

# Bytes

*A musical set inside a computer*



A musical play by Cenarth Fox  
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*Bytes* is scored for piano, guitar, bass, percussion, woodwind and brass. These band parts are for hire and will give your production a real zing! A marvellous backing CD is also available with an instrumental teaching version and a full orchestral version for performances.

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## **To the Director**

The gender of all characters is neither male or female. Everyone is *fale*.

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### Synopsis

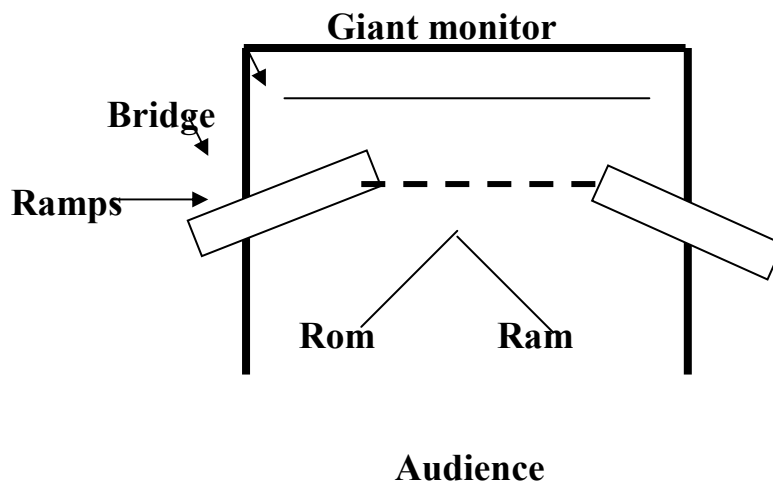
Do computers control our lives? Some say computers with their many bits and bytes have taken over the world. Our bills, phone calls, grocery shopping, theatre tickets and pension entitlements are all locked into a computer. So too our health insurance, traffic fines and library borrowings. We're told computers never make mistakes. We're told they work tirelessly and always for the benefit of humans. Well, sorry, but that's just a load of cobblers. You are about to discover the truth!

### Costumes and Movement

The bytes are office workers employed in a digital computer. Some have fancy clothes, some are dressed in basic work togs. Some get to dress up. There is scope for outlandish clobber if your budget and imagination are on line. Otherwise get by with some routine rags. There is plenty of movement so these office workers need to be free to dance, climb stairs and scatter at the push of an F10 button.

### Set Design

Simple. Upstage is a giant backdrop featuring a large drawing of the QWERTY keyboard or some other computerish scene. You could make your backdrop a monitor onto which various computer images are screened. There should be several boxes or platforms on which the bytes can stand, move, etc. The main requirement is for different levels which dress the stage and enable the drama of the chase scene at the end. Can there be dungeons, waterfalls, blast furnaces and the like? No? Okay, just fake it. Keep plenty of space downstage for movement and plenty of ramps for rapid entrances and exits. Are you sure you can't have a rollercoaster track? Here is a bird's-eye view of the set.



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#### Characters

**DOS** - the boss, firm but fair

**GO TO** - [*as in go to the shop*] - ambitious, hardworking, the boss's right hand byte

**QWERTY** - brilliant but vague, full of ideas

**ROM** - librarian, old-fashioned, traditionalist

**RAM** - librarian, old-fashioned, traditionalist

**GRETA** - games character, strange, dresses from garbage cans

**VIRTUAL** - games character, boring, snobbish, idiot

**CONAN** - games character, massive, warrior who loves peace

**PIRATE** - police officer in disguise

**BASIC** - tea-person, wise, experienced

**HACKER** - a criminal

**VIRUS** - a criminal

**PIXEL** - clerk, frustrated theatrical, stage-struck, energetic

**PIXELETTES** - fellow workers with PIXEL in the monitor [off-stage]

**BYTES** - office workers

#### Musical Items

- |     |                              |                        |
|-----|------------------------------|------------------------|
| 1.  | Overture                     | Orchestra              |
| 2.  | We Live In A Computer        | Company                |
| 3.  | Out of Date                  | Qwerty & Company       |
| 4.  | Games                        | Greta, Virtual & Conan |
| 5.  | Pirate Buster                | Pirate & Company       |
| 6.  | Carbon Copies                | Rom & Ram              |
| 7.  | Give Up Your Day Job         | Pixel & Pixelettes     |
| 8.  | Give Up Your Day Job Reprise | Pixel & Pixelettes     |
| 9.  | The Cuppa                    | Basic & Company        |
| 10. | We Can Do Anything           | Qwerty & Company       |
| 11. | Dungeons and Decibels        | Orchestra              |
| 12. | You Can't Beat Love          | Dos & Company          |
| 13. | Curtain Calls                | Company                |
| 14. | Playout                      | Orchestra              |

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*[The OVERTURE is played. It finishes. Music of Opening Song begins then curtain rises and/or lights come up. The computer is well populated with bytes in many places. They face front and sing]*

### We Live In A Computer

**BYTES**

*Apartment? No. A castle? No.  
A palace, a mansion? No chance.  
A penthouse? No. A fancy chateaux?  
A villa in the south of France? [They laugh]  
A homestead? No. A cottage? No.  
A chalet, a cabin, a flat?  
A high rise? No. A condo for show?  
A box is where we're at.  
We live inside this computer  
We live over the shop.  
Our home's a machine which we try to keep clean  
We think it's a micro, perhaps a lap top.  
And deep inside this computer  
It's just like a honeycomb  
We boot up then take care of floppies and software  
Computer - home, sweet home.*

**DOS**

*[Spoken during song to audience]* Welcome dear friends. Welcome to our humble abode. As you can see, tis not the latest from your glossy magazines but it is exceedingly functional. We are your typical micro computer found in a million homes and offices. Grey on the outside, *crazy* on the inside. Oh, sorry. My name's Dos. I'm the boss. And on behalf of all the bytes in this computer, please, come in, boot up and floppy your disks on our hard drive. That's the spirit. Welcome!

*[Song is repeated with BYTES being happy and enthusiastic. The song finishes and BYTES chat excitedly. DOS tries to get their attention]*

**DOS**

Right, can we please cease computing. I've got some data to download.

*[It's no use, they're too excited. DOS speaks to GO TO]* Go To, go to F Ten.

*[GO TO moves to what is a switch and hits it. Instant blackout. Instant cessation of chat. A few squeals/screams. No panic. Lights up again and BYTES now pay attention to DOS]*

**GO TO**

Now stop tabulating and pay attention.

**DOS**

Thanks Go To. Okay, first I want to welcome all the new bytes. We've had some extra memory added in the few dark years and to all those add-ons, welcome and please make yourself at home. If you've got any questions, the byte to go to is Go To.

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**GO TO** That's me. I'm the gofer, the gaffer and the geffer. *[Whatever that is]*

**DOS** Our librarians are Rom and Ram. *[They raise a hand]*

**ROM** I'm Rom.

**RAM** I'm Ram.

**DOS** Rom runs the central library and looks after our overall operations. Ram takes care of daily borrowings, new files, that sort of thing.

**QWERTY** Excuse me, Dos.

**DOS** Not now, Qwerty, we're busy.

**QWERTY** Okay but when?

**GO TO** Try never. We haven't got time for your quirky ideas.

**DOS** That's Qwerty, if you don't already know. In charge of the keyboard but forever trying to do things differently.

**QWERTY** This really is important, Dos.

**GO TO** *[Angry]* So is a virus. *[BYTES gasp. Mild panic]*

**DOS** Now don't panic, stay calm. A virus is not the end of the machine. True, they're dangerous and potentially fatal but they can be beaten.

