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Quotes about Music

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Music, the greatest good that mortals know, And all of heaven we have below.

- Addison, Joseph

Nothing is capable of being well set to music that is not nonsense.

- Addison, Joseph

Mozart has the classic purity of light and the blue ocean; Beethoven the romantic grandeur which belongs to the storms of air and sea, and while the soul of Mozart seems to dwell on the ethereal peaks of Olympus, that of Beethoven climbs shuddering the storm-beaten sides of a Sinai. Blessed be they both! Each represents a moment of the ideal life, each does us good. Our love is due to both.

- Amiel, Henri Frederic

What we play is life.

- Armstrong, Louis

There is two kinds of music the good and bad. I play the good kind.

- Armstrong, Louis

Today, music heralds... the establishment of a society of repetition in which nothing will

happen anymore.

- Attali, Jacques

A verbal art like poetry is reflective; it stops to think. Music is immediate, it goes on to become.

- Auden, W. H.

Music washes away from the soul the dust of everyday life.

- Auerbach, Berthold

I wish Frank Sinatra would just shut up and sing.

- Bacall, Lauren

There are two golden rules for an orchestra: start together and finish together. The public doesn't give a damn what goes on in between.

- Beecham, Sir Thomas

The English may not like music, but they absolutely love the noise it makes.

- Beecham, Sir Thomas

Great music is that which penetrates the ear with facility and leaves the memory with difficulty. Magical music never leaves the memory.

- Beecham, Sir Thomas

A musicologist is a man who can read music but cannot hear it.

- Beecham, Sir Thomas

She was one of those people who said I don't know anything about music, but I know what I like.

- Beerbohm, Sir Max

Beethoven can write music, thank God, but he can do nothing else on earth.

- Beethoven, Ludwig Van

Music is the mediator between the spiritual and the sensual life.

- Beethoven, Ludwig Van

Music should strike fire from the heart of man, and bring tears from the eyes of woman.

- Beethoven, Ludwig Van

Music hath the charm to soothe a savage beast, but I'd try a revolver first.

- Billings, Josh

Music of all the arts has the most influence on the passions and the legislator should give it the greatest encouragement.

- Bonaparte, Napoleon

Music is the fourth great material want, first food, then clothes, then shelter, then music.

- Bovee, Christian Nevell

It is cruel, you know, that music should be so beautiful. It has the beauty of loneliness and of pain: of strength and freedom. The beauty of disappointment and never-satisfied love. The cruel beauty of nature, and everlasting beauty of monotony.

- Britten, Benjamin

We are aware that the conductor is not really making the music, it is making him -- if he is relaxed, open and attuned, then the invisible will take possession of him; through him, it will reach us.

- Brook, Peter (Stephen Paul)

I've outdone anyone you can name -- Mozart, Beethoven, Bach, Strauss. Irving Berlin, he wrote 1,001 tunes. I wrote 5,500.

- Brown, James

I'm not going to be joining ZZ Top. You know they can't play my stuff. It's too complicated.

- Brown, James

It is a wise tune that knows its own father, and I like my music to be the legitimate offspring of respectable parents.

- Butler, Samuel

It is better to make a piece of music than to perform one, better to perform one than to listen to one, better to listen to one than to misuse it as a means of distraction, entertainment, or acquisition of culture.

- Cage, John

Truly fertile Music, the only kind that will move us, that we shall truly appreciate, will be a Music conducive to Dream, which banishes all reason and analysis. One must not wish first to understand and then to feel. Art does not tolerate Reason.

- Camus, Albert

A lot of people are singing about how screwed up the world is, and I don't think that everybody wants to hear about that all the time.

- Carey, Mariah

If you look deep enough you will see music; the heart of nature being everywhere music.

- Carlyle, Thomas

One is hardly sensible of fatigue while he marches to music.

- Carlyle, Thomas

Song is the heroics of speech.

- Carlyle, Thomas

Music is well said to be the speech of angels; in fact, nothing among the utterances allowed to man is felt to be so divine. It brings us near to the infinite.

