , " It 's not really my area " . Sierra used the same technology and Hollywood techniques from Phantasmagoria to make The Beast Within : A Gabriel Knight Mystery (1995) , another interactive movie adventure game . Williams later described Phantasmagoria as the game that best represented her career as a game designer . Due to its development delays , Phantasmagoria was released after other interactive movie games like Wing Commander III and Under a Killing Moon , so it did not receive as much credit for heralding that gaming subgenre as the other titles . Harley Jebens of the Austin American @-@ Statesman said by the time it was finally released , " computer games that incorporate video (were) becoming a common sight on the software store racks " . Sean Clark , a project leader at LucasArts , feared the success of Phantasmagoria would set a bad precedent that software companies would think they need huge budgets and lots of discs to have a successful game , rather than focusing on quality .

= = Sequel = =

A Phantasmagoria sequel , Phantasmagoria : A Puzzle of Flesh (1996) , was released by Sierra a year after the original . It was written and designed by Lorelei Shannon , Roberta Williams ' design partner on King 's Quest VII . Williams was not involved with it , and the game featured a very different tone and completely different characters , with no direct connection to the storyline of the first game . Shannon said the original game was a haunted house story in the style of a " late night creature feature " , while her game has more science @-@ fiction and fantasy horror elements , in the style of the works of Clive Barker and Tanith Lee . Roberta Williams said both she and her husband Ken enjoyed the sequel . A preview for A Puzzle of Flesh was included in the first CD of the original Phantasmagoria game .

Ken Williams had wanted Roberta to work on a Phantasmagoria sequel immediately after the success of the first game , but she could not do so due to her obligations to King 's Quest VIII . Ken Williams felt the sequel was less successful because gamers could sense the absence of Roberta 's style . " It 's as if a bestselling author had a book ghostwritten . Within a few pages , the fans would know they had been duped and feel disappointed , regardless of the quality of the work . " Ken Williams said a third game was not produced after A Puzzle of Flesh because of issues after Sierra was acquired by CUC International in 1996 . Distribution was handled by Davidson & Associates , another CUC company , which primarily sold educational software . Williams said the company was uncomfortable with the violent content in Phantasmagoria and did not attempt sell the sequel aggressively as Sierra would have . He also claimed Jan Davidson , the wife of Chairman and CEO

Bob Davidson , personally did not like the game and " wanted it shut down " . Due to these sales challenges , Williams said " there was no reason to make a third Phantasamagoria .

 Roberta Williams , however , said she was asked by Sierra to make a third Phantasmagoria game , and that she said she would consider it , but it was not ultimately made . Williams said :

 Before I would even consider tackling a major project like that , though ? and devoting a couple of years of my life to it ? I would need a huge outpouring from all of those gamers out there that they would truly love to have another Phantas to play . If there is a big enough groundswell of support for another Phantasmagoria , and if Sierra hears it and begs me enough , I might consider it .