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## The Who's Tommy plays a modern pinball

By: Brittany Smith, journalism student

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According to telecommunication, information studies and media assistant professor [Dan Marsh](#), while enrolled in his class last year the first thing that stood out to him about students Matt Bambach, Alex Hatch and Jason Maynard was their work ethic.

He kept them in his mental memory card. So much so that when the [Department of Theatre](#) asked Marsh to help design a pinball game for the upcoming play [The Who's Tommy](#), he knew immediately who would assist him.

"All three understand the game aspect and excel in 3D animation," said Marsh, who has more than 10 years of experience creating computer-animated projects and interactive media. (For more info, watch the [MSU News video](#) or read the [MSU News article](#)).

Since last fall, Marsh and his student team have been working on an updated version of a pinball game that will be used in the play, The Who's Tommy is a musical based on the rock group, The Who's 1969 rock opera album Tommy. The Broadway play is about a young boy who, after witnessing a traumatic event, cannot hear, speak or see. However, he becomes an instant celebrity when he is discovered to have great pinball game talents.

With game systems such as the Wii, that have made a huge impact on today's pop culture, The Department of Theatre joined forces with the [Department of Telecommunication, Information Studies, and Media](#) to create a virtual pinball game that would appeal to a tech-savvy generation.

The game is similar to the Wii, where the player uses hand movements to control the movement of the ball. The camera also follows the pinball wherever it goes. While it may seem simple, the work behind the design is tedious.

Telecommunication graduate student Gyoung Kim created the idea of what the game would look like. Hatch and Maynard, who are both in the game design and development specialization and Bambach, who's in the design specialization, made the idea into reality.

"It's not an easy task. We have to complete this game within a matter of days," said Bambach, a media arts junior. "But it makes it more enjoyable because the deadline is fast approaching."

Even with the short work period, the students are nonetheless happy to be involved with such a major project.

"This is our first time working on a project like this and it is a lot of work," said Maynard, a telecommunication junior. "But this is how the real world is and we're getting that experience now, so I like this. We're getting the job done."


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