LOST IN MY SPECTRUM

Alessandro has played too much with his Spectrum lately and is now trapped inside his 'wonder machine'! It's up to us to try to let him out of there.

Lost In My Spectrum is a *Manic Miner*-styled game, that is to say – if there's still someone around who doesn't know it! – it is composed by several screens containing platforms and items to collect in order to get through the exit leading to the next screen. Such items are guarded by characters whose touch makes Alessandro lose one of his nine lives. The same happens in case of contact with some parts of the scenery - spikes, hooks etc. Alessandro will also lose a life if the countdown in the lower part of the screen will reach zero.

The game also contains features not present in *Manic Miner,* such as pursuing enemies, mobile platforms and other surprises!

Lost In My Spectrum can be controlled through the keyobard (redefinable), or a Kempston or Sinclair joystick. Default keys are: **Q** - left; **W** - right; **M** - jump; **H** - hold.

It is possible to change direction while jumping. Alessandro can also fall from any height without this causing him to lose a life.

WHAT'S NEW IN VERSION 2.0

The game is now divided into three sections of 10 screens each. All of the previous 20 screens, including those from the Extended Version, have been included, together with the 'Epilogue' final screen which was absent from the Extended Version. Starting points for each section can be recalled later by entering a code (just press ENTER for the first). The section loaded last can be played after the game is over, unless the player chooses another section or the game is loaded again.

The 10 brand new screens are (English version names):
- Ancient Ruins
- The Pink Inferno
- The Mages' Guild
- Pirates, Ahoy!
- Egg Heads
- Back With The U.F.O.'s
- Is There Life On Mars?
- Fearful Symmetry
- If The Poop Hits The Fan
- Tape Loading Error

Almost all of the previous 20 screens have been modified to make the game less difficult and more enjoyable. Some examples:
- Objects in 'Homage To Mondrian' are now visible and there is no exit, the game moves on when the last object has been collected.

- No more 'move or die' at the start of 'Revenge Of The Joysticks'.
- Platform blocks on the Maneki Neko are now visible.

Other new features:
- New sprite types: moving platform, cannonball, bouncing enemy.
- Many new sprite images, including the main character's.
- The main character now has a death animation.
- Sprites are now not always of the same color in each screen.
- Objects now glow.
- Time now runs about 10% slower.
- Custom sound effects for jump, object collection and screen exit.
- The melody of F. Mendelssohn-Bartholdy's 'Lerchengesang' is heard between sections (48K only) and at the end of the game.
- High scores table.
- New key redefinition routine, which allows all keys to be selected.
- End-of-game congratulations message.
- 'The 155 Blue Bubbles' had its name changed to 'The 160 Blue Bubbles'.
- 'Nekollection' had its name changed to 'Jack-in-the-boxes'.
- The "level completed" message has been omitted.
- Screen names are now displayed in double height characters.

The 48K version loads each section separately (they are recorded one after the other), whilst the 128K version loads all sections together, plays background AY music – a medley of some background tunes of Spectrum games –, and displays a short animation at the end.

THE SCREENS

1. EASY PEASY
As its name says, the opening screen is the most accessible: 'as easy as drinking a glass of water' – an Italian saying. In fact, in order to activate the exit, you must pick up some glasses filled with water!

2. WACKY JOYSTICKS
Here we find some joystick frantically moving by themselves! Collect them in order to pass to the following screen.

3. A GREEK DREAM
It's night. Jumping on Ionic columns and on clouds we must grab the Moon, accompanied by some stars, taking care not to be caught off guard by the warriors. A reference to the classical Greek civilization, the cradle of Western philosophy.

4. THE ACID CAFE
A really 'acid' place - in fact, the lower part of the screen is almost entirely occupied by a vat containing some acid green substance! Forced direction platforms appear here for the first time in the game. Take the cup of hot coffee to unlock the exit.

5. COLD WAR
Caught in the middle between East and West, we must collect the peace symbols (two for each side) in order to escape the helicopters and go on. The 'icy' setting is a pun on the screen name.

