

ABSTRACT

Title of dissertation: AFFECTING ETERNITY: THE
 PEDAGOGICAL INFLUENCE OF
 OLIVIER MESSIAEN

Dissertation directed by: Professor Rita Sloan, School of Music

Olivier Messiaen was among the most prominent and prodigious composer-teachers of the 20th century, teaching scores of students while holding two positions at the Conservatoire de Paris, first as professor of analysis, then as professor of composition. This dissertation explores the connections that can be established through three generations of composers: the composers whose works Messiaen lectured on, his own works, and works by the students of Messiaen. The repertoire considered centers on the piano in various solo and collaborative settings, including operatic reductions, art song, and instrumental chamber music. An effort was made to include students from different periods of Messiaen's teaching career and representatives of different aesthetic traditions, including serialism, neo-expressionism, European minimalism, and others. Compositions by composers preceding Messiaen were chosen because they were most important to Messiaen and his philosophies. All of these works and composers are assembled here in order to represent the breadth and diversity of Messiaen's teaching, which enabled his students to find distinct voices in the postwar musical scene.

This repertoire was performed over the course of three recitals on November 15th, 2019, March 8th and May 6th, 2020, with the first two recitals held in the Gildenhorn Recital Hall at the University of Maryland, and the third recital streamed live from the living room of the pianist. Recordings of these three recitals can be found in the Digital Repository at the University of Maryland (DRUM).

AFFECTING ETERNITY: THE PEDAGOGICAL INFLUENCE OF OLIVIER
MESSIAEN

by

Andrew Jonathan Welch

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of the requirements for the degree of
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Advisory Committee:

Professor Rita Sloan, Chair

Professor Andrea Frisch

Professor Barbara Haggh-Huglo

Professor Justina Lee

Professor Gran Wilson

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During my first two recitals of this dissertation project, I was joined onstage by many gifted, generous artists. Although they are listed individually below, I could not have completed this work without them. A constant presence at my University of Maryland recitals was Antonino D'Urzo, who repeatedly worked small miracles as the recording engineer.

In addition to advising this dissertation, I was privileged to study with Rita Sloan as a private piano student. When she was on sabbatical during the final semester of this project, I had the good fortune of working with Audrey Andrist.

This work is dedicated to those who have taught me, and those whom I've taught.

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Program I

November 15, 2019

5:00 p.m.

Gildenhorn Recital Hall

Le Merle Noir

Olivier Messiaen
(1908 – 1992)

La plainte, au loin, du faune

Paul Dukas
(1865 – 1935)

Pièce pour le tombeau de Paul Dukas

Olivier Messiaen

- Intermission -

L'Âme en Bourgeon

IV. Te voilà hors de l'alvéole...

V. Je Savais que ce serait toi...

Claire Delbos
(1906 – 1959)

Douze Notations

I. Fantastique - Modéré

II. Très vif

III. Assez lent

IV. Rythmique

V. Doux et improvisé

Pierre Boulez
(1925 – 2016)

Première Rhapsodie

Claude Debussy
(1862 – 1918)

Thomas James Wible, flute

Lewis Gilmore, clarinet

Nicole Levesque, mezzo-soprano

Andrew Jonathan Welch, piano

Program II

March 8, 2020

2:00 p.m.

Gildenhorn Recital Hall

Act III, Scene I “The Tower Scene”

from *Pelléas et Mélisande*

Claude Debussy

(1862 – 1918)

Rain Tree Sketch II

Toru Takemitsu

(1930 – 1996)

Cloches d’adieu, et un sourire

Tristan Murail

(b. 1947)

Rain Spell

Toru Takemitsu

- Intermission -

Octet

George Benjamin

(b. 1960)

Scene IV

from *Written on Skin*

George Benjamin

Thème et Variations

Olivier Messiaen

(1908 – 1992)

Thomas J Wible, flute

Lewis Gilmore, clarinet

Cambria van der Vaarst, harp

Anthony Konstant, percussion

Myles Mocarski, violin

James Stern, violin

Tonya Burton, viola

Molly Jones Castrucci, cello

Jessica Powell Eig, bass

Erica Ferguson, soprano

Elise Volkmann, soprano

Tim Keeler, countertenor

Richard Giarusso, baritone

Kevin Short, bass-baritone

Andrew Jonathan Welch, piano

Program III

May 6, 2020

5:00 p.m.

From the home of the pianist

<i>Huit Préludes</i> I. La Colombe	Olivier Messiaen (1908 – 1992)
<i>Erotiques</i>	Joanna Bruzdowicz (b. 1943)
<i>Images</i> (book II) I. Cloches à travers les feuilles	Claude Debussy (1862 – 1918)
<i>Signets</i> (Hommage à Ravel)	Betsy Jolas (b. 1926)
<i>Gaspard de la Nuit</i> II. Le Gibet	Maurice Ravel (1875 – 1935)
Twelve New Etudes for piano XII. Hymne à l'amour	William Bolcom (b. 1938)
- Intermission -	
<i>Huit Préludes</i> III. Le Nombre Léger	Olivier Messiaen
<i>Pas à pas</i>	Karel Goeyvaerts (1923 – 1993)
<i>Huit Préludes</i> VII. Plainte Calme VIII. Un reflet dans le vent	Olivier Messiaen
<i>Symmetry Disorders Reach</i> X. Air	Alexander Goehr (b. 1932)
<i>Huit Préludes</i> VI. Cloches d'angoisse et larmes d'adieu	Olivier Messiaen

Andrew Jonathan Welch, piano

CD Track Listings

CD 1 – Lecture Recital: Messiaen, Dukas, Delbos, Boulez, Debussy

1. Lecture, part I
2. Olivier Messiaen, Le Merle Noir
3. Lecture, part II
4. Paul Dukas, La plainte, au loin, du faune
5. Lecture, part III
6. Messiaen, Pièce pour le tombeau du Paul Dukas
7. Lecture, part IV
Claire Delbos, L'Âme en Bourgeon
8. IV: Te voilà hors de l'alvéole...
9. V: Je Savais que ce serait toi...
10. Lecture, part V
Pierre Boulez, Notations
11. I: Fantastique – Modéré
12. II: Très vif
13. III: Assez lent
14. IV. Rythmique
15. V. Doux, et improvisé
16. Lecture, part VI
17. Claude Debussy, Première Rhapsodie

CD 2 - Debussy, Takemitsu, Murail, Benjamin, and Messiaen

1. Claude Debussy, Pelléas et Mélisande, Act III, scene I “The Tower Scene”
2. Toru Takemitsu, Rain Tree Sketch II: In Memoriam Olivier Messiaen
3. Tristan Murail, Cloches d’adieu, et un sourire
4. Takemitsu, Rain Spell
5. George Benjamin, Octet
6. George Benjamin, Written on Skin, Scene IV
7. Olivier Messiaen, Thème et Variations

CD 3 – Messiaen, Bruzdowicz, Debussy, Jolas, Ravel, Bolcom, Goeyvaerts, and

Goehr

Olivier Messiaen, Huit Préludes

1. I. La Colombe

2. Joanna Bruzdowicz, Erotiques

Claude Debussy, Images, book II

3. I. Cloches à travers les feuilles

4. Betsy Jolas, Signets: hommage à Ravel

Maurice Ravel, Gaspard de la nuit

5. II. Le Gibet

William Bolcom, Twelve New Etudes for Piano

6. XII. Hymne à l'amour

Olivier Messiaen, Huit Préludes

7. III. Le nombre léger

8. Karel Goeyvaerts, Pas à Pas

Olivier Messiaen, Huit Préludes

9. VII. Plainte calme

10. VIII. Un reflet dans le vent

Alexander Goehr, Symmetry Disorders Reach

11. X. Air

Olivier Messiaen, Huit Préludes

12. VI. Cloches d'angoisse et larmes d'adieu

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Introduction

“A teacher’s work affects eternity: he can never tell where his influence stops.”

- Henry Adams

As the son of a teacher, and a teacher myself, this quote by Henry Adams has long been a source of fascination for me. While the quote might suggest lofty ideals, it is from a document decrying a perceived slide into perdition of the Harvard history department; thus the reality is earthlier than the initial reading of the quote might suggest. The message however, remains constant whether perceived positively or negatively: teachers influence the work of their pupils.

As performing musicians, we consider the influence of our teachers frequently, often tracing back that influence several generations to certain “schools.” Pianists, for instance, can often follow their pedagogical line back to Theodor Leschetizky, or Carl Czerny: from this information we can try to infer something about someone’s playing or teaching. We consider, too, the pedagogical lines of the composers we study and perform: how did Haydn influence Beethoven? Can one hear the influence of Rimsky-Korsakov on Stravinsky?

Despite the images some composers molded for themselves, virtually no composer is an autodidact. Additionally, many of them made, or supplemented their living, through teaching. Among a full canon of composer-teachers in Western classical music, who should one select to explore the idea of influence?

Ultimately, choosing Olivier Messiaen over other composers prevailed for several reasons. First, Messiaen left behind a considerable amount of writing about composing: two major (and two minor) volumes detailing his personal compositional process, as well as his analyses of the works and process of other significant composers. His 1941 book, *The Technique of My Musical Language*, is especially remarkable, both for its influence on other composers, including those with whom he had not directly engaged (e.g., Toru Takemitsu,) and for the assuredness that the thirty three-year-old composer possessed about the evolution of his personal style.

Messiaen worked and composed during a pivotal time in French musical history – he was born ten years before the death of Claude Debussy, was integral in developing the concept of total serialism, but did not accept all of its principles, and blazed a path in twentieth-century music that was different than that of composers of the mid twentieth-century. Even though he possessed a strong musical identity and has a definite cohesiveness of approach within his catalogue of works, he strongly urged his students not to become mere acolytes of his style. Thus, my dissertation project sought to pull a thread forward from the musical world Messiaen was born into, the world of Debussy and Stravinsky, to the composer himself, and to his composition students. What similarities could exist to bind together this diverse group of students into a “Messiaen school,” and to attach that school to a longer evolution of compositional practices over the last one hundred and fifty years?

To attempt to answer such a question in its complete form would be a project of such scope to render it impracticable to accomplish in the format of a collaborative piano dissertation project. Messiaen's works involving piano as a collaborating instrument alone could fill more than three recital programs, not to mention the works by the scores of Messiaen's students from his years in storied positions at the Conservatoire de Paris: Professor of Harmony (1941-1966) and Professor of Composition (1966-1978,) as well as works by his private students.?

Selections by both teacher and pupils were chosen, therefore, with an eye to diversity of styles and years of composition, ranging from 1929 to 2012. The composers represented in this project stretch from Messiaen's earliest days of teaching to the end of his career. Some of them adhere more closely to Messiaen's own compositional style, and others forged a distinct voice early in their output. Some of these composers have become fixtures in the discussion of twentieth- and twenty-first century music, while others are more obscure, or are seeing their star still rising.

Variety was also important when selecting the repertoire from the generation of composers before Messiaen that his students would have studied with him. A special effort was made to program pieces that related directly to discussions surrounding Messiaen and his musical language, or the progression of music in France between the outbreak of the two world wars. Claude Debussy, who was programmed three times, is the most represented of these composers, with Igor Stravinsky, Maurice Ravel, and Paul Dukas also programmed.

Among all of this repertoire, one particular category of composition makes an appearance no less than six times: the homage. Many of these pieces were written as memorials to a recently deceased composer (two are for Messiaen.)¹ The genre of the homage, or in French, *hommage*, encourages the writer to adopt or reference some elements of style of the person to which they are paying tribute while retaining elements of their own individual voice. In this way, the homage is of particular interest to this project, as we can see what the composer paying tribute views as essential in the language and workings of the composer they seek to memorialize.

Lastly, the selection of repertoire for this project was steered by a professional sense of what it means to obtain a performance-based doctorate in collaborative piano. The repertoire was selected from an array of genres, including art song, opera reductions, works for solo instruments with piano, mixed chamber music ensembles, works that necessitated conducting from the keyboard, and a robust selection of works for piano solo.²

Above all, the chosen works fascinated me, for they allowed unexpected insights into what bonds and separates these sixteen composers, each connected to a single master teacher but simultaneously possessing individual voices and unique journeys.

¹ If this category is broadened to include works clearly motivated by the act of grieving, all five of Messiaen's preludes from the third recital would be considered, too, as each in some way relates to the then-recent death of Messiaen's mother, Cécile Sauvage.

² My third recital, which was cancelled due to the 2020 pandemic, included works for two pianos, piano four-hands, and mixed vocal chamber music

United by an elastic creed: the compositions of Messiaen

The formation of Olivier Messiaen's compositional voice begins with his coming of age in Avignon and Grenoble between 1914 and 1918. Messiaen's mother, the poet Cécile Sauvage, was primarily responsible for young Olivier and his brother Alain, because their father, the translator and professor Pierre Messiaen, was enlisted during the first world war. Sauvage exposed Messiaen to many musical works, including operas by Mozart, Berlioz, and Wagner, and piano music of Debussy and Ravel, including *Estampes* and the newly-published *Gaspard de la Nuit*. She also sought out the best possible musical education for the prodigious youth, including organ and piano lessons. It was his organ teacher, Joseph de Gibon, who gave the eleven-year-old Messiaen a copy of Debussy's *Pelléas et Mélisande*, a work which Messiaen described coming as a "thunderbolt" into his world.

It is remarkable to consider how much of Messiaen's stylistic development can be traced back to these years before the Messiaen family moved to Paris. *Pelléas*, especially, was a work which Messiaen held in the highest esteem: he selected it as the work he would lecture on for Michel Fano's 1972 documentary *Messiaen et les Oiseaux*,³ and George Benjamin recalls that the class spent six weeks combing through *Pelléas* measure by measure.⁴ Richard Wagner, too, an icon for Debussy's development as a composer, was central to Messiaen's early

³ A short clip of that lecture is available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GSWatsiBERU>

⁴ Peter Hill, ed., *The Messiaen Companion*, ed. Peter Hill (Portland: Amadeus Press, 1995), 271.

development: the plot of *Tristan und Isolde* was central to three works by Messiaen in the 1940's. All three centered around the actualization of love through the death of the lovers, and included the Turangalila-Symphonie, arguably one of his most prominent works.

When the Messiaens relocated to Paris in 1919, Olivier was enrolled at age eleven as a student at the Conservatoire de Paris for the academic year 1920-1921. Messiaen's teachers included the vanguard of musicians in early twentieth-century in France, many of them appointed by the outgoing director, Gabriel Fauré. In 1927, Messiaen enrolled in a composition course with one of these forward-thinking artists: Paul Dukas. Dukas, like Messiaen, taught a robust studio of budding composers who had their individual compositional voices nurtured. The class, when Messiaen was enrolled, included Maurice Duruflé, who established a lasting compositional legacy in a small catalogue of works. Dukas, too, left behind a greatly reduced final catalogue: he was an exacting self-critic, and destroyed many of his compositions. Those that remain, however, show the hand of an inventive composer in full control of his art. This exacting self-criticism was limited to his own works: Dukas was a patient and open-minded teacher, one who encouraged his students to explore relatively new works by Stravinsky and Ravel alongside the standard older compositions whose works had comprised the conservatory curriculum. Dukas also encouraged Messiaen to explore birdsong, once proclaiming "listen to the birds: they are great teachers."⁵

⁵ Olivier Messiaen, *The Technique of my musical language*, trans. John Satterfield (Paris: Alphonse Leduc, 1956), 34.

Huit Préludes

Dukas was the driving force behind persuading the publishing house of Durand to publish Messiaen's *Huit Préludes* (1930), the earliest work by Messiaen included in this dissertation.⁶ These eight remarkable early works show a composer who simultaneously connects his language to that of older generations of French composers (namely Debussy and Ravel) while also exhibiting a distinct, mature voice in transition towards the next two decades of his compositional output. Composed between 1928 and 1929, these preludes were written in the shadow of Messiaen's tremendous grief at the death of his mother, Cécile Sauvage, on August 26, 1927.⁷ His grief is initially visible in several of the titles:

- I. *La colombe* (The dove)
- II. *Chant d'extase dans un paysage triste* (Song of ecstasy in a sad landscape)
- III. *Le nombre léger* (The light number)
- IV. *Instants défunts* (Deceased instants)
- V. *Les sons impalpables du rêve* (The impalpable sounds of a dream)
- VI. *Cloches d'angoisse et larmes d'adieu* (Bells of Anguish and Tears of Farewell)
- VII. *Plainte calme* (quiet lament)
- VIII. *Un reflet dans le vent* (A reflection in the wind)

Among the five preludes programmed in this dissertation, only *Le nombre léger* eludes a ready reference to Messiaen's bereavement. The work's somewhat vague title is best understood when examined alongside Messiaen's next work involving piano, his 1930 *La Mort du Nombre*, "the death of number." In *La Mort*

⁶ Hill, *The Messiaen Companion*, 72.

⁷ Stephen Schloesser, *Visions of Amen: The Early Life and Music of Olivier Messiaen* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2014), 62.

du Nombre, for soprano, tenor, violin, and piano, a dialogue between two ‘souls,’ emerges surrounding the separation of the two, and how they mourn no longer being together. Towards the end of the work, the soprano sings of a hope that is “lighter than feathered birds, lighter than emptiness...the weight of the number will be dead.”⁸ Both *La Mort de Nombre* and the title of *Le nombre léger* hint at a fascination with the dissolution of time, both temporal and musical, that will occupy many of his future works. Musically, *Le nombre léger* spells out Messiaen’s melodic and harmonic language inside a readily apparent ternary form. However, the work pays a final homage to its title by setting the repeat of the main melody in the last section as a two-part canon at the octave, which ascends higher and higher on the piano while gaining speed, defying weight and time. As Peter Hill observes, “the effect really is exhilarating, in an ecstatic entwining, impelled by marvellous shifts of harmonic colour towards a final fizz of virtuosity.”⁹

La Colombe, the first prelude of the set, is a simple binary form (A | A’). It contains a noteworthy example of ‘added resonance’ in the last system of the piece, where Messiaen doubles a final motif one octave plus a major seventh higher on the keyboard, amplifying the natural series of overtones present in the notes (an effect to which he returns in the sixth prelude.) The titular doves are a common image in French music, signifying, among other things, love and peace (notably as a Christian symbol, also.) Messiaen was well-acquainted with

⁸ Schloesser, *Visions of Amen: The Early Life and Music of Olivier Messiaen*, 118.

⁹ Hill, *The Messiaen Companion*, 78.

Debussy's *Pelléas et Mélisande* from a young age, and could readily recall the iconic tower scene where, after Pelléas ties Mélisande's hair around a willow tree, doves fly out of her hair. Stephen Schloesser has also proposed that Messiaen may have obtained a copy of *The Music of the Incas* (1925) by Marguerite and Raulo d'Harcourt, which would have further extended the his imagery of the dove to include the mourning of a lover, or of one who has lost one they truly loved.¹⁰ Notably absent from *La colombe* is any explicit reference to birdsong. Although Messiaen would later become the most famous transcriber and incorporator of birdsong into his works, these pursuits were taken up later in his life, at the beginning in the 1950's.

Plainte calme is, like *La Colombe*, a modest prelude of two pages length, placed as the penultimate piece in the volume. Like *La Colombe*, the ABA form of the work is readily apparent after a single listen. The interest and beauty in *Plainte calme* comes from Messiaen's deft juxtaposition of two sonorities, Ab7 and D7, which share two common tones (C, and Gb/F#.) The melody of the work is highly chromatic, effectively employing the tension found within a half-step at the ends of phrases, and bears more than a passing similarity in notes, rhythm, and texture, to the prelude from Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde*.

