

● **REBELLION** surprised *Zombie Army 4: Dead War* fans with the next installment of the Hell Cult campaign DLC. *Blood Count* carries on from *Terror Labs* but moves the

action to Transylvania. They also released a renegade officer character, bloodsoaked weapon skins, gas mask headgear and mortar shotgun bundles.

● **2K Games** has revealed that *Sid Meier's Civilization VI* will get a second season pass this month. The *New Frontier* will add six DLC packs on a bi-monthly basis. There

will be free updates as well. It will set you back £32.99, but you can buy each DLC pack separately. Up first is the *Maya & Gran Colombia* pack on May 21.



DARK SIDE OF MOON

THERE is a huge social element to gaming — but, sometimes, the only interaction is chatting about what you have just played.

This creation from Dutch studio KeoKeN Interactive is the ultimate social distancing game. You play alone. You explore alone. You win alone.

It starts in 2030 and humanity has messed up the planet. There was hope when a new energy source was found on the moon, but we messed that up as well.

Fast forward to 2059 and it's your job to get the moon complex back up and running and find out what went wrong in the first place.

The journey begins with you prepping and launching your rocket on your own and that sets the tone for what's to come. Beyond a few scientists talking to you over the air waves you are really on your tod. This earlier

Deliver Us The Moon

Xbox One, PS4, Switch and PC £19.99

section gives you a taste of the puzzle-solving and info collecting you'll need to do in the search for answers.

It is all a sort of walking/floating sim, but with a bit more involvement than the run-of-the-mill titles in the genre.

It all comes to life once you reach space. A robot can help you complete puzzles because it can

squeeze into tight spots and replay holograms left by those stationed in the complex. That's a neat touch.

However, the game never loses that feel of isolation. In fact, it thrives on it. It's like a high-tech tomb where the rooms offer scraps of information about those who lived there.

It works because you start to care about them as the tale unfolds. You almost make friends with the ghosts.

The gameplay is decent, but it does become a bit repetitive as you move around fixing kit and doing the same tasks. It does fit the vibe that you're on a hulking abandoned moon complex but it grates after the 20th time.

At a time where we all feel alone in one way or another, *Deliver Us The Moon* embraces the core emotions and uses them to make every puzzle solved or door open feel like an epic victory. ★★ ★★



Mean Streets

IN A world of remakes and remastering, it actually makes a change for a studio to go with a proper sequel in a series.

And they don't come much bigger than *Streets of Rage*.

French studio Dotemu have just served up the long-awaited fourth game and — **SPOILER ALERT:** it's brilliant.

It's been 26 years since we last got to brawl on the mean streets and it is fair to say that the world in general — and gaming in particular — has changed a lot in that time.

But there is an air of expectation about *Streets of Rage*. It is not just a game — it is a full-blown superstar series.

First up, you have to recognise what made the game a hit and then don't change it. So the core is very much the same as the 90s classics — you move from left to right punching, kicking and special attacking everything that moves.

Second, you make it better. This has wrapped that core in a stunning art style and ramped up every element to 11.

The game takes place 10 years from the events of *Streets of Rage 3*. Big, bad Mr X's kids are hell-bent on revenge — the Y twins want to rebuild their father's crime syndicate and you have to stop them. The story is wafer-

Streets of Rage 4

Xbox One, PS4, Switch and PC £49.99

thin so don't expect an epic tale but it does frame the endless barrage of punches well.

It has the same comic-book style before and after each level — and that was where we found our only gripe. These sections are not voice-acted. Why? Just why?

A few characters, like Axel Stone and Blaze Fielding from the first game, make a return but they have aged a bit since their pixelated faces in 1991.

They are also joined by new kids on the block Cherry, the daughter of Adam Hunter from the first game, and Floyd Iraia who is half-man, half-cyborg and full tank.

Spoiler alert, the sequel: There are a lot of unlockable characters so it is a fair bet that, if you're a fan of the series, your favourite will be here in some shape or form.

The studio has kept the same gameplay style. Some may dismiss that as simple button-bashing but all the critics are doing are revealing that they have only played it on easy mode. There is a real hidden depth in the combat thanks to a few tweaks to the formula.

You have a powerful attack but it will damage you if you

just spam it over and over. Another new tweak is that you can regain lost health by stringing together a combo of standard attacks. Word of warning: if your combo is broken you lose the health you could have reclaimed.

