

GAME DEVELOPMENT CONTEST FOR MSX COMPUTERS #RESULTS

THE MSXDEV23 GAME COMPO, RUNNING FROM FEBRUARY 2023 UNTIL OCTOBER 2023, HAS YIELDED 29 REGISTERED NEW MSX GAMES. ALL OF THESE GAMES HAVE BEEN JUDGED AND SCORED BY THE JURY PANEL OF WHICH THE RESULTS CAN BE READ IN THIS DOCUMENT.

BEHOLD - THE FINAL REPORT FOR THIS YEAR'S DEV EDITION.

Document revision

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Preface

The MSXdev compo, that had its first edition in 2003, is an international MSX exclusive game-design match that delivers a steady growing pile of homebrew games. This year's MSXdev edition was in "free style" format – meaning there's no limit on supported MSX hardware or ROM size.

With no less than 29 games submitted, just over 900 euro of donations, and a dozen sponsored items, the MSX scene proves to be just plain AWESOME. We, the organization, wish to express a big THANK YOU to everyone involved. We hope it has been as much fun for you as it has been for us.

Signing off, with love:

John Hassink, Róman van der Meulen – organizing party of MSXdev23

You can find more information on MSXdev23 at the following locations:

- <https://www.msxdev.org/msxdev23/> - the official MSXdev23 web page
- <https://www.file-hunter.com/MSXdev/> - Play all MSXdev games online at The File-Hunter's
- <https://www.generation-msx.nl/company/msxdev/746/software/?sort=year&dir=desc> – All MSXdev software at Generation MSX

Jury Panel

As this is a competition about making the best possible MSX game, the organization of MSXdev23 has put together a competent jury panel to judge all of this year's registered entries. Just remember that there are no losers in this contest. However, and we're quoting here, "there can be only one" the best. Not an easy task for the jurors, as the quantity and quality is excellent this year.

Allow us to introduce you to the Jury Team, which consists of veterans among the worldwide MSX community:

Jury member	Expertise
Ronald van der Putten (USA)	Game mechanics
Danilo "DanDan" Danisi (IT)	Sound
Robert Vroemisse (NL)	Graphics

Tabel 1 Jury panel of MSXdev23

The panel will judge all games by giving points. The higher, the better. There is no public rating available for MSXdev23. The panel judged each game on its quality and provide a written motivation of the rating.

About the Jurors.

RONALD VAN DER PUTTEN, U.S.A. – GAME MECHANICS

Back, way back, in the mid-1980s, the Dutch software company Aackosoft International released an impressive portfolio of MSX games. One of their main programmers was Ronald van der Putten. Initially hired as a Master-Tape Creator, and later transitioning into the role of Game Designer and Programmer, he is credited for designing and coding several games for the company. Ronald also pioneered writing the first software-only digital voice recording and playback tool for MSX systems. This tool was frequently used in MSX games – you may remember the legendary Oh Shit! – and was eventually released as a commercial package called Mastervoice/Wordstore. Ronald was also responsible for the development of Aackosoft's Floppy Disk Copy Protection System.

Still in the computer business, Ronald would continue his programming ambition as software engineer and later Senior Security Architect. While originally being a Dutchman, Ronald is living in the beautiful Pacific Northwest outside of Seattle with his wife Shawn and their dog Bruno.

DANILO DANISI, A.K.A. DANDAN, ITALY – BLEEPs

The MSX user group can easily be divided into two; gamers and demo sceners. The latter being a tight group of MSX enthusiasts that would show off their skills with demos. Danilo is one those, known for his excellent scene music. Popular in the early nineties, where the demo scene had its peak, he provided a good bunch of OPL based music under the moniker "DanDan" for demo and game groups such as Abyss and IOD. A few examples like the Audiowave series, the unfinished game X-Tazy, and Total Parody might refresh your memory. In later years, he shifted focus from electronic to traditional acoustical instruments like African percussion, only to re-connect with electronic music again at the turn of the century.

Nowadays, Danilo is teaching computer graphics and design at an Italian Art academy, acts as sound designer, and even organizing some videogame and creative coding workshop in Italy. All that while enjoying the beautiful scenery of Bologna, Italy.

ROBERT VROEMISSE, THE NETHERLANDS – PIXELS

It's no secret that growing up with MSX, our beloved platform has inspired an entire generation of professional engineers, software developers, game designers, musicians and last but not least, graphic designers ofcourse.

Belonging to mainly that last category, we are pleased to introduce this year's jury member for the Pixels department.

Robert Vroemisse is a professional graphic artist, who amongst other things, is a high profile designer of product packaging, advertisements, educational material and 2D, 3D and VR designs. In the roaring nineties, his MSX activities included affiliations with development teams such as Sargon, as both chief of their graphics department and co-composer. In this function, Robert contributed to productions such as the music demo Twisted Reality and the Defender disk magazine.

Later on, he ventured to fresh pastures, collaborating with Team Bomba to create Bombaman, and Team Deva of, you guessed it, Angelic Warrior Deva fame. Much of his musical work on the MSX OPL4 is included on the Dutch Moonsound Veterans compilation. Robert is still an active member of the MSX scene these days, currently working on the graphic design of a very ambitious MSX2 project.

SCORING

Every entry will be judged on different aspects of the game by the jury panel. Each game-aspect is assigned to one expert-juror. A juror will score two (2) points per game. One on the assigned game-aspect and one on the overall impression of the game. These are separate points to score. A single score can be 1-100 points. The total score of a game is the sum of all (6) scores from the panel, with a maximum of 600.

The game aspects that are rated separately are:

- Game mechanics
- Graphics
- Sound

Each score type is weighed equally. A judge can only rate using whole integer numbers, so without fractional parts (e.g. half points).

Ties will not be accepted. To prevent those as much as possible, we instated the resolution of 6-600. Nevertheless, in case of a tie (when multiple entries have an equal number of scored points), the jury panel is required to vote for the better game. The game with the most votes wins and gets 1 extra point awarded. If that leads to another tie, the jurors are again asked to vote. This process continues until there are no more ties.

An eventual tie breaking process is transparently mentioned in the final jury report.

RANKING

In the end, there are four (4) ranking categories published, namely:

1. Best overall game (average of all scores combined)
2. Best gameplay
3. Best graphics
4. Best sound

From these ranking lists, only prizes are available for ranking list 1 (Best overall game). The other ranking lists are for pride and honor.

The Results

The jury panel has reached its verdict, scoring is done. So, without further delay, here are the results for MSXdev23:

BEST GAME SCORES

Overall best game: **"Snake and Rhino in the sketchbook" by ARC8 (470/600)**

Best mechanics: **"Snake and Rhino in the sketchbook" by ARC8 (75/100)**

Best sound: **"Pentacorn Quest" by Robosoft (90/100)**

Best graphics: **"Snake and Rhino in the sketchbook" by ARC8 (90/100)**

Well, with that we can only conclude that we have absolute jury consent for *Snake and Rhino in the sketchbook* to be the grand winner. Congratulations for this outstanding achievement to ARC8.

For all other results, congratulations to all participants! Awesome!

The following are the ranking lists for all the categories.

OVERALL BEST GAME RANKING

- 1 "Snake and Rhino in the sketchbook" by ARC8 (470/600)
- 2 "Pentacorn Quest" by Robosoft (462,5/600)
- 3 "Eggy's Maze" by Jacco Bikker (432,5/600)
- 4 "The Goblin" by Hicks & Mananuk (417,5/600)
- 5 "Xelden Ring" by Brain Games (405/600)
- 6 "Crawlers" by Pixel Phenix (382,5/600)
- 7 "Uchu Yohei" by FranChesstein (352,5/600)
- 8 "Tenebra 2" by Haplo (347,5/600)
- 9 "Phenix Corrupta" by Casper Croes (340/600)
- 10 "Pearl Rain" by Patrik's Retro Tech (335/600)
- 11 "The Porpoise Man" by Jose Soto (300/600)
- 12 "Flubber in the upside down world" by Amaury Carvalho (292,5/600)
- 13 "Tetpuz" by Totta (290/600)
- 14 "Woods Rat" by Gamecast Entertainment (285/600)
- 15 "Attack of the Petscii Robots" by Robosoft (280/600)
- 16 "Mad House" by Gamecast Entertainment (258/600)

- 17 "Last Escape" by Fred Rique (257,5/600)
- 18 "Hopper Boy" by Gamecast Entertainment (255/600)
- 19 "Mine Command" by Fred Rique (245/600)
- 20 "Tower of Damnation" by Marcelo "BigFive" Correia (235/600)
- 21 "Vampire Slayer" by Seamsoft (225/600)
- 22 "Double Rainbow" by Hakogame (212,5/600)
- 23 "Global Ordnance" by Fred Rique (185/600)
- 24 "Bricks" by MoltSXalats (172,5/600)
- 25 "Super Ory 2 - Enigma" by Orazio Cacciola and Cristiano Polenta (167,5/600)
- 26 "Defuse" by Gamecast Entertainment (117,5/600)
- 27 "Martian War" by Fausto Pracek (100/600)
- 28 "Plastic" by Z80ASMer (92,5/600)
- 29 "Farmer's Yields" by Rio Yamamura (70/600)

BEST GAME MECHANICS RANKING

- 1 "Snake and Rhino in the sketchbook" by ARC8 (75/100)
- 2 "Pentacorn Quest" by Robosoft (65/100)
- 3 "Eggy's Maze" by Jacco Bikker (65/100)
- 4 "Xelden Ring" by Brain Games (65/100)
- 5 "Flubber in the upside down world" by Amaury Carvalho (65/100)
- 6 "Mad House" by Gamecast Entertainment (60/100)
- 7 "Tower of Damnation" by Marcelo "BigFive" Correia (60/100)
- 8 "The Goblin" by Hicks & Mananuk (55/100)
- 9 "Uchu Yohei" by FranChesstein (55/100)
- 10 "Attack of the Petscii Robots" by Robosoft (55/100)
- 11 "The Porpoise Man" by Jose Soto (50/100)
- 12 "Global Ordnance" by Fred Rique (50/100)
- 13 "Defuse" by Gamecast Entertainment (50/100)
- 14 "Crawlers" by Pixel Phenix (45/100)

