

Claude DEBUSSY  
CENTENARY EDITION 2018

PRÉLUDES  
livre I

*Claude Debussy*



Musical Health Warning : please be aware that these editions are definitely not urtext and should be consulted together with a traditional version. They have been devised purely to help solve musical and technical problems at the piano.

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# Claude DEBUSSY 1862 - 1918

## PRÉLUDES livre I

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Much has been written about the many sets of piano preludes which have appeared since the original and definitive works of Bach celebrating fine tuning and circular temperament. For the most part they form collections in multiples of 12\* and often encompass all the major and minor keys. Debussy however formed a new genre offering diffident 'symbolist' clues to their character and content via delayed subtitles which appear bracketed at the final bars. Without the justification of tonality, the number twelve has no strict reason save almost certain deference to Chopin, whose preludes he was editing for Durand.

Before their publication, the bulk of the Debussy's output for piano featured descriptive, exotic or catchy titles, but

in 1910 he chose the generic name of *Préludes* and worked rapidly on their completion; sketches show that the project may have begun as early as 1907. Sources of inspiration are very varied and reflect a wide range of 'world music'\*\*; Greek antiquity, mortality, visual arts, dance, the natural world, folk music, poetry, Shakespeare, legends, Spain, Italy and the U.S.A.

« *Il n'y a pas de théorie : il suffit d'entendre. Le plaisir est la règle* » — There is no theory : you only need to listen. Pleasure is the rule.

— Debussy

In May 1910 Debussy himself gave a first performance of four preludes from this volume at the *Salle Érard* in Paris for the *Société Musicale*

*Indépendante: danseuses de Delphes, Voiles, la cathédrale Engloutie and la danse de Puck.* They are often performed in small groups with a tonal relationship — i.e. numbers 1-3 which revolve around B flat, or alternatively *ce qu'a vu le vent d'ouest*

sharing the same tonic with *la fille aux cheveux de lin* and then G flat accentuated at the opening of *la sérénade interrompue*. There are many juxtaposing contrasts: *ce qu'a vu le vent d'ouest* framed by *des pas sur la neige* and *la fille aux cheveux de lin*, or *la cathédrale engloutie* at the centre of *la sérénade interrompue* and *la danse de Puck*.

Like all great works of art these preludes invite a lifetime of discovery and exploration; they cover a wide range of musical and pianistic

demands, not evident at first, but always rewarding the inquisitive. Rapid fingerwork, lightning jumps across the keyboard, the need to project several degrees of dynamics, particularly muted — these are the difficulties facing a serious musician.

**Stephen Walsh** : Just as with the *Images*, it seems that in contact with the piano Debussy could write freely, exploring the implications of his unique idiom in a completely uninhibited way, but that when it was a matter of composing for a more 'impersonal' medium and on a larger scale for orchestra, with or without voices, or for the stage — he was forced to think in a more linear, syntactical, perhaps objective manner, that raised issues of procedure he was increasingly reluctant to confront. When he had talked to Caplet about the twenty bars suffocated by tradition, he may well have meant the sort of music that, in every eighteenth- and nineteenth-century composer you could name, bore the structure along from one distinctive gesture to the next, that made sense of works that might otherwise disintegrate under the sheer weight of irrepressible, disconnected inventiveness: the musical details that information theorists describe with the charming term 'redundant'. It may go against the grain to think of

anything in, say, Mozart or Schubert or even Brahms as redundant. But, purely in the sense that a lot of what happens in their music is predictable, the redundant is an important, if humble, part of their language. It looks as if, at least where the House of Usher was concerned, Claude Debussy, the lifelong enemy of rules was now in rebellion against redundancy.

**Paul Roberts** : More than 100 years after Debussy's death, such a view still needs stating and defending.

Much of what happened to music — and to art in general — in the twentieth century marked a break, conscious or unconscious, with the nineteenth. The past was an orphan parent, rejected by its children, despised by its grandchildren. Debussy, too, found fault with his forebears and tried to do things differently from them. But while he questioned their methods, he never doubted their fundamental intention, which was to create beauty and to share sensibilities, to communicate wonder at the richness of the world around us and the various ways our senses give us of responding to it. His music is without ideology and without doctrine. Like the world, it simply is, take it or leave it.

*Debussy: A Painter in Sound* (2018)

by **Stephen Walsh**

Sound, atmosphere and 'fairy-tale' charm, so characteristic of Debussy, are not finally the reasons for playing and listening to this music, for being drawn to it and possessed by it. Just as the painters of his epoch saw what had been hitherto unseen, so Debussy heard what had been unheard. His images and allusions were, paradoxically, a means of provoking an intensity of listening. In a voice that was often subdued, he distilled and communicated the essence of the external world and touched the core of human experience.

**Lockspeiser & Halbreich** : These preludes have a very different objective from those of Chopin, and there is no question of comparing them. For the Pole, these are striking reductions of moods, psychological snapshots suddenly illuminating the innermost self. For the Frenchman, on the other hand, they are evocations intended to express an impression, to create a state of sensitivity, awareness conducive to the identification of the listener with the chosen theme, landscape or character. From the poetic realism of the *Images*, we have moved to the more abstract plane of musical symbolism.

\* Bach, Chopin, Scriabin, Messiaen, Shostakovich and Szymanowski, among others.

## World Music — *Exposition Universelle*\*\*

In May 1889, a major cultural event was staged in the *Champ de Mars* in the vicinity of the recently completed Eiffel Tower. The celebrated Paris *Exposition Universelle* had already been running for three weeks by the time the 26-year-old composer attended, with countries from all over the world exhibiting the best of their art, culture and lifestyle. In the crucial weeks which followed, Debussy's experience of musical cultures from Java, Cambodia and Vietnam would make a lasting — indeed legendary — contribution to the development not just of the young composer himself, but to the history of Western music as a whole.

At this time, Debussy was no novice in what we now refer to as 'world music', and while in Russia, as a guest of Nadezhda von Meck he encountered the Russian nationalists' fascination with music of the East.

In 1895, Debussy wrote "Javanese music, which is able to express every shade of meaning, even unmentionable shades... which make our tonic and dominant seem like ghosts, for use by naughty little children". His music from 1889 onwards, and his piano works such as *Pagodes* in particular, began to develop unmistakable traces of this new cultural influence.

— *Martin Buzacott*

## Recommended reading:

- Debussy: The Quiet Revolutionary *Victor Lederer*
- The Piano Music of Claude Debussy *Alfred Cortot*
- Images: The Piano Music of Claude Debussy *Paul Roberts*
- Debussy: A Painter in Sound *Stephen Walsh*
- Debussy, sa vie et sa pensée *Edward Lockspeiser & Harry Halbreich*
- The Art of French piano music & Debussy in proportion — a musical analysis *Roy Howat*
- The Life of Debussy & Debussy Remembered *Roger Nichols*

**"I believe more and more that music in its essence is not a thing that can be poured into a rigorous and traditional mould. It is made of colours and rhythmical beats. Music is a mysterious mathematical process whose elements suggest infinity, capturing inexplicable relations between nature and the imagination" — Debussy**

In 2018, during the course of the centenary year *Piano Practical Editions* became a creative and critical working publication; in addition to suggestions of fingering, hand disposition and *sostenuto* pedal, you will find significant modifications to the general layout with alternative key

signatures, staves, barlines, time- and key- signatures and varied fonts. I have also enjoyed the challenge of translating all the texts in French, and vocabularies may be found on pages **88 - 90**.

In this first book of Preludes, metronome speeds appear in brackets and are omitted in four — he once wrote: "as a rose which might only last for one morning, a metronome speed might only work for one bar." In the second book only one prelude has a metronome speed.

The strong influence of French piano music is surely identified with Chopin and Debussy who share a unique position as masters of an exceptional instrument; through an extensive affinity with the sustaining pedal they each created a personal language conceived to communicate their work with the greatest authenticity.

*Ray Alston* October 2023



Debussy was always searching for exotic stimuli, and this first prelude dating from December 1909 centres on Greek antiquity and the oracle at Delphi, the Temple of Apollo, patron of the arts and a god of music and dance.

Some 15 years earlier this caryatid\* had been discovered by French archeologists during *la Grande Fouille* (the Great Excavation). Displayed at the Louvre, Debussy particularly admired *la colonne des danseuses de Delphes*, three priestesses clothed in *chitoniskos\*\**, bare feet suspended and arms raised, and depicting dancers or participants in a religious ritual.

In 1894 Debussy had composed an *image oubliée* entitled *Souvenir du Louvre\*\*\** and I wonder whether its heading might have influenced the slow and dignified character of this first Prelude — *dans le mouvement d'une "Sarabande"*, *c'est-à-dire avec une élégance grave et lente*.

Or could it be that the composer, always attracted to original and evocative ideas, just liked the catchy caption? Perhaps it is not useful to seek inspiration from the bracketed afterthought placed as always beneath the final bars.

With some gravitas this prelude, which feels like an introduction, brings to life stones from antiquity, an asymmetric Brahmsian sarabande of hypnotic and sombre sensuality. The style of composition seems well adapted for two pianos.

*Solemn and silent, they move to the slow rhythm of harps, sistrums and flutes. And in the mysterious shadow of the temple, where hang heavy vapours of consecrated incense, lies, invisible and present, the meditative god who dreams of destinies.*

— Cortot

*The first prelude, Danseuses de Delphes, was inspired Debussy told an English admirer by the beautiful column of that name exhibited on the landing of the grand staircase of the Louvre, a plaster copy of a stone original recently excavated by the French archaeologist Théophile Homolle at Delphi. Perhaps the sculpture was rotated so that the three female figures appeared in succession, or perhaps one could walk round it.*



*There is certainly some feeling in the prelude of a slow circling, as of stately dancers with linked arms. But the real miracle of this piece is its harmonic concentration, the alternation of music made of soft dissonance and music made of plain triads in irrational but perfectly poised sequence. If, as the autograph suggests, the piece was written in a single day (7 December 1909), one might picture Debussy at the piano - literally or metaphorically - carefully testing each chord, each sequence, listening to the spacing and balance, the resonances, the dynamic shadings, the effect of the two pedals (not indicated, as usual). At first glance, this is not difficult music to play, but to play it well, with attention to every nuance, every painstaking detail, is a serious exercise in mental and physical control. Hearing Debussy play it, his English friend reported "was like hearing a poet reciting some of his own delicate lyrics. He had a soft, deep touch which evoked full, rich, many-shaded sonorities... I have never heard more beautiful pianoforte playing."*

— Stephen Walsh

\* a sculpted female figure acting as support of a much larger structure — the Akanthos Column standing at 1.95 metres — a monument probably from 330 BC.

\*\* short tunics — possibly worn by the three daughters of Cecrops I, the legendary first king of Attica

\*\*\* the second of three *Images Oubliées* dedicated to Yvonne Lerolle — later revised and published as the second movement of the suite *Pour le Piano* (1901)

#### Duration: 3 minutes

- a wonderful study in the control of dynamics which Debussy has detailed with great clarity
- **3 - 17** editorial modification of time-signatures
- **9** dynamics from the original edition... however *pp* subito (see **4**) might be more effective
- **11 & 14** editorial *sostenuto* pedal to be coupled with the sustaining pedal
- **13 & 16** this edition features a few practical 'arrangements' — it can be effective to project the melody notes (minims) as tied *acciaccaturas*
- **17 - 26** modification of portamento crotchets (syncopated chords) and key-signature
- **18** RH D missing, probably in error

lent et grave [♩=44]

*doux et soutenu*

I

Musical score for the first system, measures 1-2. It features a grand staff with treble, bass, and a lower bass clef. The music is in 3/4 time and includes a triplet of chords in the treble and a triplet of eighth notes in the bass. Dynamics include piano (*p*).

Musical score for the second system, measures 3-4. It features a grand staff with treble, bass, and a lower bass clef. The music includes a triplet of eighth notes in the treble and a triplet of chords in the bass. Dynamics include piano-piano (*pp*).

Musical score for the third system, measures 5-6. It features a grand staff with treble, bass, and a lower bass clef. The music includes a triplet of chords in the treble and a triplet of eighth notes in the bass. Dynamics include piano (*p*).

Musical score for the fourth system, measures 7-8. It features a grand staff with treble, bass, and a lower bass clef. The music includes a triplet of chords in the treble and a triplet of eighth notes in the bass. Dynamics include mezzo-forte (*mf*).

*doux mais en dehors*

11 **2** *pp*

\* *Sost. Ped*

14

\* *Sost. Ped*

17 \*

**4** *mf*

**3** *f*

[ *mp* ]

pp      più pp      ppp

20

diminuendo

pp

ppp

This system contains measures 18 through 22. It features a piano accompaniment with a treble and bass clef. The treble clef has a series of chords, with dynamics *pp*, *più pp*, and *ppp* indicated above. The bass clef has a melodic line with dynamics *pp*, *più pp*, and *ppp* indicated below. A *diminuendo* marking is placed between measures 20 and 21. The system ends with a fermata.

23 *p*

*più p*

*p*

This system contains measures 23 through 26. It features a piano accompaniment with a treble and bass clef. The treble clef has a melodic line with dynamics *p*, *più p*, and *p* indicated above. The bass clef has a melodic line with dynamics *p*, *più p*, and *p* indicated below. A crescendo hairpin is shown between measures 25 and 26.

27

*p*

*pp*

*p*

*pp*

This system contains measures 27 through 30. It features a piano accompaniment with a treble and bass clef. The treble clef has a melodic line with dynamics *p* and *pp* indicated above. The bass clef has a melodic line with dynamics *p* and *pp* indicated below. There are several chords in both staves.

