

12 Favorite Halloween Classical Pieces

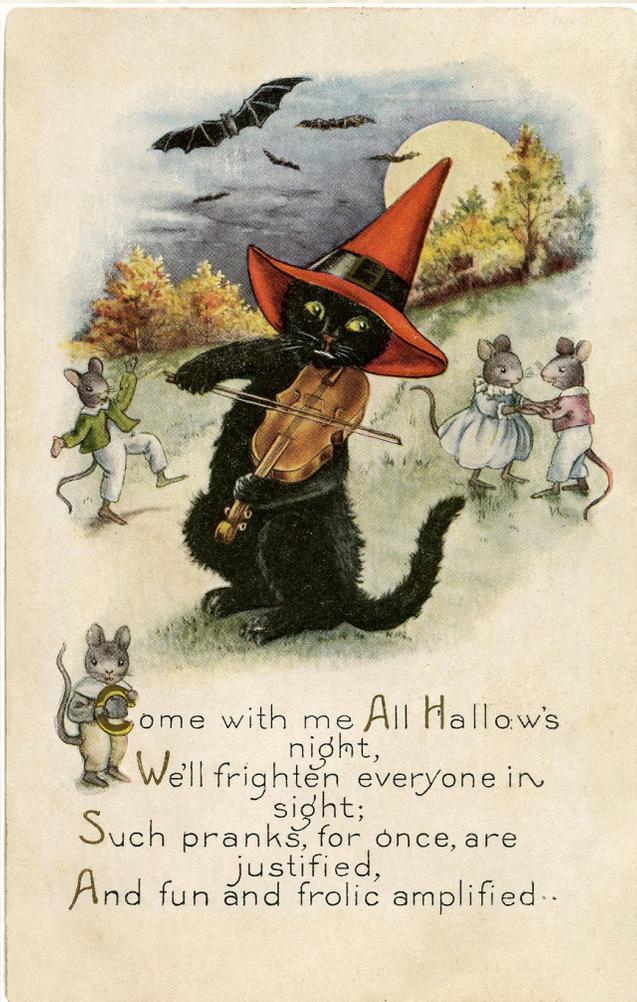
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Post published: October 31, 2018

Halloween is here! And if you're looking for spooky, creepy, or monstrous music for your playlist, you're in luck. Check out our 12 favorite Halloween classical music pieces below.

1. Saint-Saëns – *Danse Macabre* <https://youtu.be/71fZhMXlGT4>

With a title that includes the word “macabre”, you can tell it’s a great piece for Halloween. This is by far the most famous work associated with the holiday, and with good reason. It is a tone poem inspired by a French legend that says “Death” appears at midnight on Halloween to call forth the dead from their graves to dance for him. He plays the fiddle while skeletons dance until dawn.



2. Dvořák – *The Water Goblin* <https://youtu.be/FIDTah3SvCU>

The Water Goblin is a symphonic poem that tells a horrific story of a mischievous goblin who traps drowning souls in upturned teacups. It begins by depicting the water goblin sitting by a lake sewing a green coat and red boots for his wedding. Then a mother is telling her daughter a dream she had about her daughter in white robes swirling in foaming water. Fearing it was a foreshadow of danger, she warns her daughter not to go to the lake. Of course, the daughter is drawn to the lake despite the warnings. The bridge she sits on collapses and, as she falls into the water, the goblin abducts her. He takes her to his underwater castle and marries her. They have a child together and she begs the goblin to allow her to visit her mother. He agrees on 3 conditions: that she not embrace anyone, that she leaves the baby behind, and that she returns by the bells of the evening vespers. She visits her mother who forbids her to return when the bells ring. The water goblin becomes enraged and goes to the mother's home and bangs on the door. When he is refused, he kills the child.

3. Mussorgsky – *Night on Bald Mountain*

<https://youtu.be/52iOdAVU4C8>

Another famous piece commonly associated with Halloween, *Night on Bald Mountain* paints a musical picture of a witch's sabbath occurring on St. John's Eve. Interestingly, the original piece composed by Mussorgsky is not the version you typically hear. That was only published in 1968 and is performed very rarely. The piece we have come to know (and hear in places like Walt Disney's *Fantasia* is an arrangement by Rimsky-Korsakov.

