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Well hey there and welcome to Busy Kids Love Music, an educational podcast for music-loving families. I'm Carly Seifert, the creator of Busy Kids Do Piano, and I'm so glad you're joining me today.

Sometimes music can be used to make us feel a certain way or create a picture in our minds. And sometimes music might give you goosebumps or make your spine tingle. In today's episode, we're talking about some spooky songs in classical music.

The piece you're listening to now is "Tocatta and Fugue in D Minor" written by Johann Sebastian Bach, and it's one of the biggies when it comes to scary classical music. It's been used throughout the years in classic horror films and in the Walt Disney film, *Fantasia*. Along with many other pieces by Bach, the piece had faded into oblivion as people began to think Bach's music was old fashioned. About 80 years after Bach's death, composer Felix Mendelssohn began to perform some of Bach's works, reviving interest and appreciation for his genius. Among the works that Mendelssohn performed was the "Tocatta and Fugue in D Minor". It's now one of the most famous pieces of organ music.

Do any images come to your mind as you hear this piece? It's based on a Russian poem and called "Night on Bald Mountain". Written by composer Modest Mussorgsky, this piece is also used in the Disney film *Fantasia* during an animated scene of graveyards and ghosts. The piece was never performed until after Mussorgsky died. After his death, composer Rimsky-Korsakov edited it a bit so that it would sound less "demonic" but kept the same energy that Mussorgsky used in his music.

This next spooky piece is “Danse Macrabe” -- or the “Dance of Death”. This piece was written by French Composer Camille Saint-Saens as an orchestral poem about a French superstition. Listen closely to the harp play a single note 12 times as midnight strikes in the graveyard. The character of “Death” appears, summoning the dead from their graves with the tune of his violin.

Xylophones are used throughout the piece to create the sounds of rattling bones as the skeletons in the graveyard do the dance of death. This piece of music is sometimes used in the background of television shows or movies, including a scene from *Shrek the Third* where Charming stages a musical in front of the kingdom to get rid of Shrek.

The next time you’re watching a movie or television show, and something not-so-good is happening, pay attention to the music in the background of the scene. What instruments are playing? How does the music make you feel?

I’ve created something super special for you -- a free listening calendar with links to the music from this episode as well as other musical performances that fit with our theme of this episode -- spooky music. You can download that calendar by visiting busykidsdopiano.com/podcast/4. This listening calendar will have links to musical performances to listen to for the next two weeks, until our new episode of Busy Kids Love Music airs.

You can also download show notes and look at a list of the music from today’s episode by visiting busykidsdopiano.com/podcast/4. If you enjoyed today’s episode, be sure to rate and review the Busy Kids Love Music podcast and subscribe so that you don’t miss brand new episodes filled with fun musical learning activities for the whole family. We’ll see you in two weeks on the Busy Kids Love Music podcast!