29

*ppp*

*pp*

*pp*

*f*

*pp*

This system contains measures 31 through 34. It features a piano accompaniment with a treble and bass clef. The treble clef has a melodic line with dynamics *ppp*, *pp*, and *pp* indicated above. The bass clef has a melodic line with dynamics *ppp*, *pp*, and *pp* indicated below. A dynamic shift to *f* is indicated above measure 33, followed by a crescendo hairpin leading to a final *pp* dynamic in measure 34. The system ends with a fermata.

(... danseuses de Delphes )

## III

Much has been said about the motif of descending thirds and the characteristic whole tone scale, so essential to Debussy's 'symbolist' music. This short quote from the composer seems particularly apt: *music begins when words are powerless to express; it is made for the inexpressible — I would like it to seem to emerge from the shadows and from time to time return there.* I personally love the the haunting oriental monastic theme, especially when it returns in the treble accompanied with *quasi-glissandi* over a B flat pedal point.

Here is a truly original work, full of character and ethereal mystery, ambiguous both in title and content. If the *voiles* are veils, they might have been inspired by an American dancer (Loïe Fuller), who used shrouds and unusual lighting to produce imaginative visual effects. But they might also be sails, moving us across calm waters into an atmospheric world which is difficult to describe with mere words.

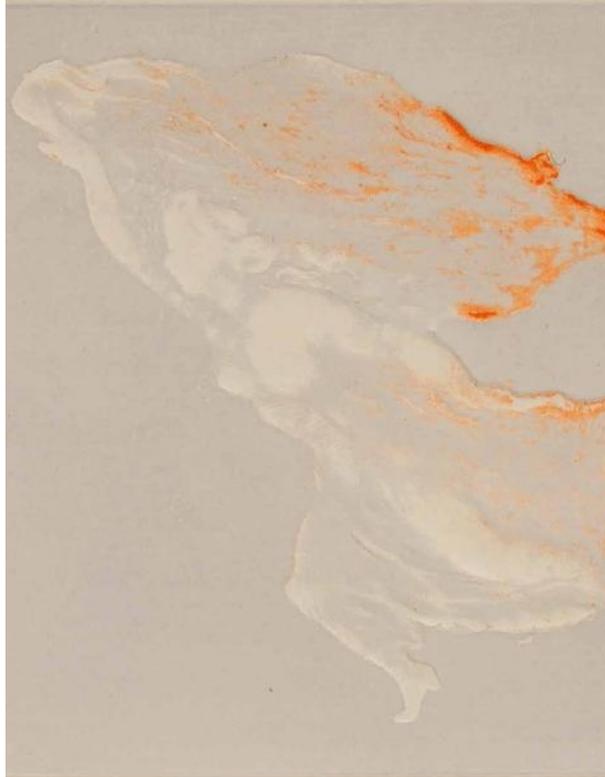
Liszt, Mussorgsky and Borodin occasionally included the whole-tone scale but in this composition Debussy obsessively uses it throughout, highlighting a short section in pentatonic contrast at **22-24**.

*Justly famous as one of the first pieces to abjure tonality, the connotations of 'veils' or 'sails' (the very ambiguity is characteristic), focuses attention on the image of billowing, a gentle moving back and forth rooted to an immobile base. Debussy, therefore, sits the piece on a low B flat whose only activity is to propound irregular rhythms at irregular intervals and, on occasion, to rest quietly.*

— Irwin Freundlich

*Boats at rest in a luminous port. Their sails flap gently and the breeze which fills them blows towards the horizon and a setting sun — a white wing soars over the caressing sea.*

— Cortot



PIERRE ROCHE LA LOÏE FULLER 1904

l'esprit art nouveau  
estampes modelées — gypsographie

*Voiles, is a curiously doctrinaire piece, a pair of entirely whole-tone episodes framing a pentatonic middle section that could almost be a remnant of the gamelan music of Pagodes. The title might mean 'veils' (like the ones shed by Salome in Strauss's opera or deployed with coloured lighting by the American dancer Loïe Fuller). But the music has a sinister edge, provided by the bass ostinato B flats and the curious floating metre, that seems to contradict both meanings. The B flats are an echo of Danseuses de Delphes, which is in that key, and they continue into le Vent dans la Plaine, supporting the windy sextuplets that blow on and off throughout the prelude.*

— Stephen Walsh

*Voiles, with its blurring whole tones — especially in the final bars, where Debussy supplies a rare pedal marking that ensures a wash of harmony — could loosely be compared to an one of the countless Impressionist seascapes with sailing boats (perhaps Whistler or Degas), though the sinister undertow of low B flats suggests a more mysterious agenda while failing to identify it.*

— Paul Roberts

Duration: 4'25

- originally 2/4 throughout
- **14** the exact placing of these tempo instructions has been modified
- **32-33** Debussy's original pedal indication

modéré [♩ = 88]

( dans un rythme sans rigueur et caressant )

II

*p* très doux

*p* *più p*

*m.d.*

3

*pp*

*expressif*

*toujours pp*

*très doux*

*très doux*

*pp*

*pp*

Musical score for measures 9 and 10. The piece is in G major. Measure 9 starts with a piano (*pp*) dynamic. Measure 10 features a piano (*p*) dynamic. The right hand plays a series of chords and arpeggios, while the left hand provides a steady bass line with eighth notes.

Musical score for measures 11 and 12. Measure 11 begins with a piano (*pp*) dynamic. Measure 12 is marked *très souple* (very flexible) and also features a piano (*pp*) dynamic. The right hand has a more melodic line with slurs, while the left hand continues with a bass line.

Musical score for measures 13 and 14. Measure 13 includes fingerings 3, 4, and 5. Measure 14 is marked *cédez* (yield) with an asterisk, followed by a dashed line and a double bar line, then *a tempo*. The dynamic is piano (*pp*) in measure 14. The right hand features arpeggiated chords, and the left hand has a bass line.

Musical score for measures 15 and 16. Measure 15 includes fingerings 1, 2, and 3. Measure 16 features a piano (*p*) dynamic. The right hand has a melodic line with slurs and fingerings, while the left hand provides a bass line.

cédez - - - - - // a tempo

*p* *m.s.* *pp*

18

*pp* **2**

serrez - - - - - // cédez - - - - - //

*p* **4** *m.d. 3* *4*

en animant

*p* *m.d.* *m.s.* *mf*

Musical score for measures 22-23. The piece is in a key with three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat) and a common time signature. Measure 22 features a piano (*p*) dynamic. Measure 23 begins with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic, marked with an 8va (octave) sign. The score includes various articulations such as slurs, accents, and fingerings (4, 3, 2).

emporté - - - - // cédez - - - - // très retenu - - - -

Musical score for measures 23-24. Measure 23 continues with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic, followed by a fortissimo (*f*) dynamic. Measure 24 starts with a piano (*p*) dynamic, marked with a *molto* tempo marking, and ends with a *più p* dynamic. The score includes slurs, accents, and fingerings (1, 3, 4).

Musical score for measures 24-25. Measure 24 continues with a pianissimo (*pp*) dynamic, marked with a *più pp* dynamic. The score includes slurs, accents, and fingerings (7). A double bar line with repeat dots is present at the end of the system.

au mouvement

Musical score for measures 25-26. Measure 25 begins with a pianissimo (*pp*) dynamic. The score includes slurs, accents, and fingerings (7). The instruction "comme un très léger glissando" is written below the bass line. Measure 26 continues with a piano (*p*) dynamic.

*doucement en dehors*

Musical score for measures 26-27. The piece is in a key with two flats (B-flat and E-flat) and a common time signature. The tempo and mood are indicated as *doucement en dehors*. The score consists of a treble and bass clef system. Measure 26 begins with a piano (p) dynamic. The right hand features a melodic line with a long slur over measures 26 and 27, and a *m.s.* (mezzo-soprano) dynamic marking. The left hand provides a bass line with a similar slur. Measure 27 continues the melodic and bass lines, with another *m.s.* dynamic marking.

Musical score for measures 27-28. The piece continues in the same key and time signature. The score consists of a treble and bass clef system. Measure 27 continues the melodic and bass lines from the previous system, with a *m.s.* dynamic marking. Measure 28 begins with a piano (*pp*) dynamic. The right hand features a melodic line with a long slur over measures 28 and 29, and a *m.s.* dynamic marking. The left hand provides a bass line with a similar slur.

Musical score for measures 28-29. The piece continues in the same key and time signature. The score consists of a treble and bass clef system. Measure 28 begins with a piano (*pp*) dynamic. The right hand features a melodic line with a long slur over measures 28 and 29, and a *m.s.* dynamic marking. The left hand provides a bass line with a similar slur.

Musical score for measures 29-30. The piece continues in the same key and time signature. The score consists of a treble and bass clef system. Measure 29 begins with a piano (*pp*) dynamic. The right hand features a melodic line with a long slur over measures 29 and 30, and a *m.s.* dynamic marking. The left hand provides a bass line with a similar slur.

très apaisé et très atténué jusqu'à la fin

Musical score for measures 30-31, piano part. The score is written for a grand piano with a treble and bass clef. Measure 30 starts with a treble clef and a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The bass clef has a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The music is marked *più pp*. The melody in the treble clef features a series of chords and a long, sweeping line that spans across measures 30 and 31. The bass clef provides a harmonic accompaniment with chords and a few moving lines. The piece concludes with a double bar line.

Musical score for measures 31-32, piano part. This system continues from the previous one. Measure 31 shows the continuation of the melodic and harmonic lines. Measure 32 begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F-sharp). The bass clef remains in one flat. The music features a prominent, long, sweeping melodic line in the treble clef that rises and then falls, accompanied by a steady bass line. The piece ends with a double bar line.

Musical score for measure 32, piano part. This system shows the continuation of the melodic and harmonic lines from the previous system. The treble clef has a key signature of one sharp (F-sharp), and the bass clef has a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The music features a prominent, long, sweeping melodic line in the treble clef that rises and then falls, accompanied by a steady bass line. The piece ends with a double bar line.

Musical score for measure 32, piano part. This system shows the continuation of the melodic and harmonic lines from the previous system. The treble clef has a key signature of one sharp (F-sharp), and the bass clef has a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The music features a prominent, long, sweeping melodic line in the treble clef that rises and then falls, accompanied by a steady bass line. The piece ends with a double bar line.

(...voiles) \*

The first book of preludes has two wind-inspired pieces and of the two tone poems this is more of a fresh breeze than a gale. The hushed tenor voice, wailing a sinuous and mysterious chant, creates moments of tension and unease with a few short passages in the whole tone scale imitating *Voiles*. The stormy climax in chordal surge is most effective and poses quite a pianistic challenge (see **28-34** below).

### C'est l'extase langoureuse\*\*

*Romances sans paroles* 1902

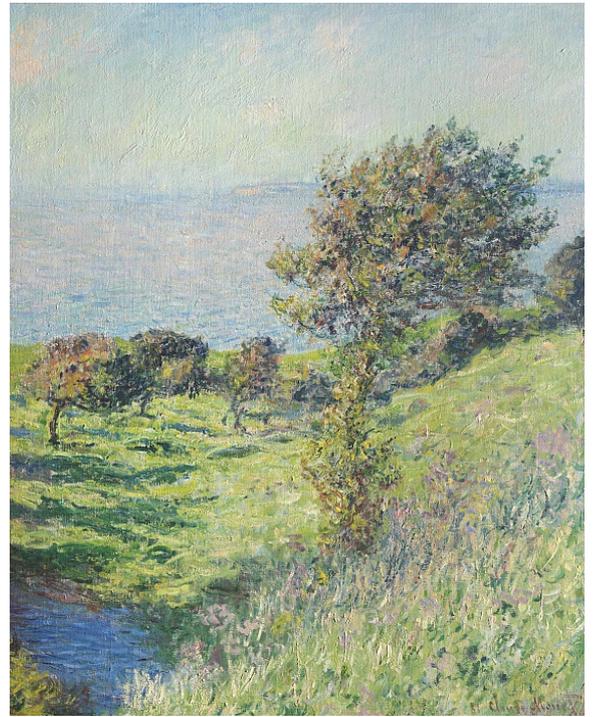
*Le vent dans la plaine  
Suspend son haleine*  
— Favart

C'est l'extase langoureuse,  
C'est la fatigue amoureuse,  
C'est tous les frissons des bois  
Parmi l'étreinte des brises,  
C'est, vers les ramures grises,  
Le chœur des petites voix.

Ô le frêle et frais murmure !  
Cela gazouille et susurre,  
Cela ressemble au cri doux  
Que l'herbe agitée expire...  
Tu dirais, sous l'eau qui vire,  
Le roulis sourd des cailloux.

Cette âme qui se lamente  
En cette plainte dormante,  
C'est la nôtre, n'est-ce pas ?  
La mienne, dis, et la tienne,  
Dont s'exhale l'humble antienne  
Par ce tiède soir, tout bas ?

**Paul Verlaine**



**MONET COUP DE VENT** 1881

A quotation from the eighteenth century playwright Favart inspired the full title\* — *le vent dans la plaine suspend son haleine* (the wind in the plain is holding its breath). Debussy and Verlaine became inevitably entwined as one of the composer's early piano teachers was the poet's mother-in-law. *Languorous Ecstasy* was also set to music by the composer in 1888 and this prelude dates from about 1910 with a first performance in 1911.

