

# Christian Rhythm at the End of Antiquity (4<sup>th</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup> cent. AD) - part 4

Thursday 1 September 2016, by [Pascal Michon](#)

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## Rhythm as Performance of the Soul - Augustine's *De musica*, 6

Augustine is not drawing from the unitary and hierarchical view that he borrows from Plotinus the same conclusions as his predecessor. Due to his belief in Original sin and in God's Incarnation to save Humanity, his view does not fit any longer in the dualistic Platonic paradigm, even that revamped by Plotinus. Since it considers every being as participating in the One, Plotinus' emanationism provides the theoretical basis to repel strong dualism as Manichaeism. But, for the same reason, it may result in considering all beings as God Himself.

To avoid such objectionable consequence, Augustine proposes an intermediate way between strong dualism as Manichaeism and soft dualism turning into monism as Plotinian philosophy. His own brand of dualism is based on a third conceptual arrangement: a hierarchical and quite paradoxical association of opposites. This is the second reason why Augustine uses the term "traces" (*vestigia*). Due to the Fall, we find in earthly bodies only "traces of their primitive beauty." But despite the Fall, the soul "has preserved a remnant of greatness" and is *superior to the body in which she dwells*. However, the body is not to be rejected either because "truth in the body is better than error in the soul."

— **Master.** Instead, admire how the body acts on the soul. This influence would perhaps not exist if, through the effect of the original sin, the body, which the soul in its prime perfection animated and governed without difficulty and without embarrassment, would not have been degraded, subjected to corruption and death. Nevertheless, he retains some traces of its primitive beauty, and as such he sufficiently reveals the dignity of the soul, which has preserved a remnant of greatness even in its punishment and infirmities. [...] We must no longer be surprised that the soul, acting in a mortal envelope, feels the modifications of the body, or conclude from the superiority of the soul over the body that everything that happens in it is better than what happens in the organs. [...] If truth is better than falsehood, in spite of the superiority of the soul over the body, truth in the body is better than error in the soul. (*De musica*, 6.4.7, my trans.)

This, logically, has major rhythmological consequences. Contrarily to the most common opinion among pagan thinkers since Pythagoras, Augustine does not consider the body as a tomb (*sôma sêma*) and the soul as buried in it in a way that would render her deaf to the Intelligible. She is not passively receiving perceptions from the organs. On the contrary, the soul “governs” the senses in order to “regulate the perceptions of the body.”

— **Master.** It seems to me that the soul, when she feels something in the body, experiences no passive modification, but intervene with more attention in the modifications that the body undergoes, and that these actions, which are easy when they are appropriate to her, painful when they are inappropriate to her, do not escape her. In that consists the whole phenomenon which is called feeling. As for the sense which is in us, even when we do not feel anything, it is a physical organ which the soul governs and uses to regulate the perceptions of the body [*quod ea temperatione agitur ab anima*], in order to bring favorable objects closer or keep those contrary to her nature away. (*De musica*, 6.5.10, my trans.)

As we know, this interpretation is wrongly prolonged by a physiological assumption, which was quite common in Antiquity, according to which the senses project various kinds of fluid towards the objects they encounter.

No doubt there is in the eye a luminous agent, in the ears, a pure and subtle air, in the nares, a vapor, in the mouth, a fluid substance, in tact, a viscous principle. But whether or not these principles are localized in the organs, the soul directs them calmly, [...] it is thanks to this capacity that she sees, hears, smells, tastes, feels by touch, to use ordinary language. (*De musica*, 6.5.10, my trans.)

When the auditory sensation occurs, the soul continues “the insensible action by which she animated” the auditory apparatus and “communicates to the fluid, that has been externally shaken, the same motion which she made before the sound enter the ear.”

— **Master.** Now we must explain the rhythms of the sounds [*de sonorum numeris*] and discuss the meaning of hearing: it is therefore not necessary to examine thoroughly the other senses. [...] Since the fluid circulating in this organ is put into motion by the percussion of the air, must we think that the soul, which, before hearing this sound, communicated internally movement and life to the auditory apparatus, has suspended the insensible action by which she animated this organ, or rather that she communicates to the fluid, that has been externally shaken, the same motion which she performed before the sound entered the ear? — **Student.** Surely, I do not see otherwise. — **Master.** Hence, if the movement is the same, should we not see in it an act of the soul, rather than a purely passive modification? — **Student.** That is true. (*De musica*, 6.5.11, my trans.)

Even pulse and respiration are driven by the activity of the soul.

