



Claude DEBUSSY
CENTENARY EDITION 2018

I I V O I L E S

P R E L U D E S b o o k 1



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.

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Ray Alston : contact@pianopracticaleditions.com

Claude DEBUSSY 1862 - 1918

II VOILES

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.

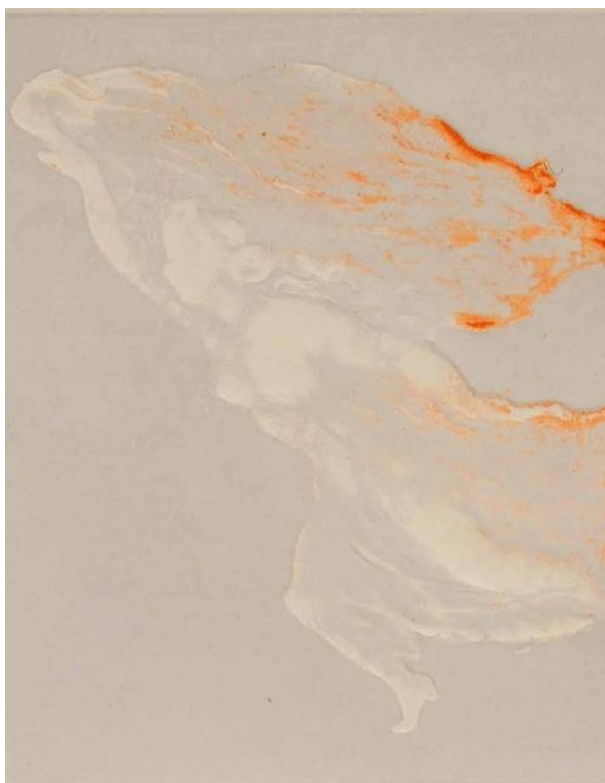
Much has been said about the motif of descending thirds and the typical whole tone scale, so essential in Debussy's "impressionist" music. I personally love the the oriental theme, especially when it returns in the treble accompanied with quasi-glissandi over the B^b pedal point.

Here is a truly original work, full of character and ethereal mystery, ambiguous both in title and content. I believe the *voiles* are in fact veils, possibly inspired by an American dancer (Loïe Fuller), who used shrouds and unusual lighting to produce imaginative visual effects. "Sails" are also a possible

translation, moving us across calm waters into an atmospheric world which is difficult to describe with mere words.

During the course of this centenary year Piano Practical Editions has become a creative and critical working publication. I always felt there were too many bar lines in this prelude and present the music in 4/4 time underlining the long melodic lines and broad feeling of timelessness. I have suggested some fingering in spite of this 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!



Modéré

[♩ = 88]

(dans un rythme sans rigueur et caressant)

II

p très doux

p *più p*

m.d.

3

pp

expressif

toujours *pp*

5

très doux

7

pp

Musical score system 1, measures 9-10. Treble clef, key signature of one sharp (F#). Measure 9 starts with a *pp* dynamic. Measure 10 features a crescendo from *pp* to *p*. The bass line consists of chords and single notes.

Musical score system 2, measures 11-13. Treble clef, key signature of one sharp (F#). Measure 11 starts with a *pp* dynamic. Measure 12 is marked *très souple*. Measure 13 features a *pp* dynamic. The bass line includes a *b♭* symbol under the first measure.

Musical score system 3, measures 13-15. Treble clef, key signature of one sharp (F#). Measure 13 includes fingerings 5, 4, 3. Measure 14 includes fingerings 3, 3. Measure 15 includes a *pp* dynamic and a *cédez* marking with a dashed line and double bar line, followed by *a tempo*. The bass line includes a *b♭* symbol under the first measure.

Musical score system 4, measures 15-17. Treble clef, key signature of one sharp (F#). Measure 15 includes fingerings 2, 1, 3. Measure 16 includes a *p* dynamic. Measure 17 includes a *p* dynamic. The bass line includes a *b♭* symbol under the first measure and a *4* marking under the second measure.

cédez - - - - - // a tempo

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

18 *pp* 2 *pp*

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

20 *p* 4 *mf* *m.d. 3*

en animant

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

22 *p*

23 *mf*

8va

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

23 *mf*

24 *p*

molto

più p

24 *pp*

25 *pp*

più pp

au mouvement

25 *pp*

26 *p*

comme un très léger glissando

doucement en dehors

m.s.

26 7

Musical score for measures 26-27. The system consists of a grand staff with a treble clef and a bass clef. The treble clef part features a melodic line with a long slur over measures 26 and 27, and a fermata over the final note. The bass clef part provides a harmonic accompaniment with a similar slur. A '7' is written above the first measure of the bass line. The key signature has one flat (B-flat).

27

Musical score for measures 27-28. The system consists of a grand staff with a treble clef and a bass clef. The treble clef part features a melodic line with a long slur over measures 27 and 28, and a fermata over the final note. The bass clef part provides a harmonic accompaniment with a similar slur. The key signature has one flat (B-flat).

28 *pp*

Musical score for measures 28-29. The system consists of a grand staff with a treble clef and a bass clef. The treble clef part features a melodic line with a long slur over measures 28 and 29, and a fermata over the final note. The bass clef part provides a harmonic accompaniment with a similar slur. The dynamic marking *pp* is present. The key signature has one flat (B-flat).

29 *pp*

Musical score for measures 29-30. The system consists of a grand staff with a treble clef and a bass clef. The treble clef part features a melodic line with a long slur over measures 29 and 30, and a fermata over the final note. The bass clef part provides a harmonic accompaniment with a similar slur. The dynamic marking *pp* is present. The key signature has one flat (B-flat).

très apaisé et très atténué jusqu'à la fin

Musical score for measures 30-31. The system includes a grand staff with treble and bass clefs. Measure 30 is marked *più pp*. The music features a long, sweeping melodic line in the right hand and a more rhythmic accompaniment in the left hand. The key signature has two flats.

Musical score for measures 31-32. The system includes a grand staff with treble and bass clefs. Measure 31 continues the melodic line from the previous system. Measure 32 introduces a triplet in the right hand. The key signature has two flats.

Musical score for measure 32. The system includes a grand staff with treble and bass clefs. The music features a triplet in the right hand and a more rhythmic accompaniment in the left hand. The key signature has two flats.

Musical score for measure 33. The system includes a grand staff with treble and bass clefs. The music features a triplet in the right hand and a more rhythmic accompaniment in the left hand. The key signature has two flats.



(...Voiles)

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Appendix

Comments, afterthoughts & vocabulary

Duration: 4'25

- 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." Might this explain why there are no metronome speeds in the second book?
- **32-33** Debussy's pedal indication here is curious as the entire work requires a virtually continuous use of the pedal. I personally like to change the pedal at each repetition of the bass G^b.

| | |
|--|---|
| dans un rythme sans rigueur et caressant | <i>with a yielding and caressing pulse</i> |
| très doux | <i>very gentle</i> |
| très souple | <i>very flexible</i> |
| cédez | <i>slow down</i> |
| serrez | <i>accelerate</i> |
| en animant | <i>animating</i> |
| emporté | <i>exalted</i> |
| retenu | <i>held back</i> |
| comme un très léger glissando | <i>like a very light glissando</i> |
| doucement en dehors | <i>gently in relief</i> |
| très apaisé et très atténué jusqu'à la fin | <i>very calm and very muted until the end</i> |