

= Freedom Planet =

Freedom Planet is a two @-@ dimensional platform video game created by independent developer GalaxyTrail , a studio set up for the project by designer Stephen DiDuro . The player controls one of three anthropomorphic animal protagonists : the dragon Lilac , the wildcat Carol , or the basset hound Milla . Aided by the duck @-@ like Torque , the player attempts to defeat the evil Lord Brevon , who plans to conquer the galaxy . While the game focuses on fast @-@ paced platforming , its levels are interspersed with slower action scenes .

Freedom Planet began development as a Sonic the Hedgehog fangame , but DiDuro lost interest in creating a derivative work and reconceived the project as his own intellectual property . He visited the website DeviantArt to recruit artist Ziyi Ling , who replaced the existing cast of characters with her own . Lilac , originally a hedgehog , became a dragon ; antagonist Doctor Eggman was replaced by Brevon ; and the Sonic series ' ring @-@ based health system was abandoned . Further changes were suggested by fans and incorporated throughout development . Freedom Planet was developed in Denmark and the United States and its art direction has East Asian influences : its background visuals were inspired by medieval Chinese art , and the game 's title is written in katakana .

The game was released for Microsoft Windows , first as a demo in August 2012 , then ? after a successful Kickstarter campaign and a few delays ? as a full game via Steam on July 21 , 2014 . A version for the Wii U console was announced in March 2015 , but was postponed that August due to a troublesome glitch ; however , the game was finally released successfully on October 1 , 2015 . Freedom Planet has been widely compared to the Sega Genesis Sonic games . Critics praised its gameplay , aesthetics , and balance of Sonic elements with original content , but were more mixed on its pacing and length .

= = Gameplay = =

Freedom Planet is a 2D platform and action game featuring anthropomorphized animal characters and 16 @-@ bit style graphics mimicking the look of games released for the Sega Genesis , particularly the Sonic the Hedgehog series . The game puts players in the role of one of the available playable characters as they traverse each level , fighting through enemies and obstacles before facing a boss at the end . Players have a health meter , which can be replenished by collecting red leaves , and a regenerative energy meter used to perform each character 's unique special moves . Players can earn extra lives by collecting enough blue crystals found throughout the level , or by rescuing creatures trapped in cages . Players can also obtain various types of shields , some of which often bonus attributes such as invulnerability to fire or the ability to breathe underwater , and invincibility power @-@ ups . Also hidden through the levels are cards , which unlock bonus content such as music and concept art , and bonus tokens which allows access to a bonus game at the end of the level .

The game currently has three playable characters ; Lilac the dragon , Carol the wildcat , and Milla the dog . In addition to melee attacks that can be used to attack enemies , each character has a unique array of moves which allow them to traverse the environment in different ways . Lilac can perform a double @-@ jump attack and can launch herself into an air dash , allowing her to bounce off walls and reach high areas . Carol is able to curl into a spin @-@ attack while running and can climb up walls . By picking up gas canisters , Carol can bring out her motorcycle , which can double @-@ jump and ride up vertical walls . Milla can throw gelatinous cubes and put up an offensive shield , combining the two to perform a Shield Blast , and flap her ears to reach high areas . Players can play through the main game in one of two ways ; Adventure , which tells the game 's story through the perspective of a chosen character , and Classic , in which the levels are played in order without any story cutscenes . They can also select Time Attack to try and play through completed levels in the quickest time possible . At launch , only Lilac and Carol are playable in Adventure mode , but additional playable characters and Adventure campaigns will be released through downloadable content . These include Torque , who can fire a blaster in multiple directions , and Spade , who attacks using playing cards .

= = Plot = =

The game begins as Sash Lilac and Carol Tea ? an anthropomorphic dragon and wildcat , respectively ? rescue a duck @-@ billed creature named Torque after his spacecraft crash lands . At Torque 's request , the three set out to protect a powerful relic called the Kingdom Stone . This involves them in a conflict between three nations on their planet : Shuigang , a country militarized by its new king , Dail ; Shang Mu , led by the wealth @-@ obsessed Mayor Zao ( / ?za? / or / ??a? / ) ; and Shang Tu , whose Royal Magister is unprepared for war . Lilac and Carol rush to the Kingdom Stone 's shrine but are waylaid by the Shang Tu officers General Gong and Neera Li , who doubt that the Stone is threatened . The protagonists arrive just as the Stone is stolen by Spade , a henchman of Zao . After the shrine collapses , Carol is separated from Lilac and pinned by rubble , but she is saved by the timid basset hound Milla ( / ?mi?l? / ) Basset .

