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(54) **MUSICAL PLAYING CARD BOARD GAME**

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

A musical board game and playing method that permits players to respond to playing cards both visually and aurally without requiring additional manual intervention by the game player. By incorporating computer-readable indicia such as RFID tags or bar codes in player's cards and providing a suitable computer assisted reader in the game board, it is possible to play music when enabled player cards come within proximity of a reader.

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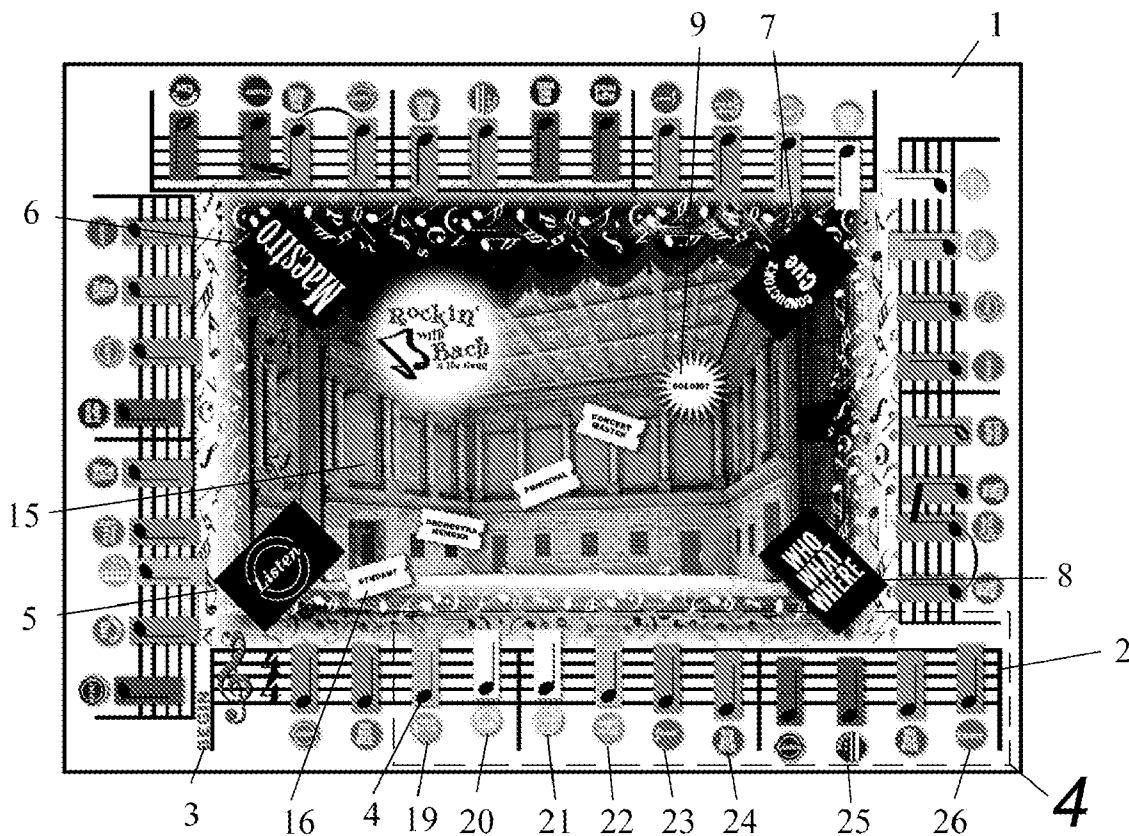


