This month we test drive Virtua Fighter 2 and Daytona Deluxe from Sega, battle the boche in Close Combat, and look at colouring, first aid and music-making packages

Home & Entertainment

The latest stories and products

Wireplay, the games network from BT, has added two new titles to its range of online offerings. **MUD 2** (Multi User Dungeon) is an updated version of the classic multi-player adventure game made famous in the early 1980s. It offers all the challenge of the original, plus a new graphical user interface to make exploring its levels easier than ever before.

The company has also set up an online version of **Chess**, which can be played in either Blitz or Fischer Clock speed modes.
Wireplay: 0171 490 1323

Microsoft has released an **aircraft and adventure converter** for Microsoft Flight Simulator 98. This free converter makes aircraft and adventures created with BAO Flight Shop compatible with Flight Simulator 98. The converter also installs several modified files to correct known problems in the game.

Continued opposite…

VIRTUA FIGHTER 2

Following its success with the Windows versions of Sega Rally and Virtua Cop, Sega's latest PC title is Virtua Fighter 2. The fast-moving 3D beat-'em-up caused quite a stir in the arcades, but can it really be converted?

With 10 fighters to choose from, each with over 60 moves, there's certainly a lot to get your teeth into. The characters on offer in VF2 range from oriental Kung Fu masters through to wrestlers and fancy-footed French-

men, each with their own fighting styles. As it's a beat-'em-up the plot is virtually non-existent, and the aim of the game is simply to fight your way to the finish.

Unfortunately, the character selection screen is about the only thing that runs at the original arcade speed. As with previous Sega titles you can change graphic detail to suit your machine, but anyone expecting arcade quality will be extremely disappointed. The minimum specification of a Pentium 90MHz
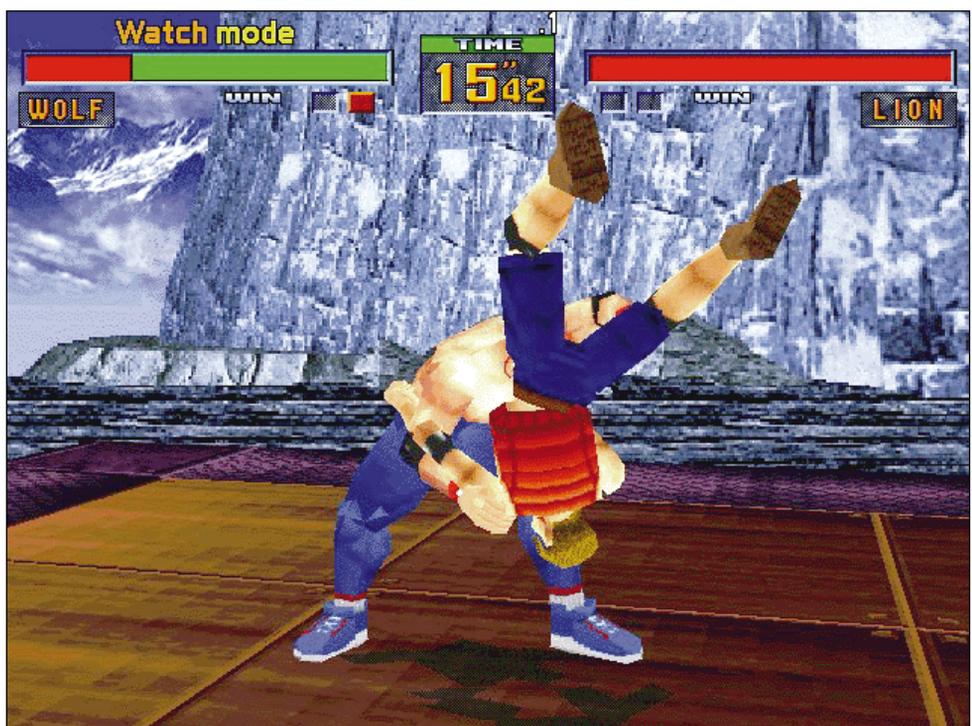
is laughable, and even when we tried the game on a 300MHz Pentium II with 64Mb of RAM it didn't have enough power to run with all of the options turned on. There's also no support for 3D graphics cards, which is a surprising omission to say the least.

