



MUSIC LISTENING GUIDE: CLASSICAL

JOHN OWENS, PH.D.

JOHNOWENSMUSICATHOME.COM

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Compiled and written by John Owens, Ph.D.

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How to use this guide

Like the works of classic literature, there is standard repertoire in every musical genre. Classical music (Western Art Music) has a rich tradition of music that stands the test of time. The selected works are derived from multiple sources, which can be found in my book *Music at Home: A Parent's Guide to Raising Musically Insightful Kids*. Purchase it on Amazon at <https://amzn.to/320EzmW>. Or, at www.johnowensmusicathome.com.

There are three levels to the music listening guide: Newbie, Mid-Level, and Connoisseur. The Newbie list is for anyone that is new to classical music at any age. Basically, it is the foundation. The Mid-Level collection is for individuals with a solid grounding in the musical tradition, but want more. Connoisseur list is for those who are passionate about the musical genre and want to dig deeper. As you explore these works, remember that the journey should be enjoyable and you can listen anytime and anyplace.

Newbie List

The newbie pieces listed are a good starting point for anyone that is just starting out with classical music. Remember, you do not have to start with the entire work. Rather, start with a little bit at a time and listen to a piece of music repeatedly, which will make you comfortable and familiar with it. Using classical literature as an example, works on the newbie list are like reading *Cheaper by the Dozen* by Gilbreth or Barrie's *Peter Pan*.

Composer	Newbie Work(s)
J. S. Bach	<i>Tocatta & Fugue in D Minor,</i> <i>Air on a G String</i>
Bela Bartok	<i>Romanian Folk Dances</i>
Ludwig von Beethoven	<i>Symphony No. 5 (1st Mvt),</i> <i>Fur Elise,</i>
Johannes Brahms	<i>Wiegenlieder (Lullaby)</i>
Aaron Copland	<i>Fanfare for a Common Man</i>
Claude Debussy	<i>Claire de Lune, La Mer</i>

Antonin Dvorak	<i>New World Symphony (4th movement)</i>
Felix Mendelsohn	<i>Wedding March</i>
George Gershwin	<i>I Got Rhythm</i>
Phillip Glass	<i>1000 Airplanes on the Roof</i>
George Fredrick Handel	<i>Hallelujah Chorus</i>
Gustav Holst	<i>Mars</i>
Scott Joplin	<i>Entertainer</i>
Felix Mendelsohn	<i>Wedding March</i>
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart	<i>Eine Kleine Nacht Musik, Queen of the Night</i>
Modest Mussorgsky	<i>Night on Bald Mountain</i>
Sergei Prokofiev	<i>Peter and the Wolf</i>
Maurice Ravel	<i>Bolero</i>
Nikolai Rimsky-Korsikov	<i>Flight of the Bumblebee</i>
Camille Saint-Saens	<i>Carnival of the Animals</i>
Franz Schubert	<i>Die Forelle (The Trout)</i>
Richard Strauss	<i>Blue Danube</i>
Igor Stravinsky	<i>Firebird (introduction)</i>
Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky	<i>Swan Lake, Nutcracker</i>
Vivaldi	<i>La Primavera (Spring)</i>

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More Newbie Works

Composer	Newbie Work(s)
Paul Dukas	<i>Sorcerers Apprentice</i>
Claude Debussy	<i>Golliwog's Cakewalk</i>
Edvard Grieg	<i>Peer Gynt Suite No. 1</i>
Johann Strauss	<i>Tritsch-Tratsch Polka, Opus 214</i>
Leroy Anderson	<i>Typewriter</i>
Johann Pachelbel	<i>Canon in D</i>
Georges Bizet	<i>L'Arlésienne Suite: Farandole</i>
Dmitri Kabalevsky	<i>The Comedians: Galop</i>
Giachino Rossini	<i>William Tell Overture: Finale</i>

Mid-Level List

Mid-level works are selected from the same set of composers. These works dig a little deeper and will take a more time listen to, but the strategy is the same. Listen to the works as much as possible. In many cases, more advanced works or complete symphonies are part of this list. Again, using classic books as a reference, these musical pieces would be like reading *Ben Hur* by Wallace or *Black Stallion* by Farley.

