ZPF
ゼンチュリオン
FUTURE METAL FANTASY

01

INTRODUCTION

Enter the dimension of ZPF, a Sega Genesis shooter unlike any other. Prepare yourself for a visual feast of grotesque creatures, bizarre landscapes, and mind-bending effects, all rendered in glorious pixel art.

Join the creators on a journey behind the scenes, uncovering the inspirations and challenges they faced while pushing the 16-bit console to its limits.

Every page crackles with the energy and passion that fueled this ambitious and unconventional shooter, making this art book an essential experience for any fan of intense action and captivating visuals.

FUTURE METAL FANTASY

ZPF

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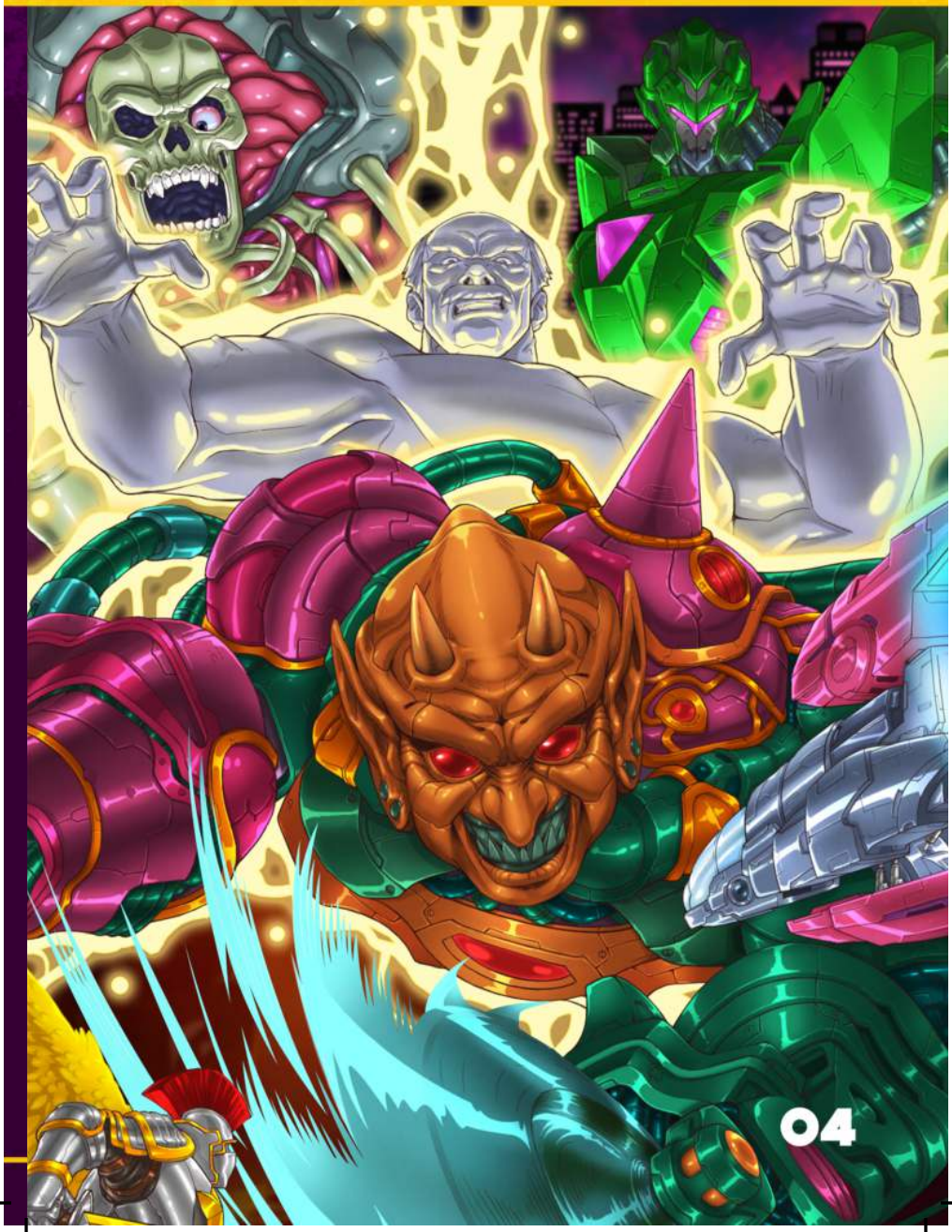

04

16-BIT MEGA
INSTRUCTION MANUAL
ZPF
ゼンチュリオン
FUTURE METAL FANTASY
16-BIT MEGA
ZPF
ゼンチュリオン
FUTURE METAL FANTASY

WELCOME NOTE

It's hard to believe how much time has flown by since we first brought ZPF to life. This book is our way of sharing a bit of that journey with you – the amazing fans who made it all possible.

Inside, you'll find a collection of concept art, character designs, and behind-the-scenes glimpses into the development process. We hope these pages fuel your excitement for ZPF and give you a taste of the adventure that awaits.

From the entire ZPF team, thank you for your support. We're so grateful for the opportunity to share this with you.

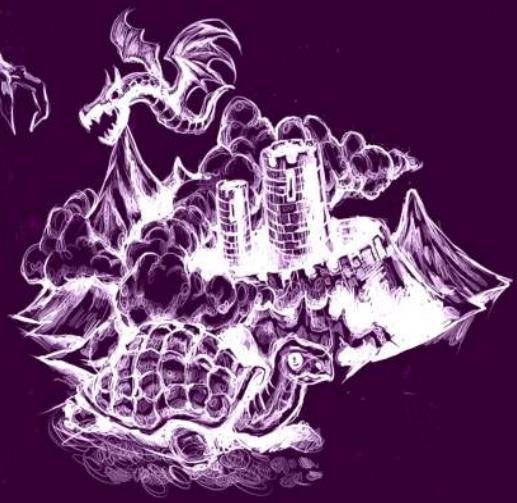
ORIGIN STORY & INSPIRATIONS

ZPF began as a passion project by the developer Gryzor, drawing inspiration from classic horizontal shooters like Lords of Thunder and Elemental Master.

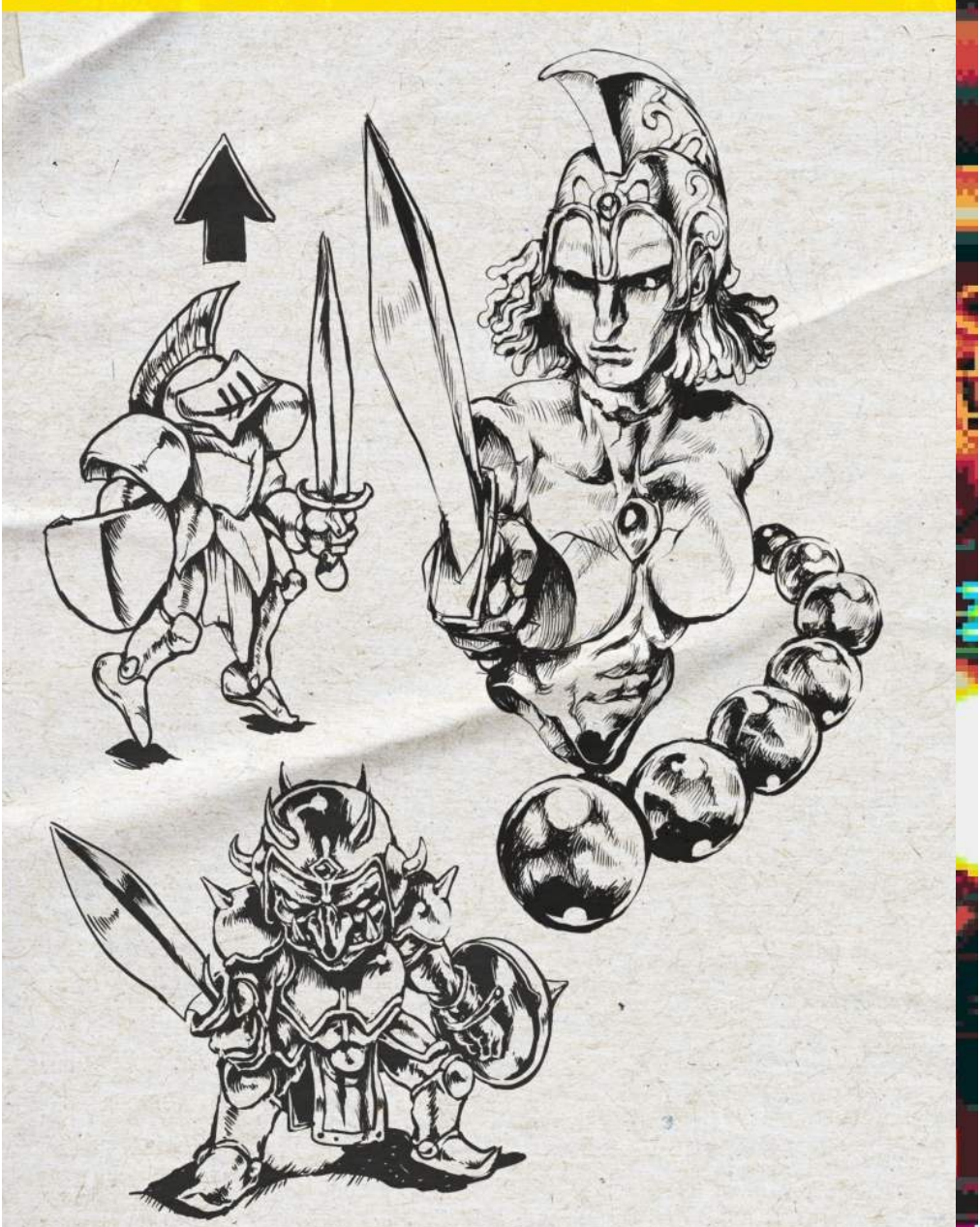
Initially centered around a fantasy theme, the game later integrated horror and sci-fi elements to maintain the developer's interest and creativity. The game's concept and design were influenced by classic console shooters and the desire to mix different thematic elements freely.

Though ZPF is a horizontal shooter, it owes a debt to Gryzor's earlier vertical creation, Super XYX. Super XYX acted as a testing ground for many of the elements that would later define ZPF. The crisp pixel art style, the need for sharp shooting skills, and the demanding boss fights – these core aspects were honed in Super XYX before being adapted for ZPF's side-scrolling action. Think of Super XYX as the precursor, where Gryzor refined the formula that would ultimately give rise to ZPF.

Gryzor: “It then evolved into having multiple themes and different characters to match. Like most of my games, it then got shelved for years, though.”



When the team started carrying it over to Mega Drive/Genesis, they didn't know what had to be left behind from the old PC builds and what would even work under the tighter restraints they would be working with. It turned out that they needed far more content than they had thought, too. Once they moved past the need to reuse the older materials, the game really began to have its own identity.

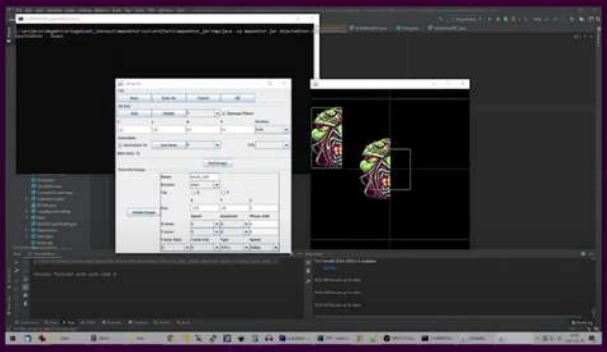


1UP

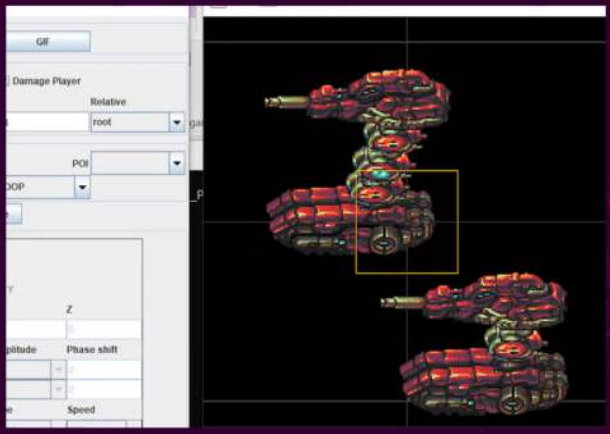
LEVEL DESIGN & ANIMATION

ZPF takes the classic horizontal shooter formula and blasts it into a new dimension. Sure, you'll dodge, shoot, and collect powerups while battling enemies and bosses, but that's just the tip of the iceberg. ZPF adds unique elements like collectible medals with a risk/reward system, a shop for upgrades and story interactions, and secrets for skilled players to uncover.

