

LOST THEMES

John Carpenter

Sacred Bones Records

For as long as John Carpenter has been creating fantastic horror films, he's also been creating fantastic horror film music. Now, along with his son Cody and godson Daniel Davies (who helped score *I, Frankenstein*), he's created a new masterpiece with *Lost Themes*, his first ever album of all-original music – a soundtrack for movies that don't exist.

There's certainly an entire film's worth of suspense and drama on the album. It seems that

each cut is driven by some version of a heartbeat, from steady to scared, rendered on synth or drums. Add in additional instruments, such as guitar, and the result is a consistently tense texture.

Carpenter's signature electronic minimalism forms the core of *Lost Themes*, however, he often breaks from that mould. You can hear the influence of classical composers in the stately piano opener "Vortex," while the tendrils of Goblin's iconic *Suspiria* score show up in "Mystery." The muscular guitars in "Fallen" and "Wraith" call to mind the action heroics of some of the director's early efforts, while "Purgatory" and "Night" can inspire genuine terror with their chilling atmosphere. There's even a delirious haunted house organ found in both "Obsidian" and "Domain." The standout track, however, is "Abyss;" it's resplendent melody glides along, taking the listener on a dangerous mission. What makes *Lost Themes* tower over similar releases is a continuous emotional undercurrent that fires the imagination.

The deluxe digital edition comes with six remixes, including Zola Jesus' version of "Night," which adds glacial female vocals; ohGr's dance-floor revamp of "Wraith"; and Silent Servant's grinding interpretation of "Vortex." Composer JG Thirlwell wraps "Abyss" in symphonic synths, while "Fallen" is radically re-interpreted by both Bill Kouligas, who crafts something buzzing and ambient, and Blanck Mass, who turns the song into an entirely new beast with swirling crescendos of doom-flavoured beats.

Electronic horror soundtrack music is arguably more popular today than ever. With *Lost Themes*, Carpenter reminds us he's still in charge.

LESS LEE MOORE

