



Out of Tune: Book 2

Jonathan Maberry (Editor) , Allison Pang , Nik Vincent-Abnett , Rachel Caine , James A. Moore , Eric J. Guignard , David J. Schow , J.C. Koch , more... Cherie Priest , Rachel Aukes , Dan Abnett , David Mack , Deborah Grabien , Delilah S. Dawson , Josh Malerman , Laura Anne Gilman ...less

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The music playing in the night...whispering from the shadows. Haunting melodies and old songs sung by ghostly voices.

New York Times bestselling author Jonathan Maberry presents a brand new collection of original stories by some of today's top authors of horror, dark fantasy, and science fiction. Each tale draws strange inspiration from classic folks songs and murder ballads from around the world.

Introduction (Out of Tune: Book 2) • essay by Jonathan Maberry
Respawn, Reboot • novelette by Allison Pang
The Knoxville Girl • short story by Cherie Priest [as by Cherie M. Priest]
The Beams of the Sun • novelette by Dan Abnett
Midnight Rider • short story by David Mack
Not Long After the Fair • short story by Deborah Grabien
Just Another Black Umbrella • short story by Delilah S. Dawson
The House of the Rising Sun • short story by Eric J. Guignard
Red River Valley • short story by Gini Koch [as by J. C. Koch]
Who Is Bringing Milk to Me? • short story by Josh Malerman
First Dance • short story by Laura Anne Gilman
The Twa Corbies • short story by Nik Vincent [as by Nik Vincent-Abnett]
A Tale of Three Deaths • short story by Rachel Aukes
I Lay Stretched on Your Grave • short story by Rachel Caine
In the Woods, Somewhere • short story by James A. Moore
Long Black Veil • short story by David J. Schow

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From Reader Review Out of Tune: Book 2 for online ebook

Christopher Payne says

Listen! Hear that?

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New York Times bestselling author Jonathan Maberry presents a brand new collection of original stories by some of today's top authors of horror, dark fantasy, and science fiction. Each tale draws strange inspiration from classic folks songs and murder ballads from around the world.

GracieKat says

I absolutely loved this book. I love the mix of music and horror. Lyricism and madness and even though I haven't published anything I can relate to the preface about music inspiring your creativity.

I am a big reader of anthologies and when <http://www.scifiandscary.com> offered it for review I was all, "Yes, please!"

On a side note if you like horror and sci-fi it's a great blog to check out. No, that's not required to say, it's just a great blog that I've been following for a bit now)

Anyway, back to the book. At first it sounded a bit like Shock Rock, Volume I and Shock Rock, Volume II. Which are also both (great) music themed horror.

I was instead happily surprised that they were instead based on old folk tales and songs. Not only that but at the end of each story you get a mini-lesson on the songs, poems or tales that were the basis for each story. Also some of the singers that sang versions of them. I definitely plan on looking some up because some of the songs I'd never heard sounded very interesting. I was a little disappointed that Loreena McKennitt was never mentioned for I know she did covers of at least two of the songs mentioned in the book. But I do understand they were pressed for space. And it may be only a disappointment to me because I'm a huge fan of her singing, particularly her poem and tale covers.

Part of the fun of reading them was trying to guess what poem/tale/song the story was coming from. Some were easy, some were hard and others I had no idea of as I'd never heard of it before.

They aren't exact copies. Each author does an excellent job of making each story their own without destroying the core concepts in the original.

The only three I thought were slightly off from the originals were: 'Just Another Black Umbrella' (it just didn't seem to fit the story at all) of 'Proud Lady Margaret'. It reminded me much more of 'The Phantom

'Hitch-hiker' urban legend), 'Not Long After the Fair' seemed to not fit quite right with its source and 'Long Black Veil' changes one of the major things that makes it a tragic tale.

This might be somewhat picky, you might say and maybe you're right. It's just my opinion and I loved each of the stories listed, despite the deviation from the original

The only story I could not get into was 'The Twa Corbies'. It was written well and I get its connection to the source, it just wasn't my cup of tea. I think I'm just dystopianed out but other readers might find it more to their liking. I also didn't really care for one of the characters too much but I don't want to say why for fear of little spoilers.

Even though the cover is Grim looking (sorry, couldn't resist the pun) I'm hesitant to label it strictly horror. Perhaps dark fantasy might be a better category for it.

So, to sum up this lengthy little review I can only say again that it was a 5 star read for me and now I can't wait to get the second one.

There will be a longer review on my blog going into each of the stories and their corresponding songs. It will be spoilery but please give it a read when you've given this book a read.

Received the e-book free from Sci-Fi & Scary (link above) for an honest review.

Judi says

Wonderful collection of horror stories based off ballads. Many are quiet introspective chilling pieces. Delilah Dawson was wonderful. Eric J. Guignard was brilliant. Allison Pang's story was tragic, captivating. All good tales!

