

COINCIDENCES?

A Journey into the Storm by the
Premiere Forces of
FESTIVAL of LIGHT!

IGNA 8-9-11 April 1995

There are those who have silenced their unique resonance with the *Great Music* that exceeds all laws of probability and coincidence. This story is not for them.

The Story begins at 3:33 pm on a Bridge in Boston. (*Actually, it goes back to the 1940s.*)

Impossible to list all of the subsequent events including the numbers 3, 33 and 333, we fast-forward to the completion date of the piece, *Festival of Light*, commissioned by Garwood Whaley and the *Bishop Ireton High School* Musicians. The horn solo, a symbol of the *Eternal Light* was written at lapsed-real-time 3:33 and was composed at 3:33 pm. The entire work was completed and saved to disk at 3:33 am.

333s accompanied Brian Kornfeld and I on the trip from New Jersey to Alexandria, Virginia. Everything from license plates to restaurant tabs... \$13.33 for instance... sign-posted the sojourn. Three times, hawks flew over our car during the trip, and each time, the gliding birds flew in groups of three.

Now, onto the piece, a miracle within a miracle made for an unplanned miracle.

Festival of Light was supposed to be delivered and premiered in 1996. I had completed it much earlier and sent it more than a year in advance. As fate would have it, the other 1995 commission fell through. Dr. Whaley received *Festival of Light* at a time that allowed him a new option.

While writing *Festival of Light*, I had no idea that (*Bishop*) *Ireton High School* was a Catholic school. In fact,

it was quite similar to *Iona Prep*, in New Rochelle, New York. My 9th grade was at *Iona Prep*. Walking into *Ireton*, Brian and I saw the jackets and ties and realized what was happening. Even the school colors were the same as *Iona Prep*.

After our first *Re*-hearsal on Friday, we attended an assembly at which a survivor of the Holocaust spoke. She had met her husband-to-be in a slave labor camp. We dedicated the piece to the Mr. and Mrs. Spiegel. They were in the audience that night.

Keep this in mind. **We didn't realize it then!**

Auschwitz had been liberated in January of 1945 by The Red Army. *Camp Ohrdruf*, however, was the **first** Nazi concentration camp liberated by the U.S. Army. It was a subcamp of the *Buchenwald* concentration camp near Weimar, Germany, liberated on **11 April 1945**. It was on *that date* that the Spiegels, then, not yet married, had been rescued. It was on *this date*, **50 years to the day later** that we premiered *Festival of Light*.

Back to the piece: At the rehearsal in which we met Mrs. Spiegel, we determined that Brian needed to play the chimes. Brian is Jewish, and in many ways, he was an inspiration for this piece. It is in the chime part that we find the iteration of the **8 days of burning Light**.

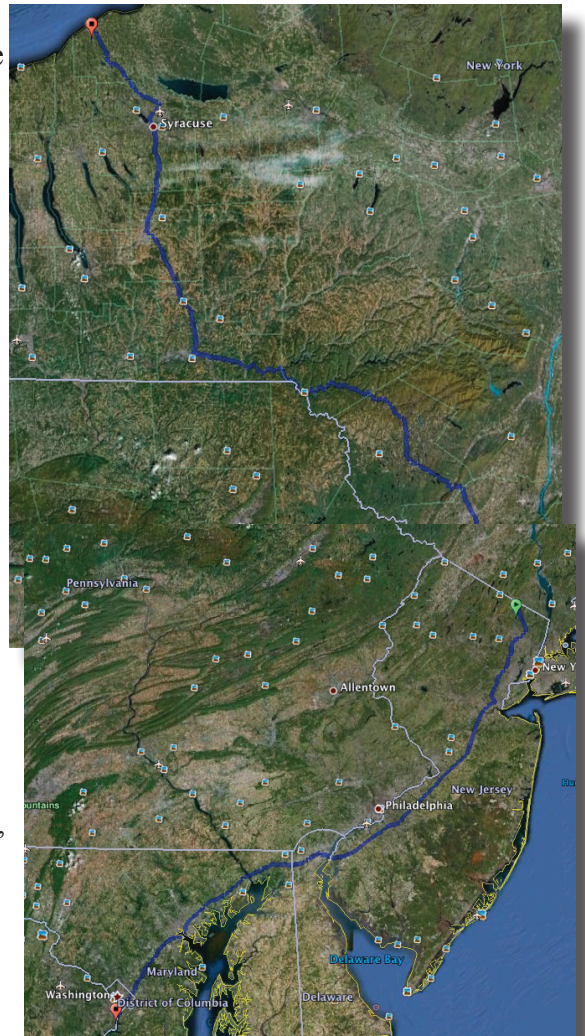
If you investigate the 4/4-5/8 section, you will see that they are in units of **8**. Why 4/4-5/8? That is because there are **13** - 1/8th notes or **8** units of **13**. These are *Fibonacci* numbers. And why **13**? Jesus was the 13th person at the Passover. How fitting, and yet, how “unplanned” for the Catholic school that would dedicate a piece to our Jewish Survivors.

