

Men of faith:
Stravinsky, Maritain and the ideal Christian artifex
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What constitutes the rigor of the true classical, is such a subordination of the matter to the light of the form thus manifested, that no material element issuing from things or from the subject is admitted into the work which is not strictly required as support for or vehicle of this light, and which would dull or “debauch” the eye, ear or spirit. Compare, from this point of view, Gregorian melody or the music of Bach with the music of Wagner or Stravinsky.¹

Jacques Maritain, *Art et Scholastique*, 1920

In 1920, French philosopher Jacques Maritain wrote *Art et Scholastique*, a philosophical treatise on art and aesthetics. It included a savage attack on Igor Stravinsky, claiming that Stravinsky’s music contained elements that dulled and debauched the eye, ear or spirit.² Yet in startling turnaround, the 1927 edition of the same work contained a verbose apology from Maritain to the composer in a footnote to the above quote:

I am sorry to have spoken in this way of Stravinsky. I knew as yet only the *Sacre du Printemps*, but I should have already seen that Stravinsky was turning his back on all that shocks us in Wagner. Since then he has shown that genius preserves and increases its strength by renewing it in the light. Exuberant with truth, his admirably disciplined work affords the best lesson of any today in grandeur and creative force, and best comes up to the strict classical rigor of which we are speaking. His purity, his authenticity, his glorious spiritual vigor, are to the gigantism of Parsifal and the Tetralogy as a miracle of Moses is to the enchantments of the Egyptians.³

Although only a footnote in *Art et Scholastique*, this quote represents one of the most direct evidences that documents the influential relationship between Igor Stravinsky and Jacques Maritain. This relationship gave both men a framework within which to articulate their spiritual and artistic beliefs. From the way each man spoke about the other, it is clear that Maritain came to use Stravinsky as the prime living example of his ideal Christian artifex, where conversely Stravinsky used Maritain’s ideas to help him describe how his own religious beliefs affected his music.

Maritain's radical change of opinion demonstrates that events significant to his understanding of Stravinsky's music had occurred by the time of *Art et Scholastique's* second edition in 1927. First, in 1926 Maritain met Stravinsky. The composer was already familiar with Maritain's work,⁴ whereas Maritain knew only *The Rite of Spring*. As 'knew' was exactly the word the philosopher used,⁵ we cannot be sure that Maritain had actually heard the piece by 1920. He must, however, have seen the copious reviews which exploded into the Parisian press after the ballet's notorious premiere in 1913. These reviews gave both the full title of the work (*The Rite of Spring: Scenes of Pagan Russia*) and detailed descriptions of the pagan scenario, often including a synopsis of the ballet's plot. They frequently describe Stravinsky's music as 'disconcerting and disagreeable...destroying every impression of tonality', 'amusical' and 'savage'.⁶ Maritain's rather vague descriptions of music suggest very little formal musical education: note the mysterious phrase from the opening quote that 'no material element issuing from things or from the subject is admitted into the work which is not strictly required'.⁷ Could not Maritain have been influenced in his verdict on *The Rite of Spring* by the bad press and explicitly pagan subject? Subsequently, might not his opinion have changed on meeting Stravinsky and hearing the composer's own voluble views on his music?

¹ Jacques Maritain, *Art et Scholastique*, trans. Joseph W. Evans, University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame 1962, 57.

² *Loc cit.*.

³ *Loc cit.*

⁴ As I will discuss shortly, Stravinsky rededicated himself to the Russian Orthodox Church in 1926. The composer, however, claimed that Maritain had no role in his rededication, saying that 'until just before...I knew him only through his books'. Louis Andriesson & Elmer Schönberger, *The Apollonian Clockwork*, trans. Jeff Hamburg, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1989, 91. Sadly Andriesson & Schönberger's book is frequently free from specific references, and I have been unable to trace from whence this quote of Stravinsky's came.

⁵ 'Je ne connaissais encore que le Sacre du Printemps'. Jacques & Raïssa Maritain, *Oeuvres Complètes*, Volume 1, Édition Universitaires, Fribourg 1986, 678.

⁶ These epithets alone come from one verbose article by Adolphe Boschot, published in *L'Echo de Paris* on May 30, 1913. They are fairly representative of the language used by critics who did not favour *The Rite of Spring*. Truman Campbell Bullard, *The First Performance of Igor Stravinsky's Sacre du Printemps*, Volume 2, University Microfilms International, Ann Arbor 1971, 14-15. Even before the premiere, an article appeared in the journal *Montjoie* under Stravinsky's name, dedicating the performance to Maritain's other undesirable, Richard Wagner (Ricciardo Canudo, 'Gloires et misères du theater actuel', *Montjoie!*, *Organe de l'Impérialisme Artistique Francais*, 1/8 (May 29, 1913), 1 in Bullard, *ibid*, 3.

⁷ One wonders what the 'material elements' issuing from the 'things' could possibly be. I am at something of a loss to make any suggestions, although in musical terms Maritain's 'material elements' could refer to any of the structural elements of composition which are required to support or perhaps

Second, in 1926, the very year that the two men met, Stravinsky formally rededicated himself to the Russian Orthodox Church. The reason Stravinsky's regained and profound religiosity changed the philosopher's opinion of him becomes clear in a closer reading of *Art et Scholastique* – Maritain's work is not merely a treatise on art and aesthetics, but ultimately a treatise on how to produce good *Christian art*.

In this paper I explore the relationship and mutual influences between Stravinsky and Maritain. Despite the connections between these two men, and the prominence which Stravinsky at least still holds, scholars have neglected to examine their relationship in any depth. Although there is an abundance of recent scholarship on Stravinsky, most of it concentrates on Stravinsky during his Russian period, or on the workings of Stravinsky's serial music divorced from its religious subject matter.⁸ I will demonstrate how Stravinsky met the criteria of Maritain's ideal Christian artifex by analysing *Canticum Sacrum* (1955) through the lens of Maritain's philosophy. One of Stravinsky's major religious works, *Canticum Sacrum* was also one of his first works to use serialism. Although it is neither neo-classical nor from the period of Stravinsky's rededication, it demonstrates not only how Stravinsky exemplified Maritain's ideal, but that he continued to exemplify this ideal in his later works. While neither man changed his work to comply with the beliefs of the other, both Stravinsky and Maritain used each others' writings – both musical and philosophical – to support and explain their methods, ideas and inspirations. Maritain's enshrinement of Stravinsky as the prime living example of his artistic ideal boosted the popularity of his own philosophy, and Stravinsky ultimately lived up to the role of the ideal Christian artifex with pleasure, publicly describing himself in Maritain's terms and finding a method of worship through his art that required no overt prostrations, only humble belief.

enhance the 'subject' (for this I read 'tune'): ornamentation, extravagant instrumentation and elaborate harmonies might all be regarded as elements which extinguish the light of the subject, in opposition to Maritain's desire that they merely support it. As to the 'things', I find myself unable to elaborate. Both such uses of language and a lack of evidence to the contrary suggest Maritain had no musical education.

⁸ For an example of prolific scholarship on Stravinsky's Russian period, see Richard Taruskin's weighty tomes *Stravinsky and the Russian Traditions: a Biography of the Works Through Mavra*, Volumes 1 & 2, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1996. Taruskin spends 2,640 pages alone (not including his glossaries, bibliographies and indices) on music from Stravinsky's 'Russian' period.

There is comparatively little written about Stravinsky's neo-classical period which is represented more by articles than by books: see Edward T. Cone's 'Uses of Convention: Stravinsky and his Models', *The Musical Quarterly*, Vol. 48, No. 3 (Jul. 1962), 287-299. The scholarly pursuit of the neo-classical

Atrium: The Influence of *The Rite of Spring*

While it would be convenient to have some record of what occurred during Stravinsky and Maritain's first meeting, we have few details either of this meeting, or of any subsequent encounters between the two men. The only concrete evidence that they did meet in 1926 is one letter from Maritain to Stravinsky. Stravinsky left no record of their first encounter, although he admitted to furthering his friendship with the philosopher from 1929.⁹ As I will show in this paper, we can determine that after their first encounter in 1926 Maritain's opinion of Stravinsky changed dramatically, and that they continued to meet throughout their lifetimes and to speak, sometimes fondly, of each other and of each other's works. My ensuing investigation of Maritain's ideal artist in the context of Stravinsky's music reveals that Maritain had every reason to assign Stravinsky the exalted position he did in 1927.

The key to understanding Maritain's change of mind lies in *The Rite of Spring*, the only piece of Stravinsky's music which the philosopher knew in 1920. We have already seen that even if Maritain did not see one of the four Parisian performances of the ballet, he would have been hard pressed to avoid the publicity which surrounded it. I have also suggested that Maritain had limited musical knowledge, and that this, coupled with published denunciations of Stravinsky's score, would have entrenched a disgust for the pagan ballet in the philosopher's mind.

There is no evidence to suggest that Maritain received any formal musical education. Maritain's wife Raïssa made no mention in her memoirs of any musical training on her husband's part, despite the fact that she herself played piano in her youth. Nor does the fact Maritain spoke freely about music in *Art et Scholastique* suggest

Stravinsky has produced a greater tendency towards examining the climate which prompted the change in the composer; see Donald Mitchell's 'Stravinsky and Neo-Classicism', *Tempo*, No. 61/62 (Spring-Summer 1962), 9-13, and Alan Lessem's 'Schoenberg, Stravinsky and Neo-Classicism: The Issues Reexamined', *The Musical Quarterly*, Vol. 68, No. 4 (Oct. 1982), 527-542. However, none of these articles address the impact of Stravinsky's religious rededication or uncover his appreciation of Maritain's philosophy.