Having said all this, once you've dropped everything down to the bare essentials, or at least to medium graphic detail, the game plays just as it did in the arcade. It seems to be a bit easier, although Sega claims it's actually more difficult, and all of the tricks and tactics that worked on the original game seem to work in this version. The excellent soundtrack is included, as are the sample voices, and you even get some bonus artwork on the disc.

Compared with the arcade version and even its Saturn console counterpart, Sega's Virtua Fighter 2 for the PC is in fact incredibly disappointing.

A great game let down by ridiculously high hardware demands. Dedicated fans should buy it in two years' time when it'll be cheaper and the average PC will be fast enough to run it. Chris Cain

● £39.99 (inc VAT)
● Sega: 0181 995 3399

Virtua Fighter 2					
Overall	★	★	★	★	★

Minimum requirements: Pentium 90MHz, 16Mb of RAM, Windows 95.

Lara Croft is back! Or at least she will be when **Tomb Raider 2** hits the shelves this Christmas. The sequel to the hit adventure from Eidos should be available by the time you read this, boasting improved graphics, all new puzzles and larger levels to explore. Fans will also be pleased to hear that Lara has a horde of new costumes and weapons at her disposal! **Eidos: 0181 636 3000**

Microprose has announced two new titles set in the Star Trek universe. **Birth of the Federation** will let players control one of five races of the Star Trek universe (Federation, Romulans, Klingons, Ferengi, and Cardassians), while **Klingon Honor Guard** offers real-time action in a quest to save the Klingon Empire. The game will include campaign and multi-player modes that take place in seven 3D worlds and more than 15 levels, including space stations, starships, and alien cities. **Microprose: 01454 893893**

CLOSE COMBAT: A BRIDGE TOO FAR

Promising to recreate 'The Thrill of Combat', Close Combat: A Bridge Too Far is the latest strategy offering from Microsoft's games stable.

Like many war games, A Bridge Too Far can initially appear daunting, such is the attention to detail involved. However, it doesn't actually take long to grasp the basics, and playing the game itself is thankfully simple.

A Bridge Too Far is very much a game of skill – a sort of modern-day chess. The outcomes of the battles are decided by tactical skill and awareness. This makes victory all the more sweet, knowing you have bashed the Hun using a mixture of brains and honest spunk. Based on Operation Market Garden, the game chronicles the

AGE RATINGS

Age ratings: We have assigned viewing suitability ratings for each game.
U = Universal;
PG = Parental Guidance;
15 = suitable for viewing by 15-year-olds and above;
18 = suitable for viewing by 18-year-olds and above.
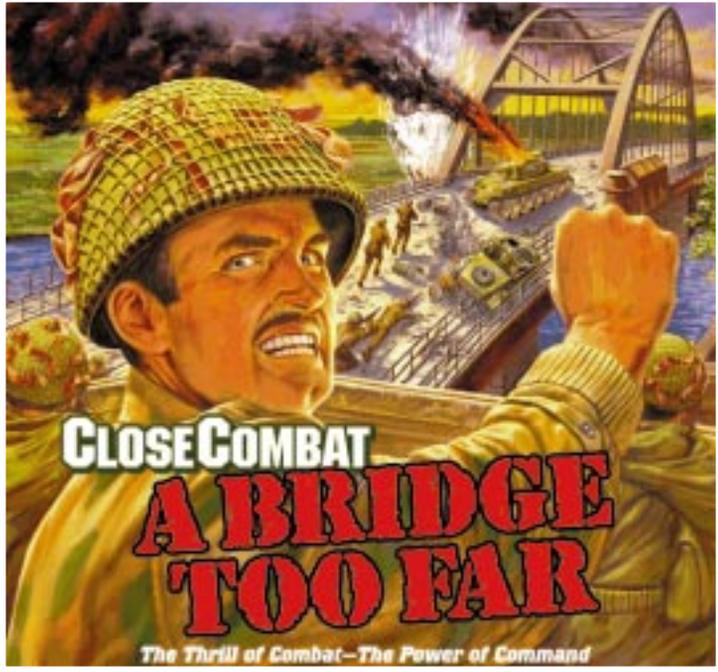
battle, you can fight whole operations or campaigns, which gives you the opportunity to bring in reserves before each new skirmish.

