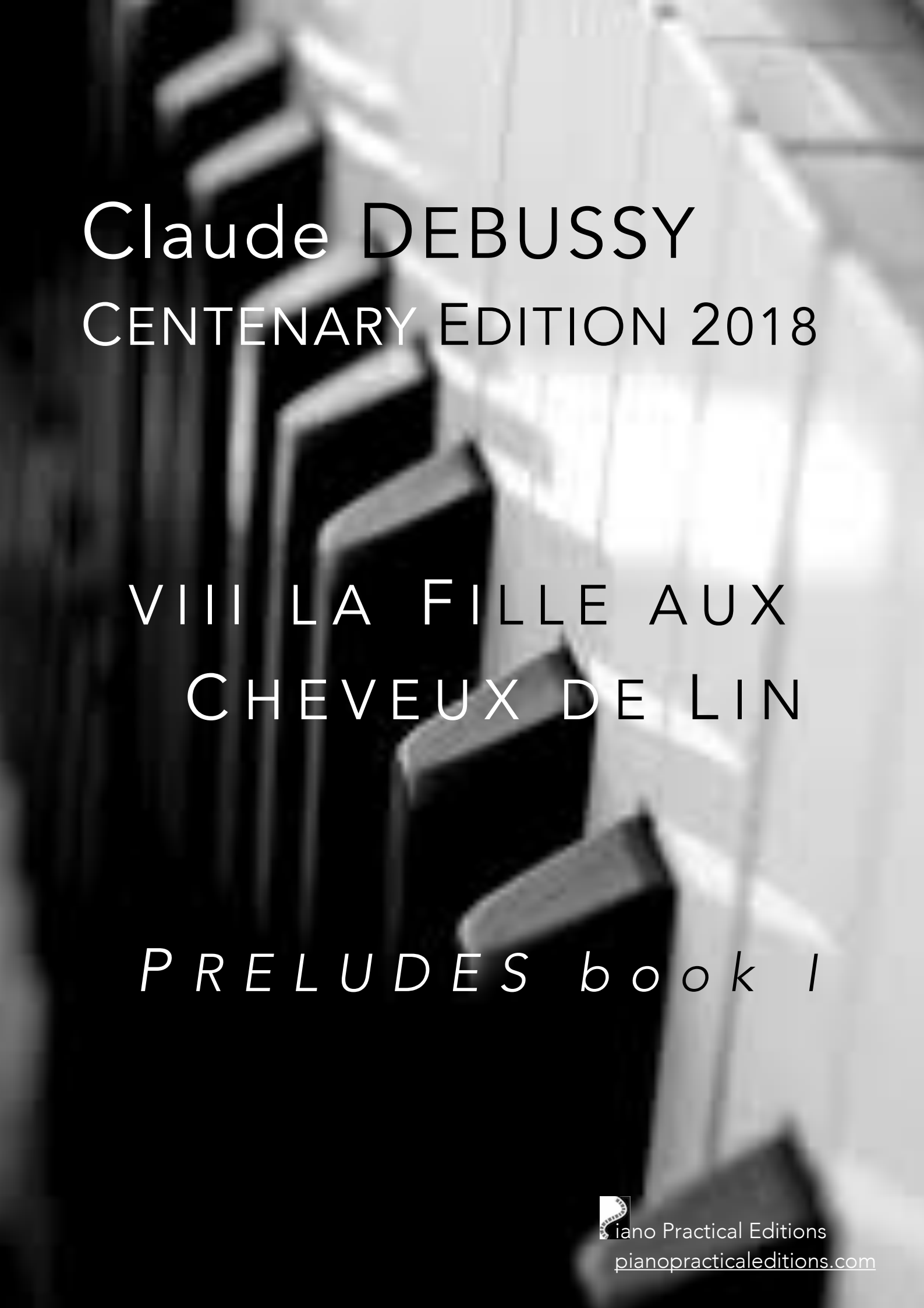

Claude DEBUSSY
CENTENARY EDITION 2018

VIII LA FILLE AUX CHEVEUX DE LIN

PRELUDES book I

Piano Practical Editions
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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.

