PER DAHL

Text, Identity and Belief in Stravinsky's *Symphony of Psalms*

Introduction

In 1926, Igor Stravinsky rejoined the Russian Orthodox Church. Throughout the rest of his life, he would use religious texts in several musical works, starting with the *Pater Noster* for four-part a cappella choir, which he wrote following his first communion on 9 April 1926. Also in the 1920s, Stravinsky emerged as a leading proponent of neoclassicism in music, a style that opposed the perpetuation of German expressionism and the associated new compositional techniques that had been devised by Schoenberg. One of the fundamental principles of Stravinsky's neoclassicism was that music is only about music. This, of course, raised questions about the relation between text and music in his vocal works and led to Stravinsky having to repeatedly underline in his statements and writings that there was no alignment between the two in what he composed.

In this article, I will present an analysis of the text-music relations in Stravinsky's *Symphony of Psalms*, composed in Nice and Charavines between January and 15 August 1930. The score includes the following dedication: 'Cette symphonie compose à gloire de DIEU est dediée au "Boston Symphony Orchestra" à l'occasion du cinquantaire de son existence'.[1] The orchestration indicates a rather personal investment in the commission of a work for the Boston Symphony Orchestra and I will argue that there is evidence of a personal identification with the text's religious aspects as well. This position questions the way in which Stravinsky's identity is fashioned—in terms of his religious beliefs and their significance in his combination of religious texts and music—through the narratives of Stravinsky biographer Robert Craft and Stravinsky himself and in the work of many scholars of the 1960s and 1970s. (This portrayal of his beliefs and identity has, of course, already been revisited and challenged by Taruskin[2] and Walsh,[3] among others, in recent decades.) My perspective will be that of the listener; I will focus on the epistemological possibilities for creating meaning or imparting significance based on elements and symbols in the text and their expressive qualities in relation to the music.

1 Stravinsky wrote the third movement first, dating it 27 April 1930 and inscribing it 'a week after Ascension', while the first was finished on 15 August and inscribed 'Assumption Day in the Roman Church'. The second was completed on 17 July and he pasted a drawing of the Crucifixion into its sketchbook accompanied by the words: 'Adveniat regnum tuum' [Thy kingdom come].
2 Taruskin, R. (1996). *Stravinsky and the Russian traditions: a biography of the works through Mavra*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
3 Walsh, S. (1999). *Stravinsky: a creative spring : Russia and France, 1882-1934*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

I will start with some historical facts and reflections regarding Stravinsky's religious convictions in the time before he composed the *Symphony of Psalms*. Subsequently, after reviewing some early reactions to his religious music, I will revisit the idea of absolute music as a premise for neoclassicism. I will then analyse the text-music relations in the symphony's three movements, before evaluating the substance of his religious belief in tandem with the aesthetics of neoclassicism.

Religious background

The initial christening of Igor Fedorovich Stravinsky took place in the Russian Orthodox Church in Oranienbaum some days after he was born on 17 June (O.S. 5 June) 1882. In adulthood, after gaining admittance to the circle of Diaghilev, Stravinsky formally left the church in 1910.[4] During the 1920s, however, he became increasingly concerned about questions of religion and faith and, at the 1925 ISCM festival in Venice, he purchased a book about Francis of Assisi that he would read in its entirety that very same night.[5] At this festival, Stravinsky was to play his Piano Sonata. Just prior to the performance, he developed a large abscess on his right index finger. He then prayed for the abscess to heal, and, miraculously, it did.[6]

In 1926, as Stravinsky re-joined the Russian Orthodox Church, he had one of the most powerful experiences of his life. After a spring concert tour spanning Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Harlem, Budapest, Vienna and Zagreb, Stravinsky embarked on his first journey by airplane (from Trieste to Venice). On the plane, he encountered a group of pilgrims on their way to Padua to celebrate the 700th anniversary of St. Anthony's birth.[7] In the Stravinsky biography by White (1966/1979, p. 90), we read the following:

> 'I happened to enter the Basilica', he [Stravinsky] writes in his memoir *Dialogues,* 'just as the Saint's body was exhibited. I saw the coffin, I knelt, and I prayed. I asked that a sign of recognition be given when and if my prayer was answered, and as it was answered, and with the sign, I do not hesitate to call that moment of recognition the most real in my life'.[8]

An immediate consequence of this answered prayer was Stravinsky's composition of the *Pater Noster* for mixed choir a cappella, his first work without instruments. The

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4   Even as a teenager, he had started to withdraw from the church. Stravinsky, I., & Craft, R. (1969). *Retrospectives and conclusion*. New York: Knopf. 198.
5   White, E. W. (1979). *Stravinsky: the composer and his works*. London: Faber and Faber. 89.
6   Duke, V. (1955). *Passport to Paris*: Little, Brown. 200.
7   Stravinsky probably confuses the dates in his narrative here; it was the 700th anniversary of St. Francis's death that was celebrated in October 1926 (St. Anthony's dates are 1195–13 June 1232). Nevertheless, St. Anthony is known to have inspired several miracles in 1226, so any or all of these might have been the subject of the pilgrimage.
8   I have not found this utterance from Stravinsky in either the American Stravinsky, I., & Craft, R. (1963). *Dialogues and a Diary*. New York., the English Stravinsky, I. & Craft, R. (1968). *Dialogues and A Diary*. London: Faber & Faber. or the shortened *Stravinsky, I., & Craft, R. (1982). Dialogues.* Berkeley: University of California Press. This episode is also not mentioned, oddly, in Stravinsky, I. (1936/1990). *An Autobiography 1903-1934*. London: Marion Boyars.

exact date of composition is not known, but it was certainly after his first communion on 9 April 1926 and probably sometime in the early summer months of 1926.[9] The text was Slavonic (*Otče naš*), the language in which Stravinsky prayed. *Pater Noster* was intended for use in the Russian Orthodox Church liturgy and, in the first instance, for the Russian church in Nice.[10]

Such a conversion was surprising indeed to many of Stravinsky's friends, including Diaghilev, and biographers have been compelled to propose a number of explanations. Robert Craft, who would become Stravinsky's close colleague after Stravinsky settled in the United States, claims that Stravinsky's new religiosity arose out of a complicated emotional situation and, in particular, the guilt that threatened to overwhelm him.[11] Behind this guilt was his extensive infidelity, which had rendered his marriage to his cousin Yekaterina (Katya) a formal, empty arrangement. His affairs, though, were beginning to stabilise around Vera Sudeykina (whom he would marry after Katya's death from cancer in 1939) and it may be that other explanations hold more weight here.

