

Favorite artists, works and performers of the twentieth century: a survey of WSWS contributors

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Introduction by David Walsh

The *World Socialist Web Site* editorial board asked a number of contributing writers and readers to list their favorite artists, works and performers of the century in several categories. The contributors, including artists and critics, have collectively spent a good many years thinking about aesthetic questions.

Those participating were requested to provide lists of favorites in any given category, on the supposition that definitively establishing the “best” in artistic and cultural matters is a near impossibility. Aside from the fact that personal taste, personal history and other subjective factors come into play, what does “the best” mean in art? There may be only one correct way to answer certain scientific problems, but there are an infinite number of ways to approach artistic truth.

Certain contributors chose to explain their choices, most did not. The reader might reasonably ask: what does this particular group of people, Marxists or those sympathetic to the goal of socialism, bring to a consideration of twentieth century culture?

The first thing, most obviously, is social insight. It is safe to say that this collection of individuals has had more experience wrestling with social problems, and in particular with the development of the consciousness of the working class, than any other similar group that is likely to take up artistic questions. This is not a small matter.

By itself, however, as we know, such experience would not qualify anyone to make judgments about artistic excellence. As a specific mode of human activity, artistic work has to be measured by artistic standards. All those participating, as their selections indicate, grasp that fact. We have long ago gone beyond the method of praising works for the prettifying or consoling picture they provide of social life, or for their worthy intentions. Whether the reader agrees with the choices or not, he or she will have to admit that they have been made with due consideration to the specific problems of artistic production.

Bearing then those two elements in mind—the socially-critical standpoint and the concern for the highest aesthetic quality—what are some of the characteristics that this group of contributors might look for in a novel, a film or a piece of music?

I can only truly speak for myself, but perhaps other contributors might agree that the work we admire must possess seriousness about human affairs, compassion and a kind of intellectual or moral rigor; that it must move and delight; that it must reveal something about social reality in an original and perhaps disturbing manner; that, more than mere beauty, it must have an incandescence to it. We are all, I think, looking for inspired moments at which the pettiness and routine of everyday life fall away and we're able to grasp in mind and body some grains of absolute truth about the human condition. We are all convinced, I believe, that such knowledge

contributes to the cause of social progress.

In my own mind, for example, my first three choices in fiction most closely address these concerns. I don't know of any works that have astonished, enlightened and terrified me more in twentieth century literature than Alfred Döblin's *Berlin Alexanderplatz*, Theodore Dreiser's *An American Tragedy* and Louis-Ferdinand Céline's *Journey to the End of the Night*. To me these are unimpeachable works, their truth, their beauty, their protest beyond dispute. Each takes treats banal events (the life of a truck driver, a sordid murder case, the fate of a soldier and eventual doctor to the poor) and finds in them the universal, the “sacred,” as it were. Others find these or similar qualities in different works.

The argument could be made that the work which endures is not necessarily the one that sets itself the task of describing great events and self-consciously advancing great themes. Friedrich Engels advised Ferdinand Lassalle in his playwriting efforts to follow the example of Shakespeare, with his spontaneity and his wealth of realistic detail, and not that of Schiller, who tended to transform his characters into mouthpieces. A significant work carries with it its truth at every moment, it doesn't wait for grand speeches at the end of the third act.

Aside from that general consideration, there may be something about the particular character of the twentieth century that bears on the matter. It has been a century marked more than any other by the entry of masses of people into history. Examining the thoughts and emotions of “ordinary” individuals inevitably pressed itself on artists as necessary and fruitful work. Indeed in the face of momentous events, pitched battles between the forces of revolution and counterrevolution, battles whose outcome might be largely determined by the consciousness of the previously anonymous and inarticulate masses, the mental state of the latter became the question of the century.

Each list or contribution that follows is inevitably a polemic in support of a certain way of looking at life and art. Given the oppositional nature of the contributors' views, it is not surprising, in the field of European and North American fiction for instance, that their choices are perhaps at odds with the officially-sanctioned “great literature” of the twentieth century. Nonetheless the apparent lack of interest in such figures as Marcel Proust, James Joyce and Thomas Mann (Henry James is largely a figure of the nineteenth century) does not indicate, in my view, the belief that there is no value in reading those authors. It is rather a positive argument in favor of other, relatively neglected figures, with insights into perhaps more explosive areas of social and psychological reality. In any event, it is an argument the contributors feel ought to be made under the present circumstances.

We hope our readers will agree that the contributions, as a whole, make fascinating reading. We make no claim that they reflect evenly the development of each art form in every part of the world. There are obvious gaps, both in terms of geography and artistic medium.

Nonetheless, taken as a whole, they do represent a serious effort to confront the critical artistic and cultural issues of the past century.

In their own way the contributions demonstrate that the twentieth century, which, incredibly enough, we can now speak of in the past tense, was the most complex, inspiring and tragic in human history. There has been no shortage of human aspiration or genius. Everything that it is given human beings to strive for has appeared before men and women as a possibility. Yet this potential, like the fruit and water just out of reach of Tantalus, whom the gods punished, retreated as mankind attempted to realize it.

It does seem worth noting in this regard that in the fields of fiction, poetry and music at least the vast majority of works selected were produced half a century ago or more. Only a relative handful of novels, for instance, written in the past two or three decades appears on the lists. It would be comforting if this merely reflected the belief that a work must be made to stand "the test of time." Unhappily, it is more likely an accurate response to what has been a general cultural retrogression.

It cannot be mere coincidence that so many of the novels and musical compositions cited below were created in the first third or so of the century. A great anticipation, which artists not simply reflected, but helped produce, that humanity was about to ascend to a higher form of social organization, animated great numbers of people. This sentiment was cruelly betrayed, in the name of "socialism" and "communism" by the bureaucracy in the Soviet Union and its political supporters everywhere. We still live under the political, moral and psychological shadow cast by this betrayal.

Professional cynics, those who have given up on the possibility of changing the world, have no need to concern themselves in a serious manner with the artistic brilliance and intellectual insight of the past. On the contrary, such work makes demands and presents realities that the skeptics and renegades would rather not be reminded of; it all stands as too much of a condemnation.

We publish these contributions in large measure because we have confidence that they will be needed by those waking to the reality of the social crisis and who may feel dissatisfied with their own state of mental preparedness. At the hinge joining the two centuries, we turn our attention at once to the past and the future. The effort to preserve the best in the twentieth century against the forces of ignorance, philistinism and reaction must be bound up, in our view, with the impulse to create a new critical and revolutionary culture.

A new century will inevitably produce a new mood. There will be the general sentiment that we are starting or ought to start with a clean slate. People will also want to take stock of present-day society and culture, they will want to know how we arrived at this point and in which direction we might go. They will not accept on faith the official arguments. This process has already begun. It will only grow in depth and scope. We might agree with the French writer Lautréamont, observing in 1870: "At the time of this writing, new tremors are running through the intellectual atmosphere; one needs only the courage to face them."

The contributions are posted in alphabetical order. The numbers have been added in a number of cases simply for the sake of uniformity and convenience. They should not necessarily be construed as indicating an order of preference.

John Andrews, WSWS contributing writer (US)

List of 10 favorite jazz musicians:

Jazz music flowered in the twentieth century. As we approach its end, there is serious concern that this distinctively American art form, a hybrid of many different cultural currents which melded in the dynamic growth of US industry and economic power, may have run its creative course. Rather than expanding the frontiers of the music, new players are dipping into the styles of the past, particularly bebop, or borrowing from other musical trends such as rock. We will soon see what the future has in store

for this wonderful music.

This is *my* list of favorite jazz musicians of the twentieth century, given more or less in chronological order. Although I considered the artists' impact on the music as a whole, the most important criterion for this list is how much I personally enjoy listening to their recordings. I understand that the list does not contain such highly significant figures as Duke Ellington, Thelonious Monk, Dizzy Gillespie, Miles Davis and John Coltrane. It is a matter of personal taste, not a value judgment.

1. *Louis Armstrong*: Trumpet, cornet, and vocal (1901-71)

He was the progenitor. One simply cannot imagine jazz without Louis. He left his native New Orleans, where the earliest jazz was performed constantly in venues all over the city in the early 1920s to work in the small band of his main influence, King Oliver, and then in the prominent big band of Fletcher Henderson. From 1925 to 1928 Armstrong made several dozen small group recordings known as the "Hot Fives" and "Hot Sevens" for Okey Records' "race" catalogue. These historic performances, available today on compact discs, belong in every serious jazz library. Armstrong plays solo after solo of soaring trumpet, perfectly constructed, swinging and packed with exuberance and emotion. Although the sidemen other than pianist Earl "Fatha" Hines sound a bit stodgy and old-fashioned by contemporary standards, Armstrong's trumpet consistently sounds fresh and relevant, and his unique vocals are always both humorous and moving.

Armstrong quickly became an international star, the main influence on what would become "swing music" and an astoundingly entertaining personality. Although he would remain a superb musician by any other standard, he did not maintain the lofty aesthetic peak achieved in his earlier work. During the 1930s and early 1940s, Armstrong fronted a mediocre large band, featuring more and more of his "mugging" and other silliness along with increasingly self-conscious and showboating trumpet playing. After World War II, Armstrong became one of the most vocal opponents of modern jazz, forming a small group of "All Stars" which played caricatures of early New Orleans music.

In 1964, Armstrong achieved his greatest commercial success when "Hello Dolly" became his first Number One hit. His appearance in the 1968 film of the same name stole the show from Barbara Streisand. Armstrong continued to work almost right up to his death, at home, from heart failure.

2. *Bix Beiderbecke*: Cornet and piano. 1903-31.

Beiderbecke was Armstrong's opposite twin. Raised by staid middle-class German-American parents in Davenport, Iowa, Beiderbecke developed a lyrical improvisational style much cooler and, perhaps, emotionally more complex than Armstrong's. He spent most of his brief musical career within the ponderous, commercial dance orchestra fronted by Paul Whiteman, then the so-called "King of Jazz." During those years, however, Bix found a soul mate in the C-melody saxophonist Frankie Trumbauer, and together they made several wonderful small band recordings, also for Okey Records. The best of these, for example "Singin' the Blues," "I'm Comin' Virginia," and "Way Down Yonder in New Orleans," are immortal. Plagued by acute alcoholism, Beiderbecke's died at 28.

3. *Art Tatum*: Piano. 1910-56.

Almost completely sightless, Art Tatum was the greatest piano virtuoso in jazz history. He played an aggressive two-handed style firmly grounded in the conventions of the swing era, but full of harmonic inventiveness and punctuated by unexpected rhythmic changes and incredible flights of scales and arpeggios going every which direction.

First recorded in 1932, Tatum quickly established himself as the most outstanding pianist in jazz, whether playing solo or in a group. Perhaps the best recordings available today are his seven CD's of solo work recorded late in his career by Norman Granz, and now available on Pablo records. Tatum too was an alcoholic, and died at the age of 46.

Tatum has always been a favorite of musicians, with the outstanding pianist Oscar Peterson being his most notable disciple.

4. *Lester Young*: Tenor saxophone and clarinet. 1909-59.

As a member of the great Count Basie Band from 1935 to 1940, Lester Young was the most important figure in the transition from swing to bop. Citing Frankie Trumbauer as his principal influence, Young established an entirely new approach to the improvised solo: long, flowing, structured, "horizontal" lines which seemed to tell beautiful little stories in sound. Besides his numerous recordings with Basie, during the second half of the 1930s Young made a number of exquisite sides under the supervision of John Hammond accompanying vocalist Billie Holiday.

After leaving Basie, Young's playing, although still lyrical and enjoyable, underwent a steady decline, hastened by an unfortunate experience with the US military during 1944 and 1945 and increasing alcohol abuse. Nevertheless, Young continued to play until his sad death at 49 from malnutrition and alcoholism.

