

NOT FOR PUBLICATION



Prepare to Embark on an Epic Adventure

Final Fantasy:

The Spirits Within

www.finalfantasy.com

The year is 2065. Earth is under siege. A meteor has crashed onto the planet, unleashing millions of alien creatures who roam the earth, decimating field and city alike, threatening to extinguish life itself. The survivors of the initial onslaught have retreated to barrier cities built to protect the inhabitants of Earth from the marauding invaders... 'but time is running out.

Yet the spirit of humankind is resilient and embodied in the brilliant and beautiful Dr. Aki Ross (voiced by Ming-Na). As determined as she is capable, Aki is Earth's last hope for defeating the alien predators. With the guidance of her scientific mentor Dr. Sid (voiced by Donald Sutherland) and the aid of the Deep Eyes military squadron led by the courageous Capt. Gray Edwards (voiced by Alec Baldwin), Aki races to save both the planet and herself.

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

Prepare to be spellbound by an extraordinary woman, the brave individuals at her side, and an astounding mission to save the Earth.

Infected by an alien spirit, Aki holds the key to discovering the secret to defeating the alien creatures, but her quest is challenged by the militant opposition of General Hein (voiced by James Woods), who plots to unleash a massive space cannon that could destroy the enemy—and the earth as well.

As the clock ticks down, Aki searches her nightly dreams to find the answer to the alien mystery while scouring the earth to collect the eight spirits she believes will save the planet. In these dreams, a sadness and desolation is in her eyes as she stares at a wasteland around her. Harsh sunlight narrows her vision. As she stands alone, in clouds of dust on a scarred alien world, her eyes reveal an inner conflict.

Fighting both the enemy within and the scheming General Hein, who would destroy the earth in order to save it, Aki valiantly pursues her final fantasy.

On July 13, 2001, audiences will share a motion picture event unlike anything that has come before, a cinematic breakthrough where the most sophisticated effects imaginable are invisibly woven into an unforgettable story about adventure, survival and the eternal spirit of mankind. Get ready to break the boundaries of the photo-real and experience the hyperReal—the apex of CGI technology.

Columbia Pictures presents a Square Pictures production of FINAL FANTASY: THE SPIRITS WITHIN. Hironobu Sakaguchi directs from an original screenplay written by Al Reinert and Jeff Vintar. Motonori Sakakibara co-directs. The film features the voices of actors Alec Baldwin, Steve Buscemi, Pen Gilpin, Ming-Na, Ving Rhames, Donald Sutherland and James Woods, among others. Sakaguchi, Jun Aida and Chris Lee are producers.

The film's creative team includes director of photography Motonori Sakakibara, animation director Andy Jones, staging director Tani Kunitake and lighting supervisor Kevin Bjorke, among others.

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

FINAL FANTASY: THE SPIRITS WITHIN arrives at the beginning of an era of digital storytelling. The Columbia and Square project is recognized as a milestone in motion picture history – the first feature to simulate a full range of human emotions and movements with hyperReal human characters and backgrounds, all computer generated imagery. It is the first to use CGI actors to bring a compelling and complex story to the screen.

This film is not yet rated by the Motion Picture Association of America. For current rating information refer to www.fimra.tings.com.

About the Production

“By using CGI in FINAL FANTASY: THE SPIRITS WITHIN, we were able to be innovative in using various camera angles, lighting and special effects on the action scenes. But most important, we were able to create a superior computer-generated human character. That’s the CG artist’s dream,” says Hironobu Sakaguchi, the film’s director.

“I wanted to create a visual story about the emotion of the ‘heart’ and its existence at life’s most basic level—survival,” he continues. “This film will set the viewer on an exciting voyage of personal discovery, focusing on the spiritual and philosophical aspect of ‘life,’ rather than a fantasy world of myths and magic.”

Sakaguchi is acclaimed as the visionary creator of the Final Fantasy interactive game series (*FE I-IX*) produced by Square. The cinematic version of FINAL FANTASY: THE SPIRITS WITHIN realizes Sakaguchi’s dream of taking the latest in computer graphic technology and the best artists in the world to create a brand new form of entertainment.

“The storyline is completely original and the characters are fully computer graphics-generated,” he explains. “I have always wanted to create a new form of entertainment that fuses the technical

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

wizardry of interactive games with the sensational visual effects of motion pictures. FINAL FANTASY: THE SPIRITS WITHIN takes us one step toward that dream.”

Some CGI projects pursue the fantastic, building colorful virtual worlds of an alternate reality. Other CGI projects startle because they so precisely mirror the actual look of people, things and places in our natural world. Both are valid approaches as already proven by the convergence of CGI and film across a wide variety of entertainment content creations.

