= Star Ocean (video game) =

Star Ocean (???????? , Sut? ?shan) is an action role @-@ playing video game developed by tri @-@ Ace and published by Enix for the Super Famicom . The first game in the Star Ocean series , it was released only in Japan in July 1996 , and was the first game developed by tri @-@ Ace , consisting of staff that had previously left Wolf Team due to being unhappy with the development process for Tales of Phantasia with Namco in 1995 . The game required a special compression chip in its cartridge to compress and store all of the game 's data due to possessing graphics that pushed the limits of the aging Super Famicom . Additionally , the game had voice acting for the game 's intro and voice clips that played during the game 's battle gameplay , a rarity for games on the system .
 The story involves three friends who , while searching for the cure to a new disease , come into contact with a space @-@ faring federation that is locked in a war with another galactic power . Using advanced technologies and time travel , the group attempts to uncover the cause of the war and to find a cure for their planet . The game was never released outside Japan in this form , due to Enix closing its American branch shortly before the game was finished , and Nintendo 's focus on supporting the then @-@ upcoming Nintendo 64 video game console . However , the game was later remade by Tose for the PlayStation Portable under the title Star Ocean : First Departure , and released in English @-@ speaking regions in North America , Europe , and Australia in October 2008 . The game was the start of the entire Star Ocean series , featuring five games , two remakes , and a manga comic .

= = Gameplay = =

 Star Ocean is a role @-@ playing video game that is played from a top @-@ down perspective . The player navigates a character throughout the game world , exploring towns and dungeons and interacting with non @-@ player characters . Unlike the original game , the PlayStation Portable remake includes a world map for the player to navigate .

= = = Party = = =

 In progressing through the game , the player is able to recruit up to eight additional characters to travel alongside the protagonist ; some recruitments happen automatically , while others only happen depending on the previous actions and options taken by the player . Though only 8 characters can be recruited in a playthrough , ten characters are available to be recruited , and as a result not all characters can be recruited in one playthrough of the game . Certain characters cannot be recruited unless the players party is a specific size , or the players has made specific story decisions . In First Departure , players have the option of recruiting characters they did not previously have the option of adding to their party .

= = = Battle = = =

 When players move their party in the game 's dungeons and paths , random battles occur . Combat is done in a 3D isometric point of view . Unlike games in the Final Fantasy or Dragon Quest series , the battles are not turn based , but play out in real time . Players also do not directly control all of their characters actions , but instead chose battle strategies beforehand for all but one of their characters who then move and attack their closest enemy automatically . Added to First Departure was a combo attack system where special attacks stack to become more powerful . Players can equip characters with four special abilities with " ranged " and " distance " slots , whereas the remake reduced that number to two . Up to four characters can participate in battles , but the player is only able to control one character at a time , leaving the others to be controlled by the computer 's artificial intelligence . The player can switch which character is being controlled in battle . All characters have a standard " attack " option , in which the character 's equipped item is used to attack whichever enemy the player has locked on to . Additionally , special techniques called

Symbology can be used as well , which have the potential to deal more damage , but cost MP (Mental Points) , of which each character has a finite amount . Special attacks are assigned before combat begins .

Customization

Special Points (abbreviated " SP " in game) are also rewarded from battles , and are used to customize the character 's abilities . For instance , allotting SP to the cooking ability grants or improves a given character 's ability to make consumable foods out of raw materials in order to heal characters from damage taken in battles . Item creation can allow for characters to be able to create weapons and equipment that are stronger than those available to be bought in stores and towns . Individual items have a 20 item limit .

Affection system

Star Ocean has a game mechanic called " Private Actions " that plays a role in character development . While entirely optional , they often reveal additional backstory of particular characters or have other varying effects on gameplay . Upon arriving in a town , the player can opt to have all the characters in the party to temporarily split up and go their separate ways within the limitations of the town . The player retains control of just Ratix , and is able to look for the other characters . Upon finding other party members , various events may happen ; sometimes only small talk results , other times , larger events happen , that may even require a choice to be made by the player . Depending on the results , this can cause characters to either gain or lose " affinity " toward other characters in the party . For example , if one character loves another , the affinity level will be high , but if the former is mistreated , it will lower their feelings for the latter . A character 's affinity towards one another can have effects on the rest of the game . Affinity also affect which character 's endings players see . While the game 's overarching plot always largely ends the same , various parts of the ending are changed , added , or left out , depending on characters ' affinity at the end of the game .

