

# Association and Teleology in Anže Rozman's *Phoenix*

Samantha M. Inman



inmans@sfasu.edu

## 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

- Camille 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.25.2.1.
- Cairns, Zachary. 2024. "Whole-Tone Collections and Temporal Dislocation in Film Music." *SMT-V* 10.5. <http://doi.org/10.30535/smtv10.5>.
- 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 (1): 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—Death
  - most 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
  - Collection: chromatic -> minor modes -> major