Un reflet dans le vent, the final prelude, shares the central image of its title with two preludes by Debussy (*la vent dans la plaine* and *ce qu'a vu le vent*

¹⁰ Schloesser, *Visions of Amen: The Early Life and Music of Olivier Messiaen*, 92-96. We know that Messiaen was well acquainted with this volume, and returned to the musical ideas proposed by the d'Harcourts most prominently in his 1945 song cycle, *Harawi*, part of the *Tristan* trilogy, concerning the actualization of love made possible through the lovers' death(s).

d'ouest), whose two sets of preludes are a forerunner to Messiaen's contribution to the genre.¹¹ Like others in Messiaen's set, the form of *Un reflet dans le vent* is readily apparent, with the opening section occurring twice in the piece, and a large second section returning in the latter half of the piece transposed down a fifth, but fully intact. At a closer resolution, though, Messiaen is busy assembling smaller sections of material that differs vastly in range, dynamic, mood, and harmony, and abutting them together with very little in the way of transition. Likewise, the title itself is similarly a combination of seemingly incompatible images: how can a visual reflection exist in the wind? These musical and literary choices point the way towards Messiaen's identity as a "surrealist composer," or one who combines images, events, or sounds so incompatible they could only exist in some form of fantasy state.¹²

Although these eight early pieces, the first which Messiaen considered of any value among his own works, are indelibly attractive fruits of the same mind that would produce the *Turangalila-Symphonie*, *Quatuor pour le fin du temps*, and numerous other masterworks, critical appraisal of the preludes has been mixed. The prelude generally exempted from any charges of "weaknesses," in the words of Robert Sherlaw Johnson, is the sixth in the set, *Cloches d'angoisse et larmes d'adieu*, which as Johnson notes 'anticipates future developments.'¹³

Undoubtedly the most explicit reference to grief in the cycle of eight works,

¹¹Wind is a common image in French music: consider as well the final movement of *La Mer*, among many others.

¹² For more examples of Messiaen's prose and poetry, examine his words for the three major song cycles and the opera *Saint Francois d'Assise*, which continue this surrealist vein.

¹³ Robert Sherlaw Johnson, *Messiaen* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975), 26-28.

Regardless of what critical assessment one might make of the set of preludes, *Cloches d'angoisse et larmes d'adieu*, the longest and most adventurous work, is clearly the centerpiece of the eight: Messiaen himself was fond of it until the end of his life.¹⁴ The opening page of the work features two key principles of Messiaen's musical language, as outlined in his *Technique de mon langage musicale*. First, we immediately encounter the 'added value' of rhythm present in the 'tolling bell.'



¹⁴ Angela Hewitt, “Preludes (Messiaen),” Hyperion, accessed April 27th, 2020, https://www.hyperion-records.co.uk/dw.asp?dc=W7808_67054.

In Messiaen's description, the 'added value' is a disruption of rhythmic stability by adding one small part of a note value to a line, in the form of a tie, dot, or rest. Sherlaw Johnson notes that, besides this prelude and *La Nativité du Seigneur* (1935), it is unusual to see this rhythmic treatment this early in Messiaen's work.¹⁵

In Chapters XIII and XIV of *Technique de mon langage musical*, Messiaen outlines his viewpoints on harmony, with sections in the fifteenth chapter on the "effects of resonance," crediting the term to his teacher Paul Dukas. Cited as an example in this chapter is a section from *Cloches*, where added resonance is achieved in the opening four pages by having the pianist's right hand supplement, at a much softer dynamic, notes that will naturally resound with the louder, lower notes of the left. The other examples Messiaen cites for 'added resonance' in *Technique* are pulled exclusively from later works, reinforcing the forward-thinking classification for this prelude.

Thème et Variations

Messiaen's *Thème et Variations* (1932) was one of two works for violin and piano that he composed for his first wife, Claire Delbos, a brilliant composer and violinist he met during his student days at the Conservatoire de Paris. Messiaen offered the work, designed to be performed by the two, as a wedding gift to Delbos, whom he had affectionately nicknamed "Mi" (possibly as a

¹⁵ Sherlaw Johnson, *Messiaen*, 27. In future Messiaen pieces, as his disruption of the meter becomes more and more adventurous, he begins writing fewer and fewer pieces with defined time signatures.

reference to the violin's "E" string, corresponding with the third note of the Solfeggio scale.) Messiaen would dedicate a number of works, most prominently the significant song cycle *Poèmes pour Mi* to Delbos. Not only is Delbos the dedicatee of *Thème et Variations*, but also a likely inspiration, as a number of similarities exist between her style and the opening theme of *Thème et Variations*. Messiaen prefers the use of two-or-three-note chords in the RH of the piano at the theme, a notable paring down from the sonorities heard in subsequent variations (which employ the massive chords we're used to hearing from him.) The quality of the chords, too, seems to hover on the brink of tonality – the violin continuously foils the piano's attempts to resolve to conventional major and minor chords (one of Delbos' hallmarks was balancing these more traditional chords with the more 'modern' polytonal, octatonic, etc. chords of her contemporaries.) Through the five variations, the violin and piano finally reconcile, in dramatic fashion, on a bombastic major chord in the titanic final variation, whose colossally slow tempo seems to suspend musical time.

In constructing a work that seems to start in the rhetorical world of Delbos, but then proceeds through a number of variants that illustrate Messiaen's distinct style before a dazzling, climatic finish, it is as if, in his musical gift to Claire, Messiaen aimed to unite with new wife musically, as well as lawfully and religiously. We know Messiaen regarded this work highly: in a letter to the composer and organist Jean Langlais ahead of a performance of the work, he

writes Langlais ‘would be very kind if he were to make a lot of noise and call for an encore of this work which is one of my best.’¹⁶

Pièce (pour le tombeau de Paul Dukas)

Although Messiaen wrote no major works for solo piano between 1930 (*Huit Preludes*) and 1943-44 (*Visions de l'Amen* for two pianos and *Vingt Regards pour l'enfant Jesus*) he did compose a number of miniatures, including *Pièce pour le tombeau de Paul Dukas* in 1935. Dukas had been Messiaen's primary and final composition teacher at the Conservatoire de Paris, and served as an essential link between the young student and a previous generation of French masters.

When Dukas died in 1935, the editor of the French musical publication *La Revue Musicale*, Henry Prunières, solicited composers to write pieces in memory of the deceased composer. In addition to Messiaen, there were submissions by seven others, including Joaquín Rodrigo, Manuel De Falla, and Florent Schmitt, and Messiaen's former studio mates Elsa Barraine, Julien Krein, and Tony Aubin. In a final connection to a previous generation of composers, De Falla and Schmitt had been asked to submit compositions for *Le Tombeau de Debussy* in 1920 (for which Paul Dukas also submitted a piece; see below.)

Although works of homage typically attempt to take on some characteristic element of the composer to which they pay tribute, Messiaen's *Pièce* is a largely original work, and one that, in its fixed use of the 2nd and 3rd

¹⁶ Schloesser, *Visions of Amen: The Early Life and Music of Olivier Messiaen*, 202.

modes of limited transposition, the lack of notated meter, and the liberal use of the “added value” of rhythm, represents another logical step on the journey from the *Préludes* toward becoming the composer of *Quatuor pour le fin du temps* and the *Turangalila-symphonie*. What role did Dukas play in shaping the young mind of Olivier Messiaen, and what connections does this work have with Messiaen’s student years at the conservatory? The first and second modes of limited transposition, often referred to by their alternate names, the whole-tone and octatonic scale, are used liberally by Dukas in his *La plainte, au loin, du faune*. Both modes are employed by Messiaen in his *Huit Préludes*, begun during Messiaen’s student years, and familiar enough to Dukas that he recommended it to Durand for publication, suggesting that he may have been a guiding influence for these melodic and harmonic developments.

Of this work, Messiaen only says: “It is static, solemn and stark, like a huge block of stone.”¹⁷

Le Merle Noir

The happiness that Messiaen and Delbos experienced during the 1930’s as a new couple and, after the birth of their son Pascal, as a new family, was not destined to last. While the years leading up to and following his notorious imprisonment at Stalag VIII in 1940 were filled with great productivity, his output slowed greatly following the conclusion of his trilogy of “Tristan” works in 1949 with the completion of *Cinq rechants*. Much of this slowdown can be traced to

¹⁷ Nigel Simeone, “Pièce pour le tombeau de Paul Dukas,” Hyperion, accessed April 28th, 2020, https://www.hyperion-records.co.uk/dw.asp?dc=W4496_GBAJY0436608.

two causes: his musical dilemma of where to take his compositional voice following his serialist explorations in the *Quatre Études de rythme*, and a dramatic upheaval in his domestic life.

The nature of Claire Delbos' gradual decline in health is vague and difficult to assess: both Delbos and Messiaen were extremely private individuals, who allegedly surprised their friends when they announced that they had been married. Records indicate that Delbos had irreversible cerebral atrophy which caused Messiaen to install her in a nursing home in 1953, where she died in 1959.¹⁸ Symptoms of her decline had begun to appear as early as 1941, which increasingly hampered Messiaen's productivity, and strained also his relationship with his son, Pascal. The Messiaen biographer Christopher Dingle has noted the connection here to Messiaen's own relationship with his father, who lost his wife at a young age, and experienced an increased distance from his own son. While Messiaen and Pascal's relationship had improved by the 1960's, his absence from his son's wedding in 1958 represents the fractured nature of their relationship during this decade.¹⁹

The other primary concern in Messiaen's life in the early 1950's was a crisis of compositional voice. As is noted below, Messiaen's second of four rhythmic études, the work *Mode de valeurs et d'intensités* (scale of values and intensities) synthesized several developments in pre-serialist procedures, and led to the coalescing of the techniques that came to be known as "total serialism," a

¹⁸ Schloesser *Visions of Amen: The Early Life and Music of Olivier Messiaen*, 488.

¹⁹ Christopher Dingle, *The Life of Messiaen* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), Google Books, 142.

movement launched by a dedicated cohort of Messiaen students (Boulez, Stockhausen, Goeyvaerts, Fano, among others.) This work was followed shortly by the *Livre d'orgue* (1951-52), which contained further experiments in compositional form and style.

Messiaen did not, however, follow these works with further serialist works of his own, and did not, as Pierre Boulez observes, completely set aside the preexisting components of his musical language, merely minimized some (vertical harmonies, juxtaposed forms) in order to focus more intensely on others (the relationships between rhythm and harmony, and how they might be combined into a holistic system.)²⁰ Indeed, valuable research by the Stockhausen pupil Richard Toop has shown that hallmarks of Messiaen's language from the well-known compositions of the 1940's are still present in *Mode de valeurs et d'intensités*.²¹

However, these two developments did leave Messiaen at an impasse, as shown by the gradual slowing of his composition output at the beginning of 1950's, including a totally blank year in 1954. Messiaen's eventual escape from writer's block was found through his exploration of birdsong in many forms: identifying and recording it in the wild, transcribing it, and incorporating it into musical works. To this end, Messiaen went as far as engaging a private instructor to teach him basic ornithology and birdsong identification.²²

²⁰ Pierre Boulez, "Messiaen," in *Orientations*, ed. By Jean-Jacques Nattiez, trans. Martin Cooper (Boston: Faber and Faber, 1986), 412-418.

²¹ Richard Toop, "Messiaen/Goeyvaerts, Fano/Stockhausen, Boulez," *Perspectives on New Music* 13, no. 1 (1974): 144-146, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/832372>.

²² Dingle, *The Life of Messiaen*, 140.

Messiaen's first work to center around birdsong was *Le Merle Noir* (1952), composed as an examination piece for the flute studio at the conservatory. The work centers around two extended cadenzas for flute, which lay out many of the elements of typical blackbird birdsong, including the variation of rhythmic activity and rapid change of registers. From these free cadenzas, Messiaen reincorporates the piano, and writes out melodic figures borrowed from elements of the birdsong. After the second cadenza, these melodic figures are repeated, but in a canon at the unison. The coda of the piece contains a ferocious flurry of activity, with the piano and flute playing overlapping cells of music that are varied in their individual rhythms, and in how they are layered together, before the piano suddenly cuts out, and the flute finishes the piece with one final, fortissimo bird call.

In the period immediately following *Le Merle Noir*, Messiaen sticks to many of the same formulas in his music, introducing birdsong in a quasi-transcription, before varying it through fragmentation and exposure to traditional compositional devices. Though he would scale back the prominence of birdsong in many of his works after the *Catalogue d'oiseaux*, birdsong remained present in most Messiaen works to the end of his life.

Pièce pour piano et quatuor à cordes

One of the final works Messiaen wrote, the *Pièce pour piano et quatuor à cordes* was composed, like *Pièce pour le tombeau de Paul Dukas*, as an occasional piece to be included in a set of works by a larger body of composers. This time the occasion was a positive one: the celebration of the ninetieth birthday

of Alfred Schlee, the president of Universal Editions, whose publishing house had done much to advance the cause of twentieth-century composers.²³ Other composers contributing works for this celebration included Ligeti, Dutilleux, Schnittke, and former Messiaen pupils Pierre Boulez and György Kurtág.

Like other post-1951 Messiaen works, the *Pièce pour piano et quatuor à cordes* centers around birdsong, in this case, the song of the *fauvette des jardins*, or ‘garden warbler.’ The piano introduces the birdsong after an opening section where we hear strings and piano in alternation, and then together. The birdsong erupts in a joyous frenzy of activity, with the piano trading off sections with the string quartet in a daringly fast call-and-response. Remarkably, after the birdsong section concludes, we hear all of the material presented from the opening again, but this time in reverse, so that the piece is structured as a formal palindrome.²⁴

The Messiaen of 1991, in his penultimate composition, is remarkably aligned with the Messiaen of 1930, in his first published work, the *Huit Préludes*. We find a composer who writes in readily-apparent formal structures, who is inspired by the images or sounds of birds, interested in building sonorities based on the natural resonance of pitches and of the piano, and finding a careful balance between establishing rhythmic patterns while disrupting a sure sense of meter.

²³ Hill, *The Messiaen Companion*, p. 511

²⁴ If the piece were an exact palindrome, we would hear the musical material presented *entirely* in reverse, so that, for instance, the opening four note motif, G-A-G#-D, would read D-G#-A-G. The choice to make it a structural palindrome allows the listener to more readily perceive the form, and is in keeping with Messiaen’s longstanding practice of using straightforward forms to showcase contrasting materials. Compare this treatment to the Allegretto from Beethoven’s 7th symphony, where travelling in opposite directions outward from the central fugato we encounter the same musical materials, including the first/final a minor chord in the wind section.

The Venerated Masters

What Messiaen learned and taught from the scores of Debussy, Stravinsky, Ravel, and others

Through the course of appointments at the Conservatoire de Paris as a professor of analysis and theory (1941 – 1966) and professor of composition (1966 – 1978) Messiaen analyzed and taught scores by most of the major composers in the Western musical canon, often focusing whole semesters on a composer, sometimes down to a particular sub-genre. Betsy Jolas' first semester with Messiaen, for instance, focused exclusively on the Beethoven symphonies.²⁵ Karlheinz Stockhausen spent a semester with Messiaen dedicated entirely to the Mozart piano concertos, a course that later led Stockhausen to write about the subject himself.²⁶ Students recall working through a variety of other composer's works, ranging from those of a generation immediately prior (Debussy, Stravinsky, Bartok, Ravel), to those many centuries ago (Monteverdi), and including studies of the music of cultures from around the world.

Dukas, *La plainte, au loin, du Faune*

Of all of the composers whom Messiaen revered, deciphered, and taught, none held as special a fondness as Claude Debussy, who had died of rectal cancer only two years before Messiaen entered the Paris Conservatoire. Messiaen had a vital link to Debussy - his primary teacher, Dukas, was one of Debussy's few

²⁵ Betsy Jolas, "Interview with Betsy Jolas," interviewed by Samuel Andreyev, May 17, 2018, video, 81:00, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DHTGOayU1DQ&>.

²⁶ Toop, "Messiaen/Goeyvaerts, Fano/Stockhausen, Boulez," 143.

remaining friends and confidants. It's therefore unsurprising that Dukas was asked in 1920 to submit a piece to *La Revue Musicale* in memory of Debussy (the same publication that would collect memorial works for Dukas fifteen years later.) The work he submitted, the poetically titled *La Plainte, au loin, du faune*, demonstrates that Dukas not only had a deep appreciation for the musical language of Debussy, but that he also understood the underlying implications Debussy's music would have on generations to come. *La Plainte, au loin, du faune* borrows both its title and musical material from Debussy's 1894 paradigm-shifting *Prelude à l'après-midi d'un faune*, the only completed part of an intended suite of works based on the analogous poem by Stephane Mallarmé.

Dukas' piece, of a comparable length and scope to the typical Debussy prelude, opens with a single repeated G, reminiscent of many other works in the project that blossom from a single tone (and two that begin on G.) Here, Dukas' inspiration is the bottom note of the celebrated flute solo that begins the Debussy. From there, the references to the Debussy increase in number and intensity, culminating in a moment where the publisher, Durand, inserts a footnote in measure 15 letting their reader know that the notes are lifted from *Prelude à l'après-midi d'un faune*.²⁷ Throughout the work, hazy reminiscences of highlights from the Debussy are washed with chromatically shifting harmonies as part of three-to-four-layer piano textures. Harmonies exist in a blurred world between holding functional power and serving merely to define only the chord

²⁷ The composer of this orchestral work is not explicitly stated: another indicator of the works abiding ubiquity.

immediately before or after, until the work ends where it started: a direct quote from the flute solo, and an inconclusive open fifth of G and D in the bass being colored by an unsettling Ab. It becomes clear after perusing the Dukas and studying what Messiaen wrote about Debussy's role in changing our perceptions of harmony that the two men were in sincere agreement about the implications of Debussy's music. Olivier Messiaen would have entered the Conservatoire already with a deep and abiding love of the music of Debussy: Dukas' hauntingly gorgeous tribute to his deceased friend serves also as a link backwards into how Messiaen must have first encountered the works of Debussy as part of a formal, conservatory education.

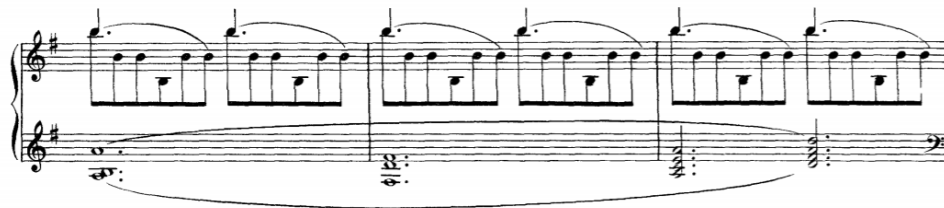
Debussy: *Pelléas et Mélisande*

We know of Messiaen's adoration of the works of Debussy through so many sources: in addition to the aforementioned "lightning-bolt" of receiving a score to *Pelléas et Mélisande* at age ten and the inclusion of scenes from *Pelléas* in Michel Fano's documentary about Messiaen's teaching, Debussy is the most frequently cited example of other composer's works in *Technique du langage musicale*, with four submissions. (Ravel, the only other composer with multiple submissions, has two.) Unsurprisingly, three of the four examples are from *Pelléas*: these are used to explain and justify his concept of "added note" harmony, which evolves into "added resonance" and other key concepts of Messiaen's language.

It is for both biographical and theoretical purposes, therefore, that an excerpt from *Pelléas* is included in this dissertation project. Among many fine

possibilities for a synecdoche of the opera's tonal world and plot content, the opening of act three, known as the "Tower Scene," captures much of the essence of *Pelléas*. In the opera, the mysterious Mélisande, who is a stranger in the kingdom, is engaged to be married to the prince, Golaud. She has, however, also caught the eye of Pelléas, who, in this scene, persuades her to throw her ample hair over the side of her balcony and proceeds to caress it, before tying it to a nearby willow tree. The scene is concluded with the entrance of Golaud, who proclaims the two are behaving like children, and absconds with Pelléas.

Two particular passages in this scene jump out as being of interest: the first is the opening orchestral interlude that precedes Mélisande's first lines.