**ROM** *[Upset]* If I get a virus in my library, you can say goodbye to this computer.

**RAM** *[Upset]* Me too. A virus would decimate my files.

**DOS** So it's up to everyone to keep an eye out for a virus.

**BYTE** But how do we know what a virus look like?

**GO TO** You'll know as soon as you see it. They're evil, monstrous, positively maniacal. *[BYTES upset. DOS not happy]*

**DOS** All right, keep your bits on. *[Angry with GO TO]* Nice one, Go To. We're supposed to keep them happy.

**QWERTY** I think my ideas will help, Dos. They'll give the bytes something nice to think about.

**DOS** Good idea. *[To BYTES]* Okay, I want you to switch on to Qwerty. *[BYTES settle and QWERTY takes control]*

**QWERTY** Thank you Dos and greetings fellow bytes.

**GO TO** Get on with it.

**QWERTY** I am in charge of new ideas. I'm what is known as the literal thinker.

**ROM** Literal thinker? I think you mean lateral thinker.

**QWERTY** *[Confused]* I do? Yes, perhaps you're right. Anyway, my latest ideas are one, the telephone ... *[BYTES laugh]*

**RAM** The telephone's not new. It was invented milliseconds ago.

**QWERTY** Ah yes, sorry. Not the telephone. I meant the *telepathy* phone. *[BYTES buzz]*

**DOS** The telepathy phone? What in the world is that?

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- QWERTY** The telepathy phone works on thought waves. You tune into someone's brain by using special thought patterns. You think the right number and you're connected. *[BYTES buzz again]*
- GO TO** But that's impossible. In fact it's ridiculous.
- QWERTY** Not so. The boffins have already perfected it with computers. Now they're working on humans.
- DOS** Humans! What would they know about it? One of the humans who uses this computer is a total zoob. *[BYTES amused]*
- QWERTY** And my second idea is smellivision. *[BYTES buzz]*
- GO TO** Oh really, Dos. Do we have to listen to this garbage?
- QWERTY** A computer program generates different aromas and, at the appropriate time, expels them from your TV.
- ROM** But what if they're nasty smells?
- RAM** Oh yes. That'd be terrible. We've decided we don't like new things.
- GO TO** You don't like anything. You're both old fashioned and boring.
- ROM** Of course we are. Librarians and accountants are the wet blankets of a stereotyped society.
- DOS** Okay, Qwerty, I think you've said enough.
- QWERTY** But I do have one more idea.
- DOS** I said that's enough.
- ROM** It certainly is. I mean where are we heading with all these updates, upgrades, new this, new that?
- RAM** Exactly. New inventions are thrown at us every nanosecond. We can't possibly keep up.
- QWERTY** But it's not the new inventions that cause concern. *[MUSIC BEGINS]* I think we get upset by the *speed* of change. The fact that things don't last.
- DOS** Good point, Qwerty. Very well said.

### Out of Date

- QWERTY** *I've just had a great idea [Groans from BYTES]  
And it certainly rates a mention  
My mind has been hard at work  
And produced a new invention. [More groans from BYTES]  
It is time-saving, cost-cutting, very, very smart  
And will bring a huge income.  
But it's all just a part on the downward chart  
Of the way life has become.  
As soon as you buy it and take it home to try it  
The darn thing's out of date.  
As soon as you choose it and plug it in to use it  
The price will then deflate.*

## 7 BYTES

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*The latest, the greatest, is what they say  
Forgetting that the upgrade goes on sale today.  
As soon as you buy it and take it home to try it  
The darn thing's out of date.*

**QWERTY** *[As spruiker. Over music]* State of the art, Bart. Hot to trot, Dot. Mover 'n groover, Hoover. It's got the works. Upgradeable. Biodegradable. Compatible. Unflappable. Quad spin multimedia with sonic stereo quantum leap. Oh, plus windows. And *all* with double glazing. This product is so fresh, it can't possibly be improved for at least five minutes. Come on. Be the first to try. Be the first to buy. Be the first to fly. Keep up with that Jones guy. Here it is, folks. Shop today!

*[BYTES amused by all this and join QWERTY in reprise of song. During dance, a mock sale could take place with several signs appearing. The Latest. The Very Latest. The Very Very Latest. Song finishes and BYTES slap QWERTY on back, wave, and exit in various directions. DOS and GO TO take QWERTY to one side, mime discussion then all three leave together. ROM and RAM are alone. They mime working on their libraries C. Lights dim and concentrate on the librarians]*

**ROM** *[Working]* Qwerty's right you know. This new program ain't new any more. And it was only installed this morning.

**RAM** *[Working]* I haven't got time to worry about new programs. I've got more files than I can point a cursor at and my filing cabinets are almost chockers.

**ROM** Yes and they reckon we librarians have nothing to do.

**RAM** *[Stops work. Pause]* Rom?

**ROM** *[Still working]* I'll bet we get an upgrade this week.

**RAM** Do you ever get the time to *read* your files?

**ROM** *[Stops work]* Read them? You must be joking. Have you seen the manual for this stuff? It was written by a dyslexic sadist with the IQ of a fungus.

**RAM** As you know, I have all the smaller files. The letters, accounts, lists, etcetera.

**ROM** Poor old you. That must be so tedious.

**RAM** Well, yes and no. The thing is, some of the contents are ... well, interesting.

**ROM** *[Shocked]* My dear Ram, remember your calling. We librarians are like priests and doctors. Confidential is our middle name.

**RAM** Yes but what if we found something illegal, something dangerous?

**ROM** Illegal? Dangerous? Surely not. This computer's owned by a lawyer.

**RAM** Over here, have a look. *[ROM moves to RAM'S library]*

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- ROM** [*Reading. Shocked*] But that's fantastic. Have you told Dos?
- RAM** Of course not. My files are confidential. [*Upset*] Oh Rom, have I done the right thing? Are we supposed to read the files?
- ROM** This is sensational. It's dynamite. This information means the difference between crashing and working.
- GRETA** [*From upstage*] Computers crashing!  
[*ROM and RAM cover up, turn upstage. Lights come up and GRETA, VIRTUAL and CONAN enter and come down C*]
- RAM** Who are you? What are you doing here?
- VIRTUAL** We live here, same as you.
- ROM** All new bytes report to Dos.
- CONAN** We report to no-one. We work in the games department.
- ROM** [*Disgusted*] Games!
- RAM** That load of rubbish!
- GRETA** Popular's my nick-name but my printout says Greta the Garbo.
- VIRTUAL** Hi. I make two-dimensional three-dimensional. I'm Virtual Banality.
- CONAN** And I'm into peace-keeping adventures with a banana and zucchini. They call me Conan the Vegetarian.
- ROM** Well I'm sorry but this is a serious computer. We haven't got the time or space for boring, mindless games.
- GRETA** Mindless! Computer games are mindless? Have you ever tried to get out of the maze? Well?
- VIRTUAL** Boring! Wait till you get to fly through an asteroid avalanche in quadraphonic colour.
- CONAN** Do you two know how to fight ten thousand barbarians armed with two tomatoes and a carrot?
- RAM** I don't see what any of that's got to do with *serious* computing?
- GRETA** Serious? We *are* serious. Do you know how much money is spent on computer games?
- VIRTUAL** There are entire libraries filled with nothing but multi-media extravaganzas.
- CONAN** You've heard of New Age activities. Computer games are at the dicing edge.
- DOS** [*Enters with GO TO*] Hey! What's going on here?
- ROM** Ah, Dos. These inferior bytes claim to live in our computer.
- GO TO** They *do* live in this computer.
- RAM** But why? They don't do anything. Games are a waste of valuable storage space.
- GRETA** Okay, hold it right there, buster. You've got yourself a mighty big chip on your shoulder.
- VIRTUAL** Games are mentally stimulating and big, big business.



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**CONAN** And remember, all work and no play makes Rom and Ram a dull librarian.  
*[MUSIC BEGINS. COMPANY re-enter and listen as verse is sung]*

### Games

**TRIO** *Spreadsheets are helpful  
Word processing's the key  
And data bases have their places  
Gracious, we agree.  
And graphics are delightful  
Statistics show what's done  
But all of these are boring  
Unless life has some fun.*

*Games, we love to play games  
We love to race cars, shoot stars, explore the Milky Way  
Games, we love to play games  
We love to punch hard, each guard, defeat the CIA.  
At the monitor we sit and stare  
Our head is dead, our bum is numb  
But we don't care.  
Games, we love to play games  
And it is computer games we love to play.*

**GRETA** *Rubbish, I love the rubbish  
I love the garbage, trash, the yucky, mucky gunk.*

**VIRTUAL** *Hi-tech, I love the hi-tech  
I love the gizmos, whizmos,  
Fizz-mos space-age junk.*

**CONAN** *Violence, I love the violence  
I am a hoonie, loonie, zooney kind of hunk.*

**TRIO** *Addicts, computer addicts  
We tend dough, see ya, we're a game show punk!*

*[Chorus is repeated with company joining in. During the staccato dance break, TRIO play computer games perhaps on a giant screen seen by the audience. The BYTES are fascinated. Games are fun. Song ends and everyone is excited]*

**DOS** Right, thanks everyone. *[BYTES settle]* We welcome our friends from the games department. I'm sure they'll come in very handy at the end of term party. But right now ...

