

Towards a Critical Edition of Darius Milhaud's
La création du monde
81a

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Knowing the Score
MUHST 519
June 13, 2016

LA CRÉATION DU MONDE 81A

The Piece

La création du monde, Op. 81a is a ballet composed by Darius Milhaud which outlines the creation of the world as depicted in African folk mythology. It was dedicated to Paul Collaer, a Belgian musicologist, pianist and conductor and Roger Désormière, a French conductor. The libretto was written by Blaise Cendrars and commissioned by the Ballets suédois. It stands today as a milestone in the wind band repertoire because it was one of the first pieces to fuse elements of jazz with Western Art music, predating Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* by a year.

La création was written within a few weeks between May and June of 1923¹, and premiered four months later at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées on October 23, 1923. There exists a version of *81a* for four-hands that was published in the same year.

Op. 81b (1926) is written for a piano quintet and is attributed in the bibliography of Miller's dissertation to being written for the Pro Arte chamber ensemble, but the Bibliothèque nationale de France contradicts this, stating that the premiere of this arrangement was performed by the Kolisch Quartet at the Festival de Baden-Baden in 1927.²

Background

Working with the score of Milhaud's *La création du monde, op. 81a*, one will find errata including inconsistencies between similar voices, similar musical material and rehearsal numbers. The score and parts (parts available through rental only) are published by Éditions Max

¹ (Yang 1997)

² (Bibliothèque nationale de France n.d.)(Miller Jr. 2011) (Jacobi 1930)

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Eschig, originally Max Eschig & Cie Editeurs. Eschig was a French publisher of Czech birth who published many of the leading French composers of the twentieth century. Both *Op. 81a* and *81b* (the piano quintet arrangement) were originally published under Eschig, but the reprints of *81a* in 1929 would have been after Eschig's death when the company became publicly listed and rebranded "Éditions Max Eschig", then run by Eugène Cools until 1936.³

Lack of Manuscripts

In a thesis submitted for his Doctor of Musical Arts degree in 2011⁴, Robert Ward Miller found that the manuscript score of Milhaud's *La Création du Monde* cannot be found, nor has its existence been mentioned by Milhaud or his wife in interviews or published correspondence. The score is not with the Bibliothèque nationale de France, the National Library of Sweden, the British Library, the Répertoire International des Sources Musicales, or other collections indexed by the WorldCat, nor is it found in Milhaud's private collections at Mills College or with Universal Music Group, the conglomerate that owns Éditions Max Eschig.

Many of Milhaud's scores were thrown into the fireplace during a raid by Nazi officers, and the original manuscripts for *81a* and *81b* were possibly burned in that episode.⁵

Prioritizing Sources

FH – Four-hands version. 1929. Éditions Max Eschig.

PQ – Piano Quintet version. 1926. Max Eschig & Cie Editeurs.

³ (Nicols n.d.)

⁴ Miller 2011. Robert Ward Miller. "Darius Milhaud's *La Création du Monde*: the conductor's guide to performance." DMA (Doctor of Musical Arts) thesis, University of Iowa, pp. 25-26. Retrieved from <http://ir.uiowa.edu/etd/2746> on April 18, 2016.

⁵ (Miller. 2011)

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FO – Full Orchestration version. 1929. Éditions Max Eschig.

Given that no manuscripts can be found, one is left only with the two 1929 publications of *81a*, and the 1926 publication of *81b*. There are many substantive differences between *81a* and *81b* with large segments taken out or added in. The four-hand version is the only one of the three that contains descriptions of the scenes as written by the librettist Blaise Cendrars, between the title page and the first page of music.