FINAL FANTASY: THE SPIRITS WITHIN takes its journey of personal discovery into both the real and fantasy worlds, drawing viewers deep into its complex characterizations and themes, its psychology and secrets.

“We think FINAL FANTASY: THE SPIRITS WITHIN is special,” says Amy Pascal, Columbia Pictures chairman. “The way Square produced the film is a special form of animation that people haven’t seen before.”

The heroine of this digital journey is Aki. The story of her remarkable quest is all the more unique because she is portrayed by a beautiful and talented “virtual actress” fabricated by a team of computer graphic wizards and their powerful workstations.

The Development of Final Fantasy

Times Square crumbles in the dark, burnt to near extinction, but elsewhere huge force barriers hold back the alien army. As death lies in ambush like a shadow, Aki searches for the miraculous, believing that human values of courage, dedication and love can ultimately save our planet Earth....

This isn’t taking place on a soundstage. . .Welcome to today’s digital backlot—where computer graphics and animation have reached the point of creating motion picture imagery that enables viewers to experience the excitement of the fantasy like never before.

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

“There’s no end to the research and development that goes into this production,” adds Jun Aida, the film’s producer. “Unlike other films derived from interactive games, FINAL FANTASY: THE SPIRITS WITHIN features an original storyline and characters.

“There are a lot of complications,” explains Aida, “and you could ask if it wouldn’t be easier to shoot it as live-action. But we’re trying to set new standards and establish a new genre of feature films—it is not our intention to compete with live-action films.”

FINAL FANTASY: THE SPIRITS WITHIN draws upon many traditional strong points—a compelling science-fiction story, likeable attractive heroes, adrenaline-pumping action, dramatic acting, exotic settings and myths, even a love story. But it is the development of new computer graphic techniques and technology that allows the artists to achieve the highest degree of unprecedented realism.

As a century of filmmaking via traditional techniques drew to a close, it was inevitable that new innovative methods of motion picture production would emerge, propelled by freshly imaginative screenwriting and direction, blazing-fast computer technology and brilliant computer graphic artists. It was the goal of the filmmakers for FINAL FANTASY to harness this lightning in a bottle.

“We have put an extensive amount of effort into developing in-house software tools,” says Aida. “Since this is something no one has ever done before, I couldn’t just hire people to show us how to do it. Other studios have never done hyperRealistic human actors, so there was no ‘right’ approach. So again, we had to set those new standards.”

Several years were spent in research and development before actual work began on FINAL FANTASY: THE SPIRITS WITHIN. Once production was up and running, content creation speed, flexibility and quality reached new high levels.

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

Final Fantasy Comes to Life in Hawaii

For FINAL FANTASY: THE SPIRITS WITHIN, the digital backlot was not in Hollywood, but in tropical Hawaii.

Square's Honolulu, Hawaii-based studio was where dozens of the world's top graphic artists worked on the hottest SGI (Silicon Graphic Imagery) machines and CG software available to forge new frontiers in digital content creation.

Final Fantasy: The Spirits Within showcases the latest and most extreme innovations in CGI as well as stunning work of the most exceptionally creative people working today in the field of entertainment film animation. In fact, "Square selected Honolulu because of its centralized location in the Pacific," explains film's producer, Jun Aida. "This has enabled us to maximize the most creative and experienced talent from all over the world."

Next to the beautiful Pacific Ocean, with palm trees rustling in the tropical breezes and a 180 degree view of sea and surf that stretches all the way from Honolulu International Airport to Diamond Head, the studio where FINAL FANTASY came to life occupied several floors of Harbor Court, in downtown Honolulu. Specializing in film production and employing close to 200 people, the studio came well-equipped with state-of-the-art computers and software.

The studio gathered its prestigious talent for the film from all over the world, including Hollywood, Tokyo and Europe. There were artists who worked on *Godzilla* and *Titanic*, some former Disney animators, and a staging director who labored on *The Matrix*, among other films. Security cameras mounted next to doors that opened only by coded electronic key protected the top secret project during production.

Most of the film's designers worked in high-ceilinged rooms behind windows that had been draped in black cloth to prevent glare on the two or three monitors crowded before them. On any given day in the studio, one might see hundreds of hand-drawn storyboards taped to walls everywhere, workstation screens abuzz, some designers working on fine details—such as skin textures and hair for

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

the human characters—others building vehicles, battlefields and futuristic weapons in cyberspace.

Another part of the Square studio is located in the shadow of the familiar Honolulu landmark known as Diamond Head. Here, at the Hawaii Film Studio's production facility, specially trained actors and stunt personnel spent hours working in customized body suits, bringing a unique physical personality to the series of complicated and realistic action sequences in the film.