Fig. 1

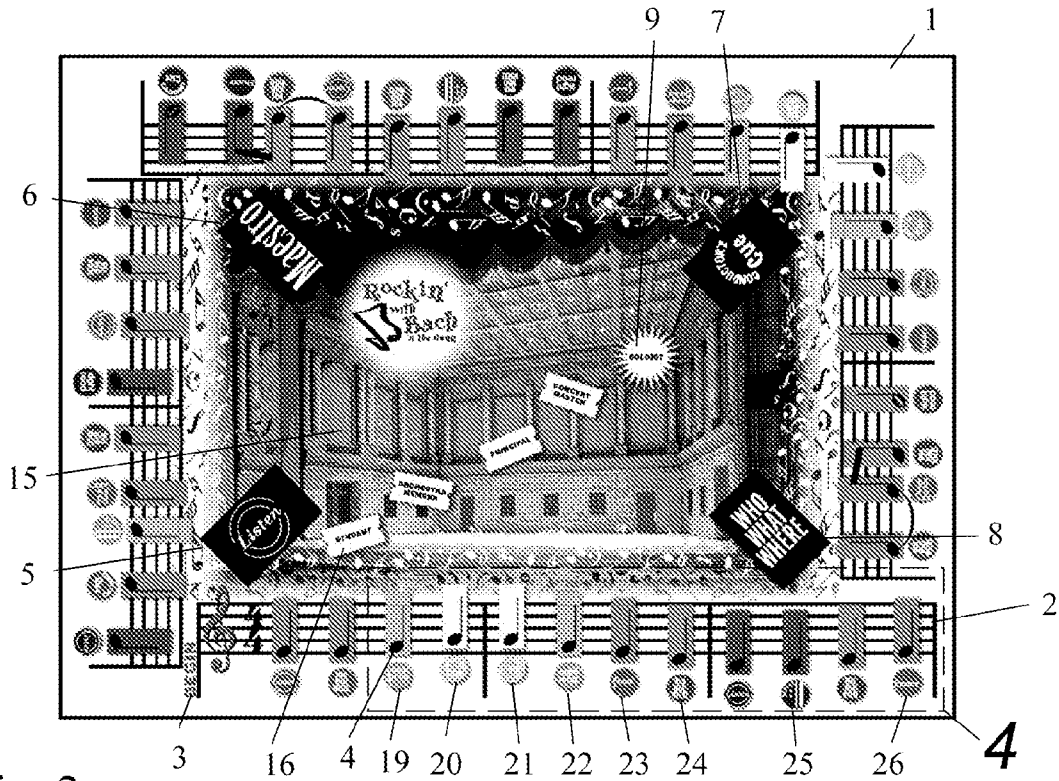


Fig. 2

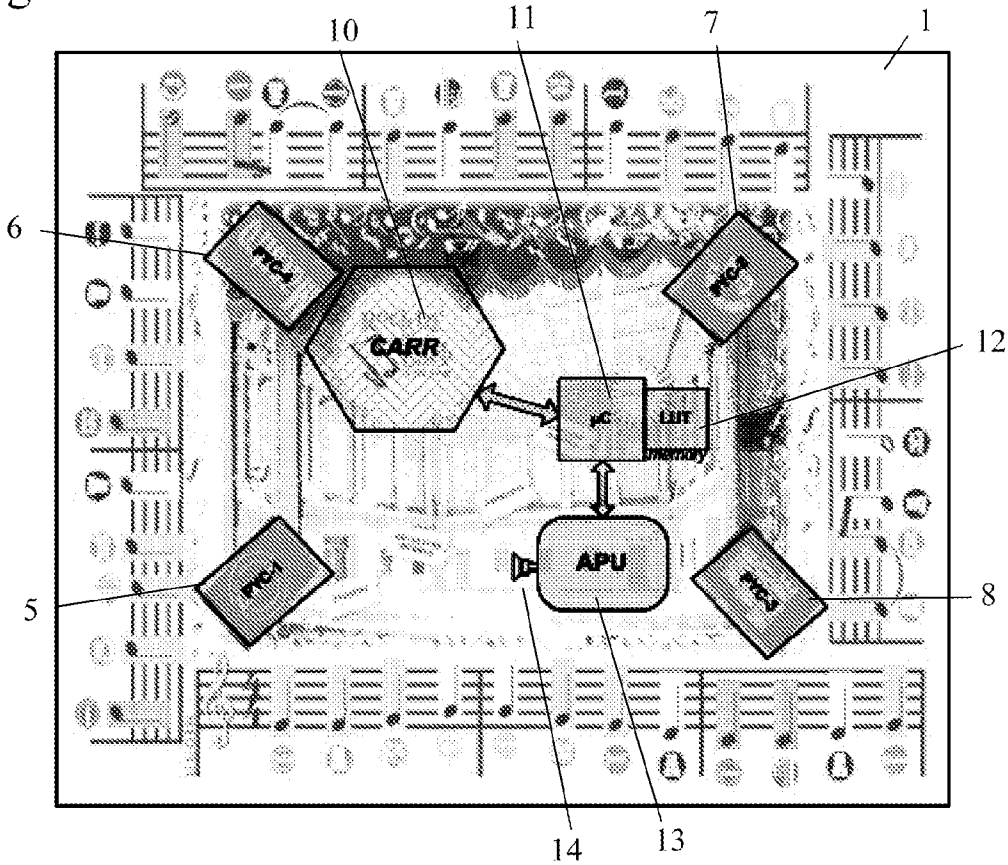


Fig. 3

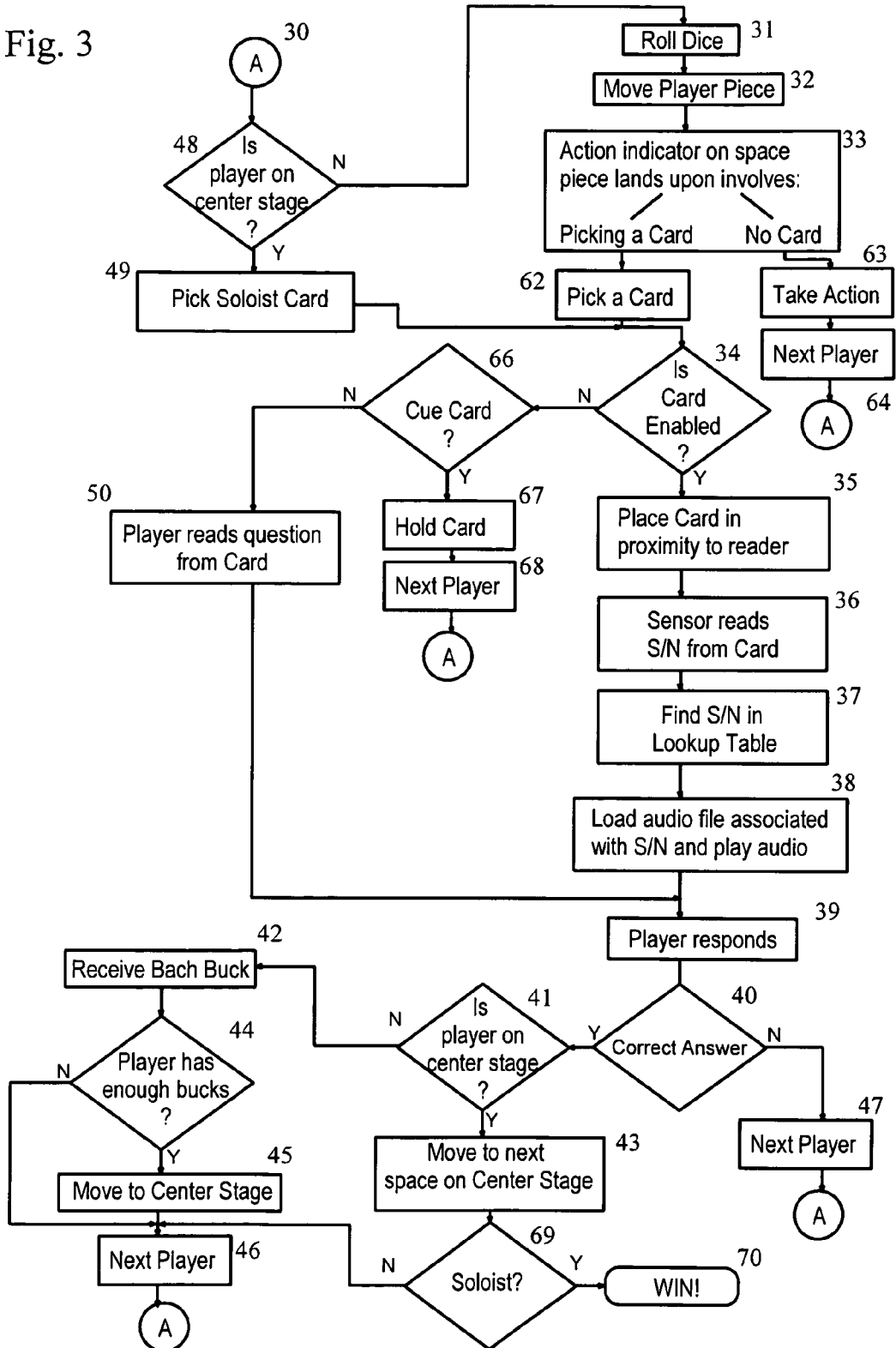


Fig. 4

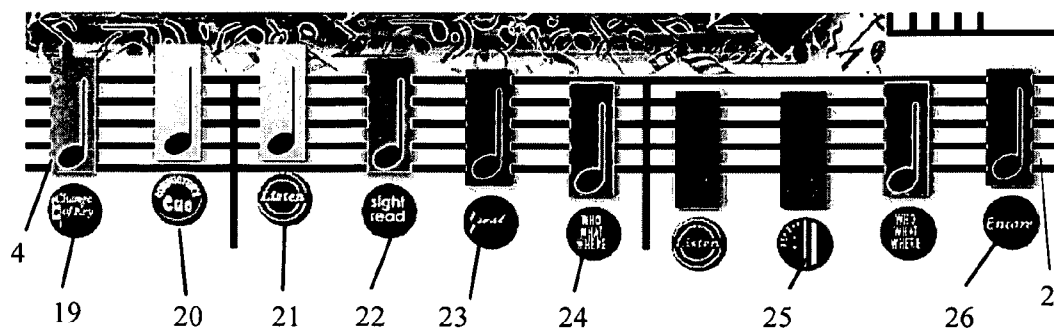


Fig. 6



Fig. 7

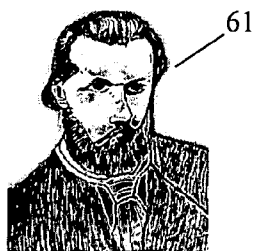


Fig. 5a

51


Soloist

Forgotten by the music world,
he died a very poor man.

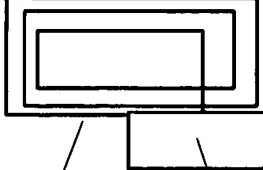
- Bach
- Beethoven
- Vivaldi
- Tchaikovsky

--- Listen ---

- Beethoven's Moonlight Sonata
- Tchaikovsky's 1812 Overture
- Holst's The Planets – Saturn
- Mozart's Jupiter Symphony



56



57 58

Fig. 5b

52


Soloist

He studied law before
he became a composer.


- Tchaikovsky
- Beethoven
- Saint-Saens
- Bach

--- Listen ---

- Tchaikovsky's Nutcracker Ballet – Final Waltz
- Beethoven's Moonlight Sonata
- Saint-Saens Carnival of the Animals – Aquarium
- Tchaikovsky's 1812 Overture



56



59

Fig. 5c

53

Soloist

Who impacted Tchaikovsky's
musical development?

- Stamaty & Boily
- He was self-taught
- His father, Leopold
- His teacher, Nikolai Rubinstein

Who enjoyed Holst's music
the most while he was alive?