The sound is also impressive. Depending on which side you're commanding, you get random voices bellowing complaints – if you're fighting as a British unit, you get a voice with a British (well, Cockney) accent. The splutter of machine-gun fire and the screams of dying men also add greatly to the realism of the game.

Close Combat: A Bridge Too Far is so realistic it'll give you shellshock, and the graphics and sound are straight out of the top drawer. If you like war games, you'll love this.   Jim Haryott

- £39.99 (inc VAT)
- Microsoft: 0345 002000

Close Combat: A Bridge Too Far					
Overall	★	★	★	★	★

Minimum requirements: Pentium 90MHz, Windows 95, 16Mb of RAM, 45Mb of hard disk space, 4x CD-ROM drive.

Allied attempt to secure key bridges from Eindhoven to Arnhem in September 1944. The historical detail and accuracy is both noticeable and impressive, from the territory covered to the weapons and armour used by both the German and Allied forces.

You have a bird's eye view as you direct the unfolding battle. Usually you have control of between five and 10 units, ranging from riflemen to tanks. It is your job to tell them what to do, although much depends on their health and mental state.

The graphics are splendid, and movement of the troops and vehicles is extremely realistic. At times you just feel like sitting back and watching. Other than fighting a one-off

DAYTONA USA DELUXE

When we looked at the first PC version of arcade racing game Daytona USA, we were unimpressed by its poor graphics and unresponsive controls. A few months on and Sega has released the Deluxe edition, professed as being 'a quantum leap on' from Daytona USA. But is it?

Like the original, Daytona Deluxe is a straightforward track-based racing game. You choose the car you wish to drive and the track you want to rattle around. Deluxe, according to the press release, features 'breath-taking graphics' and 'explosive end-over-end crashes' – so that's just dandy then.
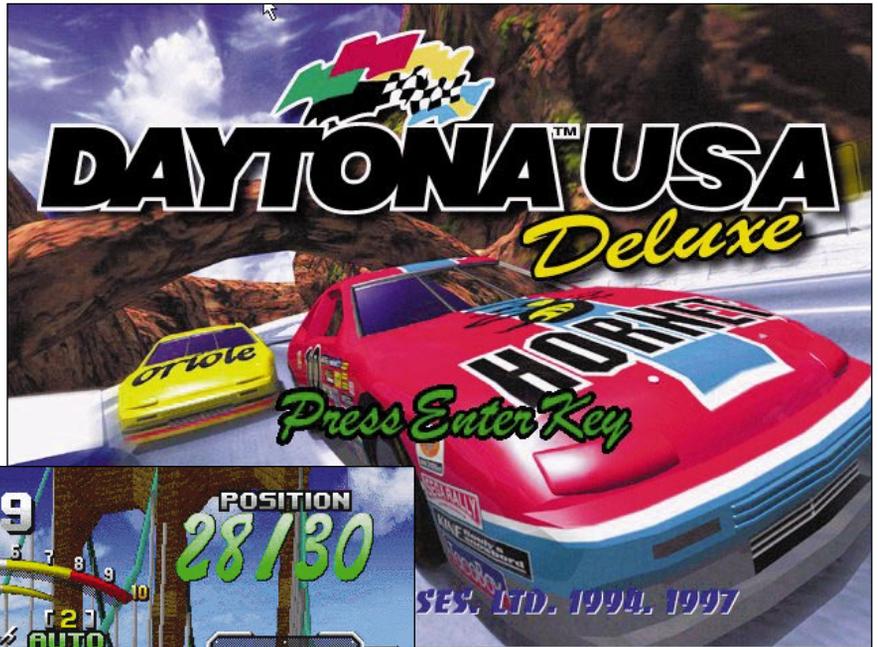
drivers with our Force Feedback Pro so it is hard to judge just how well this works. **Sega's advertising slogan reads: 'To be this good takes ages'. Bearing that in mind, we guess Daytona USA Deluxe was put together on a Friday afternoon just before the pubs opened.** Scott Colvey

