

Ordered by President Nixon in 1974 and drafted by Henry Kissinger, National Security Study Memorandum 200 (NSSM 200)—which remained classified until 1989—identified population growth as a national security threat to the U.S., particularly in developing countries which contained raw materials Kissinger believed the U.S. should control.

NSSM 200 also laid out a far-reaching program for Draconian population control. According to Mumford—who pronounces NSSM 200 to be “one of the most important population projects ever undertaken by any government”—it would have, among other things, “required a one-child family policy for the U.S. [and a] two-child family in the developing countries by 2000”; enforced a global policy of unrestricted abortion; and required the U.S. taxpayer to “provide substantial funds to achieve these goals.”

Noting that NSSM 200 “forthrightly opposes the Vatican on population strategy, family planning, and abortion,” and that the study “specifically notes that the only institutional opposition to population growth control is the . . . Roman Catholic Church,” Mumford spends the bulk of his book excoriating the Church for impeding NSSM 200’s implementation.

Dismissing Morality

Mumford refuses to acknowledge that the Church opposes such population control schemes on moral grounds, so he invents a bizarre explanation for its position. He argues that the dogma of Papal infallibility, adopted by the First Vatican Council in 1870, is central to the power of the Papacy, and that if the Vatican were to drop its opposition to contraception and/or abortion, this would destroy the credibility of Papal infallibility, and with it, Papal power. “It is institutional survival that governs the behavior of the Catholic hierarchy. . . .” Mumford asserts. “The claim that ‘morality’ governs its behavior in the matters of family planning and abortion is fraudulent.”

To back up this fiction, Mumford invokes renegade theologian Hans Kung. He quotes Kung extensively, including Kung’s 1979 assertion that,

“[t]he only way to solve the problem of contraception is to solve the problem of infallibility.” Writes Mumford: “No other single statement better summarizes the world population problem.”

Mumford’s main objective is to portray the Catholic Church as bent on sabotaging U.S. political institutions; this he does by painting its moral stance in favor of human life as a conspiracy against the foundations of the American republic. “To protect the dogma of infallibility,” he claims, “the Vatican has been forced to undermine the political will of governments [including the U.S.—ed.] which have been striving to deal with overpopulation” “The security-survival interests of the Papacy are undeniably pitted against the security-survival interests of the United States.”

Who’s Against Democracy?

Where does Mumford intend all this blather to lead? To defining the Vatican and the “foreign-controlled” U.S. Catholic bishops’ conference as prime enemies of the U.S., which must be fought tooth and nail, including through such measures as depriving the U.S. Catholic Church of its tax-exempt status.

Ironically, in the course of berating the Catholic Church for undermining democracy, Mumford demonstrates just how “undemocratic” the population control lobby is. To Mumford, the fact that the Catholic Church dares to publicly oppose a policy (i.e., NSSM 200) that would prohibit couples from having more than one or two children, and that it dares to mobilize public opinion against such an obscenity—in other words, that it dares to participate in the democratic process to fight policies that are clearly *coercive*, not to mention morally reprehensible—certifies it as a foe of democracy!

Given his standards, one can only assume that Mumford would find his ideal democracy in Communist China, where forced abortions and infanticide, particularly of females, are the order of the day—all in pursuit of the NSSM 200 policies that those nasty old men in the Vatican fought to keep from being adopted on a global scale.

—Kathleen Klenetsky

Two Fraudulent

Now I do not complain of these ancients so much because their logic is, by their own showing, utterly baseless, worthless and fantastic altogether, as because of their pompous and imbecile proscription of all other roads of Truth, of all other means for its attainment than the two preposterous paths—the one of creeping and the other of crawling—to which they have dared to confine the Soul that loves nothing so well as to soar.

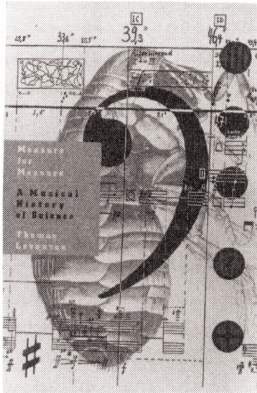
—Edgar Allan Poe,
“Mellonta Tauta”

Long ago, throughout the English-speaking world (under the intellectual domination of Oxford-Cambridge and its Ivy League satraps), the Newtonian Revolution was proclaimed: henceforth, the only acceptable modes of scientific inquiry would be Deduction and Induction (“creeping” and “crawling,” respectively), and scientific ideas would needs be expressed as algebraic functions. But for a few courageous rebels like Poe, everyone accepted the yoke.

