

MUSIC QUOTATIONS

Music is made up of a large number of individual sounds, and is either a single melody or a partsong. Johannes Tinctoris, *Dictionary of Music Terms* (c. 1475).

Music is nothing else but wild sounds civilised into time and tune. Thomas Fuller, *History of the Worthies of England* (1662).

Music is the one incorporeal entrance into the higher world of knowledge which comprehends mankind but which mankind cannot comprehend. Ludwig van Beethoven, quoted by Bettina von Arnim, letter to Goethe, 1810.

The only reality in music is the state of mind which it induces in the listener. Stendhal, *Life of Rossini* (1824).

Music is something innate and internal, which needs little nourishment from without, and no experience drawn from life. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Conversations with Eckermann* (1827).

If this word 'music' is sacred and reserved for eighteenth and nineteenth-century instruments, we can substitute a more meaningful term: organisation of sound. John Cage, *Silence* (1961), 'The Future of Music: Credo' (1937).

Music is a complex of activities, ideas and objects that are patterned into culturally meaningful sounds recognised to exist on a level different from secular communication. Anon., quoted in Merriam, *The Anthropology of Music* (1964).

You just pick a chord, go twang, and you've got music. Sid Vicious, quoted in Green, *the Book of Rock Quotes* (1982).

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'. John Cage, *Silence* (1961).

The language of music is common to all generations and nations; it is understood by everybody, since it is understood with the heart. Gioacchino Rossini, quoted in Zanolini, *Biografia de Gioacchino Rossini* (1875).

Music is the universal language of mankind. Christopher North, *Noctes Ambrosianae* (1822-35).

The language of tones belongs equally to all mankind, and melody is the absolute language in which the musician speaks to every heart. Richard Wagner, *Beethoven* (1870).

We must, of course, be careful to avoid the fallacy that music is a 'universal language'. There are many music-communities in the world, though not, probably, as many as there are speech communities. Many of them are mutually unintelligible. Charles Seeger, 'Music and Culture' (1941).

The music of the people ... can be lifted out from beneath the rubbish heaped on top of it, and a higher art can be built upon it. Zoltán Kodály, *Speech*, 1955.

The art of music above all the arts is the expression of the soul of a nation. Ralph Vaughan Williams, quoted in Headington, *The Bodley Head History of Western Music* (1974).

To me the greatest objective is when the composer disappears, the performer disappears, and there remains only the work. Nadia Boulanger, quoted in Kendall, *The Tender Tyrant: Nadia Boulanger* (1976).

I like most music unless it's wrong. Coleman Hawkins, quoted in Dance, *The World of Swing* (1974).

Rock 'n' roll is a means of pulling down the white man to the level of the 'Negro'. It is part of a plot to undermine the morals of the youth of our nation. It is sexualistic, unmoralistic, and the best way to bring people of both races together. Asa Carter, member of the North Alabama White Citizen's Council, quoted in *The Melody Maker*, 1956.

Music defiles the service of religion. John of Salisbury c. 1160, quoted in *The Oxford History of Music* (1929).

Among all the arts, music alone can be purely religious. Madame de Staël, *Corinne* (1807).

We must cultivate a sense of musical citizenship: why should not the musician be the servant of the State and build national monuments like the painter, the writer or the architect? Ralph Vaughan Williams, quoted in Machlis, *Introduction to Contemporary Music* (1963).

These Beatles are completely anti-Christ. They are preparing our teenagers for riot and ultimate revolution against our Christian Republic. Rev. David Noebel, Sermon to his congregation in Claremont, California, quoted in Palmer, *All You Need is Love* (1976).

Don't just move to the music, listen to what I'm saying. Bob Marley, quoted in Johnson and Pines, *Reggae* (1982).

To members of modern western societies, the concept of music is normally unproblematic, as is the distinction between music and non-music. Music is generally defined as some sort of pattern of organised sounds, deliberately created in order to produce certain effects. Thus it is distinguished from naturally or randomly occurring sound, or noise, even though the latter may sometimes be similar to the elements of music. And apart from some avant-garde composers and 'free' improvisers who deliberately set out to challenge the conventions, this sort of commonsense definition is good enough for most people, most of the time. ...

But while such an approach might be adequate in western societies, it may well not be universally applicable, since the definition of music on which it is based is specific to these societies. Peter J. Martin, *Sounds and Society* (1995).

Tiv, Yoruba, Igbo, Efik, Birom, Hausa, assorted Jarawa dialects, Idoma, Eggon, and a dozen other languages from the Nigeria-Cameroons area do not yield a word for music gracefully. It is easy to talk about song and dance, singers and drummers, blowing a flute, beating a bell, but the general terms 'music' and 'musician' require long and awkward circumlocutions that still fall short, usually for lack of abstraction. Charles Keil, *Tiv Song* (1979).

The essential misapprehension about popular music is that it is anything other than a totally capitalistic enterprise. Lester Bangs, quoted in Palmer, *All You Need is Love* (1976).

'Music' is a very small word to encompass something that takes as many forms as there are cultural or subcultural identities. And like all small words, it brings a danger with it. When we speak of 'music', we are easily led to believe that there is *something* that corresponds to the word – something 'out there', so to speak, just waiting for us to give it a name. But when we speak of music we are really talking about a multiplicity of activities and experiences; it is only the fact that we call them all 'music' that makes it seem obvious that they belong together. *Nicholas Cook, Music: a very short introduction* (1998).

Music is autonomous; it develops according to its own laws. This is one of the axioms of musical aesthetics. Alan Walker, *An Anatomy of Musical Criticism* (1966).

If we want to understand the different musics of the world ... we need to understand them on their own terms – that is, as the various music-cultures themselves do. We also need a way to talk about music as a whole without imposing ideas of music inappropriately. To start, we can ask whether there is something about music common to all music-cultures, whether the people in those cultures are aware of it or not. Jeff Todd Titon, *Worlds of Music* (2002).