

# RECOMMENDED LISTENING WITH TIM THURSTON

Over the last years I have given a number of lecture series in dlr Lexlcon, the lovely library in Dún Laoghaire, entitled Tim's Monday Music. They have been very well attended and many have told me that listening to music is an ideal way to start the week. In these most distracted times, as an alternative to the ever more worrying news, I suggest that music can provide some calming reassurance and lift the spirits at the start of the day. Some gentle jazz – and a studious avoidance of news in the evenings – helps towards a peaceful night.

Being assured that my family is safe and well and having the companionship of a beloved co-hibernator, I have had no problem thriving during the lock-down period. The songs of the birds that seem to have re-colonised my garden in such a delightful way, have been a great pleasure – and of course music, as ever, has given me much comfort.

I have made the following 12 lists of music of which I am very fond – much of it I have loved for many years, much I discovered during my 18 years researching and presenting Gloria on RTÉ Lyric FM and my regular checks on the exciting world of improvised music. My listening habits tend to be of classical music in the mornings and jazz in the evenings. I don't claim to have listened to everything listed during the last few months but all have appeared on my Lexlcon playlists – or will do should they continue!

We are limited in the specific recommendations we can make concerning recordings due to copyright restrictions. Where I mention particular artists or recordings they are accessible on either YouTube, Spotify or Freegal.

If you have any queries - about how to find the music, or indeed any other musical matter, do email me at the address below. A hint to improve the sound quality when listening on-line – even a comparatively inexpensive set of earphones will improve the sound quality.

The arts have taken such a vicious blow during the lock-down and I have heard of some of the most renowned musical groups who fear for their future. We music-lovers must do everything we can to support them when live music is again possible. Until then let's broaden our musical boundaries and give thanks for their astonishing skills.

## WEEK 1

**MONDAY:**                    **MONTEVERDI – 1610 VESPERS** – No piece of music has given me more delight over the years. It is, I believe the first great masterpiece, drawing together all the thrilling early developments of vocal, choral and instrumental music.

**EVENING JAZZ:**            **GERRY MULLIGAN ON BARITONE SAX** - my Damascus moment in the 1950s. One of the few musicians to tame this monstrous instrument - his work without the chordal constraints of piano or guitar introduced a harmonic freedom. Lyrical yet swinging.

**TUESDAY:**                    **JOHN PLUMMER - ANNA MATER MATRIS CHRISTI** - A lovely motet by a 15th Century English composer, a member of the Chapel Royal, in honour of Saint Anne. I love the many portraits of her teaching the Virgin Mary to read. A perfect example of how it doesn't matter if you've never heard of the composer – especially in the reliable hands of The Sixteen under Harry Christophers.

**EVENING JAZZ:**           **THEO BLECKMANN** - one of the few vocalists who is worthy of the definition Jazz Singer - he sings in tune with little vibrato (just as I like my early music singers) and though German born interprets the Great American Songbook superbly.

**WEDNESDAY:**           **SCHUBERT - AVE MARIA** (not to be confused with Gounod/Bach!) Who says I don't like 'Pop Classics'? Schubert wrote so many really wonderful tunes. This is one of the most gorgeous. So many composers set this text – it is fascinating to compare and contrast.

**EVENING JAZZ:**           **SOME CLASSIC DUKE ELLINGTON** - Take the A Train perhaps - from the Blanton Webster Band from the year I was born! I heard the band in a cinema in O'Connell Street, Dublin in 1963.

**THURSDAY:**           **CHANT - LAETARE JERUSALEM, LAETATUS SUM** - There is simply nothing as calming as Gregorian Chant.

**EVENING JAZZ:**           **A CONTRAST – FROM EVAN PARKER** - who has reinvented saxophone playing and mastered the arcane skill of circular breathing - not for the faint-hearted.

**FRIDAY:**               **J.S.BACH - SONATA FOR FLUTE - BWV1013** - Bach Solo cello and solo violin - plenty - but solo flute - just one Partita – it's a stunner. Do find a baroque flute – the modern flute is so very different in tone.

**EVENING JAZZ:**           There are some wonderful young American piano players - try **AARON PARKES** from Seattle.

**SATURDAY:**           **JOSQUIN DESPRES** - from **MISSUS EST GABRIEL ANGELUS AD MARIAM** - Josquin was the towering figure of the High Renaissance - this is one of his 18 complete Masses. The series of recordings by the Tallis Scholars are exemplary.

**EVENING JAZZ:**           There is no reason why a trumpet should always blast you out - I like **ALEX SIPIAGIN** and from an earlier era, **LEE MORGAN** – again that rare combination – the lyrical and the swinging.

**SUNDAY:**               **LENNOX BERKELEY - JUDICA ME DEUS.** This is a lovely setting of the Introit for Passion Sunday by Lennox Berkeley who, like so many 20th century composers, studied in Paris with Nadia Boulanger in the 1920s and knew Stravinsky, Poulenc and Benjamin Britten. It was composed for his 75th birthday in 1978.

**EVENING JAZZ:**           **CHARLIE PARKER** is a unique voice on alto sax - the High Priest of Modern Jazz - his inventiveness is wondrous. You will know why he was called Bird when you hear him take off on one of his twirling arpeggios. Find Embraceable You.

## WEEK 2

**MONDAY:**               **BACH - ORGAN CHORALE PRELUDES FOR PASSIONTIDE.** J.S.Bach was the greatest composer of organ music. Like his Cantatas, much written for specific Lutheran Feasts. BWV 618-624. Even today, it is a rare organ recital which does not include some of Bach's music.

I prefer these smaller Chorale Preludes to the grander Toccatas and Preludes and Fugues.