● £39.99 (inc VAT)
● Sega: 0181 995 3399

Daytona USA Deluxe					
Overall	★	★	★	★	★

Minimum requirements: Pentium 90MHz (133MHz recommended), 16Mb of RAM, 50Mb of hard disk space, Windows 95, 2x CD-ROM drive.

Except, of course, that it isn't. The graphics are about as breath-taking as a fruit-flavoured Polo and the end-over-end crashes don't result in explosions. Indeed, though undeniably colourful, the game is graphically lacking. The pop-up (where 'distant' objects suddenly appear) is painfully apparent and though we wouldn't go so far as describing it as jerky, the on-screen action is sluggish. While you might expect this on a lowly Pentium system, on our 48Mb, 200MHz MMX test machine it is unacceptable.

On the plus side, the game boasts support for Microsoft's new SideWinder Force Feedback Pro joystick. For those lucky enough to own one of these, the game will respond to knocks and crashes with a jolt on the stick. Sadly, we were using an early (hence unstable) set of

HMV GAMES CHART

	Title	Manufacturer
1	**Aftermath: Red Alert data disk**	Virgin
2	**Quake: Replay**	GT Interactive
3	**Total Annihilation**	GT Interactive
4	**Flight Simulator 98**	Microsoft
5	**Broken Sword 2**	Virgin
6	**Lands of Lore 2**	Virgin
7	**Worms United: Power Plus**	Microprose
8	**Hexen II**	Activision
9	**Constructor**	Acclaim
10	**Dark Reign**	Activision

This chart is based on the latest available figures at the time of going to press.

The latest stories and products

The latest in the Anglia Perspectives series is **Sightings UFOpedia**, priced at £29.99. It lets you explore the evidence for and against UFOs as you examine anything from crop circles to the Roswell incident, while online links let you delve even deeper into the murky world of government cover-ups. (See also TV spin-offs feature in this issue.)
Anglia Multimedia: 01603 615151

Last year, Attica released the **Ordnance Survey Interactive Atlas of Great Britain**. Now, there's a new edition with updated maps and city plans: it's even supposed to run faster. As well as navigating round Britain with the Locator Map, 300 Media Pins help you find out about specific places through pictures and videos. It costs £39.99, with a £7.50 rebate if you already have the first edition.
Attica Interactive: 01865 791346

Lemon Dog in SoundLands is an interactive adventure with cartoon graphics. Help Lemon Dog rescue his musical friends from Sour Puss and let the band play thousands of tunes. Developed by Glasgow-

IBM Brings you Crayola Magic 3D Colouring Book

Crayola is one of those brands that everyone remembers from their childhood. It's sure to be familiar to parents or teachers of young children, if only because it's the name on crayons that seem to be very tempting to little mouths. The 3D Colouring Book is only the first in a range of Crayola titles, so Iona Software clearly hopes that having the crayon giant on board will make this disc fly off the shelves.

