



Life

CLIPART COURTESY OF CREATIVE COMMONS



Nick Cave from the The Birthday Party. Their song “6 Inch Gold Blade” matches the vibes of Friday the 13th.
PHOTO COURTESY OF @THE_BIRTHDAY_PARTY_OFFICIAL ON INSTAGRAM

by Nate Wylie
CONTRIBUTOR
HE/HIM/HIS
byf24004@uconn.edu

Even though Halloween happened almost half a year ago, yet another Friday the 13th rolls around. Because there's no better day to put on some scary music, here are 13 songs that you can play to set the mood on this horror-filled holiday.

“6 Inch Gold Blade” — The Birthday Party

This song is a timeless classic from one of the most influential post-punk bands of all time. If you're familiar with Nick Cave and the Bad Seeds, you'll love this band, as The Birthday Party is an earlier project of Cave's. This song is fun, campy and packed with horror.

“Turned Killer” — Eugene Viscione

There's not a whole lot of information about Eugene Viscione on the internet, other than that he was a New Jersey barber that kept a recording studio in the back of a shop. This song is strange, fuzzy and creepy. It's like a half-forgotten

memory or the auditory version of a liminal space. Anyone looking for a creepy, dreamlike vibe should listen to this song.

“Down in a Willow Garden” — Kossoy Sisters

This folk song is deceptive with its happy melody, but if you listen beyond the gentle voices of the Kossoy Sisters, you'll hear the surprisingly brutal lyrics about committing murder. For fans of folk, bluegrass and country, this could be a go-to creepy song for you.

“Killing Fever” — Dazzling Killmen

Dazzling Killmen is one of the most underappreciated noise rock bands of the 1990s. Their aggressive and abrasive sound and morbid lyrics make the perfect combination for any Friday the 13th playlist. If you are a fan of Nirvana's more abrasive songs, this band will be right up your alley.

“Lower East Side” — Keiji Haino and Tatsuya Yoshida

Although the theme of this song isn't related to death, fear or horror in any direct way, this track is one of the most intense,

angular and dissonant avant-garde jazz pieces out there. This piece drills its way into your ears and stays there — a perfect musical mirror of the feeling of overwhelming fear. Fans of noise should check this one out.

“Known Victims” — Deathpile

This might be one of the most difficult songs to listen to on this list, and for good reason. This song comes from a concept album inspired by the Green River Killer, one of the deadliest serial killers in American history, and the music provides a disturbing window into the deranged mind of the killer. This track falls closer to noise than music, but for anyone with an adventurous music taste looking for a scare, this is a great pick.

“Re-Enact the Crime” — Unwound

Unwound is probably one of the best bands for anyone looking for an entry into noise rock. This track and its horror-esque themes features a nice blend of dissonance while also preserving enough of the

musicality for easy listening.

“Too Many Humans” — No Trend

There aren't any bands that are even close to being similar to No Trend. This '80s punk band packs a punch: every second of every song drips with intense hatred and misanthropy. If there's any song that matches the angst of Friday the 13th, it's this one.

“Designed to Kill” — James Chance and the Contortions

If there's one thing I could say to sum up this song, it's this: James Chance, a prevalent NYC musician in the 1970s, started out as a jazz musician. He would be subsequently kicked out of most New York jazz clubs after gaining a reputation for jumping into the crowd to fight people. This song shows that rage; it's almost like violent disco.

“Bloodhail” — Have a Nice Life

This song is gloomy, morbid and a great song to play for anyone wanting to create a graveyard-like atmosphere. With the fuzzy, experimental production, this song plays like a disturbing dream. It makes for the perfect

Friday the 13th soundtrack.

“Fear” — South of No North

This list wouldn't be complete without at least one goth song. This song, from a severely overlooked Greek goth band, fits the bill perfectly. It's gloomy, edgy and full of horror. For fans of goth music that haven't heard this band yet, this is a perfect one to check out.

“Destination: Blood!” — Orchid

Of course, I'm obligated to include goth's cousin, emo, in this list as well. This band from Amherst, Mass., is without a doubt one of the most influential screamo bands of the 1990s. This song perfectly fits the fear, drama and intensity of Friday the 13th.

“Nothing is Safe” — clipping.

