

Eclectic Music Selections for the Pandemic Age (may it be brief!)

I started doing my COVID-19 newsletter on March 23 and decided to add a daily music selection to help add some levity to what has been a serious situation. The only criteria is the selections had to be video performances and available on YouTube. The range of music is quite eclectic and governed only by my own good/bad taste. You won't find disco but you will find Taylor Swift and Frank Zappa. Lots of good classical and some longer pieces for reflection. If you just want to take your mind off of things, feel free to click on the links in this email for an aural and visual treat. I've seen a number of the performers in live performance. Occasionally a link is taken down by YouTube; if you find one that is send me an email so I can find an alternative. Some of the links to live productions are only available for a limited period of time.

2020-03-29

We are entering our third week of closures here in Maryland and last night we helped one of our local restaurants by ordering in with delivery from one of the Internet food delivery apps. This is nice way to help keep your local restaurants running in this time of closure.

To help take your mind of SARS-CoV-2, here is a YouTube performance of Wagner's Tannhauser overture as transcribed by Franz Liszt. Melodic and devilishly difficult to play well:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W46BKM0mg-g>

2020-03-30

Welcome to a new week. Thus far the hospital case load here in Maryland has been manageable but reported cases of SARS-CoV-2 continue to increase. Some good work out of China looking at serological testing.

For the musical selection, here is a cute, short, video of how opera during a pandemic might be staged. The two singers are voice professors from Augustana College and even the notable Dr. Fauci has a role:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7S5WnAlogxQ>

2020-04-01

Lots of pre-prints today; I guess there was a lot of work being done over the weekend. I've been posting some music links that have inspired me. One of the pieces that I find most spiritual is the Chaconne from Bach's second partita for unaccompanied violin. Here is a nice rendition by the Bulgarian/American violinist, Bella Hristova, filmed at the Curtis Institute:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XkfsGClIHb4>

2020-04-02

Today's musical selection is indie rocker Grace Potter who pays a visit to Darryl Hall's house (this was a wonderful show that ran for five years where Hall invited singers of all genres to come to his home studio and play). The song is Low Road, one that I've always enjoyed: <https://youtu.be/jt5rKGsMKyM>

2020-04-03

Today's music selection is one of the great country songs that goes back to the Appalachian hill country. Though it started off as a church hymn, the words were reworked and A.P. Carter reworked the words so that it was funereal in nature. Despite the somber nature, it can be uplifting to listen to. Here is a video of the second all-star recording by the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7bRjLkNqNXI> The first version was featured in Ken Burns's Country Music documentary that was aired on PBS last fall and featured one of the original vocalists, Mother Maybelle Carter.

2020-04-04

The musical choice for today is the beautiful tenor/baritone duet from Bizet's Pearl Fishers: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yfvjWD4GGck> The setting is unusual and would be frowned upon right now. This is my favorite duet and one that I've sung several times with baritone colleagues.

2020-04-05

For today's musical selection, I've moved over to the pop world. I am a closeted Taylor Swift fan so we have the great music video (great for the depiction of girl power) 'Bad Blood' -

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qcly9NiNbmo> There is a cameo VIP appearance by someone whose marriage I may or may not have broken up about 25 years ago (that's a story for another day).

2020-04-06

The music selection for today is a lengthy one, Mahler's 8th symphony. I've seen this performed live on three occasions and always find it incredibly spiritual. This telecast is from the Amsterdam Concertgebouw, recorded last year: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nxf3xtH31jA> Spectacular and wonderful singing from the soloists.

2020-04-07

For today's musical selection, a delightful performance of Beethoven's Piano Concerto #5 by the young Spanish pianist, Rosalia Gomez Lasheras: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q-hn8WH_-3U I came across this one yesterday when I was reading abstracts. Just fine, precision pianism.

2020-04-08

NO, NO, NO, I am not going to post any disco tunes!!! Don't wait for The Village People. However, here is ABBA singing for the Royal Family the night before the wedding of their son/daughter (I can't remember). Dancing Queen is one of my faves from that long last era: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XN9lgrT8eVc> (there will be no Elton John or Neil Diamond so don't hold your breath).

2020-04-09

Let's take another trip down Country lane. One of the finest singer/songwriters of our time is Kris Kristofferson (did you know he was both a Rhodes Scholar and an Army captain who passed ranger training?). His songs have been covered by singers of all genres. Here is 'Me and Bobby McGee' with Kris and Sheryl Crow: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UKJ-49RbjA>

2020-04-10

Today's music selection is a nice video performance of Schumann's Dichterliebe by the German soprano, Christine Schäfer: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L8d-d_-IF3k She is a wonderful artist, and gave the most stirring rendition of Schubert's Winterreise that I have ever seen in a live performance. I know Dichterliebe quite well having performed it in recital but this erotically charged version is well worth watching.

2020-04-11

One of the loyal readers request some Bach. Here goes and it's not what you expected, a nice (?) excerpt of the double concerto for two violins: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EofKXc-EOo&t=302s> Don't give up on it too early as there is some fine playing.

2020-04-12

A lot of years ago I got my start in choral singing at All Souls Episcopal Church in San Diego. One of my good friends invited me to join the youth choir. I asked my mother about this as a good Jewish son ought to do. She said it was fine but at some point they will pass crackers around. "You don't want to take one," she admonished. I was with the choir for about four years singing at all kinds of services. Easter morning we always performed Handel's Hallelujah chorus from The Messiah. Here is a wonderful version for these pandemic times: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PQYVbd1Gwg> This was some feat and quite stirring.

2020-04-13

It's chamber music for Monday! Here is the Beaux Arts Trio playing Schubert's sublime trio in e flat: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6v8omgNS4lw> I have a great fondness for this group as they premiered their tour recital for free at Indiana University every year when I was in grad school. The pianist, Menachem Pressler, is still on the faculty at the school of music at the young age of 97! I remember when the IU opera house opened in 1973. The hall was consecrated with a performance of Beethoven's 9th symphony. It was open seating and I ended up sitting right next to Professor Pressler who enjoyed the performance just as much as I did. Trivia moment for you filmophiles: the slow movement was prominently featured in Stanley Kubrick's mediocre (IMO) film 'Barry Lyndon.' Kubrick made another mistake in picking a piece of music written almost 100 years after the time period of the film. **[note: see what kind of good stuff you get to read and listen to from this newsletter!]**

2020-04-14

There are some pieces of music that upon first hearing, remain indelibly in one's mind. So it was when Stan Getz and Joao Gilberto released their album of Bossa Nova music in 1964. The main track, 'The Girl from Ipanema,' was a major hit on the radio but it was the 'B' side of the 45 release, 'Corcovado,' that I liked and continue to enjoy today. The album made a star of Astrud Gilberto, then Joao's wife, who was and remained a singer with a whispery naïve voice. I learned the Portuguese words and it was my favorite lullaby that helped get both my daughters to sleep. Here is a nice version from the Brazilian singer, Gal Costa: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ReE4jDvJVLw>

2020-04-15

It's always fun when you find a piece of music that is new and doubly fun when it's a chamber music piece with stings and wind instruments. Here is Dutch violinist Janine Janssen and friends with the

Beethoven Septet in E major: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LQ5vciYlfk8> I sent the link on to my bassoonist daughter who is a music therapist at UCSF's Children's Hospital. Here response back, "OMG, I played this piece in a small chamber group several years ago and it was a wonderful experience." Unfortunately, no recording of that performance is available.

2020-04-16

It difficult to grasp how international air travel has all but collapsed. A couple of years ago my wife and I visited the Basque region of Spain. We flew to Barcelona where we had vacationed some years before and took a short flight on to Bilbao. On the plane were members of the Joan Chamorro Quintet and their lead singer and trumpeter Andrea Motis. I ended up sitting next to guitarist, Josep Traver, and we spent the hour talking about jazz music. I had not heard of the group. He said they had a lot of stuff up on YouTube and that they would be performing in Bilbao over the weekend. Unfortunately, we were spending that time in San Sebastian so I wasn't able to see them live. Here is a nice cover of 'Someday my Prince will Come' featuring Ms. Motis (she was 18 at the time):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3qu52nXuEZ0> [contest warning!!! **This one is easy and I want to give away a prize. First person to tell me the origin of the song *without using Google* wins a prize related to the Quintet!**] Since it's Friday and everyone is worn out from a hard week of sheltering in place, here is a special COVID-19 performance from Anne-Sophie Mutter (I'm still looking for the pianist): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DCY7XaBqWMI>

2020-04-17

A couple of things before we get started this Friday. As one perceptive reader noted, I got the days mixed up in yesterday's newsletter. Yes, it was Thursday!! In the absence of sports scores, I am having difficulty staying oriented (or maybe it's just 'Groundhog Day' syndrome; we need an ICD code for this). Second, and more importantly, we had a winner in yesterday's contest. The song, 'Someday my Prince Will Come,' is from Walt Disney's 'Snow White,' the first of Disney's full-length animated films. Music was by Frank Churchill, lyrics by Larry Morey, and Adriana Caselotti sang it in the film. The prize will be going out in today's mail to the lucky winner. Don't lose your thinking caps as quizzes will pop up periodically.

Before we get into the musical selection today (these are programmed way in advance!), let's take a moment and remember saxophone great Lee Konitz who passed away from SARS-CoV-2 complications. Konitz was 92 and had a storied career playing with almost every jazz great since starting in the 1940s. Here is a live version of All the Things You Are: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0AnM3bTEXGk> from 2012 (Mr. Konitz was 85).

On to the main selection. Those of us old enough to remember what 'camp' really meant will derive some pleasure from this piece. Those of you wanting an explanation are referred to the greatest reference 'book' of our time: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Camp_\(style\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Camp_(style)) We have not featured Broadway, so it's time to dim the lights and strike up the band. Here is 'Tonight' from 'West Side Story.' The audience was enthralled with the performance, me not so much: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QC10LrVWtu4> Trivia question (no prizes for this one): who sang Tony, incurring the great wrath of Leonard Bernstein?

2020-04-18

Here's the music choice for today. She sure didn't make a convincing Maria but just maybe La Netrebko is better suited for German operetta. From an earlier stage in her career (I think it's at the Baden-Baden gala): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7tUq8Q_b8Lg

2020-04-19

Contest Alert!!!!!! Today's music selection is one that I often come back to, a performance of the Country classic 'Wabash Cannonball;' it is a group of all-star singers and musicians, some contemporary and some from years past: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z7eTelcaf_M The song is introduced by two old clips by the legendary Roy Acuff before the scrim comes up and Ketch Secor of Old Crow Medicine Show starts the second verse. Ketch introduces the instrumental soloists, but the second vocal soloist is not named. To win the prize, your task is to identify the wonderful baritone who sings the Daddy Claxton verse. Hey, let's also add a Sunday morning bonus!!! Of course you guessed it, 'Sunday Morning Coming Down' from Kris Kristofferson's debut album: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vbqGWTxwZEA> **[note: I certainly do not endorse cigarette smoking!]**

2020-04-20

Alas, there was no winner of yesterday's prize question. It was a tough one if you are not a big CM fan. The singer was Josh Turner who is also well known for his gospel singing. Here is a fun one for these COVID times, 'Why Don't We Just Dance': <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IH1Z9DEDqpk> Let's move on music fans, why haven't you asked for the 'Chairman of the Board?' What a big gaffe on my part not to have posted a Sinatra song. His young recordings were outstanding, he had the rhythm and technique to really style a song. Here is some good singing from the mid-1960s. Big band and Sinatra in 'Fly me to the Moon:' <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0YEtYHZXI5M>

2020-04-21

I just realized we have not heard anything by Richard Strauss. Let's remedy this right now with a fine rendition of his final composition, The Four Last Songs. IMO, Lucia Popp was one of the most underrated sopranos who sadly departed this world way too early. Here is a wonderful rendition with the Chicago Symphony and Georg Solti: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FhXLq3d_6kU 20 minutes of exquisite singing.

2020-04-22

I am fond of piano transcriptions of operas. Franz Liszt was the first one to do this, and regularly toured Europe playing virtuoso pieces. Here is a nice arrangement of Wagner's Götterdämmerung by pianist Nikolay Lugansky: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RvbUnf-Fygc>

2020-04-23

Yes, it is a little late for Easter but I came across this new video of The Messiah (I've sung this several time as a chorister and even learned the opening tenor solo!). It's always stirring to hear this sung well and this fits the bill: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IFjQ77ol2DI> I found it interesting that they split the opening solo between two tenors. I really liked 'Every Valley', great tone and breath control. This is the first video I've seen that has a fundraising link (I enjoyed the performance so much I donated).

We should remember that lots of musicians rely on public performances for income. [The pandemic has taken this away](#). I ask my loyal readers to give back to arts communities as appropriate (hey, you are getting a great newsletter for free!). As a double treat today, here is a delightful COVID-19 kitchen recital by German-Slav soprano Patricia Janečková singing a devilishly difficult Rossini song: <https://youtu.be/Xy4bFpaGnII> She's only 21 and there are a number of wonderful YouTube clips of her singing.

2020-04-24

You were all thinking what's up with this Goldhammer guy. He gives us indie rock, pop rock, and even country music. Where is Vladimir Horowitz? Why these dumb opera transcriptions, surely there must be a fine concert performance of the great Horowitz. Not to worry, of course there is Horowitz and here he is in a 1987 Vienna concert: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8ELwCdgGQLQ> Here's a nice anecdote. My wife's college roommate lived across the street from him in New York. She always knew when he was about to give a concert at the piano movers were on the street to hoist his piano out and move it to Carnegie Hall. I don't know if he had it shipped over for the Vienna concert. He was 84 years old at the time of this concert that was his next to last public performance.

2020-04-25

You knew that he had to make an appearance. Yes, I was present at the famous May 1970 performance of the LA Philharmonic and [Frank Zappa's](#) Mothers of Invention. It was memorable in all kinds of ways that would take too long to explain. Zappa was an iconoclastic musician and composer and there are a number classical groups who continue performing chamber music he wrote. I told you my taste in music is very eclectic. Here is the classic Montana: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DmcYTShN4Fk> and here is one of his finer chamber pieces 'G-Spot Tornado' with accompanying dancers; it was the last time he conducted, passing away nine months after this performance at the age of 52. **[Contest Alert!!!! What was the name of the leader of the do-wop band inspired by Frank Zappa?? This is a tough one but a nice prize will go to the winner!]**

2020-04-26

We absolutely have to stay with pop music for today's selection. I have been a fan of [Aretha Franklin](#) since she hit the charts big time in the 1960s. There are so many good selections but I return to 'Think' which for me made [The Blues Brothers](#) an iconic film: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WY66eICQkYk>

2020-04-27

I promise no more Frank Zappa! BTW, nobody responded to the contest question regarding Zappa's relation to the do-wop band. He and his colleagues released an album called '[Cruising with Reuben and the Jets](#),' consisting of do-wop songs, which received some mainstream radio play. The band leader, *Reuben Sano*, was the alter ego of Frank Zappa. You can find the album on YouTube.

I continue to look for inspiration in music during the pandemic and often return to Mahler. Today I offer a fine performance of the Symphony No. 2: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0-CdYvJ6t4> I look past the religiosity of the choral verses and rather focus on the longing for relief. There is a [good entry on Wikipedia discussing this symphony](#).

2020-04-28

Here is another fine piece of chamber music by [Franz Schubert](#), the octet in F major, for strings, horn, bassoon & clarinet: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fnpVu8Eihj4> I'm constantly amazed at Schubert's musical output during his short life. By my count, I have sung maybe 35 or so of his lieder and have been working on and off on Winterreise. That recital is likely not to take place but as soon as things clear up, I'm planning on doing the Schumann Op. 39 songs (Eichendorff poems) with maybe Beethoven's An die ferne Geliebte. If it's safe for travel all my loyal readers will get an invite.

