

Mel Bonis (1858 - 1937)

La Cathédrale Blessée (1915)

for piano (2 hands!), arranged for Wind Octet by Toby Miller (2022)

Original key version (G# minor – key signature removed for easier reading)

Clarinets in A. 2nd bassoon requires 'A' extension (or toilet roll)

This very striking piece is dedicated to the memory of the poet Lucien Augé de Lassus, who died in December 1914, his death reportedly hastened by his shock at the war damage to Reims Cathedral. Its concept and the outer sections with full organ chords are clearly suggested by *La Cathédrale Engloutie*, tenth of Debussy's piano preludes (first heard in 1910); we may also sense echoes of *Le gibet* from Ravel's *Gaspard de la nuit* (1908). Following the first 'explosion', we hear Rachmaninov's motto, the *Dies Irae* theme: a limping accompaniment (graphic in Maria Stembolskaia's superb recording) conveying the cathedral's wounds, while further explosions interrupt it. The organ is repaired but not to its full glory (a much shortened repeat); the outlook is bleak, as suggested by the final repeated lowest piano A, clashing with the G# minor key.

So who is the composer? If (like me) she is new to you, please read her extraordinary life story (straight from a tragic novel) on the official website mel-bonis.com maintained by her descendants; and let us reflect again that while old prejudices severely damaged her life, our own prejudices have also until recently denied her the chance of a fair hearing after death. Below, meet: **Mélanie Hélène Domange, née Bonis**, with her husband **Albert** a few years before his death in 1918, in the garden of their house at Sarcelles north of Paris; and **Amédée-Louis (Landély) Hettich**, singer and later professor of singing at the Paris Conservatoire, where he met Mélanie while they were both students - her piano-accompaniment class (for women only) providing a service to the singers. Domange: the successful manager of a business making and exporting leather drive-belts for industry, an energetic man with 5 children from 2 previous marriages (both wives having died in childbirth) and now 3 more with Mélanie, was deaf to music. Hettich: poet as well as singer, offered his hand in marriage but was refused by Mélanie's parents, who were also in business in a humbler way (father a foreman in a clock factory, mother a needleworker with extreme religious zeal). They had a fashionable piano yet also disliked music and preferred to arrange a more advantageous and 'safer' marriage for their daughter. So, sadly but sensibly, Hippolyte Maury, professor of cornet (and former valve horn graduate) of the Paris Conservatoire, had earlier persuaded Mélanie's parents to let him introduce her to César Franck with these words:

"For a young girl, musical talent is an element of seduction, an additional trump which she will bring to her marriage dowry". Franck on the other hand was completely unworldly, and simply saw in



Amédée-Louis Hettich about 1920 (coll. mel-bonis.com)

Mélanie an excellent piano pupil – no matter that she was female – whom at the age of nearly 19 he introduced to the Paris Conservatoire, where she was accepted and won successive prizes. Later Mélanie was allowed entry to Franck's organ (and unofficial composition) class, where her fellow pupils included Pierné and Debussy. Her forbidden romance with Hettich later caused Mélanie to associate music with sin (unlike Debussy, whose sin was greater!), and was surely the cause of the depression which gradually overcame her in later years. She did compose more after her husband's death, but this is the only piece from World War 1.



Mélanie Bonis and Albert Domange at Sarcelles during WW1 (mel-bonis.com)

La Cathédrale Blessée for piano, arr. for wind octet by Toby Miller

Score (original key: instrumental pitch)

Op 107

Mel Bonis

Grave, majestueux ♩ = 72

molto legato

Wind Octet Score (Measures 1-3):

- Oboe 1:** *mf* (Measures 1-3)
- Oboe 2:** (Measures 1-3)
- Clarinet 1 in A:** *mf* (Measures 1-3)
- Clarinet 2 in A:** *mf* (Measures 1-3)
- Horn 1 in F:** *mf* (Measures 1-3)
- Horn 2 in F:** *mf* (Measures 1-3)
- Bassoon 1:** *mf* (Measures 1-3)
- Bassoon 2:** *mf* (Measures 1-3)

Wind Octet Score (Measures 4-7):

