

🎵 Desert Island Composers 🎵

We posed this question to our musicians:

Suppose you were stranded on a desert island. You had time to grab from your sinking ship the complete works of three of your favorite composers. Who would they be? And, optionally, why?

[Assume you have a device to play CDs with solar power to run it, plus plentiful food and water (seafood from the ocean and an inland freshwater lake). Don't despair--survival is guaranteed. You will be rescued after a year.]

(Most of our musicians were distressed that they could only choose three composers!)

🎵 *Who are your favorite composers? Maybe COT will play them this season!* 🎵

1 – Beethoven

2 – Mozart

3 – Vivaldi

Handel, Bach, Corelli, and more.
Guess I better not get stranded on a desert island.

Teresa, violin

1 – Brahms

I like the melodies that he wrote. He likes French horns. Everyone seems to get interesting parts passed around the orchestra.

2 – Respighi

I like his harmonies. He is a contemporary composer that wrote tonal music.

3 – JS Bach

I like his counterpoint.

Elaine, French horn

1 – Verdi

Got to have opera.

2 – Tchaikovsky

Favorite romantic era composer.

3 – Sir Edward Elgar

Love everything he ever wrote.

Couldn't we have our favorite 30?

Chad, violin

1 – Beethoven

2 – Mozart

3 – Tchaikovsky

Mike, trombone

1 – Dvořák

Lots of gorgeous music, and particularly one chord that I could listen to all day. You need the few measures in front to set it up, but then - fabulous! Besides, Dvořák wrote some really nice stuff for 2nd oboe.

2 – Prokofiev

Snatches of his music run through my head all the time, so I might as well listen to the whole thing, right?

3 – Beethoven

Beethoven! You know, Beethoven! I could sing along with the 9th (Alle menschen werden bruder...) for most of the year!! How do you choose between Beethoven and Mozart???

Marilyn, oboe and English horn

1 – Stravinsky

Great variety of music, much of it complex so lots to listen for and keep you busy on that island.

2 – Brahms

Gorgeous melodies and some of my favorite concerti and chamber music of all time.

3 – Bartok

Similar to answer 1.

Fran, flute

1 – Tchaikovsky

2 – Saint-Saëns

3 – Vivaldi

Jennie, viola

1 – Mahler

I always loved the vastness and breadth of his musical thought.

2 – Beethoven

After Beethoven, no one could be truly original.

3 – Haydn

Humor, wit and a certain urbanity pervades the music.

Thomas, bass trombone

1 – Dvořák

I'm a big fan of the flute solo in Dvořák's Symphony #8!

2 – Beethoven

You can't beat Beethoven's 7th...or his 5th...or his 9th!

3 – Astor Piazzolla

Just to mix things up a little bit. I love Piazzolla's rhythms!

It's hard to pick just three. I'd love to also bring along Rimsky-Korsakov, Debussy, and Copland to name just a few!

Dee, flute

1 – Debussy

I love composers from the Impressionist period.

2 – Mahler

I think he was able to represent the times he was living in through his music.

3 – Ravel

Again love the period and music.

Mary Ann, viola

1 – Copland

Copland captures American landscapes in music that express the vastness and contrasts in our great land. It's worth listening to some of his less popular pieces. Quiet City is one of my favorites.

2 – Dvořák

One of my first exposures to a complete symphony was Dvořák's New World Symphony. I can't imagine being stranded on a desert island without having this available to listen to on a regular basis.

3 – Bruce Cockburn

Sorry, I had to include this talented poet / musician in my favorites list. I admit to my musical tastes being formed in the 60's and 70's era, so had to include a slightly different genre. His melodies are often as poignant as his lyrics. I just couldn't do without a daily dose of this talented composer / musician from Canada.

This was a very hard choice to nail down, especially with my influences from rock n roll, blues, jazz, and gospel. I only started seriously listening to classical music when I was 20 and took up the horn when I was 25.

Mary, French horn

1 – Astor Piazzolla

Piazzolla and the rest of the Brazilian Bossa Nova composers bring back the early years of my adult life.

2 – Stan Kenton

My first attraction to music other than the classics came with modern jazz in my high school years.

3 – Mahler

When my awareness shifted to more classical works, Mahler got my attention. He was the perfect bridge for me between heavier classics and modern light classics. Never tire of Mahler. Can listen to it all day long.

Rip, tuba

1 – Mozart

2 – Beethoven

3 – Brahms

John, violin

1 – Ricard Strauss (tone poems)

2 – Stravinsky (e.g., Firebird)

3 – Brahms

...and many more.

