



Night Music: Nocturnes 2

John Connolly

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Fans of THE BOOK OF LOST THINGS and NOCTURNES will be delighted with this superbly crafted collection of short stories of the supernatural from John Connolly.

A decade after NOCTURNES first terrified and delighted readers, John Connolly, bestselling author of thirteen acclaimed thrillers featuring private investigator Charlie Parker, gives us a second volume of tales of the supernatural. From stories of the monstrous for dark winter nights to fables of fantastic libraries and haunted books, from a tender narrative of love after death to a frank, personal and revealing account of the author's affection for myths of ghosts and demons, this is a collection that will surprise, delight - and terrify.

NIGHT MUSIC also contains two novellas: the multi-award-winning THE CAXTON PRIVATE LENDING LIBRARY & BOOK DEPOSITORY, and THE FRACTURED ATLAS, featuring The Wanderer in Unknown Realms, previously published as an ebook, developed here into a five-part novella.

NIGHT MUSIC: NOCTURNES 2 is a masterly collection to be read with the lights on - **menace has never been so seductive.**

Night Music: Nocturnes 2 Details

Date : Published October 15th 2015 by Hodder & Stoughton (first published October 6th 2015)

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Author : John Connolly

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From Reader Review Night Music: Nocturnes 2 for online ebook

Magdalena aka A Bookaholic Swede says

John Connelly's first collection of short stories (Nocturnes) was a great book with many good stories. This book is equally good if not better. It contains both short stories and two longer novellas.

The Caxton Private Lending Library and Book Depository, one of the novellas is without a doubt my favorite story in the book. It's about a man that discovers that characters from books end up in *The Caxton Private Lending Library and Book Depository* for real as soon as the author has died. But only those really famous characters like Sherlock Holmes, Anna Karenina, and Dracula, etc. It was such a tremendous story and the "library" return later on in the book in one of the shorter stories.

There is no Charlie Parker short story within this collection as it was in the last collection, but I did not mind because the stories are so good and so well written that even those that the subject wasn't really my cup of tea got at least 3-star rating.

4.5 stars

I received this copy from Atria/Emily Bestler Books through Edelweiss in return for an honest review! Thank you!

Aldo Meza says

Algunos malos otros muy buenos, si es mejor Nocturnos que está segunda parte.

Por otro lado, todo parece indicar que lo más nuevo de Conolly no llegará en papel a mi país, por lo cual, tristemente, me tengo que despedir de este gran autor.

Así que señor John Connolly, 17 libros después, muchas gracias !!

Liz Barnsley says

It's hard to believe actually that it's been that long since Nocturnes – I'm a fan of short stories and novella's, they fill in reading gaps and can be particularly beautiful and intriguing to read when in the right hands and of course they are definitely in the right hands here.

Night Music contains a selection of short haunting stories and two longer novella's – one of which, *The Caxton Private Lending Library and Book Depository*, has become one of my favourite tales of all time. I actually read it twice. In fact I might read it again after writing this review...

The collection definitely has something for everyone, including an essay that gives us some insight into the mind of the author, one of those times I think gosh, he should write some non fiction too – These read very differently to the Parker novels – but in a way are all the more brilliant for it, another string to the bow of an

extraordinarily talented writer.

Connolly's prose is intuitive and absorbing, taking the reader to the dark side and enveloping them in a different world – I am hoping that we don't have to wait another decade for more like this – a bit of a masterclass in the art of the short story, whilst this author and Mr King are still writing them, I don't think we need fear the death of the format.

Fantastic. Highly Recommended.

Oscar says

Consagrado como novelista de novela negra con su serie de Charlie Parker, John Connolly también se está convirtiendo en una gran escritor de relatos de terror. La atracción del irlandés por el terror es evidente en sus novelas, donde introduce elementos sobrenaturales de manera más que convincente, algo que algunos puristas del género negro han criticado, a mi modo de ver, injustamente. Lo bueno de estos relatos, es que tienen peso propio, Connolly sabe dotarles de una buena trama, con unos personajes bien definidos, y una atmósfera acorde. En mi opinión, es una gran antología de cuentos de terror.

