

# Music as a metaphor for the company

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Raphael, *The School of Athens* (1510), detail: Plato and Aristotle

In ancient times, music was considered to be a metaphor for the Universe. For Pythagoras and Plato music was number made sound; it became a science like algebra or geometry. In the same period, Aristotle considered it first and foremost as a source of pleasure and an experience of the senses. The Early Middle Ages put an end to that pleasure. Saint Augustine recommended only music that brought spiritual joy. This type of music was considered as a way of hearing God. At the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Saint Augustine went out of favour. Music for pleasure now predominates.

The music seminars for companies organised by *Saisir le temps*® have the Greeks' ambition to renew with the dual nature of music by considering it both as an abstract model and a source of pleasure. What is generally termed classical music is a remarkable metaphor for the company. Like the company, it is a complex yet accessible system, full of intelligence and emotion, and like the company, music carries the mark of its creator's strategies.

Issues such as the link between change and stability, the distribution of roles among the various players, unity in diversity, the hierarchy of structures, balance and coherence or the fulfilment of a vision, have all found a striking response in the works of the great composers. In the company these difficult questions are often crucial. Sometimes no answers are found and in some cases the questions are not even asked.

When we see that in 2006 the World Economic Forum (WEF) in Davos was held on the theme of the "creative imperative" for all economic players who want to rise to the challenge of an increasingly complex and uncertain 21<sup>st</sup> century, we are willing to wager that decision-makers, leaders and managers will seek to appropriate the domain of music to inspire their decisions.

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