

Spooky Songs of the Songbook

"I Put a Spell on You"

"Ghostbusters"

"Ding Dong! The Witch is Dead!"

"Monster Mash"

"Bewitched"

Thrills, Chills & Harmonies That Haunt

These songs capture the mystery, magic, and mischief of the season, inviting us into a world where witches cackle, ghosts linger, and love itself can be a spell. From the playful to the haunting, each tune paints a vivid picture of the thrills and chills that come with October's spooky spirit.



Song: "I Put a Spell on You" (1956)

Songwriters: Screamin' Jay Hawkins and Herb Slotkin

Brief Context:

"I Put a Spell on You" was released in 1956 by Screamin' Jay Hawkins, who transformed what began as a tender blues ballad into a wild, theatrical anthem of desire and possession. The song shocked radio stations—many banned it—but still sold over a million copies and became Hawkins's signature hit. His coffin-rising, cape-wearing stage act around the song helped pioneer the genre of shock rock, cementing its spooky reputation. Over the decades, the song has been reinvented by artists from Nina Simone to Creedence Clearwater Revival to Annie Lennox, and even cast a spell on pop culture through films like *Hocus Pocus*. Its haunting mix of passion, humor, and theatrics has made it one of the most enduring—and enchanting—songs of the 20th century.

Activity: Listening

What do you need?

- Perfect Harmony "I Put a Spell on You" video ([YOUTUBE](#))

Suggested Discussion Prompt

Every person has songs that help set the mood for different seasons. During October, music can make us feel the mystery, magic, or playful chills of the spooky season.

Tell someone about a song that puts a spell on you this time of year.

[Explore our favorites on Spotify!](#)



Song: "Ghostbusters" (1984)

Songwriter: Ray Parker Jr.

Brief Context:

"Ghostbusters" was written and performed by Ray Parker Jr. as the theme for the 1984 blockbuster film of the same name. With its instantly recognizable hook—"Who ya gonna call?"—the song captured the movie's playful mix of comedy and supernatural thrills and shot to No. 1 on the Billboard Hot 100, where it stayed for three weeks. The neon-soaked music video, packed with celebrity cameos, helped cement it as a pop culture phenomenon, even earning an Academy Award nomination. Nearly four decades later, the song remains Parker's signature hit and a Halloween staple, perfectly capturing the fun, campy spirit of chasing things that go bump in the night.

Activity: Movement

What do you need?

- Perfect Harmony "Ghostbusters" video ([YOUTUBE](#))

Suggested Seated Movement

Follow Perfect Harmony leader Nonni or create your own seated movement!

Use movements like . . .

- Drum roll on lap
- Alternating punches to each side (high and low)
- Playing "air" saxophone
- Swinging upper body from one side to the other to "look for ghosts"
- Shaking jazz hand up and down on each side (one hand, then two hands)
- Seated Frankenstein walks



Song: "Ding Dong! The Witch is Dead" (1939)

Songwriters: Harold Arlen and E.Y. Harburg

Brief Context:

"Ding-Dong! The Witch Is Dead" was introduced in the 1939 film *The Wizard of Oz*, written by Harold Arlen with lyrics by E.Y. Harburg. Performed by the Munchkins (with help from Glinda and Dorothy), the song celebrates the fall of the Wicked Witch of the East. Though less than a minute long, it became one of cinema's most iconic musical numbers, filled with playful rhymes and jubilant march-like energy. Over the years, the song has been reinterpreted by artists from Ella Fitzgerald to Bing Crosby. With its mix of humor and theatrical flair, the song remains a timeless anthem of triumph over wickedness—and a playful favorite for the Halloween season.

Activity: Singing and Discussion

What do you need?

- Perfect Harmony "Ding Dong! The Witch is Dead" video ([YOUTUBE](#))
- Perfect Harmony "Ding Dong! The Witch is Dead" lyrics

Suggested Discussion Prompt

This song reminds us of all the spooky characters we used to dress up as when we went trick-or-treating.