**EVENING JAZZ:**           **EST (ESBJÖRN SVENSSON TRIO).** The jazz world was rocked by the early death aged 44 of pianist Esbjörn Svensson. His Trio recorded some wonderful music – their 2 visits to Vicar Street were as memorable as any Dublin jazz events.

**TUESDAY:**               **ARVO PART - PASSIO.** Estonian composer Arvo Part is the most renowned of the so-called 'Holy Minimalists'. Certainly his sacred choral music has a simple power. Passio from 1989 owes a great deal to Bach's Passion settings.

**EVENING JAZZ:**           American **STACEY KENT** is one of the few female jazz vocalists I am totally happy with. She often sings – most effectively – in French. Find 'The Ice Hotel'.

**WEDNESDAY:**           **ANTONIO LOTTI - CRUCIFIXUS** - This powerful extract from one of his many Masses, composed for St Mark's in Venice, has become one of the most popular pieces for Holy Week. His operas and madrigals form a link between Renaissance and Baroque styles. He's not just a 'One Work' composer and deserves more attention.

**EVENING JAZZ:**           **PAOLO FRESU** – I really enjoy this Italian musician playing the flugelhorn – especially in a trio called **MARE NOSTRUM** – with accordion and piano from yet another first class Munich based label, **ACT**.

**THURSDAY:**               **CHANT - ERIPE ME DOMINE** is the Gradual for Passion Sunday, from Psalm 139.

**EVENING JAZZ:**           **LOUIS SCLAVIS** – From Lyon, Sclavis specialises in the clarinet, especially the bass clarinet, now a popular instrument for single reed players with a great range and in his hands a lovely tone in the upper register. His best offerings are on the ECM label.

**FRIDAY:**                 **HEINRICH IGNAZ FRANZ BIBER** – The **MYSTERY** or **ROSARY SONATAS** for solo violin. From the 1670s, these sonatas are the most renowned virtuoso solo violin works before Bach – every bit as demanding, requiring 'scordatura' - different tuning to the usual for the 4 strings.

**EVENING JAZZ:**           **ART TATUM** died aged 47 in 1956. He was an icon for jazz pianists and had his own radio show in Ohio in his teens. Though he was almost blind, his virtuoso piano style was legendary – try Tea for Two.

**SATURDAY:**           **KENNETH LEIGHTON - CRUCIFIXUS.** He was one of the finest composers of sacred music of the 20th century, Professor of music in Edinburgh from 1970 until his death in 1988.

**EVENING JAZZ:**           **LOOSE TUBES** – Keeping a 21 piece band financially viable in the 1980s proved too much for this thrilling collective. They made just 3 albums – all full of musical interest and variety – and humour and some top rank soloists – Django Bates, Julian and Steve Arguelles, Mark Lockheart, Tim Whitehead, Iain Ballamy all emerged from the band as leading figures of British Jazz. They played in Cork, Galway and Belfast – though not, I think in Dublin - and, memorably, at the Proms.

**SUNDAY:**           **J.S. BACH - ST. MATTHEW PASSION.** A performance of this work - especially with a fine Evangelist - is an overpowering experience. I first sang in the chorus at school and have 8 times since. In 2018 I heard a performance in Bach's church, St Thomas's, Leipzig, where he lies. With just 8 voices, including the Evangelist (Nicholas Mulroy), Christus (Benjamin Appl) and counter-tenor Tim Mead under Paul McCreech. This performance, in this setting - stunned the audience to the longest, most intense silence after the final chorus. We thought we had gone to Heaven!

**EVENING JAZZ:**           If you were part of **ART BLAKEY'S JAZZ MESSENGERS**, your name was made in the world of jazz. For 35 years the drummer from Pittsburgh called up the finest young players who subsequently went on to be leaders in the music.

## WEEK 3

**MONDAY:**           **THOMAS TALLIS - LAMENTATIONS OF JEREMIAH** I have often said that, to my mind, this music is up there with late Beethoven String Quartets. I've sung it many times so I know it as it were from the inside - every time I hear it something new and wonderful emerges - my definition of a 'classic'.

**EVENING JAZZ:**           **BIX BEIDERBECKE** – Like so many great players Bix died young – in 1931 aged just 28 yet his name is acclaimed along with fellow cornet player Louis Armstrong who outlived him by 40 years.

**TUESDAY:**           **FRANÇOIS COUPERIN - LEÇONS de TÉNÈBRES** - A musical language so very different from the Tallis with that unique French Baroque flavour - but just as much intensity. The Couperin family were renowned in late 17<sup>th</sup> century Paris. His uncle Louis composed thrilling harpsichord music and at 18 François took over the job he and his father held in the church of St Gervais in Paris. His later renown caused him to be known as Couperin Le Grand.

**EVENING JAZZ:**           **CLARK TERRY** He played with the 2 greatest big bands of jazz, Duke Ellington and Count Basie and made famous the flugelhorn with its rounder more mellow tone than the trumpet. Terry was a major influence on Miles Davis – he died in 2015 aged 95.

**WEDNESDAY:**           **VICTORIA – TENEBRAE** No renaissance music has quite such deep and impassioned intensity than that from Spain, especially Victoria, Morales and Guerrero - search for a new recording by The Sixteen – it's been on 'repeat' here.

**EVENING JAZZ:**           **FATS WALLER** We are having an Old Jazz week! Wikipedia calls him a 'comedic entertainer' but his stride piano style - check out Ain't Misbehavin' – made a major contribution to piano jazz.

**THURSDAY:**           **CHANT** - One of the best-known chants is Pange Lingua Gloriosi for Good Friday.

**EVENING JAZZ:**           **SIDNEY BECHET** – played the soprano sax (the straight one) and the clarinet and was – and still is hugely popular in France. He moved there in 1949 and became a national hero.

