Having played video games most of my life, I remember a Namco whose best efforts were spent on first-person shooters headed for the arcade and games like *Splatterhouse* and *Rolling Thunder*. You'd think I'd mention *Pacman* but sorry, I just never got around to it... there was always an *Asteroids* or *Tron* machine in close proximity... Anyway, all I'm trying to say is don't be shocked by *Klonoa*, because before *Tekken* (yes there was life before *Tekken*) Namco made a bunch of cool platformers and action adventures. This is their first notable polygonal one though, and at the same time it's their first foray into the *Sonic*-like little fury creature genre, one that can prove quite lucrative if done correctly which is sadly (more often than not) not the case. But this is Namco so I'll blow the whole bleedin' (how British!) thing right now by saying you could (could but shouldn't) stop reading right now and just go buy *Klonoa*, it's friggin' awesome!! Now for those of you still with me,

E. STORM
GOD, I HOPE THERE'S MORE WHERE THIS CAME FROM!

# Klonoa of the Wind

door to phantomile

### Namco's Latest Miracle Is Indeed A Wonder

here's why. Let's start with the intro. Okay... okay, PS thumpy sound bite... yeah-yeah, the Namco logo... huh, wh- wh- wha- what's this?! Oh my Lord it's CG so completely amazing I'm going to soil my trousers!! The first time you see *Klonoa's* intro you may well cry. Get the picture? Good. Now, on with the game.

At its heart, *Klonoa* is a tried and true platformer filled with jumps and harder jumps, laced with obstacles and interactive enemies and at the end of every level (or in *Klonoa's* case "Visions") a massive guardian awaiting. With those basics as a foundation, and not the basis for the entire game (as so many developers would have you endure) we proceed. First, the jumping. Jumping, A simple enough task wouldn't you say? In *Klonoa* this simple maneuver is taken quite seriously as you must learn to grab, jump, and launch in sequence.

## "GIVE ME 10 LIKE THIS A YEAR AND I'LL BE HAPPY 4-EVER!"

Bouts of second person 3D break up the platforming action. Klonoa must use his floppy ears keenly as well his judgement, or he could meet a spikey demise...

*Klonoa* grabs and lifts his bloated enemies overhead and then uses them for either target practice or to launch from in mid air. Klonoa's elephantile ears also allow him to hover and so eventually, you'll find yourself using various techniques in sequence to attain the harder-to-reach items and secret areas. Obstacles play a major role in the action as well. The level designers have done a spectacular job erecting polygonal pillars laced with moving parts and multiple layers as well as inner domains packed with puzzle elements. When it all comes together in vivid color at 60 fps, well, it's hard to describe how amazing Klonoa really is. It's as complete an overall package as the genre has seen thus far.

Besides the genius level design, much attention has been paid to the bosses as well. Appearing in either circular 3D or head-on as shown on the previous page, they are not only

## "IT'S HARD TO DESCRIBE HOW AMAZING KLONOA REALLY IS."
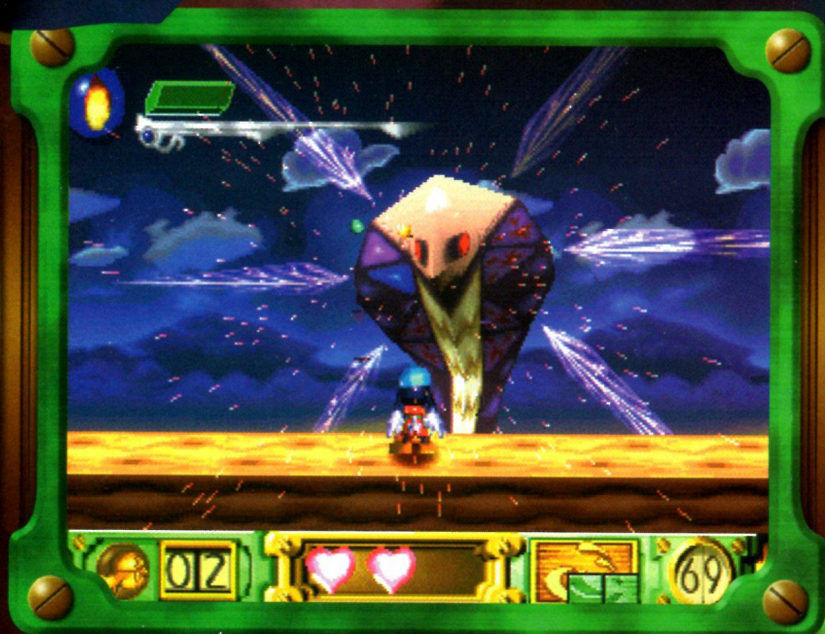
Monumental 3D boss fighting in a 2.5 D game at 60fps! It's powered by Namco and packed with furry fun for all ages. It just doesn't get any better.

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aesthetically wondrous but quite challenging as well, often exhibiting small weak points which *Klonoa* must breach one at a time, along the lines of those in *StarFox*. Musically too the game excels, pouring out appropriately cheerful or throbbing melodies depending on the situation at hand. The control is pinpoint accurate and the interaction with the game's inhabitants (though in Japanese presently) seems not only at home but quite whimsical as well. I can hardly wait to play Klonoa in English and uncover all of its secrets.

*Klonoa: Door to Phantomile* is a refreshingly brilliant looking and playing platformer riddled with multiple paths, objects to find and use, creative environments to explore, and endless play value. It is definitely one of those games that just feels right in your hands. I can't recommend it highly enough. Do come and see what else Namco are great at! And then we can begin praying for a sequel! *ES*

No one blows up my village and lives to talk about it!

OH STORM, YOU'RE SO STRONG!

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