

# Mel Bonis (1858 - 1937)

## *La Cathédrale Blessée* (1915)

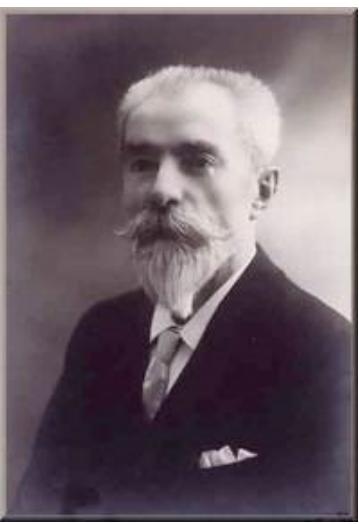
for piano (2 hands!), arranged for Wind Octet by Toby Miller (2022)

**Transposed version** (A minor): Clarinets in B<sup>b</sup>

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](http://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](http://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](http://mel-bonis.com))

# La Cathédrale Blessée

for piano, arr. for wind octet by Toby Miller  
Score (transposed: instrumental pitch)

Op 107

Mel Bonis

**Grave, majestueux**  $\text{♩} = 72$

*molto legato*

Oboe 1

Oboe 2

Clarinet 1 in B♭

Clarinet 2 in B♭

Horn 1 in F

Horn 2 in F

Bassoon 1

Bassoon 2

Musical score for orchestra and piano, page 2, measures 5-9.

**Measure 5:** *sempre legato*. Dynamics: *f*, *p*; *pp*; *p*.

**Measure 6:** Dynamics: *f*, *p*; *pp*; *p*.

**Measure 7:** Dynamics: *f*, *p*; *pp*; *p*.

**Measure 8:** Dynamics: *p*; *pp*; *p*.

**Measure 9:** Dynamics: *ff*; *p*; *mf*—*f*.

**Measure 10:** Dynamics: *ff*; *p*; *f*.

**Measure 11:** Dynamics: *ff*; *p*; *f*.

**Measure 12:** Dynamics: *ff*; *p*; *f*.

**Measure 13:** Dynamics: *ff*; *p*; *f*.

**Measure 14:** Dynamics: *ff*; *p*; *f*.

**Measure 15:** Dynamics: *ff*; *p*; *f*.

12

*cresc. molto*

*p*      *p*      *p*      *p*      *p*      *p*

*p*      *p*      *p*      *p*      *p*      *p*

*p*      *p*      *p*      *p*      *p*      *p*

*f*      *p*      *p*      *p*      *p*      *p*

*f*      *p*      *p*      *p*      *p*      *p*

*ff*

*serrez*    ...    ...    ...    ...    rit.

17

*ff*

*ff*

*mf*

*mf*    *ff*

*mf*

*ff*

*ff*

*ff*

*ff*

*ff*

*ff*

poco animato

21

6  
4

*p*

*p* σ

*p*

*p*

*p*

Tempo

23

*p* cresc.

*f*

*cresc.*

*p* cresc.

*f*

*cresc.*

*cresc.*

*cresc.*

*f*

*cresc.*

*p* σ

*f*

*cresc.*

Musical score for orchestra and piano, page 27, measures 27-32. The score consists of five staves: Violin 1, Violin 2, Viola, Cello, and Double Bass. The key signature changes between B-flat major (measures 27-28), A major (measures 29-30), and G major (measures 31-32). Measure 27 starts with a forte dynamic (ff) in B-flat major. Measure 28 begins with a forte dynamic (ff) in A major. Measures 29-30 start with a forte dynamic (ff) in G major. Measures 31-32 begin with a forte dynamic (ff) in G major. The score includes various dynamics such as *dim.* (diminuendo), *p* (pianissimo), and *b.p.* (bassoon part). Measure 27 ends with a repeat sign and measure 28 begins with a forte dynamic (ff) in B-flat major. Measures 29-30 start with a forte dynamic (ff) in A major. Measures 31-32 begin with a forte dynamic (ff) in G major. The score includes various dynamics such as *dim.* (diminuendo), *p* (pianissimo), and *b.p.* (bassoon part).