Estos son los doce relatos, más un ensayo sobre los autores favoritos del género del autor, incluidos en 'Música nocturna' (Night Music, 2015):

La Biblioteca Privada y Depósito de Libros Caxton (*****). El señor Berger es un solitario funcionario que hace una fantástico descubrimiento cuando sigue a una misteriosa mujer que ha intentado suicidarse. Magnífico relato, uno de los mejores del libro, aunque es fantasía y no terror.

La sangre del cordero (*****). Unos padres esperan la visita de unos enviados del Vaticano, que vienen a examinar a su hija, la cuál parece poseer el don curar. Impresionante relato, de los que dejan huella.

Un sueño invernal (***). Un niño cuyo colegio está junto a un cementerio, ve el rostro de un hombre en la ventana. Breve e interesante.

La lamia (****). Carolyn fue violada, y aunque el culpable fue a juicio, salió libre. Ahora vive con una gran rabia dentro, y con ansías de venganza. Un día recibe una extraña tarjeta de visita donde dice *PUEDO AYUDARTE*. Muy buen relato.

El Rey Hueco (****). Una extraña neblina se aproxima al reino. Estupendo relato ambientado en el universo de otro libro de Connolly, *El libro de las cosas perdidas*.

Los niños de la doctora Lyall (****). Tres rateros entran a robar a una extraña casa, lo que supondrá un gran error. Muy buen relato.

El Atlas fracturado: cinco fragmentos (*****), está formado por cinco partes que se relacionan entre sí. El tema principal es el libro del título, un libro maligno que trae la desgracia a todo el que entra en contacto con él. Junto al primer relato, quizás de lo mejor de la antología.

Rajahuesos (****). Unos contrabandistas de licor deben parar en un lugar apartado ante una inminente tormenta. Pronto el terror hará aparición. Gran relato.

Sobre *La anatomización de un hombre desconocido* (1637), de Frans Mier (*)**. El narrador nos describe del cuadro del título... y más secretos. Buen relato.

Una aparición (*)**. Un hombre, tras perder a su esposa, vuelve al hotel al que solían ir. Está bien.

Lázaro (*)**. Lázaro fue resucitado, pero ¿qué fue de él después? Está bien.

Holmes anda suelto: un relato sobre la Biblioteca Privada y Depósito de Libros Caxton (*)**. Volvemos al entorno del primer relato del libro, aunque con otros protagonistas.

Vivo aquí (*)** Ensayo de Connolly que empieza con la anécdota de una mujer mayor que tras una conferencia, se acercó al autor para solicitar consejo sobre una casa maldita de su barrio. Esto sirve al escritor para contarnos cómo empezó a interesarse por el género del terror en la literatura y el cine. Divertido e interesante.

Sue says

This will probably become a favorite collection for me and I now will start reading a lot of John Connolly's books. How have I missed him? Well I will miss him no longer.

In this collection, Connolly presents us with his own take on the world of the unusual or rather ghostly, somewhat fantastical--OK, remove the somewhat. If you enjoy tales of the fantastic with an otherworldly bent and a definite literary edge, Connolly is your man and *Night Music* is your book. The first story, a bibliophile's delight, "The Caxton Private Lending Library & Book Depository," deals with the implications of the characters of well-loved books taking on corporal form when their authors die. "The Fractured Atlas--Five Fragments" is a novella that deals in books by way of the occult and is as close as this book comes to the world of horror. Definitely has creepy moments.

My absolute favorite, and candidate for having some of the most perfect lines of the entire book, is "Holmes on the Range." I strongly recommend it to anyone who has ever read (or watched) and enjoyed Sherlock Holmes in any of his various personas. Perfection.

This collection of 12 stories ends with Connolly's discussion of his love of writing in this genre of the supernatural, the books that have influenced him, etc. I have now added *Nocturnes* to my reading list and will be checking out more of Connolly's backlist. Excellent writing, excellent stories. Excellent package and highly recommended if you enjoy stories of the unknown, the un-natural and the beyond, written in a very literate manner.

