

A Hidden Theology: Pitch Association and
Symbolism in Olivier Messiaen's
Méditations sur le Mystère de la Sainte Trinité

by

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Abstract

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Adviser: Professor Philip Lambert

Messiaen's *Méditations sur le Mystère de la Sainte Trinité* (1969) was a late work written for organ solo. The composition developed from Messiaen's improvisations, performed alongside Trinitarian sermon-lectures at La Trinité in Paris. The most unique aspect of this composition is the literal language (music-alphabet and leitmotif grammar—nouns, verbs, and cases) Messiaen developed for the piece. Messiaen described this as his *langage communicable* “communicable language.”

Messiaen created this language to convey specific theological ideas about the Trinity. Each meditation exists to communicate Christian theology from specific texts (biblical and non-biblical). There are many types of leitmotif and each employs these texts in different ways. Because of this, the analysis accounts for both musical and written relationships.

Because Messiaen attaches symbolic meaning to his leitmotifs, not simply his modes, a study focusing solely on the pitch aspect is needed to compare how these leitmotifs inter-relate. The study of pitch transformation, relationship, and resultant communication is a logical research departure for this unique composition. Through this

investigation, the understanding of Messiaen's leitmotivic associations will further unveil the depth of his communicable language and its theological message.

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Fifth, and lastly, I would like to thank God. You showed me my faults and filled them with your love, you laid down your life that I may have life and life abundantly, you have done all these things and yet you are more humble than a servant. May your name be praised above the heavens and may the Glory of your son Jesus be known in all the world.

AUTHOR'S NOTES

Examples from the *Méditations sur le Mystère de la Sainte Trinité* are reproduced by kind permission from Alphonse Leduc and Cie, owner and publisher for all countries, Paris, France.

For reference purposes please read the following:

1) Since the preface pages are unpaginated, I have taken the liberty to number them. The manuscript begins on page 8, so I numbered backwards from there. The preface is now pages 3-5 and the title page is page 1.

2) Locations in the score will be determined by this system: page/system/measure/(chord or note). For example, p.8/S4/m.3/(chord 2) = page 8/system 4/measure 3/ (chord number 2). Note, not all information is listed each time, only what is necessary for identification is provided.

The French quotations without reference are Messiaen's words from the *Méditations*. The English translation is largely from Appendix A in Andrew Shenton's PhD dissertation, "The Unspoken Word: Olivier Messiaen's 'Langage Communicable'" (Harvard University, 1998).

CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	iv
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	vi
AUTHOR'S NOTES	vii
EXAMPLES	ix
Chapter 1. Introduction to <i>Méditations sur le Mystère de la Sainte Trinité</i>	1
Chapter 2. Analysis of <i>Méditation I</i>	30
Chapter 3. Analysis of <i>Méditation IV</i>	72
Chapter 4. Analysis of <i>Méditation VIII</i>	113
CONCLUSION	151
APPENDICES	
Appendix A: Preface to the <i>Méditations</i>	157
Appendix B: Annotated Score of <i>Méditation I</i>	160
Appendix C: Annotated Score of <i>Méditation IV</i>	167
Appendix D: Annotated Score of <i>Méditation VIII</i>	174
BIBLIOGRAPHY	180

EXAMPLES

Chapter 1

Example 1.1: “Christian Magic Square,” according to Messiaen	8
Example 1.2: Messiaen’s musical alphabet	17
Example 1.3: Latin declension motives	18
Example 1.4: Auxiliary verb motives	18
Example 1.5: <i>Thème de Dieu</i> leitmotif	18
Example 1.6: <i>Père</i> , <i>Fils</i> , and <i>Saint Esprit</i> leitmotifs	19
Example 1.7: <i>Être</i> and <i>Père</i> leitmotifs	21
Example 1.8: <i>Avoir</i> and <i>Fils</i> leitmotifs	22

Chapter 2

Example 2.1: ET-1 and <i>Père</i> leitmotif	39
Example 2.2: ET-2, <i>Père</i> and <i>Fils</i> leitmotifs	40
Example 2.3: ET-2, <i>Père</i> and <i>Fils</i> leitmotifs	40
Example 2.4: V1-1 plus V1-2 and V1-8	42
Example 2.5: ET-1, V1-3, and A/D case	42
Example 2.6: <i>Fils</i> leitmotif, V1-5, V1-9, V1-10, <i>Avoir</i> leitmotif, and G/A/L case	42
Example 2.7: Cryptic Message in V1 accompaniment (RH)	45
Example 2.8: ET-1, ET-2, and ET-3 sets and subsets on p. 10 of score	57
Example 2.9: ET-1, ET-2, and ET-3 sets and subsets on p. 11 of score	58
Example 2.10: ET-1, ET-2, and ET-3 sets and subsets on p. 12 of score	59
Example 2.11: TN(RH) and TN(LH) chords relating to CR-chords	64
Example 2.12: CR-chords and UN-1	68
Example 2.13: V2-chords and UN-2 plus UN-3	68
Example 2.14: V2-chords and UN-4	69
Example 2.15: V2-chords and UN-5 (UN-6, UN-8 also included)	69
Example 2.16: TN-chords and UN-7	69
Example 2.17: All UN-chords and UN-10	70

Chapter 3

Example 3.1: MP motive	76
Example 3.2: MP-chords, G_MP-1, and G_MP-2	77
Example 3.3: G_MP-1 plus G_MP-2, MP-1 plus MP-2, and G_MP-3	77
Example 3.4: MP-3 to MP-5 and G_MP-4 to G_MP-7	78
Example 3.5: CT-1 to CT-6	79
Example 3.6: CT-1, CT-3, and CT-5 with G_CT-1 and G_CT-2	80
Example 3.7: G_MP-1 and G_MP-2, CT-3 and CT-6, and G_CT-1 through G_CT-3	81
Example 3.8: CT-1 through CT-4 plus CT-6 and G_CT-4 to G_CT-10	82
Example 3.9: CT-1, CT-3 through CT-5 and G_CT-11 to G_CT-13; p. 34/S2/m.3	82

Chapter 3 (cont'd)

Example 3.10: PN-1 through PN-9	83
Example 3.11: PN-1 to PN-7, and G_PN-1 to G_PN-5	84
Example 3.12: M7 subsets from G_PN and PN	85
Example 3.13: G_PN-7 through G_PN-10	85
Example 3.14: Râgavardhana rhythmic cell	93
Example 3.15: <i>Père</i> -Evoke with râgavardhana rhythm	94
Example 3.16: Pratâpaçekhara rhythmic cell	94
Example 3.17: <i>Fils</i> -Evoke with pratâpaçekhara rhythm	95
Example 3.18: Simhavikrama rhythmic cell	95
Example 3.19: <i>Esprit</i> -Evoke with simhavikrama rhythm	95
Example 3.20: <i>Père</i> -Orig and <i>Père</i> -Evoke	96
Example 3.21: <i>Fils</i> -Orig and <i>Fils</i> -Evoke	96
Example 3.22: <i>Esprit</i> -Orig and <i>Esprit</i> -Evoke	97
Example 3.23: Tr-1 through Tr-5	100
Example 3.24: Tr-2 to JS-2, Tr-5 to JS-3, and JS-3 to JS-5	103
Example 3.25: Tr-1 to JS-7, and Tr-2 to JS-8 (and JS-2)	104
Example 3.26: Tr-4 to JS-9 (and JS-3), and Tr-2 to JS-10	104
Example 3.27: G_TS-1 and JS-11 through JS-14	105
Example 3.28: G_TS-1 to JS-15, and JS-15 through JS-18	106
Example 3.29: JS-10 to JS-19 to JS-20, and JS-10 plus Tr-2 to JS-21 to JS-22	107
Example 3.30: JS-3 to JS-23, JS-6 to JS-24, JS-1 to JS-25, JS-2 to JS-26	107
Example 3.31: JS-15, JS-20 to JS-27 and CT-6	108
Example 3.32: Jean Lurçat's <i>L'Homme en Gloire dans la Paix</i>	112

Chapter 4

Example 4.1: <i>Trois</i> -chords	115
Example 4.2: <i>Trois</i> -chords and BM-3 to BM-5	118
Example 4.3: Rom-6 and BM-1 through BM-2	118
Example 4.4: Romotif	119
Example 4.5: Romotif-A	120
Example 4.6: Romotif-B	120
Example 4.7: Romotif-C	120
Example 4.8: G/A/L and Romotif-A	121
Example 4.9: A/D and Romotif-B	121
Example 4.10: A/D cadence and Romotif-C	121
Example 4.11: Rom-chords	124
Example 4.12: Ps-1 through Ps-4	125
Example 4.13: Shared pitches between Rom-1 and Ps-1	125
Example 4.14: Rom-3 and Ps-2	126
Example 4.15: Rom-5 and Ps-4	127
Example 4.16: Ps-1 to Ps-4 compared with Ps-5 to Ps-8	128
Example 4.17: Ps-1 and Ps-2 to Ps-9 through Ps-14	130
Example 4.18: Ps-4 and Ps-15	130

Chapter 4 (cont'd)

Example 4.19: Ps-4 and Ps-15 through Ps-17	132
Example 4.20: Ps-17 to Ps-25	133
Example 4.21: Ps-1 and Ps-4 to Ps-26 through Ps-29	134
Example 4.22: Ps-11 and Ps-15 to Ps-30 through Ps-34	136
Example 4.23: Ps-1 and Ps-35	137
Example 4.24: Ps-36 through Ps-39 and Ps-40 through Ps-43	138
Example 4.25: Ps-36 and Ps-44	138
Example 4.26: Linear aspect of Ps-36 through Ps-39 and Ps-40 through Ps-43	140
Example 4.27: Ps-44 through Ps-55, p. 75/S3	141
Example 4.28: Ps-56 through Ps-59	142
Example 4.29: Mt-Group 1	145
Example 4.30: Mt-Group 2	146
Example 4.31: Ps-15 through Ps-17 and Mt-Group 2	148
Example 4.32: Ps-30 through Ps-34 and Mt-2 with Mt-5 through Mt-7	149

CHAPTER 1
Introduction to Messiaen's
Méditations sur le Mystère de la Sainte Trinité

Messiaen and the *Méditations*

A brief biography of Olivier Messiaen (1908–1992)

Olivier Messiaen was a devout Christian his entire life and his faith profoundly influenced his composing.¹ According to Messiaen, from a very young age he had a knowledge and experience of God that was independent of church exposure. In a similar vein, Messiaen's fascination with sound and music also began independently.²

His formal music training began at an early age, attending the Paris Conservatoire and studying with many well-known teachers. His most influential teachers were Marcel Dupré (organ), who demonstrated organ virtuosity, Maurice Emmanuel (history), who taught Christian liturgy and Greek meters and modes, and Paul Dukas (composition), who, along with Dupré, influenced Messiaen towards modality. His teachers' many influences were important to the development of Messiaen's musical and faith-oriented language.

Messiaen left the Conservatoire in 1931 and began working as the organist at *La Trinité* in Paris. His dedication to this church was unwavering as Messiaen himself described:

I am . . . attached to my post as Sunday organist . . . almost like a priest . . . During the Service I participate in the unfolding mystery . . . [of] the bread and the wine,

¹ The following biographical account is largely attributed to Griffiths, "Messiaen, Olivier." In *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online*.

² According to Loriod, Messiaen, at 18 months, was out in a stroller with his mother. Upon hearing the sound of a bird, Messiaen angrily threw down his bottle and raised his hand up, indicating that his mother should be quiet and listen to the bird. See Hill, "Interview with Yvonne Loriod," 297.

that which is transubstantiation. The Holy Sacrament is present as I improvise and I know that in this situation, what I do is better here than in concert.³

Messiaen did not separate his career from his faith. As he participated whole-heartedly in his church duties so also did he work to bring his faith directly into his compositions.

Messiaen's experiences during World War II affected him profoundly, changing both his life and his creative direction. After the war began, France enlisted Messiaen for military duties and by 1940 he had become a prisoner of war. Amid these dreadful circumstances, Messiaen still composed music about his Christian faith. While in captivity, Messiaen composed his well-known *Quatour pour le fin du temps*, a work that prominently displayed the subjects of eternity, liturgy, and praise of Jesus Christ.

In 1941 he was released and given an appointment to teach harmony (and later composition) at the Conservatoire. Messiaen's influence as a teacher was great, attracting a talented list of pupils that included Boulez, Xenakis, Benjamin, Goehr and many others. He remained a fixture of composition and creativity until his retirement in 1978.

Throughout his life, Messiaen remained a dedicated follower of Christ. His child-like faith led to a life-long curiosity and study of God's creation. From Messiaen's birdcall studies to his sound-color investigations the goal was the same: to reveal the majesty and truth of God to others through the medium of sound. As Loriod said, "He celebrated all the mysteries of Christ and now his music speaks to those who, without knowing it, have need of faith."⁴

³ Attributed to publication *Caecilia* (January-February 1993) of the Diocese of Strasbourg, found in Kars, "The Works of Olivier Messiaen and the Catholic Liturgy," 326.

⁴ Hill, "Interview with Yvonne Loriod," 303.

Messiaen's Organ Works and Development of the language communicable

Messiaen's major organ works were dispersed throughout his career. The early organ works (pre-1945) display three major elements that define Messiaen's style. The first element is slow harmonic rhythm, featured in *Le banquet céleste* (1928) and *Apparition de l'église éternelle* (1932). The second element is virtuosity, as found in 'Transports de joie' from *L'Ascension* (1933-4) and 'Dieu parmi nous' from *La Nativité* (1935). The third element is timbral experimentation. In fact, it is Messiaen's experimentation in general that leads the way forward in his compositional development. John Milsom writes that the "organ articulation instructions" (e.g. "cavernous staccatos") and the experimental vocal timbres of "the snarling solo Bassoon" in *Jésus accepte la souffrance (La Nativité)*, are influential to the development of "the organ pieces of the 1950s, most obviously in the Offertoire of the *Messe de la Pentecôte*."⁵

All three features remain in Messiaen's organ works beyond 1945, but his use of experimentation is the most developmental feature. Together, the Tristan works of 1945-48 (*Harawi*, *Turangalîla Symphonie*, and *Cinq rechants*), the piano work *Mode de valeurs et d'intensités*, (written at Darmstadt in 1949), and *Cantéyodjayâ* (also in 1949) constitute a Messiaen middle period, due to their use of experimental procedures. Milsom keenly observes that Messiaen's development of experimentation was not all that different from that of composers who experimented with serialist or electronic means:

In both there is an urge to escape from conventions of instrumental and orchestral colour, to discover sounds that had never been heard before, to investigate registral

⁵ Milsom, "Organ Music I," 67.

extremities, to suspend time through musical motionlessness; above all to dislocate the listener through unfamiliarity, and evoke the unknown or unknowable.⁶

The late organ works (post-1945) display features that echo Messiaen's middle period of experimentation. As mentioned above, the *Messe de la Pentecôte* drew much from timbral experimentation. Additionally, portions of the *Livre d'orgue*'s methodical organization reflected similar construction as found in Messiaen's *Quatre études de rythme*. Though Messiaen experimented briefly with serialism in these works, he also created his own methods of pitch organization in reaction to his serialist colleagues.⁷

The epitome of Messiaen's experimentation came with the invention of his *langage communicable*, a device employed in his last two published organ works, *Méditations* (1969) and *Livre du Saint Sacrement* (1984).⁸ This *langage* is Messiaen's pitch experiment to create leitmotifs that form a literal grammar, replete with alphabet, verbs, Latin cases, and nouns. Examples of this experimentation in the *Livre* include the music-alphabet spelling of the Aramaic words “*Mene, Teke, Parsa!*”⁹ (from the book of Daniel) and the Greek words “*Agios o Theos, . . . Agios ischyros, . . . [and] Agios athanatos*” (referencing the Trisagion, a hymn from the liturgy for Good Friday).¹⁰ In the *Méditations* the music-alphabet is reserved for the texts of Aquinas's *Summa Theologica*.

⁶ Milsom, “Organ Music I,” 70-71.

⁷ Messiaen's turn away from serialism (even as he turned toward his own methods of pitch organization – most notably “interversion”) led to criticism among his serialist colleagues and pupils. See Shenton, *Olivier Messiaen's System of Signs*, 39-40. As Messiaen states in the liner notes for the DG recording of *Saint François*, p. 24 “Dodecaphony, serial music, atonal music, the result is the same: music without colour, grey and black. Except to express a terrible feeling of fear and anxiety, I see no emotion in this language, which sought to abolish resonance. I'm afraid that a love of music is missing from such a world.”

⁸ Messiaen's *langage* also appears in *Des Canyons aux étoiles*, a non-organ work.

⁹ These words are from the book of Daniel, appearing mysteriously on a wall and prophesying the downfall of King Belshazzar, the last ruler of the Babylonian empire. (See Lawrence, *The IVP Atlas of Bible History*, 110.)

¹⁰ Shenton, *Olivier Messiaen's System of Signs*, 129-130.

A short explanation of the *langage* is found in the *Méditations* preface. Messiaen's explanation begins with an alphabet, letters mapped onto specific pitches and durations. This music-alphabet is used to spell music-words in his composition; when employed, the letters are spelled along side the pitches in the score. The next features of his *langage* are motives that function grammatically: noun motives (e.g., a member of the Trinity), verb motives (e.g., *être* – to be), and declension motives (e.g., genitive case). Additionally, many other motives exist that are not listed in the preface. These depict nouns or conditions that are part of a specific meditation's theology (e.g., God is Simple).

Messiaen's *langage* experimentation had a special goal: to convey word-specific Trinitarian ideas using only sound. In the scope of Messiaen's previous experiments this was by far the most ambitious. Each of the nine meditations seeks to communicate distinct aspects of Trinitarian theology based on a variety of text sources. Messiaen employs words from these sources as topical frames for each meditation and the various leitmotifs reference ideas from these text sources. However, one final question remains for Messiaen's special experiment: Is this cryptic communication effective?

Organist Gillian Weir asks the same question more practically: "Are we expected, as listeners, to translate this? Effectively, Messiaen says 'Yes,' and implies that even without knowing its title or composer future listeners will be able to deduce his basic beliefs from the music."¹¹ Weir then wrestles with the validity of Messiaen's expectation, discussing the effectiveness of word communication versus music communication. She concludes that words, after all, are the "shapes of thought," trying to convey and express what they often cannot. Music, however, can "reach below the surface to the original untrammelled thought" and immediately be processed by the ear, heart, and mind of the

¹¹ Weir, "Organ Music II," 375.

listener.¹² Music communication is, after all, closest to the concept of revelation, a spirit-based form of communication that validates Messiaen's cryptic pursuit.

In the ears of this analyst, Messiaen's communication is possible, though perhaps it is rare in accomplishing its task. Upon first hearings of Messiaen's *Méditations*, familiarity with Messiaen's works and knowledge of the bible enabled a general embrace of Messiaen's theological concepts. However, something was also occurring beneath the surface, a spiritual feeding that closely resembled experiences of personal prayer or bible study. This sensation of spiritual communication from Messiaen's music led to an exploration of what was occurring beneath the surface. Messiaen intended for a listener to "deduce basic beliefs" through just such an experience, an experience that leads to a search of what, why, and how the revelation occurred. In the ears of this listener, Messiaen's communication accomplished its task and did so through its contribution of both written and music-spiritual communication.

Composition and Purpose of the Méditations

As described previously, Olivier Messiaen's career focused almost exclusively on sacred Christian music. His vision was to be the creator of a special realm of music:

a *true* music . . . which may be an act of faith . . . [and] which may touch upon all subjects without ceasing to touch upon God; . . . whose language may open a few doors, take down some yet distant stars. . . . To express with a lasting power our prison of flesh, to give to our century the spring water for which it thirsts, there shall have to be a great artist who will be both a great artisan and a great Christian.¹³

¹² Weir, "Organ Music II," 375.

¹³ Messiaen, *The Technique of My Musical Language*, 7 (emphasis original).

These words demonstrate the composer's perspective on the power of music. Throughout his career he demonstrated again and again his ability to create works that broaden and broadcast this message. The *Méditations* are no different in task, though they are different in approach.

Messiaen's compositional idea for the *Méditations* developed from an event that he took part in as an improviser. In November of 1967, *La Trinité* held a special event, *Le Mystère de Dieu*, to celebrate its hundredth anniversary. A well-known speaker, Monsignor Maxime Charles (1908-1993) was their invited guest.¹⁴ Presenting the subject of the Trinity, Charles preached and Messiaen improvised between sections of his speech.¹⁵ Some interesting details from this lecture-sermon-improvisation ended up in the score. Yvonne Loriod reveals a particularly interesting detail from a rehearsal between Messiaen and Monsignor Charles: "Mgr Charles: How will I know when your improvisations are finished? Messiaen: My wife can switch a light on and off or even better, I will finish each improvisation with the song of the yellowhammer: seven repeated notes, followed by a long held note which you'll recognize easily."¹⁶ The yellowhammer motif (occurring at the ends of *Méditation II, V, VIII, and IX*) and other improvisational details developed into the nine-movement *Méditations*.

While these improvised details are indeed interesting, the most unique and experimental aspect of this composition remains the *langage communicable*. Messiaen's creation of these music-cryptic devices developed from a number of personal experiences.

First, the ancient scripts and methods of communication intrigued Messiaen greatly. Experiences viewing Old Persian writing in Persepolis (Iran) and cuneiform writing in

¹⁴ Information provided by the secretary of the Basilique due Sacré-Coeur de Montmartre (Paris).

¹⁵ Hill and Simeone, *Messiaen*, 275.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 275-276.

Egypt led Messiaen to note how the kings' names were labeled. Names such as Xerxes, Darius, Ptolemy, and Thutmosis were enclosed by an oval, a device known as a cartouche.¹⁷ Messiaen was also fascinated with the Egyptologist Champollion,¹⁸ who figured out how to translate the Egyptian cuneiform hieroglyphics.¹⁹ Champollion succeeded in deciphering the Rosetta Stone because he realized that hieroglyphics were phonetic. The signs on the Rosetta Stone mix alphabet, syllabic, and determinative (the idea as expressed before) communication and Champollion grasped these distinctions.²⁰

Second, Messiaen also admired the “Christian magic square,” “a secret message” used by persecuted Christians to “make themselves known” to one another (Example 1.1).²¹ The symbol, discovered in the ruins of Pompeii, communicated many things, among them “the word ‘*tenet*’ which . . . has no retrograde and at the beginning and end of which is the letter ‘t’, symbol of the Cross.” The two words of “Tenet” also form a cross when combined together. “And if one reads the letters in a certain order, it produces ‘*Pater noster*,’” translated “Our Father.”²² Together, these experiences impacted the formulation of Messiaen’s personal script devices, developing the essence of what became the *langage*.

Example 1.1: “Christian Magic Square,” according to Messiaen

R O T A S
O P E R A
T E N E T
A R E P O
S A T O R

¹⁷ Samuel, *Olivier Messiaen: Music and Color*, 132-138.

¹⁸ Champollion was born in Grenoble, the same region where Messiaen grew up. Messiaen enjoyed this geographical connection and would mention this fact in passing when discussing Champollion.

¹⁹ Rößler, *Contributions to the Spiritual World of Olivier Messiaen*, 53-56.

²⁰ Shenton, *Olivier Messiaen’s System of Signs*, 145-6.

²¹ This is not a universally accepted definition, but it was presented by Messiaen in his interview with Rößler.

²² Rößler, *Contributions to the Spiritual World of Olivier Messiaen*, 113-114.

Introduction to this study

Analytical Introduction

The purpose of this dissertation is to analyze the pitch aspect of the leitmotifs that communicate Messiaen's theological texts. The analysis focuses on *Méditations I, IV, and VIII*. Though the leitmotifs appear in various formats, it is the intention of this analyst to view them through the same analytical lense. Many writers have kept these distinctions separate in an attempt to correctly categorize the grammar and function, but none-the-less, all musical communication can be summarized by the word "leitmotif." In this study, all motives accompanied by any written explanation will be analyzed and compared to one another. The only distinguishing characteristics are the meanings themselves. In this analysis, the leitmotifs' pitch relationships and written explanations together create the analytical framework.

This study is primarily analytical. When interesting pitch relationships occur (e.g., a string of similar transpositions), the given leitmotif meanings are compared alongside the pitch findings. Since the pitches in Messiaen's motives symbolically represent an idea, it is assumed that pitch similarity also symbolizes the same idea. It is the same process as when one hears a Wagnerian leitmotif. A particular leitmotif in association with a character is heard in its original context and later on it is heard again, perhaps transposed, in a different context. Since the music is transported to the new context, the associated idea is also transported there. Depending on the new context, the repeated motive may have a similar or different meaning. In this Messiaen study, the tandem findings of pitch relationship and contextual relationship create the analytical result.

The motivic analysis looks at pitch structures (melodic and harmonic) and their various transformations (inversions, retrogrades, rotations, and transpositions) using basic post-tonal analytical tools. Although Messiaen's modes of limited transposition are of great influence in his works, most of Messiaen's motives in the *Méditations* are built from relatively small pitch sets. In small sets, specific mode identification is not always advantageous or helpful. As Allen Forte writes about Messiaen's pitch sets, "it is possible that a given set, having been identified in the course of an analysis, may be found to be resident in more than one mode."²³ This has meaningful implications for motivic studies of Messiaen's music because it means that set comparison does not stop at a modal boundary. Forte also states that, "the characterization of the modes as limited with respect to transposition is inadequate as a description of the mode as a whole, that is, when it is regarded as a source harmony."²⁴ Because of these observations, this study of Messiaen's motives will conduct pitch analysis according to mod12 space, not according to modal definition.²⁵

Though much work has been done with Messiaen's modes, not much has been done on the motives themselves. The most relevant area of previous research deals with how Messiaen's music and theology is interpreted, specifically in light of the information (musical and extra-musical) that Messiaen provides. The seminal studies on Messiaen's *Méditations* are the investigations by Andrew Shenton. His dissertation "The Unspoken Word: Olivier Messiaen's '*Langage Communicable*,'"²⁶ his recent book, *Olivier*

²³ Forte, "Messiaen's Chords," 95.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Although a majority of this study concerns pitch-class space, some areas invite a pitch-space perspective. These might include entire motives that are transposed by the same distance and direction, and motives that are composed using Messiaen's alphabet, in which, for example, C5 and C3 denote different letters of the alphabet.

²⁶ Shenton, "The Unspoken Word: Olivier Messiaen's '*Langage Communicable*.'"

Messiaen's System of Signs,²⁷ and his various Messiaen articles²⁸ are all important resources. In them, Shenton delves into Messiaen's communicable language through linguistic analysis, cognition studies, theological studies, and the history of music cryptography. His works are very thorough in their treatment of the communicable language and have done much to establish hermeneutics for approaching Messiaen's communicable language.

On the whole Shenton deals primarily with how Messiaen's language works and whether or not one can cognitively understand the intended communication. Shenton discusses motives in a few places, but such analysis is limited to a) searching for new words that may be hidden in the composition (using Messiaen's pitch-alphabet) and b) basic motivic information about a handful of motives (e.g., that a motive is symmetrical, repeats three times, or is mostly inversions compared to another). He does not perform any motivic comparison beyond this and as he states in his dissertation, "Other aspects of his technique . . . require a more detailed hermeneutic analysis to be understood fully. Such analysis is beyond the scope of the current study."²⁹ This invitation to perform a detailed analytical study on Messiaen's *Méditations* is what this dissertation is responding to.

The need to analyze the pitch aspect of the leitmotifs in Messiaen's *Méditations* remains. In the preface to this composition, Messiaen assigns theological meanings to various sets of pitches, his leitmotifs. Since Messiaen offered his own example of leitmotif and meaning, it seems that the study of transformation, relationship, and resultant communication is a logical and needed research departure. Through this investigation, the

²⁷ Shenton, *Olivier Messiaen's System of Signs*.

²⁸ Shenton, "Speaking with the Tongues of Men and of Angels: Messiaen's 'langage communicable,'" Shenton, "Observations on Time in Olivier Messiaen's *Traité*," and Shenton, "Composer as performer, recording as text: notes towards a 'manner of realization' for Messiaen's music."

²⁹ Shenton, "The Unspoken Word: Olivier Messiaen's 'Langage Communicable,'" 242-243.

understanding of motivic association will give further insight into the depth of Messiaen's communicable language and its purposed theology.

Messiaen's preface, the langage communicable explained

As mentioned above, Messiaen's preface to the *Méditations* (p. 3-5) gives the listener an entry-point for understanding his *langage communicable*. He begins with a list of preliminary observations about communication. The first observation is about language. Messiaen says that language is primarily vocal, though it may consist of other methods that are not vocal. "One can very well imagine a language based on movement, images, colors, or smells . . . In each case one begins with the established convention: it is agreed that one thing expresses another."³⁰ Messiaen then describes how music (on its own) is in some ways void of the accuracy of communication that vocal language enjoys. "It may suggest, create a feeling, [etc . . .] however, it is not able to 'speak,' to inform with precision."³¹ Such a statement could seem to undermine Messiaen's *langage*, but he states it here in order to rationalize the need for certain vocal language devices in order to communicate clearly with music.

Following this, Messiaen discusses Wagner's communicable language through the medium of the leitmotif. He explains how Wagner's leitmotifs describe many things, from the heavens and their gods, to the fire of Loge, to the hero's (Siegfried's) freedom and power. The listener, Messiaen admits, must acknowledge this convention and know the leitmotifs in advance. This allows them "to grasp . . . all the juxtapositions,

³⁰ "On peut très bien imaginer une langue reposant sur des mouvements, des images, des couleurs, des parfums... Dans tous les cas, on doit partir de conventions préalables. Il est convenu que ceci exprimera cela." The French quotations are Messiaen's words in the *Méditations*. The English translation is largely from Appendix A in Shenton, "The Unspoken Word: Olivier Messiaen's 'Langage Communicable.'"

³¹ "Elle peut suggérer, susciter un sentiment, [etc . . .] elle ne peut absolument pas 'dire,' informer avec précision."

superimpositions, variations, and transformations.”³² Following this steep learning curve of musical convention, Messiaen discusses, at some length, the communication of angels, which occurs “among themselves without language, convention, and . . . without consideration of time and place.”³³ This idea relates to Messiaen’s expectation for the notes themselves to communicate the intended message, even if the listener is not cognitively aware of the effect. As discussed previously, this expectation may be unrealistic, but one should not discount the possibility of spiritual revelation that occurs simultaneously.

Ending his preliminary observations on communication, Messiaen then delves into his own system. “Overwhelmed by these grandiose examples . . . I have tried nevertheless, as a game, and to stimulate my thoughts, to find a kind of musical language that can be communicated.”³⁴ The first part of his system is “a musical alphabet . . . [to] transcribe words.”³⁵ His alphabet has its beginning with the eight letters of the German musical alphabet (b= Bb, h=B). Messiaen adds the other letters to his alphabet “in [his] own way, grouping the letters according to the type of phonic production.”³⁶ The groupings consist of the German letters, the five vowels, palatals, sibilants, dentals, hard C, labials, linguals, and the non-categorized letters of r, w, and x. Messiaen then compiles them into one complete alphabet, A to Z (Example 1.2).

Following the musical alphabet, Messiaen indicates his desire to limit the number of words by eliminating articles, pronouns, adverbs, and prepositions. He replaces these

³² “saiser...les juxtapositions, superpositions, variations et transformations.”

³³ “entre eux, sans langage, sans convention, et...sans avoir à tenir compte du temps et du lieu.”

³⁴ “Ecrasé par ces exemples grandioses . . . j’ai cependant essayé, par jeu, et pour renouveler ma pensée, de trouver une sorte de langage musical communicable.”

³⁵ “alphabet musical . . . transcrire des mots.”

³⁶ “à ma façon, en groupant les lettres par genres de productions phoniques.”

important words by employing a system of declension motives based on Latin cases.³⁷ One motive represents the genitive, ablative, or locative cases (herein, G/A/L motif), another represents the accusative or dative (herein, A/D motif), and a third represents the privative (Example 1.3). Further, the declension words Messiaen employs are not only part of Aquinas' Latin language, but are also part of Aquinas' theological explanations in his text.³⁸ This proves a deep connection between Messiaen's theology and his grammar motifs.

Following the declension motives, Messiaen then adds "two notions most important of all thought, which we call so inadequately the auxiliary verbs: *to be*, and *to have* are expressed by two melodic formulas which are exactly contrary, "to be" by a descending movement, because all that is comes from God . . . [and] "to have" by an ascending movement, because we can always gain more by raising ourselves towards God."³⁹ (Example 1.4).

The last section of Messiaen's preface is about his royal name motives. During Messiaen's extensive travels, he "noticed the importance of royal names in the Old Persian cuneiform inscriptions, (Xerxes, the great king . . .), and how these same royal names (Ptolemy, Cleopatra, Ramses, Tutmosis) enclosed in a cartouche have provided the secret

³⁷ Messiaen used Latin grammar because of the influence of Aquinas' *Summa Theologica*, a great source of inspiration for the *Méditations*.

³⁸ For example, in the Aquinas text "Further, Unbegotten is taken either in a privative, or in a negative sense" the term "privative," one of Messiaen's chosen declensions, demonstrates its terminological and theological use, not just its grammatical use as a case. Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, First Part, Q33, A4, Objection 2, p. 260. Other declension terms are used similarly.

³⁹ "Les deux notions les plus importantes de toute pensée ce que nous appelons bien imparfaitement les verbes auxiliaires: être – avoir, sont exprimées par deux formules mélodiques exactement contraires: être: mouvement descendant parce que tout ce qui est vient de Dieu . . . [et] avoir: mouvement ascendant parce que nous pouvons toujours avoir plus en nous élevant vers Dieu."

of Egyptian hieroglyphics to Champollion . . .”⁴⁰ Following this royal pattern, Messiaen introduces the “most important word in the entire language . . . not the name of a king, but the King of kings, the *Divine Name!* I have not enclosed it in a cartouche, but I have pronounced it . . . in a true theme (which Wagner would have called a leitmotif).”⁴¹ Messiaen also describes how the pitch aspect of this divine name has corresponding meaning. “In order to express that God is immense as much as eternal, without beginning or end in space as in time, I have given two forms to my theme: one straightforward, one retrograde, like two extremes which face each other and that one could move back indefinitely . . . [the] theme of God”⁴² (Example 1.5).

Messiaen’s *langage communicable* description is intriguing and helpful, but it is also incomplete. It provides an initial explanation, but there are many other variables which widen the *langage* in the composition itself. An example of this is Messiaen’s creation of another verb leitmotif. The verb *aimer* (to love), in *Méditation VII*, is part of an Aquinas text. Its motif is different from the other verb motifs, and Messiaen does not mention any aspects of its extra-musical meaning (such as the directional orientation of *être* or *avoir*). Besides *aimer*, there are no other additions to the categories of alphabet, case, or verb. However, in the category of noun-based leitmotif (representing a person, place, thing, or idea), the additions are numerous.

