“Mozart’s Smile – Messiaen’s Smile: The Joy and Eschatological Hope of Eternity in *Un sourire*”

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(Presented in English)

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Abstract
The bicentenary celebration of the death of Mozart in 1991 initiated various scholastic activities and musical performances all over the world. The Swiss Catholic priest and theologian, Hans Küng, presented a wonderful and inspiring lecture in tracing the Catholic origin of Mozart, which was engraved in Mozart’s heart even in the end encountering the harshness of struggle for survival. Commissioned by Marek Janowski in 1989 for the Mozart bicentenary, Messiaen revealed in the new composition that “[d]espite all his sorrows and sufferings, hunger, cold, incomprehension and closeness to death, Mozart never stopped smiling. His music smiles too. So I allowed myself, in all humility, to call my homage ‘A Smile’.” Messiaen solely composed *Un sourire* (*A Smile*), with no musical quotation of Mozart, as a personal tribute to Mozart’s cheerfulness through life of adversity. Even experiencing difficulties, struggles, and harshness in daily life, Mozart still cheered and smiled in his heart with his music. Based on Küng’s lecture, this paper gives a reflection of Mozart’s Catholic faith and identity, which become hints, though coincidentally, in Messiaen’s musical tribute. For examples, the simplicity of melody in the strings (without double basses) and the alternative formal structure are no doubt the musical symbols of Mozart. The colourful modes of limited transpositions and Messiaen’s beloved birdsongs are his personal smile at Mozart’s faith and joy. As an old man and a devout Catholic, Messiaen reveals his Catholic faith and eschatological hope of eternity, as much as homage to Mozart, through his musical timelessness and favourite colour-harmonies.

Biography

**Dr. Martin Lee** is one of the active music theorists in Hong Kong. Not only in the music discipline, but he also delivers research papers in the biblical and theological conferences ranging from local to international levels. His recent research project includes the application of music semiotics in Messiaen’s music with respect to his synaesthesia, Catholic and theological beliefs. Currently, Lee is the Programme Leader in Music in the Unit of Associate Degree Studies at the Hong Kong Institute of Education. He received his doctorate in music theory from the University at Buffalo, State University of New York. He was the recipient of College of Arts and Sciences Dean’s Fellowship, Teaching Assistantship and Graduate Tuition Scholarship during his doctoral study in the United States. Before studying at the University at Buffalo, Lee finished his postgraduate and undergraduate studies at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. Besides doing and teaching music theory, he has been violinist in various orchestras and ensembles. His major violin teachers include Dr. Movses Pogossian, Ms. Ho Hong Ying, Mr. Wong Wai Ming, Mr. Ng Ka Ming, and Mr. Wong Chiu Tan.

In addition to his heavy school-duty and ongoing research, Lee is a programme-note writer for professional musicians and music groups. He also serves as an examiner reading music scripts in the diploma programme of the International Baccalaureate Organization. He is the choir conductor of S.K.H. All Saints’ Cathedral. He enjoys cooking, eating, reading, and photo-shooting during his leisure time. His wife, Wong Wing Yin, is a harpsichordist but she also teaches and plays the piano and oboe.