

Chapter 2

Messiaen as Pianist: A Romantic in a Modernist World

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Scholars or performers might view the study of musical performance, whether live or recorded, as the exploration of creative confusion. Such an investigation feeds off the gap between the information provided by the composer (principally, though not exclusively, through the score) and the performer's understanding of what is and is not conveyed explicitly and implicitly by that information. We might rationally think that such a gap would not exist when the composer and the performer are the same individual. Still, while every case differs, the gap can often appear to become a yawning chasm for composer-performers.

This chapter explores the particular creative confusion that arises between the composer Olivier Messiaen and the performer Olivier Messiaen. Pierre Boulez, admittedly talking about Messiaen's position in general, neatly encapsulated the conundrum in words readily applicable to Messiaen the performer. He described Messiaen as:

a man who is preoccupied strongly with techniques, but who puts forward, in the first place, expression He has a kind of revolutionary ideal and at the same time a very conservative taste for what the essence of music is [T]hat's a man who is exactly in the centre of some very important contradictions of this century.¹

These contradictions become especially acute in considering Messiaen as composer-performer.

Messiaen the composer was a man of many words, always happy to talk about his music. Despite the widespread availability of certain recordings, Messiaen the performer is rather less well known. While his activities as organist at the Trinité tend to be among the first things newcomers discover about the composer, relatively few appreciate that Messiaen was a pianist first and foremost. This goes beyond the stark, and startling, fact that he only began organ lessons aged eighteen; even after this, the piano remained the focus of the majority of his music-making.²

¹ Dennis Marks (executive producer), "Messiaen at 80," TV program broadcast by BBC2 on December 10, 1988.

² For more on Messiaen's introduction to the organ, see Peter Hill and Nigel Simeone, *Messiaen* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2005), 22, and Christopher

It is well known that Messiaen initially taught himself to play the piano on the instrument at his uncle André's house in Grenoble during the First World War. He made frequent trips to Deshairs, the big music shop in Grenoble, to look at the scores, and friends and family also fed his appetite for music with gifts of piano works. Recent pieces, such as Debussy's *Estampes* and Ravel's *Gaspard de la nuit*, figure prominently in Messiaen's recollections, as does Grieg's *Peer Gynt*, but he also devoured the works of Bach and Beethoven, even if they left fewer obvious imprints on his own music.³ That *Gaspard de la nuit*, an exceptionally challenging contemporary work, was already in his repertoire before he entered the Paris Conservatoire aged just ten reveals an unusual curiosity and technical prowess for one so young. Nor, of course, did Messiaen restrict himself to piano repertoire. Foremost among the anecdotes of his childhood is the recollection that at Christmas he requested not toys, but opera vocal scores. Within little more than three years, his repertoire included Mozart's *Don Giovanni* and *Die Zauberflöte*, Berlioz's *La Damnation de Faust*, Wagner's *Die Walküre* and *Siegfried*, and Gluck's *Alceste* and *Orphée*. Playing through these gave Messiaen his first experience of acting as accompanist, albeit that the soloist was himself, his treble voice singing each of the parts.⁴

Messiaen entered the Paris Conservatoire, as a pianist, studying with Georges Falkenberg, but he had little desire to become a virtuoso concert performer, not least because the sheer quantity of practice required would allow little time for composition. He later recalled that:

I always knew I was going to be a composer, but to become one I had to resist my teachers. When I was in the piano class they said I should be a pianist, when I was in the organ class they said I should be an organist, but I always said no, I am studying this instrument because one needs to know how to play, but I am not a performer, I am a composer.⁵

Despite Falkenberg's initial encouragement that his student aspire to a career as a concert pianist, Messiaen chose, after just a few years, to study the instrument under his own volition. The only prize the instrument brought Messiaen, therefore, was a Premier Prix in accompaniment under the tutelage of César Abel Estyle. He appeared most regularly in concerts as an accompanist; nor

Dingle, "Forgotten Offerings: Messiaen's First Orchestral Works," *Tempo*, no. 241 (July 2007): 3–4.

³ See, for instance, Claude Samuel, *Olivier Messiaen: Music and Color—Conversations with Claude Samuel*, trans. E. Thomas Glasow (Portland: Amadeus, 1994), 100.

⁴ For more on Messiaen's early life, see chapter 1 of Christopher Dingle, *The Life of Messiaen* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

⁵ Alan Benson (producer/director), *The South Bank Show: Olivier Messiaen—The Music of Faith*, London Weekend Television film broadcast on Good Friday, April 5, 1985.

should it be forgotten that his duties as an organist required the particular skill of accompanying a congregation.

Although rarely a soloist, Messiaen performed most often in concert conditions (rather than within the liturgy) as a pianist, and he was a frequent performer on piano well into the 1960s. For instance, in the concerts under the auspices of La Spirale, Messiaen accompanied songs by John Alden Carpenter, Ives, Maurice Emmanuel, and his own wife, Claire Delbos, as well as his own *Poèmes pour Mi*. Moreover, he also appeared as soloist in Elsa Barraine's *Deux Pièces*, Ravel's *Valses nobles et sentimentales*, six of Milhaud's *Saudades do Brazil*, and Samazeuilh's *Suite en sol*. In La Jeune France concerts, he regularly accompanied his own works and those by other members of the group, and appeared as soloist in three pieces from Jolivet's *Mana*. In the charity concert of July 3, 1949, given with the violinist Angel Reyes on board the S.S. *De Grasse* during the crossing to America for his first trip to Tanglewood, the two played the Adagio from Mozart's G major Violin Concerto and the Finale from Franck's sonata. This concert also included the only known instance of Messiaen improvising in public on the piano.⁶ He did improvise on informal occasions, however, and on October 20, 1968, having presented Langlais with the Légion d'Honneur in his capacity as a member of the Institut, Messiaen entertained the assembled guests by improvising on the piano for a long time.⁷

On innumerable informal opportunities Messiaen's students heard him play a wide range of works, for he centered his class at the Conservatoire upon discussing works at the piano. These three weekly classes, each lasting four hours, allowed plenty of time for Messiaen to give complete performances, even of large-scale works such as Beethoven's *Hammerklavier* sonata. Nor should it be forgotten that Messiaen did much of his composition at the piano.⁸

While he did not embark on a career as a virtuoso, Messiaen clearly had considerable ability as a pianist and performed frequently, both formally and informally. Even though the organ played a crucial role in his life, the piano accounted for the majority of his music-making until the 1960s at least.

