

Gustav Mahler

Quotes

*World, Men, Music, Tradition, Ashes, Writing, Differences, Symphony,
Composer, Spring, Perfect, Composing, Bother, Giving, Musician, Form, Fate,
Musical, Way, Ideas*

Tradition is not the worship of ashes, but the preservation of fire.

~Gustav Mahler

If a composer could say what he had to say in words he would not bother trying to say it in music.

~Gustav Mahler

Beauty and fullness of tone can be achieved by having the whole orchestra play with high clarinets and a carefully selected number of piccolos.

~Gustav Mahler

You must renounce all superficiality, all convention, all vanity and delusion.

~Gustav Mahler

The point is not to take the world's opinion as a guiding star but to go one's way in life and working unerringly, neither depressed by failure nor seduced by applause.

~Gustav Mahler

What is best in music is not to be found in the notes.

~Gustav Mahler

A symphony must be like the world. It must contain everything.

~Gustav Mahler

But it's peculiar, as soon as I am in the midst of nature and by myself, everything that is base and trivial vanishes without trace. On such days nothing scares me; and this helps me again and again.

~Gustav Mahler

I am hitting my head against the walls, but the walls are giving way.

~Gustav Mahler

If you think you're boring your audience, go slower not faster.

~Gustav Mahler

In its beginnings, music was merely chamber music, meant to be listened to in a small space by a small audience.

~Gustav Mahler

Melodic invention is one of the surest signs of a divine gift.

~Gustav Mahler

In Bach, the vital cells of music are united as the world is in God.

~Gustav Mahler

I am thrice homeless, as a native of Bohemia in Austria, as an Austrian among Germans, and as a Jew throughout the world. Everywhere an intruder, never welcomed.

~Gustav Mahler

There is a world of difference between a Mahler eighth note and a normal eighth note.

~Gustav Mahler

Tradition is tending the flame, not worshipping the ashes.

~Gustav Mahler

Spring won't let me stay in this house any longer! I must get out and breathe the air deeply again.

~Gustav Mahler

Only when I experience do I compose - only when I compose do I experience.

~Gustav Mahler

With the coming of spring, I am calm again.

~Gustav Mahler

A full cup of wine at the right time is worth more than all the kingdoms of this earth!

~Gustav Mahler

To write a symphony is, for me, to construct a world.

~Gustav Mahler

I was a crazy young man who let himself be blinded by his passions and obeyed only the impulses of the moment.

~Gustav Mahler

A true personality . . . is like a robust organism that, with unconscious sureness, seeks out and digests the nourishment appropriate to it and vigorously rejects that which is unsuitable.

~Gustav Mahler

The impressions of the spiritual experiences gave my future life its form and content.

~Gustav Mahler

I beg of you... never assume an inner or an outer pose, never a disguise.

~Gustav Mahler

What I wanted and what I visualized while composing has not always been realized.

~Gustav Mahler

All that is not perfect down to the smallest detail is doomed to perish.

~Gustav Mahler

Behind me the branches of a wasted and sterile existence are cracking.

~Gustav Mahler

Never let oneself be guided by the opinion of one's contemporaries.
Continue steadfastly on one's way.

~Gustav Mahler

It is strange how one feels drawn forward without knowing at first where one is going.

~Gustav Mahler

Discipline, work. Work, discipline.

~Gustav Mahler

Don't bother looking at the view - I have already composed it.

~Gustav Mahler

It's not just a question of conquering a summit previously unknown, but of tracing, step by step, a new pathway to it.

~Gustav Mahler

Both my marriages were failures! Number one departed, and number two stayed

~Gustav Mahler

The call of love sounds very hollow among these immobile rocks.

~Gustav Mahler

Destiny smiles upon me but without making me the least bit happier.

~Gustav Mahler

I don't choose what I compose. It chooses me.

~Gustav Mahler

It should be one's sole endeavor to see everything afresh and create it

anew.

~Gustav Mahler

I also had a brother who was like me a musician and a composer. A man of great talent, far more gifted than I. He died very young... he killed himself in the prime of his life.

~Gustav Mahler

It is easier to achieve a desired result in short pieces.

~Gustav Mahler

Fortunately, something always remains to be harvested. So let us not be idle.

~Gustav Mahler

To judge a composer's work, one must consider it as a whole.

~Gustav Mahler

The real art of conducting consists in transitions.

~Gustav Mahler

An operetta is simply a small and gay opera.

~Gustav Mahler

The further the music develops, the more complex the apparatus used by the composer to express his thoughts becomes.

~Gustav Mahler

Don't bother to look, I've composed all this already.

~Gustav Mahler

God can only be comprehended as Love.

~Gustav Mahler

When I have reached a summit, I leave it with great reluctance, unless it is to reach for another, higher one.

~Gustav Mahler

I don't let myself get carried away by my own ideas; I abandon 19 out of 20 of them every day.

~Gustav Mahler

In the theatrical works we love and admire the most, the ending of the drama generally takes place offstage.

~Gustav Mahler

The spirit can assert itself only through the medium of clear form.

~Gustav Mahler

I hope you will no longer accuse me of a lack of delicacy. as I now count on your understanding.

~Gustav Mahler

Even if people censure me, they should do so hat in hand.

~Gustav Mahler

It is always the same with me; only when I experience something do I compose, and only when composing do I experience! After all, a musician's nature can hardly be expressed in words.

~Gustav Mahler

Life's been nothing but paperwork.

~Gustav Mahler

I live like a Hottentot. I cannot exchange one sensible word with anyone.

~Gustav Mahler

Tradition is laziness.

~Gustav Mahler

The longer you live and the more you learn, the more clearly you will feel the difference between the few men who are truly great and the mere virtuosi.

~Gustav Mahler

If I weren't the way I am, I shouldn't write my symphonies.

~Gustav Mahler

I have become a different person. I don't know whether this person is better, he certainly is not happier.

~Gustav Mahler

Tradition is the spreading of fire and not the veneration of ashes.

~Gustav Mahler

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- Bother Quotes
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