

# Birds, Bells & Spells

January 10, 2009

## Tristan Murail

*Bells of Farewell and a Smile* for piano (1992)

## Pierre Boulez

*Derive II* for piano, flute, clarinet, violin, cello & vibraphone (1985)

## Toru Takemitsu

*Rain Spell* for flute, clarinet, harp & vibraphone (1983)

## Olivier Messiaen

*Death of Number* for soprano, tenor, violin & piano (1928)

*The Blackbird* for flute and piano (1951)

The Golden Oriole from *Catalogue of the Birds* (1956-58)

## George Benjamin

*Viola Viola* for two violas (1980)

## Tristan Murail

*Ethers* for flute, violin, viola, cello, double bass, trombone & maracas (1978)

If birds evolved from avian dinosaurs, then their songs must transcend time. In human history, bells are associated with ritual and are heard in all cultures where they produce distinctively regional sounds that vibrate across a wide spectrum. The oldest bells were made of bronze in China and date from c. 1600 B.C. Today's titanosaur of functioning bells in Burma weighs 200,000 lbs., however its size is less than a third of the weight of the largest known bell, lost in a Burmese river by Portuguese temple raiders centuries ago. Furthermore, if the sound of a bird or a bell can be experienced as color, then sound can colorize time to create a period of enchantment, a transitory fascination. Ornithology, sonority, transports and four generations humbled by nature — such is the stuff of tonight's program.

A complete list of musicians who learned composition with Olivier Messiaen has yet to be published, but the large number of significant composers who make it up can be rivaled only by the students of the formidable pedagogue Nadia Boulanger (1887-1979). These are the two great trees influencing the global atmosphere of music in the 20<sup>th</sup> century — and beyond. Boulanger stood for linear tradition and formal classicism — music that refers only to other music, while Messiaen promoted inclusive and promiscuous exploration.

## Three Generations

This concert offers leading composers of three distinct generations who came under the spell of Messiaen's teaching and his personality. Pierre Boulez (b. 1925) studied formally and informally with Messiaen beginning in 1944 for about five

years. Tristan Murail (b. 1947), also French, was a student from 1967 to 1972. The precocious Londoner George Benjamin (b. 1960) began two years of study in 1976. Also included is the self-taught Toru Takemitsu (1930-1996).



Nadia Boulanger, 1936

At age 17, Takemitsu was introduced by a fellow Japanese composer to Messiaen's early piano *Preludes* and his 1944 book *Technique of my musical language*. Takemitsu quickly became Japan's foremost composer and a major figure on the international scene. Upon Messiaen's death he wrote that, "Among the many things I learned from his music, the concept and experience of color and the form of time will be unforgettable... Truly he was my spiritual mentor."

The nexus of time and color was perhaps Messiaen's most powerful and pervasive idea. What seemed entirely subjective and perhaps physiological — a condition called synesthesia — was for Messiaen highly codified. His innate color hearing, when married to the organizational principles of Anton Webern, gave Messiaen a distinctive methodology. His understanding of poetic meters from ancient Greece, medieval plainchant and Hindu rhythmic formulas further enriched his method with other ways to organize time. His ability to transcribe birdsong added a boundless source of melody (and unexpected rhythms) contrasting with the simple tunes from the medieval era of anonymous composition, a time when the sound of church bells prevailed.

Boulez matured at a time when science was a vibrant alternative to religion. Wartime technology and medical breakthroughs gave science a sense of urgency and futuristic glamour. Emboldened by the heady postwar atmosphere of the Donaueschingen Festival and the Darmstadt International Summer Courses for New Music (secretly created by the CIA to advance freedom of ex-

pression in Germany via the anti-nationalist avant-garde) Boulez furthered the method of total serialism and embraced the potential of sound manipulation through technology.



