

COSMIC STAR HEROINE



For Zeboyd Games' Robert Boyd, the appeal of the role-playing genre isn't hard to pin down. "As a kid, JRPGs really appealed to me," he says. "They had fun stories and characters mixed with strategic gameplay, in an era where most games had minimal stories and action-focused gameplay." That made them an easy buy, despite their often being more expensive than other 8- and 16-bit games: "They gave a lot of bang for your buck, with the average one being 20-30 hours, as opposed to an action game that might only last a day or two."

RPGs no longer need to ship on huge, battery-powered carts that inflate their price, but the design principles that once drove the genre have inspired Zeboyd to follow in the footsteps of the old-time greats.

"RPGs give a lot of bang for your buck—at least 20-30 hours, as opposed to an action game"

"With *Cosmic Star Heroine*, we were trying to make a spiritual successor to *Phantasy Star IV* with visuals reminiscent of *Chrono Trigger*," Boyd says. "Our upcoming magical girl RPG, *This Way Madness Lies*, is heavily inspired by the later *Persona* games, while having combat visuals reminiscent of the *Shining Force & Golden Sun* games."

At the same time, Boyd says, there's much to be learned about modern game design. "We take influences from both old and new," he says, "which is why I feel like our games don't necessarily feel as derivative as they might. For example,

the idea to make each battle self-contained with no long-term resource management was inspired by *Final Fantasy XIII*. Desperation mode—negative HP—was inspired by *Borderlands*. Having cooldowns instead of MP was inspired by the *Xenoblade* games. Items that recharge after combat may have been inspired by *Paladin's Quest* or *Dark Souls*—and ailment HP was definitely inspired by *Dark Souls*."

It can be tricky to navigate the line between homage and retreat, but games like *Cosmic Star Heroine* and *Cthulhu Saves Christmas* prove it's possible. "When you take all of these elements and add periodic super turns, it creates a dynamic, unique battle system that's more than the sum of its parts," says Boyd. LR

Flashback: Cosmic Star Heroine CE for Vita: Outer box; Vita case with manual and cart; Sega CD style bonus storage case with Vita cart holder insert and oversized alternate manual; fold-out poster; set of four litho art prints with slipcase. (Also available for PlayStation 4 version.)



Coming soon from Limited Run Games:

Cthulhu Saves Christmas, a follow-up to Zeboyd's breakout hit, *Cthulhu Saves the World*. If you missed that one, don't worry; *Christmas* is a prequel that requires no familiarity with the previous game. According to Boyd, that's by design. "It's been such a long time, and I'm in a very different place now than when we made *CSTW*," he says. "I felt a new cast and not having to worry about the developments of *CSTW* would be for the best." All you need to know is that you play as a slumbering god beyond mortal comprehension, whose plans for world conquest involve... delivering presents to kids everywhere?