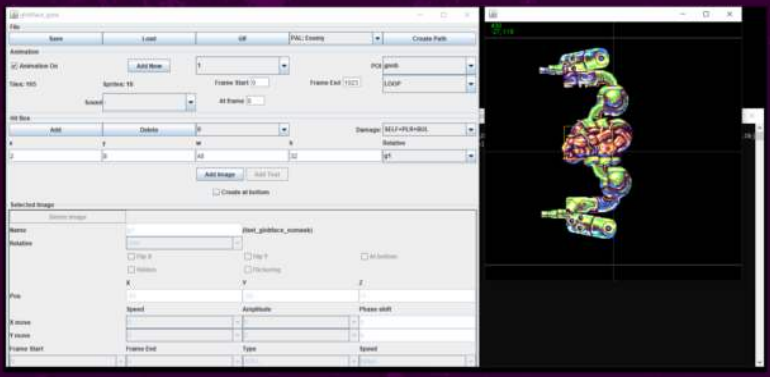
Jamie: “Creating all these features – the medals, the shop, the secrets – presented a significant challenge. That's where our madman developer, Mikael Tillander, came in. He created a custom set of tools to aid in the development of ZPF.”



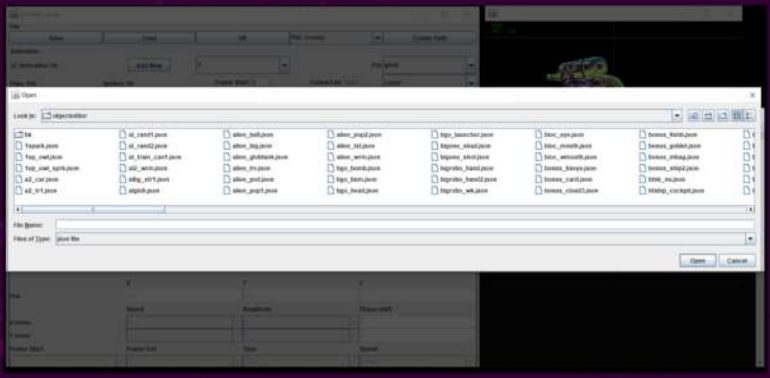
“First was an object editor, which gave us a whole new level of control over things like enemy layout, movement, attack states, death animations, enemy AI roles, and more. He made a text editor, and even a sound effect and VGM file manager.”



Gryzor: “Characters/objects/enemies are then ‘animated’ in the custom editor by placing sprites together - all must be from the same GFX sheet and use the same palette.”



“Then they can be arranged by depth/draw order/Z coords. Movement is then added with horizontal or vertical speed or combinations of both to make sine patterns.”

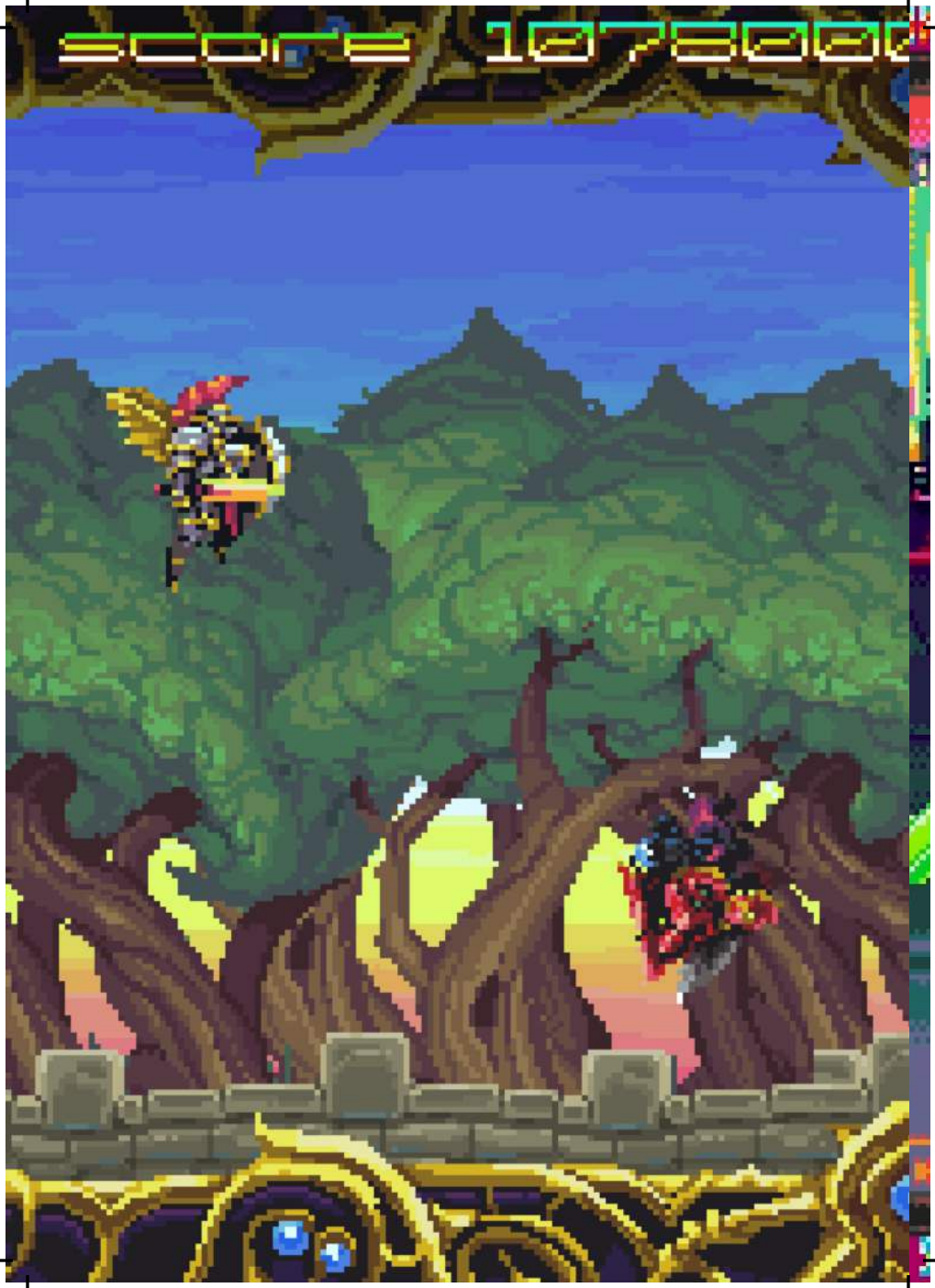


“Each sprite can be set relative to each other in basic child/parent behaviour.
Each object can have many ‘animations’ which we use for obvious states like special movements done for boss attacks, intros or death sequences.”

GOLD IDOL

Character design isn't just about aesthetics—it's about making sure those designs translate smoothly into animation. Here's a look at how we adapted some character drafts to ensure fluid movement and a polished look in the final game.

OGRE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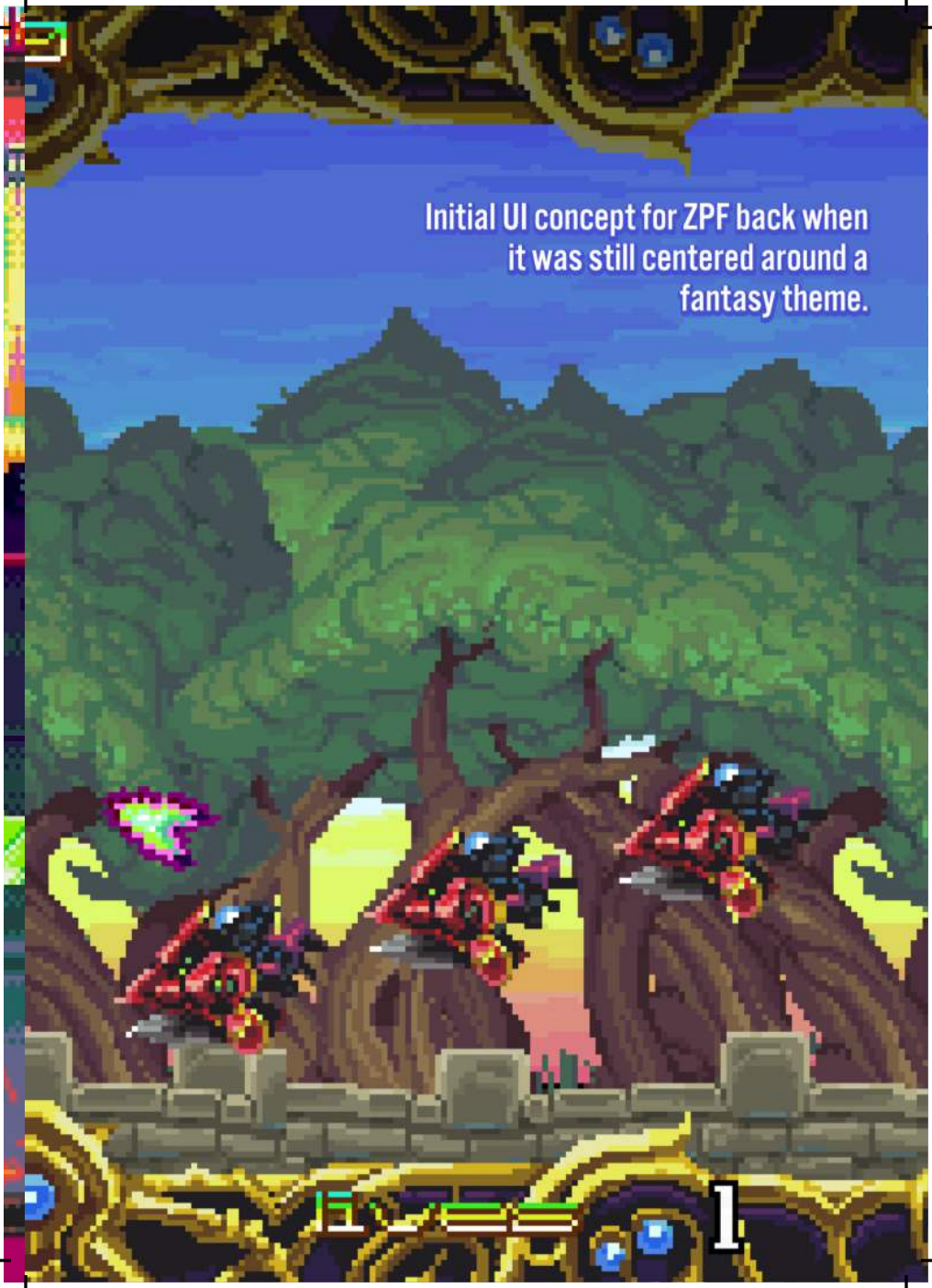
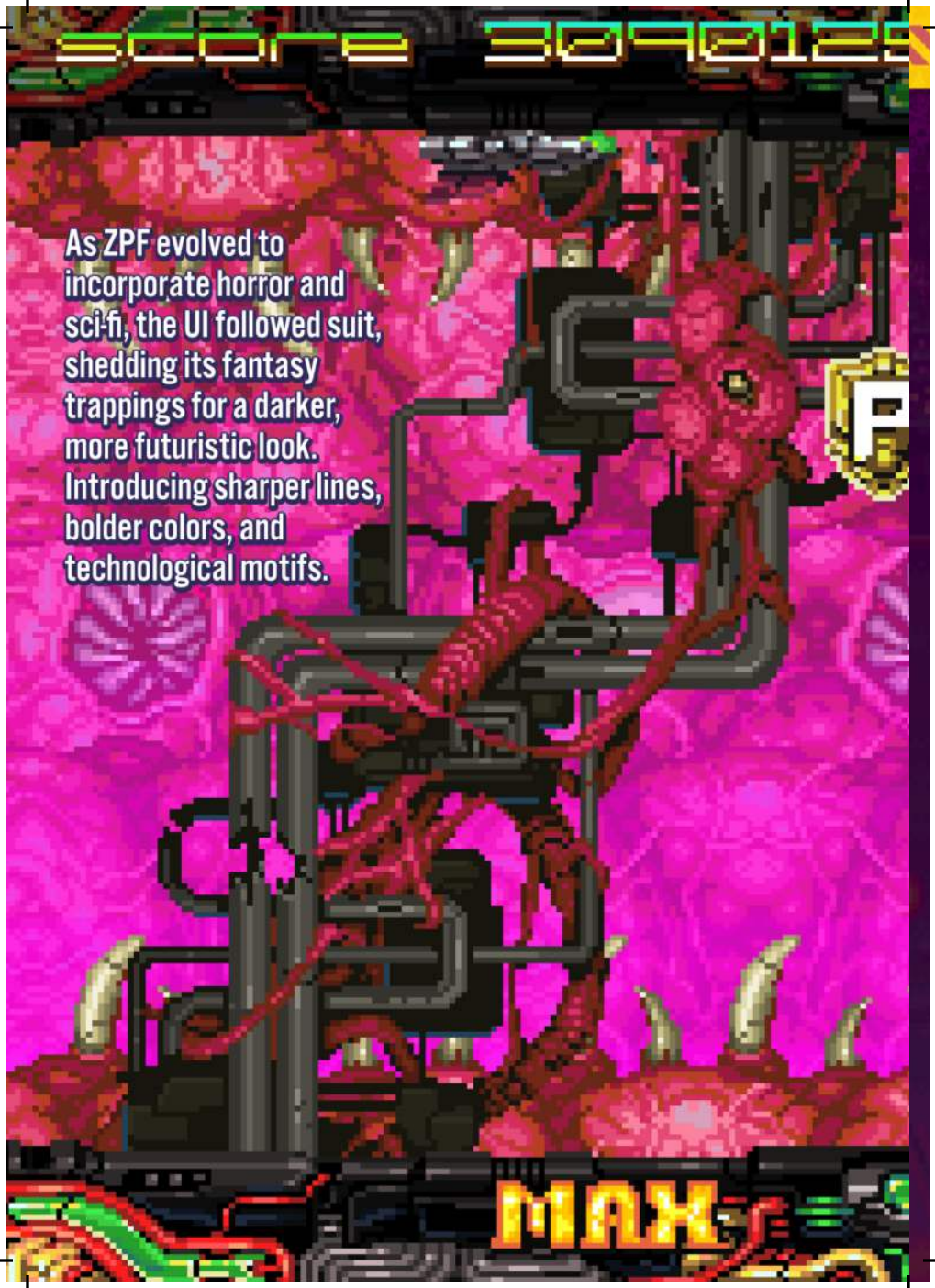