⁴⁰ “remarqué l’importance des noms royaux dans les inscriptions cuneiformes en vieux perse (Xerxès, le grand roi . . .) et comment es memes noms royaux (Ptolémée, Cléopâtre, Ramsès, Thoutmosis), entourés d’un cartouche, ont livré à Champollion le scret des hiéorlyphes égyptiens...”

⁴¹ “le seul mot important de tout langage, ce mot qui n’est plus le nom d’un roi mais du Roi des rois, le Nom Divin! Jen e l’ai pas entouré d’un cartouche, mais je l’ai dit...par un vrai theme (Wagner aurait dit un leitmotif).”

⁴² “[P]our exprimer que Dieu est immense autant qu’éternel, sans commencement ni fin dans l’espace comme dans le temps, j’ai donné deux formes à mon theme: une droite, une retrograde, comme deux extremes qui se regardent et qu l’on pourrait reculer indéfiniment...[le] thème de Dieu”

The first additions to the category of noun-leitmotif are the Holy Trinity's persons: *Père, Fils, and Saint Esprit* (Example 1.6). Since Messiaen's Catholic faith is both monotheistic ("acknowledging that there is one true God who is eternal, omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent") and Trinitarian ("while God is one in nature, essence and being. . . . [He] also exists in three divine and distinct identities, as a 'perichoresis'") this addition makes complete sense.⁴³ These leitmotifs are easily identified in Messiaen's score with cartouche-like ovals around the name whenever the leitmotifs are employed. This is similar to the rectangle enclosing the name "Dieu" (see Example 1.5).

The next noun-leitmotif expansion is the use of birdcalls. Common in Messiaen's oeuvre and used frequently in this composition, each *Méditations* birdcall functions like a leitmotif because of an assigned extra-musical association. The birdcalls in *Méditation IV* demonstrate this well. Here, Messiaen uses the "extraordinary call of the black woodpecker[']s rapid and discordant lament . . . [and] two other primitive songs: the calls of the ring ouzel and the sad little chime . . . of the Tengmalm's owl"⁴⁴ to "evoke an unknown dimension."⁴⁵ Not only does each individual bird represent a slightly different characteristic, but they also form another meaning cumulatively. This brings up an interesting facet about Messiaen's leitmotifs, plurality. Messiaen's leitmotifs are not inherently limited to singular symbolization, and further Messiaen never limits what a leitmotif can symbolize, or how many variants it may have.

⁴³ Shenton, *Olivier Messiaen's System of Signs*, 17.

⁴⁴ "l'extraordinaire cri du Pic noir, plainte rapide et discordante...[et] [d]eux autres chants primitifs: les appels du Merle à plastron, et la petite cloche...de a Chouette de Tengmalm"

⁴⁵ "évoquer quelque dimension inconnue"

Example 1.2: Messiaen's musical alphabet; p. 4 (preface)

8 1^{ères} lettres :

A B C D E F G H

5 voyelles :

A E I O U

palatales :

I J Y

sifflantes :

S Z

dentales :

D T

C dur :

C Q K

labiales :

B P F V M

linguales :

L N

En ajoutant le R, le W, le X :

R W X

nous aurons la série complète :

A B C D E F G H I J K

L M N O P Q R

S T U V W X Y Z

Example 1.3: Latin declension motives; p. 5 (preface)

génitif, ou ablatif,
ou locatif :



G/A/L motif

accusatif, ou datif :



A/D motif

plus un privatif (qui signifie
évidemment l'absence de) :



Example 1.4: Auxiliary verb motives; p. 5 (preface)

être :



avoir :



Example 1.5: *Thème de Dieu* leitmotif; p. 5 (preface)

thème de Dieu :



le même, en sens rétrograde :



Example 1.6: *Père, Fils, and Saint Esprit* leitmotifs; p. 62 (*Méditation VII*)

Père: 

Fils: 

Saint Esprit: 

Yet another step in noun-leitmotif expansion is Messiaen's use of biblical or liturgical passages to ascribe meaning to a particular section. *Méditation VIII* has many such examples. For example, Messiaen writes Romans 11:33⁴⁶ above a particular phrase (p. 70/S3) and he later writes Psalm 55:6⁴⁷ above a passage two pages in length (pp. 74-75). Not only can his leitmotifs have various meanings, but they can also vary greatly in length, lasting for a single phrase or multiple pages. They are not limited by the traditional definition of motive. It is also evident that Messiaen's leitmotifs can represent both simple and complex ideas, entire sentences even, with these leitmotifs. Combined with the above features of multiplicity, one can see how the complexity of communication can become quite overwhelming.

⁴⁶ Rom. 11:33 "Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God"

⁴⁷ Psalm 55:6 "Oh that I had the wings of a dove! I would fly away and be at rest."

The additions of Messiaen's personal theological leitmotifs are similar to the biblical/liturgical noun-leitmotifs above. They express diverse ideas and the leitmotifs vary in length from short phrases to multiple pages. *Méditation I* demonstrates this well. At the very beginning Messiaen writes the words "*Le Père des étoiles*" (The Father of the Stars), referring to three short phrases; this statement is then applied to two variations, which last for two pages (pp. 8-9).

This brings the new areas of noun-leitmotif expansion to a close. However, there is one final area of leitmotif expansion, Messiaen's hidden motives. Hidden motives are those devoid of extra-musical association (no verbal assignment), yet are musically the same, or similar, to other leitmotifs with extra-musical association. Such motives can be in any category of leitmotif (not just noun) and they represent, by far, the most challenging area of Messiaen's communication, dealing with the ideas of concealment and intentionality.

Méditation I, again, addresses this issue with its motivic offerings. On p. 8/S3/m. 3, the right-hand accompaniment contains several familiar motifs, but they lack any extra-musical explanation in the score. Beginning with a motive that replicates the pitches in the Father leitmotif, followed by a motive that replicates the A/D leitmotif, and then another motive whose pitches spell the word "Person" using Messiaen's music-alphabet, hidden motives abound in this section. Yet Messiaen seems to be entirely mute on the existence of this section's concealed motives. Never-the-less, the evidence points to a potentially hidden message, one that may contribute to the overall theology that is presented in *Méditation I*.

These new leitmotivic elements significantly expand Messiaen's *langage communicable*. They broaden the path of Messiaen's leitmotivic symbolism and demonstrate the complexity of his theological communication. The process now involves

moving from an observational framework to an analytical one. Both Messiaen's examples and Andrew Shenton's observations offer ideas for how such analysis is to be performed.

Analyzing Messiaen's Leitmotifs

In Messiaen's preface, there are several observations that demonstrate how leitmotifs are connected via pitch and theological context. The clearest examples are Messiaen's explanations of the verbs *être* and *avoir*. The meaning of these verbs carries theological weight: as noted above, the descending motive *être* "to be" means that all comes from God; the ascending motive *avoir* "to have" means that one gains by giving back (upward) to God. However, the symbolic association becomes stronger when these leitmotifs are compared with the *Père* "Father" and *Fils* "Son" leitmotifs. Though Messiaen does not mention this, the first three pitches of *Père* are the same as *être* (Example 1.7). The verb leitmotif symbolizes characteristics of God (creator, giver) and the noun leitmotif carries a partial symbolic representation of these characteristics. Similarly, the first three pitches of *Fils* are the same as *avoir* (Example 1.8). Here the verb reflects a human's relationship to God (giving back to Him is gaining for oneself) and the noun leitmotif carries a partial symbolic representation of Christ giving himself back to God through sacrifice.⁴⁸

Example 1.7: *Être* leitmotif; preface (p. 5) and *Père* leitmotif; p. 62 (*Méditation VII*)

Être :  Père: 

⁴⁸ Shenton presents a similar finding in his book *Olivier Messiaen's System of Signs*, 106.

Example 1.8: *Avoir* leitmotif; preface (p. 5) and *Fils* leitmotif; p. 62 (*Méditation VII*)



In both instances pitch similarity is the first step in the analysis (though the rhythms are different) and the theological context is the second step, providing a correlate between the two sets of leitmotifs. Nevertheless, no mention of this is made by Messiaen. It seems that Messiaen expected performers and close listeners to hear the association and understand the theological connection shared by these two leitmotifs. This example, additionally, is a perfect demonstration of Gillian Weir’s discussion of word versus music communication; in this paragraph, for example, it takes many words to explain this relatively short and simple musical and theological statement.⁴⁹ This is what Messiaen liked so much about music communication, the potential for instantaneous perception.

In addition to pitch similarity, Messiaen’s leitmotif associations also develop deeper theological overtones when scriptural analysis is part of the deductive analysis. A good example of this is the *Livre du Saint Sacrement*, movement thirteen (“The two walls of water”). Here, Messiaen uses two leitmotifs to communicate overlapping texts from the Old and New Testaments. As Weir observes, “Messiaen links philosophically the presence of God in the walls of water that parted the Red Sea with the actual presence of Christ in the broken Host and the two ideas alternate, expressed by tumultuous cascades of sound on full organ and the song of the melodious warbler.”⁵⁰ To understand this reference,

⁴⁹ Weir, “Organ Music II,” 375.

⁵⁰ Weir, “Organ Music II,” 385.

Messiaen assumes a thorough understanding of two biblical contexts. The first is the history surrounding the original Passover sacrifice and the subsequent Red Sea crossing.⁵¹ The second is the history of Jesus celebrating the Passover feast at the last supper, a representation of the approaching sacrifice of himself.⁵² In the music, the two leitmotifs are superimposed and this combination creates the intended theological effect.⁵³ However, without this scriptural background, the leitmotivic association is not as powerful or accurate. Since biblical understanding is part of Messiaen's approach to leitmotivic theology, it becomes crucial that an analyst be aware of the biblical overtones that may be contributing to Messiaen's directed communication.

Shenton's motivic analysis begins with a different tack. He starts by organizing Messiaen's leitmotifs into three categories: The representational leitmotifs, (representing a Trinitarian noun ("Theme of God") or attribute ("God is immense")), the *langage* leitmotifs (the *langage* grammar, including verbs and Latin declensions), and the associated leitmotifs, (*Méditations* leitmotifs used in other Messiaen compositions whose association is extra-musical (e.g. "The wind of the Spirit")).⁵⁴ Though these categories define a kind of leitmotif syntax, such divisions are not as important to the task of leitmotif pitch association since all of Messiaen's motifs have leitmotivic representation (explained previously). Other concepts within Shenton's study are more analytically useful.

Shenton's discussion of the leitmotif "God is eternal" is particularly engaging because of the evaluation of this motive in two works. This leitmotif (in *Méditations III*) contains a smaller motive that is also used in the joyous third movement of *L'Ascension*

⁵¹ Exodus, chapters 12-14.

⁵² Matthew 26: 17-30.

⁵³ This combination of leitmotifs is also reminiscent of the bird leitmotifs (discussed previously) that have greater theological significance when combined together.

⁵⁴ Shenton, *Olivier Messiaen's System of Signs*, 101 and 109.

(organ version).⁵⁵ The *L'Ascension* motive “is descriptive of an outburst of joy but acquires a deeper significance through its previous association with heaven and the eternal.”⁵⁶ The analyst first observes the shared motivic features and then studies their two distinct contexts, inferring a connection between the two concepts- joy and eternity.

Shenton himself recommends that “Messiaen’s system of associated leitmotifs is worthy of further exploration . . . because it may shed light . . . on an aspect of his compositional technique . . . [and] on a developmental study of his personal theology.”⁵⁷ This type of motivic and contextual study is what the present study pursues. The only difference is that the present *Méditations* study is seeking inner pitch-association of motives and deals mostly with immediate communicative contexts of those motives.

Such motivic similarities obviously correlate the meanings of leitmotif pairings. This correlation is defined by Shenton as “relative motivation between signs,” a term he borrowed from linguist Ferdinand de Saussure. The general idea is that two motives that share some, but not all, features (be they rhythmic or melodic) are related; their association is not “arbitrary.”⁵⁸ Shenton then discusses how his own newly composed leitmotifs (e.g. a music-alphabet spelling of Mary combined with the *Fils* leitmotif) would apply in this system of relative motivation. However, the present study is again more focused on recognizing relative motivation between Messiaen’s pre-existent motives.

⁵⁵ The third movement is entitled “Transports of Delight for a Soul Longing for Heaven.” Also, the comparison of partial and whole leitmotif associations is similar to Examples 6 and 7 above (*être* and “Father,” *avoir* and “Son”).

⁵⁶ Shenton, *Olivier Messiaen’s System of Signs*, 109.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 110.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 106.

Messiaen's Theology of Trinitarian Relationships

Messiaen's *Méditations* communicates theology that is centered on a central topic, the mystery of the Holy Trinity. Within the Christian tradition, this topic looms large indeed.⁵⁹ At the 1972 European premiere of this work, Messiaen indicated that he had been waiting for forty years for “someone to speak about what the Trinity is.” He continued, “It’s spoken about far too little – people don’t care to do so. At the age of 64, I believe that I’m now worthy to talk about it.”⁶⁰

Though not a Catholic church teacher, Messiaen was very interested in teaching about God in his compositions. As Père Gaillard, the curé of Petichet (a city in the French Alps where Messiaen composed during the summers⁶¹), has said: “Messiaen did not have a priestly vocation, but he did have the soul of a priest.”⁶² This is important to the current study because the choice of Trinitarian topics reflects Messiaen’s theological position, the mysteries of the Trinity that are most crucial to him. Messiaen is very wise to include the word “mystery” in his title because the concept of perichorisis cannot be grasped fully, it is a topic of study and rumination for a lifetime. It is similar to the mystery grammarians encounter when studying the Hebrew of Genesis – a plural noun (“*Elohim*”) is used for God (Gen. 1:1) yet it is followed by a singular verb. Similarly, in the Shema (Deut. 6:4), the Hebrew word “*echad*,” describing one-ness, means united one.⁶³

⁵⁹ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Part 2: The Celebration of the Christian Mystery, Chapter 1, Article 1: The Liturgy – Work of the Holy Trinity. <http://www.vatican.va/archive/ccc_css/archive/catechism/ccc_toc.htm>

⁶⁰ Rößler, *Contributions to the Spiritual World of Olivier Messiaen*, 51.

⁶¹ Hill and Simeone, *Messiaen*, 66.

⁶² Kars, “The Works of Olivier Messiaen and the Catholic Liturgy,” 326.

⁶³ Eastman and Missler, *The Creator Beyond Time and Space*, 183-187. This also explains why Messiaen’s cleverly uses the word “we” (though he alone is writing) in the preface to *Méditation VIII* “And to point out that the mystery of the Holy Trinity attributes no composite nature to God, **we** also declare” (“Et pour bien marquer que le mystère de la Sainte Trinité n’apporte aucune composition en Dieu, **nous** éconçonnons aussitôt” (author’s emphasis). See Chapter 4, p. 113, footnote 4.

Although Messiaen focuses on the three members of the Trinity, the composition is also about defining God's character and the human response to his essence. This is important because Messiaen's teaching about God is by no means traditional. He picks up on subtleties within texts that bring interesting insights into who God is. The employed texts include Aquinas's *Summa*, the Old and New Testaments, the Mass, the Litany, and Messiaen's own writings, too. The Aquinas texts occur only in conjunction with Messiaen's alphabet and the other texts are displayed as text super- and subscripts, extensions of the noun-leitmotifs as noted in the previous section on motives.⁶⁴ These text accumulations broaden the theological reach of the composition, also noted by Shenton, and they do so in a specific way,⁶⁵ emphasizing the relationships of God, both between the members (one to another) and to humankind. Since the distinctions between Trinity persons are also based on their relationships, one to another, Messiaen's emphasis is well-founded.⁶⁶

As an example, the end of *Méditation IV* has one final birdcall of the Tengmalm owl; it occurs immediately after the Glory of the Lord ("I am that I am" of Ex. 34:6) appears. This birdcall was previously described as a "sad little chime,"⁶⁷ helping to "evoke an unknown dimension."⁶⁸ But, in the second location Messiaen adds further commentary, saying that "The Tengmalm owl fades, expressing our pettiness overwhelmed by the brilliance of the Holy One."⁶⁹ The earlier reference to the bird's sad, mystical aura now becomes transformed into an expression of human frailty in light of the Glory of God

⁶⁴ There are a few discrepancies about whether certain texts are indicated for staves above or below the written words.

⁶⁵ Shenton, "Speaking with the Tongues of Angels and Men," 236. Attributed source: *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (1992) <http://www.vatican.va/archive/ccc_css/archive/catechism/ccc_toc.htm>

⁶⁶ Shenton, *Olivier Messiaen's System of Signs*, 17.

⁶⁷ "petite cloche triste"

⁶⁸ "évoquer quelque dimension inconnue"

⁶⁹ "La Chouette de Tengmalm s'éloigne, exprimant notre petitesse accablée par la fulgurance du Sacré."

Himself. This demonstration of qualitative relationship between humans and God is also a reflection of Messiaen's own relationship with God. This expansion from known Trinitarian theology (e.g. Aquinian and Pauline) to relational theology (inter-Trinitarian and extra-Trinitarian) is common in the *Méditations*.

In Messiaen's theology of Trinitarian relationship, it is also important to clarify a point about Messiaen's personal theology. Many writers insist that Messiaen's music is based mostly on Theology of Glory (knowing God by his creative works). While not incorrect, this assumption unfortunately causes the exclusion of Theology of the Cross (knowing God by his sufferings at Calvary), falsely attributing the later mindset to a Protestant theological position.⁷⁰ This argument will not be settled here, but regarding this essay on Messiaen's *Méditations* there is clear evidence that both theologies are present and active in Messiaen's life and composition. As such, the general assumption that Messiaen's theology is limited to the Theology of Glory is a hindrance to a detailed investigation exploring the full extent Messiaen's theological communication.

The balance of these two theological positions is also found in texts that heavily influenced Messiaen's theological understanding. Aquinas' *Summa Theologica*, a major source for the *Méditations*, demonstrates a balance of these two theologies. A similar balance is also found in the book *Christ in His Mysteries* by Columba Marmion, a favorite theologian of Messiaen's.⁷¹ Both texts clearly state that in the Christian faith, the Theology of the Cross leads to the Theology of Glory, which again leads back to the Theology of the

⁷⁰ Shenton, *Olivier Messiaen's System of Signs*, 28.

⁷¹ This book was recommended to Messiaen by his Catholic confessor (Kars, "The Works of Olivier Messiaen and the Catholic Liturgy," 325) and is referenced by Messiaen many times. Marmion's importance is demonstrated by his reference in the preface to Messiaen's *The Technique of my Musical Language*, 7.

Cross. The two are imbedded in one another, in relationship and in conversation. This duality is expressed well in Peter Hill's interview with Yvonne Loriod:

PH: I'd like to ask whether events in the outside world, whether politics or the war, for example, or events in Messiaen's personal life ever influence his music?

YL: Messiaen had an extremely strong faith. He always said, "No, I have no wish to waste my time on harrowing subjects. I am a musician of joy. I have composed various works on the subject of grief, but these are concerned with the grief of Christ – 'Jésus accepte la souffrance,' for example, from *La Nativité*." When he was asked to compose a work to commemorate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the outbreak of the war, a work in memory of the dead, Messiaen said, "Death? That exists, but I myself emphasize the Resurrection." For this reason, Messiaen refused to write a Requiem and wrote instead *Et expecto resurrectionem mortuorum*.⁷²

The Theology of the Cross is a fundamental tenet of the Catholic faith. Without this central feature Messiaen's confidence in the subsequent resurrection and its joyous expression would be unwarranted.⁷³ Though Messiaen may not engage themes of war among humans, he clearly distinguishes between this and the expression of grief through Christ's suffering. As a result, it is incorrect to assume that his theology does not include the cross since this perspective is clearly present in the full spectrum of his theological position.

Each *Méditation* delivers its own set of theological points, some are mysterious and others are more easily comprehended. Both major and minor concepts are delivered in a bundle of texts upon which to meditate. In the *Méditations* examined in this study, the

⁷² Hill, "Interview with Yvonne Loriod," 294-295.

⁷³ *Catechism of the Catholic church*, Part 1, Section 2, Chapter 2, Article 4 "Jesus Christ suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried." <http://www.vatican.va/archive/ccc_css/archive/catechism/ccc_toc.htm> and the book, *The Catholic Faith* by Cunningham, attributed in Shenton's *Olivier Messiaen's System of Signs*, 18.

following texts are used to develop the specific theology. In *Méditation I*, about the person of the Father (*Père*), the texts are: Messiaen's introduction and musical super/subscripts, and Aquinas's *Summa Theologica*. In *Méditation IV*, on the topic of God's existence ("He is") the texts are: Messiaen's introduction and musical super/subscripts, and Exodus 34:6. In *Méditation VIII*, on the topic "God is simple" and other details, the texts are: Messiaen's introduction and musical super/subscripts, the Litany "*Alleluia de la Toussaint*", Romans 11:33, Matthew 11:28, Matthew 11:30, and Psalm 55:6. Thus the texts vary widely from *Méditation* to *Méditation*, but Messiaen's explanation and use of the texts are what drive the interpretation. As Shenton writes, each *Méditation* is untitled, "so that any relationship to an aspect of the Trinity comes from signs in each movement."⁷⁴

All of Messiaen's *Méditation* texts, as well as texts that were theologically influential in Messiaen's life, will be used to inform the theology that Messiaen communicates. This knowledge base, in tandem with the leitmotif observations, will further illuminate the depths of Messiaen's theology in the *Méditations sur le Mystère de la Sainte Trinité*.

⁷⁴ Shenton, *Olivier Messiaen's System of Signs*, 33.

CHAPTER 2 *Analysis of Méditation I*

Introduction to *Méditation I*

Program, Theology, and Concealment

Méditation I is about the first member of the Trinity, the Father. Messiaen's preface provides comments about the Father's various characteristics, which can be summarized into two broad categories: 1) creator and ruler of creation; and 2) unbegotten Father. Although there is enough theology in these two categories to fill mountains of texts, Messiaen limits these categories to two focal points. For the creation category, Messiaen references only stars. For the unbegotten father category, Messiaen's focus is on the Father not being born, "the Principal who has no principal."¹

These two topics are presented as a type of dance that reflects Messiaen's most prominent ideas about the Father. For example, the opening section *Le Père des étoiles* is about the Father who created the stars. The following section, based on the *langage communicable*, focuses on the Father's unbegotten nature. The piece continues in like fashion until the end.

However, there is another layer of communication at work in this Meditation. Underneath the theological dance, there is more information at work in the content of the motives employed. This information is a type of concealed communication, communicable yet disguised. The first glimpse of this concealment begins with the opening motive. In Messiaen's recorded conversation with organist Almut Rößler, Messiaen explains that the pitches in the first *Le Père des étoiles* motive were written by

¹ "Principe qui n'a pas de principe"

an astrologer who sent his findings to Messiaen.² But, Messiaen makes no mention of this in the score. Outside of his conversation with Rößler, it is concealed information. Looking further into *Méditation 1*, other sections also contain similar concealed information. Examples of this include earlier motivic material used in the accompaniment, contrapuntal lines with hidden sentences, and other such details.

So, why does Messiaen reveal certain pieces of information while concealing others? Perhaps Messiaen uses both revealed and concealed information about his motives to suggest the existence of these same facets in theological communication. Answering the “what” and “why” of Messiaen’s revelation and concealment is the large subject of the analysis below. However, before any analysis begins, one must first answer two questions. 1) Why would Messiaen hide these features? 2) What is the theological use of these two facets of communication, revelation and concealment?

To answer the first question, a look at the Preface to *Méditation 1* may provide the rationale. Here, Messiaen focuses on the word “proceeding” numerous times in reference to the Father. Borrowing Aquinas’ words, used on pp. 10-12, the other Persons of the Trinity (Son, Holy Spirit) are “proceeding from Him . . . but, considered as ‘The Principal who has no principal’, he signifies: He proceeds from no other.”³ Though these words are literally spelled out with Messiaen’s *langage*, the musical depiction of this proceeding relationship can easily be portrayed with one motive literally existing within another and proceeding from it. So, in his compositional strategy Messiaen musically demonstrates how the act of proceeding works. The concealed motives that exist within the revealed motives are simply a reflection of this theological truth. Though Messiaen begins with

² Rößler, *Contributions to the Spiritual World of Olivier Messiaen*, 113.

³ “procédant de lui . . . en tant que ‘Principe qui n’a pas de principe’, il se notifie ainsi: il n’est pas d’un autre.”

surface theology (re: the Creator or the Unbegotten one) he also communicates many sub-theologies. These sub-theologies inform and contribute to this meditation on the Trinitarian Father.

A parallel expression of revealed and concealed association is found in the Trinitarian subtopic of the Father – Son relationship. One of Messiaen’s favorite theologians, Columba Marmion, discusses this relationship in his book, *Christ in his mysteries*:

As you know the Father proceeds from none; He is the Principle without principle, the first Principle of all intimate life in God, the first origin of all the ineffable communications in the Trinity. The Father, knowing himself, begets by an infinite Word, a Son only-begotten and perfect, to Whom He communicates all that He is, except the personal property of being the Father. . . The Son is equal in all things to the Father; He is the adequate expression, the perfect image of the Father.⁴

There are three close relationships between Marmion’s excerpt and Messiaen’s *Méditations*. The first is the use of the word “mystery” in Marmion’s title which matches Messiaen’s title and program. The second is Marmion’s phrase “Principle without principle” which is directly attributable to Aquinas’ phrase in *Méditation I* (p. 11). The third, is his description of a specific mystery regarding Father and Son. According to Marmion, the Father relates to the Son as both infinite yet begotten, always-existing and yet born. This duality matches ideologically with Messiaen’s revealed and concealed motives. Such connections with Marmion make sense because this book was

⁴ Marmion, *Christ in his mysteries*, 326.

“recommended to him by his confessor.”⁵ Messiaen had the following to say about Marmion’s book: “I have discovered a magnificent book...each mystery of Christ...has its individual beauty, its particular splendour, like its own grace.”⁶ Marmion’s theology also matches some of the concealed revelations as found in the analysis of this composition. Such points will be discussed later in this chapter.⁷

Another theological parallel for Messiaen’s concealed, revealed facets of communication is the biblical use of parables. Parables are representational lessons that have both a surface story (revealed) and an underlying lesson (concealed) for the hearer. In Matthew 13: 13-15 Jesus speaks about why he teaches using parables:

This is why I speak to them in parables: Though seeing, they do not see; though hearing, they do not hear or understand. In them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah:⁸ “You will be ever hearing but never understanding; you will be ever seeing but never perceiving. For this people’s heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them.”⁹

Here, Jesus makes the point that his parables, themselves a form of concealed communication, exist to test the hearts of the hearers. To those whose hearts are calloused, no revelation from his parables will come. However, to those whose hearts are yielding, revelation will proceed from its concealed message. So too Messiaen’s revealed

⁵ Kars, “The Works of Olivier Messiaen and the Catholic Liturgy,” 325.

⁶ Kars, “The Works of Olivier Messiaen and the Catholic Liturgy,” 326 attributed to Landale, “Messiaen” in *L’Orgue*, 224.

⁷ For interested readers, see the analysis of V1 and Messiaen’s cryptic communication.

⁸ Isaiah 6:9-10

⁹ Matthew 13:13-15.

and concealed motives in *Méditation I* function in a similar way, creating a musical parable that communicates about the Trinitarian Father on two levels.

As the analysis of *Méditation I* proceeds, the theological use of concealment will be considered in the context of Messiaen's motivic communication. The concealed features will be compared to the surface communication and to Messiaen's Preface descriptions in order to understand how motivic concealment is to be interpreted in Messiaen's composition. As the concealed ideas further engage the theological dance of *Méditation I*, as outlined at the start of this chapter, their presence in the composition is validated.

Messiaen's intent is to communicate Aquinas's ideas ("As the Father is the beginning that has no origin, he is not of another: a second characteristic denoted by the term 'unbegotten'"¹⁰). The question for this *Méditation* is: Do its revealed and concealed features give further insight to the understanding of these topics, Unbegotten Father and the Ruler/Creator of all things?

Analysis of *Le Père des étoiles* motifs and their variations

Genesis and Meaning of ET-1

Méditation I begins with a section entitled "*Le Père de étoiles*" (The Father of the Stars). There are three motifs that comprise the opening section (p.8/S1 to S3/m.2), herein referred to as ET-motifs. Each motif is monophonic and contains ~ 7-10 notes. The motifs are interesting because they are used throughout *Méditation I* and also because of details of their compositional origin. As discussed briefly in the introduction

¹⁰ Samuel, *Olivier Messiaen: Music and Color*, 132-138.

of this chapter, the pitches of the first motif (ET-1) were not composed by Messiaen, they were sent to him by an astrologer. Before analyzing the motive itself, it is important to understand all the meaning that Messiaen intended in this motive. Messiaen divulged much of this meaning in conversation with organist Almut Rößler:

Once I received a letter from an elderly astrologer who suggested that I work with him by sending me a “melody of the stars.” By the time I finally realized the significance of his letter, he was dead. He’d written down the following melody for me: G#-A-G-G#-F-D-B-G-F-C-F#-F-A. According to him, that’s the oldest melody in the world; it arises from the resonances emitted by each planet and from the vibrating ratios resulting from the distances of the planets from each other and from the sun; these are expressed by means of intervals. G#—that’s the sun—and I’m talking about this because this melody is found right at the beginning of my *Méditations* (“The Father of the stars”)—A is Mercury, G is Venus, G# is the Earth, F is Mars, G is Jupiter, C is Saturn, F# is Uranus, F is Neptune, and A is Pluto.¹¹

Messiaen continues in his discussion with Rößler, explaining various details about pitch and theological relationships:

One peculiar thing: the Earth and Sun have an octave relationship to each other, the same as Pluto and Mercury, so here’s a direct relationship between Intelligence (Mercury) and Death (Pluto): one has to pass through Death in order to understand. There’s also an octave relationship between Neptune (Water) and Mars (Fire) as well as a two-octave distance between Jupiter (Man) and Venus (Women). Finally, there’s the tritone relationship (half an octave), between

¹¹ Rößler, *Contributions to the Spiritual World of Olivier Messiaen*, 113.

Saturn and Uranus: the C of Time, which devours everything, cuts the F# of Heaven (Uranus) into two equal parts: Time cuts Eternity in two.¹²

The above also says much about Messiaen's ability to perceive interesting theological aspects based on pitch relationships. At first glance this pitch-based hermeneutic seems to be quite limited, not having any broad application beyond this melody itself. However, upon second glance, the information revealed above is a microcosm that contains two of Messiaen's compositional features.

First, Messiaen's explanation demonstrates that he considers the octave and half-octave to be markers of meaning, concluding that the astrologer's octave relationships join two ends of a verbal dichotomy (i.e. Intelligence-Death, Water-Fire, Man-Woman, Time-Eternity). Though these dichotomies are common Judeo-Christian topics, and additionally applicable within *Méditations* theology, they have another interesting purpose. The pairing of two ideas ideologically parallels the pairing of revealed and concealed motives and information in *Méditation I*.

Additionally, the connection between octave relationships and meaning, as it turns out, is not limited to the above melody. The idea is remarkably similar to the octave relationships Messiaen assigns to letters of his alphabet that share the same phonetic group. As Andrew Shenton describes, Messiaen organizes his letters into phonetic groups, one for vowels and seven groups of consonants. Within these groups (e.g. sibilants, dentals, linguals, etc...) most pitches are related via octaves (pitch class equivalence).¹³

¹² Rößler, *Contributions to the Spiritual World of Olivier Messiaen*, 113.

¹³ Shenton, *Olivier Messiaen's System of Signs*, 87-88.

Considering these similarities, Rößler's conversation uncovers the genesis of many features found in *Méditation I*. First, the octave relationships reveal the possible beginning of Messiaen's alphabet system of related sounds and octave designations. Second, the combination of two ideas based on pitch relationship is the potential beginning of Messiaen's combination of revealed and concealed communication, itself also based on pitch relationship.

ET leitmotifs and analysis

Continuing in the mindset of revelation and concealment, the pitch-based analysis of these ET-motifs now begins. The strategy is to analyze pitches according to Messiaen's "example of musical cryptography – the art of writing or deciphering messages using a code or a cipher."¹⁴ Following Messiaen's cipher, it will be shown that these ET-motives contain important subsets from Messiaen's Trinity leitmotifs.

ET-1 is the first motif, containing the pitches that Messiaen attributed to the astrologer above. It also contains many subsets that relate to the *Père* leitmotif (Example 2.1). This is an interesting observation considering Messiaen's focus on the Father's (*Père*) unbegotten being. Since ET-1 is the one theme whose genesis is not wholly Messiaen's, it can also be considered a truly unbegotten motif.¹⁵ It is a motif that was pre-existent, albeit hidden, in the Father's creation. Coupled with fragments of the *Père* leitmotif, Messiaen has created the two facets of musical parable; both revealed and concealed aspects give meaning to ET-1.

Continuing, the other two ET-motifs, ET-2 and ET-3 also include many subsets found in the Trinitarian leitmotifs. ET-2 contains many subsets of *Père* and *Fils* (Example

¹⁴ Shenton, *Olivier Messiaen's System of Signs*, 69.

¹⁵ There is no evidence to answer whether or not the rhythms are Messiaen's own or the astrologer's.

2.2). ET-3 contains many subsets of *Esprit* (Example 2.3). The combination of these relationships demonstrates the shared pitch and theological relationship between the Trinitarian and ET leitmotifs, similar to the shared pitch and theological relationship that Messiaen explained about ET-1.

The analysis demonstrates that the pitches in Messiaen's motivic relationships contain both revealed and concealed information. Both facets communicate and enrich the theology of the Father. The main conclusion is simply that the "Father of the Stars" motifs (ET-1, ET-2, and ET-3) are built using subsets of all three Trinity leitmotifs. These subsets demonstrate how the Trinity proceeds from the Father, supporting the second of Messiaen's crucial points, the Unbegotten Father. This resultant theology, beginning with "Father of the Stars," brings to mind the quotation that Messiaen was "the cantor of Creation...[for whom] birds and stars hold a separate 'theological' place in his creativity."¹⁶

Variations on ET and analysis

Following the opening section ("*Le Père des étoiles*"), the ET-motifs appear again in two variations. Each variation contains ET-1 through ET-3 (just like the opening) which is heard alongside two different styles of accompaniments. The accompaniments, however, quickly become the focus of the analysis because they contain sets and subsets of important *Méditations* leitmotifs that further inform the theology of the Father.

