

## Book (and CD) Case

Dr Michael Cave  
Six favourites

### THE RITE OF SPRING

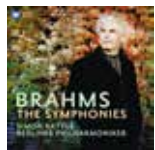
Igor Stravinsky  
(numerous recordings available)



This ballet, depicting a barbaric pagan ritual, caused a minor riot when premiered in 1913, but is now widely considered to be the most influential work of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The music is dissonant and repetitive. When quiet it is mysterious and ominous. When loud it is mechanical, incessant and strangely elating. How Stravinsky conceived the sound in his head, let alone wrote it down on an orchestral score, will always amaze me. You might hate it, but listen to it at least once anyway.

### BRAHMS: THE SYMPHONIES

Simon Rattle, Berliner Philharmoniker (EMI Classics, 2009)

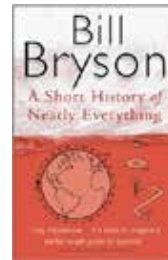


This music is profound, cleverly constructed and deceptively complicated, but to analyse it while listening is a mistake. Above all, it is BEAUTIFUL - just listen, and enjoy. This version was recorded live during concerts in 2009.

The dynamics are breathtaking, the intonation and balance perfect, and the intensity and passion that Brahms wrote into the music shines out in abundance.

### A SHORT HISTORY OF NEARLY EVERYTHING

Bill Bryson (Black Swan, 2004)



Bill Bryson is not a scientist, and is best known for his travel books, but here has researched millennia of natural history and presents it in a way that fascinates, amazes and amuses in equal measure. His curiosity and thirst to know more are infectious, and his accomplished and humorous writing makes potentially difficult and dull subjects both easy and interesting. I'm told the illustrated version is even better.

### QUANTUM

Manjit Kumar (Icon Books, 2008)



A well written and engaging account not just of the work of the great 20<sup>th</sup> century physicists, but of their lives and personalities; how they argued and competed, but worked together to understand the forces that govern our universe. I have read this book several times and still have no grasp of quantum mechanics, but that is not the point. It the insight into the minds and lives of

these great thinkers that stimulates in us the same curiosity and wonder that inspired them.

### THE SHOW MUST GO ON

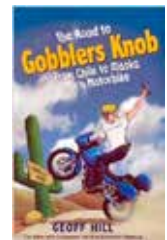
Gareth Davies (Elliot and Thompson 2013)



Gareth Davies is principal flute in the London Symphony orchestra, but also a very readable and humorous writer. Here he gives a carefully researched account of the orchestra's tour of the USA in 1912, alongside personal anecdotes from their world tour a century later in 2012. An informative, but not too serious, insight into the world of the professional orchestral musician.

### THE ROAD TO GOBBLERS KNOB

Geoff Hill (Blackstaff Press 2007)



Belfast journalist Geoff Hill and a long suffering companion travel 16000 miles on the Pan American Highway from Chile to Alaska on a pair of motorbikes. The tale is told with a strictly tongue in cheek history of each country visited, followed by an account of the pleasures and not infrequent dangers of the trip. Enjoyable light reading, not even remotely intellectual, with plenty of laugh out loud moments.