**QWERTY** Dos. Sorry to interrupt again but there's still my other new idea.

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**GO TO** Not now, Qwerty.

**ROM** Actually Ram and I would also like a word, Dos. It's rather important.

**QWERTY** I asked first. My idea could revolutionise the world of computing. *[BYTES impressed]*

**RAM** Well *our* investigation could save this computer from a disaster. *[BYTES very impressed. "Disaster! This computer! Wow!"]*

**GO TO** Disaster! And what investigation? You two are librarians, you're not police officers.

**ROM** We cannot say any more at this stage except that the matter is of the utmost importance.

**QWERTY** Well so's my idea. In fact, it's incredible.

**RAM** Oh yeah? Well ours is veracious. *[Build these large words. Milk them. The BYTES are impressed and could ooh and ahh as each Byte tries to out do the other]*

**QWERTY** Yes but mine's ... indefectible.

**ROM** So? Ours is ... egregious.

**QWERTY** Stupefying!

**RAM** Sesquipedalian!

**QWERTY** Quaquaversal!

**ROM** Grandiloquent!

**DOS** Yes all right. We get the picture if not the meaning. Now let's all get back to work and prepare to be booted up the byte-side.

**PIRATE** *[Appears high up and calls]* Hold it! Freeze that frame! *[Everyone turns to face PIRATE]*

**RAM** Not another weirdo.

**ROM** *[Calling]* We don't want any more games!

**DOS** *[Calling]* I'm sorry but our memory is full at the moment.

**PIRATE** And don't I know it.

**GO TO** *[Calling]* What's your name? What do you want?

**PIRATE** I have reason to believe this computer contains tainted software. *[Huge buzz from BYTES]*

**DOS** Tainted! You mean we've got a virus. *[BYTES upset]*

**PIRATE** Boot up! I'm from the FBI.

**QWERTY** The FBI! *[Gosh!]*

**PIRATE** *[Holds up ID badge]* Find Bogus Info. *[Another buzz]* It's my job to seek and destroy pirated software.

**GO TO** *[Impressed]* Oh my graphics. That means you're ...

**PIRATE** Indeed it does. So clear the decks and brace the mainsail. Pirates ahoy! *[MUSIC BEGINS]*  
*[PIRATE swings on a rope or slides down a ramp or pole and lands on deck - DC with the company or crew in awe. PIRATE is king]*

**Pirate Buster**

**PIRATE**            *When people copy tapes 'n stuff  
They never, ever pay enough  
That's when they find out I am tough  
I'm the pirate buster.*

**COMPANY**        *That's when they find out he is tough  
He's the pirate buster!*

**PIRATE**            *Computer games are lots of fun  
To muck around when homework's done  
But pinch a disk and you're on the run  
From the pirate buster.*

**COMPANY**        *But pinch a disk and you're on the run  
From the pirate buster.*

**PIRATE**            *I am a pirate buster  
They fluster at my bluster  
I chase the crooks with their stolen books  
If you steal you'll squeal like Custer.  
For I am a pirate buster  
Your lustre I'll encruster  
If you copy things then you'll cop the slings  
Of an irate pirate buster.*

**COMPANY**        *For he is a pirate buster  
You'll fluster at his bluster  
See him chase the crooks with their stolen books  
If you steal you'll squeal like Custer.  
For he is a pirate buster  
Your lustre he'll encruster  
If you copy things then you'll cop the slings  
Of an irate pirate buster.*

**PIRATE**            *Today we make a great machine  
Producing copies nice 'n clean  
But break the law and on the scene  
Is the pirate buster.*

**COMPANY**        *But break the law and on the scene  
Is the pirate buster.*

**PIRATE**            *The price of goods may be is steep  
A pirate copy's nice and cheap  
But don't forget that I never sleep  
I'm the irate pirate buster.*

**COMPANY**        *But don't forget that he never sleeps  
He's the irate pirate buster*

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*[The chorus is repeated with everyone singing with gusto. Lots of swashbuckling moves a la Captain Hook and Errol Flynn. Song over, DOS thanks PIRATE and everyone]*

**DOS** Thank you. Thank you. *[Hubbub settles]* Marvellous to have you on board, Pirate. I'm sure we'll do everything we can to help find pirated software.

**GO TO** Absolutely. We're totally opposed to impersonation. But Dos, don't forget you were going to talk about something else.

**DOS** I was? Oh yes. Games are great, pirated software is bad but something absolutely diabolical is hacking.

**BYTES** Hacking? *[They murmur]*

**DOS** Yes, hacking is when someone uses the computer without permission.

**GRETA** You mean they play games without asking first?

**DOS** Play games, steal files, damage data. Anything.

**RAM** They won't see my files. Nobody does. Even *I* don't read them.

**VIRTUAL** Well my games are far too sophisticated for any simple thief.

**ROM** And I've got a brilliant defence - the computer's manual.

**CONAN** Try and hack me, buddy, and you'll cop a rotten tomato and two sticks of celery.

**DOS** Yes, okay, that's terrific. The point is we may not know if the user *is* a hacker. They can be pretty damn clever.

**GO TO** That's the trouble with computers. You never know just who the baddies are.

**QWERTY** I've got an idea that might help. *[BYTES groan]*

**RAM** And we've got something vital we'd like to discuss, Dos. In private.

**DOS** Not now, later. In fact I suggest we all turn into our chips until the power surges again. Go on. Off you go. Bye bye Bytes.

**BYTES** *[Exiting in various directions]* Bye bye bytes.

**GO TO** Well said, Dos. Listen, I've got a theory about this hacking.

**DOS** *[Exiting with GO TO]* Okay. Tell me over by the mother board.

*[Everyone exits except ROM and RAM. Lights again dim and concentrate on the libraries C. The two librarians sit and think aloud]*

**ROM** We're going to have to tell Dos.

**RAM** I know. And that makes me scared.

**ROM** Scared of what's in the files?

**RAM** Yes. And scared of admitting I've read them.

**ROM** *[Pause]* Have you got any pirated software?

**RAM** Who knows? I'm flat out with filing, I haven't got time to check anything.

**ROM** But just time to read the occasional file?

**RAM** *[Worried]* Yes, all right, I know I was wrong.

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- ROM** The question is, where do the rights of the individual stop and the rights of the community begin?
- RAM** So you think I've done the right thing?
- ROM** Don't ask me, Ram. I'm just a humble librarian battling to avoid a pile up on the information super highway.
- RAM** Ha! I hate highways.
- ROM** Me too.
- RAM** You do? Gee I thought I was some kind of weirdo.
- ROM** Change is fine but it's the pace of change that I can't hack.
- RAM** *[Alarmed]* Hack? Are you a hacker?
- ROM** Don't be ridiculous. I just wish we could do things the way they did in the old days.
- RAM** You mean the bad old good old days?
- ROM** No colour monitors, no mother boards and no notebooks.
- RAM** I think they had notebooks in the old days.
- ROM** Yes, but they were made of paper and cost twenty five cents.
- RAM** And I'll bet filing was dead easy back then. None of this save a document in a second, print it in two and flop the poppy.
- ROM** Flop the poppy? Don't you mean pop the floppy?
- RAM** I don't know what I mean. It's all a bit too technical for me.
- ROM** You're right. Let's face it, Ram. We were born in the wrong era.  
*[MUSIC BEGINS]*

### Carbon Copies

- ROM** *[Dialogue over music]* Did you know you can now store a million words on a tiny card?
- RAM** Ha! That was an hour ago. It's now a trillion times more data on a pinhead.
- ROM** *[Shakes head]* Oh, it's all too much. I'd love to do clerical work like they did in the old days.
- RAM** You mean this morning?
- ROM** No, way back. Fifty, a hundred years. Or more.
- RAM** But that was the Ice Age.
- ROM** No. *[Smiles. Dreams]* That was the Nice Age.
- DUET** *With blotting paper, a ruler, eraser  
A nib, pencil, sharpener too  
I'm sure it looked better  
To smudge every letter  
The carbon was messy but true.*