4. Berlioz – “Dream of the Night of the Sabbath” from *Symphonie Fantastique*

<https://youtu.be/cao6WyF-61s>

Often referred to as the “Dream of the Witches’ Sabbath”, it is the 5th movement of Berlioz’s grand *Symphonie Fantastique*. Each movement of the symphony depicts an episode in the protagonist’s life (an artist who poisoned himself with opium out of unrequited love). The program notes in the original score for the 5th movement are as follows:

He sees himself at a witches’ sabbath, in the midst of a hideous gathering of shades, sorcerers and monsters of every kind who have come together for his funeral. Strange sounds, groans, outbursts of laughter; distant shouts which seem to be answered by more shouts. The beloved melody appears once more, but has now lost its noble and shy character; it is now no more than a vulgar dance tune, trivial and grotesque: it is she who is coming to the sabbath ... Roar of delight at her arrival ... She joins the diabolical orgy ... The funeral knell tolls, burlesque parody of the Dies irae, the dance of the witches. The dance of the witches combined with the Dies irae.



5. Ryan Smith – *The Night Creeps Slowly*

<https://youtu.be/vvGXqeVt4J4>

Ryan Smith may not be a name you know, but he is composer from Parker, Colorado who wrote a very Halloween-appropriate piece that the Parker Symphony

played for its world premiere. A Chaparral High School graduate in 2008, he has written, recorded, and produced under the name M.I.X.



6. Chopin – “Funeral March” from his *Piano Sonata No. 2*

<https://youtu.be/xt9SN7Y-z-A>

What Halloween music list would be complete without the famous Funeral March from Chopin. Although many may not know it, it is actually the 3rd movement in his *Piano Sonata No. 2* and quite lovely once you get past the main motif. It has been arranged for a variety of instruments and even full orchestra and has been played at numerous funerals including Chopin’s own burial in October 1849 at Père Lachaise Cemetery in Paris.

7. Liszt – *Totentanz*

<https://youtu.be/ScqeArnDoaE>

“Totentanz” translates to “Dance of the Dead” in English. It joins several other works by Liszt in showing his fascination with death. In fact, it is said he frequented hospitals and asylums and even went down into prison dungeons to see those condemned to die.

8. Bach – *Tocatta and Fugue in D minor*

<https://youtu.be/ho9rZjlsyYY>

Probably the most famous piece of organ music written, the *Tocatta and Fugue in D minor* was not intended to be creepy, but thanks to its use in numerous films, it has become a cliché to illustrate horror and villainy.

9. Rachmaninoff – *Isle of the Dead*

<https://youtu.be/WJyQOpqappg>

Another symphonic poem that depicts a story, this piece was inspired by a reproduction of a painting of the same name that Rachmaninoff saw in Paris. The opening of the piece is either suggestive of oars as they meet the waters on the way to the Isle of the Dead or the waves themselves.

10. Gounod – *Funeral March of a Marionette*

<https://youtu.be/NVcVBCMuGgo>

Ok. One listen to this piece and you'll instantly recognize it as the theme for *Alfred Hitchcock Presents*. However, it has also a great piece for Halloween because of its subject matter (a funeral) and it's oddly catchy and creepy melody. The storyline that the piece follows is that a marionette has died in a duel, the funeral procession commences, and then, during the central section, mourners take refreshments before returning to the march.



11. Penderecki – *Intermezzo For 24 Strings*

<https://youtu.be/sOSsWdrnid0>

Not an overtly Halloween-themed piece, the chromatic layering of instruments has a creepy effect that makes this a great addition to any Halloween playlist. Penderecki is a Polish composer of the 20th and 21st century whose music has sometimes been adapted for films. His *String Quartet* and *Kanon For Orchestra and Tape* were featured in the 1973 movie *The Exorcist*



12. Grieg – “In The Hall of the Mountain King” from *Peer Gynt*

https://youtu.be/kLp_Hh6DKWc

The translation of the title of this piece from Norwegian isn't quite literally “mountain king”. The “king” in this instance is actually a troll that Peer Gynt invents in a fantasy. The introduction of this movement is, “There is a great crowd of troll courtiers, gnomes and goblins. Dovregubben sits on his throne, with crown and sceptre, surrounded by his children and relatives. Peer Gynt stands before him. There is a tremendous uproar in the hall.”

