

Toni Braxton



C E N T R E

TONI BRAXTON is pop's hot new diva for the nineties. Since the then-unknown artist emerged on the 1992 soundtrack for the Eddie Murphy film *Boomerang*, her golden alto voice has become the Midas touch for hit singles, multi-million-selling albums, and all the awards you can imagine. But the success of "The First Lady of Love"—the label owned by equally golden writer-producers Kenneth "Babyface" Edmonds and Antonio "L.A." Reid—was hardly a surprise when Braxton was a child: she is making a kind of music she wasn't even allowed to listen to growing up.

The Braxton home in Severn, Maryland, adhered to the strict tenets of the Apostolic faith, of which Braxton's father was a minister. Women, for instance, were not allowed to wear pants, sandals, or makeup. And certainly no popular music was allowed. Not that Braxton and her five siblings (her sisters and one brother) were entirely in the dark: "I used to sneak Soul Train when my parents would leave the house to go shopping on Saturday," remembers Braxton, who sang in the church choir from an early age. Her technical skill came from her mother, an amateur opera singer, but watching the biggest R&B stars of the seventies on TV—particularly Stevie Wonder, Chaka Khan, and Quincy Jones—planted a different kind of seed. Things lightened up at home when Braxton was about eleven and her parents joined the less strict United Methodist faith.

Braxton eventually studied teaching at Bowie State University, but singing was her true passion. Her first break came after she and three of her sisters, performing as the Braxtons, signed to Arista Records and hit the low end of the Billboard R&B charts with "The Good Life." The record caught the attention of L.A. and Babyface, who signed Braxton to LaFace in 1991. Then another break: a pregnant Anita Baker bowed out of singing or

The Devil Inside

If you enjoyed every "shotgun" pumping round of Capcom's Evil series of games, then this game is going to knock you out. Interactive's "The Devil Inside" is a 3D point-and-click adventure that actually feels and runs like a Wes Craven horror movie.

The plot (no, I don't mean the plot for the sequel): Today is Halloween, and you play as Dave Cooper, a TV news anchor investigating a mansion, claimed to be haunted. But you're not alone: accompanying you is a cameraman, and watching your every move. T. Ripper, the host of "The Devil Inside" game show that event live! And by a large audience glued to the seats in front of the scene is set. You are standing outside the gate of a mansion, the police have already secured the area, and are outside of the mansion for anything "unusual" that might happen. You check your handgun for the last time and slowly walk through the huge, iron gates, into the adventure of your life. Whatever happens, it's solely your responsibility.

The characters: (a page out of Stephen King novels!) The game features over 40 different characters, including UFO's (Unidentified flying ogres!), Mechanical Androids, a favourite, the old lady with the walking stick and a semi-automatic handgun! There are also Zombies, who, when shot, split into two at their waistline (remember Terminator 2?) and merge again. A bizarre thing about the game is Dave Cooper himself. This guy can "magically transform" into a totally knockout babe named Deva. You have magical powers, and while Dave has to rely on his shotgun and rifles to blow away the zombies, Deva can do casting different spells.

The Gameplay: The game uses the "unreal" engine, although you play through there are enough camera angles, to make the game feel like a movie. Most of the times, all you have to do is shoot the

Amazing MIDI

By Sharie

"AmazingMIDI" (by Araki Software) is a utility that transcribes music, converting WAV files into MIDI files. It can recognise single-instrument polyphonic music. It's a powerful tool to help you to transcribe music to practice musical instruments and to make MIDI files, and so on. (From Readme file of the software.)

Download from Bdonline's Tucow site (<http://proshikanet.tucows.com/adnload/dlamiid.html>). Tucow has more than 30,000 shareware enough to make you go crazy. If you don't remember the link after reading this article, go to Bdonline.com site for Tucow (where you'll find an audio sub-directory). The size of this file is 839 Kb.

Firstly, I am writing about this because I was really surprised to see the use of this software. AmazingMIDI is to my knowledge, the first of its kind. It's meant for musicians, especially for those who know how to make MIDI (Musical Instrument Digital Interface) files. Any musician with sequencing knowledge in PC or synthesizer would be able to utilise this tool. But it's so simple to use that anyone can at least try it out.

I've been doing MIDI sequencing (Sequencing means writing digital data for a digital musical instrument in different tracks. By sequencing, you can make a song instrumental complete with drums, bass, etc. etc.) since '94 for my band. I need it because it gives me the full freedom of composing music.

