

The Music of the Spheres:

Music and the Divine Life in George Steiner and Robert W. Jenson

Part Two: Intersections

[Part One of this article - Orientations -
appeared in the previous edition of *Crucible*]

Jonathan P. Case

Houghton College

Abstract

This essay explores the commanding heights of George Steiner's and Robert Jenson's thinking about music and God. Despite their far-reaching differences, both thinkers bring the phenomenon of music into close descriptive proximity to the divine life. For Steiner, music witnesses to the undeniable presence of the divine, ever pressing upon us through artistic creation. Yet the divine life itself remains finally inaccessible to us, beyond human discourse and intelligibility. In Jenson, we overhear the life of God as a 'great fugue,' the divine music that is none other than the living discourse of Father, Son and Holy Spirit: the identities named in Holy Scripture. But, for all their differences, Steiner and Jenson share more than what one might suppose at first glance. In this essay I demonstrate that, in spite of their irreconcilable differences, Steiner and Jenson exhibit remarkable similarities in their treatments of the temporality, ontology and freedom of music. In revealing these similarities within a greater difference I hope to show that Steiner's analysis of music can be appropriated to lend a descriptive thickness to Jenson's systematic musings on the temporal and ontological richness of the divine life as it happens between Father, Son and Holy Spirit and our creaturely participation within that divine harmony. Further, I aim to reveal how, through his analysis of the nature of music, Steiner effectively overhears something essential to the Christian understanding of God as triune, in a way at odds with his own agnostic tendencies to misplace the life of God or mis-identify a mute or solitary God behind the temporally and ontologically diffuse phenomenon he describes as the life of music. The point of the essay is not to use the musical experience as a 'proof' of God's existence or as a prolegomena to faith. Rather, in large measure, a more modest ambition motivates the essay: to continue the missionary task of the church within earshot of a theologically pagan and musically literate audience.

Part Two – Intersections

For Robert Jenson, the capacious 'triune fugue' shapes both the character of creation and the creation's relationship to God. Opposed to the kind of closure and infinite solitude typical of George Steiner, Jenson overhears God's infinity as open and characterised by expansive inclusion. For Steiner, the essence of divinity is to be beyond us; for Jenson, God's life accommodates us. Given the contrary claims here, a telling comment on the state of religious studies in the west emerges, insofar as Steiner's conception, even with its closed and autistic character, would be more acceptable within the rhetoric of our pluralism and openness,¹ while Jenson's conception of God's capaciousness would be seen as profoundly exclusivist, on account of the narrower *access* to this capacious and inclusive life.

The essence of being a creature, Jenson says, is to be 'enveloped' or 'bracketed' by the infinite life of the triune persons. 'We are "worked out" among the three.'² God opens room for us, and 'we call this accommodation in the triune life time.'³ In other words, all creatures indwell the time God has created, even if all do not fully enjoy him. This *roominess* in God is the outcome of the perichoretic dynamic at the heart of the divine life; the 'mutual implosion of the energies of Father, Son and Spirit ... opens created time within God's eternity.'⁴

In part two of this paper I exegete that last statement, both 1) the relation between created time and God's time (a short task) and 2) the energies of the triune persons, in relation to Steiner's analysis of the life of music (a longer task) For, whilst in the first part of this paper the differences between Jenson and Steiner dominated my analysis, at this juncture some striking similarities and possibilities for a cross pollination of ideas emerge.

The 'twofold timeliness' of God's music

So to 'created time' and 'God's eternity.' A redefinition of God's eternity as temporal infinity generated by the three identities energises the heart of Jenson's theology. What can it mean to be accommodated within this infinity as creatures? Time, we might say, is of the essence, yet how is our time and God's time related? In pursuing this question Jenson addresses a common

¹ Frank Brown has commented that Steiner's work has helped to 'legitimize and motivate *nondogmatic* theological reflection within the academic study of history and culture' (emphasis added). 'The Startling Testimony of George Steiner,' *Theology Today* 47 no. 4 (January 1991), 423.

² Jenson, *Systematic Theology Volume II: The Works of God* (New York and Oxford, 1999) 25. Hereafter ST 2.

³ Ibid. See also Jürgen Moltmann's comments on the 'indwellable God' in *Science and Wisdom* (SCM, 2003) 111ff.

⁴ Jenson, ST 2, 25. Emphasis added.

division in our thinking, inherited from Augustine, between God's timeless eternity and our experience of time.

Augustine's legacy remains problematic for us, for while he correctly drew his view of time from his doctrine of God, his 'conceptual unitarianism,'⁵ in which God is sheer simultaneous presence, forced him to split timeless divine eternity from creaturely experience of time, in which past and future are grasped within the soul's own 'essential presentness.'⁶ Thus Augustine's notorious description of the 'stretching out' or distention of the soul's present to make room for past and future. 'Notorious,' because in the history of western thought, Augustine's interpretation of time as the inner horizon of human experience has been at loggerheads with the Aristotelian notion of time as the 'metric of external physical movement provided by a standard such movement.'⁷ Whenever the world external to the soul is dealt with in its temporality, Aristotle's legacy enters the discussion; time is a feature of the 'architecture' of our world.⁸ Yet Aristotelian doctrine is unsatisfactory when we have to account for our experience of time.

Jenson's elegant proposal runs as follows. If the being of God is capacious infinity, why not unroll the distention of time within the being of God? Such distention would then be grasped as that narrative accommodation God makes for us in his triune life. We inhabit and experience that divine distention both as an 'objective metric' and, as we participate within the divine life, as a determinant of our personal existence. In sum, '[t]ime is *both* the inner extension of a life, as for Augustine, *and* the external metric of all events, as for Aristotle. For time is a "distention" in the life that is God and just so is the enveloping given horizon of all events that are not God.'⁹

In light of the above analysis, Jenson says 'it better suits the gospel's God to speak of God's time and created time,' rather than to think of God as not having time.¹⁰ What then, does it mean to inhabit the divine *distentio*, i.e., to be a creature? In short, to be a creature is to be mentioned in the triune conversation. In oral/aural terms, to be mentioned within this conversation means that creatures are apprehended as 'legomena' (things that are spoken of) rather than 'phenomena' (things that appear).¹¹

⁵ Ibid., 29.

⁶ Ibid., 31.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid., 34.

⁹ Ibid., 35.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid., 36.