Member News

Congratulations to club members **Katharine and Gregory Shields** for receiving the 2022 James C. Armstrong Award for Philanthropy in Community Arts Engagement.

The Shields were recognized at a celebration concert and ceremony Oct. 22 hosted by the Armstrong Community Music School.



President's Musings

Angela Smith

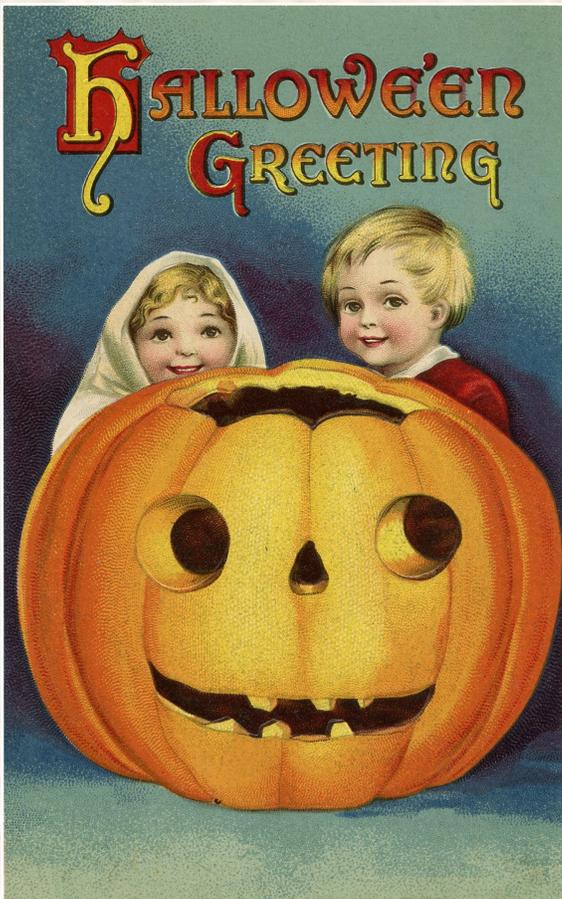
Before I graduated to computerized telescopes, I learned as an amateur astronomer how to visually locate objects in the night sky, just using my two eyes. Polaris, the North Star, was my guide as I navigated my way through the constellations, searching for galaxies, nebulae, and star clusters.

Organizations such as ours need a North Star, too. A mission statement serves that purpose. It provides needed direction that helps keep the organization on track. The vision statement provides the goal to be reached by following that direction. Both the vision and mission work together to align the organization's resources to achieve a successful future. They give members a sense of identity and belonging.

As a club on the verge of celebrating its Centennial year, it is fitting that we approach that occasion with a compass pointed to the future. At our November program meeting, we will be presenting a proposed vision statement and mission statement, both approved by the board.

Vision: To share the gift of music with each other and the community at large and to encourage and support aspiring young musicians.

Mission: We believe in the transforming power of music. Through programs and advocacy, we strive to advance recognition of music's importance in enriching the human experience.



Our move to register our DBA (doing business as) to Music Club Austin is part of our journey to achieve our vision and mission. We've already researched name availability with the Texas Secretary of State and were told the name Music Club Austin is available. With club approval, we will now proceed with filling out the necessary forms to move this action forward. To clarify, a DBA is not a name change. We are rather opening options for more flexibility in our programming and branding, both especially key in recruiting new members. www.musicclubaustin.org is already being used as our registered domain name.

As a nonprofit management and educational communications consultant for more than 30 years, I've helped many organizations and school districts develop mission and vision statements. I've seen firsthand how they bring people together to work toward common goals. Like great music, they inspire and move us.

When I look at the Andromeda galaxy through my telescope, I know I'm looking at light that came from that galaxy over 2.5 million years ago. My hope is that the light we emit from our own galaxy is light worth seeing. With the right mission and vision, perhaps whoever sees that light will also hear our music.

