

# Stylistic Transitions in Vivier's Emergent Musical Style

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**Abstract:** In *Music, the Arts, and Ideas*, Leonard Meyer states the internal dynamics hypothesis in the transformation of a musical style: a style emerges gradually and, thus, isn't the product of a specific decision; a style is *learned*, even by the composers who invent it, and listeners learn in as well. A personal style can also be understood through its influences, be it from individuals or from culture in general.

Since Canadian composer Claude Vivier's style is often described by its influences, I aim to shed new light onto it by explaining its internal process. How does Vivier go from one work to another? What are the choices he makes in each work and that he modifies from one another, on a given period of time? This is what I aim to understand in analysing the melodic parameter in the music of Claude Vivier. In this paper, I am going through the internal dynamics of Vivier's emerging melodic style in five vocal works composed between 1973 and 1975: *Chants*, *O! Kosmos*, *Jesus erbarme dich*, *Lettura di Dante* and *Hymnen an die Nacht*, analysed in the chronological order of their composition.

After a brief summary of paradigmatic analysis of the five works showing they share much of the same melodic material, I follow the evolutionary path of a simple yet very significant musical formula, i.e. a motive constantly repeated and transformed throughout the works. By observing the transformation of this specific formula into each work and from one to another, I show a microcosm of the evolution of Vivier's melodic style: a very simple formula is used to structure entire sections of each work; it evolves into more complicated and implicative states, yet simpler versions can still be found. Complexity is by no means a goal in Vivier's style, but merely a passing state.