- Fellow musicians
- The people of France
- The people of England
- Members of his church

Fig. 5d

52


Soloist

Answers


- Tchaikovsky

--- Listen ---

- Saint-Saens Carnival of the Animals – Aquarium



56



59

Fig. 5e

54

Soloist

Johannes Brahms was:

- a. The son of a carpenter
- b. Forced to play piano in bars as a teenager
- c. 33 when he died
- d. A famous violinist

--- Listen ---

- a. Brahms' Symphony No. 1 Cmin
- b. Vivaldi's 4 Seasons – Summer
- c. Brahms' Lullaby
- d. Holst's The Planets – Venus

56 Listen

87

Fig. 5f

55

Soloist

Beethoven's first musical job was

- a. Assistant Court Organist for Archbishop of Cologne
- b. Priest in Bonn, Germany
- c. Concert pianist
- d. Solo violinist for King & Queen

--- Listen ---

- a. Beethoven's Symph No 9 DMin
- b. Tchaikovsky's Snowflake Waltz
- c. Saint-Saens' Carnival of the Animals – Elephant
- d. Saint-Saens' Carnival of the Animals - Kangaroo

56 Listen

88

MUSICAL PLAYING CARD BOARD GAME

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0001] 1. Field of the Invention

[0002] The invention pertains to the field of games. More particularly, the invention pertains to board games using playing cards as play elements.

DESCRIPTION OF RELATED ART

[0003] Board games have enjoyed much popularity over the decades. Typically players move pieces around a board and interact with the text printed on game cards. This text may be in the form of questions or word-based prompts necessary for game play.

[0004] Recent advances in technology have given board game designers many new tools to enhance game play. These tools allow board game designers to impart “magical” qualities to the gaming experience. Examples of the “magical” qualities include the ability to integrate music and intelligent player pieces into the overall game board playing experience. It is now possible to design intelligent board games which automatically monitor players’ moves and permit the player to interact with a wide-range of electronically generated aural and visual stimuli.

[0005] Mattel introduced a game called “Hyper-Scan” the San Diego Comic Con in July 2006, and the product was discontinued a year later. HyperScan was described as a cross between trading card games (TCGs) and video games. The HyperScan console allowed players to scan RFID-imbedded cards and then play a video game based on the information in those cards. The winner of that video game could then scan his card again and that card could be granted new powers. Hyper-Scan was not a board game, and did not link RFID-enabled cards with music or audio files.

[0006] Various games have been created which teach music recognition and musical concepts and theories. In the 1950’s, a television show, “Name that Tune”, involved identification of tunes. A home version of the game was marketed by Milton Bradley in the mid-1950’s, using Bingo-like playing boards and a long-playing record as a source of music for players to identify. The game was updated and re-released in 2005 using a board having a path for playing pieces and a DVD as an audio source.

[0007] U.S. Pat. No. 7,325,805 comprises a game board that provides a path of movement for a playing pawn controlled by each player. Movement is related to musical intervals on a piano keyboard.

[0008] U.S. Pat. No. 6,497,412 is a quiz game in which a player attempts to provide an answer to at least one question after listening to an audio clip related to the question. The audio clips are selected randomly after entry of selected attributes by a player on a keypad. There is no playing board.

[0009] U.S. Pat. No. 5,106,097 uses a compact disk (CD) player to play an audio clip relating to a category of questions and answers selected completely by chance. Each track of a CD contains one or more audio clips separated by audio queues. The questions and answers relating to the CD tracks are provided in a book or on playing cards or in computer memory, and can be randomly accessed.

[0010] Japanese published patent application JP2007252716, “BOARD GAME USING RFID” is a board game having pieces with RFID tags. The game board has a built-in reader/writer for writing and reading data in the RFID

tags. The data corresponding to the progress of a game are written or read in the RFID tags by the game board. The game does not use audio clips indexed to the RFID tags.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0011] The invention is a musical board game and playing method that permits players to respond to playing cards both visually and aurally without requiring additional manual intervention by the game player. By incorporating computer readable media such as RFID tags in “enabled” cards and providing a suitable computer assisted reader in the game board, it is possible to play music when “enabled” cards come within proximity of a reader.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWING

[0012] FIG. 1 shows a representation of the game board layout.

[0013] FIG. 2 shows the game board electronics against a silhouette of the game board layout.

[0014] FIG. 3 outlines a flowchart of the method of play of the invention.

[0015] FIG. 4 shows a detail view of part of the playing board from FIG. 1.

[0016] FIGS. 5a-5f show details of playing cards for use with the game of the invention.

[0017] FIG. 6 shows a monetary token as may be used in the game of the invention.

[0018] FIG. 7 shows a player piece as may be used in the game of the invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

Overview

[0019] Rock’n with Bach’n the Gang is a game designed by children to teach players about classical composers and their music. The game uses a specially designed board (1) having an outer path of musical notes (FIG. 4) and an inner “Center Stage”, which will be described in greater detail below, a chance device such as dice or spinner or the like, player pieces (movement tokens) (61), monetary tokens (“Bach Bucks”) (60) and a variety of question cards (51)-(55). The object of the game is to become the soloist (9) on “Center Stage” (15).

[0020] Two or more players roll dice, move player pieces (61) around the board (1), and follow the directions printed on each musical note (space on the board), as will be described in greater detail below. Each player’s piece continues around the board until the player has earned sufficient monetary tokens (“Bach Bucks”) by correctly answering multiple-choice questions posed on the game cards. At least some of the cards (51)(52) are “enabled” by having computer-readable indicia, allowing musical clues or other audio clips to be included in the questioning.