That adds a real risk-reward mechanic. Get it right and you use powerful attacks more often, but if things get too heavy you have your star move. That's a one-use combo that dishes out major damage.

You can also catch objects you threw at an enemy if they bounce back. Again, that's a small change that adds layers to combat.

If that is not excitement enough, you can spice things up with on and offline mates' battles. If you played the series on the Mega Drive then you'll know what fun this brings.

The look is backed up by the soundtrack that, like past games, has a few standout tracks — but you can also swap to a retro soundtrack if that floats your boat.

The expectations were high for *Streets of Rage 4*. We wanted big, bold and in-your-face action. We got it. The studio has shown how to dish up nostalgia for established fans while creating a masterpiece for newcomers. This is a shiny polished brawler. It's a knock-out. ★★ ★★ ★



● **GOLF** fans in Scotland may be waiting to play the real thing, but details of the upcoming PGA Tour 2K21 have arrived. It will land on Xbox One, PS4, PC, Nintendo Switch and Stadia on August 21 and the cover star is 2017 Fed-

ExCup champ, PGA Championship winner and former world No1 Justin Thomas. There will be another 11 PGA Tour pros, 15 licensed PGA courses. You can create courses and customise your golfer. Sounds perfect.



TOP 5 GAMES THIS WEEK

- 1 *Animal Crossing: New Horizons*
- 2 *Grand Theft Auto V*
- 3 *FIFA 20*
- 4 *Call of Duty: Modern Warfare*
- 5 *Mario Kart 8 Deluxe*

● THE eagerly awaited *Ghost of Tsushima* promises to be an open-world samurai slash fest when it arrives on July 17.

Developers Sucker Punch have revealed that it will be set on a good-sized island where you can battle enemies along two paths.

There is the expected samurai route — with the

focus on direct fights — or the ghost route. Guess the clue was in the name. That is more stealth than battling. Also in Sony's latest State Of Play showcase was news that the

game would have high levels of customisation, an original Japanese audio mode and a movie-inspired black and white mode.



NEW MUSIC

By Jim Gellatly

TOMMY ASHBY

WHERE: Innerleithen, Peeblesshire
FOR FANS OF: Ed Sheeran, Paolo Nutini, Ben Howard

JIM SAYS: Borders lad Tommy Ashby has had many career highlights. Among them was having his music featured on hit US TV show *Grey's Anatomy*.

Top of the list though was performing at Hampden Park a couple of years ago. He said: "Three nights at Hampden, an absolute dream for a wee Scottish laddie."

"We got to play all the stadiums I watched people play football in as a kid."

A sought-after session musician, Tommy was playing guitar with fellow singer-songwriter Jamie Lawson at the time.

The 32-year-old added: "We played four nights at Wembley too. The first three went in a bit of a blur so for the whole of the fourth night I made sure to just look around and take in what a sold-out stadium looks like!"

Tommy first picked up guitar when he was six, jamming with his sister and his blues musician dad. He'd also visit folk clubs with his parents, further enhancing his musical spectrum.

There is certainly a folk element to his acoustic-led songs, but Tommy's music also embraces pop to create a rather satisfying sound.

As a kid he was also a Scottish champion runner, before injury turned his main focus towards music. He first started writing songs after going down south to study music and sound recording at the University of Surrey.

He said: "I then took a PhD in a field called Psychoacoustics. In my music I have combined the technical understanding of sound science with a childhood growing up in rural Scotland and this has really helped me find my sound."

Along the way Tommy's released a string of well-received EPs. Last summer's *Golden Arrow* collection has now clocked up around 2 million streams. His beautiful new single *One Word* is the first track to be lifted from his upcoming fourth EP.

He said: "Since being lucky enough to sign with Universal Publishing I decided to put my session work on the back-burner and really concentrate on my own music."

"That higher level of concentration means that I think this EP is really stepping up a gear."

While gigs are currently on hold, Tommy's doing a series on online performances. He said: "The next one will be on my Instagram and Facebook on May 28. It's a lovely way to interact with fans in these strange times."

Tommy added: "I also wrote a song for my sister's birthday. She is a doctor, and spent the day examining coronavirus patients, so I thought I would write *Just For Now* to make her smile."

"My parents and my little brother are in the video and filming it was a fun way to spend a day in lockdown."

MORE: tommyashby.com
● Jim presents a weekly showcase of New Music on Amazing Radio Sundays 2-4pm.

amazingradio.com/jimgellatly.com

Watch video of Tommy Ashby at thescottishsun.co.uk