

= Air (visual novel) =

Air is a Japanese adult visual novel developed by Key released on September 8 , 2000 for Windows PCs . Key later released versions of Air without the erotic content , and the game was ported to the Dreamcast , PlayStation 2 and PlayStation Portable . The story follows the life of Yukito Kunisaki , a traveling showman searching for the " girl in the sky " . He arrives in a quiet , seaside town where he meets three girls , one of whom is the key to the end of his journey .

The gameplay in Air follows a branching plot line which offers pre-determined scenarios with courses of interaction , and focuses on the appeal of the three female main characters by the player character . The game is divided into three segments ? Dream , Summer , and Air ? which serve as different phases in the overall story . The title of the game reflects the prominent themes of the air , skies , and use of wings throughout gameplay . The game ranked as the best-selling PC game sold in Japan for the time of its release , and charted in the national top 50 several more times afterwards . Air has sold over 300 ,000 units across several platforms .

Following the game 's release , Air made several transitions into other media . A manga by Yukimaru Katsura was serialized in Kadokawa Shoten 's Comptiq , and later published into two volumes . Comic anthologies and art books were also published , as were audio dramas and several albums of music . Kyoto Animation produced a 13 episode anime television series and a two episode anime mini series in 2005 , and Toei Animation produced an anime film in 2005 . The anime adaptations are licensed by Funimation who released them in North America .

= = Gameplay = =

Air is a romance visual novel in which the player assumes the role of three characters . Much of its gameplay is spent on reading the story 's narrative and dialogue . Air follows a branching plot line with multiple endings , and depending on the decisions that the player makes during the game , the plot will progress in a specific direction . With the consumer ports , if an undesired choice was selected , there would be an option to rewind the story to correct the mistake . However , if the player reaches a bad end to a storyline , the player does not have this option and must reload the game at the last saved point .

There are five main plot lines that the player will have the chance to experience , three which are initially available and two more which can later become available . Throughout gameplay , the player is given multiple options to choose from , and text progression pauses at these points until a choice is made . To view all plot lines in their entirety , the player will have to replay the game multiple times and choose different choices to further the plot to an alternate direction .

When first playing the game , the player assumes the role of Yukito Kunisaki and the scenarios for the three heroines are available in what is called the Dream story arc . After the plot lines for these three heroines have been completed , an additional scenario called Summer is made available where the player assumes the role of Ry?ya . Summer is a linear novel arc in which no choices are presented to the player . Upon the completion of the Summer route , another scenario called Air is made available , which serves as the true ending to the story . In Air , the player assumes the role of a crow named Sora . In the adult versions of the game , there are scenes with sexual CGs depicting Yukito and a given heroine having sex . Later , Key released versions of Air without the erotic content .

= = Plot = =

= = = Setting and themes = = =

There are important locations featured in Air that are based on places in the city Kami in Hy?go Prefecture , Japan . Air is set in the Kasumi district of Kami ; during the course of the series ' creation , Kasumi was an individual town that has since merged with two others to form the city of

Kami . Many of the locales in Air , such as the seawall , the train station , the shrine , and the school are based on real places . As Air is set in the middle of summer , the season offers bright , sunny skies for the town during the day . In the manga adaptation , the town is described as a " quiet town with few people ... with nothing but beaches and countryside . " Scenario assistant Y?ichi Suzumoto has commented that his impression of Air is similar to that of a folk song due to the rural setting and heartwarming story progression .

As indicated by the title , air , skies and wings are important themes : Yukito is searching for the " girl in the sky " , and Misuzu believes her other self is flying in the sky above her . Other characters show a similar relationship to the sky , such as Minagi who is a member of the astronomy club , and Michiru who has a fondness for bubbles that float in the air . Kano wants wings to fly , and Kanna already has them . Misuzu names a crow she finds Sora (?) ? Japanese for sky . Another major theme is the maternal bond , as the four heroines ' stories , as well as Yukito 's , revolve around their mothers , either biological or adoptive . Main scenario writer Jun Maeda commented that he prefers to include mothers in games if given the choice between only include a mother and father , as is what happened with Air , though he backs this up by noting that in bish?jo games , women are the main focus anyway . Complicated relationships involving family members and friends play a key part throughout the story . One of the sub @-@ themes in the story is magic . Uraha , Yukito 's mother , and Yukito himself have the ability to use magic , though Yukito is the least skilled among them . Kano was told by her sister that when she grows up and takes off her yellow ribbon , she will gain the power to do magic . However , the problems of parents leaving their offspring and poverty are displayed realistically .

