

OPINION

THE CANADIAN CHAMPION

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Don't roll over Beethoven

There are times when even the most intelligent, tuneful, hard-driving rock music is irritating. Times when Pink Floyd is comfortably dumb, The Drab Four are yesterday's news, and Led Zeppelin is dazed and confused.

It is on these occasions, and don't try to pretend they don't exist, that a little blast of the classics is necessary. I don't mean classic rock, whose growth on radio merely proves that today's younger generation realize that music written as a celebration of youth several decades ago, still has the power to move young people. No, I mean beautiful music; Bach, Beethoven, Mozart and that bunch of happy-go-lucky artists of long ago.

These guys suffered for their art, they were laughed at, chided and led difficult lives. They threw up before they went on stage. While a comfortable living could be had by gaining patronage, it was tough to get at the best of times and concert revenues were hard to accumulate. Recordings and royalties were non-existent.

Like popular music, there is good classical music and there is bad classical music. The difference is, we don't have to do the sifting; time and changing tastes have already accomplished it for us.

When you listen to new music, you have to listen to a lot before finding anything of lasting quality. There are thousands of selections. People have been listening to the classics for several hundred years during which time the poorer quality music has been weeded out.

Still there are several 'must haves' for any collection from the vast catalogue of classical music: Beethoven's *Pastoral (Sixth) Symphony*, the noble *Fifth Symphony*, Mozart's *Jupiter Symphony*, Pachelbel's *Canon in D*, Holst's *The Planets*, Vivaldi's *The Four Seasons*, and Mussorsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition*.

In fact many of these selections are available very cheaply on CD thanks, in part, to the fact that the composers are dead and no royalties need be paid.

REAUME WITH A VIEW

with BRAD REAUME



You must like a style of music where the composer is the star. In the years prior to the rock explosion and even in the early years of that style, the emphasis was on the performer, like the art itself had materialized from thin air.

In contemporary music we can thank Bob Dylan for a return to the glorification of the writer of the music. Prior to Dylan there were several notable careers, such as Frank Sinatra and Elvis Presley, conjured from an ability to sing, something that people can be trained to do rather competently, rather than an ability to create, which is a truer talent.

Rock music has a reputation for loudness. But all music should be played loudly to allow the listener to fully appreciate it. A joy of going to the symphony is the volume that a full orchestra can conjure. There is nothing in contemporary music like the noisy cacophony of bells and cannon shots that populate the end of Tchaikovsky's *1812 Overture*.

Perhaps the best thing about the classics is their universal appeal and recognition. People the world over are familiar with Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony 'The Ode to Joy'*. So much so, that compact discs were created to hold enough music for whole of the Ninth to be on one disc.

Perhaps in 200 years such things as The Beatles, Led Zeppelin and Pink Floyd will be considered classics, classics of the youth culture of the late 20th century. Then again, maybe some of the things we consider throw away will capture the fancy of generations yet to be born. I suspect, however, that Beethoven will still be popular.



BRIAN MULRONEY
IN
HONEY, I
SCREWED UP
THE COUNTRY

NEASE '92

Cherish your brothers and sisters

Relationships between siblings are the most enduring of all family bonds — they last longer than relationships between spouses or between parents and children.

Siblings share a common heritage and upbringing, an early sense of family belonging, and (often) a common gene pool. While they may love their parents, as they get older they should get their emotional support and solidarity from their siblings. The question is, will our children remain friends when they become adults? Will they have a sense of solidarity and help each other?

During the early years, siblings will be rivals and friends. And they will be together a lot. Consequently, they are important agents of socialization. That is, they naturally present situations in which a child must learn how to resolve conflicts, compromise, share, and at times, do without. They learn about helping a person when he cries, standing up for yourself, compromising. They talk to each other when they're worried, learn how to solve problems.

Unfortunately, the important and positive role of sibling relationships has been buried under the focus on sibling rivalry. Yet, sibling rivalries tend to diminish with age, while the (potential) supportive role of the sibling relationship increases dramatically.



PSYCHOLOGY IN THE '90S

with DR. ARNOLD RINCOVER

Sibling relationships become more important to you as you get older, for a variety of reasons. Your parents will age and pass away, so an important source of emotional support will disappear; most of us turn to our brothers and sisters. We will all undergo life-stresses — a divorce, losing a job, financial losses, learning that your child has a disorder or your spouse is in a car accident, a trial of some kind — and we turn to our siblings for support.

