

- 1.) Many western players were surprised when it was revealed that Hrothgar and Viera would not have both genders available, especially after the efforts the team went through to provide more options with Miqu'te and Roegadyn in 2.0. Why did the team decide to do two different races with one gender each instead of one race with both genders?

A.) The timing of the game launch, the races needed to have each gender counterpart for ARR. When I took over for ARR, I wanted to fill the missing gender to make those races seem complete. What is different now compared to then. After multiple expansions, the situation isn't the same as when we released the base game. My answer will be quite long...

This game has been launched for 6 years currently. It has tens of thousands of armors available. We have to make sure every race can use every outfit correctly. The more unique the appearance of the race, the more difficult these adjustments are to make.

When we create one gear, we have to make adjustments so it fits all these different races. So when we add new races, we have to adjust how to approach this process. The development cost for making a new race is very intense because of how much work we put into the graphics of the game. We also have to make sure these things all work properly. That's why we are saying these may be the last races because of how taxing it is on the development team.

We wanted to give players options and freedom to choose more races. We envisioned adding a new race, but people really wanted the Viera to play in-game. So if we add another new race that isn't Viera, people might wonder why we didn't do Viera, so we had to add them for sure.

We had a big discussion back when we added Au ra in Heavensward about whether to add Au ra or Viera. We knew we only had Female Viera for reference, so we had no idea what to do for the Male variant. We would have to use our own imagination for that. There was fear about how we would approach that. Perhaps an elezen body with a miqu'te face and bunny ears. Would this be the right way to add this race to the game?

When we create a fantasy game, especially for FF14. We have a good variety of races. We don't really need any more cute or sweet looking characters because we have so many as it is.

Especially for FF14, we have many symbols of power or strength such as Highlander and Roegadyns. We wanted something more animal like. It's not that we wanted to create a wild west of characters, but we do need a good variety. So the simple answer is: Viera was sought after so we had to add those. To expand the game and its options, we also wanted to add Hrothgar.

2.) As a follow up, is the team considering adding the other gender for these two races in future expansions?

A.) Short answer is we haven't made a decision on that. The reason why we can't say for sure. We need to optimize our work flow with the existing races and the new ones. After that, perhaps we do the other gender. But we don't know right now.

We did consider Male Viera instead of adding an extra race, but we tried to take player feedback on adding a more beast like race as well as the strong desire to receive Viera. We did expect strong feedback on the gender lock. It was a tough decision, but we decided to do our best to meet both the player feedback and our development team's vision. It will be very costly to add a new race or genders. So I won't say no, but I would not like to set expectations high.

We haven't had time to look at all of the feedback since this is our first day back at the office after the Tokyo Fan Festival. What was the general feedback from NA based on your experience? Were they upset about no Male Viera, no Female Hrothgar or both?

Me.) It has been a heated topic. Some players are okay, while many players are upset about the gender locking. Many are disappointed about no Male Viera, but with the Female Hrothgar I've seen some people be even more upset. This is because in The First Shard they are called Ronso, and in FFX there are plenty of female Ronso.

A.) Thank you for the insight. Currently, we are putting together all the feedback. Depending on the feedback we are considering an official statement on the forums.

3.) The reveal that Dancer was a ranged DPS caught a lot of players by surprise as well. Why did the team decide to add another DPS to the game as opposed to a new healer?

A.) Out of curiosity why was the community generally expecting it to be a healer?

Me.) Mostly because we really expected it to be both a tank and a healer for the expansion.

A.) Simply we only had two ranged physical DPS so we wanted to add another. We have 4 tanks and 4 melee dps, 3 casters and 3 healers, and yet there were only 2 ranged dps. We wanted to balance the number of jobs across the board.

We also really wanted to add another tank to balance the tanks more. With 4 tanks, we can better balance the tank role, with two main tanks and two off-tanks.

When players decide which role or job to play. Even a small difference in abilities and attribute make a big difference. People like to take Paladin as an off-tank thanks to abilities like Cover, so the Warrior and Dark Knight are fighting for the main-tank spot most commonly.

