

DEBUSSY

ESTAMPES

L. 100
FOR THE PIANO

EDITED BY MAURICE HINSON

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This edition is dedicated
to Mrs. Irwin (Lillian)
Freundlich with admiration
and appreciation.

Maurice Hinson



AN ALFRED MASTERWORK EDITION



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CLAUDE DEBUSSY

Estampes, L. 100

Edited by Maurice Hinson

“If one cannot afford to travel, one substitutes the imagination.”

Claude Debussy



Debussy in his garden, 1905

About the Composer

The leading representative of musical Impressionism was the French composer Claude Debussy (1862–1918). Debussy created a musical language so unique that any adoption of it by others has appeared to be imitation or, at the least, mannerism. He developed his own style virtually from within his musical imagination. Influenced strongly by the Impressionist painters and symbolist poets, as well as Musorgsky and Eastern traditions (he heard Javanese music at the 1889 Paris Exposition), music was for him primarily an expressive or suggestive medium, rather than a structural medium like architecture or decorative design. While formal design is not a major strength of his music, the structural principles result from the dictates of its subtle content. For him, the framework should not be visible. He favored the character piece and almost completely avoided the large traditional forms where requirements of structure would restrict his desire for freedom. Debussy was a pianist, although not an active performer, and devoted a large part of his compositional output to the piano.

About the Music

Estampes was completed in July of 1903; its first performance was given on January 9, 1904, in the Salle Erard at the Société Nationale in Paris by Ricardo Viñes.

Debussy was profoundly influenced by the visual arts, and the title *Estampes* indicates his wish to merge the visual with the aural. The title *Estampes* means prints and refers to images printed from engraved copper or wood plates. They are so designed as to set the image in sharp perspective. Debussy was able to transform the most abstract pictures into music, and his mastery of the Impressionistic genre achieved fruition in this set of three sharply contrasted scenes. They are among the most diversely colored and descriptive of

Debussy's piano works and are full of curves and irregular patterns. In this set, Debussy's vivid musical imagination creates the poetic universe of an oriental city of pagodas (*Pagodes*), an unpredictable warm evening in Granada, Spain (*La soirée dans Grenade*), and a stormy afternoon in a garden with Parisian children (*Jardins sous la pluie*). The titles conjure up images from nature and faraway places without attempting to describe them.

Estampes is dedicated to Jacques-Emile Blanche (1861–1942), a portrait painter and a friend of Debussy. See page 5 for a description of how Blanche might have been involved with the inspiration for *Jardins sous la pluie*.

Performance time for *Estampes* is approximately 14 minutes.

Pagodes (Pagodas), L. 100:1.....7

Pagodes was Debussy's first piano piece to break away from traditional piano textures. It uses the pentatonic scale similar to the one Debussy heard performed by the Javanese gamelan and Cambodian pinpeat musicians at the Paris Exposition in 1889. Debussy spent many hours listening to these exotic orchestras, made up almost entirely of percussion instruments. Clappers, rattles and a variety of gongs gave timbres previously unused in occidental ensembles to this music. The pentatonic scale created a sense of transparency. Just as pagodas are relatively small in body but spread in ornamental roofs, this music is small in the bass register but spreads in a vivid and ornate tonal superstructure. The booming gongs and tinkling bells suggest a kind of stasis, a state of static balance, in a remote place. “It is not only the pattern [rhythm] of *Pagodes* that is Chinese, but also the emotion, the regret of a country that is too gentle. Here are the dances, the fish-ponds, even the enigmatic smile on the faces of the gods of the country. One sees pointed roofs, hears little bells, and the tinkle of transparent porcelain.”¹

The piece assumes an anti-Romantic stance; the occasional ritardandos (add about one eighth-note duration) are not expressive in nature, but stylized gestures.

It is difficult to discuss this piece without using the word “Impressionism.” A short example (see page 3, measures 80–81) shows what the term denotes in this context.

¹ Marguerite Long, *At the Piano with Debussy*, trans. Olive Senior-Ellis (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1972), 77.

[illegible]

Form: Sectional. I = measures 1-32; II = 33-53; III = 53-79; IV = 80-98.

Measures 7–10: second subject in the tenor, uses a pentatonic scale of D-sharp, C-sharp, B, A-sharp, G-sharp, modal.

Measures 15–18: return to the first pentatonic form, related to the first subject in its design.

Measures 23–26: development of the first subject; the motif juxtaposed so the two voices permit contrary motion both in the melodic counterpoint and in the rhythmic counterpoint, i.e., the beginning of the motif in triplets is superimposed upon the end of the motif in duplets.

