

Triangles and the concept of the “Harmony of the Spheres”, a discussion with Eduardo Gramaglia

Kathy - *Where/when did the concept of the Music of the Spheres originate? Is it connected with a particular view of the cosmos and man? It was said that Pythagoras could tap into this harmony and others, most notably Kepler explored it in depth. Please touch upon a few points related to the history of this idea.*

Eduardo - As you said today before the Triangles meditation, we are witnessing powerful signs given by the sky. The solstices have been considered sacred seasons from ancient times. And when other signs concur, such as eclipses or certain conjunctions, they become an enlightened time in which the cosmic clock allows steps forward to be taken. This has been especially emphasized by Blavatsky. And we are told that during this period sound was used to accomplish certain effects. The concept of the “Harmony of the Spheres” has too frequently been touched upon from a poetical or mystical point of view, but I am convinced that it has a lot of practical implications for our life and service activities. The ancient Greeks used the word “*kosmos*” to reflect their idea of an organized and mathematical universe which was the product of a cosmic mind or *logos*. For the Pythagoreans, for instance, *kosmos* meant both “*order*” and “*beauty*”. If the Cosmos is mathematically organized, then it behaves like a musical instrument. They had created a musical system which was supposed to be a resemblance of that cosmic order, thus linking the macrocosm with the microcosm. So, the Pythagorean school came up with this concept of the “*Music of the Spheres*” which regards proportion in the movement and distances of the celestial bodies as a form of music. Pythagoras is supposed to have lived more or less 6 centuries before Christ, one century before Gautama Buddha incarnated on earth. By “*sphere*” they meant something like the circular field of movement of a planet, the furthest being the circle of the fixed stars, which included the Zodiac. The “*sound*” of a planet did not depend only on its own vibration, but also on its speed and distance from the others. Their belief that the universe was thus a great musical instrument, and man was a reflection or resemblance of it, led them to think that sound is so powerful. We certainly do not know where this knowledge really came from, although Pythagoras is said to have met the priests in India and Egypt, from whom he might have received his knowledge. We certainly owe the western musical system to the Pythagorean School, which was used by the Greeks, and was later borrowed by the Christian Church. Eventually, this system developed into our present musical system.

Kathy - *Is “the music of the spheres” simply a poetical or mystical symbol, or is it real? How does sound reflect the fact that we are all interconnected?*

Eduardo - When we learn about sound, we are so tempted to believe, as Pythagoras did, that the whole universe is based on numbers and proportions. Nowadays, Acoustics has

thoroughly studied sound, and a wonderful world has emerged, though we know that only the physical wave has been explored. We know that sound is born from a vibration, and considered from the angle of the physical plane, sound is a translation made by the brain, of a certain wave which reaches it. This sound-wave is, loosely put, a regular movement of atoms originated in a vibrating body. A musical instrument has been built in such a way, that it can produce certain complex waves. The simple fact is, that what we hear as “a” sound, is in fact a compound of many sounds. So, a fundamental sound is said to have “overtones”, or “harmonic partials”. This is because sound is a complex wave, composed of lesser waves which are in mathematical relationship with one another. The wonderful thing is that in each sound, all the other sounds of the musical scale are contained. So we have a fundamental sound, the frequency of which has a numerical relationship with all the minor “overtones” of which it is composed. In this network of relationships, we find each “individual note” or “overtone” adding to the quality of the “group note”. And – even more fascinating - each “fundamental sound”, each unity, that wave or frequency containing a group of lesser waves, is in turn a member of another higher system, which is called “tonal system”, made up of chords with a hierarchical relationship with each other. The beauty of this is that it is evident that we have a system in which no individuality makes sense, except by its relationship to the whole. In last week’s Triangles webinar, we heard a beautiful expression: “the dance of the one in the many”, which reflects what Music essentially is. What takes places in the time a piece of music is heard, is nothing but the confirmation of the principle of *unity in diversity*, and the process by which from one sound a whole universe is born, which will eventually return or “be re-absorbed” into that original sound.

And when it comes to why we cannot so simply hear that universal music, we could perhaps speculate. In our modern world, we have become so used to noise, that we take it for granted. In this context, in which silence seems to be the exception, it may be difficult to realize that sound, and even word, might have a creative function. We might have found out through this pandemic that we are “out of tune” with nature. In *Esoteric Psychology*, the Tibetan suggests that sensitivity is not anything one can be trained in, the fact is that *all women and men are sensitive by nature*. So when it comes to the realization that a universal symphony surrounds us, we might find in silence, in *inner* silence, a key. The importance of vigilance is beautifully expressed by the Agni Yoga teachings, where we read “*that being on guard fills us with the light of new possibilities*” (*Community New Era*, 152).

