



The hills have ears: the scariest music-led spots

Description



It’s the most hair-raising time of the year once again, so we thought we’d offer some two-fold treats: a very quick roundup of our favourite Halloween offerings this year, and a look at some of our all-

time favourite spooky spots that make great use of music. How many do you dare to watch?

2014's tops



This year as every year, brands have come out in force to celebrate the Christmas Day of creepiness and [cavities](#). Trulia comes out on top of the [pranks](#), while Ikea Singapore is leagues ahead in the [film homage stakes](#), though [Giffgaff](#), [Geico](#) and [Snickers](#) have also offered some fun twists (tee hee). Competing for cutest are [Dumb Ways to Die](#) and Oreo's stop-motion [Nomsters](#).

See some evil, hear some evil



On to our perennial favourites. The use of horror itself in advertising can be a delicate thing â?? too tame and it seems hokey, too scary and the thing gets pulled for upsetting viewers. Most spots choose to temper the terror with comedy (a little of which youâ??ll see below.) The ads we selected make fine use of music â?? in fact, most of them use no dialog or VO at all, making strong use of score and visual with a single sharp line of finishing copy to create maximum unsettling impact in minimal time.

Read on, and test your courage â?? who needs sleep, anyway?

Dirt Devil, 2011

Sickeningly young German director Andreas Roth made his mark while still a student with this slick Hoover spot. It layers on the gloom, with solid casting, bleak lighting and a deliciously brooding score from oddball sound and music agency German Wahnsinn, beforeâ?? Well, youâ??ll see. Just as music can set the mood, so can it gleefully bust that mood wide open. The central conceit is a [well-trodden device](#), but this is arguably its finest execution.

Dead Island, 2011

This might be the most decorated game trailer going, and for good reason — studio Axis Animation and publisher Deep Silver recognised the potency of seeing the sadness in horror (stand up [The Orphanage](#), and also the similarly score-led trailer for [Halo 3](#)). Rather than opting for thumping metal or elaborate rock to soundtrack the horrors of a zombie battle, the family's desperate struggle is accompanied by composer Giles Lamb's rather minimal and entirely heart-rending orchestral arrangement, a neat balance between slow motion rewind and frantic action giving the terror a haunting poignancy.

Metz, 2000

The Judderman spot for long-defunct Bacardi-owned alcopop Metz, by Irish director Enda McCallion, isn't necessarily all that scary on paper. But somehow the execution gets the better of you. First the production: the gaunt, Robert Wiene-style woods, grinning puppets, head-spinning crows, and the spiky, vacillating, ice-crust-ed Judderman himself, designed by comic book artist Clint Langley. Then there's the silent movie-aping soundtrack — clock that gently synthetic organ grinder sound, and the dimly Balkan, vintaged-up orchestration. It all contrives to slip an icy hand around the imagination that still makes a whole UK generation shudder.

Herbaria, 2013

This singular German spot from Hungary-based tea purveyors is an excellent blend (geddit) of twisted comedy and real, two-pronged terror — unsurprisingly, it also comes from director Andreas Roth, who nabbed a Young Directors award at Cannes for his trouble. Instead of the more typical filmic inspirations (not to say that John Carpenter and Bernard Hermann homages don't evoke an instant recognition of the grim territory the viewer has entered) Jung von Matt/Neckar and Roth score the spot with frantic Vivaldi-style strings care again of the Wahnsinn team, to match the horrifyingly high-detail visuals. Proof that to break out of the —expected— ad mould for your industry can yield big, weird creative results.