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Jungle Command (00.00.1990) (group interview)

Martyn, Sat 23 Jun 2007

Interview with Jungle Command by Martyn/17Bit

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CRITICAL INTERVIEW, Held at the Jungle Command Centre

Ok then guys, we know there are a few of you, can we have a full list ?

- Mark Langerak, (nickname Exterminator) is programmer and graphic artist, he's about 21 years old and just finished 'The Plague' He lives in Zierikzee, Holland
- Daniel Ockeloen, (nickname MCS, or better Okkie) also programs and hold the Jungle Command together with John. He's currently writing a game in his spare time, 20 years from Utrecht
- John van Dijk, (nickname Boil) does some programming and organizing He's the one who organizes the meetings etc. and the founder together with Daniel of the Jungle Command, 20 years from Harmelen
- Sander Hassing, (nickname Artelli) is the personal graphic artist of Daniel and is working on Daniels gamegraphics, 17 years from Hoevelaken (linksaf)
- Tonnie Meijdam, (nickname The Chosen 1) also does graphics for several people including John. Maybe you have noticed some artwork of him here in NewsFlash, 17 years from Geldermalsen
- Ron Klaren, (nickname Master Blaster), the music composer of the lot



programming music in the special routine from Ivo or in Octalyzer
20 years from Tuk (I can't help it)

- Ivo Zoer, (nickname Valiar), currently working at Innerprise, and the programmer of the musicroutine. 20 years and also from Tuk (Now in Hunt Valley, USA)
- Peter van Dijk, (nickname Slide) graphic artist of logos and fonts at the moment 18 years and from Harmelen
- Peter van Berghenegouwe, (nickname Ghattoshark) graphic artist and game-addict, 18 years and from HuisterHeide

QUESTIONS DIRECTED AT THE CODERS:

How and when did you all meet, how long have you all known each other?

How long have you all been into computers and more specifically the Amiga?

How long have you been coding?

We started off programming our calculators in the seventies and after that we purchased 64's. (that was around 1983, on a wednesday at 14.53 pm) John and Daniel met each other at school, where they in the same class. John met Mark via a mutant! friend. After the Amiga (1985) came out we all bought one and formed the demo-group The Jungle Command.

As soon as we got famous, people started showing their work to us at various parties. That's how Ron Klaren, Yvo Zoer, Sander Hassing and Tonnie Meijdam got into our group. Some other people who are in The Jungle Command, but who are at the moment too busy with other things, are Peter van Dijk, Peter van Berghenegouwen. And a guy called Marko (Travelling Jack) Klaassen, who did some music, left because of school.

Coding began when we got fed up with games. One advantage was that we also has programmed the 64 and Daniel and John had technical training. Mark just taught himself.

What have you written previously and what are you working on at the moment ?

Out of the Jungle Command, which is actually a demo-group, we formed the Critical Design. Under the Critical label we release our commercial products, which doesn't mean that The Jungle Command, as a demo and PD group, has ceased to exist. It's just that were too busy at the moment with our commercial activities that we don't have time to do any demos or utilities.

MARK: As you all should know, I just finished a game called THE PLAGUE, which has been sold to Innerprise Software, previously responsible for Battle Squadron. At the moment I'm working on this interview, but I'll be writing a new game soon. (John : probably some racing game)



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DANIEL: I did the occasional Jungle Command Demo, but I'm currently writing a game with 8 way scrolling, 2500+ screens, multi-color system and fabulous graphics by Sander Hassing. The idea behind the game a combination between arcade action and puzzle solving.

JOHN: I've just did the intro sequence and hiscore routines for THE PLAGUE, the occasional demo and utility. At the moment I'm taking it slow, because I'm studying.

YVO: At the moment I'm working on the new SEGA Megadrive at Innerprise Software. (called the Genesis over here in America) Which is all kinda hush-hush, so I can't tell to much about it at the moment.

Whats your best production up to date ?

MARK: THE PLAGUE !!!

JOHN: I'm not really satisfied with my products but I like some of my routines...

DANIEL: What I'm working on now will of course be my best product. As a second best I would say the JC Music Invasion series.

YVO: My music routine. (as featured in Battle Squadron and THE PLAGUE.)

What coders do you admire ?

MARK: Andrew Braybrook. I think he should drop his programming system, though, because it doesn't sound like it's that powerful. I mean, we, as Critical, keep on finding new techniques to do things, so he must keep on updating his system. I say you're better off starting coding from scratch.

