

Claude DEBUSSY
CENTENARY EDITION 2018

VII LA TERRACE
DES AUDIENCES
DU CLAIR DE LUNE

P R E L U D E S b o o k I 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
Ray Alston : contact@pianopracticaleditions.com

Claude DEBUSSY 1862 - 1918

VII LA TERRACE DES AUDIENCES DU CLAIR DE LUNE

PRELUDES BOOK II

"I believe more and more that music in its essence is not a thing that can be poured into a precise 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.

This rather obscure title (the Hall of Public Audience by moonlight) was discovered quite by chance in 1912 when the composer



La Terrasse des Audiences — Diwan-e-Aam —
the Hall of Public Audience **

was reading an article by René Puaux in *Le Temps*. This is a lively account of a visit the writer made to the abandoned city of Amber,

near Jaipur. Debussy was clearly stimulated by poetic descriptions of deserted palaces, a completely uninhabited city only recently crowded with chariots, elephants, ostlers and mahouts.

Stephen Walsh*** makes the point that the music might be regarded as a response to the activity of the imagination in the face of the beautiful but inexplicable relics of history. At first the eye sees and the ear hears only debris, musical fragments, then gradually some kind of picture materialises with a distinct shape, yet no clear connection with the fragments that preceded it. The visitor turns away moved by what he has seen, but still in truth mystified as to what precisely it was.

Moments of exaltation evoke a distant land, shrouded in legend, saturated with exotic overtones — a subtly elusive and ethereal scene requiring great sensitivity by an artist.

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, sostenuto pedal and hand disposition, you will find significant modifications to the

general layout.

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!

In my original introduction to this prelude I wrote that although the music depicts little majesty nor festivity, and even less pomp, the article in question gave an account of the Delhi Durbar* following the coronation of King George V as Emperor of India. Mr. Walsh correctly concludes that the work has nothing to do with the Durbar.

*A public ceremonial reception held by a ruler in India. The Delhi Durbar, held in December 1911, officially crowned the newly enthroned George V and Queen Mary; attired in their Coronation robes, the emperor and empress appeared in an unprecedented event of prestige and pageantry.

**Amber Fort, Jaipur — important state assemblies were held here in the 17th and 18th centuries. The abundant stone pillars turn this space into an optical illusion. Beneath these intricately-designed arches, Kings used to meet with citizens seeking help.

***A quotation from “Debussy... A Painter in Sound” by Stephen Walsh

VII

Lent

ppp

pp

un peu en dehors

Sva ----- 1

#p.

Sub -----

pp

pp

pp

m.s.

pp

m.s.

Sub - - - 1

Sub - - - 1

Sva -----

pp

#p.

Sub - - - 1

#p.

Sub - - - 1

Musical score for measures 7-9. The piece is in G major (one sharp) and 6/8 time. Measure 7 starts with a *pp* dynamic. Measures 8 and 9 feature a *p* *marqué* dynamic. The score includes a grand staff with treble and bass clefs, and a sub-octave line for the bass clef. Dynamics include *pp*, *più pp*, and *m.s.*

Musical score for measures 10-11. The tempo is marked *un peu animé*. The piece is in 6/8 time. Measure 10 starts with a *pp* dynamic. Measure 11 ends with a *pp* dynamic. The score includes a grand staff with treble and bass clefs, and a sub-octave line for the bass clef. Dynamics include *pp*.

Musical score for measures 12-14. The tempo is marked *au mouvement*. Measure 12 starts with a *più pp* dynamic. Measure 13 features a *m.d.* (mezzo-forte) dynamic. Measure 14 features a *pp subito* dynamic. The score includes a grand staff with treble and bass clefs, and a sub-octave line for the bass clef. Dynamics include *più pp*, *m.d.*, and *pp subito*.

Musical score for measures 15-17. The piece is in 6/8 time. Measure 15 starts with a *pp* dynamic. Measures 16 and 17 feature a *pp* dynamic. The score includes a grand staff with treble and bass clefs, and a sub-octave line for the bass clef. Dynamics include *pp*.