Section II. Measures 33–36: brings in the fourth material, a second part of the second subject on a still different pentatonic group, G-sharp, B, C-sharp, D-sharp, E-sharp.

Measures 45–53: concludes the development with the fourth material.

Measures 73–79: similar to measures 11–17.

Rhythms must be independently executed in perfect timing, and their alternating stresses must be well-organized when textures are superimposed. Long pedals help achieve Debussy's oriental atmosphere in his directions stated at measure 3: "delicately and almost without nuance." Exper-

³ Much of this material comes from E. Robert Schmitz, *The Piano Works of Claude Debussy* (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce Publishers, 1950), 84–85.

iment with flutter pedaling to keep the underlying tonal pedal points sounding. The few fortissimos should ring out strongly. A light percussive quality, in imitation of the gamelan orchestra, is necessary throughout the piece. The tone must not be massive, but should be highly resonant.

Performance time for *Pagodes* is approximately five minutes.

La soirée dans Grenade

(The Evening in Granada), L. 100:216

Claude Debussy's affinity for the music of Spain is magnificently demonstrated in this second piece of *Estampes*. "When Debussy played it, this piece was all depth, allure-ment and an inexplicable magical charm."⁴ Debussy's use of Spanish idioms is most aptly symbolized in *La soirée dans Grenade*. Pervading the work is an almost incessant ostinato based on the dance rhythm of the habanera; hints of languor, passion and the ecstasy of the dance come and go in the lazy, warm summer night—no other music ever embodied darkness as this piece does. Despite the almost constant presence of this habanera rhythm, there is not the static quality heard in some pieces that use an ostinato throughout. Debussy exploits the dance and its rhythmic element to the fullest, presenting the characteristic rhythms of the habanera throughout the composition. This prevalent dance rhythm blends many moods and is characterized by the dotted eighth note followed by a 16th note, followed by two eighth notes:

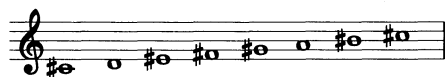


Other variant rhythms include an eighth-note triplet followed by two eighth notes:



This rhythmic ostinato serves to unify the entire structure of the piece.

Debussy goes further to capture the essence of the Spanish evening and to symbolize the freedom and abandonment associated with Spanish music through the use of the following elements: frequent change of tempos, rubato and dynamic nuance, the augmented second interval, and exploration of the exotic through the use of the whole-tone and modal scales.



Modal scale derived from *La soirée dans Grenade*,
L. 100:2, measures 7–16

He employs the Phrygian mode as well as the Arabic scale (measures 7–16) in descending passages to evoke the Andalusian (Granada is in the Andalusian region of Spain) atmosphere. The melodic line contains sinuous passages and is typical of the Andalusian tradition. The sounds of the guitar, the instrument so symbolic of Spanish music, are heard at the tempo marking, *Tempo giusto* (in exact time) as Debussy's musical imagery suggests *rasqueado* (strumming) guitar technique. Far-off castanets are evident at *Léger et lointain*, measure 109 forward, as well as more guitar strumming intertwined with the Moorish melody near the end of the piece (measures 122–129).

La soirée dans Grenade was the first of Debussy's Spanish

pieces evoking the spirit or atmosphere of a country he knew only in fantasy. Debussy's knowledge of Spain was limited to a few hours at San Sebastián, yet this music captures the strumming of Spanish guitars and the rhythm of the habanera dance. It manages to conjure up impressions so genuine and accurate that no less an authority than Manuel de Falla said they represent the "images in the moonlit water of the *albercas* [pools] adjoining the Alhambra." He further described this piece in the *Revue Musicale*: "The power of evocation integrated in the few pages of *La soirée dans Grenade* borders on the miracle when one realizes that this music was composed by a foreigner guided by the foresight of genius. There is not even one measure of this music borrowed from the Spanish folklore, and yet the entire composition in its most minute details, conveys admirably Spain."⁵

