

PlayStation's State Of Play News Roundup For March 9th

With the Gran Turismo 7's State of Play (SoP) comfortably in our rearview mirrors Sony has once again treated us to a traditional presentation featuring a variety of games and surprises. While the single game presentations are often fascinating deep dives, they are also a known quantity. Multi-game SoPs offer more in the way of speculation and excitement conversely, they can also provide a larger margin for disappointment. While everyone's enjoyment of this most recent live stream is subjective, it's hard to imagine anyone leaving its 20ish min run time blown away by anything shown off. To their credit Sony only offered a 24-hour notice, a move that was almost certainly a sign that we should mitigate our hype. Still there is plenty to go over so without further ado let's dive in.

Exoprimal – The first game shown off is also our first victim of hype and preconceived expectations. Between the word “Capcom”, the futuristic setting, and the mention of dinosaurs, one could not be faulted for assuming we were about to learn more about “Pragmata” or be treated to a new futuristic entry in the long dormant Dino Crisis series. The tone and scope of the presentation had not yet been established and there was no telling what we were in for. However, it didn't take too long for us to be rocketed back to reality as we soon realized we were watching a trailer that looked like a budget version of “Anthem.” This multiplayer mech game features a shield wielding heavy, a fast-moving rogue, and other similar trappings to EA's failed IP from 2019. Although the similarities do seem to end there as the trailer demonstrates a team of players fending off hordes of dinosaurs raining down from portals. While the final product could absolutely prove to be a fun time, the modest production values of something like an “Exoprimal” clearly sets the bar for what we should expect from this presentation going forward. (2023 | PS4 | PS5)

Ghostwire Tokyo – Up next is another look at Tango Gameworks' upcoming horror action title. Given that PlayStation still has a year-long exclusive deal with this game and its incoming releases at the end of the month, it shouldn't be a surprise that it would get a last-minute marketing push in this presentation. The game continues to look exciting and promising, however not much new could be ascertained from this latest trailer. (March 25th | PS5)

Stranger Of Paradise: Final Fantasy Origin – Similar to “Ghostwire”, “Stranger Of Paradise” also has an incoming release in just a few weeks, and while it is releasing on multiple platforms PlayStation has the marketing deal and its presence in this SoP should have also been expected. After a brief trailer the disembodied narrator tells us to check out the latest demo and we are off to the next game. (March 18th | PS4 | PS5)

Forspoken – With the recent news of the game's delay its presence in this show is a nice surprise. Not only that but we are treated to probably the most in depth and extended look at

gameplay that we have gotten so far. Great showings like this help ease the sting of lengthy delays. The game comes off looking distinctly next gen with the character speeding over large distances, gracefully dodging attacks with complex acrobatics, and firing off particle effect heavy spells surrounded by interesting environments and imaginative creatures. Short of a gameplay walkthrough it's hard to imagine a better showing for this title considering how far out from release we are. (October 11th | PS5)

Gundam Evolution – Next up is Gundam Evolution and after a 3-game high in the presentation this trailer brings us back down a bit. It's an FPS Gundam game and there isn't much else to say about it. The high hi-octane cinematics are intercut with comparatively lackluster looking gameplay. With a plethora of viable multiplayer shooters on the market this trailer does little to make a case for itself, and it's hard to imagine anyone outside of the most diehard Gundam fans finding something to get excited about here. (2022 | PS4 | PS5)

TMNT The Cowabunga Collection – This is a collection of just about every TMNT game all packed together. It's always exciting to see a collection of games that date back as far as these do brought together and made accessible on modern consoles especially considering a collection like this requires Konami to play ball. (2022 | PS4 | PS5)

GigaBash – With almost no context given we get a trailer for Giga Bash, an isometric action game with monsters... and that's about all I could figure out from the trailer. Further research reveals that this is a “multiplayer arena brawler” with “fully distractible environments”. While the game could end up being a fun time with friends there is little presented here to latch onto and its presence will likely be forgotten when I think back to this SoP even a week from now. (2022 | PS4 | PS5)

Jojo's Bizarre Adventure: All Star Battle R – A remake of a Jojo fighting game that came out in 2013 is getting another shot at the lime light. While this announcement certainly means more to those who are already a fan of Jojo, this trailer also makes a case for it being a fun fighting game in its own right. Engaging action draped in a beautiful cell shaded art style makes it look right at home with fans of similar titles in the genre. While there's no shortage of fighting games out there it's always nice to see in underserved anime community getting something to look forward to. (Coming early 2022 | PS4 | PS5)

Trek To Yomi – The final stretch of this presentation is looking to end strong as we are treated to a trailer for a new side scrolling samurai adventure wrapped in a Kurosawa inspired art style. Beautiful cinematography, tight action sequences, and gorgeous visuals set this game up to be an adventure worth anticipating. (Spring 2022 | PS4 | PS5)

Returnal DLC – Considering PlayStation had announced that this presentation would focus on Japanese publishers, I wasn't expecting to see anything first party in this showcase, especially from one of their European developers. “Returnal Ascension” comes as a nice surprise offering a free update to the game adding campaign co-op and a survival mode later this month.

Considering how hard the game can be a co-op mode is a welcome proposition for those hesitant about making a return to this brutal alien planet. (March 22, 2022 | PS5)

The DioField Chronicle – The disembodied voice preps that these last two Square Enix announcements will close out the show. Our first of these two is a new strategy RPG. It has been a while since we got a “Final Fantasy Tactics” game and this appears to fill that void or at least attempt to. The trailer sets up a story about warring nations and political turmoil. The game seems perfectly ambitious with some elaborate cut scenes that go farther than the standard animated motion graphics that many strategy games lean on when telling their stories. The game also set itself apart from the Tactics franchise by losing the grid system and embracing a more free-form troop movements structure reminiscent of an isometric Valkyria Chronicles. (2022 | PS4 | PS5)

Valkyrie Elysium – With the final announcement Square Enix has revealed a resurrection of one of their dormant franchises. While Valkyrie Elysium doesn’t look like it’s going to reinvent the JRPG or light the world on fire, it has a strong showing as a budget project that handles its fundamentals well. It doesn’t attempt to sell itself as something it’s not and in many ways feels like a throwback to the variety of projects that were prevalent on the PS1 and PS2 around when the franchise debuted. There used to be space for B-list RPGs with strong stories and gameplay despite not having access to the budget of something like a Final Fantasy or Dragon Quest. Over the years we saw this scale of project disappear and it’s nice to see that Square Enix is giving something like this a shot. (2022 | PS4 | PS5)

Overall, this state of play was a modest showing and likely won’t stick out in anyone’s mind even a month from now, but it was short enough that the lackluster moments didn’t bring it down too much and the stand out trailers from the likes of “Forspoken” and the rest of the Square Enix lineup had plenty of time to shine.