Finally, music theorists have produced the majority of scholarship on Stravinsky's serial work. For example, Joseph N. Straus has written on Stravinsky's serial music in detail. See Joseph N. Straus, 'Stravinsky's Serial "Mistakes"', *Journal of Musicology*, Vol. 17 No. 2 (Spring, 1999), 231-271; Joseph N. Straus, *Stravinsky's Late Music*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2001.

⁹ Andriesson & Schönberger, *op. cit.*, 91. Again, sources are vague. I assume that, out of the works listed in Andriesson & Schönberger's bibliography, Maritain's letter most likely came from Raïssa's journal, published by her husband in 1963. Unfortunately I have no access to this book.

musical competence; he spoke just as freely about art, which he confessed to knowing little about. Maritain's ideas about art were formed when he and his wife attended the studio of the artist Georges Rouault, which they did specifically to watch him work and learn his motives. As Raïssa said, 'we were neither art critics nor old school-mates'.¹⁰ Georges Rouault was an artist of whom Maritain approved; they shared the same mentor in novelist and devout Catholic Léon Bloy. Rouault himself once said that 'I do not feel as if I belong to this modern life on the streets where we are walking at this moment; my real life is back in the age of the cathedrals'.¹¹ Maritain would find a similar ally in Stravinsky, but in 1920 all his lack of musical training could enable him to see was that Stravinsky's music was pagan and disordered.

¹⁰ Raïssa Maritain, *We Have Been Friends Together*, Longmans, Green & Co., Inc., New York 1945, 159.

¹¹ James Thrall Soby, *Georges Rouault*, The Museum of Modern Art, New York 1947, 6.

After the chaos of *The Rite of Spring*'s premiere, Maritain could be forgiven for believing Stravinsky's music to be the antithesis of Bach. The events of the premiere are well known and have been carefully documented, especially by Truman Bullard and Thomas Kelly.¹² A brief peek at some of the premiere's reviews, however, will reinforce my argument that Maritain would have easily been able to form a negative opinion of the ballet, whether he saw it or not. Critic Jean Chantavoine wrote that 'to suggest the disharmony of a world...still plunged in barbarity and almost in animality, M. Stravinsky has written a score which...is deliberately discordant and ostensibly cacophonous.'¹³ Reviewer Gaston Carraud chose to illustrate the 'cacophony' with a metaphor: 'the music of *Le Sacre* gives the impression of a battle of cats – in the springtime, of course – who have been locked up in the cupboard of pots and pans'.¹⁴ Critics found the music 'disturbing',¹⁵ and 'heavily, flatly and uniformly ugly',¹⁶ considering it 'the torture of Art'.¹⁷ Finally, leading music critic Adolphe Jullien referred to Stravinsky's music as 'a debauchery'¹⁸ – is it any wonder that Maritain initially referred to Stravinsky as he did?

These reviews – and many more in a similar vein – were all published in respected journals or newspapers, readily accessible to the public. Maritain had plenty of information with which to form his opinion of *The Rite of Spring*, regardless of whether he had heard it or not. Even the favourable reviews contained material which could have prejudiced the Catholic Maritain against the ballet:

A fervent love of the earth, interrogation of the stars, exaltation of the forces of nature, veneration of the ancestors, astral dances, a sacrifice in the form of a mystical union between a chosen virgin and the earth, a union from which shall issue the springs of the future, these are the matters which the music and choreography conveyed with unique novelty and power.¹⁹

¹² Bullard, *op. cit.* Thomas Forrest Kelly, *First Nights: Five Musical Premieres*, Yale University Press, New Haven 2000.

¹³ Jean Chantavoine, 'Au Theatre des Champs-Elysees: *Le Sacre du Printemps*', *Excelsior*, IV/927 (May 30, 1913), 6, in Bullard, Volume 3, *op. cit.*, 20.

¹⁴ Gaston Carraud, 'Au Theatre des Champs-Elysees: *Le Sacre du Printemps*', *La Liberte*, XLVIII/17,255 (May 31, 1913), 3, *ibid.*, 58.

¹⁵ 'Ce qu'il faut faire a Paris', *L'Illustration* (June 1913), 546, *ibid.*, 69.

¹⁶ Pierre Lalo, 'Au Theatre des Champs-Elysees', *Le Tempe* (June 3, 1913), 3, *ibid.*, 86.

¹⁷ Alfred Capus, 'Courrier de Paris', *Le Figaro*, LIX/153 (June 2, 1913), 1, *ibid.*, 81.

¹⁸ Adolphe Jullien, 'Revue Musicale', *Le Journal des Debats*, CXXV/158 (June 8, 1913), 1, *ibid.*, 133.

¹⁹ A. D., 'Theatre des Champs-Elysees: Premiere Representation du *Sacre du Printemps*', *Le Matin*, XXX/10685 (May 30, 1913), 3, *ibid.*, 16.

Stravinsky himself had changed his opinion of *The Rite of Spring* by the time he met Maritain in 1926. The composer's primary *volte-face* regarded his opinion of Vaclav Nijinsky's controversial choreography, the aspect of the ballet which some critics argued was the most barbaric contribution to the work.²⁰ It is enlightening to examine Stravinsky's change of opinion, as even if the composer did not communicate his new-found distaste for Nijinsky's choreography to the philosopher at their first meeting, he had certainly had it published in at least one French newspaper.

At the time of the premiere in 1913 Stravinsky publicly supported and defended Nijinsky's choreography for *The Rite of Spring*. The first such comments attributed to Stravinsky were published before the premiere in *Montjoie!*, although in his autobiography of 1936 the composer eloquently denied authorship of the article. Interviews following the premiere, however, demonstrate Stravinsky's defense of Nijinsky at that time:

M. Nijinsky has been reproached for his production and people have said that it seemed foreign to the music. They are wrong. M. Nijinsky is a wonderful artist... We have not ceased for one second to be in complete communion of thought.²¹

Stravinsky continued his praise of Nijinsky up until 1916, but the 1920 revival of the ballet with choreography by Leonide Massine prompted him to change his colours. First of all Stravinsky claimed he had written 'an architectural work, not a story-telling one' and praised Massine for realizing that his music, 'far from being descriptive, was an "objective construction"'.²² When working on the choreography, Stravinsky and Massine systematically 'suppressed every anecdotal or symbolic detail...which would burden or obscure a work of pure musical construction that was to be accompanied, simultaneously, by the realization of a pure choreographic construction.'²³ On December 11th, 1920, Stravinsky published these views for all to see in the *Comoedia Illustré*, a Parisian monthly periodical on the theatre.

²⁰ For example, note Alfred Capus's review in *Le Figaro* from June 2nd, 1913, which hardly treats the music at all, so involved is Capus with tearing Nijinsky and the Russian Ballet to shreds. Bullard, *op. cit.* Vol. 2, pp77-82.

²¹ *Ibid.*, Volume 2, 102-103.

²² Minna Lederman (ed.), *Stravinsky in the Theatre*, Da Capo Press, New York 1975, 25-26.

²³ *Loc. cit.*

The composer followed this up with severe criticisms of Nijinsky's choreography in his autobiography, first published in 1936: 'What the choreography expressed was a very laboured and barren effort rather than a plastic realization flowing simply and naturally from what the music demanded. How far it all was from what I had desired!'²⁴ Although Stravinsky penned his autobiography ten years after first meeting Maritain, the composer's radical change of opinion had been brewing since his collaboration with Massine in 1920. Stravinsky's use of language – describing his ballet as an architectural, objective construction – would also have pleased Maritain, whose aesthetic philosophy was predicated upon a structured and intellectual approach.

Any such change from supporting the pagan and controversial *Rite of Spring* could only have endeared the composer to Maritain. The Stravinsky of 1926, newly rededicated to his religion and in the process of divorcing himself from his revolutionary past, must have presented a very different picture to the philosopher than the widely publicised *enfant terrible* of 1913.

Nave: the Philosophy of Jacques Maritain.

To understand Maritain's philosophy we must first turn to the socio-cultural climate in which he lived: the disillusionment and nationalism of intellectual and artistic Paris in the 1920s. 1918 saw the end of World War One and the French, keen to prove themselves superior to the Germans in art as well as warfare, launched a campaign against that nineteenth-century bastion of the Western Canon, Romanticism. French author Jean Cocteau's gently acid pen distilled the essence of this Francophilia in his 1918 publication *The Cock and the Harlequin*:

We must be clear about that misunderstood phrase "German influence". France had her pockets full of seeds and, carelessly, spilt them all about her; the German picked up the seeds, carried them off to Germany and planted them in a chemically-prepared soil from whence there grew a monstrous flower without scent. It is not surprising that the maternal instinct made us recognise the poor spoilt flower and prompted us to restore to it its true shape and smell.²⁵

²⁴ Igor Stravinsky, *Igor Stravinsky: An Autobiography*, M. & J. Steuer. New York 1958, 48.

²⁵ Jean Cocteau, *Cock and Harlequin*, Rollo H. Meyers (trans.), The Egoist Press, London 1921, 16.