¹⁶ Kars, "The Works of Olivier Messiaen and the Catholic Liturgy," 326.

Example 2.1: ET-1; p. 8/S1¹⁷ and *Père* leitmotif; p. 61/S3/m.1-LH

The first variation (herein V1) is from p. 8/S3/m.3 to S5/m.4. It contains the ET-motifs in the LH with linear, fragmentary accompaniment in the RH. Messiaen describes the accompaniment as “a disjunct melodic counterpoint”¹⁸ which is an appropriate description of the short, leaping fragments (between three and eight 16th notes long). The second variation (herein V2) fills up all of p. 9. It contains the ET-motifs in the pedals and chord accompaniment in the RH and LH. Messiaen describes the accompaniment as “a counterpoint of chords;”¹⁹ they react to the pedal notes in short bursts. The two sections both contain interesting details that demonstrate the two facets of Messiaen’s revealed and concealed communication.

In V1 the linear accompaniment contains many subsets that relate to the Trinity leitmotifs (*Père* most strongly), ET-motifs, and grammar motifs. Andrew Shenton also notes finding a few of these motifs in his search for hidden aspects of the *langage*.²⁰ This is

¹⁷ As explained in the Author’s Note, locations in the score will be determined by this system: page/system/measure/(chord or note). For example, p.8/S4/m.3/(chord 2) = page 8/system 4/measure 3/ (chord number 2). Note, not all information is listed each time, only what is necessary for identification is provided.

¹⁸ “contrepoint mélodique disjoint”

¹⁹ “contrepoint d’accords”

²⁰ Shenton, *Olivier Messiaen’s System of Signs*, 143.

similar to the findings in the ET-motifs. As the analysis reveals, most of the pitch relationships here are in pc space, except for a few exact motivic copies. The lack of pitch space agreement, however, correlates well with Messiaen's self-described disjunct melodic counterpoint.

Example 2.2: ET-2; p. 8/S2/m.1-2, *Père* and *Fils* leitmotifs; p. 61/S3/m.1-LH and m.2-LH

ET-2 (RH and LH)
[ss=subset]

Père (top staff)

Fils (bottom staff)

Example 2.3: ET-3; p. 8/S3/m.3 to S4/m.2 and *Saint Esprit* leitmotif; p. 62/S3/m.2

ET-3 (RH and LH)
[ss = subset]

Esprit

Esprit (retrograde)

To begin, V1-8 and the combination of V1-1 plus V1-2 contain copies of *Père*, note for note in pitch space (Example 2.4). V1-3 copies the A/D (accusative/dative) case in pitch space and also relates to a subset of ET-1 (Example 2.5). V1-5 begins by copying the G/A/L (genitive/ablative/ locative) case and V1-9 begins with a copy of the *avoir* motif, again both in pitch space. These two plus V1-10 all relate to the *Fils* leitmotif (Example 2.6). V1-4 contains subsets of ET-1, ET-3, and *Fils*; V1-6 contains subsets from ET-2; V1-7 contains subsets from ET-2 and *Fils*; and lastly both V1-5 and the combination of V1-6 plus V1-7 share the same large pitch subset <3437432>. These last three instances are not shown in examples below.

These findings seem to verify what Shenton himself found in V1: “some words, notably those from Messiaen’s grammar such as the leitmotif for the accusative and dative, are randomly ordered in the right-hand accompaniment.”²¹ However, Shenton also states “There may, however, be other hidden uses.”²² He then discusses George Perle’s analysis of Alban Berg’s *Lyrische Suite* and Bonnie Jo Dopp’s analysis of Lili Boulanger’s *Clairières dans le ciel*, both of which contained amazing cryptic messages in shorthand. So, now the question returns to Messiaen: Does his music contain any cryptic messages similar to those found in Berg and Boulanger?

V1 and Messiaen’s Cryptic Message

Finding the Cryptic Features

The answer to this question is yes. Though the above analytical connections between the leitmotifs and V1 are intriguingly similar to the findings the opening section,

²¹ Shenton, *Olivier Messiaen’s System of Signs*, 143.

²² *Ibid.*, 142.

there is nevertheless more going on beneath this surface. Digging a little deeper with Messiaen's cipher, there are music-alphabet details that reveal a cryptic message within the V1 accompaniment.

Example 2.4: V1-1 plus V1-2; p.8/S3/m.3 to S4/m.1 and V1-8; p.8/S5/m.6-7

Musical notation for Example 2.4. The score is on a single staff in treble clef. It shows three distinct melodic fragments: V1-1, V1-2, and V1-8. Dashed lines connect these fragments to the text 'Père (note for note)', indicating a specific cipher relationship between the notes.

Example 2.5: ET-1; p. 8/S1 and V1-3; p.8/S4/m.2-3 and A/D case; p. 5 (preface)

Musical notation for Example 2.5. The score consists of two staves, treble and bass clef. It features three sections: ET-1, V1-3, and A/D case. Annotations include '<7065>' and 'T10' at the bottom, and '<5T43>' in the bass staff. A dashed line connects the A/D case section to the T10 annotation.

Example 2.6: *Fils* leitmotif; p. 61/S3/m.2 (LH) and V1-5, V1-9, and V1-10; p.8/S4/m.6-7 (RH) S6/m.1-4 (RH) and *Avoir* leitmotif, G/A/L case; p. 5 (preface)

Musical notation for Example 2.6. The score consists of two staves, treble and bass clef. It features four sections: Fils leitmotif, V1-5, V1-9, and V1-10. Annotations include '<687>', 'T9', 'T10', 'T8', 'ss <354>', and 'ss <635>'. A legend indicates '[ss = subset]'. A dashed line connects the V1-5 section to the '(G/A/L case)' annotation.

As stated above, V1-1 plus V1-2 form the *Père* leitmotif and V1-3 is the dative leitmotif. But V1-4 turns a new leaf. Its pitches (G-E-E-F-B-Eb), using Messiaen's music-alphabet, spell the word "person" in pitch space (Example 2.7). This word is three letters short of Messiaen's "*personnes*," as spelled on p. 10/S1 - S2/m.2. Continuing, V1-5a is the ablative leitmotif. However, the first three pitches of the ablative (Eb-F-E) are the exact three letters missing from the full spelling of "*personnes*" (pitch class spelling). However, they are spelled slightly out of order in the score, spelling "*personnse*." The close proximity of this detail, though, leads one to consider how much hidden spelling and grammar may exist in this accompaniment. Thus far, the communication of this accompaniment contains the following grammar: *Père*—A/D leitmotif—"personnse"—G/A/L leitmotif (overlapping the "nse" spelling).²³

As the V1 accompaniment continues, more cryptic words appear (Example 2.7 continued). V1-5b spells "*inengend*" (unbegotten) in pitch-space; it is an incomplete version of "*inengendre*" as it appears on p. 12/S3/m.3 to S4. Then, the last Eb from V1-5 combines with the first two letters of V1-6 to form the *être* motif (Eb/D#-C#-D, pc space). The rest of V1-6, combined with V1-7 spells "*inengendr*" (again, in pitch space), here with only last letter "e" missing. V1-8 is the *Père* leitmotif. V1-9 contains both the *avoir* leitmotif (F#-G#-G, in pitch space) and the ablative case (it is transposed and doesn't seem as relevant considering all the pitch equivalence that surrounds it). The end of V1-9 and the beginning of V1-10 (A-D-E-E in pc space) spells "atre" which is one letter off from "*autre*" (other), spelled on p. 11/S6/m. 4 – p. 12/S1/m. 2. The missing "u" is a C#, which happens to occur in the LH the note before "*atre*" begins. Lastly, the rest

²³ The overlaps in this section are relatively minor (one to three notes); as such, they do not hinder the cryptic message.

of V1-10 contains two features: the letters (Eb-F#-B-Eb, in pc space) spell “*lion*”²⁴ and the last letters (Eb-F-Bb-E) are a rotated version of the A/D leitmotif (F-Bb-E-Eb). So, is this a cryptic message? Can it be deciphered? Does it relate to Aquinas? Did Messiaen intend to communicate it?

As before, the answer to the first question is definitively yes. There are too many parallels with the *langage* to consider this to be uncommunicative music (as Messiaen defines communicative). The next three questions, however, take longer to answer.

Deciphering the Cryptic Message

To decipher the message, one must first deal with the issue of language and translation. Shenton reports that Messiaen transliterated and paraphrased Aquinas’s Latin phrases into French. Then Messiaen reduced this paraphrase into his communicable language.²⁵ In the score itself, precious few words are actually spelled out in his music-alphabet sections and the grammar is somewhat challenging to interpret, especially when comparing Messiaen’s version with the original texts. Reversing this process, re-inflating Messiaen’s broken grammar into either French or Latin, is, therefore, a very difficult task since Messiaen provided no such formula for this. Complicating matters further are the issues of a) pitch space vs. pitch class in the music-alphabet, and b) grammar and syntax errors (e.g. verbs and cases before and after nouns).

²⁴ There are other possible letters for these pitches. However, this was the only French word that exists given the possible combinations. It is also the one word that whose majority of letters (three out of four) match exactly with Messiaen’s register-specific music alphabet.

²⁵ Shenton, “Speaking with the Tongues of Men and of Angels,” 229, 235, and 236.

Example 2.7: Cryptic Message in V1 accompaniment (RH); p. 8/S3/m.3 – S6.

8

(sur "cresc.") (cresc. n° 12)

GPR: fonds 16,8,4 - anches 16,8,4 - mixtures -

(Le Père des étoiles)

Lent
legato

MAN. GPR *legato*

MAN. *legato*

MAN. *legato*

Comb. 6

Lent (aussi lié que possible)

R: fonds 16,8,4 - anches 16,8,4 - cymbale 3 rangs < |
Pos: fonds 16,8,4, fourniture 4 rangs < |
G: fonds 16,8,4, avec montre 16 - PG. |

piu f

PÈRE

AID leit. P-E-R-S-O-N N-S-E I-N-E-N-G-E-N-D (RE)

VI-2 (VI-3) (VI-4) (VI-5a) (VI-5b)

MAN. *legato*

Être I-N-E-N-G-E-N-D R (E) PÈRE

(VI-6) (VI-7) (VI-8)

MAN. *legato*

AVOIR A-(U)-T-R-E L-I-O-N

(VI-9) (VI-10)

MAN. *legato*

(sur "cresc.") (cresc. n° 9)

(R: fonds 16,8,4 - anches 16,8,4 - cymbale 3 rangs < | Pos: fonds 16,8,4 - trp. 8 - fourniture 4 rangs < |
G: fonds 16,8,4 - plein-jeu 5 rangs - | Ped: fonds 16,8,32 - bombarde 16, trp. 8 - 3 tir.)

The first issue of pitch-class equivalence is not a giant hurdle. Shenton further notes that Messiaen himself violates his own “register-specific” alphabet assignments at times. In fact, one of these register violations is “at the end of the first movement of the *Méditations* [I, 14/5] where the word *inengendré* (“unbegotten”)...is played for emphasis entirely on the pedals.”²⁶ This fact frees an analyst to consider pc equivalence when investigating Messiaen’s leitmotifs. In addition to this fact, the overwhelming majority of pitches in the V1 cryptic accompaniment are register-specific (both alphabet-letters and leitmotifs) according to Messiaen’s preface and score. There are 64 total notes in the RH; when counting the pitches that double in two or more communications, the total number is 69. 61 out of 69 are register-specific. This surely validates their communicative value.

The second issue, order of the grammar, is not as easy to overcome. According to Shenton’s classification of the *langage* the cryptic portion here easily violates a few of the rules. According to his borrowed classification of English (created by linguist Stephen Pinker), it violates the rules of fixed-word order, accusative language, and SVO (subject-verb-object) order that exist in other examples of Messiaen’s *langage*.²⁷ In short, the grammar and syntax in V1 is floating and needs interpretive guidance. In addition to this, Messiaen’s case leitmotifs clump together three separate cases into one motif. When his *langage* is used formally, Messiaen always supplied specifics of which case and which word. An example of this is on p. 10/S5/m.1 where the G/A/L case (genitive-ablative-locative) is used. Here, Messiaen specifies the case as ablative and further defines the case with the word *du* (“from”). Without this information the phrase could have meant something entirely different. Complicating matters one more step, Messiaen

²⁶ Shenton, *Olivier Messiaen’s System of Signs*, 88.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 83-84.

sometimes adds “articles, pronouns, adverbs and prepositions he claims to have omitted”²⁸ to both his case and verb leitmotifs. One simply cannot account for all the possibilities. However, in the midst of this rich yet floating grammar of music communication, the analyst must attempt to coordinate possible syntax options. The order and meaning below is the most intelligible option possible considering the topic and the grammar supplied.

Given the Meditation topic (theology of the Father) and the basic grammar options outlined in the preface, a word-by-word translation of the V1 accompaniment is as follows²⁹: [The] Father – A/D (to whom belongs- dative i.o.) – [the] Persons – G/A/L (of – genitive possession) – [the] unbegotten, – is – unbegotten. [The] Father – has – other – lion – G/A/L (his – genitive possession). The grammar is awkward and requires some refinement in order to understand it. However, before this is attempted, one first needs to define the word lion. It is the one music-alphabet word that is not used anywhere else in *Méditation 1*.

The lion is used in many biblical references and is an important piece of Judeo-Christian theology. One of the first significant references to this animal is listed in Jacob’s blessing of his twelve sons. In Gen. 49:9 Jacob identifies his son Judah with the lion, saying “You are a lion’s cub, O Judah; you return from the prey, my son. Like a lion he couches and lies down, like a lioness – who dares to rouse him?” Additionally, the character of the Lion is also the emblem of the flag of Judah.³⁰

²⁸ Shenton, *Olivier Messiaen’s System of Signs*, 94.

²⁹ A note for guidance: dashes separate the motives from one another. Also, when there are multiple options for cases the analyst’s selection of case and specific word is given. Bracketed words function as inserts, like in quotations.

³⁰ Numbers 2:1-4.

The word lion now has a beginning biblical context.³¹ But, returning to the cryptic message, the question now becomes: why does it speak of the “other lion?” The answer to this question lies in two New and Old Testament verses about Jesus Christ referencing the tribe of Judah. The New Testament identifies Jesus as a lion connected with the tribe of Judah in Revelation 5:5b: “See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has triumphed. He is able to open the scroll and its seven seals.” The Old Testament also records how Jesus, the “other lion,” was also prophetically spoken of in another portion of Jacob’s blessing to Judah. Gen. 49:10-11 says:

The scepter will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler’s staff from between his feet until he comes to whom it belongs and the obedience of the nations is his. He will tether his donkey to a vine, his colt to the choicest branch; he will wash his garments in wine, his robes in the blood of grapes.

This scripture prophetically points to five distinct pieces of Jesus’ ministry. First, the lineage of Jesus is through King David of Judah³² (the scepter not departing). Second, the Romans took away the Jew’s right to determine life and death, capital punishment, in ~6-7 A.D. (ruler’s staff departing).³³ Third, Jesus’ use of a donkey’s colt to ride into

³¹ It also has a *Méditations* context. In *Méditation IV*, Messiaen’s adapted the meaning of the tâla simhavikrama (“force of the lion” – dedicated to Shiva, symbol of the death of death) to mean “the victory of Christ over death.” In doing so, Messiaen has sewn together the concepts of lion and Christ.

³² Matthew 1:1-17 and Luke 3:23-38 present the genealogies of Jesus.

³³ According to Jewish historian Flavius Josephus the rule of law in Judea changed hands from the Jews to Caesar (Augustus): “And now Archelaus’s part of Judea was reduced into a province, and Coponius, one of the equestrian order among the Romans, was sent as a procurator, having the power of [life and] death put into his hands by Caesar.” (Josephus, *The Works of Josephus*, Wars of the Jews, Book 2, Chapter 8: 117.) “Because of this, the power of the Sanhedrin to adjudicate capital cases was immediately removed. In the minds of the Jewish leadership, this event signified the removal of the scepter or national identity of the tribe of Judah!” (Eastman and Missler *The Creator Beyond Time and Space*, 144-149.) “The province of Judea had, however, been spared from this policy up to this point. However, Caesar Augustus had had enough of the Jews and finally removed the judicial authority from them at the ascension of Caponius.” (Levy, *The Messiah: An Aramaic Interpretation: The Messianic Exegesis of the Targum*, 2.) Since the Pharisees had no legal right to crucify anyone, it explains why they asked Pontius Pilate to crucify Jesus. (John 18:31)

Jerusalem³⁴, a sign of his kingship (tether his donkey). Fourth, Jesus gave his disciples the communion bread and cup³⁵, and foot washing³⁶ during the last supper (washed in wine). Fifth, Jesus was beaten³⁷ and crucified,³⁸ becoming the sin sacrifice for the world's atonement (his robes in the blood of grapes).

Given the scriptural understanding of Jesus as the “other lion” of Judah, the cryptic message is more easily interpreted. The message can be further refined to the following: “The Persons of the unbegotten belong to the Father, the unbegotten one. He, the Father, has his other Lion (Jesus).” Theologically, some very stable Trinitarian concepts are made here. The first sentence repeats much of the Father-oriented theology of *Méditation*. It correlates directly with Aquinas’ statement on pp. 10-12 of *Méditation I*: “Thus therefore the Father is known both by paternity and by common spiration, as regards the persons proceeding from Himself.”³⁹

The second sentence offers a relational understanding of the Father and the Son. It communicates two theological facts. First, that Jesus was a true lion – a true king and ruler.⁴⁰ Second, the Father “has” him. The verb “has” is a powerful word. In this context, it reminds the reader of two facts. First, Jesus sits in subjection to the Father; the Father “has” Jesus beneath him hierarchically and Jesus does the Father’s will.⁴¹ Second, Messiaen’s verb “être” (has) is ascending; it symbolizes that “we can always have more

³⁴ Mark 11:1-9.

³⁵ Luke 22:14-23.

³⁶ John 13:2-5.

³⁷ Mark 15:16-20.

³⁸ Luke 23:26-49.

³⁹ Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, p. 260

⁴⁰ This is also verified in Jacob’s blessing (Gen. 49:8) “Judah, your brothers will praise you; your hand will be on the neck of your enemies; your father’s sons will bow down to you.”

⁴¹ John 8:28b. “I do nothing on my own but speak just what the Father has taught me.”

when we lift ourselves up toward God and heaven.”⁴² So, whatever one “has” needs to be given back to the Father in order to fulfill the Father’s will. In this understanding, Christ’s subjection resulted in being offered as a sin sacrifice; all he had was laid down and offered up to God the Father. The use of the verb “has” in this context is all about subjection.

The tandem pair of Christ’s kingship and subjection, found in Messiaen’s second cryptic sentence, is a very crucial issue. It presents a dichotomy that informs that reader of the Father’s relationship with His only Son. As such it gives great insight into the theology of the Father within the theology of these two members of the Trinity.

If the reader recalls, this dichotomy was also presented in Marmion’s *Christ and his mysteries*. Discussed in the opening of this chapter, Marmion reveals that the Father relates to the Son as both infinite yet begotten, always-existing and yet born. Considering the parallels between his book and Messiaen’s *Méditations*, this example gives yet further credence to Marmion’s theological influence.

Cryptic Message and Aquinas Correlate

Given all the close connections above, one can clearly state that yes, Messiaen’s cryptic message can be deciphered. However, now that the cryptic message has been deciphered, one needs to investigate whether or not Messiaen’s message relates to other pieces of Catholic theology besides the biblical references supplied above. The connection with Marmion, above, is a great initiator for this discussion. However, since Messiaen’s main theological inspiration for the *Méditations* was Aquinas, it is important to look for direct correlates with concepts that Aquinas also communicated. Having

⁴² Samuel, *Olivier Messiaen: Music and Color*, 132-138.

surveyed his *Summa Theologica*, two questions indicate that the ideas in Messiaen's cryptic message are indeed foundationally Thomistic.

The first question, (Whether it is fitting that Christ should sit at the right hand of God the Father?) deals with Christ's kingship similarly to the cryptic message. Here is an excerpt from this question:

“Now in either sense it belongs to Christ to sit at the Father's right hand. First of all inasmuch as He abides eternally unchangeable in the Father's bliss, which is termed His right hand, according to Ps. 15:11: “At Thy right hand are delights even to the end.” Hence Augustine says (De Symb. i): “Sitteth at the right hand of the Father’: To sit means to dwell, just as we say of any man: ‘He sat in that country for three years:’ Believe, then, that Christ dwells so at the right hand of the Father: for He is happy, and the Father's right hand is the name for His bliss.” Secondly, Christ is said to sit at the right hand of the Father inasmuch as He reigns together with the Father, and has judiciary power from Him; just as he who sits at the king's right hand helps him in ruling and judging.”⁴³

This dovetails with the message that Jesus is worthy of being honored, and worthy to be called the Lion of Judah, as outlined in the cryptic message.

Aquinas' second question (Whether we may say that Christ is subject to the Father?) deals with Christ's subjection in a similar way to the cryptic message : “The third subjection He attributes to Himself [Jesus], saying (John 8:29): “I do always the things that please Him.” And this is the subjection to the Father, of obedience unto death.

⁴³ Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, p. 3438.

Hence it is written (Phil. 2:8) that he became “obedient” to the Father “unto death.”⁴⁴
Such obedience relates directly to the idea of subjection as discussed previously.

In summation, Messiaen’s cryptic message contains theological truths that intersect with Biblical scripture, Messiaenic influence, and now Thomist theology. These three pillars strongly verify the theology communicated in the V1 accompaniment.

Messiaen and Cryptic Intentionality

However, the reader is left with one final question to answer. Did Messiaen intend to communicate it? Considering the above evidence, it seems the answer is yes. Yet, Messiaen did not claim to have hidden any technique or process in this composition. The lack of such verifying evidence, however, does not mean that the answer is no.

Returning to the Rößler situation at the start of this chapter, it is clear that the origin of ET-1 (*Le Père des étoiles*) became known only after the interviewer asked a precise question that Messiaen answered. Messiaen himself never disclosed this data in the *Méditations* publication (Alphonse Leduc Publishers) or in any other publication.

Messiaen’s admittance, that “my method is only a...fruitful game that has forced me to discover new musical variations,”⁴⁵ provides further fuel to this mystery of intentionality. This statement causes one to consider the possibility that Messiaen left some things unsaid, un-spelled, and un-defined. After all, the words that appear in V1 (besides the word “*Lion*”) are the three exact words that later appear formally in pp. 10-12. And, the more familiar Trinity leitmotifs and cases, also not listed by Messiaen, come directly from his preface. So, how can one conclude this mystery?

⁴⁴ Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, 3142.

⁴⁵ Samuel, *Olivier Messiaen: Music and Color*, 132-138.

In a recorded conversation with Claude Samuel, Messiaen provides some interesting clues that may answer the question of cryptic intention. Initially, Messiaen responds negatively to the idea of cryptic encoding in his *Méditations* message:

[O.M.] I'm not posing any problem at all for future decipherers because I marked the letters above the notes myself.

C. S. You're not waiting for your Champollion!

O. M. No, I was completely honest and frank and my approach has nothing esoteric about it.⁴⁶

Messiaen indeed is not waiting for his Champollion. But, the reason is because his system and its cipher are already provided. However, within the cipher many investigations can still be conducted. The difference is subtle but distinct. But, did Messiaen intend for his cipher to be in use beyond his own defined parameters? The continuation of Messiaen conversation with Samuel gives an interesting answer to this:

But I obtained some absolutely unbelievable, extravagant themes that I then had to set in counterpoint and harmonize. It was a fascinating task for me and analogous to what Johann Sebastian Bach did to Protestant chorales. To those chorales, which are simple and often anodine melodies, he added extraordinary variations, ornamenting them with ostinato counter-subjects or treating them in fugue form. I myself was burdened with letters which I had to transform into music.⁴⁷

Though understandably denying the need for Champollion above, here Messiaen readily admits that he composed his counterpoint using his original subjects (all parts of

⁴⁶ Samuel, *Olivier Messiaen: Music and Color*, 132-138.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

his *langage*) like countersubjects in a fugue. Using similar language in the preface to *Méditation I*, Messiaen again described his accompaniment as counterpoint.

Compositionally, what better counterpoint could be used than something preexistent in the same composition?

These helpful insights explain how Messiaen's compositional use of accompaniment leitmotifs (and their meanings) was a cryptic extension of his *langage* via the compositional technique of counterpoint. Through this medium he explored how his created system could be used to a greater extent.

Considering this, the conclusion is that Messiaen was compositionally aware of his recycled leitmotifs being used in this capacity. Whether or not he strategically created another piece theology can be argued; though it is highly unlikely that such a topically merited sentence would exist aside from some intentionality on Messiaen's part.

Paralleling the concepts which began this chapter, Messiaen's V1 cryptic message demonstrates all the features that are involved in the idea of revealed and concealed information. First, the undisclosed motives demonstrate how motives can proceed from one another; this further emphasizes the role of the Father. Second, the concealed information demonstrates the parable-like nature of communication that has a biblical basis. Third, the combination of revealed and concealed concepts includes both Creator and the Unbegotten Father, the two focal points of Messiaen's *Méditation I* theology. Considering the complexity of a cryptic message working in tandem with the ET-motifs, these levels of communication reveal the amazing number of dimensions at work in Messiaen's composition.

A Brief Discussion of V2

In V2 (p. 9) the accompaniment is harmonic, not melodic as in V1. Similar to V1, it also has many subsets that relate to the Trinity leitmotifs, ET-motifs, and grammar motifs (mostly in pitch class space). Additionally, there are also many internal chord similarities in V2. However, despite having forty-two distinctly different harmonies, none contains music-alphabet words or other features of Messiaen's grammar. For the present, no further V2 analysis will be discussed. However, a few of these harmonies return in the "*inengendre*" analysis (p. 14) at the close of this chapter.

Communicable Language and '*les étoiles tournent*' Analysis

Communicable Language and ET motifs

Thus far the discussion has covered pages 8-9 of the score. When p. 10 is reached a corner is turned. Messiaen's preface indicates that beginning here, a "New element in the 'communicable language' is on the Choir Clarinet . . . [with] [c]ounterpoint on the Great Organ with Flutes"⁴⁸ This is the first formal use of Messiaen's music-alphabet in the entire composition. It is an incredible communicative device which delivers sentence-specific thoughts about the Father. The leitmotifs used here are employed from pp. 10-12; each is approximately one to two measures in length

Messiaen's *langage* communicates the following Thomist theology about the Father: "In relation to the Persons proceeding from Him, the Father signifies paternity and spiration; but, considered as 'The Principal who has no principal,' he signifies: He

⁴⁸ "Nouvel element en 'langage communicable.' Le 'langage' est au Positif sur clarinette . . . Contrepoint au Grand Orgue sur flutes"

proceeds from no other: it is that precisely which is the peculiar quality of not being born, signified by the name the unbegotten one.”⁴⁹

This communication of theology via leitmotif is clear when Messiaen’s words “one thing expresses another”⁵⁰ are taken literally. However, it is not the only thing being communicated in these pages. As with the previous sections, there are further motivic details contained in the counterpoint accompaniment. Though Messiaen again ascribes no extra-musical meaning to his counterpoint, it is by no means un-communicative. In fact, his statements about fugal counterpoint are more firmly solidified here because the accompaniment here recycles earlier material as a motivic source.

The counterpoint motives on pp. 10-12 (of score) are musically similar to the accompaniment in V1. Sets of sixteenth notes (from two notes to sixteen notes) are presented quickly with small rests in between them. At first glance they appear as a hodgepodge of atonal motifs. But, on closer inspection these motifs consist of exact pc sets and subsets of ET-1, ET-2, and ET-3 (Examples 2.8-2.10). There is not a single note in the accompaniment that is unaccounted for outside of the ET-based motifs. The pcs are exactly the same, with some duration and octave designation differences. Considering the above issues of disclosure (origin of ET-1 and V1 cryptic message) it is likely that this is yet another undisclosed leitmotif communication.

Considering the organization of revealed and concealed motifs on pages 8-9, pages 10-12 communicate in a similar, yet reversed, fashion. On pages 8-9 the ET-motifs

⁴⁹ “Par rapport aux Personnes qui precedent de lui, le Père se notifie ainsi: paternité et spiration; en tant que ‘Principe qui v’a pas de principe,’ il se notifie ainsi: il n’est pas d’un autre: c’est là précisément la propriété d’innascibilité, designee par le nom d’Inengendré.”

⁵⁰ “ceci exprimera cela”

Example 2.8: ET-1, ET-2, and ET-3 sets and subsets on p. 10 of score

The image shows a page of a musical score with six systems of music. Each system consists of a vocal line and a piano accompaniment line. The score is annotated with various musical terms and set labels:

- System 1:** Vocal line starts with "Père" in a circle. The piano part is marked "legato mf". Annotations include "ET-1" in two places, "Miss. 'G#A' 'FA' open close", and "(G#)".
- System 2:** Vocal line has notes "p", "e", "r", "s", "o", "n". Piano part has "ET-1" and "ET-2" labels. Annotations include "(Mistake?) or start of ET-1 again" and "Miss. 'EbG'".
- System 3:** Vocal line has notes "n", "e", "s", "p", "r", "o". Piano part has "ET-2" and "ET-1*" labels. Annotations include "Miss. 'c' open" and "(Bb)".
- System 4:** Vocal line has notes "c", "é", "d", "a", "n", "t". Piano part has "ET-2*" and "ET-3" labels. Annotations include "Miss. 'D'" and "m.g.". There is a circled "Père" above the system.
- System 5:** Vocal line has "(ablatif: du)" above. Piano part has "ET-1" and "ET-3*" labels. Annotations include "(ET-2)" and "(Bb)".
- System 6:** Vocal line has "(avoir: il a)" above. Piano part has "ET-2*", "ET-3", and "ET-3*" labels. Annotations include "Miss. 'D' close", "(copy) m.g.", and "First 'D' in Agnus Accomp.". There is a circled "Père" above the system.

Example 2.9: ET-1, ET-2, and ET-3 sets and subsets on p. 11 of score

The image shows a handwritten musical score for piano, featuring several systems of music with lyrics and performance instructions. The score is annotated with ET-1, ET-2, and ET-3 sets and subsets, along with various performance markings.

System 1: Lyrics: "t m.d. i o n". Annotations: ET-3, ET-2*, ET-1*, m.g., m.d., Miss. "D" close (in RH).

System 2: Lyrics: "Père". Annotations: ET-2*, ET-1, ET-1*, m.d., m.g., (copy).

System 3: Lyrics: "(datif: vers le)". Annotations: ET-2*, ET-1, (ET-2).

System 4: Lyrics: "p r i u c i p e (privatif: sans)". Annotations: ET-1, ET-1, ET-2, Miss. "c" open, "e" b close.

System 5: Lyrics: "p r n c i p e (avoir: il a)". Annotations: ET-2, ET-3, ET-1 start, ET-2, ET-1, Miss. "c" open, "e" close, Miss. "cd" close, Miss. "E" open, "A" close.

System 6: Lyrics: "(privatif: ne pas) (être) (ablatif: d'un) a u". Annotations: ET-1*, ET-2, ET-1, m.g., m.d., overlap.

Example 2.10: ET-1, ET-2, and ET-3 sets and subsets on p. 12 of score

Handwritten musical score for Example 2.10, showing ET-1, ET-2, and ET-3 sets and subsets on page 12. The score includes vocal lines with lyrics and piano accompaniment with figured bass notation. Annotations include "Miss. 'FA'", "Miss. 'E+G'", and "(3 complete sets)". A legend at the bottom right lists instrument specifications.

Legend:

- (sur "cresc.") (cresc. n°9)
- R: fonds 16,8,4 - anches 16,8
- cymbale 3 rangs - <
- Pos: fonds 16,8,4 - trp. 8
- fourniture 4 rangs - <
- G: fonds 16,8,4 -
- Ped: fonds 16,8 - 3 tirass

Annotations:

- Miss. "FA"
- Miss. "E+G"
- (3 complete sets)
- 3 incomplete sets
- * = complete set
- (Père)
- Missing "D"

are the revealed communication and the music-alphabet is the concealed information. Oppositely, on pages 10-12 the music-alphabet is the revealed communication and the ET-motifs is the concealed information. Interestingly, both approaches combine together the two main ideas that Messiaen is developing in this *Méditation*: The creator/ruler of creation (first revealed, now concealed) and the unbegotten Father (first concealed, now revealed). This gives further merit to the idea that Messiaen was ultimately aware of this strategy since the combination of these communications delivers both focal points of the theology he was presenting. It is also another example of how the parable is an appropriate parallel to Messiaen's compositional and communication strategy.

Les étoiles tournent (the stars revolve)

Beginning on p. 13 is a new section, “*les étoiles tournent*.” Its title means “the stars move” or, more appropriately “the stars revolve,” considering planetary and stellar movement. Herein, the section will be referred to as the TN-section, based on the word “*tournent*.” According to Messiaen, the “theme of the song of the stars [is] in the Pedals as a ten-note ostinato.”⁵¹ This theme of the stars is ET-1, the unbegotten melody. Accompanying this melodic ostinato are two harmonic ostinatos, “in the right hand an ostinato of eight chords in mode 6⁴ (Eb-E-F-G-G#-A-B-C#-D-D#), in the left hand an ostinato of nine chords in mode 4⁵ (E-F-F#-A-Bb-B-C-D#).”⁵² With these unequal ostinatos (eight, nine, and ten) Messiaen creates a swirling texture that imitates the orbital revolutions of the stars. It is musically reminiscent of how stars and planets are viewed when watching a planetarium movie of the solar system from the earth's perspective. All

⁵¹ “theme du chant des étoiles à la Pédale, en ostinato de dix notes.”

⁵² “à la main droit, ostinato de huit accords en mode 6⁴, à la main gauche, ostinato de neuf accords en mode 4⁵.”

the orbits are circular, returning to their beginning, but the length of the orbits vary greatly. Analytically, these ostinatos will be compared to other leitmotifs to see if they contain any concealed motivic information.

Although the harmonies seem to be independent of previous materials, the individual chords in the RH ostinato all relate to subsets of the ET and Trinitarian motifs, similar to the variation accompaniments on pp. 8-9. The LH ostinato does not have as many connections to the former motifs, though portions of it relate easily. These motivic connections may symbolically represent a subtle underlying theological communication. The ET-1 motive represents the Creator. Its short length is the smallest orbit, like being at the center of this musical solar system. The motives that orbit around it proceed from this central place, like “the Persons proceeding from Him.”⁵³

Additionally, both ostinatos are not repeated exactly; each repetition has a few differences in pitch.⁵⁴ The RH chords have a few pitch variants yet all notes are in mode 6⁴. The LH variants, though, include many G#s, a note outside of the mode 4⁵ (E-F-F#-A Bb-B-C-D#). Perhaps this minor adjustment can be justified just like Messiaen’s explanation of changes in his music-alphabet. His personal allowance was: “I nevertheless exercise some control and reserve the right to change the words when the result isn’t interesting.”⁵⁵

⁵³ “Personnes qui precedent de lui”

⁵⁴ This inconsistency is unusual for Messiaen’s ostinatos. In *‘Liturgie de Cristal’* from *Quatuor* the harmonic ostinatos are very consistent; one slight error exists between chords three and four in the fourth repetition.