= = = Main characters = = =

The player assumes the role of Yukito Kunisaki , the protagonist of Air . He lives a poor life going from town to town with little money , trying to make a living off his show with a puppet . By being an adolescent or young adult , Yukito sometimes acts childishly if provoked . Yukito tends to be helpful to those around him while trying to earn any money at the same time , and does his best to look after Misuzu in the Dream arc . Misuzu Kamio , the main heroine of Air , makes Yukito quite mistrustful at first by being too friendly , but eventually earns his affection . She is a cheerful but introverted , slightly clumsy and simplistic high school girl , and often utters the pseudo @-@ dinosauric phrase gao when she feels troubled , a habit she retained from childhood . Misuzu has a great love of dinosaurs , finding the story of their glory and extinction " romantic " . The second of the three heroines Yukito meets after Misuzu is Kano Kirishima , a girl attending the same school as Misuzu . She is usually energetic , playful , and tells jokes by saying nonsensical things . Kano is friends with a strange stray dog named Potato that follows her around and is able to communicate in his strange manner of speech . Kano still believes in things she was told by her older sister Hijiri as a child as a way of coping with her past . The third and final heroine Yukito meets is a girl in Misuzu 's class at school named Minagi Tohno , a top student in the school who is introverted as well . Until she met Yukito , her only friend was Michiru , with whom she often blows bubbles at the abandoned train station in town .

= = = Story = = =

Air 's story revolves around three girls whose lives are connected to the same man . In the first story arc , Dream , Yukito Kunisaki is a showman traveling across Japan , continuing his late mother 's search for the " girl in the sky " . The story opens on Monday July 17 , 2000 when Yukito comes across a small seaside town where the story takes place . On his first day in town , Yukito tries to earn money by putting on a mysterious puppet show where he manipulates a doll magically without strings for a small audience of kids passing by . Yukito is unsuccessful in gaining the children 's favor , and the children leave without paying him for his performance . That night , Yukito sleeps on the town 's seawall by the beach . Yukito collapses from heat stroke the next day and is taken to a nearby fisherman 's guild ; after he awakens , they feed him , and give him some very large rice

balls to take with him as he is leaving . As he sits on the town 's seawall eating one of the rice balls , he notices a young girl beside him who introduces herself as Misuzu Kamio ? a sincere yet clumsy girl who is eager to become friends with him . Misuzu persistently attempts to play with him , while Yukito tries to refuse her efforts . He eventually follows her home lured by the chance to eat . After Haruko , Misuzu 's aunt and foster mother , is persuaded , it is decided that he will stay with them for the time being .

The next day , Yukito meets a girl named Kano Kirishima and a stray dog named Potato ; Kano and Misuzu go to the same high school . Later that day , Yukito meets a third girl named Minagi Tohno , Misuzu 's classmate , and her friend Michiru . Like Misuzu , both Kano and Minagi have strange personalities connected with mysterious pasts . Before long , a legend of " one thousand summers " begins to unfold where the mysteries of the past are framed primarily by the relationship between Yukito and Misuzu . The cursed " girl in the sky " Yukito has been searching for turns out to be Misuzu . By the time he figures this out , she has already grown to love him and has passed her 15th birthday . Once these things have come to pass , the " girl in the sky " is cursed to die . The remainder of this arc is dedicated to Yukito 's attempt to save her , trying to effectively break the curse .

The next arc , Summer , reveals events that occurred in the summer of one thousand years before the Dream arc , taking place in the Heian period . Kannabi no mikoto , or Kanna , is one of the last winged beings in Air 's fictional setting and is held as a prisoner in her own castle . Since she bears wings on her back , she is not permitted to leave the castle walls or see her mother , who is in a similar situation elsewhere . With Ry?ya , a member of her samurai guard , and Uraha , a fledgling telekinetic , Kanna escapes and traverses feudal Japan to find her mother . However , the rest of the guard and a sect of Buddhist monks follow them . After catching up , they place a curse on Kanna where she must endure constant reincarnation and death whenever she finds love ; Misuzu is one such reincarnation .

In the last arc , Air , Yukito 's final wish to save Misuzu 's life is heard . The story starts over from the Dream arc , although it is seen through the view point of a crow Misuzu finds and names Sora . New things are revealed that were not seen following Yukito in the Dream arc . After Misuzu finds Sora and brings him back home , her condition worsens and eventually she forgets even who Haruko is . Misuzu 's father Keisuke Tachibana shows up during this arc wanting to take Misuzu back to his home , but Haruko pleads with him to grant her more time , and they agree on extending the time for three more days . After the three days pass , Keisuke comes back and sees the love between Misuzu and Haruko ; he decides to let them stay together . The remainder of this arc has Misuzu and Haruko spending time together like mother and daughter , culminating in Misuzu 's death .

