



SATURN REVIEW

X-MEN CHILDREN OF THE ATOM

BY CAPCOM

RELEASE

JANUARY

PRICE

£49.99

GAME TYPE

BEAT 'EM UP

BREAK
DOWN



ORIGINALITY



CHALLENGE



ACTION



STRATEGY



REFLEXES

BEAT THIS

ROUND 7 ON NORMAL

1-2

PLAYERS

OPTIONS

CONTROL
JOYPAD

GAME
DIFFICULTY
TOUGH

CONTINUES
UNLIMITED

SKILL LEVELS
8

RESPONSIVENESS
BRILLIANT

ORIGIN

Another
Capcom coin-
op arrives on
the Saturn in
all its
technicolour
glory.

GAME AIM

Come on,
you've heard it
all before.
Punch, kick
and fireball
your way to the
top etc.

50 MM SEGA

The big guns are blazing in the beat 'em up world and the Saturn is witnessing the fiercest action. The X-Men comics are still big after all these years, and the recent spin-off cartoon series was similarly successful. The first game featuring the mutants gained mixed reviews when released on the Megadrive, and the follow up again didn't exactly do the license justice. But now, it seems fans have been rewarded with a game worthy of the name.

With Capcom, the fighting game masters, at the helm, this conversion couldn't have been in better fists. The programmers have dispensed with the relatively conservative dress of Virtua Fighter, and gone for the all out extravagance of a RuPaul lookalike convention. The fighters are, on occasions, nearly a full screen's height in size, and with multiple fireballs and projectiles flying about on screen this really taxes the Saturn's processing powers. Although some of the more popular characters are excluded, most of 10 selectable ones and hidden warriors are reputable enough, so die-hard enthusiasts should be more than satisfied.

WHO'S X-ACTLY WHO?

When we last looked at the game, three of the characters were yet to be added. Now we are able to bring you the full uncanny company in a little more detail. For those of you who missed our fabulous coverage a couple of issues back, here's a brief run down on the other characters:

STORM

The fighter previously known as Ororo Munroe had ancestors deeply involved in black magic, which would explain her control over the elements. She was shot down and stripped of her powers in the early days of the X-Men, but returned to lead the mutants as their cunning master. Her attacks mainly consist of small hurricanes and lightning bolts, but she also has the ability to fly, making evading most of the weaker attacks in the game a lot easier.



OMEGA RED

A tentacled Dr. Octopus look alike, but the similarities end there. A powerful mutant, with a long reach and power moves that make him a good choice.



CYCLOPS

This guy has been around since day 1 of the comic series, so a little respect is due if you please. His laser attacks are really nasty, so be warned.





SPIRAL

Perhaps the most obscure character in the game, Spiral is a space age fighter who is one of the 'good' mutants' principal enemies. Having fought against them in the comics on quite a few occasions she was rewarded with a place in this game. She has 6 arms at her disposal, and the standard hard punch attack can produce an easy six hits. Her other moves are, on the whole, fairly weak, but she does possess the best special in the game.



WOLVERINE

Probably the best known and most popular character, his moves and top combos are easily achieved. Beginners would be wise to play as him.



SENTINEL

These huge robots were created with one aim in mind - to apprehend all of the mutants by any means necessary. In one animated episode, a Sentinel is captured and his mind read. Professor X orders the destruction of the Mutant Registration act, and it all gets very serious. He is really slow, but his attacks with detachable arm bits are really powerful, and when strung together in combos can be most rewarding.



ICEMAN

He is one of the best all round characters, with a wide variety of ice moves and a special that can inflict 52 hits! A good fighter to try to master.



PSYLOCKE

The twin sister of Captain Britain, her moves stem from her acquired bionic eyes. She died in one of the comics, but was bought back to life later on in the series.



COLOSSUS

He's a big and slow, but his ability to change his skin to an organic metal increased his strength and he became an X-Man, having previously worked on a farm! Strange bloke.