2020-04-29

[Stephen Sondheim](#) turned 90 in March and a [90th birthday celebration was held](#) and it's worth watching just for the simple pleasure of seeing so many wonderful singers performing in the COVID-19 era. For a shorter enjoyment of Sondheim here is Neil Patrick Harris singing "Being Alive" from Company: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HnTu8IBWvTQ>

2020-04-30

How have I ignored Chuck Berry??? I need to correct this STAT! Here is Chuck, live at the Roxy, singing Memphis: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B7fyNnoZ7IA> It's an understated performance compared to those of his younger days but arresting nonetheless. **Contest Alert: first person to correctly provide the answer as to the classical composer featured in one of Chuck's greatest hits will win a nice prize! Hint: the song was covered by a number of well-known bands including Paul Shaffer and The World's Most Dangerous Band (this should really help you solve this one).**

2020-05-01

Happy May Day!!!

Let's move on to one of the great instrumentalists of our time. Yes, dear readers, it is time to listen to Ravi Shankar live from the 1967 Monterey Pop festival (and before you ask, I was not there, nor was I at Woodstock either; in those days jazz was my thing): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lk600bnblOk> Speaking of Monterey, it is a shame that I cannot find a video anywhere of John Handy's 1965 Jazz Festival performance. I wore out my LP playing 'Spanish Lady' so much. If you are interested, the full recording is on YouTube and is one of the great jazz festival performances IMO.

We had a winner of yesterday's contest!!! The correct answer was Ludwig von Beethoven and the Chuck Berry song was 'Roll over Beethoven.' While Paul Shaffer's band did cover this song, The Beatles version is the most famous.

2020-05-02

Lots of popular songs get taken up by jazz musicians who give them a special twist. I presented one example, 'Someday my Prince Will Come,' which came from a very popular movie. Sometimes, the song comes from a movie that is all but forgotten today. This is the case with 'Green Dolphin Street' from the [film of the same name](#). Lyricist [Ned Washington](#) was best known for 'When You Wish Upon a Star' from Pinocchio. It was one of MGM's hits in 1947-48; it occasionally pops up on Turner Classic Movies (I have to stay on the lookout for this one). Here is the great John Coltrane with the sidemen who played with

the Miles Davis Quintet. For some reason Miles, who was first to record this song, sat out this Düsseldorf performance: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ePScREIDHOY>

2020-05-03

Sunday is spiritual music day! Here is a very fine performance of Brahms [A German Requiem](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A-1SishN_bc) : https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A-1SishN_bc Despite taking the text from the scriptures, Brahms made this work non-liturgical and focused on humanism.

2020-05-04

I first heard [Keith Jarrett](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Eqr0ZmgmDr4) when he played with Charles Lloyd at the Monterrey Jazz festival in 1966 (I was there!!). I thought he was a very special pianist and was not proven wrong. He went on to play a number solo concerts, the most famous of which was in [Cologne Germany](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Eqr0ZmgmDr4) where they forgot to bring the correct piano in. Jarrett adapted and that evening's recording became one of the bestselling in jazz history. Here is Jarrett in Tokyo with some encores of popular songs:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Eqr0ZmgmDr4> There is a good [podcast by Tim Harford about the Cologne recording](#). You cannot say I am not keeping you all entertained with all types of arcana.

2020-05-05

Did I miss posting a music video of our Nobel Laureate poet of the people? Yes, none other than the iconic [Bob Dylan](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IJCmgKRszYM)!! Before you ask, I was indeed at one of the 1974 performances of Bob and The Band, a truly memorable evening in a packed Assembly Hall at Indiana University (IIRC, it was about 2-3 weeks after I saw Luciano Pavarotti in recital, what a pair of artists). Here is a youthful Dylan on Canadian TV: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IJCmgKRszYM> Also, [Dylan's Nobel Prize acceptance speech](#) is well worth listening to. I finally understand Moby Dick now. **It's time for another contest!!!! Who is the mysterious girl he is singing about? She might have even been on an album cover! I really want to give away prizes!**

2020-05-06

Alas, there was no winner of yesterday's contest. There is no unanimity of thinking about who '[girl of the north country](#)' is, and of course Bob Dylan isn't talking. The song was on Dylan's second album, "The Freewheelin' Bob Dylan" and also on "Nashville Skyline" where he sings it as a duet with Johnny Cash. Most people believe it is [Suze Rotolo](#) who is on the iconic album cover with Dylan. If you are looking for a good book to read about Dylan and his time in New York, I can give a major recommendation for David Hajdu's "Positively 4th Street: The Lives and Times of Joan Baez, Bob Dylan, Mimi Baez Fariña, and Richard Fariña." Trivia note: Richard Fariña was a good friend and Cornell classmate of the reclusive American writer, Thomas Pynchon.

Here is a vivid memory of my almost misspent youth. Loyal readers had no way of knowing that your correspondent was a beach bum at one point. Anyone who goes to school at [UC Santa Barbara](#) had the beach in his/her system (do click on the link to see some wonderful panoramic photography of my alma mater). When the [Beach Boys](#) hit the scene we were all stoked up and ready to hit the waves!!! It was so rad!! Here is the iconic Surfin USA (co-written by none other than Chuck Berry): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sNypbmPPDco> yes, the video is grainy and audio cloudy but all the other filmed versions are lip synch and we cannot have that!

2020-05-07

This has to be one of the best classical-pop fusion songs. The great Freddie Mercury and Montserrat Caballe singing [Barcelona](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pPG5DP2RQZk): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pPG5DP2RQZk> it doesn't get any better than this!! [Caballe sang one of the most magnificent 'Casta Diva'](#) that I've seen. It was a windswept evening at an open-air performance in France and the voice is just in prime shape. The YouTube clip is nowhere as good as the DVD. I'll look for a good clip of Queen's 'We are the Champions.'

2020-05-08

I came upon the Swiss soprano, Regula Mühlemann, pretty much by mistake the other day. What a wonderful singer she is. Here she sings Mozart's Exsultate Jubilate: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o_fA-Ls4RXk I am constant surprised by Mozart's compositions.

2020-05-09

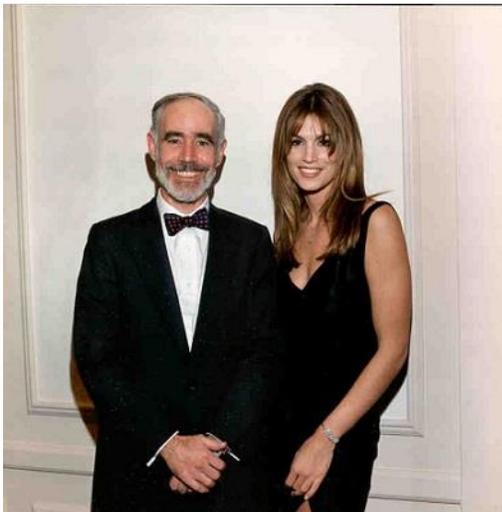
It occurs to me that we need to have a string quartet performance to fill out the chamber music repertoire! One of my favorites is Schubert's Quartet #14 D.810 aka "[Death and the Maiden](#)." Here is the fine Hagen Quartet in performance: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ovEYC-mFjvU>

2020-05-10

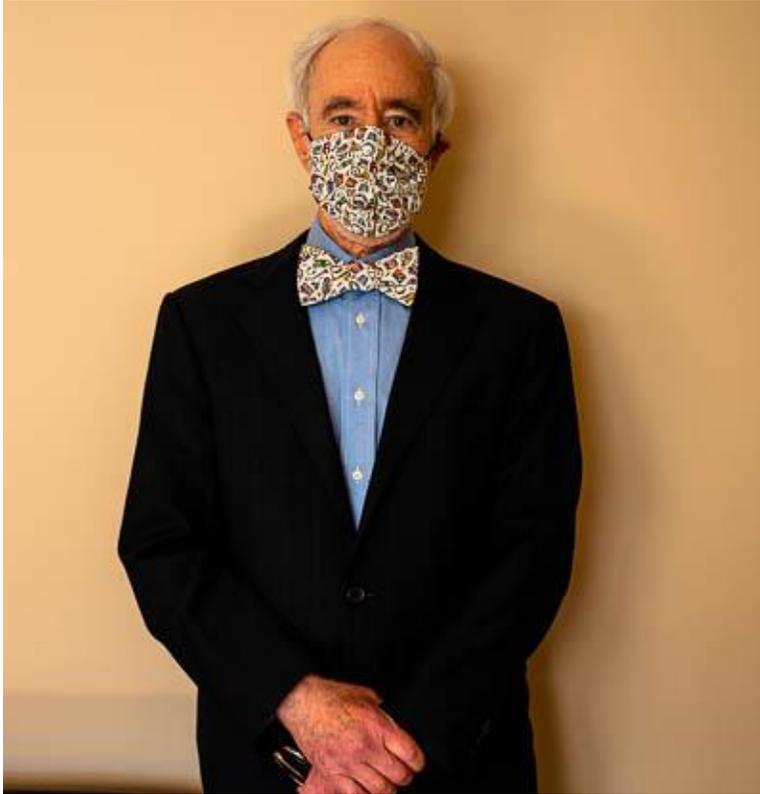
To all the mothers, Happy Mother's Day!!!!

Sunday is usually a day of reflection and what better way than with this Verdi Requiem: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nlq9IJRElBk&t=11s>

Dearest readers, I have a special treat for all of you. Most of you don't know that at one time in the long ago past, I did a stint as an Armani model. Yes, it is true and here is me and a certain super-model just off the runway.



I was thinking to myself there has to also be a way to revive my modeling career. What better way than to dress for success the COVID-19 way!!! With the help of my wonderful bowtie supplier, I now present business dress for the COVID-19 ERA!!



For you fashionistas, [I was also featured in the Washington Post way back in 2005](#). I did get my famous tag line in the interview, "I'm a slave to fashion; we all must have standards!" Eat your heart out Tim Gunn. Unfortunately, my picture didn't make the front page they deferred to Mac Dunaway; it's hard to compete with the likes of Faye's brother! Enough fashion talk, on with the main business of the day. **Wait, let's run a contest! First person to correctly identify my partner in the Armani picture wins a prize! This one should be easy.**

2020-05-11

I never tire of Schubert. Here is one of his better known songs, 'The [Shepherd on the Rock](#)' written for soprano, piano and clarinet. Barbara Bonney does a wonderful job accompanied by Andre Watts and David Shifrin: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KEjBGYLohto>

2020-05-12

Last week (I think it was, but since the days are a blur, I cannot be certain) I had Schubert's 'Death and the Maiden' string quartet. One of the movements of that is a paraphrase of the [song by the same name](#). Here are [Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau](#) and his wife, [Julia Varady](#) performing the song: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DgvM0g4fGBE> Fischer-Dieskau is of course well known for the numerous lieder recordings and here he is a more than decent pianist.

2020-05-13

[Franz Liszt](#) wrote three songs to poems of [Petrarch](#) (Liszt was the rock star of his generation as those who have had the good fortune to have seen Ken Russell's art house classic, 'Lisztomania' starring Who bandmember Roger Daltrey as the composer). Here is the fine American tenor [Lawrence Brownlee](#) singing Sonnet 104, 'Pace non trovo': <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c8ii2cUAje0>

2020-05-14

[Henri Duparc](#) only wrote 17 songs but each one was masterful in composition and expression. One of my favorites is [Phydilé](#) sung here by Sylvia McNair: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Sec4GzrZ9U>

2020-05-15

I love opera duets!!! One of my faves is the Flower Duet from [Leo Delibes's](#) opera [Lakme](#). Here is a nice version from the recording studio with Sabine Devieille and Marianne Cregassa:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C1ZL5AxmK_A

2020-05-16

No introduction about today's music selection, just the name – [Ella Fitzgerald](#):

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

2020-05-17

For reflection Sunday, one of the masterpieces of Western Music. To me Bach is the embodiment of spirituality. Looking at his vast output, there had to be something more than musical genius and his B minor Mass is a piece I can listen to over and over. Here is a French group, Ensemble Pygmalion, playing on period instruments with a great choir and soloists:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D5ttwUX4zWg>

2020-05-18

Week nine of the newsletter; time flies when you are having fun (or at least it supposed to).

How have I managed to neglect the blues??? I did have Aretha in her Blues Brother's cameo but that didn't count. We need to take care of business right now. Who else to kick off a 'Blue Monday' than BB King. Here is 'The Thrill is Gone': https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SgXSomPE_FY Nobody does it better.

2020-05-19

Let's stay with the blues for at least another day. Another movie that featured an out of character blues number is 'Adventures in Babysitting' (which all my loyal readers should have watched more than once) where Elisabeth Shue and the three kids she is babysitting find themselves in a Chicago blues club. The only way out is....yes, they gotta sing the blues: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=552PLnE61TM> 'Babysitting Blues' with the great Albert King on guitar and back up vocals. **Time for another contest!!! Which actor who gained notoriety playing an intense procedural detective in a Dick Wolf produced series plays the Thor-like character in this movie? First correct answer wins a nice prize!**

2020-05-20

Let's shift gears and move on to some folk music. Here is a very young Joni Mitchell from England. Her voice was youthful and lyrical. Two of her well known songs of the day, 'Big Yellow Taxi' and my fave 'Both Sides Now': https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GFB-d-8_bvY Alas, nobody got the quiz answer yesterday. Vincent d'Onofrio played the garage worker in the movie who the little girl thinks is Thor; he was an intense Detective Goren in 'Law and Order: Criminal Intent.' Better luck in the next contest; I have nice prizes I really want to give away to my loyal readers!!!

2020-05-21

Let's stay with folk for another day. Two for the price of one! The lilting voice of Joan Baez is featured. First we have a live 1978 performance of 'the Night they Drove Old Dixie Down' from Norway: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XTNirVqTepE> the second one is a song that I have always enjoyed, Leonard Cohen's 'Suzanne,' <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=39eFrEzZmYE> from a French performance in 2000. Don't forget my book recommendation from earlier, David Hajdu's "Positively 4th Street: The Lives and Times of Joan Baez, Bob Dylan, Mimi Baez Fariña, and Richard Fariña."

2020-05-22

I cannot think of any vocal quartet that puts a smile on my face as the [Manhattan Transfer](#). The arrangements and blend in voices is just sublime. Here is 'Boy from New York City': <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k2fN36wq-zc>

2020-05-23

I read a fascinating article on the Russo-German pianist [Igor Levit in The New Yorker](#). He started doing house recitals over Twitter right after the lock down was imposed in Germany (he lives in the Mitte section of Berlin; I had my eyes on a very nice flat in that area following a visit to Berlin several years ago but it wasn't that amenable as a weekend getaway). He was invited to do a reprise of one of the concerts at the President's house, [Schloss Bellevue](#). Here is Beethoven's [Waldstein Sonata](#): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IC8DBTfJI90&t=7s> (don't be alarmed by the drop out in the first movement, it's a glitch in the recording) and a double treat, his [NPR Tiny Desk Concert](#): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HSyJNWYRZ8Y>

2020-05-24

For reflection Sunday, let's add a bit of optimism. What better and uplifting way to move our spirits than the Beethoven 9th Symphony. We turn to the [Frankfurt Radio Symphony](#) under the baton of [Andrés Orozco-Estrada](#). I really like how he only modestly accepts the audience applause, preferring to acknowledge all the ensemble members and soloists: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gT91esZK90I> Collectively, we are all brothers and sisters and we will get through this!

2020-05-25

Back in the day, The Righteous Brothers were chart toppers. One of the major hits was Unchained Melody which was also used in the movie Ghost with Demi Moore and Patrick Swayze (who can ever forget that movie?). Here is a video clip of Bobby Hatfield from 1965: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IYj2hex99gY> The song has an interesting origin and now it is time for another **CONTEST**. **A nice prize will go to the first person to correctly identify the first person to sing the song and what that person was really famous for!!!** This was one of my best bar bets of all

time and I never found anyone who could provide the correct answer. I will give you a couple of hints. It was not Bobby Hatfield nor was it Elvis (who did a decent job with it). Put your thinking caps on!!!