This brings us to the *Ram's Horn*, the *Shofar*, which we obtained from the Rabbi. The Rabbi told the story of the *Ram's Horn*. It came from the sacrificial *Ram of Abraham*. It symbolized a “loud voice” that was used to call upon God.

Fitting. I had chosen the instrument because of its history and color. While composing *Festival of Light*, I did not yet know of its symbolism.

When Dr. Whaley told me over the phone that he couldn't get the trumpet player back to the ‘*Large Tam*’ for the initially written effect, I decided to get a **real** Ram's Horn. That is how I met the Rabbi. Later that same day, we went to a Dodge Ram dealer. The logo on their car, the one we purchased for a friend... was, yes, a Ram, complete with horns. Interestingly enough, when we returned on Sunday, **The Ten Commandments** was on TV. Brian called me when he got home and told me to watch. We had been talking about Moses and the History of the Jewish Faith. When I turned on the television, there was a scene playing that I had not remembered. Incredibly, **Moses was hollowing out a Ram's Horn!**

A Ram's horn grows in the proportion of the *Fibonacci Series*, the same mathematical underpinning for all of the *Stormworks* and for the *Stormworks* Logo. Naturally, this form was designed into *Festival of Light*. The *Fibonacci Series*, in my work and its far-reaching implications to the ever-expanding world of connections, is Monumental.





Monumental.

Now there's a good word. Prior to our trip to Alexandria, I was in Oswego, New York, the same number of miles from Ramsey... oh, my Gosh... **RAM**sey... as was Alexandria. There we delivered *The Fountainhead*. The last movement of this work about Integrity is called, *Monument to the Spirit of Man*.

This is the first line of the program notes from *The Fountainhead*. "God Architected the World and then in the greatest Storm, Architected Man, granting Him the miraculous ability to Architecture Himself and His surroundings."

Festival of Light was premiered in a Monument, a Monument to George Washington, and more than a Monument, a Temple, and not just a *Temple*, but a Temple whose fundamental bricks were proportioned after the exacting brick-dimensions used in King Solomon's *Temple of Jerusalem*. Do you remember our discussion about "architecture" prior to ever visiting this Washington Monument/Temple?

Keep all of this in mind as we continue into this miracle.

As Brian and I drove up to the Monument/Temple, I asked Brian, "What would you do, if, after the concert, we came out and right up there, above the Monument, we saw a Star of David?"

Looking back, I'm not even sure why this thought came to me, but we could just feel so much Good in the air. We would dedicate the piece to the Spiegels. They would be in the audience exactly 50 years to the day since their liberation.

Brian smiled. He said, "*Well... it would be a miracle.*"

Festival of Light is, and was, prior to this story, dedicated to "*all those who believe in miracles.*"

The fact that our concert was rendered with the US Air Force Band is still, yet another significant connection/coincidence. It was the USAF Band that first commissioned *Stormworks*, the piece. The man who recorded the concert was the same man who first conducted the premiere of that piece.