[0021] Once an “octave” (8) of Bach Bucks is earned, the player gains admission onto center stage. The player enters “Center Stage” as a Student (16) and moves through the other positions by correctly answering questions from the appropriate sets of cards. The player who reaches the Soloist’s Space (9) first wins the game.

[0022] FIG. 1 shows an example of a playing board for the Rock’n with Bach’n the Gang game. The board has a playing surface (1) having a musical staff (preferably G-clef and/or F

[Bass]-clef) (2) forming a path around its periphery. A start position (3) provides a place for player pieces (61) at the beginning of the game.

[0023] The game uses a number of question cards, which will be explained in greater detail in the “Method of Play” section below. These cards may be designated in different groups as, for example, “Who, What, Where” Cards, “Listen” Cards, “Conductor’s Cue” Cards or “Maestro” or “Soloist” Cards. Storage areas for each card may be provided on the board, for example at (8), (5), (7), and (6), respectively. Some of these cards will correspond to the action indicators on the board, as explained below.

[0024] FIG. 4 shows a detail of the peripheral path, in the area denoted by dotted lines 4 in FIG. 1. As can be seen in FIG. 4, a series of playing positions in the form of musical notes (4) are laid out within musical staff (2) as to denote a portion of a particular musical composition within a particular genre (e.g. Classical, Jazz, etc.). The game board shown in FIG. 1 outlines the first ten measures of Bach’s “Ode to Joy”—hence representing the Classical music genre—but it will be understood that any musical composition (or even a random assortment of notes) may be used within the teachings of the invention.

[0025] Underneath the notes (4) are indicators which indicate what actions are to be taken when a player piece lands on the associated note. For exemplary purposes, the action indicators shown in FIG. 4 are: Change of Key (19), Conductors Cue (20), Listen (21), Sight Read (22), Rest (23), Who What Where (24), Repeat (25) and Encore (26). It will be understood that these particular indicators are presented for example only, and other indicators might be substituted within the teachings of the invention. The various action indicators are repeated around the periphery of the board, in whatever arrangement is deemed appropriate.

[0026] A center stage area (15) in the center of the board (1) is the area where the final phase of the game is played out. The player enters “Center Stage” as a Student at space (16). He/she moves through the other positions—here shown as “Orchestra Member”, “Principal”, “Concert Master” and, finally, “Soloist” (9) by correctly answering questions from the appropriate sets of cards. The player who reaches the Soloist’s Space (9) first wins the game. These titles can be changed to others which might be more appropriate to other forms of musical expression within the teachings of the invention. For example, for an opera-themed game, a player might progress from “student” through “chorus” to “diva”, or in a rock and roll game, in appropriate stages from “garage band” to “superstar”. Other variations would be apparent to one skilled in the art.

[0027] As shown in FIG. 2, the board (1) further has electronics embedded below the game board surface (1), not visible to the naked eye. Such electronics are used to read the “enabled” cards (described in more detail below), and for other functions. These electronics include a computer or embedded microcontroller shown in block μ C (11), which is connected to memory containing a Look Up Table LUT and stored music or audio clips (12), to a reader/sensor CARR (10) for reading “enabled” cards which has an output attached to the computer, and to an audio playback unit APU (13). The APU (13) has an input connected to the computer (11), and is connected to an audio transducer or speaker (14) or other means of making audio signals discernable to those playing

the game. Appropriate batteries or other arrangements for supplying power to the circuitry will be supplied, as is well known to the art.

[0028] The μ C (11) may be any microprocessor or other computer processor, and may include built-in or external memory as is known to the art for program and data storage. If desired, μ C (11) could also be implemented in discrete components as is known to the art.

[0029] The reader/sensor CARR (10) is preferably a Computer Assisted RFID Reader for reading RFID-enabled cards as described below. Such readers are available from Texas Instruments, Intermec or Iadata. Alternatively, the CARR (10) can be an optical reader for barcodes or 2-D targets or mark sense marks or punched holes or OCR characters or other optical indicia, or a magnetic stripe reader, or may incorporate other technology for “reading” data from the enabled playing cards.

[0030] The memory containing the LUT (12) may store data in read-only memory (ROM), or in volatile or nonvolatile Random Access Memory (RAM), or other technologies known to the art. The memory (12) may also be implemented on removable media such as CD-ROM or DVD, or on removable ROM cartridges or “flash drives”, which would allow flexibility in changing the music or audio clips to provide additional game options. For example, packs of question cards could be provided with an appropriate memory, each covering a specific musical genre or adding additional depth or difficulty of questions to a given genre. The music or audio clips may be stored in any convenient format, such as WAV files or MP3 compressed audio, or MIDI encoded music, or any other format as may be desired.

[0031] The APU (13) can be a music or audio synthesizer chip such as the STA013 Mp3 decoder/playback chip from STMicroelectronics, or implemented in discrete components. The board (1) would preferably include an audio transducer (14) such as a flat piezoelectric “speaker”, but could also include jacks for headphones. Alternatively, a Bluetooth audio transmitter/receiver, WiFi-based transmitter receiver, or InfraRed (IR) transmitter could be provided for external home console stereo play, where the music or audio from the APU (13) is transmitted wirelessly to a receiver on a home stereo amplifier.

