

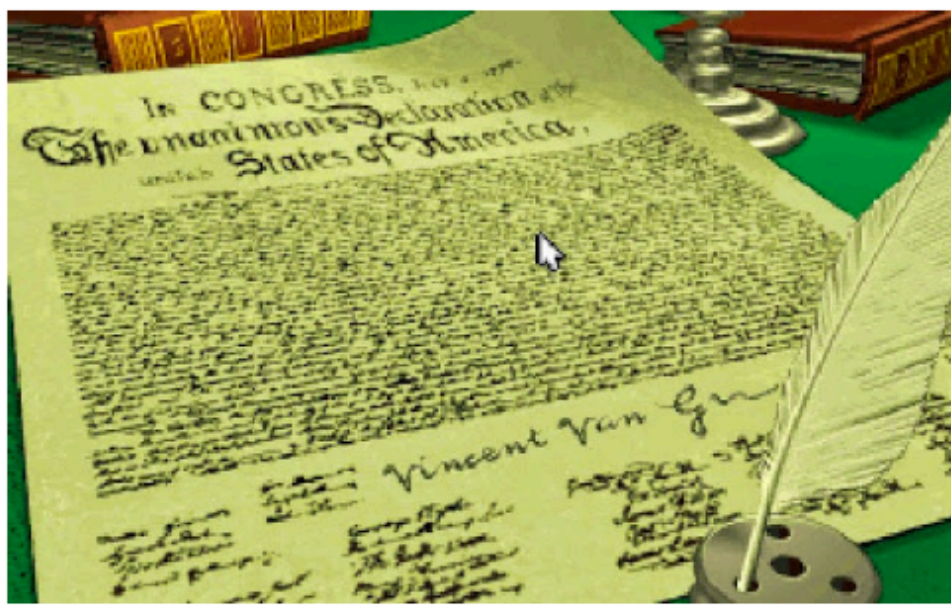


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## Where are they now? - Jeffery L. Briggs



Sid Meier's Civilization: A game Jeffery L. Briggs both designed and composed music for

For our next "Where are they now?" post we have a fellow who is a bit of a "Renaissance Man" having dabbled in a bit of everything. While I've only heard of Jeffery L. Briggs with respect to his involvement as a composer on many *Civilization* games and being a designer/producer for *Sid Meier's Civilization II*, he's actually done quite a bit more than I expected. While Sid Meier is obviously the most famous out of Microprose and Firaxis's employees (thanks to his name being on almost every one of their titles) little do we realise that there are many other individuals such as Briggs and indeed Bruce Campbell Shelley (whom I talked about last week) that made the games at Microprose and Firaxis the classics they are. So where did Briggs come from? And why am I calling him a "Renaissance Man"?

Briggs was born in Alabama in 1957 but only started to get a real appreciation for classical music when he was 14. In the 1970s, Briggs attended music school and after completing his formal education he became a freelance composer and arranger in New York City during the 1980s.

In 1984, Briggs started to play around with digital orchestras and it wasn't long before he was working at Microprose with the likes of Sid Meier. While Briggs mainly composed music he also started to branch out into several other streams once he got into the world of game development. Some of Briggs's earlier roles included being the project leader for 1987's *Sid Meier's Pirates!* as well as composing music for *Sword of the Samurai* and *Covert Action*. Later on at Microprose, he was responsible for composing music for 1991's *Sid Meier's Civilization* as well as working as a designer and composer for 1994's *Sid Meier's Civilization II* where he served as a designer, composer and producer for the game.

In 1996, he and Sid Meier were awarded a U.S. Patent for a "System for Real-Time Music Composition and Synthesis" used in a product called "CPU Bach". It was also around this time that Briggs had left Microprose and formed a new company called Firaxis (by using the words 'fire' and 'axis', connoting the 'fiery axis of creativity', and borrowed from one of his early musical works, *Firaxis*). Briggs was the CEO at Firaxis but he wore many hats, composing music (and acting as executive producer) for *Sid Meier's Alpha Centauri* and *Sid Meier's Civilization IV* (except for the famous intro theme "Baba Yetu" by Christopher Tin), co-designing *Sid Meier's Civilization III* (with Soren Johnson) and even dabbling a bit in programming (as well as design) of the American Civil War classic, *Sid Meier's Gettysburg!*

In 2005, Briggs sold Firaxis and revisited his life as a non-commercial artist. He has composed several works in the past decade but it doesn't seem like he's composed anything for games - which is a pity (for us) - but I'm sure none can deny the importance of his contributions to the PC games industry. There are so many classic strategy games thanks to his ability to compose, design, program and manage. Like I said, a "Renaissance Man" in the world of game development.

<http://www.choicestgames.com/2015/04/where-are-they-now-jeffery-l-briggs.html>