

# Failure Workshop 2021: How I Accidentally Spent \$30,000 on Music For a Game Before I Knew What the Design Was

Ty Taylor

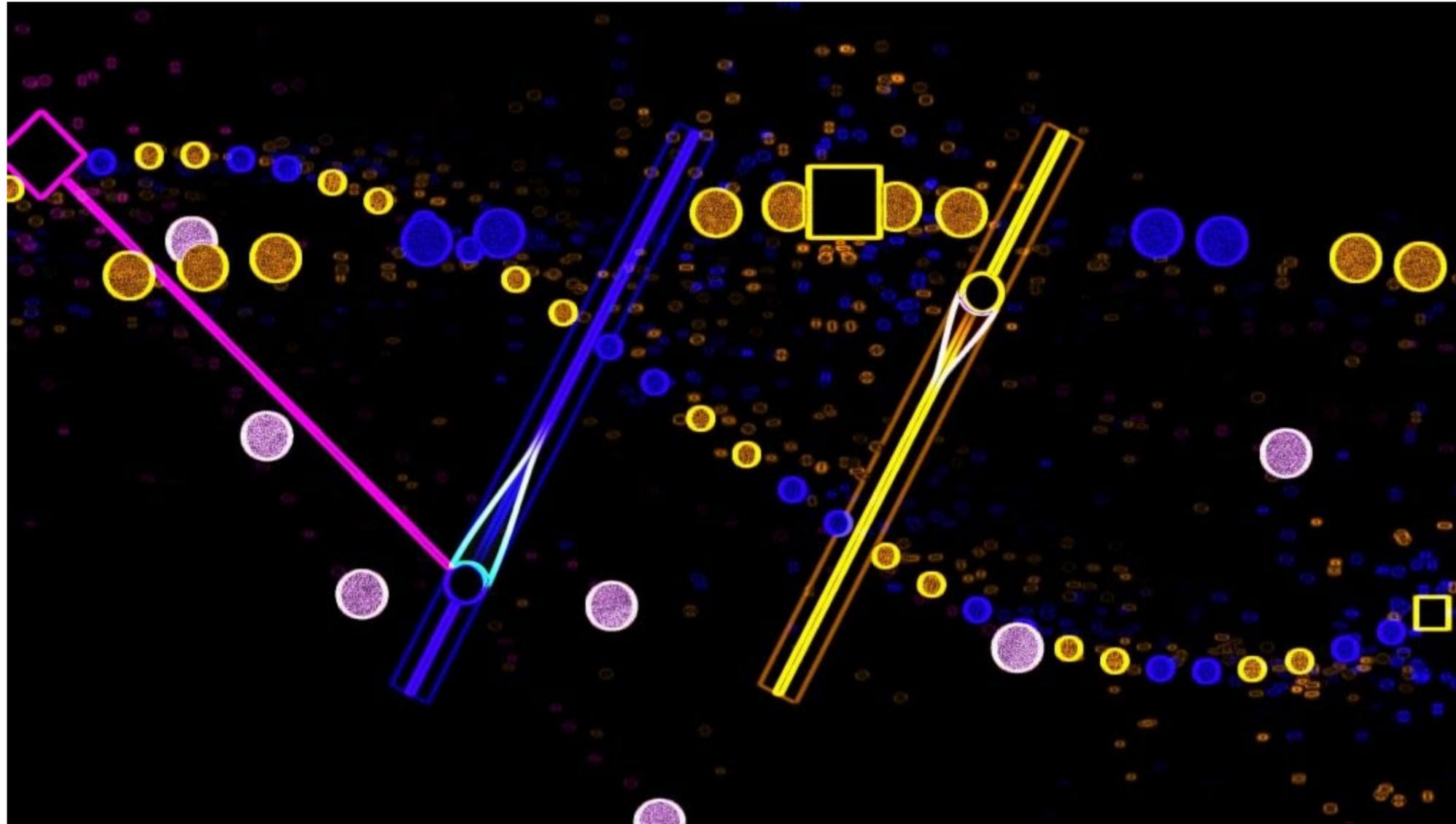
Director of The Quantum Astrophysicists Guild