A copy of this book was provided by the publisher through NetGalley in return for an honest review.

Chris says

I received an advance copy of this book from the publisher via Netgalley in exchange for an honest review.

Right up front I have to admit that I am a huge fan of John Connolly. For me he is right up there with Robert McCammon, Richard Matheson and Stephen King as writers of dark fiction. I wouldn't call any of them horror writers per se, although they don't seem particularly offended by it as horror is probably their first literary love anyway. What separates these giants, in my opinion, is that their work, while horrifying at times, never fails to dig deeper into the humanity of the situation. Their characters are complex, often conflicted, and the stories are deep in meaning and emotional impact. Plus, they propel their stories forward in such a way that I can't help but read them in as few sittings as possible.

I love Connolly's Charlie Parker series and recommend *The Book of Lost Things* to anyone I find, but I have limited experience with his short stories so I was very interested to read *Night Music*. Given that many of these stories are interrelated and some of them novella length, this isn't really a traditional short story collection—it has a cohesiveness that made it even more enjoyable for me.

The Caxton Private Lending Library and Book Depository and its companion piece *Holmes on the Range* show that Connolly is not only a mature writer—but like the greats mentioned above, at heart he is still that young man that fell in love with the books he read in his youth. These two stories are homages to great literary characters, and to their writers. I don't want to spoil even a word of these two stories so I will just say that if you love literature and great characters from Dickens, Doyle etc. these two stories are at times hilarious, and at all times tremendously clever and just plain fun to read.

The *Fractured Atlas* stories, which tell of a diabolical and hopefully mythical book, is another connected set of tales that have an overarching Lovecraftian type of theme to them. Each story provides a different perspective, and often different time frame, to the overall story of the book. And it is a great story that emerges like peeling the skin off of an onion.

There are a couple of classic style stories such as “Razorshins” and “The Lamia” as well as some that travel unusual territory like the brilliant bit of heresy “Lazarus.” While on the subject of heresy, I have to give a shout out to “The Blood of the Lamb” which is one of the most chilling stories that I have read in a long time. The ending is like stepping into an elevator shaft.

Connolly is very generous in that all of the stories are annotated and give you the details on how they came to be, because as we are told, songs and short stories are not written, they are already there and are merely discovered.

In “I Live Here,” Connolly treats the reader to an extended, and often hilarious, autobiographical section in which he mentions the authors and works that impacted him, as well as, perhaps as interestingly, those that didn't. I thoroughly enjoyed this section. It felt like the wizard came out from behind the curtain, pulled up a chair, and proceeding to tell you how all of the magic worked---or at least where it came from. However, don't get too comfortable because “I Live Here” will give you chills as you are asked quite seriously are there people assigned to guard actual dangerous places so that people stay away? What if Hill House (or Hell House for that matter) was in your neighborhood? Would you want to visit? Could you stop yourself?

Of course 5 stars. It's Connolly so it is brilliant.

