

A Preparatory Study of Stravinsky's Symphony of Psalms
MUS 224
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INTRODUCTION

Igor Stravinsky, 1882-1971, began composing the *Symphony of Psalms* at the bequest of Serge Koussevitzky, the music director of the Boston Symphony Orchestra. Koussevitzky wanted popular sounding symphonies to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the Boston Symphony Orchestra. Stravinsky understanding that he had free rein over the composition wanted to play with voices and instruments, giving both equal status.

The dedication printed on the score states “This symphony composed to the glory of GOD is dedicated to the ‘Boston Symphony Orchestra’ on the occasion of its fiftieth anniversary.” Stravinsky explains later that it references St. Thomas’s “art is a way to God.”¹ The *Symphony of Psalms* originally had titles for the three movements. Stravinsky removed them at the first world premiere in Brussels, December 13, 1931.² The titles Prelude, Double Fugue, and Symphonic Allegro, as dry a description it is, still gave a sense of authority. Their removal has invited characterization by theorists. Druskin calls them “prayer for help,” “song of hope,” and “song of praise.”³ Shrock writes that the movements are called “Prayer,” “Thanksgiving,” and “Hymn of Praise,” but they do not get their names from Stravinsky.⁴ The three part structure of the whole work was explained by Boulanger as first an act of supplication, second an act of belief, and third an act of Praise.⁵ The influence of Orthodox spirituality can be seen in Stravinsky’s conception of the *Symphony of Psalms*. He described the first movement as being

¹ Robert Craft, *Stravinsky: Chronicle of a Friendship* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1994), 17.

² M. S. Druskin and Martin Cooper, *Igor Stravinsky: his life, works, and views* (Cambridge [Cambridgeshire]: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 96.

³ Druskin and Cooper, 97.

⁴ Dennis Shrock, "Russia and Estonia," in *Choral Repertoire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 640.

⁵ Kimberly A Francis, *Teaching Stravinsky: Nadia Boulanger and the Consecration of a Modernist Icon* (Cary: Oxford University Press, 2015), 57.

“composed in a state of religious and musical ebullience.”⁶ The second movement was envisaged as a prayer for a new canticle to be given to humanity, the “Alleluia” of the third movement being that canticle.⁷ In the revised 1947 scores, simple movement numbers delineate the parts.

The piano vocal score came about because of pressure from Nadia Boulanger. She knew the work would be of interest in a reduced form. She worked painstakingly at many details, knowing the score and different recordings. She is not credited on the score, only Soulima Stravinsky, whose contributions aren't clearly documented.⁸ The 1947 revisions of Stravinsky's scores were an answer to performance royalties in the United States. Stravinsky became a naturalized citizen of the U.S in 1945. Royalties of his music performed in the U.S. only applied to works copyrighted in the U.S.

MOVEMENT I

<p>Exaudi orationem meam, Domine, et deprecationem meam. Auribus percipe lacrimas meas. Ne sileas, ne sileas. Quoniam advena ego sum apud te et peregrinus, sicut omnes patres mei. Remitte mihi, prius quam abeam et amplius non ero.</p>	<p>Hear my prayer, O Lord; And my prayer. Give ear to my tears. Be calm, be calm. For I am a stranger with thee, and a sojourner, as all my fathers. Forgive me, First than return And more not I will.</p>
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⁶ Marianne Gillion, "Eastern Orthodox Spirituality in the Choral Music of Igor Stravinsky," in *The Choral Journal* (Lawton, OK [etc.]: American Choral Directors Association, 2008), 34.

⁷ Gillion, 34.

⁸ Francis, 53.

Tempo $\text{♩} =$

FLAUTI GRANDI

FLAUTO GRANDE
(poi PICCOLO)

OBOI

CORNO INGLESE

FAGOTTI

CONTRA FAGOTTO

CORNI FA

TROMBA PICCOLA RE

TROMBE DO

TROMBONI

TROMBONE (basso)

TUBA

TIMPANI
GRAN CASA

Tempo $\text{♩} =$

CORO

SOPRANI

ALTI

TENORI

BASSI

ARPA

PIANOFORTI 1. 2.