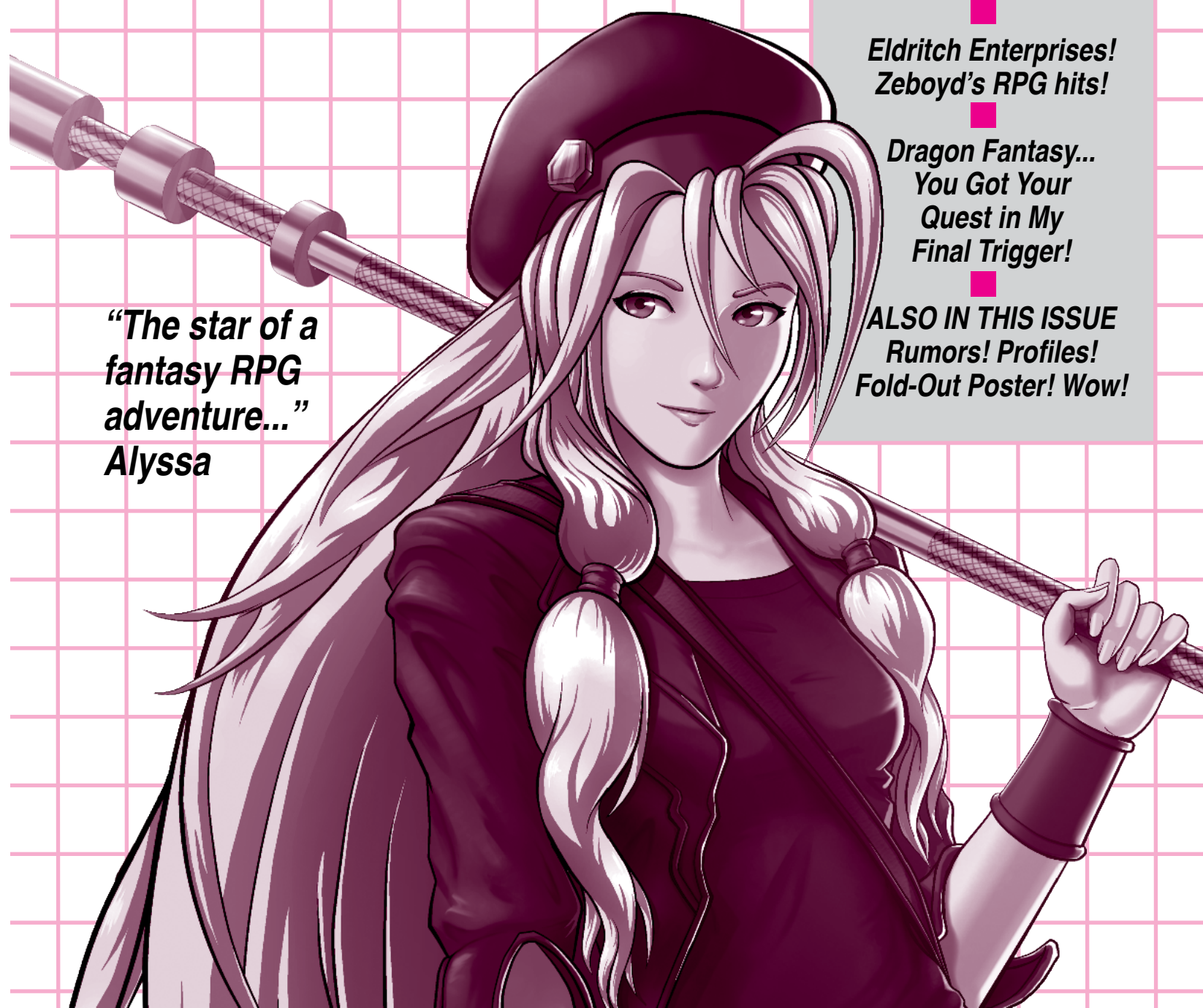
CLUB O FUN NEWS



LIMITED RUN

NOV./DEC. 2020

THE MAGAZINE FOR PHYSICAL GAME PLAYERS \$0.00



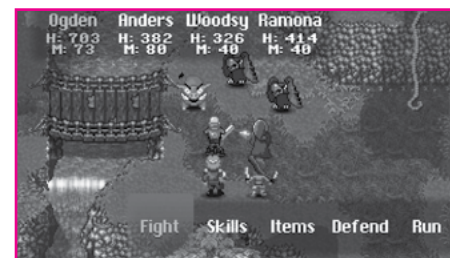
"The star of a fantasy RPG adventure..."
Alyssa

Eldritch Enterprises!
Zeboyd's RPG hits!

Dragon Fantasy...
You Got Your
Quest in My
Final Trigger!

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE
Rumors! Profiles!
Fold-Out Poster! Wow!

DRAGON FANTASY



Video games can spark players' imaginations, but in the case of Muteki Corp.'s Adam Rippon, they sparked a career—though the mere thought of gaming was only a fantasy. "When I was a kid, my friend gave me a bunch of *Nintendo Powers* and the *Final Fantasy Strategy Guide*," says Rippon. "I didn't have an NES, but I dug through those magazines and played the games in my head. *Final Fantasy* seemed like the coolest game imaginable to me."

Eventually, Rippon did play those games, and they lived up to his imagination. Not long after, console emulation gave American RPG fans access to Japanese games they had previously been denied, and Rippon quickly got to work on shoring up the gaps in his fandom. "I worked with the fan translation community to write tools for *Final Fantasy II, III, and V*. Eventually, I ran out of *Final Fantasies*, so I tried to make my own!"

"Because RPGs are such a blank slate, you can bring a ton of ideas into them"

Rippon's fascination with those games never faded. Instead, it helped shape his own creations. "I'm a bit nuts for those 8-bit and 16-bit Japanese RPGs like *Dragon Quest* and *Final Fantasy*," he says. "I pretty much stuck to that era. I try to use a Super Nintendo-like design philosophy in a lot of my work. Limitation breeds creativity, so even when I'm working in Unreal Engine, I base my work on colors from the NES palette and design things with a tile layout."