*On manual typewriters words looked okay  
And in-between tea breaks we'd type two a day.  
Filing? Don't scoff us  
We'd fill half the office  
Cos that's how we worked yesterday.*

**RAM** *[Dialogue over music]* Did you know telephones once had lots of little holes?

**ROM** Oh yes, I knew that. But it took longer to dial the number than it did to make the call.

**RAM** Ah, but did you know they had mobile phones over a hundred years ago?

**ROM** Mobile phones? A hundred years ago? You've got to be kidding.

**RAM** No, I'm not. The only problem was they came with a cable .... *[ROM joins the tag]* ... a hundred miles long.

**ROM** *[Speaking with RAM]* A hundred miles long.  
*[They laugh. Then dream again]*

**RAM** You know, there was something magical about the old days, about going slow.

**ROM** Yeah. Let's forget the rush. Let's take it nice 'n easy.

**RAM** Now that's what I call magical.  
*[They sing again. Song ends. The librarians start to work on their libraries in the quiet silence when there's a stumbling sound onstage. It's dim lighting onstage so we can't see who or what it is. The librarians stop work and make "shhh" signs. Another stumble. "Ow!" is heard]*

**ROM** Hello? Who's there?

**RAM** *[Worried whisper]* It might be a hacker.

**ROM** *[Equally concerned]* It might be a virus.

**RAM** Quick. We have to warn Dos.  
*[QWERTY suddenly stumbles into the light and ROM and RAM grab each other for protection]*

**ROM** *[Relieved]* Qwerty!

**RAM** We thought you were a hacker.

**QWERTY** Evening all.

**ROM** What are you doing wandering round the computer when it's switched off?

**QWERTY** I've just been studying the circuitry. Fascinating stuff up there. Are you bytes interested in the technical side of things?

**RAM** Definitely not.

**QWERTY** This is a digital computer, it works on the binary system of numbers. And that's just perfect for my new idea.

**ROM** We don't want anything that's new.

**RAM** Unless you've got a box of coloured pencils and some drawing pins.

**QWERTY** Pencils? Drawing pins? No, listen. My idea will take you to a new dimension.

**ROM** Yes but can we get there by steam train?

**QWERTY** *[Confused]* Steam train? What are you talking about?

**RAM** We're not interested in anything technical or anything new. We want simplicity and we want to return to the past.

**ROM** *[Leading/pushing RAM]* Now, have you got the message? We're old-fashioned. So good night, Qwerty.

**RAM** *[Calling back]* Yeah. Sweet dreams, Qwerty.

*[ROM and RAM exit into darkness. QWERTY confused. Calls after them]*

**QWERTY** Hang on. This is important. It could change the world of computing.

*[QWERTY'S alone. Shakes head, wanders off in another direction]* A byte gets a brilliant idea and nobody wants to know. It's crazy. Crazy.

*[Lights dim. Blackout. Pause. In darkness PIXEL calls]*

**PIXEL** Are we happy in our work?

**PIXELETTES** *[Also calling from the darkness]* No!

**PIXEL** Do we want to live life to the full?

**PIXELETTES** Yes!

**PIXEL** Then strike up the band. *[MUSIC BEGINS]*

*[Single light hits PIXEL up high. PIXEL sings verse with just one light. When the chorus begins, PIXEL descends but still under limited lighting. When the chorus is repeated, bring up the lights as the PIXELETTES race in and join PIXEL. Showbiz lighting. Mirror ball, strobe, many colours, etcetera]*

### Go Into Showbiz

**PIXEL** *Go to school, study hard,  
Pass exams, get a job  
Go to work, don't be late  
Save your cash, join the mob.  
That's what they tell you, teachers, your folks  
Get some security, no risk or jokes.  
Well I say that's baloney,  
It's bunkum, balderdash  
Your life is far too short to waste  
Take chances, make a splash.  
Give up your day job, go into showbiz  
Buy a ticket to Life.  
Throw up that grey job, dough isn't so swizz  
Fly through that thicket of strife.  
Time waits for no-one, life passes you by  
Strap on those tap shoes, audition and fly.*

## 16 BYTES

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*Give up your day job, go into showbiz  
And buy a ticket to Life.*

*[Speech over the music to audience]* Now listen my friends and listen well. Show business is the toughest, meanest, poorest, nastiest trade in the whole wide world. The pay's lousy, the competition's ferocious and the job opportunities are massively minuscule. You don't have to be crazy but it certainly helps. And one thing's for sure. You won't ever get bored. So live it, breathe it, do it! Showbiz!!

*[The chorus is repeated with all the PIXELETTES featured in the big finish. They're frozen in the spotlight. The applause ends. GO TO, wearing a large nightshirt and cap storms in and throws a wet blanket over their celebrations]*

- GO TO** Right, knock off this racket and get back to the monitor. *All of you!*
- PIXEL** Aw, get lost, Go To. You're just a gofer. Stop trying to push us around. *[PIXELETTES agree]*
- GO TO** You pixels have one job and that's to light up the monitor. So get back there and wait till you're switched on.
- PIXELETTE** We are switched on. *[Others agree]* Hit the follow spot.
- GO TO** You're drunk and you're stupid. Let's face it, you're just a bunch of lighting operators on the monitor's screen.
- PIXEL** You're right. And let me tell you it is boring. What we really want is to light up the world! *[Others agree]*
- GO TO** In your dreams, Pixel. In your dreams.
- PIXEL** We're sick of the little screen. We want the big time. *[To PIXELS]* Don't we?
- PIXELETTES** Yeah. The big time. That's right ... *etc*
- GO TO** Want, want, want. What sort of world would it be if everyone did just what they liked?
- PIXEL** Well *we'd* be in the glorious uncertainty of showbiz and *you'd* be in some boring little office surrounded by invoices and red tape.
- GO TO** Listen you misguided anarchist. Life is about sacrifice. It's about doing your duty and getting on with the job at hand.
- PIXEL** You only live once, Go To. You only get one chance at happiness. Why spend your days doing something you hate?
- GO TO** If you lot don't return immediately to the monitor, I'll report this disgraceful episode to Dos.
- PIXEL** Yeah, you would. In triplicate.
- GO TO** For all we know this pathetic acting business could just be a front.
- PIXEL** Oh it's a front all right. Showbiz is all about front. Right bytes?
- PIXELETTES** Right.
- PIXEL** It's about style, Go To. Something you've never even heard of.



- GO TO** I mean a front for something sinister like being a hacker or worse. A virus!  
*[PIXELETTES show mock horror]*
- PIXEL** Now that's funny. You should go into comedy, Go To. You're a joke.
- GO TO** Right, that's it. *[Starts to exit]* I'm going to get Dos.  
*[GO TO storms off. MUSIC BEGINS. PIXEL calls after GO TO]*
- PIXEL** And don't call us. We'll call you!  
*[PIXELETTES laugh as they sing a reprise of their song]*

### Go Into Showbiz Reprise

*Give up your day job, go into showbiz  
Buy a ticket to Life.  
Throw up that grey job, dough isn't so swizz  
Fly through that thicket of strife.  
Time waits for no-one, life passes you by  
Strap on those tap shows, audition and fly.  
Give up your day job, go into showbiz  
And buy a ticket to Life.*

*[Song ends and PIXEL and Co dash off. Lights dim. GO TO enters. It's dark. GO TO checks on the libraries and starts to exit when a voice speaks from the darkness]*

- HACKER** Anything interesting?
- GO TO** *[Stops, looks around]* What? Who's there? *[Pause]* Come on. I know you're there.
- HACKER** *[Coming down]* I just wondered if Rom and Ram had any juicy files?
- GO TO** Look, I told Pixel and now I'm telling you. Get back to the monitor until the power surges. Now clear off!
- HACKER** I don't live in the monitor. I'm not a pixel.
- GO TO** Well, the motherboard, the power unit, wherever. Just go back to your place.
- HACKER** Ah, but where is my place?
- GO TO** Do I know you? What's your name? Where do you live?
- HACKER** Oh, didn't I say? I'm visiting.
- GO TO** Visiting? *[Suddenly realises]* Oh my Dos. You're a virus.
- HACKER** A virus. *[Laughter]* Please, spare me the jokes. You must be a comedian.
- GO TO** That's the second time someone's said that.
- HACKER** No my friend. I'm what you might call a private investigator.
- GO TO** *[Shocked, impressed]* Oh no! You're from the FBI.
- HACKER** That's it. Fossick, Bot, Infiltrate.
- GO TO** But where's your pirate costume?