Bandit says

Though I seem to have abandoned the Charlie Parker series, which despite being thoroughly excellent just went on and on and on, this collection was still something on my radar. Connolly is, after all, a very talented author. And sure enough, *Night Music* showcases that talent thoroughly, although not without some caveats. The book is 9/10th fiction and 1/10th essay on how that fiction came to be, not story introductions per se, but instead a glimpse into Connolly's psyche to help the readers understand the inspirations, motivations and ideas behind the words. One doesn't need to read the essay to understand that Connolly's main inspiration (with notable exception of the most popular modern genre author) is classic horror of bygone days, namely M.R.James. In fact *Night Music* stories read very much like old time pastiches in pacing and manner and subject matter, albeit considerably more readable. Books are, of course, a thing of personal preference and personally I don't care much for classic horror, I find it quite slow and frequently tedious and plodding. Connolly obviously loves them enough to emulate them. If M.R.James is your idea of a good read, you'll love *Night Music* passionately. If not, there is a good chance you'll still love it or at least like and appreciate it as I did. There is much to admire and enjoy here, although none as much as the Caxton Private Lending Library and Book Depository, which is an absolute literary delight, a bibliophile's dream and one of the best fictional places of its kind since Ruiz Zafon's. The companion story (the two of them bookending the collection) is also absolutely terrific and one of the most original take on the famous detective oeuvre out there. Very, very clever, both. The rest of the stories are good, solid, but not amazing. The cosmic horror novella, for example, is thoroughly well written, original, creative, but it reads so very slowly. The two aforementioned stories are really the stars of the show here. The essay part is interesting, it makes one think Connolly might have a future in nonfiction writing. He's witty, erudite, highly opinionated (and quite so) and funny. Personally I'm not sure one should really get to know the creative types behind the creations to maintain the impartial, pure enjoyment of those creations, but alas, the essay was read and now I have a fair idea of Connolly as a person. So there it is, along with some decent critical analysis of classic horror. Pretty good read, this anthology, although one that felt very long, certainly longer than page count warranted. Much to enjoy for Connolly's fans & genre aficionados. Recommended.

Karl says

John Connolly's "Night Music: Nocturnes Volume 2" gives the reader a high water mark for excellence. This compilation of stories, some short, some not so short arrives eleven years after "Nocturnes" (Volume 1) and should be on every one's reading list.

Mr. Connolly displays his craft of the art of storytelling by supplying 13 well-crafted and amazingly powerful stories. Some are ghost stories, some are fairy tales and some are more unsettling than others, though all are outstanding. A couple of the stories were published in the "Irish Times" so most readers have most likely not run across them previously.

Although it is difficult to choose my favorite stories in this volume as there is not a below average tale amongst them, I would have to choose two related tales, "The Caxton Private Lending Library & Book Depository" and "Holmes on the Range." The first, which opens this book, follows a middle aged booklover, Mr. Berger, a retired housing registrar, after he witnesses what looks like a suicide by train, a scene that strongly reminds him of the climactic moments from the novel "Anna Karenina." When there is no body is recovered, Mr. Berger becomes obsessed with learning the truth behind what must have been a vision, and his investigation leads him to the establishment titled in this story, which includes a host of literature related secrets.

“Holmes on the Range” is a much-shorter sequel to the first story, its title provides a clue as to the cast of characters in this story. The two “Caxton Library” stories are amazing stories of creativity and are in no way overdone.

Another favorite tale in the book is “A Wanderer In Unknown Realms” which may just well be worth the price of the book. This story was previously released as a stand-alone book from Mr. Connolly’s own imprint “Bad Dog Books” in an edition of 750 copies and now commands a price of over one hundred dollars. It’s the story of madness, of obsession, and of books’ power to change the world and the people in it.

Highly Recommended !

This copy is signed by John Connolly.

Bill says

2 novellas and several shorts highlight John Connolly’s writing skills with both the longer novella and the short story formats. The guy can flat out tell a story no matter what the length and I truly enjoyed every one of these stories.

There is an old school flavor to a few of these and if you read the closing autobiographical essay “I Live Here” you’ll know why. Expertly done, as I have come to expect from Mr. Connolly. If you haven’t read him before, then you better start cracking. You have some work to do... Be sure not to miss out on the Parker series either. Trust me. You will not regret it.

**I received an advanced copy of this release from NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.*

Char says

Night Music: Nocturnes Volume Two is an unbelievably wonderful collection of tales from a master.

The only other short form John Connolly story I've read is **The Wanderer in Unknown Realms**, which I loved. Turns out that's part of a larger narrative: **The Fractured Atlas-Five Fragments**. This is a group of 5 tales of varying lengths involving an ancient, evil text. Who doesn't love a good story about an evil book? And here, there's 5, (count them, 5!), and they are simply delicious.

Two of the other stories here are connected: **The Caxton Private Lending Library and Book Depository** and **Holmes on the Range: A Tale of the Caxton Private Library and Book Depository**. These are killer pieces about characters in books coming to life and in what type of places they reside. I want to go there for a nice long visit.

