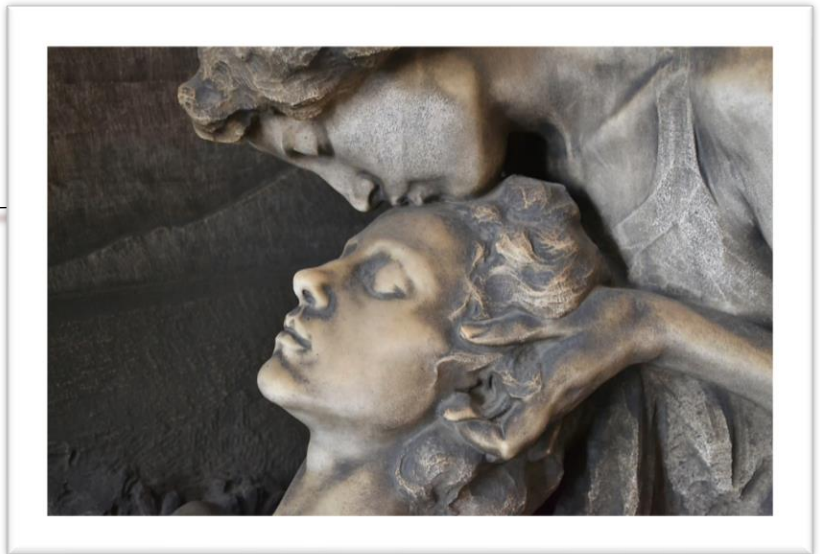


The Crypt

March, 2018



A MINOR CHORD

I can't imagine a world without music.

At an early age, I realized that music was a way to express what lurked in the dark corners of the human soul. In fact, one of my earliest memories of being scared was from *The New Trumpet*

(1972) by Gerard Schwarz. My dad played the trumpet, and this album was in his collection. The track that used to push my buttons was a narration of the poem *Passages 13—The Fire*, by William Hellerman, overlaid by Schwarz's music. I managed to find a video recording of it [here](#), if you want to have a listen.

Even now, the haunting echo of the voices, combined with the cavernous drip-drop of the music's pulse – not to mention Schwarz's often bizarre trumpet playing – still creep me out. But there was one word that always got me: blood. To a child, a lot of these words are nonsense, but *blood!* When my parents left me and my sister at home alone, she used to play this to torment me, especially at night. Ah...good times.

““There's a kind of sadness and poetry about [Barber's *Adagio for Strings*]. It has a melodic gesture that reaches an arch, like a big sigh...and then exhales and fades off into nothingness.”

– Barbara Heyman in this [article by NPR](#).

There are many classic tunes that people associate with gloom and doom, such as Mozart's *Requiem in D Minor* and Mussorgsky's *Night on Bald Mountain*—not to mention hard rockers like Ozzy Osbourne, Metallica, Godsmack and

pretty much the entire death metal scene – but (despite my love for all things metal), Samuel Barber's *Adagio for Strings* is right at the top of my list.

This is one of my absolute favorite pieces of music, but it has such a powerful, emotional effect on me, I can only listen to it about once a year. I heard it performed live for the first time last year, and I'm not ashamed to admit that I cried. It was like a shroud had engulfed the entire auditorium – slowly, without anyone noticing – and it seemed like an eternity before someone had the courage to break the silence with applause.

Robert James

Everyone has demons
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I'm a huge fan of *The Witch: A New-England Folktale* (2015), as much for it's music as it's story. Can you imagine this film without the music of Mark Korven? The grating strings, haunting voices, rhythm, and complex dissonance add so much to the creepy New England frontier. At times it's shrill, piercing and bombastic, but at other times, it's just a single voice over a low drone. This music isn't light fare – so come prepared for a journey – but if you want to give it a go, you'll find a sample [here](#).

That's the power of music.

Even without my sister's help, music continues to stoke the embers of my fear.

—RJ



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