VOLONCELLI

CONTRABASSI

The Symphony of Psalms is scored for

- Four flutes
- Piccolo
- Four oboes
- English Horn
- Three Bassoons
- Contrabassoon
- Four French Horns
- Piccolo Trumpet in D
- Four Trumpets in C
- Two Tenor Trombones
- Bass Trombone
- Tuba
- Timpani
- Cymbals
- Harp
- Two Pianos
- Cello
- Bass

The instrumentation differs from a traditional orchestra with the absence of violin and viola parts and the addition of two pianos. Stravinsky engineered the body of the orchestra to sound like an equal partner to the choir and this is his sound idea.

The optimal sound for the full mixed choir includes children's voices on the soprano and alto parts. The score does not specify if the children's choir should be a boy's choir. Female voices may substitute the soprano and alto parts when the participation of a children's choir is not possible.

Stravinsky having pondered the idea of a symphony for a while, knew he wanted something contrapuntal and not necessarily contained by the formal structures of the modern symphony. In deciding on the sounds of a choir with instruments, he thought of works that “neither reduced the role of the choruses to that of homophonous chant nor the function of the instrumental ensemble to that of an accompaniment.”⁹



The opening instrumental figure is an E minor blocked chord in root position played by woodwinds, lower brass, and the stringed instruments. The pianists are expected to have a reach of a tenth, a setting that will exclude small-handed people, mostly women. Paul Griffiths and Stephen Walsh in their books about Stravinsky consider the presence of the piano a representation of Stravinsky.¹⁰ Only the English Horn fills in the middle texture aside from the harp and piano's full attack. The high cello G doubles the oboe G on the treble staff. The distribution of parts on EGB is 5,9,7 respectively. The chord is mediant heavy, creating an unstable sound. The mezzo forte is neither demure nor decisive, rather like standing on the fence with a slight lean to forte. If one thinks of a teeter totter, neither side is heavy enough to be down and so the plank tries to balance itself, attempting to change its function from an externally ruled device to an instrument with a dense core. The one sound event becomes a sudden and real moment of instability by pitch and passivity by volume.

⁹ Igor Stravinsky, *Stravinsky: An Autobiography* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1936), 162.

¹⁰ Francis, 37n.

As a beginning sound, there is no reference to know that it sounds on the second beat. However, visually one sees a gesture, not unlike a hand going down to swear on the bible. Or, one can imagine a decision taking place and then the action, such as God deciding to create the world and then the subsequent creation. Or furthermore, the rest notates the bend of the knee necessary to kneel. Measure one could, in a package, be the act of kneeling and the sound of knees landing on the floor.

Stravinsky disliked unintended associations with his music. He didn't give guidance on what a listener should think and feel, but he wanted his audience to rise above the need to make up reasons for anything they hear, and focus on hearing music as its own entity. He also believes that music is visual when one watches a performer gesturing for musical effect. This sheds more understanding on the inclusion or omission of a rest before the blocked chord. He wants both a visual and aural effect.



In measures two and three, arpeggiated seventh chords, ascending Bb7 in root position and descending G7 in first inversion, create a pattern of up, down, down, up, down. These two measures can be seen as a miniature rounded binary form. The stack of minor third, major third, minor third, also hints at an octatonic scale Bb, B, (Db), D, (E), F, G, Ab. The constant rhythmic sixteenth notes resembles the repetitious iterations of praying. The contour emulates the rise and fall of speaking cadences.



The blocked chord returns, initiated by the quarter rest, framing the arpeggio pattern. This time the pattern unfolds with three up patterns and three down patterns, repeating the A natural and Ab notes more than any other. The As can be subdominants of E major and Eb major creating somewhat of a Plagal Cadence effect to the blocked E chord. The last two notes leading to the blocked chord presents a 3-2-1 minor scale arrival.



In R1 a variation of the arpeggio idea returns for five measures, this time contained by the block chord without the preceding quarter rest though silence is heard for an eighth rest at the end of the arpeggios. The arpeggios more consistently span a major seventh interval, more firmly establishing the idea of octatonism.



At R2, only “white” notes play, untainted by accidentals, over an E, establishing E phrygian. Over the next eleven measures from R2, sequences of ascending arpeggiated figures change subtly with chromatic movement, sometimes only one note different, until R3 when the pattern changes to downward chevrons, mimicking the lower neighbors of the bass line. In the bass that begins with an E drone for three measures, neighbor tones tease the ear but go nowhere until springing to a C more than two octaves higher, returning to more neighbor tones. The next

springing note of D prepares the aural expectation for an E. The eleven measures of bass movement leads to the event at R4 which spells a minor E triad in second inversion.

