

AJ Harbison Artist Statement

(under 200 words)

Music, for me, is about storytelling. I wrote and illustrated my first story at age 4, and since then I've never looked back. The emotional power of music, as well as its capacity for abstract expression, makes it an ideal medium for me to tell both narrative stories and those that exist as a single snapshot in time. The journeys my music takes are a search for beauty in brokenness, in the space between the already and the not yet.

Stylistically, my music lives at the intersection of concert music and vernacular music, each bringing unique vitality to the other in a language both adventurous and accessible. I often integrate harmonies and rhythms from pop music with theory, instrumentation and performance techniques from the concert music tradition, while drawing forms and structure from both. To me, concert music is a rich language of nuance, complexity and depth, while pop music is a dynamic medium of energy and movement. By combining them into my own individual expression, my goal is to draw from and synthesize the best aspects of each to create an integrated musical experience that takes performers and listeners on an intensely personal yet deeply communal journey.