Musical score for measures 18-19. The system consists of three staves: a vocal line in treble clef, a piano right-hand part in treble clef, and a piano left-hand part in bass clef. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and the time signature is 9/8. Measure 18 features a vocal line with a dotted quarter note followed by eighth notes, and piano accompaniment with a steady eighth-note pattern. Measure 19 includes a vocal line with a dotted quarter note and eighth notes, and piano accompaniment with a triplet of eighth notes in the right hand and a dotted quarter note in the left hand. A 'Sub' marking is present below the left-hand staff in measure 19.

en animant un peu

Musical score for measures 20-21. The system consists of three staves: a vocal line in treble clef, a piano right-hand part in treble clef, and a piano left-hand part in bass clef. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and the time signature is 6/8. Measure 20 features a vocal line with a dotted quarter note and eighth notes, and piano accompaniment with a triplet of eighth notes in the right hand and a dotted quarter note in the left hand. Measure 21 includes a vocal line with a dotted quarter note and eighth notes, and piano accompaniment with a triplet of eighth notes in the right hand and a dotted quarter note in the left hand. A 'pp' marking is present below the vocal line in measure 20.

Musical score for measures 21-22. The system consists of three staves: a vocal line in treble clef, a piano right-hand part in treble clef, and a piano left-hand part in bass clef. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and the time signature is 6/8. Measure 21 features a vocal line with a dotted quarter note and eighth notes, and piano accompaniment with a dotted quarter note and eighth notes in the right hand and a dotted quarter note in the left hand. Measure 22 includes a vocal line with a dotted quarter note and eighth notes, and piano accompaniment with a dotted quarter note and eighth notes in the right hand and a dotted quarter note in the left hand. A 'p' marking is present below the vocal line in measure 21.

Cédez //

23 *p*

Sva

mouvement du début

25 *pp subito* *p*

Sva

en animant

28 *poco crescendo*

Sva

Musical score for measures 30-32. Measure 30 starts with a forte (*f*) dynamic. The score includes a *Sost. Ped* instruction and a *..*..* marking. A large bracket labeled '5' spans measures 30, 31, and 32, indicating a five-finger exercise. The key signature has three sharps (F#, C#, G#).

8^{va}

Musical score for measures 32-33. Measure 32 begins with a pianissimo (*pp*) dynamic. The score includes an 8^{va} instruction. The key signature remains three sharps.

(8^{va})

Musical score for measures 33-34. Measure 33 starts with a pianissimo (*pp*) dynamic. The score includes an (8^{va}) instruction and a *m.s.* marking. The key signature is three sharps.

Musical score for measures 34-35. Measure 34 begins with a pianissimo (*pp*) dynamic. The score includes a *m.s.* marking. The key signature is three sharps.

37 *sempre pp*

This system contains measures 37 and 38. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#). Measure 37 features a piano introduction with a dotted quarter note in the bass and a half note in the treble. Measure 38 has a half note in the bass and a half note in the treble, with a slur over the treble staff. A fermata is placed over the final note of the treble staff.

plus lent

39

p

This system contains measures 39 and 40. Measure 39 has a half note in the bass and a half note in the treble. Measure 40 has a half note in the bass and a half note in the treble, with a slur over the treble staff. A fermata is placed over the final note of the treble staff. A dynamic marking of *p* is present. A section break is indicated by a dashed line labeled *Sva* at the end of the system.

(Sva)

42

pp

Red.

This system contains measures 42 and 43. Measure 42 has a half note in the bass and a half note in the treble, with a slur over the treble staff. Measure 43 has a half note in the bass and a half note in the treble, with a slur over the treble staff. A dynamic marking of *pp* is present. A section break is indicated by a dashed line labeled *Sva* at the end of the system.

44

timbrez légèrement la petite note

Red.

This system contains measures 44 and 45. Measure 44 has a half note in the bass and a half note in the treble, with a slur over the treble staff. Measure 45 has a half note in the bass and a half note in the treble, with a slur over the treble staff. A dynamic marking of *Red.* is present. A section break is indicated by a dashed line labeled *Sva* at the end of the system.

(... La terrasse des audiences du clair de lune)

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Appendix

Comments, afterthoughts & French vocabulary

Duration: 4'40

- 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?
- There is a tendency to perform *La Terrace* too slowly, feeling 6 quaver beats. The section from **39** to the end should be even slower, so it is sensible to keep something in reserve. Feeling 2 dotted crotchet beats will save the work from inevitable dragging.
- **1-12** presented with a blank key signature
- **21-24** presented with a blank key signature
- **29** sostenuto pedal editorial suggestion
- **43-43** editorial pedal indications

un peu en dehors	<i>a little in relief</i>
marqué	<i>marked</i>
un peu animé	<i>a little animated</i>
en animant un peu	<i>animating a little</i>
cédez	<i>held back</i>
mouvement du début	<i>tempo primo</i>
timbrez légèrement la petite note	<i>sound the acciaccatura but just a little</i>