Although it is conceivable that Milhaud started with the four-hand version as a template from which to orchestrate, the four-hand version has many slurs and accents that are largely absent from the other two versions, which leads one to believe that it was revised after the other two versions were written. It is unlikely that Milhaud carelessly left out so many details as he orchestrated the piece. Several discrepancies between the FH and the FO version cannot be attributed to a different requirement based on orchestration differences, and are obviously errata, such as:

Overture:

- Bar 46, in violin 1 and cello the accents suddenly disappear in FO despite continuing in the FH
- Bar 59, in the clarinet line the slur has been shifted from the FH to include beat one, where in subsequent figures the slur always begins on the second eighth-note

I:

- Bar 6, in the bass part the slur over the triplet to the next beat has been shortened to only the first two notes, despite the slur pattern in subsequent responses such as the trombone in bar 11, alto sax in bar 16, and trumpet in bar 21

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III:

- Bar 1, in the bass part, “pizz” is absent despite the cello requirement to play pizzicato and the requirement to play staccato in the corresponding piano part in the FH version.

This editor has therefore used the four-hand version as the primary exemplar and tracked the discrepancies between it and the two other versions.

Work to Be Continued

Given the revered place that this piece holds in the wind band literature and the number of performances it garners, the creation of a critical edition that matches score to parts, and consults with the four-hand and piano quintet version is warranted.

The percussion part for this edition should incorporate the significantly reduced percussion parts as proposed by Miller in his dissertation. In the original, the part for the drum set is divided into five staves at the most, and eight staves in the conductor’s score; this has been reduced to a double staff by Miller to be played by one percussionist. The timpani part is originally in two staves and Miller reduces it to one, to be played by a second percussionist. Miller actually created a combined percussion score that only showed both parts if both players were playing simultaneously. This percussion part should be amended based on the findings of the four-hand and piano quintet version.⁶

Works Cited

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⁶ (Girsberger 2000)(Society 1973)(Rose 1987)(Miller 2014)

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Table of Discrepancies

bar #	Discrepancies from FH to PQ	Discrepancies between FH to FO
Overture	renamed "I - Prelude"	no title
1-7	split and crossed voices between 1st violin and alto	added "chante" in bar 1
1, 10, 12, 22	raised beat 1 by 3rd	raised beat 1 by 3rd (figure is absent in bar 10)
1-9		omitted 3 bar slurs in alto
3,6,9		added slur in alto
9		shortened decresc.
10		shortened cresc.
11		added cresc.
12-17	omitted slurs	
13-18		omitted slur in ato
16	extended decrescendo	
17-18	slur shifted	
18		shortened decresc.
19-20	omitted cresc.	shifted cresc.
21	omitted slur	omitted cresc.
23		omitted accent
23-24	omitted cresc.	omitted cresc.
25	slur shifted	
27-29	omitted slur	omitted slur
29-30		shifted "cédez"
31	melody 8ve	
31-39	omitted slurs	omitted slurs
35	extended cresc.	
36		shortened cresc.
38,40	omitted accents	omitted accent in 40
41-46		discrepancies in accents between identical lines
42-43		shortened cresc.

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42-45	omitted slurs	
46	added cresc.	omitted accents
47	changed ff to fff	
48-50		omitted accents
50-55	eighth note passage rewritten	
52-53	shifted decresc.	
53		omitted decresc.
53-55	shifted slur	
56-57	shifted/omitted slurs	
56-63	added grace notes	
59		shifted slur
65-67		omitted 3 bar slurs
66-67		omitted decresc.
68	mf changed to ff	
68-70	omitted cresc.	
68-72		omitted accents
74-75	added accents	
75-76	omitted slurs	
76	omitted "cédez"	omitted "cédez"
77	omitted "mouv't"	omitted "mouv't"
77-78	shifted cresc.	
79-80		shifted cresc.
78-82	shifted/omitted slurs	
81	omitted p	shortened decresc.
83	omitted "très calme"	omitted "très calme"
83		changed ppp to pp
87	omitted slur	discrepancy in slurs between piano and low cello/bass
89	omitted "très calme"	omitted "très calme"
95	omitted notes on beat 4	
96	added p	
103	omitted "très calme"	
104-105	shortened decresc.	shortened decresc.