Young not only laid the foundation for the bebop revolution, but was the direct and overriding influence on virtually all its tenor saxophonists, including Stan Getz, Dexter Gordon and Zoot Sims, and several of its finest alto saxophonists, especially Lee Konitz, Art Pepper and Paul Desmond.

5. *Charlie Parker*: Alto saxophone (1920-55)

In my personal opinion, Charlie Parker's virtuoso improvisation incorporated and surpassed all the jazz which preceded it and then profoundly influenced all the jazz which followed. He developed an entirely new musical vocabulary firmly grounded in rhythmic and harmonic logic to express a breadth and depth of emotion far beyond earlier players. He was, arguably, the greatest American musician of the twentieth century.

Parker, also known as "Yardbird" or just "Bird," grew up in Kansas City while it was the base of operations for Lester Young and the Basie Band. On his first recordings with Jay McShann, who then led a fine swing band similar to Basie's, Parker's alto sounds almost like a speeded up Young tenor solo. By 1945, however, Parker had gone far beyond his principal influence. Having formed an invaluable, if unstable, partnership with trumpeter Dizzy Gillespie, recordings such as "Groovin' High," "Hot House," and "Salt Peanuts" forever changed the face of jazz and, with it, popular American music as a whole.

Unfortunately, the fruits of Parker's genius were diminished in no small degree by his seemingly insatiable appetite for narcotics and liquor. Parker's prime was interrupted by a seven-month stay in a California state mental hospital. After his release in 1947, he led a fine quintet including Max Roach on drums and a very young Miles Davis on trumpet, which left a legacy of outstanding recordings on the Dial and Savoy labels. In 1949, Parker switched to labels controlled by impresario Norman Granz, later consolidated as Verve, and made recordings in more commercial settings, including with somewhat tacky sounding string sections.

During the early 1950s, Parker's health deteriorated and his behavior became increasingly erratic. He was almost entirely inactive during 1954. Charlie Parker died at the age of 34 from the effects of chronic alcohol and drug abuse.

6. *Bud Powell*: Piano (1924-66)

The only bebop player who could have possibly eclipsed Charlie Parker, Bud Powell was an absolutely brilliant musician, possessing both extraordinary technique and boundless musical imagination, but his achievements were curtailed by severe mental problems which would hound him to an early grave.

Powell mesmerized the early New York bebop scene while still a teenager and completely changed the way jazz piano was to be played from then on. He eliminated the steady "stride" rhythms and full chording from the left hand, replacing it with sparse, irregular punctuations, often consisting of only one or two notes. Meantime his right hand would play

dazzling, rapid fire bebop melodies. Despite two extended hospitalizations, which included barbaric electro-shock treatments, Powell's trio and solo piano recordings through the year 1951 have never been equaled, and can be listened to again and again with no diminution of pleasure.

Unfortunately, Powell's health and talents eroded steadily throughout the 1950's. Finally, he moved to France, where he developed a most touching relationship with a fan, Frances Paudras, who patiently nursed him back to mental and physical health. Paudras told the story in his remarkable book, *Dance of the Infidels*, and French film director Bertrand Tavernier used it for his film *'Round Midnight*, starring tenor saxophonist Dexter Gordon as the Bud Powell character.

With his strength and sanity restored after six years in France, Powell returned triumphantly to the United States in 1964. All the old habits and problems quickly overtook him, however, and he died alcoholic and penniless at age 41.

7. *Fats Navarro*: Trumpet. (1923-50)

Some readers may question my choice of Fats Navarro, a relative obscure player, over Dizzy Gillespie, the great innovator of bebop, or Miles Davis. My reason is aesthetic: Navarro's improvised solos are better sculpted and more beautiful than either Gillespie's or Davis's.

Navarro first became prominent in 1944 as Gillespie's replacement in the great Billy Eckstine Orchestra. He subsequently became an integral member of Tadd Dameron's small group, appearing on several wonderful sides recorded for Savoy, Blue Note and Capitol. Although his overall recording output is relatively meager, there is a wonderful live recording, "One Night at Birdland," made in the famed New York nightclub during late 1949 or early 1950, featuring a quintet with Charlie Parker, Bud Powell and Navarro.

Unfortunately, Navarro was heavily addicted to heroin, which led to his death from tuberculosis at age 26.

8. *Clifford Brown*: Trumpet. (1930-56)

Clifford Brown carried on the legacy of Fats Navarro. He practiced relentlessly, and his dedication to both the instrument and the music manifested itself in a beautiful fat, clear sound and impeccably crafted solos. He was one of the best jazz musician to emerge after the founding generation of beboppers.

Although Brown's entire recorded legacy comprises only about three years, it is incredibly varied. Although much of his playing took place within the prototype "hard bop" band he co-led with drummer Max Roach, he appeared on albums backing singers, including Sarah Vaughn and Dinah Washington, fronting big bands, including some with arrangements by a young Quincy Jones, and playing ballads over lush string arrangements. There is one special recording he made with a group of "West Coast" "cool" musicians, with arrangements of several Brown compositions, including his great standard *Joy Spring*.

Unlike so many jazz musicians of the period, including most of those listed here, Brown lived clean of substance abuse with his wife and son. He might still be thrilling us today except that on June 26, 1956, he was tragically killed in a car accident along with Bud Powell's younger brother, Ritchie.

9. *Bill Evans*: Piano (1929-80).

Following Art Tatum and Bud Powell, Bill Evans was the third architect of twentieth century jazz piano. Featured along with John Coltrane on Miles Davis's groundbreaking album *Kind of Blue*, Evans became one of the best known and most admired jazz players of the 1960s.

In his early years, the pale and bespectacled Evans looked more like an accountant than a jazz musician. His posture was as unique as his playing, as he hunched over the piano so that his forehead on occasion sank even lower than the keyboard. But his music was sublime. First with the outstanding Scott LaFaro and, following his death in a 1961 car accident, several other great bassists, Evans redefined the jazz trio. Although his

playing developed over the years and always displayed sensitivity to context, it maintains a consistency of quality and integrity throughout. Regularly recorded, Evans work can be heard on a variety of comprehensive boxed sets or single albums.

Evans, too, was afflicted by the bane of narcotics addiction. Although he successfully battled it during many periods of his life, it finally killed him at the age of 53.

10. *Stan Kenton*: Pianist, bandleader and arranger (1911-79)

My including Stan Kenton on this 10-best list is sure to raise a few eyebrows, if not guffaws. Not a great musician in any sense of the word, Kenton's contribution to jazz arose from his seemingly tireless efforts to assemble big bands with outstanding musicians and have them play through the best arrangements available.

Kenton formed his first "orchestra" in 1941, and it became a popular sensation. With a year off here or there to reorganize, he kept edition after edition of the band on the road until health problems forced him into retirement in 1978. Sometimes pretentious to the point of absurdity, Kenton strove to be on the cutting edge of serious music making by employing arrangers involved with all the latest developments in twentieth century music: Pete Rugulo, Bill Russo, Shorty Rogers, Bill Holman and Johnny Richards, just to name a few. Band alumni, many still active in music, are too numerous to mention.

Kenton's sound on his best recordings is characterized by brilliant, fanned out brass sections (often beefed up with French horns or melliphoniums in addition to the standard trumpets and trombones), sinewy saxophone lines, and tricky changes of tempo and key. Soloists were invariably excellent, and most arrangements would invariably lead up to dramatic crescendos both loud and pleasing to the ear.

There are still legions of Kenton fanatics collecting recordings and attending reunion concerts featuring band alumni. His contribution to jazz music was unique and should not be overlooked.

Ten favorite singers of "The Great American Songbook," in no particular order

1. Frank Sinatra
2. Ella Fitzgerald
3. Johnny Hartman
4. Mel Tormé
5. Sarah Vaughn
6. Dinah Washington
7. Nat King Cole
8. Tony Bennett
9. Joe Williams
10. Billie Holiday

Paul Bond, WSWS contributing writer (Britain)

A list of enthusiasms

Films/Filmmakers:

1. Luis Buñuel—It would be invidious to select one film by the director whose work I have enjoyed so much and which has had so much bearing on the way I comprehend art. Perhaps for sentimental reasons I should say *The Exterminating Angel* which was the first Buñuel film I saw, and which opened up to me a whole new world of filmmaking and the imagination.

2. The Marx Brothers, *Duck Soup* —I have always preferred the wilder excesses of their early slapstick even to the better-made more structured Irving Thalberg movies (*A Night at the Opera* etc.). *Duck Soup* is the one that runs wildest with the notion of shape in a movie.

3. Federico Fellini—*Amarcord* was the first film I saw where a camera panned along a crowded street illuminating any number of small scenes before arriving at the story the director was going to tell. This was wonderful, humane, filmmaking, fascinated with the extraordinary in the ordinary.

4. Buster Keaton—The greatest master of silent physical comedy opened

a world of imagination. As interested in the reaction of people to film as in the techniques of film itself, Keaton always played a more sympathetic character than Chaplin, one with whom the audience could identify rather than one the audience was invited to adore.

5. Fritz Lang, *M* —Peter Lorre was one of the truly great screen actors, with a range that encompassed many shades of feeling and moral ambiguity. The original German version of *M* provided him with his finest role as the haunted child-killer.

6. John Huston, *The Maltese Falcon* —There are better American noir movies. There are tougher tough guys than Bogart. There are meaner villains than Greenstreet. (It must be said, though, that there are fewer weirdoes weirder than Lorre, or cheap hoods cheaper than Elisha Cook Jr.). The whole hangs together perfectly, though, like a slept-in suit.

7. Carl Dreyer, *Vampyr* —The most frightening of horror movies, in which the feeling of evil is greater than the evil portrayed. Along with Robert Wiener's *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* and F. W. Murnau's *Nosferatu*, *Vampyr* established the dislocated landscape of German Expressionism as the perfect vehicle for an alienating terror.

8. W. C. Fields—the old curmudgeon, ogling women and drink with almost the same expression, detesting children as small beasts that stood between him and a quiet life, was one of the great comic characters. Fields was also a great acrobat, all the greater for its being a surprise. The films sometimes stifle the anarchic spark of his laconic delivery, but it is there.

9. Werner Herzog, *Aguirre: The Wrath of God* —A more truly insane journey into the heart of darkness than Francis Ford Coppola's *Apocalypse Now*. Herzog's relationship with Klaus Kinski frequently ran close to self-parody. Here at least they produced something wild and magnificent.

10. Charles Laughton, *Night of the Hunter* —Alongside *Cape Fear* this is one of Robert Mitchum's finest moments. It is a brooding and terrifying film, but more striking is the visual poetry that Laughton creates. He never made another film, so we never saw how that vision might have been developed.