Initial UI concept for ZPF back when
it was still centered around a
fantasy theme.
LIVES
1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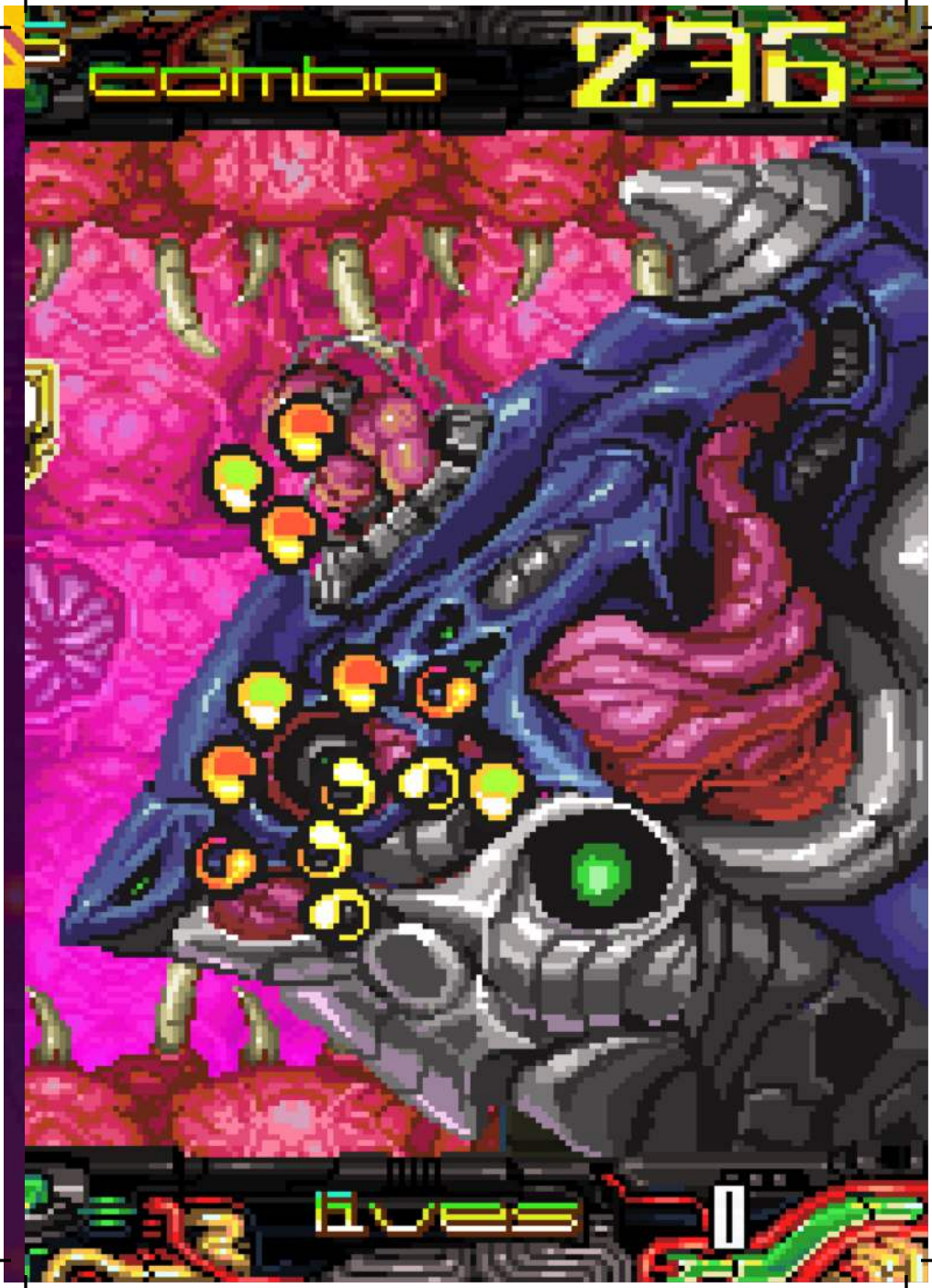
As ZPF evolved to incorporate horror and sci-fi, the UI followed suit, shedding its fantasy trappings for a darker, more futuristic look. Introducing sharper lines, bolder colors, and technological motifs.
MAX


combo
236
lives
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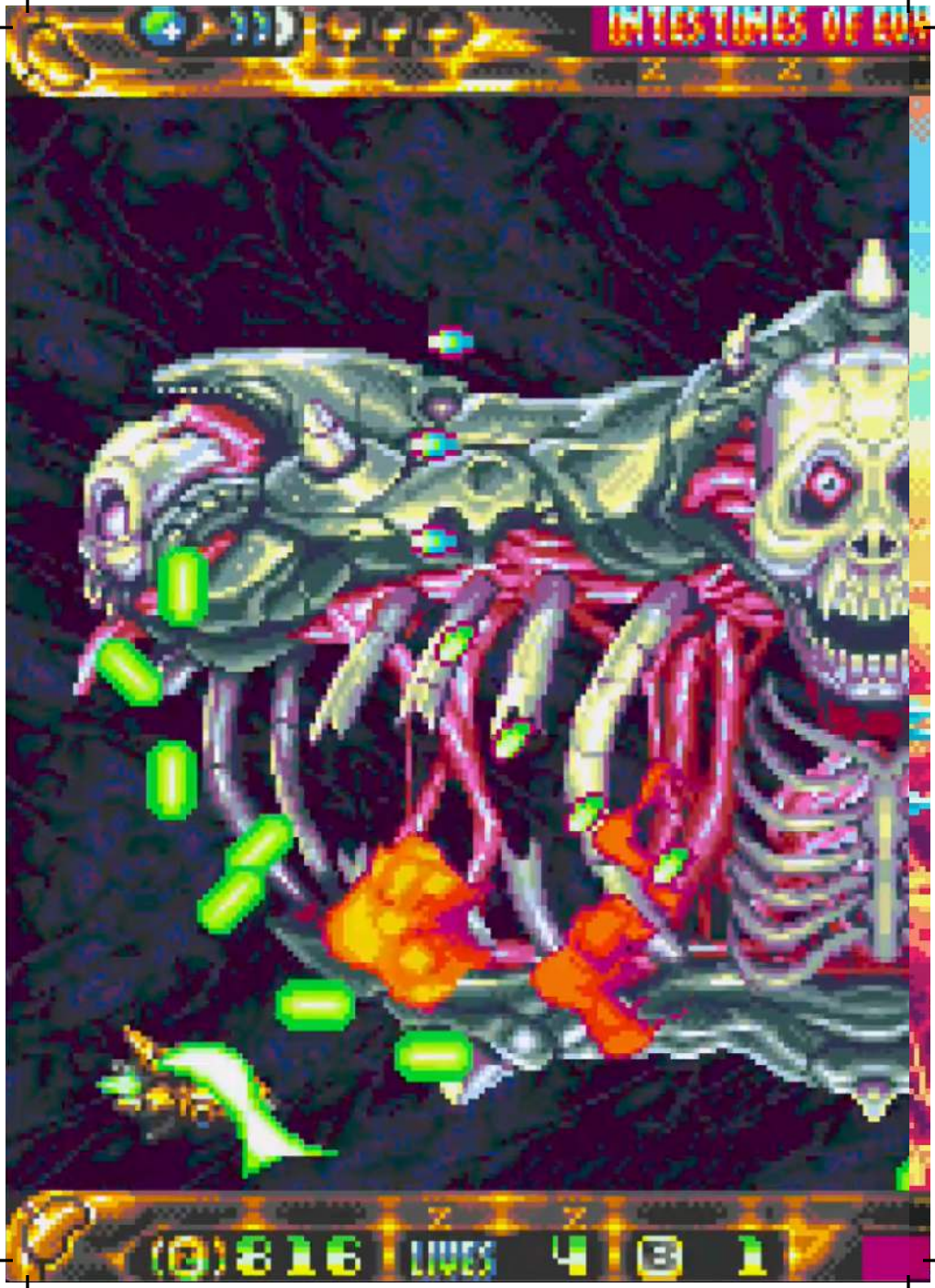

INTESTINES OF EVIL
LIVES

The Final Form:
ZPF's polished UI,
ready for action

SOUNDTRACK & SOUND DESIGN

He wasn't around at the project's inception, but one night, while hanging out playing video games, Gryzor asked Jamie if he wanted to make the music for a game he and Mikael were working on called ZPF.

Jamie: "Gryzor mentioned it was for the Sega Genesis, so, I had to broach the fact I wouldn't even qualify as a Genesis dilettante. I was a complete noob. Sacrilege, I know. A strict NES-enforcing older brother, not a lot of dough growing up; I just never had access to one!"

"NEVERTHELESS...I had done some tracker work, and wasn't going to turn down this opportunity to work on a passion project with my friends."

