

RICE UNIVERSITY

**Dwelling in the Secret:
André Jolivet's *Ascèses* in the Context of his Life and Philosophy**

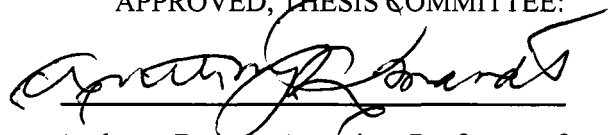
by

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A THESIS SUBMITTED
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

Doctor of Musical Arts

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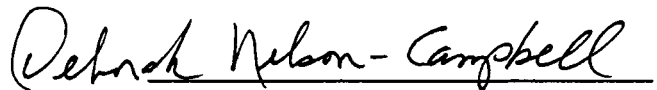
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ABSTRACT

Dwelling in the Secret:

André Jolivet's *Ascèses* in the Context of his Life and Philosophy

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Michelle A. Cheramy

This document presents a case for viewing *Ascèses* (1967) for solo flute/clarinet as a paradigmatic work in the compositional output of André Jolivet, reflective of his aesthetic and philosophical ideals as they had developed by the 1960s. As such, the work serves as a touchstone for a deeper understanding of the aesthetic and philosophical stance from which Jolivet was working during the last decade of his life.

Many aspects of *Ascèses* suggest this interpretation of the work. The piece bears many striking similarities to one of Jolivet's self-identified paradigmatic works of the 1930s, the *Cinq Incantations* for solo flute. In addition, the unaccompanied monophonic medium is one in which Jolivet did not work for thirty years, making his return to it in the 1960s particularly striking.

The document positions *Ascèses* within the biographical context of the final fifteen years of Jolivet's life and suggests that Jolivet's activities of this time in his life and career support a reading of *Ascèses* as a defining composition. The document also thoroughly explores the state of Jolivet's aesthetics and philosophy by the 1960s,

presenting a unified model of Jolivet's philosophy from which *Ascèses* can be seen to have sprung, and suggesting ways in which *Ascèses* reveals the strength of certain later influences on Jolivet's thought. The extra-musical materials of the work are considered for the ways in which they confirm and expand the understanding of Jolivet's worldview as presented. The document concludes with a detailed consideration of the ways in which Jolivet translates his late aesthetic ideals into compositional practice, and the ways in which *Ascèses* reflects, at a deep structural level, the most important of them.

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INTRODUCTION

It has been more than thirty years since the death of French composer André Jolivet, a man who, during his lifetime, was a well regarded and frequently performed composer and a prominent member of France's musical community. Given this fact, the amount of scholarship from the last three decades that is devoted to Jolivet's life and analysis of his works is still surprisingly small; so small, in fact, that nearly every writer who has engaged in assessment and consideration of Jolivet is compelled to note the fact in their own work. One may read that as a justification for the writer's own undertakings. It may also be, however, simple wonderment that the work of a composer of such skill and depth could for so long remain relatively unexplored.

The last ten years *have* seen a marked increase in Jolivet publications and dissertations, and much factual information is now available on the excellent website of the "Friends of André Jolivet" Society.¹ Despite this fact, however, many aspects of Jolivet's work have not been explored in the literature. For example, there has been substantial investigation of the early influences that helped to shape Jolivet's musical language and aesthetic outlook but relatively little that assesses possible later influences. Similarly, there has been some assessment of Jolivet's later musical language, but not nearly as much analysis of later works as of earlier ones.² The *New Groves* article on

¹ The Jolivet Association website is available in both English and French, and is accessible at <www.jolivet.asso.fr>. It includes an excellent bibliography of Jolivet-related writings.

² Bridget Conrad's Ph.D. dissertation, "The Sources of Jolivet's Musical Language and his Relationships with Varèse and Messiaen" (City University of New York, 1994), is the most comprehensive

Jolivet is a paradigmatic example of this larger problem: of the eight paragraphs devoted to Jolivet, fully six of them deal with his life and work up to 1945, while only two are devoted to the almost thirty remaining years. Because of the relatively little investigation of later influences, what analysis there is of later works tends to situate them within the context of the earlier influences only. While it is certainly true that earlier influences remained a force in Jolivet's worldview, assessing Jolivet's later works in the context of events and influences of his later life would seem a logical next step.

The present study is a beginning to such an assessment. Since a comprehensive evaluation of Jolivet's late compositions would require a document of much greater scope than this inquiry, this document will focus on the text and context of one of Jolivet's late works, *Ascèses* (1967) for solo flute/clarinet. Since the more than thirty works of Jolivet which post-date 1960 include numerous substantial chamber works, several concertos, his third symphony and two significant works combining orchestra and voice(s), one may be justified in questioning a focus on a relatively short (twenty minute) monophonic composition. Far from being limiting, however, *Ascèses* is a particularly good work to choose for this investigation because much about it suggests that it is a potent articulation of Jolivet's core beliefs and ideals (both philosophical and compositional) in the last decade of his life.

A primary factor which suggests that *Ascèses* may be a paradigmatic work in Jolivet's oeuvre is the similarities it bears to several of Jolivet's compositions from the 1930s. Jolivet's 1930s compositions are generally regarded as seminal in his output,

discussion of early influences. One of the few assessments of his later music is Benjamin Tucker's DM dissertation, "Atonality, modality, and incantation in two works for trumpet by André Jolivet, with a discussion of his technical and aesthetic principles," (University of Arizona, 1994). On the basis of the comparison in that study, Tucker posits a fourth style period for Jolivet.

works in which Jolivet emerged as an important and unique new musical voice. Among these important early works are several “incantations” for solo flute: a set written in 1936, entitled *Cinq Incantations*, and a single incantation written in 1937.³ For decades after the composition of these seminal pieces Jolivet wrote no other music for unaccompanied monophonic instrument; his return to the medium in the 1960s is therefore striking and important.⁴ *Ascèses*, dating from 1967, is in fact Jolivet’s first unaccompanied wind work since 1937, and the only such work in his catalogue other than the *Incantations*. Each movement of *Ascèses* bears a brief quotation at its conclusion (from Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, Max-Pol Fouchet and the ancient Egyptian Insinger Papyrus), epigraphs which are reminiscent of the descriptive titles given to each *Incantation*. The designation of *Ascèses* for solo wind instrument and the use of the quotations are both strong and seemingly deliberate connections to the earlier pieces for solo flute and since those earlier works, in their musical and extra-musical materials, were a bold statement of personal conviction, the listener is led to draw the same conclusion regarding *Ascèses*: that they are Jolivet’s companion statement to the *Incantations*, an end-of-career declaration of his ideals.

A second element that suggests the richness of *Ascèses* as a starting point for a consideration of Jolivet’s late aesthetic stance and its relationship to his compositional craft are the quotations themselves. Jolivet himself here points us in the direction of his philosophical and aesthetic preoccupations of the mid-60s, evoking a fascinating web of

³ The set, *Cinq Incantations*, has received a fair amount of analytical attention to date in the literature. Discussions of it are included (in greater or lesser measure) in Conrad, “The Sources of Jolivet’s Musical Language;” Katherine Kemler, “Is there Magic in Jolivet’s Music?” *The Music Review* 44, no. 2 (March 1983): 121-35; and Gérard Michel, “André Jolivet: Essai sur un système esthétique musical,” *La Revue musicale* 204 (January 1947): 8-26.

⁴ Jolivet also wrote works for solo string instruments during the 1960s: *Suite en Concert* for solo cello (1965), *Cinq églogues* for solo viola (1967) and *Suite rhapsodique* (1965) for solo violin.

ideas that encompass twentieth century theology, philosophy, scientific theory, contemporary French poetry and culture, and the ancient writings of a civilization thousands of years old.

For these reasons, the ensuing document will focus its attentions on *Ascèses*, and will present a case for viewing it as a work which expresses in microcosm Jolivet's worldview as it had developed by the 1960s. The document will begin by presenting more fully the case for the importance of *Ascèses* in Jolivet's output, and by considering the questions raised by the extra-musical materials. A biographical context for the work will next be presented, suggesting that Jolivet's activities of the last fifteen years of his life support a reading of *Ascèses* as a defining composition. The third chapter will explore the state of Jolivet's aesthetics and philosophy by the 1960s, presenting a unified model of Jolivet's philosophy from which *Ascèses* can be seen to have sprung, and suggesting ways in which *Ascèses* reflects the strength of certain later influences on Jolivet's thought. The fourth chapter considers in more detail the extra-musical materials of *Ascèses* and the ways in which they confirm and expand our understanding of Jolivet's worldview as presented in Chapter 3. The document concludes with a detailed consideration of the ways in which Jolivet translates his late aesthetic ideals into compositional practice, and the ways in which *Ascèses* reflects, at a deep structural level, the most important of them.

Ascèses, despite its apparent compositional simplicity, is a work rich in meaning in the catalogue of André Jolivet, and thus may serve as a touchstone for a deeper understanding of the aesthetic and philosophical stance from which Jolivet was working during the last decade of his life. Always seeking to clarify his vision and its musical

expression, the following pages will demonstrate that Jolivet achieved, in *Ascèses*, a striking unity of music and thought.

CHAPTER 1

Ascèses: Implications and Inquiries

André Jolivet was a composer whose ideals and personal convictions were, throughout his life, integral to his compositional work as well as being manifest in his professional activities and associations. The centrality of Jolivet's ideals to his work as a composer is apparent in numerous details of his career. One example of this is the fact that, from his earliest years as a professional musician, Jolivet aligned himself with colleagues and associations that mirrored his own principles. In the 1930s these associations included the groups *La Spirale*, (dedicated to the performance of new chamber music), and *Jeune France* (dedicated to new orchestral music).¹ Later in his life (1959), Jolivet founded the *Centre Français d'Humanisme Musical*, a summer academy which brought together young composers with thinkers from a diversity of disciplines.

A second proof of the importance of ideals in the work of Jolivet is the fact that Jolivet rarely spoke of compositional craft without also referencing philosophical ideas, connecting the art of musical creation with larger concerns of humanity. For Jolivet, musical composition was a question not just of aesthetics but also of ethics, a sentiment he expressed at more than one point in his career. In discussing the underlying governing principles of music in 1937, for example, Jolivet stated that "Artists have had the

¹ *Jeune France* was founded in 1936 with composers Olivier Messiaen, Yves Baudrier and Daniel Lesur. It was an ideologically driven collaboration dedicated to the presentation of contemporary orchestral music and striving to be (as their manifesto said) "...as removed from academic conventionalism as from revolutionary conventionalism." This stance meant that, on principal, the composers were opposed to neoclassicism and the aesthetic of composers such as *Les Six* on the one hand, and to twelve-tone composition on the other. The manifesto of the group espouses basic humanistic ideals, which in the case of Jolivet echo throughout his life's work.

revelation of this principle when they felt that the problem was not one of *aesthetics*, but *ethics*...”² Similarly, in 1957, Jolivet wrote that “...the [musical] work...was an aggregate of the aesthetic principles that had presided over the initial and *unconscious* inspiration of this work. All human aesthetic therefore necessarily includes/contains an ethic.”³

Jolivet thus positions musical composition as an activity which expresses (consciously or not) the ethics of the composer. Jolivet moves music from the purely aesthetic realm, and makes clear that his work may be viewed not simply an articulation of his aesthetic values but as an articulation of the larger constellation of his beliefs. As he stated in 1937, quoting Charles Koechlin, “A composer writes the music that he is.”⁴ This is an open invitation to the outside observer to examine the music of Jolivet in order to understand more thoroughly the entirety of Jolivet.

The case for Ascèses as a paradigmatic work: Relationship to the Incantations

As mentioned in the introduction, the development of Jolivet’s musical language and his early articulated aesthetic position have been well explored by previous scholars, while his later works and philosophy have been treated almost not at all.⁵ This gap in the

² André Jolivet, “Genèse d’un renouveau musical” (Genesis of a Musical Renewal), (handwritten lecture notes for a lecture presented at the Sorbonne, January 1937), I/3, Archives André Jolivet, Paris; quoted in Bridget Conrad, “The Sources of Jolivet’s Musical Language and his Relationships with Varèse and Messiaen” (Ph.D. diss., City University of New York, 1994), 226. In this document translations from the original French are by the quoted author in the case of secondary sources, by me in the case of directly quoted materials.

³ André Jolivet, “Postlude,” *Zodiaque*, no. 33 (1957): 42.

⁴ Jolivet, “Genèse,” IV/1a; quoted in Conrad, 238. The original quotation is from Charles Koechlin “De quelques horizons nouveaux,” *La Revue musicale* 162 (January 1936): 26.

⁵ See also the bibliography for other writings on Jolivet’s earlier music. The fact that his later works and aesthetics remain largely unexplored may in part be explained by the fact that source material has, in the past, not been easily accessible to researchers. Much of what Jolivet said about music exists in unpublished interviews and manuscripts, and much of his personal collection of papers remained uncatalogued until the 1990s. Materials are privately held, and while access to researchers is graciously granted as Jolivet’s daughter, Mme. Christine Jolivet, has time to accommodate, access is not as free as in

literature is begging to be filled, for if a composer writes the “music that he is,” then a greater understanding of Jolivet’s late music promises to provide us with a greater understanding of Jolivet himself.

Ascèses, dating from 1967, is a particularly compelling place to begin in considering Jolivet’s later works, as there are many things about it that suggest that it is a potent articulation of Jolivet’s core beliefs and ideals in the last decade of his life. As was noted in the introduction, *Ascèses* bears numerous similarities to a much earlier work, the *Cinq Incantations*. The importance of this connection resides in the position which Jolivet himself accorded to the *Incantations* as a paradigmatic statement of his early musical aesthetic, and the strong and direct links that his discussion of this and three other 1930s pieces forged between what he thought and how he wrote.

The articulation of the connection between Jolivet’s philosophy and his music, and the conviction that philosophical ideas were central to his work as a composer, was first expressed in print in 1946 in a now very well known and often quoted article in *Contrepoints* entitled “Réponse à une enquête: André Jolivet, ou la magie expérimentale.” (Response to an inquiry: André Jolivet or experimental magic).⁶ In this article Jolivet and several other French composers were asked to explain the “canon” of their musical aesthetics. Jolivet answered that he had been clearly stating the canon of his musical aesthetic since 1935, and doing so in two ways: first, by affirming the *philosophical idea* that he sought to “...return to music its ancient and original meaning,

an archival collection housed in a library. Jolivet’s collection of books and journals is housed at the Médiatèque Mahler in Paris, while his scores are in the Bibliothèque Nationale, accessible through arrangement with Mme. C. Jolivet.

⁶ André Jolivet, “Réponse à une enquête: André Jolivet ou la magie expérimentale,” *Contrepoints* 1 (1946); reprinted as “Une enquête” in *La Revue musicale. Le Musicien dans la cité*, 306-307 (special double issue, 1977): 19-22. Page citations in this document will be to the reprinted article.

when it was the magical and incantatory expression of the religiosity of human societies;”⁷ and, second, through *the music he was writing*, citing in particular *Danse incantatoire*, *Cinq Incantations* and *Mana* (all 1936) and the *Cinq danses rituelles* (1938).

These early comments have some implications for analysts. In the “Réponse” article Jolivet clearly defined his musical canon as existing on two planes: the plane of the abstract intellectual ideal - the “why” - and the plane of the concrete realization of that ideal – the “what.” As we shall see when looking at his 1960s writings, the relationship between these two elements of his work remained absolutely central to Jolivet’s work as a composer to the end of his life. Jolivet never discussed compositional technique without also speaking of the role and purpose of the resulting musical expression (indeed, he tended to speak less about what he called the “recipe” of compositional practice and more about the why behind the practice⁸); because of this, any consideration of Jolivet’s musical product – the “what” – is enhanced by understanding the underlying philosophical influences - the “why.” It is for this reason that the discussion in this study takes a dual approach to Jolivet’s music, examining both the aesthetic (“why”) and technical (“how”) elements.

Ascèses issues an especially persuasive invitation to consider the “why” as that question relates to Jolivet’s later works because of the numerous similarities between it and the *Cinq Incantations*. That work for solo flute was identified by Jolivet as

⁷ Jolivet, “Une enquête”, 19.

⁸ For example, “Naturally, to have a successful meal, one must do some cooking. But it so happens that I want less than ever to talk about recipes, means, ingredients, for I find that one talks about them too much these days. Only one thing counts, and that is the result.” André Jolivet, “Concerto pour ondes Martenot et orchestre,” interview by Bernard Gavoty for lecture-performance given to Jeunesses Musicales Françaises, January 1955, Archives André Jolivet, Paris; quoted in Conrad, 63.

expressing the very core of his musical canon, and remained the sole substantial work for monophonic instrument in Jolivet's catalogue until the 1960s.⁹ Given the importance that Jolivet accorded the earlier works, his return to the unaccompanied medium in the 1960s is very striking. *Ascèses* takes on particular significance when one considers that it is the *only* work in his catalogue, other than the *Incantations* (the set of five and the single movement), for unaccompanied wind instrument.¹⁰ *Ascèses* and the *Cinq Incantations* bear other surface similarities as well, including the number of movements in each work and the association of a text of some sort with each movement. In all the *Incantations*, the text takes the form of titles which clarify the desired effect of each incantation, or prayer: for example, that the negotiations be peaceful, that the child be a son. In *Ascèses*, the text takes the form of quotations at the end of each movement (see below for texts and translations). Like the titles of the *Incantations*, these also seem to imply something of the spiritual - one quote referring to the gods, another being drawn from a Catholic theologian (Teilhard de Chardin). The title of the work, "Asceticisms," further reinforces this spiritual sense. Although this word is not frequently used in English, extrapolating from the adjective "ascetic," and the practices of someone who is considered an ascetic, the title may be understood to refer to deprivations of some sort practiced in order to enhance one's receptivity of the divine – spiritual practices, in other words.¹¹

⁹ As mentioned above, there is also a single *Incantation* which dates from 1937. The observations which follow regarding the *Cinq Incantations* are also true for that work.

¹⁰ *Ascèses*, which is designated for solo flute or clarinet, is not the first such work of that decade; Jolivet wrote pieces for solo violin, cello and viola as well. *Ascèses* is, perhaps more significantly, his *last* work in this medium.

¹¹ The title will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 4.

The similarities between *Ascèses* and the *Incantations* seem too numerous and too significant to be accidental: by drawing direct parallels between the works through performance medium, basic structure, and spiritual overtones in the texts associated with them, it feels as if Jolivet is making deliberate reference to the earlier work in the creation of the latter. Since the *Incantations* were identified by Jolivet himself as a declaration of his most important ideals, *Ascèses* are thus positioned as important companion pieces to the *Cinq Incantations*, and may perhaps be understood as a declaration of his ideals in the same way that the *Cinq Incantations* had been thirty years earlier.

Extra-Musical Materials and Musical Language: Questions and Implications

Having thus been drawn to consider *Ascèses* as a potentially important landmark in Jolivet's later compositions one is next immediately drawn to the extra-musical materials associated with the piece, for the very presence of extra-musical materials implies that the work is a philosophical statement of some sort. The material in question includes the title itself, *Ascèses*, and the single lines of poetry which are appended as epigrams to the end of each movement. The poetry, with translations, appears below.

- | | |
|--|--|
| I. (Pour que demeure le secret
Nous tairons jusqu'au silence)
(Max-Pol Fouchet) | <i>In order that the secret remains
We hush to silence.</i> |
| II. (Tu surgis de l'absence...) (Max-Pol Fouchet) | <i>You arise from absence...</i> |
| III. (Matière, triple abîme des étoiles,
des atomes et des générations.)
(Pierre Teilhard de Chardin) | <i>Matter, triple abyss of stars,
of atoms and of generations.</i> |
| IV. (Le dieu créé les rêves pour indiquer
la route au dormeur dont les yeux sont
dans l'obscurité.) (Papyrus Insinger) | <i>The god created dreams to show
the way to the sleeper whose
eyes are in darkness.</i> |

V. (O femme qui ne sais que tu
portais en toi le monde.)
(Max-Pol Fouchet)

*O woman who knows only
you carried within you the world.*

These quotations are tantalizing and somewhat obscure hints at Jolivet's thinking. (The obscurity may in part be deliberate; Jolivet was fond of quoting Paul Valéry: "Hide your god, for he is strongest when he is secret, weakest when others know him."¹²) The title and poetry raises numerous questions. For example:

What is an "asceticism" and how might we understand that concept
musically?

Who are the authors of this material, and why might Jolivet have been
attracted to their work?

What is the relationship of the poetry to the title of the work?

What is the "secret" which we wish to have remain, and the "you" who
will arise?

Why did Jolivet choose to link these quotations to the music? What
resonance did these images of silence, emptiness, abyss, darkness
etc. have for Jolivet, and what are the implications for the overall
"meaning" of the piece?

What constellation of associations might these quotations have had for
Jolivet and/or a contemporaneous French listener?

What is the relationship between these extra-musical references and
Jolivet's aesthetic and philosophy of the time?

¹² According to Hilda Jolivet in "André Jolivet," *Zodiaque. Homage à André Jolivet*, no. 119 (1979): 15.

The answers to these and other questions can really be only speculation, but consideration of them in this study will nonetheless provide some insight into Jolivet's later period work.

The musical language of *Ascèses* also invites consideration, particularly if one compares it superficially with the *Incantations*. On the whole, the writing in *Ascèses* is more sweepingly lyrical, more modal and less repetitive than in the earlier, canonical, work. Does this imply a shift in Jolivet's compositional approach, or does the language of *Ascèses* simply represent different elements of a unified aesthetic?

There are numerous implications in the music and extra-musical materials of *Ascèses*. If Jolivet was writing the "music that he is," then *Ascèses* implies a man interested in spirituality; in essentials; in connecting the work and writing of others to his own work (which further implies a belief in the importance of such connections); in the power of a single voice; in the power of lyricism; in mysticism. In short, Jolivet seems to be implying a context within which to see his music, and supplying keys to understanding how his late musical method and philosophy are interconnected.

Is *Ascèses* emblematic of Jolivet's worldview in the last decade of his life? Through its relationship with the *Incantations* Jolivet positions it as such, and provides many hints in the score as to what that worldview might encompass. Because the threads of Jolivet's life, composing and philosophical thinking are so closely woven, the most complete and meaningful interpretation of *Ascèses* will be possible from within the context of Jolivet's life and his aesthetic and philosophical stance as he had come to articulate it in later years. The ensuing chapters will explore that context and provide a

backdrop against which to assess not only *Ascèses* but also Jolivet's musical canon as it had evolved by the 1960s.

CHAPTER 2

Biographical Context: Jolivet as Activist, Humanist, Idealist

Ascèses dates from 1967, just seven years before Jolivet's death in 1974.¹ A professor at the Paris Conservatory by this time, Jolivet was a busy composer working in a variety of media and genres and enjoying success both domestically and abroad. The most immediate context of that time in Jolivet's life is not particularly suggestive; a snapshot of Jolivet's life in 1967 reveals a man who seems to have reached a point of much deserved respect in his career, and to be enjoying the fruits of his thirty-five years of labor as a composer. The larger context of Jolivet's life during his last fifteen years, however, is much more suggestive, and supports a reading of *Ascèses* as an articulation of Jolivet's central ideals. Viewing the final period of Jolivet's career as a whole one can see that *Ascèses* was written during a period in Jolivet's life in which he was once again (as he had been in the 1930s, when he wrote the first works that he identified as paradigmatic) engaged in a variety of public activities that strongly reconfirmed his most central concerns. These years contrast sharply with the decade and a half that preceded them, during which Jolivet was more focused in a single endeavor. His life and activities during the last years of his life were reflective of the things he held most dear and, just as the activities of his life oriented themselves towards an expression of his fundamental beliefs, so too may his music reflect them.²

¹ Jolivet was born in Paris, 8 August 1905.

² The factual evidence of Jolivet's life presented in this chapter was gathered from a multiplicity of sources, including the Friends of Jolivet website, Tucker's dissertation, Conrad's dissertation, *Avec...André Jolivet* by Hilda Jolivet and the collection of essays *André Jolivet, Portraits*, ed. Lucie Kayas and Laetitia

The beginning of the final phase of Jolivet's career was marked by a significant turning point in his professional activities. From 1945 to 1959 Jolivet had served as music director of the *Comédie Française*, a demanding job that involved composing, arranging, and conducting music for more than thirty productions each month. In 1959, after a very successful tenure at the *Comédie*, Jolivet left the theater and branched out into other undertakings. These included a government appointment as advisor to the also newly-appointed Minister of Cultural Affairs André Malraux, and the founding of the *Centre Français d'Humanisme Musical* in Aix-en-Provence. Later in the decade Jolivet also accepted a teaching position at the Paris Conservatory. These three major projects underline the importance that Jolivet accorded to the composer's responsibility to his society and fellow humans, his strong belief in a humanist approach to thinking about and creating music, and his desire to pass on these ideals to the next generation of composers.

Jolivet as Cultural Leader

The date of Jolivet's 1959 government appointment coincides with the beginning of the Fifth Republic in France and some important changes in the French government offices which had responsibility for music and culture. By accepting a government appointment at this time Jolivet was embracing the responsibility of playing a significant role in the shaping of new cultural policy. The significance of this decision is more easily grasped when one considers the dramatic changes that cultural policy in France

Chassain-Dolliou (Arles: Actes Sud, 1994). A basic chronology of Jolivet's life is available at <www.jolivet.asso.fr>, and a brief biographical sketch was published in *Tempo* shortly after Jolivet's death (Brigitte Schiffer, "André Jolivet", *Tempo* 112 (March 1975): 13-16).

was undergoing at this time and recalls some of the concurrent developments in the Parisian musical milieu.

In the spring of 1958 Charles de Gaulle had been reinstalled leader of France and, after having a new constitution approved by a vote of the French people in September, immediately began a number of government reforms. One such reform was the creation of a Ministry of Cultural Affairs and the appointment of writer André Malraux as minister. The creation of this ministry was in large measure a reaction to the decline in the consumption and production of culture throughout the 1950s. In the case of music, for example, concert audiences were between fifty and sixty-five percent of what they had previously been, the number of orchestral musicians in Paris had shrunk from 7000 to 2000, and instrument production and music publishing had declined sharply.³ Private patronage of music had also seriously eroded, while state support of musical organizations was inadequate.⁴ In 1959 the government decided to take steps to address these issues, and thus the Ministry was born.

Declines notwithstanding, this new state agency came into being during a particularly dynamic time of French musical history. For students of music history, the mention of 1950s Paris immediately evokes the towering figures of Boulez and Stockhausen and the rise to dominance of the modernist aesthetic and compositional practices such as integral serialism. In 1954, with private sponsorship, Boulez had founded the *Domaine Musicale* for the presentation of contemporary music, the most innovative of which was not finding a home elsewhere in Paris. Boulez became a very powerful and influential figure in Paris, and by the end of the decade there was a general

³ Jann Pasler, "Paris," *Grove Music Online* ed. L. Macy (accessed April 26, 2005), <<http://www.grovemusic.com/shared/views/article.html?section=music.40089.7.4#music.40089.7.4>>

⁴ Even by 1963 only 23 associations were receiving state subsidies; "Paris," *Grove Music Online*.

sense that the only contemporary music that was deemed “worthy” was that which adhered to Boulez’s ideals. French musicologist François Porcile has called this Parisian phenomenon “serial tyranny,” a state of affairs which of course posed difficulties for composers who did not work in Boulez’s idiom. One composer remembers the atmosphere in Paris thus:

The atmosphere was harshly branded by anathemas: all musicians who had not crossed the threshold of the series were useless! and all other ways were presented by the musical Vatican as backwards because chained to the past.⁵

The relationship of the State to contemporary French art music production was, at this time, rather uneasy. Prior to the creation of the new Ministry, there had been extremely cautious support of the new generation of composers represented by Boulez.⁶ Even after the creation of the new ministry the government tended to be quite conservative in its view of contemporary music. Nevertheless, there were increases in state support; the Domaine, for example, received an amount five times its previous grant for the 1960-61 concert season.⁷

Thus when Jolivet stepped out of his role as music director at the *Comédie* he stepped directly into a role which offered him the opportunity to influence the creation and dissemination of French music in a way that had not existed before 1959. No doubt this appealed to the idealist in him which had always firmly believed that music has a crucial role to play in society. Jolivet had been espousing that view from the 1930s,

⁵ André Riotte in chapter “Témoignages,” *André Jolivet, Portraits*, ed. Lucie Kayas and Laetitia Chassain-Dolliou (Paris: Actes Sud, 1994), 140.

⁶ For example, the Domaine received as its first grant in 1955 only 5% of its budget. François Porcile, *Les conflits de la musique française (1940-1965)*, (Paris: Éditions Fayard, 2001), 191.

⁷ Porcile, 191. In the area of commissioning music there were, unfortunately, few gains made under Malraux. Commissions were erratic; music tended to be treated as a “secondary art” that was supported with a distracted hand and called upon mainly for important events (Porcile, 311).

when he wrote of musicians being able to “...seize their prerogatives and take an active part in the life of society, rather than working only for a chancey posterity.”⁸ Jolivet acted as a technical advisor to Malraux for three years (from 1959 to 1962) but unfortunately, beyond this bare fact, there is currently no further information available regarding Jolivet’s involvement in the Ministry. His involvement with government planning continued for a further three years, however, for in 1962 he accepted another appointment, this time to the Commissions for the IVth and Vth Plans. Jolivet participated in the work of a national commission struck to study musical issues from its inception in 1962 until it reported in 1965.⁹

It was not only to government agencies that Jolivet willingly devoted his time: the 1960s in general saw Jolivet participating in a wide variety of organizations and activities. In 1962 he was a member of the jury for the Prix de Rome, a very prestigious honor. He served as president of the venerable Concerts Lamoureux from 1963 to 1968¹⁰, and in 1970 took the position of Vice-president of the *Comité National de la musique*, an organization which he had helped to found in 1957. In addition, he was made Honorary President of the musicians’ union in 1965 (*Syndicat National des Artistes musiciens*). Christine Jolivet, André Jolivet’s daughter, posits that her father’s willingness to participate in the work of a large variety of institutions and organizations during his

⁸ André Jolivet, “La Musique: plaid pour le vif,” *La Nouvelle Saison* 2/7 (July 1939), 404-5; reprinted in Hilda Jolivet *Avec... André Jolivet* (Paris: Flammarion, 1978), 110.

⁹ These “Plans” were yet another example of French government centralization. In 1946 the Commissariat Générale du Plan had been created to address, on a national level, issues such as post-war economic recovery and housing. In 1962 a national commission to study musical issues was struck, and Jolivet participated in its work until it reported in 1965. For general information on the “plans” see Tyler Stovall, *France Since the Second World War*, Seminar Studies in History, Clive Emsley and Gordon Martel, general eds. (Harlow: Pearson Education, 2002), 29. For information on the commission on music see François Lesure, “France,” *Grove Music Online* <<http://www.grovemusic.com/shared/views/article.html?section=music.40051.1.5.2#music.40051.1.5.2>>

¹⁰ This concert series was founded in 1881.

lifetime was motivated primarily by his desire to defend the music of his time and, more particularly, to protect the artist. “An important part of his non-compositional activities [activités extra-créatrices] was devoted to the defense of the musician in society.”¹¹

Identified as a something of a leftist early in his life, Jolivet’s activities in his last decade also reflected such an orientation.

