



The Musical Mind of God

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The Musical Mind of God

by

Mark Rusinko

“We know in part,

We prophecy in part,

We look through a glass darkly”

--the apostle Paul

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The Musical Mind of God ... Chapter 1

The Sounds of Heaven

When individuals are questioned as to what type of music is played in heaven, the response is frequently, “Angels sitting on a cloud playing harps.”

While playing harps is indeed mentioned in the scripture and saints are pictured singing songs in the book of Revelation, the “music of heaven” is far from the typical understanding most people have of the subject.

Certainly, the mind of God is multifaceted and beyond our comprehension in numerous ways. Just seeing the logic associated with the diversity and function of the various life forms on the earth speaks of a supernatural mind that defies explanation.

God is not only a being of unparalleled logic but of unfathomable love. Human beings, that are gifted in the area of logic, frequently lack a depth of feeling for their fellow man. Often cold and distant from the suffering of others, they prefer to remain detached and ponder their thoughts alone and in solitude.

However, the Love of God operates on a completely different level. It seeks to elevate the earthly mind to that of a spiritual mind, which reflects the nature of his being—showing intense compassion, while logic remains intact.

The concept of God having a musical mind presents an extremely interesting study. While many limit their understanding of the music of God to harps and heavenly choirs singing a few short verses, most are unaware of the real complexity and the need for musical expression, which is part of the nature of the Godhead.

More is written than meets the eye in many passages of the scriptures.

In Ezekiel 28 and Isaiah 14, we obtain a glimpse of the musical nature of God. These passages speak of a supernatural being created for the expressed purpose of “creating music” before the Throne of God in heaven.

His original Hebrew name was “Haylel,” which is derived from the root word, “Halal,” a Hebrew word used to show honor and praise toward the Creator of the Universe.

In Ezekiel 28:12, it was said of him; “You sealed up the sum, full of wisdom, perfect in beauty.” The phrase; “Sealed up the sum” means being in the “Image of Perfection.” It was not possible for God to add anything to make him “more perfect.”

Today, we know that being as Lucifer or Satan. Somehow, he changed from defending and uplifting the name of God to becoming “the adversary” of the things of God.

Haylel possessed three musical gifts, which are considered as part of his nature;

One of those musical gifts was “viols.” The word “viols” is used in Isaiah 14:11. It refers to a stringed instrument such as a harp, lute or guitar. Today, we could include the sound of a violin as part of that same family of instruments.

Ezekiel 28:13 lists two more attributes:

...the workmanship of your tabrets and your pipes was prepared in you in the day that you were created.

The word “tabrets” is defined as a drum or a tambourine. In today’s vernacular, that instrument would be referred to as a “percussion instrument,”

Finally, a “pipe” is defined as a flute or fife. Pipes are classified as “wind instruments” in current musical terminology.

It is interesting to note that all of these three distinct sounds, which are listed as part of the nature of “Haylel,” are all present in today’s modern orchestra: The string section, the wind section and the percussion section.

With this understanding of the instruments involved, we can determine what type of music was emanating from this being. Undoubtedly, a type of orchestral music was part of the “sounds of Heaven.” With these different sounds available, the possibilities were endless as to the composition of the various melodies; they ranged from simple to complex.

It is now possible to glimpse from these passages how truly diversified the mind of God is. Musical expression was important to him as part of the spiritual creation. He took the time to create a being filled with the ability to compose and play melodies such that we can only dream about.

We too are created with the ability to create beautiful melodies. Our minds are “wired” to enjoy music. Many functions of the brain are enhanced when listening to or performing various songs. With the myriad of musical styles that exist today it’s a wonder how the “sounds of heaven” could be limited to those playing harps.

The Musical Mind of God ... Chapter 2

Musical gifts to Man

As we continue our search into the “Musical Mind of God,” I would like to focus on how man is instilled with the “creative powers” of God, namely that of music.

Today, those in favor of an evolutionary perspective that the human brain came into existence through a series of mutations, over a span of millennia, without anything but the wind to direct its progress, find it difficult to explain how structured musical sounds can be created in the “grey matter” of the brain through a “random” series of electrical impulses and chemical reactions.

Their conclusions are tenuous at best.

Mindless connections do not produce intricately woven harmonic melodies that require the use of an orchestra with one hundred different instruments to replicate its sound.

The classical music masters of the 18th century freely admit in their writings that they could see and hear whole movements of their compositions, in their minds, before they ever put paper to pen.

They would simply transcribe the note arrangements, already composed, from their mind, onto a musical score. This was not the case on every occasion but it happened with tremendous frequency throughout the course of their careers.