As its name suggests, the Colouring Book is an electronic drawing pad. It comes with a virtual boxful of crayons – Crayola, naturally enough – as well as lots of outlines to colour in. Actually, there are seven books for you to colour with themes ranging from flying machines to teddy bears. They're easy enough to use, and the main interface comprises a big crayon and a little crayon, lots of colours, and a paintpot that will fill any shape.

If plain colours are too boring, then the other side of the drawing pad has a selection of textures that can be used instead and there's a glitter tool to add sparkle to your drawings. A switch confines you to the supplied outlines or lets you draw outside the lines, and of course any mistakes can be erased instantly without leaving little bits of rubber all over the carpet.

The package is aimed at three-year-olds and above, so it's a good thing the 3D Colouring Book is easy to use. The only problem is that it's really not that much fun. Voices tell you what colour of crayon you've picked, but there aren't many other sounds. The outlines are a bit limiting – the Disney Cartoon Studio we reviewed in October has a much better selection of artwork, better drawing tools and a bigger brand name to boot.

Moreover, Brøderbund's Orly Draw A Story, reviewed in May, is at least as capable a colouring book as this. It also includes music and stories – and makes your child's drawings part of the stories as they're told.

At least your kids can't rip the labels off these crayons or grind them into the carpet. The 3D Colouring Book is reasonably priced, but other discs are more fun.   John Sabine

- £19.95 (inc VAT)
- Iona Software: 0181 296 9454
  indigo.ie/~ionasoft/home.html

IBM Brings you Crayola Magic 3D Colouring Book				
Overall	★	★	★	★	★

Minimum requirements: Windows 3.1, 486DX2-66 (Pentium recommended), 8Mb of RAM (16Mb recommended), 10Mb of hard disk space, 2x CD-ROM drive.
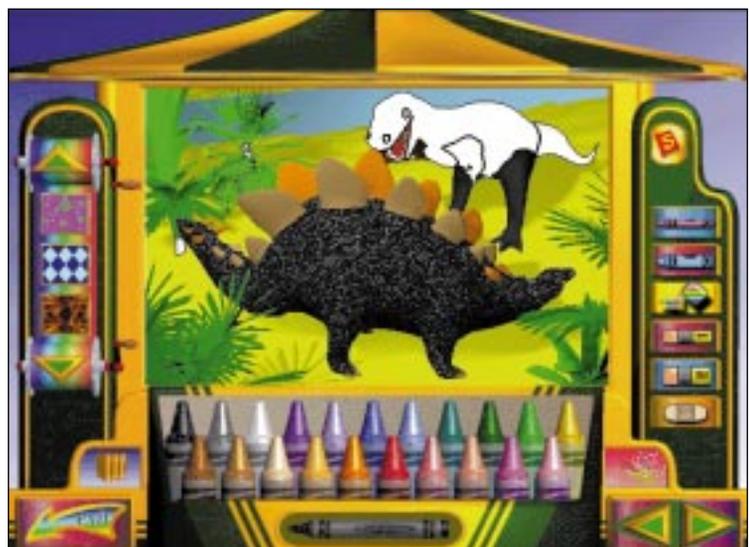
Attica Interactive First Aid

It had never even crossed our minds that there were no CD-ROMs dealing with first aid. Attica Multimedia has spotted this gap and, with the St John Ambulance brigade, produced its Inter-active First Aid disc.

Since the content has been supplied by the brigade, we wouldn't normally question it. How-ever, we found sev-eral inconsistencies which, although fairly minor, might be confusing if the disc was your main source of first aid training. What's more, there are quite a few differences between the informa-tion here and what members of the *What PC?* team have learnt on first aid courses.

This isn't necessarily significant – some-times two courses of treatment can be equally effective. However, we don't think this disc should be your only first aid text-book. It would be better to use it for revision if you're already doing a more formal course.

In fact, because of the way the disc is laid out, it might be confusing unless you've already got some first aid knowledge. Principles of First Aid aims to give you guide-lines which can help deal with any situation, but some parts of the section give specific instructions without enough detail to carry them out and without any sort of cross-reference. Although there is a search mecha-nism, and the Conditions section tells you how to deal with specific ailments, it's browseable rather than being structured to aid learning or support a course.