— **Student.** Although the pulse of the veins and the intervals of respiration [*venarum pulsus, et respirationis intervalla*] vary according to the temperaments, who would dare to maintain that they do not occur by virtue of the activity of the soul [*tamen operante anima fieri*]? These movements, in spite of their different degree of speed or slowness in the various individuals, could not exist without the activity of the soul. (*De musica*, 6.3.4, my trans.)

Although this view of the relation between mind and senses will prove later to be wrong (more on its external side than on its internal one, though), its consequences have been of the highest importance. Whereas Plato considered music as a charm that inebriates and possesses the soul against her will, Augustine emphasizes the capacity of the latter to aim actively at God's perfection through the rhythms and harmonies which the body enables her to hear. Since it is the soul not the ear, viz. the body, that listens, thanks to her active participation in the development of the musical phrase, the perception of music is at odds with any enthusiastic possession that blinds reason and releases irrationality.

This explains why Book 6, probably for the first time in Antiquity, develops a reflection on the performance of the soul when she listens to music—and finds pleasure in it.

By reading the first five Books of *De musica*, we realized that Augustin never mentions melody and harmony. We know that he contemplated addressing these issues in another treatise, but whatever the reasons are, in this text, music is defined as *ars bene modulandi* (1.2.2) and *ars bene movendi* (1.3.4), i.e. "art of fine modulation and motion." Music is primarily rhythmic. Therefore, understanding music and the pleasure it provides means necessarily analyzing the perception of rhythm. Augustine distinguishes five instances in its circuit: physical sound, sense of hearing, mouth and pronunciation, movement of the soul and memory, and rule of God. He takes as example a famous Ambrosian hymn, *Deus Creator Omnium*, his mother's favorite, which is also part of the Nicene Creed (325).

— **Master.** I want to rise with you, who are my friend, from the corporeal to the incorporeal world [*ut a corporeis ad incorporea transeamus*], taking reason for our common guide; answer me, then. When we pronounce this verse: *Deus creator omnium*, where do the four iambs and the twelve times that compose it reside? Are they in the sound that strikes the ear? In the sense of hearing? In pronunciation? Or, finally, as the verse is well known, in memory? —

**Student.** I believe, in all of them. — **Master.** Are they not elsewhere? — **Student.** No, unless there is a more mysterious and higher principle to which all these things belong. (*De musica*, 6.2.2, my trans.)

The first problem is to assess the particular rhythmic power of the sense of hearing. The student naively attributes the faculty to recognize rhythm to the ear.

— **Student.** It seems to me unlikely that the sense of hearing does not contain such sense of

rhythm [*sensum numeris*], even when no sound strikes it. Otherwise, it would not be pleased by the elegance of a sequence of sounds, nor shocked by their discord [*concinntate aut absurditate*]. I call this sense, which naturally and without the help of reason helps us to judge that a sound is pleasing or disagreeable, the sense of rhythm [*ipsius sensus numerum voco*]. This sense, I mean the hearing, does not acquire this faculty of distinguishing the sounds when it hears them: the ears remain open in the same manner, whether the sound is harmonious or discordant. (*De musica*, 6.2.3, my trans.)

But the master disagrees and explains to the student that he is confusing two different things that must be clearly separated: the physical and sensitive existence of rhythm and the real capacity of hearing, which actually depends on a higher entity than the corporeal sense itself.

— **Master.** Take care not to confound two very different things [...] If the sensation is triggered by rhythmic words [*quae si numerosa voce fit*], it necessarily becomes rhythmic [*etiam ipsa numerosa sit necesse est*]. It can only exist with the sound that causes it [*nisi cum adest effector eius sonus*]: it resembles the trace printed on water that forms and disappears according to whether the body is or is not in contact with it. As for this natural faculty of appreciation which is localized in the ear, it does not cease [indeed] to exist in silence. Far from creating it in us, the sound falls under its control to be approved or blamed. It is therefore necessary to distinguish carefully between these two phenomena and to recognize that the rhythms born from the impression which the sounds produce on the ear [*et fatendum numeros, qui sunt in ipsa passione aurium*] rise and disappear with them. Hence the consequence: the rhythms contained in these sounds [*numeros qui sunt in ipso sono*] may exist independently of those which form in hearing, while the latter cannot exist without them. (*De musica*, 6.2.3, my trans.)

Another important point in the rhythmic circuit concerns pronunciation. What about the rhythms produced in the mouth, i.e. poetry? They are clearly subordinate to those of the soul. But the question about the poetic discourse immediately triggers another question: in the case of poetic performance rhythms, does the soul act entirely by herself or does she need some help from memory?

