

Cry like a Ninja

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

CAPCOM crusader Matt Walker has plenty of reasons to smile. Their latest offering, Devil May Cry 5, is riding high in the charts and the fans love it.

Many loved the Ninja Theory DmC game which has been put into its own universe, but Matt, below, has revealed that his hopes for it to be a DMC sequel had been dashed... for now.

He told STUART CULLEN: "We would love to see a sequel to DmC: Devil May Cry some day."

"We very much hoped we could do another one when development ended on that title, but unfortunately it never materialised."

"Personally, though, a lot of the magic of DmC came from Ninja Theory — so I think it should only ever be done if Ninja Theory gets to make it. They have a sense of style that is unmatched in the gaming industry."

Matt is also keen to see DmC Dante and Devil May Cry Dante face off. He admitted: "I feel like the Marvel vs games were the beginning of true video game cross-overs."

"It would be amazing if we could convince some fighting team somewhere to implement two versions of Dante. But why stop there? Imagining being able to summon V's demons, or use Nero's Devil Breakers in the heat of a fight? Nero's Wire Snatch would be right at home in a fighting game."

"This is all wishful thinking. There are no plans to put DMC characters in any fighting currently that I'm aware of."

The soundtracks are also a work of art that play a vital role in the game. Matt said: "This time we felt the battle themes for each character should try to be different from each other and more based around what that particular player character would listen to."

"What's really cool is that the three battle songs play out differently in accordance to how the fight is proceeding on screen."

"The song will really heat up and hit the chorus once you've hit S rank."

"We're hoping this feels like people are performing live on stage, as they're dishes out stylish combos — and the music change helps accentuate the high of performing well."



APE JAZZES IT UP

MUSIC and gaming have always had a strong relationship.

From full-blown epic soundtracks to the thud of plastic buttons being bashed on a plastic guitar in Rock Band.

Enter Ape Out — a side-scrolling beat-em-up in the same vein of Hotline Miami but with a heavy dose of style. Developer Gaber Cuzzillo has created something that is both stunning and brutal at the same time.

The story is simple. You play an ape who has to escape from four different levels set in backdrops such as a testing facility or a military base.

As you rip through each location you'll be faced with a horde of guards and soldiers out to stop you, each with different weapons and attacks from machine guns to flamethrowers. Learning how to deal with each differently (you only have two moves — punch and grab) is where the depth of combat really starts to show itself.

Levels are short and, occasionally, very

Ape Out

Switch and PC £13.49

claustrophobic as you barrel down an endless number of corridors.

Graphically the game is stunning as your big orange ape bombs around the dark

walled levels bashing, smashing and throwing enemies.

But the REAL STAR of the show is the jazz soundtrack, composed by Matt Boch.

The beat ticks away with each move you make then unleashes blasts of drum cracks and cymbals with each punch and throw. It all builds up each track to a bombastic crescendo when it all kicks off.

Movement and music being linked isn't a new idea but in Ape Out it adds so much to the game.

If you're looking for a fun, addictive and easy game that is an aural and visual treat, Ape Out nails it.

★★★★★

STUART CULLEN

Stealth life's a Beach



Turtle Beach Stealth 600 White

Xbox One and PC £89.99

HEADSETS are all about solutions for gaming needs. Wireless or wired seems to be straightforward enough, but then there is style, quality and cost.

Now Turtle Beach have muddied the waters even more with their updated Stealth 600. It comes in a white and green finish that will melt the heart of Xbox fans.

But would they tempt you, especially when £40 more will get you the better-spec Stealth 700 — a solid 5/5 when we reviewed them? They are very similar — they have the same body as well as sharing a lot of kit but the difference is in the detail. The 700 can connect to Bluetooth and has all the bells and whistles.

Beyond that, the 600 fights its corner well. They are very lightweight and the huge selling point is the set-up. In the past, it could be a real pain to plug in docks and read complex instructions. The 600 were up and running within minutes.

The headset has 50mm drivers so you get a great sound sphere. We tested it with Devil May Cry 5, The Division 2, DiRT Rally 2.0 and Dead or Alive 6 and each was brought to life in spectacular fashion.