Given his insistence that God's beauty concretises itself in the infinite discourse of Father, Son and Spirit as it 'sings,' it seems a bit strange that Jenson has not attempted a musical description in his discussion of our time and God's eternity. What if, appropriating Steiner, we were to think more *musically* at this point in Jenson, in a way that we could construe our time and God's as more musical from the start? How could we think about God's time and creaturely time along Steiner's analysis of the temporally differentiated character of music?

Consider Steiner's twofold timeliness of music, but transposed into a theological key. Musical time is objectively organised according to the marking of the metronome, and, as Steiner says, each piece of music enacts a duration specific to itself. Yet the length and cadence of the musical unit and structure as performed are impossible to standardise exactly, and the precise relations between metronome, acoustic factors and the psychology of audition and recall differs with each performance.¹² On this score, we might venture a description of God's time – the objective metric (Jenson) – as the triune 'metronomic' time (Steiner); it is the infinite music of the triune righteousness as it happens between the divine identities. As it occurs, God's music enacts a duration specific to itself – in God's case, self-surpassing infinity. We might think of this as God's life played out in the pitch, cadence and speed of *Spirit*, the innerscape of the shared consciousness and communication amongst the divine persons. Yet this music is played out also in the economy of salvation, in the narrative configuration of those events with which God establishes his identity with us. So it becomes apparent that, as Jungel puts it, 'God does not will to be for himself, but rather realises *ad extra* the community of reciprocal otherness which he is as the triune God, by creating a creaturely reality over against himself ...'¹³ As this music is played out in creation, we inhabit it in the 'acoustic' particularities of our existence; it sounds within the mortal bounds of our linguistic and cultural space, and is received by legomena whose capacity for reception and recital is distorted. We might rework some of Jenson's own comments about the distinction between immanent and economic Trinity as follows: 'It is a central contention ... that the story [read: music] God lives with us and the story [read: music] that is God's own life are not other than one another ... However we are to distinguish the immanent from the economic Trinity, we must conceive two different stories [read: musics].'¹⁴

¹² George Steiner, *Grammars of Creation* (London: Faber and Faber, 2001) 202-203.

¹³ Eberhard Jüngel, 'On the Doctrine of Justification,' *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 1 no. 1 (March 1999), 36.

¹⁴ Robert W. Jenson, 'Christ as Culture 3: Christ as Drama,' *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 6 no. 2 (April 2004) 197. By employing the notion of a 'twofold timeliness' to God's music with reference to immanent and economic trinity, I am suggesting a response to Jason Curtis' critique that, by speaking of 'God's time' and 'created time,' Jenson has not avoided the problem of timelessness at all, since God still appears to have escaped 'the vicissitudes of created temporality.' Curtis' point, I think, is that by speaking of 'God's time' Jenson has merely renamed that which continues to

Steiner's analysis of the 'seminal distinction' between time and duration remains as Jenson describes it in his *Systematic Theology*: antagonistic and unresolved, even if the dilemma is beautifully elucidated. The difference between music's time from that of the sciences is 'drastic.'¹⁵ An alternative rendering from Jenson (which Steiner would never accept) would run thus: Instead of postulating an 'invariant eternity' forever at odds with our horizon of experience, posit the objective metronomic that even music obeys as the life of God, and our meagre duration of threescore and ten as the inhabitation of that distention.

What is it like to be apprehended by this phenomenon of music, to inhabit that distention? From Steiner's perspective, the aesthetic experience in general is one of psychic intrusion, even violence.¹⁶ Together with religious experience, the encounter with the aesthetic is 'the most "ingressive", transformative summons available to us.' Indeed, Steiner says that 'the shorthand image is that of an Annunciation, of a "terrible beauty" or gravity breaking into the small house of our cautionary being.'¹⁷ Such an encounter brings with it 'a radical calling towards *change*;' any work of art says to us, as in Rilke: 'changes your life.'¹⁸ Just so, the aesthetic endeavour is intrinsically a moral act.

Jenson does not develop a phenomenology of the musical experience to complement his construal of God as a great fugue.¹⁹ He has, however, given the following:

...to live in Christ is to live in the rush of the great fugue as God is composing it ... One does not readily sense that on most occasions when the *totus Christus* gathers. But sometimes one does. For me it happens when the preacher actually makes sense, or when I am swept away in the melodious enthymeme of the argument. Or when the procession of folk to commune displays all sorts and conditions of humanity, all the notes of a chord too densely augmented for mortals to sort out. Or when the depicted spiritual universe in a Byzantine church approaches the paradigm described in textbooks. Or of course by the Eucharistic transformation itself, when the fruits of past labor are brought to the altar and God

be a problem. Jason Curtis, 'Trinity, Time and Sacrament: Christ's Eucharistic Presence in the Theology of Robert W. Jenson,' *Journal of Christian Theological Research* 10 (2005), 31.

¹⁵ Steiner, *Grammars of Creation*, 202-203.

¹⁶ George Steiner, *Real Presences* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989) 142.

¹⁷ Ibid, 143. Granted, whether this intrusion of the 'other' is in fact God is debatable. Karl Josef-Kuschel, 'Presence of God? Towards the Possibility of A Theological Aesthetic in An Analysis of George Steiner,' *Literature and Theology* 10 no.1 (March 1996) 14.

¹⁸ Steiner, *Real Presences*, 142.

¹⁹ So it may have been helpful if Jenson had explained what he takes to be the essence of the musical experience generally, and then set that in relation to the specifically Christian experience of being apprehended by, and coming to indwell, the capacious triune fugue, perhaps similar to the way Jüngel has capitalised on the phenomenon of 'interruption' in the aesthetic experience and in being apprehended by the Gospel. See Eberhard Jüngel, "The Truth of Life: Observations on Truth as the Interruption of the Continuity of Life," in RWA McKinney, *Creation, Christ and Culture: Essays in Honour of T.F. Torrance* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1976) 231-236.

lets us taste and see they are open to the final Climax ... [T]o have faith is ... to skip about between the great Composer's hands on the keyboard.²⁰

This way of describing what it means to live in 'the rush of the great fugue' is not very musical *per se*; Jenson uses the term 'fugue' as a metaphor for the rhythm and colour of Christian worship. For those outside the covenant of faith, one wonders if we are warranted in supposing that in the experience of music generally unbelievers overhear something of that harmony of the music of the spheres spilt over from God's own harmonious life. Jenson does not affirm knowledge of God *extra ecclesiam* that is not idolatrous, but even idolatrous religion, he maintains, 'is response to the true God's speech and makes humanity vulnerable to him.'²¹

Triune Persons, Triune Music

The Father's role: 'Let there be...'

