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**Olivier Messiaen's *Vingt Regards sur l'enfant-Jésus*:  
Analytical, Religious, and Literary Considerations**

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**Olivier Messiaen's *Vingt Regards sur l'Enfant-Jésus*:**

**Analytical, Religious, and Literary Considerations**

by

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**Treatise**

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Analytical, Religious, and Literary Considerations**

Publication No. \_\_\_\_\_

Cole Philip Burger, D.M.A.

The University of Texas at Austin, 2009

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This document offers performers, scholars, and enthusiasts of Olivier Messiaen's *Vingt Regards sur l'enfant-Jésus* a summary of recent research on both the composer and the composition, while probing new directions for future Messiaen and *Vingt Regards* research. After an opening chapter which contains a brief biography of the composer, Chapter two draws from Messiaen's two theoretical treatises, the *Technique de mon Langage Musicale* and the *Traité de Rythme, de Couleur, et d'Ornithologie* to consider analytical issues surrounding the work. These two documents reveal a wealth of rhythmic and harmonic innovations, as well as a unique connection between sound and color. A particularly significant contribution here is the discussion of *Traité* in the context of the *Vingt Regards*. In addition to relevant context from before and

after the *Vingt Regards*, Chapter three discusses religious considerations surrounding the work, including Biblical references, cyclical themes, other formal and symbolic considerations, and the influence of Dom Columba Marmion's *Christ dans ses mystères*. The cogent summary of the Marmion is this chapter's most notable contribution. Chapter four discusses literary considerations relating to the *Vingt Regards*, including the influences of Messiaen's family, his personal readings and writings, and Maurice Toesca's *Les Douze Regards*, cited in the preface to the music. The chapter also examines the important connection between the *Vingt Regards* and *L'Âme en bourgeon* (The Soul in Bud), a set of poems Messiaen's mother wrote while pregnant with him. The links between the *Vingt Regards* and *L'Âme en bourgeon*, deeply analyzed for what is believed to be the first time, are not only thematic, with their similar subjects of birth and infancy, but also include ties to Messiaen's musical forms, a somewhat overlooked and perhaps somewhat criticized element of his musical language. References to "le 'Cas' Messiaen" are part of the document's efforts to show how the analytical, religious, and literary considerations are all deeply interwoven in both the life of the composer and in this monumental work written at such a challenging historical hour.

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# INTRODUCTION

This treatise examines Olivier Messiaen's *Vingt Regards sur l'enfant-Jésus*, a two-and-a-half hour piano cycle written in Paris between March 23 and September 8, 1944. By the summer of 1944, France had been under German control for roughly four years. Enemy soldiers occupied the streets of Paris. The city was quiet at night from an imposed curfew. Supplies of food and water were inconsistent. There was fighting in the streets and regular cuts to gas and electricity. A former prisoner of war, Messiaen himself faced difficulties reuniting with his family throughout this time.<sup>1</sup> In spite of these conditions, Messiaen stated that in this work he sought a "language of mystical love, at once varied, powerful, and tender, sometimes brutal, in multicolored arrangements."<sup>2</sup> This document summarizes the current research on Messiaen and the *Vingt Regards* and investigates new avenues for the benefit of performers, scholars, and enthusiasts.

Chapter one consists of a brief biography of Messiaen, with details from both his personal and professional life. It also provides necessary cultural, historical, and musical context for the subsequent chapters.

Chapter two focuses on the connections between the *Vingt Regards* and Messiaen's two theoretical treatises, the *Technique de mon Langage Musicale*, published in 1944, and the *Traité de Rythme, de Couleur, et d'Ornithologie*, published

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<sup>1</sup> For more on the general living conditions in Paris in 1944, see especially Jean-Pierre Azema, *From Munich to the Liberation, 1938-1944*, trans. Janet Lloyd (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984) and Christopher Dingle, *The Life of Messiaen* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

<sup>2</sup> Olivier Messiaen, *Vingt Regards sur l'enfant-Jésus*. (Paris: Durand, 1947), 1. Translation by Cole Burger.

posthumously between 1994 and 2002. The chapter discusses some of the rhythmic concepts of *Technique*, including the uses of Hindu rhythms, augmented or diminished rhythms, nonretrogradable rhythms, and rhythmic canons, as well as the ways in which these ideas overlap. The chapter also analyzes the primary melodic innovation of *Technique*—the modes of limited transposition—and shows how these modes overlap. The depth of organization and the original writing style in *Technique* provoked intense reactions from scholars and critics of the day, as part of a controversy known as “le ‘Cas’ Messiaen.” Since *Traité* has been published less than a decade, the chapter includes fresh background and analysis with respect to the *Vingt Regards*, especially rhythmic issues, the Volume II analysis of the *Vingt Regards*, and matters related to the connection between sound and color.

The religious aspects of the *Vingt Regards* are the subject of Chapter three. Before discussing the many Biblical references associated with both the music and the pre-movement commentaries, this chapter provides some historical context for religious issues prior to the *Vingt Regards*. The chapter also examines the four cyclical themes of the *Vingt Regards*, as well as other formal and symbolic considerations with clear religious bases. After a précis of an important primary source—Dom Columba Marmion’s *Christ dans ses mystères*—discussion of religious topics following the *Vingt Regards* conclude the chapter.

Chapter four delves into literary matters. While the details of Messiaen’s musical and spiritual language are widely known, the area of literature is less familiar to

most performers and Messiaen enthusiasts. Studies examining this aspect of Messiaen's life have only recently begun to emerge.<sup>3</sup> This chapter presents erudition about the literary influences in his personal life. This knowledge reveals a connection between these literary stimuli and musical form, a somewhat criticized element of Messiaen's compositional style. The chapter examines Maurice Toesca's *Les Douze Regards*, a work specifically mentioned in the preface to the *Vingt Regards*, as well as another musical composition connected to Toesca's work.

While the text of this treatise may seem to be highly organized and sectional, each area of consideration overlaps with the others, just as they did in Messiaen's actual life and specifically within the *Vingt Regards*. Messiaen himself underlined the importance of scholarly pursuits when he said, "I require the interpreting artist to make a close study of all...the ideas I want to express...even believe in them to a certain extent, in order to be able to convey them to the listener."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> For example, Christopher Dingle and Nigel Simeone, eds, *Olivier Messiaen: Music, Art, and Literature* (Altershot: Ashgate, 2007) and Siglind Bruhn, *Messiaen's Explorations of Love and Death: Musico-poetic Signification in the Tristan Trilogy and Three Related Song Cycles* (Hillsdale, NY: Pendragon Press, 2008).

<sup>4</sup> Almut Rößler, *Contributions to the Spiritual World of Olivier Messiaen, with Original Texts by the Composer*, trans. Barbara Dagg and Nancy Poland (Duisburg: Gilles & Francke, 1986), 28.

## CHAPTER 1: BIOGRAPHY

Olivier Messiaen was born in Avignon, France, in 1908, to Pierre Messiaen and Cécile Sauvage. The family expanded to four with the birth of Olivier's brother, Alain, in 1912. In 1919, the family moved to Paris, where soon afterwards Olivier entered the Conservatoire National de Musique.

By the time he completed his studies in 1930, he had won numerous prizes for piano, organ, history, harmony, and composition. During his time at the Conservatoire, instructors such as Maurice Emmanuel, Paul Dukas, and Marcel Dupré introduced Messiaen to the music and concepts that strongly influenced his subsequent works. In addition to these mentors, Messiaen was influenced by the works of composers Claude Debussy, Béla Bartók, and Igor Stravinsky, as well as plainchant, Greek verse, and Hindu rhythms. Shortly before his graduation, he began serving as the substitute organist at *L'Église de la Sainte-Trinité*, and in 1931 became the chief organist. He held this position for the rest of his life.

Messiaen's presence at the state-financed Conservatoire just after the First World War was significant. During this time, the state grew more active in using the arts to influence French culture and politics.<sup>5</sup> For example, the music history prize Messiaen won in 1924 was an award instituted during the war, not only to highlight the importance of music history, but also to aid the development of French musical style in

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<sup>5</sup> Jane F. Fulcher, *The Composer as Intellectual: Music and Ideology in France 1914-1940* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 10.

the state's desired direction.<sup>6</sup> The passionate and unstable political environment shaped Messiaen's career and should be considered alongside his personal compositional development.<sup>7</sup>

Messiaen married violinist and composer Claire Delbos during the summer of 1932. Their only child, Pascal, was born in 1937. Messiaen left his wife and young son at their home in Petichet in the summer of 1939 when summoned to serve his country. In June 1940 the German army entered France and Messiaen, along with other French soldiers, was soon transferred to a camp near Görlitz on the German-Polish border. During his time as a prisoner of war, he composed the *Quatuor pour la fin du Temps*, for violin, clarinet, cello, and piano. With help from the German soldier Karl-Albert Brüll and three other talented prisoners, the work was debuted in early 1941.<sup>8</sup>

Marcel Dupré's determined efforts finally secured Messiaen's liberation around March 1941.<sup>9</sup> After a short stay in Vichy, Messiaen obtained a position as teacher of harmony at the Conservatoire in Paris in May 1941. His predecessor was Jewish and had decided to leave the country.<sup>10</sup> Pianist and future wife Yvonne Loriod was one of his first students.

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 42. Fulcher also notes that music history was an infamously poorly-taught subject at the Conservatoire at the time.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 5. Fulcher argues more strongly that the "evolution" of composers in this period "*cannot* be explained by 'pure' stylistic development, or sporadic influence from other arts." Emphasis mine.

<sup>8</sup> Rebecca Rischin, *For the End of Time: The Story of the Messiaen Quartet* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003), 9-12.

<sup>9</sup> Nigel Simeone and Peter Hill, *Messiaen* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 103.

<sup>10</sup> Paul McNulty, "Messiaen journey toward Asceticism," in *Messiaen Studies*, ed. Robert Sholl (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 65. Due to the political realities of early 1940s Paris, it is likely that Messiaen's Jewish predecessor may not have left under his own accord. See Paul Webster,

In spite of the wartime conditions, Messiaen composed the *Visions de l'Amen*, a seven-movement work for two pianos. He conceived one part for the brilliant pianist Loriod. They performed the work for the first time in May 1943. Messiaen also dedicated his next major piano composition, the *Vingt Regards*, to Loriod. She went on to début and record many of his works, and Messiaen once said she played his compositions “as if she wrote them herself.”<sup>11</sup>

During the late 1940s, the health of Messiaen's wife Claire began to deteriorate. She was committed to a sanatorium in 1953 and died in 1959.<sup>12</sup> Roughly two years later, Messiaen and Loriod were married, in a private ceremony. Many were not aware of their marriage for some time, in part because they lived apart until 1964.<sup>13</sup>

The *Vingt Regards* were essentially Messiaen's last observably religious composition until the 1960s. Between 1945 and 1964, his compositions included experiments with rhythm (the *Quatre Études de Rythme*), works related to the Tristan myth (notably the *Turangalîla Symphonie*) and others inspired by birdsong (like the *Catalogue d'Oiseaux*). The second of the *Quatre Études de Rythme*, the *Mode de valeurs et d'intensités*, was especially influential to later composers for its serialization, or total control, of parameters other than pitch. All of these works brought him greater worldwide recognition. Messiaen and Loriod traveled to Argentina, Australia, the U.S.,

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“The Vichy Policy on Jewish Deportation,”

[http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/worldwars/genocide/jewish\\_deportation\\_03.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/worldwars/genocide/jewish_deportation_03.shtml).

<sup>11</sup> Olivier Messiaen, *Musique et Couleur* (Paris: Pierre Belfond, 1986), 221. A detailed study of this exceptional woman is long overdue.

<sup>12</sup> Simeone and Hill, *Messiaen*, 209 and 228.

<sup>13</sup> Dingle, *Messiaen*, 158.

Japan, Iran, New Caledonia, and places throughout Europe, often doing ornithological work.<sup>14</sup> One trip to the U.S. was memorialized by the naming of Mount Messiaen in Utah. In 1966, he was appointed Professor of Composition at the Conservatoire in Paris. Students who studied with him include such notable and diverse figures as Pierre Boulez, Karlheinz Stockhausen, Iannis Xenakis, and Gérard Grisey.

Messiaen spent much of the late 1970s and early 1980s completing an opera, *Saint François d'Assise*, a project he kept secret from even his wife for years. He later entrusted her help transcribing and notating parts in preparation for the first performance in 1983. For a time, it was thought the opera would be his final composition, but he recovered both physical strength and musical inspiration, writing works such as the *Petites Esquisses d'Oiseaux* in the mid-1980s. He died in Paris in 1992, and was buried in the churchyard of Saint-Théoffrey near his summer home in Petichet.<sup>15</sup>

Later in his life, Messiaen conducted many interviews with students and biographers.<sup>16</sup> While these publications remain extremely helpful for their firsthand information, they are not without their limits. Since his death in 1992, scholars have critically engaged with these texts in an attempt to create a clearer picture of Messiaen's life. Many personal documents made available by Yvonne Loriod have aided researchers. As of result of these studies, scholars have discovered that portions of

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 160, 166, 233, 180, 201, et al.

<sup>15</sup> Simeone and Hill, *Messiaen*, 383.

<sup>16</sup> For examples of these interviews, see especially the works of Claude Samuel and Almut Roßler cited in the Bibliography.

Messiaen's writings are ambiguous, contain incorrect information, and leave out facts regarding seemingly important elements of his life.<sup>17</sup>

A notable omission for those interested in the *Vingt Regards* is Messiaen's lack of discourse regarding the controversy known as "le 'Cas' Messiaen." Beginning with a negative review of the March 1945 début of the *Vingt Regards* and continuing through September 1946, the debate played out in the major French newspapers *Le Monde* and *Le Figaro*, as well as in musical and religious publications such as *Confluences* and *Contrepoints*.<sup>18</sup> Journalists and composers such as Bernard Gavoty (also known as "Clarendon"), Fred Goldbeck, Guy Bernard-Delapierre, Claude Rostand, Francis Poulenc and Georges Auric debated the merits of both Messiaen and his works.<sup>19</sup> The writings generally praised certain elements of Messiaen's musical language and denounced others.<sup>20</sup> The complex social, political, and musical context of postwar Paris strongly affected the overall discussion.<sup>21</sup> The connection between "le 'Cas' Messiaen" and the analytical, religious, and literary realms of the *Vingt Regards* will be discussed at appropriate points in this document.

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<sup>17</sup> Dingle, *Messiaen*, 1 and 31, and Dingle and Simeone, *Music, Art, and Literature*, xxii. Omissions include details regarding Messiaen's first marriage and other facts surrounding his early years.

<sup>18</sup> Lilise Boswell-Kurc, *Olivier Messiaen's Religious War-time Works and their Controversial Reception in France (1941-1946)* (Ph.D. diss., New York University, 2001), 2-30.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Goldbeck, for example, states that Messiaen "claims for his music a place in the first rank," then excoriates the pre-movement commentaries for the *Vingt Regards*, saying that "In comparison, Wagner is humble and inconspicuous..." Ibid., 6.

<sup>21</sup> Additionally, Messiaen was not widely known before his time as a prisoner of war. His music, writings, and teaching of the mid-1940s brought him significantly increased recognition. This prominence led both Yvonne Loriod and composer/critic Henri Barraud to assert that some of the criticism came from jealousy. Ibid., 149-151.

## CHAPTER 2: ANALYTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Messiaen's first theoretical treatise, the *Technique de mon Langage Musicale*, was published just before Messiaen composed the *Vingt Regards* in 1944. Using examples from the *Vingt Regards*, this chapter examines rhythmic and melodic concepts found in *Technique*, including Hindu rhythms, augmented or diminished rhythms, nonretrogradable rhythms, rhythmic canons, and modes of limited transposition.

As Messiaen's musical language and international stature as composer and teacher developed over the subsequent years, Messiaen wrote his second theoretical document, the seven-volume *Traité de Rythme, de Couleur, et d'Ornithologie*. Yvonne Loriod and Messiaen student Alain Louvier completed it according to Messiaen's intentions in 2002.<sup>22</sup> The *Traité* portion of this chapter concentrates on the first two elements of the title—rhythm and color—in addition to examining Messiaen's analysis of the *Vingt Regards* in Volume II of *Traité*.

