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CD Review

Nox Arcana – “Necronomicon”

By Marcus Pan

I just wrote up three thrash CDs, the last of which was a very powerfully brash black metal album. I'm not much of a black metal fan, so that was very hard for me to do. So I have no choice but to calm down my senses, chill out and let my imagination take me somewhere softer. So what do I do? I put on a CD dedicated to the Elder Gods of evil, darkness and terror. A tribute to the Cthulhu Mythos by Nox Arcana. So much for softer.



Friends of Midnight Syndicate and creators of some of the best gothic soundtrack style music in...well anywhere, really. This time Nox Arcana, known for taking us to places like abandoned and haunted asylums and castles, bring us with them into a much older and ancient place. Titled **Necronomicon**, it takes on one of the classic literary hoaxes of all time by H.P. Lovecraft(1). If you are even remotely a horror or science fiction fan you've heard of the gods of the **Necronomicon**. Names like Cthulhu, Yog-Sothoth and Dagon bring back memories of some of the best horror ever penned or played.

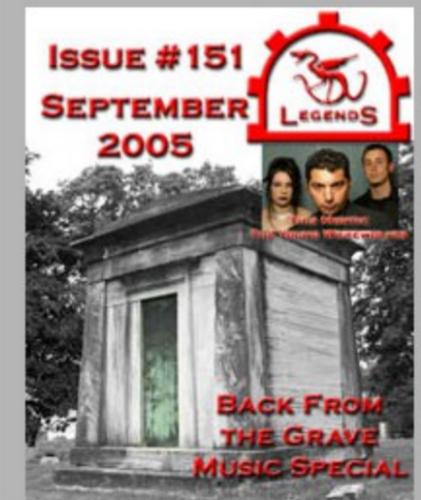
I wouldn't trust a project of this magnitude to anyone other than the Joseph Vargo and William Piotrowski duo (except Midnight Syndicate, but they just did the **AD&D Soundtrack**(2) so it's Nox Arcana's turn). The CD jacket is in and of itself a work of art with a short diary entry from Simon Barrington, an archaeologist who in 1939 discovers the original **Necronomicon**, penned by Abdul Alhazred in his own blood, deep in the bowels of a tomb buried near Damascus. In closing he beseeches the keeper of the original book to destroy it, lest it fall into the wrong hands and bring about our downfall as a civilization.

The music describes the creatures and laments of mankind as the Elder Gods once again lay claim to the earth after Yog Sothoth opens the gate and the great priest Cthulhu awakens them from slumber. Done in their well known soundtrack instrumental style, classically arranged and wonderfully visionary. *Mythos* opens **Necronomicon** with a Vincent Price like reading of the old gods and their banishment to outer realms. *The Nameless City* marches us to the edges of evil where *Alhazred's Vision* shows us the depressing horror that awaits mankind.

The dark drums of *Ancient Shadows* awakens the shadows of old. The readings continue, as on track 6 we are introduced to *Azathoth*. The readings' text are included in the CD booklet as well. Others we'll hear about are *Nylarthotep*, *Dagon*, *Yog-Sothoth* and, the most famous of all, *Cthulhu*. *Eldritch Rites* is a brooding masterpiece wrapped around the soft speaking of an elder priest as he chants a **Necronomicon** ritual and is one of the most frightening pieces of music ever pressed, even with it's slow speed. The darkness that surrounds **Necronomicon** as a whole is truly mind numbing.

The Hunter of the Dark speeds up a bit with moving synth work and *The Awakening's* rhythm brings us further along on a quicker pace and opens with the famous phrase: "That is not dead which can eternal lie, and with strange aeons even death may die." *Cthulhu Rising* is also a great track with heavy drum movements against a dark brooding melody that could easily be a string instrument as much as a wind. It pulses to a powerful climax and leads into the closing four minutes of *The Great Old Ones*, dominated by tympani drum pounds and slow moving orchestration with a violin hiding in the back as mankind may some day find themselves hiding from Azathoth and all of Elder Gods' sinister machinations.

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Depts.

Foreword

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Mindless Self Indulgence—"You'll Rebel to Anything"

Faetal—"[sic]"

Divinity Destroyed—"Eden in Ashes"

Ulver—"Blood Inside"

Infinity Interrupt—"Hybrid Still Life"

Bowling For Soup—"A Hangover You Don't Deserve"

Chiasm—"Relapse"

Compest—"Kryptozoologie"

Einzelheit 003—"Ich Habe Nur Noch..."

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Falling You—"Touch"

Ikon—"Destroying the World to Save It"

Les Anges de la Nuit—"Ruins of Victory"

Mandrel—"The Terrible"

Horna—"Envaatnags Eflos Solf Esgantaavne"

Epica—"We Will Take You With Us"

Impaled Nazarene—"Death Comes in 26 Selected Pieces"

Ritual Carnage—"I, Infidel"