

the human facebook project

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The stressy existence of a professional page turner

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There are plenty of stressful jobs out there, but have you ever considered what it'd be like to be a sheet-music page turner for classical musicians? Of course you haven't.

It's not Liz Parker's main job – her real thing is doing [PR for musicians](#) - but it's probably the most unique.

Anyway, I thought of her because I keep trying to listen to classical music, but I just don't seem to get it. So, I asked her to dumb it down a little for me.



Liz, pre-page turning presumably.

You've done work as a page turner. Is that the stressiest job ever?

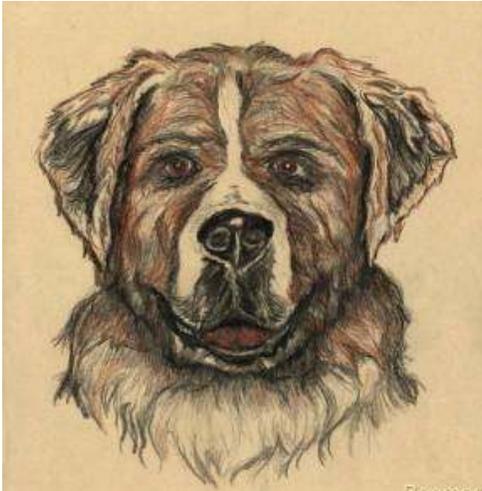
It depends on who I'm turning for, and the repertoire. I usually turn for one of my brothers (Jon Kimura Parker or Jamie Parker) so it's pretty relaxed, and both of them mark their music clearly so I know what's going on. But yes, it's stressful, because while you can't add to the performance (unless you're really hot) you can certainly detract by screwing up. The last time I turned for Jamie was a couple of weeks ago at Lula Lounge and the music had a ridiculous number of turn-backs, flip-aheads, etc. I didn't turn all the way back like I was supposed to, but Jamie quickly turned to the right place. Fortunately, the violinist let out a whopper of a wrong note, so nobody really notice how flustered I was. You also have to make sure you don't wear a plunging neckline, of course.

Have you always listened to classical music, or is it something you picked up as an adult?

I've been listening to classical music since I was conceived – my parents brought my brothers and me up to listen, learn, appreciate, and love classical music. My parents also subscribed the [Vancouver Symphony](#), so I'm sure I was at many of their concerts when my mom was pregnant with me.

I want to listen to classical music. I don't know how – I literally don't know what to concentrate on when I'm listening and there is so much going on. Help?

Well, like any kind of music, there are many different sub-categories. When people hear “classical music”, they think of a big-ass orchestra. Classical music can be a solo pianist, that's it. Or piano, violin, and cello. Or a singer and harp. Also, some works are big-scale and “hard to follow” and others are much more simple. So, it's about being introduced to pieces that are easier to cope with, to start. Since I trained as a pianist, I recommend Bach's [Prelude and Fugues](#), Beethoven [Piano Sonatas](#), and Debussy's [Preludes](#) - they are the musical equivalent to Monet and Renoir. If you want to start with orchestra music, go with Mozart.



AND he was deaf.
He overcame so many obstacles.

What's the best piece of music ever, and why?

Well, this of course is a totally unfair question! For me, personally, I'd have to say Beethoven's [7th Symphony](#). The brass roll their eyes when they see it on the rehearsal schedule, as it's a bit of a lip-shredder. But it IS a crowd-pleaser. Every movement (or “section”) – there are four of them – is wonderful. Glorious. It's the kind of music that makes me terribly grateful that I'm alive. And if there's a motivation to truly live, it is to keep checking with your local orchestra to see if it's programmed. Beethoven was deaf when he composed this. How he managed to write such joyful music, dubbed by Richard Wagner “the apotheosis of the dance,” with this setback astounds me still. I have yet to hear this work without getting all verklempt and stuff.

Do you listen to other stuff too? Like, Snoop Dogg on the weekend or something?

People seem to think us classical-types live in a bubble-shaped shelter. Unless we're Russian musical geniuses, yes, people raised in classical music listen to other stuff. I don't listen to Snoop Dogg, but I like a wide range of things: Pink Martini, Michael Jackson, rinocerose (a fabulous French rock/electronica group – check out “Installation Sonore”. Amazing), Justin Timberlake, Oscar Peterson, Spice Girls (shhhhh), Liza Minnelli, Peter Gabriel, Pasty Cline, Judas Priest, kd lang, AC/DC, the range is pretty wide. I'm not a total nerd.

About the project

My name is Steve Ladurantaye. I'm a Canadian newspaper reporter, but this blog has nothing to do with that. It's the Human Facebook Project, where I call my real friends on the phone or meet them for a drink and then write about them and what they are doing with their lives. Think of it as taking Facebook offline, and then forcing it back online in another format. Confusing, I know, and possibly stupid. But hopefully amusing, because my friends are *interesting*.

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