The task remains to exegete what Jenson calls the 'implosion' of the energies of the triune persons in the creative act, and to consider how this determines creaturely existence. As Steiner says that 'creation' is another word for the *fiat* 'let there be,' then proceeds to exposit creation's freedom and relation to nothingness, so Jenson exegetes that same *fiat* as it occurs as the 'implosion' of the divine energies. The Father's energy is characterised in the accent, 'Let there *be*.' As the *arche* of the Son and the Spirit, he is the 'absolute *Antecedent* of all possible other reality;' the Father's specific role resides in 'the sheer fact of positing being'.²²

Ontology is of chief concern here: what it means *to be* when being cannot be abstracted from its originating movement in the creative, triune fugue. Jenson's statement, '[i]nsofar as creatures are initiated by the role of the Father, their being is their mere existence ...'²³ if taken by itself, would sound fairly pedestrian or substantially 'flat,' and would reduce our relation to God to a causal one again. However, this ontological description, in musical terms, reveals the participatory character of our life in God as the Father initiates it. To be a creature in relation to the Father's accent in 'Let there *be* ...' is to be

²⁰ Robert W. Jenson, 'Christ as Culture 2: Christ as Art,' *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 6 no.1 (2004) 75.

²¹ Jenson, *ST* 2, 163.

²² *Ibid*, 26.

²³ *Ibid*, 38.

a motif in the orchestration that occurs when God's musicality opens *ad extra*. We might say: the Father hums a music "of the spheres," the tune of the creating conversation ... [t]o be a creature *is* to belong to the counterpoint and harmony of the triune music.²⁴

Here Jenson follows Jonathan Edwards' lead in positing that 'as the harmony of the divine consciousness is finally musical, so the creation, *sheerly as such*, is musical. And since the very being of creation is this harmony, to be a creature is, in this respect, to be harmonized ...'²⁵

Steiner's insights on the relation between music's ontology and silence (i.e., nothingness) can be appropriated at this point to understand the Father's part in the creative movement. As each note in a musical piece emerges and dies away, it remains 'in dialogue' with silence; it is 'silence interrupted,' deployed out of the silence of non-being.²⁶ In our description of the triune life, then, let us say: the Father's part in the triune harmony can be heard as the one who breaks into song and so interrupts the silence of nothingness.

Again from Steiner: in music we are touched by 'the logic at work in the springs of being that generate vital forms.'²⁷ So in the Father's role we hear a generative musicality, by which he continues to sing the 'rhythmic' existence of the cosmos against the threat of nothingness, and which we continue to sense in mundane, human acts of creation. What we might call Steiner's unbaptised patrological intuitions almost seem of themselves to merge with Jenson's descriptions. Our perceptions of harmony and discord correspond to not only our personal states of being, but also to that of the social contract and, ultimately, of the cosmos: that 'music of the spheres.'²⁸ 'The energy that is music puts us in felt relation to the energy that is life; it puts us in a relation of expressed immediacy with the abstractly and verbally inexpressible but wholly palpable, primary fact of being.'²⁹

Discounting all attempts to describe the life of music as mere verbiage,' Steiner nevertheless ventures to characterise music as 'the soliloquy of being, of the original fiat echoing itself.'³⁰ But of course in trinitarian perspective the original fiat is no soliloquy, even if initiated by

²⁴ Ibid, 39.

²⁵ Ibid, 41.

²⁶ Steiner, *Grammars of Creation*, 108.

²⁷ Steiner, *Real Presences*, 218.

²⁸ Ibid, 196.

²⁹ Steiner, *Real Presences*, 196.

³⁰ George Steiner, *Errata* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1997) 84.

the Father; it exists as a fugued event. As we move to the Spirit and the Son's role this will become clear, and hopefully also how in Steiner's account, perhaps at odds with his own explicit theological commitments, we find insight into the musical harmony of the mystery of creation.

The Spirit's role: 'Let there be ...'

The Spirit's particular word, 'Let there be ...' reflects the Spirit's role in freeing the Father from retaining all being within himself and in freeing the creation from being merely an emanation from the divine, as though God were a mere 'monad.'³¹ This freedom cannot be understood apart from God's futurity. For in the freedom created by the Spirit, God creates his own future that rushes upon both himself and us.³² God the Spirit always and infinitely surpasses himself, and this pneumatically-generated, ever-expanding horizon of God's own life demarcates the boundary between the gods of our own devising and the true and free God. 'Human religion as such,' Jenson writes, 'is refusal of the future,' and he ponders whether there are

... only two possible deities: the gods whose transcendence is the fixity of the past and the security we seek in it and the God whose transcendence is the unmanageability of his futurity.³³

The Spirit, as God's future and ours, frees us within the divine life such that we are broken out of our attempts at self-enclosure and yet not absorbed by the life of God; it is a *real* future. But this description of a real future does not remain an abstraction; it has a concrete, personal focus. In trinitarian perspective, the Spirit is always given by the Father and Son and liberates those identities for each other. When the Spirit "snatches" us into freedom, then, the Spirit does so in that community in which we enjoy the fellowship of Father and Son. As Jenson has it, freedom in the Spirit is an 'ecclesial reality.'³⁴

These pneumatological themes, freedom and futurity, that play such a signal role in Jenson's theology also perform critical functions in Steiner, and are kept in close proximity to music. Recall at this point Steiner's observation that as music is time made 'organic,' so it provides us with an 'abode of freedom' – the only free time granted us prior to death – and his venture that music may be independent of physical or biological laws. Steiner even postulates

³¹ Jenson, *ST* 2, 26.

³² Jenson, *ST* 1, 160.

³³ Jenson, *ST* 2, 146.

³⁴ *Ibid*, 107-108.

that music intimates the presence of a deathless realm; it allows us to catch an echo of a form of existence not subject to the ravages of 'biological-historical time.'³⁵ If we follow the pneumatological drift of these comments, we should say that, as God's time has been made 'organic,' as God's music is played with us, we inhabit the abode of freedom: we live in the Spirit. Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.

