Pop'n Music 2 (Import) Dreamcast Changes FAQ

by Justin Strauss   Updated to v0.9 on Feb 25, 2000

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Pop 'n Music 2
Playstation - Dreamcast Changes FAQ
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Written By:   Crono    (crono@tows.org)
otherwise known as Justin Strauss




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0.0 Revision History
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V0.8 - 02/23/00 - Initial Release! Expect typos or grammar problems from it.

V0.9 - 02/25/00 - Added the Pop-kun Animations section. Many thanks
                      to Reo-kun for reminding me about it!
                - Added the Initial Loading section.

V1.0 - 02/27/00 - Coming Soon!
                - See below...


Coming Soon:

    -specific character animations that are different
    -other changes that I left out (already know a few)
    -detailed analysis of sound difference




1.0 General Description
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    The purpose of this FAQ is a simple one. This file will list any and all
changes that were made between the Playstation and Dreamcast versions of this
game. Think of it as a "list of differences." There are many things that are
different about the two, ranging from easily noticeable graphic changes to minor
technical memory-management changes. There are many reasons that they made
"different" versions of the game for these two systems. The main reason, of
course, is the "performance" of the systems themselves. The more powerful system
(in this case, Dreamcast) usually tends to get the "better" of the features.
However, there are little things that are missing from both games. I will do my
best to list every one of them ^_^ And besides, you can never have a home-
version of a game that is "identical" on both of the different systems.

    Also, please remember, I am NOT trying to insult either the Playstation or
the Dreamcast. This FAQ is intended only for the purpose of informing the fans
of the game. I personally love Pop 'n Music 2 more than almost any other game
that exists. In fact, it is my obsession and love for this game that convinced
me to write this in the first place. It's one of the best games I have ever
played, and has brought me countless hours of joy. I personally own BOTH
versions of it, for both systems, and I do not regret either purchase. This is
simply a well-researched attempt at making a comparison, and knowing every
little bit of info that I can about the game.

    In reality, if you are trying to decide "which version is better"... it goes
like this: If you own a Dreamcast, buy the DC version of the game. If you own a
Playstation, buy the PSX version of the game. I don't even need a "review" to
tell you... that this game is an absolute must-own! However, if you own BOTH the
Playstation and Dreamcast systems... and you're not sure of which version to
buy... then of course you should get the Dreamcast one. It is the better version
overall, and by far.




2.0 Options, Menus, Gameplay
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    -Amount of Players. On the Playstation version, up to Two Players can play
the game at the same time. Either person can control whichever buttons they want
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to, making the game much easier. On the Dreamcast version of the game, however, up to Four Players can play! The play style is the same as before, where any of the four people can play for whichever buttons they want. Therefore, this is a plus for the Dreamcast.

     -Options Menu Shortcut. The option for "Select: Normal/Shortcut" from the Playstation version is not present in the Dreamcast version. The reason for this, is that the Dreamcast version does not have any kind of loading time. The PSX version had this option put into it to reduce the long loading time between menus (which is caused by the PSX's lack of RAM). However, the shortcut is a mode in which all the level names are in English and simple to navigate through. Therefore, this is a plus for the Dreamcast (but with a slight plus for the Playstation).

     -Key Config. The button layout for the PSX controller is different than that for the DC controller. Both systems have their own Pop 'n Music Controller (sold separately). When using the standard controller, there is a default button setup for each system. The DC version also has a built-in default button setup for the DC Arcade Joystick (which is the best choice aside from the Pop 'n Controller itself). But then again, you can use any joystick or joypad you want to in either version. So this isn't a huge concern.

     -Memory Card. On the Playstation, you can use a Pop 'n Controller (special one) for both players, and can load your data from either memory card slot on the console. On the Dreamcast, the VMU plugs into the controller of one of the players. So, because of this, you can not use four Pop 'n Controllers on Dreamcast IF you want to also load your data (because one of the players' controllers must have a VMU slot, which the Pop 'n Controller does not). Therefore, this is a plus for the Playstation.