Ex. 2 – *Pelléas et Mélisande*, Act III, scene I, piano-vocal score, page 115

Here, the B, constantly struck in the harp, serves as an “added note” for the chords over the course of the line, which themselves blur the boundary between functional and non-functional harmony (consider that the final chord resolves in the next measure as B major with an ‘added’ G.) Later in the scene, we encounter this passage:



Ex. 3 – *Pelléas et Mélisande*, page 127

This passage also defies easy analysis – the chords exist primarily as a coloring of the melodic gesture, here two-thirds of a descending whole-tone scale. Examples of non-functional harmony, or chords that seem to be positioned solely for the effects of color, were of particular interest to Messiaen both as a composer and as a teacher. As Vincent Benitez notes concerning Messiaen the teacher: “ In general, he did not distinguish between structural chords and linear chords. Harmonic motion at different structural levels is not explored. Essentially, we receive no explanations as to how one chord progresses to another.”²⁸ Among scores of the early twentieth century, no work would have given him more opportunities to explore the color inherent in chords, and the ways their usage evolved from composer to composer.

Debussy: Première Rhapsodie and Jeux

Written only five years after the première of *Pelléas et Mélisande*, Claude Debussy’s *Première Rhapsodie* was composed as an examination piece at the Conservatoire de Paris (it has a shorter pairing piece, *Petit Pièce*, which was written for the sight-reading portion of the exam.) It provides a comparison of

²⁸Vincent Benitez Jr., “A Creative Legacy: Messiaen as Teacher of Analysis,” *College Music Symposium* 40 (2000): 125, accessed April 28th, 2020, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40374403>.

genre with Messiaen's *Le Merle Noir*, composed for the same purpose (but for the flute, rather than the clarinet.) Both pieces are, in a sense, transitional pieces for their respective composers. *Le Merle Noir*, as noted above, represents Messiaen's first attempt to incorporate birdsong into his compositions. *Première Rhapsodie* was a logical continuation of Debussy's inventive treatments of musical form, which had begun with his earliest works, and arguably culminate with his 1912 ballet, *Jeux*.²⁹ Although *Jeux* was the work that captured much of the attention of Pierre Boulez and other members of the post-WW II avant-garde, much of what Boulez admired in *Jeux* can also be seen in the 1910 *Première Rhapsodie*.

Consider the following quote from Boulez:

The structure is rich in invention and shimmeringly complex...in order to hear it, one's sole recourse is to submit to its development, since the constant evolution of thematic ideas rules out any question of architectural symmetry.³⁰

The *Première Rhapsodie* encourages a similar form of listening, too – albeit to a form that is well-decorated by a series of virtuosic impositions on the clarinetist. The entire work unfolds from a single point of genesis: three F's, separated by an octave, struck by the pianist, and answered by three descending notes in the piano, and three ascending tones in the clarinet (a gradual unfolding away from the main pitch.) This unfurling of pitches continues over eight measures, before landing in the aquatic world of rippling Db major, where a longer theme (based on the opening piano gesture) is finally presented by the clarinet. Throughout the work, however, materials from different sections

²⁹ *Jeux* was among the intended pieces to be performed on the third recital – see appendix

³⁰ Stephen Walsh, *Debussy: A Painter In Sound* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2018), 285.

resurface later, but they challenge the form by appearing with such radically different accompaniments, one questions whether or not they had heard that section of the piece before.

Consider then, the sharp contrast with Messiaen's treatment of form, shown by this quote from his former student Peter Hill:

Here, as later, Messiaen shows little interest in beveling the right angles of his forms. Indeed the fascination of [the preludes]...arises perhaps from the way this 'squareness' combines with a sound and mood which is veiled and mysterious.³¹

Debussy: Cloches à travers les feuilles

The evolution of Debussy's radical treatment of musical form can be traced back even further than *Jeux* or the *Première Rhapsodie*: here we consider the first selection from Debussy's second book of *Images*, *Cloches à travers les feuilles*. The work was composed in 1907 while Debussy was away from Paris at Pourville, on the Normandy coast. The title of the work, "Bells through the leaves," is, as Stephen Walsh observes, a fascinating mingling of senses, as one immediately and primarily hears the bells and sees the leaves.³² One can also draw a reference here back to Messiaen's own quasi-surrealist mingling of different senses in the titles of his preludes, especially *Un reflet dans le vent*.

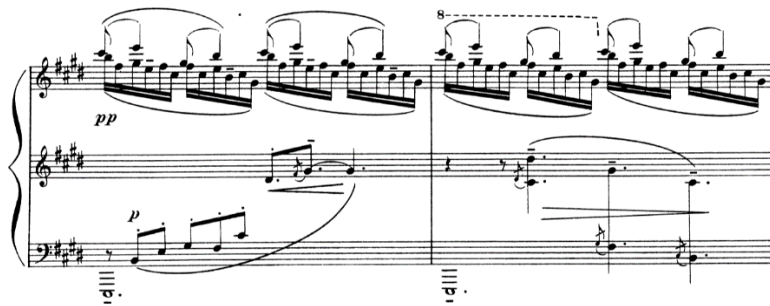
Debussy's work, a stunning study in the use of different textures and colors of the piano, is also remarkable in its harmonic makeup: here there are free transitions between static (the first eight measures are all centered around a simple whole tone scale), and active harmony, mixing whole-tone and pentatonic-scale-

³¹ Hill, *Messiaen Companion*, 73.

³² Walsh, *Debussy: A Painter In Sound*, 182-183. The emphasis is mine.

derived chords with more traditional diatonic harmonies. This foreshadows many of the harmonic devices Debussy would use in his two sets of twelve preludes, later submissions to his piano catalogue.

The titular connection to Messiaen's *Cloches d'angoisse et larmes d'adieu* is grounded by a number of important musical similarities. Consider Debussy's use of planned resonance throughout the work: although he provides no pedal indications in the score (despite meticulously considering dynamics, articulation, note lengths, etc.) he clearly intends for the use of some sustaining pedal, as is shown by the number of "three-hand" textures that could not be achieved otherwise. This is especially obvious in moments like the example given below, where one, low pealing bass note is sustained, with faster-moving notes above it.



Ex. 4 – *Cloches à travers les feuilles*, p. 4

Here, the writing for the piano matches the title well – just as the resonance of the low E is amplified by the many notes sounding above it, one can hear, in the pealing of a very large bell, a series of overtones that enhance and amplify the fundamental tone. This connection between the imagery of bells, popular throughout French culture for their many religious and societal purposes,

and their acoustic properties was not lost on Messiaen, whose *Cloches d'angoisse et larmes d'adieu* is an exercise in exploiting the natural resonance of the piano.

These works by Messiaen and Debussy share a final, important connection – that of a starting tone. Both enter on a single, modest G, and proceed to unfurl outwards in their explorations of sound, reverberation, and resonance. Although Debussy's "G" is not as repetitive as the ostinato notes in the first half of the Messiaen prelude, it does resurface at critical moments throughout the work, usually presented in different registers and accompanied by different sonorities, further masking the structural skeleton of the piece.

Ravel: Le Gibet

Debussy's *Cloches à travers les feuilles* was not the only work from the second half of the first decade of the twentieth century to exploit both the symbolism and natural musical properties of the bell. Maurice Ravel's *Gaspard de la Nuit* was written in 1907, and inspired by his friend, the virtuoso pianist Ricardo Viñes. Viñes introduced Ravel to the Aloysius Bertrand poetry that inspired the three movements, and also gave the premiere of the work.³³ In crafting *Gaspard de la Nuit*, Ravel told Maurice Delage, a fellow composer, friend, and one-time student, that he intended to write a work "of transcendental virtuosity, that would be more difficult than Balakirev's *Islamey*."³⁴ Although the outer two movements of the triptych, *Ondine* and *Scarbo*, receive the most

³³ The dedication, however, is broken down into movements, and none of them are dedicated to Viñes, who had already received a movement in Ravel's earlier work, *Miroirs*.

³⁴ Maurice Ravel, *Gaspard de la Nuit*, ed. Nancy Bricard (Van Nuys, CA: Alfred, 2003), 9.

attention for their difficulty, the central movement, *Le Gibet*, also possesses tremendous difficulties, especially the successful execution and balancing of a single Bb that runs from the beginning of the piece to the end.

The Bertrand poem that inspired *Le Gibet* paints a harrowing picture: the narrator is disturbed by a single sustained, ominous sound, which he attributes to a variety of sources (including a person hanging from a gibbet), before identifying the sound as “the bell that tolls from the walls of a city.”³⁵ Here, of course, is the connection of imagery to the Debussy, and the Messiaen – like those works, and others by all three composers, the sound of bells was a direct inspiration.

Although Ravel’s work operates under more traditional, functional harmony than the Debussy or the Messiaen, it, too, contains moments of chords that exist as devices of color over a single pedal point, washing together into a greater collection of sounds.

Ex. 5 – *Le Gibet*, p. 18, Durand

³⁵ Ravel, *Gaspard de La nuit*, 32.

Messiaen, analyzing a similar passage from Debussy's *Pelléas*, ventures that we hear these sonorities, especially the final bar in this example, blending together into one single larger chord with many added notes.³⁶

We know that Messiaen acquired a score of *Gaspard* as a child, in the period before the family moved to Paris at the end of the first world war. Certainly, by the time he was an adult, he knew the work intimately and regarded it highly.³⁷ Not only did he study the work and know it well: the opening of his prelude *Cloches d'angoisse et larmes d'adieu* leaves a strong clue that both the Debussy and Ravel left an imprint on him as the young composer of *Huit Preludes* (1930). The prelude also captured his feelings of grief over his recently departed mother, who provided him with the scores that influenced him at such an impressionable age. Messiaen's prelude, written in two halves, opens with a single G, tolling underneath the larger, resonant chords above (the similarity with the Debussy *Cloches*.) He then, after a brief move towards a canon in D major, energizes the same texture as the opening (bells/chords) by repeating it, in truncated form, a minor third higher, with the tolling bell sounding on Bb (the same as the 'bell' in *Le Gibet*.) Not content to rest on the Ravellian Bb, the pitch of the bell sequences up again, this time to D. On top of this D bell, the chords build in intensity until, at a moment of apparent climax, the texture dissolves, and the second half of the piece, the sublime, vast melody in B major, unfolds. Is it possible that Messiaen was returning to the pieces that his mother, Cécile

³⁶ Benitez, "A creative legacy: Messiaen as teacher of analysis," 126.

³⁷ Claude Samuel, *Conversations with Messiaen*, trans. Felix Aprahamian, (London: Stainer and Bell, 1976), 73, Hathi Trust Digital Library.

Sauvage, gave him as a child, and using those as a vehicle to access her spirit, and ultimately to resolve his grief musically?

Ravel: Frontispice and other works

The suspension of momentum and the slow unfolding of melody at the end of *Cloches d'angoisse et larmes d'adieu* so vitally essential to Messiaen's style are heard twice in the *Quatuor pour le fin du temps*, at the end of the *Theme et Variations*, in the final movement of *Vingt regards sur l'enfant Jésus*, among many others. Often, Messiaen precedes these "suspended endings" with moments of great activity, drawing conscious contrast to just how much has been halted in these celestially grand finales (presented either in loud, or soft dynamics.)

As was explored above, much of Messiaen's interest in this element of compositional style was derived from a combined theological and musical interest in what it means to "suspend time."³⁸ Although this may be an identifiably Messiaen trait, there were other composers who ended a work using a similar type of finale.³⁹ A particularly interesting example comes from the pen of Maurice Ravel, whose peculiar two-minute *Frontispice* contains a similar device. Not only is the frenetic activity in measure 10 stripped away for the solemn chordal finish, but the successive sonorities in measures 11-15 are, like much of the piece,

³⁸ Consider the source of the quote behind the title for "Quatuor pour le fin du temps," from the book of Revelation in the Christian bible.

³⁹ Among others, Mussorgsky's "Pictures at an Exhibition," which Messiaen was certainly familiar with in both the piano and Ravel orchestration,

beguiling: G# minor, A minor, C# major, D major, F major, before cadencing on a polytonal chord comprised of B major and pitches in the whole-tone scale.

The image displays a musical score for Maurice Ravel's *Frontispice*, measures 10 through 15. The score is written for piano and features complex polytonal textures. Measures 10-14 are marked with a *cresc.* (crescendo) and feature rapid, ascending and descending chromatic lines in the right hand, while the left hand plays a steady, rhythmic pattern of eighth notes. Measure 15 is marked with *ppp* (pianissimo) and features a dense, complex chordal structure in the right hand, while the left hand continues its rhythmic pattern. The score is written in a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a time signature of 3/4.

Ex. 6 – Ravel, *Frontispice*, mm. 10- 15

Written immediately after the end of the first world war, *Frontispice* has often been cast off as the work of a confused composer who was uncertain of the direction in which his compositions would go. (Messiaen suffered from a similar

predicament in the 1950s.)⁴⁰ The work, however, has not escaped all modern interest, and beside its more-than-passing resemblance to works by Messiaen, it was orchestrated later in the twentieth century by Pierre Boulez, himself a Messiaen student.⁴¹

Stravinsky and other influences

In his essay “Proposals,” Pierre Boulez opens a discussion of the evolution of rhythm in his (and others’ music) by first complimenting his former teacher: “I shall accordingly take Messiaen’s teaching, the only interesting thing on the subject, as the starting point.”⁴² In the discussion immediately following, he lays out a case for Stravinsky as “the first to make an immense conscious effort in the field of rhythm,” before moving on to a brief analysis of the use of rhythm at the beginning of *Petrushka* and in the *Danse Sacrale* of *Le Sacre du Printemps*.⁴³ Here, he refers to a conclusion similar to that opening the beginning of Messiaen’s *Technique du mon langage musicale*, namely that Stravinsky was strongly influenced by Hindu rhythms.⁴⁴ What were the consequences of this type of analysis of Stravinsky’s rhythmic choices in *Le Sacre du Printemps*?

⁴⁰ Barbara L. Kelly, “Ravel, (Joseph) Maurice,” Grove Music Online, (2001): Accessed May 4, 2020, <https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.52145>.

⁴¹ It is, of course, entirely possible that Boulez learned of the work separate from his time with Olivier Messiaen. While we do know that the class was analyzing Ravel (*La Mère l’Oye*) when Boulez joined, there appears to be no information as to whether or not the class discussed this Ravel work.

⁴² Pierre Boulez, *Stocktakings from an Apprenticeship*, trans. Stephen Walsh (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 47.

⁴³ The opening tableau of *Petrushka* was to be programmed on the final DMA recital.

⁴⁴ Messiaen, *The Technique of My Musical Language*, 14.

Benitez writes in his article about Messiaen's teaching style:

By drawing attention to Stravinsky's rhythmic practices through his teaching, Messiaen contributed to the dissemination of a rhythmic approach that departed radically from traditional Western practices... evident in works, albeit in different manifestations, by Boulez, Carter, Pousseur, Stockhausen, and Webern⁴⁵

Messiaen's particular reference to Hindu rhythmic influence in *Le Sacre du Printemps* may owe itself to the teachings of Maurice Emmanuel, with whom Messiaen studied music history with at the conservatoire. Emmanuel was a composer, also, whose interest in birdsong (as shown by his second piano sonatina) as well as in music of other cultures, in particular the music of Greece and the literary and musical traditions of Peru, had a lifelong effect on the young student.

In addition to the standard canon of composers typically studied at a conservatory, Messiaen was also influenced by the music of many other French contemporary composers, including the music of his organ teacher, Marcel Dupré, and the organist and composer, Charles Tournemire, whose combination of concert music with religious themes expanded what was possible in the world of sacred music. These composers mixed with the canonic composers from five-hundred years of Western music to form a ready glossary of musical devices and achievements for Messiaen to reference, both as a composer and a teacher.

⁴⁵ Benitez, "A Creative Legacy: Messiaen as Teacher of Analysis," 133.

Messiaen's friends and confidants

Messiaen, who was regarded by almost all of his students as an enthusiastic, even-tempered and kind teacher, went out of his way to hear performances of his student's works, so it is not surprising that many of Olivier Messiaen's students went on to become lifelong friends after their graduation from the conservatoire. It is worth noting an important circle of influence in Messiaen's pre-World War II biography, comprised of fellow composers who were never direct students of his, but participated in a reciprocal exchange of ideas akin to those shared in a student-teacher relationship.

Claire Delbos

Insofar as it is often helpful to divide composers' lives and catalogues into sections to better understand their works, Messiaen's life might be broken into periods centered on the three most important women in his life: his mother, Cécile Sauvage, his first wife Claire Delbos, and his second wife Yvonne Loriod. All three were active as artists: Sauvage was a prominent poet and writer, Delbos was a violinist and composer, and Loriod was a pianist (and one-time student in Messiaen's analysis class.) Delbos, as a fellow composer, provides a fascinating window into Messiaen's own works.

Messiaen and Delbos met while both were students at the conservatory and married in 1932.⁴⁶ Her compositions are primarily for organ, or for voice and

⁴⁶ Nigel Simeone, "Delbos [Messiaen], Claire," (2001): accessed April 30th, 2020, <https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.51575>.

piano, and were composed mostly for Messiaen, who would often give the premiere, and who reciprocated by offering back works that were inspired by Delbos, either in her role as a violinist, or in a portrait of their domestic life together, including the monumental song cycle *Poèmes pour Mi* (Mi was Messiaen's nickname for Delbos.)

L'Âme en Bourgeon

Delbos, like Messiaen, composed three major song cycles for voice and piano. All three of these works contained poetry by Cécile Sauvage, with two cycles, *L'Âme en Bourgeon* and *Primevère*, comprised exclusively of poems by Messiaen's mother. *L'Âme en Bourgeon* provides an especially intimate view of the relationship between Messiaen and Delbos, as well as Sauvage and Messiaen. Each of the eight poems in the cycle offer a glimpse into the mind of Sauvage during the months immediately after giving birth to Messiaen, revealing a tapestry of emotional reactions to becoming a mother. While the act of Delbos setting poems Sauvage wrote while pregnant with Messiaen is already deeply intimate, the work takes on a new dimension when recognizing that, while composing *L'Âme en Bourgeon*, Messiaen and Delbos were actively trying to conceive their first child. The work was an intimate project between the two composers, and Messiaen was the pianist for the work's premiere.⁴⁷

⁴⁷ Hild Borchgrevink, Liner notes for *Pour mi: Songs by Olivier Messiaen and Claire Delbos*. Liv Elise Nordskog, Signe Bakke, Lawo Classics 1051, 2014, accessed April 30th, 2020, https://lawostore.no/assets/files-rte/LWC1051_Pour_Mi_Ebooklet_12x12.pdf.

L'Âme en Bourgeon sounds reminiscent of Messiaen in a number of ways.

The printed excerpt below, from the opening of the fifth song, serves as a great demonstration of the similarities between the two composers. As Messiaen demonstrated in *Technique de mon langage musicale*, the tritone can be found in the natural series of overtones, and thus plays an important role in his compositional language. The opening of song five from Delbos' cycle contains no fewer than three different tritones.



Ex. 7, *Te voilà hors de l'alvéole* from *L'Âme en Bourgeon*

The pitches of this example belong to the octatonic scale, or what Messiaen would have referred to as his 2nd transposition of mode two, of the modes of limited transposition. (Not limited to Messiaen, use of the octatonic scale in Western Music goes back to the late nineteenth century.) Delbos 'modulates' away from mode two by introducing a single Gb in measure six, which leads to a cadence in measure eight. The chords in this example, none of which contain an octave or perfect fifth at their base, are also reminiscent of the sequence of descending inverted chords at the opening of *Pièce pour le tombeau de Paul Dukas*. Both sequences also 'cadence' on a B7 chord, potentially indicating that in 1936-1937 the two composers were sharing their compositions back and forth within their house.

