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**Barnabas, Andrew (Crusaders) (00.00.1998) musician**

Wivern, Sun 21 Jan 2007

#### **Interview with Andrew Barnabas**

**Job: musician**

**Wivern: When were you born, and where?**

Andrew Barnabas: May 1973, in Croydon, South London. UK That makes me 24.

**Wivern: When did you become active in the "Amiga scene" ?**

Andrew Barnabas: Well unlike most, I was actually a late bloomer in the ways of the scene. was just starting to become quite active in the C64 scene as a programmer / graphics artist and a tiny bit of music, but programming was my forte (doing 3D vectors on the 64 was fun!). Just as that was coming ahead, we got an Amiga A500 in the Xmas of '89. Due to my contacts in the 64 scene, it wasn't too long before I got involved in the Amiga side of things, I'd actually composed music on the amiga before owning one so had a foot in the door as it were. My first group I joined was TSL UK (The Silents, UK division) on the recommendation of a 64 / amiga owner 'Guardian', and this was just over 1 month after Xmas '89, and having written approx. 2 tunes on Soundtracker! Nothing really amazing happened in TSL UK, so I left with Guardian as he started up his own group, and then moved on to a local Croydon group called Ecstasy. I stayed with them for approx 18 months, composing music for a few demos (most notably the Ecstasy Multi-Demo) and my own music disk (NightShade's Harmony) released in '91. In September '91 I was asked to join the Crusaders by Fleshbrain. I composed music to the penultimate Eurochart (November '91), and have stayed with them ever since... I now host The Gathering conference run by the Crusaders every Easter in Norway. During my tenure in the scene I met a \*lot\* of people, I took it upon myself to get to know as many famous amiga musicians as possible, and to a large degree actually succeeded. I was looking at a Eurochart one time and realised I knew \*all\* the muso's. I had a few run in's with a few of them (no names mentioned) went to The Party '91 with Jesper Kyd / Silents & Nightlight / Kefrens in Denmark and had my 1st taster of a \*real\* scene party, as opposed to the small affairs that were run in the UK. I had an absolutely wonderful time in the scene, apart from the fact that it took over my life (socially & financially) and ran up the phone bill incredibly but felt that I was always involved with something special, something where all the members felt passionately about the machine they were using.



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**Wivern: When did you start composing music for games?**

Andrew Barnabas: My first official release was in 1990, that was SWIV on the amiga. In 1991 I got together with a friend in London (hi Bob) and started a games music label, and decided to get who I thought were the best guys around Europe involved. The company was called DENS Design. Members wise we had Bjorn Lynne from Norway, Rene Bidstrup in Denmark (Diablo / Budbrain), and Volker Tripp in Germany (Jester / Sanity). It was brilliant fun, and we all learnt a \*lot\* about the way the industry works. I personally got ripped off left right & centre, but when you're a student and don't rely on the work to live from you're not that bothered. I finished university in 1995 and joined Millennium immediately after finishing. Millennium got taken over by Sony in July '97. I hope one day to go back to DENS Design and run it as a proper company doing graphics / animation AND music. That WOULD be fun. It's just a shame that all of us are PC users now, the passion for the machine isn't at all what it was for the amiga, they're just more powerful and have got some great software...

**Wivern: To what games have you composed music?**

Andrew Barnabas: Here's a list of games that are \*completely\* credited to me. SWIV (Amiga), Double Dragon III (Amiga), Global Gladiators (Amiga), Cool Spot (Amiga), Aladdin (PC / Amiga), Pinball Dreams II (PC), Fifa '96 (SNES), Snowman (3DO, Saturn, PSX, PC, Mac), Father Xmas (3DO, Saturn, PSX, PC, Mac), Defcon V (PSX, 3DO, Saturn, PC), Silverload (PSX), Creatures (PC / Mac), Deadline (PC), Frogger (PC / PSX), Beastwars (PC / PSX), Medieval (PSX) - to be released mid '98. And I've worked on a load of others (unreleased stuff, the odd tune or sfx here or there etc.)

**Wivern: Which of your own songs is your favourite?**

Andrew Barnabas: Hard to say, changes depending on the mood I'm in. If we're sticking to mods, then probably Water II, the title track to Double Dragon III (in it's original form). I wrote that in 1991.

**Wivern: How would you describe your album "Shades"?**

Andrew Barnabas: Shades is the culmination of 3 years work by me. I started composing the music for it in late 1994 for my final year project at university (doing a degree in music at Leeds). The music is \*completely\* varied, and as such is difficult to put into any single category. The music ranges from acid-jazz (Jamiroquai) to funk-rock (Red Hot Chili Peppers) to soul (Sade) to ambient to brit-pop to fusion (Aphex Twin, Orbital). 4 of the tunes are from game music especially remixed for the album as Montages (music from Creatures, Defcon V, Silverload & Double Dragon III). 34 musicians were involved, from guitarists/bassists to a brass section to a shakuhachi player to a full male choir recorded in a cathedral. Variety being the spice of life and all that. Bjorn Lynne also donated a track for the album too (since I composed one for his 1995 album Dreamstate!). Shades is my debut CD, and was released under the



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TRSI RecordZ label. I hope to release a lot more, and game soundtracks too.

**Wivern: What influenced you to write the tracks for it?**

Andrew Barnabas: Well, since 4 of the tracks are for games, I think that's pretty self explanatory. My main goal with Shades was variety, for me to stretch myself musically and try something new all the time. I don't see any point in just repeating yourself as a musician and sticking to one style of music. This is the beauty of writing music to a brief, you get a spec and you have to think about what kind of music would suit that situation. That could be a full orchestra to one bloke playing a piano, whatever suits. I find these challenges very rewarding, I've been composing an instrumental hip-hop tune for the last couple of days, that's a \*lot\* harder than I thought it would be to get right. Another feather in the cap and all that. I think my aim is to be able to compose music proficiently in all styles, then you start to develop your own... Not in my life would I have thought I'd have recorded a full choir and a shakuhachi player for my own work a few years ago..... Also, it's great FUN. Taking a style of music you may be unaware of, analyse it and come up with something of your own in that style, very rewarding..

**Wivern: Who are your favourite Amiga musicians?**

Andrew Barnabas: I'll take that as meaning favourite scene musicians... Well, I couldn't narrow it to one muso but my top 3 would have to be :- Bruno / Anarchy, Heatbeat / Rebels, Uncle Tom / Scoopex. But I also highly rated Romeo Knight, Walkman, Nightlight, Firefox, Jugl and a few others who I can't remember right now (it's been a \*long\* time since I've been asked this!)

**Wivern: Do you have any ongoing projects?**

Andrew Barnabas: I'm still working on Medievil for Sony, and another project which I can't disclose at the moment for a 3rd party company. Suffice to say, both projects have gone extremely well. Medievil's music is basically Danny Elfmanesque synthesized orchestral work, and the other project is varied stylewise, anything from Jarre to Vangelis to Kraftwerk to X-Filesesque to classical to hip-hop!!! As to what the future holds, who knows?

**Wivern: Anything else you would like to say?**

Andrew Barnabas: Don't underestimate game music, the quality of the stuff has come on in leaps and bounds over the last few years, people are starting to use full orchestra's for game music. The budgets of games are starting to approach that of small films as are the timescales taken to produce them. Most of the average games playing punters forget the sound & music, **DON'T**. Just think how much work must go in to what's essentially 50% of the overall product...

Interview performed by Wivern