In spite of the opening directions "begin slowly in a nonchalantly graceful rhythm," it is best not to relax the habanera rhythm too much at the beginning. Fade the C-sharps in measures 5 and 6 into the entrance of the *cante jondo* (deep song—a characteristic style of Spanish singing) melody beginning at measure 7, which must be very flexible though the rhythm remains precise. Ritard a little and fade the triplet before the *retenu* (measure 15). Keep the hands firm for precision, and exceed the *pp* only slightly, even at the ends of the crescendos (measures 18 and 20). The languid rubato phrase at measure 23 will not be intoxicating if you spoil the fluidity of the triplets by making the tenuto dashes all alike. Cling a little to the first note, move on gently to the next two and fade the tied G-natural (measures 23–24) into the A, keeping the left-hand rhythm audible. Respect the two-note phrasing, but keep the triplets fluid nevertheless. This is a feature of Spanish rhythm. Maintain a solid crescendo in measures 38–41 to the *ff*. The long diminuendo is difficult to manage (measures 44–60). Do not get too quiet too soon. Let the top C-sharp on beat one in measures 62, 64 and 66 ring out a little, fading and making considerable ritardando to prepare for the great phrasing in measure 67 forward. The lilt of these measures is irresistible. The rhythmic C-sharps from measure 78 forward must be studied in the left hand separately. Swing freely into the octave melody (measures 97–98) and keep the tone that is played by the right-hand little finger bright. The low E's are bothersome. You can leave the preceding keys in plenty of time, but leaping back to the melody with the proper weight is difficult. Staying close to the keys will help this problem. In measures 109–112, notice that only the first three 16th notes are triplets. Space the others precisely and make them very brittle. The prescribed tempo ♩ = ♩ is so fast that articulation of the 16ths is difficult. Try for the articulation rather than the speed. Bring out the fading melodic line (G-sharp F-sharp) from measure 130 to the end.

Form: The piece is made up of a number of small sections embedded in larger sections.

Part I = measures 1–60 (A = 1–16, first subject group; B = 17–20; bridge = 21–22; C = 23–28, second idea of first subject group; B = 29–32; D = 33–60, second subject with 38–60

⁴ Long, 78.

⁵ Schmitz, 85–86.

the full habanera in A major).


Part II = measures 61–108 (C = 61–66, identical with 23–28; E = 67–77, a further idea of the second subject; C = 78–91, extended beyond 23–28; B = 92–97; D = 98–108, with the habanera in A major).

Coda = measures 109–136 (castanet rhythm = 109–112, 115–118; E = 113–114, 119–121, a condensed recapitulation of 67–77; 122–136 = recall of measures 7–16).


Performance time for *La soirée dans Grenade* is approximately four and one-half minutes.

***Jardins sous la pluie* (Gardens in the Rain), L. 100:323**


This nature toccata piece brings us to France, after our vivid imaginary visits to the Orient and to Spain. It was probably inspired by a scene described by the painter Jacques-Emile Blanche as he set out on a rainy afternoon to sketch a portrait of Debussy. Blanche was sketching outside in Auteuil (a district in the western part of Paris) and made a sketch of Debussy's head. It began to rain and the reflection from the trees cast a greenish tinge on Debussy's face; the rain made it look like he was covered by enamel.⁶ *Jardins sous la pluie* depicts a child looking out from a nursery window at the rain drenching the garden. Debussy's musical chemistry encompasses two songs that were popular with French children: *Nous n'irons plus au bois* (We'll Not Return to the Woods)



Nous n'i- rons plus au bois, Les laur- iers sont cou - pés. La bel - le



que voi - lá, La lai- rons nous dan - ser? En - trez dans la dan - se,



Vo - yez comm' on dan - se, Sau - tez, dan - sez, Em- bras- sez qui vous vou- drez.

and the lullaby *Dodo, l'enfant, do l'enfant* (Sleep, Child, Sleep).



Do, do, l'en - fant do, L'en - fant dor - mi - ra bien - tôt.



Do, do, l'en - fant do, L'en - fant dor - mi - ra tan - tôt.

These tunes, to some extent, determine the piece's main melodic outlines as they are heard through the splash of arpeggio figuration, as the rain patters down in 16th notes. The rain splashes about with varying degrees of intensity, sometimes falling lightly, sometimes dashed in furious gusts as the storm approaches. As the storm gathers force, one can hear the moaning of the wind and the sharp clap of thunder, and see the flash of lightning. Modulations temporarily change the color of the sky, the lawn gets soaked, a wind comes up, the sun shines through the mist, the clouds are whisked away, and the grass sparkles in the sunlight. This picture and mood are mixed with the plaintive quality of the children's songs. The lullaby is heard four times, first in single notes in the left hand (measures 27–30), then gathering momentum as the storm picks up force. There is a lull before the other children's song

⁶ Jacque-Emile Blanche, *Portraits of a Lifetime*, trans. and ed. W. Clement (London: Dent, 1937, and New York: Coward-McCann, 1938), 257.

