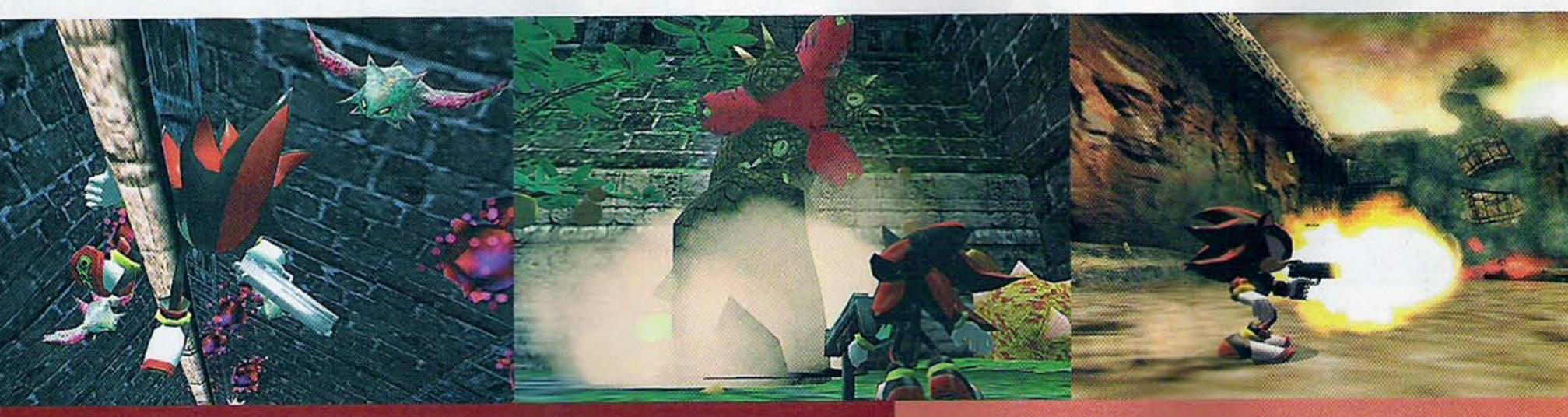# SHADOW
the HEDGEHOG

Pushing Sonic aside for the time being, Shadow the Hedgehog steers Sega's legendary action-platform series in a bold new direction. Make no mistake—the game moves at the breakneck speeds the series is famous for, but unlike Sega's beloved mascot, Shadow's packing heat. Caught in the middle of a complex battle between the G.U.N. army, Dr. Eggman and a mysterious race of aliens, the dark hedgehog can wield a variety of weapons as he blasts through more than 50 unique missions. Your actions at critical points in the game will tip the scales toward the forces of good or evil, and ultimately determine Shadow's fate, reflected by multiple endings.

Though the game isn't completely abandoning its platformer roots, there's definitely a greater emphasis on the action part of the equation. In previous Sonic games, the real enemy was often the environment, forcing the player to concentrate on fancy footwork and well-timed jumps. In Shadow the Hedgehog, combat takes center stage. Therefore, the developers are endeavoring to tighten some of the play mechanics, even giving Shadow the ability to strafe. Another area where the game deviates from its predecessors is in its focus on a single protagonist. Whereas recent games have had you play as multiple characters, Shadow keeps you in the rocket-powered shoes of its titular antihero at all times (though we do expect Sonic and company to make an appearance).

Narrative also plays a much bigger role than it did in previous Sonic adventures, and at the center of that are the secrets of Shadow's past. Is he an android created by Dr. Eggman? Is he the original Shadow simply suffering from amnesia? Or is there an even more sinister explanation?

Shadow the Hedgehog is currently in development at Sega Studio USA under the direction of Takashi Iizuka. The studio's previous title, Sonic Heroes, enjoyed great sales success (especially on the GCN) despite being vastly underrated by the gaming press. It'll be interesting to see if the team can pull off the darker tone and still maintain its audience. We'll find out this winter.

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Q&A with Takashi Iizuka

Takashi Iizuka has worked on a number of SonicTeam's greatest hits, including Sonic the Hedgehog 3, NiGHTS into Dreams and Sonic Heroes. He was recently gracious enough to answer a few questions for us.

I am extremely excited to see the advances in the technology and as a creator, the next hardware generation offers us the chance to create games that we could have only dreamt of years ago.