- 15 "Tenebra 2" by Haplo (40/100)
- 16 "Tetpuz" by Totta (40/100)
- 17 "Last Escape" by Fred Rique (40/100)
- 18 "Mine Command" by Fred Rique (40/100)
- 19 "Super Ory 2 - Enigma" by Orazio Cacciola and Cristiano Polenta (40/100)
- 20 "Pearl Rain" by Patrik's Retro Tech (35/100)
- 21 "Woods Rat" by Gamecast Entertainment (35/100)
- 22 "Bricks" by MoltSxalats (35/100)
- 23 "Phenix Corrupta" by Casper Croes (30/100)
- 24 "Hopper Boy" by Gamecast Entertainment (25/100)
- 25 "Vampire Slayer" by Seamsoft (25/100)
- 26 "Double Rainbow" by Hakogame (20/100)
- 27 "Martian War" by Fausto Pracek (15/100)
- 28 "Farmer's Yields" by Rio Yamamura (15/100)
- 29 "Plastic" by Z80ASMer (10/100)

BEST SOUND RANKING

- 1 "Pentacorn Quest" by Robosoft (90/100)
- 2 "The Goblin" by Hicks & Mananuk (90/100)
- 3 "Crawlers" by Pixel Phenix (80/100)
- 4 "Snake and Rhino in the sketchbook" by ARC8 (70/100)
- 5 "Eggy's Maze" by Jacco Bikker (70/100)
- 6 "Tetpuz" by Totta (70/100)
- 7 "Pearl Rain" by Patrik's Retro Tech (60/100)
- 8 "Phenix Corrupta" by Casper Croes (60/100)
- 9 "Hopper Boy" by Gamecast Entertainment (60/100)
- 10 "Xelden Ring" by Brain Games (50/100)
- 11 "Woods Rat" by Gamecast Entertainment (50/100)
- 12 "Double Rainbow" by Hakogame (50/100)

- 13 "Flubber in the upside down world" by Amaury Carvalho (45/100)
- 14 "Tower of Damnation" by Marcelo "BigFive" Correia (40/100)
- 15 "Uchu Yohei" by FranChesstein (40/100)
- 16 "Vampire Slayer" by Seamsoft (40/100)
- 17 "Tenebra 2" by Haplo (30/100)
- 18 "Super Ory 2 - Enigma" by Orazio Cacciola and Cristiano Polenta (20/100)
- 19 "Last Escape" by Fred Rique (15/100)
- 20 "Bricks" by MoltSxalats (15/100)
- 21 "The Porpoise Man" by Jose Soto (10/100)
- 22 "Mine Command" by Fred Rique (10/100)
- 23 "Attack of the Petscii Robots" by Robosoft (5/100)
- 24 "Plastic" by Z80ASMer (5/100)
- 25 "Mad House" by Gamecast Entertainment (0/100)
- 26 "Global Ordnance" by Fred Rique (0/100)
- 27 "Martian War" by Fausto Pracek (0/100)
- 28 "Farmer's Yields" by Rio Yamamura (0/100)
- 29 "Defuse" by Gamecast Entertainment (/100)

BEST GRAPHICS RANKING

- 1 "Snake and Rhino in the sketchbook" by ARC8 (90/100)
- 2 "Pentacorn Quest" by Robosoft (85/100)
- 3 "Uchu Yohei" by FranChesstein (80/100)
- 4 "Eggy's Maze" by Jacco Bikker (75/100)
- 5 "The Goblin" by Hicks & Mananuk (70/100)
- 6 "Xelden Ring" by Brain Games (70/100)
- 7 "Last Escape" by Fred Rique (65/100)
- 8 "Attack of the Petscii Robots" by Robosoft (65/100)
- 9 "Crawlers" by Pixel Phenix (60/100)
- 10 "Phenix Corrupta" by Casper Croes (60/100)

- 11 "Woods Rat" by Gamecast Entertainment (60/100)
- 12 "The Porpoise Man" by Jose Soto (60/100)
- 13 "Hopper Boy" by Gamecast Entertainment (55/100)
- 14 "Vampire Slayer" by Seamsoft (55/100)
- 15 "Tenebra 2" by Haplo (55/100)
- 16 "Mine Command" by Fred Rique (55/100)
- 17 "Mad House" by Gamecast Entertainment (50/100)
- 18 "Global Ordnance" by Fred Rique (50/100)
- 19 "Pearl Rain" by Patrik's Retro Tech (45/100)
- 20 "Flubber in the upside down world" by Amaury Carvalho (45/100)
- 21 "Bricks" by MoltSxalats (45/100)
- 22 "Tetpuz" by Totta (35/100)
- 23 "Double Rainbow" by Hakogame (25/100)
- 24 "Plastic" by Z80ASMer (25/100)
- 25 "Tower of Damnation" by Marcelo "BigFive" Correia (20/100)
- 26 "Farmer's Yields" by Rio Yamamura (15/100)
- 27 "Super Ory 2 - Enigma" by Orazio Cacciola and Cristiano Polenta (10/100)
- 28 "Martian War" by Fausto Pracek (5/100)
- 29 "Defuse" by Gamecast Entertainment (/100)

Jury Reports

For every MSXdev23 published game a written report and sub-score of each juror is printed below in the next section. The entries are arranged in order of original registration. Whenever an extra point is assigned in case of a tie, it is mentioned in the score bar.

All the printed points and texts are an unaltered 1:1 relay of the juror reports.

Hoping that we have eliminated any potential confusion or question marks, and without further ado, here are the raw jury reports – just as you like them.

#01 Pentacorn Quest



Title: Pentacorn Quest
Genre: Platform, adventure
Author(s): Robosoft
Medium: ROM 48KB
Hardware requirements: MSX1

462,5/600

Ronald Overall: 72,5 Mechanics: 65	<p>Overall:</p> <p>This one compelled me to keep coming back for more. The game boasts an appealing visual design, and the accompanying tune is delightful!</p> <p>Tech:</p> <p>Technically, there's nothing wrong with this game. The character control and collision detection are good.</p>
Danilo Overall: 80 Sound: 90	<p>Overall</p> <p>If this game had been produced in the 80s/90s, it would have become a genre classic and likely one of my favorites. It embodies a lot of the love for video games that Konami infused into its productions, and the character's style somewhat recalls that typical Konami vibe. The puzzles are well-crafted, making the game enjoyable and intriguing for the player. The graphics have a very clean style with no color overlaps among the sprites, making it a small technical masterpiece compared to the typical issues of MSX1 games! The graphics and overall feel are an improvement over the original ZX Spectrum version, while the music remains almost identical.</p> <p>Sound</p> <p>Fantastic, even though the quality comes from the original version from which the porting is derived. Despite the tune utilizing only the capabilities of the PSG processor, the melody and sounds are powerful, with extensive use of enhancing techniques such as arpeggiators, slides, etc. From the pseudo-reggae style intro, one can grasp the "sound direction of the game." In certain passages, the PSG almost doesn't pale in comparison to the more famous C64 SID. The loop never gets boring and, in fact, stimulates progression in the game's discovery. Perhaps a second tune to "break away" and provide some variation from the first would have been useful, but I understand potential RAM space constraints. The only disappointment is that I would have tried to make it slightly different from the original ZX Spectrum version, although the chips are very similar.</p>

	Overall, though, it's a truly excellent port, very polished, and extremely professional. I am very curious to see what Robosoft's next production will be like. I am still humming the tune as I wander around the house.
Robert Overall: 70 Graphics: 85	<p>Overall</p> <p>The first thing I notice when I boot this game is the amount of detail that went into everything. Okay, it's a port but one that was really well done. From the moment I see the quite well drawn title screen and the music starts playing I get pulled in. The music score consists of real earworms and has quite a European feel about it. This is absolutely not a negative remark whatsoever. It just reminds me of the European MSX 1 titles from the early and mid-eighties. The game plays smoothly and the level design is compact and well thought out. I played this game for quite some time, and I must say it is quite addictive. Each time I play I discover some new puzzles and sometimes I even manage to solve one! Overall, this game oozes quality.</p> <p>Graphics</p> <p>I always am a bit disappointed graphics-wise when I see yet another MSX1 title but Pentacorn Quest does exactly the opposite. It really amazes me in the graphics department. The graphics are very well drawn for a MSX1 title and the amount of detail that is crammed into them is simply astounding considering the limitations of the MSX1 VDP. I can see that a lot of love and dedication went into the graphics. Little things like the use of different greens in the grass and the yellow versus white in the rocks make the overall look and feel of this game quite cool. Together with small details like the animated foliage makes this game top notch? Do I really have nothing to nag about? Yeah ofcourse I do! The enemy sprites are quite adamant when it comes to their direction. They never seem to turn around. The bats are quite skilled in flying backwards and the trolls always face me directly while moving frantically sideways. Oh yes, and the player reminds me a bit too much of a certain Konami game starring an explorer and some mummies...</p>

#02 Tower of Damnation



Title: Tower of Damnation
Genre: Action, Platform
Author(s): Marcelo ""BigFive"" Correia
Medium: ROM 48KB
Hardware requirements: MSX1