So hypothetically speaking, if we rebalance things and put Warrior as MT, then the Paladin and Dark Knight would be fighting for off-tank. No matter what we really needed to balance this with two and two. Its much more fair this way, so its two jobs between main tank and two between off-tank. **This is very tentative so please convey this is no indication at all of our final plans.**

When looking at this history of healing jobs. Making strong balance between three jobs it has been tough. With three its been tough, so with a 4th the balance might get even worse. Instead of doing this, we want to prioritize balancing them better this expansion so we didn't want to add a new healer at 4.0 or 5.0. We really think we need to restructure the way healers are handled. We can't keep this strict division between pure healer and barrier healer. Something needs to change here so we can maintain good balance. Thats the main reason we didn't have a healer. First priority was to add a 3rd ranged, then a 4th tank while we balance the healers better.

We need to maybe change the way to present new jobs at Fan Festivals. Perhaps reveal the roles first and then reveal the job later to subvert expectations.

- 4.) Eden was revealed as the new high-end raid in Shadowbringers. Normally high-end raids aren't involved with the Main Scenario quests, but Eden looks as if it is very important when it comes to restoring balance to The First. Can you say if Eden has more relation to the Main Scenario quests than the previous raids?

A.) Thats a spoiler question! I can't answer that now or players would be upset that I spoiled the story. We have experienced the concerns and the curiosity with the story here. I won't comment on how closely involved it is with the Main Scenario quests, but if we ever did make the raids directly part of the Main Scenario, we luckily have the Normal difficulty so players could complete it without much concern.

- 5.) The Eureka series in Stormblood has received a lot of feedback from various players around the world. The Baldesion Arsenal in particular has been the focus of a lot of players' feedback in the most recent iteration. With the confirmation of a new exploration content in Shadowbringers what changes might we expect for the way public dungeons are handled?

A.) Of course, we will make adjustments. We can't touch upon the exact changes this far away, but we are taking feedback on the Baldesion Arsenal and using that. There are two big reasons why we won't say anything concrete. One, we are getting a large variety of feedback.

Two, the feedback is very different depending on the region of the world. We need to be very careful and review the feedback in greater detail.

- 6.) Eureka also brought with it a change to the way we obtain powerful weapons similar to the Zodiac weapon. Instead of running older content, you created something brand new. Has the team considered which approach they will take with a similar weapon in Shadowbringers? Will the weapon again be obtained in exploration content or will you include ways to complete older content to progress as well?

A.) The opinions here are very split. Some players like or are okay Eureka and some players prefer the Anima and Zodiac weapons. So the way we allow players to enhance a weapon in the expansion is still undecided. The development team was bored with how the Zodiac and Anima weapon were enhanced, so they wanted to do something different, which is why we did Eureka. We were surprised many players actually liked that old system. So we are torn.

- 7.) The release date for the Final Fantasy XIV and Final Fantasy XV collaboration was revealed yesterday and players noticed it has a limited time. How does the team decide which collaborations are limited time and which ones are permanent?

A.) So this is decided based on the type of content we are making for the event itself. For the Garo, it was simply structure wise. We just integrated into PVP. For the Monster Hunter one, the content can be a lot more challenging, so players may need more time to clear. For the FF15 collaboration, its catered to an easier difficulty, so it doesn't need to be permanent.

Luckily with limited time events, we can always turn them back on if we really need to or want to. So we don't consider how long it takes.

- 8.) What has the general feedback been for Blue Mage and the concept of limited jobs? Has feedback led the team to strive to make any changes towards their approach on how to implement this kind of content?

A.) For the Blue Mage, it is still only available at an entry level. Its quite easy to level and only basic content for it is available. We will eventually increase the level cap for it and release new content for it. When we increase the cap, we will have some more content, some of which is much more hardcore. This will release sometime after Shadowbringers releases. We want to see how players respond to these new contents. Until we reach that point, we don't want to talk much about future Limited Jobs. We need to see player feedback after more Blue Mage content is available.

- 9.) I wanted to take the time to thank you and the teams in Japan and America for arranging for me to make this trip to Japan. This time last year I lost my father and he always told me that when I finally went to Japan to make sure to tell him all about it. I may be here

as media, but I am also here because of my passion for FF14 and the franchise. So finally coming to Japan at a time of year so close to my heart has been humbling and a true honor. Thank you.

A.) You are here because of your hard work and dedication to Final Fantasy XIV. It was our pleasure to bring you here and to see you enjoying your time, meeting Japanese players who watch your content and covering the event. I am sure your father would be very proud. Thank you for your support and I hope you continue to support us for a long time.

