

Sombres Dimanches
Une étude en noir

Michel Fingerhut

Overture To Death

D.P. MacDonald

[Supposedly from] *The Cincinnati Journal of Ceremonial Magick*, vol. 1, no. 1, 1976

In February of 1936, Budapest Police were investigating the suicide of a local shoemaker, Joseph Keller. The investigation showed that Keller had left a suicide note in which he quoted the lyrics of a recent popular song. The song was "Gloomy Sunday".

The fact that a man chose to quote the lyrics of a little-known song may not seem very strange. However, the fact that over the years, this song has been directly associated with the death of over 100 people is quite strange indeed.

Following the event described above, seventeen additional people took their own lives. In each case, "Gloomy Sunday" was closely connected with the circumstances surrounding the suicide.

Among those included are two people who shot themselves while listening to a gypsy band playing the tune. Several others drowned themselves in the Danube while clutching the sheet music of "Gloomy Sunday". One gentleman reportedly walked out of a nightclub and blew his brains out after having requested the band to play "The Suicide Song".

The adverse effect of "Gloomy Sunday" was becoming so great that the Budapest Police thought it best to ban the song. However, the suppression of "Gloomy Sunday" was not restricted to Budapest, nor was its seemingly evil effects. In Berlin, a young shopkeeper hung herself. Beneath her feet lay a copy of "Gloomy Sunday". In New York, a pretty typist gassed herself leaving a request that "Gloomy Sunday" should be played at her funeral.

Many claim that broken romances are the true causes of these suicides. However, this is debatable. For instance, one man jumped to his death from a seventh story window followed by the wailing strains of "Gloomy Sunday". He was over 80 years old! In contrast to this, a 14-year old girl drowned herself while clutching a copy of "The Suicide Song".

Perhaps the strongest of all was the case of an errand boy in Rome, who, having heard a beggar humming the tune, parked his cycle, walked over to the beggar, gave him all his money, and then sought his death in the waters beneath a nearby bridge.

As the death toll climbed, the B.B.C. felt it necessary to suppress the song, and the U.S. network quickly followed suit. A French station even brought in psychic experts to study the effects of "Gloomy Sunday" but had no effect on the ever climbing death rate.

The composer, Rezső Seress [11/3/1899 - 1/12/1968; --mf], who in 1933 wrote "Gloomy Sunday", was as bewildered as the rest of the world. Although he wrote the song on the breakup of his own romance, he never dreamed of the results which would follow. However, as fate would have it, not even Seress could escape the song's strange effects.

At first he had a difficult time getting someone to publish the song. Quite frankly, no one would have anything to do with it. As one publisher stated, "It is not that the song is sad, there is a sort of terrible compelling despair about it. I don't think it would do anyone any good to hear a song like that."

However, time passed and Seress finally got his song published. Within the week "Gloomy Sunday" became a best seller, Seress contacted his ex-lover and made plans for a reunion. The next day the girl took her life through the use of poison. By her side was a piece of paper containing two words -- "Gloomy Sunday".

When questioned as to just what he had in mind when he wrote the song, Seress replied, "I stand in the midst of this deadly success as an accused man. This fatal fame hurts me. I cried all of the disappointments of my heart into this song, and it seems that others with feelings like mine have found their own hurt in it."

As the months went by and the excitement died down, the B.B.C. agreed to release "Gloomy Sunday", but only as an instrumental. This version was later made into a record. A London policeman heard this particular

arrangement being repeatedly and endlessly played in a nearby apartment. He considered this to be worthy of investigation. Upon entering the apartment, he found an automatic phonograph playing and replaying the tune. Next to it was a woman, dead from an overdose of barbiturates. It was this incident which prompted the B.B.C. to reimpose its ban on the song. To this day it has not been lifted.

As a final note, "Gloomy Sunday" was introduced to the U.S. market in 1936. However, getting it recorded was no easy matter. Bob Allen and members of the Hal Kemp band were the first to record "Gloomy Sunday" in the U.S. They were noticeably affected while making the record. It took twenty-one takes to turn out a record good enough to publish. Few people who have ever listened to the melody and lyrics fail to confess that it has a horribly depressing effect.

Finally, it is not surprising to note that Rezső Seress, the composer of "Gloomy Sunday", committed suicide in 1968.



Budapest Calling
On the trail of a suicide cult
Daniel Richler
Shift Magazine

Hungary has a problem with its kids: they keep killing themselves. And no one seems to care. The media focuses on a small group of young people called Grufti. They use drugs, have dangerous sex and commit suicide to boot. Or do they?

[...]

Bingo. I read an article about a guy called Józsa Béla, who buses skinheads into town for *oi-kor* festivals. He's a member of the Hunnia league, which is a lot like Canada's Heritage Front. He also runs a recording studio. And he runs a club for metal heads, for punks... and sometimes for Grufti.

I head over to the club at night, walking along the Danube that so beautifully divides Buda from Pest. The sky is eerie; a unit of soldiers on Gellért hill is playing a spotlight along the *Széchenyi Lánchíd* bridge, as if pursuing an elusive performer on a stage. Or a drowner, perhaps....

In 1849, the creator was so proud of this bridge he announced he'd drown himself if anyone could find fault with it. No one could. Though they tried. Then one day an apprentice cobbler discovered the stone lions had no tongues. So, the builder committed suicide...

In 1927, a local writer named László Jávör penned the words to "Szomorú Vasárnap," or "Gloomy Sunday," which Billie Holiday would later make famous. A rash of student suicides followed: every Sunday for a couple of months, young men left a flower and a copy of the lyrics on the bridge, before leaping to their deaths...

What is it with this country?

[...]



Gloomy Sunday
*Pessimism and depression have deep roots in a country
 where suicide is widely regarded as a solution*
Krisztina Fenyo
The Hungarian Report Monthly Digest, May 1997

The tune is strangely gripping, and the lyrics capture an odd longing for death. The sad and monotonous song easily entices one into feeling depressed. It's Gloomy Sunday — the Hungarian "suicide anthem".