Jolivet’s leftist tendencies and belief in the importance of social engagement continued unabated through the later years of the decade. On May 13, 1968 Jolivet, then honorary President of the musician’s union, led members of the *Syndicat* in the demonstration march that started at the Place de la République and ended at the Place Denfert-Rochereau. This action was part of the historic events of May 1968, which began with student protests, expanded into riots, street blockades and clashes with police, and then spread into generalized anti-government feeling supported by the trade unions.¹² Given his university and union affiliations (Jolivet was, at this time, a professor at the Conservatory) it is hardly surprising that Jolivet participated in these activities. According to one student, Philip Drogoz, Jolivet also encouraged his students to be involved in the protests.¹³

The last fifteen years of Jolivet’s life were a time of increased social engagement on the part of the composer, particularly as compared to the previous fourteen years. Through his work as a civil servant and his participation in musical organizations in various capacities Jolivet signaled his belief in the importance of the role of the artist in

¹¹ Lucie Kayas and Laetitia Chassain-Dolliou, “Évocation: Entretien avec Christine Erlih-Jolivet,” in *Portraits*, 24. C. Jolivet cites an interesting example of Jolivet having worked to have musicians receive official Social Security recognition after the war. She also mentions that he served on the commission of the Office Radiodiffusion-Télévision de France, but I have found no other such reference.

¹² The events of May 1968 are an important part of modern French history, and another interesting case of the role of intellectuals in that history. For an excellent, brief but thorough discussion see Stovall, 70-75.

¹³ Conrad, 45.

society; his numerous activities are a clear indication that Jolivet was a man for whom beliefs are to be put into practice. Considered from this perspective, the 1960s very much parallel the 1930s in Jolivet's life, for during that decade as well Jolivet was an active participant in numerous musical organizations (*La Spirale* and *Jeune France*, for example) and a vocal advocate for artists' taking an active role in society (see "Plaid pour le vif", cited above). Both decades seemed to be for Jolivet a time of reconfirmation of central ideals. While not every composition written during either of these decades may be of particular significance in Jolivet's oeuvre, there is a general orientation towards idealistic action during these years. Noting that Jolivet composed his first self-identified "canonic" works during the 1930s, the parallel in social engagement is suggestive for works such as *Ascèses*, written in the 1960s.

Jolivet as Humanist Mentor

Jolivet's idealism led him to another major undertaking in 1959: the founding of the *Centre Français d'Humanisme Musical*. The *Centre*, which ran for five seasons, was a summer institute for young composers which brought a new generation of creators together with a broad diversity of musicians and thinkers. Set against the other events of the European compositional world of the 1950s (Boulez's move towards total serialization (*Structures Ia* and *Ib*, 1951-2), Stockhausen's experiments in electronic sound generation (*Studie I*, 1953), the influence of Cage and the shift to open form and aleatory in performance (Stockhausen, *Klavierstücke XI*, 1956), Berio's continued expansion of vocal and instrumental techniques (*Sequenza I*, 1958), the imitation of Boulez's Paris *Domaine Musical* concerts (founded 1954/55) in places such as Milan

(*Incontri Musicali* founded by Berio and Maderna, 1956)), Jolivet's initiative and emphasis on humanism seems an almost radical act. In founding a center for musical study which openly promoted the ideals of humanism, Jolivet was, in a way, staging a protest. He was also reaffirming ideals which had been central to him for his entire life.

It is particularly revealing to consider this action in the context of French musical life of the time. The primacy of Boulez in musical Paris of the 1950s has already been mentioned above. Jolivet, however, abhorred Boulez's aesthetic and approach to composition, feeling it too intellectual and removed from human experience.¹⁴ In Jolivet's worldview, music could never be created "for music's sake." As Rollo Meyers pointed out more than thirty years ago "...for him [Jolivet] music is a language and not a code...."¹⁵ and, as with all language, it springs from deep within humanity and has a distinct role to play within human life. Thus in a decade in which French music was struggling with "serial tyranny," Jolivet founded a place for advanced study at which young composers could be exposed to a wide variety of aesthetic ideas and encouraged to explore the relationships and connections between music and other arts. In a 1960 interview with writer/critic/broadcaster Antoine Goléa Jolivet explained his aims in founding the *CFHM*, noting that the training of young composers is a delicate task that goes beyond discussing and revealing compositional process:

¹⁴ Boulez and Jolivet's dislike of each other and each other's music was quite public. The conflict dated back to at least Boulez's 1948 "Proposals" essay which was critical of several composers, Jolivet and Messiaen among them. Jolivet, for his part, was also verbally critical of Boulez's music and felt the *Domaine musicale* not worth supporting. The conflict between the two men degenerated to the point of a lawsuit in 1960 (precipitated by a particularly insulting remark made to Hilda by Boulez at a concert) in which Jolivet sought justice for remarks against him that Boulez had published in a set of program notes in 1958, and Boulez claimed that Jolivet had intervened to block funding to the *Domaine* (Porcile 194-5). (The brouhaha over the 1958 remarks is known as the "Jolinavet" scandal; Boulez had used the term in a derogatory fashion, a "navet" being both a turnip and slang for a worthless piece of art.)

¹⁵ Rollo Meyers, *Modern French Music* (New York: Praeger, 1971; reprint New York: Da Capo Press, 1984), 141 (page citations are to the reprint edition).

But beyond the means of realization, I always attempted to make them aware of the nobility of our task as composers and of the importance of its action on the spiritual life of our contemporaries. It is in this spirit that the musical seminars that I began last year at Aix-en-Provence transformed this year to the “Centre Français d’Humanisme Musical.” This new designation clarifies my wish to elevate the problems always higher and, beyond the study of compositional techniques, to make apparent the human constants of eternal music.¹⁶

The seminars consisted of composition classes given by Jolivet in the mornings and lectures by a wide variety of personalities from music and the arts presented in the afternoons. One may glean a sense of the diversity of musical ideas presented in these talks simply by noting that the contributing composers ranged from Poulenc to Xenakis.¹⁷ Other presenters included theatre producer Jean Vilar, choreographer Georges Skibine and information theorist Abraham Moles. Some of the lecture titles included “music and poetry,” “the electronic and music,” “the troubled immutability” of French music.”¹⁸ Jolivet also ensured that his summer sessions would have a connection to real, living music by choosing to run them during the Aix-en-Provence and Avignon music festivals.

The creation of the *CFHM* may be compared to the creation of *Jeune France* in 1936, a group also dedicated to humanist and spiritual ideals. But while in 1936 Jolivet (with *Jeune France*) was protesting, among other things, the frivolity of “Les Six,” in 1959 he was protesting the seemingly inexorable crush of the modernist aesthetic. As musicologist Paul Griffiths has noted, the 1950s, viewed from half a century later, seem rather monolithic because of the predominance of certain young composers (particularly

¹⁶ André Jolivet, twelve interviews by Antoine Goléa, 1960-61, Paris, Archives André Jolivet; quoted in Laetitia Chassain-Dolliou “Les Artisans d’un humanisme musical au Conservatoire de Marcel Beaufils à André Jolivet,” *Silages Musicologiques, hommages à Yves Gérard* (Paris: Conservatoire national supérieur de musique et de danse de Paris, 1997), 256.

¹⁷ Noted in Chassain-Dolliou, “Les Artisans,” 256, and on website www.asso.fr.

¹⁸ Chassain-Dolliou, “Les Artisans,” 255; the author indicates her source as dossiers in the Archives André Jolivet.

Boulez and Stockhausen). In a time when so many were focusing on process, on integral serialism, explosions of form, the extreme modernism, Jolivet in his own way was staging a protest against the same. When others were stressing structure and systematic rules, Jolivet continued to stress religion, philosophy, natural science, poetry and cultural humanism. Two sentiments in the quotation above confirm in some measure Jolivet's orientation of these years. One is the emphasis on the effect of a composer's work on the "spiritual life" of his fellow humans. The second is the stress on the "human constants" of music. In these thoughts and in the broad range of speakers included in the *Centre*, one feels a strong resonance with *Ascèses*, which itself encompasses references to spirituality and references the writings of a scientist/theologian and a cultural commentator/poet (Teilhard and Fouchet respectively). Thus in Jolivet's life activities we may observe evidence for the importance of the ideals of spirituality and humanism in his thinking of this time.

Jolivet himself emphasized the humanist element of his work, but it is important not to misrepresent the case of Jolivet as humanist. Or, perhaps, it is important to clarify what humanism really meant to Jolivet. In continuing to stress the human-centered nature of music, Jolivet was not therefore rejecting out of hand integral serialism, electronic music, or compositional systems per se. Instead, Jolivet was advocating an embracing of *all* aspects of human endeavor as relevant to music and its goals. Composer Jean-Claude Risset remembers, for example, that Jolivet was the only professor at the Conservatory to invite him to present his work on computer-generated music to a class.¹⁹ In embracing so wide a scope of musical endeavor, Jolivet was most

¹⁹ Jean-Claude Risset in chapter "Témoignages," *André Jolivet, Portraits*, ed. Lucie Kayas and Laetitia Chassain-Dolliou (Arles: Actes Sud, 1994), 144.

definitely swimming against the tide of a significant portion of French (especially Parisian) musical life. This is one way in which Jolivet and Boulez are particularly dichotomous. Unlike Boulez, Jolivet did not believe that there was a single “true” compositional path. Instead, Jolivet advocated inclusion rather than exclusion.

According to composer participant Henry Barraud,

The superiority of the Centre of Aix-en-Provence over all that exist outside of it is first its absence of dogmatism; it is in the universality of the themes grappled with in the course of the month by the eminent speakers, in the liberalism and richness of the daily teaching given to the students.²⁰

It was this liberalism and lack of dogmatism that allowed Jolivet to contribute to the formation of composers with wildly diverse aesthetic views,²¹ and which marked him as part of the tradition of French musical humanist teaching that had begun to emerge in the Conservatory itself in classes such as Messiaen’s analysis course (begun in 1947).

The *CFMH* ran for five summers, until 1963. For a few years following this Jolivet was not officially engaged in teaching activities, but in 1966 it became a full-time focus when he was appointed professor of composition at the Paris Conservatory. This was in many ways the crowning achievement of Jolivet’s musical career, recognition on the highest domestic level of his stature as a composer. Many of the composers quoted in this chapter came into contact with Jolivet at the Conservatory. As has been noted above, Jolivet’s students observed in him a tolerance towards all types of musical expression, and a general lack of dogmatism despite his strong personality. He encouraged each student to find his own voice, and his class included a rich collection of students from all over the world, including several from Japan where he enjoyed a strong reputation.

²⁰ Chassain-Dolliou, “Les Artisans,” 255, citing an unnamed article by Raymond Lyon in the file “C.F.H.M. 1958-1961,” Paris, Archives André Jolivet.

²¹ such as Philippe Hersant and Ton-That Tiet

The composition of *Ascèses* dates from the years in which Jolivet was engaged full time at the Conservatory. The time commitment that the teaching appointment required did curtail somewhat Jolivet's compositional activities in the latter half of the 1960s; it is therefore particularly interesting to note that, of the works written while he was at the Conservatory, *Ascèses* is one of the most substantial.²² This fact is additional evidence of the importance of *Ascèses* in Jolivet's output and further supports a detailed consideration of the piece.

Jolivet, Other Cultures and the Expression of Humanity

Throughout his entire life Jolivet had an abiding interest in other countries and cultures, related, perhaps, to his "...tendency to want to know all, to understand all that man could express, whatever his origins, his race and his religion."²³ Over the course of his life Jolivet had many opportunities to travel (his time with the *Comédie* had included many trips abroad). His international reputation continued to grow in the 1960s and resulted in performances in and commissions from several countries, making the mid-1960s particularly rich years for travel in Jolivet's life. 1963 found Jolivet in Israel for the first time (he would return in 1967) for the Congress of the International Society for Contemporary Music. In 1964 Jolivet and his family traveled to the United States and Mexico, where they had a number of memorable experiences. Jolivet had the opportunity

²² The second cello concerto (22') and *Songe à nouveau rêve* (28') are the other significant pieces from these years.

²³ André Jolivet, "Aspects de la Musique Française Contemporaine à travers l'oeuvre d'André Jolivet," typewritten lecture notes in English and French, [c.1960], Archives André Jolivet, Paris; quoted in Conrad, 42.

to reunite with his old teacher Varèse in New York, enjoying several meetings with his mentor during the course of his stay there. From New York the Jolivets continued to Mexico for the premiere of Jolivet's Third Symphony. The later 1960s also included numerous trips abroad, despite the demands on Jolivet's time at the Conservatory. During these years Jolivet traveled to Spain, the USSR for a second time, Lebanon, and Israel (also for a second time), visiting the East Bank on the eve of the Six Day War.

When Jolivet traveled to another culture he did not simply passively observe: he actively engaged in his musical experiences. Two examples from the 1964 trip to the US and Mexico illustrate this. While in New York Jolivet had the opportunity to hear and meet both Charlie Mingus and Louis Armstrong (the former in a club, the latter at a party where the Jolivets were guests and Armstrong's band was playing). Despite the fact that neither American spoke French and Jolivet did not speak much English, Jolivet took the opportunity to communicate through gesture his enthusiasm for the jazz artists' music.²⁴ Similarly, the trip to Mexico also afforded Jolivet another opportunity to be inspired by the musical culture of another country and, according to his daughter Christine, Jolivet took advantage of this fact and spent many hours listening to Mariachi bands.²⁵

Jolivet's enthusiasm for travel, his tendency to want to "understand all that man could express" was a lifelong passion that certainly had an impact on his compositional work. Examples of pieces that were inspired by the music or culture of another country are numerous and include the paradigmatic 1930s works (*Cinq Incantations*, etc.), *Chant de Linos* for flute and piano (1944, inspired by ancient Greek culture and music) *Epithalame* for choir (1958, inspired by Egyptian texts), and *Mandala* for organ (1969),

²⁴ Kayas and Chassain-Dolliou, "Évocation," 28.

²⁵ Ibid, 28. Christine Jolivet also notes that, in true Mexican fashion, Jolivet accompanied his listening with tequila.

inspired by Indian spirituality). Embedded in this interest in other countries and cultures is, as Jolivet himself implied, an interest in understanding the very essence of human nature. This more general preoccupation of Jolivet manifested itself in several other ways as well, including in his interest in a wide variety of subject areas and writers. We have seen this in action already in his engagement of a wide variety of lecturers at the *CFHM*; Jolivet's library, which we will examine in the next chapter, also bears witness to the wide-ranging nature of his interests.

The common thread that binds Jolivet's interest in other cultures and his engagement with a wide variety of thinkers and writers is his more general interest in forging connections: connections between individual human beings and between humanity and the divine. As will be explored in greater detail in the following chapter, this was a lifelong preoccupation of Jolivet; but the fact that this search for connection and engagement was occurring on so many levels in the 1960s gives a deepened context to the appearance in *Ascèses* of quotations from three sources. In this work we also see Jolivet forging connections: connections between the philosophical stances of three individuals (Jolivet, Fouchet and Teilhard); connections between the texts themselves; and connections between the text and music. The work thus functions in some way as a microcosm of the greater connections which Jolivet perceived in the world.

Jolivet as Composer

Having considered many of Jolivet's non-compositional activities of the final fifteen years of his life it remains to consider briefly his compositional activities of these years and their relationship to his other endeavors.

Jolivet's work of the 1960s represents a continuation of a multiplicity of compositional tendencies which had begun to emerge in Jolivet's work after 1945. Prior to that date Jolivet had worked first in a fairly rigorously atonal idiom utilizing primarily smaller forms and instrumental ensembles, and then, from about 1940 to 1945, in a much more tonal and accessible style.²⁶ Greater diversity began to appear in his work after 1945 and, as Jolivet gained more acceptance by the public, he adopted a more flexible use of modal and atonal materials. He also began writing in larger forms such as the concerto and symphony (perhaps in a continued effort to have his music remain somehow accessible to the public), and utilized a large diversity of ensemble types. As he had in the 1930s, Jolivet continued to evoke the music of different cultures (for example in the first piano concerto) and wrote works with varying degrees of extra musical association (titles such *Chant pour les piroguiers de l'Orénoque* (oboe, piano, 1953) betraying those that clearly have such associations, and the symphonies and concertos remaining more obscure).

These trends continued in the 1960s, with Jolivet's work encompassing absolute music in traditional large forms (for example, the third symphony), a few works with clear extra-musical associations (*Cinq Eglogues*, *Mandala*), substantial works for solo instruments and chamber ensembles, and short and rather insignificant pieces (*Patchinko* for 2 pianos, two works for recorder and drum). The speculative side of Jolivet's nature is very much in evidence in the most substantial of his final compositions. These works,

²⁶ This shift in Jolivet's style was attributed by Jolivet himself to his experiences in the Second World War and his desire to write music that his fellow humans, many weary with war, would enjoy. See Jolivet, "Fifth Interview" by Antoine Goléa, 1961, Archives André Jolivet, Paris, also quote in Hilda Jolivet, *Avec...André Jolivet*, 151-3. Much of his solo vocal music dates from this period.

for large performing forces, include *Songe à nouveau rêve* (1970/1), for soprano and orchestra on texts by Antoine Goléa and Yin-Yang, for string orchestra (1973).

Several of Jolivet's interests and preoccupations remained active forces in his life as a composer across the entire span of his career, and are very much in evidence in its last fifteen years. These include his interest in the music of other cultures (*Suite rhapsodique* (1965) for solo violin, inspired by his visit to Israel in 1963), symbolism (*Mandala* (1969)), the spiritual purpose of music, the spiritual as inspiration *for* music (including several pieces which make reference to the writings of theologian Teilhard de Chardin²⁷). The importance of a spiritual orientation to the music of Jolivet will be discussed in greater detail in the following chapter, but it is worth noting here that these interests had been very much in evidence in Jolivet's work from the 1930s, both in his compositions and his writings.²⁸ *Yin-Yang*, mentioned above, is evidence that the esoteric interests of Jolivet's younger years remained an interest for him in his later decades as well.²⁹ Jolivet's primary compositional concern, however, remained related to the spiritual, to music's ability to link humanity to something greater than itself: "Music must establish a communication, not only between humans but also between humans and the Universe...."³⁰

²⁷ These include the cantata on Teilhard texts *La Coeur de la matière*, the second symphony and *Ascèses*. See also Chapter 4.

²⁸ The paradigmatic works, including the *Cinq Incantations*, are examples of Jolivet's early interest in religious ritual. Evidence for this interest include his early writings and lectures, such as the 1937 Sorbonne lecture, and the slightly later "Réponse" article in which he wrote that he wished to "return to music its ancient and original meaning, when it was the magical and incantatory expression of the religiosity of human society," ("Réponse", 19).

²⁹ Hilda called this the work of Jolivet's "most marked by esotericism;" Hilda Jolivet, *Avec...André Jolivet* (Paris: Flammarion, 1978), 287.

³⁰ Quoted in Hilda Jolivet, "André Jolivet," *Zodiaque*, no. 119 (1979): 38.

One of the most interesting aspects of Jolivet's compositional output in the 1960s is the relatively large number of works for unaccompanied monophonic instruments that appear in his catalogue in this decade. These include the *Suite en Concert* (1965) for solo cello, the *Suite Rhapsodique* (1965) for solo violin, the *Cinq Eglogues* (1967) for solo viola and *Ascèses* (1967) for solo flute or clarinet. The unaccompanied medium was not one in which Jolivet had worked much previously (the only other works being the incantations for solo flute from the 1930s) and he was obviously exploring it with some concentration during the mid-1960s. This is an interesting phenomenon, for the medium itself implies introspection, and its appearance in Jolivet's work occurs at the same point in his life at which he was arguably his most publicly active. Jolivet's engagement with the intimacy of solo compositions in so concentrated a period of time suggests an intentional exploration of the medium, and implies a desire to communicate musically in a particularly personal and direct way.

As a composer Jolivet enjoyed great success; there is no question that, by the last decade of his life, Jolivet was well respected both at home and abroad. One measure of his domestic stature is the fact that, in 1960-61, a series of twelve radio interviews by Antoine Goléa (the unpublished texts of which are referred to often throughout the course of this document) were dedicated to Jolivet and his music. His position in Parisian musical life was, however, not without its difficulties. Throughout the 1960s Jolivet remained identified with the "anti Boulez" camp, a fact which may have not always served him well, and may have caused his music to be dismissed by some as conservative or reactionary. One student remembers "In the years of the 60s Jolivet was in conflict with Boulez and the Domaine Musical; confrontation of two personalities, without doubt,

but also of two very different creative conceptions.”³¹ “It was the epoch of Ligeti, Stockhausen, Boulez and the Domaine Musical,” notes another, “of which Jolivet remained outside.”³² Jolivet refused to compromise his freedom of choice to the tyranny of rules and numbers, but this position appeared to some as archaic. The conflict between Boulez and Jolivet caused each camp to accentuate the differences between them, and thus Jolivet was rejected by the progressives and adopted by many conservatives. Jolivet’s music is in many ways highly original, and the stereotyping of his aesthetic as “backward” was somewhat unfair. He was not completely unappreciated, however, and numerous young composers did see him as representing a form of modernity that was a successful alternative to the “invasion” of serial music.³³

Conclusion

The preceding pages have outlined the primary components of the final phase of Jolivet’s career. During this time Jolivet worked as a civil servant, expanded his teaching activities, traveled extensively and continued to compose in a variety of genres and media. The combination of Jolivet’s government appointments, his sense of the importance of using “the system” to improve the lot of music and musicians in France, and his almost moral opposition to the aesthetic of Boulez combines to form an interesting picture of Jolivet during the 1960s. Indeed, throughout his professional life Jolivet tended to operate within the established musical structures of Paris, a somewhat surprising fact given that his own musical training took place completely *outside of* the

³¹Jean-Claude Risset, “Témoignages,” *Portraits*, 144.

³² Yoshihisa Taïra, “Témoignages,” *Portraits*, 147.

³³ Even de Tissot, “Témoignages,” *Portraits*, 151.

established conservatory system.³⁴ It would be tempting to come to the conclusion that Jolivet simply became more conservative as he aged, as is the case with a great number of people. To believe so would be to miss a deeper truth, which is that Jolivet's vision of the purpose of music and the act of its creation remained constant throughout his life, and it was his continued search for the best realization of this ideal that drew him along the path he followed. As we shall see in the next chapter, Jolivet did not retrench philosophically in the 1960s, but continued to expand and explore his understanding of music's greater cosmic meaning.

There is a clear line of demarcation that separates the final fifteen years of Jolivet's career from the period which preceded it. 1959 marked Jolivet's departure from his long-time position as music director at the *Comédie Française* and signaled the beginning of his engagement in activities which, in different ways, underlined his commitment to his most fundamental beliefs. Jolivet was an ideologue, associating himself throughout his life with individuals and groups who shared his ideals. He was a man of ideas, but also a man of action, choosing to found organizations to support his musical goals as was necessary. He was an activist in a political sense as well, aligning himself more or less obviously with left-leaning organizations and events. He believed that composers have an important role to play in society and accepted the responsibility of engaging in the formation of societal policy. Jolivet also believed that music had an important role to play in the spiritual life of humanity and was therefore, as we shall see more clearly in Chapter 3, a mystic.

³⁴ Jolivet studied privately with Paul le Flem for five years (from 1927) and with Varèse from 1929 until 1933. Jolivet was Varèse's only European student.

It is from within this milieu that *Ascèses* was born. Jolivet created the work, (with all its similarities to his earlier self-confessed paradigmatic *Cinq Incantations*) at a time when his choice of professional activities was affirming some of his most fundamental principles. As in the 1930s, Jolivet's professional life in the 1960s was overtly oriented towards an expression of his essential beliefs. These years were in many ways the most public of Jolivet's career and yet, during this time, Jolivet focused for a few years on the creation of monophonic compositions. In the case of *Ascèses*, both the title and the medium of the work imply something deeply personal, individual and intimate. Taken in the larger context of Jolivet's life at the time, there is a suggestion in *Ascèses* of balance: a balance between public and private expression of belief. The very context in which *Ascèses* was created, then, supports a reading of the work as an expression of Jolivet's ideals, and from this context the piece emerges as a musical parallel to Jolivet's public activities.

CHAPTER 3 Aesthetic Context: Jolivet as Worldly Mystic

During the final phase of Jolivet's career, the last fifteen years of his life discussed in Chapter 2, Jolivet was not only confirming fundamental beliefs through his professional activities: he was also confirming, through his music, writing and interviews, a philosophical world-view and aesthetic stance. *Ascèses* is a product of Jolivet's essential aesthetic orientation, springing from the same basic philosophical well from which he had drawn his whole life while at the same time strongly articulating an incarnation of Jolivet's worldview that is particular to his later life.

Jolivet's fundamental philosophical orientation had been operational in his creative life from the 1930s. Most extant writings on Jolivet have focused on his ideas as he expressed them in that decade and the 1940s,¹ while a few other writings deal with a particular thematic thread in Jolivet's thought (such as the role of religion and spirituality).² No previous commentators, however, have specifically explored the ideas that Jolivet expressed during the last years of his life, or investigated the influences on that later thought. Nor has any writer attempted a comparison of Jolivet's earlier and later aesthetic stance; thus there currently exists no clear picture of how or even if

¹ For example, Conrad treats very thoroughly the influences and contexts within which Jolivet's early aesthetic was formed and the influences on it.

² For example, Dom Angelico Surchamp "Philosophie et spiritualité chez André Jolivet," *André Jolivet, Portraits*, ed. Lucie Kayas and Laetitia Chassain-Dolliou (Arles: Actes Sud, 1994), 51-70.

Jolivet's thought changed or developed over the course of his life.³ Finally, there is little in the way of systematic consideration of Jolivet's philosophy.

Such a consideration is necessary in an assessment of *Ascèses* and its potential larger meaning in Jolivet's compositional output. An investigation of Jolivet's later expressions of his philosophy, and a comparison of that to earlier source material, allows one to posit an overarching aesthetic framework in which *Ascèses* can be viewed. Furthermore, it allows one to confirm that this aesthetic framework was a driving force throughout Jolivet's life yet also to see clearly the ways in which *Ascèses* represents an expression of that framework that is, in its details, specific to the later years of Jolivet's life. Since Jolivet himself placed philosophy at the centre of his musical canon and forged direct links between what he thought and how he wrote, an emphasis on this aspect of his life in relation to *Ascèses* is fully justified.

Source Materials and Methodology

In examining Jolivet's thought, this study proposes that one may make reasonable assumptions about what an individual believes to be important by examining three main sources: direct expressions of belief through writings, lectures or interviews; indirect expressions of belief as evidenced in how an individual invests his or her time (in activities such as reading, for example, and particularly if he or she commented on what was read); and the indirect expressions of belief evident in the work that an individual

³ Most commentators who address this at all make a simple statement that Jolivet was very consistent throughout his life in terms of what he thought. Laetitia Chaissain-Dolliou is one who does identify "struggles" in Jolivet's thinking across his life, such as reintegrating the composer into society, defending the tradition of French music, recreating a universal musical language through a synthesis of twentieth-century and earlier musical aesthetic and creating a humanist and spiritual renewal (Laetitia Chaissain-Dolliou, "La pensée d'André Jolivet à travers ses écrits," *Portraits* 39-50). She does not, however, address philosophical shift.

creates (for example, extra-musical references (such as titles, quotations and the like) in a composer's work). Unless the composer was a particularly prolific and articulate writer (of prose), these three sources will not give a complete picture of the person's philosophy. They will, however, provide enough information for some conclusions to be drawn.

In the case of Jolivet, there are strengths and weaknesses in the source material in each of these categories. Jolivet's published writings, for example, are not particularly numerous (see bibliography); however, in addition to the published articles and commentaries (which date from the 1940s, '50s and '70s) there are several unpublished writings and lecture notes among his personal papers (many of which date from the 1960s). Not all of these materials can be dated with assurance, diminishing their usefulness in tracing the development of Jolivet's thought. Many can, however, be placed as being written before or after a certain year, which assists in elucidating Jolivet's thoughts at a particular time.

Since many of Jolivet's writings will be referred to repeatedly throughout the text of this document, an overview of those materials follows.⁴ Two of the most important sources for Jolivet's early thought are writings which date from the 1930s, the same decade in which Jolivet wrote the four musical works mentioned above which he himself singled out in 1946 as paradigmatic of his compositional and philosophical canon. The first source is the unpublished text of a lecture that he gave at the Sorbonne in 1937 entitled "Genèse d'un nouveau musical." The second is an article published in *La*

⁴ Several have already been cited in previous chapters. As noted in previous citations, the unpublished materials are housed in Paris at the Archives André Jolivet maintained by Jolivet's daughter, Christine Jolivet. Mme. Jolivet and the Archive may be contacted through the Friends of André Jolivet website, www.jolivet.assoc.fr.

Nouvelle Saison in 1939 entitled “Musique: plaid pour le vif,” reprinted also in Hilda Jolivet’s 1978 memoir *Avec...André Jolivet*.⁵ Both of these documents provide much insight into Jolivet’s thinking during the 1930s.

The primary sources for Jolivet’s thought as it had evolved in the 1960s are almost entirely unpublished documents. The unpublished documents include: a series of radio interviews with critic/writer/broadcaster Antoine Goléa, aired in the early 1960s⁶; lecture notes “Tendances de la musique française contemporaine à travers l’oeuvre d’André Jolivet” (dated post 1967)⁷; lecture notes “Aspects de la Musique Française Contemporaine à travers l’oeuvre d’André Jolivet” (dated ca. 1960-62);⁸ and notes not identified for any purpose, “Notes sur les Sons.”⁹ Jolivet’s later published writings are two articles which appeared in the 1970s in journals devoted to spiritual matters (in itself a revealing fact): “Musique, flèche de la communion universelle” (1973-4) and “Variations impromptues sur un thème éternel” (posthumous, 1975).¹⁰ In addition, a commentary by Jolivet published in 1957 in the journal *Zodiaque* is also useful; although it predates the decade with which we are primarily occupied here, in it Jolivet states that he feels ready to reflect on his work and make an attempt at a synthesis of thought. This would suggest that Jolivet is looking ahead into a new phase of his career, and for this

⁵ Hilda Jolivet, *Avec...André Jolivet*, 104-112.

⁶ André Jolivet, twelve interviews by Antoine Goléa, 1961, Paris, Archives André Jolivet.

⁷ André Jolivet, “Tendances de la musique française contemporaine à travers l’oeuvre d’André Jolivet,” (typewritten lecture notes, n.d. [post 1967], Archives André Jolivet, Paris. Based on references in the manuscript, Bridget Conrad dates this as post 1967; her extensive work with Jolivet archival materials makes her a credible judge.

⁸ Jolivet, “Aspects,” Archives André Jolivet; again, Conrad is the source for the approximate date of writing.