- Oboe 1:** *f*, *p*, *pp* (Measures 4-7)
- Oboe 2:** *f*, *p*, *pp* (Measures 4-7)
- Clarinet 1 in A:** *f*, *p*, *pp* (Measures 4-7)
- Clarinet 2 in A:** *f*, *p*, *pp* (Measures 4-7)
- Horn 1 in F:** *mf*, *f*, *p*, *pp* (Measures 4-7)
- Horn 2 in F:** *mf*, *f*, *p*, *pp* (Measures 4-7)
- Bassoon 1:** *f*, *p*, *pp* (Measures 4-7)
- Bassoon 2:** *f*, *p*, *pp* (Measures 4-7)

8

10

12 *cresc. molto*

16 *serrez ...*

La Cathédrale Blessée Octet original key-score, page 3 of 13

Tempo

24

28

La Cathédrale Blessée Octet original key-score, page 5 of 13

33 **Vivo** [♩ = 84]

pp *ff* *p*

pp

34 **Largo Grave** [♩ = 56]

p *mp* *p*

Musical score for measures 37-40. The score is written for a woodwind octet (flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon, saxophone, and three woodwinds). The key signature is one flat (B-flat major or D minor). The time signature changes from 5/4 to 4/4 and back to 5/4. The score includes various musical notations such as rests, eighth notes, sixteenth notes, and slurs. Dynamics include *mf* (mezzo-forte), *cresc.* (crescendo), and *p* (piano).

Musical score for measures 41-44. The score continues for the woodwind octet. The key signature remains one flat. The time signature changes from 5/4 to 4/4 and back to 5/4. The score includes various musical notations such as rests, eighth notes, sixteenth notes, and slurs. Dynamics include *mf* (mezzo-forte), *cresc.* (crescendo), *f* (forte), and *mf* (mezzo-forte).

43

Vivo **Largo**

pp mp pp pp p p

p 5

46

Vivo **Largo**

pp pp p p p p

mf

51

mf f mf f mf p

Largo Poco ... a ... poco accel. al

52

p p p p p

54 **Tempo 1**

58

[poco accel. ...]

61

64

65

mp 6 6 6 6 6 6 p p p p p p

67

rit.

pp p pp p pp p pp p pp p pp p pp p pp p pp p

La Cathédrale Blessée for piano, arr. for wind octet by Toby Miller

Oboe 1 - original key

Op 107

Mel Bonis

Grave, majestueux ♩ = 72

(Hns) (others)

mf molto legato *f* *p sempre legato*

6 (w Cl2)

pp *p* *ff*

10 (Cls Hns) (Bn2) (Bns) *cresc. molto*

p *mf < f* *p* *mf*

16 **serrez** (Cl1 lead) ... (Ob1 lead) ... **ff** (w Cls) **rit.**

ff *ff*

poco animato 21 (Hns) 2 **Tempo** (others) (Bns) *p cresc.* *f* *cresc.*

p cresc. *f* *cresc.*

27 (others) (Bns) **Vivo** [♩ = 84] (Bn2 off; Cl1 hold) (Cl1 ad lib)

ff *dim.* *p*

Largo Grave [♩ = 56]

34 (Cl1 Hn1 Hn2) (Bn1 Hn2) (+Ob2) (Ob2+Hns to fore)
to fore (Bn2) (Cls) (+Bn1)(-Bn2)

pp

44 **Vivo** **Largo** **Vivo** **Largo**
(Bn1 ad lib)

pp

48 **Vivo** **Largo** **Vivo** **Largo Poco a poco**
(Cl1 w Bns) (Bn1 ad lib) (Cl1 w Bns) (Cl2 w Bn2) (Cl2 (Cl1 (Bns) Bn1) Bn2)

mf pp

53 **accel. al Tempo 1**
(Hn2 Bn2) (others)

mf pp p f

58 (w Cl2) [poco accel.] ...
p mf (Cl1 lead)

p mf

62 **rit.** ... **Tempo 1]** **rit.**
(Cl2 Hn2 Bn2) 2 (Hn2 Bn1) (Obs Cls Hns) 2
f ff p