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105	omitted p	
106	omitted slur, fermata and "rideau"	omitted slur, ppp, shifted fermata
	I renamed "II - Fugue"	I
0	omitted 2 bars	
4,9	shifted slur	shifted slur (not in 4)
6		shifted slurs, omitted accent
11	added slur	
12		omitted accent and slur
13	omitted slur	
16	added mp	
17-18	shifted slur	
18-20	omitted cresc.	
19-20		shifted slur
21		shortened cresc.
21-23,25-34,36	omitted slurs	
22	omitted "très attaqué et sec"	
22-26	shortened sting notes	shortened sting notes, omitted accents
24	shifted cresc.	changed mf to ff, omitted "très attaqué et sec"
24-33	omitted accents	omitted accents
26-27		omitted 2 bar cresc.
30-32	added grace notes	
35		shifted slur
36		shortened cresc.
36-38		omitted accents
38,42-55	omitted/shifted slurs	
39		added accent
41		omitted slur
42-46		shortened sting notes, omitted accents
44	shifted cello note one beat later	shifted slur, added accents
44-55	added grace notes	
47-48		shortened cresc.

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48-53		shifted slurs
53		celli and bass should match piano
54		omitted "rall", and "subit."
55		omitted decresc.
56	added "sans" to ralentir	
56	extended decresc.	
58	added bar of whole notes	
	II renamed "III - Romance"	II
0	omitted 34 bars	
1	added "tendre et doux", "rall"	
2	added fermata	
4	omitted "très tendre"	
6	added slur	
9-10,12,19	omitted slurs	
12-13		omitted decresc.
17-18		omitted slur
21		omitted decresc.
21-27		shifted slurs
22		shortened decresc.
22,26,28-29,32	added slur	
26-27		shortened cresc.
27-28, 31	omitted slur	
28		omitted decresc.
30-34		omitted slur
32		shifted decresc.
33	omitted 3 bars	
33	added p	
35-50	omitted/shifted slurs	
35,37, 39-43		shifted slur
38	changed eighth note to quarter note	
43	shortened cresc.	

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46-47, 50	omitted tenuto	
48-49		added slur
49	shortened decresc.	
50		added cresc.
51-83	8 bars rewritten as the following 33 bars	
57-60		shifted slurs
67		added pp
70-71		omitted slurs
82		shifted "cédez"
83		shortened decresc.
84-92		omitted 2 bar slurs
87-88		shortened cresc.
89-92		omitted crescendi
	III renamed "IV - Scherzo"	III
1	rewritten 8ve higher	rewritten 8ve higher
1	omitted "vif", "très sec"	cello missing "pizz"
1-6,9-16	omitted accents	
8		omitted slur
13	added slur	
13-14	omitted tenuto	omitted tenuto
14,16	omitted slurs and accents	
16	added grace note	
16-17	shifted cresc.	added slurs, omitted cresc.
17	shifted slurs	
19-21,24-44	omitted accents	omitted accents
25-30	shortened half notes	
25-31	omitted slurs	
30		omitted cresc. in low strings
31		omitted slur
32	added run	
33-39		omitted accents

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34-41	omitted slurs	
37-39		shifted slurs
40		omitted slur
41	omitted cresc.	shifted slurs
41	added decresc.	
42-44, 47-51, 53, 55-61		omitted accents
44	added mp	
45-46	added cresc.	
46	added "gardez"	added f
46	added accent	omitted "croisez" and cresc.
47	changed tenuto to accent and slur	
49-51,53	omitted accents	
51-52	omitted cresc.	shortened cresc.
55-67	37 bars rewritten as following 13	
65-66		shortened decresc.
71		added cresc.
72, 74, 76		shifted slurs
72-80		omitted large phrase markings/slurs
80, 82		shifted cresc.
83		added cresc.
84-85		shortened cresc.
86-88		added pp
91		added cresc.
IV	renamed to "V - Final"	IV
0	added 15 bars	
5		shifted slur
12		should be rehearsal 36
16	changed p to mp	
16	omitted "très chanté"	
17	half notes shortened	
17-35	added tenuto marks, sf and decresc.	