⁹ André Jolivet, “Notes sur les Sons,” (typewritten notes, n.d.), Archives André Jolivet, Paris. It is the personal opinion of this author that “Notes sur les sons” is probably also a late manuscript, based on the general tone and subjects of the writing. In style, and in the direct and clear references to the spiritual, it bears a kinship to later, published writings.

¹⁰ André Jolivet, “Musique, flèche de la communion universelle,” *Axes: La musique sacrée* 6, no. 2 (December 1973-January 1974): 64-68; André Jolivet, “Variations impromptues sur un thème éternel,” *Arfuyen* 1 (1975): 64-67.

reason it is legitimate to consider it reflective of the direction of his thinking in his later years.¹¹

There is also a rich source of information available in the form of Jolivet's personal library. Jolivet was not only an avid reader but also an active one. His collection of books and journals contains numerous works which are underlined and annotated; these markings help make clear what was engaging Jolivet's attention at different points in his life, and even sometimes what his opinion on different matters was.¹² The very nature of the books and journals in his collection is also in itself instructive. It is, of course, not always possible to determine precisely when Jolivet read a particular work, beyond a date of publication establishing an earliest possible encounter with a particular text; even that, however, is helpful.

The paragraphs which follow will examine these sources in some detail, paying particular attention to materials which relate to Jolivet's thought later in his life, but connecting those materials to those which illuminate his aesthetic stance in the 1930s. In this way Jolivet's thinking in both the decade in which he wrote the paradigmatic *Incantations* and the decade in which he composed *Ascèses* is thrown into relief - an approach suggested by the similarities between the two works as previously outlined. This approach also allows for the confirmation of a fundamental philosophy guiding Jolivet's compositional work.

¹¹ André Jolivet, "Postlude," *Zodiaque*, no. 33 (1957): 41-43.

¹² Jolivet's markings include exclamation marks, lengthy notes and the occasional "non!" in the margins. Jolivet's system of annotation includes simple underlining and vertical lines in the margin next to passages. There are single, double and even triple lines next to some passages, and the number of lines seems to correspond with the intensity of Jolivet's feeling about the subject matter.

The Essential Jolivet

As one becomes immersed in Jolivet's writings, readings and compositions it does become evident that there was a philosophical core to Jolivet which, although elastic in its expression, remained constant throughout his life. The foundation on which his philosophical stance rested was a belief in the existence of "the divine," specifically a divine presence or nature which exists separate from (although connected to) humanity. The manner in which he expressed this belief was not always constant; the word "God," for example, is relatively absent from his writings. Nevertheless, the belief itself is evident from the earliest though the latest writings and work.

Proceeding from that foundation, Jolivet's philosophy of music and composition may be summarized as follows:

1. There is a sacred element to music, and this element is music's most important aspect.
2. Music is sacred for two reasons: 1. the root of its origins and 2. its fundamental structures. Music is born of a deep need on the part of humanity to connect with the "universal life, the cosmic life" – in other words, with something outside of and bigger than itself. In addition, music is based on fundamental principles and relationships which are also fundamental to the nature of the universe, although they may be hidden from our direct sensory experience.¹³

¹³ This will be discussed in greater detail below. At their core, these principles and relationships are numeric in nature: the proportional relationships inherent in pitch (frequency), sound duration, etc. can all be expressed through number. Because the mathematical basis of music and the universe, and the link between the two, has been known for thousands of years, the symbolism of number is very powerful.

3. Because music has at its core fundamental *universal* principles and relationships, it is able to fulfill a particularly important role and purpose: namely, to act as a mediator between humanity and the divine, between the earth and the universe/cosmos. This fulfills the need of the origin mentioned in 2. above. Although Jolivet never says so outright, the implication is that by knowing the true nature of music and by creating “true” music, we can know the true nature of the universe and thus something of God.¹⁴
4. This purpose – this mediation between the human and divine – should take place not just on an individual level but on a societal one as well. Music has an important role to play in the life of society, not just individuals.

Jolivet searched his entire life for truer and clearer expressions of this philosophy; consequently, he was drawn at different times in his life to different writers, thinkers and belief systems. These influences provide a fascinating contextual texture to Jolivet’s work, and because Jolivet himself acknowledged the impact that his various non-musical life experiences had upon his work as a musician, they are worthy of note. For example, speaking of his experiences as a young man and student of Varèse in Paris Jolivet once said:

... when Varèse and I finished working in his little studio of the rue de Vaugirard, and we strolled down Blvd. Montparnasse, we met Picasso, Max Ernst, Marc Chagall, Braque, Artaud, Robert Desnos, and Foujita, who rubbed shoulders with a picturesque and colorful menagerie...Imagine what the continual wonder of encounters with personalities as diverse as they were dynamic – and of

¹⁴Jolivet believed that music was more effective in this than other arts such as writing because it acted more directly on the listener. He did, however, have a sense of the sacred in all arts, indeed in all things (and was identified as “pantheistic” by some friends/commentators).

which the whole constituted a microcosm of the entire world – was like for a young Montmartois Parisian of 25 years. *This only accentuated my tendency to want to know all, to understand all that man could express, whatever his origins, his race and his religion* [emphasis mine].¹⁵

The lifelong influences on Jolivet's thought are diverse, and include the work of esoteric and occult writers, acousticians and scientists, philosophers, poets as well as an abiding interest in (and eventual travels to) other cultures. Many of these influences will be discussed in the following pages as we consider in turn each of the elements of Jolivet's core philosophy enumerated above, presenting the expression of each belief as it appears in his later writings, readings, and work, and comparing that latter expression to its earlier manifestations.

Music, sacred Art

"Music is a sacred art; all the difficulties that remain today in the life of this art are a result of people having forgotten this essential principle...."¹⁶ So wrote Jolivet in 1973, in an article entitled "Musique, flèche de la communion universelle" published in the journal *Axes* in 1974 shortly after his death. The characterization of music as "sacred" was a strong feature of Jolivet's thought in the later years of his life, and the importance of this aspect of music to Jolivet was a clearly articulated conviction by the time of his death. "...if music doesn't have a sacred character, by its rhythms, its

¹⁵ Jolivet, "Aspects;" as quoted in Conrad, 42. (The phrase "...de la rue de Vaugirard..." would perhaps be better translated as "...on the rue de Vaugirard...")

¹⁶ Jolivet, "Musique, flèche," 64.

development, by a discourse that elevates the soul, it is useless to write it, and better to dedicate oneself to ditties.”¹⁷

Jolivet’s articulation of the importance of the spiritual side of music using vocabulary such as “sacred” and “spiritual” is most pronounced in his latest writings, although it had been a feature of his work and teaching for many years. Jolivet insisted on the spiritual aspect of music with his students even in the 1960s when a humanist and spiritual aesthetic was unfashionable in France. Akira Tamba, a Japanese composer and musicologist who studied with Jolivet in the 1960s explained in a 1990 interview that “Jolivet told us openly, ‘seek spirituality, spiritualism.’ In my opinion, it was pantheism, but he had a certain human, or humanistic spirituality, in a positive sense.”¹⁸ Even earlier than this Jolivet used the word “sacred” in describing music, commenting in a 1957 *Revue Musicale* article (on his oratorio *La Verité de Jeanne*) that “Music, sacred art, must participate in each important event of the life of human communities...”¹⁹ An undated manuscript also emphasizes the sacred nature of music.

Religious art: from *re-ligare* [to re-bind or splice], *relier* [to connect/bind/join]
All true music is thus sacred.
The least debatable foundations of musical function are in the region of the
sacred/of the sacred sort.²⁰

Lyricism is the communicative form of the spiritual aspirations of men.”²¹

Interestingly, Jolivet’s earliest writings do not characterize music in exactly this way. In the 1937 Sorbonne lecture Jolivet speaks of music (founded on a ‘revealed

¹⁷ Ibid., 66.

¹⁸ Conrad, 198.

¹⁹ André Jolivet, “La Verité de Jeanne,” *La Revue Musicale* 237 (June 1957), 24.

²⁰ André Jolivet, “Les sources héroïques du lyrisme populaire” (lecture notes, undated), Archives André Jolivet, Paris; quoted in Surchamp, “Philosophie et Spiritualité,” *Portraits*, 51.

²¹ Jolivet, “Les sources héroïques;” quoted in Surchamp, “Philosophie et Spiritualité,” *Portraits*, 60.

principle') as being the basis of a spiritual renewal. But this renewal is not because of music's sacred nature, *per se*. Instead, in these early writings, Jolivet explains that "Artists have had the revelation of this [revealed] principle...when they rediscovered at last that art is a *magical process*.... This is the basis of a spiritual renewal...."²² The problem of musical creation, says Jolivet in this same paragraph, is not an aesthetic one. Rather, it is an ethical one. Artists must allow the "magical process" that underlies artistic creation to be of primary importance, and if they do then their art becomes the basis of spiritual renewal.

Jolivet's use of the word "magic" in speaking of music persisted into the 1940s as well. The famous "Réponse" ("Une enquête") article is one such example: "...I sought to give back to music its original, ancient meaning when it was the magic and incantatory expression of the religiosity of human societies."²³ The reader's eye may quite correctly be drawn to the use of the verb "express" in this context: there is a subtle difference between music being something (sacred) and music expressing something (of a religious or magic nature). Reading the "Enquête" quotation carefully one sees that Jolivet is saying that the original meaning of music is "the...expression of the religiosity of human societies." So what music is expressing is religious in nature. The foundation of this expression, the means of this expression, however, are "magic" in their essence. In speaking of his early work as a composer Jolivet explained: "I was led to abandon the strict system of Schoenberg as well as the theories of Varèse in favor of a return to the very sources of music. In a word, to magic. Magic is based on the visible elements of

²² Jolivet, "Génèse," I/3; quoted in Conrad, 227.

²³ Jolivet, "Une enquête," 19.

nature and their invisible, hidden relations in the cosmos.”²⁴

Thus the concepts of sacred, magic and religion interweave in Jolivet. There is no question that his later writings are clearer on the issue of the sacred nature of music, but even in the earlier sources there is a clear implication of this as well. In the early writings, music is persistently referred to as expressing “a faith” or “religiosity” (albeit an undefined faith and religion). As we have already noted above and shall see in greater detail below, the element of “magic” in music is, for Jolivet, part of the process by which the power of music is released.

There are many possible influences on the development of these concepts in Jolivet’s thinking. Jolivet himself identified Varèse as being of primary importance in this regard.

I must say, that it was Varèse, whose only pupil I was, and for whom I have the deepest admiration, who set me on my way. He helped me to discover one of music’s most significant aspects; music as a magical and ritual expression of human society. I have learnt to attach great importance to the balance between man and the cosmos.²⁵

It has already been noted above that Varèse was an important source for Jolivet’s meeting some of the most important French artists and thinkers of his time. Another important source of contacts and ideas in the 1930s was Jolivet’s wife Hilda, who was studying at the Sorbonne and was particularly interested in the sociology of “primitive” societies. Jolivet later explained the fermentation of this time. “My spiritual tendencies, which dated from my youngest infancy, combined with the sociological studies which I

²⁴ André Jolivet “Second Interview” by Antoine Goléa, 1961, Archives André Jolivet, Paris; quoted Conrad, 162 and in Hilda Jolivet, *Avec...André Jolivet*, 64-65 with some changes. Magic and what that meant to Jolivet will be discussed further below.

²⁵ Martine Cadieu “A Conversation with André Jolivet,” *Tempo*, no. 59 (Autumn 1961): 3; first published in French in *Les Nouvelles Littéraires* earlier in 1961.

undertook at the Sorbonne with my young wife, led me fairly quickly toward esoteric preoccupations.”²⁶ Among the people with whom Jolivet was acquainted in Paris were several occultists and esoteric thinkers. Occultism (including such things as astrology, numerology, tarot cards, ESP and the like) was popular in France in the early twentieth century, and Jolivet’s friends and acquaintances included such adherents as Serge Moreux (a musicologist and critic), Hélène de Callias (author of a significant book on number symbolism) and René Allendy (the psychiatrist who invited Jolivet to give the “Gènese” lecture at the Sorbonne).²⁷ Further evidence of Jolivet’s interest in occultism is the fact that among the volumes in Jolivet’s library are several annotated issues of *L’Astrosophie-Revue mensuelle d’astrologie et des sciences psychiques et occultes* dating from the 1930s.²⁸

Common to much esoteric thought was the idea that at the core of ancient religious mythologies was a common, shared content; Jolivet’s library reveals his interest in this idea and many others, and his writing betrays their influence. Works such as C. Kerneiz’s *Le Karma Yoga ou l’action dans la vie selon la sagesse hindoue* (17th edition; Tallandier, 1939) and Dr. J.C. Mardus’s *Toute-Puissance de l’adepte. Transcription des hautes textes initiatiques de l’Égypt – le livre de la vérité de la parole* (Bibliothèque Eudique, 1932) are two examples of heavily annotated books that show Jolivet’s interest

²⁶Jolivet “Second Interview,” 1961; quoted Conrad, 162 and in Hilda Jolivet, *Avec...André Jolivet*, 64.

²⁷ See Conrad for an extensive discussion of these influences. Conrad cites Edward Tiryakian’s definition of “esoteric” in her consideration of this aspect of Jolivet’s development, and this definition bears repeating here. Tiryakian defines “esoteric” as the belief systems which underlie “occult” activities; esotericism is thus a particular model of reality. One key feature of esoteric thought is the connection of the visible and invisible world through symbol (Conrad 218), a feature which has a parallel in Jolivet’s approach to composition. In their belief in alternative ways of seeing reality there is also a parallel to be drawn between esoteric thinkers and the surrealists, some of whom were friends of Jolivet (Artaud, for example).

²⁸ Jolivet owned at least volumes XIII, no. 1 (July 1935); XIII, no. 2 (August 1935), XIII, no. 3 (September 1935) and XVI, no. 2 (February, 1937).

in philosophies from other cultural traditions, and possibly reveal his search for connections between them. One bit of marginalia in the former is illustrative of how Jolivet connected his readings to each other; in a section in which Kerneiz speaks of the possibility of a “super intuition” and direct perception of the highest order Jolivet notes “Si: L’intuition (Bergson),” thus linking this work’s ideas to another of his volumes: Henri Bergson *Les deux sources de la morale et de la religion* (Librarie de Félix Alcan, 1933).²⁹

Also in this same vein (the connections between religious traditions) is *Les grands Initiés: Esquisse de l’histoire secrète des religions* (1889) by Edouard Schuré, a popular and widely read work which Jolivet owned (and heavily annotated) in its 128th (1935) edition. This book tells the stories of eight visionaries and their contributions to the history of religion: Rama, Krishna, Hermes, Moses, Orpheus, Pythagoras, Plato and Jesus. Two key elements of this work are Schuré’s observation that literature and art have lost their sense of divine, and that Religion and Science are competing camps.³⁰ Schuré envisions healing of this breach, a synthesis of scientific and religious thought (what he called the Science of the Spirit), with art as the “inspired interpreter” bridging the gulf between the two.³¹ These ideas will be developed in slightly more detail below, but what is noteworthy here is the positioning of art (including music) in special relation to religious thought.

The purpose of the preceding paragraphs has been to sketch the extent of Jolivet’s *early* interest in cultural and philosophical traditions outside of Christianity and to

²⁹ This notation appears on page 116.

³⁰ Edouard Schuré, *Les Grands Initiés – Esquisse de l’histoire secrète des religions*, 128th edition (Paris: Librairie Academique Perrin, 1935), quoted in Conrad 223.

³¹ This second idea is actually from another of Schuré’s books, *L’Évolution divine*, quoted in Conrad 224.

illustrate his interest in and apparent belief in the idea of connections between all religious/philosophical traditions; this provides some context for the sources of his ideas about the sacred nature of music. It is interesting to compare those volumes in his library whose dates of publication suggest that they were read early in Jolivet's compositional career to the religious and philosophical readings that bear later publication dates (and were therefore read later in his life). From these later years the most dominant philosophical volumes (indeed, the only such volumes) are the works of Jesuit theologian Pierre Teilhard de Chardin.³² The work of Teilhard certainly shares some things in common with Jolivet's earlier interests. It is intensely speculative, and reflects a synthesis of religion and science as in Schuré (a book which, incidentally, Teilhard also read and loved). Teilhard's philosophy is, however, at core a Christian one, and his voluminous presence on Jolivet's shelf only serves to highlight the absence of more esoteric volumes such as we find from the 1930s.³³ The preponderance of the language of the "sacred" with regard to music in Jolivet's later writings corresponds to the apparent shift in his reading habits, and perhaps hints at a reassertion of his own religious background. Raised Catholic, Jolivet was not practicing but had the Church very present in his life. He was, for example, friends with several monks, listened (according to daughter Christine) to radio broadcasts of Père Carré during Lent, and on occasion lived in a cell at the monastery Abbaye Sainte-Marie de la Pierre-que virein, Saint-Leger

³² Jolivet owned almost all Teilhard's published works, including *Hymne de l'univers* (1961) (notes on this) *L'Activation de l'énergie* (1963) *L'Apparition de l'homme* (1956), *L'Avenir de l'homme* (1959), *L'Energie humaine* (1972), *Le Milieu divin* (1957), *Le Phénomène humain* (1955), *La Place de l'homme dans la nature: le groupe zoologique humain* (1956), *Sur le bonheur* (1966) and *La vision du passé* (1956) (all Editions de Seuil). He also owned Claude Cuénot, *Lexique Teilhard de Chardin* (1963) and Emile Rideau, *La pensée du Père Teilhard de Chardin* (Paris: Editions de Seuil, 1965). A detailed discussion of Teilhard follows below.

³³ The latest specifically "occult" related work in Jolivet's library is Robert Amadou and Robert Kanters, *Anthologie littéraire de l'occultisme* (Paris: Juilliard, 1950), and this is actually a collection of much earlier writings.

Vauban, to write. Jolivet also owned all the works published by the monastery, notably the journal *Zodiaque* which was dedicated to the relationship between art and the spiritual.³⁴

It is evident that throughout his life Jolivet believed that music had a very special nature. His late writings clearly identify this nature as being “sacred,” and this emphasis on the sacred is mirrored particularly in his interest, during the later years of his life, in the writings of a Catholic theologian. In contrast, earlier in his life Jolivet had spoken more of the “magic” in music, and exhibited strong interest in esoteric thought and philosophical traditions outside of Christianity. Although the details of its articulation are shifted slightly in Jolivet’s years, it is nevertheless apparent that the special, sacred nature of music was a fundamental belief for Jolivet. Why music should be so privileged is the second pillar of Jolivet’s philosophy.

The Basis of Music’s Sacred Nature: Origins and Fundamental Principles

The second tenant of Jolivet’s basic philosophy concerns the reasons for which music has a sacred, special nature. There are two ideas which appear in Jolivet’s writings in this regard. First, music is sacred because of its origins: it is born of a deep need on the part of humanity to connect with the “universal life, the cosmic life” – in other words, with something outside of and bigger than itself. Second, music is sacred because it is based on fundamental principles and relationships which are also fundamental to the nature of the universe, although they may be hidden from our direct sensory experience. This correspondence grants to music its special status.

³⁴ See Conrad, 204.

These two ideas assert themselves in different ways at different times in Jolivet's life, but the former idea is found articulated very clearly in the final articles which Jolivet published.

The profound needs which led to the birth of music and its development...have a sacred origin: to provide communication between the life of this terrestrial world and the universal life, the cosmic life.

All music therefore has for me a sacred character and must respond to this primordial principle, whether or not it is music destined for a religious service.³⁵

This quotation, from 1973-4, illustrates Jolivet's logic clearly: music is sacred because of its origins. The same article continues:

Music is probably born out of the fear of silence. This kind of fear in the face of silence must have led our first brothers to manifest their existence through sonorous means....³⁶

This second quotation, with its reference to the earliest societies, is reminiscent of Jolivet's interest in so-called "primitivism" (which will be discussed below) and its manifestation in his early important works such as the *Cinq Incantations*, *Mana*, *Cinq Danses Rituelles*. Seen side by side, these two quotations suggest an interesting progression: humanity may have had a fear of the silence, of the abyss beyond itself, but in the end it desired not only to fill that silence but also to bridge it, to establish a connection between the earthly world and the larger universe.

The presence in the first quotation of the words 'primordial principle' are reminiscent of the "Gènese" lecture quoted above, in which Jolivet (almost forty years earlier) had spoken of a "revealed principle" that underlies the power of music. This

³⁵ Jolivet, "Musique, flèche," 64.

³⁶ Ibid.

similarity of language provides another illustration of the evolution of Jolivet's thinking, for the "revealed principle" of the early quote was the "magical process" of art, whereas the "primordial principle" of the second is the sacred nature of music's origin. Magical process and sacred nature should not, however, be viewed as fundamentally different; rather, they represent aspects of a single concept, namely the belief in a very special and not completely "of this world" element to musical creation. Jolivet may well have been influenced by Schuré in this connection of the magical and the sacred, since Schuré described the goal of his Science of the Spirit to be "...to seek from the principles and causes that lie behind all phenomena, and to ascend from the visible to the invisible, from the material to the spiritual."³⁷

Although the previous paragraph illustrates that the vocabulary surrounding the concept of an essential principle underlying music changed over the course of Jolivet's life, an examination of his writing and reading reveals that much of Jolivet's thinking regarding the *foundation* of that ineffable aspect of music stayed remarkably consistent and is observable in Jolivet's early statements regarding music.

From the beginning of his public/professional life Jolivet linked the power of music to scientific principles and thus, by extension, linked science to spirituality. The foundation of this philosophy was established in the 1937 Sorbonne lecture. In this lecture Jolivet quoted extensively from Antoine Fabre d'Olivet's *La Musique expliquée comme science et comme art et considérée dans ses rapports analogiques avec les mystères religieux, la mythologie ancienne et l'histoire de la terre* (new edition; Paris: Jean Pinasseau, 1928), the very title of which links music to religious practice and

³⁷ Schuré, *L'Évolution divine*, quoted in Conrad, 224.

scientific principle.³⁸ Jolivet's copy of his book has markings on at least half the pages, suggesting that it was work of significance to him. In addition to his obvious close reading of the work and his extensive quotations from it in the Sorbonne lecture, numerous other phrases appear in his writings without citations, suggesting a deep integration of these ideas into Jolivet's own mind.³⁹

Working from Fabre d'Olivet, Jolivet argued in his Sorbonne lecture that the return to "revealed principle" is in fact a return to an ancient tradition which will rejuvenate music. "Music, envisioned as speculative, is, as the ancients defined it, the knowledge of the order of all things, the science of the harmonic relations of the universe; it *rests on immutable principles which nothing can undermine*"⁴⁰ [emphasis mine]. Here then is the core kernel of Jolivet's aesthetic view: music is knowledge of the order of all things; music is the science of harmonic relations in the universe; music rests on immutable principles. All of this proceeds from the most ancient of sources.

These immutable principles are the means by which music exercises its power. Jolivet quotes Fabre d'Olivet directly here in the Sorbonne lecture.

It is never by its exterior forms that music exercises its true power; it is not even by means of the elements which serve to develop these forms; it is rather *by means of the principles which constitute them*. [emphasis mine]⁴¹

These principles, more fully explained, include Pythagoras' and others' theories of numbers and proportions, a clear link to the ancient theories of the harmony of the

³⁸ This edition was actually the first collection of Fabre d'Olivet's writings.

³⁹ Conrad notes this last point and asserts that this book was crucial to the formation of Jolivet's worldview. (See Conrad, 225).

⁴⁰ Antoine Fabre d'Olivet, *La Musique expliquée comme science et comme art et considérée dans ses rapports analogiques avec les mystères religieux, la mythologie ancienne et l'histoire de la terre* (new edition; Paris: Jean Pinasseau, 1928); quoted in Conrad, 228.

⁴¹ Fabre d'Olivet, quoted in Conrad, 228-9.

spheres and others. Jolivet is unequivocal in the “Gènese” lecture in defining the basis for the “magical” aspect of music: “It is not arithmetic which is the basis of music, but *numbers*. And it is because it is based on numbers that music is a *magical art*.”⁴²

This, then, is the most fundamental element of Jolivet’s understanding of the power of music: number. Number, and by extension, proportions (which are of course governed by numeric relationships). We have already noted Jolivet’s acknowledgement that magic, the source of music, is based on “...the visible elements of nature and their invisible, hidden relations in the cosmos.”⁴³ Historically, these relations have been expressed through number (such as in Pythagorean theories of music and the music of the spheres), and across Jolivet’s compositional life there is overwhelming evidence that his interest in the power of numbers was an essential and omnipresent driving force in his work.

Jolivet’s intense interest in this area is clearly evident in his early reading as well as writing, and manifest itself in his work in several ways. First, Jolivet was attracted by the idea that numbers themselves carry symbolic meaning. This interest certainly dates from at least as early as the Sorbonne lecture, in which Jolivet quotes at length from Fabre d’Olivet on the symbolism of number.⁴⁴ Fabre d’Olivet, for his part, claims to be repeating ideas which are found in ancient and modern philosophers/theosophists, and common to all peoples of the earth. Symbols in general, of course, held great interest for Jolivet, as they are the means by which concepts inaccessible to us become accessible;

⁴² Jolivet, “Gènese,” III/1a; quoted in Conrad, 229.

⁴³ Jolivet “Second Interview” by Goléa; quoted in Hilda Jolivet, *Avec...André Jolivet*, 64.

⁴⁴ For example: “The number 12, formed of the ternary and the quaternary, is the symbol of the universe and the measure of sound.” (Fabre d’Olivet, 59, quoted by Jolivet, quoted in Conrad, 231.

symbols play an important role in revealing to us that which is hidden.⁴⁵

Numerous other early sources in Jolivet's library also deal with number symbolism and point to its importance in Jolivet's thought. Sections of Mardus' *Toute-Puissance de l'adepte* (1932) that deal with numerology figure prominently among those annotated by Jolivet. Hélène de Calais' book, *Magie sonore* (Paris: Librairie Vége, 1938) also treats the subject of number symbolism in great detail and is another of the widely annotated volumes in Jolivet's library. Hilda Jolivet confirms the importance of this book and Jolivet's friendship with Calais:

We received two or three times a week, an extraordinary woman, friend of the Lesjeunes, musician and musicologist, of affirmed esoteric beliefs: Hélène de Calais. She was constantly establishing relations between music and numbers – she had even written a book on the subject – and she influenced Jolivet a lot, already attracted by these questions.⁴⁶

Christine Jolivet, in an interview published in 1994, also discusses her father's interest in Chinese number symbolism, and the interview contains a reproduction, in Jolivet's own hand, from the notebook in which he undertook his cabalistic calculations.⁴⁷

Early sources also reveal a deep interest in proportion and its application to musical composition in formal structures, rhythmic structures and even the structures of pitch complexes (scales and the like) themselves. One of the main points of Jolivet's Sorbonne lecture of 1937 was to argue that the proportions of tempered tuning had destroyed the natural proportions of the scales, and thus had destroyed the magic in music (an idea that also influenced Fabre d'Olivet, who made a similar argument). As we shall see in Chapter 5, Jolivet favored Pythagorean tuning and an "acoustic mode" based on

⁴⁵ This idea is expressed Kerneiz, 118-9 in a section underlined by Jolivet.

⁴⁶ Hilda Jolivet, *Avec...André Jolivet*, 132-3. Hilda is referring to the 1930s here.

⁴⁷ Kayas and Chassain-Dolliou, "Évocation," *Portraits*, 25.

the notes of the overtone series (which expresses, of course, mathematical proportions in sound). Matila C. Ghyka's *Essai sur le rythme* (NRF, 1938), another of the annotated volumes in Jolivet's library, includes underlinings in the discussions of the importance of Pythagoreans, the Fibonacci series, repetition, cyclic constructions, irrational proportions, and the use of the Golden Section for derivation of scales.

The importance of number and proportion remained a central concern for Jolivet in the last period of his compositional life as well, a fact which is evident in the works Jolivet was reading later in his life and the music he was writing.⁴⁸ With regards to number symbolism, few of the volumes in Jolivet's library which date from the 1960s contain discussions of it specifically; Jolivet did, however, acknowledge the conscious use of number in the construction of some of his later works. His *Douze inventions pour douze instruments* (1966), for example, is based entirely on the number twelve, whose importance as the "symbol of the universe" (Fabre d'Olivet) has already been mentioned above (note 44). Speaking of this work, Jolivet explained the importance of the number twelve in the piece, pointing out that "The number of beats, of measures, of modulations, is based on the number twelve. The work lasts twelve minutes."⁴⁹ Two of the later books in Jolivet's library that do make some mention of the symbolic nature of numbers are works by Alain Daniélou: *Traité de musicologie comparée* (Hermann, 1959) and

⁴⁸ It falls outside the scope of this paper to discuss the middle period of Jolivet's compositional life (the 40s and 50s), but it is worth noting that several volumes in Jolivet's library dating from those years also contain sections on numbers and number symbolism that were annotated by Jolivet. These include: *La Leçon de Platon* (1943) by D. Néroman, which includes sections on scales, the Golden Section, and astrology; *Anthologie littéraire de l'occultisme* (1950) by Robert Amadou and Robert Kanten, which contains sections on number symbolism; and *Réflexions sur l'univers sonore* (1954) by P. G. Adrian which discusses the transformation of "organic existence" to "mathematical existence." This last volume is highly speculative and esoteric, and actually contains several "non!" annotations in the margins. In any case, it is clear that Jolivet's interest in number was fueled throughout his life.

⁴⁹ Jolivet, "Aspects," 4; quoted in Conrad, 232.

Sémantique musicale: essai de psychophysiologie auditive (Buchet-Chastel, 1966)⁵⁰ The former volume makes relatively fleeting reference to the correspondence of scale degrees to various symbolic things, including number (p. 89). The latter is a quite extensive treatment of number, temperament and meaning in music. It is possible that Jolivet saw this latter work as part of a continuum of study of the relationship of number and music with which he strongly agreed. Annotations in the bibliography of *Sémantique musicale* include brackets highlighting works by Aristotle, Boethius, Fabre d'Olivet (*Musique Expliquée*), Gyka (a volume on the "golden number") Helmholtz, and Vulliard (*La Tradition Pythagoricienne*). This is a veritable "what's-what" of Jolivet's thought.

A second numeric concern that later sources make clearer is Jolivet's interest in the use of Golden Mean proportions. Jolivet discusses his use of the Golden Section with Antoine Goléa in the eighth Radio France interview (1961), stating that he been using GS proportions in his music "for 25 years."⁵¹ He cites his first piano sonata (1945, and dedicated to Bartok) as an early example of his application of GS proportion to duration,⁵² but manuscript evidence proves that Jolivet was also cognizant of GS proportions in later works. Notes with the manuscripts for the Second Cello Concerto (1966) and the *Suite en concert* for solo cello (1965) include pages showing numbers of beats for individual themes and various calculations using .618, the decimal

⁵⁰ This citation for *Semantique musicale* is as it is listed in the catalogue of the Fonds André Jolivet at the Médiathèque Musicale Mahler. The book actually housed in the archive that I was able to consult, however, is published by Hermann with a date of publication of 1967. This discrepancy remains unexplained, but it should be noted that the annotations in the 1967 edition do appear to be in Jolivet's hand.

