

NOSFERATU is a work that has been quoted and copied many times in cinematic history - nevertheless it is and remains the classic thriller par excellence. Based on themes from Bram Stoker's DRACULA novel, Henrik Galeen wrote the script for Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau's sombre film drama, telling the story of a nightmarish vampire, Count Orlok, who invades a small town. The sinister character spreads pestilence and death until a young woman sacrifices herself and makes him forget the morning sunrise.

Employing a German expressionist cinematographic style, Murnau's direction of the film's mystery and horror is sublime. The film bathes the protagonist in quivering light reflexes, shows his action in slow motion, blows up his shadow and toys with the element of fears.

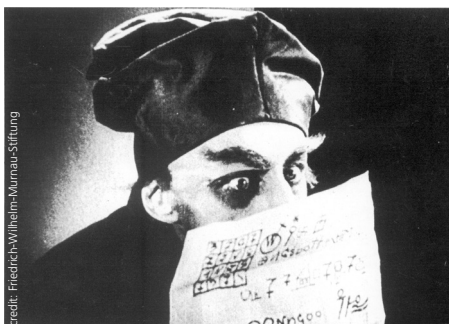
James Bernard wrote soundtracks to numerous thrillers in the 1950s and 1960s and became famous for his creation of the „Hammer horror sound“. In compliance with its subtitle: „A Symphony of Horror“, he interpreted Murnau's master piece as a classic horror film.

The contemporary ensemble version written by Michael Obst in 2003 creates a fascinating contrast to the old film material. A rather subtle composition, it picks up on individual images and accentuates them with colourful instrumentation. The spacey and atmospheric music, which is relatively straightforward for a contemporary composition, permeates the film and creates subtle tension.

## NOSFERATU - A SYMPHONY OF HORROR

Pierre Oser's musical interpretation of NOSFERATU is characterized by a sharp distinction between the (initially) peaceful life of Thomas Hutter in Wisborg (orchestra) and the life of Count Orlok in the Carpathian Mountains as well as during the passage to Wisborg (choir). As soon as Count Orlok (Nosferatu) arrives in Wisborg, the previously separated worlds of pure vocal music on the one side and of instrumental music on the other side are combined and eventually culminate in the dramatic finale.

The text of the choral parts is taken from Ovid's "Metamorphoses" in its original Latin, especially those passages that relate to plagues, diseases, catastrophes, and death. Although the choral part bears a slight resemblance to Gregorian chant, it is intensified by contemporary harmonics, clusters and driving rhythms which add up to a menacing and sinister picture. Pierre Oser's composition for mixed choir, percussion and string orchestra offers a rather uncommon interpretation of Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau's classic black-and-white horror movie.



original title:  
NOSFERATU – EINE  
SYMPHONIE DES GRAUENS  
directed by  
Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau  
(D 1922)  
Music: new scores by  
James Bernard (1997)  
Michael Obst (2003)  
Pierre Oser (2012)

Instrumentation (Bernard):  
2/picc. 2. ca. 2+1 bcl. 2+cbn -  
0.4. 2trbn+2brbn. 1 - per(4).  
pno - strings (14.12.8.8.4)  
94 min.

Instrumentation (Obst):  
1/picc/alto. 0.1+basscl. 1/cbs -  
0.2.2.0 - perc. piano - strings  
(1.0.1.1.1)  
93 min.

Instrumentation (Oser):  
4perc(timp) - str - choir  
94 min.