Honorable mention: Jacques Tati; Carol Reed, *The Fallen Idol*; Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger, *Peeping Tom*; Alfred Hitchcock, *Strangers on a Train*

Artists:

1. Alberto Giacometti
2. Hans Arp
3. Joseph Cornell
4. Marcel Duchamp
5. Georgia O'Keeffe—the lily paintings
6. Marc Chagall

Music and musicians:

1. Béla Bartók - *String Quartets*
2. Jacques Brel
3. Lester Young
4. Leo Ferre—the poets (especially Rimbaud)
5. Jeannie Robertson
6. Anne-Sophie Mutter's recording of the Berlioz *Violin Concerto* with the
7. Berliner Philharmoniker, conducted by Herbert von Karajan
8. Muddy Waters
9. Django Reinhardt

Frank Brenner, WSWS contributing writer (Canada)

Novels:

1. *Nadja*, André Breton
2. *Lolita*, Vladimir Nabokov
3. *Berlin Alexanderplatz*, Alfred Döblin
4. *The Ragazzi*, Pier Paolo Pasolini
5. *Death on the Installment Plan*, Louis-Ferdinand Céline
6. *Blue of Noon*, Georges Bataille
7. *The Postman Always Rings Twice*, James M. Cain
8. *I Married a Dead Man*, Cornell Woolrich

9. *A Ghost at Noon*, Alberto Moravia

10. *Intimacy*, Hanif Kureishi

Non-Fiction:

1. *Eros and Civilization*, Herbert Marcuse
2. *Case histories: 'Little Hans' and 'The Rat Man'*, Sigmund Freud
3. *Sex-Pol: Essays, 1929-1934*, Wilhelm Reich
4. *A Life of One's Own*, Marion Milner
5. *Charles Baudelaire: A Lyric Poet in the Era of High Capitalism*, Walter Benjamin
6. *To the Finland Station*, Edmund Wilson
7. *Mythologies*, Roland Barthes
8. *Hieronymus Bosch*, Wilhelm Fraenger
9. *Ways of Seeing*, John Berger
10. *Bonobo: The Forgotten Ape*, Frans de Waal

Biography, Autobiography, Memoir:

1. *Letter to His Father*, Franz Kafka
2. *Aden Arabie*, Paul Nizan
3. *My Life*, Leon Trotsky
4. *Prisoners All*, Oskar Maria Graf
5. *William Morris: Romantic to Revolutionary*, E. P. Thompson
6. *Charles Fourier: The Visionary and His World*, Jonathan Beecher
7. *Freud: A Life for Our Time*, Peter Gay
8. *Van Gogh: A Self Portrait: Letters Selected by W. H. Auden*
9. *Fury on Earth: A Biography of Wilhelm Reich*, Myron Sharaf
10. *Frances Farmer: Shadowland*, William Arnold

Plays:

1. *Lulu*, Frank Wedekind
2. *In the Jungle of Cities*, Bertolt Brecht
3. *The Threepenny Opera, The Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny*, Bertolt Brecht & Kurt Weill
4. *Faith, Hope and Charity, Tales from the Vienna Woods*, Ödön von Horváth
5. *Saved*, Edward Bond
6. *Request Concert, The Nest*, Franz Xaver Kroetz
7. *Katzelmacher, The Bitter Tears of Petra von Kant*, Rainer Werner Fassbinder
8. *Heartpiece*, Heiner Müller

European and Asian films:

1. Robert Bresson: *Pickpocket*
2. Rainer Werner Fassbinder: *Fox and his Friends*
3. Kenji Mizoguchi *The Life of Oharu*
4. Jean-Luc Godard: *Vivre sa Vie*
5. Federico Fellini: *Nights of Cabiria*
6. Pier Paolo Pasolini: *Accattone*
7. Jean Vigo: *L'Atalante*
8. Abbas Kiarostami: *Close-up*
9. Luis Buñuel: *Los Olivos*
10. Jean Renoir: *Rules of the Game*

Honorable mention: Max Ophuls: La Signora di Tutti;; Luchino Visconti: Rocco and His Brothers; Fritz Lang: Die Niebelungen; Vittorio De Sica The Bicycle Thief; Mohsen Makhmalbaf: Salaam Cinema; Jean-Claude Lauzon: Léolo [Canada/France]

US films:

1. Max Ophuls: *Letter from an Unknown Woman*
2. Alfred Hitchcock: *Vertigo*
3. Charles Chaplin: *City Lights*
4. Buster Keaton: *Steamboat Bill Jr.*
5. D. W. Griffith: *Broken Blossoms*
6. Fritz Lang: *Scarlet Street*
7. Abraham Polonsky: *Force of Evil*
8. Orson Welles: *A Touch of Evil*
9. Douglas Sirk: *Imitation of Life*

10. Preston Sturges: *The Miracle at Morgan's Creek*

Honorable mention: Howard Hawks: His Girl Friday; Anthony Mann: The Man from Laramie; Vincente Minnelli: Some Came Running; Otto Preminger: Laura; Nicholas Ray: In a Lonely Place;; Erich Von Stroheim: Greed; Raoul Walsh: High Sierra; Josef Von Sternberg: Blonde Venus; John Ford: The Searchers; Victor Seastrom: The Wind; Frank Borzage: History is Made at Night; Sam Fuller: Pickup on South Street

Male film actors:

1. John Garfield
2. James Mason
3. Marlon Brando
4. Peter Lorre
5. James Stewart
6. Cary Grant
7. Richard Widmark
8. James Cagney
9. Humphrey Bogart
10. Marcello Mastroianni

Female film actors:

1. Barbara Stanwyck
2. Marilyn Monroe
3. Joan Bennett
4. Lillian Gish
5. Marlene Dietrich
6. Ingrid Bergman
7. Carole Lombard
8. Gloria Grahame
9. Vivian Leigh
10. Jessica Lange

Ian Bruce, WSWS contributing writer (Canada)

"Favorites" lists

Tin Pan Alley Songs:

1. *After You've Gone*
2. *Embraceable You*
3. *Emily*
4. *I'll See You in My Dreams*
5. *It Never Entered My Mind*
6. *Night and Day*
7. *One for My Baby (and One More for the Road)*
8. *Stardust*
9. *Time After Time*
10. *There Will Never Be Another You*

Blues Records:

1. Leroy Carr and Scrapper Blackwell: *Hard Times Done Drove Me to Drink*
2. Son House: *Death Letter*
3. Skip James: *Hard Time Killing Floor Blues*
4. Lonnie Johnson: *I Can't Sleep Anymore*
5. Percy Mayfield: *Life is Suicide*
6. Memphis Minnie: *Nothin' in Ramblin'*
7. Jelly Roll Morton: *Mamie's Blues*
8. Bessie Smith: *Yellow Dog Blues*
9. Frank Stokes: *'Tain't Nobody's Business*
10. Big Joe Turner: *Sweet Sixteen*

Country Records:

1. Spade Cooley: *Detour*
2. Darby and Tarlton: *Lonesome Railroad*
3. Merle Haggard: *Branded Man*
4. Maddox Bothers and Rose: *(Pay Me) Alimony*
5. Jimmie Rodgers: *TB Blues*
6. Jean Shepard: *Twice the Lovin' in Half the Time*
7. Carl Smith: *You're Free to Go*

8. Hank Snow: *I Don't Hurt Anymore*
9. Gary Stewart: *Your Place or Mine*
10. Hank Williams: *Honky-Tonk Blues*
Some Essential Jazz Albums:
 1. Louis Armstrong: *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (Columbia—4 CDs)
 2. Bix Beiderbecke: *Singin' the Blues* (Columbia)
 3. Benny Carter: *Further Definitions* (Impulse)
 4. Miles Davis: *Milestones* (Columbia)
 5. Duke Ellington: *The Blanton-Webster Band, 1939-1942* (Bluebird—3 CDs)
 6. Billie Holiday: *The Quintessential Billie Holiday* —Any volume! (Columbia)
 7. David Holland: *Conference of the Birds* (ECM)
 8. Charles Mingus: *Let My Children Hear Music* (Columbia)
 9. Thelonious Monk and John Coltrane (Prestige—2 CDs)
 10. Django Reinhardt and Stephane Grappelli: *Le Quintette du Hot Club de France* (Charly—2 CDs)

Favorite performers:

Blues:

1. Rory Block
2. Leroy Carr
3. Howlin' Wolf
4. Robert Johnson
5. Lonnie Johnson
6. Blind Willie Johnson
7. Percy Mayfield
8. Memphis Minnie
9. Bessie Smith
10. Big Joe Turner

Country:

1. Milton Brown
2. Carter Family
3. Patsy Cline
4. Darby and Tarlton
5. Merle Haggard
6. Maddox Brothers and Rose
7. Buck Owens
8. Gary Stewart
9. Hank Williams
10. Bob Wills

Jazz:

1. Louis Armstrong
2. Lenny Breau
3. Clifford Brown
4. John Coltrane
5. Miles Davis
6. Eric Dolphy
7. Duke Ellington
8. Billie Holiday/Lester Young
9. Thelonious Monk
10. Django Reinhardt/Stephane Grappelli

Steven Brust, novelist (US)

Favorite novels are:

1. *Lord of Light* by Roger Zelazny
2. *The Letter of Marque* by Patrick O'Brian
3. *The Book of the New Sun* by Gene Wolfe
4. *The Isle of the Dead* by Roger Zelazny
5. *This Immortal* by Roger Zelazny
6. *The Lord of the Rings* by J. R. R. Tolkien
7. *Early Autumn* by Robert B. Parker
8. *Soldier of the Mist* by Gene Wolfe

9. *Nine Princes in Amber* by Roger Zelazny
10. *War For the Oaks* by Emma Bull

Sandy English (US)

Fiction:

1. Sherwood Anderson *Winesburg, Ohio*
2. Isaac Babel *Collected Stories*
3. Alfred Döblin *Berlin Alexanderplatz*
4. John Dos Passos *USA*
5. Theodore Dreiser *An American Tragedy*
6. Ralph Ellison *Invisible Man*
7. F. Scott Fitzgerald *The Great Gatsby*
8. James Joyce *Dubliners*
9. Pier Paolo Pasolini *Roman Nights and Other Stories*
10. Richard Wright *Native Son*

Honorable mention.: John Horne Burns *The Gallery*; José Camilio Cela *The Hive*; Lawrence Durrell *Alexandria Quartet*; Günter Grass *The Tin Drum*; Ernest Hemingway *The Sun Also Rises*; William Kennedy *Ironweed* ; Thomas Mann *Death in Venice*; Erich Maria Remarque *All Quiet on the Western Front*; Hubert Selby *Last Exit to Brooklyn*; Isaac Bashevis Singer *Collected Stories*.

Poetry:

1. W. H. Auden
2. John Berryman
3. Bertolt Brecht
4. André Breton
5. Constantin Cavafy
6. Vladimir Mayakovsky
7. Frank O'Hara
8. Ezra Pound
9. W. B. Yeats
10. William Carlos Williams

Painting and sculpture:

1. Francis Bacon
2. Umberto Boccioni
3. Willem de Kooning
4. Max Ernst
5. Alberto Giacometti
6. Leon Golub
7. Wassily Kandinsky
8. Henri Matisse
9. Amedeo Modigliani
10. Pablo Picasso

Adrian Falk, musician (Australia)

My favourite twentieth century music (in no particular order)

Orchestral:

1. Jean Sibelius: *Symphonies 4 & 7*
2. Bohuslav Martinu: *Three Frescoes after Piero della Francesca*
3. Maurice Ravel: *Piano Concerto*
4. Dmitri Shostakovich: *Symphonies 5, 6 & 7*
5. Edward Elgar: *Symphonies 1 & 2*
6. Gustav Mahler: *Symphony 9*
7. Charles Ives: *Three Places in New England*
8. Richard Strauss: *Metamorphosen*
9. Edgar Varèse: *Ionisations*

Chamber:

1. Arnold Schönberg: *Transfigured Night*
2. Witold Lutoslawski: *String Quartet*
3. Béla Bartók: *6 String Quartets; Sonata for two pianos and percussion*

Opera and Vocal:

1. Benjamin Britten: *Peter Grimes; War Requiem; Midsummer Night's Dream*
2. Leonard Bernstein: *West Side Story*

3. George Gershwin: *Porgy and Bess*
4. Edward Elgar: *Dream of Gerontius*
5. Richard Strauss: *Four Last Songs*; *Rosenkavalier*
6. Alban Berg: *Wozzeck*
7. Leos Janáček: *Jenufa*; *Kata Kabanova*
8. Giacomo Puccini: *Il Trittico*

Ballet:

1. Igor Stravinsky: *Rite of Spring*; *Agon*
2. Sergei Prokofiev: *Romeo and Juliet*

Marty Jonas, WSWS contributing writer (US)

My favorites of the century (in no particular order):

Filmmakers:

1. Orson Welles
2. Sergei Eisenstein
3. Stanley Kubrick
4. Howard Hawks
5. Billy Wilder
6. Samuel Fuller
7. John Huston
8. Luis Buñuel
9. John Boorman
10. Don Siegel

Films:

1. *Citizen Kane* (Orson Welles)
2. *Notorious* (Alfred Hitchcock)
3. *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance* (John Ford)
4. *Once Upon a Time in the West* (Sergio Leone)
5. *Singin' in the Rain* (Stanley Donen)
6. *Gold Diggers of 1933* (Busby Berkeley)
7. *The Night of the Hunter* (Charles Laughton)
8. *Touch of Evil* (Orson Welles)
9. *The Godfather* (Francis Coppola)
10. *Night Moves* (Arthur Penn)

Honorable mention: The Maltese Falcon (John Huston); *I Shot Jesse James* (Samuel Fuller); *Sherlock, Jr.* (Buster Keaton); *The Umbrellas of Cherbourg* (Jacques Demy); *The Band Wagon* (Vincente Minnelli)

Fiction writers:

1. Jorge Luis Borges
2. Richard Yates
3. William Trevor
4. Doris Lessing
5. F. Scott Fitzgerald
6. Richard Wright
7. Vladimir Nabokov
8. Isaac Bashevis Singer
9. Italo Calvino
10. Graham Greene

Honorable mention: Philip K. Dick; Hilma Wolitzer; Tobias Wolff; George Orwell; Thomas Berger, Ralph Ellison; Chester Himes

Novels:

1. *The Great Gatsby* (F. Scott Fitzgerald)
2. *Lolita* (Vladimir Nabokov)
3. *The Hive* (Camilo Jose Cela)
4. *Appointment in Samarra* (John O'Hara)
5. *The Name of the Rose* (Umberto Eco)
6. *Revolutionary Road* (Richard Yates)
7. *The Quiet American* (Graham Greene)
8. *The Golden Notebook* (Doris Lessing)
9. *Night of the Jabberwock* (Fredric Brown)
10. *The Talented Mr. Ripley* (Patricia Highsmith)

Plays:

1. *Waiting for Godot* (Samuel Beckett)

2. *Our Town* (Thornton Wilder)
3. *Him* (e.e. cummings)
4. *Marat/Sade* (Peter Weiss)
5. *The Iceman Cometh* (Eugene O'Neill)

Poets:

1. W. H. Auden
2. Louis MacNeice
3. Kenneth Fearing
4. James Tate
5. Ezra Pound
6. Bertolt Brecht
7. Kenneth Patchen
8. William Carlos Williams
9. Gerald Stern
10. Leonard Cohen

Composers:

1. Dmitri Shostakovich
2. Stephen Sondheim
3. Scott Joplin
4. George Gershwin
5. Paul Hindemith
6. Kurt Weill
7. Sergei Prokofiev
8. Erik Satie

Photographers:

1. William Klein
2. Henri Lartigue
3. Walker Evans
4. George Tice
5. W. Eugene Smith
6. Ansel Adams
7. Lewis Hine
8. Henri Cartier-Bresson
9. August Sander
10. Dorothea Lange

Lisa Levitt, WSWS contributing writer (Canada)

Favourite novels:

1. *And Never Said A Word* (Heinrich Boll, 1953)
2. *Intimacy* (Hanif Kureishi, 1998)
3. *The Ragazzi* (Pier Paolo Pasolini, 1955)
4. *Nadja* (André Breton, 1928)
5. *In Dreams Begin Responsibilities* (stories—Delmore Schwartz, 1937)
6. *An American Tragedy* (Theodore Dreiser, 1925)
7. *Lolita* (Vladimir Nabokov, 1955)
8. *Voyage In The Dark* (Jean Rhys, 1934)
9. *Waltz Into Darkness* (Cornell Woolrich, 1947)
10. *Strangers On A Train* (Patricia Highsmith, 1950)

Favourite autobiographies/memoirs:

1. *My Life* (Leon Trotsky, 1930)
2. *Prisoners All* (Oskar Maria Graf, 1926)
3. *The Autobiography of Mother Jones* (1925)
4. *Shot In The Heart* (Mikal Gilmore, 1994)
5. *Angela's Ashes* (Frank McCourt, 1996)

Favourite children's books:

1. *The Secret Garden* (Frances Hodgson Burnett)
2. *Charlotte's Web* (E. B. White)
3. *James And The Giant Peach* (Roald Dahl)
4. *Charlie And The Chocolate Factory* (Roald Dahl)
5. *Where The Wild Things Are* (Maurice Sendak)
6. *Green Eggs And Ham* (Dr. Seuss)
7. *Harriet The Spy* (Louise Fitzhugh)

Daniel S. Martino, actor (US)

Favorite films:

1. *Citizen Kane* (Orson Welles)
2. *Potemkin* (Sergei Eisenstein)
3. *Nashville* (Robert Altman)
4. *Modern Times* (Charles Chaplin)
5. *Godfather II* (Francis Ford Coppola)
6. *Hiroshima, Mon Amour* (Alain Resnais)
7. *Rashomon* (Akira Kurosawa)
8. *Vertigo* (Alfred Hitchcock)
9. *Il Postino* (Michael Radford)
10. *The Wild Bunch* (Sam Peckinpah)

Honorable mention: Rules of the Game (Jean Renoir), *Children of Paradise* (Marcel Carné), *1900* (Bernardo Bertolucci), *The Magnificent Ambersons* (Orson Welles), *Open City* (Roberto Rossellini), *Sandakan No. 8* (Kei Kumai), *The Bicycle Thief* (Vittorio De Sica), *West Side Story* (Robert Wise), *Sunset Boulevard* (Billy Wilder), *Bread and Chocolate* (Franco Brusati); *The Garden of the Finzi-Continis* (Vittorio De Sica), *The Conversation* (Francis Ford Coppola), *The Great Dictator* (Charles Chaplin), *Safety Last* (Fred Newmeyer [Harold Lloyd]), *Tom Jones* (Tony Richardson), *City Lights* (Charles Chaplin), *Metropolis* (Fritz Lang), *McCabe and Mrs. Miller* (Robert Altman), *Like Water for Chocolate* (Alfonso Arau), *Don't Look Now* (Nicolas Roeg)

Favorite film directors:

1. Orson Welles
2. Charlie Chaplin
3. Sergei Eisenstein
4. Robert Altman
5. Alan Resnais
6. Luis Buñuel
7. Francis Ford Coppola (first period)
8. John Ford
9. Alfred Hitchcock
10. Akira Kurosawa

Favorite female actors:

1. Vanessa Redgrave
2. Jeanne Moreau
3. Irene Pappas
4. Judy Davis
5. Melina Mercouri
6. Meryl Streep
7. Sophia Loren
8. Jessica Lange
9. Bette Davis
10. Lillian Gish

Favorite male actors:

1. Marlon Brando
2. Charlie Chaplin
3. Ian McKellen
4. Spencer Tracy
5. Peter O'Toole
6. Laurence Olivier
7. Al Pacino
8. James Cagney
9. James Stewart
10. Marcello Mastroianni

Favorite playwrights of the twentieth century:

1. Arthur Miller
2. Eugene O'Neill
3. Bertolt Brecht
4. Tennessee Williams
5. Harold Pinter
6. Eugene Ionesco

7. George Bernard Shaw
8. Friedrich Dürrenmatt
9. Edward Albee
10. Samuel Beckett

Fred Mazelis, WSWS contributing writer (US)

Ten favorite composers of the twentieth century:

This list will be selected from composers of Western classical music who were either born in the twentieth century or who did most of their work after 1900 and whose creative lives were shaped and bound up with this past century.

For that reason it does not include such major musical figures as Edward Elgar (1857-1934) or Jean Sibelius (1865-1957). These men lived well into the mid-twentieth century or even beyond, but their musical style was formed in the period before 1900, and they generally looked back toward the nineteenth century for the rest of their careers. Giacomo Puccini (1858-1924), the great Italian composer of verismo opera, is a similar case. He worked up until his death, but his most famous works date from just around 1900 (*Tosca*) or earlier (*La Bohème*, 1896) and he is a nineteenth century figure.

Richard Strauss (1864-1949) is a much harder decision. I think he was a far greater composer than Elgar or Sibelius, although that it not to minimize their own accomplishments. It is also more difficult to categorize Strauss as a nineteenth or twentieth century composer. Elgar died in 1934, and Sibelius stopped composing more than 30 years before his death in 1957. Strauss continued to work until shortly before his death. In fact he was both a nineteenth and twentieth century composer, I would not argue with having him on a list of twentieth century favorites. In the first decade of this century, he composed two operas, *Salome* and *Elektra*, that marked a revolutionary break with the nineteenth century. For the rest of his life, his musical language became more conservative, but he continued composing until shortly before his death, and his *Four Last Songs* is undoubtedly the most sublime music ever created by an 84-year-old.

I have decided not to include Strauss, however. This is partly because it could also then be argued that two others, Claude Debussy (1862-1918) and Gustav Mahler (1860-1911), also belong. Although they did not live very far into the twentieth century, they did much of their work in its first decade, and they had a great impact on music in this past century. Nevertheless, they too were mature composers before the turn of the century. To include Strauss, Debussy and Mahler would slant this list too much toward the first 10 years of the twentieth century.

It's not accidental that my list appended below concentrates on music composed in the first half of the century. Indeed, only two (Shostakovich and Britten, to some extent Stravinsky) were fairly active into the 1960s or beyond. I listen to the work of more contemporary composers, but I cannot honestly include them in a list of favorites. Nevertheless, I do think this list should be as wide a representation as possible of those first six decades or so of the century.

The ten composers I would list are as follows:

Béla Bartók (1881-1945). My personal favorite. He synthesized Hungarian folk influences with the most advanced musical trends into a powerful and universal contribution. He developed a completely original style and his work is marked by an emotional depth that rewards serious listening. His six string quartets have been called the greatest contribution to that medium since Beethoven.

Dmitri Shostakovich (1906-75) Together with Bartók, a giant of twentieth century music. The subject of heated controversy between opposing critical camps who seek to claim his musical legacy. Shostakovich survived and miraculously developed his art in the darkest decades of Stalinist dictatorship. His large output includes 15 symphonies, 15 string quartets and numerous other chamber works, several operas, half a dozen concertos for piano, violin, or cello, much work for solo piano,

and film music.

Maurice Ravel (1875-1937). This French composer, while famous for his overplayed *Bolero* and *Pavane for a Dead Princess*, produced far more interesting work. He is well known for his orchestral and piano music, including the *Mother Goose Suite*, *Le Tombeau de Couperin*, *Daphnis and Chloe Suites*, *Rapsodie Espagnole*, and his *Piano Concertos*. His melodic inventiveness, rhythmic originality and unusual instrumental combinations stand out. My favorites are his relatively small number of chamber music compositions: the *Piano Trio* and the *String Quartet*. Also the original *Introduction and Allegro for Harp, Flute, Clarinet and String Quartet*.

Sergei Prokofiev (1891-1953). Another monumental Soviet figure, Prokofiev emigrated after the Russian Revolution but returned in the early 1930s. Like Shostakovich, his genius was able to survive and transcend the dictates of Stalinist "socialist realism," even when Prokofiev composed music (the cantata *Alexander Nevsky*) designed to meet the nationalist requirements of the bureaucracy. Prolific composer of seven symphonies, five piano concerti, two violin concerti, nine piano sonatas, music for the *Romeo and Juliet* ballet, and much else.

Igor Stravinsky (1882-1971). Another Russian-born musical genius. I do not find the kind of emotional depth in his music that I find in Bartók and Shostakovich, but he is undoubtedly one of the greatest composers of the twentieth century. In the century's second decade he became world famous for his ballets (and the orchestral suites derived from them) *Petrouchka* and *The Firebird*. In 1913 *The Rite of Spring* caused a violent scandal when it was first performed in Paris. These works were followed by a "neoclassical" period in which Stravinsky produced *Pulcinella*, the *Violin Concerto*, *Jeu de Cartes*, *Symphony of Psalms* and many other works.

After these five the choices for me become more difficult. I would include the following, in no particular order of "favoritism."