The mic is a bit stumpy, but it does a great job — nice, clear audio with just a little background sound bleed. It also has the excellent flip-up-to-mute ability.

Turtle Beach say you'll get about 15 hours from a full charge, but we were between 12 and 13. You also can't charge the headset and use it at the same time.

Our only gripe was the fabric of the earcups. It felt on a fair bit of sound bleed and that can irritate on a long game session. The volume controls are behind your ears, which takes a bit of time to work out.

But, overall, they are a winning addition to your gaming experience.

★★★★★

STUART CULLEN

Take crisis to the President

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

BIGGER is better according to the design gurus behind The Division phenomenon.

They have moved from the snow-covered streets of New York to Washington DC for The Division 2 — and Ubisoft World Director Manny Diaz, below, felt the team rose to the challenge. He said: "It was a bold move to switch from the iconic backdrop of New York and the winter setting for the second game and there were a few cities we considered."

"There was Seattle while New Orleans was really interesting with its cross-sections of cultures as well as being stunningly beautiful. But we kept coming back to Washington DC for the variety it offered."

"The first game was set in Manhattan and, in its own way, it was stunning, but we felt a proper sequel needed to open up spaces and explore nature as well as seeing some of the monuments. DC is built on a swamp so the air around the city is hot and sticky. In the summer and spring it's a lot different from anything in the first game."

"We also felt that moving the timeline forward about seven months would let us ramp up the stakes for both the agents and civilians. But the flip side is the enemy factions are pooling their resources and becoming stronger and ultimately more dangerous. The agents report directly to the President so we thought 'Why not bring the crisis to the doorstep of the White House?'"

They aimed to build a 1-to-1 version of DC — or, as Manny admitted: "There is a saying that isn't official at Ubisoft but you'll hear it enough around the office. It's 'You're getting your Hemingway on'."

"Ernest Hemingway spent a lot of time in Paris and in the cafes learning about the people and culture then he wrote about it beautifully, so for us at Ubisoft if we are going to build a game set in a real-world location we are going to get our Hemingway on. We

spent time with Special Forces agents, Crisis Responders and the Coastguard.

"We moved to the Oval Office, looked at art facilities, we went hunting and went underground and tried to breathe in Washington. One of the things we took away was how thin that line of defence really is."

Then they had to nail the sounds of the city. Manny added: "We didn't realise how much nature wanted to creep in — from the sounds of frogs to mosquitoes and there was always something rustling in the bushes like deer."

"We sent an audio team down to record, mostly at night, to get the true sound of the city without traffic."

Creating the new playground was a moving experience for Manny. He admitted: "We incorporated all this data into the game and when it finally came together I walked around trying to get a sense of the space. I was at a point just around the corner from a coffee shop I had been to. It blew me away to walk round the corner and the shop was there. But we had to transform the city for the game so we imagined what would happen if the infrastructure was to break down."

Manny added: "The game has six environments. The suburbs are very upmarket so the people were evacuated earlier but the area is being taken back by nature."

"Fans will feel more at home with the residential area. The people weren't evacuated so there are piles of garbage in the streets which attracts animals. Then there is a commercial area where we can showcase some of the architecture and open up a few new ways to impact gameplay."

"The last is the historic — with the likes of the Lincoln Memorial and Theodore Roosevelt Island. It highlights the changes from the first game. Then the rule was: 'If you're in cover, you are safe.'"

"That's perfect in New York because you are never more than 10 metres from cover but, in Washington, there are a lot of open areas so we needed solutions."

★★★★★

STUART CULLEN

Special Agents

TOM Clancy's The Division was a strong start for a series — fighting the good fight on the New York streets in snow-covered Manhattan.

But there was a but... and it was a significant but. A BUT if you like. Once you save the day, that was it... until extras were added months after launch.

So fair play to Massive Entertainment and Ubisoft. They looked at what worked and what didn't. They saw what the fans enjoyed and have now blended it all together for the sequel.

