

Un sourire (A smile), composed in 1989 as Messiaen's contribution to the Mozart bicentenary, heralds the simplicity that characterizes the composer's remaining orchestral works, *Éclairs sur l'Au-Delà ...* and the *Concert à 4*.

Two types of music appear in *Un sourire*: a string melody colored by winds that alternates with the music of an exotic bird from xylophones and additional winds, to create an ABABABA form. But its harmony and tonality are somewhat ambiguous.

Answer the following questions; you may want to use the web resource on pc set analysis listed on the “resources” page of the website, as well as the charts on Messiaen’s modes and late chord types linked on the week 2 page.

First A section, pp. 1-2

1. The opening melody is in which of Messiaen's modes of limited transposition? How many transpositions of this mode are used?
2. After two phrases, which mode does the A section transition to?
3. Explain how the harmonies of the opening section play with a classical model of cadence?

First B section, pp. 3-4

Modère

oboes, English horn,
clarinet, bassoon

bassoon

4. The B section opens with a Bb/A# minor chord moving to E major, as shown in the reduction above. But this E chord is promptly undermined by a G-Bb-C in bassoon. This final chord fits into which mode and transposition?
5. The xylophone melody in the *Un peu vif* 4 mm. later represents which mode and transposition? Which mode and transposition are represented by the xylorimba melody?

6. In your opinion what is the combined effect of these lines in with the suspended cymbal?

flutes, oboes, English horn,
clarinet, bassoon

7. The two-chord progression at the second *moderé* (p. 4) is represented by the above harmonic reduction. The first chord represents which one of Messiaen's "color" chords? If you remove an "extra" E5 note in flute (in parentheses), the second chord also represent which one of the color chords? If you include the E5, this chord fits into which mode?

The final cadence, p. 29 (9:08 on your recording)

oboe, strings

8. This final cadence begins and ends with a transcendent A major chord. How would you explain the two chords that precede the final sonority (in a reduction above)? You may invoke functional harmony, the modes of limited transposition, or any other explanation that seems plausible.