Francis Poulenc (1899-1963). Another French composer, in some respects the developer of the kind of lightness, elegance and sophistication that characterized Maurice Ravel. Poulenc was one of "Les Six," a term coined by a music critic to refer to a group of French composers linked by a certain common sensibility. Among Poulenc's best known works are *Les Biches*, a ballet; much chamber music, especially the sextet for piano and winds and the clarinet, flute and oboe sonatas. Also the concerto for piano and concerto for two pianos, and his opera *The Dialogues of the Carmelites*.

Leos Janacek (1854-1928) Although Janacek was already in his forty-sixth year when the twentieth century dawned, his inclusion in this list is justified by the fact that so much of what he wrote that was original and lasting came after 1900. I find a slight parallel with Bartók, only in the sense that he used folk music (in his case from his native Moravia and elsewhere in what would later become Czechoslovakia) to forge an original and individual style. His opera *Jenufa*, from 1904, is a great work. Many of the works for which he is most renowned were written in the 1920s, the last decade of his life. These include the operas *Katya Kabanova*, *The Cunning Little Vixen*, *The Makropoulos Case* and *From the House of the Dead*, his two string quartets, the *Sinfonietta*, and the *Glagolitic Mass*.

Benjamin Britten (1913-76). Another original composer, widely known for his many operas, including *Billy Budd*, *Peter Grimes*, *Death in Venice* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Also the composer of much chamber music, the well-known *War Requiem*, and other works.

Kurt Weill (1900-50). Weill is something of a special case on this list. He was a "serious composer" in his early years who then turned strongly against the principles of serialism and the 12-tone school developed by Arnold Schoenberg. Without necessarily passing final judgment on Weill's views on this question, there is little doubt that he found his own distinctive musical voice in works such as *The Threepenny Opera* and

Mahagonny, working together with the great German dramatist Bertolt Brecht.

Bohuslav Martinu (1891-1959). I am including Martinu, another Czech composer, on this list because I am convinced from the relatively little of his music that I have heard that he is greatly underrated. Like Bartók, Weill and many others he fled the Nazis and lived most of the last 20 years of his life in the US, where he became a teacher at Princeton and at the Mannes College of Music in New York. Martinu wrote over 400 works, including much chamber music, many symphonies, and the *Three Frescoes after Piero della Francesca*.

This list is not meant to be "definitive" or all-inclusive in any way. Various others, from very different traditions, who could have been placed on it or who deserve mention, include the Americans Aaron Copland, George Gershwin, Henry Cowell and Lou Harrison, the British composer Ralph Vaughan Williams, the Brazilian Heitor Villa Lobos, and the French composers Darius Milhaud and Olivier Messiaen.

Peter Mazelis, WSWS contributing writer (US)

Favorite films, in chronological order:

1. *The Crowd* (King Vidor, 1928)
2. *Bringing Up Baby* (Howard Hawks, 1938)
3. *The Bicycle Thief* (Vittorio De Sica, 1948)
4. *The Third Man* (Carol Reed, 1950)
5. *Pather Panchali* (Satyajit Ray, 1955)
6. *Don't Look Now* (Nicolas Roeg, 1973)
7. *Chinatown* (Roman Polanski, 1974)
8. *A Woman Under the Influence* (John Cassavetes, 1975)
9. *Safe* (Todd Haynes, 1995)
10. *Babe* (Chris Noonan, 1995)

Gabriela Notaras, WSWS contributing writer (Australia)

Novels:

1. *American Tragedy* (T. Dreiser)
2. *The Great Gatsby* (F. Scott Fitzgerald)
3. *American Pastoral* (P. Roth)
4. *The Outsider* (A. Camus)
5. *Heart of Darkness* (J. Conrad)
6. *Man's Estate* (A. Malraux)
7. *Strait is the Gate* (A. Gide)
8. *Mad Love* (A. Breton)
9. *The Grapes of Wrath* (J. Steinbeck)
10. *Steppenwolf* (H. Hesse)

Authors:

1. Theodore Dreiser
2. Philip Roth
3. Milan Kundera
4. André Breton
5. D. H. Lawrence
6. Virginia Woolf
7. Vladimir Nabokov
8. John Steinbeck
9. Maxim Gorky
10. André Gide

Stuart Nolan, WSWS contributing writer (Britain)

Favorite artists:

1. Pablo Picasso (1881-1973)
2. Max Ernst (1891-1976)
3. Giorgio de Chirico (1888-1978)
4. Georges Braque (1882-1963)
5. Henri Gaudier Brzeska (1891-1915)
6. Marcel Duchamp (1887-1968)
7. Kurt Schwitters (1887-1947)
8. Salvador Dali (1904-89)
9. André Masson (1896-1987)

10. Henri Rousseau (1844-1910)

Honorable mention: Roland Penrose (1900-); Piet Mondrian (1872-1944); Victor Passmore (1908-98); Ben Nicholson (1894-); Kazimir Malevich (1878-1935); Jackson Pollock (1912-56); Willem de Kooning (1904-); Mark Rothko (1903-70); René Magritte (1898-1967); Oskar Kokoschka (1886-1980)

Lee Parsons, sculptor (Canada)

In listing favorites, inevitably too many are omitted, and while I would fight to rank these among the most important artists of the century, some are included more as a matter of personal taste.

Painters:

1. Francis Bacon
2. Lucian Freud
3. Adolph Gottlieb
4. Wassily Kandinsky
5. Amedeo Modigliani
6. Robert Motherwell
7. Pablo Picasso
8. Mark Rothko
9. Georges Rouault
10. Egon Schiele

Honorable mention: Max Beckmann; Georges Braque; Paul Cézanne (died 1906); André Derain; Sam Francis; Alberto Giacometti; Juan Gris; Paul Klee; Willem de Kooning; Chaim Soutine

Sculptors:

1. Hans Arp
2. Antoine Bourdelle
3. Max Ernst
4. Alberto Giacometti
5. Emilio Greco
6. Barbara Hepworth
7. Jacques Lipchitz
8. Henri Matisse
9. Joan Miro
10. Vladimir Tatlin

Honorable mention: Aristide Maillol; Marino Marini; Pablo Picasso

M. H. Perez, musician-teacher (US)

Fiction and poetry:

1. Nelson Algren/ *A Walk on the Wild Side*
2. Toni Morrison/ *Beloved*
3. Henry Dumas/ *Goodbye, Sweetwater*
4. John Fante/ *Ask the Dust*
5. Aimé Césaire/ *Return to my Native Land*
6. Richard Wright/ *Native Son*
7. James Baldwin/ *Selected Works*, or anything else by this author.
8. Jayne Cortez/ *Coagulations*
9. Zora Neale Hurston/ *Their Eyes Were Watching God*
10. Joseph Heller/ *Catch 22*

Films:

1. *Daughters of the Dust* / Directed by Julie Dash
2. *Citizen Kane* / Orson Welles
3. *The Accident* / Joe Lovett and Barbara Kopple
4. *Frankenstein* / James Whale
5. *Matewan* / John Sayles
6. *Treasure of the Sierra Madre* / John Huston
7. *Rebel Without a Cause* / Nicholas Ray
8. *Duck Soup* / Marx Brothers [dir. By Leo McCarey]
9. *Dreams* / Akira Kurosawa
10. *Dr. Strangelove* / Stanley Kubrick

Music:

1. *Our Man in Havana* / Monto Santamaria
2. *Survival* or anything else by Bob Marley

3. *Santeria* / Milton Cardona

4. *Better get Hit in yer Soul* / Charles Mingus

5. *The Champ* or anything else by Dizzy Gillespie

6. *Hope* / Hugh Masakela

7. *Highway 61 Revisited* / Bob Dylan

8. Anything by Duke Ellington

9. Anything by Louis Armstrong

10. Anything by Billie Holiday

Richard Phillips, WSWS contributing writer (Australia)

Photographers

1. Paul Strand
2. Henri Cartier-Bresson
3. Brassai (Gyula Halasz Brassai)
4. Eugene Atget
5. Aleksandr Rodchenko
6. Aaron Siskind
7. Robert Capa
8. Diane Arbus
9. Dorothea Lange
10. Weegee (Arthur Fellig)

Film directors:

1. Luchino Visconti
2. Sergei Eisenstein
3. Orson Welles
4. Luis Buñuel
5. Alfred Hitchcock
6. Federico Fellini
7. Buster Keaton
8. John Ford
9. Roberto Rossellini
10. Zhang Yimou

Films:

1. *Casablanca* (Michael Curtiz)
2. *Citizen Kane* (Orson Welles)
3. *Touch of Evil* (Orson Welles)
4. *Some Like It Hot* (Billy Wilder)
5. *Open City* (Roberto Rossellini)
6. *The Battle of Algiers* (Gillo Pontecorvo)
7. *Potemkin* (Sergei Eisenstein)
8. *King and Country* (Joseph Losey)
9. *The Damned* (Luchino Visconti)
10. *The Exterminating Angel* (Luis Buñuel)

Ismet Redzovic, WSWS contributing writer (Australia)

Novels:

1. *An American Tragedy* (Theodore Dreiser)
2. *Journey to the End of the Night* (Louis-Ferdinand Céline)
3. *Lolita* (Vladimir Nabokov)
4. *The Outsider* (Albert Camus)
5. *Bridge on River Drina* (Ivo Andric)
6. *Dervish and Death* (Mesa Selimovic)
7. *Nadja* (André Breton)
8. *American Pastoral* (Philip Roth)
9. *Sons and Lovers* (D. H. Lawrence)
10. *The Leopard* (Giuseppe di Lampedusa)

Authors:

1. Theodore Dreiser
2. Ivo Andric
3. D. H. Lawrence
4. André Breton
5. André Malraux
6. Vladimir Nabokov
7. F. Scott Fitzgerald

8. Miroslav Krleža

9. Herman Hesse

10. Danilo Kis

The order is not according to rank, just a matter of convenience.

Margaret Rees, WSWS contributing writer (Australia)

Poets:

The list of my favourite twentieth century poets cost me much thought and is not definitive or exhaustive by any means. In the end I decided not to worry whether they were major or minor poets, but to confine myself to personal taste. In English alone, there are so many others of interest, but if I have not made any excursions into their work I have not included them.

1. *Guillaume Apollinaire*, friend of Braque and Picasso, supposed to have coined the term “surrealisme,” wounded in World War One in the French Army, dead of influenza in 1918; for his poems “Zone,” “Song of the Poorly Loved” and “At the Santé” written when he was imprisoned in the Santé, falsely accused of stealing the Mona Lisa. He once wrote deprecatingly: “Not because rooted in poetry we have the power of words forming and deforming the universe” (song at the wedding of André Salmon).

It seems he had a great influence on the American Beat poets. Allen Ginsberg wrote 50 years later in “At Apollinaire’s Grave”

*One must have felt the shock in St. Germain when he went out
Jacob and Picasso coughing in the dark
a bandage unrolled and the skull left still on a bed outstretched
pudgy fingers the mystery and ego gone*

2. *W. H. Auden*: Apart from his own poetry, his critical writings about other poets in “The Dyers Hand” and “Forewords and Afterwords” are a rich source of thoughtful insights. Writing of Greek poet C. P. Cavafy, he said: “Like everybody else, I think, who writes poetry, I have always believed the essential difference between prose and poetry to be that prose can be translated into another tongue, but poetry cannot. But if it is possible to be poetically influenced by work which one can read only in translation, this belief must be qualified.”

3. I cannot bypass *T. S. Eliot*, although not without misgivings. “The Love Song of J Alfred Prufrock” must have one of the most arresting beginnings of any poem this century:

*Let us go then, you and I,
When the evening is spread out against the sky,
Like a patient etherised upon a table;
Let us go through certain half-deserted streets*

This is like an eerie entryway that leads directly to London in the second decade of this century.

4. *Seamus Heaney*: “Tollund Man” is about Denmark and the bog people buried in the peat. He identifies with the sacrificial victims.