We have spoken of freedom in Steiner. What of futurity? In earshot of Jenson's 'two possible deities,' what is one to make of Steiner's confession at the end of *Errata*? Although the horrendous cruelty in our world cries out against belief in God, Steiner writes of his inability '... to abdicate from the belief that the two validating wonders of mortal existence are love and the invention of the future tense.'³⁶ And while rejecting any conventional eschatology (only fundamentalists await the actual coming of a messiah³⁷) he yet writes in hope that the 'conjunction' of that *love* and *future*, 'if it will ever come to pass, is the Messianic.'³⁸

As to the question of the future, we first must bear in mind Steiner's more comprehensive wager on meaning as a wager on transcendence. In language, such a wager carries within it an echo of the pneumatological, a grammatical suspicion of the Spirit, when one hears how the future and subjunctive tenses function. 'Language is the generator and messenger of and out of tomorrow.'³⁹ Every use of the future tense of the verb 'to be,' Steiner says, 'is a negation, however limited, of mortality,' and every use of an 'if' sentence constitutes 'a refusal of the ... despotism of the fact.'⁴⁰ "'Shall," "will" and "if", circling in intricate fields of semantic force around a hidden centre or nucleus of potentiality, are the passwords to hope.'⁴¹ This hardly counts as linguistic luxury. Our very lives depend on the capacity to *speak* that hope, to 'entrust to if-clauses and futures our active dreams of change, of progress, of deliverance.'⁴²

So the future, and the hope it may portend, are inscribed in the grammar of our language. But in music we are confronted by the aural instantiation and delivery of that potentiality; it breaks in upon us and offers a time reorganised such that we overhear the possibility of hope. Again, hope is, Steiner insists, a 'transcendental inference' and one underwritten by 'theological-

³⁵ Steiner, *Grammars*, 214.

³⁶ Steiner, *Errata*, 190.

³⁷ Steiner, *Grammars of Creation*, 8. Does this belief continue to help perpetuate anti-Semitism? See George Steiner, *My Unwritten Books* (New York: New Directions, 2008) 116.

³⁸ Steiner, *Errata*, 190.

³⁹ Steiner, *Real Presences*, 56.

⁴⁰ Steiner, *Grammars*, 5.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Steiner, *Real Presences*, 56. See also *My Unwritten Books*, 166ff.

metaphysical presumptions⁴³ by that infinity antecedent to human language or music. The hope that music, in particular, provides comes to us in the form of 'felt intimations of open horizons [note the unbounded character of this description] of well-springs of recuperation and self surpassing for a constricted and worn humanity.'⁴⁴ This is not mere therapy for Steiner. 'I believe the modulation of music towards our apprehension and sufferance of death to be of the essence.'⁴⁵

The Christian will overhear in the metaphor of 'well-springs' an echo of pneumatological themes in Scripture: of renewal and resurrection 'in the power of the Spirit.' Here lies grist for the theological imagination. Is the music of the Spirit a melodious gurgle that can be heard as part of the background noise of creation, as the Spirit ever renews the cosmos? Not for nothing are brooks said to babble. Can this music be heard in the humming current of living water, which rushes out of those in whom the Son places the Spirit? Can we overhear it in the infinite rhythmic splashing of that Spirit-river which runs from the throne of God and through the eschatologically restored city of God, the mention of which brings hope to the covenant people of God in this present age?

But above we quoted Steiner's claim that the conjunction of 'love and the future' is indicative of the Messianic. And at this point, the point of love, Steiner's explicit theological musings seem to run counter to his best instincts about music, freedom and the future. Consider: 'To identify the divine with the emanation of love, as does all Platonism, which is to say, the Western model of transcendence – is to partake of the most commonplace and inexplicable sacrament in human life.'⁴⁶ The experience of music instantiates this emanation, delivers and makes it immediate, more than any other.

[M]usic often puts me "beside myself" or more exactly, in company far better than my own. It empowers the oxymoron of love, that fusion into a measure of oneness of two human persons each of whom, even at the moment of spiritual and sexual unison, remains, is made more richly himself or herself. To listen to music with the loved one is to be in a condition simultaneously private, almost autistic, yet strangely welded to another (shared reading, reading aloud, does not achieve this.)⁴⁷

⁴³ Steiner, *Grammars*, 6.

⁴⁴ Steiner, *Real Presences*, 63.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ Steiner, *Errata*, 189.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 85.

If love has anything to do with God, however, it is difficult to see how it can have anything to do with the inaccessible divine life that Steiner in his more philosophical moments posits. Surely, the nature of love bears closer comparison to the intrinsic relationality and hospitality characteristic of the God who invites us to share his life. A link between hospitality and futurity suggests itself: to be brought into a network of relations in which new possibilities for community are offered is to experience an expanding horizon of being, a hitherto unavailable future. Genuine love and futurity are motored and structured by relations.

Steiner himself seems to grasp this when, immediately following the quote above about being strangely 'welded to another' in the experience of listening to music with one's beloved, he adds: 'Thus the *collaborative interplay* as between voice and piano in a *Lied*, or the execution of a string quartet, may well be the most *intricate*, non-analyzable happening on this planet.'⁴⁸ In trinitarian perspective, that collaborative interplay between the divine identities in the great fugue is characteristic of divine love and enables us to share in such love. Steiner's explicit theological statements cannot but be reckoned by Christians as a mis-identification of the life of God as a mute and solitary being (Jenson's 'monad', or better, a monotone) behind the ever-expanding and harmonious life of music. In other words, (to deploy the above quote again) when Steiner admits that the single most intricate organization of the interacting of feelings and meanings is that deployed in a string quartet,⁴⁹ that the 'collaborative interplay' between voice and piano in a *lied* may be 'the most intricate, non-analysable *happening* on the planet'⁵⁰ (perhaps even more complex than 'the dance of the galaxies'), he nudges closer to the truth of God's collaborative and intricate life (which 'happens') than when he (Steiner) retreats into statements about the austere, self-enclosed continuity of divine solipsism.

So while Steiner has overheard an echo redolent of the triune life of God and of our participation within that life, his explicit preference for the theological autism or withdrawal of Celan or George remain irreconcilable with any notion of divine love. What makes this disjunction even more painful when reading Steiner is his keen sense for the necessity of hospitality if the Jews, and indeed the human race, are to survive. 'Unless we learn to be one another's guests, mankind will slither into mutual destruction and perpetual hatred.'⁵¹

Let us [Jews] survive, if at all, as guests among men, as *guests of being itself*. At its festive table, the Jewish family keeps a seat vacant for the stranger who may

⁴⁸ Ibid. Emphasis mine.

