

# CHRONO TRIGGER

A NEW STANDARD FOR RPGs

Square Soft will increase the stakes in the role-playing world this summer when Chrono Trigger is released in the United States. Epic Center took a look at the Japanese version of the game to give you a sneak peek.



## A NEW WORLD ORDER

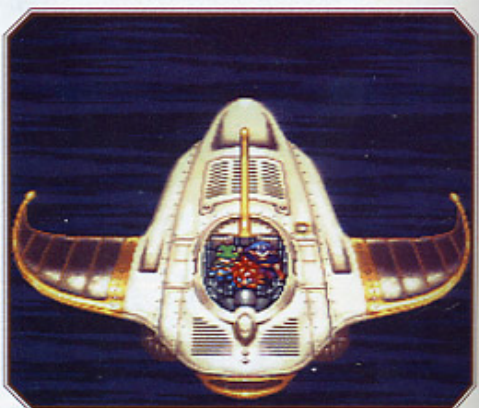
Chrono Trigger makes dramatic improvements in graphics and sound over just about every previous traditional RPG, including Square's Final Fantasy III. With larger characters and beautiful artwork designed by famed cartoonist and video game artist, Akira Toriyama, Chrono Trigger sparkles on the screen. Mr. Toriyama's video game fame comes from his character designs for Dragon Ball Z and the Dragon Quest series. Even the over-



world views pack in the detail, whereas most RPGs reserve the fine points for interiors. Your first hint at the visual feast that will follow comes from the introduction, where a beautifully rendered pendulum swings back and forth. The ensuing cinema scenes are nothing short of breath-catching. Square Soft added to the

developmental punch of Chrono Trigger by bringing in another Dragon Quest veteran, Yuji Horii, who

created the game stories for Enix's popular RPG series. The third jewel in Square's crown was Hironobu Sakaguchi, the game designer responsible for the Final Fantasy series. Add to this a fresh and innovative sound track (slated to become a CD in Japan) and you have a



monster combination. The success of Chrono Trigger since its release in March testifies to the merits of Square's game plan—two million Super Famicom Game Paks sold in two months.

## ■ A SNAP SHOT

After entering your name, the view switches to a cinematic flyby of a port city before switching to your character's home and the beginning of the game. The story itself is pretty vast, but as the name suggests, it involves time and time travel. Chrono, the main character, must move forward and backward in time during his many missions. To help out, he needs a



time machine, which he finds in the distant future. At the beginning, when you first go outside and begin wandering about the city, you'll be attracted to the market in the north. Here you'll find one of the most colorful collections of pavilions and characters ever put into a video game. You'll also meet your first companion here, a princess who has lost her



necklace. Exploring further, you'll find an exotic concert underway. There's even a tournament against a robot in another corner of the market and a test of strength elsewhere. The sense of a large, fully-imagined world comes through loud and clear even at this early stage, and it only grows stronger the further you go in the game.

## ■ THE PLAY IS THE THING

At first glance, a lot of players make the mistake of thinking that Chrono Trigger follows in the footsteps of Secret of Mana. There are some similarities, such as gathering a party of three characters and fighting in an overhead perspective.

But the fighting itself falls firmly into traditional RPG style with menu commands for attacking, using magic and items. Both the hero and enemy characters are animated during battle moves.

Although you have no direct control of the action, it looks great and adds a cinematic feeling to the game.

The story is huge—another 50-100 hour RPG—and it includes ten different endings. One unique aspect of the multiple endings is that you can use your built-up character when

you begin playing through the game for a second or third time. Not only does that speed up the subsequent games, it allows you to check out things you may have missed in an earlier game. The battery-backed memory and three memory files make the long game easier to play and share. The game flow takes un-

expected twists and turns like the story in Final Fantasy III. Your characters can split away from the party, and you get to decide which paths to follow when the plot branches. In battle, characters can make combo moves wherein one character enhances the fighting move of a companion. Although you

control only three characters at a time, you can switch between standby characters at any time to customize your party. Another innovation is the game-within-a-game concept. At one point, Chrono must race a villain on futuristic motorcycles, and the player can set the perspective for the race—front, behind, side view, etc. All this variety in the game enhances the basic play, which includes traveling in the overworld, visiting towns and castles, and collecting story clues from minor characters.



## ■ CHRONO AND EVERMORE SWAP

The latest release date news is that Chrono Trigger and Secret of Evermore will flip flop on Square's release calendar. Chrono Trigger will now be released in August and Evermore will follow in October.