

# Claude DEBUSSY

## CENTENARY EDITION 2018

... d ' u n C a h i e r  
d ' E s q u i s s e s



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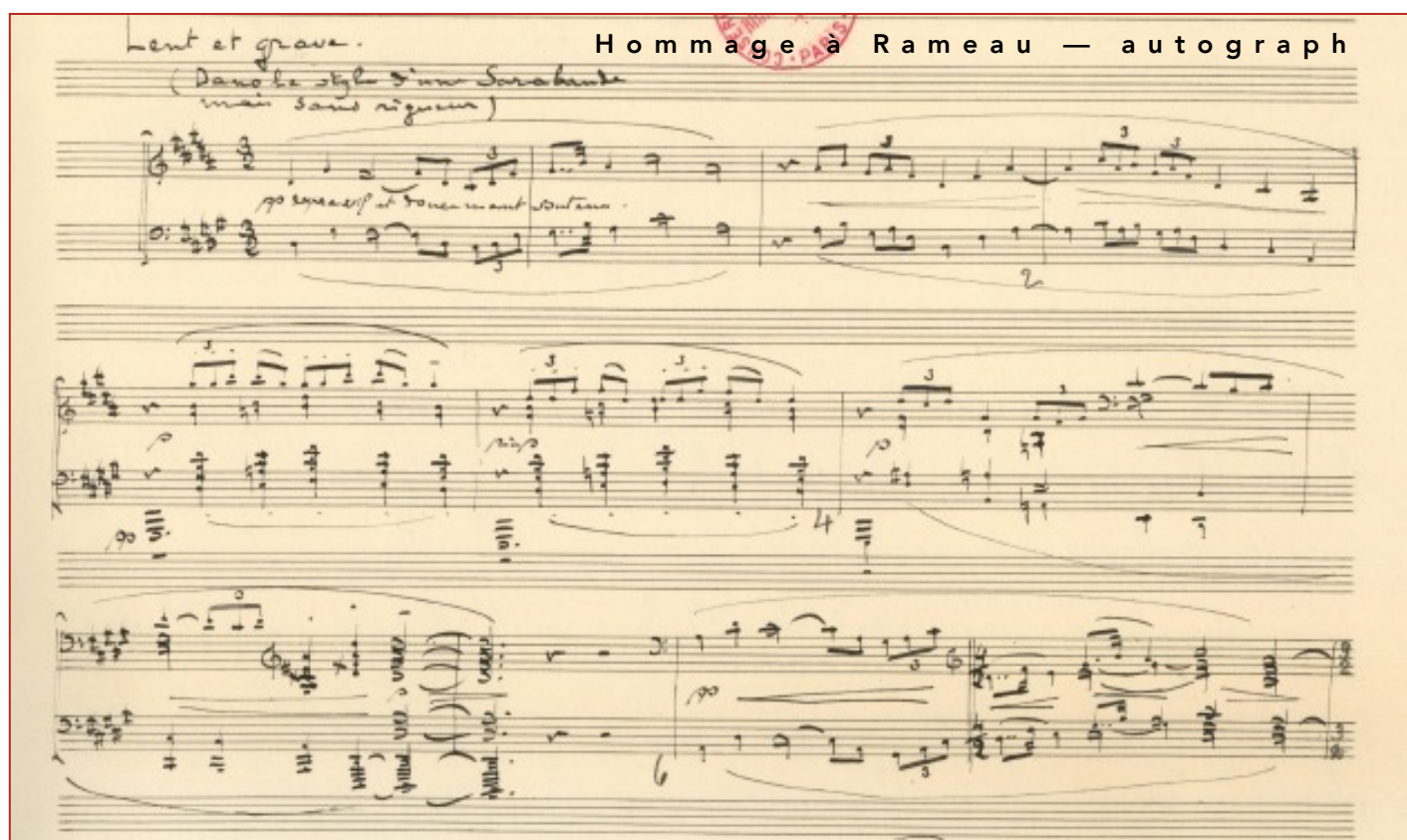
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# Claude DEBUSSY 1862 - 1918

## ... d'un Cahier d'Esquisses

It is unusual for Debussy to compose without a significant or literary title; might "from a scrapbook" or "sketchbook" mean that the work is to provide a link between two others? Roy Howat advances a plausible argument that Debussy may have planned it as a central piece to *Masques* and *l'Isle Joyeuse*

to form a suite similar to *Images* or *Estampes*, the first and third performed as a pair by Ricardo Viñes in February 1905. While it is possible that a sarabande was destined for the interlude, *d'un Cahier d'Esquisses* serves just as well to complete this "second *Suite Bergamasque*".



Commissioned and published by the magazine *Paris illustré* in February 1904, it was first performed in Paris, for the *Société musicale indépendante*, on 20th April 1910, by no less a celebrity than Maurice Ravel. This slow and sensuous piece may act as a prelude, so well does it introduce the following "Island of Joy". The three pieces can be found, united in one volume possibly for the first time, under the title *3 morceaux 1903-1904*, on the Piano Practical Editions website, where their interconnection as a group can be readily appreciated.

The exquisite whole tone passage from **19 - 28** reminds me of *Hommage à Rameau* from *Images* book I.

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"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.