### TECHNIQUE: INTRODUCTION

Messiaen began work on *Technique* in the early 1940s, finalizing portions of it in the summer of 1942. It is dedicated to Guy Bernard-Delapierre, a man Messiaen first met while a prisoner of war. Alphonse Leduc, the third company contacted by Messiaen, agreed to publish it in the spring of 1944 only after the composer provided a list of potential buyers—a fact that illustrates both the publisher's uneasiness about the

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<sup>22</sup> Andrew Shenton, "Observations on time in Olivier Messiaen's *Traité*," in *Music, Art, and Literature*, 173.

project and the importance of the work to Messiaen.<sup>23</sup> The treatise comes in two volumes—one with text and the other with musical examples, which Messiaen draws primarily from his own compositions.<sup>24</sup> In addition to the rhythmic and melodic issues discussed below, Messiaen also briefly discusses formal and harmonic subjects, partly in the context of the influence of plainchant.<sup>25</sup>

In the Introduction to *Technique*, Messiaen states his motivation for writing: “...several persons have vigorously either criticized or praised me, and always wrongly and for things I [have] not done. On the other hand, some students particularly eager for novelty have asked me numerous questions relative to my musical language, and I decided to write this little ‘theory.’”<sup>26</sup> The origin of *Technique* may also be related to Messiaen’s identity as a French organist and composer. Both Vincent d’Indy (1902) and Marcel Dupré (1925) wrote theoretical treatises detailing their compositional approaches.<sup>27</sup> Messiaen admired both men and their documents, and referenced them in *Technique*.<sup>28</sup> Rather than a dry discourse, *Technique* is unique among theoretical treatises for its strange and religiously-tinged prose. In the first chapter, Messiaen presents an important idea he calls the “*charm of impossibilities*...This charm, at once

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<sup>23</sup> Simeone and Hill, *Messiaen*, 120.

<sup>24</sup> Olivier Messiaen, *The Technique of My Musical Language*, trans. John Satterfield (Paris: Leduc, 1956), 1:7.

<sup>25</sup> More about the influence of plainchant will be discussed with Messiaen’s analysis of the *Vingt Regards* in *Traité* later in this chapter, as well as in Chapter three.

<sup>26</sup> Messiaen, *Technique*, 1:7.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 12, and Boswell-Kurc, *Controversial Reception*, 481.

<sup>28</sup> Messiaen, *Technique*, 1:35.

voluptuous and contemplative, resides particularly in certain mathematical impossibilities of the modal and rhythmic domains...”<sup>29</sup>

### *TECHNIQUE*: RHYTHMIC TOPICS

#### HINDU RHYTHMS

Chapter two of *Technique* contains a very brief mention of Hindu rhythm.

Çârṅgadeva, a thirteenth-century Hindu theorist, collected a table of a hundred and twenty decî-tâlas, or Hindu modes.<sup>30</sup> Number 93 of these is Râgavardhana.<sup>31</sup> Messiaen offers no reason as to why he chose this particular decî-tâla, though he references it frequently throughout *Technique*.

Example 2.1 Râgavardhana



Then, curiously, Messiaen completely alters this rhythm. First he reverses it, and then he turns the dotted half note into three quarter notes.

Example 2.2 Altered Râgavardhana



<sup>29</sup>Ibid., 13. Emphasis Messiaen's.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., 14. The table may be found in the Appendix of Robert S. Johnson, *Messiaen* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975).

<sup>31</sup> Though he did not grasp a translation from the Sanskrit at this time, in a later composition Messiaen described râgavardhana as “the rhythm that enlivens the melody.” From Andrew Shenton, *Olivier Messiaen's System of Signs: Notes Toward Understanding His Music* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), 56.



six, creating a dotted quarter note. The subsequent eighth note from the first bar is multiplied instead by four to create a half note, for an inexact augmentation.

Example 2.4 *L'Échange*, 11-4-1 through 4



## NONRETROGRADABLE RHYTHMS

Nonretrogradable rhythms—the subject of Chapter five—are the same read left to right (“in time”) or right to left (“backwards in time”). This symmetry suggests an “abolition of time.”<sup>35</sup> They exemplify Messiaen’s charm of impossibilities in that the listener will perceive a “certain unity of movement in the symmetry...” Messiaen hopes “[this] will lead...progressively to [a] sort of *theological rainbow*.”<sup>36</sup>

In the *Vingt Regards*, the symmetrical rhythms that contain a middle value often result in rhythmic examples with prime numbers of notes, highlighting Messiaen’s affinity for prime numbers. An example of this occurs in the opening measure of the *Regard du temps*, where an eighth is followed by a sixteenth, then another eighth.

<sup>35</sup> Messiaen, *Technique*, 61.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 20-21.

Example 2.5 *Regard du temps*, 55-1-1



The rhythmic values of the notes throughout the bottom stave of *La parole toute-puissante* are nonretrogradable—values of three, five, eight, five, and then three sixteenth notes, followed by seven sixteenth notes of rest.

Example 2.6 *La Parole Toute-Puissante*, 84-3-1 through 4

In this example from *Noël*, the right hand features nonretrogradable rhythms, the first measure with larger values in the middle, the second with smaller.

Example 2.7 *Noël*, 93-2-2&3



## RHYTHMIC CANONS

Messiaen introduces rhythmic canons in Chapter six. As expected, the lead voice donates only its rhythm to the subsequent strands. A three-voice example occurs throughout portions of the *Regard des Anges*. The lower voices are truncated so that the three strands can end at the same time.

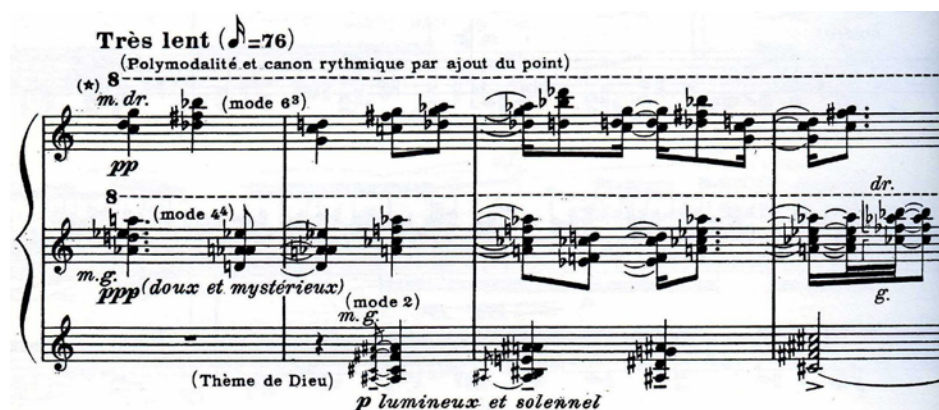
Example 2.8 *Regard des Anges*, 98-4-2 through 4 and 99-1-1 through 3



The canon “by the addition of the dot” is also common in the *Vingt Regards*.<sup>37</sup>

It appears in the *Regard du Fils sur le Fils*. The top stave begins with a quarter note, while the middle begins with a quarter note, plus a dot.

Example 2.9 *Regard du Fils sur le Fils*, 18-1-1 through 4



## AMALGAMATIONS

Though Messiaen discusses each rhythmic concept separately in *Technique*, they frequently overlap in his music, resulting in greater compositional diversity. This practice occurs not only in the *Vingt Regards*, but also throughout Messiaen’s œuvre. A simple case has already been observed, since a portion of the altered *râgavardhana* rhythm is nonretrogradable. The next two examples show how Messiaen combines the rhythmic canon with other rhythmic topics.

A rhythmic canon appears early in the *Regard du temps*, with three voices each beginning two sixteenth notes after the previous. Messiaen truncates the two lower ones so that all of them end together.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 25.

Example 2.10a: Appearance 1: *Regard du temps*, 55-1-2&3 and 55-2-1 through 3

The image shows a musical score for a piece titled "16<sup>a</sup> (Canon rythmique)". The score is written for three staves: Treble, Alto, and Bass. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The time signature is 16th century notation, with a common time signature "C" and a "16<sup>a</sup> bassa" marking. The score is divided into five measures. The first measure is marked "pp" (pianissimo). The second measure is marked "m. dr." (moderato) and "pp". The third measure is marked "dr." (diminuto) and "m. g." (moderato). The fourth measure is marked "m. g.". The fifth measure is marked "pp". The score is enclosed in a dashed box. There is a small asterisk at the bottom right of the score.

The first three notes of the subsequent returns of this material are rhythmically related, combining the rhythmic canon concept with the augmented or diminished rhythm idea. The second appearance is a diminution by  $\frac{1}{4}$  (the opening half note is shortened to a dotted quarter note), the third is an augmentation by  $\frac{1}{4}$  (the opening half note is increased to a half note plus an eighth), the fourth is extended in overall length, and the fifth and final appearance is a repeat of the opening rhythmic values.

Example 2.10b Appearance 2: *Regard du temps*, 55-3-1 through 3

This musical score is for Example 2.10b, Appearance 2 of 'Regard du temps', measures 55-3-1 through 3. It is written for three staves: Treble, Alto, and Bass. The key signature has two sharps (F# and C#), and the time signature is 3/4. The score is marked with a dashed line at the top labeled '16<sup>a</sup>'. The Treble staff begins with a *pp* dynamic. The Alto staff has markings for *dr.* and *pp* in the first measure, and *g.* in the second and third measures. The Bass staff is marked *pp* and includes the instruction '16<sup>a</sup> bassa' below the first measure. The piece concludes with a double bar line and an asterisk.

Example 2.10c: Appearance 3: *Regard du temps*, 56-1-2 through 4 and 56-2-1&2

This musical score is for Example 2.10c, Appearance 3 of 'Regard du temps', measures 56-1-2 through 4 and 56-2-1&2. It is written for three staves: Treble, Alto, and Bass. The key signature has two sharps (F# and C#), and the time signature is 3/4. The score is marked with a dashed line at the top labeled '16<sup>a</sup> (Canc. a rythmique)'. The Treble staff begins with a *pp* dynamic. The Alto staff has markings for *m. dr.* and *pp* in the first measure, and *dr.* and *m. g.* in the third measure. The Bass staff is marked *pp* and includes the instruction '16<sup>a</sup> bassa' below the first measure. The piece concludes with a double bar line and an asterisk.

Example 2:10d: Appearance 4: *Regard du temps*, 56-3-2 through 4, 56-4-1 through 4, & 57-1-1 through 4

The image displays three staves of musical notation, likely for a piano and voice or another instrument. The notation is in a key with one sharp (F#) and a common time signature (C). The first staff is labeled '16<sup>a</sup>' and 'pp' (pianissimo). It features a melody with a 'dr.' (drone) marking. The second staff is labeled '16<sup>a</sup> bassa' and 'pp'. It features a melody with a 'dr.' marking. The third staff is labeled '16<sup>a</sup> bassa' and 'pp'. It features a melody with a 'dr.' marking. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

Example 2:10e: Appearance 5: *Regard du temps*, 57-3-1 through 3 and 57-4-1&2



A second rhythmic canon amalgamation occurs in *Par Lui tout a été fait*. Like the previous example, this rhythmic canon also features three voices, each beginning two sixteenth notes after the previous one. The values of each note, in number of sixteenth notes, are 3-5-8-5-3, 4-3-7-3-4, 2-2-3-5-3-2-2. The middle strand cuts out the last 2, and the bottom one cuts out the last two 2s. The example clearly contains nonretrogradable sections, but is also entirely nonretrogradable when added to music later in the movement. The combination of the two rhythmic canons forms a remarkable and lengthy nonretrogradable rhythm.

Example 2.11a: Appearance 1: *Par Lui tout a été fait*, 26-1-1 through 4 and 26-2-1 through 4

(Strette du sujet, canon de rythmes non rétrogradables)

The image shows a musical score for piano accompaniment. It consists of two systems of staves. The first system has a treble and bass staff. The treble staff is marked with 'marcato' and 'p'. The bass staff is marked with 'legato' and 'marcato f'. The second system continues the musical notation with similar markings.

Example 2.11b: Appearance 2: *Par Lui tout a été fait*, 34-3-2&3, 34-4-1 through 4, & 34-5-1&2

The image shows a musical score for piano accompaniment. It consists of two systems of staves. The first system has a treble and bass staff. The treble staff is marked with 'marcato' and 'p'. The bass staff is marked with 'legato' and 'marcato'. The second system continues the musical notation with similar markings.

Amalgamation of rhythmic techniques is a common part of Messiaen's overall compositional evolution. Throughout his output, a rhythmic invention would be discovered, used primitively, then applied substantially, even into the melodic and harmonic realms, before being abandoned or giving way to a more complex procedure.<sup>38</sup>

### *TECHNIQUE: MELODIC TOPICS*

#### MODES OF LIMITED TRANSPOSITION

Modes of limited transposition are the harmonic equivalent of nonretrogradable rhythms. These modes appear throughout Messiaen's entire compositional career.<sup>39</sup> Messiaen finds beauty in their ability to be "at once in the atmosphere of several tonalities, without polytonality, the composer being free to give predominance to one of the tonalities or to leave the tonal impression unsettled."<sup>40</sup> Messiaen forms the modes by connecting several pitch collections symmetrically. The last note of one segment is always the first note of the following segment. At the end of a certain number of chromatic transpositions, the mode returns to its original pitches.<sup>41</sup> Their limited transpositions correspond with the charm of impossibilities Messiaen introduces at the beginning of his treatise.

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<sup>38</sup> Gareth Healey describes this evolution with regard to *personnages rythmiques* (rhythmic characters) in "Messiaen and the Concept of *Personnages*," *Tempo* 58 (October 2004): 17.

<sup>39</sup> Jonathan W. Bernard, "Messiaen's Synaesthesia: The Correspondence Between Color and Sound Structure in His Music," *Music Perception* 4 (Fall 1986): 47.

<sup>40</sup> Shenton, *Signs*, 49. The quote is from Messiaen, *Technique*, 58.

<sup>41</sup> Messiaen, *Technique*, 58-59.

Messiaen describes seven distinct modes. In *Technique*, he displays them both melodically and as a chain of chords, since his music frequently uses them in both manners. The number of possible transpositions increases throughout, from the two versions of Mode 1 to the six of Modes 4 to 7.<sup>42</sup>

The first mode of limited transposition (i.e. Mode 1) is equivalent to the whole-tone scale. It is the least common mode in the *Vingt Regards*, reflecting Messiaen's thought that Debussy and Dukas "made such remarkable use of it that there is nothing more to add."<sup>43</sup> There are two unique transpositions of Mode 1.

The component interval expands to a minor third in Mode 2, the most common mode in the *Vingt Regards*. It consists of four overlapping half step whole step segments. The notes add up to an octatonic scale. There are three unique transpositions of Mode 2. An important example of Mode 2 will be included in the next chapter.<sup>44</sup>

The base interval increases to a major third in Mode 3, which can be thought of as three interlocking augmented triads. Mode 3 consists of three overlapping segments, each containing a whole step followed by two half steps. The notes add up to a scale comprising three of the four unique augmented triads. There are four unique transpositions of Mode 3, the fourth of which (Eb F F# G A Bb B C# D) is employed in the right hand at the outset of the *Regard du silence*.

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<sup>42</sup> See Figures 2.15 and 2.16 for concise presentations of the modes.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 60.

<sup>44</sup> See Figures 3.1 and 3.2.

Example 2.12 *Regard du silence*, 128-1-1 through 3 and 128-2-1&2

**Très modéré** (♩=66)  
(Canon rythmique par ajout du point)

*PIANO* *ppp impalpable*

(mode 3<sup>4</sup>)

(mode 4<sup>4</sup>)

*Red.* \*

*Red.*

*etc.*

The left hand in the *Très modéré* section of *Noël* contains the first transposition of Mode 3 (C D Eb E F# G Ab Bb B).

Example 2.13 *Noël*, 93-2-1 through 4 and 93-3-1 through 3

**Très modéré** (♩=63)

*p* *tendre*  
*rubato*

Modes 4 through 7 each contain two overlapping segments, making them transposable six times. Thus, all of them have an axis of symmetry at F# in their first transposition. Messiaen discusses them together, stating that “one cannot find other” modes of limited transposition, since “all other combinations dividing the octave into two symmetrical groups must...commence the scales of modes 4-7 upon other degrees than the first...or form arpeggios of classified chords; or form truncated modes 2 or 5...”<sup>45</sup>

In Mode 4 each segment has two half steps, then a minor third, and then a half step. Mode 4 can be found in its fourth transposition in both the middle layer of the opening of the *Regard du Fils sur le Fils* (Example 2.12) and the left hand of the opening of the *Regard du silence* (Example 2.9) (D# E F G# A A# B D D#).

Mode 5 (Example 2.14) contains two segments, each consisting of a half step, major third, and another half step.<sup>46</sup>

Example 2.14 Mode 5



Like Mode 1, it is very uncommon in the *Vingt Regards*, for reasons suggested later.<sup>47</sup>

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 61. It turns out that other possibilities exist. See Alan Forte, *The Structure of Atonal Music* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977).