- Carlyle, Thomas

It's a marvelous feeling when someone says I want to do this song of yours because they've connected to it. That's what I'm after.

- Carpenter, Mary Chapin

Alas! all music jars when the soul's out of tune.

- Cervantes, Miguel De

Music is the refuge of souls ulcerated by happiness.

- Cioran, E. M.

All good music resembles something. Good music stirs by its mysterious resemblance to the objects and feelings which motivated it.

- Cocteau, Jean

Music hath charms to soothe the savage breast, to soften rocks, or bend a knotted oak.

- Congreve, William

Without music, life is a journey through a desert.

- Conroy, Pat

Canned music is like audible wallpaper.

- Cooke, Alistair

Nothing separates the generations more than music. By the time a child is eight or nine, he has developed a passion for his own music that is even stronger than his passions for procrastination and weird clothes.

- Cosby, Bill

Extraordinary how potent cheap music is.

- Coward, Noel

Don't play what's there, play what's not there.

- Davis, Miles

Good music is very close to primitive language.

- Diderot, Denis

Composers shouldn't think too much -- it interferes with their plagiarism.

- Dietz, Howard

The high note is not the only thing.

- Domingo, Placido

Music can name the unnamable and communicate the unknowable.

- Duffecy, James

Music was invented to confirm human loneliness.

- Durrell, Lawrence

Music is only love looking for words.

- Durrell, Lawrence

Mozart is sweet sunshine.

- Dvorak, Antonin

He who joyfully marches to music in rank and file has already earned my contempt. He has been given a large brain by mistake, since for him the spinal cord would fully suffice. This disgrace to civilization should be done away with at once. Heroism at command, senseless brutality, deplorable love-of-country stance, how violently I hate all this, how despicable and ignoble war is; I would rather be torn to shreds than be a part of so base an action! It is my conviction that killing under the cloak of war is nothing but an act of murder.

- Einstein, Albert

You are the music while the music lasts.

- Eliot, T. S.

I always seem to have a vague feeling that he is a Satan among musicians, a fallen angel in the darkness who is perpetually seeking to fight his way back to happiness.

- Ellis, Havelock

Music causes us to think eloquently.

- Emerson, Ralph Waldo

Music is the only language in which you cannot say a mean or sarcastic thing.

- Erskine, John

I've always felt rock and roll was very, very wholesome music.

- Franklin, Aretha

Americans want grungy people, stabbing themselves in the head on stage. They get a bright bunch like us, with deodorant on, they don't get it.

- Gallagher, Liam

Opera is when a guy gets stabbed in the back and instead of bleeding he sings.

- Gardner, Edward

Perhaps all music, even the newest, is not so much something discovered as something that re-emerges from where it lay buried in the memory, inaudible as a melody cut in a disc of flesh. A composer lets me hear a song that has always been shut up silent within me.

- Genet, Jean

True music must repeat the thought and inspirations of the people and the time. My people are Americans and my time is today.

- Gershwin, George

Sounds like the blues are composed of feeling, finesse, and fear.

- Gibbons, Billy

A song will outlive all sermons in the memory.

- Giles, Henry

The effects of good music are not just because it's new; on the contrary music strikes us more the more familiar we are with it.

- Goethe, Johann Wolfgang Von

You're talking to someone who really understands rock music.

- Gore, Tipper

I know only two tunes. One them is Yankee Doodle and the other isn't.

- Grant, Ulysses S.

A jazz musician is a juggler who uses harmonies instead of oranges.

- Green, Benny

When Mozart was composing at the end of the eighteenth century, the city of Vienna was so quiet that fire alarms could be given verbally, by a shouting watchman mounted on top of St. Stefan's Cathedral. In twentieth-century society, the noise level is such that it keeps knocking our bodies out of tune and out of their natural rhythms. This ever-increasing assault of sound upon our ears, minds, and bodies adds to the stress load of civilized beings trying to live in a highly complex environment.

- Halpern, Steven

Words are poor interpreters in the realms of emotion. When all words end, music begins; when they suggest, it realizes; and hence is the secret of its strange, inexpressible power.