⁴⁹ Steiner, *Real Presences*, 196.

⁵⁰ Steiner, *Errata*, 85.

⁵¹ Steiner, *My Unwritten Books*, 121.

come to the door. He may be a beggar or a veiled messenger from God. He must never be turned away.⁵²

As 'guests of being itself'? This is either empty Heideggerian flourish or a dim, intuitive apprehension of divine hospitality. Perhaps just that 'Platonism' mentioned earlier, theologically run-amok, finally makes the coherent idea of an open and accommodating (i.e., loving) divine life an impossibility in Steiner's thought. Creation based on the exercise of naked freedom, followed by mute withdrawal, can hardly be understood as a loving act. Genuine freedom arises out of love, and if not, then the Messianic future, at any rate, has to do with neither. In brief, on account of Steiner's theology, a caesura emerges in his reflections between love and the future.

So far we have overheard in Steiner a patrological and pneumatological echo. What of an audible trace of the Son?

The Son's role: 'And that is good'

In Jenson's account, the Son's particular word in the creating conversation resounds in the response to the 'Let there be ...: *and that is good.*' As he who has his own individual entity within created time, the Son mediates the Father's originating and the Spirit's liberation, holding open our space in being. Attention to grammar is paramount here: The Son, Jenson says, as the specious present of the divine life, *holds open* the space for creatures *to be*.⁵³ *To be*. That is the accent of the Father; who in his part in the fugue calls creation out of nothing in 'Let there *be* ...' As the Father's love of the Son as other than himself is the possibility of all otherness from God, so Jesus' acceptance of being other than the Father instantiates the actual mediation of that possibility – possibility of the otherness necessary for there to be a fugue and not merely a solo or a monotone. Jesus, in other words, is the embodiment and sacramentally enduring presence who holds open and extends the Father's welcome flung wide open.

From this perspective we can see why God set us other than himself and why he made space between him and us: '[D]id not God set us other than himself, did he not make space between him and us, all time would just be *his* time and there would be no "accommodation" in him.'⁵⁴ This God apart from Jesus would be named Death.⁵⁵

⁵² Ibid., 122. Emphasis added.

⁵³ Jenson, *ST* 2, 27.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 48.

⁵⁵ Robert W. Jenson, 'Triune Grace,' *dialog* 41 no.4 (Winter 2002) 289.

Our relation to God is maintained in the present tense of created time (instead of being a timeless relation) 'in that one of the three, the Son, has his own individual entity *within* created time, in that he is himself one of those among whom and upon whom creatures' participation in God's story is being "worked out."⁵⁶ The envelopment of our time by God is accomplished in the course of our time.⁵⁷ Jesus therefore determines the moral content of the command: 'Let there be ...' As Jenson says, 'The story told in the Gospels states the meaning of creation.'⁵⁸ As Jesus holds open the space so created, so in Christological perspective to be a creature is to be a revelation of God's will. So we must 'interpret creaturely being strictly as it answers to *what* is morally said in the divine conversation that mandates it.'⁵⁹

Steiner's reflections on the physicality of the musical experience may prove fruitful when brought into relation with Jenson's Christology. We have already seen how, for Steiner, the human being seems eminently suited for the vibration that persists long after the string has ceased to be plucked. Consider Steiner on the ingressive character of the music experience. To be possessed of music is an incarnational trauma: 'Song is simultaneously the most carnal and spiritual of realities.'⁶⁰ Eminently metaphysical, it reaches into the crevasses of the human psyche, yet it expresses itself as 'the most carnal, the most somatically traceable of signifying acts.'⁶¹ Music enters simultaneously body and mind at many levels, 'to which classifications such

⁵⁶ Jenson has been criticised numerous times for his understanding of Christ's preexistence, with George Hunsinger even calling Jenson's ideas 'neo-Arian.' George Hunsinger, 'Robert Jenson's *Systematic Theology*: a review essay,' *Scottish Journal of Theology* 55 no. 2 (2002) 171. Jenson responded by saying that Hunsinger supposes that 'if something has a temporal beginning it cannot begin eternally... [H]e supposes the inherited metaphysics that construes time and eternity as contradictory.' Robert W. Jenson, 'Response to Watson and Hunsinger,' *Scottish Journal of Theology* 55 no. 2 (2002) 231. In fairness, Jenson's treatment of the 'The Christological Problem' in *ST1* is extraordinarily complex, but one of his overriding concerns is to not to indulge in abstractions about a preexistent *Logos asarkos* apart from the man Jesus and in doing so leapfrog over the Old Testament, one of the perennial temptations of Logos Christologies. Jenson thus attempts to think of the Son as a narrative pattern of Israel's human story before he appears as an Israelite within the story. And 'precisely because it is the actual appearance of the biblical narrative that is his own presupposition in eternity, *this antecedence must be taken as itself eternally actual.*' *ST 1*, 141 (emphasis added). What then, if God had not chosen to create? Would not the Son have been the same one he is, although he could not have been Jesus? The answer to this question must be Yes, according to Jenson, but what this would have been like we can know nothing at all. (Ibid) So much for Jenson's neo-Arianism. It is difficult to parse exactly how the narrative pattern of *being going to be* born in the triune life, which ontologically precedes the birth to Mary of Jesus, is different from the 'eternal generation' of the Son maintained in more conventional Christologies, except that the triune time as Jenson understands it is not timeless but infinitely self-surpassing, i.e., pneumatologically generated.

⁵⁷ Jenson, *ST 2*, 27.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid, 45. So a discussion of the *imago Dei* will have a moral dimension, precisely on account of this location in the divine conversation.

⁶⁰ Steiner, *Errata*, 74.

⁶¹ Steiner, *Real Presences*, 80.

as “nervous,” “cerebral” [and] “somatic” apply in a rough and ready way,⁶² yet, as quoted earlier, music searches out ‘resonances in our bodies at levels deeper than will or consciousness.’⁶³

On account of our relationship to this vibration, human beings echo the divine capaciousness to experience temporality. In the experience of music, Steiner says, ‘immediacy, recollection [and] anticipation’ (i.e., present, past and future) ‘are often inextricably fused.’⁶⁴ Now as the divine vibration was embodied in the *legomenal* specious present-ness of Jesus of Nazareth, let us say: in Jesus the vibration, ‘Let there *be* ...’ sounded by the Father resounds to the goodness of creation, echoing throughout the cosmos by the perfecting Spirit. Just so, Jesus at once comprehends true God and true man. And just so, Jesus Christ continues to make God present for us; as the intersection of the Father’s capacious initiative from the deeps of time and the Spirit’s inbreaking promise of God’s infinite horizon, he remains physically available to us.