The German who received the most criticism all round was Richard Wagner. The first page of this paper illustrated Maritain's distaste for Wagner's music. Maritain's sentiment, however, was neither unusual nor original in Paris at that time; in 1918 Jean Cocteau wrote 'Wagner is played in London; in Paris Wagner is secretly regretted'.²⁶ Stravinsky also shared the Parisian artists' dislike for Wagner. In his autobiography he recalled suffering through a performance of Parsifal in 1912, complaining that

What I find revolting in the whole affair is the underlying conception which dictated it – the principle of putting a work of art on the same level as the sacred and symbolic ritual which constitutes a religious service. And indeed, is not all this comedy of Bayreuth, with its ridiculous formalities, simply an unconscious aping of a religious rite?...It is high time to put an end, once and for all, to this unseemly and sacrilegious conception of art as religion and the theatre as temple.²⁷

We can only imagine Stravinsky's disgust on reading Maritain had associated his music with Wagner's. Maritain was quick to rectify this error most explicitly in his 1927 edition of *Art and Scholastique* ('I should have already seen that Stravinsky was turning his back on all that shocks us in Wagner').²⁸

Stravinsky's interest in returning to the formality of religion was echoed by the intellectual and artistic elite of post-war Paris. An interest in order, proportion, balance and construction grew steadily, forming an aesthetic firmly opposed to the excessiveness and emotiveness of the Romantic ideal. This new style became known as neo-classicism, a term which emerged among French critics in the early 1900s.²⁹ Although there were almost as many interpretations of classicism as there were artists, the binding factor between them all was a resounding desire for discipline. French author Andre Gide's declaration that the classical art work was a 'triumph of order and measure over self-centered romanticism'³⁰ epitomised the shift in attitudes from the romantic to the neo-classical.

In 1926 Jean Cocteau, who was by then Maritain's most famous convert, published

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 14.

²⁷ Stravinsky (1958), *op. cit.*, 39.

²⁸ See page 1.

²⁹ Scott Messing, 'Polemics as History: the Case of Neo-classicism', *Journal of Musicology*, Vol. 9, No. 4 (Autumn, 1991), 483.

³⁰ Andriesson & Schönberger, *op. cit.*, 86. As usual, Andriesson & Schönberger provide no source for this quote and I have been unable to locate it within Gide's substantial *oeuvre*.

his collection of essays *Le Rappel A L'Ordre* which championed neo-classicism and its exponents and expertly rubbished Romanticism. As Maritain discovered from the success of *Art et Scholastique* in 1920, neo-Thomism, a revival of the ideas of St Thomas Aquinas, provided the perfect aesthetic philosophy to justify such a return to the classical and to champion a desire for order and discipline.

Maritain's philosophy was not, however, completely new; like neo-classicism, it was revised, in this case from a philosophy some eight hundred years old. Between 1100 and 1500 C.E. a school of medieval European academics, known to their contemporaries and successors as 'the Schoolmen', laboured to reconcile the thoughts of classical philosophers with medieval Christian theology. Their attempts produced a technique that emphasised dialectical reasoning, and which would become known as 'scholasticism'.³¹ Maritain both revived and extended this in his philosophy.

St Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274), the most famous of the Schoolmen, lived in the middle of this period. With his formidable education, it is small wonder that the saint became one of the foremost theological teachers of his day, writing many famous and influential works including his incomplete *Summa Theologica* (1266–1273). His development of scholasticism so pleased the Catholic Church that it renamed scholasticism 'Thomism'. By the mid-fourteenth century St Thomas's the *Summa Theologica* was the main text book for Dominican schools, and the Catholic church adopted the saint's ideas as its primary philosophical approach until well into the twentieth century. Interest in Thomas's works blossomed after his death. In 1567 Pope Pius V named Thomas a doctor of the church, and in 1879 one of Leo XIII's encyclicals sparked a revival of interest in Thomistic studies.³² Thomism enjoyed its most recent resurgence in Europe after World War I, where it was taken up by intellectuals who, finding refuge in religion after the horrors of the First World War, also sought a way to reconcile their belief structures with their intellectualism.

At this point Jacques Maritain wrote *Art et Scholastique*. This treatise brought Thomas and his Schoolmen forward several hundred years into the limelight. Maritain

³¹ See John Haldane, 'Editorial Introduction: Scholasticism – Old and New', *The Philosophical Quarterly*, Volume 43, No. 173, October 1993. Also 'Scholasticism', *Wikipedia: the Free Encyclopedia*, 2005. (Accessed 20th April 2005) <<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Schoolmen>>.

³² David Attwater, *The Penguin Dictionary of Saints*, Penguin Books, Baltimore 1965, 328.

used their techniques and philosophies to instruct his audience in the right way to create. The philosophy of *Art et Scholastique* immediately appealed to the Parisian intellectuals and was hugely influential in the city's artistic circles: 'Look!' exclaimed Raissa Maritain, the philosopher's wife, in her diary in 1925, 'Here is another group of young Catholics falling into [Maritain's] arms; they beg for intellectual direction, discussions, meetings.'³³ Maritain's followers included French artist Georges Rouault, Irish poet Brian Coffey, who arrived in Paris in the early 1930s, and Jean Cocteau, whose support of Maritain's philosophy increased the philosopher's visibility and popularity among the artistic elite of Paris at the time. The philosophy contained in *Art et Scholastique* was to help Stravinsky articulate exactly how he expressed his own religious beliefs through his music.

Art et Scholastique is first and foremost a treatise on aesthetics – it attempts to reconcile beauty and art. Maritain did not consider “art” to refer to the fine arts alone, but to all areas in which an object is created. To create art, he argued, is to imprint ideas on matter, and therefore the capacity for art resides in the intelligence of its creator. This argument appealed to the French intellectuals; according to Maritain, art is not about emoting – a Romantic trait – but about intellectualising – a firmly neo-classical trait. Stravinsky himself clearly despised emoting through music, as he has shown in interviews, essays and even his use of instrumentation. In the most well-known example, Stravinsky chose not to use string instruments in his *Octet* because 'The suppleness of the string instruments can lend itself to more subtle nuances and can serve better the individual sensibility of the executant in works built on an 'emotive' basis. My *Octuor* is not an 'emotive' work but a musical composition based on objective elements which are sufficient in themselves.'³⁴

³³ Andriesson & Schönberger, *op. cit.*, 90.

³⁴ Igor Stravinsky, 'Some Ideas About my Octuor', in Eric Walter White, *Stravinsky: the Composer and his Works*, Faber & Faber, London 1966, 529.

Maritain accorded the fine arts a unique place in his philosophy; the fine arts create a beautiful work rather than a functional one. Beauty is 'that which, being seen, pleases',³⁵ and is therefore an object of the intelligence, which is appealed to by, and recognises, this pleasure. Again, Maritain allowed the emotions no place in art, only the intellect. According to St Thomas, beautiful things must contain three elements: integrity, proportion and radiance or clarity. Out of this argument emerged the centrality of form, for form is, 'above all, the proper principle of intelligibility, the proper clarity of every thing'.³⁶ This emphasis on form matched the neo-classical aesthetic of order. Maritain illustrated the three elements of beauty with St Thomas's description of God's ultimate artwork, Jesus Christ:

In the Trinity, Saint Thomas adds, the name Beauty is attributed most fittingly to the Son. As for integrity or perfection, He has truly and perfectly in Himself, without the least diminution, the nature of the Father. As for due proportion or consonance, He is the express and perfect image of the Father: and it is proportion which befits the image as such. As for radiance, finally, He is the Word, the light and the splendor of the intellect, "perfect Word to Whom nothing is lacking, and, so to speak, art of Almighty God."³⁷

Beauty's final requirements according to Maritain were the qualities of being metaphysical and transcendental, for beautiful things draw the soul beyond them to glimpse 'splendors situated beyond the grave'.³⁸ A relationship with God also permits us to glimpse these splendors; like beauty, He is metaphysical and transcendental. Accordingly beautiful objects represented God in Maritain's philosophy:

God is beautiful. He is the most beautiful of beings...He is beauty itself, because He gives beauty to all created beings, according to the particular nature of each, and because He is the cause of all consonance and all brightness. Every form...is "a certain irradiation proceeding from the first brightness," "a participation in the divine brightness." And every consonance or every harmony, every concord, every friendship and every union whatsoever among beings proceeds from the divine beauty, the primordial and super-eminent type of all consonance, which gathers all things together and which calls them all to itself...Thus the beauty of anything created is nothing else than a similitude of divine beauty participated in by things...³⁹

³⁵ Jacques Maritain, 1962, *op. cit.*, 23.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 24-25.

³⁷ Jacques Maritain, *Art and Scholasticism*, trans. Joseph W. Evans, 3rd edition, University of Notre Dame, Indiana (Accessed 14th June 2005) <<http://www.nd.edu/Departments/Maritain/etext/art.htm>>

³⁸ *Loc. cit.*

³⁹ Jacques Maritain, *Art and scholasticism*, trans. Joseph W. Evans, 3rd edition, University of Notre

In what way did Maritain postulate such beauty can be created? Maritain's artist (invariably male) must follow rules or a method but not be a slave to them; he must know when to transcend the rules. The artist must also have something in his heart which motivates him beyond the completion of his work; if the artwork he produces is the sole focus of his creative process, he is, in effect, an idolater. For Maritain, that motivation was, of course, God. God is morality, truth and beauty, and true art must aspire to all these things. Clearly in Maritain's eyes God was the only choice for the motivation beyond the artwork itself.

