



Randall Larson's

SOUNDTRAX

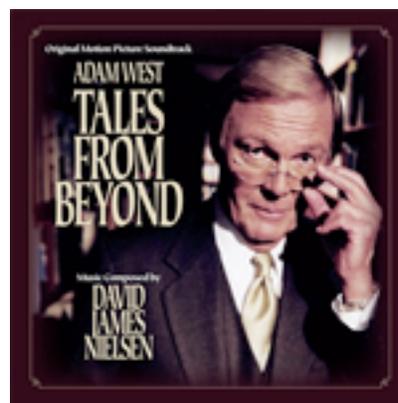
Soundtrax: Mark Isham and the Sonic Landscapes of Emotion

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By Randall D. Larson

*This week we talk with Mark Isham about his latest score for **The Mist**, his first ever true horror score. We also chat about his approach to scoring **Reservation Road**, **Crash**, and **Bobby**. Reviews this week include **Klute/All The President's Men** from FSM, **Tales from Beyond** from MSM, **Trojan War/The Avenger** and Morricone's **Men or Not Men** from Digitmovies, and ponder the splendid gamescore from **Mass Effect**. We also take a look at the notable music featurette from the amazing **Man From U.N.C.L.E.** series dvd release from Time-Life.*

MovieScore Media's final release of the year is a splendid mysterioso – newcomer David James Nielsen's classy orchestral score for **Tales From Beyond**, a 2004 **Twilight Zone**-ish anthology story comprising four macabre stories from a quartet of directors, built around tales of a bookshop owned by a shopkeeper played by Adam West. Nielsen, who got the plum assignment right after graduating from USC's film scoring program (MSM has also released Nielsen's subsequent score, **Haunting Villisca**), essentially provides four unique scores for each of the four stories



embodying the film, plus the mysterious title, prologue, and finale music. A 5-track suite of jazz cues used in different episodes is also provided, making this a thorough and well-presented package of music. The overall tone is one of dark, mesmerizing, atmospheres, and Nielsen crafts these very nicely. "Abernathy" comprises a soft mysterioso, derived somewhat from Nielsen's prologue, emphasizing finely echoed and intricate harp notes over strings and piano, enhanced by haunting voices in a vague air that is more atmospheric than melodious; "Theme" closes out this episode with a haunting articulation. "Nex's Diner" takes on a prominent lounge-jazz

atmosphere, appropriate for its setting (most of the source cues collected in the “Jazz Suite” are from this episode); Nielsen derives his suspenseful scoring from the jazz sensibility heard in the Diner, while “Life Replay” is accompanied by a series of quirky and experimental tonalities and musical effects, not unlike that often used in **Twilight Zone** scores. “Fighting Spirit,” on the other hand, is built from layers of ascending orchestra, very uplifting and emotional. While almost entirely devoid of melodic content, Nielson’s atmospheric quotient is effectively high and the diverse score is quite likable. And his “Finale” is a stupendously awesome and energetic dark climax to the quartet of weird tales.