

Noirscape

Album Commentary

Yo yo! It's me, **Witch's Cadence!** Back from the music mines with something new for your ears to chew on. But hold on, humm, this font is too hard to read, let's change it up for something better.

(Here's the part of the commentary where I do a long drawn out bit of me going through different fonts ranging from goofy ones and serious ones and then ending on comic sans before saying "definitely not". But that would be lame, so we aren't doing that.)

Here we go, now into the juicy shit.

I had been wanting to do a solo album for **Desynced** for a little while now, and when I finally got the idea I was a little bit pensive. I mean, it seemed like a bit of a stretch. Would anyone want to listen to something so . . . saturated?

Noirscape is an album all about jack (of the Noir variety if you weren't sure). And I sure as hell ran with this idea. There's plenty of "**Black**" and "**Ballad of Jack Noir**" to go around. So much in fact you could probably solve world hunger if it was measured out in bread loaves. Okay, probably not really, but it's a nice fantasy. Like I mentioned earlier, I was worried that this album would be a bit . . . too much jack, haha. But yet, when I mentioned it to **Dizzims** she seemed to like the idea. Also her and **Rainy** gave me a couple track ideas, so I kind of just had to do it.

I really tried to go all out with this album, the amount of tracks that didn't make it is honestly a surprising number. (Though you can still find most of them in the goodies folder!) They were cut in order for the actual album to be up to par with higher standards that I gained out of utter nowhere, lol. I'm really happy with how this album turned out, and I hope you enjoy it! Now, on with the commentary!!



ACT 1

"Be Jack"

This song, while the first on the album, was not actually the first song I made. It was created to function like how **Stormspirit** does in **Tensei's** homestuck solo album, **Strife**. A quiet, dark track with a bit of build up before leading into the first major track of the album. Oh, and of course it starts with wind sfx. The little bits of clicking sound design were inspired by the sounds that play in **Metroid 2** and it's official 3ds remake. I really like how spooky they are in those games. Of course the main melody here is "**Ballad of Jack Noir**" (A personal favorite of mine) as setup for where this album is to go (Foreshadowing is a literary device-). The synths are based off of one of the tracks that didn't make the album, ("**Witch Plays Bass**" in the soundtest folder). Very happy with the mysterious vibe in this track, and of course it transitions to the next track with the midnight crew sample and a rising reversed cymbal crash.

"The Dirty Snake's Coup"

You've seen a snake in your boot, now get ready for: a coup by your snake?? I really wanted the first major song on the album to be an utter banger, (at least as much as I could manage) and when I started on this one I knew it had to take that spot. This song's sole existence really is only because of one thing, I was browsing the **homestuck music wiki** (hi guys :DDD) and came across the song "**Dogfight**", which if you haven't heard it, (and a horrid amount have not) it is an utterly brazen song of epic proportions. This song in of itself caused me to entirely rework this album from the ground up, and that is not a joke. For my song I took a lot of concepts from "**Dogfight**", like the orchestral start, breaking out into a rocking groove, and the trumpets (Oh god the trumpets!!!). I started the song off with the "**Void of the Moon**" motif by **Levc**. This motif has mostly been correlated with Derse in the **Desynced** music canon, so I thought it made sense as a scene setter. I then had the little square like synth that comes in play some of **Spad3s** track "**Snake-Eyes!**". All of the songs for Act 1 are for a specific Jack in **Desynced**; this one is for Snake Eye, the dragon session's Jack. We don't know a lot about him yet, other than he was a big troublemaker (if you couldn't tell, that's why I referenced "**Snake-Eyes!**" here, lol). The trumpet that comes in is played by me on my midi keyboard. And all of the guitar hits are played by me live aswell. Also of course there's a devilish use of the "**Black**" motif for the transition to hype rock. I think I did an okay job at the guitar parts, I mean, it's no "**Dogfight**" level of guitar solo but it still sounds cool, lol. I'm really happy with how everything comes together for the finale of the song, ending on the "**Desynced Anthem**" hits just right y'know? Overall this has become like my second favorite song I've made ever.