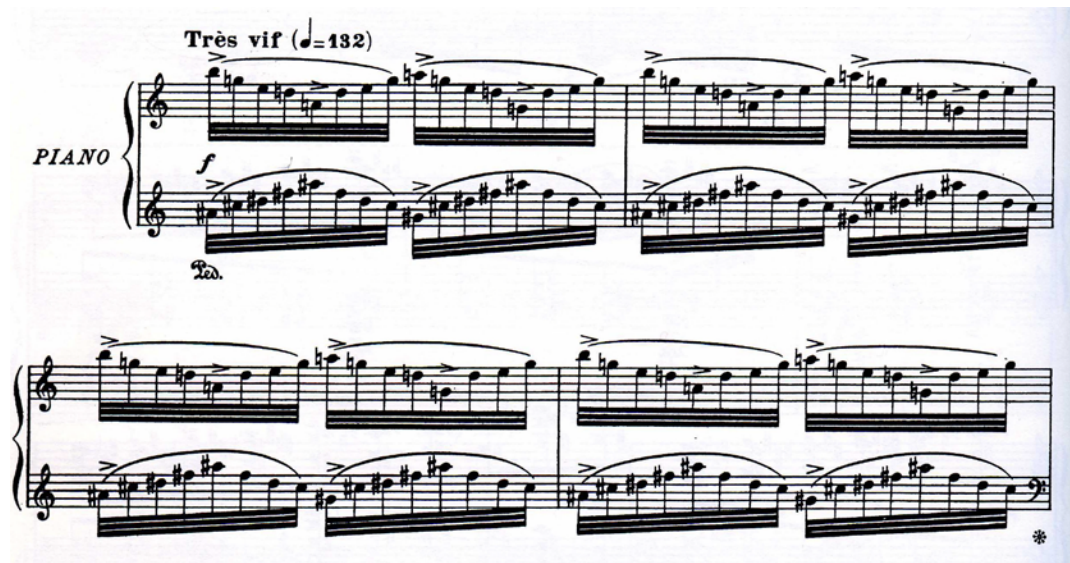
<sup>46</sup> This example, as well as Examples 2.16-2.20, are reproduced by authorization of Alphonse Leduc; owner and publisher, Paris, France.

<sup>47</sup> Mode 5's appearance in movement eighteen is argued for in David Rogosin, *Aspects of Structure in Olivier Messiaen's Vingt Regards sur l'enfant-Jésus* (Ph.D. diss, University of British Columbia, 1996), 119, and Siglind Bruhn argues for it in movement sixteen in *Images and Ideas in Modern French Piano*

The segments in Mode 6 each contain two whole steps, then two half steps. In other words, it is the opening tetrachord of two major keys a tritone apart. The top stave at the opening of the fifth movement (Example 2.9) contains Mode 6 in its third transposition (D E F# G Ab Bb C Db).

The segments in Mode 7 have three consecutive half steps, then a whole step, then a half step. The opening of the *Regard des Anges* uses Mode 7 in its second transposition. (C# D D# E F# G Ab A Bb C)

Example 2.15 *Regard des Anges*, 98-1-1&2 and 98-2-1&2



## MODAL OVERLAPPING

The modes of limited transposition present possibilities for amalgamation just as Messiaen's rhythmic topics did earlier. For instance, while Messiaen introduces seven

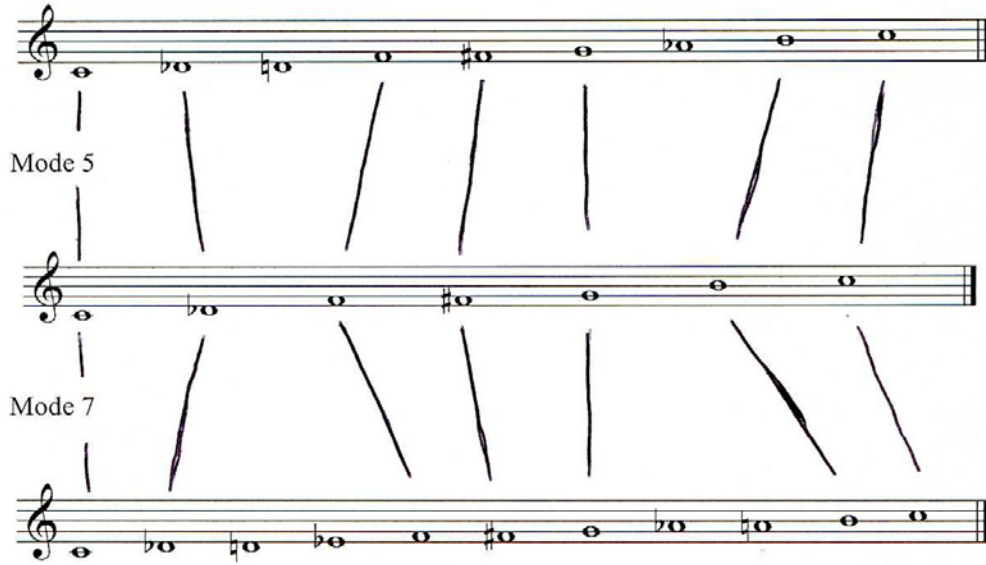
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*Music: The Extra-Musical Subtext in Piano Works by Ravel, Debussy, and Messiaen* (Stuyvesant, NY: Pendragon Press, 1997), 392. I have not included either example here for the reason described later in this chapter.

modes of limited transposition, certain intersections occur. Example 2.16 displays Modes 4, 5, and 7 in their first transposition.

Example 2.16 Modal Overlapping, Modes 4, 5, and 7

Mode 4



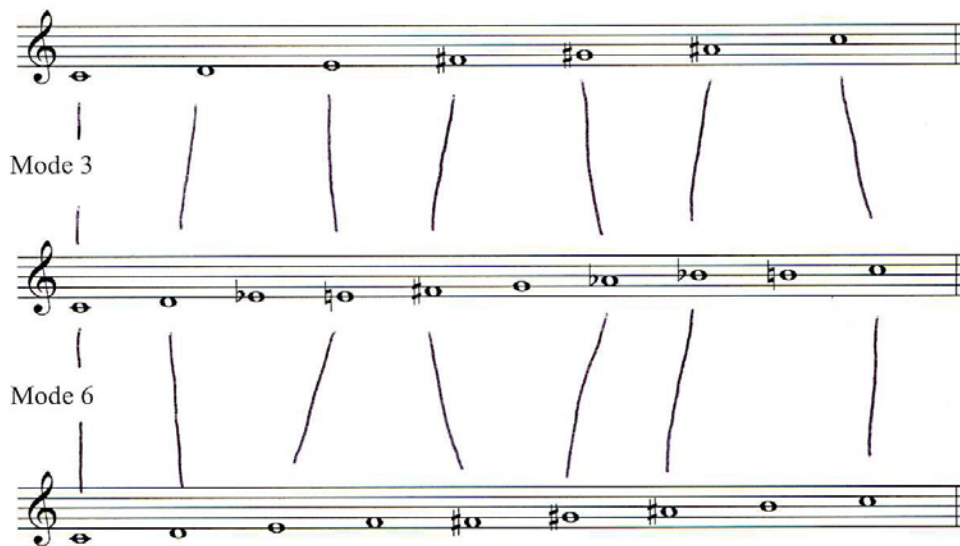
As indicated, Mode 5 is contained within Modes 4 and 7.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>48</sup> Thus, examples said to be in Mode 5 can be argued to be in other modes. Bruhn attaches symbolic weight to Mode 5. See Chapter 3 for more symbolic considerations.

Additionally, Mode 1 is contained within Modes 3 and 6.

Example 2.17 Modal Overlapping, Modes 1, 3, and 6

Mode 1



Thus, only four of Messiaen's seven modes are truly unique: Modes 2, 3, 4, and 6.<sup>49</sup>

Messiaen notes only the overlap between Modes 4 and 5 in *Technique*, including it only because it relates to his discussion of Melodic Development by Elimination.<sup>50</sup>

With all of this modal overlapping, the modes of limited transposition as explained in *Technique* can be seen as “unordered pitch-class set[s],” especially given their frequent presentation as chords.<sup>51</sup> The lack of a specific sequence gives Messiaen more possibilities, making them less limited than their title suggests. If they are

<sup>49</sup> Alan Forte, “Messiaen's Chords,” in *Music, Art, and Literature*, 93.

<sup>50</sup> Messiaen, *Technique*, 62 and 35.

<sup>51</sup> Forte, “Messiaen's Chords,” 94.

unordered, more overlapping is present, since segments of one mode appear in others.<sup>52</sup>

The last three chapters of *Technique* outline further possibilities surrounding the modes of limited transposition—modulation between themselves and major tonalities, as well as polymodality, where two or more modes are heard simultaneously. An example of polymodality occurs at the opening of the *Regard du silence* (Example 2.12). The right hand uses Mode 3 in the fourth transposition, while the left hand uses mode 4 in the fourth transposition.

#### CONTEXT BETWEEN *TECHNIQUE* AND *TRAITÉ*

The reaction to *Technique* has varied in the years since its completion. While recent biographers Nigel Simeone, Peter Hill, and Christopher Dingle have praised *Technique* for its revealing nature and fascinating approach to musical language, *Technique* was also part of the criticisms of “le ‘Cas’ Messiaen.”<sup>53</sup> Detractors took issue with the quirky, sometimes verbose mixture of analysis and religion found in *Technique*. The pundits also attacked the utility of the work and the nature of Messiaen’s compositional methods, which they found to be rigid, algebraic, and systematic to the point of stagnation. Composer Francis Poulenc’s comment artfully summarizes this area of criticism: “the only useful recipes, in my opinion, are those for

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Simeone and Hill, *Messiaen*, 136, and Dingle, *Messiaen*, 88.

cooking.”<sup>54</sup> The postwar Parisian societal trend towards anti-systematization weighed heavily on these critiques.<sup>55</sup>

Around the same time as “le ‘Cas’ Messiaen,” composer and theorist René Leibowitz (1913-1972) also attacked *Technique* for its separate discussion of individual parameters.<sup>56</sup> Leibowitz taught privately in Paris after the war and sought to advance the music of the Second Viennese School. He saw serialism as the “logical outcome of Romanticism” and strongly argued for a “singular historical lineage.”<sup>57</sup> Not surprisingly then, Leibowitz also disapproved of the unique musical language Messiaen explained in *Technique*.

Both Leibowitz and Messiaen taught at the *Internationale Fereinkurse für Neue Musik* in Darmstadt, Germany, during the late 1940s.<sup>58</sup> Messiaen’s *Mode de valeurs*, presented at Darmstadt in 1951, was extremely influential in the development of total serialism.<sup>59</sup> The pointillism and control of parameters other than pitch in *Mode de valeurs* suggests an approach to serialism more in line with Webern than Schoenberg.<sup>60</sup>

The apparent preference for Webern evident in *Mode de valeurs* implies another difference between Messiaen and Leibowitz. Leibowitz seemed to favor Schoenberg

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<sup>54</sup> Boswell-Kurc, *Controversial Reception*, 71. This portion of the paragraph draws from Ibid., 60-75. The critiques of *Technique*, however valid, were by no means organized or free from strange contradictions.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 107.

<sup>56</sup> McNulty, “Messiaen’s journey,” 69.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 68.

<sup>58</sup> Elliott Antokoletz, *Twentieth-Century Music* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1998), 369.

<sup>59</sup> McNulty, “Messiaen’s journey,” 63.

<sup>60</sup> Antokoletz, *Twentieth-Century Music*, 370-371.

the most, organizing and conducting performances in Paris of Schoenberg's op. 26

*Wind Quintet* in 1944 and an 'Hommage à Schoenberg' in 1947.<sup>61</sup>

Leibowitz's presence in Paris and Darmstadt also affected Messiaen's students. Messiaen instructed a determined and progressive group of musicians known as "les flèches" (the arrows).<sup>62</sup> These students stimulated Messiaen to learn more about music of the day. This class took place outside the state-sponsored Conservatoire, in part to allow Messiaen to lecture on the developments of serial technique.<sup>63</sup> While Messiaen possessed some knowledge of the Second Viennese School at that time, he may not have had access to portions of Webern's output in the late 1940s.<sup>64</sup> Searching for more on serialism, some of Messiaen's students—most notably Boulez—went to study with Leibowitz.<sup>65</sup> Leibowitz's connections to Messiaen provide both an example of the complex external factors affecting Messiaen's musical evolution, and a segue to the discussion of Messiaen's second theoretical treatise, the *Traité de Rythme, de Couleur, et d'Ornithologie*.

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<sup>61</sup> McNulty, "Messiaen's journey," 66-67.

<sup>62</sup> Paul Griffiths, "Olivier Messiaen," <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/18497>.

<sup>63</sup> Griffiths' article, cited above, also suggests "academic rigidity" at the Conservatoire. The mid-1930s Conservatoire education of Henri Dutilleux (b. 1916) "did not feature much contemporary music and lacked an analysis class." From Caroline Potter, "Henri Dutilleux," <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/08428>. McNulty also implies that Leibowitz would not have been able to lecture on serial technique, had he taught at the Conservatoire. McNulty, "Messiaen's journey," 67.

<sup>64</sup> McNulty, "Messiaen's Journey," 66.

<sup>65</sup> Boulez's change of instructors was short-lived, finding Leibowitz "narrow and stupid." Ibid., 67.

## TRAITÉ: INTRODUCTION

Had he lived long enough to study it, Leibowitz likely would have also criticized *Traité* as he did *Technique*. Though Messiaen's brief discourse on serialism in *Traité* uses Leibowitz's terminology for classifying tone rows, Messiaen focuses on examples from Webern, not Schoenberg. Furthermore, Messiaen also offers an unusually weak critique of Schoenberg's dodecaphonic *Klavierstücke*, op. 33a.<sup>66</sup>

Messiaen's thoughts on serialism appear in Volume III of *Traité*. The rest of that volume, along with the first two of *Traité*, addresses predominantly rhythmic subjects. Volume IV contains discussions regarding plainchant. Volume V is devoted primarily to birdsong, Volume VI to Debussy, and Volume VII focuses on harmonic and color issues. Throughout the seven volumes, there are also analyses of specific works by Messiaen and others.

While the two volumes of *Technique* add up to around 150 pages, the entire *Traité* contains roughly 3,000 pages. It is one of the largest treatises ever written in the Western world and an outstanding guide to Messiaen's musical philosophy.<sup>67</sup> *Traité* consists primarily of lecture notes and other items not meant for formal presentation.<sup>68</sup> As previously stated, Messiaen did not write another major explicitly religious composition after the *Vingt Regards* until the 1960s. Messiaen's works following the *Vingt Regards* include pieces inspired by birdsong, such as the *Catalogue d'oiseaux*. More notable at this point are his experiments with rhythm, since he began working on

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<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 67.

<sup>67</sup> Boivin, "Musical Analysis," 139.

<sup>68</sup> Forte, "Messiaen's Chords," 91.

*Traité* around the same time he completed the *Quatre Études de Rythme*. In fact, Messiaen initially conceived *Traité* as a text solely on rhythm.<sup>69</sup>

The remainder of this chapter explains the connection between *Traité* and the *Vingt Regards*. Volume II contains the most substantial and direct information about the *Vingt Regards*. The rhythmic considerations of this volume use many examples from the composition. There is also a separate analysis which derives from notes Messiaen used for a course he taught at the Musikhochschule in Saarbrücken in 1954.<sup>70</sup> In addition to the specific insights it provides about the *Vingt Regards*, the exegesis reveals a glimpse of Messiaen the teacher. The chapter finishes with an examination of the relationship between sound and color, drawn from Volume VII of *Traité*.

#### TRAITÉ: RHYTHM

Volume II features more comprehensive discourses on many of the rhythmic topics discussed in *Technique*, including the topics described earlier in this chapter. Notably, Messiaen explains in much greater detail the influence of Hindu rhythms. To the discussion of râgavardhana in *Technique*, Messiaen adds two new Hindu rhythms, candrakalâ and lakṣmîṇa.<sup>71</sup> Messiaen alters candrakalâ by cutting the rhythmic values in half, resulting in the rhythm shown in Example 2.18.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Shenton, "Observations on time," in *Music, Art, and Literature*, 175.

<sup>70</sup> Jennifer Donelson, *Musical Technique and Symbolism in Noël from Olivier Messiaen's Vingt Regards sur l'enfant-Jésus: A Defense of Messiaen's Words and Music* (DMA diss., University of Nebraska, 2008), 5.