SILVER SAMURAI

One of the less well known mutants, his energy is channelled into his sword, with all the notable moves coming from this. One of the better fighters to play as.





AFTER DARK

For those who like to inflict a little psychological damage on their bewildered opponents, this game has a sly little method of doing just that. When an opponent's defeated and the scores are being tallied, walk up to the mutant whilst holding the R-button. Now you are free to execute a few kicks and punches while the man is down, just to add a little insult to injury. Be warned, however, that this has been known to backfire, causing your slightly peeved opponent to follow up with a quick caning in the next round to make you look the fool. Serves you right really.



You've got this bloke slightly riled. I can sense it.



GOING DOWN!

The backgrounds in the game conceal slightly more than your average stages. In MK 3 (just an example, not a comparison) you could be uppercuted into the level above, but with the added benefits of the Saturn you now fall down a terrace or two, with some of these dropping down as far as four stages. The floor will collapse after a few nasty combos or a bad fall, but the even better thing is that the fighters will still battle with each other whilst descending, meaning the combo count can hit the roof if you time your attacks well.



How do you think Silver Samurai made it into this Japanese game? I guess we'll never know.



THE HIDDEN

The game has two boss characters who must be defeated to complete the game – Magneto and Juggernaut. As far as we know, these are both available to play via cheats but we don't yet know how. Magneto is one of the many X-Men to have switched allegiance between good and bad and back again. He was once known as Magnus, which isn't the toughest of names, and adopted Magneto when he developed the use of magnetic powers and energy. But to get to him you must first face the mighty Juggernaut. And when we say mighty, we mean it. This bloke makes Sentinel look like Mr. Sheen. He is really slow, which is the key to his undoing, but get caught up in his punches and you'll soon regret it. A more surprising secret character is Akuma from Street Fighter, and this guy is awesome. All his moves are the same, and he has a wild special attack, but we'll let you find out that for yourselves.



COMMENT

As you may know, I'm not a big beat 'em fan, and I find the 2-D variety especially yawnsome. This, however, has made me eat my hat. It's difficult not to like a licensed game that so faithfully conveys so much of the colour, action and character of its source material. The other winning formula here is a cheeky sense of humour sadly lacking from so many other games of this type – the special moves are so utterly outrageous, and so mercifully simple to achieve, that more often than not the screen turns into multi-coloured circus of flailing limbs, giant snowballs and electrical storms. At last, a decent Marvel title. And at last, a refreshingly original 2-D beat 'em up that deserves some of the limelight its sophisticated bigger brothers are currently hogging.



MARCUS

COMMENT

Well slap my thigh with a wet haddock, if this game isn't bloody brilliant! Let's get it out of the way early – this is not Virtua, and it never will be. But it is the best alternative beat 'em up available at the moment. The graphics ooze quality and have a certain cartoon feel to them enabling all of the characteristics to be added that you come to expect from Marvel material. The fighters are huge, extremely well animated mutants who roll off the moves at a frightening speed, and the amount of combos that are available really give a greater incentive to come back for more. But for me, the fact that this one of the most playable games in ages makes it an instant hit. It's rock hard even on the easiest of settings and, as a result, to see all of the endings is going to take some serious play hours. The only down side is that we are probably going to have to endure numerous sequels and upgrades.



STEVE

GRAPHICS

94

▲ Superb detail and backdrops, with lots of action going on at once, and no hint of slow down.

ANIMATION

95

▲ Even better. The characters have lots of frames all pulled off at multiple speeds and no blocky sections.

MUSIC

90

▲ Lots of background music to delight your ears and there are no annoyingly repetitive sections.

EFFECTS

91

▲ Lots of cries and shrieks when the moves are executed, and all are pretty clear.

PLAYABILITY

94

▲ If you had a life, you won't have after playing this. Resistance is useless.

LASTABILITY

93

▲ With eight skill levels to master and secret characters to find, this department scores high as well.

OVERALL

Don't be put off by the 2-D environment – this is a sophisticated and brutal beat 'em up. Purchase now!

94