

# Leonard Bernstein Quotes

*Music, Art, Men, Writing, Music Is, Artist, Thinking, Believe, Dream, Composer,  
Academic, Musical, Orchestra, Years, Funny, Children, Mind, World, Names,  
Inspiration*

To achieve great things, two things are needed; a plan, and not quite enough time.

~Leonard Bernstein

Music can name the unnameable and communicate the unknowable.

~Leonard Bernstein

This will be our reply to violence: to make music more intensely, more beautifully, more devotedly than ever before.

~Leonard Bernstein

Life without music is unthinkable.

~Leonard Bernstein

It is the artists of the world, the feelers and the thinkers who will ultimately save us; who can articulate, educate, defy, insist, sing and shout the big dreams.

~Leonard Bernstein

The second fiddle. I can get plenty of first violinists, but to find someone who can play the second fiddle with enthusiasm

~Leonard Bernstein

A liberal is a man or a woman or a child who looks forward to a better day, a more tranquil night, and a bright, infinite future.

~Leonard Bernstein

A work of art does not answer questions, it provokes them; and its essential meaning is in the tension between the contradictory answers.

~Leonard Bernstein

I can't live one day without hearing music, playing it , studying it , or thinking about it .

~Leonard Bernstein

I've been all over the world and I've never seen a statue of a critic.

~Leonard Bernstein

Children must receive music instruction as naturally as food, with as much pleasure as they derive from a ball game, and this must happen from the beginning of their lives.

~Leonard Bernstein

To be a success as a Broadway composer, you must be Jewish or gay. I'm both.

~Leonard Bernstein

The joy of music should never be interrupted by a commercial.

~Leonard Bernstein

The gift of imagination is by no means an exclusive property of the artist; it is a gift we all share; to some degree or other all of us, all of you, are endowed with the powers of fantasy.

~Leonard Bernstein

Life without music is meaningless, music without life is academic.

~Leonard Bernstein

I'm no longer quite sure what the question is, but I do know that the answer is Yes.

~Leonard Bernstein

The most difficult instrument to play in the orchestra is second fiddle.

~Leonard Bernstein

From New Year's on the outlook brightens; good humor lost in a mood of failure returns. I resolve to stop complaining.

~Leonard Bernstein

Music, because of its specific and far-reaching metaphorical powers, can name the unnamable and communicate the unknowable.

~Leonard Bernstein

When I am with composers, I say I am a conductor. When I am with conductors, I say I am a composer.

~Leonard Bernstein

I'm not interested in having an orchestra sound like itself. I want it to sound like the composer.

~Leonard Bernstein

Life without music is unthinkable. Life without music is academic. That is why my contact with music is a total embrace.

~Leonard Bernstein

Music, of all the arts, stands in a special region, unlit by any star but its own, and utterly without meaning ... except its own.

~Leonard Bernstein

Mozart's music is constantly escaping from its frame, because it cannot be contained in it.

~Leonard Bernstein

I believe that man's noblest endowment is his capacity to change.

~Leonard Bernstein

Technique is communication: the two words are synonymous in conductors.

~Leonard Bernstein

Any asshole can write a tone-row. It takes a composer to write a tune.

~Leonard Bernstein

In the olden days, everybody sang. You were expected to sing as well as talk. It was a mark of the cultured man to sing.

~Leonard Bernstein

Inspiration is wonderful when it happens, but the writer must develop an approach for the rest of the time... The wait is simply too long.

~Leonard Bernstein

It would be nice to hear someone accidentally whistle something of mine, somewhere, just once.

~Leonard Bernstein

Einstein said that "the most beautiful experience we can have is the mysterious." So why do so many of us try to explain the beauty of music, thus depriving it of its mystery?

~Leonard Bernstein

Elvis is the greatest cultural force in the twentieth century. He introduced the beat to everything, music, language, clothes, it's a whole new social revolution - the 60's comes from it.

~Leonard Bernstein

The 20th century has been a badly written drama, from the beginning.

~Leonard Bernstein

When the study of the arts leads to the adoration of the formula (heaven forbid), we shall be lost.

~Leonard Bernstein

Even experimental composers, revolutionary composers, self-styled radicals are, in writing revolutionary music, recognizing the music that preceded them precisely by trying to avoid it.

~Leonard Bernstein

Conducting is like making love to a hundred people at the same time.

~Leonard Bernstein

Wine snobbery, of course, is part showmanship, part sophistication, part knowledge, and part bluff

~Leonard Bernstein

If you're a good composer, you steal good steals.

~Leonard Bernstein

I hate you, Richard Wagner . . . but I hate you on my knees.

~Leonard Bernstein

It is hard to think of another composer who so perfectly marries form and passion.

~Leonard Bernstein

Success is all very well as long as you don't inhale.

~Leonard Bernstein

Bernstein has been disclosing musical secrets that have been well known for over 400 years.

~Leonard Bernstein

...we can all shut-up and go back to our caves.

~Leonard Bernstein

Which of my Jewish roots do I follow?

~Leonard Bernstein

I have two answers to everything and one answer to nothing.

~Leonard Bernstein

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