

KO Desert Island Discs

Dear All,
I hope you are well.

Here is something you should all do! It's an interesting exercise. Your choices will change every day - so once you have had a good think just write down the choices for that day. On mine there are clearly some BIG omissions - no Mahler symphonies, no Strauss 'An Alpine Symphony' which properly gives me the tingles. The list goes on. However, these are my choices for Friday 30th October 2020.

I tried to think of mine as important pieces of classical music that have helped shape my musical journey so far. I hope you like.

1. Tchaikovsky - Violin concerto in D

I was 15/16 years old and for some reason my parents owned a CD of the Tchaikovsky violin concerto performed by Kyung-Wha Chung and for some reason I put it on to play one day. And 'it' clicked. The main theme from the first movement... I remember thinking 'wow, she makes an incredible sound' then 'I want to be able to do this' (I still wish that!) and also, I could pick out, latch on to, and remember that melody. That was when I really started practising the violin and expanding my independent listening to classical music. Which, up until that moment, I had 'just done'.

<https://youtu.be/Uo9Kil3RFFo>

The next three pieces are works that were introduced to me 'properly' when I was 16-18. All three completely blew me away and made me think 'classical music is ok'.

2. Stravinsky - Le Sacre du Printemps

Such a deep, dark sound world. I could have chosen Petrouchka - but this was the first for me! So terrifyingly exciting from start to finish.

<https://youtu.be/EkwqPJZe8ms>

3. Britten - Four Sea Interludes

Taken from Britten's opera 'Peter Grimes'. The second movement 'Sunday Morning' is one of my favourite pieces. Rhythmically it is just so exciting! I'd go so far as to say it's down right funky!

https://youtu.be/OCNM_qd5b3U

4. Shostakovich - Symphony 5

This piece made classical music tangible to me. Written in a country and at a time in history that I find fascinating. Such an austere feel yet achingly beautiful. Politically potent. Witty. And so many theories behind it. I played this and that was it - no looking back.

<https://youtu.be/jiaiS4nupYc>

5. Debussy - La Mer

If I'm honest, it took me a long time to really start appreciating French repertoire. Then I met Emily, and her enthusiasm for it opened the door wider for me. Sometimes I feel that music like this just needs constant listening and then it just takes hold of you and never lets go.

Technically it's a masterpiece. But really it's just like listening to a picture.

<https://youtu.be/SgSNqzA37To>

- 6.Sibelius - Symphony 5, 6 & 7

I could not commit to just one. His 5th symphony is very special to both Emily and I. The 6th I just love. And the 7th wow.

And the journey through the three of them in one listen is worth doing. A magical sound. A truly unique voice. And I find - spiritually, deeply moving.

Symphony 5 <https://youtu.be/t8D-TMiz5Ew>

Symphony 6 <https://youtu.be/SlcjeoRLcoE>

Symphony 7 <https://youtu.be/RjQV7ZGiWk>

7.Bach - Sonatas and Partitas for Solo Violin

The pinnacle of the violin repertoire. I play these probably more than anything else. This movement is the Chaconne from Partita no.2 in D minor. Seen by many as one of the finest pieces of writing in history. It's a set of variations that are truly beautiful. This is music to absorb and take you on your own spiritual journey.

<https://youtu.be/xjYQImpS69k>

8.Beethoven - Symphony 3

Possibly the greatest symphony ever written... and it's in E flat major. Where to begin. By bar 7 Beethoven has already ripped up the rule book, it is truly a revolutionary symphony.

<https://youtu.be/cziRynzmWaA>

For the next two answers, I suppose I should say my violin and score of Bach's Sonatas and Partitas for Unaccompanied Violin but the reality is...

Luxury Item - Bike

Book - Lord of the Rings Trilogy

Take care. Keep fit and healthy.

Yours,

Mark