

Welcome to The Instrumental Adventures of Doctor X! They say that a self-taught musician has an idiot for a teacher, and that's true if you decide you're going to be a musician and then refuse to learn from a music teacher. But some people start fooling around with a guitar as a teenager and then realize ten years later that they're a musician, like it or not, with lots of musical knowledge but also lots of good and bad habits that are pretty hard to break. Likewise, I'm a self-taught recording engineer, though I've had a lot of "teachers" via magazine articles or through the wisdom of people in my life who've shared the same hobby. I also regularly recorded orchestras as part of my day job in the early eighties in an environment where they'd just give you the equipment and hope you could figure it out.

I started recording my own music in 1978, overdubbing tracks between two stereo cassette decks, moving up to 4-track and then 8-track cassettes and digital portastudios before finally hitting computer recording at 24-bits in 2002. Everything in this collection before 2002 was sourced from stereo masters, the multitracks being long lost due to extinct tape formats; the rest are the original 24-bit masters or new remixes from the 24-bit multitracks.

Probably only 10% of my recording experiments from 1978 through 1985 were instrumentals, though I've always liked the abstract nature of instrumental music. A song with words is always "about" something, whereas an instrumental piece isn't "about" anything, which can be very refreshing. "Visual Music" was my first collection of strictly instrumental music, recorded in 1986 on a 4-track cassette portastudio and mixed to a stereo cassette deck with dbx noise reduction. Five tracks are collected here. "Flight" and "Train" are 2026 re-recordings; the former because I couldn't play the guitar part very well back then, and the latter because the 1986 recording sounded very harsh and tinny. The other three are sourced from the original dbx stereo cassette master. I added a deep bass to "Om" in 2026 because it really needed it.

The next year, I bought a cheap VHS copy of "The Phantom Of The Opera" (1925) with Lon Chaney. This was the early days of home video, and I was so excited to own a copy of this film. When I popped it on, I discovered it was silent. Mind you, I knew it was a silent film, but this tape was *silent* - no soundtrack whatsoever. It was boring to watch, and it gave me the idea of doing a soundtrack for it on the 4-track portastudio. It was a fun learning experience, but you really couldn't sync things up with any accuracy, and the duplicated video quality was even worse than the cheap VHS. Although the current Lowbudget bluray of the film is visually stunning with gorgeous sound, I wish I had

saved one of those VHS tapes from 1987 just to see how far we've come.

The next batch of instrumentals were recorded in 1994 when Glenn Williams and I did the "Guilty Pleasures" sessions in 1994. Six of these pieces are offered here. We had an 8-track cassette portastudio that sounded pretty damn good, and it was synced to Opcode's StudioVision, a MIDI sequencer that ran on a Mac (you couldn't yet record audio on home computers at that time). StudioVision, when coupled with a MIDI interface, could sync up all the synthesizers and drum machines you could get ahold of. All you needed was an audio mixer to tie them all together and feed the stereo output to one of those new-fangled DAT machines - which were state-of-the-art at the time. It was a huge leap in quality for us. (One of these tracks, "And Good Luck To You All", is a re-recording from 2026; the 1994 version had a special effect on the voices that unintentionally made them completely disappear when heard through a mono speaker! I couldn't figure out how to "undo" it, so I thought it would be easier to just re-record it again.)

In 2002 I decided to do an abridged version of "Nosferatu" for fun. I had seen the movie a thousand times and I still love it, but I just wanted to be able to get through it without all the long intertitles explaining what vampires are. The result was a one-hour version, tinted, toned, and sometimes layering one scene over another. It was so good I decided to put it out on disc.

"Speechless" was a 2003 album of music that used pre-recorded vocal samples to enhance electronic beat-based music. The final third of the album was a set of ambient pieces titled "The Chillroom", some of which are presented here. The album, in particular one live solo performance of it, introduced me to Hayim Kobi, who formed Chillgroove with me the following year along with Kerry Maxwell. After the performance, Hayim said that he'd like to work with me. I told him I was stuck on a soundtrack for "The Cabinet of Doctor Caligari", but he was welcome to take over for me. In the end, he did a smashing job of it. Presented here are the bits that either I wrote or that I started and he finished. (I have a sneaking suspicion that the "Ending" piece is mostly Hayim, but I can't remember.)