Listen to what Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart said about his method of composing music; “Nor do I hear in my imagination the parts successively, I hear them all at once.” ...All this inventing, this producing, takes place in a pleasing, lively dream.

How can these pitches, which run in ever-changing harmonic intervals and complicated mathematical sequences (music is based on mathematics), be seen and heard in the “minds-eye” without the use of an instrument?

James Taylor, a popular singer of our time, said in a recent interview with Charlie Rose, “Some of the songs I have written are a gift of the gods. I can’t really take credit for them. All I did was just write them down.”

When asked about how they composed their songs, the Bee Gees, a popular singing group back in the 70s, explained in an interview;

“It’s like we sit at the radio and change the channels to select different songs. The problem is not coming up with a song, it’s choosing which songs we want to sing.”

Just like the 18th century musical masters, our modern composers speak to us of the same phenomenon; musical pieces already composed in their minds, ready to be transcribed.

Are these examples of random acts of creativity that occur in the human brain? Is it the result of electrical impulses and chemical reactions coinciding in a unique combination once every millennia or is this a part of the musical mind of God that has been bestowed on man because he is indeed in his image?

As we have seen, the sound of music that occurs in the human mind transcends the physical realm. It resides in the spiritual realm. Its origins come from a supernatural source, a highly ordered and creative spirit that has no boundaries.

The scriptures talk of a “Spirit in man” that is given to him at birth (1 Corinthians 2:11). I feel that it is “within this spirit” that God instilled in man the ability to appreciate the higher arts, and one of those arts is music. Those gifted in this area are able to “tap-into” this reservoir of sound and create beautiful and complex melodies.

Throughout the ages, many musicians have taken credit for their works without ever acknowledging God. Although their creator gave the gift of music to them, they decided to shower themselves with many compliments for their own “great abilities.”

To be fair though, there are indeed those who clearly acknowledged a higher being for their talents.

Johann Sebastian Bach said, “The aim and final end of all music should be none other than the glory of God and the refreshment of the soul.”

Many others have also acknowledged the fact that one must work diligently to develop a particular gift that one possesses. Furthermore, it doesn't always come easy! A high level of commitment is necessary to complete, in terms of our discussion, a musical project.

Thomas Edison declared, “It's one percent inspiration and ninety-nine percent perspiration.”

Johann Brahms said, “Without craftsmanship, inspiration is a mere reed shaken in the wind.”

There are many mysteries associated with this concept we call “music.” Today, we know much more than ever before about how the human brain functions. Nonetheless, scientists, rejecting the spiritual realm entirely, have only scratched the surface in understanding how it is “wired for music.”

The question man needs to ask now is, “Who wired it?”

The Musical Mind of God ... Chapter 3

Music through the Ages

In this installment of the “Musical Mind of God”, I would like to discuss the development of music from the days when David played soothing melodies to calm the tormented mind of Saul, the King of Israel, to the haunting compositions of Andrew Lloyd Weber’s “Phantom of the Opera”. Today, there are virtually no archeological remains of manuscripts depicting ancient musical styles. Although written notes or symbols on a piece of sheepskin, such as the Dead Sea scrolls, may exist in a cave somewhere, unfortunately, it has yet to be found. Therefore, all we can do is guess what kind of musical compositions were developed prior to the first notated examples of music, which were from the Gregorian monks of the Catholic Church.

Nonetheless, there are many examples of musical performances that grace the pages of the bible. David’s love of music is well known even to those who plead ignorance when it comes to knowing anything at all about the scriptures.

The plethora of musical poetry that David produced in the psalms demonstrates how gifted he was in composing songs. In addition, he often instructed other musicians to arrange his compositions for performing with instruments and voices. It is apparent that he either knew or developed some type of musical system to accomplish those things.

David’s son, Solomon, was also well accomplished in the field of music. Like his father, he wrote many psalms, including the “Songs of Solomon,” which read like a modern play or musical. He produced large musical productions, for Temple worship, that would

rival any “Hollywood production” of today. Solomon was very much a creative planner and thinker.

In the dedication of the Temple, he assigned many musicians for the event, **2 Chronicles 5:13** describes:

Also the Levites [which were] the singers, all of them of Asaph, of Heman, of Jeduthun, with their sons and their brethren, [being] arrayed in white linen, having cymbals and psalteries and harps, stood at the east end of the altar, and with them an hundred and twenty priests sounding with trumpets.

It came even to pass, as the trumpeters and singers [were] as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the LORD; and when they lifted up [their] voice with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of musick, and

praised the LORD, [saying], For [he is] good; for his mercy [endureth] for ever: that [then] the house was filled with a cloud, [even] the house of the LORD;

Notice the phrase “to make one sound” in the text. This phrase reflects an effort to have both vocal and instrumental parts playing in harmony.

