

# Song of the Weekend

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From the Lee Jackson Audio Community Discussion Group

(<https://www.facebook.com/groups/ljackaudiogroup>)

Entry: 20210320 – Sniper

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This week's "Song of the Weekend" is Sniper, from the album, "Duke Nukem Tank Tracks."

Sniper is the first song on the "Duke Nukem Tank Tracks" album. It was also the second single to be released from the album, right after Underground Train. Unlike Underground Train, it did not have a music video made for it, however.

The title of the piece involves both a bit of wordplay and a tribute. The piece is based off of Stalker, the music for E1L1 of "Duke Nukem 3D." Snipers and Stalkers are in a small way related when it comes to Army combat (I'm sure I'll get a ton of e-mail about this being wrong - don't worry, I'm NOT talking about creepy ought-to-be-locked-up stalkers in daily life) in that they both employ stealth tactics when hunting their prey. As for the tribute aspect of Sniper, that relates back to a pet of my best friend from college and post-college days, Preston King. He purchased a cockatiel, and for some goofy reason he, my wife, and I decided to name him Sniper. Sniper's life was all too short, so this adaptation is dedicated to him.

Musical Analysis:

I'll try to keep this simple, since most people are familiar with the original Stalker and since it has already been covered in the January 26th, 2020 edition of "Song of the Weekend." No guarantees, however.

Sniper is written in the key of e minor at an approximate tempo of 92 bpm (I could be wrong on that - I can't find the source file on short notice). It begins by taking the original Stalker's bass line intro and splitting it up across pizzicato strings in a question-and-answer section, while a drone E note is played in the background on lower strings. This continues until it is wrapped up by a harp glissando.

The clarinet section takes over the melody at this point, playing the original notes but in the low register and in a staccato style instead of the original's legato style. Meanwhile, the E drone is joined by a B at the fifth interval on mid-strings, possibly violas. The clarinets continue their staccato pattern until the melody ends on a B, at which point they drop out and let a swell in the viola drone carry the melody.

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Staccato violins take over for the clarinets, continuing the melody over the split drone while an occasional *divisi* viola and cello section play an answer figure. Once this finishes, the percussion, which has been keeping a steady if somewhat sparse syncopated beat using a bass drum and a snare played with a side stick, begins to pick up the rhythm somewhat, bringing in new instruments and patterns while keeping the tempo steady.

The clarinets take over once more, this time with one voice added an octave higher. They play over drones that ebb and flow with the clarinet melody, and which include a third voice for a richer chord structure. At the end of the clarinet melodic section, the violins take over and play a pizzicato figure that is pulled straight from the end section of the original Stalker, although made a bit easier to perform (the original would not be playable as a pizzicato line). This is the ostinato that plays while the chords and percussion build toward the climax of Stalker. It plays for a couple of repetitions, then the whole piece starts a long wind-down towards the end in preparation for the loop.

And that's Sniper, in a nutshell. Now, please allow me to leave you with a link to Sniper on Bandcamp. Thank you for reading, and thank you for voting for your "Song of the Weekend!"

<https://leejackson1.bandcamp.com/track/sniper>