That night , Torque tells Lilac , Carol , and Milla that he is an alien sent to apprehend the intergalactic warlord Arktivus Brevon , whose spacecraft wrecked on the planet . Brevon has invaded Shuigang , murdered its king , and brainwashed Dail to be his servant . He intends to steal the Stone to power his ship . The protagonists decide to reclaim the Stone from Zao , but they are accosted en route by Spade and by Brevon 's assistant Serpentine . The delays give Dail and Brevon 's forces time to steal the relic . Afterwards , Zao sends the protagonists as emissaries to Shang Tu to discuss an alliance against Shuigang . They are detained by the Magister upon their arrival , as Neera blames them for the Stone 's original disappearance . Torque is acquitted when Lilac falsely pleads guilty . She , Carol , and Milla quickly break out of jail to reunite with Torque , only to see him captured by Brevon and Serpentine .

Carol quarrels with Lilac and storms off . Feeling guilty , Lilac sends Milla to find her and then goes by herself to save Torque from Brevon 's nearby base , but she is captured and tortured by Brevon . Meanwhile , Carol and Milla ally with Spade to storm the base , where they rescue Torque and Lilac . However , they are all separated in the ensuing conflict . Neera finds Lilac , arrests her , and brings her back to Shang Tu , where the Magister determines that she is innocent and reveals that Zao is challenging Shuigang for the Stone . Lilac rejoins her friends and convinces Shang Mu and Shang Tu to unite against Dail and Brevon 's army . During the battle , Brevon announces that his ship is repaired , and Lilac , Milla , and Carol board it . The team combats Brevon 's minions , including a mutated Serpentine . Brevon captures Milla and turns her into a grotesque monster that attacks the other protagonists , who are forced to render her unconscious . Enraged , Lilac and Carol attack and defeat Brevon , but the Kingdom Stone is destroyed in the process . Shortly after the battle , Milla awakens in a medical tent and sees the sky lit up by swirling , crystalline energy released from the Kingdom Stone . The three kingdoms resolve to harness the Stone 's power and share it equally , thereby bringing an end to the war . Torque says goodbye to Lilac , Carol , and Milla and returns to space .

= = Development and release = =

Freedom Planet was conceived by American game designer and programmer Stephen DiDuro , who founded the independent developer GalaxyTrail to create the project . The soundtrack was composed by DiDuro in collaboration with user Shane " Blue Warrior " Ellis of VGMusic.com and user Leila " Woofle " Wilson from Fur Affinity . Although it is an original intellectual property , Freedom Planet was first developed as a Sonic fangame : it contained rings , and Doctor Eggman was the villain . DiDuro decided that the Sonic affiliation would hold back the game and attempted without success to design his own characters . Afterward , he received permission from the Chinese artist Ziyu Ling ? whom he had found on the art website DeviantArt ? to use her characters Lilac , Carol , and Milla in his game .

Viewers of early footage from the developing product encouraged DiDuro to separate it further from Sonic , so he replaced rings with red leaves and altered the characters ' abilities . Ziyu had drawn Lilac as a hedgehog , but DiDuro redesigned the character to be a dragon . Lilac 's wall @-@ jump

ability was based on a similar game mechanic from Ristar . Originally , her level of energy was to be dependent on her speed , but this proved too difficult to control .

While Freedom Planet was developed in Denmark and the United States , its art direction was influenced by medieval East Asian art , particularly that of China . The game 's visuals reference modern science fiction and fantasy as well . Much of the text in the game world is written in Chinese characters , and the title text is subtitled in Japanese katakana as Fur?damu Puranetto ( ????? ? ????? ) . However , no Japanese @-@ language version of the game has been released .

Freedom Planet was first released as a demo for Microsoft Windows in August 2012 . After a full version of the game was funded through Kickstarter , it was taken to Steam Greenlight and approved for Steam . Its release was first projected for early 2014 , then delayed to June 30 . Shortly before that date , it was delayed again to July 19 : the developers wanted to promote the game at a convention in Miami , Florida , and to avoid competition from the heavily discounted products in Steam 's Summer Sale . The game was released , after a third delay , on July 21 . To advertise the game , GalaxyTrail created branded T @-@ shirts , and Lilac was included as an easter egg in the 2013 game Sonic : After the Sequel . DiDuro considered and rejected the idea of developing an Android version of Freedom Planet , but he is saving money to port the game to the PlayStation Vita . The game was released on the website GOG.com in late 2014 . GalaxyTrail also developed versions for Mac OS X and Linux , which were released on Steam on April 17 , 2015 .

On March 9 , 2015 , Stephen DiDuro announced through Twitter that a version of the game for Nintendo 's Wii U console was planned for release on the eShop online store for late 2015 , later specified as August 13 . A demo was released as part of a promotion titled " Nindies @ home " , wherein players were invited to try out several upcoming Wii U games between June 15 and June 22 . On July 28 , however , GalaxyTrail confirmed that production of the final version of the game was taking longer than expected , suggesting that the game 's actual release would be later . DiDuro announced the cause of the delay on August 18 : the Wii U version had been set back by a " console @-@ freezing bug " , which would postpone the Wii U release indefinitely until the issue was fixed . He later explained that the bug had taken so long to detect because it only occurred in retail versions of the console , which had prevented GalaxyTrail and Nintendo from learning of the issue . The bug required a hard reset of the system to address the problem , which could potentially cause damage to the Wii U hardware . However , the bug was eventually fixed , and the game was successfully released on the eShop on October 1 ; customers who had tried out the game 's demo were rewarded with a 15 @-@ percent discount .