[0032] PYC-1,2,3,4—Player Card Home areas (5)(6)(7) and (8) on FIG. 2 are simply holding areas for various kinds of cards, as explained elsewhere. If desired, circuitry could be included in these areas for various functions within the teachings of the invention.

“Enabled” Playing Cards

[0033] FIGS. 5a-5f show some of the cards which can be used in the game (FIG. 5d is the reverse side of the card of FIG. 5b).

[0034] By incorporating specific machine-readable coding in cards such as (51), (52), (54) and (55) the APU (13) in the game board (1) can play music or other audio files when suitably encoded cards come within proximity of a reader. Such cards will be hereinafter referred to as “enabled” cards. If desired, a logo or other symbol (56) can be printed on such cards to identify them as “enabled”. Card (53), FIG. 5c, is an example of a card which is not “enabled”.

[0035] Preferably, the machine-readable coding in the card is in the form of a unique serial number (S/N), which is indexed by the Look Up Table to correspond to a specific selection of music or audio clip in the LUT memory (12).

[0036] As shown in card (51), FIG. 5a, this serial number is preferably encoded in the form of a passive RFID “tag” embedded in the card. The tag has an antenna loop (57) coupled to an RFID circuit (58). When the card (51) is placed nearby the reader (10), loop (57) receives radio frequency (RF) energy from the RFID reader (10), the energy activates the circuit (58) which responds with an electrical signal representing the S/N. This signal is transmitted by the circuit (58) through the loop (57) and picked up by the reader (10). The use of RFID technology allows the game to read “enabled” cards when they are waved near or swiped by the reader (10) area of the board (1), without requiring actual contact (as might be needed by a magnetic stripe) or clear line of sight or alignment as might be required for some optical systems. Such passive RFID tags are commonly used for such purposes as inventory tracking in stores and warehouses, and are available from Hitachi.

[0037] Alternatively, the reader (10) can be an optical reader, with the S/N encoded upon the card (52) in the form of a barcode (59) or other optical indicia. Many standards exist for barcode encoding, and one skilled in the art could choose an appropriate standard based on the length and content of the S/N and the reader chosen. Alternate optical indicia include 2-D Data Matrix (ISO/IEC16022) or similar codes, multiple color codes, circular “bullseye” codes. Alternatively, with an appropriate reader, direct optical character recognition (OCR) can be used to read numbers and/or letters from the card. Optical encoding would have the advantage of being inexpensive to produce, since the code is merely printed on the card along with all of the other information, but would be more affected by card position and lighting than wireless RF solutions.

[0038] As another alternative, FIG. 5f shows an enabled card (55) which has an array of punched holes (88) encoding a serial number or other identification. As with other optical encoding, a simple optical reader could read the punched holes in a manner known to the art.

[0039] FIG. 5e shows still another alternative embodiment for enabled cards. Card (54) has a magnetic stripe (87) on which the identification (serial number), at a minimum, is magnetically encoded. The identification can be read by swiping the card through a magnetic stripe reader. Readers for such magnetic stripes are known to the art, such as are commonly used in the fields of credit cards and magnetically encoded tickets for transit systems and the like.

[0040] Whatever the technology chosen, when a card (51) comes within proximity of the reader (10), the card’s serial number (S/N) is detected by the game board computer (11). The computer accesses a Lookup Table (LUT) in memory (12) that provides a reference for a particular piece of music or sequence of music pieces or other audio clips. When found, the music selection is sent to the onboard audio playback unit (APU) (13) for conversion to a suitable analog conversion and playback.

[0041] In the example in FIG. 5a, card (52) contains a question (62) about a composer, and a “listen” question (63). When the barcode (59) on the card (52) is scanned by reader (10), the S/N from the barcode would cause computer (10) to look up the S/N in the LUT (12) and play a music clip from memory using the APU (13)—in this case, an excerpt from the “Carnival of the Animals”.

[0042] While described in the context of musical genres, it would be recognized that the same method of game play and “enabled” cards could be used with games testing knowledge

in other contexts. For example, with provision of an appropriate set of question cards and audio memory, the game could be adapted to a historical or current events quiz game, answering questions and recognizing sound bites and audio quotes from speeches or news reports. For the very young, “enabled” cards could be used within the teachings of the invention to permit recognition of animals, with the sounds of the animals played when the S/N on the enabled cards are read.

Method of Play

Preparation

[0043] The game board (1) is prepared by placing the “Who, What, Where” Cards (8), “Listen” Cards (5), “Cue” Cards (7) and the “Soloist” or “Maestro” Cards (6) in their designated spaces on the board. The monetary tokens (“Bach Bucks”) (60) may be placed anywhere on “Center Stage” (15), or anywhere the players find convenient. Each player selects a player piece—this may be done by randomly selecting a “Composer” Card (not shown) and taking the matching composer as their playing piece. FIG. 7 shows an example playing piece representing the composer Tchaikovsky. Players read the information on their “Composer” Cards and are able to refer to their cards throughout the game. Alternatively, other tokens could be used to represent players, as is known in other board games.

[0044] All of the player pieces are placed on the board in the “Begin” position (3).

[0045] Each player uses the chance device (i.e. rolls the dice) to decide who will go first. The player with the lowest number rolled goes first and play continues to the right. If two players roll the same number, those two players roll again.