Kathy - *The original meaning of the Delphic injunction to “Know thyself” pointed to one’s part within the larger whole and the recognition that everything has its own note or sound to contribute. This understanding has application to the Triangles work--as each Triangles worker comes to know him or herself, to perfect their instrument, they become more fully able to contribute to the effectiveness of the network.*

Eduardo - When I was doing classical studies at university, I became particularly interested in the Oracles of Antiquity. What did the famous Delphic injunction "*know thyself*" mean, I wondered? At that time, I had the idea of an "introspective" self-knowledge, such as getting to know one's weaknesses, not in a different way than modern Psychology does. The Temple of Apollo at Delphi had two frontispieces: on one the phrase "*know thyself*" was carved; on the other, a particularly meaningful one: "*nothing too much*", or, "choose the middle path", loosely translated. But during a Greek Philology class, a Professor explained to me that the fact of "knowing oneself" within the context of Greek Philosophy had nothing to do with finding faults in oneself. Rather, it pointed to one's function within the whole, which by the way was the meaning of "Justice" in Greek, more related to what we call "Balance" or "Harmony" nowadays, and which conveys the idea of a note that adds to the harmony of the whole. He even spoke of the "network" we all form part of. By the way, when we speak of "harmony", I think it is useful to understand that it comes from the Greek verb "*harmoza*", which means something like "to fit in the whole", as a piece adjusted to an entire mechanism. So when we say that something is "harmonious" we are not only saying that it is beautiful, but that it correctly fulfills its part in the whole. In musical terms, "harmony" is the study of how chords relate to each other, so that a series of principles governing their "right relationships" is established. Perhaps this all suggests that we, as individualities, are like *overtones* of a major group sound. The concept of the "Music of the Spheres" is based on the fact that sound permeates all forms: the planet has its own note or sound, as each atom, and each human being or group sounds its own chord for the simple fact of being, and all chords contribute to the Great Symphony. However, some people fear that their individualities may be "lost" in a group.

Kathy - Some people fear the loss of their "individuality" when confronted with the idea of a spiritual group. In what way does Music suggest that our own individual notes are not lost, but rather serve to contribute and enrich the greater group life? As you are a musician and work within a symphony what has this experience taught you about the contributions that a single instrument can add to the whole in a symphony?

Eduardo - The great composers had that outstanding ability to paint ideas into Music. When we have the opportunity to see a musical score of a Symphony, for example, we notice that quite a few individual contributions of certain instruments are not really heard, even when they are written in the Music. In a great Symphony we hear a massive sound, and it requires great training to hear isolated instruments. One may wonder, why did a composer bother to write a melody for the clarinet, which cannot be heard when lost in that massive sound? The point is, if we took that melody out, the result would be completely different. So we might not distinguish that note within the sound of the whole, but we can be sure that it adds to the quality and beauty of the whole. Without it, the global sound, that of the group, would be different, and would lack something, even when we can't distinguish what it is precisely that is lacking. So Music here gives us a very important clue: each individual note

is important, and adds to the whole, no matter how apparently inaudible it may be. One may ask, for instance, what difference does it make, whether I take part in the work of Triangles or not? I am not a trained occultist, and my contribution may be like a drop in the ocean. Well, that might be a Piscean way of thinking, which requires an outstanding individual to do great works. The Aquarian perspective is, I think, quite different.

Kathy - What is the relationship between Aquarius and sound-waves and resonance as expressed through its planetary rulers-- Uranus and Jupiter. Group work is very Aquarian and Uranian in nature -- Uranus stimulating the creative experimentation and Jupiter adding to the quality of expansive consciousness...

Eduardo - If we have to assign this quality of individual effort "adding to the clockwork of the whole" to any particular planet, it will no doubt be Uranus, the modern ruler of Aquarius. Uranus stands for anything that suggests a network, and electricity. This of course must be done within the framework of time, law and duty, as the other ruler, Saturn, suggests, which is said to lose its hold on the individual as he/she approaches discipleship. By the way, the relationship between these two rulers of Aquarius gives us a beautiful definition of freedom: Uranus the free individual, acting within the framework of karma, duty and time. The sign Aquarius, in its symbol, gives us a suggestive idea of resonance. From the point of view of Esoteric Astrology, Aquarius is a dual sign which indicates a harmonic resonance between two vibrations, or even telepathic interplay. As an air sign, it is inherently connected with the sound waves which propagate through the air. It is a sign of constant movement and changing activity, and the balancing of forces, as shown by the fact, known by all modern astrologers, that no planet falls or is exalted there. It is the age in which the real keys to the wielding of sound will be given and used for healing purposes, as a sort of revival from the ritual practices of those ancient Mystery Schools. Uranus is the electric urge to better conditions, and if we include Jupiter, the esoteric ruler, in the formula, we will see a strong tendency to synthesis and fusion, motivated by love and brotherhood. In this context, we could claim that Music and sound have a part to play in this Plan, not necessarily connected with verbal communication, but rather with that creative capacity to precipitate. The idea of the part each individual note plays within the whole is very Aquarian and Uranian in nature. This is, in essence, what was meant by the *Harmony of the Spheres*.