- Haweis, H. R.

Music and dancing (the more the pity) have become so closely associated with ideas of riot and debauchery among the less cultivated classes, that a taste for them, for their own sakes, can hardly be said to exist, and before they can be recommended as innocent or safe amusements, a very great change of ideas must take place.

- Herschel, Sir John

I am fond of music I think because it is so amoral. Everything else is moral and I am after something that isn't. I have always found moralizing intolerable.

- Hesse, Hermann

It is the stretched soul that makes music, and souls are stretched by the pull of opposites --opposite bents, tastes, yearnings, loyalties. Where there is no polarity --where energies flow smoothly in one direction --there will be much doing but no music.

- Hoffer, Eric

Without Elvis, none of us could have made it.

- Holly, Buddy

Take a music bath once or twice a week for a few seasons, and you will find that it is to the soul what the water-bath is to the body.

- Holmes, Oliver Wendell

Country music is three chords and the truth.

- Howard, Harlan

Classical music is the kind we keep thinking will turn into a tune.

- Hubbard, Elbert

Music expresses that which can not be said and on which it is impossible to be silent

- Hugo, Victor

Berlioz says nothing in his music, but he says it magnificently.

- Huneker, James G.

After silence that which comes nearest to expressing the inexpressible is music.

- Huxley, Aldous

I was a veteran before I was a teenager.

- Jackson, Michael

The history of a people is found in its songs.

- Jellinek, George

I think music in itself is healing. It's an explosive expression of humanity. It's something we are all touched by. No matter what culture we're from, everyone loves music.

- Joel, Billy

It is from the blues that all that may be called American music derives its most distinctive characteristics.

- Johnson, James Weldon

Difficult do you call it, Sir? I wish it were impossible.

- Johnson, Samuel

It is the only sensual pleasure without vice.

- Johnson, Samuel

'Tis the common disease of all your musicians that they know no mean, to be entreated, either to begin or end.

- Jonson, Ben

Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard are sweeter.

- Keats, John

Music is the vernacular of the human soul.

- Latham, Geoffrey

I resent performing for frisking idiots who don't know anything.

- Lennon, John

Since music is a language with some meaning at least for the immense majority of mankind, although only a tiny minority of people are capable of formulating a meaning in it, and since it is the only language with the contradictory attributes of being at once intelligible and untranslatable, the musical creator is a being comparable to the gods, and

music itself the supreme mystery of the science of man, a mystery that all the various disciplines come up against and which holds the key to their progress.

- Levi-Strauss, Claude

The musical emotion springs precisely from the fact that at each moment the composer withholds or adds more or less than the listener anticipates on the basis of a pattern that he thinks he can guess, but that he is incapable of wholly divining. If the composer withholds more than we anticipate, we experience a delicious falling sensation; we feel we have been torn from a stable point on the musical ladder and thrust into the void. When the composer withholds less, the opposite occurs: he forces us to perform gymnastic exercises more skillful than our own.

- Levi-Strauss, Claude

Just as certain selections of music will nourish your physical body and your emotional layer, so other musical works will bring greater health to your mind.

- Lingerman, Hal A.

I have no pleasure in any man who despises music. It is no invention of ours: it is a gift of God. I place it next to theology. Satan hates music: he knows how it drives the evil spirit out of us.

- Luther, Martin

Next to theology I give music the highest place of honor.

- Luther, Martin

People whose sensibility is destroyed by music in trains, airports, lifts, cannot concentrate on a Beethoven Quartet.

- Lutoslawski, Witold

A woman's two cents worth is worth two cents in the music business.

- Lynn, Loretta

There is something suspicious about music, gentlemen. I insist that she is, by her nature, equivocal. I shall not be going too far in saying at once that she is politically suspect.

- Mann, Thomas

We fight our way through the massed and leveled collective safe taste of the Top 40, just looking for a little something we can call our own. But when we find it and jam the radio to hear it again it isn't just ours -- it is a link to thousands of others who are sharing it with us. As a matter of a single song this might mean very little; as culture, as a way of life, you can't beat it.