Method of Play

Player Turns

[0046] FIG. 3 shows a flowchart of the method of play of the game, after completion of the preparation phase.

[0047] For ease of explanation, we will start with step (31).

[0048] (31) The player who is “up” rolls the dice (or uses whatever chance device might be chosen, such as a spinner or electronic random counter, etc.) to get a movement count.

[0049] (32) The player moves his player piece along the peripheral staff (2) on the board (1) the number of positions (notes (4)) denoted by the movement count.

[0050] (33) The action indicator underneath the note is read, and the appropriate action is taken. This action may either involve taking a card or not.

[0051] (63) If the action indicator does not involve taking a card, the appropriate action is taken. These actions may include, for example:

[0052] (19) Change of Key—A player swaps his/her “Composer” Card, game piece and exchanges positions with another player of his/her choice to gain information about a different composer (players do not change the space on which they were located).

[0053] (23) Rest—no action, remain on this space for your turn (i.e lose a turn)

[0054] (25) Repeat—Player goes back three spaces.

[0055] (26) Encore—Player takes another turn and rolls the dice.

- [0056] (22) Sight Read—This, or other action indicators may be included for other functions which may optionally be included in the game as desired.
- [0057] (64) Once the action is taken, play passes to the next player and the method loops back to connector (A).
- [0058] (62) If the action indicator involves taking a card, an appropriate card is chosen from the pile of cards associated with the action indicator. In the example game shown, these cards are Who What Where (24), Conductors Cue (20) and Listen (21).
- [0059] (34) The process of play branches, depending on whether or not the card is “enabled”. For examples of “enabled” cards, see (51) FIG. 5a, and (52) in FIGS. 5b (front) and 5d (rear).
- [0060] If the card is not enabled, then
 - [0061] (50) If the card is not a “cue” card, the player reads the question from the card. Play then continues from step (39), see below.
 - [0062] (66) If the card is a “cue” card, it provides a hint to help in answering the questions on question cards of the other types. The player (67) keeps the card as a reference until the coinciding question is drawn by any player. If the coinciding “Who, What, Where” card or “Listen” card is drawn by another player and not answered correctly, the player with the “Cue” card may answer the question correctly and earn one “Bach Buck.”
 - [0063] Play then (68) passes to the next player, and the method loops back to connector (A).
- [0064] If the card is enabled, then (35) the card is placed in proximity to the reader/sensor (10), in whatever form is appropriate for the reading technology chosen (see above for a description of the various options). For example, if the preferred RFID system is used, the card is waved past the RFID transponder.
- [0065] (36) The sensor (10) reads the S/N from the card.
- [0066] (37) The S/N is looked up in the Lookup Table (12) to find the associated music or other audio file in memory.
- [0067] (38) The audio file associated with the S/N is read out from memory and played by the APU (13) as described above.
- [0068] (39) The player responds to the question(s) (from step (50)) and/or identifies the audio clip (from step (38)) and/or otherwise responds to a problem presented by the card.
- [0069] It will be understood that, as shown in FIGS. 5a and 5b, a single card might be “enabled” and also contain a question to be answered. For example, card (52), which asks a question (62) about a composer who studied law and also has a “listen” section (63) which asks the player to identify a musical excerpt played by the board. In that case, the “response” in step (39) would include both an answer to the question and a response to the “listen” section (identification of the music, etc).
- [0070] (40) The player’s response is evaluated against the correct answer(s)—as shown in FIG. 5d, the answers (64) (65) may be printed on the back of the card (52), or otherwise indicated in an answer book or by other means.
- [0071] (47) If the answer is incorrect, play passes to the next player and the method loops back to connector (A)
- [0072] (41) If the answer is correct, the action depends on whether or not the player is on “Center Stage” (15).

- [0073] If the player is on Center Stage, then (43) his piece is advanced to the next space (“Student” to “Orchestra Member”, etc.)
- [0074] (69) If the piece has advanced to the final spot on Center Stage—Soloist (9), then (70) the player has won, and the game ends. Otherwise, (46) play passes to the next player and the method loops back to connector (A).
- [0075] If the player is not on Center Stage, then (42) he receives a “Bach Buck”.
- [0076] (44) If the player has accumulated “enough” Bach Bucks (preferably defined as an “octave” or eight notes’ worth), then (45) his piece is moved to “Student” (16), the first place on “Center Stage” (15).
- [0077] (46) Play then passes to the next player and the method loops back to connector (A).
- [0078] (A) Connector A is where all of the turns begin, once play has started.
- [0079] (48) How play proceeds in a given turn depends on whether or not the current player is on “Center Stage”.
- [0080] If the player is not on Center Stage, then play proceeds from rolling the die (31), as described above.
- [0081] If the player is on Center Stage, then further progress depends solely on the player’s answering questions on the “Soloist” or “Maestro” cards, rather than by dice roll. The player starts his turn by picking a “Soloist” or “Maestro” card (49), and then the method continues as before, from step (34), above.
- [0082] Accordingly, it is to be understood that the embodiments of the invention herein described are merely illustrative of the application of the principles of the invention. Reference herein to details of the illustrated embodiments is not intended to limit the scope of the claims, which themselves recite those features regarded as essential to the invention.