**FRIDAY:**                I leave you to choose which **STABAT MATER** you play - that by **JAMES MACMILLAN** (my favourite contemporary composer of choral music) is stunning, **PERGOLESI, ROSSINI, DVOŘÁK** – so many composers set the feelings of the Virgin Mary at the foot of the cross.

**EVENING JAZZ:**           I remember hearing **KID ORY's** band in a cinema in Cambridge, one of my first live jazz events. Very exciting! He was a ragtime trombonist.

**SATURDAY:**            My favourite performers of Baroque music are **VOX LUMINIS**. I heard them perform my Desert Island Bach – the motet Jesu Meine Freude around the font in Eisenach where JSB was christened – what an unforgettable experience. Not a dry eye in the house!! They have an unmissable Buxtehude programme and they have cast brilliant light on compositions by JSB's forbears. See YouTube.

**EVENING JAZZ:**           **FRANK KIMBROUGH** is Maria Schneider's pianist and has made some fine trio albums. Definitely worthy of a wider listenership.

**SUNDAY:**               **DUM TRANSISSET SABBATUM** - especially the setting by **JOHN TAVERNER**, (the 16th century one - not the 20th) is a wonderful text about the women finding the open tomb. It intersperses chant with polyphony in a beautiful way.

**EVENING JAZZ:**           **JAN GARBAREK** A major pioneer of European jazz. I heard him in the Royal Marine Hotel Dún Laoghaire with his keening saxophone with Brazilian percussionist **NANA VASCONCELOS** playing his berimbau and shaking his bunches of shells. Far from New Orleans indeed.

## WEEK 4

**MONDAY:**                    **G.F. HANDEL** - from **MESSIAH - I KNOW THAT MY REDEEMER LIVETH**. The Messiah isn't just for Christmas. There are a number of recordings by a boy treble that are most effective - do avoid soprano wobblers - it's not Brunhilde!! (How I do hate ubiquitous vibrato.)

**EVENING JAZZ:**            **TAKE SIX** is a fantastic male voice gospel/jazz vocal ensemble who wowed the Concert Hall - and me - a few years ago.

**TUESDAY:**                **CHANT AND WILLIAM BYRD - HAEC DIES** - Byrd was one of the great masters of England's Golden Age - His 3 Masses are masterpieces but the brief, impassioned motets are gems too.

**EVENING JAZZ**            **BILL FRISELL**. One of the great jazz guitarists - I heard him with Joe Lovano and Paul Motian in Andrew's Lane. He had a period when he returned to his Country and Western roots which I didn't care for - go for the earlier albums on ECM.

**WEDNESDAY:**            **SAMUEL SEBASTIAN WESLEY** - Blessed be God the Father. This is a tour de force for the trebles in a good boys' choir. Wesley was an irascible organist who was fired from a number of English Cathedrals but left us some stirring anthems.

**EVENING JAZZ:**            **LESTER YOUNG** was one of the great early innovators of the tenor saxophone influencing Charlie Parker. See Saturday next - Chris Potter.

**THURSDAY:**              **CREDO from BACH'S B MINOR MASS**. There can be few pieces of music expressing the joy of Easter better than the 'Et Resurrexit' in the Creed of the B Minor. JSB may not have composed any operas but his music is full of drama. This work is beyond compare.

**EVENING JAZZ:**            **MICHAEL WOLLNY**, looking about 15 with his floppy hair is a brilliant Berlin based pianist. He has played a number of times in Dublin - to full houses. Many say that the centre of the best new jazz has moved this side of the Atlantic.

**FRIDAY:**                    **RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS - EASTER** from 5 Mystical Songs. This is a setting of a George Herbert poem for Baritone and orchestra. He called himself a 'Cheerful Agnostic' but composed many wonderful hymns and set sacred texts.

**EVENING JAZZ:**            **COUNT BASIE's** 1958 album The Atomic Mr Basie is my favourite from his band, renowned for almost 50 years.

**SATURDAY:**               **MAHLER** – His, and indeed Bruckner’s massive Symphonies leave me cold, but his Song Cycles with orchestral accompaniment are very lovely – especially Die Kindertotenlieder, settings of Ruckert’s poems, written following the death of his daughter, Maria, at the age of 4 in 1902. Janet Baker’s performance is unsurpassed.

**EVENING JAZZ:**           **CHRIS POTTER** is my favourite of the young tenor players. His gig in Whelan's with pianist Craig Taborn was a jazz highlight of recent years.

**SUNDAY:**                 **RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHANT** - What a uniquely beautiful sound this is with the renowned low basses for which Orthodox music is so famous. Recordings by the Russian Orthodox Patriarchate Choir under Anatoly Gridenko are wonderful.

**EVENING JAZZ:**           The UK jazz scene is thriving and there are some very fine players emerging - pianist **KIT DOWNES** is most impressive, lyrical and sometimes free and very exciting with an amazing technique.

## **WEEK 5**

**MONDAY:**                 **JOHN SHEPPARD - JESU SALVATOR SAECULI.** I think Sheppard deserves to be ranked with Byrd and Tallis in the Golden Age of English music. This motet has the most wonderful Amen twisting and turning to a glorious final resolution.

**EVENING JAZZ:**           **HERBIE HANCOCK** is one of the great jazz pianists - 80 last month and still playing!! Joni Letters from 2007 is a star-studded tribute to his friend, Joni Mitchell. His albums from the 1960s are classics.

**TUESDAY:**               **MICHAEL HAYDN - IN DIE RESURRECTIONIS.** Younger brother of Joseph he was also a major figure in the composition of sacred music in 18th century Vienna. He composed some charming Masses for female voices.

**EVENING JAZZ:**           **STAN KENTON’s** was the foremost big band on the west coast during the 1940s and 50s, always forward-looking and comprising an impressive list of soloists. See Peanut Vendor – and next Friday’s choice - Bud Shank.