Jamie: "Not being an expert in the iconic styles of the console and its game-library let me approach things with a kind of aloof independence. While I was inspired by other OSTs, I mostly chased what felt good to me versus trying to fit in amongst giants of the class. I like darker tones, and I tend to write more rhythmically than melodically – for better or worse. The end result hopefully stands out as something distinct."

“Lastly, there are always memories and nostalgia fueling ideas in the background. My older brother Marc and I bonded over NES games growing up, and the music often made life-long impressions on us. Stuff like the 'Heat Man' theme from Mega Man 2, 'Heat Wave' from Bionic Commando, 'Stage 2' from Journey to Silius, 'Idaten' from Shinobi III... those tracks are burned into my brain. They definitely fueled the fire while I was working on ZPF.”

FANTASY

"The Journey Begins" starts from a shore of an unfamiliar land to a dense forest, to a lake and then to mountains, leading to an imposing fortress, the Goblin's Castle. From there, you conquer the castle, ridding it of goblins and their evil king.

HERO HIGHLIGHT

Knight, The Fantasy Hero

In the mystical realms of ZPF, Knight emerges as the valiant defender, melding magic and steel to vanquish the encroaching goblin horde. Piloted by a young magician, Knight's shimmering armor shields the lush lands from the clutches of darkness, weaving spells of protection amidst the chaos.

ENEMIES HIGHLIGHT

Ogre

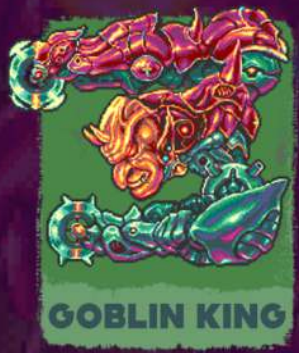
A distant cousin to the goblins, this huge beast is the guardian of the castle entrance.
He wields a giant chain whip and breathes deadly flames.

Forbidden Throne Room Guardian, (Goldstat)

A magical golden statue in the visage of an ancient god. Kept hidden away in darkness for many years, it protects the castle's secret

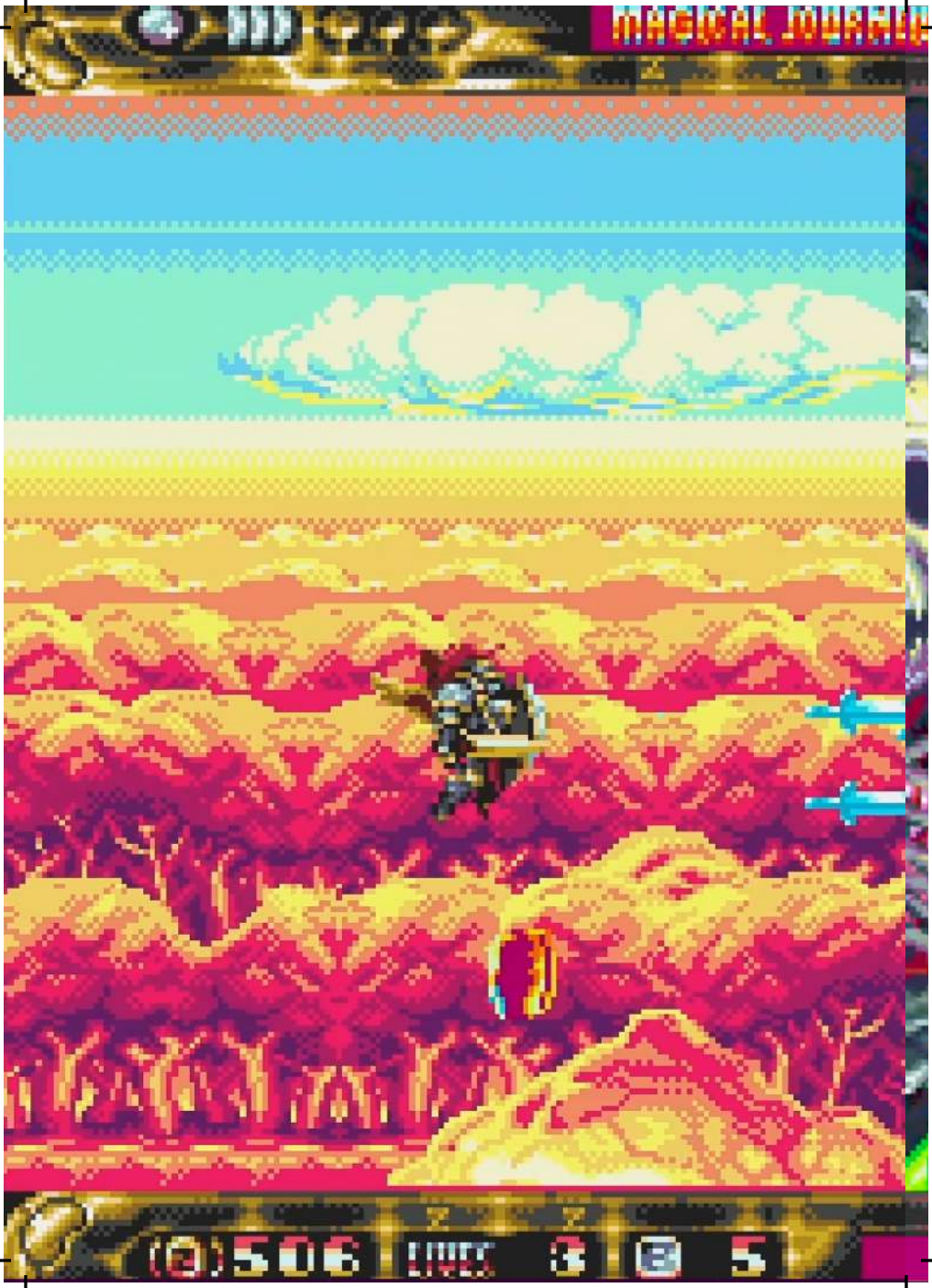
Goblin King

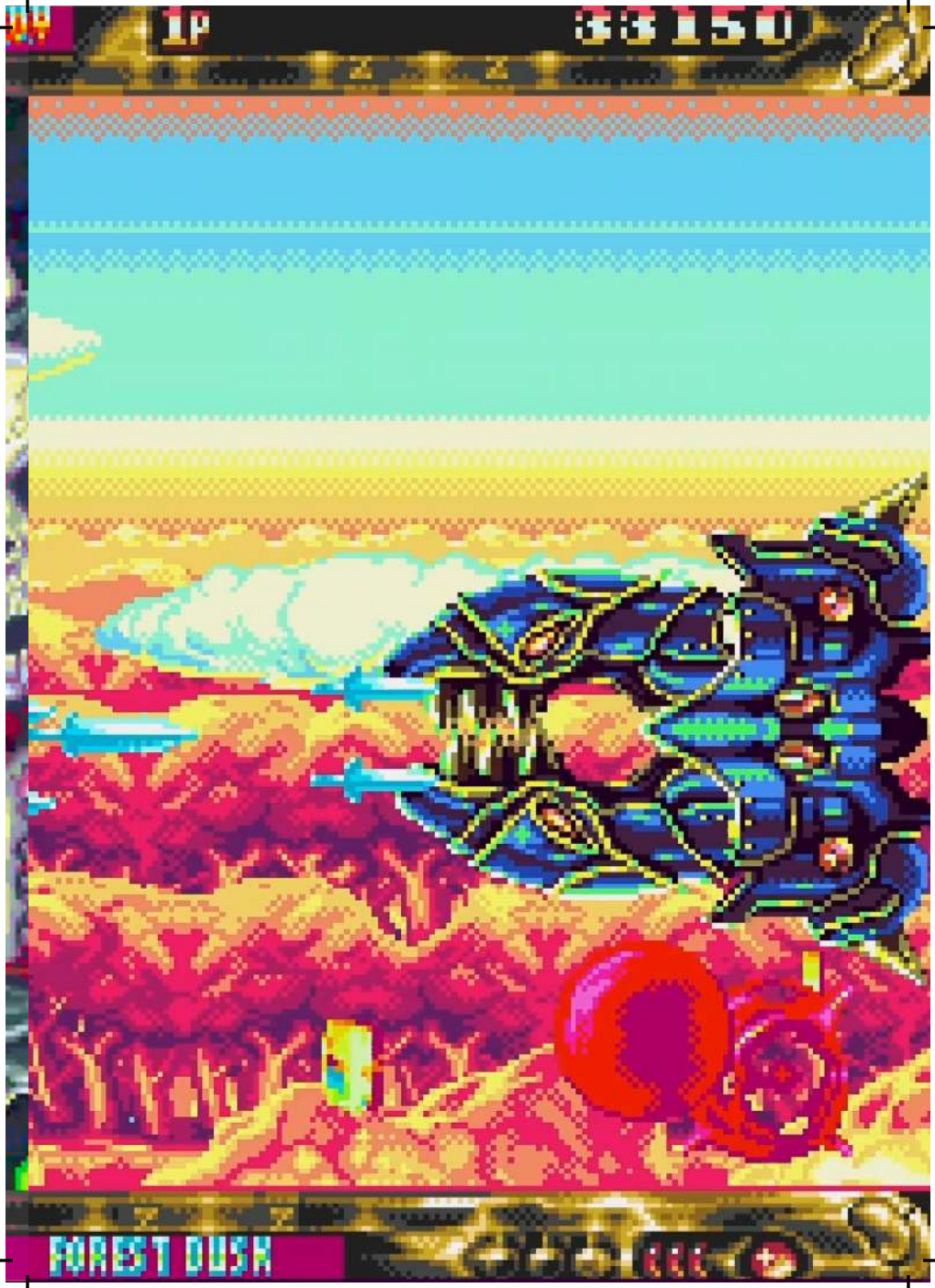
The king of the rogue goblin confederations. Having united many evil creatures under his banner, he has besieged and captured the kingdom's mighty castle stronghold. For all the fearsome might he wields, he is actually quite diminutive even among his goblin kin.



MAGICAL JOURNEY
230
LIVES 4
5

1P
16100
SPRITE VILLAGE


MAGICAL JOURNEY
506
LIVES 3
5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33150
FOREST RUSH

FUTURE

Megalopolis 20XX is a huge city in a future dystopia. You battle through the city streets and tunnels, only to fight more serious military hardware and tanks, eventually taking part in an air war. From there, you plunge down into the UnderCity Depths, which is no less guarded; but hides some strange secrets.

HERO HIGHLIGHT

Gold, The Future Hero

Stepping from the shadows of a dystopian future, Gold strides forth as the embodiment of cybernetic prowess and relentless determination. Driven by the promise of riches to cure her financial woes, Gold navigates the neon-lit streets, hunting down bounties set by corrupt city overlords, her metallic visage gleaming with unwavering resolve.