Composer	Mid-Level Work(s)
J. S. Bach	<i>Fugue in G minor</i> <i>Brandenburg Concerto No. 2</i>
Bela Bartok	<i>14 Bagatelles</i>
Ludwig von Beethoven	<i>Symphony No. 5 (complete),</i> <i>Piano Sonata Nos. 8 and 14</i> <i>Symphony No. 9, Mvt. 4</i>
Johannes Brahms	<i>Hungarian Dance No. 5</i>
Aaron Copland	<i>Appalachian Spring</i> and <i>Hoe Down</i>
Claude Debussy	<i>Sunken Cathedral</i>
Antonin Dvorak	<i>New World Symphony (complete)</i>
Felix Mendelsohn	<i>Violin Concerto in E Minor</i>
George Gershwin	<i>Rhapsody in Blue</i> and <i>Summertime</i>
Phillip Glass	<i>Einstein on the Beach: Knee Play 3 and 5</i>
George Fredrick Handel	<i>Water Music</i> and <i>Messiah</i> (complete)
Gustav Holst	<i>Planets</i> (complete)
Scott Joplin	<i>Maple Leaf Rag</i>
Felix Mendelsohn	<i>Violin Concerto in E Minor</i>
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart	<i>Symphony No. 40,</i> <i>Piano Sonata No. 11</i>
Modest Mussorgsky	<i>Pictures at an Exhibition Mvt. 1</i>
Sergei Prokofiev	<i>Montagues and Capulets</i> from <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> , <i>Troika</i>
Maurice Ravel	<i>La Valse</i>
Nikolai Rimsky-Korsikov	<i>Scheherazade, Mvt. 2</i>
Camille Saint-Saens	<i>Danse Macabre</i>
Franz Schubert	<i>Erlkonig</i>
Richard Strauss	<i>Also Sprach Zarathustra</i>
Igor Stravinsky	<i>Rite of Spring</i> , <i>Firebird</i>
Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i> , <i>1812 Overture</i>

Vivaldi	<i>Four Seasons</i> (complete)
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More Mid-Level Works

Composer	Mid-Level Work(s)
Frederic Chopin	<i>Polonaise in A-flat Major, Opus 53</i>
Franz Liszt	<i>Hungarian Rhapsody No. 2</i>
Edward Elgar	<i>Pomp & Circumstance</i>
Gustav Mahler	<i>Symphony No. 5</i>
Robert Schumann	<i>Piano Concerto in A Minor, Opus 54</i>
Dmitri Shostakovich	<i>Piano Concerto No. 2, Allegro, Opus 102</i>
Jean Sibelius	<i>Finlandia</i>
Nikolai Rimsky-Korsokov	<i>Scheherazade</i>

Connoisseur List

Once you have a solid grounding in classical music listed above, you are ready to really dig into the works of individual composers. This would include additional works from the composers previously discussed composers, such as the symphonies of Brahms, Mahler, or Beethoven. Likewise, you can spend a lifetime enjoying and digging deep into the works of J.S. Bach, Franz Schubert, and others. There are many classical composers that are not included in the list above, but are included below. Further, there are notable composers that are not on this list and similarly that can be explored in depth. For example, one of my favorite organ composers is Dietrich Buxtehude, but J. S. Bach enthusiasts typically only know him.

Musician	Connoisseur Work(s)
J. S. Bach	<i>Brandenburg Concertos, Goldberg Variations</i>
Ludwig von Beethoven	<i>Symphony No. 3 and No. 9</i>
Hector Berlioz	<i>Symphonnie Fantastique</i>
Hildegard von Bingen	<i>Ordo Virtutum</i>
Georges Bizet	<i>Carmen</i> (opera)
Johannes Brahms	<i>Symphony No. 4 and Requiem</i>
Edward Elgar	<i>Salut d'Amour and Cello Concerto in E Minor Op. 85</i>
Franz Liszt	<i>Transcendental Etude and Sonata in B Minor</i>
Gustav Mahler	<i>Symphony No. 2 "Resurrection"</i>
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart	<i>Magic Flute, The Marriage of Figaro, Don Giovanni</i> (operas)
Claudio Monteverdi	<i>Vespers</i>
Carl Orff	<i>Carmina Burana</i>
Josquin Des Prez	<i>Missa Pange Lingua</i>
Giacomo Puccini	<i>La Boheme, Madama Butterfly, and Barber of Seville</i> (operas)
Steve Reich	<i>Music for 18 Musicians</i>
Giuseppi Verdi	<i>La Traviata, Aida, and Otello</i> (operas)
Richard Wagner	<i>Tristan und Isolde and Die Walkure</i> (operas)

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More Connoisseur Works

Composer	Connoisseur Work(s)
Ottorino Respighi	<i>Pines of Rome</i>
Franz Liszt	<i>Liebestraum No. 3</i>

Rachmaninoff	<i>The Isle of the Dead, Piano Concerto No. 2</i>
Franz Schubert	<i>Symphony No. 9 in C Major, D 944</i>
Richard Strauss	<i>Till Eulenspiegels lustige Streiche</i>
Modest Mussorgsky	<i>Boris Godunov</i>
Johannes Brahms	<i>Symphony No. 3 in F Major, Opus 90</i>
Anton Bruckner	<i>Symphony No. 7 in E Major</i>
Joseph Haydn	<i>The Creation</i>

You can find additional insight and resources in my book *Music at Home: A Parent's Guide to Musically Insightful Kids* at www.johnowensmusicathome.com. Or, on Amazon at <https://amzn.to/320EzmW>. Note: All lists in this guide are derived from my book. The more sections are bonus materials, which are not included in my book. For additional references and sources, checkout my book.

Reference

Owens, J. (2019). *Music at Home: A Parent's Guide to Musically Insightful Kids*. Seattle, WA: Kindle Publishing.