235/600

Ronald Overall: 45 Mechanics: 60	Overall: Has potential. It is a clean game and easy to master. Tech: Sometimes the character does not want to go in 'stairs mode'. It sometimes walks where it should fall. To enhance gameplay, making the character's positioning less precise when aiming for the ladder.
Danilo Overall: 40 Sound: 40	Overall I see the MSX2 screen, but the game itself feels typically MSX1 to me. The graphical aspect of the game left me somewhat perplexed, with repetitive elements and sprites featuring rather limited animations. However, despite the graphical appearance, the game seems to have decent gameplay, encouraging players to keep going to rescue all the hostages. Sound This chiptune can humorously be described as the "typical PSG basic style," without undermining the harmonic or melodic intentions of the author. The potential of the PSG seems somewhat restricted, almost like composing in Basic without delving into the details of the sound processor through machine language (or assembly). Musically, the loop could become redundant over time, lacking entirely in dynamic sound levels. However, personally, I find the "second part" of the composition more appreciable, where the low registers fade, as prolonged exposure to the bass can become bothersome after a few cycles. The more arpeggiated part appears more intriguing from a musical perspective, almost departing from the "typical basic PSG style" :-). However, an annoying issue arises with the fire button press, which, aside from producing a somewhat bothersome sound and eliminating one of the 3 PSG channels (as expected), persists constantly if the pressure remains unchanged, which is sincerely very annoying. Even more frustrating, unfortunately, is precisely in the second part of the music, where the high registers of the fire button blend with those of the music. It would have been appropriate to have a sound corresponding to the saved hostage."
Robert	Overall

Overall: 30 Graphics: 20	<p>Tower of Damnation is a somewhat nice platformer with something that some people would call charm. I'm not one of these people I'm afraid. The title screen has a certain style but once you start playing it becomes obvious that you're just playing a Jet set Willy clone although a bit more polished. Walking is good, jumping is floaty as you would expect from a Jet set Willy clone and using stairs is something you have to get used to I think. The whole shooting thing is a nice addition to the 'genre' and one of the more redeeming factors in this game. The music, although not bad but not good as well, is quite in your face and made me nervous after a while. All by all a nice but somewhat mediocre game.</p> <p>Graphics</p> <p>Okay, what would happen if Jet set Willy and the font of Alien 8 and Starquake had a love baby? It would probably look like this. Not good, not bad but adequate. Like I wrote before, the title screen has a certain style about it but the graphical amazement in the game itself is limited to some repeating brick tiles and a few other basic shapes that try really hard to resemble lamps and stairs. The sprites are nicely done but lack decent animation. All by all not bad but the graphics could be far more colorful and detailed.</p>
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#03 Uchu Yohei



Title: Uchu Yohei
Genre: Platform
Author(s): FranChesstein
Medium: ROM 128KB
Hardware requirements: MSX1, 16KB

352,5/600

Ronald Overall: 67,5 Mechanics: 55	Overall: This game's simplicity and bold colors bring back memories of classic vector graphics games. It's a joy to play! Tech: The controls are crisp and responsive, making for a smooth and enjoyable gaming experience.
Danilo Overall: 70 Sound: 40	Overall I can only appreciate the refined graphic style of this game. Finally, a bit of visual exploration within the MSX platform style that nods to current trends in stylistic research in contemporary gaming. Straight and orthogonal lines well characterize the entire game world, and I must say that the gameplay is also quite high, except for occasional levels of "bastard" difficulty. A feast for the eyes and more. Sound The intro music is a bomb. Very much in the style of high-quality chiptune; perhaps the only drawback is the somewhat overwhelming presence of the arpeggiator. I would have introduced occasional breaks to give the ear some rest. Unfortunately, the absence of tunes within the game, although the sound effects are above average, forces me to lower the score. However, I am confident that with a bit more effort, if RAM allows, the game could have gained even more depth, although silence can sometimes be a value, especially in contexts simulating nature.
Robert Overall: 40 Graphics: 80	Overall Uchu Yohei is like a relationship. At first there is a big physical attraction. You fall in love with the looks of this game and you want to spend time with it. You have a great time together but after some time you're beginning to notice that the game has some issues. It is incredibly hard and unforgiving but because it looks so great you decide to keep on playing for now. Then... your first real fight! You get frustrated with the game's mechanics such as the almost non-

	<p>avoidable jump at the end of stairs and the fact that it is really hard to aim your jump while the game demands really precise jumping to catch certain capsules. The fights get more often, and frustration builds up. Why do I instantly die when I touch something! Do I really have to do this whole thing all over? And finally, you decide to end the relationship when you notice some flaws in the map where you can't go on but can't return either. This is the point you press the reset button and be done with it.</p> <p>Okay, I may seem a bit harsh but that's intentionally. I really think this is a nice game but it has many flaws. The jumping is not intuitive at all so making a precise jump to obtain an item is hard as hell and the one hit deaths (by the scenery, the enemies are more forgiving luckily) make it a chore to play after a while, although with some polishing and a continue option this could become a true gem.</p> <p>Graphics</p> <p>Wow! This game has some interesting graphics I must say You could even call this an art style. The whole design is really minimalistic and stylized and the has a certain early vector look like the Vectrex. The animation is really well drawn and detailed. I love the jumping pose of the player for example. So simple but so well designed. Furthermore, I adore the details like the little random flowers and the twinkling of the deadly poison (at least I think it is poison because I died a lot from it). All by all a worthy contestant at least graphics-wise.</p>
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#04 Pearl Rain



Title: Pearl Rain
Genre: Puzzle
Author(s): Patrik's Retro Tech
Medium: ROM 32KB
Hardware requirements: MSX1, 16KB

335/600

Ronald Overall: 55 Mechanics: 35	Overall: Simple, but nice matching game. Love the tune. Tech: A more visually eye-catching animation when new dots appear after a match could have resulted in bonus tech points.
Danilo Overall: 70 Sound: 60	Overall This is a classic puzzle game where you assemble color bubbles, and there's no room for error. The game is mentally relaxing and fun at the same time. However, there could have been some improvement in the graphic aspect, which, in my opinion, is lacking in several respects. The color choice for the bubbles doesn't seem to be optimal, especially considering some of the more current and desirable accessibility standards. Occasionally, there may be situations where there are no solution possibilities due to the random cascade of bubbles, and this could have been an area for improvement. Sound The game lacks any kind of sound effects, which would have been useful to "signal" what is happening (e.g., bombs). However, the accompanying music is well-crafted and accompanies the game from the beginning to the end of sessions. The melodic composition is very interesting, featuring positive chords. It is relaxing yet stimulating, with good use of special sound techniques. It doesn't become tiresome.
Robert Overall: 70 Graphics: 45	Overall Pearl Rain is a charming game. A very charming game even. It's unpretentiously fun and I love it for that. It's one of those games that you boot up once in a while, play for a couple of rounds and have a great time while doing so. The music is nice, controlling the game is easy and the interface is clear and simple. So It's a perfect game then? No, not by a long shot! The placement of the pearls seems quite random so a bit of luck is involved which is a bit of a letdown in my opinion. It makes the game feel unfair sometimes. Furthermore, I don't think that the game would suffer from a bit of falling animation. Sometimes it's a bit unclear

	<p>what's happening on screen after you make a combination because everything happens in an instance.</p>
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	<p>Graphics</p>
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	<p>The game looks nice with a somewhat Greek theme. I think Columns was somewhat of an influence while making this design choice. The graphics are nice and clear but simple. The whole presentation could have been better if given a bit more attention. The title screen could use a nice Greek mural as a backdrop for example and the borders of the interface are all just in one color. A bit of white highlights here and there would give the whole play screen a bit of punch that it needs. The pearls are monochrome as well. I know of the MSX1 color limitations ofcourse, but they could have looked far better with some additional colors or different shapes.</p>
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#05 Super Ory 2 - Enigma



Title: Super Ory 2 - Enigma
Genre: Adventure, puzzle
Author(s): Orazio Cacciola and Cristiano Polenta
Medium: ROM 512KB
Hardware requirements: MSX2

167,5/600

Ronald Overall: 37,5 Mechanics: 40	<p>Overall:</p> <p>This game is a little bit rough around the edges but has potential!</p> <p>Tech:</p> <p>Character controls are pretty responsive. Too bad the loading of screens isn't faster; it takes the rhythm out of the game.</p>
Danilo Overall: 30 Sound: 20	<p>Overall</p> <p>The game appears to be interesting in its heterogeneity and level diversification. However, I was compelled to watch it on YouTube. It nods to old adventures, presenting elements that almost seem crafted with Basic. There's a special note for the typography, which seems to wink at contemporary alternative/underground font styles. Yet, as with certain sound results, it's unclear whether the effect is intentional or random.</p> <p>I am very undecided in the evaluation, there are some elements that give me a sense of "contemporary underground approach."</p> <p>Sound</p> <p>Regrettably, to be candid, the music is simply hard to listen. Nevertheless, in the grand scheme of things, it turns out to be consistent in its unlistenability, a peculiar outcome that paradoxically adds character to the overall play, even though it's challenging to endure the discordant chords. It's not entirely clear whether this is a deliberate artistic choice or a randomness dictated by a potentially deeper exploration.</p>
Robert Overall: 30 Graphics: 10	<p>Overall</p> <p>Okay, this is a hard one for me. Why you ask? Well, because I can't find any redeeming factors about this game I'm afraid. I see that a lot of time and effort went into this game but the result is well... sub-par. The two authors of this game went for an adventure-style game and in that they succeeded but the executions leave a lot of things to be desired. Besides the language barrier (the English translation is understandable but has a lot of grammatical errors) the game's story is quite nice but the execution is not what it should</p>

be which is a shame because I really like the genre. I couldn't get past the first screen and trust me, I tried.

Graphics

What to say about the graphics without hurting any feelings? Okay, I see a lot of time and effort went into the graphics but the results are disappointing. The font is inconsistent and hard to read, the graphics are crude in execution and the use of color is abysmal. Harsh? Yes. Too harsh? No, I don't think so. I want to end this review by giving the authors some tips. Please have a look at some classic games. Skin is for example never a hard pink but often a light brown/beige and big set-pieces (like mountains) are never only one color but use more to create details like shadows and highlights. If the authors don't have any graphic skills themselves maybe they can find someone who does because the game really suffers from the lack of decent graphics. Sorry...