Comprehending Jesus under the rubric of what one might call a ‘resonative Christology,’ i.e., as the embodied presence of God in whom the divine vibration persists, also suggests a response to the question posed by Steiner regarding the untamed and amoral character of music. Granted, there may be an ontological fittingness in the human being to the life of music (‘music declares to us our humanity’⁶⁵) yet there is always in Steiner’s reflections the threat of the fundamental inhumanity of music, a *daimonia* that may ‘heal the broken mind’ or ‘trigger the feasts of hatred.’ In its intimate strangeness to us, music functions ‘outside truth and falsehood, good and evil.’⁶⁶

Little wonder. Being caught between God the Father and the deep blue sea of the Spirit, i.e., the patrological ontological abyss and the pneumatological infinity, is overwhelming. The intimacy and interplay between being and nothingness, the unpredictability of a future that constantly surprises, are essential to human being; but without a real presence, a location in which they can be harmonised, these energies threaten to overflow the banks of our intellectual, psychic and moral capacities. The aesthetic hospitality and inspiration we sense from them may be misinterpreted as an invitation to rampage or lasciviousness, as well as righteous enjoyment of the goodness of the created order.

Thus, from a Christian perspective, Steiner’s anthropology needs a presence in which the divine energies are localised and harmonised, and a moral situatedness in which we can hear

⁶² George Steiner, *Martin Heidegger* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987) 43.

⁶³ Steiner, *Real Presences*, 217.

⁶⁴ Steiner, *Martin Heidegger*, 43.

⁶⁵ Steiner, *Real Presences*, 195.

⁶⁶ Steiner, *Errata*, 83.

and participate in the life of these energies. In fact, certain key components in Steiner's reflections on the relationship of music to anthropology would suggest that, to be complete, we should explore a doctrine of flesh-and-blood incarnation and a community in which this real presence should be available to us.

In sum, the vibration set off by the life of God resonates in Jesus in such a way that we can participate in that same fellowship with the Father, who sings creation out of the deeps of time, and with the Spirit, who will never foreclose God's creative horizon. And, as Jesus is the moral content of the Father's creative fiat, we can share in the life of the trinitarian fugue without throwing aside the lute for the sabre, or without ditching the horn for hashish.

The music of Jesus, the music of the Eucharist

As mentioned earlier, for Jenson the condition for hearing the Word is the church; the church's eucharistically configured 'acoustics' makes such hearing possible. We hear here, because at the Lord's table we come to participate in the fellowship of Father and Spirit in the space the Son holds open for us, that is, in the Son's history. All of which is to say: Jesus remains available to us in the Eucharist.⁶⁷ Were Jesus not physically available to us but merely the disembodied presence of God, Jenson says that the results would be disastrous for us, viz., absolute bondage. 'Were Christ not embodied in his community, were his presence there merely to and in thought and in feeling, he would be the community's destruction, however fond the thoughts and feelings; and were he not embodied for the world in his community, his presence in the world would be the world's damnation.'⁶⁸ Following Jenson's temporal logic, God's time would encounter us in its naked unboundedness and unaccommodating alterity.

The sacramental language of 'real presence' occupies a central place in Steiner's project, but from a Christian perspective it remains a presence without an identity, even as it remains stubbornly incarnated throughout great artistic creations. A sacramentality of sorts can be discerned in these works insofar as they house 'real presences' of the divine. Perhaps not oddly, Steiner recognizes that we owe our recognition of art's ability to convey truth due to the Christian church's discussion of the incarnation and transubstantiation.

Like no other event in our mental history, the postulate of God's *kenosis* through Jesus and of the never-ending availability of the Saviour in the wafer and wine of the eucharist conditions not only the development of western art and rhetoric

⁶⁷ Jenson, *ST* 2, 213.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 214.

itself, but also, at a much deeper level, that of our understanding and reception of the truth of art – a truth antithetical to the condemnation of the fictive in Plato.⁶⁹

Thus after Christ, “our perception of flesh and of the metamorphic spirituality of matter” has been dramatically altered. “In the consecration of the blood-wine, spirits are made spirit”⁷⁰ To be specific, the historic Eucharistic debates exerted decisive influence (from seemingly arcane arguments involving the likes of Radbertus, Berengarius etc.) upon the western intellectual and aesthetic tradition, in such a way that elevation of physicality in the sanctification and eating of the elements has prompted us to grasp for what seems counterintuitive: how mental or psychological acts such as reading a novel or hearing a symphony are, in essence, events of profoundly physical dimensions and how that physicality is, paradoxically, ingredient to spirit.

The effects of this alteration in the cultural imagination of the West have penetrated and complexified our understanding and use of language itself. The ‘materiality of the immaterial’ set forth in the bread and cup has given impetus and validation to the notion that aesthetic representation and the fictive may serve as a figuration of the truth. In other words, after the Christian message, the relation between reality and fiction has become *iconic*. “The poem, the statue, the portrait ..., the nave, tell of, provide lodging for a real presence. The sentence or pigment or carved stone is shone through. The imagined is an icon, a true fiction”⁷¹

Steiner’s account of the physicality of such ‘sacramental’ presence is among the most provocative analyses to be found in literary studies. The text of a great work ‘engraves the fiction in the wax tablets or the copper plate’ of the reader’s psyche, to the point that ‘something nearly physical is occurring.’⁷² While all enduring fiction may be, in essence, a ‘ghost story’ – insofar as the characters are ‘spectral’ – such characters are nevertheless ‘endowed with a penetrative “thereness” which we cannot explain or justify causally.’⁷³

We can be grateful for Steiner’s recognition that our aesthetic sensitivity and capacity owes more to the Christian Eucharistic tradition than Plato. Steiner has, in effect, hinted at a phenomenology of the physiological event that occurs when we read and are etched by the text encountering us (what it means to say, for example, that the Word of Christ can *indwell* us richly). Still, critical questions should be directed toward Steiner’s proposal. To begin, if what he has

⁶⁹ Steiner, *Grammars*, 55.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 61.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 63.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 136.

