

**The Winston Churchill Memorial Trust of Australia**

Report by Coady Green - 2005 Fellow

Vingt Regards sur l'Enfant Jesus – a piano cycle by Olivier Messiaen

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## INTRODUCTION:

This report will detail my experience working the piano music of Olivier Messiaen, particularly on two of the great piano cycles - *Vingt Regards sur l'Enfant Jesus* and the *Catalogue d'Oiseaux*. It will include a description of certain techniques used by Messiaen in his music and some brief insights into the performance of the *Vingt Regards sur l'Enfant Jesus*. I am continuing to work on this music with Professor Gunter Reinhold in Karlsruhe, Germany. I am grateful to the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust of Australia for providing me with the funds to begin this exciting residency to explore this music, so significant in the history of contemporary music and music performance. My Fellowship project was initially to be undertaken with the guidance of Messiaen's widow, the pianist Yvonne Lroid-Messiaen, who was sadly taken suddenly ill in 2006. I am most grateful to her former student Professor Renihold for agreeing to take me as his student, and for his remarkable advice.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Project Description: An intensive residency with Professor Gunter Reinhold to explore the piano music of Olivier Messiaen with an emphasis on *Vingt Regards sur l'Enfant Jesus* and *Catalogue d'Oiseaux*.

This project took place in Karsruhe, Germany at the Akademie fur musikalische Bildung e. V.

During this residency, which is still in progress, I have been undertaking a detailed analysis of the two piano cycles *Vingt Regards sur l'Enfant Jesus* and *Catalogue d'Oiseaux*, by Olivier Messiaen. These extraordinary piano works hold a vitally significant place in the piano literature of the twentieth-century.. It is a fact that Messiaen's music in general has had a huge influence on the contemporary music of Australia, with almost all established Australian composers claiming inspiration from him. *Vingt Regards* and the *Catalogue d'Oiseaux* are enormous works, with the *regards* playing at just over two hours and the *catalogue*, staggeringly, at just under three hours. The *regards* are usually heard performed as one entire concert programme, with an interval after the tenth piece. The *catalogue* can also be performed as one programme, but collections of pieces from this work can also be performed as individual items on a concert schedule. Both works demand of the pianist almost superhuman requirements.

There were written for Yvonne Loriod and centered on her powerful and brilliant technique, which allowed Messiaen to write in such a way as to liberate his imagination from any practical compositional restraints, for example, the transformation of birdsong from a decorative to a brilliantly soloistic role.

As a result, the music is phenomenally difficult to play, and it is true that, at the time Loriod premiered the 'Regards' in 1945, it was considered the most difficult music ever written. As Loriod herself says: 'I remember that when I played the *Vingt Regards* in 1945 for their first performance it was clear that the work seemed extremely difficult to my generation, but to young people today - and you are a lot younger than I! - it's quite different...' However demanding the works are, it must be said that the difficulties can be overcome if learned in the correct way - the music, whilst being demanding, is certainly playable. Much of my residency was taken up with painstakingly slow and repetitive work on various issues dealing with muscle and finger control and techniques involved in the continual relaxation of the body, no matter how challenging the music. The taxing time limits and physical demands become therefore effortless and can be accomplished without any muscular strain.

I have also been researching the many different compositional techniques employed by Messiaen in these cycles, and throughout his music in general and the symbolic functions of these techniques. These include the use of specific modes ('Modes of Limited Transposition'); complex rhythms taken from Messiaen's extensive research into ancient Greek and Hindu rhythmic techniques; the use of birdsong based on Messiaen's ornithological studies; the symbolic use of certain tonalities and keys and the concept of 'colour' in the music, influenced by Messiaen's synaesthesia, a physioneurological condition which enabled the composer to literally experience different, often complex colours when hearing sound. Unfortunately, space in this report does not allow for a detailed explanation of all these techniques.

