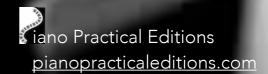
## Claude DEBUSSY CENTENARY EDITION 2018

IV LES FÉES
SONT D'ESQUISES
DANSEUSES

PRELUDES book II



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

# IV LES FÉES SONT D'ESQUISES DANSEUSES 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.

In 1912 Debussy visited an exhibition in Paris of the famous book illustrator, Arthur Rackham; Fairies are Exquisite Dancers is based on one his illustrations for Peter Pan, a book which had been offered to his daughter Chouchou the previous Christmas. Notice especially the bespectacled spider playing the double bass and a grasshopper the clarinet to accompany the fairy's magical dance balancing on silk

that must have been particularly strong!

After a charming, capricious and ephemeral introduction with diaphanous textures, spidery broken chords, trills and tremolos, the contrasting central section is an

expressive and *rubato* waltz. The following trill passages are truly Scriabinesque with a Brahms motif quotation from opus 39. The final bars feature a brief reference to Weber's *Oberon*.

Fairies Are Exquisite Dancers
Arthur Rackham

To quote Michael Clark\*, "Les fées sont d'exquises danseuses" is a miniature masterpiece of descriptive music. These strong ties to former styles suggest that Debussy, a composer credited with breaking new ground, is in many ways continuing and expanding upon the Romantic tradition in his music.

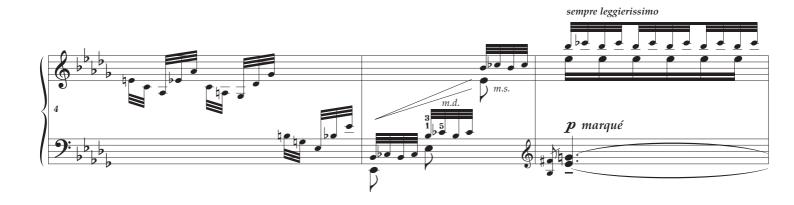
During the course of this centenary year *Piano Practical Editions* has become a creative and critical working publication; in addition to a few suggestions of fingering, sostenuto pedal and hand disposition, you will find significant modifications to the general layout.

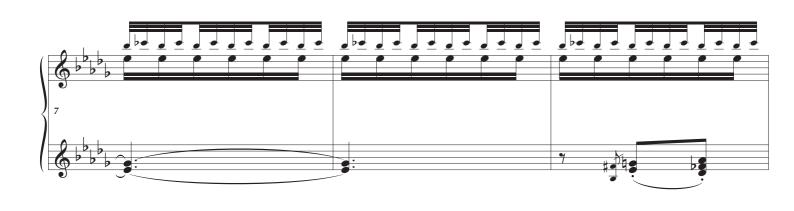
Here is an apt quotation by the composer: "Absence of fingering is an excellent exercise, negating musicians' perverse desire to completely dismiss the composer's (and editor's), and thereby

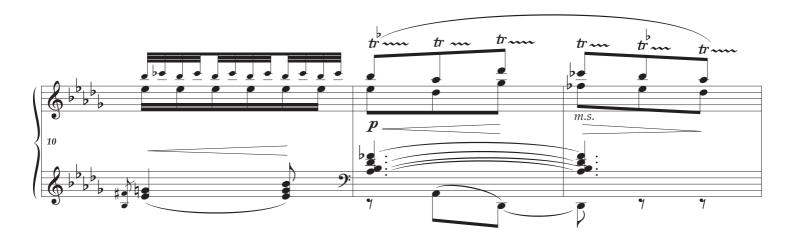
vindicating words of eternal wisdom: 'If you want something done well, do it yourself'". Let us seek our own fingering!

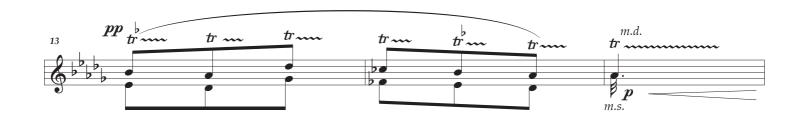
\* from "Fleeting Fairy Footprints: Trails of Influence in a Debussy Prelude" (2013).