*"Little white flowers won't wait for you,
Not where the black coach of sorrow has taken you
Angels have no thought of ever returning you.
Would they be angry if I thought of joining you?"*

A pianist today still sometimes plays Gloomy Sunday in the old popular Kis Pipa restaurant, the same place where the song's composer, Rezső Seress, used to play it in the early 1930s. Gloomy Sunday became world famous as it was sung by Billie Holiday, Louis Armstrong, and had versions in Swedish, Chinese, Japanese and even Esperanto.

When the song appeared it soon came to be known as the "suicide anthem" because its impact was so lethal that many people were said to commit suicide to it and leave the lyrics with their farewell letters. Later the composer himself also took his own life by jumping out of a window.

Hungarians have long had a reputation as being the gloomiest nation in Europe. They are renowned for their pessimism, depression is a nationwide problem, and until recently they had the highest suicide rate in the world, according to the World Health Organisation. Recent surveys also show that they die earlier than most European peoples.

Gloom, depression and suicide seem to be part and parcel of Hungarian culture. "You can hardly meet with a Hungarian who wouldn't have relatives or friends who really committed suicide — it's a kind of national disease, it's a kind of sickness," says Peter Muller, a Hungarian playwright who has written a play about Gloomy Sunday and has studied the suicide phenomenon.

Suicide as a solution

In some areas in the countryside suicide is so general that no family remains unaffected. In recent years a number of small and isolated settlements in southern Hungary came to be known as 'suicide villages' as their rate is even higher than the average national figures. Until last year there were 4,500 recorded suicides a year in Hungary, which, was the highest per population figure in the world. Not only many people kill themselves in Hungary but they also often choose brutal methods: they jump down wells, hang themselves, or drink pesticides.

Psychiatrist Dr Bela Buda says one problem is that Hungarians regard suicide in a very different way to people in other countries. "In the unconscious popular mind suicide is a positive pattern of problem solution, it's a formula which is actualised in times of crisis because everybody has experiences with other persons who committed suicide and who were regarded not as failures but as brave people daring to restore their self-esteem and dignity by this desperate and heroic act."

The sadness and gloom has a long tradition in the country's history. Many famous historical figures, from the middle ages to modern times, ended their life with suicide. The politician revered as 'The Greatest Hungarian', Istvan Szechenyi killed himself, as did a wartime prime minister, Pal Teleki, as did the poet Attila Jozsef, and as did the actor Zoltan Latinovits at the very same train station where the poet threw himself in front of a train. They were all outstanding talents and characters, but their suicides became part of what suicidologist call 'the heroisation of death'. Still today there are instances almost every year, Buda explains, of young people trying to commit suicide at the same train station where the poet and the actor had killed themselves.

According to Buda, the many historical models and their copying shows that Hungarian culture is "favouring defective, maladaptive patterns of solution for life problems". Others who have direct experience with people "in crisis" agree that suicide does seem to many Hungarians as a form of solution. A volunteer worker at an anonymous helpline phone service — where many calls are suicide related — has answered callers for seven years. He also feels that suicide is an accepted form to solve problems. "Somehow it is in our culture that there is way to solve a problem easily, to quit in this way, " he explains, "sometimes people want to punish somebody with whom they have a difficult relationship."

Alarming mental health problems

The high rate of suicide, however, is just one symptom of the Hungarians' dire mental health, psychiatrists say. About twenty-five percent of the population suffer of anxiety illnesses, and a very large part of it coupled with depression. There is a growing number of mental disorders and the rate of alcoholism and smoking is also

alarmingly high, experts say.

Hungary now leads world statistics in liver sclerosis, 8500 cases a year, an illness directly linked to alcoholism, Dr Buda says. In 1995 there were 8500 cases of liver sclerosis death, in the previous year there were 7300. This was far the highest rate in any country in the world, according to Buda. "This dramatic elevation shows that in the last years there must have been a continuous heavy drinking in many hundreds of thousands people in Hungary".

In fact, many experts agree that behind the recent drop in suicide figures there is a growing rate of mental disorders and the growth of alcoholism. Buda says that "suicidality" itself has not decreased but merely manifests itself in alcoholism which leads to earlier death. In other words, many potential suicidal victims die before reaching the suicide age.

Life expectancy is now one of the lowest in Europe in Hungary, with the population decreasing by thirty to forty thousand every year, experts say. If this trend continues Hungary's population will fall below ten million by the next century.

Reasons and theories

Dr Buda says one reason for Hungary's disturbing mental health is the enormous social changes of the last decades, with which broke up old supporting kinship and family ties. Since the 1950s almost 60 percent of the population changed residence and social status during the process of accelerated industrialisation, Buda says. "This huge horizontal and vertical mobility meant that a lot of people became isolated, alienated, as kinship systems, family ties were destroyed," he says.

Similar changes also took place in other central and eastern European countries but in countries like Romania and the Slavic countries, the kinship and family ties remained stronger, Buda explains. "What is important is that in Hungary the degree of individualisation is very high, almost as high as in the Western countries."

Indeed, Hungarians often say that they are caught in between two worlds, East and West, and feel that they 'too western' for their geographical location. Hungary has often been compared by many writers to a ferry boat — moving between East and West, longing to anchor at the Western shore but always pushed back to the East. "This intermediary situation is really characteristic — our short trips to the Western shores imbued as with values and aspirations, but we had to go back to our Eastern realities and if you taste something then you might begin to miss it," Buda echoes the theory.

But the Gloomy Sunday playwright Peter Muller thinks that there is more to the Hungarian gloom that just frustrated aspirations. The real reasons go much deeper, he says. It is essentially a problem of identity. "Somehow the root is missing. We live in a very strange position of the world. We always try to stick to the Western culture, we try to escape from the Eastern mentality and somehow we are in a limbo, we don't belong to anybody, it's a kind of loneliness. We have somehow lost our Oriental roots without finding another one — and if you are in trouble, if your life is difficult it is the root that can save you."

Many Hungarians, however, will insist that they are not really gloomy, let alone pessimistic. The fact that they complain readily and frequently, Dr Buda says, is merely a mechanism by which they cope with problems or try to elicit help. And many Hungarians will also emphasise that they really are a merry people, and they point to their many humorists, cabaret figures, and their passionately merry gypsy music. Peter Muller explains this by saying that the Hungarians have an essentially antagonistic spirit, a 'double feeling' in their mentality. Beside their gloom, there there is always a determinism to survive, a "but" factor, in Muller's words.