— **Master.** There is a third class of rhythms, I mean those which are produced by the pronunciation itself: examine whether they can exist independently of those which reside in memory. We can, without opening our mouth and by the power of thought alone, execute some rhythms [*aliquos numeros cogitando peragere*] as we would do with our voice. These rhythms [*hos*] thus result from an activity of the soul [*operatione animi*], and since no sound or impression is produced on the ear, they constitute a species that is entirely distinct from the first two, that reside either in sound or in the hearing struck by sound. But would it exist without the aid of memory? This is the point to be clarified. (*De musica*, 6.3.4, my trans.)

Thus memory provides a fourth kind of rhythm. The master argues that the possibility to memorize rhythms proves that they exist independently from their actual acoustic performance, that is thanks to the power of the soul. But the student stresses the empirical fact that no rhythm can be stored in memory without having been first heard by the ear.

— **Master.** Let us now turn our attention to this fourth kind of rhythms which reside in memory [*eorum scilicet numerorum qui sunt in memoria*]: if it is true that we can reproduce them by the power of memory, and that by passing to other ideas we leave them, so to speak, hidden in the folds of memory, it is evident that they exist independently of others. — **Student.** I do not deny this but they can be kept in memory only on the condition that they have somehow already been heard or thought once: therefore, although they subsist when the latter vanish, they may be engraved in memory only if they have been preceded by them. (*De musica*, 6.3.4, my trans.)

The discussion results finally in the discovery of a fifth and superior kind of anthropological rhythm which depends on the capacity for judging of the soul.

— **Master.** In the analysis we have just made, I do not know how, a fifth kind of rhythm has appeared: it is the natural judgment which accompanies the perception [*in ipso naturali iudicio sentiendi*], and it is by virtue of this judgment that we are charmed by the regularity of the rhythms or shocked by the mistakes they contain [*cum delectamur parilitate numerorum, vel cum in eis peccatur, offendimur*]. [...] — **Student.** It seems to me that there is a new class to be established. For producing sounds as the bodies do, or hearing them as the soul does through the body, modifying the rhythm by accelerating it or slowing it down [*operari numeros vel productius vel correptius*], recalling it in memory, these are phenomena that are quite distinct from that which consists in evaluating the rhythms and to exert upon them like a natural judgment by appreciating or abhorring them. — **Master.** Good. Tell me now which rhythms seem to you superior? — **Student.** Those of the fifth kind. — **Master.** You are right: they would not serve as a rule to appreciate the others, if they were not superior to them. (*De musica*, 6.4.5, my trans.)

Unsurprisingly, this rhythmic capacity of the soul depends in turn on a higher rule from which she may benefit “by renouncing the movements of the flesh to allow herself to be purified by the Divine rhythms of Wisdom.” Beyond the anthropological rhythms, there are the absolutely perfect rhythms of the Lord.

— **Master.** The bodies are all the more perfect when they receive the most eurhythmic proportions from such rhythms [*Corpora enim tanto meliora sunt, quanto numerosiora talibus numeris*]: on the contrary, the soul becomes more perfect by tearing herself away from physical impressions, by renouncing the movements of the flesh to allow herself to be purified by the Divine rhythms of Wisdom [*et divinis sapientiae numeris reformatur*]. (*De musica*, 6.4.7, my trans.)

Recapitulating the discussion, the master then reconsiders the whole issue of music, viz. rhythm, from top to bottom, that is to say through a path going from the Divine rhythms to those of the soul, then from the rhythms of the soul to those of the body. The whole creation appears now as composed of rhythms which are hierarchically arranged.

— **Master.** We read in the Holy Scriptures. “I have run everywhere to know, to investigate and to seek wisdom and rhythms [*Circumivi ego, ut scirem et considerarem et quaererem sapientiam et*

*numerus*].” (Eccle. 7, 25) And it is necessary to understand by this word “rhythms,” not those that resound in infamous theaters [*quod nullo modo arbitrandum est de his numeris dictum, quibus in etiam flagitiosa theatra personant*], but, in my opinion, those [*sed de illis*] that the true God communicates to the soul and that she then transmits to the body, far from receiving it by the channel of the senses. (*De musica*, 6.4.7, my trans.)