One might expect, then, that his piano works would dominate Messiaen's recorded legacy as a performer. In fact, with the signal exception of the *Quatre Études de rythme*, he recorded no music as a solo pianist. His other solo recordings are those of his organ works, encompassing everything except *Verset pour la fête de la dédicace* (1960) and the final cycle, *Livre du Saint Sacrement* (1984).⁹ However, Messiaen did make several recordings as accompanist or part

⁶ Hill and Simeone, *Messiaen*, 186.

⁷ Marie-Louise Jaquet-Langlais, *Ombre et Lumière: Jean Langlais 1907–1991* (Paris: Éditions Combre, 1995), 262.

⁸ Peter Hill, "Interview with Yvonne Loriod," in *The Messiaen Companion*, ed. Peter Hill (London: Faber and Faber, 1995), 285.

⁹ In addition to the recordings of works, Messiaen made two commercial recordings of improvisations: an LP inspired by his mother's poetry and a film of three improvisations on "Puer natus est nobis" (see discography). Furthermore, about a decade after Messiaen's

of an ensemble. As documented in the discography, he made two commercial recordings of *Visions de l'Amen* for two pianos, in 1949 and 1962 respectively, and one each of the *Quatuor pour la fin du Temps* (in 1956) and the song cycle *Poèmes pour Mi* (in 1964). In addition, the Institut national de l'audiovisuel (INA) has issued a broadcast of a 1954 concert featuring Messiaen as pianist in his own song cycle *Harawi* and Debussy's *Cinq Poèmes de Charles Baudelaire*. The Debussy set stands as the only recording known thus far of Messiaen performing another composer's music.

It is important to note at the outset that the works that Messiaen recorded as a pianist were not recorded (and barely played, if at all) by Yvonne Loriod, the pianist who would become Messiaen's second wife, until much later. Indeed, she recorded the song cycles only in 1988 and the *Quatuor* in 1990. In other words, while Messiaen still actively performed on the piano, he and Loriod kept their repertoire quite separate. She played the big solo cycles and was soloist in various works with orchestra, all of which were inspired by her exceptional prowess. Messiaen performed in the works where the pianist acts more as accompanist and where he could have direct input into the interpretation of the music. *Visions de l'Amen*, of course, involved them both, but Loriod always played the first piano part, and Messiaen the second (which, in many ways, has the greater influence on how the music flows).

Since all the song cycles were intimately associated with Messiaen's love for his first wife, Claire Delbos, it is not surprising that Messiaen wished to take an active role in the performance of such personal works, even leaving aside any feelings that may have been forming for Loriod. Similarly, the extraordinary circumstances in which he wrote and first presented the *Quatuor* make it natural that he retained the prerogative of performing it.

The *Quatre Études de rythme* stands as an exception to these observations, and so much else. It is the one solo work that Messiaen recorded and regularly performed. Hill has listed fifteen performances between 1950 and 1955.¹⁰ Loriod recalled that he performed the *Études* for the simple reason that he needed to earn the additional fees from radio stations to cover his travel expenses on foreign trips.¹¹ Nonetheless, since he could have offered a selection from the *Préludes* instead, these frequent performances give evidence of a striking commitment to a work the composer later dismissed, Messiaen describing the "three pages" of

death, the La Praye label issued some of his improvisations at the Trinité as a two-disc set. Unfortunately, La Praye does not provide information on the dates, the liturgy in question, or the readings in the service that prompted these improvisations, and this hampers full appreciation of these fascinating materials.

¹⁰ Peter Hill, "Messiaen Recorded: The *Quatre Études de rythme*," in *Olivier Messiaen: Music, Art and Literature*, ed. Christopher Dingle and Nigel Simeone (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), 81.

¹¹ Hill, "Interview with Yvonne Loriod," 296.

Mode de valeurs et d'intensités as perhaps “prophetic and historically important, but musically [...] next to nothing.”¹²

Messiaen’s 1951 recording of the set is a remarkable document and, in some respects, revelatory. It also raises complex issues regarding technique that, while fascinating, would act as a red herring in the context of the present discussion, for the music differs fundamentally in its nature from the song cycles, the *Quatuor*, and *Visions de l’Amen*. Peter Hill explores this document in detail in his absorbing full-length examination of the recordings of the *Études* by Messiaen and several other pianists.¹³ It suffices merely to observe that while the composer’s recording of *Mode de valeurs et d’intensités* underlines the extent to which the music was written without regard for the practicalities of the instrument, Messiaen’s *fantaisie*-like (some would say compromised) performance itself thoroughly mesmerized the young Stockhausen. The question arises, though, of whether Messiaen’s performance would have differed markedly in spirit if he indisputably had had the requisite technique (and an appropriate instrument). In other words, we might wonder whether Messiaen would have liked to perform this piece more like those pianists who stay closer to the letter (and perceived abstract modernist spirit) of the score. As we shall see, his comments might appear to suggest so, but the evidence from his recordings of other pieces implies a personal performance aesthetic markedly different from his protégés among the post-war generation.

Messiaen had emerged from World War II as a kind of godfather to these radical young composers. Coincidentally, he made his recordings during the period that this new avant-garde emerged, namely the two decades after World War II. He taught them and opened compositional doors to them. Still, as Boulez recently put it, they were also “the Stravinsky generation.”¹⁴ With the appearance of the *Domaine Musical*, a purist, text-based approach to new works found strong advocates who valued “the objectivity of the realization, the exact rhythms, no *rubato*, etc.”¹⁵ Since virtually no performance tradition existed for much of the repertoire, especially in France, they effectively created one that obeyed the modernist, objective aesthetic. Whether by accident or design, exceptionally dry acoustics in their recordings often exaggerated this performance philosophy. In retrospect, the performance aesthetic adopted for modernist repertoire mirrored embryonic trends in areas of more established repertoire with the emergence of period instrument ensembles. Ironically, Boulez had, and continues to have, no sympathy for the use of period instruments or techniques.

¹² Samuel, *Music and Color*, 47.

¹³ Hill, “Messiaen Recorded,” 79–90.

¹⁴ Claude Samuel, “Interview with Pierre Boulez by Claude Samuel: September 2005,” booklet translation by John Tyler Tuttle of CD interview “‘Une histoire d’amitiés...’: Interview exclusive réalisée à l’Ircam par Claude Samuel le 14 septembre 2005,” in *Accord set Pierre Boulez: Le Domaine Musical 1956 ... 1967 Vol. 1*, Accord 476 9209, p. 6.