Up to this point, the music can be considered an appetizer for the first course, the entrance of a single voice that leads to the full choir. The altos enter only singing 'E's and 'F's in patterns of minor seconds and repeated notes on the text "hear my prayer, O Lord." As one feels small in entreaty to the omniscient Lord, the smallest interval fits the plea of a mortal. However, scholars have illustrated how the movement of minor seconds and unisons reflect Byzantine chant traditions. What he produces may be subconscious or unconscious, using music tools that his brain assimilated from hearing mounds of music, but what his conscious intellect had yet to be taught the terms and definitions. Stravinsky writes further that he "was not aware of 'Phrygian modes,' 'Gregorian chants,' 'Byzantinisms,' or anything else of the sort while composing this music, though, of course, the 'influences' said to be denoted by such script-writers' baggage-stickers may very well have been operative."¹¹

The image shows a musical score for two voices, likely Alto and Soprano, with lyrics in Russian and Latin. The score is written on two staves. The top staff is marked with a box containing the number 4, a dynamic marking of *mf*, and the instruction *CANT.*. The lyrics for the top staff are "E - xau - di o - ra - ti -". The bottom staff has lyrics "- o - nem me - am, Do - mi - ne,". The music consists of a series of notes, some with ties, and rests, following a melodic line that moves in minor seconds and repeated notes.

¹¹ Igor Stravinsky and Robert Craft, "A Quintet of Dialogues," *Perspectives in New Music* 1, no. 1 (Fall 1962): 16.


	
<p>Boulanger in the 30s and 40s had been teaching her students that this B-D-A#-C# a tetrachord is a building block of the entire composition.¹² In 1962, Stravinsky writes that “the sequences of two minor thirds joined by a major third, the root idea of the whole symphony, were derived from the trumpet-harp motive at the beginning of the <i>allegro</i> in Psalm 150.¹³</p>	<p>G-G#-A#-B-(C#)-D-(E)-F</p> <p>Boulanger doesn't comment on the bass accompaniment which hints at the octatonic scale and maintains the statement of the opening arpeggios.</p>

The movement continues with these three devices: vocal melody based on unisons and minor seconds, an ostinato of low instruments on the tottering thirds, and the arpeggiations of seventh chords sometimes morphing into the tottering thirds idea. Mellers calls the tottering thirds “dove-like fluttering.”¹⁴ Five measures before the end, the choir lands on B, F, D, E. The B is a suspension to C which then becomes a harmonic moment of the tottering thirds C-E, D-F. The choral bassline approaches the cadence via C, D, F, G, calling in a traditional cadence of FA, SO, lower TI, and to DO, DO being G. The instrumental bass line descends by whole step or half step to the G. Both basslines counter the soprano's scalular climb to the mighty DO.

¹² Francis, 56.

¹³ Stravinsky and Craft, 16.

¹⁴ . Wilfrid Mellers, "Stravinsky to Monteverdi: Celestial Music," in *Choir & Organ*. May/Jun97, Vol. 5 Issue 3 (London: Orpheus Publications, 1997), 42.

<p style="text-align: right;">161</p>  <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Enchaînez</i></p>	<p>Piccolo Flute 1,2</p> <p>Flute 3,4 Oboe 1,2 Oboe 3,4 English Horn</p> <p>Bassoon 1 Bassoon 2,3 Contrabassoon</p> <p>Horn 1,2 Horn 3,4 Piccolo Trumpet Trumpet 1,2 Trumpet 3,4</p> <p>Trombone 1,2 Bass trombone Tuba</p> <p>Soprano Alto</p> <p>Tenor Bass</p> <p>Piano 1</p> <p>Piano 2</p> <p>Cello Contrabass</p>	<p>The final chord of movement I is an unapologetic G. The voicing gives interest in the preponderant dominance of G. The piccolo, flutes half the oboes, English horn, bassoons, half the horns piccolo trumpet, trombones, tubas, sopranos, basses, pianos, cello and contrabasses perform a G. One part of the oboe, the other half of the horns, one part of the trumpets and the tenors perform a B. The last oboe part, three trumpet parts, and the altos perform a D. That's a ratio of 23:5:5. This voicing should make tuning confidence bloom.</p> <p>The G relates to the opening E minor by being E's mediant, but a stronger relation is the <i>enchainez</i> start of the second movement in C minor. The aural impact of the G needs to resonate through four measures until a G is heard again.</p>

