

Bytes

A musical set inside a computer



A musical play by Cenarth Fox

© Copyright Cenarth Fox 1995

ISBN 0 949175 37 4

THIS IS A PREVIEW SCRIPT AND CAN ONLY BE USED FOR PERUSAL PURPOSES. THE COMPLETE SCRIPT AND MUSIC IS AVAILABLE FROM FOX PLAYS

Bytes is fully protected by the international laws of copyright and can only be performed after first obtaining written permission from **FOX PLAYS** or its agent. See page 32 for details. Except as permitted under the Copyright Act, no part of this book may be copied by any means without the prior written permission of the publisher.

Published by **FOX PLAYS**

Internet web page www.foxplays.com

Orchestrations and Backing CD

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.

Production Package

Groups staging a **FOX** play or musical get lots of help. There are *free* production notes [*set-design, costumes, lighting, props, etc*] and with each musical there are *free* lyric sheets for chorus members. Every show has a *free* Activity Booklet with heaps of activities for your cast. Your local agent may have colour photos and video recordings of previous productions and offers friendly, helpful service.

To the Director

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

Synopsis

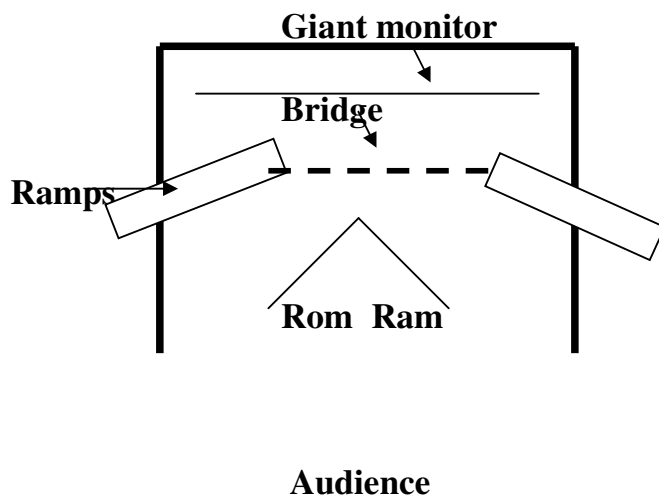
Do computers control our lives? Some say computers with their many bits and bytes have taken over the world. Our bills, phone calls, grocery shopping, theatre tickets and pension entitlements are all locked into a computer. So too our health insurance, traffic fines and library borrowings. We're told 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.



3 BYTES

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 |

4 BYTES

[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.

5 BYTES

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?

6 BYTES

- 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

*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]*

8 BYTES

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.

9 BYTES

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.

10 BYTES

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*

12 BYTES

[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.

13 BYTES

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.*

14 BYTES

*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 upstage. It's dim lighting upstage 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.

15 BYTES

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

*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.

17 BYTES

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?

18 BYTES

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.

19 BYTES

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.

20 BYTES

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?

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 your local agent listed below.

UK & Europe

FOX PLAYS UK

4 Drovers Way

Burton

Carnforth

England LA6 1HU

Tel 01524 781868

inquiries@foxplays-uk.co.uk

Australia & North America

FOX PLAYS

PO Box 2078

Richmond South

Victoria, Australia 3121

Tel +61 3 9429 3004

Fax +61 3 9428 9064

sales@foxplays.com

www.foxplays.com

www.foxplays-uk.co.uk

www.howtowriteplays.com



Publishers of plays, books, musicals and music since 1975