f ff p

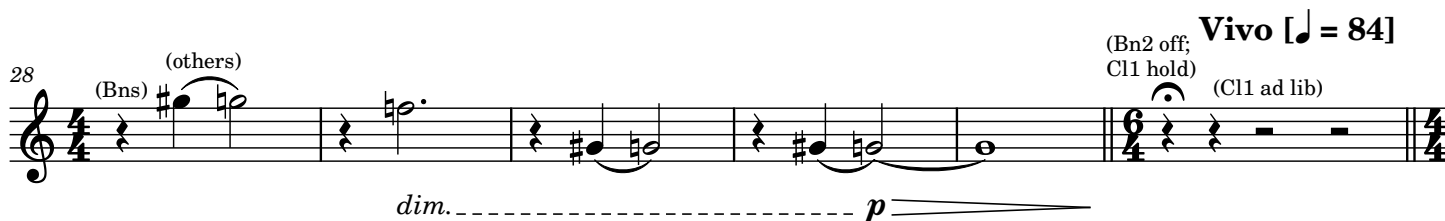
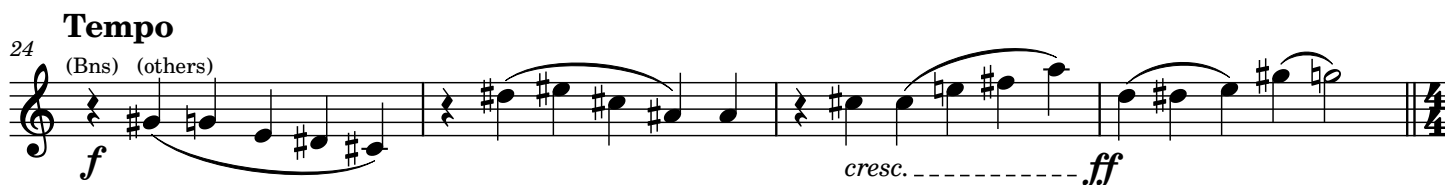
La Cathédrale Blessée for piano, arr. for wind octet by Toby Miller

Oboe 2 - original key

Op 107

Mel Bonis

Grave, majestueux ♩ = 72



Largo Grave [$\text{♩} = 56$]

34 Hn1 to fore (Bn2) (Bn1 Hn2) (Cls) (+Bn1) (+Ob2) (-Bn2)

(Cl1 Hn2)

mf <

43 (Ob2+Hns to fore) **Vivo** **Largo** **Vivo**

(Bn1 ad lib)

mp

47 **Largo** **Vivo** **Largo** **Vivo**

(Cl1 w Bns) (Cl1 w Bns) (Cl1 w Bn2) (Cl2 w Bn2)

pp (Bn1 ad lib) (Bn1 ad lib)

Largo Poco a poco accel. al Tempo 1

52 (Bns) (Cl1 Bn2) (Hn2 (others) Bn2)

(Cl2 Bn1)

p *mf* *pp* *mf*

57 [poco accel.]

p *f* *p* *mf* (Cl1 lead)

62 rit. **Tempo 1** (Obs Hn2 Cls Bn1 Hns)

f *ff* *p*

La Cathédrale Blessée for piano, arr. for wind octet by Toby Miller

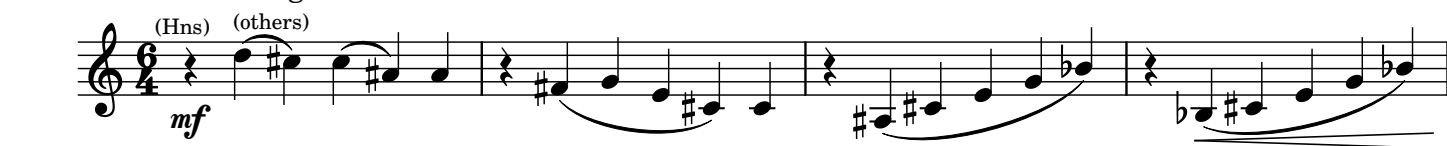
Clarinet 1 in A - original key

Op 107

Mel Bonis

Grave, majestueux ♩ = 72

molto legato



38 (Cls) (+Bn1) *cresc.* *mf* (+Ob2) (-Bn2)