"There is always a great 'but', and this 'but' is a very Hungarian word. 'But' we have to do it, 'but' we have to survive...It is in the melodies, it is in the music of the great Hungarian composers — you can find a lot of 'but's in Liszt's work, in Bartok's work — they are full of such 'but's. It's a very strange and special strength beside the sadness."



**The Great Depression
American Music in the '30s
CD and cassette,
Blackside/Publishing and New Media**

Extraordinary crises which challenge the human spirit also inspire many of its most enduring monuments. Each day millions of Americans use public buildings, parks and roads built some 60 years ago in public works projects of a scope unsurpassed in our nation's history. We still enjoy the fiction of John Steinbeck, films of Frank Capra, and populist-themed symphonic works of Aaron Copeland and Roy Harris. All these works -- the art no less than the public buildings -- came to life in response to the Great Depression. It was a time of both agony and exuberance, an era when creative enthusiasm seemed to outweigh the burdens of poverty and the specter of impending war. Of all America's periods of crisis, the Depression is the one we look to with greatest pride and with the fondest hope of inspiring us to vanquish similar challenges today.

Collected here is representative music of the Great Depression. In it you'll hear echoes of emotions ranging from despair to exuberance from a very different America still living in memory for many of us.

We are lucky to have much of it, given the economic devastation visited on the recording industry by the Depression. The sale of an estimated 104 million records in 1927 plummeted to a mere 6 million in 1932.

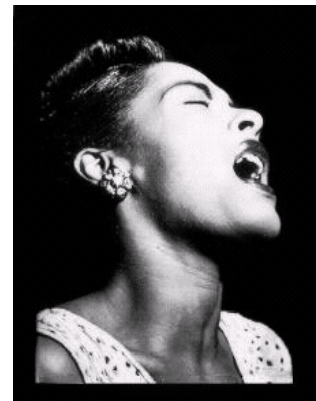
Recording activity surged again when 'swing' became the craze of mid-1930s youth culture, and this collection evidences notable recordings waxed even in the torpid lull of 1931-1934. The range of material reflects an America which was scarcely homogeneous, and whose diversity was targeted by record companies with everything from Delta blues to sophisticated swing. Lyrics, as much as styles, paint the era's portrait: along with song celebrations of heroes like Joe Louis and employment offered by the National Recovery Administration, there are hopeful fantasies of love and prosperity offered by Tin Pan Alley craftsmen. Their songs were popularized by both radio crooners and spectacular movie musicals. "A nation in crisis had become the songwriter's golden opportunity," wrote Patricia Dubin McGuire in her biography of her father, *Lullaby Of Broadway: Life And Times of Al Dubin* (Citadel Press, 1983, Secaucus, NJ). Along with composer Harry Warren, Dubin supplied songs to many of the Depression-era Busby Berkeley musicals which, his daughter recalled, "helped many people forget about the grimness of unemployment, overdue bills and unpaid rent, if only for an hour." The problems plague us still, but perhaps the vitality of these Depression-era songs will encourage us to persevere, as it did the Americans of that time.

[...]

"Gloomy Sunday"

Billie Holiday, 8/7/41

Popular folklore of the Depression has Wall Street pedestrians dodging a hailstorm of failed financiers jumping from skyscrapers. Nothing like that ever happened, but America's suicide rate increased (and its birth rate declined) during the Depression. Edmund Wilson wrote movingly in *The American Earthquake* of the unemployed man whose last desperate act was rationalized in a coroner's report as due to "ill health, family troubles and no work." Given that background, it may be understandable that Holiday's recording of "Gloomy Sunday" was reportedly banned from radio. This suicidal reverie was written in Hungary in 1933 and first recorded in English by Paul Robeson in 1940. Legend has it that "Gloomy Sunday" (or "Szomorú Vasárnap," as it was known in Hungary) inspired suicides wherever it was heard, hence its nickname, 'the suicide song.'



[...]



GLOOMY SUNDAYS

WITH YOUR HOSTS ANJI AND JUSTIN



Gloomy Sunday, the concept, came to Anji whilst searching for a theme to tie in their varied musical tastes with an opening jingle. Not only did the title seem to fit the prevalence of dark-themed music in her and Justin's mutual collection, but she owned several different versions of the infamous song, "Gloomy Sunday."

As synchronicity would have it, the [KUCI](#) program director needed DJs for the Sunday morning 3:00 to 5:00 am time slot, and thus *Gloomy Sunday* found a most appropriate home. They kept this slot for a full semester before burning out on those early morning hours.

As to the show title and it's tie-in to the song, Diamanda Galas' alternate version of the song "Gloomy Sunday" was featured on the opening cart and Billie Holliday's original version was used for the top of the second hour cart. ([click title to view lyrics](#)) We also played versions by **Lydia Lunch** and **Christian Death**. Several other versions were found or suggested, but either we didn't obtain copies before our show ended, or the artist was too mainstream according to KUCI policy for us to play.

Consistency of mood is what *Gloomy Sunday* strove for with its format. Although all of the music played was, more-or-less, gloomy in one way or another, many different genres of music were represented. The show best fell under KUCI's category of "Free Form," featuring ethereal, experimental, darkwave, electronic, acoustic, ambient, noise, poetry, psychedelia, soundtracks, spoken word, tribal, gothic rock, vintage blues & big band -- and whatever else struck our fancy! ([Our links page](#) give a partial idea of favored bands. Please refer to the [play lists](#) for an entire account of what was played.)



Between Sanctity and Damnation
Dee meets up with Diamanda Galás
(Excerpt)

Your interpretation of "Gloomy Sunday" dragged out my soul. It was a powerful and personal to me, having lived in Eastern Europe for 15 years or so. How did you come to choose this song?

Diamanda: I was just in Russia and I did "Gloomy Sunday", I mentioned that to you. It was the last song on my set and they went fucking crazy. Bulgaria has the greatest singers in the world. Dimitrova... unbelievable. She's a monster singer.

