JOHN CARPENTER'S
THE FOG
MUSIC BY JOHN CARPENTER
NEW EXPANDED EDITION ORIGINAL FILM SOUNDTRACK

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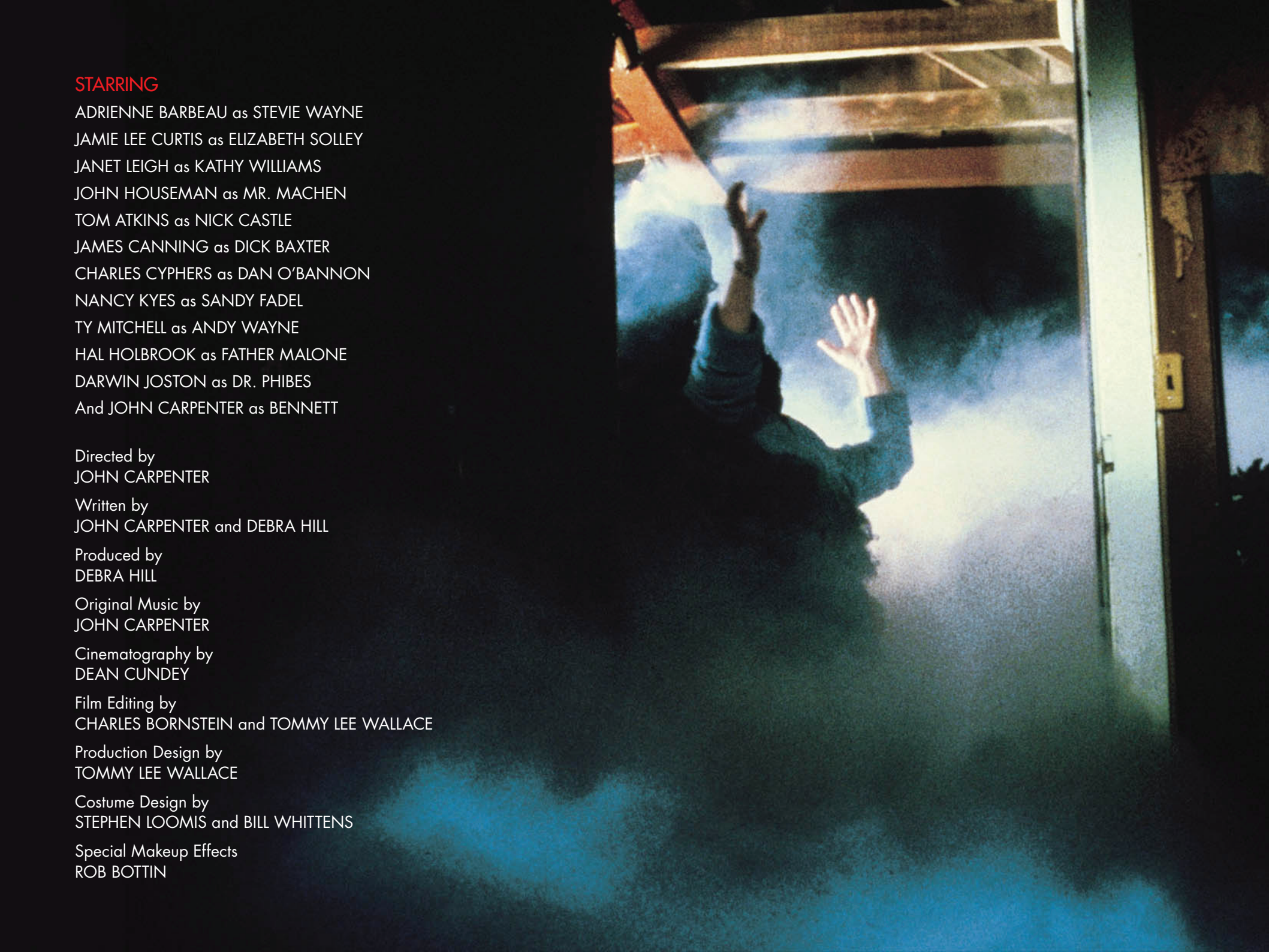
THE 2000 REMIXED SOUNDTRACK ALBUM