(*Nous n'irons plus au bois*) is heard, rather hesitantly against a calm trill (measures 75–97), which reminds us that the storm has not yet passed. A moment later the storm breaks with intensity in a torrent of cadenzalike arpeggios and trills (measures 116–132). The storm is over quickly, however, and the two songs are heard again in ringing tones, first one, then the other (measures 133–156), as the scene is bathed in glorious sunlight after its heavenly bath. The great French painter Edouard Manet, a friend of Debussy, once said: “The principal person in a painting is the light.”⁷ The performer will find this is true of *Jardins sous la pluie*. The remarkable play of light and color is enhanced by the use of four modal materials: minor, major, whole-tone and chromatic. The somber color of the opening section (measures 1–26) is created by use of the minor mode. The sparkling brilliance of the end (measure 133 to the end), and a few fragments throughout the piece (measures 27–30, 47–55) are based on major tonality. Whole-tone (measures 56–63) and chromatic passages (measures 64–70) are used in close contrast to portray the mounting intensity of the weather. The opening section requires a great clarity of texture, as do measures 27–36. Keep the first 15 measures a light nonlegato. Be sure to clearly realize the three levels of melodic activity at measures 37–42: bass, tenor and top notes of the right-hand figuration. Partial pedal changes on beat three of measures 37–42 will help achieve this effect. Measures 64–70 perhaps signal atmospheric disturbance; notice that only the lower voice is written in legato quarter notes. Throughout measures 73–97 the trill must not sound mechanical, but should provide a fluid background for the two melodies. The cadenza at measures 116–121 should be played brilliantly and rapidly as a single line and should not be overloaded with too much sonority. Lightning flashes at measures 126 and 130. Contrast the themes in measures 133–146. A buildup begins at measure 147 and continues to the end where the sun returns in all its glory! This radiant toccata requires a broad tonal and dynamic range, and the stamina necessary to maintain the momentum.

Form: Sectional. **A** = measures 1–74; **B** = 75–99; **C** = 100–125; **D** (coda) = 126–157.

Performance time for *Jardins sous la pluie* is approximately four and one-half minutes.

About This Edition

This pedagogical- and performance-oriented edition is based on the first edition published by Durand in 1903. All fingerings and pedal indications are editorial unless stated otherwise, as is all parenthetical material. Because the pedal plays such an important part in the correct interpretation of

Debussy's piano music, a complete mastery of pedal technique is indispensable to the pianist who aspires to play this music. Choices in pedaling can be highly subjective, and the editor's pedal indications should be taken only as one person's suggestions; the instrument, room acoustics and other criteria must be taken into consideration to achieve artistic pedaling. The sign:



indicates normal depression of the damper pedal,



indicates use of half or less (shallow) than full depression of the damper pedal, and



indicates flutter pedaling. One characteristic device of which Debussy was very fond is that known as “half-pedaling,” different from the half or less (shallow) pedaling that the editor has just described. Debussy's device consists of raising the dampers by depressing the damper (right) pedal, then allowing the dampers to come in contact with the vibrating string for a fraction of a second by half releasing the pedal and then immediately depressing it again. This may be difficult but it can be learned with practice. The editor's suggested half-pedal device achieves a similar effect and is much easier to perform.

All pieces are in their original forms, neither rearranged nor simplified. All French terms have been translated into English. The “L.” numbers refer to the François Lesure *Catalogue de l'oeuvre de Claude Debussy*, Geneva, 1977.

⁷ Schmitz, 90.

Pagodes

(Pagodas)

Claude Debussy (1862–1918)
L. 100:1

(Moderately lively, ♩ = ca. 63)
Modérément animé

(LH)
m.g.

(delicately and almost without nuances)
délicatement et presque sans nuances

Moderément animé

pp (RH) *m.d.* *m.g.*

a

3

rit.

5 *a tempo*

rit.

7 *a tempo*

rit.

Ⓐ Debussy indicated *2 Ped.* at measures 1, 11–14 and 27–31. This indication means use both the damper (right) pedal and the una corda (left) pedal at the same time.

Jardins sous la pluie

(Gardens in the Rain)

(Clear and quick, ♩ = ca. 88)

Net et vif

L. 100:3

4

5

pp
(over)

4

1 1

1 5

7

3

1 5

1

3

10

4 5 5 4

4 5 5 4

pp

3 1 2 3

4 1 2 3

13