DANIEL: Everybody who writes good games. Nobody seems to really admire the enormous amount of work that goes into writing a game.

JOHN: The guys who wrote F29 Retaliator and all PLAYABLE games. I mean too much time is put in graphics, music etc. where the playability should be better.

Which programs do you admire ?

MARK: The tool I use the most of all is the DevPac assembler, but it still needs improving, so...

DANIEL: I agree.

JOHN: Cygnus text editor and ofcourse the DevPac assembler. I only think that the programmer should leave his Atari occasionally to update it (and take our advice -> Arexx port)

What do you think of the future of Amiga coding ?

MARK: The Amiga is going to lose out on the games front, with machines like the new SEGA on the market. With the new, fast and expensive Amigas coming out, the Amiga will be used more profesionally than as a games machine.

DANIEL: I agree that the Amiga is losing ground, but a console will never be a computer which you can program. Compared to the 64 and what is possible on that machine now, I think that the Amiga will last for few years, esp. with those new Amigas coming out.

JOHN: I see the Amiga as an 64 saga part 2, the freaks will continue to program and as long as people buy games and software



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nothing will change. Still with machines as the Lynx and Sega it would eat a lot of the potential Amiga buyers, resulting in fewer games sold, and thus less products.

What do you think of the standard of software ?

All: For games we have only two categories : Good and VERY bad. The future will squeeze more out of the Amiga but the originality is very low at the moment with those (bad) conversions.

How would you recommend others start coding ?

All: Make those contacts with other coders and don't do it all on your own. Because more people know more than one, tricks and tips can't be figured out by a single person. And it is much more fun talking to people on the same level than to nitwits that you can outrun easily.

Whats your opinion of people who use their talents and knowledge to 'crack' programs rather than using their talents for more positive things ?

All: We don't mind if people crack games, and occasionally copy a game that they wouldn't buy anyway. The problem is that, with all the BB's and people SELLING crack copies of games, we as commercial programmers start to lose a lot of money.

How do you see the future of the Amiga ?

All: Erm...can't tell....our crystal ball just got a GURU!

If you weren't programming what would you be doing ?

MARK: When I'm not programming (or drawing) I'm either asleep or drinking. So if I wasn't a programmer, I'd probably would drink and sleep all day.

DANIEL: Watching other people program.

JOHN: Watching Daniel watching other people programming.

What work have you got lined up for the future - hows things with Innerprise going ?

All: We will keep on programming games, and Innerprise Software is always looking for new products. So we'll probably sell 'em to Innerprise but if somebody else has a better offer...

Tell us a little about Innerprise, how they do things and tell us how you'd do things if you were in charge at a software publication company ?

All: Innerprise also publishes software from Europe in America, and there's a deal with Linel coming up. They have a deal with SEGA to program games for the Megadrive and the Master System. Their next game on the SEGA will be around the Spiderman comic. We'd rather not have our own software publication company, because it's too much risk and hassle.

QUESTIONS DIRECTED AT THE MUSICIAN (hello Ron)



How long have you been writing music, did you write music before the Amiga or is it just something that started when you messed with computers (64 etc) ?

The first music I wrote was on the 64, 5 or 6 years ago, but I was only fooling at the time.

What is your best piece of music to date in your own opinion ?

I wrote a piece of music on my Roland (D110) called 'Biddy Buddy'. and I guess that is the best I've ever written. (Maybe I'll convert it to Amiga someday) My best song on the Amiga is the Battle Squadron intro theme.

What is your best known piece ?

The Axel F conversion.

What is your opinion of Amiga music in general ?

Very good, the quality is improving every day.

Which musicians do you admire ?

Rob Hubbard (ofcourse), Paul v.d. Valk, Mike and Tim Follin, Chris H ,Isbeck, and a friend of mine Rein Ouwehand (you'll hear a lot of him on the Amiga in the near future)

Have you any favourite amiga music pieces you like ?

Yes, I love the music from LED storm (Follin) and X-out (H ,Isbeck)

What do you think of current music programs/drivers ?

Quit good, but some of them could use some improvement. I don't know much about them cause I only work with my own routine. (I also work with Oktalyzer which is in my opinion the best sampleplayer at this moment)

Tell us about your own custom-built driver and its capabilities ?

It is one of the better music drivers at the moment but can use a whole lot of improvements. It is a complete gamemusicdriver, it uses both synthetix and sampled sounds, several songs in memory at the same time, jingles, soundeffects, almost no memory usage and it's fast. Maximum use of 10 rasterlines (decimal!), a small song uses about 10 Kb (including samples). For the sounds we use a computergenerated pulsewave combined with a waveform. We are working on a new driver which is even better, but I can't tell you too much about it at this moment.

