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Messiaen and His Milieu: An Exploration of  
Stephen Schloesser's *Visions of Amen:  
The Early Life and Music of Olivier Messiaen*

### *Religion and the Arts*

As a reviewer, my objectives were to explore and reveal to the reader new, untrodden facets of composer Olivier Messiaen that are discussed in the book. Therefore, I highlighted in detail Schloesser's extensive research on Messiaen's mother, Cécile Sauvage, who was neglected by many biographers but emerges as a major writer thanks to his penetrating analysis of her works. I outlined Schloesser's study of synesthesia that places it in its proper historical context and dispels erroneous myths about Messiaen's own synesthesia. The composer's condition resulted from a cultural phenomenon, not a physiological disorder, as is commonly believed.