The Division 2 is a looter shooter that will be like a pair of comfy slippers to fans, but will also appeal to newcomers.

You are back as an Agent — US sleeper-cell specialists trained to respond to a crisis. They report directly to the President. The action has moved from a wintry New York to the hot and hazy summer streets of Washington DC.

The story is a lot lighter than in the first game, which is a shame, but it is full of military chat and has a full-on Clancy vibe as you start in a small camp which is attacked by a unknown, but well-equipped, force. Then in the heat of the battle, you are sent to Washington as the stakes are ramped up.

Ubisoft's move to blast what there is of a story at you through radio chat and shortcut scenes is great. It doesn't get in the way when you're playing with your mates across the 30 to

Tom Clancy's The Division 2 Xbox One, PS4 and PC £52.99

40-hour main campaign (dare we say, unlike Anthem) so my mate, Andy, got his fill of shooting while I soaked up the story.

The gameplay is very much like the first game — main, side and objective missions to boost your experience level up while hoovering up gear and loot.

However, unlike the first game, loot is plentiful and most firefights end like a seven-year-old's piñatas party with a rainbow of gear levels in between the piles of bodies.

It's a simple loop but it's so satisfying as you hope for a rare gold drop and some one-upmanship on your gun-toting mate.

The core gameplay feels great. You get a beefy arsenal plus some fun abilities and skills, such as a drone and turret as well as kit like a grenade that can pick up fallen teammates.

There are layers of combat, especially when you're teaming up.

The different skills open up the game as you all fight from each covered position. That said, you could go lone wolf but it's a bigger challenge because the AI will hunt you down.

There is a stunning amount of content on a show but... and this time it's a good BUT. The problems from the first game are forgotten because when you reach the end game here —

after 30-odd hours — everything gets ratcheted up as a new force fires in and takes over.

They are bigger and stronger. The tech and the challenges are tougher... and you have to win the whole place back all over again.

On the plus side, you can pick one of three specialities which are like classes with their own unlock trees. That paves the way for you to get a powerful rifle, grenade launcher or a crossbow depending on the speciality.

And that's all before you hit the three Dark Zones where risk and reward is the key and there is the threat of rogue agents and high-level enemies. There is also a PvP mode, which is fun if short-lived.

The development team have done a wonderful job with Washington. There is so much drama in the empty streets and abandoned cars and the little pockets of natural wonder will catch you by surprise.

The sound of the weapons and the voice acting is good, but your agent is mute so that's a bit one-sided at times. The battle soundtrack frames each fight well, though.

It is not perfect. The AI is a bit spongy at times and you can feel rushed if they are a higher level than you. However, it is still the best looter shooter we have ever seen. It is fun in a crowd. But, being a live title, time will tell if it gets the support it needs, although it's a must-get just now.

★★★★★

STUART CULLEN

HELLO Games gave a sneak peek at the next major FREE update heading to No Man's Sky. It's called Beyond and will land this summer.

It's being billed as the "most ambitious chapter so far". It was planned to be three separate updates before the firm merged them into one beefy

monster. Full info on what's coming is light on the ground just now but the studio has hinted at a new online mode known as No Man's Sky Online.

And Hello Games is saying that it's a radical new social and multiplayer experience which empowers players to meet and play together.

BETHESDA will be having a media briefing at this year's E3. The showcase will be held in LA on June 10. You can catch the action live at 1.30am so it'll be a late one.

SNIPER Elite fans are in for a treat — Rebellion have FOUR new titles in the pipeline. That means a main series port of Sniper Elite 3 Ultimate Edition and a new standalone Elite game for virtual reality devices from Leeds-based studio Just Add Water.

But the tastiest news is that Sniper Elite V2 is getting the remastered treatment. It's due out later this year on the Xbox One, PS4, PC and Switch.

It will have enhanced visuals, 4K resolution and HDR.

It will also add new playable characters, a photo mode and expanded online multiplayer for up to 16 gamers as well as all the content ever released for the game. We're sold on it.

