



 PlayStation™	95% COMPLETE	PLATFORM	BY NAMCO	* NO OTHER VERSIONS AVAILABLE * NO OTHER VERSIONS PLANNED * STORAGE 1 CD * RELEASED BY NAMCO TEL 0171 447 1600
	??? RELEASE	1 PLAYER		

After a string of hit PlayStation beat 'em ups and driving games, Namco turn their unrivalled talent to platform games!

KLONOA

DOOR TO PHANTOMILE



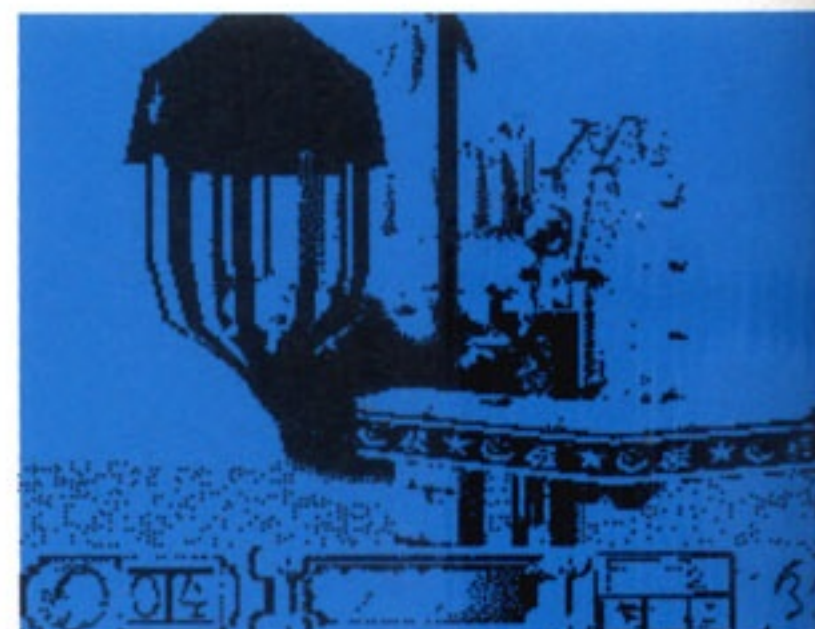
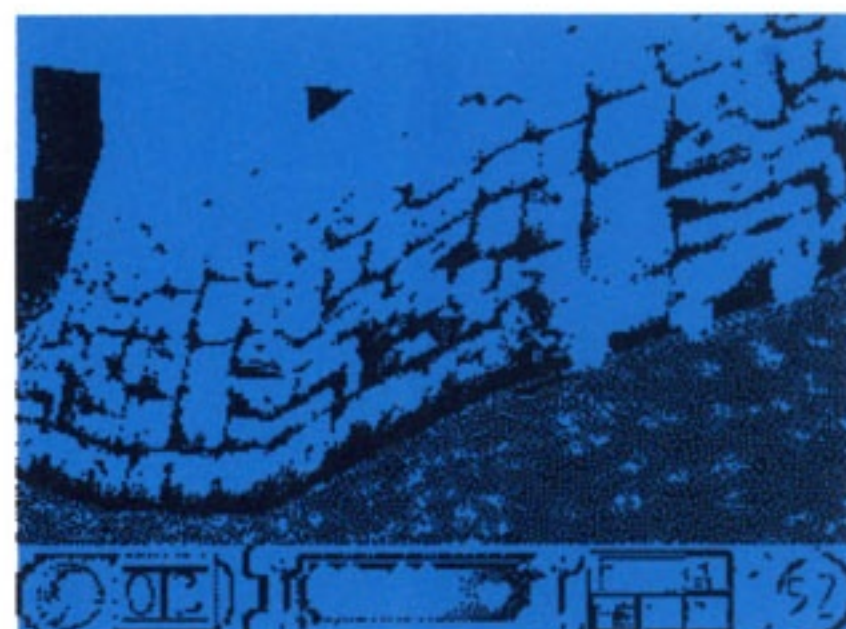
There was a time when nearly every home video game was a platform game. Film licenses, character licenses, no-licenses, they all ended up as jump-around-dodge-the-ghosts-collect-the-coins games. These days though, there are few developers willing to work within this old-fashioned format, and even fewer who can turn out a 'next generation' platform game which makes effective use of modern hardware. When we heard those PlayStation gods at Namco were producing a platformer, though, we felt sure that it would be a bit special. Now we know the truth - *Klonoa* is cool!