Although Messiaen's music is extremely significant in terms of its effect on many of our Australian composers and still very popular on the concert platform around the world, it is performed less in Australia and many of the young performance students keen to learn the music are not taught the correct techniques needed to accomplish a masterful performance of pieces like the *Vingt Regards* and the *Catalogue d'Oiseaux*. There are a handful of wonderful Australian musicians this statement does not apply to - especially the pianist Michael Kieren-Harvey, who only in 2005 gave the Australian premiere of the complete *Catalogue d'Oiseaux* in Tasmania in a flawless and remarkable performance. However, the techniques needed to play this music, and to be able to sustain a level of physical relaxation whilst performing this sort of music, need to be addressed more at a tertiary level, particularly as there are often students who easily do themselves serious muscular damage attempting it. There are other common misconceptions regarding the performance of Messiaen's music that I have discovered through learning the music with a pianist closely associated with Messiaen and Loriod themselves. As a former student at the Faculty of Music, The University of Melbourne and a former teacher at this institution, I propose to continue and complete my research on this music with

Professor Reinhold in Germany, whilst completing a residency with Professor Peter Feuchtwanger in London focussing on music of the Baroque, Classical and Romantic eras, and return to Australia to perform Messiaen's piano music, and share my knowledge with future Australian musicians and performers.

## PROGRAMME

During my Churchill programme I worked closely with Professor Gunter Reinhold at the Akademie für musikalische Bildung e. V, Karlsruhe, Germany.

## MAIN BODY

As previously stated, my Fellowship revolved around the piano music of Olivier Messiaen, with a particular emphasis on the two great cycles *Catalogue d'Oiseaux* and *Vingt Regards sur l'Enfant Jésus*. My fellowship was undertaken with Professor Gunter Reinhold, a student of both Yvonne Loriod and Messiaen, so much of his advice came directly from them. In working on these pieces, we have looked into Messiaen's various compositional techniques, as well as the techniques needed to physically accomplish an accurate performance of the works. Work was also done involving the piano exercises developed by Professor Peter Feuchtwanger which are specifically designed to eliminate tension in performance. Whilst these exercises will be discussed briefly, there is insufficient space in this report to explore them fully. However, they constitute an important part of this fellowship, as to be able to play the often taxing works involved, complete relaxation is essential. The Fellowship also involved work on other contemporary French music, in particular, the *Preludes*, *Images*, and *Estampes* of Debussy, and the music of Ravel, which had a particular influence on Messiaen.

The monumental piano cycle *Vingt Regards sur l'Enfant Jésus* was written in an astonishing six months in 1944, after the completion and success of his *Visions de l'Amen* for two pianos, a work which saw the beginning of his musical and personal partnership with the pianist Yvonne Loriod. From this time his works often centred on her remarkable playing, firstly with the *Trois Petite Liturgies* for choir and orchestra, with its important piano part and, immediately following this, the *Vingt Regards*, Messiaen's most ambitious piano music by far in this period.

Messiaen was a devout Catholic, a 'born believer', as he often stated. The *Vingt Regards* is a religious cycle of twenty pieces focussing on the birth of Jesus and set out as a series of interweaving cyclic ideas. The word 'regard' has no literal English translation. In one sense, it means 'look' or 'view', but it also holds connotations associated with the sense 'reverence' and 'aspect'. We should therefore think of the meaning of 'regard' in terms of a 'contemplation', or an 'adoration'. Therefore, the *Vingt Regards* presents a series of 'contemplations' upon the infant Jesus from characters both material and immaterial and ethereal. We are shown the contemplations of the Father, the Virgin, the Angels, the Prophets, Shepherds and the Magi and the 'Church

of Love', and also the contemplations of the Star, Time, 'the Heights', the Cross and of Silence.