**WEDNESDAY:**           **J.S. BACH - 'CELLO SUITES.** I know of few more overwhelming concert experiences than of these wonderful works. Is there a more beautiful sound than the 'cello? (Is there a more sublime composer than Bach?!)

**EVENING JAZZ:**           Joining **CHRIS POTTER** (see last week) as one of the finest tenor players of today is **TONY MALABY.** He has visited Ireland often and I heard a wonderful gig from him in Cornelia Street in Greenwich Village.

**THURSDAY:**                   **CHANT - QUASI MODO** - The Introit for the Sunday after Easter - after which Victor Hugo's character was named. We remember Notre Dame Cathedral a year on from the disastrous fire.

**EVENING JAZZ:**           **DON CHERRY** - trumpeter and teacher, stepfather of Neneh, famed for his challenging work with Ornette Coleman. Try his group **CODONA** on ECM - a trio with sitar.

**FRIDAY:**                   **WILLIAM BYRD - ANGELUS DOMINI.** A brilliant little motet set for 3 high voices - The Cardinal's Music complete recordings are excellent.

**EVENING JAZZ:**           I remember discovering **BUD SHANK** and the ultra-cool West Coast school as a teenager - I've enjoyed his alto playing ever since and he's one of the few jazz flautists. His work with oboist Bob Cooper from 1956 was unique - 2 rare jazz instruments.

**SATURDAY:**               **CHARLES WOOD** - Professor of Music at Cambridge at fellow Irishman Stanford's death in 1924, Wood too is mainly remembered for his sacred music. His Easter hymn This Joyful Eastertide is most popular.

**EVENING JAZZ:**           The **MODERN JAZZ QUARTET (MJQ)** gave modern jazz a gentle chamber feel throughout the 50s and 60s with Milt Jackson's vibraphone playing a central role - John Lewis was a fine pianist too. Bach a frequent influence too.

**SUNDAY:**                   There is no doubt that Haydn was the King of the String Quartet - 68 of them!! But I am equally fond of **MOZART's** String Quintets, dark and rich with an extra viola - His viola is in the Mozarteum in Salzburg.

**EVENING JAZZ:**           **BILL EVANS.** With **THELONIOUS MONK**, the most influential pianist in modern Jazz, he was a central figure in the most famous Jazz album of all, Kind of Blue, from 1959.

## WEEK 6

**MONDAY:**                   **LUDWIG SENFL - MISSA PASCHALE** - from the court of the Emperor Maximilian c1520. One of the many minor masters - well worth following up.

**EVENING JAZZ:**           **WOODY HERMAN'S HERD** - A great big band especially in the 1960s- very much for the Dancing Years of Jazz but some fine soloists, including the leader on clarinet.

**TUESDAY:**               **MICHAEL PRAETORIUS** is renowned for his unique compositions for renaissance instruments – some very weird - Syntagma Musicum (1614-1620), but he also wrote some splendid large scale motets for choirs and instruments in the Venetian style, especially for Christmas.

**EVENING JAZZ:** **BARRY GUY** is *the* Renaissance man of today's music, a composer, Double-Bass player - he recorded with Roger Norrington the first period instrument recording of the Beethoven Symphonies and has made many wonderful albums with his partner violinist **MAYA HOMBURGER** - they lived in Ireland for many years. Principally his fame rests as the most exciting and innovative free jazz bassist - especially with Evan Parker.

**WEDNESDAY:** **PALESTRINA's** Masses and Motets are considered as fine as any renaissance composer and still enrich today's liturgies. Recordings by The Sixteen and by Westminster Cathedral are particularly fine.

**EVENING JAZZ:** I've recommended some fine tenor players in this week's list but **MIGUEL ZENON** plays alto and has given me much pleasure - he is Puerto Rican and has won many awards - Grammys etc.

**THURSDAY:** **MATTHIAS WECKMANN** – was a pupil of Heinrich Schutz and absorbed his splendid blend of Venetian sparkle and North German seriousness. I am fascinated by German repertoire pre Bach (see tomorrow) and have enjoyed Weckmann's music a great deal since 'discovering' him some years ago.

**EVENING JAZZ:** **DAVE DOUGLAS** is one of my favourite contemporary trumpeters. I saw him play a superb set at the Cheltenham Jazz Festival. He has made many recordings and always has something interesting and different to say. He has published over 500 compositions. Try Soundprints with Joe Lovano.

**FRIDAY:** **DIETRICH BUXTEHUDE** - also **DIDERIK** - he is often considered Danish. He became the most renowned organist of his time in the Marienkirche in Lübeck and in 1705 J.S. Bach walked the 200k from Arnstadt to Lübeck to hear the Master. His organ compositions are wonderful but I've had huge pleasure from his Cantatas. The recording by Vox Luminis is an absolute winner (as is everything they do!!)

**EVENING JAZZ:** **ERROL GARNER** - of course nostalgia plays a large part in one's listening pleasure and Garner's Concert by the Sea from 1955 was one of my most precious possessions when I came to Dublin 57 years ago. The LP was worn out - I will play the CD with much joy and happy memories.

**SATURDAY:** **CARLO GESUALDO** earned himself an entry in music encyclopaedias as he murdered his wife and her lover in 1590. This event – and his harmonically tortuous compositions have fascinated ever since and are indeed strangely beautiful. Stravinsky was particularly drawn to them.

**EVENING JAZZ:** My last jazz series for Lyric FM was called 'In Her Own Sweet Way' celebrating female jazz musicians - not vocalists. There are so many now - on both sides of the Atlantic. The pianist I enjoy most is New Yorker **KRIS DAVIS** - she is a unique jazz voice - pretty close to the edge but she can swing and has an amazing technique.