Tristan Murail

Two decades later, Murail came of age as the full potential of computers was first being glimpsed against a background of anti-Vietnamese war foment and cultural upheaval. This new future-driven perspective led to the treatment of sound as raw material for analysis. Murail eventually converted sound to an analytic visual representation as an aspect of the compositional process.

### Tristan Murail

At the end of the sixties an efficient algorithm made possible what is known as Fast Fourier Transform (FFT) analysis of sound by a computer using a spectrogram. Such processes are also used in seismologic, sonar and speech analysis. Musical approaches to spectrograms were refined at IRCAM, Boulez's Paris-based international research institute for music founded c.1973. However, in discussing his music Murail downplays the technical aspect in favor of an aesthetic attitude in which, "music is ultimately sound evolving in time."

"Spectralism" may not yet have gained much linguistic traction as a general term referring to a certain group of young composers linked to the post-war European avant-garde, but it has shown staying power. The term was coined in 1979 around the time that so-called minimalism had run its course. Murail provided some leadership to a cadre of similarly inclined experimentalists including two other Messiaen students Gérard Grisey (1946-98) and Michel Lévinas (b. 1949). Jonathan Harvey (b. 1939), another Messiaen student, is considered a founding spectralist in Britain. The group also included the Canadian Claude Vivier (1948-83), who studied with Gilles Tremblay and Karlheinz Stockhausen — both Messiaen students of Boulez's generation. As well, the music of a

slightly younger group of accomplished Finnish composers Kaija Saariaho (b. 1952), Esa-Pekka Salonen and Magnus Lindberg (both born in 1958) is often described in spectralist terms, as is that of the impressive Boulez protégé Marc-Antoine Dalbavie (b. 1961).

Apart from the resonance of a consistent pedal, there is little of spectral music, per se, in Murail's short piano tribute *in memoriam Olivier Messiaen*. Among the *Eight Preludes* (1929), essentially Messiaen's Opus 1, is "Bells of Anguish, tears of farewell" written in response to the death of his mother Cécile Sauvage, considered the finest French poet among the women of her generation.

Murail emulates the rhythms and intervals of the prelude but breaks up the tempo. Messiaen's contribution to the 1991 bicentenary of Mozart's death was a work for strings and winds called *A Smile (Un Sourire)*. So, Murail's *Bells of Farwell and a Smile* both remembers his teacher with references to the master's style and, in the title, refers to the far ends of a huge body of work in a way that amplifies the long French tradition of such memorial pieces.

Parenthetically, the mathematics of bell making presumes generations of trial and error to arrive at the exact formula from which a diameter generates every dimension: the frequency of a bell's tone differs with the square of its thickness, and inversely with its diameter. Such is the science of sound which characterizes Murail's preoccupations.

In contrast to the piano piece, *Ethers* (1977) is a signature work emblematic of Murail's fascination with the natural world. For people old enough to remember, the title might recall going into a tonsillectomy with the chemical swoon of  $\text{CH}_3\text{-CH}_2\text{-O-CH}_2\text{-CH}_3$ , however the composer had in mind a more cosmic metaphor.

Before archaic physicists posited that ether carried electro-magnetic waves throughout our atmosphere and into space, ether was believed to be the medium through which light propagates. While poets used it as a synonym for the sky, students of the paranormal refer to auras and the intangible planes of existence as etheric.

*Ethers*, Murail's "study in relativity," establishes the flutist playing the whole family — piccolo, flute, alto flute and bass flute — within a granular context of multiple maracas and surrounded by five instruments that imitate, refract and distort the flutist's sounds. In addition to trills, flutter tonguing and multi-phonics, the flutist sings into the instruments while playing and simulates phase shifting with the ensemble of strings and trombone by

producing arpeggios that increase from two to twenty-two sounds in a harmonic spectrum. The soloist must evolve as a result of forces exerting a powerful sway, "thinking of what is contained, before thinking of what is discreet...knowing that everything is linked," says Murail.



