Claude DEBUSSY CENTENARY EDITION 2018

VIII O N D I N E

PRELUDES book II



<u>iano Practical</u> Editions

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

VIII O N D I N E 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.

Whereas Ravel in Gaspard de la Nuit followed almost verse by verse the pattern of Aloysius Bertrand's fluid and seductive prose poem, Debussy was inspired by a mythical nordic romance — Undine by Friedrich Heinrich Karl de la Motte, Baron

Fouqué. A 1909 English translation featured 15 illustrations by Arthur Rackham*, and these formed the basis for the prelude's fanciful take on the watery temptress, hauntingly irresistible and dangerous, who lures young men to their deaths.

Marked scherzando, much of this tone poem is

delicate, exquisite and mysterious, its sophisticated and capricious character achieved through subtlety of harmony and texture. The central section develops some tension with darker and deeper shades, underlining the sinister nature

> of the water nymph's powers of alluring enchantment. An ethereal version of *Ondine* which has become part of a rich legacy of aquatic subjects in the composer's catalogue.

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 alternative 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),

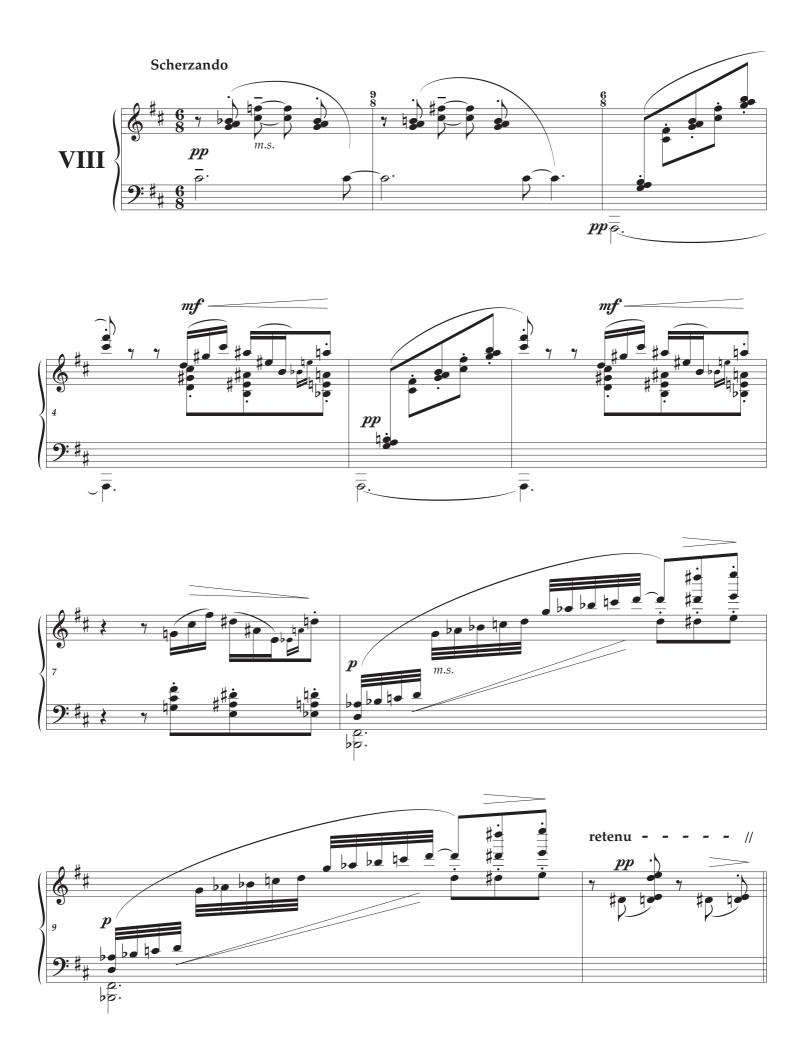
and thereby vindicating words of eternal wisdom: 'If you want

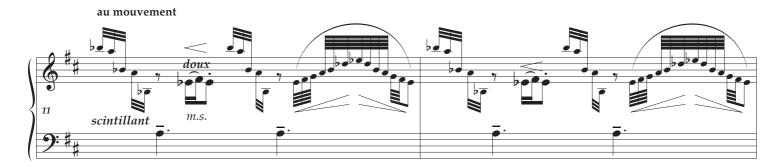
something done well, do it yourself'
Let us seek our own fingering!"