Maritain saved the crux of his argument for the final chapters of his book, where he emphasised that, since God is the epitome of all things to which good art should aspire, one must really be a Christian in order to be a good artist. The Christian has no need to try deliberately to make a Christian work; if he holds his Christianity in his heart while he is creating, then his work will be Christian. Again, Maritain emphasises simply making rather than active attempts at expression. It is no wonder that Stravinsky found Maritain's philosophy so appealing – the composer's opinion of active expression was public and, as we shall see, unfavourable.

Transept: Stravinsky Through the Lens of Neo-Thomism

'Stravinsky to a journalist: "Suppose you went out and narrowly escaped being run over by a trolley car. Would you have an emotion?"

Journalist: "I should hope so, Mr Stravinsky."

Stravinsky: "So should I. But if I went out and narrowly escaped being run over by a trolley car, I would not immediately rush out for some music paper and try to make something out of the emotion I had just felt."

Igor Stravinsky to an unnamed journalist⁴⁰

With this image in mind, we can begin to see the ways in which Stravinsky connected with Maritain's philosophy. From *Art et Scholastique* we learn that Maritain's ideal artist is not the slave of rules, but both uses and breaks them at will, that he must aspire towards, or incorporate, the classical and that he must be Christian. To develop his

Dame, Indiana (Accessed 14th June 2005) <<http://www.nd.edu/Departments/Maritain/etext/art.htm>>

⁴⁰ Andriesson & Schönberger, *op.cit.*, 83.

artistry, he should not have studied at an institution, but as an apprentice with a master of his art. A study of Stravinsky as a composer of neo-classical and serial works reveals that he met all these requirements, and he was also quite vocal about the manner in which he conformed to them.

While Schoenberg saw serialism as an extension of Germanic Romanticism, infamously describing it as a discovery that would ‘ensure the supremacy of German music for the next hundred years’,⁴¹ Stravinsky does not seem to have held the same views, describing serialism instead as little different from ‘the great contrapuntal schools of old’.⁴² Stravinsky noted that serialism compelled him to compose with ‘greater discipline than ever before’,⁴³ suggesting that he saw serialism as an extension of neo-classicism rather than Romanticism. The Russian composer also waited until after both his arrival in America and Schoenberg’s death to begin using serial techniques, which suggests further demarcation in his mind from any connection Schoenberg might have made to the German Romantic tradition. In the words of musicologist Edward T. Cone, Stravinsky used the twelve-tone method ‘as an outsider adopting a historically defined mode’.⁴⁴

Like other composers of his generation, Stravinsky never studied composition at a university. Later in his life he also warned other composers against doing so, saying that ‘there is no pattern for the real composer anyway’.⁴⁵ Instead, he studied composition under private teachers. Most notable in this instance was his intimate relationship with Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, an apprenticeship which Stravinsky valued so highly he mourned Rimsky’s death more intensely than that of his own father.⁴⁶

⁴¹ Arved Ashby, ‘Schoenberg, Boulez and Twelve-Tone Composition as “Ideal Type”’, *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, Vol. 54, No. 3 (Autumn 2001), 596.

⁴² A later reference to Josquin’s *Duke Hercules Mass* suggests that Stravinsky was referring to the polyphony of church music in the Renaissance. Igor Stravinsky & Robert Craft, *Conversations with Igor Stravinsky*, University of California Press, Berkeley 1958, 25.

⁴³ *Loc. cit.*

⁴⁴ Cone, *op. cit.*, 295.

⁴⁵ Stravinsky & Craft (1958), *op. cit.*, 132.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 39-45.

Stravinsky ended his composition tuition with a good grasp of rules. His music demonstrates his own awareness of both holding the rules and acting beyond them. A tendency to act beyond the rules is especially evident in Stravinsky's serial works. Even music theorist Joseph Straus, keen as he is to 'correct' Stravinsky's serial errors, acknowledges that the composer apparently intended to include some row-incorrect notes.⁴⁷ Arguing that Stravinsky demonstrated flexibility of rules during his neo-classical style is a little more difficult, because as musicologist Scott Messing has argued, there were very few hard-and-fast rules for neo-classical works.⁴⁸

Regardless of the actual facts of Stravinsky's fondness for breaking rules, Maritain's lack of musical knowledge enabled him to decide on his own terms which music followed rules too closely, and which music diverged from them too far. Imagine his position on hearing *The Rite Of Spring*, the only work of Stravinsky's he knew in 1920. It is highly likely that a man who had little musical education and who preferred the music of Bach to Wagner would have heard a shapeless cacophony in *The Rite*. Maritain could never have realised that there were compositional rules governing Stravinsky's music. Even educated and respected musicologists have since indulged in vehement squabbles over the ballet's organisation.⁴⁹ By the time Maritain published his apology to the composer in 1927, Stravinsky was in his neo-classical phase, composing in a range of classical forms,⁵⁰ including *Symphonies of Wind Instruments* (1920), *Octet* (1923), *Concerto* (1924), and a *Suite d'après thèmes, fragments et pièces de Giambattista Pergolesi* (1925).⁵¹ In 1926 Stravinsky also had the opportunity to explain his music to Maritain directly, something which, judging from Maritain's change of opinion, the composer most definitely did.

⁴⁷ See Straus, 1999, *op. cit.*, 231-271.

⁴⁸ See Messing, *op. cit.*, 481-497.. For Stravinsky's use of octatonicism – the rules he learnt from Rimsky-Korsakov – see Pieter C. Van den Toorn, *The Music of Igor Stravinsky*, Yale University Press, New Haven 1983 and Richard Taruskin, 'From Chernomor to Kashchei: Harmonic Sorcery; Or, Stravinsky's "Angle"', *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, Vol. 38, No. 1 (Spring 1985), 72-142.

⁴⁹ The Forte, Taruskin & Van den Toorn debate is the most notorious example. See, for example, Allen Forte's book *The Harmonic Organisation of the Rite of Spring*, Yale University Press, New Haven 1978; Richard Taruskin, 'Review of *The Harmonic Organisation of the Rite of Spring*', *Current Musicology*, No. 28, 1979, 114-34; Van den Toorn, *op. cit* and Allen Forte, 'Letter to the Editor in Reply to Richard Taruskin from Allen Forte', *Music Analysis*, Vol. 5, No. 2/3 (July, 1986), 321-337.

⁵⁰ See Part 2 of Igor Stravinsky, *Igor Stravinsky: An Autobiography*, *op. cit.*

⁵¹ Stephen Walsh, 'Igor Stravinsky', *The New Grove Dictionary of Music Online*, ed. L. Macy

In his neo-classical music Stravinsky also demonstrated the ideal artist's aspiration towards, or incorporation of, the classical. 'These days,' said Maritain, 'all *the best people* want the classical.'⁵² Maritain refused to define what he understood as classical, claiming in a footnote that

Too many theories have rendered the word "classical" irritating to our ears and terribly hackneyed. The fact remains that the definition of words are free. The important thing is to distinguish the authentic from the sham – they sometimes bear the same label – and to realize all the liberty the first requires.⁵³

In his next paragraph, however, Maritain celebrated Eric Satie's music as 'sincerely classical'. According to Maritain, Satie's music was a good example of classicism because it was free from 'suspicious caresses, fevers' and 'miasmas'. Maritain also praised Satie for having an excellent working knowledge of technique with which to express simple ideas.⁵⁴ In other words, part of being classical was being strongly anti-romantic. Maritain's praise of Gregorian melody and Bach, in opposition to the music of Wagner, also bears out this assumption.⁵⁵ (Stravinsky was himself a friend of Satie's, describing him as 'the most rare and consistently witty person' he had ever known.⁵⁶) Music critic Boris de Schloezer first described Stravinsky's music as neo-classical in 1923,⁵⁷ too late for Maritain to mention in his first edition of *Art et Scholastique* in 1920, but in plenty of time to encourage his apology in 1927. The timing of de Schloezer's comment supports the theory that Maritain's missing musical knowledge left him reliant on the opinions of others.

(Accessed 6th July 2005), <<http://www.grovemusic.com>> 2005, 12.

⁵² J. Maritain (1962), *op. cit.*, 53. 'Tous les *gens bien*, aujourd'hui, demandant du classique; je ne connais rien, dans le production contemporaine, de plus sincèrement *classique* que la musique de Satie.' Jacques & Raïssa Maritain (1986), *op. cit.*, 673.

⁵³ J. Maritain (1962), *op. cit.*, 187. Unfortunately, Maritain does not explain how we are to make this distinction between the authentic and the sham.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 53.

⁵⁵ See opening quote.

⁵⁶ Stravinsky & Craft, *op cit.*, 67.

⁵⁷ Scott Messing, *op. cit.*, 490.

The final connection between Maritain's ideal artifex and Igor Stravinsky is the philosopher's requirement that the artist be a Christian. Compare Maritain's words in 'Christian Art', the penultimate chapter of *Art et Scholastique*, with Stravinsky's conversation on music and the church with Robert Craft in 1958. Maritain exhorted the Christian artist to remember that 'If you want to make a Christian work, then *be* Christian, and simply try to make a beautiful work, into which your heart will pass; do not try to 'make Christian.'"⁵⁸ When Craft asked Stravinsky, 'Must one be a believer to compose in these forms?''⁵⁹ the composer replied, 'Certainly, and not merely a believer in 'symbolic figures', but in the Person of the Lord, the Person of the Devil, and the Miracles of the Church'.⁶⁰ He believed that 'Religious music without religion is almost always vulgar'⁶¹ – that religious music written without religious belief would somehow miss its mark. These quotes illustrate the central position Christianity held for both Maritain and Stravinsky regarding the creative process.

