

Harrison Birtwistle

Quotes

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I think music has gone through a period of something very severe, rather radical, rather the way painting did with cubism.

~Harrison Birtwistle

I didn't have a record player.

~Harrison Birtwistle

I don't have ideas so much as there are things which constantly evolve... there are various threads or layers, if you like, which change.

~Harrison Birtwistle

When I was confronted with official tuition, the academic thing, I could see no relationship whatever between that and the music I'd been writing since I was 11.

~Harrison Birtwistle

The opera tells the story with all the built-in contradictions and from many different angles.

~Harrison Birtwistle

The theatre only knows what it's doing next week, not like the opera, where they say: 'What are we going to do in five years' time?' A completely different attitude.

~Harrison Birtwistle

Music is such a problem in the time it takes.

~Harrison Birtwistle

People say my music is English. I don't know what it is. Maybe it's not me writing English music, but that English music is becoming more like me.

~Harrison Birtwistle

Minimalism now is a reaction to what came before. It's absolutely of its

time. Music moved into the set theory thing, and moved out of it.

~Harrison Birtwistle

The thing about influence is that any composer worth anything will give you the same names.

~Harrison Birtwistle

My operas and my theatre works are very formal pieces.

~Harrison Birtwistle

I'm not an architectural composer.

~Harrison Birtwistle

I'm not a music lover in the sense that I look for something to have on. I've never had that attitude to music.

~Harrison Birtwistle

Composing's not voluntary, you know. There's no choice, you're not free. You're landed with an idea and you have responsibility to that idea.

~Harrison Birtwistle

In the end it doesn't matter what you do.

~Harrison Birtwistle

There are rhythmic ideas which sometimes only work up to a point. In writing there are moments when it just comes off the page, it's not just a collection of notes.

~Harrison Birtwistle

It's the irrational things that interest me.

~Harrison Birtwistle

This sounds horribly pretentious, but I like to think that if music hadn't

existed, I could have invented it.

~Harrison Birtwistle

When I was a kid, I wrote music - from the age of 11 until the age of 18.

~Harrison Birtwistle

You either are or you're not.

~Harrison Birtwistle

I don't think there is much American music.

~Harrison Birtwistle

My attitude to writing is like when you do wallpapering, you remember where all the little bits are that don't meet. And then your friends say: It's terrific!

~Harrison Birtwistle

I always write the pieces I want to write.

~Harrison Birtwistle

I think there are influences that you open the door to, and influences that come under the door.

~Harrison Birtwistle

I wrote music as soon as I knew notation.

~Harrison Birtwistle

The piece that had a large influence on me was Turangalila.

~Harrison Birtwistle

One thing I've tried to do in writing music is take on very basic things, very archetypal things.

~Harrison Birtwistle

When I dealt with set theory, I could never make it be the music that I wanted.

~Harrison Birtwistle

My operas usually come from musical ideas rather than ideas about subject matter.

~Harrison Birtwistle

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