3.0 Modes, Levels, Characters

     -Download. The Pop 'n Music minigame that you download from the "Original" mode is slightly different in the two versions. The PSX one downloads to the Pocketstation and takes up 5 blocks. The DC one downloads to the Dreamcast VMU and takes up 56 blocks. Also, some miniscule features on the high-score or data part of each one seem to be different. I will research and list these later. Either way, though, they're nearly identical.

4.0 Graphics, Sound, Cinemas

     -Ending Cinema. In the Playstation version, the endings for the game modes are very "simplistic" compared to those on the Dreamcast. When you beat Excite mode on Playstation, you will get a roll of the Staff Credits on a black background. When you beat Party mode, you will get the same credit roll... but with Nakajima-san (the duck in the shape of the number Two) floating on the screen for a few seconds. The endings on the Dreamcast version are much more elaborate by far. When you beat Excite mode on there, you get the Staff Credits in a nicer setting. The screen setup in this ending is just like the screen setup in the arcade mode. It shows the player and opponent on the sides (in this case, the current set of characters) and in the middle, it shows the credits rolling (in the place where the pop-kuns usually are). The characters on the sides start with Mary and the King, and the two characters change every 20 seconds or so (after doing all their movements and taunts) and by the end of the

credits... you will see every character in the game. However, any characters
that you have not "faced" in the game yet will just be shadows and not have
their name listed yet (therefore, this is a good way to keep track of which
levels you've earned and which you still need to). If you beat the game on Party
mode, you will get this same sort of ending... except that all the characters
will be in their alternate costume colors. Therefore, this is a plus for the
Dreamcast.

    -Character Graphics. In the Playstation version, there are far less frames
of animation when compared to the Dreamcast's characters. Although the
animations are similar overall, the characters have more types of taunts,
attacks, and gestures in the Dreamcast version of the game. This is again
because of the Dreamcast's higher RAM and memory usage. Overall, the characters
move much more fluidly and smoother in the Dreamcast version. There are
definately more frames of animation on Dreamcast, also because of the framerate
(see below). I will research and list the specific gestures and additions later.
Therefore, this is a plus for the Dreamcast.

    -Pop-kun Graphics. As with the characters, the pop-kuns (the colored discs
that drop down in the middle) also have far less frames of animation on
Playstation than they do on Dreamcast. On the Dreamcast version, you can notice
little movements of eyeballs and mouths that appear on the pop-kuns (making them
seem lifelike and cute). They move from left to right and in various ways. On
the Playstation version of the game, however, these movements are not
noticeable. There seem to be very slight movements on the Playstation version,
but not very many. This is because of the Playstation's lack of RAM, as usual.
Therefore, this is a plus for the Dreamcast.

    -Sound Quality? Although I have not researched this is detail yet, my first
impressions of the Playstation sound quality seem to indicate that the sound
effects are SOMETIMES more "drowned out" or less powerful/crisp on the
Playstation. I will thoroughly research this, with better equipment, and do a
better writeup on it. For now, let's say it's a plus for the Dreamcast.

5.0 Framerate, Loading Time, Technical

    -Loading Time. There is an abundance of loading time on the Playstation
version. You must wait on a "now loading" screen on many occassions. There is
loading time before you select your character and game mode, there is loading
time before you select your stage, and there is loading time before the stage
name and opponent are shown. It is only a short time for each load, but it does
get very annoying when they all come so close together. The Playstation version
must also do a "now loading" screen before you enter your initials at the end,
and to return to the title screen. On the Dreamcast version of the game, there
is NO loading time in any of these cases. The levels, selection screens, and all
the rest flows togther smoothly and without interrupt. The only time you will
see a "now loading" message on the Dreamcast is when the special "ending" gets
ready to start. But even then, it is only for about Two seconds. Therefore, this
is a plus for the Dreamcast.

    -Initial Loading Time. On the Playstation version, when the game first boots
up (after the PSX startup screens) there is a special screen with a "now
loading" message. There is also a progress bar on this screen, because there is
a long loading time at this point. This only happens once, to cache the primary
graphics and game information to the system. This is because of the
Playstation's lack of RAM (2 megs of memory, as opposed to the Dreamcast's 16
megs). Therefore, this is a plus for the Dreamcast.