As Maritain's focus on how to create a Christian work is the climax of his argument, the manner in which Stravinsky identifies himself with this point deserves a detailed exploration. Such an exploration constitutes the second half of my paper. In order to demonstrate how Stravinsky's Christianity informed his compositional process, I have analysed his choral work *Canticum Sacrum*. Although Stravinsky wrote *Canticum Sacrum* some thirty years after his first meeting with Maritain, it was in the 1940s and 50s that Stravinsky produced his largest corpus of religious works and when his belief was strongest.

Apse: *Canticum Sacrum* (1955)

⁵⁸ Jacques Maritain, *op. cit.*, 66.

⁵⁹ Craft is referring to the sacred musical services Stravinsky spoke of earlier in the conversation, 'the Masses, the Passions, the round-the-calendar cantatas of the Protestants, the motets and Sacred Concerts, and Vespers and so many others' without which we are 'much poorer' (Stravinsky & Craft, *op. cit.*, 121-122.)

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 123. I am unsure who instigated the capitalisation in this sentence.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 124.

By the time Stravinsky reached America in 1939, his first wife Catherine, eldest daughter Ludmila and his mother had all died within a short space of time. Furthermore, his mistress Vera was unable to join him until 1940, leaving the composer alone in a strange new land. The advent of the Second World War also depressed Stravinsky, as the First World War had brought him such privation. Stravinsky consoled himself by composing a flood of religious works which continued to flow until shortly before his death in 1971. The Maritains also moved to America in 1939 to escape the war, and the philosopher continued to lecture and teach, primarily in New York.⁶² In April 1941 Stravinsky wrote to Victoria Ocampo that he had not seen Maritain when he was in New York,⁶³ and in 1944 Maritain attended Stravinsky's delivery of the William Vaughan Moody lecture at the University of Chicago.⁶⁴ The pair maintained contact until Maritain's return to France in 1961, yet the philosopher's ideas remained with Stravinsky for the rest of the composer's life.

Canticum Sacrum is a five-movement work with an ecclesiastical theme. The second movement, *Surge, Aquilo*, was Stravinsky's first entirely serial piece. The work was commissioned for the Venice Biennale International Festival of Contemporary Music. Stravinsky spoke of an intensely powerful religious experience in Venice which gave him a special spiritual connection to the city:

At the beginning of September 1925, with a suppurating abscess in my right forefinger, I left Nice to perform my Piano Sonata in Venice. I had prayed in a little church near Nice, before an old and 'miraculous' icon, but I expected that the concert would have to be cancelled. My finger was still festering when I walked onto the stage at the Teatro La Fenice, and I addressed the audience, apologizing in advance for what would have to be a poor performance. I sat down, removed the little bandage, felt that the pain had suddenly stopped, and discovered that the finger was – miraculously, it seemed to me – healed.⁶⁵

⁶² Marie and Tony Shannon, 'Jacques Maritain', *Jacques Maritain Centre – University of Notre Dame* (Accessed 6th July 2005), <<http://www.nd.edu/Departments/Maritain/etext/lives.htm>>, 2005.

⁶³ Robert Craft (ed.), *Dearest Bubuskin: The Correspondence of Vera and Igor Stravinsky*, Thames and Hudson, New York 1985, 119.

⁶⁴ White, *op. cit.*, 94.

⁶⁵ Igor Stravinsky and Robert Craft, *Dialogues and a Diary*, Faber and Faber, London 1961, 26.

Although the composer confessed in his *Dialogues* (1961) that he may have simply suffered a *maladie imaginaire*, he stressed that at the time he took his rapid recovery for a miracle, and this prompted his return to the church.⁶⁶ Shortly after this event, in the Easter of 1926, Stravinsky formally returned to the Orthodox communion to which his parents nominally belonged and began to attend church services regularly again.⁶⁷ With such religious resonances, it is small wonder that Stravinsky seemed determined from the first to create a work of religious significance for Venice. He toured the city's cathedrals in search of the finest acoustic, and finally settled on St Mark's, the cathedral of Venice's own patron saint. Stravinsky chose to dedicate *Canticum Sacrum* to the saint, giving his work the subtitle 'Ad Honorem Sancti Marci Nominis' – 'to the honour of St Mark, in his name'.⁶⁸ A heraldic dedication of *Canticum Sacrum* to the city of Venice and its patron saint Mark precedes the main body of the work.

Stravinsky scored *Canticum Sacrum* for tenor and baritone soli, chorus and orchestra. The orchestra is buttressed with mostly triple woodwind and brass, but is light on strings, using only harp, violas and double basses. Stravinsky preferred a full complement of wind instruments as they furnished him with a rich register, and because the range of volume they provided 'renders more evident the musical architecture'.⁶⁹ Also, as we have already seen, Stravinsky considered the higher string instruments too emotive.⁷⁰ The addition of an organ increases the liturgical atmosphere of the work. The composer himself fashioned the libretto from the Latin Vulgate Bible, St Jerome's fifth century translation commissioned by Pope Damasus I.

⁶⁶ *Loc. cit.*

⁶⁷ Walsh, 2005, *op. cit.*, 6.

⁶⁸ In this he followed the famous example of Claudio Monteverdi, whose *Vespro della Beata Vergine da Concerto* – the Vespers – of 1610 was also written for the Basilica of St Mark's, where Monteverdi was soon to find himself employed. There are other similarities between the two works: both utilise soloists, chorus, organ and ensemble and both are a conglomeration of styles (scholars attribute the variations in the Vespers to Monteverdi's desire to demonstrate the range of his compositional abilities). Both works also use ritornelli and plainsong style melody. Geoffrey Chew, 'Claudio Monteverdi: Works from the Mantuan Years', *The New Grove Dictionary of Music Online*, ed. L. Macy (Accessed 6th July 2005), <<http://www.grovemusic.com>> 2005.

Although the parallels are quite striking, Stravinsky does not admit to the influence of Monteverdi, and therefore the reasons behind any similarities remain conjectural.

⁶⁹ White, *op. cit.*, 529.

⁷⁰ See page 7 for Stravinsky's famous quote about the instrumentation of his *Octet*.

From the title to the text, the organ to the organisation, *Canticum Sacrum* is an explicitly religious work. Within it, Stravinsky demonstrated his Christianity through a range of techniques. First, he used biblical texts and direct references to religious musical techniques such as plainsong and antiphony. Second, Stravinsky's careful use of structure highlighted the philosophy that order, proportion and form were central elements of a work of Christian art, and argument with which Jacques Maritain acquainted him.⁷¹ Therefore to highlight the ways in which Stravinsky conformed to Maritain's ideal artifex I will look at his use of texts, references to religious music and the form and proportions of his work.

Art et Scholastique includes the following quote from Maritain about medieval cathedral builders:

The cathedral builders did not harbour any sort of thesis. They were, in Dulac's fine phrase, "men unaware of themselves". They neither wished to demonstrate the propriety of Christian dogma nor to suggest by some artifice a Christian emotion. They even thought a great deal less of making a beautiful work than of doing good work. They were men of Faith, and as they were, so they worked.⁷²

⁷¹ Andriesson and Elmer Schönberger draw an interesting parallel in their *Apollonian Clockwork* (*op. cit.*): the entire book is based around their association of Stravinsky with the Greek god Apollo. Apollo controlled the nine muses but was also god of reason and the intellect. In literary criticism, the figure of Apollo is connected with order, harmony and reason. Apollo's justice is lawful and transparent, as opposed to the chthonic powers which are his direct opposite in the classical world. The Apollonian ideal in comparison to the Dionysian is best illustrated by Aeschylus' tragic trilogy *The Oresteia*, in the first part of which Orestes murders his mother Clytemnestra. In the following plays he is pursued by the Furies, women from the chthonic realm who since time immemorial have had the task of killing matricides. Yet in the final play of the trilogy, *The Eumenides*, Orestes pleads with Apollo for his life, and despite the prior claim of the Furies, Apollo grants Orestes' wish. In this way Apollo embodies a new order of lawfulness, a logical justice which ultimately overpowers the dark mysteries of blood guilt and women's vengeance. Andriesson and Schönberger's alignment of Stravinsky with Apollo acknowledges the composer's desire for order and reason in the creative arts, and typifies the shunning of the romantic, chaotic forces popular among artists between the world wars.

⁷² Jacques Maritain, *op. cit.*, 35.

While I cannot argue that Stravinsky did not harbour any sort of thesis, the composer himself described his own works as architectural, and in the case of *Canticum Sacrum* Stravinsky used interplay between the architecture of St Mark's Cathedral and his own preference for 'architectonic' composition to structure the entire work. Stravinsky spoke of his own belief in the connection between his music and architecture as early as the 1920s, saying in several interviews that 'My work is architectonic and not anecdotal; an objective, not a descriptive construction'. Moreover, '[Counterpoint] is the architectural base of all music, regulating and guiding all composition.'⁷³ The composer even spoke of his neo-classical period as a primarily structural exercise: 'I attempted to build a new music on eighteenth-century classicism using the constructive principles of that classicism.'⁷⁴ In 1962 musicologist Edward T. Cone discovered 'a completely symmetrical layout' in the opening movement of Stravinsky's *Symphony in C* (1940), which Cone argued 'takes on the shape of a huge arch'.⁷⁵ Cone's analysis props up Stravinsky's claim that the structure of his music is influenced by architectural design.