Authors Levenson and James, though they may chafe and fret a bit, are not exceptions. Both address, in different ways, the intertwined histories of science and music, and they both express a sort of wistful yearning for coherence between the two disciplines, with which the reader can sympathize. However, they both wind up banging their heads stoically against the bars of their Newtonian cage, when they ought rather to unlatch the door and exit.

Levenson’s is in most respects the less ambitious of the two efforts. *Measure for Measure* is an anecdotal journey through the history of instruments, both scientific and musical. Much of it has sort of a “Popular Mechanics” cast to it, but the author is also looking for opportunities to explore some of the deeper issues of method. He discusses one obvious drawback of the Newtonian formal-logical approach, which is that it cannot account for causality. Consequently, when issues of causality arise, we are often confronted with the logician’s

Versions of the Music of the Spheres



Measure for Measure
by Thomas Levenson
Simon and Schuster,
New York, 1994

351 pages, hardbound, \$25.00

Siamese twin, the occultist.

Newton, as is increasingly well known, was a zealous student of alchemy and the occult. Levenson, after a slightly euphemistic discussion of these proclivities, provides us with the following, relatively insightful passage: “Newton’s recognition of the existence of secret, occult forces in nature freed him from a trap in which less magically inclined scientists found themselves. Whereas such men as Leibniz held out for an explanation of gravity that would include an account of what makes it work, the cause that produced gravity’s observable effects, Newton was able to postulate an attractive force, and then ignore its inner workings. It did not matter that he could not dismantle the engine that powered gravity, so long as his account of gravity’s qualities successfully accounted for the observable experience of the universe. That segregation of observable phenomena and unknown causes, and the assignment of occult status to the latter, defined the field of modern science: its task was simply to complete the description of the phenomena, the effects of the causes that transformed one state in nature to the next. Modern scientists still rely on the occult to save them from tasks they cannot master: for example, they do not ask what makes an electron both wave and particle but only

how its wave-like and particle-like qualities manifest themselves.”

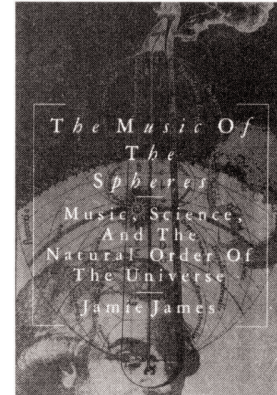
Levenson, like Jamie James and the entire contemporary tribe of popular science writers, is apparently ignorant of the opposing current in the history of science. While they cannot ignore Kepler, they can and do ignore Nicolaus of Cusa; their discussion of Leibniz is cursory at best; and there is scant mention of the Continental successors of Leibniz, who did not conform to the peculiar logician/warlock tendency exemplified by Newton.

Levenson often seems to be flirting with the idea of a more profound examination of the questions he raises. At one point he asserts that “both science and music, any art, are ultimately aesthetic endeavors.” But he stops short of any more rigorous examination of this promising topic (which has, of course, been examined with tremendous rigor by Friedrich Schiller). Instead, he is content to regale us with interesting stories about the development of diverse instruments, and to conclude each section with a little musing.

Music of the Spheres

Jamie James, on the other hand, takes on the serious challenge of examining the entire history of the relationship between science and music in his *The Music of the Spheres*, in order to determine what caused the two to diverge. The results are disappointing.

James is a man who has had sufficient education to know that, as he says in his book’s preface, “there was a time when the universe was believed to cohere, when human life had a meaning and purpose.” He seems genuinely annoyed that music and science have been divorced from one another, referring to this state of affairs as “this psychotic bifurcation in our civilization,” although he hastens to add that he does not have any hope that this situation will ever change. His book is certainly not likely to change it, because his version of the history of ideas is afflicted with all manner of academic misreadings and distortions, such as to mirror



**The Music of the Spheres:
Music, Science, and the
Natural Order of the Universe**
by Jamie James

Grove Press, New York, 1993
262 pages, hardbound, \$20.95

the process that produced the “psychotic bifurcation,” without contributing any insight as to how it happened, or how to correct it.