⁵¹ Jolivet, "Eighth Interview" by Antoine Goléa, 2; quoted in Conrad, 358.

⁵² In a 1951 article on the Concerto for ondes martenot Jolivet claimed to have applied GS proportion to sound masses. It is unclear what he meant by this. André Jolivet, "A Propos du 1er concerto pour ondes et orchestra d'André Jolivet," *Revue Internationale de Musique* 10 (Spring-Summer 1951): 389-396.

representation of the Golden Section ratio.⁵³ This observation is particularly relevant in relation to *Ascèses*, which also date from 1965. According to Bridget Conrad, several of Jolivet's students also confirmed that Jolivet spoke enthusiastically about the use of GS, without indicating exactly how it applied in his own works.⁵⁴

Perhaps most interesting in the materials in Jolivet's library which date from the 1960s is the prominence of annotated writings by and relating to the work of composer Iannis Xenakis. There are three main Xenakis-related texts with annotations in Jolivet's hand: Claude Samuel's *Panorama de l'art musical contemporain* (NRF, Le point du jour, 1962); *La Revue Musicale* 265-266 (1969), a double issue on Varèse, Xenakis, Berio and Pierre Henry which contains "Entretien avec Iannis Xenakis" by Michel Perrot; and *La Revue Musicale*, 257 (1963) subtitled *Iannis Xenakis et la Musique stochastique*.

Jolivet's interest in Xenakis' thought and work is particularly clear in the first and second of these volumes. The first, the Samuel, does not have all its pages cut, clearly indicating that Jolivet did not read the entire book. Nonetheless, the chapter by Xenakis ("Éléments sur les procédés probabilistes (stochastiques) de composition musicale" (pp. 416-425) is extensively annotated. The double issue of *Revue Musicale* is similarly not entirely cut, and there are very few annotations outside of the interview with Xenakis, which is much underlined.

Since Xenakis' theories and methods of composition are mathematical in nature, Jolivet's interest in them is clearly another manifestation of his interest in the relationship between music and number. The annotations in the articles above, however, highlight slightly different ideas than what we have previously seen in Jolivet's earlier reading and

⁵³The information from Conrad (360) who examined these manuscripts. Exactly how Jolivet applied the GS to the themes is not clear from either the notes or the manuscript.

⁵⁴Conrad, 359.

writing; Xenakis' thought and stochastic theory may have contributed to Jolivet's contemplation of new areas of inquiry. For example, Jolivet was obviously taken with Xenakis' argument that the apparent contradiction of numerous polyphonic lines whose intensely ordered and complex relationships to each other result in a seeming disordered surface sound mass (such as in serialism) is obviated when the sounds are independent and governed by stochastic laws. Xenakis's article in Samuel's book develops this argument, and Jolivet has underlined or marked the margin vigorously at points such as

The statistical laws of these events, emptied of their political or moral content, are those of the cicadas or of the rain. These are laws of the passage from perfect order to total disorder, in a continuous or explosive manner. These are stochastic laws.

The passages from a discontinuous state to a continuous state are regulatable with the aid of the stochastic.⁵⁵

The implications of the use of stochastic laws were many; Jolivet was apparently in agreement with Michel Philippot when he described Xenakis as a seeker of new forms, as one who, on the one hand, is striving to discover an explanation for the mysterious mechanism by which human listeners perceive form, and on the other hand is using mathematical model to construct new forms "...that is to say, trying (and generally succeeding) in making music which proceeds from logical or mathematical visions."⁵⁶

The *Revue Musicale* interview with Xenakis (No. 265-66) brings forward other ideas which apparently interested Jolivet. This article contains numerous underlinings which reference the structure of time, our perception of it, the theory of relativity, and

⁵⁵ Iannis Xenakis, "Éléments sur les procédés probabilistes (stochastiques) de composition musicale" in Claude Samuel, *Panorama de l'art musical contemporaine* (NRF, Le point du jour, 1962): 419.

⁵⁶ Michel P. Philippot, "La Certitude et la Foi" *La Revue Musicale* 257 (1963): 15.

using the laws of physics to organize sound. In the case of this last, Xenakis is clear about his motivation as a composer: “The laws of physics can give models, but it is necessary to never forget that it is a question of music.”⁵⁷ This is a sentiment with which Jolivet agreed. Indeed, there are a few familiar old ideas in these articles in addition to newer ones. For example, Jolivet signals his agreement with Michel Philippot in *Revue Musicale* No. 257 when he reminds readers that mathematical constructions are only the products of the human imagination, models by which we can better understand the physical and mental worlds.⁵⁸ The chapter by Xenakis in Samuel’s book also makes clear that Xenakis and Jolivet share certain basic philosophies of music, including the fact that music should be a vehicle by which an individual is led to experience something greater than himself. Music should strive to achieve “...total exaltation in which the individual blends, by losing his consciousness, with a truth...rare, enormous and perfect.”⁵⁹ This is the third tenant of Jolivet’s musical philosophy, which we will explore in the next section.

Having now surveyed Jolivet’s aesthetic and the influences on it in both the 1930s and 1960s, it is clear that number and proportion and its role in music were a consistently strong interest of Jolivet’s. There does appear to be a shift in emphasis, however, from more esoteric writings on the matter (which are completely absent from Jolivet’s library in later years) to more scientific ones. The following quotation seems to confirm the more scientific influence of Jolivet’s later years, while also clearly demonstrating the continued importance of his earlier concerns with ratio and proportion.

⁵⁷ Michel Perrot, “Entretien avec Iannis Xenakis,” *La Revue Musicale* 265-66 (1969): 70.

⁵⁸ Philippot, “Certitude,” 15.

⁵⁹ Iannis Xenakis, “Éléments sur les procédés probabilistes,” in Samuel, *Panorama*, 416.

All our sense perceptions can be reduced to ratios. And, just as it has been shown that colors don't really exist, but are just variations in ratios of luminosity, so no musical discourse can hold its ground unless it is articulated on solidly established relationships between sounds, their durations, their pitch, and their dynamic intensity."⁶⁰

Jolivet continually attempted to relate the visible and invisible through musical symbols, and number and proportion were a key aspect of that endeavor.

Sidebar: Jolivet and Science

Jolivet's interest in Xenakis' work brings to the fore the question of Jolivet's relationship to scientific inquiry in general. It was noted at the beginning of the previous section that Jolivet had, from the beginning of his life as a composer, linked music to science and thus science to the spiritual. Seen from the outside, and considering Jolivet's interest in numbers as science of a sort, this is clearly true. Science for Jolivet, however, was only a means to reach a more spiritual end; in fact, the truths of science were also the truths of religion, a position reminiscent of Schuré.

This sentiment is reflected in Jolivet's interests and work in both the 1930s and the 1960s. In the 1930s Jolivet expressed this position clearly in his "Gènese" lecture, arguing against a reliance on the modernist concept of "progress" for solutions to societal problems and saying that "Modern applied science interests us only to the extent that it is a method of *re-discovery*, by successive approximation, of the marvelous phenomena whose possible realization was known by the ancients, through intuition."⁶¹ In the lecture he also quotes Albert Gleizes (friend of Varèse and author of *Vie et mort de l'occident*

⁶⁰ Jolivet, "Notes sur les Sons," 2; quoted in Conrad, 234.

⁶¹ Jolivet, "Genèse," IV/5; quoted in Conrad, 69.

chrétien (Sablons, Isère: Éditions Moly-Sabata, 1930)) on the subject of scientists: “They [the most objective and lucid scientists] are in tune with distinct tendencies of the whole, they are already tied to a spiritual state opposed to that which is currently primary....”⁶²

In the 1960s Jolivet appears to have continued to be drawn to the use of scientific ideas in music and to the connection of science to the spiritual. Nowhere is this more clear than in his interest in Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, which we will explore more fully below. Teilhard de Chardin’s combining of his scientific work as a geologist and paleontologist with his vocation as a Jesuit priest, and his melding of scientific theory with Catholic theology in many ways parallels Jolivet’s work as a composer.

Music as Mediator

*“My mysticism would integrate me into the universal rhythm,
and as for my philosophy, it would lead you, by the effect of the sounds which I organize,
into that “serene communion of the human being with the world.”*⁶³

The third major tenant of Jolivet’s philosophy is that because music has at its core a sacred origin and is based on fundamental universal principles and relationships, it is able to fulfill a particularly important role and purpose: to act as a mediator between humanity and the divine, between the earth and the cosmos. The desire for this communion has already been identified as a primary and sacred reason for humanity’s creation of music: “The profound needs which led to the birth of music and its

⁶² Albert Gleizes, *Vie et mort de l’occident chrétien* (Sablons, Isère: Éditions Moly-Sabata, 1930), 129-131; quoted by Jolivet in “Genese” IV/5b; quoted in Conrad, 69.

⁶³ Quoted in Hilda Jolivet *Avec...André Jolivet*, 104; source identified only as “une conférence.”

development...have a sacred origin: to provide communication between the life of this terrestrial world and the universal life, the cosmic life.⁶⁴

As we have seen with other of Jolivet's ideas, some of the clearest statements of them come from later in his life. "Our goal in the twentieth century seems to me to be to give back to music its role as mediator between the human and the divine,"⁶⁵ he told Antoine Goléa in 1961. The last two published articles by Jolivet sound this same theme very strongly. For example, the 1973-4 interview in *Axes*, "Musique, flèche de la communion universelle", takes the theme of communion as its main topic and treats the idea from several angles. In it Jolivet explains that humanity has, from its beginning, recognized itself to be a part of a macrocosm, and an "infinitesimal synthesis of this macrocosm, a microcosm." This contributes to our desire for a communication between humanity and the universe.⁶⁶ For Jolivet the concept of unity between humanity and the divine is also sometimes expressed as a general universal unity. In the *Axes* interview the interviewer notes that Jolivet values greatly the idea of universal communion, and Jolivet answers "Music is probably the ideal means of assuring universal unity. This is essential for me...."⁶⁷ This idea is also reflected in the following quotation (which is from an undated, although probably later, source)

"What is Music? Before all else, music is an act of communion. It is even an act of communion in two senses; first, communion of the composer and nature (I mean nature in all its manifestations, both perceptible and imperceptible) at the moment of the creation of the work; next, communion between the composer and the public at the moment of the performance of the work..."⁶⁸

⁶⁴ Jolivet, "Musique, flèche," 64.

⁶⁵ Jolivet, "Second Interview" by Goléa; quoted in Conrad, 54.

⁶⁶ Jolivet, "Musique, flèche," 64-65.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 68.

⁶⁸ Jolivet, "Notes sur les Sons;" quoted in Conrad, 194; see also below on composer's role in society.

Communion is also a strong theme in the posthumous “Variations impromptues sur un thème éternel”, published in 1975 in the journal *Arfuyen*. Commenting on contemporary composers and citing Stockhausen as an example, Jolivet notes the use of compositional principles which lead to “a communion between the individual and the cosmos....”⁶⁹ He goes on to quote a favorite line from the mathematician Heinrich Wronsky, that music is the embodiment of the intelligence of sounds, and adds “This intelligence contained in sounds is really itself the marvelous symbol of the cosmic unity between the macrocosm, the universe, and the microcosm, man,”⁷⁰ a statement which resonates with the language of the *Axes* interview.

A companion idea to this concept that is expressed very strongly in Jolivet’s later writing is that, although all of the arts played this mediating role to some extent, music is particularly privileged in this regard because of the “very psycho-physiological nature of sounds”⁷¹ and the immediate action of the vibrations of sound on the listener (a very long-held interest and belief of Jolivet’s⁷²).

This possibility of immediate communion certainly constitutes an advantage of music compared with other forms of art, notably poetry. In music, the composer can say all without revealing [all]. There is its strength; because all things neither can nor should be revealed.⁷³

Jolivet repeated this belief elsewhere as well. “Music should establish a communication, not only between humans [les hommes] but also between humans and the Universe,

⁶⁹ Jolivet, “Variations impromptues,” 65.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² There is much, for example, in “Plaid pour le vif” on the action of sound vibrations on listeners.

⁷³ Jolivet, “Variations impromptues,” 65. c.f. also the Paul Valéry quote referenced previously (“Hide your god...).

better than writing and language.”⁷⁴ and “Music has a universality not possessed by any other art....”⁷⁵

Despite this assertion that music is superior to other arts in its ability to connect humanity to the divine, Jolivet also acknowledged the important connection between poetry and his own music. “...my music has, without doubt, always been linked (tied?) to poetry.”⁷⁶ It is very interesting that Jolivet should say this, for while there are a notable number of volumes of or about poetry in Jolivet’s library that date from the 1960s, there is a relative absence of such volumes which date from the 1930s.⁷⁷ This suggests that Jolivet’s interest in poetry intensified in his later years.⁷⁸ The presence of texts by Max-Pol Fouchet in *Ascèses* is certainly suggestive in this regard, Fouchet having been the editor of a journal dedicated to poetry and its relationship to the mystic (including one famous issue that was a special edition subtitled “On Poetry as Spiritual Exercise”).

By the final decade of Jolivet’s life his belief in the role of music as a mediator between the human and the divine, and as a means of unifying humanity itself, had assumed great prominence in his writing. As with the other major tenants of Jolivet’s philosophy, the concept of music as a mediator does find its first expressions in Jolivet’s

⁷⁴ Quoted in Hilda Jolivet, “André Jolivet,” *Zodiaque*, no. 119 (1979): 38. The reference is to the work *Songe à nouveau révé.*

⁷⁵ Jolivet, “Musique, flèche,” 68.

⁷⁶ Jolivet, “Variations impromptues,” 65. Jolivet also goes on to list some of the poets with the greatest importance to him, including Claudel, Pierre Reverdy, Pierre Emmanuel and others. Interestingly, none of these are the poets whose works date from the 1960s and who we find on Jolivet’s library shelf!

⁷⁷ The later works include: Max-Pol Fouchet, *Demeure le secret* (Mercure de France, 1961); Pierre Marie *Igloo* (L’Information Poétique, 1963); Jacques Maritain *L’Intuition créatrice dans l’art et dans la poésie* (Desclée De Brouwer, 1966); Serge Moreux *Poésies* (Éditeur non mentionné: Impr. Humbert and Fils, Largentière, 1965); Alfred Pouinard *Miscellanées. Prose, poèmes*. (Roudil, 1966).

⁷⁸ Although it is possible that Jolivet had other volumes that he did not keep, this seems unlikely given the number of books in his library which date from the 1930s. The relation of poetry and music does emerge in at least one writing of Jolivet dating from the 1950s. “Whereas poetry, animated by a general thought, particularizes it to make it graspable, music, struck by a particular thought, generalizes it to multiply the influence, it universalizes that which is particular, elevating it from the earth towards the sky.” Jolivet, “À Propos du 1er concerto pour ondes,” 391; quoted in Conrad, 196.

earliest writings and preoccupations; they are, however, expressed in slightly different terms in those writings than they are in later ones, and are not so clearly developed. The “Genèse” lecture for example, concerned as it is with elaborating an argument for the principles on which music should be based, speaks only generally about “spiritual renewal” and not about a communion between humanity and the divine. The 1939 article “Plaid pour le vif”, however, does mention both connection and universality. The secret of all art, according to Jolivet here, is “...the connection that it establishes between the Earth and Heaven, between the Visible and the Invisible.”⁷⁹ The true purpose of art is “the universal expression of Man...”, and sound is “...a particular but not independent expression of the universal rhythm....”⁸⁰

In the 1930s, Jolivet believed that the music of other cultures could provide a better model by which to achieve this “connection”. Recall that Jolivet identified four key 1930s works as paradigmatic of his compositional canon of the time: *Danse incantatoire*, *Cinq Incantations* and *Mana* of 1936 and the *Cinq danses rituelles* of 1938. All are examples of works that seem to recall non-European social and religious rites. Jolivet was drawn to the music of so-called “primitive” cultures because he believed that the music of his time had lost its connection to everyday life, and that this lack of connection to life meant that music lacked a connection to the universal.⁸¹ Jolivet’s familiarity with other cultures (through his and Hilda’s sociological studies at the Sorbonne, trips he had already taken to Algeria and Morocco in 1934 and 1936, and the general influence of the Parisian milieu of the time) led him to believe that music played

⁷⁹ Jolivet, “Plaid pour le vif,” *Avec...André Jolivet*, 111.

⁸⁰ Jolivet, “Plaid pour le vif,” *Avec...André Jolivet*, 110, 112.

⁸¹ “But music, for a century, has been a gratuitous art, without connection to life, in the daily sense of the term, and, because of that, except for a few works of genius, without connection to the universal.” Jolivet, “Plaid pour le vif,” *Avec...André Jolivet*, 105.

a more central role in the life of other cultures, and thus had not lost its connection to the sacred. Writing in 1947 (just a year after the “Réponse” article in which he had identified the ritual works as paradigmatic of his canon) he explained that to reconnect with the “magic” of “oriental” music was to reconnect with “the grand, original tradition in which magic and music were intimately linked.”⁸² In the 1960s Jolivet provided an even more fleshed out line of reasoning as to why this should be the case: modern culture has lost its connection to nature while the primitive soul has not; thus, the primitive soul “has the intuition of the universal soul” and returning to beliefs and practices of primitive society is fruitful because “it is the universal soul that one uncovers there.” In primitive society, “An immaterial bond connects men to each other, and connects them to the rest of the world. It is this primal unanimity that we must rediscover.”⁸³ For Jolivet, then, the attraction to primitive societies was their more immediate connection to the ultimate cosmic unity which he sought to facilitate through his music.⁸⁴

There are numerous probable influences on Jolivet’s 1930s interest in other societies, particularly so-called “primitive” societies. These include a general interest in the subject in Paris in the 1930s, evident in the success of the Colonial Exhibition of 1931 and activities such as concerts, journal articles (such as in *La Revue Musicale*) and presentations of recordings made during the Exposition by the Institut de Phonétique at

⁸² “It is from the day when, more or less consciously, the composer experienced in oriental musics their magic power, he renewed the grand, original tradition in which magic and music were intimately linked.” André Jolivet, “Musique et exotisme,” *L’Exotisme dans l’art et la pensée*, ed. Roger Bezombes (Paris: Elsevier, 1947), 159.

⁸³ Jolivet, “Aspects;” quoted in Conrad, 186.

⁸⁴ Because the “Aspects” lecture was given so many years after the composition of the ritual and incantatory works of the 1930s it is difficult to know whether it truly represents Jolivet’s beliefs of that time or are, rather, a refinement of those thoughts and more representative of his 1960s beliefs. The language of the “universal soul” and the connection of all beings to all beings certainly resonates with his other 1960s writings. Regardless of which is the case, this lecture does provide an explanation that is consistent with Jolivet’s statements and activities of the 1930s.

Musée Guimet in 1932 and 1933. Other influences likely include Jolivet's participation in Hilda's sociological studies at the Sorbonne and his reading of works by pioneering sociologists Lucien Lévy-Bruhl and Emile Durkheim.⁸⁵ Other readings of Jolivet may have influenced him as well in this regard for, as we have noted above, several of the occult or esoteric works which Jolivet read (such as Schuré and Kerneiz) also sought answers to existential questions in ancient cultural traditions (although the cultures in question were also sometimes "high" ancient cultures). These works sometimes also spoke specifically of the idea of communion with the divine, such as Kerneiz's *Karma Yoga*, which identifies liberation through communion with the divine as one of the goals of all types of yoga practice.⁸⁶ Jolivet also owned Albert Lavignac's encyclopedia on foreign musical cultures (1913) and considered this an indispensable resource, even recommending the work to Messiaen.⁸⁷ The articles in this volume are amazingly detailed in their descriptions of the technical aspects of the music, its philosophical underpinnings, and instruments and performance practice of the culture in question. Cultures treated include Greek, Indian, Chinese, Korean, Japanese, African, and American Indian, to name only a few. Jolivet's familiarity with this work perhaps explains why he was able to say in a 1958 interview that he had studied the technical principles of the East before he had ever had a chance to travel there.⁸⁸

⁸⁵Hilda herself asserted that André read with enthusiasm these works, and Jolivet's "Aspects" lecture is reminiscent of Durkheim's language in its identification of the essential religiosity of humanity and the possibility of discovering that which is most essential through the study of "primitive" societies (see Conrad, 168). The works that Hilda says Jolivet read are: Lévy-Bruhl, *Les Fonctions mentales dans les sociétés inférieures* (1910), Lévy-Bruhl, *La Mentalité primitive* (1922), Durkheim, *Les Formes élémentaires de la vie religieuse: le système totémique en Australie* (1912).

⁸⁶Kerneiz, *Karma Yoga*, 82. The goal of practice is liberation, the means to it include true knowledge, communion with the divine and just or true action.

⁸⁷According to Hilda Jolivet. See *Avec...André Jolivet*, 86.

⁸⁸Cadiou, "Conversation," 3.

Jolivet's early interest in other cultures was a manifestation of his search for the means by which music could affect his expressed desire for mediation between the human and the divine and an expression of the universal. As is evident from the statement quoted at the beginning of this section, however, it is Jolivet's later writings that focus much more strongly on the idea of "communion;" the idea in general becomes much more prominent in Jolivet's later articles and interviews. It is interesting, therefore, that the influence of other cultures seems to fade somewhat in Jolivet's later life. Indeed, there is an interesting correspondence between the prominence of the idea of communion in Jolivet's late writings and the prominent appearance on his bookshelf in the late 1950s and 1960s of the works of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (1881-1955). The work of Teilhard is one of the most important of Jolivet's later life, and thus will be explored here in some detail.

First, it must be said that the works of Teilhard de Chardin really are an overwhelming presence among the later dated volumes in Jolivet's library. It has already been noted that these are essentially the only volumes of a philosophical or spiritual nature with later publication dates that are contained in Jolivet's library. The ten volumes that Jolivet owned include both some of Teilhard de Chardin's more scientific volumes (such as *La Place de l'homme dans la nature: le groupe zoologique humain* (1956)) and more mystical or theological ones (such as *Hymne à l'univers* (1961) and *Le Milieu divin* (1957)). If the sheer number of the books is not enough to convince one of the importance of Teilhard's thought to Jolivet, comments by both Jolivet himself and Hilda Jolivet confirm the special place that Teilhard de Chardin's work had in Jolivet's life. After Jolivet's death Hilda noted "He devoured his [Teilhard de Chardin's] books as soon

as they were edited; they remained his bedside reading.”⁸⁹ For his part, Jolivet confirmed that he felt himself “in perfect harmony” with the thought of Teilhard de Chardin, and even referred to himself as a “non-practising fetishist – a fetishist reader of Teilhard de Chardin.”⁹⁰

What was it in Teilhard’s writing that so attracted Jolivet? There are numerous points of convergence between the work of Teilhard and that of Jolivet, including not only a shared essential belief in the connected nature of the universe but also several shared common influences. These connections are worth exploring in some detail, given the prominence of Teilhard’s work in Jolivet’s later life.

Teilhard was a truly intriguing blend of the scientific and the spiritual, both a brilliant scientist and deeply religious man. A Jesuit priest trained as a geologist and palaeontologist, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin was a very well respected French scientist, widely published, and involved in some of the most significant expeditions and finds in Asia that contributed to the theory of the evolution of man. To reconcile his own Christianity with his scientific work, Teilhard evolved complex and highly original theological ideas which he was banned from publishing during his lifetime.⁹¹ Through evolution, Teilhard came to understand the world as being in a state of “becoming,” (cosmogogenesis) rather than having been created (genesis). This state of change and growth involved both matter and spirit. As a result of his scientific work Teilhard noted ever increasing levels of self-reflection and awareness at higher levels of structural

⁸⁹Hilda Jolivet “André Jolivet,” *Zodiaque* no. 119, 17.

⁹⁰ The first of these quotations is from “Musique, flèche” (67), and is referencing specifically the *Heart of Matter*; the second quote is apparently from an August 1957 article in *La Tribune de Lausanne* by Pierre Descargues, quoted in Kayas and Chassain-Dolliou “Évocation,” *Portraits*, 31.

⁹¹ Teilhard de Chardin was, in fact, silenced by the Vatican on theological matters and essentially exiled from France. He was allowed to publish his scientific writings, however; he also lectured on scientific matters extensively.

complexity in living things (“hominization”). Observable in the evidence of evolution, Teilhard believed that this evolution into ever greater consciousness would lead humanity to an ultimate unity, the Omega Point. In Teilhard’s writing, the Omega Point is both God and the “apex of the convergent social and spiritual development of the earth.”⁹² Teilhard also theorized a level of earthly reality he termed the “noosphere.” If the geosphere is the non-living world, and the biosphere is the layer of living organisms above that on the earth, then the noosphere is the layer of mind and spirit around the earth, both contributing to and connecting all humanity.⁹³

There is no doubt that Teilhard’s thought is challenging. Its essence, however, contains numerous elements which resonate with ideas we have identified as important to Jolivet in the 1960s. Essentially, Teilhard perceived the divine in everything. He believed that matter and spirit were connected, and that the universe was still in a state of creation, of “becoming.” Because all matter and spirit are connected, so too is all humanity to each other (in the noosphere) and all of humanity to God. The idea of communion with the divine through the universe is a recurring theme in Teilhard’s thought, not unlike the recurring theme of communion through music in Jolivet. Some examples of Teilhard’s expression of this idea:

...I have always...surrendered myself to this active feeling of communion with God through the universe.”⁹⁴

⁹² W. Henry Kenney, *A Path Through Teilhard’s Phenomenon* (Dayton, OH: Pflaume Press, 1970), 252.

⁹³ Teilhard scholar Ursula King calls this “a thinking envelope of the earth.” Ursula King, *Spirit of Fire: The Life and Vision of Teilhard de Chardin* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1996; second printing (paper) 1998), 88.

⁹⁴ Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *Heart of Matter* (London: Collins and New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1978), 47; quoted in Ursula King *Pierre Teilhard de Chardin: Writings Selected with an Introduction by Ursula King*, Modern Spiritual Masters series, Robert Ellsberg, series ed. (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1999; fourth printing (paper) 2002), 102.

“There is communion with God, and a communion with earth, and a communion with God through earth,”⁹⁵

...life...now reveals itself to me as communion with you through the world.”⁹⁶

For Teilhard, the earthly world is not something that must be transcended in order to achieve union with divine; no longer is the mystical removed from the physical.

Moreover, humanity can achieve communion with God through action, and participate in creation itself through our work on earth.⁹⁷ There is a clear correspondence here with Jolivet’s emphasis on the importance of the active engagement of the composer in society, and Jolivet evidently felt Teilhard’s idea to be an important one, as his copy of *Le Milieu divin* has the paragraph containing the following underlined:

...in action, I adhere to the creative power of God; I coincide with it; I become not only its instrument but its living extension....I merge myself, in a sense,...with the very heart of God.

The soul does not pause to relish this communion, nor does it lose sight of the material end of its action; for it is wedded to a *creative* effort.”⁹⁸

In developing this cosmology Teilhard was influenced by several writers who also influenced Jolivet. Henri Bergson is one such writer; his 1911 book *Creative Evolution* helped Teilhard develop his theory of cosmogenesis.⁹⁹ We know that Jolivet too was

⁹⁵ Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, “Cosmic Life” in *Writings in Times of War* (London: Collins, 1968); quoted in King, *Spirit*, 55.

⁹⁶ Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *Le Milieu Divine: An Essay on the Interior Life* (London: Collins, 1960), 116-118; quoted in King, *Writings*, 117-8.

⁹⁷ King points out that Teilhard later came to understand this communion as taking place through actions including “political and social engagement” (King *Spirit*, 56). This too is quite similar to Jolivet’s thinking.

⁹⁸ Teilhard de Chardin, *Le Milieu divin* (Paris: Seuil, 1957), 51; the translation is borrowed from King *Writings*, 75.

⁹⁹ “Matter and spirit: these were no longer two things, but two *states* or two aspects of one and the same cosmic stuff, according to whether it was looked at or carried further in the direction in which (as Bergson would have put it) it is becoming itself or in the direction in which it is disintegrating.” Teilhard de Chardin, *Heart of Matter*, 25-28; quoted in King *Writings*, 40.

attracted to Bergson's writing, as his library contains annotated copies of *Les deux sources de la morale et de la religion* (Librarie de Félix Alcan, 1933) and *L'énergie spirituelle* (PUF, 1972). While Jolivet appears not to have owned *Creative Evolution*, it is nonetheless clear that Bergson was a point of convergence for Teilhard and Jolivet and a common influence.

Another influence common to Jolivet and Teilhard was Edouard Schuré's book *Les Grands initiés*, discussed previously. Teilhard read Schuré during the First World War, and his work on eastern and western mysticism confirmed for Teilhard that the questions which were occupying him were perennial questions of humanity. The influence of Schuré is also evident in Teilhard's deep wish to reconcile science and religion and his vision of a new mysticism in which religion and science could animate and transform each other. "Science (which means all forms of human activity) and religion have always been for me one and the same thing; both have been, so far as I have been concerned, the pursuit of one and the same object."¹⁰⁰ This is a sentiment we have also seen reflected in Jolivet.

Although Teilhard's theological works were not published until after his death, copies of some of his writings circulated during the war and it is apparently at this time that Jolivet first came into contact with Teilhard's thinking. According to the website of the Friends of Jolivet, a diary entry of August 8, 1919 (Jolivet's birthday) indicates that the young man had discovered Teilhard's "La puissance spirituelle de la matière," and Hilda Jolivet asserts that Jolivet had come into contact with "clandestine copies" of

¹⁰⁰Teilhard de Chardin, "My Universe" in *Heart of Matter*, 196-198; quoted in King *Writings*, 31.

Teilhard's writing during the war.¹⁰¹ Jolivet himself made reference to "La puissance spirituelle de la matière" in a 1965 interview with Bernard Gavoty (already referenced in chapter 2), saying that he heard the text "on the radio" on August 8, 1919.¹⁰² Despite the inconsistency in the description of how Jolivet came to be familiar with "La puissance," it is nevertheless clear that Teilhard's thinking was a presence in Jolivet's life to some degree even at this early date.

The correspondences between Jolivet's thinking and Teilhard de Chardin's thinking are obvious, and in fact can be elaborated rather neatly within the framework of the four tenants of Jolivet's musical aesthetic and philosophy proposed in this chapter. Both men expressed a belief in the sacred nature of some aspect of the physical world (Jolivet, music, sonorous matter; Teilhard, physical matter). Both men believed that the sacred nature of those elements was inherent in them. Both men believed that this fact would help lead humanity to union with the divine, and had strong visions for that union. Both men felt the interconnected nature of all things.¹⁰³ Both men passionately believed that their work was a contribution to the achievement of unity. There are also additional points of similarity in Jolivet's and Teilhard's worldview. Both men shared an optimism about the world and the future. Teilhard, for example, speculated that the atom bomb might be the beginning of a new unity. "I think that through the atom bomb war itself

¹⁰¹ Hilda Jolivet, *Avec...André Jolivet*, 262, and "André Jolivet," *Zodiaque* 119, 17. Teilhard was not officially silenced by Rome until 1925, so although the copies that were circulated were unpublished, they were not yet actually forbidden.

