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Ryan Nyburg
Budget rack

Time to take the ego out of rock

By Ryan Nyburg
Senior Pulse Reporter

Let me relate an incident that I think illuminates a problem with modern musical performers. Back in September I saw a concert at the WOW Hall headlined by locals The Rock n' Roll Soldiers. It was a great show, and I was especially impressed by the band's attitude toward its audience. The band was playful and seemed to genuinely enjoy performing for people. No ego, no pretense, just good old-fashioned rock n' roll the way it is meant to be.

This remained true the next time I saw the Soldiers, which was at a rather disastrous show in October where the set crumbled into chaos. The band held out as long as it could, especially lead singer Marty Larson-Xu, who ranted and yelped like the bastard son of Mick Jagger, essentially expressing the fact that he was the coolest S.O.B. in his zip code. Eventually everything sort of fell apart. Near the end they were inviting up audience members to take over the instruments.

The Soldiers are just part of a grand tradition in this part of the country. There seems to be an inclination in the Pacific Northwest for the low-down-and-dirty as far as rock is concerned, from the whole garage rock trend in the '60s to the grunge rock farce of the early '90s. From the wailing and distortion of the Sonics right up through the powerhouse riffs of Mudhoney, it all boils down to the same noisy, loud, abrasive sound. It makes for great rock just like great rock was meant to be made. And one of its key benefits is a complete lack of artistic pretense.

Pretension is not something that fits in well with rock 'n' roll, especially when performed live. And yet, I see it day after day in almost every performer I read about, from the indie

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Double Dash!! fun

The GameCube version of Nintendo's classic racer lives up to its hallowed title

By Travis Willse
Editorial Editor

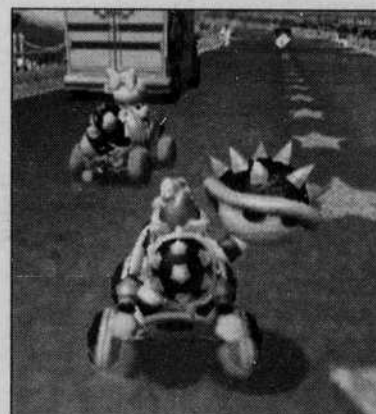
If any party game series defined the late 1990s, it's certainly Mario Kart.

With fast action, intuitive controls and a sharp learning curve, the original 1992 Super Mario Kart was a solid racer, and it left its mark as one of Super Nintendo's most memorable releases. Its sequel, Mario Kart 64, lifted the series from solid to sublime. Players could duel up to three friends, hurling turtle shells and banana peels with negligence or malice in true 3-D environments that offered nearly flawless gameplay, indisputably granting the title classic status in its own right. (Also in the Mario Kart family is the Cousin Oliver of the series, 2001's Mario Kart: Super Circuit, a Game Boy Advance release.)

Mario Kart: Double Dash!!, the GameCube sequel to the series, looks to uphold the franchise's fine legacy of player-friendliness, intense grab-you-by-the-seat-of-your-overalls action and all-around racing fun.

For the uninformed video game aficionado (in this case, someone who has appreciated video games for the last decade, but lived deep enough in a castle teeming with pits of lava not to know the Kart series), playing a round of Mario Kart starts with picking a driver from a selection of characters from Nintendo lore. Once the race starts, metal-frame go-carts career around a race track littered with five-foot-wide pipes, jumping moles, monkeys that throw coconuts at unsuspecting drivers, and other vehicular non sequiturs.

Moreover, drivers can contribute to the mayhem by collecting items from



Courtesy

'Mario Kart: Double Dash!!' is due out for Nintendo GameCube on Nov. 17.

prize boxes clustered around each course, and use some of them to pump their own kart's performance, or to throw objects at opponents' vehicles in an attempt to impede their progress. For someone steeped in the tradition of the Mario franchise and who enjoys multiplayer action, Mario Kart is the very manifestation of fun.

Double Dash!! is a variation on most of the above themes. The most obvious change is the increase from one to two drivers per kart. While the ingenious new system leaves the learning curve a little more arduous, and there's much more to keep track of than in previous incarnations of the game, Dash more than compensates by adding considerable depth to the gameplay.

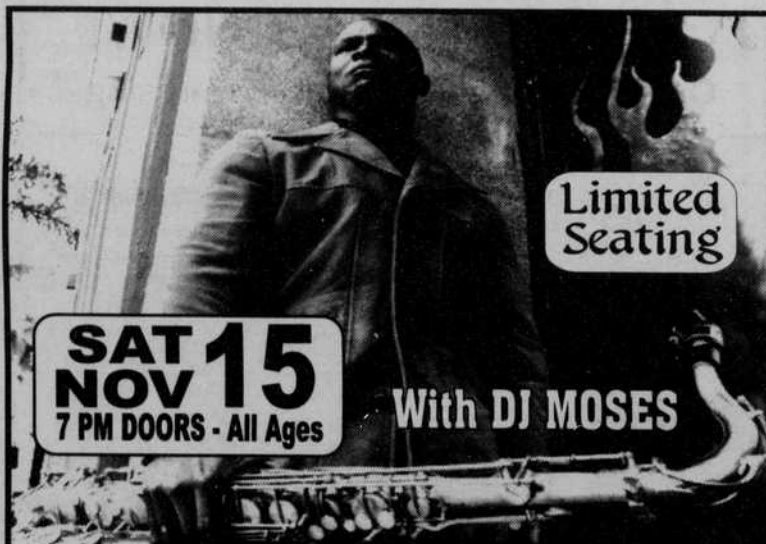
Players select two characters — one driver and one gunner, who can swap roles on the fly — and a go-kart. Characters include the omnipresent Mario, Luigi and (Princess) Peach to relative newcomers like Waluigi and Daisy to throwbacks to earlier Mario adventures like Donkey

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