



- Current**
- ▶ Front Page
  - ▶ Latest News
  - ▶ Subscribe
  - ▶ Advertise in Legends

- Past Issues**
- ▶ Music Reviews [V/A] [#-F] [G-M] [N-Z]
  - ▶ Music Interviews
  - ▶ DVD/Film Reviews
  - ▶ Fiction & Horror
  - ▶ Fantasy & Sci-Fi
  - ▶ Rants & Essays
  - ▶ Book Reviews
  - ▶ Departments
  - ▶ Past Issues
  - ▶ Search Legends

- Legends Store**
- ▶ Legends Gear
  - ▶ Subscribe
  - ▶ Advertise in Legends

- Legends Info**
- ▶ FAQs
  - ▶ Press Kit (PDF)
  - ▶ Banners to Link
  - ▶ Legal Policies
  - ▶ Contact & Credits



Beer 4 Pan  
Click 2  
Contribute

## CD Review

### Nox Arcana—"Darklore Manor"

By Ray Van Horn, Jr.

For those of you with any firm appreciation for the classics, close your eyes a moment and remember the first time you saw Bela Lugosi in front of you, his foreboding vampire's grin in response to the werewolf's howl as he near-whispers in ghoulish delight, "Children of the night...what music they make!" Now that's where it's at, friends. If you are cosmopolitan enough to favor Lugosi to Bloodrayne, then you'll undoubtedly appreciate the danse macabre of Nox Arcana's **Darklore Manor**.



Former Midnight Syndicate(1) mastermind Joseph Vargo pairs off with a new partner-in-crime, William Piotrowski, and the 21-song litany of lament they orchestrate is pure Goth. Not your ordinary mascara and vinyl-clad Vlad-fad Goth. The blackened compositions Vargo and Piotrowski have written are irredeemable but gorgeous, dreary but exquisite. These friars of fugue offer ne'er a feel good moment on **Darklore Manor** unless somnambulism does it for you, because Nox Arcana sleepwalks you through its cheerless horror house that will either leave you intoxicated or deadened and they undoubtedly take satisfaction in either case.

Nox Arcana's frozen narration of its timeless muse, a spooked manor, isn't your Disney-saccharined haunted house, nor is it a splatterfest rendition of *House on Haunted Hill*. It's more akin to Vincent Price's version of the former with perhaps more serious implications. Nox Arcana doesn't pussyfoot around like the Creature Feature selection of the week. Tracks like *Threshold of the Dead*, *Phantom Procession*, *Remnants*, *Belladonna*, *The Forgotten*, *Sanctuary of Shadows* and *Séance* deliver a refined creepiness probably best aligned with the *Dark Shadows* TV series than any of the aforementioned media comparables.

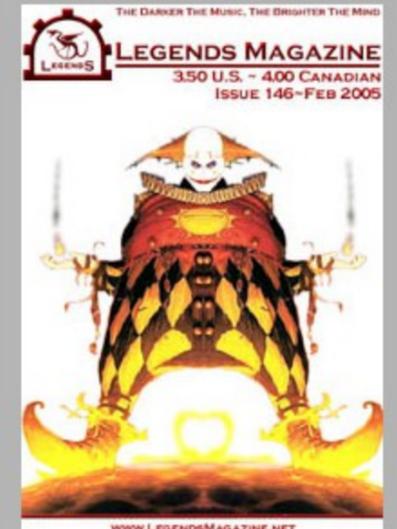
It's not necessarily the story written inside the CD jacket that will give you the shivers; it's tame (and redundant) compared to the music symbolizing the story. The same way King Diamond made **Abigail** and **Them** so compelling with his death metal incantations is the same way Nox Arcana packs a noxious punch to its storyline with ghastly keys, synths and pulseless voices. When you've reached *The Grande Hall*, you'll feel like you're there with its chilly sublimation. Not since Hammer has an ominous Gothic sensation been so effectively produced. In other words, Nox Arcana realigns Van Helsing in harmony with Peter Cushing's interpretation, not Hugh Jackman's.

For all the slam-bang special effects and computer wizardry the movie industry has catapulted at its apathetic new millennium audiences, nothing has been able to capture the gut-wrenching visceral terror of the subliminal. In today's gimme-gimme impatient society, we're accustomed to having the goods delivered immediately; not only in our ordinary lives, but in our entertainment. How often do we switch stations if a movie fails to propel our state of inactivity into overdrive within the first five minutes? In other words, the art of suspense is lost in our Starbucks-swigging society. Nox Arcana keeps its tone subversive and this is a lost art. You make a pact to give Nox Arcana fifty minutes of your time; you make a pact to feel a sense of prolonged soul raking as they guide you through what is certainly a given at the front with its terror house story. But what you're unprepared for is to acutely realize the story. If they tell you you're not leaving, you're not leaving!

When you hear *Music Box* you're going to enjoy a brief allayment, as if a sense of normalcy has returned, but keep in mind there's nine more tracks to go and by the time **Darklore Manor** concludes with *Resurrected*, you will want to proverbially run like hell, put the CD back into its case and get away from it. Where Vargo and Piotrowski went inside their twisted minds to produce such a soulless recording will leave you perplexed.

The Dukes of Dirge, Robert Smith and Morrissey combined, can't produce something as hapless and utilitarian as **Darklore Manor**; not even on their most self-deprecating days. I reiterate as a disclaimer: Nox Arcana will affect you. The pretense comes off like a cult gimmick, but it is more in line with the occult, which is not to accuse Vargo and Piotrowski of heresy or Satanism. Whatever floats their boat. The accusation for the record will be to say that Nox Arcana went somewhere deep and dark to produce such a convincingly frigid body of work.

ISSUE 146  
February, 2005



## Depts.

Horrorscopes

The Mean Little Column - "Welcome Back O&A"

## MUSIC REVIEWS

Nox Arcana—"Darklore Manor"

Aureate—"Metamorphosis"

Haiku—"Synthese"

Nick Grey & the Random Orchestra  
—"Regal Daylight"

Grundik + Slava—"...for Electronics and Birds"

Hollydrift—"Waiting For the Tiller"

Written in Ashes—"Written in Ashes"

Lupercalia—"Florilegium"

Namnambulu—"Expansion"

Love Alien—"In the Waves"

Ghost Parade—"Dying Breed""

The Endless—"...And I'm the Queen of the Moon"

Avaritia—"Pulse"

The Collisions—"Talk is the New Action"

Croc Shop—"Croc\_Shop.SEA"

Infrastructure—"Salt the Earth"

Mortis—"The Grudge"

Live Not on Evil—"Next Time Nail it Shut"

## OFF THE SHELF

From a Buick 8

Download E-HardCopy

