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M	T	W	T	F	S	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						
« Dec						Feb »

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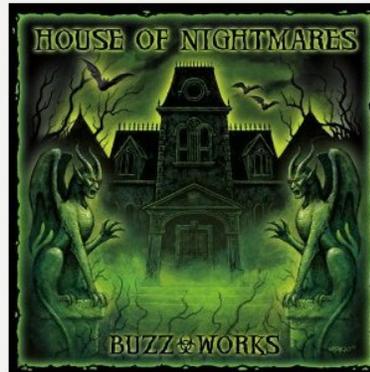
Music to Haunt By: House of Nightmares

By [Weird Jon](#) in [Music](#), [Music To Haunt By](#)

Buzz Works

Official Site

[House of Nightmares](#), Monolith Graphics 2010



While browsing through the ol' Google Analytics page, the sheer number of people who read the [Nox Arcana](#) and [Buzz Works](#) installments of "Music to Haunt By" after searching for "House of Nightmares" convinced me that I simply had to review Buzz Works' newest release.

Given how the above links already give the origins of Buzz Works and its Nox Arcana connection, let's jump straight into the review. The titular track "House of Nightmares" opens with moaning, thunder and theremin-style wailing music. Tolling bells, a chanting male chorus and other sound effects add to the spooky feel created by the occasionally John Carpenter-esque music. Similarly, "Night Closes In" has something of a Carpenter feel to it. The pounding music gives one the sensation of time running out or being chased (perhaps that explains the moaning effects), while the contrasting music box-like chimes add to the sense of unease. I can easily see this track being used in a room setup involving a chase or perhaps even a haunted nursery. The moans that close it out also leads the listener into "Book of the Dead," where moaning and male vocals creepily chant over heavy, pounding music. Haunters should find that this will greatly enhance the feel of a room containing a spooky-looking spellbook prop, especially if it's played so low that it can only be heard when people approach the book. In fact, you can make it even scarier if you use a motion sensor that starts playing the music when people get close enough.

"Darkness Rising" features somewhat dreamy music that is soon overtaken by darker music and the sound of a beating heart. "Dead Time" appropriately begins with a clock ticking, then strings and pounding piano notes are combined with wordless female vocals. The harpsichord is used to great effect here, and it further adds to the sense of danger and the otherworldly. As an added bonus, this track's length makes it ideal for looping. "The Ruins" starts off softly and then gradually builds up. The whispering and music definitely makes you feel like you're in an ancient, haunted place. There's a rain or fire effect that can be heard at points as well. I personally would have preferred it to not be used, but it doesn't hurt the track. It's just something to keep in mind if you want to use it for a haunted room or crypt scene. "The Forgotten Crypt" uses a steady deep note with alternating light, chime-like notes and pounding notes layered on top. The numerous scary sound effects are only icing on the cake. Despite the name, it can be used in many haunt scenes and the light touches could let it work in a haunted nursery

scene.

The medium, pounding buildup of "Well of Souls" reminds me of a rock song starting, but the rest of the track is eerie rather than rocking. There's also a feel of danger and movement felt amongst the pounding notes, which allow the track to be looped for use in more than just a scene involving a [bottomless pit effect](#). "The Descent" has a light industrial feel to this, although the female vocals lend an unearthly feel to it. I think the prior track conveyed a sense of descent better, but this track would work wonders in a haunted factory or boiler room setting. "The Summoning" has a perfect spooky opening that just screams horror. Breathing and moans, followed by thunder, precede a spoken chant that summons the forces of darkness. The chant, presumably read by Joseph Vargo, can also be found in the CD's enclosed booklet. Pounding music and heavy horns signal the coming of the "Ancient Evil" summoned by the previous track. Moans and the occasional burst of chanting add to the feel of a powerful being rushing into our world.