**HACKER** *[Confused]* Ah, this is getting a bit esoteric for me. Listen old byte, are you interested in a little cash?

**GO TO** Cash? You mean the stuff before EFTPOS?

**HACKER** That's it. Spondulicks, bread, filthy lucre. A little back hander.

**GO TO** I don't know what you mean.

**HACKER** Oh cut the innocent caper. We both know the story. I'm a hacker.

**GO TO** *[Stunned]* A hacker!

**HACKER** Yes a hacker. And I've broken in to read your files. You show me the juicy ones and I'll bung you a ton.

**GO TO** *[Doesn't understand]* Bung me a ton?

**HACKER** Oh for Gate's sake. I'll pay you to help me steal. Get the picture? Is your monitor switched on? Have you been down-loaded?

**GO TO** *[Outraged]* You can't be serious. Stealing's a crime. It's an outrage against individuals and society.

**HACKER** Okay, I'll double it.

**GO TO** *[Instant character change]* Fair enough. It's a deal.

**HACKER** Now I'm a professional and my field is industrial espionage.

**GO TO** What's that mean?

**HACKER** It means one company invents a new product or new way of doing something and another company wants the details.

**GO TO** So, why don't they buy them?

**HACKER** Because they're not for sale and if they were, they'd cost the earth.

**GO TO** So they pay you to steal them?

**HACKER** Spot on. Now. What I need to know is the Internet connection details and the E-Mail password.

**GO TO** `Um ... ah ...

**HACKER** Well come on. I want some juicy files. Hit me with the data.

**GO TO** I think we've got the things you want. This is a lawyer's computer.

**HACKER** Oh then I've struck gold. They know all about stealing.

**GO TO** *[Moving to RAM'S library]* Over here. Only I don't know how to access the files.

**HACKER** *[Examining library]* Don't worry. That's what I'm paid to do. *[Attempts to break in]* Just need the right password and ... there!

**GO TO** *[Impressed]* Hey. That's brilliant.

**HACKER** Now, let's call up the files and see what we can steal.  
*[Mimes working. We see PIRATE enter and creep forward]*

**GO TO** So what's it like being a hacker? Is it dangerous?

**HACKER** This is unbelievable. Have you seen what's on these files?  
*[GO TO moves closer and looks at RAM's library]*

**GO TO** Of course not. I don't do anything that's illegal.

**HACKER** This stuff is sensational. Does Dos know about these files?

**GO TO** Look, could you please hurry? There might be someone else around.

**PIRATE** *[From above, breaks cover]* Everything okay down there?  
*[Panic. HACKER nearly dies. GO TO has a power surge]*

**HACKER** Who the hell are you?

**GO TO** Pirate! What are you doing here?

**PIRATE** *[Coming down]* I thought I felt some pirate activity.

**GO TO** You did. I've just captured a hacker!  
*[Grabs HACKER who is surprised]*

**HACKER** Hey! Let go! *[Struggles]*

**GO TO** *[Struggling]* Help me! Help! *[Continues]*  
*[PIRATE rushes over and grabs HACKER who is subdued. The three call. HACKER protests, the other two call for help. Lights come up and BYTES appear from everywhere. They buzz with excitement. One or two give GO TO a hand. DOS is the last to appear]*

**DOS** What's all this racket? *[Louder]* All right! Cut the static!  
*[Noise settles]*

**GO TO** Glad you could make it, Dos. I have the pleasure of handing over a bandit byte. Meet the hacker. *[Gasps from BYTES]*

**HACKER** *[Threatens GO TO]* You wait, you dirty double-crosser!

**DOS** Brilliant work, Go To. I'm proud of you.

**PIRATE** Yeah, well done, Go To. You had me fooled there for a nanosecond.  
*[GO TO a bit sheepish but the bluff seems to have worked]*

**RAM** *[At library]* Hey! Someone's broken into my files. *[BYTES buzz]*

**GO TO** It's all right, Ram. I stopped the hacker before any damage was done.

**DOS** Right, take the hacker to the format-disk section.  
*[BYTES gasp at this terrible punishment. HACKER is dragged away]*

**HACKER** *[Exiting with some BYTES]* I'll get you Go To. Nobody double crosses a hacker and gets away with it.

**DOS** *[To BYTES]* Now take note, Bytes. Go To has led by example. If you find someone breaking the law, rorting the system, doing anything illegal, it's your duty to dob them in.

**ROM** You mean you want us to grass on our mates?

**GO TO** No, we want you to uphold the law. All I did was my duty. Besides, it could have been *your* files the hacker broke into.

**QWERTY** Excuse me, Dos. About my new idea.

**DOS** Not now, Qwerty. Later. Listen Bytes. We are about to be upgraded. *[Buzz of excitement from COMPANY]* Our hard drive is being expanded and we're getting some extra memory.

**RAM** And about time too.

**QWERTY** That's a fantastic coincidence. This could affect my new idea.

**GO TO** More memory means more work for everyone. *[BYTES excited]*

**PIRATE** *[Pushing forward]* Hang on. Just a nanosecond. More memory is useless if you're using pirated software.

**DOS** Well until that happens, we'll operate as usual. Now everyone back to your places in the computer and get ready for the upgrade.

**QWERTY** No! You haven't heard my idea. It's a winner.

**PIRATE** And I need to investigate to see if there's any pirated material.

**RAM** And Rom and I have something we *have* to share.

**GO TO** We do as Dos tells us. Now move.

**DOS** Here comes the upgrade.  
*[Bell rings. COMPANY turns upstage, freezes. Pause. What is this upgrade? BASIC enters pushing a tea-trolley. Everyone relaxes]*

**BASIC** *[Heading DC]* Tea-break!

**DOS** Not now, Basic. We're about to be upgraded.

**GO TO** Go away, Basic. We are facing something extremely important.

**BASIC** Important? What's more important than a cuppa tea?

**ROM** Dos, please go easy. Basic's been part of the furniture here ever since we were a two eight six.

**BASIC** Do you mind?

**ROM** Sorry. A one eight six.

**BASIC** Listen Rom, I started work on a manual typewriter.

**RAM** Really? What was it like?

**GO TO** Oh this is ridiculous. We're about to get state-of-the-art megabytes of memory and the whole upgrade is stopped by some stupid tea break.

**BASIC** *[Looking on trolley]* Ah, I've got your cinnamon doughnuts, Ram.

**RAM** *[Drooling]* Cinnamon. Oh droolsville.

**ROM** *[Upset]* Cinnamon doughnuts! What about my jam tarts?

**QWERTY** And you promised me some of those marshmallow things with chocolatey sprinkles.

**CONAN** *[Pushing through to BASIC]* Ah g'day. I'm Conan the Vegetarian. Got any lentil burgers?

**BASIC** I've got everything. Now who wanted the fairy cakes?  
*[All the BYTES start calling out their requests. Brief but noisy]*

**DOS** *[Calling over din]* Yes all right, all right. *[They settle. Silence]* Now I know what they mean by a bun fight. *[BYTES ashamed]* I'm sorry, Basic. The situation is very serious. It's almost an emergency. I'm ordering you to delete the tea-break.  
*[Pause. Silence. BASIC replaces cup on trolley and approaches DOS who is soon intimidated. BASIC is an old hand at dealing with bosses]*

**BASIC** Now listen to me, Dos. Nothing, but nothing, interrupts the brew-up. Long before computers were even dreamt about, workers stopped for a cup of char. It is one of the eleven commandments.