<sup>71</sup> Olivier Messiaen, *Traité de rythme, couleur, et d'ornithologie* (Paris: Leduc, 1994), 2:62. Messiaen later described candrakalâ and lakṣmîṇa as "symbolizing beauty and peace." From Shenton, *Signs*, 56.

<sup>72</sup> Figures 2.18-2.20 reproduced by authorization of Alphonse Leduc; owner and publisher, Paris, France.

### Example 2.19 Altered Lakṣmīṣa Rhythm



### Example 2.20 Messiaen's "Rhythmic Signature"



<sup>73</sup> Bruhn, *Messiaen's Contemplations of Covenant and Incarnation: Musical Symbols of Faith in the Two Great Piano Cycles of the 1940s* (Hillsdale, NY: Pendragon Press, 2007), 53. This rhythm also appears in Messiaen, *Technique*, 2:50.

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## TRAITÉ: VINGT REGARDS ANALYSIS

Rather than the clear organization by compositional device seen in *Technique*, the *Vingt Regards* explanation in Volume II of *Traité* flows from movement to movement, covering analytical, religious, and literary issues Messiaen thought salient. One possible explanation for this stylistic difference lies in Jean Boivin's observation that Messiaen's analytical background is characteristic of an inquisitive and erudite French musician of the day, and his teaching would have reflected this.<sup>75</sup> Despite many years as an enthusiastic instructor of analysis, Messiaen was at his core a composer, and as his music and life took influences from a variety of sources, so did his teaching.

The analysis reinforces the connection described earlier between the *Vingt Regards* and concepts in *Technique*. This analysis is likely included within Volume II because discussions of rhythmic issues are prominent. The *Vingt Regards* analysis continues the thorough discourse of altered Hindu rhythms, both within and outside the "rhythmic signature."<sup>76</sup> Messiaen also illustrates the appearance of nonretrogradable rhythms and modes of limited transposition in various movements of the *Vingt Regards*.<sup>77</sup> The appearance of modes 2, 3, 4, and 6 exclusively may suggest that Messiaen had caught on to the modal overlapping discussed earlier in this chapter.<sup>78</sup> Messiaen also describes the influence of plainchant on specific portions of the *Vingt*

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<sup>75</sup> Boivin, "Musical Analysis," 144.

<sup>76</sup> For an example of Hindu rhythms outside his "rhythmic signature," see the discussion of movement IX. Messiaen, *Traité*, 2:460.

<sup>77</sup> For examples of nonretrogradable rhythms, see 26-3-1 through 5 (movement VI). *Ibid.*, 446. For examples of modes in the *Vingt Regards*, see Messiaen's discussion of movement IV. *Ibid.*, 441.

<sup>78</sup> Further confirmation that he knew of this is evident in Messiaen, *Traité*, 7:107.

*Regards*. For example, the birdsong figurations in the fifth movement resemble both the “climacus resupinus” and the “porrectus” figures of Gregorian chant.<sup>79</sup>

Messiaen’s analysis of the *Vingt Regards* also elucidates musical issues not seen in *Technique*. Messiaen shows a thorough knowledge of music history, demonstrating how elements of the *Vingt Regards* resemble or are influenced by, among others, Chopin, Liszt, and Falla.<sup>80</sup> He also alludes to astronomy and nature, the latter when referring to the stalactite figures in the right hand at the opening of the eleventh movement, and the former when mentioning the effects of contrasting lights on his conception of the sixteenth movement.<sup>81</sup> Messiaen twice refers to the monody in *La Parole Toute-Puissante* as deriving from a Korean motive he calls “Mân tâiyep,” though he offers no explanation as to where he first obtained it.<sup>82</sup> In Volume VII of *Traité*, Messiaen discusses Chinese, Hindu, Greek, and plainchant modes, the major tonality, and the twelve-tone series. There is also a chapter on folk melodies from around the world, including China and Japan, which is dated from around the same time as the *Vingt Regards* analysis, though it offers no further clarification on Korea or the source of the aforementioned motive.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Messiaen, *Traité*, 2:444-445. See pg. 464-5 for the influence of plainchant on the tenth movement.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., 468, 469, 460.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., 449 (astronomy), 471 (movement 11), 480-1 (movement 16).

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., 55 and 472 (“de structure coréenne”). “Mân tâiyep,” or “Man Dae Yeop,” is considered to be the oldest kagok (or gagok) melody, dating from the fifteenth century. Kagok, or “lyric song,” is a traditional Korean vocal form. For more information, see Coralie Rockwell, *Kagok: A Traditional Korean Vocal Form* (Providence: Asian Music Publishers, 1972): 1-17. I am deeply grateful to Dr. Josh Pilzer for this information.

<sup>83</sup> Chapter 2 of Volume VII is from before 1956, and the *Vingt Regards* analysis is from 1954—both within ten years of the composition of the *Vingt Regards*.

## TRAITÉ: SOUND AND COLOR

Volume VII of *Traité*, a “hymn to color and light,” focuses heavily on the connections between sound and color.<sup>84</sup> Some scholars have hypothesized Messiaen had a neurological condition known as synaesthesia, perhaps heightened by his depraved circumstances as a prisoner of war. Messiaen’s own thoughts on this seem to have varied during his life.<sup>85</sup> By the time of *Traité*, however, he believed his connection between sound and color was more intellectual than physical.<sup>86</sup> The relationship between sound and color was a vital aspect of Messiaen’s compositional language.<sup>87</sup>

The connection between sound and color derives, in part, from Messiaen’s relationship to the other arts. Messiaen mentions colorful literary sources, such as poets Charles Baudelaire and Rainier Maria Rilke, as well as the book of Revelation in the Bible.<sup>88</sup> He compares the presence of overtones in a single note to the experience of seeing a color’s complement within it.<sup>89</sup> The beauty of the stained glass windows of Chartres, Bourges, and especially Saint Chapelle awed Messiaen throughout his life. Specific painters Messiaen praises in *Traité* include Swiss painter and synaesthetic

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<sup>84</sup> Messiaen, *Traité*, 7:XIII.

<sup>85</sup> For an early statement on the issue, see Bernard, “Messiaen’s Synaesthesia,” 41. For a later statement, see Dingle, *Messiaen*, 162.

<sup>86</sup> Messiaen, *Traité*, 7: 97. “Il s’agit seulement d’une vision intérieure, d’un œil de l’esprit.” (“It acts only as an inward vision, like an eye into the spirit.”) Some scholars make no distinction between the neurological condition and something only intellectual, such as Sander van Maas in “Forms of Love: Messiaen’s Aesthetics of *éblouissement*”, in *Messiaen Studies*, ed. Robert Sholl, 81.

<sup>87</sup> Jonah Kappraff, “Finding evidence of synaesthesia in Messiaen’s music,” <http://oliviermessiaen.net/musical-language/synaesthesia>.

<sup>88</sup> Messiaen, *Traité*, 98. More on the influence of literature may be found in Chapter four.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 102-103.

Charles Blanc-Gatti and Lithuanian painter/composer Mikalojus Čiurlionis.<sup>90</sup> He also stated that he was particularly fond of the French painter Robert Delaunay, stating that Delaunay's work comes "very close to what I see when I hear music."<sup>91</sup>

Specific visual works of arts also inspired particular pieces of music. Messiaen drew ideas for his 1945 song cycle *Harawi* from Roland Penrose's painting *L'Île invisible* (1937). Messiaen cites the egg heads of Giorgio de Chirico in his pre-movement commentary for the ninth movement of the *Vingt Regards*.<sup>92</sup> Both artists have ties to Surrealism, a topic discussed in the next chapter.<sup>93</sup>

Volume VII of *Traité* also examines both the general influence of individual colors, through various mythological, religious, and etymological considerations, and the relationship between specific colors and sounds, by relating various colors to specific pitch sets. Both ideas hold ties to the *Vingt Regards*.

A portion of Volume VII's *Prologue sur la couleur* includes a discussion of the color red.<sup>94</sup> In an earlier interview, Messiaen claimed that the key of E major represented red.<sup>95</sup> Here it is a hot color and the color of fire and blood. Red is important and symbolic to Greek mythology and philosophy, Egyptian religion, and

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<sup>90</sup> Ibid., 6-8.

<sup>91</sup> Dingle, *Messiaen*, 162.

<sup>92</sup> Messiaen, *Vingt Regards*, II. "A short, cold, strange theme, like the egg heads of Chirico..." Translated by Cole Burger. Bruhn argues persuasively that Messiaen is referring to the rhythmic canon, not the other portions of this movement. See Bruhn, *Messiaen's Contemplations*, 202.

<sup>93</sup> Bruhn, *Messiaen's Contemplations*, 202, and Robert Sholl, "Love, Mad Love and the 'point sublime': the Surrealist Poetics of Messiaen's *Harawi*," in *Messiaen Studies*, 51.

<sup>94</sup> This portion of *Traité* draws heavily from René-Lucien Rousseau's *Les Couleurs: contribution à une philosophie naturelle fondée sur l'Analogie*.

<sup>95</sup> Claude Samuel, *Olivier Messiaen: Music and Color: Conversations with Claude Samuel*, trans. E. Thomas Glasow (Portland: Amadeus Press, 1986), 167.

Christianity, specifically the Holy Spirit. Liturgical Christian churches often use red for the celebration of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit descended as tongues of fire.<sup>96</sup>

*Traité* also correlates divine love, embodied in the Holy Spirit, with red. The Holy Spirit contemplates the Infant Jesus in the tenth movement of the *Vingt Regards*.<sup>97</sup>

In addition to the discussion of red, the *Prologue sur la couleur* also explores the intricacies of yellow and white. More than just the glow of the sun and gold, yellow is the color of the Word. Volume VII of *Traité* quotes the first five verses of John 1, which opens “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”<sup>98</sup> Messiaen uses John 1:3 as the title of the sixth movement of the *Vingt Regards*. White, the synthesis of all pigments, is the color of both snow and milk. It is also the representation of purity, often associated with virginity. Messiaen describes the first transposition of Mode 3 as milky white later in Volume VII. Movement eight of the *Vingt Regards* is the Contemplation of the Heights, where snow is often found, while movements four and eleven involve the Virgin Mary.<sup>99</sup> Cécile Sauvage, Messiaen’s mother, frequently utilizes the word “milk” in her cycle *L’Âme en bourgeon*, a topic examined in Chapter four.

In addition to these general connections between sound and color, Messiaen also correlates certain hues more specifically to Modes 2, 3, 4, 6, and their transpositions. While similar chords and pitch collections appear in the works of other composers,

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<sup>96</sup> This story occurs in the second chapter of Acts in the Bible’s New Testament.

<sup>97</sup> More on this movement in the next Chapter.

<sup>98</sup> John 1:1 NIV.

<sup>99</sup> Messiaen’s commentary for movement eight references both high places and Luke 2:14.

Messiaen states that these associations are relevant only in his music.<sup>100</sup> Each of the transpositions of Modes 2 and 3 are given both general and dominant color descriptions. Certain chords of each mode evince the dominant color more prominently and are marked with an “x.” The modes are presented essentially the same way they were in *Technique*, save Mode 6, where the chain of chords is voiced differently and thicker than its earlier presentation. Ultimately, these modes are neither melody nor harmony, though—only colors.<sup>101</sup>

The associations between modes, transpositions, and colors are linked to movements of the *Vingt Regards* in Table 2.1.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> Messiaen, *Traité*, 105. “...ils s’appliquent seulement à ma musique...”

<sup>101</sup> Ibid., 107. “Ces modes ne sont ni mélodiques, ni harmoniques: **ce sont des couleurs.**” Emphasis Messiaen’s.

<sup>102</sup> Bernard, “Messiaen Synaesthesia,” 47. The colors listed for Modes 2 and 3 are the dominant colors described in the previous paragraph. While this chart was published before *Traité*, the latter does not dispute any of its claims, though there seems to be a typographical error, when Bernard labels both 2(1) and 2(2) for movement V as blue-violet. The former is correct. A similar chart in Charles Ernest Seifert, *Messiaen’s Vingt Regards sur l’Enfant-Jésus: A Historical and Pedagogical Study* (Ed.D. diss., University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1989), 157, also contains typographical errors.

Table 2.1 Mode/Color Links in the *Vingt Regards*

Mode (Transposition)	Movement	Color(s)
2(1)	V	Blue-violet
2(2)	XIII, XVII	Gold and brown
	XVII	Rose and mauve
3(1)	XIII	Orange, gold, milky white
3(2)	XIII	Grey and mauve
3(3)	XVIII	Blue and green
3(4)	XIII	Orange, red, with a bit of blue
4(4)	V	Deep violet, white with violet design, purple-violet
	XVII	Violet veined with white
4(6)	VII	Carmine red reflections; purplish blue; grey-mauve; grey rose
6(3)	V	Transparent sulphur yellow with mauve reflections and little patches of Prussian blue and brown purplish-blue
6(4)	VII	Vertical bands: yellow, violet, black

Messiaen does not offer any intervallic or other musical basis for the wide range of color possibilities shown in this table.<sup>103</sup> These mode/color correlations also do not explain the influence of register, timbre, chord voicing, modal overlapping, and contour.<sup>104</sup> Additionally, uncolored modes and transpositions are still evident and represent a significant portion of Messiaen's œuvre. Scholars such as Jonathan W. Bernard and Jonah Kappraff have suggested that Mode 7, which uses ten pitches, was too chromatic for Messiaen to see colors within it.<sup>105</sup>

<sup>103</sup> Bernard, "Messiaen's Synaesthesia," 44.

<sup>104</sup> Messiaen, *Traité*, 7:97.

<sup>105</sup> Bernard, "Messiaen's Synaesthesia," 46, and Kappraff, "Synaesthesia," <http://oliviermessiaen.net/musical-language/synaesthesia>.

## TRAITÉ: CONCLUSION

The sound/color association gaps are not the only shortcoming of *Traité*. Since it took shape over the course of decades for various audiences and purposes, there is a jumbled nature felt when reading the entirety of *Traité*.<sup>106</sup> Messiaen's penchant for the finer points of his works limits the well-rounded investigator.<sup>107</sup> *Traité* says almost nothing about the structural features of Messiaen's compositions.<sup>108</sup> Moreover, *Traité* contains no substantial historical context, omitting any effects of "le 'Cas' Messiaen," critiques of René Leibowitz, actions of Messiaen's students in the late 1940s, or postwar state involvement in pedagogical matters.

Questions also remain when considering analytical issues surrounding the *Vingt Regards*. The evolution of Messiaen's thoughts on the *Vingt Regards* after his 1954 analysis is unknown. In addition, the general discussions of color in Volume VII of *Traité* raise fascinating connections to movements of the *Vingt Regards* that Messiaen does not address. The inclusion of a significant excerpt from René-Lucien Rousseau's *Les Couleurs* raises questions about this author's background, as well as how and when Messiaen first learned of him.<sup>109</sup> Given its connection to the Holy Spirit, there is a possibility that the tenth movement of the *Vingt Regards* appeared red to Messiaen.

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<sup>106</sup> Healey, "Personnages," 10.

<sup>107</sup> Healey, "Form: Messiaen's 'Downfall'?", *Twentieth-Century Music* 4 (September 2007): 165.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid.

<sup>109</sup> Messiaen scholar Nigel Simeone did not respond to a formal letter requesting information about this subject.

Despite these apparent drawbacks, *Traité* contains valuable information for the performer, scholar, and enthusiast interested in the *Vingt Regards*.<sup>110</sup> *Traité* also exemplifies a connection between Messiaen's analytical realm and the religious and literary spheres considered in the next two chapters. The references to the Bible, the Trinity, and color associations of the Christian church clearly have a religious context, which the next chapter will discuss. *Traité* also cites many authors and poets, including Charles Baudelaire and Cécile Sauvage, Messiaen's mother, whose contributions will be examined in Chapter four.

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<sup>110</sup> Healey, "Form," 165.

## CHAPTER 3: RELIGIOUS CONSIDERATIONS

This chapter begins with information about Messiaen's faith and historical context from before the *Vingt Regards*. Following this background, the chapter examines Biblical references, cyclical themes, other formal and symbolic considerations, and then summarizes Dom Columba Marmion's *Christ dans ses mystères*. It concludes with details about events and concepts after the *Vingt Regards*. The analytical insights about the cyclical themes and the influence of Marmion's theological literature highlight the interconnectedness of subjects surrounding the *Vingt Regards*.