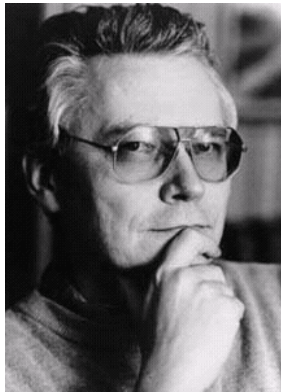
What influenced me to do the song, was to tell you the truth, it was played to me by my friend Howard. He played me the Paul Robeson version of "Gloomy Sunday", the orchestration was by Paul Robeson and the arrangement was so different from anything I had heard earlier. I'd never thought of singing it before. I heard the Billie Holiday version once, I respected it, but it didn't move me to sing it. The way Robeson sang it and the orchestration (it was with an orchestra) was so full-voiced and so sad, not in a kinda introverted way, but in a real prevailing, powerful way. It was just like... well, he had this voice in any case that was gigantic. It was resonated from the toes to the skull, just like Bulgarians and his sound was of course, spiritual. I'd never heard a singer sing a song like that before, of any race. The closest to it would probably be those Bulgarian timbres... those big, big voices. I was very moved by it. I was knocked on my arse and I just had to sing it. It's so beautiful.

There seem to be two Gloomy Sundays. There is the Billie Holiday version and this one. They seem very different and have different composers.

Dee: I only know it as a song I've heard a lot in Eastern Europe. It is originally a Hungarian song, composed by Laslo Javor and Reszo Seresz, Carter wrote the English text. I saw a documentary on it once, which if I remember it correctly inferred that the composer committed suicide because of a lost love. I know Hungarian, Serbo-Croatian and Russian versions. I heard it a lot when I lived in the ex-Yugoslavia and of course in Budapest.



Gloomy Sunday
A movie by Rolf Schübel



Hamburg-based filmmaker Rolf Schübel (The Homesickness of Walerian Wrobel) is currently in preproduction on his second feature film, the DM 8.5 million Gloomy Sunday, described as "a furious parable about guilt and innocence, love and hatred". Based on Nick Barkow's 1988 novel Das Lied vom Traurigen Sonntag, the film opens in a restaurant run by the artist Herr Szabo with his lover Ilona in Budapest at the end of the 1930s. Their life of harmony together is perfect once they engage the melancholic András as a pianist.

However, conflicts appear on the horizon when András falls in love with Ilona and she reciprocates his affection. An unusual love triangle develops between the three, which is marked by friendship and passion, but also by sacrifice and sadness.

On Ilona's birthday, András gives her a song, his first and only composition, as a present. Meanwhile, a young businessman from Germany, Hans Eberhard Wieck, is sitting at the birthday girl's table. Enchanted by Szabo's cuisine and András' wonderful music, he also loses his heart to Ilona...

None of them know that the spell of the "Song of Gloomy Sunday" will follow them long after this day. The song's charm runs like a leitmotif throughout the film, its unique and - to this very day - enigmatic history holding the events together and lending them significance.

This "Song" was composed in real life in Budapest in 1935 and became internationally known as the "hymn of suicides" because hundreds, above all young people, bade farewell to this life with this melody on the turntable.

As producers Dom Film/Studio Hamburg note, Gloomy Sunday "is not any easy story for cinema, but it is the cinema of really big emotions. If we can manage this in a European way as well as the makers of such films as Casablanca or The English Patient, then the theatrical prospects for this project cannot be underestimated".

Original title of the film: Gloomy Sunday

Type of project: Feature Film

Genre: Drama

Production companies: Dom Film GmbH/Studio Hamburg Produktion für Film & Fernsehen GmbH

In coproduction with: Focus Film Ltd. (Hungary), WDR, Nelka Film (France)

Backer: FilmFörderung Hamburg, Filmstiftung NRW

Producer: Richard Schöps

Commissioning editor (WDR): Martin Wiebel

Director: Rolf Schübel

Screenplay: Rolf Schübel, Ruth Toma, based on the novel Das Lied vom traurigen Sonntag by Nick Barkow

Cast: Joachim Król
Shooting from late spring 1998 in Germany and Hungaria.

Contact:
Studio Hamburg Produktion für Film & Fernsehen GmbH
Jenfelder Allee 80, D-22039 Hamburg
phone: +49-40-66 88 0
fax: +49-40-66 88 54 28



Traurige Romanze bei 40 Grad im Schatten
Brigit Heidsiek

Babylonisches Sprachgewirr am Set: Rolf Schübel drehte in Budapest Dreiecksgeschichte "Gloomy Sunday".

Budapest im Hochsommer. Die Sonne brennt. Auf dem Gemüsemarkt herrscht buntes Treiben bei 40 Grad im Schatten. Alte Frauen mit Kopftüchern bieten körbeweise Äpfel, Melonen, Paprika und Tomaten an. Neben einem Pferdewagen steht ein Käfig mit Hühnern, die laut gackern. Dazwischen Weinfässer, Eier und jede Menge farbenprächtiger Blumen. Ein junger Mann in einem dunkelbraunen Cord-Jackett hat gerade einen Blumenstrauß gekauft. Erwartungsvoll will András (Stefano Dionisi) sie einer schönen, jungen Frau überreichen, die ein ausgeschnittenes, hellblaues Kleid im Stil der vierziger Jahre trägt. Doch Ilona (Erika Marozsán) hat ihm den Rücken zugewandt und geht auf László (Joachim Król) zu, den sie mit einem Kuß begrüßt.

Richtiges Timing mit dem Blumenstrauß

Rolf Schübel, der diese Szene auf einem Monitor in einem abgedunkelten Blackbox-Zelt verfolgt hat, ist mit dem Timing noch nicht zufrieden. Er gibt seinem italienischen Hauptdarsteller die Anweisung, etwas schneller zu gehen. Die Szene wird noch einmal wiederholt. Es ist der 16. Drehtag von "Gloomy Sunday", der im Budapest Ende der dreißiger Jahre die ungewöhnliche Dreiecksgeschichte zwischen dem Gastwirt László, seiner Geliebten Ilona und dem Pianisten András erzählt. "Hier auf dem Markt findet eine wichtige Schlüsselszene statt", erklärt der Regisseur Rolf Schübel, "denn Ilona und András haben zum ersten Mal gemeinsam die Nacht miteinander verbracht."

