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PREVIEW RESPONSE

The Possibility of Music as Created Order



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Music is a kind of cosmic natural law – at least in the ancient world. Both the Confucian and Pythagorean traditions posited music as a harmonious mathematical order that was simultaneously scientific, aesthetic and moral; and Pythagorean music theory was then adapted and incorporated in the Christian tradition by scholars such as Clement, Augustine and Boethius, and was the dominant view in Western thought for 1500 years. It was truly *great* music and not centred on humanity. In my recent book, *Alien Listening: Voyager's Golden Record and Music From Earth* (Zone Books, 2021), I revisit the possibility of music as 'created order', arguing that to send music into space via the Voyager mission presupposes an ontology of peace (as NASA and Buzz Lightyear insist on saying: 'We come in peace'). The question is how to retrofit ancient music theory in the modern world. To answer this question would require a book.

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