

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.

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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



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

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 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 and 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.

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

8va - - - - - 1

ppp 3

pp

un peu en dehors

#♭.

8vb - - - - -

pp

pp

pp

m.s.

pp

m.s.

3

4

2

4

#♭.

8vb - - - - -

8va - - - - -

5

pp

#♭.

8vb - - - - -

#♭.

8vb - - - - -

*

7 *pp* *p marqué*
pp m.d. *più pp* *m.s.*

10 *pp* *un peu animé* *léger* *pp* *pp*
m.s. *m.d.*

12 *più pp* *au mouvement* *m.d.* *pp subito*
m.s. *m.s.*

15 *pp*
pp

Musical score for measures 18 and 19. The score is written for piano in G major (one sharp) and 9/8 time. Measure 18 features a melody in the right hand with a slur over the first six notes, and a bass line with a slur over the first two notes. The dynamic is *m.d.* (mezzo-dolce). Measure 19 continues the melody in the right hand with a slur over the first six notes, and the bass line has a triplet of eighth notes. The dynamic is *[m.d.]*. A *Sub* (sub-octave) marking is present below the bass line in measure 18.

en animant peu à peu

Musical score for measures 20 and 21. The score is written for piano in G major (one sharp) and 9/8 time. Measure 20 features a melody in the right hand with a slur over the first six notes, and a bass line with a slur over the first two notes. The dynamic is *pp* (pianissimo). Measure 21 continues the melody in the right hand with a slur over the first six notes, and the bass line has a slur over the first two notes. The dynamic is *p* (piano).

Musical score for measures 22 and 23. The score is written for piano in G major (one sharp) and 6/8 time. Measure 22 features a melody in the right hand with a slur over the first six notes, and a bass line with a slur over the first two notes. The dynamic is *p* (piano). Measure 23 continues the melody in the right hand with a slur over the first six notes, and the bass line has a slur over the first two notes. The dynamic is *p* (piano).

p

8^{va}----- Cédez //

mouvement du début

8^{va}-----

25 *pp subito* *p*

en animant

(8^{va})----- 8^{va}-----

28 *poco crescendo*

5

30 *f*

Sost. Ped

..*..

8va-----

au mouvement

32 *pp*

(8va)-----

33 *pp* *m.f.*

34 *pp* *m.f.*

35

Musical score for measures 37-38. The piece is in a key with four sharps (F# major/C# minor). Measure 37 features a piano introduction with the instruction *sempre pp*. The right hand has a complex rhythmic pattern with triplets and a four-measure rest. The left hand has a simple accompaniment. Measure 38 continues the right-hand pattern with a four-measure rest.

Musical score for measures 39-41. Measure 39 begins with the instruction *plus lent*. The right hand has a melodic line with a four-measure rest. Measure 40 continues the melodic line. Measure 41 features a piano introduction with the instruction *p* and a four-measure rest.

Musical score for measures 42-43. Measure 42 begins with the instruction *pp*. The right hand has a melodic line with a four-measure rest. Measure 43 continues the melodic line. The left hand has a simple accompaniment. The instruction *Red.* is written below the left hand.

Musical score for measures 44-45. Measure 44 features a piano introduction with the instruction *Red.* and the instruction *timbrez légèrement la petite note*. The right hand has a melodic line with a four-measure rest. Measure 45 continues the melodic line. The instruction *Red.* is written below the left hand.

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

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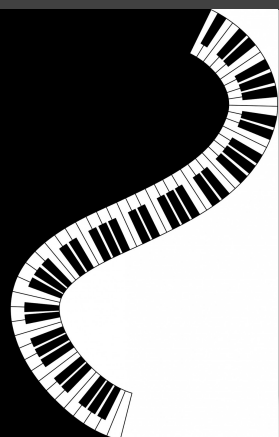
Appendix

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 six quaver beats. The section from **39** to the end should be even slower, so it is sensible to keep something in reserve. Dotted crotchet beats will save the work from inevitable dragging.
- **1-12** presented with a blank key signature (original in F# major)
- **6** According to the new Durand Edition, F# from the composer's personal copy. The autograph gives F#.
- **21-24** presented with a blank key signature
- **29** sostenuto pedal editorial suggestion
- **42-44** 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>
au mouvement	<i>a tempo</i>
léger	<i>light</i>
en animant peu à peu	<i>animating gradually</i>
cédez	<i>held back</i>
mouvement du début	<i>tempo primo</i>
plus lent	<i>slower</i>
timbrez légèrement la petite note	<i>lightly accentuate the acciaccatura</i>



D E B U S S Y
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Preludes book II

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