Please send comments and error reports to
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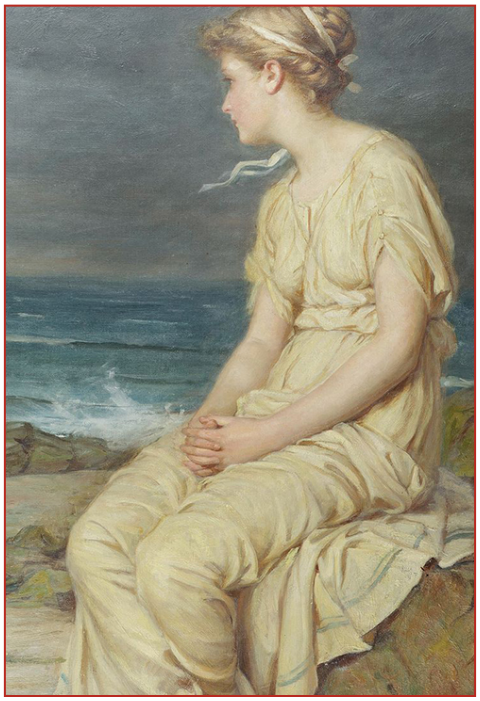
Claude DEBUSSY 1862 - 1918

VIII LA FILLE AUX CHEVEUX DE LIN

PRELUDES BOOK I

"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 partake of infinity, capturing mysterious relations between nature and the imagination". — **Claude Debussy**

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.