During the process known as motion capture, an actor wearing a skin-tight black costume laced with 37 white ball bolts from the darkness of an empty set, simulating true-to-life human motions. Sixteen specialized cameras, each silently and rapidly blinking a red light, are connected to computer screens to "motion capture" the action. Huge speakers play a pre-recorded voice track.

"What the hell do you think you're doing!" the actor lip-synchs to another, who is similarly dressed and waves a mock gun. "There's a life-form out there," she answers, also mouthing the words coming from the speakers.

These actors are told exactly where to run, jump, fall or turn on a large, specially marked grid in the Film Studio's expansive 16,000 square-foot sound stage. Cameras surrounding the grid document these moves. The capture, as each and every bit of action recorded, is electronically sent back to the programmers at Harbor Court. The result of the actors' scene is a 3-D stick figure that matches their movements, just one of a series of complex computer graphic procedures that lead to the finished feature film.

"This is beyond anything that has been done before," says Sakaguchi, as his artists labored on renderings for the film's many characters, often going through hundreds of transformations and refinements. Eventually the images

a tur d" at the bi sound sta e were inte rated into the final character designs, creating hyperReal computer-generated human beings.

To overcome technical problems, the programmers at Square developed in-house software tools. The accurate rendering of skin colors and textures and facial expressions, as well as hair details

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

and clothing wrinkles as each character moves about, presented enormous challenges which needed to be answered by special solutions.

“Technically, the natural human facial expressions were the most difficult aspect,” explains Sakaguchi. “Unlike bringing inanimate objects to life, it is an extreme challenge to simulate human movement, hair and clothing, because our eyes are naturally critical toward human movements as we observe them everyday. It would take a very long time if we produced this feature by hand animation, so we became very innovative.

“But our ‘actors,’” he adds with a smile, “are always willing to work on time and take direction.”

The Story of Final Fantasy: The Spirits Within

FINAL FANTASY: THE SPIRITS WITHIN emerges from its successful interactive game roots to deliver a powerful motion picture adventure. The movie, however, does not retell a particular story from any of the nine versions of the *Final Fantasy* interactive game. Just as each of the games has consistently told a new story about a new group of characters, the film presents an all-new storyline, along with characters you care about.

The international blockbuster successes of *Final Fantasy*, a role-playing interactive entertainment series which has sold more than 26 million units worldwide and ranks as one of the most popular interactive game franchises of all time, inspired the film. With its ninth title released in November 2000, each game and the film are originated from *Final Fantasy*'s underlying themes of love, friendship, dreams, adventure, life and death, with a spiritual backdrop.

While capturing the kind of excitement, energy and integrity presented in the phenomenally successful game series, the film's special subject matter and plot is carefully designed to appeal not just to gamers but to a wide audience of moviegoers.

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

If the *Final Fantasy* series could be pinpointed as the product of one man's imagination, that man would be Hironobu Sakaguchi, who conceived the project and whose creative vision watched over every stage of the development of the game series. His *Final Fantasy* is the unchallenged leader among interactive role-playing games and is largely responsible for the tremendous growth of these kinds of RPG titles.

While not based upon any specific *Final Fantasy* game title or storyline, the film expands upon territory familiar to those who have known the games: the concept of creating an ultimate fantasy story about life and death.

“What is fantasy?” asks Sakaguchi. “Is it a genre, a structure, a state of mind or a technique? Fantasy invokes wonder by making the impossible seem familiar and the familiar seem new and strange. Experiencing fantasy, we explore the unknown. Fantasy gives a comprehensible form to the basic questions around life, death, good and evil, mystery and magic.

“What is life..., and death?” he continues. “In *FINAL FANTASY: THE SPIRITS WITHIN*, the stage is Earth in the future, where science has analyzed life and death, with life expressed as a form of energy. There we face death as we part with our loved ones. We begin to question what ‘life’ and ‘love’ is, as well as the philosophical definition of the ‘heart.’ In order to express these subjects we took a different approach in depicting ‘life,’ using a virtual platform.”

The first game in the series was introduced in 1987, and instantly appealed to game enthusiasts because of high production values and the sheer joy of playing the game.

Following on the success of the game's first version, Square produced and released six more versions during the decade that followed, but it was the release of *Final Fantasy VIII* for the Sony Playstation system in 1999 that rewrote the record books in the interactive entertainment industry. Achieving a new high level of animation and graphics sophistication drove game *VIII* to record sales; 2 million units sold on the first day of release in Japan and eventually an amazing 6.1 million units sold worldwide.

