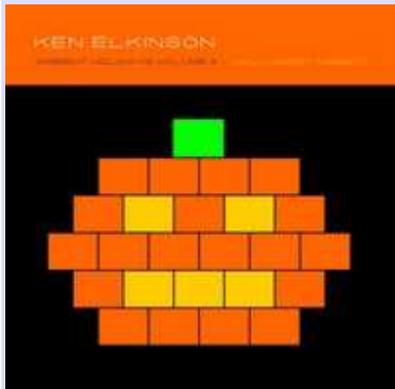


Games Gazette

Ken Elkinson creates sounds for the occasion. This CD, his third for Holidays, is for Halloween.



AMBIENT HALLOWEEN

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The Tracks: Below is a list of the tracks on this CD and my thoughts and impressions as I listen to them.

Apparition:

A haunting selection of organ chords with echo and reverb providing a ghostly back and forth breathing effect like a purposeful icy wind unsure of which direction to take.

Fear:

The whirling echoes in your mind as darkness falls and you realise you are all alone in this dark foreboding place ... or are you ?

Graveyard:

As you hide in the cold stillness of the decrepit burial ground your ears pick up on the slightest sound - you didn't know that insects and ground-dwellers could make so much noise.

Phantom:

The Phantom moves on and with the wind, rapidly changing pace and direction, never standing still long enough to be seen, only felt.

Cauldron:

Not what I would expect from a piece with this title. The wind chimes sound to tinny for my impression of a cauldron which I think of as an iron pot over an open flame. The swirling sounds conjure up visualisations of a magical storm which could be contained in such a cauldron.

Haunt:

Haunt - the Verb - the place where a Ghost regularly manifests itself. Haunt - the Noun - a place frequently revisited, as in "my old haunts". Continues the reverberating whirling theme associated with this CD. For me this is too loud, as a Haunt, in my opinion, should either bring back memories (as in the "noun") or it should be soft and eerie as a Ghost (the "verb").

Skull:

The agonising moment in time when you realise that the buzzing chainsaw in your Skull that is sending you into delirium is real.

Tomb:

Close your eyes and for a while you can imagine this being played in the background as you and your band of adventurers descend into an a recently located and opened Pharaoh's burial chamber. Then like so many searches it yields nothing and you leave empty-handed.

Trick:

The opening of this track sounds like the beginning of a piece by Enigma (Michael Cretu's Germanic neo-Goth classical-rock) but the Trick is that here there aren't the haunting harmonic voices and booming beat of the Rumanian's drum.

Treat:

A more hallowed and peaceful compliment to "Trick".

Ghoul:

A Ghoul can be a Vampire's companion (for feeding off) or perhaps someone who bites the heads off bats or chickens. Either way they or their actions are unpleasant, hence "ghoulish". This piece is too soft, almost comforting, with just a hint of eerie. One wonders if it's title is derived simply because it fits with the CD's theme ?

Blood:

I have to admit that I expected a pulse-like sound and this track proves that you shouldn't have preconceived ideas. The whirling organ, the wind chimes, the swirling sounds and the crackling deep

voices and the creepy distant whistle all sound thoroughly dramatic, which I can understand Blood could be perceived to be.

My overall thoughts are that this isn't a CD you would just put on to play - obviously - nor is it one I would use for background to a role-play session (as I have done in the past with Midnight Syndicate). However if you celebrate Halloween, as we used to before we moved, by hanging bats and witches outside your house and decorating your doors and windows with ghosts, spooks, spiders and cobwebs, then this is a CD you would have playing through outdoor speakers to accompany your decorations and entice Trick or Treaters to your lair.