33

Vivo [♩ = 84]

*pp*

*ff*

*p*

*pp*

6

## Largo Grave [♩ = 56]

34

*p*

*mp*

*p*

37

*cresc.*

*p cresc.*

*cresc.*

*p* *cresc.*

39

41

44

Vivo

Largo

5

46

Vivo

Largo

pp

p

p

p

5

5

mf

48

**Vivo**

**Largo**

49

50

**Vivo**

Musical score for orchestra, page 51, measures 1-2. The score consists of six staves. Measures 1-2 begin with a dynamic of *mf*. Measure 1 features a melodic line on the top staff with slurs and grace notes. Measure 2 shows a transition with a dynamic of *f*, followed by *mf*. Measure 3 begins with a dynamic of *f*. Measure 4 concludes with a dynamic of *p*.

Musical score for orchestra and piano, page 52, measures 1-10. The score consists of six staves. The top staff is for the piano (two hands). The second staff is for the first violin. The third staff is for the second violin. The fourth staff is for viola. The fifth staff is for cello. The bottom staff is for double bass. The key signature is one flat. Measure 1: Piano: forte. Violins: eighth-note chords. Viola: eighth-note chords. Cello: eighth-note chords. Double Bass: eighth-note chords. Measure 2: Piano: forte. Violins: eighth-note chords. Viola: eighth-note chords. Cello: eighth-note chords. Double Bass: eighth-note chords. Measure 3: Piano: forte. Violins: eighth-note chords. Viola: eighth-note chords. Cello: eighth-note chords. Double Bass: eighth-note chords. Measure 4: Piano: forte. Violins: eighth-note chords. Viola: eighth-note chords. Cello: eighth-note chords. Double Bass: eighth-note chords. Measure 5: Piano: forte. Violins: eighth-note chords. Viola: eighth-note chords. Cello: eighth-note chords. Double Bass: eighth-note chords. Measure 6: Piano: forte. Violins: eighth-note chords. Viola: eighth-note chords. Cello: eighth-note chords. Double Bass: eighth-note chords. Measure 7: Piano: forte. Violins: eighth-note chords. Viola: eighth-note chords. Cello: eighth-note chords. Double Bass: eighth-note chords. Measure 8: Piano: forte. Violins: eighth-note chords. Viola: eighth-note chords. Cello: eighth-note chords. Double Bass: eighth-note chords. Measure 9: Piano: forte. Violins: eighth-note chords. Viola: eighth-note chords. Cello: eighth-note chords. Double Bass: eighth-note chords. Measure 10: Piano: forte. Violins: eighth-note chords. Viola: eighth-note chords. Cello: eighth-note chords. Double Bass: eighth-note chords.

55

56

57

58

59 [poco accel.] ... ...

60

61

62

## **Tempo 1]**

Musical score for five staves, measures 1-5:

- Staff 1: Treble clef, 6/4 time. Measures 1-5 show eighth-note patterns: measure 1 (open), measure 2 (solid), measure 3 (solid), measure 4 (solid), measure 5 (solid). Measure 6 is a repeat sign.
- Staff 2: Treble clef, 6/4 time. Measures 1-5 show eighth-note patterns: measure 1 (open), measure 2 (solid), measure 3 (solid), measure 4 (solid), measure 5 (solid). Measure 6 is a repeat sign.
- Staff 3: Treble clef, 6/4 time. Measures 1-5 show eighth-note patterns: measure 1 (open), measure 2 (solid), measure 3 (solid), measure 4 (solid), measure 5 (solid). Measure 6 is a repeat sign.
- Staff 4: Treble clef, 6/4 time. Measures 1-5 show eighth-note patterns: measure 1 (open), measure 2 (solid), measure 3 (solid), measure 4 (solid), measure 5 (solid). Measure 6 is a repeat sign.
- Staff 5: Bass clef, 6/4 time. Measures 1-5 show eighth-note patterns: measure 1 (open), measure 2 (solid), measure 3 (solid), measure 4 (solid), measure 5 (solid). Measure 6 is a repeat sign.

65

*mp* 6 6 6 6 6 6 *p*

*p* 8 *p* *p*

rit.

...   ...   ...

67

*pp* *p* *pp* *p* *pp*

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

## Oboe 1 - transposed

Op 107

Mel Bonis

## Grave, majestueux ♩ = 72

*molto legato*

(others)

*sempre legato*

Musical score for orchestra, page 10, measures 11-12. The score consists of two staves. The top staff shows a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp, and a common time signature. It features woodwind entries: first oboe (measures 11-12), then bassoon (measures 11-12), then flute (measures 11-12). The dynamics are *mf* (measure 11) and *f* (measure 12). The bottom staff shows a bass clef, a key signature of one sharp, and a common time signature. It features double bass entries: first double bass (measures 11-12), then cello (measures 11-12), then double bass again (measures 11-12). The dynamics are *p* (measure 11) and *p* (measure 12).