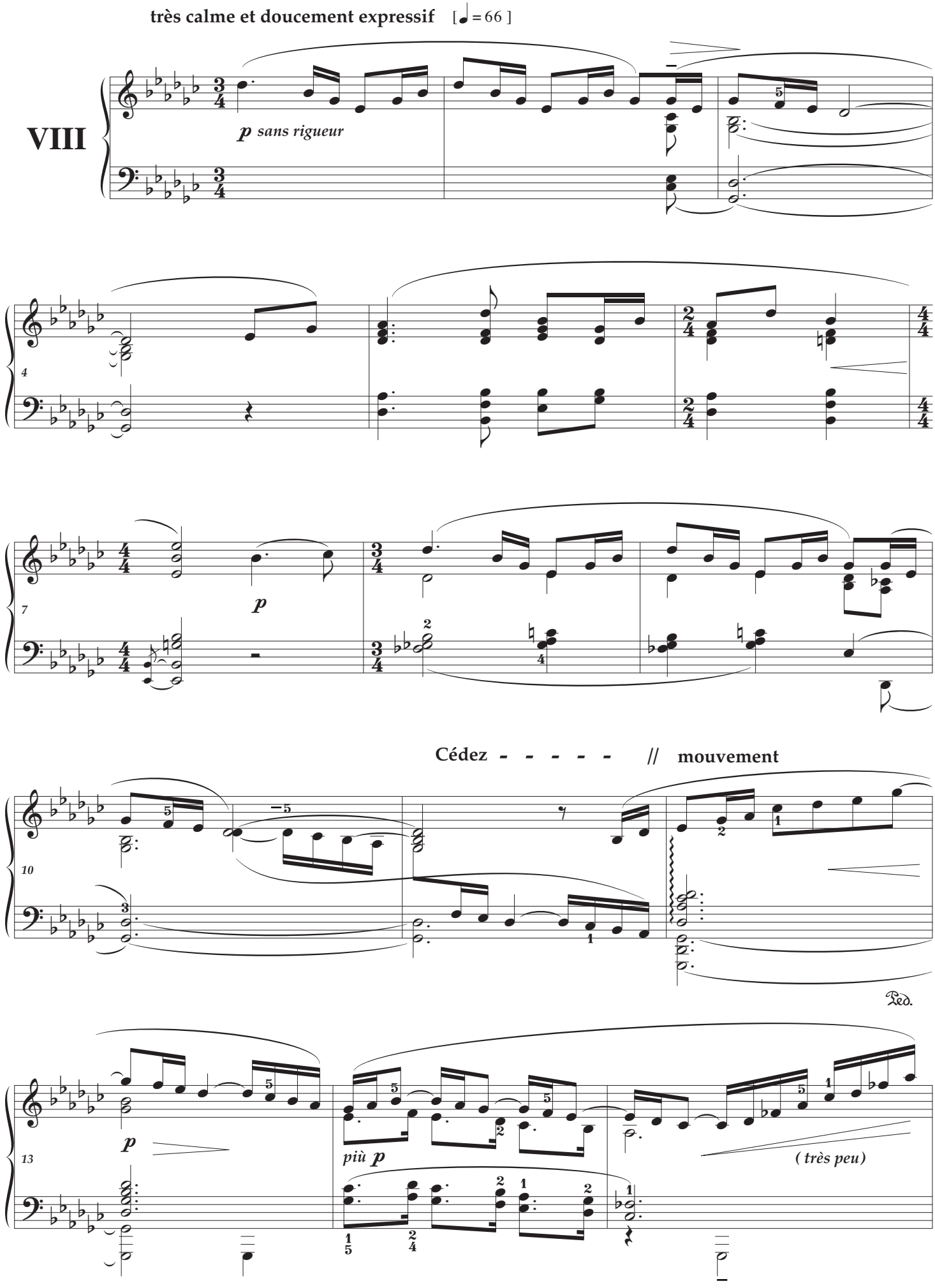


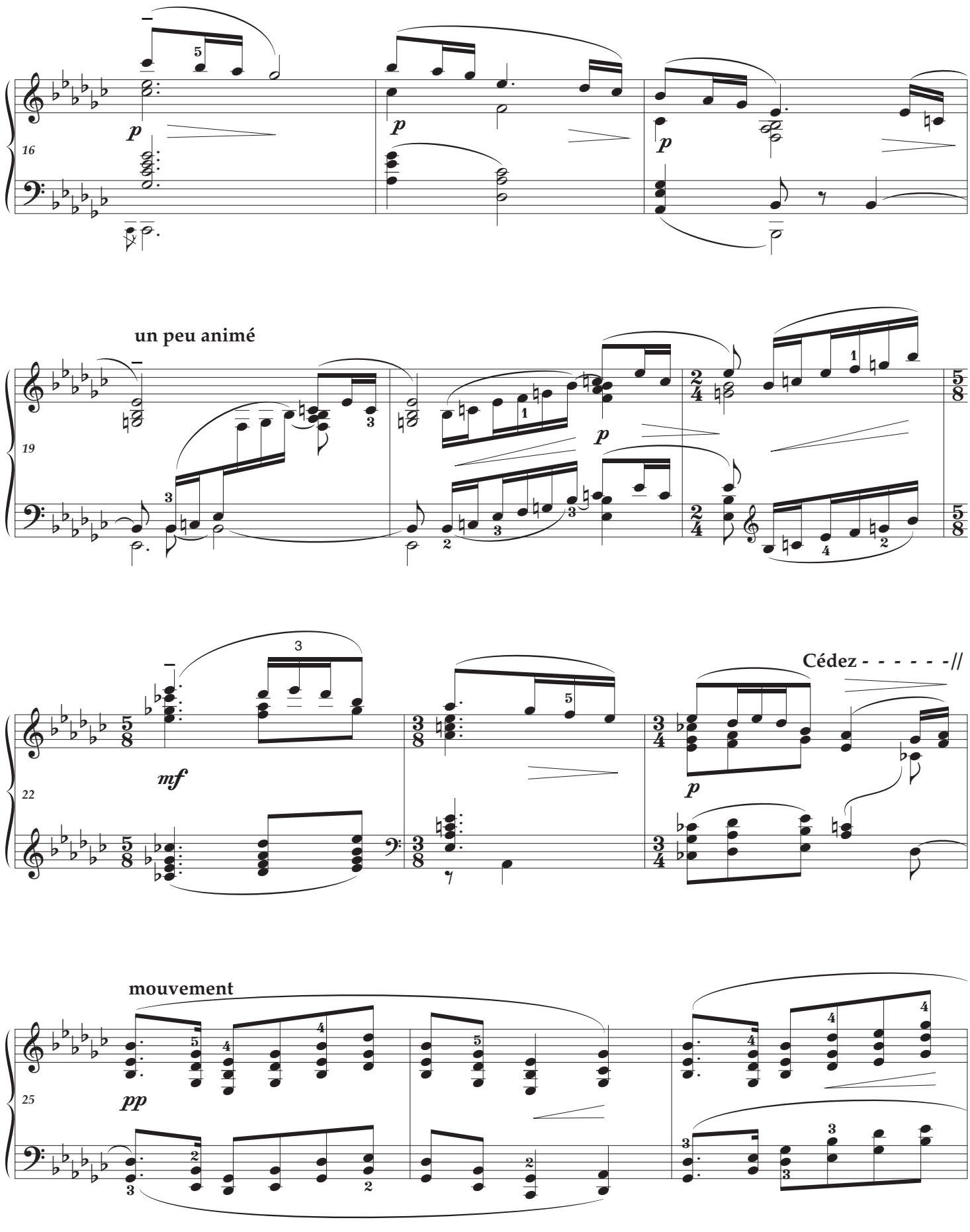
John William Waterhouse 1875

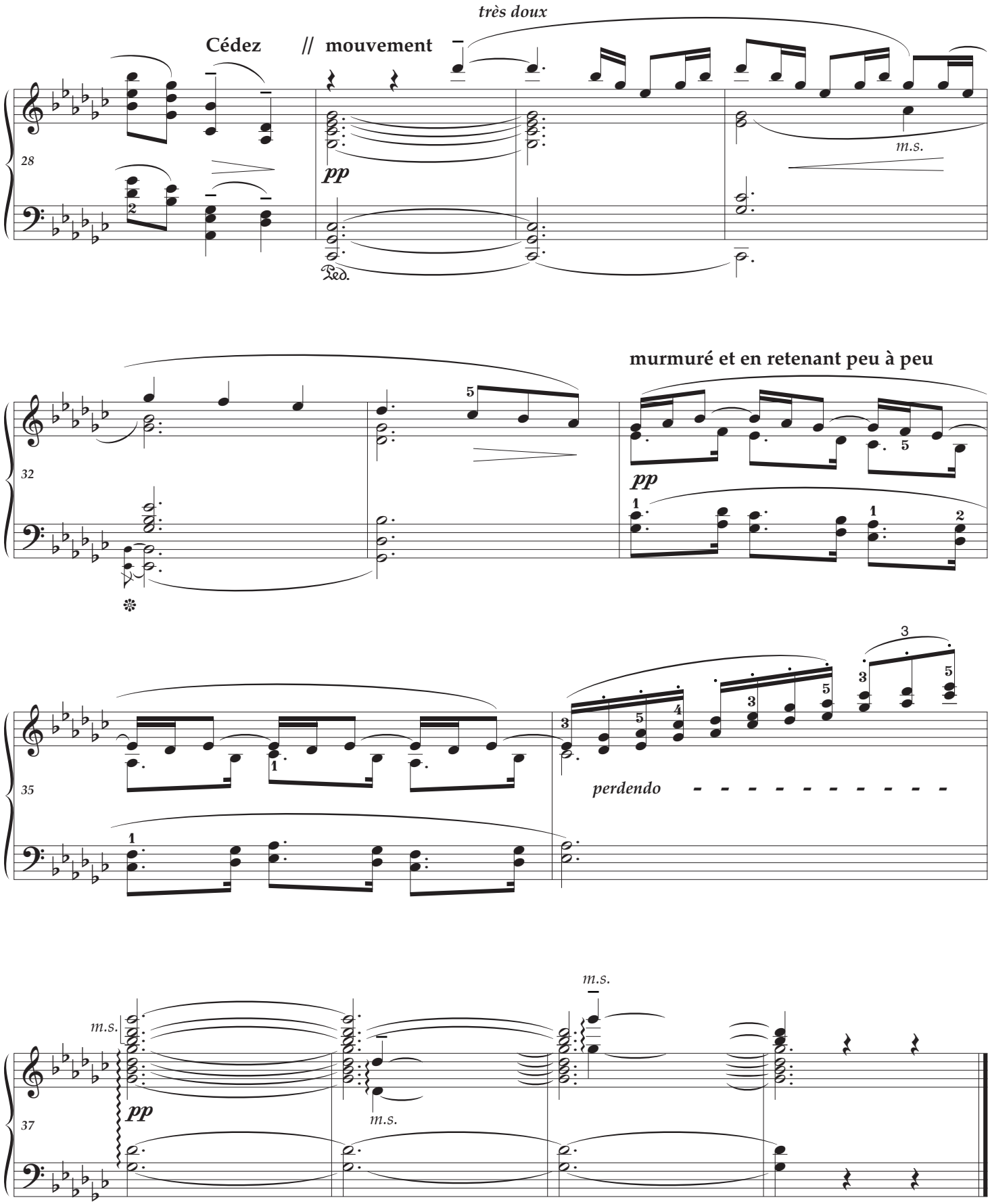
It is difficult to conceive a greater contrast to the previous prelude — *ce qu'a vu le vent d'ouest*. Here we have another erotic masterpiece (IV *les sons et les parfums…*) with inspiration transferred from Baudelaire to De Lisle (the original poem in French can be found after the appendix) and geographically northwards to Scotland. A flaxen-haired beauty sings with the lark, her lips changing from cherry to pink, culminating in the poet's desire to kiss her hair and to press her purple lips with his own. The music hauntingly reflects one of the poet's four Scottish beauties, girls who represent simplicity with 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.