Here is a super special musical treat for you all: [https://youtu.be/ Y3iT_o67M](https://youtu.be/Y3iT_o67M) The pop star [JoJo](#) makes a surprise visit to a Zoom group of Healthcare Heroes led by one of the music therapists at UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital, none other than the great **Jenny Goldhammer!!!**

2020-05-26

The correct answer to yesterday's contest is the great American baritone, [Todd Duncan](#). He was famous as the first Porgy in the Gershwin opera Porgy and Bess. He was a long-time voice teacher in Washington DC. Here is [a nice article on 'Unchained Melody](#) and [a clip of famous singers](#) who covered the song (including Elvis).

I am always on the lookout for COVID-19 special music videos. Here is a fun one from opera stars Jamie Barton and Ryan McKinny, accompanied by Kathleen Kelly, entitled Coronadämmerung from Wagner's Das Rheingold: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n_ChqaZxLT4

2020-05-27

One can always listen to Bach and not be disappointed (even when Jack Benny is trying to play the double concerto with Isaac Stern. Here is a good rendition of two violin concertos in a very intimate space with Hillary Hahn: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nGwDSNEikFw> There is a bonus piece by Piazzolla for violin and accordion.

2020-05-28

OK opera fans, we have had some arias, piano transcriptions, duets, but why not a full opera you might ask. Asked and answered is my reply. The Rome Opera is putting some very nice productions on line to view for FREE (just like this newsletter!!). Here is video recorded back in 2015. Some fine singing and great scenery: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h746rBi1Hdw> Remember to read your newsletter before settling in to watch Floria Tosca do her thing.

2020-05-29

[Stan Getz](#) and [Chet Baker](#) were true icons in the jazz world. Both were intensely melodic musicians and both were seduced into heroin use and addiction. Getz successfully kicked the habit, Baker did not. Here is a fine performance of the two from a 1983 Stockholm performance: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0p72L4bMdPA>

2020-05-30

Here is another COVID-19 performance from a group that is new to me. The quartet NOVA is minimalist with a guitarist, bass player, drummer and vocalist. Here is a nice split screen performance of one of my faves, Corcovado: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wl6NVR88kgQ> I want to hear more from this group!

2020-05-31

For reflection Sunday let us turn to Beethoven for the second week in a row. This time have a listen to the delightful Symphony #6, The Pastorale. As with last week, it is the Frankfurt Radio Symphony under the direction of Andrés Orozco-Estrada: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zv4PIFRpYcw&t=250s>

2020-06-01

Happy June and welcome to Week 11 of the newsletter!!

Let's spend some time on soul music and for me there was nobody like [Sam Cooke](#). The tragedy of his early death was never adequately explained and remains controversial to this day. Unfortunately, his best composition 'A Change is Gonna Come' was never performed on video that I could find so we have to settle for a short appearance on the old Jerry Lewis show:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eltCoCoR2Yg> There is a very funny back story about 'A Change is Gonna Come' on a [Drunk History episode](#) and here is the original Sam Cooke recording that always melts my heart: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wEBlaMOmKV4> The film clips accompanying this video are apt for reflection today!

2020-06-02

Let's turn to another wonderful soul tune today, composed and first sung by Otis Redding, [Sitting on the Dock of the Bay](#). This was one of the last pieces Redding composed as he died in an airplane crash shortly after this was recorded and there is no video performance available. However, the American singer/songwriter Sara Bareilles provides a soulful cover for us:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DTvnL1jWNao> Redding's original recording is here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rTVjnBo96Ug>

2020-06-03

How about Oakland's finest: [The Pointer Sisters](#)? Jump for My Love:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uyTVyCp7xrw> I was attracted to this MTV video when it first came out. All the track and field athletes engaged in various jumping and hurdling activities and then you can watch for yourself. **Time to run another contest to see if I can give away a prize!!! First one to correctly identify the player who has the flying slam dunk will be the winner! I can't think of an easier question to ask about this video (I do know half the track and field athletes but those would be too obscure).**

2020-06-04

A while back I said NO Disco, NO way, NO how. Does singing a Disco classic at the Nobel Peace Prize Concert honoring President Obama count as Disco? NO way, NO how. Here is the estimable [Donna Summer](#) singing her great hit 'Last Dance:' <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rFWbjz02OCQ>

My goodness, none of my loyal YouTube music aficionados got the answer to yesterday's contest. I know for a fact that **one of my readers is a diehard NBA fan**; perhaps he doesn't like The Pointer Sisters. Of course, it was the great Julius 'Dr. J' Erving whose slam dunks for the Philadelphia 76ers were legendary. Prizes are still out there to be won!!!

2020-06-05

Back on April 16, I provided a music selection from the Joan Chamorro Quintet. Chamorro is a phenomenal music teacher and his [Sant Andreu Jazz Band](#) is one phenomenal orchestra made up of kids between ages of 7 and 20. You can queue up any one of the groups performances or play lists and just smile the time away. The vocalists are always female, much as they were in the big band era here in the US. Here is a fine performance of [‘Lover Come Back to Me’](#) with drummer Abril Sauri singing: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T9_x09c-Xd8 Enjoy!

2020-06-06

Why haven't we had any comedy songs? One of my alert readers posed this exact question yesterday and I will remedy this oversight right now. [Tom Lehrer](#) is still with us at age 92, though he retired from performing many years ago. He also claims to have invented the Jell-O Shot while in the army. Here is 'We Will all Go Together When We Go' that refers back to the Cold War Days when we all had to do [‘duck and cover’](#) drills in school for fear of the nuclear apocalypse which, although I cannot be 100% certain, has not yet occurred: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=frAEmhqdlFs>

2020-06-07

For reflection Sunday I will turn again to Mahler for what is one of my favorite symphonic pieces [‘Das Lied von der Erde.’](#) I always find something new in this piece and have maybe 10 recordings. Perhaps the best interpretation is [Bruno Walter's 1952 recording](#) with [Kathleen Ferrier](#) and Julius Patzak. I don't think anyone has sung the final song as well as Ferrier who died of cancer at the young age of 41 about one year after the recording was made. Walter conducted the premier of the piece in 1909. For a video performance, here is the Toronto Symphony under the direction of Peter Oundjian with soloists, Michael Schade and Susan Platts: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R81yPON9IHl>

2020-06-08

Welcome to Week 12 of the COVID-19 Journey

How have I forgotten ballet?? Music and dance go together like a hand and glove. Here is the New York City Ballet in George Balanchine's 'Rubies' with music by Igor Stravinsky: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gw74CUCeqoM> enjoy the aural and visual pleasure.

2020-06-09

Why should one move a Steinway concert grand to the middle of the woods? Silly question, it is to hear the wonderful French-Georgian pianist, [Khatia Buniastishvili](#), play some wonderful solo pieces. I've been listening to a lot of her concerti over YouTube and she has both the technique and feeling for this instrument. Here is Das Waldkonzert: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eYlIk19CbBI> Spectacular setting, wonderful playing and an appreciative audience.

2020-06-10

One thing that is great about YouTube are the interesting places that concerts are staged. We saw a woody setting yesterday. Today it's a pop up lunch room opera: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JNgCM7zp30M> The kid's expressions are priceless!

2020-06-11

One of my loyal readers wants to hear and see the wonderful Chinese pianist [Yuja Wang](#). Ms. Wang got her early training in China before moving to the US and studying at the Curtis Institute in Philadelphia. As I am always happy to accept recommendations from my readers, here is Yuja Wang performing Rachmaninoff 3rd piano concerto with fingers flying over the keyboard. She is accompanied by the Vienna Philharmonic under the direction of Andrés Orozco-Estrada (it also has the Dvorak 'New World Symphony' as a bonus): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JKdpEvzKoj4>

2020-06-12

My bassoonist daughter, Jenny, and I saw the [Imani Winds](#) about a decade ago when they were in residence at the University of Maryland giving some master classes. She went to one of the classes and we both went to the concert they gave. They are a wonderful group that play an eclectic program of music that includes a number of compositions written for them. Here is [Astor Piazzolla's](#) "Libertango": <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BOMbCsFV4ns> that was recorded about a mile up the road from where we live in Bethesda!! Our county was very courageous about 15 years ago when [they built a concert hall](#) on the mansion property and we are better for it.

2020-06-13

How about another piano concerto by a Russian composer? Why not? Let's have a listen to the famous Tchaikovsky Piano Concerto #1, admirably played by [Anna Federova](#) accompanied by the Nordwestdeutsche Philharmonie led by Yves Abel: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hNfpMRSCFPE> Here is a [nice short](#) video of Ms. Federova discussing Rachmaninoff. **Contest Alert!!! I desperately want to give away a prize. This one should be easy. Who won the inaugural Tchaikovsky Competition in the piano category?**

2020-06-14

For reflection Sunday we have [Bach's Goldberg Variations](#). This is a special version, performed by a number of instrumentalists (and some vocalists) for these pandemic times: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O2QqWC7CKel> I'll say no more other than to urge you to listen and think.

2020-06-15

Welcome to Week 13 of what hope is not going to be an endless wandering in the wilderness.

Of the 32 Beethoven piano sonatas, #31 is my favorite. Here we have Vladimir Ashkenazy playing at a live recital at University of Essex in 1972: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QI1viKPG3TI> I saw him about five years later when I was a post doc at Cornell and he gave a mesmerizing performance of this sonata. I had a special thrill this morning when my YouTube feed showed that Joan Chamorro had given me a  for my comment to the video of 'Love Your Spell is Everywhere' featuring the young vocalists Alaba Armengou and Élia Bastida: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JRtH41FP3ni> As soon as it's safe to travel, I am going back to Barcelona to see them live!

I totally forgot to mention that four astute readers had the correct answer to Saturday's contest. Van Cliburn was the winner of the first Tchaikovsky Piano Competition held in Moscow in 1958. I received a note from a loyal reader yesterday in response to my music choice of Bach's Goldberg Variations., asking

if I had read [Richard Powers](#) fine novel, '[The Goldbug Variations](#).' OMG!! Powers is my favorite American author, and this is for me, his finest book. To all my loyal readers I give this one a big 👍

2020-06-16

Two of the great ladies of American song. Does it get any better than this? [Jo Stafford](#) and [Ella Fitzgerald](#) having a great time with classic songs about love: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ctyT-9o4VI0> There wasn't any description about when this was recorded but judging by some other clips, I suspect this took place in the early 1960s. Stafford and her husband did a number of music spoof recordings under the names: Darlene and Jonathan Edwards. Most of the recordings were sung off key and with terrible rhythm which made them all the more fun. As a special treat, here are Darlene and Jonathan Edwards on the [Jack Benny show](#) from 1958! How I wish we had television as witty as this right now.

Contest Alert!!! Today is famous in literary circles (and I know we have some very able and literate readers who will get this one right away). It's a two part question: 1) what is today famous for and 2) who spoke this famous line (greatly excerpted – hint, hint) "*...the sea crimson sometimes like fire and the glorious sunsets and the fig trees in the Alameda gardens yes and all the queer little streets and the pink and blue and yellow houses and the rose gardens and the jessamine and geraniums and cactuses and Gibraltar as a girl where I was a Flower of the mountain...*"? A prize awaits the correct answers!

2020-06-17

Stacey Kent has been one of my favorite contemporary vocalists. She floats between a number of different jazz influenced genres as well as the classic American songbook. Along with other artists, she has been doing isolation videos. Here she is with 'A Time for Love' something that there is too little of these days: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iU-S2ScUKLk>

The answer to yesterday's contest was Ulysses by James Joyce where the action of the book takes place on June 16th which is now referred to in literary circles as 'Bloomsday'. The quotation was from the lengthy soliloquy delivered by Molly Bloom in the book's final chapter. Here is [Angeline Ball from the film Bloom doing the last fifty lines](#), well worth watching, yes, yes, yes!

2020-06-18

In response to my selection of Stacey Kent yesterday, a loyal reader asked whether I had ever listened to [Nancy LaMott](#). This was new name to me. She was a fine singer who was taken from us way to early at the age of 44 from uterine cancer. Here she is with an original song written by [David Friedman](#), 'I'll be Here with You' that aired on a Valentine's Day episode of Good Morning America: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zb40nYUshTE> There are a number of clips and albums on YouTube.

Let us all take a minute to mourn [the death of Vera Lynn](#), the English singer, whose song '[We'll Meet Again](#)' became an anthem of hope during WW-II.

2020-06-19

Let us stay with cabaret performers again today. [Andrea Marcovicci](#) got her start in movies and television (I remember her well from an old Kojak show in the early 1970s). In the 1980s she turned to cabaret and is an arresting singer. She celebrates her 65th birthday in this clip from a stint at Joe's Pub singing the Cole Porter song 'Don't Look at Me That Way':

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TM34ABIP1_8 and paying homage to the great chanteuse, [Julie Wilson](#).

2020-06-20

Cabaret again today, this time featuring [Diana Krall](#). YouTube has a number of full concert performances that you can seek out. Here is a music video of 'Just the Way You Are', a fine Billy Joel composition: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d8RYUZT57XA> and as a double treat Saturday here is a fun conversation and performance of 'You Can't Take That Away from Me' with [Tony Bennett](#)!!!: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZogFMxidChM> this song by George and Ira Gershwin was first sung by Fred Astaire way back in 1937: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fuufFgAMkGE> why not three music selections and a bonus dance video with Fred and Ginger?

2020-06-21

This week's reflection Sunday piece is the magical [Schubert Symphony #8](#). While it is unfinished by the composer it still has a lot going for it. Here is the Vienna Philharmonic under the direction of Phillippe Jordan: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tgzj4Vd3HHk&t=479s>

2020-06-22

Welcome to week 14 of the newsletter. I was hoping to be out of business by now but the virus has a mind of its own and I will persevere.

One of my loyal readers responded to my music selections, noting [Karen Carpenter's](#) fine voice. Most of her work was with her brother Richard, but here is a fine duet with Ella Fitzgerald from 1980:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HDp9b9eYoLM> Carpenter had a lifelong battle with anorexia that finally took her life at the age of 32; another fine performing artist who left way too soon. The American director, [Todd Haynes made a short film](#) on Karen's life using mainly Barbie dolls to represent the characters. It is well worth watching on YouTube.

2020-06-23

A couple of weeks ago I featured the Manhattan Transfer singing 'The Boy from New York City'. It is such a fave of mine that I just had to link to another recording. Here is [Janis Siegel](#) at Indiana University with two of their vocal jazz ensembles in an up tempo version:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7EcXR8pUImo> I did my graduate work at IU and some of my best memories came from all the wonderful concerts and recitals from various groups at the [IU school of music](#)!

2020-06-24

Though my youthful infatuation with the operas of Richard Wagner have waned, I continue to find certain parts quite moving. One of these is Wotan's farewell from [Die Walküre](#). This excerpt is from the famous, or infamous, depending on your view; I am of the former camp, [Bayreuth 1976 production](#).

Donald McIntyre and Gwyneth Jones are the singers under the direction of Pierre Boulez: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4tDP-K1dQ-M> as a Tuesday Twofer (obviously it is Wednesday but the selection was made on Tuesday and try to rhyme Twofer with Wednesday!), here is Gwyneth Jones in the immolation scene from the same production but the final opera of the tetralogy Götteredämmerung: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2JgMt8GWdyU> Damn, I may need to interrupt my binging of 'The Wire' and rewatch this [Ring Cycle](#)!!!

