

ABSTRACT

CREATIVE PROJECT: Olivier Messiaen's "Appel Interstellaire": The Influences of Birdsong and Its Technical Challenges on Horn

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This paper is a study of Olivier Messiaen's "Appel Interstellaire." Though its original context is as the sixth movement of *Des Canyons aux étoiles . . .*, it is more commonly performed outside *Des Canyons* as a solo movement for recital repertoire. This lack of context can jeopardize the player's rendering of what Messiaen originally intended for the piece. Therefore, it is important to investigate the understanding of the contextual reflection of "Appel Interstellaire" within *Des Canyons*.

Messiaen used his worship of nature and God to create his music. His experience in Catholicism often led him to find divine beauty within music. A large number of his melodies are derived from various birdsongs. In his book, *Langage Communicable*, Messiaen writes of a cryptomusical language in which he can derive rhythm and pitch from a set order of cryptology. These compositional practices and others can make the technical challenges of this piece rather staggering for the player. Messiaen makes full use of the French horn's technical ability to mimic birdsongs by including half-valved trills, large intervallic leaps, and flutter tongue.

This paper is broken up into three sections. The first section gives a brief

introduction into the musicological background of Messiaen. The second section investigates the origin of “Appel Interstellaire” and how it fits into *Des Canyons*. The third section explores important performance issues including an analysis from the perspective of bird-song quotation, ‘langage’ communicable, and returning chromaticism.