Benjamin's Reviews!

What made you want to make games?

From day one, I've always been motivated by the fact that I what I wanted to play simply didn't exist! I'm a firm believer that if you want something done right you have to do it yourself. Whether you like it or not, no other human being on the planet shares your particular vision. That's why it's so great that people can mod the games now and rebuild them in their own image. That's what I've always said to my critics - if you don't like what I do, go and do a better job of it yourself. Whining to somebody else is the least productive thing you could ever do. Even now, I'm still intensely dissatisfied with *THQ*'s wrestling games and that fuelled my recent return to the *Wrestling MPire* series. I became a fan of wrestling again this year and wanted to engage with the latest games. I was genuinely disappointed that I felt the need to load up my own simulator! I want to love the official games because they look the part, but there's something missing. It's frustrating that they get the difficult things right and the easy things wrong?! I'd like to think that my legacy is one of getting the important things right. Making sure the experience is deep and feels good - and to hell with what it looks like on the surface. Unfortunately, that doesn't fly in the 21st century...**What is your best selling game?**

My most popular game is actually 2006's *Wrestling Encore*. Even though it's primitive compared to *Wrestling MPire 2008*, it had the good fortune to arrive when my work was at its most widely accepted. When I first started, people were more tolerant of my novice flaws and that tolerance gradually evaporated over time - as did the enthusiasm for wrestling itself, which has only just started to enjoy a resurgence. It has always frustrated me that my best work was enjoyed by the least amount of people! It's like I've been living out my career in reverse. I wish *Facebook* and *Twitter* had been around 10 years ago, because we could have added a couple of zeroes to the current following and kept a better grip on it...**Can**

you tell us the history of *Wrestling MPire* or any other games?The history of my games actually goes beyond the moment I even owned a computer! When we were kids, my brother and I would make games of ALL kinds. Board games, card games, dice games, even outdoor sports and activities. We were bursting with creativity and would unleash it on absolutely anything that had a chance of being entertaining. It comes back to what I said about being dissatisfied with professional efforts and doing a better job wanted and refused to accept that we couldn't bring it into existence ourselves. I learnt a lot about what does and doesn't work during that period, which gave me a running start when I finally sat in front of a PC. In fact, my wrestling games share a lot of DNA with a card game we made that used those exact same statistics for each wrestler! It's amazing how everything pans out and the past becomes part of your present. So now my advice to any kid who Wants to be creative is to appreciate every little thing that's happening. Every success and failure - they're all bricks in your own empire. Nothing begins or ends in vain...**What game are you making at the moment?**I was hoping to have moved on to a "Mixed Martial Arts" game by now, but I've had to think twice about whether it's worth embarking on a major new 3D project. I'm still not convinced that there's an audience for what I do as I currently do it. *Under Development* and *Wrestling MPire Remix* were special one-off projects that I was happy to come back and release for the longtime fans. They weren't forward-looking projects that were designed to reboot my career. That would involve a lot of wholesale changes to what I do and how I do it. The next time you see a game from me, I suspect it will be on a completely different platform. I'm more interested in developing for *Apple* and *Android* mobile devices now. I figure I can relive my career all over again from the beginning if I start releasing small but charming games to

a large audience. I've noticed that wrestling is not very well represented, so I'd love to corner that market with some unique interactive experiences...**If you could be any famous video game character which one would it be?**Ah, a question I can honestly say I've never been asked before! I always thought Ryu was cool in *Street Fighter* - both because of the game and the animated *Manga* movie, which was surprisingly good. Not only did he look the part and have the moves, but I'm a sucker for a good back-story. I love the fact that he used to train with Ken and got his red headband from him. It's interesting to know why somebody is the way they are, and what they sacrificed to get there...**What program do you use to make the games?**I made the big 3D games in a version of the BASIC programming language known as *Blitz 3D*. They prefer not to acknowledge my existence, but I'm happy to promote their product because it gave me a career. I'd be happy to use it for the rest of my life if only there were an audience for it! For me, it's as easy as breathing. I can rely on it to create I can imagine. Unfortunately, that doesn't mean a lot now that the PC platform is almost extinct as a gaming platform. In order to stay relevant going forward, I would have to embrace new technology. A lot of my elitist critics looked down on me for the simplistic methods I used, but I wear it as a badge of honour. If they're "real" programmers and I'm not then they're under-achieving while I'm over-achieving! I'm just a regular guy who shouldn't have been making games at all, and yet I made a living from it for 10 years. I think it's pretty cool that I made something out of nothing through sheer passion. I'd like anybody reading this to know that that's the most important factor in achieving any dream. Passion alone will make you get up and persistently DO the things that everybody else is merely talking about...