L'Âme en Bourgeon is not, of course, written by Messiaen, and despite the many intimate connections between Delbos, Messiaen, and the words of Sauvage, the music does retain a certain independence from Messiaen's style. Texturally, Delbos often avoids the dense harmonies that populate Messiaen scores, favoring instead sonorities that are only three to four pitches. (See the relevant discussion above regarding Messiaen's *Thème et Variations*.) She was also far more likely than Messiaen to enter into more prolonged sections of diatonic, modal, or pentatonic harmony: examples can be found in the almost-Ravellian opening of the first song, *Dors*, or in the only slightly-altered D major section that opens the second song, *Mon coeur revient à son printemps*. Curiously, both she and Messiaen avoided key signatures on the flatted side of the circle of fifths: *L'Âme en Bourgeon* shares this feature with the two major Messiaen song cycles of the 1930's, *Chants de La Terre et Ciel* and *Poèmes pour Mi*.⁴⁸

Delbos' treatment of rhythm and meter is also distinct from that of her husband. During this era, Messiaen was increasingly moving away from printing time signatures in his piano music or chamber music.⁴⁹ Delbos, by contrast, uses non-metrical writing in songs V, VIII, and then in closing section of III, but otherwise employs other metrical devices, including frequent changing or oscillation of the number of beats in a measure, and using lesser-employed time signatures, including 9/4 (song one) and 1/4 (song seven.) Absent even from the

⁴⁸ All three cycles employ the key signature of F# major or E major at least once, possibly as a way of avoiding the excessive writing of sharps. D major is found only in the Delbos, and none of the three contain G or A Major.

⁴⁹ Orchestral music was another matter, where it would be impractical for players to know what exists in every other part in the ensemble.

selections without time signatures are two of the most recognizable of Messiaen's rhythmic devices, added value and non-retrogradable rhythms.

Delbos' rhythms, however, are far from milquetoast, and her frequent incorporation of divisions of beats into uneven subdivisions (quintuplets, septuplets, etc.) immediately alongside standard subdivisions (eighths, sixteenths) provide rhythmic variety, similar to the rhythms employed by other composers of the 1920's and 30's in France, including Andre Jolivet.

La Spirale, La Jeune France, and Andre Jolivet

Pierre Boulez pays a mixed compliment to the music of Andre Jolivet in his essay "proposals," writing that he deserves mention for his "particularly felicitous use of rational values in relation to irrational ones."⁵⁰ Jolivet, once described as the "enfant terrible" of the Societé Nationale, met Olivier Messiaen in 1934. The two would later partner in the formation of two important musical groups, *La Spirale* (1935, which included Claire Delbos among its membership) and *La Jeune France* (1936.) Though the groups overlapped chronologically, they served different genres of art music: *La Spirale* primarily concerned itself with solo and chamber music by composers domestic and foreign, and *La Jeune France* with promoting orchestral music of a rising generation of French composers.⁵¹ Both creative circles afforded Messiaen the opportunity to engage

⁵⁰ Boulez, *Stocktakings*, 48.

⁵¹ Nigel Simeone, "La Spirale and La Jeune France," *The Musical Times*, 143 no. 1880 (2002): 10-12, accessed May 2nd, 2020, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1004548>.

frequently with scores by other contemporary composers, both as a performer and an attendee of concerts.

Jolivet and Messiaen were quick to take to each other's music, as both had overlapping interests, especially in the music of other cultures around the world. In many ways, Jolivet was an almost perfect complement for Messiaen: he had studied with Edgar Varèse, a radically different but equally prominent teacher as Dukas, towards the end of the 1920's. Varèse's experiments in rhythm, orchestration, and color left a profound impact on Jolivet, who in the 1930's wrote a series of works inspired by magic, including the piano suite *Mana* (1935) and *Cinq danse rituelles* (1939) for orchestra.⁵² It was perhaps these works that Messiaen had in mind when, in conversation with Claude Samuel, he noted that Jolivet's name should be added to a list of those responsible for the new directions in music alongside Varèse, Schoenberg, Berg, Webern, Stravinsky, and Debussy.⁵³ Jolivet, in addition to serving as an important friend and supporter of Messiaen's music throughout his lifetime, was likely also his primary window into the music of Varèse, who would serve as an iconic trailblazer for so many of Messiaen's future students.

⁵² Barbara L. Kelly, "Jolivet, Andre," *Grove Music Online*, (2001): accessed April 30, 2020, <https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.14433>.

⁵³ Samuel, *Conversations with Messiaen*, 118. He goes on to say the "psychic, physiological, and perhaps therapeutic action of a work like *Danse Rituelles* is still not understood: it's still a little known power."

A magnum opus: the composition studio of Olivier Messiaen

Before a proper discussion of the composers and works studied below, it is worth laying out which criteria made composers eligible for consideration in this project. In order to be considered, composers needed to have participated in either private lessons or class sessions with Messiaen, and have acknowledged him as one of their primary teachers or influences. As with any association with a person of any level of celebrity, composers, especially early in their careers, would be keen to attach their name to an established master, no matter how tenuous that connection might be. Therefore, in good faith, the composers considered below needed to have a solid connection to the pedagogical world of Olivier Messiaen.

Within this large group of eligible composers, an effort has been made to consider music from different schools of composition, and different eras of Messiaen's teaching. The list is ordered roughly chronologically, with Boulez, who studied with Messiaen in 1945, as the first composer.⁵⁴ Within these rough groupings by decade, an effort has been made to draw a narrative thread through the stories of these composers, connected across many years and disparate lives by their time spent with a single, master teacher.

⁵⁴ Toru Takemitsu, who had encountered Messiaen's music in the 1950's, is grouped with the composers who studied with Messiaen in the 60's and 70's, corresponding to his private lesson with Messiaen (1975.)

Pierre Boulez

“He was like a lion that had been flayed alive – it was terrible!”⁵⁵

– *Messiaen, on Boulez in the 1940's*

“Ah, Messiaen, he is for me a big problem ...the religion ... the birds ... and ...
my God ... the ORGAN!”⁵⁶

-*Boulez, on Messiaen*

“For me, Pierre Boulez is the greatest musician of his generation”⁵⁷

- *Messiaen on Boulez*

“A master whom one knows... is going to reveal you to yourself”⁵⁸

-*Boulez on Messiaen*

When Boulez arrived at Messiaen's house near the beginning of the academic year in 1944, Messiaen noted his arrival with a diary entry: “Boulez at my house at 9:30...likes modern music.”⁵⁹ From these understated beginnings emerged a relationship that began as traditionally pedagogical and morphed in subsequent decades into a maddeningly complex mixture of the collaborative, adversarial, dismissive, and adulatory (with much of the whiplash coming from Boulez's side.) The two composers were a stunning case of the rare collision of powers of intellect and personality whose combination forever altered the course of both men's lives and careers. Together, they formed the beginnings of the serialist movement, a musical revolution on par with those instigated by Schoenberg, Debussy, and other generations prior, whose ripple effects are still felt in concert halls and on campuses across the world today.

⁵⁵ Alex Ross, *The rest is noise* (New York: Picador, 2007), 392.

⁵⁶ Gerard McBurney, “Pierre Boulez: he was one of the naughtiest of great artists,” *The Guardian*, January 12, 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/music/2016/jan/12/pierre-boulez-gerard-mcburney-a-pierre-dream>.

⁵⁷ Samuel, *Conversations with Messiaen*, 111.

⁵⁸ Boulez, *Orientations*, 418. Remarks delivered at the Paris opera on Messiaen's 70th birthday in 1978.

⁵⁹ Ross, *The Rest is Noise*, p. 391.

When Boulez began studying with Messiaen, he was in search of a path forward in his musical language. He had, during the time he studied with Messiaen, also engaged with Andrée Vaurabourg and René Leibowitz as private teachers. Leibowitz was a devoted acolyte of Schoenberg and the Second Viennese School, and undoubtedly introduced Boulez to works that were rarely heard in Paris during the wartime years, including works by Anton Webern, who had died that year.⁶⁰

In Boulez's *Douze Notations*, composed in 1945, we encounter a twenty-year-old composer already in full command of many of the compositional devices of the second Viennese School. Boulez was, like Paul Dukas and many other fine composers, an exacting critic of his own work, and often destroyed pieces retrospectively after deeming them unfit for further public dissemination. He was also, like Anton Bruckner, a frequent reviser of works throughout his life. Not only did the *Douze Notations* survive both of these treatments, Boulez revisited the twelve pieces to rework them for orchestra in two stages during the 1970's and 1980's, and conducted them frequently.

In addition to being a dedicated composer and legendary conductor, Boulez was a prolific writer and charming conversationalist. One of the mixed blessings of studying Boulez is the vast amount of material he left behind to be considered. Regarding *Douze Notations*, we get mixed information from the composer: in one interview, he claims that the works are a testament to the

⁶⁰ Pierre Boulez, "Pierre Boulez on his piano collection *Douze Notations*," interview by Tamara Stefanovich and Tobias Bleek, *Explore the Score*, May 2012, video (multiple fragments), <https://www.exploretthescore.org/pierre-boulez-douze-notations-boulez-video-interview.html>.

twelve-tone system, saying that “twelve was a sacred number.”⁶¹ In an interview given two years later, however, he claims that his aim was “to make fun of the twelve-tone system!”⁶² Regardless of this humorous inconsistency, when Boulez stated in an interview that to understand the twelve notations, one needed to understand the music of Bartók, Stravinsky, Schoenberg, and Debussy, he certainly reflects the truth: these composers are all present in the twelve piano miniatures, but they are also molded into a new product by a fresh and creative mind. Messiaen, too, would be a worthy addition to that list, with his presence keenly felt in questions of rhythm and meter.



Ex. 8, Boulez, *Douze Notations*, no. 3

Boulez has adopted his teacher’s penchant for writing without a time signature in this early work, and engages in three prominent examples of “added value” in the first three measures of the example above, where half of a note’s value is added to offset any metrical expectations. Boulez would move away from these devices in his next prominent chamber music works, reinstating time signatures (albeit frequently changing them) in the *Sonatine* (1946/49) and *Structures I* for two pianos (1951-52), while withholding written meters in his two

⁶¹ Pierre Boulez, “Pierre Boulez on his piano collection *Douze Notations*, interview.

⁶² Pierre Boulez, “Pierre Boulez on 12 notations,” Interview for *Universal Editions*, October 31, 2014, video, 4:22, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6zCwiKTSKTg>.

piano sonatas from the 1940's. Boulez differs here from Messiaen: he seems primarily to be interested in meter as a device allowing his ensembles to stay in sync, where Messiaen (who uses no meter for *Le Merle Noir*, or the *Pièce pour piano et quatuor à cordes*) works out his rhythm by other considerations.

Although Boulez wrote the *Douze Notations* while studying under Messiaen, the work that captures a lasting connection between the two is probably *Structures Ia* (Boulez), which Messiaen and Boulez premiered as the two pianists. *Structures Ia*, alongside innumerable other serial works, resulted from Messiaen's *Mode de valeurs et d'intensités* (1949), the second of his *Quatre Études de Rythme*. Messiaen had long been interested in the relationships between pitch and rhythm: in *Technique de mon langage musicale* (1944), Messiaen addresses the relationship between harmony and rhythm in the very first chapter, and revisits it several times throughout the volume.⁶³ However, it is not until 1949 that he, in *Modes de valeurs et d'intensités*, lays out a formula connecting four elements of music together in a synthesized scale: rhythm, pitch, dynamics, and articulation. With this modest ten-page work, nestled among three other etudes, Messiaen unknowingly fueled the movement that would come to be known as 'total serialism,' with Pierre Boulez as one of its most prominent leaders. Boulez's first offering in this new organization of musical material was the aforementioned *Structures Ia* (the first of several compositions with the same initial word in their title), which expanded on Messiaen's composition by filing in all twelve pitches throughout the register of the piano, disconnecting the different

⁶³ Messiaen, *Technique of my musical language*, p. 13.

organizational dimensions that Messiaen lays out in the preface of the work, and subjecting them to independent serial organization.⁶⁴ Messiaen would have had an intimate grasp of these innovations as the pianist at the premiere.

As noted above, “*Mode*” and other proto-serialist works contributed to a crisis of Messiaen with his compositional voice, an impasse he traversed by exploiting the creative possibilities of birdsong in his works. Boulez, alongside other Messiaen students, ran forward full-steam with the ideas Messiaen had laid out; the two composers exhibited their works at, among other places, the Darmstadt lectures which were so frequented by the avant-garde in the 1950’s and ‘60’s. Through these presentations by acolytes of *Mode de valeurs et d’intensités*, Messiaen gained a number of students who were specifically interested in meeting and studying with the composer of *Mode de valeurs et d’intensités*.

Karel Goeyvaerts

“You are looking for a chicken in an abstract painting”

- Karlheinz Stockhausen, to Theodor Adorno

Boulez was not the only of Messiaen’s current or former students to be fascinated by *Mode de valeurs et d’intensités*, nor the only one to write music intended to carry forward the theories he spelled out. The Belgian composer, Karel Goeyvaerts (1923 – 1993), who like many Messiaen students of the 1940’s

⁶⁴ Pascal Decroupet, “Serial Organisation and Beyond: Cross-Relatins of Determinants in *Le Marteau sans maître* and the Dynamic Pitch-Algorithm of ‘Constellation’,” in *Pierre Boulez Studies*, ed. Edward Campell and Peter O’Hagan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 109.

and 50's studied with both Messiaen and Milhaud at the Conservatoire de Paris, wrote a series of works in the 1950's exploring serialist concepts. The most famous of these was his *Sonata for two pianos* (1951), which, among works by many other composers (and at least one other by Goeyvaerts) often receives the tribute of being the first work of "total serialism." Goeyvaerts submitted the work for the composition seminar at Darmstadt in 1951, which was supposed to be taught by Arnold Schoenberg, who withdrew because of grave illness. His successor, the philosopher Theodor Adorno, heard the composer perform the work with Karlheinz Stockhausen as the other pianist, and proceeded to question Goeyvaerts extensively in German (a foreign language for the young composer) about its musical value. Stockhausen, who saw great potential in Goeyvaert's piece, butted in with the infamous 'chicken' line printed above, which put an abrupt end to Adorno's inquiries. While the concept of uniting dynamics, pitch, rhythm, and articulation in one synthesized system of construction already owed much to Messiaen's *Mode*, Goeyvaerts additionally structured the four movements of the work in a decidedly Messiaen-esque fashion, employing the musical material in the second movement in retrograde to form the third movement, a technique that Messiaen employs in the first section of his *Livre d'orgue* (1951).⁶⁵

Despite Goeyvaerts successful early experiments in works of serialism, his career led him in different aesthetic directions than those of fellow Messiaen

⁶⁵ Herman Sabbe, "Goeyvaerts and the Beginnings of 'Punctual' Serialism and Electronic Music," *Revue belge de Musicologie/Belgish Tijdschrift voor Muziekwetenschap* 48 (1994): 64, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3687128>

pupils Stockhausen and Boulez.⁶⁶ He abandoned composition for many years, and re-emerged by passing through a number of experimental phases in his musical language, before writing compositions that employed minimalist techniques in the 1970's and 1980's (shortly after Stockhausen and Györgi Ligeti explored similar techniques in the late 1960s.)⁶⁷ His piano composition, *Pas à pas*, written in 1985, is, like the compositions that surround it in Goeyvaerts's catalogue, fully immersed in the world of minimalism, but presented in very different ways than the contemporary music of American minimalists like Reich or Glass. Here, Goeyvaerts overlaps the cells of his music, and gradually moves pitches into and out of his patterns. This technique is laid out clearly at the opening of the work, which begins with only a single Ab being struck. Gradually, new pitches are introduced, with each added pitch occurring at relatively the same rhythmic interval each time, before it eventually makes its exit. The total effect is closely related to "the ship of Theseus," the classic thought experiment that encourages one to question when an object whose underlying parts have been replaced can still be considered the same object. Although Goeyvaerts does, in *Pas à pas*, play around with the blurred boundaries of his minimalist cells, he punctuates the work by inserting long silences between measures, dramatically thinning out the texture, which aids the listener in understanding the musical form.

⁶⁶ The relationship between the careers of Goeyvaerts and Stockhausen is of great interest: the two composers shared a number of key moments in their development, and both developed operas on a novel scale towards the ends of their careers

⁶⁷ Martin Beirens, "European Minimalism and the Modernist Problem," in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Minimalist and postminimalist music*, ed. Kyle Gann, Keith Potter, Pwyll Ap Siôn (Burlington: Ashgate, 2013), 62-64.

Karel Goeyvaerts's life and works appear disjunct, given his midlife switch in music aesthetic from total serialism to minimalism. Goeyvaerts, however, did not consider the world of minimalism to be separate from the world of serialism, but rather thought the two were closely connected, with both models of composition simply subcategories of 'static music,' a term he was employing and exploring as early as 1953.⁶⁸

William Bolcom

"The general re-acceptance of tonality in the Western world cannot be purely historicist. However, tonality, and what composers want and need from it, has inevitably changed"

- William Bolcom, from *Twelve New Etudes*⁶⁹

Like Karel Goeyvaerts, William Bolcom (b. 1938) studied as a foreigner in Paris with both Darius Milhaud and Olivier Messiaen, and has explored, throughout his prodigious compositional output, the intersections, compatibilities, and oppositions of compositional techniques and musical styles.

When Bolcom submitted his entrance pieces to the Conservatoire de Paris in 1960, he submitted a required sonata movement and a fugue, and as his free piece of choice, a song from his cabaret-opera *Dynamite Tonight* called "One Little Bomb and Boom!" The number, which sarcastically extols the virtues of bombs, apparently left Messiaen puzzled: Bolcom recalls "I'll never forget the bemused look on his face." He goes on to say that, while he eagerly learned the

⁶⁸ Maarten Beirens, Mark Delaere, and Hilary Staples, "Minimal Music in the Low Countries," *Tijdschrift van de Koninklijke Vereniging voor Nederlandse Muziekgeschiedenis*, 54, no. 1 (2004): 32-34, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/20203896>.

⁶⁹ William Bolcom, "Afterword" in *Twelve New Etudes* (New York: Edward B. Marks Music Company: 1988), 62.

theories of Boulez, Messiaen, and Stockhausen, he “was no acolyte.”⁷⁰ Of course, this probably pleased Messiaen, who was not interested in molding acolytes, and encouraged students to develop their own voices, their own solutions to “the problem of composition.”⁷¹ Regardless, Bolcom appeared to make up his mind early: he would leave his ears open, but maintain an original voice.

Bolcom expands on his compositional views in the afterword to his Pulitzer Prize-winning *Twelve New Etudes*, where he spells out a summary of how his compositional style has changed since his time in Europe (approximately 1959-1966, roughly the same time period in which he wrote his *Twelve Etudes for Piano*.) In these short paragraphs, he reflects how his writing became more American, but how he now seeks to compose a music “no longer involved with any local style.” He states he has now formed “a musical speech that is at once coherent and comprehensible and in constant expansion,” before finishing the paragraph by pushing back against systems that reject borrowing and adapting the music of the past.

I have found this more fruitful than the employment of any musical language that depends for its coherence on a priori eschewing of certain musical elements, a rigid adherence to an equally a priori system of generating notes, or a wholesale rejection of what our century has discovered on the horizons of musical style by turning totally to the past.⁷²

While Bolcom does not specifically name any composers or systems, one can imagine that he is not excluding serialist composers from his list. However,

⁷⁰ Matthew Gurewitsch, “A big year for a full-service composer,” *New York Times*, February 24, 2008, <https://www.nytimes.com/2008/02/24/arts/music/24gure.html>.

⁷¹ Consider George Benjamin, who, in Peter Hill’s *The Messiaen Companion*, recalls how Messiaen would only reproach students whom he suspected were adhering too closely to his style.