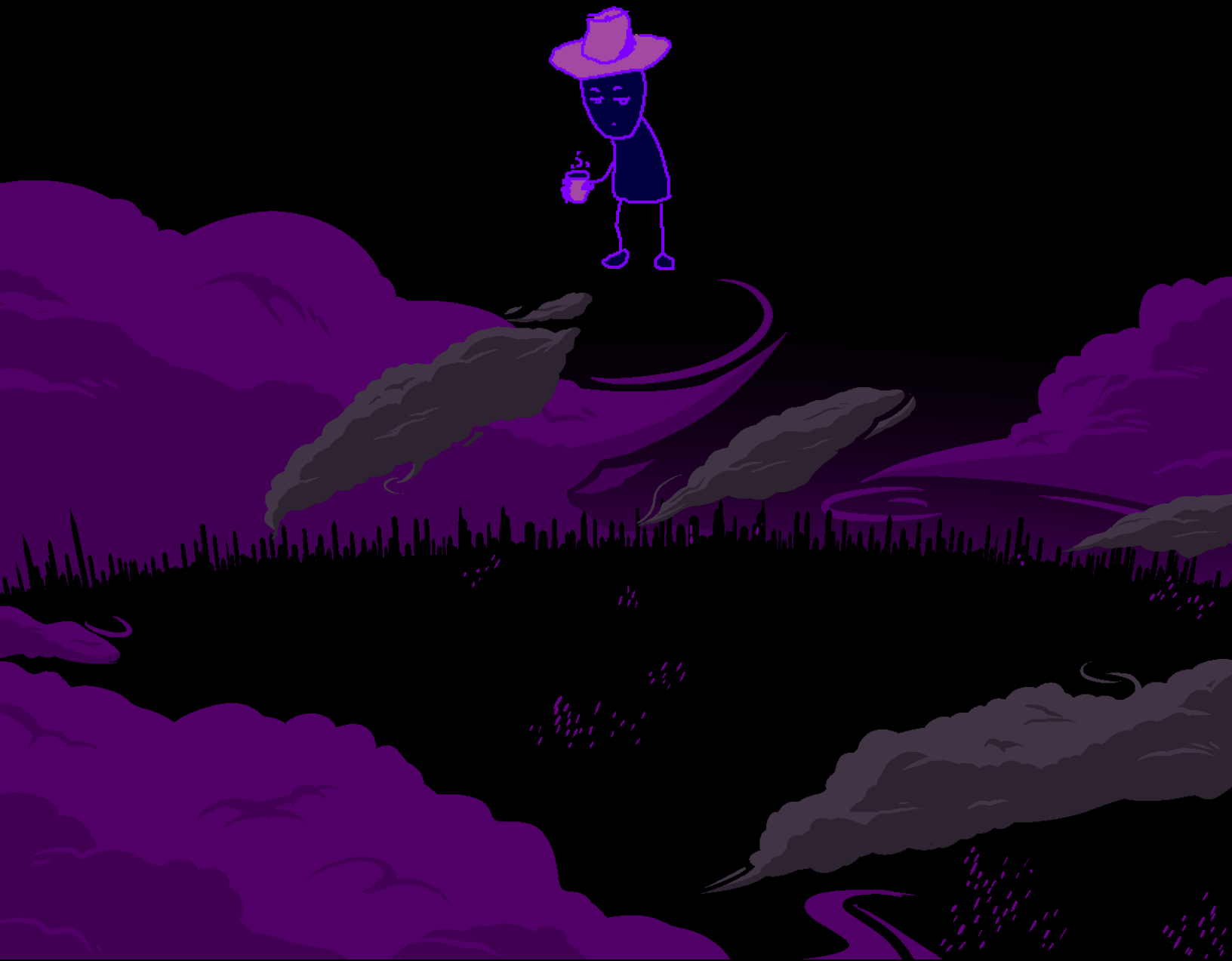
"Nomad of Nothing"

This was the 3rd earliest song I made for the album that still actually made it on. I even almost cut this one. I really wanted to swap out the soundfont guitars for a real acoustic but I can't do finger style. . . Oh well. This song is about the intermission jack. Hence the title, "**Nomad of Nothing**" (alliteration baby!!!). The song starts with what I imagine is jack taking a deep breath before playing this tune on a guitar while whistling along. Of course "**Ballad of Jack Noir**" makes an appearance again, (I'm telling you I simply cannot resist). But also because I feel that a ballad is fit for a wanderer. I really like the sort of call and response between the two whistles. Of course the song ends with a little reprise of the midnight crew motif. I tried adding a lead guitar part to this song but decided to cut it as it was just making the whole thing messier than it needed to be. Overall, a decent song I think.