Suizid-Hymne als Liebesgabe

Der Grundstein für diese unglückselige Menage-à-Trois wird bereits am Vorabend gelegt, als Ilona im Restaurant ihren Geburtstag feiert. András, der sich in Ilona verliebt hat, schenkt ihr seine erste und einzige Komposition: "Das Lied vom traurigen Sonntag". "Durch diese Melancholie, die Stefano Dionisi ausstrahlt", so Rolf Schübel, "glaubt man ihm wirklich, daß er dieses Lied spielen kann." Zu diesem Zweck wird der italienische Schauspieler, der durch seine Hauptrolle in "Farinelli" bekannt wurde, von dem belgischen Musik-Coach Daniel Lipnick trainiert. "Ich bin überhaupt kein Musiker", gesteht der dunkelhaarige Italiener lächelnd, "spiele aber gerne Rollen, durch die ich etwas Neues lernen kann."

Schon mehr zu schaffen macht ihm die Vielsprachigkeit in dieser deutsch-ungarischen Coproduktion, die Hamburg & Dom Film gemeinsam mit PolyGram Filmed Entertainment und dem ungarischen Partner Focus Film produziert. "Es ist eine ungewöhnliche Erfahrung, weil ich die Dialoge meiner Filmpartner nicht verstehen kann." Ähnlich geht es Joachim Król, der neben dem babylonischen Sprachgewirr auch unter der Hitze leidet. "Das ist eine große Prüfung für die Konzentration." Die 42tägigen Dreharbeiten zu "Gloomy Sunday" erfolgen zu zwei Dritteln in Budapest. "Wir drehen hier an 26 verschiedenen Locations", berichtet der Herstellungsleiter Martin Rohrbeck. "Die Behörden haben uns sogar erlaubt, am Wochenende die Kettenbrücke zu sperren. Die Straßenbahn wurde deshalb stillgelegt, das wäre in Deutschland undenkbar." Insbesondere für historische Filme ist Budapest, wo auch sämtliche Außenaufnahmen von "Evita" gedreht wurden, die perfekte Kulisse. Trotzdem müssen an den Motiven oft drei- bis viertägige Vorarbeiten geleistet werden, um Parkuhren und Straßenschilder abzubauen oder elektrische Leitungen zu kaschieren. Da das Ma-Filmstudio seinen Fundus verkauft hat, stammen die meisten Requisiten aus privatem Besitz. Bei der Organisation profitiert die Produktion von dem ungarischen Coproduktionspartner Focus Film, der die Strukturen, Örtlichkeiten und Sprache des Landes kennt. "Seit der Wende 1989 werden in Ungarn nur noch vier, fünf Kinofilme im Jahr gedreht", berichtet der ungarische Coproduzent Aaron Sipos, der sich schon an mehreren italienischen Coproduktionen beteiligt hat. "Gloomy Sunday" ist die erste Coproduktion, bei der Focus Film von der ungarischen Filmförderung unterstützt wird. Wir konnten sie überzeugen, weil dieser Film sehr ungarisch ist, was die Musiker, die Hauptlocation Budapest, aber auch das Lied angeht."

"Noch heute werden die Leute traurig . . ."

Um Rolf Schübel die Atmosphäre in den Lokalen zu vermitteln, wo noch heute manchmal Pianisten "Das Lied vom traurigen Sonntag" spielen, zeigte er ihm die alten Restaurants von Budapest. "In Ungarn kennt wirklich jeder diesen Song", weiß die Hauptdarstellerin Erika Marozsán. "Dieses Lied macht die Leute sogar heute noch traurig. Als ich es in Hamburg im Studio aufgenommen habe, waren alle davon berührt, obwohl sie den ungarischen Text gar nicht verstehen konnten." Auch in "Gloomy Sunday" verfehlt das "Lied vom traurigen

Sonntag", das einst als Hymne der Selbstmörder um die Welt ging, nicht seine Wirkung. Der junge Geschäftsreisende aus Deutschland, Hans Eberhard Wieck (Ben Becker), der an jenem Abend mit Ilona, Lászlo und András feiert, macht Ilona schüchtern und unbeholfen einen Heiratsantrag. Als sie diesen abweist, stürzt er sich schwer alkoholisiert in die Donau, wird jedoch von Lászlo gerettet.

Nachdem der Krieg ausbricht, kehrt Wieck als SS-Brigadeführer nach Budapest zurück, wo er mit der "Erfassung jüdischer Wirtschaftsgüter" beauftragt ist. Er bewahrt zwar den Juden Szábo vor dem KZ, benutzt ihn aber für seine eigenen Zwecke. Gegen Geld und Schmuck verhilft er ungarischen Juden zur Flucht in die Schweiz.

Marktszene spiegelt Veränderungen

17. Drehtag. Wieder steht eine Marktszene auf dem Drehplan. Diesmal Budapest 1944: Nazis patrouillieren mit Gewehren im Anschlag. An den wenigen Ständen verkaufen Bauern Kartoffeln und Äpfel und einige ehemals Wohlhabende ihre letzten Habseligkeiten. "Wir haben bewußt eine zweite Marktszene eingebaut, um zu zeigen, wie sich die Zeiten geändert haben", erläutert Rolf Schübel. Die Atmosphäre der Szenerie ist von Angst geprägt. Ein ärmlich gekleideter Jude weicht eingeschüchtert aus, als laut knatternd zwei SS- Uniformierte auf einem Motorrad mit Beiwagen vorfahren. Ein Kriegsverletzter humpelt auf Krücken davon, im Hintergrund hängt ein NSDAP-Plakat. "Um die Farbkontraste zu neutralisieren, benutze ich bestimmte Filter, welche die Farben etwas blasser erscheinen lassen", verrät der Kameramann Edward Klosinski, der auch Krzysztof Kieslowskis "Drei Farben: Weiß" fotografierte. "Bei diesem Film ist es nicht erforderlich, die rote SS-Fahne durch starke Farbakzente hervorzuheben wie in einer amerikanischen Vormittagsserie. Eine solche Ästhetik ist für uns nicht akzeptabel."

