

Messiaen's 6th Mode of Limited Transpositions

Kim Ratcliffe (07/13)

This scale is from "The Technique of my Musical Language" by Olivier Messiaen, Editions Musicales, pp.93-94, pub. in 1944. It consists of the lower tetrachord of a major scale, and it's tritone transposition. It can be used, from various degrees, over M7, dom7, minor, augmented and diminished chords! It yields some very interesting harmonic possibilities as well. Note the symmetrical nature of the scale and how it yields duplicate patterns intervallically, and contains major, minor, dominant, whole tone, half diminished and diminished elements! Mix this mode with other tonalities and superimpose it over more conventional harmony. Serves 4.

The musical score is written in 4/4 time and consists of eight staves. The first staff shows the scale starting on C4, with notes: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5. The notes are labeled with numbers: 1, 2, 3, 4, #4, #5, b7, 7. The second staff shows the scale starting on G4, with notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, D5, E5, F5, G5. The notes are labeled with circled numbers: ⑤, ④, ③, ②, ①. The third staff shows the scale starting on E4, with notes: E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5, D5, E5. The notes are labeled with circled numbers: ③, ②, ①. The fourth staff shows the scale starting on B3, with notes: B3, C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4. The notes are labeled with circled numbers: ①, ②, ③, ④, ⑤. The fifth staff shows the scale starting on F4, with notes: F4, G4, A4, B4, C5, D5, E5, F5. The notes are labeled with circled numbers: ④, ③, ②, ①. The sixth staff shows the scale starting on D4, with notes: D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5, D5. The notes are labeled with circled numbers: ②, ①. The seventh staff shows the scale starting on A3, with notes: A3, B3, C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4. The notes are labeled with circled numbers: ①, ②, ③, ④, ⑤. The eighth staff shows the scale starting on E3, with notes: E3, F3, G3, A3, B3, C4, D4, E4. The notes are labeled with circled numbers: ①, ②, ③, ④, ⑤. The score includes various intervallic transpositions: 3rds (measures 8-11), 4ths (measures 16-19), and 5ths (measures 24-27).

32



36 6ths



40



44 harmonic 2nds etc. thirds



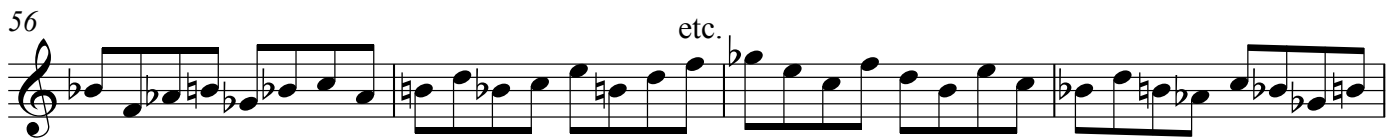
48 etc. fourths etc. 5ths (tritones)



52 etc. sixths etc. diatonic triads



56 etc.



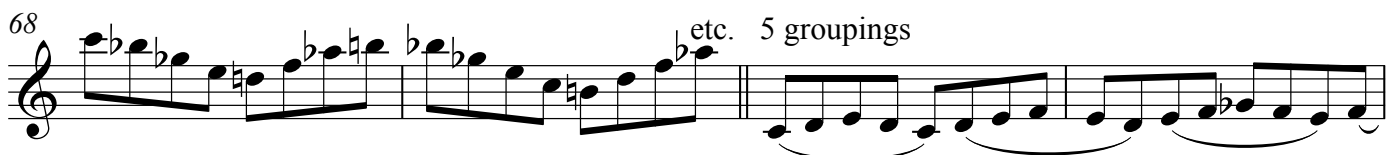
60 etc. diatonic 7th arpeggios



64 etc.



68 etc. 5 groupings



72 etc.

76 etc. 7 groupings

80 etc. 4ths in 5 grouping etc.

84 drop 2 - 1357 drop 2 - 1368

strings 1-4/ 2-5

88 stacked 4 chords stacked 6th chords

92 stacked 7th chords stacked 8th chords

Other Chord Sequences

96 1,2,8 8va 1,3,8

100 1,3,4 contrary motion - 1/4 to 2/3

104 line w/ mixed intervals

107 sequence - 4ths 8va

111 line with chords - C root

Mixing tonalities over one chord (ex. Major based tonality & Messiaen scale)

115 Cmaj7

117 Cmaj7

120 Cmaj7 C root

124

128

133

138

142

146