### CONTEXT FROM BEFORE THE *VINGT REGARDS*

Messiaen often stated that though his parents were non-believers who supported his faith, he was “born a believer.”<sup>111</sup> Recent research disputes the factuality of these sentiments. Messiaen's father Pierre took Olivier to mass and likely held comparable religious beliefs.<sup>112</sup> Siglind Bruhn has posited that this distortion helped Messiaen to picture himself specially called to be a religious composer.<sup>113</sup> This account presents another example of the challenges facing Messiaen researchers as they confront his many writings and interviews.

Another issue that arises when studying Messiaen's writings and interviews is the lack of detail he provides regarding the influence of organist-composer Charles

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<sup>111</sup> Harry Halbreich, *Olivier Messiaen* (Paris: Foundation SACEM, 1980), 44, and Simeone and Hill, *Messiaen*, 14.

<sup>112</sup> Dingle, *Messiaen*, 19, and Bruhn, *Messiaen's Contemplations*, 29.

<sup>113</sup> Bruhn, *Messiaen's Contemplations*, 34.

Tournemire (1870-1939). Tournemire taught at the Conservatoire while Messiaen studied there and aided his successful bid to become the chief organist at *La Trinité*.<sup>114</sup> Tournemire's *L'Orgue mystique*, a collection of music for each Sunday of the church year, sought for Catholicism what Bach accomplished for the Lutheran church.<sup>115</sup> Messiaen admired this work, praising it in *Technique* for its remarkable use of plainchant.<sup>116</sup> This respect extended to the *Vingt Regards*, where a recent article by Julian Anderson has discovered a short passage from *L'Orgue mystique* in the ninth movement of the *Vingt Regards*.<sup>117</sup>

Tournemire's influence on Messiaen was also philosophical. Both men wrote significant works based on St. Francis and the Tristan myth.<sup>118</sup> Tournemire, along with Catholic philosopher Jacques Maritain, was also part of the nonconformist spiritualist movement of the 1920s, which influenced the philosophy of *La Jeune France* (The Young France). Messiaen helped found this group of composers in the late 1930s and resumed relations with them after his return from captivity.<sup>119</sup> Most of these composers were Catholic and looking for a way above the complex political, cultural, and aesthetic realities of the day. The group's manifesto focused on generosity and opposed the

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<sup>114</sup> Ibid., 20.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid., 31. Though Messiaen was never in Tournemire's class, the two men traded letters around 1930.

<sup>116</sup> Messiaen, *Technique*, 1:44.

<sup>117</sup> Julian Anderson, "Messiaen and the Notion of Influence," *Tempo* 63 (January 2009): 12-13. Anderson claims this passage also appears elsewhere in the *Vingt Regards*.

<sup>118</sup> Bruhn, *Messiaen's Contemplations*, 32.

<sup>119</sup> Fulcher, *Music and Ideology*, 285-292, and Nigel Simeone, "Messiaen in 1942: a working musician in occupied Paris," in *Messiaen Studies*, 19.

Neoclassical principles advocated by Cocteau.<sup>120</sup> *La Jeune France* emphasized collective values and spirituality and saw music, like many nineteenth century composers, as a fundamental and inclusive practice.<sup>121</sup> Messiaen later tried to distance himself from *La Jeune France*. He likely did this to avoid being categorized as someone engaged in the unpleasant daily realities of musical life, and to instead preserve an image as a purely religious composer.<sup>122</sup>

The last relevant manifestation of Messiaen's faith before the writing of the *Vingt Regards* occurred at the end of the introduction to *Technique*, when he stated, "Let us hasten by our prayers the coming of the liberator."<sup>123</sup> This rescuer was likely both literal—for the French—and spiritual—for Messiaen and other believers.<sup>124</sup> Christopher Dingle suggests that writing the *Vingt Regards* eased the troubles Messiaen would have experienced in occupied Paris, and Charles Seifert contends that Messiaen countered the evils of Nazism in the spirituality of the *Vingt Regards*.<sup>125</sup>

## BIBLICAL REFERENCES

Both the movement titles and Messiaen's written commentaries for the *Vingt Regards* contain Biblical references. Messiaen mentioned these passages throughout

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<sup>120</sup> Fulcher, *Music and Ideology*, 294, and Stephen Broad, "Messiaen and Cocteau," in *Music, Art, and Literature*, 1-3.

<sup>121</sup> Fulcher, *Music and Ideology*, 16-17, 296.

<sup>122</sup> Stephen Broad, "Messiaen and Cocteau," in *Music, Art, and Literature*, 4. This may also explain the omission of historical context in *Traité* mentioned in the last chapter.

<sup>123</sup> Messiaen, *Technique*, 8.

<sup>124</sup> Seifert, *Vingt Regards*, 39.

<sup>125</sup> Dingle, *Messiaen*, 84, and Seifert, *Vingt Regards*, 35.

his life.<sup>126</sup> The commentary for the first movement, *Regard du Père*, references Matthew 3:17—“This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” The title of movement six, *Par lui tout a été fait*, comes from John 1:3. Movement eight, *Regard des hauteurs*, uses a portion of the Christmas story from Luke 2:14—“Glory to God in the *highest*, and on earth peace on whom His favor rests.”<sup>127</sup> The Spirit of Joy of the tenth movement has roots in Romans 14:17 and 1 Thessalonians 1:6.<sup>128</sup> *La Parole Toute-Puissante*, the title of movement twelve, originates in Hebrews 1:3—“The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of His being, sustaining all things by His powerful word.” The commentary for *Regard des Anges*, movement fourteen, cites Psalm 104:4—“He makes winds his angels, flames of fire his servants.” Messiaen connects movement fifteen with Revelation 21:4—“He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.”<sup>129</sup> The Biblical Christmas accounts in Matthew 1-2 and Luke 2 contain the prophets, shepherds, and Magi of movement sixteen. The commentary for movement eighteen, *Regard de l’Onction terrible*, contains references to Psalm 45 and Revelation 19. Movement nineteen, *Je dors, mais mon cœur veille*, gains its title from Songs of Songs 5:2. Careful reading of these texts and their contexts

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<sup>126</sup> For example, see the texts by Massin and Samuel, as well as *Traité*. All Biblical texts are from the New International Version.

<sup>127</sup> Emphasis mine.

<sup>128</sup> Bruhn, *Messiaen’s Contemplations*, 140.

<sup>129</sup> Messiaen, *Traité*, 2:480.

greatly aids the performer of the *Vingt Regards*, since they are the most important influences on Messiaen's compositions.<sup>130</sup>

### CYCLICAL THEMES

Four recurring musical themes appear throughout the *Vingt Regards*—the *Theme of God*, the *Theme of the Star and the Cross*, the *Theme of Mystical Love*, and the *Theme of Chords*. In addition to the obvious religious nature of their titles, these themes are part of this chapter because Messiaen also used the concept in other overtly religious works. For example, the work he wrote just prior to the *Vingt Regards*, the *Visions de l'Amen*, also has a *Theme of God*.<sup>131</sup> Cyclical themes, notably a *Theme of Love*, are also used in the *Messe de la Pentecôte*.<sup>132</sup>

In the *Vingt Regards*, the most important recurring music is the *Theme of God*. Example 3.1 shows how Messiaen displays it in the preface.

Example 3.1 *Thème de Dieu* from Preface<sup>133</sup>

#### THÈME DE DIEU :



The theme can be heard in movements one, five, six, ten, eleven, fifteen, and twenty, because each of these movements addresses the Divinity.<sup>134</sup> The first person of the Trinity, God the Father, contemplates the Infant Jesus in movements one and six. The second person of the Trinity, God the Son, appears directly in movements five and

<sup>130</sup> Bruhn, *Messiaen's Contemplations*, 20.

<sup>131</sup> Seifert, *Vingt Regards*, 112.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, 164.

<sup>133</sup> Examples 3.1-3.7 are reproduced with the kind permission of les Editions Durand.

<sup>134</sup> Olivier Messiaen, *Vingt Regards sur l'enfant-Jésus* Yvonne Loriod, piano (Paris: Erato, 1973), 23.

fifteen and within the Virgin Mary in movement eleven. Because the body of the church is “the extension of the body of Christ,” the twentieth movement is also included here.<sup>135</sup> The third person of the Trinity, God the Holy Spirit, gazes upon the Infant Jesus in the tenth movement.

The full *Theme of God* makes up the entire first and fifth movements, and this complete presentation is not heard again until the final movement.<sup>136</sup> Though the perceived speeds are very similar, the basic rhythmic value is different in each case—eighth notes in the first movement, quarter notes in the fifth movement, and sixteenth notes in the last movement.<sup>137</sup> Harmonically speaking, the *Theme of God* uses Messiaen’s Mode 2.<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>135</sup> Ibid.

<sup>136</sup> Bruhn, *Messiaen’s Contemplations*, 146.

<sup>137</sup> Messiaen, *Traité*, 2:442.

<sup>138</sup> Except for the penultimate chord. Bruhn, *Messiaen’s Contemplations*, 151.

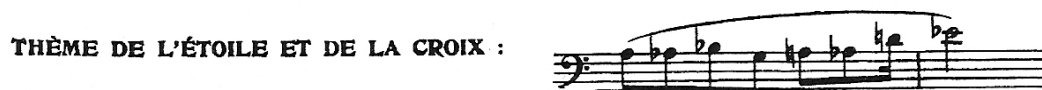
Example 3.2 Reduction of Complete *Thème de Dieu*

The second cyclical theme is the *Theme of the Star and the Cross* (Example 3.3). It occurs in movements two and seven—the movements where the Star and the Cross contemplate the Infant Jesus. Messiaen relates these symbols because they frame the life of Jesus.<sup>139</sup> The star lighted the way for the Magi to find the infant Jesus, and he was crucified upon a cross.

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<sup>139</sup> Messiaen, *Vingt Regards*, 22.

Example 3.3 *Thème de L'Étoile et de la Croix* from Preface



Musically speaking, the *Theme of the Star and the Cross* is inspired by the first antiphon of the second Vêpres of Epiphany.<sup>140</sup> The full theme uses Mode 7 in the third transposition. (D Eb E F G Ab A Bb B D)

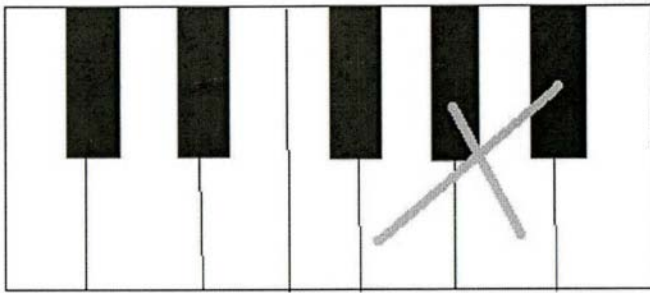
Example 3.4 Reduction of Complete *Thème de L'Étoile et de la Croix*



<sup>140</sup> Messiaen, *Traité*, 2:439.

In addition, portions of the theme also *look* like a cross, a semiotic device employed at least as far back as J.S. Bach.<sup>141</sup>

Figure 3.1 Visual Representation of “Cross”



The third cyclical theme is the *Theme of Mystical Love*. Messiaen explicitly labels it in movements six, nineteen, and twenty. The theme also appears in measures eleven and twelve of the complete *Theme of God* (Example 3.2), so it may also be heard in the first, fifth, and final movements.<sup>142</sup> Messiaen stated that he based the theme on the division of a minor seventh into two perfect fourths.<sup>143</sup> In Example 3.5, the upper voice of the last three chords contains the minor seventh G# to F#, with C# between them. The *Theme of Mystical Love* does not employ any of Messiaen’s modes of limited transposition.<sup>144</sup>

<sup>141</sup> Bruhn, *Messiaen’s Contemplations*, 154, and Seifert, *Vingt Regards*, 161.

<sup>142</sup> Siglind Bruhn, “The Spiritual Layout of in Messiaen’s Contemplations of the Manager,” in *Messiaen’s Language of Mystical Love*, ed. Siglind Bruhn (New York: Garland, 1998), 251.

<sup>143</sup> Messiaen, *Traité*, 2:496.

<sup>144</sup> Bruhn, *Messiaen’s Contemplations*, 48.

Example 3.5 *Par Lui tout a été fait*, 39-5-1



The final recurring music, the *Theme of Chords* (Example 3.6), does not refer to any specific theological concept, yet it occurs in more movements of the *Vingt Regards* than any other cyclical theme. The *Theme of Chords* uses all twelve tones, with F#, G#, Bb, and B each used twice. It appears in movements six, fourteen, fifteen, sixteen, seventeen, eighteen, and twenty. Messiaen describes its coloration as “steely grey blue, crossed with red and bright orange, a mauve violet stained a leathery brown and encircled by purple violet.”<sup>145</sup>

Example 3.6 *Thème d'Accords* from Preface

**THÈME D'ACCORDS :**



<sup>145</sup> Messiaen, *Traité*, 438.

Unlike the other themes, Messiaen often alters it in unusual manners. In movement fourteen, for example, he rearranges the ordering and register of the chords.

Example 3.7 *Regard des Anges*, 99-2-2



#### ADDITIONAL FORMAL AND SYMBOLIC CONSIDERATIONS

Messiaen orders many of the twenty movements of the *Vingt Regards* with a concern for religious matters. Every fifth piece deals with the Divinity.<sup>146</sup> The first deals with God the Father, the fifth with God the Son, the tenth with God the Holy Spirit, and the fifteenth and twentieth return to God the Son, the latter, as mentioned before, because “the church and all believers are the body of Christ.”<sup>147</sup>

The placement of other movements is also symbolic, as well as the relationship between movements and their double.<sup>148</sup> Movements six and twelve both involve the continuity of creation. The Biblical creation story is told over the course of six days. The Contemplation of the Cross is the seventh movement because Christ’s sufferings on the cross restored perfection to a sinful world. The Judeo-Christian tradition considers

<sup>146</sup> Messiaen, *Vingt Regards*, 23.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid., 22.

<sup>148</sup> This paragraph derives from Messiaen, *Vingt Regards*, 23-24.

seven the perfect number, and the Bible frequently uses it. Since angels are perfect beings, their movement is fourteen. Time is given movement nine, since it has experienced the birth of the Savior, confining Him for the typical nine months of maternity. The Awesome Anointing—movement eighteen—occupies this position since the Son of God embodies both divinity and humanity, and the astounding wonder of this Anointing presumes both Jesus’ Incarnation and birth.

Beyond the placement of themes and the numbering of movements, other compositional components also function symbolically. Rhythmically, symmetry represents the abolition of time; growth processes, the transformation of the God-seeking soul; and the addition of dots represent the divine concern for even small creatures.<sup>149</sup> The modes of limited transposition exemplify a neatly structured cosmos, both complicated and uncomplicated.<sup>150</sup> The association of these modes with specific colors is also symbolic, according to Andrew Shenton, since these correlations are essentially subjective.<sup>151</sup>

Musical elements other than those Messiaen outlines may also serve as spiritual symbols.<sup>152</sup> For instance, Siglind Bruhn calls A# the “pitch of love” and the F# major chord in first inversion the “chord of love.”<sup>153</sup> The symbolism of F# major may also

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<sup>149</sup> Bruhn, *Messiaen’s Contemplations*, 61. An example of growth processes is the augmented rhythm concept discussed in Chapter 2.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid.

<sup>151</sup> Shenton, *Signs*, 51.

<sup>152</sup> Bruhn, *Messiaen’s Contemplations*, 46-47.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid., 49. A# is a prevalent pitch in the *Theme of God*. The F# major chord in first inversion, with the A# doubled, is the most symmetrical of triadic options, and also features prominently in this movement. Bruhn attaches the symbolic titles cited above based on the significance of these notes throughout the

relate to the linguistic closeness of the French word for son, *fil*s, and the German word for F#, *fis*. It is the key signature for the first, fifteenth, and nineteenth movements, as well as the finale of the cycle.<sup>154</sup>

The presence of birdsong is also symbolic in the *Vingt Regards*. Messiaen calls birds “our little servants of immaterial joy.”<sup>155</sup> Their festive songs intone the sounds of God in this world. Throughout his life, Messiaen saw birds as a wellspring of uncorrupted music and as icons of radiance and purity threatened by the realities of the present.<sup>156</sup> The *Vingt Regards* contain Messiaen’s most substantial efforts with birdsong to this point in his output, occurring most substantially in movements five, eight, and fourteen—each somehow involving the heavens.

#### MARMION

Messiaen cites Dom Columba Marmion’s *Christ dans ses mystères* (Christ in His Mysteries) in his introduction to the *Vingt Regards*. Joseph Marmion was born in Dublin in 1858 to an Irish father and a French mother and ordained a priest in 1881. Marmion was appointed Abbot of the Benedictine abbey Maredsous in Belgium in 1909, where he died in 1923.<sup>157</sup> *Christ in His Mysteries* is one of three volumes of spiritual conferences praised by Pope Benedict XV. The largest section of this work is the discussions of the Mysteries of Christ. Marmion’s work considers both how

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*Vingt Regards*, as well as the idea that the opening movement and the *Theme of God* “[stand] for God’s love.”