Boulez with Yvonne Loriod

### Pierre Boulez

*Derive* is a small hexagonal microcosm that spun off of from *Répons*, a 45-minute work for six soloists, an ensemble of 24 musicians, a computer and six loud-speakers surrounding the audience. The larger work evolved and expanded through three versions from 1981 to 1984. In its wake, *Derive* was written quickly and required none of the famously finicky composer's revisions.

The name can mean drift, but given its origins clearly refers to derivation. *Répons* requires special platforms and seating for all involved — two pianos, a cimbalom, vibraphone, xylophone, glockenspiel, harp and the audience — in *Derive* only one piano and a vibraphone were retained to join a flute, clarinet, violin and cello. While *Répons* is Boulez's most elaborate electro-acoustic spatial composition, *Derive* is marvelously approachable chamber music.

A hexachord based on the last name of Paul Sacher (1906-99) generates most of the material, as it did in *Répons* and the earlier *Messag-esquisse* (*Message Sketch*, 1977). The German and French languages allow for the letters of Sacher's name to be translated into six notes, often heard in *Derive* as a hexachord.

Sacher, a Swiss conductor and close friend of Boulez, had commissioned, or inspired landmark works from Bartok, Stravinsky, Martinů and Hon-egger, among others. In *Messag-esquisse* Boulez also translated Sacher's name into Morse code to determine the rhythmic material. Boulez's admir-

ation for the conductor can be further understood with a little more history. Sacher established the Basel Chamber Orchestra (1926-87) and the Collegium Musicum Zurich (1941-92) and his own foundation in 1973.

The Sacher Foundation acquired the Igor Stravinsky, Webern and Bruno Maderna collections in the 1980's. Sacher was also the founding president of Boulez's IRCAM in 1977 and remained a formidable benefactor conducting premieres up to and including his last subscription concert in 1992. Last month the Sacher Foundation announced acquisition of the Steve Reich collection.

However such history is nothing more than a back story for music that holds as much sensual allure as a chamber work by Debussy. The intricacy of the craftsmanship and formal rigor of *Derive* has analogs with the infinite variety of six-sided crystalline structures moving in cold space that is a flurry of snowflakes, or the fervent heat of a beehive made of hexagonal cells alive with activity and potential.

Following the lead of Murail's major 30-minute piano work *Territoires de l'oubli* (*Territories of Forgetting*, 1977), Boulez asks the pianist to depress the pedal for the entire length of the music allowing the frequencies of the whole ensemble to vibrate the piano strings with sympathetic resonance.



Paul Sacher

### Olivier Messiaen

Paradoxically Messiaen's musical vocabulary evolved in ways that many hear as decidedly radical, yet his voice is evident in the earliest works. It can be heard strikingly unchanged at moments within his most distinctively advanced style, especially among the last works composed near death.

Boulez has observed, "Beneath the very real complexities of his intellectual world, Messiaen has remained simple and capable of wonder — and that alone is enough to win our hearts."

The strong branches of his students thrust out from his trunk, but at the root are Claude Debussy (1860-1918), Maurice Ravel (1875-1937), to name only those most formidable anchors visible above ground. Such influences can be heard in *The Death of the Numbers*, a cantata composed in 1930.

The 22-year old composer had high hopes for this work, but unlike the *Preludes* and, to a lesser degree, his *Theme and Variations* violin duo that followed, the short dramatic scene remained largely on the shelf. Its composition was sandwiched between two failed efforts to capture the Prix de Rome — failures that would include him in a distinguished tradition dating at least as far back as Hector Berlioz, who was rejected twice before winning.

### The Death of the Numbers

The poetic text was written by Messiaen. It represents the dialogue between two souls who experience separation. The tenor expresses suffering with apocalyptic images that may show the influence of Edgar Allen Poe — “Bells of horror! Horrible mixture! Wall that crushes me! The earth opens up, the stars fall, the world is swallowed up!” The music has the feel of Debussy’s writing for the eponymous tenor in *Pelleas and Melisande*, or his unfinished opera *Fall of the House of Usher*, with urgent piano writing of an orchestral nature.

