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### **A Casebook of Otherworldly Music: Vol. 1 of Paranormal Music**

**Experiences** by D. Scott Rogo. San Antonio, TX: Anomalist Books, 2005. 176 pp. \$12.95 (paper). ISBN 1-933665033.

### **A Psychic Study of the Music of the Spheres: Vol. 2 of Paranormal Music**

**Experiences** by D. Scott Rogo. San Antonio, TX: Anomalist Books, 2005. 176 pp. \$12.50 (paper). ISBN 1-933665041.

Anomalist Books has re-released a number of books by the late parapsychologist, D. Scott Rogo, including the first two books of his writing career. Originally published in 1970 by University Books under the title, *NAD: A Study of Some Unusual "Other World" Experiences*, the re-released and re-titled book, *A Casebook of Otherworldly Music: Vol. 1 of Paranormal Music Experiences*

was written with the purpose of providing "enough case material to reinstate celestial music as a phenomenon worthy of parapsychology's concern" (p. 146). Rogo's efforts were followed up in 1972 with his second book, formerly titled *A Psychic Study of the Music of the Spheres: NAD Vol. 2*, in which his purpose was to relate paranormal music experiences to the general body of psychical phenomena. In the re-titled release, *A Psychic Study of the Music of the Spheres: Vol. 2 of Paranormal Music Experiences*, Rogo fleshes out his thesis and examines the relation of celestial music to out of body experiences, survival after death, and other psychic phenomena.

D. Scott Rogo studied at the University of Cincinnati and San Fernando Valley State College, from which he graduated in 1972 *summa cum laude* with a **B.A.** in Music. He played the English horn for two seasons with the San Diego Symphony and also performed occasionally with the Honolulu Symphony. He played the oboe as well. Being both a musician and a student of psychical research, Rogo was in a unique position to provide an original contribution to the field, and did so by the age of twenty with the publication of the first volume in this set. Much in the way that parapsychologists use the general blanket term "psi" from the Greek alphabet to denote paranormal processes and causation, Rogo chose the Sanskrit word **NAD** (also written **NADA** with the final "a" being silent) as a blanket term to represent the subject of his study. Sometimes the phenomenon is called psychic music, astral music, celestial music, or transcendental music, but the term **NAD** simply expresses the idea of music that is heard from no apparent source.

There are a number of criticisms that could be leveled against these books. First, Rogo reveals some naivety about what constitutes proof of survival as well as the proper uses of certain statistical terms. Such writing comes across as stilted at best or pseudoscientific at worst. Second, even though Rogo attempts to maintain some neutrality by prefacing out-of-body experiences with the term "ostensible", he makes no apologies for his survivalist beliefs and appeals to the "psychic ether" as an explanatory framework for some of the phenomena. These criticisms, however, will not be the focus of this review. Reading chronologically through the rest of the Rogo series, as released by Anomalist Books, one may witness the developing maturity of the author both in the sense of his writing style and his methods of critical analysis, thus rendering any extended discussion of these criticisms moot.

Throughout both of these volumes, Rogo presents case material taken from many different sources such as *Phantasms of the Living* by Gurney et al, books by Ernesto Bozzano and Robert Crookall, as well as accounts of **NAD** experiences as presented in the popular paranormal magazines of his day. However, the bulk of material comes from personal correspondence between Rogo and the experiencers of such phenomena, who had responded to his calls for such accounts in the magazines *Fate* and *Psychic News*. Rogo states that upon the commencement of the study in Vol. 1, he knew virtually nothing about the phenomenon of paranormal music and had no conception about where the data

would lead. His initial plan was to present cases quoted in toto, with points of coincidence and recurrent patterns emphasized (p. 129). However, along the way, he noticed a number of commonalities between NAD experiences and OOBEs (out of body experiences), and this apparent relationship became the focus of the books.

By the concluding section of Vol. 2, Rogo affirms his belief that "transcendental music is but another characteristic of the OOBEE and is in no way independent of it, even when the relationship is vague" (p. 96). According to his content analysis, both experiences manifest during similar mental states, and the type of music heard (i.e., choral vs. instrumental or melodic music vs. music without a discernable melody) coincides with the type of OOBEE (natural vs. enforced) reported. Rogo's analysis also uncovers what he calls a "crescendo effect" in the majority of the collected cases, in which experiencers report the volume of mysterious music gradually being heard, rising to full power, and receding again.

As much as Rogo would like to say that his study was written without bias (Vol. 1 p. 129), one may suspect that his prior interest in OOBEEs as well as his choice of secondary sources might have tempered his conclusions. Additionally, a call for accounts of experiences concerning "astral music" (p. 27) is likely to elicit reports from out-of-body experiencers. Still, it is admirable that someone so young, without having yet completed a formal education, would not only have the initiative to collect reports about little understood or discussed phenomena, but also have something meaningful to say about them. Thanks to the re-release of these books, which were long out of print, interest in NAD experiences might be renewed, and D. Scott Rogo might not have the first and final word on them.

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**Poltergeists: Examining Mysteries of the Paranormal** by Michael Clarkson.  
Buffalo, NY: Firefly Books, 2006. 220 pp. \$14.95 (paper). ISBN 1-55407-159-3

The German word *poltergeist* (literally meaning "noisy spirit") has traditionally been used to both label and describe a short-lived series of anomalous physical phenomena primarily involving the movement of objects without any apparent force acting upon them, which occurs repeatedly and spontaneously (knocking and rapping sounds are sometimes reported, as well). Parapsychologists instead use the term recurrent spontaneous psychokinesis (RSPK) based on the observation that the phenomena tend to occur in the presence of a certain individual (called the agent) and are, therefore, thought to involve an invol-