6

*pp*

*p*

*ff* (w Cl2)

10

*p*

*mf* < *f*

*p*

(Cl Hns) (Bn2)

(Bns)

*cresc. molto*

*mf* < *ff*

**poco animato**

21 (Hns) 2 -

*p cresc.* — **f**

(Bns) **Tempo**  
(others)

*cresc.* —

27 (others)  
(Bns) *dim.* (Bn2 off;  
Cl1 hold) (Cl1 ad lib)

**Vivo** [♩ = 84]

**Largo Grave [♩ = 56]**

(Cl1  
Hn2)

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

Vivo Largo

Vivo

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

Largo

Vivo Largo

Vivo

47 (Cl1 w Bns) (Cl1 w Bns) (Cl2 w Bn2)  
pp (Bn1 ad lib) (Bn1 ad lib) (Bn1 ad lib)

Largo Poco a poco accel. al Tempo 1

52 (Cl2 (Cl1 (Bns) Bn1) Bn2) (Hn2 (others) Bn2) mf pp

[poco accel.

57 (w Cl2) p mf (Cl1 lead) ...  
f p rit. ...

Tempo 1]

62 (Cl2 Hn2 Bn2) 2 (Obs Cls Hns) f ff p rit. 2

# La Cathédrale Blessée

for piano, arr. for wind octet by Toby Miller

Oboe 2 - transposed

Op 107

Mel Bonis

**Grave, majestueux**  $\text{♩} = 72$

*molto legato*

9

13

19

**Tempo**

24

28

**Vivo** [ $\text{♩} = 84$ ]

(Bn2 off;  
Cl1 hold)

(Cl1 ad lib)

## Largo Grave [♩ = 56]

Vivo Largo

## Largo

Vivo Largo

Vivo

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

52 (Bns) (Cl1 Bn2) (Hn2 (others) Bn2)  
(Cl2 Bn1)

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

[poco accel.

rit. . . . . Tempo 1]

