

# CYBER COLUMN by Brett Younger: The music of God's heart

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**By Brett Younger**

I'm at Barnes & Noble in the music section, seeing if there's anything new by Frank Sinatra. I'm looking in classical, where Sinatra should be located but never is, when I see a section that inexplicably keeps growing larger. Behind country, across from new age, astonishingly, unaccountably, there are rows and rows of soundtracks.

It makes sense to have the soundtrack of a musical—*Lion King*, *Sound of Music*, *Chicago*. It makes sense to have the soundtrack of a movie in which the music is important—*Walk the Line*, *Mr. Holland's Opus*, *Amadeus*. What's harder to understand is the availability of television soundtracks including *CSI*, *Days of our Lives*, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, four different CDs of *X-Files*, and, some of you were wondering, and yes, it is now available, *My Name is Earl*.

Brett Younger
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Some movie soundtracks make you scratch your head. I haven't seen *The Dukes of Hazzard*, *Pokemon*, *Princess Diaries 2* or *Rocky 5*, but it seems unlikely that any of these would be especially noted for their music. I have seen *Big Fish*, *You've Got Mail*, *The DaVinci Code*, and—I'm not proud of this—*Laura Croft*, *Tomb Raider*, but I didn't leave any of those films saying, "I have to buy the music." I'd guess Shakespeare would be surprised that there's a soundtrack for *Hamlet*. I'm still surprised at the success of *Titanic* with that song that just goes on and on. Celine Dion sold something like 100 billion albums, and I don't know anyone who'll admit they bought one.

Some CDs make you worry about the people who purchase them. Who would buy the soundtrack from *American Psycho*, *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*, *Scream 3* or *Lethal Weapon 4*? I haven't seen any of the four *Lethal Weapons*, but I would guess that they used up the best *Lethal Weapon* music in the first three.

Why do people buy soundtracks? Do they ever buy what could be the background music for their own lives? Do funny people listen to comedies? Do anxious people listen to the soundtrack from *Jaws*?

Maybe everyone's life has a soundtrack—even if it's *Dumb and Dumber*. What would it mean for your soundtrack to be *The Ballad of Ricky Bobby*, *The Devil Wears Prada* or *Crash*? Would the musical score for your life be a comedy, drama or tragedy?

Whenever we go to church, it's to listen to our life's music. Whenever we listen to God's song, we hear a new soundtrack for our lives. The Bible is a hymnal. King David auditions singers to lead in worship. Psalmists write symphonies for lyres, trumpets, strings, pipes and loud clashing cymbals. At Jesus' birth, the angels break into song. The hymns of the early church are sprinkled through the New Testament. Paul tells young Christians to "sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts." In Revelation, The Hallelujah Chorus ushers in the kingdom. On virtually

every page, you hear the music of God's grace meant not only for our ears, but also for our souls.

When our faith falters, it's often the music of the church and the singing of the congregation that holds us up. When the world seems bent on madness, music offers hope.

We use a variety of metaphors for God. God is Father. God is Mother. God is Vine. God is Bread. Maybe God is Music—not just notes and rhythm, but the music beneath everything that words can't describe. God is love, spirit, music. If what's in our heart isn't a melody, then we need to listen more carefully to the music of the spheres, the sound of God's grace and the hope of God's presence.

What do you hear when you listen to the music that you hear best in silence? Is it a melancholy bassoon or a haunting hammered dulcimer deeper than your sorrows? Is it the exuberance of a trumpet or the joy of a flute?

We don't hear nearly enough of the music of God's grace. We don't listen carefully. We so easily tune out when we need to tune our hearts, and maybe change our tune.

You get to the symphony just as the orchestra begins to warm up, and you sit down next to a well-dressed gentleman. You introduce yourselves. You ask what he does and he responds, "I'm a musician, a conductor." You say, "I don't want to take advantage of you, but I've never been able to figure out what's going on during warm-ups." So he begins pointing things out. "That violin is practicing the overture. That cello is putting her music in order, studying the score. The bass is staring at the hardest part. The percussionist is playing the same notes over and over, because he only has eight measures to play all night." Then the orchestra begins to tune their instruments. Every instrument is silent, then the oboe plays a note. Then

everyone plays a note. Then the oboe plays a note. The conductor explains that the oboe can't be tuned to anything else, so they tune to the oboe. You start listening for the oboe. You're listening more intently than you ever have, and you're hearing more than you've ever heard. It's almost like you've never heard the music before.

If we listen carefully, then we hear the sound of God's love and tune our lives to it. God invites us to listen to the music and realize it's for us. We need to hear the soundtrack that's always under the noise, the song of God's goodness, the melody of the Creator's grace, the psalm of the Spirit's love. If there's no music bursting within us, then we need to open our hearts again to God's joy. We need to listen, for then we can sing.

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