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Manic Miner

Platformer

ZX Spectrum

Bug Byte

1983

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6031769 is a sequence of numbers etched on to the inner thought waves of every Spectrum users crania, involuntarily regurgitated at the mere mention of Mathew Smith's stunning Miner 2049'er inspired game Manic Miner. Rumoured to be his driving licence number, this code opens up numerous cheats in Bug Byte's version of the game; some would say the only way to get through the twenty levels of psychedelic platform mayhem.  
Manic Miner sees the player take Miner Willy on a perilous journey through the bizarre and incredulous mind of Smith where killer penguins, evil snapping toilets and mutant telephones from hell are the norm. A rhythmic looping rendition of In the Hall of the Mountain King inadvertently helps the player in making split timed jumps across impossible looking ravines to collect keys that open up the portal to the next level.  
As the levels become progressively difficult to navigate, beads of sweat form on the forehead of the player whose face becomes contorted with painful concentration and urgency. One more key and the next level beckons. A miss-timed jump sees Willy fall short of the last ledge and plummet towards his death, losing his last game playing life. A flash of the screen, a screech of static thrust out of the Spectrum's mono-speaker (that if amplified induces a missed heart beat) and Willy is dead once again.  
  
Curses and expletives abound, but never does the player blame the game for being unfair as the responsibility of Willy's death lies firmly with them. After the Pythonesque foot of doom squishes poor Willy, rubbing further salt into the wounds of failure, Blue Danube is blurred out in one channel Spectrum greatness as the player reflects where it all went wrong. Then it's back to level 1 for another go.  
Manic Miner is the grandfather of pure, platform perfection on the Spectrum that has been mimicked, blatantly copied but never bettered. A land mark title that made Mathew Smith an overnight star.

min 200 characters

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