

Poèmes pour Mi – Olivier Messiaen

Olivier Messiaen, French composer:

Olivier Messiaen was born in Avignon on December 10th, 1908 and died on April 27th, 1992 in Clichy-la-Garenne. As his father enlisted during the World War I, Olivier Messiaen discovered the arts thanks to his mother Cécile Sauvage, a poet.

Olivier M. took his first steps as an autodidact: he composed his first opus for piano with no help nor teaching, he learned to play the piano and to sight-read piano scores by himself.

Autodidact, Olivier Messiaen composed his first opus for piano by himself, which he learned piano, decrypted music scores. After that, in 1930, he joined the Paris Conservatoire where he won his First Prizes for fugue, counterpoint, history of music, accompanying, organ, improvisation and composition. He was appointed organist at the Eglise de la Sainte-Trinité in Paris, where he played and composed for organ. With the assistance of Yves Baudrier, Daniel Lesur, André Jolivet, Olivier Messiaen created Spirale of the « *Groupe Jeune France* » to protest against the neoclassical aesthetic of France that had lasted since the early 1920s.

The world of Olivier Messiaen and Poèmes pour Mi:

Olivier Messiaen comes up with innovative writing processes that include palindromic rhythms and limited transposition modes, a perfect depiction of what he called « *le charme des impossibilités* », (*charm of impossibilities*). He found this charm in a few mathematical impossibilities of the modal domain. He developed his intellectual synesthesia and believed that harmonic sounds and complementary colours shared an obvious intimacy. perceived colours between harmonics and complementary colours.

« *Colour is perhaps the most important element here. Harmonic colour first. It is obtained either by juxtaposing 'limited transposition modes' that give blue-purple, red-purple, orange, white and gold as in Paysage or by superposing these modes in a complex coloured motion* » (Olivier Messiaen about « *Poèmes pour Mi* »)

« *Poèmes pour Mi* » is a work dedicated to his first wife, Claire Delbos (Mi was Messiaen's affectionate nickname for her). This work operates symmetrically, by placing the Wife in the its center. For Olivier Messiaen, human love can not be separated from the love of God, « *it is a love beyond the body, beyond even the thoughts of the mind and expands on a cosmic scale.* »

Sylvia Cazeneuve and Poèmes pour Mi:

« *Poèmes pour Mi* » is a demanding work that requires special qualities, a great technical mastery and a thorough musical training to start with. It was composed for a great dramatic soprano with a deep voice and a wide ambitus. Sylvia Cazeneuve is familiar with Olivier Messiaen's writing system and she has vocal and musical capacities to pass on his music research and musical plastics.

« *Poèmes pour Mi* » lasts about 30 minutes. A presentation can be proposed in order to provide explanations about the work itself and help understand it.