⁷² Bolcom, “Afterword,” 62. Underlining is by the author, Bolcom.

his zeal to bring together different genres of music into one work, was far broader than exhibiting the ability to write dodecaphonic music alongside ragtime. In “Something About the Music,” Bolcom makes a case for expanding to an even wider conception of what art music can encompass:

The division between pop and serious, or vernacular and aristocratic (just as bad) music, is so deep that neither side benefits from the other...their mutual dislike is always under the surface....I am fascinated with their interrelationships. At first shocking, a juxtaposition makes better sense with repeated hearings – if it is the right juxtaposition.⁷³

Juxtaposition is an apt term for what Bolcom accomplishes in *Twelve New Etudes*, placing pieces next to each other that, on their surface, seem to have little to do with each other. Within pieces, too, including *Hymne à l’amour*, the final etude, he places sections side-by-side that perhaps complement more than they relate. The discussion of Bolcom and his treatment of form readily brings to mind Pierre Boulez’s famous quip about Messiaen: “he does not compose – he juxtaposes.”⁷⁴

There is more, though, to the Bolcom-Messiaen connection than mere juxtaposing: Bolcom’s harmonic writing in *Hymne a l’amour* frequently searches for moments of resonance that are similar to the ones Messiaen discusses in

⁷³ William Bolcom, “Something About the Music,” in *Contemporary Composers on Contemporary Music*, ed. Barney Childs and Elliott Schwartz (Cambridge: Da Capo Press, 1998), 483.

⁷⁴ Boulez, *Stocktakings from an Apprenticeship*, 49.

Technique de mon langage musicale, including key Messiaenesque chordal voicings on the second system of page 56.⁷⁵



Ex. 9, Bolcom, *Hymne à l'amour* from *Twelve New Etudes*

The finale of the piece, and by its nature of being the finale of the set of twelve, the end of the entire opus, broadens continuously until time seems to be entirely suspended on the final E major chord, against which different resonances are explored, a technique similar to what occurs in other Messiaen works, such as the *Pièce pour le Tombeau de Paul Dukas*.

The title of *Hymne à l'amour* and other works in the cycle may hint at Messiaen as well. Bolcom acknowledges briefly in the preface to the work that the titles of the twelve etudes are divided alternately between English and French. Several of the French titles are allusions to well-established genres, including *Récitatif*, *Nocturne*, and even *Scène d'opéra*. The eighth selection, and the antepenultimate one to bear a French title, is *Rag infernal (Syncopes apocalyptiques)*, which bears a humorous eschatological mention that hints strongly of Messiaen's similar interests, especially his affinity for the book of Revelation.⁷⁶ The strongest case to be made to tying Bolcom to Messiaen through

⁷⁵ There are no measure numbers to reference in the Bolcom

⁷⁶ The idea of apocalyptic rhythms is reminiscent of Scriabin's *Mysterium*.

titles, however, is made from the final two etudes, poetically titled *Vers le silence*, and *Hymne à l'amour*. Messiaen, in his *Vingt regards sur l'enfant Jésus*, entitles *Regards* numbers 17 and 20, *Regard du silence*, and *Regard de l'Église d'amour*, as perhaps a reference to the master teacher that transcends a simple inclusion of French titles as a reminiscence for his time abroad.

Betsy Jolas

“Boulez said you needed to forget the past. I couldn't forget the past – I didn't want to!”

- Betsy Jolas⁷⁷

Betsy Jolas (b. 1926) was, like Bolcom and Goeyvaerts, a student of both Milhaud and Messiaen, and like Bolcom, a composer moving from an American education (at Bennington College) to a French one. Like Bolcom, she claims not to have been influenced by Boulez or Stockhausen, but was very interested in their compositions, and their technique.⁷⁸ Unlike Bolcom, she remained in Paris after completing her education, and remained actively engaged with musical life in France throughout her life. A multi-talented musician, she won the 1953 International Conducting Competition of Besançon, and taught at universities all over the world, including replacing Messiaen in his composition course from 1971-74 at the Conservatoire de Paris while he was on leave.⁷⁹

⁷⁷ Jolas, “Interview with Betsy Jolas.”

⁷⁸ Betsy Jolas, “Betsy Jolas in Conversation with Fergus McWilliam,” interview by Fergus McWilliam, *Berlin Philharmoniker*, June 18, 2016, video, 16:40, <https://www.digitalconcerthall.com/en/concert/22414#>.

⁷⁹ “Biographie,” Betsy Jolas’ personal website, accessed May 1, 2020, https://www.betsyjolas.com/niv_2.php3?ch=1&nav=0.

In many of her works, Jolas engages directly with the composers of the past, often treating them similarly to Dukas, in *La Plainte, au loin, du faune*, or Alexander Goehr in *Symmetry Disorders Reach*. By her own admission, she “steals from the (composers) she likes.”⁸⁰ In her recent work, *A Little Summer Suite*, commissioned by the Berlin Philharmonic, she tackles the legacy of Mussorgsky directly, whose *Pictures at an Exhibition* served as an inspiration for the work. *Signets* (1987), or “Bookmarks,” subtitled “*hommage à Ravel*,” similarly engages with fragments from works by Ravel and combines and adapts them into a completely new musical composition. Among the works of Ravel selected, his 1907 *Gaspard de la Nuit*, Messiaen’s favorite piano work of the composer, is her primary concern. The first reference in the piece is perhaps also the most explicit.



Ex. 10, Jolas, *Signets*

The uneven oscillation between G# and A natural is a direct borrowing from the opening of *Ondine* from *Gaspard de la Nuit*. If we enter unambiguously into the world of Ravel, Jolas quickly pulls us back, blurring the lines between Ravel’s music and her own. Additional references occur, however, especially the held Bb’s at measures 50 and 69-72, an allusion to *Le Gibet*, and the two-note

⁸⁰ Jolas, “Betsy Jolas in Conversation with Fergus McWilliam.”

chord sequence with a top voice ascending by half-step in measures 49 and 65, a clear allusion to *Scarbo*. Besides the *Gaspard* borrowings, we see examples from the Toccata in *Le Tombeau de Couperin* (measures 41-49), as well as a potential reference to the *Sonatine* in measure 54, and the printed word “cloches” in measure 34.

The work’s form eludes easy categorization, but Jolas deftly melds sections together, often introducing a new section before the previous section has been completed, interlacing material until the old section has finished and the new one can begin, repeating the process later.⁸¹ *Signets* showcases many signatures of Jolas’ language: textures vary between large sonorities, overlapping rhythmic values, and moments of extreme clarity, where only one musical line is heard. Even at its densest, however, Jolas always indicates which voice is to achieve prominence. This is in keeping with her firmly-held belief, expressed in two separate but recent interviews, that modern composers blur the texture with too much activity, and not enough moments of clarity.⁸²

Although Jolas, in her professions, was never a disciple of Boulez, she did benefit greatly from his support, which included his programming of her works during the 1950’s as part of his series at the *Domaine Musicale*. A composer who borrows freely from works of the past, but holds the esteem of contemporary composers, Jolas is one whose approach and language defy easy categorization, but has earned the respect of prominent musicians across multiple generations.

⁸¹ Works below by George Benjamin and Toru Takemitsu employ similar approaches.

⁸² Both interviews include a segment where she speaks to this.

Alexander Goehr

“Many lives and many selves might exist, but that doesn’t render each variation false.”

- Madeleine Thien, *Do Not Say We Have Nothing*

If Betsy Jolas has made the task of identifying which Ravel works she has “bookmarked” accessible in her opening of *Signets*, Alexander Goehr (b. 1932) has made the pianist’s task even simpler by printing the scores that his *Symmetry Disorders Reach* models itself upon at the end of the work. The tenth and eleventh movements, Air and Double, are based on the Air (and variations) from Handel’s Third Suite in D minor, HWV 428. Goehr’s Air borrows much from its modelling on the Handel, including its twelve-measure rounded binary form, though he writes out his repeat to include his variations upon the original material. The melodic content, too, aligns on key pitches, and borrows numerous melodic fragments that, in turn, lead to different outcomes than the Handel while still retaining their neo-Baroque identity.

Goehr’s intervallic and harmonic language are what mark the Air as decidedly not from the eighteenth century. Goehr wastes no time spelling this out: the very first chord of the piece is an unapologetic, *poco forte* Bb major chord containing an added major seventh. Encased in this modern harmonic world, Goehr inserts several harmonies that are reminiscent, perhaps, of his time studying with Messiaen. Observe in the example below the two highlighted chords, the first of which contains two different sets of tritones, and the second, which voices a top-most Bb over a Cb in the bass, creating a resonant major-seventh voicing.



Ex. 11, Goehr, Air from *Symmetry Disorders Reach*

The Air and Double are not the only movements that hold historic models in *Symmetry Disorders Reach*. The entire piece, composed of fifteen works in various forms, is derived from one of four historic models by Mozart, Bach, Handel, or Schumann. Goehr's journey to the historically-centered *Symmetry Disorders Reach* was not a seamless one, without skeptics or distractors.

"I have great regard for Goehr, but I think his music gets worse and worse. First it was neo-expressionism, then neo-romanticism, and now it is neo-classicism. When will it end?"⁸³

Goehr came from a highly musical German family that fled to England in the 1930's during the rise of the Third Reich. His father Walter Goehr was a conductor and a composer, and a one-time student of Schoenberg at the Prussian Academy of Arts in Berlin. Walter achieved a prominent place in the British musical scene, conducted world premieres by Benjamin Britten, Michael Tippett,

⁸³ Brian Northcut, "Alexander Goehr: The Recent Music (II)," *Tempo*, New Series 125 (1978): 12, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/944931>.

and others, and gave the English premiere of Messiaen's *Turangalila-Symphonie* in 1953.⁸⁴

Alexander Goehr turned down a full scholarship to read classics at Oxford in order to pursue music at the Royal Conservatory of Manchester, where he met fellow composers Harrison Birtwistle and Peter Maxwell Davies. Together with the pianist John Ogdon and the trumpet player Elgar Howarth, they formed New Music Manchester, a collective dedicated to the performance of modern English music. Goehr studied with Messiaen (as well as privately with Yvonne Loriod) in Paris between 1955 and 1956, where he broadened his continental connections (securing premieres of his works at Darmstadt) and brought the compositional ideas of Messiaen back to Manchester, where they especially influenced the compositions of Harrison Birtwistle.

Goehr was especially taken with Pierre Boulez, whom he met during his time studying with Messiaen, and Boulez's influence shows often in his early works, especially those composed in the second half of the 1950's. Goehr's migration, therefore, away from total serialism with *Psalm IV* for choir (1976) puzzled many listeners. Gradually, like William Bolcom and many others, Goehr came to cultivate a certain eclecticism of style in his works, but unlike Bolcom preferred to work to achieve unity within a piece. This led one writer to observe:

Goehr's music raises significant aesthetic questions, not least of which is just what we mean by such glib categorizations as 'progressive' and 'reactionary.'"⁸⁵

⁸⁴ Naomi Cumming, Arthur Jacobs, and Nicholas Williams, "Goehr Family," *Grove Music Online*, (2001): accessed May 2nd, 2020, <https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.53781>.

⁸⁵ S.G.F. Spackman, review of *The Music of Alexander Goehr*, by Bayan Northcott, Notes, Second Series 38, no. 2, 317, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/939872>.

Joanna Bruzdowicz

“I learned from him to hear the voices and noises around us in this very special way.”

-Joanna Bruzdowicz, on studying with Messiaen

Joanna Bruzdowicz represents an interesting but somewhat limited subgroup of Messiaen students who also studied with Nadia Boulanger, one of the most sought-after composition teachers of the mid-twentieth century. Olivier Messiaen seldom had a negative word to say of anyone, and while we do not have any direct record of his thoughts about Boulanger, there was at least a general understanding among his students of the difference between his and Madame Boulanger’s pedagogy: George Benjamin recalls Messiaen saying to Xenakis “Your gift is elsewhere. Follow your own voice,” and goes on to recall “To say that was extraordinary...his attitude was totally different from the other great French teacher at that time, Nadia Boulanger.”⁸⁶ Bruzdowicz studied with Boulanger alongside a cohort of other Polish female composers, including the celebrated Grazyna Bacewicz. Speaking specifically to the question of being a female composer, Boulanger told Bruzdowicz “composers have no right to self-pity or self-indulgence, but solely the right to work, work, work.”⁸⁷

Bruzdowicz’s *Erotiques* is a set of five miniatures for piano, composed in 1966, just before her student years in Paris. While each piece captures a different set of musical moods, certain principles unite all five: a sudden juxtaposition of dissimilar material without transition, abrupt register shifts on the piano,

⁸⁶ Hill, *The Messiaen Companion*, 270.

⁸⁷ Polish Music Center, “Joanna Bruzdowicz,” accessed May 2, 2020, <https://polishmusic.usc.edu/research/composers/joanna-bruzdowicz/>.

especially explosions of rapid notes in a very high register (similar to Messiaen's many piano realizations of bird song beginning in the 1950's), and a voicing of chords that include numerous major sevenths, and tritones. Remarkably, the piece bears a number of strong similarities to the hallmarks of Messiaen's style, penned before her studies with him had commenced. Two possibilities arise: Bruzdowicz had accessed and internalized details from Messiaen scores that were widely available in the Western world by the 1960's, or the confluence between their two styles fed from different streams.

Erotiques is one of Bruzdowicz's earliest published works, and was the only work she wrote for solo piano until 1978, when she composed the *Sonata d'Octobre* in honor of the elevation of Pope John Paul II (who was celebrated as a Polish icon.) The sonata represents a composer more in control of her full technique, but many of the hallmarks of *Erotiques* remain, including the "right-angle" juxtaposition of musical materials, the unprepared shift to extreme registers of the piano, and the "resonant sonorities," all heard in *Erotiques*.

Was Bruzdowicz, then, a case of a student who found the works of the teacher before they actually went to study with the teacher? Or do her piano works resemble Messiaen's purely by coincidence, reaching similar conclusions to his by finding a source in similar models? Bruzdowicz has been generally reserved in interviews about her sources of inspiration and influence, though when Bruce Duffie asked her what she learned during her time with Messiaen, she

responded “it’s not possible to learn to compose. You have to be born with this talent.”⁸⁸

Tristan Murail

“Murail’s music is certainly, distinctly French. It is based on the pleasure of hearing sounds”

-Pierre-Laurent Aimard, 2014⁸⁹

Tristan Murail (b. 1947), studied with Messiaen during 1967- 1971, the same period as Joanna Bruzdowicz. Alongside Gérard Grisey, he is one of the leaders of the “spectralist” school of composition, where composers structure their technique around the acoustic properties, or sound spectra, present in sound itself. Murail, Grisey, and other spectralists were seeking a path forward in the 1970’s that broke away from serialist-driven techniques, but still preserved a logical, scientific coherence to each composition. Spectralists were influenced by Messiaen’s work exploring resonance, and his interest in orchestration and timbre, and extended that work further by exploring many of the technological innovations available to them, often composing hybrid works for instruments alongside ‘taped’ sounds. In this vein, Murail served as a professor of computer-assisted composition at both the Conservatoire de Paris, and IRCAM (the *Institut de Recherche et Coordination Acoustique/Musique*.)⁹⁰

⁸⁸ Joanna Bruzdowicz, “A Conversation with Bruce Duffie,” interview by Bruce Duffie, May 7, 1991, <http://www.bruceduffie.com/bruzdowicz.html>.

⁸⁹ Pierre-Laurent Aimard, “Pierre-Laurent Aimard on Tristan Murail at the 2014 Aldeburgh Festival,” May 23, 2014, 3:06, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nIes-Dxksjk>.

⁹⁰ Julian Anderson, “Murail, Tristan,” *Grove Music Online*, (2001): accessed May 2, 2020, <https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.44940>.

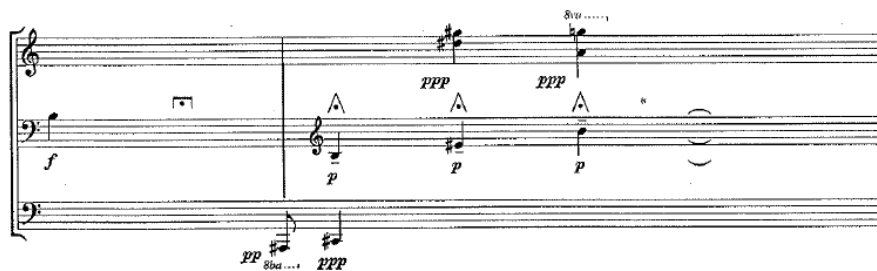
During the time when he was actively exploring music guided by the spectra of sound, he formed and led the new music collective *Ensemble L'Itineraire*, which became widely recognized for its high level of playing and its groundbreaking performances of works combining live performance and live electronics. While Murail was active with the group, he often served as a performer on various electronic keyboard instruments, and gained a particular skill on the *Ondes Martenot*, on which he twice recorded Messiaen's *Turangalila-Symphonie*.⁹¹

Murail's *Cloches d'adieu et un sourire* was composed in 1992 as a homage to the recently deceased Messiaen. The title, a reworking of Messiaen's 1930 prelude *Cloches d'angoisse et larmes d'adieu*, expresses the emotional context in which the work was written, but also reveals that the musical material for the work will be derived from or guided by the earlier Messiaen work. Murail's selection of *Cloches d'angoisse et larmes d'adieu* is a perfect fit for his style: the work contains some of Messiaen's most extensive early explorations into resonance, and was undoubtedly a lodestar, among many other works, for Murail's development of a compositional language based around resonance and acoustics. Indeed, much like the Messiaen, Murail employs a variability of dynamics within a single chord, where certain pitches are played louder than

⁹¹ The *ondes martenot* is an electric keyboard instrument that can produce a wide range of sounds, accessed by a combination of standard keyboard playing, or by using a ring that slides along the base of the keyboard, producing a more theremin-like sound. Messiaen is perhaps the most prodigious composer for the instrument.

others to exploit the natural acoustic properties of each sound, and of the instrument.

Numerous other references to the Messiaen piece abound in Murail's homage, including the initial repeated G (that itself is likely an allusion to Debussy's 1907 *Cloches a travers les feuilles*.) While Murail is not as explicit in his incorporation of the "Bb" and "D" bells that Messiaen uses in the first section of "*Cloches d'angoisse*," Murail repeats a solitary B⁴ fifteen times in the last two pages of the score, ranging in dynamic from pianissimo to forte, interspersed with other sonorities of various dynamics and complexity. With this tenacious repeated B⁴, we hear the coming preface of a goodbye, one which the composer is reluctant or unwilling to make happen, until he finally finds the means to do so: by reharmonizing the notes of the master, the exalted "*adieu*" from the end of the Messiaen prelude. Now, like *Thème et Variations* or *L'Âme en Bourgeon*, two composers are forever musically bonded.



* Olivier Messiaen : "*Cloches d'angoisse et larmes d'adieu*" (Préludes pour piano)

Example 12, Murail, *Cloches d'adieu, et un sourire*

Toru Takemitsu

“When I was writing my first piano piece, it was going nowhere, but after I heard Messiaen, I found my way out of the tunnel.”

- Toru Takemitsu, on discovering Messiaen’s *Huit Preludes*⁹²

Takemitsu, like Murail, composed an elegy to the recently-deceased Messiaen the year that he died. *Rain Tree Sketch II*, subtitled “In Memoriam Olivier Messiaen,” is one of three works by Takemitsu which take their title from “the Clever Rain Tree,” a short story by Kenzaburō Ōe. In the Ōe piece, the rain tree is a quasi-mythical plant which stores water in its small leaves for a long period of time after it rains, allowing the plants in the garden below to access water long after the rain has ended. Of the other two works Takemitsu composed, one, *Rain Tree Sketch*, is also for solo piano, while the original *Rain Tree* is for percussion trio.⁹³

If Takemitsu’s tribute to Messiaen, like the examples of Dukas and Murail, sought to synthesize elements of the musical language of both into a new hybrid work, it is difficult to tell where one composer’s style ends and the other’s begins. Takemitsu may well have been one of Messiaen’s most devoted acolytes, despite not meeting him until 1975 for a one-time, three-hour lesson in New York City.⁹⁴ He first encountered the works of Messiaen when he was shown a score of the

⁹² Tomoko Isshiki, “Toru Takemitsu’s Cosmic View: The *Rain Tree* Sketches,” (DMA diss., University of Houston), 13.