ENEMIES HIGHLIGHT

Giant Mecha

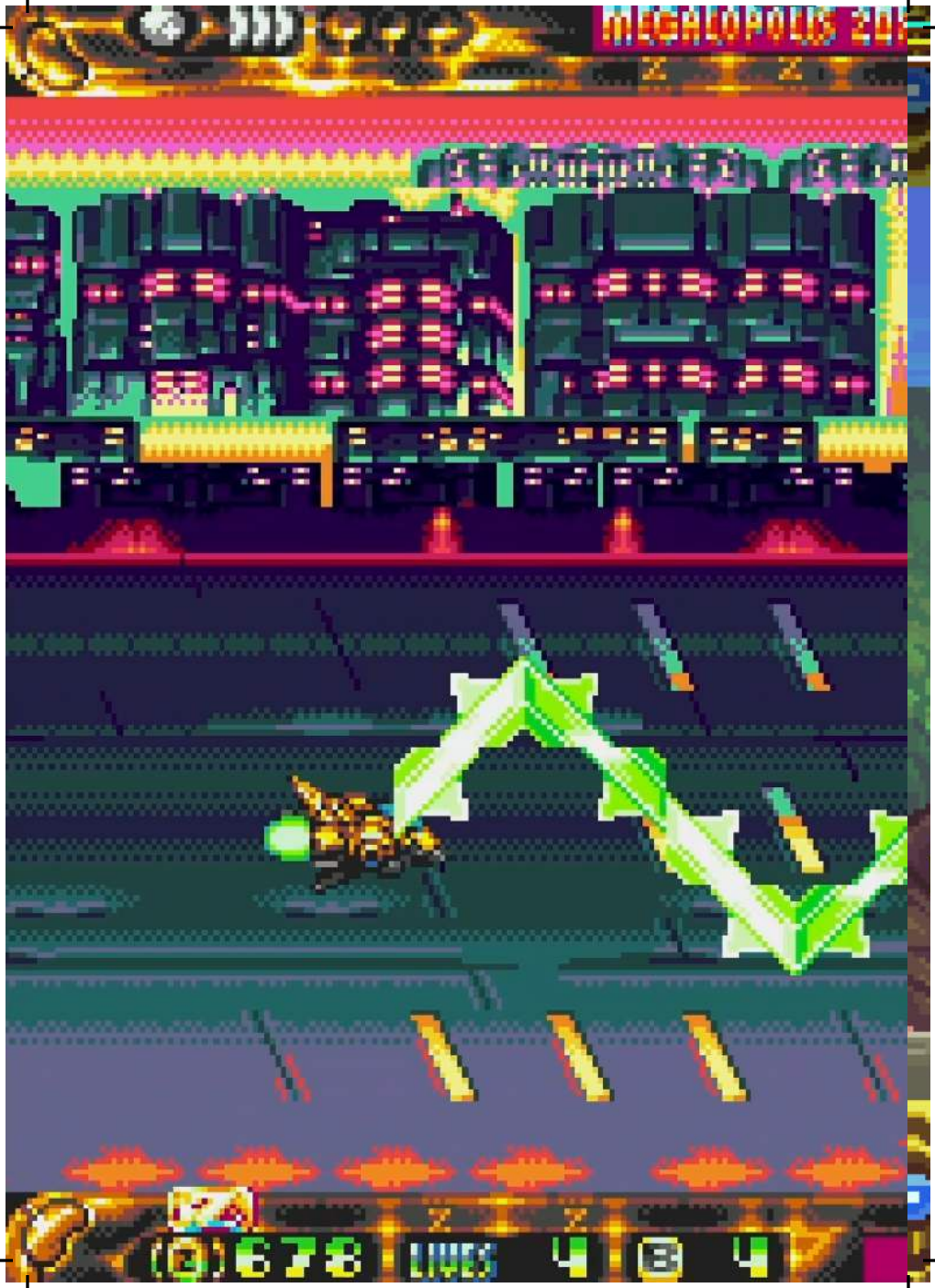
A rogue battle machine set loose in the bustling skyways of the Megalopolis. It is likely repurposed police or military tech but the purpose of it's attack is unknown.breathes deadly flames.

Battleship

This behemoth is new military gear developed and kept in secret in the vast city underdepths. Bristling with all kinds of weaponry, it is a force to be reckoned with.

The Glob (Globface)

A strange creature living in the undercity depths. Who knows how long it has been there; but it seems to readily adapt to new threats.


MEGALOPOLIS 20
678
LIVES
4
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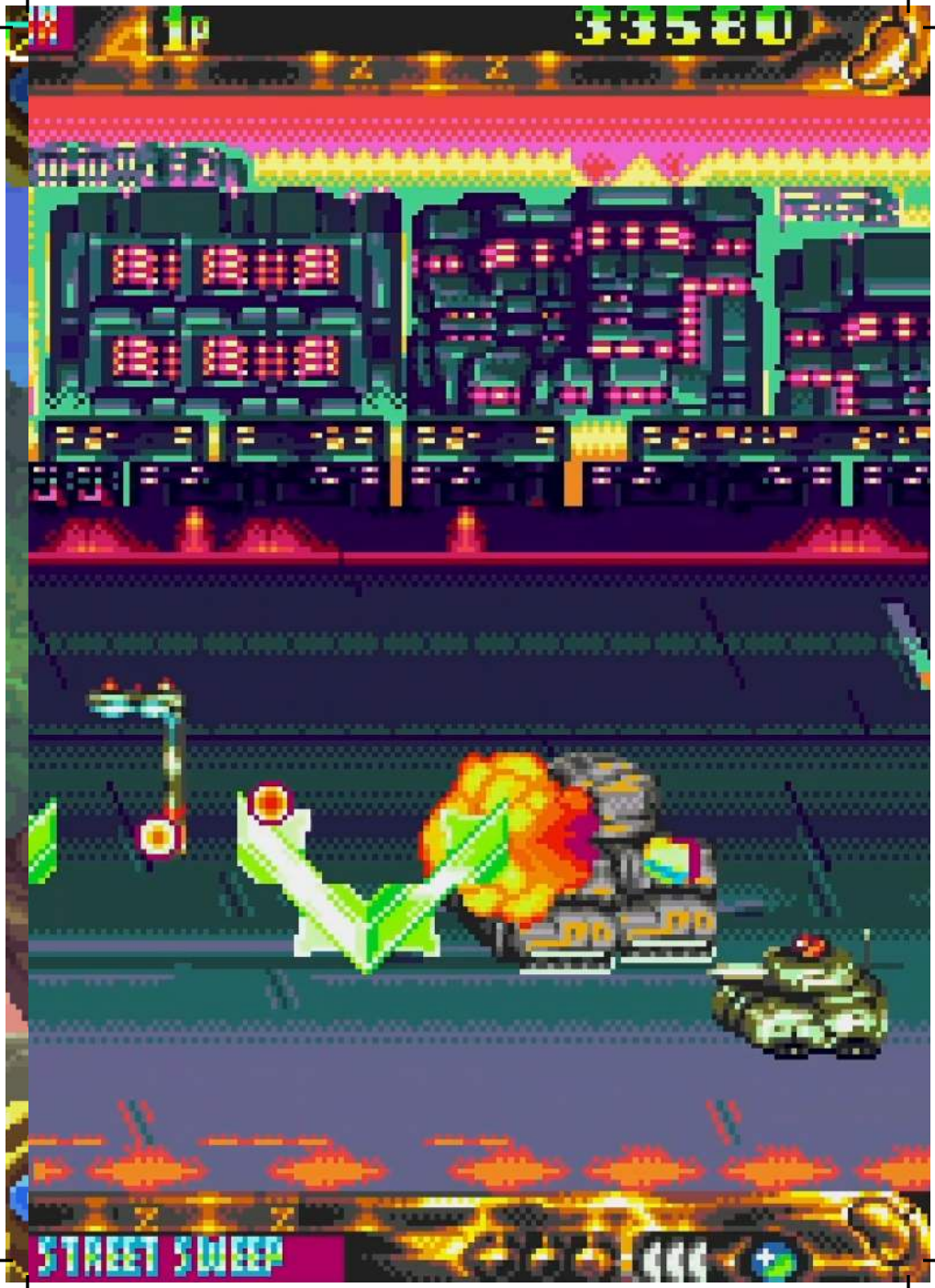

1P
33580
STREET SWEEP

MEGALOPOLIS 20
744
LIVES
4
3

1P
41230
SKYLINE

ALIEN

Alien Infestation starts you in a destroyed space station overrun by an unknown extraterrestrial threat. Many have tried to flee; but could not escape. The further you go in, the more corrupted things become as you have battle the station's own defense systems, turned against its masters. From there, things just get weirder and nastier in The Intestines of Evil.

HERO HIGHLIGHT

GladiUS, The Alien Hero

From the distant reaches of the galaxy, Gladius emerges as the final bastion against the encroaching alien menace. Piloted by a lone warrior, Gladius slices through the void with precision and fury, its sleek form a beacon of hope against the relentless onslaught of extraterrestrial invaders.

ENEMIES HIGHLIGHT

GOR-X

The station's defense machinery gone awry and infected with the alien menace. It now attacks and further infects everything it comes in contact with.

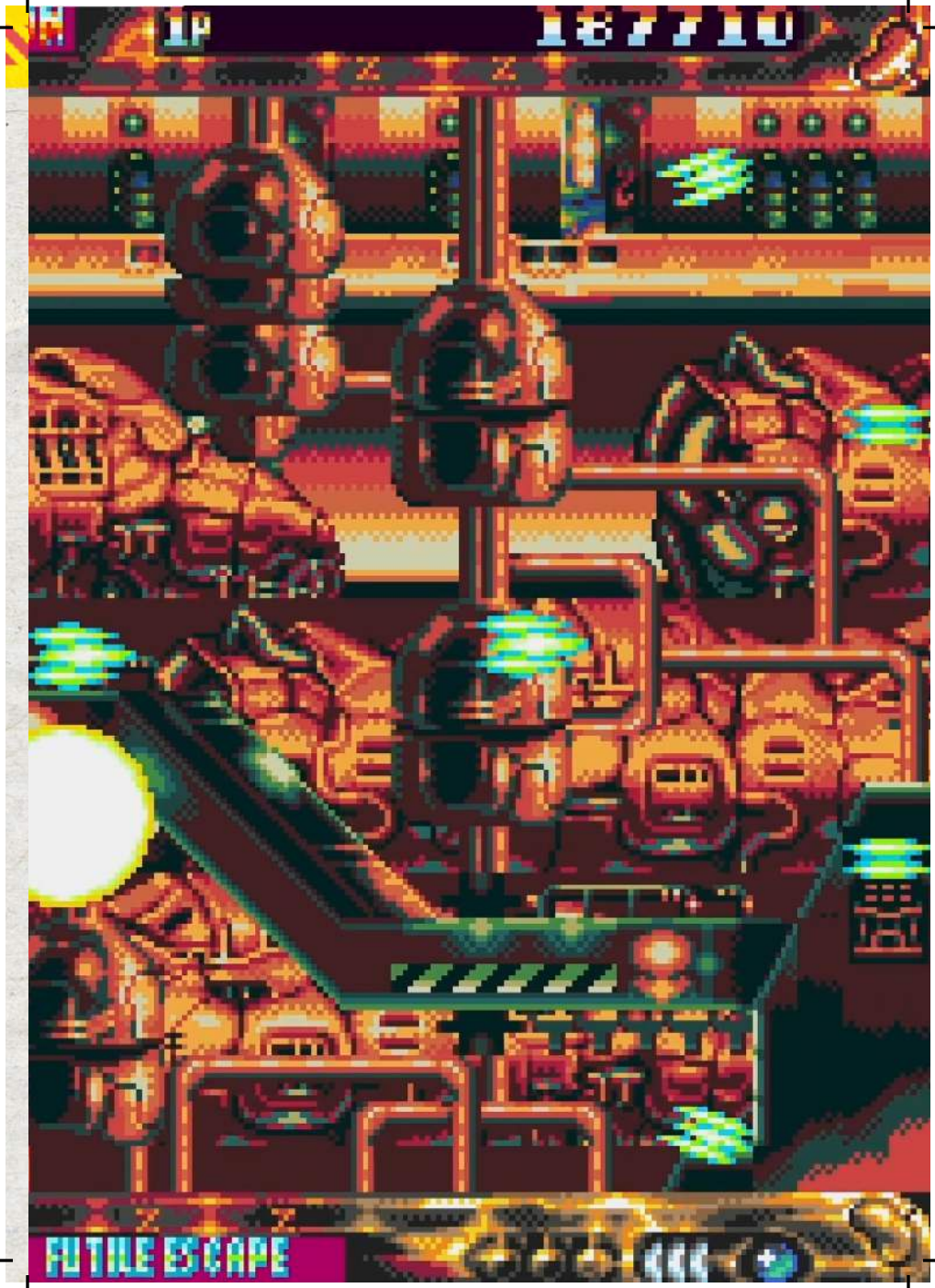
Terror Gate (Facegate)

A uniquely bizarre biomechanoid horror that appears to be some kind of gate... perhaps to the alien's home even deeper in space.

Thanatos

The mighty "king of death", thought to be the leader or head general of the alien forces. His heart must be destroyed to finally end this menace.

