= Gyromancer =

Gyromancer is a puzzle and role @-@ playing video game developed by PopCap Games in collaboration with Square Enix . In the game , the player moves through a map of an enchanted forest , battling monsters using their own summoned monsters through a puzzle @-@ game battle based on PopCap 's Bejeweled Twist . In these battles , the player rotates groups of four in a grid of gems to line up three or more jewels of the same color ; when enough lines have been created damage is dealt to the enemy . Between battles , a story is told through a series of cutscenes , while the player and the summoned monsters gain experience and power using role @-@ playing game elements .

The initial idea for the game was inspired by Puzzle Quest : Challenge of the Warlords , a 2007 video game which members of both companies were playing at the time . The game was proposed to Square Enix half @-@ jokingly by PopCap 's chief creative officer Jason Kapalka during a meeting between the two companies in 2007 , and was released on the Xbox Live Arcade and on the Steam platform for Windows PCs by Square Enix on November 18 , 2009 . Gyromancer received a generally positive reception from reviewers . Critics took issue with perceived limited graphics , some aspects of the music , and a weak and confusing plot . Despite these flaws , in general they found the game to be fun and addictive , and to have a great deal of replay value .

= = Gameplay = =

Players assume the role of Rivel , an immortal summoner who ventures through the enchanted Aldemona Wood . He has been tasked to track down the rebel group Temperance , led by Quraist Kingsley , who have assassinated a member of the royal family . The forest at times magically seals itself , trapping visitors inside , and is rumored to hold a source of mystical power for which Quraist is searching . The game consists of twelve stages , which are large branching maps that allow the player to move from points represented by stars to adjacent points . Each stage contains its own objectives , from defeating beasts that block the player ? s way , to solving puzzles before time runs out . Additional stages are available for purchase as downloadable content . There are multiple optional objectives per stage , in addition to a main goal . Many areas of each stage are initially blocked off , and can only be entered by replaying the stage later in the game .

While moving through the stages , the player encounters many monsters , and is forced to battle against them using one of their own monsters in a puzzle battle based on Bejeweled Twist . The creatures are " variations on fantasy archetypes " and include demons , giant spiders , giant frogs , and beasts inspired by Dungeons & Dragons . The player can only bring three creatures into a stage out of all of the ones that they have , and selects one of the three when a battle begins . A grid of different colored gems is displayed , and the player can select blocks of four jewels and rotate them clockwise . If a line of three or more identical gems is formed , the gems disappear , allowing all of the jewels above the now @-@ vacant spaces in the grid to fall down a row to replace them . New gems appear at the top of the screen to fill any holes in the grid . If new lines of gems are formed from this movement , the process repeats . Whenever lines are formed , a gauge is filled slightly for the player ; when it is full a special gem appears on the board . When that gem is formed into a line , damage is done to the enemy . The enemy also has a gauge , which is filled every time the player performs a rotation , and damage is dealt directly to the player when it is filled .

Later in the game , non @-@ rotatable gems can be found , and the player is punished for rotations that do not lead to a match by having the enemy 's gauge fill faster . The amount of damage that the player can take or deliver is dependent on the monster used in battle , and using a beast in battle earns experience points which can increase the power of that summon . Each monster has a corresponding color , and matching gems that are the same color as your chosen monster or the enemy makes your gauge fill faster or theirs slower . Enemy monsters can change gems on the board to skulls , which cause damage to the player if they are not lined up within a certain number of moves . After being defeated in a battle , enemy monsters are added to the list of creatures that the player chooses from when they start a stage . New monsters can also be found hidden in the stages

, along with items that can be used during battles .

= = Development = =

The game was first thought up in 2007 during a meeting between PopCap and Square Enix , which had published several of PopCap 's games in Japan . Jason Kapalka , the co @-@ founder and chief creative officer of PopCap , claims that he " half @-@ jokingly " proposed a game collaboration between the two companies that would combine a role @-@ playing game with Bejeweled @-@ style gameplay , calling it ? Final Fantasy Bejeweled ? . Kapalka was envisioning creating a similar game to Puzzle Quest : Challenge of the Warlords , a 2007 video game which members of the development staff of both companies were playing at the time . The idea attracted the attention of Yuichi Murasawa , designer of Final Fantasy Tactics Advance , and the game began formal development . To differentiate the game from Puzzle Quest , the gameplay was based around Bejeweled Twist rather than Bejeweled , which Kopalka feels fit the art design of the game more . Other candidates considered were Zuma and Peggle , but they were dropped as the developers felt that they did not fit in with the combat theme . PopCap developed the early prototype for the game , then allowed Square Enix to complete the bulk of the work in designing and creating the game , especially in regards to the RPG aspects . Square Enix and PopCap announced the game on September 24 , 2009 . It was published by Square Enix on the Xbox Live Arcade and on the Steam platform for Windows PCs on November 18 , 2009 . A downloadable pack of maps and a pack of items were made available for sale a week after launch on November 23 , 2009 for both versions of the game .

The game was directed by Murasawa and produced by Yoshinori Kamei . The story was written by Kyoko Kitahara , who had previously worked on Final Fantasy Tactics Advance with Murasawa , and the art direction was led by Yuki Matsuzawa . The soundtrack was created by Tsuyoshi Sekito . Matsuzawa was asked to make the art style that of a " dark fantasy " and to focus more on making the visuals realistic rather than fantasy @-@ oriented , so that it would appeal more to players outside Japan .

= = Reception = =

Gyromancer received a generally positive reception from reviewers . While many critics noted its similarity to Puzzle Quest , the gameplay was still described as being " fun and addictive " by Brett Todd of GameSpot , and similar praises were made by Daemon Hattfield of IGN and Eurogamer 's Oli Welsh . Welsh claimed that it had a great deal of replay value , and praised the " surprisingly varied story missions " . Game Informer 's Matt Miller disagreed slightly , stating that while the game had some replay value , it was limited by the lack of depth to the RPG elements of the game . Although the paintings of the monsters and game world were rated highly by critics , the art direction itself was criticized . Todd called the graphics " murky and grainy " and noted the lack of animation in the battles or cutscenes , in which two @-@ dimensional pictures of the characters speaking " slide back and forth like cardboard cutouts " rather than perform realistic movements . Welsh added that the stage maps were " crudely portrayed " . Hattfield did not share those concerns , but did note say that they felt that the portraits of monsters were reused for different monsters too often . Miller disagreed completely with the other critics , saying that the game " looks great " and that " even the map screen between battles has a polished appearance " . A reviewer from GameTrailers also enjoyed the aesthetic of the game , saying that despite the " still images " and " simple effects " , the game made an " effort to look and sound the part " of a deeper game , which they felt would increase the player 's enjoyment .

The plot was similarly criticized , with Welsh calling it " endearing , largely unpronounceable rubbish " , while Hattfield termed it " not Gyromancer 's strong point " and " a bit hard to follow " . Miller dismissed it as " generic " and " lackluster " , while the GameTrailers reviewer said that it was " somewhat thrown together " . All the reviews , however , noted that the plot was largely irrelevant to the game next to the gameplay elements . Todd criticized the tutorial system as very inadequate , as

well as the " beyond cheesy " music , a criticism that Hattfield left only to the " Japanese videogame metal during boss battles " , rather than the rest of Sekito 's " rousing orchestral tunes " . Overall , however , the reviewers felt that Gyromancer was a fun , casual game .