The contrasting music for the soprano is of a sweetness and luminosity that recalls less progressive models and caused contemporary critics to complain of a stylistic lack of unity. At least one writer heard the violin as stylistically related to Jules Massenet (perhaps the “Meditation” from *Thaïs*?) and the abundance of pearly arpeggios not unlike Liszt’s *Fountains of the Villa d’Este*.

The beauty and the sincerity of the melody, however, cannot be denied and the clear foreshadowing of the sublime movements toward the end of the *Quartet for the End of Time*, make hearing this early work worthwhile. Perhaps the biggest obstacle to the cantata’s acceptance was a puzzling title whose meaning no one tries to explain.

Nadia Boulanger was instrumental in organizing the first performance in 1931, despite her lack of conviction about the composer’s talent. He struggled with many obstacles up to the very last minute to secure the high level of artistry that would become a hallmark of virtually all of his successive premieres. Boulanger had kind words only for his 1932 performance of an organ reduction of music by her deceased sister Lili Boulanger (1893-1918) at her memorial concert held annually at the church where Messiaen was organist. It was an honor bestowed on him only once before he and Nadia parted artistic ways.

### A Change of Direction

Profound life experiences separate the beginning of Messiaen’s career and the music of his maturity in the 1950s — marriage, the birth of a son, the deterioration of his wife’s mental state, wartime service, capture and incarceration as a POW, life as a teacher in occupied Paris, celebrity, major premieres, platonic love of a star pupil, critical backlash and hostility, institutionalization of his wife, and a pivotal role in the emerging postwar avant-garde.

In 1949-50 Messiaen inspired Boulez, Karlheinz Stockhausen and Iannis Xenakis to embrace total serialism and move it to an even more advanced musical language. Their status as *enfants terribles* bestowed on Messiaen an unexpected cachet. It is ironic to learn, with the recent declassification of more Nixon tapes, that the U.S. President had deep contempt for Boulez and his followers and a conflicted attitude toward Messiaen. Nixon believed that the Darmstadt School, a movement coming out of summer courses that ended in 1960, was an actual physical place that the CIA could secretly break into and destabilize in 1971.

Furthermore Nixon, in separate conversations with H.R. Haldeman and Dr. Henry Kissinger a year later, seemed to regard Messiaen’s Catholicism, and the lingering controversy about his religious music, was a virtue that could be used as a wedge to counter the Ivy League composers, whom he despised. The recorded comments were on the subject of the U.S. premiere of Messiaen’s huge oratorio *Transfiguration of Our Lord*, (that surely Nixon must have found bewildering) during which the staunchly apolitical composer was referred to as both “our friend” and “that poor dumb bastard.”



Olivier Messiaen

## The Blackbird

The point of this digression is to underscore how intense and long-lasting was the so-called "Messiaen Case," a furor that arose after the 1945 premiere of the *Three Little Liturgies of the Divine Presence*. The acrimony got decidedly worse after the 1950 Aix Festival performance of Messiaen's ten-movement *Turangalila Symphony*, and seemed only to have subsided with the premiere of his opera *Saint Francis of Assisi* in 1983. Is it any wonder that for more than a decade Messiaen devoted his attention almost exclusively to birdsong? At the time of the first performance of the massive *Catalogue of the Birds* in 1959 he wrote:

"In my hours of gloom, when I am suddenly aware of my own futility, when every musical idiom — Classical, Oriental, ancient, modern and ultra-modern — appears to me as no more than admirable, painstaking experimentation which cannot ultimately be justified, what is left for me but to seek out the true, lost face of music lost somewhere off in the forest, in the fields, in the mountains or on the seashore, among the birds."