Finally, there is both a multiple choice test and a selection of 'real-life' scenarios. Struc-tured as photo-stories, with interactive hot-spots on the pictures, these are intended to let you put your training into 'practice'. The layout limits their usefulness: it's too easy to guess and the model answer at the end doesn't explain things in enough depth. **It's no substitute for proper first aid instruc-tion. Despite the confusions, though, it might be handy for revision if you're already signed up for a course.** John Sabine

● £39.99 (inc VAT)
● Attica Interactive: 01865 791346

Attica Interactive First Aid					
Overall	★	★	★	★	★

Minimum requirements: 486DX2-66 (Pentium recom-mended), Windows 3.1 or later, 8Mb of RAM (Windows 3.1), 16Mb of RAM (Windows 95), 12Mb of hard disk space, 2x CD-ROM drive.

based Inner Workings, the disc is published by Europress Software at £19.99.
Europress: 01625 859333

If you're concerned about your health, **Dr Schueler's Medical Adviser** could help put your mind at rest. It has databases of diseases, X-ray photographs and videos, and a function where, if you enter your symptoms, Dr Schueler will try to diagnose your ailments. Meanwhile, **Hyperhealth** covers complemen-tary medicine.
Health Perfect: 0181 200 8897

The latest educational title from Helicon is **EuroReporter**. Tour Europe on the way to your next scoop: comparison charts and a thematic atlas teach you about life in the European Union from the European Court of Justice to the tomato industry. Its content is in French, German and English, and it costs £29.99.
**Helicon: 01865 204204**

Family software to be won

WIN

Europress Software has put together five bundles of software catering for all the family. Kids can read along with **Three Little Pigs** or learn to compose with **Musicolour**. If they're not keen on learning music, then singing along with the **Oasis Interactive Songbook** might be more appealing, while **The Tastes of Italy** should lure you into the kitchen for some gastronomical treats.

Five lucky readers have a chance to win these great packages. Send a postcard to our usual editorial address (page 5) with your name and address, clearly marked **Europress Competition**. Closing date is 31 January 1998, when five winners will be drawn from our editor's top hat.
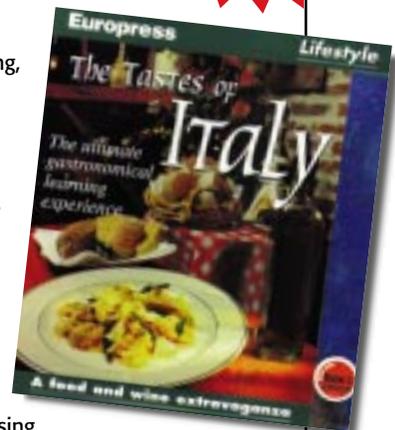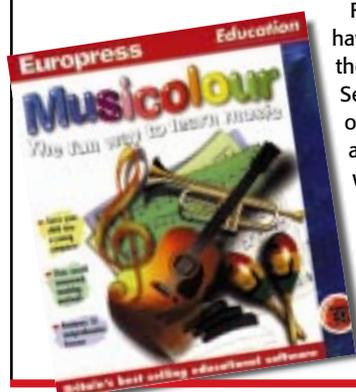
MAGIX music maker 3.0

The great thing about PCs is that they allow you to do things you would never otherwise be inclined to do. In this case, MAGIX music maker 3.0 lets you become a DJ without needing a disc, or even a jockey for that matter.

The major difference between music maker 3.0 and some other music creating software is that it lets you splice AVI and MIDI files together in one simple move. Put another way, you can play videos and tunes simultaneously, thus creating your own music videos.

As well as offering a huge range of instruments and samples, the program lets you create your own video by splicing together clips and stills, either your own or those that are included with music maker. There are some amusing video clips too – the best being the boogying baby ones. Both MIDI and video files can be edited to change speed, background, scaling, and more.

