

Quadrapped Tearaways – The Novella

Greetings listeners, and welcome to the novella of the 'Quadrapped Tearaways' album. In this I'll give an exclusive insight into the making of the original C64 demo itself, and what exactly did happen to it all.

In around October 1991 I first thought of the idea of having an album's worth of music which would feature in a future C64 demo. I quickly decided to set the ball rolling by writing a couple of songs which would be a preview of things to come, well that was the idea but I panicked upon starting, but.... I quickly remembered all those really over the top cop series (some Japanese one is really sick!) in where there's always someone chasing someone else with a gun, and that gave me the inspiration for 'Gun Run'. Listening to some Pixies tracks gave me the idea for 'Into The Grey', as there was some nice chords and ideas in there that I thought would do quite well for a tune. After a few days the results were completed and the 'Album Sampler' (ZAW 4) was born. Zaw completists should note that early copies were called 'New Music Demo' because they were at that time new tunes, but very few copies were released as I re-titled it 'Album Sampler' upon the starting of 'Quadrapped Tearaways'.

Now where does the title of 'Quadrapped Tearaways' come from? Well rock history and a dictionary has ensured that not many bands become famous with the letter Q, the best three I know being Queen, Queensyrche and Quando Quango (Mike Pickering's band before he went and started M-People!), and I wanted to confuse those people who insist on everything such as spelling being right so I deliberately ensured the spelling of 'quadrapped' to be 'quadrapped'. Why the 'tearaways'? Well every news report that you had about youth violence called them 'the tearaways from society' but we've all done something a little naughty when we were younger, so in effect we're all tearaways eh? You could of course read the title to be 'four raped tearaways', probably raped mentally by society as a whole, but that's probably a passing thought (and in itself probably will have some clever sociologist writing a book, typical isn't it!)

Work started in December 1991 (that long ago?), I'd just finished the first 'Merry Christmas' demo and I'd just had a job interview for where I was next to work (as it thankfully turned out) between Feb 1992 and Dec 1994. I'd happily been submitting the occasional Zaw demo to Mark Caswell (who then did the tips section for Zzap! 64 but he kept making mistakes with my listings - at least Robin Hogg was apologetic!) and I suggested my concept of the demo for a covertape. In principle it seemed a good idea for them as they'd just come back from the dead under the new ownership of Europress Impact and it would revive a flagging readership.

So the work started in earnest. For a while now I'd always kept hitting my head against the wall when I woke up in the mornings, as I would attempt to turn my head left and thwack! ouch! And from that it gives you a bad start to any day really. People always tend to ask you, don't they, 'Oh who got out of the wrong side of bed this morning'? And thus that settled the title of 'The Wrong Side Of Bed'. The idea of the track structure would have a meandering first minute or so where it would render a dream, then a manic time (hence the speeded up bit) as your headache ensues from hitting the wall and all thoughts go through your mind. The remainder of the track I would then have as a slightly depressing tune to match the day that would ensue afterwards. In effect it worked, but on reflection I didn't make the few minutes that downtrodden enough.

Then came a burst of inspiration and I wrote the next two tracks in about five hours, literally! I'd just had lots of thoughts go through my head or some strange reason, and with it came 'Aural Ambience Attack'. I thought a touch of alliteration would be a nice track, but in reality it's hardly ambient at all. I thought of the slow-down bit partly because of bands who'd appeared on Top Of The Pops, where they'd have a bit of the song where it seems to end, the audience would cheer, then look like total nitwits as they were proven wrong! So in this track too it seems to end then go back to normal speed. In essence it's quite a pacey punchy track, and one thing I noticed upon listening to it again recently is that the really fast drums sometimes don't go in perfect timing! Must remember to correct it sometime.

Then a couple of hours later another idea had hit me. Looking through my disks of unfinished music I found some opening chords to a couple of pieces, and in the end I had to write down the details of all the sequences by hand (!) because there was no 'merge files' option whatsoever. I had to take a break for a little while, I had cramp from writing that lot so fast! But back I came and finished it. Listening to it again reveals to me that I could have taken inspiration from a Roy Harper track 'Hell's Angels' for one of the main riffs (in fact the Angelic Hell bit comes directly because of that title!) but listening to that bit, the way I did it was more of a twelve-bar thing. Part of the tune also reminds me of a tune which I still have unfinished somewhere, I may go back and do it one day! I was completely drained after this effort so I went to see my girlfriend at that time for some chat and carnal indulgence!

Now I had a dilemma. I'd wanted to use the source files available from the 'Album Sampler' as mentioned earlier so I could write down all the sequence information for use. As it turned out the disk with the source files decided not to work ever again, so I ended up having to make a really crap audio recording of the two tracks and playing it by ear, literally! It was not fun doing so (much head scratching ensued!) but I got the basics for each tune and then developed them further. In the best interests I decided to slightly re-title them so that they would be differentiated. With 'Gun Runner' I decided on a slightly slower pace throughout, in retrospect it sounded a little too sedate for what the tune was about, but the sombre introduction made it seem different and worthwhile to me. A slight tweak at the middle and end and it was all done, more of an extended version maybe but still what I'd managed to do was get that Japanese-esque instrument sounding better. If you want to try it out yourself, then set up a little sequence on a music editor which plays notes of decreasing octaves (eg C7, C6, C5, C4) very quickly and then hold the last one (eg C3) for the remainder of the time.

