

# Unravelling Music



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PRESENTS

## HALLOWEEN ROBO-BOP



Welcome to the

# Unravelling Music

*Special Edition:  
“Halloween Robo-Bop”*

*Who said that ear training couldn't be fun? Enjoy learning while listening to great music on your iPod.*

*The Unravelling Music series is designed to help you learn, wherever you are – just by listening to music. Spend a little time getting to know the track using the extra clips and track notes provided, and then simply listen to the track to reinforce what you've learned.*

*For this Halloween special, the audio examples will help train your ears to hear **chord progressions commonly used for pop songs**, with some special spooky changes for a horror twist.*

*Now you can train your ears to hear more in music whether you are at the office, in your room at home, working out, or at the local Halloween party on October 31st... Ear Training has never been so much fun!*

## Audio Index

*There are 6 audio tracks which make up this Halloween special. The main music track and 5 example clips:*

- (#1) Halloween Robo-Bop**
- (#2) Ex. 1 [0.00] Minor Progression (Organ)
- (#3) Ex. 2 [0.00] Minor Progression (Strings)
- (#4) Ex. 3 [0.23] Broken Chords I-IV-V
- (#5) Ex. 4 [1.38] Classic I-IV-V
- (#6) Ex. 5 [2.08] Minor Chord Angst

*Note: When you see a time marker like **[1:23]** that means you should listen from 1 minute and 23 seconds in the track.*

## Basic musical terms

If you haven't studied much music before - no problem! But you may find some of the terms used in the track notes are unfamiliar. Here are a few explanations to help you get started:

➤ **Chord:**

*3 or more notes played together to create a nice cohesive sound.*

➤ **Broken Chord:**

*A chord which is played one note at a time.*

➤ **Chord Progression:**

*A sequence of chords. There are various standard chord progressions you'd recognise the sound of from pop and rock songs, such as the "I-IV-V" progression.*

➤ **Scale:**

*A group or sequence of notes used together to create an overall mood.*

➤ **Key:**

*The musical environment of a piece, defined by the scale being used.*

➤ **Major:**

*A type of chord or key with a bright, happy sound.*

➤ **Minor:**

*A type of chord or key with a dark, gloomy sound.  
Perfect for Halloween!*

## Composer's Notes

*When I was creating this track, I thought it would be fun to make something that was both old and new - what would a ghost sing today and in the past? So I went with a fun high energy dance track, then the second section slows it waaaayyyy down and goes into some fun doo-wop with a more sentimental ghost singing. Oh so lonely!*

Of course, I had to throw in the typically silly **sound effects** and some symphonic creepiness. C Major is way too happy, so I thought I could start out with the I-IV-V progression all creepy, then change it up before ending creepy again.

I was also playing with **high tech vs lo-fi**, so the set and sound effects in the the doo-wop had fun sound effect sounds like a bottle crash, clapping, and snapping, and the piano and some vocals were passed through a distorted guitar amp plugin, making for a dirtier sound.

The vocals were created with **Vocal Writer**, a shareware program from Kae Labs (<http://kaelabs.com/>). The program actually uses synthesis to create the voices, not samples, which is what makes its unique sound.

You can either create a whole song in Vocal Writer or export the audio and import into a Digital Audio Workstation (which is what I did). Then I applied a Noise Gate and EQ to clean up the vocals a bit and made sure that on the first pass, the vocals were solo before adding in more instruments later on.

The **Song Lyrics** to Halloween Robo-Bop:

*(It was a dark and gloomy night, it was a dark and gloomy night)*

*Party time, stand up!*

*Halloween*

*Happy Happy Halloween*

*Dance Let's Dance*

*Let's Dance*

*Halloween*

*Dance with me*

*Dance with me*

*Halloween Dance (2x)*

*(Thunderstorm and strings)*

*What can a lonely ghost do on a spooky Halloween?*

*Can I boo, with you?*

*What can a ghost do on a spooky Halloween? (2x in thirds)*

*Boo, boo oh, boo boo oh, boo boo boo boo*

*(Monster Growl)*

*Can I boo with you, yes you..?*

*Happy Halloween!*

The **musical form** for this piece is:

A-B-B-transition-C-C-A'

Not always a huge fan of standard forms, but I did apply it here, especially since it was three entirely different treatments of the I-IV-V-vi chord progression.

Use the articles and tutorials on EasyEarTraining.com to continue exploring the world of music and sound:

- [\*\*Chords\*\*](#)
- [\*\*Chord Progressions\*\*](#)
- [\*\*“Pitch & Harmony” series\*\*](#)

## Track Notes

*Halloween Robo-Bop* introduces you to different versions of a progression of four basic chords: I (“one”), IV (“four”), V (“five”) and VI (“six”) in their major and minor forms.