Synopsis

Plot

The game starts off in a small town of Kratus on the under @-@ developed planet of Roak . There , a few of the local Fellpool (cat @-@ like people) youth , Roddick , Millie , and Dorne , are part of the village 's local " Defense Force " , who defend the village from minor threats such as thieves and robbers . However , one day , a neighboring town , Coule , starts contracting a terrible disease that turns people into stone . The town healer , Millie 's father , contracts the disease while trying to get rid of it , leading the group to search Mt . Metorx for a herb that is rumored to cure any sickness . Dorne unintentionally contracts the disease as well after touching an infected pigeon .
 When they reach the summit , they are confronted by Ronyx J. Kenny and Ilia Silvestri , two crew members of the Earth Federation (Terran Alliance in the PSP remake) starship Calnus . They inform them that the disease was sent to the planet by a foreign race called the Lezonians , whom the Earth Federation has been at war with . Roddick and Millie go with them on their spacecraft to help them find a cure . They learn that Fellpool blood could be used to process a special , invisible material which could give them a massive advantage in the war . Upon coming in contact with Lezonians , they reveal that they were being forced into war by a shadowy , powerful third party with a disgust for the Federation .
 Before Dorne fully succumbs to the disease , they do tests on him to figure out a cure . They determined that the only possible way to fight it would be to make a vaccine that uses the original source of the disease . While the origin of the virus is tracked back to being on Roak itself , it is from Asmodeus , the King of the Demon World , who had been killed 300 years prior to the spread of the

disease . Ronyx talks the group into using a Time Gate on the Planey Styx to go back 300 years into the past to track down Asmodeus back when he was still alive . While this works , Ilia trips while approaching the gate . As such , Ilia and Roddick have a delay from when they enter the time gate , and after the trip through time , they find themselves separated from Ronyx and Millie . The two groups work towards locating each other , and Asmodeus , in efforts to heal their family members and stop the war .

= = = Characters = = =

Roddick Farrence (????? ? ?????? , Ratix Farrence) is a 19 @-@ year @-@ old Fellpool swordsman and the game 's protagonist . A childhood friend of Mille and Dorne who served with them as town watchmen before being swept into adventure . He is voiced by Yuri Lowenthal in the English version , Mamoru Miyano in the Japanese remake , and Hiro Yuki in Super Famicom original .

Millie Chliette (??? ? ???? , Milly Killet) is an 18 @-@ year @-@ old Fellpool practitioner of Symbology healing magic who wields a staff , and a longtime friend and romantic interest for Roddick . She is voiced by Katie Leigh in the English version , Hitomi Nabatame in the Japanese remake , and Konami Yoshida in the Super Famicom original .

Ronyx J. Kenny (???? ? J ? ??? , Ronixis J. Kenny) is the 38 @-@ year @-@ old human captain of the starship Calnus , and uses a bow and arrows after leaving his phaser weapon behind . He is the father of Claude C. Kenny , the protagonist of Star Ocean : The Second Story . He is voiced by Sam Gold in the English version , Kenji Hamada in the Japanese remake , and Akira Okamori in the Super Famicom original .

Ilia Silvestri (??? ? ?????? , Iria Silvestoli) is the 23 @-@ year @-@ old human head science officer on the Calnus , serving under Ronyx . She fights using martial arts supplemented by gloves or claws , and enjoys alcohol . She is voiced by Julie Maddalena in the English version , Sanae Kobayashi in the Japanese remake , and Wakana Yamazaki in the Super Famicom original .

Cyuss Warren (??? ? ????? , Cius Warren) is a 20 @-@ year @-@ old Highlander who wields a large broadsword . Son of Lord Lias , one of the Three Heroes of the Demonic Wars , he dreams of becoming the greatest swordsman in the land . He is voiced by Grant George in the English version , and Hiroki Tochi in both Japanese versions .

Ashlay Bernbeldt (????? ? ?????? , Ashlay Barnbelt) is a 57 @-@ year @-@ old Highlander soldier wandering the world to find a successor in which to teach his sword skills . If recruited , he forms such a relationship with Roddick , and thus they share many of the same techniques . He is voiced by Michael McConnohie in the English version , and Norio Wakamoto in the Japanese remake , and Kazuhiko Inoue in the Super Famicom original .

