Association and Teleology in Anže Rozman's Phoenix



Phoenix

The Legend

- Magical bird with an unusually long life span (500+ years) that regenerates from the remains of its prior body, through fire and ash in many versions.
- Named by Greek historian Herodotus (c. 450-425 BC). Appears in varied sources: coins of Ancient Rome, medieval bestiaries, alchemical texts, Elizabethan poetry, and modern fantasy novels (including the *Harry Potter* series by J.K. Rowling). (Nigg 2016)
- Associated with resurrection, renewal, immortality, strength, perfection, uniqueness, and hope. (Nigg 2016)

The Composer

- Anže Rozman (b. 1989): Slovenian composer of concert and film music.
- Concert music includes orchestral pieces and flute works.
- Frequent collaborator of Hans Zimmer.
- Notable media titles include *The Planets* (2019), *Universe* (2021), *Prehistoric Planet* (2022-23), and *Beckham* (2023).

The Composition

- Programmatic work in four movements (24 minutes in performance) based on the lifecycle of the legendary bird.
- I. Ash—Birth
- II. The First Flight—Life
- III. The Last Flight—Death
- IV. Rebirth
- Two versions: flute and piano (2012) and flute and orchestra (2019).
- Finalist in 2013 Newly Published Music Competition of the National Flute Association.

The Analysis. Rozman's *Phoenix...*

- Combines numerous extramusical associations from concert and film music.
- Derives unity from the program and the cyclic "call" theme.
- Creates teleology through the program, victory signifiers, and motivic development (including the "rebirth" theme).

Extramusical Associations: Large-Scale

Virtuosic Flute = bird

- Camile Saint-Saens, X. Aviary, Carnival of the Animals
- Sergei Prokofiev, II. "The Bird," Peter and the Wolf Op. 67
- John Williams, "Secrets of the Castle," *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*
- Rozman, *Phoenix*, passim

Minor -> Major = victory

- Ludwig van Beethoven, Symphony No. 5
- Howard Shore, "The Crack of Doom," The Return of the King
- Rozman, *Phoenix*, III. The Last Flight—Death IV. Rebirth (c -> C)

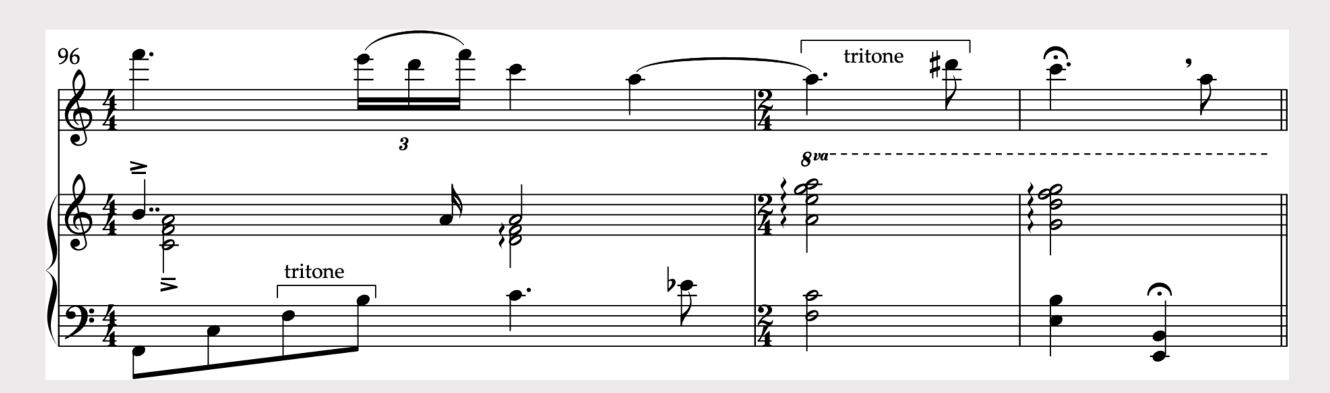
Theme Repeated Higher and Louder = awakening, victory

- Modest Mussorgsky, "The Great Gate of Kiev," Pictures at an Exhibition
- Igor Stravinsky, Finale, The Firebird
- Rozman, *Phoenix*, IV. Rebirth

Extramusical Associations: Local

Tritone = magic, sorcery

- Paul Dukas, The Sorcerer's Apprentice
- John Williams, "Hedwig's Theme," Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone
- Rozman, *Phoenix*, I. Ash—Birth



Lydian = magic, wonder, flight (Atkinson 2019)

- Jerry Goldsmith, "Main Title," The Blue Max (Schneller 2013, 68)
- John Williams, "Journey to the Island," *Jurassic Park* (Schneller 2013, 68-69)
- Rozman, *Phoenix*, II. The First Flight—Life



Whole-Tone Collection = magic, dreams

- Claude Debussy, *Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun* (Novak 2015, 95-96)
- Miles Goodman, "One O'Clock," The Muppet Christmas Carol (Cairns 2024)
- Rozman, *Phoenix*, IV. Rebirth



Trills/Tremolos/Rapid Scales = magic, supernatural, transformation

- Carl Maria von Weber, Wolf's Glen Scene, Der Freischütz
- Leslie Bricusse & Anthony Newley, "The Bubble Machine," Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory
- Rozman, *Phoenix*, IV. Rebirth

Works Cited

Atkinson, Sean E. 2019. "Soaring Through the Sky: Topics and Tropes in Video Game Music." *Music Theory Online* 25 (2). DOI: 10.30535/mto.25.2.I.