# Hello!

- I'm Ty
- I make indie games!
  - Twitter: @IMakeIndieGames



# Here's a game I didn't make:



(Well, at least didn't finish)

# A rhythmic bullet-hell

by Ty Taylor

# DualJoy

Steam/consoles 2018



GDC<sup>®</sup>

GAME DEVELOPERS CONFERENCE | July 19-23, 2021 | #GDC21

# Sidebar

- Don't tell people your planned release dates
- Don't estimate a release date
- (Don't even make it up)
- Until your game is done
  - (and not just *almost* done)







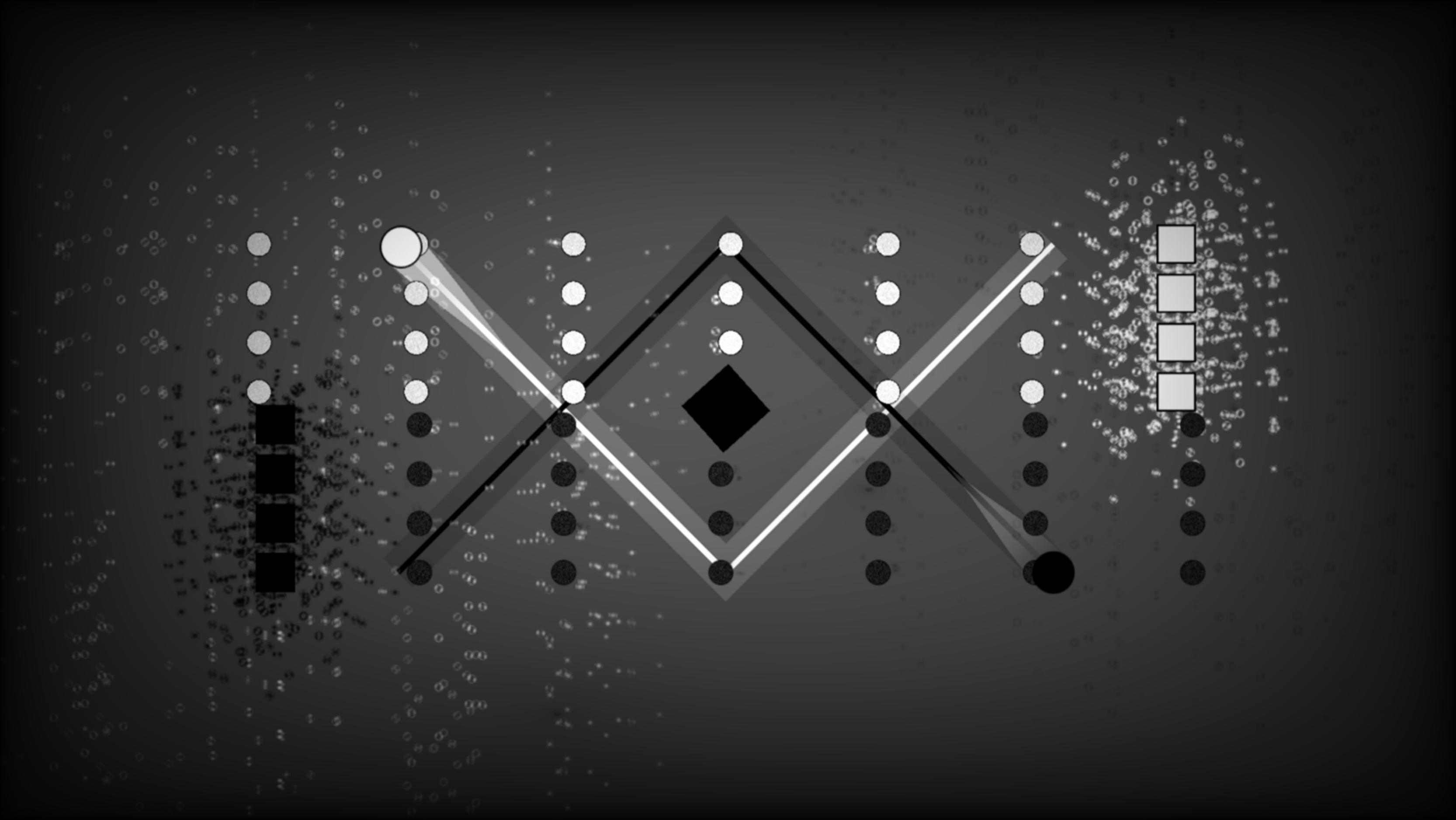
