

Classical Therapy

Compiled by the Kairós Ensemble

Said to increase intelligence and concentration, classical music also captures hidden histories and the deep-seated drama of the human condition. Founded by Christoph Koncz, Olatz Ruiz De Gordejuela, Salvador Solón and Lelia Iancovici, the Kairós Ensemble sees music as a powerful language essential to the human spirit and works to connect people to its power through new mediums. As part of ColourFeel Digital Dispatch Vol. 2 "Sound Check", the link to the 11-track classical therapy playlist comes with this companion list of short descriptions, written by the Kairós Ensemble to help you delve into the lesser-known significance of each composition.

1 - Franz Schubert, String Quintet D.956, 1st movement

This quintet represents the climax of Schubert's instrumental oeuvre. At the same time, it is one of the most remarkable compositions in the entire repertoire of Romantic chamber music. The C Major String Quintet is one of those musical enigmas whose mystery is only deepened by repeated hearings. What inspired Schubert to compose such remarkably beautiful music, and why did no one notice it until the quintet was published in 1853, 25 years after the composer's death?

2 - Maurice Ravel, Piano Concerto, 2nd movement

Ravel's music often reveals depths of feeling beneath glittering surfaces. The slow second movement is one of the most poignant and beautiful pieces of music ever written. Despite its apparent spontaneity, Ravel confessed: "That flowing phrase! How I worked over it bar by bar! It nearly killed me."

3 - L.V. Beethoven 5th symphony, 4th movement

The symphony of symphonies that embodied all of the power and possibilities of instrumental music, the template for a journey from tragedy to triumph that would become a musical and dramatic blueprint for all subsequent symphonic composers. This movement represents the triumphal march of the French Revolution ideals.

4 - Claudio Monteverdi, "L'Incoronazione di Poppea, Pur ti miro"

Belonging to "L'Incoronazione di Poppea", it is considered the culmination of Monteverdi's work and a great benchmark for later music. It represents one of the most beautiful love duos in the history of music.

5 - Clara Schumann, Piano trio, 1st movement

One of the greatest composers in history, with her trio Clara inspired composers such as Robert Schumann or Johannes Brahms, and her work was admired for its great musicality and expression under impeccable writing.

6 - Alexander Scriabin, Etude Op. 8 N.12, Pathetic.

I get goose bumps listening to Horowitz's interpretation of Scriabin's etude. With minimum movement, effortless, he takes incredible risks but doesn't lose control over the musical line, he achieves unbelievable torrents of sound as well as he is capable to produce the softest nuance. Horowitz goes beyond playing the piano and the music, his intensions and the intensity transcends his aged body and touches the inner self.

7 - W.A Mozart, Don Giovanni, "Batti Batti"

The opera's subject is Don Juan, the spanish notorious libertine of fiction, and his eventual descent into hell. For Mozart, it was an unusually intense work, and it was not entirely understood in his own time. Within a generation, however, it was recognized as one of the greatest of all operas.

8 - Gustav Mahler, Rückert-Lieder, "Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen"

Written in 1901 and considered probably the best song written by Gustav Mahler, the text has an immense personal significance to the composer, and it is probably one of his most profound and poignant compositions.

9 - Béla Bartók, Concerto for Orchestra, 5th movement

Hungarian composer, pianist and pioneering ethnomusicologist, Bartók composed Concerto for Orchestra in United States in 1943. He completed the work only in two months and it is his last and most popular work for orchestra. Why a concerto for orchestra? "The title of this symphony-like orchestral work is explained by its tendency to treat the single orchestral instruments in a concertant or soloistic manner" explained Bartók. Despite facing health deterioration, exile and war, this last movement is bright, potent and vigorous; Bartók describes it himself as "life-assertion".

10 - J.S. Bach, Violin Double Concerto, 2nd mov

Written between 1717-1723, when Bach was Kapellmeister in the Anhalt-Köthen court. Prince Leopold's calvinist beliefs did not accept music interpretation in religious services. This is why this compositional period in Bach's life is characterized by the creation of many non-religious instrumental works, to be interpreted in the court. For sure this must have been a difficult condition to accept for a lutheran who devoted most of his music to God, Soli Deo Gloria.

11 - Richard Wagner, Tristan and Isolde, "Mild und leise wir er lächelt"

"Life and death, the whole import and existence of the outer world, here hang on nothing but the inner movements of the soul," wrote Wagner. From the act of birth, the human condition is to inevitably face death and to wonder about the meaning of life and its existence. The opera has as central idea the misplace of the death potion for the love potion and its consequence as Tristan and Isolde experience a transcendental spiritual bond. This final scene known as "Liebestod" or "Love-Death" is a resolution of the death-love and love-death conflict.