⁵⁵ Samuel, *Olivier Messiaen: Music and Color*, 132-138.

TN-section and CR-section

The RH and LH harmonic ostinatos also relate to the section that follows (p. 13/S4/m.3 – p. 14/S1). Messiaen provides the following words for this section: “a short ascending crescendo heralds (under the colors of the revolving chords in transposed inversions and contracted resonance) a last proclamation”⁵⁶ The section will herein be referred to as the CR-section, short for the words “contracted resonance.” The final proclamation refers to the music-alphabet spelling of the word “*inengendre*” (unbegotten) at the very end of this Meditation. However, one must first analyze Messiaen’s descriptive “*herald*.”

The parenthetical description following “*herald*” has four technical terms. These terms describe the CR-section, however they also relate it to the preceding TN-section. The word “colors” evokes Messiaen’s renowned synaesthetic mode colors that appear in the TN-section, resembling the “effect of a stained-glass window.”⁵⁷ The word “revolving chords” (sharing the same French verb “*tourner*” as with the former section “*les étoiles tournent*”) also evokes a connection with this section. The next words are more difficult to relate upon first reading. However, based on the clarity of the above associations, it is fair to assume that these terms also apply to the same materials. The words “transposed inversions” are obviously theoretical terms. They seem to indicate a method of construction, an aspect explored below. The words “contracted resonance” are vague at best. These last two terms will be explained within the analysis of TN and CR below.

⁵⁶ “Une courte montée en crescendo amène (sous les couleurs des accord tournants, à renversements transposés, à résonance contractée) une dernière proclamation”

⁵⁷ Abdoulaev, “Messiaen's Chord and Harmonic Theory,” <<http://oliviermessiaen.net/musical-language/messiaens-chord-and-harmonic-theory/>>

The analysis of these sections will simply compare the TN and CR chords to determine the harmonic relationship. The RH mode of TN (herein, TN(RH)) and the LH mode of the TN (herein, TN(LH)) will be compared with the CR-section motifs. As it turns out, both modes are represented as transposed and inverted subsets within the CR-section (Example 2.11). These transpositions and inversions validate Messiaen's use of the words "transposed inversions" above. When combined with the use of the revolving ostinato chords and the existence of both modes ("colors of the changing chords"⁵⁸), the result substantiates the use of Messiaen's first three technical terms.

The fourth term, "contracted resonance," still needs clarification. Its explanation begins with Messiaen's term "Chord of Resonance," as explained by theorist Alexandre Abdoulaev. This chord of resonance is built from a fundamental pitch and its acoustic overtone series. This specific chord is also related closely to "mode 3, lacking only one note from that mode."⁵⁹ However, since Messiaen employs modes 4 and 6 in the TN and CR sections, the term's relevance is not yet apparent.

The chord of resonance has other manifestations too. The chord of superior resonance, which "contain[s] all of the notes of the overtone series" and the chord of "contracted superior resonance [which] present[s] the same notes in a restacked fashion, much like a cluster. The chord of contracted resonance, in a similar fashion, contains the notes placed in clusters, but with parts of the overtone series missing."⁶⁰ Here, Messiaen's term "contracted resonance" is finally found. It is a chord of superior resonance, reordered in clusters and also missing certain partials of the overtone series.

⁵⁸ "sous les couleurs des accords tournants"

⁵⁹ Abdoulaev, "Messiaen's Chord and Harmonic Theory," <<http://oliviermessiaen.net/musical-language/messiaens-chord-and-harmonic-theory/>>

⁶⁰ Ibid.

While this is helpful, it is also confusing since there are no specific rules as to which partials could or should be missing.

Example 2.11: TN(RH) and TN(LH) chords; p. 13/S1 to S4/m.1 (RH and LH) relating to CR-chords; p. 13/S4/m.3 to p. 14/S1

* A Variant of the original; without G#

Though a particular superior resonance chord is not found in the CR or TN-sections, the descriptive features of contracted resonance can perhaps be separated and then applied to other mode situations. Messiaen’s own “Effects of Resonance” example in his *Technique*, is a good model to consider. Here, a superior resonance chord occurs

when two distinct RH and LH chord clusters (in different modes) “form superior resonance” of a preceding chord.⁶¹

Following this model, the CR-section’s “contracted resonance” now makes sense. First, the combined pitches from RH and LH modes create a chromatic scale, very similar to a superior resonance chord. Second, most (but not all) of the mode 4 and mode 6 chords are employed in CR; this is like the missing pitches from the overtone series. Third, the two modes are now re-ordered as linear dyad clusters in the CR-section, the last aspect of the contracted resonance definition. Though it is an approximation of Messiaen’s term (which has no concrete definition), this is a viable option. All four terms have now been applied to the TN and CR-section analysis.

***Inengendré* Analysis**

The Proclamation “Inengendré”

The last section of *Méditation I* (p. 14, *Extrêmement lent*) contains the final proclamation. Employing his music-alphabet once again, the word *inengendré* (“unbegotten”) is spelled in the pedals. Accompanying this is a series of chords, all of which relate to previous accompaniment chords used throughout *Méditation I*. The chords he chooses for this accompaniment are from sparse locations. Referring back to the celestial topic that began this Meditation, if one were to highlight each represented chord on the manuscript, a distanced perspective would reveal a group of chords that appear like a constellation of stars. As the meditation began as an astrological statement (Father of Stars), it now also ends displaying the stars themselves as represented harmonies in the composition.

⁶¹ Messiaen, *Technique of my Musical Language*, 72-73 (Ex. 217).

Messiaen's constellational collection of chords provides further commentary on the characteristics of the Trinitarian Father. Though His unbegotten-ness is an accepted fact, it is also true that He is exhibited everywhere via creation. Though not created, he is creator of all things seen and unseen. Through his creation, through these stars, one can see, identify, and worship His majesty and His beauty. Psalm 19:1-4 states the validity of this celestial testimony with the following words:

The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands.
Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge.
There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard. Their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world.

As stated above, the accompanying chords to “*Inengendrê*” (herein, UN-chords) relate to different sections in the meditation. In fact, many UN-chords are pitch-related to two or more chords within these areas. The analysis reveals that the pitch relationships continue similarly to the chordal association in the previous CR and TN analysis in this chapter; the main difference here is that these chords relate to specific sections, emphasizing a constellation-like relationship.

The first chord, UN-1, is related to the CR-chords (Example 2.12); UN-9 is very similar to UN-1 and relates to the same CR-chords.⁶² UN-2 and UN-3 relate to V2 chords⁶³ (Example 2.13). UN-4 also relates to V2 chords (Example 2.14), as does the group of UN-5, UN-6, and UN-8⁶⁴ (Example 2.15). UN-7 relates to TN-chords (Example 2.16). The final chord, UN-10, is an amalgamation of all the previous UN-chords

⁶² Excluding its top note, UN-9 is T3 from UN-1. Its associations are similar as well.

⁶³ V2 and V3 are very closely related (basically a T1 relationship). In this example, many more associations exist than shown. Only the most prevalent ones are displayed.

⁶⁴ Note, UN-6 is T3 from UN-5 and UN-8 is T7 from UN-5. They are all the same sonority. Because of this, only UN-5 will be compared in the example.

(Example 2.17). Continuing the constellational motif, it is like a great star that contains all their colors. As the culminating star it also demonstrates how the other stars proceed from this harmony. Theologically, this concept fits with the star of Bethlehem, which pointed to the birth of Christ. Matthew 2:9-11 records the magi following this star:

After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen in the east went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him.

The final sonority (UN-10) plays an interesting theological role considering its revealed and concealed motivic aspects. As the chord from which the other UN-chords can proceed from it demonstrates this characteristic of the Father. As the culmination of the stars accompanying the unbegotten father, this culminating chord/star prophetically points to the Christ who was to come. The Father is the only unbegotten, but Jesus is the only begotten of the Father; they are two singularities regarding the begetting aspect of the Trinity. Revelation 22:16 provides further biblical basis for this interpretation: “I, Jesus . . . am the Root and the Offspring of David, and the bright Morning Star.”

As the final chord represents the Bethlehem star of Christ, so too the final section of *Méditation I* looks back to the beginning stars that began the composition. This echo from the beginning now sounds with different meaning. This combination of revealed and concealed information once again reflects the two focal points in Messiaen’s theology of the Father. The earlier stars depict the Creator and the final stars, amid the word “*Inengendré*,” depict both the unbegotten and the begotten of the Father.

Example 2.12: CR-chords; p. 14/S1 and UN-1; p. 14/S2/ (chord 1, without the pedal)

*Also includes UN-9.
Excluding its top note,
it is T3 from UN-1.

The musical score for Example 2.12 consists of two staves. The top staff is in treble clef and the bottom staff is in bass clef. The music is divided into five measures, each labeled with a chord name: CR-3, CR-4, CR-5, CR-6, and UN-1*. Above the staves, there are several annotations: 'T0' is connected by a line to the first two measures; 'T1' is connected to the last two measures; 'T2' is connected to the fourth measure. String symbols are placed above and below the notes: '<E06>' above the first measure, '<9246T>' above the second and third measures, '<T357E>' above the fourth measure, and '<E06>' below the fifth measure. Below the staves, there are more string symbols: '<8135>' and '<T357>' below the fourth measure, and '<E06>' below the fifth measure.

Example 2.13: V2-chords; p. 9/S1/m.4, S2/m.5, S3/m.1/chord 3, S4/m.1/ (chord 1 and 2), and UN-2 plus UN-3; p. 14/S2/ (chord 2 and 3, without the pedal)

The musical score for Example 2.13 consists of two staves. The top staff is in treble clef and the bottom staff is in bass clef. The music is divided into seven measures, each labeled with a chord name: V2-7, V2-20, V2-23, V2-31, V2-32, UN-2, and UN-3. Above the staves, there are several annotations: 'T3' is connected to the first two measures; 'T6' is connected to the third measure; 'T9' is connected to the fourth and fifth measures; 'UN-2' is connected to the sixth measure; 'UN-3' is connected to the seventh measure. String symbols are placed above and below the notes: '<06E>' above the first measure, '<T6E491>' above the second measure, '<73816>' above the third measure, '<E4926>' above the fourth measure, '<4T3814>' above the fifth measure, '<816E3>' above the sixth measure, and '<192704>' above the seventh measure. Below the staves, there are more string symbols: '<T270>' below the first measure, '<T2>' below the second measure, '<T10>' below the third measure, '<2816E>' below the sixth measure, and '<281>' below the seventh measure. A 'RI1' annotation is placed below the first measure.

Combining the unbegotten and the only begotten, as communicated at the end of this *Méditation*, is a very important Trinitarian idea. In fact, Messiaen describes a similar duality when describing the Father in *Méditation V*. For Messiaen, the Father has “A double paternity: that of the Father who engenders, but also of the Father as creator and of his benevolence to all men.”⁶⁵

⁶⁵ Samuel, *Olivier Messiaen: Music and Color*, 132-138.

Example 2.14: V2-chords; p. 9/S5/m.1 chord 1 and 3, and UN-4; p. 14/S2/ (chord 4, without the pedal)

Example 2.14 shows three measures of music. The first measure is labeled V2-38 and has a guitar fingering of $\langle 8T13627 \rangle$. The second measure is labeled V2-40 and has a guitar fingering of $\langle 469E2T3 \rangle$. The third measure is labeled UN-4 and has a guitar fingering of $\langle 358T192 \rangle$. Lines connect the fingerings to labels T7 and T11. T7 is connected to the first two measures, and T11 is connected to the second and third measures.

Example 2.15: V2-chords; p. 9/S1/m.4/ (chord 1), S5/m.1 chord 2, S5/m.2/ (chord 1 and 2), and UN-5 (UN-6, UN-8 also included); p. 14/S2/ (chord 5), (S2/chord 1 and 3 also, without the pedal)

*Also includes UN-6 and UN-8 chords; these are T3 and T7 from UN-5. All are the same sonority.

Example 2.15 shows four measures of music. The first measure is labeled V2-6/V2-41(8va) and has a guitar fingering of $\langle 4790281 \rangle$. The second measure is labeled V2-39 and has a guitar fingering of $\langle 8E14605 \rangle$. The third measure is labeled V2-42 and has a guitar fingering of $\langle 2506E \rangle$. The fourth measure is labeled UN-5* and has a guitar fingering of $\langle 14E5T \rangle$. Lines connect the fingerings to labels T9, T5, and T11. T9 is connected to the first and second measures, T5 is connected to the second and third measures, and T11 is connected to the third and fourth measures.

Example 2.16: TN-chords; p. 13/S1/m.1/ (chord 3), m.3/ (chord 2), and UN-7; p. 14/S2/ (chord 2, without the pedal)

Example 2.16 shows two measures of music. The first measure is labeled TN(R)-3/8 (same chord) and has a guitar fingering of $\langle 2E13 \rangle$. The second measure is labeled UN-7 and has a guitar fingering of $\langle 09E1 \rangle$. Lines connect the fingerings to labels T10 and RI0. T10 is connected to both measures, and RI0 is connected to the second measure.

Example 2.17: All UN-chords and UN-10; p. 14/S1 to S3 (without the pedal)

*Also includes UN-9.
Excluding its top note,
it is T3 from UN-1.

** Also includes UN-3.
Excluding its bottom note,
it is T1 from UN-2.

***Also includes UN-6 and
UN-8 chords; these are T3 and
T7 from UN-5.

The musical score consists of two staves, treble and bass clef. Above the staves are six chord diagrams labeled UN-1*, UN-2**, UN-4, UN-5***, UN-7, and UN-10. Below the staves are various annotations including 'ss <T357>', 'ss <2816>', 'RI10', 'T3', 'ss <16E3>', 'RI15', '<1469E5T>', 'T3', 'ss <09E>', 'T9', 'ss <E1T>', 'RI7', 'ss <968>', 'ss <4790281>', 'ss <47902>', 'ss <4928>', 'ss <4926>', and 'ss <8135>'.

Aquinas also comments on this duality in his *Summa Theologica*. Interestingly, this commentary restates the earlier “Principle who has no principal”⁶⁶ concept that Messiaen employed. According to Aquinas, “As in creatures there exist a first and a secondary principle, so also in the divine Persons...is formed the principle not from a principle, Who is the Father; and the principle from a principle, Who is the Son.”⁶⁷ In the culminating moments of *Méditation 1* this thought is articulated via Messiaen’s revealed and concealed musical communication. Considering these parallels it is also possible that Messiaen’s theology was aided by this related Thomist text. As Messiaen stated about his experiences with Aquinas’ *Summa Theologica* “[I] need only to read a single paragraph, stop, close the book, and then reflect for hours.”⁶⁸

⁶⁶ “Principe qui n’a pas de principe”

⁶⁷ Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, p. 260

⁶⁸ See Shenton, *Olivier Messiaen’s System of Signs*, 34. (Attributed to Massin, “Une poétique du merveilleux,” 32.)

Conclusion of *Méditation I*

The numerous areas of motivic concealment (the unbegotten melody, the cryptic grammar, the cryptic accompaniment of the *langage*, and the chordal stars), reveal that Messiaen's *Méditation I* communicates on multiple planes. Yet, the points of theology revealed through analysis demonstrate that these concealed features further engage and enrich the theology of the Father. Just as Jesus spoke parables with revealed and concealed information, so too Messiaen's theology pours out of musical parables of his own revealed and concealed making. In listening and investigating this aspect of Messiaen's *Méditations*, the listener must therefore be careful *not* to become "ever hearing but never understanding."⁶⁹ The message of his pitches may include concealed elements, but these can be only illuminated if one knows how to look. As Messiaen himself declared, "But in the music, in the notes, I declare my belief."⁷⁰

⁶⁹ Isaiah 6:9a

⁷⁰ Rößler, *Contributions to the Spiritual World of Olivier Messiaen*, 48-51.

CHAPTER 3
Analysis of Méditation IV

Introduction to *Méditation IV*

The Revelation of God according to Messiaen

Méditation IV is about the existence of God. The statement may seem trite, but Messiaen is pursuing this exact thought. He writes that “All that we can know of God is summed up by these words which are so complex and yet so simple: He is.”¹ Messiaen then states that human comprehension of this mystery is not a normal educational experience. Rather it is something that “we can only comprehend in flashes, in rare and brief moments of illumination.”² Messiaen is not writing about a person’s belief in God, nor about one’s salvation or faith. He is writing about understanding God in His fullness, His complete existence. This depth of understanding is rare, yet Messiaen attempts to create one of these “brief moments of illumination” in this Meditation. This theologically ambitious goal is seemingly impossible, yet Messiaen nevertheless sets out to accomplish this high task.

Messiaen’s specific goal is to provide the listener with a vision of God’s full glory, one similar to Moses’ vision of God’s glory on Mount Sinai (Ex. 34:6). To be transported to this place of vision, Messiaen presents the entire Meditation as “an atmosphere in preparation for the final vision.”³ The preparation consists of a list of odd musical events: “strangeness of the timbres . . . bird song . . . unknown dimensions . . .

¹ “Tout ce que nous pouvons savoir de Dieu se résume dans ces mots à la fois si denses et si simples: il est.”

² “nous ne comprenons que par éclairs, dans de rares et courtes illuminations.”

³ “un climat, préparant la vision finale.”

trilled ‘clusters’ . . . three persons of the Holy Trinity . . . long solo of the song thrush.”⁴

All of these lead to the ‘*Je suis*’ (I am) vision. Curiously enough, Messiaen does not explain how these events are preparatory. He leads the listener there, as he often does, with semi-cryptic leitmotifs and extra-musical associations that guide the unworn path. However, one thing is strikingly clear, however murky the atmosphere of preparation, there are no doubts about the arrival of the final “*Je suis*” vision: “Suddenly, towards the end of the piece, a fortissimo on the organ: rapidly descending chords in iambic rhythm: it’s the vision of Moses. “And ‘I am’ passed before him crying: ‘I am, I am!’” (Exodus, Chapter 34, Verse 6).”⁵

Because the final vision is so clear, and the music so definite in its representation, the listener is left with an interesting thought to consider: If “*Je suis*” is musically represented, can the opposite of this also be musically represented? If so, how would the opposite of “*Je suis*” be expressed? In Judeo-Christian theology, there is no opposite of the living God, but there is an opposing side. This side, with its representative fallen angels, demons, is recognized not by appearing different, but rather by appearing similarly, deceptively – as a decoy. One must exercise spiritual discernment to recognize such decoys.

Returning to the question above, the opposing musical representation would therefore also be a motivic decoy of the “*Je suis*” motive. To find evidence of this, two things need to be exhibited in Messiaen’s score. First, one must investigate to see if any existing motifs are close approximations of the God-based leitmotifs – are there any

⁴ “L’étrangeté des timbres . . . chant d’oiseaux . . . dimension inconnue . . . Des ‘clusters’ trillés . . . trios Personnes de la Sainte Trinité . . . long solo de Grive musicienne”

⁵ “Soudain, vers la fin de la pièce, fortissimo de l’orgue: des accord en rythme iambique desendent rapidement: c’est la vision de Moïse. “Et ‘Je suis’ passa devant lui en criant: ‘Je suis, Je suis!’” (Exode, chapitre 34, verset 6).”

decoy motifs? Second, following Messiaen's established leitmotif association, these decoy motifs should also include scripture references and/or extra-musical associations that reinforce this deceptive representation. *Méditation IV* warrants such a search since its musical contents include many motifs that are closely related to other God-oriented leitmotifs. In this scenario, there is definite opportunity to discern the decoy from the authentic.

As mentioned above, the presence of decoy and authentic leitmotifs is important theologically because the spiritual life requires similar discernment. The apostle Paul, warning of Satan's ability to deceive, writes these words: "The coming of the lawless one [Satan] will be . . . displayed in all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders."⁶ If even miracles can be counterfeit, discernment of those qualities which seem automatically holy or good is a definite requirement. Jesus further warns his disciples not to follow after counterfeit religious leaders, saying: "Watch out that no one deceives you. For many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many." (Mt 24:4-5). This is another reminder that spiritual discernment must be practiced with caution.

In *Méditation IV*, three sections with authentic and decoy motives will be analyzed. The first section is a birdcall analysis. Here, there is a long *Grive musicienne* (Song Thush) birdsong solo that imitates and mocks three other bird calls that surround it. The second section is a Trinity leitmotif analysis. Here, the leitmotifs are variations on the other Trinity leitmotifs in the composition as a whole. The third section is a "*Je suis*" analysis. Here, a trill motif is the authentic predecessor of the "*Je suis*" chords (Moses' vision). These three analyses present the opportunity to interpret Messiaen's "atmosphere

⁶ 2 Thessalonians 2:9

in preparation.” Using the devices at hand, the analysis will help discern between who “He is” and who “He is not” as the listener heads towards the final, verifiable vision.

Birdcall Analysis

Introduction to Birdcall leitmotifs

In *Méditation IV* there are many bird calls. The birds *Pic noir* (PN-Black Woodpecker), *Chouette de Tengmalm* (CT-Owl at Tengmalm), and *Merle à plastron* (MP-Alpine Blackbird) are used in the opening and ending of the piece (pp. 30-31 and pp. 35-36). Another bird, the *Grive musicienne* (GM, Song Thrush), and has an enormous solo in the middle pages (pp. 32-34). The GM solo derives most of its musical features from the PN, CT, and MP. These motive overlaps are a main subject of investigation in *Méditation IV* because the GM is a mimicking bird, much like the mocking bird.

According to an ornithological article, An individual male [Song Thrush] may have a repertoire of more than 100 phrases, many copied from its parents and neighbouring birds.⁷ Additionally, the mimicry can also include sounds made by telephones.⁸ As the analysis reveals below, there is definite proof that the GM incorporates motivic features from the three other birds. The analysis is conducted in three sections, comparing each bird with the GM. When the analysis is complete, an exploration of the reason for these bird-influences will be offered in the context of Messiaen’s theological purposes for

Méditation IV.

⁷ DeVoogd, Krebs, Healy, and Purvis, “Relations between Song Repertoire Size and the Volume of Brain Nuclei Related to Song,” 75–82.

⁸ Slater, Peter J. B. “The Buzby phenomenon: Thrushes and telephones,” 308-309.

GM and MP

The investigation begins by exploring the motivic connections between the MP and the GM. The MP is found twice in this *Méditation* (Example 1). Its melodic and harmonic features will be compared with the GM to determine their similarities. Framing the MP motive is an obvious emphasis on melodic tritones and harmonic 7ths and 9ths. The GM solo has thirty-six total motives that relate to Example 3.1. The motives share features such as: fast two, three, and four-note linear dyads, relatively large pitch-space intervals, register extremes, and similar contour (heavily ascending or descending by leaps). Since this study is focusing solely on pitch, only that aspect will be analyzed in depth, although the other aspects are helpful in substantiating a motivic connection.

Example 3.1: MP motive, p. 30, System 2

MP-1 MP-2 MP-3 MP-4 MP-5 MP-3

[348E] [79T2] [349] [812] [6TE] [349]
(0158) (0237) (016) (016) (015) (016)

The first GM motives are G_MP-1 and G_MP-2, on p. 32/S2/m.1. Note, since the GM motives incorporate three other bird motives, these motives will be referred to as G_(MP/CT/PN); i.e. G_MP equates *Grive musicienne* influenced by *Merle à Plastron*.

G_MP-1 and G_MP-2 relate to MP-chords in a variety of ways. The most interesting feature is the presence of harmonic motives unfolded forward in chronological space as melodic motives. There are also shared (016) chords and framing intervals employed. Finally, MP-2 can be heard as a subset of the combination of G_MP-1 and G_MP-2 (Example 3.2).

Example 3.2: MP-chords; p.30/S2, G_MP-1 and G_MP-2; p. 32/S2/m.1

The musical score for Example 3.2 consists of two staves. The top staff contains several chords labeled MP-4, G_MP-1, MP-3, MP-1, MP-5, G_MP-2, G_MP-1+2, and MP-2. The bottom staff contains melodic lines with annotations: <182>, T8, <94T>, [016] (shared normal order), (shared framing intervals), (01237), and (0237) (subset). A dashed line labeled '(combined)' spans across the G_MP-2 and G_MP-1+2 chords.

Example 3.3: G_MP-1 plus G_MP-2; p.32/S2/m.1, MP-1 plus MP-2; p.30/S2/m.1, and G_MP-3; p. 32/S3/m.2

The musical score for Example 3.3 consists of two staves. The top staff contains chords labeled G_MP-1 and G_MP-2, MP-1 and MP-2, and G_MP-3. The bottom staff contains melodic lines with annotations: linear subset <9T0> (013), lower subset <487> (014), R15, <T91> (014), and slight expansion to... (with a dashed line connecting the lower subset and <T91> annotations).

The next MP-influenced motive from the GM solo is G_MP-3 (Example 3.3). Its Bb-A is the same framing interval (ic1) as above (MP-1 and MP-5) and it relates to subsets of G_MP-1 plus G_MP-2 and MP-1 plus MP-2.

G_MP-4 through G_MP-7 is another interesting set. The chords have (012) subsets in common. However, the main issue that ties the motives together is pitch-class invariance with MP-3, MP-4, and MP-5 (Example 3.4).

G_MP-8 to G_MP-36 include many similar features as above. For the purposes of this essay, these chords are not discussed further here. However, these chords are listed in Appendix C for interested readers who wish to investigate further.

Example 3.4: MP-3 to MP-5; p.30/S2/m.2, and G_MP-4 to G_MP-7; p.32/S4/m.1 to m. 2 (first chord)

The musical score consists of two staves. The top staff shows melodic lines for MP-3, MP-4, MP-5, G_MP-4, G_MP-5, G_MP-6, and G_MP-7. The bottom staff shows harmonic accompaniment for the same measures. Annotations include:

- MP-3 + MP-4 outer voices, harmonically ordered: $\langle C\#4-Eb4 \rangle$ and $\langle D5-E5 \rangle$. Transformations T+24 and T+0 are indicated.
- MP-3 + MP-5 subset: $[9TE4]$. Transformation T-12 is indicated.
- secondary subset of MP-3 + MP-4: $\langle Eb4-D5-E5 \rangle$.
- G_MP-4: $\langle D5-E5 \rangle$ and $\langle C\#6-Eb6 \rangle$.
- G_MP-4: subset (0123) .
- G_MP-5: subset $\langle C\#3-G\#4-D5 \rangle$.
- G_MP-6: subset (012) .
- G_MP-6: subset $\langle Eb4-D5-E5 \rangle$.
- G_MP-7: subset $[9T04]$ and (0127) .
- Transformation almost T0 is indicated between G_MP-4 and G_MP-7.
- Transformation T+0 is indicated between G_MP-4 and G_MP-7.

It is clear that the various MP chords and lines generate the material for the G_MP motives. That completes step one in this analysis and it satisfies the “mimicking” status of the GM bird in connection with MP.

GM and CT

Step two is moving on to the CT motives. Here the same type of analysis occurs. CT motives generate G_CT motives in the *Grive musicienne* pages (p. 32-34). The CT motives occur twice in *Méditation IV*, once on p. 30 and once on p. 36. The second appearance includes one additional chord. It will be used as the example to compare against the G_CT motives (Example 3.5). The motivic features they share include: completely vertical chord structures, a lack of linear movement, quiet dynamics, a tendency of chord repetition, and staccato articulation. Pitch-wise, the CT chords are inter-related. They have recurrences of (01457) and many subset relationships between (01256) and (0156). The final hexachord, CT-6 (012567), functions as a summary of the preceding chords. These CT chords and their subsets fit with most of the G_CT chords as shown in the following examples.

Example 3.5: CT-1 to CT-6, p. 36/S4 and S5

The musical score for Example 3.5 consists of two staves, treble and bass clef. The notes are grouped into six distinct vertical chord structures, labeled CT-1 through CT-6. Dashed boxes above the notes group these chords. Below the notes, chord diagrams are provided for each CT motive. The diagrams are as follows:

CT Motive	Chord Diagram
CT-1	[467TE] (01457)
CT-2	[89012] (01256)
CT-3	[12378] (01267)
CT-4	[9T124] (01457)
CT-5	[TE34] (0156)
CT-6	[678E01] (012567)

G_CT-1 and G_CT-2 appear first in the GM solo. As is obvious, the rhythmic features of both are consistent with the above comments. In the area of pitch, there are many shared subsets with CT-1, CT-3, and CT-5 (Example 3.6).

Example 3.6: CT-1, CT-3, and CT-5; p.30/S3/m.1/chords 1 and 2, m.2/chord 1, with G_CT-1 and G_CT-2; p.32/S2/m.3

The image shows a musical score with two staves (treble and bass clef) and several annotations. The annotations include:

- Labels for chord types: CT-1, CT-3, CT-5, G_CT-1, and G_CT-2.
- Subset relationships: 'subset' lines connect CT-3 to G_CT-1 and G_CT-2, and CT-5 to G_CT-1 and G_CT-2.
- Set class numbers: (01267) for CT-3, (0127) for the subset of CT-3, (012) for ss <324>, (013) for ss <746>, (012) for ss <231>, (016) for ss <4T3>, (013) for ss <E8T>, and (016) for ss <394>.
- Transformation labels: T11 and T4.

G_MP-1 and G_MP-2 have two M7 framing intervals, Bb-A and C-B, which are heard again in G_CT-1 through G_CT-3.⁹ The remaining interval of G_CT-1 through G_CT-3, ic5, also finds its genesis in G_MP-1, the ic5 A-E. As an additional relationship, G_MP-1 plus G_MP-2 (01237), G_CT-3 (01237), and G_CT-2 share subset (0127) with CT-3 (01267) and CT-6 (012567), (Example 3.7). These connections clearly demonstrate motivic mimicry of the CT source materials.

G_CT-4 through G_CT-10 is the longest CT reference within the GM solo. It also has some of the clearest pitch representations when compared to CT-1 through CT-4 and CT-6. There are a few complete pitch class associations, and many set class and subset associations (Example 3.8). The relationships exhibited are the most prominent; there are many other trichord subset associations that relate the two passages.

⁹ Note, G_CT-2 and G_CT-3 are mostly the same pitch classes and therefore the same intervals relate them. G_CT-3 has one additional pitch, F.

Example 3.7: G_MP-1 and G_MP-2; p.32/S2/m.1, CT-3 and CT-6; p.36/S25/ (chords 4 and 8), and G_CT-1 through G_CT-3; p.32/S2/m.3 and p.33/S1/m.1

*Note, the two primary intervals in G_CT-1, G_CT-2, and G_CT-3 relate to one another by complementary distances, T4 and T8

The final G_CT examples are on p. 34/S2/m.2. They exhibit similar characteristics of rhythm, dynamics, repetition, and articulation and the other G_CT chords above. The most prominent pitch features are transpositions, pc invariance, and subset associations (Example 3.9). In summary, G_CT has many interesting motivic connections with CT. Though some motives associate more closely than others, CT is surely the source of the G_CT materials. As with the MP, CT is also being “mocked” by the GM bird.

GM and PN

Step three is moving on to the PN motives. Here the same type of analysis occurs. PN motives generate G_PN motives in the *Grive musicienne* pages (p. 32-34). PN motives occur four times in *Méditation IV*, twice on p. 30 (systems 1 and 4), on p. 32 (system 1), and on p. 35 (systems 1 and 2). The fourth appearance (Example 3.10) includes the most chords. It will be used as the example to compare with G_PN chords.

Example 3.8: CT-1 through CT-4 plus CT-6; p.30/S3/m.1 plus p. 36/S5/ (last chord), and G_CT-4 to G_CT-10; p.33/S3/m.1

Annotations in Example 3.8 include: ss=subset, same set class, (01457) for CT-1, CT-2, CT-3, CT-4, CT-6, G_CT-5, G_CT-7, G_CT-9, G_CT-10; (01256) for CT-1, CT-2, CT-3, CT-4, CT-6; (012567) for CT-3, CT-4, CT-6; (0146) for G_CT-4; (0157) for G_CT-5, G_CT-7, G_CT-9, G_CT-10; ss (012)* for G_CT-6, G_CT-8; ss (0126)* for G_CT-10; <T746E> <19280> for CT-1, CT-2, CT-3, CT-4, CT-6; <63027> <95T48> for G_CT-4, G_CT-6, G_CT-8; T8 for CT-1, CT-2, CT-3, CT-4, CT-6; G_CT-4, G_CT-6, G_CT-8, G_CT-10; *(012) and (0126) sets are found in CT-2, CT-3, and CT-6.

Example 3.9: CT-1, CT-3 through CT-5; p.32/S3/m.1/ (chords 1, 3, 4) plus m.2/chord 1, and G_CT-11 to G_CT-13; p. 34/S2/m.3

Annotations in Example 3.9 include: ss=subset, (01457) for CT-1, CT-3, CT-4, CT-5; (0237) for G_CT-11, G_CT-12, G_CT-13; <1T0E> for G_CT-13; <T798> for G_CT-8; T3 for G_CT-11, G_CT-12, G_CT-13; [12378] for CT-1, CT-3, CT-4, CT-5, G_CT-11, G_CT-12, G_CT-13; [TE34] for CT-3, CT-4, CT-5; [E346] for G_CT-11, G_CT-12, G_CT-13; pc invariant for CT-1, CT-3, CT-4, CT-5; almost pc invariant for G_CT-11, G_CT-12, G_CT-13.

The shared motivic features among PN and G_PN chords include: large leaps between two chords, very fast and short gestures, generally loud dynamics, staccato and accented articulation. Pitch-wise, the PN chords are inter-related. They have many subset relationships of (0235), (0237), and (016) chords. The middle hexachord, PN-4 (012568) is sustained beneath the remaining chords (PN-5 to PN-9). It also contains two out of

three of the above subsets mentioned (Example 3.10). These PN chords and their subsets fit with most of the G_PN chords as shown in the upcoming examples.

Example 3.10: PN-1 through PN-9, p.35/S1 and S2

The musical score for Example 3.10 is presented in two systems. The first system includes PN-1, PN-2, PN-3, PN-4, PN-5, PN-6, and PN-7. The second system includes PN-5, PN-7, PN-8, PN-9, and PN-7. Fingerings and dynamics are indicated throughout.