¹⁰² André Jolivet, "Les Secrets de l'orchestre," typewritten notes for radio interview by Bernard Gavoty, November 1965, Archives André Jolivet, Paris; quoted in Surchamp "Philosophie et spiritualité," *Portraits*, 69.

¹⁰³ In examining Jolivet's library it was interesting to note instances of "Teilhardian" thought in other authors, and Jolivet's attention to these points. In other words, these influences were not only from Teilhard, although Teilhard was perhaps an eloquent amplification of them. For example, Kerneiz's *Karma Yoga* discusses energy as an attribute of the divine, which has a Teilhardian ring; also, Jolivet's assertion that the basis for a musical aesthetic is found in a "synthesis of matter and thought" ("Plaid pour le vif," in *Avec...André Jolivet*, 403-4) has a resonance with Teilhard's concept of a synthesis of matter and spirit.

may be on the eve of being doubly and definitely destroyed.”¹⁰⁴ Jolivet expressed a similar sentiment in 1963: “No, man will not kill men; the more society becomes mechanized the more it will leave freedom for the birth of a new humanism.”¹⁰⁵

According to Hilda Jolivet, André never had the opportunity to meet Teilhard de Chardin, but Teilhard’s work was clearly an important presence in Jolivet’s life. Hilda characterized it as a “friend in all his hours of meditation”¹⁰⁶ and declared that “He [Jolivet] wanted to say again in music what he [Teilhard] had dared to dream and express.”¹⁰⁷ Interestingly, Jolivet denied that Teilhard was a *source* of his own belief, characterizing his relationship with Teilhard’s thought as “a meeting and not a driving force.”¹⁰⁸ Whether Teilhard acted as an influence on Jolivet or was simply a reinforcement of Jolivet’s thought, he was clearly an important presence in the later years of Jolivet’s life and a resource upon which Jolivet drew in both his private and compositional lives. Jolivet’s own writing reveals many points of convergence with that of Teilhard, making the inclusion of a quotation from Teilhard de Chardin’s work highly appropriate in *Ascèses*.

As the foregoing paragraphs make clear, the quest for the universal, and for a universal communion of humanity with the divine, of the visible with the invisible, and the terrestrial with the cosmic, was a lifelong preoccupation for Jolivet. They have demonstrated that the idea of music as a mediator between humanity and the divine was

¹⁰⁴ Teilhard “The Spiritual Repercussions of the Atom Bomb” in *The Future of Man* (London: Collins, 1965), 141; quoted in King, *Spirit*, 200 (partly King’s translation).

¹⁰⁵ André Jolivet to Georges Ribemont-Dessaignes, 18 September 1963, Archives André Jolivet, Paris; quoted in Surchamp “Philosophie et spiritualité,” *Portraits*, 55. This letter was part of a project with Ribemont-Dessaignes entitled “L’homme tuera-t-il les hommes?”

¹⁰⁶ Hilda Jolivet, “André Jolivet,” *Zodiaque* 119, 38.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 18.

¹⁰⁸ Jolivet, letter to Dom Surchamp, 14 February 1966 quoted in Surchamp “Philosophie et spiritualité,” *Portraits*, 68.

most clearly articulated in the 1960s. The outlines of this philosophy were present in the 1930s, although at that time Jolivet spoke more frequently of universality than he did of “communion.” There appears to be a correspondence between the later, more clearly articulated, vision of communion with the divine and Jolivet’s interest in the work of Teilhard de Chardin, while Jolivet’s contact with the study of other cultures in the 1930s influenced his early belief that these cultures were the best source of inspiration for music that would achieve his goal of communion.

Having investigated with some thoroughness two of the major pillars of Jolivet’s philosophy (that music is sacred because it is based on fundamental principles which also govern the structure of the universe, and that because of this sacred nature music has an important role to play as mediator between the human and the divine) it becomes clear that, although these basic principles remained consistent in Jolivet’s thinking, the external influences to which he was attracted did shift. The esoteric interests of the 1930s and the overwhelming influence of primitivism gave way, by the 1960s, to modern poets, stochastic theory and Teilhard de Chardin’s melding of the science of evolution to Catholic theology. It is not hard to see these influences as existing on a continuum: from number symbolism to stochastic principles, from Australian totemism (one of the “primitive” religious practices in which Jolivet was interested) to Teilhard de Chardin. Jolivet himself would probably prefer to characterize these ideas as existing on a spiral, from which one is constantly viewing the same ideas from new angles.

Although all these ideas are related, there is a perceptible increase in “sacred” language in the 1960s. It seems too that the primary influences on Jolivet at this time tended to be from his own religious culture rather than that of others, i.e. Christianity and

particularly the Catholicism in which he was raised. The privileging of a certain religious worldview over others seems to be supported by ideas articulated by Jolivet in his “Aspects” lecture of the early 1960s. In it Jolivet implies that certain religious practices, namely prayer, represent a forward development in humanity. In describing religious sentiment in humanity Jolivet asserts that humanity felt fear in the face of nature, and sought to exercise that fear with charms, incantation, magical gestures. This fear then gave way to love in the hearts of men, and men “...after having let themselves be swayed by exorcisms and incantation, ended up *ceding to prayer alone*.” [emphasis mine]¹⁰⁹ The implication that the history of religion is a movement from incantation to prayer is suggestive in light of Jolivet’s own aesthetic development.¹¹⁰

Music and Society

The mediation between the human and divine that was so important to Jolivet was not, for him, to happen on only a private or individual level. Jolivet believed that this mediation had to occur on a societal level as well, and thus that the composer had an important role to play in the life of society. This idea is expressed consistently in both Jolivet’s earliest writings, from the 1930s, and his later ones, from the late 1950s and 1960s.

Jolivet’s later writings are clear about the role music should play in society and the need for a partnership between the composer and society. “Music, sacred art, should

¹⁰⁹ Jolivet, “Aspects”, 3; quoted in Conrad, 188.

¹¹⁰ It is interesting to note that Hilda Jolivet, in her memoir, identifies the shift in Jolivet’s musical style of the 1940s as a passage from the “ritual” to the “religious” (see *Avec...André Jolivet*, 158). Jolivet’s writings in the mid-1940s, however, were certainly still emphasizing the ritual (see the “Réponse” article, for example).

participate in each important event of the life of human societies and help the members of these communities to commune in their highest aspirations.”¹¹¹ Indeed, music cannot exist without the participation of society.

Let us say that, for a musical work to exist, three authors are required: the composer who writes the score, the interpreter who transforms it into sounds, and the social group that keeps it alive.

In other words, the composer doesn't write *for*, he writes *with*....And his aesthetic is never fortuitous or gratuitous; it is always the transcendence of an ethic.¹¹²

The *effect* of music's role in society is clearly articulated in the above statements. As a result of the composer's participation in society, through the creation of music and its dissemination, the human spirit will be renewed, hidden reality will be revealed.

Reflecting on his career in the late 1960s, Jolivet believed that his own music was successful in this regard.

For my part, I have always endeavored to produce works which would merit the attention of the people, which could be felt also by them. One will retort that the perception of a work of art is never a naive one: one must know the code to which the work refers. Well, I believe I have in effect based my works on an easily decipherable code: THE CURRENT SENSIBILITY OF MY BROTHERS IN HUMANITY.¹¹³

In the rhetoric of these statements, which link music's place in society to spiritual goals, there is also the echo of a left-wing rhetoric; it is not difficult to perceive a connection between them and Jolivet's social and political activism. From the time of *Jeune France* in the 1930s Jolivet had been identified as something of a leftist, and we have explored in Chapter 2 the ways in which Jolivet chose to play a very active, public role in French society in the 1960s. Indeed, his 1960s activities occasionally also took on political

¹¹¹ Jolivet, "La Vérité de Jeanne," *La Revue Musicale*, 27.

¹¹² Jolivet, "Notes sur les Sons;" quoted in Conrad, 194.

¹¹³ Jolivet, "Tendances," 4-5; quoted in Conrad, 195.

overtones, such as when he participated in the student uprising activities of 1968.

Whether his political sensibilities influenced his philosophical outlook, or whether the currents of influence flowed the other direction is difficult to determine. Regardless of which is the case, Jolivet's belief in the importance of music for society, and that the composer was duty bound to play an active role in society, was always clear.

Jolivet's early writings are also remarkably similar in their argument for the composer assuming an active role in society. We have already noted Jolivet's concern, in 1939, that music was detached from everyday life and thus from the sacred. What musicians must do to rectify this was clear to him:

Musicians must not obey the habits of musicians but must take orders from music itself. When they have understood this, music will be able to again play its social role, dispense its enchantments, and recapture its power. Musicians will then be able to seize their prerogatives and take an active part in the life of society, rather than working only for a chancy posterity. Finally, music being an art of the masses, with an almost unlimited power of action, musicians will be able, through it, to participate in the regeneration of the human spirit."¹¹⁴

This is very similar to sentiments expressed in the 1937 Sorbonne lecture.

I say that the musician must be...the most prepared to move into action. Because his art is action...Because music participates directly in the universal cosmic rhythm.¹¹⁵

In both the 1930s and the 1960s Jolivet held a conception of the composer as activist on some level. In the 1960s, however, a completely new vision of what it meant to be a composer began to emerge in Jolivet's writing. On more than one occasion in these later years, Jolivet compared the life of a composer to that of a monk or mystic.

It is necessary to enter into music as one enters into religion. There are equivalences between the religious experience of a monk and the obscure,

¹¹⁴ Jolivet "Plaid pour le vif," *Avec...André Jolivet*, 110.

¹¹⁵ Jolivet, "Genèse," IV; quoted in Conrad, 192.

disconcerting, ways of a life of a composer. Both are commanded by an absolute need.¹¹⁶

To be a composer it is not only necessary to fabricate sound objects, it is necessary to make the spiritual life. [il faut faire de la vie spirituelle].... In what consists the work of the composer? To know the spark and make of it fire...act of love and communion....¹¹⁷

He also spoke, using language reminiscent of the Gospel of John, of the need for humility in a composer, and asserting its importance to the composer's ultimate goals: "This Humility without which Man, created by the Word, cannot exercise his power of serving the Word by creating sonorous figures and penetrating the infinite."¹¹⁸

This expression of what it means to be a composer runs somewhat contrary to the social activist role articulated in the previous quotations. It is, however, in keeping with the apparent increase in the influence of "traditional" religious thought and the language of the sacred in Jolivet's later life that we have already noted above. It is also interesting to note that the Second Vatican Council of the Catholic church had made social activism and Catholicism more comfortable bedfellows. While there is nothing in any of Jolivet's writing to suggest he was familiar with the proceeding of that council, or affected in any way by the changes it made to the Church, Jolivet's close friendships with Catholic monks may have been a channel of indirect influence.

¹¹⁶ Jolivet, "Tendances," quoted in Surchamp, "Philosophie et spiritualité," *Portraits*, 61.

¹¹⁷ Quoted in Surchamp, "Philosophie et spiritualité," *Portraits*, 60. The source of the quotation is identified simply as "Notes manuscrites sans titre," Archives André Jolivet, Paris.

¹¹⁸ Jolivet actually first wrote these words in 1957 ("Postlude," *Zodiaque* no. 33 (1957): 43) but repeated them verbatim in a 1971 radio broadcast "Portraits de la musique moderne" (facsimile pages reproduced in Chassain-Dolliou "La pensée," *Portraits*, 42). The fact that Jolivet stated and repeated these words lends further credence to the argument that the influence of Christian thinking was ever more evident in the last 10 or 15 years of his life.

Conclusion

This chapter has been a comprehensive examination of four essential pillars of Jolivet's aesthetic and philosophical outlook. It has presented evidence to support the presence of each pillar in Jolivet's thinking in the later years of his life, has compared the later manifestation of each principle to its 1930s expression, and has examined the possible external influences on Jolivet's conception of each idea in both the earlier and later years of his life. Comparing Jolivet's philosophy of the 1960s and 1930s one sees that much remained consistent in the way that Jolivet saw the world of music and his own place in it. The essential idea of music as sacred, the reasons for that special nature of music, music's role as mediator between the vernacular and spiritual, and the importance of music and the composer in and for society were all key elements of Jolivet's belief system in his later years, and had all been present in some form during the time he composed his self-identified canonical works of the 1930s. These basic beliefs in turn meant that Jolivet had certain areas of interest (often inter-related) his whole life: science, the relationship of science and religion, the importance of number and proportion in music, the music of other cultures. Jolivet drew on different sources at different times in his life as he investigated these central ideas and interests, and it is here that we see shifts in emphasis. In the 1960s Jolivet was, for example, less involved with occult interests but still interested in mysticism (Teilhard); drew more equally on French contemporary culture and other cultural symbolism;¹¹⁹ was still interested in science, and mathematical applications in music, but was reading Xenakis rather than Pythagoras; still believed that

¹¹⁹*Ascèses* and *Mandala* standing as examples.

the composer must play an active role in society, but now articulated that role as similar to that of a monk; wrote less about “magic” and more about the “sacred.”

The investigation of this web of beliefs and influences allows for a more complete understanding of the context in which Jolivet’s later works, such as *Ascèses*, were written. One thing is clear: André Jolivet was deeply interested in the relationship between music and the spiritual. Certain elements of his writings and interests in the 1960s, however, imply an increased emphasis on the sacred and the religious in Jolivet’s thought in these years. The combination of his clearer writing about music as specifically “sacred,” his identification of the life of a composer as similar to that of one with a religious vocation, and the strong presence of the works of scientist and mystic Teilhard de Chardin in his later life combine to suggest that Jolivet was embracing and expressing a more specifically Western-mystic religious worldview by the time he wrote *Ascèses*; indeed, such a worldview may have been the very impetus for the work’s composition. The specific details of how Jolivet’s 1960s aesthetic and philosophy are manifest in *Ascèses* is the subject of the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4

Extra-Musical Associations in *Ascèses* and their relationship to Jolivet's 1960s Aesthetic and Philosophy

By the time Jolivet came to compose *Ascèses*, his essential philosophy of music was well established. The final period of Jolivet's life, however, brought some shifts in the details of emphasis in that philosophy, and in the particular influences on Jolivet's thinking. While there is ample non-musical source material available to suggest the direction of Jolivet's thinking at this time, *Ascèses* provides a valuable corollary to them. Not only do the extra-musical materials associated with *Ascèses* support an understanding of Jolivet's later worldview as proposed in Chapter 3, they expand our understanding of that worldview through their subtle web of implied connections. At the same time, having considered the biographic and aesthetic contexts in which *Ascèses* was written allows the extra musical materials of the work and their sources to take on new resonance, and serves to emphasize and confirm those elements which were most central to Jolivet's philosophy while also highlighting the most important influences on it at this time.

The extra-musical materials of *Ascèses* comprise the title itself and the quotations that end each movement. As with any good piece of music, it is perfectly possible to enjoy *Ascèses* as a piece of absolute music, without reference to the poetic lines that accompany it. The composer's inclusion of the poetry in the score signals its importance, however, and implies that there is some level of understanding to be gained if one understands the context of the poetic references; indeed, the composer may be *assuming*

that the listener will understand these references. As was noted in Chapter 1, the poetry Jolivet chose to include in *Ascèses* and even the title of the piece itself raise numerous interesting questions about the relationship between the music, the text, the authors, and Jolivet and his aesthetic. The following pages will explore those relationships and posit possible answers to the questions.

Ascèses: Meanings and Goals

Before even opening the score of *Ascèses* the average North American Anglophone is confronted by something of a puzzle. How exactly is one to understand the title of the piece? The literal English translation of the word “ascèses” is “asceticisms,” a word not in common use. Rather than this plural noun, English speakers are probably more familiar with the cognate adjective “ascetic,” meaning “spare and Spartan.” Although “ascetic” is now frequently used to describe any number of situations, the adjective does have its roots in the religious practice of engaging in personal deprivation of some sort for the purpose of attaining greater a greater depth of spirituality; in other words, denying the body in order to enhance the receptivity of the soul to the divine. Since an “ascetic” is one who practices such deprivation, one may extrapolate an “asceticism” as any such practice of deprivation (such as fasting, sleeping on a hard bed, etc.). The word, however, allows for an interpretation which includes the general concept of “spiritual practice.” Jolivet’s title may be understood on both these levels. These five pieces form a “spiritual practice” perhaps in a general sense, but they are also movements in which Jolivet confines himself to an “ascetic” monophonic texture and the musical discipline of writing for a single voice.

The mid 1960s saw a relative flourishing of works for solo monophonic instrument in Jolivet's output after a thirty year absence of such pieces: the *Suite en Concert* for solo cello (1965); the *Suite rhapsodique* for solo violin (1965); the *Cinq eglogues* for solo viola (1967); and *Ascèses* for solo flute (or clarinet) (1967).¹ Jolivet commented on the nature of such works in prefatory remarks to the *Cinq eclogues*, explaining that the various levels on which "asceticism" applied to a monophonic work.

A work for a solo instrument is an asceticism.

For the one who writes it;
who must, by penetrating the profound nature of the instrument, by bringing out its most characteristic expressive possibilities and by mastering the technique of it, show clearly all of its qualities.

For the one who interprets it;
who must, by his playing and his musicality, magnify the virtues of his instrument and, with himself alone and beginning with himself, convey feeling.²

Writing such unaccompanied works was, for Jolivet, clearly a discipline of a sort. A work for solo instrument is a practice in which the reduction of musical means at the composer's disposal refocuses attention from the aural luxury of the moment to the larger sense of meaning behind the music itself. This may be likened to the reduction in physical comfort of a monk, whose simplicity of physical existence encourages the mind to focus not on the attainments and exigencies of this world, but rather the greater mysteries and truths of the spirit.³ Such an interpretation of the solo works in general and *Ascèses* in particular is not at all fanciful. By the end of his life Jolivet had come to

¹ The only other solo monophonic instrument works are the incantations (for solo flute) of the 1930s.

² Quoted in Hilda Jolivet *Avec...André Jolivet*, 272.

³ It is interesting to note that Jolivet's statements about the life of a composer being like that of monk date from after 1967, the year that the *Eglogues* and *Ascèses* were written.

see strong parallels between the life of a monk and the life of a composer (see Chapter 3). We know, too, that Jolivet occasionally retreated to a monastery in order to write. In the case of *Ascèses*, the title itself is a clear reference to monastic existence. These connections support an understanding of Jolivet's creation of *Ascèses* as an ascetic practice.

Virtuous as such a practice may be in itself, one generally engages in such discipline in the service of a larger purpose; the implication of the title *Ascèses* is that the five movements are the means to the achievement of a spiritual end. This is very much in keeping with Jolivet's preoccupations of the 1960s during which, as we have seen, there was a marked increase in Jolivet's use of the vocabulary of "sacred." As we have also seen in Chapter 3, Jolivet's late writings reveal a significant increase in his discussion of the idea of "communion," possibly influenced by his knowledge of Teilhard de Chardin's writings in which this is a central theme. These facts, combined with the implication of the title – asceticism, i.e. deprivation for the purpose of achieving close communion with the divine – leave little doubt as to the "spiritual end" which Jolivet references in this work: communion, on all levels of existence.

The piece *Ascèses*, then, is positioned as a vehicle through which communion may be effected. If one extrapolates further from the mystic and monastic framework in which Jolivet has located us, a further interpretation of the form of the work suggests the method by which this is achieved in the piece. Much spiritual practice, including in the Christian mystic tradition, involves meditation. Combining the general reference to spiritual practice of the title with the presence of text in each movement, it is possible to view each movement of *Ascèses* as a meditation on an image or idea that is suggested and

clarified by the text which accompanies it. Through these meditations, communion is to be achieved.⁴

The broad reading of *Ascèses* suggested above reveals the piece to be a profound reflection of the first and third tenants of Jolivet's musical philosophy. Music as sacred, and able to act as a mediator between the human and divine, are central pillars of Jolivet's aesthetic, particularly as he expressed it in the 1960s. *Ascèses*, with its reference to monastic practice, also seems reflective of the general increase in mysticism observable in Jolivet's later life. The technical (musical) means through which Jolivet supports the expression of his philosophy in *Ascèses* will be explored in the chapter which follows. First, however, it remains to consider the poetic text and their sources, and the ways in which they contribute to an understanding of Jolivet's late aesthetic and *Ascèses* as a particularly strong articulation of it.

Sources of the Extra-Musical materials

The poetry that Jolivet includes in *Ascèses* is drawn from the writing of two named authors and one apparently ancient source: Max-Pol Fouchet, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin and the Papyrus Insinger. All of the Fouchet quotations are from the collection *Demeure le secret*, published in 1961; the Teilhard quotation is from his "Hymn to Matter" (which ends his 1919 essay "The Spiritual Power of Matter" and was eventually

⁴ Manuscript notes indicate that "Meditations" was in fact one of the titles Jolivet originally considered for the piece. The *Ascèses* manuscript containing Jolivet's handwritten notes is housed at the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, but was unavailable to me prior to the completion of this study. A comparison of the analytical notations of Jolivet with that which has been presented above would be very interesting. Bridget Conrad's dissertation confirms that Jolivet considered several titles for the piece, including "Meditations", "Secrets", "Interiors", and "Incantatory Meditations." Although Conrad does not discuss the piece in her study, she does make a few observations regarding it (307-09).

published in *The Heart of Matter*). Each of these authors has a resonance with Jolivet. In the case of Fouchet and Teilhard, their points of convergence with Jolivet serve to underline certain aspects of Jolivet's worldview. Taken together, the sources in *Ascèses* alone combine to provide a great deal of information about Jolivet himself.

The majority of the quotations included in *Ascèses* are drawn from the work of Max-Pol Fouchet (1913-1980). Fouchet was a contemporary of Jolivet, and equally active in the cultural life of France. A well known figure in the country in the 1960s, Fouchet was a writer and commentator on culture and aesthetics who hosted a popular weekly literary television show ("Lectures pour tous") and, in addition, a series called "World of the Arts" which explored aesthetic issues through the connections between a culture's life and its art and architecture. Fouchet and Jolivet had much in common philosophically: both leaned politically to the left (Fouchet perhaps more strongly than Jolivet); both saw their arts as having a deep connection to the spiritual; both were humanists; and both tended to see connections between all things.⁵ Fouchet and Jolivet were also personally acquainted with one another and Jolivet's copy of *Demeure le secret* bears a dedication from the author.⁶

Fouchet was more actively political in his life than Jolivet was, but both men shared a socialist sensibility. Fouchet had, in his youth, official associations with both the socialist and communist parties. Although he resigned these associations by midlife, he retained a strong sense of social obligation and a definite leftist stance. For example, used his journal *Fontaine* (founded in his home, Algeria, in 1939) as a tool for the French

⁵ All of the general information on Fouchet which follows is from Sarah Allam, "Max-Pol Fouchet ou les chemins de l'altérité," Ph.D. dissertation., Université de Bourgogne, 1996.

⁶ Christine Jolivet, correspondence with author February 7, 2005; volume of poetry available in Médiatèque Mahler, Paris.

Resistance in the Second World War. Later in his life, Fouchet used his television programs as a medium for political commentary, speaking out on controversial issues such as the death penalty and the French presence in Algeria. (His 1950s program “Le fil de la vie,” came to an end when Fouchet resigned over government insistence that his scripts be submitted in advance for approval.) Fouchet was a visible activist in the 1960s as well. At the time of the events in Paris in May 1968 Fouchet was president of the National Syndicate (union) of Television Producers and, like Jolivet (in his capacity as Honorary President of the Musician’s Union), participated in the strikes and protests. These actions had implications for another of Fouchet’s television programs, on the air at this time. The producers of the popular “Lectures pour tous” received a warning from de Gaulle for their role in the Radio-Television France strike, and the show was, in the end, taken off the air.

Even more important for *Ascèses* than the general political orientation that Jolivet shared with Fouchet is the belief both men held in the connection of art to the spiritual. This belief manifested itself in Fouchet’s life in several ways. His career as a writer and broadcaster certainly reflected this interest, his book on the “amorous” art of India being an excellent example (*L’Art amoureux des Indes* 1957). This book investigates the idea of eroticism as a means to approach the sacred, and the interpretation of that idea in the plastic arts of India (sculpture and architecture). Perhaps particularly relevant for *Ascèses* is Fouchet’s early work as a poet. His journal *Fontaine* was dedicated to poetry and its relationship to the mystic. Two issues in particular are worth mentioning for the resonance they have to Jolivet’s approach to art: an early special edition elaborated the rights and responsibilities of the poet (recall Jolivet’s 1939 rhetoric on the role of

composer in society), and a 1942 special edition bore the subtitle “Of poetry as spiritual exercise.” The latter included articles on the nature of religious experience, Indian philosophy and Spanish mysticism. According to Marie-Claire Bancquart, editor of the 1985 Actes Sud edition of *Demeure le secret*, “spiritual exercise” remained, to the end, the heart of the definition Fouchet gave to poetry.⁷ For Fouchet this included clearing a space into which revelation may enter. “The “spiritual exercise” of the poet is first creation of emptiness...”⁸

Fouchet’s career as a writer and broadcaster also reflects his interest in all the cultures of the world. He travelled widely over the course of his life, writing and producing television programs on numerous countries.⁹ In this too we can observe a convergence with Jolivet’s interests. Fouchet was attracted to the big questions, common to all of humanity: life, death, suffering, joy. His work often reflects these themes, and the more general idea of the connection of all the peoples of the earth on a fundamental level.

It is not difficult to see why Jolivet would be attracted to the writing of Max-Pol Fouchet. The two men shared a political sensibility, a sense of duty to their society, a humanist sensibility and a profound belief in the connection between art and the sacred.¹⁰ The presence of Fouchet’s work in *Ascèses* underlines certain aspects of Jolivet’s worldview: the importance of the social activism of the artist, and the importance of the role of the artist in society; the connection between the art and the spiritual; the common

⁷ Marie-Claire Bancquart, preface to Max-Pol Fouchet *Demeure le secret et autres poèmes* (Arles: Actes Sud, 1985), 5.

⁸ As quoted in Bancquart, 9 (no citation for original source given).

⁹ Fouchet was actually trained in both geology and art. It is interesting that two of the writers Jolivet draws on in *Ascèses* have a connection to geology.

¹⁰ According to Allam, Fouchet did not believe in God but did believe in the power of “other” in human life.

threads that bind all the cultures of the earth. Of particular note is Fouchet's strong association of poetry with the sacred and the association of his work as a poet to the spiritual; given this orientation, it is appropriate to find his poetry associated with the music of Jolivet. Given too Fouchet's particular interest in poetry as spiritual exercises, it is particularly fitting that his work appear associated with the "spiritual exercises" of *Ascèses*.

A second source found in *Ascèses* is the Papyrus Insinger. At first glance, the inclusion of a quotation from an ancient Egyptian manuscript seems very much in keeping with Jolivet's interest in ancient as well as primitive cultures, and an intriguing juxtaposition of modern French culture with ancient sources. Given Jolivet's interest in Egypt and travels there (by 1967 Jolivet had been to Egypt at least once, in 1950) it would not be unreasonable to assume that his source for the quotation was independent from the others appearing in *Ascèses*. It is more likely, however, that Jolivet's source for this quotation is in fact Fouchet's collection *Demeure le secret*, in which it appears as a prefatory epigraph to the poem "Femme de nuit et d'aube."

The Insinger Papyrus is named for Jan Herman Insinger (1854-1918), a photographer and art dealer who lived and worked for almost 40 years in Egypt.¹¹ Housed in the Museum of Antiquities (Rijksmuseum) in Leiden, the papyrus is one of several copies of a collection of single line maxims, grouped by subject by the compiler into "teachings" of an ethical, moral and pious nature. The handwriting of the papyrus dates from the first century A.D., but the compilation of the text may date from far earlier. It is written in the vernacular of the time, the Demotic language, which was used

¹¹Publisher's note for *In het land der Nijlcatacracten* (1883) by J.H. Insinger
<http://www.oxbowbooks.com/bookinfo.cfm/ID/59073/Location/DBBC/CFID/2514764/CFTOKEN/40201928>, accessed Jan. 15, 2005.

for non-literary texts of daily life.¹² The section from which the *Demeure* and *Ascèses* quotation is drawn is the Twenty-fourth Instruction, “The teaching of knowing the greatness of the god, so as to put it in your heart.”¹³ The maxims of this section describe the actions and creations of the god, creations such as light, darkness, day, summer, winter, wealth, birth, physical body, sleep and, of course, dreams. The section ends “The fate and the fortune that comes, it is the god who sends them.”¹⁴

The question of whether Jolivet was familiar with the entire papyrus must at this time remain unanswered. Jolivet certainly did have some familiarity with Egyptian literature: he owned Mardus’ *Toute-Puissance de l’adepte. Transcription des hautes textes initiatiques de l’Égypte* and had used Egyptian text in his 1956 work for choir, *Epithalame*.¹⁵ Regardless of whether his knowledge of the text came solely from Fouchet’s use of it, or also from his own experiences, there is no question that the use of this quotation is very much in keeping with Jolivet’s interests. The sacred traditions of many cultures had always interested Jolivet, and the inclusion of this single line is a thread of continuity in that regard. The quotation is also in keeping with Jolivet’s belief in the existence of “the divine” and the existence of a presence active in the lives of men.

The third source of poetry in *Ascèses* is Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, whose theology and its relationship to Jolivet’s philosophy was considered in some detail in Chapter 3. Given Jolivet’s deep interest in the writing of Teilhard, and his immersion in

¹² This would include such things as contracts. See Miriam Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature: A Book of Readings. Volume III: The Late Period* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980) 8.

¹³ Papyrus Insinger, quoted in Lichtheim, 209.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 211.

¹⁵ There is some chance that he would have become aware of the Insinger texts on his own, although the Mardus does not contain the Insinger text. The 1950 trip that inspired *Epithalame* was later called by Jolivet the most significant trip he had ever undertaken (Suzanne Demarquez, *André Jolivet, Musiciens d’aujourd’hui* (Paris: Ed. Ventadour, 1958), 20.

the 1960s into Teilhard's writing, it is far from surprising to find a quotation from Teilhard's work in *Ascèses*; indeed, what is perhaps more surprising is the fact that only *one* of the five quotations is from Teilhard. Teilhard's vision of the unity of matter and spirit, and humanity's eventual convergence into unity with the divine, have obvious parallels in the philosophy of Jolivet and form the core of Jolivet's attraction to Teilhard's thought. The presence, therefore, of a Teilhard quotation in this work immediately serves to emphasize the overarching theme of communion that the piece presents.