What is claimed is:

1. A board game comprising:
 - a) a board, comprising:
 - i) a playing surface having a plurality of playing positions arranged along a path;
 - ii) a sensor mounted to the board, having a sensor input for reading machine-readable indicia and an output;
 - iii) a processor having an input coupled to the output of the sensor;
 - iv) a memory coupled to the processor, comprising a plurality of audio files and a look up table indexing each of the audio files to an identification; and
 - v) an audio processing unit having an input coupled to the processor and an audio output;
 - b) a plurality of cards bearing machine-readable indicia readable by the sensor; and
 - c) a plurality of player tokens for movement along the path; wherein the processor is programmed such that when the sensor reads a machine-readable indicia from a card and an identification corresponding to the indicia is provided to the processor on the output of the sensor, the processor looks up the identification in the look up table and retrieves an audio file from memory based on the index of the identification in the look up table, and the audio file is provided to the input of the audio processing unit, playing the audio file on the audio output.
2. The board game of claim 1 in which the cards further comprise at least one question related to the audio file.

3. The board game of claim 1, in which the machine-readable indicia on the plurality of cards comprise RFID tags, and the sensor is an RFID reader.

4. The board game of claim 1, in which the machine-readable indicia on the plurality of cards comprise optically readable indicia and the sensor is an optical reader.

5. The board game of claim 4, in which the optically readable indicia is a bar code.

6. The board game of claim 4, in which the optically readable indicia is a plurality of punched holes.

7. The board game of claim 1, in which the machine-readable indicia on the plurality of cards comprise a strip of magnetic material having indicia encoded magnetically and the sensor is a magnetic stripe reader.

8. The board game of claim 1, in which the audio files are MP3 files.

9. The board game of claim 1, in which at least part of the memory is in the form of removable memory media.

10. The board game of claim 9, in which the removable memory media is a plug-in ROM containing at least a plurality of audio files and an associated look up table.

11. The board game of claim 1, further comprising a speaker coupled to the audio output of the audio processing unit.

12. The board game of claim 1, further comprising a transmitter coupled to the audio output of the audio processing unit and a receiver having an audio output for connection to a stereo, such that the audio files are transmitted from the audio processing unit to the receiver and a user may listen to the audio file through a stereo connected to the receiver.

13. The board game of claim 1, in which the path comprises a plurality of musical notes arranged on a staff.

14. A method of playing a board game using a plurality of cards bearing questions and machine-readable indicia, a plurality of player tokens, a chance device, a plurality of monetary tokens, and a board comprising a playing surface having a plurality of playing positions arranged along a path; a sensor mounted to the board, having a sensor input for reading machine-readable indicia and an output; a processor having an input coupled to the output of the sensor; a memory coupled to the processor, comprising a plurality of audio files and a look up table indexing each of the audio files to an identification; and an audio processing unit having an input coupled to the processor and an audio output; the method comprising:

- a) a player using the chance device to produce a movement count;
- b) the player moving a player token from a current playing position to a new playing position based on the movement count;
- c) the player choosing a card based on an action indicator at the new playing position;
- d) the player reading at least one question from the card and placing the machine-readable indicia on the card proximate to the sensor;
- e) the sensor reading the machine-readable indicia from the card and providing an identification corresponding to the indicia to the processor on the output of the sensor;

f) the processor looking up the identification in the look up table and retrieving an audio file from memory based on the index of the identification in the look up table and providing the audio file to the input of the audio processing unit;

g) playing the audio file on the audio output;

h) the player answering the at least one question; and

i) if the player answered the at least one question correctly, providing the player with a monetary token.

15. The method of claim 14, in which the board further comprises a center stage area comprising a plurality of spaces on a path from a starting space to an ending space, and the method further comprises, after step (i):

j) if the player has more than a chosen number of monetary tokens, moving the player piece to the starting space on the path in the center stage area;

k) once a player's player piece is in the center stage area, controlling the movement of the player piece along the path in the center stage area solely by success in answering questions from the cards; and

l) ending the game when a player reaches the ending space in the path in the center stage area.

16. The method of claim 14, in which the question on the card chosen in step c is related to the audio file.

17. The method of claim 14, in which the machine-readable indicia on the plurality of cards comprise RFID tags, and the sensor is an RFID reader.

18. The method of claim 14, in which the machine-readable indicia on the plurality of cards comprise optically readable indicia and the sensor is an optical reader.

19. The method of claim 18, in which the optically readable indicia is a bar code.

20. The method of claim 18, in which the optically readable indicia is a plurality of punched holes.

21. The method of claim 14, in which the machine-readable indicia on the plurality of cards comprise a strip of magnetic material having indicia encoded magnetically and the sensor is a magnetic stripe reader.

22. The method of claim 14, in which at least part of the memory is in the form of removable memory media.

23. The method of claim 22, in which the removable memory media is a plug-in ROM containing at least a plurality of audio files and an associated look up table.

24. The method of claim 14, in which the path comprises a plurality of musical notes arranged on a staff.

25. The method of claim 14, in which in addition to the cards bearing questions and machine-readable indicia, the game further comprises a plurality of non-enabled cards bearing questions but no machine-readable indicia, and at least one of the action indicators refers to the non-enabled cards, such that when a player piece is moved to a new playing position having an action indicator referring to non-enabled cards, the player reads the question and skips to step h of the method.

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