- Marcus, Greil

Modern music is as dangerous as narcotics.

- Mascagni, Pietro

The opera is to music what a bawdy house is to a cathedral.

- Mencken, H. L.

Music is a beautiful opiate, if you don't take it too seriously.

- Miller, Henry

Such sweet compulsion doth in music lie.

- Milton, John

Music is spiritual. The music business is not.

- Morrison, Van

Like everything else in nature, music is a becoming, and it becomes its full self, when its sounds and laws are used by intelligent man for the production of harmony, and so made the vehicle of emotion and thought.

- Mungers, Theodore

Rock 'n Roll is an asylum for emotional idiots.

- Neville, Richard

A good composer is slowly discovered a bad composer is slowly found out.

- Newman, Ernest

Only sick music makes money today.

- Nietzsche, Friedrich

Without music, life would be a mistake.

- Nietzsche, Friedrich

Without music, life would be an error. The German imagines even God singing songs

- Nietzsche, Friedrich

I often thought that if there had been a good rap group around in those days, I might have chosen a career in music instead of politics.

- Nixon, Richard M.

Wagner's music is better than it sounds.

- Nye, Bill

Rock 'n Roll is monotony tinged with hysteria.

- Packard, Vance

Music is your own experience, your own thoughts, your wisdom. If you don't live it, it won't come out of your horn. They teach you there's a boundary line to music. But, man, there's no boundary line to art.

- Parker, Charlie

All art constantly aspires towards the condition of music.

- Pater, Walter

You don't need any brains to listen to music.

- Pavarotti, Luciano

Music and woman I cannot but give way to, whatever my business is.

- Pepys, Samuel

Music is the movement of sound to reach the soul for the education of its virtue.

- Plato

For the introduction of a new kind of music must be shunned as imperiling the whole state; since styles of music are never disturbed without affecting the most important political institutions.

- Plato

Medicine to produce health must examine disease; and music, to create harmony must investigate discord.

- Plutarch

The author's conviction on this day of New Year is that music begins to atrophy when it departs too far from the dance; that poetry begins to atrophy when it gets too far from

music; but this must not be taken as implying that all good music is dance music or all poetry lyric. Bach and Mozart are never too far from physical movement.

- Pound, Ezra

There once was a brainy baboon who always breathed down a bassoon for he said, It appears that in billions of years I shall certainly hit on a tune.

- Pound, Ezra

I don't know anything about music. In my line you don't have to.

- Presley, Elvis

If you can walk you can dance. If you can talk you can sing.

- Proverb, Zimbabwe

I think my fans will follow me into our combined old age. Real musicians and real fans stay together for a long, long time.

- Raitt, Bonnie

If anyone has conducted a Beethoven performance, and then doesn't have to go to an osteopath, then there's something wrong.

- Rattle, Simon

It was called the Backstreet Market, and it was just like a local hangout. That was where

the kids would drive their cars, hang out with their convertibles and listen to music. That's how we got Backstreet. We put Boys on it, because no matter how old we get, we'll always be boys.

- Richardson, Kevin

Music should never be harmless.

- Robertson, Robbie

Give me a laundry list and I'll set it to music.

- Rossini, Gioacchino Antonio

Music when healthy, is the teacher of perfect order, and when depraved, the teacher of perfect disorder.

- Ruskin, John

Music is essentially useless, as life is.

- Santayana, George

The notes I handle no better than many pianists. But the pauses between the notes --ah, that is where the art resides.

- Schnabel, Artur

If we were all determined to play the first violin we should never have an ensemble.

therefore, respect every musician in his proper place.

- Schumann, Robert

People compose for many reasons: to become immortal; because the pianoforte happens to be open; because they want to become a millionaire; because of the praise of friends; because they have looked into a pair of beautiful eyes; for no reason whatsoever.

- Schumann, Robert

Music is the key to the female heart.

- Seume, Johann G.