Stravinsky used his knowledge of the architectural design of St Mark's cathedral to structure *Canticum Sacrum*. The five main movements refer to the five cupolas of the basilica; Stravinsky ordered them cyclically and symmetrically, as one would encounter them on walking clockwise around the domes (see Figure 1).⁷⁶

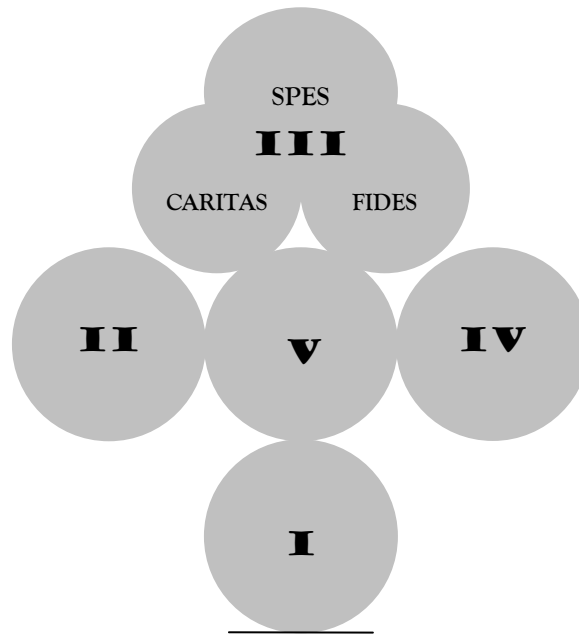
ORDER OF MOVEMENTS		
<i>Dedicatio</i>	Brief introduction in plainsong style.	
<i>I: Euntes in Mundum</i>	Ensemble choruses divided by organ versets.	
<i>II: Surge, Aquilo</i>	Lyrical tenor solo; wholly serial.	
<i>III: Ad Tres Virtutes Honorem</i>	<i>Caritas</i>	Antiphonal choruses connected by organ ritornelli.
	<i>Spes</i>	
	<i>Fides</i>	
<i>IV: Brevis Motus Cantilenae</i>	Baritone solo with chorus responses.	
<i>V: Illi Autem Profecti</i>	Retrograde of <i>Euntes in Mundum</i> .	

⁷³ Messing, *op. cit.*, 491.

⁷⁴ Stravinsky and Craft (1958), *op. cit.*, 21.

⁷⁵ Cone, *op. cit.*, 294.

⁷⁶ For a floor plan of the basilica, see Appendix One.



Entrance
(Dedicatio)

The five cupolas are all dedicated to different saints and events. The first cupola, which marks the entrance to the basilica, is the Cupola of the Pentecost, commemorating the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the disciples seven Sundays after Easter. The Cupola of the Pentecost is directly in front of the central cupola, the Cupola of the Ascension, commemorating Christ's ascension to heaven forty days after his crucifixion.⁷⁷ These cupolas both commemorate events significant to the Catholic calendar, and to exit the cathedral from the Cupola of the Ascension one must again return to the Cupola of the Pentecost. For this reason Stravinsky composed *Euntes in Mundum* and *Illi Autem Profecti*, the first and last movements, to share the same material – pitch, rhythm and instrumentation are similar or the same. The text for both movements comes from the same biblical chapter – Chapter 21 of the Book of Mark – and addresses the same theme:

I: Euntes in mundum universum,
praedicate evangelium omni creaturae.

Go ye into all the world, and preach
the gospel to every living creature.

V: Illi autem profecti praedicaverunt
ubique, Domino cooperante et sermonem
confirmate, sequentibus signis. Amen.

And they went forth and preached
everywhere, the Lord working with them,
and confirming the word with signs
following. Amen.⁷⁸

⁷⁷ Giovanni Musolini, *The Basilica of St. Mark in Venice*, trans. John Guthrie, Ferdinando Ongania, Venice 1955, 48.

⁷⁸ Ivan Moody, *Stravinsky: Symphony of Psalms, Mass, Canticum Sacrum* (CD notes), Westminster

The shared material between these two movements provides the listener with a strong sense of *Canticum Sacrum*'s cyclical nature. Stravinsky retrogrades the first movement, *Euntes in Mundum* to form the fifth movement, *Illi Autem Profecti*. This technique gives the strongest sense of connection between the musical material. The retrograde is not entirely exact, providing one example of Stravinsky employing a rule only to break it part way through. Although in some places the two movements are consistent both rhythmically and harmonically, there are notable diversions in the final movement from the pattern set by the first movement. One example of Stravinsky both embracing the rules and breaking them is the organ versets in *Euntes in Mundum* (bars 17-25 and 32 - 40, Figure 2.1) and *Illi Autem Profecti* (bars 312-320 and 327 - 335, Figure 2.2). The organ versets occur twice in each movement.

The matching versets in the final movement *Illi Autem Profecti* are almost identical retrogrades of the matching versets in the first movement *Euntes in Mundum*. The rhythmic retrograde is the closest to perfect – only the final note of the pedal part is one beat longer in the retrograde than it is in the original versets. Otherwise, the retrograde is rhythmically correct. The pitch, however, reveals two ‘mistakes’ in the retrograde (these ‘mistakes are circled in the following musical examples). As each organ verset occurs twice, it seems unlikely that Stravinsky simply made a copyist’s error in producing the retrograde for the final movement. Rather, this is one example of the composer following a rule only to transcend it as he chooses.

Figure 2.1 – reduction of organ versets from the first movement, *Euntes in Mundum*, bars 17-25 and 32-40.

Figure 2.2 – reduction of organ versets from the fifth movement, *Illi Autem Profecti*, bars 312-320 and 327-335.



There are further differences between *Euntes in Mundum* and *Illi Autem Profecti* (see Figures 3.1 and 3.2). The pitch material of the opening and closing chords of each movement is identical (marked ‘A’ and ‘A¹’), as is the opening vocal entry of the first movement compared to the closing notes of the choir in the final movement (‘B’ and ‘B¹’). However, there are some slight differences in the instrumentation and rhythm. For example, the final two bars of the work use the same pitch material as the opening bar, but the orchestration and rhythm differ. Stravinsky took three bars to say in closing what he grandly stated with one chord to begin. The composer almost certainly extended the material in the name of closure; they are, after all, the final bars of the entire work. An assessment of the overall structure of the movements bears out my claim: the length of each section is appropriate to the pattern of the retrograde (see Figure 4) except for the final section of *Illi Autem Profecti*, two bars longer than the opening section of *Euntes in Mundum*. These rogue two bars seem to have been placed outside the frame of the two movements as a closing statement.

Figure 4

Length of sections in the first and final movements

<i>Euntes in Mundum</i>	<i>Illi Autem Profecti</i>
7 bars of 6/4*	5 bars of 6/4
9 bars of 3/4	9 bars of 3/4
6 bars of 6/4	6 bars of 6/4
9 bars of 3/4	9 bars of 3/4

5 bars of 6/4

9 bars of 6/4*

* The discrepancy in the retrograde, showing the two additional bars in the final section of *Illi Autem Profecti*.

Stravinsky did not indulge in just these divergences from the rules. While the pitch material found in the last wind statement at bar 341 ('C') is the same as their first annunciation of this motif in bar 11 ('C¹'), the rhythm is very slightly different. Note also the Alto line at bar 340: while all other voices are faithful to the retrograde at this point, the Alto line differs ('D' and 'E').

Stravinsky divided both movements into alternate sections of vocal and instrumental choruses and organ versets. The tempi in each movement remain the same for all associated sections. The pitch material, orchestration and tempi all contribute to the inescapable feeling of return the listener experiences on encountering the retrograde in the final movement of *Canticum Sacrum*. By retrograding the music from the first movement *Euntes in Mundum* in the final movement *Illi Autem Profecti*, Stravinsky imitated the physical return one must make to the Cupola of the Pentecost, the first Cupola, to exit the cathedral.

The two cupolas opposite one another in the basilica are both dedicated to saints – the Cupola of St John and the Cupola of St Leonard. Stravinsky constructed the second and fourth movements to reflect this; the movements balance and reference one another, although not quite so closely as the first and fifth movements. The second movement, *Surge, aquilo*, is a lyrical tenor solo which is complemented by the baritone solo featured in the fourth movement *Brevis motus cantilenae*:

II: Surge, aquilo; et veni auster; perfla hortum meum, et fluant aromata illius. Veniat dilectus meus in hortum suum, et comedat fructum pomorum suorum. Veni in hortum eum, soror mea, sponsa; messui myrrham meam cum aromatibus meis; comedi favum meum cum mele meo; bibi vinum meum cum lacte meo. Comedite, amici, et bibite; et inebriamini, carissimi. *Song of Songs 4:16-5:1.*

IV: Iesus autem ait illi: Si potes credere, omniaabilia sunt credenti. Et continuo exclamans pater pueri, cum lacrimis aiebat: Credo, Domine, adiuva incredulitatem meam. *Mark 9:23-24.*

Awake, o north wind; and come, thou south; blow upon my garden that the spices thereof may flow out. Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits. I am come into my garden, my sister, my spouse; I have gathered my myrrh with my spice; I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey; I have drunk my wine with my milk: eat, o friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, o beloved.