System 1:

- PN-1: [0237] (0237)
- PN-2: [8TE1] (0235)
- PN-3: [013458] (013458)
- PN-4: [167] (016)
- PN-5: [T0] (02)
- PN-6: [8T02] (0246)
- PN-7: [34589E] (012568)
- PN-7: [1345678E] (0234567T)
- PN-7: [89TE0345] (01234789)
- PN-7: [8T02345] (0123579)

System 2:

- PN-5: [167] (016)
- PN-8: [17] (06)
- PN-9: [3456789E1] (01234568T)
- PN-7: [0124568T] (0124568T)

G_PN-1 through G_PN-6 appear first in the GM solo. As is obvious, the rhythmic features of both are consistent with the above comments. Pitch-wise there are many common linear and vertical features shared between the PN-chords and G_PN-1 to G_PN-5 (Example 3.11). Continuing the association, G_PN-4 to G_PN-6 contain very

prominent M7s, as do PN-4, PN-5, and PN-7 (the ordering of PN-chords on p. 30 and p. 32). These two chord groups map onto one another as two linear sets, with slight imperfections (Example 3.12).

The next chord group, G_PN-7 to G_PN-10, functions similarly to G_PN-4 through G_PN-7. (These chords are the same as G_MP-4 to G_MP-7; since they share a number of motivic characteristics with both MP and PN they are analyzed from both perspectives.) As with G_PN-4 to G_PN-7, they contain similar M7 framing intervals as well as linear and vertical subset relationships (Example 3.13).

Example 3.11: PN-1 to PN-7; p.35/S1, and G_PN-1 to G_PN-5; p. 32/S3/ m.1 (chords 1 to 5)

The image shows a musical score for three systems (treble, alto, and bass clefs). The score is annotated with various labels and lines indicating relationships between chords. Key annotations include:

- PN-1 to PN-4**: 1st line: [8E13]
- PN-1 PN-2 PN-3**: (013458)
- PN-5**: RH <716>
- PN-6**: T7
- PN-7**: ss <281>
- G_PN-1 to G_PN-3 plus G_PN-5**: 1st line: [8E31]
- G_PN-2**
- G_PN-3**
- G_PN-5**
- ss = subset**
- PN-4**
- PN-5 to PN-7**: 1st line: [026]
- same pcs** (multiple instances)
- G_PN-1 to G_PN-3**: 1st line: [580] (037), 2nd line: [026] (026)
- PN-1 to PN-3**: 2nd line: [580] (037), 4th line: [826] (026)
- same sets**
- G_PN-4**: (0124)

As with G_MP, there are many other G_PN chords. G_PN-11 to G_PN-30 include many similar features as above. They also overlap many G_MP chords because of shared motivic features.¹⁰ For the purposes of this essay, these chords are not discussed

¹⁰ In Appendix C, chords that have multiple identities (G_MP and G_PN) have an asterisk and list the secondary association in parenthesis.

further here. However, these chords are listed in Appendix C for interested readers who wish to investigate further.

Example 3.12: M7 subsets from G_PN; p.32/S3/m.1, and PN; p. 35/S1

Top line: <915> (048) <36T> (037)

Subset M7s from: PN-4 PN-5 PN-7 G_PN-4 G_PN-5 G_PN-6

Bottom line: <T26> (048) <47E> (037)

Detailed description: This musical example shows two staves. The top staff is in treble clef and the bottom in bass clef. The top line of the treble staff is labeled with the set class <915> (048) and the top line of the bass staff with <T26> (048). The right half of the example shows the set class <36T> (037) in the top line and <47E> (037) in the bottom line. Dashed lines connect specific notes between the two staves, with labels T6 and T7 indicating tritone relationships. The notes are grouped into six M7 subsets: PN-4, PN-5, PN-7, G_PN-4, G_PN-5, and G_PN-6.

Example 3.13: G_PN-7 through G_PN-10, p.32/S4/m.1 and m.2, chord 1

M7s in PN-4 to PN-7: M7s in G_PN-7 to G_PN-10:

<ED#> <GF#> <AG#> <BBb>** <EEb> <C#C> <EbD> <BbA>

PN-5 PN-6 PN-7 G_PN-7 G_PN-9 G_PN-10

PN-4 (0234567T) RH: (0137) (0123) G_PN-8 (012)* (0137)

ss = subset ss ss same set class (0126) *(012) is a subset in all PN-4 to PN-7 chord

** B-Bb is a M7 plus an octave

Detailed description: This musical example shows three staves. The top staff is in treble clef, the middle in bass clef, and the bottom in bass clef. The top staff shows M7 chords for PN-4 to PN-7 and G_PN-7 to G_PN-10. The middle staff shows the same chords with set class labels and subset relationships. The bottom staff shows a single line of music. Annotations include 'ss = subset', 'ss', 'ss', 'same set class', and '* (012) is a subset in all PN-4 to PN-7 chord'. A note in the middle staff is marked with a double asterisk: '** B-Bb is a M7 plus an octave'.

Before finishing this section of the analysis, it should be noted that one particular motive in the GM does not have a predecessor in MP, CT, or PN. This motive is labeled

by the description of torn silk [*soie déchirée*] in the score and will be labeled G_TS.

Though it is not related in the present motivic discussion, its extra-musical association is discussed below as part of the cumulative theological explanation in the birdcall analysis.

The G_TS motive, however, does return in the “*Je suis*” analysis.

Theological Implications of Birdcall Analysis

In the above bird analysis, the MP, CT, and PN motives are obviously mimicked by the GM motives. The GM is clearly mocking the others. Messiaen, writing about all the birds, states that “the strangeness of the timbres and birdsongs selected is intended to conjure up some unknown dimension.”¹¹ Though he does not explain the motivic tie-ins explained above, his knowledge of ornithology and the GM’s well-documented mocking ability leads the listener to explore what this unknown dimension is.

Messiaen’s unknown dimension is likely a spiritual dimension. Robert Fallon, writing about Messiaen’s birdcalls, states: “For Messiaen, the bird style embodied theology by representing nature.”¹² Fallon goes on to quote St. Bonaventure’s *Itenerarium mentis in Deum* [The Mind’s Journey to God], in which Bonaventure, speaking of a nature’s connection to God, says:

These creatures are exemplars, or rather illustrations offered to souls . . . so that through these sensible things that they see they may be transported to the intelligible, which they do not see, as through signs to that which is signified. Following Bonaventure, the mocking motivic activity describes a relationship between the exemplars (birds) and the signified (Trinity) that Messiaen is using to represent a

¹¹ “L’*éstrangeté* des timbres et des chants d’oiseaux choisis doit évoquer quelque dimension inconnue”

¹² Fallon, “The record of realism in Messiaen’s bird style,” 130.

theological scenario. But, what theological scenario contains such an originating and mocking relationship?

The answer is an antagonistic relationship. The most well-known antagonist in the spiritual realm is Lucifer, a fallen angel who mocks both God and humanity. The description in 2nd Corinthians 11:14, is that “Satan masquerades as an angel of light.” Likewise, in 2nd Thessalonians 2:9 “Satan . . . uses all power, signs, lying wonders, and every kind of wicked deception” Both passages should remind the reader of the GM who also deceives by masquerading with characteristics of the other three birds.

There is additional verbal information in Messiaen’s score that also helps draw this conclusion of originator and mocker. In the preface to *Méditation IV*, Messiaen writes that the GM has “changes in timbre and attack (pizzicati, drops of water, tearing silk).”¹³ The unusual descriptions of have prompted many authors to ask why they are there. In Andrew Shenton’s work on *Méditations*, for example, they are categorized alongside other “representational motifs,” unique because they “are used to express a specific natural sound.”¹⁴ But, are they representative of anything beyond the natural sound itself?

According to John Milsom, referencing an earlier appearance of “dripping water” (in *Le banquet céleste*), Messiaen “introduces his most baffling organ sonority, the ‘*staccato bref, à la goutte d’eau*’ [drops of water], an uncanny dripping sound that turns up in several later organ scores.” The *Méditations* are, of course, one of those later scores. Milsom continues by stating, “What this texture is meant to signify . . . Messiaen never explained, yet its oddness somehow seems justified in music that asks us to ponder

¹³ “changements de timbres et d’attaques (pizzi, gouttes d’eau, soie déchirée).”

¹⁴ Shenton, “Speaking with the Tongues of Men and of Angels” 233.

the unfathomable.”¹⁵ As with Shenton’s observation the question remains, what else might this represent? Having pondered this representation with motivic detail, the depths will now be plumbed in the verbal descriptions. They too have their exemplars (timbral descriptions) as well as their (signified) leitmotivic characteristics.

Contrasting the GM descriptions, Messiaen also includes information about the other three birds. The “extraordinary cry of the black woodpecker [PN], a rapid discordant lament . . . [and the] primitive birdsongs: the calls of the Alpine blackbird [MP] and the sad measured chime of the little owl at Tengmalm [CT]”¹⁶ are all unique descriptions as well. From “extraordinary cry” and “discordant lament” to “sad chime”, all summarize an experience of agony. The three birds, suffering together, could simple be the protagonist to the above antagonist. The birds are nature’s description of the Trinity. And in what biblical scenario is there the most suffering of the Trinity, with Lucifer on its heels? – the crucifixion.

Considering biblical texts about this phenomenon, both the GM and the other three bird descriptions can be interpreted as part of this event. First, from the three birds, the expressions of agony lead one to consider the Gospel of Mark 15:34 “And at the ninth hour, Jesus cried out in a loud voice, “*Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?*” which translates to “My God, my god, why have you forsaken me?” Second, if Christ’s agony on the cross is the expression of the Trinity suffering, then the GM bird is an expression that mocks and causes His suffering, similarly to how the soldiers, in Luke 22:63, “began to mock him and beat him.”

¹⁵ Milsom, “Organ Music I,” 63.

¹⁶ “l’extraordinaire cri du Pic noir, plainte rapide et discordante . . . chants primitifs: les appels du Merle à plastron, et la petite cloche triste en valeurs égales de la Chouette de Tengmalm”

Here follow all the words that accompany the GM. The word “bursting” [*écletant*] (in G_MP) is reminiscent of a scripture in the Gospel of John (19:33): “But when they came to Jesus and found that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. Instead, one of the soldiers pierced Jesus’ side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water.” Zechariah 12:10 also prophetically proclaims, “they will look on the one they have pierced.” The next words “very dry, like pizzicato” [*très sec, comme des pizzì*] (in G_CT) is reminiscent of the Gospel of John 19:28 “After this, when Jesus knew that all was now finished, he said, (in order to fulfill the scripture), ‘I am thirsty’.” The next words, “like drops of water” [*comme des gouttes d’eau*] (in G_CT) fulfill the next sentence in the Gospel of John, 19:29-30a, “A jar full of sour wine was standing there. So they put a sponge full of the wine on a branch of hyssop and held it to his mouth. When Jesus had received the wine, he said, ‘It is finished’.” Additionally, the drops of water could also refer to either the “flow of blood and water” mentioned above in John 19:33 or to Jesus’ distressed prayer in the garden of Gethsemane, “And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground” (Luke 22:44). Further, the words “like from the tearing of silk” [*comme de la soie déchirée*]¹⁷ (following G_PN) are reminiscent of the Gospel of Luke 23:44-45, “It was now about noon, and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon, while the sun’s light failed; and the curtain of the temple was torn in two.” Following this, in Luke’s Gospel is again the description of Jesus, crying in a loud voice “‘Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.’ Having said this, he breathed his last.”

¹⁷ The motif attached to this quotation, G_TS (Grive_Tearing Silk), does not contain a predecessor in the PN, CT, and MP motifs. However, it is used in the JS-sect at the end of this chapter.

Such a theological interpretation is drawn directly from the motivic connections between the mocking GM (Lucifer) and the mimicked PN, CT, and MP motives (Christ's cries of pain). The reader should recall that the GM does not sound very different from the other birds, but that is exactly the Satanic method. Satan does not go out of his way to demonstrate how different he is. Rather he goes about "masquerading as an Angel of Light."

Trinity Analysis

Introduction to the Trinity leitmotifs

On p. 31, systems 2 and 3, there is a very short section that simultaneously presents the three leitmotifs of the Trinity (*Père, Fils, and Esprit*). Messiaen describes this section as, "a short trio passage evoking the three persons of the Holy Trinity."¹⁸ The leitmotifs have some pitch and rhythm variations when compared with the same leitmotifs in other *Méditations*. Messiaen anticipates these variations in his preface; referencing Wagner's leitmotifs, he says that "it is essential that the listeners know in advance the leitmotifs in order to grasp as they appear, all the juxtapositions, superimpositions, variations, and transformations."¹⁹ This verbal anticipation of variations, when partnered with Messiaen's word "evoking," draws this analyst to interpret these leitmotif variations as extensions of the 'masquerading' features in the bird analysis above. Though the analytical focus is still pitch-based, the analysis begins with a foray into rhythm features. The rhythm details help to corroborate the masquerading ideas found in the pitch analysis.

¹⁸ "...un court passage en trio évoquant les trios Personnes de la Sainte Trinité."

¹⁹ "...il est indispensable que les auditeurs connaissent à l'avance les leitmotifs, pour en saisir au passage toutes les juxtapositions, superpositions, variations et transformations."

Rhythm

The most obvious difference in the Trinity leitmotifs is the Indian rhythm cells that are applied to each person: rāgavardhana – *Père*, pratâpaçekhara – *Fils*, and simhavikrama – *Esprit*. Though Messiaen does not comment on these rhythmic tâlas in *Méditation IV*, he does provide an explanation for *Méditation III*. There, as examples of his rhythmic personalities, he describes their roles in the music and provides symbolic meanings for each one.

Messiaen’s symbolic meanings are interesting because Messiaen, it seems, interpreted these rhythmic personalities according to his own tastes rather than quoting the meanings as defined by Indian musicians. According to Messiaen, the rhythm “pratâpaçekhara [means]...the power emanating from the countenance..., rāgavardhana [means]...the rhythm which gives life to the melody...”²⁰ However, according to Mirjana Šimundža, the translations of the rhythmic meanings are a bit different.²¹ According to these findings, pratâpaçekhara means ‘a shiny, powerful crown,’ and rāgavardhana means ‘cutting colours, cutting off wishes, interrupting passion, separating the raga.’²² Messiaen’s meanings have obviously been revamped, though his definitions are relatively synonymous.

This acknowledgment of approximate definitions now comes to bear on the rhythmic personalities in *Méditation IV*. Messiaen re-uses two of the deçi-tâlas (pratâpaçekhara and rāgavardhana) from *Méditation III*, and then adds simhavikrama,

²⁰ “...pratâpaçekhara [means]...la force qui émane du front..., rāgavardhana [means]...le rythme qui donne vie à la mélodie...”

²¹ In fact, according to Šimundža the translations are already a step removed from their original intent. They are merely “pictorial personifications, but...cannot be literally translated in all cases.”

²² Šimundža, “Messiaen’s Rhythmical Organisation and Classical Indian Theory of Rhythm (I),” 124.

which originally meant “courage of a lion, as daring as a lion.”²³ Though Messiaen does not define this deçi-tâla in the *Méditations*, Roberto Fabbi has found some interesting details which both define this tâla and contextualize Messiaen’s use of deçi-tâlas in his works. He offers that,

In rare cases, the original Hindu symbolism is coopted into Christian symbolism. In . . . *Et exspecto resurrectionem mortuorum* Messiaen imposes his own interpretation on the tâla simhavikrama, which . . . stands for “force of the lion” and is dedicated to Shiva. Shiva— . . . inasmuch as he is a symbol of the “death of death” here comes to represent the victory of Christ over death.²⁴

So, it is clear that the three deçi-tâlas comment on the personalities of the evoked trinity members. Perhaps *Père* and râgavardhana “life to the melody” communicates that from the Father all existing things have life; *Fils* and pratâpaçekhara “power emanating from the countenance” communicates that the Son gets his power from the God-head, the countenance; lastly *Esprit* and simhavikrama “death over death” means that the Holy Spirit’s presence indicates the victory over death.

The applied rhythms are also important to this communication. In each one, there are slight variations compared with the original deçi-tâlas. In *Père*-râgavardhana, for example, the rhythmic formula is “1 1.5 1 6”²⁵ (Example 3.14).²⁶ His application of râgavardhana is almost exact (one rhythmic system per measure), although his final value is shortened, 3.5 instead of 6 (Example 3.15). Continuing, in *Fils*-pratâpaçekhara the

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Fabbi, “Theological Implications of Restrictions in Messiaen’s Compositional Processes,” 77. Also accounted for in Johnson, “Rhythmic Technique and Symbolism,” 132.

²⁵ Šimundža, “Messiaen’s Rhythmical Organisation and Classical Indian Theory of Rhythm (I),” 126-127.

²⁶ For Messiaen the rhythmic numbers in *Méditation IV* stand for 16th notes.

rhythmic formula is “6 1 1½”²⁷ (Example 3.16). Again, the deçi-tâla is almost exact except for an additional 16th value in m. 2 and a longer final value, 6.5 instead of 6 (Example 3.17). Lastly, in *Esprit-simhavikrama* the rhythmic formula is “2 2 2 1 3 2 3”²⁸ (Example 3.18). Again, the deçi-tâla is close, though it has the most variations thus far. It begins 2 1 2 2, switching 1 and 2, and ends with 2 2 1 2, another version of the beginning that switches 1 and 2 (Example 3.19).

Example 3.14: Râgavardhana rhythmic cell

râgavardhana



Based on the above discrepancies, it is clear that Messiaen’s deçi-tâlas are close variations of the original rhythmic cells. He changed specific features to fit the rhythms more to his liking, but this was not happenstance. Commenting on Messiaen’s deçi-tâla knowledge, Šimundža reports that

He used them for a long time without knowing the cosmic and religious symbols. . . . Later, he obtained translations which enabled him to discover the meaning of the tâlas and their symbolic use in compositions. Not until the piece *Couleurs de la Cite celeste* in 1963 did he render their meanings more precise and added his own analytical comments.²⁹

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Šimundža, “Messiaen’s Rhythmical Organisation and Classical Indian Theory of Rhythm (I),” 126-127.

²⁹ Ibid., Šimundža, 118.

Since the *Méditations* were composed in 1969, it is clear that Messiaen’s discrepancies were intentional. Though by no means separating the rhythmic characters from the rhythmic motives, he nevertheless created rhythmic variations, rhythms that masquerade as the originals.

Pitch

The other difference is pitch structure. This is unusual because every other Trinity leitmotif in the *Méditations* has exactly the same pitches. Additionally, each leitmotif varies from its originator in different ways. Borrowing Messiaen’s word “evoke”, the analysis will use the label “*Père-Evoke*”, “*Fils-Evoke*,” etc . . . to describe the motif in this section. The originating motif will be labeled “*Père-Orig*”, “*Fils-Orig*,” etc . . .

Example 3.15: *Père-Evoke* with rāgavardhana rhythm, p.31/S2 (top line) to S3/m.1 (top line)

Père-Evoke (rāgavardhana) (* denotes error in pattern)

Example 3.16: Pratâpaçekhara rhythmic cell

pratâpaçekhara

Père-Orig, begins with tetrachord <3129> as does *Père-Evoke*. *Père-Orig* continues with tetrachord <7T84> whereas *Père-Evoke* has <6984>. Here, two pitches

are the same; two other pitches are transposed down a semitone (T-1). Since *Père-Orig* has eight pitches and *Père-Evoke* has twelve, the last *Père-Orig* tetrachord will be repeated for comparison. *Père-Orig* (repeat) <7T84> is mostly down a P4 (T-5) to the last *Père-Evoke* tetrachord <2531>; the last pitch is down an m3 (T-3) (Example 20). The originator is obviously the motivic source, but the evoked leitmotif is slightly off, like a decoy.

Example 3.17: *Fils-Evoke* with pratâpaçekhara rhythm, p.31/S2 (middle line) to S3, m.1 (middle line)

Fils-Evoke (pratâpaçekhara) (* denotes error in pattern)

6 1 1.5 6 1 1* 1.5 6.5*

Example 3.18: Simhavikrama rhythmic cell

simhavikrama

2 2 2 1 3 2 3

Example 3.19: *Esprit-Evoke* with simhavikrama rhythm, p.31/S2 (bottom line) to S3, m.1 (bottom line)

Esprit-Evoke (simhavikrama) (* denotes error in pattern)

2 1* 2 2* 3 2 3 2 2 1* 2*

Fils-Evoke is almost exactly an octave below *Fils-Orig*. The only pitch that is not down an octave is the second pitch of the first tetrachord (Example 3.21). It is down an m7 (T-10). Again, the originator is the source and the evoked leitmotif is slightly off, almost a duplicate aside from register and one pitch.

Example 3.20: *Père-Orig* and *Père-Evoke*, p.62/S1 (middle line) and p.31/S2 (top line) to S3/m.1 (top line)

Père-Orig. (top line) [straight line = T0] (2nd tetrachord repeat)

<3129> <7T84> <7T84>

(T-1) (T-1) (T-5) (T-5) (T-5) (T-3)

Père-Evoke (bottom line) <3129> <6984> <2531>

Example 3.21: *Fils-Orig* and *Fils-Evoke*, p.62/S2 (middle line) and p.31/S2 (middle line) to S3/m.1 (middle line)

Fils-Orig. (top line) [straight line = T0/T-12]

<6871> <T79E>

(T-10)

Fils-Evoke (top line) <6T71> <T79E>

Esprit-Orig begins with tetrachord <E938>. Besides the last note (which is the same in both), it is transposed by T1 to the first *Esprit-Evoke* tetrachord <0T48>. In the second *Esprit-Orig* tetrachord <T467> the second and fourth pitches are transposed up T1 to the second *Esprit-Evoke* tetrachord <T568>. As *Esprit-Evoke* contains eleven notes, the final tetrachord in this analysis will reuse the last note of the former tetrachord; *Esprit-Orig* will do the same.³⁰ In the final *Esprit-Orig* tetrachord <7176> the first is transposed up T1 and the fourth pitch is transposed up T11 to the final *Esprit-Evoke* tetrachord <8175> (Example 3.22). Once again, the motif is close but not fully accurate. It is more like a leitmotif decoy.

Example 3.22: *Esprit-Orig* and *Esprit-Evoke*, p.62/S3/m.2 (middle line) to S4/m.1 (middle line) and p.31/S2 (bottom line) to S3/m.1 (bottom line)

Esprit-Orig. (top line) [straight line = T0]

<E938> <T467> <7176> (begins with repeated G)

(T1) (T1) (T1) (T1) (T1) (T11)

[Notes unaccounted for in Esprit-Evoke]

<0T48> <T568> <8175> (begins with repeated G#)

Esprit-Evoke (top line)

Theological Implications of Trinity leitmotif analysis

Considering the theological aspects of the bird analysis of *Méditation IV* and the rhythmic approximations, one could easily argue that these evoking leitmotifs are also

³⁰ The *Esprit-Orig* leitmotif is twice as long as the others because it includes a retrograde. Since *Esprit-Evoke* is only eleven pitches, *Esprit-Orig* ends its association after eleven pitches also.

masquerading as the originals. Besides those used in the bird analysis, many other scriptures also testify about the close appearance between originals and fakes. In Matthew 24:5, for example, Jesus Christ declares that "...many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many." As the motives themselves testify, perhaps this is why Messiaen used the words "evoking the three persons of the Holy Trinity"³¹ rather than explicitly stating "Musically, this gives us: Father . . . Son . . . Holy Spirit"³² as occurs with the Trinity leitmotifs in *Méditation VII*.

"Je Suis"(I Am) Analysis

Introduction to "Je Suis"

The last page of Meditation IV, p. 36, is about God's glory passing by Moses on Mount Sinai. In this section, God's glory is announced by the crying out of God's name, "*Je Suis*" (I Am). Messiaen writes the following about this: "Suddenly, towards the end of the piece, a fortissimo on the organ: rapidly descending chords in iambic rhythm: it's the vision of Moses. 'And 'I am' passed before him crying: 'I am, I am!'"³³

The motives in JS-sect are unique because they directly reflect two other motifs from *Méditation IV*. The first, and most prominent, predecessor is a set of chords that have a lot of trills. The second predecessor is the GM Torn Silk motif (herein, GM_TS). This is the motif that was not included in the earlier bird analysis. From these two predecessors the majority of the musical materials in JS-sect find their progenitors. Before entering into the analysis, below is an explanation of the Trill motif and its

³¹"évoquant les trios Personnes de la Sainte Trinité"

³²"Ce qui donne musicalement: Père . . . Fils . . . Saint Esprit"

³³"Soudain, vers la fin de la pièce, fortissimo de l'orgue: des accords en rythme iambique descendent rapidement: c'est la vision de Moïse. "Et 'Je suis' passa devant lui en criant: 'Je suis, Je suis!'"

theological significance. The GM_TS motif will be discussed later in the chapter since its motivic influence is smaller.

Trill Motif

The Trill motif is found in three places: a) p. 31/S1, b) p.31/S3/m.2 to S4 and c) p.35/S3. The first two Trill motifs frame the Trinity leitmotifs discussed in the previous section of this chapter. The first two locales surround the masquerading Trinity personas. The third Trill motif is in between the PN and MP motifs that occur immediately before JS-sect. In the third locale, the motif functions as an immediate predecessor to JS-sect.

The motif contains groups of two and three chords. The majority of these groups (five out of seven) contain a short duration followed by a long duration. There are two instances in which there are two shorts and one long. The short, long rhythm is interesting to note because it is the same iambic rhythm that Messiaen uses predominantly in JS-sect (matching the speech rhythm of “*Je Suis*”). Additionally, the rhythm is also used quite prominently in both PN and MP motives. In the Trill groups described above, there are five chords used. They are labeled Tr-1 through Tr-5 (Example 3.23). Likewise, there are twenty-seven chords in JS-sect; these are labeled JS-1 through JS-27.

Before entering into the analytical features that JS-sect and the Trill motives share, it is important to survey the theology expressed through this sharing. Messiaen did not provide an explanation of this section and the preface has few words about the Trill motives, “Trilled ‘clusters.’”³⁴ This is all that is provided. So, one must initiate the

³⁴ “Des ‘clusters’ trillés”

theological search assuming that this section is yet another “preparation for the final vision.”³⁵

Example 3.23: Tr-1 through Tr-5, p.31/S3/m.4 through S4

The image shows a musical score for two staves. The top staff contains five trill motifs labeled Tr-1 through Tr-5. Tr-1 is marked with 'gva' and a dashed box. Tr-2 is marked with 'tr' and a wavy line. Tr-3, Tr-4, and Tr-5 are also marked with 'tr' and wavy lines. The bottom staff shows the corresponding harmonies for each trill motif. The key signature has one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 4/4. The motifs are distributed across measures 4 through 8.

To begin, the two unique features that the trill motives and JS-sect share are their rhythms (shown above) and their harmonies (shown below). If the Trill motives are direct motivic predecessors of “I am”, this infers that the great “I am” is also present here, though the listener may be unaware of it. This dual presence of the great “I am” could be the catalyst of a variety of theological discussions, however, this study will pursue one that is justified by Messiaen’s contextual placement. The JS-sect context is the revelation of God’s glory to Moses during the second covenant confirmation and second giving of the stone tablets. If the JS-sect is representative of this scenario, the earlier “I am” Trill motives are easily assumed to be the context of the first covenant confirmation and first giving of the stone tablets (Exodus, chapters 24-32).³⁶

This idea is strengthened when one considers another unique occurrence during the first covenant confirmation, the rebellion of the Israelites (Exodus chapter 32). The

³⁵ “préparant la vision finale.”

³⁶ The reader will note that this motivic parallel is not interpreted as a “decoy” motive, as shown in the previous examples. The reason is that no extra-musical associations give merit to this interpretation.

Israelites turned their back on God when Moses went up Mount Sinai. They ignored his presence even though “To the Israelites the glory of the LORD looked like a consuming fire on top of the mountain” (Exodus 24:17). This is like the Trill motives that represent God yet are also ignored, a direct violation of God’s first commandment.³⁷

To make things worse, the Israelites also made false gods out of gold, forming a golden calf, despite God’s warning.³⁸ These false gods could easily be interpreted as the masquerading trinity members that occur in between the Trill motives; they have the form and appearance of the Trinity, yet are inexact and are not the true God. The close motivic appearance is reminiscent of God’s warning that was close to the Israelites’ violation. God warned the Israelites even more specifically than in Exodus 20:3-5a, saying that “You have seen for yourselves that I have spoken to you from heaven: Do not make any gods to be alongside me; do not make for yourselves gods of silver or gods of gold.”³⁹

Further details of the Israelites’ rebellion include the dancing before the idol (Exodus 32:19). The dancing could be connected with the rhythmically foreign Hindu rhythms that accompany the masquerading trinity motifs; the combination creates both idol and the dancing before it. Messiaen’s Hindu reference could further represent a false or foreign god, something that God warns of constantly throughout the Holy Scriptures.⁴⁰

This is the theological explanation of the Trill motif when surrounding the masquerading Trinity motifs. However, the Trill motif also returns just before the JS-sect

³⁷ Exodus 20:2 “I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.”

³⁸ Exodus 20: 3-5a, (Ten Commandments) “You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them.”

³⁹ Exodus 20: 22-23

⁴⁰ Gen 35:2,4, Deut 31:16 and 32:16, Jos 24:20, 23, Jdg 10:16, 1 Sa 7:3, 1 Ki 11:8, 2 Ch 33:15, Jer 2:25, 3:13, 5:19, and 19:4, etc...

(p. 35/S3). This placement parallels God's forewarning to Moses about how He will display His glory:

There is a place near me where you may stand on a rock. When my glory passes by I will put you in a cleft in the rock and cover you with my hand until I have passed by. Then I will remove my hand and you will see my back; but my face must not be seen.

It is the final preparation before God's glory is shown, the final detail before Messiaen reveals the "final vision."

When these details are put together in the context of how the Mosaic covenant came into being, a remarkable theological perspective emerges from the combination of motivic detail and the scriptures surrounding Messiaen's context and quotations in *Méditation IV*. This follows Messiaen's own words about how the piece approaches the JS-sect, "Nearly all the piece establishes an atmosphere in preparation for the final vision."⁴¹

JS-sect

With the above theological perspective in mind, the reader will now embark on the analysis that demonstrates how the Trill motives and JS-sect are intertwined.

The first system of JS-sect (JS-1 through JS-10) relates directly to Tr-chords. These ten chords are then used and developed throughout the JS-section. JS-1, JS-4, and JS-6 have the closest relationship to Tr-chords, all relate via T0. Tr-1, excluding the top note, is the same as JS-1 excluding its top note; Tr-3 is T0 to JS-4; and Tr-4 is T0 to JS-

⁴¹ "Presque toute cette pièce situe un climat, préparant la vision finale."

6.⁴² In addition to the pitch similarities, each coupling also creates a long and short rhythm, the first two are iambic, and the second is a trochee. This may be coincidental or not, but it is interesting to note that these closest associations create the exact rhythms as displayed by the speech rhythm “*Je suis*,” present in all JS-1 to JS-10 chords.

Tr-chords relate to JS-2, JS-3 and JS-5 via subsets (Example 3.24). These chords do not contain the interesting long-short metric features as in JS-1, JS-4, and JS-6.

Example 3.24: Tr-2 to JS-2; p.31/S3/m.3 to p.36/m.1 (chord 2), Tr-5 to JS-3; p.31/S4/m.3 to p.36/m. 2 (chord 1), and JS-3 to JS-5; p.36/m.2 (chord 1) to m.3 (chord 1)

The image shows a musical score for two staves (treble and bass clef) with six measures. Above the staves, chords are labeled: Tr-2, JS-2, Tr-5, JS-3, JS-3, and JS-5. Dashed lines connect notes between chords, labeled with transformations: T0, T2, T11, and RT3. Subset relationships are indicated by brackets: <4T5> for Tr-2, <2T3> for JS-2, <817> for JS-2, <T36> for Tr-5, <058> for JS-3, <691> for JS-3, <580> for JS-5, and <E37T> for JS-5. Specific notes are labeled: RT3, RH, LH, and *8va*. Intervallic structures are shown as [47E], [691], and [580].

*Note, if the top notes of JS-1 and JS-2 switched (F and G), Tr-1 would have a full T0 association and Tr-2 would have two subset associations of T0 <2T3> and <817>.

**The only note not accounted for is the G# trill in Tr-5 LH.

JS-7 and JS-8 relate to Tr-chords via full sets and subsets (Example 3.25). The coupling of JS-7/JS-8 is similar to JS-1/JS-2, yet T-13 and T-1 govern its relationships. JS-9 has two interesting relationships; one built from pitch invariance and the other from a subset relationship. JS-10 also relates via two subset relationships (Example 3.26). The chords JS-7 through JS-10 also lack the interesting metric features found in JS-1, JS-4, and JS-6.

⁴² These relationships are seen easily in Appendix C, the annotated score for *Méditation IV*.

In summary of p.36/S1, T0 and T11 predominate the distances between Tr-chords and JS-chords. These and other details provide a strong connection that validates the Tr-chords as motivic predecessors to these opening JS harmonies.

Example 3.25: Tr-1 to JS-7; p. 31/S3/m.2 to p.36/m. 4 (chord 1), Tr-2 to JS-8 (and JS-2); p.31/S4/m. 1 to p.36/m.4 (chord 2) (and p.36/m. 1 (chord 1))

Example 3.25 musical score annotations:

- Tr-1: subset <815>
- JS-7: T-13
- Tr-2: subset <2T3>
- JS-8: T-1, RH <704>, LH <192>
- JS-2: (lower pentads of JS-2 to JS-8 are also T-13)

Example 3.26: Tr-4 to JS-9 (and JS-3); p.31/S4/m.2 (chord 2) to p.36/m.5 (chord 1) (and m.2 (chord 1)), and Tr-2 to JS-10; p.31/S4/m.1 to p.36/m.5 (chord 2)

Example 3.26 musical score annotations:

- Tr-4: subset <0591>
- JS-9: subset <0591>
- JS-3: (contains all pitches of JS-9, top 3 rotated)
- Tr-2: subset <2T3>
- JS-10: T5, RH <738>, LH <9E24>
- Tr-2 to JS-10: T1

The next part of JS-sect (p.36/S2/m.1) has different motivic features (linear, M2s) that come from two separate motivic predecessors. The first predecessor, the preceding harmony JS-10 LH, contains two M2 dyads, which is an important pitch feature in JS-11

to JS-14. The second predecessor, the first statement of the torn silk [*soie déchirée*] motive from the GM solo (G_TS), also shares prevalent M2 intervals (as above); it is further related because it is also linear in motion.⁴³ This second association is of further interest because G_TS is the only motive from GM that was unassociated with the PN, CT, and MP motives. G_TS-1 has subsets that relate directly to JS-11 through JS-14. Example 3.27 details a majority of them, though there are many others. It is a very rich association.

