Sonic Advance 2

Sonic Advance 2[a] is a 2002 side-scrolling platform game developed by Dimps for the Game Boy Advance. It is an installment in the *Sonic the Hedgehog* series and the sequel to 2001's *Sonic Advance*. The story follows Sonic as he sets out to save his friends and retrieve the seven magical Chaos Emeralds from series antagonist Doctor Eggman. Gameplay consists of the player completing various levels as one of five characters, each with their own unique attributes. After each zone is completed, the player faces Doctor Eggman in a boss battle.

Development began in February 2002 and lasted eight months. *Sonic Advance 2* was programmed using an updated version of the original's game engine and the team aimed to make the game larger and faster-paced than the original. *Sonic Advance 2* was released to positive reviews; critics praised the updates made over the original *Advance* and its improved replay value in comparison to past games. Some journalists, however, disliked its high difficulty level. A sequel, *Sonic Advance 3*, was released in 2004. *Sonic Advance 2* was rereleased for the Wii U's Virtual Console in February 2016.

Contents

Sonic Advance 2	
Developer(s)	Dimps Sonic Team
Publisher(s)	JP: Sega NA: THQ EU: Infogrames
Director(s)	Akinori Nishiyama
Producer(s)	Yuji Naka Hiroshi Matsumoto
Artist(s)	Yuji Uekawa
Composer(s)	Tatsuyuki Maeda Yutaka Minobe Teruhiko Nakagawa
Series	*Sonic the Hedgehog*
Platform(s)	Game Boy Advance
Release	JP: December 19, 2002 NA: March 9, 2003 PAL: March 21, 2003
Genre(s)	Platform, action
Mode(s)	Single player, multiplayer

Gameplay

Sonic Advance 2 is a side-scrolling platformer similar in gameplay and style to the original *Sonic Advance*. The player controls Sonic the Hedgehog, who can unlock three other playable characters: Cream the Rabbit and her Chao named Cheese, Tails, and Knuckles the Echidna after defeating Doctor Eggman in specific boss battles.[1] A fifth character, Amy Rose, can be unlocked after completing the game with each character.[1] Each character has their own unique moves and abilities. Sonic can perform an "insta-shield" that protects him for a brief moment; Cream and Tails can fly; Knuckles can glide and climb; and Amy can destroy enemies using a hammer.[1]

Gameplay screenshot showing Sonic fighting Doctor Eggman

In the tradition of *Sonic* games, gameplay consists of moving quickly through levels. Levels in the game are divided into seven "zones",[2] each consisting of two acts of normal gameplay then a boss battle, where the player fights Doctor Eggman[3] in order to stop Eggman from taking over the world.[4] The player collects rings as a form of health; when the player is attacked by an enemy, their rings bounce in all directions. If the player is hit by an enemy and has no rings, they lose a life.[5] A character will also lose a life if they fall into a gap, get crushed, or exceed an act's 10-minute limit. The game ends when all lives are lost. The player can also collect seven "special rings" to access special stages,[5] where Chaos Emeralds are found. Special stages are on a 3D plane,[3] where the character tries to obtain a set number of rings before time runs out in order to collect a Chaos Emerald. After beating all zones and finding all seven Chaos Emeralds with Sonic, an alternate final act is unlocked.[2]

When all of the Chaos Emeralds are collected with the other characters, a sound test feature (where the player can listen to music) and a boss time-attack feature are unlocked, along with the Tiny Chao Garden, where toys for Cheese,[1] can be purchased with rings earned in-game.[5] Various mini-games can also be played in the Tiny Chao Garden.[6] Other game modes include a "time-attack" mode where the player tries to beat a specific act in the shortest amount of time,[7] and a multiplayer mode, where players can race each other through unlocked acts.[3]

Development and release

Sonic Advance 2 was developed by the video game studio Dimps, with assistance from Sonic Team. According to producer Yuji Naka, the developers began designing the concept of the game immediately after the completion of the original *Sonic Advance*, and full development began in February 2002. The design team decided to increase the speed of the original greatly; thus, the levels were made six times larger. The main development period lasted eight months; it was programmed using an updated version of the original *Sonic Advance* engine. The developers also refined the graphics and sought to make the game feel more "mechanical".[8] The game also marks the first appearance of Cream the Rabbit in the *Sonic* series; the character was originally designed for 2003's *Sonic Heroes*,[9] though she was added to *Advance 2* before the release of *Heroes* to help make the game easier for beginning players.[10]