*"Stealthy and swift it glides over cropped grass, clings onto bushes, ruffles hedges, and sometimes with a sudden gust, in the fresh energy of the morning, bows the burgeoning wheat with a long quivering wave."*

— Cortot

\*an ariette from a comic opera *Ninette à la cour* 1755, used as a motto in Verlaine's poem, the first song in Debussy's *Ariettes oubliées* 1887

\*\* website translation : [https://www.lieder.net/lieder/get\\_text.html?TextId=16335](https://www.lieder.net/lieder/get_text.html?TextId=16335)

**Duration: 2'20**

- editorial reduced notation
- **28-34** these large RH leaps are of course quite challenging, but become slightly more manageable with the bass modified as here
- **30** *subito p* can be effectively achieved by silently re-playing the diamond-headed fifths with a suitable change of pedal
- **43** *ossia* according to recordings by the composer

animé [♩ = 126]

*aussi légèrement que possible*

III

5  
m.s.  
*pp*

\* 6

3

*pp*

5

*pp*

7

*pp*

8<sup>va</sup>-----, 1

*pp*

*cédez //*

*a tempo*

8<sup>va</sup>-----, 1

*pp*

*cédez //*

*a tempo*

13

*p* *p* *sfz*

15

*pp*

17

*pp* *pp* *pp*

4/5

This system contains measures 17 and 18. The right hand features a continuous eighth-note pattern. The left hand has a melodic line with slurs and accents, and a bass line with a 4/5 time signature. Dynamics include *pp* (pianissimo) and accents.

19

*pp*

3 2

This system contains measures 19 and 20. The right hand continues with eighth-note patterns. The left hand has a melodic line with a slur and accents, and a bass line with a triplet of eighth notes and a doublet. Dynamics include *pp* (pianissimo).

21

*pp* *m.s.*

This system contains measures 21 and 22. The right hand has eighth-note patterns. The left hand has a melodic line with a slur and accents, and a bass line with a slur. Dynamics include *pp* (pianissimo) and *m.s.* (mezzo-soprano).

23

This system contains measures 23 and 24. The right hand has eighth-note patterns. The left hand has a melodic line with a slur and accents, and a bass line with a slur. Dynamics include *pp* (pianissimo).

25

*pp* *sotto*

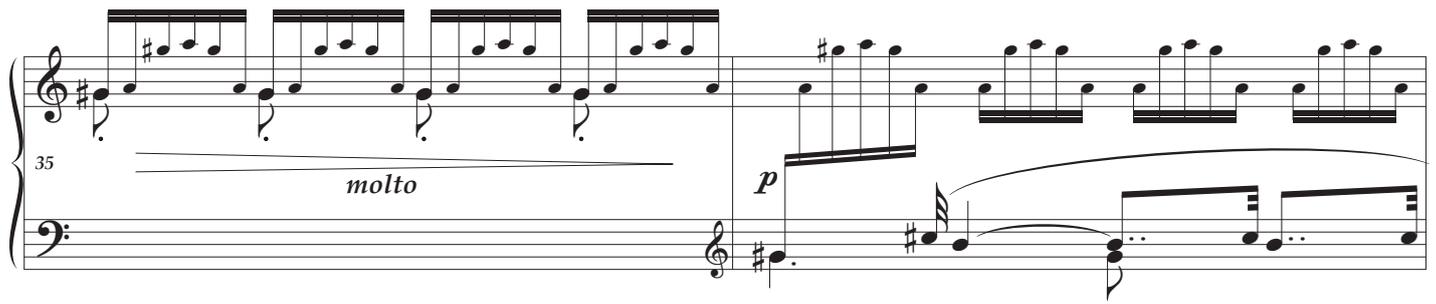
This system contains measures 25 and 26. The right hand has eighth-note patterns. The left hand has a melodic line with a slur and accents, and a bass line with a slur. Dynamics include *pp* (pianissimo) and *sotto* (sotto voce).

Musical score for measures 27-30. The piece is in a key with two flats (B-flat major or D minor). Measure 27 features a treble clef with a melodic line and a bass clef with a steady eighth-note accompaniment. Measure 28 has a dynamic marking of *f* and a fermata over a chord. Measure 29 has a dynamic marking of *p*. Measure 30 features a dynamic marking of *pp* and a fermata over a chord. A *pp* marking is also present at the beginning of the system.

Musical score for measures 31-34. The key signature changes to one flat (F major or D minor). Measure 31 has a dynamic marking of *f*. Measure 32 has a dynamic marking of *p*. Measure 33 has a dynamic marking of *f*. Measure 34 has a dynamic marking of *p*. A *pp* marking is present at the beginning of the system.

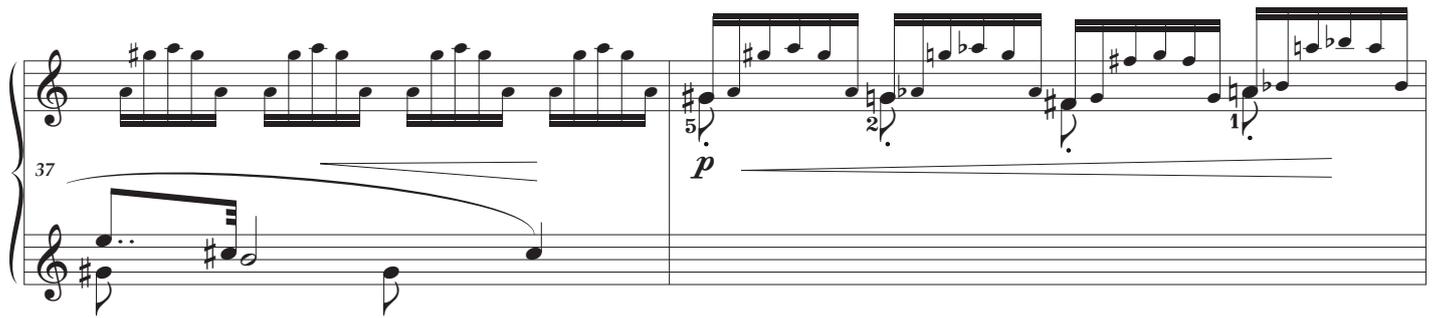
Musical score for measures 35-38. The key signature changes to two sharps (D major or F# minor). Measure 35 has a dynamic marking of *f*. Measure 36 has a dynamic marking of *p*. Measure 37 has a dynamic marking of *f*. Measure 38 has a dynamic marking of *p*. A *pp* marking is present at the beginning of the system.

Musical score for measures 39-42. The key signature changes to three sharps (A major or C# minor). Measure 39 has a dynamic marking of *f*. Measure 40 has a dynamic marking of *p*. Measure 41 has a dynamic marking of *f*. Measure 42 has a dynamic marking of *p*.



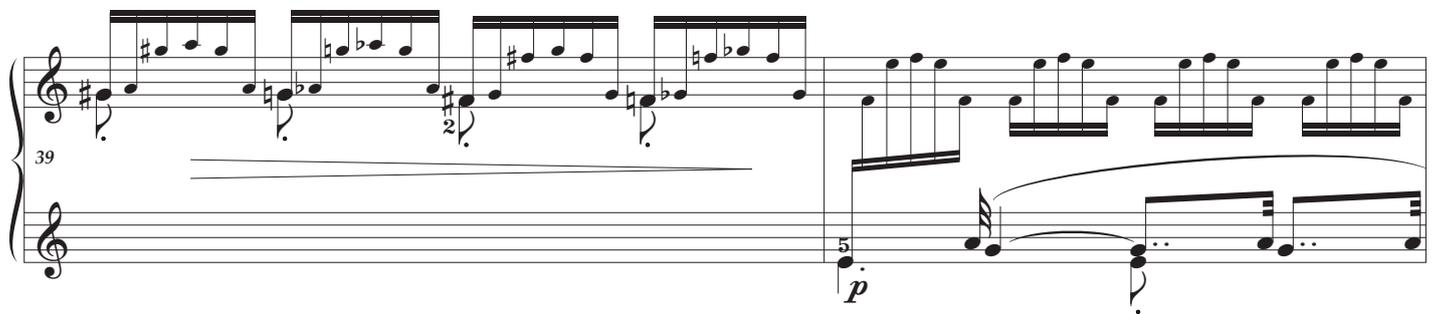
35 *molto* *p*

This system contains measures 35 and 36. The right hand features a continuous eighth-note pattern in the treble clef. The left hand has a melodic line in the bass clef, starting with a half note and followed by quarter notes. A *molto* marking is placed under the first measure, and a *p* (piano) marking is placed under the second measure.



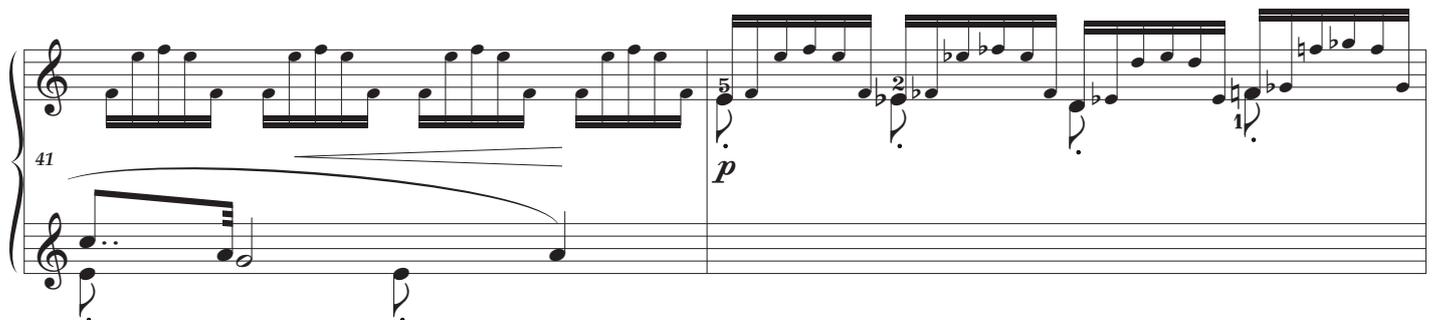
37 *p*

This system contains measures 37 and 38. The right hand continues with eighth-note patterns, showing some chromatic movement. The left hand has a melodic line with some rests. A *p* marking is placed under the first measure of the second system.



39 *p*

This system contains measures 39 and 40. The right hand continues with eighth-note patterns. The left hand has a melodic line with some rests. A *p* marking is placed under the first measure of the second system.



41 *p*

This system contains measures 41 and 42. The right hand continues with eighth-note patterns. The left hand has a melodic line with some rests. A *p* marking is placed under the first measure of the second system.

ossia \*

Musical score system 1, measures 43-44. The system consists of two staves. The upper staff contains a melodic line with eighth-note patterns and a fermata. The lower staff contains a bass line with a fermata and a measure marked with a '5' and the instruction 'più p'.

Musical score system 2, measures 45-46. The system consists of two staves. The upper staff contains a melodic line with eighth-note patterns. The lower staff contains a bass line with a long note and a triplet of eighth notes.

Musical score system 3, measures 47-48. The system consists of two staves. The upper staff contains a melodic line with eighth-note patterns. The lower staff contains a bass line with notes and chords, including two measures marked with 'p'.

Musical score system 4, measures 49-50. The system consists of two staves. The upper staff contains a melodic line with eighth-note patterns and a fermata, with a '1' above the final note. The lower staff contains a bass line with notes and chords, including two measures marked with 'p' and a final measure marked with 'pp'. A '8va' marking with a dashed line is positioned above the final measure.

cédez - - - - - // a tempo

8<sup>va</sup> - - - - -

51

*pp*

cédez - - - - - // a tempo

53

*p*

55

*p*

*pp*

un peu retenu

57

*più pp*

*ppp*

*laisser vibrer*

(... le vent dans la plaine )

## IV

So much of Debussy's work is inspired by the written word and this prelude (possibly my favourite) — *sounds and scents fill the evening air* — takes its title from Baudelaire's pantoum\* poem — *Evening Harmony*. The music truly evokes and reflects the sensuous text which talks of a melancholic waltz\*\* and languorous elation, a repeated line along with another which describes a quivering emotive violin and a grieving heart.

First published in 1857, with themes relating to decadence and eroticism, *les fleurs du mal* (the flowers of evil) became fundamental to the symbolist and modernist movements, for which the author and publisher were prosecuted (just after *Madame Bovary* suffered similar accusations) — 'an insult to public decency'!

Indeed, this particular work is an outstanding example of the erotic, an inspired vision which Debussy has made his own: "It is necessary to abandon yourself completely, and let the music do as it will. All people come to music to seek oblivion".

*The elusive evocation of Baudelaire is a nocturne dealing with the sensations aroused by a drowsy commingling of the senses, a theme close to the interests of the symbolist poets. The imagined fusion of sounds and scents is suggested by (or suggests) melodic fragments that attempt to rise, trail off into nothingness, or are caught in nostalgic webs of sound. The perfumed ambience of Baudelaire's Harmonie du Soir from Les Fleurs du Mal is further heightened by the distant horn calls at the final cadences.*

### Harmonie du Soir \*\*\*

Voici venir les temps où vibrant sur sa tige  
Chaque fleur s'évapore ainsi qu'un encensoir ;  
Les sons et les parfums tournent dans l'air du soir ;  
Valse mélancolique et langoureux vertige !

Chaque fleur s'évapore ainsi qu'un encensoir ;  
Le violon frémit comme un cœur qu'on afflige ;  
Valse mélancolique et langoureux vertige !  
Le ciel est triste et beau comme un grand reposoir.

