

Hallelujah Possession

Anyone who doubts that music can connect us to higher spiritual dimensions should heed the stories of mystical phenomena surrounding Handel's "Hallelujah Chorus".

In one famous incident, a psychic researcher sprinkled sand evenly over the surface of a timpano head, right before a performance of the "Hallelujah Chorus". By the time the performance was over, the sand had organized itself into a perfect drawing of the Star of David.

My story is this: it was my privilege for many years, at Lewis-Clark State College, to conduct the Hallelujah Chorus at the traditional Christmas concert. The routine was this: I rehearsed the orchestra for a few weeks, had the chorus for two rehearsals, and then we did the performance. The hitch, was that the "Hallelujah Chorus" was the big grand finale which incorporated a sing-along—audience members came forward and joined the College Chorus creating a fairly huge Community Chorus.

Now, any conductor knows that when you go from conducting 35 people to conducting 85 people, the most obvious difficulty will be to keep from slowing down. More people = more weight, which = heavier, which = more difficult to move. I became obsessed with the idea that I should not let this big group slow me down. Inside my head I spoke this interior monologue, "I'm not going to let these people slow me down, I'm going to do it My tempo, I want to move, I've got to do it My way, I want My tempo MY Tempo! MY Tempo! Mine! Mine! Mine! I! I! I!" Suddenly in the middle of this inner tirade, I heard a voice, another voice, (not my voice but a whisper as clear as a bell), speak three simple words to my inner ear: "NOT— SO—FAST."

And then a superhuman power actually lifted my arms (against my will) and started the piece, literally without me, at a slightly slower tempo than I had imagined. For a moment I thought about fighting against this supernatural force, but other similar experiences of the recent past, had taught me to trust these psychic events when they broke upon me, and not to try to exercise personal ego, but to just let myself become the vehicle of expression, the channel, as they say, of the collective ego.

It was a glorious performance, a perfect tempo kicked in and dragged that huge chorus along like a great river of energy. It was perhaps the greatest performance of my career. Afterwards I went backstage and wept.

It just goes to show that miracles can happen onstage if you're willing to open yourself to psychic influence. And don't get the idea that this story is like the "Night of the Living Dead"—I was not a mindless automaton conducting with no will of my own—I could have fought back and rejected that unseen helper's insight; but by that time I had had enough psychic experience to recognize a special positive moment, an unexpected moment of grace, and I allowed myself to be taken over and become a vessel for higher knowledge to flow through me into the chorus, into the audience, and into the world.

Laus Dei.