

Desert Island Discs – Phil Pocock

Like most people, I'm sure, it was difficult to decide whether to base my choice on music that has had significance to me through my life or just stuff that I like. In the end it is a compromise, a bit of both. Also I have adhered to orchestral music so there is no room for the Beatles, jazz or other forms that I probably would have included otherwise.

1. Gounod – Ballet music from 'Faust'

As a boy (I come from a fairly musical family) this was the first piece of music I came to like that led me onto the classical path. It was the last (7th) movement that particularly thrilled me – a passage of lyricism sandwiched between frenetic, exciting sections.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Oq90poRogZs>

2. Sullivan – Overture from 'The Mikado'

G & S was part of my early life (and subsequently) fired by the fact that my mother sang in an amateur light opera group and my first performance in a musical presentation came when as young boy I had a walk-on part (Koko's axe bearer!) hence this overture containing, as it does, most of the great tunes. But any G & S would have done – it's consistently enjoyable music.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IhSNVb4TUYQ>

3. Tchaikovsky – Symphony no 4

No list from me would be complete with some 'Tchaik' and there's so much thrilling music to choose from. But I've settled on his 4th and most exciting symphony.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YnRkXtsD_54

4. R Strauss – Also Sprach Zarathustra

Like many I have '2001: A Space Odyssey' to thank for introducing me to this absorbing music. There is so much more after the famous other-worldly opening passage. I've grown to love his other tone poems too.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IFPwm0e_K98

5. Mozart – Requiem

I hope I'm allowed a complete requiem (there's another to follow) but I've fallen in love with the whole work. It took on an additional potency recently when KO performed it and the 'Tuba mirum' is probably the most significant and exposed solo for the 2nd trombone - me in this case!! After more practice than ever before (or since) I was quite pleased with result.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dp2SjN4UiE4>

6. Mahler – Symphony no 1

I came to Mahler fairly late in life and really like most of his symphonies in particular. I choose his 1st ('The Titan') as it was the first I got to know and is his most accessible.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4XbHLFkq_Mw

7. Verdi – Requiem

In places quite dramatic and operatic this whole sequence of multiple sections never ceases to excite and move me. Every section is a winner. The 'Dies Irae' is especially thrilling. A big orchestra is required including a prominent with bass drum part and off-stage trumpets to add to the drama. Interestingly it is 'a deeply religious work written by a great sceptic'.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J9HqRohOPul>

8. Bruckner – Symphony no 4

As with Mahler I came to Bruckner quite late in life and have got to know most of his symphonies. Likewise also I have chosen the first one I heard, his 4th ('Romantic') probably, again, his most accessible.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qljRZ-3BlcM>

So, no room for any of my other much-loved pieces, sadly. Some may notice a predominance of grand-scale, complex and often noisy choices (Mahler, Bruckner, Strauss, Verdi) whatever that says about me?! On the radio program participants are asked which piece would they choose to have with them were they allowed only one and in my case I think it would have to be the Verdi, over 80 minutes of undiminished delight.

As for a book, it would have to be the one I'm currently half-way through (at least so that I could be sure of the opportunity of finishing it) – Michelle Obama's autobiography 'Becoming'. It's insightful and brilliantly written.

And for a luxury I'd wish for a guitar. I started having lessons (classical) a few years ago for a while and was struck how difficult it was and so could spend some time trying to master it with no-one else around to hear my hear my efforts!

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