Le violon frémit comme un cœur qu'on afflige,  
Un cœur tendre, qui hait le néant vaste et noir !  
Le ciel est triste et beau comme un grand reposoir ;  
Le soleil s'est noyé dans son sang qui se fige.

Un cœur tendre, qui hait le néant vaste et noir,  
Du passé lumineux recueille tout vestige !  
Le soleil s'est noyé dans son sang qui se fige...  
Ton souvenir en moi luit comme un ostensor !

*The languid distress of an anxious day, perfumes which float in the air's caress, muffled vibrations perceived in the gently advancing night, and, to stay close to the sense of Baudelaire's quotation,*

*vertiginous langour where a heart fails — without reason.*

— Cortot

*It is the intangible that rotates in the air and this has an impact on Debussy's harmony and, no less intriguingly, his form that takes us into new realms. Time and again the music is disorientated by the chromatic chord sequences (starting in bar 3) that effectively liquidate the harmony, and with it any clear, simple sense of form: magical sounds and scents that teach the brain new logics. The form breaks down into a kind of montage*

### Charles Baudelaire



*of brief images, at first apparently incoherent, then reconstructed through repetition and the forming of new connections. Risks are taken, assessed, listened to. At the piano he could bring this off; he was in his element. Impressionism or Symbolism? In this music the question is once again exposed as meaningless. The sounds are sounds and the perfumes are absent.*

*Without the title, we could have no conception of the subject matter.*

— Stephen Walsh

— Irwin Freundlich

\* A type of oriental poem with a set pattern of repetitive lines.

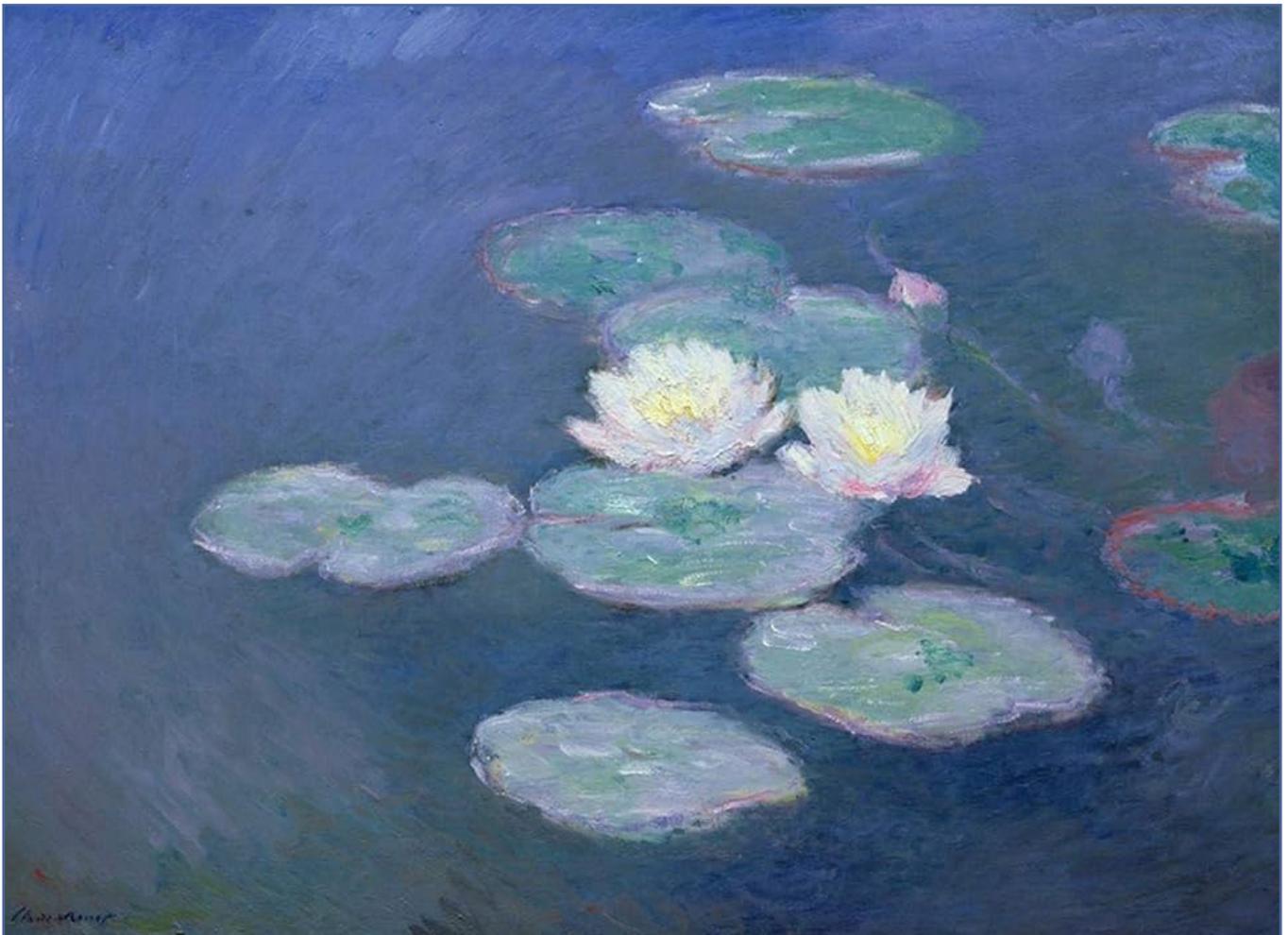
\*\* The choice of waltz is significant, as at that time the waltz was still considered provocative with unusual physical proximity on the dance floor.

\*\*\* website translation

Duration: 3'45

- 1 bars with 5 beats are sometimes easier to interpret by lightly accentuating as 2 + 3 (see 44)
- 9-12 editorial *sostenuto* pedal to be coupled with the sustaining pedal
- 30 editorial *sostenuto* pedal suggestion
- 30 2nd beat RH C octave the ties are missing in the original — probably an oversight

- 30-31 modification of time-signature
- 31-32 there are minor differences of rhythm in the original Durand edition
- 34-36 two bars reminiscent of another sensual poem — *La fille aux cheveux de lin*
- 38-39 there are confusing tenor dotted crotchets in the original
- 44 LH 4th beat and 45 3rd beat — be careful to differentiate between the E# and E♭. Several recordings contain a misreading of the first particularly irresistible chord.
- 50 & 52 playing the acciaccaturas with the right hand makes it easier to synchronise these horn-like chords which evoke a quatrain from Baudelaire's *Les Phares (Les Fleurs du Mal)* — *Un appel de chasseurs perdus dans les grands bois !*



**MONET** NYMPHÉAS, EFFET DU SOIR 1902

modéré [ ♩ = 84 ]  
(harmonieux et souple)

IV

5 *pp*

3 *pp*  
*m.d.*  
*m.s.*

6

en animant un peu

9 *p expressif*  
*p*

\* *Sost. Ped*

..\*..

*mf* *p* *p* *en retenant*

- - - - - // *a tempo*  
*égal et doux*

*pp* *en dehors*

*serrez un peu* - - - - - // *retenu* - - - - - // *a tempo*

*p* *pp*

*pp* *pp*

*plus lent*

*en animant*

*pp* *p*

cédez - - - -

28 *mf* 3 *pp* \* *Sost. Ped.* ..\*

serrez - - - //

30 \* *mf* *rubato* 6 \* *p* *m.d.*

serrez - - - //

33 *rubato* 6 *m.d.*

34 *p* \* 1 2 *la basse un peu appuyée et soutenue* 1 2

rubato

serrez

*mf* *p* *mf*

tranquille et flottant

cédez - - - //

*pp*

*p*

a tempo

*pp*

en retenant

45

3 *pp*

léger

6

47

6

6

*pp*

plus retenu

comme une lointaine sonnerie de cors

49

5 *pp*

*m.d.*

3 *m.s.*

Sub - - -

encore plus lointain et plus retenu

51

5 4 5 1 2 1

4 3 1

7

7

*pp*

*pp*

Sub - - -

Sub - - -

Sub - - -

(... "les sons et les parfums tournent dans l'air du soir" )



The bay of Naples sets the scene for the fifth prelude, the *hills of Anacapri*. By drawing in equal measure upon its rhythm and the brightness of the scenery, Debussy has redefined tonality in this splendid programme music, succeeding in fully capturing the exotic character of the mediterranean Italian island. A quasi-scherzo featuring pentatonic bells, a folksong and a tarantella bring forth vivid colours and views bathed in dazzling sunlight. The central Neapolitan love song could easily be mistaken for Albeniz.

\* *Peindre non la chose mais son effet — la peinture est une poésie muette et la poésie une peinture parlante.*

*Movement in light, a sunny vision of the hills of Naples; a lively tarantella rhythm merges with the nonchalance of a popular refrain, an amorous melody of delectable and banal nostalgia intensely mingling with the palpitations of a vivid blue sky, interrupted by the untiring and penetrating vitality of a rapid flute.*

— Cortot

*Possibly an impression of part of the island of Capri which Debussy probably never visited. One theory,*

*offered guardedly by no less an authority than Roy Howat in the Foreword to the Collected Edition, is that the piece was inspired by the label on a bottle of Anacapri wine (presumably with a picture of the landscape). It includes bells, two popular songs, a tarantella and, unexpectedly, a habanera, and has the vividness and colouristic brilliance of a Derain or Matisse painting of the seaside village of Collioure.*

— Stephen Walsh

*We breathe thyme, cistus and the scent of the maquis. Let the cicadas rasp until the radiant fireworks at the finale! In Debussy's œuvre for piano, an equal intensity of light vibration can only be found at the conclusion of l'Isle Joyeuse.*

— Harry Halbreich

\* Paint not the object but its effect — painting is mute poetry and poetry an eloquent picture

Duration: 3'45

- editorial reduced notation
- **1-45** modified time-signatures — and editorial pedal interpretations

- **29 RH** accompaniment slightly modified to match **33**

- **54 & 58** the original layout is somewhat confusing and can only be respected by arpeggiating the wider chords... an unlikely solution

- **67-68** modified time-signature

- **90-92** the rhythm in the original Durand edition is somewhat confusing — here is a possible solution. The pedal suggestion is editorial.



**ASCAN LUTTEROTH** MONTE SOLARO 1923

**V**

*très modéré*

*pp* *sopra*

*pp* *léger et lointain*

*Red.* *quittez, en laissant vibrer*

*vif* [ $\text{♩} = 184$ ]

*très modéré*

*pp*

*Red.* *quittez, en laissant vibrer*

*p*

*en serrant* - - - - - // *vif*

*f*

*8va*

*6*

*(8va)*

*p*

*dim. molto leggiero*

*m.d.*

*1 2*

*p* joyeux et léger

12 *pp* [3]

14 *p*

17 *pp* *pp m.s.*

20 *p expressif*

Musical score for measures 23-25. The piece is in G major (one sharp) and 3/4 time. Measure 23 starts with a treble clef and a bass clef. The right hand plays a steady eighth-note accompaniment. The left hand has a bass line with some rests and a half note. Measure 24 continues the accompaniment. Measure 25 features a melodic flourish in the right hand and a half note in the left hand.

Musical score for measures 26-28. Measure 26 continues the accompaniment. Measure 27 has a melodic flourish in the right hand with a *mf* dynamic. Measure 28 has a melodic flourish in the right hand with a *f* dynamic, followed by a *p* dynamic. The piece ends with a double bar line and the instruction *cédez //*.

**a tempo**

( avec la liberté d'une chanson populaire ) *cédez - - - - - //* **a tempo**

Musical score for measures 29-31. Measure 29 starts with a treble clef and a bass clef. The right hand has a melodic line with a *pp* dynamic. The left hand has a bass line. Measure 30 continues the accompaniment. Measure 31 features a melodic flourish in the right hand. The piece ends with a double bar line and the instruction *cédez - - - - - //*.

Musical score for measures 32-34. Measure 32 continues the accompaniment. Measure 33 has a melodic flourish in the right hand with a *pp* dynamic. Measure 34 features a melodic flourish in the right hand. The piece ends with a double bar line and the instruction *cédez - - - - - //*.

a tempo

35

This system contains measures 35 and 36. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#). Measure 35 features a steady eighth-note pattern in the right hand and a simple bass line in the left hand. Measure 36 shows a more complex right-hand melody with some grace notes and a descending bass line.

37

*f*

38

This system contains measures 37 and 38. Measure 37 begins with a forte (*f*) dynamic and features a more active right-hand melody. Measure 38 continues this melody and includes a triplet of eighth notes in the bass line, with fingerings 3, 5, and 3 indicated.

39

*f*

*ff*

*a tempo*

*f*

*cédez*

40

This system contains measures 39 and 40. Measure 39 starts with a forte (*f*) dynamic. Measure 40 features a fortissimo (*ff*) dynamic and includes the instruction "cédez" (yield) above a complex chordal texture. The system concludes with a return to "a tempo" and a forte (*f*) dynamic.

41

*dim. e rit.*

42

This system contains measures 41 and 42. Measure 41 begins with a decrescendo and ritardando (*dim. e rit.*) instruction. Measure 42 continues this deceleration and includes fingerings 5, 1, 4, 2, 1, 2 in the right hand.

Musical score for measures 43-44. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#). Measure 43 features a treble clef with a melodic line and a bass clef with a supporting line. Measure 44 continues the melodic line in the treble clef, marked with a dynamic of *m.s.* (mezzo-soprano).

modéré et expressif

Musical score for measures 45-46. Measure 45 continues the melodic line in the treble clef. Measure 46 features a 2/4 time signature change and a triplet of eighth notes in the treble clef, marked with a dynamic of *p* (piano).