"City Streets"

Derse, what do you think when you hear the name? For me, I think a jazzy smog induced cityscape. Thus, this song was born. I imagine this song playing as Jack does his business on his homeland. The synths that are used to introduce the song are heavily inspired by **Levc's** use of synths in songs like in *Crossmound Vol 1's* "Crossmound" or the *Tales From The Other Side DEMO OST's* "Time Above the Clouds". I really like his use of the acid like floating synths so I asked him how he did it and then snatched it for myself, lol. The piano plays a lot of 7th chords here, which really gives it that relaxed feel (Using a minor key but with 7th chords tends to take the edge off of it some). Of course I added some background city sfx, just for that nice texture. Makes it feel more alive methinks. I think the part that really sells this track for me is the brass, which wouldn't be as good as it is here if it weren't for **Levc** giving me some mixing pointers (My tracks were a bit dry before, he suggested I used a tad bit more reverb, thanks to him the whole album sounds even better than before!) The bass here is from a synth called the **VK-1 Viking Synthesizer**, which I found from asking Mr. Sauceman what he used to make music in the **DustRiser** Discord (that now seems to be defunct?). The drums are from a really cool sampled CD with a bunch of great drum loops. (I highly recommend checking out whatever sample CDs you can find on the **Internet Archive** to anyone trying to make music themselves!)

END OF ACT 1



ACT 2

"I'm Sorry"

"I'm sorry" was a track that I originally just made up as a short piano improv. I wanted something kind of bittersweet, and well, that's exactly what I got (it even has the minor four, the most gut wrenching chord change of them all). The recording used in the album is not the original improv (that one wasn't recorded, and was kind of shit haha). I recorded this using my midi keyboard which is why the sound quality is decent in any capacity. This one is the 2nd earliest song that still made the album. I also referenced it in "Nomad of Nothing", or I guess this technically references nomad of nothing? Either way, it's about the intermission jack having *done fucked up*. And now we're sad I guess. (lol.) I really like the dynamics in this one, and I think my pauses where I'm trying to remember wtf I'm trying to play actually added to it somehow. Probably my best piano recording. ACT 2 is going to be all about just vague jack shit, so now we go straight into:

"Ballad of a Jack"

This song is special, "Ballad of Jack Noir" is one of my favorite homestuck songs ever (especially the piano version where Toby Fox sings the lyrics he wrote for it). Which is why for this arrangement of the song I started with me recording myself playing my midi keyboard again, the lead vocal is also played by me on the midi keyboard. This song is actually one of the reasons I started the album in the first place, but I didn't get around to doing it until later on. I really wanted it to be super expressive, I added the little string bits at 0:16 just for that perfect emotive quality. And then once again, right into some rock shit. This is a song about a Jack fucking shit up (which kind of applies to all of the songs in ACT 2 but whatever). I had lots of fun playing the guitar parts for this, especially for the really hectic section at 1:07. (I love guitar mutes :drooling face:) The second half of this song is some entirely new stuff. First it goes into "Light of the Sun" by Levc. Perhaps this Jack is combating some skaian force; in a dubious manner I am sure. And then we bring in "Desynced Anthem" also by Levc. Gotta have that main theme nonsense. The finale section is just me playing way too many solos on way too many instruments at once, haha. I sprinkled in bits of "Black", the bit of "Ballad of Jack Noir" that goes "I really hate these stupid hats!! And that stupid KING" (best part of the song imo) and finally once again little bits of "Desynced Anthem". Finally the song ends on a reprise of the start of the song, this time melancholic in nature, what have you done jack? We may never know. .

