

God's Voice, Speaking Through Music

By Nathaniel Ralston

After nearly four years with the same company, I decided to leave that line of work and move back to Florida, confident that I would be able to replace that income, even if I didn't have a job waiting for me. At the end of my last day on my route, I was listening to the local public radio classical music station on my drive back to the depot. And as my final moments as a sales representative for that company began to dwindle down, what music came on? It was my FAVORITE orchestral suite by Igor Stravinsky, the music from "*The Firebird*" ballet. It immediately spoke to my soul.

For those unfamiliar with this orchestral work, in general it depicts the beautiful life, intense death, and the brilliant rebirth of the mythical phoenix (the "firebird"). In just one masterpiece, Stravinsky manages to express perfectly these three scenes, in all their raw emotion. And as the music started to play on the radio, I began to weep.

You see, one could also view the story of the phoenix as an allegory to our own human lives. For instance, we celebrate the joy of life as we go about our days (especially when everything is going our way, life is good, etc.) Then comes the inevitable pain, confusion, worries, sometimes even despair as something goes awry and our whole world is shaken up. We wonder what will happen next and how can we go on? And finally, we experience that pure, uplifting feeling when, in spite of everything that has happened, even out of the ashes of what we knew before we begin again, growing stronger with every step as we are born anew.

As I listened to that magnificent music, I was instantly reminded of this story, and how it correlates so strongly with what I was going through at the time. AND I WEPT. For nearly four years, I had been successful out there on my own. I had a home, a good job---I led a good life. But then (for many good reasons), I made the hard decision to drop it all; to walk away from that home, that career . . . and leap out into the unknown, on faith.

The Firebird Suite is approximately 30 minutes long and it came on the radio when I was approximately 30 minutes away from my depot. And no, I do not believe it was coincidence that this particular piece of music played on the radio station that I just happened to be listening to in the literal final moments of my route sales career. I've heard that suite many times before and enjoyed it, but never felt it as an affirmation from God. Surely there were hundreds or thousands of other people listening to it at the same time I was that night and, chances are, none of them felt God speaking to them. That is because His message was for me that night and He chose this piece to be His voice.

I believe in my very soul that this was God's way of speaking to me, through the music I know so well---comforting me and letting me know that I chose the right path. Because, just like the phoenix before me, from the ashes of the life I left behind I know I will be reborn. And it will be glorious.