What music do you listen to in your spare time (commercial music) ?

All kinds of music, but my favourite music is synthesizer (Jarre, Vangelis, Kitaro, Tomita etc.), movie and TV soundtracks (John Williams and Mike Post), rock and roll, rythem and blues and blues. I hate acid, house, hip-house etc....

If you werent a musician what would you be ?

dead.....



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How do you see the future of Amiga music ?

Very positive, there are a lot of good musicians out there

If there was one thing you could do to change the Amiga music-chip what would it be ?

Build in some SID chips, I think the SID is the best computer soundchip ever made.

What makes a good piece of music in your opinion ?

Try to be original, try to develop your own style.

Whats your opinion of synthetic and sampled sounds ?

I only use samples for drums and some effects (wind, thunder etc.) cause you can't make them with synthetic sounds (no good anyway), all the other sounds I use are synthetic. I also use samples if I have enough memory for the song (e.g. The Plague intro and Highscore tunes. I think synthetic sounds are more fun to work with.

How did you feel about the Axel-F rip off by Tynesoft (oh dear)

I can only say one thing about it : "NEVER BUY TYNESOFT PRODUCTS !!!!!"

What are you working on right now ?

As I said we are working on a new routine. I finished The Plague soundtrack and I'm waiting for the program to be released. And I'll also write the music for spiderman (SEGA Megadrive), but I don't know when I'll have to start with it. So at the moment nothing .. (Answering silly questions!)

QUESTIONS DIRECTED AT THE ARTISTS

What do you use to draw your work ?

MARK: Dpaint III

TONNIE: A mouse

SANDER: My Amiga

What work are you most proud of so far ?

TONNIE: The gamegraphics for Obitvary, The electric phonecall and that picture in the Critical demo

SANDER: Mostly my latest drawings, such as in the game I make with Daniel (I'm learning all the time)

MARK: PLAGUE gfx

Where do you get the inspiration for your work ?

SANDER: I don't know

MARK: Anything, books, films, magazines...sleep

TONNIE: Visions, looking at other people's work gives me ideas



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How long does the work take, say sprites, titles etc ?

MARK: Too long

TONNIE: The gamegraphics lets say in 2 or 3 months and the rest within a week (depends on the drawing)

SANDER: Like Tonnie says, it varies, 3 hours for an end-of-level monster to a full day for a single enemy

Which artists do you admire on the Amiga/art-world ?

MARK: Torben Larsen

TONNIE: Torben Larsen, Artelli (whose he?), JOE

SANDER: Torben Larsen and the Japanese style (Konami, Sega, Taito etc.)

Which game features the best use of graphics so far in your opinion ?

SANDER: Battle Squadron and Shadow of the Beast

MARK: Avaitors (next game from Martin and Torben)

TONNIE: I think Mark and Sander have the same opinion

Which is your favourite style of graphics ?

TONNIE: Futuristic, realistic (like Drew, he made the posters for Back to the Future and Indiana Jones.)

JOHN: Yo, Tonnie, when do I get my Indiana Jones original back !

SANDER: Japanese cartoon style (Sander owned a MSX!!!!)

MARK: Realistic, with lots of highlights to get a glossy shine

How long have you been painting/drawing ?

SANDER: About 2 years

MARK: Since I started writing THE PLAGUE

TONNIE: On Amiga 2 years, on paper 17 years

If you werent an artist what would you do ?

MARK: Program

TONNIE: Nothing

SANDER: Get bored, depressed, become a drug-addict and kill myself

GENERAL QUESTIONS FOR EACH MEMBER

(to get a little background story behind each of you)

Favourite Food ?

TONNIE: Fruit

MARK: Babi Pagang

DANIEL: Yes, three times a day



RON: Tynesoft disks & junk food (almost the same)

JOHN: Lasagna and pizza (Does anyone actually read this ??!)

Favourite Drink ?

RON: Cola & T

MARK: Beer and whiskey

TONNIE: 7up, Coke

DANIEL: Coffee

JOHN: Orange juice

Favourite Saying ?

SANDER: What the hell ! (As Jack Burton would say in a situation like this)

TONNIE: Me tarzan you Jane

MARK: Broodje ei met ui

JOHN: You never know until you've tried

Dislikes ?