PennsyLady (Bev) says

Out of Tune: Book 2

edited by Jonathan Maberry

"collection of original stories by some of today's top authors of horror, dark fantasy, and science fiction. Each tale draws strange inspiration from classic folks songs and murder ballads from around the world." (publisher's note)

Jonathan Mayberry is editor of a collection of short stories by current writers of "horror, dark fantasy and science fiction." Each tale ends with a discussion of the unusual source of inspiration. The contributors are also introduced in a section named as such.

I enjoyed the brevity and imaginative flair these authors exercised. In some cases, I felt the story could have been told without the overuse of certain expletives. I find that annoying and unnecessary.

Actually, it was an interesting read and an opportunity to make time for short stories.

4 ★ for content (excluding "drama phrases").

Goodreads giveaway

Ladiibbug says

Avail. via Kindle only - this book II rel. date = 5/20/16

Sean Carlin says

This is an anthology of short stories in the horror and dark fantasy genres, and, as such, is difficult to rate *overall*, as most anthologies are a mixed bag of hits and misses; this is no different.

Let's start with the *presentation* before we move on to the *content*: The hardcover edition -- the one I ordered and read -- is very nice quality for a small publisher. The artwork is aces, with a moody cover by Ryan Brown and atmospheric penciled interstitials by John Couchant. The collection's unifying theme -- all the stories are inspired, to one degree or another, by folk songs and murder ballads -- is a novel one. (I wasn't aware of the first volume and haven't yet read it, but I assume it was at least moderately successful -- creatively and financially -- to have warranted a follow-up.) Of the fifteen stories in this collection, I found five to be really satisfying:

- David Mack's "Midnight Rider" is a terrific "weird Western" with a *Tales from the Crypt*-style payoff.
- Delilah S. Dawson's "Just Another Black Umbrella" is a haunting little yarn with rich characterization and beautiful attention to detail.
- "Red River Valley" by J.C. Koch is also a wicked Western, one in which evil preys on the naïve and the stupid.
- I loved Josh Malerman's "Who Is Bringing Milk to Me?" Between this short piece and his chilling novel *Bird Box*, Malerman is proving himself to be a master of slow-burn terror.
- The collection ends on a high note with David J. Schow's "Long Black Veil," which reads like James M. Cain meets William Gaines -- and I mean that as the highest compliment. Excellent writing here.

Runners-up in this collection would be Dan Abnett's "The Beams of the Sun" and James A. Moore's "In the Woods Somewhere," which were well-written if not exceptional entries.

Allison Pang's opening salvo, "Respawn, Reboot," sees a good premise buried under pedestrian execution. The next story, Cherie Priest's "The Knoxville Girl," is an improvement, but could've been scarier or had a better twist. Deborah Grabien's "Not Long after the Fair" is *meh*, and Eric J. Guignard's "The House of the Rising Sun" is perplexing (perhaps it would benefit from a second reading?). Laura Anne Gilman's "First

Dance" is short and to the point, but didn't pack enough of a climactic punch. Nik Vincent-Abnett's "The Twa Corbies" suffers from subpar writing (I thought it very odd that the protagonists were called "Rob" and "Bobbie," essentially the exact same name, to no apparent point). Rachel Aukes' "A Tale of Three Deaths" is a wicked little story with a halfway decent twist, but the dialogue isn't spectacular and the plot a little far-fetched. Rachael Caine's "I Lay Stretched out on Your Grave" reads like Twilight leftovers.

So, all in all, Out of Tune: Book 2 boasts five out of fifteen home runs, about as many base hits, and about as many strikeouts -- a pretty even mixed bag. I found the strongest entries in this collection made the book worthwhile, and Nancy Keim Comley's folklore commentary gives some nice background on the ballads that inspired each of the stories. Will definitely be curious to read the first collection now, as well as any subsequent volumes, and I will certainly look to read more work from Mack, Dawson, Koch, Malerman, and Schow.

Angela Crawford says

I received a copy of this book from the publisher for review purposes. This is in no way reflected in my opinion of this anthology. I did not receive any form of compensation for my review.

As a longtime fan of Jonathan Maberry I was excited to be offered a review copy of this book. I know that anything written or edited by him is sure to be enjoyable. When I found out that the stories are inspired by some of my favorite murder ballads I was even happier. Each story starts off with a creepy illustration and ends with a commentary about the history and folklore of the song that inspired it. I spent a lot of time on YouTube looking up the songs I didn't know and revisiting those I did. The tales found within these pages are fantastic. A few of my favorites are,,, Respawn, Reboot about a video game that may truly transport you to another world, one you might not escape. Midnight Rider is a weird western tale of ghostly revenge, and might be my favorite of all the stories in this anthology. In The Woods Somewhere is a dark fairy tale that I wanted more of. Who Is Bringing Milk To Me is a great example of how less is sometimes so much scarier when it comes to horror. After reading this I can't wait to read the first book in this collection! I highly recommend this outstanding 5 star anthology.