In fact, a wave of interest in all things religious arose among artists and intellectuals in Paris during the mid-1920s. Among these was a sizable population of exiled Russian artists and intellectuals and the church on rue Daru became their gathering place—a bastion that seemed able to withstand the enormous philosophical and literary force being mustered by the French Catholics. Among the assembled there, though, disagreements arose. Some people wanted to embrace the strictly Orthodox values and customs that were now being discarded in the newly revolutionised Russia while others, who were more Westernised (Stravinsky among them), considered Catholicism a much more open and broad scaffolding for their thought, art and beliefs.[12]

Moreover, for Stravinsky, his acquaintance with Jacques Maritain's article 'Art et scolastique' (1920)[13] would underpin an Aristotelian-Thomist understanding of reality that provided him with a broad basis for the humanist practice of art and religion.[14] Maritain, also associated with the *renouveau Catholique* movement, argued that the

9   Walsh, S. (1999). *Stravinsky: a creative spring : Russia and France, 1882-1934*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 433. See also Dahl, P. (2011). *Verkanalysen som fortolkningsarena*. Oslo: Unipub.

10 In Stravinsky, I. (1972) *Themes and Conclusions*. 40. Stravinsky writes: 'My *Pater Noster, Credo, Ave Maria*, and the unfinished prayer *And the Cherubin* . . . were inspired out of antipathy to the bad music and worse singing in the Russian Church in Nice, where I became a communicant in 1925, the year before composing the *Pater Noster*'.

11 Stravinsky, V., & Craft, R. (1979). *Stravinsky in pictures and documents*. London: Hutchinson. 211.

12 According to Vlad, R. (1958/1971). *Stravinsky* (F. a. A. Fuller, Trans.). London: Oxford University Press. 165. Stravinsky was reported to have said that he was 'close to Catholicism, and it would not be surprising if he became a Catholic one day'.

13 Maritain, J. (1935). *Art et scolastique* (3. éd., rev. et corr. ed.). Paris,: L. Rouart et fils.

14 Stravinsky and Maritain met for the first time in 1926 and became close acquaintances in 1929, two years after the second edition of Maritain's 'Art et scolastique', in which Maritain apologises for associating Stravinsky with Wagner in terms of music 'that dulled and "debauched" the eye, ear or spirit' in the first edition. In his book Stravinsky, I., & Craft, R. (1962). *Expositions and developments*. London: Faber and Faber. 76. Stravinsky dismisses any influence of Maritain upon his conversion. Walsh, S. (2006). *Stravinsky: the second exile: France and America, 1934-1971*. New York: Knopf. 170. notes that, starting in the 1920s, both Igor and Katya were reading Maritain and Aquinas (especially his *Summa Theologica*), as well as other central works of the Catholic church's theological literature.

lack of clarity in the Catholic Church, and in late Romantic thought, shared common causes and a common remedy: to depersonalise expression and return to the medieval ideals of humility and anonymity wherein acceptance of a divine sense of order was implicit. In 1926, his friend Jean Cocteau published a collection of essays titled *Le Rappel A L'Ordre*, comprising a strong attack on Romanticism that linked Maritain's ideas—that is, that art is not about emoting (a Romantic trait) but about intellectualising—to the concept of neoclassicism.[15] In combining Thomas Aquinas's thought and Henri Bergson's phenomenology, Maritain was able to link his arguments directly to a major topic of contemporary discussion: whether aesthetic theory could function as an arbiter of taste when it came to spiritual values. This discussion was important to Stravinsky as he developed his understanding of text-music relations, especially with regard to religious texts.

In *Expositions and Developments*, then, Stravinsky writes: 'For some years before my actual "conversion", a mood of acceptance had been cultivated in me by a reading of the Gospels and by other religious literature'.[16] The work of St. Augustine (354–430), St. Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274), Bishop Jacques Bossuet (1627–1704), Léon Bloy (1846–1917) and the orthodox theologian Victor Nesmelov (1863–1937) could be found in Stravinsky's library.[17] He engaged in discussions with the Neo-Thomist George Bernanos (1888–1948) and, starting in 1923, with the Russian immigrant Nikolai Berdyaev (1874–1948) whose philosophy might be labelled Christian existentialism.

At this time, Stravinsky was working on the oratorio *Oedipus Rex* (1927), for which Jean Daniélou had translated into Latin Jean Cocteau's text based on Sophocles' tragedy. Stravinsky recalls in his autobiography the pleasure he took in working with the Latin text, because he could separate these words from their literary meanings and use them instead as phonetic material for his composition. He concludes: 'This, too, has for centuries been the Church's attitude towards music, and has prevented it from falling into sentimentalism, and consequently into individualism'.[18] Later in life, Stravinsky would nuance his view of the church's music by distinguishing between secular and sacred religious music. The former was typical of Romanticism and was inspired by human love 'in its ordinariness, by art, by goodness and by God knows what'.[19] The latter bore the stamp of genuine faith. In *Conversations with Stravinsky*, the composer responds as follows to the question of whether one must possess religious faith in order to be able to write in the old church music forms: 'Of course. And not simply be one who believes in symbolic figures, but in a personal God, a personal Devil and the miracles of the Church'.[20] As I will demonstrate below, this distinction between an operationalised belief in symbolic figures and the acceptance of a personal God and Devil, and the miracles, is a crucial aspect of Stravinsky's identity as a composer of religious music.

15   Cocteau, J. (1926). *Le rappel à l'ordre*: Stock.
16   Stravinsky, I., & Craft, R. (1962). *Expositions and developments*. London: Faber and Faber. 63-64.
17   Stravinsky, V., & Craft, R. (1979). *Stravinsky in pictures and documents*. London: Hutchinson. 356.
18   Stravinsky, I. (1936/1990). *An Autobiography 1903-1934*. London: Marion Boyars. 128.
19   Stravinsky, I., & Craft, R. (1959). *Conversations with Igor Stravinsky*. Lond.: Faber & Faber. 103.
20   Stravinsky, I., & Craft, R. (1959). *Conversations with Igor Stravinsky*. Lond.: Faber & Faber. 104.

Stravinsky chose the Russian Orthodox Church, he said, for its language. His own habitual language of prayer was Slavonic and, though he admired the distant sound of Latin for its almost ritual suggestiveness, the embodiment and the incarnation were so crucial to his religious conviction that he found himself drawn to Russian Orthodoxy, even though he always considered himself in everyday life closer to Catholicism. That is to say, while the Western churches, Catholic and Protestant alike, have a very strong focus on the Word (with reference to John 1.1), the Russian Orthodox Church relates to these texts slightly differently. It does not think of the church as something built upon text, because the church existed before the (New) Testament. The Holy Bible conveys the faith of the church and, inspired by the Holy Spirit, represents a canonical example to be followed. Yet, to the Russian Orthodox faithful, de-emphasising the importance of the Word (and its many literate renderings) allows for a proper emphasis to be put upon the embodiment and the incarnation.