## VINGT REGARDS SUR L'ENFANT JESUS

1. REGARD DU PÈRE (The Father's Contemplation)
2. REGARD DE L'ÉTOILE (The Contemplation of the Star)
3. L'ÉCHANGE (The Exchange)
4. REGARD DE LA VIERGE (The Contemplation of the Virgin)
5. REGARD DU FILS SUR LE FILS (The Contemplation of the Son upon the Son)
6. PAR LUI TOUT A ÉTÉ FAIT (Through Him All Was Made)
7. REGARD DE LA CROIX (The Contemplation of the Cross)
8. REGARD DES HAUTERUS (The Contemplation of the Heights)
9. REGARD DU TEMPS (Time's Contemplation)
10. REGARD DE L'ESPRIT DE JOIE (The Contemplation of the Spirit of Joy)
11. PREMIÈRE COMMUNION DE LA VIERGE (The First Communion of the Virgin)
12. LA PAROLE TOUTE PUISSANTE (The Omnipotent Word)
13. NOËL (Christmas)
14. REGARD DES ANGES (The Contemplation of the Angels)
15. LE BAISER DE L'ENFANT JÉSUS (The Kiss of the Jesus Child)
16. REGARD DES PROHÈTES, DES BERGERS ET DES MAGES (The Contemplation of the Prophets, the Shepherds and the Magi)
17. REGARD DU SILENCE (Silence's Contemplation)
18. REGARD DE L'ONCTION TERRIBLE (The Contemplation of the Awesome Anointing)
19. JE DORS, MAIS MON CŒUR VEILLE (I Sleep, but my Heart Keeps Watch)
20. REGARD DE L'EGLISE D'AMOUR (The Contemplation of the Church of Love)

The works are set out so that each of the various compositional techniques employed and each of the main cyclic themes are presented within the first five meditative pieces. They are then developed through the intermediary pieces, before reaching a 'conclusion' in the last three pieces. The important cyclic themes, the 'Theme of God', the 'Theme of the Star and the Cross' - symbolising Christ's earthly life, the 'Theme of Chords' and the 'Theme of Love' are all presented in these first five pieces. So too are the significant modes that Messiaen uses, most importantly, his second mode of limited transposition, often juxtaposed with F sharp major to become a symbol for 'God's love' and other significant modes; symbolic rhythms, particularly the pallindromic, or 'non-retrogradable' rhythms derived from the thirteenth-century treatise on rhythm by Carnagadeva containing a table of 120 small rhythmic formulae called 'deci-talas' and ancient Greek rhythms; symbolic chords, particularly the F sharp major chord with

added sixth, sometimes referred to as the 'chord of God's love'; and the use of birdsong. The order of the movements is also partly a matter of numerological significance, as stated by Messiaen in his preface to the work:

'the 'Regard de la Croix' bears the number 7 (a perfect number) because the sufferings of Christ on the Cross restored the order that was disturbed by sin, and the angels are confirmed in grace in No. 14 (two times 7). The 'Regard du temps' bears the number 9 representing the nine months of maternity common to all children, and the 'Regard de l'onction terrible' has the number 18 (two times 9) - here, divinity is poured out over the humanity of Christ in the one person who is the Son of God. The two pieces which speak of creation and the divine government of creation are No 6 (because 6 is the number of creation) and No. 12 (two times 6).'

The recurrences of the 'Theme of God' throughout the cycle are also numerologically significant. This theme, consisting of five chords, is introduced at the outset of the journey, in the meditative 'Regard du Père' and, importantly, appears in every fifth piece, the *regards* concerning the divinity. It also is heard in number six and number 11, indicating another spacing of five pieces. The fifth piece, 'Regard du Fils sur le Fils', is an exact paraprased of the opening *regard*, which seals the first five pieces as an introduction to the whole. Overall, the outer movements are the longest, and Messiaen balances the set so that virtuosic, often dissonant pieces are followed by lyrical, slower movements. The great slow movements, often heard performed as individual items in concerts, dominate the second half of the cycle (evenly spaced as numbers 11, 15 and 19), interspersed with shorter, fiery outbursts, and these slow set-pieces all refer in differing and developing ways back to the 'Theme of God'. This then allows for the 'theme of God' to be developed evenly throughout the cycle before it's ultimate, glorious transformation in the final *regard*.. This is very similar to the development of the 'Theme of Creation' in the two piano work *Visions de l'Amen*, a theme that is 'consummated' in the final *Amen*.