HYUPO'S RING

We've found the plot in *Klonoa* a bit difficult to fathom, but as far as we can make out from the (incredibly pretty) attract sequence, this is what you're doing. It starts with Klonoa himself (a kind of cat with wing-like ears) walking in the woods when a large gold ring drops from the sky and embeds itself in the earth. When he yanks it out a little glowing space friend called Hyupo appears and off they go, frolicking through the meadows.

Suddenly Klonoa sits up in bed - it's all been a dream! Or has it? There's Hyupo by his bed, and hovering somewhere over the land of Phantomile is the unwelcome presence of the wizard Ghadius who has followed Hyupo to Klonoa's home planet. With the help of Joka, Ghadius is invading Phantomile, taking the natives hostage and imprisoning them in nightmare bubbles, and only the wielder of Hyupo's ring can stop him. Taking the ring, Klonoa dives out of his house and prepares to do his duty!



SMASHING STUFF

Namco have taken a leaf out of Sega Sonic Team's book by breaking the game up into levels called 'visions'. In each vision Klonoa has to run through a maze of platforms in search of six imprisoned Phantomileans. The Phantomileans are held in eggs or nightmare bubbles, some of which are stashed in out of the way places, while others are invisible and only appear when Klonoa passes over a certain spot or hits a certain object.

As for the other power-ups, crystals serve the usual purpose of providing an extra life for every 100 collected, and if you smash a mirror fairy icon you get a few seconds in which every dream crystal you collect counts double. There are also memory clocks which Klonoa can hit. These act as restart points should he lose a life.



⊕ There's another one released! The block puzzle at the bottom of the screen shows how many Phantomileans are still to be found.