#06 Mad House



Title: Mad House

Genre: Platform

Author(s): Gamecast Entertainment

Medium: DSK 720KB

Hardware requirements: MSX2, 128KB, MSX-Music

258/600

+3 points tie break with Hopperboy

Ronald Overall: 65 Mechanics: 60	Overall: Had to get used to the game play... Sometimes the character didn't pick up the loot, love the music. Tech: Makes clever use of the sprite limitations.
Danilo Overall: 30 Sound: -	Overall This video game is a bit peculiar because it seems like a mash-up of various disparate elements. Starting from the initial intro screen where the graphics appear replicated from other sources (excessive pixel anti-aliasing typical of digitization), and even the child character seems to stylistically come from different realms. The game itself combines mismatched graphics and music, and the music selection mode nods to yet another style. It all seems very inconsistent, more of a training exercise than an actual project. I prefer games that are less flashy but more stylistically coherent, even in the simplicity of possible solutions. Sound I've never been able to fully appreciate the sounds of the FM-PAC, but I must say that in this case, Airborne and Foxlair seem to have done a good job, pushing the capabilities of this sound cartridge to an excellent level. Finally, a music selection mode where I could appreciate not only the cameo to The Godfather's music in level #4 but also the exact replication (level #5) of one of my tracks from 1990 titled "Total Parody Orchestra," which was included as the last track on the Audio Wave #3 demo disk! Aaaarghhh!!!! Can we get at least a mention, guys? Anyway, musically commendable. I'm not sure how well the music aligns with the game's style, though.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>note: as jurors are excluded to participate, Danilo can't rate his own music and therefor the sound score is undecided.</i>
Robert Overall: Graphics:	<p>Overall</p> <p>Okay, one of the MSX Dev regulars is back with another new game. After booting the game, we get treated to a nice and colorful Gamecast logo followed by a nice title screen. The music is nice and reminds me of the old Dutch scene music from the 90's. Gamecast has made a frantic cat and mouse platformer where you have to steal bags of money and load it into your car. Do this 5 times and the level is done. Stealing 5 bags is a bit too much for my taste and it even got a bit boring after bag 3. Level 2 wants you to steal 10 bags of money but is not any more difficult than level 1, So the challenge here is more one of perseverance than of skill. Nice game to play in short bursts but gets tedious after 10- minutes or so.</p> <p>Graphics</p> <p>At first glance, Mad House looks really nice. The graphics are colorful although I don't feel any love for the title screen and the Gamecast logo because they look quite digitized. The character on the title screen was somewhat familiar and I traced it back to a stock photo site. The in-game graphics on the other hand are quite nice but remind me A LOT of Mappy. Maybe this game was an inspiration graphics-wise. The sprites are lovely drawn and the background graphics are quite nice as well.</p>

#07 Martian War



Title: Martian War
Genre: Arcade
Author(s): Fausto Pracek
Medium: ROM 16KB
Hardware requirements: MSX2

100/600

Ronald Overall: 30 Mechanics: 15	Overall: Space invaders reimagined. Tech: The game doesn't run as smooth as I would have hoped. You can see the 'Martians' slowing down when then humans fire their defensive cannon.
Danilo Overall: 20 Sound: 0	Overall It appears to be a game programmed in Basic, with all the limitations that this can entail. While it's an appreciable experiment, the gameplay aspect is lacking. Sound Absent
Robert Overall: 30 Graphics: 5	Overall Just as I thought that I've seen everything Fausto surprises me with a MSX2 game made in screen 0. Isn't there anything sacred anymore? Martian War is a Galaxian clone if there ever was one. This totally silent game does exactly what a Galaxian clone is supposed to do; Shoot down those pesky aliens before they kill all the poor earthlings that are so scared they can't move a muscle. Luckily for them a triangle-shaped plane is here to protect them from the invaders and will obliterate all the alien scumbags with huge barrages of 1 missile at the time. Martian War is a very basic game. Calling it a game even is a bit farfetched. I would rather say It's some kind of 'proof of concept' or at most some kind of small game on a BBS. Graphics Graphics? What graphics? Were there graphics? Okay, there are some basic shapes on screen but to call these graphics is giving them far too much credit. Next!

#08 Flubber in the upside down world



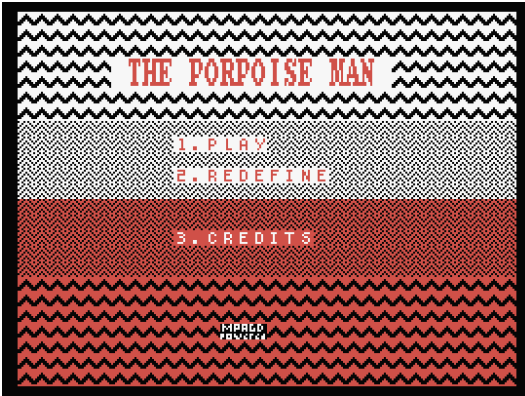
Title: Flubber in the upside down world
Genre: Arcade
Author(s): Amaury Carvalho
Medium: ROM 48KB
Hardware requirements: MSX1, 16KB

292,5/600

Ronald Overall: 62,5 Mechanics: 65	Overall: It took me a while to understand the object of the game. very clever! I enjoyed playing this! Tech: The delayed character and increased out-of-sync mirror world make this a challenging game.
Danilo Overall: 50 Sound: 45	Overall The game opens up very nicely graphically, with the typical 8-bit style graphics being quite interesting, and an overall cute feel. However, I have the feeling that the gameplay might pose issues in the long run, and perhaps some better balancing would have been advisable. Sound The intro music is quite interesting and cute, but within the game, after a while, the sound approach seems to break. The main issue with this track is the use of only high-pitched sounds. The effects blend with the notes, and at times, the overall effect is a bit confusing. It's a fairly typical approach in old video games, but I've never truly appreciated it, even though I don't dislike the genre.
Robert Overall: 30 Graphics: 45	Overall When I read the description of Flubber in the upside down world I got a bit excited. Was this some kind of arcade take on Binary Land? That would be really nice! And on paper It's a really nice idea. But translated to a game it just doesn't work for me. The whole jumping part of this game is flawed and gets old after a while. You can make the player(s) jump just a bit and really high. Why you would like to jump just a bit is (still) a mystery to me. The sprite on top jumps first and after he lands the bottom sprite jumps so you always have to jump twice to cross any obstacle. Solution is to just hold the spacebar pressed down and start running to the right. When the screen stops scrolling just stop jumping for a while and keep proceeding to the right. Graphics

	<p>The graphics in this game are just a bit beyond average. There are some nice details such as the moving clouds but the obstacles are made with just a stacked 8x8 tile which gives this game quite a basic look and feel. I love the player sprite but some walking animations wouldn't hurt anyone. All by all a nice look and feel but nothing really mind blowing.</p>
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#09 The Porpoise Man



Title: The Porpoise Man

Genre: Adventure

Author(s): Jose Soto

Medium: FDD 720KB

Hardware requirements: MSX1, 16KB

300/600

Ronald Overall: 60 Mechanics: 50	Overall: Fun to play and I like that I could redefine the keys. Tech: The game looks very busy, and the characters are sometimes hard to see. Also, the character seems to be able to walk where it shouldn't.
Danilo Overall: 80 Sound: 40	Overall With maturity comes an appreciation for projects that might have been loved less in younger years. The Porpoise Man intrigued me from the start, especially with the intro screen crafted with "ethnic" patterns that seem anything but random. The game is rich in atmosphere and style. I highly appreciated the color palette, the "blocky" style with abundant details that captivate and characterize the journey. There are also some interesting details, like the water bubbles trailing behind the first boss or some unexpected scenarios. The typography is also quite captivating, and the initial setup hints at a decent backstory. Sound Unfortunately, it's only on the sound side that the game seems a bit lacking. The highly positive aspect of the soundtrack is that, unlike other projects, it tries to narrate something and has a somewhat narrative quality compared to typical chiptune music. Even the boss music is not bad (almost like a simplified dubstep). The problem is that it becomes overly repetitive. While not tiring due to its slowness, a more varied sonic approach would have added more vigor to the game.
Robert Overall: 40 Graphics: 60	Overall What to say about The Porpoise Man. I have such mixed feelings about this one. The game has nice music, the graphics are good and everything plays smoothly. This could be a very nice action RPG but it isn't. Why? Because it's hard. Purposely too hard. Some enemies move too randomly and together with the stage layout a lot of luck is involved. When You die because the same crab grabs you for the 10'the time because he moves and jumps at

random it get really frustrating. And when you finally cross that screen you enter the next screen where there are two of these bastard crabs. And yes I know I can shoot... once... To make a long story short, I didn't enjoy playing this game. This could be a great game when making it more forgiving. Checkpoints or a nice continue option would help but this game is made to frustrate the player on purpose and that's never fun unless you are some kind of masochist which I'm not.

Graphics

The graphics look fairly nice. They reminded me a bit of the MSX 1 version of Romancia by Falcom. There are little details in the background which is always nice and the whole look of the game is colorful and inviting. Some enemies are somewhat hidden in the background so you have to be really careful sometimes. I didn't care much for the title screen with all the patterns though.

#10 Defuse [disqualified]



Title: Defuse
Genre: Arcade
Author(s): Gamecast Entertainment
Medium: FDD 720KB
Hardware requirements: MSX1

117,5/600

Ronald Overall: 67,5 Mechanics: 50	Overall: Very clever game. I kept going back to see if I could beat my last score. Tech: Not rated as it is disqualified.
Danilo Overall: - Sound: -	Not rated as it is disqualified
Robert Overall: - Graphics: -	Disqualified so I won't look at it.