The opening *regard* must be played so as to communicate a majestic sense of timelessness and complete stillness, so as to correlate with the 'properties of God' inherent in the Bible - it must create the impression of an omnipotent, all-encompassing presence. This is not easy to achieve and demands complete control, especially for the final diminuendo from *pianissimo* to near inaudibility. The 'theme of God' is introduced as the first five chords of the piece, as is the symbolic use of the key of F sharp major as the key of 'God's Love'. One can instantly see the significance of this key by Messiaen's use of a key signature, unusual for a composer who does not normally employ the use of traditional signatures in his scores. The piece must be counted in slow semi-quaver triplets, the use of triplets and the fact that the music unfolds in groups of three, spread over three staves, symbolic of the Trinity. Messiaen's directions above the opening of the piece read 'Extremement lent - mysterieux, avec amour', with a very slow metronome marking of semiquaver triplets = 60. Performed at this exact speed, this opening piece, only five pages, lasts for around nine minutes. Performed effectively, with precise rhythm, it can achieve a marvelous atmosphere.

Performing the 'Regard du Père' and some of the other slower movements at the exact published markings makes for an effective atmosphere for sure, but my opinion has always been that these markings are just slightly too slow. In fact, a common misconception amongst performers of this cycle, and an understandable one, is actually to perform the slower numbers at their published speeds. It is not known widely that Messiaen himself later regarded his published tempi of the slow movements in the *Vingt Regards* as probably too slow. Yvonne Loriod certainly performs these slow movements noticeably faster than what is written on the page, as do the students of hers from the past who are now established concert pianists and have released numerous recordings of Messiaen's music. I remember performing some of the slower numbers some years ago during my university days and being criticised for taking a slightly faster tempo than what was written, having already corresponded with Loriod and one former student of hers. As Loriod herself explains: 'Messiaen always marked the tempos in his scores only after the work had been performed. It may be that in the *Vingt regards* the first piece, 'Regard du Père', is marked too slow - it's quite possible. In fact, I am hoping to make new editions of certain of Messiaen's works in order to incorporate the tempos Messiaen wanted. One has to bear in mind that the technique of performers has advanced and now everyone plays the 'Regard de l'Esprit de joie' more quickly than it is marked. One should remember, however, that different tempos suit different performers. Some people are lively and energetic, others relaxed and calm - so it's partly a personal matter'. This revelation about tempo in the *Vingt Regards* may come as a surprise, considering Messiaen's meticulous working habits. The most important matter in this first piece though, regardless of whether playing at the exact tempo or slightly faster, is to maintain a steady pulse and sense of utter stillness - the evocation of the correct atmosphere - vast and impalpable.

The second *regard*, the 'Star's Contemplation', introduces the 'Theme of the Star and the Cross'. Messiaen believed the Star and the Cross to be closely unified, as the two outer points of Christ's earthly life, the Star also holding premonitions of the death on the Cross. For this reason, the structural form of this movement is incomplete. On its own it is in binary form, but it is directly continued and fulfilled in number seven, the 'Contemplation of the Cross', placed five pieces away, in which the 'Theme of the Stars and the Cross' reappears. If put together, the two movements achieve a completed ternary form. The theme is a kind of chromatic, despairing plainsong, accompanied by dragging slurs and pained harmonies.

The third piece, 'L'Échange', introduces the theme of, as Messiaen describes 'the terrible commerce' between God and mankind. This is later explored in the fifth piece, 'Regard du Fils sur le Fils', as Christ contemplates the dual natures of God and Man within him. This is expressed in 'L'Échange', composed in two-bar units, with the figures in the odd bars, representing the divine, remaining unchanged, whilst the figures in the second, even bars of each unit, representing mankind, involve pitches either systematically rising or falling.

