

# Eye on Entertainment

## Kickin' It Old School: Super Mario RPG

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With the next-gen systems out now running of full, it is nice to kick back once in a while and take a trip to the past. With the Wii Virtual Console, there is no excuse to not play an old classic. So, dust off your cartridges and CD's and get ready for some old school gaming.

In this issue, we will take a look at the game that first started Mario off in the RPG (role-playing game) direction.

"Super Mario RPG: Legend of the Seven Stars" was released in 1996 for the Super Nintendo. It was made by Nintendo and Squaresoft (the creators of the Final Fantasy series.) The game-play is quite similar to the Final Fantasy games and Chrono Trigger, but with some twists.

Certain attacks are time sensitive and some required hard-core button mashing techniques, adding some interactivity into the RPG genre. All enemies are visible on the field, and if you find the traditional star power-up, the enemies could be destroyed on the field without even engaging in battle.

The story of the game first begins with Mario traditionally rescuing Princess Peach from the infamous villain, Bowser, but when stars suddenly fall out of the sky and a large, mysterious talking sword crashes and takes over Bowser's castle, Mario sets off on a journey to collect the seven stars. The stars themselves are said



to be the broken pieces of the star road which is in need of repair. Along the way, Mario makes many friends that aid him in his journey. He meets Mallow, a cloud-like creature who thinks he's actually a tadpole, Geno, a doll with a soul and a mission, Princess Peach, Mario's damsel in distress who now wants to take part in the action herself, and even Bowser himself, the big tough baddie who is reluctantly helping Mario only so that he can get his castle back. The major villain of the game is Smithy, who he and his Smithy gang, are out to control the world.

Super Mario RPG's story itself is actually very well developed, and more often than not, it is very humorous. It is still a Mario game, but one that took the franchise into a whole new direction. The game never had a true sequel, but other Mario RPG titles that followed include the Paper Mario series and the Mario & Luigi series. The game has been re-released, though, on the Wii Virtual Console.

The game is truly a gem in the Mario series and definitely deserves a play through for it is a very well done Mario game and an even better RPG.

In the next issue, we will venture forth into Dracula's castle with whip in hand in the classic side-scrolling adventure, "Castlevania."

## ELIZABETH: The Tarnished, In Need of a Good Polishing Age

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Cate Blanchett is a wonderful actress. You will have to keep that in mind as you watch "Elizabeth: The Golden Age." Think of it as a mantra, of sorts.

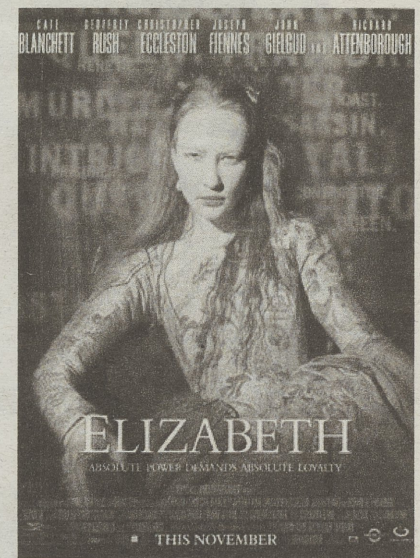
The public hardly goes to the movie theater to see a historically accurate film. Let's face it, there are those who avoid movies that take place more than thirty years ago out of the fear of them somehow being "boring." But as someone who appreciates historical accuracy, even if it isn't perfect, "Elizabeth" simply missed the mark, oh by maybe twenty years. Elizabeth I was born in 1533. The Spanish Armada attacked in 1588. With the cunning use of arithmetic, we know that Elizabeth would be 55 years of age at the point at which this movie takes place. Cate Blanchett is simply not 55, nor does she look it, nor does she act it. What is depressing, considering the fabulous job done with the prequel, is that this age discrepancy is neither hardly the most obvious error nor the worst aspect of the movie.

The fictionalized relationship between Elizabeth and Sir Walter Raleigh was possibly the most surprising and most infuriating failure. Although historically inaccurate in several blatant ways, it still seemed possible that the audience could suspend disbelief if it was executed well. Sadly, the fire and drama of Elizabeth's relationship with Dudley from the first movie overshadowed this farce of a relationship. The emotional highs and lows of the relationship are more soap-opera in quality than one would expect from such great actors as Blanchett and Clive Owen.

It is also sad to see a woman so self-possessed shatter to pieces over what appears to be more of a crush than a passionate love.

Although there are major inaccuracies in the film and some rather messy writing, the film is beautiful. Samantha Morton, as usual, is completely underappreciated. Despite a series of strong performances in "Pandaemonium" (playing the poet Coleridge's wife) and "The Libertine" (playing Elizabeth Barry), she is always overshadowed by another actor. Here Cate Blanchett's fabulous wardrobe takes precious screen time away from Morton's interestingly played Mary, Queen of Scots.

The movie is somewhat entertaining and, again, is pretty to look at, but the hardest part to get over is that this movie was generally made by those involved in its 1998 predecessor. The comparison only helps sharpen the disappointment this movie is.



## Apple Unveils Latest Operating System

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Once upon a time, there was a magical collective group of companies called the record industry. The companies were many: EMI, Sony, Warner, Virgin, and so on and so forth. Artists made their creations, and these grand corporations mass-produced their tunes for everyone to purchase and hear.

Then the internet came along. It was a wonderful thing, allowing connectivity to others across the globe. Eventually, certain people learned that via this tool, files could be distributed amongst users around the world. And thus the advent of Peer-to-Peer protocol came into the world. It still exists today, but not as commonly in the forms such as Napster as we once knew it. The most popular form in the modern day is a protocol called BitTorrent,

which allows for incredibly fast data transfer between users with little interruption. The companies and the RIAA didn't like this, and have in recent years taken control of the industry and raised record prices dramatically.

Recently, artists such as Radiohead and Nine Inch Nails have reached the end of their contracts. Radiohead's latest album, In Rainbows, has been released for download for however much the buyer wants to pay, with a cost as low as nothing at all. Nine Inch Nails, founded by Trent Reznor (the only permanent member), is planning on very possibly taking the same direction. Trent has worked with hip-hop performer Saul Williams to a great extent on his latest album, The Inevitable Rise and Liberation of NiggyTardust. Released on November 1st for free, Trent's own future work will most likely be released in the same manner.

Ultimately, what does this mean for the music industry? Is it a sign of collapse? Are more artists going

to start following suit? Perhaps the issue at hand is not so much the fact that the artists wish to be independent of companies, but instead that they have come under the support of sharing music. When one thinks about it, isn't the purpose of music to entertain? What dollar amount must CDs reach before enough is enough? The media has been around for over two decades, and yet a record can cost almost twenty dollars in a music store. Digital media is still inefficient due to DRM and recovery issues (yes, I'm looking at you, iTunes), and physical media allows for higher file quality for those that appreciate it, pigeonholing the consumer into the piracy option.

But in the end, is sharing music so bad? Is trying before buying the worst thing in the world? The question continues to arise, and perhaps artists are beginning to realize that the more they become known, legally, the more money they'll make in the long run.