Nintendo Power: Why create a new game featuring Shadow rather than Sonic? What makes him such an appealing character to work with?

Takashi Iizuka: I've been interested in featuring Shadow in his own adventure ever since I created him for Sonic Adventure 2. Shadow has a completely different personality than Sonic, which allows me the ability to do things that are just as cool as Sonic while giving me the freedom to do things that are completely outside of Sonic's world.

Why did you decide to add weapons? And a possibly related question: why do you think platformers, once the most popular genre in video games, have been dwindling in popularity in recent years?

Weapons are just one component of the entire game that is new to gamers familiar with the Sonic-based games. And guns are just one type of weapon—we have gadgets, alien weapons, and even environmental objects like poles, sticks and debris that can be utilized. We have over 30 different weapons and items plus a variety of vehicles you'll be able to commandeer.

I think that the variety of new game genres and ideas that have been created has made platformers just one type of game that can be enjoyed. There are just so many great games to choose from these days as compared to what we used to play.

This is the fourth 3-D game in the series (not counting offshoots like Sonic R). What have you learned from those previous efforts?

With each game I've learned that it's most important to keep the game design fresh and appealing to our fans. The heart of the game is high-speed action and it's been one of my biggest challenges to balance the design of a new style of gameplay that includes weapons and vehicles.

Modern Sonic games have typically starred multiple characters. Why a single protagonist this time?

One of our goals in creating Shadow the Hedgehog was to give the opportunity for our fans to truly find out the mysteries that have shrouded him in the past. Is he good? Is he evil? Just why was he created? In this game, we specifically designed it so that the player will be in total control to unveil every story behind Shadow.

Many have complained about the camera in the 3-D Sonic games. What is the team doing to address this?

With the return to a single-character game, we have been able to optimize the camera specifically for the player's perspective. We have implemented a new camera system that lets the player actually control the camera angle during gameplay, which further enhances our idea of putting complete control of the game into the player's hands.

With the darker tone, are you afraid of losing Sonic's younger fan base? Conversely, are you hoping to attract a larger mature audience?

With every game I create, I've always tried to embrace our Sonic fan base, since they are the ones

> "I can now let gamers unveil and discover the truth behind the mysteries that shroud our renegade hedgehog. You decide the path he takes, and you decide how the story unfolds."

that make our games what they are today. With Shadow the Hedgehog, being able to work within the Sonic world but having the freedom to do different things, I'm hoping that those who grew up with Sonic can enjoy it just as much as those new players who have never played Sonic before. We really are excited about making this a game that everyone will love.

What can you tell us about the good/evil alignment and how it affects the gameplay and storyline?

Shadow has always been a very mysterious character. In Shadow the Hedgehog, I can now let gamers unveil and discover the truth behind the mysteries that shroud our renegade hedgehog. You decide the path he takes, and you decide how the story unfolds. Besides the branching storylines, each stage, story event and even the difficulty is all affected by how the player decides to play the game. This is all put in place with the intention of offering the player a different game experience every time.

What are your thoughts on the next hardware generation?

Can you tell us anything else about the future of the Sonic franchise?

Sega is always interested in exploring new directions, as it's our goal to continue to push the envelope creatively as well as technologically for the Sonic franchise. And we would like to create Sonic franchise titles that appeal to all ages. Shadow the Hedgehog is just one of them.

Sonic Mega Collection has enjoyed incredible prolonged sales success on the GCN. Do you think we'll ever see another side-scrolling Sonic game on consoles?

Sega is always looking into new ways of offering a new gaming experience to our fans. Our Mega Collection has done exceptionally well and we thank all our fans for their support. In the future, we are committed to bringing new types of Sonic games to market that our fans love.

What's your personal favorite Sonic game of all time and why?

For the 2-D side-scrollers, I really enjoyed Sonic the Hedgehog 2 for Genesis. I think it has the best all-around action, game design and stage tempo. For the pure enjoyment of the Sonic world in general, I love Sonic Heroes because as you play through the game, you feel as though you are part of a group that constantly works and communicates together.

What else would you like our readers to know about Shadow the Hedgehog?

We're working hard to bring you, our fans, a completely new game from the Sonic franchise! We look forward to sharing with you more information about our game as soon as we can. 🍄