-Buffered Start. In the Playstation version, there is a short delay between
the time that the title screen comes up, and the time that the intro music and
stuff comes up (the Jamaican man). It is a very short delay, but still
noticeable. This same "lag" appears when you are selecting a stage to play in
aracde mode (or any other mode) on Playstation. When you switch left/right
between opponent characters, there will be a delay in showing each person's
picture. This makes it impossible to "zip" past people quickly and wastes a bit
of time. You can turn the "shortcut" on to help this, but it makes the game less
attractive in the menus. A similar "slow lag" of graphic appearance occurs when
the pictures of you and your opponent appear at the start of a stage. Needless
to say, none of these listed problems exist in the Dreamcast version. There's no
lag of any sort in there. Therefore, this is a plus for the Dreamcast.

   -Framerate. In the Playstation, the framerate is a bit lower than that on
the Dreamcast. The movement of the pop-kuns (the colored discs that drop down in
the middle) is choppier on the Playstation. The movement of the pop-kuns is
smoother and easier to track on the Dreamcast version. Though I'm unsure of the
exact framerates, the Dreamcast definately has a framerate around Ten frames-
per-second faster than the Playstation does for the pop-kuns. This is mainly an
issue of "how nice it looks" and should not effect the gameplay (except in cases
where there are tons of pop-kuns on screen, such as in the "Hyper" levels).
Therefore, this is a plus for the Dreamcast.

6.0 Overall Summary

   -This section will be filled in once the FAQ is more detailed. It will do a
side-by-side comparison of things for easier viewing. As of now, of course, read
my intro section as for "which version you might wanna get."

7.0 Contributions and Thank-You's

   GameFAQs (www.gamefaqs.com) for hosting this FAQ, along with more great
gaming info than most any site out there. Keep up the good work, man. Without
GameFAQs... where would we all go for detailed game help? Sure, lotsa places
have great code archives, and some TRY to keep all the best FAQs. But who
succeeds? Only one, my friend ^_^

   The wonderful patrons of my own message board, the OtherWorlds Shrine
(www.tows.org) which is sometimes the only refuge for the true gamer. Along with
my friend SineSwiper, we keep the shrine alive as a place for gamers to
respectfully speak and get together while online. The friends that I have made
there have meant the world to me, despite how my "real life" sometimes drags me
offline for days at a time. Either way, here's to ya'll... and I won't mention
any names (as there are too many of you to possibly remember them all now. And
you'll kill me if I miss any, hehe).

   The select few of my real-life friends who love gaming almost as much as
myself, and keep me inspired to keep on playing. Tacchi, you're as obsessed over
games as me. We've been gaming for well near two decades. We're getting old,
dude. And Crystal, well you can kick most of our sorry arses ^_^ Steffannee...
you introduced me to Will in Rival Schools! Scott, you've been a pal through it
all, despite how you suck at games ^_^ Kathryn, your love and understanding will
always be cherished (yes, call me sappy). And Alex, you've been there since we

were infants, when the NES was only a dream in the semi-near future.

   And of course, thanks go out to Lynn and Donna! You two are a few of the
only people who love Pop 'n Music (and Bust a Move of course) as much as I do.
Every time we meet is a cherished moment. And, speaking of music games, I owe a
world of thanks to Malcolm. His friendship has meant a ton to me, and he's one
of those few folks who plays and works hard at ALL the music game series just
like I do (Beatmania, Dance Dance Revolution, Pop 'n Music, Bust a Move, and the
countless other Bemani titles as well). Matt, you're the only true Gas-o, and a
dear dear friend (I know, I use that phrase so often, but it's true!) And
finally, Freddy-kun, you love H-anime more than any other Shorty I've ever known
^_^;;

   Konami, Sony, Sega, and all the great companies and people who made the game
possible. Without them, we'd never have been introduced to this wonderous world,
beautiful characters, and a style of gaming that changed our lives. These Bemani
games, like Pop 'n Music, are perhaps my favorite genre out there right now. It
gives those folks with a "rhythmical sense" a way to convey that sense through
gaming. And besides, it beats having another cookie-cutter RPG or fighter to
deal with.

~End of File~