MOVEMENT II

Expectans expectavi Dominum, et intendit mihi. Et exaudivit preces meas; et exudit me da lacu miseriae, et de lato faecis. Et statuit super petram pedes meos: et direxis gressus meos. Et immisit in os meum canticum novrum, carmen Deo nostro. Videbunt multi, videbunt et timabunt: et aperabunt in Domino.	I waited patiently for the Lord; and to me. And he heard my prayers; He brought me also the pit of misery, out of the mire. And he set my feet upon a rock: and ordered my goings. And he hath put a new song in my mouth, our God. Many will see, see it and fear; and trust in the Lord.
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Wilfrid Mellers of University of York labeled movement II a double fugue between God and man, God's theme being in C minor and man's theme being in Eb. The E keys have been representative of men, from heroes to the downtrodden, but did the nonassociative Stravinsky have this in mind when he chose this key? He could have been playing with the idea of death from the Phrygian mode to Ionian, a heavenly mode. Or he could have been musically documenting his own duplicity in life, one side of him walking with God's commandments, and the other side serving himself in extra-marital affairs. Removing speculative attributions, what hails is a double fugue with themes in different keys, related by an interval of a third. Stravinsky says "The subject of the fugue was developed from the sequence of thirds already introduced as an ostinato in the the first movement." In terms of architecture of the whole movement, Stravinsky envisioned a treble-heavy outline, an "upside-down pyramid," using single parts of oboes and flutes as the subjects enter.¹⁵ Stravinsky does call the second theme the human fugue but it is unclear if he calls it that because it represents humans or because of the productive forces. He also uses the term "human choir" in describing the a cappella section. Remember his

¹⁵ Stravinsky and Craft, 16.

initial desire to create a work of equal strength between instrumental forces and choral forces, maybe he uses the term “human” to denote the instrument built in the human body.

The image shows a musical score for three instruments: Oboe 1, Flute 1 (Fl. gr.), and Oboe 1. The tempo is marked as **Tempo** with a quarter note equal to 80 (♩ = 80). The score is in 3/4 time and features a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The first system shows the Oboe 1 part starting with a *mf* dynamic. The second system shows the Flute 1 and Oboe 1 parts, with a first ending bracket labeled '1' over the flute part. The third system shows the Flute 1 and Oboe 1 parts, with a second ending bracket labeled '2' over the flute part. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, breath marks, and dynamic markings.

The first theme opens with an ascending minor third and leaps to an ascending augmented fifth. With the G from the ending of the first movement reverberating in the three notes, a C minor plus major seventh appears. The raised seventh leads to the C. The fourth note of the fugue, an unashamed D, produces a wrap-around effect on C. The breath marks, two-note and three-note slurs produces a sense of movement in rhythm which helps to distract the listener to the lack of harmonic movement. The second entrance of the first theme happens at R1, a fifth above. Seven measures later, the third statement of the first theme occurs in the original key. Identical to the second statement, the fourth statement enters five measures after the third entrance.

<p>The image shows a page of a musical score for 'DOMINUM'. It features multiple staves. The top section shows a chromatic countersubject layer with various instrumental parts, some marked 'sub. p'. Below this, there are vocal parts, with the soprano part starting with a descending fourth from Eb. The lyrics 'Ex - pectans ex - pec -' are printed at the bottom of the page. The score is marked with 'mf' and 'mf tranquillo'.</p>	<p>Chromatic countersubjects layer linearly into the sound milieu, an exercise in multi-horizontal tracks by the instrumental forces which end on an Eb minor chord the same moment the voices enter with their theme. Sopranos begin the vocal them with a descending fourth from Eb on the “I waited.”</p>
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“*DOMINUM*” is printed in all capital letters, though it is not the first time “the Lord” is mentioned in the piece. In movement I of the full score, “*Domine*” is not printed in capitals. Boulanger noted these discrepancies in the vocal score which now has no all-capital words. The full score, from the first all-capital “*DOMINUM*” prints all other references to Lord in capitals, including *DEO* and *DOMINO*, except for the alto entrance on theme one.