SPACE INVADERS
266
LIVES 3
B 1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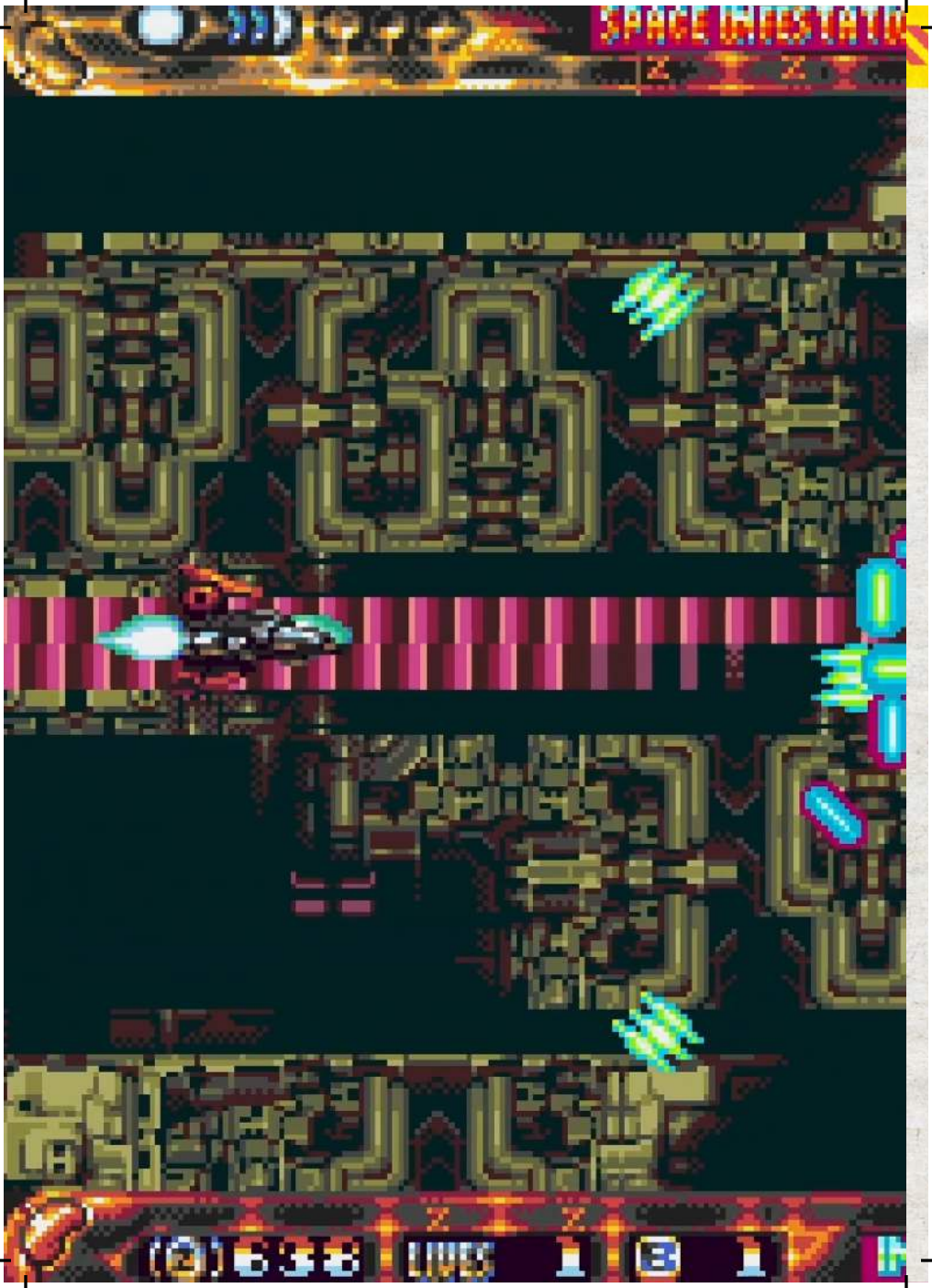
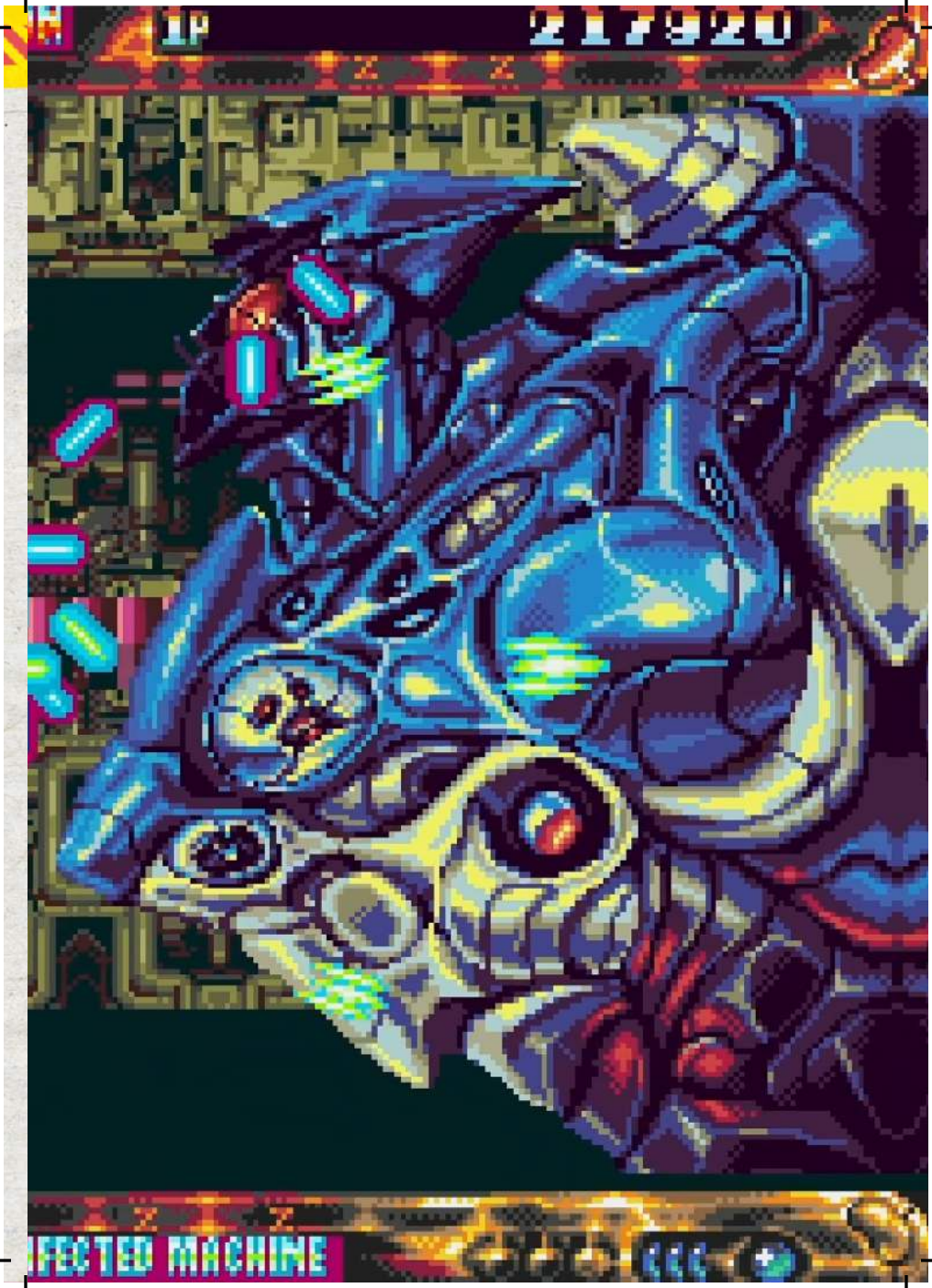
FUTILE ESCAPE


SPACE INVADERS
LIVES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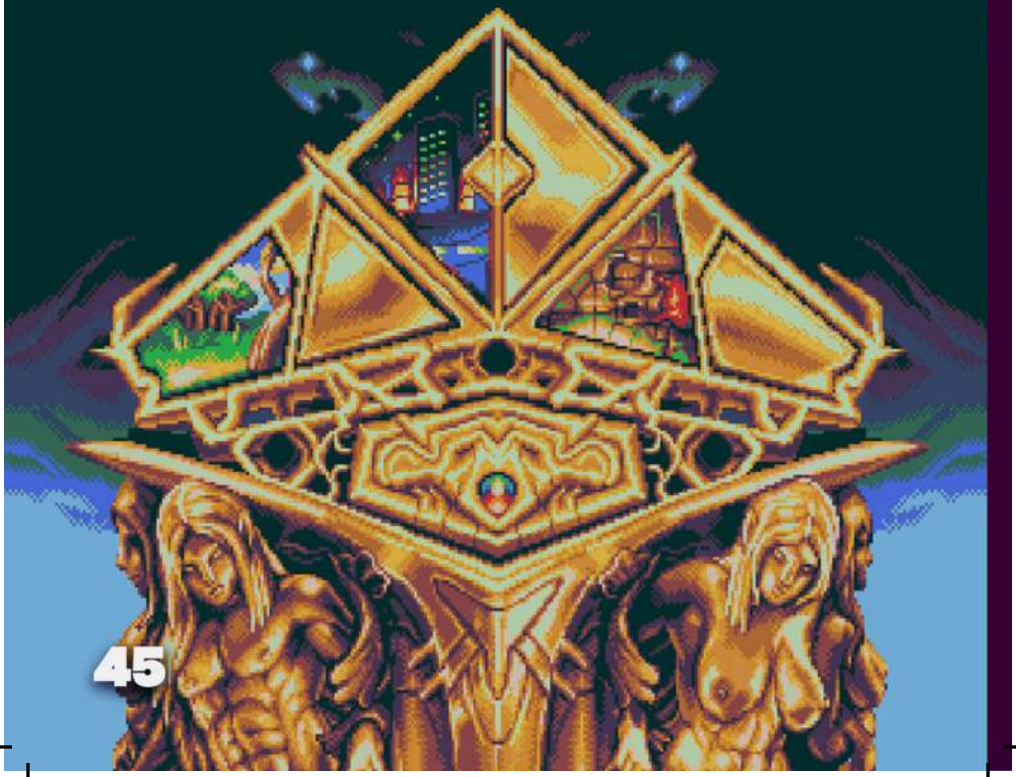
INFECTED MACHINE

NEXUS

There is a singular point from which the worlds ruptured and from which they are also merged.

The Nexus lies just between and through that point. Vast expanses of space and many dark mysteries beckon the heroes within.