= = Development = =

After the completion of Kanon , the Key staff started production on Air and expanded the number of people involved in this project compared to Kanon . The executive producer for Air was Takahiro Baba from VisualArt 's , the publishing company that Key is under . The planning for Air was headed by Jun Maeda who was also one of two main scenario writers , the other being Takashi Ishikawa . Scenario assistance was provided by four more people : Kazuki Fujii , Kai , T?ya Okano , and Y?ichi Suzumoto . Art direction was headed by Key 's artist Itaru Hinoue who worked on the character design . Further computer graphics were split between three people ? Miracle Mikipon , Na @-@ Ga , and Shinory ? and background art was provided by Din and Torino . The music in the game was composed primarily by Shinji Orito , Jun Maeda , and Magome Togoshi , who had started working with Key since before Kanon 's release . After the completion of Air , two of the staff ? Kazuki Fujii , and Takashi Ishikawa ? left Key .

Jun Maeda , the main scenario writer of Air , commented that in the early stages of Air 's production , it was already decided that it was to be an adult game , and he further assumes that if it was not at least first released with adult content , that it would not have been as commercially successful . Maeda also commented that he wanted to write Air to give players the chance to experience the

entire story as a whole rather than just a sum of differing parts as typicalbish?jo games do , including Kanon . While attempting to do this , Maeda also tried to simultaneously make it seem similar to typical visual novels in the same genre as Air to give the game appeal to the players who often play such games . As such , while the game incorporates stories from several characters , they are all of varying lengths .

= = = Release history = = =

Air was released as an adult game on September 8 , 2000 as a limited edition , playable on a Windows PC as a 2 @-@ disc CD @-@ ROM set . The limited edition came bundled with the remix album Ornithopter remixing background music tracks featured in the visual novel . The regular edition was released on July 27 , 2001 . Key released an all ages version on July 27 , 2001 for Windows . An updated adult version called the Air Standard Edition was released on April 8 , 2005 with added support for Windows 2000 / XP as a DVD @-@ ROM . An updated all ages version of Air compatible for Windows Vista PCs was released by Key on July 31 , 2009 in a box set containing five other Key visual novels called Key 10th Memorial Box . Another updated all ages version compatible for Windows 7 PCs called Air Memorial Edition was released on May 28 , 2010 .

The first consumer console port of the game was released for the Dreamcast (DC) on September 20 , 2001 by NEC Interchannel . A PlayStation 2 (PS2) version was released on August 8 , 2002 also by NEC Interchannel . The PS2 version was re @-@ released as a " Best " version on September 1 , 2005 . The PS2 version was bundled in a " Key 3 @-@ Part Work Premium Box " package together with the PS2 versions of Kanon and Clannad released on July 30 , 2009 . To compensate for the lack of erotic content in the consumer ports , extra scenes were added .

A version playable on SoftBank 3G mobile phones was released by Prototype through VisualArt 's Motto on May 1 , 2007 . Prototype later released a VGA edition produced by NTT DoCoMo playable on FOMA phones in February 2008 . The version for the FOMA phones was split into two separate files : the Dream story arc comprised the first file , and the remaining Summer and Air arcs comprised the second file . A version of the Dream arc playable on Android devices was released on July 27 , 2012 . A version containing the Summer and Air arcs for Android devices was released on August 15 , 2012 . A full version Air on Android devices was released on October 24 , 2012 in two editions : one without voice acting , and one with voice acting , including Yukito . Two versions were released on May 2 , 2013 : an adult version for Android devices and an all ages version playable on iOS devices . A PlayStation Portable (PSP) version of the game was released in Japan on November 22 , 2007 by Prototype . A downloadable version of the PSP release via the PlayStation Store was released by Prototype on September 2 , 2010 . A PlayStation Vita version will be released by Prototype on September 8 , 2016 . In the original release , there was no voice acting for the characters , though this was later changed for the DC version , which except for Yukito included full voice acting , and the PS2 and PSP versions , which had full voice acting .

= = Adaptations = =

= = = Manga = = =

An Air manga was serialized in the Japanese computer game magazine Comptiq between August 10 , 2004 and February 10 , 2006 . The individual chapters were later collected into two separate volumes published by Kadokawa Shoten . The story was adapted from the visual novel version that preceded it , and was illustrated by Japanese artist Yukimaru Katsura . Between the two volumes , there are 15 main chapters (nine in volume one and six in volume two) , and two bonus chapters included at the end of each volume . The manga version goes through the Dream and Air arcs in detail while the Summer arc is only touched upon briefly throughout the manga . The main focus is on Misuzu 's story with Kano and Minagi serving as minor characters in comparison . However , Minagi 's story is explained in the bonus installment at the end of volume two .