It seems strange that James so persistently misses the boat on this, since in the course of his book he traverses most of the history of ideas, looking in many of the right places. He often reflects the standard academic idiocy, that ideas which are not susceptible to logic are therefore mystical: “While Newton had actually crossed over the line straddled by Kepler before him, perceptible only in retrospect, which divides the age of classical thought and the modern era, the point at which natural philosophy began to be governed by logic rather than belief, he still yearned to maintain a spiritual connection with the seers of antiquity.” The key, missing concept is found in the *Republic*, where Plato suggests that what might be called “belief” and “logic” are two relatively inferior modes of thought, subordinate to Reason (the *soaring* referred to by Poe).

Since James does not conceive of mental activity outside of the categories of “logic” and “belief,” his tendency is to look toward “esoteric” or downright mystical models in his search for some kind of unity (here the logician/warlock phenomenon recurs). Although he cannot discuss Plato or Kepler without

squirming a little, he expresses unbridled enthusiasm for Freemasonry, and devotes a rather tedious chapter to the “Hermetic Tradition.”

Because James does seek, in his own way, a universalizing quality in music, he takes a relatively dim view of Romanticism, although he concedes that he has difficulty establishing a rigorous definition of it. He associates it with an excess of individuality; a far more rigorous approach would be to associate it with the point where *eros* supercedes *agapē* as the driving emotion (which would end all the silliness about Beethoven, Chopin, *et al.* being Romantics). He refers to Romanticism as a “sea change,” when perhaps a clearer metaphor were that of a musical “low tide,” which would account for the aroma. However, James’ affinity for Hermeticism causes him to then turn around and embrace Schoenberg and other moderns, because they profess to address universal themes in their works, albeit using compositional methods that demonstrate just how mutually antagonistic Logic and Reason can be.

The *reductio ad absurdum* of this antagonism is typified by the contemporary composer/mathematician, Iannis Xenakis, whom James describes as follows: Xenakis believes that the history

of European music is the audible record of scientific and philosophical “attempts to explain the world by reason.” The music of antiquity, he says, was causal and deterministic, “strongly influenced by the schools of Pythagoras and Plato,” and in support he quotes the *Timaeus*: “For it is impossible for anything to come into being without cause.” Then, he declares, there was a revolution. Causality underwent “a brutal and fertile transformation as a result of statistical theories in physics.” In other words, science discovered that, in point of fact, the *Timaeus* was dead wrong: things generally come into existence with no causality whatsoever. Genes mutate randomly, and subatomic particles decay according to no fixed program. Ultimately, the whole notion of an orderly cosmos ruled over by a Divine Intelligence is just a sentimental delusion. Xenakis would make the mathematics of chance work on behalf of art, to give musical compositions the same inevitable and absolute correctness as a mathematical expression in physics.

In this thinking, form achieves a total victory over content. It does not matter what you say, because there is nothing worth saying except what can be proved by logic, and that, by definition, is what is obvious and hence need

not be said. Tragically, to such ravings, James can only respond with mild annoyance, and moral indifference: “I do not say that [Xenakis’] music is not worth performing, only that very few people would care whether it is performed or not.”

Response to LaRouche

In the January 4, 1991 edition of *Executive Intelligence Review*, there appeared an essay by Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr., entitled “The Science of Music: Solution to Plato’s Paradox of ‘the One and the Many.’” In the space of a few pages, LaRouche systematically addressed and resolved the questions that baffle authors Levenson and James. This essay was subsequently republished as the foreword to the Schiller Institute’s *A Manual on the Rudiments of Tuning and Registration, Vol. I*, which appeared in 1992. This *Manual* was received with great enthusiasm by leading performing musicians, and has sparked a revival of interest in the Renaissance principle of the coherence of all human creative activity. The fact that *Measure for Measure* and *The Harmony of the Spheres* appeared shortly thereafter, no doubt signifies a need on the part of the intellectual Establishment to respond.

—Daniel B. Platt

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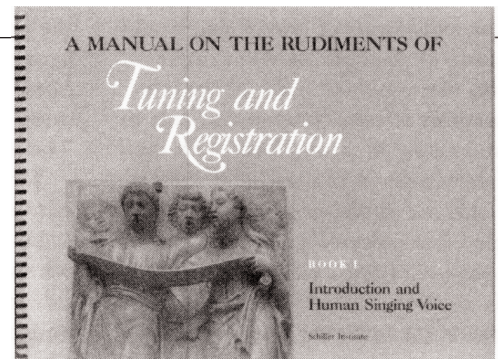
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