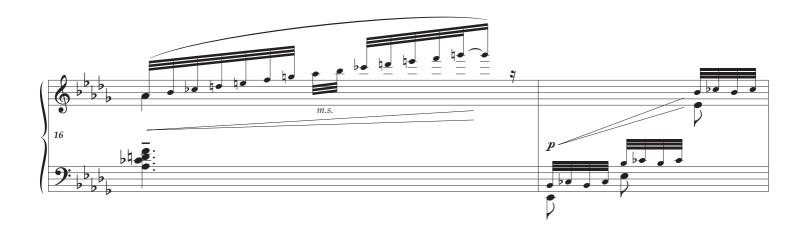


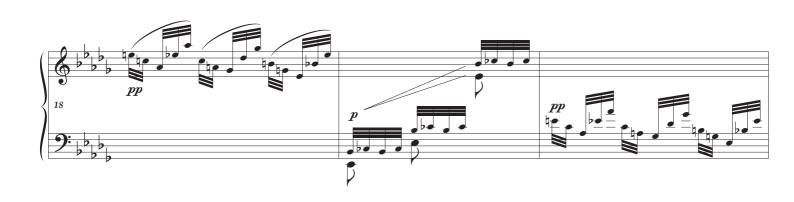








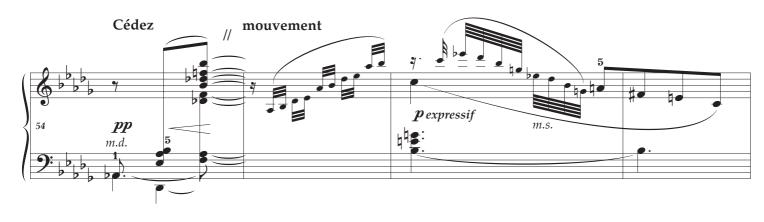


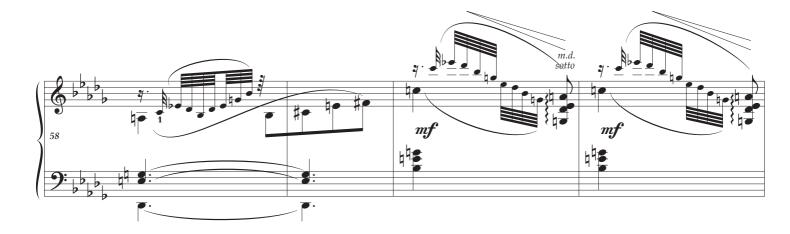


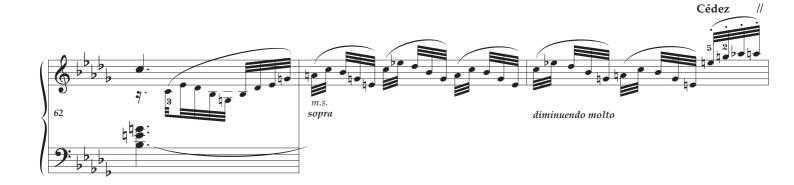


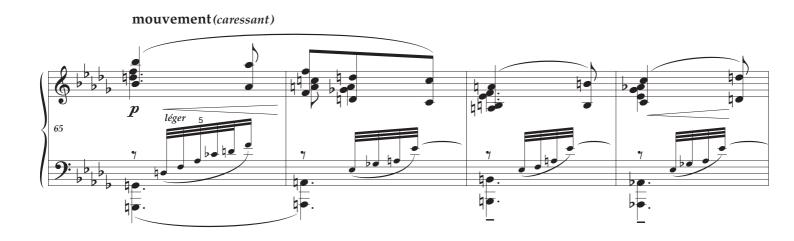




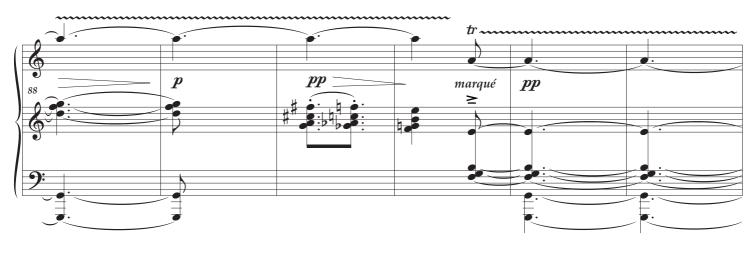














#### mouvement







(... "Les fées sont d'exquises danseuses" )



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#### **Appendix**

Comments, afterthoughts & French vocabulary

Duration: 3'20 (There is a beautiful studio recording in which Horowitz takes 3'10)

- 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?
- The opening with minimum pedal is particularly effective
- 13-14 I offer this practical solution... if Debussy's septuplets prove impossible
- 16 Gamissing from the original edition probably a misprint
- 24-37 sostenuto pedal editorial suggestion
- 106-110 presented in 3/4

marqué *marked* cédez *slow down* 

sans rigueur with rhythmic freedom

retenu *ritardando* en retenant *held back* 

doux et rêveur gentle and dreamy un peu en dehors a little in relief