⁷³ *Ibid.*

suggested about a real presence in works of art is true, and this understanding is indebted to Christian Eucharistic doctrine, then wouldn't Steiner himself be compelled to admit the possibility of a real presence in the bread and wine? Is it tenable to maintain that such presence is true of the poem, the symphony, etc., but not true of the reception of sanctified loaf and cup – the event that birthed a sacramental understanding of the arts? If Eucharistic does not express a 'true fiction' but is sheerly fictive, then what would this hold for Steiner's aesthetics? It is true, we read and observe and listen as *if* the works we are considering are meaningful, i.e., as *if* their meaning is underwritten by a divine presence.⁷⁴ But the *as if* wager cannot be a secretly acknowledged fiction that somehow sustains us, as though we were whistling Bach nervously in the dark. There must be the possibility that the wager is not assuredly ill-placed. But, with respect to the Eucharist, what would it mean for an agnostic Jew to make such an admission?

In trinitarian perspective, the church partakes of the embodied music of God. What can it mean to say such a thing? Surely music is heard, not eaten or drunk. Yet if our intuitions about a resonative Christology are correct, the same Spirit that incarnated the music of God in the Nazarene rabbi continues to make Jesus present to us in the here and now of the loaf and cup.⁷⁵ The vibrations are ongoing, and Jesus Christ continues to make place for us in God's life, and in the *communio* that results, the triune God and the church make beautiful music together.

So our voices join in the power of the Spirit through the Son to the glory of God the Father. As we hear the Word and respond with the Amen, the intrinsic intelligibility of that Word, which in God's own being is not at odds with the music of the divine life, penetrates us. As we hear the splash of the Spirit in the font, the wellsprings of divine renewal, the same that renews the cosmos, bring us into the renewed life. As we partake of the embodied music of God, made available in the bread and cup, his presence enables us to join our voices in the doxology which harmonises with the music of the spheres, and on account of the Spirit, is finally joined to the chorus of the four living creatures and the twenty four elders who surround the throne. And thus we are taken and enveloped within the capacious fugue of God. Of course in our present reception of this fugue, and in our meagre response, we suffer in our corruption a tear, a rent, between form and content. But as we await the fullness of the kingdom, we live by the Spirit.

⁷⁴ On the gamble here, see Graham Ward's comments in 'George Steiner and the Theology of Culture,' *New Blackfriars* 74 no. 868 (February 1993) 101.

⁷⁵ Jenson's comments about the Epiclesis make it difficult to accept Curtis' criticism that the former's view of divine ontology, which 'pushes toward a biological presence of Christ' and 'elevates sacrament,' finally detracts from the priority of the Word and the actualizing power of the Spirit (Curtis, 'Trinity, Time and Sacrament,' 34). Jenson writes, 'For indeed... the elements and the community gathered around them must be freed from their merely historical reality if they are to be the body of the risen and coming One; just that, as we have seen at several points, is a role of the Spirit.' (*ST* 2, 227).

Summary

At the risk of unfair generalisations, I attempt here a summary: Contrary to Jenson's claims about the capaciousness of the divine life, Steiner's own theological tendencies lean towards the infinite solitude of divine autism. Yet this presence continues to bear upon us through our moral intuition and through the mystery of human creation, in which we recognise the enactment of freedom and the sublated potentiality for non-being, which continue to spill into our existence as the 'background radiation' from the initial moment of creation. The 'analogue' of which Steiner speaks when describing music in relation to the divine has to do with the undeniable pressure of this existence and our helpless acknowledgement of this pressure without recourse to argument. But I have been suggesting that Steiner misplaces the life of God or mis-identifies a mute or solitary God behind the temporally and ontologically diffuse phenomenon he describes as the life of music. The dynamics of music he describes so well can be appropriated to provide an evocative description of the temporal and ontological richness of the divine life itself as it happens between Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

From Jenson's position, the religious knowledge Steiner has gleaned from his meditations on the life and meaning of music cannot but be deemed as idolatrous. Steiner admits as much when he speaks of the only two experiences that enable human beings to participate in the 'pragmatic metaphor of eternity': authentic religious beliefs ('for those open to them') and the experience of the aesthetic.⁷⁶ Clearly these two experiences are rivals. Now Jenson says that he does not affirm a knowledge of God outside the church that is not idolatrous, but neither does he deny the possibility of its occurrence. However, as we noted earlier, Jenson is careful to add: 'But also idolatrous religion ... is response to God's speech and makes humanity vulnerable to him.'⁷⁷

Judged most severely from Jenson's perspective, Steiner's incompetent knowledge of God must be judged, if not entirely 'empty,' then at least profoundly truncated,⁷⁸ especially when one considers that, although there is in Steiner an awareness (of sorts) of the Fall, the 'salvation' provided by the arts consists more or less in their ability to humanize (rehumanize?) us. This is not a very sure bet at that, as Steiner himself has struggled numerous times in print over how the

⁷⁶ Steiner, *Grammars*, 214.

⁷⁷ Jenson, *ST 2*, 163.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 155. As Steiner himself says, neither music's 'meanings nor its significations can be... translated conceptually into any domain except repeated performance' (*Errata*, 183)

aesthetic experience sometimes seems to desensitise us to real suffering.⁷⁹ Steiner says that, even in full view of suffering on our streets, often we come to respond more acutely to *literary* sorrow.⁸⁰ He insists that every great work of art says to us, 'change your life!'⁸¹ – yet (in *Real Presences*, at any rate) – he does not tackle the question of the amorality/morality of works of meaning, opting rather for an analysis of the 'ethics of reception' in those whom a great work has grasped.⁸²

If one would dare to claim a 'natural' theology in Steiner, Jenson would almost certainly judge it to be a part of our pagan Mediterranean heritage, and therefore as historically contingent as any other theology.⁸³ The problem, from Jenson's perspective, is that more often than not natural theology proponents refuse to acknowledge the historically conditioned character of their claims and attempt to utilise such claims as prolegomena that functions as a norm of intelligibility for other theology. And so the West's pagan heritage is elevated to be the judge of its biblical heritage, the 'unilateral judge of the whole.'⁸⁴ Steiner of course does make universal claims for his philosophical 'theology' and acts as 'judge of the whole' where positive religion is concerned. His Archimedean position in all matters religious can at times be maddeningly ambiguous. Great art may be indebted to the theological, to the incessant pressure of God, yet we cannot actually know anything about this God. God has lodged infinity in our arts, yet we cannot fathom what God has actually done from beginning to end. It is as though Steiner acknowledges the divine presence and pressure in the music, say, of Haydn, but evidently that pressure did not, cannot, spill over to the point where it can be said that his lyrics nominate God or God's dealings with creation in any plain sense.

