

# When Colossus met Game Boy: Pixelh8 plays Bletchley Park

Submitted by: Palam Communications

Thursday, 5 March 2009

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Pixelh8 plays Bletchley Park on March 20 and 21

When Colossus met Game Boy: Electronica music from vintage computers

More than 20 vintage computers at The National Museum of Computing are being turned into an array of instruments by Matthew Applegate / Pixelh8 in readiness for the first performances of his new Electronica composition *Obsolete?* at Bletchley Park on 20 and 21 March 2009.

Tickets for the event to be held in the ballroom of the historic Bletchley Park Mansion are selling fast and can be obtained online by following links from [www.tnmoc.org](http://www.tnmoc.org). *Obsolete?* is supported by The PRS Foundation.

Matthew, a classically trained musician, has recently featured on a BBC Radio 1 session 6 Music and has followers including Imogen Heap, Damon Albarn and VV Brown.

Matthew says of *Obsolete?* "In composing the piece, I looked into the history of the machines and the amazing history of The National Museum of Computing building – a wartime codebreaking centre where people worked in secret applying their amazing intellects to defeat Hitler. So the composition has a tremendous emotional depth as well as reflecting cryptography, mathematics and our technological heritage right up to the present day."

Vanessa Reed, Director of the PRS Foundation, said, "We are delighted to be supporting this commission because Matthew's piece is breaking new ground and it will appeal to a mixed audience of new music lovers and computer enthusiasts. We look forward to hearing the results."

Having listened, studied and assessed the sounds of scores of vintage computers at TNMOC, Matthew's final "instrument" selection includes Colossus, the world's first electronic programmable computer, the Elliott 803, a 4kb memory workhorse from the 1960s, a 1970s card punch machine and a trio of games machines from the 1980s and '90s.

Along the way, Matthew has made unusual musical discoveries: "One morning, as I past Colossus, a huge machine that could only fit in the largest of trucks, it was making a different sound. It usually has a set rhythm and a set sound, but that day it was running a different algorithm and some of the panels for the relays had been removed, and the sound was very different. I quickly set up my recording equipment and was delighted with the new sounds that I captured."

Notes To Editors:

The Ensemble

Computers used in composing *Obsolete?* include:

Elliott 803

Colossus MK2 Rebuild  
Dragon 32  
BBC Micro  
SORD M5  
MSX-HX10  
Atari 800XL  
Amstrad CPC464  
IBM 029 Key Punch  
Brunsviga Adding Machine  
Bulmers Adding Machine  
Block & Anderson Adding Machine  
Crete Teleprinter  
ICL Line Printer  
PDP 11  
PDP 8  
380Z Research Machine  
RM Nimbus Power  
MAC 5500/275  
DecTalk

About The National Museum of Computing at Bletchley Park

The National Museum of Computing at Bletchley Park, an independent charity, houses the largest collection of functional historic computers in Europe, including a rebuilt Colossus, the world's first electronic programmable computer.

The Museum complements the Bletchley Park Trust's story of codebreaking up to the Colossus and allows visitors to follow the development of computing from the ultra-secret pioneering efforts of the 1940s through the mainframes of the 1960s and 1970s, and the rise of personal computing in the 1980s. New working exhibits are regularly unveiled and the public can already view a rebuilt and fully operational Colossus, a working ICL 2900, one of the workhorse mainframes computers of the 1980s, and many of the earliest desktops of the 1980s and 1990s.

For more information, see [www.tnmoc.org](http://www.tnmoc.org)

Matthew C Applegate / Pixelh8

Internationally renowned chip tune musician Pixelh8 (pronounced Pixelhate) makes his music from reprogramming vintage computer systems such as the ZX Spectrum, Commodore 64 and Game Boy. His unique blend of Electronica has taken him across the globe, performing at Microdisco in Berlin, Apple iTunes in California, BBC Maida Vale Studios for Radio 1 in London, Assembly 2008 in Helsinki Finland and the Game In The City Festival in Holland.

In 2006 he won a MySpace competition to open for Grammy nominee Imogen Heap on her UK tour and in March 2008 he won Playback Album of the Month from Sound On Sound Magazine with his second album "The Boy With

The Digital Heart".

Pixelh8 has also created software like the Pixelh8 Music Tech Game Boy Synth and Pro Performer for other musicians including Imogen Heap and Damon Albarn.

Matthew C. Applegate also lectures and runs music and computer related workshops across the United Kingdom and is a mentor at the British Academy of New Music, London. Patron of the Access To Music Centre, Norwich, and is currently studying for his Masters at The Centre for Design Innovation, University Campus Suffolk. He is a STEMNET Science and Engineering Ambassador.

For more information on Pixelh8 visit [www.pixelh8.co.uk](http://www.pixelh8.co.uk) and join the mailing.

#### About PRS Foundation

PRS Foundation is the UK's only independent funder dedicated to supporting new music of all genres. Widely respected as a refreshingly approachable and adventurous funding body, the Foundation supports an amazing range of new music activity -- from unsigned band showcases to composer residencies, from commissions for new music to experimental live electronica. The organisation has a unique remit to support all genres of new music across the whole of the UK. Since its launch in March 2000, it has successfully funded over 2500 imaginative new music initiatives to the tune of over £10 million. Visit [www.prsfoundation.co.uk](http://www.prsfoundation.co.uk) for more information and [www.myspace.com/prsf](http://www.myspace.com/prsf) to hear examples of work we have supported.

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