Example 3.27: G_TS-1; p.33/S5/m.1, and JS-11 through JS-14; p.36/S2/m.1

The image shows a musical score with three systems of staves. The first system contains G_TS-1 and JS-11. The second system contains JS-12 and JS-13. The third system contains JS-14. Annotations include:

- G_TS-1 <68E157T24>
- JS-11**
- JS-12*
- JS-13**
- JS-14*
- ss <E157>
- ss <E124>
- ss <5724>
- ss <68E1>
- ss <689E>
- ss <029E>
- ss <0268>
- ss <1368>
- ss <68E1>
- ss <469E>
- ss <9E02>
- ss <57T0>
- ss <T035>
- T7
- T1
- T0
- T10
- T4
- T11
- T+28
- [ss = subset]

*Additionally, JS-12 is T4 plus two octaves (T+28) to JS-14. The first two pitches of JS-11 to JS-13 do the same, C2D2 to E4F#4 is T+28.

**However, the remainder of JS-11 to JS-13 is T3 plus two octaves (T+27), F#2-G#2-A2-B2 to A4-B4-C5-D5.

JS-15 through JS-18 develops a bit differently. The relationship begins with G_TS-1 relating by subset to JS-15. But there is an additionally inner uniformity that binds JS-15 through JS-18. Here the JS chords have a pattern of association; the RH of the preceding chord becomes the LH of the subsequent chord, and vice versa. This

⁴³ The reader should be aware that there are five total G_TS motifs. Though they are distinct from one another, they carry many of the same characteristics as described above. It is also the most common G_TS motif, appearing three times, all others appear only once. For this reason, the G_TS-1, which is the model for G_TS-2 through G_TS-5, will be included as the only comparison here.

pattern continues throughout JS-15 to JS-18 (Example 3.28). Additionally, the T-4 relationship emerges from JS-15 to JS-18, the same interval pattern as found in the beginning.

Example 3.28: G_TS-1 to JS-15; p.32/S4/m.2 (after chord 1), and JS-15 through JS-18; p.36/S2/m.2

The image shows a musical score with two staves. The top staff contains G_TS-1 and JS-15 through JS-18. The bottom staff contains JS-15 through JS-18. Annotations include: G_TS-1 <68E157T24>, [ss = subset], JS-15, JS-16, JS-17, JS-18, T-4***, ss <7T24>, RI 2, RH: <T047>, <8E36>**, <7T24>**, <6803>**, ss <57T2>, RI 1, LH: <E368>, <T2*47>, <80*36>, <7E*24>.

* = Pitch raised by M/m2,

** = Set is rotated

***By the time three of these rotations occur the same interval pattern emerges as found in the beginning; JS-15 is T-4 to JS-18.

Moving to p.36/S3, the next four JS-chords also develop differently. These chords relate closely to JS-10 and subsets of Tr-2 (Example 3.29). Also, as in Example 3.28, the T-4 relationship persists in JS-19 to JS-21 and in JS-20 to JS-22. The internal patterns in JS-19 to JS-20 and JS-21 to JS-22 are further reminiscent of Example 3.28. Both pairings (JS-19 to JS-20 and JS-21 to JS-22) share three pitches. These two trichords relate by T8. The remaining LH notes in both pairs move up by m2; the remaining RH notes move down by M2. Just as JS-15 through JS-18 demonstrated internal patterns with M/m2 intervals, JS-19 to JS-22 also demonstrate similar patterns.

The last five JS-chords continue previous associations, having subsets related to previous JS-chords and Tr-chords (Example 3.30). The detached notes in the examples are not included in the transpositions.

Example 3.29: JS-10 to JS-19 to JS-20; p.36/S1 (final chord) to S3 (chords 1 and 2), and JS-10 plus Tr-2 to JS-21 to JS-22; p.36/S1 (final chord) plus p.35/S3/m.2 to p.36/S3 (chords 3 and 4)

Example 3.29 musical score annotations:

- JS-10: ss <E24738>
- JS-19: RH down M2
- JS-20: ss <8E1405>
- Tr-2: ss <T235>
- JS-10 (second): low pentad <9E247>
- JS-21: upper tetrad <2T35>
- JS-22: RH down M2
- Transpositions: T9, T11, T8, T7
- Notes: [ss = subset], (Ab, Db, Gb remain the same), (E, A, D remain the same)

Example 3.30: JS-3 to JS-23, JS-6 to JS-24, JS-1 to JS-25, JS-2 to JS-26; p. 36/S1/m.1-3 to p. 36/S3/m.1 (chords 9-14)

[detached notes not included in transposition]

Example 3.30 musical score annotations:

- JS-3, JS-23, JS-6, JS-24, JS-1, JS-25, JS-2, JS-26
- Transpositions: T1, T2, T10

The last JS-chord, JS-27, is slightly different in association. It has many subsets that relate to other previous JS-chords, however its most interesting influence is found

with CT-6, the final chord of the entire *Méditation* (Example 3.31). This chord ends the last CT-sect (p.36/S4 and S5), a section Messiaen describes as “The Tengmalm owl goes away, expressing our pettiness overwhelmed by the brilliance of the Holy One.”⁴⁴

Example 3.31: JS-15, JS-20 to JS-27; p. 36/S3/m. 2 (chord 1), S4 (chord 3), to S4 (last chord), and CT-6; p.36/S5 (last chord)

*[detached notes not included in this transposition]

T2*

JS-15 JS-20 JS-27 CT-6

upper tetrad <706E> upper tetrad <706E>

LH <E368> LH <T257>

T11 T0

Theological summary of “Je suis” and its influences

The perspective of the two covenant confirmations is definitely preserved in light of the motivic connections between the Trill motives and the JS-sect chords. However, there are a few more details which also contribute to this perspective. The first detail is the presence of the GrM motif TS-1. Though it occurs only partially in JS-sect, its presence is obviously tied to TS and its leitmotivic connection with torn silk. As explained earlier, this leitmotif was further important because of the connection between it and the crucifixion details found in the GrM solo. However, no bird motif was found in connection with the TS-motifs.

⁴⁴ “La Chouette de Tengmalm s’éloigne, exprimant notre petitesse accablée par la fulgurance du Sacré.”

Nevertheless, the connection with the crucifixion was the important tearing of the curtain and the beginning of a new covenant. In fact, the origin of this curtain placement and meaning was provided during the first covenant confirmation, exactly the context of this *Méditation's* theology. Exodus 26:33 describes the purpose of the curtain in the tabernacle: "Hang the curtain...and place the ark of the Testimony behind the curtain. The curtain will separate the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place." Theologically this represents the separation of sinful man from God, since only the High Priest could enter the Most Holy Place once a year after himself being fully cleansed through sacrificial offerings. The presence of the torn curtain motif amidst this Old Testament context is the motivic reminder of Jesus' sacrifice and new covenant. Both covenants must be confirmed through the sacrifice of blood, and both were completed as such.

One final thought to consider is the theology of Messiaen's CT bird at the end of *Méditation IV*. Its presence and its expression of "our [human] pettiness overwhelmed by the brilliance of the Holy One"⁴⁵ is also tied into this temporal context of Mosaic covenants. First, there is a literal interpretation of a bird not allowed to be in God's presence. An idea expressed just a few sentences before God reveals his glory to Moses: "No one is to come with you or be seen anywhere on the mountain; not even the flocks and herds may graze in front of the mountain." Emphasizing the word flocks, the bird is obviously ousted from the scenario. The second interpretation has to do with the fear of mankind in approaching God. This is a much more profound comment, one that Messiaen surely intended to be primary. Here, there is yet another scripture that gives much needed evidence of this emotion and relationship between God and man. Immediately after God spoke the Ten Commandments, the Israelites and Moses have an insightful exchange

⁴⁵ "notre petitesse accablée par la fulgurance du Sacré."

about feeling petty, being overwhelmed and frightened by the Almighty (Exodus 20: 18-20):

When the people saw the thunder and lightning and heard the trumpet and saw the mountain in smoke, they trembled with fear. They stayed at a distance and said to Moses, "Speak to us yourself and we will listen. But do not have God speak to us or we will die." Moses said to the people, "Do not be afraid. God has come to test you, so that the fear of God will be with you to keep you from sinning."

Here, the subtleties between healthy and unhealthy fear are given. Moses describes how humans should not fear relationship with God. Rather, humans should fear him out of love and within a relationship. Then, one acknowledges the true and almighty presence for who He really is, the great "I am." If one fears God on the basis of distance from Him the human can only guess as to what and why this God exists. In this scenario God becomes another question without any possibility of answer. However, if one fears God on the basis of love, recognizing who He is and relating to him in the correct posture (humans below and God far above), then the human has entered into a right and Holy relationship to God. Aquinas presents a similar understanding in his question, 'of the cause of fear' (Q[43], A[1]):

As stated above (Q[42], A[1]), fear, of itself and in the first place, regards the evil from which it recoils as being contrary to some loved good: and thus fear, of itself, is born of love. But, in the second place, it regards the cause from which that evil ensues: so that sometimes, accidentally, fear gives rise to love; in so far as, for instance, through fear of God's punishments, man keeps His

commandments, and thus begins to hope, while hope leads to love, as stated above (Q[40] , A[7]).⁴⁶

Messiaen's communication of this enormous theological concept through the relatively short birdsong of the Tengmalm's owl is reminiscent of Messiaen's interpretation of a similar owl (*Athena Noctua*) in Jean Lurçat's apocalyptic tapestry collection *Le Chant du Monde* (1958). The owl, in *L'Homme en Gloire dans la Paix* (Example 3.32, Man in the Glory of Peace, the fifth tapestry in the collection) is placed on Man's head, which Messiaen interpreted in the following way. "Lurçat uses the little owl to symbolize Wisdom...perched on the head of the man: the Thought before the Light."⁴⁷ Messiaen spoke these words during his induction to the *Académie des Beaux-Arts* in 1968,⁴⁸ the year before he completed *Méditations*. Here, Messiaen places his owl so as to provide, yet again, wisdom about man's thoughts before the Almighty, the Light. It is a short birdsong which explodes into brief, overwhelming fire of theological knowledge, akin to Mendelssohn's idea that "genuine music . . . fills the soul with a thousand things better than words."⁴⁹ To this Messiaen adds that both "He is" and "I am," are "Words that we can only comprehend in flashes, in rare and brief moments of illumination."⁵⁰

⁴⁶ Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, 1146.

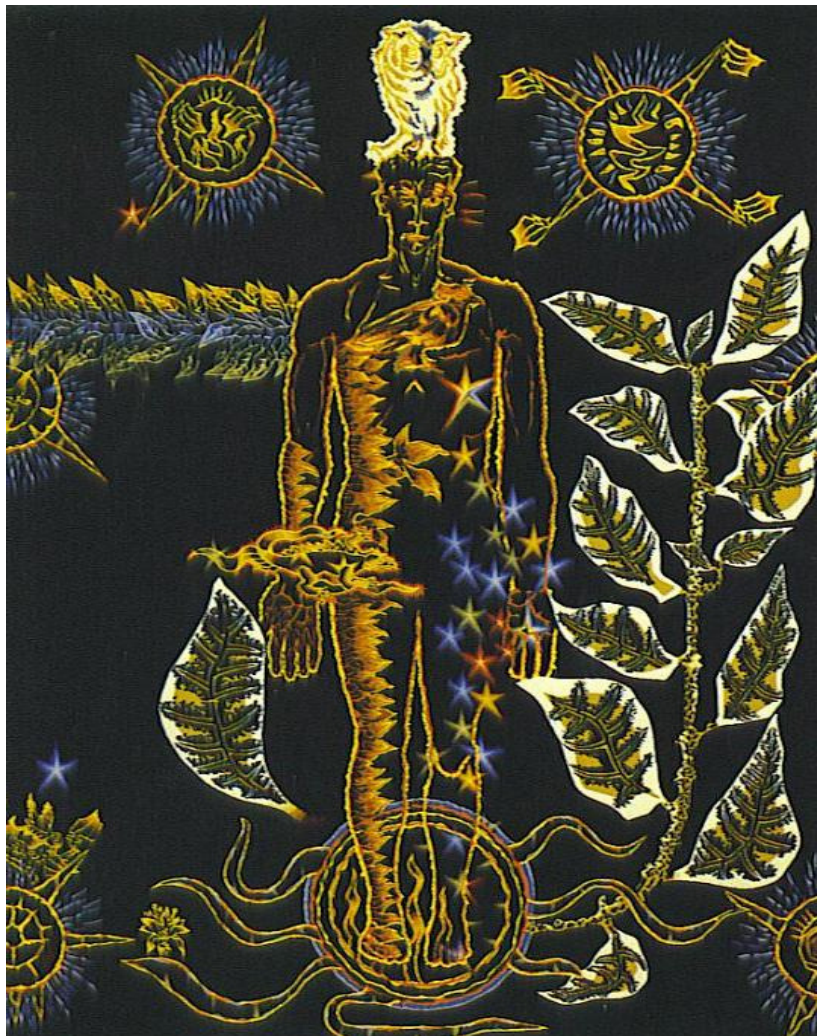
⁴⁷ Messiaen, "The life and works of Jean Lurçat (1892-1966)," 283.

⁴⁸ Simeone, Introduction to Messiaen, "The life and works of Jean Lurçat (1892-1966)," 279.

⁴⁹ Quoted in Shenton, "Speaking with the Tongues of Men and of Angels," 241.

⁵⁰ "Mots que nous ne comprenons que par éclairs, dans de rares et courtes illuminations."

Example 3.32: Jean Lurçat's *L'Homme en Gloire dans la Paix* (Man in the Glory of Peace)⁵¹



⁵¹ This tapestry is the fifth part of Jean Lurçat's *Le Chant du Monde*, displayed in the Musée Jean-Lurçat et de la Tapisserie Contemporaine in Angers, France. This reproduction is from <<http://www.tapisserie.defrance.fr/abouquet/bq021b.lurcat.ledoux.fr.htm>>

CHAPTER 4 *Analysis of Méditation VIII*

Introduction to *Méditation VIII*

The noun leitmotifs explaining “God is Simple”

The preface to *Méditation VIII* begins with the phrase, “God is simple.”¹ The meditation, however, is anything but simple in construction. Messiaen begins the meditation by expressing this attribute of God with the “Gregorian theme of the Alleluia for All the Saints, unadorned and unaccompanied.”² Following this, the piece continues into other theological realms, affording only a few brief glances on this opening idea.

Méditation VIII has many topics. Perhaps they are supposed to be subject to the above divine attribute, perhaps not; Messiaen gives no written guidance about such issues. However, the important thing is to investigate the motives and meanings Messiaen provides in order to better understand the theology he expresses. This chapter is divided into two areas of investigation. The first area deals with short motives and the pieces of theology they communicate. The second area deals with lengthier motives and the interplay between them. After the second analysis is complete, a discussion of its theological implications finishes the chapter – bringing the reader back to consider the opening comment, “God is simple.”

This Meditation does not contain any quotations from Aquinas, so neither Messiaen’s music-alphabet nor verb-leitmotifs from his *‘langage communicable’* are in use. Rather, Messiaen communicates solely through Biblical quotations and noun

¹ “Dieu est Simple”

² “thème grégorien de l’Alleluia de la Toussaint, à nu, sans accompagnement.”

leitmotifs connected to these quotations. As explained in the preface, these noun leitmotifs are musical motives that Messiaen assigns to a person/place/thing/idea. Another example in *Méditation VIII* is the leitmotif *les Trois sont Un* (“The Three are One”); it is an idea printed in the score above a motive that expresses the idea. Because noun leitmotifs communicate one idea after another, without explaining the connection between them, their interpretation is somewhat cloudy. Though Messiaen insists on a simple explanation, “It is agreed that one thing expresses another,”³ this analytical project investigates how the various noun leitmotifs relate to one another, creating a hermeneutic of how to hear and understand *Méditation VIII*.

Short Motives with Theological Implications

This first area of exploration deals with motives on p. 70, the first page of *Méditation VIII*. Having explained the opening epithet and Gregorian chant above (p. 70/S1 and S2), the analysis begins with the leitmotif *les Trois sont Un* on p. 70/S3.

Trois-chords

In the preface, following his explanation of “God is simple,” Messiaen writes “And in order to emphasize that the mystery of the Holy Trinity in no sense implies a division in the Deity, we at once proclaim, ‘The three are one.’”⁴ Messiaen is anxious to present a theological fact. He continues, stating that the leitmotif is expressed “with a

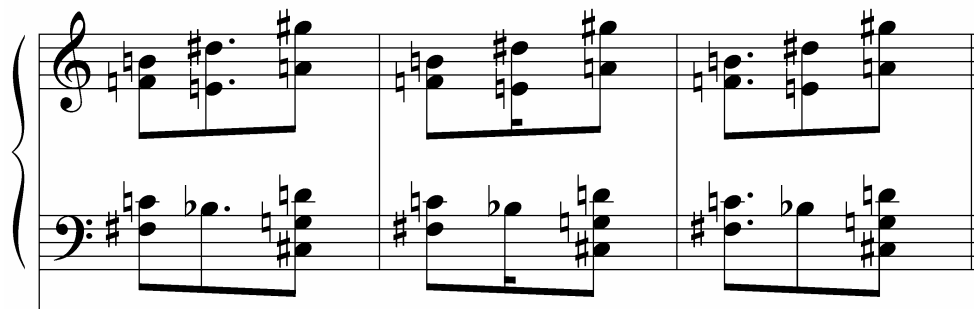
³ “Il est convenu que ceci exprimera cela.”

⁴ “Et pour bien marquer que le mystère de la Sainte Trinité n’apporte aucune composition en Dieu, nous énonçons aussitôt: ‘les Trois sont Un.’” Note Messiaen’s use of the plural pronoun “we,” as discussed in Chapter 1, p. 25, footnote 55.

ternary rhythm: Cretan⁵ in three forms (dotted central value [m. 1], short central value [m. 2], dotted outer values [m. 3])”⁶. In addition to Messiaen’s rhythmic details, the motif also contains three chords, each repeated three times. The obvious association here is a triple Trinitarian expression expressed with harmony, rhythm, and repetition (three chords, three rhythmic values -with three permutations, performed three times) (Example 4.1).

However, the Trinitarian association is stronger than this. There is no pitch intersection from one chord to the next, no repeated notes. The first chord (herein, *Trois-1*) is <605E>; *Trois-2* is <T43>; and *Trois-3* is <17298>. Put them together and you have a pitch class aggregate. This would not normally be a meaningful observation. But, considering Messiaen’s leitmotif label, “the Three are one” and his careful warning to “emphasize that . . . the Holy Trinity in no sense implies a division in Deity,” the pitch aggregate feature is a strong finding that supports the theological concept of unity.

Example 4.1: *Trois*-chords; p. 70/S3



⁵ Pople states that long-short-long rhythms (as found here) are common in the dance music of the island of Crete. See Pople, *Messiaen: Quatour pour le fin du temps*, 5.

⁶ “avec un rythme ternaire: Créatique sous trois formes (valuer centrale pointée, valuer centrale brève, valeurs extrêmes pointées).”

Trois-chords, BM-chords and Rom-6

The *Trois*-chords also relate to the *Bien modéré* section (p. 70/S6/m. 4 through S7). In S7/m. 4, the last three *Bien modéré* chords (herein BM-chords, BM-3 to BM-5) contain large subsets that relate palindromically to the *Trois*-chords⁷. *Trois*-3 [78912] shares [789] with BM-3 [T789]. *Trois*-2 [T34] is a subset of BM-4 [TE34]. And *Trois*-1 [E056] shares [056] with BM-5 [56801] (Example 4.2).

Though complete chords are not associated, the shared pitch relationships demonstrate how the *Trois*-chords frame the section (p. 70/S2 to S6). This reference also hints at a reflective glance as the last BM-chords look back to the reference *Trois*-chords. Messiaen writes of such backwards glances when describing the *Père-Fils* leitmotifs (p. 70/S4): “Then . . . in monody: the Father-theme (basic form), the Son-theme (the same in inversion, like two intersecting glances)”⁸ It is important to note here that Messiaen’s *Père-Fils* ‘inversion’ is not an exact association but rather slightly inexact and pictorial in association; it is off by a few half-steps here and there.⁹ Likewise, the *Trois*-BM associations are also more representative than exact.

Outside the *Meditations*, similar reflective features have also been observed in the “Flower theme” of the *Turangalîla-Symphony*, which the composer [Messiaen] described as being in two parts, “like two eyes reflecting each other.”¹⁰ Another representative, though visual, is the stained-glass window (by Père Marie-Alain Couturier) which hung in front of the piano that Messiaen composed at. Its description by Marie-Louise Jaquet

⁷ Note, BM-1 and BM-2 (the repeated chords from p. 70/S6/m. 2 to S7/m. 3) are not included in the present discussion.

⁸ “Suivent . . . le thème due Père (mouvement droit)- le thème du Fils (mouvement contraire due précédent, comme deux regards qui se croisent)”

⁹ Shenton, *Olivier Messiaen’s System of Signs*, 105-106.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 102.

matches with the concepts above: “against a background of clouds, we have a crucified Christ, and above him there is the Father who takes the form of the Cross in such a manner that the four eyes are turned towards one another and the two looks melt into one another.”¹¹

The above *Père-Fils* leitmotifs are often heard adjacently, making their inversional association immediate. However, the *Trois-BM* leitmotifs are distant in association. They frame a section of the piece (p. 70, S3 to S7, repeated again on p. 71) and are retrogradable in association. As such, the *Trois-BM* motivic frame is pitch palindromic, not pitch inversional. Nevertheless, the ‘reflective’ association is still motivically valid.

The other BM-chords, BM-1 and BM-2 (S6/m. 3, chords 1-2), also participate in a similar ‘intersecting glance’ when compared with the chord that immediately precedes them (S6/m. 2). This chord, herein Rom-6, is the final harmony in a set of chords called Rom-chords (S6, mm. 1-2).¹² Rom-6 subset <67TE> is Rr0 to BM-1 subset <T76E>. Likewise Rom-6 subset <087E> is T1 to BM-2 subset <1980> (Example 4.3).

Here, as with Messiaen’s comment about *Père-Fils*, the final “thought” of the Rom-chords is directly reflected into the next section. Yet it is not only reflected, it is also fragmented. While *Père-Fils* is adjacent and inversional, and *Trois-BM* is distant and palindromic, Rom-BM is adjacent and palindromically fragmented. Rom-6 breaks into two smaller entities (BM-1 and BM-2) and the two fragments repeat nine times while looking back at its source. To use pictorial language as Messiaen often did, here is an

¹¹ Jaquet, “Une somme théologique et musicale” 154. Attributed in Shenton, *Olivier Messiaen’s System of Signs*, 32.

¹² Note: The rest of the Rom-chords are discussed in detail in the second analytical area of this chapter.

analogy involving mirrors: Rom-6 is an object between two parallel mirrors, BM-1 and BM-2 are the reflections that keep repeating the source image in smaller fragments.

Example 4.2: *Trois*-chords; p. 70/S3/m. 1, and BM-3 to BM-5; p. 70/S7/m. 4

The musical score for Example 4.2 consists of two staves, Treble and Bass. It is divided into two systems. The first system contains three measures labeled Trois-1, Trois-2, and Trois-3. The second system contains three measures labeled BM-3, BM-4, and BM-5. Above the first system, a dashed line connects the top notes of Trois-1, Trois-2, and Trois-3, labeled 'shared subset [056]'. Another dashed line connects the top notes of BM-3, BM-4, and BM-5, labeled 'shared subset [T34]'. Below the first system, a dashed line connects the bottom notes of Trois-1, Trois-2, and Trois-3, labeled 'shared subset [789]'. Brackets are used to group the notes for each measure.

Example 4.3: Rom-6; p. 70/S6/m. 2, and BM-1 through BM-2; p. 70/S6/m. 2 and m. 3 (chords 1 and 2)

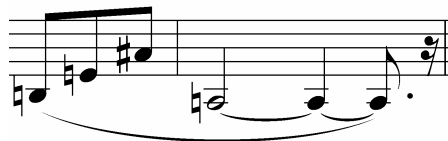
The musical score for Example 4.3 consists of three staves: Treble, Treble, and Bass. The first measure is labeled 'Rom-6 (full)'. The second measure is labeled 'Rom-6 subset <67TE>'. The third measure is labeled 'Rom-6 subset <08TE>'. The fourth measure is labeled 'BM-1 subset <T76E>'. The fifth measure is labeled 'BM-2 subset <1980>'. Brackets are used to group the notes for each measure.

First, here is an explanation of the parsing. Since Messiaen wrote two slurs in the motif, there is reason to separate them likewise into two phrases, Romotif-A and Romotif-B (Examples 4.5 and 4.6). Note, since Romotif-A contains two C#s, the second will be ignored in this phrase context so as to create two four-note motifs (Example 4.5). Since there are two phrases, there is also reason to parse the two cadence tones as another present motif. This is similar to isolating a leading tone to tonic resolution in the melodies of antecedent-consequent phrases. The C# at the end of phrase 1, a cadence tone, can be heard to resolve down by pitch-class half-step to the C natural, shown in Romotif-C (Example 4.7).

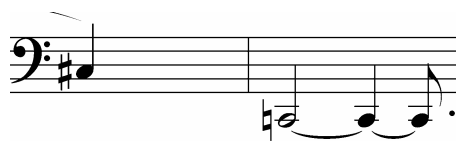
Example 4.5: Romotif-A, p. 70/S4/m. 1 into m. 2



Example 4.6: Romotif-B, p. 70/S4/m. 2 into m. 3



Example 4.7: Romotif-C, cadence notes from Romotif-A and Romotif-B, p. 70/S4



Under this parsing, the same pitch-space relationship appears between the three motifs and three case leitmotifs. The genitive/ablative/locative case (herein, G/A/L) <3546> is T9 to the first four notes of Romotif-A <0213> (Example 4.8). The accusative/dative case (herein, A/D) <5T43> is T9 to Romotif-B <2710> (Example 4.9). And the last two pitches of A/D, <43> (its cadence) is T9 to Romotif-C <10> (Example 4.10).

Example 4.8: G/A/L; p. 5 (preface) and Romotif-A; p. 70/S4/m. 1 into m. 2

The image shows two musical staves. The left staff is in treble clef and contains a sequence of five notes: G4, A4, B4, C#5, and B4. The right staff is in bass clef and contains a sequence of five notes: G3, A3, B3, C#4, and B3. An arrow labeled 'T9' points from the left staff to the right staff, indicating a tritone transposition.

Example 4.9: A/D; p. 5 (preface) and Romotif-B, p. 70/S4/m. 2 into m. 3

The image shows two musical staves. The left staff is in treble clef and contains a sequence of five notes: G4, A4, B4, C#5, and B4. The right staff is in bass clef and contains a sequence of five notes: G3, A3, B3, C#4, and B3. An arrow labeled 'T9' points from the left staff to the right staff, indicating a tritone transposition.

Example 4.10: A/D cadence; p. 5 (preface) and Romotif-C; p. 70/S4

The image shows two musical staves. The left staff is in treble clef and contains a sequence of four notes: G4, A4, B4, and C#5. The right staff is in bass clef and contains a sequence of four notes: G3, A3, B3, and C#4. An arrow labeled 'T9' points from the left staff to the right staff, indicating a tritone transposition.

The only case not used as a leitmotivic reference is the privative case, <9T>. Though it clearly shares prime form with Romotif-C <10>, relating via I10/RT4, its difference from the other exact associations is too big for equal consideration. Because of

the significant T9 pitch-space connections, the other case leitmotifs from the preface are presumed to be source materials for Romotif.

A theological inquiry about the words that accompany these motives (Romans 11:33 and Latin cases), explains the close association they share. The meaning of the referenced Latin cases (genitive, ablative, locative, accusative, and dative) covers every positive way that a noun/pronoun functions grammatically in a phrase or clause. Receiving (accusative), possessing (genitive), locating (locative), giving (dative), and modifying where/when/how (ablative) are the sum of these positive noun functions. This summation of every positive function of noun usage is like noun omniscience; the negation associated with the privative case is excused because there is nothing that God does not know, he is omniscient.

The Romans 11:33 passage “depth of . . . wisdom and knowledge” is an expression of God’s all-knowing nature. The omniscience concept of the above Latin cases fits tightly within the same concept ascribed to God in Paul’s epistle. Once again, the pitch relationships in Messiaen’s leitmotifs demonstrate a deep association between pitch, leitmotif, and theological expression.

Larger Motives that Inter-relate

The second area of analysis deals with the lengthier motives in *Méditation VIII*. Because of their length, these motives are not privy to the short, concise theological conclusions as found above. The reader must bear with gradual section by section analysis before the final theological discourse is reached.

The analytical goal is to demonstrate how three of Messiaen's sections are sewn together via their motivic and theological relationship. These three areas are the Rom-chords (p. 70/S6/m. 1-2), the Psalm-section (p. 74-75), and the Matthew-section (p. 72/S3 through p. 73). In these sections, there is significant evidence to correlate ideas about bird-flight and human relationships with God.

To arrive at these analytical goals, there are a few important steps that must be established along the way. The first step is to identify three motivic features about bird-flight: 1a) motives that represent a bird preparing for flight; 1b) motives that represent a bird, overcome by fear and weariness, failing to fly; and lastly 1c) motives that represent a bird with new hope taking flight into heaven. These ideas are found in the analysis of the Rom-chords and the Psalm-section. The second step is to identify how these motives describe the parallel idea of human relationship with God. This step involves the analysis of the Matthew-section and the Psalm-section. The third and final step is to address how these ideas coalesce with other observed features in *Méditation VIII*, wrapping up the entire theological discussion.

The analysis begins by tackling step 1a), motives that identify the presence of bird wings preparing for flight. To start the discussion, there is an interesting bird association between the Rom-chords on p. 70 and the Psalm-section on pp. 74-75.

Rom-chords in the Psalm Section

The Rom-chords occur immediately after Romotif on p. 70. Messiaen describes the chords, as “. . . a slow cascade of chords in the 1st transposition of the 3rd mode,

simultaneous vertical and contrary movements, like the closing of a fan”¹⁵ (Example 4.11). The statement is very pictorial; the words “slow cascade”, “vertical and contrary movements” and “closing of a fan” all depict mechanics associated with a bird flight preparation: wings are “slow” in motion, “movements” are “contrary,” at first “vertical” and outstretched and then closing down toward the body “like a fan.” The interpretation is of a bird preparing its wings to fly, but not flying yet. Considering Messiaen’s ornithological influence, this is not a surprising relationship.

Example 4.11: Rom-chords, p. 70/S5/m. 1-2



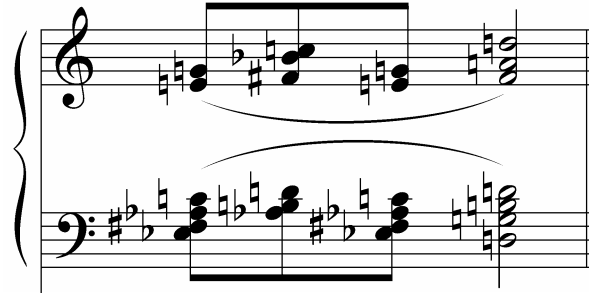
There are close symbolic and harmonic similarities between the Rom-chords and the opening Psalm-section chords. The Psalm-section, for example, begins with the bird-oriented Psalm 55:6,¹⁶ “Oh that I had the wings of a dove, I would fly away and be at rest.” This Psalm excerpt describes a human wishing to be a bird and hoping to fly away

¹⁵ “. . . une lente cascade d’accords en mode 3¹, mouvement droit et contraire ensemble, comme un éventail qui se ferme.”

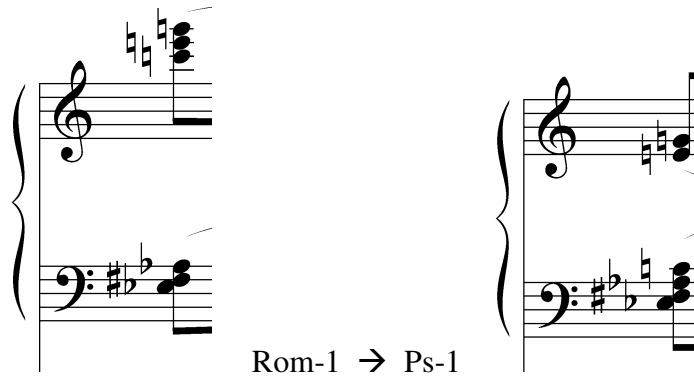
¹⁶ A misprint in Messiaen’s manuscript reads “Psalm 54:7.” This is incorrect.

in peace. Note, in both Rom-chord and Psalm-section verbal passages, flight is not yet achieved, only the potential for flight is expressed.

Example 4.12: Ps-1 through Ps-4; p. 74/S1/m. 1



Example 4.13: Shared pitches between Rom-1; p. 70/S5 (chord 1) and Ps-1; p. 74/S1 (chord 1)



Harmonically, the parallels continue. Psalm-chords 1 through 4 (Example 4.12), herein Ps-1 to Ps-4, etc . . . , relate directly to Rom-chord 1 through 5, herein Rom-1 through Rom-5. Rom-1 <0368047> (minus the Pedal tone C) contains the same notes as Ps-1 <368047> (Example 4.13). Rom-3 <0E246T0> and Ps-2 <8E26T0> also have many

of the same notes. Removing both chords' bass notes and the pitch E from Ps-2 produces <E26T0> (Example 4.14).¹⁷

Example 4.14: Rom-3; p. 70/S5/m. 1 (chord 3) and Ps-2; p. 74/S1/m. 1 (chord 2)

Rom-4, repeating Rom-1, is related to Ps-3, itself a repetition of Ps-1 - the same notes once again. The only relationship without the same notes is Rom-5 <047T23> and Ps-4 <27ET592>. However, removing the top note Rom-5 and the outer dyad of Ps-4 reveals an interesting subset relationship. Rom-5 subset <047T2> is T7 to Ps-4 subset <7E259> (Example 4.15).

These pitch similarities bind the two motifs together. Their verbal association also seals this relationship. Together, they form a leitmotif parallel that satisfies step 1a) motives that represent a bird-flight preparation. Any future reappearance of either leitmotif (Rom-1 through Rom-5, or Ps-1 through Ps-4) will also create the same symbolic association – a bird preparing to fly.

¹⁷ The interested reader will notice that Rom-2 is not used in this discussion. In this study, Rom-1 <0368047> and Rom-2 <07T08E3> are considered similar source materials and are somewhat repetitive as they relate to Ps-1 in the above discussion. Their subsets (Rom-1 <36847> and Rom-2 <7T08E>) are very similar harmonies, related by T4. This T4 relationship is also exhibited in the bass clef trichord of Rom-1 <368> as it projects upward in pitch space, moving to Rom-2, Rom-3, and Rom-4. The last move into Rom-4 posits the original Rom-1 bass clef trichord up an octave. These combined features tie Rom-1 and Rom-2 together.

