

## Getting to Know our Faith and our Church

This month's question is more a personal one to me rather than one about faith and the church, but as we have Frome Festival this month with all its celebration of music and arts I feel that its as good a month as any to answer this one:

If you were invited to appear on Desert Island Discs, what would be your selection of records and why?

The format of Desert Island discs is that guests are invited to choose eight recordings (usually, but not always, music), a book and a luxury item that they would take to a desert island and explain their choices.

### 1] 'Music was my first love' by John Miles.

I was fortunate to be brought up in a household where music was much valued and enjoyed. My father had an extensive collection of 78's from the days when he helped run the Derby Recorded Music Society and my mother and sister both sang in choirs that competed successfully at the Llangollen International Eisteddfod. Out of the first two weeks of earnings I ever had I found the money to buy my own record player...

### 2] 'On earth as it is in heaven' – the opening track of the music from the film 'The Mission' composed by Ennio Morricone.

One of the greatest films ever made, the tale it tells of issues of mission and justice is enhanced by an amazing score which moves the soul with a gentle but relentless power. Gentle, relentless power speaks to me of the nature of God.

### 3] Camille Saint Saens' Symphony No 3 in C-minor, op 78, the Organ Symphony.

The theme from the old Latin plainchant 'Dies Irae' is subtly and beautifully crafted through this symphony leading to the majestic and thrilling final movement. Saint Saens said 'I gave everything to it I was able to give' – and what more can we do with our lives than take the same approach – give everything we are able to give.

### 4] The performance of Rodrigo's 'Concierto de Aranjuez' in the film 'Brassed Off'.

During my training for ministry I was lucky enough to go down a working pit, Wath Main, and this music reminds me of that, of the traumatic journey of pit closures and, by way of complete contrast, of a morning sunrise in Lanzarote where this music was playing on the hotel terrace.

### 5] The Living Years – Mike & The Mechanics

The opening words 'Every generation blames the one before' remind me of Bertholdt Brecht's powerful poem 'An Die Nachgeborene'; the words 'you just can't get agreement in this present tense, we all talk a different language talking in defence' remind me of issues and conflicts, personal, ecclesiastical and global that seem incapable of resolution; and the words 'so don't yield to the fortunes you sometimes see as fate, it may have a new perspective on a different day, and if you don't give up, and don't give in, you may just be okay' provide encouragement and challenge to keep going on the difficult days – echoing the Peter Gabriel & Kate Bush song 'Don't give up'

### 6] The Shepherd's Farewell from 'L'Enfance du Christe' by Hector Berlioz

One of my father's favourite pieces of music – which we played at the end of his funeral service. The prayerful words towards the end 'God go with you, God protect you' voice a prayer that we may have for those who have gone before us, but also a prayer we may have for many who we may feel protective towards but are unable to be with.

7] Mike Batt's recording of 'The hunting of the Snark' based on Lewis Carroll's epic nonsense poem.

There's a delightful playfulness in some of Lewis Carroll's writings, literary and mathematical, and Mike Batt's work gives a fresh playful interpretation that I am sure Lewis Carroll (Rev Charles Lutwidge Dodgson) would have delighted in.

8] Oscar Peterson's 'Hymn to Freedom' – a choice which will not surprise anyone who has attended the Good Friday Three Hours over recent years

I had thought of including Dylan Thomas reading his poem 'Do not go gentle into that good night' in my list of recordings but having a volume of his poetry as my book choice to read out loud on the island seemed a better option.

As for a luxury item... I'll think on that for a while yet...