"Midnight"2"

"Double midnight" was a song Toby Fox made that we have not heard the full version of. A tragedy really. When I first suggested the album idea Rainy suggested that I do a version of that song for it. Which of course, just makes perfect sense. There already exists a couple of fanmade finished versions of this song, (see "One and a Half Midnight") but still, I wanted to do my own version. I decided to start the song off with just the "I'm a Member of the Midnight Crew" song, and to make it slowly glitch out until it gets to the line "Home with the milk in the morning", which has a big placement spot in the short snippet of the original song that we do have. Then I had the main riff of the song play on a synth as a little intro to the actual first section. Once again, little bit of real guitar :3. I originally wanted there to be guitar all throughout the track but changed my mind as I realized it was just muddying everything. So it's only in this first section, then right after that it goes into the section with "Black", which we only hear the ladder of in the original, before it goes into the section where *everything goes ham*. As they always say, "Make her a member of the midnight crew!". It was actually pretty fun trying to recreate something similar to the original part, the sample splicing should have been hell but was actually quite enjoyable, lol. Of course the final section is a reprise of the earlier one, (just now realizing I do that a lot, huh). And the song ends off with a final "Home with the milk in the morning". As all good Dads do.

"Breakout"

Breakout is the absolute oldest song I made that went on the album (It's funny because I've had to correct earlier parts of this commentary like 3 times now because I kept getting it wrong). This song was made before I even had the idea for the album in the first place. I just wanted to make some crazy Jack shenanigans song. Originally the guitars in it were shreddage, but I decided to swap them out with some actual recordings of me playing to keep it up to par with the rest of the album (you can find the original version in the goodie bag folder). There is so much **Desynced** Jack in this song. It starts with "Escapade" played on the iconic **DSK Saxophone** VST. Then it goes into "Noir". There's also bits of "Snake-Eyes!" scattered throughout the track. Once again I had a calm before the storm section where "Desynced Anthem" plays (it just works so well for that). And the finale here, oh boy. I really don't like to toot my own horn, but I'm really proud of it. It starts off with how you've heard this section before, but then right after you think you've heard everything, it goes straight to the four chord, where I used that to develop the melodies a bit more (The four is great for developing things further, really gives off a sense of progression). Originally this song was going to be called "Jackknife" but then I found out that there is already a **Homestuck** song by that name, so I changed it. I chose "Breakout" for a couple reasons.

- 1) It sounds cool (duh)
- 2) Gives the vibe of shattering something, Jacks are just good at that
- 3) **Levc's** song "Desynced" often has been compared to another song called "Breakout", the one that **Scott the Woz** used to use in his outros, lol (yes I know that is not the origin of the song, no I do not care).

Just seemed like a cool homage.

END OF ACT 2



ACT 3

"The Epic of Jack Noir"

This is it, the big kahuna, massive whopper, the epic ensemble that is, "The Epic of Jack Noir". The last time I did a solo album for something, I made a giant song, one that was a whopping seven minutes and thirty seconds, but now, I've shown myself up. This song is the definitive longest song I've ever written, totaling nine minutes at least. Why did I do this? Because I can, mothafuckers. Because I can. This song is about basically, the ULTIMATE JACK OFF. For some reason thousands, maybe even millions of jacks have collided into one plane of existence, and now they have to all fight to the death to prove who is the GREATEST JACK. It's basically a mega jack medley. The first minute or so was separate from the song at first, and was a track that played right before, but I decided to smush them together because it made the album a nice perfect ten tracks, (also it made the song longer, and I'm just vain like that. The inspirations for this song were very clear in my mind, at first I wanted to make "what if the end part of "Oppa Toby Style" was a full song". You know, the part where "Black" plays? But I also wanted to have a section near the end where it goes ascension mode, like "Hopes and Dreams" from *Undertale*. I did the first minute and a half with this in mind, and originally was using shreddage and a soundfont for the drums. This demo can be found in the goodie bag folder. But then I had an idea, what if I made it like the final boss song "Unexpectedancy" from *Pizza Tower*? As in, have 3 main parts to it, kind of like phases. In that game the song is split up like that, having a normal boss theme phase 1, a pedantically goofy 2nd phase, and then a hyped up emotionally driven final phase. This was the layout I gained for my song, and so that is how I began my journey.

"The Epic of Jack Noir" starts with a poem, or that's what I'm calling it at least. It doesn't really follow any actual rhyme or reason, it kind of just is. When this section was it's own track, it was called "Poem of Calamity". Of course I have "Black" play behind it on a kind of music box/bell esque synth. The poem goes like this:

"POEM FOR CALAMITY"

A split in the multiverse,
a crack in God's will.
Can you smell the smoke rising from the ashes?