1. Prologue from The Fog 2. Theme from The Fog 3. Matthew Ghost Story 4. Walk To The Lighthouse
5. Rocks At Drake's Bay 6. The Fog 7. Antonio Bay 8. Tommy Tells Of Ghost Ships 9. Reel 9
10. Main Theme - Reprise 11. The Fog Rolls In 12. Blake In The Sanctuary 13. Finale
14. Radio Interview with Jamie Lee Curtis

THE ORIGINAL 1980 SCORE CUES

1. Ghost Story 2. The Journal 3. Seagrass Attack 4. Andy on the Beach 5. Where's The Seagrass?
6. Stevie's Lighthouse 7. Something to Show You 8. An Evil Plan 9. Weatherman
10. Walk to Lighthouse 11. Dane 12. Morgue 13. The Fog Approaches 14. Knock at the Door
15. Fog Reflection 16. Andy's In Trouble 17. The Fog Enters Town 18. Revenge 19. Number 6
20. The Fog End Credits



STARRING

ADRIENNE BARBEAU as STEVIE WAYNE
JAMIE LEE CURTIS as ELIZABETH SOLLEY
JANET LEIGH as KATHY WILLIAMS
JOHN HOUSEMAN as MR. MACHEN
TOM ATKINS as NICK CASTLE
JAMES CANNING as DICK BAXTER
CHARLES CYPHERS as DAN O'BANNON
NANCY KYES as SANDY FADEL
TY MITCHELL as ANDY WAYNE
HAL HOLBROOK as FATHER MALONE
DARWIN JOSTON as DR. PHIBES
And JOHN CARPENTER as BENNETT

Directed by
JOHN CARPENTER

Written by
JOHN CARPENTER and DEBRA HILL

Produced by
DEBRA HILL

Original Music by
JOHN CARPENTER

Cinematography by
DEAN CUNDEY

Film Editing by
CHARLES BORNSTEIN and TOMMY LEE WALLACE

Production Design by
TOMMY LEE WALLACE

Costume Design by
STEPHEN LOOMIS and BILL WHITTENS

Special Makeup Effects
ROB BOTTIN

REASSESSING AND RECREATING THE MUSIC FROM **THE FOG**

By Randall D. Larson

In a year that would see the release of such notable shockers as FRIDAY THE 13TH, THE SHINING, DRESSED TO KILL, THE CHANGELING, and SILENT SCREAM, John Carpenter's 1980 film THE FOG has like those others weathered the passing three decades well, retaining its effectiveness as an unsettling and often strikingly suspenseful horror fantasy. Despite the presence of a contemporary 2005 remake, Carpenter's original film has lost none of its atmospheric potency.

After the smash success of his 1978 film HALLOWEEN, John Carpenter was looking for a different direction to avoid becoming typecast. After some work on TV-movies at NBC, Carpenter accepted an offer from Avco-Embassy to make a ghost story in the tradition of the great supernatural tales of the past. Carpenter's inspiration for THE FOG had come from seeing thick fog on the English countryside near Stonehenge. "There was this tremendous mood to the countryside," Carpenter told writer Jordon Fox of *Cinefantastique*. "I looked across and there was this fog sitting there. It was very visual, eerie, white, and ghostly. I thought 'what if some dark shape just walked out of that thing and started coming toward me?'"

Written by Carpenter and his frequent producer partner, Debra Hill, the film tells of a strange fog that settles over a small northern California fishing town where, 100 years earlier, townspeople had caused a deadly shipwreck in order to plunder the ship's stores; out of the fog's concealing mists emerge the ghost-zombies of the dead mariners, seeking revenge on the ancestors of those who killed them. With a cast that included Carpenter's then-wife, Adrienne Barbeau along with Tom Atkins and Jamie Lee Curtis (star of HALLOWEEN), Carpenter quickly went into production on THE FOG. As he had done with his three feature films before it, he also composed and performed his own musical score.