Will our children be there for each other? That will depend on a lot of things.

First, of course, is what we teach them as children. If we treat them fairly, praise them for sharing and helping each other, help them to resolve conflicts by negotiation and compromise, they are more apt to be friends.

If, on the other hand, we leave them to "settle it themselves", if we don't notice it when they share, if we treat them as a unit instead of individually, then we will be fostering competitiveness rather than friendship.

The fact is, the closeness of siblings in adulthood is most often related to how close they are as children.

A recent study in the *Canadian Journal of Sociology*, by Professor Ingrid Connidis at the University of Western Ontario, reveals some practical considerations that are important in later life. For example, the farther apart they live (eg. more than a day's drive), the less contact they have and the less satisfied they are with the relationship.

Interestingly, women, divorced, single and childless people tend to maintain the most active ties with their siblings. There are many possible explanations — for example, siblings who were never married, or are childless, may tend to feel deprived of kinship, or perhaps they are simply more available because they don't have children.

But these factors are primarily related to the amount of contact, and this should not be confused with the quality of the relationship. There can be a strength and a solidarity to that relationship even if sis lives far away.

To maintain (or build) that solidarity, we should contact them regularly, even if infrequently, so that they won't be strangers when you (or they) need a friend.

If some fences need mending, mend them, because the research suggests you will need your brothers and sisters more as you get older.

A pet is only welcome when everyone agrees

"I'd just love to have a pet but my husband (wife, father, mother, whatever) won't let me."

Forget, for the moment, that in many cases "not letting" someone have or do something is a total power play. (I don't mean parents preventing a small child from owning a pet that can't be properly cared for by a tiny person). This is such a complicated issue, with so many factors on either, and every case being different, it's best just to leave it to the psychologists.

One thing is certain. A pet going into a home where every family member welcomes its arrival stands an infinitely better chance of living a long happy life than does its poor, unwanted counterpart.

Some of the rationalizations commonly used may sound familiar. "I'll do all the work, you won't even know it's there." Oh, sure. Even if it were possible to be home all the time, to do all the maintenance, an extra body around the house is still an extra body. If the pet in question is a dog or a cat, there will be a noise factor, a clean-up factor, and a plain old taking-up-space-and-moving-around factor. Some rodents, (hamsters, gerbils) are nocturnal, and rattle around in their cages at night. Birds sing, whistle or screech, and scatter seeds and feathers around with reckless abandon. No way is a person who is totally opposed to the



PETS AND YOU

with ANNE NORMAN

idea of the pet going to be unaware of its presence. Nice try, though.

"Just give him a chance. You'll love him when you get to know him. Pleeeeeease!" Wheedling and begging are sometimes very effective over the short term. A little guilt may nag at a conscience; there may be a brief prickle that "Hey, I'm not so bad, sure, go ahead." However, any pet obtained under duress may end up being returned (with the would-be owner in tears), taken to the nearest Humane Society, or worst of all, dumped. There has to be complete agreement, and understanding of the situation, long before a pet of any kind is brought into the home.

"Oh, look at those poor little things! Let's take one home." Oh, dear. Not only is it one of the worst ways to obtain any sort of pet, you'll still face the problem of ground rules once you get home. This scenario multiplies your problems many times. Bad idea.

"A pet won't interfere with our daily lives." Wrong again. It would be foolish indeed to assume that there is no extra planning required when figuring out holidays, weekends away, or even late nights, and a pet's welfare is to be considered. Don't even think about telling a whopper like this to someone who doesn't want a pet in the first place.

"It'll be good company for (fill in the blank with the name of whatever other pet already lives at your house)." Not only does this automatically ensure that the large foot will come crashing down, it assumes that Binky or Coco or whatever wants company. Two things to think about.

"If you let me have this pet, I'll be your slave, your best friend, and your favourite car-washer for the rest of my natural life." As surely as you will come to regret this rash promise as you lick the bumper of the Chevy clean one more time, you may come to resent the small creature upon whose tiny shoulders you've heaped all this responsibility. He never asked you to sacrifice for him.

As I mentioned, I have trouble with this concept of "letting" someone have a pet, as far as consenting adults are concerned.

In an equal partnership, no one person should hold the balance of power. It is always the little people, or in this case, the little animals, who are shortchanged.