#11 Mine Command



Title: Mine Command

Genre: Action

Author(s): Fred Rique

Medium: ROM 48KB

Hardware requirements: MSX1, 16KB

245/600

Ronald Overall: 50 Mechanics: 40	Overall: This game reminds me a bit of Atari missile command. I miss the accuracy in the crosshair control. Tech: This incoming missiles seem to have a predetermined path. This makes it a bit easier to intercept.
Danilo Overall: 30 Sound: 10	Overall I'm sorry, but I genuinely struggle to understand the purpose of this game. It seems more like an experiment in comparative game design, in contrast to the more historic Missile Command. Unfortunately, it turns out, sorry to say, less interesting and enjoyable than the classic game. Placing mines feels somewhat like betting on the pseudo-random movements of bombs and doesn't replicate the coordination needed in the old game. After a few stages (the game starts off pulling its punches), lines of mines are introduced, and that's pretty much it. I don't quite grasp the meaning behind it. It's a shame because aesthetically and in terms of atmosphere, it's pretty good. More variation in the game design ideas, had added more interest. Sound Sonically, there's little to say—few effects, functional for the game, with the enemy explosion sound being a bit too stressful.
Robert Overall: 60 Graphics: 55	Overall Mine command is missile command with mines instead of missiles. DUH! Missile command always made me somewhat nervous and Mine command is no different but that only says something about my gaming preferences and nothing about the quality of this game. The quality of this game is actually quite high. There's a story with some explanation in the manual which explains all the game mechanics quite well. They even make all the mechanics seems logical because they are all written in as part of the story. Liked that a lot.

	<p>The only drawback of this game is the fact that the incoming alien ships move a bit diagonally over a 8x8 grid which make placing mines somewhat a guessing game at times.</p> <p>Graphics</p> <p>The graphics are basic but do the job just fine. Nothing world changing but the subtle graphical changes between levels were a nice surprise. It's very clear what is what so I will keep this very short by saying that I enjoyed the graphics and that they are fairly good and detailed considering it is a MSX 1 game.</p>
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#12 Vampire Slayer



Title: Vampire Slayer
Genre: Adventure
Author(s): Seamsoft
Medium: ROM 32KB
Hardware requirements: MSX1, 16KB

225/600

Ronald Overall: 30 Mechanics: 25	Overall: This game has more than meets the eye. A shooter and a maze combined. Tech: The sprite restrictions show at some points of the game.
Danilo Overall: 30 Sound: 40	Overall I'm not quite sure what to say about this video game. It has some interesting aspects, but overall lacks a compelling element. It could benefit from some improvement in gameplay and strategic elements. The graphics are decent but could be made more captivating with a few additions. Overall, there is room for growth and enhancement. Sound The melody is pleasant, despite some off-key notes that seem out of place. The main issue is its repetitiveness. However, the musical style, an interesting blend of Balkan music and chiptune, adds a unique touch to the game. The use of PSG is moderately interesting; it could be utilized better to vary the track and make it less monotonous.
Robert Overall: 45 Graphics: 55	Overall This is again one of those games that make me nervous. This Operation Wolf-style game uses static screens where you have to shoot all the baddies to advance. In the meantime, these enemies nibble your health bar away so there's a continuous pressure to hurry up! Overall, the gameplay is nice. Heck, I even made it to level 3 so there must be some redeeming qualities right? The only drawback is the lack of strategy involved. These creatures keep reducing your health and there is nothing much you can do about that except for killing them as fast as possible. With a little bit of extra development time, this could really be a nice addition to the ever growing MSX library. Graphics

	<p>The graphics are nothing special. It's not particularly beautiful but not particularly awful as well. The only problem I have with the graphics that they tried to use a tile as a pixel to get a bit of depth in the playing area. Nothing wrong with that ofcourse but some dedicated tiles to make the diagonals less 8x8 pixel-like would not harm the overall look and feel.</p>
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#13 Bricks

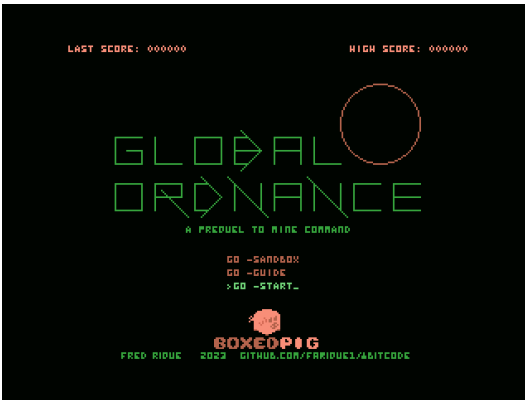


Title: Bricks
Genre: Arcade
Author(s): MoltSxalats
Medium: DSK 720KB
Hardware requirements: MSX2, 128KB, MSX-Music

172,5/600

Ronald Overall: 27,5 Mechanics: 35	Overall: It's a very slow game, but I can see why it might work with some performance improvements. Tech: Character can stand on bricks that aren't there. To load up with extra jump power takes a long time.
Danilo Overall: 20 Sound: 15	Overall This game requires numerous improvements, starting with responsiveness. Sound A well-balanced FM sound landscape, but... where is the harmony? All out of tune !
Robert Overall: 30 Graphics: 45	Overall The first thing I notice after booting this game is the terrible music. Maybe It's the emulation doing something wrong but the song is playing extremely out of tune. But hey, I'm not here for the music. This game is meant as an arcade game but the lack of speed makes it a chore to play it. I quit after playing 3 levels. Too slow for my taste I'm afraid. Graphics. Wow, screen 7 is used. That's a screen that is not very common when it comes to MSX 2 games. The sprite animation is quite nice especially in the title screen. The in-game graphics can only be called basic. They do what they should do but nothing more. There is no real graphical amazement to be had in this title. That's a shame because with a little effort this game could be much nicer on the eyes.

#14 Global Ordnance



Title: Global Ordnance

Genre: Simulation

Author(s): Fred Rique

Medium: ROM 128KB

Hardware requirements: MSX1, 64KB

185/600

Ronald Overall: 10 Mechanics: 50	Overall: Only certain individuals will find the challenges and complexities of this game appealing. Unfortunately, I am not such a person. Tech: I am convinced that creating this simulation took a lot of effort, and I applaud your dedication.
Danilo Overall: 25 Sound: 0	Overall A strategic game with textual input, potentially interesting, but really hard to start to play. Sound No music/sound no value
Robert Overall: 50 Graphics: 50	Okay... this one is really hard to write. I somewhat know that here is a really fantastic game hidden in this beautiful mess of incomprehensible commands but I cannot seem to find the appeal yet. This game intrigued me a lot and I tried to play it on and off the last couple of weeks but I still don't know what this game really is about. I can only say that an interface that solely relies on command line entries is somewhat a letdown for me. A good GUI with a menu structure could really help me to unravel the mysteries of this game. Please redesign the interface and submit a version 2 next year. I really think that there's a beautiful game underneath all these commands! Graphics The graphics are basic but in a good way. They 'hide' the MSX 1 restrictions quite well. I can only see that this is a MSX 1 title by looking at the colors used. This is ofcourse due to the minimalistic style of the graphics but they fit the sci-fi theme quite well. It's only a shame I have the feeling that I've seen only a small portion of the game's graphics yet but I keep trying.

#15 Eggy's Maze



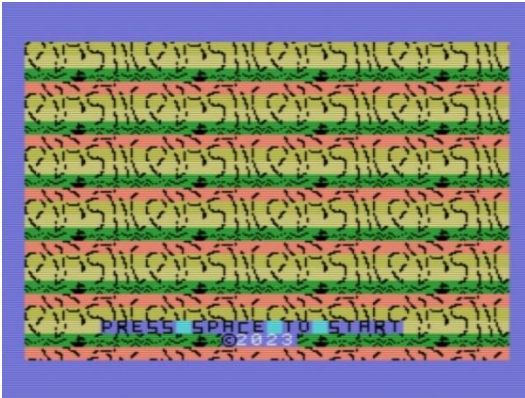
Title: Eggy's Maze
Genre: Puzzle
Author(s): Jacco Bikker
Medium: ROM 48KB
Hardware requirements: MSX2

432,5/600

Ronald Overall: 62,5 Mechanics: 65	Overall: I like this one... super fun to play. Tech: The smooth scroll is very good. Controls are responsive and collision detection is on par!
Danilo Overall: 80 Sound: 70	Overall Wonderful graphics, intelligent puzzles, and a genuinely intriguing overall aesthetic. I truly appreciate this genre of productions; they almost reach the level of some of the retro-gaming from PlayStation or Xbox consoles. Sound The music is straightforward but contributes the right carefree atmosphere to the production. The PSG is used functionally within the context. Perhaps a bit more variety would have benefited the gameplay system. Functional effects and overall sound are very well-balanced.
Robert Overall: 80 Graphics: 75	Overall Oh yes... Eggy's maze... I really enjoyed this one. I always liked Eggerland-style games and this one definitely is such a game. It's a level-based puzzle game with a lot of atmosphere. I really enjoyed this little details in this game but the main attraction is the gameplay ofcourse. The puzzles are very well thought out and I was compelled to play on and on. The only thing I could (and will) nag about is the fact that it is sometimes a bit unclear where the player can walk and not. Graphics The graphics are nothing special, but they have a certain charm. I loved the animation of the player and the little subtle animations such as the water and birds flying over make this a true atmospheric experience. The game looks a bit blocky at times which is to be

	expected in a puzzle game, but this could have been masked a bit by adding some more organic shapes or breaking free from the 8x8 tile logic.
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#16 Plastic



Title: Plastic
Genre: Simulation
Author(s): Z80ASMer
Medium: ROM 32KB
Hardware requirements: MSX1, 8KB

92,5/600

Ronald Overall: 17,5 Mechanics: 10	Overall: I totally agree with the core idea behind this game. Tech: The game could benefit from several enhancements to elevate the overall experience. Consider improving the cursor control, graphics, and sound to make the game more engaging.
Danilo Overall: 20 Sound: 5	Overall It's a kind of digital performative net-art? I can't understand which is the focus of the game Graphics are strangely interesting, but really guys, I can't enjoy moving that shape, sorry. Sound The music taken from the suite n° 3 in D major by Johann Sebastian Bach, seems to be made in basic programming: kind of tune like old casio watch ringtones. Mmmmmhhhhh.....
Robert Overall: 15 Graphics: 25	Overall I will keep this one very short. I didn't enjoy this game a bit. The gameplay is jerky, everything moves quite slow and the flickering almost made me cry. Sorry guys... Graphics The graphics in this game are really crude. There is big player sprite that is drawn quickly with a mouse and not being fine-tuned afterwards. Not everyone is an artist (trust me I know) but this one scores really slow even when considering that this is an amateur game.