Messiaen notating seaside birdcalls

Such truth seeking was hardly of the a passive becoming-one-with-nature variety. Messiaen had a unique ability to hear the often high-pitched and super swift songs of birds without the aid of any recording device and, with pad and pencil, to transcribe them down as many as four octaves and slow them to be within human range and dexterity to reproduce. Furthermore he could distinguish

the sound complexes of each note issued by the bird's syrinx and translate it into a chord. As improbable as this skill sounds, academics at both UCLA and USC have made recordings of specific birds and played them beside Messiaen's piano versions and the likeness is surprisingly clear.

*The Blackbird* was written as a competition piece for the Paris Conservatory in 1952 (not 1951 as is universally cited, according to the authoritative biographer Nigel Simeone) and contains a brilliant high speed farewell to serialism in its final passages.

At the outset, the bird is heard through a virtuosic flute cadenza. Only the male of the species is black with the bright yellow beak and matching eye ring. He sings mostly from March to June during courtship and caretaking. Ornithologists describe the song as a "varied and melodious low-pitched fluted warble." The middle section is a languorous melody, a transformation of the theme from the Messiaen symphony's slow movement "Garden of the Sleep of Love." The departure is as though the bird is taking a break in the mid-afternoon warmth before ardently defending his territory from intruders and ending with a shriek.

### The Golden Oriole from *Catalogue of the Birds*

A crudely rendered portrait of the blackbird occupies the hunting clarinet solo "Abyss of the Birds" in *Quartet for the End of Time* (1941). An even more closely observed rendering than the flute duo is among the supporting cast of "The Golden Oriole."

Each of the thirteen tone pictures in the seven books of the *Catalogue of the Birds* sets a particular bird in a specific locale during a specified time period with the surrounding birds and a reflection of all that nature served up in Messiaen's experience to represent. Rarely performed in a single concert, the two-and-a-half hours of music was written for the pianist Yvonne Loriod over two years beginning in 1956.

She became his student shortly after his liberation from the POW camp. She was seventeen and he was twice her age. He often misspelled her name in those days "Loriot" (Oriole) perhaps as a way to tease, or flirt with her. It is one of the many curiosities of Messiaen's biography that he should become artistically bonded to a woman whose name can easily be mistaken for that of a bird. They would wait two decades before his first wife died — the same year that *The Catalogue of the Birds* was premiered.

"The Golden Oriole" begins at 5:30 a.m. at the end of June and proceeds in several locations toward the full midday sun. Messiaen describes his experience:

"The beautiful golden yellow bird with black wings whistles among the oak trees. Its song, liquid and gilded like the laughter of a foreign prince, evokes Africa and Asia, or some unknown planet, filled with light and rainbows, filled with Leonardo da Vinci smiles. In the gardens and the woods, other birds: the rapid, decisive song of the Wren, the confiding caress of the Robin, the zest of the Blackbird, the long-short-long of the Redstart with its white front and black throat, the incantatory repetitions of the Mistle Thrush. At tireless length the Garden Warblers practice their gentle virtuosity. The Chiffchaff adds its sparkling drops of water. A nonchalant reminder, a memory of gold and of rainbows: the sun seems to be a gilded emanation from the Oriole's song..."

### **Another Favorite Student**

George Benjamin recently wrote for *The Guardian* a marvelously personal and intimate portrait of his years as Messiaen's student and as his surrogate son during the last fifteen years of his life. Here are some of the most salient thoughts:

"I recall him entering the classroom in the Conservatoire jauntily whistling the "Rigaudon" from Ravel's *Tombeau de Couperin*... He loved teaching that class, and relished the contact with his students. I was with him in the two final years of his Conservatoire career, and we were indeed fortunate to receive a grand retrospective of his discoveries and techniques going back almost a half-century. And how fresh he made it all seem... there was birdsong, plainchant, Indian rhythms, Japanese court music, Claude le Jeune, Beethoven, Chopin, Wagner, Berg, Stravinsky, Ligeti, Dutilleux and Boulez.