41 *pp* (Ob2+Hns to fore)

44 **Vivo Largo.** (Bn1 ad lib) **Vivo Largo** *p*

48 **Vivo** (Cl1 w Bns) (Bn1 ad lib) **Largo** *p*

50 **Vivo** (Cl1 w Bns) (Bn1 ad lib)

51 **Largo Poco** **a poco accel.** **al** (Cl2 w Bn2) (Cl1 w Bn2) (Bn1) (+Bn2) (Bns) (Bn1 Bn2) (others) (Hn2 Bn2) *f* *mf* *p*

54 **Tempo 1** *mf* *pp* *mf* *p* *f*

58 **[poco accel. ...]** (w Cl2) *p* *mf* (Cl1 lead) *f*

63 **rit. ...** **Tempo 1]** (Cl1 6plets Bn1 6plets) (Cl2 Hn2 Bn2) *ff* *mf* 6 6 6 6 6

65 *mp* 6 6 6 6 6 6

66 (Hn2 Bn1) (Obs Cls Hns) (Bn2) **rit.** (Bn2) (Bn1 lead) ... (Bn2 lead) *p* *pp* *p* *pp*

La Cathédrale Blessée for piano, arr. for wind octet by Toby Miller

Clarinet 2 in A - original key

Op 107

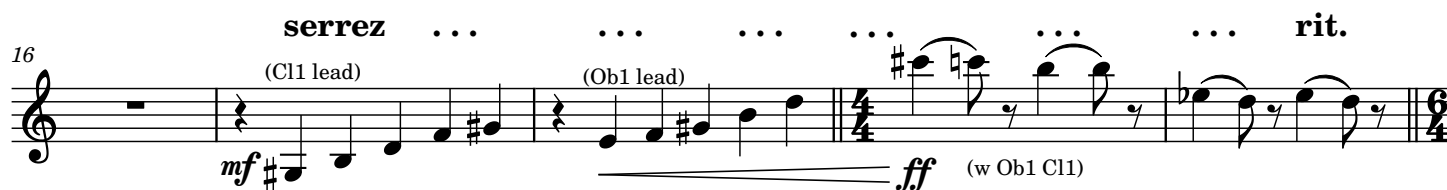
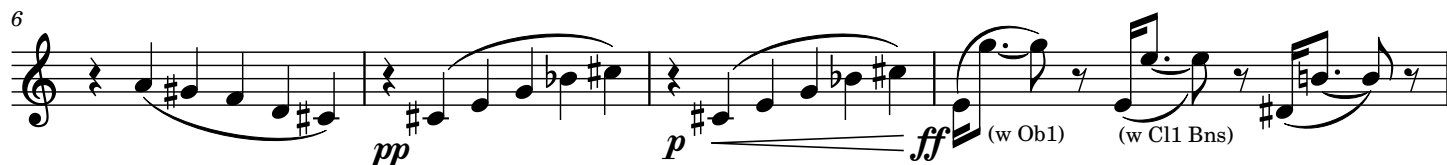
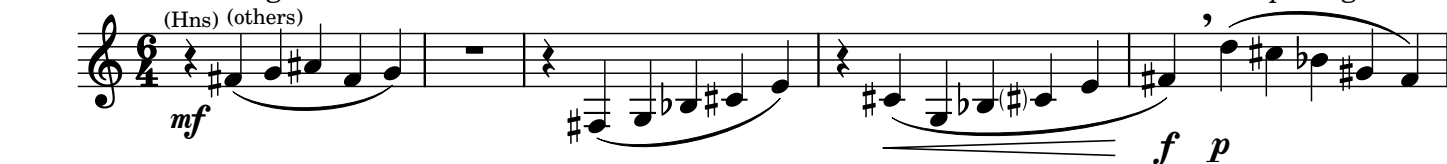
Mel Bonis