#17 Hopper Boy



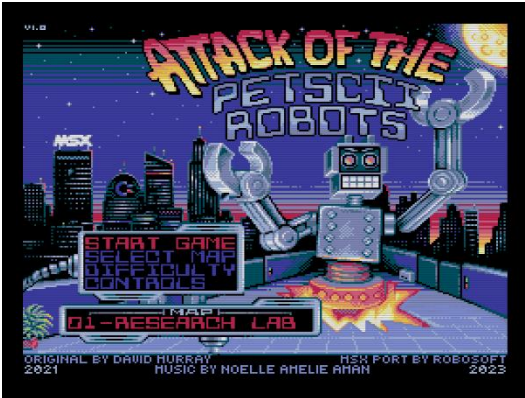
Title: Hopper Boy
Genre: Arcade
Author(s): Gamecast Entertainment
Medium: DSK 720KB
Hardware requirements: MSX1, disk drive

225/600

Ronald Overall: 35 Mechanics: 25	Overall: Like the concept, and love the music. Tech: Character could have been a bit more responsive and the enemies should have a bit more intelligence.
Danilo Overall: 40 Sound: 60	Overall This is a simple game, with very MSX1 look like style, with a very good music track. I like the general sense, but after a while perhaps could became a little repetitive... Sound Wow! Right from the initial screen, the musical sense is excellent. The stage music is very adventurous and provides an excellent balance of PSG, without overdoing it. It's a shame because a few other tracks would have greatly enhanced the overall feel.
Robert Overall: 40 Graphics: 55	Overall Hopper Boy looks and feels as a very basic MSX 1 game. The gameplay is (too) easy and becomes tedious after a short while. The idea of this game is actually not bad but the executions leaves a lot to be desired. I was never really threatened by the enemies and the only thing that changed during the levels was the amount of diamonds I had to collect. That's not the way to make a game fun. Furthermore, there is absolutely no AI in the enemies. They just move from left to right and back again. They do not chase you nor do they pose a threat in any other way. Graphics The graphics look nice for a MSX 1 game. More could be done ofcourse but for such a tiny arcade game they do the job just fine. I liked the diagonal background. They somewhat

	elevate the graphics beyond average. The animation of the sprites is not really good. Only two steps of animation does not make a convincing walking player I'm afraid.
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#18 Attack of the Petscii Robots



Title: Attack of the Petscii Robots

Genre: Strategy

Author(s): Robosoft

Medium: ROM 2MB

Hardware requirements: MSX1, V9990, OPL4

280/600

Ronald Overall: 55 Mechanics: 55	<p>Overall:</p> <p>Nice port, feels solid. Unlike other games, this game masterfully gives out goodies in a way that effectively enhances player retention.</p> <p>Tech:</p> <p>A smoother scroll would have helped and the character's movements can sometimes be a bit imprecise, causing it to go past the intended location.</p>
Danilo Overall: 50 Sound: 5	<p>Overall</p> <p>A MSX1 game with nice graphics in v9990, but doesn't fully exploit the potential of the platform. The scrolling is a bit stiff, although the colors and patterns are interesting.</p> <p>Sound</p> <p>No music, no value. The sounds are very basic.</p>
Robert Overall: 50 Graphics: 65	<p>Overall</p> <p>Oh wow! A GFX9K game! I was really looking forward to playing this title. The screenshots were looking somewhat cool so I really wanted to try this one. At first glance the game looks great. After booting the game, I got treated with a nice and colorful title screen but when I started playing the game my enthusiasm was quickly tempered by what I experienced. Okay, the game looks nice but scrolling is done with instances of 16 pixels which is sub-par considering this is a GFX9K game.</p> <p>Graphics</p> <p>The graphics are ported from the Amiga version of this game and only use 16 colors and some basic animation frames. The GFX9K can handle a lot more and a bit more graphical amazement would not hurt anyone. What we get on screen is nice but is not beyond the graphical capabilities of a plain MSX 2. And what do I see? Doom guy? A missed opportunity. This could be far better.</p>

#19 Woods Rat



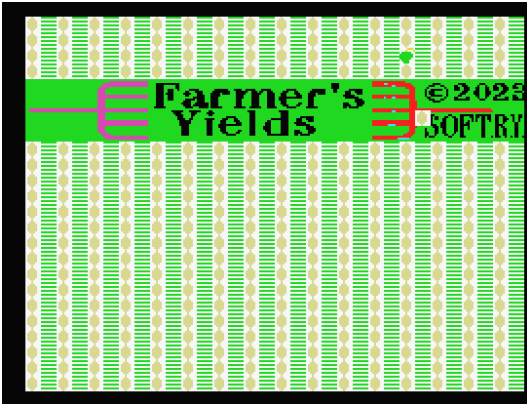
Title: Woods Rat
Genre: Arcade
Author(s): Gamecast Entertainment
Medium: DSK 720KB
Hardware requirements: MSX1, disk drive

285/600

Ronald Overall: 45 Mechanics: 35	Overall: The game's deceptively simple design belies its captivating charm, and the viewport approach effectively enhances the gameplay experience. Tech: Consider implementing a smooth scroll, less busy looking mase and smarter opponents.
Danilo Overall: 40 Sound: 50	Overall A simple maze game with unremarkable scrolling. Sound The intro music is very intriguing due to the tones it employs, utilizing only the PSG processor with echo effects and simulated filters. GameCast's musical productions are quite interesting; even the in-game music is really charming with a good utilization of the processor's capabilities, in a pure chiptune style. I've read from Robert's reviews that the music seems to be derivative: personally, I didn't recognize similar tunes, but if that's the case, it would be the same method used for Mad House... a bit sad.
Robert Overall: 55 Graphics: 60	Overall Another Gamecast production. This time it's a MSX 1 maze-like game that plays as to be expected. Some music tracks sounded a bit too familiar and I suspect that they are ports or covers from other games. Nonetheless there is some fun to be had with this game although not for hours on end because the gameplay is just too basic and repetitive for that. Graphics These graphics look nice but familiar. Maybe a bit too familiar... They have an obvious Pippols-vibe. I checked and found out that they were not ripped from, but probably inspired by this game. The overall look and feel of the graphics are good but a few more

	in-game tiles would really help this title. Every wall looks the same which is ofcourse not a bad thing but it makes the game look less impressive.
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#20 Farmer's Yields



Title: Farmer's Yields
Genre: Arcade
Author(s): Rio Yamamura
Medium: ROM 32KB
Hardware requirements: MSX1, 16KB

70/600

Ronald Overall: 10 Mechanics: 15	Overall: This game is work in progress. Tech: I get an headache just looking at the screen.. Just using different graphics would be a huge improvement.
Danilo Overall: 20 Sound: 15	Overall Memory game very simply Sound No music, no score
Robert Overall: 20 Graphics: 15	Overall It's memory. Just plain old memory. Nice for small children but not so much for players beyond the age of 6. Graphics. There is no graphical fun to be had with this game. Everything looks below average and no real effort went into these pixelated fruits. Even the big font that is used is just a cropped PC font that was converted to MSX 1 without any retouching which make it look really awful. Sorry guys...

#21 Last Escape



Title: Last Escape
Genre: Point-and-click adventure
Author(s): Fred Rique
Medium: ROM 128KB
Hardware requirements: MSX1, 16KB, (mouse)
Status: Published

257,5/600

Ronald Overall: 27,5 Mechanics: 40	Overall: I appreciate the detailed world of this adventure game, even if the pace is a bit slow. Tech: The graphics are quite good. Mouse-cursor overshoots when using keys. I'd have added KB shortcuts to the different actions. Hidden items and loot could be hinted at, making players curious and wanting to explore more.
Danilo Overall: 40 Sound: 15	Overall Point+Click game with nice MSX1 graphics Sound Music like this has no sense for an exploring and click+point game like this. Sorry but just after few minutes, the loop became stressing, and you need to get down or off the volume. It's just a start ?
Robert Overall: 70 Graphics: 65	Overall A point and click game for MSX 1. Who could have dreamt that! Luckily for us Fred Rique did just that and the result is a really nice new MSX title. The point and click genre is one that is not often seen on the MSX due to the system's limitations but this game proves that a game like this is really possible even on MSX 1. Everything runs smoothly and the GUI is clear and easy to understand. Graphics I see graphics. Real graphics. Good graphics. Graphics that are bigger than one or two tiles. This is really a work of love. Everything looks nice and polished, the animation is decent and there are a lot of unique rooms to explore with all different graphics. I think a lot of work went into them and it really pays off.