Clipping is probably one of the most interesting rap groups to decades. This song, with its experimental edge and slow buildup, matches the anticipation and anxiety of Friday the 13th. For any rap fans looking for more diversity in their regular rotation, this is a must-listen.

‘Slay the Spire 2’ early access fully delivers

by Elijah Polance
CONTRIBUTOR
HE/HIM/THEY/THEM
elijah.polance@uconn.edu

“Slay the Spire 2,” the awaited sequel to Mega Crit Studio's successful indie video game “Slay the Spire,” made it to early access on Steam on Thursday, March 5.

At first glance, “Slay the Spire” and its new sequel might not look the most captivating. It's a roguelike, which means the player makes their way through a series of generated levels on the way to a final boss, starting off weak but gaining power-ups along the way. If you die, you start back at the beginning, losing all the abilities you earned on your journey.

“Slay the Spire” stands out by being a deck builder. You choose a certain character at the start of each run with their own starting deck and unique traits. The combat is turn-based, and you must battle through different enemies as you climb the “spire,” progressing through three different acts with their own themes, unique challenges and bosses.

The original game fully launched in 2019, and despite having a relatively simple gameplay loop, the depth of the four playable characters and endless possibilities within a run, along with a fleshed-out system of difficulty, gave the title immense replay value for the last seven years. The game had so much to offer that it begged the

question of whether a sequel was even necessary — but even the earliest glimpses at “Slay the Spire 2” showed that Mega Crit had a lot more ground they were willing to cover.

One of the most exciting changes to the sequel is with the characters. Three of the four characters from the original return: the brutish knight called the Ironclad, the stealthy, toxin-trained assassin called the Silent and the orb-wielding robot called the Defect.

While all three characters remain the same at their core, they each benefit from new cards and mechanics to navigate the new challenges you'll face along the way. They all feel familiar, but never the exact same as you climb the spire, and the difference feels more distinct than a simple update would.

More importantly, “Slay the Spire 2” adds two new characters to the mix. There's the Regent, an orange alien from outer space who sits arrogantly in a floating chair. While most characters in the game require energy as a resource to play their cards, the Regent uses an additional resource system with stars to play more powerful cards. He can also summon a magical sword that you can infuse with more damage to take out dangerous foes.

The other addition is the Necrobinder, a lich who fights out of revenge with her pet skeletal hand, Orly, by her side. When

attacked, Orly takes damage before her, giving a temporary shield from danger. But it also forces the player to heal and shield Orly, as he can deliver powerful attacks of his own. The Necrobinder is also proficient with a “Doom” mechanic, which will instantly kill enemies after their turn once their health has lowered to their “Doom” value.

If you have friends who liked “Slay the Spire,” the new multiplayer option is built for you. In “Slay the Spire 2,” up to four players can team up to climb the spire, where you face enemies that have scaled up stats alongside each other. It's a surprising but well-implemented change for a game that used to exist as a solo escapade.

Another big change is how the game handles each act. In the original, the three main acts had set themes that didn't change between runs, though they did have different bosses you would have to face to reach the next act. There are now currently two different theme possibilities in Act One, where you might end up navigating the “Overgrowth” with its forest-related enemies or the “Underdock,” which has more of a city sewage theme. While the next two acts do not have alternate level possibilities, it's something that may come in future updates.

The progression between acts has also changed. Instead of getting a choice of powerful relics after beating a boss, there

are now different “Ancients” — powerful deities — at the start of each act with their own array of boons to provide. While the Ancients have up to nine options they can provide, players will receive a random choice between three of them that can drastically change how you approach the rest of the game.

Along with these additions and changes are numerous quality of life changes, inclusions of small quests to complete within runs for rewards and revitalized artwork and animations. The game looks beautiful, and in many ways, more polished than the original already, though some of the later content lacks the detail you'll find at the start.

If you tried “Slay the Spire” and found it wasn't for you, “Slay the Spire 2” and its massive content additions might not change your opinion, as the gameplay flow remains largely the same. But if you haven't played the original, the sequel might be an exciting place to start.

The \$25 price tag might feel like a lot for early access, but the sheer amount of content and replay value makes the cost worth it. Considering the original stayed in its early access state for two years, “Slay the Spire 2” could be hanging around in this form (with constant updates) for a while. It will only get better from here, so if you're a fan, it might be worth buying in now.

PHOTO COURTESY OF @POLYGONDOTCOM ON INSTAGRAM