Stravinsky's compositional process also demonstrates aspects of embodiment, which may further explain the attraction. He always composed at the piano and described the process of composition in *Musical Poetics* as follows:

> Composing, for me, is putting into an order a certain number of these sounds according to certain interval-relationships. This activity leads to a search for the centre upon which the series of sounds involved in my undertaking should converge. Thus, if a centre is given, I shall have to find a combination that converges upon it. If, on the other hand, an as yet unoriented combination has been found, I shall have to determine the centre toward which it should lead.[21]

Later in the same work, he continues: 'Let me have something finite, definite—matter that can lend itself to my operation only insofar as it is commensurate with my possibilities'.[22]

Stravinsky's predilection for strictness and order permeates central written works like the *Musical Poetics*,[23] *Autobiography*[24] and many books of conversations. It is also to be found in aspects of his daily life, especially those directly connected to his composing.[25] In a

21 Stravinsky, I. (1956). *Poetics of music in the form of six lessons* ([1st Vintage ed.). New York,: Vintage Books. 39. In Copland, A. (1968). *The new music 1900-1960* (Rev. and enl. ed. ed.). London. 94. Copland describes Stravinsky's compositional process as follows: "With Stravinsky one senses that the place for each note in each melody and chord has been found for it only after a process of meticulous elimination, and the place found is usually so unexpected and original that one can imagine the notes themselves being surprised at finding themselves situated where they are – 'out of place' – so to speak."

22 Stravinsky, I. (1956). *Poetics of music in the form of six lessons* ([1st Vintage ed.). New York,: Vintage Books. 67.

23 Stravinsky, I. (1956). *Poetics of music in the form of six lessons* ([1st Vintage ed.). New York,: Vintage Books.

24 Stravinsky, I. (1936/1990). *An Autobiography 1903-1934*. London: Marion Boyars.

25 After his religious conversion, in fact, his sketches are occasionally dated by the church calendar. Walsh, S. (1999). *Stravinsky: a creative spring : Russia and France, 1882-1934*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 499.

number of places, he notes that what fascinates him about texts is usually not the meaning or history/pedigree but instead the rhythmic relations between words or syllables. Yet certain 'elevated' compositions (such as *Oedipus Rex*) transcended this blunt physicality of language. In those cases, he would shun the vernacular for the Latin, which he called 'monumental and inaccessible to all triviality', and in this way, his music realises a 'distancing of voice from utterance'[26]—a condition that literary theorists label 'authorial absence' (see, for example, Roland Barthes's 1977 work 'The Death of the Author').[27] For his own part, Stravinsky, of course, does not appear to accept any such absence. He has an obligation to invent music and he continues to insist upon the expressivity of his vocal music even when divorced from the direct content of its text (and/or its vernacular re-presentation).

For Stravinsky, this position is simply an extension of his fundamental belief that music has its own ordered nature and must avoid any extra-musical, literary representation of its text's content. Yet Stravinsky's assumption (and that of the co-constructors of his aesthetic theory) that it is possible to separate a word's linguistic meaning from its sound structure is somewhat ambiguous. He bases his theory of language on the language's written meaning (and the meaning complex it represents) but he does not account for the dimensions and qualities that the spoken language contributes to the construction of meaning. When Stravinsky is fascinated by word and syllable, it is the sound of language that captures his interest; when he rejects language as an untoward influence upon his way of composing, it is the content of language to which he refers.

Stravinsky's statement 'My Octour is a musical object' (1923) was nearly as shocking as his new musical idiom.[28] It underlined a fresh aesthetic that, for a long time afterward, was taken as a point of departure for analysing Stravinsky's religious works. Stravinsky's friend and biographer Alexander Tansman proclaims:[29]

> Stravinsky's religious music, then, should be considered as a sort of professional offering from a musician for the purpose of glorifying the Divinity, a sort of musical *ex voto*; yet it has no illustrative or literary relationship with a greater order of things, it is not a transcendental and exalted transcription in sound by a mystic describing his vision.

Wilfrid Mellers sees the *Symphony of Psalms* as a revelation of God's love because the composer attains, in the last movement, the love of God. However, Mellers continues: 'In comparison, Stravinsky's later works seem to be in love with the idea of God, rather than with God Himself' (see *Stravinsky's Oedipus as 20th-Century Hero*).[30] To me

26   Stravinsky, I. (1936/1990). *An Autobiography 1903-1934*. London: Marion Boyars. 53.
27   Barthes, R., & Heath, S. (1977). *Image, music, text*. London: Fontana Press.
28   Aaron Copland, who was present at the premiere of the Octet, wrote: 'Everyone was asking why Stravinsky traded his Russian heritage for what looked very much like a mess of eighteenth-century mannerisms'. Copland, A. (1968). *The new music 1900-1960* (Rev. and enl. ed. ed.). London. 72.
29   Vlad, R. (1958/1971). *Stravinsky* (F. a. A. Fuller, Trans.). London: Oxford University Press. 152.
30   Mellers, W. (1963). Stravinsky's Oedipus as 20th Century Hero. In P. H. Lang (Ed.), *Stravinsky A New Apprisal of his Work* (pp. 34-46). New York: W.W.Norton & Company Inc. 45.

Stravinsky's last works from 1961-66 expresses embodiment and incarnation far more than just a fascination of the idea of God.[31]

Paul Henry Lang is even more critical:[32]

> Even when he is wondrously lyrical—which is rare—as in the *Symphony of Psalms*, he sings with a certain planned precision . . . there is almost always a greater interest in impeccable style and manner than in message. (pp. 10–11)

> In this music no meaning is possible for the 'mind' to review, or for the 'spirit' to kindle at, till the 'brain' has mastered the musico-geometric relationship. This concept of music is mechanical-scientific; its structure is supposed to be as intelligible as that of a piece of machinery to the engineer who built it; no aesthetic-ethical problem is involved. (p. 11)

> Is he a genuinely religious composer of 'sacred' music? No, he could not be, for his ideal world is too little concerned with the final inwardness of life. (p. 18)

Yet, Lang's conclusion rings false because it is heavily influenced by what Stravinsky himself says about his music and his life. Lang employs Stravinsky's descriptions of his own music in an argument about Stravinsky's religiosity. I would argue that Stravinsky defines religiosity and music as respective life spheres that do not admit to written notation in a manner that would join them together. In other words, the wrong question has been posed.

If I must, then, interpret examples from the *Symphony of Psalms* as connoting Stravinsky's personal engagement with the presentation of textual content, others have differed in this regard. Ernest Ansermet writes:[33]

> As Stravinsky, in response to some form of inner compulsion, does not make of his music an act of self-expression, his religious music can reveal only a kind of 'made-up' religiosity. The *Symphony of Psalms*, for instance, expresses the religiosity of others—of the imaginary choir of which the actual singing choir is an *analogon*: but it must be agreed that the expression of this religiosity is itself absolutely authentic.[34]

I would maintain, despite Stravinsky's claims to the contrary, that his composition is an 'act of self-expression'. All of his life and his identity related to his vocation as a composer, and his adopted position as a defender of absolute music seems to me an act separating his artistic-political gamesmanship from his (religious) *credo*.

31 *A Sermon, a Narrative, and a Prayer (1960-61). The Flood (1961-62). Abraham and Isaac (1862-63). Variations (1863-64). Introitus (1965) and Requiem Canticles (1965-66).*

32 Lang, P. H. (1963). *Stravinsky A New Apprisal of His Work*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company. 10, 11, 18.