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

Unlike other interactive game movies where there is little subtlety in the characters and little backstory exists to be mined, *Final Fantasy* games have a rich storytelling tradition. We now see that epic quests, fantastic love stories, hideous evils and enormous personal struggles are things just as well suited to a big screen as well as a small one.

Square's technological improvements have pushed computer-generated imagery to new heights for both the game series and the new motion picture. Each *Final Fantasy*, at its heart, is defined by its story and the characters that inhabit its world.

* * *

Films featuring visual effects and animation date back to *Le Voyage dans la Lune*, a fantasy voyage to the moon made in France which dazzled audiences in 1903. Today, complex computer imaging technology drives the success of interactive games, theme parks, TV programs and commercials, websites, music videos, movies and more. There is no denying the power of computer generated imagery to continue to delight and amaze us.

Recent months have provided the most competitive as well as most innovative period in the entire history of 3-D graphics and animation software. Performance of computer workstations and software are evolving at warpspeed, setting the stage for a new generation of films and filmmakers waiting to happen.

FINAL FANTASY: THE SPIRITS WITHIN is the vanguard of this movement, an outstanding example of how art and high-tech alchemy is changing the movies we will see in the future, the ultimate integration of real-world images, human characters and fantasies into a complex 3-D space on the screen.

“My goal was to create a film in which each scene embodies our artists' spirit,” says Hironobu Sakaguchi. “To express a human's spirit is expressing ‘life’ itself.”

About the Filmmakers

HIRONOBU SAKAGUCHI (director) has led the development division since joining Square Co. Ltd. in 1986. He has produced more than 40 million units of computer game software worldwide, with his smash hit *Final Fantasy* series selling more than 30 million units.

At Square, Sakaguchi was promoted to executive vice president in 1991. Appointed president of Square USA in 1995 and chairman and CEO on May 1, 2000, Sakaguchi continues to oversee the entire research and development base for the U.S. operations from the company's Honolulu, Hawaii headquarters.

MOTONORI SAKAKIBARA (co-director) was born in Tokyo and earned his BS in Architecture from Musashino Art University in Japan. As an animator and modeler, he has created various television programs and commercials while working for Japan Computer Graphics Lab (J.C.G.L.), Namco Ltd. and HD/CG New York, Kaufman Astoria Studios. He joined Square in 1995 to work on *Final Fantasy VII*, first as a chief 3D animator and modeler and later as a director. Sakakibara is the winner of the ARTFOLIO International Art Competition (1993) and the Japan Graphic Exhibition (1989), among others. His works have been recognized at the SIGGRAPH Art Show (1989, 1990) and SIGGRAPH ELECTRONIC THEATER (1990). He has also participated in art exhibitions, including the JACA Illustration Exhibition (Isetan Museum, Japan, 1991), Technillusion International Electronic Cinema (Invited Museum of Sydney) and Digital Sight (0 Art Museum, Japan, 1991).

JUN AIDA (producer) serves as president and C.O.O. of Square's Honolulu Studio.

In 1994, he produced the film *Street Fighter*, the live-action box-office hit which grossed more than \$100 million worldwide. In addition, he supervised the film's local distribution, marketing and promotion for North America, Latin America, Europe and Australia.

Aida has also produced successful animated TV series such as *Street Fighter*, *MegaMan* and *DarkS talkers* for the U.S. market.

CHRIS LEE (producer) is the founder of Chris Lee Productions Inc., a multi-media entertainment and management company with a first-look deal at Columbia Pictures. He is the former president of motion picture production for Columbia /TriStar Pictures.

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

Based on the Sony Pictures Entertainment lot, Lee's company is involved in a wide range of content creation: the production of motion pictures, television, internet programming, music videos, commercials and computer video games.

Lee began at TnStar Pictures as a freelance script analyst and worked with acclaimed director Wayne Wang on his film *Dim Sum*. Originally from Hawaii, Lee is a graduate of Yale University.

AL REINERT (screenwriter) was born in Tokyo, Japan, where his father, a United States Army officer, was stationed.

After a career as a newspaper journalist and magazine writer, Reinert made the successful jump to writing for feature films. *For All Mankind*, which he produced, won the Audience Award at the 1989 Sundance Film Festival.

In 1995, Reinert was nominated for an Academy Award® for his screenplay for Ron Howard's *Apollo 13*.

EFF VINTAR (screenwriter) is a graduate of the University of Iowa's Writer's Workshop.

During the lean years, he worked as a college English instructor, a bus driver and a cartoonist. His writing credits include *Hardwired*, *Speed Racer* and *The Last Hacker*, among others. Recent projects for Vintar include a modern film noir, *The Long Hello and Short Good-bye*, produced by John Woo and Terence Chang, and directed by Gustavo Mosquera.