Downloadable content ( DLC ) is being created for the game . The first packs , which add Torque as a playable character and an adventure story for Milla , was released for computers in December 2015 , with a Wii U update yet to be announced . Additional DLC , which will make Spade a playable character , will be released in 2016 .

= = Reception = =

= = = Pre @-@ release = = =

Tony Ponce of Destructoid felt positively about the demo for Freedom Planet ; he found it " nice to see a well @-@ established style or formula applied to a new world with original characters " . Similarly , Eurogamer 's Jeffrey Matulef described the game 's preview as " an indie Sonic @-@ esque platformer done right " , and he enjoyed the redesigned health system . Dominic Tarison of IndieStatik , whom GalaxyTrail gave an exclusive demo build featuring Milla , complimented the game 's " new and unfamiliar configuration " of elements from classic 16 @-@ bit games . However , he felt that it " maybe adheres a little too closely to 16 @-@ bit limits , especially in the amount of viewable gameplay area . " John Polson of IndieGames.com believed that " the spectacles like loops and wall runs ... [ are not ] as magical to do or watch " as in Sonic games , but he nonetheless concluded that " every platformer fan " ought to download the demo .

Nathan Grayson of Kotaku praised the demo for its balance of Genesis Sonic elements and original

content : he described the product as " a love letter to classic Sonic , except when it 's not " . He also praised the game 's enemies , and , while he experienced minor control issues , guessed that they may have resulted from his use of an Xbox 360 controller instead of a keyboard . He found the game 's pacing to be slower than that of the Genesis Sonic games because of the added combat sequences , which sacrificed the feeling of " getting into a groove with a classic Sonic level " , though felt that this gave the player " time to look around , take in the sights , and think , ' Hey , I want to explore that ' " . He concluded that the game 's sense of speed was " solid " . Grayson was , however , critical of the voice acting , exclaiming " Yikes " .

Ponce strongly praised the visuals , which he found pleasant to the eye because of their light outlines , though he criticized the bland foreground design . Polson noted minor audio and visual flaws , most notably the recycling of sound effects from Genesis Sonic games , but he lauded the game 's music . Tarison praised the music and visuals , as well as the varied designs of the environments and playable characters .

= = = Post @-@ release = = =

Jahanzeb Khan of Hardcore Gamer felt that it was a worthy successor to the 1994 game Sonic 3 & Knuckles ? which he considered the series ' pinnacle ? and that it was " perhaps the most Sonic game to have come out since 1994 , one that feels like a true evolution and more importantly a resounding step forward . " Jonatan Allin of the Danish version of Eurogamer , who had not enjoyed any Sonic games since the Genesis era , concurred with Khan . Polygon 's Griffin McElroy argued that Freedom Planet successfully performs " a difficult balancing act , borrowing and transforming elements from games like Sonic the Hedgehog and Rocket Knight Adventures without coming off as derivative " . McElroy and Pablo Taboada of the Spanish @-@ language website MeriStation both compared the game to the work of developer Treasure . Taboada lamented the game 's obscurity and suggested that , had Treasure obtained the rights to Sonic and released Freedom Planet as an official sequel , it would have been more popular .

Khan commented that the levels " never feel like they 're over too soon nor do they drag on unnecessarily " , and he appreciated the setpiece moments such as " explosive chase / escape sequences , maze like labyrinths , traps , and even shoot- ' em @-@ up style shooting segments " . Taboada was mixed on the game 's brevity : he thought it was suitable for speedrunning but unsatisfying for those seeking a deeper experience . By contrast , Japanese website 4Gamer stated that the game 's quirks allowed one to play extensively without boredom , and Taboada enjoyed the large , Metroidvania @-@ style levels .

Regarding the game 's visuals , Taboada said , " Técnicamente es excelso " ( technically , it is excellent ) . He praised the colorful and detailed backgrounds , expressive character animations , sound effects , and music . Khan agreed : he commented that " every inch of it exud [ es ] artistic diversity with high resolution sprites that resemble the quality of yesteryear " . He called the audio a " nice mix of catchy chiptune style melodies with infectious synthetic beats " . Both Khan and 4Gamer were intrigued by the game 's East Asian visual style . Taboada believed that each character was likeable and interesting to play . Allin found himself unexpectedly captivated by the story , which he guessed many players would miss due to impatience with cutscenes .

= = Sequel = =

In December 25 , 2015 , GalaxyTrail announced Freedom Planet 2 is in development . With the goal of " defin [ ing ] Freedom Planet 's identity as a franchise , " the characters underwent a design overhaul . In contrast to the original title , it is being built using the Unity framework . The game is slated for release on PC and various Nintendo platforms at a later date .