2020-06-25

Talk about strange coincidences!!! Two weeks ago I was thinking about what songs to begin to work on for what will probably be a pandemic recital. The Schumann Op. 39 songs to Eichendorff poems are one set that I have been working on over the past several months, but what to pair them with? I thought that Beethoven's '[An de Ferne Geliebte](#)' would be a good one as it was the first 'official' song cycle written. I was discussing this with my voice teacher last week and he agreed the Beethoven cycle would be a good one to do. Yesterday's New York Times had an article on [two singers who are doing one on one telephone performances!](#) How cool and only [\\$40 for a performance!](#) Here is the great German baritone [Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau](#) singing the cycle accompanied by Gerald Moore: https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=14&v=KOk7EWYbyqk

2020-06-26

I have always enjoyed [Norah Jones](#). Her she is with [Wynton Marsalis](#) and his jazz ensemble singing the Ray Charles song, 'You Don't Know Me': https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T2_9Rkk4f_g Here is the original audio recording by Charles: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jyTiyHI8g4s>

2020-06-27

One of my favorite Motown songs was '[I Heard it Through the Grapevine](#)' by [Marvin Gaye](#). Here is a more funky live performance from the Montreux Jazz Festival: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y7dGdrP3pms> It was a great dance tune when I was in college as the original version shows: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hajBdDM2qdg>

2020-06-28

For reflection Sunday, let us turn to [Felix Mendelssohn](#)'s 5th symphony also known as the [Reformation Symphony](#). Here is my current favorite orchestra, the Frankfurt Radio Symphony under the direction of Jérémie Rhorer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=otcrnrQAwD8>

2020-06-29

Welcome to Week 15 of the newsletter!!

I could do several weeks on Motown and still not cover all the singers and songs that were part of my high school and college memories. Let's spend some time with the all-time faves. Summer is a time for taking it to the street and this can be done safely even in a time of pandemic distancing. Who else to get us off our easy chairs and moving but [Martha and the Vandellas](#)! The iconic '[Dancing in the Streets](#)' is just the recipe: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CdvlTn5cAVc> and here is a great summer twofer with the same group doing 'Heat Wave': https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dAvq_gimOto

2020-06-30

Keeping with the Motown vibe, let's look at one of the big male groups that rocked during the 1960s. [The Temptations](#) were just a huge hit machine for Barry Gordy's record label. Even though the personnel changed over the years, they always had a crisp sound. My favorite recording is '[My Girl](#)': https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C_CSjcm-z1w

2020-07-01

Let's continue with Motown. [Smokey Robinson](#) and the Miracles were another one of the staples in the Motown hit parade. One of their great songs was '[Tracks of My Tears](#).' While Smokey was great with the song, I'm choosing the phenomenal cover by the phenomenal (why have I not had her in the newsletter?) [Linda Rondstadt](#): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OYLSvXYp_5U Rondstadt wowed a lot of us back in the mid-1960 with The Stone Poneys where she was the featured vocalist on '[Different Drum](#)': <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w9qsDgA1q8Y> (I had an upstairs neighbor in college who played this so many times that the grooves on the record wore out) and there is this bizarre live version with a pick up band that seems to be playing something totally different: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TGZznJXY1Xc> it's from a NYC night club as per the comment by Alan White. Rondstadt was a great rock and roller as well with this version of Back in the USA accompanied by Chuck Berry, Keith Richard and George Harrison!!!: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u7MwyZnMdYY> Showing her versatility, Rondstadt did a run in '[The Pirates of Penzance](#)' first in Central Park and then on Broadway: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RfjAJn45C-w> I'll have to stop here before this departs from COVID-19 and becomes a Linda Ronstadt fan blog!

2020-07-02

[The Band](#) were one of the iconic groups of the 1965-75 era. They produced a lot of influential work and their tours with Bob Dylan were legendary. I was fortunate enough to see one of the performances on the final tour with Dylan when I was in grad school at IU. The Band's final concert was recorded by the great American filmmaker, Martin Scorsese and released as '[The Last Waltz](#).' It is still a staple on cable television. Here is one of their iconic songs, '[The Weight](#)': <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g-w9OclUnns> it is from the Scorsese film and backed up by the Staple Singers. Let's give you a Thursday twofer with this all-star version sung in memory of Levon Helm's passing: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BlgDC6mOU0o>

2020-07-03

[Martha Argerich](#) is a very young 79 years of age and like some of her male predecessors still playing phenomenally well. She has played pieces from virtually all the top composers of the piano rep since her debut recital at the age of 8. There are a number of fine YouTube videos but let's just look and revel in the most recent from pre-pandemic December 2019. It is the Beethoven Piano Concerto #1 and a couple of nice encores: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BF7pmimzjBs> Let this be an inspiration to all of us over the age of 65!

2020-07-04

Happy Independence Day to all my American Readers!

The [Eurovision Song Contest](#) has been around for a long time. The best known winners were ABBA (1974) and Celine Dion (1988) though there have been some others who have had moderate careers such as Lulu (1969). Now we have a movie, [Eurovision Song Contest: The Story of Fire Saga](#), with Will Farrell and Rachel McAdams that is a clever parody of the annual event. Here we have a wonderful song sung by McAdams from the movie: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AvzotsxIjLI> the movie is streaming on Netflix

2020-07-05

Let us turn to love for this reflection Sunday. What better way to explore love's passion than the second act love duet from Richard Wagner's [Tristan and Isolde](#). It's a draining opera for both singers and audience and perhaps the best place to view it is the summer festival at Bayreuth where directors are given freedom to experiment and the acoustics are exemplary. Here are [Waltraud Meier](#) and [Siegfried Jerusalem](#) under the baton of [Daniel Barenboim](#) in a 1995 production by [Heiner Müller](#): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lQNcTYVlcEg> I would be remiss if I didn't provide my loyal readers with Isolde's Liebestod that concludes the opera: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OAEkTK6aKUM> While we are on the subject of redemptive love, let's not forget the efforts that Maestro Barenboim has taken for peace in the mid-East with his [West-Eastern Divan Orchestra](#). Here is a concert performance of the Liebestod with Meier and that orchestra (it looks to be from the 2008 Ravello Festival on the Amalfi Coast): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jtKxaUeAD5I> Enjoy and think about better times that will come following the pandemic!!!

2020-07-06

Welcome to Week 16 of a Newsletter that Shows no Sign of Ending

Let's stick with opera for today. Yesterday we had a nice presentation tale of love induced by magic potion. What about demented love you might ask? I have just piece for you, [Richard Strauss's Salome](#). Based on a play by Oscar Wilde, the opera was shocking upon introduction and some opera houses refused to stage it. I have seen the final scene done in concert as well as on the opera stage but I must say, this version with German soprano [Nadja Michael](#) (who also studied at Indiana University!!!) is too over the top: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nan2WjNfVrU> A semi-staged and well sung version is also good listening: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qa9ug0g0iAM>

2020-07-07

It is looking like it may be an all opera week! Here is young love epitomized by the rose presentation scene from Richard Strauss's [Der Rosenkavalier](#). This is a filmed version of the 1962 Vienna Opera production with [Sena Jurniac](#) and [Anneliese Rothenberger](#): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G3nmm5l0-Ys> IMO, this duet has never been done any better than this and the sumptuous staging is to die for. It was no secret that Strauss preferred women's voices and his best works were for them. However, the Italian Singer's aria from Rosenkavalier is splendid as Piotr Beczala shows in this Vienna Production: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K8OvpdGrWUE> Beczala was in DC several years ago for a recital with Vocal Arts DC. I was invited to the after-recital dinner and was seated next to him! What a surprise. I asked him what the most difficult aria for him and he replied it was this Strauss piece. The tenor comes on right when the piece starts without any other warm up in

the opera and departs right afterwards. He noted, “the high notes have to be very secure or you really end up fluffing your lines.”

2020-07-08

In memoriam - [Charlie Daniels](#) passed away the other day (not COVID-19) related. He and his band always had a great time performing. His best-known hit was ‘[The Devil Went Down to Georgia](#).’ Here is the band live at the Grand Ole Opry: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J5j69aEZ8xE>

2020-07-09

I was going to post a clip from the final scene of Der Rosenkavalier yesterday to close out the romantic love theme from that opera but wanted to acknowledge Charlie Daniel’s passing. There are a number of good clips but I have always liked Renee Fleming in this role. Here is a Met production with Fleming, Susan Graham and Christine Schäfer with Edo de Waart conducting:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fi810zB3L04> Also, let’s take a moment to remember the great violinist Ida Haendel who just passed away. Here she is playing an encore piece by Sarasate, ‘Gypsy Airs’ from 2008 when she was 85 years young: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uGXArQJA3Po>

2020-07-10

I have been giving short shrift to violinists and will remedy this today. One of my favorite pieces is [Max Bruch’s Scottish Fantasy](#). The first recording I had back in the vinyl days was the one by [Kyung-Wha Chung](#) that was recorded back in 1972. Here is a much later live performance from Seoul in 2012. The conductor is her brother Myung-Whun Chung and frequent collaborator in chamber music performances: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Bux10fh3CI>

2020-07-11

One of the finest singer/songwriters of our day is [John Legend](#). Bet you didn’t know that out of college (UPenn) he was a management consultant with Boston Consulting Group!! He clearly made the right choice to go into the entertainment industry. He is also one of fifteen to grab the EGOT (Emmy, Grammy, Oscar, Tony). Here is ‘[All of Me](#)’ in the official music video format:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=450p7goxZqg> The song was written for his soon to be wife, [Crissy Teigen](#). She is in the video and it was filmed in Italy the day before their wedding (I think the end shots were of the actual wedding). Wow, my loyal readers do get a lot for their money reading this newsletter.

2020-07-12

For reflection Sunday I offer two pieces. The famous London recital venue [Wigmore Hall](#) hosted empty-seat lunchtime pandemic recitals during the Month of June. I will link to some of these in future newsletters but one piece that seems apt for reflection is Franz Schubert’s great song cycle, ‘[Die Winterreise](#)’. Yes, it is bleak, but I can think of no other cycle where the music and poetry are so intertwined. The cycle has been done by both men and women of differing voice ranges though it was original written in the tenor range. Here we have [Mitsuko Uchida](#) (a great recitalist in her own right) and tenor, [Mark Padmore](#): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2en3ZugteLI> Padmore’s voice sounds better than I remember and his interpretation of the cycle is sublime. The second selection is by the great [John Coltrane](#), another phenomenal artist taken away from us at the height of his talent. His

composition '[Alabama](#)' was written shortly after the 1963 bombing of a church in Birmingham that killed three teenage girls. We are fortunate that he performed this on Ralph Gleason's Jazz Casual show late in the same year: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=saN1BwlxJxA> Coltrane is with his great sidemen: McCoy Tyner, piano; Jimmy Garrison, bass; and Elvin Jones, drums. Schubert's bleak outlook and Coltrane's sense of optimism (his great recording '[A Love Supreme](#)' which crystalized his sense of spirituality was recorded a year later) seem like a good pairing.

2020-07-13

Welcome to Week 17 of the Pandemic Newsletter!

I have one more opera duet to begin the week as we will be shifting music genres. Here are [Nicolai Gedda](#) and [Lisa Della Casa](#) in the prison scene from [Gounod's Faust](#): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=19R-Kk0ThGA> Both were exquisite singers. Gedda sang roles in almost every single language and Della Casa was a renowned Strauss interpreter.

2020-07-14

Let us have a listen to another pandemic recital from Wigmore Hall. Canadian pianist [Angela Hewitt](#) is an excellent pianist who has specialized in Bach both in recordings and recitals. One could do worse than listen to Bach though it sometimes brings back nightmarish memories of my music theory battles analyzing Bach chorales. I think my loyal listeners will enjoy this solo piano recital as much as I have: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tfFXCiUHOGU>

2020-07-15

Let's get back to country!! [Tennessee Waltz](#) is just plain wonderful. Most people think it was written for [Patti Paige](#) but they would be wrong. Lots of singers have covered this and this rendition by [Bonnie Raitt](#) and Norah Jones is fine despite the screwed up video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zzDUi_L6MzA Paige's original 1950 version is here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5c-rVoBdZDE>

2020-07-16

I am going to stay with country for a day or two more. Country music is evocative of many moods, having its roots in a number of sectors within the United States. I mentioned Ken Burns fine PBS documentary about this genre a number weeks ago and it is worth watching if you haven't. Here is a song of remembrance by [Vince Gill](#), "[Go Rest High on That Mountain](#)" accompanied by [Alison Krauss](#) and [Ricky Skaggs](#): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NwFiWCUkk4M>

2020-07-17

This is another one of my country faves!!! [Pancho and Lefty](#) was composed by [Townes Van Zandt](#) who battled various addictions throughout his life but managed to have great influence on a lot of performers. Here is the video of the song performed by [Willie Nelson](#) and [Merle Haggard](#): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UoKvUYbGu7A> just good music telling a good story, it doesn't get much better than this!

2020-07-18

Let's wrap the country selection with [The Chicks](#) who despite dropping the 'Dixie' from their name continue to stay true to their country rock roots. They have always been political going back to their protest of the Iraq war which pretty much ended their Nashville career. Here is a song from their newest album, March March: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xwBjF_VVfV_E I'll let the music and video do the talking. Let us also take a moment to remember Congressman John Lewis who passed away yesterday. He was a stalwart of the Civil Rights movement. Also from the new album is the title track 'Gaslighter': <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sbVPcPL30xc>

2020-07-19

For reflection Sunday let's go to a pandemic performance of the [Dvorak 8th Symphony](#). The venue is an empty Concertgebouw in Amsterdam. Listen to the introduction on how they set up the stage. It's a wonderful performance directed by Gustavo Gimeno: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EQTgC1Kelcl>

2020-07-20

Welcome to Week 18 of the Never-Ending Pandemic

[Joaquin Rodrigo's Concierto de Aranjuez](#) for guitar and orchestra is one of my favorite pieces. Here is the great Spanish guitarist [Pepe Romero](#) at the Guitar Festival in Belgrade: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QPcjtG6FvX8> The second movement has been adapted by a good number of jazz instrumentalists. [Gil Evans](#) did a wonderful arrangement for Miles Davis 'Sketches of Spain' LP: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=38zRx9AYDHQ> the adagio movement from the Concerto is the first track but the whole album is worth a listen.

2020-07-21

It is always a fun time when greats of the guitar get together to just play. From the Crossroads Festival of 2010 here are [BB King](#), [Eric Clapton](#), [Robert Cray](#) and [Jimmie Vaughan](#) playing 'The Thrill is Gone': <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nu4tjTyqbho> I have a fond memory of seeing Clapton live with Jack Bruce and Ginger Baker when they made up [The Cream](#) back in 1969.

2020-07-22

Let us spend the rest of this week with some nice pandemic inspired videos. We begin with a great version of 'The Longest Time' the Billy Joel song but with COVID-19 associated lyrics. The singers come from a bunch of different choral organizations in Canada and the US: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LpAKcQufacc> the greatest part of this is the guy getting his haircut by his lockdown partner. Speaking of which, *I need to get Ms. Goldhammer to trim my locks.*

2020-07-23

Loyal readers will recall the wonderful ABBA performance for the Queen of Sweden that I posted a while back. Here is a 'Momma Mia' cast doing a riff on that song with of course pandemic lyrics. Enjoy and have a good chuckle!!!: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FmDcg59Xzek> Let us take a moment to remember the great jazz singer [Annie Ross](#) who recently passed. Perhaps her greatest fame came as part of the vocal trio: [Lambert, Hendricks and Ross](#). Here is the trio backed by the Count Basie Orchestra singing 'Avenue C': https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E99TIXB_swg Ross was also known for her

solo composition, '[Twisted](#)'. Here is the Lambert, Hendricks and Ross version:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JXwMgIlmoaM> and one of the great covers by Joni Mitchell:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4Vmq-DHQRf4>

2020-07-24

Staying with quarantine 'concerts' here is a group of Long Island musicians rocking '[We Are the World](#)':

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ITK84KEDMW8> local musicians full of energy and spirit, something that all of us need a lot more of. There is this more polished version from Broadway United:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BdnteHS9bnY> but the theme is still ---- We Are All In This

Together!!! Taking time out from COVID-19 thinking – [Taylor Swift](#) has a new album!!!! GREAT NEWS!!!

Here is a vid from 'Folklore': <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2s5xdY6MCeI> and the Washington

Post has the backstory on '[The Last Great American Dynasty](#).' Enjoy this triple treat of music videos.

