



Listen and Learn Activity: Key Stage 3

Wednesday 11 November 2020- Quartet for the End of Time

The piece has eight movements, written below in their original language (French). Read each movement and try to match it with the correct English translation.

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. Liturgie de cristal | A. Abyss of birds |
| 2. Vocalise, pour l'Ange qui annonce la fin du Temps | B. Praise to the immortality of Jesus |
| 3. Abîme des oiseaux | C. Interlude |
| 4. Intermède | D. Dance of fury, for the seven trumpets |
| 5. Louange à l'Éternité de Jésus | E. Crystal liturgy |
| 6. Danse de la fureur, pour les sept trompettes | F. Vocalise, for the Angel who announces the end of time |
| 7. Fouillis d'arcs-en-ciel, pour l'Ange qui annonce la fin du Temps | G. Tangle of rainbows, for the Angel who announces the end of time |
| 8. Louange à l'Immortalité de Jésus | H. Praise to the eternity of Jesus |



Oliver Messiaen composed this piece in a German prisoner of war camp, after being captured whilst serving as a member of the French army. The first performance of this piece was in the same camp, the audience containing both fellow prisoners and guards. He later described this intense performance, saying 'Never have I been listened to with such attention and such understanding.'

Think of the hardships Messiaen must have been experiencing whilst composing this piece.

- In what ways do you think the music reflects the difficulties he was facing?
- What emotions does this music convey, and why?
- The four instruments are rarely all played together within this piece. How may this relate to the experience of living as a prisoner in a camp?

This work is one of Messiaen's first use of birdsong within his music, which later became a significant feature of his style. Listen out for any musical representations of birdsong.

- In which movements is this most prominent?
- Which instruments does Messiaen use to mimic the birdsong and calls?
- What kind of birds do you think Messiaen may have been mimicking?



We appreciate your feedback. If you want to send us your completed activity sheet for our gallery, or you have any comments or suggestions about these activities, please don't hesitate to get in touch by email at concert@liverpool.ac.uk.