Phia Melle (??? ? ?? , Fear Mell) is a 20 @-@ year @-@ old Highlander and the head of the Astral Knights who uses throwing daggers in combat with the Hisho @-@ ken style . She has feelings for Cyuss , but hides them under her outward desire to be a great knight . She is voiced by Dorothy Fahn in the English version , Megumi Toyoguchi in the Japanese remake , and Konami Yoshida in the Super Famicom original .

Mavelle Froesson (????? ? ????? , Marvel Frozen) is a mysterious 19 @-@ year @-@ old sorceress who accompanies Ronyx and Millie to Ionis . Her weapon is an orb that she throws at the enemy . She is voiced by Tara Platt in the English version , Hoko Kuwashima in the Japanese remake , and Nozomi Nonaka in the Super Famicom original .

Ioshua Jerand (???? ? ????? , Jousha Jerand) is a 20 @-@ year @-@ old magic @-@ using Featherfolk who is searching for his sister Erys , whom he was separated from after their parents were murdered . He despises combat , but realizes it as a necessary evil to survive in the world . He is voiced by Ezra Weisz in the English version , Jun Fukuyama in the Japanese remake , and Nobuyuki Hiyama in the Super Famicom original .

T 'nique Arcana (????? ? ???? , Tinek Arukena) is a 18 @-@ year @-@ old Lycanthrope who can transform into a dark blue werewolf in battle , and trains to become an excellent fighter and martial artist . He is voiced by Vic Mignogna in the English version , Chihiro Suzuki in the Japanese remake

, and Takuya Fujisaki in the Super Famicom original .

Pericci (???? , Perisie) is a 16 @-@ year @-@ old Lesser Fellpool with more pronounced cat @-@ like features including feline ears and fangs . Pericci serves as comedic relief , starting with low stats but gains several powerful techniques . She is voiced by Alicyn Packard in the English version , Yukari Tamura in the Japanese remake , and Wakana Yamazaki in the Super Famicom original .

Erys Jerand (??? ? ????? , Eris Jerand) is Ioshua 's 17 @-@ year @-@ old sister who was kidnapped when they were children , and was brainwashed to be an assassin by the mysterious Crimson Shield . She later escaped and swapped her body with Mavelle to search for her parents ' killer in secret . Erys does not appear in the original Super Famicom release , and is voiced by Stephanie Sheh in English , and Kana Ueda in Japanese .

Welch Vineyard (???? ? ????? , Welch Vineyard) is a mysterious 18 @-@ year @-@ old traveler who appears somewhat ditzy and interested in meeting guys . Welch , like Erys , is only available in the remake . She first appeared as a non @-@ playable character in Star Ocean : Till the End of Time , but has been retroactively added to the first two games . She is voiced by Melissa Fahn in the English version , and Tomoe Hanba in the Japanese version .

= = Development = =

In 1994 , video game developers Wolf Team signed a deal with publisher Namco to release the game that would be Tales of Phantasia , which was later released in 1995 in Japan for the Super Famicom . However , the development cycle for this game was plagued with creative disputes between the developers and publisher , leading to much of the development team leaving to form a new company , which would become tri @-@ Ace , which explains some of the common themes between the games , such as the similar battle systems .

After Tales of Phantasia was completed , some of the games designers felt that the core skill and item systems were too " generic " , and for their next game they would make a much deeper gameplay experience . To deepen the story , the " private action " system was created to reveal more of the characters history , personality and relationships , but the score the game generated from various choices was hidden from players since there was no " right " or " wrong " story path . In order to tell a " bigger " story , space was chosen as the setting .

Both Tales of Phantasia and Star Ocean stretched the power of the Super Famicom to its limits , with a total of 48 megabits of data . Additionally , Star Ocean was also one of two games that used a special S @-@ DD1 chip to aid in compression of almost all graphics and map data , meaning that it effectively stored even more data than Tales of Phantasia , though the compression lead to a lower audio quality . The game also featured special technology called a " Flexible Voice Driver " that allowed for the compression of sound , allowing for voice clips for characters when in battles , another trait that was both very rare for a Super Famicom game , and shared with Tales of Phantasia . Different voice clips would be played depending on the scenario ; if the characters were confronted by weak enemies , they may say something more confident , where as if confronted by strong enemies , they may say something more fearful or frantic . Mode 7 graphics were generated using software , and appear when items pop out of treasure chests ; the need for extra tiles , however , limited the graphical effects implementation . The game also featured surround sound . Planning for a sequel began as soon as development was completed on Star Ocean . Feedback about weak boss monsters later lead to more challenging battles in Star Ocean 2 .

