

“PARANORMAN” directors talk Jon Brion’s soundtrack

Written by Michael Gingold

Tuesday, 14 August 2012 11:01



One of the many achievements of PARANORMAN, the terrific stop-motion supernatural film opening Friday (see review [here](#)) is the evocative score by composer/songwriter/producer Jon Brion. It hits CD today, and the movie’s creators spoke with Fango about Brion’s contributions.

PARANORMAN is Brion’s first animated feature score, following the Paul W.S. Anderson films HARD EIGHT, MAGNOLIA and PUNCH-DRUNK LOVE and comedies ranging from ETERNAL SUNSHINE OF THE SPOTLESS MIND to STEP BROTHERS and THE OTHER GUYS. He was part of PARANORMAN even before he knew it, as Chris Butler, who scripted that movie and directed it with Sam Fell, recalls. “Way back when, as I was first writing it,” Butler tells Fango, “I storyboarded the first couple of pages of the script myself just for the hell of it, to see if the story would work. I happened to slap on a bit of temp music from ETERNAL SUNSHINE OF THE SPOTLESS MIND, and it stuck! We ended up using it the whole way through. It was always in our heads: ‘Jon Brion would be perfect for this.’”



“We used a lot of his stuff as temp music for the actual movie while we were making it,” Fell adds, “and it definitely brought a distinct flavor. There’s a dimension to the film where it has this funny, low-key, naturalistic, zombie-movie feeling, which I felt as soon as I arrived, and I think it was because of that music playing with it already.”

“It was great when we first started talking about who the composer could be,” Butler says, “and the first name we said was Jon Brion, and he was really up for it.” Fell continues, “He’d been thinking for a little while that he wanted to get into animation, and had been looking for that

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project. Happily, we were the right one, I guess. Using a lot of his temp helped! He’s a mad genius, really. He’s committed to finding unique and real sounds, and it totally fits our stop-motion process, which is also completely unique and handmade. He’s only reluctant to use standard synthesizers and standard methods. If you go down to his studio, it’s full of crazy old equipment from the lost years of sound recording. The way he records and processes things...”

“He’s pretty unique,” Butler says. “It was a real pleasure getting to watch him work.”

The PARANORMAN soundtrack CD is being issued by Relativity Music Group, with a retail price of \$12.99; it’s also available for MP3 download at Amazon.com. Below is the complete track listing:

1. Zombie Attack in the Eighties
2. Norman at the Piano/Main Title
3. Norman’s Walk
4. Alvin Attacks
5. Enter Neil/Mr. P/Ghost Walk/Ghost Dog
6. Goodbye Mr. P/Historic Drama/Grounded/Heavy Visitation
7. Alvin Again/Scary Bedroom
8. Norman Tries to Keep It Cool/ Grandma’s Got Your Back
9. Moth Rock
10. The Dead Shall Be Raised
11. Zombies Attack
12. People Attack
13. Are We There Yet?
14. Aggie Fights
15. Resolution
16. Oh, and One More Thing