We journeyed halfway across Paris in the snow to investigate the most up-to-date percussion instruments. Young composers — most of them previous pupils of his — visited the class to play and explain their newest works. Then there was the analysis of Debussy's *Pelléas et Mélisande*, note by note, over six enthralling weeks — which meant three classes a week, each lasting well over four hours. *Pelléas* probably mattered more to him than any other single piece in the history of music. During sleepless, freezing nights as a prisoner of war during the early 1940s, he would go through whole acts of the opera in his head to keep his spirits up, so the subjectivity and sensitivity of his comments were deeply affecting...

But perhaps his greatest lesson was by example, and his attention to detail and pride in craftsmanship has remained a benchmark for me ever since. He taught as much by osmosis as by intention, acting almost unconsciously as a model for the maximum degree of daring, sincerity and imagination in his students.

Another attribute that made him such an out-standing teacher, for more than three generations of students from across the world, was his capacity for tolerance. In his contact with students, he displayed a rare mixture of passionate engagement coupled with a genuine and profound acceptance of difference in others.

He tried with all his might not to impose his own views or tastes on his students, though with the degree of enthusiasm he displayed, this wasn't always easy. But he sincerely valued other aesthetics, other philosophies and indeed other faiths — there was not a trace of dogma about him, despite his fervent Catholicism.

Thirty years on, my studies in Paris with Messiaen remain the revelatory experience of my life. In my own creative work, I believe I have moved a long way away from that of my maître, both technically and expressively, and that is what he would have wanted."

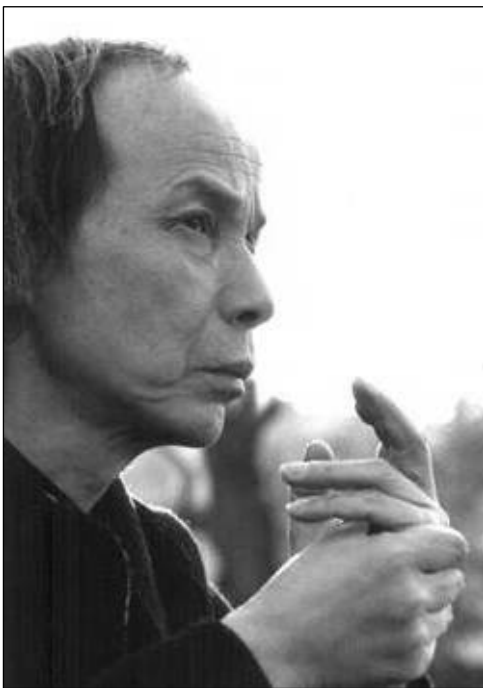


George Benjamin

From the beginning Benjamin's impressive *Piano Sonata* (1978), essentially the 17-year-old's Opus 1, bore very little resemblance to his teacher's music.

Almost twenty years later and shortly before his death, Takemitsu commissioned a work from Benjamin for two violists, Yuri Bashmet and Nobuko Imai. Given that the piece was intended for the 1997 opening of the Tokyo Opera City Concert Hall, Benjamin envisioned a work that would, "make you imagine, if you close your eyes, that there's a string ensemble on the platform."

As a title *Viola, Viola* is a more clever than obvious. The music is a product of extensive research into canons. Imitation at its most sophisticated level would be the means to open up the dynamic range of a pair of instruments stereotyped as reticent and create a "hidden though intensely simple and strong architecture."



Toru Takemitsu

In addition to mirror-inversions and a method of concealing obvious imitations with sudden contrasts, Benjamin invented so-called encoded canons — exchanging diatonic intervals with chromatic intervals — and elastic canons, "whose lines expand, contract or fuse according to variable speeds." The structural weaving of the canons is further achieved by overlapping complicated variations on the rhythms material. What was begun with *Viola Viola* culminated about five years later with *Shadowlines*, a piano work commissioned for Pierre-Laurent Aimard by Betty Freeman in 2001.