Kathy – In what way is sound so powerful? Does sound have healing properties? What was H. P. Blavatsky's concept of sound?

Eduardo - We know for certain that music and ritual played an important part in the ancient Mysteries. Wondrous stories about Pythagoras are told in the relatively few written

testimonies extant. In his school certain melodies were used as antidotes for sicknesses both of the body and emotions. In certain sacred seasons certain sounds and melodies were used for healing purposes: a person playing the lyre was surrounded by a group of students who could sound specific notes. Pythagoras is even said to have put to rest a man in anger, who had set his partner on fire, and he did it by sounding a melody with specific intervals. Myth tells us that Orpheus was able to charm even the stones with his music. Those traditional stories attached many magical qualities to sound, which *is shown to have tremendous powers*. In those ancient traditions (which sound quite like the future use of music, as explained in *Esoteric Healing*), this will involve a group of trained workers. H. P. Blavatsky was convinced that all legends had a kernel of truth. The “Harmony of the Spheres” was for her much more than a philosophical fancy: she looked upon sound as the effect produced by the vibration of the ether. In fact, in the Secret Doctrine, in a chapter with a suggestive title, “*The Coming Force*”: she makes an astounding claim: she maintains that sound is a stupendous force which could be compared to a million Niagaras when directed with occult knowledge. Sound – she claims – “may be produced of such a nature that the Great Pyramid would be raised up in the air, or that a dying man would be revived and filled with vigor” (vol. I, p. 555, *facsimile edition*). That is an amazing claim, isn’t it?

It is also interesting to note that right after that, she proceeds to deal with forerunners in the field of force research, among them, the Philadelphian John Worrel Keely. He had been one of those who ventured in the realms of etheric force, and had not been permitted to go too far: he had succeeded in reducing an ox to atoms. However, such a forerunner of etheric forces, who came to the threshold of a great secret of the universe, is now qualified by Wikipedia as a “fraudulent inventor”, because he refused to give out certain secrets, and was not willing to reveal all the underlying principles. Blavatsky once agreed to make demonstration of certain powers, though she is said to have bitterly regretted it in her later years. She is even witnessed to have wielded sound, though she refused to qualify such things as supernatural: she insisted on the fact that those wonders are subject to laws which are not *yet* known. She became famous for having made a whole audience hear the sound of bells. She even foresaw the intimate relationship between Sound and Astrology, also Aquarian in nature: in her view, the impulses communicated to the ether by the different planets may be likened to the tones produced by the different notes of a musical instrument.

Kathy - *We know that sound and color are essentially two sides of one whole, even though our current perceptions being rather limited, do not permit us to tune into or envision this underlying reality. With our Triangles work we visualize light streaming forth throughout the planetary network but, in truth, this light is also emitting vibration as well. Therefore, wouldn't the other side of the work being carried forward by the network involve tuning the music of our planet to a more resonant and harmonious sound?*

Eduardo - In a way, this leads us directly to a re-definition of what we consider “Magic”. When the inner perception is matched with an equal capacity to see without, to project our

thoughts, and a bridge between the higher and the lower is built, then we have Magic in the real sense, don't we? Any attempt to bring the knowledge of the world of meaning down to bear on this world of glamour can properly be considered Magic. So I wonder what kind of Magic we are dealing with in our work with Triangles. A united group effort to precipitate light and goodwill on the world... is it not a training in Magic, I wonder. So sound, as it is dealt with in esoteric writings, may have an important part to play in precipitating those ideas which will give birth to the future civilization. Though we do not have the real keys yet to the wielding of sound, we *are* contributing to change the sound quality of our planet to a more resonant and harmonious sound. This is the "*ocean of thought*" underlying the music of the spheres, according to the Agni Yoga Teachings, with which "*the song of progress and labor*" is blended (*New Era Community*, 153). And we can be sure that this precipitation of light-sound has a part to play in the dispelling and dissipation of glamour and illusion.

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