When he was finished, however, he was unsatisfied with the picture and his music. Originally conceived as a fairly non-violent ghost story, Carpenter's original cut was diffuse and ambiguous, and lacked the visceral punch he now realized it needed. "It didn't work," Carpenter recalled years later. "The movie I had made was clunky, clumsy and awful. The music was heavy-handed and obvious. With a mighty Herculean effort, Debra Hill, [editor] Tommy Lee Wallace and myself re-wrote, re-cut, re-shot, and re-scored the picture. In one month… Out of all this frenzy, re-working and re-structuring, I produced what I consider to be one of my best scores." Among the new scenes filmed was the memorable prologue in which John Houseman tells ghost stories to children over a campfire, and several sequences intended to make the film scarier and gorier. The result was a much more comprehensible film that has retained its respectability in the years since its release, and is generally very well regarded by current evaluations.

"Few horror movies can legitimately be termed poetic, but THE FOG certainly qualifies" wrote John Kenneth Muir in *Horror Films of the 1980s*. "Aside from the artful use of the ghost story to generate terror, the film is enriched by beautiful imagery throughout, even in the most terrifying and horrible of moments… what is truly unique about THE FOG is the manner in which the scare sequences are rendered beautiful." Carpenter's use of the titular ether itself, despite the threat it carries within itself, is fraught with visual and suggestive beauty, as Muir explained: "The fog glows, it pulsates, moves, thins and thickens, and remains eerily luminescent throughout the film." In contrast with the grim, stalking force at the heart of HALLOWEEN, the menace within THE FOG is cast in a vaporous grain of visual beauty and striking coloration, submerging its unforgiving threat within a floating wave of peaceful mist.

The music for THE FOG is likewise cloaked in an aura of beauty, with a sparkling, chiming melody that seems to hover upon the brooding haze, obscuring its darker, menacing tonalities until the gathering, textured condensation parts to reveal the dangerous sonic colors carried within it. Carpenter, as he had done since his feature film debut, 1974's DARK STAR, composed and performed his own film scores; he would do so for nearly half of his two dozen films.

RENDERING THE SONIC TENDRILS OF THE FOG

Carpenter had gained his musical background from his father, who was the head of the musical department at the University of Kentucky, as well as a musician performing in recording sessions in Nashville. By attending some of the recording sessions, John picked up the rudiments of music, from classical to rock to country music, and he later played in a rock and roll band. Carpenter does not write music, but rather has created his film music on the keyboard while watching the finished scenes. "All my music's improvised," Carpenter said. "For the most part – I'd say 90 per cent of the time – I don't have a prewritten theme," he told Ronald V. Borst in an interview published in *The Cinema of John Carpenter: The Technique of Terror*.

When he re-cut and re-scored THE FOG, Carpenter achieved the proper musical balance he had missed in his first attempt. "What was missing from both the movie (the first, aborted version) and its score – a lightness of tone, a softer, understated fear – was achieved," Carpenter wrote in his notes for the original LP release of his score. Assisted by synthesizer programmer Dan Wyman, whose electronic orchestrations enlivened Carpenter's musical ideas, the score was created using the same phalanx of early synthesizers that had created the sound for HALLOWEEN, featuring the distinctive textures of Sequential Circuits' Prophet 5, a Moog Modular IIIP system (which created all the string sounds), a Linn LM-1 Drum Computer, several ARPs, and a variety of sequencers and programmers. The score was recorded and mixed at the Sound Arts studio in Los Angeles where his earlier scores had been done.

THE FOG occupies an interesting space in the director/composer's musical filmography. Coming between the iconic HALLOWEEN (1977) and the broader musical dimensionality of ESCAPE FROM NEW YORK (1981), THE FOG found Carpenter being more adventurous in his use of electronic textures, embracing more variety in his musical motifs while further evolving his HALLOWEEN-mode.

