What was the first music tech you bought?
I bought the first Linn drum machine, the LM-1. This was in 1979 or 1980 and I bought it specifically for Carly Simon’s Why, which Rodgers produced with his Chic partner, Bernard Edwards. Dancehall reggae was a new art form that had come into my life at that time and I wanted to do our Chic spin on dancehall.

What’s the most expensive tech purchase you’ve made?
Back in the day, when things were over a quarter of a million dollars – and this was in 1983. But it was great and if there was no Synclavier there would be no Fleh-fleh-fleh-fleh on Duran Duran’s The Reflex.

Is there any danger that virtual reality gigs will kill off the concert industry?
No. People like people. Technically, we might be able to connect to billions now things were over a stream but there’s incredible satisfaction in seeing people gathering together with a feeling of expectation, hugging, kissing, getting drunk. It’s exciting and real and a one-time-only event.

What technology has made the biggest difference to you?
Near the room.com

THE BIG RELEASE

MONSTER HUNTER
RISE

Under the bed. In a wardrobe. Cooped up beneath a bridge. What is it with monsters and their cubbyholes? The denizens of Nintendo’s latest exclusive (a PC version is due next year) suffer no such shyness. They’re out front and centre, monstrously waving around like a morris dancer after too much tea.

The name of the game here is to put said beasties back in their box, hence ‘hunter’. The ‘rise’ bit is harder to explain. While the Monster Hunter franchise has been mega in Japan for over a decade, the success of the series on these shores only came rather more recently with 2018’s Monster Hunter: World. Here, once again, the player takes the role of a hunter, tasked with slaying colossal creatures with a variety of weapons and tools. Unlike story-led games such as The Witcher, which shares a similar premise, Capcom’s offering is an all-out arcade romp – and it’s all about upward movement, with that ‘rise’ referring to the fantastically imaginative verticality of the level design and gameplay.

To reach new heights your hunter gets two new perks: a companion called a palamute, which is a mountable dog-like creature that runs all over the place; and the wirebug mechanic, which lets you grapple and dash up mountains and cave walls to your heart’s content. Once mastered, these new additions alter the gameplay, turning an apparent linear level into an explosion of pinball motion and swordplay. Bored of zip-wiring about? Mount the monsters and ride to an open arena or pit them against a fellow jumbo.

More’s the fun, you can enlist up to three real-life mates to help you cull the herd, although there’s no in-game voice chat. Aside from tracking and trapping, stabbing and skinning, there’s lots to do and about, from collecting power-ups to side quests.

Fundamentally, though, Monster Hunter Rise is a great example of a game that appeals super fans and new players alike. It’s been a while since Switch owners got a monster of a game. Saddle up! GARETH MAY

THE VERDICT

A fantastic technical feat with level design, crazy creatures and four-player arcade co-op