In this rhythmic hierarchy, the soul, which is located in its exact middle, is naturally of the highest interest to bishop Augustine. That is why he differentiates in it between two kinds of rhythmic movement. Those “when the soul is directed towards the body which is united to her, and the others, when the soul, on hearing the sounds, reacts against the impressions of the body.”

— **Master.** We have just seen that the rhythms which reside in sensibility [*qui sunt in sentiendo numeros*] are at bottom merely acts of the soul. How then can you distinguish them from those which have the activity of the soul as a principle, as we have already observed, and which occur when the soul, even in silence and without memory, moves in rhythmic time intervals [*agit aliquid anima per temporalia spatia numerosum*]? Would it not be that some are born, when the soul is directed towards the body which is united to her, and the others, when the soul, on hearing the sounds, reacts against the impressions of the body? — **Student.** I understand that difference. — **Master.** Well! Should we not firmly admit then that the movements of the soul towards the body are of a higher order than those through which it opposes the impressions of the body? (*De musica*, 6.6.16, my trans.)

A little further down, Augustine summarizes the results of the discussion. The soul may have different kinds of rhythmic activities: she can act by herself on the rhythms of the body; she can react against rhythmic perceptions coming from the body; and she can memorize all rhythmic events that occurred in both previous situations.

— **Master.** Therefore, when we classify and distinguish these two kinds of rhythm, we merely analyze the movements and dispositions of one and the same being, I mean the soul. Thus we establish distinctions between the movements of the soul, when she is confronted with modifications of the organs, as in sensation; or when she is directed towards the organs, as in action; or when she retains the result of all these movements, as in memory. (*De musica*, 6.8.24, my trans.)

Augustine proposes then an extraordinary list of rhythm genera, “classified, according to their relative superiority.” “Rhythms of judgment,” which are images in the soul of the Divine rhythms, “progressive rhythms” by which the soul moves towards the body without being prompted by exterior sounds, “reaction rhythms” by which the soul opposes or controls the impression of the body, “rhythms of memory,” which record rhythmic perceptions, and “sound or physical rhythms,” which are the acoustic and most material part of the rhythmic world.

— **Master.** We have thus distinguished and classified, according to their relative superiority, five genera of rhythm [*quinque genera numerorum*]. Now we must designate them by suitable terms,

to avoid circumlocutions in our conversation. — **Student.** Gladly. — **Master.** Let us call the first, rhythms of judgment [*vocentur ergo primi iudiciales*]; the second, progressive rhythms [*progressores*]; the third, reaction rhythms [*occursores*]; the fourth, rhythms of memory [*recordabiles*], the fifth, sound rhythms [*sonantes*]. (*De musica*, 6.6.16, my trans.)

At the bottom of the pyramid come up the physical rhythms which are silent in their own way, since they can exist without to be heard or when they escape our attention.

— **Master.** As for the sound rhythms, is it necessary to talk about it? They are appreciated with the help of the reaction rhythms, when they strike the ear. And if they resound without being heard, they escape our judgment, no one doubts it. (*De musica*, 6.8.22, my trans.)

In the middle, we find the judgment rhythms which “remain immutable, perhaps in the soul, certainly in the depths of human nature” and serve “as a rule for rhythms that are produced, to approve them, if they are fine, to censure them, if they are false.”

— **Student.** Neither do I see what I can answer. But [...] whatever intervals fall under their control, it is quite possible that they eternally keep their capacity of judgment. [...] the judgment rhythms remain immutable, perhaps in the soul, certainly in the depths of human nature, and, although they vary between more or less distant limits, they serve as a rule for rhythms that are produced, to approve them, if they are fine, to censure them, if they are false. (*De musica*, 6.7.18, my trans.)

Judgment rhythms are used whatever kind of physical and sensible rhythm is concerned. Dance, in this regard, is “similar to sounds”.

— **Master.** Concerning dances and other visible movements, there are similar to the sounds which are transmitted by the apparatus of hearing: their temporal rhythms [*quod ad temporales numeros attinet*] are appreciated by the judgment rhythms with the aid of memory. (*De musica*, 6.8.22, my trans.)

At the top are naturally higher “hidden rhythms”—the Divine rhythms.

— **Master.** But what happens when we sing this verse, which is so well known to us: *Deus creator omnium*? We hear it by the reaction rhythms, we recognize it by the rhythms of memory, we pronounce it by the progressive rhythms, we are delighted by the effects of the rhythms of judgment, and we approve them with the aid of other hidden rhythms. Indeed, there are hidden rhythms which are superior to the latter and which sovereignly decide of that very delight. (*De musica*, 6.8.23, my trans.)