It's not simply childhood obsession that fuels Rippon's interest, though; he has a great appreciation for the economy of design in classic RPGs. "I feel like JRPGs today are more complicated than they need to be, so my goal is to recreate those simpler experiences I

loved as a kid, but with new stories and modern niceties." These ambitions show clearly in Muteki's *Dragon Fantasy* games, which combines the best elements of multiple classic RPGs in unexpected ways while updating their core mechanics to feel more in line with modern games. Both *Dragon Fantasy* and its sequel can feel like a stroll down memory lane for people who grew up playing classics of the role-playing genre, yet neither game is content to simply nod at history. They both contain as many surprises as memories.

In the end, Rippon is perhaps most drawn to the format by the possibilities it offers him as a writer. "JRPGs are really simple if you boil them down," he says. "You have a world, you have characters, and you go from point A to point B. But because they're such a blank slate, you can bring a ton of ideas into them in ways that would feel out of place in a platformer or a run-'n-gun action game." LR

Josh Lu, 98 Prez

HP: 478 / 666
MP: 58 / 99
Next: 9989 EXP

Prez Says: Time to (Form a) Party

Welcome to another *Limited Run Club O' Fun* newsletter. This issue covers many of the RPGs we've released. I've always been bad at traditional games—my response time is terrible, and I have a low willingness to replay segments of games to master them. RPGs appeal to me because they allow me to take my time, think through conflicts, and use brainpower over reflexes to conquer challenges.

I first discovered the genre in 1996 when my brother brought home *Super Mario RPG*. I was forbidden from entering his room and playing his SNES, but the allure of that

game pulled me in. One week when he was at camp, I played it almost non-stop. I marked where the controller was supposed to be when he returned so nothing seemed off. *He would never find out I'd played his game!* Then I learned you couldn't delete save files. Sure enough, it took him no time at all to realize the file named "JOSH" was mine. It would have been hard to lay the blame on someone else!

Even though my first RPG experience ended somewhat rough, I've been a fan ever since. It's been my pleasure to help preserve the games covered here. As always, remember: *Physical is forever!* LR

Community Profile: Connor Nichols



Please introduce yourself! My name is Connor Nichols. I'm a huge retro gaming fan. I run a review website (seafoamgaming.com) and YouTube channel (youtube.com/seafoamgaming).

What's your first video game memory? It's very tough to pinpoint. It's either *Pajama Sam*, *Super Mario 64*, or *Mega Man 64*. My favorite memory, though—after being adopted in 2006, I was rewarded with *Pokémon Mystery Dungeon: Red Rescue Team*. It was the most emotional game I had played by far, and young me learned a lot of life lessons that made the transition of that rough moment a lot easier.

How did you start your Limited Run collection? Half a year after I started my YouTube channel, I started recording unboxings on a whim. I heard that Limited Run was pressing

Mystery Chronicle: One Way Heroics for PS Vita and PS4. I was in the middle of a *Pokémon Mystery Dungeon* retrospective, and figured I might as well add this *MD* spinoff to my collection. When I got a PS4, I went crazy with LRG purchases due to loving the idea of owning indies physically and helping out the devs more!

What's your favorite Limited Run release? It's a super close tie between *Dariusburst Chronicle Saviors* or the very recent *Blaster Master Zero* double pack releases.

What's your Limited Run dream release? As a *Mystery Dungeon* fanatic, a Collector's Edition of *Shiren the Wanderer 5* would be awesome! My other equally big want would just be any release of Hamster's *Arcade Classic Archives* series. In short? RPGs are one of those things and it would probably make me go bankrupt! LR

Know Your Role (Playing Game)

What does it mean to be an "RPG"? These days, practically every game claims to have "RPG elements," even if it's just little numbers that pop out when you damage something. Even games with strong connections to the tabletop and computer roots of the genre tend to be all over the place—consider games inspired by roguelike RPGs, like Chun Soft's *One-Way Heroics* and Mossmouth's *Spelunky*, which play nothing like Square Enix's *Dragon Quest* (which inspired *Dragon Fantasy*) or Nintendo's *Super Mario RPG* (the creative spark behind Mighty Rabbit's *Saturday Morning RPG*). Or Sidebar's *Golf Story*, which seems like a normal sports simulation... until you get into the stat growth and narrative elements. For every game that's undeniably an RPG in the classic sense of the term, like Zeboyd's *Cosmic Star Heroine*, there's something like Asymmetric's *West of Loathing*, a stick-figure Western comedy with "RPG elements." In short? RPGs are one of those things you just kinda know when you see it. LR

