



I will break this down by category.



Classical

In classical music, the immediate canon is Bach, Beethoven, Brahms, and Mozart.

With Bach and Beethoven it is hard to go wrong. But my short list there would be Bach's B Minor Mass and St. Matthew's Passion, The Art of the Fugue, Well-Tempered Klavier, some of the organ music, the Brandenburgs, the Partitas, the Goldberg Variations, and the solo violin works.

For Beethoven it would be the late piano sonatas, the late string quartets, and the symphonies.

For Brahms I like best the chamber music, such as the sonatas for cello and piano, or for clarinet and piano, some of the piano music, and some of the songs, in addition to the German Requiem and the symphonies.

Mozart I like the operas best, definitely.

Other composers worth checking out:

Palestrina

Monteverdi

Haydn (the string quartets, piano sonatas, the trios, The Creation, assorted symphonies)

Chopin

some pieces by Schubert

Mahler's 9th

Do not be duped into thinking that 20th century and contemporary musics are a wasteland (see my book **In Praise of Commercial Culture**, on this). I very much like:

Shostakovich

Stravinsky

Hindemith (Kammermusik, Das Marienleben, early version, Ludus Tonalis, Die Daemon, music for viola, viola and piano)

Varese

Assorted bits by Ives, such as The Unanswered Question, Central

Park in the Dark, Three Quarter-tone Pieces for Two Pianos

Messiaen

Helmut Lachenmann

David Tudor

Robert Ashley (Perfect Lives, Improvement, Purposeful Lady/Slow Afternoon)

early Philip Glass (like Einstein on the Beach)

Poul Ruders

Karlheinz Stockhausen

Morton Feldman (For John Cage)

Harry Partch

Pierre Boulez (especially Pli Selon Pli)

Scelsi

Elliott Carter (Sonata for Cello and Piano, other works)

Eric Lyon



Rock and Roll

In rock and roll, in addition to the obvious classics (Chuck Berry, Beatles, Rolling Stones, James Brown, Motown, and many others, etc.) I recommend the following:

Beach Boys - Pet Sounds, 20//20, Friends, Sunflower, Love You

Byrds: Notorious Byrd Brothers, Sweetheart of the Rodeo, Greatest Hits, volume 1

Harry Nilsson, all, with Duit on Mon Dei as my favorite

Can - Soundtracks, Monster Movie, Future Days

Kraftwerk, early works

Led Zeppelin, I-IV

Brian Eno - Here Comes the Warm Jets, Before and After Science

Taking Tiger Mountain, Another Green World

Sex Pistols - Never Mind the Bollocks

Queen - A Night at the Opera, Sheer Heart Attack

Clash - The Clash, London Calling, Black Market Clash My Bloody Valentine - the album is called Loveless, maybe the best album since the Beatles

Sonic Youth - Daydream Nation

Laibach - Let It Be, Opus Dei

Sly and the Family Stone - There's a Riot Going On

Nirvana

Hole - Live Through This

Aphex Twin and Richard D. James (in general there is much good stuff in techno, jungle, drum&bass, but it is hard to find consistent artists)

If you think you know how good the Beatles were, you probably don't. Go back and listen to their best songs, including If I Fell, Please Please Me, Hard Day's Night, She's a Woman, You Won't See Me, Rain, Strawberry Fields Forever, For No One, A Day in the Life, Back in the USSR, and Hey Jude, among many others. There is also much of value in the Beatles's solo careers, albeit scattered. From Paul I recommend McCartney, Ram, Band on the Run, Flowers in the Dirt, Flaming Pie, and assorted singles and B-sides, like C Moon, or Daytime Nighttime Suffering. Lennon's best are Plastic Ono Band, Imagine, and Double Fantasy. By the way, Yoko is much underrated.



In jazz, I like best Sun Ra and Thelonious Monk, plus some swing, such as Benny Goodman.

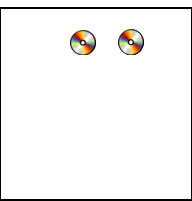


In show tunes I give pride of place to Jerome Kern, with Showboat being a particular favorite.



In world music, I recommend the music of the Pygmies of Central Africa, most extant collections are good. The Pygmies are among the world's greatest and deepest musicians.

I also very much enjoy Indian music, gamelan music from Indonesian, and African popular music since the 1950s, from almost anywhere on that continent, with first place perhaps going to Zaire. The music of Madagascar and the Cape Verde Islands are deserving of special attention. There is also Brazilian and Cuban music, or almost anything else African-derived. Untold riches there. Calypso from Trinidad deserves notice also, with Roaring Lion as a special figure of note.



From Jamaica, my favorite album is Buju Banton's *Til Shiloh*, I am also a big fan of Desmond Dekker, King Tubby, Lee Perry, Burning Spear, Luciano, and others. The book *Reggae on CD* gives an impeccable set of recommendations.



Country Western, Bluegrass

In country and western and bluegrass music (most of which I do not like), I recommend the following:

Johnny Cash

Louvin Brothers, especially Tragic Songs of Life

Flatt and Scruggs

Everly Brothers, Roots (yes, the Everly Brothers!)

Hank Williams, Sr.

Gram Parsons, Grievous Angel

Flying Burrito Brothers, Gilded Palace of Sin, Burrito Deluxe



Final Note



"If you are looking to buy something contemporary, and extremely affordable, check out the works of Susan Dayal of Trinidad. She is fantastic. Her email is jdayal@carib-link.net"

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