**GO TO** *Eleven* commandments?

**BASIC** Thou shalt not neglect thy cuppa. So tell your upgrade friend to pull the plug. It's time to boil the billy. It's tools down, Dos. Cease work. Have a break. Knock off. Got the message? [*Meekly DOS nods*] Now, milk and sugar? [*MUSIC BEGINS*]

### The Cuppa

**Basic**                    *Wars may start and finish*  
                              *Earthquakes come and go*  
                              *Typhoons, monsoons*  
                              *Tycoons, communes*  
                              *Put on quite a show.*  
                              *But none can match the impact*  
                              *Or the popularity*  
                              *Of life's great institution*  
                              *The good old cuppa tea.*  
                              *Everything stops for a cuppa*  
                              *Everyone stops for tea.*  
                              *The bosses, the workers,*  
                              *The Gurkhas, the shirkers*  
                              *All cease their mazurkas*  
                              *To sip, slurp with glee.*  
                              *White, black, with sugar or lemon*  
                              *Tea-bag or tea-pot so twee*  
                              *It's downright habitual*  
                              *To some it's a ritual*  
                              *The good old cuppa tea.*

*[COMPANY sing the chorus. BASIC distributes tea. This could be mimed. Song ends in a toast to the cuppa. Everyone returns their cups [mimed] and thanks BASIC for the splendid refreshment. BASIC exits farewelled by BYTES who settle and chat quietly. QWERTY is bubbling with enthusiasm and buttonholes DOS. They move DR. Concentrate lights DR]*

**QWERTY** Dos, this is not another crazy idea. This time it's the real thing.

**DOS** Go away. I've got to prepare for the upgrade.

**QWERTY** I promise you won't be disappointed.

**GO TO** [*Coming over*] Sorry about the tea business, Dos. I've sent Basic packing.

**QWERTY** It's unique, it's revolutionary and it can happen right here in *your* computer.

**GO TO** Let me deal with this. Qwerty, go and play on the information super highway.

**QWERTY** You're missing the chance of a lifetime, Dos.

**GO TO** *[Pushing QWERTY]* Come on, hop it.

**DOS** Wait. *[Duo stop]* Come back.

*[Excited, QWERTY scampers back to DOS. GO TO upset]*

**QWERTY** You won't regret this.

**GO TO** Dos, have you popped a transistor? This byte's a fruit cake.

**DOS** *[To QWERTY]* You've got twenty nanoseconds. Go.

**QWERTY** Right. This computer and trillions of others work on a binary system. That is, zero and one, on and off, yes or no. Electric impulses trigger one of two responses. The billions of questions we get asked come down to this basic situation. Yea or nay.

**GO TO** This is a waste of time.

**QWERTY** What if, instead of us only answering yes or no, we added a third answer?

**DOS** What? You mean yes, no and something else?

**QWERTY** Exactly. And the something else is MAYBE.

**DOS** Maybe? Maybe what?

**QWERTY** It's an alternative. Why should we be stuck with giving the same old answers year in, year out? With MAYBE we'll get some variety and computer programmers will have a whole new field to develop.

**GO TO** If this is so fantastic, why haven't programmers used it already?

**QWERTY** They're only human, they're fallible. Not like us. We never make mistakes.

**DOS** You mean there are more numbers than just zero and one?

**QWERTY** I'm sure there are. In fact I've invented a new number. It's called zwun.

**DOS** Zwun. What's zwun?

**GO TO** It's bunkum. The whole thing's preposterous.

**QWERTY** If you add zero and one you get zwun.

**DOS** But zero and one equals one.

**GO TO** It'll never work. Zwun's too hard.

**QWERTY** Okay, zwun's too hard. Take away zwun. That leave's too hard. Take away hard. That leave's too. Zero, one, too.

**DOS** I think I follow.

**QWERTY** Look, trust me. I know I've discovered something. And if you'll let me demonstrate to the bytes, I'm sure you'll be convinced.

**GO TO** Dos, we should be worried about upgrades, hackers and the virus, not this mumbo-jumbo from quirky Qwerty.

**DOS** I know, I know. But let's face it. Today's hi-tech world is super competitive. You need a gimmick, a break, a new invention to keep ahead of your opposition.

**QWERTY** And this is it, Dos. This is the idea that'll put your name on every operating system in the universe.

**DOS** Right. I'll let you explain things to the bytes on one condition. If they agree, we'll take it further. If they don't, your disk gets formatted by me, *personally*. Understand? Yes or no?

**QWERTY** Understood perfectly. I'll just get some stuff.  
*[Darts offstage to collect some large cards. ROM and RAM approach DR]*

**ROM** Dos, we'd like a word. It's very important.

**GO TO** Not now, we're busy.

**RAM** We've made a shocking discovery.

**DOS** *[Upset]* You've found a virus?

**ROM** Sort of.

**RAM** It's about some data on my files.

**GO TO** But how do you know what's there? Your files are strictly confidential.  
*[Pause. Silence]*

**ROM** Well, we *think* we know something.

**DOS** Think? Not good enough. I need proof. Now out of my way. *[Pushing past]*  
Qwerty's doing a demonstration.  
*[DOS heads RC to a raised position. GO TO follows protesting. Lights up slowly. ROM and RAM mime brief dispute then join others]*

**GO TO** Dos? You'll make a fool of yourself. Qwerty's a bit short of a byte.

**DOS** *[Calling to BYTES who stop their mimed chit chat and face DOS]* Switch on. We are about to have a brief demonstration by Qwerty. *[BYTES nod, briefly comment]* This is another idea which I think we should consider. If you have any questions, don't be afraid to ask.  
*[QWERTY bursts in with cards and sets up DC]*

**QWERTY** Now make yourselves comfy. Oh and I need some volunteers.  
*[Three BYTES come forward. The rest spread around upstage. QWERTY works front]*

**ROM** This had better not interfere with my library.

**RAM** Or mine.

**QWERTY** Now I'm going to give each volunteer a card. *[Does so]* You are zero and you are one. Now what comes next?

**BYTE** One zero.

**QWERTY** Correct but what a waste. I mean, why only two digits? Why only Zero and one? All we ever get to answer is on or off.

**CONAN** Yeah but it's easy that way. We like simple things. *[BYTES agree]*

**QWERTY** Simple, okay, but where's the variety? It was the games' bytes who told us all work and no play made Dos a dull byte?

**GRETA** We did say that. And it's true. You've gotta have variety.

**VIRTUAL** Put some graphics on your screen.

**PIXEL** Put some showbiz in your life.

**QWERTY** Exactly. And here it is. *[Holds up card with the digit 2 written back to front]*  
This is my idea. It's too!

**BYTES** Too! *[They chat]*

**DOS** *[Calling]* Time's almost up, Qwerty. Convince them or else.

**QWERTY** Okay, tabulate. Once we answered like this. *[Points to cards]* Zero. One.  
Now we have another number, another answer. Instead of just on/off or  
yes/no ...  
*[The first two cards are turned. On the back of zero is YES. On the back of one is  
NO] ... we have another answer. [The 2 card is turned and reads MAYBE]*  
Maybe. *[BYTES buzz]*

**GO TO** They don't understand, Dos. Hit delete.

**CONAN** I get it. Instead of just fruit and veg, we have fruit, veg and ...

**QWERTY** How about Nuts?

**CONAN** *[Delighted]* Yeah. Nuts. Fruit, veg and nuts.

**VIRTUAL** *[To CONAN]* You're the one who's nuts.

**RAM** But what about my files? I've got IN and OUT.

**QWERTY** How about TOO HARD?

**RAM** *[Excited]* TOO HARD. That's brilliant. The one's I can't file are TOO  
HARD.

**ROM** But I'm happy with just ON or OFF. I'll only get confused with another  
choice.

**GO TO** We'll all get confused. And what will MAYBE do to our output? I bet it'll  
mean more work for the workers.

**QWERTY** Yes but think of the good points. Think of the potential for change.

**RAM** I don't like change.

**VIRTUAL** It all sounds pretty banal to me.

**DOS** I think you're losing them, Qwerty.

**QWERTY** Oh come on, bytes. The possibilities are limited only by your imagination.  
Computers are not just machines. They can do all sorts of things. *We* can  
do all sorts of things. What do you say?