ANDY JONES (animation director) was born in California and earned his BA in Design and Graphic Arts from UCLA, where he studied both traditional animation and computer generated animation. Employed by Digital Domain as a character animator, Jones served as a lead animator on three projects before becoming an animation supervisor for *Titanic* (1997). For *Titanic*, he was responsible for much of the animation during the "sinking sequence," including the "propeller guy." Before joining Square, Jones worked for Centropolis Entertainment as an animation supervisor on *Godzilla* (1998).

TANI KUNITAKE (staging director) was born in Detroit, Michigan. In 1993, he worked as a storyboard artist for Industrial Light and Magic and Digital Domain. His talent has also led him to illustrate for David Fincher's *Fight Club* and storyboard for the Wachowski Brothers' *The Matrix*. He has also worked as a conceptual illustrator for directors such as Ridley Scott, Terry Gilliam, Michael

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

Bay, Vincent Ward and Steve Norington. Kunitake joined Square in April 1998 as a staging director.

KEVIN BJORKE (lighting supervisor) is a graduate of the filmmaking program at CalArts and worked in live-action before becoming involved in computer graphics. His previous credits include *Toy Story* (1995), *A Bug's Life* (1998), *Super Mario Brothers* (1993), a host of themepark attractions in the United States and Japan, and numerous games and commercials created in Hollywood, New York, San Francisco and Paris. He has been cited as a computer graphics rendering expert by sources ranging from *CC World* to *American Cinematographer*. Bjorke is a recipient of three consecutive Gold Clios for Best Computer Animation.

ELLIOT GOLDENTHAL (composer) most recently completed the scores for *Titus*, and *In Dreams*, and won the LAFCAs award for best music on *Butcher Boy*. Prior to that, he won the ASCAP award for *Batman & Robin*, and was both Oscar and Golden globe nominated for his work on *Michael Collins*. His other film credits include *A Time to Kill*, *Heat*, *Batman Forever*, and additional Oscar and Golden globe nominations for his work on *Interview with the Vampire: The Vampire Chronicles*.

About the Cast

ALEC BALDWIN recently starred in *State and Main* and *Thomas and the Magic Railroad* as well as TV's *Nuremberg*. His film credits include *Outside Providence*, *Notting Hill*, *Mercury Rising*, *The Edge*, *The Juror* and *Ghosts of Mississippi*. He will next be seen in *Pearl Harbor* and *The Devil and Daniel Webster*.

STEVE BUSCEMI recently starred in Betty Thomas' *28 Days* and *Animal Factory*. Buscemi's other film credits include *Big Daddy*, *Armageddon*, *The Wedding Singer*, *The Big Lebowski*, *The Imposters*, *Con Air*, *Escape From L.A.*, *Kansas City* and *Fargo*.

PERT GILPIN stars as 'Roz' on the popular NBC series *Frasier*. She has also lent her voice talents to the animated series *Hercules* **and** *The Lionhearts* as well as appeared in the telefilms *The*

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

Secret She Carried, Fight for Justice: The Nancy Conn Story and Laughter on the 23rd Floor.

MING-NA lent her voice talents to Disney's *Mulan*. Her other feature film credits include *12 Bucks, One Night Stand, Street Fighter* and *The Joy Luck Club*. She was formerly a regular on the series *The Single Guy*, and is currently a regular on the NBC series *ER*.

VING RHAMES most recently starred in *Mission: Impossible 2* and TV's *American Tragedy*. His other credits include *Bringing Out the Dead, Entrapment, Out of Sight, Con Air, Rosewood, Striptease, Mission: Impossible, Kiss of Death, Pulp Fiction* and TV's *Don King: Only In America*, and can next be seen in the upcoming *Baby Boy*

Veteran actor DONALD SUTHERLAND was recently seen in *The Art of War* and *Space Cowboys*. His other feature film credits include *Instinct, Virus, Without Limits, Fallen, The Assignment, A Time to Kill* and *Six Degrees of Separation* as well as *Klute, M*A*S*H, The Day of the Locusts* and *Ordinary People*.

JAMES WOODS is a two-time Academy Award® nominee for *Salvador* (Best Actor, 1987) and *Ghosts of Mississippi* (Best Supporting Actor, 1997). His recent credits include TV's *Dirty Pictures* and the feature films *Any Given Sunday, The General's Daughter, True Crime* and *The Virgin Suicides*. He will next be seen in *Riding in Cars With Boys*.

© Academy Award(s) and Oscar(s) are registered trademarks and service marks of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences

3/12/01