The man that hath no music in himself, nor is not moved with concord of sweet sounds, is fit for treasons, stratagems, and spoils. The motions of his spirit are dull as night, and his affections dark as Erebus. Let no such man be trusted.

- Shakespeare, William

Is it not strange that sheep's guts should hale souls out of men's bodies?

- Shakespeare, William

If music be the food of love; play on.

- Shakespeare, William

Hell is full of musical amateurs: music is the brandy of the damned.

- Shaw, George Bernard

Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought.

- Shelley, Percy Bysshe

Jazz will endure just as long people hear it through their feet instead of their brains.

- Sousa, John Philip

Music is good to the melancholy, bad to those who mourn, and neither good or bad to the deaf.

- Spinoza, Baruch (Benedict de)

I like Beethoven, especially the poems.

- Starr, Ringo

The new sound-sphere is global. It ripples at great speed across languages, ideologies, frontiers and races. The economics of this musical Esperanto is staggering. Rock and pop breed concentric worlds of fashion, setting and life-style. Popular music has brought with it sociologies of private and public manner, of group solidarity. The politics of Eden come loud.

- Steiner, George

I think no woman I have had ever gave me so sweet a moment, or at so light a price, as

the moment I owe to a newly heard musical phrase.

- Stendhal, Henri B.

They said, You have a blue guitar, you do not play things as they are. The man replied,
Things as they are changed upon a blue guitar.

- Stevens, Wallace

The trouble with music appreciation in general is that people are taught to have too much respect for music; they should be taught to love it instead.

- Stravinsky, Igor

Too many pieces of music finish too long after the end.

- Stravinsky, Igor

A good composer does not imitate; he steals.

- Stravinsky, Igor

Conductors must give unmistakable and suggestive signals to the orchestra, not choreography to the audience.

- Szell, George

The most perfect expression of human behavior is a string quartet.

- Tate, Jeffrey

I would advise you to keep your overhead down; avoid a major drug habit; play everyday, and take it in front of other people. They need to hear it, and you need them to hear it.

- Taylor, James

Music is the effort we make to explain to ourselves how our brains work. We listen to Bach transfixed because this is listening to a human mind.

- Thomas, Lewis

The pleasure we feel in music springs from the obedience which is in it.

- Thoreau, Henry David

Music is the shorthand of emotion.

- Tolstoy, Count Leo

There are German songs which can make a stranger to the language cry.

- Twain, Mark

We all drew on the comfort which is given out by the major works of Mozart, which is as real and material as the warmth given up by a glass of brandy.

- West, Rebecca

Jazz came to America three hundred years ago in chains.

- Whiteman, Paul

Of course the music is a great difficulty. You see, if one plays good music, people don't listen, and if one plays bad music people don't talk.

- Wilde, Oscar

Musical people are so absurdly unreasonable. They always want one to be perfectly dumb at the very moment when one is longing to be absolutely deaf.

- Wilde, Oscar

If one hears bad music, it is one's duty to drown it by one's conversation.

- Wilde, Oscar

A symphony is a stage play with the parts written for instruments instead of for actors.

- Wilson, Colin

Music is a readily available, highly effective tool that you use to improve both your cognitive and physical abilities.

- Winter, Arthur

There's a basic rule which runs through all kinds of music, kind of an unwritten rule. I don't know what it is. But I've got it.

- Wood, Ron

Hearing often-times the still, sad music of humanity, nor harsh nor grating, though of ample power to chasten and subdue.

- Wordsworth, William

All my concerts had no sounds in them; they were completely silent. People had to make up their own music in their minds!

- Yoko Ono

Music, in performance, is a type of sculpture. The air in the performance is sculpted into something.

- Zappa, Frank

The manner in which Americans consume music has a lot to do with leaving it on their coffee tables, or using it as wallpaper for their lifestyles, like the score of a movie --it's consumed that way without any regard for how and why it's made.

- Zappa, Frank

There are more love songs than anything else. If songs could make you do something we'd all love one another.

- Zappa, Frank

Music is the universal language: it is the same anywhere you go in the world.

- Anonymous



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