Musical score for measures 47-49. Measure 47 features a treble clef with a melodic line and a bass clef with a supporting line. Measure 48 features a 4/4 time signature change and a melodic line in the treble clef. Measure 49 continues the melodic line in the treble clef.

plus modéré

Musical score for measures 50-52. Measure 50 features a bass clef with a melodic line and a treble clef with a supporting line. Measure 51 features a melodic line in the bass clef, marked with a dynamic of *un peu marqué*. Measure 52 features a melodic line in the bass clef, marked with a dynamic of *pp* (pianissimo).

53

*rubato*

*un peu marqué*

56

*pp*

59

*pp*

*retenu* - - - - - //

62

*presque lent* // *a tempo (vif)*

*p crescendo molto*

8va

Musical score system 1, measures 65-67. The system consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and a common time signature. It features a melodic line with slurs and fingerings 1, 3, and 4. The lower staff is in bass clef with the same key signature and time signature, showing a complex texture of overlapping lines with wavy patterns. A dynamic marking *f* is present at the beginning of the system. A dashed line labeled "8va" is positioned above the system. An asterisk (\*) is located in the right-hand portion of the lower staff.

Musical score system 2, measures 68-70. The system consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef with a key signature of three sharps and a common time signature. It contains a melodic line with slurs and fingerings 3, 5, and 3. The lower staff is in bass clef with the same key signature and time signature, featuring a melodic line with slurs and fingerings 2, 4, and 2. A dynamic marking *f* is present in the middle of the system. A triangle symbol ( $\Delta$ ) is placed above a note in the lower staff. A triplet of notes is marked with a "3" below it at the end of the system.

Musical score system 3, measures 70-72. The system consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef with a key signature of three sharps and a common time signature. It features a melodic line with slurs and fingerings 1, 2, and 4. The lower staff is in bass clef with the same key signature and time signature, showing a melodic line with slurs and fingerings 4, 2, and 4. A dynamic marking *p* is present in the middle of the system.

Musical score system 4, measures 72-74. The system consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef with a key signature of three sharps and a common time signature. It features a melodic line with slurs and fingerings 3, 4, and 4. The lower staff is in bass clef with the same key signature and time signature, showing a complex texture of overlapping lines with slurs and fingerings 3, 3, and 2. A dynamic marking *crescendo molto* is present in the right-hand portion of the system.

cédez - - - //

75

*f*

3

a tempo

77

*ff*

4

cédez - - - - - //

a tempo

79

*ff*

cédez - - - - - //

a tempo

81

*p*

2

*m.d.*

3

2

83 *m.s.* *f* *p*

85 *f* *p*

87 *f* *f*

lumineux

89 *f* *m.s.* *ff* *m.s.* *Sva*

*Red.*

très retenu

91 *fff* *m.s.* *Sva*



(... les collines d'Anacapri )

# VI

The years 1909 and 1910 were terribly distressing for the composer — he was diagnosed with a particularly painful cancer and his father Manuel-Achille was close to death\*. Now approaching the winter of his life, these two events must have weighed heavily, and this depressing and desolate image of silence and isolation, surely corresponded to thoughts of mortality. **Edward Lockspeiser**: *those solitary footsteps marked out in the desolate snowscape — where do they lead?*

Unlike many of the more approachable preludes in Book I, this hypnotic work must be one of the most profound from his œuvre. In spite of, or perhaps because of its despondency, I love playing this evocative work — the dragging rhythm, the hypnotic ostinato — melancholic throughout except for two illuminated, almost exalted passages in G flat (**22** and **29**). Like a sad and tender lament, the image fades into nothingness with untold emotion.

Regarding the incessant appoggiaturas, Debussy indicated “*ce rythme doit avoir la valeur sonore d'un fond de paysage triste et glacé*” (this rhythm should reflect the sounds of a desolate and frozen landscape).

It was composed on 27th December 1909 and published in 1910, with a first performance in 1911 by Debussy himself.

*With an anguished tone poem Debussy summons a sorrowful and frozen winter landscape; the absent beloved, faint imprints of her departure, each one painfully reliving a serene memory that is no more.*

— Cortot

*Like Monet, Debussy here found solace, working with a winter scene. Music is a matter of colours and rhythmicised time, and in ‘des Pas sur la Neige’, the idea of time being stretched out and probed for its hidden content is almost palpable. In a sense, the music gets nowhere; it is a time capsule in which we experience extension, then step out, like the soldier in Stravinsky's L'Histoire du soldat, exactly as and where we were when we stepped in, but with knowledge that was not previously ours.*

— Stephen Walsh

*Debussy was a fiercely independent composer, who like Beethoven learned from past masters only to blaze ahead on his own path, always the seeker. For like Beethoven, Debussy knew that the burden of the explorer is that the promised land is never reached, and that each discovery, miraculous as it may be, is yet another of music's imperishable illusions. He was a part of no group and left no school behind him.*

— Edward Lockspeiser

## *le tombeau des Naïades\*\**

*Le long du bois couvert de givre, je  
marchais ; mes cheveux devant ma  
bouche se fleurissaient de petits glaçons,  
et mes sandales étaient lourdes de neige  
fangeuse et tassée...*

Through the frosty wood, I walked; my hair covering my mouth where flourished icy crystals, and my sandals were heavy of dense sodden snow...

## *Pierre Louÿs*

\*\* an appropriate frozen opening verse from the final song of *trois chansons de Bilitis*

Duration: 4 minutes

- this edition features hand swapping and a quite few practical ‘arrangements’
- beware of starting too slowly, keeping something in reserve for the slower tempi beyond **33**
- **1** appoggiaturas should be executed thus throughout
- **8 & 22** editorial modifications of key-signature
- **12-14** editorial modifications of time-signature and dashed barlines
- **22** editorial *sostenuto* pedal



**MONET** GLAÇONS, EFFET BLANC 1893



\* A late photograph of Debussy together with his parents in 1909 suggests the warmth and mutuality of a suburban homecoming. Debussy was sincerely distressed by his father's death; "although we practically never had an idea in common," he wrote, "it's a loss I feel more deeply each passing day."

— Stephen Walsh

triste et lent [♩ = 44]

VI

4 *pp*

*p* *expressif et douloureux*

*più pp*

\* 



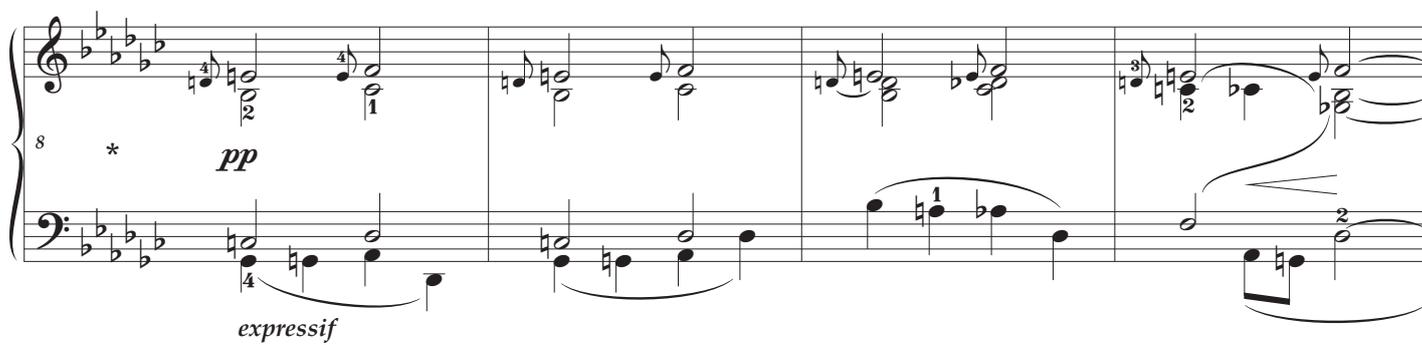
ce rythme doit avoir la valeur sonore  
d'un fond de paysage triste et glacé



8 \*

*pp*

*expressif*



cédez - - - retenu - - - //

12

*pp*

[execution - see bar 1]

cédez - - - //

17

*p*

*più p*

a tempo *p* en animant surtout dans l'expression  
*p* espressif et tendre

21

*pp*

\*

*pp*

\* Sost. Ped

retenu - - //

24

..\*..

a tempo

*pp*

*p*

27

2 - 1

comme un tendre et triste regret

30

4

4

1

2

4

5

4

3

plus lent

très lent

*pp*

*morendo*

*m.d.*

*ppp*

33

2

5

(... des pas sur la neige )

## VII

With unusually violent adjectives — *strident, angoissé, incisif, furieux* — *What the West Wind Saw* was composed at about the same time as Bartók's *Allegro barbaro* and Prokofiev's *Toccata*. Much of Debussy's output is inspired by the wind, and while it is true that the titles appear at the end of each work, they must have been influential in the choice of subject. Simultaneously, *The Garden of Paradise\**, a fairy tale by Hans Christian Andersen, was translated into French; a young prince finds the cavern of the four winds and a woman identified as their mother. However, given the extreme dissonance, the most likely source is Shelley's *Ode to the West Wind*, penned in 1819 (2 short extracts\*\*). This prelude and *l'Isle Joyeuse* are the composer's most pianistically impressive pieces, their virtuosity so beloved of the public at large. In extreme contrast with the two adjacent preludes it evokes the turbulence of nature, which Victor Lederer describes as 'cathartic violence'. Whatever its inspiration, gusts storm under a leaden sky and we encounter a challenging and effective romantic work, highly charged emotionally and very satisfying to study.

*Through the pallid glow of dawn, or in the terror of the night, this is the dreadful vision of a tempest where, in the howling of an unchained sea, there pass cries of agony rejected by the waves.*

— Cortot

*A more or less candid parody of Liszt, especially 'Orage', from the first set of Années de pèlerinage, with which Paul Roberts has found clear thematic connections. But*

*Roberts also points out that Debussy's prelude, though frightening in its violence and virtuosity, is devoid of the pathos in Liszt's parallel between the wild elements and human suffering. "Debussy's West Wind," he notes "never sees the valley of despair experienced by Liszt's Obermann".*

— Stephen Walsh

*\* "I have rushed wildly across the savannahs; I have stroked the wild horses, and shaken the coconuts from the trees. Yes, I have many stories to relate; but I need not tell everything I know. You know it all very well, don't you, old lady?" And he kissed his mother so roughly, that she nearly fell backwards. Oh, he was, indeed, a wild fellow.*

*\*\* Make me thy lyre, even as the forest is:  
What if my leaves are falling like its own!  
The tumult of thy mighty harmonies.*

*The trumpet of a prophecy! O Wind,  
If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?*

#### Duration 4'45

- editorial reduced notation
- metronome speed omitted in the original
- **1-6** sostenuto pedal (to be coupled with the damper pedal) editorial suggestion
- **8** it is sensible to omit the final E♭
- **15** for private enjoyment, or possibly even in performance, the *sostenuto* pedal can be effectively held until **24**
- **19-20** rhythmic presentation of the accompanying whole tone scale has been slightly modified
- **20** (2nd & 4th beats) LH final semiquaver chords are mysteriously missing in the original
- **21** rhythmic presentation of the accompanying RH broken chord has been slightly modified — the diamond-headed notes may be omitted
- **37** the bass (B octave) does not appear in the original repeat of this section
- **57** editorial accents
- **63** sostenuto pedal editorial suggestion



**TURNER** WAVES BREAKING AGAINST THE WIND 1840

## Animé et tumultueux

VII

First system of the musical score. It features a bass clef, a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#), and a 4/4 time signature. The music is marked *pp* (pianissimo) and *m.d.* (mezzo-dolce). There are two asterisks (\*) above the staff. A slur covers the first two measures, and another slur covers the last two measures. The instruction *Sost. Ped* is written below the first measure.

Second system of the musical score, continuing the bass line from the first system. It begins with a measure number '2' above the staff.

Third system of the musical score, showing the right-hand part in a treble clef. The music is marked *m.s.* (mezzo-soprano). The right-hand part has two measures of rests, with notes appearing in the third and fourth measures. The instruction *m.s.* is written above the staff in two places.

Fourth system of the musical score, continuing the right-hand part from the third system. It begins with a measure number '4' above the staff.

Musical score for measures 5 and 6. The system consists of two staves. Measure 5 features a sixteenth-note arpeggiated figure in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. Measure 6 continues the arpeggiated figure in the right hand. A dynamic marking of *molto* is present with a hairpin indicating a crescendo. A fingering of 6 is shown above the right hand in measure 6.

Musical score for measures 6 and 7. The system consists of two staves. Measure 6 continues the arpeggiated figure in the right hand. Measure 7 features a sixteenth-note arpeggiated figure in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. A dynamic marking of *molto* is present with a hairpin indicating a decrescendo. A fingering of 6 is shown above the right hand in measure 7. A double asterisk (\*\*\*) is placed below the bass line in measure 7.

Musical score for measures 7 through 10. The system consists of two staves. Measure 7 features a *p* dynamic marking and a hairpin indicating a decrescendo. Measure 8 features a *pp* dynamic marking. Measure 9 features a *sfz m.d.* dynamic marking and a hairpin indicating a crescendo. Measure 10 features a *pp* dynamic marking. The text *plaintif et lointain* is written above the right hand in measure 10. A fingering of 3 is shown below the left hand in measure 7. A fingering of 2 is shown below the left hand in measure 8. A double asterisk (\*\*) is placed below the left hand in measure 8.