2020-07-25

It's Saturday I think; I am beginning to lose track of the days as they all run together. What a better way to celebrate the pandemic than a song from the iconic show [Saturday Night Live](#)! Here is a song done by

[Pete Davidson](#) and [Adam Sandler](#), 'Stuck in the House':

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3VubWlYr9Ek>

2020-07-26

For this reflection Sunday let us have a good time with some fine jazz. Here are icons [Ron Carter](#) and [Hank Jones](#) live in Kobe Japan with a varied supporting cast. Carter has played bass on an amazing 2221 recording sessions and Jones was part of a great musical family that included brothers Elvin (drummer with John Coltrane) and trumpeter Thad (who headed up a great band with Mel Lewis at the Village Vanguard for a lot of years. I heard them one time live and it was memorable). Here is the concert to enjoy and think: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=93o0llbWCLw&t=3580s> I always find good jazz conducive to meditation.

2020-07-27

Welcome to Week 19! The hits just keep on coming.

We are going to stay with pandemic performances for a little while longer. First up this week is troubled Portland who have the double whammy of COVID-19 and a questionable occupation force. Here is the

Motown classic '[Ain't No Mountain High Enough](#)': https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RDekA8Bqc_0

We are all in this together as this group points out and we can surmount this virus. Here are the song's original interpreters: [Marvin Gaye](#) and [Tammi Terrell](#) (you have to overlook the horrible lip-synching):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IC5PL0XImjw>

2020-07-28

This is the greatest pandemic video collage that I've seen to date. It will take something really special to top it. Here are a bunch and I mean a bunch of Chicagoans singing and riffing off '[Sweet Home Chicago](#).' The performers are identified at the end of the video and try to see how many you can identify (I got 10 of them that were the easiest). Hard blues will put a smile on your face:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V7-Nxgwa2iM>

2020-07-29

Today's pandemic choral presentation comes from Canada. The virtual choir does a nice rendition of [Leonard Cohen's Hallelujah](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XIDim9aYWds), another iconic piece: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XIDim9aYWds>

For a solo version here is [Jeff Buckley](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y8AWFf7EAc4) another one who died too young:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y8AWFf7EAc4>

2020-07-30

A lot of years ago when I was still an aspiring boy treble singing at All Soul's, the Episcopal church right around the corner from where we lived we sang classic Rogers and Hammerstein song from Carousel, 'You'll Never Walk Alone' in a choral arrangement. It still gives me hope when I hear it sung. Here is a virtual choir and orchestra from the Brooklyn College Conservatory of Music:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FTQr4yU5APE> We are all optimists!!!

2020-07-31

Baseball season is here except for the Miami Marlins who have 14 players sidelined with COVID-19 and maybe the Phillies who had a couple of players test positive yesterday. There are a number of topflight players who have decided to sit this abbreviated season out because of either personal or family health concerns. For those and the active players stay safe as possible. Here is a delightful choral arrangement of 'Take Me Out to the Ballgame' by the same arranger who did yesterday's 'You'll Never Walk Alone' and several ball players participate in this one! Play Ball:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MIwII9fQlWU> Reminder – pick up some Cracker Jacks next time I am out running errands.

2020-08-01

Let's close out this week's pandemic choral selections with this collection of New York City singers and musicians. 'How Can I Keep from Singing': <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VLPP3XmYxXg> This captures the spirit quite well. I'll add a second song video from a Canadian singer who pretty much does only covers, Brigitte Wickens. I don't know much about her at all but I found the clips of all the COVID-19 health care workers quite moving: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Osdpf55Y4Fg>

2020-08-02

Live music is starting up in Europe under these trying times. Here is a chamber music concert from the Solsberg Festival this past June. There is a sparse audience present. It's a fine performance of works by Beethoven for clarinet, cello and piano: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4O1f-X0Fllc> I'll be moving away from the pandemic choral works as the novelty is wearing thin (though I continue to applaud all those who are making the effort to perform).

2020-08-03

Let's get back to a classic US road song. Before we had the Interstate highway system there was [numbered system of patchwork US highways](#). Even numbers were for east-west roads and the odds were north-south. US route 1 ran from the Florida Keys to Maine while the 101 went from San Diego to Seattle. One of my faves was old route 6 that went from the tip of Cape Cod all the way to San Francisco. Perhaps none was as famous as [Route 66](#), running from Chicago to Los Angeles. It carried

countless Midwesterners to California during the depression dust bowl years, spawned a [television show](#), and a classy [hit song](#). Here is jazz singer [Diana Krall](#)'s version: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BgeVx8QoVaQ> from the Montreal Jazz Festival accompanied by Paul Keller and [Russell Malone](#). [Nat King Cole](#) was the first to make this a hit and here is an old video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dCYApJtsyd0>

2020-08-04

What could be better than a nice summer afternoon in Barcelona and music filling the square? Good listening and dancing music from the Sant Abreu Jazz Band under the direction of Joan Chamorro. I don't know where he finds all these great young vocalists and here is Eva Fernandez singing [Georgia on my Mind](#): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rRWZxFXXBCE> The Tuesday Twofer also brings this Ray Charles Version: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qlp9TwSEgFg> from the Montreux Jazz Festival.

2020-08-05

Today we will pay homage to one of the great pianists who just passed away, [Leon Fleischer](#). Here is the [Washington Post obituary](#). He began studying with the great [Artur Schnabel](#) when he was nine years old and his recordings of the five Beethoven piano concertos with the Cleveland Orchestra remain classic interpretations. Fleischer lost the use of his right hand in the early 1960s because of a nerve problem, recovering some use following BoTox injections 20 years later. Here is a late career performance of Bach's 'Sheep may Safely Graze' <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GyOEOuUPvM0> and of course we need to also look and listen to a performance when he could not use his right hand at all; here is the Ravel concerto for left hand and orchestra: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jgj6jScPWK8>

2020-08-06

This clip from the [Australian collective Stringsplace](#) came up on my YouTube feed yesterday. This is an interesting concept and looking at their videos they do covers from all different types of music. Perhaps the little elves who reside inside the YouTube brain know that I like Bossa Nova and are constantly finding new arrangements of top [Antonio Carlos Jobim](#) compositions are working their hearts out to please me. It doesn't matter as I found this version of [Desafinado](#) quite arresting: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-YkK5eSIX7M> If I am ever in Australia and planning an event needing music, I will contact these folks.

2020-08-07

I want to stay with Stringsplace for a couple of more days as there are some great classical covers. Here is the [Mahler Symphony #5](#) Adagietto arranged for string quartet. I've always found this to be both haunting and soothing. I cannot say anything more about this than just listen: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8UgGLEccLWE> Here is the full orchestral version from the [World Orchestra for Peace](#) conducted by Valery Gergiev: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CFQQsu6VBYA>

2020-08-08

The great thing about doing these daily music selections is finding excellent performers that I've not heard of. Nashville-based pianist [Beegie Adair](#) is one such artist. She has been associated with the [Nashville Jazz Workshop](#) for some time. Here she is with vocalist [Monica Ramey](#) performing 'Make Someone Happy' https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fEmG6_INL9A I just love 'The Great American

[Songbook](#)!!!’ How much do I love these songs? I went to Amazon Music and bought two of Ms. Ramey’s albums!

2020-08-09

For this reflection Sunday, let us have a listen to [Hector Berlioz](#)’s ‘[Symphonie Fantastique](#).’ I always enjoyed playing this on Halloween just to hear the witches sabbath movement. Here is the orchestra of Radio France conducted by Myung-Whun Chung: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5HggPpjlH5c>

2020-08-10

Welcome to Week 21!

Live opera is coming back! Not in the US but in several places in Europe. Here is American soprano [Lisette Operosa](#) (I had the pleasure of meeting her several years ago here in DC when she gave song recital) in Madrid singing ‘addio del passato’ from [Verdi’s La Traviata](#) at the end of last month in Madrid: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2ldOBson0vw> The ovation at the end of the aria was well deserved and she then starts in with the second verse that is customarily deleted in modern performances. For my loyal readers here is Ms. Operosa in the Act 1 ‘Sempre libera.’

2020-08-11

Here is another live performance from Europe. French Soprano [Julie Fuchs](#) sings Deh vieni non tardar from Mozart’s [Marriage of Figaro](#). This is from last month with the National Opera Orchestra of Paris conducted by Philippe Jordan: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XSzO4QAYGjE>

2020-08-12

What could be finer than some chamber music by Beethoven? There really is not a good alternative answer for me. While the string quartets are often exalted, he wrote a bunch of other fine stuff as well. Here is the [Archduke piano trio](#), op. 97. with members from the [Camerata Pacifica](#): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eZRNLXBbB8Q> Let us take a moment to remember [Trini Lopez who just passed as a result of COVID-19](#). He was a huge hit in the US during my teen years, singing a variety of songs. Here is perhaps his greatest hit, ‘[If I had a Hammer](#),’: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kp1z8EzZ5Hs>

2020-08-13

For today’s music selection let us go to a time just before the pandemic hit. Here is the Frankfurt Radio Symphony performing the [Saint-Saëns](#) cello concerto with soloist [Gautier Capuçon](#) under the baton of Alain Altinoglu. The performance was recorded on Valentines Day of this year: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pfBkzWNQTpl>

2020-08-14

A loyal reader writes that I should feature the [Donizetti](#) aria ‘Una furtiva lagrima’ in honor the Bergamo Atalanta football club as that Italian city was Donizetti’s birthplace. Of course I always honor my reader’s requests but this time I do the reader one better! Here is Peruvian tenor, Juan Diego Florez from his 2015 Salzburg Festival recital. He accompanies himself on guitar in [Malagueña](#), then sings [Granada](#) before exiting. The crowd won’t stand for this and bring him back for a spectacular encore,

Donizetti's "Ah! mes amis....pour mon ame" from the [Daughter of the Regiment](#). Florez handles the 9 high Cs as if they are nothing: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x5aLni632MY> I don't want to slight my reader, so here is Una furtiva lagrima from [L'elisir d'amore](#): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NPshURqqyA>

2020-08-15

I don't think as many greats have been on one show that I can remember. Here is a television show from 1972 with all the legendary swing singers and players: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bNMM8HuX6PM> Nothing more needs to be said as the music speaks for itself this Saturday!

2020-08-16

For reflection Sunday I am in a gospel mood. 'Just a Closer Walk with Thee' has been around since 1941. It has been covered by a huge number of artists from a variety of musical styles. Here is a version done by Wynton Marsalis and his band at Lincoln Center with guests Eric Clapton and Taj Mahal: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q5krFNUMQHI> Here is my favorite Barcelona group headed by Joan Chamorro with Magali Datzira on the vocal line: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bylCFXdW0c0> This one is a recording, but who does it better than Patsy Cline and Willie Nelson: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OOKaircCiGI> ? and finally the pure voice of Joan Baez: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9mR1P4nc-bk>

2020-08-17

Welcome to Week 22 of the continuing COVID-19 saga!

Let's kick the week off with the iconic song of my teen years, Bob Dylan's [Blowin' in the Wind](#). It seems a fitting anthem for today. Though it has been covered by a large number of artists (including Marlene Dietrich!), I'll offer up a couple of my favorites beginning with the duet version from Dylan and Joan Baez (I think this is circa 1982): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lo3HY7Yebjk> another duet from Fort Collins, Colorado from 1976: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RxMQYF6EFCU> Here is Bob in a 1963 TV clip when his voice was still fresh: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vWwgrjilMXA>

2020-08-18

Here is a wonderful music tribute to the great singer songwriter [Townes Van Zandt](#). Van Zandt wrote numerous songs that have become iconic. This collection of all-star singers do justice Van Zandt's compositions: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Oc32Z424DCc> Here is Townes Van Zandt and Nanci Griffith from 1993: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kc6AsDmuD2U> I did not know of [Nanci Griffith](#) until I saw these clips. She is wonderful and here she is on Letterman, singing 'From a Distance': <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yBbi1dk-HQ> Bette Midler made this a great hit, but Griffith was the first to record it.

2020-08-19

I am going to stay with Nanci Griffith for one more day. Here she is in the PBS show Austin City Limits show from 1989: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=reZpbkE8o_M the famous [Woolworth Five and Dime](#) song is near the end of this clip. Here she is singing [Kate Wolf](#)'s great song, Across the Great

Divide with Emmylou Harris singing the harmony: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6uQNRtNsntY>
 Finally, Nanci covers Bob Dylan's [Boots of Spanish Leather](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k1KxthvX1Ms):
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k1KxthvX1Ms> and for a comparison, the Dylan original:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iy6wryJMwVU> (the full poem is in the notes of this video)

2020-08-20

Because it is my favorite song cycle and because it is Jonas Kauffmann accompanied by Helmut Deutsch, this is a must listen: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9M3tZE-ffxw> According to the notes it was recorded on April 27 which explains the absence of an audience. This is just wonderful!!!

2020-08-21

I've featured classical chamber music over the weeks but let's hear from one of the finest jazz chamber groups ever to play together. Of course it has to be the [Modern Jazz Quartet](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l10wV4m4Dug) that was founded in 1952 and with only one change in personnel played together for a lot of years. Here is a live concert at the North Sea Festival in The Netherlands: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l10wV4m4Dug>

2020-08-22

Gershwin and dance, a good coupling indeed. No, we are not going with Fred and Ginger though they are fantastic in every movie they did. This time the dance is ballet, and the choreographer is George Balanchine: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VM_91kZVQ1o&t=8s Yes, I know you all want to see Fred and Ginger. Here they are in the closing number 'Shall We Dance':
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VS9rCo-sA9Q>

2020-08-23

You cannot ever go wrong with Bach as this clip from MASH shows:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0zWbpZPsrfc> For this reflection Sunday, here is the concerto for violin in a minor featuring [Julia Fischer](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sDyDHvZKl8g) and the Baltic Sea Youth Philharmonic (it's always good when young musicians can play with accomplished artists): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sDyDHvZKl8g> and as an added treat here is the concerto for 3 violins in D major:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WDkDbvtQaSE>

2020-08-24

The video is choppy and awful. The sound is passably decent. The singing and guitar playing are sublime. [Neil Young](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RDEflxWEID0) and [Norah Jones](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TIX8Rz5C3LY) on the stage at the same time for a school benefit concert, what could be better. I was a senior in college when the album with Crazy Horse came out and wore out the grooves on it. A bunch of great songs and to my mind the greatest is '[Down by the River](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RDEflxWEID0),' here is the benefit performance: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RDEflxWEID0> here is Neil Young and Crazy Horse at Farm Aid (1994): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TIX8Rz5C3LY> Young was one of the co-founders of Farm Aid in the mid 1980s.

2020-08-25

I don't think I have had any Handel since the Messiah excepts around Easter time. Let us remedy this oversight with the '[Water Music](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EVAB2z1RPu4)' played on period instruments by the Akademie für alte Musik Belin. This is a live performance from 2016: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EVAB2z1RPu4> The first

performance took place on the River Thames in London. I cannot find any record about how many times it has been played in/on the original setting.

2020-08-26

As long as the Sant Andreu Jazz Band drops new videos, I will feature them!! Remember that except for the occasional soloist, these are all kids 20 years old and under! Here is 'He's My Guy' which has been covered by some impressive musicians: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8X0gMTRo7_c Here is Sarah Vaughn and Clifford Brown: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SL4k3CJkJOM> and of course Peggy Lee: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9KfQk0I_oBM

2020-08-27

With everything that swirling around these days I needed to find something uplifting to listen to today (don't even ask me to post one of IceT's provocative videos; while I admire his work, it won't make the cut for a family friendly newsletter). [Vivaldi](#) composed a lot of stuff, but I go back to [The Four Seasons](#) for enjoyment. Here is the great German violinist, [Anne-Sophie Mutter](#) as the featured soloist: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9eEap53WxKY>

2020-08-28

Beethoven's '[Hammerklavier](#)' Sonata may be one of the more difficult solo pieces in the repertoire. A number of young pianists attack this piece with force but little subtlety. Notes come cascading out at the sacrifice of a musical line. Not so with [Vladimir Ashkenazy](#). Here is a fine live performance from 1980: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FjJPNVJMMN4>

2020-08-29

One of my top ten faves in the entire music world is the [Bach Partita #2 in D minor](#). Many newsletters ago I had a performance of the final movement from this piece. Today we have the whole thing played by a young [Itzhak Perlman](#) and every note is just right on. Enjoy: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qtyTaE7LvVs>

2020-08-30

As my readers know, I am always impressed by good youth performances. For this reflection Sunday here is an exceptional performance that was on my YouTube feed yesterday. It is the [Dvorak Symphony #9](#) From the New World: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O_tPb4JFgmw The orchestra is Gimnazija Kranj Symphony Orchestra under the baton of maestro Nejc Bečan. It is a school in Slovenia and this is the extent of my knowledge. There are some other YouTube clips of performances worth watching like this one of the Barry Manilow hit: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ULCAJrC1Ia4> or this one of the Bert Bacharach hit: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D-EE9xCG9oY> Stuff like this makes me realize that the kids are alright and things will get better!! Optimism is far better than pessimism. BTW, how do the learn such good American accents in Slovenia?