#22 The Goblin



Title: The Goblin
Genre: Platform, Arcade
Author(s): Hicks & Mananuk
Medium: ROM 48KB
Hardware requirements: MSX1

417,5/600

Ronald Overall: 62,5 Mechanics: 25	Overall: Pleasantly surprised. I am not a sprite fan, but in this case, they were used in a correct way. The graphics could have been a bit cleaner, but overall, the game feels solid. Tech: The game's character control and collision detection are both well-implemented and responsive.
Danilo Overall: 70 Sound: 90	Overall A very charming and enjoyable MSX1 game to play. At the time, it would have been a must-have. Sound Well done, McRaymond! The music for the game stage is fantastic and sets the exact atmosphere for a game like this: the rhythm is fast with a kind of mix between "Dracula" style music and folk music. Despite the music looping, it never gets boring. The bonus stage is also very nice and breaks the loop. Different special techniques for glissando, vibrato, and music arpeggiators are used in the stage. Perhaps two soundtracks wouldn't have hurt. Excellent chiptune! The overall style is perfect for each section of the game. I hum it as I walk through the studio.
Robert Overall: 70 Graphics: 70	Overall This frantic arcade game is oodles of fun! The game plays like a dream and everyone should play this one to death. As you can read I am quite positive about this game. It just oozes quality. Movement is great, music has a nice ring to it and the level design is well thought out. Sorry but I gonna play some more... Bye! Graphics

	<p>The overall look and feel of the game is quite nice. Top notch MSX 1 pixel quality on this one. The game uses the MSX color restrictions and makes it like it doesn't exist at all. So, a perfect ten then? Nope! I felt little love for the title screen and the font is somewhat hard to read but everything else is really to my liking.</p>
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#23 Double Rainbow



Title: Double Rainbow
Genre: Puzzle
Author(s): Hakogame
Medium: ROM 128KB
Hardware requirements: MSX1

212,5/600

Ronald Overall: 37,5 Mechanics: 20	Overall: The idea of the game is cool, but I'm having trouble figuring out how to play it well. Tech: Perhaps a different choice of colors would make it a bit better to see which tile connects to other tiles? Sometimes the controls are not as responsive.
Danilo Overall: 50 Sound: 50	Overall An interesting and perhaps new concept for a puzzle game based on chromatic associations. Sound The music and sound are very basic but functional for the type of game. I appreciate this minimalist approach to game design. In this case, the music and images attempt an almost synesthetic or perceptual association.
Robert Overall: 30 Graphics: 25	Overall This game is probably lots of fun but I can't seem to find any I'm afraid. There must be some logic in this whole selecting colors thing but I just don't see it. The whole color selecting thing is strange and the could have used numbers or shapes to make it more understandable because the way the game is now it just frustrates me. I truly believe some people will love this game but I am not one of them. Graphics. The graphics are nicely done albeit a little bit too basic for my taste. The Hakogame logo made me very glad and gave me hope for the rest of the game. The title screen has some potential but the overall look and feel of it just feels uninspired. A different font or a real logo could have lifted this a lot. The in game graphics are quite basic as well. They serve a

	purpose and they do that but they are not especially pleasing to the eyes. I understand the graphical limitations of the MSX 1 but a lot more could be done with these graphics.
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#24 Tenebra 2



Title: Tenebra 2
Genre: Puzzle
Author(s): Haplo
Medium: ROM 32KB
Hardware requirements: MSX1, 8KB

347,5/600

Ronald Overall: 77,5 Mechanics: 40	Overall: Impressive game! I appreciate the simplicity of the sound and graphics. In my opinion, it possesses all the elements that contribute to an enjoyable and challenging gaming experience. Tech: While the game functions adequately in its current state, implementing a smooth scroll could have elevated its technical score.
Danilo Overall: 80 Sound: 30	Overall Very minimalist game with a super intelligent puzzle game design that can create some addiction! Sound Sounds are minimal too, and they are limited to movement and interaction of the character within the context, but the general effect is not bad, remembering a little the famous "boulder dash" game.
Robert Overall: 65 Graphics: 55	Overall My first impression of this game was bad. Really bad. I hated this game because I hadn't read the manual properly so when it came to reviewing this game I had my knives ready to dissect this game. Then, I read the manual properly at last... Wow, this game is actually quite well thought out and I found myself playing it for hours on end. Looks can be deceiving and a first impression is sometimes not the best thing to go on. Tenebra 2 is a really nice puzzle meets dungeon crawler game. The level design is really clever and the different mechanics make it sometimes very hard to solve a level. Loved this game very much at second sight. Graphics

	<p>The graphic design is sober. Very sober even. Only black and white is used so no problem porting the game to every known system. The minimal graphics are actually a clever design choice. The black and white, together with the shimmering light effect really gives this game some atmosphere and uniqueness. So... minimal graphics that resemble the ASCII character set and some basic animation can still make a great game. Who knew...</p>
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#25 Crawlers



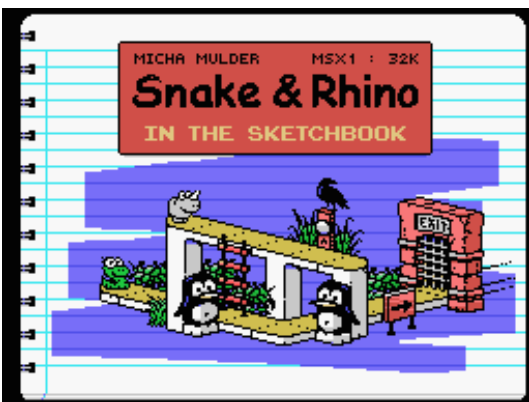
Title: Crawlers
Genre: Party, action, arcade
Author(s): Pixel Phenix
Medium: ROM 48KB
Hardware requirements: MSX1, 16KB

382,5/600

Ronald Overall: 67,5 Mechanics: 45	Overall: Centipede stampede! Pretty tough game to play, but I kept coming back for more 😊 Tech: The option to practice with fewer crawlers was a wise decision, as it allows players to acclimate to the controls before the action ramps up.
Danilo Overall: 70 Sound: 80	Overall What a beautiful product! It looks very professional, crafted with love, featuring lovely graphics, beautiful colors, and finally, an engaging gameplay pace. A fascinating variation of Snake with different play styles. Sound A small chiptune masterpiece! The intro music is simply spectacular, with a well-assembled range of chip effects. The melody is catchy, well-paced, melodically interesting, and has an intriguing internal melodic variety that never gets tiring. The rhythm is lively, in line with the cute style of the game. During gameplay, the choice to remove the beat is clever because it allows space for the sound effects. The transitional music is in pure Konami style. Truly commendable.
Robert Overall: 60 Graphics: 60	Overall I haven't played a Snake game in forever. The last time was on my trusty and nearly indestructible Nokia 6210 back in the 90's. Well, this is not a Snake clone in the purest sense of the word. This is a FRIGGING AWESOME multi player game that will keep you on edge for hours. Gameplay is fast, tension is high and the action is frantic. Besides the multi-player there is a single player mode as well. The goal is to eat all the hearts as quick as possible so there is an optimal route in every round that requires skill and accuracy. I see a great challenge for speed runners here. So round up some friends and start crawling already! Graphics

	<p>The graphics are nice and slightly above average. Everything on screen is clear and recognizable and really colorful. The only thing I can (and will) nag about is the fact that some player portraits are 'borrowed' from the game Worms but I think that is just a mere homage instead of a pure rip-off because other portraits are truly original and well-drawn.</p>
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#26 Snake and Rhino in the sketchbook



Title: Snake and Rhino in the sketchbook

Genre: Puzzle

Author(s): ARC8

Medium: ROM 48KB

Hardware requirements: MSX1, 32KB

470/600

Ronald Overall: 65 Mechanics: 75	Overall: This is a fun one. I love the cartoonish look! Tech: Creatures control a bit odd and sometimes hard to align with the paths. I believe that using the numeric pad would allow for better control.
Danilo Overall: 90 Sound: 70	Overall Sometimes I am amazed at how the MSX scene can still produce incredibly interesting works. This game exudes quality, ideas, and a love for game design from every pore. I was truly astonished, and given my venerable age, having become a dedicated player of modern consoles and discovering the world of retro gaming on the latest generation consoles with great joy, I am even more amazed that this trend continues on our beloved MSX. Congratulations. The pixel art is also fantastic for an MSX1! Sound PSG music with an almost classical/baroque compositional approach in the intro music that repeats in the levels. The melody is beautiful, but in the long run, being densely packed with notes, it can become overwhelming. Perhaps some variation could have helped, and maybe a few tracks with a calmer style would have aided concentration in a game that requires a certain level of focus and relaxation.
Robert Overall: 80 Graphics: 90	Overall This game really surprised me. Everything about this game oozes quality. Gameplay is fun, the art style is just gorgeous with the loveable character designs and the Escher influences and the levels are just lots of fun to admire and solve. Even the music is cool. The later levels are sometimes a bit disorientating because of the aforementioned Escher influences but this is at the same time one of the main attractions of the game. I'm really trying to find some negative things to say about this game but I just can't find any. Okay, the game stole a lot of time from me and for that I hate it!

