

## SPOOKY TUNES

So, it's Halloween again and time to party with the ghosts and ghouls. And to party, you need the perfect creepy playlist, so let those spooky tunes fill the gloom! Here's a selection from the archive... just how many can you remember?

The obvious place to start has got to be *Ghostbusters* by Ray Parker Jr. Actually released in June 1984, the song was a global phenomenon with the 12" single outselling the 7" edit version in the UK. The song was No 1 in the US, and No 2 in the UK, and hit the top of most charts across the world. Admit it, we all sang it!

As a DJ back in the 1980s, I would overlay the ending of *Ghostbusters* with the atmospheric *Sense of Doubt* by David Bowie. I wonder how many of you will know this Bowie recording – it was an instrumental recorded in 1977 for Bowie's '*Heroes*' album. Mainly recorded in Berlin, Bowie expert Nicholas Pegg described the piece as a doomy, minimalistic piece composed within a four-note piano line. It features a chilling crescendo of strange organs and mellotrons being played by Bowie and Brian Eno, sending shudders down the spine. Bowie and Eno places us in a gothic cemetery at midnight, spied upon by arching motifs of sleeping angels, eagles and gargoyles.

Out of Bowie's haunting comes Michael Jackson's opus, *Thriller*. 'Darkness falls across the land, the midnight hour is close at hand...' I recall seeing the *Thriller* video at the cinema in 1983. The fifth single to be released from the album of the same name, the song was written by Rob Temperton. Rob had been the keyboard player in the 70s disco band, Heatwave, and had written some of their biggest hits including *Boogie Nights* and *Always and Forever*.

Out of the Jackson mist, comes *Bat Out of Hell* by Meat Loaf. Surely, one of rock's finest moments and I dare say some of you will know all the words to this classic? Running at 9 minutes, this embarrassing "dad dance" song has birthed so many air-guitar renditions by souls dressed as Warlocks, Frankenstein, or Dracula. My Halloween dancefloors were no exception. This song seems to bring out the best and the worst in our middle-aged crisis! Released in 1977, the album (allegedly) has outsold every other album across the world, but it wasn't all plain sailing. Having been rejected by several record companies, eventually Cleveland Records took a leap of faith and the rest they say is history. Amazing how many of us know how to kick start and ride a motorcycle with extended handlebars similar to a children's chopper bike!

Once the dads have suitably cleared the dancefloor, it's time to play the ultimate idiot song, *Monster Mash*. First released in August 1962, yes even before The Beatles, the song was originally banned by the BBC for being "too morbid." Cult status brought about a renaissance and a relenting by the BBC for in 1973 it finally became the hit record we all remember and love. One for the "scientist" in all of us, Bobby Pickett and his Crypt Pickers take us through the door and out into a graveyard full of howling dogs, banging coffins, Dracula, and his son Wolf Man.

Be afraid, be very afraid, cos next up I would play *The Witch Queen of New Orleans*. I'm sure you all know the song as a bit of American Glam, but for 10pts, can you name the band that recorded the song. The mantra of the song that is lost in the world of misheard lyrics, ' Marie La-Voodoo-Veau, she'll put a spell on you' ...time up, Redbone were the band... Nope, never heard of them either, but they were big in the states alongside The Eagles, Bread, The Band, and America.

Taking us rudely out of Redbone's undoubted Halloween prayer is, at the top of his voice, 'I am the god of hell fire...' yes Arthur Brown. The man who set the Top of the Pops studio alarms off and summoned the Shepherd's Bush Fire Brigade – not sure that is true or just myth, but either way what has been interesting down the years has been the amount of weird contortions expressed on the dancefloor by, yes, you've guessed it, the returning "dad dancers" complete with pint of ale in hand... Not my idea of fun, especially watching all this from the relative safety of the DJ booth! One evening in a pub in Potters Bar, my nephew (who was also a DJ) and I, along with the rest of the Halloween partygoers, witnessed a brave chap taking his shirt off and really going for it! It ended in his eviction onto the street as he decided to light a rolled up newspaper for the finale of the song!!!

One of the surprising Halloween successes in terms of music, has been the playing of *The Eve of the War* by Jeff Wayne from his *War of the Worlds*. I used to remix the original Richard Burton voice-over with a disco mix in the 1980s and would segue this into the Tavares classic song, *Heaven Must Be Missing An Angel*. And after the disaster of Arthur Brown, so my dancefloor would fill again and the songs would just keep on coming... *Time Warp*; Stevie Wonder's *Superstition*; The Eagles *Witchy Woman*; and Cliff's *Devil Woman*... sorry, got that last one wrong, I meant to have said Duran Duran's *Hungry Like The Wolf*.

Apologies if I haven't mentioned your Halloween soundtrack song, but hopefully as we head toward the Night of Fright, you will be suitably informed as to some great sounds – whether you're going to listen to a *Symphony for the Devil* (Rolling Stones) or choose to *Dance with the Devil* (Cosy Powell), there is something for every taste...

Ah, if you really want to scare everyone and send them home after an exhausting haunting, there is no better piece of music than Albinoni's *Adagio in G Minor* – a funereal favourite now thankfully replaced at most ceremonies by a selection of the deceased's favourite music... Once heard, this eerie classical piece will stay in your mind for ages... try it and defy it!

Happy Halloween!

p.s. A couple of Watford Writers colleagues suggested *Ghost Town* by The Specials; and *There's A Ghost In My House* by R.Dean Taylor – excellent, let the music play!!!