Musical score for measures 11 through 14. The system consists of two staves. Measure 11 features a *pp* dynamic marking. Measure 12 features a *sfz* dynamic marking and a hairpin indicating a crescendo. Measure 13 features a *p* dynamic marking and a hairpin indicating a decrescendo. Measure 14 features a *più pp* dynamic marking. A hairpin indicating a decrescendo is also present in measure 14. A double asterisk (\*\*) is placed below the left hand in measure 11.

commencer un peu au-dessous du mouvement

15

*pp* *pp*

*un peu marqué*

\* *Sost. Ped*

16

*pp* *pp*

17

*p* *m.d.*

*m.s.*

revenir progressivement au mouvement animé

18 *p*

19 *mf* *mf*

20 *mf* \* *mf* \*

21

Musical score for measures 21-22. The system consists of a grand staff with treble and bass clefs. Measure 21 features a dynamic marking of *f* and a slur over a series of notes in the right hand, with a fermata over the final note. The left hand plays chords. Measure 22 continues the melodic line in the right hand, with a fermata over the final note. Below the grand staff, there are two diagrams showing chord voicings with a 7 below them.

22

Musical score for measures 23-24. The system consists of a grand staff with treble and bass clefs. Measure 23 features a dynamic marking of *ff* and a slur over a series of notes in the right hand, with a fermata over the final note. The left hand plays chords. Measure 24 continues the melodic line in the right hand, with a fermata over the final note. Below the grand staff, there are two diagrams showing chord voicings with a 7 below them.

23

Musical score for measures 25-26. The system consists of a grand staff with treble and bass clefs. Measure 25 features a dynamic marking of *ff* and a slur over a series of notes in the right hand, with a fermata over the final note. The left hand plays chords. Measure 26 features a dynamic marking of *strident m.d.* and a series of notes in the right hand. Below the grand staff, there are two diagrams showing chord voicings with a 7 below them.

24

Musical score for measures 27-28. The system consists of a grand staff with treble and bass clefs. Measure 27 features a dynamic marking of *ff* and a slur over a series of notes in the right hand, with a fermata over the final note. The left hand plays chords. Measure 28 features a dynamic marking of *strident* and a series of notes in the right hand. Below the grand staff, there are two diagrams showing chord voicings with a 7 below them.

25

*molto*

Musical notation for measure 25, featuring a piano accompaniment with eighth-note patterns in both hands.

*un peu retenu**p* mais en dehors et angoissé

Musical notation for measures 26-27, including vocal lines and piano accompaniment. Measure 26 includes the dynamic marking *p* and *m.d.*

Musical notation for measures 27-28, including vocal lines and piano accompaniment. Measure 27 includes the dynamic marking *p*.

Musical notation for measures 28-29, including vocal lines and piano accompaniment. Measure 28 includes the dynamic marking *p*.

Musical notation for measures 29-30, including vocal lines and piano accompaniment. Measure 29 includes the dynamic marking *p*.

30 *f*

31 *p*

32

en serrant et augmentant beaucoup

33 *mf*

34

[ ♩ = ♩ ]

8<sup>va</sup>

Musical score for measures 35-36. The system includes a treble clef staff with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and a common time signature. The bass clef staff has a key signature of three sharps and a 3/4 time signature. The right hand plays a continuous eighth-note pattern. The left hand has a few notes, including a triplet of eighth notes. Dynamics include *f* and *ff*. The instruction *très en dehors* is present. A dashed line above the staff is labeled 8<sup>va</sup>. A fermata is placed over the final notes of the system.

(8<sup>va</sup>)

Musical score for measures 36-37. The system includes a treble clef staff with a key signature of three sharps and a common time signature. The bass clef staff has a key signature of three sharps and a 3/4 time signature. The right hand plays a continuous eighth-note pattern. The left hand has a few notes, including a triplet of eighth notes. Dynamics include *ff*. A dashed line above the staff is labeled (8<sup>va</sup>). A fermata is placed over the final notes of the system.

(8<sup>va</sup>)

Musical score for measures 37-38. The system includes a treble clef staff with a key signature of three sharps and a common time signature. The bass clef staff has a key signature of three sharps and a 3/4 time signature. The right hand plays a continuous eighth-note pattern. The left hand has a few notes, including a triplet of eighth notes. Dynamics include *ff*. A dashed line above the staff is labeled (8<sup>va</sup>). A fermata is placed over the final notes of the system.

Musical score for measures 38-40. The system includes a treble clef staff with a key signature of three sharps and a common time signature. The bass clef staff has a key signature of three sharps and a 3/4 time signature. The right hand has a few notes, including a triplet of eighth notes. Dynamics include *ff* and *p*. The instruction *m.d.* is present. The left hand plays a complex rhythmic pattern with fingerings 5, 4, 2, 4, 1. A fermata is placed over the final notes of the system.

[ \* ]

39  $[ \text{♩} = \text{♩} ]$  *m.d. non legato*  
*p*

*peu à peu crescendo en serrant*

40

41

*crescendo molto*

42

*f*

8<sup>va</sup>

$[ \text{♩} = \text{♩} ]$

(8<sup>va</sup>)

43

*f* *en dehors*

(8<sup>va</sup>)

Musical score for measures 44-45. The system consists of two staves. The upper staff is a treble clef with a dashed line above it labeled (8<sup>va</sup>). The lower staff is a bass clef. Measure 44 features a treble staff with a melodic line and a bass staff with chords. A dynamic marking *sfz* is present. Measure 45 continues the melodic line in the treble and has a dynamic marking *ff*. There are also dynamic markings *ff* in the bass staff for measure 45.

(8<sup>va</sup>)

Musical score for measures 46-47. The system consists of two staves. The upper staff is a treble clef with a dashed line above it labeled (8<sup>va</sup>). The lower staff is a bass clef. Measure 46 features a treble staff with a melodic line and a bass staff with chords. Dynamic markings include *più f* and *ff*. Measure 47 continues the melodic line in the treble and has a dynamic marking *ff* in the bass staff.

Musical score for measures 48-49. The system consists of two staves. The upper staff is a treble clef with a dashed line above it labeled (8<sup>va</sup>). The lower staff is a bass clef. Measure 48 features a treble staff with a melodic line and a bass staff with chords. Dynamic markings include *ff*. Measure 49 features a treble staff with a melodic line and a bass staff with chords. Dynamic markings include *ff* and *diminuendo molto*.

Musical score for measures 50-51. The system consists of two staves. The upper staff is a treble clef with a dashed line above it labeled (8<sup>va</sup>). The lower staff is a bass clef. Measure 50 features a treble staff with a melodic line and a bass staff with chords. Dynamic markings include *ff*. Measure 51 features a treble staff with a melodic line and a bass staff with chords. Dynamic markings include *pp*.

50

Musical score for measures 52-55. The system consists of two staves. The upper staff is a treble clef with a dashed line above it labeled (8<sup>va</sup>). The lower staff is a bass clef. Measure 52 features a treble staff with a melodic line and a bass staff with chords. Dynamic markings include *pp*. Measure 53 features a treble staff with a melodic line and a bass staff with chords. Dynamic markings include *pp*. Measure 54 features a treble staff with a melodic line and a bass staff with chords. Dynamic markings include *pp*. Measure 55 features a treble staff with a melodic line and a bass staff with chords. Dynamic markings include *pp*.

51 *pp incisif*

*pp*

52

*sfz*

*pp*

53 *furieux et rapide*

*f*

*Sva*

54 *ff*

*ff*

55 *pp subito*

*pp subito*

*Sva*

57

*più pp*

*S<sub>pb</sub>*

59

*p*

*serrez et augmentez*

61

63

*sempre crescendo*

*f*

*m.d.*

\* *Sost. Ped*

..\*..

65

*retenu*

*S<sub>va</sub>*

*3 ff*

*au mouvement*

*4 f*

*sfz sec*

(... ce qu'a vu le vent d'ouest )

# VIII

It is difficult to conceive of a greater contrast to the previous prelude. Inspiration from another erotic poem (IV *les sons et les parfums...*) relocated from Baudelaire to De Lisle and geographically northwards to Scotland. A golden-haired beauty sings with the lark, her lips changing from cherry to pink, culminating in the poet's desire to kiss her flaxen hair and to press her purple lips with his own. The music of haunting simplicity reflects one of the poet's four Scottish beauties, girls who represent an unsophisticated and gentle demeanour. In this gorgeous and ever-popular prelude, we discover three pages of delicate, perfectly composed music, as charming and serene as one could wish, and demanding a combination of sensuality, delicacy and depth. Either the lark or the girl must have adored broken chords and a variety of cadences. The title had appeared once before, as early as 1882, for a song dedicated to Marie-Blanche Vasnier, with whom Debussy had an affair.

*This long modal melody evokes a peaceful sister to Mélisande, to whom the predominance of the pentaphonic range makes it possible to attribute Celtic origins. This is one of Debussy's strongest musical reversions, which is also to be found in Bruyères: both works consist of a single large melodic arabesque.*

— Harry Halbreich

*An affectionate adaptation of the Scottish song by Leconte de Lisle, describing the charm and gentleness of the distant beloved, 'seated in the flowering lucerne'.*

— Cortot



JOHN WILLIAM WATERHOUSE 1875

Duration: 2'35

- ♩ = 60 is perhaps more realistic
- 6-7 modification of time signatures
- 7 & 32 LH acciaccatura editorial suggestion
- 13 LH tied thumb octave editorial suggestion
- 21-23 modification of time signatures
- 29-31 editorial pedalling

## La fille aux cheveux de lin\*

Sur la luzerne en fleur assise,  
Qui chante dès le frais matin ?  
C'est la fille aux cheveux de lin,  
La belle aux lèvres de cerise.

L'amour, au clair soleil d'été,  
Avec l'alouette a chanté.

Ta bouche a des couleurs divines,  
Ma chère, et tente le baiser !  
Sur l'herbe en fleur veux-tu causer,  
Fille aux cils longs, aux boucles fines ?

L'amour, au clair soleil d'été,  
Avec l'alouette a chanté.

Ne dis pas non, fille cruelle !  
Ne dis pas oui ! J'entendrai mieux  
Le long regard de tes grands yeux  
Et ta lèvre rose, ô ma belle !

L'amour, au clair soleil d'été,  
Avec l'alouette a chanté.

Adieu les daims, adieu les lièvres  
Et les rouges perdrix ! Je veux  
Baiser le lin de tes cheveux,  
Presser la pourpre de tes lèvres !

L'amour, au clair soleil d'été,  
Avec l'alouette a chanté.

**Charles-Marie Leconte de Lisle**

\*translation : <https://oxfordsong.org/song/la-fille-aux-cheveux-de-lin>

très calme et doucement expressif [♩ = 66] \*

VIII

*p sans rigueur*

*p*

*p*

cédez - - - - - // mouvement

*p*

*red.*

*p*

*più p*

*(très peu)*

16 *p*

un peu animé

19 *p*

22 *mf* *p* cédez - - - - //

mouvement ( sans lourdeur )

25 *pp*

cédez // mouvement *très doux*

28

*pp*

*Red.*

*m.s.*

murmuré et en retenant peu à peu

32

*pp*

1 2

perdendo

35

1 2 3 4 5

1 2 3 4 5

*m.s.*

37

*pp*

*m.s.*

*m.s.*

(... la fille aux cheveux de lin )

## IX

Spanish culture and music thrived in Paris at the turn of the century and both the Conservatoire and the Schola Cantorum encouraged the creation of innovative and experimental ideas. Although Debussy never travelled to Andalusia, he again\* expressed his admiration for flamenco. Five years after Ravel's *Alborada del Gracioso* (1905), he created a similar torrid scenario with a frustrated guitarist and his inamorata.

The staccato rhythm possibly evokes a jota or fandango and at **19** it recalls the typical strummed rasgueado\*\* chords of a flamenco guitar. Although in B flat minor, the guitarist flattens the supertonic C, which creates a typical tableau for Andalusia — the Phrygian mode is characteristic of flamenco.

*Now and then he would make an ironic comment on his own idiosyncratic way of working. Our hero solemnly tunes up, practises a few appropriate riffs, then begins a lament in the raw, guttural flamenco style (cante jondo) around just two notes, only for the object of his affections to slam her shutters closed! Undismayed, at 54 he recommences, this time a truly heart-wrenching chant of four notes, again interrupted, this time by another, distant singer, and later the town band playing jour de fête, from Ibéria (a reference that would have been lost on anyone looking over Debussy's shoulder in January 1910 as it did not appear until February). The serenader resumes, crossly at first, but then wanders off, mildly disgruntled.*

— Stephen Walsh

*A nocturnal and malicious fantasy à la Goya, transposing the timid passion of an inamorato, his love songs beneath a closed window; with alarmed or angry*

*reactions to strange noises and to a student band passing nearby — with the rhythm of nervous guitars, already to be found in Iberia.*

— Cortot

*Two serenaders are fighting for the favours of a lady who, hidden behind the flower-adorned lattice of her window railing, observes the gallant contestants.*

— de Falla



EMILIO PETTORUTI *EL IMPROVISADOR*

\* Debussy wrote three piano works with strong references to Andalusia — *La Soirée dans Grenade*, *La Sérénade Interrompue*, and *La Puerta del Vino*.