One of the reasons this collection is so perfect for me is all these stories about books. And book lovers. And book characters. And evil books. I can't resist!

Plus, Connolly's characterization and writing are beyond compare. I loved this passage from the story **The**

Wander in Unknown Realms :

"There was a benignity to him that I liked, a happy disengagement from the futilities and ugliness of life's toil that one encountered in those who had discovered a way to take something for which they had only love and gratitude, and make it their means of support."

Ain't that the truth?

This was a lovely, dark collection. It ends with a sort of autobiographical essay called **I Live Here** ,which was enjoyable and included insights into John Connolly's boyhood experiences with horror fiction and movies.

I found every story in this volume worthy of my attention and I can't say enough good things about it. My highest recommendation!

Thanks to Net Galley for the ARC. This is my honest review.

Kimberly says

John Connolly is a man who has the nearly unattainable ability to give "life" to each and every character he creates. The stories in this collection left me literally gaping at the sheer genius of their construction. Regardless of the length of the tale, Connolly is able to create an entire "world" with the strength of his words.

I can point out many authors who have written a handful of extremely memorable short stories, but very rarely have I encountered such a discovery in a single collection of modern works! Just about everything in this collection will mentally take you away and deposit you into their unique "virtual reality".

As if that weren't enough, so many of these stories were so commanding that I found myself going back to them in my own mind time and time again. I can honestly say that--even though some stories affected me more so than others--there is not a single thing I have to be critical about in regards to NIGHT MUSIC.

John Connolly is a true artist at what he does.

Some of my personal favorites include:

--"The Caxton Private Lending Library & Book Depository": A true book lover discovers his own paradise in the secret of Caxton's Private Library. The exquisite language used in this story really transports the reader into a world where virtually anything seems possible. I found this one beautifully haunting and poetic at once, and it is tied with one other story for my favorite in this collection.

--"The Hollow King": I felt this to be one of the more horrific tales in this collection, with an atmosphere that I, nevertheless, found myself irresistibly drawn to.

--"The Lamia": This was another emotionally disturbing tale detailing the life of a rape victim AFTER the occurrence, and a unique opportunity afforded her. . .

--"Razorshins": A story that combines true crime in the Prohibition Era with a local "superstition".

--"Lazarus": A disturbing look at the life of one of the Bible's most famous "miracles".

--"Blood of the Lamb": A girl with Christ-like healing abilities gets a visit from representatives of the Vatican. This is the other story I consider tied for my personal favorite in this book. Although the material

this tale is based upon contains a completely different set of emotions and circumstances, it is one that caught me thoroughly off guard, and I am still unable to get it out of my consciousness.

A very memorable array of stories from first to last. This is a book you will want to go back to repeatedly!

Highest Recommendation!

I received an advance e-copy of this book through NetGalley and the Publisher in exchange for an honest review.

Paul Nelson says

Night Music is the second in John Connolly's Nocturnes series of dark and chilling short fiction. Contained within are 12 stories, two multiple award winning novellas and a final section, *I Live Here* where the author talks of his fictional and supernatural influences.

My favourite story, the one that nudged past the others, as Mr Connolly does set the bar pretty high, had to be *The Fractured Atlas - Five Fragments*. Which is a novella comprising of 5 loosely linked stories concerning a book of power. Of the five the one I enjoyed most was *The Wanderer in Unknown Realms* where Mr Sorter is hired by a lawyer to investigate the disappearance of his client Lionel Spalding. Spalding had been buying books of the occult, spending large sums of money and the book he sought was *The Atlas of Unknown Realms* a book of maps, alleged realms beyond our own. The dark atmosphere and slow building tension are perfect, deep and edgy it felt like a much longer piece, which for me is the sign of an excellent short story.

