

Transpose this onto a religious plane: you have the harmonious silence of heaven.

2. "Vocalize, for the Angel Who Announces the End of Time." The first and third sections (both very brief) evoke the power of this mighty angel, crowned with a rainbow and clothed in a cloud, who places one foot on the sea and the other on the land. The "middle" [second section] evokes the palpable harmonies of heaven. In the piano: gentle cascades of blue-orange chords, encircling with their distant carillon the plainchant-like song of the violin and cello.

3. "Abyss of the Birds." Unaccompanied clarinet. The abyss is Time, with its weariness and gloom. The birds are the opposite of Time; they represent our longing for light, for stars, for rainbows, and for jubilant song!

4. "Interlude." Scherzo, in a more outgoing character than the other movements, yet related to them nevertheless by melodic "recalls."

5. "Praise to the Eternity of Jesus." Here, Jesus is considered the Word of God. A long phrase in the cello, inexorably slow, glorifies, with adoration and reverence, the eternity of this mighty yet gentle Word, "of which the ages never tire." The melody unfolds majestically, as if from a regal yet soft-colored horizon. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

6. "Dance of Fury, for the Seven Trumpets." Rhythmically, the most characteristic movement of this series. The four instruments in unison create the effect of gongs and trumpets (the first six trumpets of the Apocalypse followed by various calamities, the trumpet of the seventh angel announcing the fulfillment of the mystery of God). Use of added values, augmentation and diminution, and nonretrogradable rhythms. Music of stone, tremendous ringing granite; perpetual motion of steel, of enormous blocks of purple fury, of frozen intoxication. Listen, above all, to the terrifying fortissimo of the theme in augmentation and register alteration toward the end of the movement.

7. "Tangle of Rainbows, for the Angel Who Announces the End of Time." Certain passages here recall the second movement. The Angel full of might appears, and in particular the rainbow that crowns him (the rainbow, symbol of peace, of wisdom, and of every luminous sound

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The End of Time
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Appendix A

COMPOSER'S PREFACE

1. Subject of the Composition and Commentary on Each Movement

"And I saw another mighty angel coming down from heaven, wrapped in a cloud, with a rainbow on his head; his face was like the sun, and his legs like pillars of fire. . . . Setting his right foot on the sea and his left foot on the land. . . . and, standing on the sea and on the land, he raised his right hand toward Heaven and swore by He who lives forever and ever. . . . saying: 'There will be no more Time, but in the days when the seventh angel is to blow his trumpet, the mystery of God will be fulfilled.'"

Revelation of Saint John, chapter 10

Conceived and composed during my captivity, the *Quartet for the End of Time* was premiered in Stalag VIII A on 15 January 1941, by Jean Le Boulaire, violin; Henri Akoka, clarinet; Etienne Pasquier, cello; and myself at the piano. The piece was directly inspired by the above passage from Revelation. Its musical language is essentially ethereal, spiritual, Catholic. The modes, realizing melodically and harmonically a sort of tonal ubiquity, bring the listener closer to infinity, to eternity in space. The special rhythms, independent of the meter, powerfully contribute to the effect of banishing the temporal. (But given the awesomeness of the subject, all of the above serves merely as inarticulate and tentative explanation!)

This *Quartet* comprises eight movements. Why? Seven is the perfect number, the Creation in six days sanctified by the divine Sabbath; the seventh day of this repose extends into eternity and becomes the eighth day of eternal light, of unalterable peace.

1. "Crystal Liturgy." Between 3 and 4 o'clock in the morning, the birds awaken: a solo blackbird or nightingale improvises, surrounded by dustwhirls of sound, by a halo of harmonics lost high up in the trees.

and vibration]. In my dreams, I hear and see classified chords and melodies, common colors and forms; then, after this transitory stage, I pass into unreality and lose myself in a rapture to a whirling, a gyrating fusion of superhuman sound and color. These swords of fire, these pools of blue-orange lava, these shooting stars: this is the tangled skein, these are the rainbows!

8. "Praise to the Immortality of Jesus." Long solo for violin, the counterpart to the cello solo in the fifth movement. Why this second eulogy? It addresses more specifically the second aspect of Jesus: Jesus the Man, the Word made flesh, immortally resurrected, to impart us his life. This movement is pure love. The progressive ascent toward the extremely high register represents the ascension of man toward his Lord, of the son of God toward his Father, of deified Man toward Paradise.

—And I repeat again what I said earlier: "Given the awesomeness of the subject, all of the above serves merely as inarticulate and tentative explanation!"

II. *Brief Theory of My Rhythmic Language*

Here, as in my other compositions, I employ a special rhythmic language. In addition to my secret predilection for prime numbers (5, 7, 11, etc.), the notions of meter and tempo are replaced here by the feeling of a short note value (the sixteenth note, for example) and by its free multiplication; also by certain "rhythmic forms," such as: added values; augmentation and diminution; nonretrogradable rhythms; and rhythmic ostinato.

a) The added value. Short value, added to another rhythm, whether by a note, a rest, or a dot.

By a note: 

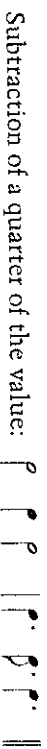
By a rest: 

By a dot: 

Ordinarily, as in the examples above, the rhythm is almost always immediately followed by the added value, without having been heard previously in its simple form.

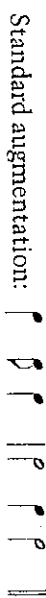
b) Augmentation or diminution. A rhythm may be immediately followed by its augmentation or diminution, following various forms; here are several examples (in each of which the first measure contains the normal rhythm, the second measure the augmentation or diminution):

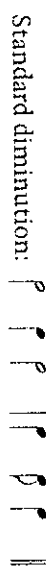
Addition of a third of the value: 

Subtraction of a quarter of the value: 

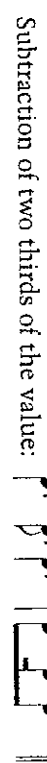
Addition of a dot: 

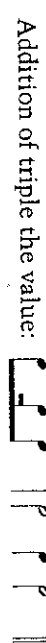
Subtraction of a dot: 

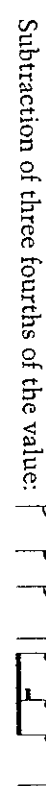
Standard augmentation: 

Standard diminution: 

Addition of double the value: 

Subtraction of two thirds of the value: 

Addition of triple the value: 

Subtraction of three fourths of the value: 

Inexact augmentations and diminutions can also be employed.

Example: 

This rhythm contains three eighth notes (standard diminution of three quarter notes), with a dot (added value), which results in an inexact diminution.

c) Nonretrogradable rhythms. Whether read from right to left or from left to right, the order of their values remains the same. This feature ex-