**SUNDAY** I've always loved **BACH's** solo Lute music. There isn't much of it, though the 'cello Suites are often played in transcription. It has become very fashionable to use the lute as a continuo instrument in Baroque Music. It has a unique and very lovely sound - it was referred to as the King of Instruments in Renaissance times - what a contrast to the organ!! It is astonishingly light - you can lift it on a little finger and the finest music is gentle and intimate. **HOPKINSON SMITH, JACOB LINDBERG** and **NIGEL NORTH** are stars of the instrument.

**EVENING JAZZ:** After a gentle morning, a contrast would be **ERIC DOLPHY**. He built on the exquisite language of Charlie Parker with his own eccentric blowing - and introduced me to the pleasures of the bass clarinet - now popular with a lot of single reed players.

## WEEK 7

**MONDAY:** **SCHUBERT - GOTT IST MEIN HIRT**. Another of Schubert's lovely melodies, this time for women's voices and piano.

**EVENING JAZZ:** **BRANFORD MARSALIS** -Trumpeter **WYNTON** is the most renowned of the family from Louisiana - Patriarch Ellis died last month. I am a fan of sax player Branford. 'Gloomy Sunday' has 14 million hits on Spotify!

**TUESDAY:** **BACH - SONATAS AND PARTITAS FOR SOLO VIOLIN. BWV 1001 - 1006**. Irish audiences have been blessed by many performances by Maya Homburger. I will never forget a late night candlelit concert in the Kilkenny Arts Festival - how will we manage without it this year?!

**EVENING JAZZ:** **MYRA MELFORD** - with **KRIS DAVIS** - see last Saturday - Myra is at the forefront of the world of contemporary improvised piano. Described as a virtuoso who shocks and soothes. On her recent album Snowy Egret drummer **TYSHAWN SOREY** is stunning too.

**WEDNESDAY:** **HEINRICH SCHUTZ – DIE AUFERSTEHUNG the RESURRECTION**. In my mind no composer deserves greater new exposure. Recognised as the greatest German composer before Bach he paid 2 seminal visits to Venice studying with Andrea Gabrieli and - most likely - Monteverdi. A wonderful blend of Venetian passion and Lutheran seriousness.

**EVENING JAZZ:** **JOSHUA REDMAN** - The second of 3 top tenor players this week. His quartet **JAMES FARM** - with pianist **AARON PARKS** is excellent and he's recorded with **BRAD MEHLDAU** too.

**THURSDAY:** **CHANT JUBILATE DEO PSALM 100** - O be Joyful in the Lord. In Morning Prayer in the 1662 Book of Common Prayer.

**EVENING JAZZ:** **DAVE HOLLAND** - in 1968, aged 22 he was playing in Ronnie Scott's club when **MILES DAVIS** was in the audience. Miles invited him to join his band and he became one of the best

known bass players in Jazz. He held the attention of a packed John Field Room audience with his 'cello and bass alone - I'll never forget it.

**FRIDAY:** **MOTETS FROM THE ETON CHOIRBOOK** - The composers of the 64 pieces in the richly illuminated choirbook written around 1500 for use in the Chapel at Eton are not well known but they well represent the amazing quality and complexity of English music of the time. Since the superb recordings by the Sixteen they have held my fascination. Just as Bach emerged from Schutz and Buxtehude, so Tallis and Byrd were keenly influenced by this thrilling repertoire.

**EVENING JAZZ:** **STEVE LEHMANS** is a dazzling young New York alto player, a 21st century inheritor of Charlie Parker. His clips on YouTube are thrilling.

**SATURDAY:** **BRUCKNER MOTETS.** These intense, prayerful and concise motets have long been favourites of mine having sung many with various choirs over the years. **LOCUS ISTE, CHRISTUS FACTUS EST** and **OS JUSTI** are the cream of 19th century choral music.

**EVENING JAZZ:** **JOE LOVANO.** Now that **SONNY ROLLINS** has hung up his sax (aged 82!) Joe Lovano is top of the tenor tree. He has recorded a vast amount of music yet always has something interesting to say - he never seems to freewheel. Twice Downbeat's Jazz artist of the year.

**SUNDAY:** **MOZART - C MINOR MASS - ET INCARNATUS EST.** My favourite movement from Mozart's sacred works is introduced by a sublime passage for wind before the soprano enters - it is glorious - and should be played every Christmas (I don't think I've ever heard it then).

**EVENING JAZZ:** **JOEL ROSS** is a young vibraphone player from Chicago whose quartet played in Ronnie Scott's last year. I recently came across a lovely 'Touched by an Angel' on YouTube. His future is guaranteed now he is on the Blue Note roster.

## WEEK 8

**MONDAY:** There is uncertainty as to why anyone should muddle him with the Pope!! But no doubt that **CLEMENS NON PAPA** though not a well known name was a fine composer from early 16th century Flanders. The Brabant Ensemble recordings are lovely.

**EVENING JAZZ:** Trumpeter **LAURA JURD** has become a major figure on today's London jazz scene. Her group **DINOSAUR** with **ELIOT GALVIN** on keyboards is first class.

**TUESDAY:** **GUILLAUME DE MACHAUT** was born in Reims around 1300 and was the first known composer to have set the complete ordinary of the Mass. The Messe de Nostre Dame is strangely beautiful. The Orlando Consort have recorded many of his lovely songs. He was a fine poet too - a direct influence on Chaucer.

**EVENING JAZZ:** I had the very great pleasure of hearing **CRAIG TABORN** play in Ronnie Scott's and then Whelan's the following week (with tenor **CHRIS POTTER** - they much preferred Whelan's!!) He is as interesting a contemporary pianist as any.

**WEDNESDAY:** Do I sense that **ELGAR**'s music is a little unfashionable nowadays. I have long loved - and often sung - his 3 early Latin motets - especially **AVE MARIS STELLA**.

