

Olivier Messiaen

La mort du nombre

Texts for La mort du nombre

English Translation: Naomi Woo

Second spirit

It was a sunbeam
Sleeping in your hand.
You raised your little fingers up high.
It began to shine with such radiance
That I could see nothing else.
Then it unfolded and became so long
That it embraced the ends of the earth.
Rising, it enveloped me
And carried me towards your serene spirit.

I am still so far from you.
Who is keeping me away from you?
Why this goodbye?
Nothing can destroy the dream!

First spirit

Resting water does not flee the flower,
The flower that watches it.

Second spirit

I want to come near
What invisible force is stopping me?
Why these bonds?
Why these chains?
I can have no more desire!
How could I climb this infinite staircase?

First spirit

We must dissolve the clouds,
Fill the oceans.

Second spirit

Oh long, sad waiting!
Oh suffering,
Circle of fire!
Die, time and space!
Far away, joy!
Far away, light!
Horrid bells! terrible drink! wall that crushes me!
The earth opens,
The stars crumble,
The world is buried beneath them!
The end, the end, who will announce it?
I suffer! I suffer! I suffer!

First spirit

Wait! hope!

Lighter than feathered birds,
Lighter than emptiness,
Lighter than that which is no longer,
We will float above a dream.

The weight of the number will be dead.
The weight of the number will be dead.
It will be dead! dead!
Hear the song of our unified soul.
Clear smile, pure gaze, trembling ecstasy,
It rises still higher than this soul and rushes towards a new brightness,
In an eternal spring!