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

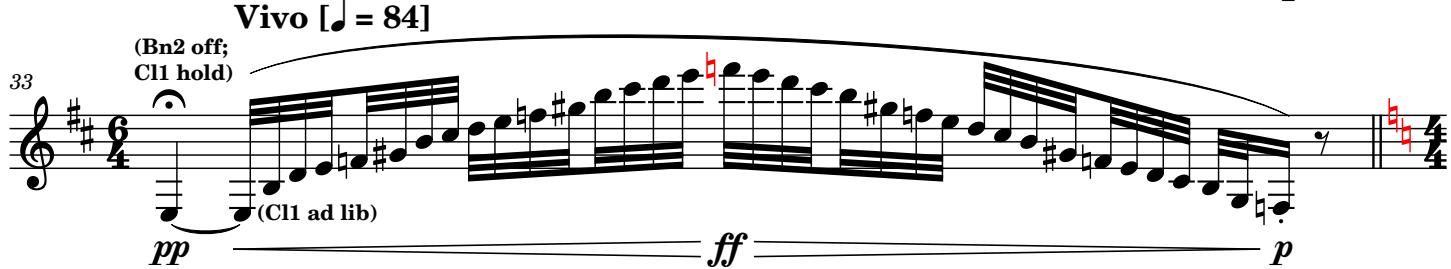
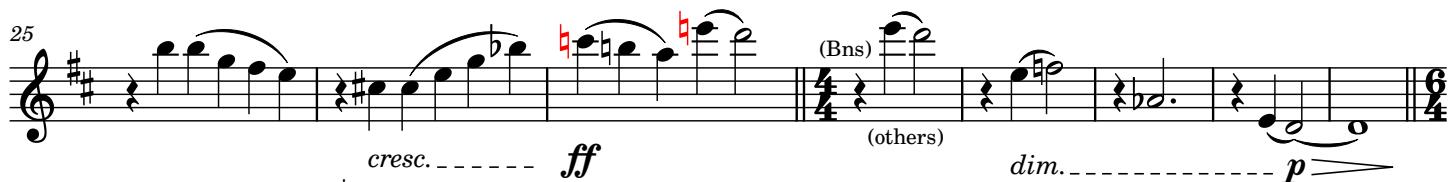
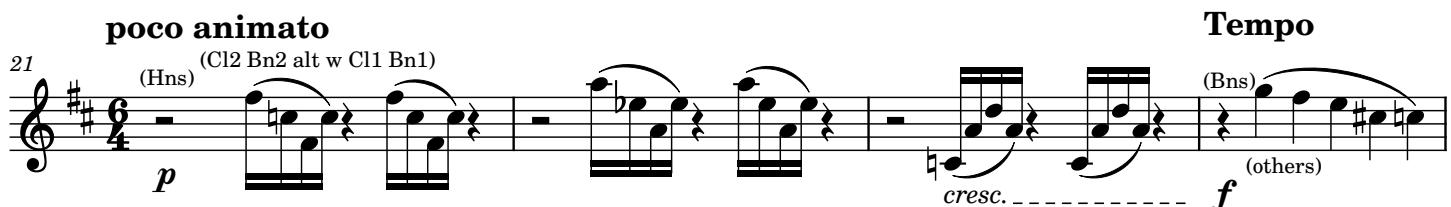
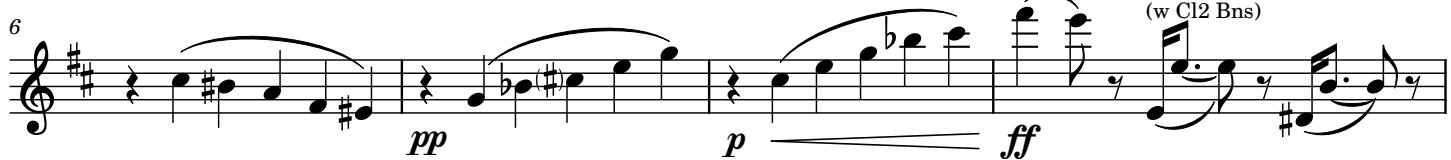
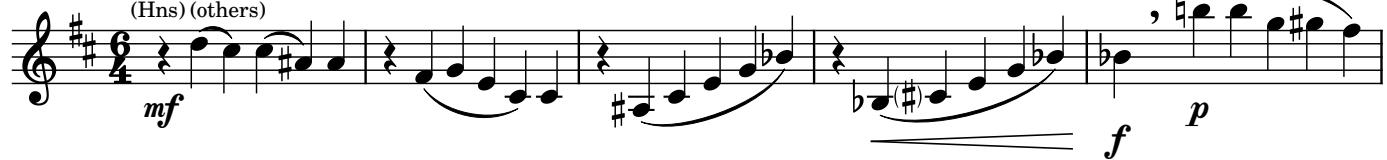
Clarinet 1 in B♭ - transposed

Op 107

Mel Bonis

**Grave, majestueux ♩ = 72**

*molto legato*  
(Hns) (others)



**Largo Grave [♩ = 56]**

**(Cl1**



38 (Cls) (+Bn1) (+Ob2) (-Bn2) *cresc.* *mf*  
 41 (Ob2+Hns to fore) **Vivo Largo** **Vivo Largo**  
 44 (Bn1 ad lib) **Vivo** (Bn1 ad lib) **Largo** *p*  
 48 (Cl1 w Bns) (Bn1 ad lib) **Vivo** (Cl1 w Bns) (Bn1 ad lib) **Largo** *p*  
 50 **Poco a poco** **accel. al**  
 51 (Cl1 w Bn2) (Bn1) (+Bn2) (Bns) (Cl2 (Cl1 Bn1) Bn2) (others)  
 (Cl2 w Bn2) *f* *mf* *p* (Hn2 Bn2)  
**Tempo 1** *mf pp* *mf* *p* *f*  
 54 [poco accel. ...] ... ....  
 rit. **Tempo 1** *p* *mf* (Cl1 lead) *f*  
 63 (Cl2 Hn2 Bn2) *ff* *mf* (Cl1 6plets Bn1  $\frac{1}{8}$ s) 6 6 6 6 6  
 65 (Obs Hn2 Cls Bn1 Hns) *mp* 6 6 6 6 6 *p*  
 67 (Bn2) (Bn2) (Bn1 lead) rit. ... ... (Bn2 lead) *pp*

# La Cathédrale Blessée

for piano, arr. for wind octet by Toby Miller

Clarinet 2 in B♭ - transposed

Op 107

Mel Bonis

**Grave, majestueux** ♩ = 72

*molto legato*

(Hns)(others)