Profile: Art Director/CCO Shadie El-Haddad



PROFILE:

SHADIE EL-HADDAD

How did you get your start here? I met Josh in 2010 when I opened my own game studio alongside Mighty Rabbit. Once that ran its course, Josh brought me on to MRS in 2012. I transitioned over to LRG in 2017 when the creative side started to become a huge undertaking.

Any non-gaming hobbies? Currently, my main non-gaming hobby is woodworking. I've become quite passionate about designing in that medium.

What's your all-time favorite game? *The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time* will always be the most memorable and special gaming experience from my childhood.

What's your dream Limited Run release? I've been a Blizzard fanboy since *Orcs & Humans*. If we ever did anything at all with Blizz, I would feel pretty fulfilled :) LR

Min-maxing Your Rumor Stat

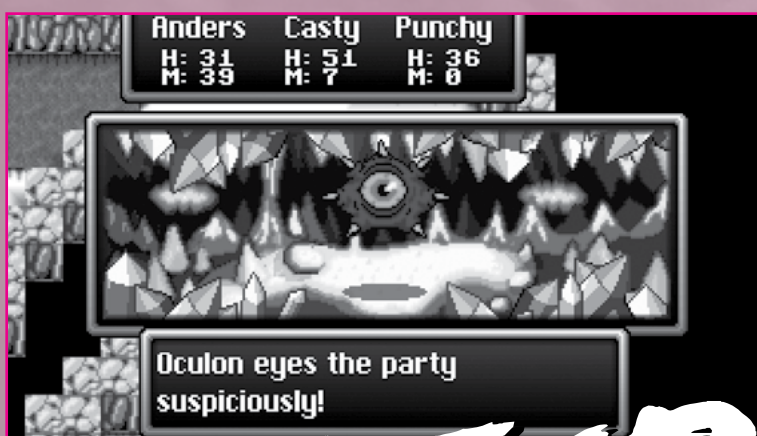
Disinformation is flying fast and furious in the year 2020, especially during the run-up to the most hotly contested political season in living memory. But our rumors section remains the last true bastion of neutrality: We report, you decide.

- The term "role-playing game" is extraordinarily broad! It can mean so many things: Action, exploration, survival, fishing... even farming?
- Everyone always talks about JRPGs, and

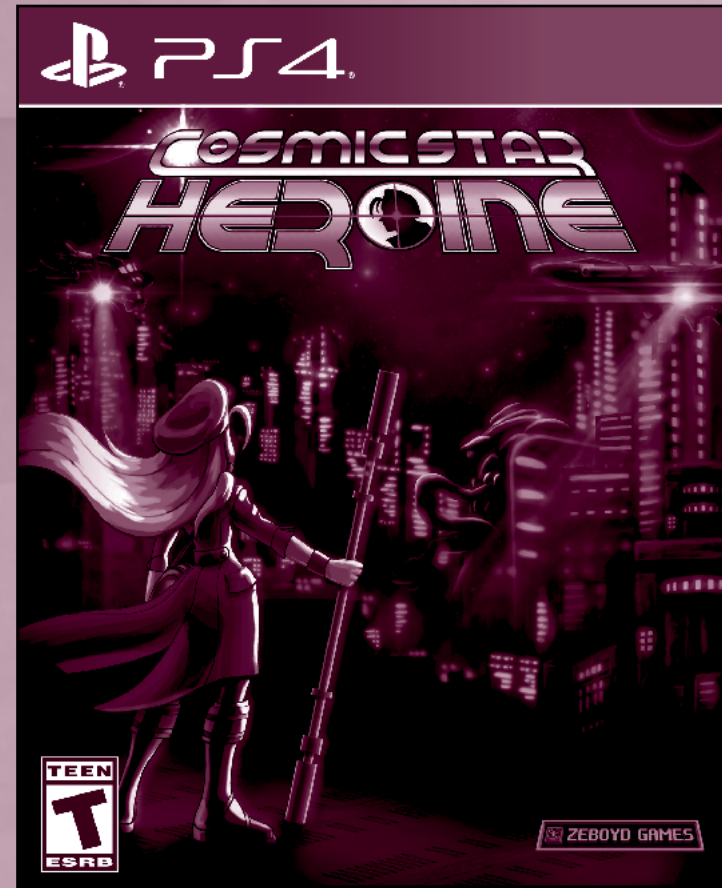
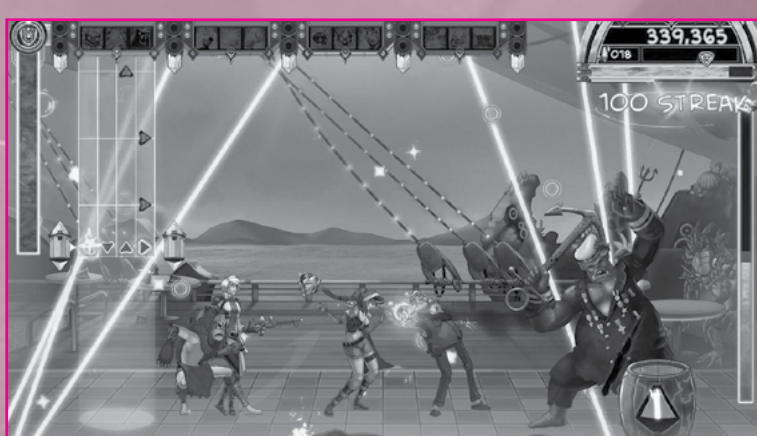
yeah, RPGs from Japan are pretty great! Yet there's not a lot of love for classic ERPGs (European RPGs). So then what would people say about Japan-made versions of European RPGs?