A modern day example of this would be listening to the Mormon tabernacle choir singing in unison with an instrumental ensemble.

Musical prowess was not limited to David or Solomon. It appears that Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, liked musical productions as well.

*In **Daniel 3:6**, we read about a decree that was pronounced on the people, including Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, for not worshiping the image of Nebuchadnezzar. The decree said; “and whoso shall not fall down and worship the golden image shall the same hour be cast into*

the midst of a burning fiery furnace.” This worship was to take place when the instruments were playing.

*Look at **Daniel 3:7**:*

Therefore at that time, when all the peoples heard the sound of the horn, flute, lyre, trigon, psaltery, bagpipe and all kinds of music, all the peoples, nations and men of every language fell down and worshiped the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up.

*It is interesting to note that the instruments listed in **Daniel 3:7** would produce very pleasing sounds by skilled musicians. “Bagpipes” are even listed in some versions of the text. That sound belongs to the isles of Britain and Scotland.*

One would not consider such an instrument in what is now called Iraq.

Another characteristic of the description in this passage of Daniel is the level of musicality that is revealed in the text. It appears to indicate that the Babylonians would have possessed an understanding of rhythm, harmony and instrumental arranging to produce “all kinds of music.” We can deduce from the instrumentation that the sound was relatively sophisticated. It may not have sounded very different from the styles of music we that we hear today from folk instrument ensembles.

The question frequently arises as to how intelligent or sophisticated ancient civilizations were in relationship to our own. Indeed, it is clear that in many ways, they were not extremely different from our society today. Although we have some obvious technological advantages over them, they also displayed deep levels of thought and achievements of their own; the pyramids of ancient Egypt is one example that to this day still defies explanation. Josephus

says of Abraham, “he taught the Egyptians in mathematics and astronomy.” Not only was he the father of the faithful but a man interested in the sciences! Unfortunately, the sands of time have all but obliterated the memory of ancient civilizations and their accomplishments.

The origins of our present musical theory, or system, began with Greek theorists and philosophers such as Plato and Aristotle.

Music theory is heavily based in mathematics. Pythagoras is credited with discovering that the basic consonant intervals (pleasing sounding harmonies) were produced by simple ratios: 2:1 for the octave, 3:2 for the fifth, and the 4:3 for the fourth.

The Greek discipline of harmonics (how a note sounds) laid the foundation for modern concepts such as notes, intervals, scales and modes.

Greek scales were constructed from tetrachords, groups of four notes spanning a fourth.

Boethius is the main source through which Greek music theory was transmitted to the Middle Ages. In his book, “De Institutione Musica” (The Fundamentals of Music), Boethius discusses three kinds of music: cosmic music, the orderly numerical relationships that control the natural world; human music, which controls the human body and soul; and audible music, produced by voices or instruments. Boethius saw music primarily as a science.

Although some of these musical concepts were interpreted and transmitted to the Middle Ages through the writings of early Christians, others were not rediscovered until the Renaissance period. I mention these concepts briefly just to make the reader aware of the contribution that ancient Greek thought has on modern music. Most people develop a “brain-freeze” when engaging in any lengthy discussion on this topic and they will normally ask for the discussion to move on to another subject.

The first notes written, to paper, that represented specific sounds, began with what is called “Gregorian chant.” This music was linked to the “Mass” in the Catholic Church. It is where the evolution of our written melodies really began.

The Medieval period, from 1150–1400, was marked by written secular music sung by troubadours and others. The Renaissance followed with a reintroduction of Greek music theory, which set the stage for the Baroque and Classical periods.

In all of music history, I feel that the Classical period, which only lasted for 70 years (1750–1820) is the most significant in the development of God’s musical gifts within the mind of man. During this time, there was a tremendous explosion of complicated musical arrangements for both vocal and instrumental genres. Music theory and practice advanced light years ahead

of what had been heard in the previous generations.

From the “Phantom of the Opera” to today’s major motion picture music, all of our modern orchestral arrangements are indebted to the achievements made during the Classical period.

While we may not cherish much of what was written during the Classical era, today’s music, with its numerous styles, is based on the musical advancements of that period.

In this century, we have heard and seen many beautiful “musicals” and performances by numerous accomplished singers and instrumentalists. The current level of sophistication is mind-boggling. People spend their entire lives perfecting their talent and they are indeed able to achieve stardom level. Indeed, it is a far cry from playing a harp or lyre in an ancient king’s palace to singing in a huge stadium today.

