

Olivier Messiaen - Des canyons aux étoiles (2015)

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Part One 1-1 I - *Le Désert* 4:29 1-2 II - *Les Orioles* 6:10 1-3 III - *Ce Qui Est Ecrit Sur Les Etoiles* 7:21 1-4 IV - *Le Cossyphé D'Heuglin* 4:26 1-5 V - *Cedar Breaks Et Le Don De Crainte* 8:24 Part Two 1-6 VI - *Appel Interstellaire* 4:59 1-7 VII - *Bryce Canyon Et Les Rochers Rouge-Orange* 15:00 Part Three 2-1 VIII - *Les Ressuscites Et Le Chant De E'Toile Aldebaran* 11:57 2-2 IX - *Le Moqueur Polyglotte* 11:18 2-3 X - *La Grive Des Bois* 4:33 2-4 XI - *Omao, Leiothrix, Elapaio, Shama* 9:52 2-5 XII - *Zion Park Et La Cité Céleste* 11:37

Tzimon Barto – piano John Ryan – horn Andrew Barclay – xylorimba Erika Öhman - glockenspiel London Philharmonic Orchestra Christoph Eschenbach – conductor

Commissioned in 1971 by Alice Tully, Olivier Messiaen's *Des canyons aux étoiles* (From the canyons to the stars) was planned for the celebration of the bicentennial of the United States Declaration of Independence, though it was given its premiere performance in 1974. Messiaen found inspiration in Bryce Canyon in Utah, which he visited, and the music is an evocation of the vivid scenery and bird songs he encountered, though it should also be understood more broadly as a mystical hymn to nature, outer space, and heaven. In many ways, this large-scale, multi-movement work is reminiscent of Messiaen's *Turangalîla-symphonie*, though prominent in this score is a group of soloists playing horn, piano, xylorimba, and glockenspiel, which gives it the feeling of a concerto grosso updated for modern purposes. This live recording by Christoph Eschenbach and the London Philharmonic Orchestra offers extremely clear separation of parts and vivid sonorities, so everything is perfectly audible, though an opportunity was missed to present *Des canyons aux étoiles* in a multichannel recording, which it really needs. Even so, this exceptional stereo recording comes close to the audiophile ideal, and at many points, the positions of the soloists can be detected, thanks to the careful microphone placement. --- Blair Sanderson, AllMusic Review

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