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## Henri Dutilleux's dodecaphonism in *Métaboles* and *Tout un monde lointain...*

### ABSTRACT

#### Background

Henri Dutilleux has been characterized as 'independent' in the history of 20th century music with the connotation of anti-serialist. Indeed, Dutilleux was not inclined to generalize serial thinking to all parameters of music during the height of serialism. However, he made an intentional effort to draw on the legacy of the Second Viennese School in his works. In this sense, Dutilleux was not a serialist but rather a dodecaphonist.

Dutilleux's dodecaphonism has nevertheless been underestimated, mainly due to his declaration during the early postwar years that 'je ne pense pas devenir dodécaphoniste' ('I don't think to become dodecaphonist') (Dutilleux 1957, 128). Antoine Goléa remarked that 'certainly, there are traces of serialism in the great works of his maturity, from the *Second symphony* to the *Tout un monde lointain*. But his serialism is essentially confined to the melodic use of the dodecaphonic tone row, modeled very flexibly on that of Schoenberg' (Goléa 1977, 840). However, corresponding with Delcambre-Monpoël's observation that 'Dutilleux's thinking is more constructivist than generally believed' (Delcambre-Monpoël 2011, 83), some indices suggest that Dutilleux's dodecaphonism moved far beyond a superficial jaunt. In fact, Dutilleux very likely began attempting to incorporate dodecaphonism into his harmonic language in the *Second symphony*, therein surpassing a simple melodic use of the twelve-tone row.

#### Aims and repertoire studied

However, with *Métaboles* and *Tout un monde lointain*, Dutilleux intentionally advanced and sophisticated his dodecaphonic thinking, utilizing 'the most rigorous processes that offers this technique, even with their consequences in the harmonic dimension' (Dutilleux 1993, 12). My presentation therefore aims to evaluate the significance of the dodecaphonism in these works by analyzing their pitch structure in relation to the twelve-tone rows installed in them.

#### Methods

The drafts of these two works, housed in the Paul Sacher Stiftung (Piencikowski, Noirjean-Linder, and Tebert 2007), are essential for my music analysis, because the traces of Dutilleux's thinking therein provide an important signpost for it. Conversely, the music analysis helps us decode the meaning of these traces in a coherent way. This reciprocal cycle will lead us to some findings.

#### Implications

An interesting draft, which the composer annotated to read 'Etude pour lère des 5 métaboles', teaches us that the use of a twelve-tone row was a central concern for Dutilleux from the very beginning of his composition of the *Métaboles*. Indeed, he noted the following twelve-tone row in a top staff of the leaf: D-Eb -Ab -Gb -E-F-B-A-Bb -C-Db -G. In this *Etude*, Dutilleux harmonized each note with subsets or supersets of a diatonic collection, without having a clear idea about how to reconcile the twelve-tone row as an atonal device with the diatonic harmony chosen in relation to his inner sense of harmony. Therefore, when he integrated this dodecaphonic element especially in *Obsessionnel*, the third section of the final version of *Métaboles*, he was to reshape the twelve-tone row of *Etude* into a staggered combination of ascending fourths in principle, probably to imbed a diatonic sonority within it: E-D#-A-G#-D-C#-G-F#-C-Bb -F-B.

In *Obsessionnel*, this twelve-tone row is treated as a sort of ostinato, appearing and reappearing with various harmonies. Daniel Humbert observed that they 'derived nothing from the twelve-tone row' of the work (Humbert 1985, 99). However, given that these harmonies are more or less diatonic, we can no longer conclude that '*Obsessionnel*, if based on a tone row, is not serial in its spirit' (Humbert 1985, 99). In fact, we can even consider some passages to be constructed by stacking transpositions of the twelve-tone row.

The draft of *Tout un monde lointain* suggests that Dutilleux sought to deduce an expanded set of harmonies from the dodecaphonic tone row exposed in the first section *Enigme*: C-F#-Ab -G-Eb -E-B-A#-D-C#-F-A. In the margin of the draft for *Miroir* (the third section of the work), the composer effectively sketched six different inversions of a harmony deduced from the first half of the twelve-tone row, and selected three of these inversions to serve as accompaniment.

However, we can find more ingenious harmonic deduction from the twelve-tone row in the second section *Regard*. The draft tells us that Dutilleux's first conception of this section was to be transposed 'one tone lower' in the final version. Moreover, when Dutilleux rewrote the very beginning of the section 'one tone lower', using a leaf cut out of the bifolium, he surprisingly noted the eighth transposition of the twelve-tone row in the top staff of the leaf.

From this evidence, it is possible to infer that Dutilleux deduced the chords destined to accompany the cello melodic line in this section by selecting every other note of this eighth transposition. In turn, the use of the eighth transposition leads

us to an analytical interpretation of the twelve-tone row of *Tout un monde lointain*.

Notably, the first nine notes of the twelve-tone row constitute the enneatonic collection, similar to Messiaen's third mode of limited transposition; its content thus remains unchanged in its fourth and eighth transpositions. Dutilleux's use of the latter (instead of the tenth transposition) as a consequence of the 'one tone lower' operation may be designed to better utilize this parsimonious characteristic. Dutilleux thus introduced a new horizon in dodecaphonism through the concept of the 'tone row of limited transposition.'

### **Keywords**

Dodecaphonism, Henri Dutilleux, Sketch Study, Modern music in France.

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