2020-08-31

Welcome to Week 24 of the Pandemic Newsletter

Let's stay with Dvorak for another day. Here is the fine Serenade for Strings with the Netherlands Chamber Orchestra. It is a live performance from the Concertgebouw, filmed in 2016:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CRcbDMg56yg>

2020-09-01

How have gone this long without ever once posting a clip of the wonderful [Silk Road Ensemble](#)? (Better question is why my readers have not written to me about this omission? 😊) Let us correct this right now! Here is the ensemble performing 'Arabian Waltz':

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fZpEjrd56k> You can [read more about the ensemble](#) that was formed out of a project started by cellist Yo-Yo Ma. My wife and I saw them live as part of the Inauguration Week festivities back in 2008 which was a special treat. We had front row tickets right next to WaPo columnist E.J. Dionne. There is a wonderful documentary of the group that HBO did several years ago, '[The Music of Strangers: Yo-Yo Ma and The Silk Road Ensemble](#)' that can be found on a number of streaming sites (Google is your friend) and here is a nice clip of a concert following the Berlin Film Festival screening: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BWYo388T1XU>

2020-09-02

Today is a special treat day for the [Lisztomania](#) fans. No, I'm not going to screen the great [Ken Russell](#) film, though it is worth seeking out if only for the high camp of watching The Who's [Roger Daltrey](#) as the amorous pianist. Rather I have a piece that Liszt wrote for both solo piano and then also voice and piano. It is one of the [three Petrarch Sonnets](#) that he set, in this case Sonnet 123; 'I vidi in terra angelici costumi'. The solo piano works are part of his Years of Pilgrimage group composed in 1838. Here is Marc-André Hamelin playing the solo version: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qb9qJ_ILXlc and here are soprano Elizabeth Caballero and pianist Elaine Rinaldi in the vocal version:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uTcX-WiHrbI>

2020-09-03

Sonny and Cher? Why not? No further comments other than I was a senior in high school when this came out: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PkmBjHwzyMw> (now some of you must be considering that I just might be suffering from severe COVID Cabin Fever; your diagnosis is obviously correct). Then there is the final time they sung the song: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c4EaFzRVjIM>

2020-09-04

[Antonio Carlos Jobim](#) was one of the great composers of the 20th century. He played as important a role as anyone for the popularity of bossa nova which was quickly picked up by numerous American jazz players. Here is a live film of 'Wave' with Oscar Peterson, Joe Pass and Niels-Henning Orsted Pederson:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vUuB4UYe8nM> Here is the vocal version by NOVA:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TBHQ-CJLPi4>

2020-09-05

[Fleetwood Mac](#) were great from the mid-1970s to once Lindsey Buckingham and Stevie Nicks joined the group. When they left about a decade later, the band wasn't quite the same. There were reunions of a sort but the original magic was never captured. Here is Rhiannon live from 1976:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wgmRb3MlpHQ> Just good rock and roll!

2020-09-06

For reflection Sunday here is a live concert from the Temple of Dendur at Metropolitan Museum of Art featuring [Rhiannon Giddens](#) with [Francesco Turrisi](#). It's full of some very good Americana and world music and Ms. Giddens addresses some particularly thorny questions (such as performance in blackface) throughout. Enjoy this one, I did: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lgnhso0iv9U>

2020-09-07

Welcome to Week 25 of the Ongoing Pandemic Newsletter

Sinatra, Baryshnikov, and Tharp. What do they all have in common? A great vocalist, a great dancer, and a great choreographer, that's what! Here they are in 'One for My Baby (and One More for the Road)': <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ifoOO5ZEC9g>

2020-09-08

Let's listen to some opera! Here is the great Peruvian tenor, [Juan Diego Flores](#) with the Austrian coloratura [Daniela Fally](#) in Bellini's [La Sonnambula](#). No sleepwalking going on here, just some great bel canto singing: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5I8SNXbpNZo> there was nothing in the notes to indicate when and where this performance took place but a Google search indicates Vienna in 2017.

2020-09-09

What better name for a daughter who you just know will be an opera singer when she grows up. [Aida Garifullina](#) was born in Kazan and has been enjoying a very nice career as a lyric soprano. Of course she is unlikely to sing [Norma](#) on stage but this is about as nice a 'Casta Diva' in concert that I've seen: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rK6GsRUI4WI> I don't think the eyelashes are real.

2020-09-10

We are going to stay with Bellini's 'Casta Diva' for little while longer; I'll conclude on Saturday with the version I believe to be the best from currently active singers. If you are not an opera fan, feel free to move one. Here is Renee Fleming from the Palace of the Tsars in St. Petersburg: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rg4L5tcxFcA>

2020-09-11

Continuing with Bellini's 'Casta Diva', the featured artist today is the great [Maria Callas](#), the American-born Greek soprano who never met a role she couldn't sing. One of her debut roles in Italy was Brünnhilde in Wagner's Die Walküre! Her personal life was the stuff of soap opera, you really wondered what was really going on. Her prime singing years were during the 1950s and there are lots of conjecture about vocal deterioration that became prevalent during the latter part of the decade (rapid weight loss, singing too many heavy/light roles, lost confidence, early menopause; take your choice). I saw her in 1974 during the tour she was doing with [Giuseppe di Stefano](#), and that was a total train wreck as neither singer had much to give. Here she is singing with a choir that cannot follow the conductor and she has to make things right: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TYI8GRJGnBY> it is from a Paris concert in 1958. Tomorrow, my favorite current singer who is as good as the 'greats' who preceded her.

2020-09-12

I know that everyone was patiently waiting to find out who the star Norma of today is. It is none other than the wonderful [Sondra Radvanovsky](#). I saw her live in the Washington Opera production of Donizetti's [Anna Bolena](#) and she was simply spectacular. Here is a concert performance of 'Casta Diva': <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RgUINdGLPFA> and here she is on stage at the Met: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VF-NapCY8WM> and why not also from Barcelona: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hqMBNYdpXEs>

2020-09-13

For this reflection Sunday let us have a listen to [Beethoven's Piano Concerto #5](#), The Emperor. Here is Vladimir Ashkenazy with the London Philharmonic, conducted by Bernard Haitink in a 1974 performance. Magisterial: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V4pJxad_al8

2020-09-14

Welcome to Week 26; Half a Year of Reporting on the Pandemic 😞

Let us stay with the piano and Beethoven! Here is [the Sonata #23 "Appassionata"](#) with the great Chilean pianist, [Claudio Arrau](#). This is a live performance from Bonn, filmed in 1970 when Arrau was 67: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tdg-DT8rTUQ> and why not make this a twofer! Here is Arrau from Bonn in 1977 playing the "[Waldstein](#)" sonata: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dL0JLNt_3EE

2020-09-15

There is no one 'best' pianists but rather a lot of 'best' pianists. Here is one of the 'best' in my opinion and I'm surprised that I've overlooked him in these musical preludes. Of course it is none other than [Evgeny Kissin](#) who made his concert debut at the age of 10 playing the Mozart piano concerto #20. Here he is in Moscow with a selection of eight Chopin etudes: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5hwOveZlugk>

2020-09-16

Here is an extra special treat for all you singers and fans of singers. [Nicola Vaccai](#) was an Italian opera composer and singing teacher. His book, "Practical Method of Italian Singing," may be one of the most widely used practice books of all time. It has been in print since its 1832 publication. I'm currently working my way through it. You can [download a copy of the exercises at the IMSLP site](#) if you wish. Last night, Will Crutchfield's Teatro Nuovo, premiered a YouTube recital of a group of opera singers who each took one of the exercises. It was great fun to watch and listen how professionals handle these: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vPyK1vjFaaE>

2020-09-17

I received an email from a loyal reader regarding 'best' pianist. I noted that there were a lot of 'best' pianists but the reader noted that there is one best pianist, [Arthur Rubenstein](#), and one second best, van Cliburn. I already posted on van Cliburn and today will address my reader's wish to have a Rubenstein piece or two. Here is Beethoven's Emperor Concerto from Jerusalem in 1975: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K25fZRwbeGM> and a live recital from Warsaw in 1966 featuring the Schubert B flat sonata D. 960 and the Schumann Carnival Op. 9:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qLTM-Y3dXs4&t=139s> Alas, I cannot find any evidence that Robenstein played the fiendish '[Warsaw Concerto](#)' by Richard Addinsell which should have been warmly embraced by the pianist who was born in Poland. We must remedy this! Here is Bulgarian pianist Ani Aramova and the Harmony Orchestra 'Prinses Irene Huizen' - Joop Boerstoel conductor - at the 'Oude Kerk' (church) of Huizen, Netherlands on 28 May 2010:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P4Is4RB8se8>

2020-09-18

I love the NPR Tiny Desk concerts. Most of the time they are a tiny desk concert but not in the case of Chick Corea and Gary Burton. NPR had a Yamaha Grand piano hauled up to the fourth floor and fitted in the rented vibes. Enjoy this great jazz duo: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=15IHNYq6stw>

2020-09-20

For reflection Sunday (and there is an awful lot to reflect on today) there is no composer to turn to better than [Johan Sebastian Bach](#). Yes, he wrote for the St. Thomas Church in Leipzig for most of his composing career, but the music transcends the religious to the spiritual that can force all of us to meditate on creative glory. There is no 'best' Bach piece as something original can be found in every composition (I well remember laboring over Bach chorales when I took music theory). The [Mass in B Minor](#) was one of his final compositions. Here is [John Elliot Gardiner](#), the English Baroque Soloists and the Monteverdi Choir: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CT6vRpmYiW0> Nothing more need be said, just listen and think!

2020-09-21

Welcome to Week 27!!!

This one popped up on my YouTube feed and is spectacular. Frank and Ella two icons of the Big Band Era who had great careers for a long time! Here they are singing the Rogers and Hart classic "[The Lady is a Tramp](#)" from the 1960s: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xafBWOxgssg> This is a very nice performance by Tony Bennett and Lady Gaga: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZPAmDULCvRU>

2020-09-22

I was listening to [Marc Maron's interview with Alicia Keys](#) on my walk yesterday and thought, why haven't I featured her? We need to take care of this ASAP! Here is [Alicia Keys](#) from another one of the fine NPR Tiny Desk concerts with her wonderful song '[Gramercy Park](#)': <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o5WauEHL43Y> Maybe with everyone fleeing New York I can realize my dream of a pied-à-terre that borders the park along with the requisite entry key. It probably won't happen, but loyal readers can contribute to my Gramercy Park housing fund!!! *Make that pledge today*

2020-09-23

Chamber music is on the docket for today. Here is another in the series from Wigmore Hall in London. The delightful Leonore Piano Trio performs Beethoven's first trio and Brahms's last: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MqLAsIk6Fus> It is good to see people in the audience again.

2020-09-24

We will stay with Wigmore Hall for today and maybe tomorrow. Here is the wonderful [Angela Hewitt](#) playing an all Bach recital (cue up [Radar O'Reilly's famous statement, "ah Bach."](#)) : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-PIN0k-xOQc> This is a somewhat long recital but it is BACH! Let us take a moment and celebrate the life and artistry of [Juliette Greco](#) who just passed away. Ms. Greco led an extraordinary life as a singer and actress. Two movie roles that were memorable even though the films were pretty much disasters were in the late 1950s films '[The Sun also Rises](#)' and '[The Roots of Heaven](#)'. They are often shown on cable movie channels and one can find them on streaming sites. Here is Ms. Greco singing the title song in Otto Preminger's 'Bonjour Tristesse':

2020-09-25

Here is a group that plays and sings traditional jazz standards. It popped up on my YouTube feed and I took a quick listen. It is the [Avalon Jazz Band](#) with [Tatiana Eva Marie](#) and I had not heard them before. The group is inspired by the jazz played in Paris during the 1930s and 40s. Here is a video set that displays the infectious charm of the group: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A2oVx_Bgux4 Note: can I still use the adjective 'infectious' during a pandemic?

2020-09-26

It is a dubious achievement, but today's newsletter marks the ½ year point since this project started.

I have some loyal readers in New York City and of course I still have my eyes set on a flat in Gramercy Park. Well, [Diana Krall](#) has a new album out and one of the tracks is '[Autumn in New York](#)'. Here is the music video of that track with great filming by Davis McCutcheon and direction by Mark Seliger. I find this a very optimistic song/video. Enjoy it: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v5FVmJKPSrY> It appears that this was filmed during the pandemic as the streets are pretty much empty.

2020-09-27

For this reflection Sunday I offer a recent live outdoor concert from Berlin by the Staatskapelle Orchestra conducted by Daniel Barenboim. It's an all-Beethoven program with a pair of violin romances with Anne-Sophie Mutter and the Symphony #9. I would advise watching this sooner rather than later as the first YouTube posting was taken down by the apparent copyright owner. This is just great playing: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XTCBHRauWRg> It is interesting to see how the chorus is socially distanced.

2020-09-29

Welcome to Week 28 of the Newsletter!

To celebrate the conclusion to the Days of Awe the ended with Yom Kippur last night here are a couple of clips from Avi Schwartz, the cantor at the Park Avenue Synagogue in New York City. First we have the Hasidic Kaddish: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e50J2VpW48> The Rabbi's comment at the end is priceless! The second clip is the closing segment of the Yom Kippur service: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6k_Orlkk9Ww Why not make it three clips? For the opera buffs, here is Cantor Schwartz singing Adon Olam to a variety of classic tenor arias: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pkxe8lxPTOA> How many can you identify??

2020-09-30

Today we have another one of the live Wigmore Hall concerts from London. Here is the Castalian String Quartet with Haydn and Beethoven quartets on the program. This group is quite fine:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kq35oYPOJY4> I won't post any links to the pieces as the moderator has a very good commentary on the video. Both pieces are exceptionally played.

2020-10-01

Welcome to October!

[West Side Story](#) is one of the iconic Broadway musicals of all time. It's as fresh today as when it premiered back in 1957. Here is the Frankfurt Radio Big Band live in a recent concert with an instrumental only version: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lzI4Si-6Kds>

2020-10-02

[Lawrence Brownlee](#) is one of my favorite singers. I've seen him in both opera and recital and am always happy when I leave the theater. Here he is singing from the living room of his Florida home in mid-August with remote accompaniment from Myra Wang who is in New York. Some good songs and arias in this recital: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AgNTHoPuSsM> **NOTE:** skip ahead to the 7 minute mark of the this video. The camera was running while Brownlee was moving in and out of the room.

2020-10-03

I'm always a sucker for a well sung Flower Duet from the Delibes opera, Lakmé. What could be better than an outdoor performance right next to the Eiffel Tower in Paris? It's really cool how the tower lights up during the aria. Here are [Elina Garanča](#) and [Olga Peretyatko](#):

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=borTi9_i0YU

Good news for music fans. Rolling Stone have updated the [top 500 albums of all time](#). My hero [Isaac Hayes](#) is there and you all need to listen to his cover of 'By the Time I get to Phoenix' (prepare yourself for 17 wonderful minutes!). This is how soul is done. What puzzles me is that Freddie Mercury and Queen don't even merit a mention.