The music for THE FOG, like much of Carpenter's soundtrack music of the time, can be divided into three separate elements: theme(s), drones, and stingers. Themes in John Carpenter's musical world are motifs comprised of one or more repeated rhythmic melodies or phrases, usually minimalist in nature and recurring almost hypnotically without extensive variation. The main theme in THE FOG is very much derived from that of HALLOWEEN, while sounding brighter and more ethereal; a menacing but lively atmosphere for vengeful ghosts. Where HALLOWEEN had been music for unrelenting human malevolence, THE FOG is music for mist and spirit, unseen ghosts in vapor rather than a psycho hidden in shadows. Drones are ambient atmospheres intended to build an unsettling suspense or anticipation of something bad about to happen. The entwining rotation of electronic patterns, progressive low "walking" synth chords punctuated by piano, bleak reverberating piano figures over wisps of airy synths and the like serve as THE FOG's atmospheric drones. Carpenter will often combine his themes and drones together to achieve a forceful contrast between high-end melody, mid-range counterpoint, and low, droning bass textures. Stingers are bursts of musical dissonance, usually erupting out of silence, that augment a sudden visual shock; the sonic lunge coupled with its spine-chilling electronic texture has become known as the "John Carpenter Stinger."

The score for THE FOG, like those before it, finds its most effectual power in its simplicity. Built over a pair of repeated motifs that cycle throughout the film, contrasted against or integrated within his atmospheric drones, the score wraps itself around a primary theme where high-end keyboard arpeggios, struck above a low resonance of synthesized textural ambiance, evoke tangible terror close at hand as much as an ambiguous and unsettling foreboding. The constant ringing of the keyboard arpeggios serve as a kind of heartthrob with a chillingly visceral quality heralding unexpected ghost-zombie attacks. The secondary theme is a set of slow and pensively advancing piano figures over a buzzing synth drone associated with the ghost story told by Houseman at the film's start; the motif is later incorporated into the score as his tale is played out by the returning sailors of the capsized *Elizabeth Dane*.

When the fog first advances upon the town of Antonio Bay, a monotonous synthesizer throbbing is heard under remarkably effective electronic whaps, punctuating the panicked heartbeat of the doomed town, highlighted by a high-pitched keyboard tinkling in tempo with the throbbing rhythm. In the end, when the fog finally lifts, high synthesizer tones echo a sigh of relief as they eke out a somber melody of aftermath, segueing to a fast-paced version of the advancing-fog motif for high, descending piano and synthesizer notes interplaying over a fast tapping rhythm. In between, an array of spooky drones, electrifying stingers, and progressive minimalist renderings of theme-sans-variation make the journey of protagonists and villains alike as the story plays out.

"It is hardly surprising that the score's structure and unity is minimal; it revels in its fragmentary and repetitious nature," explained K. J. Donnelly in an analysis of THE FOG's music that was included in Neil Lerner's *Music in the Horror Film: Listening to Fear*. "Rather than being written to fit the film, Carpenter's music arises more a part of the genetic make-up of the film – in its DNA."

RECONSTRUCTING THE FOG

With this new edition of THE FOG soundtrack, Silva Screen presents a definitive rendering of John Carpenter's score, newly arranged from its original masters by Carpenter's associate Alan Howarth, who had assumed Dan Wyman's role as Carpenter's synthesizer programmer beginning with 1981's ESCAPE FROM NEW YORK and running through 1988's THEY LIVE.

This is a re-creative process that began two years after Howarth and Carpenter collaborated on scoring ESCAPE FROM NEW YORK. In 1983, Howarth created a proper soundtrack record of Carpenter's HALLOWEEN score by remixing his original analog music tracks into digital stereo; following it up with a soundtrack album for THE FOG by doing the same to its multi-track master recording. That generated an LP released in 1984; the limitations of vinyl precluded having more than eight tracks of music on the LP (reissued on CD in 1985). When Silva Screen assembled their expanded CD release in 2000, they included the four extra tracks that had been left off the first album and added John Houseman's narrated prelude and a contemporary interview with Jamie Lee Curtis as additional extras.