Ascèses is not the only later work of Jolivet to reference Teilhard, a fact which further underscores the importance of the theologian in Jolivet's life. In a 1965 radio interview with Bernard Gavoty Jolivet confirmed his affinity to the cosmology of Teilhard and made a link between that philosophy and his compositional philosophy:

It is because he was a poet that Teilhard de Chardin expressed in his philosophy the unity of the universe by extrapolating the results of his scientific work, realizing in this way a system of the formation of the world, a cosmology. I have always thought like this man! And always my efforts have aimed to express in my music the connections between man and the cosmos.¹⁶

Jolivet further reveals his attraction to Teilhard de Chardin in the number of compositions from the late 1950s and 1960s which have a textual connection to Teilhard. These include *Ascèses* (1967), of course, but also: the *Second Symphony* (1959) (which bears the Teilhard quotation "Matter, matrix of the spirit, Spirit, superior state of Matter"); *Hymne à l'univers*, for organ (1962) (the title itself is very similar to Teilhard's *Hymn of the Universe*; furthermore, it carries the Teilhard quotation "Nothing is more

¹⁶ Jolivet "Les Secrets de l'orchestre" with Gavoty," quoted in Surchamp "Philosophie et Spiritualité," *Portraits*, 68.

precious than that which is You in others and others in You.”¹⁷); and the Cantata *The Heart of Matter* (1965) (based on a text by Teilhard of the same name).

Whether Teilhard acted as an influence on Jolivet (a fact that Jolivet himself denied) or was simply a reinforcement of Jolivet’s thought, he was clearly an important presence in the later years of Jolivet’s life and a resource upon which Jolivet drew in both his private and compositional lives.

Taken in *toto*, the sources for the poetry of *Ascèses* underline some central concerns of Jolivet’s late philosophic stance, and confirm the importance of certain influences in his aesthetic. The very use of poetry in the piece recalls Jolivet’s 1960s acknowledgement of the influence of poetry on his music. Referencing the work of Fouchet, Teilhard and the Papyrus Insinger underscores the importance of social activism to Jolivet, his interest in the connection between the art and the spiritual, his interest in the connection between science and religion, his interest in the underlying connections between cultures of the world and, finally, his desire to achieve communion in something greater than humanity and his belief in the role that music could play in that endeavor.

The Poetry

Now that we have considered the sources for the poetry it is time to turn our attention to the poetry itself. The texts of *Ascèses* (see Chapter 1) contain beautiful and mysterious imagery: secrets, silence, absence, emptiness, abyss, dreams, darkness. There is a certain coherence in this language; it is the language of negation and otherworldly

¹⁷ See “Musique, flèche,” 67, for Jolivet’s own identification of the Teilhard connection with this work; he does not identify the source of the quotation of Teilhard. The second symphony quote is also mentioned here in connection with *The Heart of Matter* but, again, no source is identified.

reality. It is very different from the extra-musical associations of the other unaccompanied flute works in Jolivet's output, the much earlier *Incantations*. In those works, the titles of each movement are much more rooted in the concrete reality of everyday life: planting, harvesting, birth, death. The lines of poetry chosen here are highly appropriate to the context of *Ascèses* as spiritual exercises for they reinforce a general sense of denial.

Some of the poetic texts have clear resonance with Jolivet's aesthetic concerns as we have already investigated them. For example, hushing to silence in order to preserve a secret (as suggested in the quotation appended to the first movement) is reminiscent of one of Jolivet's favorite quotations, from Paul Valéry: "Hide your God, for he is strongest when he is most secret, weakest when others know him."¹⁸ Jolivet's copy of Fabre d'Olivet's book also has a long passage marked in which Fabre d'Olivet discusses the Egyptian practice of keeping the principles of science and music secret, revealed only to some initiates.¹⁹ The quotation of the second movement, "You arise from absence....," is the first half of a line that reads "You arise from absence like a song from silence;" here again the concept of silence is implied. The poem as a whole (dedicated to Fouchet's dead wife) speaks of the continued presence of a loved one even when they are no longer with one. In the context of *Ascèses* the poetic line also implies a sacred presence that arises if space is allowed for it to do so. We have already seen that Fouchet believed that the poet shaped such a space through the creation of poetry, and it would seem that Jolivet hoped to achieve the same with his music.

¹⁸Quoted in Hilda Jolivet "André Jolivet," *Zodiaque* 119, 15.

¹⁹ Fabre d'Olivet, *La Musique expliquée*, 29; quoted in Conrad, 240.

The quotation of the third movement is from Teilhard's "Hymn to Matter," a beautiful invocation of matter each line of which begins with the words "Blessed be you [adjective] matter..." The sentence from which the *Ascèses* quotation comes reads in its entirety: "Blessed be you, universal matter, immeasurable time, boundless ether, triple abyss of stars and atoms and generations: you who by overflowing and dissolving our narrow standards of measurement reveal to us the dimensions of God."²⁰ This line expresses with poetic beauty the idea that the very essence of matter expands our notion of reality by extending into realms far larger, far smaller and far older than we can truly comprehend. It obliquely references Einstein's work, which had shown that time was not an absolute measurement, theories of quantum mechanics that had demonstrated that matter itself is not as it would seem, and Teilhard's own work which had helped to show that the story of the earth and humanity was not what many believed it to be. Jolivet's attraction to these ideas is in keeping with his continual search for communion and unity (note the blessing here is on "universal" matter), and the expression of those ideas. It is also in keeping with his general interests in scientific endeavor, which may in fact have included other disciplines of the physical sciences as well. For example, the special double issue of *La Revue musicale* (256-66) in Jolivet's library (on Xenakis, Berio, Varèse, Henry) contains an article by Maurice Chattelun in which a paragraph relating Xenakis' work to Planck, Einstein, Bohr, and Heisenberg is vigorously marked. This implies at least some interest in the work of those men as well.²¹ In addition, there is a

²⁰ Teilhard de Chardin, "Hymn to Matter," in *The Heart of Matter* 71-76; quoted in King, *Writings*, 45.

²¹ Maurice Chattelun, "Quelques remarques et props," *La Revue musicale* 265-66, 153. There is also a reference to quantum theory and the "discontinuity of matter" in Hilda Jolivet's 1979 *Zodiaque* article (Hilda Jolivet, "André Jolivet, *Zodiaque* 119, 39). This is certainly not definitive, but also suggests that developments in modern physics may have been of interest to Jolivet.

certain resonance in the Teilhard quotation with Jolivet's attraction to Xenakis' thought, and the idea that that which appears disordered may in fact be governed by underlying principles.

The quotation from the third movement reaffirms the importance to Jolivet of drawing on ancient wisdom, and the connection he felt between ancient traditions and modern knowledge and understanding. For Jolivet, as we saw in Chapter 3, universal truths and the fundamental principles which govern them are revealed in ancient wisdom but may also be revealed through scientific endeavor. In contrast to the quotations of the other movements, the quotation here refers directly to the divine ("the god"), thus helping to ground the discourse of the work in the realm of the sacred. Furthermore, it also positions the sacred as a guiding force in the life of humanity; this may be seen as a variation on Jolivet's interest in intuition in human life and creative endeavor, something which he did speak about to some degree particularly in his early years.

The quotation of the final movement centers around the images of woman and totality. Taken out of context as this is, this line of poetry evokes the metaphor of pregnancy and birth, the most literal way in which a woman may carry within her the complete world of another human life. Jolivet did not himself write about the role of the feminine in his worldview. Teilhard did, however, and for him the feminine was the great unitive principle of the universe. It may be that Jolivet was inspired to include this image from Fouchet because of his knowledge of Teilhard. Regardless of exactly why Jolivet included the line, there is no question that the general concept of complete unity (the world contained within) is reflective of Jolivet's philosophy in the 1960s.

As mentioned above, the title of *Ascèses*, with its references to monastic practice, suggests an interpretation of each movement as a meditation on an idea or image that is very resonant with the 1960s aesthetic and philosophy of Jolivet. The first movement, with its exhortation to hush to silence, may be seen as a meditation on mystery and the need for mystery in the sacred and thus in music. The second movement becomes a reflection on the need for there to be space in which the divine may arise, and the mystery that absence may yield presence. The third movement can be interpreted as a meditation on the relationship of the earthly to the cosmic, while the fourth movement invites reflection on the relationship between the sacred that is beyond us and the intuition that is within.²² The last movement is a meditation of the unity in all things, the metaphor of pregnancy inviting reflection on the connected nature of all life.

This collection of quotations is intriguing because of the fascinating web of associations it evokes and the numerous disparate elements that it brings together. Scientific inquiry (Teilhard) and television broadcasting (Fouchet) could easily seem removed from spiritual concerns, but for Teilhard and Fouchet they were central activities in lives filled with thoughtful consideration of humanity's relationship to itself and to something greater than itself. In *Ascèses* it seems that Jolivet is deliberately drawing from a very different well from that which watered the *Incantations*, on which *Ascèses* seems in part to be modeled. While the *Incantations* evoked a cultural other, feeling the need to step outside of contemporary cultural time and place in order to establish music's connection to the universal, in *Ascèses* Jolivet draws deeply from twentieth century French culture to lend music its power, referencing a range of modern

²² i.e. guided by that which is outside of us (the god), we are still somehow being guided by that which comes from within us (dreams). The oblique reference to intuition is reminiscent of Bergson, a writer loved by both Teilhard and Jolivet.

knowledge and practice that he then puts to the service of his musical aesthetic. All knowledge is part of the same continuum and ancient knowledge should be valued as well, as the Papyrus Insinger quotation reminds us. But the implication of these choices of quotation overall seems to be a shift in Jolivet's orientation: rather than having to return completely to the knowledge of the ancients in order for music to link humanity to the universe, contemporary thinkers too can be imbued with knowledge of the "revealed principles" and can thus be our guides in the search for cosmic unity.

Conclusion

The preceding paragraphs have considered in some detail the network of connections inherent in the extra-musical materials of *Ascèses*, discussing in turn the title of the work, the sources from which the poetry is drawn and the poetry itself. What becomes clear from such a consideration is that the extra-musical elements of *Ascèses* strongly support an understanding of Jolivet's aesthetic as outlined in Chapter 3. *Ascèses* is, in fact, almost a shorthand for that aesthetic, a microcosm of the larger macrocosm that was Jolivet's philosophic orientation. As a spiritual practice with the aim of mediating communion between the human and the divine, *Ascèses* clearly reflects two of the four philosophical pillars of Jolivet's thought. Its direct and indirect references to monastic practice, the art of poetry itself, the connection between the spiritual and the artistic, the unity of matter and spirit, modern scientific inquiry, social activism and, above all, communion are strong manifestations of influences explored in Chapters 2 and 3.

Through *Ascèses* and the extra-musical materials associated with it we can also begin to see that four main recurring threads of interest in Jolivet's late worldview act as metaphors for four relationships with which he was fascinated. The four interests that recur in Jolivet's late thinking are the political, the scientific, the spiritual and the artistic. Each of these may in turn be seen as symbolic of a human being's struggle to understand his or her relationship to various levels of existence, the political representing an individual's relationship to his society, the scientific representing an individual's relationship to the larger natural (terrestrial) world, the spiritual representing an individual's relationship to the cosmos itself (God), and the artistic representing an individual's relationship to and quest for understanding of self.

Of course, the strongest philosophical and aesthetic imperative expressed by Jolivet in the later years of his career was the sacred nature of music and the importance of forging a communion with the divine through music. Although they reference a variety of Jolivet's philosophical and aesthetic influence, the extra-musical materials of *Ascèses* do reflect these two most important concerns and confirm that which was most central to his worldview.

CHAPTER 5

The Music of *Ascèses*: from Mysticism to Music

Chapters 3 and 4 have presented a strong case for the ways in which Jolivet's philosophical ideals are confirmed and indeed amplified in the extra-musical materials of *Ascèses*. This in itself is a strong argument in favor of seeing *Ascèses* as a potent articulation of Jolivet's end-of-life aesthetic. Such an argument is further strengthened, however, by the fact that the music itself also reflects Jolivet's philosophical worldview.

A composer who wishes to have his music effect a mediation between the earth and the universe, a communion with the divine, is faced with the challenge of how to achieve that goal. How is one to translate aesthetic principle into musical technique? This question is of no small import for a composer such as Jolivet, who believed that "...a musical work is not, for me, simply a fortuitous meeting of effects, a catalogue of effects, but is an organized discourse."¹ Jolivet's belief in the importance of a composer's attention to constructive detail related directly to his conception of music as a spiritual force, linking humanity and the universe. "Music, spiritual in its essence, is embodied in sounds. This incarnation takes place only if the sounds are rigorously organized."² Jolivet emphasized throughout his life the importance of the sound of a piece, "...music being above all a sound phenomenon."³

As we have seen in Chapter 3, Jolivet's basic philosophy supplies the answer as to how to translate philosophy into art. Music is sacred and is able to mediate between

¹ Quoted in Hilda Jolivet "André Jolivet," *Zodiaque* 119, 7.

² Quoted in Hilda Jolivet, *Avec...André Jolivet*, 44.

³ Jolivet, "Second Interview," by Goléa, 3; quoted in Conrad, 93.

humanity and the divine because it is based on fundamental principles and relationships which are also fundamental to the nature of the universe. As was explored in that chapter, these principles are number-based, and hence number and proportion became very important to Jolivet's understanding of the creation of music. This interest was evident in his earliest writings, and was also evident in the 1960s in his interest in composers such as Xenakis and his statements regarding Golden Section proportions.

In order to create music that would be able to act as a mediator between humanity and the divine, therefore, Jolivet sought to apply principles of number and proportion to his compositional activity. As other writers have noted this resulted in:

1. A central underlying philosophy regarding pitch materials, which included the beliefs
 - a. that pitch materials should be derived from acoustic principles (i.e. the proportions inherent in sound)
 - b. that tonality should be avoided in order to weaken as much as possible the tempered tuning system (as we shall see, Jolivet believed that tempered tuning was a distortion of the inherent proportions of sound and therefore of the underlying principles of music, and thus destructive of its power)
 - c. that the tempered tuning system should be undermined as much as possible through harmonic and melodic interval choices
2. The use of number and proportion in the construction of rhythmic and formal elements of a work, including:

- a. the use of number symbolism to govern numbers of repetitions and other aspects of a piece, such as rhythmic divisions
 - b. the use of Golden Section proportions in formal construction
 - c. the creation of rhythms from irrational numbers and prime numbers⁴
3. A central underlying philosophy of the importance of melody as the bearer of musical meaning.
4. A central underlying philosophy of the importance of all relationships within a piece, including those of timbre, intensity, and soundspace.

Because Jolivet believed strongly that music had a role to play in society, he wanted his music to have coherence for listeners. Thus, he also stressed the importance of lyricism and melody, and used repeated referential pitches (which he called *notes-pivots*) to orient listeners in his sound world.

Restoring Music's Power: The Acoustic Mode, Avoidance of Tonality, and Aggregate Completion

Jolivet's most essential theories about the derivation of pitch materials and their "correct" deployment in a piece of music derive from the belief that the true proportions of sound should be utilized in the creation of music. Recall that, from early in his life, Jolivet conceived of music as "...the science of the harmonic relations of the universe...." resting on "...immutable principles which nothing can undermine."⁵ Equal temperament is, of course, a compromise of those relations, and thus (in Jolivet's mind) a destroyer of

⁴ All of the foregoing are discussed to a greater or lesser degree in Conrad.

⁵ Fabre d'Olivet, *La Musique expliquée*, 7, underlined by Jolivet for use in his Sorbonne lecture; quoted in Conrad, 228.

the power of music. Jolivet therefore sought ways in which to undermine equal temperament and to work as closely as possible with natural acoustic proportions of sound.⁶ One of his most fundamental propositions was the use in compositions of a modal scale derived from the overtone series.⁷



Figure 5.1: Overtone Series



Figure 5.2: Jolivet's "Acoustic Mode"

This mode encompasses a number of symmetrical pitch constructs, notably the whole-tone scale and a number of tri-tones. Jolivet himself pointed out the predominance of the augmented fourth in this scale, characterizing it as "...more accurate (or less false) than

⁶ Jolivet argues against equal temperament strenuously in his 1937 Sorbonne lecture, quoting from Tartini, Saint-Saëns and Fabre d'Olivet to support his arguments. Jolivet was also quite likely influenced in this matter by the work of physicist Hermann Helmholtz, introduced to him via Varèse. See Conrad 77, 229 and 276-77.

⁷ Jolivet first proposed this in the 1937 Sorbonne lecture as well. In it, Jolivet notes that the Bb and F# are approximate notation: in reality these two notes are slightly lower. Jolivet calls his approach as beginning from "fundamental and resonances" – this is worth noting, because the concept of the importance of resonance is a crucial and oft-repeated element of Jolivet's work. The fact that this term appears in his earliest writing affirms its fundamental centrality. It is also worth noting that the actual overtone series yields notes that fall between F and F# and between G# and A. Many writers identify these notes as F# and A within the series. Jolivet, however, identifies them as F# and G#, as does Messiaen.

the so-called true fourth of the tempered system.”⁸ In addition, the mode also includes all but one note of Messiaen’s third mode of limited transposition, another symmetrical scale with repeating whole tone-semitone-semitone construction. With the addition of the one pitch required for Messiaen’s mode three, Eb, Jolivet’s acoustic mode contains the partials for *three* separate fundamentals (C, E, Ab). The result of all of this is that a mode which might be assumed to imply a pitch hierarchy can in fact easily be used in a manner that implies no pitch centre.⁹

Jolivet employed other means for undermining the tempered system, finding ways (other than altered tunings) to do so while writing for instruments and instrumentalists working in equal temperament.¹⁰ Avoiding tonality was one such means, and in this regard Jolivet was influenced by Schoenberg.¹¹ From Schoenberg Jolivet adopted two main ideas: 1. the use of the complete chromatic aggregate and 2. the general concept of “pitch avoidance.” This second point needs further amplification, for Jolivet’s application of “pitch avoidance” is not at all the same as Schoenberg’s. Explaining his method to Antoine Goléa in 1961 Jolivet acknowledged its origin in Schoenberg’s twelve-tone method. “In effect, the first great principle of Schoenberg in the construction of a series is that of the non-repetition of sounds, before the total exhaustion of the whole series.”¹² Jolivet applies this idea of “non-repetition” only to particularly important pitches (such as those occurring at the end of a phrase). The example Jolivet gives is of a melody which ends on an E, explaining that the effect of the final arrival of the E is

⁸ Jolivet, “Gènese,” III/13-14; quoted in Conrad, 258.

⁹ Conrad, 260.

¹⁰ It should be noted that Jolivet never asked performers to retune their instruments (where possible) or to perform his music with attention to altered intonation – not even in the case of the ondes Martenot which could easily accommodate such alteration.

¹¹ Jolivet had been introduced to Schoenberg’s music by his first teacher, Paul Le Flem, who encouraged him to attend the first concerts of Schoenberg’s music in Paris in 1927 at the Salle Pleyel.

¹² Jolivet, “Second Interview” by Goléa, 1; quoted in Conrad, 280.

ruined if there are previous Es in the passage. If one can harmonize each E differently, then one can still reserve a “special light” for the last one. “But if we refuse to have recourse to traditional harmony, and we still want to reserve the effect of this last E, we will be obliged to restrict its appearance, by suppressing this note “E” from the beginning of the phrase....”¹³

On the surface, advocating the use of both a modal scale and the complete chromatic complement might seem contradictory. Jolivet successfully combined these practices, however, into what he called “...modalism with an atonal harmony....”¹⁴ A key feature of this language, arising from the adoption of the concept of pitch avoidance coupled with the use of the complete chromatic complement, is the strong presence of chromatic aggregate completion as a unifying force in the music. Aggregate completion is a vehicle of unity in many of Jolivet’s works, and it is one of the most important features of formal coherence in *Ascèses* on both a small and large scale.

The opening of Movement I provides an excellent example of Jolivet’s use of aggregate completion as the unifying focal point of a section, while also demonstrating his simultaneous use of a modal center. Figure 5.4 is the opening line of the first movement in which the pitch content is almost entirely drawn from the acoustic mode built on D. The repetition of the initial rising gesture, with its arrivals on D each time, helps to establish the identity of the melody as being in mode D. This first line begins Jolivet’s expansion of the mode into the complete chromatic aggregate. The F5 and Eb5 are notes outside the mode and appear in a melodic gesture which is clearly aural set apart from the rest of the line through direction and register. They are used in much the

¹³ Jolivet, “Second Interview” by Goléa, 2; quoted in Conrad, 281.

¹⁴ Jolivet, “Second Interview” by Goléa, 3; quoted in Conrad, 93.

same way as a composer of tonal music would use chromatic pitches. The two non-mode pitches are of relatively short duration, and the repetition of mode-based pitch content helps to anchor the opening of this movement strongly in mode D.



Figure 5.3: Mode on D.

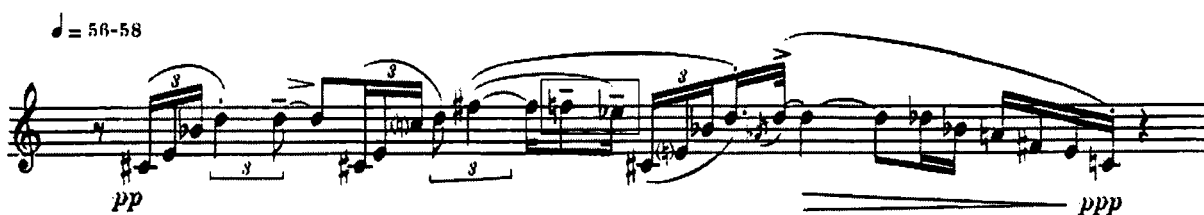


Figure 5.4: *Ascèses*, mvt. I, m. 1. Non-mode notes indicated

By the end of this first line all but two pitch classes have been introduced (G and B are missing). The second line begins with a repetition of melodic material similar to that of line one, with further emphasis on D (see Figure 5.6). In the middle of the line, one of the two missing chromatic notes is introduced: the G. It too is introduced in a melodic figure that opposes in direction and register the melodic material that is based in the home mode. In addition to bringing us one note closer to aggregate completion, the G has further importance. The remaining notes of the line do not fit into the mode D that was established at the outset of the movement; instead, like the other non-mode notes introduced in lines one and two, they belong to the acoustic mode based on G. (The only exception is the single pitch class E, which “hangs over” from mode D and appears as an incomplete neighbor.)



Figure 5.5: Mode on G

Figure 5.6: *Ascèses*, mvt. I, mm. 1-3

In order to continue the expansion of his chromatic aggregate, Jolivet has made a subtle shift of modal center and has begun drawing on a second modal pitch collection. He effects this shift through the appearance of a pitch class previously absent from the discourse (the G of line two), but does not establish G strongly as the modal basis of the melody. Indeed, the modulation to G proves brief as Jolivet returns to D-based material for the beginning of the third phrase (line three of Figure 5.6 above). In this third phrase Jolivet continues to seek the completion of the chromatic aggregate which, despite the

of the chromatic aggregate, B natural, remains the focal point of the music to the end of the section.

A second, slightly more complex, example of Jolivet's use of his acoustic mode combined with the complete chromatic complement can be found in Movement V.

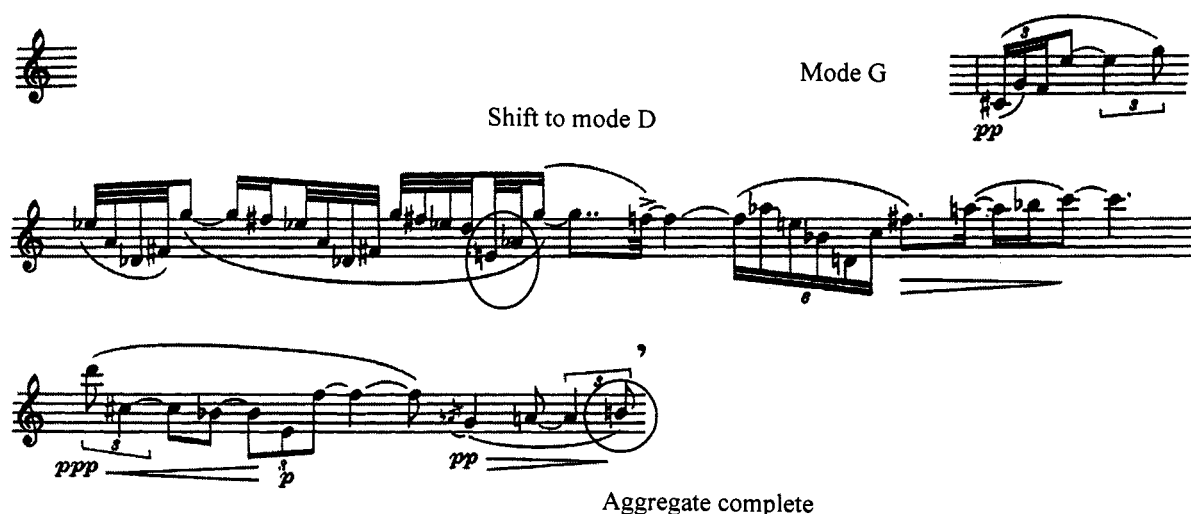


Figure 5.9: *Ascèses*, mvt. V, mm. 4-5

Here the music begins quite clearly in mode G. Two conspicuous non-mode notes (E and Ab) signal the shift to a new mode, that of D. This mode shift is reinforced by the rising melodic line, whose ultimate goal is the D which appears as the first note of the next phrase. By the end of measure four, all pitch classes but one, B natural, have been introduced. That pitch appears, finally, as the concluding note of the next gesture, set off by Jolivet with a breath mark indicating to the player to take a small lift or break at this moment. This completion does not initially occur at a structurally strong moment; the modal center is weakening, and Jolivet in fact continues the phrase with varied repetition of the beginning of measure 5 (see Figure 5.45). The importance of the B natural,

however, is reasserted at the end of measure 5, when it becomes the ultimate resting place of not only the phrase but also the section.

These are just two localized examples in *Ascèses* in which Jolivet combines the use of his acoustic mode (including modulation from one mode to another) with that of completion of the complete chromatic aggregate to create a coherent and unified structure. In some sense, this completion also functions on a symbolic or metaphoric level. We have already seen how, in *Ascèses*, the desire for unity and communion is reflected throughout the work in the extra-musical materials. This unity is reflected musically as well through the achievement of the complete chromatic aggregate at musically significant moments, a technique which Jolivet uses even when the melodic material is not strongly modally based. The example below is from the second movement.



Figure 5.10: *Ascèses*, mvt. II, m. 3

The melody here quickly introduces almost all of the twelve chromatic pitches, thus undermining any sense of modal centre. Jolivet holds back the completion of the aggregate, however, until the very final pitch of the phrase (F natural).

Although Jolivet wanted in general to undermine a sense of tonal center by using the complete chromatic aggregate, he actually uses modal centers to contribute to the structural unity of *Ascèses*; the careful shift from mode to mode that we have observed in

Figures 5.6 and 5.9 implies thoughtfulness on the part of the composer as to his deployment of modal centers. The work as a whole contains both strongly modally based movements (I, V and to a lesser degree III)¹⁵ and others which are much less so (II and IV). In the case of the latter types, melodic material often begins strongly centered in a mode, only to have the modal basis immediately and seriously undermined through the presence of the remaining chromatic aggregate pitches (such as in Figure 5.10 above). In the movements which are modally based, Jolivet strongly favors mode G, secondarily modes D and Eb, and uses occasionally modes C and B. This use of both clearly and ambiguously modal (or more atonal) movements in itself provides structural coherence to the piece overall as it progresses from modal to more atonal and back to modal material. Further internal structural coherence is provided by Jolivet's choice of modes within movements, as a brief examination of the structure of the modal movements reveals.

The two most strongly modally-based movements of *Ascèses* are the first and the fifth (forms: ABA¹C and ABCA¹). Both of these center in mode G for much of their durations, although both also use other modes and have sections of less strongly modal writing. We have already seen how the first movement begins in mode D and uses mode B as well in its opening A section. The return of the A material in the first movement occurs transposed to mode Eb, before the music returns finally to center again in mode G by the end of the movement (see Figures 5.6 and 5.28 for A and A¹). This choice of modes is not haphazard. The pairing of modes D and G, and modes D and B in the initial measures mean that Jolivet has at his disposal the complete chromatic aggregate. He could certainly have chosen two modes that did *not* have that feature (such as G and B,

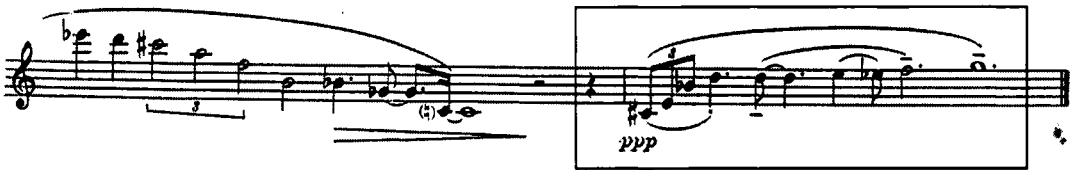
¹⁵ These are also the movements with the strongest Golden Section proportions and the clearest overall forms. See below for a discussion of GS proportions in these movements.

which would lack G# and E), but instead he deliberately selected modes that encompass all chromatic pitches. Similarly, the A and A¹ material appear in D and Eb: again, two modes whose pitches create the complete aggregate. The modal choices of Movement V reveal the same characteristic. Jolivet combines statements in mode C and D in the A section, G and D in the B section, and Eb and G in the final section (see Figures 5.6 and 5.45). The A and A¹ materials occur in C and Eb (Figures 5.6 and 5.28). All of these pairings also represent complete chromatic aggregates. Thus Jolivet's choice of modal centers is, on some level, representative of the symbolic completion that much of the rest of the materials of the piece also reflect.


Small-scale aggregate completion and careful choice of modal centers are two ways in which unity on a symbolic and structural level is achieved in *Ascèses*. Perhaps the greatest such unity in *Ascèses*, however, is achieved through the use of large-scale aggregate completion across the work as a whole. As Figure 5.11 shows, the first four movements conclude with a final gesture that is foregrounded in the listener's attention in some manner. In Movements I, II and III there is a substantial silence before the final "measure" of the movement, and since the piece for the most part does not use meter, the measure lines in conjunction with the silence clearly set apart each final musical statement. In Movement IV, the final gesture is made aurally obvious through repetition and the gradually decelerating rate of the statement of two notes, Gb and Ab.

C#, D, Eb, E, F, G, Bb


Mvt. I




Mvt. II - Adds F#



Mvt. III - Adds C and B



Mvt. IV - Adds Ab



Mvt. V - Aggregate completed with A

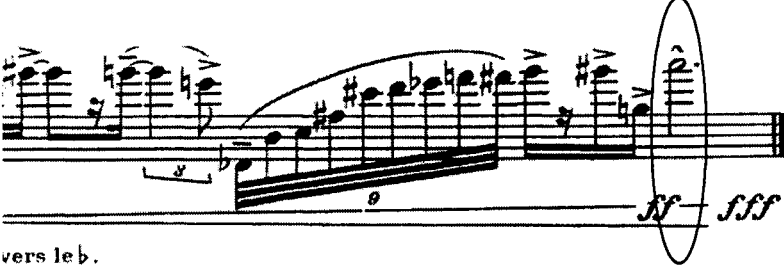


Figure 5.11: Final gestures showing large-scale chromatic aggregate completion

Figure 5.11 also traces the unfolding of the chromatic aggregate across the last bars of the five movements. We begin with seven pitch classes; the end of Movement II adds an eighth, Movement III the ninth and tenth and Movement IV the eleventh. Movement V provides the final and ultimate closure, presenting the missing pitch class, A, as the final and highest note of the final movement. Thus, in the last note of the piece there is the achievement of absolute completion and unity across the work.