ENEMIES HIGHLIGHT

Quibley

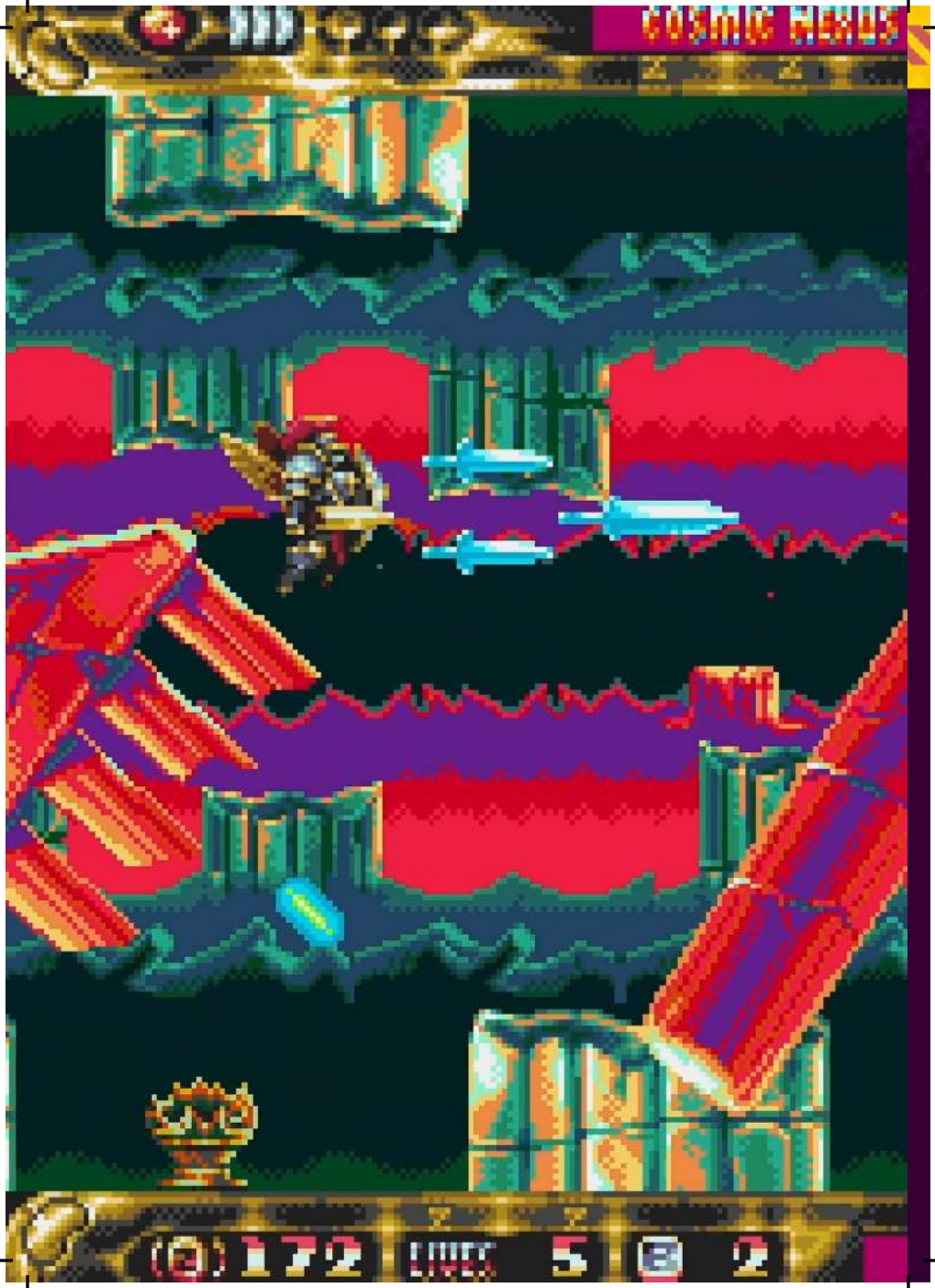
An odd, many faced being that could only exist here in the Nexus. He tends to argue with himself a lot.

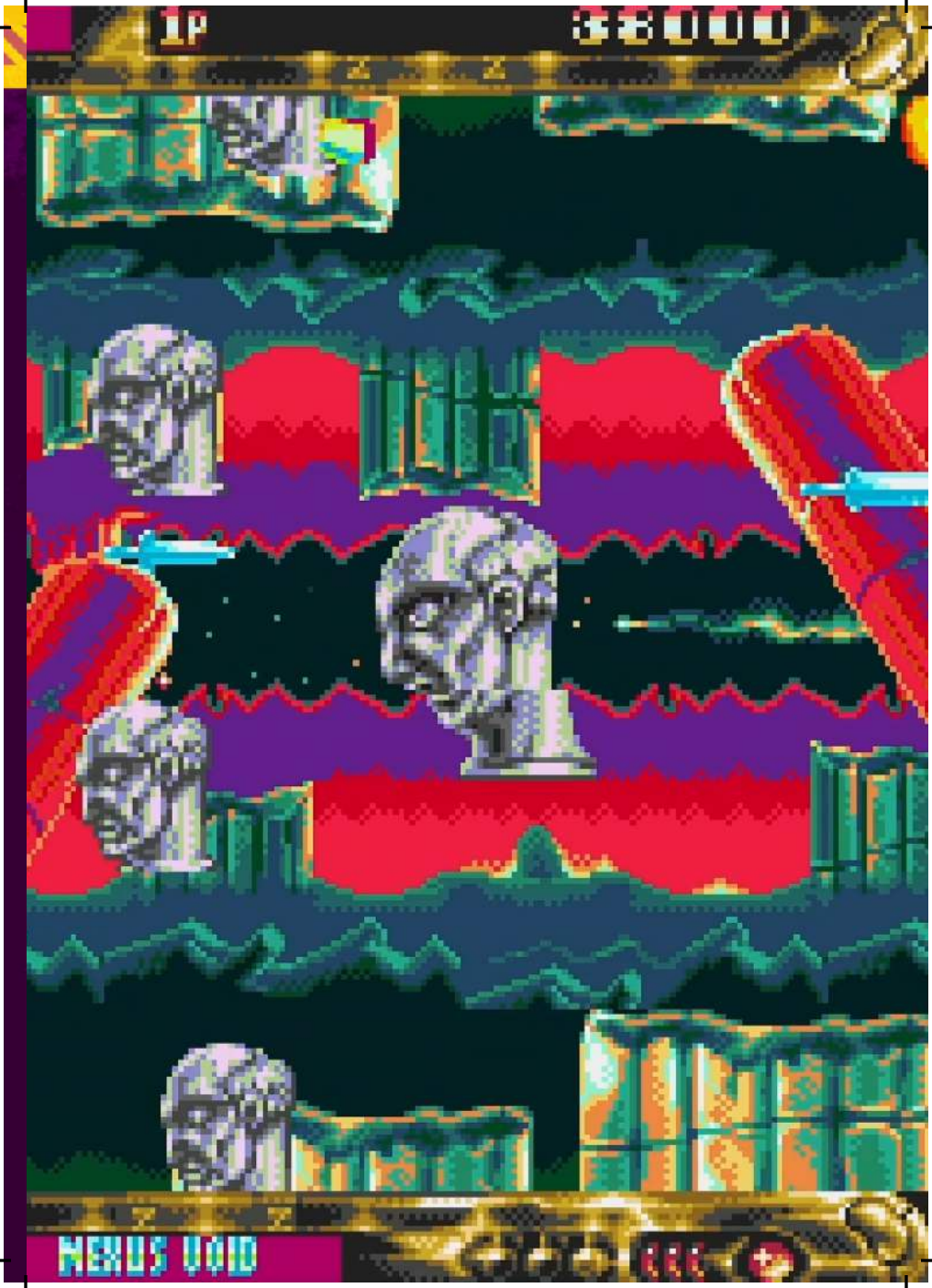
Gestalt One

Even as the evils from each world were defeated, enough of their essence remained to combine and reform into a new, darker threat. A fearsome chimeric creature that stands in the way of your final victory.

The Master

?????????


COSMIC NEMUS
172
LIVES
5
2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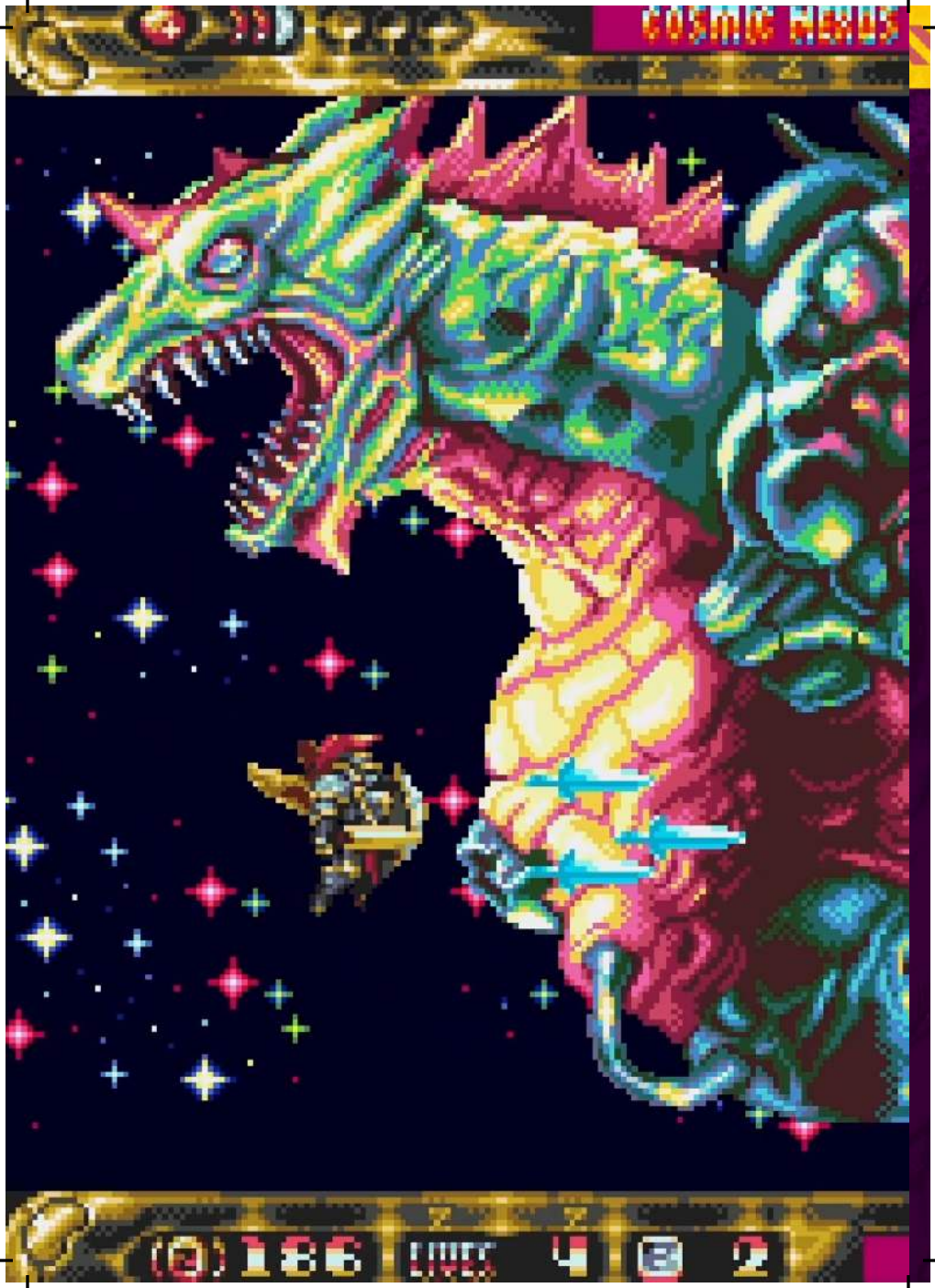
NEXUS VOID