The dual natures of Christ - earthly and divine - are expressed in the fifth piece, 'Regard du Fils sur le Fils', using symbolic modes. The piece quotes the entire 'Regard du Père' in the bass, again using the 'Theme of God', and over the top of this are two distinct layers of sound. The upper layer represents the divine aspect of Christ and employs the third transposition of the sixth mode of limited transposition - these numbers indicating, again, the Trinity. The lower layer employs the fourth transposition of the fourth mode, which, correlating to 'four earthly elements', represents the earthly nature of Christ. The dynamic distinction between these two layers, played so closely together, is minute - the top layer being *pp* and the lower *ppp*, but it is extremely important. One must hear a distinction - very difficult to achieve and again requiring extreme control. Amidst this hushed and mysterious glow from the piano's heights emerges the song of the skylark, and the introduction into the cycle of one of the most significant aspects in Messiaen's music - birdsong.

Birdsong will reappear significantly throughout the cycle, especially in numbers eight, eleven, fourteen and twenty. As a world renowned ornithologist, Messiaen spent much time notating birdsong from around the world and using it in his music. 'Among the artistic hierarchy, the birds are probably the greatest musicians to inhabit our planet', Messiaen is quoted as saying in conversation. The first appearance of birdsong in his music occurred in 1941 in the Quartet for the End of Time, although its realisation in this work, and also in the *Vingt Regards*, is rudimentary compared to its fully realised, developed and timbrally faithful representations in later works, particularly the *Catalogue d'Oiseaux*. Birdsong that was realised in the Quartet for the End of Time and the *Vingt Regards* by using a single melodic line was later expressed using a variety of rich harmonies and colourations. For the performer, it is most important, in both the *Vingt Regards* and the *Catalogue d'Oiseaux*, to realise that the bird passages should be completely clear, avoiding any tendencies to crescendo into states of aggression or to use rubato for expressive means. Bird song, for Messiaen, is about the realm of being: the objective, all-encompassing expression of the Will of God, not open to human opinion or interpretation. It just is. Unfortunately, one often hears performers attempting to inject their own personality into the birdcall passages. This should never be the case. There is no doubt that birdsong, for Messiaen, held this spiritual significance. Messiaen believed that, through their song, they were God's messengers, a kind of intermediary between earth and heaven, their flights symbolising an escape from the earthly life. In number fourteen, 'Regard des Anges', Messiaen shows us his belief by effectively juxtaposing the brilliant, rapid birdsong with the sound of the angels wings, a wonderful effect. It is helpful to ponder the following beautiful quotation from Messiaen:

'In my hours of gloom, when I am suddenly aware of my own futility, when every musical idiom... appears to me as no more than admirable, painstaking experimentation, without any ultimate justification, what is left to me but to seek out the true, lost face of music somewhere off in the forest, in the fields, in the mountains or on the seashore, among the birds?'

The sixth piece, 'Par Lui Tout a Été Fait', is considered by many pianists to be the most

taxing and difficult work in the cycle and although Loriod claims that in the past she has guided a fourteen year old student through the work successfully in two weeks (!) I must admit it took me a painstakingly slow time to learn. It consists of a fugue in which the subject never recurs in the same form, symbolising the substance that always remains the same, permeating everything, no matter how varied its individual manifestations may be. Ferocious as this movement is, the sense of this overall, underlying stillness must be conveyed through the performer's utter rhythmic and dynamic discipline. The same must be said for the monumentally difficult tenth piece, which serves as the conclusion to the first half of the cycle and is usually followed by an interval, 'Regard de l'esprit de joie'. In 'Par Lui Tout a Été Fait', the fugue's subject and counter-subject, employing to a large extent notes from the 'Theme of Chords', are continuously and rigorously fragmented and deformed in systematically logical ways, until reaching a point where, note for note, it is all repeated backwards. This reversal, unfortunately, is not at all easier to learn - one must start again from scratch to slowly work the notes into the muscle memory of the fingers. The pianist Peter Hill, who has released an exceptional set of CDs containing the complete piano music of Messiaen, has likened this effect to a filmed explosion played in reverse. In this piece too, the 'Theme of God' is quoted most effectively, accompanied by ferocious, rapid chordal blasts at the bottom of the piano, signifying the 'face of God appearing from behind the flame'. Played correctly, this has a profoundly startling effect on audiences.