6. HOMAGE TO MONDRIAN
Surprise! Platforms are invisible. Luckily there are no dangers lurking about. There is no exit, the game continues after Alessandro collects the last item. A clue: platforms are hidden in the black lines. A little tribute to the notorious Piet Mondrian.

7. SPECTROPHENIA
A reference to the Who's *Quadrophenia* album and to Franc Roddam's film based upon it. Starting from the cliffs of Brighton, our task will be to find not some Lambrettas, but some lovely C5s!

8. REVENGE OF THE JOYSTICKS
The joysticks found in the second screen revolted against Alessandro and called some others as a reinforcement! To escape we must grab the joypads, that will help us to unlock the exit. Beware the vertical currents!

9. CAREFUL WITH THAT AXE, EUGENE
This screen is a re-imagining of 'Eugene's Lair' in *Manic Miner*, but the title also refers to the well-known Pink Floyd song. Now Eugene does not surround himself with WCs anymore, but with dangerous two-headed rotating axes. Items to pick up are also inspired by those found in the 'Lair'. The exit is not explicitly shown – but it should be fairly obvious!

10. IN THE COURT OF THE MANEKI NEKO
The most 'Japanese' section of *Lost In My Spectrum*! On the left, we must negotiate some hazardous platforms to reach the 'Daruma' doll at the top, which will activate the little Maneki Neko placed in the top right corner, then climb up the Big Maneki Neko in order to reach it.

11. ANCIENT RUINS
We are in an archaeogical site and must collect all the funerary mask, which for some reason are sought after by an alien spacecraft!

12. THE PINK INFERNO
Inside a building in flames, Alessandro must get the fuel canisters and bring them to the helicopter up right to save himself. Besides staying away from fire, he must also care not to be suffocated by smoke clouds.

13. THE MAGES' GUILD
Among ancient books, strange potions and nasty little spirits, we should collect the philosopher's stones before reaching the exit.

14. PIRATES AHOY!
Alessandro founds himself on a pirate ship, with a "warm" welcome – cannon balls! Let's take the treasure chests and touch the flag to get out. Hint: the cannon won't harm you.

15. EGG HEADS
We must care to avoid the ovoid enemies and collect all the WCs before going to the exit.

16. BACK WITH THE U.F.O.'S
Here we are at an outpost of the aliens seen in 'Ancient Ruins'. Alessandro must take all of their power items, the 'Penrose triangles', and reach the exit. The screen's name is a reference to The Beatles' *Back In The U.S.S.R.*

17. IS THERE LIFE ON MARS?
Mars: a red desert, which however seems to host some spider-like life forms, definitely unfriendly. Let's avoid them and the probes sent by Earth, aiming to collect the strange crystal placed up left, which will unlock the exit. The screen is a reference to David Bowie: the title is taken from *Life on Mars?* and the three aliens hint at the Spiders from Mars – Mick Ronson, Trevor Bolder and Woody Woodmansey –, Bowie's associated band at the time when that song was recorded.

18. SUB SPECIE AETERNITATIS
The Latin phrase means 'under the aspect of eternity' and in Baruch Spinoza's philosophy indicates thinking about reality not upon particular impressions but according to a universal point of view. In this case, however, 'eternal' is the sleep of those who rest in a cemetery. To get out we must collect all the crosses and reach the exit placed in the mass grave. An evil winged creature harasses us; but with all of its might, even it can't get through some elements…

19. WIR SIND DIE ROBOTER
The whole refers to Kraftwerk. The title ('We are the robots') is taken from *Die Roboter*, a song from the *Die Mensch-Maschine* album (*The Robots* and *The Man-Machine* in the English version). The pseudo-3D graphics refer to the back cover art of the record, which in turn is inspired by the works of El Lisitskij. Items to pick up are small 'Kleinempfänger' radios, the same featured on the cover of *Radio-Aktivität/Radioactivity*, while the exit depicts the logo of German highways, from *Autobahn*.