<sup>154</sup> Robert Fallon, “Two Paths to Paradise: Reform in Messiaen’s *Saint François d’Assise*,” in *Messiaen Studies*, 223.

<sup>155</sup> Messiaen, *Technique*, 34.

<sup>156</sup> Peter Hill, ed. *The Messiaen Companion* (London: Faber and Faber, 1995), 9.

<sup>157</sup> There is a more substantial biography of Marmion in Bruhn, *Messiaen’s Contemplations*, 282-284.

Biblical figures contemplated and how believers *should* reflect upon the mysteries of Christ. Messiaen drew primarily from the latter concerns.<sup>158</sup> *Christ in His Mysteries* has twenty chapters, matching the *Vingt Regards*, and the two works possess strong philosophical similarities.<sup>159</sup>

The contemplative nature of Marmion's work comes from his belief that "...the virtues of the mysteries of Jesus are above all interior, and it is this virtue that we must seek before all."<sup>160</sup> Messiaen confirms this sentiment by using the word *Regard* in the title of his work.

Joy, according to Marmion, "is one of the most marked characteristics of the celebration of [the] mystery," in large part because "...God...gives us His friendship...[and] restores to us the right of entering into possession of the eternal inheritance..."<sup>161</sup> Messiaen labels a "theme of joy" in the tenth movement and the "triumph of...joy" in the last movement.<sup>162</sup>

Another important global theme of *Christ and His Mysteries* is that of an astonishing exchange—between divinity and humanity, heaven and earth, Creator and creature. Jesus Christ—true God and true Man—is the "visible" embodiment of this exchange.<sup>163</sup> Human beings experience it in the Eucharist, which Roman Catholics

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<sup>158</sup> Ibid., 134.

<sup>159</sup> Bruhn uses her analysis of Marmion to help justify her overall formal analysis of the *Vingt Regards*. Ibid., 129-140.

<sup>160</sup> Columba Marmion, *Christ in His Mysteries*, trans. Mother M. St. Thomas of Tyburn convent (St. Louis: Herder, 1939), 23.

<sup>161</sup> Ibid., 130.

<sup>162</sup> Messiaen, *Vingt Regards sur l'enfant-Jésus*, 75 and 177.

<sup>163</sup> Marmion, *Christ in His Mysteries*, 121.

believe to be Jesus' actual body and blood, poured out for them.<sup>164</sup> The third movement of the *Vingt Regards* is entitled *l'Échange*, and in his liner notes to Yvonne Loriod's 1972 recording, Messiaen quotes an antiphon from the Missal: "The Creator of humankind, taking on a body and a soul, had deigned to be born of the Virgin, in order that we might *share* in his divinity."<sup>165</sup>

Marmion emphasizes Trinitarian relations in *Christ in His Mysteries*, notably the relationship between the Father and the Son. The Father has two reasons to reflect upon His Son. To quote Marmion, "the Father finds in Jesus...all His delight, because He ever sees the Person of His Only-begotten Son." Also, "the soul of [Jesus] Christ...is full of all grace."<sup>166</sup> Among Messiaen's *Vingt Regards* are the Father's Contemplation of the Son in the first movement and the Son's Contemplation of the Son in the fifth movement.

Marmion also discusses the adoration of the Infant Jesus by those who were visibly there—the angels, shepherds, and Magi. The angels "contemplated the New-born Babe [and] saw in Him their God... [He] threw these pure spirits into awe..."<sup>167</sup> The shepherds "paid Him... homage, and their souls were for a long time full of joy and peace..."<sup>168</sup> The Magi are worthy of praise for their "fidelity to the inspiration of grace," because "they obey the divine call without delay or hesitation."<sup>169</sup> Marmion

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<sup>164</sup> Ibid., but especially 114-133. ("partakers of His Divine Nature.")

<sup>165</sup> Messiaen, *Vingt Regards*, 24. (emphasis mine)

<sup>166</sup> Marmion, *Christ in His Mysteries*, 63. Also important is Marmion's notion that the "Incarnation is a *Divine* mystery...[a] masterpiece of Eternal Wisdom and Infinite Love." Ibid., 68.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid., 119.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid., 131.

<sup>169</sup> Ibid., 142.

draws a comparison between the Magi's journey to Bethlehem and the journey of the Church towards greater communion with God.<sup>170</sup> The contemplations of the angels, shepherds, and Magi are given sound in Messiaen's movements fourteen and sixteen.

One final comparison between Marmion's work and the *Vingt Regards* concerns the union of love and the church. Marmion states, "Christ is the Head of this mystical body which He forms with the Church, because He is its Chief and the source of life for all its members."<sup>171</sup> The *Vingt Regards* echo Marmion's sentiment in the *Theme of Mystical Love*, as well as in the last movement's Church of Love, an extension of the body of Christ. Ultimately, "love underlies all Christ's mysteries. The humility of the manger, the obscurity of the hidden life, the fatigues of the public life, the torments of the Passion, the glory of the Resurrection, all is due to love...love, above all, that is revealed and shines out in the mysteries of Jesus. And it is above all by love that we understand them..."<sup>172</sup>

#### CONTEXT FOLLOWING THE *VINGT REGARDS*

Around the same time as the début of the *Vingt Regards*, issues surrounding "le 'Cas' Messiaen" challenged Messiaen's faith. These polemical texts attacked not only his theoretical writings, as discussed in the previous chapter, but also the religious nature of his compositions. Works such as the *Trois petites liturgies* and the *Vingt Regards* confronted the established conservative aesthetic of French sacred music, with its unusual harmonies, texts, and instrumentations and its exotic nonwestern influences.

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<sup>170</sup> Ibid., 142-3.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid., 14.

<sup>172</sup> Ibid., 29.

They also differed from the typical religious expressions of love, sounding secularly sensual and thus dangerous.<sup>173</sup>

In the midst of “le ‘Cas’ Messiaen,” Messiaen wrote: “There is so much that is dry and inhuman in contemporary music! Will our innovator be revolutionary only in his language? It seems almost certain that he will also bring love.”<sup>174</sup> The *Vingt Regards* is surrounded by love, in the connections to Marmion’s text, the pre-movement commentaries described in the next chapter, as well as in the *Theme of Mystical Love*.<sup>175</sup> Messiaen’s love for his ailing wife clashed with feelings for his prize student during this time, as Loriod had debuted the *Vingt Regards* just two months prior to the quote above.<sup>176</sup>

Love was also important to Surrealism, an important poetic-artistic movement based in Paris between the two World Wars.<sup>177</sup> Though it was a secular movement, one of its early proponents, Pierre Reverdy, converted to Catholicism in 1921. Messiaen met with Reverdy three times during the summer of 1944, the same time he was composing the *Vingt Regards*.<sup>178</sup> The greater prominence of birdsong in the *Vingt Regards* may have a connection to these meetings. Birds feature prominently in

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<sup>173</sup> Boswell-Kurc, *Controversial Reception*, 139-149.

<sup>174</sup> Simeone and Hill, *Messiaen*, 153.

<sup>175</sup> See the commentaries for movements one, eleven, fifteen, nineteen, and twenty.

<sup>176</sup> Loriod once stated, “We cried for 20 years until [Claire] died and [we] could marry.” Sholl, “Love,” 60.

<sup>177</sup> Larry W. Peterson, “Messiaen and Surrealism: A Study of His Poetry,” in *Mystical Love*, 216.

<sup>178</sup> Sholl, “Love,” 52. Larry W. Peterson notes a conversation he had with Messiaen that suggests Messiaen did not think of Reverdy as a Surrealist. Peterson, “Surrealism,” 223.

Reverdy's poetry, seeking out the camaraderie of humans and aiding them out of modernity's unease.<sup>179</sup>

Messiaen's interest in Surrealism provides a distinctive link between his progressive compositional aesthetic and his Roman Catholic faith. Messiaen synthesized the Surrealist texts of André Breton and Paul Eluard in the three 'Tristan'-inspired works he wrote immediately after the *Vingt Regards*.<sup>180</sup> Surrealism valued love as the apex of life and art, just as Messiaen's faith saw Christ's love as the consummation of beauty and truth. In order to reveal Christ to others in this era, a brutal alteration of musical language was necessary. Part of the Surrealist aesthetic featured the absurd and often ferocious juxtapositions of substances and concepts. Similarly, Messiaen combines traditional tonality and innovative modality, motionless and active temporal effects, physical and numeral semiotics, and contemplations of both the immaterial and the material in the *Vingt Regards*.

Later in his life, when discussing his *Couleurs de la cité céleste* (1963), Messiaen introduced the notion of *éblouissement* (dazzlement), an inner blinding that embodies the synthesis of music and religion.<sup>181</sup> This mystagogical metamorphosis relates to and goes beyond both the subject of love and the sound/color associations discussed in Chapter two.<sup>182</sup> Though never discussed in the context of the *Vingt Regards*, *éblouissement* raises fascinating questions about the interrelation of music and

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<sup>179</sup> Sholl, "Love," 58.

<sup>180</sup> Ibid., 35.

<sup>181</sup> Sander von Maas, "Forms of Love: Messiaen's aesthetics of *éblouissement*," in *Messiaen studies*, 79.

<sup>182</sup> Ibid., 81. Mystagogy studies both "mystery" and "mystical doctrines." Merriam-Webster Online, "mystagogue," Merriam-Webster Online, <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/mystagogue>.

religion.<sup>183</sup> With its profound union of love, color, and contemplation, the *Vingt Regards* was instrumental in Messiaen's efforts with musical-religious fusion.

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<sup>183</sup> Ibid., 100.

## CHAPTER 4: LITERARY CONSIDERATIONS

This chapter details the numerous literary issues surrounding Messiaen and the *Vingt Regards*. After a section on familial influences, the chapter examines Messiaen's readings and writings. Paramount among his inspirations is *L'Âme en bourgeon* (The Soul in Bud), a set of poems Messiaen's mother wrote while pregnant with him, and a work Messiaen called his sole influence.<sup>184</sup> The strong link between Messiaen and poetry suggests the comparisons between *L'Âme* and the *Vingt Regards* discussed in this chapter. Information about Maurice Toesca's *Les Douze Regards*, a work Messiaen cited in the preface to the *Vingt Regards*, concludes the chapter.

### FAMILIAL INFLUENCES

Like his son Olivier, Pierre Messiaen (1883-1958) instructed for a living, teaching English.<sup>185</sup> In addition to a complete translation of Shakespeare's works into French, Pierre wrote explicitly religious novels and memoirs published while Messiaen was composing the *Vingt Regards*.<sup>186</sup> Despite these connections, Messiaen did not mention his father as an influence on his musical and personal growth.

On the other hand, Messiaen often spoke of the impact of his mother, the poet Cécile Sauvage (1883-1927). While he did not inherit her pessimistic nature or lack of Catholic faith, her poetry did inspire a sense of wonder, a concern for details, and a

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<sup>184</sup> Dingle, *Messiaen*, 2.

<sup>185</sup> Seifert, *Vingt Regards*, 64.

<sup>186</sup> Dingle, *Messiaen*, 2, and Bruhn, *Messiaen's Contemplations*, 19. These memoirs include the first written account of Messiaen's time in captivity.

fascination with nature.<sup>187</sup> Messiaen wrote the preface to the 1987 publication of her complete works.<sup>188</sup> *L'Âme en bourgeon* is her most famous collection of poetry.

Messiaen stated that *L'Âme* shaped his entire life.<sup>189</sup> The cycle correctly predicted Messiaen's gender and contained other expressions he felt were prophetic.<sup>190</sup> For instance, Messiaen often cited a line from the sixth poem of *L'Âme*—"Here is all the Orient which sings within my soul"—for its prediction of his interest in this area of the world.<sup>191</sup>

Though he never formally set *L'Âme* to music, Messiaen did an organ improvisation based on twelve of the poems in the late 1970s.<sup>192</sup> Messiaen's first wife, Claire Delbos, composed vocal music using Sauvage's poetry. Notably, Delbos used portions of *L'Âme* as the text for an eight-movement song cycle. Messiaen wrote the program notes and played the piano part at the first performance of this work in 1937.<sup>193</sup>

*L'Âme* shares general connections with the *Vingt Regards*. Messiaen composed twenty movements to match his mother's twenty poems. Birth and infancy inspired the

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<sup>187</sup> Dingle, *Messiaen*, 2, and Yvonne Lorient-Messiaen, "Étude sur l'œuvre pianistique d'Olivier Messiaen," in *Portraits d'Olivier Messiaen*, ed. Catherine Massip (Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale de France, 1996), 77.

<sup>188</sup> Cécile Sauvage, "*L'Âme en bourgeon* (translation and afterword by Philip Weller)," in *Music, Art, and Literature*, 270.

<sup>189</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>190</sup> Simeone and Hill, *Messiaen*, 114 and Dingle, *Messiaen*, 2.

<sup>191</sup> "Voici tout l'Orient qui chante dans mon être." Stanza 8, Line 3. See Appendix 2 for translated poem titles. All subsequent references to *L'Âme* come from Sauvage/Weller, *L'Âme*, 191-251., and all *L'Âme* translations are by Philip Weller unless otherwise indicated.

<sup>192</sup> Dingle, *Messiaen*, 187.

<sup>193</sup> Sauvage/Weller, "*L'Âme*," 277. One wonders how (or if) Delbos was involved in the writing of these notes.

composition of both creations. At the celebration of the centenary of Sauvage's birth, readings of *L'Âme* were interspersed with movements of the *Vingt Regards*.<sup>194</sup>

One of the many specific thematic similarities between *L'Âme* and the *Vingt Regards* is the significance of color to both artists. Consistent with her pessimistic nature, Sauvage fills these poems with grays, blues, and silvers, but just like her son's modes, there are pinks and reds as well.<sup>195</sup> Sauvage also frequently uses the word milk—both as symbol of purity and when referring to breast milk. One strophe in the eleventh poem is particularly visionary:

Du monde où passé la lumière  
Je ne t'offrais que les reflects;  
Et ton oeil ouvrit sa paupière  
Et ta main poussa les volets.

Of the world of light and colour  
I'd given you only pale reflections;  
Then your eyelids opened wide;  
Your hand pushed wide the shutters.<sup>196</sup>

Sauvage often personifies the sun, moon, and stars in *L'Âme*. For instance, the moon has a “so-secret smile” in the fourth poem and “sit[s] on an oak-tree” in the tenth poem.<sup>197</sup> Messiaen's interest in astronomy is confirmed by his writings in *Traité* and his reference to galaxies and photons in the preface to the *Vingt Regards*.

Living creatures feature prominently in *L'Âme*—animals, fish, birds, and insects. Sauvage must have been fascinated with the bee, as it appears in half of the

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<sup>194</sup> Ibid., 268.

<sup>195</sup> Poem 19, though only 8 lines long, is notable for its quantity of color words.

<sup>196</sup> See Appendix 2 for translated poem titles. All subsequent references to *L'Âme* come from Ibid., 191-251, and all *L'Âme* translations are by Philip Weller unless otherwise indicated.

<sup>197</sup> Poem 4, Stanza 1, Line 7; Poem 10, Stanza 9, Line 1.

poems and even has a poem named for it. The mention of larks, sparrows, doves, bluebirds, and blackbirds compare to the birdsongs of the *Vingt Regards*. Flowers such as morning glories, lilies of the valley, and especially roses also turn up throughout. The flora and the fauna are side-by-side in gardens in the sixth, seventh, and thirteenth poems. Messiaen uses the image of a garden in the fifteenth movement of the *Vingt Regards*.

*L'Âme* presents many tender physical expressions of love. Throughout the set of poems, the speaker holds, caresses, touches, and kisses the child. The fifth poem even uses three different phrases to express the depth of an embrace—"je te serre de près..." (I press you closely), "enlacement" (embrace), and "l'étreinte délacée" (delicate grasp).<sup>198</sup> These demonstrations of affection occur with bodies vividly portrayed—from literal head to toe and from metaphorical breasts to wings. Messiaen's eleventh and fifteenth movements feature musical depictions of the heartbeats of the Infant Jesus, outstretched arms around love, and the Kiss of the Infant Jesus.