Jesus said unto him: If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth. And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears: Lord I believe; help thou my unbelief.⁷⁹

⁷⁹*Loc. cit.*, 20-22.

Connections between these two texts are tenuous. The text for the fourth

movement, *Brevis Motus Cantilenae*, may reflect the hermit St Leonard's special



propensity for working miracles.⁸⁰ I can, however, suggest no connection between the text for the second movement, *Surge, Aquilo*, and the Cupola of St John. The musical connections are somewhat clearer, linking the cupolas of the two saints together. Both are songs performed by solo male singers, and both involve a cast of two characters. Both songs could be said to concern the family - *Surge, Aquilo* from 'Song of Songs' ambiguously describes the relationship between a young man and woman who are apparently newly wed. *Brevis Motus Cantilenae* from the Book of Mark describes the relationship of a father and son, a step down the familial timeline from the young couple portrayed in the second movement.

If order is indeed an aspect of the divine, *Surge, aquilo* is most divine movement in *Canticum Sacrum*, being Stravinsky's first strictly serial piece and therefore very carefully ordered. The tenor soloist states the tone row in his opening phrase and the row is shared amongst the ensemble and heard both vertically and horizontally for the duration of the piece. Serial music reminded Stravinsky of the polyphony of early church music, and he relished the opportunity to compose with added discipline: 'The rules and restrictions of serial writing differ little from the rigidity of the great contrapuntal schools of old...The serial technique I use impels me to greater discipline than ever before'.⁸¹

More closely linked both textually and structurally are the three smaller pieces which build the third and central movement, *Exhortations to the Three Virtues*. Stravinsky referenced St Mark's structure most explicitly here: the three lesser movements, *Caritas, Spes* and *Fides*, imitate the three smaller domes of the basilica.⁸²

⁸⁰ Attwater, *op. cit.*, 218.

⁸¹ Stravinsky & Craft, *op. cit.*, 25.

⁸² The usual order of Faith, Hope and Charity are reversed, in White's view so that special prominence can be given to Faith (White, *op. cit.*, 483-484). I disagree with White on this: what the special prominence accorded to Faith is, he does not say. Instead, it is Hope, as the central movement and the longest, that is most prominent, indeed central in more ways than one, to the entire work, and both Faith and Charity with their use of canon act modestly as flanking movements to the central virtue.

Caritas: Diliges Dominum Deum tuum ex toto corde tuo, et ex tota anima tua, et ex tota fortitudine tua. Diligamus nos invicem, quia caritas ex Deo est; et omnis qui diligit ex Deo natus est, et cognoscit Deum. *Deuteronomy 6:5*.

Spes: Qui confidunt in Domino, sicut mons Sion; non commovebitur in aeternum, qui habitat in Ierusalem. Sustinuit anima mea in verbo eius; speravit anima mea in Domino, a custodia matutina usque ad noctem. *Psalms 125:1, 130:5-6*.

Fides: Credidi propter quod locutus sum; ego autem humilatus sum nimis. *Psalms 116:10*.

Charity: Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.

Hope: They that trust in the Lord shall be as Mount Zion, which cannot be removed but abideth forever. My soul doth wait, and in his word do I hope. My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning.

Faith: I believed, therefore I have spoken; I was greatly afflicted.⁸³

Spes, the central text, represents the Cupola of the Presbytery, the area of the cathedral traditionally reserved for the high clergy, while the surrounding texts reflect the smaller chapels of St Clement and St Peter. The text for the Chapel of St Peter, *Fides*, is especially appropriate, as it was this disciple who famously denied association with Christ three times before the cock crowed, a test of faith which Peter failed. These movements, all set to well-known biblical verses, speak most directly about the experience of being Christian, exhorting the listener to love the Lord, to trust in Him and to have faith. Stravinsky accorded these exhortations extra weight by placing them in the centre of his work.

Stravinsky connected his *Exhortations to the Three Virtues* with organ ritornelli. Like the organ versets connecting the sections of the first and final movements, Stravinsky again chose to feature the church's favourite instrument in a vital structural and connective role. These organ ritornelli have two functions beyond their basic task of connecting the three smaller movements: first, they outline the progression of the movements. Second, Stravinsky completed the final ritornello with the opening pitch from the first. This suggests the ritornelli also provide a private cycle for the three smaller movements within the context of *Canticum Sacrum* as a whole. The organ ritornelli use a twelve-tone row which, through transposition, begins on A in the first movement, and ends on the same note at the close of the third virtue. By this final point in the cycle we

⁸³ Moody, *Stravinsky: Symphony of Psalms, Mass, Canticum Sacrum* (CD notes), Westminster

hear the row transposed up one tone (see Figures 5.1-5.4). This is one example of the serial techniques Stravinsky employed in the construction of *Canticum Sacrum*, although only the second movement *Surge, Aquilo* is a wholly serial work. Musicologist Stephen Walsh argued that these three smaller pieces, well balanced and cyclical in themselves, 'form a central arch or dome for the whole structure',⁸⁴ a kind of microcosm to the macrocosm of the overall work.

Figure 5.1 – the row for the organ ritornelli in the third movement, *Exhortations to the Three Virtues*



Figure 5.2 – reduction of the first organ ritornello, the introduction to *Caritas* from *Exhortations to the Three Virtues*, bars 94-99.



Figure 5.3 – reduction of the second organ ritornello, the introduction to *Spes* from *Exhortations to the Three Virtues*, bars 130-135.



Figure 5.4 - reduction of the third and final organ ritornello, the introduction to *Fides* from *Exhortations to the Three Virtues*, bars 184-189. The strings repeat this ritornello at the close of the movement, bars 244-249.



Cathedral Choir, Hyperion Records, London, CDA66437 1991, 21-22.

⁸⁴ Walsh, *op. cit.*, 9.

Thus we can see that the order defined by the cathedral builders in worship of God structures Stravinsky's music, also written in worship. The order is divine; the choice of structure is in itself an act of worship. *Canticum Sacrum*'s construction ' . . . observes closely the fundamental architectural principles of symmetry, proportion and balance'.⁸⁵ More directly, the choice of a cathedral as the unifying principle of a piece of music connects it to God with real immediacy.

Canticum Sacrum also demonstrates a musical connection with God through Stravinsky's use of compositional techniques appropriate to various forms of church music. Stravinsky professed that only believers could compose in liturgical styles, and Maritain argued the virtues of doing so:

The art which germinates and grows in Christian man can admit an infinity of [techniques, styles]. But these forms of art will all have a family likeness, and all of them will differ substantially from non-Christian forms of art. . . Consider the liturgy: it is the transcendent and supereminent type of the forms of Christian art; the Spirit of God in Person fashioned it, so as to be able to delight in it."⁸⁶

Stravinsky set *Canticum Sacrum* apart as sacred from its opening dedication with his transparent use of liturgical styles. Tenor and baritone soloists perform the *Dedicatio* with trombone accompaniment. The listener instantly recognises Stravinsky's reference to plainsong in the smooth modal vocal lines in often consonant harmonies (Figure 6).

Dedicatio: Urbi Venetiae, in laude Sancti sui Presidis, Beati Marci Apostoli.	Dedication: To the City of Venice in praise of its Patron Saint, the Blessed Mark, Apostle. ⁸⁷
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⁸⁵ White, *op. cit.*, 489.

⁸⁶ Maritain, *op. cit.*, 8.

⁸⁷ Moody, *op. cit.*, 20.

Musical score for Figure 6, showing vocal and instrumental parts. The score includes parts for Tenore, Soli, Baritono, tenore (i), Tromboni (basso), Tromboni (contrabasso), and Tromboni (tenore). The tempo is marked $\text{♩} = 66(-69)$. The lyrics are "Ur - bi Ve - ne - ti - ae,..... in lau -". The score features various musical notations such as dynamics (*mf*, *marc. ma non f*), articulation (accents), and phrasing (slurs, breath marks).

Figure 6

From referencing plainsong, Stravinsky moves to using the verse and response form found in liturgical music. The first examples of this are the organ versets in the first movement *Euntes in mundum*. These also create an antiphonal effect with contrasts between the grouping of chorus and orchestra against the organ. The fourth movement, *Brevis motus cantilena*, contains the most notable example of verse and response; the chorus answers the baritone soloist, echoing both his words and his melody in condensed form (Figure 7).

The image displays two systems of musical notation. The first system features five vocal staves: Baritone Solo (bass clef), Discanti (treble clef), Alti (treble clef), Tenori (treble clef), and Bassi (bass clef). The Baritone Solo part begins with a tempo marking of quarter note = 88 and includes the lyrics 'Je - - -'. The second system includes Baritone (Bar.), Descant (D.), Alto (A.), Chorus Tenors (T.), and Chorus Basses (B.). The Baritone part has lyrics 'sus....' and 'au - tem a - it li - li:.....'. The Descant, Alto, Tenors, and Basses parts are marked 'quasi un eco' and include lyrics 'Je - - - sus....' and 'au - tem'. The score uses various musical notations including slurs, accents, and dynamic markings.