⁹³ Isshiki, “Toru Takemitsu’s Cosmic View,” 82-88.

⁹⁴ Timothy Koozin, “Octatonicism in the recent solo piano works of Tōru Takemitsu,” *Perspectives of New Music* 29 vol. 1 (1991): 125, accessed May 5, 2020, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/833071>.

Huit Préludes by his colleague, the pianist Toshi Ichianagi, leading to an interest in Messiaen's music that would accompany him throughout his entire career.

The first indication in the printed score of *Rain Tree Sketch II*, a tempo marking of "Celestially Light," already reinforces the dedication to Messiaen, printed only a centimeter higher. The first section features large vertical sonorities, varying from two to five notes, travelling altogether, all voiced and written in the treble clef.

The initial motive that opens the piece is transposed upwards in measures four and five, a familiar device in the Messiaen preludes. In keeping with a longstanding Messiaen practice (since after the time of the preludes), there are no time signatures: bar lines merely indicate groupings of motifs, and reset any indicated accidentals.

In the tenth measure of *Rain Tree Sketch II*, we encounter the first iteration of the only "bass" pitch in the work (that is to say, the only pitch in the bottom two octaves of the piano). This very low D is tolled nine times throughout the work, and, with the pedal held, each pitch that follows reverberates inside of D, reminiscent of a tolling bell, or of the Murail and Messiaen works mentioned above that play on resonance.

The apex of Messiaen allusions comes in the center of the work, where Takemitsu returns to the opening tempo, but marks as an expressive adverb, "Joyfully," rather than "Celestially Light." Here, the melody is treated with both canon and a sequencing down a major second.



Ex. 13, Takemitsu, *Rain Tree Sketch II*

The final Messiaen touch, however, is found at the end of the melodic figure, where, after ascending up an octatonic scale, the melody falls back down by a tritone. This gesture of an end-of-line resolution by a falling tritone was present in Messiaen's music from the 1940's onward, including works from a variety of stylistic eras in his writing, and is easily recognized by anyone familiar with his music.⁹⁵

Despite the common imagery invoked in their titles, Takemitsu's *Rain Spell*, a quintet for piano, harp, vibraphone, flute, and clarinet, does not share its titular origins with *Rain Tree Sketch II*, but rather belongs to a large category of other works in his catalogue centered around water. Speaking in 1980 to the connection between water and music, he noted "thinking of musical form, I think of liquid form. I wish for musical changes to be as gradual as the tides."⁹⁶ In *Rain Spell*, Takemitsu alternates between sections where the timing is at the discretion of the performers, and sections where it is notated. Within the notated sections, he

⁹⁵ Toop, "Messiaen/ Goeyvaerts, Fano/ Stockhausen, Boulez," 145.

⁹⁶ Daniel Foley, Liner notes for *Takemitsu: Toward the Sea/Rain Tree/Rain Spell/Bryce*, Toronto New Music Ensemble, Naxos 8.555859, 2003, accessed May 3, 2020, https://www.naxos.com/mainsite/blurbs_reviews.asp?item_code=8.555859&catNum=555859&filetype=About%20this%20Recording&language=English_.

measures time through one of two methods, either with metronome markings, or indications of duration in seconds prior to the next event. In the sections at the performers' discretion, he indicates time by drawing several types of dotted lines between the five players' parts, indicating events that should happen either successively or simultaneously among the ensemble.

The image shows a musical score for five instruments: Piano, Harp, Vibraphone, Flute, and Clarinet (in Bb, Transposed). The score is marked with various dynamics and performance instructions. A circled 'A' at the top left indicates a specific section. The Piano part starts with 'Freely, very spatially.' and includes dynamics like *pp*, *p*, *mf*, *f*, and *ff*. The Harp part includes 'blatiglendo' and 'Eolian rustling'. The Vibraphone part includes '(medium hard mallets)' and 'Motor on *pp* sempre'. The Flute and Clarinet parts have specific fingering and articulation markings. Dotted lines connect notes across the staves, indicating temporal relationships between the instruments.

Ex. 14, Takemitsu, *Rain Spell*

Within these two different divisions of time, the pacing varies between sections similar to the one marked above (freely, very spatially), and faster-moving sections. All five instruments are asked to employ extended techniques that change their pitches or timbres, with the wind instruments given specially indicated fingerings to produce multiphonics, and the three other instruments instructed to play certain notes in a specific manner (e.g., with your hand inside the piano, stopping the string), and with the harp additionally requested to retune several strings to quartertones.

From this world of precisely prescribed sounds, but free divisions of time, Takemitsu creates vivid colors from the five players through the different sonorities and combinations of instruments. In the very first line, we see the incredible range of sounds Takemitsu elicits. First, the harp echoes the first piano chord by filling in the chromatic scale above the middle piano note, before adding a quarter tone immediately below this chromatic scale, thereby introducing a density of small intervals into a delicately soft dynamic world, with all tones produced by the fingernail, rendering them especially brittle.

Then, the pianist is instructed to play the next chord at three different dynamic levels: the low Eb is pianissimo, the Bb is piano, and the A is mezzo-forte. Here, like Murail, Gérard Grisey, and other spectralists, Takemitsu has the natural series of overtones in mind. Messiaen goes through a bit of explanation in *Technique de mon langage musicale*, a text Takemitsu knew well and referenced often, to show that the tritone is naturally present in the series of overtones at the octave, writing that it can be heard “with a fine ear.”⁹⁷ Takemitsu aims here to remove some doubt by emphasizing the A natural, a tritone over the fundamental Eb. (The Bb, marked only one dynamic level higher, is easier to hear in this natural series of overtones.)

Rain Spell, which received its premiere in 1983 in Yokohama by Sound Space Ark, is a mesmerizing performance experience, and succeeds in creating suspended, vaporous music.

⁹⁷ Messiaen, *Technique of my musical language*, 47.

George Benjamin

“Having him enthuse about my harmony was more than enough to make me work incessantly.”

“I was almost unaware of being taught.”

- George Benjamin on Olivier Messiaen⁹⁸

George Benjamin holds several distinctions within the Messiaen studio.

First, he was one of the youngest composers to study with Messiaen. He was also one of the last to take his course at the Conservatoire de Paris, where the mandatory retirement age for faculty members was seventy years old. He has also been referred to as Messiaen’s “favorite” student, and studied, at two different times, both with Messiaen, and with a Messiaen pupil (Alexander Goehr).⁹⁹ He has written or given interviews on a number of occasions about his time with Olivier Messiaen, whose kindness and generosity of spirit were a formative influence on the precocious teenager.

Benjamin relates a memory of working together on his early work *At First Light* (1982), recalling that Messiaen at first ‘reacted badly’ to the work, noting “I can’t see much harmony...the harmony is diffused in the music.” Benjamin was puzzled about the comment, as it opposed his belief, even at a young age, that harmony was integrated into the form of a piece,¹⁰⁰ a familiar point of discussion in Messiaen’s teaching, emphasized in previous sections by Benitez and Boulez.

⁹⁸ Hill, *The Messiaen Companion*, 270.

⁹⁹ The designation of Benjamin, or anyone, as Messiaen’s favorite pupil seems out of character for the generous, unassuming teacher. Citations of this can be found in a November 2006 article in *The Guardian* by Angelique Chrisafis, or a review of a concert involving Esa-Pekka Salonen and the New York Philharmonic by Jacob Slaterry. No mention appears to exist in a first-hand source.

¹⁰⁰ Consider here the observations of Benitez and others on Messiaen’s methods of analysis, notably his focusing on vertical events, rather than understanding how harmonies served the larger musical form.

Benjamin's *Octet* (1979) for four strings, two winds, percussion and celesta, was written just after he concluded his time in Paris studying with Messiaen. He notes that the work was "my first attempt to integrate all that I had learnt in Paris on an instrumental canvas."¹⁰¹ Much like the Takemitsu and Jolas pieces referenced above, the *Octet* often has overlapping sections and tempo markings. Benjamin prefers a blending of formal structures to Messiaen's more rigid, angular forms: within his sections, Benjamin uses a combination of alternating tempos and constantly changing time signatures to destabilize both the form and the meter. In the example below, reminiscent of the *Danse Sacrale* of Igor Stravinsky, Benjamin makes full use of silences, different subdivisions of the beat, and different time signatures to destabilize the pulse.

Ex. 15, Benjamin *Octet*, mm. 219-223

¹⁰¹ Yellow Barn, "George Benjamin: *Octet*," program notes for Yellow Barn, accessed May 3, 2020, <http://www.yellowbarn.org/page/george-benjamin-octet>.

The influence of Messiaen on the *Octet* shines through with Benjamin's inventive orchestration and full exploration of the timbre of every instrument. Seldom does Benjamin use all eight instruments together, often economically exploring six or seven instruments in combination. The percussionist, for instance, does not enter until measure 19, at which point the double bass has (temporarily) dropped out. The eight instruments are not heard together until measure 81, and, even then, only briefly combine their sounds. Within these smaller groups, Benjamin exploits a number of colors. For instance, observe below how he employs the warm timbre of celesta and clarinet in unison at the opening of the piece, and colors their final pitches with an added harmonic from the cello.

GEORGE BENJAMIN

Allegro ♩ = 96

Flute

Clarinet

Celesta

Percussion

Violin

Viola

Violoncello

Doublebass

pp (actual sound)

Ex. 16 – Benjamin, *Octet*, mm. 1-6

One of the most remarkable moments in the piece is an extended solo section for two cymbals on the final page of the full score. The cymbals, designated only as “small and large,” alternate pitches twice, with the small cymbal leading to the large cymbal both times, with both cymbals instructed to diminuendo after the initial onset of sound. Although this exact use of the two cymbals has not been employed before in the score, the gesture of a higher note resolving to a lower note has been well established for pages prior, including with the violist immediately playing two solo descending pitches before the entrance of the cymbals. In fact, the very opening of the piece (referenced above) includes a sequence of three pitches by clarinet and celesta that first rise, and then fall -- a foreshadowing of the cymbal solo on the final page of the score.

The section is reminiscent of similar spots in Messiaen’s music, including the famous cymbal interludes in *Et exspecto resurrectionem mortuorum*, his elegy to the victims of the two world wars. It also brings to mind Stockhausen’s experiments in relating compositional procedures between pitched and non-pitched instrument groups, notably incorporating non-pitched percussion into his serialist procedures in *Kreuzspiel*.¹⁰² The cymbal section in the *Octet* also calls to mind a specific Benjamin reminiscence about his time in the Messiaen course, speaking to different examples of his fondness for learning the inner workings of specific instruments: “he would make us walk half-way across Paris in the snow to look at the newest cymbals.”¹⁰³

¹⁰² Toop, “Messiaen/ Goeyvaerts, Fano/ Stockhausen, Boulez,” 162-163.

¹⁰³ Hill, *The Messiaen Companion*, 272.

The meticulous and thoughtful technique employed in George Benjamin's *Octet* can be seen throughout his oeuvre, including in his perhaps most-celebrated work, the 2012 opera *Written on Skin*. His second of three stage collaborations with the English playwright Martin Crimp, *Written on Skin* has been performed all over the world since its 2012 premiere at the Aix-en-Provence festival. Benjamin, Alex Ross notes, "pulled off a tremendous feat of stylistic integration, fusing twentieth-century modernism with glimpses of a twenty-first century tonality."¹⁰⁴ Steven Humes, writing for Opera Philadelphia, observes "George Benjamin's *Written on Skin* continues the great operatic core purpose of moving an audience by bringing all of the arts together to tell the story."¹⁰⁵

Like Alban Berg's *Wozzeck* and Debussy's *Pelléas et Mélisande*, the opera is structured in fifteen scenes, and concerns the deadly love triangle that emerges from three central characters. In the Benjamin, the three characters in question are the Protector (baritone,) vassal of a mysterious medieval fiefdom, his restless wife Agnes (soprano,) and the "the Boy" (countertenor), a scribe who has come to record the story of the Protector through words and pictures, but is ultimately murdered by him after he is successfully seduced by Agnes.

Scene IV of *Written on Skin* has the first private interaction between Agnes and the Boy. Agnes enters the room where the Boy is working, and expresses an interest in his work, before mocking him and informing him that he

¹⁰⁴ Alex Ross, "Illuminated," *The New Yorker*, March 18, 2013, <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2013/03/25/illuminated>.

¹⁰⁵ Steven Humes, "Defining Opera Throughout History," program notes for *Written on Skin*, Opera Philadelphia, the Academy of Music, February 2018, <https://www.operaphila.org/whats-on/on-stage-2017-2018/written-on-skin/student-guide/>.

doesn't know how to draw a real woman. In a series of explicit descriptions of what comprises a real woman, it becomes increasingly clear that Agnes is expressing her sexual interest in the boy.

Musically, Benjamin makes similar choices with alternating tempo in this scene as his *Octet*. Here, the changes of tempo serve a dramatic end: exhibiting the increasing tension as Agnes approaches the boy, and the escalation of emotions as the scene progresses. Within these tempo changes, Benjamin spells out rhythmic associations for each character: the time signatures employed when the two are together are spelled mostly in regards to the eighth note (9/8, 6/8, etc.), and the boy sings primarily within these triple subdivisions of the large beat. Agnes, by contrast, sings mostly in even divisions of the larger beat. Rehearsal number 43, printed below, spells out this division clearly.

344

p stacc., scherz.

43

Agn. She, she does-n't look real, does-n't look real, does-n't,

Boy, in - ven - ted too.

43

pp

poco

Ex. 17, Benjamin, *Written on Skin*, rehearsal no. 43, piano-vocal score

The rhythmic tension mirrors the tension of the characters, and builds to an expressive climax at rehearsal no. 45, where the Boy and Agnes participate in an exact voice exchange (a rarity in opera between heterosexual love interests,

owed to the casting of the Boy as a countertenor) before finally unifying their disparate rhythmic subdivisions on the words “too close,” repeated twice. After this moment, compound meters gradually give way to duple meters (2/4, 3/4, etc.), before the scene ends with Agnes singing alone for two pages almost exclusively in duple meters.

As the Steven Humes quote printed above notes, *Written on Skin*, though a twenty-first-century work, exists inside a standard operatic canon. The work is intimately connected to a number of preceding works, but is perhaps most closely linked, in its formal constructions as well as its storyline and characters, to *Pelléas et Mélisande*. Benjamin was among many Messiaen students fortunate to study *Pelléas* with him, recalls:

Then there was the analysis of Debussy's *Pelléas et Mélisande*, note by note, over six enthralling weeks - which meant three classes a week, each lasting well over four hours. *Pelléas* probably mattered more to him than any other single piece in the history of music. During sleepless, freezing nights as a prisoner of war during the early 1940s, he would go through whole acts of the opera in his head to keep his spirits up.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁶ George Benjamin, “Make a Joyful Noise,” *The Guardian*, December 4, 2008, <https://www.theguardian.com/music/2008/dec/05/olivier-messiaen-centenary>.

Concluding Thoughts

“No one who ever took that course could forget it”¹⁰⁷

Is it impossible to imagine that George Benjamin would not have encountered *Pelléas et Mélisande* studying with a different composer, or that Betsy Jolas could have avoided *Gaspard de la Nuit* throughout her career as a student and professional composer. Toru Takemitsu, one of the most enthusiastic Messiaen students, professed that he had encountered the octatonic scale long before he discovered *Huit Préludes*. The immensely gifted Boulez, as we have seen, synthesized techniques from a multitude of composers, both those he had studied with directly and those he knew of exclusively through their scores. Each composer considered on this list studied with at least one other composer, and several were connected to the same teacher (Darius Milhaud.) What then, is the value of exploring these composers as a group by virtue of one teacher with whom they studied?

We have seen that Messiaen’s students have incorporated some of his compositional ideas, which were clearly outlined in his two primary treatises on his technique, into their own language. Messiaen’s explorations in harmony and resonance are perhaps the most influential, as seen directly in the evolution of the Spectralist movement, or in the textures he generated with his harmonies, from his works for solo instruments all the way up to the orchestral. The rhythmic techniques of Messiaen, too, often surface in the works of students, especially the

¹⁰⁷ Jolas, “Interview with Betsy Jolas.”

added value, Messiaen's technique of undermining metrical regularity by adding the smallest note value. While certain large-scale structural devices were employed by Messiaen, including the suspension of a regular time signature, his students by-and-large reject what Peter Hill refers to as "the right angles of his forms," with the possible exceptions of certain works by Joanna Bruzdowicz and William Bolcom.¹⁰⁸

However, the variety inherent in the compositions of Messiaen students is staggering: the stylistic differences between their compositions serve as proof that Messiaen, as several commentators attest, consciously steered students away from imitation of his style.

What then, is the legacy of his composition and analysis lessons? We have seen that the materials the students considered, including prominent works by Debussy, Ravel, Stravinsky, and others, were analyzed, and often found their way into the works of the students. We know, too, that through these classes Messiaen cultivated an interest in the music of other cultures, especially the rhythms of Indian classical music, the music of ancient Greece, and the older European tradition of plainsong.

Perhaps, though, the legacy rests in a combination of the materials and the method of conveyance. We have heard positive testimonials about the courses or private lessons given by Messiaen from Betsy Jolas, Joanna Bruzdowicz, Pierre Boulez, George Benjamin, and Toru Takemitsu, which complement other written

¹⁰⁸ Hill, *The Messiaen Companion*, 73.

and recorded examples from the scores of other Messiaen students, all testifying to the power of his teaching, and his gracious generosity of spirit. As Boulez observed, Messiaen had a beautiful way of exerting a balanced influence on his students:

“...the generosity I mean is something more profound – his generosity in comprehending a young, malleable human being, and in refusing to regard him simply as an object to be moulded, though impressing on him the necessity of both determination and curiosity.”¹⁰⁹

In conveying the “necessity of both determination and curiosity,” Messiaen led from the front, constantly engaging students in his newest fascinations, both musical and extra-musical (food, geology, ornithology). He also demonstrated the power of showing up, always attending Parisian performances of works by his students, no matter how small or informal the venue. His seminars were always lengthy, but this length was generated only by a necessity to cover the material. The material itself was came from a broad range of music from across seven centuries (dating back to Machaut) and all over the world, much of it determined by the particular need and interest of the students. All of this was covered by with unstoppable, childlike enthusiasm and a deep, pervading reverence.

Though we have seen the connections among the many scores examined in this project, perhaps this is the ultimate connection of these students – that they were united in time, place, and intention by a master teacher whose boundless enthusiasm was rooted in the ingenuity of the scores they examined together. The

¹⁰⁹ Boulez, “Olivier Messiaen,” from *Orientations*, 406.

students could take both the concrete observations and the personal enthusiasm and apply that to their own work: their catalogue of compositions, and their own roster of seminar and private students.

Indeed, as the remaining students of Messiaen continue to write compositions influenced by their newest discoveries, and the students of students of Messiaen continue to rise in number and output, it will become more and more difficult to trace exact developments in their scores back to Messiaen himself, just as it becomes more difficult to trace nuances of the scores backwards to Debussy, or Wagner, or Beethoven. What abides instead, is the inextinguishable font of enthusiasm that leads to the joy of discovery, a source that Messiaen did not generate but was able to tap into, and give generously to his students, who emerged changed and enriched from the experience.

When one considers the balances of Messiaen's life, the great triumphs alongside the unfathomable depths, it is remarkable that a man who faced the nihilism of being a prisoner of war, who placed his first wife in a convalescence home from which he knew she would never emerge, who experienced a strained relationships with his own son, managed to fasten himself to an intractable faith in music, humanity, and God. Here, the concluding lines from his sole opera and largest work, *Saint Françoise d'Assise*, seem especially appropriate: "From pain, weakness, and disgrace he resuscitates, resuscitates power, glory, and joy!!!"¹¹⁰

¹¹⁰ Schloesser, *Visions of Amen*, 532. The exclamation marks in Schloesser's translation are copied directly from the libretto.