¹⁵ Samuel, “Interview with Pierre Boulez,” 6.

Messiaen's comments on performing his music appear to confirm an affinity with the modernist, objective approach. For instance, he said to Claude Samuel:

I'm a very meticulous man, and I note with great care on my manuscripts the tempos I desire, the dynamics, the bowing when it involves strings, articulation for the winds, fingerings for keyboard instruments. I demand simply that my indications be respected; but I'm always appreciative of the artists who play my music.¹⁶

Yvonne Loriod, his most important interpreter, has reinforced this sentiment. Asked by Peter Hill to point out the most frequent errors made in performances of Messiaen's music, she replied:

That is difficult to answer because all the aspects of the music are so important. I would say that complete fidelity to Messiaen's text is vital. And I would especially emphasize the importance of rhythm, which is perhaps the aspect of Messiaen music that is most difficult for the performer.¹⁷

This merely reinforces comments made by the composer in conversation with Almut Rößler:

I was accused of something else which you haven't mentioned: that my music is a kind of notated rubato. That's not true, that's a lie! That's not rubato, but they are very exact rhythms and they have to be performed very exactly.¹⁸

Even if Messiaen would have found the term alien, his succinct advice to performers [*Conseils aux exécutants*] in the score for the *Quatuor* resembles a *Texttreue* approach: "It suffices to play the text, the notes and the exact values, to respect all the nuances indicated."¹⁹ Messiaen's comment implies that, for him, the work and the written score are one and the same thing—that a performer wishing to be true to the work need only be true to the text. The vast majority of performances have adhered to this precept. However, many appear to have overlooked the next remarks in Messiaen's preface, comments that significantly temper reliance on the text alone:

In the pieces without barlines, like "Danse de la fureur," they can, to help themselves, mentally count all the semiquavers, but only at the start of their

¹⁶ Samuel, *Music and Color*, 201–02 (translation emended).

¹⁷ Hill, "Interview with Yvonne Loriod," 287.

¹⁸ Almut Rößler, *Contributions to the Spiritual World of Olivier Messiaen with Original Texts by the Composer* (Duisberg: Gilles und Francke Verlag, 1986), 133.

¹⁹ Olivier Messiaen, "Préface" in *Quatuor pour la fin du Temps* (Paris: Durand & Cie, 1942), p. iv.

work: this process could annoyingly weigh down a public performance: they must retain the sentiment of the values, no more. They should not be afraid of the exaggerated nuances, the accelerandos, rallentandos, all that makes an interpretation lively and sensitive.²⁰

Similarly, after telling Rößler that his rhythms have to be “performed very exactly,” Messiaen went on to say:

But once one performs them very exactly, one is then in no way prevented from making an “interpretation” which embraces freedom, love, passion, emotion and all such things. No one should be allowed to make music as if he were made of wood. One must reproduce the musical text exactly, but not play like a stone.²¹

Given Messiaen’s exhortation in the preface to the *Quatuor* not to “be afraid of the exaggerated nuances,” performers must decide what degree of exaggeration is appropriate while still complying with the composer’s apparently prescriptive, and restrictive, advice that “It suffices to play the text, the notes and the exact values, to respect all the nuances indicated.” How does the performer “reproduce the musical text exactly, but not play like a stone”? In other words, how much flexibility should a performer seek within a framework of inflexible adherence to the score?

If Messiaen’s recordings did not exist, or the evidence from them was deemed unreliable, the answer would be clear, not merely from his pronouncements, but also from the body of recorded performances made within his lifetime. Many were made in Messiaen’s presence, or he gave direct input into the preparation of the interpretation. Not surprisingly, a modernist approach, or at least the norms of post-war performance practice, characterizes these (often marvellous) recordings by the first and second generations of interpreters; fidelity to the score is paramount.

The exceptions that prove the rule among the particularly early recordings of Messiaen’s music would seem to be the accounts of the orchestral cycle *L’Ascension* by Pierre Monteux and Leopold Stokowski, neither of which is known to have received any input from Messiaen (items 6 and 7 in the fourth section of the discography). At the time that these performances were captured, few had performed Messiaen’s music in the United States, and the composer had yet to visit the country. The two recordings represent paradigms of a Romantic performance approach being applied to Messiaen’s music by two men who cut their interpretative teeth in the first half of the twentieth century. Put another way, neither man saw any reason to deviate from the norms of the time.

A few features stand out as illustrative of this. In both performances, the tempo greatly exceeds both the metronome marking of ♩ = 48 and the speed adopted by later recordings. Throughout, Monteux (conducting the “Standard Symphony Orchestra” in San Francisco for a radio broadcast of a live performance on March

²⁰ Messiaen, “Préface,” iv.

²¹ Rößler, *Contributions*, 133.

28, 1948) approaches tempo flexibly and has a tendency to cut short the rests that punctuate the first movement. The performance sounds terribly rushed in comparison with modern performances. In fact, Monteux's account of the first three movements of *L'Ascension* is everything we would expect from a conductor of his generation, especially with regard to tempo. That the concert did not include the final movement seems like a clumsily hacked amputation for the exigencies of radio schedules, but such practices were commonplace at the time.

Stokowski, in the work's first commercial recording from 1949, is similarly brisk, but elongates the rests in the first movement, so that the performance gives the impression of more space, even though the speed is comparable. He, too, employs flexible tempi, and is equally willing to ignore Messiaen's markings, notably in the third movement, where he drives through the marked *rallentandos* at climactic points. In the final string movement, Stokowski is more in tune with Monteux's account of the first movement, cutting short the ends of phrases, often getting his strings to attack the new phrase vigorously. This is effective, and it is worth noting that Stokowski is remarkably consistent, taking the same approach in the two recordings of *L'Ascension* (one live, one studio) that he made twenty-one years later in 1970 (the final items in the discography).

The initial impulse is to regard the performances of both Monteux and Stokowski as significantly wide of the mark—of not merely producing different aural results from the vast bulk of Messiaen performances, but of being founded upon an entirely different philosophy of performance. These early orchestral recordings appear to fly in the face of what is regarded as good performance practice of Messiaen's music. Put simply, they respect neither the tempos Messiaen desires, nor the markings in the score. And yet, Messiaen's own recorded performances show the same characteristics, and numerous others, that might be characterized as belonging to a Romantic performance philosophy.