Cairns, Zachary. 2024. "Whole-Tone Collections and Temporal Dislocation in Film Music." *SMT-V* 10.5. http://doi.org/10.30535/smtv.10.5.

Nigg, Joseph. 2016. *The Phoenix: An Unnatural Biography of a Mythical Beast*. University of Chicago Press.

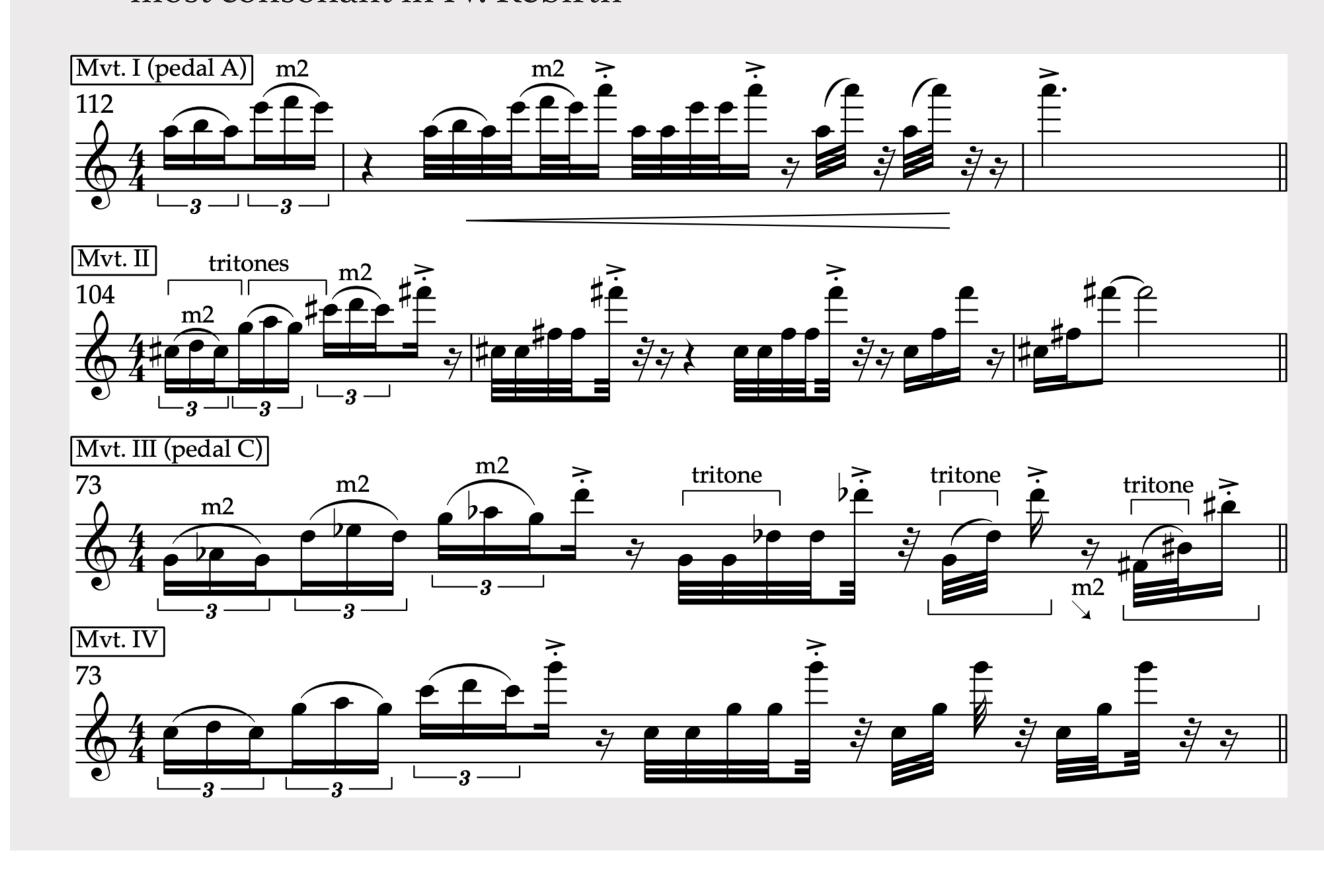
Novak, John K. 2015. "Whole-Tone as Extension of Tonal Harmony in the Music of Debussy: An Underestimated Technique of Conjunction." *International Journal of Musicology* 1: 79-99.

Schneller, Tom. 2013. "Modal Interchange and Semantic Resonance in Themes by John Williams." *Journal of Film Music* 6 (I):

49–74.
United Music & Media Publishers UMMP. 2020. "Anže Rozman - Phoenix for Flute and Orchestra." Published April 11, 2020.
Video, 24:17. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SFKdhcvSqLs.

Call Theme

- Cyclic, appearing in all four movements
- Suggests the call of the phoenix itself through short rhythmic values, unpredictable accents, high register, and exclusive presence in the flute.
- Versions differ in exact intervals, particularly the inclusion of minor seconds and tritones.
- most dissonant in III. The Last Flight—Deathmost consonant in IV. Rebirth



Rebirth Theme

- Connects III. The Last Flight—Death to IV. Rebirth
- Transformations toward stability
- Timbre: harmonics to normal
- Register: low -> high
- Interval: tritone -> perfect fourth Dynamics: soft -> loud