Grave, majestueux ♩ = 72

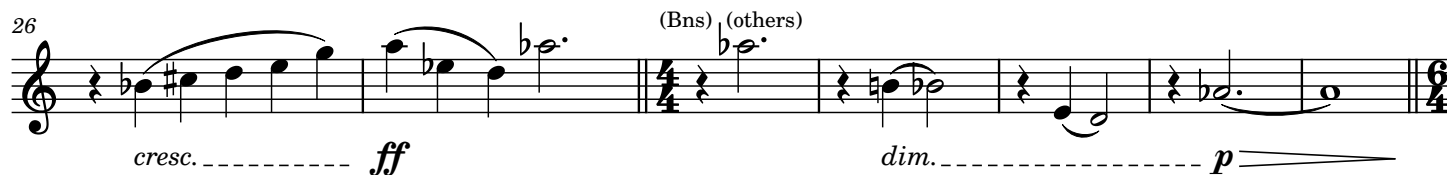
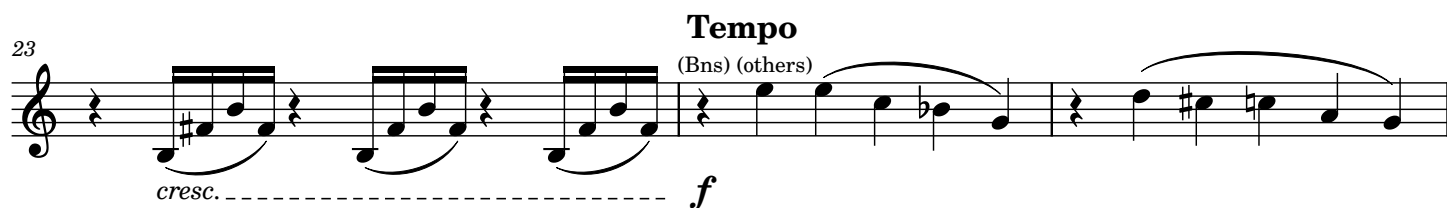
molto legato

(Hns) (others)

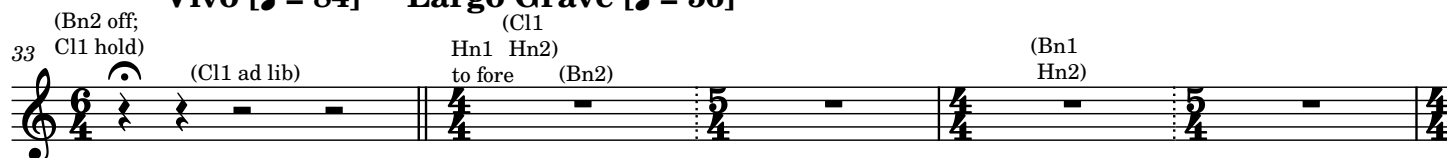
sempre legato



poco animato



Vivo [♩ = 84] **Largo Grave** [♩ = 56]



38 (Cls) (+Bn1) (+Ob2) (-Bn2) *p cresc.* *mf*

41 *pp* (Ob2+Hns to fore)

44 **Vivo** **Largo** (Bn1 ad lib) *p* **Vivo** **Largo** **Vivo**

48 (Cl1 w Bns) (Bn1 ad lib) (Cl1 w Bns) (Bn1 ad lib)

51 (Cl2 w Bn2) (Cl1 w Bn2) (Bn1) (+Bn2) (Bns) **Largo Poco** **a** **poco** (Cl2) (Cl1 Bn2) *mf* *f* *p* **acc.** **al** **Tempo 1**

53 (Hn2 Bn2) (others) *mf* *pp* *mf*

57 (w Ob1) (w Bns) [poco accel. ...] (w Cl1) *p* *f* *p* *f*

63 **rit.** ... (Cl2 **Tempo 1**) (Hn2 Cls (Obs Hn2 Cls (Bn2) (Hn2 Bn1 Hns) (Bn2) *ff* *p* *pp*