*mf*

*pp* *p* *ff* *f* *p* *semper legato*

*pp* *p* *ff* *w Ob1* *w Cl1 Bns*

*p* *f* *p* *pp* *(Cls Hns)* *(Bn2)* *(Bns)*

*mf* *(Cl1 lead)* *(Ob1 lead)* *ff* *(w Ob1 Cl1)* *rit.*

**poco animato**

*p* *(Hns)* *(Cl2 Bn2 alt w Cl1 Bn1)*

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

**Tempo**

*ff* *(Bns)(others)* *dim.* *cresc.*

*(Bn2 off;* *Cl1 hold)* *(Cl1 ad lib)* **Vivo** [♩ = 84] **Largo Grave** [♩ = 56] *Hn1 to fore* *(Cl1 (Bn2) Hn2)* *(Bn1 Hn2)*

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

41 (Ob2+Hns to fore)

**Vivo Largo**

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

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

51 *(Cl2 w Bn2)* *(Cl1 w Bn2)* *(Bn1)* *(+Bn2)* *(Bns)* *(Cl2 Bn1)* *(Cl1 Bn2)* *mf* *f* *p*

**accel. al Tempo 1**

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

58 *(w Ob1)* *(w Cl1)* *(w Bns)* **[poco accel. ... 2 ... ... rit. ...]** *p* *f ff*

**Tempo 1]**

64 *(Cl2 Hn2 (Cl1 6plets Bn2) Bn1 Hns)* *(Obs Hn2 Cls Bn1 Hns)* *(Bn2)* *rit. (Bn1 lead)* *(Bn2)* *(Bn2 lead)* *p pp p pp*

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

Horn 1 in F - transposed

Op 107

Mel Bonis

**Grave, majestueux**  $\text{♩} = 72$

*molto legato*

(Hns)(others)

8

13

(Cls Hns) (Bn2) (Bns) cresc. molto (Cl1 lead) ...

18

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

24

Tempo (Bns) (others) f cresc. ff

28

(others) dim. p mp

Vivo [♩ = 84] Largo Grave [♩ = 56]

(Bn2 off; Cl1 hold) (Cl1 ad lib) (Hn1 Hn2) to fore (Bn2)

36

(Bn1 Hn2) (Cls) (+Bn1) (-Bn2) f

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

**Largo** **Vivo Largo** **Vivo** (+Bn2)  
 (Cl1 w Bns) (Bn1) (Cl1 w Bn2)  
 (Bn1 ad lib) (Cl2 w Bn2)

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

52 (Bns) (Cl2) (Cl1) (Bn2) (Hn2 others)  
 (Bn1) (Bn2) (Bn2)

56

[**poco accel.** ... ... rit. ...]

59 **mf** (Cl1 lead) **f** **ff**

**Tempo 1]**

64 (Cl2 Hn2 Bn2) (Cl1 6plets Bn1 6lets) (Obs Cls Hns)

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

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

Horn 2 in F - transposed

Op 107

Mel Bonis

**Grave, majestueux**  $\text{♩} = 72$

*molto legato*  
(Hns) (others)

*sempre legato*

*mf* > *mf* > *mf* > *mf* > *p* > *pp* *p* < *ff*

10

*cresc. molto*  
(Cl Hns) (Bn2) (Bns)

*p* *p* *pp* *mf* < *ff*

17

**serrez** *(Cl1 lead)* ... *(Ob1 lead)* ... ... ... ... ... **rit.**

*mf* *ff*

21

**poco animato** *(Hns) (Cl2 Bn2 alt w Cl1 Bn1)* **Tempo** *(Bns) (others)*

*p* *p* *p* *f*

26

*cresc.* *ff* *(others)* *(Bns)* *dim.* *p*

33

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

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

36

*(Bn1 Hn2)*

38

45

49

54

60

64

67

# La Cathédrale Blessée

Bassoon 1 - transposed

Op 107

Mel Bonis

**Grave, majestueux**  $\text{♩} = 72$

*molto legato*

(others)

**1** (Hns) *mf* *sempre legato*

**5** *f p* *pp* *p*

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

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

**16** *serrez* (Cl1 lead) (Ob1 lead) *ff* (Hns w Bns)

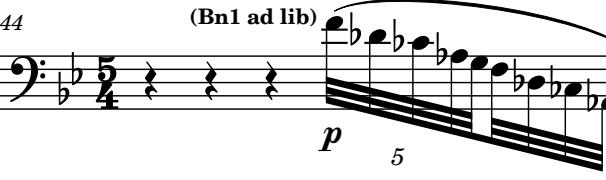
**20** *ff* rit. *poco animato* (Hns) (Cl2 Bn2 alt w Cl1 Bn1)

