

The enterprising Klonoa opens a toll.

I feel motion sick just looking at it.

Hope he's wearing his glasses.

Klonoa 2: LUNATEA'S VEIL

CATEGORY: Platformer >> PLAYERS: 1 >> PUBLISHER: Namco >> PRICE: \$99.95 >> RATING: G >> AVAILABLE: November

CAM SHEA steps between two dimensions and three... **PS2**

Klonoa: Door To Phantomile was undoubtedly one of the best platformers on PlayStation. Laughing in the face of the seemingly unstoppable move into 3D, it was one of the first pseudo 3D platformers — 2D gameplay in a 3D world. Although a few years have passed, it seems the game industry still hasn't learnt its lesson, so Namco are back with Klonoa 2: Lunatea's Veil to remind people that even on PS2, gameplay isn't dependent on dimensions.

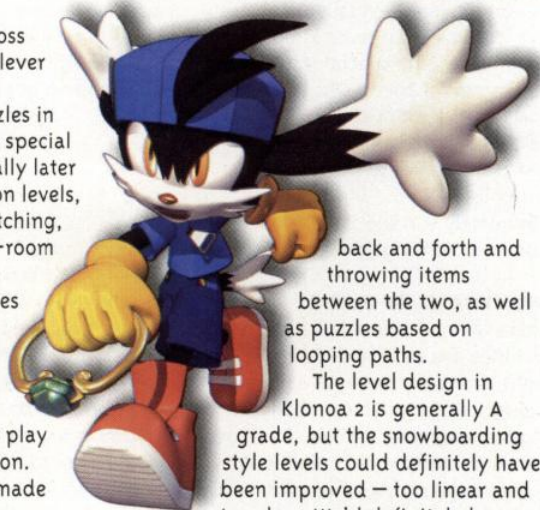
WARNING - RING JOKES AHEAD
Klonoa is, unsurprisingly, the lead character in Lunatea's Veil. He/she/it appears to be a cat with over-sized novelty ears, although we can't quite be sure... since you don't start the game with nine lives. What we

do know, however, is that Klonoa leads quite a good life. Not only does he have two bestest friends (the soppy Priestess Lolo and the sassy sidekick Popka) who travel with him throughout the game (well, the cutscenes at least), but he's blessed with a magic ring. If you don't know the story of the origins of Klonoa's ring and his gradual probing of what lies inside, then go buy the first game, for it examines Klonoa's ring in graphic detail.

The ring basically enables Klonoa to grab his enemies. He can then throw them or use them to get extra jumping height. It's a very simple mechanism, but through this simple idea, almost all Klonoa's exquisitely crafted gameplay is born. Levels range from old school side scrolling platform fare, through to

hoverboarding, boss battles and very clever puzzle sections.

In fact, the puzzles in this game deserve special mention — especially later on in the indecision levels, where gravity switching, mirrors and multi-room puzzles come into play. All the puzzles are meticulously designed set pieces, where every ledge, switch and enemy play a role in the solution. Namco have also made good use of puzzles involving a foreground and background plane, where you're using a cannon to shoot Klonoa



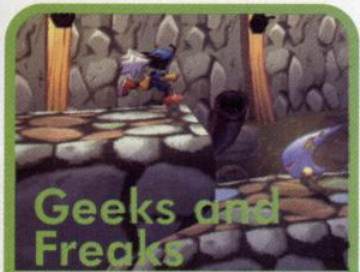
back and forth and throwing items between the two, as well as puzzles based on looping paths. The level design in Klonoa 2 is generally A grade, but the snowboarding style levels could definitely have been improved — too linear and too slow. We'd definitely have preferred more puzzle-based levels, and less pseudo racing levels. An overall speed increase for



Cats are so vain.



"It's because I got high..."

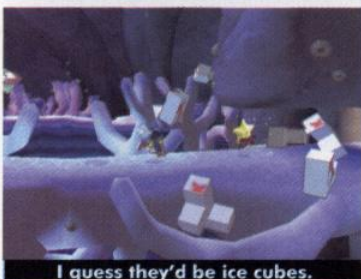


Geeks and Freaks

»»What's clever about Klonoa is that it's the enemies that determine what you can do at any given time. Klonoa's raw abilities are incredibly basic, consisting purely of jumping and grabbing. It's ensnaring the different enemies that give you different abilities. For instance, there are the Erbils, hovering creatures whose electric charge can be used to catapult high into the sky, bursting through crates and into secret areas. Then there's the Boomie, which act as timed explosives, and come in long and short fuse varieties. There are a whole host of new additions for the sequel, and Namco have balanced their abilities beautifully.



Gratuitous snowboarding level.



I guess they'd be ice cubes.



Klonoa runs away to join the circus.



I'd kiss you but we don't have mouths.

Aesthetically, this is one of the most stylish games thus far in the PS2's entire catalogue.

Klonoa would have added a lot to the game as well.

TECHSTHETICALLY SPEAKING...

That said, the amount of variety in Klonoa 2 is hugely impressive — levels range from snow capped peaks to a circus, a village and an underground iron foundry. Although the models and environments aren't that detailed, Klonoa's visuals are still hugely impressive. Technically, the levels are large and you can often see the entire world laid out before you. Aesthetically, this is one of the most stylish games thus far in the PS2's entire catalogue. This game simply oozes style — the variety and quality of the artwork is quite awesome.

Namco have used the extra processing power of the PS2 to ensure that even the traditional platform

gameplay driven levels aren't too predictable. As an example, the bounce pads that litter some levels have been amped up, boosting Klonoa ridiculously high into the air. The camera mechanics accentuate this beautifully, switching from a side on perspective to top down, so you really get a good impression of height. Namco have taken advantage of the fact that the entire game is built in 3D to really lend some style to the way the camera works. Generally speaking, the camera is utilitarian, but there are plenty of situations, like when Klonoa is shot out of a cannon, that the camera really goes to work, panning around to show off both Klonoa



Klonoa is also coming to the Game Boy Advance, so keep an eye out.

and the gameworld.

Although Klonoa 2 is one of the best platform games we've ever played, it can be comfortably beaten in a single evening of play. While there's some appeal in playing through each level again to collect all the gems and stars, the game itself should have been longer. We respect Namco's decision to pack so much variety into the game, but the puzzle mechanics have so much potential that it's a shame that Namco didn't devise more devious puzzles and pitch the game at an older demographic. We would have loved to award Klonoa 2 a big rubber stamp, but unfortunately it's just too short, and a little too easy. <<<

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PLUS: Fantastically stylish.

MINUS: Too short, too easy.

VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY

90 86 91

OVERALL

87

This could be used as a textbook for budding game designers.

REVIEW

»HYPER 57