# Sidebar

- Playtest your game with a few other people before showing it AT AN EXPO
  - You, yourself, an indie developer - cannot be objective when playtesting your own game

# DualJoy - So, what even was this game?

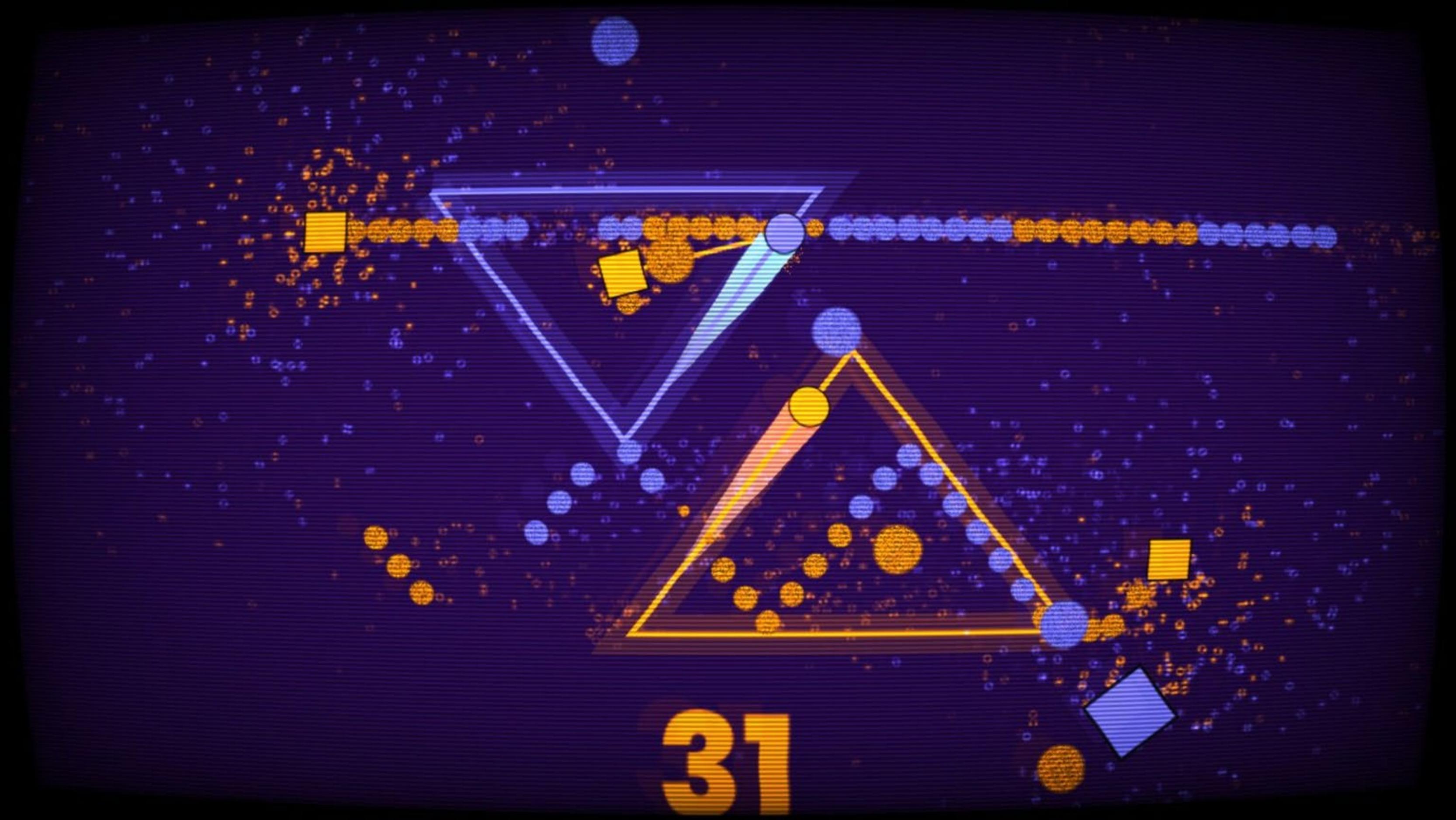
- A rhythmic bullet-hell
  - by Ty Taylor
- Players controlled a different cursor with each thumb
  - (it sucked)
- The music was awesome
  - (but your movements didn't actually correspond to the notes)