There are also five sets of manga anthologies produced by different companies and drawn by a multitude of different artists . The first volume of the earliest anthology series , released by Ichijinsha under the title Air Comic Anthology , was released on January 25 , 2001 under their DNA Media Comics label . Volumes for this series continued to be released until December 25 , 2001 with the seventh volume . The second anthology , Air Anthology Comic , was released in a single volume by Softgarage on December 20 , 2002 . On April 17 , 2004 , Ohzora released an anthology composed of works based on both Kanon and Air titled Haru Urara : Kanon & Air . Ohzora also released three other anthologies under the title Air , the last of which came out on March 24 , 2005 . The last manga anthology was released as a single volume on April 2 , 2005 by Jive titled Comic Anthology Air : Kimi no Iru Basho . Each of the anthology series are written and drawn by an average of 20 people per volume .

== = Drama CDs == =

There were nine drama CDs released based on Air released by Lantis . The first three focused solely on each of the main heroines separately per CD where the cover of the album would depict which of the girls to be presented . These three albums were released on August 24 , 2005 . The next set of three was done the same way and released on October 21 , 2005 . The last three were released in one month increments after the second batch of three drama CDs went on sale . The seventh CD focused on the events of the Summer arc in the story while the last two were based on the Air arc . At least the last CD released on January 25 , 2006 contained original stories in addition to the story from the visual novel .

== = Anime == =

On November 17 , 2004 , a teaser DVD named " Air prelude " was produced containing interviews with the anime 's cast , clean opening and ending theme video sequences , and promotional footage of the anime itself ; it was a limited edition DVD , with only 20 @, @ 000 copies produced . The anime television series is produced by Kyoto Animation , directed by Tatsuya Ishihara , written by Fumihiko Shimo , and features character design by Tomoe Aratani who based the designs on Itaru Hinoue 's original concept . Thirteen episodes were produced by Kyoto Animation : 12 regular episodes , and a final recap episode which summarizes Misuzu 's story arc . The anime also follows the game by splitting the series into three parts ; Dream (episodes one through seven) , Summer (episodes eight and nine) , and Air (episodes 10 through 12) , with the recap episode (episode 13) following . The episodes aired between January 6 and March 31 , 2005 on the BS @- @ i Japanese television network . The theme songs from the Air visual novel are used for the anime 's opening theme , ending theme and soundtrack . After the conclusion of the anime series , a mini @- @ series which added to the Summer arc of the story called Air in Summer aired on August 28 and September 4 , 2005 a week later on BS @- @ i . Air in Summer consisted of two episodes and was produced by the same staff as the anime series .

A DVD released on March 31 , 2005 called " Air Memories " contained promotional commercials for the series , staff commentaries , and clean ending sequences from the 12th and 13th episodes , lasting 92 minutes . The episodes were released to Region 2 DVD between April 6 and September 7 , 2005 by Pony Canyon in limited and regular editions containing two episodes per volume . The DVD for Air in Summer was later released on October 5 , 2005 in Japan . Additionally , Air became one of the first anime series to be released in Blu @- @ ray Disc format on December 22 , 2006 . A new version of the Blu @- @ ray Disc box set was released on November 28 , 2008 in Japan .

On April 27 , 2007 , ADV Films co @- @ founder and executive Matt Greenfield announced the acquisition of both the anime series and the film during a panel at the anime convention Anime Matsuri ; it paid \$ 145 @, @ 000 for the TV series . The 12 main episodes and two Air in Summer episodes were licensed for North American distribution by ADV Films . The episodes were released on four DVD compilations between August 14 and November 27 , 2007 . The second DVD volume was sold in two editions , with the difference between the two being a series box all four DVDs could

fit inside . In July 2008 , the license for the anime series and film was transferred to Funimation , which continued to produce them in North America in English . Funimation released a three @-@ disc series box set of the Air anime on April 21 , 2009 , which did not include the recap episode .

= = = Film = = =

An Air animated film directed by Osamu Dezaki premiered in Japanese theaters on February 5 , 2005 . The film , animated by Toei Animation , is a reinterpretation of the original Air storyline which centers on the story arc of the female lead Misuzu Kamio . Yukito Kunisaki arrives in the town of Kami for a chance to earn money at the summer festival and meets Misuzu on his first day in town . They soon become friends and a story one thousand years old begins to unfold . The film was later sold on DVD and released in three editions : the Collector 's Edition , the Special Edition , and the Regular Edition on August 5 , 2005 . The Air film was originally released on DVD by ADV Films in North America on December 11 , 2007 . Funimation continued the release of the film as of July 2008 when the license was transferred from ADV to Funimation ; Funimation re @-@ released the film on April 21 , 2009 .