Stravinsky uses fugal techniques such as augmentation, diminution, and inversion for successive subjects. At R10, on the text “he set my feet upon a rock and ordered my goings,” the sopranos enter on F, the altos a fifth below on Bb, the tenors another fifth below on Eb, and the

basses on Ab. The descending pitches evoke the helping hand of God and the planting of a foundation. Avoiding attributions when text painting declares itself would take denial. As this section thins with instruments sounding fragments of the descending second theme, the audience hears a G, B, and C with another G in the horns that is a suspension to F#. The keys of C and G are set up harmonically, not melodically, with their leading tones. A two-beat rest recharges the ear for what was recently foreshadowed by the trombone's dotted line, is a nearly homophonic emphatic announcement in the style of a French overture. The walking speed is appropriately slow but the accents and harmony leave an impression of unwanted calamity. The music announces the edict, walk with the fear of God and He shall give you a new song, which segues smoothly into movement III.

MOVEMENT III

<p>Laudate Dominum in sanctis Ejus. Laudate Eum in firmamento virtutis Ejus. Laudate Dominum in virtutibus Ejus. Laudate Eum secundum multitudinem magnitudinis Ejus. Laudate Dominum in sanctis Ejus.. Laudate Eum in sono tubae. Laudate Eum in timpano et choro, Laudate Eum in cordis et organo. Laudate Eum in cymbalis benesonantibus, Laudate Eum in cymbalis jubilationibus. Laudate Eum, omnis spiritus laudet Dominum, omnis spiritus laudet Eum.</p>	<p>Praise God in His sanctuary: Praise Him in the firmament of His power. Praise Him for His mighty acts: Praise Him according to His excellent greatness. Praise Him with the sound of the trumpet: Praise Him with the timbrel and dance. Praise Him with stringed instruments and organs. Praise Him upon the high sounding cymbals, Praise Him upon the loud cymbals. Let every thing that hath breath praise the Lord.</p>
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The opening of the finale begins with a C minor chord sounded by the woodwinds and trombones. The remainder of the slow introduction to the third movement was originally composed to the Slavonic *Gospodi Pomiluy, Kyrie eleison*.¹⁶ The structure of this movement is

¹⁶ Marianne Gillion, "Eastern Orthodox Spirituality in the Choral Music of Igor Stravinsky," in *The Choral Journal* (Lawton, OK [etc.]: American Choral Directors Association, 2008), 34.

an ABA form with ritornello elements in the B section. The bass arpeggiates octaves in C major while the choir shifts between C major/minor creating a bitonal experience. More text painting, whether consciously composed or not, can be observed at measure sixteen on the word “firmament” intoned up a whole-tone scale.

The B section at R3 has the rhythmic motif in C major that inspired the whole work. Stravinsky said:

The fast-tempo sections of the Psalm were composed first, and the first and second movements of the symphony followed. The "Allelujah" and the slow music at the beginning of the 150th Psalm, which is an answer to the question in the 40th Psalm, came last.¹⁷

Stravinsky was inspired by the Russian popular belief that Elijah’s chariot of fire caused thunder. In several books, it is documented that Stravinsky claims this is the only time he set music to a vision.¹⁸¹⁹ The section that begins a measure before R5, triplets enter, setting up a ritornello section at measure 44 and 130. The six-repetition figure and the triplets do evoke sounds of thunder and turning wheels. If music can interpolate the natural world, why would any associations with music detract from music operating as its own entity? Tonally this section plays from C major, E major, and Eb major.

The Laudate Dominum section is a prayer to the Russian image of the infant christ with orb and sceptre.²⁰ This section has “a static, hymn-like character which is Russian in derivation,

¹⁷ Stravinsky and Craft, 15.

¹⁸ Michael Steinberg, *Choral Masterworks: A Listener's Guide* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 269.

¹⁹ Daniel Albright, *Stravinsky: The Music Box and the Nightingale* (New York: Gordon and Breach, 1989), 6.

