

COMMODORE FREE REVIEW

Metal Dust



Metal Dust - An Overview:

- Seven different weapon systems
- Single or dual player mode
- Four really big levels with a lot of small, many medium and some very big enemies
- Giant end monsters with different attack behavior
- Overlay color graphic objects and lots of other nice graphical effects
- More than 1000 blocks of digi music data per level, exclusively composed by the band Welle:Erdball
- Digi music will be played with very high CIA rate
- Real-time mixing of digis for explosions and game effects
- Really soft parallax scrolling with high speed areas
- High end sprite multiplexer that still runs stable while playing high quality digi music



- Outro sequences with brilliant graphics

System requirements:

- a Commodore 64 with Heavy Duty Power Supply or a Commodore 128
- a 3,5" floppy drive (FD-2000, FD-4000 or 1581)
- a CMD SuperCPU 20 MHz Accelerator with SuperRAM Card (at least 4 MB)
- and of course a monitor or TV as well as one or two joysticks

The Making Of Metal Dust

In 1995, Big User aka Stefan Gutsch had the idea to program a Shoot 'em Up for the Commodore 64 with the 8 MHz accelerator card "Flash8". He started as the only coder and graphician, and because he is not a musician, he digitized selected MOD music from the Amiga, using the DAISY digitizer. But because of the instability of the Flash8 card, Big User stopped development soon after.

Fascinated by the project, some people could persuade Big User in restarting the project later on. Because of the lack of development tools - there was only the (a bit unstable and buggy) "Flash8 AssBlaster" - and due to some hardware problems, development went very slowly. Finally, there has been one level with some enemies and a quite big end monster. This is the level many of you know from scene parties and other occasions.

At this time, about 1997, Stefan Gutsch met Chester Kollschen, creator of the top games Ice Guys and Bomb Mania. Both coders had always dreamed of creating a Turrigan-like game. The idea of an (unofficial) successor of Turrigan I and II was born. To get every C64 user the chance to play the game, it was decided not to require the SuperCPU for this one. Now Stefan could concentrate on what he can do best, great graphics and creative level design. Chester started with the hard work of programming the game, work name "Turrigan 3". The goal was to be not only as good as but even better than the predecessors. Finally music had been implemented, the end monsters got bigger and absolutely flicker free - using a completely new designed multiplex routine. The game could even load data while one could move the player. In 1998, the project was presented to a small bunch of people during a scene party. But during the night, the disk was stolen and the half completed game was spread around the internet. Shocked by the fact that such things could happen even in the fantastic C64 scene, Chester cancelled the work. Simultaneously, Factor 5, makers of the "Turrigan" games on Amiga, threatened because of copyright issues. Half a year later, Chester started again to code, this time not a game, but a new operating system that one time shall replace GEOS. He thought that the SuperCPU offers a great deal of power and so much



possibilities that there is a need for a new, SuperCPU-only operating system. CLiPS was born.

Fortunately, also Stefan regained his interest for the C64 and started coding. Surprisingly, the - actually cancelled - project "Metal Dust" was revived. Stefan worked hard on the game, although programming was not easy. Three more levels were created, also some end monsters were designed. But frequent setbacks and long bug hunts more and more slowed development down and also took away motivation. Metal Dust died again.

Malte Mundt aka ThunderBlade could not accept the thought that such a fascinating game project should never be finished. He organised a new meeting between Stefan and Chester, where a new cooperation had been decided. Again Chester took over the code work and Stefan could concentrate on the graphics. In the meantime, Chester has recoded the complete game engine. The game concept has been redesigned and extended, for example by implementing the two-player mode. Malte and Chester reached an agreement with the band Welle:Erdball to get an exclusive sound track for Metal Dust. The graphics have been improved again, the levels got much better and much bigger. Malte digitized and arranged the music created by Welle:Erdball. The old enthusiasm is back. After a long time of hard work, Protovision can now present you Metal Dust, the first Shoot 'em Up for the Commodore with SuperCPU.

Metal Dust - Credits
 Producer: Stefan Gutsch (Big User)
 Programming: Chester Kollschen
 Graphics: Stefan Gutsch
 Level Music: Welle:Erdball
 Title and End sequence Music: Lars Hutzelmann (The Blue Ninja)
 Project Management: Malte Mundt (ThunderBlade) and Milo Mundt (MacGyver)

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Now for those users without a SCPU the best I can give you is that there are various YouTube videos available <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rcJ7BRbXX4> and here <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=le79hicxteg> and an AVI file from the protovision website <http://www.protovision-online.de/md/trailer.htm>

When I heard about the game I became excited, I saw some of the previews and then actually managed to play the actual game at a Commodore Scene meeting. Now some may be saying that using a SCPU attached to the Commodore 64 turns the machine into something else and not a real Commodore 64, I must admit you have a point and how many people in the world actually own a SCPU in the first place. I am lucky enough to have one and also one on order from Maurice Randal that has been waiting for him to put together for something like 6 years! I would advise you to stay away from him.

So the game looks amazing and of course the sounds are just samples replayed back through the SID chip, the music is super

cool matches the place of the game and ties the whole project together well. However I think that most of the SCPU power has been utilized to replay samples, although the massive monsters and super smooth scrolling look like the game is played on a 16 bit system, there is some confusion with objects that are in the background and foreground. From my point of view I couldn't tell the difference and kept crashing into things I thought were background objects.

The screen is absolutely full of bullets flying and bolder ships, there is no question this looks amazing, I doo feel though that the graphics would have been better created on the C64 instead of porting them from other platforms.

Is it worth buying

Well you invested in a SCPU and lets be honest there isn't much software that utilizes the SCPU so you really owe it to yourself to purchase a copy, its just unbelievable the response from others when they see the game playing.

On the game play front its more a question of learning flight patterns than anything else, I did see some members of Commodore Scene make it to later levels, with giant monsters virtually filling the screen.

Its s tough game but the playability does make you go back for more.

Graphics	8/10
Sound	8/10 Well its mainly replaying sampled music
Playability	7/10
Overall	8/10

It does have a Wow factor but the SCPU power would have been suited to more than just digi sounds playback