Creating clips and tracks couldn't be simpler – all you need to do is click and drag the samples from the file list on to the music 'sheet', from where you can alter them in almost any way. As well as the bog standard mixer, you can fade in and out, use

reverb, distort, echo and a host of other things too.

There are up to 16 tracks that you can use, which, providing you're patient enough, will allow you to create the next Ibiza club classic. Each track can be filled with effects ranging from drumbeat to synth, bass and guitar. There are even voice clips to mess about with.

The interface is very usable once you've got used to it, and even a musical luddite can get the hang of it quickly.

Beware though that there are a lot of features packed into this application, and so mastery of the airwaves is not guaranteed. Nor is creating a track worth listening to. Unfortunately, all we had to go on was a help file, as we had no manual.

Having said all this, it is worth bearing in mind that music maker seems very much biased towards dance music lovers – and we're not talking the waltz. The chords, effects, riffs and drumbeats wouldn't be much use if it's Prokofiev you're after. And the same goes for the video clips and stills.

The program also crashed occasionally when accessing the files from the sound pool, and the video clips are housed on the CD containing the start-up page for company. This means that each time you access the CD for a video clip, it launches into the start-up page. Talk about in-your-face marketing.

MAGIX music maker 3.0 is good value at just under £40, and you get a lot for your money. Worth persevering with despite the glitches.   Jim Haryott

- £39.95 (inc VAT)
- MAGIX Entertainment: 0171 917 2897
  www.magix.net
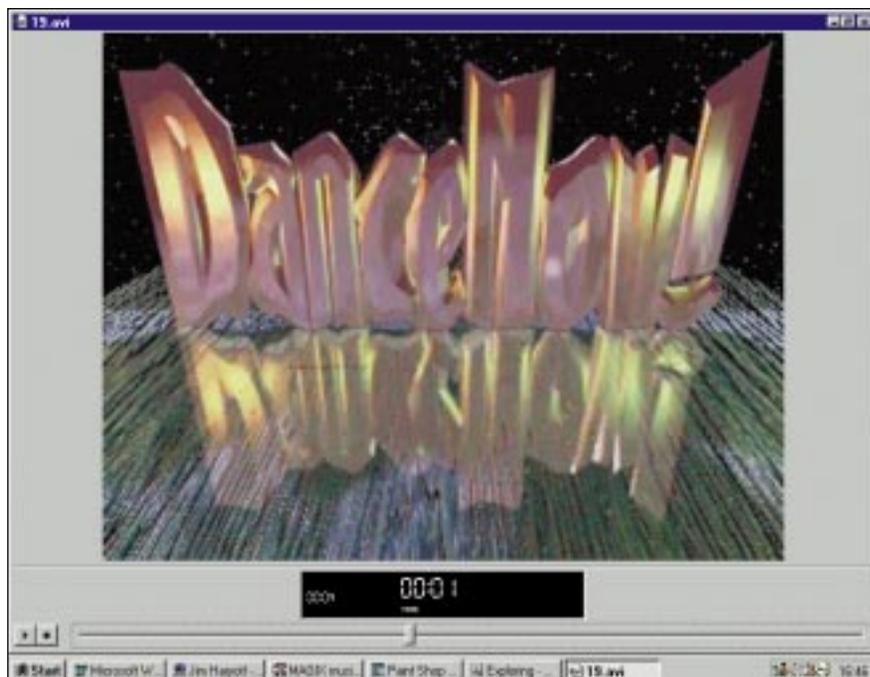
MAGIX music maker 3.0					
Overall	★	★	★	★	★

Minimum requirements: 486-compatible, (Pentium recommended), 10Mb of hard disk space, 16Mb of RAM (32Mb recommended), VGA, 16-bit sound card, 4x CD-ROM, Windows 95.