²⁰ Gillion, 35.

as Stravinsky himself observed.”²¹ Praising the Lord’s greatness, the note values increase and the intervals are big. At R11, the sopranos and basses sing “praise Him with the timbrel and dance,” while the altos and tenors sing “praise Him according to His excellent greatness.” This telescoping technique creates a text sandwich.

The slow A section returns similarly with an addition of an alternating fourth relationship of C minor-Fminor-Bbmajor. The six-note figure reappears with an augmented sixth configuration emphasizing G, the dominant of C.

At R20, a new praise motif unfolds over a minimal instrumentation. The markings clearly define inflection and hierarchy of pulse. Without the slur and tenuto markings, a singer may be inclined to slide down the descending intervals. Stravinsky’s concept creates a pulsating lift to the text and music.



The final coda of the work persists in the individuality of C minor and Eb major until C clashes first with Bb and then D, wrapping around the pull of C, test it with a strong minor seventh, take a breath, drive forward in the triumph of C major, take a breath and solidify the glory of C major.

²¹ Druskin, 53.

ABOUT TEXT AND SPIRITUALITY

Other aspects of understanding *Symphony of Psalms* that would shape a conductor's rehearsal and performance rose to my attention. The thought processes in choosing the text and setting it with or without intended text painting, and in composing melody and harmony with or without intended reference to tradition enlightens the conductor on what to emphasize and what to subdue. Stravinsky gave considerable thought to the verses of the Psalms and the order in which they were to be presented.

Stravinsky said, "When I work with words in music, my musical saliva is set in motion by the sounds and rhythms of the syllables."²² "The text thus becomes purely phonetic material for the composer. He can dissect it at will and concentrate all his attention on its primary constituent element – that is to say, on the syllable."²³ He finishes this commentary by qualifying this practice also used by the Church to prevent sentimentality within music. Stravinsky's opinion conflicts with the historic practice in religious institutions to invoke fervency in worship through music and chant. His upbringing in the Orthodox gives foundation to his way of thinking. "In the Orthodox Church, believers are encouraged to sublimate their passions and rise above their emotions in order to be able to worship truly." Yet the claim that in the Orthodox practice, music's "essential aim is to promote a communion, a union of man with his fellow-man and the Supreme Being" seems to be a contradiction in itself as the act of communion stems from desire.²⁴

²² Philip Clark, "quoted in Emblem of the Avant-garde," in *Choir & Organ* (London: Orpheus Publications, 1993), 41.

²³ Stravinsky, 128.

²⁴ Gillion, 23.

Stravinsky wrote in his autobiography that he sought for words from poems that were written for singing. He naturally turned to the Psalms. He worried though after receiving critiques of the performance that “people have lost the capacity to treat the Holy Scriptures otherwise than from the point of view of ethnography, history, or picturesqueness. ... All these misunderstandings arise from the fact that people will always insist upon looking in music for something that is not there. The main thing for them is to know what a piece expresses, and what the author had in mind when he composed it. They never seem to understand that music has an entity of its own apart from anything that it may suggest to them. ... Music would not be worth much if it were reduced to such an end.”²⁵

Stravinsky wanted his music to be heard without associations, to hear only what was presented and to not seek an emotional reason for its existence. Yet, when his intent in this piece is to recreate what he heard in Orthodox services, he dips close to the feelings of nostalgia. He acknowledged to Craft that the Slavonic “Alleluia” chant traditions were part of the inspiration for the Symphony of Psalms.²⁶ Cross writes “it is not that this music is without emotion: rather, it is concerned with an expression of communal, collective experiences; it is symbolic and stylised rather than representation; it taps into ancient, timeless ceremonies and acts of worship.” Looking at Stravinsky’s defenses for his music in terms of a need for structure and ritual adds meaning and understanding for music as a tool to connect to God, a more Orthodox approach to religion.²⁷ Stravinsky utilizes the power of ritual in Symphony of Psalms, adding drama to the event of music.²⁸

²⁵ Stravinsky, 162.

²⁶ Craft, 549.

²⁷ Cross, 250.

²⁸ Cross, 139.