68 **rit.** (Bn2) (Bn1 lead) ... (Bn2 lead) *p* *pp*

La Cathédrale Blessée for piano, arr. for wind octet by Toby Miller

Horn 1 in F - original key

Op 107

Mel Bonis

Grave, majestueux ♩ = 72

(Hns) (others) *molto legato* *sempre legato*

mf *mf* *mf* *f* *p* *pp*

8 *p* *ff* *p* *f* *p*

13 (Cls Hns) *cresc. molto* **serrez** ...
(Bn2) (Bns) (Cl1 lead)

pp *mf* *ff* *mf*

18 ... rit. **poco animato**
(Ob1 lead) (Hns) Cl2 Bn2 alt w Cl1 Bn1

ff (Hns w Bns) *p*

24 **Tempo**
(Bns) (others)

f *cresc.* *ff*

Vivo [♩ = 84] **Largo Grave** [♩ = 56]
(Bn2 off; Cl1 Hn1 Hn2)
(Cl1 hold) to fore (Bn2)
(Cl1 ad lib)

28 (Bns) (others) *dim.* *p* *mp*

36 (Bn1 Hn2) (Cls) (+Bn1) (+Ob2) (-Bn2)
cresc. *f*

42 **Vivo** **Largo** **Vivo**

(Ob2+Hns to fore) (Bn1 ad lib)

p

47 **Largo** **Vivo** **Largo** **Vivo**

(Cl1 w Bns) (Cl1 w Bns) (Cl1 w Bns) (Cl2 w Bn2)

(Bn1 ad lib) (Bn1 ad lib)

p

52 **Largo Poco** **a poco accel.** **al Tempo 1**

(Bns) (others)

(Cl2 Bn1) (Cl1 Bn2)

p *mf* *pp*

56

p *f* *p*

59 **[poco accel.** ... **rit.** ...

(Cl1 lead)

mf *f* *ff*

64 **Tempo 1]**

(Cl2 Hn2 Bn2) (Cl1 6plets Bn1) (Obs Hns)

mf *mp* *p*

67 **rit.** ...

(Bn2) (Bn2) (Bn1 lead) (Bn2 lead)

pp *p* *pp*

La Cathédrale Blessée for piano, arr. for wind octet by Toby Miller

Horn 2 in F - original key

Op 107

Mel Bonis

Grave, majestueux ♩ = 72

molto legato

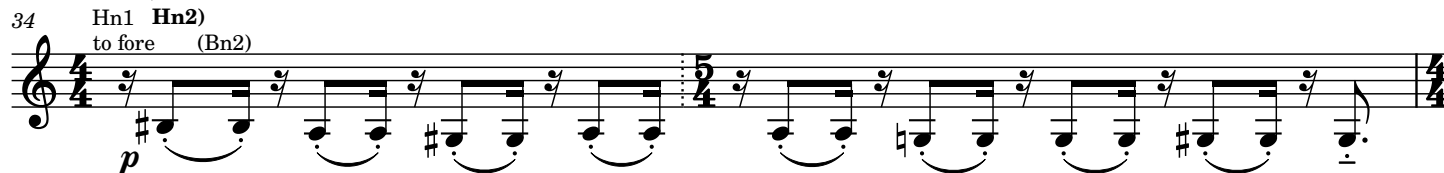
(Hns)(others)

, sempre legato



Largo Grave ♩ = 56]

(Cl1)



38 (Cls) (+Ob2) (+Bn1) (-Bn2) (Ob2+Hns to fore) **Vivo** (Bn1 ad lib)

mf < > *p*

45 **Largo** **Vivo** **Largo** **Vivo** (Cl1 w Bns) (Bn1 ad lib)

p *mf*

49 **Largo** **Vivo** **Largo Poco a poco accel. al** (Bn1) (Cl1 w Bn2) (Cl2 w Bn2) (+Bn2) (Bns) (Bn1) (Cl1 Bn2) (Hn2 (others) Bn2)

p *mf*

54 **Tempo 1**

mf *pp* *p* *f*

59 **[poco accel. ... rit. ...]** (Cl1 lead) *mf* *f* *ff*

mf *f* *ff*

64 **Tempo 1]** (Cl2 Hn2 Bn2) (Cl1 6plets Bn1 Hns) (Hn2 Bn1) (Obs Cls Hns) *mf* *mp* *p*

mf *mp* *p*

67 **rit. ...** (Bn2) (Bn2) (Bn1 lead) (Bn2 lead) *pp* *p* *pp*

pp *p* *pp*

La Cathédrale Blessée for piano, arr. for wind octet by Toby Miller

Bassoon 1 - original key

Op 107

Mel Bonis

Grave, majestueux ♩ = 72

molto legato

mf (Hns) (others)