"The only truth is music." Jack Kerouac

Wednesday Morning Music Club

November 2, 2022

American Music

PROGRAM

Program Leader: **Elise Ragland**

Song Leader: **Katharine Shields**

Accompanist: **Gena Tabery**

Together We Sing: America the Beautiful, pg 19

◆ Poetry and Thoughts by Michelle D'Arcy

◆ Canzone for Flute and Piano by Samuel Barber (1910-1981)

Soliloquy for Flute and Piano by Jake Heggie (b.1961)

Performed by **Sheryl Goodnight**, flutist and **Stephen Burnaman**, guest pianist

◆ Après un rêve by Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924)

Oh, quand je dors by Franz Liszt ((1811-1886).

Performed by **Katharine Shields**, soprano and **Gena Tabery**, pianist

◆ Adelaide's Lament from *Guys and Dolls* by Frank Loesser (1910-1969)

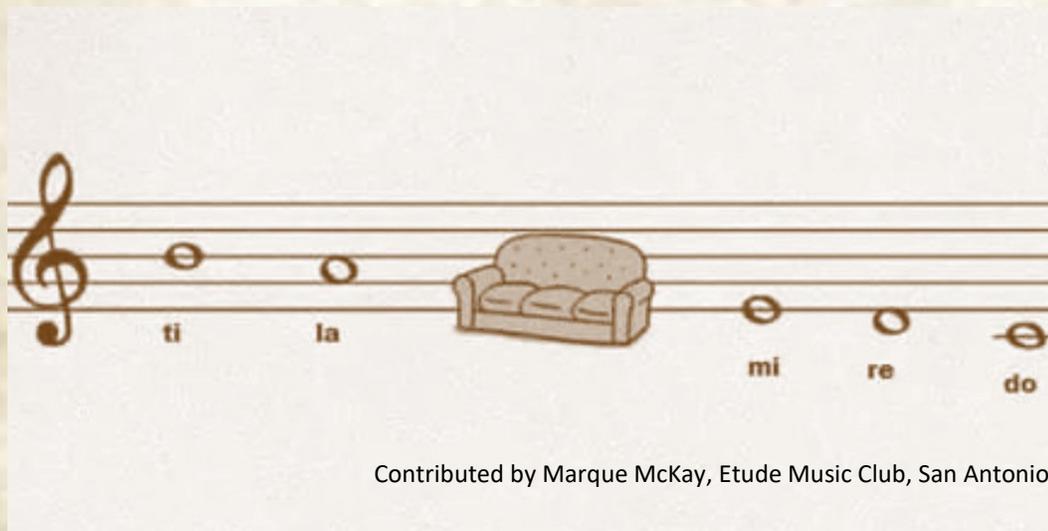
Goodnight New York by Julie Gold (b. 1956)

Performed by **Sue Bilich**, vocalist and **Greta Gutman**, pianist

◆ Module Five or Homage to Paul Desmond by Mike Cornick (b.1947)

The Stars and Stripes Forever by John Philip Sousa (1854-1932), arranged by
Weekley and Arganbright

Performed by the 6 hands of **Kathryn Govier**, **Marcia Edwards**, and **Felicity Coltman**, pianists



TFMC District VI Fall Conference Report

(by Angela Smith, WMMC Conference Delegate)

The Wednesday Morning Music Club hosted the Texas Federation of Music Clubs District VI fall conference Oct. 8 at Good Shepherd Episcopal Church. Marcia Edwards did a masterful job of presiding over that meeting, which drew 32 participants representing the seven District VI clubs.

After breakfast, participants were treated to an enchanting presentation by Michelle D'Arcy on "Poems Inspired by Music." Guest speaker Dr. Bob Duke, head of Music and Human Learning at the University of Texas, gave an informative and engaging talk titled "Eleven Years of Piano and I Can't Get a Date." Duke made his presentation via Zoom as he had tested positive for Covid the day before.

A trio from the Inside Out Steelband then provided music, and CJ Menge, director of the group, shared some interesting details and commentary on the history of that instrument.

At the business meeting, delegates adopted the budget and heard brief reports from the presidents about their clubs' activities. An idea was shared for organizing a new District VI spring competition.