SWITCH alert: Bigben have revealed the hardest bike sim in the world. TT Isle: Ride On The Edge, is arriving on May 23. It will have all 264 turns of the iconic track, 40 official bikes and 23 racers.

EA and Respawn have finally released the long-awaited Season Pass for Apex Legends.

Wild Frontier kicked off this week and introduced Octane, a metal-legged adrenaline junkie with a number of high-risk abilities. The

battle pass follows a similar path to the Fortnite model. It costs 950 Apex Coins — about £8 in real money — and paves the way to earning 100 unique rewards.

Just for buying the pass, you get three new skins for Lifeline, Wraith and Mirage.

TOP 5 GAMES THIS WEEK

- 1 Tom Clancy's The Division 2
- 2 Red Dead Redemption 2
- 3 Grand Theft Auto V
- 4 FIFA 19
- 5 The Lego Movie 2 Videogame

THE wait for the new Halo goes on but Microsoft has revealed that Halo: The Master Chief Collection is heading to PC. It will be a staggered release — the first game will be Halo: Reach then Halo: Combat Evolved, Halo 2, Halo 3, Halo 3: ODST and then Halo 4.

The PC version is being developed by UK studios — Splash Damage and Dundee-based Ruffian. Xbox

owners shouldn't feel left out though — Halo: Reach will be joining the collection.

The last true Bungie-developed Halo game will run on 4K/HDR, if you have the kit, and at 60FPS. The multiplayer is included if you have the Master Chief Collection, but the campaign and Firefight are premium DLC. However, Xbox Game Pass subscribers can get the lot.

NEW MUSIC

By Jim Gellatly

LAYAWAY

WHO: Stewart Matheson (vocals/guitar), Rob Lees (guitar/vocals), Euan Wilkie (drums), Drew Walls (bass).

WHERE: Glasgow.

FOR FANS OF: Fatherson, Biffy Clyro, The Xcerts.

JIM SAYS: Layaway are the epitome of DIY music. Sometimes that can be to the detriment of a band, but the Glasgow alt. rockers succeed with a high level of professionalism and focus.

Frontman Stewart said: "We try to keep everything in-house so what you see is all Layaway. We record, produce merchandise and manage ourselves."

The results are impressive. They describe their sound as "big alternative stadium rock" and they're not far off. Crunching guitars and hook-laden songs have become their trademark.

Formed in 2016 after stints in other bands, they took a while to find their feet. Stewart added: "We have gone from not really having much direction musically to really focusing on where we are now. We've all grown as players, individuals and songwriters over the last few years."

After a series of singles and videos they reckon they are in a strong place going forward. The new single Blood And Water suggests as much.

Stewart said: "It is really the start of Layaway's focused sound."

"We have several singles planned this year, all leading from one to the other. Blood And Water is a song that musically was born out of roughly one studio session. Lyrically it's based around that old saying 'blood is thicker than water'."

"I like to write lyrics around something like that but then flip it on its head. A lot of people don't actually have close family bonds like that. There's a line in the song which perfectly demonstrates this... 'When you cut your eyes and you see that your blood is thinner than water to me'. I love that sort of stuff."

The band learned early on to push themselves and get to the right people. There is something nice, and perhaps more genuine, when a band does it themselves. It does take some nerve. Not all bands have that confidence, especially when it comes to knockbacks.

It can be good to have someone else to deflect the criticism.

But if you can, who better to sell the product? Yes, the music should do the talking, but folk still need to find out about it in the first place.

Guitarist Rob said: "You need to talk to people. There are opportunities for bands out there. It's all about networking for me and trying to get the name to as many people as possible."

Layaway play a co-headline show with Red Hearted Vibrations at the Hug And Pint in Glasgow on April 20. They are also booked to appear at the city's N Sleazy with Slouch and Prices on June 7.

MORE: facebook.com/layawayofficial

● Jim presents a weekly showcase of New Music on Amazing Radio, Sundays, 2-4pm.

amazingradio.com

jimgellatly.com

Watch a video of the band at: thescottishsun.co.uk

STUART CULLEN