Set Class Unity and the Power of “Detempering”

Large-scale aggregate completion and modal organization are powerful means of unification in *Ascèses*, yet they are not necessarily audible to the listener. A more immediately obvious means of reinforcing unity in *Ascèses* is Jolivet’s consistent use of melodic motives based on set classes that emphasize the tri-tone and minor second: (014) (or (0134)), (0236) and (012). These set classes are derived from Jolivet’s mode, and it is important to note that it would have been easy for Jolivet to choose other, more tonal-sounding, set classes from it (the major or minor triad, for example).

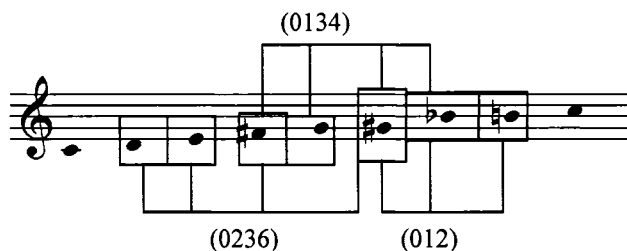


Figure 5.12: Set classes in Jolivet’s acoustic mode

These set classes, and slight variations on them, are fundamental to the construction of *Ascèses* on both small-scale and large-scale levels. They tend to define melodic gestures

in an audible manner, and there are numerous examples in the piece on which to draw.

The opening phrase of the first movement (other aspects of which we have examined in some detail already), for example, is saturated with (0236) and (014) and slight variations on them, making the tritone and semitone forceful presences in the passage.

The image displays two staves of musical notation for the first movement of *Ascèses*, measures 1-2. The tempo is marked as 58-58. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings like *pp*, *p*, and *ppp*. Above the notes, several set classes are identified: (0236), (01426), (013), (014), (026), (02368), (0126), (0126), (023), and (0134). Brackets and arrows connect these set classes to specific groups of notes. A bracket labeled [3, 0, 6, 2] is placed below the first staff. The second staff ends with the text "etc...".

Figure 5.13: *Ascèses*, mvt. I, mm. 1-2; saturation with (0236) and (0134) and variants

The rest of Movement I is similarly saturated. A second example, below, is drawn from the very end of the movement. The initial G is the climactic arrival of the final section of the movement, and the phrase which follows, its denouement. The phrase is almost entirely overlapping (0126) set classes and, as in Figure 5.13, the tritone and semitone are aurally prominent.

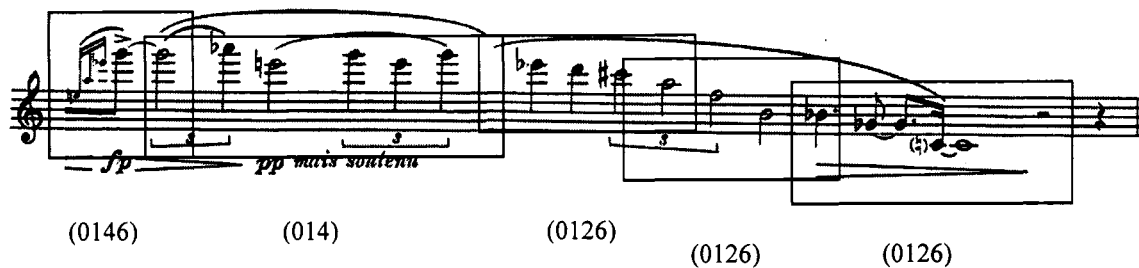


Figure 5.14: *Ascèses*, mvt. I, m. 6 (final arrival on G, second to last phrase of movement)

There are numerous other clearly defined gestures, occurring at significant structural moments within movements, which also comprise these set classes. Some examples include the conclusions of the “B” sections of Movement II (the “souple” passages), the final section (“poco più mosso”) of Movement IV and the opening of Movement V (see p. 117).



Figure 5.15: *Ascèses*, mvt. II, m. 3; end of first “souple” (0236)

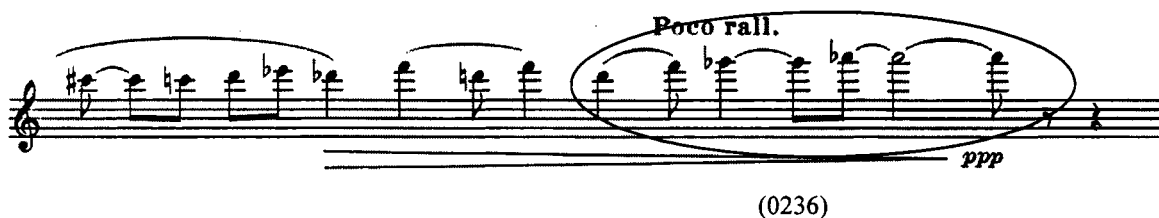


Figure 5.16: *Ascèses*, mvt. II, m. 6; end of second “souple”



Figure 5.17: *Ascèses*, mvt. IV, m. 9, beginning of “Poco più lento;” a gesture rich in variations on the fundamental set classes ((012), (014), (016), etc.)



Figure 5.18: *Ascèses*, mvt. V, m. 1; overlapping (012), (014); the center two gestures are (013) which also emphasizes the semitone. All three set classes are, in some sense, variations on a single expanding and contracting set class.

Sometimes a set class operates not only a surface level, but at a slightly deeper – although still very audible – structural level within a very localized musical gesture. The very opening of Movement III (material which returns several times over the course of the movement) provides an example of this. Although the first few pitches of the measure comprise set class (014), the long and/or repeated pitches sound a clear (016), positioning the interval of the tritone prominently.

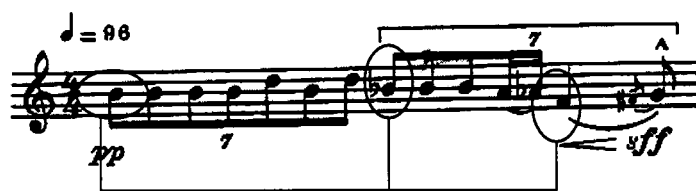


Figure 5.19: *Ascèses*, mvt. III, opening bar (016)

In itself the use of these recurring set classes as the basis for melodic gestures at structurally important moments in the piece is significant in the context of Jolivet's desire to create a musical structure that is reflective of his greater aesthetic and philosophical concerns. Like aggregate completion, the use of melodic motives which emphasize a limited number of set classes lends great aural coherence to the piece and reflects Jolivet's overall goal of a musical work that mirrors themes which were particularly important to him: those of unity and communion.

Jolivet's use of these *particular* set classes is even more nuanced in its importance, however, and is connected to his desire to restore to music its power to connect humanity and the divine by undermining as much as possible the tempered system. As discussed above, Jolivet believed that equal temperament was destructive of music's power to mediate between the earthly and the divine, and sought ways in which to thwart equal temperament while still working with traditional instruments. (His avoidance of tonality, previously discussed, is one example of this). Jolivet commented on this practice in general in 1961.

For my part, I have forced myself in my harmonic writing to detemper the resultant sound of my aggregates. And I am persuaded that if since the beginning of the century music has seen flourish so many augmented fourths, major sevenths, and minor ninths and seconds, it is with the purpose of provoking harmonic interferences which detemper music.¹⁶

Here then we see evidence of the reasons for Jolivet's attraction to certain intervals such as those which so dominate the preferred set classes of *Ascèses*: these are intervals which Jolivet feels will "detemper" music and thus assist in restoring to it its true power.

¹⁶ Jolivet, "Second Interview," by Goléa, 7; quoted in Conrad, 264.

In *Ascèses* these intervals operate in a monophonic rather than harmonic context, but it is easier to understand how Jolivet conceived of these intervals “detempering” music if we consider his theories in a harmonic context as well. In general, Jolivet’s theories of “detempering” involved using pitch material that, at least in theory, had strong conflicts in their overtone series. Ways that Jolivet attempted to do this include using intervals (melodic or harmonic) comprising two notes whose overtone series contain pitches that would clash with each other.¹⁷ It is debatable whether even the most astute listener would be able to hear a dissonance in the fifteenth partials of two notes, but this is theoretically the type of conflict Jolivet felt would help in “detempering” music. Along the same lines, Jolivet introduced non-mode notes into a mode-dominated texture, resulting in a conflict in resonances (Figure 5.4, above, is a simple example of this). Finally, he was careful about his orchestrations, choosing chordal voicings that avoided what he called a “dirty C major”¹⁸ and also reinforced certain “resonances” (difference tones) in the texture.¹⁹ (Because *Ascèses* is a monophonic composition, this last point will not be discussed in this chapter.)

To some degree, Jolivet’s “detempering” techniques operate on only a theoretical level, existing in a realm of overtones, difference tones and resonances of which the average listener will remain unaware. A practical and very audible result of Jolivet’s theories, however, is a predominance of certain intervals in his music, such as we have

¹⁷ Jolivet’s first attempt to articulate his ideas in this area was in his contribution to the 1946 article “Réponse à une enquête” in *Contrepoints*. In this article Jolivet outlined his theories of “double bass” and “inferior resonance,” providing somewhat confusing explanations of them. In later years Jolivet was clearer about the concept of detempering in general, allowing one to arrive at more general conclusions regarding his music. For a very coherent discussion of the 1946 article, however, see Conrad, 272-76.

¹⁸ Jolivet, “Second Interview,” by Goléa, 3; quoted in Conrad, 93.

¹⁹ “...the partitioning of chords between different instrumentation in such a manner that the natural resonances will favor certain sounds and that the resultant sound will be filled in with sounds that aren’t written, but produced by resonances.” Jolivet, “Fourth Interview” by Goléa, 4; as quoted in Conrad, 266. This list of techniques is adapted from Conrad’s analysis of Jolivet’s writing.

seen operating in the set classes of *Ascèses*. The instances of this we have examined to this point focused on examples operating on the surface level of the movements.

Unification through the use of these set classes, however pervades the piece on deeper levels as well, for not only does Jolivet saturate his soundscape with these set classes at the phrase level, he also relates each movement of the work to the others through the use of his favored set classes as the opening and closing gesture of every movement. The following table outline these relationships.

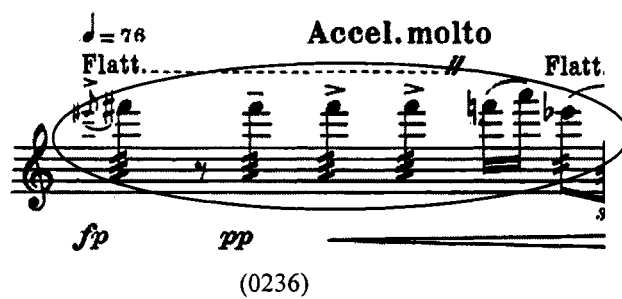
Table 1 – Presence of (0236), (014), (012) in First and Final Measures

I - opening:	(0236) and (014)/(0134)	see Figure 5.4 (above)
I - end:	(0236) and (0124)	Figure 5.20 (below)



Figure 5.20: *Ascèses*, mvt. I, final measure

II – opening:	(0236)	Figure 5.21 (below)
II – end:	(01)	Figure 5.22 (below)

Figure 5.21: *Ascèses*, mvt. II, opening measureFigure 5.22: *Ascèses*, mvt. II, final measure

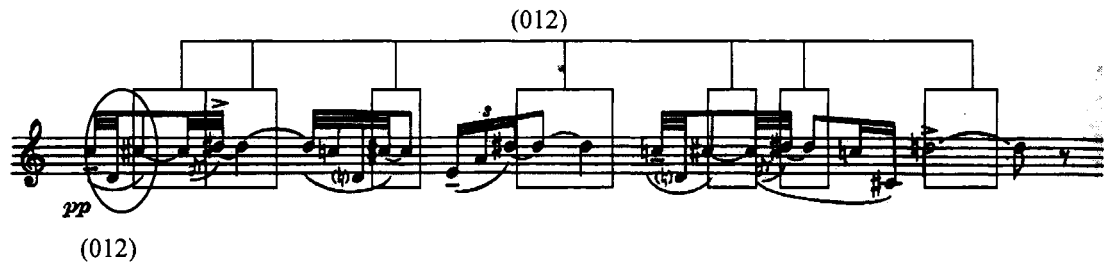
III – opening: surface (014), hidden (016) Figure 5.19

III – end: (0123) Figure 5.23

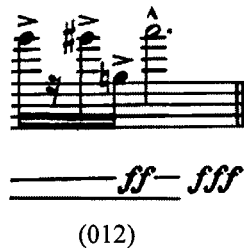
Figure 5.23: *Ascèses*, mvt. III, final measures

IV – opening: (012) surface and hidden Figure 5.24

IV – end: (012) Figure 5.25

Figure 5.24: *Ascèses*, mvt. IV, m. 1Figure 5.25: *Ascèses*, mvt. IV, conclusion of final measure

V – opening: (012), (014) see Figure 5.38
 V – end: (012) Figure 5.26

Figure 5.26: *Ascèses*, mvt. V, final notes

Jolivet's consistent use of these detempering set classes is one of the most interesting features of the piece, and has its origins in Jolivet's general desire to "detemper" music in order to restore its power to unify the earthly and the cosmic. Through their presence at

surface and deeper levels of construction they provide an important means of aural unity in *Ascèses*.

Symbolic Proportion in Formal Construction: the Golden Section

The previous paragraphs have explored how Jolivet drew on his belief in the power of the “true” proportions of sound in order to arrive at a theory of pitch derivation, and how the results of that theory (such as aggregate completion and the use of “detempering” intervals) are used throughout *Ascèses* as a means of creating great musical unity while reflecting a core Jolivet aesthetic principle, that of communion and unity. *Ascèses* is reflective of Jolivet’s belief in the importance of number and proportions in another way as well: the use of Golden Section proportions in the construction of several of the movements. As discussed in Chapter 3, there is much evidence for Jolivet’s interest in Golden Mean proportions in his music, and particularly so in the unaccompanied 1960s works (score notations in the solo cello work, for example). *Ascèses* presents a strong case study in Jolivet’s application of the Golden Section to the proportions of a piece.

Using a very simple method of calculation based on the number of quarter notes in each movement, the Golden Section and “negative” Golden Section were calculated for each movement of *Ascèses*.²⁰ In Movements I, III and V (movements already discussed for their more strongly modal characters) the GS corresponds with an important

²⁰ The quarter note was chosen as the referential duration because Jolivet’s rhythmic notation groups pitches in quarter note divisions quite obviously through most of the piece, despite the fact that this is frequently not audible to the listener. “Negative” or “reverse” Golden Section proportion simply refers to the proportions of the work if calculated from its end rather than its beginning. Thus, the “reverse” GS will be a point in the music .618 from the *end* of the movement rather than the beginning.

moment of formal division i.e. the obvious beginning of a new section of the music; in Movement III, the reverse GS also corresponds with an important moment. The diagrams which follow help to illustrate this.

Movement I

Form: ABA¹C

Duration: 182.5 quarter notes

GS: $(182.5 \times .618 = 112.7)$ [113]

Reverse GS: 70

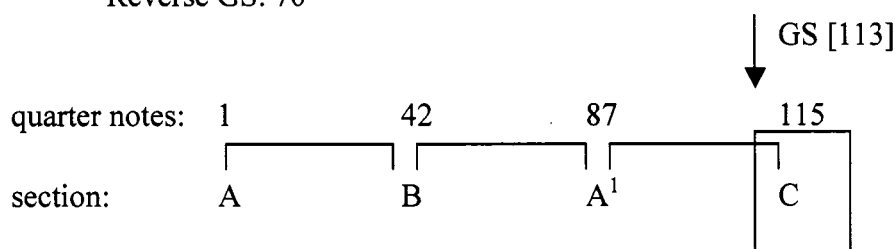


Figure 5.27: Form diagram for *Ascèses*, mvt. I

In Movement I each individual section is quite clearly distinguished, although there is a certain degree of interconnectedness in the melodic materials. The first A section ends (as was seen in Figure 5.6) with a long, held pitch *diminuendo* to *ppp*. The material that follows (B) is marked slightly faster (*Poco più*), is less strongly modal, and expands over a much wider range of the instrument. The return to A (at quarter note 87) is very clear: the B section concludes, like A, with a long held *diminuendo* pitch, and the A¹ material is an almost exact repetition of the original A, save a transposition to Eb.



Figure 5.28: *Ascèses*, mvt. I, m. 5; return of opening material (A¹)

(compare Figures 5.4 and 5.28). The start of the C section, which corresponds to the GS proportion, is, like B, marked to be played slightly faster. Because this *Più mosso* begins after two statements of the A-related thematic material (as in the beginning of the piece), the listener expects a continuation similar to that of the opening. This, however, is the point in the music at which Jolivet begins his build to the ultimate climax of the movement, using ever increasing dynamic, rhythmic and registral intensity to propel the music to its conclusion. The C section of the movement is thus pivotal in the overall trajectory of the movement and its beginning, which corresponds with the GS proportion, is a significant moment in the music.

Movement III

Form: AA¹BA²C

Duration: 230 quarter notes²¹

GS: (230 x .618 = 142)

Reverse GS: 88

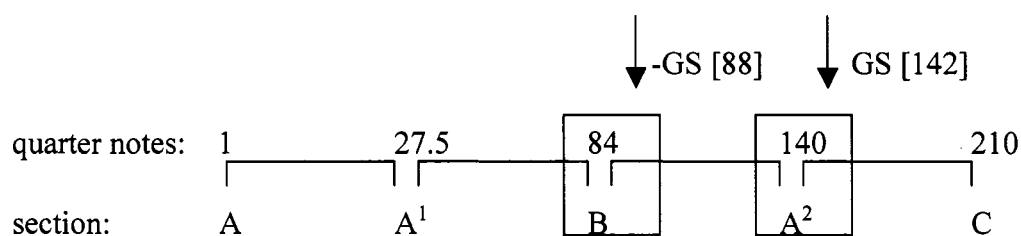


Figure 5.29: Form diagram for *Ascèses*, mvt. III

In Movement III Jolivet delineates his musical material even more clearly, using rhythm, motive and timbre to set A, B and C apart from one another. The movement is

²¹ This quarter note count omits the last 14 quarter notes which occur in the final two measures of the piece. These final measures are separated from the rest of the movement to such a degree and are so different from what has preceded them, that the third to last measure functions aurally as the ending of the movement (the final measures may be interpreted as a brief codetta or, it may be argued, as operating outside of the form altogether). This justifies the assertion of a strong GS proportion in the movement, particularly since both the GS and reverse GS are used here.

dominated by the A material, which comprises incessant septuplet figures with numerous repeated pitches, centering in the low and middle registers (see Figure 5.19). The B material is completely different: is it higher and features tremolo and arpeggio figures.

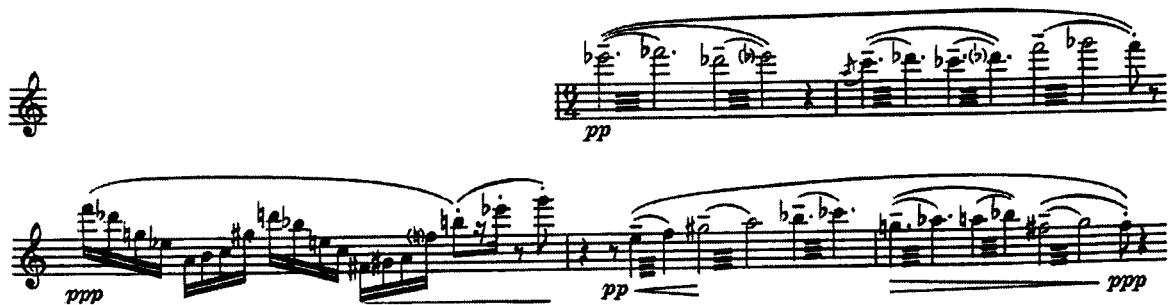


Figure 5.30: *Ascèses*, mvt. III, m. 19; beginning of B section

Because of these differences, the arrival of B (corresponding with the reverse GS proportion in this movement) is aurally extremely clear. The return to A material, which corresponds with the GS proportion of the movement, is similarly obvious as the movement resumes its frenetic septuplet activity. It is notable that in this return of A-related material the musical figure is transposed up a third so that where B was the repeated pitch in the previous section, D is here. This shift of referential pitch, discussed further below, is a significant point of development in the movement.

Movement V

Form: ABCA¹

Duration: 241.5 quarter notes

GS: (241.5 x .618 = 149.2) [149]

Reverse GS: 92.3 [92]

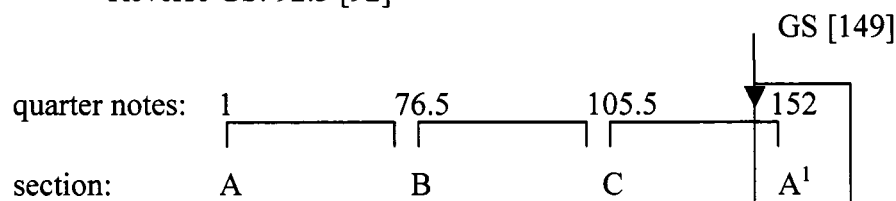


Figure 5.31: Form diagram for *Ascèses*, mvt. V

In Movement V the point which corresponds to the GS proportion of the music is also clear to the listener and is a significant moment of arrival. Each formal division of this movement is set off by a long pitch often followed by silence, similar to Movement I. Each section has a clear character: A is languidly melodic; B is more active and recalls the material of Movement I; C is reminiscent of Movement III (see Figure 5.33). The C section is the most explosively climactic of the piece, exhausting itself in a frenzy of activity that culminates in a *ppp* statement of three notes followed by a very long silence. The return to A material follows, and is a release of the tension generated in the previous section. This important arrival corresponds with the GS proportion of the movement.



Figure 5.32: *Ascèses*, mvt. V, mm. 7 (partial) – 8 showing end of C section and return of A, transposed

As these movements illustrate, Jolivet does not reserve the Golden Section division for a single type of formal moment in *Ascèses*. In the case of the first movement, the GS corresponds to a *departure* of sorts, the beginning of a section of growth. In the third movement it corresponds to an important *resumption* of thematic material; and in the last movement it corresponds to a key *arrival*. In all cases, however, the musical material which begins at the point of GS proportion in the movement is significant in some way, and clearly audible. GS proportions are less strong in Movements II and IV, although even in these movements GS proportions and structural

divisions are often close to each other (roughly 6% deviation from GS). The strong presence of this symbolically potent proportion in *Ascèses* seems far from accidental, but rather another way in which Jolivet aligns the piece with the concepts of perfection and unity.

Melody as Spiritual Vehicle

If music is to connect humanity to the divine it must have coherence and relevance to the listener, for “Lyricism is the communicative form of the spiritual aspirations of men.”²² Melody is thus the most important aspect of music for Jolivet, the key element that expresses the spirituality of humanity. This is perhaps why Jolivet chose the melody-dominant medium of an unaccompanied monophonic instrument as the vehicle for a piece (*Ascèses*) specifically focused on the spiritual. Jolivet regarded melody as the “authentic element” of art because it is the carrier of emotional content,²³ and it was for him one of the two things that marked a true musical creator.²⁴ Jolivet’s accomplishments in the realm of melody were acknowledged by other composers such as Messiaen, who wrote of Jolivet posthumously “...our century is indebted to André Jolivet for these two major elements: large form and continuous melody.”²⁵

There are numerous ways in which Jolivet gives his melodies coherence for a listener. The utilization of repeated and recognizable pitch material, such as the set classes discussed above, is one example. Another, simpler, type of pitch repetition that

²² Jolivet, “Les sources héroïques,” quoted in Surchamp, “Philosophie et spiritualité,” *Portraits*, 60.

²³ Jolivet, “Un enquête,” 21.

²⁴ In response to the question “What in your opinion distinguishes the true musical creator?” posed by Martine Cadieu in a 1961 interview Jolivet answered “Unity in diversity and lyricism – of course.” (Cadieu, 4).

²⁵ Quoted in Hilda Jolivet, “André Jolivet,” *Zodiaque* 119, 16.

Jolivet frequently utilized in his melodies is that which he termed *note-pivot*. A *note-pivot* is a “home note,” a dominant, referential pitch established, through repetition and emphasis, as a point of return or rest in the musical discourse. Over the course of a movement, one pivot note may yield to another, thus creating a sense of modulation, contributing to the generation of form.²⁶ *Notes-pivots* are the counterbalance to Jolivet’s theory of pitch avoidance, creating for the listener a sense of expectation, struggle and resolution, and providing a point of reference in what is sometimes a very disjunct language. This coherence was important to Jolivet, for while he wanted to avoid tonality he also wanted to avoid complete atonality for; as he explained in the early 1960s, “...I have found atonality to bring disorder.”²⁷

The opening of Movement I provides an example of a *note-pivot* established through repetition. The top note of the initial rising gesture (see Figure 5.4) is D5, which is repeated both immediately and in subsequent repetitions of the gesture. This repetition, combined with the fact that D is the “tonic” of the mode in which the movement is based, establishes the D as a “home” pitch. The opening of Movement III is a second example of a *note-pivot*, B, established through repetition.

²⁶ Jolivet notes the location of pivot notes in some of his own score notations, for example in “Pégase” from *Mana* (see facsimile page, Portraits, 115). Conrad identifies several examples of *notes-pivots* functioning in early works (see Conrad 288-293). Jolivet had been emphasizing the importance of melody and coherent discourse as early as the mid-1940s and he wrote then of resting points or “modulating pivots” as assuring the articulation of that discourse (André Jolivet, “Les Réveil des muses,” *La Revue Musicale* 198 (February/March 1946), 41).

²⁷ Jolivet’s early studies with Varèse were rigorously atonal: “The atonal discipline to which Varèse constrained me was much more severe than that of the dodecaphonists. First, it avoided all tonal connections and even hints of tonality, not only in the simultaneous harmonies, but also in the melodic successions.” Jolivet, “Second Interview,” by Goléa, 3; quoted in Conrad, 93.

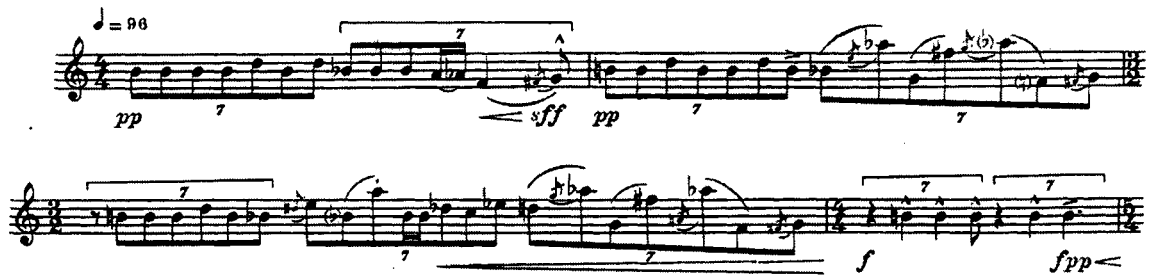


Figure 5.33: *Ascèses*, mvt. III, mm. 1-4

That *note-pivot* is replaced, in the A² section of the movement, by D as the “home” pitch, helping to create a sense of development in the music while providing the listener with an aural landmark. *Notes-pivots* are often the tonic of the underlying mode of a passage, as in Figure 5.4. They do not have to be however; the pitch material of Figure 5.33 (above) is drawn from the mode based on Eb (although the material is not strongly modal). In cases where the former is true a greater sense of stability tends to prevail in the music, while in cases of the latter the *note-pivot* acts as an anchor in more aurally ambiguous waters.

Although the use of a referential *note-pivot* is present in and lends coherence to many of Jolivet’s melodies, his melodic constructions do tend to divide into two distinct types: melodies that circle around a few pitches only, sometimes oscillating between only two notes and implying a sense of stasis, and more dynamic melodies that include the progressive development of a small cell of pitches through gradual and progressive expansion of pitch content and increased ornamentation. Bridget Conrad has dubbed these “repeated” and “continuous” melodies.²⁸ Examples of both types of melodies can

²⁸ Bridget Conrad, “Le langage musical d’André Jolivet” in *Portraits*, 116-7.

be found in all of Jolivet's works. In the latter types of melodies, the expansion of pitch content is often accompanied by an expansion of the melodic intervals, increased loudness and accentuation, and an expansion of the register of the melody. This registral expansion may also work in conjunction with aggregate completion to give coherent form to long melodic lines.

By far more common in *Ascèses* are melodies of the continuous type. These dynamic, expanding (pitch/register/interval) melodies are particularly prominent in the outer, strongly modal movements. We have already seen a subdued example of this type of melody in the opening of movement one (see Figure 5.6). A more characteristic example appears later in movement one. In measure seven, material from the first half of the movement (m. 4) returns, transposed and varied (see Figure 5.34).

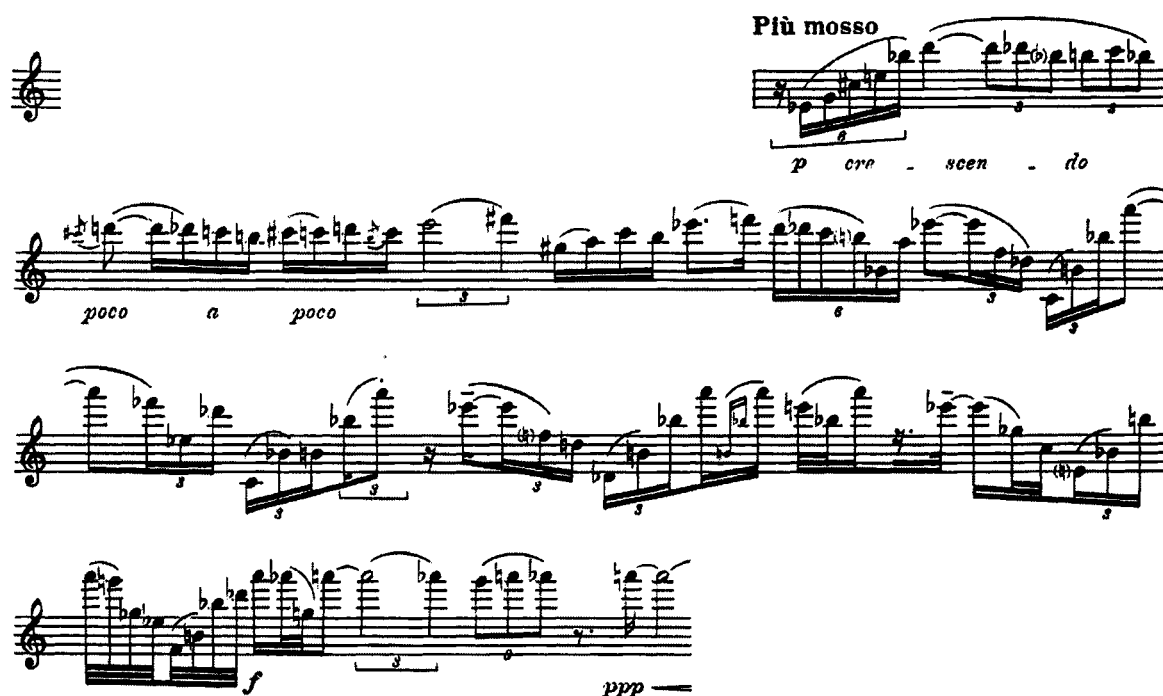


Figure 5.34: *Ascèses*, mvt. 1, m. 7

Beginning with a limited pitch collection and a narrow range (after the initial ascending gesture), the melody quickly expands to encompass a Major 6th and Perfect 12th before opening up to a double compound Major 6th (a Major 20th, C4-A6). This expansion of melodic range is accompanied by an increase in rhythmic activity (intensity) as well.