**DOS** I'd say they need more convincing and you're running out of time.  
*[MUSIC BEGINS]*

**GO TO** Face it, Qwerty. ON and OFF are the best answers.

**DOS** Make it good, Qwerty, or you're deleted.

**GO TO** It's a cut-throat world out there, mate.

### We Can Do Anything

**QWERTY** *We can do anything if we try  
We can be anyone, don't be shy  
We can go anywhere, even fly  
We can, we can, we can, we can. we can.*



*We can learn anything, think be smart  
We can share everything, play a part  
We can love everyone, mind and heart  
We can, we can, we can, we can, we can.  
Anything's possible, go  
Anything's possible, try  
Anything's possible, so  
Do it, make it, cue it, take it.  
We can build anything with a plan  
We can teach anyone, byte or man  
We can do anything, yes we can  
We can, we can, we can, we can, we can.*

*[QWERTY inspires the COMPANY. They join in this frantic song and dance. You could include a scene involving this revolution e.g. cards with YES, NO and MAYBE or IN, OUT and BIN. These could flash on your giant screen. At the end, everyone is excited but DOS, who likes the idea, still has other problems. These must be addressed]*

- DOS** Okay, Bytes, keep your chips on. Now I like Qwerty's idea. I believe it has great possibilities. But it's not the greatest thing since the silicon chip.
- RAM** And maybe we can't convince the human programmers to think laterally.
- ROM** Exactly. The key word is *maybe*.
- QWERTY** *[Excited]* Yes! Yes! It's MAYBE.
- GO TO** Has anyone considered the side effects of this new idea? I mean if we start answering MAYBE instead of YES or NO, what will happen to our software?
- RAM** What will happen to my files?
- DOS** Yes, I know there are bugs in the system but it's still early days. Right now we've got much more important things to consider.
- PIRATE** Yeah, like in this software genuine?
- GRETA** And how can we get equal billing for computer games?
- PIXEL** And when are auditions for the latest showbiz extravaganza?
- DOS** Please, one at a time. *[Pause]* There are problems. Every community has its share of trouble. But we must learn to solve our differences in a calm and reasonable manner.
- GO TO** It's no use, Dos. You've got to tell them.
- PIRATE** Tell us what? Don't say we've been working on pirated software all along?
- DOS** No we haven't but this is far more important than pirated software.  
*[Buzz from BYTES. What is DOS going to talk about?]*

**GRETA** Well get on with it. I've got three teenagers wanting to play *Demolition Dunderheads*.

**DOS** It's time we faced up to that ever present threat. The Virus.  
*[BYTES buzz about the Virus. Many are scared]*

**QWERTY** What Virus? Are we under threat?

**CONAN** I'll fight the Virus. Give me a packet of unsalted cashews.

**DOS** There is no need to panic. If we take care and heed the warning signs, we should be safe.

**RAM** Dos, I urgently need to speak to you in private.

**VIRTUAL** *Should* be safe? You mean there's no guarantee?

**DOS** The Virus is very cunning. It can disguise itself, pretend to be someone else and sneak past our defences.

**ROM** This is crucial and confidential.

**QWERTY** And what if it does sneak past? What happens then?  
*[Pause. BYTES look at DOS who hesitates]*

**GO TO** It's no good. Dos. You have to tell them. It's no good trying to hide the data.

**DOS** *[Sadly]* Okay. If the Virus breaks into our computer, we'll probably all be corrupted. *[Huge shock to BYTES]* I'm sorry but it's the truth. The Virus is able to corrupt all data and once you're corrupt you're ...

**ROM** Go on. Say it. We're dead.

**RAM** Please Dos. Send the bytes away and talk to us.

**DOS** If it's so important, tell me now.

**ROM** We've seen something on one of Ram's files. *[Gasps all round]*

**DOS** *[Stunned]* You've read someone's file?

**RAM** It was an accident. We didn't mean to.

**VIRTUAL** That's immoral. *And* illegal.

**PIRATE** I think it's a case for the FBI.

**ROM** But what we saw was so dreadful, I'm sure you'll understand.

**RAM** It's about misrepresentation.

**DOS** All right, but this had better be good.

**GO TO** *[Suddenly upset]* Oh my Dos.

**GRETA** What's wrong? What have you seen?

**GO TO** *[Pointing upstage]* Up there by the hard disk. That's the Virus!  
*[EVERYONE looks where GO TO points. Pause. Then controlled bedlam. BYTES scream and run everywhere. Choreographed chaos. They bump into one another, some fall, some push. Be careful with staging. VIRUS appears up high wearing a basic costume but with a crazy face mask - perhaps like some bank robbers wear. COMPANY eventually exit. Nine principals remain - DOS, GO TO, QWERTY, ROM, RAM, CONAN, GRETA, VIRTUAL and VIRUS. Lighting changes. MUSIC BEGINS]*

## Dungeons and Decibels

*[This is an instrumental piece. You provide the special effects. Each PRINCIPAL attempts to fight the VIRUS. The aim is to present a computer game to the audience. For this you ideally will have a set and lighting to create the mood. This is where the pit, waterfall, dungeon, bars of a jail, etc all appear during the game. Listen to the music and make your moves fit the sounds. Obviously keep everything very safe. Having a huge hidden pile of foam to enable bytes to vanish in peace in one piece sounds okay.]*

*VIRUS is high up but moves down to say C. ROM and RAM lead the assault. They move to VIRUS, one from each side. Just as they lunge to grab VIRUS, it moves and ROM and RAM scream and disappear. The GAMES' BYTES are next. First GRETA who engages in a Kung Fu type struggle. It's brief and spectacular before GRETA is chopped in half or something equally nice. VIRTUAL takes the hypnotic approach a la snake charmer. VIRUS is hooked, in a trance. Just as a gleeful VIRTUAL moves in for the kill, VIRUS snaps out of the trance and dispatches VIRTUAL. CONAN is next. VIRUS and CONAN are wild west gun fighters. They face each other at five and a bit paces. They slowly approach. CONAN suddenly goes for his gun which is a banana. He fires saying "Bang". Nothing happens. CONAN fires again and again. VIRUS laughs and keeps walking. VIRUS then produces a laser type weapon and CONAN is vaporised.*

*QWERTY creeps up with a card as in the recent demonstration. We can see the word MAYBE. QWERTY dongs VIRUS who turns and pushes QWERTY who falls into jail. VIRUS turns the card around and we see JAIL. This is stuck on the bars before QWERTY disappears.*

*Finally it's DOS and GO TO. They approach from different sides. VIRUS is laughing. GO TO stands up and VIRUS is distracted. DOS leaps at VIRUS and has VIRUS on the surface. DOS is struggling]*

**DOS** I've done it. I've captured Virus. Help me, Go To. Help me.  
**VIRUS** Get off me. Get off! *[Struggles]*  
**GO TO** *[Hesitates]* I'm scared. I can't.  
**DOS** Oh for Rom's sake, Byte. Help me. *[Louder]* Help me!  
**GO TO** But if I touch the Virus, I'll be corrupted.  
**DOS** Think of the others. You can save every other Byte in this computer.  
**VIRUS** You idiot. Get off. Look! *[VIRUS removes mask]*  
**DOS** *[Shocked]* Hacker!  
**HACKER** I might be a thief but I sure ain't no corrupter.  
**DOS** But why did you attack all the Bytes? You've destroyed them.  
**HACKER** But don't you know?  
**DOS** Know what?

**HACKER** What's on your files. Rom and Ram were going to tell you about the true identity of the Virus.  
*[Pause. DOS stops. HACKER and DOS stare at GO TO]*

**GO TO** What's up? Why are you staring?

**DOS** Why didn't you help me?

**GO TO** I didn't know it was Hacker. You said it was Virus. I told you. I was scared. I am allowed to be frightened.

**HACKER** That byte's a double-crosser. It's dangerous.

**DOS** Extremely dangerous.

**GO TO** What are you talking about? It's me, Go To the gofer.

**HACKER** You double crossed me not to do your duty but to preserve your true identity. You're the Virus!

**GO TO** *[Pause. Then suddenly nasty. Removes gloves or head gear or something small]*  
All right, so you've guessed. But now it's too late. I'm in the computer and nothing can stop me corrupting.  
*[GO TO moves slowly towards the tense DOS and HACKER. Suddenly GO TO gives a zap motion with a hand and the lights flicker and a crackle is heard. DOS and HACKER are terrified and cling to one another. GO TO gives a nasty laugh then slides or swings down to the lowest surface. The others watch from above. GO TO moves to the libraries]*

**DOS** Please, not Rom and Ram's files. You'll ruin everything.

**GO TO** *[Laughing]* Precisely. That's the general idea, moron. *[At library]* Now which files will I corrupt first?

**DOS** You'll never get away with this.

**GO TO** *[Still working]* Oh sure. And I'm a laser printer with knobs on.

**HACKER** You think you've corrupted all the bytes who came to fight you.

**GO TO** They've been zapped. All sent to the dungeons of computer games.

**PIRATE** *[Appears from behind]* Not quite, old bean.

**GO TO** *[Shocked]* What?

**PIRATE** Beware the pirate buster. Justice will prevail. *[Calling]* Come out, Bytes.

**ROM** *[Head appears]* Careful with my library.  
*[Quickly different heads appear. They pop out of port holes or from other unusual places. Don't take long over this. Keep it moving. GO TO is stunned and looks up, down, across each time a new face appears & speaks]*

**RAM** Mind my juicy files.

**QWERTY** I've got a good idea, mate.

**GRETA** Time for a quick fight?

**VIRTUAL** Banality, banality, all is banality.

**CONAN** Careful chum, this banana's loaded.

**PIXEL** All the world's a stage, darling.  
*[No-one approaches GO TO. It's still dangerous]*

**GO TO** *[Furious]* You cretins! So you've found a way out of the maze. Well this time I'll corrupt you permanently! Come any closer and I'll zap these files.