33 Ansermet, E. (1961). *Les fondements de la musique dans la conscience humaine*. Neuchatel. 498.

34 Walsh, S. (1999). *Stravinsky: a creative spring : Russia and France, 1882-1934*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 504.

Neoclassicism and the idea of absolute music

In 1923, Stravinsky published an essay in the New York journal *The Arts* that described his Octet in a series of concise, declarative statements:

> My Octour is a musical object. This object has a form and that form is influenced by the musical matter with which it is composed. The difference of matter determines the different form. One does not do the same with marble that one does with stone . . . My Octour is not an 'emotive' work but a musical composition based on objective elements which are sufficient in themselves.[35]

This passage is a turning point in the history of the idea of music as autonomous, self-contained and wholly self-referential. 'Absolute music' would, in turn, supply the superstructure of neoclassicism. Stravinsky's provocative declaration represents a complete rejection of, for example, Johann Mattheson's (1681–1764) definition of music as a *practice*—that is, the 'science and art of setting out adroit and pleasing sounds wisely, joining them correctly, and presenting them delightfully, so that through their euphony God's honour and all virtues might be promoted'. This definition, Mattheson insists, encompasses 'the material, the form, and the final cause of our entire system of music'.[36] It is worth noting that Mattheson refers to music as a combination of science <u>and</u> art, while Stravinsky's focus on the *Octour* as a musical object is a positivistic perspective skipping Mattheson's 'pleasing sounds' and 'presenting them delightfully'. Later, in Stravinsky's description of the process of composition in *Musical Poetics* in 1956 he is in line with what Thomas Kuhn came to call puzzle solving in normal science ("putting into order a certain number of these sounds").[37]

While philosophers and critics have always acknowledged the importance of form as an aesthetic category, the idea of an art consisting entirely and exclusively of form and lacking representational content of any kind has posed a conceptual challenge. Whether this conceptual problem was restricted to linguistic concepts or included non-linguistic concepts manifested in mimesis, and by that defining the balance between effect and essence in music, was treated differently in history. Between antiquity and the middle of the sixteenth century in the West, music's essence was understood as the direct cause of its effect. Subsequently, it appears that the ear, along with its fellow senses, began to challenge the mind as a source of knowledge and, from the middle of the sixteenth century to the middle of the nineteenth century, commentators on music generally saw the qualities of expressivity, form, beauty, autonomy and disclosiveness as mutually reinforcing. Rhetoric and mimesis offered yet another means with which to explain instrumental

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35   As Carr, M. A. (2014). *After the Rite. Stravinsky's Path to Neo-classicism 1914-25*: Oxford University Press. 249. underlines: 'In his article "Some Ideas about My Octour", which was written by Stravinsky himself in French and translated to English, he concluded that: "Form, in my music, derives from counterpoint. I consider counterpoint as the only means through which the attention of the composer is concentrated on purely musical questions'. I would say that making a double fugue on the text of a prayer is therefore quite illustrative of Stravinsky's notion of the relation between music and text.

36   Mattheson, J., & Reimann, M. (1954). *Der vollkommene Capellmeister* (Vol. 5). Kassel: Bärenreiter. 6.

37   Kuhn, T. S. (1962). *The structure of scientific revolutions*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

music's power to express and arouse emotions (the *musica pathetica* of the Baroque). This way of thinking about music as the 'language of the heart' or the 'language of feelings' was made possible by shifting attitudes toward not only music but also language itself.

By the second half of the eighteenth century, however, mimesis and rhetoric had begun to give way to another, more abstract quality that would place even greater demands on the attentiveness and taste of listeners: beauty. This transition contributed to the idea of the 'fine arts' and helped to establish the new conceptual sphere of aesthetics. In his *Aesthetica*, Alexander Baumgarten (1714–1762) defined aesthetics as the 'science of sensory cognition', the goal of which is 'the perfection of sensory cognition as such', and he explicitly equated this perfection with beauty (*pulcritudo*).[38] The idea of the fine arts was founded on the conviction that the arts dedicated to beauty should serve no purpose other than contemplation for their own sake. This belief, which initially gained currency in the eighteenth century, would eventually become what Richard Taruskin has called 'the dominant regulative concept of both art-theory and art-practice for more than two centuries'.[39] Baumgarten's original idea of aesthetic as a science of 'sensory cognition' is more in line with today's 'embodied knowledge' in artistic research discourse. Stravinsky's preference for the incarnation, the effect of a physical object and the embodied knowledge (practitioner's knowledge) is closer to Baumgarten's original concept that the l'art pour l'art attitude at fin de siècle.

The term 'absolute music' was coined in 1846 by none other than Richard Wagner, who used it as a pejorative in his efforts to expose the limitations of purely instrumental music, thereby justifying his own theory of opera. It was less an attack on formalism per se than on the idea that music should exist for its own sake and not for the sake of some broader social purpose. As Mark Evan Bonds points out:

> In an ironic twist, those who considered music to be autonomous and entirely self-referential appropriated the very term Wagner had used to denigrate that conception of art. The most important figure on this side of the debate was the Viennese music critic Eduard Hanslick, who, in his brief treatise *Vom Musikalisch-Schönen* (*On the Musically Beautiful,* 1854), celebrated precisely those qualities of abstraction and isolation so repugnant to Wagner.[40]

Hanslick insists that the effect of music has nothing to do with its essence, and vice versa.[41] He does not deny music's ability to move us, of course, but he removes this

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38　Søren Kjørup describes this cultural moment, using Kuhn's concepts, as follows: 'A dawning feeling for aesthetic qualities had given rise to more and more anomalies within the current logical-conceptual paradigm, and Baumgarten solved the problems by creating a new paradigm. And to do that, he had to invent a new concept of knowledge, sensuous knowledge, and a new theoretical discipline, aesthetics' Kjørup, S. (2006). *Another way of knowing : Baumgarten, aesthetics, and the concept of sensuous cognition* (Vol. no. 01). Bergen: Kunsthøgskolen i Bergen. Baumgarten, A.G. (1961). *Aesthetica : (Frankfurt 1750/58)*. Hildesheim.

39　Taruskin, R. (2006). Is There a Baby in the Bathwater? (Part I). *Archiv für Musikwissenschaft, 63*(3), 163-185. 163.

40　Bonds, M. E. (2014). *Absolute music: the history of an idea*. New York: Oxford University Press. 2.

41　Hanslick, E. (1854/1973). *Vom Musikalisch-Schönen: ein Beitrag zur Revision der Ästhetik der Tonkunst*. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft.

quality from music's essence. Instead, Hanslick looks to the natural sciences as the only rational approach with which to gain knowledge of this essence. He was determined to ground the laws of beauty in the immutable laws of nature that in turn buttressed his conception of beauty as an objective quality that was not subject to the vagaries of individual perception. The essence of music lies in an autonomous and specifically musical (*Musikalisch-*) manifestation of beauty (*Schönen*); its only content, to quote the treatise's most celebrated phrase, consists of *tönend bewegte Formen* (tonally animated forms). As such, the goal of music aesthetics became a search for 'meaning' through a connection to philosophy in general rather than to the phenomenology of the arts in particular. This top-down perspective restricts value-laden utterances about music to those that originate from arguments that are already part of the music-theoretical discourse. I think Stravinsky quite often went down this path himself in his ex-post facto comments.