But I've always wondered if it would ever be possible to convert analogue data like a guitar sound or the vocals in to MIDI data. That way, I could save all my hard work digitally and permanently.

Well, AmazingMIDI just does that. You put a sample sound (say a long note of a guitar) for it to analyse the sound character, then an analogue sound file (or a WAV file) which you want to convert to MIDI data (in this case, a recording of your guitar work—recorded in your PC and finally a MIDI file). Within a minute of analysis, it'll convert your whole guitar track digitised (if it's noise free and clean, it's perfect) as a MIDI file. You can now hear the MIDI using Piano sound, or Strings or Brass or whatever you want. You can do the same experiment with your vocals. I'm this is crazy. And off course, you can later edit the MIDI file any way you want it with a MIDI editor like Cakewalk.

Amazing MIDI is a shareware and it has a demo version that allows you to convert a WAV file of up to 30 seconds. If you want the full version, register it with 29 dollars. It's a pretty fair price that much, you have to cut your WAV file to several seconds pieces to squeeze out the whole juice of your work.

this composite image reveals Europa's mottled terrain (colored brown) and icy plains (coloured blue) of the Minos Linea region.



Water on Europa?

By Philip Downey, Discovery.com News

A watery ocean lies below the surface of Jupiter's moon Europa, a team of scientists has concluded last week. The discovery goes a long way toward fulfilling scientists' goal of finding liquid water—the elixir of life—in our solar system.

The discovery was made with the Galileo spacecraft, which has been orbiting Jupiter and its moons since December 1995. On Jan. 3 of this year, the satellite detected tell-tale fluctuations in Jupiter's magnetic field that suggest the presence of liquid water on its moon.

According to measurements made by Margaret Kivelson and her colleagues at University of California, Los Angeles, Jupiter's magnetic field is constantly shifting position and changing in strength as Europa moves through it. This implies that something on the moon is carrying an electrical current and creating its own magnetic field.

"Something's happening at Europa. The magnetic field got bigger as the satellite got closer to Europa," said Kivelson. She said Europa's magnetic field could be created by electrical currents from a salt or an acid in underground water. Ice, which almost completely covers Europa's surface, is a poor electrical conductor, she

noted.

Previously, scientists haven't been sure when or if liquid water ever existed on Europa. Europa's surface is cracked almost everywhere, and it appears that water has bubbled up into the intervening spaces and frozen. But it is very difficult to date these features.

Kivelson's results indicate there may be water now. Her team has calculated the water layer is at least 7.5 kilometers thick. Their results were published in this week's issue of Science.

Galileo has also taken plenty of pictures of Europa that support this idea. Many of these reveal areas of extensive deformation, and chunks of the surface layer that have been rotated.

These images are most easily explained by underground water. But, Kivelson's magnetic field evidence is strongest of all.

Europa is not the only place scientists are looking for the life-giving liquid. Researchers announced evidence of possible recent landslides caused by underground water on Mars in June of this year. Some of the icy moons around Jupiter and Saturn are other possible water-containing candidates.

NOSY PALS

By Deborah Blum, Discovery.com News

How to measure friendship? Perhaps no one has come up with a more creative—or one might say peculiar—test than the South American capuchin monkey. "They stick a finger up each other's noses," said Susan Perry, an assistant professor of anthropology at the University of California, Los Angeles. "And they keep the fingers there for up to 10 minutes."

But more importantly, she says, they illustrate the fact these unexpectedly smart little monkeys share something with us—they know how to build strong relationships and to test them carefully.

Perry explains capuchins are careful to only test well-developed relationships. No capuchin would poke up the nose of a stranger. They try other tests as well, such as game playing. One will bite a little hair off the others' face and the two monkeys will toss the hairball back and forth. They take turns donating hair.

Emory University psychology professor Frans de Waal says one has even appeared as a companion animal on the popular television show, *Friends*. He discourages that though: "They are still wild animals. They grow up. They bite. They don't make good pets."

But what they do provide, de Waal says, is a powerful reminder not to underestimate our fellow primates. It turns out capuchins are second only to humans in brain size to body ratio. "They can do a lot of things that people used to think only chimps could do," de Waal said. Capuchins use sticks and stones as tools; they cooperate on tasks, such as food gathering; they share the spoils.