\*\* a guitar finger strumming technique commonly associated with flamenco

#### Duration: 2'30

- this edition features hand swapping and a few practical 'arrangements'
- metronome speed omitted in the original
- to create contrast between solo guitar and vocal passages I suggest virtually no pedal for the former and pedals (*estompé*) for the latter, as suggested by the composer

- to help perceive phrase lengths, dotted barlines are entirely editorial
- acciaccaturas should be well crushed to twang like a guitar
- one of the real challenges in this work is the timing of those interruptions and the varying tempi required to underline their character
- start with **125** to establish an appropriate tempo
- **42** C tied dotted crotchet, possibly an error
- **46-47** resist the temptation to play too fast and too loud and enjoy the dynamic harmonies
- **74** B double flat semiquaver in the original Durand edition
- **80** crotchet, possibly an error

modérément animé \*

\*

*pp* (comme en préludant)

IX

*quasi guitarra* *pp*  
*sopra*

*mf* *pp*

*pp* *mf* *p* ritardando - - - - //

*pp* *m.d.*  
a tempo

*p* *m.d.* *pp*  
*sotto* *les deux pédales*

*più pp*  
*simile*

*expressif et un peu suppliant*

32

*( estompé et en suivant l'expression )*

cédez - - - - //

37

*a tempo*

41

*très vif*

46

*retenu* - - - -

*a tempo*

50

*pp*

54

(estompé)

58

*mf*

63

*p*

68

*mf*

73

*mf*

76 *librement* *4* *4* *5* *retenu* *p* *più p* //

*modéré* *80* *pp* *lontain* *m.d.*

*rageur* *modéré* *85* *f* *pp*

*rageur* *90* *f* *m.s.* *m.s.*

*diminuendo* *revenir au mouvement* *94*

*p*

98

*pp*

This system contains measures 98, 99, and 100. The right hand features a melodic line with a long slur over measures 98 and 99, and a final note in measure 100. The left hand plays a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth-note chords. The dynamic marking *pp* is placed below the first measure of the left hand.

101

This system contains measures 101, 102, and 103. The right hand continues the melodic line with a slur over measures 101 and 102. The left hand continues the rhythmic accompaniment.

105

This system contains measures 104, 105, and 106. The right hand has a slur over measures 104 and 105. The left hand includes fingerings '2' and '1' under the notes in measure 104.

109

This system contains measures 107, 108, and 109. The right hand has a slur over measures 107 and 108. The left hand includes fingerings '1' and '4' under the notes in measure 109.

*rubato doux et harmonieux*

113 *pp*

117 *più pp*

121

125 *a tempo pp*

129 *en s'éloignant*

133 *sfz* *p* *pp*

(... la sérénade interrompue )



The legend of Ys\* is a dream scenario for an 'impressionist' artist; with bells, water and religious overtones, Debussy could not have invented a more appropriate setting for this prelude. Completed in 1910, Roger Nichols plausibly suggests that the composer might also have been inspired by the great flood of Paris at the end of January, when the Seine rose a massive eight metres above the average. It was only in March that the river finally returned to normal.

The scene pertinently begins with 'a gently resonant mist' and ghostly bells perceived from afar. Then the cathedral organ with gradually increasing volume rises from the depths, finally sinking back into the sea with a matching diminuendo, leaving only pianissimo bells to disappear at closure. Rather like *ce qu'a vu le vent d'ouest* Debussy presents unusually widely spaced chords to great effect.

*In concept, the piece could hardly be more basic, but its effect, oddly enough, depends on certain advanced aspects of Debussy's style. For instance, though coloured for much of its length by big, full-handed chords, it contains very little harmony in the conventional sense. The chords are mainly parallel triads, as if Captain Nemo were seated at the underwater organ with all the stops out and doubling the melody with rigid hands. The bells likewise start as parallel chords, but with open fifths, which lends them a colour similar to that at the start of *Les Collines d'Anacapri*, but fuller because the chords are sounded rather than merely an effect of pedalling. Later the bells are enriched by dissonance, like real bells with their rogue overtones. At bottom, the whole prelude is a majestic study in the synaesthesia of water and reverberation, the swell of the ocean as seen and heard, the boom of waves on rock, and the hidden mysteries of the sea itself.*

— Stephen Walsh

*Breton legend has it that on clear mornings when the sea is transparent, the Cathedral of Ys, which lies slumbering and accursed under the waves, slowly emerges from the depths of the ocean and of the ages. Bells toll and the chanting of priests is heard. Then the vision disappears once more under the indolent sea.*

— Cortot

*A performer might imagine 'La cathédrale engloutie' as heard from the farthest point of a concert hall, where its softest resonances and its evocations of space and timelessness must seem to gain in concentration and distinctness. The visual analogy is inescapable, whether it is with the paintings of Monet or with an imaginary cathedral arising from the sunken city of Ys on the Brittany coast; and we are invited to make such associations, both by the title and by Debussy's instructions on the score. The first, *dans une brume doucement sonore* (in a gently resonant mist), at the head of the score, characteristically fuses sound and sight; the second, *peu à peu sortant de la brume* (gradually coming out of the mist), at **16**, dispenses with sound altogether.*

*It is impossible to say whether Debussy admired Monet's series paintings of the 1890s, but he could not have failed to know them. The paintings of Rouen Cathedral, in particular, established Monet once and for all as among the greatest of French painters. "You do me a great honour by calling me a pupil of Claude Monet," Debussy wrote to the critic Emile Vuillermoz in 1916 (by which time Monet had reached the venerable age of seventy-six). The comparison between the composer and the painter, especially in regard to *la cathédrale engloutie*, would have been the obvious one to make for Debussy's audience, always eager to relate music and painting. When Vuillermoz linked Monet and Debussy, it is likely that he had this prelude in mind.*

— Paul Roberts

\*Ys was a mythical island in the Bay of Douarnenez, Brittany, famous throughout the region for its beautiful gardens and buildings. A king named Gralon who lived in a palace of marble, cedar, and gold, which was also rich in commerce and the arts. Debussy may have discovered this legend in the opera *Le Roi d'Ys* by Édouard Lalo.

#### Duration: 5'45

- metronome speed omitted in the original
- it is important to be aware of whether we are in duple or triple time — always clear from the content — while maintaining a steady crotchet pulse
- **7/16/19** editorial key-signatures
- **28 & 46** *sostenuto* pedal (to be coupled with the damper pedal) editorial suggestion

profondément calme ( dans une brume doucement sonore ) \*

**X**

*pp*

*8va - 1*

doux et fluide

4

*8va - 1*

8

( sans nuances )

13

*pp*

*8va - 1*

peu à peu sortant de la brume  
 sempre *pp*

16

*p marqué*

18

*p marqué*

*p*

marqué

augmentez progressivement (sans presser)

20

22

*f*

8va

(8va) - 1

25

*più f*

*ffz*

*m.d.*

sonore sans dureté

28

*ff*

\* Sost. Ped

32

36

40

*p* *più p* *pp* *più pp*

*Sua* *Sua* *Sua* *Sua*

\*\*\*

un peu moins lent ( dans une expression allant grandissant )

*pp* expressif et concentré

46

4

\* *Sost. Ped*

51

*pp*

55

*pp* *p*

8va -----

59 *f* *ff* *loco*

\*.\*.\*

63 *p* *p*

68 *m.d.*

au mouvement      comme un écho de la phrase entendue précédemment

*pp*

72 *flottant et sourd*

3 1

75

(8vb)-----

78

(8vb)-----

81

*più pp*

(8vb)-----

dans la sonorité du début

84

*pp*

8va

(8vb)-----

86

8va

(... la cathédrale engloutie )

# XI

Inspired by the clever and mischievous sprite in Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, much of this piece is suitably delicate and wistful, admirably capturing his impish character; a jaunty dorian theme with a Celtic rhythm that darts about, alternating with a gently sustained melody. A dramatic and quirky prelude which appropriately embraces abrupt changes of mood — from the unearthly to the beguiling, and there are quite a few horn calls from Oberon, trills and tremolos to interrupt the proceedings. Finally Puck suddenly exits stage right — *rapide et fuyant*.

*The dotted, jerky rhythms characterise the image of Robin Goodfellow — Puck of Midsummer Night's Dream. The capricious musical outbursts flow from the nature of the poetic subject at hand down to the haunting horn calls (69-70), at which point Puck seems to pause and listen as the musical activity holds back. The disappearing scale passage at the close is pure vaudeville as Puck flees the stage.*

— Irwin Freundlich

*Capricious, nimble, ironic, ethereal, the adept Shakespearian spirit flies, scampers, returns, makes fun of a rustic whom he deceives, and a couple whom he insults — then swiftly disappears.*

— Cortot

*After these solemnities, the last two preludes are lighter character sketches. La Danse de Puck is a deft portrait of Shakespeare's 'merry wanderer of the night' perhaps inspired, as Howat suggests, by Arthur*

*Rackham's illustration of Puck as a naughty little boy with a sparkler, though Debussy had himself described the character more vividly, some years earlier in connection with Weber's Oberon, as 'equally adept at suddenly descending to the ground as in vanishing into space with a flap of his wings,' an image that suggests Ravel's more dangerous and brilliant Scarbo, the final movement of Gaspard de la Nuit. Debussy's*

*piece opens with seventeen straight bars of highly ornamented melodic arabesque, unaccompanied, then continues, mainly, as a series of accompanied variants on this idea.*

— Stephen Walsh

*Puck has further mischief up his sleeve, and he flees in a mist of polytonality: the final scale twice alternates A-flat major and E major, switching at the last fleeting moment (*rapide et fuyant*) to C minor. We are left in the air, spellbound, and are not even brought back to earth by the terminating bass E-fat, which resolves nothing.*

— Paul Roberts



ARTHUR RACKHAM 1906

Duration: 3'25

- editorial reduced notation
- 8-12 arpeggiated chords slightly "rearranged"
- 16 commence the trill with LH
- 20 bass E $\flat$  tie missing in the original
- 30-48 editorial changes of key-signatures
- 63-68 sostenuto pedal editorial suggestion
- 65 the diamond-headed note may be omitted
- 93-95 pedal editorial suggestion

## capricieux et léger [ ♩ = 138 ]

XI

Musical score for "capricieux et léger" in 2/4 time, marked with a tempo of ♩ = 138. The score is divided into systems, with measures numbered 1 through 11.

The first system (measures 1-6) begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The melody is characterized by slurs and grace notes. The bass line features a triplet of eighth notes in measure 3. The dynamic shifts to mezzo-forte (*mf*) in measure 5, and then to mezzo-dolce (*m.d.*) in measure 6.

The second system (measures 7-8) includes a section marked "retenu" (retained) in measure 8, where the tempo is held. The dynamic is *mf*. A triplet of eighth notes appears in the bass line in measure 7.

The third system (measures 9-10) is marked with a tempo change: "----- // mouvement". The dynamic is *p*. A triplet of eighth notes is present in the bass line in measure 9.

The fourth system (measures 11) continues with a piano (*p*) dynamic. It features a trill (*tr*) in the melody of measure 11, which is marked with a forte (*f*) dynamic.

**pressez**

13

**retenu - - - - - // - - - - - mouvement**

16

20

24

28

*pp* aérien

Musical score for measures 30-31. The right hand features a series of arpeggiated chords in a 3/4 time signature, marked *pp* and *aérien*. The left hand has a simple accompaniment. A measure rest is indicated by an asterisk (\*) above measure 30. The key signature changes from three flats to three sharps at the end of the system.

Musical score for measures 32-33. The right hand continues with arpeggiated chords, marked *p* *douxment soutenu*. The left hand accompaniment includes fingerings (5, 4, 5, 4) and a slur. The key signature changes from three sharps to three flats at the end of the system.

Musical score for measures 34-35. The right hand features arpeggiated chords, marked *pp*. The left hand accompaniment includes slurs and *pp* markings. The key signature changes from three flats to three sharps at the end of the system.

Musical score for measures 36-37. The right hand continues with arpeggiated chords, marked *p*. The left hand accompaniment includes slurs. The key signature changes from three sharps to three flats at the end of the system.

Musical score for measures 38-39. The right hand features arpeggiated chords, marked *più p*. The left hand accompaniment includes slurs and fingerings (5, 2, 1, 2, 3). The key signature changes from three flats to three sharps at the end of the system.



Musical score for measures 40-41. Measure 40 is in 3/4 time with a key signature of three flats. Measure 41 is in 2/4 time with a key signature of three sharps. Dynamics include *mf* and *pp*. A triplet of eighth notes is marked with a '3' below it.

Musical score for measures 42-43. Measure 42 is in 2/4 time with a key signature of three sharps, featuring sixteenth-note runs marked *p* and *m.s.* Measure 43 is in 2/4 time with a key signature of three sharps, featuring a *mf* dynamic and a triplet of eighth notes.

Musical score for measures 44-45. Measure 44 is in 2/4 time with a key signature of three sharps, featuring sixteenth-note runs marked *p* and *m.s.* Measure 45 is in 2/4 time with a key signature of three sharps, featuring a *simile* marking.

Musical score for measures 46-47. Measure 46 is in 2/4 time with a key signature of three sharps. Measure 47 is in 2/4 time with a key signature of three sharps.

Musical score for measures 48-49. Measure 48 is in 2/4 time with a key signature of three sharps, featuring a *cédez* marking and a double bar line. Measure 49 is in 2/4 time with a key signature of two flats, featuring a *mouvement* marking and a *pp* dynamic.

Musical score for measures 50-51. Measure 50 is in 2/4 time with a key signature of two flats. Measure 51 is in 2/4 time with a key signature of two flats.