**EVENING JAZZ:** **JOHN ABERCROMBIE** was one of my favourite guitar players. His early recordings on ECM - up to 50 with many of the greatest names - were all stamped with the highest quality.

**THURSDAY:** **CHANT - CANTATE DOMINO – PSALM 98** – ‘Sing unto the Lord a new song’ is - understandably one of the most frequently set by composers from Monteverdi - to contemporary Irish composer Rhona Clarke. Many were based on this chant.

**EVENING JAZZ:** Not many jazz musicians make it to No 1 in the hit parade as **BOBBY MCFERRIN** did in 1988 with ‘Don't Worry, Be Happy’. He has one of the most amazing voices in any field. He has worked with Yo Yo Ma and many other great names - but his favourite duets are with - the audience - nobody will ever forget a concert of his.

**FRIDAY:** **JOSEPH HAYDN** was so prolific - helped by his long working life (in contrast to poor Mozart). His String Quartets and Symphonies are central to the repertoire but I am very fond of his Masses - the last 6 - of 14 - are full of his finest music - try his **NELSON MASS** composed in 1798 - it got the name after Haydn met Nelson after his victory against Napoleon at the Battle of the Nile - the Viennese were much relieved.

**EVENING JAZZ:** Polish trumpeter **TOMASZ STANKO** was a unique jazz voice. His death just 2 years ago robbed the rich Polish jazz scene of a universally respected leader. He is associated with the avant-garde but is often most lyrical.

**SATURDAY:** Tenor **ROBIN TRITSCHLER** is originally from Wicklow and has quickly become a leading voice on the London scene. His sweet-toned tenor has featured in a number of excellent recent recordings including the latest in Hyperion's mammoth cycle of 19th century songs - by Brahms - it is a great pleasure.

**EVENING JAZZ:** **BRAD MEHLDAU**, one of the finest improvising pianists, has played to full houses in Dublin a number of times. I particularly love his work in ‘The Art of the Trio’ series and with the Joshua Redman Quartet and his tribute to Bach was wonderful. Lets hope he can keep his 1st November date in our NCH.

**SUNDAY:** **BRITTEN WAR REQUIEM.** I believe this to be the most inspiring and thrilling work of the 20th Century. I have been listening to his music since childhood and attended, I think, the 3rd ever performance in St Patrick's Cathedral - and in the Proms and have sung in it in the NCH - so - it is very special.

**EVENING JAZZ:** Sadly, I never heard Canadian **OSCAR PETERSON** live but his recordings have also delighted me since schooldays. There is a lovely story of him and **NAT KING COLE** - both could sing and play piano and they agreed to leave the singing to Nat and the piano to Oscar - both pretty splendid!!

## WEEK 9

**MONDAY:** **GIOVANNI GABRIELI - CANTATE DOMINO.** Gabrieli was one of the earliest Venetian Maestro di Capella of San Marco and his magnificent music is most keenly felt in that astonishing glowing space - though sadly no longer heard there.

**EVENING JAZZ:** The piano playing of **THELONIOUS MONK** is instantly recognisable. He grew more and more eccentric - and unwell and withdrew into a silent world. But his piano style - angular jagged and slow when the fashion was fast and furious and his many compositions remain unique. He was one of the real trailblazers of jazz.

**TUESDAY:** **CHANT - VOCEM IUCUNDATIS** – ‘Declare with a voice of joy’ - this is the introit for the 6th Sunday of Easter.

**EVENING JAZZ:** In a series of US female pianists I must add **MARILYN CRISPELL.** Like most of today's keyboard players she was classically trained but she can play wonderfully wild free jazz. Her work with **ANTHONY BRAXTON** was thrilling. I drank pints with her in Limerick talking about Bach!

**WEDNESDAY:** **FRANZ SCHUBERT – STANDCHEN** has long been one of my favourite works by Schubert - for alto solo and male chorus - Dubliner Alison Browner's version is lovely.

**EVENING JAZZ:** One of my most memorable London Jazz Festival concerts was by **MARIA SCHNEIDER's** superb band. Her compositions and arrangements are very special and she has some great soloists too. My favourite contemporary big band by far.

**THURSDAY:** **PETER PHILIPS** was educated in St Pauls Cathedral School but became a Catholic and lived in Flanders for much of his life. He was renowned throughout Europe as a keyboard player and composer. **ASCENDIT DEUS** is his most renowned motet - from 1612.

**EVENING JAZZ:** The New York Times observed, ‘There's probably no frame wide enough to encompass the creative output of the pianist **VIJAY IYER**’. He is a New Yorker of Indian extraction and his recent programmes on the ECM label are enthralling.

**FRIDAY: JOHANN ROSENMULLER - ASCENDIT CHRISTUS IN ALTUM**

I have 'discovered' Rosenmuller recently thanks to a number of recordings. He spent 20 years in Venice from 1658 as a sackbut player in San Marco. Counter-tenor Robin Blaze includes this work in a lovely programme titled Salve Regina.

**EVENING JAZZ: BAD PLUS** - One of the finest piano trios. There has been a change of pianist in recent years but ORRIN EVANS has maintained the tight unity of the group. Very well worth an hour or 2 under the phones.

**SATURDAY: MOZART SYMPHONY 29.** Another nostalgic choice. This was the first symphony I got to know really well – in Nigeria - and I still think it's my favourite.

**EVENING JAZZ:** And more nostalgia - **STAN GETZ - SWEET RAIN.** I had known Getz's swinging tenor for ever but this album from 1967 with a 26 year old CHICK COREA and a brilliant rhythm section is a real Desert Island choice. I listened right through recently with great joy.

**SUNDAY: JOSEPH HAYDN. PIANO TRIOS** - There is so much to delight in from Haydn's chamber music. His 45 piano trios - no less - are full of charming graceful music.

