A Promising New Role-Playing Game to Be Released This Fall

LAKEWOOD, CO—A few months ago, two men calling themselves Mad Man Software flew out to show us a piece of software they were putting together with some of their college buddies. Here we go, I thought, another AD&D rip-off. The eternal skeptic, my expectations were not high.

In Messiah III, your quest is revealed as you explore the desert planet, Radix.

Fortunately, I was wrong. These guys are professional engineers and, as it turns out, one of the "college buddies" is a National Dungeon Master. They've spent five-and-a-half years planning their massive fantasy role-playing game, **Messiah III: Nemesis**, complete with its own DOS. What they showed us was quite impressive.

The final version will not be available for review until later this fall, but if Messiah III lives up to its aspirations, this game could rival the Ultima series in scope and overall quality.

Be forewarned: M3 is not intended for the novice FRP gamer. Gene Barker, the chief Mad Man, describes M3 as "quite difficult, designed for the high school intellectual and up." Accordingly, the game will sport an "R" self-rating for violence, nudity and adult situations.

As the name suggests, the series starts midstream. Messiah III is the first release of a 5-part series that takes place on a harsh desert world called Radix.

Radix and discover your destiny as you go along. The levels are set up in an intricate web, so you're free to make your way about Radix, exploring more than 300 flicker-free color screens and 50 maps.

The massive game (six disk sides) claims the fastest access times and fewest disk swaps of any Commodore FRP to date. On a stock C-64 with a 1541 drive, says Barker, your *maximum* disk access will be only 12 seconds, with most access times under *two* seconds. With a RAMLink, RAMDrive or CMD Hard Drive, disk access becomes instantaneous. Mad Man has been working with CMD to ensure that the game is fully compatible with their products, including Jiffy DOS. What's more, a custom operating system, Mad DOS, stores graphics in a buffer, so there's less need for disk access. Even so, the game promises 200–400 hours of playing time!

Still, I was most impressed by their novel approach to combat. Your character might slip or fumble during a fight, particularly if he or she's a novice. More unique is the AMI—Artificial Monster Intelligence—that endows each monster with a special style to exclude formula combat. Some run away, others have magic, and so on. That challenge, explains Barker, makes sure that combat won't get easier or boring as you and your character gain experience.

Whether or not M3 succeeds will depend on how faithfully they can follow through with the game's promise. We anxiously await the final version, which, again, is planned for later this fall.

For more information, you can contact Mad Man Software at 7610 West 5th Avenue, Suite 200, Lakewood, CO 80226.

Western Theme Clip Art Disk

DEER PARK, WA—In the past year, virtually every clip art collection to cross my desk has featured cute cartoon characters: the Flintstones, the Simpsons, the Turtles. They may be adorable, and for now they may be popular, but how often can you send out "Cowabunga, Dude!"

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Messiah III Update

Mad Man Software, makers of *The Compression Kit*, have recently passed on this news concerning *Messiah III: Nemesis*, a role-playing game which Mad Man has been developing:

> For all practical purposes, Messiah III is completed. We are currently examining options for funding the release of this program. This role-playing adventure game contains more than 10 screens, 25 levels, and 300 pictures. Playing time is estimated at more than 300 hours to complete. A prototype of a few levels has been previously reviewed by both RUN and Compute's Gazette.

Mad Man Software has assured *Commodore World* that they will keep us apprised of any change in the status of this product.