***Technique de mon langage musical* (1944)**

Stephen Broad

*Technique de mon langage musical* [*The Technique of My Musical Language*] is a treatise by the French composer Olivier Messiaen (1908 – 1992), setting out some of the features of his compositional style and the processes that he had developed by the time of its publication in 1944. *Technique* gives an insight into both the mechanics of his compositional approach, and the inspirations on which it draws, drawing copiously on examples from his own music and the music of others. These included his approach to melodic shaping (rooted in plainchant, folksongs, and certain fragments of earlier music); harmony (including the so-called “modes of limited transpositions” and various “special chords”); and rhythm. There is also a preliminary discussion on birdsong that predates his sophisticated use of birdsong in the 1950s, and a worklist to 1942, indicating “significant” works.

*Technique* was never updated by the composer, and so does not reflect later developments. These are accounted for in the posthumously published *Traité de rythme, de couleur, et d’ornithologie* (1994 – 2002).

*Technique de mon langage musical* was originally published by Alphonse Leduc in two volumes. It was translated into English in 1956 by John Satterfield and into German in 1966 by Sieglinde Ahrens. In 2000, Leduc produced a single-volume version.

Messiaen, O. (1944) *Technique de mon langage musical*, Paris: Leduc.