During the centenary year *Piano Practical Editions* became a creative and critical publication; minor modifications have been made (see the appendix page **7**) with a possible improvement in the text 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!"

« *Il n'y a pas de théorie, le plaisir est la règle.* » — There is no such thing as theory, pleasure is the only rule" — Claude Debussy

très lent (sans rigueur)

3 4

*pp* *ppp* *pp*

5

4

*p*

*m.f.*

*Sost Ped.*

8

8

*p*

retenu

\*

...✱...

au mouvement (*doucement expressif*)

rubato - - -

*pp*

*ppp*

*pp*

*ppp*

rubato - - - au mouvement

*p*

*pp*

( la basse toujours un peu flottante )

en animant peu à peu *poco a poco crescendo*

*1*

*3*

*4*

Measures 23 and 24 of a musical score. The piece is in B-flat major (two flats). Measure 23 features a treble staff with a series of eighth notes and a bass staff with a triplet of eighth notes. Measure 24 continues the treble staff with a triplet of eighth notes and the bass staff with a triplet of eighth notes. A fermata is placed over the final note of the bass staff in measure 24.

Measures 25, 26, and 27 of a musical score. Measure 25 begins with a *mf* dynamic. The treble staff has a series of eighth notes, and the bass staff has a series of eighth notes. Measure 26 features a *p* dynamic in the bass staff. Measure 27 continues the treble staff with a series of eighth notes and the bass staff with a series of eighth notes. A fermata is placed over the final note of the bass staff in measure 27.

Measures 28, 29, and 30 of a musical score. Measure 28 begins with a *p* dynamic and the instruction "retenu". The treble staff has a series of eighth notes, and the bass staff has a series of eighth notes. Measure 29 features a *pp* dynamic and the instruction "au mouvement". The treble staff has a series of eighth notes, and the bass staff has a series of eighth notes. Measure 30 continues the treble staff with a series of eighth notes and the bass staff with a series of eighth notes. A fermata is placed over the final note of the bass staff in measure 30.

en animant

31 *p* *più p* *p* 2

34 (en dehors) *p* *mf*

*Sost Ped.* *Sost Ped.* ..\*..

37 *f* *pp* *ppp* rubato - - -

40 *pp* *sfz* *pp*

*ad libitum*

43 *pp* (*véloce*) *f* *p*

*pp* *ppp* *8va*

[ *a tempo* ]

44 *pp* *ppp* [ *♩. = ♩* ]

*expressif ( un peu en dehors )*

46 *p* *p*



Musical score for measures 48-49. The key signature is three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat). The time signature is 9/4. Measure 48 starts with a piano (*pp*) dynamic. The right hand features a series of chords and a melodic line. The left hand has a steady eighth-note bass line. Measure 49 continues the pattern with a crescendo leading to a final chord.

Musical score for measures 50-51. The key signature is three flats. The time signature is 6/4. Measure 50 starts with a piano (*pp*) dynamic. The right hand has a series of chords. The left hand has a steady eighth-note bass line. Measure 51 continues the pattern with a crescendo leading to a final chord.

encore plus lent et plus lointain

Musical score for measures 52-53. The key signature is three flats. The time signature is 6/4. Measure 52 starts with a piano (*pp*) dynamic. The right hand has a series of chords. The left hand has a steady eighth-note bass line. Measure 53 continues the pattern with a crescendo leading to a final chord.

Musical score for measures 54-55. The key signature is three flats. The time signature is 6/4. Measure 54 starts with a piano (*pp*) dynamic. The right hand has a series of chords. The left hand has a steady eighth-note bass line. Measure 55 continues the pattern with a crescendo leading to a final chord.



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## Appendix

### Comments, afterthoughts & French vocabulary

- 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."* This explains why there are so few metronome speeds in Debussy's music
- *"Pedalling cannot be written down"*, Debussy explained — *"It varies from one instrument to another, from one room, or one hall, to another"*. Combined with the sustaining pedal, it is possible, even desirable, to use the sostenuto\*\* pedal effectively, although this is entirely editorial.

### ... d'un Cahier d'Esquisses Duration : 4'30 (Debussy\*)

- **6, 34-35** LH editorial acciaccaturas
- **9** replay the bass octave A if the sostenuto pedal is not used \*
- **43** Bass tie (F#) omitted \*
- **43-44** *véloce* \* LH octave for the final beats \*
- **48-49** I believe these arpeggiated chords should begin on the beat

\* Welte piano roll recording of the composer in 1913

retenu	<i>tempo held back</i>
doucement expressif	<i>gently expressive</i>
la basse toujours un peu flottante	<i>the bass always floating a little</i>
en animant peu à peu	<i>gradually more and more lively</i>
en dehors	<i>in relief</i>
plus lointain	<i>even more distant</i>

\*\* The sostenuto pedal was first shown in Paris at the Industrial Exposition of 1844. The idea was not immediately taken up by piano builders, but in 1874, it was perfected and patented by Steinway, soon to be fitted on all their grands and better uprights. One obvious commercial reason for not including the sostenuto pedal in musical scores must have been the thought of excluding buyers whose pianos didn't provide it. Debussy and Ravel certainly played a Steinway sostenuto grand *chez* Madame de Saint Marceaux and another bought by Winnaretta de Polignac in 1906. One could say that it took over 100 years for it to become commonplace.