*L'Âme* expresses a wide-ranging and nuanced intimacy between speaker and nascent soul. A sense of motherly doting appears in the phrases "my fragile little secret" and "my little twin."<sup>199</sup> When Sauvage depicts shepherds in the eighth and tenth poems, a more protective closeness emerges. Shepherds appear in the Christmas story and are mentioned by name in Messiaen's sixteenth *Regard*. The shielding image mixes gently with nature in Sauvage's frequent use of the concept of a nest. In the

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<sup>198</sup> Stanza 5, line 1; Stanza 9, line 4; Stanza 15, line 3. Translations by Cole Burger.

<sup>199</sup> Poem 12, Line 30: "...ô mon secret frileux," and Poem 16, Stanza 2, Line 5: "Mon petit double..."

eleventh poem, she uses both the literal “nids” (nest) and the metaphorical “retraite” (retreat).<sup>200</sup> The connection is also deep and profound, as in “I give my heart to you” and “I am you.”<sup>201</sup> When the new soul is born and the mother yearns for the greater proximity they shared in the womb, the closeness takes a wistful turn—“We were mystery and life together.”<sup>202</sup>

Dreams, spirits, and gazes also appear throughout *L'Âme*, suggesting a less tangible and more metaphorical togetherness. Sauvage uses the French word *regard* in many of the poems.<sup>203</sup> Though it is sometimes translated as “gaze,” *regard* does not have an exact English equivalent. Its use in both *L'Âme* and the *Vingt Regards* is both literal and metaphorical, and thus may be more accurately translated “contemplation.” The unique, detailed, and deep contemplations of mother to son so eloquently penned by Cécile Sauvage parallel the musical gazes of Trinitarian units, eyewitnesses, immaterial and symbolic objects upon the infant Jesus.

Olivier’s brother Alain Messiaen (1912-1990) followed in the footsteps of his family, composing poetry and prose on musical subjects.<sup>204</sup> Like his older brother, Alain was a Catholic man and a prisoner of war.<sup>205</sup> Alain introduced Olivier to the writings of nineteenth-century French philosopher Ernest Hello, a strong literary

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<sup>200</sup> Poem 11, Stanza 4. Translations by Cole Burger. Nests also appear in Poems 1, 4, 9, and 13.

<sup>201</sup> Poem 5, Stanza 11, Line 1: “Je te donne mon cœur,” and Poem 16, Line 14: “Je suis toi.”

<sup>202</sup> Poem 13, Stanza 1, Line 30: “Nous étions le mystère et la vie à nous deux.” Translation by Cole Burger.

<sup>203</sup> Examples include Poem 3, Stanza 1, Line 4 and Poem 5, Stanza 4, Line 3.

<sup>204</sup> Seifert, *Vingt Regards*, 70.

<sup>205</sup> Ibid. and Dingle, *Messiaen*, 75. Seifert also notes that Alain, like Olivier, created art as a prisoner of war, writing *La Petite Lampe* (published by Desclee De Brower in 1942) while interned.

influence on the *Visions de L'Amen*.<sup>206</sup> Hello's *Paroles de Dieu* speaks of a euphoric intoxication given by the Holy Spirit, an idea Messiaen references in the commentary for the tenth movement of the *Vingt Regards*.<sup>207</sup> Messiaen wrote the preface to one of his brother's publications, praising Alain for his knowledge and love of music.<sup>208</sup> Alain clearly admired his brother's music, notably writing a poem entitled *Regards sur l'Enfant-Jésus*.<sup>209</sup> The musical and evocative final phrase clearly echoes Olivier's music:

O la Toccata de mes yeux rouverts  
qui touchent touchent la clarté  
Dans le carillon de l'ESPRIT DE JOIE.

O the Toccata of my reopened eyes  
Which touch and touch again the light  
Of the bells of the Spirit of Joy.<sup>210</sup>

## PERSONAL INFLUENCES

Messiaen was very well-read and possessed a wide range of literary preferences.<sup>211</sup> Poetic influences included Spanish mystic Saint John of the Cross and nineteenth-century Carmelite nun Saint Thérèse de Lisieux. Messiaen also studied other religious sources, such as the Bible, the Catholic Missal, and the writings of Marmion, Saint Thomas Aquinas, and Henri Bergson. Fictionally speaking, he had a passion from an early age for fairy tales, which later led to reading Robert Louis

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<sup>206</sup> Ibid., 81. Though Charles Tournemire was also familiar with Hello, there is no formal indication that it was he, and not Alain, that introduced Messiaen to Hello. Bruhn, *Messiaen's Contemplations*, 31-32.

<sup>207</sup> Bruhn, *Messiaen's Contemplations*, 140.

<sup>208</sup> Seifert, *Vingt Regards*, 70.

<sup>209</sup> Ibid., 73-4. The poem comes from Alain's 1964 *Histoire de la Musique*.

<sup>210</sup> Translation by Artur Lomba, altered by Cole Burger.

<sup>211</sup> This paragraph derives from both Messiaen, *Vingt Regards*, 1, and Gareth Healey, "Messiaen - bibliophile," in *Music, Art, and Literature*, 162-172.

Stevenson and Lewis Carroll. His father certainly influenced his love of William Shakespeare. Messiaen's reading of Aloysius Bertrand and Edgar Allan Poe reflected an interest in the macabre. Poetry he considered included the ancient classics of Dante and Homer and the French symbolists and surrealists Stéphane Mallarmé, Charles Baudelaire, and Paul Éluard. Messiaen was also fascinated by astronomy, referring to the *Larousse Encyclopedia of Astronomy* in Volume III of *Traité*. The remarkable breadth of these influences mirrors the many musical inspirations mentioned in this document's biography of Messiaen.

Messiaen further confirms an interest in literature through the extensive writing he produced throughout his life. In addition to two theoretical treatises, he discussed his early works in three articles for *Le monde musical* between 1935 and 1939 and helped generate the manifesto for *La Jeune France* discussed in the previous chapter.<sup>212</sup>

Messiaen also compiled the libretto for his opera *Saint François d'Assise* using quotations from the title character and composed original texts for other works.

Messiaen's highly personal and decidedly eclectic version of Surrealism weighed heavily on this writing.<sup>213</sup> Furthermore, Messiaen created program notes to accompany the majority of his works, including the *Vingt Regards*. He wrote them to help people better understand each composition. Though he was fond of them, Messiaen did not

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<sup>212</sup> Fulcher, *Music and Ideology*, 420.

<sup>213</sup> Sauvage/Weller, "L'Âme," 260.

think it was necessary for them to be disseminated once the works became more widely known.<sup>214</sup>

Messiaen's program notes have received a mixed response throughout their existence. In addition to the analytical and religious criticisms discussed earlier, "le 'Cas' Messiaen" also included attacks of Messiaen's commentaries. Unlike the other issues, however, critics were virtually unanimous in their disapproval, finding them to be of poor quality and composed in an odd prose style.<sup>215</sup> Christopher Dingle, in his 2007 biography of Messiaen, finds them ambiguous and indicative of a dry compositional approach.<sup>216</sup> My personal experiences, both including them as program notes and speaking them, have both been positively received. Like *Traité*, the program notes for the *Vingt Regards* reflect a wide range of rhythmic, modal, thematic, religious, and other considerations. Some are very brief, while others are several paragraphs.<sup>217</sup> Many contain ellipses, where Messiaen might have spoken more, but chose not to include those comments when the work was later published.

#### LITERARY CONNECTIONS TO MUSICAL FORM

Besides its appearance in Messiaen's readings and writings, poetry is important for understanding his musical forms. Messiaen based his first known composition, a 1917 piano piece called *La Dame de Shalott*, on a poem by Tennyson. Its sectional

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<sup>214</sup> Rößler, *Contributions*, 28.

<sup>215</sup> Boswell-Kurc, *Controversial Reception*, 94.

<sup>216</sup> Dingle, *Messiaen*, 16.

<sup>217</sup> Movement sixteen's commentary is simply: "Exotic music, tam-tams and oboe, [an] enormous, nasal concert..." For examples of longer commentaries, see movements six, ten, and eleven. Messiaen, *Vingt Regards*, II and III.

form corresponds to the poem and is a harbinger of Messiaen's future works.<sup>218</sup> The importance of *L'Âme en bourgeon* on Messiaen's entire life and the specific mention of poets in the introduction to the *Vingt Regards* further support a connection between poetic structure and musical form in the *Vingt Regards*. These links also account for the possibly perceived oddity of including discussion of musical form in the "Literary" chapter of this document.

Despite his vast literary output, Messiaen rarely wrote about form. There is one chapter in *Technique*, which makes up less than ten percent of the first volume, and only a few of his analyses in *Traité* contain formal outlines.<sup>219</sup> He even stated that "...form is not very important, neither tonality nor serialism..." and "[p]erhaps my best works are those that have no form, in a strict sense."<sup>220</sup> Messiaen's scarcity of discussion on form likely reflects a greater fascination for other musical subjects, rather than a shortcoming of his musical language. Jean Langlais once said that Messiaen "knew...he was a very gifted composer, but he did not know his system..." and that Messiaen "discovered [it] by analyzing his works."<sup>221</sup>

Messiaen's suggestion that his works might not possess form is not an indication of some sort of chaos, but instead a distinct contrast from the organic development model pervasively used in Austro-Germanic music.<sup>222</sup> This difference has led to some

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<sup>218</sup> Dingle, *Messiaen*, 7.

<sup>219</sup> Gareth Healey, "Form," 165.

<sup>220</sup> Stefan Keym, "'The art of the most intensive contrast': Olivier Messiaen's Mosaic Form up to its Apotheosis in *Saint François d'Assise*," in *Messiaen Studies*, 188.

<sup>221</sup> Dingle, *Messiaen*, 16.

<sup>222</sup> Keym, "Mosaic Form," 189-190.

criticism. André Hodeir is especially scathing, stating that “Messiaen’s impotence [with regard to form] is total and...definite...”<sup>223</sup> Former students Pierre Boulez and Karlheinz Stockhausen are also uncomplimentary—Boulez stating that “Messiaen does not compose—he juxtaposes,” and Stockhausen comparing Messiaen’s forms with the configuration of a tapeworm that can be sliced into several parts without damaging the whole.<sup>224</sup> Scholars such as Peter Hill and Paul Griffiths also negatively assess Messiaen’s structures.<sup>225</sup>

The complete appearance of the *Theme of God* in movements one, five, and twenty suggest the outline of a global structure for the *Vingt Regards*. Siglind Bruhn develops this idea in great detail, labeling the first five movements “exposition,” and the large sixth and twentieth movements “synthesis.”<sup>226</sup> The odd-numbered movements between seven and nineteen are “development of musical and theological symbolism,” while the even-numbered movements are “contrasting passages.”<sup>227</sup> Bruhn also details symmetrical relations within movements seven through nineteen, with help from comparisons to Marmion’s *Christ dans ses mystères*.

The twenty poems of *L’Âme* hold an overall form notably similar to the one just described for the *Vingt Regards*. A structural connection between *L’Âme* and the *Vingt Regards* is clearly similar to Bruhn’s comparison of global literary and musical forms.

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<sup>223</sup> André Hodeir, *Since Debussy: A View of Contemporary Music* (New York: Grove Press, 1961), 97-98.

<sup>224</sup> McNulty, “Messiaen’s Journey,” 70 and Keym, “Mosaic Form,” 190. Boulez and Stockhausen’s criticisms of Messiaen’s forms contrast with their generally favorable opinions of Messiaen as an instructor, evidenced in part in Boulez’s Preface to *Traité*.

<sup>225</sup> Healey, “Form,” 164, and Boswell-Kurc, *Critical Reception*, 39.

<sup>226</sup> Bruhn, *Messiaen’s Contemplations*, 146.

<sup>227</sup> Ibid.

A quick scan of the twenty poems of *L'Âme* reveals five basic forms—through-composed, strophic, very short, and sectional poems.<sup>228</sup> The ninth poem is the longest of the set and a fusion of poetic-structural forms. It contains two large, essentially non-strophic sections. The second is in two parts, as evidenced by the formatting of the second part of the second section. The only other long, sectional, non-strophic poems are the first and the thirteenth. These two poems neatly surround the second and twelfth, the only through-composed poems of the set. The thirteenth poem marks a notable point in the cycle—the birth of the child. Sauvage addresses the final seven poems to the child outside the womb.

Scholars have proposed three general ideas regarding Messiaen's local forms. One theory defines Messiaen's structures alongside his rhythmic innovations, similar to other composers active before the Second World War.<sup>229</sup> Another hypothesis is to see the stasis of his forms in conjunction with his aim to reflect the timelessness of a never-ending God.<sup>230</sup> This connection between form and religious considerations also relates to the notion of *éblouissement* discussed in the previous chapter. This dazzling music often features dramatic textural variations and repetitions, fragmenting and shattering structure to provide a window to the sublime spirit.<sup>231</sup> The notion of *éblouissement* also calls upon the transcendent and evokes the unimaginable.<sup>232</sup> The *Vingt Regards*

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<sup>228</sup> See Appendix 2 for formal details of *L'Âme*.

<sup>229</sup> Healey, "Form," 180. See especially Alban Berg in this respect.

<sup>230</sup> *Ibid.*, 184.

<sup>231</sup> von Maas, "*Éblouissement*," 86-87.

<sup>232</sup> *Ibid.*, 87 and 98.

includes contemplations of the immaterial, like the heights, time, and silence, as well as the ineffable, like the Exchange and the Awesome Uncion.

A third formal theory compares Messiaen's varied repetition of short contrasting units to a mosaic.<sup>233</sup> In a style similar to other French composers, such as Couperin and Satie, Messiaen adapts and reconfigures the components of refrain and rondo models. Messiaen's brief discussion of form in *Technique* supports this idea. Using illustrations primarily from plainchant, Messiaen demonstrates some of the formal options possible with the creative varied repetition of musical sections.<sup>234</sup> Because of its indirect, multi-faceted, and unpredictable nature, mosaic form creates a sense of timelessness which connects back to spiritual ideas.<sup>235</sup>

The structures of the individual poems of *L'Âme* provide an original option for understanding the local forms of the *Vingt Regards*. Roughly half of the poems of *L'Âme* suggest strophic or sectional forms.<sup>236</sup> Sauvage's strophes employ consistent rhyme schemes within a single poem, though the number of strophes varies throughout the cycle.<sup>237</sup> Approximately eight of the movements of the *Vingt Regards* also possess strophic or sectional forms. In *Traité*, Messiaen labels the form of the fourteenth movement as five strophes and the form of the seventeenth movement as two strophes, surrounded by an introduction and coda.<sup>238</sup> The structures of the first and fifth

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<sup>233</sup> Keym, "Mosaic Form," 189.

<sup>234</sup> Ibid., 191.

<sup>235</sup> Ibid., 195.

<sup>236</sup> See especially Poems 3, 10, and 20, since they separate the strophes into larger sections.

<sup>237</sup> Sauvage uses a b b a, a a b b, and a b a b rhyme schemes in *L'Âme*.

<sup>238</sup> Messiaen, *Traité*, 2:477 and 483.

movements are also strophic, since the complete *Theme of God* (Example 3.2) contains two strophes followed by a codetta.<sup>239</sup> Movements eight, ten, eleven, and fifteen also possess sectional forms.<sup>240</sup>

In addition to the many strophic or sectional forms, both *L'Âme* and the *Vingt Regards* have works which are through-composed, or unipartite. Sauvage's second and twelfth poems are similar to Messiaen's movements seven and twelve. The division of these particular poems into sentences compares to the division of these musical movements into large phrases.

A significant comparison may be made between Messiaen's thirteenth movement and his mother's eleventh. *Noël* is a regular rondo, with four refrains alternating with three episodes, the third a varied return of the first.<sup>241</sup> Messiaen labels Delbos's setting of Sauvage's eleventh poem a "melancholic rondo in which the third appearance of the refrain—for the piano alone—is reduced to its last bars."<sup>242</sup> This poem is unique amongst those of *L'Âme* in its repeat of the opening strophe, lending support to Delbos's formal choice.

The largest works of both *L'Âme* and the *Vingt Regards* also possess formal similarities. The sixth and final movements of the *Vingt Regards* are unique for their use of so-called traditional forms: fugue in the sixth movement, and sonata form in the

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<sup>239</sup> Strophe 1: m. 1-8, Strophe 2: m. 1-12, Coda: m. 13-15.

<sup>240</sup> Healey, "Form," 173.

<sup>241</sup> Bruhn, *Messiaen's Contemplations*, 209. This is supported by Messiaen, *Traité*, 2:473-477. Rogosin's understanding differs. See *Aspects*, 200 and 203.