Naturally for this book, an examination of Messiaen's piano playing follows, but his performances of organ works, which have received greater comment, exhibit many of the cited features. It has been possible to raise caveats concerning the organ recordings about the acoustic, the state of the organ at the Trinité, and the relationship of these works to improvisational practice. While the instruments are profoundly different, the proximity of performance styles between Messiaen's piano and organ recordings provides support for treating the latter as idiomatic. From both of these emerges the image of a composer-performer who not only deviates from the strict letter of the score—that is a composer's prerogative—but also of an artist playing in a style that conforms to the norms of the first half of the twentieth century.

Messiaen's recording of the *Quatuor pour la fin du Temps*, worthy of a study in its own right, demonstrates many elements of his personality as a performer. In the fifth movement, "Louange à l'éternité de Jésus" for cello and piano, and the eighth movement, "Louange à l'immortalité de Jésus," performance convention treats the piano part as an immutable, resolute presence that tries to remain as unvarying as possible, over which the string instrument can soar. The constant flow of slow sixteenth-note chords in the fifth movement and the unchanging rhythm of the

eighths appear to imply this. The composer's advice to performers conforms to this approach as well: "Sustain implacably the extremely slow movements of the two 'Louanges'."²² Moreover, during a round-table discussion at the Royal Academy of Music's symposium on Messiaen's piano music in 2008, Pierre-Laurent Aimard asserted that in rehearsal Messiaen encouraged this almost metronomic approach: "What personally I got from him for this piece was to try to keep the tempo [as if] for eternity and never, never to push it or to pull it back."²³ Messiaen's recorded performance, on the other hand, presents a radically different approach. In the eighth movement, he rarely plays the rhythm the same way twice. He is constantly making shifts of nuance, allowing the accompaniment to ebb and flow. In particular, his extensive agogic accentuations underpin important shifts in harmony. Example 2.1 shows the first change from the opening E major chord. The first time he plays the chord in bar 2, he leans on it, as if obeying an unwritten tenuto marking.

Example 2.1 Messiaen, "Louange à l'immortalité de Jésus," movement 8 of *Quatuor pour la fin du Temps*, bar 4

In the course of the movement, the rhythm varies from being close to the double-dotted notated durations, to an extreme, at the piano's first low bass octave, of three slow, virtually even sixteenth notes, which at this extremely slow tempo is a remarkable deviation (see Example 2.2 and Recorded Example

²² Messiaen, "Préface," iv.

²³ "Interpreting Messiaen's Piano Music," Royal Academy of Music, October 17, 2008. The other members of the panel were Roderick Chadwick, Peter Hill, and the present author.

Example 2.2 Messiaen, “Louange à l’immortalité de Jésus,” movement 8 of
Quatuor pour la fin du Temps, bar 9

The image displays a musical score for bar 9 of the eighth movement, "Louange à l'immortalité de Jésus," from Messiaen's "Quatuor pour la fin du Temps." The score is written for voice and piano. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and the time signature is 3/4. The vocal line begins with a *pp* dynamic and a *cresc.* marking, featuring a melodic line with trills. The piano accompaniment also starts with *pp* and *cresc.*, with a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes and trills. Below the main score, a section labeled "Approx. as played:" shows a simplified version of the vocal line, indicating the tempo and phrasing as performed.

2.1).²⁴ When the opening music returns at figure C, far from an unrelenting tempo, it is as if Messiaen has all but ground to a halt. He gives the impression that he can barely overcome the inertia of returning to the opening music, before gradually gaining some momentum (see Example 2.3). Rather than maintaining a resolute tempo across both slow movements, the two “Louanges,” Messiaen allows himself marked fluctuations, especially in the second “Louange,” which deviates substantially from the marking of $\text{♩} = 36$.

This flexibility of tempo, while revealing, is understandable in the extreme slow movements. However, far more surprising is the fluidity of tempo in the notorious unison rhythmic study of the sixth movement, “Danse de la fureur.” Having set a relatively steady speed for the opening salvos of the movement, the performers suddenly step-up the tempo at rehearsal figure C, pushing forward as one in response to the preponderance of sixteenth notes. This unexpected burst of energy subsides as longer durations reassert themselves in the bars before figure D. While the ebbing and flowing of the “Louange” movements might be ascribed to an inability on Messiaen’s part to hold a steady tempo, such elasticity could only occur in “Danse de la fureur” as a result of rehearsed interpretative decisions.

²⁴ Recorded examples are available at <http://frenchpianomusic.com>.

Example 2.3 Messiaen, “Louange à l’immortalité de Jésus,” movement 8 of *Quatuor pour la fin du Temps*, bars 13–14

The ensemble plays this rhythmically irregular music in unison and shows clear unity of purpose in the tempo changes.

At the Royal Academy of Music, Aimard recalled that Messiaen not only urged a resolute tempo in the slow movements of the *Quartet* but also made clear that principle applied to other repertoire as well:

I remember in *Poèmes pour Mi* having accompanied a singer who was so afraid she was ill, and who never had the voice for sustaining the length of the notes. I was trying to help her, going forwards sometimes, or taking lighter tempi, and Messiaen was saying “no, no, no, she will make what she will make, but you have to keep absolutely [in tempo].”

In this respect, Messiaen definitely practiced what he preached, as can be heard at the end of “Louange à l’Immortalité de Jésus.” The violinist’s final stratospheric E natural requires remarkable bow control and a steady nerve to make the note last. Far from mitigating this stern challenge for the violinist, or even just holding the tempo as advocated to Aimard, Messiaen slows down markedly as soon as Jean Pasquier has reached the last note. He is similarly ruthless at various points in his live radio recording of the song cycle *Harawi* with Marcelle Bunlet, the soprano who gave the premières of all of the song cycles and virtually all of the early performances. In “L’Escalier redit,” the ninth song, the music has a written-out ritardando as it approaches the transformative cry of “L’amour, la Joie.” Messiaen’s performance exaggerates this slowing enormously, showing no mercy to Bunlet’s aging voice.

That Messiaen took rehearsing the *Quartet* very seriously is clear from a letter he sent to Leo Black at the BBC dated November 25, 1961, regarding a visit to London the following January for a performance of *Réveil des oiseaux*. Messiaen explains that, due to regulations introduced by the new director of the Conservatoire, he would be unable to get to London after all. Despite this, he

emphasizes his unease at participating in a proposed performance of the *Quartet* during the trip “as [it] cannot be done in two days, but requires at least fifteen days of rehearsal.”²⁵ Messiaen was clearly concerned with more than being able to reproduce the notes in the score in the correct order. His recording of the *Quartet* demonstrates that, musically, he needed the ensemble to live and breathe together.