The identification of absolute music with a specific repertory grew still more pronounced in the summer of 1855, with the first appearance—and almost immediate acceptance—of a new term for works of purely instrumental music that were *not* absolute: program music. Franz Liszt coined it in a long essay published in instalments in Brendel's *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*.[42] Liszt's neologism, in turn, helped a new generation of composers justify an approach to composition that incorporated *Poesie*—conceptual content rather than merely superficial representation—into purely instrumental music without the onus of the reductive 'tone-painting'. In my analysis below, I will examine all of this from the listener's perspective and search for this particular relation to meaning construction (that is, conceptual content) in the text-music interaction in the *Symphony of Psalms*.

In yet another swing of the aesthetic pendulum, some of the most prominent composers who were active at the turn of the century chose to turn their backs on program music and embrace the aesthetics of purity offered by absolute music. Schoenberg's abandonment of program music has been overshadowed by his more obvious break with tonality around this same time. Stravinsky was equally anxious to hide the evidence linking at least some of his earlier works to programmatic content. He went to great lengths to repress the connections between his *Scherzo fantastique* of 1908 and Maurice Maeterlinck's *La vie de abeilles* (1901), a socio-philosophical essay that takes as its point of departure the 'life of bees'. This repression might also have been the result of his apprenticeship with Rimsky-Korsakov. Taruskin has also pointed to instances of Stravinsky's attempts to cover up his programmatic tracks, most notably in the ballet *Le Sacre du printemps*, which he repeatedly labelled, from the 1920s onward, a 'purely musical' work.[43] When my analysis of *Symphony of Psalms* will use the concept 'musical-rhetorical figures', I cannot expect any support from Stravinsky's ex-post facto statements.

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42   See Bonds 2014, p. 210, for a complete reference.
43   Taruskin, R. (1995). A Myth of the Twentieth Century: The Rite of Spring, the Tradition of the New, and "The Music Itself". *Modernism/Modernity, 2*(1), 1-26.

As a leading figure among neoclassical composers, Stravinsky, for the rest of his life, constantly reiterated a link between the aesthetics of neoclassicism and the idea of absolute music:

> Why not admit that music has an intrinsic value, independent of the sentiments or images that it may evoke by analogy, and that can only corrupt the hearer's judgement? Music needs no help. It is sufficient unto itself. Don't look for anything else in it beyond what it already contains.[44]

Elsewhere, he says of *Abraham and Isaac*:[45]

> I do not wish the listener any luck in discovering musical descriptions or illustrations: to my knowledge none were composed, and as I see it the notes themselves are the end of the road. Though I thought long and deeply about the meaning of the text, I am also unaware of symbolism in my use of canons, or of expressive rhythmical devices. Anyone who pretends to hear such things in, for example, the passage referring to Isaac and the two youths, will have made too much, I think, of what for me is no more than a coincidence.

Analysis

Stravinsky's first commissioned work with a religious text was, as mentioned above, the *Symphony of Psalms.* In his *Dialogues*, Stravinsky notes:

> The commissioning of the *Symphony of Psalms* began with the publisher's routine suggestion that I write something popular. I took the word, not in the publisher's meaning of 'adapting to the understanding of the people', but in the sense of 'something universally admired', and I even chose Psalm 150 in part for its popularity, though another and compelling reason was my eagerness to counter the many composers who has abused these magisterial verses as pegs for their own lyrico-sentimental 'feelings'. The Psalms are poems of exaltation, but also of anger and judgment, and even of curses.[46]

Due to a delayed performance in Boston, the premiere of this work was in Brussels on 13 December 1930, conducted by Ernest Ansermet. At this performance, the programme carried the following subtitles for the three movements: I: Prelude, II: Double Fugue, III: Allegro symphonique. These subtitles were not reproduced in the score. The first performance in America was in Boston on 19 December, conducted by Kousse-

44 Originally in Stravinsky, 'Quelques confidences sur la musique' (1935), in White, E. W. (1979). *Stravinsky: the composer and his works*. London: Faber and Faber. 574-577. Translated from French by Taruskin in Taruskin, R. (1995). A Myth of the Twentieth Century: The Rite of Spring, the Tradition of the New, and "The Music Itself". *Modernism/Modernity, 2*(1), 1-26. and also cited in Bonds, M. E. (2014). *Absolute music: the history of an idea*. New York: Oxford University Press. 259.

45 Newman, A., Craft, R., & Stravinsky, I. (1967). *Bravo Stravinsky*. Cleveland,: World Pub. Co. reprinted on the cover of *The New Stravinsky* MS 7386 (1967).

46 Stravinsky, I., & Craft, R. (1963). *Dialogues and a Diary*. New York.

vitzky. Stravinsky selected from the Vulgate verses 13 and 14 of Psalm 38, verses 2–4 of Psalm 39 and the whole of Psalm 150.[47]

I will point to three means of generating meaning/semantic resonances between text and music in this analysis of the *Symphony of Psalms*. This categorisation is not exclusive; it should be seen simply as an analytical tool with which to group Stravinsky's musical expressions of his chosen texts:

1   Omission of tone-paintings
2   Use of musical-rhetorical figures
3   Enhancing text elements in a subjective/personal way (Credo elements)

The first item is perfectly predictable, given Stravinsky's consistent rejection of any direct connection between text and music in his compositions. Yet this act of omission is nevertheless an act, and one with connotations for meaning, if the listener is inclined to hear it as part of a larger symbolic utterance.

As early as Renaissance music, both sacred and secular, there is ample evidence that composers employed various musical-rhetorical means to illustrate or emphasize words and ideas in the text. In analysing the text-music relations in Stravinsky's *Symphony of Psalms* a reference to the concept musical-rhetorical figures is natural. However, the 'musical-rhetorical figures' has a long and twisted history. In the first half of the twentieth century, writings by Schering[48], Kretzschmar[49] and later Unger[50] developed a notion of a Figurenlehre in Baroque music consisting of stereotyped musical figures with specific affective connotations. The repetition of combinations of textual meaning and musical expression in vocal music was seen as contributing to the establishment of an objective meaning that transcends the actual music involved in certain figures and gestures. These musical-rhetorical figures realised a system of typification when they were integrated as elements of expression in pure instrumental music.[51] In this understanding, the musical-rhetorical figures were seen as consistent with the aesthetics of neoclassicism.

Nevertheless, in the second half of the twentieth century, research on historical sources reveal a magnitude of possible relations between text and music, making it impossible to give direction to associations or conclusion of content.[52] The detailed

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47   For the Authorised Version, the corresponding references are to verses 12 and 13 of Psalm 39, verses 1, 2 and 3 of Psalm 40 and the whole of Psalm 150.