Fast forward a dozen years: While relocating his studio, Howarth discovered the original monophonic quarter-inch music tapes from THE FOG – the actual soundtrack mixes that had been used in the movie. This led to this new release, which includes the previous remixed tracks along with the newly-found original masters, remixed into stereo, to present as complete a soundtrack album from THE FOG as we're likely to have. "I processed the mono masters to stereo in a pleasing way, and added a little touch of reverberation to give it a little more stereo space," Howarth said. "I think these tracks represent the most accurate soundtrack album of THE FOG."

One of the difficulties in arranging an accurate soundtrack album for THE FOG lies in the fact that the music was created by layering in the mix sessions. Carpenter composed and recorded most of his original cues "wild" – meaning they were sound patterns, motifs, and ambient atmospheres meant to be cut into a number of scenes. "This score had been created off-line," noted Howarth. "It wasn't built to the movie, it was built by sitting in the recording studio doing cues. It was prior to the synchronization of film and tracks, so it was created using a stopwatch. John made a lot of bits and pieces that he was going to cut together later in the editing room and build layers for the film. I've tried to do a similar reconstruction of John's work, by layering tracks in the same way, based on how it was done in the movie."

Howarth found that some of the tracks included integrated sound effects, like the sound of fog horns, which became part of the sonic ambiance in the film, drawing the natural sounds into a reverberating, unearthly tonal atmosphere. The fusion of the two was so effective and memorable in the picture that Howarth decided to restore that original mix into some of the new tracks (on CD 2), letting them be heard for the first time on disc as they were heard in the film. "Some of these cues are playing as ambient sound, they are not pieces of music that have a beginning and an end," Howarth explained. "They're more like atmospheres, so I took the liberty of blending in some of the fog sound effects as intros and outros to the music cues on this version. I think it does help establish the mood of THE FOG."

The third element Howarth restored into the mix were the stingers that Carpenter and Wyman had created when they rescored the movie. That process increased the film's energy and sense of spooky/scary, all of which required new music, including the signature "stingers" that Carpenter used to sonically augment particular shock moments. But that music had been recorded separately during Carpenter's re-scoring phase and added into the film's final mix. Howarth took those separate stinger tracks and added them to the earlier recorded droning atmospheric tracks to replicate the way they were used in the film. "For example, the first time the fog comes in and the ghosts attack the fishing vessel out at sea, in the film that was the drones plus the stingers. So I went ahead and took the drones and found the stingers and put them all together."

Although Howarth wasn't involved in THE FOG at the time it was made and scored, his intimate association with Carpenter in the seven films that followed it have given him the unique understanding on how to properly recreate the score as it was heard in the film. Having already revisited the scores of DARK STAR, ASSAULT ON PRECINCT 13, HALLOWEEN, and 1982's THE THING in this manner for other CD releases, Howarth has now reconstructed the music to THE FOG in as accurate a replication as was heard in the film's soundtrack as possible.

"My work has been to try and reconstruct the best sonic job from these mono masters, with some stereo enhancement added to, so that it's the most listenable of all the stuff that's been created so far I think," said Howarth.

Randall D. Larson writes a regular film music column for buysoundtrax.com and is the author of more than a hundred soundtrack album commentaries and several books on film music, including Musique Fantastique: 100 Years of Science Fiction, Fantasy & Horror Film Music.

Music Composed by John Carpenter
Music Performed by John Carpenter
and The Bowling Green-Warren County Chamber Orchestra
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Recorded at Sound Arts Studio (Los Angeles, CA)
Synthesiser Programming and Orchestration : Dan Wyman
Music Co-ordinator: Bob Walter
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