This flexibility of tempo also surfaces in his recordings of *Harawi* and *Poèmes pour Mi*, often delineating different layers or textures in the music. For instance, “Bonjour toi, colombe verte,” the second movement of *Harawi*, includes periodic birdsong interjections from an unnamed “oiseau.” Messiaen repeatedly cuts short, and essentially omits, the rests that precede the birdsong in the score, pushing into the *Un peu vif* section. Though the impetus may differ, Messiaen’s decision shows an analogy with Monteux’s and Stokowski’s apparent rushing. The effect is as if the birdsong is starting almost before the previous music has finished, creating a much more dynamic interplay. Messiaen’s performance suggests that he does not intend the rests to provide a brief gap between the bulk of the song and the bird’s interjections: rather, they assist with phrasing the birdsong.

A more extreme creative approach to tempo comes in Messiaen’s only commercial recording of one of his song cycles, *Poèmes pour Mi*, with the soprano Lise Arséguet. This rare recording, yet to be transferred to CD, appeared briefly in France and also in the United States (see item 6 in section 1 of the discography). In Messiaen’s hands, the tempo at the opening of the second song, “Paysage,” is certainly *Très modéré*. Remarkably, though, he plays the descending sixteenth-note chords more or less at double speed (see Example 2.4 and Recorded Example 2.2).

Example 2.4 Messiaen, “Paysage,” movement 2 of *Poèmes pour Mi*, opening

The image shows a musical score for the opening of "Paysage" from *Poèmes pour Mi*. It consists of two staves: a vocal line (CHANT) and a piano accompaniment (PIANO). The tempo is marked "Très modéré". The vocal line begins with the lyrics "Le lac comme un gros bi - jou bleu." The piano accompaniment starts with a descending sixteenth-note chord pattern. A dynamic marking of "mf" is present for both parts. A "gracieux" marking is also present. A section of the piano accompaniment is shown as "Approx. as played:" with a dynamic marking of "mf".

In the composer’s hands, what appears on the page to be gentle water drops reflecting the lake (mentioned by the soprano), transforms into an invigorating

²⁵ BBC Written Archive Centre, PP 628.

gush. This near doubling of the speed happens on all three occasions that the phrase occurs, so the decision was either intentional, or Messiaen was quick thinking enough to repeat his mistake. The latter seems unlikely in a recording from 1964, well into the era of tape-editing. If this speed-up of the tempo, essentially turning the sixteenth-note chords into thirty-second notes, was deliberate, then Messiaen could have incorrectly notated the passage in the score, modified his view of this gesture, misread his own music, or viewed his method of playing as implicit in the notation. If the first of these were so, then he repeated his error in the orchestral version of the work from 1937. A misreading, while possible, seems unlikely. Messiaen had performed the cycle regularly, so the work was no distant memory when he came to record it. His view of the gesture may well have evolved. The orchestral score, however, lends credibility to the notion that he regarded a sudden change of speed as a natural consequence of the notation. Messiaen added the marking “*pressez*,” but placed it in brackets. While falling somewhat short of a doubling of the speed, this instruction to the conductor is in line with the spirit of Messiaen’s interpretation at the piano. Moreover, placing it in brackets suggests that the composer felt the nuance was implicit in the music, simply a reinforcement of instinct. Such instincts were profoundly challenged, though, in the post-war era, especially in contemporary music.

Messiaen’s dash through these chords goes significantly beyond what might normally be regarded merely as pushing forwards. In addition, his dynamic significantly exceeds the marked *pianissimo*. The result is analogous to Debussy’s piano roll performance of “*La Cathédrale engloutie*,” in which the composer doubles the tempo in bars 7, 13, 22, and 84.²⁶ As with Debussy, other pianists who worked closely with Messiaen (most notably Yvonne Loriod) reinforce the evidence of Messiaen’s performance decisions. While her 1988 recording starts the movement at a faster tempo, Loriod still confirms the spirit of Messiaen’s gesture, the fizzing descending chords being a shade faster than a straight doubling of tempo. In fact, the treatment of these chords in “*Paysage*” opens up a marked divergence of approach. The majority follow the broad example of Messiaen and Loriod, more or less doubling the tempo on each occasion. While this evidence may confirm implications of the notation, it is more likely that an oral tradition has come into being, either through direct contact or from the recordings. The effect, though, differs on each occasion, for some pianists retain the *pianissimo* marking, and give the effect of a trickling spray of chords rather than Messiaen’s sharp shower.

Instead of Messiaen’s performance, some pianists (and conductors) have possibly been influenced by the score of the orchestral version of the cycle, and/or by the first recording of it, conducted by Pierre Boulez in 1971. Boulez interprets the bracketed “*pressez*” marking as being essentially a doubling of

²⁶ A reasonable transfer of this roll can be heard on the Pierian CD “*Debussy as Pianist*,” Pierian 0001. See also Claude Debussy, *Œuvres complètes de Claude Debussy: Série I. Vol. 5, Préludes: livre 1; livre 2*, Roy Howat (ed.) with Claude Helffer (Paris: Durand, 1985), 42–47, 167.

speed. Curiously, the chords are paced at closer to double speed than the original tempo by the conductors of every subsequent recording except Boulez himself in his 1994 recording with Françoise Pollet. On this occasion, his initial speed is significantly faster than other recorded performances, and he increases tempo only marginally for the descending chords.

Returning to the piano version, two British pianists, Robert Sherlaw Johnson and David Mason, stand as notable exceptions to the tendency to play the chords more like thirty-second notes. Sherlaw Johnson plays the initial drooping figure slowly, but then takes the second bar significantly faster, then plays the descending chords freely, but without a marked change of tempo. Mason keeps a steady tempo throughout the three bars.

The evidence of this short gesture in “Paysage” confirms that it would be wrong to seek a single, authorized interpretation of Messiaen’s music. The score and Messiaen’s own recording have the authority of the composer, but the recording by Loriod and Boulez’s first account also had his artistic input. The crucial point here is that none of the various approaches to this threefold gesture in “Paysage” sounds wrong or misguided. Whether the tempo relationship between the opening bar and the descending chords is exact, a doubling of tempo, or somewhere in between affects the nature of the decoration of the held chord and the spirit of the interpretation, but does not undermine the integrity of the song.