48   Schering, A. (1908). Die Lehre von den musikalischen Figuren im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert. *Kirchenmusikalisches Jahrbuch, 21*, 106-114.

49   Kretzschmar, H. (1911). Allgemeines und Besonderes zur Affektenlehre. *Jahrbuch der Musikbibliothek Peters, 18*, 63-77.

50   Unger, H.-H. (1941). *Die Beziehungen zwichen Musik und Rhetorik im 16.-18. Jahrhundert*. Würtsburg.

51   Berger, P. L., & Luckmann, T. (1966). *The social construction of reality: a treatise in the sociology of knowledge*. Harmondsworth: Penguin. use the term typification to indicate objectivation of the second order—that is, an identification of relation between signs free of any connection to the original context. There is also a connection here to the concept of topoi. Hatten, R. S. (2004). *Interpreting musical gestures, topics, and tropes : Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert*. Bloomington,Ind.: Indiana University Press.

52   Dahlhaus, C. (1986). Zur Geschichtlichkeit der musikalischen Figurenlehre *Festschrift martin Ruhnke zum 65. Geburtstag* (pp. 83-93). Neuhausen-Stuttgart.

catalogue of musical figures in Bartel's *Musica Poetica*[53] lists different forms taken from definitions and descriptions of varying degrees of exactness in many seventeenth- and eighteenth- century treatises without the 'strained associations and misconstrued con-clusions' (p. ix) imposed on them by writers in the early twentieth century attempting to establish a unified system of the Figurenlehre in spite of the complexities and con-tradictions found among the original sources. Stravinsky in the 1920s had of course no access to this modern understanding, so in my analysis I will use the 'musical-rhe-torical figures' in the understanding of his contemporaries when composing the *Sym-phony of Psalms*.

My third category, Credo elements, arises from a juxtaposition of the two address-ees in the dedication. Taking Stravinsky's nod to '*la gloire de DIEU*' at face value, I will look for possible connections between text and the use of musical gestures that reflect a personal identification with the religious meaning in the text. Even though the texts (the psalms) are not liturgical, they do allow for a (religious) meaning beyond their primary literate one. Stravinsky's particularity in his choices of orchestration is often seen as a signature of his neoclassical idiom. In this case, because he intended to com-pose a lot of contrapuntal development, he chose 'a choral and instrumental ensem-ble in which the two elements should be on equal footing, neither of them outweigh-ing the other'.[54] The *Symphony of Psalms* is not the first time Stravinsky omitted violins and violas, due to the sound quality or whatever else. In an article in *Montjoie!* on the premiere of *Sacre*, he remarks:

> From this melody I have consequently excluded the *strings*, with their cre-scendos and diminuendos—much too evocative and representative of the hu-man voice—and I have placed in the foreground the *woodwind*, drier, cleaner, less prone to facile expressiveness, and by that very token still more moving to my taste.[55]

Omission of tone-paintings

The texts from Psalms 38 and 39 include several opportunities for tone-painting but Stravinsky passes them by. This might be seen as underlining his above-quoted state-ment in *Dialogues* ('my eagerness to counter the many composers who have abused these magisterial verses as pegs for their own lyrico-sentimental "feelings"'). This incli-nation is even more apparent in the setting of Psalm 150, where there is no evidence of tone-painting of texts like 'praise Him' through the sound of the trumpet, for ex-ample, or with timpani and dance, stringed instruments and organs, high-sounding

53　Bartel, D. (1997). *Musica poetica : musical-rhetorical figures in German Baroque music*. Lincoln: Univer-sity of Nebraska Press.
54　Stravinsky, I. (1936/1990). *An Autobiography 1903-1934*. London: Marion Boyars.
55　'Ce que j'ai voulu exprimer dans *Le Sacre du Printemps*', published in *Montjoie!* on 29 May 1913. The quotation is an early example of his neoclassical thinking. In later writings, he would expand upon these sentiments.

cymbals, or loud cymbals. These instruments are either not present or not prominent in the soundscape. In 'A Quintet of Dialogues',[56] he says: '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 way'.[57] From the listener's perspective, on the other hand, the omission might be taken as a message from Stravinsky—that is, the praising of the Lord itself should be the focus, not the way in which we do so (with our human-built tools and instruments). Here, perhaps, Stravinsky comes out against a literal reading of the Holy Bible, as though the word was the reality. Instead he points to the individual, embodied praising.

Stravinsky's complex attitude towards the use of language and meaning is captured in the following quotation: 'The allegro in Psalm 150 was inspired by a vision of Elijah's chariot climbing the Heavens; never before had I written anything quite so literate as the triples for horns and piano to suggest the horses and chariot'.[58] When he refers to the literate connection between the music and his vision of the chariot, it is important to remember that there is no temporal link between the texts in Psalm 150 and his vision of Elijah's chariot. The outburst of horns and piano happens at rehearsal numbers 18 and 19, immediately after the text 'Laudate DOMINUM, Laudate Eum', while the text that could support a kind of tone-painting, 'Laudate Eum in sono tubae', is sung between numbers 11 and 12.

Musical-rhetorical figures

There are several examples of the more traditional use of musical-rhetorical figures in all three movements. Stravinsky uses repetition of certain words for emphasis—for example, in the first movement, 'Ne sileas' (9–10, 'be not silent') in *forte* and 'Remitte mihi' (12–13, 'O forgive me') in *fortissimo* harness repetition and dynamics to enhance the meaning of the text. The latter even feels rather personal, as though Stravinsky identifies with this text, sung first in *fortissimo* and then *subito forte*, to capture a moment of hesitation in the repetition of the plea, as though the persona remembers not to present demands to God.

Stravinsky further expresses his attitude towards God in the second movement by not only repeating the opening phrase in all four parts in the choir but also by repeating 'et intendit mihi' ('he was attentive to me') several times (between 5 and 10). This gesture underlines his anticipation of a forthcoming and incarnated God. In the third movement, the many musical expressions of the text 'Laudate Dominum, Laudate Eum' align with Stravinsky's interest in the sounds of the syllables. The first motive of 'Laudate Dominum' recalls the same melodic figure in the opening of Stravinsky's Symphony in C (also dedicated to the glory of God) and in 'Tom seals pact' in *The Rake's Progress*.

56   Stravinsky,I. & Craft, R. (1962) *Perspectives of New Music 1*, no.1 (Autumn): 7-17.
57   This was written in 1962, and the utterance is typical for Stravinsky's ex post facto comments on his works, adjusted to his idea of absolute music in line with the aesthetics of neoclassicism.
58   Stravinsky, I., & Craft, R. (1962). *Expositions and developments*. London: Faber and Faber. 17.

Another kind of repetition is his use of rhythmic ostinato, especially in the third movement. Here, Stravinsky arranges several layers of repeating figures of different lengths in a manner that creates a continuous yet ephemeral stream, positioning the music as 'something universally admired'. At the same time, this isorhythmic gesture could also be an example of what Jonathan Cross calls 'neo-medievalism'.[59] A third association evokes Maritain's plea for a return to the medieval ideals of humility and anonymity.