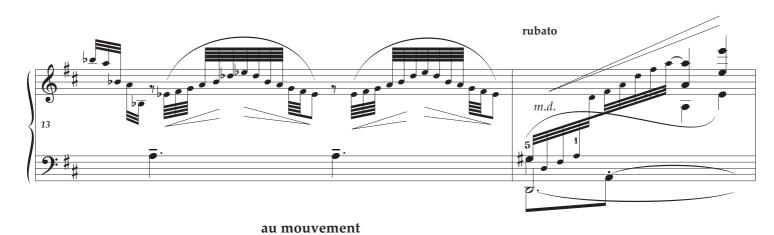


Undine — Arthur Rackham

* Les fées sont d'exquises danseuses (Book II N° 4) is another prelude inspired by a Rackham illustration — Peter Pan.

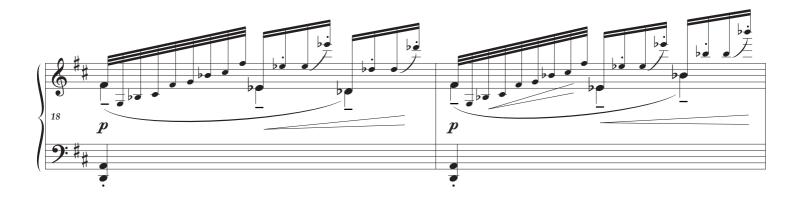






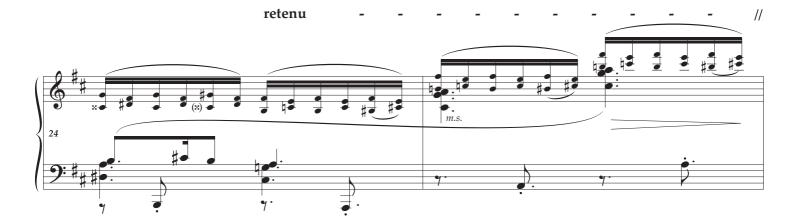






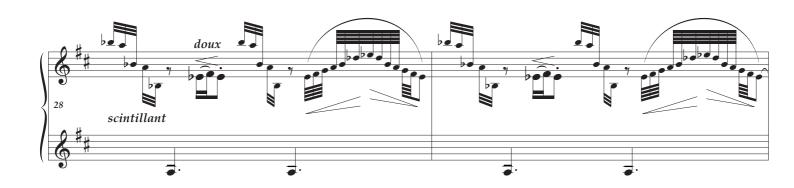


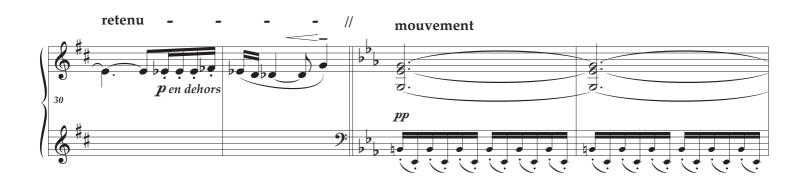


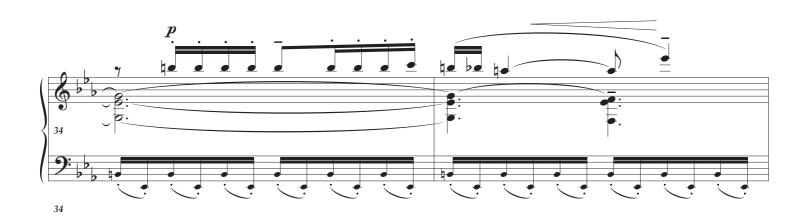


mouvement



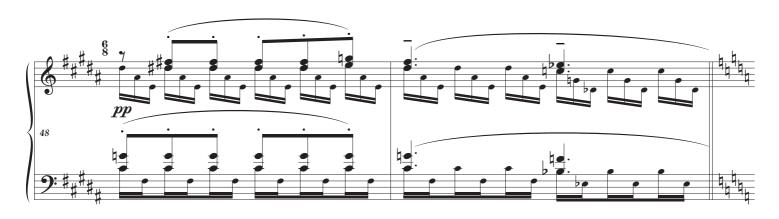






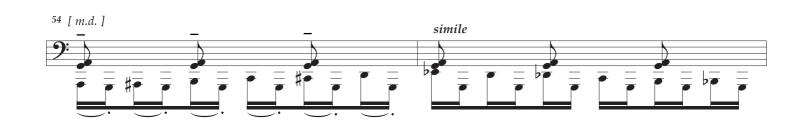




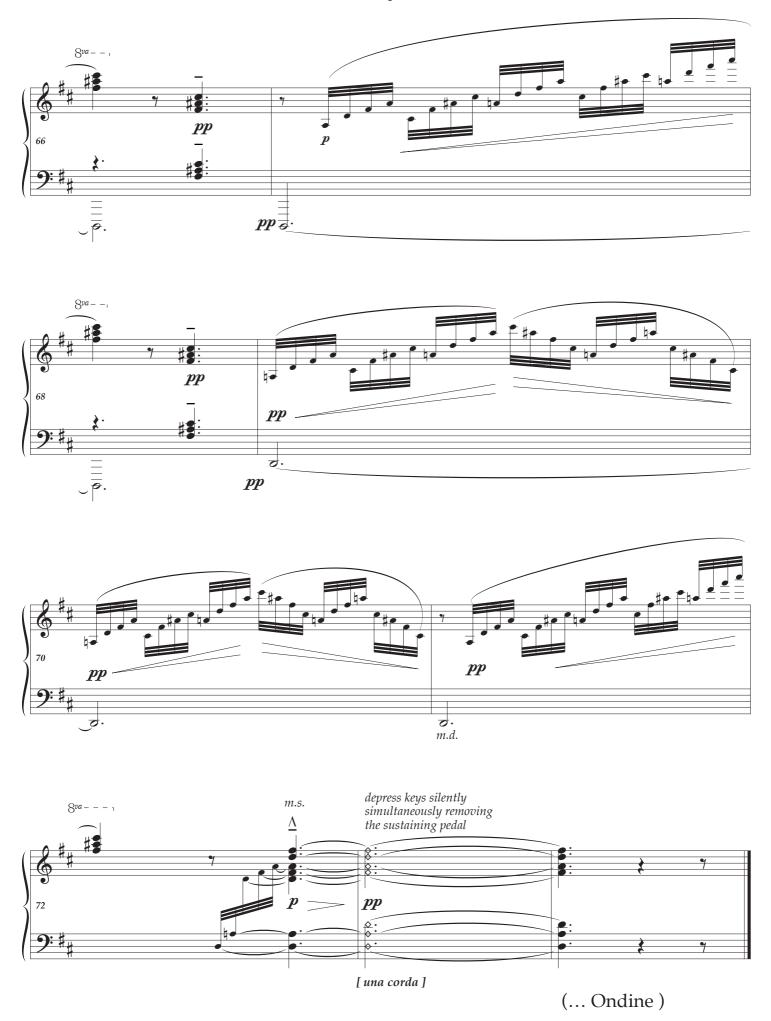












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Appendix

Comments, afterthoughts & French vocabulary

Duration: 3'45

- 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?
- In this piece of particularly capricious tempi, it seems a good idea to take the basic tempo from bar **16**
- 50-64 presented with a blank key signature
- 60 RH tied (slurred) quavers are probably an oversight
- 73 to achieve *pp*, an interesting effect can be obtained by silently replaying the final chord simultaneously removing the sustaining pedal

retenu *held back*

au mouvement a tempo

scintillant brilliant

doux gentle

à l'aise at ease en dehors in relief

le double plus lent twice as slow

un peu au-dessous du mouvement the tempo a little less quick

doucement marqué gently marked

aussi léger que possible as light as possible

ONDINE