A fire burns in the distance;
hell is coming.
They are coming.
Heed these words jack:

The gates of heaven have been opened.
Hear the call of the angels,
and reach out and claim what is yours.

THE FATE OF THOSE YOU LOVE DEPENDS ON IT

I then sampled song "Black", and reversed it and put a lot of bitcrush over it. The sample slowly fades in, and you can just barely make out in the background the sound of "Make her a member of the midnight crew" Then for the first part of actual music, I used a melody for another crazy boss song I've made for *Desynced*. Though at the time of me writing this that song is not out yet, just something for you to look forward to! Also there's a melody being played on the devious *DSK Saxophone*; strike again you glorious horrible instrument!! After that you get some harsh genesis synths playing an edited version of the "Black"/"Liquid Negrocity" melody. Right after that, it's into the song that this one is named after, "Ballad of Jack Noir". I told you, foreshadowing it a literary device!!! I warned you dog!! Also yeah, I do realize it was also in like 3 other songs in this album, haha. The drums for both of these parts is very much based off of the drums in "Oppa Toby Style". There's also a synth doing some crazy arpeggios that's inspired by that song as well. Then there's a bit of "Midnight^2"/"Double Midnight" played on a square synth, I'm putting all the jacks in this song. Eventually we get to where there's a lot of sample splicing of "I'm a Member of the Midnight Crew", which is inspired by "Double Midnight" and "Unexpectedancy". 2:50 is where I consider the "Phase 2" part to have begun. Here I brought in some acoustic guitar playing, it's not the most stunning acoustic guitar playing you'll ever hear, but I still did my best. I originally was going to have the lead guitar be me playing here, but I couldn't come up with anything good enough on the real instrument so I whipped out the trusty *Ultimate Guitar Kit 2* soundfont and wrote something that I proclaim to be "UTTERLY EPIC", or so I hope at least. Once we reach the end of this phase, at 5:07 we hear a familiar part from earlier in the song. This was to bring it back around and re-anchor the listener, before going into the final phase. This is the phase where one jack finds within his soul the power to conquer the devil, and as he was told, "Claim what is yours". It's time to go ham. But of course! Before that we have a badass heavy riff played on the guitar, and then it time to unload some SHIT. Here I

brought in the motif from "I'm Sorry" an emotional reprise for a climactic moment. This was possibly my favorite part to write, and honestly, I can't believe I was actually able to play the rhythm guitar part here, haha. Guess I must actually be getting better!! I then did the thing once again where it goes to the four chord to develop the song more (Wow!! So epic!!!). Then we go right back into "Black". Then "I'm Sorry" again, and then one final "Black". The final section is a reprise of the first saxophone section, but slower, then we build up with the "I'm a Member of the Midnight Crew", setting up expectation, before breaking it with the scream of a victorious jack.

Well done, you've won the battle of a lifetime.



Fin

The last song of the album is a simple music box track. I put it together in about 30-45 minutes, and yet I am still very happy with it. The music box vst is **DSK Music Box**. Which was recommended to me by someone in the undertale fan music community. (Check them out, they go by **MagicalFishing** basically everywhere!) It's a very good music box vst, probably the best free one you will find. The oboe playing one last "Black", just to say goodbye.

So, uh, that's the end of the album! I hope you enjoyed it. I put SO much love and care into this that I think it way outshines almost everything else I've ever made. I've grown so much, once again, and I can't wait to show you what we have in store next!

Before I go I'd like to thank a few people:

- **Dizzims** - for making *Desynced*. This comic has allowed me to meet plenty of awesome new people and other amazing musicians.
- **Rainy** - for all the help he's given and managing the music team like a boss.
- **Levc** - for the criticism he's given me while I was making this album, it would not be of the level of quality it is without him.
- **Spoofy** - for being such a big fan of my music :D
- **Tensei, Mr. Sauceman, Toby Fox, Mudeth, +Tek, Rom M and Cazok** - they don't really need my thanks but they were the ones that inspired this whole album with their music! It never would have come into existence without them.
- **My friends in the Unbound Music Team** - for supporting my music, and just being good friends
- **My mom** - For supporting me and my music with all of her heart

And that's the album! See you all next time :3





... What you're still here?
Sorry I'm all out of donuts.