The change of texture was seen as an established musical-rhetorical figure that was particularly effective for positioning the persona in the text in relation to a group or chorus. The first movement of the *Symphony of Psalms* is mostly homophonic, except for the unison outburst at 9 on 'Ne sileas' and the polyphonic setting at 10–12 on 'Quoniam advena ego sum apud te et peregrinus, sicut omnes patres' ('For I am a stranger with thee, and a sojourner as all my fathers were'). The use of polyphony for the words 'I am a stranger' gives each person an individual voice in the musical texture and perhaps indicates Stravinsky's identification with the text. Interestingly, there is also a crossing of the soprano and alto on 'et peregrinus' which is more apparent to the score reader than to the listener of the performance—a detail that recalls the *musica reservata* practice in Baroque music.

The second movement begins with a five-part instrumental fugue that is succeeded by a four-part vocal fugue in which the motif from the instrumental fugue serves as the counterpoint. The text expresses God's care for each of us (in a polyphonic setting) but changes at 10, where God's actions bring the congregation together through a shared action ('and set my feet upon the rock') in a stretto in a respectful piano, where the vocal fugue's opening (a falling fourth) functions as tone-painting. After an instrumental interlude in which the trombone presents a double dotted version of the oboe theme, the choir and orchestra conclude the movement in a homophonic texture in *fortissimo* to the text 'And He hath put a new song in my mouth'. It is interesting to note that this new song derives from the instrumental fugue and is not simply an extension of the vocal fugue (sung by people), perhaps implying that such a song/way of living can only come from the Lord who created everything before people.[60]

In the first movement, Stravinsky also makes use of a special orchestration accompanying the prayer in the choir. The arpeggiated chords in oboes and bassoons are presented simultaneously in staccato and legato in unison by pairs of instruments (heterophonic doubling). These combinations could represent the intersection of the voices of each individual (staccato) with the voice of all (legato).

Music-rhetorical figures were mostly connected to melodic patterns, and some aspects of this practice can also be traced in the *Symphony of Psalms*. In the first movement, the altos begin in a recitative of sorts, on an oscillating semitone to the

59   Cross, J. (2003). *The Cambridge companion to Stravinsky*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 12.
60   When Stravinsky also includes the last part of the verse, 'Videbunt multi, videbunt et timebunt' ('Many shall see it and fear'), it recalls his comment that 'the Psalms are poems of exaltation, but also of anger and judgment, and even of curses'.

text 'Exaudi orationem Domine' ('Hear my prayer, O Lord'). When the text changes to 'For I am a stranger with Thee', the melodic line moves in large intervals to emphasise the expressed alienation in the persona affiliated with the practice of music pathetica.

One of the most common music-rhetorical figures in religious music is the illustration of Jacob's ladder. Here, the long ascending scale with crescendo between figures 21 and 22 in the third movement is the most obvious example of this. It is not a question of tone-painting as the text is not specific at this point, but as I commented earlier, it is the act of praise, rather than the means with which we do so, that is important. The ending of the first movement also creates such an impression (depending on the balance between upward and downward parts in the orchestra). In addition, the ending in G major is full of hope—here, Stravinsky exploits many musical-rhetorical figures in such a way that we can experience his identification with the text's religious meanings. This, in turn, brings us to an elaboration of my last category, the Credo elements.

Credo elements

The search for musical gestures that reflect a personal identification with the religious meaning in the text is closely connected to the question of belief. The elements pointed to are to be placed in a religious context where the observations and arguments gain coherence in the believer's perspective. Both in the first movement (figures 10–12) and in the third movement (figures 9–12), Stravinsky makes use of scale-suggestive motifs that enhance the emotional impact of the text and music. The text does not *require* such expressive qualities, but as a listener, it is possible to hear this as an act of identification—even a personal statement of belief or confession—on the part of the composer. The contrast in the setting of the first phrase in the first movement is likewise telling. While the opening part, 'Exaudi oriationem, Domine', is sung in *mezzoforte* by altos alone (within the range of a minor second), the next part, 'et deprecationem meam', is sung in *forte* by a four-part choir (and the sopranos extend the range to a third). The juxtaposition of 'listen to me' in *mf* and 'my humility' in *f* underlines the personal engagement, opposite of the expected expression. When the altos repeat their recitative-like melody at figure 7, Stravinsky doubles them in the oboe at the double octave. The 'lacrimas' moment in the text ('Auribus percipe lacrimas meas') finds the oboe in its most extreme register (in the same way that crying represents an extreme form of human utterance). Stravinsky clearly identifies with the persona in the text and uses his musical creativity to convince the listener of the wisdom in the words. This may be an indication of a strong connection between the text and Stravinsky's music and, by extension, Stravinsky himself, devoted composer (and religious man) that he was.

Setting the vocal performance of 'Remitte mihi' in *forte* is another potential alignment between the remorseful sinner and Stravinsky the composer. At the end of the first movement, one might ordinarily expect the text to be set to a morendo/diminu-

endo but Stravinsky does (quite typically) the opposite. His propensity to challenge the listener's expectations is thoroughly integrated into his way of using musical material of the past and rephrasing it within the realm of neoclassicism. Instead of a morendo, Stravinsky uses *forte fortissimo* in the orchestra and ends on a brighter and more optimistic G major harmony.[61] Perhaps he identifies with a believer who seeks a better life in heaven?

The next movement starts in c minor (releasing the dominant tension of G major) with an instrumental motif in the oboe. This motif is identical to one of the four motifs in the second movement in his Three Pieces for String Quartet from 1913, a piece Stravinsky orchestrated in 1928, when he named it 'Eccentric' (and recalled its inspiration in the jerky movements of the clown Little Tich at a London circus). The introduction of something so eccentric to this religious text underlines the religious dogma of believing in something bigger than yourself—before you place yourself at the centre of your existence, you must accept the divine sense of order that transcends you. The second movement is a double fugue that, in a sense, evokes the degree of preparation and forethought that goes into a true believer's confession.[62] It is impossible to compose a double fugue unless you believe in the structure and content restrictions of the form. You do not need to be a religious believer to compose a double fugue but, in this case, it is tempting to interpret Stravinsky's choice of form for the text (a prayer) as an act of advocacy of believing in something bigger than yourself.

Some of the examples I have presented under musical-rhetorical figures can also be interpreted as Credo elements. For example, the use of polyphonic writing and a melody featuring big leaps atop the text 'Quoriam advena ego sum apud te et pergrinus' (figures 10–11) in the first movement might be read as though Stravinsky is identifying with all of those people (the polyphony) who feel homeless and otherwise alienated (the large melodic leaps which seem tonally directionless).