Mary Ann, tuba

1 – Franck

Because his music is so melodic and full. I especially like his Symphony. Also he wrote a Sonata that can be for flute, violin, or cello. I've played it on the flute. Gorgeous. Also have a recording of Jacqueline du Pré performing the Sonata. And a few weeks ago I heard Franck's Piano Quintet in f. Gorgeous. I could tell it was by Cesar Franck Same luscious melodies and chords. Franck was Belgian not French. I think Herschel said he was an organist. Organists like to modulate a lot.

2 – JS Bach

His music is so complex. I could spend an entire year trying to follow each line of counterpoint. Try it with the two or three part inventions for keyboard. It will drive you crazy.

3 – Ives

Charles Ives intertwines melodic passages in the most interesting ways, using folk melodies and other recognizable tunes. I feel like I've won a prize when I recognize one. And he is an American.

Wonder why there is no Beethoven? We know his pieces by heart. Don't need to take recordings to the desert island.

Lee, violin (also trombone)

1 – Dvořák

2 – Vaughan Williams

3 – Beethoven

Laurie, violin

1 – Beethoven

Since my childhood, his music has been inspirational, intense, and spiritual. As unusual as it may sound, when I was a teenager and had many migraines, my mother would have me lie down in a dark room and she put on Beethoven's most soothing piece of music and that was what relieved the migraine. The family doctor was very awed.

2 – Brahms

He was the first composer I ever heard. Mom played the lullaby to get 4 little daughters to sleep at nite. I love playing all his Hungarian pieces.

3 – Dvořák

So many reasons for liking him. One piece in particular: "The Noon Witch" is a tale told by my grandma (from another cultural background) to scare us little kids from going up to the waterfall outside our mountain cabin. She said the Water Bruja waits to push naughty children off into the water. Sure scared me! I hope we can do the Noon Witch again.

Martha, viola

1 – Beethoven

Symphony #3...very percussive

2 – Dvořák

Symphony #8, #6, #7 – beautifully odd tonality, lots of twists and turns.

3 – Tchaikovsky

Symphonies #4, #5, #6 – most beautiful melodies; chamber music.

Rossini wrote the music of my childhood: cartoons, westerns, comedies.

Wallace, violin

1 – Mahler

Mahler's 1st symphony: I love the forest he puts you in.

2 – Brahms

3 – Schubert

Harriet, cello

1 – Borodin

Rich melodies and sonorous harmonies.

2 – Brahms

Complex vertical structure and passionate melodies.

3 – Mahler

Rhythmic power, complex orchestration, and frequent melodies.

I started COT in 1984–85 with Herschel Kreloff, and then I played in the Las Vegas Civic Orchestra for 4 years. From 1989–1998 I played cello for COT. Then, I switched to Bass and played for Herschel from 1998–2013. After a 2-year break, I returned to the Bass section at Herschel's request. I love the opportunity to challenge myself musically each season. This is my 28th season with COT.

Teresa, double bass

1 – Beethoven**2 – Brahms****3 – JS Bach**

Hyun, violin

1 – Prokofiev

Prokofiev has been my favorite since high school. My love for his music started when I saw an Alec Guinness movie which used the suite from Lt. Kijé as its theme.

2 – Shostakovich

Moody, neurotic and compelling.

3 – Haydn

The complete opposite of Shostakovich -- bright and cheerful.

Ed. oboe

1 – Mussorgsky

"A Night on Bald Mountain"!

2 – Borodin**3 – Tchaikovsky**

Calliandra, viola

1 – Prokofiev

The movie, "The Competition".

2 – Beethoven

Sonata Pathétique on piano.

3 – Chopin

Prelude in A major, Op. 28, No. 7 and Waltz in C# minor.

Kim, viola

1 – Sibelius

Symphony No. 2 was a great piece; I have fond memories of playing it in high school.

2 – Wagner**3 – Beethoven**

"Ode to Joy" is the first song I played for my grandma when I was little and what I played many years later at her funeral.

Jamie, double bass

1 – Shostakovich

Because I love heavy, heart-stopping romantic music. Was in St. Petersburg, Russia, in June and heard Valery Gergiev conduct #7. Indescribable. My personal favorite is Symphony #5.

2 – Tchaikovsky

Why explain? Pathétique last year remarkable. All the ballet music. He is Russian and a genius.

3 – Richard Strauss

In some ways similar to Shostakovich and apparently I like "heavy" emotional music.

Joanna, cello

1 – Handel**2 – Dvořák****3 – Copland**

Glynn, viola

1 – John Williams

Because movie soundtracks are cool.

