

my culture fix

The singer lets us into her cultural life

Ute Lemper



My favourite author or book

Paulo Coelho's *The Alchemist*. Its spiritual wisdom and life lessons are constant sources of inspiration for me.

The book I'm reading

I am working on my memoir. Reading and rereading my life's many stories has been an emotional and spiritual journey.

The book I wish I had written

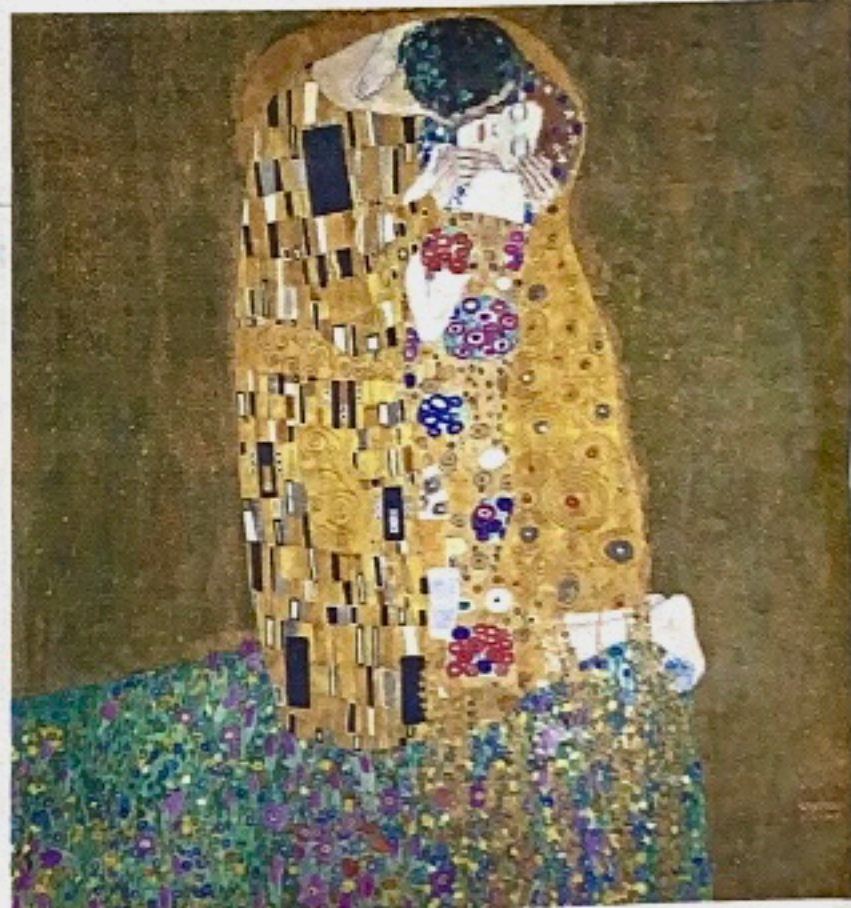
Hermann Hesse's *Siddhartha*, a book that changed my life as a young person and still resonates today. It always reminds me that the journey, as difficult as it may be, is the goal.

The book I couldn't finish

The Waves by Virginia Woolf. Her

Ute Lemper's new album *Time Traveler* is out now

Gustav Klimt's *The Kiss*. Below: Bruce Springsteen



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modernist style took me through a wordy maze that made it impossible to stay connected to the characters.

The book I'm ashamed I haven't read
My daughter's favourite book since she was a teenager is *Moby-Dick*. I need to read it to share her great passion.

My favourite film
All That Jazz by Bob Fosse. It was a turning point in my life. I discovered a new aesthetic in theatre and dance.

My favourite play
Bruce Springsteen's *Springsteen on Broadway* was one of the best theatrical experiences. It was a mind-blowing, vulnerable, personal journey into his life and soul.

The box set that I'm hooked on
I love PBS's *New York: An Illustrated History*. I have lived in Manhattan for 25 years and am stunned by its evolution.

My favourite TV series
I loved *Homeland*. But I find myself just wasting precious time that might be better spent with myself or the family. Watching these shows is such an escape into the nothing.

My favourite piece of music
Is it Erik Satie's *Gymnopédies* or the string quartets from Ravel and Debussy? Is it *The Dark Side of the Moon* by Pink Floyd or *Ordinary People* by John Legend? Is it Barbra Streisand singing *People* or Sarah Vaughan singing *My Funny Valentine*? My father loved Mahler's symphonies. I feel his presence through the pieces' beautiful movements.

The last film that made me cry and laugh
Steven Spielberg's *The Fabelmans*. It's a truly wonderful work of classic cinema.

The poem that saved me
Mary Oliver's poem *The Uses of Sorrow* is deeply meaningful to me.

The instrument I play
The piano, to write my songs.

The instrument I wish I'd learnt
The cello, a gorgeous, haunting instrument.

The music that cheers me up
Earth, Wind and Fire's music brings me back to my youth.

If I could own one painting it would be...
The Kiss by Gustav Klimt. It is completion and beauty. Francis Bacon, though, expresses the haunting perspective of a disturbed mind and a lost soul.

My guiltiest cultural pleasure
I paint, possibly not well, but I create inner visions and scenarios of people, lost in their lives and cities in oil on canvas. I use a rough brushstroke and indulge in wild, sometimes erotic, sensual visual adventures, as if I need to be uncensored and free, on canvas.

I'm having a fantasy dinner party, I'll invite these artists and authors...
Stevie Wonder, Charles Bukowski and Simone de Beauvoir.

And I'll put on this music...
Kind of Blue by Miles Davis.

The shows I'm looking forward to
I want to go back to see *Leopoldstadt* by Tom Stoppard. I was deeply touched, it has a lot of parallels to my work. My *Songs for Eternity*, songs from the ghettos and concentration camps, focus on the loss of dignity and survival during the Holocaust.

The play I walked out of
Moulin Rouge! The Musical on Broadway. It's a ridiculous parade of hits sewn together into an unbearable audio experience.

Overrated
While I love many of Quentin Tarantino's films, *Kill Bill* was a demonstration of gratuitous violence.

Underrated
Hiatus Kaiyote have a unique, cutting-edge funk that should have more mainstream acknowledgment. The lead singer and guitarist, Nai Palm, is a force of nature.