Figure 7

Stravinsky continued to reference liturgical music in the third movement, *Exhortations to the Three Virtues*, which musicologist Eric Walter White described as a 'miniature cantata': *Spes*, as the central and longest section, contains what White describes as 'contrasted antiphonal liturgies'⁸⁸ between the tenor and baritone soloists and the descant and alto chorus. The cores of the surrounding virtues are canonic: *Caritas* is a four-part canon between the three upper voices of the chorus and trumpet. *Fides* is a four part canon in which the entries, though consistent in terms of melodic line, begin at different intervals (Figure 8). Both canonic and antiphonal scoring featured in early church music.

⁸⁸ White, *op. cit.*, 486.

CARITAS

[Figure 8]

113 114 115 116 $\text{♩} = 72$ 117 118 *cant. - non f*

A. *Di - li -*

Coro T. **) cant. - non f* *Di - li - ges Do - - - mi -*

Tromba in Do bas. *poco sfz poco sfz sim.*

119 120 **) cant. - non f* 121 122 123 124

Coro D. *Di - li - ges Do - - - mi - num De - um tu - um ex to -*

Coro A. *- ges Do - - - mi - num De - um tu - um ex to - ta a - ni - ma tu -*

Coro T. *- num De - um tu - um ex to - to cor - de tu - o. Di - - li - ges*

I Tromba in Do bas. *poco sfz sim.*

FIDES

218 219 220 221 *cant.* 222 223 224 225

D. *..... E - go au - tem hu - mi - lia - tus*

Coro A. **) cant.* *..... E - go au - tem hu - mi - lia - tus..... sum ni - mis. Cre.*

Coro T. *..... cant. -* *E - go*

B. *.....*

226 227 228 229 230 231 232 233 234

D. *sum ni - mis. Cre - - - di - di,..... cre - di - di, ere - di - di.....*

Coro A. *- - - di - di, ere - di - di,..... cre - di - di,..... cre - di -*

Coro T. *au - tem hu - mi - lia - tus..... sum ni - mis. Cre - - di - di, ere - di - di,..*

B. **) cant. -* *E - go..... au - tem hu - mi - lia - tus sum..... ni - mis.*

Egress: Concluding Remarks.

Through a combination of referencing church music, using ecclesiastical texts, borrowing a sacred architectural structure and promoting careful order in his music, Stravinsky connects *Canticum Sacrum* inextricably with the divine. The listener may not notice all these aspects immediately, but many, like the clear plainsong style of the *Dedicatio*, we can recognise instantly as references to religious music. Unlike other of his works, Stravinsky hints at neither parody nor irony: he intends the use of sacred styles very seriously. Stravinsky allowed his faith to fashion his music in a manner of which Maritain would have been proud. After all, he is the composer who, in his own words, 'hopes to worship God with a little art if one has any'⁸⁹ and who discussed his own music in Maritain's terms of construction and order.

It is unlikely that Stravinsky consciously changed his compositional approach to conform with Maritain's thesis. Although the philosopher did not realise it, Stravinsky was always a highly ordered composer, and even if he did not rededicate himself to the church until 1926, even in 1914 Stravinsky refused to see Diaghilev set a mass as a ballet,⁹⁰ demonstrating the power religion had over him even at that time. What Maritain's philosophy did provide for Stravinsky was a way for the composer to articulate how he was able to worship God with his art without compromising his belief that music is powerless to express anything at all.⁹¹ Stravinsky did not actively use his music to try to express his faith; creating his music was not an act of expression but an act of worship. Like the cathedral builders who did not actively seek to create Christian emotion with their work but let their own Christian emotion shape their art, Stravinsky let his faith, shape his music. In this way we can see Stravinsky's faith in his music, irrespective of whether he sought to express it, and he was able to worship God with the art he had irrespective of that art's inability to express his beliefs. For Stravinsky music could not express; it was itself an expression.

What, then, did Maritain gain from their relationship? Just as his association with

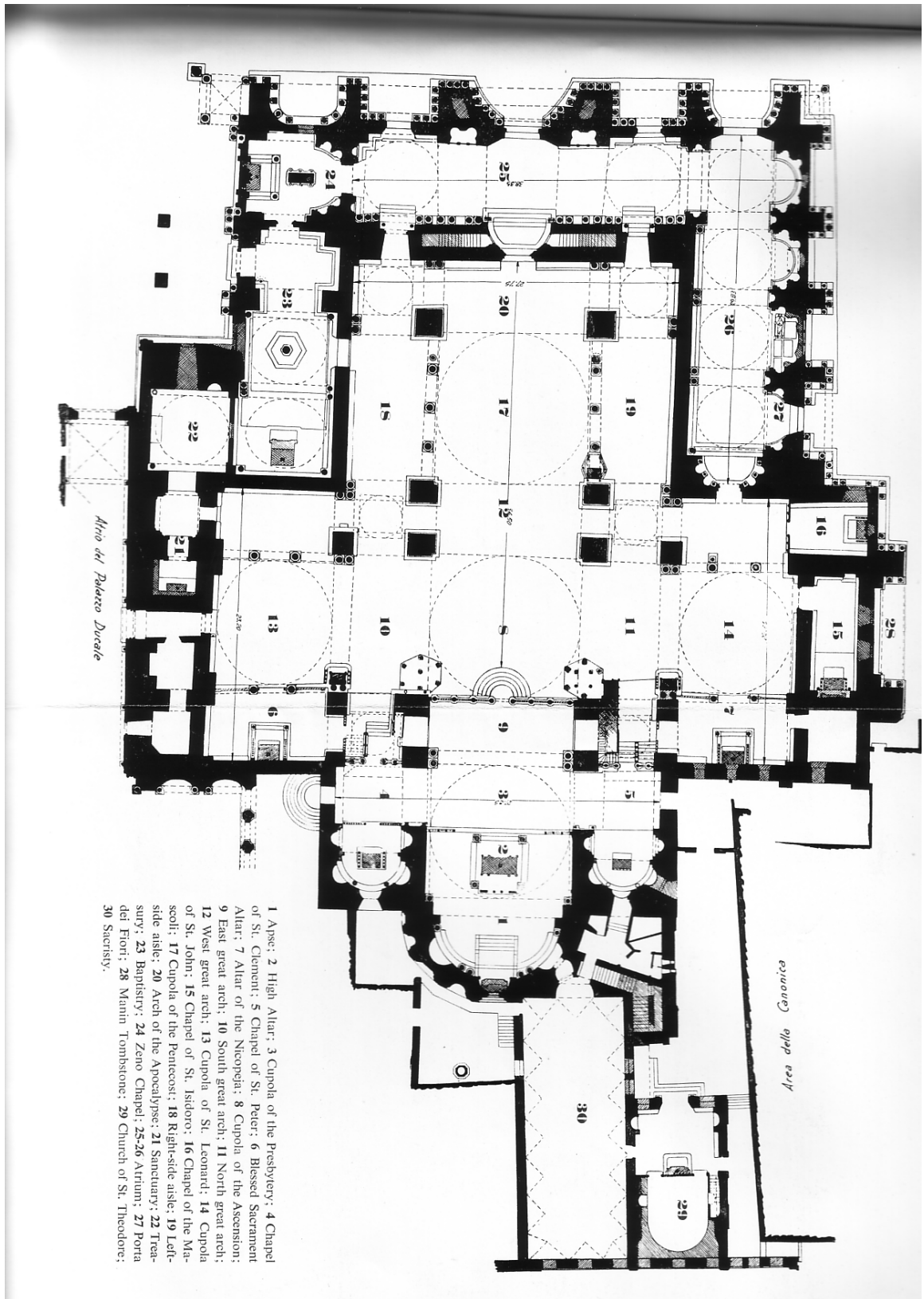
⁸⁹ Stravinsky and Craft (1961), *op. cit.*, 46.

⁹⁰ Stravinsky felt presenting the Mass as a ballet would be an inappropriate and frivolous use of the liturgy. White, *op. cit.*, 34.

⁹¹ Stravinsky, 1958, *op. cit.*, 53.

Cocteau gave Maritain greater force in the artistic world, so did his relationship with Stravinsky. Stravinsky was a name with which the whole Western world – the whole artistic and intellectual Western world at least – was familiar by the end of the 1920s, and Maritain's association with the composer lent his philosophy international prestige and power. More than that, in Stravinsky Maritain found a living example of the ideal Christian artifex he had previously exalted in Bach and the anonymous composers of Gregorian chant. Maritain's philosophy was no longer hundreds of years old – with Stravinsky along side it, it was modern, it was forceful, and it had the power to be as popular as the *enfant terrible* of Russian music was proving to be. Maritain's promotion of Stravinsky as the ideal Christian artifex holds firm, although it is doubtful his philosophy would have lasted the time that it did if he had not had Igor Stravinsky to enshrine in it.

Appendix One



- 1 Apse; 2 High Altar; 3 Cupola of the Presbytery; 4 Chapel of St. Clement; 5 Chapel of St. Peter; 6 Blessed Sacrament Altar; 7 Altar of the Nicopeia; 8 Cupola of the Ascension; 9 East great arch; 10 South great arch; 11 North great arch; 12 West great arch; 13 Cupola of St. Leonard; 14 Cupola of St. John; 15 Chapel of St. Isidoro; 16 Chapel of the Mascotti; 17 Cupola of the Pentecost; 18 Right-side aisle; 19 Left-side aisle; 20 Arch of the Apocalypse; 21 Sanctuary; 22 Treasury; 23 Baptistry; 24 Zeno Chapel; 25-26 Atrium; 27 Porta dei Fiori; 28 Marmi Tombstone; 29 Church of St. Theodore; 30 Sacristy.

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