Appendix I: Texts and Translations

Delbos, *L'Âme en Bourgeon*

Text by Cécile Sauvage | Translation by the pianist

IV.

Te voilà hors de l'alvéole
Petite abeille de ma chair,
Je suis la ruche sans parole
Dont l'essaim est parti dans l'air

Je n'apporte plus la becquée
De mon sang à ton frêle corps;
Mon être est la maison fermée
Dont on vient d'enlever un mort

Te voilà hors de l'alvéole
Petite abeille de ma chair,
Je suis la ruche sans parole
Dont l'essaim est parti dans l'air

J'eus beau te donner sur ma bouche,
Butineuse dès le matin,
Le pollen où pètrit la mouche
Et l'odeur piquante du thym:

J'eus beau cueillir pour ta retraite
Des rameaux avec leur azur,
Des nids où la ponte était faite,
Des lézards sur leur pan de mur,

Du monde où passe la lumière
Je ne t'offrais que les reflets;
Et ton œil ouvrit sa paupière
Et ta main poussa le volet

Here you are out of the cell
Little bee of my flesh,
I am the hive without words
Whose swarm is gone in the air

I do not bring the beak
From my blood to your frail body;
My being is the closed house
From which we have just removed a dead person

Here you are out of the cell
Little bee of my flesh,
I am the hive without words
Whose swarm is gone in the air

I could give you on my mouth,
Forager in the morning,
The pollen where fly catches
And the piquante smell of thyme:

I could pick for your retirement
Twigs with their azure,
Nests where the laying was done,
Lizards on their wall,

From the world where the light goes
I offered you only reflections;
And your eye opened its eyelid
And your hand pushed the shutter

V.

Je savais que ce serait toi
Avec cette petite bouche,
Avec ce front et cette voix
Ce regard indécis qui louche.

I knew it would be you
With this little mouth,
With that forehead and that voice
This undecided look that fishy.

Je savais que ta jeune chair
Aurait ces nacres veloutées,
Que tes mains tapoteraient l'air
Pour sai sir la robe des fées

Je savais la suave odeur
De lait pur qu'aurait ton haleine
Et quel choc effrayant ton couer
Battrait sous la guimpe de laine.

Comment ne t'auraisje pas vu
Avec les yeux de ma pensée?
Rien de toi ne m'est imprévu,
Petite ame que j'ai tissée

I knew that your young flesh
Would have these velvety nacres,
That your hands would pat the air
To know the dress of the fairies

I knew the sweet smell
Pure milk that would have your breath
And what a frightening shock your heart
Would fight under the woolen scarf.

How could I not have seen you
With the eyes of my thought?
Nothing of you is unforeseen to me,
Small soul that I have woven

Claude Debussy, *Pelléas et Mélisande*, act III, scene I

Text by Maurice Maeterlinck

English translation by Charles Alfred Byrne (1907), courtesy of Wikisource

(One of the towers of the Castle. A watch path passes under a window of the tower).

MÉLISANDE (à la fenêtre tandis qu'elle peigne
ses cheveux dénoués)

Mes longs cheveux descendent jusqu'au seuil de
la tour;

Mes cheveux vous attendent tout le long de la
tour,

Et tout le long du jour,

Et tout le long du jour.

Saint Daniel et Saint Michel,

Saint Michel et Saint Raphaël,

Je suis née un dimanche,

Un dimanche à midi...

(Entre Pelléas par le chemin de ronde.)

PELLÉAS
Holà! Holà! ho!

MÉLISANDE
Qui est là?

PELLÉAS
Moi, moi, et moi!
Que fais-tu là, à la fenêtre, en chantant comme
un oiseau qui n'est pas d'ici?

MÉLISANDE
J'arrange mes cheveux pour la nuit...

Mélisande (at the window, as she combs her
loosened hair).

My long hair hangs unto the base of the tower.

My hair awaits thee all the length of the tower.

And all the length of the day!

• And all the length of the day!

• Saint Daniel and Saint Michael.

• Saint Michael and Saint Raphael,

• I was born on a Sunday,

• A Sunday at noon!

(Enter Pelléas by the watch path).

Pelléas.
Hola! Hola! Ho!

Mélisande.
Who is there?

Pelléas.
Me, me, and me! What are you doing at the
window singing like a bird that is not of this
place?

Mélisande.
I am arranging my hair for the night...

PELLÉAS C'est là ce que je vois sur le mur? Je croyais que tu avais de la lumière...	Pelléas. It is that which I see on the wall! I thought that it was a ray of light...
MÉLISANDE J'ai ouvert la fenêtre; il fait trop chaud dans la tour... Il fait beau cette nuit.	Mélisande. I opened the window. It is too hot in the tower, it is fine to-night.
PELLÉAS Il y a d'innombrables étoiles; je n'en ai jamais vu autant que ce soir; mais la lune est encor sur la mer... Ne reste pas dans l'ombre, Mélisande, penche-toi un peu, que je voie tes cheveux dénoués.	Pelléas. There are innumerable stars; I have never seen so many as to-night;...but the moon is still on the sea... Do not remain in the shadow, Mélisande, lean forward a little, that I may see your loosened hair. (Mélisande leans out of the window.)
MÉLISANDE Je suis affreuse ainsi...	Mélisande. I am frightful this way.
PELLÉAS Oh! oh! Mélisande, Oh! tu es belle! Tu es belle ainsi! Penche-toi! Penche-toi! Laisse-moi venir plus près de toi...	Pelléas. Oh, Mélisande! oh, how beautiful you are... You are beautiful thus... Lean over, lean over...let me come nearer to you...
MÉLISANDE Je ne puis pas venir plus près de toi... Je me penche tant que je peux...	Mélisande. I cannot come nearer to you... I am leaning over as much as I can...
PELLÉAS Je ne puis pas monter plus haut...donne-moi du moins ta main ce soir avant que je m'en aille... Je pars demain.	Pelléas. I cannot mount any higher...give me at least your hand to-night...before I go away...I start to-morrow...
MÉLISANDE Non, non, non...	Mélisande. No, no, no.
PELLÉAS Si, si, je pars, je partirai demain...donne-moi ta main, ta main, ta petite main sur les lèvres...	Pelléas. But yes, yes: I go, I shall start to-morrow...give me your hand, your hand, your little hand on my lips...
MÉLISANDE Je ne te donne pas ma main si tu pars...	Mélisande. I won't give you my hand if you go...
PELLÉAS Donne, donne, donne...	Pelléas. Give, give, give...
MÉLISANDE Tu ne partiras pas?	Mélisande. You will not go?...
PELLÉAS J'attendrai, j'attendrai...	Pelléas. I will wait. I will wait.
MÉLISANDE Je vois une rose dans les ténèbres...	Mélisande. I see a rose in the darkness...

PELLÉAS
Où donc?
Je ne vois que les branches du saule qui dépasse
le mur...

MÉLISANDE
Plus bas, plus bas, dans le jardin; là-bas, dans le
vert sombre...

PELLÉAS
Ce n'est pas une rose...
J'irai voir tout à l'heure, mais donne-moi ta main
d'abord; d'abord ta main...

MÉLISANDE
Voilà, voilà, je ne puis pencher davantage.

PELLÉAS
Mes lèvres ne peuvent pas atteindre ta main!

MÉLISANDE
Je ne puis me pencher davantage...
Je suis sur le point de tomber...
Oh! Oh! mes cheveux descendent de la tour!
(Sa chevelure se révolte tout à coup tandis
qu'elle se penche ainsi, et inonde Pelléas.)

PELLÉAS
Oh! oh! qu'est-ce que c'est? tes cheveux, tes
cheveux descendent vers moi!
Toute ta chevelure, Mélisande, toute ta
chevelure est tombée de la tour!
Je les tiens dans les mains, je les tiens dans la
bouche...
Je les tiens dans le bras, je les mets autour de
mon cou...
Je n'ouvrirai plus les mains cette nuit!

MÉLISANDE
Laisse-moi! laisse-moi! tu vas me faire tomber!

PELLÉAS
Non, non, non!
Je n'ai jamais vu de cheveux comme les tiens,
Mélisande!
Vois, vois, vois, ils viennent de si haut et ils
m'inondent encore jusqu'au cœur;
Ils m'inondent encore jusqu'au genoux!
Et ils sont doux, ils sont doux comme s'ils
tombaient du ciel!
Je ne vois plus le ciel à travers tes cheveux.
Tu vois, tu vois? Mes deux mains ne peuvent pas
les tenir; il y en a jusque sur les branches du
saule...
Ils vivent comme des oiseaux dans mes mains, et
ils m'aiment, ils m'aiment plus que toi!

Pelléas.
Where?
I only see the branches of the willow which
surmount the wall...

Mélisande.
Lower down, lower down, in the garden; over
there in the dark greenery.

Pelléas.
It is not a rose.—I will go and see by and bye,
but give me your hand first; first your hand...

Mélisande.
There, there;... I cannot bend over farther...

Pelléas.
My lips cannot reach your hand...

Mélisande.
I cannot bend over farther... I am on the point of
falling. Oh, oh, my hair descends from the
tower!...
(Her hair suddenly revolutes, as she bends over
thus, and covers Pelléas.)

Pelléas.
Oh, oh, what is it?... Your hair, your hair comes
down toward me!...
All your hair, Mélisande, all your hair is fallen
from the tower...
I hold it in my hands, I hold it in my mouth...

I hold it in my arms, and I put it around my
neck.
I shall not open my hands again to-night...

Mélisande.
Let me go, let me go! You will make me fall!...

Pelléas.
No, no, no!
I have never seen hair like yours, Mélisande...

Look, look, look, it comes from so high and it
inundates me to the very heart. It inundates me
more, even to the knees!
It is so soft, it is soft as if it fell from heaven!
I no longer see the sky through your hair.
You see. you see, my hands can no longer hold
it.
It even reaches to the branches of the willow.

It lives as a bird in my hands, and it loves me, it
loves me a thousand times more than you!

MÉLISANDE
Laisse-moi, laisse-moi...
Quelqu'un pourrait venir...

Mélisande.
Let me go...let me go...
someone might come...

PELLÉAS
Non, non, non, je ne te délivre pas cette nuit...
Tu es ma prisonnière cette nuit, toute la nuit,
toute la nuit...

Pelléas.
No, no, no; I will not deliver you to-night... You
are my prisoner this night; all the night, all the
night.

MÉLISANDE
Pelléas! Pelléas!

Mélisande.
Pelléas! Pelléas!

PELLÉAS
Je les noue, je les noue aux branches du saule...
Tu ne t'eniras plus...tu ne t'en iras plus...
regarde, regarde, j'embrasse tes cheveux...
Je ne souffre plus au milieu de tes cheveux...
Tu entends mes baisers le long de tes cheveux?
Ils montent le long de tes cheveux...
Il faut que chacun t'en apporte...
Tu vois tu vois, je puis ouvrir les mains...
J'ai les mains libres et tu ne peux plus
m'abandonner...
(Des colombes sortent de la tour et volent autour
d'eux dans la nuit.)

Pelléas.
You shall not go away any more...
I tie it, I tie it to the branches of the willow, your
hair.
I suffer no longer in the midst of your hair. You
hear my kisses through the length of your hair.
They go up through your hair.
Each particular one must carry some.
You see, you see, I can open my hands... You
see, I have my hands free and you cannot
abandon me...
(Two doves come out of the tower and fly about
them in the night).

MÉLISANDE
Oh! oh! tu m'as fait mal!
Qu'y a-t-il Pelléas?
Qu'est-ce qui vole autour de moi?

Mélisande.
Oh, oh! you hurt me.
What is it, Pelléas?
What is it that flies around me?

PELLÉAS
Ce sont les colombes qui sortent de la tour...
Je les ai effrayées; elles s'envolent...

Pelléas.
It is the doves that come out of the tower. I
frightened them. They fly away.

MÉLISANDE
Ce sont mes colombes, Pelléas.
Allons-nous-en, laisse-moi elles ne reviendraient
plus...

Mélisande.
They are my doves, Pelléas.—Let us go, leave
me; they would not return...

PELLÉAS
Pourquoi ne reviendraient-elles plus?

Pelléas.
Why would they not return?

MÉLISANDE
Elles se perdront dans l'obscurité...
Laisse-moi! laisse-moi relever la tête...
J'entends un bruit de pas...
Laisse-moi!
C'est Golaud! Je crois que c'est Golaud!
Il nous a entendus...

Mélisande.
They will be lost in the obscurity...
Let me lift my head...
I hear a noise of footsteps...
Leave me!—It is Golaud...
I think it is Golaud... He has heard us...

PELLÉAS
Attends! Attends!
Tes cheveux son autour des branches...
Ils se sont accrochés dans l'obscurité...
Attends! Attends
(Entre Golaud par le chemin de ronde.)
Il fait noir.

Pelléas.
Wait, wait!...
Your hair is around the branches...
It has got caught in the darkness.
Wait, wait!...
(Golaud enters by the watch path.)
It is black...

GOLAUD
Que faites-vous ici?

PELLÉAS
Ce que je fais ici?

GOLAUD
Je... Vous êtes des enfants...
Mélisande, ne te penche pas ainsi à la fenêtre, tu
vas tomber...
Vous ne savez pas qu'il est tard?
Il est près de minuit.
Ne jouez pas ainsi dans l'obscurité.
Vous êtes des enfants...
(riant nerveusement)
Quels enfants!
Quels enfants!
(Il sort avec Pelléas.)

Golaud.
What are you doing here?

Pelléas.
What I am doing here?... I...

Golaud.
You are two children...
Mélisande, do not lean that way from the
window, you will fall...
You do not know it is late?
It is nearly midnight.
Do not play thus in the dark.
You are two children.
(Laughing nervously.)
What children!
what children!
(He goes out with Pelléas.)

George Benjamin, *Written on Skin*, scene IV

Anges

The woman takes off her shoes steps through a stone slit turns up the spiral stairs pads into
the writing where the Boy ah yes look the Boy bends over a new page.

What is it she feels between her bare feet and the wood floor? Grit.

Boy

What d'you want says the Boy.

Agnes

To see, says the woman.

Boy

See what?

Agnes

To, to see – to see how a book is made. What is that tree?

Boy

The Tree, says the Boy, of Life.

Agnes

Ah. Odd.

Boy

I invented it.

Agnes

Ah. Yes. And who is that woman?

Boy

Eve, says the Boy.

Agnes

Ah. Invented too?

Boy

Yes, says the Boy, invented too

Agnes

She, she doesn't look real, laughs the woman: that's not how a woman looks.

Boy

You're in my light, says the Boy.

Agnes

Oh?

Boy

Yes – in my light too close

Agnes

Oh?

Boy

Yes

Agnes

Too close in what way?

Together

Too close to the page

Boy

you're in my light.

Together

Too close, too close

Agnes

What else can you invent? Can you invent another woman, says the woman, not this, but a woman who's real a woman who, who can't sleep who keeps turning her white pillow over and over from the hot side to the cold side until the cold side's hot? Can you invent that?

Boy

What is it you mean, says the Boy.

Agnes

And if the woman said, says the woman said – said- said-

Boy

IF the woman said what, says the Boy.

Agnes

what if, ...if you invented – invented a woman who said she couldn't sleep who said that her
heart split and shook at the sight of a, of a boy the way light in a bowl of water splits and
shakes on a garden wall – who said that her grey eyes at the sight of a boy turn black with
love

Boy

What boy? Says the Boy-

Agnes

You can decide what boy –

Boy

What love?

Agnes

You can decide what love.

Invent her – invent the woman you want: and when you know the colour of her eyes the
length of hair the precise music of her voice – when you've quickened her pulse entered her
mind tightened her skin over her back when you have invented and painted that exact woman
come, come, come to me show her to me: I'll tell you if she's real.

Appendix II: Recital Program #4

Printed below is my original third dissertation recital program, cancelled during the Covid-19 pandemic. It is printed here to illuminate the original arc of the project, and to honor the works and collaborators listed.

March 29, 2020

8:00 p.m.

The Gildenhorn Recital Hall

<i>Petrushka</i> (arr. for piano four-hands) Première Tableau	Igor Stravinsky (1882-1971)
<i>Structures Ia</i>	Pierre Boulez (1925 - 2016)
<i>Sonata for Two Pianos</i> I. Quarter = 72	Karel Goeyvaerts (1923 – 1993)
<i>Frontispice</i>	Maurice Ravel (1875 - 1937)
<i>Jeux</i> (arr. for piano four-hands)	Claude Debussy (1862 - 1918)
- Intermission -	
<i>Variations</i>	Alexander Goehr (b. 1932)
<i>Plupart du temps</i>	Betsy Jolas (b. 1926)
<i>Les Voix du Verseau</i>	Karel Goeyvaerts
<i>Bagatelles</i>	György Kurtag (b. 1926)
<i>Pièce pour piano et quatuor à cordes</i>	Olivier Messiaen (1908 – 1992)

Michele Currenti, soprano
Jazmine Oliwalia, mezzo-soprano
Alexander Kostandinov, piano
Alec Davis, piano
Tzu-yi Chen, piano
Andrew Jonathan Welch, piano

TJ Wible, flute
Melissa Morales, clarinet
Sarit Luban, violin
Qian Zhong, violin
Calvin Liu, violin and viola
Samuel Lam, cello

Bibliography

Aimard, Pierre-Laurent . “Pierre-Laurent Aimard on Tristan Murail at the 2014 Aldeburgh Festival.” May 23, 2014, 3:06.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nIes-Dxksjk>.

Pierre-Laurent Aimard, one of the most prominent pianists and proponents of twentieth and twenty-first century music, introduces Tristan Murail’s music for the Aldeburgh Festival. In his short talk, he explains spectralism from the perspective of a performing musician, and ties Murail’s music to the French masters who preceded him.

Anderson, Julian. “Murail, Tristan,” In *Grove Music Online*. Accessed May 2, 2020, <https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.44940>.

Grove Music is the preeminent reference encyclopedia for musicians the world over, with entries written by top scholars and specialists.

Beirens, Maarten. “European Minimalism and the Modernist Problem,” in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Minimalist and Postminimalist Music*, edited by Kyle Gann, Keith Potter, and Pwyll Ap Siôn. Burlington: Ashgate, 2013.

Woefully little material exists on the music of Karel Goeyvaerts in English: here, he shares an article with Louis Andriessen, a fellow minimalist from the ‘low countries’ of Europe. Beirens traces through key compositions in Goeyvaert’s minimalist period, focusing on his specific formal constructions in the work *Litany IV*, but applicable to other works from this creative period.

Beirens, Maarten, Mark Delaere, and Hilary Staples. “Minimal Music in the Low Countries.” *Tijdschrift van de Koninklijke Vereniging voor Nederlandse Muziekgeschiedenis* 54, no. 1 (2004): 31 – 78.
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/20203896>

Like the previous entry, Goeyvaerts shares this article with Louis Andriessen, whose geographical and aesthetic proximity lends itself to a juxtaposition of the works of the two. The authors draw an important connection between Goeyvaert’s earlier, “serialist” works, and his minimalist compositions of the 1970’s and 80’s by examining his use of cellular musical material, and connecting his later works to his own

descriptions of his serialist pieces as existing in the world of “static music.”

Benitez, Vincent. “A Creative Legacy: Messiaen as Teacher of Analysis.” *College Music Symposium* 40 (2000): 117 – 139.
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/40374403>

Drawing from a rich variety of sources, Benitez’s article summarizes the principles Messiaen employed in teaching his analysis class at the Paris Conservatoire, and compares his pedagogy with that of American and French schools, especially his treatment of harmonies as isolated vertical entities, rather than functional links. Discussions of color, rhythm, melodic accentuation, and aesthetics follow.