The dissonant, harder-edged piano writing of numbers six and ten is continued for the pieces that are associated with the pieces involving the human celebrations of the birth of Christ, 'Noel' and 'Regard des prophètes, des bergers et des Mages', for instance. As said before, however, Messiaen balances these pieces with movements of the utmost beauty and lyricism, the most famous being number fifteen, 'Le baiser de l'Enfant Jésus', the 'Kiss of the Jesus Child'. Here the 'Theme of God' is introduced in the form of a lullaby ('berceuse'), loosely based on Chopin's piano Berceuse Op. 57. Messiaen, touchingly, declared that 'one must be in love to love the subject matter and the music of this movement, both of which would like to be as tender as the heart of Heaven itself'. Care must be taken by the pianist to ensure that, unlike the execution of many chordal passages in the romantic tradition, the top notes of the chords are not to be given extra sound. This is a mistake which is often heard in performance. One must remember that Messiaen was a prolific organist, and on the organ one cannot easily stress one note of a chord more than another, as one can on a piano. Though it is tempting for any pianist to highlight the upper notes of the chords in this movement, Messiaen himself often expressed to his students distaste with this practice in this particular piece. I would suggest that the same applies to all the appearances of chordal themes such as the 'Theme of God' and the 'Theme of Chords', so this would be the case for 'Regard du Père', 'Regard du Fils sur le Fils' and 'Première Communion de la Vierge'. One should focus on the timbre produced by all the notes of the chord, without attempting to highlight a melody by bringing the top notes out more. The listener's ear is naturally drawn to the upper notes of the chord anyway. Again, it is important for the performer not to inject too much of their own personality into this movement, which is performed most effectively by executing it exactly as written. I am reminded of a wonderful

quotation by the legendary pianist and Alfred Cortot: 'What is required is POETRY, not SUBJECTIVITY'. Needless rubato should be completely out of the question in this piece and overall. Debussy, in talking about his own music, apparently stated that one must simply play what is written on the page, and this applies exactly to Messiaen's music also. If the composer wants rubato, then he writes it in the score, precisely over the appropriate bars.

#### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

It is my aim to return to Australia to perform the music I have been researching in Europe, particularly the cycles *Vingt Regards sur l'Enfant Jésus* and *Catalogue d'Oiseaux*, but also other works by Messiaen, including the *Quartet for the End of Time* and some of the pieces for piano and orchestra. I intend also to teach what I have learned to other students, as Messiaen's music has a huge following amongst the young student cohort in Australia. For those who are interested in studying these works, there are several excellent books that are readily available in Australia. 'The Messiaen Companion', edited by the pianist Peter Hill, published by Faber and Faber in 1995, and Peter Hill and Nigel Simeone's wonderful book 'Messiaen', published by Yale University Press in 2005 both offer extraordinary insights and information for those who have not had access, like I have been fortunate enough to have, to Loriod and people close to Messiaen and Loriod. Paul Griffiths's book 'Olivier Messiaen and the Music of Time' is also excellent, published by Faber and Faber in 1985. Rebecca Rischin's delightful and moving book on the Quartet for the End of Time, 'For the End of Time - the Story of the Messiaen Quartet'. published by Cornell University Press in 2003 is a must-read not only for students of the music, but for anyone interested in Messiaen or twentieth-century music in general. One does not need to be a musician to enjoy this fascinating account of the history behind the famous quartet, written in appalling conditions in a German prison camp during the Second World War. Those serious about their studies of Messiaen's music should find his own books on his music, which offer first-hand insights. The easiest of these to find is '*Technique de mon langage musicale*', published by Leduc, 1944, with a new edition released by Leduc in 2001. This can be found in most good libraries. Excellent recordings of these works are available by the pianists Yvonne Loriod, Pierre Laurent Aimard and Peter Hill (both former students of Yvonne Loriod and Messiaen), and Michael Kieren-Harvey's Australian premiere of *Catalogue d'Oiseaux*, on Move Records, is also excellent.

