

A Taste of Arts & Science

Another Bucket List: Nine Short Pieces You Should Hear before You Die

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#1 — Louis Armstrong (1901-1971): Potato Head Blues (1927) [2:58]

- Recorded (1927) by Louis Armstrong and His Hot Seven

#2 — W. A. Mozart (1756-1791): Movement I from Clarinet Quintet, K. 581 (1789) [9:55]

- Recorded (1980) by Academy of St. Martins in the Field's Chamber Ensemble

#3 — Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina (1525?-1594): Sicut cervus [2:23]

- The text is taken from Psalm 42:1:

As the hart yearns for the water springs,
So longs my soul for thee, O God.

- Recorded (1999) by Voices of Ascension, conducted by Dennis Keene

#4 — William Billings (1746-1800): Chesterfield (ca. 1700) [2:28]

- From *The New-England Psalm-Singer* (1770) [Billing's first printed collection]

With earnest longings of the mind My God to thee I look;
So pants the hunted hart to find and taste the cooling brook!

When shall I see thy courts of grace, and meet my God again?
So long an absence from thy face my heart endures with pain.

Hope in the Lord, whose mighty hand can all thy woes remove;
For I shall yet before him stand, and sing restoring love.

- Recorded (1978) by the Oregon State University Choir, conducted by Ron Jeffers

#5 — Johannes Brahms (1833-1897): Intermezzo in A Major, Op. 118, No. 2 (1893) [4:32]

- Recorded (1963) by pianist Wilhelm Kempf

#6 — John Cage (1912-1992): 4'33" (1952)

#7 — Reynaldo Hahn (1874-1947): Si mes vers avaient des ailes (1888) [2:06]

- To a poem by Victor Hugo:

My verses would flee, sweet and frail,
To your garden so fair,
If my verses had wings—like a bird.

They would fly, like sparks,
To your smiling hearth,
If my verses had wings—like the mind.

Pure and faithful, to your side
They'd hasten night and day,
If my verses had wings—like love!

- Recorded (1972) by soprano Joan Sutherland

#8 — George Gershwin (1898-1937): I Got a Crush on You, Sweetie Pie (1928) [3:26]

- Lyrics by [Ira Gershwin](#).

How glad the many millions of Timothys and Williams
Would be, to capture me; but you had such persistence,
You wore down my resistance: I fell, and it was swell.
You're my big and brave and handsome Romeo.
How I won you, I shall never, never know.
It's not that you're attractive, but, oh, my heart grew active
When you came into view

I've got a crush on you, sweetie pie; All the day and nighttime, hear me sigh.
I never had the least notion that I could fall with such emotion.
Could you coo, could you care for a cunning cottage we could share.

The world will pardon my mush 'cause I've got a crush, my baby, on you.

- Nelson Riddle arrangement recorded (1959) by the incomparable Ella Fitzgerald
- Recorded on Fitzgerald's *George and Ira Gershwin Song Book*

#9 — Richard Strauss (1864-1949): Beim Schlafengehen (1948)

- Text by Herman Hesse

Now that I am wearied of the day,
I will let the friendly, starry night
greet all my ardent desires
like a sleepy child.

Hands, stop all your work.
Brow, forget all your thinking.
All my senses now
yearn to sink into slumber.

And my unfettered soul
wishes to soar up freely
into night's magic sphere
to live there deeply and thousandfold.

- Recorded (1993) by soprano Lucia Popp and London Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Michael Tilson Thomas

Introduction

Greeting

Thanks to the Dean for the invitation: I am a crusader.

Topic: Bucket List

- Common expression in our language: kick the bucket = to die
- Of undocumented origins but first documented in 1785 = several theories

- recent film with Jack Nicholson and Morgan Freeman

My simple intent—on this beautiful spring day—is to call your attention to some compelling music — not our mortality or any other lugubrious connotations

Because of my allotted time, I have concentrated on music of considerable brevity. This rule, of course, has eliminated an enormous body of great music. Especially when we take note of the fact that Western Civilization puts a certain premium of largeness in terms of forces, duration, and intentions. = Big homes, big sales, big universities, big men, and big women! As a result, there is no purely orchestral music.

My criteria were simple:

- short and sweet
- historically significant
- concern for both the composition and the performance
- remarkable and unforgettable
- dear to my own heart

I'm sure that this particular list of pieces says more about me than anything else—and I am grateful to you for this self-indulgence. But I don't think my choices are uninformed. Once I had made my list, I was surprised at its scope and variety.

You will hear that I have representatives of the Italians, the French, the Austrians, the Germans, the Americans, the African-Americans, and even a piece influenced by Asian philosophy.

One word of caution before we begin: I believe that our appreciation of any experience is greatly conditioned by what we as individual human beings bring to that experience. For example, when I play musical examples for many of my students, I am absolutely aware that I am having a completely different experience than they are. I remind them that the fifteenth kiss is better than the first kiss. It's supposed to be! And so I remind you, the fifteenth kiss is better than the first kiss!