"Ambient Hours" from 2009 was a three-hour collection of short ambient pieces inspired by the Omnisphere software synth from Spectrasonics - a huge leap in my sound palette that's still my main instrument today. I'd touch a key on my new toy, and the most marvelous sounds would come forth. Before I knew it I had hours of short improvisations, so I put them together in a three-disc boxed set. I then used the synth to

record a soundtrack for a mashup of two silent versions of "The Fall Of The House Of Usher", both coincidentally from 1928.

Ever since I did "The Phantom..." back in 1987, I'd wanted to add music to the 1930 "Dracula" with Bela Lugosi. (Philip Glass beat me to it, but his string quartet felt more like it belonged in an Eadward Gorey animated version of the story than the Lugosi film.) Later I discovered that Universal had prepared a silent version of the film for theaters not yet equipped for sound, though no such prints survived the decades. But in 2010 Philip J. Riley published his book "Lon Chaney as Dracula 1930" (Bear Manor Media) that contained, among other things, the censor's record of all the intertitles used for that silent print (p. 97). The temptation was too great, and I set about preparing a silent version of Dracula, which will be released on January 1st of 2027 when the film enters the public domain.

The inspiration for my 1987 "Phantom" soundtrack had come from the Giorgio Morodor re-release of "Metropolis" (1926) in 1984, which I had seen at full volume in the Coolidge Corner Theater. The film has been completely restored since then and is now twice as long as the Morodor version. But I kind of missed the shorter Morodor version and the synth-heavy music, which fits the story well, so in 2019 I made "Metropolis: Homage To Morodor" as a labor of love. It's just a tad longer than the Morodor version, has lots of color tinting (something that Fritz Lang *never* did to his films), and shakes one's booty. I also started making long-form abstract videos with ambient music to put on the telly in the background while relaxing. The first two such discs were "Slow Burn" (2019) and "Dense Growth" (2020). Short excerpts appear in this collection.

When Criterion released "Haxan: Witchcraft Through The Ages" on blu ray, it contained a rare and beautiful print of the full 1922 film, as well as the more common, shorter version from 1968 with a soundtrack by Jean Luc-Ponty et al, and featuring narration by none other than William S. Burroughs. I had always loved the Burroughs version, so I made a soundtrack for the full length version using Burroughs' voice, which I extracted from the 1968 soundtrack. The music represented here doesn't include the Burroughs narration; without the context of the film, it makes no sense and can be a bit jarring.

By the time I did the next two long form ambient videos, COVID had hit. "Flow" (2020) used the sound of a brook as a way to focus on breathing and putting the awful pandemic out of one's mind. "Thursday Morning 3 am" (2020) uses a surround recording I made of a thunderstorm that occurred early one Thursday morning. I put a 4-channel ZOOM recorder on a mic stand on the back porch for an hour and let it record

the rain and the soft thunder; at that hour, the usual sound of traffic - rare anyway in 2020 - hadn't yet started up. During COVID, I also did soundtracks to "Der Golem" in 2020 and "Hands Of Orlac" in 2022; in between were two more long-form abstract videos, "Red Woods" (2020) and "Tidal Forces" (2021). My music enhanced "Der Golem", but it couldn't save "Hands Of Orlac", which is really not that great a film. (It was remade as "Mad Love" in 1935 with Peter Lorre and a completely different, and faster, script.) I still like the soundtrack, though.

I think that, out of everything, my 2023 soundtrack to "Faust" and its blu ray presentation is what I'm most proud of. The movie is absolutely wonderful and was an international hit when it was released in 1926. The music seemed to flow from my fingers to the keyboard.

In 2024 I put together a 2-disc set of Avant Garde films, including "Un Chien Andalou", "Blood Of A Poet", and "The Fall Of The House Of Usher", all on blu ray for the first time. The set also included two Man Ray films, "Le Retour à la raison" and "Emak-Bakia" accompanied by new soundtracks. I went for a musique concrète vibe and tried to follow the scenes in the film - as much as is possible with a Man Ray film. The results were stunning when we watched them one night outside in surround-sound on the big screen!

I hope you have as much fun listening to this music as I had making it.

- Tim Casey March, 2026