In the years after Messiaen's death, Yvonne Loriod was left to finish several works and edit the enor-

mous *Treatise on Rhythm, Color and Ornithology* (1949-92) Messiaen's life work in eight volumes published in 2002. George Benjamin, who often made Messiaen laugh uncontrollably with his animal imitations, provided Loriod with technical and moral support for all the work she undertook to complete the legacy.

### Toru Takemitsu

Born in 1930 and drafted into the army when he was only 14, Takemitsu associated traditional Japanese music with the bitterness of war. His first exposure to Western music was forbidden French popular songs secretly played by fellow soldiers. Mostly self-taught, by the age of twenty Takemitsu composed piano music based on two of the most sophisticated models of the time: Alban Berg, John Cage and Messiaen. Like Messiaen he was deeply influenced by Debussy. Takemitsu's success as a film composer came early with an electronic score for *Woman of the Dunes* (1964) and reached great heights with such films as *Dodes'kaden* and *Ran* by Akira Kurosawa and *Black Rain* by Shohei Imamura.

Comparable to Messiaen's fixation with birds, Takemitsu's obsession with water dates back to at least the experimental electronic work and tape manipulation of *Water Music* (1963). In 1980 the composer explained his pre-disposition, "Thinking of musical form I think of liquid form. I wish for musical changes to be as gradual as the tides."

Although trees, seasons, islands and other natural stimuli inspired his works, those inspired by rain alone include *Garden Rain* (1974) for brass ensemble, *Rain Tree* (1981) for percussion, *Rain Coming* (1982) for chamber orchestra, *Rain Tree Sketch* (1982) for piano, *Rain Dreaming* (1986) for harp-sichord, and *Rain Tree Sketch II – in Memoriam Olivier Messiaen* (1992), also for piano.

*Rain Spell* (1982) came from a particularly wet period that also included the orchestral works *Riverrun* (1984) and *I Hear the Water Dreaming* (1987), as well as *Toward the Sea III* (1988) for flute and harp.

The scoring of *Rain Spell* for flute, clarinet, harp, vibraphone, and piano brought together an ensemble for which Takemitsu had a strong affinity. His poetic and imagistic music achieves a comparable level of intricacy and craft as Boulez's *Derive*, substituting the harp's broad plane of resonant strings for the violin and cello. Yet like the art of calligraphy and haiku, the Japanese sense of skilled intuition renders the experience of *Rain Spell* as a coolly unfolding hypnosis.

## **The Death of the Numbers** by Olivier Messiaen

It was the sunbeam that slept in your hand,  
You lifted your little fingers on high, it started to shine with such brilliance that I was blind to all else.  
And it unwound and became so long that it touched the four ends of the earth.  
In ascension the sunbeam engulfed me and conducted me towards your untroubled soul.

I am still very far from you.  
Who can push me farther away? Why this goodbye? Nothing can destroy a dream!

Still water does not flee from the flower that looks on.

I want to go nearer. What invisible force is stopping me? From whom these bonds?  
For whom these chains? I can no longer desire! Could I so tread this endless staircase.

We must dissolve the clouds, fill up the oceans.

Oh long, oh sad awaiting! Oh torment, circle of fire!  
May time and space die! So far off, joy! So far off, light!  
Bells of horror! Horrible mixture! Wall that crushes me!  
The earth opens up, the stars fall, the world is swallowed!  
The end, who can foretell it? I suffer! I suffer!

Wait! Hope!

Lighter than feathered birds, lighter than emptiness, Lighter than nothingness, we will soar above a dream.  
The weight of the numbers will be dead.  
Listen to the song of our single soul!  
Diaphanous smile, limpid gaze, trembling ecstasy.

It rises higher than this soul and leaps towards new transparencies, in an eternal springtime!



Messiaen circa 1930