53 *sf* *tr* *p* *tr* *tr*

Measures 53-55: Treble clef contains a series of chords with a *sf* dynamic and a *tr* (trill) over the first measure. Bass clef contains a trill starting at measure 53 and continuing through measure 55. Treble clef has a melodic line starting at measure 54 with a *p* dynamic. Measure 55 features a 4-measure rest in the treble and a 2-measure rest in the bass.

56 *p* *tr* *tr* *pp* *Sva*

Measures 56-57: Treble clef has a melodic line starting at measure 56 with a *p* dynamic. Bass clef contains a trill starting at measure 56 and continuing through measure 57. Measure 57 features a 4-measure rest in the treble and a 2-measure rest in the bass. A *Sva* (Sustained Pedal) marking is present above the treble clef.

58 *p* *tr* *tr* *Sva*

Measures 58-59: Treble clef has a melodic line starting at measure 58 with a *p* dynamic. Bass clef contains a trill starting at measure 58 and continuing through measure 59. Measure 59 features a 3-measure rest in the treble and a 2-measure rest in the bass. A *Sva* marking is present above the treble clef.

60 *p* *tr* *tr* *pp* *Sva*

Measures 60-61: Treble clef has a melodic line starting at measure 60 with a *p* dynamic. Bass clef contains a trill starting at measure 60 and continuing through measure 61. Measure 61 features a 4-measure rest in the treble and a 2-measure rest in the bass. A *Sva* marking is present above the treble clef.

62 *pp* *un peu en dehors* *Sva*

Measures 62-63: Treble clef has a melodic line starting at measure 62 with a *pp* dynamic. Bass clef contains a melodic line starting at measure 62 with a *pp* dynamic. Measure 63 features a 4-measure rest in the treble and a 2-measure rest in the bass. A *Sva* marking is present above the treble clef. The instruction *un peu en dehors* is written above the bass clef line.

\* *Sost. Ped.*





dans le mouvement

retenu

87

*pp*

*tr*

*expressif*

89

*tr*

91

plus retenu

*p marqué*

*pp*

93

*p marqué*

*pp*

\* [Red.]

95

*pp*

*m.d.*

10

*m.s. sotto*

8va

[\*]

(... la danse de Puck)

## XII

To avoid the impending scandal and complications of their liaison, Debussy and Emma Bardac\* stayed for over a month at the Grand Hotel Eastbourne in 1905. Crowds on the promenade were entertained every evening by minstrels\*\*, pierrots and military bands, and similar American shows were all the rage in Parisian cafés and theatres. This final prelude from book 1 captures their exuberance, often imitating banjo, cornet and drums — a sympathetic tableau of exotic art from the USA. At 35 there is some troubled taunting taking place, perhaps backstage, and I love the final bars with clowns running off the stage in a mock chaotic exit. With 'alternative' rhythm, harmony and cutting dissonance Debussy has transformed their music into an ironic caricature, a style which certainly influenced Stravinsky, Hindemith and Poulenc.

The final prelude of the twelve reflects from a slightly different angle the circus and music-hall obsessions of French art in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries: the clown as counter-image of the self-absorption of Romanticism, with a certain tinge of Baudelaire's 'nostalgie de la boue'. The piece is a skilful montage of musical tricks, like a song-and-dance routine by a cabaret artiste or the blacked-up clowns that Debussy is supposed to have watched performing outside his hotel in Eastbourne in 1905. As with his other montage pieces, and no doubt like the clowns, Debussy binds everything together by repetition and skilful timing. The art of the entertainer, he seems to tell us, is brevity and surprise, and *Minstrels* is a perfect throwaway ending to this wonderfully varied procession of musical landscapes, portraits and vignettes.

— Stephen Walsh

A humorous and brilliant portrayal of the music-hall. On the stage English jesters nonchalantly indulge in frantic pirouettes, whilst a fragment of sensual music suggests the facile charm of a haunt of pleasure.

— Cortot

Stylised and exaggerated, ridiculous and yet humane, this musical sketch reveals Debussy's acute observation, shrewd humour, and discreet compassion.

E. Robert Schmitz

A collage of comic character sketches, dancing, singing, and acrobatic tricks from mid-19th century America. The 'gruppetti' show an imaginary clown centre stage chuckling to himself and then a brass band suddenly appears in the spotlight. As I play *Minstrels* and listen to the surprising changes from one skit to another, my senses are delighted. The abrupt switches of characters and moods mirror the frivolities of life and laugh with good humour and compassion.

Jennifer Yu

\* An accomplished soprano and former partner of Gabriel Fauré. Their daughter Claude-Emma (Chouchou) was born in 1905 and they were married in 1908.

\*\* American entertainers who exotically performed in blackface, wearing tails, top hats and bow ties, featuring quirky dance steps such as the cake-walk, burlesque, slapstick and comedy sketches, including vaudeville acts such as tap dancing, acrobatics and juggling.



LES MARIONNETTES MINSTRELS c1890

Duration: 2'30

- **grace notes** : playing these on the beat will inevitably make this witty and sarcastic music sound out of time, thus furthering the wishes of the composer
- this edition features hand swapping and a few practical 'arrangements' — RH stems up LH stems down
- metronome speed omitted in the original
- **12** the lingering tie is missing (see **22**)
- **26-31** presented in Eb
- **26-27** editorial slur

modéré ( nerveux et avec humour ) \*

\* les "gruppetti" sur le temps

XII

Musical notation for measures 1-3 of piece XII. The bass clef is in 2/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody features eighth-note groups (gruppetti) on the off-beats. Dynamics include piano (*p*) and accents.

Musical notation for measures 4-6. Measure 4 starts with a piano-piano (*pp*) dynamic. Measure 5 has the instruction "cédez" and a double bar line. Measure 6 starts with a piano (*p*) dynamic and the instruction "mouvement".

Musical notation for measures 7-9. Measure 7 starts with a piano (*p*) dynamic. Measure 8 has a piano-piano (*pp*) dynamic and the instruction "cédez". Measure 9 starts with "très détaché" and a double bar line.

Musical notation for measures 10-12. Measure 10 has a piano-piano (*pp*) dynamic. Measure 11 has a staccato instruction. Measure 12 ends with an asterisk (\*).

Musical notation for measures 13-15. Measure 13 starts with a piano-piano (*pp*) dynamic. Measure 14 has a piano-piano (*pp*) dynamic. Measure 15 has a piano-piano (*pp*) dynamic.

Musical score for measures 16-18. The piece is in G major. Measure 16 starts with a piano (*f*) dynamic. Measure 17 features a piano (*f*) dynamic. Measure 18 features a piano (*f*) dynamic. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings.

Musical score for measures 19-21. The piece is in G major. Measure 19 starts with a piano (*p*) dynamic. Measure 20 features a piano (*p*) dynamic. Measure 21 features a piano (*p*) dynamic. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings.

Musical score for measures 22-25. The piece is in G major. Measure 22 starts with a piano (*pp*) dynamic. Measure 23 features a piano (*pp*) dynamic. Measure 24 features a piano (*pp*) dynamic. Measure 25 features a piano (*pp*) dynamic. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings.

Musical score for measures 26-28. The piece is in G major. Measure 26 starts with a piano (*f*) dynamic. Measure 27 features a piano (*f*) dynamic. Measure 28 features a piano (*mf*) dynamic. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings.

Musical score for measures 29-32. The piece is in G major. Measure 29 starts with a piano (*f*) dynamic. Measure 30 features a piano (*mf*) dynamic. Measure 31 features a piano (*f*) dynamic. Measure 32 features a piano (*f*) dynamic. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings.

32 *sfz* *en cédant* *pp*

*f* *p* *Sub*

36 *moqueur* *p* *m.d.* *m.s.*

*p* *m.d.* *m.s.* *(Sub)*

40 *m.d.* *p*

*m.d.* *p*

44 *f* *p* *f* *mouvement*

*f* *p* *f* *mouvement*

47 *p* *f* *p*

*p* *f* *p*

51 *pp* [*p*]

55 *pp* *ppp* *f* (quasi tambouro)

59

*expressif*  
63 *p* 48 -1

68 *f* *mf* *en dehors*

72 *p* *en dehors*

75 *p* *f* *f*

**tempo primo**

78 *p*

81 *p* *pp* *m.d. sotto*

**mouvement ( plus allant )**

84 *f* *ff*

**serrez** - - - - - //

87 *f* *ff* **sec et retenu** (... minstrels)



## Préludes 5-8 Vocabulary

<b>V</b>	vif	<i>lively</i>
	léger et lointain	<i>light and from afar</i>
	quittez en laissant vibrer	<i>release and hold the pedal</i>
	en serrant	<i>accelerate</i>
	joyeux et léger	<i>joyous and light</i>
	cédez	<i>slow down</i>
	avec la liberté d'une chanson populaire	<i>with the freedom of a popular song</i>
	un peu en dehors	<i>a little in relief</i>
	un peu marqué	<i>a little marked</i>
	très retenu	<i>tempo seriously held back</i>
	lumineux	<i>radiant</i>
<b>VI</b>	presque lent	<i>almost slow</i>
	triste et lent	<i>sorrowful and slow</i>
	expressif et douloureux	<i>expressive and distressing</i>
	ce rythme doit avoir la valeur sonore d'un fond de paysage triste et glacé	<i>this rhythm should reflect the sounds of a desolate and frozen landscape</i>
	cédez	<i>slow down</i>
	en animant surtout dans l'expression	<i>more animated especially in expression</i>
	tendre	<i>tender</i>
	comme un tendre et triste regret	<i>like a tender and sad lament</i>
<b>VII</b>	animé et tumultueux	<i>animated and tempestuous</i>
	plaintif et lointain	<i>mournful and distant</i>
	commencer un peu au dessous du mouvement	<i>commence with a slightly slower tempo</i>
	un peu marqué	<i>a little marked</i>
	revenir progressivement au mouvement animé	<i>gradually back to the animated tempo</i>
	strident	<i>dissonant</i>
	un peu retenu	<i>a little held back</i>
	... mais en dehors et angoissé	<i>... but in relief and tormented</i>
	en serrant et augmentant beaucoup	<i>seriously accelerating and increasing tone</i>
	très en dehors	<i>very prominent</i>
	peu à peu crescendo en serrant	<i>little by little increase tone while accelerating</i>
	incisif	<i>cutting</i>
	furieux et rapide	<i>frenzied and fast</i>
au mouvement	<i>a tempo</i>	
<b>VIII</b>	très calme et doucement expressif	<i>very calm and gently expressive</i>
	sans rigueur	<i>with a flexible pulse</i>
	cédez	<i>holding back</i>
	très peu	<i>very little</i>
	un peu animé	<i>a little animated</i>
	sans lourdeur	<i>without heaviness</i>
	très doux	<i>very gentle</i>
	murmuré en retenant peu à peu	<i>whispered while gradually holding back the tempo</i>

## Préludes 9-12 Vocabulary

## IX

comme en préludant	<i>like an introduction</i>
les deux pédales	<i>both pedals</i>
expressif et un peu suppliant	<i>expressive and pleading a little</i>
estompé et en suivant l'expression	<i>muted and following the melody</i>
cédez	<i>slow down</i>
très vif	<i>very lively</i>
retenu	<i>held back</i>
librement	<i>not in strict time</i>
lointain	<i>from afar</i>
rageur	<i>enraged</i>
doux et harmonieux	<i>dulcet and harmonious</i>
en s'éloignant	<i>moving further away</i>

## X

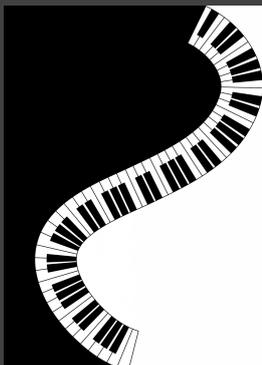
profondément calme	<i>profoundly calm</i>
dans une brume doucement sonore	<i>in a gently resonant mist</i>
doux et fluide	<i>gentle and fluid</i>
sans nuances	<i>without nuances</i>
peu à peu sortant de la brume	<i>gradually emerging from the mist</i>
marqué	<i>marked</i>
augmentez progressivement	<i>gradually amplify</i>
sans presser	<i>do not rush</i>
sonore sans dureté	<i>resonant without forcing the tone</i>
un peu moins lent	<i>a little less slow</i>
dans une expression allant grandissant	<i>expressive, moving forward, growing</i>
expressif et concentré	<i>expressive and concentrated</i>
comme un écho de la phrase entendue précédemment	<i>like an echo of the phrase heard previously</i>
flottant et sourd	<i>floating and muted</i>
dans la sonorité du début	<i>match the sound of the opening</i>

## XI

capricieux et léger	<i>capricious and light</i>
retenu	<i>held back</i>
pressez	<i>rush</i>
aérien	<i>ethereal</i>
doucement soutenu	<i>gently sustained</i>
cédez	<i>holding back</i>
en cédant	<i>gradually holding back</i>
dans le mouvement	<i>in tempo</i>
rapide et fuyant	<i>swift and fleeting</i>

## XII

nerveux et avec humour	<i>lively (capricious) and with humour</i>
les "gruppetti" sur le temps	<i>grace notes start on the beat</i>
cédez	<i>holding back</i>
un peu plus allant	<i>a little quicker</i>
très détaché	<i>molto staccato</i>
en cédant	<i>holding back</i>
moqueur	<i>ironic</i>
quasi tambouro	<i>like a side-drum</i>
en dehors	<i>in relief</i>
serrez	<i>accelerate</i>
sec et retenu	<i>crisp and held back</i>



**D E B U S S Y**

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