All of the examples thus far have gone some way to demonstrating that Messiaen the performer operated under a philosophy that differed from the ethos normally associated with the performance of new music in the post-war era, notably by Boulez and, fascinatingly, Yvonne Loriod. With a Romantic performance philosophy, the pianistic equivalent of Monteux or Stokowski might easily have made similar choices to Messiaen, not least in the flexibility of tempo which occurs both horizontally and vertically. The suspicion might linger, though, that Messiaen was simply erratic, and that same caution should be exercised as with Stravinsky’s

Example 2.5 Messiaen, “Amen du désir,” movement 4 of *Visions de l’Amen*, bars 71–73

Un peu plus lent Pressez Au mouvt

2^e fff p cresc. fff

Approx. rhythm as played:

Example 2.6 Messiaen, “Amen de la Consommation,” movement 7 of *Visions de l’Amen*, bars 56–57

The image shows a musical score for two piano parts, labeled I and II. Part I (right hand) consists of two staves with complex, dense chordal textures. It begins with a dynamic marking of *mf* and ends with *p*. Part II (left hand) also consists of two staves, featuring a more rhythmic accompaniment with block chords. It starts with a dynamic marking of *p* and ends with *f*. A dashed line above the staff indicates a breath mark or release of the pedal. The score includes various musical notations such as accidentals, stems, and dynamic markings.

recordings which, despite the composer’s declarations of authority, are notoriously inconsistent in interpretation of the same work.

The work that provides the largest body of evidence for Messiaen’s manner of piano playing, *Visions de l’Amen*, counters such thoughts to a degree. Written in 1943 for Messiaen and Loriod to play, *Visions* effectively became their party piece, the scintillating first piano part showing off Loriod’s fearsome talents, while Messiaen keeps his hand on the tiller of the interpretation (for the second piano part has most of the important thematic material). Crucially, while Loriod made multiple recordings of many of Messiaen’s works, this is the only work featuring the composer himself in two commercial recordings. Messiaen and Loriod first recorded *Visions de l’Amen* in 1949 for the Contrepoint label, and then returned to the studio in 1962 courtesy of Véga. Despite inevitable differences between the recordings, a number of striking interpretative quirks—features that might otherwise be thought to be of the moment—are common to both. One of the more obvious examples occurs during the second piano’s jaunty solo in the fourth movement. Example 2.5 gives an approximate transcription of what Messiaen plays at this point, though no notation or description adequately encapsulates the slight pause, pressing forward and final shimmy into the second bar. Messiaen certainly does not play a sequence of even sixteenth notes with his right hand, nor, though, is it an accident, for he plays the passage this way in both recordings (Recorded Examples 2.3 and 2.4).

A second interesting example occurring in both recordings comes in the final movement. As a motive from the principal theme is taken through a sequence, Messiaen and Loriod effectively insert a significant breath mark between phrases (as suggested in Example 2.6). The only thing in the score that might suggest a break is the indication of the release of the pedal. What Messiaen and Loriod do makes musical sense, for they are allowing the sound to clear before proceeding, much in

the way that a conductor might bring an orchestra off with a closing of the left hand. Since, for Messiaen, each modulation of the theme would have produced different color associations, the desire for a clear aural canvas is all the more understandable. Once again, the composer apparently felt this mannerism was implicit in the notation.

It is hard to see how that could be the case in the way that Messiaen plays the final two examples, for his recordings also include instances of freedoms that a composer alone is likely to take, but that provide insights nonetheless. A simple example occurs during the trance-like “mapa nama” sections of “Répétition planétaire,” the sixth song of *Harawi*, where three chords in the piano part are singled out with the marking “plus timbré.”

Example 2.7 Messiaen, “Répétition planétaire,” movement 6 of *Harawi*, p. 36, bar 1

While the score seems to imply a change of tone, and maybe a little broadening, in Messiaen’s hands these three chords create a sudden, complete change in the flow of the piano part, combining a ringing tone with the tempo being almost halved. His performance gives the effect of an abrupt sudden change of perspective, certainly of a distinct feature that briefly intrudes on the scene. In other words, for Messiaen the “plus timbré” marking here may not merely denote a textural coloring, but signify an important musical moment that requires special treatment.

The opening of “Montagnes,” the third song of *Harawi*, is, perhaps, the most extreme example, for reconciling the performance with the score presents some challenges. Similarly to the first of the examples from *Visions*, Messiaen is extremely creative with the rhythm in the second bar and, again, the transcription does no justice to the composer’s breathless approach (see Example 2.8 and Recorded Example 2.5).

How can we reconcile this performance with Messiaen’s stated desire for fidelity to the score? This seems to be a long way from his statement in the preface to the *Quartet* that performers should play the “exact values” or his comments to Rößler that “they are very exact rhythms and they have to be performed very exactly.”²⁷ However, he did give additional advice in the preface to the *Quartet* that “before public performance, [the performer] must retain the sentiment of

²⁷ Rößler, *Contributions*, 133.

Example 2.8 Messiaen, “Montagnes,” movement 3 of *Harawi*, opening

Très vif

CHANT

Très vif

PIANO

ff (pour 2) (pour 2)

Approx. rhythm as played:

PIANO

CHANT

PIANO

PIANO

the values, no more.” The “sentiment of the values” differs considerably from durational exactitude. We know that Messiaen regarded each rhythm as having a character, a “personnage,” and his recordings give the impression that the score is simply a reminder of a well-loved acquaintance, whose character Messiaen is conveying truthfully in his own head, even though there may be a divergence from the durational truth of the document itself. On occasion, Messiaen extends this approach to entire passages, such as the one that opens “Montagnes.” He is keeping to the “sentiment” rather than the letter of the opening. That is his prerogative as the composer, but where does this leave other performers? What can be learned from Messiaen’s performances?

As so often, the evidence is contradictory, and it is hard to imagine a more extreme contradiction than between what Messiaen says and what he does. The consistencies in the more striking aspects of interpretation between the two recordings of *Visions de l'Amen* make it impossible to dismiss anything in Messiaen's recordings of other pieces. The repetition of these gestures is the smoking gun that suggests many of Messiaen's idiosyncrasies were intentional aspects of his interpretation. It challenges all those who would like to dismiss the more surprising elements of the composer's performances as being accidental, the product of a lack of control or the whims of the moment. Whatever their causes, we cannot assume that divergences from the score are unintended.

On the other hand, Aimard and others recall advice from Messiaen that appears flatly to contradict the way that the composer himself plays. This may simply be a case of "do as I say, not as I do." Messiaen may just have changed his mind about the way he wished his music to be performed. Performances by Loriod, Boulez and others, not least at the Domaine Musical concerts, may have put a perspective on his music that Messiaen had not originally envisaged, but that he preferred. By the time that the second generation of performers were receiving advice from Messiaen, the entire approach to performance, and not just of Messiaen's music, had changed radically and so had his advice. Another possibility is that, as with students in his class at the Conservatoire, Messiaen tried to tailor his advice to the character of the performer in question.