Movement V also contains excellent examples of this type of melodic construction. Midway through the movement Jolivet begins a section with melodic material reminiscent of the third movement.

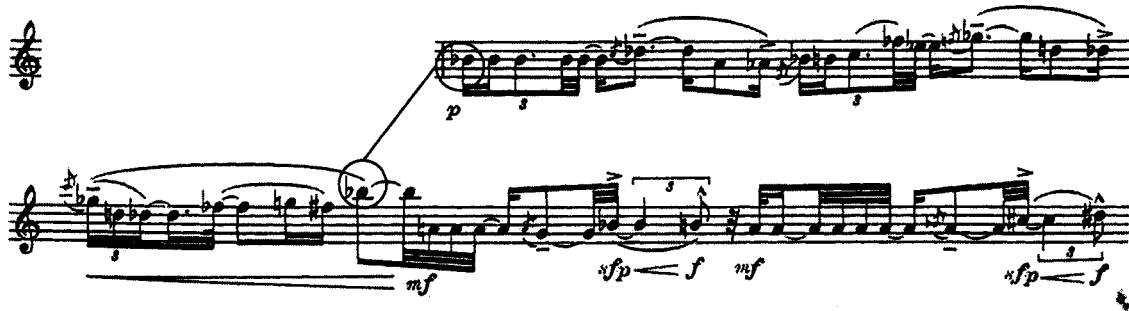


Figure 5.35: *Ascèses*, mvt. V, m. 6

Although Jolivet begins here with repeated pitches, there is an almost immediate climb in register from the initial Bb4 to Bb5. The passage begins over again in the first octave and continues this rise in tessitura in the material that immediately follows, eventually arriving at Eb6.

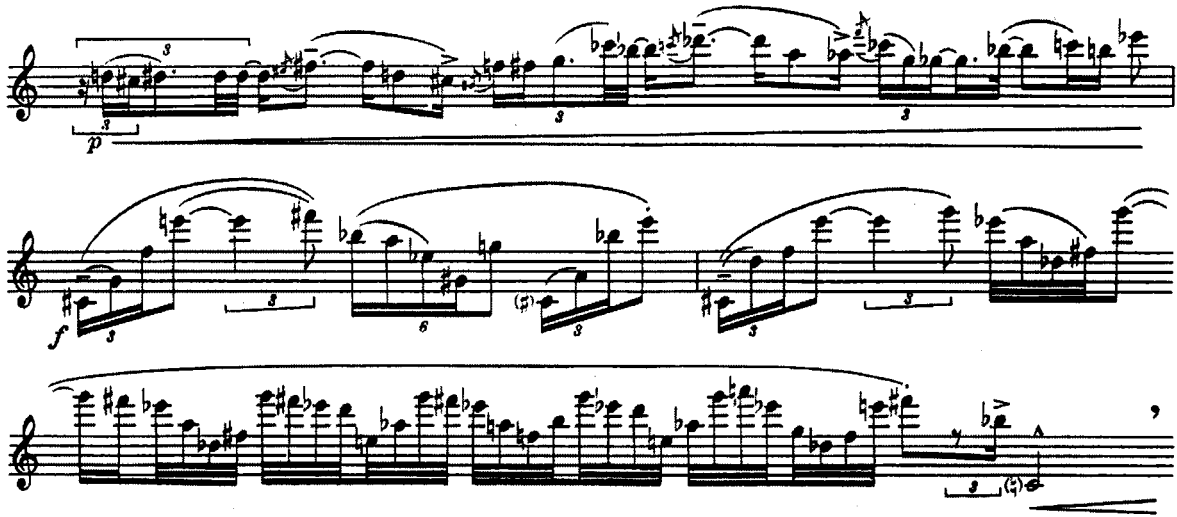


Figure 5.36: *Ascèses*, mvt. V, m. 6 (cont.) and m. 7

As one can see in Figure 5.36, once this relatively high note has been achieved, Jolivet expands the range of the melodic activity much as in Figure 5.34. There is also a similar increase in rhythmic activity and dynamic intensity.

These examples demonstrate the care with which Jolivet fashioned his climactic moments, manipulating pitch and soundspace to create powerful moments of arrival. In creating his melodic forms Jolivet also carefully considered their rhythmic aspects. Jolivet wrote much less about how he conceived of rhythm than he did about matters related to pitch, but he is clear that a melody must have “an evident rhythmic progression.”²⁹ Furthermore, the melodic aspect of rhythm leads Jolivet to offer a definition of rhythm: “...rhythm is the delivery of lyricism.”³⁰ Recalling that, for Jolivet, melody and lyricism are the most important aspect of composition, it is not surprising that he proposes a definition of rhythm that is reliant on these.

²⁹ Jolivet, “A propos du 1er concerto pour ondes,” 391; quoted in Conrad, 266.

³⁰ Ibid.; quoted in Hilda Jolivet “André Jolivet,” *Zodiaque* 119, 39-40 and also quoted in Conrad 326 (translated as “rhythm is the outpouring of lyricism”)

Rhythm is also connected to Jolivet's aesthetic or spiritual aspirations for music, making its organization greatly important. Jolivet suggested that Western musicians could learn from the East, where "...the precise organization of sounds in measured groupings, of which the repetition or the constancy of dynamism establishes the magical power."³¹ So too for Jolivet, rhythmic manipulations can assist in establishing the magical power of his own works. These may include repetitions (as is suggested in the quotation) and the constant or repeated use of symbolically significant rhythmic subdivisions.

It is important to realize, however, that the "measured groupings" referred to above do not necessarily arise from meter. Jolivet frequently makes use of melodies that avoid any sense of pulse whatsoever. Conrad notes that the confusion created by such an "ametric" or "rubato" approach to rhythm allows the listener to focus on the repeating melodic figure, the unfolding melodic line or the registral direction of the melody.³² This type of rhythmic construction is by far the more favored type in *Ascèses*, a choice that seems appropriate in a work focused on spiritual matters and functioning as a meditation of sorts; for if "Lyricism is the communicative form of the spiritual aspirations of men,"³³ then distraction from that lyricism, the melody, is undesirable.

Jolivet achieves the effect of ametric, or "rubato," rhythm through numerous means, several of which are illustrated in Figure 5.37 below.

³² Conrad, "Langage," *Portraits*, 120.

³³ Jolivet, "Les sources héroïques," quoted in Surchamp, "Philosophie et spiritualité," *Portraits*, 60.



Figure 5.37: *Ascèses*, mvt. V, m. 10 (final ascending melody)

In some cases, as this one, ametric melodies will have no meter signature. (This is the case in all the ametric movements of *Ascèses*.) This is by no means an imperative criterion, however. The effect of such music is often of an almost improvisatory flow but, as is evident in the example above, durations are precisely notated. The effect of freedom is achieved through the use of a large variety of durations, frequent ties to obscure any sense of pulse or beat accents and numerous irregular and constantly changing subdivisions (which Jolivet referred to as the “minting” of rhythm according to non-rational numeric relationships).³⁴ It is this type of writing that was innovative when Jolivet first introduced it in the 1930s, and which gained him great admiration from many quarters - including from Boulez, who criticized Jolivet severely in other regards.³⁵ Numerous of the other examples already supplied in this chapter also illustrate ametric rhythmic constructions.

Melodies of the continuous type, paired with ametric rhythmic construction, are the dominant types of writing in *Ascèses*, but Jolivet does not ignore the possibility that

³⁴ Jolivet, “Second Interview” by Goléa, 10-11; quoted in Conrad, “Langage,” *Portraits*, 120. She translates the verb “monnayer” as “exploit”, but “to mint or coin” is an appropriate translation in this case.

³⁵ Pierre Boulez “Proposals” in *Notes of an Apprenticeship*, trans. by Herbert Weinstock (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1968), 63.

more obvious repetition is useful, for “...the repetition or the constancy of dynamism establishes the magical power [of music].”³⁶ In *Ascèses*, such repetition may involve pitch material in an ametric rhythmic framework, or repeated pitch and rhythmic figures in ostinato or ostinato-like patterns, often utilizing symbolically significant numbers.

The first type of repetition, pitch material in an ametric rhythmic framework, is an example of the second type of melody already mentioned above: “repeated” melodies which circle around a limited number of pitches, creating a sense of stasis. These are not common in *Ascèses*, but Figure 5.24 (the opening of Movement IV), is an example of this type. There is certainly a feeling of stasis in the opening material of the movement for, despite the large leaps, the pitch material is quite restricted; furthermore, the duration of the upper notes causes them to assume a place of prominence in the listener’s ear, effectively slowing the melody and further reducing its pitch content.

The opening of Movement 5 exhibits “repeated” melody characteristics in a more subtle manner. Although the opening phrase utilizes all twelve chromatic pitches, the first half of the phrase has a very narrow range (perfect fourth) and relies heavily on stepwise motion. In addition, the length of the Ab4 and A4 make them prominent enough that the quicker pitches assume somewhat decorative roles aurally, effectively foregrounding the stepwise Ab-A-G# motion.



Figure 5.38: *Ascèses*, mvt. 5, m.1

³⁶ Quoted in Hilda Jolivet “André Jolivet,” *Zodiaque* 119, 39-40 and also quoted in Conrad 326.

Dynamic, ostinato rhythmic patterns are also not prominent in *Ascèses*. Some of Jolivet's early, self-identified paradigmatic works contain particularly good examples of repetition and symbolic rhythms, such as *Cinq Incantations* which features frequent quintuplets (five being symbolic of equilibrium and unity according to Fabre d'Olivet) and repetitions of entire phrases or sections.³⁷ *Ascèses* is much less reliant on this type of rhythmic practice, a shift that is also perhaps reflective of the shift away from early reliance on the musical practices of non-European societies. The third movement, however, is an example of both ostinato-type rhythmic repetition in the use of an almost constant septuplet subdivision.

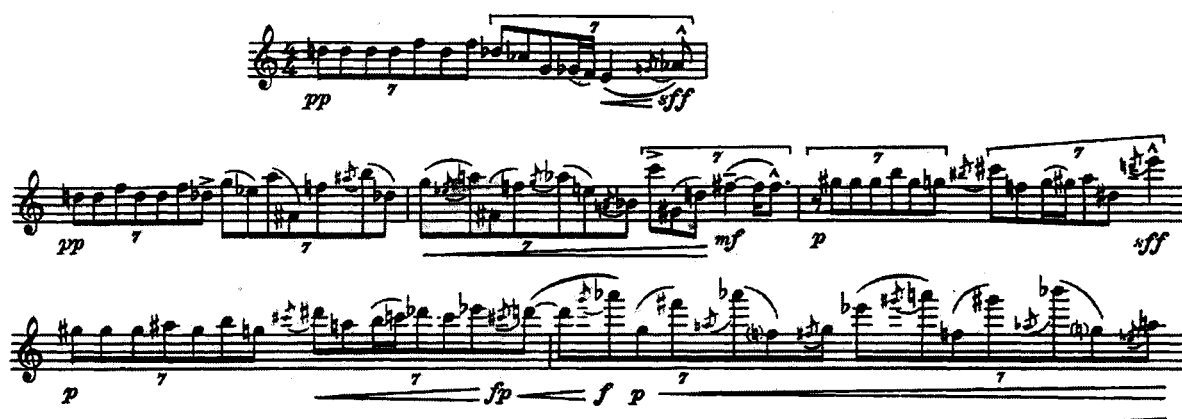


Figure 5.39: *Ascèses*, mvt. III, mm. 30-34

Jolivet's choice of the septuplet for this movement is almost certainly an example of his continued preference for symbolic numbers in his musical construction. Seven is a combination of three, associated in Jolivet's early occult readings with God, perfection, the divine, and four, associated by those same authors with earth (the four elements) and

³⁷ The number five had lifelong significance to Jolivet, and he chose five movements for several important works, including *Cinq incantations*, *Cinq danses rituelles*, *Mana*, *Cinq egloges* and *Ascèses*.

man. Thus, seven is a symbolic union of the heavenly and the earthly. According to Fabre d'Olivet, seven is symbolic of "the soul of the world unfurling itself into the bosom of the universe". Given the amount of reading Jolivet pursued in this area in the early part of his career, and his close friendship with writers and numerologists such as Hélène de Callias, it seems unlikely that Jolivet could have chosen such a conspicuous rhythmic subdivision without considering the symbolic nature of the number. Given its associations with both the earthly and the divine, the prominent use of the number seven is very appropriate to Jolivet's aesthetic in general and to a movement with the Teilhard quotation in particular.

The final two measures of the piece are also symbolically suggestive (see Figure 5.23). First, it must be pointed out that since the third movement is the only one of the set of five to use meter signatures at all, choices and shifts in the metric notation take on more meaning here than they might in another piece. The movement uses 4/4 predominantly, with measures of 3/2 and 5/4 occurring regularly and 6/4, 3/4, 2/4 and 3/4 + 1/8 occasionally. As has already been noted, the final measures of the movement are substantially separated from the rest of the movement through silence, a fact which makes them extremely obvious to the listener. The meter of the penultimate measure is 9/4, a meter signature which stands out as different from the others of the movement, and is suggestive of medieval *tempus perfectus* in which large and small divisions of time (here the pulse groupings and the pulse itself) are divisible by the divine number three. The rhythm of this measure reinforces the meter; unlike the rest of the movement, in which rhythmic subdivisions constantly conflict with the notated meter, here the rhythm is three dotted half notes (or three times three quarter notes). This measure of simple

long notes in 9/4 is followed by a measure of 5/4 comprising a single long pitch. Since it is likely that Jolivet associated five with equilibrium, union and the relationship of microcosm to macrocosm (because of his reading of Fabre d'Olivet, Pythagoras, Callias and others), together these measures form a veritable symbolic shorthand for one of Jolivet's central tenants: that music is a means of unity with the divine.

Relationships of Sound in Space

The preceding sections have focused on how Jolivet constructs coherent relationships between pitch materials and formal constructions, putting both in the service of the expression of his philosophical ideals. These relationships were by no means the only ones that Jolivet considered when composing, however. The expansion of range, interval size and dynamic intensity evident in several of the previous melodic examples are illustrations of another aspect of Jolivet's musical aesthetic, namely the importance of relationships of register, timbre and intensity.

In the late 1960s Jolivet identified "...a rigorous control of the relationships of intensity and pitches...." as one way in which he had freed himself from the tempered system.³⁸ For Jolivet, issues of register, timbre and intensity were integral elements of musical development and were connected to the spatial aspect of music.³⁹ Evidence of this comes from several statements made by Jolivet over many years. For example, in

³⁸ Jolivet, "Tendances;" quoted in Conrad, 263. The other two element of his compositional craft that Jolivet cited in this regard were a "deepening" of the serial technique, applied to modal scales, and the study of orchestration for new means of putting acoustic laws into practice. Both of these have been discussed above.

³⁹ The influence of Varèse may be seen in these concerns. Varèse spoke frequently about new timbres, use of science and technology to produce new sounds, spatialization of sound, and the structuring of musical space.

discussing his concerto for ondes Martenot in 1951 he clarifies that development in the work is not simply linear, involving melody and harmony, but also spatial, involving sound intensity. The development of the work thus takes place not only in time, but also in space.⁴⁰ A remark from one of the 1961 Goléa interviews clarifies that such development arises from Jolivet's belief in the importance of timbral structure or architecture: "From this attitude regarding musical composition was born my technique of intensities, with musical development no longer being just melodic development, but a development of sound masses."⁴¹

In *Ascèses* Jolivet manipulates intensity levels and employs registral expansion (what he had called "projection of sound" in his earliest writings) in the creation of form. Examples of Jolivet's intensity manipulation include both increasing intensity at moments of climax and juxtaposing timbre and intensity to delineate form. Movement V is a good example of the former (see Figures 5.34-36 above). Here, at the climax of the movement, there is increased textural intensity, achieved through an increase in rhythmic activity combined with registral expansion. Movement IV provides examples of the latter. In Movement IV, the middle section of the work is defined in part by its very spare texture (low intensity) and change in instrumental timbre (flutter-tonguing). (See Figure 5.40 below and Figure 5.24 for comparison).



Figure 5.40: *Ascèses*, mvt. IV, m. 5

⁴⁰ Jolivet, "A propos du 1er concerto pour ondes;" quoted in Conrad, 82.

⁴¹ Jolivet, "Second Interview" by Goléa, 3; quoted in Conrad, 96.

Musico-poetic Relationship

It is clear that, in a general sense, Jolivet successfully translated his aesthetic principles into musical practice. As the examples above show, *Ascèses* demonstrates a fundamental expression of Jolivet's aesthetic ideals, relying on proportional considerations in the derivation of pitch materials and form, saturating his texture with “detempering” elements, and using various means (such as aggregate completion and set class saturation) to create great unity within the piece. Having considered these more general elements of the piece it is now time to turn to a consideration of some aspects specific only to *Ascèses*, beginning with the relationship of the poetic epigraphs to the music of each movement.

To some degree, the music of each movement does reflect the content of the poetic line in a programmatic manner. The first movement, (“In order that the secret remains, we hush to silence”) is a meditation on mystery, a reflection on the mystery of the sacred. The movement overall is subdued in its dynamic level. More importantly, however, important arrivals are marked by a sudden “hush” to *pp* or even *ppp*, thus preserving the “secret” of the epigraph (see Figure 5.6, Figures 5.41 and 5.42 and below).



Figure 5.41: *Ascèses*, mvt. I m. 4 (excerpt); varied return of opening material on note-pivot G

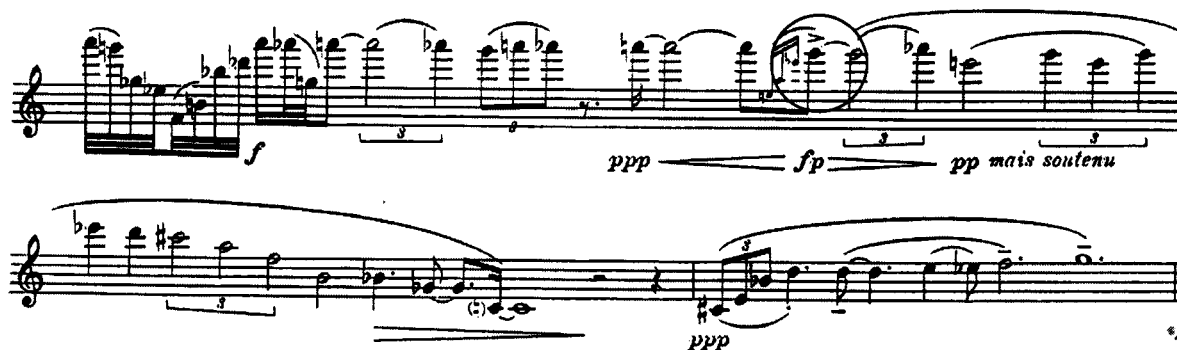


Figure 5.42: *Ascèses*, mvt. I final measures; final arrival on home *note-pivot*, G

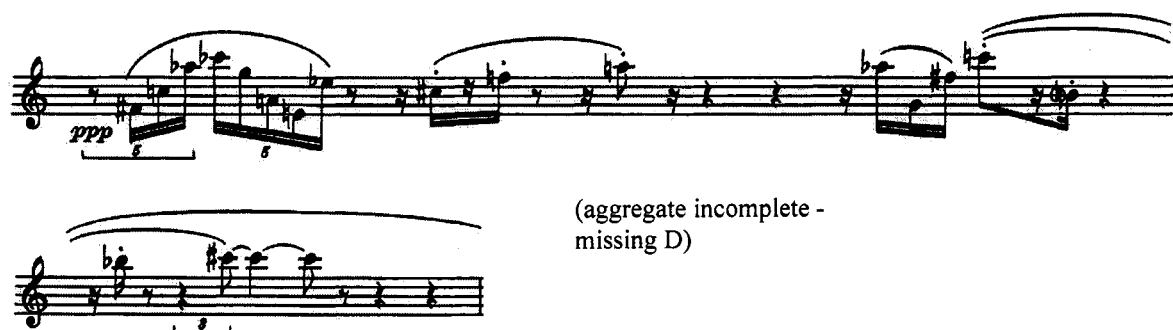
One interpretation of the poetry of the second movement, “You arise from absence...,” is that there is a need for space and silence in order for one to feel the presence of the divine. The “absence” of the poetry is reflected here in the music, through deliberate avoidance of aggregate completion. Movement two begins with an energetic musical statement that is missing two of the twelve chromatic pitches classes, D and B.



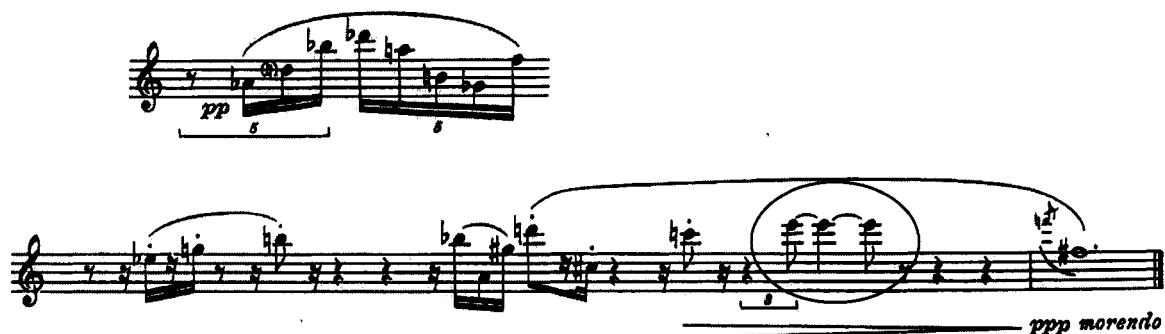
Figure 5.43: *Ascèses*, mvt. II, m. 1

The second measure adds one of the missing pitches, the B, but the section ends *without* aggregate completion: there is no D. When the opening returns at the end of the movement it is varied and transposed (up a whole step). This time, however, the second phrase does present a complete chromatic aggregate (the last interval of the phrase is

altered in comparison to the first statement), and the final chromatic pitch is the last one of the phrase.



Ascèses mvt. II, m. 2



Ascèses mvt. II, m. 8

Figure 5.44: *Ascèses*, mvt. II, m. 2 and m. 8

Here, then, aggregate completion marks not just the end of a section but also the end of the movement, and underlines the poetic text (“You arise from absence”). Numerous other phrases in the movement also lack a single pitch class of the chromatic aggregate: the second phrase of the first “souple” section is missing Eb; the fourth measure (second half of “souple”) is missing F; the return of the opening lacks both Eb as well. The “absence” of complete chromatic aggregates in phrases of this movement is notable in comparison to the other movements. In addition to this absence, there is also the notable

absence of sound in this movement; frequent rests in the opening material and its return thus further emphasize the poetry that accompanies the music.

The symbolic nature of the septuplet divisions in Movement III has already been mentioned in relation to the poetry of this movement, which can be interpreted as a meditation on the relationship of the earthly world to the cosmos. The asymmetrical rhythmic energy of the septuplets, combined with an ever-increasing number of grace notes in the movement, is also evocative of the random energetic motions and vibrations of molecules in the atoms referred to in the quotation.

Movement IV, “The god created dreams to show the way to the sleeper, whose eyes are in darkness,” can similarly be interpreted as containing metaphorical musical references to the text. The opening thematic material (Figure 5.24), with its sinuously winding contour and limited pitch content, certainly seems to be seeking something. Variations on this thematic material occur in the middle of the movement, which uses low register flutter-tonguing to further reinforce a sense of uncertainty (Figure 5.40). More expansive melodic material may be representative of the dream of the text; in the end of the movement, the dream dissolves back into the searching darkness of the opening, represented in the oscillation of the final two pitches (Figure 5.25).

The final movement’s poetry speaks of the unity and connected nature of all things through the implied metaphor of birth. There are numerous ways in which the movement reflects the unity and interconnectedness of the text, such as its referencing of musical material from previous movements in the construction of its own thematic material. No previous movement is quoted directly, but several are recalled in discernable ways and by these means the movement carries in it the world of the piece.

For example, the first movement is referenced in the fifth phrase not only with melodic gestures that recall it but also by through the use of (0236) which so saturated the first movement. The third movement is recalled at the beginning of measure seven with a motive that uses repeated pitches and frenetic rhythmic energy similar to that of the earlier movement. The sinuous nature of the fourth movement's thematic material is paralleled in that of the fifth movement's opening (and in this material's varied return later in the movement).

V.

Largement chanté

pp *mf*

p *pp* *pour 4 temps*

p *pp* *Mvt. I (0236)* *pp*

ppp *p* *pp* *mp sub.*

Mvt. III *ppp* *p*

Figure 5.45: *Ascèses*, mvt. V, m. 1-7 (partial)

Music and text, then, are not simply friendly neighbors in this piece but have a clearly discernable relationship to each other. In this way too *Ascèses* is highly unified, with all elements of the work combining to project the larger meaning of the piece, a meaning which is most fully comprehended in light of Jolivet's aesthetic and philosophical stance of the 1960s.

Conclusion: Ascèses and Communion with the Divine

Chapter 4 explored the ways in which the extra-musical materials of *Ascèses* echo Jolivet's aesthetic and philosophy, and found that they combined to form a highly coherent shorthand for that aesthetic and reflected beyond doubt two of the four pillars of that philosophy described in Chapter 2. In the discussion of Jolivet's musical materials above we can now see how a third tenant of Jolivet's philosophy is reflected in *Ascèses*, and how a belief in the power of underlying principles may be translated into concrete musical practices. Together, the music and extra-musical elements of *Ascèses* combine to form a powerful expression of Jolivet's thought.

Having considered how Jolivet translated his aesthetic principles into musical practice, how these musical practices operate in *Ascèses*, and how the musical language of this piece interacts with its text, one arrives at a deep appreciation of the great coherence of *Ascèses*. Because both the choice of texts and the principles which govern the creation of the musical language are derived from Jolivet's underlying philosophy of music, there is substantial unity present in the work; for this reason alone one could argue that *Ascèses* is a powerful statement of Jolivet's late aesthetic. The relationship of *Ascèses* to Jolivet's philosophical ideals runs more deeply, however, for the language and

construction of the work reflect the most important of Jolivet's philosophical ideals: that of unity and the relationship of the microcosm to the macrocosm.

Ascèses, on every level, is imbued with the theme of unity, a fact which is reflective of the goal of "spiritual exercises:" to achieve unity with the divine. Unity in *Ascèses* is clear in the relation of the text to the music, in the unity of pitch material across movements (Jolivet's saturation of the musical texture with particular set classes) and in the use of aggregate completion not only in smaller sections of the piece but across the piece as whole. The theme of unity is also reflected in the number of movements in the work, five being symbolic of equilibrium, union and the relationship of microcosm to macrocosm.⁴² Thus Jolivet's most important aesthetic ideals, those of communion and unity, are realized in the structure of *Ascèses*. This musical unity in turn stands as a metaphor for the unity with the divine which Jolivet ultimately sought to have his music achieve.

⁴² According to Fabre d'Olivet.

CONCLUSION

It has been the central argument of this document that *Ascèses*, despite its relatively modest proportions, is a powerful articulation of Jolivet's essential philosophical orientation as it had developed by the last years of his life. Because of its striking surface similarities to an early work which Jolivet himself had identified as paradigmatic of his *early* aesthetic and technical canon, *Ascèses* stands out among Jolivet's later works and invites such an interpretation. An examination of the biographical context in which *Ascèses* was written, of Jolivet's aesthetic and philosophical beliefs in the 1960s, and a detailed consideration of both the musical and extra-musical elements of the work supports this contention, and reveals *Ascèses* to be a highly coherent musical and semantic structure representing in microcosm the larger macrocosm of Jolivet's worldview.

This more complete understanding of *Ascèses* contributes in turn to a more complete understanding of Jolivet's late aesthetic and his approach to composition in the final decade of his life. Jolivet felt that a composer's work reflected who he was; in *Ascèses* we can see that who Jolivet "was" remained in many ways consistent throughout his life. The constellation of musical and extra-musical materials of *Ascèses* confirms an interpretation of Jolivet's philosophy as resting on four main pillars of belief. *Ascèses* is grounded in a conception of music as sacred, and in fact ties the very music itself to monastic life and the idea of spiritual practice through its title. The music, on a technical

level, remains grounded in practices derived from Jolivet's second pillar of belief, that music is sacred because it is based on the same fundamental principles and relationships that govern the larger universe. Some examples of this principle in practice include pitch derivation and deployment according to acoustic principles (the acoustic mode, avoidance of tonality) and the use of numerically significant numbers in rhythm and proportion (including GS proportions).

Ascèses, then, seems well positioned to provide a means of achieving communion with the divine, the third element of Jolivet's philosophy and a primary goal of any spiritual exercise. In keeping with the practice of most mystical traditions, each movement may be interpreted as a meditation on an idea or image, the contemplation of which is one way to achieve closer communion with the divine. At first glance, this communion between the human and the divine takes place on a very individual level in *Ascèses*. The composition of the work is a "spiritual practice" for the composer, performer and listener individually, as implied by Jolivet's words on monophonic compositions quoted in Chapter 4. These three individuals, however, are united in the music itself; individual communion with the spiritual through the music also, on some level, effects the communion of three individual human beings with each other. This in turn may stand symbolically for the communion of all humanity through music and is thus reflective of Jolivet's belief that music must connect all of humanity in its highest aspirations.

At its core, *Ascèses* is a celebration and confirmation of this central belief of Jolivet: that communion with the divine and thus an ultimate cosmic unity is possible. The idea of communion is present in the piece at every level, from the coherence of the

poetic imagery to the tight musical structure and complementary interaction of the music and extra-musical materials. Possibly inspired by ideas such as those of Teilhard de Chardin, which emphasize the continual evolution of spirit and matter towards ever greater complexity and unity, *Ascèses* illustrates Jolivet's music evolving into ever more highly unified structures, with long standing practices such as aggregate completion functioning on a large scale level and symbolically providing the ultimate unity which Jolivet so consistently desired. As poetry was Fouchet's "spiritual exercise," music was Jolivet's, and *Ascèses*, standing as it does at the end of Jolivet's compositional life, offers a unique opportunity to glimpse Jolivet's evolution to his own Omega Point.

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