

Example 2.1: Messiaen’s colour analysis¹ of *Choral de la Sainte Montagne*

1 2 2 3 4 3 5 4 6 7 8

1 2 3 4 4 1 2 3

no.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Chord no.	1	2	3	4	4	1	2	3
	bluish green, on acid green almost black	acid green on bluish green, completely faded by black	violet and pink on green	red	more emphasized red	<i>bluish green, on acid green almost black²</i>	<i>acid green on bluish green, completely faded by black</i>	<i>violet and pink on green</i>

5 9 10 6 11 7 12 8 13 9 14 15 16

5 3 4 6 4 1 2 3

9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
5	3	4	6	4	1	2	3
bluish green and light purple on orange faded by black	<i>violet and pink on green</i>	<i>red</i>	gold and brown	<i>red</i>	<i>bluish green, on acid green almost black</i>	<i>acid green on bluish green, completely faded by black</i>	<i>violet and pink on green</i>

10 17 18 11 19 12 20 21 22 13 23 24 14 25

5 3 4 7 8 9 10 7 11

17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
5	3	4	7	8	9	10	7	11
<i>bluish green and light purple on orange faded by black</i>	<i>violet and pink on green</i>	<i>red</i>	purple, grey and dark grey	blue violet	goldish yellow, bluish grey, purple	white (with purple and pale yellow reflections)	<i>purple, grey and dark grey</i>	blue, deep royal blue

¹ The colours of Messiaen are my own translation from French
² The colours in *italics* are not noted by Messiaen because there is a repetition of a chord (that usually means the same colour to Messiaen as before)

Handwritten musical score for piano, measures 26-31. The score is in 3/8 time and features a key signature of one sharp (F#). The notation includes chords and single notes, with some measures containing rests. The measures are numbered 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, and 31. Above measure 29, there is a small musical staff with measures 17, 30, and 31.

26	27	28	29	30	31
8	12	12	4	13	14
blue violet	pale green with a little yellow, silver grey, red and black	pale green with a little yellow, no grey, more red and a little black	red	orange, gold and milky white, orange dominates	grey and purple with a little red and at the top a little bit of blue

Handwritten musical score for piano, measures 32-39. The score is in 3/8 time and features a key signature of one sharp (F#). The notation includes chords and single notes, with some measures containing rests. The measures are numbered 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, and 39. Above measure 35, there is a small musical staff with measures 18, 19, 20, 21, and 22.

32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39
15	16	4	4	1	2	17	18
brick red, a little blackened, a little white and very pale green	red and orange, bluish grey	red	red	bluish green, on acid green almost black	acid green on bluish green, completely faded by black	pale blue on green-brown, almost black (with a little acid green)	green-brown on dark blue (with a little light yellowish grey)

Handwritten musical score for piano, measures 40-45. The score is in 3/8 time and features a key signature of one sharp (F#). The notation includes chords and single notes, with some measures containing rests. The measures are numbered 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, and 45. Above measure 43, there is a small musical staff with measures 23, 24, and 25.

40	41	42	43	44	45
19	20	21	4	4	22
red-brown on bluish grey	white (C-maj.) on black and gold (C#-min.) with light bluish grey	grey, with black and gold patches, and a little bit of red	red	red	gold and brown, with a little red

26 46 47 27 48 28 49 50 29 51

4 23 11 3 12 4

46	47	48	49	50	51
4	23	11	3	12	4
red, with a little brown because of the lower register	brown with gold and a little black	<i>blue, deep royal blue</i>	<i>violet and pink on green</i>	yellowish green on grey, gold and black	<i>red</i>

30 52 31 53

24 4

52	53
24	4
quite dark grey, with a little white and orange	the red of the last bar is deep red, quite dark, where the carmine red of the upper fifth and the black red of the low E comes through