MARK: Getting up in the morning

RON: Acid, hiphop and house music

TONNIE: School, gays

DANIEL: Deadly stuff

JOHN: Agressive drunken people and sleep classes

Favourite Film(s) ?

MARK: Splatter and horror movies

DANIEL: Comedies and horror movies

JOHN: Action and Comedies

RON: George Lucas and Steven Spielberg movies

SANDER: Aliens, Indiana Jones, Back to the Future, Gremlins

TONNIE: see SANDER

Favourite Tv ?

MARK: Sony trinitron

DANIEL: Color

SANDER: Erres 5738 Color

RON: Family Ties

JOHN: My Sony trinitron

TONNIE: see MARK and JOHN



Favourite Music ?

TONNIE: Jarre, house, Ron Klaren

MARK: Trash-, speed- and dead-metal

DANIEL: Jarre, Jan Hammer, Vangelis and anything that keeps me awake

JOHN: Everything that Mark dislikes

RON: Synthesizer, soundtracks, rock 'n roll

Best Place Visited ?

RON: Paris

MARK: Howard Johnsons

TONNIE: Geldermalsen

SANDER: Spanish beach

DANIEL: Toilet

JOHN: Wendy the Whip massage parlor

Worst Place Visited ?

MARK: School

RON: Tuk (That's where I live)

DANIEL: Toilet (after John has went there)

JOHN: PC Show at Saturdays

TONNIE: Geldermalsen

Favourite hobby (except for Amiga) ?

SANDER: No time for hobbies (blame school)

MARK: Sleeping/Drinking

TONNIE: Girls

DANIEL: Drinking coffee

JOHN: Telling teachers that Amiga is better than a PC, playing cards

RON: Music

Earliest memory in life ?

RON: Opening the mail this morning

MARK: Uh...don't remember...

SANDER: Darkness

DANIEL: About 2048 Bytes

TONNIE: ... eh .. yeah ... sure!

JOHN: must have been when I shot Kennedy....



Most proudest moment ?

MARK: Getting interviewed in this Magazine (what was the name again??)

SANDER: My birth

DANIEL:

JOHN: ha, ha, Daniel has none!

TONNIE: a little ...

RON:

Worst moment ?

MARK: Formatting all my Plague source disks by accident

DANIEL: Losing all my three lives

SANDER: Oral exam English (Oral what

?)

RON: Waking up after a party

TONNIE: ... too much !

JOHN: Changing the labels of Marks source disks, I was in the hospital for 3 weeks

Ambitions ?

TONNIE: Being the best graphic artist and the best paid

MARK: Dunno...I'll just wait and see where it all ends

DANIEL: Arexx-ing my Amiga to my coffee machine, to get my coffee multi-tasked

JOHN: Have time to really hit the programming again

SANDER: Finishing at least one game

RON: Writing soundtracks for movies

Hopes for the future ?

MARK: Getting rich and famous

DANIEL: Getting more rich and famous than Mark

JOHN: No I'm not going to say : richer and more famous than Daniel

RON: Working on the SEGA-Megadrive

TONNIE: Making game-graphics for many games

SANDER: Pass my exams

Your message to everyone reading !

MARK: Hi! Please buy my game....



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DANIEL: If you like this interview, stop reading If you don't, start again

TONNIE: Never say, die !

JOHN: Contributions on giro 6068100, Holland

RON: Watch out for the Plague (BUY IT!!)

SANDER: Hi !

What would you want to come back as, after you die - if anything?

MARK: Amiga Virus

TONNIE: A rabbit (har!, har!)

DANIEL: Normal, for once

RON: ALF!

SANDER: My cat

JOHN: Atari ST, doing nothing is fantastic

What was the best thing about the 80's for you ?

All: the ten years inbetween

TONNIE: Censored

SANDER: Buying an MSX (Sorry, don't laugh!)

What do you hope will happen in the 90's

All: Getting our crystal ball repaired and to get rich.

Well there you go, as much sense as a cat with a unfashionable tarten jacket on.. my thanks to those particular lunatics and I hope you`ve enjoyed this little insight as to what makes these guys tick, or not, as the case may be. My personal thanks to John (Boil) for arranging the convicts together and persuading them to answer my silly questions, I`m happy in the knowledge that the cattle-prod wasn`t necessary in the end.

Next time you see a JungleCommand demo or an Innerprise game by these guys just reckon on WHO you`re dealing with.. you have been warned! Thanks to Mark, John, Ron, Daniel, Sander, Tonnie and Ivo for taking part.