	<p>Graphics</p> <p>Is this really MSX 1? This game could easily pose as a MSX 2 game made in screen 5. There is (almost) no color clash and these graphics are REALLY well thought out. The whole sketchbook look-and-feel made me drool and the overall quality of the graphics is very high. There was a really skilled artist at work here. An artist that truly knows the limitations of the system and has a lot of tricks up his sleeve. He even managed to cram some great details in the game that made me look twice to believe it. The little, and barely unnoticeable extra shadow colors underneath the pillars were not necessary to make the game look great but he went all the way to even do these little extra things. Call me impressed!</p>
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#27 Phenix Corrupta



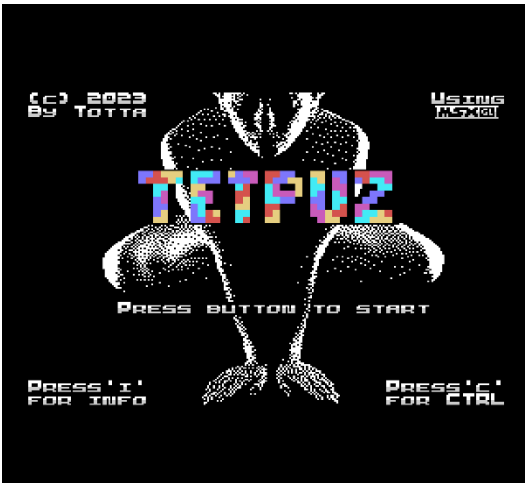
Title: Phenix Corrupta
Genre: Metroidvania/Horror themed action adventure
Author(s): Casper Croes
Medium: ROM (ASCII8) 512KB
Hardware requirements: MSX2

340/600

Ronald Overall: 60 Mechanics: 30	<p>Overall:</p> <p>A crucial aspect of a compelling game is its capacity to captivate the player. If a game is stingy in providing hints, it risks losing the player's attention. Unfortunately, this particular game falls into that category. If it had disclosed a few secrets earlier in the gameplay, it could have garnered a higher score.</p> <p>Tech:</p> <p>The frequent on-screen interactions between characters became a bit overwhelming. However, the control of the characters is well-executed, and the collision detection is precisely on point.</p>
Danilo Overall: 60 Sound: 60	<p>Overall</p> <p>A game that joyfully recalls certain outcomes of old Konami platform/metroidvania games. Not excellent in terms of graphical variety, but exceptionally well executed regarding sprites and certain animations/interactions. A bit more detail, and it could become a small masterpiece.</p> <p>Sound</p> <p>I must be honest: from a game in the typical MSX2 style, I would have expected a more interesting track, perhaps created with SCC or even with OPL4. The atmosphere conveyed by the music is consistent with the game, but at times, the registers are too high, and perhaps more use of chip effects would have been useful to optimize the overall appeal. It's a pity, as the rest is really well done.</p>
Robert Overall: 70 Graphics: 60	<p>Overall</p> <p>Hey, a MSX 2 game! And even a MSX 2 game in my favorite gaming genre. Yes, we're dealing with a real Metroidvania game here. A genre that deserves a lot more love on MSX. <shameless plug>Oh I wish that there were more people who were making a Metroidvania style game for MSX 2. That would be so cool!</shameless plug> All jokes aside, this game deserves your attention. A lot of time went into making and planning</p>

	<p>this game. It's large and filled to the brim with a lot of items and weapons for you to find. The game has atmosphere and I just wanted to play on and on to find everything there is to find. The only drawback is the difficulty. The controls are somewhat jumpy and you often find yourself hugging an enemy or hitting a spiked wall by accident.</p> <p>Graphics</p> <p>The title screen is clearly a render of some kind that has been converted to MSX. A technique I don't particularly like because it just looks so 'look guys, I have a NMS8280 at home!' You can use a render as a starting point for your drawings ofcourse but it really needs some rastering and subtle dithering to add some details and life to the image and to erase that plastic 90's render look. The in game graphics are far better luckily. Screen 5 is used quite nicely and everything looks as it is supposed to look. Dungeons with stones, earth-like colors and some candles to light the room. The sprites are very well animated and are the star of the show. I only missed some backgrounds. There is only black now and some dark rocks in the background would elevate the whole look of the game.</p>
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#28 Tetpuz



Title: Tetpuz
Genre: Puzzle
Author(s): Totta
Medium: ROM 48KB
Hardware requirements: MSX1

290/600

Ronald Overall: 45 Mechanics: 40	Overall: A neat Tetris-inspired game that's got a good vibe. Tech: I was hoping that I could rotate the pieces.
Danilo Overall: 60 Sound: 70	Overall A relaxing puzzle game that follows in the footsteps of Tetris, trying to bring innovation to the genre. At first, I thought it was a 'Tetris-strip tease,' but I had to reconsider... :-)) Sound New age music in PSG style? YES! I greatly appreciated the series of harmonies and chords that make up this PSG chiptune. The style is excellent for a relaxing puzzle game like this. Technically, simulated echoes and reverbs are implemented, which are not always easy to replicate with only 3 channels. It's true that sometimes the game sounds interact awkwardly with the track, but this is a more than normal effect with our beloved old technologies. Congratulations to the composer!
Robert Overall: 40 Graphics: 35	Overall I have mixed feelings about this game. The basic game concept is really nice and creative but the execution leaves a lot to be desired. More that often (actually the majority of the times I played) I couldn't make a move anymore but the game thought otherwise and just wanted me to play on. Maybe it has something to do with detonating the bombs you can place sometimes but I never got to see the destructive powers of these harbingers of doom. Tip: Make the manual more elaborate and let the player see one block in advance so he or she can play more strategically. Graphics

	<p>The game is colorful because of the different blocks used throughout the game. These little blocks even have some details which made me quite happy. The background photo is a nice addition and gives the whole game a bit of an artsy look. For the rest there's nothing special to see in this game.</p>
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#29 Xelden Ring



Title: Xelden Ring
Genre: 3d action RPG
Author(s): Brain Games
Medium: ROM
Hardware requirements: MSX1, 16KB

405/600

Ronald Overall: 70 Mechanics: 65	Overall: Solid 3D, the ability to change the camera angles makes it even more fun to play. Tech: Controls are good and character moves through its world quite realistically.
Danilo Overall: 80 Sound: 50	Overall WOW! 3D graphics for MSX1? It looks incredible. At the time, it would have been one of my favorite games, probably. Complete with camera management! Sound I really enjoyed the intro music; it reminds me of Ys and Final Fantasy RPGs, even though it's in PSG style (MSX1). However, I thought it might not be an integral part of the game because the musical loop is too short and after a while, it risks becoming boring. The second part of the track is not bad; it provides a suitable sense of tension for the game. Although the style is not exceptional, the tracks do contribute a certain atmosphere to the game.
Robert Overall: 70 Graphics: 70	Overall Okay, this game is truly one of a kind. We are getting a real 3D game on our humble MSX 1. And I'm talking about real and smooth 3D which is a true miracle. The player has a lot of freedom and when you finally master the controls (and there are a lot of controls to master) you discover that behind this unholy 3D witchcraft hides quite a nice RPG for you to play. I really hope this game gets a physical release so I can buy it and make love to it. Graphics The graphics in this game are some sort of white whale and with that I mean that I don't have a clue to say something good or bad about them because there is nothing to

	<p>compare them with. What I can say is that the title screen is very well drawn and that the in game graphics are clear and quite pleasant on the eyes when in motion. Just a screenshot says nothing in this case. You have to see the game in action to really appreciate the graphics.</p>
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End notes

FROM THE ORGANIZATION

We, John and Róman, would like to thank everyone that has been involved in this year's dev compo – together we made it happen. All participants, all donators, all sponsors, the jurors and all who helped out to make it work: thank you, you are awesome!

FROM DANILO

Hello to all msx users/fan bases: after many years of being "absent" from the gaming world, I suddenly rekindled my interest in the genre around the age of 40 with the purchase of a PS4. The choice was also driven by a desire to catch up on certain aesthetic trends that had evolved in my absence. I discovered remarkable beauties in game design, including the entire phenomenon of retro-gaming, which encompassed game types closely resembling the aesthetics of the MSX era.

Although I have never stopped composing electronic music with today's high-end technologies, this creative movement gradually led me back not only to reconsider to re-arrange musics in the style of chiptunes, but also to our beloved 8-bit computer, and finding myself, after all these years, serving as a judge for an MSX-Dev contest was not only an honor but also really enjoyable. It brought a sense of new discovery and personal satisfaction as I witnessed people continuing to develop ideas and software for an obsolete computer, even solely for the purpose of "learning" with more outdated programming languages.

It has been truly delightful to embrace that "blue screen" again, knowing that a new video game would soon be loaded. Congratulations to all the developers, regardless of their skill level. I believe it is very courageous in today's context to engage with these technologies, especially considering that some of the projects presented in MSX-Dev continue to demonstrate that brilliance always surpasses limitations, much to my amazement and joy. :-)

A big "thank" to MSX-Dev crew and the other 2 jurors, for giving me the trust and the opportunity to re-embrace this fantastic world!

Best greetings, DandAN

FROM ROBERT

Being a juror was a great honour for me. An honour I tried to fit in with my busy schedule of making my own game and life itself. I tried to give each game the attention it deserved and I hopefully succeeded in that. Some games really amazed me.

The creativity that went into them is simply mind blowing! Being a real 'MSX 2-and-up-guy' I sometimes struggled with the MSX 1 entries because I have never pixelated on a MSX 1 myself but I have played a lot of MSX 1 games so I know what I'm talking about. All in all, I had a great time and a big lack of sleep while judging all the games that were presented to me and I would gladly do this whole thing again sometimes.

I would like to thank all of the contestants that keep the MSX spirit alive. It is great to see all these new productions being made. It almost felt mean to sometimes say critical things about them because I know that every line of code, every note and every pixel was done with the best intentions. Every game I reviewed was made out of love and passion for the MSX system and I can only applaud that. So please, don't feel demoted when I didn't like your game or graphics in any way.

I enjoyed every entry for what it was; A loveletter to MSX! So keep on making these games and keep on amazing stupid jurors with them. I know I will keep on pixelating, writing and composing on MSX for eternity and I would like to suggest you do the same 😊

Game Over

And with that, it's a wrap! MSXdev23 is over. It's been a fantastic year with lots of new MSX games as a result.

Hope to see you all in the next edition.

STAFF

Róman van der Meulen - Project lead

John Hassink - Project lead

Arnaud de Klerk - Hosting games online

Julio Marchi (MSXall) - Resource provider for msxdev.org

José Andrés Gil – Web Site administration

Ronald van der Putten - Juror

Danilo Danisi - Juror

Robert Vroemisse - Juror

THANK YOU FOR PLAYING