Benjamin, George. “Make a Joyful Noise.” *The Guardian*, December 4, 2008.
<https://www.theguardian.com/music/2008/dec/05/olivier-messiaen-centenary>.

George Benjamin, one of Messiaen’s later and most prominent pupils, writes frequently about the formative impact Messiaen had on him as a composer and musical individual. Here, Benjamin writes about Messiaen’s teaching and personality as part of the centenary celebration of Messiaen’s birth.

Bolcom, William. “Afterword,” in *Twelve New Etudes*, 62. New York: Edward B. Marks Music Company, 1988.

In a note that was initially not included in the publication, but reinserted after readers demanded it, Bolcom lays out an *apologia* for his holistic compositional voice and style, while also noting that he has moved away from the idea of being associated as an “American composer.” While he lays out careful reasons for his beliefs, he makes clear that these beliefs are his own, and not prescriptions for all composition.

Bolcom, William. “Something about the music,” in *Contemporary Composers on Contemporary Music*, edited by Barney Childs and Elliott Schwartz, 481-484. Cambridge: Da Capo Press, 1998.

The final of 49 collected essays from composers active during the twentieth century, ordered roughly chronologically from Debussy to Bolcom, and inclusive of composers who wrote in a number of different

styles, including John Cage, George Rochberg, Milton Babbitt, and Benjamin Britten. Bolcom's essay argues vigorously for an inclusive definition of what constitutes 'serious' music, and for the modernization of the symphony orchestra, which he writes has been largely unchanged since the time of Mahler.

Borchgrevink, Hild. Liner notes for *Pour mi: Songs by Olivier Messiaen and Claire Delbos*. Liv Elise Nordskog, Signe Bakke. Lawo Classics 1051, 2014. Accessed April 30th, 2020, https://lawostore.no/assets/files-rte/LWC1051_Pour_Mi_Ebooklet_12x12.pdf.

Borchgrevink's liner notes one of the few widely-available recordings of Claire Delbos' *L'Âme en Bourgeon* complement the recording with insight into the compositional lives that Messiaen and Delbos shared, specifically when writing their overlapping and personally connected cycles, *Poèmes pour mi* (Messiaen) and *L'Âme en Bourgeon* (Delbos.)

Boulez, Pierre. *Orientations*. Edited by Jean-Jacques Nattiez. Translated by Martin Cooper. Boston: Faber and Faber, 1986.

Boulez left behind an impressive legacy of non-compositional activities, including several collections of essays. According to the editor, *Orientations* picks up where *Stocktakings of an Apprenticeship* left off, but includes writings from all periods of Boulez's professional life before its publication in 1986, including works not published in 'Stocktakings.' The work is divided into three sections, with the first dedicated to larger questions about aesthetics, and compositional devices (e.g., notation), before several essays dedicated to Boulez's own compositions. The middle third is dedicated to other artists, ordered roughly chronologically from Beethoven to Messiaen, with the third part, titled "Looking Back," consisting of more subjective reminiscences of Boulez's performing life, and tributes to deceased colleagues he encountered on his journey.

Boulez, Pierre. "Pierre Boulez on 12 notations," Interview for *Universal Editions*, October 31, 2014. Video, 4:22. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6zCwiKTSKTg>.

Those who knew Pierre Boulez personally regularly attest to his conversational charm, which readily comes across in these interviews. Here, the interview is interlaced with a performance of *Douze Notations*, and questions revolve mainly around the origin of the work. In this

interview, Boulez supplies a different answer for the origins of *Douze Notations* than in his interview with Stefanovich and Bleek, when he claims these pieces were making fun of dodecaphonic music.

Pierre Boulez. “Pierre Boulez on his piano collection *Douze Notations*.” Interview by Tamara Stefanovich and Tobias Bleek. *Explore the Score*, May 2012. Video (multiple fragments). <https://www.explorescore.org/pierre-boulez-douze-notations-boulez-video-interview.html>.

This interview is broken into smaller section, and questions explore both the compositional inspiration and origins, but also finer points of the content of the score. In this interview, Boulez supplies a different answer for the origins of *Douze Notations* than in his interview with Universal Editions, when he claims these pieces were paying homage to dodecaphonic music.

Boulez, Pierre. *Stocktakings from an Apprenticeship*. Translated by Stephen Walsh. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991.

Of the two collections of Boulez essays cited in this work, *Stocktakings from an Apprenticeship* was published earlier, and is comprised of fewer and lengthier articles. Boulez combines objective articles (including those collected in a section titled “Entries for a Musical Encyclopaedia”) with polemics, including a reprinting of his most notorious non-compositional writing, the article “Schoenberg is Dead.”

Bruzdowicz, Joanna. “A Conversation with Bruce Duffie.” Interview by Bruce Duffie. May 7, 1991. <http://www.bruceduffie.com/bruzdowicz.html>.

Bruce Duffie, longtime producer and announcer for Classical 97, WNIB in Chicago, has transcribed and compiled many of his interviews and made them available on a personal website. Personalities include many of the prominent composers and touring musicians of the 20th century, many of them sitting for an interview while in Chicago for a performance. In this interview with Joanna Bruzdowicz, they speak about her current work and compositional style, before turning at the end of the interview to the topic of her time at the Conservatoire de Paris studying with Messiaen.

Cumming, Naomi, Arthur Jacobs, and Nicholas Williams. "Goehr Family." In *Grove Music Online*. Accessed May 2nd, 2020, <https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.53781>.

Grove Music is the preeminent reference encyclopedia for musicians the world over, with entries written by top scholars and specialists.

Decroupet, Pascal. "Serial Organisation and Beyond: Cross-Relations of Determinants in *Le Marteau sans maître* and the Dynamic Pitch-Algorithm of 'Constellation'," in *Pierre Boulez Studies*, edited by Edward Campbell and Peter O'Hagan, 108-138. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016.

Decroupet's essay in *Pierre Boulez Studies* provides essential background information on the inception of total serialism, including the influence of Henry Cowell and John Cage, before describing how Pierre Boulez modified and expanded the ideas Messiaen put forward in *Mode de valeurs et d'intensités*. The essay then moves towards detailed analysis of Boulez's, *Le Marteau sans maître*, complete with numerous score excerpts, before exploring Boulez's technique of 'constellation,' and arguing that more detailed analysis of scores from post-war serialism will reveal more fundamental truths about the origins of the music.

Dingle, Christopher. *The Life of Messiaen*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.

Christopher Dingle's biography of Messiaen turns up new, enlightening information about the biography of the undeniably private Olivier Messiaen, including insights into the domestic lives of Delbos, Messiaen, and their son Pascal. Alongside works like Rebecca Rishin's *For the End of Time: The Story of the Messiaen Quartet*, Dingle's biography aims to reconcile the gaps that arise between Messiaen's public personality and his private life.

Foley, Daniel . Liner notes for *Takemitsu: Toward the Sea/Rain Tree/Rain Spell/Bryce*. Toronto New Music Ensemble. Naxos 8.555859, 2003. Accessed May 3, 2020, https://www.naxos.com/mainsite/blurbs_reviews.asp?item_code=8.555859&catNum=555859&filetype=About%20this%20Recording&language=English.

Daniel Foley's liner notes for Toronto New Music Ensemble's Takemitsu album includes information about the origins of all works presented,

including helpful information about the inspiration and the performers Takemitsu wrote for. The work contains basic biographical information, too, alongside quotes directly from the composer that were sourced from the collection of Takemitsu's writings, *Confronting Silence: Select Writings*.

Gurewitsch, Matthew . "A big year for a full-service composer." *New York Times*, February 24, 2008.
<https://www.nytimes.com/2008/02/24/arts/music/24gure.html>.

Gurewitsch's profile of William Bolcom includes several great anecdotes about William Bolcom's time spent overseas, as well as an appreciation of his interest in varying musical styles. Written in honor of his 70th birthday, the article includes quotes from John Corigliano, as well as an overview of Bolcom's pre-2008 catalogue, drawing special attention to his prolific output.

Hewitt, Angela. "Preludes (Messiaen)," for *Hyperion*. Accessed April 27th, 2020.
https://www.hyperion-records.co.uk/dw.asp?dc=W7808_67054.

Angela Hewitt, writing program notes for her own recording of piano works by Messiaen, provides a performers insight into both the compositional and emotional landscape of these eight preludes. Here, she makes note of Messiaen's retrospective preference for two preludes, "Les sons impalpable du rêve," and "Cloches d'angoisse et larmes d'adieu."

Hill, Peter, ed. *The Messiaen Companion*. Portland: Amadeus Press, 1995.

Peter Hill, like many of the composers profiled in this dissertation, was a Messiaen student himself, studying many of the piano works directly under the composer. The anthology includes reflections written by Hill on the piano music of Messiaen, but also includes chapters by other prominent Messiaen scholars, as well as students (Boulez, Benjamin) and an interview with his second wife, Yvonne Loriod. The appendix includes a timeline of Messiaen's life and works, a discography, a biography of works about Messiaen, and a registration list for the organ at Messiaen's parish, La Sainte Trinité.

Humes, Steven. "Defining Opera Throughout History." Program notes for *Written on Skin*. Opera Philadelphia, the Academy of Music, February 2018. <https://www.operaphila.org/whats-on/on-stage-2017-2018/written-on-skin/student-guide/>.

Steven Humes' program notes for Opera Philadelphia's production of *Written on Skin* were composed primarily with a student audience in mind, resulting in a nuanced insertion of a work that combines racy subject matter with dense, intricate music into a larger operatic canon.

Isshiki, Tomoko. "Toru Takemitsu's Cosmic View: The *Rain Tree Sketches*." DMA diss., University of Houston, 2001.

Isshiki's dissertation focuses on two works for solo piano by Takemitsu, *Rain Tree Sketch* and *Rain Tree Sketch II*. The dissertation opens with a biographical sketch and an overview of Takemitsu's musical style, before moving into the inspiration for the title of the Rain Tree Sketch series, including the exact literature sources of the origin. The work closes with a pianistic overview of these pieces.

Johnson, Robert Sherlaw. *Messiaen*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975.

Robert Sherlaw Johnson, like Peter Hill, is a scholar and pianist who studied Messiaen's works directly under the composer, and gave the UK premiere of the complete *Catalogue d'oiseaux*. Johnson's book was completed in 1975, and includes a survey of Messiaen's style, with a special focus on the works of the 1940's and 50's, and a length chapter dedicated to the *Catalogue d'oiseaux*. The appendix includes a table of 120 'tala,' rhythmic patterns from Indian classical music, and a catalogue of correctly translated names of birds, as well a table of which Messiaen works employ the songs of each bird.

Betsy Jolas, "Betsy Jolas in Conversation with Fergus McWilliam." Interview by Fergus McWilliam. *Berlin Philharmoniker*, June 18, 2016. Video, 16:40. <https://www.digitalconcerthall.com/en/concert/22414#>.

Betsy Jolas sits for an interview with a member of the Berlin Philharmonic's horn section, for the occasion of the premiere of *A Little Summer Suite*, her first commission from the orchestra. She speaks to a number of things in the interview, including her family's origins and

connections in 1920's France, and her compositional style, pedagogical origins, and the work the Philharmonic is presenting.

Jolas, Betsy. "Biographie," from Betsy Jolas' personal website. Accessed May 1, 2020. https://www.betsyjolas.com/niv_2.php3?ch=1&nav=0.

Information provided here, directly from the composer's website, is essential understanding both the basic facts of their biography, but also too which items they consider essential to understanding their lives and music.

Jolas, Betsy. "Interview with Betsy Jolas." Interviewed by Samuel Andreyev, May 17, 2018, video, 81:00. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DHTGOayUIDQ&>.

In a lengthy interview with Samuel Andreyev, Jolas goes into extensive details about her musical life, including her time studying with both Messiaen and Milhaud, and her interactions with Pierre Boulez and the Domain Musicale, his ground-breaking musical organization. Jolas also speaks to her compositional style and process.

Kelly, Barbara L. "Jolivet, Andre." In *Grove Music Online*. Accessed April 30, 2020, <https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.14433>.

Grove Music is the preeminent reference encyclopedia for musicians the world over, with entries written by top scholars and specialists.

Koozin, Timothy. "Octatonicism in Recent Solo Piano Works of Toru Takemitsu." *Perspectives of New Music* 29, no. 1 (Winter, 1991): 124 – 140. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/833071>.

Koozin provides insight into Takemitsu's compositional influences from the composer himself, including specific references to his sourcing of octatonic and whole tone scales. The work then moves into detailed analysis of the use of the octatonic scale in three then-recent Takemitsu piano works, *Far Away*, *Rain Tree Sketch*, and *Les Yeux clos II*.

McBurney, Gerard. "Pierre Boulez: he was one of the naughtiest of great artists." *The Guardian*, January 12, 2016.
<https://www.theguardian.com/music/2016/jan/12/pierre-boulez-gerard-mcburney-a-pierre-dream>.

Mc Burney's article on Pierre Boulez provides affirmation of Boulez's public personality, most notably his warmth and sense of humor, and gives direct insight into Boulez's less formal thoughts about his former teacher, Olivier Messiaen.

Messiaen, Olivier. *The Technique of my musical language*. Translated by John Satterfield. Paris: Alphonse Leduc, 1956.

Messiaen's analysis of his own compositional style, written in 1944, is essential to understanding his works, especially those composed before and immediately after the treatise was published. The work was published in two separate volumes, one of Messiaen's written text, and one of his musical examples: for the full understanding of his ideas, it is necessary to read from both books simultaneously. Satterfield's translation in 1956 was the first English translation of this work.

Northcott, Brian. "Alexander Goehr: The Recent Music (II)." *Tempo*, New Series 125 (1978): 12-18. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/944931>.

Northcott's summary of selections of Goehr's music in the 1970's, a decade of great personal change, is essentially to understanding Goehr's larger aesthetic transformation over the course of his length compositional career. The article provides analysis of several works, including works based on Goehr's own *Psalm IV*, the watershed work in his stylistic transformation. The article concludes with an appeal to reconsider broad terms about a composer's output, including the word "reactionary."

Polish Music Center, "Joanna Bruzdowicz," accessed May 2, 2020,
<https://polishmusic.usc.edu/research/composers/joanna-bruzdowicz/>.

The Polish Music Center at the University of Southern California provides basic biographical information about Bruzdowicz, including information about her time studying with Nadia Boulanger. An essay by Maja Trochimczyk about specific Bruzdowicz compositions follows, highlighting her operatic, chamber, and film work. The website concludes with a list of Bruzdowicz's compositions.

Ravel, Maurice. *Gaspard de la Nuit*, ed. Nancy Bricard. Van Nuys, CA: Alfred, 2003.

Maurice Ravel's 1907 masterwork is edited here by Nancy Bricard, who provides English translations for the three Aloysius Bertrand poems that precede each movement, as well as a lengthy essay at the front, exploring Ravel's style, the origins of the work, and specific difficulties presented in each movement. Bricard, a pianist and prominent teacher, sources many of her technical and interpretive suggestions from Robert Casadesus and Vlado Perlemuter, who both studied with Ravel.

Ross, Alex. "Illuminated," *The New Yorker*, March 18, 2013.

<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2013/03/25/illuminated>.

Ross' review of George Benjamin's *Written on Skin* was written during the work's run at London's Royal Opera House, and, like Steven Hume's essay for Opera Philadelphia, seeks to place *Written on Skin* within the canon of established operatic masterworks. Ross connects specific moments in the score to moments from these other operas, and concludes his article by noting the company's success at turning an audience for new operas.

Ross, Alex. *The Rest is Noise*. New York: Picador, 2007.

Ross' seminal book on 20th century music provides a broad overview of the century, dedicating chapters to different decades and locations, and ordering the book roughly chronologically. With a combination of meticulous research and his journalistic acumen, Ross provides insights both into the compositions and lives of the composers featured.

Sabbe, Herman. "Goeyvaerts and the Beginnings of 'Punctual' Serialism and Electronic Music." *Revue belge de Musicologie / Belgisch Tijdschrift voor Muziekwetenschap* 48 (1994): 55-94.

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/3687128>.

Sabbe notes in an introduction to his article that he was motivated to translate this work into English because of the lack of information available in that language on the music of Goeyvaerts. Sabbe considers five works by Goeyvaerts from the 1950's, first providing information about the influence of Anton Webern and Olivier Messiaen on small and large-scale compositional choices, then moving to an analysis of

Goeyvaert's compositions and his aesthetic philosophies. He concludes with thoughts about the evolution of Western musical style.

Samuel, Claude. *Conversations with Messiaen*. Translated by Felix Aprahamian. London: Stainer and Bell, 1976. Hathi Trust Digital Library.

Claude Samuel's book combines translations of several conversations he had with the composer on wide-ranging topics, including personal influences, his studio of students, and what he sees in the music of the future. A source for many subsequent writers, Messiaen's words from these conversations have been cited frequently since the book's publication.

Schloesser, Stephen. *Visions of Amen: the early life and music of Olivier Messiaen*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2014.

Schloesser's book on Messiaen exists in three parts, with the central section on the 1943 *Vision de l'Amen* pairing with an electronic recording distributed with the print book. The opening section highlights important aesthetic and musical influences in Messiaen's life, especially those of his mother, Cécile Sauvage. The work concludes with a briefer section on his personal and compositional life following *Vision de l'Amen*.

Simeone, Nigel. "Delbos [Messiaen], Claire." In *Grove Music Online*. Accessed April 30th, 2020.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.51575>.

Grove Music is the preeminent reference encyclopedia for musicians the world over, with entries written by top scholars and specialists.

Simeone, Nigel. "La Spirale and La Jeune France: Group Identities." *The Musical Times* 143, no. 1880 (Autumn, 2002): 10 – 36.
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/1004548>.

Nigel Simeone writes about the two overlapping pre-World War II musical groups, "La Spirale," and "La Jeune France." The article includes information about specific concerts these two societies produced, and the different roles they played in the lives of the composers who formed them,

especially Messiaen, Jolivet, and Jean Yves Daniel-Lesur, who were members of both groups.

Simeone, Nigel. "Pièce pour le tombeau de Paul Dukas," *Hyperion*. Accessed April 28th, 2020, https://www.hyperion-records.co.uk/dw.asp?dc=W4496_GBAJY0436608.

Simeone's program note for Steven Osborne's recording of Messiaen works includes information about the origin of the work (the death of Paul Dukas) and the other composers commissioned for the project. A brief note from Messiaen about the work is also included.

Spackman, S.G.F. Review of *The Music of Alexander Goehr*, by Bayan Northcott. *Notes*, Second Series 38, no. 2 (December, 1981) 316 – 317. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/939872>.

Spackman's review of Northcott's book summarizes the major points of the book, and includes several helpful quotations, and several quotable lines, especially the concluding observation about the overuse of reductionist aesthetic terms.

Toop, Richard. "Messiaen/ Goeyvaerts, Fano/ Stockhausen, Boulez." *Perspectives of New Music* 13, no. 1 (Autumn – Winter, 1974): 141 – 169. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/832372>

Richard Toop, a close associate of Karlheinz Stockhausen, provides essential information about five European composers and works closely associated with the origins of total serialism. Toop provides information about the two most-neglected works, by Fano and Goeyvaerts, that form the "missing link" between better known works by Messiaen, and Boulez and Stockhausen.

Walsh, Stephen. *Debussy: A Painter in Sound*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2018.

Walsh's Debussy biography, released during the centenary of the composer's death, combines information about Debussy's life with analysis of the compositions he wrote. Special focus is given to major works, including *Pelléas et Mélisande*, as well as Debussy's failed plans to realize a second operatic work.

Yellow Barn. "George Benjamin: Octet." program notes for Yellow Barn. accessed May 3, 2020, <http://www.yellowbarn.org/page/george-benjamin-octet>.

Program notes accompanying a performance of Benjamin's *Octet* at Yellow Barn comprise mostly biographical information about Benjamin, but concludes with an informative performance note about the work from the composer himself.