After the meeting adjourned, participants were provided a special treat --cookies beautifully decorated with a musical theme. There were also a few breakfast leftovers for the taking.

Thanks to Marcia Edwards and her committee – Virginia Kniesner, Beth Moreno, and Angela Smith – for putting together a memorable and impressive District VI meeting.

Poems Inspired By Music, Part 1

(From the presentation by Michelle d'Arcy at the Oct. 8 TFMC District VI Fall Conference)

When I was asked to read some poems for this gathering, I couldn't have been more thrilled. I'd spent the last few months spelunking my favorite poetry anthologies and gathering poems for our Wednesday Morning Music Club 100th anniversary celebration next spring. I found several with a musical theme. What I didn't anticipate is that it would be so challenging to choose the ones to present today. Then, to make the task even more arduous, the Library of Congress announced Ada Limón had been named the 24th U.S. Poet Laureate.

So today, I'd like to share with you three short poems, primarily from contemporary or less well-known poets and finish with a taste of Ms. Limón's brilliance.

The first is by Joseph Seamon Cotter, Jr. Born in Louisville, Kentucky, in 1895, Cotter was a precocious child, reared in a strong family tradition of poetry. He wrote almost incessantly and published his last collection of poetry just before his untimely death in 1919 at age twenty-three.

Cotter's poetry reflected the most devastating event of the time, World War I. Displaying empathy for the experience of black soldiers, he perceives the true enemy of these servicemen is not Germany but racial injustice. He may be most remembered for his posthumously published one-act play, *On the Fields of France*. This play depicts the last hours of two American army officers, one black, one white, both mortally wounded, who ultimately died hand in hand on a battlefield in northern France wondering why they could not have lived in peace and friendship in the United States.

And now, our first “musical” poem: *Rain Music* by Joseph Seamon Cotter Jr.

*On the dusty earth-drum
Beats the falling rain;
Now a whispered murmur,
Now a louder strain.*

*Slender, silvery drumsticks,
On an ancient drum,
Beat the mellow music
Bidding life to come.*

*Chords of earth awakened,
Notes of greening spring,
Rise and fall triumphant
Over every thing.*

*Slender, silvery drumsticks
Beat the long tattoo—
God, the Great Musician,
Calling life anew.*

Our second selection is by Quincy Thomas Troupe, Jr. Born in 1939, Troupe is an American poet, editor, journalist and professor emeritus at the University of California, San Diego. He is best known as the biographer of Miles Davis, the jazz musician. He recalls hearing his jazz on a jukebox at a St. Louis fish joint. As a young man, he was athletic and went to Grambling State University on a basketball scholarship. After a year he quit school and joined the Army, which quickly dispatched him to France. There he had a chance encounter with the noted French Existentialist philosopher, Jean-Paul Sartre, who recommended Troupe try his hand at poetry.

When he returned to civilian life, Troupe moved to Los Angeles, where he became a regular at the Watts Writers Workshop and began working in a more jazz-based style. The Workshop allowed him to meet many in the civil rights movement. He also met other black authors, such as Nikki Giovanni and James Baldwin.

Here’s one of his poems I loved:

Sonic Fireflies

By Quincy Troupe

*the beauty of jazz & blues voices,
syncopation of syllables flowing
free form through improvising sentences
sluicing, embracing, metaphors glowing
eyes in the dark are words imitating
fireflies pulsating bright in a black sky
are gleaming eyes of a prowling black panther
suddenly clicking on bright as flashlight beams
under moon rays probing hidden places
isolated mysterious somewhere
deep in a buzzing alive countryside*



(To be continued next month.)

Upcoming Events

Austin Chamber Music Center <https://austinchambermusic.org/concert-season/> The New World: Music by Bartok, Dvorak, and Stravinsky performed by clarinetist James Shields, violinist David Felberg, and pianist Michelle Schumann. Friday, Nov. 11 and Sat, Nov. 12, 7:30pm ALSO the 10th annual Coltman Chamber Music Competition will be March 4 and 5, 2023

Austin Classical Guitar <https://www.austinclassicalguitar.org/events/> At their new home The Rosette in the Hyde Park area. A 1927 silent movie, The Unknown, with LIVE music performed by Jennifer Choi & Les Freres Meduses. Sat, Nov. 5, 5:30pm and 8pm shows, AND Sunday, Nov. 6 at 4:30. Plus more events on the website.

