

## U.R.F's Musical Favourites:

- **Bach:** *Das Wohltemperierte Klavier; Samuil Feinberg, Russian Disc, 1962.*

This is the pinnacle of Bach pianism, at least as regards the ultimate “rightness” of piano playing on display. Each piece of the “old testament” is a wholly consistent and engrossing performance with this pianist, which is far too little-known among the general public.

- **Schubert:** *Sonata D960; Artur Schnabel, HMV (i.e., EMI nowadays), 1937-39.*

The true Schubert. I believe people which do not feel the earth move in certain passages of the first movement can forget about understanding what Schubert is about...

- **Beethoven:** *String Quartets op. 131 & op.132; Capet String Quartet, Biddulph (HMV), 1928.*

This desert island music will never sound more ethereal or spiritual. The lightness of tone cultivated by this French ensemble suits the late Beethoven by far more than the hard-pressed style of so many supposedly ‘modern’ ensembles. *This* is truly profound. Listen to the joy the last movement “Allegro appassionato” of op. 132 radiates.

- **Schumann:** *Symphonie 4; Philharmonia Orchestra, Guido Cantelli, EMI (HMV), 1955.*

The German romantic spririt by an Italian.

- **Ockeghem:** *Requiem, Missa ‘Mi-Mi’, Missa Prolationum, Motets; Hilliard Ensemble, Virgin (EMI), 1984.*

The most beloved of the greats of the fifteenth century. Has sometimes an almost unbearable beauty of expression.

- **Schubert:** *Eine Winterreise D911; Christoph Prégardien, Andreas Staier, Teldec 1997.*

I cannot really comment on this. It is simply the most touching (vocal) music I know of.

- **Webern:** *Works for String Quartet and String Trio; Arditti String Quartet, Disques Montaigne 1990.*

The most touching instrumental music I know of (for those who are able to listen).

- **Mendelssohn:** *The Hebrides op. 26; Berlin Philharmoniker, Wilhelm Furtw"angler, Koch (HMV) 1928.*

The sheer beauty and drama of this recording is breathtaking. Listen to the sound the strings of the Berlin Philharmonic were able to produce at the time of the recording.

- **Ockeghem:** *Quant de vous seul je pers la veue; Lena Susanne Norin, Ferrara Ensemble, Arcana 1997.*

Again: Music of a transcendent beauty, beautifully sung.

- **Dunstable:** *Motets; Hilliard Ensemble, Virgin (EMI) 1982.*

The intimate stillness of sound.

- **Haydn:** *Symphonies Nos. 92 & 104; Berliner Philharmoniker, Hans Rosbaud, DG, 1956.*

Wit and sharp intellect; by no means the “Papa”.

- **Schubert:** *Fischerweise D 881; Gundula Janowitz, Irwin Gage, DG, 1977.*

A signature tune of mine?

- **Mahler:** *Symphonie 6; Dimitri Mitropoulos, WDR SO, EMI, 1959.*

There was never a conductor able to generate more sustained tension in this music.

