

Olivier Messiaen and the Music of Time

Olivier Messiaen was a French composer, organist, and teacher. He is considered one of the most important composers of the 20th century, and his music is often characterized by its use of complex rhythms and harmonies, as well as its frequent use of birdsong and other natural sounds.



Olivier Messiaen and the Music of Time by Mike Marqusee

★★★★☆ 4.7 out of 5

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Messiaen was born in Avignon, France, on December 10, 1908. He began studying music at the Paris Conservatory at the age of 11, and he quickly became one of the most promising students in his class. After graduating from the Conservatory, Messiaen worked as an organist and choirmaster at several churches in Paris. He also began to compose his own music, and in 1930 he had his first major success with the premiere of his symphonic poem, *Les Offrandes oubliées*.

In the 1940s, Messiaen began to develop his own unique style of music. He was influenced by a wide variety of sources, including Gregorian chant, Hindu music, and the music of birds. Messiaen's music is often

characterized by its use of complex rhythms and harmonies, as well as its frequent use of birdsong and other natural sounds. He also developed a number of new musical techniques, such as the use of modes of limited transposition and the use of non-retrogradable rhythms.

Messiaen's music has been praised for its originality and beauty. He is considered one of the most important composers of the 20th century, and his music has had a significant influence on many other composers.

Messiaen died in Paris on April 27, 1992. He was 83 years old.

Messiaen's Music of Time

Messiaen's music is often described as being "timeless." This is because Messiaen was not interested in writing music that was simply fashionable or popular. He wanted to write music that would last for centuries, and that would continue to be performed and enjoyed by generations to come.

To achieve this, Messiaen used a number of compositional techniques that helped to create a sense of timelessness. For example, he often used modes of limited transposition, which are scales that have only a limited number of notes that can be used. This helped to create a sense of stasis and permanence in his music.

Messiaen also used non-retrogradable rhythms, which are rhythms that sound the same when played backwards. This helped to create a sense of cyclical time, and it also gave his music a sense of inevitability.

Finally, Messiaen often used birdsong and other natural sounds in his music. This helped to connect his music to the natural world, and it also

gave it a sense of timelessness.

Messiaen's music of time is a unique and powerful body of work. It is music that is both beautiful and challenging, and it is music that will continue to be performed and enjoyed for generations to come.

Olivier Messiaen was one of the most important composers of the 20th century. His music is characterized by its originality, beauty, and timelessness. Messiaen's music has had a significant influence on many other composers, and it continues to be performed and enjoyed by audiences around the world.



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