20. THRO' THE WALL REVISITED
A remake of the BASIC bat-n-ball game on the *Horizons* tape distributed with the first Spectrums. The style is influenced by *Arkanoid:* the bat resembles the Vaus pod, the items are small balls, and the only enemy is a spinning 'Penrose triangle'. In order to go on, once all balls are collected, Alessandro must return to the bat where he was at the start.

21. DISCO CLIVE
Uncle Clive feels like dancing! Bring him some records and in return he will lead us to the next screen. But remember to keep an eye on the notes!

22. COINCIDENTIA OPPOSITORUM
One Alessandro was not enough; we control two of them this time! The screen is divided in two parts; there are no exits, enemies are few and it's enough to collect the *T'ai Chi T'u* symbols placed in both of them. It all looks simple – but try to command one of the two Alessandros and you will notice that the other one will move at the same time! The Latin expression means 'coincidence of

opposites' and is a quote from Nicholas of Cusa. He maintained that God, being infinite, is beyond any dualism – in God, the opposites coincide.

23. THE 160 BLUE BLOBS
A reference to Italian singer Mina's *Le mille bolle blu* song; we must in fact pick up some musical notes and then reach the exit, while keeping away from the records, which can seriously hurt us.

24. JACK-IN-THE-BOXES
Pick up the Jack-in-the-boxes whilst avoiding the crazy toymakers.

25. THE GUARDIANS OF THE HADES
Another reference to ancient Greece. Here we must escape from the Hades. In order to do this, the exit must be activated by taking all of the cups. The Guardians will hinder us.

26. OH NO! I'M ON APULIJA-13!
Here's the reason why Alessandro is in the Apulija-13 base and has a Spectrum with him! The terrible Alien will try to bump us off, so we'll have to avoid it in order to grab the Spectrum and reach the exit, without falling into the pool of radioactive fuel which flowed out of the damaged reactor. This is a reference to a hidden room in my 2013 *Apulija-13* game, which is also going to be revised.

27. FEARFUL SYMMETRY
This screen is drawn in the shape of a cassette. It is also the only one with a symmetric structure, hence the title, taken from William Blake's *The Tyger*.

28. IF THE POOP HITS THE FAN
A screen built around a real icon of our times, the smiling 'poop'. Let's collect them all and throw them into the WC before the fans cut us to pieces.

29. TAPE LOADING ERROR
Almost at the end of the game, the most feared message by Spectrum users: the information that a tape loading has failed! In order to unlock the exit, Alessandro must pick up the cassettes whilst avoiding the error, indicated by the code letter R.

30. SPECTRES IN THE MACHINE
The exit is near! There are no more items to get, we only have to guide Alessandro up to the multi-function port (edge connector) placed at the top right. Spectres will however hinder us… The title, beyond the connection with the Latin word *spectrum*, hides another philosophical quote. Gilbert Ryle critically defined 'the ghost in the machine' the belief, stemming from Descartes's matter-thought dualism, that conscience would be a sort of 'ghost' wandering inside the body. Also, *Ghost In The Machine* is the title of a The Police album.

TOOLS USED

- Arcade Game Designer 4.7 [Jonathan Cauldwell]
- ZX Blockeditor 2.4.3 [Claus Jahn]

- ZX Paintbrush 2.6.4 [Claus Jahn]
- Notepad++ 7.5.3 [Don Ho]
- Pasmo 0.6.0 [Julian Albo]
- Bin2data 1.0 [Bob Stains]
- Vortex Tracker 1.2 RCD [Sergej Bulba]
- LetharGeek Compressor 1.1
- Exomizer 2.0.10 by Magnus Lind with Z80 decompression routine by Jaime Tejedor Gomez (Metalbrain) optimized by Antonio Villena and Urusergi.
- 'Penrose triangle' and 'hexagonal spiral' sprites by Matthew Smith.
- 'Fan' sprite by BiNMaN.
- 'Fader' routine by William Frazer.
- Original translations: Patrice Arone (French), Einar Saukas (Portuguese).

INFORMATIONS AND CONTACTS

Lost In My Spectrum was originally produced for Firenze Vintage Bit 2012 (http://www.retrocomputer.org)

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Feedback and comments are welcome!