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20		shortened cresc.
21-22		shifted slur, omitted accents
22		shortened decresc.
23-24		shortened cresc.
25		omitted accent, shortened cresc.
30	possibly missing tenuto	
23, 27, 31, 35, 51, 56	rhythm changed in violin 2	uses the rhythm changed in the string quartet version
33-34		shortened cresc.
34-35		omitted cresc.
36	omitted accent	
38-39	omitted cresc.	shortened and omitted decrescendi
40	omitted accent and slur	
40-41	added cresc.	
41-47	slurs added	
43		added slur
44		shortened decresc.
45		omitted slur
48-49	shortened cresc.	
52	lengthened decresc.	
53-54	omitted slur	
55		shifted "cédez" off of beat 3
56	omitted slur	
56-58		shifted slurs, omitted accents
61		omitted "cédez"
60-65	shortened held notes	
64,67,70		should have matching accents
65	added run	
65-70		omitted 3 bar slurs
66	omitted accents	
66	changed mp to mf	
71	added run	
71	omitted tenuto	

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73		p changed to mp
74-75		shortened cresc.
74-77		added slurs to sax part
77	shifted cresc.	
79,82,89	added notes in beat 4	
89	added mp	shifted "animez", omitted cresc.
89-90	shifted cresc.	
91	added run	
92-96	omitted accents	
92	added pick up notes	
93-94		added decresc.
97		shortened cresc.
97-98		added accents, changed tenuto to accent
97-102	omitted tenuto	
97-103	added new material in piano part	
101-102		omitted slur
104-106	shifted cresc.	
105-107	added slurs	
107-109	omitted slurs	
108-109	added decresc. and new material	
108-109	shifted "cédez"	
109-110		omitted hairpins
110-115	replaced 16 bars with these 6	
111-141		omitted accents
114		omitted slur
116-146	shortened length of sting notes, omitted accents	
116	changed mp to mf	
116-147	added slurs and tenuto to cello line	
116, 119	omitted accents	
121	added accent	
123-125	shortened slur	
124-125	shifted cresc.	

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126-127	added slur	126: added slur, 127: shortened decresc.
127,135,140	changed rhythm of cello part	
128	omitted f	
130-131, 133	added slurs	
131-133	omitted slur	131: omitted accent, 132: added slur
133-134	added accents	shortened cresc.
135, 143-4, 146-7, 149, 153, 155		added slur and accent
136	shifted sting by 1 beat	
136	omitted accent	
137	omitted f	changed accent to tenuto
136-137	shifted decresc.	
138	shifted accent and slur	added tenuto
140	omitted slur	
140-141	shifted slur	
142	omitted accent	
142-144-145		omitted slurs
143		added slur
145-146	omitted slurs and accents	
145-6		added accents, slurs
147	changed accent to tenuto	
147-148	added accents and slur	
149	added accent	
149	omitted slurs	
151-152	added accents	
152, 156, 158, 161-165	shifted slurs	
155		shifted "cédez" from beat 2
158-9		shortened decresc.
159		shifted "très rall."
160	lengthened cresc.	
160	added accents	
164	added pick up notes	
163-165	shifted decresc.	

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	V continued as same movement	V
1 (166)	added slurs, omitted tenuto	added slurs, omitted tenuto
4-5 (169-170)	omitted slur	
10-14 (175-9)	shifted slurs	
11		added "trés expressif"
11-13		added slur
12		should be rehearsal 52
14 (179)	omitted tenuto, added hairpins	shifted "rall" from beat 2
16 (181)	added slurs	added slur
16 (181)	omitted 13 bars	
17-21 (182-7)	added slurs	
18		omitted cresc.
20		added p and cresc.
20-2		shifted slur
22		shifted "cédez" from beat 3
22 -25 (187-90)	omitted tenuto	
23 (188)	added decresc.	
23 (189)	added slur	
25 (190)	shifted fermata	
27		shifted "rall" from beat 1
29		omitted tenuto, added slur
31		added tenuto
32		changed accent to tenuto
33		added slur
35		shifted "rall" from beat 1 of bar 36
37-8		omitted tenuto, added slur
38		omitted fermata