Example 4.15: Rom-5; p. 70/S5/m. 1 (chord 5) and Ps-4; p. 74/S1/m. 1 (chord 4)

Rom-5 is T7 → Ps-4

Associated 1a) motives are interspersed throughout the Psalm-section, though not all motives relate to these chords. In fact, the Psalm-section's development is based on the gradual motivic disintegration of the 1a) motives, occurring phrase by phrase until the harmony is strikingly different. This disintegration is the second leitmotif as 1a) collapses into 1b), motives symbolizing a bird, overcome by fear and weariness, failing to fly. Each gradual step of disintegration represents additional weariness and fear. The culmination of these features brings about failure of flight. An analysis of Psalm subsection 1, below, demonstrates the first instance of this disintegration.

Ps-Sect-1

The first subsection, herein Ps-Sect-1, is on p. 74/S1 through S3. The analysis is very detailed and much of its analytical groundwork will carry over into Ps-Sect-2 and Ps-Sect-3.

Ps-Sect-1 begins with phrase one (Ps-1 to Ps-4), which is then repeated in phrase two (m. 2). This is a T0 transposition and an obvious leitmotif repetition. Phrase three, Ps-5 to Ps-8, begins on p. 74/S2/m. 1. It is almost an exact pitch-space transposition of Ps-1 to Ps-4, with just a modicum of difference (Example 4.16). The slight change is the first step in motivic disintegration, and is interpreted as a bird beginning to become weary.

In phrase four (S2/m. 2) Ps-9 and Ps-10 are also exact transformations. Ps-11 is close, needing one half-step change to be fully associated.¹⁸ Continuing, Ps-12 <146T25> is T+10 from Ps-1; Ps-13 <9037E1> is T+1 of Ps-2; and Ps-14 <479158> is T+13 of Ps-1 or Ps-3 (Example 4.17). These pitch-changes demonstrate further motivic disintegration, interpreted as the accumulation of bird weariness.

Example 4.16: Ps-1 to Ps-4 compared with Ps-5 to Ps-8, p. 74/S1/m. 1 and p. 74/S2, m. 1

The image shows a musical score with two systems of staves. The first system contains four measures labeled Ps-1, Ps-2, Ps-3, and Ps-4. The second system contains four measures labeled Ps-5, Ps-6, Ps-7, and Ps-8. Dashed lines connect the first notes of Ps-1 to Ps-5, Ps-2 to Ps-6, Ps-3 to Ps-7, and Ps-4 to Ps-8, with labels T+2, T+2, T+2, and T+1 respectively. The music is written in a key with one flat and a common time signature.

¹⁸ If Bb → B in Ps-11, it becomes <8E1590>, which is T+5 from Ps-1 or Ps-3.

Since this pattern of disintegration will occur many times in the Psalm-section, it is important to be thorough about the features of this first example. Reviewing the materials thus far, the first 14 chords in the Psalm section have exact pitch-space transposition relationships (besides Ps-11) with Ps-1 to Ps-4. The motivic association, however, has disintegrated bit by bit. Initially, entire phrases repeat with near-exact transpositions, as in phrases one through three. However, by the arrival of phrase four, Ps-9 to Ps-14, three motivic features have disintegrated: 1) the association with Ps-4 is absent; 2) the phrase contains six different transpositions – far from the consistent transposition distances in m. 1-3; and 3) the phrase contains a disproportionate number of chords; here there are nine chords which contrasts the groups of four chords in m. 1-3.

Continuing in S2/m. 2, the associations disintegrate even further. Ps-15 <16T049>, for example, has no exact transpositional association with previous Psalm-chords (the first occurrence since Ps-11). It does relate to Ps-4, but only via subsets (Example 4.18). The Ps-4 subsets also map onto the LH and RH triads of Ps-16 and Ps-17 with widely different transposition distances (Example 4.19). This broken subset mapping is another step of disintegration from the opening motivic association – the bird is now weary and fearing to fly.

At this point it should be noted that a chord, or motive, splitting into two subsets with two different transpositions is not irregular for Messiaen. As Robert Johnson explains, writing about the recurrence of a blackbird motive (in ‘Liturgie du Cristal’ from *Quatour*), “the [motive] is not characterized . . . by its total interval structure . . . but . . . by the interval pairs . . . which shift by a semitone in relation each other.”¹⁹ So, this *Méditation VIII* observance matches similar motivic treatment elsewhere in Messiaen’s

¹⁹ Johnson, “Birdsong,” 262.

oeuvre. Johnson's finding substantiates the above observation; this is important since subset association is a key feature of motivic disintegration in the Psalm-section.

Example 4.17: Ps-1 and Ps-2; p. 74/S1/m. 1 (chord 1 and 2) to Ps-9 through Ps-14 p. 74/S2, m. 2

The musical score for Example 4.17 consists of two staves, treble and bass clef. Above the treble staff, chords are labeled Ps-1, Ps-2, Ps-9, Ps-10, Ps-11, Ps-12, Ps-13, and Ps-14. Dashed lines connect these chords to indicate intervallic relationships: T+4 between Ps-1 and Ps-2, T+4 between Ps-9 and Ps-10, T+1 between Ps-1 and Ps-13, T+13 between Ps-2 and Ps-14, T+5* between Ps-1 and Ps-11, and T+10 between Ps-2 and Ps-11. A note below the bass staff reads: * If Bb were B in Ps-11.

Example 4.18: Ps-4; p. 74/S1/m. 1 (chord 4) and Ps-15; p. 74/S2/m. 2 (chord 7)

The musical score for Example 4.18 shows two chords, Ps-4 and Ps-15, on a treble and bass clef staff. Above the treble staff, the chords are labeled Ps-4 and Ps-15. Dashed lines connect the two chords, with T7 and T11 labeled between them. Below the treble staff, the chord symbols <592> and <049> are shown. Below the bass staff, the chord symbols <27E> and <16T> are shown.

Chords Ps-15 to Ps-17, in phrase 4, are also interesting because they display a new motivic strategy. Here, the former emphasis on chord similarity switches to a

strategy involving chord symmetry and linear motion. For example, all three chords (Ps-15 to Ps-17) are symmetrical around pc11 (B) (Example 4.19). There is also symmetry in the mirroring of chords. In Ps-15 and Ps-16, the two hands swap places, hence the shared transposition distances between them (T7 and T11). Lastly, there is linear symmetry in the outer voices, A5–Bb5–C6 against Db4–C4–Bb3. In fact, all the voices would mirror exactly if F#6 became F6 and E4 became F4 in Ps-16, a feature caused by the triad swap between Ps-15 and Ps-16.

Resuming the bird leitmotif analysis, the fifth and final phrase of Ps-Sect-1 (p. 74/S3), demonstrates that the motivic underpinnings of Ps-1 through Ps-4 have been pulled out of joint. Here, the former weary associations become overly burdened and fearful, the bird's flight attempt has failed. New harmonies arrive with sparse connections to the previous materials. The first chord, Ps-18 <9410>, a tetrachord, sounds out of place compared to the preceding harmonies and a relationship to Ps-4 exists only through the mutual existence of Major and minor triads. The following chord, Ps-19, has a slightly stronger association, though only via subset; it is down an m3 from Ps-17 subset Bb3-G4-Eb5-C6.

Ps-18 and Ps-19 relate only tangentially to Ps-1 to Ps-4. Like Ps-15 to Ps-17 they broadcast a new motivic strategy that dissociates from the opening in many ways. For starters, Ps-18 and Ps-19 subsets directly influence harmonies Ps-20 through Ps-23. The two chords are also harmonic bookends for system 3—Ps-24 (sharing A-Db-C) and Ps-25 (sharing G-E-C) are down an octave from Ps-18 and Ps-19. Also, Ps-19 through Ps-23 are all mm7 (0358) chords. As such, they also contain interlocking Major and minor triads, like Ps-18. Additionally, the descending m3 subset from Ps-17 to Ps-19 is a relevant

developmental feature in other S3 chord relationships.²⁰ All this suffices to say that a new motivic strategy is in play and the opening motivic influence is all but moot once S3 is reached (Example 4.20).

Example 4.19: Ps-4; p. 74/S1/m. 1 (chord 4) and Ps-15 through Ps-17; p. 74/S2/m. 2 (chord 7-9)

Peering back at Ps-Sect-1, the relational distance from the original motivic material to phrase five is immense. Compared with the opening Rom-chords, the phrase five harmonies are tangential at best, the phrase lengths are incongruent, and the cardinality is reduced to tetrachords (Ps-1 to Ps-17 were hexa- and heptachords). Ps-Sect-1 began with step 1a) the Ps-1 to Ps-4 motif – bird wings preparing to fly. The ensuing chord motifs began with much in common, but by system three all unifying motivic features had disintegrated into step 1b) – the bird, becoming weary and fearful, has failed to fly.

²⁰ As can be seen in Example 4.20: Ps-18 subset E-A-Db (major triad) is down a m3/A2 to Ps-20 subset F#-Db-Bb (major triad); Ps-20 F#-Db-Bb-Eb (mm7) is also down a m3/A2 to Ps-22 Eb-Bb-G-C (mm7); and Ps-22 is also down a m3/A2 to Ps-23 C-G-E-A (mm7). Repeated from above, the subset of Ps-17 B-G-Eb-C (mm7) is down a m3 to Ps-19 G-E-C-A (mm7) which is also down a m3 to Ps-21 E-Db-A-F# (mm7).

Example 4.20: Ps-17 to Ps-25; p. 74/S2 (last chord) through S3

The musical score consists of two staves. The top staff is in treble clef and the bottom staff is in bass clef. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The music is divided into measures corresponding to Psalms 17 through 25. Brackets above the staff group the measures for each Psalm. Below the staff, chord symbols and transposition operations are listed for each measure.

Psalm	Chord Symbol	Transposition Operation
Ps-17	[7T03]	(0358)
Ps-18	[9014]	(0347)
Ps-19	[4790]	(0358)
Ps-20	[T136]	(0358)
Ps-21	[1469]	(0358)
Ps-22	[7T03]	(0358)
Ps-23	[4790]	(0358)
Ps-24	[6901]	(0147)
Ps-25	[0467]	(0137)

Ps-Sect-2

The second subsection (herein Ps-Sect-2) is from p. 74/S4 to p. 75/S2/ (chord 1). A similar motivic process of establishment and disintegration occurs as in Ps-Sect-1. The following analysis captures the critical junctures of the section.

The first three phrases begin with a rebirth of the original motive (Ps-1 through Ps-7). This is a repetition of step 1a), the bird is preparing to fly a second time. The end of the third phrase and into the fourth, Ps-26 through Ps-34, parallels the motivic disintegration found in Ps-9 through Ps-17. The first portion of phrase four, Ps-26 through Ps-29, parallels Ps-9 through Ps-14. As before, there are full chord associations with Ps-1 to Ps-4, yet with varying transposition operations and without adjacent chord associations (Example 4.21). As communicated previously, a small weariness has crept in.

The second portion of phrase four, Ps-30 through Ps-34, behaves similarly to Ps-15 through Ps-17: new harmonies without exact transpositional association with the preceding harmony. This second disintegration of the original motivic underpinnings

again requires subset association and displays a new motivic strategy. The bird again has become overly weary and burdened; fear has brought its wings to a halt.

Ps-30 through Ps-34 consist of LH (0358) chords and RH (016) chords. They have close association with Ps-11 and Ps-15, the first two incomplete association chords of Ps-Sect-1. The unique similarities between these chord sets, despite the temporal distance, create a bond between them - a bond that represents the most severe motivic disintegration in both Ps-Sect-1 and Ps-Sect-2.

Example 4.21: Ps-1 and Ps-4; p. 74/S1/m. 1 (chords 1, 4) to Ps-26 through Ps-29; p. 75/S1/m. 1 (chord 4) through m. 2 (chords 1-3)

The image shows a musical score for six pieces: Ps-1, Ps-4, Ps-26, Ps-27, Ps-28, and Ps-29. The score is written in two staves, Treble and Bass clef. Above the staves, brackets group the pieces. Dashed lines with labels T+2, T+3, T+4, and T+5 indicate intervallic relationships between the pieces. T+2 connects Ps-1 and Ps-4. T+3 connects Ps-1 and Ps-27. T+4 connects Ps-4 and Ps-26. T+5 connects Ps-4 and Ps-29. The pieces are arranged in a sequence that suggests a disintegration bond.

The details of this disintegration bond are quite interesting. The lower tetrad of Ps-11, [58T1] (0358)- a mm7 chord, relates to the lower tetrads of Ps-30 to Ps-34 (also (0358) chords)²¹ (Example 4.22). Ps-15 is a symmetrical chord around B; as such it contains two (016) subsets that relate to the upper (016) trichords of Ps-30 to Ps-34. As with the associations of Ps-15 to Ps-17, the split associations here, sourced from Ps-11

²¹ Additionally, these five tetrads (mm7 (0358) chords), are the same quality as Ps-19 to Ps-23.

and Ps-15, are also tangential in association. This new motivic strategy lacks any association to Ps-1 through Ps-4.

As an additional motivic feature of Ps-Sect-2, both Ps-30 <7E4938> and Ps-31 <9025716> are transposed up a M3 to form Ps-32 <E368170> and Ps-33 <1469E5T>; Ps-33 is up another m3 to Ps-34 <4790281> (Example 4.21). Though the motivic strategy of Ps-30 to Ps-34 is new, its inner transformations are consistent, just like the consistency seen in Ps-15 through Ps-17. This creates another bond between the chord sets that have the strongest motivic disintegration in Ps-Sect-1 and Ps-Sect-2.

The above parallels demonstrate that Ps-Sect-1 is definitely a sectional predecessor to Ps-Sect-2. In both, the original motivic procedure (based on Ps-1 to Ps-4) has experienced gradual motivic disintegration to the point of disassociation. In both leitmotif 1a), a bird preparing to fly, has disintegrated into leitmotif 1b), a bird that fails to fly.

Ps-Sect-3

The third subsection, herein Ps-Sect-3 (p. 75/S2/m. 1 (chord 2) to the end of *Méditation VIII*), is a different story. Though some similarities exist, here a new mode and new leitmotif are introduced in ways foreign to the former processes of disintegration. In Ps-Sect-3 there are just enough features of Ps-1 through Ps-4 to first bring leitmotif 1a) into focus. However, when the new mode and leitmotif take over, the association points past 1b) into leitmotif 1c), a bird with hope taking flight into heaven. Messiaen's own words validate this interpretation, writing that in the final section, "the harmonies slowly rise toward a profoundly calm diatonic heaven."²²

²² "les harmonies montent lentement vers un ciel diatonique profondément calme."

Example 4.22: Ps-11 and Ps-15; p. 74/S2/m. 2 (chords 3, 7) to Ps-30 through Ps-34; p. 75/S1/m. 2 (chord 4-7) to S2 (chord 1)

The musical score consists of two staves, Right Hand (RH) and Left Hand (LH). The RH staff contains chords for Ps-11 subset, Ps-15 subsets, Ps-30, Ps-31, Ps-32, Ps-33, and Ps-34. The LH staff contains chords for Ps-30, Ps-31, Ps-32, Ps-33, and Ps-34. The chords are labeled with their respective interval notations: [58T1], [016] & [49T] for Ps-11 and Ps-15; [389], [167], [701], [5TE], [812] for Ps-30 through Ps-34 in the RH; and [E247], [9025], [368E], [1469], [4790] for Ps-30 through Ps-34 in the LH. Interval markings M3 and m3 are also present between chords in both hands.

The analysis begins with Ps-35 (p. 75/S2/m. 1, chord 2), the first chord of Ps-Sect-3. This chord is an octave higher than Ps-1; it is also the only chord that is not in the C Ionian mode, which takes over in Ps-36. For the third time, another subsection begins with Ps-1, the orienting harmony found at the beginning of Ps-Sect-1 and Ps-Sect-2 (Example 4.23). This orienting harmony, though only a portion of the opening bird motif (Ps-1 to Ps-4), is nevertheless a reference to leitmotif 1a). The bird wings are preparing for flight, the third time.

Continuing, Ps-Sect-3 shifts into C Ionian. At this point, there are two sets of four chords, Ps-36 to Ps-39 and Ps-40 to Ps-43. These two phrases bear equivalent motivic processes as found in Ps-1 to Ps-8. Analyzing these two phrases (m. 2 and m. 3 on p. 75/S2), the similarities are obvious. Ps-36 to Ps-39 are transposed down one diatonic step to create Ps-40 through Ps-43 (Example 4.24).

Though the harmonies of Ps-1 through Ps-4 are not associated, other motivic features do recall these chords exactly. The similarity in motivic operation (limited transposition distance and adjacent chord association), the number of chords per phrase (four), and the same Ps-35/Ps-1 starting point, are enough to establish a leitmotif 1a) association. The bird is preparing to fly, but its preparation is in a new, hopeful direction.

Example 4.23: Ps-1; p. 74/S1 (chord 1) and Ps-35; p. 75/S2 (chord 2)

The image shows a musical score for two chords, Ps-1 and Ps-35, in a two-staff system. The top staff is in treble clef and the bottom staff is in bass clef. Above the top staff, a dashed line labeled 'T+12' connects two brackets. The left bracket is labeled 'Ps-1' and the right bracket is labeled 'Ps-35'. The Ps-1 chord is shown in the top staff as a triad of G4, B4, and D5, and in the bottom staff as a triad of B3, D4, and F4. The Ps-35 chord is shown in the top staff as a triad of G4, B4, and D5, and in the bottom staff as a triad of B3, D4, and F4. The two chords are separated by a double bar line.

Continuing with phrase three (p. 75, S3), associations via transposition require splitting the chords into two subsets, similar to Ps-15 through Ps-17 and Ps-30 through Ps-34. The split association occurs because the source materials, from S2 generally, are beginning to stretch apart in register. For example, Ps-36 to Ps-44 involves the Ps-36 LH trichord (D-F-G) transposing down five half steps (T-5) and the Ps-36 RH dyad (A-B) transposing down four half steps (T-4). The two operations are separated by just a half-step in p-space (Example 4.25). Here, one recalls Robert Johnson’s example exactly, “the interval pairs . . . which shift by a semitone in relation to each other”²³

²³ Johnson, “Birdsong,” 262.

Example 4.24: Ps-36 through Ps-39; p. 75/S2/m. 2 (chord 1-4) and Ps-40 through Ps-43; p.75/S2/m. 2 (chord 5-8)

Example 4.25: Ps-36; p. 75/S2/m. 2 (chord 1) and Ps-44; p. 75/S3 (chord 1)

Such subset relationships continue throughout Ps-Sect-3. However, a more important motivic observation is the behavior of the outer voices in contrary, stepwise motion. From Ps-36 onward (the point of mode change) this shift from vertical to linear strategy is a considerable occurrence in the Psalm-section.²⁴ Rather than the accumulation

²⁴ The interested reader will note that portions of linear activity did occur in the motivic disintegrations of Ps-Sect-1 and Ps-Sect-2. The difference is that the previous linear activity did not become the prevailing feature, whereas here it does.

of weariness and fear due to motivic disintegration, here a new leitmotif appears, one of hope. This new leitmotif includes an obvious registral ascension, the fulfillment of Messiaen's words: "the harmonies slowly rise toward a profoundly diatonic heaven."²⁵

This new strategy is clearly evident (p. 75/S2 to S4) as linear tetrachords (stepwise and contrary in motion) are everywhere in Ps-Sect-3. Examples of the melodic motive are seen first in Ps-36 through Ps-43 (p. 75/S2/m. 2-3) in Example 4.26.²⁶ The contrary motion of the voices is a reminder of Messiaen's Rom-chords "in forward and contrary motion together."²⁷ In fact, this could easily be a shared expression of bird wing mechanics. As an additional motivic feature, m. 2 and m. 3 (p. 75) are also symmetrical around their outer starting pitches (Example 4.26).

As with the chord associations of Ps-36 through Ps-43, so also do its linear features demonstrate features of symmetrical organization around a single motivic operation. In fact, the combination of both linear and chordal organization is like the temporary merging of two musical worlds. The first world consists of clear chordal associations, similar to the beginnings of Ps-Sect-1 and Ps-Sect-2. The second world consists of a linear strategy in Ionian mode, as found in the remainder of Ps-Sect-3. As such, this section is a motivic transition to the rest of the Psalm-section. It also marks a theological transition from the weary, burdened, and fear-based disintegration to the hope-based diatonic heaven.

²⁵ See Footnote 21.

²⁶ In Ps-36 through Ps-39, the highest voice is <DEFG>; the 2nd highest voice is <BCDE>; the 2nd lowest voice is <FEDC>; and the lowest voice is <DCBA>. In Ps-40 to Ps-43, the trend continues. The highest voice is <CDEF>; the 2nd highest voice is <ABCD>; the 2nd lowest voice is <EDCB>; and the lowest voice is <CBAG>.

²⁷ "mouvement droit et contraire ensemble"

Example 4.26: Linear aspect of Ps-36 through Ps-39; p. 75/S2/m. 2 (chord 1-4) and Ps-40 through Ps-43; p.75/S2/m. 2 (chord 5-8)

The image shows a musical score for two staves. The top staff contains eight measures of music, each labeled with a Psalm number: Ps-36, Ps-37, Ps-38, Ps-39, Ps-40, Ps-41, Ps-42, and Ps-43. The bottom staff also contains eight measures of music, corresponding to the same Psalm numbers. Dashed lines connect specific notes between the two staves. A label '(m. 2 note of symmetry)' points to a note in the second measure of the top staff and a note in the second measure of the bottom staff. Another label '(m. 3 note of symmetry)' points to a note in the third measure of the top staff and a note in the third measure of the bottom staff. The music consists of chords and single notes, with some notes beamed together.

Following these transitional measures, the linear strategy continues as the primary motivic process. From Ps-44 to Ps-55 (S3) it is the main strategy in use, despite some partial tetrads along the way (Example 4.27). It continues in like manner to the end of the *Méditation* (S4) as seen in the RH chords Ps-56 to Ps-59 (Example 4.28).

Ps-Sect-3 begins with motives in a new mode, yet the process of these motives resembles Ps-1 through Ps-8. This process similarity represents bird wings preparing for flight but with a new strategy for flight. As the subsection continues, the motivic strategy then transitions from chordal to linear. The new linear approach, the contrary motion, and the rising harmonic register combine to create a clear representation of the bird's hope, leading finally to a successful flight. Or, to use Messiaen's words, the rise to a "diatonic heaven."

In summary, the Psalm-section has three subsections, each of which begins with a leitmotif that represents bird flight preparation. The first two occurrences gradually disintegrate, representing the bird's fear and failure to fly. The third occurrence ends with

the motif transformed into a new mode and motivic strategy, representing the bird's hope and a successful flight into heaven.

Example 4.27: Ps-44 through Ps-55, p. 75/S3

Matthew-chords in the Psalm-section

The combination of motivic analysis and Messiaen's descriptions provide the rationale for the above interpretation. However, there are other details which help to further substantiate this analytical interpretation of weariness/fear and hope/heaven. The details are found in the analysis of the Matthew section (herein, Mt-section) on p. 72/S3 through p. 73. The analysis of these details will help broaden Messiaen's theology from bird-flight failure and success to the success or failure of human relationship with God.

The Mt-section contains two musical ideas. The first idea is the RH melody; this melody is a recurrence of the opening plainchant *Alleluia de la Toussaint* ("Alleluia for all the Saints") which began the *Méditation*. The melody is in G Mixolydian mode and its original unadorned melody represents the concept 'God is simple.' The second idea is a

group of harmonies which correspond motivically and theologically with the plainchant. These two musical ideas are framed with two scriptures from the same biblical passage, Matthew 11:28 and 11:30. In these scriptures Jesus says, “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest.” “For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

Example 4.28: Ps-56 through Ps-59; p. 75/S4/m. 1 to m. 2 (chord 1)

The image shows a musical staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). Above the staff, four psalm numbers are indicated: Ps-56, Ps-57, Ps-58, and Ps-59*. Brackets connect these numbers to specific chords on the staff. Dashed lines connect the notes of these chords across the measures. Below the staff, there is a note: "* (printed δ^{vb} in score, with δ^{va} sign)".

The discussion of this section begins theologically and then returns to the motives discussed above. Dealing with the truth of Jesus’ words in Matt 11:28, 30 is the first theological step. In order to submit to Jesus’ truth, two ideas must be acknowledged. The first idea is to recognize one’s weariness in this life, the burdens and fears one carries. As Jesus says, “It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick.” “For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners” (Mt 9:12-13). Without recognizing one’s human weaknesses, one cannot, and more surely will not, come to receive healing. The second idea of Jesus’ truth is to recognize that only Jesus can give rest. This rest has two hopes: the hope for eternal rest (heaven) and the hope of earthly rest as Jesus teaches someone how to live under His easy and light yoke.

The two ideas demonstrate the polar extremes of life: weariness, burden, and fear on one hand and rest, hope, and a new path of life on the other. Yet why are these ideas

communicated in this portion of the composition? One idea is that these two ideas are portrayed underneath the melodic umbrella of plainchant (“God is simple”) because they involve a theological simplicity. The choice to accept Jesus’ truth is also simple. One must simply lay down their burdens and accept Jesus’ healing and rest. After all, a choice can not be complex or composite; keeping both burden and rest is a contradiction. Jesus states elsewhere that, “No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money” (Mt 6:24). Though Jesus does not promise that this decision will be easy, it is, never-the-less, simple.

These theological ideas fit very well with the motivic ideas in the Mt-Section. Having discussed the plainchant above, the discussion now focuses on the chords that accompany it. The chords divide into two distinct groups, easily observed from a glance at the score. These two harmonic groups correspond with the two concepts found in Mt. 11:28,30: burden/fear and hope/rest. The first group, herein Mt-Group 1, is built using the G Mixolydian mode (same as ‘God is simple’) and is almost entirely tertian. Looking at the score, this group includes the following Mt-chords: 3, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 17, 18, 19, 21, 22, 24, and 25 (4 and 20 are also included yet are built from fifths), (Example 4.29). These chords match the mode of the chant line, so it makes sense that they carry its original ‘God is Simple’ meaning. These chords symbolize one polarity, the simple choice of God – a life of rest, hope, and a new path.

The second group, herein Mt-Group 2, is built primarily with (025) trichords. None of these chords have any G Mixolydian influence nor are they tertian in structure. This group includes the following Mt-chords: 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 11, 14, 15, 16, and 23

(Example 4.30). The Mt-Group 2 attributes, their (025) subsets and related associations, are included in a footnote below.²⁸ Because this group musically opposes Mt-Group 1, it represents the other polarity of Jesus' words – a life of weariness, burden, and fear.

The two ideas expressed in Matthew 11:28 and 11:30 are clearly represented by the two harmonic groups. However, the Mt-groups are further interesting because they also describe three harmonic cruxes in the Psalm-section where the harmonic association begins to change drastically. These crux chords fit directly into the two Mt-chord groups. Hence the presence of these chords again represents one idea or the other from Jesus' Matthew words.

The first harmonic crux is Ps-15 to Ps-17 (Ps-Sect-1), the subset-associated chords that point to the first drastic harmonic change. These three chords closely relate to Mt-1, Mt-14, and Mt-15, all from Mt-Group 2 (Example 4.31). Since Mt-Group 2 communicates the idea of weariness, burden, and fear, this idea maps both motivically and theologically onto this severe motivic disintegration which communicates a bird, weary with fear, failing to fly.

The second crux, Ps-30 through Ps-34 (Ps-Sect-2), has similar harmonic changes through subset association. These four chords closely relate to Mt-6&7, Mt-5, and Mt-2. Once again, all are part of Mt-Group-2 and have the same associations (Example 4.32).

²⁸ Mt-1 has [8T1] and [247] (including the RH G); Mt-2 has [368] and [790] (in the RH alone); Mt-5 has [368], [68E], and [8E1]; Mt-6 has [902] and [790]; Mt-7 has [902] and [025]; Mt-15 has [7T0]. The other chords relate closely back to these (025)-saturated chords. Mt-11 and Mt-16 (the same chords) recall Mt-2 very strongly; Mt-14 recalls Mt-1 strongly; Mt-23 recalls Mt-5 and Mt-1 strongly.

Example 4.29: Mt-Group 1; p. 72/S3/m. 3-4, p. 73/S1/m. 2 and 4, S2, mm. 2-4, S3/mm. 1-2, and S4, mm. 2-3

The musical score for Mt-Group 1 is presented in three systems. The first system contains measures Mt-3, Mt-4, Mt-8, Mt-9, Mt-10, Mt-12, and Mt-13. The second system contains measures Mt-17, Mt-18, Mt-19, and Mt-20. The third system contains measures Mt-21, Mt-22, Mt-24, and Mt-25. The notation includes bass and treble clefs, various note values (quarter, eighth, and sixteenth notes), rests, and chordal structures. Brackets above the notes indicate the grouping of measures for each Mt label.

Example 4.30: Mt-Group 2; p. 72/S1/mm. 1-2, p. 73/S1/mm. 1-2, 4, S2/m. 1, and S3/m. 4

The image displays musical notation for Mt-Group 2, organized into three systems. Each system consists of two staves: a treble clef staff on top and a bass clef staff on the bottom. Brackets are used to group specific measures or chords across both staves.

- System 1:** The first staff shows two measures. The first measure is labeled **Mt-1** and the second **Mt-2**. The second staff shows corresponding bass line notes for these measures.
- System 2:** The first staff shows three measures labeled **Mt-5**, **Mt-6**, and **Mt-7**. The second staff shows the bass line for these measures. To the right, a separate staff shows a chord labeled **Mt-11** in both treble and bass clefs.
- System 3:** The first staff shows three measures labeled **Mt-14**, **Mt-15**, and **Mt-16**. The second staff shows the bass line for these measures. To the right, a separate staff shows a chord labeled **Mt-23** in both treble and bass clefs.

The third crux is in Ps-Sect-3, which has a completely different association. Though the Mt-chords do not directly influence the first subset association (Ps-44), the Ps-Sect-3 chords in general are influenced by Mt-Group 1. The harmonic crux begins at Ps-36, the second chord in the subsection.²⁹ The chords from here on out are in the C Ionian mode, which is pitch equivalent to the G Mixolydian mode of Mt-Group 1 and the plainchant melody ‘God is Simple.’

Further, Mt-Group 1 forecasts the harmonies of Ps-50 through Ps-59. In fact, all transpositions that relate Mt-Group 1 to Ps-50 through Ps-59 are either T0 or T7 (unisons or perfect fifths). Such detail implies that a very specific harmonic origin (Mt-Group 1) influences the end of the Psalm section. With this observation, another parallel association becomes apparent. The leitmotif representation of Mt-Group 1 (rest, hope, and a new path of life) fits alongside the leitmotif representation of Ps-Sect-3 (the bird has hope and finally takes flight into heaven). Messiaen’s description of “diatonic heaven” could not have been more apropos for all these beautiful relationships which come to fruition in the last section of *Méditation VIII*.

In summary of this second analytical step, the Mt-Groups redirect harmonic language and demonstrate a parallel human interpretation of Messiaen’s bird leitmotifs. God can show humans how to fly and how to live, if one will simply come to Jesus, give him their burdens, worries, and fears, and live in the rest that he teaches. This is God’s simplicity.

²⁹ This feature occurs despite the fact that Ps-Sect-3’s motivic process is similar to the openings of Ps-Sect-1 and Ps-Sect-2. Here one distinguishes between motivic process and the chords themselves.

Example 4.31: Ps-15 through Ps-17 and Mt-Group 2; p. 74/S2/m. 2 (chord 7-9), p. 72/S3 (chord 1), and p. 73/S2 (chord 1 and 2)

The image displays musical notation for Example 4.31, organized into two main sections. The top section contains three systems of music, each with a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The first system is labeled 'Ps-15' and shows a treble staff with a chord and a bass staff with a single note. The second system is labeled 'Ps-16' and shows a treble staff with a chord and a bass staff with a single note. The third system is labeled 'Ps-17' and shows a treble staff with a chord and a bass staff with a single note. The bottom section contains two systems of music, each with a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The first system is labeled 'Mt-1' and shows a treble staff with a chord and a bass staff with a single note. The second system is labeled 'Mt-14 Mt-15' and shows a treble staff with a chord and a bass staff with a single note.

Theological Implications of Mt-chords, Rom-chords, and Psalm-section on the entirety of *Méditation VIII*

Having reached the above conclusions, the listener may now consider how these ideas link into the rest of *Méditation VIII*. For example, considering all the bird-to-human parallels, it is further interesting to note that the *Méditation* ends with the arrival of the yellow-hammer bird song. Messiaen’s states that there is the arrival of “a diatonic heaven or utmost serenity against which sounds the call of the yellow-hammer.”³⁰ The bird

³⁰ “un ciel diatonique profondément calme, sur lequel se détache encore l’appel due Bruant jaune.”

which learned to fly in the Psalm-section has finally arrived in its heavenly abode. The listener, after hearing so many bird-oriented gestures, hears the first realistic bird call of the composition. The bird becomes real only in this heavenly moment. Having arrived here, one can now look backwards and see all its earlier manifestations in the Rom-chords, Psalm-chords, and wishes of the Psalmist himself, “Oh, that I had the wings of a dove, I would fly away at be at rest.”³¹

Example 4.32: Ps-30 through Ps-34 and Mt-2 with Mt-5 through Mt-7; p. 75/S1/m. 2 (chord 4-7), S2 (chord 1), p. 73/mm. 1-2, and p. 72/S3/m. 2

The musical score for Example 4.32 is presented in two systems. The first system contains five chords labeled Ps-30 through Ps-34. Each chord is shown as a bracketed group of notes on a staff. The second system contains four chords labeled Mt-5 through Mt-7 and Mt-2. Mt-5, Mt-6, and Mt-7 are shown on a single staff, while Mt-2 is shown on a separate staff. The chords are represented by brackets and notes on staves, with some chords spanning across two staves.

³¹ The bird-call, oddly enough, was originally a communicative device, by which Messiaen alerted the ending of his improvisation to lecturer Monsignor Maxime Charles. In this light, however, its presence can be sewn together with the theological and motivic concepts at work in this composition.