COSMIC NEMUS
186
LIVES 4
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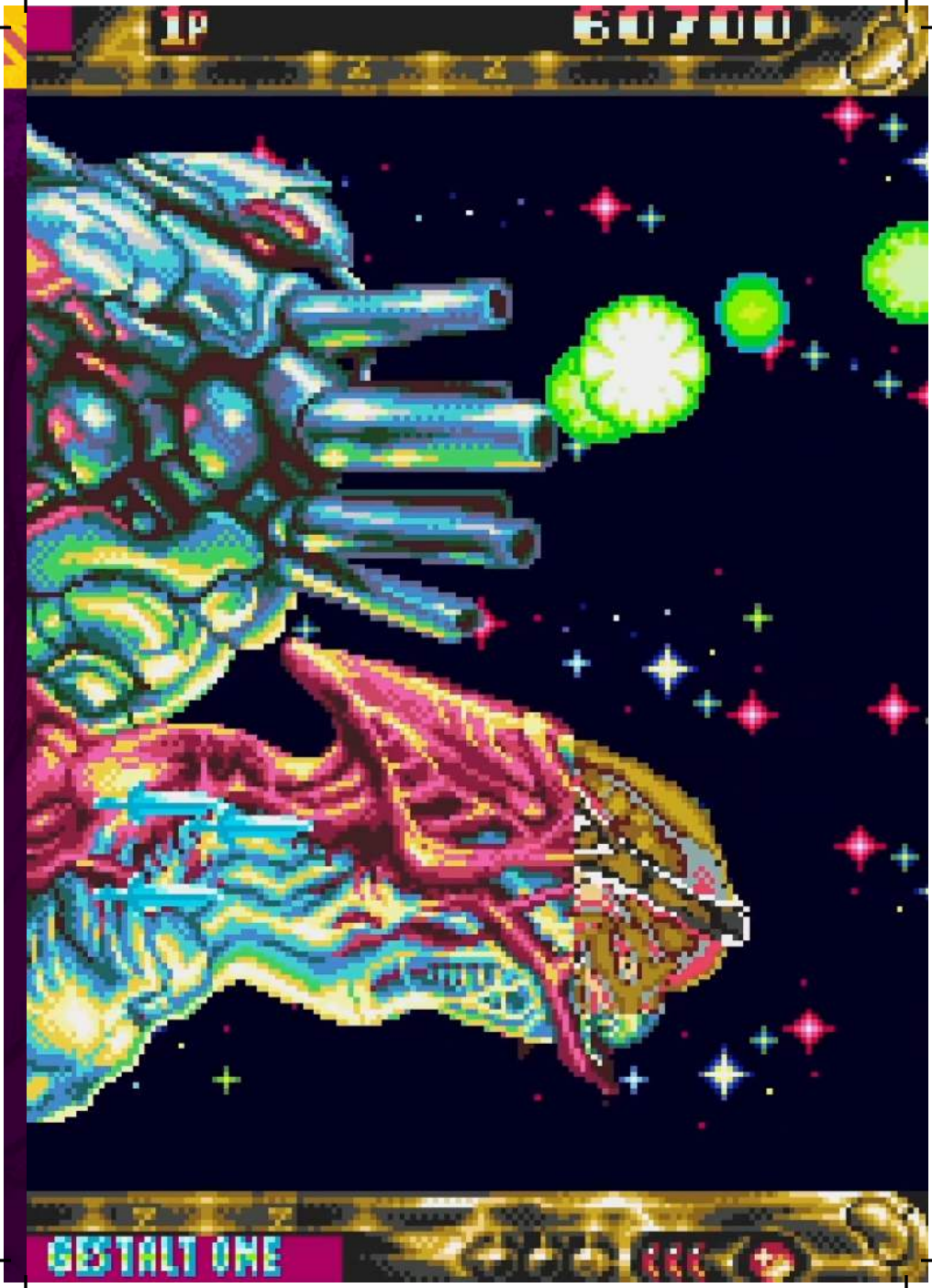
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GESTALT ONE

KICKSTARTER JOURNEY

Like a rocket fueled by nostalgia, the ZPF Kickstarter campaign blasted off on July 1, 2024, shattering its initial funding goal of $15,000 in a mere 19 minutes! This explosive start sent shockwaves through the retro gaming community, proving that the hunger for authentic Genesis experiences was burning brighter than ever.

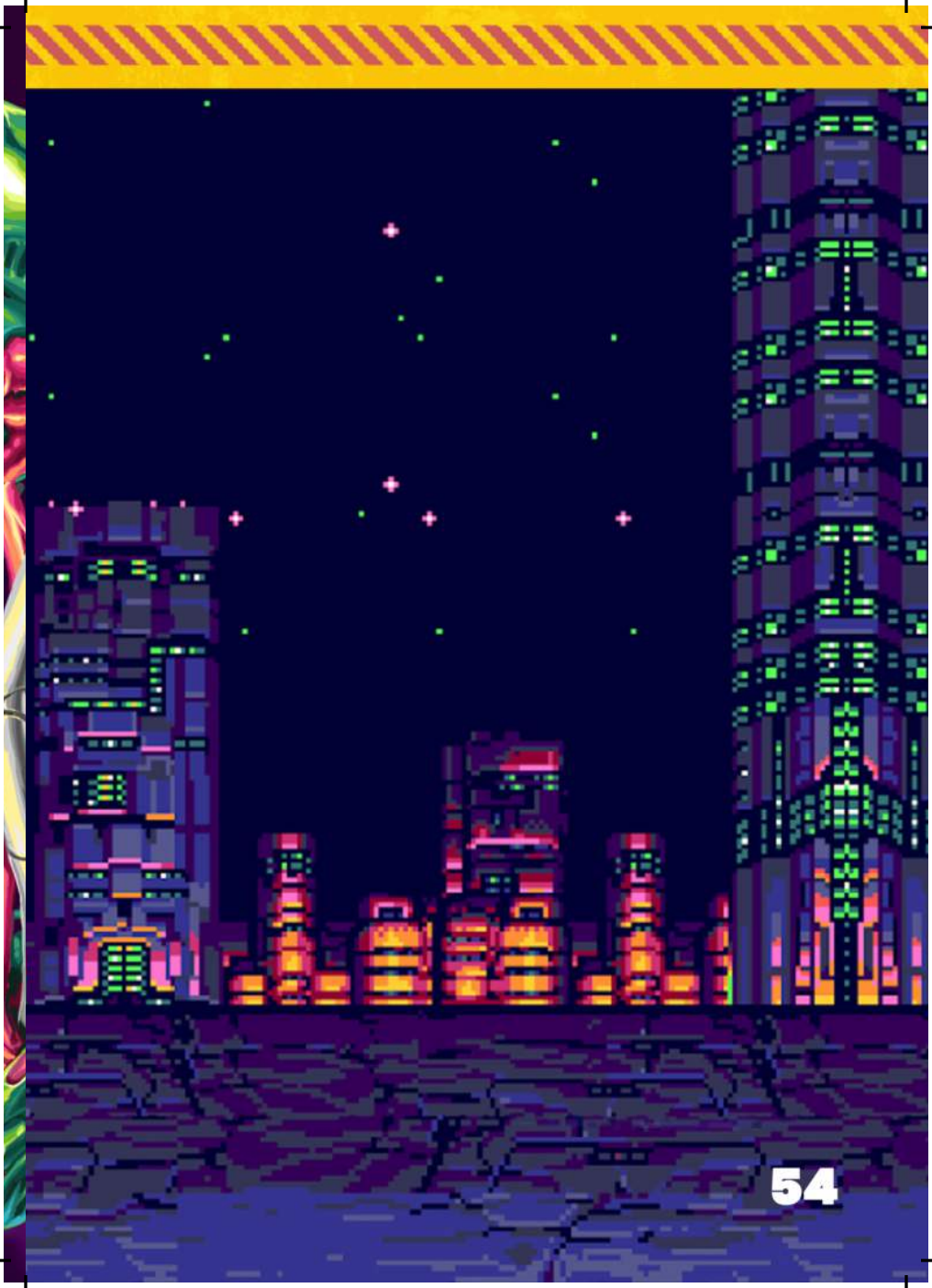
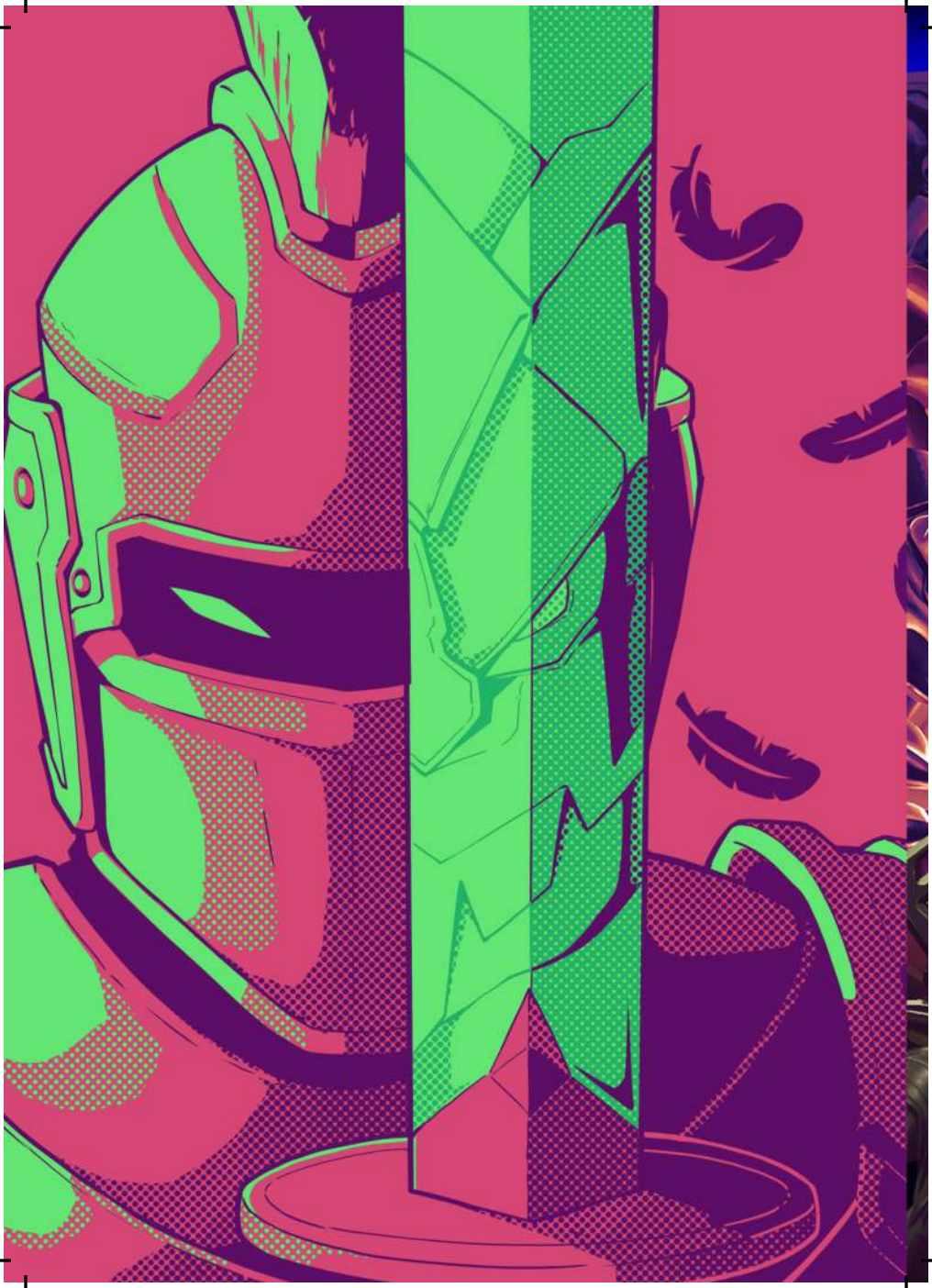
The campaign ignited a firestorm of support, ultimately amassing over $204,670 from over 2,000 passionate backers.

Surpassing initial funding targets unlocked powerful warp drives, propelling ZPF beyond the limitations of its retro origins. Stretch goals materialized, enabling development for modern platforms like Xbox and Steam. Now, a whole new generation of gamers could experience the adrenaline-pumping action alongside seasoned Genesis veterans.

Backers were treated to exclusive rewards, including limited edition cartridges, collector's boxes, pins, post cards, sticker sheets, Vinyl's and CD's, and even handcrafted cartridges.

ZPF TEAM BIOS

GRYZOR (PERRY SESSIONS) is a lifelong artist who started in game design in 2009 with small but ambitious GameMaker projects. Since then he's worked with NGDevTeam on Gunlord and NeoXYX. He is the creator of Super XYX and Fire Arrow Plus, and collaborated on titles like ZenoDeath and JetBuster.

MIKAEL TILLANDER is the Creator of Tänzer for the SEGA Genesis/Mega Drive in 2018. Managing Wide Pixel Games since 2010, with the release of Knight'n'Grail for the Commodore 64. Lately did the arcade JAMMA game Twin Tiger Shark, developing both hardware and software. Full on retro only!

JAMIE VANCE (JGVEX) is a composer, sound designer and voice actor. His work ranges from games like 'Call of Duty 2' and 'WWE SmackDown! Vs Raw 2006' to short films like the infamous 'late for meeting' and 'time for sushi'.