31

# (If you want to play a really bad prototype)

J5VIK-99I69-CWKRY  
ENIW9-P8542-CJ9LQ  
LXN5I-KRDBT-0PFIM  
KX8IB-MVJ84-VNJ6Y  
HM9CK-7MB3E-FQA9W  
EHFKF-0MEAA-296W0  
DDVYZ-D27EC-JI55R  
YFHKL-ZHR2Q-GK6TC  
8MV6N-R36DV-ZMQ0Z  
HLDKX-EPHTL-634YH  
7YGBL-ANI5F-ZGFY0  
ALZVZ-6AD3F-DLDBY

VLFGK-P5TWX-T3AR6  
BN247-JX6TP-YA29C  
R0EDV-WXWLG-D2R96  
9REBZ-P9EE5-KD2WG  
GXKQX-LLFX3-J0ZDI  
23QIT-FGTHL-TVDYN  
RBYPM-EL4PZ-35T5T  
5F44F-7HBGD-CIA8J  
EPX6C-V5KV4-GCTXV  
TN79C-C7LR7-K9G98  
BD28P-K7F7Z-X8D30  
YL5LR-TG80R-LWRPX

# Why was it so expensive, what the heck.

Danny Baranowsky

Grant Kirkhope

Disasterpeace

Lena Raine

Chipzel

Big Giant Circles

Ryan Henwood

Kasson Crooker

Adrian Talens

Bean!

John Robert Matz

Ryan Ike

Emmanuel Lagumbay

Rory Given

Brendon Williams

Gordon McGladdery

Taylor Ambrosio  
Wood

John Hamilton Smith V

**AND MORE!**

DualJoy had the best video  
game soundtrack of all time.

But the gameplay was terrible.

# Why it sucked

- Here are some **good** rhythm games:
  - Rock Band
  - Guitar Hero
  - DDR
- Here are some **bad** rhythm games:
  - DualJoy

# Why it sucked

- What Rock Band, Guitar Hero, and DDR have in common:
  - You actually do stuff to the rhythm/beats
  - You feel like you're playing an instrument
  - It makes you feel awesome
- DualJoy didn't require you to do anything on the beats
  - Bullets fired on the beats, but your movements were unconnected
  - Often moving on a beat (which is natural) caused you to get killed

# Why it sucked

- Also, it was way too hard
  - Most people couldn't beat the tutorial
  - The gameplay/rhythm being out of sync really messed people up
  - Most people did better when not listening to the game!
  - Plus, forcing people to be ambidextrous wasn't smart

# How this happened

- I've always wanted to make a rhythm game
  - (Rock Band is my favorite game of all time)
- I was super excited to work with composers I liked
- “Rhythm-bullet-hell” as a concept is super interesting
- “Surely, with all this great music I'll be able to come up with a game built around it!”
  - Without basically copying another rhythm game, it was too difficult to salvage the concept

# Moral of the story: Kill your babies



# Moral of the story: Kill your babies

- Well, that is, if your babies are awful.
- Actually prototype before making a full game
  - (and spending a bunch of money on it)
- Fail quickly, playtest often, recognize garbage
  - (and don't have emotional attachment to a brilliant idea of yours. Which is kind of impossible, but try anyway)

# That's all folks!

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