In the B section of the third movement, it sounds muscley, manly, and Russian, what Druskin called the “Scythian” sound, a reference to his inner self.²⁹ In a way, Stravinsky allows his inspirations but he dictates that his music be perceived without a listener’s inspirational connections. We know that Stravinsky admitted that he began to compose in Church Slavonic but one of the reasons he didn’t is that Orthodox rites forbid instrumental music. Since he prefers vocal music with instruments he turned to Latin and the Catholic traditions of ritual and musical technique. Another reason to choose Latin as opposed to French was that Stravinsky believed the older languages had incantatory elements that could be exploited in music.³⁰

Albright writes in his chapter titled “Oedipus Rex: How the Phoneme Killed the Sememe,” meaning how sound killed meaning, he writes that Stravinsky regards all text as nonsense once it is set in the musical composition. Stravinsky claims that every composer “approaches a poem intending to tear it to pieces, to purge it of meaning – or at least not minding if that is the result.”³¹ Granted that Oedipus Rex is a different composition, maybe the approach to text that Stravinsky began developing in Symphony of Psalms began his process of disemboweling words.

The syllabification of the Latin is subordinate to the musical rhythm. “In setting the words of this final hymn I cared only for the sounds of the syllables and I have indulged to the limit my besetting pleasure of regulating prosody in my own.”³² Below are the two different phrases set to the same melody, their accents landing on different beats.

²⁹ Druskin, 6.

³⁰ Druskin, 153.

³¹ Albright, 29.

³² Stravinsky and Craft, 17.

<p>163 <i>Molto meno mosso, rigorosamente</i> 22 $\text{♩} = 72$ <i>sub.p e ben cantabile</i></p> <p>Lau-da - te E - um in cym.balis</p>	<p>be - ne - so - nan - ti - bus,</p>
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<p>26 <i>psub.</i> 188</p> <p>O - mnis o - mnis spi - ri - tus lau - det</p>	<p>Do - mi - num,</p>
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PROGRAMMING CONSIDERATIONS

In 1955, Stravinsky felt strongly about the programming of his religious works, specifically that none of his own works could appear in the same concert as his Canticum. He said the Symphony of Psalms would be harmful in juxtaposition to the Canticum.³³ Years later for Stravinsky's 75th birthday, he had Craft conduct the Canticum and he conducted the Symphony of Psalms. Was it permissible to perform both of them at a smorgasbord birthday celebration because a serious theme wasn't needed?

OTHER TIDBITS

Craft includes in his diary of March 21, 1954 that in a taxi in Spain, the driver goes through radio stations and when Symphony of Psalms starts playing, he turns it off in disgust.³⁴

³³ Jann Pasler, *Confronting Stravinsky: Man, Musician, and Modernist* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 394.

³⁴ Craft, 117.

After some insistence by the Pope for Stravinsky to attend the Vatican concert on June 12, 1965, Craft reports that Symphony of Psalms “annihilates the pieces by the other composers, Milhaud, Malipiero, and Sibelius ... and one feels embarrassed for them.”³⁵

In July of the same year, a porter at a Holiday Inn near Indianapolis opened the Gideon Bible to Psalm 150 on Stravinsky’s bed, having earlier indicated that he was a fan of Stravinsky and particularly favors the Symphony of Psalms.

Jonathan Cross interviewed Louis Andriessen who said he remembers his father admiring Symphony of Psalms but “found the choral writing too stiff, too square.” Hendrik Andriessen, master organist, helped renew Catholic liturgical music in the Netherlands and was “deeply rooted in brilliant choral writing (all those Masses in the French or Italian style).”³⁶

CONCLUSION

The study of a score aligns a conductor’s connection to it, strengthening the purpose for its performance, and gelatinizing what previously would have been a slurried idea of the performance goal in general and an uncontrollable liquid of sounds in the detail. Whatever Stravinsky describes about his music making and belief in its consumption, because in the decades of his writings, bits and pieces have changed, and whatever scholars insist on about categorizing Stravinsky the man and about his compositions, the way to find one’s own purpose in spending time with Stravinsky’s music is to divorce it from all sources, be it the disastrous, and dastardly creator himself, plus all critiques. The more I learn about an artist, curiosity and judgement in regards to their flawed humanly choices infect the allowance of its existence, like

³⁵ Craft, 423.

³⁶ Craft, 254.

the fact that Stravinsky loved his first cousin to the point of breaking Orthodox rule and marrying her, then being unfaithful. Stravinsky is right, music must be its own entity. However Stravinsky is wrong, a listener can enlist any association ignited by his music.

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