- **Beethoven:** *Missa Solemnis*; Otto Klemperer, New Philharmonia Orchestra, EMI, 1965.  
If the term “sweeping grandeur” didn’t exist, it would have to be invented for this music in this recording.
- **Berlioz:** *Les nuits d’été*; Regine Crespin, Orchestre de La Suisse Romande, Ernest Ansermet, Decca, 1963.  
“... Et j’arrive du paradis ...”
- **Mozart:** *Don Giovanni*; Siepi, Corena, della Casa, Grümmer, Simoneau, Streich, Berry, Wiener Philharmoniker, Mitropoulos, Sony (ORF Recording) 1956.  
The greatest work of this composer, encompassing basic aspects of human life and death, performed with a stellar cast.
- **Mozart:** *String Quintets*; Talich Quartet, Calliope, 1998.  
There are very few Mozart recordings which have it all. This is one of them.
- **Schumann:** *Streichquartette 1 & 3*, Zehetmair Quartett; ECM, 2003.  
Poetic nervousity and sensitivity.
- **Buxtehude:** *Membra Jesu Nostri*; Concerto Vocale, René Jacobs, Harmonia Mundi, 1990.  
Ad pedes, ad genua, ad manus, ad latus, ad pectus, ad cor, ad faciem.
- **Dufay:** *O Sancte Sebastiane/O Martyr Sebastiane (Motet isorhythmique)*; La Reverdie, Arcana, 2001.  
Rhythmic religious ecstasy.
- **Zelenka:** *Trio Sonatas ZWV 181*; Holliger, Bourgue, Zehetmair, Thunemann, Stoll, Rubin, Jaccottet, ECM, 1999.  
Playful virtuoso depth.
- **Ravel:** *Piano Trio, Sonata for Violin and Cello*; Renaud Capuçon, Gautier Capuçon, Frank Braley, Virgin, 2002.  
Perfectly representing the delicate balance of fragility and power this composer requires.
- **Beethoven:** *Piano Sonatas*; Emil Gilels, DG, 1972-1985.  
Probably the greatest incomplete ‘complete’ recording of a cycle of works ever made.
- **Pergolesi:** *Stabat Mater*; Bertagnolli, Mingardo, Concerto Italiano, Alessandrini, Opus 111, 1998.  
With this recording one truly believes that this was a *mater dolorosa*, a woman in pain because of her son.
- **Purcell:** *Fantasias for the Viols*; Hespèrion XX, Savall, Astrée Auvidis, 1994.  
Music of an amazing spirituality and depth by a 21-years-old composer.
- **Berlioz:** *Requiem (Grande Messe des Morts)*; Boston SO, Munch, RCA, 1959.  
After listening to the *Dies Irae* and *Lacrymosa*, you might tend to believe that the Day of Final Judgment will come indeed.
- **Couperin:** *Quatrième Concert* from *Concerts Royaux*; *Les Concerts des Nations*, Jordi Savall, Alia Vox, 2004.  
Supreme elegance, *gayement*.
- **Monteverdi:** *Vespro della Beata Vergine*; Figueras, Kiehr, La Capella Reial, Savall, Astrée, 1989.  
Achingly beautiful; the intensity of this recording almost causes pain.

- **Guerrero:** *Sacrae Cantiones; La Capella Reial de Catalunya, Hespèrion XX, Jordi Savall, Astrée, 1992.*

A heavenly record in the truest sense.

- **Beethoven:** *Piano Concerto No. 2; Kapell, NBC SO, Golschmann, Naxos (RCA), 1946.*  
Possibly the most crisply articulated recording of a classical concerto ever; a sheer delight.
- **Mahler:** *Symphonies Nos. 3 & 9; Kallisch, SWR SO, Gielen, Hänssler, 1997 & 2003.*  
A clear-headed view of Mahler that pays the highest dividends with respect to insight into the modernity of this music.
- **Schubert:** *String Quartet D887; Hagen Quartett, DG, 1999.*  
Realizing the dramatic beauty and impact of this most symphonic of all string quartets.
- **Brahms:** *Symphonies 2 & 3; Concertgebouw Orkest, Willem Mengelberg, Naxos (Telefunken), 1938 & 1940.*  
Both organically developed and (seemingly) spontaneous.
- **Berwald:** *Symphonie 3 'Seriøuse'; Berlin PO, Igor Markevitch, DG, 1956.*  
A sort of (more) genial nordic Mendelssohn, with surprising turns.
- **Mozart:** *Symphonies 35 'Haffner' & 40; Pittsburgh SO, Fritz Reiner, Columbia, 1946 & 1947.*  
Truly dramatically concise Mozart, with all rococo niceties left out.
- **Bartók:** *Violin Sonata No. 1; Gidon Kremer, Martha Argerich, DG, 1988.*  
The kaleidoscopic expressionist masterpiece of Bartók, played with fervour and conviction.
- **Bach:** *Sonatas and Partitas for Solo Violin; Nathan Milstein, DG, 1973.*  
Quite simply the sovereign mastery of the intellectual and technical demands.

*Note: This is obviously a far from complete list and will be amended from time to time.*