You guys have played *Stormworks* and *Escape from Plato's Cave!* Both of these pieces were intimately connected to the flow of events regarding this miraculous night. The dedication is on videotape. Maybe someone could send me a copy. I mentioned





many of the things written in this letter. My intention was to suggest a *“coming together of forces.”*

In every part of me, I felt that we were there for an important reason, which many of us may never know! The great and noble purpose of Music is to *give*. I’m glad we were given the opportunity to give that moment to the Spiegels and every person in that room.

After the concert, Brian and I stayed, needing to pack up and discuss a recording project. Approaching midnight, the night was eerie, windy and moist. The misty sky was hazily lit by a half-moon.

The night watchman said, *“Hey, have you ever been up to the top?”*

“Nope.”

The three of us squeezed into the rickety 70-year-old elevator. Pulleys hoisted us to the top of the Monument. The door opened. The night watchman said, *“This ... is a replica of King Solomon’s Throne.”*

“What?”

We were in a room dedicated to the historic creation of the Temple of Jerusalem. Museum-like, the room was filled with artefacts from Jerusalem, with Hebrew writings on the walls and tiny statues of people mentioned in the Bible. In a large glass case was a Bible. It was opened up to **1 KINGS... The Temple Building**. The passage described the building of the Temple of Jerusalem. It was built in the 2nd month of the year 960 BC.

Please check the date on the score! It was built in **3** parts, one of which held the *Ark of the Covenant*. It had **3** outer walls, which were **3** stories high.

It was from this **SAME** passage, presented to us at that moment on 11 April 1995, behind polished glass, that I had gathered the mathematics needed to compose *Festival of Light!*

After reading *The Fountainhead* at *Iona Prep*, and having just premiered the Music, I was intrigued by this well-honoured documentation of Architecture. On top of a closed building, behind a glass case, the Bible was opened to this particular chapter, in a room replicating King Solomon’s Throne. The room was atop the Monument/Temple where we had just premiered *Festival of Light*, a work dedicated to survivors of the Holocaust, who found Love in the face of great adversity. It was 50 years to the day since their liberation by American forces.

There is more. Since I am at a loss for words, there will be more Music. Perhaps, *“Ark of the Covenant.”*

But in closing, allow me to tell you what it was Brian and I had seen in the glass case. It was at eye-level when the elevator door opened. It was a *Shofar*, a Ram’s Horn. You must go up and see it. The Shofar was the same color and about the same size as the one used in the premiere. There was only one difference. You see, **our** horn was apparently from the *Right* side of the Ram. The one in the case was from the *other* side!

Wrap?

So runs the great Storm of Time and wonder and miracle. There are those who would say that all of these many overlaps are pure coincidence. For them, I feel sorry. I would ask them to contemplate the number of variables beginning years and years ago. I would ask them to take into their mathematics all of the countless subsequent events that would need to be aligned in order to have this one moment in the great expanse of Time occur just as it did. ***Think about it!***

There is one more thing, something I saw with Brian. It is subjective and I shall leave it out of this compendium. Suffice it to say that as we were leaving the Monument on early Sunday morning, Brian and I looked up... and... well, let's just say that we both saw something interesting.

Always, GODSPEED!

Stephen Melillo

PS: By the time you get this you will have returned from Europe. I hope that you enjoyed your trip and that you experienced many wondrous things.

PS 2: I love you guys.

PS 3: **9 April** is a very important date in History. Please discover it. Then, **11 April**. On this day, unplanned and off by one year because of a “coincidental” mishap, we premiered ***Festival of Light*** as described in this document. On that ***DAY***... 50 years ago, American forces liberated more than 20,000 prisoners at ***Buchenwald***. They also liberated Dora-Mittlebau, Flossenbürg, Dachau, and Mauthausen. Amongst those 20,000 were the Spiegels! I learned of this history just last night, on 23 April 1995!

Life is short, but so *so* wide...