**EVENING JAZZ: OREGON** - No other group personifies the best of 'World Music'. Oboe, bass, Indian percussion and one of the best guitarists in the business, **RALPH TOWNER.** The 2017 album **LANTERN** is their 30th - full of subtle swinging music.

## WEEK 10

**MONDAY: PALESTRINA - VIRI GALILEII** – 'Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up to Heaven'. This dramatic Ascension text has been set by many composers - Palestrina wrote both a Motet and a Mass based on it.

**EVENING JAZZ: JOE LOCKE** is a very fine player of the vibraphone an instrument with a rich thread through jazz from Milt Jackson and Lionel Hampton, through Gary Burton to Stefon Harris. He is on the Staff of the Royal Academy of Music!! Try an enthralling album called Van Gogh by Numbers.

**TUESDAY: VIRI GALILAEI** is the title of an excellent anthology from Oxbridge's most recent choral foundations, that of Merton College, Oxford. Peter Phillips of the Tallis Scholars and Benjamin Nicholas co-founded in 2008 - their recordings are excellent - the setting of Viri Galilaei is the one by Patrick Gowers who died in 2014, most renowned for his scores for films and TV.

**EVENING JAZZ: ELLA FITZGERALD's** unique voice is my favourite and her readings of the great American Songbook are unsurpassed and her 3 albums from the mid 50s with Duke Ellington and his band are Desert Island material.

**WEDNESDAY:**           **CHANT – EXAUDI DOMINE** ‘Lord, Hear my prayer and let my cry come unto thee’ - Psalm 23, one of the Penitential Psalms.

**EVENING JAZZ:**           **CANNONBALL ADDERLEY.** Many lovers of the Improvised Art will know Miles Davis' 1959 album ‘Kind of Blue’ intimately - I play it through at least every year and am always amazed at how every member of the band seems to hit their peak. With Trane, Miles and Bill Evans so obviously starring, Cannon on alto seems perhaps to be left behind. I have also loved his album Somethin' Else (also starring Miles) for many decades.

**THURSDAY:**           **CHARLES VILLIERS STANFORD - MAGNIFICAT.** Every Sunday in many places in the Anglican world an Irish Composer's work is sung. Stanford, born in 1852 in Herbert St, Dublin became Professor of Music in Cambridge and the most renowned teacher in the Royal College of Music in London. His many Magnificats are splendid.

**EVENING JAZZ:**           **PAUL BLEY** - Like Oscar Peterson, he was a Canadian pianist of the highest order. Closer to the edge, Bley always has something unusual and interesting to say.

**FRIDAY:**               **BELA BARTOK – STRING QUARTETS.** Every year I spend an evening under my earphones with one of these 6 seminal works and emerge as amazed and thrilled as I did when I heard them first in the Corn Exchange in Cambridge as a teenager!!

**EVENING JAZZ:**           Pianist **ENRICO PIERANUNZI.** has played in Dublin a number of times to great acclaim - he is one of Europe's finest contemporary players and has recorded many excellent albums.

**SATURDAY:**           Romantic piano music seems absent from my listening - but that by **ROBERT SCHUMANN** has long pleased me - in certain moods! Try some Humoreske Op. 20.

**EVENING JAZZ:**           **AVISHAI COHEN,** Israeli born bassist moved to St Louis in his teens. There was a time when jazz bass players (they never use the word ‘double’) just walked along as part of ‘The Rhythm Section’. Nowadays they play a major melodic role and Cohen is one of the best. (There is a trumpeter by the same name who is also worth an ear).

**SUNDAY:**               **ARVO PART - MAGNIFICAT** - I was overwhelmed by this work hearing it first in Christ Church Cathedral in Dublin many years ago. Ethereally beautiful music in his unique style.

**EVENING JAZZ:**           **MARTY EHRLICH** is another of those musicians who is not a ‘big name’ but always gives me much pleasure when a new album comes along. He plays all sorts of saxophones, clarinets and flutes, surrounds himself with excellent sidemen and never plays a boring phrase.

## WEEK 11

**MONDAY:**                   **JOSQUIN DESPRES – VENI SANCTE SPIRITUS.** When the Sistine Chapel was refurbished, a 500 year old signature was discovered on a wall - of the most renowned composer of the early 16th century. Josquin sang in the Papal Choir - his Masses are supreme works. He became such a major name that many works were spuriously attributed to him - perhaps even this Pentecost Motet.

**EVENING JAZZ:**           I first heard the powerful alto player, **STEVE COLEMAN**, in a tiny bar on the Quays in Dublin. His acerbic tone and virtuoso style was central to the development of a group named the **M BASE COLLECTIVE** which often included dancers and poets.

**TUESDAY:**                   **CHANT – SPIRITUS DOMINI** - the Introit for Whit Sunday.

**EVENING JAZZ:**           Self-taught Californian **CARLA BLEY** is still playing keyboards well into her 80s with her white shock of hair, especially with her now husband, super bassist **STEVE SWALLOW** and tenor **ANDY SHEPPARD**. Their recent ECM albums are to be recommended.

**WEDNESDAY:**             **MOZART - DIVERTIMENTO TRIO K563** - 45 minutes of Mozart heaven. This is another LP which I wore out with hundreds of playings. If you should be feeling a little low - this will surely lift you to such heights.

**EVENING JAZZ:**           I had the huge thrill of a number of gigs in Cornelia Street in Greenwich Village before it so sadly closed last year. The finest musicians chose to play in this tiny intimate space - I will remember a glorious evening with trumpeter **RALPH ALESSI**.

**THURSDAY:**               **MAURICE DURUFLE** - I love Durufle's Requiem every bit as much as the more famous one by his contemporary Fauré - I've also grown to enjoy French organ music of the period - Durufle's Variations on Veni Creator Spiritus, Come Creator, Spirit are typical.