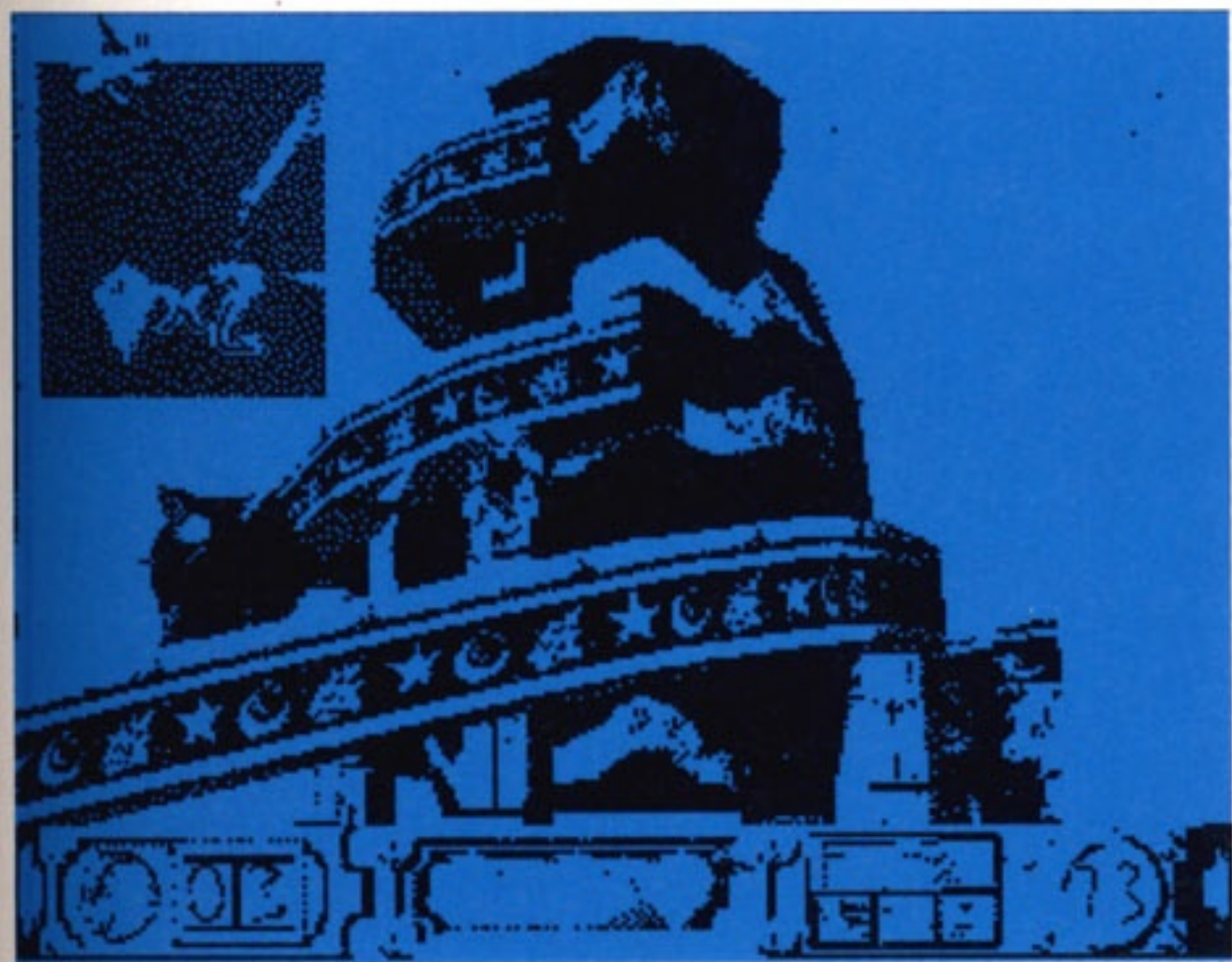
⊕ While the mirror fairy stays in the top left of the screen every crystal you collect counts twice!



⊕ Now how can you possibly get to that one? Some thinking required here perhaps.

THROW-A-FOE

Klonoa defends himself with the old standby of grabbing his foes then throwing them, to the left or right, or into or out of the screen. Throw them at walls to destroy them, or throw them at other Myus to destroy two at one stroke. The Myus serve other purposes too. Throwing a stunned Myu at an icon or a switch instantly activates it or, in the case of an egg, releases a prisoner or dream crystals. Also, if you grab one; then jump and press the jump button again, Klonoa hurls the Myu at the ground and doubles the height of his leap – essential in certain locations, and later in the game you actually have to manage repeated double-jumps, leaping from Myu to Myu to reach a lofty ledge.