Will we ever see a follow-up to *Saturday Morning RPG's* cliffhanger ending? We went straight to the source to ask Mighty Rabbit/Limited Run boss Josh Fairhurst, and he said, quote: "Don't you have some actual work to be doing?" LR

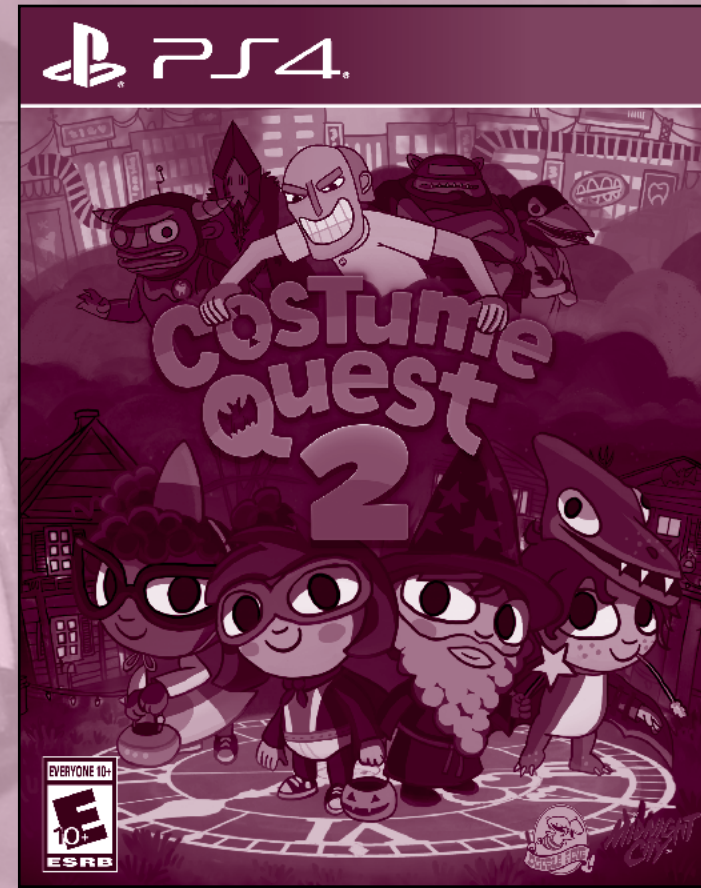
The Limited Run Games Indie RPG Lineup! Collect Them All!