Im Mittelpunkt von "Gloomy Sunday" steht für Rolf Schübel die Liebesgeschichte, die ähnlich wie in "Casablanca" oder "Der Englische Patient" in den sozialen und politischen Kontext ihrer Zeit eingebettet ist. "Die Schauspieler gehen hier wirklich an ihre äußerste Grenze", meint der Regisseur, der nach Abschluß der Außenaufnahmen in Budapest jetzt mit der Produktion ins Studio nach Köln umgezogen ist. Dort werden die Szenen im Restaurant gedreht, in dem einst "Das Lied vom traurigen Sonntag" entstand.



Nos funérailles A movie by Abel Ferrara

Dans une ruelle grise des prohibées 40's, la famille Tempio enterre le plus jeune de ses fils tandis que Billie Holliday beugle son "Gloomy Sunday" alentour. Comme dans n'importe quelle famille mafieuse, la vengeance se devra d'être terrible et sans pitié. Mais les femmes Tempio n'en peuvent plus de ces sempiternelles représailles et en appellent au pardon. Commence alors une longue nuit de réflexion où chacun se révélera à lui-même, ponctuée par un carnage fatal. Abel Ferrara livre probablement ici son film le plus abouti dans une habile décalque du premier parrain. Les hommes, suicidaires en diable, ne peuvent se résoudre à ne pas connaître l'enfer sur terre (admirable Chris Penn) et les femmes tentent, en vain, de les en dissuader (extraordinaire Annabella Sciora). Au final, un famineux huit clos sur le destin de ceux qui n'ont pas "reçu la grâce de Dieu".



Schindler's List A movie by Steven Spielberg Review by Edwin Jahiel

[...]

The historical recreation is just as amazingly strong and true. From the start, as Schindler sets about casting his nets on German officers in a nightclub, the atmosphere is genuine, from the chiaroscuro lighting of such places (it also recalls films noirs and dramas of the 1930s and 1940s) to the music : "Gloomy Sunday," a popular Hungarian song so downbeat that (it's a fact) it encouraged many a suicide; other period tunes, jazz, the tango "Jealousy"; martial music, including the German's favorite march "Erika." As the film proceeds, the score includes Hebrew songs and melodies, background music, classical music (Itzhak Perlman plays), more German items. For composer and music selector John Williams, it is his finest hour.

[...]



Gloomy Sunday
3 Miracles In The Life Of A Careless Trapeze Artist
A Play by Peter Muller

Rating: ★☆☆

by Patrick Marmion

Once sung by blues queen Billie Holliday, Rudi Seress's most famous song, Gloomy Sunday, is said to have precipitated suicides all over the world, but this charming three-person cabaret is unlikely to solve the riddle as to why.

Set in Budapest between the wars, the play weaves together recollected scenes from Seress's life with a selection of his songs bashed out on an upright bar-room piano. The picture which emerges is of a compulsive joker who forsook the trapeze after a near fatal accident, found fame as a popular composer and married the woman of his dreams, before being persecuted first by Nazis for being Jewish and then by communists for being glum. In Peter Muller's jauntily life-affirming dream-play dramatisation the worst that you can say about Seress is that he fumed into a sclerotic old louche given to bouts of morose self-pity and eccentric agoraphobia.

Julian Littman's Seress communicates rather more joie de vivre than existential despair. Likewise Loveday Smith as his wife and muse is never less than enchanting, while Matt Devereaux as his big American friend Joe is full of Disneyesque warmth and bonhomie.

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[This Is London](#)



Gloomy Sunday
(Billie Holiday)

Sunday is gloomy, my hours are slumberless
 Dearest, the shadows I live with are numberless
 Little white flowers will never awaken you
 Not when the black coach of sorrow has taken you
 Angels have no thought of ever returning you
 Would they be angry if I thought of joining you?
 Gloomy Sunday

Gloomy is Sunday, with shadows I spend it all
 My heart and I have decided to end it all
 Soon there'll be candles and prayers that are sad, I know
 Let them not weep, let them know that I'm glad to go
 Death is no dream, for in death I am caressing you
 With the last breath of my soul I'll be blessing you
 Gloomy Sunday

Dreaming, I was only dreaming
 I wake and I find you asleep in the deep of my heart, dear
 Darling, I hope that my dream never haunted you
 My heart is telling you how much I wanted you
 Gloomy Sunday



Gloomy Sunday
(Diamanda Galás' Version)

Sadly one Sunday
I waited and waited
With flowers in my arms
All the dream has created
I waited 'til dreams,
Like my heart, were all broken
The flowers were all dead
And the words were unspoken
The grief that I know
Was beyond all consoling
The beat of my heart
Was a bell that was tolling

Saddest of Sundays

Then came a Sunday
When you came to find me
They bore me to church
And I left you behind me
My eyes could not see
What I wanted to love me
The earth and the flowers
Are forever above me
The bell tolled for me
And the wind whispered, "Never!"
But you I have loved
And I'll bless you forever

Last of all Sundays



Sombre dimanche
Damia (rec. 1936)

Sombre dimanche les bras tous chargés de fleurs
Je suis entrée dans notre chambre le cœur las
Car je savais déjà que tu ne viendrais pas
Et j'ai chanté des mots d'amour et de douleur
Je suis restée toute seule et j'ai pleuré tout bas
En écoutant hurler la plainte des frimas
Sombre dimanche

Je mourrai un dimanche où j'aurais trop souffert
Alors tu reviendras mais je serai partie
Des cierges brûleront comme un ardent espoir
Et pour toi sans effort mes yeux seront ouverts
N'aie pas peur mon amour s'ils ne peuvent te voir
Ils te diront que je t'aimais plus que ma vie
Sombre dimanche



Gloomy Sunday Serge Gainsbourg

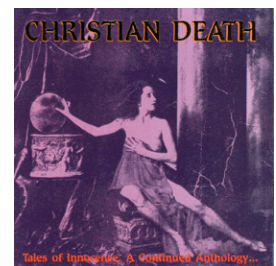
Gloomy sunday, Sombre dimanche,
Les bras tout chargés de fleurs,
Je suis entré dans notre chambre le cœur las,
Quand je savais déjà que tu ne reviendrais pas,
Et j'ai balancé des mots d'amour et de douleur,
Je suis resté tout seul comme un con pauvre conne,
Et j'ai pleuré tout bas,
En écoutant gueuler la plainte des frimas,
Gloomy sunday,