2020-10-04

For this reflection Sunday, here is a live concert with the Vienna Philharmonic from the [Schönbrunn Palace](#). What a wonderful site for this performance. Valery Gergiev is the conductor with about as small a baton as I have ever seen. German tenor, Jonas Kaufmann is the featured soloist. Enjoy this one:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hf6XSkDgAYs>

2020-10-05

Welcome to Week 29!

Let us start the week with an up-tempo piece. Here is [Willie Nelson's](#) 'I Gotta Get Drunk' performed by Joana Casanova and the Joan Chamorro group from Barcelona. Some of the players come from the St. Andreu school that Chamorro founded, and I am always amazed at the vocalists whose English is a second language. There are some wonderful instrumental solos in this arrangement:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zkjQQq9K8BI> Here is the country version with Willie and [George Jones](#): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HKD_o4gbcSE

2020-10-06

Yesterday there was a Willie Nelson song and I posted a link to the duet that Willie and [George Jones](#) did. It occurred to me that I have not featured Jones, an outstanding country singer who lived life to its fullest and maybe then some. There are a lot of good sound clips of Jones but not as many videos. Here is a good sample. George and his one time wife Tammy Wynette singing 'Golden Ring': <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q9KniULwvjE> Here is 'White Lightning' from 1959 (yes, that is a young Johnny Cash in this band): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WE5pM1HXxlI> One of my faves is 'He Stopped Loving Her Today': <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1R2F9f2Cl6Y> and finally a music video 'Wrong's What I Do Best' (I sometimes feel this is one of my traits): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d6YGmHE-2XA> Wait there's more!! Here is a 2004 all-star tribute: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o1h0U23JCBk> with some great performances by wonderful country singers.

2020-10-07

It will be no surprise that today's featured musical performer is [Tammy Wynette](#) who was for a short period of her tumultuous life (and what a life it was) married to George Jones. Jones was the third of her five husbands and even after their divorce they recorded some tracks. Here are some of the iconic performance. 'Stand by Your Man': <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f2KP9fYZUWA> 'D-I-V-O-R-C-E' <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=912DKxD0H1U> 'Til I Can Make It On My Own': <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eaYu2d9EM00> and finally 'I Don't Wanna Play House': <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uCc9tJIRUZ4> Wynette never gave less than 100% either in the studio or on the stage.

2020-10-08

[Mother Maybelle Carter](#) had a profound impact on both country and folk music. Her performing career began in 1927 when she was 18 years old and ran to 1973 with the issuance of her final recording. She was an innovative guitarist and brought back the use of the autoharp as a performance instrument. 'Wildwood Flower' provides a good example of her guitar playing: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XE80Ed59uCY> Here she is playing the autoharp on the Johnny Cash (her son-in-law) show: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RAeT1JmJNTg> Also from the Johnny Cash show is Maybelle with her cousin Sara who with her husband made up the original Carter family singing 'You Are My Flower': <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ks8INZ2ZRtw> Finally, here is a tribute to Mother Maybelle featuring Emmy Lou Harris, Ricky Skaggs, and Linda Ronstadt: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WNZs2vR6Eg8>

2020-10-09

One more day of country to round out the week. I have had some clips of [Emmylou Harris](#) in the past but here is a full set from a 1981 Austin City Limits show: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YMCHDgR4NEo> Over the years Harris has played and sung with an amazing number of musicians and is always pitch perfect. As a special treat here is Emmylou with The Band from the Scorsese documentary [The Last Waltz](#): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hqDqzGG8ba0>

2020-10-10

Did [Felix Mendelssohn](#) ever write a piece of music that was not lyrical? I've not found any piece yet that I did not enjoy on multiple levels. Here are two of my favorites. The first one is the Violin Concerto in E minor and here we have the Dutch violinist [Janine Jansen](#) with the Munich Philharmonic under the direction of tiny baton wielding Valery Gergiev: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wzhk3frB1ao> and here is one of my favorite songs, 'Auf Flügeln des Gesanges' sung by [Susanna Phillips](#) with Craig Terry on the piano: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LzKZS3OGUw8> the song was also transcribed by Franz Liszt into a piano only version and here is [Stéphanie Elbaz](#) in a nice performance with all the Lisztian accoutrements: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SeJ_uvgWrK4

2020-10-11

Here is a special treat for reflection Sunday. You will need to set aside a bit of time to take this one in. It is a stream of the current [Vienna State Opera](#) of Verdi's [Don Carlos](#). I believe this performance was staged on October 4. Yes, it is the French version rather than the Italian one, complete with the ballet (required of all Parisian staged operas in that time). This is one of my favorite Verdi operas but until now I only have seen the Italian version. Some traditionalists may object to the staging. I like these kinds of productions! The cast and notes are at the Vienna Opera link above. Enjoy this one!!!
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xaE206ziAq8>

2020-10-12

Welcome to Week 30 or 'Where has All the Time Gone?'

The mention of the name [Van Dyke Parks](#) sends people immediately to Wikipedia with the question, who in the heck is he? Parks is a wonderful singer/songwriter and arranger who has worked with some of the biggest names around (including Frank Sinatra!!). I remember back in 1967 hearing his first album, '[Song Cycle](#)' and being amazed at the creativity of it. Do read the Wikipedia entry and you will see that he had a recurring role on 'The Honeymooners' with Jackie Gleason! Here is Parks with Laraine Newman singing the mariachi inspired 'Cheek to Cheek':
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lo7iJxEbDm8> Here is Parks with the Lovin' Spoonful's John Sebastian with a couple of blues numbers: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t8VKgupaDuY> Here is one of his original compositions 'Tokyo Rose': <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2KdHVN37P0E> and finally a short documentary on Parks and Jimmy Webb who helped out on Carly Simon's album, '[Film Noir](#)': <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6TKQ25nhoRw> Seriously, what other COVID-19 newsletter provides you with this wonderful stuff!!!

2020-10-13

Of course, you are all asking yourself, why the newsletter writer has omitted one of the best known female vocalists of all time. He has featured lots of singers, some of whom are pretty obscure. Well this has certainly got to end right here and now. With the recent spate of country music vocalists, you have already guessed the genre. It is none other than Porter Wagoner's favorite (even though he sued her for breach of contract when she decided to go solo), [Dolly Parton](#). I don't think I've ever seen her without a great smile on her face. Here is the single that brought her the early fame, 'Jolene' from the Porter Wagoner show in 1973: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OTuQ9cKGSdM> Parton did a great comedic turn in the movie, '9 to 5' with Jane Fonda and Lily Tomlin as well as singing the title tune:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UbxUSsFXyo4> Here is Dolly and Porter singing 'Just Someone I used to Know': <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UDlCxHU4Zi8> Finally, one of my faves 'Coat of Many Colors': https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w_-YbWHs6DE Enjoy!!!

2020-10-14

I've now featured Linda, Dolly, and Emmylou and now it is time to take a look at the famous trio that was formed by them. They had gotten together during the 1970s but an album was not to be released until 1987, simply titled '[Trio](#).' It was a critical and sales hit. The video is not great, but here they are on Johnny Carson after the record was released: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ENJHxo1w_10 Here they are a little more than a decade later on Letterman right after Trio 2 was issued: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o2XcBL6kWn8> Here is 'High Sierra' from Trio 2: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cnieh0Y1V-o> One of the earliest collaborations was on Dolly's variety show in the mid-1970s and here is 'The Sweetest Gift': <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wWEQDyrbphE> Finally, a full length documentary on the formation of the trio: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uQ7StOs2xY0>

2020-10-15 (Another milestone today with **Newsletter #200**; I really want to get out of the pandemic newsletter business! 😊)

It's been a couple of weeks since I posted a video of my favorite Catalan jazz group. Here is Joan Chamorro playing as part of the Andrea Motis quintet at a date in New York City last year. Some great jazz standards along with a couple of original compositions by Andrea: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yikb5jVAYWY> She is also a new mother (baby boy Cel was born October 2) and here is one of her last performances before the baby arrived: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TijmJAEgRtE>

2020-10-16

It's time for some good old-time rock and roll!!! Enough country music for now. One of the great bands of all time is The Rolling Stones. I was still a teenager when they made their first appearance, and they are still around. Lots of iconic songs but maybe this is the best one, '[Sympathy for the Devil](#)', and here are Mick and company in a live performance: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZRXGsPBUV5g> I would be hard pressed to decide between that one and '[You Can't Always Get What You Want](#)': <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ef9QnZVpVd8> but I prefer this earlier live version where Mick is less affected: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c9mGtDGzoSA> . I always like the version with the choral introduction the same way it was on the record; here is that version live from Anaheim: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t0b74EisBC4> (this must have been taken with a cell phone) and Hyde Park in Chicago: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2O8DXLfYquY> (there are other videos from this concert tour with local choral groups) Finally the original LP recording: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZUqSNbJuGOW> . I better stop before I watch too many more videos of Mick prancing on the stage!

2020-10-17

I'm going to stay with rock for another day (maybe more, we'll see). One of the great super groups of the 1960s was [Cream](#) with [Eric Clapton](#), [Jack Bruce](#) and [Ginger Baker](#). I wrote music reviews for the

school paper at UC Santa Barbara which had the benefit of scoring a free pair of tickets to the on-campus concerts and saw the group in person in April 1968. I think this was the last tour before the broke up and the performance was electrifying. It was great when Bruce and Clapton left the stage during 'Toad' so that Baker would have the drum solo alone. Here is 'Crossroads' from a San Francisco performance just before they came down the coast: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7HfkSzyh1E> I always liked 'White Room': <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0bcrkiCPNso> The group got back together for a final set of concerts at the Royal Albert Hall in London. Here is another one of my faves 'Sunshine of Your Love': <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vyftaay-pFA> Good memories for me looking at these

2020-10-18

For reflection Sunday here is another in the Wigmore Hall fall series. This time it is the young German pianist [Elisabeth Brauss](#) in a program of Beethoven, Mendelssohn and Prokofiev. This will come as a respite from the recent rock and country selections. Enjoy:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vy41ekgUpN4>

2020-10-19

Welcome to Week 31!!

I'm still stuck on a rock theme to start off the week. [Steve Winwood](#) started his rock career at the age of 14 when he joined the Spencer Davis Group. One of the great songs of my college years was 'Gimme Some Lovin'' which Winwood co-wrote. He left to form Traffic and formed a super group along with Eric Clapton, Ginger Baker and Ric Grech. It is so cool to see Winwood still rocking things in this 'COVID-19 pandemic' version of 'Gimme Some Lovin': <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rpkqTLR3OD8> For contrast here is the group in Finland from 1967: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xcxYX8KPhGk> and how about this from 1986 on Letterman with 'Higher Love' and 'Gimme Some Lovin':

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YOAhI1ocaoM> How cool are these clips?

2020-10-20

Today's music selection came from a loyal reader!!! This is the Indie rock/country/pop group [case/lang/veirs](#) that was formed in 2013. Three women with wonderful voices who can harmonize the heck out of any song. There was a summer 2016 tour but I've not found anything since then which is a shame because of the music they made. Here is a live session set from that period:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AWbAP-pblkE> Here is 'Helpless' from that summer tour:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d646z7VNG_M and 'Best Kept Secret' from the Newport Folk

Festival: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xLmNUu-zc>

2020-10-21

He's only 94 years old, but [Tony Bennett](#) can still shape a song. Here he is from home in a pandemic rendition of 'The Way You Look Tonight': <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vq3z9HIDlec> I don't have anything to add.

2020-10-22

For today music selection we have the great [Andras Schiff](#) both at the keyboard and directing this performance of Beethoven's Third Piano Concerto: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FnN9GEpyREQ> the orchestra is the Cappella Andrea Barca which for those of you smarties who know Italian will recognize that it is named after the conductor! Here is the soloists/conductor with the group in the Beethoven Piano Concerto #5 for a double Thursday delight:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QEKsMz37AkY>

2020-10-23

One of my favorite singers of all time is the late American soprano, [Arleen Auger](#). Most of her fame came in Europe where she was active on the opera stage as well as recitals. Perhaps her most famous gig was singing Mozart's Exultate Jubilate at the wedding of Sarah Ferguson and Prince Andrew. Here she is singing this piece with the Bavarian Radio Orchestra conducted by Leonard Bernstein:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=co8l3GSkbaA> The performance of Richard Strauss's 'Morgen' is

sublime: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mDfVbF1UTGc> the song requires good breath control and

you cannot get overly involved in the long piano introduction or you will miss coming in (I sang this

several years ago in recital and almost missed the entry 😊 ; about a year later I was at a post recital

dinner party and was talking with pianist Malcolm Martineau who accompanies many leading singers

and I asked him whether he ever had a singer who was so entranced by his playing that he/she missed

the entry; he laughed and said he wasn't that good a pianist.). Auger's last recorded performance was a

Mozart Requiem with Cecilia Bartoli, Vinson Cole and Rene Pape with Georg Solti conducting:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zKE6rn9-xr8> and a few months later she was diagnosed with a

brain tumor that ultimately took her life at the age of 53. While not a video, I must commend this

version of Strauss's 'Four Last Songs': <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JuTbILSdD14> I probably have

14 recordings of this and this is always the one that brings me pleasure. It's from 1988 with Andre

Previn and the Vienna Philharmonic.

2020-10-24

Yesterday we had a clip from the Mozart Requiem where the mezzo soprano was [Cecilia Bartoli](#). She has exquisite vocal control and trills like no other singer I've heard. Here is her interpretation of Handel's

'Ombra mai fu': <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OdeOyrLHdSg> From Mozart's 'Cosi fan Tutte' we

have Fiordiligi's aria: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wwpm5jegeYg> and one of the songs that

brought her early fame, Giordani's 'Caro mio ben', a song often assigned to beginning singers but

difficult to pull off well: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-Hlk8EDA02M> I have not heard this one

done any better. Finally a clip from a documentary where she looks at the original score to Bellini's

'Norma' and sings the opening section of 'Casta Diva':

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UCyes1CE2vU>

2020-10-25

My favorite of the three Mozart/da Ponte operas is not what you might think. Don Giovanni is a little too jaded for me and Marriage of Figaro is too flippant. I prefer Cosi fan tutte because of its ambiguity.

I give full credit to the Pittsburgh Opera for staging a pandemic version of the opera. Yes, it is heavily

cut but that is OK when you can see live performances happening. Enjoy this one!!!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wwbL5objneE>

2020-10-26

Welcome to Week 32!

This popped up on my YouTube feed yesterday, a wonderful 'World Opera Day' concert. It starts off with the choral movement of Beethoven's 9th symphony in Tokyo and moves on from there. The filmed piece from Petra Jordan is lovely. I celebrate all these artists!!!:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BVBDDakOGIY> Music can revive the soul and that is Act 1. Here are the links to the others: Act 2: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2tuqfllS6Fw>, Act 3: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jKMZlIBX4Gs> and Act 4: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OO2QblOurB4>

2020-10-27

I featured [Hilary Hahn](#) back in May playing the Bach concerto for two violins. Here is a piece considerably later than the Bach, the Sibelius violin concerto: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DpbTHQn7RP8> We saw her play this piece with the Baltimore Symphony maybe seven years ago at the Strathmore Concert Hall right up the road from us in Bethesda.

2020-10-28

Here is another Wigmore Hall recital. The pianist is Russian pianist [Pavel Kolesnikov](#). This is the first time I've heard him, and he is quite good. In looking at some reviews, his programs are always structured with a variety of different composer's works. In this recital there is Scriabin, Liszt, Schubert and Beethoven: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RNQYEKPLE4A>

2020-10-29

I cannot believe that [Yo-Yo Ma](#) has not been featured in this newsletter! I did have some clips of the Silk Road Ensemble that he founded but not of Ma as a solist! This will be remedied right now! Though there are lots of clips around, I particularly like the Bach cello suite #1. Here is the music video he did with the prelude to the suite: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1prweT95Mo0> Here is the full suite from a live London Proms recital: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rGgG-0lOJjk> I am constantly amazed at Bach's inventiveness.