During the course of this centenary year *Piano Practical Editions* has become a creative and critical working publication; in addition to a few suggestions of fingering and hand disposition, you will find modification to the general layout, and a few surprising alternative time-signatures.

Here is an apt quotation by the composer :"Absence of fingering is an excellent exercise, negating musicians' perverse desire to completely dismiss the composer's (and editor's), and thereby vindicating words of eternal wisdom: 'If you want something done well, do it yourself'". Let us seek our own fingering!


très calme et doucement expressif [♩ = 66]
VIII
p sans rigueur
4
7
p
Cédez - - - - - // mouvement
10
Ped.
13
p
più p
(très peu)


16
p
p
p
19
un peu animé
p
22
mf
p
Cédez - - - - - -//
25
mouvement
pp



(... La fille aux cheveux de lin)

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Appendix

Comments, afterthoughts & French vocabulary

Duration: 2'35

- In the first book of Preludes, the composer indicated metronome speeds in brackets, and once wrote: *"as a rose which might only last for one morning, a metronome speed might only work for one bar."*
- **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** pedal editorial
- **32** acciaccatura editorial suggestion

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très calme et doucement expressif	*very calm and gently expressive*
sans rigueur	*with a flexible pulse*
cédez	*holding back*
très peu	*very little*
un peu animé	*a little animated*
sans lourdeur	*without heaviness*
très doux	*very gentle*
murmuré en retenant peu à peu	*whispered while gradually holding back the tempo*

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