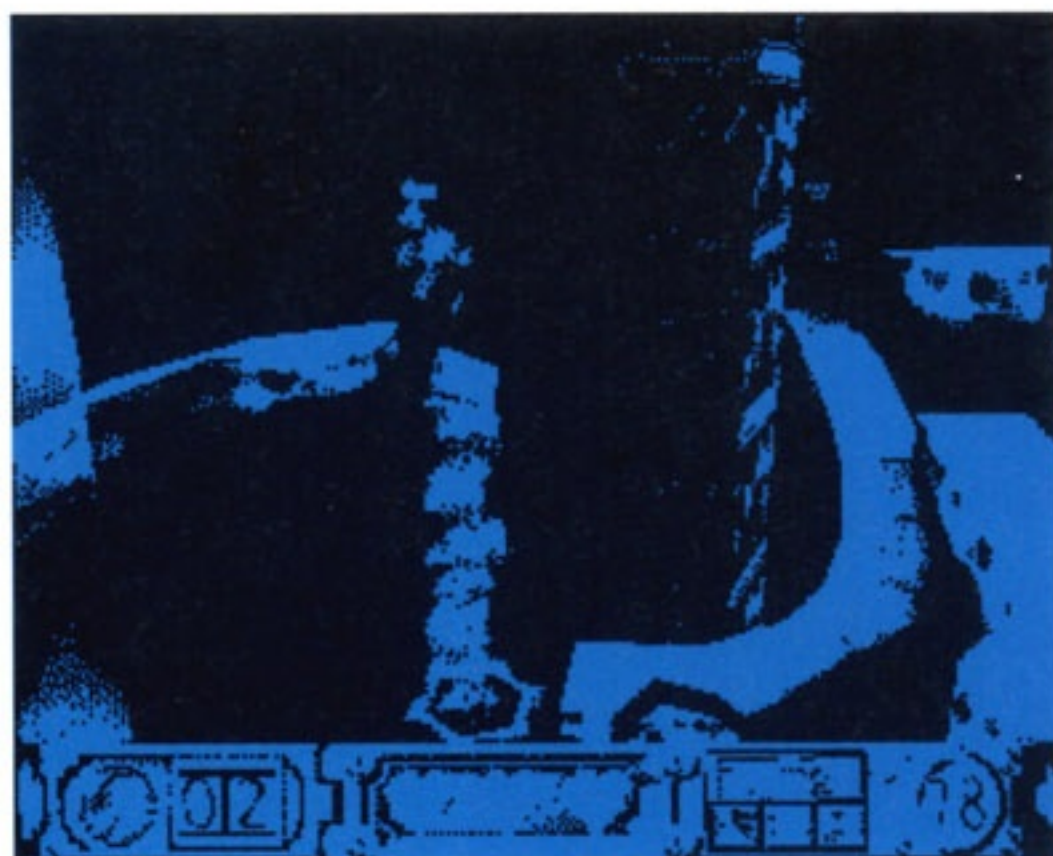
↑ Throwing a Myu at this target...



↑ ... drops this bridge.



↑ Only the power of Myu jumps can attain such heights!



← This path runs around a huge vase. There's a mine-cart level and a tree trunk stage too (below).



GHADIOUS' LITTLE HELPERS

At the end of each vision, Ghadius and his little helper 'Joka', unleash a boss. The bosses we've seen are all cleverly done but anyone with any platform game nous will have a fair idea of how to handle them. Klonoa's means of defence is grabbing baddies and throwing them, so all you have to do in the boss encounters is work out what you can grab and where and when to throw it. The first boss, Rongo Lango, shown here, has only one vulnerable spot and that's the back of the ball he bounces about on. Grab a Myu and throw it at the ball when he bounces over Klonoa and he takes a hit. The sinister spine-fish and the crawling plant bosses that appear later in the game use different attack patterns but they yield to similar tactics.



↑ When he's not trying to bounce on Klonoa's head, Rongo Lango attacks with air and ground shockwaves.



↑ Here you have to grab a Myu, then bounce over the plant and throw one into its gaping maw as it passes beneath you.



3D INTO 2D WILL GO

Though the action in Klonoa is mostly two-dimensional (in that you can only move left and right) the level layouts are three-dimensional. Look into the distance, for example, and you might see part of the level that you will come to further on, when the path loops around on itself. On occasion you even have to interact with objects in the background, throwing Myus at eggs or switches that are in the middle distance to activate them.

Paths also cross over each other, leading into and out of the screen, so that you can take a detour and explore another part of the level before coming back to the main route. As the path meanders around mountains or huge tree trunks the camera follows, zooming in and out and changing position too to give a better perspective of the action and a wonderful feeling of depth to the environment.



↑ Here Klonoa can choose to follow the main route to the right or take a detour to the left.



↑ Look in the distance and you can see...



↑ ... where you should end up later on.

JUMP TO IT SONY!

As far as we can tell from our Japanese copy, Klonoa is a really nice platform game. Nothing staggeringly new, but it has a lot of style about it, looks great and it's really easy to pick up and play. We look forward to the European version.