



SHADOW DANCER

Joey is back and this time he's brought his dog. Well, he should have done, but it appears to have gone for walkies in this version, despite showing its face on the title screen.

Still, you don't need a canine chum, because you're a rock-hard ninja warrior out to crush the power hungry Zeed empire and their armies of terrifying minions. This means you must first stow away on a heavily-guarded aeroplane bound for the Zeed home country and then fight your way across Zeed-infested landscapes until you reach the final encounter with Emperor Zeed himself!

Shadow Dancer is a horizontally-scrolling platform beat 'em up in the traditional Shinobi mould. The player leaps about killing his enemies and avoiding the many traps and hazards they have placed in his way. At the end of every level, a giant boss appears, ready to beat the cack out of Mr Mushashi - but you've got special ninja magic with which to repel their aggressive tendencies!

NOT A LOT

Ninjas don't spend their entire lives being taught how to chop people up - they are also instructed in the ways of three deadly ninja magics. There's fire, which bathes the warriors enemies in flames, air, which launches fatal whirlwinds nasty-wards and finally spirit, which summons a religious figure, thus Buddha-ing Joe's opponents into submission.

COMMENT



I didn't like the Megadrive version much, because apart from the dog, it had nothing new on offer and the game simply wasn't anywhere near as good as

JULIAN Revenge of Shinobi. On the Master System, Shadow Dancer fares better, but even so I'm still left with a nagging doubt. Getting to each end-of-level boss is easy, but until you work out the method and magic required to do them away, you get stuck. Once you finally succeed, you go straight through to the next boss where you get stuck again, making progress rather sporadic and frustrating. A shame, really, because otherwise this is a fine game with good graphics and plenty of variety. Ardent Shinobi fans might enjoy it, but at the end of the day my overall feeling is that with a few more gameplay tweaks, this could have been so much better.



▲ Hiii-yaaaa! Just a few shurikens and this gun-toting marauder should finally bite the dust!



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TIN-NINJA ALLEY

After each level, the player is given a bonus level, granting the opportunity to earn extra lives! The level is seen through Joe's eyes as he stands at the bottom of a tower, with ninjas climbing down to kill him. If he picks off all the ninjas before any one of them reaches the ground, an extra life is his for the taking.



▲ Getting down with Joe Mushashi!



▲ Joe's besieged by enem. fire.



▲ Leaping between platforms is achieved by pulling off one of these spectacular leaps. Cor!



COMMENT



RAD

The absence of any canine characters in this conversion of Shadow Dancer doesn't really effect the game much, but what does stop it from being loads of fun is the difficulty level. The levels themselves are quite easy, but the guardians are ultra-rock-hard, which leads to more than a little frustration. This is a pity, because otherwise, Shadow Dancer is a fun game to play, the graphics are quite good, with some especially nice animation, and the levels are varied enough to stop the whole thing from getting boring. Anyone considering buying Shadow Dancer would do well to try it out first.

SEGA

REVIEW



牛詩集

SHADOW DANCER

BY: SEGA

PRICE: £TBA

RELEASE DATE: TBA

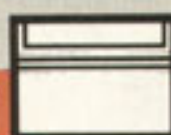
GAME DIFFICULTY: MEDIUM

LIVES: 3

CONTINUES: 0

SKILL LEVELS: 1

RESPONSIVENESS: SPEEDY



PRESENTATION 54%

No options, but the title screens aren't too shambolic.

GRAPHICS 81%

The sprites are nicely animated and the backdrops are fine.

SOUND 58%

The awful "barking" on the title screen sets the tone for a multitude of lacklustre effects and tunes.

PLAYABILITY 72%

Easy enough to get started with and nicely responsive, but the varying difficulty level is off-putting.

LASTABILITY 67%

The bosses should give you trouble for a while, if you don't hurl your joyypad through the screen first!

OVERALL 71%

A potentially great Shinobi game let down by a poorly graded difficulty level.