f *p* *sempre legato* *pp* *p*

ff (w Cls Bn2) *p* (w Bn2)

f *p* (Cls Hns) (Bn2) (Bns) *cresc. molto*

ff *mf* *serrez* (Cl1 lead) ... (Ob1 lead) *ff* (Hns w Bns)

ff *rit.* *poco animato* (Hns) Cl2 Bn2 alt w Cl1 Bn1

Tempo (Bns) *f* (others) *cresc.* *ff* (others) (Bns)

dim. *p* (Cl1 ad lib) (Bn2 off; Cl1 hold) (Hn1 to fore (Bn2) (Cl1 Hn2)

p (Bn1 Hn2) (Cls) (+Bn1) (+Ob2) (-Bn2)

mf (Ob2+Hns to fore)

44 **Vivo** **Largo** **Vivo**

p (Bn1 ad lib)

47 **Largo** **Vivo** **Largo**

mf (Cl1 w Bns) (Bn1 ad lib)

50 **Vivo** (Cl1 w Bns) (Bn1) (Cl2 w Bn2) (+Bn2)

mf (Bn1 ad lib) (Cl1 w Bn2) *p*

52 **Largo** **Poco** **a** **poco accel.** **al** **Tempo 1**

(Bns) (Cl2 Bn1) (Cl1 Bn2) (Hn2 (others) Bn2) *p* *mf* *pp*

56 [poco accel.]

mf *p* *f* *mp* *mf* (Cl1 lead)

60 ...

f

63 **rit.** ... **Tempo 1]**

(Cl2 Hn2 Bn2) *ff* *mf* (Cl1 6plets Bn1 6plets)

65 (Hn2 Bn1) (Obs Cls Hns)

mp *p*

67 (Bn2) (w Bn2) (w Cl2) **rit.** (Bn1 lead) ... (Bn2 lead)

pp *p* *pp*

La Cathédrale Blessée for piano, arr. for wind octet by Toby Miller

Bassoon 2 - original key

Op 107

Mel Bonis

Grave, majestueux ♩ = 72

molto legato

sempre legato

6 *mf* (Hns) (others) *f* *sempre legato*

10 *p* *pp* *p* *ff* (w Cls Bn1) *f*

13 (Cls Hns) (Bn2) *cresc. molto* *ff* *serrez* (Cl1 lead) *mf*

18 ... *rit.* *poco animato* (Ob1 lead) *ff* (Hns) *p* Cl2 Bn2 alt w Cl1 Bn1

22 **Tempo** (Bns) (others) *f* *cresc.*

27 *ff* (Bns) (others) *dim.* *p* *pp* (Bn2 off; Cl1 hold) **Vivo** [♩ = 84] (Cl1 ad lib)

34 **Largo Grave** [♩ = 56] (Cl1) Hn1 Hn2 to fore (Bn2) (Bn1 Hn2)

37 (Cls) (+Bn1) (+Ob2) *p* *cresc.* *mf*

40 (Ob2+Hns to fore)

44 **Vivo Largo** (Bn1 ad lib) **Vivo Largo** **Vivo** (Cl1 w Bns) (Bn1 ad lib)

mf

49 **Largo** **Vivo** (Cl1 w Bns) (Bn1 ad lib) (Cl1 w Bn2) (+Bn2) (Bn1)

mf *f*

52 **Largo Poco a poco accel. al Tempo 1** (Cl1 Bn2) (others) (Bns) (Cl2 Bn1) (Hn2 Bn2)

p *mf* *pp* *mf*

57 **[poco accel. ...]** (Cl1 lead)

p *f* *mp* *mf*

61 **rit. ... Tempo 1]** (put toilet roll in) (Cl1 6plets) (Cl2 Bn1 Hns) (Hn2 Bn2)

f *ff*

65 **rit. ...** (Obs Hn2 Cls Bn1 Hns) (Bn2) (Bn2) (Bn1 lead) (Bn2 lead)

pp *p* *pp*