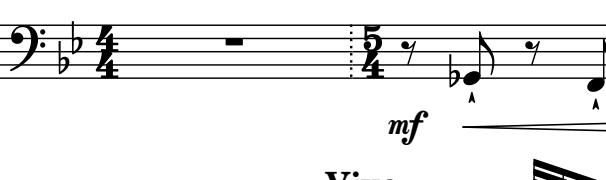
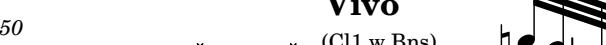
**24** **Tempo** (Bns) *f* (others) *cresc.* *ff* **Vivo** [ $\text{♩} = 84$ ] **Largo Grave** [ $\text{♩} = 56$ ]

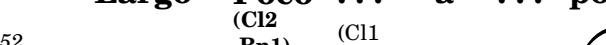
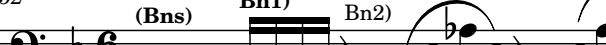
**29** *dim.* *p* (Cl1 ad lib) (Bn2 off; Cl1 hold) (Hn1 to fore) (Bn2) (Cl1 Hn2)

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

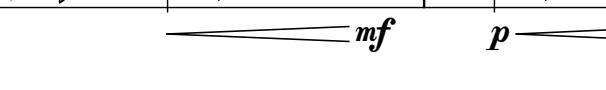
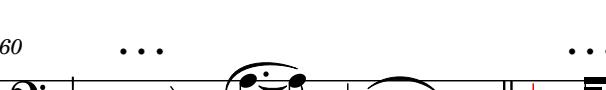
**40** *mf* (Ob2+Hns to fore)

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

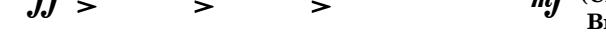
**47** **Largo** 
**Vivo** (Bn1 ad lib) 
**Largo** 

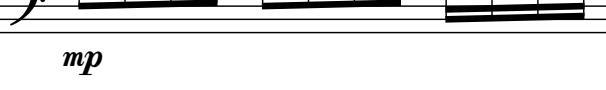
**50** **Vivo** (Cl1 w Bns) 
**(Bn1 ad lib)** 
**(Bn1)** 
**(Cl2 w Bn2)** 
**(+Bn2)** 
**Largo** **Poco ... a ... poco** 
**accel.** 
**al** 
**Tempo 1** 

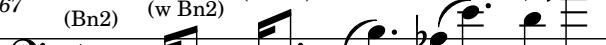
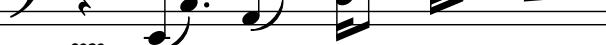
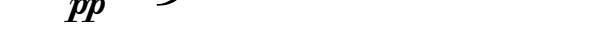
**52** (Bns) 
**(Cl2 Bn1)** 
**(Cl1 Bn2)** 
**(Hn2 (others) Bn2)** 
**mf** 

**56** 
**p** 
**f** 
**mp** 
**[poco accel.]** 
**(Cl1 lead)** 

**60** 
**...** 
**...** 
**Tempo 1]** 

**63** 
**ff** 
**mf** 
**(Cl1 6plets Bn1 8th notes)** 

**65** 
**mp** 
**(Hn2 Bn1)** 
**(Obs Cls Hns)** 

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



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

**Vivo Largo**

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

**Largo**

49

**Vivo**  
 (Cl1 w Bns) (Bn1 ad lib) (Cl2 w Bn2) (Bn1) (+Bn2)

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

52 (Cl1)  
 (Bns) (Cl2 Bn2)  
 (Bn1)

**[poco accel.] ...**

57

(Cl1 lead)

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

61

(Cl1 6plets)  
 (Cl2 Bn1 6ths)  
 (Hn2 Bn2 Bn2)

**rit.** **...** **...** **...** **(Bn2 lead)** **...** **...** **...** **Tempo 1]**

65 (Obs  
 (Hn2 Cls  
 Bn1 Hns) (Bn2)  
 ^)

**rit.** **...** **...** **...** **(Bn2 lead)** **...** **...** **...**