**EVENING JAZZ:**           New York saxophonist **DAVE LIEBMAN** has been a leading figure for almost 50 years and is a frequent visitor to Ireland, playing, teaching, lecturing and he has even made a CD titled 'Standards' in Dublin with **RONAN GUILFOYLE**.

**FRIDAY:**                   **WILLIAM BYRD - MASS IN 4 PARTS.** Byrd composed 3 Mass settings - for 3, 4 and 5 voices written to be sung in the chapels of recusant Catholic families during the reign of Elizabeth. They are all wonderful but the Agnus Dei of the Mass a 4 is a true masterpiece.

**EVENING JAZZ:**           How we have come so far without choosing the music of saxophonist **JOHN COLTRANE**, I can't think. 'Love Supreme' is another masterpiece to be sure.

**SATURDAY:**                **J.S.BACH - ORGAN CHORALE PRELUDES - BWV631 and 667 - KOMM, GOTT SCHOPFER.** The big Toccatas and Preludes and Fugues of Bach still feature centrally in so many organ recitals but my favourite works are the shorter variations on Lutheran chorales. These 2 are fascinating contrasts to the Durufle above.

**EVENING JAZZ:**            ECM records from Munich have often been mentioned in these columns but I am also a great fan of the Dutch label **CRISS CROSS**. They are famed for introducing young US musicians and some have risen to the top rank - one such is **DAVE BINNEY** an alto player from Miami.

**SUNDAY:**                 There are many renowned Song collections in the history of music - Lieder by **SCHUBERT** and the Great American Songbook are I suppose the most renowned. I would add the great chansons of 14th and 15th century France - especially those which have survived from the pen of **GUILLAUMEN DUFAY**. He is better known for his Mass movements and motets - the most famous of his age - but the songs are really lovely - try **EMMA KIRKBY** with Gothic Voices.

**EVENING JAZZ:**            **MICHELLE ROSEWOMAN** is yet another splendid US female pianist well worth a listen. There are so many who have emerged in recent decades. No longer does a female jazz musician mean a vocalist!!

## WEEK 12

**MONDAY:**                **JOHN TAVERNER - MISSA GLORIA TIBI TRINITAS.** The pre-eminent English composer of the early 15th century, beginning the Golden Age which ended with Gibbons around 100 years later. His florid large-scale Magnificats and Masses are truly glorious.

**EVENING JAZZ:**            Benny Goodman's 1938 Carnegie Hall Concert was one of the most splendid jazz recordings of the time - and the LPs came with me to Dublin in 1963 and were quickly worn out - but never to be forgotten.

**TUESDAY:**                **CHANT - BENEDICTA SIT** - The Introit for Trinity Sunday.

**EVENING JAZZ:**            **WAYNE SHORTER** - Born only 7 years after Miles and Trane he continues to play wonderful saxophone into his 80s - a major figure, and a composer and teacher. His recent Blue Note albums are as good as any. His quartet with **DANILO PEREZ** – piano, **BRIAN BLADE** – drums and **JOHN PATOTICCI** – bass in the NCH was a jazz highlight of 2016.

**WEDNESDAY:**            I am not a fan of 'Big Band' **BEETHOVEN** but his String Quartets - from the Haydn-esque Opus 18 to the astonishing Opus 131 are breathtaking. There is something very special about String Quartets - so many composers seemed to save their most sublime and deeply felt music for the form.

**EVENING JAZZ:**            Welsh Pianist **GWILYM SIMCOCK** was termed 'A creative Genius' by Chick Corea. Never a dull moment - surprise, harmonic subtlety, technical mastery.

**THURSDAY:** Frenchman **OLIVIER MESSIAEN** is often cited as the greatest composer of sacred music of the 20th century for his prolific and thrilling organ music. **O SACRUM CONVIVIVUM**, a Eucharistic motet is his only choral work. How sad – it's very lovely.

**EVENING JAZZ:** The young German pianist, **PABLO HELD** is another classically trained pianist for whom improvisation seems to come naturally. He also does excellent interviews on YouTube with renowned jazz musicians including **WAYNE SHORTER** - and **BILL FRISELL**, **DAVE HOLLAND** and **CHRIS POTTER**.

**FRIDAY:** **DOMENICO SCARLATTI** is most famous for his 555 sonatas for harpsichord - which still often begin piano recitals. But I am very fond of his choral works - especially his exquisite 10 part Stabat Mater and this lovely Eucharistic Motet Cibavit Eos - He filled them with the best wheat and honey from the rock.

**EVENING JAZZ:** Jazz **NGUYEN LE** is a French/Vietnamese guitarist with an immediately recognisable sound heavily influenced by far-eastern music. A typical example of how the jazz of today has blossomed far from New Orleans.

**SATURDAY:** I have spent some time in the lovely city of Padua, near Venice so know about St Anthony, a Portuguese Franciscan who died there in 1231. **GUILLAUME DUFAY**'s mass in his honour is lovely.

**EVENING JAZZ:** London based sax player **SOWETO KINCH** is one of the most powerful jazz voices of today - in many ways. He has won many awards - features a lot on the airwaves and demands to be heard.

**SUNDAY:** All of **HEINRICH SCHUTZ'S** many works are vocal, sacred, in German or Latin so no wonder they are not so well known. I put him in the front rank of those who deserve more exposure. He was a major influence on Bach, his 2 visits to Venice giving his sacred expressions a passionate Italianate sparkle. Try his **DEUTSCHES MAGNIFICAT**.

**EVENING JAZZ:** Do give Austrian guitarist **WOLFGANG MUTHSPIEL** a serious listen. His ECM album 'Travel Guide' - with fellow guitarist **RALPH TOWNER** is my favourite for the instrument from recent years. Muthspiel also has a very pleasing voice.

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