My work on this music, and indeed my work on the piano music of other eras, was greatly aided by study, both with Gunter Reinhold and with Peter Feuchtwanger, on Peter Feuchtwanger's piano exercises designed to ease tension in performance and allow for a completely natural pianistic technique. Unfortunately, limited space in this report does not allow a full description of this set of exercises. However, details of the 'Piano Exercises for Curing Playing Related Disorders and for Acquiring a Functional and Natural Approach to Piano Playing' may be found on the website [www.peter-](http://www.peter-)

feuchtwanger.de. Currently the only edition of these exercises, published in 2004, is in German, although an English translation is almost completed now and should be released late in 2007. I place great importance on these exercises for several reasons. In Australia I have witnessed, too often, tragic circumstances that have arisen when many fantastic musicians, both students and professionals are forced to abandon their careers and goals as performers due to serious muscular injury caused by practising and performing with the wrong muscular tension. It is even more tragic to witness the lack of support they receive from many institutions and other professionals, who seem to offer no valid solution to these problems. It is a fact that performing a cycle such as the *Vingt Regards* is extremely dangerous for a performer who is not aware of the techniques involved with proper muscular control, independence and relaxation. I feel that students must be trained in proper pianistic technique from an early age, and this must be reinforced and developed at a tertiary level. It seems to me unreasonable to expect students to prepare a host of technically challenging pieces each year, for example, the Chopin Etudes Opp. 10 and 12, to be performed in tertiary exams and concerts, without also establishing a compulsory regime which includes thorough training in aspects of both the development of muscular strength and relaxation at the instrument. I have now researched many programmes involved with this technical training. The studies of Chopin, Clementi, Cramer, Moscheles and Poisot are all important. Yvonne Loriod herself continued to practise and teach the exercises of Poisot, Clementi and Cortot until her recent retirement. I know of no other exercises that aid in matters of correct muscular relaxation and correct employment and management of tension in performance than Peter Feuchtwanger's exercises. They have been a remarkable asset to both students and professional, world-renowned concert pianists who have suffered from muscular strain and who have come to Professor Feuchtwanger for assistance. In Europe, institutions such as the Paris Conservatoire and the Ecole Normale de Musique establish regimes that rigorously train pianists in these matters from an early age, so that by the time that they reach a tertiary level, and a level and age where they can compete in international music competitions, a thorough, secure technique is taken for granted. One need only to peruse the technical manuals of, say, Alfred Cortot or Charles Poisot to see just how seriously these matters are taken in Europe, right from the elementary stages of musical training. Peter Feuchtwanger's exercises are also widely used in Europe, as a way of refining this technique and allowing pianists to perform without tension and with a completely natural approach to the instrument. It has been often commented in Europe that many Australian musicians convey a unique sense of openness and colour in their musicianship, qualities that correlate strongly with our native landscape. This is a wonderful observation. What is needed now is a considerable increase in the technical training of our musicians. It seems unfortunate to me that there is a serious lack of this kind of training in Australia, where exercises like Feuchtwanger's are little known. I strongly suggest that a programme is established at a tertiary level for the many students who suffer from muscular conditions, or those who risk muscular damage every day simply by practising in the wrong way. This is particularly important for those who wish to have a career as performers and especially those musicians who wish to play music like the *Vingt Regards*, which, if practised and performed wrongly, can result

in serious injury.

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