Whatever the reason, Messiaen's statements need to be understood in the context of his formative musical experiences in the first two decades of the twentieth century. Like Stravinsky, Messiaen would have witnessed performers making radical alterations to what was written in the score. Even re-writing the music was not uncommon, either in the guise of correcting perceived errors by composers, compensating for the changes in instruments (such as adding in lower or upper octaves) or simply out of a desire to improve the music or the spectacle. Understood in this context, Messiaen was not telling performers to reproduce the score as automatons. Rather, he was imploring them not to rewrite his music, but to take the score as the basis of the interpretation.

To coin a phrase of Aimard's, there is not just one truth when it comes to performing Messiaen. The intention here is not to replace one deep-rooted orthodoxy regarding the performance of Messiaen with another philosophy all the more potent, and dangerous, for being centered around the composer himself. Loriod's performances are magnificent and very exciting, as, for that matter, are Aimard's. Slavishly copying Messiaen would be a dangerous tactic. However, his performances may teach us that performing Messiaen's music in a flexible Romantic style may have as much validity as in an objective, modernist manner. As a composer, Messiaen provided a link for the younger generation to the creative heritage that they were rejecting. The same can be said of him as a performer. As such, perhaps we can view his music through a different prism. The approach might be characterized in terms of a composer often overlooked in relation to Messiaen, his favorite composer for the piano—perhaps we should play Messiaen like Chopin.

Appendix: discography of commercially released recordings featuring Messiaen

All works are by Messiaen unless stated otherwise. Entries are in chronological order within each category. Recordings marked with an asterisk were not originally intended for commercial release.

I. Messiaen as pianist

1. *Visions de l'Amen*, with Yvonne Loriod (piano), rec. 1949, Contrepoint CO 1/2/3/4/5/6 (78rpm 6 sides); Dial dial 8; FMR FMRC120-L0403; EMI France 0946 385275 2 7 (2 discs).
2. *Quatre Études de rythme* [*Île de feu 1; Mode de valeurs et d'intensités; Neumes rythmiques; Île de feu 2*], rec. Paris, May 30, 1951, Pathé LFX 998/999 (78rpm) Matrix nos.: LFX 998—CLX 2843-21 (side 1) CLX 2844-21 (side 2) LFX 999—CLX 2845-21 (side 3) CLX 2846-21 (side 4); FMR FMRC120-L0403; EMI France 0946 385275 2 7 (2 discs).
3. **Harawi*; Debussy: *Cinq Poèmes de Charles Baudelaire*, with Marcelle Bunlet (soprano), live rec. September 13, 1954, Grand Casino de Vichy, INA, mémoire vive IMV044.
4. *Quatuor pour la fin du Temps*, with Jean Pasquier (violin), André Vacellier (clarinet), Étienne Pasquier (cello), rec. Schola Cantorum, 1956; Club Français du Disque—Musicdisc 30 RC 719; Record Society Ltd. RS 14; Accord 461 744-2; 480 1045 (7 discs).
5. *Visions de l'Amen*, with Yvonne Loriod (piano), rec. Paris, 1962; Véga 8.509; Vega 19 200 (3 LPs); Adès AD 13 233-2; Adès 203 142; Accord 465 791-2; 480 1045 (7 discs).
6. *Poèmes pour Mi*, with Lise Arséguet (soprano), rec. 1964; Harmonia Mundi HMO 30.543; Everest 3269 [NB soprano listed on Everest LP as Lise Arseguet].

II. Messiaen as organist

1. *Apparition de l'église éternelle*, rec. Paris, Sainte-Trinité, June/July 1956; EMI DUC 260 C 074-81; 2C 153 16291/6; CZS 7 67400 2 (4 discs); CDC 5 55222 2; 50999 2 17466 2 8 (14 discs).
2. *L'Ascension*, rec. Paris, Sainte-Trinité, June/July 1956; EMI DUC 260 C 074; 2C 153 16291/6; CZS 7 67400 2 (4 discs); 50999 2 17466 2 8 (14 discs).
3. *Le Banquet céleste*, rec. Paris, Sainte-Trinité, June/July 1956; EMI DUC 260 C 074; 2C 153 16291/6; CZS 7 67400 2 (4 discs); CDC 5 55222 2; 50999 2 17466 2 8 (14 discs).
4. *Les Corps glorieux*, rec. Paris, Sainte-Trinité, June/July 1956; EMI DUC 260 C 077/8; 2C 153 16291/6; CZS 7 67400 2 (4 discs); 50999 2 17466 2 8 (14 discs).

5. *Diptyque*, rec. Paris, Sainte-Trinité, June/July 1956; EMI DUC 260 C 075/6; 2C 153 16291/6; CZS 7 67400 2 (4 discs); 50999 2 17466 2 8 (14 discs).
6. *Livre d'orgue*, rec. Paris, Sainte-Trinité, June/July 1956; EMI DUC 260 c 080/1; 2C 153 16291/6; CZS 7 67400 2 (4 discs); 50999 2 17466 2 8 (14 discs).
7. *Messe de la Pentecôte*, rec. Paris, Sainte-Trinité, June/July 1956; EMI DUC 260 C 079; 2C 153 16291/6; CZS 7 67400 2 (4 discs); 50999 2 17466 2 8 (14 discs).
8. *La Nativité du Seigneur*, rec. Paris, Sainte-Trinité, June/July 1956; EMI DUC 260 C 075/6; 2C 153 16291/6; CZS 7 67400 2 (4 discs); CDC 5 55222 2; 50999 2 17466 2 8 (14 discs).
9. *Méditations sur le mystère de la Sainte Trinité*, rec. Paris, Sainte-Trinité, June 1972; Erato STU 70750-1; ECD 71594; 2292-45505-2/VII; 4509-92007-2 (2 discs); Warner 256462162-2 (18 discs).
10. *L'Âme en bourgeon*, improvisations to poems by Cécile Sauvage read by Gisèle Casadesus, rec. June 1977; Erato STU 71104.
11. *Improvisation sur le thème Grégorien* "Puer Natus Est," Paris, Sainte-Trinité, October 21, 1985; Image Entertainment ID5085GCDVD (DVD) [NB 3 Improvisations].
12. **Improvisations inédites*, rec. Paris, Sainte-Trinité, 1984–87 [recordings of improvisations made during services]; La Praye DLP 0209 (2 discs).