The game was released on July 19 , 1996 . Despite appearing in North American video game magazine Nintendo Power in 1996 , the Super Famicom version was never officially released anywhere outside Japan . Enix America ceased to publish games in North America by the end of 1995 due to poor sales , and Nintendo had already passed on publishing Tales of Phantasia a year prior , instead choosing to focus on the then @-@ upcoming Nintendo 64 video game console . However , the game was unofficially translated into English by DeJap Translations , who created a patch that made the game fully playable in English via emulation . The game would not be officially available in English until 12 years later , when the game was remade for the PlayStation Portable as

Star Ocean : First Departure in 2008 .

= = = First Departure = = =

Star Ocean : First Departure is an enhanced remake of the original Star Ocean , developed by TOSE . The first details of the game were revealed at the " Star Ocean Special Stage " during the Square Enix Party 2007 , alongside those of Star Ocean : The Second Story . Yoshinori Yamagishi , producer of the series , stated that he wants the remakes to feel as though they 're completely new games .

The game was released in Japan on December 27 , 2007 , and was released in North America and Europe on October 21 , 2008 and October 24 , 2008 respectively ; making it the first time that the original Star Ocean was officially released outside Japan . The English localization was handled by Nanica , Inc . , with voice @-@ over production services provided by Epcar Entertainment , Inc . First Departure uses a slightly altered version of the engine used for Star Ocean : The Second Story with similar features , including prerendered backgrounds , 3D battle fields and hand drawn facial animations . Production I.G provided new artwork and animated cutscenes for the game . New playable characters have been added as well . New voice actors and extensive amounts of new , fully voiced dialogue were included , with even some non @-@ player characters being voiced over as well . A limited edition called the Star Ocean : First Departure Eternal Edition was released exclusively in Japan alongside the standard version . It features alternate box art and was bundled with a Star Ocean @-@ themed PSP @-@ 2000 handheld and carrying pouch .

= = = Music = = =

The scores for Star Ocean and First Departure were composed and arranged by Motoi Sakuraba , whose arranged soundtracks he also performed on . The Japanese music group Asunaro composed the first song of the album entitled " Heart " , which is the games theme song . The album Star Ocean Perfect Sound Collection was released after the original soundtrack in both an arranged and drama album format .

Critics praised Sakuraba 's progressive rock style , and highlighted his musical experimentation throughout the original Star Ocean score and Final Departure . Tracks added from Star Ocean : The Second Story received mixed reviews on the First Departure album , adding some familiar Star Ocean themes but also some lesser known songs to the mix . Several musical pieces were missing from the original album and were added to the remakes release .

= = Reception = =

The original Super Famicom release of Star Ocean sold approximately 235 @,@ 000 copies in Japan , of which just over 175 @,@ 000 copies were sold during 1996 . In a 2009 retro review , NintendoLife praised the game 's technical aspects calling it " one of the best @-@ looking Super Nintendo games ever created " and that the soundtrack " never ceases to amaze " . It maintains a 93 % average rating from aggregate review website GameRankings .

Star Ocean : First Departure on the PlayStation Portable sold 115 @,@ 280 copies in its debut week in Japan , with lifetime sales of approximately 204 @,@ 996 copies in the region . It received a 31 out of 40 total score from Japanese magazine Weekly Famitsu , based on individual scores of 8 , 7 , 8 , and 8 , earning it the publication 's Silver Award . While the editors thought the title 's animation and characters were well done and the story was " charming " they lamented that players could only save their progress at certain points such as the world map , which they also felt too large and had a limited field of view .

The English version of First Departure received mixed to average reviews , earning a 77 % rating on GameRankings and a 74 out of 100 average from Metacritic . Many reviewers felt that despite the updated graphics and sound , the game still felt less refined than more modern role @-@ playing games . IGN found the game to have a " bland , awkwardly @-@ told narrative " with " weak

characters " , but that it would appeal to fans of older games , stating " If you can look at First Departure and understand that it 's based on a very old title , you 'll likely be able to overlook the problems and get a fair amount of satisfaction " . GameSpot also stated that the title had " limited appeal " in addition to providing little challenge . Andrew Fitch of 1UP.com , however , called First Departure an " overlooked classic " with " ridiculously engrossing crafting minutiae " and numerous character party combinations that increase its replay value . GameSpy would additionally declare that " Despite a couple of minor hitches , Star Ocean : First Departure is one of the best remakes Square Enix has brought to portable consoles . "