Thus, not only the whole world, but also the whole circuit of perception is now considered from the rhythmic perspective. The world and the soul commune in the same rhythmic nature.

## Rhythm as Means of Salvation - Augustine's *De musica*, 6

Of course, only rhythms of judgment are eternal, because they are images in the human creature of God's eternal and perfect hidden rhythms. They provide the keys for salvation and eternal life.

— **Master.** Pay attention and tell me whether there are among rhythms eternal ones, or whether they all disappear and vanish with their times? — **Student.** Only judgment rhythms, in my opinion, are eternal. As to others, they vanish as soon as they appear, or they efface themselves from memory and perish in oblivion. (*De musica*, 6.7.17, my trans.)

This role played by the rhythms of judgment explain why master and student try to decide whether the fact that they are eternal and are used as criteria to judge any other rhythms implicates that they must somehow remain aloof from time. In other words, why is it that, being timeless, they may be used to judge temporal realities? Augustine addresses here a problem already raised by Plato in the *Timaeus* (37d), when he claimed that time is on earth “an image of eternity moving according to number.” His first answer is that eternity means necessarily timelessness.

— **Master.** If the judgment rhythms were subjected, by the ties of time, to the same intervals as the sound rhythms, could they be used to judge these sonorous rhythms, which, although they are more slowly chanted, are nevertheless subject to the rule of iambic verse? — **Student.** Not at all.  
— **Master.** So then, the higher rhythms which serve to judge others, are not chained in more or less long intervals of time? — **Student.** That is quite probable. (*De musica*, 6.7.17, my trans.)

But Augustine is not completely at ease with the Platonic and neo-Platonic answer, and maybe for the same reason he opposed the classical Greek dualistic conception of body and soul. He introduces an objection that is quite interesting and looks like an ontological corollary to Incarnation. If someone would keep the proportion between time-lengths but exaggerate their duration, it would be impossible to judge their rhythms. They would elude the absolute criteria given by the judgment rhythms which are naturally pertaining to the soul. The master realizes now that they must be somehow temporal. But then, how can they be eternal?

— **Master.** You are right to approve. But here is an objection. If these rhythms were entirely independent from duration, whatever the time I use to utter some sounds while observing the regular intervals required by the iambus, I should nevertheless still have the right to use them as criteria. In short, if I would pronounce a single syllable in the same time that a man, while walking, takes three steps, if I would double this time to pronounce another syllable, and in continuing so, I would compose an indefinite series of iambus, the ratio of 1 to 2 would certainly be faithfully respected, and yet I would not be able to rely on my natural judgment to verify such measures [*his dimensionibus*]. Is that not your opinion? — **Student.** I agree: in my opinion, it is obvious. — **Master.** So these judgment rhythms are confined within certain limits of time [*tenentur ergo et hi iudiciales nonnullis finibus temporalium spatiorum*]: they cannot escape from



them to fulfill their office of judge [*quos in iudicando excedere nequeunt*], and they refuse to appreciate all that happens beyond them. But if they are locked up in fixed intervals of time, I no longer see how they can be eternal. (*De musica*, 6.7.18, my trans.)

The right solution is presented a little further down. Rhythms of judgment must be both eternal and temporal, exactly as the soul dwells in the body but simultaneously remains superior to it as an active image of the Creator, naturally within the limits imposed upon her by the Fall. Each creature has been endowed by God with a rhythmic sense that is appropriate to his/her/its particular size and needs, but is also limited in the case of human being by his sinful nature.

— **Master.** If, therefore, in order to sustain the acts of corporeal life, a sense has been given to human nature, the scope of which only extends to appreciate the time intervals proportionate to her mode of existence, this sense is subject to the same condition of mortality as the degraded human nature. (*De musica*, 6.7.19, my trans.)

Despite their natural human limits, the judgment rhythms provide the soul with all criteria she needs to organize rhythmically her life in time—and reach salvation. Christian deliverance from Sin necessitates that the soul be guided by rhythmic criteria in her drive to eurhythmically move the body, as well as in her opposition to any arrhythmic movements coming from it.