III. Messiaen as speaker

1. *Résurrection du rythme*, introduced by Marc Blancpain (Secretary General of the Alliance Française); rec. 1961; Français de notre temps/L'Alliance Française 33t 4FT 61 (7" 33½ rpm disc).
2. *Interview d'Olivier Messiaen*, with Claude Samuel, rec. Paris, October 1961, 10" disc accompanying first commercial recording of *Turangalila-Symphonie* (VAL 027); Vega 30 BVG 1364; C35X340; Accord 472 031-2.
3. *Les Couleurs du temps: Trentes ans d'entretiens avec Claude Samuel*, extracts from interviews, rec. 1965 (Archives Claude Samuel); December 16, 1976 (Archives INA); INA/Radio France 211848 (2 discs).
4. *Entretien avec Claude Samuel*, rec. rue Marcadet, Paris, October 1988; Erato ECD 75505; Warner 256462162-2 (18 discs).

IV. Notable early recordings by other artists

1. *Les Offrandes oubliées*, Orchestre de l'Association des Concerts Gabriel Pierné, Roger Désormière; rec. Paris, December 8, 1942; Association Française d'Action Artistique AA6 (78rpm); EMI France 0946 385275 2 7 (2 discs).

2. *Trois Petites Liturgies de la Présence Divine*, Yvonne Loriod (piano), Ginette Martenot (ondes martenot), Chorale Yvonne Gouverné, Orchestre de la Société des Concerts du Conservatoire, Roger Désormière (cond.); rec. Paris, Salle de l'Ancien Conservatoire, ca. April 21, 1945; Pathé PDT 190/PDTS194 (78s—9 sides), Matrix nos.: PDT 190—SOFX 1008-1 (side 1), SOFX 1009-1 (side 2), PDT 191—SOFX 1006-1 (side 3), SOFX 1007-1 (side 4), PDT 192—SOFX 1001-1 (side 5), SOFX 1002-1 (side 6), PDT 193—SOFX 1003-2 (side 7), SOFX 1004-2 (side 8), PDT 194—SOFX 1005-1 (side 9); Dante LYS 310.
3. “Regard de l’esprit de joie” (no. 10) from *Vingt Regards*, Yvonne Loriod (piano); rec. Paris, Studio Albert, June 19, 1946; Pathé PDT 170 (78rpm), Matrix nos.: CPTX 748-1 (side 1), CPTX 749-1 (side 2); EMI France 0946 385275 2 7 (2 discs).
4. “Le Baiser de l’enfant Jésus,” (no. 15) from *Vingt Regards*, Yvonne Loriod (piano); rec. Paris, June 13, 1947; Pathé (78rpm) PDT 113, Matrix nos.: CPTX 633-1 (side 1) CPTX 634-1 (side 2); EMI France 0946 385275 2 7 (2 discs).
5. “Les Sons impalpables du rêve,” (no. 5), “La Colombe,” (no. 1), and “Le Nombre léger,” (no. 3) from *Huit Préludes*, Yvonne Loriod (piano); rec. Paris, November 12, 1947; Pathé (78rpm) PDT 132, Matrix nos.: CPTX 635-1 (side 1—no. 5), CPTX 636-2 (side 2—nos. 1 & 3); EMI France 0946 385275 2 7 (2 discs).
6. *L’Ascension*, [NB movts. 1–3 only] Standard Symphony Orchestra (San Francisco), Pierre Monteux (cond.); radio broadcast, rec. March 28, 1948; Music & Arts CD-978; CD1192 (13 discs).
7. *L’Ascension*, New York Philharmonic Orchestra, Leopold Stokowski, rec. 30th Street Studios, New York, February 21 and March 21, 1949; Matrix nos.: XCO-39365/67; XCO-41021/22; Columbia MM 893; Columbia ML 4214; Columbia WL 5140; Cala CACD 0533.
8. *Turangalila-Symphonie* [rehearsal excerpt], Yvonne Loriod, Ginette Martenot, Boston Symphony Orchestra, Leonard Bernstein, live rec., Boston, November 28, 1949, Boston Symphony Centenary Archive Set, BSC CB 100 (CB112) (12 discs).
9. *Turangalila-Symphonie*, Yvonne Loriod, Ginette Martenot, Sinfonieorchester des Südwestfunks Baden-Baden, Hans Rosbaud, live rec., Hans Rosbaud-Studio, Baden-Baden, December 23 & 24, 1951; Wergo 286 401-2.
10. *Vingt Regards sur l’Enfant Jésus*, Yvonne Loriod, rec. 1956; Vega 8.500/1/2; Adès 14112-2.
11. *Réveil des oiseaux*, Yvonne Loriod, SWR Sinfonieorchester Baden-Baden und Freiburg, Hans Rosbaud, live rec. October 6, 1953; Col Legno 31911; Hänssler CD 93.078 [NB recorded before the première].
12. *Hymne [au Saint-Sacrement]* Radio-Sinfonieorchester Frankfurt, Leopold Stokowski, live rec., May 31, 1955; Music & Arts CD-4770.

13. *Oiseaux exotiques*, Yvonne Loriod, Orchestre du Domaine Musical, Rudolf Albert; live rec. Paris, March 10, 1956 (World Première). Vega C 30 A 65; Accord 4769209 (4 discs).
14. *Cantéyodjayâ*, Yvonne Loriod, [live?] rec. Paris, 1957; Vega C30A139; Vega 19 200 (3 LPs); Adès AD 13 233-2; Adès 203 142; Accord 465 791-2; Accord 476 9209 (4 discs).
15. *Préludes*, Yvonne Loriod, rec. 1959; BAM LD 050 (10" 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ rpm discs).
16. *Catalogue d'oiseaux*, Yvonne Loriod, rec. 1959; Vega VAL11 (C30A257, C30A258, C30A259); Vega 19 200 (extracts); Adès 14057/ADE 380 (extracts).
17. *L'Ascension*, London Symphony Orchestra, Leopold Stokowski; live rec. Royal Festival Hall, June 18, 1970 (June 20, 1970?); ĩntă' glĭō [Suisa] INCD 7421; Music & Arts CD-4787.
18. *L'Ascension*, London Symphony Orchestra, Leopold Stokowski; rec. Kingsway Hall, London, June 22 & 23, 1970; London SPC 21060; Decca PFS 4203; King GT 9165; London POCL 90013; Cala CACD 0525.