2020-10-30

The [late Beethoven String Quartets](#) are among the most sublime compositions regardless of genre. I have heard most of them in recital from various groups and they never fail to move me. Here is a performance of #15 in A minor op. 132 by the Esmé Quartet: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=adKab_1S0ug The performance venue is Priesterseminar Church Brixen which is in the Italian alps.

2020-10-31

Happy Halloween!!!! 🎃 🍷 🍀 🦇

I find [Antonin Dvorak](#) an interesting composer. He was a romantic but also incorporated folk tunes in to his music. Small ensemble works such as the piano trios and string quartets are always a delight to hear.

Here is the Dvorak Serenade for Strings from the Concertgebouw:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CRcbDMg56yg>

2020-11-01

Yes, it is the day after Halloween and reflection Sunday, but this did not show on my YouTube feed until my newsletter went out. Here is a living room concert from LA Opera of some Halloween themed songs:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tF33CQrPTI8> this is a clever recital!!!

2020-11-02

Welcome to Week 33 of the Pandemic Newsletter

I featured 'Will the Circle be Unbroken' some months ago. Here is a new performance that just went up the other day. Carlene Carter (daughter of June and granddaughter of Mother Maybelle) and Mary Stuart sing and play on some original instruments: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N-IGPWZKzJI> I always find this inspiring.

2020-11-03

If you have not done so already, GO VOTE!

One of the great rock bands of my college years was [Creedence Clearwater Revival](#) fronted by John Fogerty. Infighting led to the group's break up in 1972 and the performers went their own ways. Despite the short period of time, they recorded some iconic rock songs and also performed at Woodstock. Video recordings were not a big thing in that era but here is a studio recording of 'Bad Mood Rising': <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w6iRNVwslM4> there are some nice recent music videos filmed to commemorate the release of a full set of all the band's recording. Here is 'Have You Ever Seen the Rain?': <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u1V8YRjnr4Q> and 'Long as I can See the Light': <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BDfGblfOsZ4> this is great rock music and why not show their Woodstock performance: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=75VQp8iGNF0>

2020-11-04

Today's music selection is another Wigmore Hall recital. Soprano Mary Bevan and pianist Joseph Middleton have a program songs inspired by the 'muses' of the day, both mythological and divine: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ac3auh7z0Og> I really enjoyed this recital.

2020-11-05

Happy [Haydn](#) day! I do not think I have featured him and what a prolific composer he was, leading the way into the classical era from the baroque. So much to choose from, but this rendition of the Symphony #52 popped up on my YouTube feed. This the Bavarian Radio Orchestra conducted by John Eliot Gardiner: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BUgUo_468OY I think I will go on a bit of a Haydn tear this week.

2020-11-06

We are continuing with a Haydn journey. Here is the 'Sunrise String Quartet' in B flat major. The artists are the [Dover String Quartet](#) and this is from the Banff International String Quartet Competition. It is a wonderful performance: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vcrKzQ1_2R4

2020-11-07

Yes, we are still here with good old Franz Joseph Haydn. He wrote some exquisite vocal music. One of my favorites is the cantata, '[Arianna a Naxos](#)' that is written for mezzo-soprano. Here is a live performance from this past September with [Anna Reinhold](#) accompanied by Florent Albrecht: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e7Lv39y-ug8> The text and translation are [HERE](#). This is a glorious performance and interpretation.

2020-11-08

For reflection Sunday, we need to all listen to Haydn's '[The Creation](#)' and gain inspiration from this work. This masterful performance is in commemoration of the 200th anniversary of Haydn's death and take place at the Esterhazy Palace in Austria. Soloists include [Annette Dasch](#), [Chrisoph Strehl](#) and [Thomas Quasthoff](#). Quasthoff, in addition to being an incredibly fine singer was born with defects from thalidomide exposure before the teratogenic effects of the drug were discovered. The orchestra is conducted by Adam Fischer. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xlpSNMQZH9M> Enjoy and reflect on what was and what can be.

2020-11-09

Welcome to Week 34

We had our fill with Haydn last week so it's time to move on. How about Tchaikovsky to get the newsletter off to a good start this week? Let us begin with the violin concerto. Here is Lisa Batiashvili with Daniel Barenboim's West-Eastern Divan Orchestra. I've had the orchestra on before supporting soloists and they do play extremely well under their founder. Enjoy this concerto: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EM4gpjcWmdQ>

2020-11-10

Keeping with the music theme of the week here is Tchaikovsky's Fantasy Overture on Romeo and Juliet. It is played by the Frankfurt Radio Orchestra who I have featured in the past conducted by Andrés Orozco-Estrada. This is really nice: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3x69wuwkJM>

2020-11-11

Tchaikovsky wrote wonderful chamber music in addition to his larger scale pieces. Here is the first of his string quartets, #1, op 11. The performance is by the Whitman Quartet, graduate students who are being mentored by the Emerson Quartet at Stony Brook. It's good to see student performances, especially when they are as fine as this one: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d7dto81yZFI>

2020-11-12

Today's Tchaikovsky choice is Rococo Variations for cello and orchestra. The cellist is Mischa Maisky with the trusty Frankfurt Radio Symphony conducted by Paavo Järvi: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ygkRtPsgnf4>

2020-11-13

Today's focus is on some of Tchaikovsky's work for ballet. Here is Nina Kaptsova in the 'Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy' from The Nutcracker: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wz_f9B4pPtg and the

'Waltz of the Flowers' as choreographed by George Balanchine for the NY City Ballet:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LKcZL8q1eBw> and finally, two great icons: Rudolf Nureyev and Margot Fonteyn in the pas de deux from 'Swan Lake':

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qG7JvpPGdEU>

2020-11-14

Let's wrap up Tchaikovsky week with his Symphonie #1, 'Winter Dreams.' This is perhaps my favorite of the symphonies, followed by the 'Pathetique.' Again we have the Frankfurt Radio Symphony, this time conducted by Paavo Järvi: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ocIajFkPwyU> I often feature this orchestra because the video quality is excellent as is the playing. They also tend to put up many performances

2020-11-15

For reflection Sunday, we have a delightful send up of Mozart's 'Cosi fan Tutte' (alert readers will know this is my favorite of the three operas by Mozart and da Ponte). Here is the Finnish National Opera in a pandemic take of entitled 'Covid fan Tutte'! The music is all Mozart other than a little bit of Wagner at the beginning as a performance of Die Walküre is cancelled. The words are changed for our time. The staging and singing are exceptional from this all Finnish cast under the direction of Esa-Pekka Salonen. There are English subtitles. Enjoy this one!!: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LwNz8C33JOc>

2020-11-16

Welcome to Week 35 of the Pandemic Newsletter

Let's do some opera this week (those of you who don't like the art form can skip ahead). We will start off with Bellini's '[I Puritani](#)' a classic bel canto piece. I've featured Bellini before with the classic aria 'Casta Diva' from Norma. Here is the duet A Te, O Cara with Juan Diego Florez and Nino Machaidze. Both singers throw off the high notes with such ease. Enjoy this:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MaLjYQ1jxE>

2020-11-17

What do opera singers do in the midst of a pandemic? As members of the Israel Opera show, they sing from home! Here is a funny send up of Libiamo from Verdi's La Traviata. Here is hoping for rapid vaccine deployment so we can go back to live performances ASAP. Enjoy this one:

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

2020-11-18

After yesterday's pandemic spoof on Verdi's Traviata aria, we will return again to Bellini. I have already covered the famous Casta Diva aria from Norma in a four day September flurry (you can search the [Pandemic Music selection document on the website](#) for the links to those). There is a great duet for the two female leads, Mira O Norma. Here we have maybe two of the greatest, Joan Sutherland and Marilyn Horne, from a 1970 television broadcast: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GrY66tzzeY> Phenomenal singing!!!

2020-11-19

[Mad scenes](#) in opera have a storied history. Most were written as star vehicles for sopranos. Perhaps the best known one comes from Donizetti's frequently staged opera, [Lucia di Lammermoor](#), based on the Walter Scott novel 'The Bride of the Lammermoor.' There are some good clips of this one! Here is Lisette Oropesa in a Madrid performance: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VtUcTREkLFo> Natalie Dessay from the Met in NYC: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C1LC6BRJQiQ> Diana Damrau brandishing a pistol in a totally bizarre production from Germany: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cFR9Lho1a8A> the great Joan Sutherland in an Australian performance: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U3_8wz_xNI0 and finally, Laura Claycomb from the Houston Grand Opera: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cefNlpc1wGM> Enjoy the madness!!!!!! I want to see an enterprising composer do a mad scene incorporating a COVID-19 theme!!

2020-11-20

More madness for today, this time from Bellini. Here is the mad scene from [Il Pirata](#). From Madrid, here is Sonya Yoncheva singing the role of Imogene in 2019: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ehj0Jvr-yNs>

2020-11-21

Will there be no end to this madness? Not yet! Here is the 'mad scene' from I Puritani where poor Elvira has been stood up by Arturo. [Jessica Pratt](#) sings "Ah! Vieni al tempio" from Vincenzo Bellini's I Puritani. Performance of the 19th of April 2018. Courtesy of Teatro Massimo di Palermo: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nmSfAJygc8>

2020-11-22

For reflection Sunday, how about a full-length opera? What better choice for the pandemic than Verdi's La Traviata (La Boheme might also be appropriate)? Here is a just-opened production from Madrid with Marina Rebeka as Violetta and one of my favorite tenors, Michael Fabiano as Alfredo. It's interesting that the chorus come out wearing masks and there are lines on the stage that keep them socially distanced. Once they start singing the masks come off and I hope they all had COVID-19 tests. The string players in the pit are all wearing masks. This is a very nice production courtesy of the OperaVision YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0SgpcFOchiA> It is good to see that live performances are still taking place in parts of our world.

2020-11-23

Welcome to Week 36 of the Pandemic Newsletter

We are going to stay with opera for one last day before moving on as I had an extra clip worth watching. Here is the sleepwalking scene 'Ah! Non credea mirarti' from Bellini's [La Sonambula](#). I'm constantly amazed at how many fine arias Bellini wrote in his short life. Here is the wonderful Italian soprano, [Rosa Feola](#): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BmlRn6HAZI4> and as an extra special treat, here is a masterclass taught by Joyce DiDonato with soprano Alexandra Nowakowski with one of the other arias from La Sonambula: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5rCWXu3iMTY> I was stunned when she commented to Ms. DiDonato that this was the first time she has sung this aria in a performance setting!

2020-11-24

Today we finally step away from opera (if I had my druthers, it would be vocal music every day but I might see mass desertion among my readers!!!). Here is a home recital by Hilary Hahn of some new solo cadenzas to the Mozart Violin Concerto in A major. These were commissioned by the Philharmonic Society of Orange County. These are all quite wonderful:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=00lLwGRBxDY>

2020-11-25

I have featured Yo-Yo Ma in the past but why not post another video clip as he always provides welcome relief for me. Here is a music video (yes, classical musicians are taking a cue from the pop stars and beginning to do this with increasing frequency. Here Ma is with pianist Kathryn Stott performing an arrangement of 'Over the Rainbow': <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=03GpPfOsFkQ> this is from a recording of "Songs of Comfort and Hope. Enjoy this one!

2020-11-27

How did I go so long with music selections without acknowledging [Nina Simone](#)? Too long, that's how long! Here is Ms. Simone in a live performance from Morehouse College in 1969 with 'Take Me to the Water': <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N1xWFO8xEu8>

2020-11-28

Like him or hate him, [Tom Jones](#) was one of the biggest recording stars from the time he broke onto the scene in the mid-1960s. Other than classical, there was not a single genre that he did not attack with gusto. He had a good run as a star entertainer in Las Vegas and was still singing until a couple of years ago. It seems fitting to see him in this live performance singing, 'You'll Never Walk Alone' from Carousel: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BEgtX1RgleA> that serves as a reminder that we all (maybe mostly all) are in this together.

2020-11-29

For reflection Sunday, I offer up Beethoven's [Missa Solemnis](#) that was written around the time of his Ninth Symphony. The performance is by the Frankfurt Radio Symphony under the direction of Andrés Orozco-Estrada. The setting is the [Kloster Eberbach](#), a former monastery in Eltville, Hesse Germany. Enjoy this one: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hnrFUFVcDmc&t=19s>

Welcome to Week 37 as the coming vaccines give us all a promise of return to normalcy

2020-11-30

Today we will return to one of my favorite jazz bands, the Sant Andreu group conducted by Joan Chamorro. Here is Andrea Motis singing 'Blame it on My Youth' with some great ensemble playing along with a fabulous flute solo from Joan Marti: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m4eGgRd440E> I am constantly amazed at how these kids play with such enthusiasm.

2020-12-01

As I am focusing on some all-time favorites, why not take a second look at the Chairman of the Board, Mr. Frank Sinatra? There is a dedicated YouTube channel that has loads of clips and full-length videos of his song stylings. Here are two at random that I picked out. The first is 'I've Got You Under my Skin'

from a concert film: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OqH7VwpSwBo> Wow, did he have style with the three piece sporty outfit with matching pocket square. I still occasionally dress up and look in the mirror, remembering how things used to be. 😊 The second choice is a great duet with Ella Fitzgerald, 'The Lady is a Tramp': <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xafBWOxqsgg> It doesn't get much better than this!!!

2020-12-02

One of my favorite symphonies is the ebullient Mendelssohn Symphony #4 in A major (Italian). From the opening Allegro vivace movement, this symphony gets things moving forward for me. It was also the theme music from the classic film '[Breaking Away](#)' that those of us who attended Indiana University deeply cherish! Here is the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra conducted by Kurt Mazur: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XMLyJNgd6LA>

2020-12-03

One of the new groups that I have discovered during the writing of the newsletter is the NOVA Quartet that specializes in Bossa Nova and Samba music. Laura Vall's vocals are always arresting. They have been doing a quarantine series over the recent months that feature some of my favorite pieces. 'Summer Samba' was just recently uploaded: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F8A-BezgzHY> From the pre-pandemic (remember that?) here is the great Jobim composition, 'Desafinado': <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Rhq53sCfRU> and finally, a reprise of one of my favorites that I posted a while back that warrants another listen, 'Corcovado': <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wl6NVR88kgQ> this is for a very special reader of my newsletters and you know who are.

2020-12-04

Here is one of our special favorites, The Emerson String Quartet. We have been going to see them for over ten years as they have a five-concert season at the Smithsonian Baird Auditorium. The last live music concert that we attended was about a year ago and this is something we miss dearly. Here they are performing the Schubert String Quintet in C that came out after Schubert's death at a tragically young age. The quartet are joined by David Finckel who was the cellist in the quartet for 34 years before retiring to do more duo recitals with his wife, pianist Wu Han: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T0GOv95iDf0> We heard this quintet live several years ago and it is spellbinding.

2020-12-06

For this final reflection Sunday, it is appropriate to remember that we are all one and in this together. What better way to do so than listen to [Beethoven's Ninth Symphony](#)? It was his final symphony and the fourth movement that sets Schiller's poem to music never fails to amaze and thrill me. It is frequently performed to consecrate new symphony hall and opera houses. There is no one great performance of this work, but lots that warrant listening to. First up is the famous Berlin Celebration Concert commemorating the reunification of Germany after the fall of the Berlin wall. The orchestra and chorus are made up from members of multiple orchestras under the baton of Leonard Bernstein and the soloists are June Anderson, Sarah Walker, Klaus Konig and Jan-Hendrik Rootering: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hn0IS-vlwCI> The next offering is the Chicago Symphony from 2015

under the direction of Ricardo Muti with soloists: Camilla Nylund, Ekaterina Gubanova, Matthew Polenzani and Eric Owens: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rOjHhS5MtvA> Of course we have to have one of my YouTube faves, the Frankfurt Radio Symphony conducted by Andrés Orozco-Estrada with soloists: Camilla Nylund, Gerhild Romberger, Michael König, and Nathan Berg: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gT91esZK90I> and finally Daniel Barenboim's West-Eastern Divan Orchestra from the Proms concert with Ana Samuil, Waltraud Meier, Michael König and René Pape: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sJQ32q2k8Uo> Any one of these performances will inspire you this Sunday!!