*Something of his sad freedom
As he rode the tumbrel
Should come to me, driving
Saying the names*

5. *Ted Hughes* and *Sylvia Plath*: Some of their poems complement one another, for example Plath’s 1957 poem “The Lady and the Earthenware Head” and Hughes’ version “The Earthenware Head”:

*You ransacked thesaurus in your poem about it,
Veiling its mirror, rhyming yourself into safety
From its orphaned fate.*

In 1953 as a young student Plath interviewed eminent poet Marianne Moore for *Mademoiselle* magazine. In 1958 she took Hughes to New York and introduced him to Moore, who became a literary sponsor for him. In “The Literary Life” Hughes describes the visit and later Moore’s response to Plath’s suicide:

*And I listened, heavy as a graveyard
While she searched for the grave
Where she could lay down her little wreath.*

D. H. Lawrence: His poems about animals and plants are like delicate drawings. And for sheer nasty spleen, “How Beastly the Bourgeois Is” is unbeatable.

*How beastly the bourgeois is
Especially the male of the species —
Nicely groomed, like a mushroom
Standing there so sleek and erect and eyeable —
And like a fungus, living on the remains of bygone life
Sucking his life out of the dead leaves of greater life than his own.*

7. *Robert Lowell*: “Memories of West Street and Lepke” about 1943 when he went to prison as a conscientious objector against the Allied bombing of civilians in Europe. It deflects its glance from the imprisoned Jehovah’s Witness to fellow prisoner crime czar Lepke waiting to die.

8. *Edgar Lee Masters* —there is something compelling about the self-sufficiency, indeed insularity of his “Spoon River Anthology” (1915), in which the townsfolk talk from the grave and provide epitaphs for themselves. Masters seems like an old curmudgeon, but the voices swell together in a chorus evoking the despair and low key tragedy of the town. The songs echo plaintively in the memory for a long while.

9. The World War One poets. It does not do them justice to lump them all together, but I have run out of places. *Owen*, *Rosenberg* are the finest poets of the trenches. *Sassoon* catches moments of ineffable sadness and nostalgia as in “A Concert Party (Egyptian Base Camp)”:

*Dimness conceals the hunger in our faces
This wall of faces risen out of the night,
Those eyes that keep their memories of the places
So long beyond their sight.*

10. From *W. B. Yeats*, it is not a representative sample, but I would choose “An Irish Airman Foresees his Death,” “Easter 1916” for its pen portraits of the revolutionaries, “On a Political Prisoner” about Lady Constance Markiewicz.

*When long ago I saw her ride
Under Ben Bulbin to the meet,
The beauty of her countryside
With all youth’s lonely wildness stirred
Favourite Australasian fiction:*

Here my bias is definitely towards the first half of the century.

1. Streets ahead of any other Australian writer is *Christina Stead*. *The Man who Loved Children*, set in Washington, DC, is a haunting portrait of a man whose benevolent philosophic views about raising children destroy his family. It is told by his eldest daughter, somewhat of an outcast since he has had a second family.

Stead also wrote *For Love Alone*, which is a thinly fictionalised version of her own escape from inter war Australia to Europe. Other works include *Seven Poor Men of Sydney*.

2. Another expatriate, this time from New Zealand, is *Katherine Mansfield*, a master of style. For her short stories “Bliss,” “In a German Pension” and novel, *Prelude*.

3. A number of Australian writers have focused on the theme of interaction between European settlers and Aboriginal inhabitants. *Xavier Herbert* did so in *Capricornia* and *Poor Fellow My Country* which are rambling masterpieces. Another interesting book is his autobiographical reminiscences known as *Disturbing Element*.

4. *Katherine Susannah Pritchard*: *Coonardoo* also has an Aboriginal girl as its tragic heroine. Pritchard, a member of the Communist Party, wrote for the huge audience in the USSR about the social relations in outback Western Australia. While the book has its mawkish aspects, she manages to give the story bold outlines.

5. *Nene Gare*: *The Fringe Dwellers* is set in shanty towns on the edge of Perth.

6. *Hal Porter*: *Watcher on a Cast Iron Balcony* is the autobiography of a young man growing up in a country town in the 1930s and his desperation

at the lack of culture.

7. Criena Rohan: *Down by the Docks* is a picaresque novel about a young woman trying to survive by her wits during World War II.

8. Janet Frame: *Envoy from Mirror City* and other parts of her autobiography. In New Zealand Frame was subjected to years of psychiatric treatment simply for being different. In this book she details her escape from that claustrophobic existence to Europe.

9. Dorothy Hewett: *Bobbin' Up*. Hewett is better known as a playwright. This is an earlier novel about women in a textile factory, with distinct social realist characteristics, despite which an irrepressible larrikin element insistently bursts through.

10. Frank Hardy: *Power Without Glory* —the portrait of a self-made magnate. It seems this book was much more of a team effort than Hardy ever admitted, with the Communist Party providing a research team and facilities for Hardy to write it. It is an interesting achievement, although Hardy is more of a raconteur than a great writer.

Jeff Riedel, photographer (US)

Photographers who have been an inspiration:

1. Gary Winogrand
2. Andreas Gursky
3. Joseph Kudełka
4. Larry Fink
5. Lee Friedlander
6. Robert Frank
7. Julius Shulman
8. Walker Evans
9. Nick Knight
10. Jeff Wall

Emanuele Saccarelli, WWSWS contributing writer (Italy)

Here is my list of favorite films:

1. *Glengarry Glen Ross* (James Foley)
2. *Koyaanisqatsi* (Godfrey Reggio)
3. *Padre Padrone* (Vittorio and Paolo Taviani)
4. *Midnight Cowboy* (John Schlesinger)
5. *Down by Law* (Jim Jarmusch)
6. *Harold and Maude* (Hal Ashby)
7. *La Vie Revée des anges* (Erick Zonca)
8. *Raging Bull* (Martin Scorsese)
9. *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest* (Milos Forman)
10. *Dark City* (Alex Proyas)

Barbara Slaughter, WWSWS contributing writer (Britain)

Music:

1. Béla Bartók— *Duke Bluebeard's Castle* (1911). A two-handed piece which is utterly absorbing from start to finish.
2. Alban Berg— *Wozzeck* (1923), based on a play by Georg Büchner, which was written in the 1830s and tells how a simple infantryman is driven to murder and suicide by the intolerable conditions of his life.
3. Leos Janacek— *Sinfonietta* (1926)
4. Kurt Weill—all the music he wrote before he left Germany in the 1930s, especially *The Three-Penny Opera* (1928) and *The Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny* (1930).
5. Hans Eisler—all his songs, especially the settings of words by Bertolt Brecht, written in the 1920s and 30s. There is a good collection of these songs— *The Brecht-Eisler Song Book* —published by Oak Publications New York. I don't know if it's still available
6. Leonard Bernstein— *West Side Story*
7. Arnold Schönberg— *String Quartet No 2 in F sharp minor* (1908) set for string quartet and soprano voice.
8. Gabriel Fauré—Songs, especially sung by the English mezzo soprano, Janet Baker.
9. Ralph Vaughan Williams— *Fantasia on a Theme of Thomas Tallis* (1910) and *The Lark Ascending* (1914)

Pelléas et Mélisande (1902) Debussy—

Honorable mention: Maurice Ravel— *Daphnis and Chloe Suite No. 2* (1912); Frederick Delius— *On hearing the first cuckoo in spring* (1912); Igor Stravinsky— *Rite of Spring* (1913); Dmitri Shostakovich— *Symphony No. 5* (1937); Gustav Mahler— *Song of the Earth* (1908); George Crumb - *Ancient Voices of Children* (1970), which includes settings of poems by Spanish poet/playwright Federico Garcia Lorca; Edward Elgar — *Concerto in E Minor for Cello* (1919) and *Introduction and Allegro for Strings* (1905); *A Child of Our Time* by Michael Tippett (1941), which includes settings of poems by Wilfred Owen

Singers:

1. Bessie Smith
2. Billie Holiday
3. Ella Fitzgerald
4. Big Bill Broonzy
5. Lotte Lenya—She “inhabits” the songs of Kurt Weill and absolutely makes them her own.
6. Alfred Deller—A counter tenor, a wonderful singer of English Baroque music, especially Purcell
7. Edith Piaf

Jazz instrumentalists:

1. Lionel Hampton
2. Louis Armstrong
3. Thelonious Monk
4. Erroll Garner

Gerald Somers, painter (Canada)

Painters:

1 and 2. *Henri Matisse* and *Paul Cézanne*: while both artists are firmly rooted in the last century, their heads poke into the twentieth, and their work, proto-Modernist, laid the foundation for the dramatic break with tradition that modernity ushered in;

3. *Kasimir Malevich*: a default Russian, interchangeable with a couple of others from the same Suprematist period; unequivocally, radically modern work, nicely balanced conceptual and spiritual dimensions; perhaps Kandinsky should be in there as well;

4. The dadaist, *Hugo Ball*;

5. *Pablo Picasso*; grudgingly, since his legacy is so bound up with postwar American cultural imperialism; but for his sheer appetite alone;

6. *Barnett Newman*, a nice crossover of Abstract Expressionism and the Minimalism which followed;

7. *Richard Hamilton* gives us pop art, pre-Warhol with more honest, earnest irony than the latter;

8. We'll need someone from Conceptualism; I nominate *Joseph Beuys* but others would do;

9 and 10. Fast forward to so-called postmodernism with subheadings for the Italian transavant-garde, and German-American neo-expressionism; criticisms of its market-driven cynicism notwithstanding, I believe *Francesco Clemente* has survived the test of time; now one more, how about *Cindy Sherman*?

Honorable mention: Sigmar Polke; or the Canadian photo-artist *Jeff Wall*; too many names missing, where are *Marcel Duchamp*, *Robert Rauschenberg*, *Hans Richter*, etc.?; but not enough space.

Sculptors:

1. and 2. I'm much weaker on sculptors, but let's have a go, abandoning the historical order of the above list; from the Americans, *Bruce Nauman*, American contemporary, strong conceptual roots with engaging, populist appeal, humour; *James Turrell*, whose work with light is simply stunning, far better than the exercises of Dan Flavin;

3. Perhaps that neurotic fellow who's always wrapping things, Christo, a sort of one-hit wonder who won't go away; no, let's not; instead, *Claes Oldenburg*, yes.

4-8. The German political *Hans Haacke*; from England, the brilliant,

crosscultural *Anish Kapoor*, also *Anthony Caro* and *Tony Cragg*; *Richard Serra* gets in despite himself, but could be swapped out for Richard Long with his walks;

9. and 10. The French sculptor *Louise Bourgeois* and the Russian installation artist *Ilya Kabakov*.

Stefan Steinberg, WSWS contributing writer (Germany)

Favourite films:

1. *Made in Britain* (1983) by Alan Clarke
2. *Amadeus* (1984) by Milos Forman
3. *Train of Life* (1998) by Radu Mihaleanu
4. *Woyzeck* (1979) by Werner Herzog
5. *Aguirre, the Wrath of God* (1972) by Werner Herzog
6. *The Glass Eye* (1927) by Lila Brik
7. *Shock Corridor* (1963) by Samuel Fuller
8. *The Trial* (1962) by Orson Welles
9. *The Marriage of Maria Braun* (1978) by Rainer Werner Fassbinder
10. *Martha* (1973) by Rainer Werner Fassbinder

Favourite novels:

1. *November 1918*—a trilogy by Alfred Döblin
2. *Berlin Alexanderplatz* by Alfred Döblin
3. *Life and Fate* by Vassily Grossman
4. *Dubliners* by James Joyce
5. *Mephisto* by Klaus Mann
6. *A Perfect Spy* by John Le Carré
7. *The Name of the Rose* by Umberto Eco
8. *The Defence* by Vladimir Nabokov
9. *Waterland* by Graham Swift
10. *American Pastoral* by Philip Roth

Alex Steiner, WSWS contributing writer (US)

Favorite non-fiction books of the twentieth century:

1. Leon Trotsky, *History of the Russian Revolution*

Trotsky's book is not only the most significant historical analysis of the greatest event of modern times, it is also a literary masterpiece.