Je crèverais un sunday ou j'aurais trop souffert,
Alors tu reviendras mais je serais parti,
Des cierges brûleront comme un ardent espoir,
Et pour toi sans effort, mes yeux seront ouverts,
N'aie pas peur mon amour s'ils ne peuvent te voir,
Ils te diront que je t'aimais plus que ma vie,
Gloomy Sunday

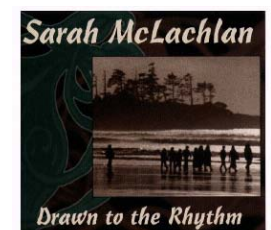
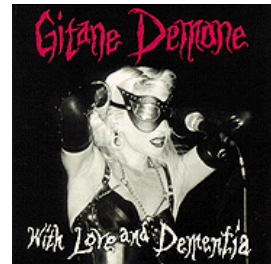
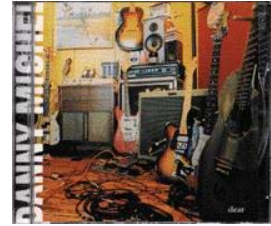


Discography

1. * **Abbey Lincoln (Aminata Moseka)**: "Abbey Sings Billie" (Enja 79633, 1989) (<http://jazzrecords.com/enja/6012.htm>)
2. **Acker Bilk**: Gloomy Sunday, in "Dixieland Jubilee - It's Dixie Time!"
3. **Anton LaVey and Blanche Barton**: Gloomy Sunday (Strange Music 10" LP)
4. * **Artie Shaw**: "Artie Shaw" (Time-Life Music, STBB-06, 1983); "Artie Shaw & His Orchestra" (Flapper, 1992) (<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/B000000X2D/duceysjazzrockbo/002-5390278-4531221>)
5. **Associates**: "Sulk" (UK WEA / BEGGARS BANQUET LP ASCL 1 October 1982)
6. **Barbara Dickson**: "I Will Sing" (Decca 24, 1981)
7. * **Bev Kelly**: "Love Locked Out" (Fantasy/Original Jazz Classics 2531 1798 2)
8. **Big Maybelle**: "Last of Big Maybelle" (Muse 5439, 1973)
9. **Bill Harris**: "The Bill Harris Herd" (Clef Vinyl; Norgran Vinyl MGN-1062, 1956)
10. **Billie Eckstine**: "Billy Eckstine and His Orchestra"/Gloomy Sunday (1946). With Fats Navarro
11. + **Billie Holiday**: "16 Most Requested Songs", Columbia 074645377629
12. **Bob Brookmeyer with the Gary McFarland Orchestra**: "Gloomy Sunday and Other Bright Moments" (Verve V-8455 12"; 314527658-2 CD)
13. **Carol Kidd**: "The night we called it a day" (Linn Records 1995)
14. + **Charles Brown**: "Just A Lucky So And So" (Bullseye Blues CD BB 9521, 1994)
15. * **Charlie Barnet**: "Be Bop Spoken Here"/ Gloomy Sunday...Capitol 57-640 (78RPM); "In Disco Order Volume 22" (AJAZ LP-225-791129); "The Capitol Big Band Sessions" (Blue Note CD) (<http://www.bluenote.com/21258.html>)
16. * **Christian Death**: "Limelight 14.8.88"/Gloomy Sunday; also, "Atrocities"; also "Tales of Innocence"
17. **Cleveland Watkiss**: "Green Chimneys"/Gloomy Sunday (Verve, 1990)
18. + **Damia** Sombre Dimanche
19. **Danny Michel**: "Clear" (1998) (<http://www.dannymichel.ca/>)
20. + **Diamanda Galás**: "Malediction And Prayer" (Mute CDSTUMM163); also, "The Singer" (different version) (Mute, 1992)
21. **Don Byas**: "1946" (Classics 1009, 1998)



