III LA PUERTA DEL VINO

PRELUDES BOOK II
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.

A postcard received from Manuel de Falla featuring the famous Moorish Alhambra “Wine Gate” in Granada, provided the title for this prelude. Debussy was often inspired by Spain and La Puerta del Vino reflects the typical violent passion that Andalusian music often evokes. The character introduction makes this absolutely clear: “avec de brusques oppositions d’extrême violence et de passionnée douceur”. Expressing conflicting violence and passion, and often imitating the guitar, the habanera* is full of gorgeous themes at once mysteriously exotic, sensual and seductive, and I particularly love the totally original and deeply felt central chordal progression (35 to 41).

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 significant modifications to the general layout in an effort to eliminate inconsistencies and improve visual impact.

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!

* A contradance originally from Havana (thus habanera) which travelled to Europe via Spain, becoming popular at the end of the 19th century.
Mouvement de Habanera
avec de brusques oppositions d’extrême violence et de passionnée douceur
en retenant

au mouvement

simile
... La puerta del Vino...
Appendix

Comments, afterthoughts & French vocabulary

Duration: 3’35

• In the first book of Preludes, the composer indicated some 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.” Might this explain why there are no metronome speeds in the second book?

• 38 the autograph gives B♭♭ in the 2nd and 4th RH chords. Many editions and recordings omit the double flats.

avec de brusques oppositions d’extrême violence et de passionnée douceur
âpre passionément ironique gracieux en retenant un peu retardé lointain

with abrupt contradictions of extreme violence and gentle passion
harsh passionately sarcastic graceful holding back the tempo a little held back from afar