LIMITED RUN



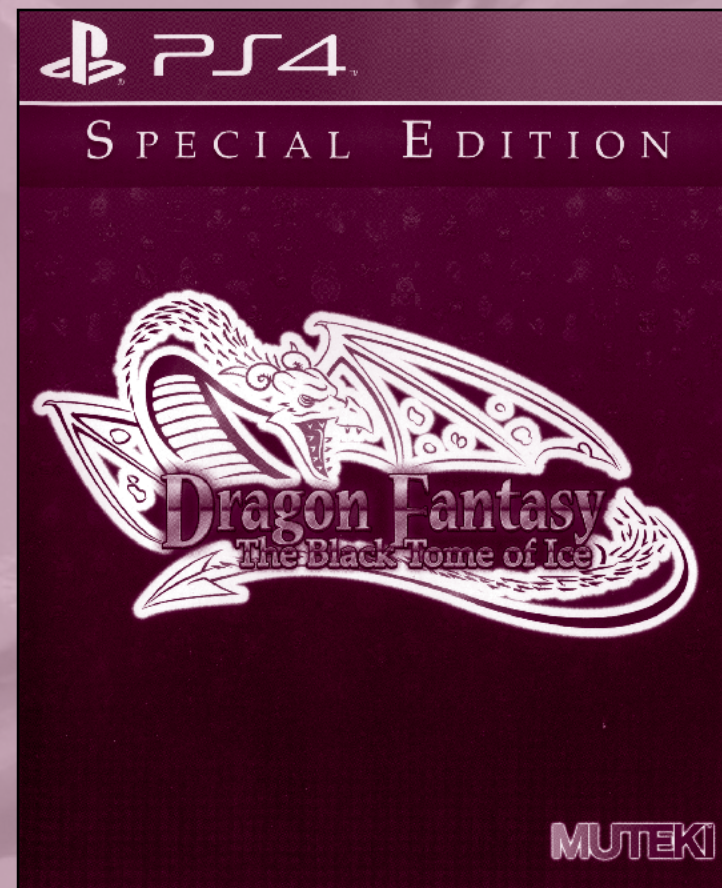
Cosmic Star Heroine
PlayStation 4 (#144) | Vita (#145) | Switch (#SW020)



Costume Quest 2
PlayStation 4 (#309)



Dragon Fantasy Book I: Volumes of Westeria
PlayStation 4 (#214) | PlayStation Vita (#234)



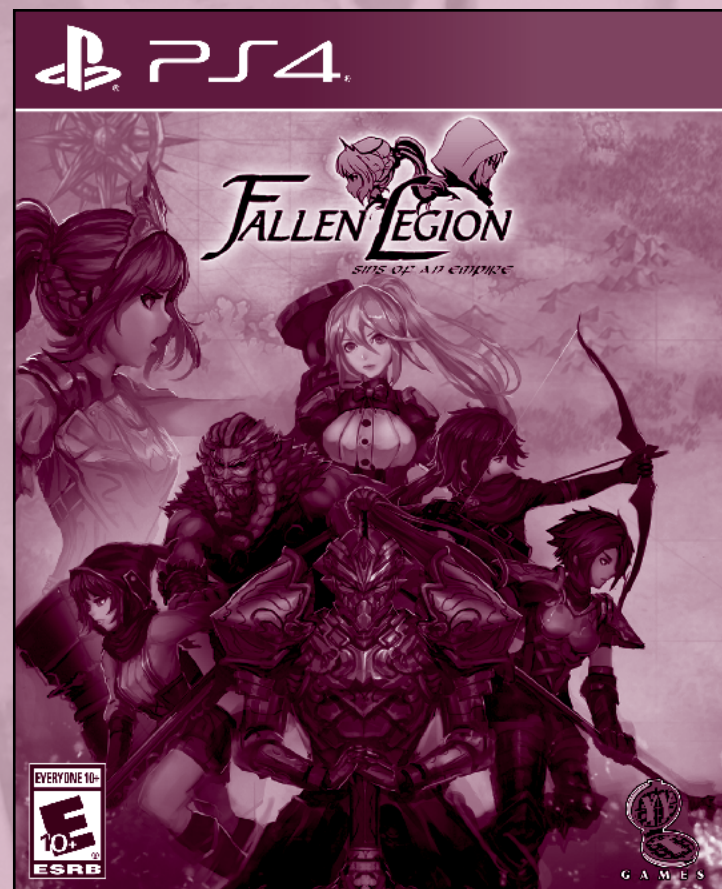
Dragon Fantasy Book II: The Black Tome of Ice
PlayStation 4 (#018) | PlayStation Vita (#019)



The Escapists
Switch (#SW030)



