

THE
GREEN BAY

News-Chronicle

www.greenbaynewschronicle.com ♦ MONDAY, DECEMBER 20, 1999

Game developer hoping world is ready for Music Mayhem

Music buffs can strut their stuff a la "Name that Tune"**By Patti Zarling**
The News-Chronicle

If you've ever known the frustration of hearing a song and having the name of the tune and artist on the tip of your tongue, you can understand a bit of the excitement behind a new game invented by a Green Bay native.

"Music Mayhem" is now for sale in selected cities and is expected to go national this spring.

The game, created by Bill Solboe of Green Bay, requires players to shout the titles and artists of tunes selected by a designated disc jockey.

Solboe claims the song will have people jumping out of their seats, pointing fingers and bellowing answers.

An admitted music lover, Solboe said he developed the game's concept from car trips he took with friends in college. As they traveled, they would try to identify names of songs and singers playing on the radio.

"We always had so much fun, I thought it'd be interesting to try to come up with a board game that followed the same idea," Solboe said.

He developed a prototype about eight years ago but set it aside after figuring he wouldn't be able to afford to create a game that included music.

About three years ago, Solboe was browsing a local music store when he saw collections of "best of" CDs and had an idea.

"I realized I could let people use their own music," he said. "That makes it all flexible for all. Now 9-year-olds can play Briny Spears, while people in their 60s or 70s could play Big Band."

So he set the wheels in motion. He tested the game among college students at the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh, where he was pursuing a master's degree in counseling.

"I had a ready supply of people to



H. Marc Larson / The News-Chronicle

CREATOR BILL SOLBOE shows a copy of his game, "Music Mayhem," which uses an LP record as a game piece.

play, and they all loved it," he said.

This is basically how the game works: Someone is named the DJ. This person chooses and plays the music, identifies correct answers, and awards points and has the final say in who is awarded points.

Any style of music can be used. Players or teams earn one point for being the first to guess the artist or song title being played. They may earn two points if they guess both. The first to score 11 points wins.

Players begin by turning a dial that is actually a playable, 10-inch vinyl record album. If it lands on a space marked "solo," players are

allowed to guess on their own for 15 seconds before other players can join in. After that, the DJ may shout "Mayhem," and the whole crowd can join in.

Other spaces allow players to "mute" another player or double the amount of points earned.

The game is designed to accommodate three or more players — Solboe said he at one time had 30.

Each round takes about 30 minutes to play.

Solboe is selling the games at The Exclusive Company outlets in Green Bay, Appleton, Milwaukee and Oshkosh and a handful of other

cities. He took out a second mortgage to finance the production of the first 3,000 games and spends his time at the music store inviting interested passersby to try a round or two.

The game, in a black hinged case, costs \$35. The games are being manufactured locally at NEW Curative Rehabilitation Inc., 2900 Curry Lane.

Eric Gerarden, vice president for Sheltered Industries, said the game fits into the type of work done by his employees, most of which have some sort of disability.

Sheltered Industries also helped package the Packerland board game, which was popular a few years ago, he said.

"This is right up our alley," he said. "And it's neat to get in on the ground floor like this."

Solboe hopes to hit the big time in February.

He plans to exhibit Music Mayhem at Toy Fair 2000 in New York and hopes to sell it nationally.

He has reason to believe it will be a hit.

"I had a game industry expert who was interested enough to want to be a partner, but by that time I was so far along I didn't really need one," Solboe said. "She thinks it will do really, really well."

"When you think about it, there really hasn't been a good new board game in a few years. We had Trivial Pursuit, Pictionary, but not too much since then."

Even if it becomes huge, Solboe doesn't intend to sell it to a major game manufacturer. Nor does he plan to create another game.

This game provided many restless nights, he said. Late in the night, he'd often awaken to ideas he had to share with his wife.

Developing a name caused more than a few sleepless minutes, Solboe said.

He had decided on Music Mania before discovering that name was already taken.

"The worst I had was Jukebox Jambalaya," Solboe said with a grin. "I think my wife might have left me over that one."