

Written by DarkTetsuya

Sunday, 27 June 2010 21:19 - Last Updated Tuesday, 29 June 2010 12:59



Well folks, it's the end of the line for BEMANI month, and I thought I'd wrap it up by taking a look at a few games that were actually pretty groundbreaking in regards to rhythm games and motion control. So hit the jump to take a closer look at some of these motion-controlled rhythm games!

While DDR, beatmania/IIDX and Guitar Freaks/drummania were all hitting it big, Konami released a few other games, that weren't all as popular, but each had a very different mechanic in that they all didn't have any actual in-game buttons to press, but all involved infrared motion sensors to detect movement.

Like the first game I'm going to talk about, DancemaniaX. The game utilized eight sets of optical sensors and the player would wave their arms either above the middle ones or below them in time to the on-screen notes, which were color-coded to designate whether the notes had to be hit high or low. There were three arcade versions released: DancemaniaX, DancemaniaX 2nd MIX, and 2nd MIX Append J-Paradise, all adding many new songs.

The songlist was more or less standard DDR fare, with many crossover songs from DDR like Drop Out, but in addition to the usual Dancemania crossovers, there were even Dancemania songs that never appeared in DDR, like 'DOODAH!' by the Cartoons. If I remember correctly there was also a 'Nonstop' mode similar to the one in DDR, where you play four songs back to back without any break in between. *(Update: seems I was half-right, there were a few mini-megamixes of songs in the game, but the game also didn't stop after each song, it just went right into the next one after the previous one was over, all the way through to the end of the session. Thanks letshavetea for the tip!)*

And if you're curious as to what the game looked like in action, here's a pretty crazy freestyle to one of the DDR crossover songs, *Heaven is a '57 Metallic Grey*:

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Another one of Konami's attempts to create a motion-controlled dancing game was the fitness themed *Martial Beat*. Unfortunately I don't know as much about this series as I do the other games, but from the pics of the machine I've seen online, it kinda looks like a similar setup to mocapboxing or Police 911, which used a camera to detect the player's location on screen. In *Martial Beat*, you select a song and follow along to an on-screen instructor doing different excersizes to various licensed tracks from the Dancemania library. For example here's the video to Boom Boom Dollar:

However, one series I *do* know a thing or two about, is ParaParaParadise! Konami actually released a game in the year 2000 all about Para dancing, which was huge at one point over in Japan. All of the dances focused more on arm movements than moving your feet (although it did help to move your feet for some of the motions)

Whereas DDR used a metal stage, and *Martial Beat* used a tracking camera, ParaParaParadise was closer to DancemaniaX in that it used a set of infrared sensors in an octagonal pattern, but facing the screen you only used the five facing the screen (*I believe there was a mirror mode where you could face away from the screen and still do routines, but I haven't tried it myself.*)

While the game featured a few Konami original songs (that Konami even came up with Para routines for) most of the songlist was comprised of licensed music by Avex, a whole slew of Eurobeat tracks, like Ale Japan, Night of Fire, Anniversary, and many others all appeared in the game, each with their own specific routine!

Like this one, for the song Ale Japan (*one of my personal favorites*):

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Watch [02 - ale japan \[Para Para Paradise\]](#) in [Animation](#) | View More [Free Videos Online at Veoh.com](#)

(The reversed image/text is designed so you could follow along at home and you'd actually be doing the routine properly.)

As shown above, there was also a home version of ParaParaParadise. Of course it featured its own exclusive controller, affectionately known as the 'Pink Biscuits of Death':



And the controller didn't use the standard PS2 controller port, it was a USB controller that plugged into one of the ports on the front. Navigation thru the menus as done via the buttons on the 'biscuit' in the center.

Fast forward to E3 2010. Microsoft officially reveals the name of 'Project Natal' as 'Kinect', and the *one* game many of the oldschool-minded OLR fans wanted to see released for Kinect was a next-gen update to ParaParaParadise.

Then, Konami announced Dance Masters for MS' new motion-controller. One of the songs revealed to be appearing on it? The most infamous ParaParaParadise song of all time, Night of Fire:

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(Sorry about the crappy quality, this was the only Dance Masters vid that wasn't the guy from IGN making a fool out of himself)

So suffice it to say Para-fanatics and BEMANI fans alike everywhere rejoiced at the acknowledgement of Konami's little seen series seeing a revival in this next-gen dancing game from the minds that put music games on the map with DDR and beatmania. I can just imagine what the board meeting must've been like:

NAOKI: So I'm working on this new game for Project Natal, and I need some ideas for music we should include.

Random Konami Employee #1: Say didn't you do a game that had choreographed dance routines already? ParaParaParadise?! You could include some of those songs, and wouldn't have to make routines, they already have them!

NAOKI: That's it, you're a genius!

And the rest was history.

Anyway, I really hope you enjoyed all the articles I've written this month in celebration of OLR's 8th anniversary. I haven't decided what I'm going to cover next on Retro Rearview, so I'll have to think of something. So stay tuned to the site for future installments!