The preface, written when Trotsky was already in exile in Prinkipo, is at once scientific and romantic, giving life to the dry language often associated with a historical narrative.

“The most indubitable feature of a revolution is the direct interference of the masses in historic events. In ordinary times the state, be it monarchical or democratic, elevates itself above the nation, and history is made by specialists in that line of business—kings, ministers, bureaucrats, parliamentarians, journalists. But at those crucial moments when the old order becomes no longer endurable to the masses, they break over the barriers excluding them from the political arena, sweep aside their traditional representatives, and create by their interference the initial groundwork for a new regime.... The history of a revolution is for us first of all a history of the forcible entrance of the masses into the realm of rulership over their own destiny.”

2. C. L. R. James, *The Black Jacobins*

James's history of one of the first successful revolutions against colonialism and slavery is an enduring classic that can be read over many times.

3. Georg Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness*

To be sure, there are many problems with this book, both philosophical and political. It can not be denied however that its presentation of Marxism as the antithesis of dogmatism and mechanical materialism represented a milestone in the retrieval of Marxist philosophy from the decay of the Social Democracy. Unfortunately, Lukacs abandoned the critique of Stalinism that was logically demanded in his work once he made his peace with the bureaucracy. The book had a profound influence on many intellectuals in the West.

4. Alexandre Kojève, *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel*

Kojève's classic lectures gave new life to the Hegelian dialectic for an

entire generation of French intellectuals in the interwar years. His analysis of the dialectic of Master and Slave in Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* remains an unsurpassed tour-de-force. Although Kojève's methodology is hardly Marxist, as it is often mistakenly described, it does fill out some of the obscurity of Hegel's original text with the living struggles of human history. In contrast, most of Kojève's detractors seek to suppress the historical and social dimension of the Master/Slave dialectic for fear of contaminating Hegel with a Marxian brush. While he does take some liberties with Hegel, Kojève's idiosyncratic interpretation still shines out against the toothless epistemological or psychological versions of his opponents.

5. Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations*

This book of essays only give the barest impression of the wide range of Benjamin's interests, which included collecting toys, handwriting analysis, literary criticism and philosophy. It does include Benjamin's classic essay, “Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction.”

6. Bertrand Russell, *Why I am Not a Christian*

Although I have long since parted company with Russell on philosophical and political grounds this was the first book I read that presented the case for atheism on philosophical grounds. It is a lively and popular debunking of Christian hokum and still remains one of my favorites.

7. H. L. Mencken, *The American Scene*

This collection of essays by the great curmudgeon of the Depression contains one of my all-time favorites, “In Memoriam: W. J. B.” This obituary to William Jennings Bryan, one-time populist and self-styled leader of religious ignorance and yahooism, is dripping with contempt for the cultural backwardness Bryan championed. Mencken, unlike his right-wing epigones, was the genuine article. He conceded nothing to the hypocrites and philistines of his time. Instead of polite sentiments, Mencken's obituary contains the following bit of bile:

“This talk of sincerity, I confess, fatigues me. If the fellow was sincere, then so was P. T. Barnum. The word is disgraced and degraded by such use. He was, in fact, a charlatan, a mountebank, a zany without sense or dignity.”

You just cannot improve on that.

8. Ernst Bloch, *Natural Law and Human Dignity*

A most original interpretation of 2,500 years in the history of philosophy. Bloch reads this history as an ever richer expression of man's striving for liberty, equality and fraternity, ideals which find their most concrete expression in a social utopia. Bloch's optimism stands in stark contrast to the philosophy of death and despair championed by his contemporary and fellow German philosopher, Heidegger.

9. Ferdinand Lundberg, *America's 60 Families*

Lundberg was a Depression-era muckraker who assembled an impressive array of data to demonstrate the class nature of power in the United States. Although he was neither a great stylist nor a theoretician, his book strips away the real forces at work behind the veil of official democratic pretense. His introduction poses the issue starkly in language that has never been surpassed.

“The United States is owned and dominated today by a hierarchy of its sixty richest families, buttressed by no more than ninety families of lesser wealth.... These families are the living center of the modern industrial oligarchy which dominates the United States, functioning discreetly under a de jure democratic form of government behind which a de facto government, absolutist and plutocratic in its lineaments, has gradually taken form since the Civil War. This de facto government is actually the government of the United States—informal, invisible, shadowy. It is the government of money in a dollar democracy.”

10. Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem*

Although I have lots of problems with some of Arendt's historical analysis in this account of Adolf Eichmann's trial in the 1960s, her portrait

of the Nazi apparatchnik who was most directly responsible for the machinery of death of the Holocaust is unforgettable. Her historically accurate account of the collaboration of some Jewish leaders with the Nazis touched many raw nerves among the various Jewish organizations. Rather than a frank reassessment of their own history, they preferred to wage a campaign of ostracism against Arendt and her message.

Tim Tower, WSWS contributing writer (US)

These are a few favorites from the twentieth century. With a few notable exceptions, the scale seems to tip to the beginning of the century and even....

Painters:

1. Winslow Homer
2. Pierre Auguste Renoir
3. Edvard Munch
4. Thomas Eakins
5. T. H. Benton
6. Edward Hopper
7. Oskar Kokoschka
8. Paul Klee
9. Wassily Kandinsky
10. John Marin

Honorable mention: Franz Kline; Georgia O'Keeffe

Architects:

1. Frank Lloyd Wright
2. Jørn Utzon
3. Le Corbusier
4. Tadao Ando

Sculptors:

1. Auguste Rodin
2. Henri Matisse
3. Isamu Noguchi
4. Constantin Brancusi
5. Alberto Giacometti
6. Louise Bourgeois

Vaadaseeli, WSWS contributing writers (Sri Lanka)

Individual artists:

1. *W. D. Amaradeva:* One of the foremost musicians and Sinhala singers of this century. He is one of the major contributors to the building of a more serious tradition of song and music in Sri Lanka. The country is bereft of a historically inherited tradition of music due to the corrosive influence of Buddhism on the arts.

Buddhism as a religion regards all sensual pleasures, including dance, song and drama, as inimical to the attainment of Nirvana and regards these pleasures as generating a craving for life and existence ('bava thanha'). Only the influence of western Enlightenment thought and Marxism provided the necessary impetus for Sri Lankan artists—though most of them were unable to digest either of these ideological forces satisfactorily—to free their minds, at least relatively, of the shackles of feudal thought.

2. *Ediriweera Sarachchandra:* A significant personality in the field of Sri Lankan arts during this century, Sarachchandra is regarded as the founder of the modern dramatic arts. Again due to the oppressive ideological influence of Buddhism, Sri Lanka also lacks a historically inherited tradition of drama. Sarachchandra, in his endeavor to build up a tradition of Sinhala dramatic art, drew inspiration from folk traditions as well as from the rich dramatic traditions in ancient India, Japan and China.

Sarachchandra belongs to a group of artists who in the 1950s and 60s made their base of cultural activity the Peradeniya University of Sri Lanka, and became the leader of the Peradeniya Group of Artists. This group was instrumental in introducing Western influences into the Sri Lankan literary scene.

The major dramatic works of Sarachchandra are *Maname* (1956) and

Sinhabahu (1961), remarkable for the poignancy they generate. An extremely poetic rendering of human emotions and aspirations have made these works memorable, and it is possible to find among music lovers in Sri Lanka any number of people who know by heart lengthy portions of these two dramatic works.

The themes of these two plays consist of the conflict between the individual and social institutions in class society.

3. *Siri Gunasingha:* Major poet and novelist belonging to the Peradeniya group of artists. His novel *Hevanella* (1960 [*The Shadow*]) is a powerful artistic indictment of the destructive influence on the individual of both Buddhist ideology and the bourgeois social system. His major poetical works are *Abinikmana* (1958 [*Renunciation*]) and *Mas-le-Nethi-Ata* [*Bones that have dried up*].

Gunasingha won critical acclaim for advancing the Sinhala poetic tradition by enriching the poetic idiom. His poetical works impress one with their daring innovative creation of imagery. Sinhala poetic idiom acquired the richness and flexibility necessary to portray the rapidly changing reality mainly through his efforts. Gunasingha can meaningfully be called the “angry poet” of modern Sinhala poetry, the recurring themes in his poetical works being his passionate resistance to both feudal and bourgeois ideology as well as the decadent system of present-day society. Unfortunately, he never found any alternatives to the social factors he reviled so insistently.

4. and 5. *Martin Wickramasingha* and *Gunadasa Amarasekera* both stand out as creators of artistic novels, which provide deep insights into a society undergoing decisive changes from a feudal set-up to capitalism.

Wickramasingha's *Gamperaliya* (1944 [*The transformation in the village*]) was the first Sinhala novel in the realistic tradition.

6. *Lester James Peries:* One of the foremost Sri Lankan filmmakers, Peries is honored for being the creator of the first artistic Sinhala film *Rekhava* (1956 [*The line*]). Until *Rekhava* Sinhala cinema remained merely a form of popular entertainment. Peries' film *Gamperaliya* (1963, the film version of Wickramasingha's novel *Gamperaliya*) was the first Sinhala film to gain international critical acclaim.

7. *Rukmani Devi:* The “heart throb” of many a film-goer in the late 1940s and 50s and to this day beloved by music lovers of Sri Lanka for her versatile talent as a singer. She died under tragic circumstances in a car accident some years ago, but lives on in the memory of music lovers—her glory and popularity as an artist never to be diminished by new entrants to the film and music scene.

8. *Nanda Malinee:* One of the foremost Sinhala female singers of Sri Lanka, Nanda Malinee's voice miraculously carries within it the power to render melodiously the joys and sorrows felt by generations of Sinhala people, as they lived and tilled their land in villages still faintly reminiscent of the feudal era.

9. *Dharmasena Pathiraja:* Belongs to the younger generation of Sinhala film artists and was specially active in the Sinhala film scene during the 1970s and 80s.

The recurring theme of his films was the social tribulations of the downtrodden layers in society, including the unemployed youth. His artistic technique was described by some critics as “Brechtian.”

Among Pathiraja's many films, *Para Dige* (*Along the road*) and *Bambaru Avith* (*The wasps are here*) won Marxist critical acclaim.

10. *Bhava Duka* (*The sorrows of existence*) and *Bhava Karma* (*Reaping results of deeds accomplished in prior lives*)

These two films directed by *Dharmasiri Bandaranayaka* deserve special mention. They are artistic works that seriously challenged the repressive Buddhist dogma that has dominated the thought of generations of believers in this part of world. Though earlier there had been protests in works of art against the oppressive nature of Buddhism, it was with these films released in the latter part of this decade that a challenge was mounted to destructive religious doctrines in an artistically genuine and

successful manner, through a realistic depiction of the contradictions in class society.

The two films won many awards for Bandaranayaka at national level film festivals.

Other dramatists and film directors

India:

1. *Satyajit Ray* (1921-1992): Film director. His well known films include:

Pather Panchali (1955)

Aparajito (1956)

Apur Sansar (1959)

Charulatha (1964)

Jalsaghar (1958)

Sadgathi (1981)

2. *Mrinal Sen*: Another filmmaker who contributed to Indian artistic film tradition along with Ray. He has made films in the Oriya, Telugu and Hindi languages in addition to Bengali.