= = Music = =

The visual novel has three main theme songs : the opening theme " Tori no Uta " (??? , Bird 's Poem) , the ending theme " Farewell song " , and " Aozora " (?? , Blue Skies) as an insert song . Each song is sung by Lia of I 've Sound and the lyrics were written by Jun Maeda . Five of the characters have leitmotifs , or background music theme songs ? the three heroines , Kanna , and Michiru . Misuzu 's theme is " Natsukage " (?? , Summer Lights) ; Kano 's theme is " Mizutamari " (???? , Puddle) ; Minagi 's theme is " Niji " (? , Rainbows) ; Kanna 's theme is " Tsukiwarawa " (?? , Moon Child) ; lastly , Michiru 's theme is " Tentomushi " (????? , Ladybug) . Of the six music tracks not used in the visual novel , but of which were included on the game 's original soundtrack , the first two were failed attempts at creating a theme for Minagi .

The first album , Ornithopter , came bundled with the original release of Air in September 2000 . The next album was released in August 2001 as a maxi single titled " Natsukage / Nostalgia " containing a vocal version of " Natsukage " , and a B @-@ side track ; both songs were sung by Lia and the rest of the single was produced by Jun Maeda . The game 's original soundtrack was released in September 2002 containing two discs with 31 different tracks along with remix and instrumental versions of the opening and ending themes . A piano arrange album was released in December 2003 called Re @-@ feel which contained five tracks from Air and five from Kanon . An EP containing original versions of the three theme songs and remixed versions of the opening and ending themes was released in May 2006 called Air Analog Collector 's Edition : Tori no Uta / Farewell song . Each of the albums released for the visual novel version were released on Key 's record label Key Sounds Label . The film 's original soundtrack was released in March 2005 by Frontier Works . A bonus symphony CD titled Shinwa e no Izanai was released with the special edition Air film DVD on August 5 , 2005 . Overall , Air 's music has been well received , and the original soundtrack for the visual novel has met with high sales . The opening theme was involved in copyright infringement in 2005 .

= = Reception and sales = =

According to a national ranking of how well bish?jo games sold nationally in Japan , the original Air PC release premiered at number one in the rankings . The game ranked twice at 42 in November and December 2000 , at 20 in January 2001 , and twice more at 42 through February 2001 . The original release appeared on the charts twice more : the first in late September to early October 2001 at 26 , and again in the last two weeks of May 2002 , ranking in at 43 . The regular edition of the Air PC release premiered at number 13 , ranked in at number 41 in the following ranking , and 42 in the ranking after that . The PC all ages version premiered at number seven in the rankings and

had a final ranking at 30 in the next ranking . The Air Standard Edition premiered at number one in the rankings . The Air Standard Edition ranked in twice more , at 34 and at 28 in the next two rankings . Air was the highest selling game of 2000 selling 102 @, @ 080 units , which was about 25 @, @ 000 more units than the second highest game , Inagawa de Ik? ! . The Dreamcast version sold 42 @, @ 445 units in its first week , and was the fourth highest selling console game in Japan that week . The video game magazine Famitsu scored this version a 30 out of 40 , and it ultimately sold 50 @, @ 406 units to rank as the 53rd highest selling Japanese Dreamcast game ever , as of 2007 . NTT Publishing reported that over 300 @, @ 000 units of Air have been sold .

" Air took the bish?jo gaming world by storm , " as states a review of the Dreamcast game by MobyGames . Air was described as a game that stands out , much like Key 's first title Kanon , due to an intricate plot that keeps the player interested , and has a good replay value as well . In an interview of Jun Maeda and Y?ichi Suzumoto , they were both surprised to find out that the Japanese public (in March 2001) felt Air to be a soothing game , but Maeda and Suzumoto made it clear that this impression is completely at odds with their impression of the game , and they remark that there was not one person who worked on Air who thought that . Characters from Air have appeared in d?jin works not directly based on the Air series . Games such as Eternal Fighter Zero -Blue Sky Edition- by Twilight Frontier where most of the playable characters either came from Air or from the earlier Key games Kanon or One . In the October 2007 issue of Dengeki G 's Magazine , poll results for the 50 best bish?jo games were released . Out of 249 titles , Air ranked eighth with 43 votes .