2 – Brahms

Can always do more Brahms.

Tim, violin

1 – Handel

I enjoyed playing in a chamber orchestra in high school.

2 – Dvořák

Love the New World Symphony.

3 – Paul Dukas

I am a big Mickey Mouse fan. "Fantasia" is one of my favorite movies.

Beethoven is my fourth favorite.

Barbara, cello

1 – Handel

He composed two of my favorite harp pieces to play: "Passacaille" and the Concerto for Harp in Bb. I grew up listening to Baroque music and LOVE it!!! I also love his work, "The Messiah".

2 – Andrew Lloyd Weber

My favorite Broadway musical is "The Phantom of the Opera" and I could listen to its soundtrack for days! Its sequel, "Love Never Dies" has some of the most hauntingly beautiful music I've ever heard.

3 – JS Bach

I love Baroque music. Also, he has such an immense body of work; I wouldn't get bored.

Denielle, harp

1 – Mozart**2 – Debussy****3 – Prokofiev**

Best symphony movement?

Beethoven's 7th, 2nd movement. [Editor's Note: COT will play this symphony at its October 1 and 8 concerts.]

Herschel, baton

1 – Beethoven

Glorious, inspiring, contained passion.

2 – Shostakovich**3 – Vivaldi Sarasate!**

Judi, violin

1 – Tchaikovsky

His music is passionate and exciting to listen to and to play. My only regret is that he didn't compose a clarinet concerto.

2 – Brahms

His music is lyrical and with beautiful phrases.

3 – (tie) Shostakovich and Dvořák

Much like Tchaikovsky and energetic, bombastic, fun to play.

I discovered Bernhard Crusell this summer; cool clarinet concertos – virtuosic, light, and fun to play.

Chauncey, clarinet

1 – Beethoven

Want to play Symphonies #1–9.

2 – Corelli

I'm Into the Baroque works.

3 – JS Bach

Good study material.

Also Handel, Haydn, Brahms, Mozart.

Chris, violin

1 – Mahler

A vast amount of orchestral and vocal/choral music. There would be hours and hours of music to hear.

2 – Stravinsky

A variety of music, specifically ballet music and music for small ensembles.

3 – Berlioz

"Symphony Fantastique"

I have too many favorite composers!! I've analyzed the music of the "traditional" composers so much that I can hear almost all of the parts in my head. I would need a challenge to do the same with the music of a few of my favorite composers.

Barbara, bassoon

1 – Vaughan Williams

His music touches my soul and brings me peace.

2 – Grieg

As a child, "Peer Gynt Suite" was my favorite. I had a storybook to go with it.

3 – Saint-Saëns

In 6th grade, "Danse Macabre" was my favorite record.

Also Beethoven #6 (or any Beethoven Symphony): emotional, passionate, exciting.

Emily, violin

1 – Beethoven

The lyrical, powerful, soulful music

2 – JS Bach

The dramatic variation and beautiful themes of his music, e.g. cello suites.

3 – Mozart

Dave, double bass

1 – James Hetfield and Lars Ulrich (Metallica)

Versatile group, many different kinds of themes and rhythms for survival.

2 – Corey Taylor (Stone Saw/Slipknot)

Lyrics that have deep meaning – keep my mind sharp!

3 – Apocalyptica (Finnish Metal Cello)

Classic instruments meet metal; oh, how the strings sing!

Just because I'm classically trained doesn't mean I'm restricted in music preference.

Janelle, French horn

1 – 3 Bs: Beethoven, Bach, Brahms

Great music from all. [Editor's Note: That's not fair, Randy, having 3 composers for your favorite!]

2 – Oscar & Hammerstein

Great movie music and vocals.

3 – John Williams

"Mr. Excitement"

"Mission Impossible", "Raiders of the Lost Art", "Star Wars", and "Pink Panther".

Randy, violin

1 – Stravinsky

I love his contrasting music, from ground-breaking ballets to his neoclassical period. When I was in high school, I took a standardized French test. The main story to read and respond to was about the riot that occurred at the premiere of his "Rite of Spring." The test designers probably didn't expect a high school student to know anything about that, but I did! (I did very well on the test.) My college graduation present to myself was a boxed set of 6 LPs of nine of his masterpieces conducted by Stravinsky himself (which I still have).

2 – Mozart

You get a wealth of symphonies, concerti, chamber music, and 22 operas.

3 – Dvořák

I love everything he wrote, and there are many of his ~200 pieces that I don't know.

And I want scores for everything!

Dorothy, cello