In the Key of C, these are C, F, G and A, and the very common I-IV-V-vi chord progression is played using the C major, F major, G major and A minor chords.

Throughout the track, you will hear different ways to change up the basic I-IV-V progression. Use the example clips with score excerpts to help develop your listening skills.

The key of C is used throughout the track for simplicity. Usually a song will travel through a couple of scales just to keep things interesting. In this case, the song changes key from C minor to C major to C minor again.

Hear how the song goes from ominous to cheerful and back to ominous at the end, and check out the way that a switch from minor to major and vice versa affects the overall sound of the piece.

Check out the different tracks and play the score samples at home. Improvise on the chord samples given and help your ear learn to hear the I-IV-V-vi chord progression.

***Ex. 1: [0:00] Minor Progression (Organ)***

Spooky Halloween music almost always starts out in a minor scale - and Halloween Robo-Bop is no different! The daunting organ plays the minor version of a I-IV-V-vi progression with a slight alteration: i-iv-v-vi. This gives the tune a haunting start.

For all you music theory buffs, the B flat would normally be raised to help create a leading tone to the C, but in this case the B stayed flat and proceeded to an A minor chord.

***Ex. 2: [0:00] Minor Progression (Strings)***

The strings echo the minor chord progression of the organ. Notice that the rhythms are slightly off. This is partially due to the string instrument used, and partially to help overlap instruments, creating a more organic feel in the track instead of having unnatural heavy downbeats at the beginning of each measure.

***Ex. 3: [0:23] Broken Chords I-IV-V***

In this fun dance section you'll hear a familiar broken chord pattern used in many pop songs today. Sped up super fast, the I-IV-V has an upbeat 'video game' sound. Try the same pattern slowly on your keyboard with a steady bass for a slower pop ballad feel.

**Ex. 4: [1:38] Classic I-IV-V**

Just for fun, lets bop back to the 1950s and a familiar sounding piano riff. This excerpt just has the I-IV-V chords. Next time you try to hear a I-IV-V progression in your head, just hum through this easy-to-remember bass line!

**Ex. 5: [2:08] Minor Chord Angst**

The A minor chord perfectly adds a moment of harmonic angst to an otherwise upbeat instrumental. Minor chords will do that to you.

Use these clips to really get your ears used to the different forms a basic I-IV-V can take. Then continue learning about this kind of “four chord song” on [EasyEarTraining.com](http://EasyEarTraining.com):

- [One Four Five songs](#)
- [4 chord songs](#)

## About the composer

Intermedia composer,  
percussionist, author, and  
obsessive sci-fi buff,

### **Sabrina Peña Young**

composes mind-numbing  
electroacoustic works heard in  
Asia, North America, Australia,  
and Europe.



Her music has been heard in film festivals, radio, electronic dance clubs, random boom boxes in France, and as not-so-pleasant background music. Her multimedia works have been performed at venues like the Beijing Conservatory, the International Computer Music Conference, Miramax's Project Greenlight, the Athena Festival, the New York International Independent Film Festival, Art Basil Miami, Turkey's Cinema for Peace, and Pulsefield International Exhibition of Sound Art.



**Origins**, a riveting album of cinematic soundscapes, pulsating rhythms and enigmatic vocals, was released on CD Baby and iTunes in 2008. Origins includes **World Order #1**, a pounding dance piece about nuclear war and **Looking Glass**, a nightmarish musical poem.

Sabrina is currently producing a futuristic “Virtual Opera” called

**Libertaria**, set in the year 2125, which combines experimental electronic music with popular rhythms, creating a fusion of the avant-garde and the familiar.



**Visit Sabrina's website for news and information:**

<http://sabinapenayoung.blogspot.com/>

**Want more great music? Buy “Origins” here:**

<http://www.cdbaby.com/Artist/SabrinaYoung>

## Further Training and Support

If you need any help using these tracks to develop your ears come join our discussion forums at:

<http://www.EasyEarTraining.com/Forums>

You can also find support information and links to further training resources at the **Unravelling Music** series homepage:

<http://www.EasyEarTraining.com/UnravellingMusic>

## Want to continue your training?

**The first Unravelling Music album, Introducing Intervals is the best place to start:**

- **Learn intervals** - even if you don't know music theory!
- **5 special MP3 tracks** with **22 supporting audio clips** demonstrate the intervals **in real use**.
- **28-page PDF guide** explains everything you need to know. Get started with just a few pages.



<http://www.EasyEarTraining.com/store/introducing-intervals/>