As for 'Into The Grey Matter' I again decided on a differing introduction and would make it more morbid and lengthy. I can remember just adding more and more bits and wanting to make it a sprawling epic of epic proportions - (if that makes any sense!) it turned out to be the longest thing I'd ever written at that time! I used the instrumentation from 'Gun Runner' in parts because it suited this more panicky atmosphere, and to make it more of a frenzied panic, I decided to use a lot of slide to generate those 'screams'. I did think about using a sampled scream but in the end I decided not to, and continued with the theme of doom which seems to prevail throughout.

After that track, I decided the last one would be short, peaceful and a sort of song of hope really. At the time there was a lot of controversy surrounding the nuclear waste at Sellafield, and it suddenly dawned on me that any future war would include nuclear weapons, a scary thought. So even more determined than ever I ploughed into a slow, meandering and quiet tune. And it worked, by building on a main chord and adding parts it

developed into a simple yet effective tune. Andy Startin for one thinks it's one of the finest things I ever wrote, the band Retaliation that he was in did instrumental jams using it at their concerts, which is very flattering. It's also why I did a 12" extended version for the game 'Retaliation'!

So it was mid-December 1991. The tunes had been written, and after a couple of days' coding, the first version of the demo was finished (ZAW 8P) which I sent to Mark Caswell and distributed various promo copies elsewhere (ten in all, although I never sent some out and gave them to some C64 users between 1992 and 1993 for their collections!). I rung Zzap! up a few days after and spoke to Phil King, the then ed. He didn't know what demo I was talking about for the covertape at first, but his main criticism with Quadraped Tearaways was that the voices I'd used were the same on every one and why couldn't I modify them? So after I'd finished off two other demos I went back to Quadraped Tearaways in January 1992 and did the main alteration to voices. This new version was then sent to Zzap and I waited and waited to see what would happen. It was an era of change at that time as I'd split up from my girlfriend and started my new job, but after a few months of waiting I decided to get it released as a purely limited edition of 100 copies.

But in order that I could, in June 1992, I made a lot of cosmetic changes to the presentation program, such as relocating the music in memory, fine tuning the voices for best effect, and adding notes on every tune (reproduced below) and making a slight change to the screen so that it would have the Zaw Production number (#8) on-screen. Once all this was done, I added some hidden messages in memory in which I kindly told Zzap! 64 to (bleep) off, it didn't surprise me they ended a few months later. The limited edition idea came so that not many people would own a copy, but appreciate it nonetheless. Also it will mean that it will be quite a rarity (I hope!) in years to come. Now for those notes from the original computer production:

1. The Wrong Side Of Bed (7:10)

Ever got out of the wrong side of bed? Well put it this way, if you're like me you have a wall on one side and hit it very hard, you may just start to imagine the pain, anguish and gut feeling this opening track tries to represent.

2. Aural Ambience Attack (8:06)

Nuts to the alliteration - this song is just up-tempo, fast and it features a fade-in at the start - not often used in a tune. Also there is a nice little bit where the tune slows and speeds up, to make the attack of this aural ambience just that bit more enjoyable.

3. Angelic Hell For Halves (7:27)

This one is quite a strange one really, the main line has a rocky Hell's Angels type feel, but other bits are just the halves of tunes I never quite managed to finish (hence the title!) - when it was all put together I thought it made a good tune, so enjoy it - someone might!

4. Gun Runner (8:30)

If you heard the preview of this album, you'll know that the 7 inch version was on it. Now here's the full length mix, with a more relaxed feel, but could still be used in one of those Japanese gun-busting movies with gun runners - see what you think!

5. Into The Grey Matter (11:29)

This is the full length version of this track that was on the preview. Some say it is more edgy, and has a spooky eerie feel to it, especially the blood curdling screams! Some say it reminds them of heavy metal rock - I think it's a good riff expanded into this!

6. Hope In A Nuclear World (3:49)

In a place where nuclear energy is so much a part of our lives, and the great danger it becomes, a song of hope and peace to make people think twice about investing in places like Sellafield. I just hope the planned second site is stopped, and soon!

That's how they were - upon reading them again there's some grammatical errors I made but I reckon they got the message across. The first copies of the C64 computer version were released on 12th June 1992 and within a month my life would change for the next couple of years due to a fateful event on an indie night.. which is partly the reason why the sequel took so long to be released - which I'll explain in full in the novella for that.

Enjoy all the work contained within and play it to as many people as you can!

Regards and best wishes,

Warren Pilkington