<sup>242</sup> Sauvage, "*L'Âme*," 278.

last.<sup>243</sup> The sixth movement contains two large sections—a seven-part palindromic portion, followed by a concluding section.<sup>244</sup> The overall form of the last movement consists of an exposition, a contrasting section, a recapitulation, another contrasting episode, and a concluding portion marked by the return of the complete *Theme of God*.<sup>245</sup> Messiaen describes the form as simply a large development followed by a large exposition.<sup>246</sup> Either way, the return of the complete *Theme of God* marks an important structural point in the movement. Both movements resemble the ninth poem in *L'Âme* described earlier, with its two large, varied sections.

Whether or not the formal comparisons between *L'Âme* and the *Vingt Regards* are intentional, careful consideration of Messiaen's musical forms and Sauvage's poetic forms is an innovative way to approach this oft-overlooked and criticized element of Messiaen's musical language. While there are certainly “modern” and inventive elements to his language—the unusual treatment of rhythm, meter, and mode—one should also consider his “romantic” side, with the concern for love and nature, the use of cyclical themes, his resolve to pursue a true artistic course, and the influence of poetry on his musical forms.<sup>247</sup>

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<sup>243</sup> I am always hesitant to refer to “fugue” as a form, since it is more of a device or process, but the use of the term here is hopefully less problematic when comparing this movement (and its fugal basis) to others in the *Vingt Regards*. Messiaen also calls the work a fugue in his commentary and labels devices such as the entries of the subject and countersubject in the music.

<sup>244</sup> Bruhn, *Messiaen's Contemplations*, 257. Healey summarizes it as “Exposition, Middle, Exposition retrograde, Fugal stretto, Final section” in “Form,” 167. In this assessment, the first three sections make up the first division, and the last two form the concluding segment.

<sup>245</sup> Bruhn, *Messiaen's Contemplations*, 272-274.

<sup>246</sup> Messiaen, *Traité*, 2:493.

<sup>247</sup> Dingle, *Messiaen*, 32.

## MAURICE TOESCA AND *LES DOUZE REGARDS*

A series of events connects the *Vingt Regards* and Maurice Toesca's *Les Douze Regards*. Messiaen and Toesca, a philosophy teacher and poet who lived from 1904 to 1998, received separate commissions to write music and text for a Radio France broadcast.<sup>248</sup> Henry Barraud, a notable figure in the French résistance, was head of music at Radio France at the time. Toesca, on the other hand, worked throughout the occupation as a government official, making him a collaborator.<sup>249</sup> The two artists worked independently on this project throughout the spring and summer of 1944. Toesca finished his portion in late July. Messiaen had completed only eleven *Regards* by that time, according to notes in Toesca's journals. Messiaen finished the *Vingt Regards* in September. Toesca attended a private performance of the *Vingt Regards* that month and later praised the work as a "magnificent tonal illustration" for his *Douze Regards*.<sup>250</sup>

The Radio France commission for a combined performance of Messiaen's music and Toesca's text never took place, though both men's journals convey other intriguing prospects. Toesca envisioned a deluxe edition, with his words, Messiaen's music, and illustrations by Rouault and Picasso.<sup>251</sup> Messiaen's journals indicate a meeting with Toesca and others in November 1944 to edit the *Vingt Regards* to fit Toesca's work.

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<sup>248</sup> Much of this information comes from Edward Forman, "'L'Harmonie de l'Univers': Maurice Toesca and the genesis of *Vingt Regards sur l'enfant-Jésus*," in *Music, Art, Literature*, 13-23.

<sup>249</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.

<sup>250</sup> Seifert, *Vingt Regards*, 119.

<sup>251</sup> Dingle, *Messiaen*, 85.

Messiaen also considered orchestrating the *Vingt Regards*.<sup>252</sup> In the end, it appears that Messiaen's mention of Toesca in the preface of the *Vingt Regards* was, as Forman states, a "generous gesture rather than a sincere expression of debt."<sup>253</sup>

In August 1949, Toesca approached artist and composer Michel Ciry (b. 1919) about his multimedia aspirations. Ciry's visual works have been displayed internationally at prominent museums and shows, and his musical compositions include works for solo piano, saxophone and piano, string orchestra, and one symphony. Ciry was an outspoken opponent of Messiaen's music in the late 1940s. As a result of their joint venture, Ciry developed a close friendship with Maurice and his wife Simone Toesca. Throughout the fall of 1951, Ciry worked on both etchings and music to accompany Toesca's text. He eventually completed music for two pianos, percussion, winds, and low strings, which debuted on December 25, 1951 on Radio France, alongside Toesca's text.<sup>254</sup> 150 copies of Toesca's text and Ciry's etchings were later published as *La Nativité* in 1957 by Marcel Sautier.<sup>255</sup> The change in collaborators—from Messiaen to Ciry—likely affected the change of title for the Toesca/Ciry publication.

*La Nativité* is a poignant embellishment of the Christmas stories found in the New Testament gospels of Matthew and Luke. In the uncomplicated words and

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<sup>252</sup> Simeone and Hill, *Messiaen*, 141.

<sup>253</sup> Forman, "Genesis," 20.

<sup>254</sup> Substantial efforts to obtain this musical score, or a recording of it, from the Bibliothèque Nationale de France and Radio France archives, were unsuccessful.

<sup>255</sup> Seifert, *Vingt Regards*, 4-5. This seems to be the only location for this material.

innocent wonder of the characters, Toesca dramatizes the contrast between the miraculousness of the events and the simplicity of the beings that were there.

The work begins with Joseph and Mary talking and resting under the stars on their way to Bethlehem.<sup>256</sup> After they arrive at the stable, a herdsman, his wife, and his daughter come to speak with them. Mary takes the time to tell these visitors of her work back in Nazareth spinning wool and weaving tapestries.<sup>257</sup>

Toesca's work features sustained conversations between an ox and a donkey in the stable. This blend of the natural and spiritual realms was typical of late-nineteenth century French symbolist writers.<sup>258</sup>

“Bonsoir, Anesse.”  
“Bonsoir, Bœuf. Excusez-moi: mes maîtres me poussent contre vous.”  
“Tant mieux, nous aurons plus chaud.”  
“Vous êtes un bon bœuf, et je me ferai aussi petite ânesse que possible.”  
“Vous devez être très fatiguée.”  
“Eh bien! J’aurais cru l’être davantage: j’ai porté ma maîtresse qui est là, depuis Nazareth, mais elle est légère comme elle ne l’a jamais été jusqu’à présent.”

“Hello, Donkey.”  
“Hello, Ox. Pardon me: my masters have pushed me against you.”  
“That’s better, we will be warmer.”  
“You are a good ox, and I will also be as pleasant as I can be.”  
“You must be very tired.”  
“Yes! I have been through a lot: I have carried my master, who is over there, from Nazareth, but now she is light like she has not been before.”<sup>259</sup>

In addition to the herdsman and his family mentioned earlier, shepherds and Magi come to worship the newborn Savior. When the shepherds arrive to worship the

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<sup>256</sup> Maurice Toesca and Michel Ciry, *La Nativité* (Paris: Sautier, 1952), 14.

<sup>257</sup> Ibid., 29.

<sup>258</sup> Seifert, *Vingt Regards*, 120.

<sup>259</sup> Toesca and Ciry, *Nativité*, 19-20. Translation by Cole Burger.

infant Jesus, Toesca names two of them Milo and Madras.<sup>260</sup> They excitedly narrate the appearance of first one angel, then a multitude, filling the sky with a white light.<sup>261</sup> The appearance of the Magi closely follows the Biblical account, except when they speak of seeing Herod's blue eyes.<sup>262</sup> All of these people approach Jesus with awe and delight, and Toesca depicts the child as the ultimate blend of human and divine.<sup>263</sup>

After the visitors depart, Toesca's account turns more theological. Some of the sentiments suggested closely compare to those expressed by Marmion in *Christ in His Mysteries*. Again there is an exchange—where the visible meets the invisible, the natural meets the supernatural, and the earthly meets the celestial.<sup>264</sup>

*La Nativité* closes by focusing on the Virgin Mary. In her closing prayer, Mary expresses both wonder and premonition, hope and fear, guidance and the desire to be guided by her Savior.

Tu le verras comme je le vois: ce monde n'est pas beau. On s'y querelle, on s'y bat sans cesse et le plus grand nombre des mort n'y sont pas naturelles. Pas besoin d'aller bien loin: dans notre village à côté de notre maison, et pas plus tard que la semaine dernière...Mais que vais-je te raconter-là? Si tu m'entendais...Eh bien, si tu m'entends, tu sauras que je veux te protéger et tout aussitôt t'instruire. On se defend mieux lorsqu'on sait. Et toi qui déjà peut-être en sait plus long que moi... Ah! Comme j'ai peur pour toi!

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<sup>260</sup> Ibid., 38.

<sup>261</sup> Ibid., 41.

<sup>262</sup> Ibid., 49.

<sup>263</sup> Seifert, *Vingt Regards*, 120.

<sup>264</sup> Toesca and Ciry, *Nativité*, 63.

Mon Dieu, accordez-moi la force de tout supporter comme un  
homage au mystère de l'Incarnation.

Jésus, mon fils, si tu savais comme j'attends ton premier  
regard, le regard de mon enfant!...

You will see it like I see it: this world is not beautiful. We quarrel, we war  
without ceasing, and most of us do not die from natural causes. No need to go  
far—in our village, near our home, and not too long from now... But what am  
I going to tell you? If you could hear me... Yes, if you could hear me, you  
would know that I want to protect you and soon, to teach you. You can defend  
yourself when you know things. And perhaps you already know more than  
me... Ah, how I fear for you!

God, give me strength to support you as great as the gift of the mystery of your  
Incarnation.

Jesus, my son, if you know how I wait for your first gaze, the first  
contemplation of my son!...<sup>265</sup>

Toesca's union of these divergent themes compares to the remarkable musical  
contrast within the *Vingt Regards*—from the extreme slow and quiet of the opening  
movement to the thunderous splashes of chords in the final movement more than two  
hours later. These astonishing contrasts also parallel the disparity between the uplifting  
*Vingt Regards* and the dark historical shadow World War II casts upon the time and  
place of its composition.

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<sup>265</sup> Ibid., 67. Translation by Cole Burger.

## CONCLUSION

This treatise has reviewed the current research on Messiaen and the *Vingt Regards* and explored new avenues for the benefit of performers, scholars, and enthusiasts. The opening chapter offered a brief biography of Messiaen and noted the cultural, historical, and musical context in which he lived.

The second chapter examined Messiaen's two theoretical treatises and their connections to the *Vingt Regards*. Both *Le Technique de mon Langage Musicale* and the *Traité de Rythme, de Couleur, et d'Ornithologie* thoroughly describe a one-of-a-kind approach to rhythm, melody, and harmony, and detail influences from a wide variety of sources. They also explain numerous technical devices Messiaen frequently employs, such as Hindu rhythms, augmented or diminished rhythms, nonretrogradable rhythms, rhythmic canons, modes of limited transposition, overlapping of modes, and sound/color associations. Because the composition of the *Vingt Regards* falls between the writing of these two works, this chapter also discussed historical events that happened around this time. The abundance of information Messiaen provided about his compositional style is both helpful and incomplete, leaving more to be questioned and revealed.

The third chapter of this document detailed the influence of Messiaen's unwavering Roman Catholic faith on the *Vingt Regards*. Religious considerations included Biblical references, cyclical themes, and other symbolic concerns. Discussion also focused on the theological connections between the *Vingt Regards* and Dom

Columba Marmion's *Christ dans ses mystères*. Additionally, Messiaen's faith and compositional approach related to issues from both before and after the *Vingt Regards*.

The impact of literature, the subject of the fourth chapter, is evident in many aspects of Messiaen's life. Messiaen's father and brother have connections to literature. Messiaen often spoke of the deep influence of his mother and the set of poems she composed while pregnant with him, *L'Âme en bourgeon*. The poetry has many thematic links with the *Vingt Regards*. In addition to his familial background, Messiaen was an avid reader and writer. Both the theoretical texts and the pre-movement commentaries provide helpful information about the music he describes, though they have also been the object of criticism. Messiaen's first composition, based on a Tennyson poem, began this chapter's discussion of a link between poetry and musical form. While Messiaen's musical forms may relate to his rhythmic processes or the concept of a mosaic, the global and local structures of the *Vingt Regards* may instead derive from poetic forms found in his mother's *L'Âme en bourgeon*, an investigative angle not previously considered. One final literary consideration is the effect of Maurice Toesca's *Les Douze Regards*. The relationship between Toesca's poetry and Messiaen's music may only be coincidental, but *Les Douze Regards* provides a fascinating thematic and historical backdrop for the genesis of the *Vingt Regards*. For the moment, the comparison between Messiaen's monumental work and Michel Ciry's on the same text remains unknown.

The entire treatise illustrates many amalgamations of analytical, religious, and literary considerations related to Messiaen and the *Vingt Regards*. The biography introduced the problem of assessing Messiaen's interviews and writings, later evident in both his omissions from *Traité* and his oft-uttered statement that he was born Catholic. The analytical and religious realms interact in the nuances of the sound/color discussions of *Traité* and the references to plainchant in Messiaen's *Vingt Regards* analysis. The religious and literary spheres combine when considering the strong influence of the Bible and Dom Columba Marmion on the *Vingt Regards*. Connecting Messiaen's musical forms to his mother's poetic structures is an example of how literary and analytical matters overlap.

Many intriguing unresolved issues exist for scholars of Messiaen and the *Vingt Regards*. Considering Messiaen's place in twentieth-century music, and as an influence in the twenty-first, will be promising and more feasible in the years ahead.<sup>266</sup> Assessments of how the *Vingt Regards* serve as beginning, middle, and culmination of the evolution of various compositional devices merits additional study, drawing from the wealth of information found in *Traité*. More general explanation is also necessary for *Traité* as a whole, such as unearthing the sources of Messiaen's various influences and references. A more detailed investigation of how the *Vingt Regards* may have initiated Messiaen's thoughts on *éblouissement* is also worthy of further consideration.

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<sup>266</sup> English musicologist Arnold Whittall provides a recent assessment of Messiaen's place in twentieth-century music in "Messiaen and Twentieth-Century Music," in *Messiaen Studies*, 232-253.

Other prospects stem from the historical significance of the time of the composition of the *Vingt Regards*.

Regardless of the angles pursued in the years ahead, the *Vingt Regards* remains two-and-a-half hours of piano music on the birth of a Savior, written in occupied Paris by a former prisoner-of-war. May Messiaen's faith strengthen the performer who attempts this grand work, the scholar who seeks to find another perspective, and the enthusiast who enjoys another colorful moment in the world he left a more harmonious place.

## **APPENDIX 1. Translated Movement Titles**

- I. The Father's Contemplation (of the infant Jesus)
- II. The Star's Contemplation
- III. The Exchange
- IV. The Virgin's Contemplation
- V. The Son's Contemplation of the Son
- VI. By Him All Things Were Made
- VII. The Cross's Contemplation
- VIII. The Heights' Contemplation
- IX. Time's Contemplation
- X. The Spirit of Joy's Contemplation
- XI. The Virgin's First Communion
- XII. The All-Powerful Word
- XIII. Christmas
- XIV. The Angels' Contemplation
- XV. The Kiss of the Infant Jesus
- XVI. The Prophets, Shepherds, and Magi's Contemplation
- XVII. Silence's Contemplation
- XVIII. The Awesome Anointing's Contemplation
- XIX. I sleep, but my heart awakes
- XX. The Church of Love's Contemplation

## APPENDIX 2. *L'Âme en Bourgeon* Poetic Forms

Title	Form
I. Nature, laisse-moi...	2 long through-composed sections
II. Voilà que je me sens...	Through-composed
III. Ai-je pu t'appeler...	6 strophes
IV. La tête	2 short sections, with closing line at end of poem
V. Enfant, pale embryon	17 strophes
VI. Tu tettes le lait pur...	14 strophes
VII. N'es-tu pas dans mon sein...	8 strophes
VIII. Mon cœur revient à son printemps	11 strophes
IX. Viens, je veux t'expliquer...	2 long sections, the second of which contains two indentation styles
X. L'Agneau...	2 sections of 3 and 10 strophes
XI. Te voilà hors de l'alvéole...	9 strophes
XII. On te mit à côté de moi...	Through-composed
XIII. Il est né...	2 long through-composed sections
XIV. Je savais que ce serait toi...	9 strophes
XV. O fruit sauvage et vert...	6 lines
XVI. Te voilà, mon petit amant...	2 short through-composed sections
XVII. La tasse...	6 strophes
XVIII. L'abeille...	8 strophes
XIX. Si la lune rose venait...	8 lines
XX. La sauterelle...	3 sections of 2, 5, and 4 strophes

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