Tell someone about a costume you wore or would like to wear for Halloween.



This signed photograph of Judy Garland, Jack Haley, and Ray Bolger is housed in the Jim Young Collection in the Songbook Library & Archives.



Ding Dong! The Witch is Dead

Ding-dong! The Witch is dead

Which old Witch? The Wicked Witch!

Ding-dong! The Wicked Witch is dead

Wake up, you sleepy head

Rub your eyes, get out of bed

Wake up, the Wicked Witch is dead

She's gone where the goblins go

Below, below, below

Yo-ho, let's open up and sing and ring the bells out

Ding-dong, the merry-oh,

Sing it high, sing it low

Let them know the Wicked Witch is dead!

Song: "Monster Mash" (1962)

Songwriters: Bobby Pickett and Lenny Capizzi

Brief Context:

"Monster Mash" is the ultimate Halloween novelty hit, written and performed by Bobby "Boris" Pickett in 1962. Inspired by Pickett's uncanny Boris Karloff impression, the song tells the tale of a mad scientist whose monster invents a new dance craze. With bubbling cauldrons, rattling chains, and campy vocal theatrics, the track shot to No. 1 on the Billboard Hot 100 just before Halloween of its release year. Though originally banned by the BBC for being "too morbid," it returned to the charts in the 1970s, 2000s, and even re-entered the Billboard Hot 100 in 2021—nearly 60 years later. Covered by everyone from the Misfits to The Wiggles, the song remains a seasonal party favorite, proving that a little humor, horror, and rock 'n' roll can keep the dance floor alive (or undead).

Activity: Movement

What do you need?

- Perfect Harmony "Monster Mash" video ([YOUTUBE](#))

Suggested Seated Movement

Follow Perfect Harmony leader Idrienne or create your own seated movement!

Use movements like . . .

- Shoulder rolls and "creepy" hands
- The Mash potato dance + alternating kicks
- Slow head turns (up, down, side to side) and arm swings



Song: "Bewitched" (1940)

Songwriters: Richard Rodgers and Lorenz Hart

Brief Context:

"Bewitched" (also known as "Bewitched, Bothered and Bewildered") is one of Richard Rodgers and Lorenz Hart's most enduring standards, first introduced by Vivienne Segal in the 1940 Broadway musical *Pal Joey*. Its witty yet vulnerable lyrics capture the dizzying highs and lows of falling head over heels in love—equal parts enchantment and chaos. The song quickly became a favorite, recorded by artists from Doris Day to Mel Tormé, and decades later reimagined in a 2003 duet by Rod Stewart and Cher. Its lasting appeal lies in the way it blends sophistication with humor, making it as timeless in cabaret clubs and jazz halls as it is in film, television, and pop culture.

Activity: Singing

What do you need?

- Perfect Harmony "Bewitched" video ([YOUTUBE](#))
- Perfect Harmony "Bewitched" lyrics

Fun Fact

The title even inspired the sitcom *Bewitched* to name an episode 'Bewitched, Bothered and Baldoni.' It cemented the song's place in pop culture's fascination with enchantment and magical mischief, perfectly mirroring its themes of being "bewitched" by love.



Bewitched cast 1964, ABC Television, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons



Bewitched

**He's a fool and don't I know it
But a fool can have his charms
I'm in love and don't I know it
Like a babe in arms**

**Love's the same old sad sensation
Lately I've not slept a wink
Since this half pint imitation
Put me on the blink**

**I'm wild again,
Beguiled again
A simpering whimpering child again
Bewitched, bothered and bewildered am I**

**Couldn't sleep
And wouldn't sleep
When love came and told me I shouldn't sleep
Bewitched, bothered and bewildered am I**

Bewitched

Lost my heart but what of it

He is cold I agree

He can laugh but I love it

Although the laugh's on me

I'll sing to him, each spring to him

And long for the day when I'll cling to him

Bewitched, bothered and bewildered am I