— **Master.** Without embracing them all very precisely, because some extend beyond their domain, the judgment rhythms subject all genera to their control. Indeed, the progressive rhythms, which strive to produce rhythmical activity in the body [*in corpore numerosam operationem appetunt*], are modified by the secret command of the judgment rhythms. What, in a walk, prevents us from walking in unequal steps? When we strike, to put unequal intervals between the blows? To move the jaws unequally while drinking and eating? And while scratching, to rub unevenly with the nails? Finally, in order to avoid going through a multitude of other operations, in all our reflexive acts, what are we feeling through our organs, which in some measure bridles and confines unequal movements [*ab imparibus motibus refrenat et cohibet*], and silently seeks to bring them back into a regular rhythm [*parilitatem tacite imperat*]? There is some principle of judgment which manifests the action of God in the creature, for it is necessary to trace to Him all proportion and harmony [*omnis convenientiae atque concordiae*]. (*De musica*, 6.8.20, my trans.)

This rhythmic capacity of the soul ensures that the pleasure that is felt while listening to poetry or music is not to be rejected because it can be “a weight that serves to bring the soul into equilibrium.”

— **Master.** Without being too critical towards inferior things, let us balance our relations with the things that are below us with those that are above us, with the help of God our Lord, so that the former do not offend us and that the second only charm us. Pleasure is indeed a weight attached to the soul: it serves, therefore, to bring it into equilibrium. “Where your treasure will be, there will also be your heart.” Where the pleasure is, there is the heart. (*De musica*, 6.11.29, my trans.)

Even if the body bears the consequences of the Fall, it is now the inescapable dwelling of the soul and, in order to reach salvation, she must accept the action on her of the body “which nevertheless has its kind of beauty.”

— **Master.** Admire how the body acts on the soul. This influence would perhaps not exist if, through the effect of original Sin, the body, which the soul in its prime perfection animated and governed without difficulty and without embarrassment, would not have been degraded, subjected to corruption and death. Nevertheless it has its kind of beauty [*quod tamen habet sui generis pulchritudinem*], and as such he sufficiently reveals the dignity of the soul, which has preserved a remnant of greatness even in its punishment and infirmities. (*De musica*, 6.4.7, my trans.)

Jacques Darriulat rightly emphasizes the importance given, in this Christian theory of music, to physical/acoustic and sensible/corporeal rhythms, which prepare the soul for her future life.

Hence, the body is for the soul like a sensor of sounds, a sounding box which arouses in the mind the reminiscence of an eternal and divine harmony. And so it is since the original Sin, because it is now the body which has the power to attract the attention of the soul by its rhythms, whereas before the Fall the soul was sovereign in the body and had no need of sound to sing the intelligible canticle of its interiority, this music of silence whose mortal shadow the art of the musician only provides us with. (Darriulat, 2007b)

Thus, whereas Augustine started with a harsh criticism against poets, singers and actors, whom he found superficial and venal, he surprisingly but understandably finishes his treatise with a defense of the pleasure brought by music.

— **Master.** The rhythms of reason [*hi numeri rationis*] have a superior beauty. Suppose we would be utterly foreign to them, they would not, in our movements towards the body, modify the sensible progressive rhythms [*progressores numeros sensuales non modificarent*]. The latter, by the movements which they communicate to the bodies, produce the sensible time-lengths beauties [*agunt sensibiles temporum pulchritudines*]. These intervals, by striking the ear, give rise to the reaction rhythms. The same soul collects all these movements, fruits of her activity, multiplies them in herself and gives them the capacity of renewing themselves by virtue of this faculty which is called memory, and which is of such a great help in the complicated acts of human life. (*De musica*, 6.11.31, my trans.)

Pleasure found in musical and poetic rhythms should not become object of contempt. It helps “tearing oneself from all the disordered movements which deprive the soul of the fullness of its being.” Earthly rhythmic beauty is but a reflection of the divine perfection and the pleasure we feel in hearing beautiful rhythms an anticipation of the eternal life in God.

— **Master.** Why, then, if such rhythms, which arise in the soul applied to the things of this world [*rebus temporalibus*], have a particular beauty which they awaken in passing, why, I say, the divine providence would angrily see the beauty that comes into being despite the very mortality to which we have been condemned by a just judgment of God? For, he has not so much abandoned us in our misery that we cannot rise again, and with the support of his mercy tear us away from the sensual pleasures of the flesh. [...] It is by tearing oneself from all the disordered movements which deprive the soul of the fullness of its being, that our whole life is converted and restituted to God by the pleasure taken in the rhythms of reason. [*delectatione in rationis numeros restituta ad Deum tota vita nostra convertitur*]. It gives the body the rhythm of health [*dans corpori numeros sanitatis*] without receiving any joy yet, a happiness which is only reserved for the man who dies, externally, but turns to a higher existence. (*De musica*, 6.11.33, my trans.)

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