Broadway music, such as the score for the “Phantom of the Opera,” contains many beautiful melodies that are played by an orchestra. This music sounds quite different from compositions of the Classical period, which used the same instruments. Each generation, in turn, contributes its own creations to the voluminous musical works of the past. Despite the “digital age” of computers and advanced technologies, this creative spirit continues unabated.

What we have seen in this discussion is that through the ages, humankind’s musical development has been a return to the heavenly sounds emanating from the musically gifted being called “Haylel.” As we developed our inquiry into the “Musical Mind of God,” we discovered that three distinctive sounds were instilled in him and that those sounds closely resemble the sounds of a modern orchestra. It has taken humankind thousands of years to replicate what may have taken only hours or minutes to produce in the spiritual realm.

There is a passage in Job that gives us another insight into the musical nature of God. It is contained in the dialog that God had with Job, when he speaks “out of the whirlwind.”

Job 38:6–7:

Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if you have understanding. who has laid the measures thereof, if you knowest? or who has stretched the line upon it? upon what were the foundation of it fastened or who laid its cornerstone; when the morning stars sang together and the sons of God shouted for joy?

I underlined the last sentence for emphasis because I want to draw attention to what it is saying. It reflects the theme of our discussion: God’s appreciation for music.

This passage is describing the creation of the earth prior to the creation of man. Job is being asked if he was a witness to that event. Can he explain the process by which the earth was created? Did he hear the sounds of the morning stars “sing together” in harmony and the sons of God shouting for joy?

“Hearing the stars sing together” is a revealing statement against the backdrop of the creation; beautiful voices were singing musical masterpieces while the creative power of God was being displayed.

This was a monumental cosmic event. It was not performed privately or in secret but publicly, with tremendous fanfare and musical accompaniment.

It is a beautiful insight into the musical nature of God.

The Musical Mind of God ... Chapter 4

Music in the New Testament

In this final installment of “The Musical Mind of God,” I would like to spend some time with the writings of the New Testament and examine several scriptures pertaining to the gift of music in the Church.

In the book of Corinthians, the apostle Paul talks about the gifts of the Holy Spirit. He wrote about the use and purpose of the gifts in the lives of the brethren. The Corinthians were inexperienced and lacked spiritual maturity in countless ways. Paul had to spend time instructing them about the many facets of the Holy Spirit and helping them to understand the main purpose for receiving the gifts; which was to edify one another.

There are numerous gifts listed in 1 Corinthians 12, from “the word of knowledge” to “the gift of healing”; however, there is no mention of music until chapter fourteen.

1 Corinthians 14:26:

How is it then, brethren? when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying.

Among the five gifts mentioned, the passage shows us that “all” of the members had something to offer the Church, not just one or two individuals.

Secondly, among the gifts, “having a psalm” is mentioned. It is actually listed first in the description of various gifts. Although it may not have been the most important gift, it was certainly expected to be part of the fellowship meeting when the brethren got together.

The letters of Ephesians and Colossians have references to the musical gifts as well;

Ephesians 5:19–20:

Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;

Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;

Colossians 3:16:

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

Paul`s comment in Colossians seems somewhat confusing when he makes the statement: “admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs.” The wording in the King James version is awkward and seems to

imply that they were to correct each other by “singing songs.”

The English definition of the word “admonishing” is a “strong reproof.” Strong`s defines it as: to caution or to reprove gently.

If we separate the phrase “teaching and admonishing one another” from “with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs,” we see that it fits more in context with “teaching” being the means by which gentle correction is applied and “singing spiritual songs”; the means by which praise to God comes.

Hebrews 13:15 *continues the thought and adds the metaphor of “the sacrifice of praise” as opposed to the “sacrifice of bulls and goats.”*

By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.

In the book of Revelation, there are visions of the saints singing songs; these are celebratory songs marking the victory “over the beast”!

Revelation 15:2:

And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God.

And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvelous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints.

Revelation 14:1–3:

And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father’s name written in their foreheads.

And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps:

And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth.

As cryptic as these verses may seem, it is interesting to note the inclusion of music as part of the celebrations.

As we conclude our investigation into “The Musical Mind of God,” we must pay tribute to the Father and the Son for bestowing on us the wonderful gift of music. It is difficult to imagine our world being devoid of its presence. We have been deeply moved and inspired by heartfelt performances of talented musicians throughout our lives. Music somehow lifts our spirit and causes us to appreciate the artistic side of our nature.

*In **Hebrews 2:10–13**, we find a very moving vision of Jesus Christ, the creator of the universe, singing a song of praise to his Father with the Church surrounding him.*

For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.

For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren,

Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee.

We can only imagine what that solo will sound like.

Maybe we can sing with him in harmony someday?

Mark Rusinko



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