

Criteria

(or, “How to Make Your Very Own List of Cultural Icons With Everyday Materials”)

“The compositions on this list are, in our opinion, the finest orchestral works in Western culture. These works...”

- Are innovative
- Have exerted a profound influence on Western culture and/or on later composers
- Have aesthetic import
- Have demonstrated lasting popularity (they are, in some way, an “icon” of Western music or of Western culture)
- Provide limitless opportunities for growth (they always ask questions)
- Stand with other great works
- Speak to “eternal” human values and emotions
- Have form (they balance repetition and contrast)
- Have shape and design reflecting conscious choice and judicious arrangement on the part of the composer
- Reflect compositional and orchestrational craftsmanship
- Have depth (they are sufficiently unpredictable to be thought-provoking and interesting)
- Exhibit consistent quality
- Transcend mere historical importance or pedagogical usefulness by representing the highest degree to which the art of music has been expressed in orchestral composition

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