Austin Jazz Society https://www.austinjazzsociety.org/content.aspx?page_id=4001&club_id=215484 Jazz at St. James (St. James Episcopal Church) Friday, Nov. 11, & Sat, Nov. 12 AND more events

Austin Opera <https://my.austinopera.org/events> The Barber of Seville: Sat, Nov. 5, and Thursday, Nov. 10, at 7:30pm AND Sunday, Nov. 13, 2:30pm

Austin Civic Orchestra <http://austincivicorchestra.org/> Pajama Party! Sat, Nov. 12, 4-5pm Wear your PJs for a special program featuring guest narrator, Peter Bay, with movie music as well as Prokofiev's Peter and the Wolf.

Austin Shakespeare <https://www.austinshakespeare.org/our-season> Jane Austin's Sense and Sensibility Nov. 11-27

Austin Symphony <https://my.austinsymphony.org/events?view=list> Masters of Music: Mendelssohn Friday, Nov. 18 and Sat, Nov. 19, 8pm

Ballet Austin <https://balletaustin.org/performances/seasontickets/> The Nutcracker: Dec. 3-23 at The Long Center

Beerthoven Concert Series <https://www.beerthoven.com/upcomingshows> Viva Lviv: A concert celebrating Ukrainian chamber music. Friday, Nov. 4, 7:30pm and Sunday, 6th, 3pm

Candlelight Concerts in Austin https://feverup.com/austin/candlelight?utm_source=google&utm_medium=pfm&utm_campaign=candlelight_aus&gclid=CjwKCAjwpqCZBhAbEiwAa7pXeSu0XO9_fUIQP_CUnFkOFVt-5sNeFJK8egq9E03ImBZRcxAKHqAYXORoChagQAvD_BwE

Chorus Austin <https://www.chorusaustin.org/events-calendar.html> Sunday, Dec. 11, 6pm Your annual opportunity to Sing-It-Yourself Messiah with the Austin Symphony

Conspirare <https://www.conspirare.org/tickets/> Conspirare Christmas: Monday, Dec. 5, 7:30pm

ensemble viii <https://ensembleviii.org/tickets/> Simple Gifts: Sounds of the season with Ensemble VIII accompanied by harp. Friday, Dec. 16, 7:30pm

Gilbert and Sullivan Austin <https://www.gilbertsullivan.org/shows/> A special event - A Victorian Musical Salon: Sunday, Nov. 6, 3pm in Barton Hills

KMFA 89.5 <https://www.kmfa.org/events> A great event calendar for our area.

La Follia <https://www.lafollia.org/upcoming-concerts> Baroque Masterworks for Strings: Friday, Oct. 28, 7:30 & Sat. Oct 29, 3pm

Salon Concerts <https://www.salonconcerts.org/> A wonderful concert planned for Sunday, Jan. 22, 4:30pm and Monday, Jan. 23, 7pm

Texas Early Music Project <https://www.early-music.org/temp-2022-2023-season> An Early Christmas: A concert with carols, motets, dances and traditional songs. Sat. Dec. 10, 7:30pm and Sunday, Dec. 11, 3pm

UT Butler School of Music <https://music.utexas.edu/events> Miro Quartet: Thursday, Oct. 27th, 7:30pm AND many more wonderful events

UT Performing Arts <https://texasperformingarts.org/events> Many coming events for the end of 2022 and into 2023

Wildflower Center <https://www.wildflower.org/events/category/tuesday-twilight/list> Tuesday Twilights: MUSIC and nature! Ryan DeSiato plays on Tuesday, Nov. 1st, 5-8pm.

Williamson County Symphony Orchestra <https://wilcosymphony.org/> Upcoming concerts including a Christmas show Sat. Dec. 17th

Fall 2022 Metropolitan Opera
Live in HD performances at local cinemas
Check your local cinema for performance times.

La Traviata by Giuseppe Verdi

Saturday, Nov. 5