

## **Reflection: God as Music**

Choir Service, Cashmere Presbyterian Church,  
Sunday 17 April 2016  
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Last week we talked about how God was like light ... a power, a presence that enlightens, that we depend on utterly, the capacity to see, to experience beauty

God is my light and my salvation, writes the Psalmist

But if God is like light, perhaps God is also like music ... Sing to the Lord a new song, writes the Psalmist. To sing is a primeval, instinctual response to the divine ... and maybe our own singing is simply an echo of God's song. Maybe the very being of God is itself music, a harmony deeper than the universe. Maybe all creation is sustained by the beat and rhythm of God, tunes vibrating at frequencies too slow or too fast for the human ear, but which we can sense with our souls.

Maybe God is like music. Maybe God is song.

John Michael Talbot is a modern-day Christian mystic. He writes

*God is perfect spiritual music.*

*In the Bible's accounts of creation God creates through the Spirit in the Word, followed by light, and then form. All else flows from this basic pattern of sound, light, and form. The mystics would say that this is God's music. But it is not only the music we can hear with the human ears. This music is the perfect harmony of various waves of created energy in sound, light, and form, all animated by God's creative Spirit.*

*Sound and light are simply waves of energy perceived by the two different sense organs of ears and eyes in human beings. Further, even solid physical objects are waves of energy vibrating at various speeds to create a solid form perceptible to the touch. In this all of creation is simply the music of energy waves moving in perfect harmony, proportion, and rhythm.*

*This awesome balance and peaceful harmony is perfectly manifested in the Trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It is perfect logic, but beyond the grasp of logic alone.*

There is a call and response between God and us; as we learn more about who God is and we find our own truth in the light of that.

This is expressed so beautifully in the Psalms. I'd like to read to you today from Psalm 146. Listen for the song of God expressed in this Psalm. Try to imagine this as song, not so much a human piece of music but divine "waves

of energy” to quote Father Talbot. Listen for the Song of God ... in creation, but also in God’s outpouring of himself into human lives and communities. Listen for the rhythms of God’s music:

Psalm 146

Praise is song. Praise is our participation in the person and energy of God. Praise is choosing to live our days in harmony with the inaudible music of God. So praise and justice depend on each other. Creation and salvation are layers of the same music.

A couple of great quotes then we’ll get back to making music rather than just talking about it.

### **Johann Sebastian Bach**

*"I play the notes as they are written, but it is God who makes the music."*

### **Ludwig van Beethoven**

*"Music is a higher revelation than all wisdom and philosophy."*

Martin Luther loved congregational music and considered music next to theology in importance. He also had no problem being blunt, even rude ...

*"When man’s natural ability is whetted and polished to the extent that it becomes an art, then do we note with great surprise the great and perfect wisdom of God in music, which is, after all, His product and His gift; we marvel when we hear music in which one voice sings a simple melody, while three, four, or five other voices play and trip lustily around the voice that sings its simple melody and adorn this simple melody wonderfully with artistic musical effects, thus reminding us of a heavenly dance where all meet in a spirit of friendliness, caress, and embrace. . . .*

*A person who does not regard this as a marvelous creation of God must be a clodhopper indeed and does not deserve to be called a human being; he should be permitted to hear nothing but the braying of asses and the grunting of hogs."*