22. **Dorothy Ashby**: "Dorothy Ashby" (Argo LPS-609, 1962)
23. **Duke Ellington** (National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Museum)
24. + **Elvis Costello**: "Trust" (1981)
25. * **Etta Jones**: "My Mother's Eyes" (32 Jazz Records, 60412 32027 2, 1997)
26. **Faragó Judy István**: "Best Of Faragó Judy István" (Folio CD rend. sz: 20386-1) (Hungarian)
27. * **Gary McFarland Orchestra/Bob Brookmeyer Orchestra**: "How To Succeed In Business Without Really Trying"/Gloomy Sunday And Other Bright Moments (Verve 314-527-658-2 CD)
28. **George Jackson**: "That Old Feeling" (AS 0655)
29. **Genesis (US)**: Gloomy Sunday (Mercury 72869-DJ, 1968) (<http://thursdays.com/title.html>)
30. **Gitane Demone**: "With Love and Dementia" (CLEO95572), "Heavenly Voices" (Hyperium, 1993)
31. **Hades**: "Born to Metalize" (Megaforce, 1984)
32. * **Hal Russell**: "The Hal Russell Story" (ECM 1498")
33. **Helmut Weglinski**: "[Szomorú Vasárnap](http://www.netwiz.net/~chung/jhraudio4.html)" (Gloomy Sunday; recording available online <http://www.netwiz.net/~chung/jhraudio4.html>). Helmut Weglinski, violin with John O'Brien-Docker:Jacques Montagne:Bob O'Brien:guitars,Stuff Combe; drums,Ribap:bongo's,John Fischer:bass, Sybille:vocals. Recorded September 30 1966 in Koln Germany . From the John H. Reeves Jazz Violin Collection.
34. **Herbie Mann**: "String Album" (Atlantic 1490, 1967)
35. * **Hildegard**: "Darling Je Vous Aime Beaucoup" (Pearl Flapper 7066, 1995) (<http://www.tunes.com/tunes-cgi2/tunes/release/24774/1/76>)
36. + **Jack Walrath & The Masters of Suspense**: "Serious Hang" (Muse MCD 5475, 1994)
37. **Jimmy Smith**: "Monster" (Verve V6-8618, 1965)
38. + **Jimmy Witherspoon**: "Spoonful" (Avenue Jazz R2 71707)
39. * **Johnny Griffin**: "White Gardenia" (Fantasy/Original Jazz Classics 2531 1877 2)
40. **JorJ**: Gloomy Sunday (Sheet Music, <http://members.aol.com/Oldpcards/music.htm>)
41. **Kenyon Hopkins Orch.**: Shock!!!!!!!!!!!!!!
42. * **Ketty Lester**: "Love Letters" (Marginal MAR 084) (<http://www.bluesworld.com/newrandb.htm>)
43. **Kronos Quartet**
44. **Lajos Boross**: "Akácos Út" (CD70074) (<http://www.hungary.com/Deutsch/evd/cd-gyp5.htm>)
45. **Lemonheads Live at London Astoria**: "It's All True" (BBC TCD 1231)
46. **Lojo Russo**: Gloomy Sunday
47. **Lorez Alexandria**: "Sing No Sad Songs For Me" (Argo LPS-682, 1961)
48. **Louis Armstrong**
49. **Louis Tillet & Charlie Owen**: "Midnight Rain" (1995)
50. + **Lydia Lunch**: "Queen of Siam"/Gloomy Sunday (Triple X Records 1993)
51. * **Marc and The Mambas**: "Torment & Toreros"/Medley: Narcissus-Gloomy Sunday-Vision (92260C)
52. + **Marianne Faithfull**: "A Perfect Stranger - The Island Anthology" (Island 314 524 579-2)
53. * **Mel Tormé**: "Tormé" (Polygram 823 010-2 CD) (<http://cheap-cds.com/surf/disps/58336>)
54. **Mickey Baker**: "Wildest Guitar" (Atlantic 8035, 1959)
55. **Miss Toni Fisher**: "Big Hurt" (Signet WP-509, 1959)
56. **Page Cavanaugh**: "Carries the Torch" (ERA EL-20007, 1956)
57. * **Paul Whiteman**: Gloomy Sunday, in "Brother, Can You Spare a Dime: Great American Songs of the Depression"
58. **Paul Robeson**: Gloomy Sunday (Music for Pleasure 7243 4 99157 2 5, 1999. Orig. recording 1936)
59. **Peter Wolf**: "Lights Out" (EMI 46046, 1984)
60. **Ray Charles**: "I'm All Yours Baby" (ABC/TRC #625 3/68)
61. **Sándor Lakatos**: "Szomorú vasárnap, magyar dalok. Lakatos Sándor és együttese"
62. + **Sarah McLachlan**: "Rarities, B-Sides & Other Stuff" (1996), "Drawn To The Rhythm" (Nettwerk 0 6700 33065 2 2,1992)



This diverse collection of hard-to-find obscurities is legitimately more than an opportunistic pacifier for McLachlan's reverent throng itchy for something fresh. But despite its merits - including its duality as a CD-ROM - the album isn't likely to appeal to noninitiates existing beyond the borders of Sarah-land.

Ignoring the smirk-inducing remix of Possession - a techno dud that dangerously mimics the Miami Vice theme song (watch out Electric Circus!) - Rarities, B-Sides And Other Stuff is a mostly flattering reflection of the emotive diva's multifaceted charms. Five-star covers of Joni Mitchell's Blue, Billie Holiday's Gloomy Sunday and a live version of Drawn To The Rhythm (recorded at Harbourfront Centre in 92) warrant picking up this audio treat.

63. **Sarah Vaughan**: "The Divine One" (Roulette SR-52060, 1961; Charly Budget 1082, 1960)
64. **Satan's Sadists**: "Black Dahlia"/Gloomy Sunday (SFTRI #51, 7", c. 1988) (<http://www.silverrocket.com.au/genres/data/sh-g.html>)
65. + **Serge Gainsbourg**: "Le Zénith de Gainsbourg"/ Gloomy Sunday
66. **Shelly Manne**: "Deep People" (Savoy Jazz 186, 1951)
67. + **Sinéad O'Connor**: "Am I Not Your Girl?" (Chrysalis 0946 3 21952 2 7, 1992) (<http://cheap-cds.com/surf/disps/16238>)
68. **S s Fenger**: "S s Fenger on holiday"
69. + **Stan Kenton**: "Jazz Profile: Stan Kenton 1945-1967"/Gloomy Sunday (Capitol CDP 33243)
70. **Trio Acoustic**: Szomorú vasárnap (Gloomy Sunday) (Pannon Jazz)
71. **Vassilis Tsitsanis**: "Hommage à Tsitsanis"/Sombre dimanche (?) (Ocora, 1980)
72. * **Woody Herman**: "Woody Herman & His Thundering Herd - Ready Get Set Jump"
73. **Z Gen**: Sombre Dimanche



Other Art Forms

1. **Ian Mairs**: "Senescence Gloomy Sunday", a play
2. **Péter Müller**: [Szomorú Vasárnap](http://net.hu/evd/ac/ac-opef.htm) [Gloomy Sunday], a musical play (Hungarian; <http://net.hu/evd/ac/ac-opef.htm>) "Gloomy Sunday" (London, 1998)
3. **Nick Barkow**: "Das Lied von traurigen Sonntag", a novel.
4. **Rolf Schübel**: "Gloomy Sunday", a movie (after Barkow's novel).
5. **Hawaii Police d'état**: "Sombre dimanche", titre français d'un des épisodes de la série télévisée américaine Hawaii Five-O, intitulé "Savage Sunday"



The song is also used in the soundtrack of the following movies:

1. **Nos funérailles (The Funeral)**, by Abel Ferrara.
2. **Schindler's List**, by Steven Spielberg.



Etc...

1. **Gloomy Sunday**, a Gothic, Dark Wave, Industrial, Dark-Folk, Club. Basement, Schwalbacher Str. 47, 65183 Wiesbaden, Germany (every 2nd and 4th Sunday in the month).
2. **Kulacs**, Restaurant, Budapest VII. Osvat utca 11 Phone (36-1) 322-3611. Open daily, 10 a.m. to midnight. Where local pianist Rezso Seres wrote Gloomy Sunday, now Gypsy bands brighten up the mood. Prices Ft 500-Ft 1,000. Tram No. 4 & 6 to Wesselenyi utca.