Like the bird motif, the “diatonic heaven” mode also has its earlier predecessors in the Mt-chords and the plainchant “Alleluia for All Saints,” creating a series of its own retrospective glances. These backward glances remind the listener of God’s underlying simplicity, just as Messiaen’s motives reveal that the simple ideas, which seemed so scattered upon first hearing, were actually present throughout. These glances provide one final example of the ‘intersecting glance’ that began with the *Père-Fils* leitmotivic and theological relationship. This idea has become fruitful, projecting its theology into the entire *Méditation*. Having reached this breadth of perspective, the ‘intersecting glance’ now matches the theological magnitude of Messiaen’s palindromic “Theme of God” leitmotif.³² This motive expresses that “God is immense as much as eternal, without beginning or end in space as in time . . . like two extremes which face each other that one could move back from indefinitely”³³ To see these beautiful musical associations finally revealed from the end of a long analysis is like looking back on one’s life and seeing all the beautiful things that God has done, even when human eyes could not see them. It reminds this analyst of 1 Cor. 2:9: “No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him” (1 Cor. 2:9).

³² The “Theme of God” and the “Holy Spirit” leitmotifs are the same pitch palindrome; only their rhythms differ.

³³ “Dieu est immense autant qu’ éternel, sans commencement ni fin dans l’ espace omme dans le temps . . . comme deux extremes qui se regardent et que l’ on pourrait reculer indéfiniment”

CHAPTER 5

Conclusion

Brief Summary

This study began by observing Messiaen's own leitmotivic and theological associations as presented in the preface to his score. Now, having analyzed three specific *Méditations*, it is clear that there are many other leitmotivic associations that further elaborate on Messiaen's proposed theology. The additional ones do not undercut Messiaen's ideas but allow for deeper meditative reflection on the Trinitarian concepts at play. Such meditation is surely one of Messiaen's intentions for the use of this work. So, it is not surprising that such analysis and reflection would uncover new aspects of Trinitarian theology hidden in Messiaen's powerful leitmotifs.

Contributions to Messiaen Scholarship

The contribution of this study to Messiaen scholarship is two-fold. The first contribution is analytical. As discussed in Chapter 1, there is a lack of motivic analysis and comparison in the Messiaen literature. Looking at Messiaen's motives, most analysts choose to label the mode and then stop. This is not a thorough approach and it leaves much to be explored, as Forte also notes.¹ The decision to focus on leitmotif analysis is further important because of the breadth in which leitmotifs are used in Messiaen's music. They are literally everywhere, not just in the *Méditations*. Because Messiaen focused much time and energy cataloguing his leitmotif communication, the study of these materials, especially their pitch context, is an important venture. In this study, many new pitch relationships were found that bring further insight to Messiaen's leitmotif communication.

¹ Forte, "Messiaen's Chords", 95.

It is my hope that the continuation of such scholarship will open up the study of Messiaen's leitmotifs in his other works. Such studies would also influence the general direction of Messiaen pitch scholarship.

Motivic analysis may also benefit other areas of Messiaen's development. For example, the study of motives (and leitmotifs when applicable) may relate directly to Messiaen's sectional approach to form. It is very likely that Messiaen's use of motivic building blocks is the methodology behind his larger communicated ideas. This may be the rationale behind his approach to form.

The second contribution is theological. There is a need to understand Messiaen's theology beyond the realm of his religious background (twentieth-century French Catholicism), by studying in depth the delicate word-choices and scripture references that he plants in his compositions. Although general implications from his background are helpful, they do not serve an analysis of the text as well as the study of the specific ideas that Messiaen communicates. Rather than Catholicism or Aquinas representing the overarching boundaries for theological discussion, it is actually the diversity of Messiaen's theological texts that should be this referential frame. In the current study, many attempts were made to develop a theological frame using all of Messiaen's texts, rather than a central one from which to define the others. From the context of the bible verses, to the breadth of Aquinas and Marmion, to the theology of other Christian artists (such as Jean Lurçat), all were ingredients of Messiaen's theological frame. It is the development of such a frame that would prove very helpful in the detailed study of other works and their theology.

New reflections on Messiaen

This dissertation also presents new perspectives on Messiaen's work. For example, it demonstrates that Messiaen definitely had different periods within his compositional development. Many commentators consider Messiaen's oeuvre to be generally asynchronous, in the sense that there is no discernible musical progression. While it is true that some aspects of Messiaen's musical language were static throughout his career, his music demonstrates periodicity in a different way. The periods of Messiaen's work parallel his public expressions of faith.

For example, the branching out to birdsong and serial techniques occurred largely after a few public controversies in the press and among his colleagues. In Chapter 1, these works are said to constitute a middle period. Further, they represent, to a certain extent, a crisis of identity and purpose in his composing. The most noticeable changes are found in the clarity or veiled appearance of Messiaen's faith in the titles of his works. Although Messiaen never publicly denounced or doubted his faith, it is true that his titles say a great deal about how comfortable he felt expressing his faith to the public. As an example, the three Tristan works (*Harawi*, *Turangalîla-Symphonie*, and *Cinq rechants*), all very well received by the public, were composed shortly after Messiaen received harsh criticism. Messiaen mentions such criticism many places, notably in the Preface to his *Technique*. The topic of these works was universal: love. It did not have "Christian" strings attached, though it did communicate many things about Christian love within the pieces themselves.

Later in Messiaen's career, when asked by the French Government to write a piece commemorating those who died in the second world war, Messiaen boldly wrote the *Et exspecto resurrectionem mortuorum*, clearly expressing his faith-perspective in a very

public setting. This is just one element of Messiaen's periodicity but it seems to be the main one. From these changes in Messiaen's mindset and faith came many new discoveries in the way that Messiaen listened to music. Far from being negative, these moments of criticism led Messiaen's ears to new observations and new techniques that were eventually wound tightly around his early techniques.

The projection of Messiaen's religious symbolism

Messiaen's *Méditations* project religious symbolism in refreshing and mysterious ways. Within this enterprise there is room for error, room for misinterpretation—in effect, room for failure. Yet, there is also space: space to explore features of God and features of Christianity that are not easily expressed or commonly taught. This is the strength of Messiaen's symbolism. It begins where most other religious music ends and it goes far into the realm of the ineffable.

Other composers have tried to convey such symbolism with similar techniques. There are strong parallels with Wagner's leitmotif systems, but more importantly there is Bach, whose works deal with the Trinity as well. Certain three-part organ works are definitively Trinitarian because the qualitative aspect of each contrapuntal line reflects the three different persons. Bach's Prelude in E-flat Major (BWV 552a), for example, attempts such a process. The Father, symbol of strength and power, is represented by the stately French overture dotted rhythm. The Son is presented in two ways: as the incarnation coming down from Heaven (in recurring descending four-note figures and descending staccato chords) and as the suffering servant (in a soprano solo line with syncopations and dissonant intervals). The Holy Spirit remains. It is symbolized by flowing and moving sixteenth notes, imitating typical Baroque virtuosic string writing.

One can hear this Baroque theology if one knows how to define these characteristics. One can also hear the relationships with Messiaen. The Father's dotted rhythm is very similar to the *Je Suis* motive in *Méditations*. The Son's descending figures are similar to the ascending and descending gestures of the verb leitmotifs (*être* and *avoir*). The Son's suffering syncopations and dissonance are similar to the motivic collapse in the Psalm-section of *Méditation VIII* and its theological symbolism of a bird failing to fly. The Holy Spirit's flowing sixteenths are extremely similar to the "Souffle de l'Esprit" ("Breath of the Spirit") in *Méditation V*. All told, the theological content is remarkably similar. The real change with Messiaen, as discussed in the opening chapter, is his attempt to broaden these theological features into the theology of relationships. In this respect Messiaen truly opened a new door.

Final Thoughts

These *Méditations* are a compilation of mysterious music on a mysterious subject. Regarding the definition of all of his details, Messiaen would probably have been pleased to see the continuation of mystery in the midst of his theological substance. Messiaen's remarkable silence on some matters parallels the silence that God sometimes offers his children. In this it takes on yet another layer of projecting the symbolism of God. Such silence is not of anger or deception, but rather a relational silence that invites the concept of faith.

One's relationship with Almighty God, after all, cannot exist without this concept of faith. The Word (the bible), the history of the Son, and the evidence of the Holy Spirit provide more than enough proof of His existence, yet faith is still a requirement. Hebrews

11:1 states that “faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.”
In verse six it goes on to state that “without faith it is impossible to please God.”

Returning to the music and message of Messiaen, the analytical findings can bring someone only so far in understanding his theology. The insights remain, the notes sound, but only with faith can one hear the mysteries within. We are left, once again, with Messiaen’s stated objective: “a *true* music, that is to say, spiritual, a music which may be an act of faith.”²

² Messiaen, *Technique of my musical language*, 7.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Preface to the *Méditations* (pp. 3-5 in score)

3

Le langage communicable

Les diverses langues connues, sont, avant tout, des instruments de communication. Elles sont généralement de caractère vocal. Mais, est-ce là le seul moyen de transmission? On peut très bien imaginer une langue reposant sur des mouvements, des images, des couleurs, des parfums, et tout le monde sait que l'alphabet Braille se sert du toucher. Dans tous les cas, on doit partir de conventions préalables. Il est convenu que ceci exprimera cela.

La musique, au contraire, n'exprime rien directement. Elle peut suggérer, susciter un sentiment, un état d'âme, toucher le subconscient, agrandir les facultés oniriques, et ce sont là d'immenses pouvoirs: elle ne peut absolument pas "dire", informer avec précision.

Wagner a essayé d'inventer avec des sons musicaux un langage communicable. Il a ainsi créé le leitmotiv. L'ensemble des leitmotivs de la "Tétralogie" est comme un grandiose éventail de notions simples et fortes: il superpose les éléments et ce qui s'y trouve: tout en haut, le ciel, avec sa lumière et ses dieux - tout en bas, sous la terre, les gnomes et la nuit - puis le feu avec Loge, l'eau avec les Ondines - entre ciel et terre, la Walkyrie - sur la terre, l'homme, la femme, les géants, le dragon, l'oiseau - et tout au centre, le héros, avec sa force et sa liberté. C'est formidable et souvent efficace. Et cela repose encore sur une convention: car il est indispensable que les auditeurs connaissent à l'avance les leitmotivs, pour en saisir au passage toutes les juxtapositions, superpositions, variations et transformations.

Seuls, les anges ont le privilège de communiquer entre eux, sans langage, sans convention, et, plus merveilleusement encore, sans avoir à tenir compte du temps et du lieu. Il y a là un pouvoir qui nous dépasse complètement, une faculté de transmission presque effrayante, et Rilke a raison de dire: "Tout ange est terrible!". On peut lire, en effet, dans la "Somme Théologique" de Saint Thomas d'Aquin (livre du "Gouvernement Divin", question 107: "le langage des anges"): "Si l'ange, par sa volonté, ordonne son concept mental en vue de le manifester à un autre, aussitôt ce dernier en prend connaissance: de cette manière l'ange parle à un autre ange". Et plus loin: "La locution angélique consiste en une opération intellectuelle. Or l'opération intellectuelle de l'ange fait abstraction du temps et du lieu. C'est pourquoi la diversité du temps ou la distance du lieu ne jouent aucun rôle là où il est fait entièrement abstraction du temps et du lieu".

Ecrasé par ces exemples grandioses - et sans vouloir singer le Kabbaliste qui cherche un sens caché sous les lettres des mots ou sous les valeurs numériques de ces lettres - j'ai cependant essayé, par jeu, et pour renouveler ma pensée, de trouver une sorte de langage musical communicable.

J'ai d'abord voulu faire un alphabet musical au moyen duquel je pourrai transcrire des mots (des mots français, tout naïvement, parce que je suis français). Tout de suite, j'ai pensé aux allemands, qui n'expriment pas les notes de musique par ces syllabes empruntées à l'hymne de Saint Jean Baptiste que nous connaissons tous: ut, ré, mi, fa, sol, la, si - mais par des lettres. Lettres immortalisées par le thème B-A-C-H (signature de Jean Sébastien Bach), et par le ASCH, SCHA, du "Carnaval" de Schumann. Voici les lettres de l'alphabet musical allemand:

A = la - B = si bémol - C = do - D = ré - E = mi - F = fa - G = sol - et H = si bécarré. On a cherché un allongement à cette succession, mais comme il n'était pas admis par tous, j'ai préféré l'oublier, et j'ai continué l'alphabet musical à ma façon, en groupant les lettres par genres de productions phoniques. De plus, j'ai attribué à chaque lettre: *un son, un registre, une durée*. Ce qui donne:

8 lères lettres:  A B C D E F G H

5 voyelles:  A E I O U

palatales:  I J Y

sifflantes:  S Z

dentales:  D T

C dur:  C Q K

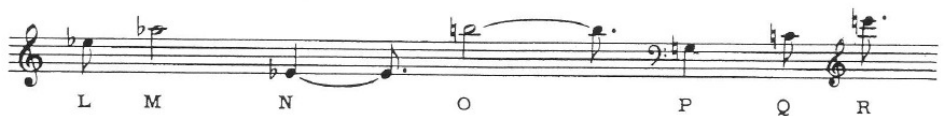
labiales:  B P F V M

linguales:  L N

En ajoutant le R, le W, le X:  R W X

nous aurons la série complète:

 A B C D E F G H I J K


 L M N O P Q R

 S T U V W X Y Z


Pour éviter l'accumulation des mots, j'ai supprimé les articles, les pronoms, les adverbes, les prépositions, et n'ai gardé que les noms, les adjectifs, les verbes. Ce qui m'a conduit à utiliser le système des "cas", comme dans les déclinaisons latines. Et j'ai indiqué son "cas" avant chaque mot, au moyen d'une formule musicale:


génitif, ou ablatif,
ou locatif:  G/A/L motif

accusatif, ou datif:  A/D motif

plus un privatif (qui signifie
évidemment l'absence de): 

Les deux notions les plus importantes de toute pensée, ce que nous appelons bien imparfaitement les verbes auxiliaires: *être - avoir*, sont exprimées par deux formules mélodiques exactement contraires:

être:  mouvement descendant parce que tout ce qui est vient de Dieu (l'Être par excellence, Celui qui Est).

avoir:  mouvement ascendant parce que nous pouvons toujours avoir plus en nous élevant vers Dieu.

Enfin, ayant remarqué l'importance des noms royaux dans les inscriptions cunéiformes en vieux perse ("Xerxès, le grand roi, fils de Dareios, le roi, l'Achéménide"), et comment ces mêmes noms royaux (Ptolémée, Cléopâtre, Ramsès, Thoutmosis), entourés d'un cartouche, ont livré à Champollion le secret des hiéroglyphes égyptiens: j'ai pensé qu'il fallait signaler à l'attention de l'auditeur le seul mot important de tout langage, ce mot qui n'est plus le nom d'un roi mais du Roi des rois, le *Nom Divin*! Je ne l'ai pas entouré d'un cartouche, mais je l'ai dit - je l'ai bégayé - par un vrai thème (Wagner aurait dit un leitmotiv), et pour exprimer que Dieu est immense autant qu'éternel, sans commencement ni fin dans l'espace comme dans le temps, j'ai donné deux formes à mon thème: une droite, une rétrograde, comme deux extrêmes qui se regardent et que l'on pourrait reculer indéfiniment...

thème de Dieu :



le même, en sens rétrograde :



Appendix B:
Annotated Score of *Méditation I* (pp. 8-14 in score)

8

(sur "cresc.") (cresc. n° 12)
GPR: fonds 16,8,4 - anches 16,8,4 - mixtures -
(Le Père des étoiles)

ET-1

MAN. *Lent legato*

GPR: *mf* *legato*

ET-2

MAN. *mf* *legato*

ET-3

MAN. *mf* *legato*

Comb. 6

V1

VI-1

VI-2

MAN. *Lent (aussi lié que possible)*

R: *più f*

GP:

(R: fonds 16,8,4 - anches 16,8,4 - cymbale 3 rangs - < | Pos: fonds 16,8,4, fourniture 4 rangs < | G: fonds 16,8,4, avec montre 16 - PG. I)

VI-3

VI-4

VI-5a

VI-5b

MAN.

VI-6

VI-7

VI-8

MAN.

VI-9

VI-10

MAN.

(sur "cresc.") (cresc. n° 9)
(R: fonds 16,8,4 - anches 16,8,4 - cymbale 3 rangs < | Pos: fonds 16,8,4 - trp. 8 - fourniture 4 rangs < | G: fonds 16,8,4 - plein-jeu 5 rangs - | Ped: fonds 16,8,32 - bombarde 16, trp. 8 - 3 tir.)

V2

Lent

MAN. GPR { *ff*

PED. *fff legato*

MAN.

PED.

MAN.

PED.

MAN.

PED.

MAN.

PED.

Communicable Language (pp. 10-12)

Comb. 3 Pos: clarinette, quintaton 16, cornet 5 rangs - Pos. en 16,8,4 < | G: bourdon 16, fl. harm., bourdon 8, fl. 4, doublette 2 |

Un peu vif

Pos: (datif: vers les)

MAN. Père

legato mf

p e r s o n n e s p e r s o n n e s

c é d a n t t

(ablatif: du) Père

(avoir: il a) p a t e r n e r

m.d. *m.g.* *m.d.* *m.g.*

n *m.g.* i t *m.g.* é s p i r a *m.d.*

MAN.

t *m.g.* i o n *m.d.*

MAN.

Père (datif: vers le)

MAN.

p r i u c i p e (privatif: sans)

MAN.

p r i n c i p e (avoir: il a)

MAN.

(privatif: ne pas) (être) (ablatif: d'un) a u *m.g.*

MAN.

t r e (être: c'est) (avoir)

MAN. *m.g.*

i n n a s c i b i l i

MAN.

t é (être) i n e

MAN. *m.g.*

n g e n d r é

MAN.

Père

MAN.

(sur "cresc.") (cresc. n° 9)
 R: fonds 16,8,4 - anches 16,8,4 -
 cymbale 3 rangs - <
 Pos: fonds 16,8,4 - trp. 8 -
 fourniture 4 rangs - <
 G: fonds 16,8,4 -
 Ped: fonds 16,8 - 3 tirasses -

TN

RH ostinato (8 chords)

Très modéré

MAN. → TN (RH) → *stacc.* 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

MAN. → GPR { *ff* } 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

PED. → TN (LH) → *stacc.* *legato ff* LH ostinato (9 chords)

(les étoiles tournent)

ET-1 ostinato (10 notes)

MAN.

PED.

MAN.

PED.

CR

(sur «cresc.») (cresc. n° 10)

MAN. *vif* *legato* 1c 2c 3c 4c 5c

MAN. R { *più f* } PR { *ff* }

PED. *legato* 3c 4c 1c 3c 4c 1c 3c 4c

g. dessus

CR-1 CR-2

poco rall. rall. più rall. rall. molto

(cresc. d. dessus no 11) (cresc. no 12)

MAN. GPR { *più ff* } *cresc.* *ff* *cresc. molto*

g. dessus g. dessus g. dessous

CR-3 CR-4 CR-5 CR-6

(GPR: tutti - Ped: fonds 32,16,8,4 - bomb. 16, trp. 8, clairon 4 - 3 tir.)

UN Extrêmement lent

legato

MAN. GPR { *fff* }

legato

UN-1 UN-2 UN-3 UN-4 UN-5

i n e n s

PED. legato

MAN. UN-6 UN-7 UN-8 UN-9

e n d r é

PED.

MAN. UN-10

PED.

“Par rapport aux Personnes qui procèdent de lui, le Père se notifie ainsi: paternité et spiration; en tant que “Principe qui n'a pas de principe”, il se notifie ainsi: il n'est pas d'un autre: c'est là précisément la propriété d'innascibilité désignée par le nom d'Inengendré.”

(Saint Thomas d'Aquin, Somme Théologique - la Trinité, livre II, question 33, “la personne du Père” - article 4, conclusion -)

Appendix C:
Annotated Score of *Méditation IV* (pp. 30-36 in score)

30

Comb. 6 R: fonds 16,8 - bombarde 16, trp. 8 - < | Pos: fonds 16,8,4, mixtures, anches 16,8,4 < |
G: montre 8, prestant 4, plein jeu 5 rangs, cymbale 4 rangs - | Ped: fonds 16,8,32 - tir. R - |

PN **Vif** (en fusée) 5 4 1c **Un peu lent** (cri du Pic noir) G: 4 2 1 1c 5

MAN. Pos: (fermer brusquement) R: (pp) (pp) (pp)

PED. (en fusée) (pp) (pp) (pp)

Comb. 1 R: fl., bourd., gambe > | Pos: cornet 5 rangs, cor de nuit 8 - < | G: fl. harm., bourdon 8, bourdon 16 - |

MP **Très modéré** (Merle à plastron) Pos: 2 5 5

MAN. R: p

CT (Chouette de Tengmalm) **Bien modéré** (bourdon 16, bourdon 8, seuls) MP-1 MP-2 MP-3 MP-4 MP-5 MP-3

MAN. G: mf p

Comb. 6 R: fonds 16,8 - bombarde 16, trp. 8 - < | Pos: fonds 16,8,4, mixtures, anches 16,8,4 - < |
G: montre 8, prestant 4, plein jeu 5 rangs, cymbale 4 rangs - | Ped: fonds 16,8,32 - tir. R |

PN **Vif** (en fusée) 5 4 1c **Un peu lent** (cri du Pic noir) G: 4 2 1 1c 5

MAN. Pos: (fermer brusquement) R: (pp) (pp) (pp)

PED. (en fusée) (pp) (pp) (pp)

Comb. 3 R: fl. 4, nazard 2 2/3, octavin 2, 3^{ce} 1 3/6, cymbale 3 rangs - < | Pos: clarinette, flageolet 2, 3^{ce} 1 3/6, piccolo 1 - Pos. en 16,8,4 - > | G: bourdon 8 seul - | Ped: violoncelle, flûte 4 - |

A.L. 74 656

Un peu vif Un peu lent Un peu vif Un peu lent

(Pos: clarinette, flageolet 2, 3^{ce} 1^{3/5}, piccolo 1- Pos..en 16, 8, 4 - >) (Ped: vel., fl. 4 -)

Un peu lent

(Père) *legato*

(râgavardhana)

(Fils) Pos { *mf*

(Esprit)

(simhavikrama)

(R: fl. 4, nazard 2^{2/3},
octavin 2, 3^{ce} 1^{3/5},
cymb. 3 rangs - <)

(G: bourdon 8 seul)

Un peu vif Un peu lent Un peu vif

Un peu lent Un peu vif Un peu lent

Comb.6 R: fonds 16,8- bombarde 16, trp.8- < | Pos: fonds 16,8,4, mixtures, anches 16,8,4- < |
 G: montre 8, prestant 4, plein jeu 5 rangs, cymbale 4 rangs- | Ped: fonds 16,8,32- tir. R- |

PN

Vif (en fusée) 5 4 1c
 (cri du Pic noir) 5 4 3 2 1
 Un peu lent

MAN. Pos { ff } (fermer R: brusquement) ff (PP) (PP) (PP) (PP)

PED. (en fusée) ff pp

GM

Comb.5 R: bourdon 16, bourdon 8, nazard 2 2/3, octavin 2- > | Pos: fl. 4, nazard 2 2/3, flageolet 2, 3^{ce} 1 3/5, piccolo 1- < | G: plein jeu 5 rangs- clairon 4- |

Un peu vif (éclatant) ff G_MP-2
 Très modéré R { pp } (très sec, comme des pizz.) G_CT-1 G_CT-2

MAN. (grand solo de Grive musicienne) G_MP-1

Modéré R { f } Un peu vif G_MP-3

|| G_PN chrds: 1 2 3 4 5 6 ||

MAN. Modéré G_MP-4 G_MP-6 (G_PN-9) R { f } Pos { mf } Vif (comme de la soie déchirée) g.dessus G_MP-5 (G_PN-8) G_MP-7 (G_PN-10) G_TS-1

Très modéré Un peu vif Bien modéré

MAN. R { pp G { ff ff

(très sec, comme des pizzi)

G_CT-3 G_MP-8 (G_PN-11) G_MP-9

Bien modéré

MAN. ff

G_MP-10

Modéré Un peu vif

MAN. R { pp G { ff

(comme des gouttes d'eau)

G_CT chords: 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

G_MP-11 (G_PN-12)

Modéré Bien modéré Modéré Vif

MAN. ff Pos { mf

(comme de la soie déchirée) g. dessus

G_MP-12 G_MP-13 G_PN-14 G_PN-15 G_TS-1

Un peu vif

MAN. G { ff d. dessus

G_TS-1 G_TS-2

34

G-PN chords Modéré (16) (17) (18) (G-PN-20) G-MP-18 (G-PN-22) G-MP-20 G-MP-23 (G-PN-25)

MAN. R *f*

G-MP-14 G-MP-15 G-MP-16 G-MP-17 (G-PN-19) G-MP-21 G-MP-22 (G-PN-23) (G-PN-24)

RH: S-PN-26 G-MP-26 (G-PN-29) Un peu lent

MAN. R *f* LH: G-PN-27 G-MP-29 PP (très sec, comme des pizzi)

G-MP-24 G-MP-25 G-MP-27 G-MP-28 (G-PN-28) G-CT-11 G-CT-12 G-CT-13

Un peu vif

MAN. G *ff*

G-MP-30 G-MP-31 (G-PN-30) G-MP-33 G-MP-35

Bien modéré Un peu vif

MAN. *ff* G-MP-32 G-MP-34

G-TS-3 G-MP-36

MAN. *ff*

G-TS-4 G-TS-5

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Comb. 6 R: fonds 16,8 - bombarde 16, trp. 8 - < | Pos: fonds 16, 8,4, mixtures, anches 16,8,4 < |
 G: montre 8, prestant 4, plein jeu 5 rangs, cymbale 4 rangs - | Ped: fonds 16,8,32 - tir. R - |

PN

Vif (en fusée) Un peu lent (cri du Pic noir)

MAN. Pos: { ff } R: (fermer brusquement) { ff } (pp)

PED. (en fusée) (pp) (pp)

PN-1 PN-2 PN-3 PN-4 PN-5 PN-6 PN-7

MAN. (pp) (pp) (pp)

PED. PN-5 PN-7 PN-8 PN-7 PN-9

Comb. 3

R: fl. 4, nazard 2 $\frac{2}{3}$, octavin 2, 3^{ce} 1 $\frac{3}{5}$, cymbale 3 rangs < |
 G: bourdon 8 seul -

Un peu vif Un peu lent Un peu vif

MAN. R: { f sec } G: { pp } R: { f sec } { f sec }

tr.

Comb. 1 R: fl., bourdon, gambe > | Pos: cornet 5 rangs, cor de nuit 8 - < |

MP

(Merle à plastron)
 Très modéré

MAN. Pos: { f } R: { p }

(sur "cresc.") (cresc. n° 12)

JS

("Et "Je suis" passa devant lui en criant: "Je suis", "Je suis"!") (Exode, chap. 34, v. 6)

Bien modéré

MAN. GPR { *fff*

JS-1 JS-2 JS-3 JS-4 JS-5 JS-6 JS-7 JS-8 JS-9 JS-10

Modéré

MAN. *fff legato*

JS-11 JS-12 JS-13 JS-14 JS-15 JS-16 JS-17 JS-18

g. dessus

Vir

PR { *fff*

Un peu vif

MAN. R { *ff*

JS-19 JS-20 JS-21 JS-22 JS-23 JS-24 JS-25 JS-26 JS-27

dim. *rall.* *rall. molto* *un peu lent* *f* *très long*

CT

Comb. 1

G: flûte harm.,
bourdon 8, bourdon 16-

Bien modéré

MAN. G { *mf*

(Chouette de Tengmalm)

CT-1 CT-2 CT-3 CT-4

(bourdon 16, bourdon 8, seuls)

MAN. R { *ppp*

CT-5 CT-1 CT-2 CT-3 CT-4 CT-6

Appendix D:
Annotated Score of *Méditation VIII* (pp. 70-75 in score)

70

Comb. 1 (Pos: corne 5 rangs, cor de nuit)

(Alleluia de la Toussaint) (Dieu est simple) [GOD IS SIMPLE]

Un peu vif

MAN. *(m.d.)*

Pos { *f*

poco rall.

Comb. 5

G: bourdon 16,
bourdon 8,
fl. harm. 8,
fl. 4 -

(les Trois sont Un) **TROIS-CHORDS**

Très modéré

MAN. G { *mf*

(R: htb., clairon 4,
bourdon 16, octavin 2,
nazard 2 $\frac{2}{3}$ - < |
Pos: clarinette,
quintaton 16, 3^{es} 1 $\frac{3}{8}$,
piccolo 1, <)

Trois-1 Trois-2 Trois-3

(Père) Bien modéré (Fils) (Esprit)

MAN. R { *f* Pos { *f* R { *f*

Romotif

Comb. 3

Pos: clarinette,
quintaton 16,
nazard 2 $\frac{2}{3}$ - <

("Ó profondeur des richesses de la sagesse et de la science de Dieu!")

Lent

MAN. *(m.s.)* Pos { *pp*

PED. *p*

(bourdon 32, sb. 16, C.B. 16, tir. R)

ROM-CHORDS

R: htb.,
bourdon 16,
fl., bourdon, MAN.
gambé,
nazard 2 $\frac{2}{3}$ -

Modéré

R { *p*

PED.

BM-CHORDS

Bien modéré

G: montre 8,
flûte 8,
bourdon 8

G { *f*

BM-1 BM-2 → pattern repeats

|| Rom-chords: 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 ||

MAN. *mf* *pp*

fl. et bourd. bourdon 8 seul

BM-3 BM-4 BM-5

A.L. 24 65/6

Comb.1 (Pos: corne 5 rangs, cor de nuit)

(Alleluia de la Toussaint) (Dieu est simple)

Un peu vif
 MAN. *(m.d.)*
 Pos { *f* } poco rall.

Comb. 5

G: bourdon 16,
 bourdon 8,
 fl. harm. 8,
 fl. 4 -

(les Trois sont Un)

Très modéré

MAN. G { *mf* }

(R: htb., clairon 4,
 bourdon 16, octavin 2,
 nazard 2 2/3 - < |
 Pos: clarinette,
 quintaton 16, 3^{es} 1 3/5,
 piccolo 1, <)

(Père) **Bien modéré** (Fils) (Esprit)

MAN. R { *f* } Pos { *f* } R { *f* }

Comb. 8

Pos: clarinette,
 quintaton 16,
 nazard 2 2/3 - <

(“Ô profondeur des richesses de la sagesse et de la science de Dieu !”)

(Saint Paul, épître aux Romains, ch. XI, v. 33)

Lent

MAN. Pos { *f* } *pp*

PED. (bourdon 32, sb. 16, C.B. 16, tir. R) *p*

R: htb.,
 bourdon 16,
 fl, bourdon, MAN,
 gambe,
 nazard 2 2/3 - >

Modéré

R { *p* }

PED.

Bien modéré

G: montre 8,
flûte 8, bourdon 8

Comb. 1
R: gambe, fl., bourdon - < 1/2 |
Pos: cornet 5 rangs, cor de nuit - < |
G: bourdon 8 (RG) |
Ped: bourdon 8, tir. GR | →

Mt-section

(Et Jésus dit: "Vous tous qui êtes chargés et fatigués, venez à moi." (Evangile selon Saint Matthieu - XI, 28)

(Alleluia de la Toussaint)

Pos: Un peu vif

Mt-section cont'd

Listed Harmonies

poco rall. a Tempo

MAN. PED.

(legato sempre)

Mt-5 Mt-6 Mt-7 Mt-8 Mt-9 Mt-10 Mt-11 Mt-12 Mt-13

rall. (a Tempo)

MAN. PED.

Mt-14 Mt-15 Mt-16 Mt-17 Mt-18 Mt-19 Mt-20

(Et Jésus dit: "Mon joug est suave et mon fardeau léger.") (Evangile selon saint Matthieu, XI, 30)

Comb. 2

R: gambe, voix céleste -> |
 Pos: quintaton 16,
 nazard 2 2/3 - < |
 G: bourdon 16, 5^e 2 2/3 - |
 Ped: sb. 32, sb 16, tir. R - |

Très lent

Pos: p mf

R: legato pp

MAN. PED.

Mt-21 Mt-22 Mt-23

Mt-24 Mt-25

R: gambe, voix céleste - < **Psalm - section**

("Qui me donnera des ailes, comme à la colombe? je m'envolerai et me reposerai...") (Psaume 54, v. 7)

Ps-Sect-1

Moderé
legato *f* *pp*
 MAN. *legato* *legato*
 Ps-1 Ps-2 Ps-3 Ps-4 Ps-1 Ps-2 Ps-3 Ps-4

legato sempre *rall.* *rall. molto*
 MAN. *cresc.* *mf*
legato sempre
 Ps-5 Ps-6 Ps-7 Ps-8 Ps-9 Ps-10 Ps-11 Ps-12 Ps-13 Ps-14 Ps-15 Ps-16 Ps-17

Un peu plus lent
 MAN. *f* (*f*)
 Ps-18 Ps-19 Ps-20 Ps-21 Ps-22 Ps-23 Ps-24 Ps-25

Ps-sect-2

Moderé
legato *f* *pp*
 MAN. *legato* *legato*
 Ps-1 Ps-2 Ps-3 Ps-4 Ps-1 Ps-2 Ps-3 Ps-4

MAN. *legato sempre* *rall.* *rall. molto*

cresc. *mf*

legato sempre $\frac{1}{3} \frac{3}{4} \frac{5}{5}$ $\frac{1}{2} \frac{2}{8}$ $\frac{1}{3} \frac{3}{4} \frac{5}{5}$

Ps-5 Ps-6 Ps-7 Ps-26 Ps-27 Ps-28 Ps-29 Ps-30 Ps-31 Ps-32 Ps-33

MAN. *Un peu plus lent* *rall.*

f *dim.*

Ps-34 Ps-35 Ps-36 Ps-37 Ps-38 Ps-39 Ps-40 Ps-41 Ps-42 Ps-43

Ps-sect-3

MAN. *più rall.* *rall. molto* *Très lent* *dim. molto* *pp* *pp*

legato $\frac{5}{4} \frac{4}{2}$ $\frac{5}{3} \frac{2}{1}$ *(legato sempre)*

1c $\frac{1}{2} \frac{2}{3} \frac{3}{5} \frac{5}{5}$ 1c $\frac{1}{2}$ 1c $\frac{5}{3} \frac{2}{1}$ 1c

Ps-44 Ps-45 Ps-46 Ps-47 Ps-48 Ps-49 Ps-50 Ps-51 Ps-52 Ps-53 Ps-54 Ps-55

PED. (Ped: sb. 32, sb. 16, tir. R)

MAN. *Bien modéré* *ppp* *(long)*

Ps-56 Ps-57 Ps-58 Ps-59 *(long)*

(bourdon 8 seul) *p* → yellow-hammer bird (Bruant jaune)

Ps-60

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