And his best films are:

Neel Akasher Nee Chey (1958)

Bhuvan Shome (1964)

Interview (1970)

Calcutta '71 (1972)

Ek Din Paratidin (1979)

Akaler Sandhaney (1980)

Khandhar (1983)

3. *Ritwik Ghatak* (1923-1976): He is another innovator of the new India artistic cinema, a contemporary of Ray and Sen. The following films by him won acclaim:

Ajantrik (1957)

Meghe Dhaka Tara (1961)

Komal Gandhar (1961)

Subarnarekha (1962)

4. *Adoor Gopalakrishnan* (Malayalam film director): A forerunner of new wave of artistic cinema in South India. His important films are:

Mukha Mukham (1984)

Swayamwaram (1972)

Elipathayam (1981)

5. *Deepa Mehta* (film director): Her well-known films are:

Fire (1996)

Earth (1998)

Sri Lanka:

1. *Prasanna Vithanage* (film director/dramatist):

Films:

Sisila Ginigani

Anantha Rathirya (1996)

Pavuru Valalu (1997)

Purahanda Kaluwara (1997)

Dramas: *Dvithva* (1992, a Sinhala translation of the play written by Dario Fo)

Other musicians and singers

India:

1. *Rabindranath Tagore* (1861-1941): A leading musician in the early part of this century. *Rabindra Sangeet* was the musical tradition he developed based on traditional Bengali folk music. He was instrumental in the expansion and development of musical art in India.

2. *Ravi Shankar* (1920-): A world famous Indian musician and a sitar player. He has based his works on Hindustani music—the North Indian classical music tradition. He is the composer for Ray's *Apu Trilogy*.

3. *L. Subramaniam*: A world famous South Indian musician. Even though he was born in Sri Lanka, he had to migrate to India to escape from anti-Tamil racist riots in 1958 under the regime of Prime Minister S. W. R. D. Bandaranayaka. He has composed new works based on South

Indian *Karnatic* classical music tradition. He has creatively and very nicely combined Western music and *Karnatic* tradition in his works.

4. *Ilaiyaraaja*: A very talented South Indian musician.

5. *Latha Mangeskar*: The most talented and popular singer in India up to the present day. She emerged as a singer in popular North Indian cinema. One cannot ignore her contribution in making Indian music popular outside the subcontinent through the enormous number of songs she has sung for about three decades.

6. *Mohammed Rafi* (1924-80): He is the other singer who has played a similar role to that of Latha Mangeskar. Most Indian cinema songs before 1980s were performed by either Mangeskar or Rafi. Their popularity continues even today.

Sri Lanka:

1. *Premasiri Kemadasa*: A musician who has made a great contribution to music in Sri Lanka. The aim of his work is to develop music in Sri Lanka based upon classical Western music.

Other novelists and poets

India:

1. *Rabindranath Tagore* as a poet and novelist as well. His works include: *Gitanjali* (1910), *Shes Saptal* (1935) and *Punashecha* (1932).

2. *Bhibhuthi Bhushan Banarjee*: The prominent Indian filmmaker Satyajit Ray based his *Apu Trilogy* on two related novels of *Pathar Panjali* and *Aparajitho* by Bhibhuthi Bhushan.

3. *Kushwanth Singh: The Last Train to Pakistan*—a novel.

4. *Arundathi Roy: The God of Small Things* (1998)—a novel.

5. *R. K. Narayan* (1906-): A prominent Indian novelist and a short story writer. Among his works are: *Malgudi Days* (1982) , *Talkative Man* (1986) and *The Guide* (1958).

6. *Vikram Seth* (1952-): A prominent poet and novelist in modern India. Among his works are: *Suitable Boy* (1993) , *Golden Gate* (1986), *Mappings* (1980) and *An Equal Music* (1999) .

Sri Lanka:

1. *Mahagama Sekara* (1929-1976): A great contributor to poetry and songs in Sri Lanka. Among his works: *Heta Irak Payai* (1963) , *Mak Nisada Yath* (1964), *Bodima* (1970), *Nomiyemi* (1973), *Prabudhdha* (1977-published after his death)

Painters

India:

1. *M. F. Hussain* (1915-): He is the most famous Indian painter. He was one of the six artists who founded the Progressive Artists Group (PAG) in 1947. He became a target of Hindu fanatic fascistic organizations in India such as Bajrang Dal and Siva Sena, especially because of some of his works such as *Saraswathi*. His portrait of first Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru (1964) represented the latter in such a realistic manner that he refused to keep it in his residence. Hussain combines traditional and modern expressionist methods in his works.

Some of his works:

Jawaharlal Nehru (1964)—Oil paint on canvas.

Samin

Between the spider and the lamp (1976)—Oil paint.

Mahabharath series

Saraswathi (1976)—A sketch.

2. *F. N. Souza* (1924-): He was earlier sent into exile because of his involvement in the *Quit India* movement in 1942. He was a member of the PAG. A pioneer of modern Indian painting. His works convey anti-imperialist opposition.

3. *V. S. Gaitonda*: A PAG member. An initiator in modern Indian painting tradition. He is considered an abstract artist.

4. *Akbar Padmase* (1928-): A collaborator with the PAG and a pioneer of modern Indian paintings.

Sri Lanka:

1. *Geoffrey Beling* (1907-92): A founding member of the Group of 43,

which included many pioneers of modern painting in Sri Lanka.

2. *David Paynter* (1900-75): A prominent Sri Lankan painter.

3. *George Keyt* (1901-93): Most world famous Sri Lankan painter. He gave powerful artistic expression to themes like love and passion, making Hindu and Buddhist folk literature the subject.

Some of his works:

Kusum Reading (1968)—Oil paint on canvas, 39.5x26 ins.

The Horseman (1957)—Oil paint on canvas, 34x16 ins.

4. *Thilak Abesingha*: He is also among the small number of Sri Lankan painters who have gained international attention. He has done some paintings and murals in a number of buildings housing government departments and other organizations.

5. *Chandraguptha Thenuwara*: A painter who expresses artistically the consequences of the racist war and contemporary social-political crisis in Sri Lanka.

Some of his works:

Thousand Barrels (1999)—Acrylic on plywood.

Thousand Barrels II (1999)—Oil paint on canvas.

The Victor

Also interviewed by the WSWS.

6. *Jagath Weerasingha*: Through his brush he also directly expresses the contemporary crisis in Sri Lanka, including the racist war.

David Walsh, WSWS arts editor (US), and Joanne Laurier, WSWS contributing writer (US)

Favorite novels:

1. *Berlin Alexanderplatz*, Alfred Döblin
2. *An American Tragedy*, Theodore Dreiser
3. *Journey to the End of the Night*, Louis-Ferdinand Céline
4. *The Ragazzi*, Pier Paolo Pasolini
5. *The Thief's Journal*, Jean Genet
6. *Native Son* (first half), Richard Wright
7. *The Centaur*, John Updike
8. *The Leopard*, Giuseppe di Lampedusa
9. *Tender is the Night*, F. Scott Fitzgerald
10. *Nadja*, André Breton

Honorable mention: Collected Stories, Isaac Babel; *The Death Ship*, B. Traven; *The Evening Sun Turned Crimson*, Herbert Huncke; *Kolyma Tales*, Varlam Shalamov; *Letters to Milena*, Franz Kafka; *Sabbath's Theater*, Philip Roth; *Serenade*, James M. Cain; *The Sun Also Rises*, Ernest Hemingway; *Swann's Way*, Marcel Proust; *The Underdogs*, Mariano Azuela

Favorite poets:

1. Pier Paolo Pasolini
2. Vladimir Mayakovsky
3. André Breton
4. Ezra Pound
5. Osip Mandelstam
6. Bertolt Brecht
7. Louis Zukovsky
8. Thomas Hardy
9. Furugh Farrukhzad
10. W. B. Yeats

Favorite plays:

1. *Baal*, Bertolt Brecht
2. *Saved*, Edward Bond
3. *Katzelmacher*, R.W. Fassbinder
4. *Pioneers of Ingolstadt*, Marie-Luise Fleisser
5. *Pandora's Box*, Frank Wedekind
6. *Heartbreak House*, George Bernard Shaw
7. *Kasimir and Karoline*, Ödön von Horváth
8. *The Hostage*, Brendan Behan
9. *The Maids*, Jean Genet

10. *Hunting Scenes from Lower Bavaria*, Martin Sperr

Honorable mention: Franz Xaver Kroetz, Staller's Farm

Favorite non-fiction works:

1. *Literature and Revolution (Revolution Betrayed, My Life)*, Leon Trotsky
2. *Communicating Vessels*, André Breton
3. *The Interpretation of Dreams*, Sigmund Freud
4. *Modern Art: nineteenth and twentieth Centuries*, Meyer Schapiro
5. *Art as the Cognition of Life*, Aleksandr Voronsky
6. *Saint Genet* (first sixty or so pages), Jean-Paul Sartre
7. *Memoirs of a revolutionary, 1901-1941*, Victor Serge
8. *Aden Arabie*, Paul Nizan
9. *Sanity, Madness and the Family*, R. D. Laing
10. *Charles Baudelaire: A Lyric Poet in the Era of High Capitalism*, Walter Benjamin

Honorable mention: The ABC of Reading, Ezra Pound; *The American Cinema: Directors and Directions, 1929-1968*, Andrew Sarris; *The Autobiography of Big Bill Haywood*, William D. Haywood; *H. L. Mencken's Smartset Criticism*; *One Long Night*, Jan Valtin; *The Prophet Armed*, Isaac Deutscher; *The Romantics*, E. P. Thompson; *The Struggle for Equality*, James McPherson; *Ten Days that Shook the World*, John Reed; *The Young Hegel*, Georg Lukács

Favorite filmmakers of the silent era:

1. Charles Chaplin
2. D.W. Griffith
3. Buster Keaton
4. Sergei Eisenstein
5. Fritz Lang
6. Erich von Stroheim
7. F. W. Murnau
8. Robert Flaherty
9. Carl Theodor Dreyer
10. Mack Sennett

Favorite filmmakers 1930-1980:

This list necessarily excludes many great figures.

1. Orson Welles
2. R. W. Fassbinder
3. Pier-Paolo Pasolini
4. Jean-Luc Godard
5. Robert Bresson
6. Howard Hawks
7. Luchino Visconti
8. Alfred Hitchcock
9. Douglas Sirk
10. John Ford

Favorite European films:

1. *Mother Küsters Goes to Heaven* (R.W. Fassbinder)
2. *Accattone* (Pier Paolo Pasolini)
3. *Mouchette* (Robert Bresson)
4. *Contempt* (Jean-Luc Godard)
5. *Ossessione* (Luchino Visconti)
6. *The Passenger* (Michelangelo Antonioni)
7. *La Signora di Tutti* (Max Ophuls)
8. *8 ½* (Federico Fellini)
9. *The Mirror* (Andrei Tarkovsky)
10. *Mr. Hulot's Holiday* (Jacques Tati)

Honorable mention: Open City (Roberto Rossellini); *The Rules of the Game* (Jean Renoir)

Favorite American films:

1. *Touch of Evil* (Orson Welles)
2. *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* (Howard Hawks)
3. *Imitation of Life* (Douglas Sirk)

4. *Band of Angels* (Raoul Walsh)
5. *Johnny Guitar* (Nicholas Ray)
6. *Mildred Pierce* (Michael Curtiz)
7. *Vertigo* (Alfred Hitchcock)
8. *The Naked Spur* (Anthony Mann)
9. *The Searchers* (John Ford)
10. *The General* (Buster Keaton)

Favorite female film actors:

1. Marilyn Monroe
2. Claudia Cardinale
3. Louise Brooks
4. Lillian Gish
5. Marlene Dietrich
6. Maureen O'Hara
7. Julie Christie
8. Anna Magnani
9. Greta Garbo
10. Barbara Sukowa

Favorite male film actors:

1. James Stewart
2. Cary Grant
3. Peter Lorre
4. Marlon Brando
5. Charles Laughton
6. Terence Stamp
7. Dirk Bogarde
8. John Garfield
9. Sterling Hayden
10. Orson Welles

Here are a few of the many other serious artistic or intellectual personalities who ought not to go unmentioned:

1. Antonin Artaud: director-actor
2. Maria Callas: singer
3. Sergei Esenin: poet
4. Glenn Gould: pianist
5. Umm Kulthum: singer
6. Werner Schroeter: filmmaker
7. El Lissitzky: painter
8. Jean Seberg: actor
9. Benjamin Péret: poet-revolutionist
10. Hannah Höch: photomontagist



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