**DOS** If you know the password.

**GO TO** I don't need the password.

**HACKER** Look out. There's someone coming!

**GO TO** Oh very original Hacker. Why not "There's someone behind you!"?  
*[There is as BASIC enters pushing the tea trolley]*

**DOS** That's because there is.  
*[GO TO turns and sees BASIC. At the same time all the other BYTES rise and start towards GO TO. In a flash, GO TO grabs BASIC from behind and calls out causing the others to freeze]*

**GO TO** Freeze! *[They do]* One more pulse and Basic loses all its data and these jam tarts.

**ROM** *[Upset]* Oh please, not the jam tarts.

**GO TO** Now, this boring old byte and I are going to take a floppy disk and fly out of here. Understand?

**DOS** We understand. But please don't harm Basic.

**GO TO** *[To BASIC]* Right, you, get moving.

**BASIC** But we haven't had our cuppa tea.

**GO TO** *[Furious]* I don't care about your stupid tea. Just get moving.

**BASIC** Well at least let me turn off the urn. Otherwise it might explode.

**GO TO** Good idea. Make it explode and we'll corrupt the files with caffeine and chocolate.

**CONAN** Ah caffeine can be bad for you. How about a fruity explosion?

**GO TO** *[Releases BASIC and studies trolley]* Good thinking. Okay, how does this work?

**BASIC** Like this.  
*[BASIC grabs a giant teapot and mimes crowning GO TO who yells and collapses. The others rush down. GO TO is captured, BASIC congratulated]*

**DOS** Brilliant work, Basic. You've saved our computer.

**BASIC** I think I broke one of my best pots.

**DOS** *[To the captured GO TO]* And as for you, your virus spreading days are over. Do you know what happens to Bytes like you?

**GO TO** No and I don't care.

**GRETA** You get to work on computer games where the human always wins.

**GO TO** *[Distressed]* No! Not *Demolition Dungeons!*

**QWERTY** And will you ever get out? Will you ever escape? The answer is ...

**COMPANY** Maybe.

**GO TO** *[Furious]* Maybe!  
*[Everyone laughs as GO TO is lead away protesting]*

**GO TO** You haven't heard the last of me. I'll be back. I'll have you lot deleted.  
*[GO TO departs with a few BYTES who discreetly return a few moments later.  
The company are relieved]*

**DOS** Well my friends, I think it's safe to say, we're safe to stay. This time we have defeated the virus.

**ROM** And the Hacker.

**HACKER** Hey, fair go. I helped save your bacon.

**CONAN** Bacon? The only thing of mine you saved were bananas.

**QWERTY** Speaking of going bananas, I've just had another idea.

**COMPANY** No!

**DOS** Thanks, Qwerty, but not now. Later. Right now we need to realise how important we are and how much we can do here in this computer.

**RAM** With more memory, I can store heaps of files.

**ROM** And with more speed, we can operate very efficiently.

**PIRATE** Particularly if we use the right software.

**DOS** Correct, absolutely correct. However, we always remember that computers will never take the place of friendship and consideration.

**CONAN** And they'll never replace tomatoes.  
*[MUSIC BEGINS. COMPANY amused]*

**QWERTY** But if only we could explain that to humans.

### You Can't Beat Love

**DOS** *Machines can help you travel  
Machines can help you type*

**QWERTY** *Machines can help unravel  
The latest prototype*

**ROM** *Machines can help you leisurely  
With jobs both big and small*

**RAM** *But some things happen naturally  
Without machines at all.*

**COMPANY** *You can be friendly, be kind and share  
Don't need machinery to show you care  
You can be gracious, give life a shove  
Machines are helpful but you can't beat love.  
Kind friends share, show you care.  
Gracious give, life a shove  
Machines are helpful but you can't beat love.*

*[Song ends. Blackout and/or curtain]*

### Curtain Calls

*We live inside this computer  
We live over the shop.  
Our home's a machine which we try to keep clean  
We think it's a micro, perhaps a lap top.  
And deep inside this computer  
It's just like a honeycomb  
We boot up then take care of floppies and software  
Computer - home, sweet home.  
Give up your day job, go into showbiz  
Buy a ticket to Life.  
Throw up that grey job, dough isn't so swizz  
Fly through that thicket of strife.  
Time waits for no-one, life passes you by  
Strap on those tap shoes, audition and fly.  
Give up your day job, go into showbiz  
And buy a ticket to Life.  
For he is a pirate buster  
You'll fluster at his bluster  
See him chase the crooks with their stolen books  
If you steal you'll squeal like Custer.  
For he is a pirate buster  
Your lustre he'll encruster  
If you copy things then you'll cop the slings  
Of an irate pirate buster.  
You can be friendly, be kind and share  
Don't need machinery to show you care  
You can be gracious, give life a shove  
Machines are helpful but can't beat love.*

### Playout

## Rehearsal Material and Performing Rights

If you wish to stage *Bytes* or any **FOX PLAYS** play or musical, you must first obtain written permission from Fox Plays.

Email

[admin@foxplays.com](mailto:admin@foxplays.com)

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## Some More Musicals from FOX PLAYS

### *Germ*s

Set inside a human. One fantastic set. Your cast is a troupe of germs [what do they look like?] intent on infecting the human. He fights back uses all sorts of medicine. It's a fight to the finish. But the germs have their own problems. There's a mutiny being planned – a bloodless coup. Some germs think their leader has a secret, is not coming clean. The human swallows a giant pill which works its deadly spell. But the moving service suddenly becomes a farce. The mutiny succeeds. Suddenly the human is dying. But then the leader's secret is revealed. Panic. A gripping finale to a fabulous musical performed by children, teenagers and adults. Genderless roles. Outstanding reviews.

### **Rat Race**

A grim, grubby set. It's a pile of rubbish inhabited by your cast of rats. Times are tough. No food, disease and the threat of the council street-sweeper. Oh and the local cat is on the prowl. Enter Snortle Tozer. Is Snortle a politician, an evangelist or fraud. Snortle claims to have the answers to all the problems faced by the rats. It's simple. Convince the world that rats have good points, that rats can be useful, helpful. How? Make a movie. The set is transformed. It becomes a bright movie set with ticker-tape finale, balloons and a chorus of tap-dancing rats. Snortle has brought happiness and peace to the woes of the world. Or has s/he? A moving musical staged in many countries by thousands of performers.

### **Jungle**

What a set. It's eerie. Vines, lush plants, a waterfall, mist oozing from the steam and a cast of wonderful animals. Hippo wants a return to the world of dignity and good manners, Croc is con-croc selling stition. It's super. Zebra is a politician seeking personal glory. Chimp wants to start a movie school to get top actors [Tarzan and Jane] back making films in the jungle. Lion has a grandpa who enjoyed missionaries for supper. Every denomination. Then there is a group of unemployed young people, the local monkeys getting up to monkey business. But things really hot up when a circus comes to town. The circus has performing humans! It's a big finale. The whole jungle turns out to see the circus. Suddenly the vicious performing humans escape from their cage. Bedlam is the main act until peace is restored and the animals sing their stirring anthem. A wonderful musical with stunning set and costumes.