

**Thoughts After Your Extraordinarily Beautiful  
Performances of  
Stravinsky's Symphony of Psalms**

**When I was almost a young man, singing in the choir of the  
First Christian Church on the northeast corner  
of "A" and Vine in the little Southern California town  
of Ontario,**

**I must say our God was magnified each and every Sunday morning  
according to an entirely different scenario.**

**Even the words of something so obviously foreign, to God and man  
as Symphonie de Psaumes.**

**Could only have interested a Deity bedizened by jewels, gold,  
marble, incense and the generally idolatrous customs  
of a small group of scribes and Pharisees  
who wore dresses and lived with each other  
and maybe even women on the other side of the world  
in a place called Rome.**

**And, as for the music of his symphony, there certainly was  
no way you could expect the God who gave us  
Plymouth Rock, Chautauqua and the Boy Scouts of America  
to respond to anything so inappropriate and  
absolutely appalling,**

**Certainly not the God of something as comforting and beautiful  
as Softly and Tenderly you know Who's Calling.**

**But, now that I'm somewhat older and have been exposed  
to several different varieties of religious experience  
-- intellectual, aesthetic and emotional,**

**It becomes a little easier as time goes on to distinguish between  
those aspects of worship which are still humbly seeking,  
and those which are largely self-promotional.**

**And, I want to say to somebody, even if it's only in a  
chorus weekly-letter,  
Year by year Stravinsky's kind of God is sounding better and better.**

**Alleluia, you-all-ya,**

**R**