The text in the third movement is usually set out by other composers in a more or less jubilant fashion (which Stravinsky himself disliked). Stravinsky's 'Alleluia' setting, on the other hand, is quiet and humble when it appears at the beginning, in the middle and at the end of the movement. If we apply the notion that instrumental music is from God and vocal music is from humans, we derive an interesting harmonic analysis from these passages (see figure 1):

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61   In Stravinsky's Pater Noster (1926) G major is used to the texts of devotion/homage. Dahl, P. (2011). Verkanalysen som fortolkningsarena. Oslo. Unipub. 103-119, 184-187
62   As Augustine says about baptism, 'Take away the Word and what is water except water? The Word is added to the element and makes the sacrament just as it is also made into a visible word itself'. Petersen, N. H. (1966). Liturgy and the Musical Composition. *Studia Theologica, 50*, 125-143.

Figure 1. Alleluia.

In the choir, there is an overarching sequence from F major via Bb dom 7 to E flat major. As such, it is a strong cadence but, in principle, the sequence of dominants could continue to A-flat, making that the new tonic. However, when Stravinsky adds the violoncello and double bass playing a simple G–C on the two last chords, the tonal centre comes into focus as c minor (subdominant F, dominant G and tonic c). Seen as a Credo element, it would appear that Stravinsky here (again) points to the need for trust in the Lord, as only He can guide people through their lives (and supply harmonic resolution in the strongest kind of cadenza and totality that this text-music relation requires). The choir (man) can make harmony, however, it is only through God's creative power embracing the whole world (including the instruments) that a unique, stable and meaningful harmony is established.

Conclusion

A traditional analysis of Stravinsky's *Symphony of Psalms* could use most of the elements I have discussed here to position this work securely within Stravinsky's stylistic development as a composer. I wanted to introduce another possibility for this material by looking at how Stravinsky dealt with the religious content of the text. There are two problems with this pursuit, of course. Stravinsky was the most prominent defender of the aesthetics of neoclassicism and therefore insisted that there was no relation between text and music in his works. He also proclaimed that the religious dimension of his life was personal, not 'professional' or overtly part of his art.[63]

In my search for connections between textual meaning and musical elements in the *Symphony of Psalms*, I applied three categories of relations: omitting tone-painting, musical-rhetorical figures and Credo elements. I also took the listener's position to allow myself to interpret the texts not only as ordinary words but also as a possible source of meaning construction in relation to a believer's symbolic universe.[64] In this

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63   In line with Kuhn's terminology in Kuhn, T. S. (1962). *The structure of scientific revolutions*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Stravinsky could have said that the art and the religious dimensions are incommensurable.

64   Here, again, I was inspired by Luhmann, N. (2000). *Art as a social system.* Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press. and Roman Ingarden's notion of the 'score as system of imperative symbols' Ingarden, R. (1962). *Untersuchungen zur Ontologie der Kunst: Musikwerke, Bild, Architektur, Film.* Tübringen: Niemeyer.

manner, the omission of tone-paintings (which is in line with the neoclassical aesthetics expressed by Stravinsky) gave rise to another kind of meaning construction: the relocation or displacement of the focus word in the text. Stravinsky's use of musical-rhetorical figures could be seen as a projection of his own faith via the imagined faith of an anonymous congregation (an interpretation that is often applied to Stravinsky's religious works). Nevertheless, my findings regarding Credo elements go beyond ordinary musical-rhetorical figures to encompass a potential personal identification with the text's speaker in the way in which Stravinsky makes use of musical expressions of a markedly individual character (orchestration, articulation and dynamics). In developing my arguments, I found it impossible to treat these categories as though they were mutually exclusive, and I had to add Stravinsky's fashioning of his identity and belief in developing the arguments.

As the most prominent neoclassical composer of the 1920s, Stravinsky faced an uphill climb to success. Many continued to wonder why he had dismissed his Russian heritage in his music and, since that time, several explanations have been put forth, including Maureen Carr's:

> Adorno's description of Stravinsky's 'connected style' without the 'inner bonds' or without 'rootedness' in contrast with the style of the seventeenth or eighteenth century that functioned as an 'organic whole' helps to establish a framework for considering the dichotomy between the integrity of Stravinsky's models and the way in which he appropriated them. In his thinking, Adorno perceives an antagonism between Stravinsky's style and his models, whereas Edward Cone celebrates Stravinsky's transformative approach to his models. He (Stravinsky) confronts the evoked historical manner at every point with his own version of contemporary language; the result is a complete reinterpretation and transformation of the earlier style.[65]

For me, Stravinsky's approach seems to derive from the transformation of his earlier style. In his 'Russian period', Stravinsky reinvented what he had inherited from his teacher (Rimsky-Korsakov) and from those Russian composers who had written extensively for the orchestra and the opera. His operas (in the Russian period) met with limited success, but he made great headway in everything from orchestral music to ballet. Moreover, Stravinsky, like his father, had a huge library and enthusiastically engaged in the contemporary aesthetic discourse. He cultivated an interest in modern communication and information processes, in writing statements for newspapers, in recording his own music (that is, making authoritative interpretations, or so he thought at first),[66] and in publishing an autobiography (which he did in 1936). The various Craft/Stravinsky books after World War II also resonate with Stravinsky's general goal of transforming his earlier style, comments and ideas. In seeking opportuni-

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65   Carr, M.A. (2014). *After the Rite. Stravinsky's Path to Neo-classicism 1914-25*: Oxford University Press. 4-5.
66   Cook, N. (2003). Stravinsky conducts Stravinsky. In J. Cross (Ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Stravinsky* (pp. 176-191). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (Reprinted from: 2005).

ties to revisit what had come before, Stravinsky was more concerned with new contexts than with original sources. Thus, one could frame his statements about the lack of a connection between text and music in his works in terms of his roles as a transformer, conservative innovator[67] and compositional chameleon.

Stravinsky's conclusions reveal a perspective on text and music as two different worlds or paradigms. Compared to language, meaning construction in music will always be arbitrary (or coincidental, in Stravinsky's mind). Thus, his conclusion to the debate in rue Daru in the 1920s is that aesthetic theory cannot be used as an arbiter of taste in spiritual values. Though convergence between text and music might arise in the individual listener, Stravinsky insists that this does not imply an existing or intentional relationship between text and music in his religious works.

Abstract

Stravinsky was a leading proponent of neoclassicism who repeatedly underlined in his statements and writings that there was no alignment between text and music in what he composed. Analysis of the *Symphony of Psalms* (as well as other works) reveals many possibilities for the listener to experience meaning-construction based on text-music relations in this work. Stravinsky re-joined the Russian Orthodox Church in 1926 and made his conversion a central role of his identity. In this article, I present some reflections regarding his religiosity and revisit the idea of absolute music as a premise for neoclassicism. Taking the listener's perspective in my analysis of text-music relations, I will focus on the epistemological possibilities for creating meaning based both on the text and the relation to expressive qualities in music. In order to understand Stravinsky's statements, I find it necessary to accept his view of music and religious texts as two incommensurable paradigms.

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67   Butler, C. (2003). Strvinsky as modernist. In J. Cross (Ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Stravinsky* (pp. 19-36). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 19.