Shorn of any positive claims, Steiner's religious vision at last looks remarkably like one of the 'post-theologies' spawned by Heidegger's attention to the muse of Being, of which

⁷⁹ See, for example, Steiner, *My Unwritten Books*, 148ff; 'Great Music Falls on Deaf Ears,' *The Guardian* (*Saturday Page*) August 22, 1998 p.4 ; 'The high noon of the arts, music, and possibly literature lies behind us in the West.' *The Chronicle of Higher Education* 42 no. 41 (June 21, 1996) B6.

⁸⁰ George Steiner, *Language and Silence: Essays on Language, Literature and the Inhuman* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1970) 4-5.

⁸¹ Steiner, *Real Presences*, 145.

⁸² The Christian doctrine of atonement is, of course, not an option. 'The argument from the Cross... can only convince the convinced.' Further, Steiner says, it is an argument 'strangely unavailable to the vast majority of fallen mankind outside the chosen West.' Steiner, *Errata*, 176.

⁸³ Is there a postmodernism of sorts, then, in Jenson?

⁸⁴ As if the 'qualification of truth taught by Plato or Aristotle' is 'more "natural" or "rational" than truth taught by Isaiah or Paul!' So much, then, for the assumption that philosophy is a different kind of thinking than theology: 'Theologians of western Christianity must indeed converse with the philosophers, but only because and insofar as both are engaged in the same sort of enterprise.' Jenson, *ST* 1, 9-10.

Heidegger's thought itself can be reckoned as representative.⁸⁵ In place of a 'supernatural deity,' we have the 'hidden presentness of Being,' a 'modulation from traditional theology into a kind of 'mystery of immanence.'⁸⁶ Or: 'the abyss at the heart of love.' And '[m]editation on a "non-God" can be as concentrated, as humble or exultant as any in approved theology and worship ... Awesome is the God who is not.'⁸⁷

What shall we say then? Is Steiner's project a case of unremittent and useless idolatry?⁸⁸ Certainly not. To begin, Steiner's soundings lend a musically sensitive descriptiveness or 'thickness' to Jenson's musings on the triune life of God as a great fugue. By considering well the freedom of music, its temporal organization and differentiation, its dialogue with nothingness and the future it intimates, Steiner has overheard movements indicative of the energies of the triune God, especially the patrological and pneumatological. The lacuna in Steiner's reflections, the lack of anything resembling a Christology, which seems especially striking given his understanding of an anthropologically embedded vibration juxtaposed to the fundamental *inhumanity* of music, serves only to press my case.⁸⁹

Secondly, by engaging Steiner's works and referencing his soundings, we continue the missionary task of the Christian church within earshot of a wider, theologically pagan and musically literate audience. Steiner's characterisation of music as the 'unwritten theology' for those without creed seems particularly apt for this period in western culture, which has experienced the 'tidal wave' of Sprachkritik, the 'critique of language root and branch.'⁹⁰ Understanding Steiner's position on music increases our ability to navigate the Christian gospel within that 'new literacy.'

We do not thereby use music or the musical experience as a 'proof' of God's existence, still less do we suggest anything like a prolegomena to faith. Far less ambitiously, we engage in lively conversation in the culture in which our mission

⁸⁵ Steiner himself points out that the 'tautological core' of Heidegger, *Sein ist Sein*, and its rejection of paraphrase and logic, are the 'absolute equivalent to the Self-utterance and Self-definition of the Deity –I am that which I am..., ' in other words, the Great Tautology that occupies central stage in Steiner's own theology. Steiner, *Martin Heidegger*, 155.

⁸⁶ Ibid, 156. On the giftlike character of this mystery of divine immanence in creation, see Peter Phillips, "George Steiner's Wager on Transcendence," *Heythrop Journal* XXXIX (1998) 167.

⁸⁷ Steiner, *My Unwritten Books*, 209.

⁸⁸ In what follows I take issue with Peter Leithart's estimation of Steiner in 'Idols of Art,' *Contra Mundum* 2 (Winter 1992)

70. <http://www.contra-mundum.org/cm/cm02.pdf> Accessed 10 June 2008.

⁸⁹ From a Christian perspective, apart from an embodied locus in Jesus we should always stand under threat of the radical inhumanity of music, i.e., God's non-accommodating time (or, to borrow from Juengel, God's non-interrupted time).

⁹⁰ On the popular level, this *Sprachkritik* and the modern ascendancy of quantitative forms of knowledge has manifested itself in a growing literary malaise and a general diminution of most people's command of language (*Grammars*, 220ff).

Writing in 1961, Steiner noted that 'the new literacy is musical rather than verbal' and that 'music is today the central fact of lay culture.' Steiner, 'The Retreat from the Word,' in *Language and Silence*, 29-30.

takes place, and, as Jenson notes, '[c]onversation with the antecedent theology of each encountered religious culture is intrinsic to the gospel's mission, and this conversation is never merely polemic.'⁹¹ As Jenson characterises the church fathers' estimation of the 'Greeks' philosophical offerings, Steiner's musings might be read as 'a theologoumena of a different faith' (and he admits as much), with some of which it might be possible to agree, some of which will have to be rejected, and some of which will occasion further discussion.⁹² Using Steiner, we should be able to say to our pagan contemporaries in the Areopagus, '... as some of your own literary critics have said.' If I have the temerity to suggest that there is something like aural *vestigia trinitatis* in Steiner, I am merely tapping into a dim awareness of God in our surrounding culture that may in fact function more as a judgement against the 'Greeks' than furnish putatively neutral insight into the nature of things. Paul's listeners remained idolaters, after all, despite their aesthetic apprehension of the divine.

'... but now he commands all people everywhere to repent.' If Steiner has grasped that our being is owed to the creative activity of God, and this activity can be apprehended most accurately through music, the question of our salvation remains a separate issue. Still, as Jenson puts the matter in hopeful terms: ' "*Let there be ...*" and "Christ is risen" are but two utterances of God within one dramatically coherent discourse. A creature who exists by hearing the first is indeed open to the second ...'⁹³

⁹¹ Jenson, *ST* 1, 9.

⁹² Jenson, *ST* 1, 10.

⁹³ Jenson, *ST* 2, 68.