Fallen Legion: Flames of Rebellion
PlayStation 4 (#327) | PlayStation Vita (#109)



Fallen Legion: Sins of an Empire
PlayStation 4 (#108)



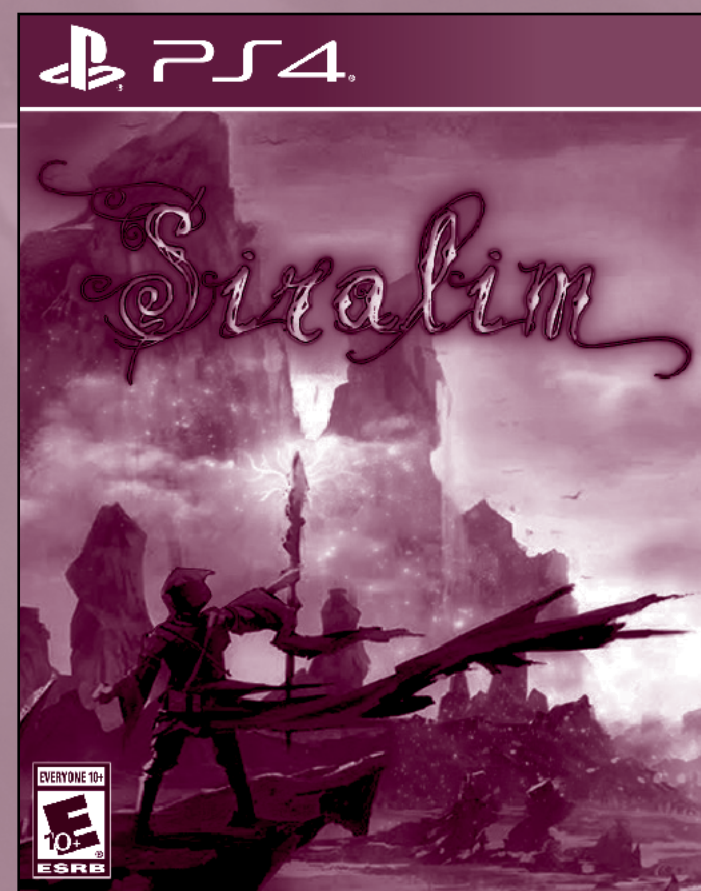
Golf Story
Switch (#SW015)



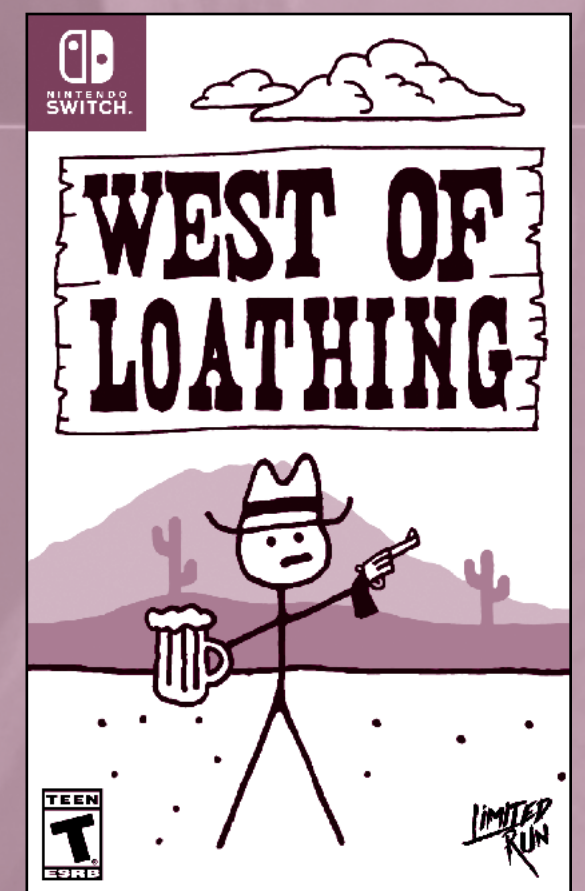
The Metronomicon
PlayStation 4 (#124)



Saturday Morning RPG
PlayStation 4 (#002) | Vita (#003) | Switch (#SW005)



Siralim*
PlayStation Vita (#137) | PlayStation 4 (#138)
* Also: *Siralim 2* (#191 Vita | #192 PS4) and *Siralim 3* (#297 PS4)



West of Loathing
Switch (#SW011)