The Caxton Private Lending Library & Book Depository is an award winning story where famous characters of fiction come to live when their authors die, discreetly hidden in a small town in the countryside. So when newly arrived Mr Berger sees a woman throw herself into the path of a train, the resulting lack of body and the fact that she mimicked and even looked as Anna Karenina would have looked has him thinking. This sees Mr Berger embark on an obsession with the incident which brings him to our *Private Lending Library*. A second story *Holmes on the Range* is also based around the lending library and unexpected events when Arthur Conan Doyle decides to kill off Sherlock and Dr Watson. The idea and premise of the library is liberating and kind of like a heaven for your favourite characters, wonderfully imaginative.

Other stories worth a mention are *Razorshins* where a creature of nightmare haunts Maine in the prohibition era and sad little tale *A Haunting* about love and heart breaking loss.

Night Music is an absolutely top notch collection of dark supernatural tales guaranteed to scupper your feelings of calm, from an author right at the top of my list of favourites. I enjoyed reading John Connolly's thoughts and reminisces as much as the stories themselves and Nocturnes volume 2 comes highly recommended.

Also posted at <http://paulnelson.booklikes.com/post/...>

K.J. Charles says

What the bobbins is this. The first story reads like it was written by a clever 14yo and the second one has switched POV back and forth about five times in a page and a half. I normally love Connolly's work, as well. DNF in favour of something that's been edited.

Edit: Apparently the 14yo-type story is multi award winning and now I'm really confused. It's about the idea that popular characters from literature come alive, their life dictated by their book, and if you change the original book you change all the copies in the world. That's not exactly a brand-new never-before-conceived bit of spec fic, is it? Which, fine, not all ideas have to be new, it's all in the treatment. But there's nothing new or unexpected in the treatment here--to absolutely nobody's surprise the hero falls in love with a pretty tragic female character and changes her ending--and while it's perfectly readable and very nicely written in itself, why you'd put it at the start of a collection, still less give it an award, I could not say.

Disappointing.

Jon Recluse says

A new John Connolly book is always an event, and his latest collection is no exception. Having already proven himself a master of Dark Fiction, it goes without saying that the short tales of horror here are all gems....dark, compelling and powerful journeys into the shadows that will thrill and chill any horror fan. Connolly's homage to the sub-genre of forbidden texts, **The Fractured Atlas-Five Fragments** alone is worth the price of admission.

But.....the crown jewels of this collection are something completely different, unexpected gifts for the book lovers in us all.

With the novella, **The Caxton Private Lending Library and Book Depository**, and its companion short story, **Holmes on the Range: A Tale of the Caxton Private Lending Library and Book Depository**, Connolly has outdone himself, creating a special place where the characters of literature appear once their creators have passed away. In my opinion, the very best stories, in any genre, are works of imagination and originality, true classics inspire the imaginations of their readers. These are true classics, in every sense of the word....a heartfelt gift from Mr. Connolly, not only to the authors and books that inspired him, but to every lover of books....giving us a place that we would give anything to visit....and that fills our dreams, wondering who else may be wandering about there. I will be returning to these stories often, as often as I've returned to The Caxton in my mind.

And finally, we come to **I Live Here**, an autobiographical essay where Mr. Connolly shares the books and authors that inspired him, told with a delightful candor, humor and even a chill from unexpected places.

It goes without saying, my highest possible recommendation.

This was an eARC from Netgalley, offered in exchange for an honest review.

Zoeytron says

John Connolly serves up a wicked brew of short stories and two novellas in **Night Music** that might very well have you looking over your shoulder for the foreseeable future. There is a wonderful flavor of the old-fashioned about these tales.

The Fractured Atlas was was my favorite in the mix. It will pull you into worlds other than the one we know. It is filled with obscure tomes, living, breathing books with whispery pages and long memories. Beware the man who doesn't like books and stinks because he is bad on the inside. Avoid the mud that carries a vile stench and remembers. This was chilling and excellent.

Other standouts for me were **The Blood of the Lamb**, **A Dream of Winter**, **The Caxton Private Lending Library and Book Depository**, and **The Children of Dr. Lyall**.

A copy of this was furnished to me by Net Galley in exchange for a review. Thank you.