The game's musical score was composed by Yutaka Minobe, Tatsuyuki Maeda and Teruhiko Nakagawa.[11] Sega announced *Sonic Advance 2* on July 1, 2002,[12] and showcased it at the Tokyo Game Show in September 2002.[10] It was released in Japan on December 19, 2002, followed by a North American release on March 9, 2003,[13] and in Europe on March 21, 2003.[14] Sega published the game Japan, while THQ published it in North America and Sega Europe in Europe, with distribution being held by Infogrames.[15][13][14] The game was re-released in emulated form on the Wii U's Virtual Console in Japan on February 24, 2016.[16][17]

Reception

Reception	
Aggregate score	
Aggregator	**Score**
Metacritic	83/100[18]

Review scores	
Publication	**Score**
1Up.com	8.5/10[2]
AllGame	★★★★★[3]
Famitsu	32/40[19]
GameSpot	8.2/10[5]
GameSpy	★★★★★[20]
IGN	9/10[1]
Nintendo Power	8.2/10[18]

Sonic Advance 2 received "generally favorable reviews", according to review aggregator Metacritic.[18] The game was also commercial successful, selling approximately 176,541 copies in Japan,[21] 740,000 copies in the United States,[22] and 100,000 copies in the United Kingdom,[23] for a total of 1.016 million copies.

The visuals and presentation were one of the most praised aspects of the game.[13][3] *GameSpot* considered the game's graphics to be a major advance from the previous game, feeling that it took more advantage of the Game Boy Advance's capabilities and praised the improved character animations, favorably comparing them to that of a cartoon.[5] *IGN* offered similar praise, calling its visuals more vibrant, bright, and vivid, and also spoke positively of its "peppy" soundtrack.[1] This sentiment was echoed by *AllGame*.[3] *Nintendo World Report* called the music catchy and enjoyable, though they criticized the re-use of certain themes from the original *Sonic Advance*.[13]

Reviewers commended the game's replay value and large level design in comparison to older titles.[5][1] *IGN* admired the "massive" designs and felt the levels were much more balanced compared to prior games. They also praised the "crafty" paths for encouraging multiple playthroughs.[1] *GameSpot* agreed, praising the method of collecting special rings to access special stages and unlock special features for being fun and rewarding.[5] *1UP.com* considered this addition interesting and called it "not bad" for the technical limitations of the Game Boy Advance.[2] *AllGame*, however, felt that the main acts were unoriginal and too short.[3][2]

The game's difficulty polarized critics.[3][2] *Nintendo World Report* began their review by warning players of the difficulty, and felt it spoiled an otherwise-good game.[13] *GameSpot* described *Sonic Advance 2* as the hardest game in the entire series, calling its auto-scrolling boss fights "positively cutthroat", though they did believe that the game's amount of playable characters helped reduce this difficulty.[5] The difficulty was cited as the game's only problem by *IGN*.[1] *1UP*, however, considered it a positive aspect, calling it "a welcome breath of fresh difficulty in this modern age of gaming."[2]

Of the game as a whole, *GameSpot* felt Sega's risks to deviate from past *Sonic* games in terms of difficulty and size paid off handsomely.[5] *Nintendo Power* stated that, while *Sonic Advance 2* did not present significant advances beyond the first game, it was still a "solid action title".[18] Despite this, *AllGame* called it a boring, unoriginal retread, and "more subsonic than supersonic".[3]

Legacy

Cream the Rabbit, who was introduced in *Sonic Advance 2*, would feature predominantly in future *Sonic* games.[24] A direct sequel, *Sonic Advance 3*, was released in 2004; it is the final entry in the *Sonic Advance* trilogy.[25]

Notes

a. Japanese: ソニックアドバンス２ , Hepburn: *Sonikku Adobansu Tsū*

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External links

- Official website (http://sonic.sega.jp/advance2/) (in Japanese)

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