"The Black Abyss" has great eerie, otherworldly opening music and sounds, plus some monstrous groans and dripping. It's perfect for looping in cave scenes and bottomless pit setups. "Shadow Dwellers" starts with soft, steady pounding notes with lighter material and creepy sounds layered on top. However, it then goes into heavier pounding music (including some guitar and harpsichord work) and tolling bells. It is bound to evoke the image of something creeping around while on the prowl. The rock-style opening of "Bridge Between Worlds" does have an otherworldly feel thanks to its sound effects and interesting musical variations, but it might not be to everyone's tastes. I can easily see this working in a vortex tunnel. Slow, pounding music and effects make "On the Prowl" live up to its name, wherein bursts of [Halloween](#) theme-style guitars alternate with heavy piano work.

"Devil's Night" has pounding notes and noise that fall somewhere between tribal drums and an "industrial" sound. Naturally, these are paired with moaning chants and spooky sounds. The bells and female vocals play off each other especially well. The distorted chimes and heavy sound effects of "The Nether Realm" transports listeners to another world filled with danger. The bubbling-like effects that pop up at times might seem odd, but could benefit some setups, such as a vortex tunnel leading to a room with lava effects. In "Hallow's Eve," effective organ work leads to a soft harpsichord and even softer moans. But the moans increase and pounding notes join in soon, as do the bells. The pounding notes of "Unleashed" increase and decrease to create impression of something being freed and chasing someone (or something). Heavy piano notes are used occasionally, while moaning chants add to the bells and other effects. It could be used in a variety of settings, but I think playing it can add an extra "oomph" to the final scene of a haunted attraction or put some additional excitement to a darkened hallway.

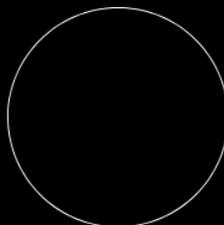
This CD has cemented my conviction that Buzz Works is not simply Nox Arcana working under another name. The musical presence of Jeff Hartz, both in terms of playing and writing abilities, are undeniable and set both this and [Zombie Influx](#) apart from the (also awesome) style of Nox Arcana. That said, Joseph Vargo does retain enough of that style so that Buzz Works albums will still appeal to the Nox Arcana fanbase.

House of Nightmares is a definite "must have" for both haunters and those who like to play scary music and effects while handing out candy on Halloween. Were it not for a few minor details in select tracks, I would say this would be the perfect CD for use in any haunt setup. That said, it is pretty darn close and it's easy to program a CD or .mp3 player to skip over any tracks that don't fit the mood you're trying to create. I should also stress that these albums exist because their artists have set out to tell a story, not to make haunted house soundtrack CDs.

Special thanks to Monolith Graphics for the review copy!

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 [Buzz Works](#), [House of Nightmares](#), [Jeff Hartz](#), [Joseph Vargo](#), [Music to Haunt By](#), [sound effects](#)



Weird Jon



Music to Game By - Gravedigger's Local 16 on *January 4, 2012 at 5:16 pm* #

[...] House of Nightmares is the group's second and most recent album, whose submit matter is perfect for both haunted house-themed adventures and Lovecraftian games. The titular track "House of Nightmares" is great for use while starting gaming sessions and "Night Closes In" gives players the sensation of time running out or being chased. The music box-like chimes also allow use in a haunted nursery scenario. In "Book of the Dead," the moaning and male vocals make it perfect for use with encounters with evil cultists or when someone examines an evil spellbook. Sound effects like a beating heart and ticking clock play large roles in "Darkness Rising" and "Dead Time" respectively. "The Ruins" makes you feel like you're exploring an ancient, haunted place during a storm, while "The Forgotten Crypt" can be used in many a spooky setting. [...]

Music to Haunt By: The Dark Tower - Gravedigger's Local 16 on *June 19, 2012 at 11:19 pm* #

[...] reviewed them for this series (unless you count the band members' participation in Buzz Works as Nox Arcana albums). This is the first time I'll be reviewing a Nox Arcana album [...]

Tuesday uEtsy: Buzz-Works - Gravedigger's Local 16 on *August 14, 2012 at 8:03 am* #

[...] has been written about on this site, as they're the force behind the Buzz-Works albums (thanks to the involvement [...])

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