



## **Danse Macabre**

Composed by Camille Saint-Saens

The music is based on a poem written by Henri Cazalis, which tells of the gruesome goings-on in the churchyard of a French village on Halloween.

Zig-a-zig-a-zig it's the Rhythm of Death!  
Death at midnight playing a dance tune,  
Zig-a-zig-a-zig on his violin.  
The winter wind whistles and the night is dark.  
The winter wind whistles and the lime trees moan.  
Weird white skeletons streak across the shadows  
Running and leaping wrapped in their shrouds.  
Zig-a-zig-a-zig the dance grows even wilder  
You can hear the eerie clatter of the dancers'  
bones But wait! Suddenly they all stop dancing.  
They scatter, they vanish for the cock has crowed.

Danse Macabre is an example of programme music. Programme music tells a story or represents something such as a painting or poem. Sometimes music that was intended for one purpose can later be used for another. For example, Danse Macabre has been used for the theme music for the television programme, Jonathan Creek. The composer, Camille SaintSaens was French and he lived from 1865-1921. He also wrote 'Carnival of the Animals' which is 14 short pieces each written to represent a certain animal. Some of this music is very well known and has been used for television adverts.